



NARS Y2K Awards Banquet

Date: Friday -- January 21, 2000

Time: 6:30 - 9:30 PM

Place: Wyndehaven Terrace

Address: 12716 Cutten Road (Just south of FM 1960)

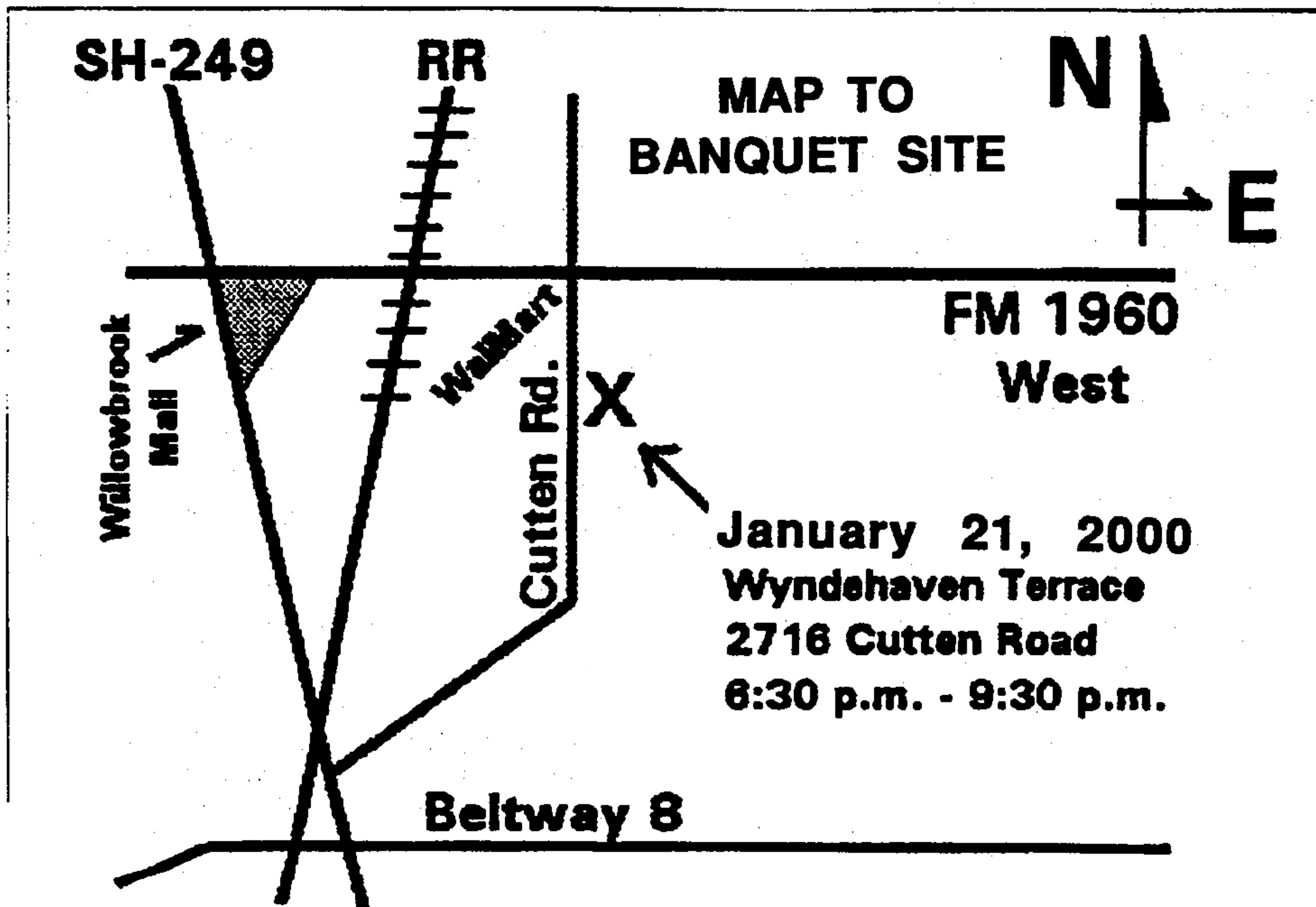
Cost: \$15 Member, \$15 Member Guest, \$18 Non-Member

RSVP PLEASE (required to set the count for food)!!! Call or e-mail Jack, WA8GHZ, 281/856-7768/wa8ghz@arrl.net or Keuth Dutson, WD4DXL. You may pay in advance to Jack or to Keith, WD5DXL, or send a check to NARS, P. O. Box 690342, Houston, TX 77269-0342.

The banquet will be held at the same place as last year. For those who missed the banquet last year, Wyndehaven Terrace is a great place for a NARS banquet. We have access to the entire facility, which includes a spacious dining room with banquet tables, an adjoining stage area, PA system, etc. Parking is easy and quite plentiful. The food last year was excellent. Entrees included roast beef and fried chicken, accompanied by salad, green beans, potatoes, coffee or iced tea and dessert. Essentially the same menu is planned for the January, 2000 get-together.

Remember! *Reservations are important and must be made in advance*

Please come out and enjoy a lovely evening!



Important Dates

Friday, January 21, 6:30-9:30 PM
 NARS Annual Awards Banquet. See announcement at left.

Saturday, January 22, 8:30 AM
 License Exam Session. Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main Street).

Tuesday, January 25, 7:30 PM
 NARS Board of Directors meeting, George Edwards home, 17007 Hillview Lane

Contests:

January 22-24
 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

January 28-30
 CQ WW 160meter DX Contest, CW
 REF French Contest, CW
 Belgian Phone Contest
 YL International Contest, CW
 Kansas QSO Party

February 6
 North American SSB Sprint

February 12-13
 World-Wide RTTY WPX Contest
 Dutch PACC Contest

February 13
 North American CW Sprint

February 19-20
 ARRL Int'l CW DX Contest

Deadline for articles to appear in February issue -Monday, January 31.

BREAKFAST at Victors

4710 W. FM 1960

Saturdays
8:00 AM

President's Corner

January, 2000

Howdy all. . .

I'd like to start off by saying "thanks" to George(K5VUU) for presiding over the December meeting. The flu bug came my way the day before. I appreciate it, George.

Missing the December meeting meant that I missed the annual show and tell project event and the silent auction. Thanks to all who took the time to show their best project, and thanks to those who helped fill the club treasury

Thanks to all who attended the December meeting and who took part in the discussion of our Rosehill tower site use. The Board listened and heard a lot. Your input will guide the Board well. I might also invite you to attend any Board meeting to put in your two cents worth on this issue or any other that you feel is important to the club.

December also brought the amateur radio community the long-awaited, anticipated, and feared FCC restructuring Report and Order. Sure enough, our fears were realized with the single 5 wpm code requirement. After a fair amount of discussion and listening to others, it seems to me the best defense of our hobby is to conduct ourselves in the manner we want those joining the hobby to conduct themselves. Be a good example.

The Annual Banquet is just around the corner. If you have not signed up, do so soon. Yes, you can pay at the door, but advanced registration helps in the head count which in turn helps to ensure there is enough food for all. See the announcement elsewhere in this issue for details.

The banquet will also serve to welcome the club leadership for year 2000. As everyone should know, George (K5VUU) will assume the helm. George, best of luck for you in 2000.

In closing, thanks for the opportunity this past year. Most of all, thanks to the Board for their dedication.

-- 73 es gud DX, H.O.-WA5MLT

Like many members, the WA8GHZ station has been running TR-log for contest logging for the last few years. And like others, I have continued to have trouble getting the program setup just right after doing TR's infamous "Config.Dat file dance" before every contest.

No more! I took a leap, spent \$75.00, purchased Writelog, initially hated it, but have come to really like it after a few contests. Not only is Writelog a Windows-based fully-capable contest logger, but it can serve as a RTTY interface, a PSK31 interface, a packet interface and a CW decoder. And, it performs all this with a simple plug-in to your computer's sound card.

But I bought Writelog for contest logging, so how does it work in that role? Well, the only drawback for me,

compared to TR Log, is that Writelog will not let you enter the exchange in any possible order; the exchange must be placed in the correct "columns" as seen in the lower "entry" window of the screen capture here. Apart from that, Writelog does everything that TR does, and more -- easier. The best feature is that all program changes and contest setups are done in the comfortable Windows environment; that's correct -- no more archaic CNTL-J, or ALT-P functions to memorize. And NO, you don't need to use another hand to work a mouse to control the program.

Of course all the Supercheck, dupe check, callsign correction, "Hi Sluggo" functions are included. Did

I mention the DVK feature? Using your computer's soundcard, the program is ready to serve as your voice keyer. Did I mention the recording mode? The program will record QSOs upon command, or an entire contest, and compress that record on your hard disk for playback later.

The screen capture shown in this article is a typical screen from the CQWW contest. Here I am logging a P5 for the second time on a new band (well, we can dream!). I like having the rate screen, the band screen, and the heading screen up all the time. But you can customize the screen appearance any way you want. For example, you could have your packet screen up and located where you want it. Or you could have an auxiliary like the CW Decode screen up (ok, but it only

The screenshot shows the Writelog software interface. At the top, there's a menu bar with options like File, Edit, View, Entry, Radio, Bands, Setup, Tools, Contest, and Help. Below the menu bar, there's a status bar showing '99cqwwcwxwl - Writelog'. The main window is divided into several sections. On the left, there's a 'Radio' section with fields for 'Radio', 'CALL', 'RST', 'ZN', and 'COUNTRY'. The 'Radio' field is set to '14000 KHzCW'. The 'CALL' field is set to 'P5/OH2AM'. The 'RST' field is set to '599'. The 'ZN' field is set to '25'. The 'COUNTRY' field is set to 'North Korea'. In the center, there's a table with columns for 'SEQ', 'DATE', 'TIME', 'FREQ', 'CALL', 'SNT', 'RST', 'ZN', 'COUNTRY', 'C', 'PREF', 'P', 'ZM', and 'CM'. The table contains several rows of data, including '1999-12-06 1813 3500 P5/OH2AM 599 599 25 North Korea HM 3 1 1', '1814 3500 YV5/WA8GHZ 599 599 09 Venezuela YV 3 2 2', '1814 3500 VO2WL 599 599 02 Canada VE 2 3 3', '1815 3500 XA5T 599 599 06 Mexico XE 2 4 4', '1815 3500 3CA/WA8GHZ 599 599 36 Equatorial Gu 3C 3 5 5', '1816 3500 YD5CW 599 599 20 Romania YO 3 6 6', and '1816 3500 WIAW 599 599 05 United States K 0 7 7'. On the right, there's a 'North Korea' section with fields for 'Direction', 'Distance', 'Reverse Bearing', and 'LP Direction'. The 'Direction' field is set to '48'. The 'Distance' field is set to '13093'. The 'Reverse Bearing' field is set to '200'. The 'LP Direction' field is set to '220'. At the bottom, there's a taskbar with icons for 'Writelog for Windows', 'Microsoft Office Word', and '99cqwwcwxwl'. The system clock shows '12:26'.

works about as well as other decoders -- perfect at 18 WPM with a +10dB signal). The point is you can customize the screen's several sub-windows to appear anywhere and at any size you want.

And, working in Windows gives you all the familiar Edit, Copy, File commands, including Screen Captures such as the above graphic. It really is easier to learn and use, gang.

The \$75.00 price for Writelog had some sticker shock for me, and it took several weeks to wean myself of the "But TR does so and so" learning curve. But, I am now sold on the ease and features of Writelog. It's a keeper.

For more info, check out the Writelog web site (www.contesting.com/writelog), or stop over at my house for a test drive of Writelog, ver. 10.11.

--Jack, WA8GHZ

Using A Field Strength Meter

A Field Strength Meter is a simple instrument that measures the relative strength of an RF field. This makes it useful for monitoring the radiated signal strength during antenna and transmitter operation. An FSM usually contains a diode detector and a milliammeter (to indicate signal strength). A telescoping antenna is attached to the detector input. The meter scale is marked logarithmically from 0 to 100 with a meter pointer to indicate the readout.

Observing Transmitter Operation in the Shack

1. Operating at 100 watts (40 to 10 meters) and positioning the FSM about two feet from the operating desk showed a scale reading of 10.
2. While transmitting I had to touch the antenna output coax insulation to get a very low reading of 5.
3. Touching a number of radio equipment chassis ground points in the shack produced an FSM reading of 40 (about 1/2 scale).

Positioning the FSM elsewhere in the shack showed a scale reading of 10 about two feet from the transmitter; further away there was no meter reading. Also, when the FSM is brought very close to the house electrical wiring in the wall the scale reading rose to 10. This showed the house wiring was picking up a low order of RF.

Conclusion: The chassis knobs and other grounds had to be physically touched with the antenna to get a reading. Nothing transmitted from the equipment through the air was

measured except a low number of 10 observed at 2 feet from the transmitter. This meant the chassis grounds were doing their job of containing RF. The low coax reading of 5 indicated there was a normal "skin effect" of RF on the coax braid when transmitting.

Observing The Antenna Radiation

Noting the main points of the compass (North, South, East and West) at a distance of ten feet in each direction registered a full scale reading of 100. Contrary to the popular joke about vertical antennas my R7 radiated well in all directions.

* At the curb in front of the house the reading was 20.

* Across the street the reading was 15.

Conclusion: Radiation was strongest at the two houses adjacent to mine but any interference has been greatly minimized by filtering of my equipment and the neighbors filtering their phones and TV's with antennas. Cable TV is not affected at all.

I purchased my MFJ-801 FSM from a dealer who had them in stock. They indicated they had other MFJ meters at a higher cost, but I opted for the MFJ-901 at approximately \$20.00 plus shipping and handling. It was adequate for my purpose as outlined above and should be adequate for most average radio amateurs. I waited too long to get one and I highly recommend that any amateur upgrading to General Class get one - you'll be glad you did.

-- Harry, N5WIZ

Receiver Sensitivity

This concludes an article which appeared two issues ago.

There appear to be three major jumps in detector sensitivity: 1) From the Coherer to the group containing the Maggie; 2) From the Maggie group to the Audion group; 3) From the Audion group to the Modern Regen group. Since some DX signal strength reports are "40dB over S9" it is clear that good antenna design and very good propagation allow even the oldest technology, the Coherer, to receive DX and not just local transmissions. Modern and more sensitive radio technology gives us the ability to receive DX transmissions under less than optimum conditions.

There is a qualitative difference in the function of detectors prior to the Crystal detector and those that follow. The first detectors were impulse devices that responded only to the edge of the incoming signal, just like the telegraph sounder that only clicks at the closing of the sending key. The Crystal detector and those that follow are all integrating detectors in that they respond to the energy in the signal, not just the edge. This enables amplitude modulation to be detected in addition to CW.

The raw data used to calculate the values for the table (See the November issue) are from Secrets of Homebuilt Regenerative Receivers by C. F. Rocky, (Bradley, IL: Lindsay Pub., 1997).

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President

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DX News

*Ere the darkness falls around me,
I would fain lay down and rest.
Call me early, Mother darling,
For the CW World-Wide Test . . .*

The millenium problems wrought all kinds of confusion amongst the troops as we moved toward the new year. Millenium DXpeditions cropped up here and there, usually with strange prefixes and suffixes. The New Caledonia boys announced a DXpedition for early 2000, hinting that it might lead to a new DXCC counter. And it seemed that everyone was claiming a new counter would emerge from the upset on Timor. Rumblings were heard from the far reaches in Europe about possible new counters in the vicinity of Yugoslavia (or whatever remains of it). All in all, the expectations appeared just a tad unreasonable.

One of the louder, noisier QRPers appeared at the door of The Old Timer to discuss another rumor. "How about this Chesterfield Island operation," he shouted? "How can they make a new country out of that?" The Old Timer recalled that FK8GM had said something about an application for a new IARU membership or something. The Old Timer was a bit more cautious. "What is the basis underlying this philosophy," he asked? Undeterred, the QRPer responded promptly with a quote from the rumor. "They say that the New Caledonia boys have submitted an application for membership in the IARU," he said airily. "But," asked The Old Timer, "what difference will that make? New Caledonia has been on the List as a DXCC counter for years and years, it already has an ITU-assigned call-letter block, and that is one of the new requirements for DXCC List status. How will IARU membership add anything significant?"

"Don't bother me with dumb questions," said the frustrated QRPer. "All I know is what I read, and they say it will make a new DXCC counter."

I read it on my computer two or three places." "Oh," said The Old Timer. "Aren't you the fellow who told me some time back that your computer had said you had worked Clipperton, when actually it was the Austral Islands? When are you going to learn that computers don't necessarily provide accurate information? That they only play back what has been put into them by folks who often don't know what is so and what is not so."

The QRPer grumbled some unintelligible mouthings as he slunk back down the hill. "Doggone it," he muttered to himself. "How come that old guy knows so much about DX? And how come he usually turns out to be right," he sighed to himself as he headed back to his hamshack to troll the bands again?

Propagation has not been very good for most of the latter part of December and early January. The solar flux index sagged down to the 130 region, with a relatively high A index. Despite these propagation numbers, DX continued to be found to work. Unfortunately poor band conditions coincided with holiday time off from work for many of the Deserving DXers.

LOCAL EVENTS: George (K5VUU) and Steve (N5EN) saw their call signs posted in CQ magazine for their CQDX awards in the January issue. This is equivalent to the ARRL DXCC award in terms of difficulty. Jim Kirk submitted an application for the same award and for recognition on the CQDX Honor Roll. The latter requires proof of having worked 275 of the entities on the Current DXC list. Both were reviewed and signed off on by

K8CSG, the Houston checkpoint for these. Bruce (N1LN) was successful in working Nepal (9N1UD) through the noise. Mike Anderson (N5MV) brought his QSL cards over for WAZ checking. Turns out he is an echo of the past, i.e., no valid card for Zone 2.

DX WORKED: BX2OOO (Taiwan) 15m 0132Z; VK1TX (Australia) 20m 1432Z; T77C (San Marino) 10m 1507Z; ER2000D (Moldova) 15m 1355Z; Z31FK (Macedonia) 15m 1519Z; GD4PTV (Isle of Man) 1720Z; 5H3US (Tanzania) 15m 1953Z; HL4GAO (So. Korea) 15m 2389Z; 9AY2K (Croatia) 10m 1435Z; FO0ERI (Austral Is.) 10m 1957Z; VQ9JA (Diego Garcia) 20m 1342Z; CE0/R3CA (Antarctica) 20m 2055Z; M2000A (Greenwich, Eng.) 10m 1508Z; ES1WN (Estonia) 15m 1543Z; 9H1EL (Malta) 10m 1630Z; JD1BIC/JD1 (Minami Torishima) 20m-CW 1331Z;

QSL ROUTES: 9AY2K via 9A1A; FO0ERI via LA7XK; ZMY2K via ZL2A1; VQ9JA via N1ZZZ; UA9ZFM via DL4VW; II4/XE1L via WA3HUO; CE9/R3CA via UA9OBA; ES1WN via CBA; ER2000D via ER4DX.

Shiro, JD1BIC, has been very active as JD1BIC/JD1 (Minami Torishima) on 17 and 10 meters CW after 2200Z. Length of stay is unknown. QSL to the JARL Bureau or direct to: Shiro Hazama, 3-7 Taura, Yokoskua, 237-0075, Japan.

Don't forget the XZ0A operation from an island in the Andaman Sea from mid-January into February. This one will count for Burma/Myanmar. Hope for good propagation.

DX News (Concluded)

The amateur radio press reported two diametrically opposite views re A5-Bhutan recently. The first one indicated that no rapid implementation of amateur radio appears likely, and that the King does not look favorably upon amateur radio. The other source says that excellent progress has been made on the amateur radio front, with high hopes for establishment of amateur radio there by the end of 2000. This has been a sticky wicket for many of the Deserving types who were not actively chasing DX 27 years ago when Pradhan, A51PN, was fairly active on 20m SSB.

Gus, 9U5D, is back in Burundi and is looking for a suitable site from which he can operate during his off-duty hours. This one has always been tough, so catch it when you can.

CE0Z is a good one to find on Juan Fernandez Ysland

Jukka, OH2BR, has departed Finland for New Zealand, his first stop en route to Pitcairn where he plans a significant operation. Watch the VP6BR home page at www.qsl.net/oh2br/, for more precise information.

An official from the ITU has stated that meetings are underway with the telecommunications administration from East Timor re callsigns and related matters. We may not be too far away from another new DXCC counter.

And, the Taiwanese may be taking a page from the book of Malaysia regarding luxury tourist attractions on Pratus Island (BV9P) similar to those constructed in the Spratlys. It certainly has made the Spratlys much less difficult to work.

Quick Tips for Packet Connections

Some folks asked about the current state of packet activities in the vicinity and we said we would research the local capabilities and report back. Here is a list of nodes and/or digipeaters that I have identified through discussions with Walter Holmes (K5WH) and Steve Niles (N5EN) as well as some internet searching. All of these are worked in the FM node and simplex. As a location reference, I live near the intersection of Louetta and Champions Forest Drive (Memorial Northwest) and I have connected with all of these sites with ten watts and a dual-band vertical antenna up about 25 feet -- all with no problems.

144.390 MHz

K5WH-2 (WIDE) An APRS repeater at SH 249 and Louetta (Compaq)

144.930 MHz

K5DXC via N5RWB Primarily DX cluster information

145.010 MHz

WD5GAZ-2 (alias Compaq) A local digipeater at Compaq

145.070 MHz

NWHBPQ (Operated by W5/F6CNB and K5VMX. A full-featured packet network station

145.710 MHz

W5NC (alias NARS Located at Rosehill. A local resource and/or DX link

TDXS71 (Located south of my location. Connect direct or via link.

K5LV (Located in Kingwood) connect direct or via link.

446.200 MHz TDXSU (located south of me. Connect direct and/or via link

446.200 MHz

K5LV (in Kingwood) Connect direct or via link.

We will continue to provide information in a more in-dept article and plan to pursue this topic for a possible presentation at a future club meeting.

-- George, K5VUU

Board Resolves Node/Cluster Issues

At its regular December meeting the NARS Board of Directors came to grips with and resolved the issues of the NARS digipeater and DX cluster. After thorough discussion, the Board took two actions. It reversed its October decision to take down the digipeater, and it decided to work with the TDXS on the local DX cluster.

This means the digipeater will remain on the Rosehill tower for the foreseeable future, thus providing wide-area accessibility to the TDXS DX cluster due to its commanding antenna height. It also means that NARS has placed its discussion on the possibility of building its own DX cluster on the back burner. The Board agrees there is no need for two DX clusters in this area at this time.

Final 1999 Board Meeting

The Board held its final meeting for this year on December 28. The Treasurer reported the Club's checkbook balance was \$2094.83, and that the December Silent Auction raised \$278.00.

The 2000 Novice/Technician classes will likely start in late March.

The program for January will be the Annual Awards Banquet. The February program to be presented by Dan Clark, KK5LD, will be a video-taped demonstration of acrobatic flying.

The Board approved funding for another year and maintaining the facilities on a node providing connection to the TDXS DX cluster, and resolved to support the TDXS cluster by continuing to provide expanded coverage through the NARS Rosehill digipeater.

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Best wishes to Norma, wife of Ken Harlan, KA5AKG, as she recovers from surgery and associated problems.

Best wishes, also, to Marian Denton who is recovering from foot surgery on December 14.

Welcome new club member Kenny Miller, KB5VII, a Technician, and Scott Adams, a member with no callsign yet. Also welcome new Extra Class member Jay Close, K0GEO., and AdvancedClass member Danny Richards, WA5OJE.

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

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 N5BA@arrl.net
WAZ - Bill Gary K8CSG, 281/537-9240
CQDX - Bill Gary K8CSG

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NARS Information

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*Call Marian for general information
about NARS. Send address, phone, e-mail
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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
k8csg@arrl.net 281/537-9240

WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.flash.net/~nars/>
Webmaster: Ben Worell KM5OT
km5ot@bfwweb.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)

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