

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

April 1991

RADIO/TV INTERFERENCE PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BY HL&P FOREMAN

Certainly interference from power lines to our radios and television sets is no new problem for Ham Radio operators. We have had club sponsored programs before on TVI, but for this month's meeting on April 18th we have an HL&P expert to help us sort it all out.

Paul Hanagriff is a foreman with the Houston Lighting & Power Company, but he's not just a foreman. He specializes in interference problems caused by HL&P power lines.

Hanagriff will touch on such topics as identifying different types of interference and their origins; what to look for; what causes them if they do come from a power line; who to call at the power company and the procedure for resolving the problem.

Bring your own horror stories and we'll see what HL&P has to say about them.

Come early to the meeting and join in some eyeball QSOing before the show starts at 8 p.m. local time.

MARCH MEETING RECAP

The Icom-sponsored movie "More Than Just Radios" was shown. The script for the movie was written and acted out by Ham Radio operators from the Northwest USA. It tells the story of a young potential Ham who was Elmered into our hobby by an older Ham operator. Bob Chmielewski, N5PJI, obtained and introduced the video.

A door prize was won by Paul Frantz, KF5SB. He received a 1991 ARRL Handbook courtesy of Madison Electronics Supply, Houston. Tel: 729-7300.

NARS OPS COUNT CANOES FOR BUFFALO BAYOU REGATTA

After a washed out beginning on Saturday, the Buffalo Bayou Regatta splashed 15 miles down the bayou on Sunday, April 6, at high noon with over 75 boats participating. NARS ops being the dedicated group they are, reacted to the change and showed up for duty at this event which was formerly known as the "Reeking Regatta."

The weather cooperated, and even with the daylight savings time change, the race was on. Anybody stationed along the banks of the bayou will testify to the previous wet conditions. Water in the bayou on Friday was way up but by Sunday it was manageable.

Dick Rousseau, N5JZY, was NARS race coordinator and did an excellent job. Operators present were Dick Hawkins, W5DWI; Bob White, KF5ZL, Net Control; Paul Frantz, KF5SB; Bob Welch, KE5IC; Jim Clarke, N5FIX; Scott Byrd, N5KEU; Trey Garland, N5RXZ; Bob Chmielewski, N5PJI; Jay Rubens, KI5MD; Don Bedell, KA3BKU; Ed Patterson, KB5MKS; Ralph Cheek, KB5DNT; Brad Nelson, WD5GNI; and Ray Dillard, WA5F.

NARS PROVIDES COMMUNICATIONS AT SUPER CITIES WALK FOR MS

The Super Cities Walk, a 15K walk to benefit the Southeast Texas Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, was held Saturday, March 23. NARS ops worked the walk site in The Woodlands, one of four sites in the Houston area. It began at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, proceeded through wooded hike and bike trails, and ended at North Shore Park. Vince Hayes, KC0LM, coordinated the event for NARS and was ably assisted by Bob Welch, KE5IC, and Rich Richardson, KI5MH, operating at two rest stops.

***** PROPAGATION *****
by ROY HRADILEK, AD5Q

DX signals on 10 meters are beginning to fade, as daytime absorption will dominate northern hemisphere paths for the next several months. Short path to Europe and Asia will drop out entirely, but April and May bring the best opportunities for 10 meter long path when fluxes are sufficiently high. Ten meter propagation peaks in the fall, and it is fall in the southern hemisphere! Long path signals on 10 follow a daytime path around Antarctica, extending into the evening hours at the eastern end of the path. Routine Europeans are workable via the southwest around midnight, with the Far East (not just JA) coming through in mid morning from the southeast.

15 is now open most of the night, as well as during the day. The band is usually open for DX in many directions at once. In the morning, for example, the band is open to Europe (the classic daytime path), but is also open across night paths to Japan, the Pacific, Australia, and over the pole! Anytime you hear Australia on 15 (or 20) in the morning, long path is also open in the same direction. This is 15 meters at its best, and these conditions will peak in May and continue into June. The day path to EU is slow to open in the morning, and often preceded by a long path opening to the same part of the world. In pileups, the east coast may have short path propagation when we don't, but an echoing long path signal from W5-land can really stand out. Sometimes you have to turn the beam a lot to see what direction signals are coming from. A severe echo on a signal is a good indication that you are beaming the wrong direction. Look for exotic African long path on 15 in the morning, and while your beam is pointed in that direction, check the same path on 20 for Africa and the Indian Ocean. Indonesian sigs in the early morning often come over the pole or via Europe. The variety of DX openings on 15 at this time of year is amazing.

20 is more predictable and very reliable. Propagation on 20 is across nighttime or greyline paths.

***** FAR OUT *****
by JACK DOUGLAS, KA5DNP

You may remember the balloon launched at Huntsville on 08 DEC 1990 that carried a small transmitter to over 100,000 feet. The transmitter sent telemetry of on board sensor data in the form of a CW message and tones that could be translated into temperature and altitude readings. The flight package was recovered intact, 30 hours later, after some effective DFing.

After this success, the loosely knit group of local Ham "DOERS" that was responsible began work on a more advanced package for yet another launch. They have made great progress and the launch of "THE SOUTH TEXAS BLT" (The balloon with everything!) is scheduled for 11 MAY 1991 at 0900 CDT.

The "payload" systems have been completed and should be operating from a West Houston test site when you read this. Listen for the 2-meter beacon on 147.435 MHz FM. Every 40 to 50 seconds a packet burst will be heard. Telemetry is in the following format:

WB5HLZ-8>STXBTL <UI C>:
Pressure = +30.039 in Hg
Inside Temp. = +070 F
Outside Temp. = +067 F

(The numbers given are just examples)

When it launches, the flight package will send:

1. Packet telemetry (standard AX.25 FM packet on 147.435 MHz).
2. ATV with digitized voice message on 435.250 MHz (Video can be received on channel 60 of a cable ready TV. However, the audio will be ± 4.5 MHz as it is a wide band subcarrier).
3. CW beacon on 28.322 MHz.

This is a **TRANSMIT ONLY** package! Please **DO NOT** attempt to make radio contact with the balloon. The above information is courtesy of two of the DOERS - N5LKJ (Allan Fox) and WA5ZIB (Andy MacAllister).

If you know your EXACT location and have a narrowly focused 2-meter beam, you might be able to help with tracking during the flight. To stay current on this and other aspects of the project, check the N5LKJ Packet BBS for timely bulletins and progress reports.

NARS NOTES

- CONGRATULATIONS go to Mike Furrey, WA5POK, upon his appointment to the NARS Board of Directors as Activities Chairman.
- THE S.I.R.E. TRIATHLON needs communication help Saturday, April 20th. This is a fun event that involves runners, horseback riders, and bike riders all competing in teams. It happens near FM 1960 & Cypresswood. Please volunteer your services to Curt Furtado, KI5AK, at 550-0895.
- THE NARS NOVICE COURSE held tests Thursday, April 11, with three candidates qualifying for a Novice class license. Chris Evers, Terry Parker, and David Stewart made the grade. Accolades to all of you.
- UPGRADES: Kudos go to Ken MacLeod, WD5FBT, for his upgrade to Advanced Class, and to David Hanus, N5RCQ, for his upgrade to General Class. And Jim Sutherland's new Technician Class call sign is N5SBP.
- PLEASE WELCOME new NARS members:

Wilburn Bruce, W5ACZ
Ken MacLeod, WD5FBT
Trey Garland, N5RXZ
John Moore, WA5ZYM
Terry Parker, Novice
David Stewart, Novice
Cris Borger, Novice candidate
- FOR NARS INFO see April QST, p.126.

LICENSE EXAMS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL

The Compaq Radio Club announces Amateur Radio examinations for Saturday, April 20, at 8:30 a.m. The exam site is the Compaq Computer Co. offices on SH 249 in northwest Houston. There will be no walk ins; you must have a reservation. To make reservations, call Alan Cross, WA5UZZ, 374-5329, or Roger Runnels, WA5WCY, 374-7490. They will give you all the information needed to take the test. For future exam dates see the March issue of the NARS News.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT by PAUL FRANTZ, KF5SB

April showers have really put on a show this year. The drive to work on Thursday 11 April was really spectacular because of the lightning show. I hope no one forgot to disconnect their antennas. The heavy rains of a week earlier delayed the Buffalo Bayou Regatta until noon on Sunday, but it failed to dampen the spirits of the intrepid communications crew provided by NARS. The weather turned out to be fine and the event came off very smoothly. Our thanks to Dick Rousseau, N5JZY, for organizing it and to Dick Hawkins, W5DWI, and Bob White, KF5ZL, for providing the City of Houston Emergency Communications van and acting as Net Control.

The Woodlands 15K walk for the MS Society was also handled by NARS during the past month. Many thanks to Vince Hayes, KC0LM, for coordinating the event and to Ron Hogan, N5HNE, for the use of the 147.62/02 repeater during the event.

Many of you have no doubt read the item in the April 1991 issue of QST concerning H.R. 73. This is a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives designed to protect current frequency allocations to the Amateur Radio Service. We are all painfully aware of the recent loss of part of the 220 MHz band to the Land Mobile Service. There are also very serious proposals to reallocate some or all of our 900 MHz band for computer networking purposes. With today's rapidly growing demands for all kinds of electronic communications, I am certain that the pressure on our VHF and UHF bands will only increase. In order to increase our chances to retain these frequencies, there are at least two things we can all do. First, write to your congressman supporting H.R. 73, and do it now. Then promote the use of these bands. Hopefully, the advent of the "codeless Technician" license will help with this. We have some valuable resources and the old saying "use it or lose it" has never been more appropriate.

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society
is an ARRL Special Service Club
* * ARRL Club No. 2120 * *

NARS BULLETIN BOARD

NARS MEETS the third Friday of each month at the Cypress Creek EMS Bldg. 16650 Sugar Pine Lane (beneath the water tower) which is one block east of Kuykendahl and two blocks south of FM 1960. Meeting time: 8 p.m.

Eye-ball QSO's: about 7:30 p.m.

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday 8 a.m. Strack Farms Restaurant, located at 5707 Louetta Rd. - Informal ragchew.

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Send news to Jim Clarke, N5FIX
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NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NARS BOARD MEETS the second Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Prince of Peace Catholic Community at 19222 Tomball Parkway, Houston. All members are cordially invited to attend.

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8 p.m.
28.444 MHz (John, N5GOW)

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8 p.m.
146.06/66 MHz (Ken, KA5AKG)

EMERGENCY NETS

Northwest Harris County ARES
WEDNESDAY 8:30 p.m.
146.06/66 MHz (Scott, N5KEU)

Harris County OEM RACES
ALTERNATE SUNDAYS 7 p.m.
146.34/94 MHz (Bob, K5HUT)

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT NARS, PLEASE
CALL KEN EDINBORGH, W5BKK, 376-7660

NARS REPEATER FREQUENCIES

146.06/66 MHz 449.375/444.375 MHz

NARS DIGIPEATER

Freq. (145.07 MHz) Alias (NARS)
Call (W5BKK-1)