

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

January 1991

DX HOT SPOTS, QSL MANAGER LISTS WWV INFO, BEAM HEADINGS, ETC.

What do all of these have in common? And where can you find information about these topics all at the tip of your fingers? Have you ever heard of PacketCluster™?

This month's guest speaker, Kenny Grabenstein, KE5IV, will enlighten us on this useful amateur radio tool at the NARS January 18 meeting. PacketCluster is a packet radio mode that is specifically designed for the fast transfer of information between stations connected through various computer nodes over the radio. And if that sounds confusing, that's the reason for this month's topic. Kenny will explain how his PacketCluster station (located near Hempstead, TX) works, and its importance in DX spotting and DX work in general.

Kenny is the immediate past president of the Texas DX Society and writes the Packet Racket column for their newsletter, "The Bullsheat." Kenny has been a Ham for the last 16 years and has been working with the PacketCluster for the last three. He is not only an expert on PacketCluster, but is also a DXer *par excellence*. He will gladly share some of his secrets with us, so be there with open ears and lots of good questions.

NOVEMBER MEETING RECAP

Don Busick, K5AAD, of Madison Electronics, briefed us on all the latest market news on Ham equipment; digital signal processing is the newest feature, and the Kenwood TS-850S and the Cushcraft R5 hottest items. Don supplied the door prizes and ARRL Handbooks were won by Tom, KF500, and Ken W5BKK. Calendars were won by Dick, N5JZY; Joe, WA4FGH; and Bob, WN5G. Henry, N5HF, won a very special kit.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT by Paul Frantz, KF5SB

Happy New Year to all! As we start a new year for NARS, let's pause a moment to express our appreciation to the officers, board members, and all the many volunteers who made it another successful year for NARS. Outgoing officers are Ed Hinds, KB5AEL, President; Dan Cassiani, N5KPI, Vice President; Barbara Peat, KB5GEZ, and Curt Furtado, KI5AK, Secretary; Bob Patterson, N5MJB, Treasurer; and Tom Roraback, KF500, Director. There is not enough room to list the numerous achievements of 1990, but they include a successful novice class, an excellent Field Day effort, and a very fruitful raffle at the Houston Com-Vention to name but a few. From this corner to all of you, a hearty "Thank you" for a job well done.

The new year brings with it many challenges, some new and some old. How can we benefit from the new no-code technician license? How can we encourage more of our members to participate in the club's activities? Where can we find volunteers to fill several key roles such as activities chairman, field day chairman, public service coordinator, and so on? The list is seemingly endless, but then so is the list of opportunities for anyone who wishes to become involved with the operation of OUR club! If you would like to help get more novices into our hobby, or learn about the fun of putting together a Field Day effort, or just make new friendships while working on one of the many club activities, talk to any of our club officers and GET INVOLVED!

If this sounds a little like a "hard sell", maybe you are right. Having had the opportunity to be involved with several Ham clubs both in the US (See "FROM THE PRESIDENT" on page 3.)

* * * P R O P A G A T I O N * * *
by ROY HRADILEK, AD5Q

January brings us the lowest MUF's of the year, and they are lower than in the last few years. Low bands are having a great season, but signals on 80 are still much weaker than they will be at the bottom of the sunspot cycle. This is something to look forward to, but for now let's enjoy 10 and 15 meters.

As I write this, hoards of policemen, lids and jammers are anxiously monitoring their packet machines lusting for the opportunity to QRM the expected Afghanistan expedition. As the path to this part of the world is almost due north from here, don't expect to work him on 10. Even if we hear him on this band, the east coast will have a tremendous advantage in the pileups. Even openings to European Russia will be short this year. Still, 10 will be loaded with DX activity from Europe in the morning. Openings to the rest of the world will occur at their regular times. Those difficult to reach corners of the world (southern Asia) will be easier on 15 or 20. Conditions on 15 will be very good.

For the past two months, 20 has been closing at night. During January this will occur especially early. Since this is the band most rely on for night path propagation, activity is way down. Much of it has shifted to the low bands. 20 is in great shape in the southern hemisphere. In the late afternoon and evening look for activity from Africa and the antarctic. Tune carefully for exotic long path stuff from the Far East around sunset. Morning long path is wide open to most of Europe, along with Russia and the Middle East.

This is the best time of year for low band work. This is more difficult, and linears are almost a necessity. For many Honor Rollers, low band DXing is the only cure for DX burnout. Europeans are workable after midnight on 80 this year, but MUFs are too high for any heavy DX excitement on 160. 40 will be the best band for serious world wide nighttime DXing for the next month or so.

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

At some future date we can expect an "official" report on the SAREX II project carried out on STS-35. I do not even know who will issue it as AMSAT, ARRL, NASA, and JSC ARC as well as Ron Parise (WA4SIR) were all deeply involved. However, we do have a "first review" presented by Dr. Tom Clark (W3IWI), President Emeritus of AMSAT who has access to all the data. What follows has been taken from his report.

The ROBOT issued 1711 QSO serial numbers. Of that number, 238 (13.9%) involved complete 2-way QSO's. A complete QSO involved: a) Ground Station sends Connect Frame to Shuttle; b) ROBOT acknowledges by Connecting and sending QSO serial Number; c) Ground Station sends an ACK in response; d) On receiving ACK, ROBOT "logs" QSO and sends a disconnect. This sequence meets all the accepted standards for a QSO; i.e., unknown information transmitted and acknowledged in both directions.

As far as I know the only NARS member to make the "Gold Star" list of 238 was Ken Edinborgh (W5BKK). This is quite an accomplishment - only 60 of the 238 were Mainland USA Stations. Other areas included were: Japan, 39; Africa, 31; Australia, 31; Caribbean/Mexico, 26; South America, 23; Hawaii, 12; Other Asia/Oceania, 8; and Others, 8.

In addition to the 238 complete QSO's 332 other unique calls have been ID'd up to now. QRZ lists (lists sent by SAREX of stations heard but not "connected") were not recorded in the on-board memory and only through Hams from around the world sending in copies of lists they downloaded can the "heard" list be expanded. So, depending on what is submitted, the heard list may grow.

If you want to look at Tom's full report including the 570 call signs, connect to N5LKJ-4 BBS (via IAH on 146.01 thense IAH4). Ask for the list of messages from AMSAT (do this by sending: L@ AMSAT). When I last looked, there were 13 messages involved in the full report.

NARS NOTES

- RECEIVING NEW CALL SIGNS were Rich Richardson, KI5MH ex KA5YFU, and Jay Rubens, KI5MD ex N5QVT, following upgrade to Advanced Class.
- PLEASE WELCOME new NARS member Joel Abrahams.
- REMINDER - 1991 NARS dues are due. Please forward your check for \$15 (made out to "NARS") to Bob Welch, KE5IC, 7811 Theisswood Rd., Spring TX 77379.

1991 NARS NOVICE COURSE SKED

The 1991 version of the NARS Novice Licensing Class is scheduled to begin on Thursday, February 14 at 7:30 p.m. Location is the Prince of Peace Catholic Community at 19222 Tomball Pkwy. Site is about a mile north of FM 1960 near the intersection of Perry Rd. & Tomball Pkwy. (SH 249). Class will meet in the two-story classroom bldg. Room 208. The eight-week course will prepare one to take the FCC Novice Class examination which will be given as a part of the program. Text to be used is the ARRL book, "Tune in the World With Ham Radio." Registration fee is \$10 per person. Pre-register by sending a \$10 check made out to "NARS" to Bob Welch, KE5IC, at 7811 Theisswood Rd., Spring TX 77379.

As usual, volunteers are needed to help with the teaching chores. Kindly offer assistance to Joe Sokolowski KD5KR, at 353-2196, or to Bob Welch, KE5IC, at 376-4814.

("FROM THE PRESIDENT" from page 1.)

and abroad, I realize that the keys to success for any club are to have an active membership and to continually attract new members. We have come a long way in the just over five years that NARS has been in existence by doing just that, and my goal for this year is to assure that NARS continues that trend. Please help by being an active member and by making any suggestions you may have to make NARS a better club.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET DATE SET

The 6th Annual NARS Awards Banquet is scheduled to be held Saturday evening January 26th at Strack Farms Restaurant at 5707 Louetta Road. A cash bar will be open at 6:30 p.m. and dinner will begin about 7:30.

Cost of the meal will be \$15 per person (tax and gratuity included) and reservations must be made in advance. You will have a choice of entree from the menu shown below. As many of us can attest, Strack's serves up excellent table. Bring a big appetite and get ready for an evening of good fellowship. Annual awards in several categories will be awarded following dinner.

For reservations, please send your checks (made out to "NARS") to Rich Richardson, KI5MH, 1207 Twin Brooke Dr., Houston TX 77088. Rich would like to have your check in hand at the latest by the NARS breakfast on Saturday morning, January 19th.

MENU	
DINNER INCLUDES:	
APPETIZER	Tostitos and Chile Con Queso
ENTREE CHOICES	
Strack's Regular Bar-B-Que	
Regular Dinner:	
Choice of sliced beef, pork, ham, pork sausage, or chopped meat.	
Served with beans, slaw, potato salad, and Texas Toast.	
Bacon Wrapped Filet	
Cooked to your desire. Served with salad and Texas Toast.	
Marinated Breast of Chicken	
Served with salad and Texas Toast.	
Chicken Fried Steak	
Strack's special breaded chicken fried steak. Served with fries.	
BEVERAGE	
Coffee, tea, soft drinks	

COMPAQ RADIO CLUB TO GIVE TESTS

Acting under the ARRL VEC, the Compaq Radio Club announces a regular sked of amateur radio license testing with the next session planned for January 19th at the Compaq Computer Co. location on Tomball Parkway (SH249) near Louetta Road. For further info contact Alan Cross, WA5UZB, at 374-5329. Look for their 1991 schedule in the next NARS News.

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.
Eyeball QSO's: about 7:30 p.m.

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

NARS NEWS is published monthly by Northwest Amateur Radio Society
Send news to Jim Clarke, N5FIX
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Houston 77079 Tel: 493-5908

BOB WELCH, KE5IC
7811 Theisswood Rd.
Spring TX 77379

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BT Burk, N5QVS 370-1955

DIRECTORS

Ed Hinds, KB5AEL 373-4219

Brad Nelson, WD5GNI 370-0934

Bob Welch, KE5IC 376-4814

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8 p.m.
28.444 MHz (Ed, KB5AEL)

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
SUNDAY 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)

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 invited to attend.