

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

March 1998

Mobileering Is Topic Of March 20th Talk

Alex Stalinsky WA5UHT, proprietor of City Electronic Supply and long time mobileer (operating mobile), will give us his expert insights and advice on mobile amateur radio.

If you are now a mobileer or want to be, particularly on HF, you shouldn't miss this one.

Jim Kirk KJ5X

Important Dates

Friday, March 20, 7:30 PM - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 28, 8:30 AM - VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

Tuesday, March 31, 7:30 PM - NARS Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Clubhouse, 5200 Woodville

Contests:

March 21-22, Bermuda

March 28-29, CQ WW WPX, Phone

April 13, ARRL VHF/UHF Spring Sprint, 144 MHz

April 21, ARRL VHF/UHF Spring Sprint, 222 MHz

April 25-26, Texas QSO Party

April 29, ARRL VHF/UHF Spring Sprint, 432 MHz

Notice:

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

Deadline for articles to appear in April issue is Tuesday, March 31.

Novice Class Scheduled for '98

- Second Notice -

The 1998 edition of the NARS license class for Novice & Technician will begin on April 2nd, and continue for eight weeks (error in last notice reported fourteen weeks). It will be held at the Prince of Peace Community Center, 19222 Tomball Parkway (Hwy 249), starting at 7:00 PM.

The first night will consist of registration and an introduction to Ham Radio, with actual classes beginning the following Tuesday night (April 7). The remaining classes are on Tuesday and Thursday of each week; there are fifteen sessions in all. The course covers Morse code and rules and regulations covered in the elements required for the Technician Plus license.

Registration cost is \$20, not including the textbook *Now You're Talking* published by the ARRL. The book may be purchased for less than \$20 from Radio Shack, EPO and Houston Amateur Radio Supply. For more information, or to reserve a seat, call Marian Denton KB5SGV, 281-469-8331, or Bill Rister KC5EZQ, 281-537-8596.

Joe Sokolowski KD5KR

HAM Web Site

There is a web site, www.mysite.com/gvang, which has over 1400 links to everything one could possibly imagine about ham radio. It is the product of a local ham, Gene VanGilder K5FQ. It's easy to use and has it all. The address will soon change to www.mysite.com/k5fq.

Jim Kirk KJ5X

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

March 1998

Where will it all end? Everyone these days is polling, or surveying the public for whatever... Last week, USA Today came out with a new survey; apparently three out of four people make up 75 percent of the population! And NARS is also getting into the act.

You may have noticed (at least, I hope you did...) a questionnaire along with your copy of this month's NARS newsletter. It concerns our packet node currently on 145.71 MHz. The equipment is presently located at the Houston NW Medical Center on FM 1960. Some time back (2 years or more), those folks working with this mode of communication were frustrated with its unreliability and marginal coverage due to the environmental conditions and limited antenna height. Money was donated by some members to help finance a modernization program. It took a long time to come up with another site that addressed these problems. Space on a commercial tower in the Rose Hill area was found, but at a cost of \$50 per month rent. Dollar wise, it's a very good deal when you compare the going rate for space on this type of structure, especially with a three month negotiated "escape clause" in the contract.

However, during this period of talking, thinking and looking, some users moved away, some lost interest and some just disappeared without a trace. Oh, there are still users of the present system, and hope is that a relocation and improvement of the node will rekindle interest in this mode of communication. Some NARS members seem to feel that the club would be committing itself to an investment benefiting only a few, and that the money spent could better serve the majority in other ways.

This is why we need your input. Tell the Board what you think by returning your questionnaire prior to, or by the next general meeting on March 20th. Your opinion can make a difference!

Joe Sokolowski KD5KR

Public Service Events Your radio skills are needed.

MDA March of Dimes WalkAmerica, Sunday, April 26

Contact: Paul Owen N5NXS, home: 281-894-7758, work: 713-644-8872, email: n5nxs@flash.net

Location: George Bush Park (Cullen Barker Park), just west of Hwy 6 and Westheimer.

We will need to show up at 7:30am and the walk will start at 9am. I will need about 10 hams for this event. We should be done about 2pm. If you would like to volunteer, please call or send email (see above).

Paul N5NXS

VE Session Results

The NARS / Compaq VEs conducted a regularly scheduled test session on Saturday, February 28, at the Tomball Community Center. Five candidates took a total of eleven elements. Nine elements were passed and two were failed. The session produced three new Technician class Hams, one Extra class upgrade and one CSCE for future use. The VE team included Jim Kirk KJ5X, Walter Holmes K5WH, Dick Rooney W5VHN, Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY, Bruce Wright WC5CW, Walter Hock KK5LO, Jack Dougherty WA8GHZ, and, as usual, our administrative secretary, Willie Southard KB5TES, who always does a great job of keeping the stats.

Bill K5ZTY

NARS Board of Directors Meeting 2/24/98

Bob Argo KC5JZO, Secretary/Treasurer's Report – The checkbook balance on January 31, 1997 was \$5953.13.

Programs – March – Alex Stalinsky WA5UHT of City Electronic Supply on mobile antennas.

Rose Hill Node – On hold pending membership survey.

Novice Class – Instructors lined up and training materials on hand.

NARS Historical File – Joe Sokolowski named club historian.

Public Information Officer – Name submitted for this office.

Administrative – Computer used for administration to be upgraded with more disk space and new software.

Club Contesting – TR logging program has been purchased for use in Club contesting events.

Annual Picnic – Date set for May 9, 1998.

Bob Argo KC5JZO, Secretary

DX News

Of all the fish that swim or swish to radio's deep autocracy, There's none possess such haughtiness As the DX Aristocracy...

One wonders about the apparent splurge of DXpeditions as one looks into March and beyond. One suspects that the Big Bend Sundancers have been doing their magic tricks again. The faint rumble from the Big Bass Bongos in the barancas could be heard sporadically as propagation appeared to improve -- if in a somewhat spotty manner. There was a reasonable opening into Europe over the weekend of Feb. 7-8. One wonders if KM5OE may be the artistic beater of the Big Bass Bongo during his visits to West Texas? Loyd is heading for Curacao late this month to photograph an eclipse. Good luck Loyd!

February began with the solar flux index at 89, the A index at 10 and the K index at 3; not fantastic numbers for good DXing. Nonetheless, DX conditions on Sunday, February 1, were not bad, with fairly good DX available for much of the day on various bands. The SFI fell toward the lower eighties, which brought a few surprisingly good openings into Europe and Japan, as well as propagation for the Spratly operation. The A-index promptly climbed to 11, which brought some relatively poor bands. At mid-month, the SFI climbed to 107, with very low A and K indices. Good conditions resulted, with good openings into Asia and the Spratly DXpedition. The SFI fell back a bit later on, but as month's end approached it was moving upward again.

LOCAL EVENTS: Gerald W5BA reported working some good DX, i.e., 7X2R?, LZ1KPP, S51WD, VP2EZ, YO2BV, YS1X, YU7CF, Z32XA, D68YN, CN2IB and 9J2AM. Jim KJ5X received his Willis Island QSL on Feb. 2. K1OJ worked 3W5FM in Vietnam on 20m CW. KD5AIJ worked EA7HBP on 20m in Spain and D44BS (Cape Verde Islands). Steve, KD5AIJ, worked several new countries; Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Uganda, St. Helena, etc. Mike KM5LA said he received a QSL from 3B8CF via the Mauritius postage gambit. He also reports working several new countries, including FM7 (Martinique) on 75-meters, ZK1DI on 17m and Zambia (9J) on 30m. KJ5X

finally has proper identification on his Tahoe. Nice tags, Jim. Conrad W5MN reports working C91 (Mozambique), 5W1 (W. Samoa), and S79 (Seychelle Islands); he also worked Spratly (9M0C) on two bands the first day. Bob (N5ET) was heard working 9M0C on 15-meters. W5MJ worked HF0POL (South Shetland Is.) from his car while on the way home. Dick Rooney W5VHN was bird watching when Crozet Islands appeared on 20-meters. He made it up Monday evening by working Spratly (9M0C) and then catching Crozet after several days. Eleven more to go, Dick!. When I called to alert him to the Spratly station, he told me I had worked the station right on his (Dick's) coattails. KM5OE worked Spratly on 12-meters and 15-meters. KD5AIJ worked 12 new countries during the weekend of February 21-22, all on CW. In addition to some relatively common ones, he worked 9X0A (Rwanda) and PY0ZFO (Fernando de Noronha). Best of all, he worked K1OJ... on CW... QRP!!!

DX WORKED: D2AI (Angola) 20m 2358; ES1MW (Estonia) 20m 1426Z; 5X1T (Uganda) 20m 1936Z; 9J2AM (Zambia) 20m 2028Z; ZK1DI (So. Cook Is.) 10m 2039Z; 9X0A (Rwanda) 15m 2046; TU2ML (Ivory Coast) 20m 1857Z; KC4AAA (Antarctica) 20m 0130Z; YB2PBX (Indonesia) 15m 2313Z; CN8NK (Morocco) 15m 1634Z; A22EW (Botswana) 20m 2012Z; ZS6AMX 20m 2028Z; RA3FM (Eur. Russia) 20m 1449Z; EM1HO (Antarctica) 20m 0135Z; JA7YAL 15m 2257Z; JA3CZY (Japan) 20m 2313Z; JR3IIR (Japan) 20m 0021Z; RU3DVR (Russia) 15m 1408Z; SV2CCR (Greece) 15m 1424Z; 9G1AA (Ghana) 20m 1827Z; Z22JE (Zimbabwe) 20m 1855Z; KA4IST/KH5 (Palmyra Island) 20m 0259Z; 9M0C (Spratly) 40m (CW, guys!) 1147Z; 3W6KA (Vietnam) 15m 0046Z; RN3ZZ (Russia) 15m 1404Z; ZB2JO (Gibraltar) 15m 1452Z; C91LCK 20m 0029Z; ES80J (Estonia) 20m 1504Z; ZS6LP (South Africa) 15m 1707Z; 6W1QV (Senegal) 15m 1603Z; A35RK (Tonga) 2020Z; VK7KO (Tasmania) 15m 2314Z; DU1KT (Philippines) 15m 2125Z.

DX HEARD (NOT WORKED): GI0TIC (No. Ireland) 20m 1434Z; A61AJ 75m 0133Z; 9K2MU (Kuwait) 40m 0327Z; 9K2ZZ (Kuwait) 20m

1505Z; VU2DK (India) 20m 1405Z; 7Q7RM (Malawi) 20m 1906Z; ET3BT (Ethiopia) 20m 2115Z; ZA1MH (Albania) 20m 2120Z; 7Q7SB (Malawi) 20m 2100Z; SV2ASP/A (Mt. Athos) 20m 1403Z; 9M0C (Spratly) 30m 1420Z; FT5WG (Crozet) 1406Z; TT8JFC (Chad) 15m 1426Z; RK8AH (Russia) 15m 1410Z.

QSL ROUTES: 5X1T via ON5NT; YS1X via OH2BU; HC8GR via NE8Z; 9J2AM via JA0JHA; 9X0A via DL5WM; 9K2ZZ via W8CNL; EM1HO via I2PJA; CT98AHU via CT1AHU; TU2ML via W4WRM; 9M0C via G3SWH; 9G1AA via PA2FAS; KA4IST/KH5 via AC7DX; FT5WG via F6APU; C91LCK via I4LCK.

With improvement in the weather, it looks like the DXpeditioners are getting out and about. Several rumors began floating about early in February. One had a Spanish crew heading for Annobon Island in March -- several others attempts were aborted in 1997. Not surprisingly, this planned operation was cancelled again before the month was out. HB9ABO advises an operation will take place from St. Brandon (3B6) early in May. A group of Czech stations will be active in the Pacific, i.e. FO, A35, 5W, KH8, and possibly Rotuma (3D2/R) beginning late in February and extending through much of March. Three Belgian operators, including Tiny (ON4CAT) will operate from 5A beginning March 2. A group from the UK was planning an operation from Spratly during the second half of February. KA4IST and others planned an operation from Palmyra, followed by a visit to Kingman Reef near the end of February. Near the end of the month, it looked like weather conditions might shift the second phase of the operation from Kingman Reef to Howland Island. K8XP announced plans for a trip to Wake Island early in March. Some German chaps plan an operation from the Chatham Islands early in March. Per, LA7DFA, is QRV until October as JX7DFA. He will also be QRV from 1400 to 1500z every Saturday on 18090 kHz, looking for USA stations. ZK3PM will be operating from Tokelau Island for nearly two years, unfortunately with a poor rig/antenna situation. A planned trip to Rodriguez Island capped off the rumor mill.

Continued on page 4

DX News continued

BALLAD OF THE DX WIDOW

Mama, don't let your babies grow up to
chase countries,
Don't let them get towers and beams, and
stuff,
Let them be hunters and golfers and such.
Mama, don't let your babies grow up to
chase countries.
He's always at home, but he's always
alone,
Looking for rare ones to work!
DXers like smoky old hamfests and clear
winter mornings,
Like warm Kenwoods and rare ones that
call in the night.
Stacked monobanders and two-holer
Alphas, And longpath at breaking of day.
You won't understand him, but if the
band's good, He'll just be going his way.

The Spratly Island Operation by the British chaps came up on February 11, with 9M0C operating on 21295 kHz and listening above 21300. The pileup was a little slow to build but the "pack" was soon "in full bellow". I called a number of NARS DXers to alert them and then watched the Olympic Games on television. A similar game was being played on 20-meters with 9M0C on 14195 kHz, listening above 14200. This operation was scheduled for approximately ten days to two weeks duration. The QSL manager was announced as G3SWH. Not surprisingly, the British ran a pretty smooth operation despite the bellowing of the pileups. As the days progressed the operation appeared to be running smoothly as the team worked virtually all of the HF bands.

My second 15m QSO was achieved with either one or two calls (forget which); a real piece of cake. I suspect this DXpedition will cause a lot of the demand for Spratly to disappear for a while. Near the end of the DXpedition, it was fascinating to hear 9M0C calling CQ in various places, finding no one replying to his calls, and then appearing somewhere else to find some action. The team logged over 63000 QSOs before the DXpedition ended. Well done, chaps!

I loaned my copy of the story of the 3Y0PI DXpedition to someone and I have forgotten who it was. If the individual reads this, I would like to have the book back.

Bill Gary K8CSG

Update on Solar Flux Prediction

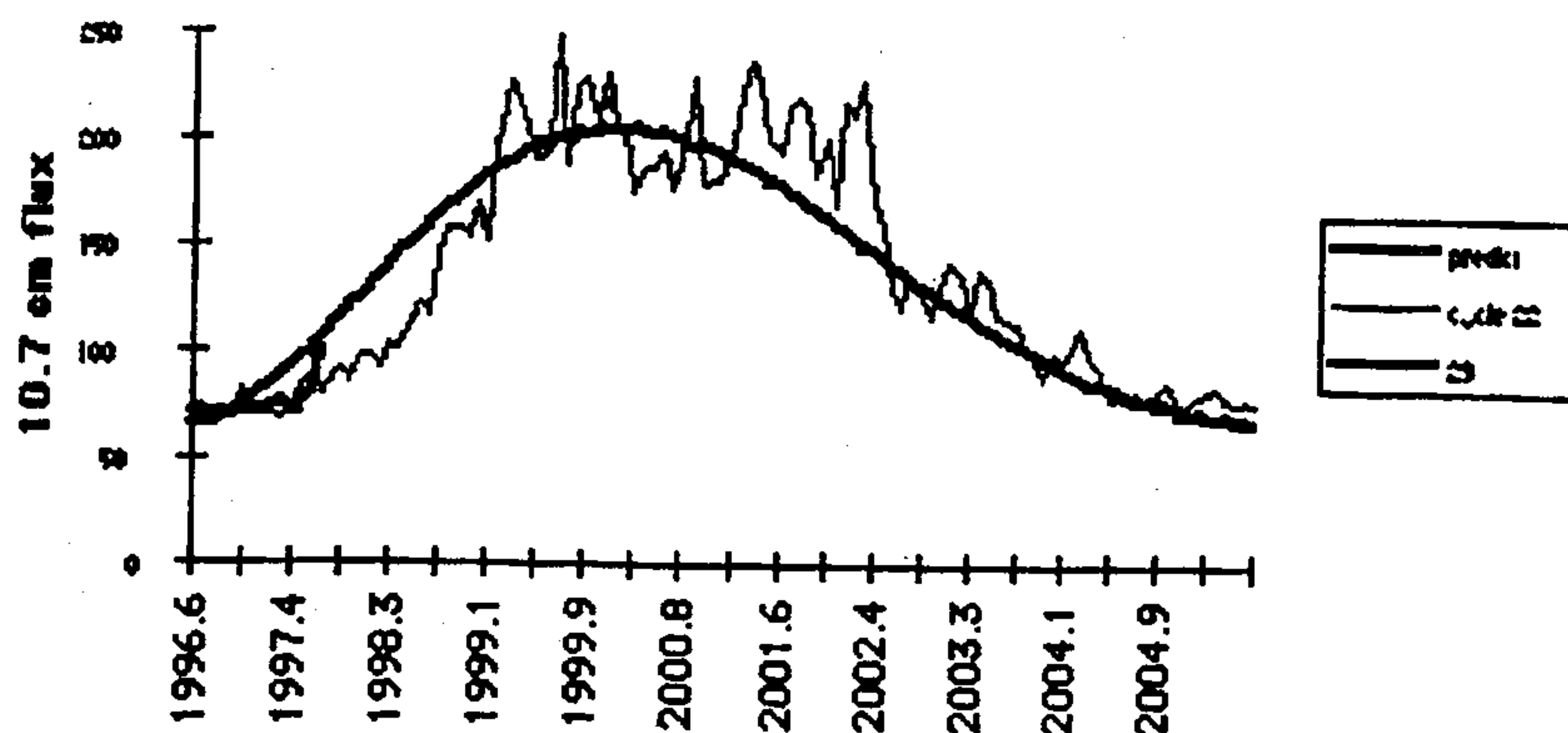
The Space Environment Agency has released the latest figures on solar flux. Keep in mind that the graph shown below is predicting Cycle 23 to reach a smoothed sunspot number maximum of 160 (± 30) early in the year 2000. The smoothed flux maximum is expected to be 205 (± 30).

Since they expect Cycle 23 activity to be comparable to recent cycles, these plots may be used to get a general idea of what to expect in the next 10 years. They caution that it is important to note that they are not attempting to forecast the magnitude or time of a specific event: rather they are providing general

guidance for the frequency distribution of events during Cycle 23. The solid line represents the smoothed predictions.

I hope the SEC graph provides for a good outlook while turning the bands.

H. Gage N5WIZ



by Keith Dutson

S
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We need to get the word out about the Novice Class. See the article in this issue for details.

Check out the new column from our Webmaster, H. O. WA5MLT. This month he covers the basics of navigating the NARS web site.

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.

Origin of "HAM"

"Ham: a poor operator. A 'plug'"

That's the definition of the word given in G. M. Dodge's 'The Telegraph Instructor' even before radio. The definition has never changed in wire telegraphy. The first wireless operators were landline telegraphers who left their offices to go to sea or to man the coastal stations. They brought with them their language and much of the tradition of their older profession.

In those early days, spark was king and every station occupied the same wavelength -or, more accurately perhaps,

every station occupied the whole spectrum with its broad spark signal. Government stations, ships, coastal stations and the increasingly numerous amateur operators all competed for time and signal supremacy in each other's receivers. Many of the amateur stations were very powerful. Two amateurs, working each other across town, could effectively jam all the other operations in the area. When this happened, frustrated commercial operators would call the ship whose weaker signals had been blotted out by amateurs and say "SRI OM THOSE #&\$!@ HAMS ARE JAMMING YOU."

Amateurs, possibly unfamiliar with the real meaning of the term, picked it up and applied it to themselves in true "Yankee Doodle" fashion and wore it with pride. As the years advanced, the original meaning has completely disappeared.

- Louise Ramsey Moreau
W3WRE/WB6BBO

From the 1969 ARRL "The Radio Amateur's Operating Manual"

Submitted by O J Quarles K1OJ

On The Web

Frequently I get questions about the NARS web site (www.flash.net/~nars), so this month I thought I might explain a couple of recent updates and other stuff.

The new look was designed for most 15" monitors at a medium resolution of 800x600 pixels. With these two requirements met, there should be "NO" scrollbars appearing on any of the four frames (which I will describe later). Depending on other monitor sizes and resolutions, the look will vary. Generally, the larger the monitor and the higher the resolution it tends to look better.

The site is best viewed with Netscape 2.0 or later. However, I would recommend Netscape's new Navigator 4.x or later, a part of Netscape Communicator. Due to industry pressure and the US Justice Department's ruling with regards to Microsoft, Netscape has recently made Navigator free. They have also released Navigator as a standalone product.

So, ... you are no longer required to install the entire Communicator product. Who knows what the future brings, hopefully Netscape and Navigator will not go the way of the Betamax video. If so, we can quickly adjust our web site to accommodate the change. Our web site can also be viewed with IE version 3.x or later; this version supported frames. Now, ... a little about the NARS web site!

The NARS web site now employs Netscape's "frame" technology. When you first arrive at the web site, you will see four frames or panes (the new techie term for frames). The panes have the following functional names: menu, banner, body and footer.

Menu pane - On the left is the stationary "menu" pane where you make your

request, selections, or picks for specific information (detailed later).

Banner pane - At the top, you see our stationary, ad hoc NARS "banner" pane that proudly says this is W5NC - web home of the Northwest Amateur Radio Society.

Body pane - Below the banner pane is the "body" pane. It's this pane that repopulates with specific topic information that you select in the menu pane.

Footer pane - Finally at the bottom, you see the "footer" pane. The footer pane contains clickable points for sending Marian KB5SGV e-mail of club administrative interests, or myself, H O WA5MLT for suggestions, comments, or complaints about our web site. In addition, the footer pane contains a horizontal scrolling ticker that says this is W5NC, welcome, come and join us at 28.444 and 146.06/66 MHz.

The menu pane contains the following selections: Flash; Repeater; Newsletters; Membership; QRZ Lookup; Officers; Activities; Application; VE Exams; Slides; Resource List; Links; QSL Check; Tech Topics.

The "Flash" selection is intended to populate the body pane with short notices of time value or current event information.

The "Newsletter" selection provides an opportunity to review current and past newsletters. So far, we have posted 18 months of club newsletter information thanks to Keith and all of you for sending in articles.

The "Membership" section is probably the most important and volatile. It requires

weekly attention. If you are not on the list let Marian KB5SGV, Keith WD5DXL and me WA5MLT know.

The "QRZedd" selection allows you to quickly go to the QRZedd callsign look up page from the front of our web site. This works great for contesting and DXing.

And finally, without going into all of the possible selections, there is the VE Exams selection. This selection makes it possible to get the latest info on what's required and where to upgrade.

Currently, I am working on posting a list of past club officers, thanks to Ken KA5AKG and Joe KD5KR. E-mail me, wa5mlt@flash.net, with your questions, ideas for future web site improvements, suggested links, notification of broken links and Flash information.

Don't you think the animated graphic is cute?

73 de H. O. WA5MLT

Contest Connection

Get ready for the Texas QSO Party. It's the weekend of April 25-26.

We plan to put on a major club effort. Plans are underway to get a lot of stations and counties on the air. I will be talking to those who want to put a station on the air. We will ASSIGN operators to go to that station. OJ and I are coordinating it. Looks like at least 4 mobiles and a number of fixed stations will be working a multi in various counties.

Bill Denton W5SB

Welcome

Join us in welcoming the following new NARS members: February

Chris Chance KD5CZZ, Michael Hebert KD5DFB, Tony Muckerooy N5FNH, Michael Mudd KD5CGN,
and Brian Jones

Also, welcome back to former member John Mudd W0TLO.

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 (apply to Board if interested)

NARS Information

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Marian Denton KB5SGV 281-469-8331
w5nc@juno.com

*Call Marian for general information about
NARS. Send address, phone, email and other
changes to:*

NARS Administrative Secretary
PO Box 690342
Houston, TX 77269-0342

NETS

10 M Ragchew: Monday 8:00 PM, 28.444
Coordinator: Jim Kirk KJ5X
jrkirk@wt.net 281-376-0718

2 M Information: Wed. 8:00 PM, 146.660
Coordinator: Bill Gary K8CSG
bsnn87a@prodigy.com 281-537-9240

WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.flash.net/~nars/>
Webmaster: H O Townsend WA5MLT
wa5mlt@flash.net 281-955-8216
Trustee: Walter Hock KK5LO
kk5lo@flash.net 281-350-6633

REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 (KA5AKG)
70 cm - 449.375 / 444.375 (KA5AKG)
Digipeater - 145.71 (W5NC alias NARS)

MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership at Spring-
Cypress Presbyterian: third Friday, 7:30 PM
Saturday Breakfast at Victors Restaurant:
8:00 AM
Wednesday Lunch at Various Locations:
11:30 AM (Info on 146.660)

NARS NEWS is published monthly by
Northwest Amateur Radio Society

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Send all articles and materials other than
email for the Newsletter to:

NARS Newsletter
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Tomball, TX 77375,

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

ARRL Club No. 2120