

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

February 1996

What NARS Membership Means to Me

It's that time of the year again, time to renew the NARS membership. Twenty five dollars this year ... hmmm... that's a lot of dough. Is it really worth it to be a member of NARS?

To answer this question I reflect back on 1995. Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO, our president last year wrote in the November NARS NEWS that we spend money for the following:

Newsletter
Administrative Secretary
Supplies/PO Box
Repeater/Packet Fund
Meeting Place
Liability Insurance
Field Day.

Okay, so that's where the money goes. But of what value is that to ME?

Well, the monthly meetings are nice. I get to meet old and new friends, have a nice hot cup of coffee with a donut, hear an interesting program and pick up information from various sources. And speaking of meetings, the weekly Saturday morning breakfast at Bleachers has gained a lot of popularity. One week there were 45 people; what a fun group to be with!

Of course there are the weekly nets on 2 and 10 meters. The Wednesday night 2 meter net is always well attended and usually provides a lot of enjoyment and information for all. The Monday night 10 meter net is more geared to the round table ragchewer's delight. One night when the band had an opening there were more than 40 check-ins from about a dozen states as far away as Michigan.

There are many other activities that various groups of NARS members

organize/ participate in. Public service is a popular type of activity, and NARS members help organize SIRE, Webelos, Alzheimer's Memory Walk and others. I helped with the SIRE event and got a good warm feeling seeing many normally home-bound children out in the open having a ball riding horses in the woods. All eight participating NARS members expressed similar feelings.

Another area of interest for many NARS members is Field Day and contesting. I was not able to take part in FD95 because of a schedule conflict, but everyone I talked to who was there said it was a resounding success, a real team accomplishment. That was confirmed many months later in QST. However, I did get a chance to do some contesting in the NAQP and Sweepstakes events held after Field Day. These were my first experiences and I learned a lot about contesting. And there were several other inexperienced NARS members like me, rubbing elbows with some of the best testers in the club...probably among the best testers in the US!

Two other NARS events come to mind. The annual picnic was a fun time for many. I was particularly interested in meeting several hams/spouses/children who are not regular meeting attendees. And the annual banquet was a huge success. It was so nice to see the "better half" of many ham friends. The magic show by Tommy Jackson N5MGM was outstanding and who could forget the Bill Denton WA5DWX roast.

Okay, I'm convinced...being a NARS member is not a good thing, it's a GREAT thing!

Keith WD5DXL

Important Dates

Friday, Feb 16, 7:30 pm - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Cypress Creek Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

Feb 17 - 18 - ARRL CW DX Contest

Feb 23 - 25 - CO WW 160 Meter SSB Contest

Saturday, Feb 24, 8:30 am - VE License Exam Session, Tomball, SH249 & Hicks (just North of FM2920)

Tuesday, Feb 27, 7:30 pm - NARS Board of Directors Meeting, IHOP, 5790 FM 1960 W, just East of Champions Forest Dr.

Mar 2 - 3 - ARRL SSB DX Contest

Notice:

NARS membership dues is \$25 per year, renewable on anniversary of last year's full payment.

BREAKFAST at Bleachers

2318 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

February 1996

That was sure a fantastic banquet that Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY arranged and it will be hard to top. The banquet also honored Amateur of the Year; Bill Denton WA5DWX, for his contribution to, promotion of, and good will to all aspects of the HAM hobby. Congratulations again go to Bill. Speaking of the banquet, I didn't realize until the other day that it was such a great milestone. That a little over 10 years ago a few HAMS got together in this area and formed this club. One of the charters of the club was to have a banquet every year. One of the other charters is to have a club picnic every year. Plans are in the works to have one sometime soon. Look in here for further details.

I want to thank the 1995 Board of Directors Bill K5ZTY, Brad Nelson WD5GNI, Allen Majeski WA5REJ, Madison Jones AB5TV, Billy Denton WA5DWX, Mike Lavender KB5WQJ, and most notably Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO for turning over the club in such great shape.

I am looking forward to serving the club with your newly elected board, Paul Owen N5NXS, Keith Dutson WD5DXL, Bill Gary K8CSG, Mark Condit KC5OFE, OJ Quarles WA1YIA, and the remaining past president board members Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO & Mike Lavender KB5WQJ. Remember we, your board of directors, are elected by you to take the club in a direction you want to go. Feel free to tell me at anytime your ideas and suggestions.

I went over to WA5DWX and Marian KB5SGV's house for the North American QSO Party. I enjoyed it very much and want to thank them for letting us trample in and out of their house. By the way, if you haven't been over there for a contest you should at least experience it once. It is a good chance to get to work another fun part of HAM-ming.

Bruce Paige KK5DO has established a voice mail HAM HELP LINE. It can be reached by dialing (713) 495-3495. I have placed messages concerning NARS activities and VE Test Sessions on his system. If you know or meet him please thank him for letting us use the system. You can leave a message to the club on this system. This might be a good place to leave suggestions for the club direction and/or events you would like to have take place in 1996.

By Walter Hock KK5LO

NARS Annual Banquet

Approximately eighty NARS members, wives and guests enjoyed the annual NARS banquet at Valley Ranch Bar-B-Que on January 19. Retiring president Rudy Novotny, KB5ZXO, introduced the members of his outgoing Board of Directors. Following a around of self-introductions by attendees, Rudy introduced incoming president Walter Hock, KK5LO.

Walter introduced the new officers and Board Members. Following drawing for and awarding of several door prizes, the attendees enjoyed a meal of excellent barbecued beef and chicken, with assorted accompaniments and drinks.

Walter then introduced Tom Jackson, N5MGM, who entertained with several card tricks. Throughout the evening, door prizes continued to be awarded to attendees. Jim Kirk, KJ5IP, presented several certificates of appreciation to retiring Board Members and officers. He also presented a special certificate of appreciation to Jeannine, the Club's breakfast and luncheon server at Bleacher's, who (with her husband) was a special guest of the Club at the banquet. Retiring president KB5ZXO was presented with a plaque recognizing his service to the Club.

Bill Denton, WA5DWX, was saluted as the Outstanding Radio Amateur of the year by the Club. Walter, Bill(K5ZTY), Jim (KJ5IP), and Rudy(KB5ZXO) all shared stories related to Bill's activities and services to the Club and its members over the years in a "This is Your Life" format.

It was an evening of good fun and fellowship for all.

Bill Gary K8CSG

Some Thank-You's are in Order

Well, the '96 banquet is history. I had a good time and I hope that everyone else did also. So far, I haven't heard any complaints. I've been told that all one has to do is provide the place and invite the people and they will make the party. It is almost that easy when you have good help like I did for this one.

Thanks to Rudy Novotny and Walter Hock for putting together the agenda and organizing the proceedings; to Jim Kirk for procuring the plaques and certificates and presenting them in his usual humorous way; to Marian Denton and Judy Kirk for sitting at the door and greeting the guests with badges and door prize tickets; to Bill Denton for putting together and setting up the sound system; to Tommy Jackson for entertaining us again with his unbelievable magic. Thanks to Rudy, Walter Jim and Mike Hance for providing some laughs in our toast to Bill Denton.

I would also like to thank the people who provided the 21 door prizes that we gave away. Rudy Novotny donated the screwdriver/flashlights; Keith Dutson donated the dual band mobile antenna that I forgot to bring, but which has since been delivered to the winner; Mike Hance donated the ARRL Operating Manual, 24 hour clock and the bound '94 volume of QST; George DiLetto at Houston Amateur Radio Supply, provided the VHF SWR meter and a copy of the ARRL Antenna Handbook; Alex Stalinski, of City Electronics gave us an ARRL Antenna Handbook; and Dan and Michelle Bretch, owners of Electronic Parts Outlet and Les Jones W5KRN, the resident HAM over there, donated the Ramsey transmitter kit and the ARRL Handbook. All of these people jumped at the chance to donate these prizes and I thank them for it.

I was a bit nervous when I read the new club bylaws earlier in the year and found out that I was the banquet chairman and was expected to feed and entertain 85 people in January. But, the job was made easy by the willingness of all who were asked to help.

Thanks to all of you.
Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY

Peanut Time Again

The January North American QSO Party was an outstanding success. With a gaggle of peanut eaters we gathered in pursuit of bettering our score of the last NAQP and better it we did. Last November we managed to rack up a score of 85,000+ points to get us into 2nd place nationally. That mark was destined to fall. Not knowing what the sun spot cycle would provide for us on the bands, we could only hope for good conditions, and that is exactly what we found. For a 12 hour period they opened up and we had a ball. With OJ WA1YIA on 40 meters and Jim KJ5IP on 20 meters the race was on. Jim started out real well on 20 but OJ was having trouble keeping things going on forty. We decided to give 15 meters a try and that was a good decision. 15 was open long enough to keep OJ busy for a while. He was able to make 132 contacts before moving back to 40 later on. We finished up the night on 160 meters looking for new multipliers.

The day started off with a great chocolate cake from Margaret (Ms OJ). It was still warm when he brought it over. That got things going real well. We had 12 operators and loggers. Everyone had been here before operation except for our new president Walter, KK5LO. He came over with his granddaughter Shawana to see what was going on. He was only going to stay for short time. I think he stayed for about 6 hours and was on the radio or logging most of the time he was here. He is hooked.

This is a summary of our scoring.

Band	QSO's	Mults
160	30	16
40	329	47
80	240	43
20	346	49
15	132	33
	-----	-----
	1077	188

Total points 202,476

Operators: WA5DWX, K5ZT
N5KEU, WA5SAJ, KK5LO, KK5LD,
KC5NRR, KB5JDZ, WD5DXL,
KC5OFE, KJ5IP, WA1YIA.

Guest: Dianna, (XYL KC5NRR) Marian KB5SGV, Shawana and Jennifer. Duke WB5BZB paid us a visit but did not operate.

The most significant thing that happened was the improvement in our score from the last NAQP. Although we probably won't finish as high this time it was a great effort. The other scores around the country were higher as well. We are looking forward to the 160 phone contest February 23, 24. Come on by, it will only cost you a bag of peanuts and who knows, you may be like Walter and get hooked.

73 Bill
WA5DWX
bdenton@tenet.edu

Are The Sunspots Coming Back?

Patterns seen on the surface of the sun recently imply the ending of Cycle 22 and the beginning of Cycle 23. Spots of the old cycle appear, generally, near the sun's equator, while spots of the new cycle generally appear at high solar latitudes. In late August the Big Bear Solar Observatory operated by Cal Tech reported seeing the first sunspots of the new cycle. The observed spots had the required reversed magnetic polarity and the proper location on the disk of the sun identifying them as part of the new sunspot cycle.

This is good news for those interested in HF radio activity and propagation. Average sunspot numbers for the past week were about double the week before, and solar flux was slightly higher. While we expect the two major indicators of solar activity to track together, they often don't.

Solar flux is a measurement of 2800 MHz energy from the sun, which seems to correlate with ionization of the ionosphere. Sunspot numbers relate to the size and number of visible sunspots.

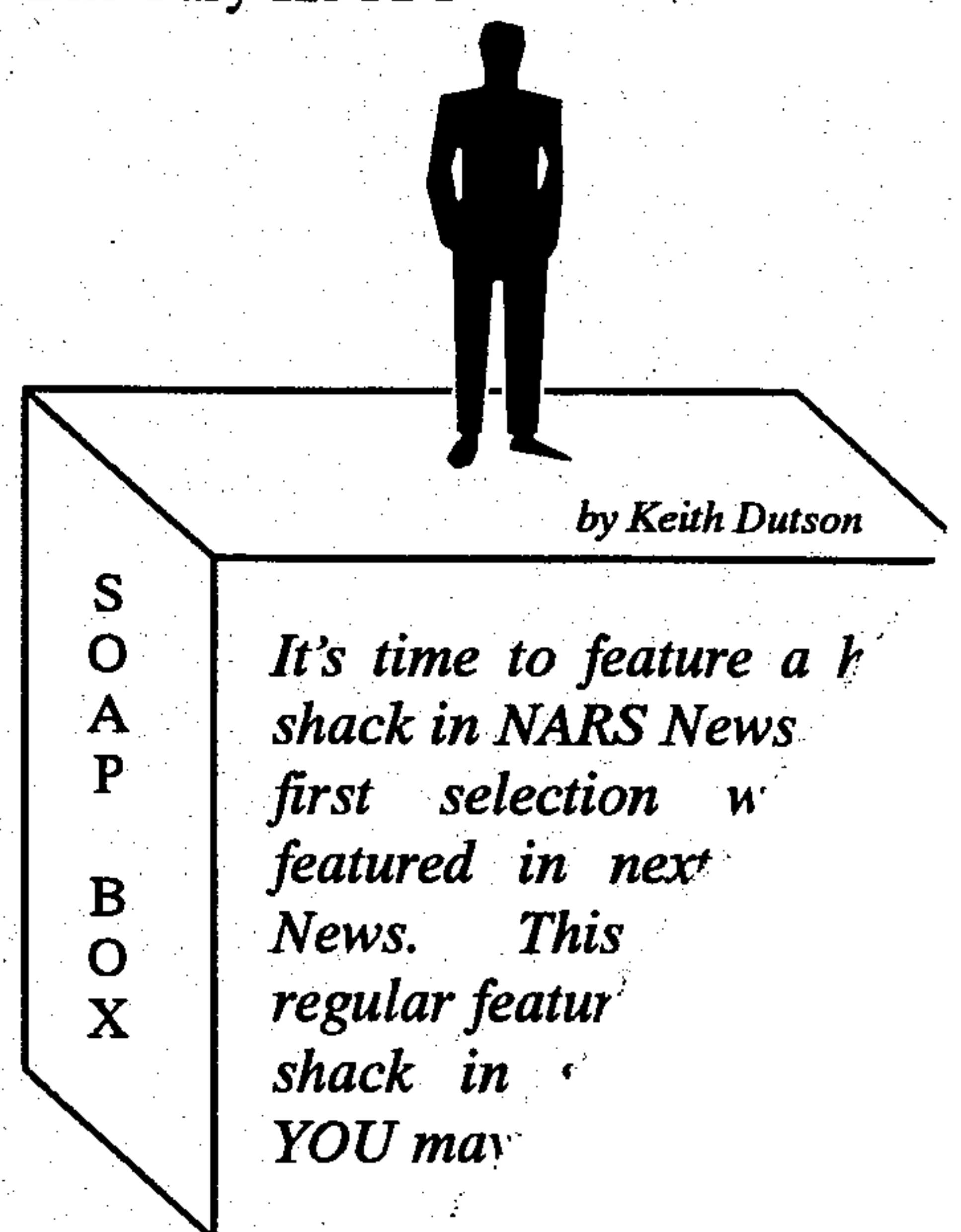
One example of the two not tracking exactly is the forecast for the end of this solar cycle and the beginning of the next. Solar flux is currently expected to reach minimum between January and February of 1997, while the minimum for sunspot numbers is predicted for April through June of 1996. Part of this may be due to the fact that the solar flux has been tracked for fewer cycles than the sunspot number, so the amount of data going into the projection is different.

Over the next few weeks solar activity is expected to stay low, with solar flux possibly peaking slightly in the mid- to high-seventies. A forecast by the Commerce Department indicates that the absolute bottom of Cycle 22 may occur during the second quarter of 1996, with smoothed sunspot numbers of six for two or three months in a row. The earliest new sunspots of Cycle 23 reported recently by the California laboratory generally serve as harbingers of a new cycle.

The Commerce Department forecast indicates the peak of Cycle 23 may come

during the turn of the century during the year 2000, with smoothed sunspot numbers in the 150-160 region. Although we still have some time to wait before we can begin to enjoy the fruits of Cycle 23, it is encouraging that we have a relatively short wait compared to the conditions of the past year or two.

Bill Gary K8CSG



The Ten Commandments of Electronics

It is traditional that all trades and callings have their Ten Commandments – the fighting services, the printing trade, medical students, the Civil Service: they have all, at some time, produced some wag who circulated, under the noses of his masters, some ironic code of behavior.

Telecommunications technicians and engineers are no exception and we imagine that as soon as the wonders of telegraph, telephone and radio were launched upon the world and the new breed of men were evolved who dealt with this new dark art, then a set of commandments appeared. Variations have continued to appear from time to time; and those quoted below appeared, from a source unknown, upon our desk. It seems only right and proper that they should be seen in our pages. After all, we are trying to fit pieces of the history of our art together and such commandments are surely a part if that history and should be recorded for posterity.

1. Beware of the lightning that lurketh in an un-discharged capacitor, lest it cause thee to be bounced upon thy buttocks in a most ungentlemanly manner.

2. Cause thou the switch that supplieth large quantities of juice to be opened and thusly tagged, so thy days may be long in this earthly vale of tears.

3. Prove to thyself that all circuits that radiate and upon which those workest are grounded, lest they raise thee up to high-frequency potential and cause thee to radiate also.

4. Take care that thou use the proper method when thou takest the measure of high voltage circuits so that thou dost not incinerate both thyself and the meter. For verily, though thou hast no account number and can be easily replaced, the meter hath one and as a consequence, bringeth much woe unto the Supply Department.

5. Tarry thou not amongst those who do deal in intentional shocks, for they are surely unbelievers and are not long for this world.

6. Take care that thou tamperest not with interlocks and safety devices, for this will incur the wrath of thy seniors and bringeth the fury of the safety officer down upon thy head and shoulders.

7. Work thou not upon energized equipment, for if thou dost, thy buddies surely will be buying beers for thy

widow and consoling her in other ways not generally acceptable to thee.

8. Verily, verily I say unto you, never service high voltage equipment alone, for electric cooking is a slothful process and thou mightst sizzle in thine own fat for hours on end before thy Maker seeth fit to end thy misery and drag thee in His fold.

9. Trifle thou not with radioactive tubes and substances lest thou commence to glow in the dark like unto a lightning bug, and thy wife be frustrated nightly and have no further use for thee except thy wage.

10. Commit thou to memory the works of the prophets, which are written in the books of instruction, which give the straight dope and which console thee, and thou canst not make mistakes.

(From a publication of the British Directorate of Telecommunications)
Reprinted from the DIAMOND JUBILEE YEARBOOK of the Radio Club of America, volume 54 no.3, Fall 1984

Thanks to Bill Garv for the use of the book.

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY

Sid's Cosmic Connection

Besides Web sites, there is an ever growing number of amateur radio related mailing lists you can subscribe to.

Here is a sampling:

1) Contesting – To subscribe: send mail to cq-contest-request@tgv.com with text (not subject): SUBSCRIBE

2) DX mailing list – To subscribe: send mail to dx-request@unbc.edu

3) Ham radio operations and related subjects – To subscribe: send mail to istserv@ucsd.edu with text (not subject): add info-hams

QRP – To subscribe: send mail to @lehigh.edu with text (not subscribe QRP-L firstname lastname)

Netlans – To subscribe: send mail to @netcom.com with text (not subscribe wlav-list)

This last one, also, comes as a Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/wlaw/index.html>

Sid's planet of the month is Mars. You can, also, download the background picture of our sister galaxy, Andromeda. Sid's Bookmarks for March include:

1. Myles Barkman, KG5AI, has a fine local repeater list for the Houston area which can be found at http://www2.cy-net.net/users/kg5ai/freqs/hou_ham.html.

2. There is a very interesting European Web site at <http://www.itl.net/~equinox>. It has links to all sorts of European amateur radio sites, radio reports, free ham radio software, and much more. Check it out.

3. A new and different commercial HAM site on the Web is <http://www.cqinternet.com>. In time, it will become an important ham resource.

In the mean time, you can register to win free ham gear, just for showing up!

4. More free Ham related software can be picked up at this ftp site – <ftp://ftp.iea.com/public/adrs>. Just enter that ftp address into your browser like you would any http address.

5. For real HF propagation and solar reports for Ham radio try <http://www.sel.noaa.gov/radio/radio.html>. Also, you can get space weather reports in general.

Check it all out. And you can Email Sid your favorite sites or anything else you want at sid@hal-pc.org, and be sure to visit <http://www.hal-pc.org/~sid>. Until next time, just remember "Computers are not intelligent. They just think they are."

Sid AB5XU

DX News

This is the first in what we hope will be a series of columns on DX. DX is one of the fascinations of the HF bands -- one in which many hams eventually become interested.

There have been two significant DX news items recently. One concerns Scarborough Reef, the latest addition to the DXCC Countries List.

The other concerns Heard Island, one of the most difficult places in the world to work

Scarborough Reef is literally a series of coral heads in the South China Sea west of the Philippine Islands. Portions of the reef are always above the surface, even at high tide. Belonging to mainland China, uncontested by other nations and well over 225 miles from the mainland of China, Scarborough Reef clearly met all extant DXCC country rules when the first two operations took place in 1994 and 1995.

For various reasons, it attracted a lot of arguments about its suitability as a new country. The primary objection seemed to be that the reef is simply too small. In

fact, it is believed to have generated the recent "minimum size" rule. On June 25, 1994, Martti Laine (OH2BH) and a group of Chinese hams operated from Scarborough for several hours and worked some 1000 hams world-wide. A later operation in 1995 was somewhat longer.

The DX Advisory Committee of the ARRL voted to disallow new-country status. Subsequently, after considerable struggle and machinations within the ARRL, Scarborough was granted new-country status by the ARRL Board of Directors. The kicker to the whole thing is that only contacts made after January 1, 1995 will be credited for DXCC. The apparent reason is that the 1994 operation was made from a scaffolding platform on the reef, rather than from atop the reef itself, as was the second operation. I got up very early in June, 1994, found the guys on the band and managed to work them. Subsequently a beautiful QSL card arrived. Unfortunately, the contact will not count, and I will have to work it all over again.

The Heard Island story is very interesting. A team made up of several of the members of the highly successful Peter I Island DXpedition of 1994 announced plans a year ago for a trip to Heard Island in December, 1995. Unfortunately, they ran into a dishonest individual in Australia who chartered a vessel to them which was subsequently found unsafe for the trip, and who then absconded with the charter fee of over \$100,000. After a frantic search for an alternative vessel, the team announced postponement of their trip.

During the last week in January, 1996, they announced they now have a firm charter for another vessel and the trip is being planned for December, 1996 or January, 1997.

Heard Island lies deep in the South Indian Ocean between 50 and 60 degrees south latitude. The last significant DXpedition was in 1983 by Jim Smith, VK9NS, and others. This will be a tough one to work due to propagation conditions.

Bill Gary K8CSG

VE Session Results, January 1996

January 27th, Saturday in Tomball at the VE exam session, there were five new licenses (all Tech) and three upgrades (1 Tech +, 2 Advanced). Seventeen written elements were administered. Please congratulate Hank KC5MZJ and Gary KC5FDQ on upgrade to Advanced. Also, George Carlson upgraded to Technician +.

Robert Berry, David Nelson, Christopher Nelson, Donald Richmond and Michael Mims passed requirements for the Technician license. Bob KC5JZO passed element 3B. Andrew Nelson passed element 2.

VEs assisting were Mark Tyler K5GQ; Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY; Walter Holmes WD5GAZ; Jim Kirk KJ5IP; Earl Morse KZ8E; Bill Denton WA5DWX and Bill Gary K8CSG.

Mark Tyler, K5GQ, VE coordinator

More Peanuts?

In the following report Mike KB5YVT seems dissatisfied with his team's (W5NN) performance in the North American QSO Party. Well, Mike, the rest of us can only dream about doing as well. Of course, I can see your point if you are striving to be number one in the world! Mighty fine results from a great effort. W5NN.

"And we thought we had done well!!" Right!

W5NN @ K5XI Multi-2 NAQP SSB

ops: KB5YVT, KK5GJ, WA5POK and KC5AMA

No packet, 50 wts out on 40m and rodent infestation!!!

1249 x 217 271033 total points

Band	Q's	Mults
160	101	28
75	256	46
40	333	50
20	433	53
15	122	37
10	4	3

Back to the drawing board!

73 Mike KB5YVT aka W5NN

NARS NEWS is published monthly by
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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 Spring-Cypress Presbyterian
Church, 6000 Spring-Cypress Rd. (1.7 mile
east of Stubner-Airline on Spring- Cypress
Rd.) Meeting time: 7:30 PM. Eyeball
QSO's: about 7:00 PM.

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday
8 AM at Bleachers Grill, located at
2318 W FM 1960 (@ Kuykendahl).
Informal ragchew.

NARS
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NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NARS BOARD MEETS the last Tuesday of
each month at 7:30 PM at IHOP on FM 1960.
All members are invited to attend.

FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL
Ken Edinborgh, W5BKK 376-7660
or send E-Mail to nars@houston.net

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 PM
28.444 MHz (Nelson, KK5IJ)

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8:00 PM
146.06 /.66 MHz (Ken, KA5AKG)

EMERGENCY NETS

NORTHWEST HARRIS COUNTY AREAS
WEDNESDAY following NARS Info Net
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
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