

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

March 1996

NARS announces the 1996 Amateur Radio Course

The classes begin on April 4, 1996, in room 208 at the Prince of Peace Community, located on Tomball Parkway (HWY 249) between 1960 and Cypresswood. The first night will consist of registration and an introduction to HAM radio, with actual classes beginning the following Tuesday night, April 9th. The complete course will cover the Morse Code, plus the necessary rules, procedures, and regulations to successfully complete all elements required for a Technician Plus license.

The classes will be held for 7 weeks, 2 nights each week, Tuesday and Thursday. The first 3 weeks (6 classes) will be primarily devoted to Morse Code. Beginning in week 4, various volunteer instructors will cover all the rules and radio theory needed to pass the exams. The course will end on May 23, with a special VE testing session for the students.

Students are encouraged to attend all classes, but those who only wish to complete the Technician requirements need only attend the last four weeks. Current Technician class HAMs can attend the first 3 weeks for a good introduction to Morse Code.

The cost of the complete course will be \$20.00. Partial attendance will be taken on a case by case basis at registration. The ARRL text "Now You're Talking" will serve as the text book for the course and will be made available for purchase during registration.

If you know of anyone interested in Amateur Radio encourage them to take these classes. It's a great way to get started and meet a lot of good

people. If you have any questions, or need any additional information, call Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO at 713-251-4546.

Vanity Calls Delayed

Date: 96-02-16 16:27:17 EST
ARRL Bulletin 11 ARLB011
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT February 15, 1996
To all radio amateurs

SB QST ARL ARLB011 ARLB011
Vanity calls delayed

ARRL has learned that the FCC may delay until mid-1996 the announcement of when it plans to open the first gate or gates of the vanity call sign program. A Commission spokesman says the FCC first wants to deal with remaining Petitions for Reconsideration it has received. The FCC had been expected to announce opening dates early this year.

FCC vanity call sign application Form 610V is now available, but the FCC will not accept completed forms until it opens the appropriate filing gates.

Prospective applicants can get the FCC Form 610V package by writing ARRL, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111. Please include an SASE. Form 610V also is available from the FCC via the Internet at <http://www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form610V> or <ftp://ftp.fcc.gov/pub/Forms/Form610V/>, or by fax at 202-418-0177. Ask for Form 006108.

The FCC's Forms Distribution Center also accepts orders for Form 610V at 800-418-3676.

Submitted by Mark Tyler K5GQ

Important Dates

Friday, March 15, 7:30 pm - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Cypress Creek Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

March 15-17, 6:00 pm - Bermuda Contest

Saturday, March 23, 8:30 am - VE License Exam Session, Tomball, SH249 & Hicks (just North of FM2920)

Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 pm - NARS Board of Directors Meeting, IHOP, 5790 FM 1960 W, just West of Champions Forest Dr.

March 29-31, 6:00 pm - CQWW WPX Contest, Phone

Thursday, April 4, 7:00 pm - Novice Class Registration, Room 208, Prince-of-Peace, SH249 @ Perry Road.

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

March 1996

How time does fly, its already March. We have entered summer, at least it feels like it anyway. It's time to renew your membership for NARS, remember now it is a 12 month renewal. NARS can offer you support in your HAM related hobby (see our list of Special Interest Group volunteers in this issue). Remember they are volunteers so please call them at a reasonable hour, i.e. before 9 pm.

We have set a date for the annual NARS Picnic. It will be held on May 18, at Elizabeth Meyer County Park located at Cypresswood and Stuebner Airline. So mark it in your calendar and plan to be there. It will be fun for the whole family and I am looking forward to seeing y'all.

The Texas QSO Party is coming 1400Z May 4 to 2200Z May 5 and is being coordinated by Mike Hance KB5YVT. We have decided to enter as a club and we need you to dust off your mobile rigs and go on the road for counties or just work from your house. We can all enjoy the fun and win the special club award being offered (see contest rules in this issue). I have been reading in QST about all the other State's QSO Party contests and I know this club can put them all to shame.

We need control operators for the NARS Nets. Expand your horizons; it is a lot of fun, and you get to make a lot of contacts. Contact OJ WA1YIA or myself and step up to the mike.

The Novice Tech+ class is going to start April 4th at the Prince of Peace Catholic Church on SH 249. Tell all prospective HAMS to dust off their brain cells and join in the fun. For more information contact Rudy KB5ZXO.

We are needing volunteers to provide communications for the March Of Dimes Walk-a-thon on April 14, 1996. This will be located, as usual, at Highway 6 and Westheimer area. Contact Paul N5NXS or myself to sign up.

This month's meeting program is a presentation by the Houston Amateur Television Society (HATS). Come and learn what it takes to put yourself on the video airwaves.

By Walter Hock KK5LO

Antenna Raising Incident

I am writing in response to your request for additional information for Block Number 3 of the accident reporting form. I put "Poor Planning" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter I should explain more fully, and I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am an amateur radio operator and on the day of the accident, I was working alone on the top section of my new 80 foot tower. When I had completed my work, I discovered that I had, over the course of several trips up the tower, brought up about 300 pounds of tools and hardware.

Rather than carry the now un-needed tools and materials down by hand, I decided to lower the items down in a small barrel by using a pulley, which fortunately was attached to the gin pole at the top of the tower.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went to the top of the tower and loaded the tools and materials into the barrel. I went back down to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 300 pounds of tools and materials. You will note in Block Number 11 of the accident reporting form, that I only weigh 155 pounds.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate of speed up the side of the tower.

In the vicinity of the 40 foot level, I met the barrel coming down. This explains my fractured skull and broken collarbone. Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time, I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold on to the

- Author Unknown

rope in spite of the pain. At approximately the same time however, the barrel of tools hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the tools, the barrel now weighed approximately 20 pounds. I refer you to Block Number 11, and my weight. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the tower.

In the vicinity of the 40 foot level, I met the barrel coming up. This will account for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower body.

The encounter with the barrel slowed me down enough to lessen my injuries when I landed on the pile of tools and materials, and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report however, that as I lay there on the pile of tools and materials, in pain, unable to stand, and watching the empty barrel 80 feet above me, I again lost my presence of mind. I let go of the rope!!!

Submitted by Bill Rister KC5EZQ

March Meeting Features ATV

In some circles ATV means all terrain vehicle, but in the Amateur Radio group ATV stands for Amateur Television. As with the other modes of this hobby (packet, sideband, and cw) television is an interesting and exciting method of communication. Houston Amateur Television Society will be presenting the basics of Amateur Television at the March general meeting. In addition they will illustrate how any amateur radio operators can get involved with equipment they probably already have.

Join us on Friday, March 15th for an interesting program.

Submitted by Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO

1996 Texas QSO Party

Following is a letter from Mike Hance KB5YVT, coordinator of the Texas DX Society's annual Texas QSO Party (TQP) contest. He asks NARS members to participate in this year's contest to help make the 1996 TQP successful.

The NARS Board of Directors voted at the February Board Meeting to make the 1996 TQP an official club project. Several members have already begun to organize activities. Bill Denton WA5DWX will host the Houston operation from his shack. OJ Quarles WA1YIA is providing coordination for those hams wanting to be "rovers" using mobile rigs in their vehicles. These rovers will be traveling around the state transmitting from as many Texas counties as possible.

Do YOU want to participate? Just tell Bill or OJ and they will help you with your planning and strategy.

Forward by Keith WD5DXL

NARS members, I've been hard at work putting together the rules for the New Texas QSO Party. This should make for a better contest and I hope all NARS members will get involved and try to win the special club award listed in the prizes.

Thanks for your support, I'll be checking with you in April to see if some of you can commit to some Texas counties.

73 Mike KB5YVT

Texas QSO Party May 4-5 1996

Sponsored by the Texas DX Society
1400Z May 4 to 2200Z May 5

Classes:

Single op, Multi-single and Texas Armadillo Expedition
Mixed Mode Only

Exchange:

Send QSO # and Texas County or State/Canadian Province

Rules:

Texas stations work everyone. Others work Texas Only. Only one transmitted signal at a time. CW QSO's must be made in CW subbands, except on 160. Work stations once per band/mode for QSO points, work Texas Armadillo stations again on same band or mode as they change counties for multiplier credit only. Multipliers count only once regardless of band or mode. CW- 1.805 and 40 kHz up, Phone- 1.850, 3.850, 7.230, 14.250, 21.300, 28.450.

Scoring:

Score 2 points/QSO on Phone and 3 points/QSO on CW. Final score is QSO points x Texas Counties (max 254). Texas stations multiply by States, Canadian Provinces and Texas Counties. DX counts for QSO points only.

Awards:

- Texas Wine Baskets and Plaques to top class finishers
- Special Awards to Texas Clubs with most logs submitted
- Special Awards to Multi-single and Texas Armadillo Expedition with the most Novice/Tech operators (List them with a /T or /N in your list of operators on summary sheet)

- Work 50 or more Texas Counties for Special Commemorative Cap
- Work all 254 Texas Counties for free air fare to the 1996 Houston Ham Convention!

Send logs and summary sheet via mail, disk or E-Mail within 30 days.
TDXS, PO Box 540291, Houston, TX 77254 / e-mail
KB5YVT@AOL.COM

Results will be posted on the Internet Contest Reflector, sent with a SASE or via E-Mail.

TQP is Supported by NA Contest Software from LTA @ (216)-565-9950 and TR Contest Software @ (512) 416-7010



by Keith Dutson

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Well, the featured shack project is not quite ready, so you will not see it this month. The purpose of the new column will be to let all members know how a typical shack is used. I need to name the column. I was going to use "Featured Shack", but I don't like the name. Maybe you could suggest a better one.

FCC Releases Newest RF Report

The FCC is attempting to quell the debate over whether or not radio frequency transmissions cause injury to people exposed to them. The commission has released a 159 page report that deals with the possible harmful affects of close-up or extended exposure. However, the bulk of this report deals mainly with RF exposure to RF tower workers in commercial broadcasting with high wattage outputs.

Many government agencies and universities around the world were involved in studying the effects of radiation on a Naptex fiber suit (a metalized fabric). The field tests were encouraging in that induced RF in the main was drained away from the body to ground. The report further suggested that Naptex socks be developed to replace the Naptex boots used in the tests as the boots did not stand up to normal wear and tear by workers climbing towers.

As far as radio amateurs are concerned the FCC regulations and recommendations developed by ANSI studies and released in 1982 still apply unless amended in the future by this report and other studies. The 1982 recommendations were developed by ANSI (American National Standards Institute) after five years of intensive study and some of the applicable ones pertaining to radio amateurs are as follows:

* In high-power operation in the HF and VHF region, keep the antenna away from people. Humans should not be allowed within 10-15 feet of vertical antennas. This is especially important with higher power, high-duty cycle operation (such as FM or RTTY). Amateur antennas that are mounted on towers and masts, away from people, pose no problem.

* When using mobile equipment with 10W RF power output or more, do not transmit if anyone is standing within 2 feet of the antenna.

* When using hand-held transceivers with output of several watts or more, maintain at least 1-2 inches separation between the antenna and your forehead. ANSI Standards recommend power outputs of no more than seven watts for hand-held radios. This is because the antenna is so close to the operator's head.

* Never touch an antenna that has RF power applied. Never have someone else transmit into the antenna and monitor the SWR while you are making adjustments. When matching an antenna, the correct procedure is to turn the transmitter off, make the adjustment, and then back away to a safe distance before turning the transmitter on again to check your work.

* Confine RF radiation to the antenna where it belongs. Provide a good earth ground for your equipment. Poor feed line and improperly installed connectors can be a source of unwanted radiation. Use only good quality well-constructed coaxial cable. Be sure that the connectors are of good quality, and install them correctly.

* Don't operate RF power amplifiers of transmitters with the covers or shielding removed. Always keep all shielding in place to avoid potential electrical shock hazards as well as RF safety hazards. This is especially important for VHF and UHF equipment. Reassemble transmitting equipment after working on it. Be sure to replace all the screws that hold the RF compartment in place. Tighten all screws securely before applying power to the equipment.

I had a ham acquaintance who had been a ham for at least 60 years, and at age 84 despite all his knowledge and experience worked on a linear amplifier with the cover off-power on-taking measurements to locate a problem. He somehow got across the output and was FRIED ON THE SPOT. That was 2 years ago and brought home the advice above. Familiarity can breed contempt or carelessness for safety when dealing with RF circuitry - always be on guard - as your FIRST mistake could be your last.

Harry Gage N5WIZ

Contest Connection

NARS Contesters Win TQP95

The Texas DX Society announced last week that the NARS contesters won first place in multi-operator class of the 1995 Texas QSO Party. The certificate was presented to NARS by contest coordinator Mike Hance KB5YVT.

We Had 565 Q's and 56 multipliers for a total of 32,144 points. The operators operating at WA5DWX were: WA1YIA, N5KEU, KC5OFE, KB5YVT, WA5DWX, KF5YM, and K5ZTY.

Plans are being formulated for the 1996 version of the TQP. NARS will be a major player, sending mobile units out to various parts of the state covering some of the more difficult counties. More on that later.

The contesters operated in the 160m contest with medium effort. We had about 325 Q's. Band was in good condition but we only worked about 4-5 hours each evening. We had a good turn out of operators.

Watch this space for future contesting information.

73 Bill WA5DWX

DX News

There has been another development in the wonderful world of DXing. About a month ago it appeared that possibly two different groups would begin squabbling about going to Heard Island at the end of 1996. In addition to the fellows who went to Peter I Island two years ago, the fellows who went to the South Sandwich Islands had announced their intentions and plans. Shortly after their announcement, the Peter I group published the news that they had contracted for a new ship for their postponed trip.

As a result, Tony DePrato, who was leading the second group, contacted K6EEK, one of the leaders of the first group, and proposed a joint effort. He apparently was turned down, which left him with a real dilemma. As he said in a subsequent announcement: "1. A major split of the DX world would result. 2. The first group had left their equipment in Australia after aborting the trip planned for December, 1995. 3. Since a joint operation had been declined the DX world could not afford to support two highly expensive DXpeditions to the same spot, regardless of its rarity."

Tony and his group rose to the occasion. He announced they would suspend their plans to go to Heard Island and instead would go elsewhere. So, with that hurdle resolved, it should be clear sailing for a good solid DXpedition at the end of 1996.

On other topics, it appears that more of our members are beginning to turn to DXing.

O.J., WA1YIA, reports several solid DX contacts from his mobile unit with stations such as S92SS on the African island of Sao Tome and 9J2SZ in Africa. Although DXers usually like to avoid local QRM, I

think some additional interest will be very healthy.

Gene, KC5NMN, worked ZP5AZL in Asuncion, Paraguay with his Kenwood TS140 and R5 vertical. Mark, KC5OFE, has also reported some success working DX, even though he is handicapped with a poor antenna situation.

Some of our members are facing rather horrendous deed restrictions which inhibit their ability to install true DX-caliber antennas. There has been a tiny bit of improvement in DX conditions during the week of February. I have worked several semi-respectable DX stations, including XT2JF in Burkino Faso, ZA5B in Albania, and a relatively rare one, TT8FT, in Chad. TT8FT is Frank Turek, DL7FT, who has a record of numerous successful Dxpeditons.

Another relatively rare DXCC country is now embroiled in controversy. Mount Athos has always been difficult to work and is active relatively rarely. The current controversy lies in a pending vote by the DXAC on the status of Mt Athos. Chairman Garth Hamilton, VE3HO, previously stated that the vote would be upon these options -- DELETE Mt Athos entirely, WITHDRAW its status as a DXC Country, or to LEAVE IT ALONE. The vote has now been postponed, and when it does come up the DELETE option will not be considered.

Wonder who got VE3HO straightened out on that one? Although it may eventually become DELETED, WITHDRAWAL of credit would have been highly inconsistent with previous DXCC decisions and actions. Wonder how Monk Apollo feels about the controversy. So much for those issues.

The good news is the nice QSL card which arrived during late February for Pratas Island, BV9P. This is a good one and will count for a new country.

Bill Gary, K8CSG

Special Interest Group (SIG) List

K5ZTY, Bill Stietenroth
893-3901, General Help

WA5DWX, Bill Denton
469-8331, General Help, Antennas

WA1YIA, OJ Quarles
955-1555, HF, General Help

K5WNO, Deral Kent
548-7476, RS12/13, Sattelite

WA5REJ, Allen Majeski
353-8652, General Help

KC5RCC, George Carlson
376-8307, Electrical Design,
Troubleshooting

KA3BKU, Don Bedell
370-6576, Packet

AB5XU, Sid George
537-0920, License, Upgrade

KC5EZQ, Bill Rister
537-8596, 694-6074
VHF/UHF, General Help

N5BA, Brian Derx
894-5942, VHF

KC5JZO, Bob Argo
288-7430, Computer Operating,
Win'95

WA5SAJ, Larry McCain
469-6709, General Help

KC5NRR, Doug Hudspeth
367-8927
Computer Tech/Networking

W5NKZ, Jerry Smith
444-4491, HF, Advanced OSCAR,
Antenna

KB5DTB, Joy Smith
444-4491, HF, Advanced OSCAR,
Antenna

WD5DXL, Keith Dutson
351-7683, Computer Programming

NARS NEWS is published monthly by
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Newsletter to:

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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.) Eyeball QSO's: about 7:00 PM.
Meeting time: 7:30 PM.

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

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mike Lavender, KB5WQJ 259-7257

OJ Quarles, WA1YIA 955-1555

Mark Condit, KC5OFE 550-5659

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 ARES
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
70 cm - 449.375 / 444.375 MHz
Digipeter - 145.71 MHz
Call (W5BKK) Alias (NARS)

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