

NARS NEWS

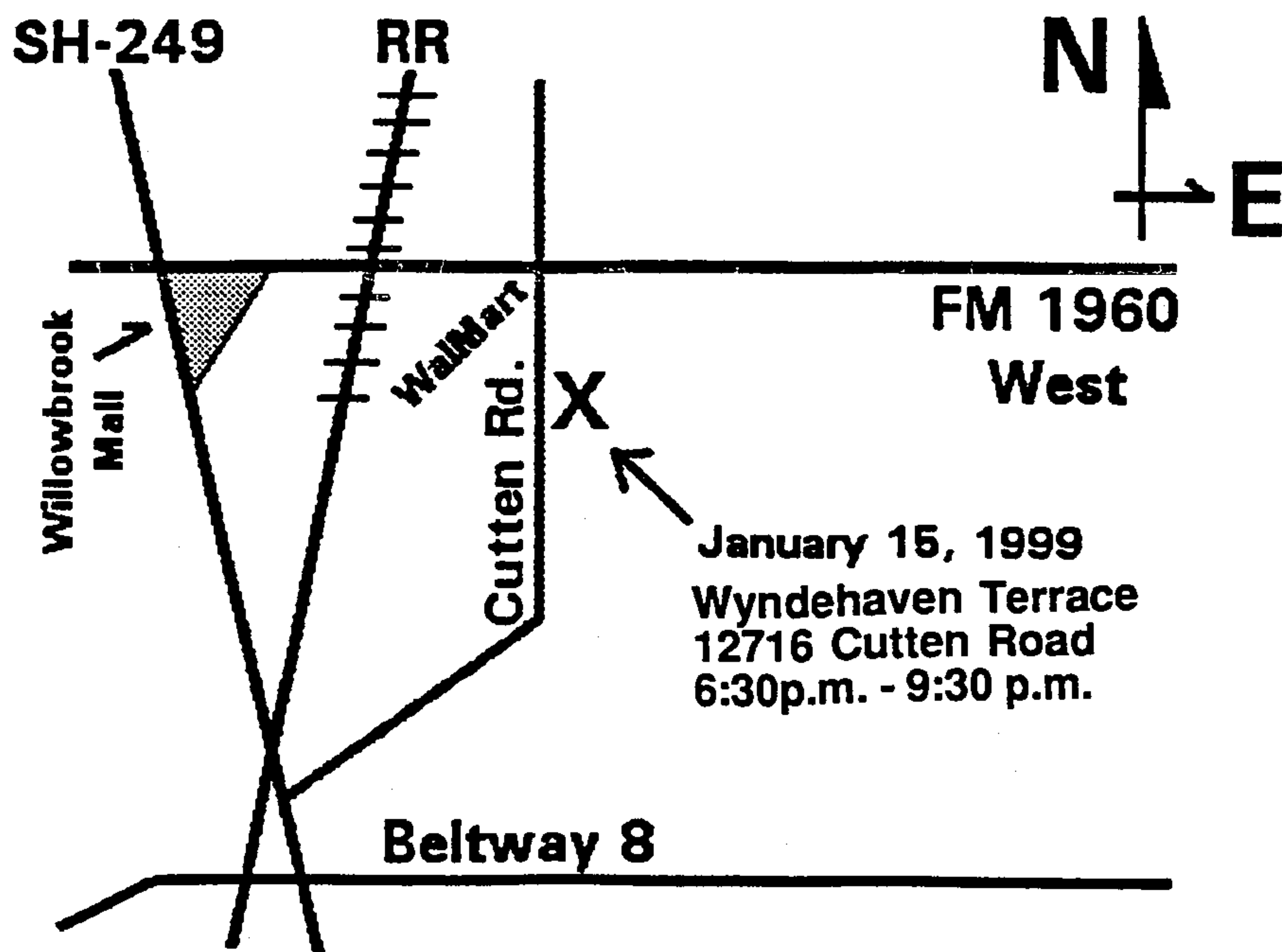
The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

January 1999

NARS Annual Banquet

Each year NARS holds a banquet in January to install its new officers and provide official recognition of those who have led the club and made special contributions on its behalf during the previous year. The banquet will be held on January 15, 1999 at Wyndhaven Terrace, 12716 Cutten Road. The menu will include roast beef and fried chicken as entrees, with lots of other good things included in the buffet. Cost is \$15.00 for members and member's guests, and \$18.00 for non-members. Get your reservations in to Dianna Hudspeth, KC5VSF, or Keith Dutson, WD5DXL. Send payment to either of those two, or to the NARS P.O. Box 690342. This is expected to be the largest NARS banquet ever, based upon the pre-registration count. Come and enjoy a great evening. You won't want to miss it!



ARRL Annual Board of Directors Meeting in Houston

The ARRL Board of Directors will meet at the George Bush IAH Marriott Hotel January 15-17. A hospitality suite is planned for January 16, sponsored by local clubs including NARS. Here is an opportunity for you to meet these ARRL officials, and to discuss your thoughts with them. The suite will be open from 4 to 6 PM

Important Dates

Friday, January 15, 6:30-9:30 PM
NARS Annual Banquet, Wyndhaven Terrace 12716 Cutten Road (Just South of FM 1960)

Saturday, January 23, 8:30 AM
License Exam Session. Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main.)

Tuesday, January 26, 7:30 PM
NARS Board of Directors meeting, H.O. Townsend's home, 16880 Maglitto Circle E,
Contests:

January 16-17, 1999 -- North American QSO Party (phone)

January 23-25- January VHF Sweepstakes

January 29-31 - CQWW 160 Meter DX contest

REF French CW Contest

YL International Contest

Kansas QSO Party

February 6-7

New Hampshire QSO Party

Vermont QSO Party

February 6-8 - Delaware QSO Party

Notice:

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

Deadline for articles to appear in February issue - **Friday, January 29.**

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

January 1999

December is always an exciting month for Nartians. It hosts the annual Home Brew event, and last month, as an added bonus, members and guests were treated to another Silent Auction, with proceeds going to the NARS general fund. I counted over seventy people that evening. The coffee and doughnuts went fast! Home Brew brought out many new and innovative projects and some repeats from the previous year. KD5KR's famous *Big Foot* power supply drew great reviews and offers to purchase this collector's item, but alas, *Big Foot*, to the disappointment of many, must remain amongst the family heirlooms to be passed on to future KD5KR generations. (Literal translation: "What a bunch of cheapskates!")

December also brings a change in the 1998 Board of Directors. As President, I must say, this was a good bunch to work with. We've tackled a few problems and even solved a few in the process, but more tasks remain. With H. O. Townsend, WA5MLT, at the helm, NARS can only continue to thrive and grow in stature.

And now it's 1999. Don't forget the Annual Banquet and Award Ceremony on January 15, another chance to eat well, exchange tall tales, and relive the past year's events. The newly elected Board members will officially take over, and the old board given the "boot".

Thanks, guys and girls, for the cooperation and understanding you have all given me during 1998. We've had a lot of laughs together and, except for the lousy top bid of \$1.98 I got for *Big Foot*, it's been a great year!

Joe Sokolowski - KD5KR

You Know You're Old

Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.

Forget all the health food; I need all the preservatives I can get.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst; they are sticking to their diets. You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you used to get on the roller coaster.

God put me on earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now I am so far behind I will live forever. Time may be a great healer, but it is a lousy beautician.

If you can remain calm, you just don't have all of the facts.

I don't mind the rat race, but I could use a little more cheese.

I finally got my haed together, but my body fell apart.

The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight -- because by then your body and your fat are good friends.

I think I understand everything; then I regain conciousness.

The best way to forget all your troubles is to wear tight shoes.

Freedom of the press means no-iron clothes.

If at first you don't succeed, see if the loser gets anything.

Age is important only if you're bourbon, scotch or a cheese.

Life not only begins at forty; it begins to show.

Stress reducer: Put a bag on your head and mark it "closed for remodeling." (Leave air holes.)

The nice thing about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you're doing, someone else does.

Brain cells come and bain cells go, but fat cells live forever.

Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

Despite the high cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?

You just hang something in your closet for a while, and it shrinks two sizes.

Every time I think about exercise, I lie down until the thought goes away.

Age doesn't always bring wisdom; sometimes age comes alone.

Just when I was getting used to yesterday, along came today.

-- Ed Woodson, NC5S

Minutes of the Board Meeting

December 29, 1998

Treasurer's Report - The checkbook balance for 11/30/98 was \$3173.93.

Programs - February - KM5OE - Loyd's Country radio station will contact.

Silent Auction - The silent Auction at the December General Meeting raised \$691 for the club.

ARRL Fund for the Defense of Amateur Radio Frequencies - \$100 donation made by NARS

Field Day 1999 - Reservation confirmed for Fritsche Cemetery Park for June 25 - 28, 1999.

Board Meeting Location 1999 - Board Meetings will be at H.O. Townsend's home radio shack next year.

ARRL Board Meeting - Houston- NARS to participate in a hospitality suite for the ARRL Directors while here for their Board Meeting. Hospitality suite to be active, 4 to 6 p.m. on January 16, 1999. All members invited to attend to meet our ARRL representatives.

Novice/ Tech Class - Bill Rister KC5EZQ to coordinate the class again, starting April 1st with registration, and ending May 20th with the VE test session.

Bob Argo, KC5JZO, Secretary

People who dream impossible dreams and strive to achieve them raise man's stature a fraction of an inch in the processs, whether they win or lose.

Begin the Year on Positive Note

Take Steps Now to Insure Your Valuable Equipment

As you kick back in the lazy boy relishing this issue of the NARS newsletter, take a look around your shack. Note the hundreds, possibly thousands of dollars you have invested in your ham radio equipment. Also, think about the 2-meter or multimode HF rig carried in your personal vehicles. Therein also lies a significant investment. It is then prudent to think about taking adequate steps to protect your investment and continue in your quest for DX and whatever else makes you happy.

Several years ago after first becoming licensed I was shocked as I came outside one morning to note that the back door on my van had been jimmied. Upon inspection, unfortunately *all* of my valuable electronic gear was stolen, right from under my nose in my driveway!! Hurriedly I called the police and they arrived to investigate. My first mistake; I had no record of the serial numbers easily available to pass on to the officers so that they could enter into their data base. Secondly, I had no pictures of the articles so that I could describe them to the officers. Finally, and

perhaps the biggest mistake of all, I had no insurance on the electronics and had to suffer a financial loss. This was the scenario I faced, but it could have easily been a fire, house robbery, etc.

As can be seen from my example above, you can learn from my mistakes and be prepared when disaster strikes:

First -- Keep an active, up-to-date inventory of your equipment. Be prepared with copies that you can hand out to investigating officers. An *Excell* spreadsheet or *Access* data base is the perfect media to manage this information.

Second -- As obvious as this advice sounds, *pictures* are very helpful. We all know what an "HTX-202 Handie Talkie" or "ICOM 706MII" looks like. Unfortunately, police property personnel and some pawn shop operators do not. Pictures describing the stolen items would help a lot.

Third -- Insure the equipment. Several options exist. Homeowner and automobile insurance policies vary from company to company along with the situations in which they will pay for the loss. Check with your agent and find out specifically what is covered and what *is not* covered.

The best way in my opinion to ensure that your valuable equipment is insured is to take advantage of the

group coverage offered to members of the ARRL, underwritten by Reliance Insurance Company and administered through ALBERT H. WOHLERS in Park Ridge, Illinois. The coverage is offered for only pennies per hundred dollars of equipment valuation and is a good peace of mind project for the new year. The company can be reached at 1-800-503-9230 for more details and clarification of rates and terms.

-- L. B. Lockhart, K5LBL

VE Session Statistics

Many of us have read various reports that interest in amateur radio is diminishing *sharply*, that VE examination activity is falling off and various other "bad" signs regarding our hobby. I have compiled some statistics which compare the 1997-1998 activity of the NARS/Compaq VE team. I found nothing in these numbers to support the elaborate claims of some. Shown below are the results of these two years of VE activity.

SUMMARY OF VE SESSION ACTIVITY -- 1997 AND 1998

Comparison factor	1997	98
Candidates served	119	113
Total elements	211	190
New licenses earned	36	35
Upgrades	23	21

There is a relatively minor dropoff in the numbers from 1997 to 1998. However, this is a very short snapshot; more data will be required to demonstrate the validity of any trends.

-- K8CSG, VE Liaison

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George DiLetto, KDORW
President

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Fax 281-355-8007

DX News

*I do not know why this confronts me,
This sadness, this echo of pain;
A curious legend still haunts me,
That Scarborough will come again. . .*

Down below the hill a new crop of QRPers seemed to be forming. These were mostly the newer hams, some of them products of the NARS Springtime classes. For unknown reasons they had become attracted to working DX (which is not all bad -- thought The Old Timer). Some were stuck with working ten meters exclusively, since they had not upgraded their licenses above Technician Plus. Others were already on the way up, steadily achieving their upgrades. One lovely Fall morning a group of them made their way up the hill for a visit with The Old Timer. One of them, stuffed tight with some recent successes, chose to share them with The Old Timer. In the course of things, the QRPer asked: "Say, when do you think I should start thinking of myself as a true-blue, upper echelon DXer?" The Old Timer stared off into the sun, sighed a bit, and then asked: "When did you last call CQ DX?" When the QRPer stuttered and stammered about, The Old Timer added: "When it is so long that you can no longer remember when you did, then it is time to start thinking that you might be getting near". Son of a Gun! Doesn't that beat all! When The Old Timer speaks, its like it is graved on tablets of stone . . .

December began with the propagation numbrs sagging a bit. By Dec. 8 the SFI was 153, with A and K indices of 6 and 1. On Dec. 11 a geomagnetic storm disrupted propagation for a day or two. Band conditions were good for the ARRL Ten Meter Contest, even though conditions were a bit rough for the start. The solar flux was above the predicted level. On Dec. 19 geomagnetic conditions were especially quiet, with A and K indices of 0. Slightly rising conditions were predicted for the rest of the month, with conditions becoming somewhat unstable by yearend. Overall, the sunspot numbers continue to creep up somewhat raggedly, but they continue to move upward. As the end of the month approached, the SFI was near 185, with low A and K indices.

FT5ZH has been showing on various bands at various times. Most of these were no more than tantalizing whiffs to the Deserving DXers of Texas, in that

few could hear the FT5 and fewer could work him early in their operation. Of course FT5ZH is Amsterdam Island, virtually antipodal from Houston in the Indian Ocean. No matter how you try to get him, it is always a very long haul. On December 2, we were treated with a puzzling complex of riches -- XZ1N and FT5ZH both working on 14195 at the same time for a while. Fortunately, perhaps, neither station could be heard in the Houston area so our Deserving types were spared the frustration of trying to work either station. It certainly brought out the frequency policemen, however. As the month progressed, FT5ZH began to be readable in the evenings in Houston. Numerous of the NARS DXers snagged him, sometimes with the help of an alerting phone call.

LOCAL EVENTS: Congratulations to John (W5PDW) on working XZ1N! At mid-month, a phone call brought K5VUU into the chase again and he finally got his contact. And, Steve, KD5AIJ, finally got him worked on 14195 on Tuesday, Dec. 15 (Z). Jim Kirk worked VQ9M?? on CW for a new one on Dec. 15. Despite the best efforts of the frequency police, our Capt. Kirk managed to contact FT5ZH. Persistence, eh Jim?? The next evening saw FT5ZH worked by K5ZTY and W5PDW, as well as K8CSG. W5SB says he worked the FT5ZH station with one call on Dec. 10. That should make a DXer out of Ole Bill. WA5MLT and KD5AIJ both worked T88II on Palau. Steve now has worked 200 countries and has ~116 confirmed. George, K5VUU finally received the last one so he can file for his DXCC. He has ~150 worked and now has 104 confirmed. KD5AIJ was heard working DS4BBL in So. Korea.

DX WORKED: V63HO (Micronesia) 10m 2306; 3B8/DK3EP (Mauritius Is.) 10m 1405Z (YL); T77C (San Marino) 10m 1457Z; 7X4AN (Algeria) 20m 1619Z; 9G1BJ (Ghana) 20m 2108Z; 5H3EM (Tanzania) 20m 2128Z; D2YY (Angola) 20m 2143Z; FT5ZH (Amsterdam Is.) 20m 0024Z; A22EW (Botswana) 10m 1739Z; 4U1UN (UN Hq.NY) 10m 1544Z; FK8FI (New Caledonia) 10m 2302Z; KC4AAA (Antarctica) 20m 0232Z; XV300S (Vietnam) 15m 0017Z; A627ND (Dubai/UAE) 20m 1435Z; YC8RRK (Indonesia) 15m 2314Z; T88II (Palau) 15m 2316Z;

SV1CQN (Greece) 10m 1428Z; 6W6/N3NS (Senegal) 15m 1801Z; HL1JV (So. Korea) 10m 2354Z; ZS6GER (So. Africa) 15m 2046Z; JG2MGM (Japan) 15m 2339Z; V63KU (Micronesia) 20m 2059Z; BV4ME (Taiwan) 15m CW 2329Z; JR1MQT (Japan) 15m 2655z; ZS5VE (So. Africa) 15m 2047Z; ZD8T (Ascension Is.) 15m 2109Z; VU2DK (India) 20m LP 1339Z; A92GE (Bahrain) 20m LP 1353Z; 4X1BD (Israel) 20m LP 1410Z; GD4PTV (Isle of Man) 10m 1726Z; 9G1TB (Ghana) 15m 2323Z; 3W6LI (Vietnam) 15m 0045Z; DU6BG (Philippines) 15m 0059Z; JL1KFR/JD1 (Minami Torishima) 30m 1238Z; GB100SFL (Great Britain) 15m 1455Z; SV2AEL (Greece) 10m 1506Z; NH5/NH6YK (Midway Is.) 10m 2223Z; T88TN (Paulu) 15m 0001Z; ZS1ZX (So. Africa) 20m 2237; JT1BG (Mongolia) 20m 0118Z; VU3WIA (India) 20m LP 1307Z; 4JA9RI (Azerbaijan) 20m LP 1323Z; HZ1AB (Saudi Arabia) 20m LP 1503Z; 3A2MD (Monaco) 20m LP 1514Z; 9K2GS (Kuwait) 20m LP 1519Z.

DX HEARD/NOT WORKED: 5V7FA (Togo) 10m 1417Z; 5B4ADA (Cyprus) 10m 1422Z; SV2ASP/A (Mt. Athos) 10m 1440Z; 7P8RP (Lesotho) 10m 1840Z

QSL ROUTES: V63HO via KQ1F; 3B8/DK3EP via DK3EP; D2YY via CT1GG; FT5ZH via F6KDF; A22EW via KB2MS; UNHq.NY via W6TER; FK8FI via VK4FW; A627ND via KA5TQF; 6W6/N3NS via K3IPK; PT7BZ via KQ0B; 3W6LI via K2WE; DU6BG via K6BG; 9G1TB via WK6O; A92GE via P O Box 1976, Manama, Bahrain.

A special-event station A627ND, showed up from Dubai on 20m on Dec. 8. Beautiful 5X9 long-path signal with a very modest pileup. Dick Rooney and I worked him for fun. The special event is a celebration of 27 years of existence as a nation and of amateur radio operation in A6-land.

XV300S showed up on frequency on Dec. 10. Despite the pileup I worked him just before he went QRT. This is a special event station commemorating the founding of the city of Saigon 300 years ago. As is typical, any contact with any station in Vietnam is considered good DX.

DX News - Continued

Continued from Page 4

H.O, WA5MLT, demonstrated his DXing skills during the 10-meter contest. He worked some 30 countries, including 3V8BB. Not bad for a recent retread. He also worked DU6BG on my coattails. Over the holidays he adjusted his array of dipoles and worked the following countries: DU4, SP7, CU3, FG/F5, YS1, V51, V4, ZP5, CX4, RW3, EA8, WP2, 6W6, etc.

8Q7LE has been operated in the Maldives by GØULN during the latter one-third of December and into January. He has been very busy on 80-10 meters SSB. This is not an easy one to work, but worth watching for

Minami Torishima, JD1, appeared during December. This station was operated by JL1KFR/JD1. He appeared to strongly prefer CW and RTTY QSOs, but was readily workable on 10 Mc. in the mornings.

The South Shetland Islands will be available until the end of February, 1999. LZ2UU is operating as LZ0A from the Bulgarian base on Livingston Island. He prefers 40 through 10 meters, mostly CW.

I have been noticing what appears to be increased activity on the DX bands by operators using RTTY. Thirty-eight years ago I acquired my first MARS teletype machine, a well-used Model 15. In time that was joined by a Model 14 TD (transmitter-distributor, or paper tape keyer) and a perforator keyboard which was then adapted to the Model 15 printer. Later a couple of reperforators were acquired, rounding out a fairly complete array of paper-tape equipment. This was all worked into a complete teletype station setup using a custom-designed-and-built table-cabinet on casters for mobility during my second involuntary tour of active duty with the U. S. Army. For the next fifteen years or so I thoroughly enjoyed operating radioteletype using this setup. It was all disposed of while still in Ohio before coming to Texas. Now all one needs to operate RTTY is a computer and a good TNC. Maybe I will finally get mine set up to return to RTTY -- sounds like a good goal for 1999!

Back in 1948 I was a college freshman in engineering school in Kentucky and a very new ham operator. We started a radio club at the University, and one Saturday we constructed a wire ten meter beam (fixed on Europe) in a tower attic of an engineering building. In testing the antenna that day we tuned the band and from the speaker boomed "This is G2PU at Cambridge University in England." The call sign and voice were extremely distinctive and I have never forgotten them. A little over fifty years later, having worked G2PU from my own station numerous times during the intervening years, I wrote to the operator, whose name is Sant, and asked for a QSL card. It arrived in mid-December. As I told the now-81-year-old Sant, I wanted it since he was the very first DX station I had ever heard on the ham bands.

Dave Heil, K8MN, of Heil headset fame, is on the air again in Africa as 5H3US. He is working for the U. S. State Department in Tanzania. On Sunday, Dec. 27, I worked him on 20-meters. He sounded just like he used to sound from J52US in the late 1980s, and other spots from which he has operated over the years. Not surprisingly, he was 5x9 and working a gigantic pileup. As is usually the case, the QRPers were out in force, calling on his transmitting frequency despite his efforts to give them a degree of instruction on how to work him and how not to. Dave is a proven DX operator and it usually pays to listen to him. When the pileup got out of hand, he simply went QRT. That is also typical of him. Have fun working him; he should be there for three years. QSLs go to WA8JOC, who is a dependable QSL manager.

GB100SFL showed on 10m around mid-month. This station was operated from a lightship in the English Channel. Its purpose was to commemorate 100 years of lightship service which assists naval navigators.



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Greetings From The New Editor!

Along with all of you, I sincerely salute Keith for his work as Editor of NARS News over the last forty-one months -- August, 1995 through December, 1998. That is a remarkable performance by any measure.

As I begin an effort to succeed Keith and Ken, I look forward to the task with some trepidation. I know how difficult it can be (at times) to fill a newsletter. For eleven years I edited a magazine called ENTELEC News. Over such a span one often finds more material written by the Editor than anyone else. Yes, the age-old problem of getting input from other authors.

As many readers will recall, I have written the DX column for nearly three years now, and I plan to continue on that task. However, I will eagerly look forward to receiving material from you other members. I know we have capable authors out there -- I have seen your work in Keith's newsletter. Please don't forget me!

Bill Gary, K8CSG

Welcome and Condolences

Welcome to these new NARS Members:

Bruce, N1LN, and Laurie, N1XXU, Meier

Condolences to: Larry B. Lockart on the loss of his mother on December 1.

O. J. Quarles as he recovers from knee surgery.

Barbara Vaglianti (KC5FMU) on the loss of her husband, Mark (KC5FMT) to a motorcycle accident in Mexico.

The Vagliantis were non-licensed members of NARS in 1994.

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY, 281/893-3901
Allen Majeski WA5REJ, 281/353-8653
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/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA, 713/894-5942

Computer Operations:

Bob Argo KC5JZO, 281/288-7430

Computer Programming:

Keith Dutson WD5DXL, 281/351-7683

-5Interference (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

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George Levandoski, KD5AYF
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NETS

10M Ragchew: Monday 8:00 PM. 28.444
Coordinator: Jim Kirk KJ5X
jrkirk@wt.net 281/537-0718

2M Information: Wed. 8:00 PM. 146.66
Coordinator: Bill Gary K8CSG
bsnn87a@prodigy.com 281/537-9240

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URL: <http://www.flash.net/~nars/>
Webmaster: Ben Worell KM5OT
km5ot@bfweb.com 409/773-4484
Trustee: Walter Hock KK5LO
kk5lo@flash.net 281/350-6633

REPEATERS

2M -- 146.060/146.660 (KA5AKG)
70 cm -- 449.375/444.375 (KA5AKG)
Digipeater -- 145.710(W5NC alias NARS)

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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Send all articles and materials other than
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