

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

May 1997

AA6VO To Give Internet Talk May 16

How do you get on the Internet, what are the basics you need to know when you get on, and what's there that hams can use? That's what Steve Baum AA6OV will review May 16 at the NARS monthly meeting. Steve is the leader of the Internet Special Interest Group of the 1960 PC Users Group, the largest club for computer users in the greater FM 1960 area.

Whether you are an experienced Internet user, want to be one or are just curious, you should expect to learn something helpful to your Internet and ham interests. If you use an Internet source for ham radio information that your fellow club members might find useful, bring the address to the meeting.

Jim KJ5X

Buffalo Bayou Regatta



Important Dates

Friday, May 16, 7:30 pm – NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church – Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

Saturday, May 17, 11am to 4pm – NARS Annual Picnic, Keith Dutson's house, 24415 Deep Meadow, Tomball

Saturday, May 24, 8:30 am – VE License Exam Session – Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main)

Tuesday, May 27, 7:30 pm – NARS Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Club House, 5200 Woodville.

CONTESTS:

May 17 – Armed Forces Day, European CW Sprint

May 24-25 – CQ WW WPX CW

June 14-16 – AARL June VHF QSO Party

June 28-29 – AARL Field Day

NOTICE:

NARS membership dues is \$20 per year, renewable on anniversary of last year's full payment.

NARS News deadline for articles to appear in June issue is Saturday, May 31.

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

May 1997

In waiting to the last minute to write and send a little something to our editor, I find the old mind here pretty much wanting. But there is something to say in the way of thanks to some deserving folks.

Thanks to Andy MacAllister W5ACM for his talk at the April meeting on how to work satellites with simple radio gear. If you weren't there, you missed a very enlightening and entertaining evening and a super handout Andy had put together on workable satellites. It just doesn't pay to miss a meeting.

The instructors of the NARS novice / technician class deserve a big "Thank You" for doing a fine job. It's an attentive and inquisitive class which includes two eleven year old ladies. Thirty six signed up for the class. The only perfect score on a practice 5 wpm code test was made by one of the young ladies. She seems to be mysteriously drawn to any code key she sees during the class breaks.

And special thanks goes to Bill Rister KC5EZQ who is handling the logistics and record keeping for the class. He is doing a fine job, often beyond the call of normal duty. Recently the father of one of the young ladies in the class locked his keys in his new truck after parking in the classroom parking lot. Attempts to get someone out to unlock it at 9:30 PM proved fruitless. Bill drove him and his daughter home to get a spare set of keys, about a fifty mile round trip.

Thanks also to coordinators Paul N5NXS and Scott N5KEU, and the many NARS volunteers who provided radio communications for the MDA March of Dimes Walkathon and the Buffalo Bayou Regatta.

The NARS annual picnic is May 17, and Field Day is the last week-end in June. So keep your calendars clear for those dates. These are highlight events of the NARS year. At the picnic we'll have HF and VHF/UHF radios and antennas set up, so come get on the air either before or after the games and Bar-Be-Que.

Jim Kirk KJ5X

VE Session Results - April

The NARS/Compaq VEs had another busy examination session on April 26. Eight VEs, aided by two non-VE hams from Compaq, examined nineteen candidates on 37 elements. Of those, 9 elements were on Morse code, five of which were passed. Of the 28 written elements, 22 were passed. This represented a relatively high pass/fail ratio.

New licenses earned included six Technicians, four Technicians-Plus and one Advanced Class. One female candidate, aged eight years, passed her exam and became a new Technician licensee. When told of this news, she became more than a little overjoyed, as was her father. These are the kinds of events that reassure us that amateur radio is still in very good health. Participating VEs included Bill K8CSG, Rick KZ5E, Jim KJ5X, Madison W5MJ, Walter K5WH, King KK5LU, Pat KK5VN and Larry WA5SAJ. Non-VE hams who provided valuable assistance included Willie KB5TES and Eddie N5OZJ

K8CSG

NARS Board of Directors Meeting 4/29/97

Treasurer's Report - The checkbook balance on March 31 was \$4,908.50.

Cy Fair High School ARC - Now have HF and 2 Meter radios, but need antennas and Elmers to guide club members.

Node - Waiting on approval from EMS for use of Five Forks Road facility; EMS Communications Director indicates there should be no problem; \$979 in new node equipment fund; Map shows proposed node site centrally located to NARS members.

Field Day '97 - A 6 meter antenna is still needed. The Novice station will probably be using the call KC5OFI.

KC5RCC Tech Program - New! A portion of each General Meeting will be devoted to a 15 minute or so presentation of a technical subject regarding Ham electronics.

Bob Argo KC5JZO Secretary

Buy - Sell - Trade

Kenwood TS940 (\$600.00), Kenwood 742 dual-bander w/duplexer and antenna (\$600.00), AOR scanner - 100 - 1300 mcs (\$350), an amplifier, and a few other odds and ends. Robert Payne N5KUC, Work 281-363-7594, Home 281-259-8017.

Photos & Slides & 8mm Film Transferred to VHS video tape with sound

No more setting up screen & projector!

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and make a personal video of:

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K5UCW

TRIPLE CCC ENTERPRISES

Member Pearland/Hobby Area Chamber

Pager (713) 834-7481 Office (713) 649-7622

SHOW YOUR SHACK

Shack of Walter Hock KK5LO

Thank You For A Dream Come True

It all started back in 1966 and laid dormant for 23 years. I was in High School and I worked part-time in a TV repair shop for a ham. I was intrigued by the electronic stuff I attempted to fix. The ham said if I learned code I could get my license. Well the long and short of it, I was a teenager with a lot on my mind. But, I still had the idea that someday I would have me a tower with a decent antenna.

Many years passed and the dream was still dormant. Until, I heard from another ham about the novice license. Five word code and you could talk on 10 meters. Gee, when I first heard about it many years before you could only use code and had to upgrade within a year. This sounded great so I bought a book and code tapes. I listened to them on the drive back from Beaumont in late 1989. I figured it was a snap; I could learn this and get a ham ticket.

Then I worked at the code on and off and still had trouble. Then I finally joined a ham club, NARS, which gave me the moral support to continue on. I finally got my license in April 1992: Technician Plus. This was after they dropped the code requirement for Technician. I was determined to go the distance because, after all, I had learned the code. More important, I had already bought a 10 meter radio and I didn't want my money to go to waste.

After that I remembered my dream of 26 years previous. A Tower and a Beam. I decided to wait until I upgraded and could find the one that would fit my taste and pocketbook. So, I got a Butternut Vertical when I first upgraded to general, which I still have and use on occasion. This got me on the air, but I still had my dream. I would look in the catalogs when they came in and drool till the pages stuck together.

In January on a NARS net I heard about a crank up tower that was for sale. I have limited yard space and not much room for guys; I snatched this up. Later on a distinguished DX'er, Bill Gary K8CSG, told me about a Hygain TH7DX for sale by another ham. The dream was maturing.

I finally had the parts, now all the work was to begin. Deral Kent K5WNO came over to help me move dirt. Boy, 50 cubic feet is a lot of hole to dig up and spread out! After breakfast the next Saturday Deral, Allen Majeski WA5REJ, Dick Rooney W5VHN, Don Bedell KA3BKU, Terry Myers KQ5U and Keith Dutson WD5DXL came over and moved two cubic yards of concrete from the front of my house to the tower base in the back yard. The next step was the hard part; I had to wait a week for the concrete to cure before I could bolt on the tower. Lucky for me it rained all week and I had no inclination to get wet.

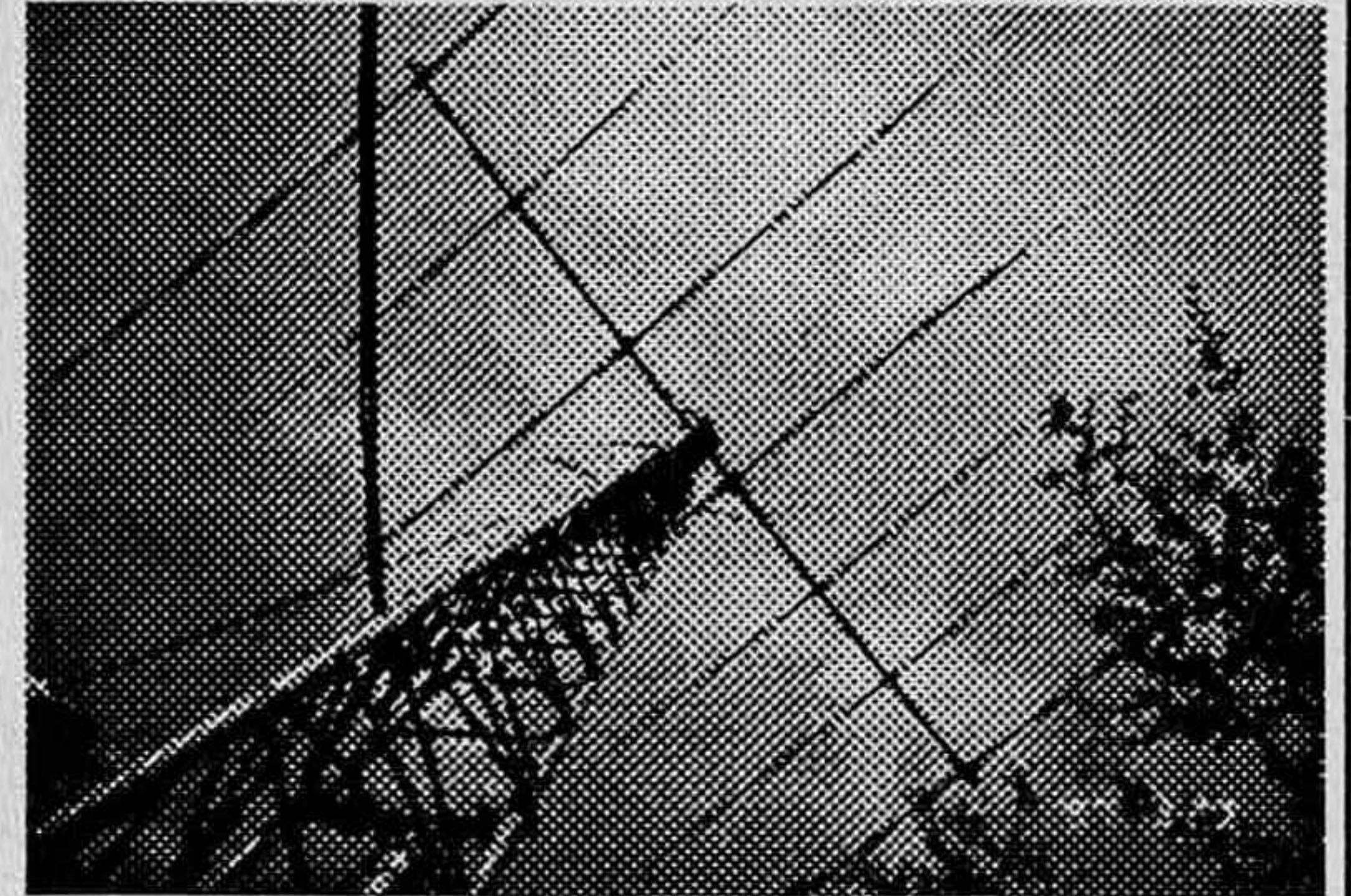
The next Saturday after breakfast, Bill Denton W5SB and Larry McCain WA5SAJ came over to lift the tower on the base. They needed size 16 shoes to keep them from sinking up to their knees in the bog.

Another week went by and Saturday after breakfast, Jim Kirk KJ5X, Bill Gary K8CSG, and Jack Dougherty WA8GHZ came over to mount the TH7DX on the mast. I cranked her up, spun her around and the bands came alive.

After 31 years a young boy's dream was achieved. None of this could have happened without the great help of these NARS CLUB MEMBERS, to whom I am so profoundly THANKFUL. All of this is really what hamming is about: helping others attain their individual goals.

Since my dream has come alive, I have worked 47 new countries – not bad for barefoot at 100 watts!

Walter KK5LO



DX News

DX Notes -- *They shook the hills with thunder riven; Then rushed DXers, to battle driven; And louder than the bolts of heaven, I QSL, you're five by seven . . .*

The propagation numbers bounced back up a bit after the CQ WPX contest. As April arrived, the solar flux was 75 and the A index was in the 4 to 7 range, indicating that DX conditions should be improving. This was reflected on the evening of April 1 with a nice 20-meter nighttime opening into Russia. By April 3 the SFI had reached 81 with an A index at 6, better numbers than seen for some time. By mid-month the SFI was bumping 80 again, offering a degree of hope for the upcoming Scarborough Reef operation at month's end. To my personal dismay, toward the end of the month the SFI had dropped to 69, which is not encouraging for Scarborough.

DX Worked: VK9NS (Norfolk Island); UA9MA (Russia); JW5NM (Svalbard Island); VQ9DW (Diego Garcia Isl.); DU1SAN (Philippines); YO3FRI (Romania); CN8VB (Morocco); GM3CIX (Scotland); 4U1UN (United Nations - New York); C21NJ (Nauru); OM3PC (Slovak Republic); SM5VOC (Sweden); VK6VU (Australia via LP); LA5M (Norway); VK2FHN (Australia via SP); 9X/RW3AH (Rwanda); YL1XX (Latvia); EA3OT (Spain); GI0AIJ (Scotland); SV1ACK (Greece); DU1KT and DU9RG (Philippines); 3D2RW (Fiji).

DX Heard: VK9NS via direct, CBA; U5WF (Ukraine); XU2FB (Kampuchea/ Cambodia); 9K2QQ (Kuwait); 7Q7RM (Malawi); VU3GBS (India); VK4OH (Australia via LP); YI1AK (Iraq); BV7FF (Taiwan); UA3CT (Russia); VQ9LV (Diego Garcia); 4L5A (Georgia).

Walter KK5LO was heard working the WPX Contest and posting spots to the DX cluster. During mid-April he suffered a minor lightning strike; fortunately his radio was disconnected from the antenna and undamaged. Jim Kirk worked Norfolk Island for a new country during the WPX contest, and later worked ET3BT in Ethiopia. N5WIZ reported working a nice strong EI station on April 1. KC5OFI upgraded his license on April 26 and made several DX contacts in Central and South America on April 27.

THE END OF AN ERA! Almost every ham operator has owned or used a copy of the "Flying Horse Radio Amateur Callbook." For many years it has been the major reference for QSL information, i.e., addresses of hams, domestic and foreign. In a change that will impact all of us, the printed version of the Callbook is coming to an end. Beginning with the Spring 1997 edition, the Callbook will be available only on CD-ROM. When I first became a ham nearly fifty years ago the Callbook was about five-eighths of an inch thick -- and that included all of the USA hams and the DX hams as well, worldwide. Today,

the North American edition is two inches thick, and the DX edition is of similar size. The first Callbook I bought cost \$2.50 around 1950. Today they cost about \$30.00 each and it takes two of them to accomplish the same thing as that little \$2.50 book of a half century ago. I think I will try to find and buy an old Callbook in Arlington this year for nostalgia.

QSL ROUTES: 9U5CW via EA1FFC; KH2/AD4WF via AE4EZ; YM2KC via TA2FE; XU2FB via N4JR; VQ9DW via KB8UCL; C21NJ via POB 45, Rep. of Nauru.

A relatively rare opportunity should come up May 20-27 if Franz (DJ9ZB) and W9EVI get their operation (3C0DX) launched from Pagalu Island, formerly known as Annobon Island. Although not particularly difficult to work, it is a location that shows on the bands infrequently. Walter/Jim, be ready!

Another good opportunity will be presented May 17-23 when Art (N2NB) operates from Kure Island. The callsign should be easily recognizable -- KH7K/N2NB or something similar. Kure used to be workable via the regular visits by the Loran technicians who frequently operated the military station KH7EDY located near the Loran station. With the demise of Loran as a primary navigation aid, Kure has become much more difficult and may become a candidate for deletion from the DXCC Countries List.

JUAN DE NOVA ISLAND, FR. FR5DJ/J and FR5KH/J will be active on all bands, using CW and SSB until May 15. QSL via F6FNU. Juan de Nova is one of a group of three islands, or groups of islands, lying to the East of Africa which are remarkable DXCC countries. Two of the three, Tromelin and Glorioso Islands, are totally unpopulated, while only sparse occupancy of the Juan de Nova group exists. All three of these DXCC countries are controlled by France via Reunion Island. Generally, the only time there is amateur radio activity from any of them is when someone goes there, usually meteorologists who maintain the weather equipment installed on the islands. Juan de Nova (FR???/J) is generally the easiest to work, perhaps because there are several islands available in the group. Tromelin (FR???/T) is usually the most difficult, with Glorioso (FR???/G) a close second, due to the restrictions on obtaining landing permission. Getting good contacts with these three locations is never easy, but getting QSL cards is generally even more difficult.

AND NOW FOR THE MAJOR DX NEWS OF THE MONTH! NARS had its own "rare DX station" in operation during part of April. Jack Dougherty W5EJZ visited Equatorial Guinea on business for several days. Equatorial Guinea is one of the leftovers from European colonial days in Africa, having once been a colony of Spain. The country consists of the island of Fernando Poo, which lies close

in the elbow of Africa adjacent to Cameroon; a postage-stamp sized piece of mainland real estate known as Rio Muni; and the island known as Pagalu. Pagalu was known for many years as Annobon Island, and was added to the DXCC list as a new country when Martti Laine OH2BH and Ville Hillesmaa OH2MM successfully activated it in 1971. Jack confidently took along his ICOM 706 radio and material for an antenna, leaving behind for us his plan to operate on the 30-meter band. To my surprise, Jack obtained permission to operate and did so for parts of three days as 3CA/WA8GHZ. His choice of 10.104 MHz did not yield any QSOs with his Houston-area buddies due to propagation conditions, but he worked several big pileups of Europeans, Japanese and similar stations. He made the DX clusters in Texas on all three days via postings from European and Japanese operators. As a result, Jack has now reached that relatively unique status of having actually been truly "rare DX". Congratulations, Jack! Nice going.

73, Bill K8CSG

ARRL Awards Card Checking

NARS offers a complete card checking service through our Special Services affiliation with ARRL. Card checking saves you from having to bundle up your cards and send them to the ARRL. The field HF Awards Manager certifies that you have all of the proper cards and paperwork and sends it in for you. If something is not right, you can correct it without having gone to the trouble of sending your cards to the ARRL and getting them back unapproved.

NARS Awards Managers: DXCC - Bob Walworth N5ET, Linda Walworth KE5TF, 281-363-0209; WAS, VUCC - Bryan Derx N5BA, 894-5942.

Bill K5ZTY

A Note From The WAS, VUCC Manager: After much effort from KK5LO and KJ5X, I have finally been appointed by the ARRL as an HF and VHF Awards Manager. This means that I can do QSL card checking for the WAS (Worked All States), 5 Band WAS and the VUCC awards. You do not have to send your hard earned QSL cards to the League for checking and worry about their return. Just present the proper application form and the QSL cards to me. I check the cards, sign the form, and you send the application and appropriate fee to the ARRL. I have a supply of the application forms for these awards. If you need one, let me know. You must be a member of the American Radio Relay League to receive the awards. If you have a question concerning these awards, give me a call.

73, Brian N5BA

Contest Connection

Texas QSO Party 1997

The Texas QSO party is history for another year. Many of our NARS members either participated from their shacks or came by mine and tried their hand at operating. We were blessed with great band conditions which accounted for some really good QSO rates. With "Captain" Kirk operating the first few hours he netted some sizzling contacts. In the first 3 1/2 hours he had 300 Q's. He had 137 the first hour. Not too bad for a state QSO party. Way to go Captain.

One of my goals on just about every contest is to have at least one new operator sit down and strap on the headsets and give it a try. Bob Argo KC5JZO attended his first contest session and was introduced to the NA logging program right away. Bob took to logging like a duck to water. It wasn't too long before he had the headsets on and was having his first experience contesting on the air. Bob did very well.

Another goal of course was to beat last year's score. I had aimed for at least 1000 Q's. As it turned out when we quit on Saturday night around 11:00 we had around 800 and figured 200 Sunday would be a piece of cake and would finish up around noon. NOT. No one was playing Sunday morning on 20m or 40m. H.O. WA5MLT came over before the rooster crowed. We were going to get a head start. We finally gave up and went to breakfast.

We were behind in the mult count. We had most of the states and Canadian Provinces so the only way the mults were to come was on 40m working Texas counties. That was like pulling teeth. There were very few players and I wound up breaking into the rag chews and asking for a report from their county. That would never have worked on 75m but the 40m guys were real nice. Caught a few mobiles going across country. Heard no SSB mobiles working the contest. It was slow going. We had more Q's but fewer mults that last year netting a lower score.

Murphy came visiting and that slowed us down quite a bit. At one point I thought I had lost my FT-990. It gave me a scare but I think it's OK. I operated 40m with my trusty TS-830 and no amp. The SB-1000 had gone down earlier and we were using the SB-221 with the FT-990. The old TS-830 did well.

K1OJ and KC5NVY hit the road with their mobiles. OJ covered 850 miles with XYL Margaret driving. They covered 32 counties and had 350 CW Q's. Lockhart and his 6 year old son hit the road to do some father and son bonding. He reports they had a great time and some good contacts along the way. Mark Tyler was mobile also but not sure at this time how well he did but I know he worked a station in Barbados and got a good report from his mobile.

Another highlight was having a total of 15 guests that came by. Some operated and others just wanted to observe. It was great to have them. Another congrat's to the NARS members that contributed. Having these club activities is a great sense of enjoyment for me. Especially when we can be competitive. Someone once said you can't have fun and still be competitive. NOT.

A sincere thanks to Marian who puts up with all the going's on at our house. Recently I read an article in the National Contest Journal about how this fellow was thanking his wife for putting up with his obsessions and his "goofy" friends. That about sums it up.

W5SB results, 855 Q's, 81 mults, 145,314 total score.

And now on to field day.

73, Bill Denton W5SB
w5sb@juno.com

June VHF QSO Party

As is usually the case, the June VHF QSO Party falls on the second weekend in June. This means I can't tout it at the June club meeting because it was the week before, I can't talk it up at the May meeting because it's too far into June. I can hope to get it in the June newsletter, but it may or may not get out in time for the contest. Therefore I'll try and get some interest by getting this in the May newsletter and hope you paste it on your calendar for June.

The contest runs from 1 PM on Saturday afternoon [June 14th] to 10 PM Sunday night. Operate all bands from 6 meters to Laser Light. Operate SSB, CW or FM. *You may not use repeaters, nor operate on the national 2 meter simplex frequency (146.52) nor simplex on repeater input or output frequencies.*

This is an excellent opportunity for Technician class licensees to discover the joys of VHF propagation. June is a great month for sporadic E propagation, so six meters usually has some very good stuff during the contest. Last year, with 8 watts to a dipole at 15 feet, I worked 100 grid squares, from Oregon to New York and a few Caribbean countries as well.

Two meters and up also has good activity, and the contest will bring out rovers going into rare grid squares. We regularly have rovers near us operating 6 and 2 meters, and 222, 432, 900, and 1296 MHz! There is some effort to get some of the higher bands available as well.

If you have a OSCAR satellite station, bring your elevation down and swing around on 144.200 and 432.100. There is some activity on terrestrial VHF; you'll find it enjoyable now that OSCAR 13 is in orbit.

FM OPERATORS - Clubs in other areas of the country have found this contest to be a great eye opener as to exactly what can be done on FM simplex. FM operators have turned in some very impressive scores by being on and getting the area operators to join in. As the NARS area of membership is bisected by the division of the EM20 and EL29 grid square, it is real easy to work 2 grid squares on FM simplex. With a band opening or a good antenna more grids may be possible. With dual band radios, 2 grids on 2 separate bands is 4 multipliers. If you have 6 or 222 you can add those bands as well. Mobile stations are Rovers and can operate from both grids and hand out QSO's from both grids. (East of 1960 and Kuydendahl is EM20, West of that intersection is EL29, as a rough, not exact point of reference.) The 30th parallel is the dividing line. I suggest the club members use 146.50 as a simplex frequency for the contest. The standard simplex frequencies for the other bands would be used as well (52.525, 223.50, 446.00).

As you probably are aware, all amateur VHF and UHF frequencies are under attack. Congress would be more than happy to sell our frequencies to the highest bidder. We can't buy the frequencies we have, but if we can show activity we can help support the need to keep them. Therefore, operating the contest gets us on the bands; submitting the logs shows that we are there. Remember the 2 MHz we lost on 220 MHz. The FCC looked at the repeater directory as its sole source of an indication of activity. Needless to say we aren't dealing with an intelligent life form when we try to protect our frequencies, but we need to do all we can to protect our resources.

73 Brian N5BA



by Keith Dutson

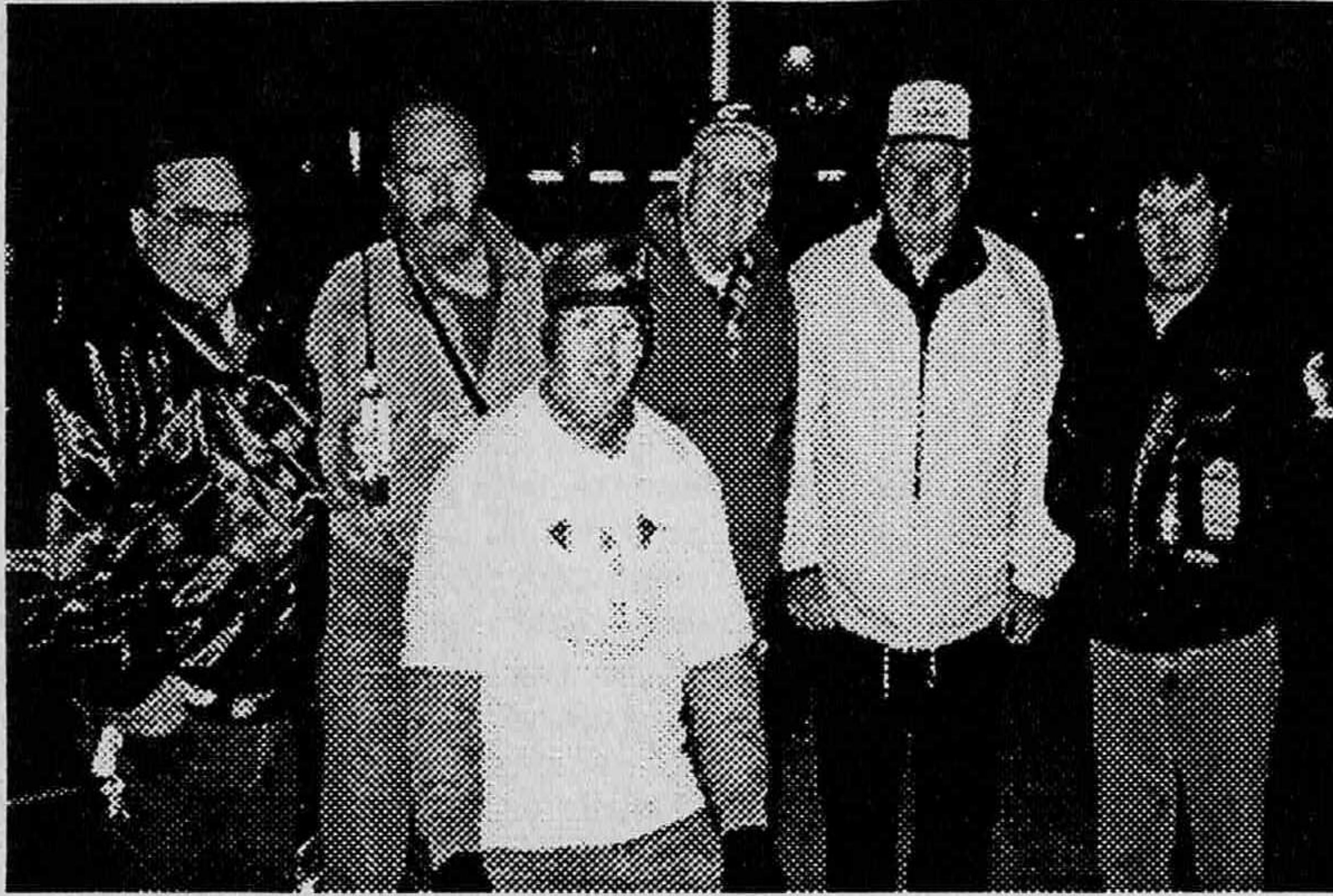
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There are so many exiting events coming in the next two months. On May 17 is the picnic, June 6, 7, 8 is the Dallas Ham-Com and Field Day is June 28, 29. Plus, there will be a new format at our regular General Membership meetings starting May 16; George Carlson will have presentations on technical subjects for hams. So, get out of those Lay-Z-Boys and jump into the action!

I'm still in need of help with the newsletter. Just sign up as a reporter and I'll give you the details. You do not have to be a writer or photographer, but it will help if you can do either.

MDA March of Dimes Walkathon



Special Interest Group (SIG) List

K5ZTY, Bill Stietenroth
893-3901, General Help

W5SB, Bill Denton
281-469-8331, General Help, Antennas

K1OJ, O J Quarles
281-955-1555, HF, General Help

WA5REJ, Allen Majeski
281-353-8652, General Help

WA5SAJ, Larry McCain
281-469-6709, General Help

W5MJ, Madison Jones
281-350-4330, General Help, CW

K8CSG, Bill Gary
281-537-9240, General Help, DX

KC5EZQ, Bill Rister
281-537-8596, ATV, General Help

K5WNO, Deral Kent
281-548-7476, RS12/13, Satellite

KC5RCC, George Carlson
281-376-8307, Electrical Design,
Troubleshooting

KA3BKU, Don Bedell
281-370-6576, Packet

N5BA, Brian Derx
894-5942, VHF, VUCC Card Checking

KC5JZO, Bob Argo
281-288-7430, Computer Operating,
Win'95

WD5DXL, Keith Dutson
281-351-7683, Computer Programming

N5WIZ, Harry Gage
281-370-7488, Basic Advice - RFI

W5VHN, Dick Rooney
281-288-8424, Satellite

K5GQ, Mark Tyler
281-587-0256, Interference

N5ET, Bob Walworth
281-363-0209, DXCC Card Checking

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MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Please send address, phone, email and other changes to Marian Denton at NARS, P.O. Box 690342, Houston, TX 77269-0342.

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 LUNCH BUNCH every
Wednesday - location decided Tuesdays
on the informal morning 2 meter net.

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 PM
28.444 MHz

Net Coordinator Jim, KJ5X

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

Net Coordinator Bill, K8CSG

*All telephone #'s are 281 Area Code

NARS REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 MHz
Digipeter - 145.71 MHz
Call (W5NC) Alias (NARS)

NARS Web Page

<http://www.flash.net/~nars/>

Coordinator HO, WA5MLT
Trustee Walter, KK5LO

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a
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ARRL Club No. 2120

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