

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

September 1991

"UP, UP AND AWAY" PROGRAM SET FOR SEPT 20 MEETING

Remember the music group 5th Dimension? They sang a song that went "Up, up and away, in my beautiful, beautiful balloon." Well, keep that image in your mind when you come to the next NARS meeting slated for Friday, September 20th.

We are going to look at balloons from all kinds of angles - up and down and electromagnetically. Andy MacAllister WA5ZIB, is one member of a growing group of local Hams who are involved in experimenting with high altitude balloons and Amateur Radio.

Andy will bring with him an edited videotape of two previous local balloon launchings, explain how it all works and what research went into making it work. He will show us some of the miniature electrical components used.

Balloon launchings with Ham radio equipment started in 1990 when the group sent up a balloon with 2-meter capability to over 100,000 feet altitude. In May 1991, two balloons were launched; one failed, the other flew to around 90,000 feet. This balloon was equipped with an ATV digipeater, packetized telemetry, and a 10-meter beacon.

In October of this year the group is planning another launch with a balloon equipped with improved ATV, a 2-meter digipeater, synthesized voice, and a 10-meter beacon.

You will definitely not want to miss this program and see what balloon radio looks like from a bird's eye point of view. Come early for some eyeball QSOing and then enjoy the program.

HOUSTON TO HOST SOVIETS

Two well-known Soviet amateurs will be the guests of the Texas DX Society and will attend the Houston Ham Convention November 8-10. Musa Manirov, U2MIR, and Boris Stepanov, UW3AX, will be visiting through the "invaluable assistance" of Vern Riportella, WA2LQQ, according to TDXS president Jim Lane, N5DC, and convention chairman Jim Carmody, NN50.

Manarov, a Soviet cosmonaut, is known for his long-running Amateur Radio operations from the MIR space station. Stepanov, deputy editor-in-chief of *Radio* magazine, last visited the U.S. in July, 1990, when he attended the World Radiosport Team Championship in Seattle.

de *The ARRL Letter*, August 7, 1991

NARS ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN RESIGNS

Mike Furrey, WA5POK, who has done a great job as the activities chairman, recently has taken a position as a teacher in the Cleveland (TX) school district. That means we need a new activities chairman. If you would like to contribute to the club in this key position, or if you know someone who would do a good job, contact Paul Frantz, KF5SB.

AUGUST MEETING RECAP

Sally Mathis, HL&P, briefed us on nuclear power. . . . Two door prizes were given out: Bob Welch, KE5IC, won a 2-meter mobile antenna donated by Madison Electronics (713-729-7300); Ken MacLeod, KI5PM, won a 20-meter QRP transceiver kit donated by Dick Rooney, W5VHN. Dick also donated a used 10-meter vertical antenna to the Ronald McDonald ARS. . . . Again, excellent attendance!!

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

Another fine DX season is before us: Autumn. Summertime propagation is boring. The high bands are afflicted with absorption problems, so there is little DX across daytime paths. Static levels on low bands keep DX'ers off 80 and 40, though propagation on 40 is actually pretty good. Most activity is concentrated on 20, and only for night path DX.

10 meters will come roaring back over the coming month, though this might be the last good year for this band in the current sunspot cycle. The 10 meter season will last until March, with the peak of activity and propagation occurring during October and November (aka contest season). All parts of the world will be workable, but 10 meter openings over the pole into Asia are usually difficult. These opportunities are at their best for only a couple months, particularly during October. Polar sigs are easy to identify by their echo, and the narrow windows open around sunrise and sunset. They are greyline paths. Seize the day!

Polar openings on 15 are of longer duration, and occur at other times of the year anyway. In late spring and summer, 15 becomes a night path band. The transition to a day path configuration is nearly complete, and from here on signal strengths will improve. Propagation patterns will be very similar to those on 10. Long path openings were very good during August, while daytime short paths were still burned by solar absorption.

20 will remain a nighttime band for now, and long path across Antarctic regions will be in season until next spring. Equinox time brings the best low band opportunities to work countries in the southern hemisphere. 40, 80 & 160 are at their best in the winter, but then it is summer down south. There really isn't much South American activity on 80 or 160 CW but the time to work it is in the fall.

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

MicroSat DO-17, known as DOVE (Digital Orbiting Voice Encoder) has been mentioned here many times. While many of us have copied its standard 2M-FM AX.25 packet signals, it has never reached its full objective of transmitting Voice messages detectable with the same simple equipment. Along the way its computer has "crashed" at least twice; it has been turned off much of the time in recent months. Within the last month new software has been successfully loaded and the Packet Beacon is again active on 145.825 MHz. Dr. Bob McGwier, N4HY, has been loading the software which is, in the main, the product of the ever resourceful Harold Price, NK6K. Bob is optimistic that between them they will have DOVE talking soon. It will be a real milestone if this bird finally can be brought up to the point of utilization of its fantastic potential. Keep tuned!

This is the season when altitude of OSCAR 13 must be changed to affect proper solar panel sun angles so the batteries will keep charged. The interim result is a period of very poor pointing angles and resulting signal. This period will be over about the time the equinox (I said it was a seasonal thing!) and some fine AO-13 activity can be expected to follow.

From time to time I am asked how one can get more current information on Amateur Satellites and related activities. I will begin by saying that if you have a real interest in Amateur Satellites you should join AMSAT as it is the organization that gets the birds up there and controls and operates them. Look at QST, contact me, or write to AMSAT, P.O. Box 27, Washington DC 20044 for details. If you would like to receive a twice monthly newsletter on Amateur Satellites contact R. Myers Communications at P.O. Box 17108, Fountain Hills AZ 85269-7108, or call them at 602-837-6392. Finally there is a local 2M net at 10 p.m. Tuesdays. It is currently on the 146.22/82 repeater; a change to 147.70/10 (backup 146.02/62) is contemplated for the near future.

NARS NOTES

● PLEASE WELCOME new NARS members:

Iloe Richardson, N5VFI
Norman Martindale, N5VOP
Cal White, WF5W
Jeff Beaumont, Novice Candidate

● CONGRATULATIONS TO Ron Schneider, N5RBC, for his upgrade to Advanced Class, and Iloe Richardson, N5VFI, for getting her Technician license.

● DROP A LINE TO Bob McBride, WA5RLU, whose new address is P.O. Box 1572, Port Aransas TX 78383.

● RONALD McDONALD HOUSE project update: Jim Clarke, N5FIX, reports that he has been appointed Chairman for the local Ronald McDonald House ARS project. Volunteers are needed to work with this excellent service endeavor. Please phone Jim at 468-6050 for details.

BRIEFS FROM THE LEAGUE

After ten years as manager of the W5 incoming QSL Bureau Josef Schilling, WB5YKD, is stepping down. He has been associated with the bureau operation for two decades, serving first as a "letter sorter." The new manager is Les Bannon, WF5E (formerly W9ZTD), of the West Texas DX Association. The address is: ARRL W5 Incoming QSL Bureau, PO Box 50625, Midland, TX 79710. (The ARRL Incoming QSL Bureau System is described in full detail in the September issue of QST on p.64. ...ed)

Japan is running out of call signs. With more than a million licensed amateurs, the JA first call area has exhausted nearly all calls in the JA1 JE1-JS1 and 7K1-7N1 blocks (the Kanto District). The Telecommunications Regulatory Bureau has announced that it will soon begin issuing 7K2 call signs in this district, followed by 7L2, 7M2, and 7N2 calls.

de *The ARRL Letter*, August 24, 1991

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT by PAUL FRANTZ, KF5SB

The past month has definitely been an eventful one for NARS. Unfortunately some of the events are not very good. Joe Green, WA4FGH, spent a few days in the hospital but is out and about and mean as ever. The YL's of Bob Welch, KE5IC, and Vince Hayes, KC0LM, are both currently in the Houston Northwest Medical Center Hospital. Our best wishes to both for a speedy recovery and return home.

We are also sorry to learn that Tom Roraback, KF500, is moving back to Yankee Land. I thought ten years in Texas would be long enough for him to know better! Tom has served NARS in many ways, including president, and will be greatly missed.

On a more positive note, there were two other events during the month. NARS made a \$200 donation to Cypress Creek Emergency Medical Service as a token of our appreciation for the use of their meeting room. The check was presented to Kerry Wells of their Public Relations office. Our club has been very fortunate to have the use of these facilities. Through the efforts of Cris Borger, KB5PSA, and the generosity of Rich Richardson, KI5MH, who loaned him a 2-meter rig, John Douglas, WB5BGP, will soon be on the air. John is a handicapped amateur in Cleveland, TX and will soon be heard on the 146.90 repeater.

The Houston Com-Vention '91 will be here soon. Your help is needed in two major efforts in connection with the convention. In addition to conducting our customary raffle, NARS has taken on the job of running the flea market area this year. This will involve checking vehicles into the "Tailgate Sale" area, taking payment for spaces and assuring that only those vehicles that have been properly registered and paid for are permitted into the area. If you can volunteer some time either Saturday or Sunday, November 9th or 10th, please contact me or any of the club officers.

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

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT (Board Chairman)
Paul Frantz, KF5SB 351-8930

VICE PRESIDENT

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Brad Nelson, WD5GNI 370-0934

Bob Welch, KE5IC 376-4814

Mike Furrey, WA5POK 583-7844

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8 p.m.
28.444 MHz (BT, N5QVS)

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 INACTIVE?

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 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.

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society
Send news to Jim Clarke, N5FIX
Editor, 8800 Hammerly #1107
Houston 77080 Tel: 468-6050

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.

BOB WELCH, KE5IC
7811 Theisswood Rd.
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