



How To Get Fast, Positive QSL Returns

Frustrated by the seemingly interminable time it takes to get your QSL cards returned from those hot DX contacts? Want to learn how to improve your rate of returns on QSLs? George Edwards, K5VUU, will share his secrets at the August meeting. George recently completed earning his DXCC membership in a relatively short time. The key is the speed with which he got cards confirming his new countries back from those countries. George used an old technique which he will describe using actual data -- his own -- to illustrate his success. Those of you who are having difficulties getting those elusive QSLs can learn how to speed things up. Come out and listen to how a "pro" did it!

-- Bill, K8CSG

AN UNUSUAL VE SESSION

The July 24 VE Session in Tomball can only be described as unusual and unique. Eight candidates were examined in fifteen elements. What was unique is the result of this session. Each of the eight candidates received either a new license or an upgrade of an existing license. Of the fifteen elements tested, only a single failure occurred. That one was an afterthought; a candidate holding a General Class license planned to take Element 4A, which he passed easily, attaining an Advanced Class license in the process. Upon taking the Extra Class written element 4B, he failed to pass it. All of the other elements were passed, a pass-rate of 93.33 percent. This is the highest pass-rate in several years, if not in all of the NARS/Compaq VE sessions held. Resulting licenses included three Technicians, three Technician Plus, and two Advanced. Truly, this was an accomplished group of candidates.

All of the participating VEs were from NARS, including K8CSG, KJ5X, WA8GHZ, WC5CW and a new NARS member, Manny Garcia, W5MGG. Manny joined NARS at the July meeting and participated in his very first VE session. This was particularly rewarding to some of us who have been around for a while. Manny received his very first amateur radio license in 1997 at a NARS/Compaq VE session. Now, two years later, Manny is an Extra Class licensee, and a new VE who is helping some of us "oldtimers" to create other new amateurs.

-- Bill Gary, K8CSG

Important Dates

Friday, August 20, 7:30-9:30 PM
NARS General Membership Meeting
Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 600
Spring Cypress Road

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

Tuesday, August 31, 7:30 PM
NARS Board of Directors meeting, H.C. Townsend's home, 16880 E. Maglittio Circle

Contests:

August 21-22

NA QSO Party, phone
ARRL 10 GHz and Up Cumulative Contest
Seanet Contest, phone
SARTG RTTY Contest
New Jersey QSO Party
KCJ Contest

August 28-19

TOEC WW Grid Contest, CW
SCC RTTY Contest
Hawaii QSO Party

Sept. 4-5

All-Asian SSB Contest
North American CW Sprint

Sept. 11-12

Worked All Europe SSB Contest
North American SSB Sprint

Deadline for articles to appear in August issue -Tuesday, August 31.

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W. FM 1960

Saturdays
8:00 AM

QRP Stuff

President's Corner

August 1999

Howdy all...

Can we ever be happy with the wx or band conditions? Probably not! No rain and it gets too hot. A high solar flux coupled with a high Boulder "A" index doesn't do too much for favorable band conditions either. Node or no node, troll the bands friends!

A big word of thanks goes to Keith - WD5DXL and Steve - KD5AIJ for the fine July program on DX packet nodes and how they can be used to form DX packet node clusters. Their program was hastily researched and assembled for the program. Great job guys.

As a follow up, Keith presented a good report to the club Board of Directors on DX packet nodes. Keith and possible other committee members will make recommendations to the August Board meeting on how the club should proceed over the next year. The Board appreciates their work.

The Board is seeking an enthusiastic member to be program chairman. I think we all agree that good programs represent an important part of any club. Let us hear from you.

League matters: With time comes change - as so stated in ARRL Bulletin 047. The League has begun referring to itself as "The National Association for Amateur Radio." There has been NO legal name change! Maybe this gives us a stronger voice in competitive band circles? We certainly don't to loose any more spectrum.

FCC matters: An FCC Public Notice July 23 says the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau will begin use of the Universal Licensing System (ULS) for the Amateur Service on August 16.

Starting August 16, hams registered in the ULS may file the new FCC Form 605 electronically at any time of day, seven days a week. FCC Form 605 will be used for license renewals, modifications, cancellations, vanity call sign applications, application withdrawals and amendments, as well as requests for duplicate licenses and administrative updates (i.e., a change of address or other clerical license modification). Applications for new or upgraded licenses will continue to be filed through a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator.

Registration in the ULS is required. Applicants should use FCC Form 606 for both electronic or manual filing. To register online, visit <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls/> and click on "TIN/Call Sign Registration." A paper FCC Form 606 is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/formpage.html> or from the FCC's Forms Distribution Center, 800-418-3676.

See you at the August club meeting. George, K5VUU, will tell us how to improve our returns on QSLs from those elusive DX countries

73 es Gud DX, H. O. WA5MLT

I wrote an article about giving correct signal reports in the June NARS News. I am still hearing some of my favorite ops giving 5 9 ++ signal reports. I guess my article wasn't written clearly or wasn't technical enough to be clearly understood, or maybe no one read it. Anyway, I have been looking around for an article on signal reporting that could be understood by today's high tech ham. I think I found it in the QRP-L archives. It was written by WB8BJL. Maybe he can straighten things out from the QRP-L CD Archives...

Once again... I have no idea how hams are progressing through the "ranks" without learning the REAL meaning behind Signal Reports. I can only think that the "standard" for a signal report on CB was the unit of "pounds" sometimes also referred to as "Pounder Kuhmonback" and was a direct visual measurement taken off of the lab-standard S-meter supplied in every CB transceiver.

For example, a CBER requests a signal report or "radio check." The typical response is, "I got mine." A savvy operator knows that a "radio check" is a request for a meter reading from the receiving station. The seasoned CB operator will glance down at the S-meter and respond with the standardized unit of measurement, as in, "Yar hittin' me with a Nine Pounder, Kuhmonback."

Ham radios, although generally much more expensive than CB radios, were not required by law to have the very sensitive, calibrated meters that the CB radios had. Hams had always used a rather informal "standard" for giving reports, and for EVERYONE's further education, it goes like this:

RST - Readability Signal Tone

The *readability* scale runs from a high of 5 to a low of 1.

5 Perfectly readable, armchair copy, "That Alpha sure sounds good here, Herman."

4 Good readability, "I think I hear someone about 60db down, Bernie; better click on the amp and clear the frequency."

3 Fair. This is really POOR, most non-QRP ops won't go through the effort to answer a CQ with an R 3 report.

2 Only used by county hunters when they can't hear each other. Net Control : "Did you copy your report?"

County Hunter: "uhhh... two by two?"

Net Control : "Good contact!"

1 Nobody ever gives an "R" of one. Even ET would not have received a readability of 1, calling home with a broken umbrella as an antenna.

S - Signal ranges from a high of NINE to a low of ONE

9 Extremely strong, loudest signal on the band. "That Alpha is sure doing the job here, Otto. OH! I'm lookin' out the window down here and I can see you mowed the lawn today." This is also the standard "contest" report, regardless.

8 Very strong - often given to the other op after you receive a report of nine.

7 Strong. This is actually the "normal" report for 100w stations, "five by seven." QRPers lose sleep dreaming about getting 579 reports.

6 Very Good. Very average. Very well move on to the next QSO.

5 Good. QRP Special. 55(9) To most ops, a signal of 5 means you are getting marginal; we QRPers are in heaven.

4 Fair - I've heard louder phase noise.

QRP Stuff

(Concluded)

- 3 Fairly Weak. At this point, your signal is getting clobbered by everyone else, still copyable, but sure to soon get the 'ol, "SRI OM FONE CALL VY 73"
- 2 Weak - See #3 above
- 1 Let's not kid ourselves. When I get a 1, I know the other op is using the S meter to judge my signal. In the real world, an S of ONE is pretty much reserved for giving to your buddies during a contest as a gag.

Tone Ranges from a high of NINE to a low of ONE:

- 9 Perfect Tone - a perfect sine wave, crystal clear, like smooth mountain waters that go into every bottle of...whoops! Sorry about that folks!
- 8 Not Quite Perfect. Boat anchor ops give a tone of 8 to each other just to be different.
- 7 Not used since 1967.
- 6 ditto
- 5 I think I see a pattern here...
- 4 Bad Tone. Typically only given to any Cuban station.
- 3 Never used
- 2 Nope
- 1 Ok, what are you keying? The AC mains?

There! Now, another special from ol' BJL. Cut this out and paste in next to your DXCC or Grid Map sheet.

-- Unca' Zed

Two Meter NCS Wanted

The NARS two-meter net has a long record of operation under a variety of coordinators. Today we find ourselves in need of some new blood. This net, which operates at 8:00 PM local time, works best with a variety of Net Control Stations (NCS). For the past two years or so I have tried to maintain a group of eight or nine NCS, which means each individual is tasked with one net every two months, more or less. The long and short of the matter is that we have some folks who have become tired and there has been a lack of new people willing to share the load. The task is relatively simple, and it only takes an hour or so every two months. If anyone would like to give it a try, please give me a call. Your help is really needed!

-- K8CSG, Net Coordinator

NAQP Contest Results

In the current issue of National Contest Journal show the results of the January '99 North American QSO Party. In the CW contest the W5NN multi-2 team operating at the K5NZ ranch finished in 5th place over all. The team included K1OJ, K5NZ, KK5LD and W5SB. The W5NN score was, 1181 Q's, 268 mults, for 316,508 points. In the SSB version the W5SB multi-2 team of KD5AIJ, KK5LD, WA5SAJ and W5SB finished 6th overall and first in the five call area. Their score was 1102 Q's, 232 mults and 255,664 points. NCJ list K5NZ 2nd in the Five call area in NAQP SSB with 217,371 points. KB5ZXO was also listed in the five call area group. The results from the February '99 NCJ CW Sprint show K5NZ with a third place finish in the five call area.

-- Bill, W5SB

Amateur Radio to Become Part of ULS

Effective August 16, amateur radio will be rolled into the FCC's new Universal Licensing System (ULS). This means that on that date all amateur applicants will be required to use the new FCC Form 605, a form for "everything and everyone" in the FCC's new licensing system. The major departure of Form 605 from FCC Form 610 involves placing in the new form the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) which, for most of us, is our Social Security Number (SSAN). Those who prefer not to give out their SSAN must insert an alternative TIN which can be obtained from the IRS or a special ULS ID number which can be obtained from the FCC.

The new Form 605 has puzzled some of us for quite a while, since it appeared to have no way of accommodating the Volunteer Examiner certification signatures and the like. The ARRL and other VECs have developed a variation of the Form 605 which is called NCVEC Form 605. This is the form which will be used by amateur applicants. For a period of up to six months, however, amateur applicants may continue to use the old faithful FCC Form 610 with which we are all familiar. After that, the Form 610 will not be accepted by the FCC. Applicants using Form 610 after August 16 must, however, include their TIN on the form, preferably written in across the top of the form.

Why is all this TIN business required? Because of the Debt Collection Improvement Act as part of an effort to increase the collection of delinquent government debts. That law requires that applicants provide their TINs. How this will all be handled for Vanity Callsigns remains to be seen.

-- Bill, K8CSG

NARS FALL PICNIC

Our picnic this year will be held Saturday, October 9 and some special activities are being planned by the Committee. Please mark your calendars:

When: Saturday Oct 9 at 1 P.M. **Where:** Spring Hill Park near Highways 249 and 2920. Key Map 288A

We're planning on a catered main course (for a nominal fee) and also a special event in keeping with the outdoors location. You are invited to polish up those mobile installations and be ready for a "mobile station shootout" for the biggest key-down signal. There will be QRP, standard and QRO categories, plus one for HT's. Brush that antenna wax onto your best mobile or portable setup and come on out for an afternoon of food, socializing and fun. Families are very welcome to this activity at this beautiful park site. See you there!

-- Jack, WA8GHZ

*Those of us who walk in light
Must help the ones in darkness up.
For that's what life is all about
And DX is all there is to life. . .*

The Old Timer was enjoying his mid-afternoon nap in the summer's sun when he was somewhat rudely awakened by the noisy approach of one of the Local QRPers. "When are we going to see the great days of DXing in this new sunspot cycle?" he asked. "When will ten meters open up to all of these promises we heard in the radio club classes the past two or three years?" The Old Timer opened one eye to see who was asking, then closed it again. "What's wrong with the sun anyway?" bellowed the QRPer. Sensing that his nap was over for the time being, The Old Timer roused himself to address the QRPer and his questions.

"This is still summertime, isn't it?" he asked. "What should one expect in the summertime?" There had been some respectable DX on in the mornings, but most of the QRPers had to work and missed the morning openings. "But some of our instructors told us that when the sunspots came back we would be able to work the world with 10 watts or less. The sunspots were over 300 late in June, but ten meters was not a good band even during Field Day" said the QRPer, obviously intending to drive home his point.

The Old Timer lay back in his hammock and eyed the QRPer suspiciously. "If you have to ask the question, you probably will not un-

DX News
derstand the answer", he said before drifting off to sleep again.

The high propagation numbers fell along with the sunspots during the first part of July. The average sunspots dropped from 272 to 204 and the solar flux was down about 18 points. This did not keep Deserving DXers from scoring, however. The low bands will continue to be noisy during the summer months but the higher bands (12 and 10 meters) should begin to improve as the days become shorter and we move toward the Fall equinox. At the end of the month the SFI was 202 but the bands did not reflect it. However, as the end of summer approaches and Fall begins to arrive, ten meters should pick up considerably. By October, it should again be a very useful band.

LOCAL EVENTS: George, K5VUU, received a card from SU - Egypt and ZL9CI - Campbell Island. George also submitted his application for WAZ. Loyd, KM5OE worked R1MVA, Malyj Vysotskij Island, as did Mike, KM5LA, George, K5VUU, Bill, K5ZTY, Bill, W5SB, Keith, WD5DXL, John, W5PDW, Bill, K8CSG, Jackie, KM5SC, and Steve, KD5AIJ. K8CSG worked 3W6XK in Vietnam. Mike, K5NZ, and Jim, KJ5X, finally received their Worked All Zones (WAZ) certificates from CQ Magazine. Congrats, Mike and Jim! Brian, N5BA, received a QSL for a notable contact -- 3Y1EE (Peter I. Isl.) in 1986. Very nice! Loyd, KM5OE, received the first place certificate for The West Texas Section of the Smirk (six meter) contest

in 1998. Steve, KD5AIJ, completed his WAZ and had his cards/application checked and signed, received word from CQ Magazine that it had been fully approved and the certificate would arrive in 4 to 6 weeks. Nice going, Steve! That is five NARS members who have completed WAZ during the past twelve months.

DX WORKED: VR2MY (Hong Kong) 20m 1112Z; 9M2CZ (W. Malaysia) 20m 1414Z; V81AN (Brunei) 20m 1425Z; BD7NQ (China) 20m 1442Z; 2A0BYE (Scotland) 20m 0056Z; BA4DW (China) 20m 1150Z; TA2DS (Turkey) 20m 0206Z; TA3DD (Turkey) 20m 0207Z; 3W6XK (Vietnam) 20m 1140Z; DU1COO (Philippines) 20m 1153Z; 9V1BG (Singapore) 20m 1458Z; BY4BSN (China) 20m 1159Z; 5R8FU (Malagasy Republic) 20m 1328Z; TI2KI/5 (Costa Rica) 10m 1933Z; T30JH (Tarawa Isl./W. Kiribati) 20m 1138Z; R1MVA (Malyj Vysotskij Island) 20m 0028Z; VK7FLI (Furieux Isl./OC-195) 20m 1021Z; 7Q7RM (Malawi) 20m 1348Z; XX9CH (Macao) 20m 1349Z; FK8HW (Fr. Caledonia) 20m 1043Z; 9V1BG (Singapore) 20m 1124Z; P29CC (PNG) 20m 1219Z; 3D2DM (Fiji) 20m 1214Z; VK8AN/6 (OC-154) 20m 0946Z; YB0ARA/9 (Indonesia) 20m 1003Z; JW8WF (Svalbard Is.) 20m 2308Z; EK6TA (Armenia) 20m 2302Z; SV3DQR (Greece) 20m 0031Z; VK8AN/9 (Australia OC-154) 20m 0946; YB0ARA/9 (Indonesia) 20m 1003Z; V83AA (Brunei) 20m 1520Z; BV2FT (Taiwan) 1533Z; BV2TL

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DX News - Continued

(Taiwan) 20m 1118Z; T88DX (Paulu) 20m 1129Z; C96DG (Mozambique) 20m 1403Z; 5N9CEN (Nigeria) 20m 2307Z; CY9CWI (St. Paul Isl.) 20m 2140Z; JW7QIA (Svalbaard Isl.) 15m 2203Z; 4S7VK (SRI LANKA) 20M 1203Z; VQ9DJ (DIEGO GARCIA) 20M 1246Z; FW8ZZ (WALLIS IS.) 15M 2322Z.

QSL ROUTES: 2A0BYE via M0BYE; VR2MY via buro; TA2DS via WA#HUP; TA3DD via KB2MI; 3W6XK via W9XK; DU1COO (Philippines) 20m 1152Z; R1MVA via OH2BR; TI2KI/5 via TI2KM; T30JH via VK2GJH; VK7FLI via VK7BE; FW8ZZ VIA OH2BN; ZC4ATC VIA 5Z4YX; VQ9DJ VIA AB7JN.

DX HEARD/NOT WORKED; PJ2/KF6JSP (Curacao) 10m 1926Z; DU4ABA (Philippines) 20m 1348Z; ZS6IN (South Africa) 20m 1400Z; V1ZD (Singapore) 20m 1335Z; V85AA (Brunei) 20m 1500Z; 3W6AR (Vietnam) 20m 1502Z.

The R1MVA DXpedition to Malyj Vysotskij Island came off very successfully during July. A substantial number of NARS operators collected this one, which is not all that easy to work since there is no resident activity on the island. Typically, there is a DXpedition there every 12 to 18 months. QSL via OH2BR.

The IARU contest stirred some activity during its weekend. It is not considered a major DX contest, but it did attract numerous interesting callsigns, especially those of the various amateur radio organization headquarters in various parts of the world. W1AW was operating from W9-land during the contest.

It appears that another rather obscure DXCC counter will be on the air later this year. Annobon, (3C0) also known as Pagalu Island should see a fairly robust DXpedition during September this year. Planned length of their stay is ten days, which should be enough to give contacts to most of the truly Deserving DXers. Annobon has seen a few DXpeditions since it was first activated by Martti, OH2BH, and one of his Finnish buddies in July, 1971. It has been estimated that some 40,000 QSOs have been made from Annobon, leaving many hungry Deserving types amongst us. Unfortunately, there have been several attempts in recent years which have all been eventually aborted. The last operation from Annobon took place in 1991. Good luck!

East Timor is entering the DX news world again as it faces the possibility of independence. Once a property of Portugal, East Timor appeared on the DXCC List as Portugese Timor, EA8,0. After it was taken over by the Indonesians, it became a deleted country and has remained so since 1976. If it becomes fully independent, it will again qualify for DXCC, probably with a different prefix. Again, keep your fingers crossed.

In January, 1966 K7LMU and ZL2AQJ operated FW8ZZ during a DXpedition to Wallis Island. Both of these DXers were lost at sea aboard the Ketch *Marinero* while returning from Wallis. During July 30 - August 3, a four-man team led by OH2BH again operated FW8ZZ to commemorate the original Wallis DXpedition and the two DXers who implemented it. QSLs for those who worked it go to OH2BN.

Summary of July 24, 1999 Board Meeting

Treasurer's Report - Bank balance June 30th was \$3495.

DX Cluster/Packet Node - Keith Dutson and committee preparing formal study and recommendations for August Board meeting.

Picnic - October 9th at Spring Creek Park in Tomball

Banquet - repeat of 1999 at Wyndehaven Terrace planned.

-- Bob, KC5JZO Secretary

In September the Brazilians will activate St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks after cancelling a previous effort. They plan to be active on the rocks for about ten days. This should be a good opportunity for those who still need this DXCC counter. On SSB they will be ZX0SK (QSL via PS7KM) and on CW they will be ZW0SP (QSL via PY7AA).

Alan M. Dorhoffer, K2EEK, died July 19 from complications of cancer surgery. He had served as Editor of CQ Magazine for nearly a quarter-century. I talked with Alan at Ham-Com in Arlington just last month when we renewed my subscription to CQ. I remember his obvious surprise when I told him that would extend my continuous subscription record to 51 years, almost as long as the magazine has been published.

Rumor says that an operation from the Laccadive (Lakshadweep) Islands may occur early this Fall. Be ready - this is a rare one! Distance, travel and weather are not the problems for this rare one. The difficulty is overcoming the very mature Indian bureaucracy. -- 73, Bill, K8CSG

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Congratulations to Rob Rasa, W5CPU, on the new callsign, changed from KB5SIS.
Congratulations to Dave Singletary on his upgrade from Technician to General Class

Welcome to these new NARS members:

KA5ARU Kenneth Winkler

KD5HDA Brandon Vier

KD5GNO Jim Dieter

KD5HKQ Rodney Rodd

Tim Ford (no callsign - student)

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY, 281/893-3901
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

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RS12/13
Dick Rooney W5VHN, 281/288-8424

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George Carlson KC5RCC, 281/376-8307

Packet:

Don Bedell KA3BKU, 281/370-6576

VHF/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA, 713/894-5942

Computer Operations:

Bob Argo KC5JZO, 281/288-7430

Computer Programming:

Keith Dutson WD5DXL, 281/351-7683

Interference (Basic Advice):

Harry Gage N5WIZ, 281/370-7488

Mark Tyler 281/587-0256

Card Checking for Awards:

DXCC - Bob Walworth N5ET, and Linda

Walworth KE5TF, 281/363-0209

WAS, VUCC - Brian Derx, N5BA
281/894-5942

WAZ - Bill Gary K8CSG, 281/537-9240

CQDX - Bill Gary K8CSG

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NETS

10M Ragchew: Monday 8:00 PM. 28.444

Coordinator: Jim Kirk KJ5X

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2M Information: Wed. 8:00 PM. 146.66

Coordinator: Bill Gary K8CSG

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REPEATERS

2M -- 146.060/146.660 (KA5AKG)

70 cm -- 449.375/444.375 (KA5AKG)

Digipeater -- 145.710(W5NC aliasNARS)

MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership at

Spring-Cypress Presbyterian Church

6000 Spring Cypress Road

Third Friday each month -- 7:30PM

Saturday Breakfast at Victors Restaurant

7:30 AM

Wednesday Lunch Bunch at various

locations 11:30 AM (Info. on 146.660)

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