

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

August 1992

Satellite Technology Comes Down to Earth for August 21st Meeting

When you hear you are in the footprint of a Japanese bird, don't run for cover. Just run for your satellite station. Satellites, or birds, are flocking around the earth more often these days and they are providing a new wide open way to communicate. Of course hams are on the cutting edge of this technology.

Communications via satellites is an exploding trend in amateur radio. And just when you think everything has been done, satellite technology launches into another phase. Speaking of phases, the footprint of the Phase 3D Project is upon us.

If you're not real sure what that means then you need to be present at the next NARS meeting. Andy MacAlister, WA5ZIB, will downlink files to us of satellite information he has been storing up for his next pass at NARS.

Andy is Vice President of User Services of AMSAT and active member of the Balloon Launch Team, BLT of Texas. The BLT group launches amateur radio equipment into the upper atmosphere using high elevation balloons. Andy will touch on the 12 currently operational satellites with amateur equipment on board, how to use them, and the future of the International Phase 3D Project.

"The rockets' red glare" will be burning often in the future. Andy will tell us about the many groups around the world getting into the act such as Italy, South Africa, Korea, Detroit and Israel. Detroit? Does that mean they have new plans for the Dodge Aerostar or are they bringing back the Plymouth Satellite?

There is more stored up for this pass so be here to copy it all. Next month the meeting topic will be on satellite antennas so stay with us. You can be talking around the world this Fall on just a few watts. Come early Friday evening for a little eyeball QSOing before the 8 p.m. meeting. See you there!

July Meeting Recap

Paul Owens, N5NXS, related the mission and activities of the Civil Air Patrol to the group as he described some of the instances in which they have been called to search for downed aircraft. He said that most of the investigations turn out to be false alarms but all ELT beacons are confirmed as insurance against catastrophe. Paul also described the other public service and educational areas in which the all volunteer group is involved.

NARS Calendar

--- plan now !

Aug. 15 - V.E. License Exam session at Tomball Community Center - 8:30 AM.

Aug. 21 - NARS Regular Monthly meeting at Cypress Creek Emergency Medical Center - 8:00 PM.

Sept. 11 - NARS Directors meeting at Dick Rousseau's home - 8:00 PM.

Sept. 18 - NARS Regular Monthly meeting at Cypress Creek Emergency Medical Center - 8:00 PM.

Sept. 19 - V.E. License Exam session at Tomball Community Center - 8:30 AM.

Sept. 19 - Brazos Bend Bike Hike at Brazos Bend State Park- 7:30 till noon.

Oct. 9 - NARS Directors meeting at Dick Rousseau's home - 8:00 PM.

Oct. 16 - Regular monthly membership meeting at the Cypress Creek Emergency Center - 7:30 PM.

Oct. 17 - V.E. License Exam session at Tomball Community Center - 8:30 AM.

Nov. 6-8 - Houston Ham-Convention & Hamfest.

Repeater Considerations by Ken Harlan, KA5AKG

With today's cellular phones, pocket phones, pagers, etc. convenient communication seems commonplace. We hams enjoy convenient local communication thru FM/repeaters. The quality audio of FM thru handy compact portable rigs is extended thru strategically located repeaters to enable us to stay in touch with hams locally better than ever before. While activity has its ups and downs, FM activity has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in the 2 meter spectrum.

With this growth has also come the need for operators to consider their activity on observe good common sense practices. Probably one of the most important is to listen before you speak. Get the rhythm of the activity before jumping in. If you need to make a call to someone, ask permission and you'll be surprised how quickly you get the frequency. Courtesy counts big on repeaters. Give everyone a chance to operate. If you have a lengthy QSO, move to a simplex frequency if possible.

IDing is important but you don't need to announce that your call is "for ID", what else? And likewise, Rodger says a lot all by itself. Remember Q signals are for CW and 10-signals are for CB. Above all, speak clearly and naturally. You want others to understand you. When conditions are strained, the use of phonetics can help clarify specific items but it is not necessary to spell out everything. If someone is copying information give them time.

Autopatches are a convenient and expensive item on repeaters. Their use should be reserved to conditions where normal telephone service is not available. Regular users should support their upkeep. Their access is often restricted to members.

While some areas have such interference that tone access is necessary, it is much nicer to allow open access for those older rigs lacking this capability. Consult a repeater directory to find the access condition for a machine.

Last but not least, be careful. Driving with a mike in hand may divert your attention from the most important task and your safety.

Notes From the President Dick Rousseau, N5JZY

Just a few notes about some things that are in the planning and development stages. NARS will be handling communications for the Sierra Club Bike Hike again this year at Brazos Bend State Park on Saturday, September 19th. We still need several operators so if you can spare the time, please give me a call. The commitment will be approximately 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM. with a mobile or handheld for 2 meters. We had a lot of fun last year and did a good turn for the Sierra Club.

Texas Ham Day at the Texas State Fair will be on Saturday, October 17th. Hams are needed to help man a Ham Radio booth for public information. If you will be in the Dallas area on that day and would like to help, give Allen Cross, WA5UZH a call at 350-0322.

Ham Com 92 is just around the corner (November 6-7-8). Bob Chmielewski, N5PJI gave the Nars Board a report on the progress to date. Nars will handle the Flea Market operations again this year. Please give Ken Harlan, KA5AKG or Paul Frantz, KF5SB a call if you can help. We will again have our raffle which will be for a mobile dual band and a multi-band scanner. Scott Byrd, N5KEU will make the arrangements with Ed Russell, KB5QLX helping. Scott and Ed will need help at the sales table, so volunteer. This is the one fund raising activity for NARS for the year so we need to get as much mileage out of it as possible. Plan to take a few tickets to sell to you friends.

See you at the meeting!

Nominees for Recognition Solicited

Summer is ending and before you know it we will be approaching the year's end with Club elections, new programs, and all those other things that crop up at that time. Least we forget about those who deserve to be recognized for their contributions and achievements during the year, please let the President, Dick, N5JZY, or one of the nominating committee, Ken, KA5AKG, and Paul, KF5SB, know. Many people work hard, often behind the scenes or with other hams to support NARS and the amateur radio community. Honor them with your suggested recognition.

******* PROPAGATION *******

by Roy Hradilek, AD5Q

The doldrums of mid-summer DX are still with us, and absorption continues to limit the usefulness of 10 and 15 for daytime DX. This phenomenon diminishes during August, so we can expect improved conditions on 15 by end of month. It will take an additional month for good propagation to return to 10 meters. This fall's season will be more sensitive to variations in solar flux than in recent years. Many have gotten used to 10 being open, because the flux was consistently high enough to open most paths anytime the band was in season.

Most DX activity in August will still be on 20. The nighttime paths are very reliable, but there are also DX opportunities during the day. The band is loaded with Russians during the evening, with European openings in late afternoon and late evening. For the first few hours after sunrise, we get a greyline pipeline into the exotic parts of Asia. Long path propagation is a daily occurrence, but many of the most popular paths are out of season. These include the morning antarctic paths to India, Russia, the Middle East and Europe and the afternoon paths to VK and Asia. Summer is the peak season for morning long path to the Indian Ocean and the southern part of Africa. There is also a path across Asia to rare countries in the south Indian Ocean (FT, ZS8, Heard). The northerly long path to Antarctica seems to peak at either equinox.

Summer QRN is an annoyance on 40 meters, but signals are good and DX is very workable. There is little reason to spend time on 80, but during contests it is always possible to work Europe and Asia in mid-summer. Major expeditions also make an effort to work all bands, and will often announce their 80 (or 160) meter operating times if you listen to them on 40.

Look for the return of 15 Meters as a reliable DX band by the end of August. This fall, 15 will be the primary daypath band during periods when the flux is too low to open 10. Good nightpath propagation should not be expected, since this occurs primarily in late spring.

NARS Notes

Congratulations to Vince, KCOLM on the new satellite station. He got the antennas mounted and everything is operational. Those who may be interested in satellite activity may want to tune in to the informal discussions on the NARS repeater most weekday mornings at about 8:45.

The July VE test session found four people passing six exam elements and gaining new licenses or advancing. The exams sessions are held the third Saturday of each month at 8:30 AM at the Tomball Community Center. If you would like to participate as a Volunteer Examiner give Mark Tyler, K5GQ, or Paul Frantz, KF5SB, a call.

Thought about going to the Texas State Fair? Here's an opportunity to take in the Fair and help showcase amateur radio too. The West Gulf Division is seeking a few volunteers to show off Ham radio to the thousands of Fair visitors in Dallas at Amateur Radio Day, October 17th between 9 AM and 9 PM. If you would like to participate, give a call locally to Alan Cross, WA5UZZ, at 713-350-0322 or in Dallas to Andy Ross, KG5VX, at 214-391-7227. What an excellent way to see the Fair, free, and to extend amateur radio to the public.

NARS has enjoyed a long good relationship with the Cypress Creek EMS who provide facilities in which we meet monthly. In appreciation for their hospitality, the Directors approved a donation of \$200 to the CCEMS.

Scott Byrd, N5KEU, with the help of Ed Russell, KB5QLX, will be heading up raffle ticket sales this year at Ham-Com. He will be counting on everyone to share in the sales effort and you'll have to go some to match Iloe's performance last year. We'll be raffling a top line scanner in addition to a dual band mobile rig this year.

Make a Deal

Commodor 64 computer for sale with disk drive and printer in great shape. An excellent addition to the shack or for the youngsters to tinker with. A deal you can't refuse if you can use it. Call Ken, W5BKK, at (713) 376-7660.

Please submit articles for publication in the NARS News to Ken Harlan, KA5AKG, by the 1st Friday of the month.

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the American Radio Relay League.
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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: 8:00 P.M.
Eyeball QSO's : about 7:30 P.M.

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday
8 AM at Strack Farms Restraunt, located
at 5707 Louetta Rd. - Informal ragchew

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIRMAN
Dick Rousseau, N5JZY 370-5714

VICE PRESIDENT
BT Burk, N5QVS 370-1955

SECRETARY
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Paul Frantz, KF5SB 351-8930
Dan Cassiani, N5KPI 376-0215
Brad Nelson, WD5GNI 370-0934
Bob Chmielewski, N5PJI 376-0215

NARS BOARD MEETS the second
Friday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the
home of Dick Rousseau, 7826 Heathrow
Ln, Houston. All members are invited to
attend.

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 P.M.
28.444 MHz (BT, N5QVS)

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8:00 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)

CITY OF HOUSTON - EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT NET
SATURDAY 9:00 AM 146.84(-) MHz
SATURDAY 9:30 AM 3.905 MHz

NARS REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 MHz
70 cm - 449.375 / 444.375 MHz
Digipeter - 145.07 MHz
Call (W5BKK) Alias (NARS)

FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL
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