

NARS



NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

July 1999

July Meeting Program

**So you want to work DX?
Come see how the experts do it!**

The July club program is scheduled to be an educational presentation centered around DX Clusters. If you are a DX'er, or if you find DXing interesting, the program just might answer a question or two, like - "just what is a DX cluster," and "what benefits do they offer to the Amateur Radio community?" With the current sun-spot cycle swinging upward, and the recent revival in DX interest, the topic should be timely.

WRAPUP -- FIELD DAY 1999

FD 1999 is in the can. The NARS score is 8386 points. This equates from the Q count as follows for 1999 FD: SSB-1082 contacts, C - 971 contacts, NOVICE-352 contacts, and VHF-324 contacts. Not a bad score but not a GRAND score either. This score may get us in the top 10 in 2A, but I wouldn't take bets on that either. We were visited by Murphy once again. The CW Novice tent was plagued by RF. After changing the keyer, radio, power supply and a few other things, it was determined to be a "ground loop problem". The signals improved but not in enough time to save the early, low Q rate. The VHF station had a hot run on 6 Meters and gave them an early, high Q rate. This fell off later in the night and never recovered. The SSB station plugged along with a so-so Q rate. Well, BETTER LUCK NEXT YEAR.

Thanks go to all for their efforts at all of the stations and their operators and loggers. Thanks to the Captains, Bill W5SB - Phone; Bruce WC5CW, Bill K5ZTY, & Jack WA8GHZ - CW; Rick KZ5E - VHF; Gregg W5IDX and George KD5AYF - Novice/Tech Plus station. Thanks to George K5VUU for his help on lining up the Porta-Cans, tents, tables and chairs. Thanks to Dianna KC5VSF for the FOOD, and Allen WA5REJ for being band captain. A BIG THANKS to all of those who helped set up and tear down. I really enjoy how much NARS members jump right in and help. It made my job as Field Day Coordinator easy. I am looking toward Year 2000 Field Day already.

-- 73, Walter, KK5LO

Important Dates

Friday, July 16, 7:30-9:30 PM

NARS General Membership Meeting at Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 6000 Spring Cypress Road

Saturday, July 24, 8:30 AM

License Exam Session. Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main Street)

Tuesday, July 27, 7:30 PM

NARS Board of Directors meeting, H.O. Townsend's home, 16880 E. Maglitto Circle

Contests:

July 17-18

Six Club Six Meter Sprint
Pacific 160 Meter Contest
North America QSO Party -- RTTY
SEANET Contest, CW
Colombian Independence Day Contest

July 24-25

RSGB Islands-on-the-Air Contest
IOTA Contest

August 1

Georgia QSO Party
USI W/VE Islands Contest
YO DX Contest

August 7-8

North American QSO Party -- CW
WAE CW Contest
MD-DC QSO Party

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

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W. FM 1960

**Saturdays
8:00 AM**

President's Corner

July 1999

Howdy all...

The fish are jumping and it's July. How's Amateur Radio at your shack? Keep those antennas up; you never know what you might hook -- a W1, W6, or a mobile QRP'er from Minot! When fish get big enough, they grow antennas.

Congratulations to Walter, KK5LO, and all who "helped" organize and who participated in this year's NARS FD99. Amateur Radio will benefit greatly. It was good to see all of the newer members there working so hard. Hopefully, NARS will make a very positive showing. I didn't make set-up, but I can say that the teardown crew was very well organized machine. Those towers laid over with the greatest of ease.

If you were not able to attend FD99, you missed club sponsored food. That's right, you missed out on FREE BBQ! How about next year you ask, we'll see if this was a popular idea?

With new towers growing like weeds and sun spots popping out like freckles everywhere, there has been renewed interest in a possible DX cluster. With this in mind, I think you'll find the July club meeting program of interest. "Come and get educated," somewhat, on what a DX cluster is.

By the way, the your Board of Directors has NOT voted to sponsor a DX cluster. Board members present at the June meeting did discuss the topic and they issued a statement endorsing the idea with limits.

I hope to see you at the meeting

73 de H. O. - WA5MLT

Skills USA VICA Championships

Skills USA VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America) just held its National Competition in Kansas City, Missouri. With this being the national competition, all of the competitors received first place in their states back in May. I received first place in the Electronics Technology competition down in Corpus Christi when Texas VICA held its state competition back in May. Therefore, I represented all of Texas at the National Skills USA VICA Leadership Championships.

Justin Williams, KC5QNJ, has received THIRD in the NATION for Electronics Technology!!!

Yeah baby, I have brought home a FAT bronze medal and a whole bunch of other goodies like a \$150 Digital Soldering Station, NIDA Auto-ranging DMM, \$250 scholarship from ISCET, and some other cool stuff.

I used a road map and ARRL Repeater Directory to keep in touch for the 11 hour drive from Amarillo to KC and back, but was so busy during the week of the competition that the radio was off most of the time. However, I used all of the Amateur Radio reference books I could find to help me study.

Here's a quick overview of the competition:

Part One -- Written exam; same used to become a Certified Electronics Technician. In fact, those who paid the \$30 fee and passed the exam received their ISCET certification.

Part Two -- Breadboarding (with a twist!). We were given some incomplete schematics and expected to point out errors and design flaws and design the circuitry necessary to make the thing work.

Part Three -- Troubleshooting. We were given 15 situations, and were expected to use troubleshooting

methods and equipment to isolate the problem and find out which fault was being injected.

Part Four -- Soldering. We were given a PCB and the parts necessary to build a non-functional circuit, and then take measurements from certain test points. We were required to solder the components at a certain level off of the board, and ask for parts that were intentionally left out of the packet of components.

After half a day of pure bliss, it looks like I did well enough to walk across the stage to receive the bronze. What a rush!

Someone wrote me and said that there was an article in the ARRL newsletter about VICA. What was it all about?

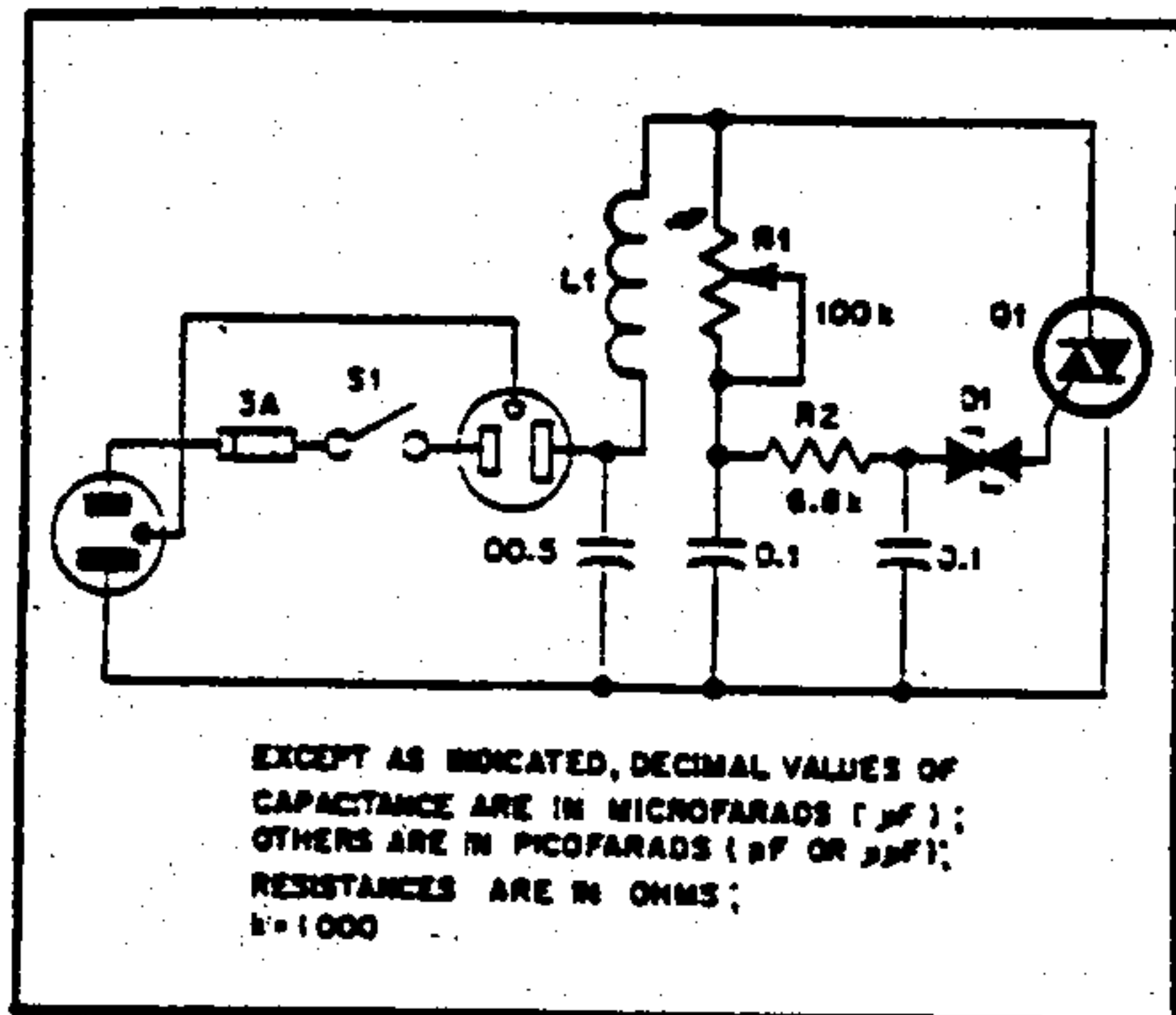
As always, I give a lot of credit to you guys for helping me become so interested and involved in electronics, amateur radio, and computers. It has certainly paid off for me, and all of Texas! Thanks! This one's for you guys!

73,
Justin Williams, KC5QNJ
3108 Paramount #B
Amarillo, Texas 79109-3350
(806) 353-4919
kc5qnj@juno.com

Editor's Note -- In the April issue of NARS News we documented Justin's progress to the point just ahead of his Statewide appearance in Corpus Christi on May 7-8 where he won a 4-year college scholarship. We suspect that may have been used as input to the ARRL Letter which further publicized Justin's work. To those of us who knew Justin when he lived here in the Houston area, this latest accomplishment comes as no surprise. Mark Tyler, K8GQ, must be popping the buttons off his shirt with pride in his protege. Mark was the Elmer who got Justin started on this trail, and who provided additional mentoring along the way while he still lived here. Congratulations, Justin and Mark.

A Soldering Station Idea

When my 30W soldering element burned out, I pressed a 50w element into service. As expected, it was too hot for most work. An incandescent light dimmer worked well for controlling the working temperature of the tip. You can purchase a ready-made unit, or the circuit depicted below can be built to prolong the life of your tips.



—Schematic diagram of a light-dimmer circuit that can be built to control your soldering-iron temperature.

- D1—Diac, 2 A, 300 mW (Motorola MPT28, HEP 311 or equiv.).
- L1—70 μ H, approx. 18 ft of no. 18 enam. wire on a 1 1/2-in. long, 1/2-in. dia form.
- Q1—Trac, 8 A, 200 V (Motorola MAC2-4, HEP 340 or equiv.).
- R1—Linear-taper control, 100 k Ω .

The dimmer should be wired in an electrical box that has a receptacle to plug in the soldering iron. This would be ideal for the construction of a soldering station for the work bench. The unit could also be used as a variable speed control for drills or other motor-operated devices.

(This idea was conceived by Wayne Hester, NK4T, Semmes, AL.)

-- Harry, N5WIZ



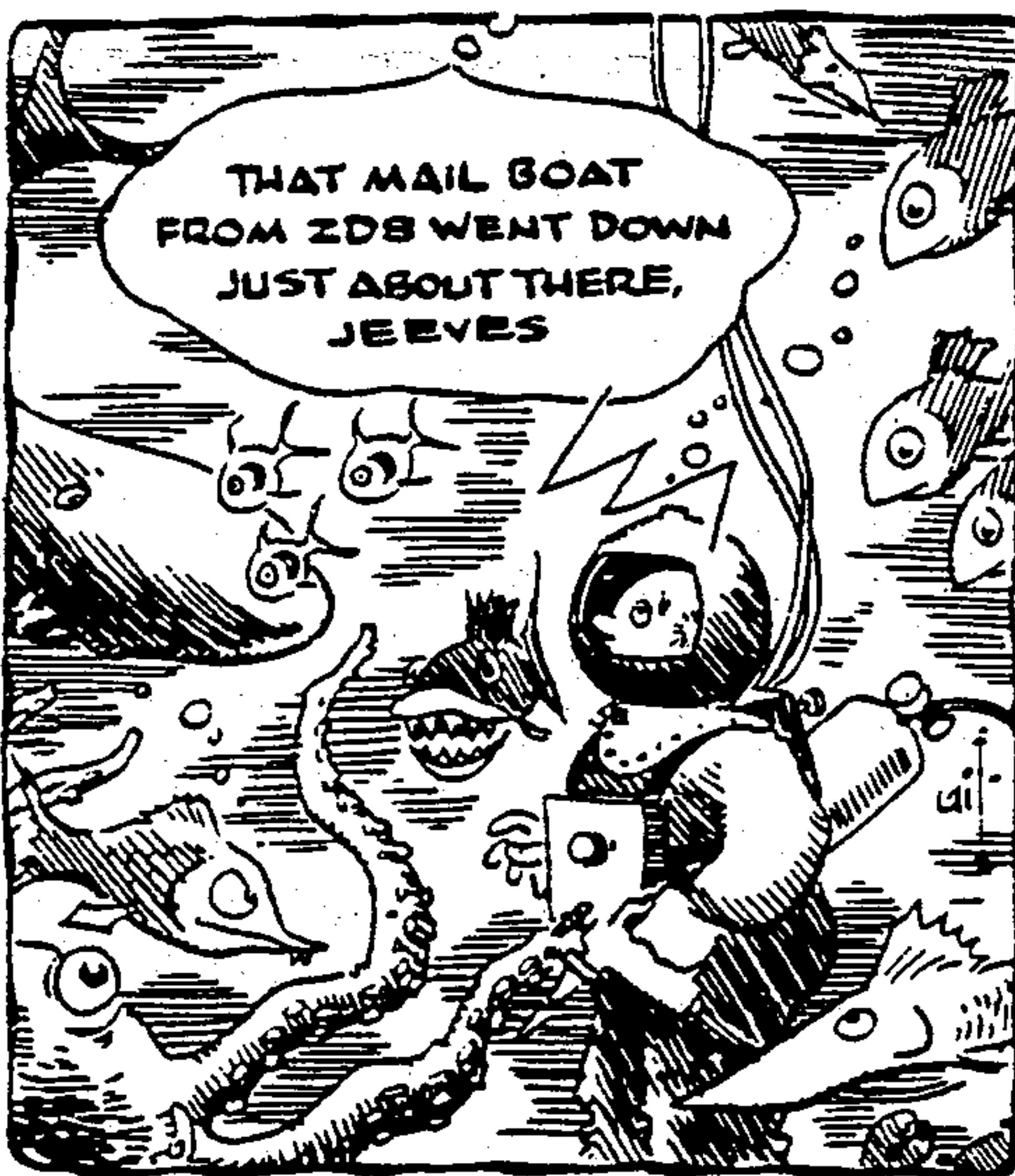
Cartoon courtesy of QST, Oct. 1954

No Changes in Examination Question Pools - Yet

No Amateur Radio examination question pool or question changes will occur July 1 for any license class--including Advanced.

Last September, the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators' Question Pool Committee announced that all question pool updates were being put on hold until after the FCC had acted on Amateur Radio restructuring (officially known as the Part 97 Biennial Review). Until the September NCVEC QPC announcement, the Advanced class question pool had been scheduled to expire at midnight on June 30, 1999.

Current examination questions and study materials remain valid until further notice.



Cartoon courtesy of QST, Feb. 1954

FCC Sets New Vanity Fee

The fee to apply for an Amateur Radio vanity call sign will increase from \$13 to \$14 starting September 10, 1999.

Alternator Whine Filter

The standard solution for alternator whine is a choke and capacitor filter. Unfortunately, when the rig is shuttled between different vehicles, a separate filter is needed for each one. With this in mind, I put the filter inside my rig, which is a Kenwood TR-2200A.

The modification was easy and took only a few minutes. Finding space for the components may be the most difficult part of the task. Below is a schematic diagram of the filter I added to my TR-2200A.

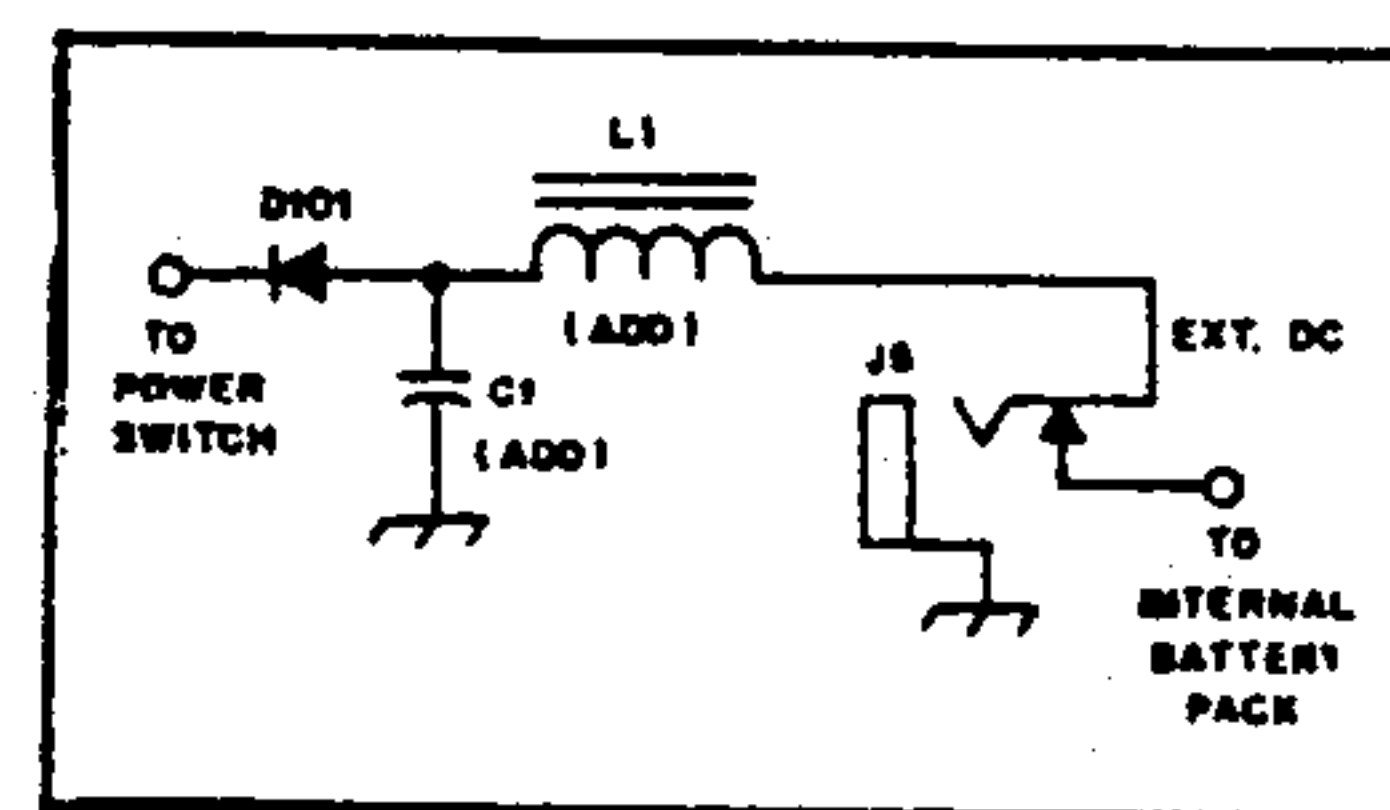


Fig 5—This simple alternator-whine filter was added to a Kenwood TR-2200A by WA0MRG. This circuit should be applicable to other rigs. C1 is a 470- μ F, 25-V electrolytic capacitor. L1 is a dc power-supply choke.

A small iron-core choke was "liberated" from an old CB unit and placed under the spacer in the battery compartment. The tight fit keeps it in place. The capacitor was mounted behind the speaker, with the ground lead on the capacitor soldered directly to the PC board.

Space is at a premium, but with attention to the physical size of the choke and capacitor this filter should be adaptable to most mobile rigs. One precaution; be sure the choke is capable of handling the current drawn by the rig. (Original concept by Dallas Williams, WA0MRG.)

-- Harry Gage, N5WIZ

The FCC has released its FY 1999 fee schedule which rounded down the proposed \$1.42 per year fee.

The FCC continues to receive in excess of 1000 vanity applications per month.

DX News

*This be the verse you grave for me,
Here he lies where he longed to be.
Home is the sailor, home from the
sea,
And the DXer, home with his key.*

One of the Local QRPers phoned The Old Timer recently. "Are you busy," he asked solicitously. "Not really," The Old Timer replied. "What's on your mind?" He could sense that something of significant importance to the QRPer was about to bubble forth.

"Well," said the QRPer, "I was listening on ten meters this evening and I heard this VK in Australia working a big pileup. His signal was unbelievably strong. So, I thought I would try to work him. I picked my spot and signed my callsign once. Just once! And the VK came right back to me on that first call!"

"Amazing," said the Old Timer thinking back to the new 150-foot tower and big Force 12 antenna recently installed at the QRPer's place. The QRPer roared right on, describing how he had heard a station in Russia working a big pileup and handing out 10-X numbers. "This guy was really strong, too," he said with a bit of a breathless tone in his voice. "I signed my callsign once and he came right back! Said he wanted to know what I was running to generate such a big signal." Told him it was probably due, in part, to my Alpha 87A amplifier and my 150-foot tower with its Force 12 antenna. I've never had DXers come back to me on the first call like that before."

The Old Timer observed that such

things often happen to fellows who have big amplifiers, big towers and big beams. "You see," he told the QRPer, "you've never worked with a true DX antenna before." A few days later The Old Timer heard the QRPer confessing to his friends on the club repeater that he "thought he had been bitten by the DX bug . . ."

Band conditions improved as June became reality. Reasonably good propagation enabled the NARS DXers to home in on DX more readily than earlier. Twenty meters began staying open late into the evenings, rather than dying shortly after dinner. Propagation was mixed during the last weekend of June, i.e., the Field Day weekend. Although the SFI was fairly high, a high A index indicated daily high absorption. The best news was the nice 6-meter opening which enabled the VHF boys to make a happy contribution.

LOCAL EVENTS: John, W5PDW, received notice from CQ Magazine that his application for Worked All Zones was approved, which means the certificate should follow. Bill, K5ZTY, and Terry, KQ5U, both received approval of their DXCC applications in Arlington, while Jim, KJ5X, and Steve, KD5AIJ, submitted endorsement applications for their DXCC's. Walter, KK5LO, has accumulated more than enough QSLs for DXCC and has asked me to take them to New Orleans for checking. The Canadians put on a pretty good show at St. Paul Island, CY9SS. KD5AIJ and K8CSG received cards for Glorioso Island from FR5ZU/G. The Japanese boys went into Laos to operate XW8KPL and rewarded

some NARS operators with QSOes. Mike, KM5LA, Steve, KD5AIJ, and George, K5VUU, all were successful in landing them. The writer received appointment as the Houston area checkpoint for the CQ DX Award, another rather nice piece of wallpaper. K5NZ and K8CSG received QSLs from EP3PTT.

DX WORKED: SV1SK (Greece) 20m 2200Z; HL4GSN (S.Korea) 20m 1321Z; Z22JE (Zimbabwe) 20m 1350Z; EU5R (Belarus) 20m 0139Z; VK4AFO (Australia) 20m 1153Z; P29WK (Papua New Guinea) 20m 1155Z; JT1FBB (Mongolia) 20m 1203Z; P29CC (Papua New Guinea) 20m 1233Z; T32RT (Christmas Island) 20m 1436Z; CY9SS (St. Paul Isl.) 20m 0310Z; BV4FH (Taiwan) 20m 1135Z; DU1EIB (Philippines) 20m 1114Z; SV1CQN (Greece) 20m 0218Z; BA4DX (China) 20m 1456Z; DX1S (Philippines) 20m 1330Z; ZC4ATC (Br. Sov. Mil. Base - Cyprus) 20m 0158Z; VU2RTF (India) 20m 1242Z; FK8HW (New Caledonia) 20m 1120Z; ZD8V (Ascension Isl.) 20m 2205Z; BA2DW (China) 20m 1539Z; P29WK (F. New Guinea) 20m 1315Z; 5R8FU (Malagasy Rep.) 20m 1123Z; C21JH (Nauru) 20m 1134Z; VR2KM (Hong Kong) 20m 1521Z; T32RT (E. Kiribati) 20m 1352Z; V73RB (Marshall Is.) 20m 1225Z.

QSL ROUTES: ZC4ATC via 5B4YX; TM1RCL via F5TCM; P29WK via K9JJR; BA4DW via BD4DW; EW3LB via W3HNK; JW2PA via LA2PA; VQ9CV via ND1V.

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President

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Fax 281-355-8007

DX News - Continued

Another fairly rare country is becoming more accessible. Tunisia (3V8) has for some time been relatively difficult to work. In recent years, 3V8BB has been the usual vehicle for getting contacts and QSLs. This club station was made available to relatively few visitors, and always drew a big crowd when it appeared on the air. Now it is appearing more frequently, thus rewarding many of the faithful, Deserving DXers. Another indication of flexibility in Tunisia is 3V8J which operated from Jervis Island for about ten days or so in June.

We hear a lot of grumbling these days about the relatively poor conditions on ten meters. I pulled my log from eleven years ago for comparison. It reflected circumstances very much like what I am hearing these days. Looking a little further into the log I found a marked change on ten meters (and fifteen) beginning with the onset of the Fall season. The frequency and quality of ten meter contacts improved sharply beginning in September. This tends to confirm that summertime conditions on ten meters are often rather poor.

Solar flux, and especially sunspot numbers, took a huge leap over the past week. Average sunspot numbers almost doubled, with a jump from 138.9 last week to 272. Sunday had the highest sunspot number, 341. Average solar flux was up almost fifty points to 198.6 compared to the previous week. Saturday and Sunday's big numbers were quite an event for Field Day weekend.

These numbers are a new record for this solar cycle. The last time sunspot numbers were any higher was on February 1, 1992, when the sunspot number was 363. Solar flux hasn't been this high since February 29, 1992 when it was 218.

The end of June was also the end of the second quarter for 1999. Average sunspot numbers for the last quarter of 1998 through the end of June were 99.1, 96.1 and 147.2. Average solar flux for the same three quarters was 136.9, 136.7 and 145. You can see a more dramatic rise in the monthly numbers over this quarter. April through June average sunspot numbers were 92.9, 140.6 and 208.3, and average solar flux for the same period was 117.2, 148.4 and 169.8. This indicates a great upward trend.

Here is an e-mail message I received

recently:

Date: Mon, 05 Jul 1999 20:07
From: JEFFREY BURRIS
<jburris@home.com>
Subject: NARS NEWS

I read with interest the section about ZD8Z, Jim Neiger, KB6DA. I was searching out anything about Canton Island.

I worked on Canton Island from 1961-1963 for Bendix Radio in the Mercury Program. I was told that I was the first ham ever to get a license on Canton. My call sign was KB6CA (KB6 Canton Atoll or KB6 Chubby Ape). Still have a QSL card around somewhere. It was black with the outline of Canton in the middle.

I was a communications operator. The guy who talked me into getting the license so that we could run phone patches was Bob Adams, an electronics technician working with me on the Bendix site. He taught me the electronics I needed to know to pass the test and I already knew the code having been a Naval radio operator. We had a Collins transceiver for the phone patches. I remember when I would get on the air trying to find somebody to run a patch for us everybody in the world it seemed would jump on me. It was fun.

Reading about this in your newsletter on the net brought back a lot of memories. I was on the evening shift at the time, me and one diesel operator, and I conducted Morse code classes out at the site for anybody that wanted to learn it. One lady passed the requirements, 13 words a minute I believe, and she might have gone on to get her license. Her last name was Preece (?), a very nice Hawaiian lady married to an FAA worker by the name of Clyde Preece. She was the Postmistress on the island.

When I left Canton I never practiced as a ham again and just let my license expire. Sometimes I think it might be fun to take it up again.

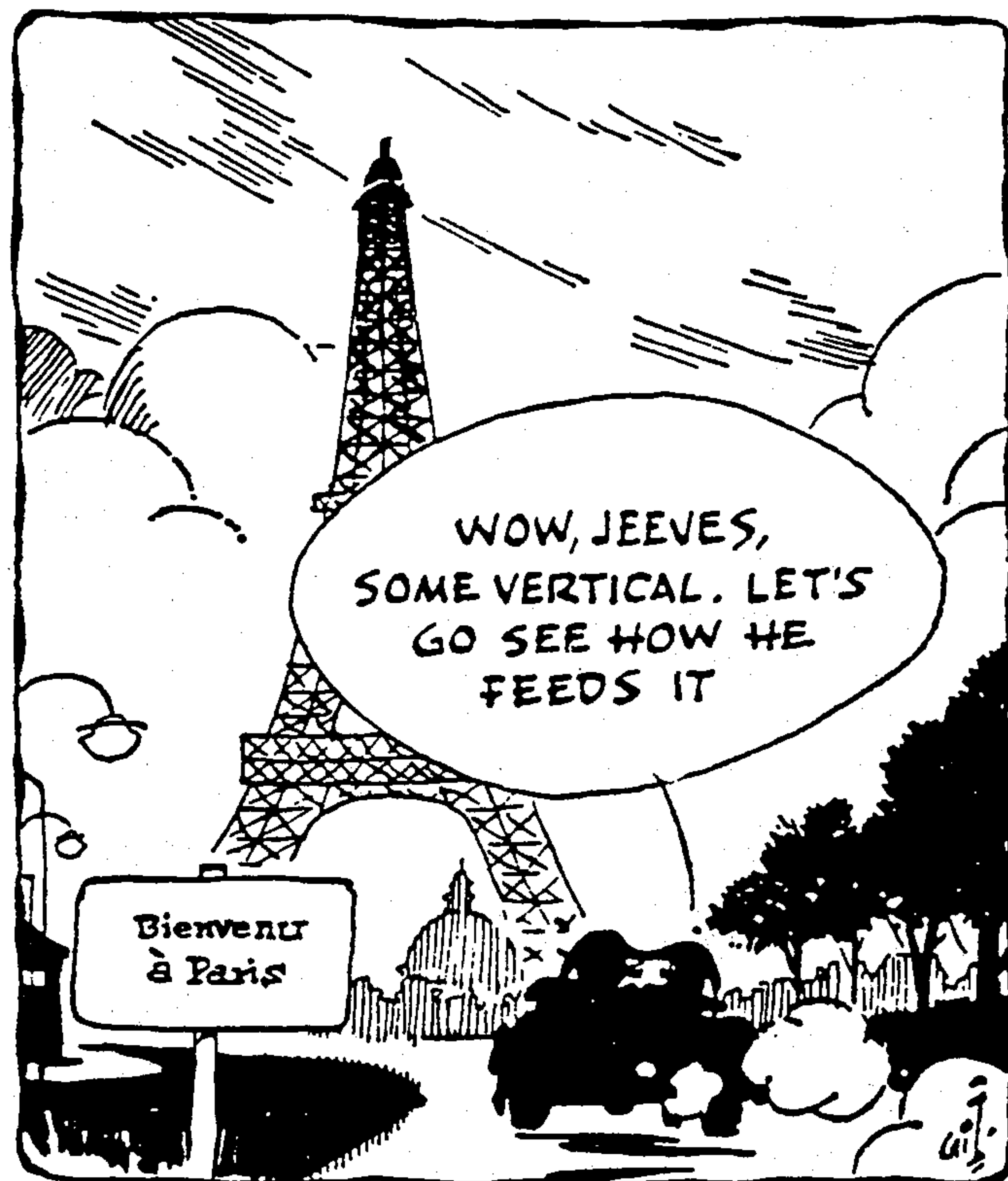
Can you tell me anything more about Jim Neiger, I'm just curious. Also, anybody there know a Bob Adams. He was a long time serious ham when he came down to Canton in 1961, 1962. He was medium height, short grey hair, wore glasses with lenses like coke bottles. I would love to get in contact with him again. Believe he might have been from San Francisco but not sure. He would be about 70 or so.

Jeff Burris
Formerly KB6CA, Canton Island

Editor's Note --This message was stimulated by a paragraph in one of my earlier DX Columns in the newsletter. In it I described my experience in working Jim Neiger on Canton Island in October, 1972 and gaining two countries via Jim's British and American callsigns as he sat in the same chair. It appears this chap may have been doing a deep topic-search of the Internet using Canton Island as a key.

-- Bill, K8CSG

Cartoon courtesy of QST, July 1967



Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Best wishes to George Edwards, K5VUU, as he recovers from quintuple bypass surgery
Best wishes to Marian Denton, KB5SGV, who is recovering from a broken back.

Welshome and congratulations to these new hams:

KH5HJB -- Don Skipton, Technician
KD5HKN -- John Gorden, Technician
KD5HIZ -- Howard Chang, Tech Plus
KD5HKM -- Susan Camron, Technician
KD5HKP -- Debbie Pearson, Novice

Congratulations to Lowell Good on his upgrade to Advanced Class.

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

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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w5nc@juno.com

Call Marian for general information

*about NARS. Send address, phone, e-mail
and other changes to:*

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P O Box 690342

Houston, Texas 77269-0342

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

k8csg@arrl.net

281/537-9240

WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.flash.net/~nars/>

Webmaster: Ben Worell KM5OT

km5ot@bfwwweb.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 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)

NARS NEWS is published monthly by the
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Send all articles and materials other than
email for the Newsletter to:

NARS Newsletter

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