

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

November 1998

November Meeting on CQ WW DX Contest

The CQ Worldwide DX Contest does strange things to people. For some reason it causes people to travel to obscure places from which to operate the contest. Last month four of the Houston area's finest fell to the attraction of travel to strange places. Led by Mike Hance, K5NZ, the group included Joey Clements, K5BAK, Roy Hradilek, AD5Q, and Bob Perrin, N5RP. These four intrepid DXers traveled north to Labrador City where they operated VO2WL in Zone 2. They will tell us of their experiences whereby they broke the contest record for Zone 2, and possibly describe other interesting facets of their little DXpedition. Rumor says some of these stories may even be true! In any case it should be a fun evening.

Election of 1999 NARS Officers Highlight of November Meeting!

It's that time of the year when NARS members in good standing will vote for their club officers for the coming year. The following are the candidates that agreed to serve if elected.

President – H.O. Townsend
Vice Pres. – Jack Dougherty
Secretary – Bob Argo
Treasurer – Keith Dutson
Director (1 yr. term) – George Edwards

In addition to these officers, the 1999 Board will also consist of:

Director – Jim Kirk (returning 2nd year)
Director – Joe Sokolowski – Past President (1st year)
Director – Allen Majeski – At Large – (2nd year)

Prior to the elections, nominations will be accepted for any person wishing to compete for a position on the Board. Don't miss this meeting. Your vote is important!

Important Dates

Friday, November 20, 7:30 PM – NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church – Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

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

Tuesday, November 24, 7:30 PM – NARS Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Clubhouse, 5200 Woodville

Contests:

November 21–23 ARRL SSB Sweepstakes

November 28–29 CQ WW DX, CW

December 4–6 ARRL 160M

December 12–13 ARRL 10M

Notice:

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

Deadline for articles to appear in December issue – Monday, November 30.

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

November 1998

Did somebody say November? Where did the other ten months go? When I was a kid, life seemed to progress at a snail's pace. As I grew older, time began to accelerate at a logarithmic rate, and now, I am close to breaking the sound barrier! Some mornings back, on the "info-repeater," we were reminiscing the days of when milk came in glass bottles and ice was delivered to your home to replenish the reefer. (K5LBL still doesn't buy that bit about walking three miles to school in the snow—uphill, both ways!)

But that was yesterday, and today's events will be soon be archived into the past. Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quick you hardly catch it going. Tomorrow is where all the excitement will be. Just think of it. A 2 meter rig built into your wristwatch, a 40 meter beam the size of your briefcase, QRP on a Popsicle stick... All this, and more, is just around the corner. Al Jolson once said, in the first talkie movie, "You ain't seen nothin' yet, folks!" What an understatement!

Did somebody say November? You know what that means to us Nartians. Yep, Election Day. It's time to elect a new group of leaders to guide us into the next millennium. Wait a minute, I'm not referring to the "shell game" going on in Washington, I'm talkin' NARS elections, dudes and dudettes! This is big stuff. Be sure to make this important meeting. And, of course, after the election comes the installation of new officers at the annual NARS Banquet in January. Dianna, KC5VSF, has come up with a super location to host this event. The food promises to be outstanding, even for you hard-nosed Texans, (sorry, Tex, no Bar-b-que this time...) We'll have more details on this event soon.

Joe Sokolowski KD5KR

Public Service Events

Your radio skills are needed.

Sunmart Texas Trails Endurance Run

Looking forward to a nice Saturday in the park? Well I have a deal for you. For the third year in a row we have been asked to provide radio communication for the Sunmart Texas Trails Endurance Run. We are looking for volunteers and their Ham radios. We need about 12 people to help with this event.

About 800+ runners traverse a course through the tall pines of Huntsville State Park. They will be running in two races; one is 50 kilometers and the other is 50 miles. Yes, I said MILES. This will last all day long. All of the runners ages 18 to 80, have been most appreciative for our continued help with this event.

Having 12 volunteers will allow us to work in relief. Six will be needed in the morning and six in the afternoon. You don't have to worry about lunch or refreshments; the race committee will provide them.

All volunteers and spouses have been invited to attend a pre-race banquet at the Crowne Sheraton hotel on JFK Blvd. between Beltway 8 and Greens Rd. (near the airport). Time is Friday, 4:30PM to 7:30PM. Dress is extremely casual. With this one you can have a dinner, too! What a deal!!!

So mark your calendars for December 12 and contact me to sign up for a most enjoyable time. If you don't believe me, ask someone who was there last year.

Walter Hock KK5LO

NARS Board of Directors Meeting 10/27/98

December program – Silent auction and Home Brew Night

Packet Node – Antenna to be up-graded to the packet network.

Newsletter – Bill Gary will become the Editor starting in January.

Annual Banquet – Will be held at the Wyndehaven Terrace, 12716 Cutten Rd. on January 15, 1999. Costs will be \$15.00 per plate for member and spouse, \$18.00 for non-members. There will be improved facilities and menu for this event.

Bob Argo KC5JZO, Secretary

VE Session Results

Four candidates presented themselves at the October 24 VE session in Tomball. Of the four, one new General Class, one new Technician and one new Tech+ resulted. Participating NARS VEs included, Bill K8CSG, Dick W5VHN, Jack WA5GHZ, Mark K5GQ and Bill K5ZTY. Compaq was represented by Walter K5WH and Willie KB5TES.

Bill Gary K8CSG

DX News

To see the world in a grain of sand, And heaven in a wild flower. Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, And seek DX by the hour . . .

It was a warm Fall afternoon and the Old Timer was dozing in his chair under a tree when he was awakened by the approach of a group of local QRPers. As usual, their questions followed quickly. "How come it seems so much easier to work these DX countries than it is to get their QSLs," one asked in his typically abrupt fashion. "Where can I find their mail addresses or their QSL managers?" The Old Timer gathered himself and straightened up in his chair a bit. Clearly it was not going to be an easy afternoon. "Well, Call Book CDs are available fairly readily," he replied to the question. "Yes," snapped the beady-eyed QRP'er, "but where does it show their QSL managers?" Realizing that the usual quick answers were not going to enable him to get back to his nap, the Old Timer launched into his practiced speech. "Well, if I work a brand new country I try to get his QSL route during the QSO. If not then, I listen for a while and he generally will give it out. For those, I go direct, either with a green stamp, an IRC, or with postage from his country on an SASE. If I can't find his address or manager and I really want his card, I send it to Les Bannon in Midland. Takes a little longer, but Les is pretty effective. If it is a routine DX QSO I just send the card via the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau. Patience, remember?" Son of a gun! What more could be said on the subject? As the QRPers retreated back down the hill, the Old Timer slouched back in his Lazy-Boy to doze off again . . . and to dream of Scarborough Reef and North Korea.

October opened with good propagation numbers, accompanied by moderately good DX. The numbers for the first weekend were 115, 2 and 0, which brought pretty good conditions for the contests in operation that weekend. The California QSO party was chewing up big sections of the bands, stateside. The RSGB contest provided lots of good contacts with UK stations, and the VK/ZL test promoted good alternative activity. During the first full weekend of the month the A index fell all the way to zero, enabling folks to find excellent openings on ten meters -- up into the bedtime hours. The onset of Fall has demonstrated what ten meters can do at this time of the year. Most of the spots during the daytime and up into the evening are on 10, 12 and 15 meters. Ten has become a real fun-band. On October 12, with the SFI at 115-119, 10m and 12m were wide open most of the day and into the evening. A minor solar storm messed things up on October 19, restricting the DX activity. By October 21 things had improved and good DX abounded as the CQ Worldwide contesters began to tune up for the big weekend.

LOCAL EVENTS: WF5W has been busy listening to and working the DX bands. The continued loss of the TDXS cluster has hampered the activities of several DXers. Jerry, KK5CA, is having some success chasing DX on RTTY. In recent times he has worked the following using a wire antenna and less than 150 watts: St. Lucia, Finland, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ceuta, Malta, Guadalupe, Galapagos Is. and Panama. Mike, KM5LA, called me on the landline one evening -- just to whine, as he put it -- and said he was very unhappy. With good DX conditions on the bands, there he was with a case of laryngitis! Later in the month he reported working the following: KH2LU, KH0CE, BV4QW, KH8/N5OLS, HF0POL, VR2KF, 4U1UN. Total countries worked so far = 176. Not bad! John, W5PDW, received his ZK1XXP QSL of which he is quite proud. Loyd, KM5OE, needs only three zones -- 2, 18 and 19. Ben, KM5OT, coat-tailed me in working JH8CLU from his mobile. KM5LA worked an XQ0 on Easter Island and touted K5ZTY onto him, also. Another "closet DXer?" K5VUU worked 19 new countries during the contest. He had 103 contacts, 58 countries and 24 zones in 10 hours.

DX WORKED: UA9CUA (Russia) 20m 0236Z; ZS5DCF (So. Africa) 20m 1444Z; VK4RD (Australia) 20m 1521Z; UA0FDX (Sakhalin Isl.) 15m 0103Z; YL80DX (Latvia) 20m 2221Z; 5N0/OK1AUT (Nigeria) 20m 0234Z; E31AA (Eritrea) 20m 2333Z; V85AA (Brunei) 20m 1417Z; 7X2DG (Algeria) 10m 1347Z; BV7CG (Taiwan) 15m 1350Z; I2PJA (Italy) 12m 1400Z; LY62ZZ (Latvia) 12m 1404Z; FO0SUC (Austral Is.) 20m 0208Z; T32NCC (Fanning Isl.) 10m 0015Z; H76C (Honduras IOTA) 15m 2013Z; 9G1BJ (Ghana) 15m 2059Z; RN3QN (Eur. Russia) 15m 1300Z; UA6JR (Eur. Russia) 15m 1305Z; 7X4AN (Algeria) 10m 1319Z; VO2WL (Labrador-Zone 2) 15m 1440Z; LX2SM (Luxemburg) 15m 2015Z; VK4DZ (Australia) 10m 2113Z; 9J2AM (Zambia) 15m 2129Z; GD4PTV (Isle of Man) 15m 1854Z; TJ2RAF (Cameroon) 10m 1250Z; 5R8FL (Malagasy Rep.) 20m 0257Z; G/FR5ZU (Glorioso Isl.) 20m 0209Z; JT1BG (Mongolia) 20m 0236Z; 6W1QV (Senegal) 10m 1418Z; V5TSB (Namibia JOTA) 20m 2138Z; C56A (The Gambia) 12m 0036Z; JT1BG (Mongolia) 20m 0236Z; V5TSB (Namibia) 20m 2138Z; A35XU (Tonga) 20m 1323Z; 6W1QV (Senegal) 10m 1418Z; V8A (Brunei) 15m 2342Z; XX9TAR (Macao) 15m 2342Z; BV5BG (Taiwan) 15m 0007Z; 9M8R (E. Malaysia) 15m 2259Z; 9J2AM (Zambia) 15m 2316Z; 5R8EE (Malagasy Rep.) 20m 0259Z; 5W0GD (W. SAMOA) 10M 2213Z; 3D2RW (Fiji) 10m 2221Z; A35RK (Tonga) 10m 2304Z; E30HA (Eritrea) 10m 1610Z; ZD7JC (St. Helena) 15m 2138Z.

DX HEARD/NOT WORKED: RK3AWL (Eur. Russia) 20m 0045Z; HS1RU (Thailand) 15m 0032Z; DS4BBL (Korea) 15m 0036Z; VK5KYL (Australia YL) 15m 0135Z; VR98BG (Hong Kong) 15m 0045Z; 5B4ADA (Cyprus) 10m 1456Z; VP6TY (Pitcairn Isl.) 10M 2305Z; 9K2GS (Kuwait) 10m 1523Z; 9J2AM via JH0JHA.

QSL ROUTES: 5N0/OK1AUT via OK1AUT; E31AA via ZL3CW; V85AA via Box 1711 Bandar Seri, Darussalam, Brunei 1917; LY62ZZ via LY2ZZ; T32NCC via Chuck Corbett, Fanning Island, E. Kiribati, Pacific Ocean via Hawaii; FO0SUC via F6JJW; H76C via HR1RMG; 7X4AN via POB 30133, Barcelona, Spain 08080; 5B4ADA via 9A2AJ; VP6TY via POB 10, Pitcairn Is. via New Zealand; 9K2GS via W6YJ; GD4PTV direct only via C-Book; TJ2RSF via EA4URE; 5R8FL via F5TBA; G/FR5ZU via VE3NG; A35XU via PA3 AXU; XX9TAR via KU9C; 9M8R via W7EJ; 5R8EE via Box 87, Tampon 97832, Reunion Island; VO2WL via K8CSG (CQWWD only); ZD7VC via WT8S; 5Z4IC via MW0AIE; 5W0GD via PA3AXU; 3D2RW via ZL1AMO; A35RK via W7TSQ; E30HA via HA5YPP; ZD7JC via P O Box 31, Jamestown, St. Helena.

The TDXS cluster continued to operate in a local mode without connection to the backbone and outside spots. A degree of relief was provided by a digipeated connection to K5DXC, the source of wider-ranging spots. This helped out some of the local DXers, but the reliability was not wonderful. The good news is that on October 11 the TDXS cluster regained its connection to K5DXC and the outside world of DX spots. I have found it easier to connect to K5LV (the cluster node) via NARS' own digipeater on 145.71 MHz, rather than via TDXS95 (N5DC). It is good to see the normal array of DX spots on what has been predominantly a blank screen for roughly a month. During the daytime, most of them are on 15 and 10 meters, with some 12m stuff sprinkled in here and there.

E31AA turned up in Eritrea again early in October. Unfortunately, he had a pretty weak signal -- which probably accounts for the smallness of the pileups. He was rather difficult to work from Texas since his signal would fade in and out with QSB. This was Jacky, F2CW, operating again. Good operator, but poor conditions.

Latest news from the WD4NGB (Space A) group is that their effort for Eritrea may be falling apart. They have discovered that the licensing fee in Eritrea is \$500, and that one license cannot be used by the entire group.

Continued on page 4

A Brief Discussion of S Meter Function

Approximately one third of NARS members are Tech Pluses. Many of them, it is hoped, will want to upgrade to a general class license. When they do, one of the first things they will be concerned with is the use of the S meter to indicate relative received signal strength. Most hams they contact will want a signal report. So a brief discussion of the S meter could be helpful.

S meters are useful in making comparative readings. They are calibrated in S units from S1 to S9; above S9 they are calibrated in decibels (dB). An attempt was made in the 1940s to establish some significant numbers for S meters. S9 was to be equal to a signal level of 50 microvolts, with each S unit equal to 6 dB; the received

signal power would have to increase by a factor of four.

Such a scale is useful for a theoretical discussion although real S meter circuits fall far short of this ideal for a variety of reasons.

Suppose you are working someone who is using a 25-watt transmitter and your S meter is reading S7. If the other operator increases power to 100 watts (an increase of four times), your S meter should read S8. If the signal is S9, the operator will have to multiply power 10 fold to make your S meter read 10db over S9.

S meters on modern receivers may or may not respond in this manner. Operation is

based on the output of the automatic gain control (AGC) circuitry; the S meter measures AGC voltage.

As a result, the S meter is useful for giving relative signal strength indications. You can see changes in signal levels on an S meter that you may not be able to detect by listening to the audio output level. For instance, an operator's ear may not be able to detect a loudness difference between S5 and S7, and still hear an acceptably good signal.

It is hoped this brief explanation of actual S meter function will be of use to those contemplating an upgrade to general class.

Harry Gage N5WIZ

DX News - Continued

Continued from page 3

With the group of twenty they were planning to take the licensing cost alone would be \$10000 (20 x \$500). It is very much up in the air now. Stay tuned! They say they are going early in November.

Rumor says that Pratus is still a possibility before long. Nothing definite, but the word is "patience". Late word is that it will happen in November.

KM5OE is feeling much better now that he has received his DXCC certificate in the mail. George, K5VUU, says he now has 82 countries confirmed. When he completes the task we will have to take a group picture of all these new DXCC members for NARS News.

Dave Heil is once again active in the DX world, this time from Tanzania as 5H3US. He expects to be there for three years, so patience should be rewarded. QSL to WA8JOC. Also, look for VY1A who will be QRV to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Yukon Territory Gold Rush through the end of November. US stations QSL via KB5IPQ.

Don't look now, but we shall soon have a genuine "big gun" DXer in our midst. On October 10 after breakfast, the gang turned out at W5SB's place en masse. When they all went home a lovely 100+-foot tower was standing, waiting for the installation of a new Force 12 antenna that will be

placed on top. Based upon his results with nothing but a bird's nest of ugly wire hanging all over his place, Bill will be a force to be reckoned with. Remember, though, Bill. The numbers, they are ag'in ye'!

DXPEDITION (REAL): The ZL boys who brought Kermadec to many will activate Campbell Island as ZL9CI on January 10, 1999. The two week operation ending on January 24 should move Campbell down the most wanted lists of many DXers. This is a capable DXpedition group (unlike some) and the results should reflect that. All bands and all modes (more or less). This sounds like a good one, but they need donations to help offset their costs.

Zoli, HA5PP, turned up in Eritrea as E30HA during the morning of October 22 working ten meters. A phone call to Dick, W5VHN, helped get that one off of his list. Shortly afterward, W5CA, one of the fellows I bring to the lunch bunch, worked Zoli on a single call from College Station. Eritrea looks to be headed lower on the most-wanted lists, especially if the Space A operation comes off as scheduled in November.

DX WORLDWIDE CONTEST (SSB). Despite an SFI in the 110-120 range, the contest appears to have been a substantial success. It was difficult to not notice the 1x2 and 2x1 US call signs plus a few others

screaming CQ contest at the top of their lungs all weekend. Many of them apparently had all knobs on their radios turned fully clockwise, based upon the observed splatter and broad signals. I took particular note of the difference of the signal from VO2WL in Labrador. Although usually very strong, Mike had a very clean signal and it was a pleasure to work him. Mike kept his QSO rate up pretty well, but never seemed as hurried as many of the short-tempered, curt US types. Nice going Mike and gang! The 10, 15 and 20-meter bands had lots of DX for the deserving types. Some pileups took some work to break, but nothing really, really bad was noticed. I kept my contesting to a single goal this year -- 100 QSOs and 100 countries. Made it with relative ease, including 29 zones, and stayed off the bands otherwise. Gerald, W5BA, made 212 contacts including 25 zones and 69 countries; a good handful of them were new counters. George, W5VUU worked 103 contacts including 56 countries. Deryl, K5WNO, had good contest results. Conrad, W5MN, had 1200 contacts and well 100 countries. All in all, not a bad contest for the "deserving" ones.

One last thought for Mike, K5NZ, and Jim, KJ5X. Your WAZ certificates should come along before too much longer. Jim Dionne, the manager, has been ill and that has impeded the work.

Bill Gary K8CSG

Field Day 1998 a Resounding Success for NARS

A preview of the December QST on the ARRL web site reveals NARS W5NC won the Field Day class 2A competition. We had 441 Q's and 13,086 points. Second place went to Texas DX Society

K5DX with 3856 Q's and 10,992 points. NARS also placed 10th overall in the contest. Congratulations to all those who worked

hard to achieve this lofty goal. Thanks to FD98 coordinators Bill Denton W5SB and OJ Quarles K1OJ who challenged and led us to the win.

NARS Banquet Plans

Date: January 15, 1999
Time: 6:30PM – 9:30PM
Place: Wyndehaven Terrace
Address: 12716 Cutten Road (Just south of 1960)

Cost: \$15 Member, \$15 Member Guest, \$18 Non Member

RSVP PLEASE!!! To Dianna Hudspeth KC5VSF (409)4472737 (Local Call)

You may pay in advance directly to Dianna, or to Keith Dutson, or send a check or money order payable to NARS, to PO Box 690342, Houston, TX 77269-0342

Please come and enjoy a great evening!!!!

Condolences

A Special condolence to Hoyd King KC5RQB. His wife passed away in October.

Also, our deepest sympathy goes out to Bill Rister KC5EZQ, who lost his mother on September 9.



by Keith Dutson

Bill Gary K8CSG has graciously accepted the post of newsletter editor beginning in 1999.

My first issue of NARS News was published ... well, it's been so long ago that I forgot the date. I think it was in May 1995 that Ken Harlan came over to my place and officially passed the baton. The experience has been rewarding and wonderful. It has given me the chance to meet just about every NARS member, and to participate in many of our events while being a News reporter.

Thanks to all those who have contributed articles and information these past four years. Special kudos go to those of the "breakfast bunch" who faithfully helped with the monthly mailing chores.

So now it is time for a fresh approach to the Editor's job. Please give Bill your support in the coming year.

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President

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Welcome

*Join us in welcoming the following new NARS members:
Gary Smith W9KNT, Rusty Davis KD5DAE, Pete Abad KD5ELH*

Also, welcome back former members: Sid George AB5XU, Jim Haynie W5JBP

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
WAZ - Bill Gary K8CSG, 281-537-9240

NARS Public Information Officer:

Open (apply to Board if interested)

NARS Information

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*Call Marian for general information about
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changes to:*

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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)

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

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a
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