

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

November 1997

November Meeting:

DX Trip Planning & 3CA Ops

Come to the meeting Friday, November 21, and learn some travel tips for your own DXpedition or personal travel, and view slides from a recent rare-DX African operation. Jack Dougherty is presenting. He has operated as 3CA/WA8GHZ in Equatorial Guinea this year, and has travelled in 26 countries.

He has lived in Yemen, Post-war Kuwait, Johnston Atoll and other "garden spots." Plan to gain some insight into planning your own DXpedition and hear tall tales, plus see a short slide show of the Equatorial Guinea DX operation.

Keith WD5DXL

Important Dates

Friday, November 21, 7:30 pm - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

Saturday, November 22, 8:30 am - VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main)

Tuesday, November 25, 7:30 pm - NARS Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Clubhouse, 5200 Woodville

Saturday, December 13, Dawn to Dusk, Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance Run, Sam Houston State Park, Huntsville

Contests:

November 15-17 - ARRL November Sweepstakes, Phone

November 29-30 - CQ WW DX, CW

December 5-7 - ARRL 160 Meter

December 13-14 - ARRL 10 Meter

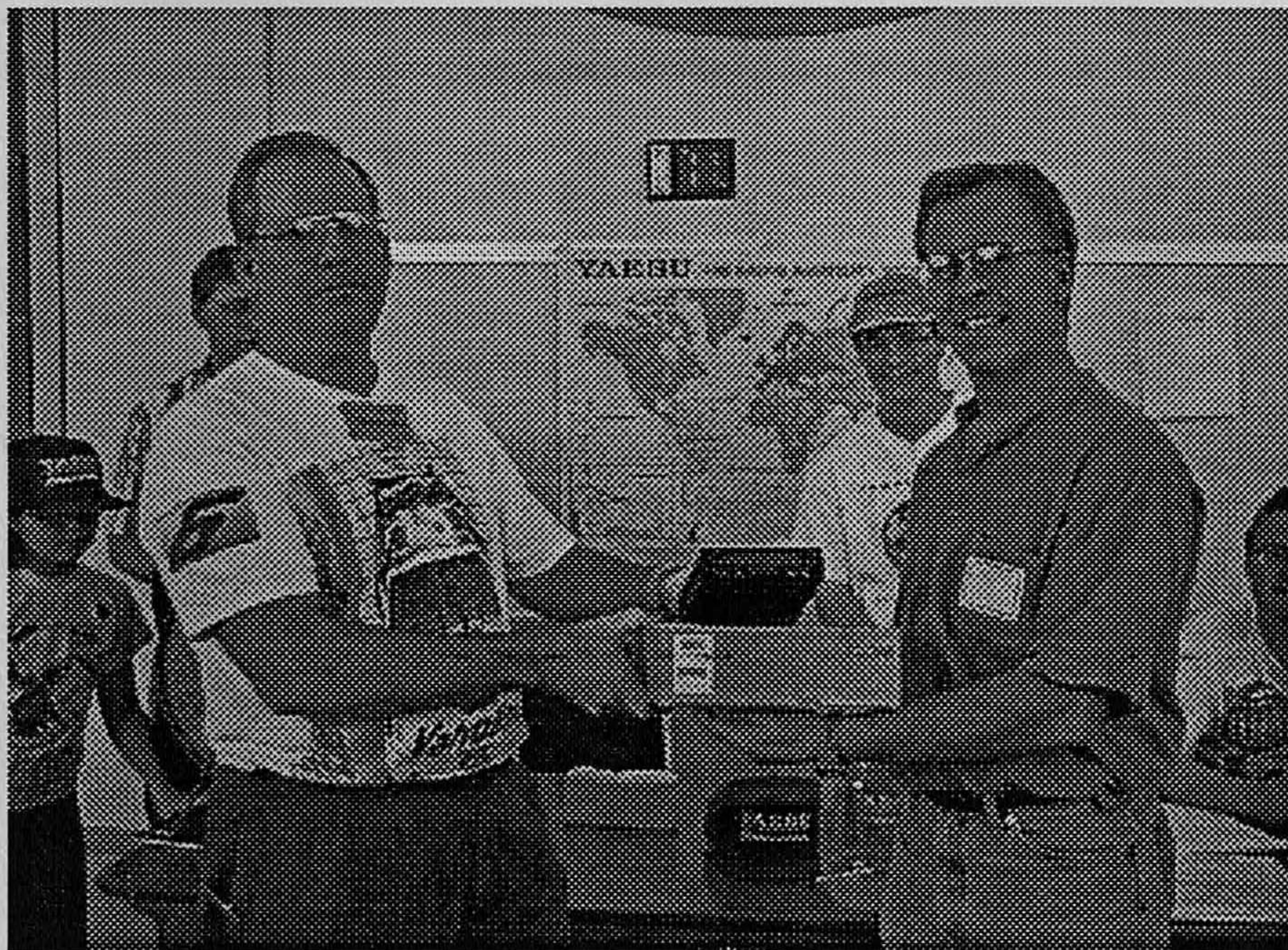
December 31 - ARRL Straight Key Night

Notice:

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

NARS News **deadline** for articles to appear in December issue is Sunday, November 30.

Raffle Winner



Walter KK5LO (left), raffle organizer, presenting ICOM 2710H to winner Curt Furtado.

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

November 1997

Congratulations fellow NARSians on the fourth place finish in class 2A, Field Day 1997. This was an outstanding accomplishment particularly in view of Murphy's visit and the fact that we had over 500 competitors in the class. And hearty congrats to our friends of the Texas DX Society who took first place in class 2A by a big margin. Recap of all the scores and activities of Field Day begins on page 96 of the November QST.

Be sure to reserve Friday evening, November 21, for the NARS monthly meeting so that you can hear about the DXpedition adventures of WA8GHZ in Equatorial Guinea earlier this year. In that same meeting we will elect our officers for 1998. We have a fine slate of people who have agreed to stand for office, the splendid result of KB5ZXO's gentle persuasion and the willingness of some very competent incumbents to serve another term.

Also, be thinking about a home brew project you can bring to show off at the December meeting. This is always a fun event with some very imaginative offerings. W5PDW's portable grounding system of last year comes to mind. In addition to the home brew projects there may also be other curious offerings and opportunities to delight and amaze.

My XYL and I got back home October 26, from a long trip to Europe with some former work mates. It was our first time there. Ten of us rented three automobiles and toured six countries. I don't recommend driving in the major cities there. To put it another way, I felt we were lucky to come out of it all in one piece. If you think driving in Houston is exciting, there is a real thrill awaiting you in places like Budapest and Prague. The police in Prague relieved us of all our Czech money for a minor traffic violation as we were leaving town. All that with gas up to \$4/gallon equivalent. Home never looked so good as it did on our return. There are other stories to tell but not here. Anybody got any spare cash to loan?

Jim Kirk KJ5X

CW Number Trivia

You may receive an RST of 5NN or 57N with the letter "N" serving as a short notation for the number Nine. The other semi-common shorthand numeric is the letter "T" for the numeral Zero, as in 'PWR IS 1TT', or 100 Watts. Although seldom used, and not part of any code test, there is a shorthand CW letter abbreviation for almost every numeral:

1 = A	6 = 6
2 = U	7 = B
3 = V	8 = D
4 = 4	9 = N
5 = E	0 = T

And now for the brainteaser: In a CW QSO, what does character "C" stand for?.....

Jack WA8GHZ

Buy - Sell - Trade

For Sale: Yaseau FL7000 amplifier - \$700.00; Kenwood 742 dualbander w/ duplexer and antenna - \$600.00; AOR handheld scanner (100 - 1300) - \$300.00

Robert Payne N5KUC - Home: 281-259-8017 - Work: 281-363-7594

NARS Board of Directors Meeting 10/28/97

Treasurer's Report - The checkbook balance on September 30, 1997 was \$3542.50.

Programs - December - Home-Brew night and silent auction of parts from Ken Edinburgh's estate.

Texas Trails Endurance Run - December 13th. Need many more volunteers to achieve a two-shift operation.

Radio Raffle - Collected \$1440 on the Radio Raffle ticket sale; expenses totaled \$569.07.

2M Repeater Repairs - Approved reimbursement to Ken Harlan KA5AKG for the replacement antenna he recently installed.

NARS W5NC QSL Card - New QSL cards to be ordered.

Field Day Video - Sending Videotape to ARRL along with an explanatory letter.

Field Day Antennas - Ken Harlan KA5AKG has donated a TA33 beam antenna to NARS.

Bob Argo KC5JZO Secretary

1998 Election of Officers

The following are the candidates for NARS club officers for 1998. Each has accepted the challenge and agreed to serve if elected.

President – Joe Sokolowski KD5KR
Vice President – Dianna Hudspeth KC5VSF
Secretary – Bob Argo KC5JZO
Treasurer – Keith Dutson WD5DXL

Director at Large (2 year term) – Allen Majeski WA5REJ

In addition to these officers the 1998 Board will also consist of :

Bill Gary K8CSG – Director at Large (2nd of 2 year term)
Jim Kirk KJ5X – Immediate Past President
Walter Hock KK5LO – Past President

It looks to be an outstanding year.

Rudy KB5ZXO

VE Session Results

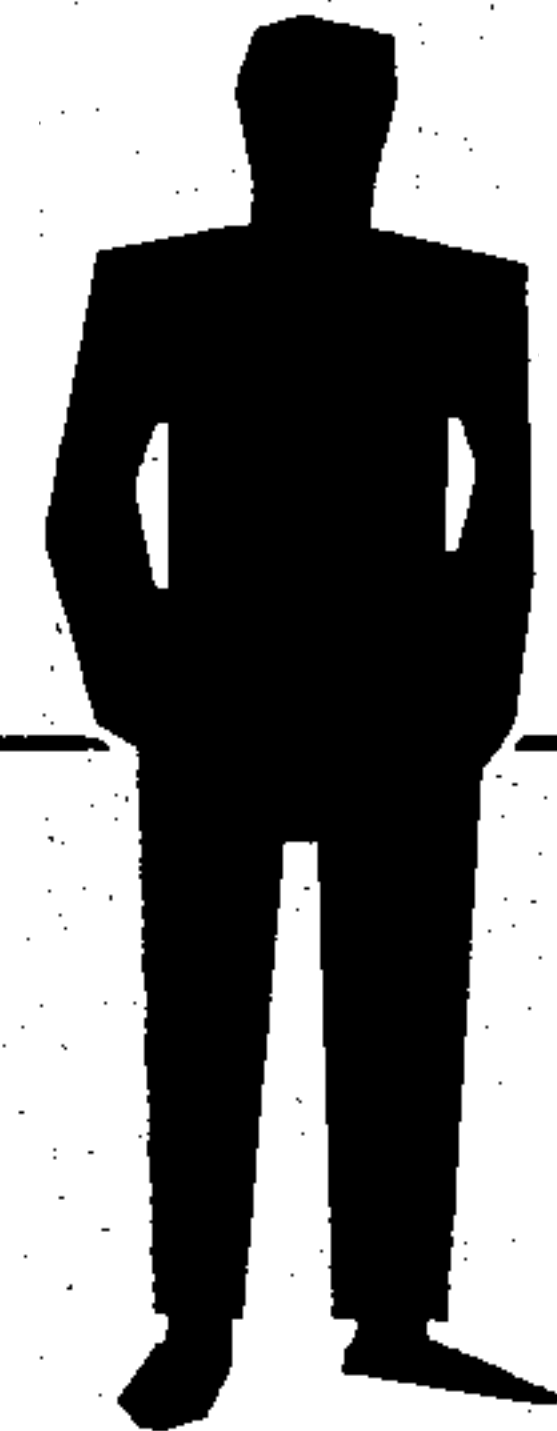
The NARS VE group supervised another examination session on October 25, 1997. Five candidates attempted eight elements and passed all of them -- another 100% pass-rate. Two new Technicians and two new Technician Plus licensees, plus some incremental upgrades via CSCEs. Participating VEs included Bill K8CSG, Bill W5SB, Jack KM5LJ, Jack WA8GHZ, and Rick KZ5E.

Bill K8CSG

From The 1969 ARRL “The Radio Amateurs Operating Manual”

The telegraph call CQ was born on the English Telegraph nearly a century ago as a signal meaning “All stations. A notification to all postal telegraph offices to receive the message.” Its meaning was close to the present meanings of QNC and QST. Like many other telegraph terms which originated on the landlines, CQ was brought over into radio and used as a general call to all ships by the Marconi Company. Other companies used KA until the London Convention of 1912 which adopted CQ as the international general call or “attention” signal. CQ still means, literally, “attention” but in amateur radio its meaning is perhaps more accurately described by Thomas Raddell who compared it to yelling “Hey Mac!” down a drain pipe.

–Louise Ramsey Moreau WB6BBO/W3WRE
submitted by O J K1OJ



by Keith Dutson

Welcome to all the new hams I have been hearing on the air lately. You are all invited to participate in the many, varied activities enjoyed by NARS members.

Check out the topic for this month's meeting; Jack WA8GHZ will do an 'expose' on his recent trip to the eastern coast of Africa. When you come to the meeting, please vote for your favorite candidates for NARS officers; see the adjoining slate of candidates. Read about the latest accomplishments and adventures of our own O J K1OJ, Bill K5ZTY and Bill W5SB in the Contest Connection. Get excited about the possibilities of working a rare DX station in Bill K8CSG's DX News column. If you have upgraded to Tech Plus, please check in to the weekly 10 meter net held each Monday at 8:00 PM. Lastly, call Walter KK5LO and sign up to help with the Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance Run. You'll be glad you did; I'll be there taking pictures for later publication.

Sign up today as a NARS News reporter; see me for details. You do not have to be a writer or photographer, but it will help if you can do either. Call me at 281-351-7683, or send email to kdutson@swbell.net.

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DX News

DX Notes --Haul up the flag, you Dxers, Not half-mast, but all the way; The cycle is done and ended; DXers will have their day! . . .

The Big Bend Sundancers performed admirably in preparing the bands for the CQ WW DX Contest. Although the numbers did not reflect the good conditions which were present, ten and fifteen meters displayed better than average conditions, and fifteen appeared to be the very best of the three popular HF bands. Someone was beating a fine tune on the Big Bass Bongos in the barancas.

The month began with the solar flux index at 88, the A index at 6 and the K index at 3. Throughout the first week of October the numbers stayed in the same range, although band conditions varied considerably. Ten and fifteen meters began to lengthen out at various periods of the day. DX openings began to appear in the evenings, a welcome change after several years of early bedtimes for these bands. As October moved on, the numbers stayed pretty much the same as did DXing. Some of the newer hams and newer DXers began to find lots of folks to work on ten and fifteen meters.

Local Happenings: Steve KD5AIJ called to report he had worked VR6TY on Pitcairn Island. It was his first DX QSO outside of the Americas. Pitcairn, of course, is the island upon which the mutineers of The Bounty settled to hide out from the wrath of the British Navy. Virtually every one of the current residents is descended from those original settlers. Tom Christian (VR6TC), a lineal descendant of Fletcher Christian, who led the mutiny, is the official weatherman, postmaster, pharmacist and radio communicator for the island. I have been talking with Tom off and on for over 25 years. The population of the island has dwindled to approximately 50-60 people, from a high of approximately 250-300 early in this century. While working in Saudi Arabia in 1977 I met a construction engineer whose name is Brian Christian. He is from the other side of the Christian family and is distantly related to Tom Christian. The family's roots are on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea. Steve also reported that he worked an EA3 on 10m the next day. During the weekend he says he worked six new countries, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, Paraguay, Jamaica, Aruba and Canada. During the second weekend, he added French St. Martin to his country total. Michael KM5LA reports working several new countries during the first weekend in October including Liberia and Antarctica. Loyd KD5AIG was heard working 6Y5CI in Jamaica. K5GQ worked Cuba from his mobile rig. W5PDW worked 9J2BO (Zambia) and 7Q7RM (Malawi). KD5AIJ worked VK4FWH in Australia for his 27th country. George K5VUU worked St. Eustasius Isl. with his original callsign obtained via the Vanity program. Frank KC5WDP upgraded his license on Saturday in Humble and worked an FO5 in Tahiti for his longest contact so far, and

his first HF QSO. He followed this later with a number of South American countries and Canada. Gerald W5BA worked KH5/N4BQW on Palmyra, a nice catch.

DX Worked -- ZS6SOA (South Africa - LP AM); VK6LK (Australia); VR6TY (Pitcairn Island); HS0ZBJ (Thailand); EX/KH6QJ (Kyrghzstan); VK2FLA (Australia); VK4KTS (Australia); YC9WZJ (Indonesia); JA1CG (Japan); 9K2HN (Kuwait); OF1XT (Finland); F/HB9LAF (Swiss chap on vacation in France); VK4NEC (Australia); ZL1CS (New Zealand); EM1HO (Ukraine); JA9PPC (Japan); 9Q5HX (Zaire); BV5GQ (Taiwan); YC0AN (Indonesia); ZS6PPB (SO. Africa); XU2FB (Cambodia); 7Q7RM (Malawi); 9J2BO (Zambia); FH5CB (Mayotte Isl.); 5H3JA (Tanzania); FR5DX (Reunion Island); ZM7A (Chatham Islands); 3A7G (Monaco).

DX Heard -- 9X0A (Zambia); AP2JZB (Pakistan); Z21 Cs (Zimbabwe); FB5QB (Tahiti); ZS2JL (So. Africa); 5Z4PL (Kenya); ZL4OK (New Zealand).

QSL Routes -- KG4CM via N5FTR; VR6TY via POB 10, Pitcairn Isl. via New Zealand; HS0ZBJ via W8GIO (CB address only - no bureau); XU2FB via N4JR; 7Q7RM via G0IAS; 9J2BO via W6ORD; 3A7G via bureau.

DXpedition activity: The K7K operation on Kure Island functioned well through the end of its planned stay. They had planned to operate from Midway, if briefly, when they stopped there on their way back from Kure. I didn't hear them there anytime, although I was looking. Some German chaps are heading for Libya and activity from 5A1A during late November: worth looking for.

On Oct. 6 at 0013Z I worked my first VK station on ten meters since the sunspots went away. Nice QSO -- 5/8 signals in both directions with 100 watts. I scanned my 3x5 file cards to see when I had last worked a VK4 on 10m. It was VK4AAU in February, 1992.

Ben KC5JBE told me one evening that he had heard a JA station on 15-meters. I went to fifteen and found the station, JA1CG, who was Haruo in Saitama, Japan. Haruo and I go back to 1979, when I asked him one evening about the current price of Kenwood TS830s in Tokyo then. I learned that Haruo was a VP of NEC, and a true gentlemen. One of my Aramco friends was planning to transit through Tokyo shortly, and Haruo gave me his phone number. When my buddy arrived there, he called Haruo, who met him, escorted him to a radio store and helped him to negotiate the purchase of the TS830 that I still have today. During our recent QSO Haruo asked for my grid square. After some discussion on the ten meter net, the local experts confirmed that I am, indeed, in Haruo's desired grid square -- EL29. Thus I was able to partially repay Haruo for his help some

eighteen years ago with my QSL confirming EL29 for him.

Terry Cox W5DRM of Conroe, is a chap who let his license lapse and then returned to the game after some years. Just about a year ago I met him at one of our VE exam sessions. Oct. 18 our paths crossed again at the Convention in Humble. Terry told me that in that year he has worked 185 countries, and he was carrying over 100 QSL cards to be checked for his DXCC. Not bad for one year after being away for a while -- especially when the sunspots have been relatively scarce. Nice going, Terry.

WA8GHZ sent me an e-mail message describing an 0300 CDST QSO he had with ZL7AA (Chatham Isl.) on 7003 KHz. Reminds me of the phone call I received at about the same time of day twenty-five years ago. When told there was a Chatham Islands station on 20m, I tiptoed down to the shack and fired up the radios. Found the station, called him and worked him. Told him my name, his report and my location in Columbus, Ohio. His reply went something like this. "My, my. The telephones must be ringing in Columbus tonight. You're my fifth Columbus station in a row!" Even before packet we had our ways. During the CQ Worldwide DX contest I worked Chatham again, ZM7A.

The CQ WW DX Contest provided some golden opportunities to our newer hams and DXers. Ten meters provided some opportunities to those interested in chasing DX with a minimum license class. I heard Mike K5NZ leapfrogging me up the band working South American and Caribbean stations. Overall, band conditions were not bad for the contest. My goals were relatively modest. I set out to work 150 contacts and hoped to achieve DXCC, i.e., work 100 countries. By mid-Sunday afternoon these had both been achieved, along with 30-plus CQ zones. Not bad for conditions as they existed. I worked some reasonably good DX along the way including Kenya, New Caledonia, Tanzania, Reunion Island, Sao Tome, Chatham Islands and a few others. Most of my contest countries must be considered essentially routine, however.

All in all, it was fun and good to see the improved conditions over the last two or three years. The fifteen meter band was very good all weekend, loaded with contesters. Some of the USA 2-letter types turned their processors fully clockwise for calling CQ on "their" frequencies. I heard one station which was so bad I could hear him over forty kilohertz, and he was only about ten over 9. There must be a lot of new DXers, based on some of the lousy operating practices observed during the contest. Some simply do not know how to make a quick contest QSO!

Bill Gary K8CSG

Contest Connection

The 1997 Texas Armadillo Chase

Our own K1OJ realized that there was no CW contest planned anywhere in the US for the weekend of October 26. So before complete panic set in, OJ, with the help of a few NARS cronies, came up with the idea of sponsoring a national, but Texas-flavored, contest to be called the Texas Armadillo Chase.

One thing led to another, and before you could say QRZ, a national following for the contest arose like a groundswell. Turnout was large for the QRP-based, 4-hour, Sunday Armadillo sprint and there was much competition to contact TX stations for 5 points over less desirable 1-pointers from other states. KR5DX was the 'special event' Armadillo station which was good for a 3,000 bonus-point contact. Prizes included a "9-bander" stuffed Armadillo, and full color 'wall-art' certificates are ready for mailing to contest participants.

When asked for his view of this successful new national contest, OJ was quoted as, "Huh? Gotta finish this Q....."

Jack WA8GHZ

Field Day - Field Day

Looks like this was a good year for NARS Field Day Participants. In the November issue of QST the ARRL Field Day results were announced. We were all pleased to see that a good effort from the guys and gals of NARS placed us 4th in the 2A category. This is the most competitive of the classes and any time you finish in the top ten, that is a real achievement. To finish 4th is especially good. We had some problems that we overcame including picking up the phone tower, antenna and all, and moving it 100 feet or so,

to give us more separation from the CW station. We had experienced interference from the very beginning between the phone and CW station. That solved most of the problems and we were able to get down to some serious contesting. The only downside was the phone guys had to drink the Yohoo Cola. Wait till next year!

More recently, another type of field day was held. The QRP guys and gals got their chance in the field. This has some of the same similarities as the ARRL event. Everyone packs up their antennas and gear and heads out to the site of their choice. Many are in a national forest, on mountain tops, fields, parking lots, woods, lakes, rivers, desert or just about any place you could imagine.

K5ZTY and I found our way to the back 40 on the K5NZ ranch near Bedia Texas. K1OJ did his stint at his digs in Possum Hollow, northeast of Tomball. Uncle Zed and I got an early morning start from Houston. We had a gourmet breakfast at a little French restaurant in Tomball and then were off to Bedia. When we arrived at the ranch we off-loaded the gear from Bill's new Silverado to a really old jeep that I understand belongs to KK5LO. It had neither license tags nor inspection sticker. I didn't realize how much gear Bill had brought until we started loading the jeep. I thought since it was QRP, all the equipment would be in a shoe box. Not so! When we got it all stacked and tided down on the jeep we looked like Jed Clampitt and the Beverly Hillbillies heading out through the woods.

I understood why Bill didn't want to drive his new pickup out to the camp site. The narrow roads and brush would have done a number on his paint job. After taking a wrong turn or two we finally arrived. Bill had constructed a 20 meter Lazy-H from

a previous operation and it was still intact after having a close call with a tornado that had skipped through the NZ ranch and downed some trees a few days before. We strung up a 40 meter dipole, assembled the two stations and were ready to go, although we were going to get started a little late. We had some problems with RF getting into the keying circuit of his OHR-400. We didn't really find the cause. It went away so we were able to get started about a hour late. This was a 6 hour contest and we had already lost some valuable time.

We had two stations set up; both were computer controlled running NA contesting programs. Bill operated his OHR-400 on 20 meters and I operated his Heathkit HW-8 on 40 meters using the dipole. Both of the antennas were around 60-70 feet up in the trees and worked great. All this equipment was operated on batteries. Conditions were pretty good and the Q's began to come in. I had some trouble getting used to the HW-8. It's not quite as selective as my FT-990. It was a nice day to be out in the woods with the radios.

When it was over I asked Bill, "Well how do think we did?," since I have little experience with this sort of thing. He said with the late start and the Q rate not what he had expected, he felt a little disappointed. We packed up and headed back to Houston less than excited about the day's work.

The results were released this week and guess who was at the top of the list? ... K5ZTY and W5SB number 1! Guess who was the next best score? ... K1OJ! He was not the official 2nd place winner however. I think an Armadillo ate his log.

Good contesting or DX, or whatever makes you happy ... de W5SB

Public Service Events

Your radio skills are needed.

Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance Run,
Saturday, December 13

Contact: Walter Hock, 281-350-6633

This will be the second year NARS members have handled communications at this prestigious event with more than 600 participants. It is held in Sam Houston State

Park, where the runners circumnavigate the entire park for a whopping 50 mile run. Bring STRONG batteries.

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY, 713-893-3901
Allen Majeski WA5REJ, 281-353-8652
Bill Denton W5SB, 281-469-8331,

Antennas

O J Quarles K1OJ, 281-955-1555, HF
Larry McCain WA5SAJ, 281-469-6709
Madison Jones W5MJ, 281-350-4330,
CW

Bill Gary K8CSG, 281-537-9240, DX
Bill Rister KC5EZQ, 281-537-8596, ATV

Satellite:

Deral Kent K5WNO, 281-548-7476,
RS12/13
Dick Rooney W5VHN, 281-288-8424

Electrical Design, Troubleshooting:

George Carlson KC5RCC, 281-376-8307

Packet:

Don Bedell KA3BKU, 281-370-6576

VHF:

Brian Derx N5BA, 713-894-5942

Computer Operating, Win'95:

Bob Argo KC5JZO, 281-288-7430

Computer Programming:

Keith Dutson WD5DXL, 281-351-7683

Interference:

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

Mark Tyler K5GQ, 281-587-0256

Card Checking Awards Managers:

DXCC - Bob Walworth N5ET,
Linda Walworth KE5TF, 281-363-0209
WAS, VUCC - Brian Derx N5BA;
713-894-5942

NARS Public Information Officer:
Open

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Keith Dutson WD5DXL 351-7683

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Walter Hock KK5LO 350-6633
Rudy Novotny KB5ZXO 251-4546
Mark Condit KM5AO 550-5659
Bill Gary K8CSG 537-9240

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Please send address, phone, email and other changes to Marian Denton at NARS, P.O. Box 690342, Houston, TX 77269-0342, email W5NC@juno.com

FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL

Marian Denton, 469-8331, for General Information and Bill Gary, 537-9240, for VE Exam Information or send email 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
Digipeater - 145.71 MHz
Call (W5NC) Alias (NARS)

NARS Web Page

<http://www.flash.net/~nars/>
Coordinator H O WA5MLT
Trustee Walter KK5LO

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Send all Articles and Materials for the
Newsletter to: 24415 Deep Meadow,
Tomball, TX 77375, (281) 351-7683,
email kdutson@swbell.net

Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a
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ARRL Club No. 2120

NARS Mailing Address: P.O. Box 690342,
Houston, TX 77269-0342