

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

July 1992

Civil Air Patrol is Featured in July 17th Meeting

How do you hunt for ELTs? And what is an ELT anyway? Transmitter hunts at ham conventions are always interesting, but did you know there is a group of people who hunt ELTs on a moment's notice? They belong to the Civil Air Patrol, CAP. Sometimes they find a little black box and other times they find a person in need of medical attention right away.

ELT, by the way, stands for Electronic Locating Transmitter. They generate a beacon when a plane crashes. The CAP works with the U.S. Air Force to locate these devices and the planes and people associated with them.

There is much more to the CAP than ELTs though and one of our members, Lt. Col. Paul Owens, N5NXS, will explain more about it to us at our July 17th meeting. Paul has been active in the CAP for over 22 years operating on VHF and HF bands outside the ham bands. He became a ham in 1989 and gained an Extra class license in 1991. He is a member of the Jersey Village Composite Squadron. His is one of seven squadrons located in the Harris County area.

Squadrons have prequalified their personnel for specific duties so they know exactly what to do when called into a situation. While they may be called in times of emergencies such as hurricanes or downed aircraft, they are also involved in aerospace education and operate a cadet program. They assist the Salvation Army, Red Cross, and local authorities. All serve in non-paid positions with the group.

Paul has many mission stories to recount and will bring with him a DF Training Station. Its going to be another super high-flying program this month. You won't want to miss out on the fun. Come early Friday evening, enjoy some eyeball QSOing and learn about an organization that really gets involved in the community.

June Meeting Recap

In preparation for Field Day, Roy, AD5Q, reviewed the Operations Guide he had prepared and outlined some savvy strategy for the contest. He related his own experiences in and provided some practical plans. Mike, N5POK, followed by describing grounding and filtering arrangements which should be used in Field Day to minimize interference between the stations. These considerations may be good practice around the shack anytime.

NARS Calendar

--- plan now !

July 17 - Regular monthly
NARS club meeting - Cypress
Creek Emergency Center - 8:00
PM... Eyeball QSO at 7:00.

July 18 - V.E. License Exam
session at Tomball Community
Center - 8:30 AM.

Aug. 7-9 - Texas State
Convention & Hamfest - Austin,
TX.

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

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

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

Field Day Replay

by Ken Harlan, KA5AKG

After anticipation, planning, and organization came the real thing - Field Day 93. As planned, material was gathered and the trek to Fritche Park got underway Friday, June 26th. Weather was hot and slightly overcast, typical of the season.

Shortly after noon the crew began to arrive and almost immediately Joe, KD5KR, had the NARS INN set up for operation. The plan to put all stations under the big top this year proved to be the first challenge. With a few adjustments the application of some dubious engineering innovation the 30 x 40 foot cover was in place and ready for occupancy. Within two hours three HF beams had been assembled and raised atop towers. Skepticism of the low elevation of the Novice station's antenna was to be put to rest early in the contest. Some got their first experience at tower assembly and guying. Rich, KI5MH, coerced a friendly farmer to strategically locate a few rolled hay bails to muffle the sound and the generator went to work. We knew all was ready when the shout went out for the pizza order. All that remained was to finish stringing 40 and 80 meter dipoles through the trees.

We were greeted Saturday morning with forecasts of thunderstorms and high winds - oh would the big top survive? Mother nature favored us and by mid-morning clearing skies lowered temperature and apprehension. Work progressed feverishly on the satellite station by Chris, KB5PSA, and crew to assemble two multielement 2 meter quads before the first pass. There was a challenge every step of the way. They found that PVC may be nice material to work with but it needs to be stiffened to be used as a mast. Finally elements were mounted, feed and phasing attached, elevation and declination adjusted just awaiting the bird.

The gong sounded and we launched into the contest. Each station heeded the suggestions in Roy's operations guide by grabbing a frequency and holding on. With contacts logged at up to several a minute throughout the afternoon some experienced and some new operators got a taste of contesting. Spectators gathered and followed the enthusiasm of the action. With the heat of the day behind us, the smell of brisket and beans drew the attention of all. Chef Bob, N5PJI, had again prepared the BBQ that was enjoyed to the last nibble.

By very early Sunday morning the high bands had faded and 40 and 80 were brought into play. CW played the game here with Roy, AD5Q, and Fred, KB5DFS, proving endurance. As daylight shown, so did higher bands and higher contact rates. When the game ended at 1:00 pm Sunday we had run out of log sheets and a happy crew celebrated a great experience. That excitement included the satellite station successfully making seven contacts, one of which was the shuttle, Challenger.

With the close of the contest the team sprang into action to break camp. Towers were lowered, antennas disassembled, equipment packed, trucks loaded and within two hours we were on our way to a shower and a bit of rest. And in case you don't believe this all happened, it was documented well by Ron, N5RBC, and Bill, WA5DWX. The edited version should be available before long so stay tuned. Aerial observation was even available courtesy of WA5DWX.

The tally took a few days to compile as Keith, N5RVC, and Iloe, N5VEI, found a real pile of contacts to decipher. With final editing yet to be finished, the faithful operators amassed 2756 contacts, 1144 on the CW station, 1240 on the phone station, 365 by the Novice station, and the 7 mentioned on satellite. Preliminary scoring is 8334 QSO points plus 600 bonus points for other activities. This compares with last year's 5750 points for 1818 QSOs and 500 bonus points.

Needless to say this great event would not have happened without the effort and contribution of a lot of fine people. A big THANKS to all who joined to make Field Day 93 a huge success. We appreciate the use of the N5FD and N5WHA calls of Bruce and Debbie for the contest and Novice stations. In addition to those already mentioned, we thank Bob, WN5G, and Roy, AD5Q, for the use of their towers, and BT, N5QVS, and Dave, N5RCQ, for their truck transportation. Thanks to Kirby, K5WOC, and Ken, W5BKK, for their station equipment that supported Chris' satellite operation. Thanks to Scott N5KEU for copying the FD Messages and Rich, KI5MH, for securing our site. And there were many more who supported the Club's Field Day 93 in too many ways to mention. Salutes to all.

* * * * PROPAGATION * * * *

by Roy Hradilek, AD5Q

July is the least exiting month of the year for DX'ers. Summer absorption has seriously effected 15 Meters, with only marginal daypath DX openings. Since 10 is also dead, there are few options remaining for daytime DXing. The solar fluxes are much lower this year, and this will also adversely effect 15. DXers must adjust to the lower fluxes by moving to lower frequencies. When 15 is unproductive, try the 18 MHz WARC band, and if this fails, try 20.

We can expect improved daypath conditions on 20 as sunspots fade. Through the next few years, 20 Meters will replace 10 and 15 as the most reliable daypath band. This also means that 20 night paths will be closed for much of the year. Late spring will still give us the highest MUF's of the year, and spring DX on 20 will replace the fine nighttime propagation we have enjoyed on 15 through the sunspot peak. Late afternoon and evening paths will almost always be open to Europe and Russia, though polar openings will be shorter. We will have morning paths to Europe like we are used to finding on 15, but with more QRN. Watch for early band closings on 20. At the peak of the cycle, these only occur during the winter. They will now be evident for more of the year, even in the summer when fluxes get real low.

The time of night a band closes is a major factor determining which paths are open. If a band (any band) is open all night, expect to find pipeline conditions to Europe following the sunrise there. If the band closes at 2:00 am, this high latitude path is closed and late evening propagation is to the northwest (Asia) instead. The best path to Europe will then be in late afternoon. When a band closes promptly after sunset, all propagation is on day paths and Europe is workable in the morning. If the fluxes are too low to open the polar areas at all, hope for east/west paths to Africa and the Pacific. north/south propagation to South America never drops out. This news is not all bad, since many new opportunities for DX will be found on 80 and 160. 40 becomes the primary night path band through the bottom of the cycle.

NARS Notes

Congratulations to Joe, WA4FGH, on his 93rd birthday on July 10th. Joe never lacks for a tale about his experiences and rich he is with them. Poems are his specialty. Keep it up Joe, you're doing something right.

At the June VE test session, held on the 20th, seven people took 13 elements and passed 10. The session resulted in 2 new licensees and 1 license upgrade. The July session will begin at 9:00 AM, Saturday the 18th at the Tomball Community Center.

At midyear the Treasurer reports that NARS has a bank balance of \$3638.45.

Spectrum Legislation Needs Your Help

The FCC is beholden to only one group, Congress, and that is who we must address if we are to influence retaining the frequency privileges we now enjoy. They are increasingly valuable and aggressively sought by industry. Perry Williams, writing in the July issue of QST equates amateur radio bands to the spectrum as national parks are to land.

Unless action is taken before long, Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act bills H.R. 73 and S. 1372 will die. These bills cause no expense to government and have no opposition at present. Neither of our Senators, Bentsen and Gramm, nor local Representatives Fields and Archer have joined the list of sponsors of the bills. If we expect our Congressmen to represent us we must let them know what we want. Do we want protection of our access to the radio spectrum?

Consider taking a few moments and writing to these men to express your views and request their support for the passage of these bills. Time is running out so do it now. As Mr. Williams notes in QST, a letter of thanks to the congressional supporters of the bills never hurts either.

Remember to be clear and to the point in contacting your representatives. Letters need not be typed and elaborate but should be easily understood as to your position on the matter and what you are requesting. Senators can be reached via US Senate, Washington, DC 20510 and Representatives via US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. The ARRL would appreciate word of your support for this legislation also.

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is
a Special Service Club affiliated with
the American Radio Relay League.
ARRL Club No. 2120

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 Restaunt, located
at 5707 Louetta Rd. - Informal ragchew

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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)

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