

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

October 1996

To the Edge of Space and Back

Come join us at the next monthly membership meeting Friday evening, October 17 at 7:30. John Allen KC5JRS will speak about the South Texas Balloon Launch Team. The team is made up from members of HATV (Houston Amateur Television), AMSAT, NARS, ECHO and BVARC. Launch sites used by the team include a local facility and a national facility located in Palestine, Texas, which is used for NASA launches.

Balloons are used to carry instruments and other equipment to an altitude of up to 100,000 feet. Amateur Television (ATV), Global Positioning System (GPS) and packet radio units are

included to record the event. Packet information received on the ground includes altitude, latitude, longitude and other data. Multiple frequency beacons are also transmitted to help in tracking balloon position. The team travels up to sixty miles to retrieve the balloon after descent from the local launch site.

John will show two short video clips of recent flights, one from the local facility and one from the Palestine facility. He will also have information handouts. Don't miss this chance to see a top notch program.

Keith Dutson WD5DXL

Honorary Nars Member has Recipe for Success



Watching Janine handle all the requests for breakfast recently I was suddenly struck with the idea that there might be a human interest story here that NARS members and their spouses (xyl's) would enjoy for a refreshing change of pace. After all here is a young woman (and mother) taking food orders, dishing out those orders - all with

accuracy and aplomb, and good naturedly trading wisecrack for wisecrack with our wild bunch - and everybody loving every minute of it. I sensed there was another side to Janine that people would also enjoy knowing. How right I was.

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Important Dates

Friday-Sunday, October 11-13 - Gulf Coast Ham Convention

Friday, October 18, 7:30 pm - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

Saturday, October 19 - Boy Scout Jamboree On The Air

Saturday-Sunday, October 19-20 - the Simulated Emergency Test

Saturday, October 19 - Fall Fair at Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm, all invited to share in food and games

Tuesday, October 29, 7:30 pm - NARS Board of Directors meeting, IHOP, 5790 FM 1960 W, just West of Champions Forest Dr.

Thursday, October 31 - Halloween, and NARS News deadline for articles to appear in November issue

Saturday-Sunday, November 2-3 - CW Sweepstakes (Phone, November 16-18)

Notice:

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

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

October 1996

We just had the September NARS Board of Director's meeting and we discussed the annual NARS Banquet, Net Manager, SIRE event assistance and nominations for 1997 club officers.

How 'bout this, it is already time to reserve the banquet location.

O.J. WA1YIA has been coordinating the NARS nets. His job duties have changed and he is unable to continue this function. The club needs someone to carry on with coordinating. How about YOU! This does not involve handling the nets, but making sure someone is assigned to net control (Pretty important position, huh?).

NARS has once again agreed to provide help and radio assistance to the SIRE event. This group has a day set aside to give handicapped individuals horse rides and raise funds to continue the rides throughout the year. I am told this improves their muscle tone and is a great boost to them. Please see Jim Sutherland N5SBP, or me, if you are interested. I have a sign-up list and need about 16 people. This is a very self-satisfying event and I am looking for HELP (I don't want to hog all the fun.).

The BIG EVENT is October 12, 1996. The Gulf Coast Ham Convention's BIG day is finally here. NARS will again have flea market tables for members to buy or sell their goodies. NARS will charge a commission of 5% of sale or a Maximum of \$5.00. We are getting four tables this year. So, dust off that potential money maker and/or trade for a newer boat anchor. Just drop on by to say hey, meet someone or just hang out. We will be monitoring 146.66 simplex for anyone lost on the premises.

The nominating committee chairman has been appointed and he will be approaching members to be next year's officers. If you would like to run for a position on the Board, have your name submitted at the October general membership meeting. Elections will be held at the November general membership meeting. Boy Howdy, it is hard for me to believe that it already September.

At September's meeting the speaker was Bill Gary K8CSG. I think he gave a very good presentation on DX'ing. He has spurred my interest in DX and I am looking forward to the peak of the sun spot cycle.

This month's meeting topic is a presentation by John Allen KC5JRS about the recent Balloon Launch and return with Lifting Body, equipped with a video camera. Ham radio has sure come a long way from spark gap transmitters, to ATV from a balloon. I am waiting with baited breath to see y'all there.

The NARS web page address is <http://www.flash.net/~nars>

Walter Hock KK5LO

Honorary Nars Member has Recipe for Success

Continued from page 1

Janine was born in Beaver Falls, Pa. in 1962 as Janine Weir (Scotch-Irish ancestry). She attended Beaver Falls High School and was graduated in May 1980. Beaver Falls is the hometown also of Joe Namath who used to work at the same plant as one of Janine's uncles - Joe was a messenger there. Janine's husband, Larry Simser, was born in New Market, England. They've been married 13 years, and have two children - Rhiannon, 12 years old and in 7th grade - Joshua, 7 years old in 1st grade. Both go to school in the Spring school district and are doing well.

Janine came to Houston 14 years ago at the urging of friends while still single. Within a year she had met and married her husband, Larry, who is a Courier for Texas Executive Couriers in Houston. They have been very contented here and have no plans for going anywhere else. Janine says she has no desire for any more winters like she experienced in Pennsylvania. Janine is working toward a career as a Bio-chemist. She would like to work in the environmental field as a consultant. She is currently attending North Harris County College as a sophomore with - get this - a 4.0 average so far!

What drives Janine is that she must maintain a high average to qualify for her goal of attending Rice University on a scholarship and grant. Because of their busy schedules, Larry and Janine make as much time as is available to play softball, basketball, volley ball and tennis with their kids. They also do some camping and fishing in the Huntsville, Lake Livingston and Galveston areas. Whew! - they've tired me out already.

What Janine is doing represents the American way - preparing herself educationally for the future and working and studying hard in the present. The Declaration of independence says something to the effect (paraphrased) that the Creator (not man or law) has endowed us with among other things the right to pursue happiness. Of course there's no guarantee we'll catch it - nobody can guarantee you that - but if you study hard, work hard - you'll have the best chance to climb the ladder of success - and hopefully catch happiness. Of course luck plays a role too - but that applies to everything we do. This is an ethic that hasn't changed in over 200 years of American history.

We think Janine will be a success in whatever she plans to do - she'll make a great biochemist. Her family appears to represent a high standard in young American family values - today - right here in our own backyard so to speak.

Janine - now that we've turned your head a little with such glowing prose, and while you're still doing such a good job waitressing - may I please have another half cup of coffee? And hold the sausage on the short stack.

Harry Gage N5WIZ

Contest Connection

On September 21st several NARS members worked the Montana CW QRP Field Contest. They paired up in several teams and operated at the QTH of Mike Hance KB5YVT. Recent postings on the packet contest reflector show the team of OJ Quarles WA1YIA and Bill Denton WA5DWX in the lead for points in this national contest. Most contacts were made on 20 meters and some important multipliers were obtained late in the day on 40 meters. Congratulations for a fine effort and well deserved result.

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY has applied for a new club call sign in the Vanity Call Sign gate 2. He submitted a list of available call signs including several one by two's that are pretty neat. The FCC is using the lottery approach to issuing these new calls; after all applications are received, a computer will do the random selections. Let's all hope we get a good one for club contesting. Whatever we end up with, we can all thank Bill for ridding us of the rather ineffective KC5OGI.

Keith Dutson WD5DXL

September Exam Session

NARS and Compaq collaborated on a VE exam session at Tomball Community Center on September 28. Eight VEs served seventeen candidates who were examined on 29 elements. Five new no-code Technician licenses were attained, as were one General and one Advanced. NARS members succeeding were Charles Singleton KC5HJP who became a General, and Conrad Stietenroth W5OYH who passed his Extra Class written element without error. We expect several of the new licensees to become NARS members, also. VEs participating in the session were K8CSG, WA5DWX, KI5ME, WD5GAZ, KB5TES, KJ5IP, KB5ZXO and WA5SAJ.

Bill Gary K8CSG

Low Budget Antennas

My first low budget antenna is a simple ground plane antenna and since 2m and 70cm FM are the most popular we'll start there.

I have three designs which comprise area and they vary in pricing that won't bust your wallet.

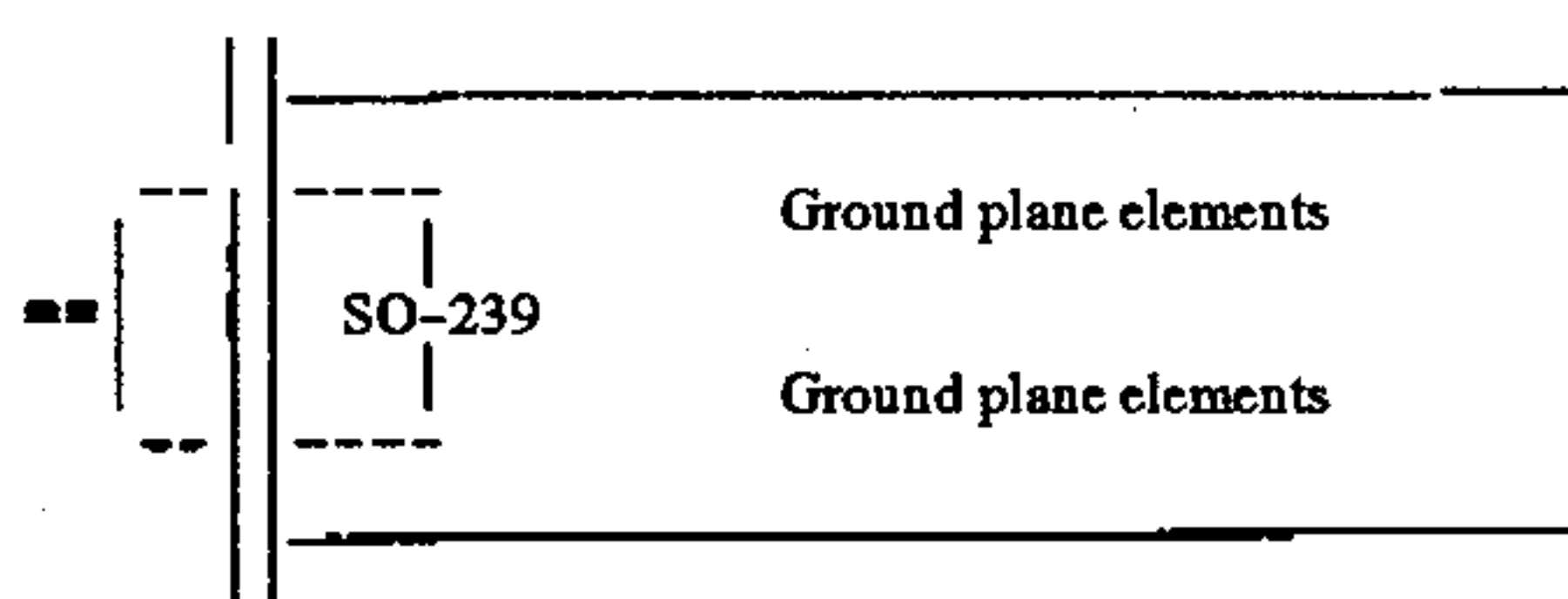
The common component is a Radio Shack SO-239 chassis mount female connector. This fits a PL-259 UHF male cable connector. You can use N type chassis and cable connectors for UHF if you please.

Antenna #1: You'll need some brass brazing rod. Nothing really thick, just big enough to fit into the chassis mount center pin for soldering. Why brass? It solders easy. You can use copper solid wire also. However, the brass is a bit more stiff.

File down the mounting holes so that the brass undercoating is exposed. Cut the brass or copper to 5% over a quarter wave:

$$[(246/f\text{MHz}) + ((246/f\text{MHz}) \cdot .05)] = \text{ground plane elements}$$

Cut four pieces and solder them to the chassis mount mounting holes so that they are perpendicular to the frame of the connector:



Using a pair of needle nose pliers, at the solder joint, just below the chassis connector, bend the ground plane elements out to between 45 and 50 degrees.

Now cut the driven element to the same length and solder into the center pin. Attach your coax. Set up this tuning example:

Antenna -- coax -- SWR meter -- rig

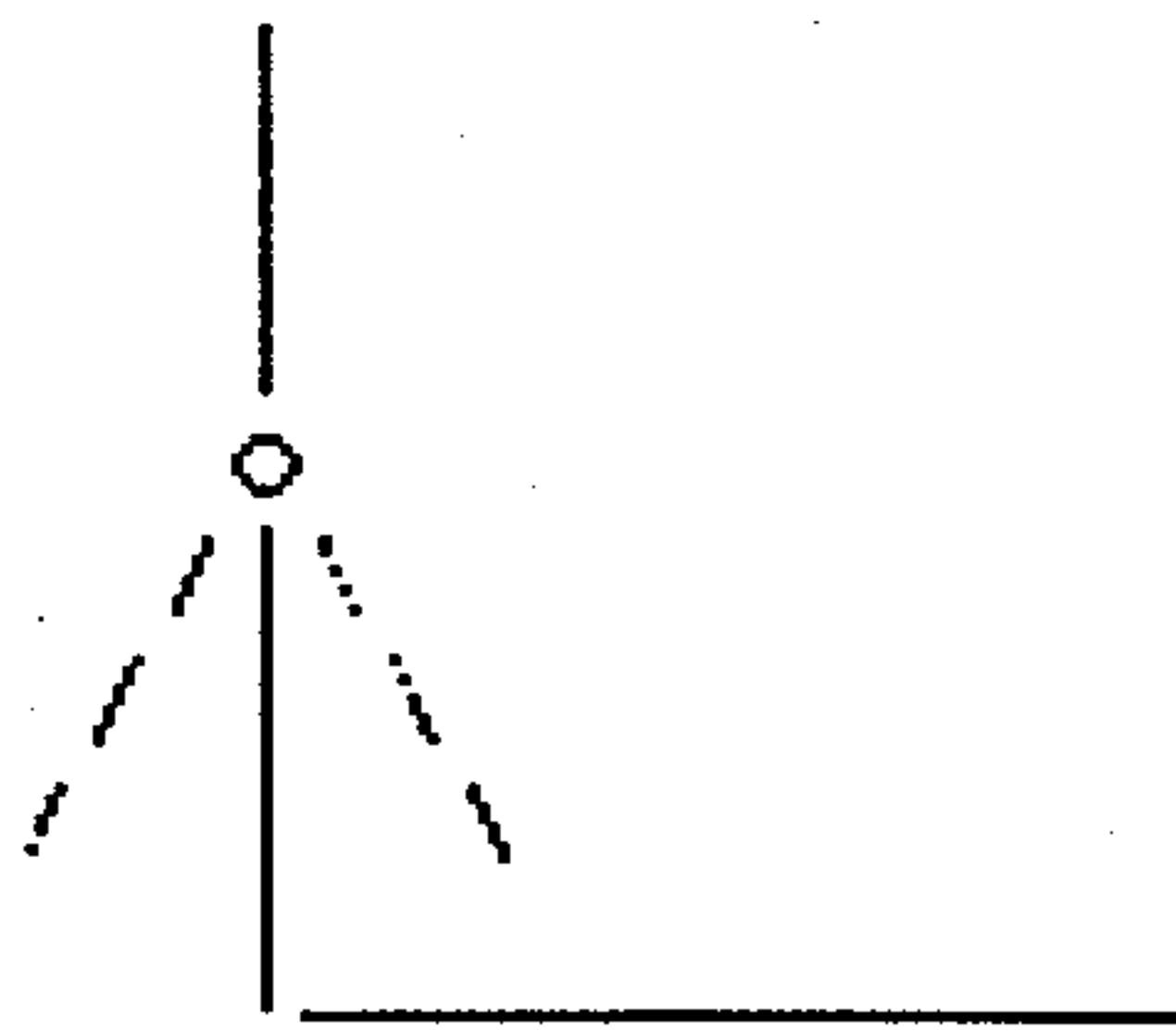
Use low power. You can attach the antenna with a hose clamp to a broom handle for tuning via the coax connection. Go to the low end of your rig and transmit. Note the SWR reading. Do the same at the mid point of the band and the high end.

If the reading is better low than high it's too long and needs to be trimmed. That should be the case. Cut the top tip down a tad bit at a time and re-measure the SWR until the center of the band or your desired portion is as low as it can be. If it starts to go back up in SWR stop. Remember that in 70cm FM the input is mostly at the upper end of the band for repeaters. Thus the SWR should be best on the transmit, not the receive.

Repeater is 443.1 MHz. Your transmit frequency is 448.1 MHz so why tune to the repeater frequency? If you are going to operate at 446 MHz, then tune the antenna there.

If the SWR is better High than Low, it's too short; thus re-cut a new longer element, remove the first one and solder the new one in place. Repeat procedure. If it's a 'right on' SWR, leave it.

Mounting is a breeze with the hose clamp and vertical whatever like a rod, broom handle, angle iron, your choice ... Clamp between the coax connector and the 'whatever' you choose and then clamp the whatever to the tower or tower arm:



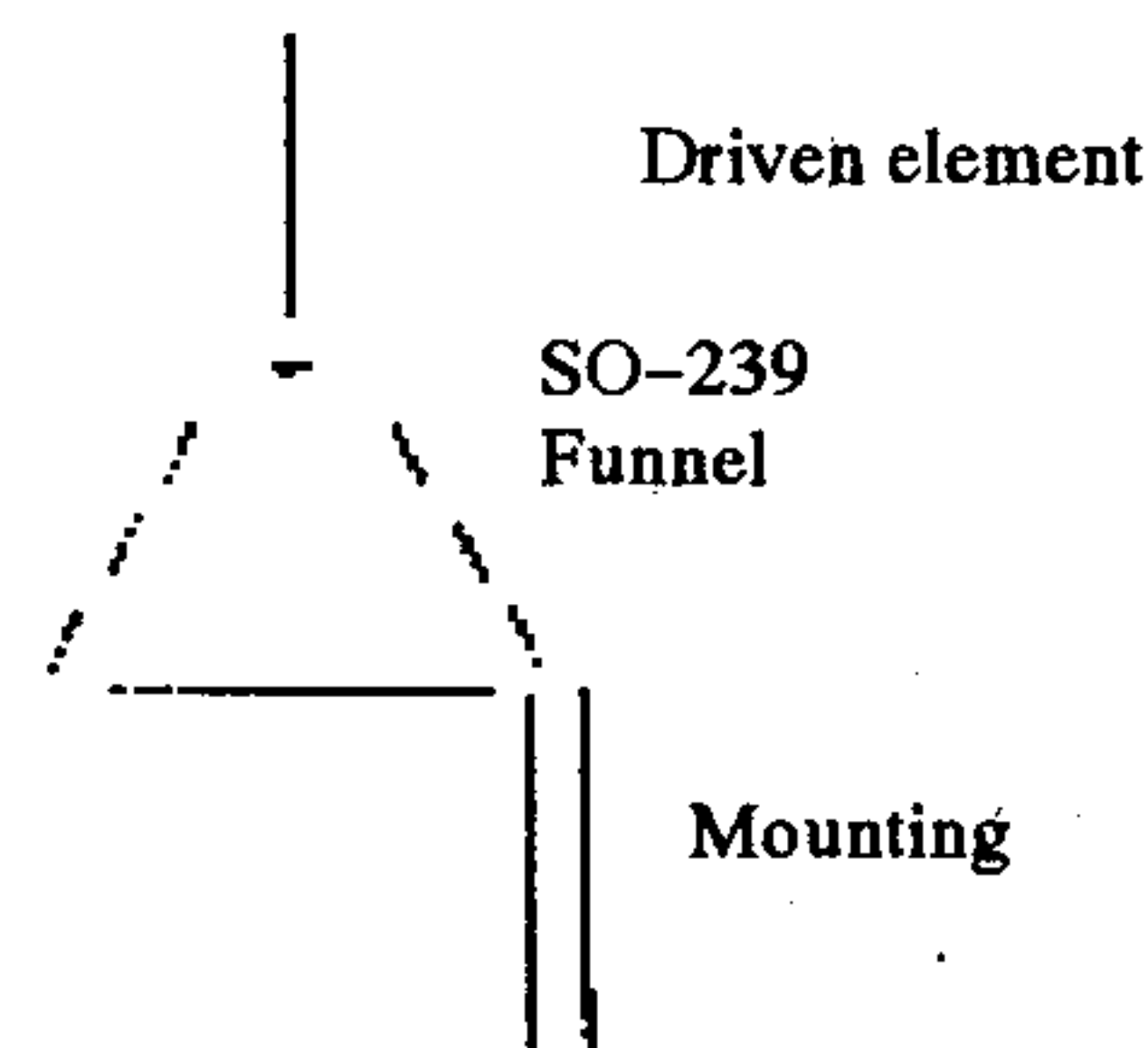
Cost: About \$3 for the Chassis mount connector, Brazing rod comes in 3' lengths and you need three for 2m and two for 70cm. About \$.50 each. And a hose clamp about \$.75. OW! that hurt my wallet! ;-) How long do they last? I have two up now for nine years!

Antenna #2: This one is made from a tin funnel, a small piece of copper wire or brass brazing rod and an SO-239 chassis mount connector.

Now, one must realize that tin funnels do not come in 2m size so this design is for 70cm FM.

Cut the narrow end off the tin funnel so that the chassis connector's threads will just fit into the hole of the funnel. Once this is completed make four short slices into the newly made hole area so that the corners of the chassis mount connector can wedge into place. Prepare the surface of the SO-239 by removing the outer coating so that the brass is exposed and solder tin these areas. Wedge the chassis connector in place. Bend the extra tin over the chassis connector's mounting edge and solder. Insert the quarter wave driven element into the center pin, cut and tune as explained in part one.

Mounting is right off the tin funnel with a small piece of [your choice]:



Coax goes up the middle like a discone.

NOTE: Paint the unit since tin will rust. Use a non-conductive paint.

Cost: Tin funnel \$1-\$2, piece of brass brazing rod \$Scrounge, SO-239 around \$3.

Antenna #3: Similar to antenna #2, brass brazing rods or solid copper wire can be soldered to the funnel and a longer driven element can be added for 1.25 and 2m.

Submitted by Bill Rister KC5EZQ

Wings over Houston



Left to right: Paul Owen N5NXS, Keith Dutson WD5DXL, Brad Nelson WD5GNI. Not pictured John Allen KC5JRS, Mike Lavender KB5WQJ. Paul and Mike rode in golf carts with show coordinators; John followed the show director; Brad worked prime seating; Keith worked the VIP tent.

That's an F-15 Strike Eagle in the back ground. One was used in a demo flight. The pilot flew down the runway at an altitude of 500 feet and a speed of 500 knots. Then he stood it on it's tail at mid field and climbed to 15,000 feet straight up. Sixty seconds later he made a landing approach . . . an awesome display of power and agility for such a large plane!



by Keith Dutson

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P

Rick Aikman KI5ME has designed a new banner for the newsletter. It needs a few refinements and should be available for use next month. I think you all will be pleasantly surprised.

B
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X

Speaking of surprise, Harry Gage N5WIZ related a rumor to me that I was going to resign as newsletter editor. Hmm... well, not anytime soon. But, whoever is responsible, call me and maybe we can work out a "changing of the guard" in the future. I enjoy doing this job, but I am willing to give someone else a chance if they are willing to take the reins.

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL
Marian Denton, 469-8331, for General Information and Bill Gary, 537-9240, for VE Exam Information or send E-Mail to novotny@tenet.edu

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday
8 AM at Victors, located at 4710 W FM 1960. Informal ragchew.

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 PM
28.444 MHz

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8:00 PM
146.06 / .66 MHz

Net Coordinator OJ, WA1YIA

NARS REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 MHz
Digipeter - 145.71 MHz
Call (KC5OGI) Alias (NARS)

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League.

ARRL Club No. 2120

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