

# NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

April 1995

## QRP, The World of Low Power to be April Meeting Subjects

Ever wondered how little power it takes to make a DX contact? Simple, inexpensive equipment can reach out much better than most of us imagine. QRP operation tends to emphasize technique, antennas and an understanding of propagation conditions that we usually want to overcome with expensive power. The April Club meeting will feature this challenging mode of operation. Bill Hickox, K5BDZ, will give us some insight into the world of low power on Friday, April 21st. He has designed, built and effectively used QRP gear for a long time. Like all other modes, this one has some secrets and characteristics he will share with us. He was the owner of Tejas RF Technologies and today provides equipment through Tejas Kits of Houston. He will show us how QRP is adaptable to our modern world of miniaturization. Whether you ever jump into the RF with only a few milliwatts or not, you won't want to miss this interesting program. Make plans now to attend this meeting and at least get a great appreciation for what can be done with so little.

## Pouring Concrete for Fun and Profit - Part 3

by Madison Jones AB5TV

Once the really tough decisions are made, the actual pour is a snap (assuming you have really lined up your able assistant with the Sturdy Pickup Truck). By this point, you have determined what you are trying to accomplish, where to put the tower, what tower and antenna to get to accomplish your purpose, and made the really tough one, how to get the money and approval of your Significant Other, all it takes is some labor and time. If you are clever, you can spread the time, other than the pour itself, over a couple of months.

As far as the mechanics of the construction go, it is sufficient to know that concrete needs an internal metal structure to keep itself together. It is essential to use rebar (supplemental steel rods, available at Home Depot) to reinforce the concrete. I agonized over the amount of rebar to put into the hole, and the size of the anchor bolts. I finally settled on 30" anchor bolts, and used a total of about 40' of rebar. North Mike, KB5WQJ, can tell you where to get anchor bolts if you need them, but don't let them talk you into using 12" bolts (which are the same price). There is no substitute for down hole iron, and the longer bolts will help you position the rebar. I used 8 lengths of vertical rebar, a few inches less than the depth of the hole, and two 8' horizontal lengths formed into a circle, and tied with tie wire to the anchor bolts and vertical pieces. Tie wire is available at your local hardware, but I have some which I will donate if I haven't given it all away. Of course, if you bury a tower section, you don't need anchor bolts.

Even though I did not use forms in the hole, Bill and I did construct some small forms to use to bring the base about 4" above the ground. I am told

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## NARS CALENDAR

**Apr 21** - NARS monthly General Membership meeting @ Cypress Creek Prebysterian Church - Eyeball QSO's @ 7:00 PM.

**Apr 22** - License Exams by NARS in Tomball @ 8:30 AM. Call Rudy, KB5ZXO for details at 251-4546.

**Apr 22** - Ham Tailgate '95 in Belton TX off I-35. Talk-in on 146.82 MHz. Call 817-773-4768 for information.

**May 5** - NARS Directors meeting @ 7:00 PM @ Lakewood Forest Fund Office, 12415 Louetta Rd.

**May 19** - NARS monthly General Membership meeting @ Cypress Creek Prebysterian Church - Eyeball QSO's @ 7:00 PM.

**May 27** - Swapfest at Dunbar Park in Lake Jackson. Talk-in on 147.38 MHz. For information call 1-800-374-6477-5021.

**Jun 24-25** - Field Day '95 at Fritche Cemetery Park with setup beginning on Friday at noon. BBQ dinner Saturday evening.

**BREAKFAST**  
at Bleachers  
2318 W FM 1960  
Saturdays  
8:00 AM

## Presidents Corner

April 1995

The NARS leadership team is now complete and in place. Allen Majeski (WA5REJ) agreed to stay on as secretary to replace Shirley Kujawa, and Ron Forrester (KC5NB) has agreed to the position of Activities Coordinator. Welcome and thanks to those folks for their commitment and help.

The Novice class is still going well, although we have had 4 students who couldn't wait to finish the course before trying the test. I am happy to say we have 4 new licensed HAMS as club members, they are Doug (KC5NDE) and Tina (KC5NRS) Struckmeyer, Doug Hudspeth (KC5NRR), and Larry Lockhart (KC5NVY). Congratulations to the new HAMS. These new licensed HAMS are continuing to attend class to learn as much as possible and to capture that magic 5 words per minute code. Thanks this month goes to Bill Steitenroth (K5ZTY) for classes on components, Bill Denton (WA5DWX) on radio in general, and Herb Phillips (KF9RX) on antennas and feed lines. I can honestly say, I learned something new from each of these presentations.

Kudos to Mike Lavender (KB5WQJ) for his efforts for the March of Dimes Walk-a-thon and to him and Jim Sutherland (N5SBP) for the Buffalo Bayou Regatta. From all reports everything went well and the NARS members who participated did the club proud.

A reminder for those NARS packeteers, the NARS node on the Northwest Medical Center is doing well. The 2 meter input is on 145.71 at 1200 baud, while the 440 input is on 441.100 at 9600 baud. These are linked into the TCAPS backbone and offer excellent coverage and access.

Field Day is in the near future and Bill Denton (WA5DWX) is charged with coordinating the NARS activities. Unlike the Marines who are looking for a few good men, Bill is looking for a lot of good HAMS to help out and participate. More information and details will follow. Field day is scheduled for June 24 and 25 with setup beginning at noon on the 23rd. Mark your calendars and make your plans.

The NARS board of directors is putting together information for repeater protocol and recommended practices. If you have heard any activity on the repeater you feel is inappropriate, let one of the board members know and we will take this into consideration. With the number of new HAMS coming on the scene, I feel this is a very important issue to address.

If you have any suggestions for making NARS a better club and more in the position to serve you, let me know. 73's

## Amateur License Exam Results

by Mark Tyler, K5GQ

NARS-sponsored FCC amateur radio license examinations were administered Saturday, March 25th, at the old HL&P facilities in Tomball. Eleven candidates were tested and nine licenses were earned.

General licenses were earned by Robert Westover, KC5IKE, and Wade Herbert, KA5OWE. Joe Lincoln, KB5DIX, and John Walthall, KC5MLV, earned Tech Plus licenses. Carlos Martin, David Flory, James Hudspeth, Tina Struckmeyer and Larry Lockhart earned Technician licenses. Twenty wpm code was passed by King Waters, KK5LU, and 13 wpm code was passed by Donald Cash, KC5DJV. Our congratulations to each of these licensees on their achievements.

The session's examiners and those assisting were Earl Morse, KZ8E, Walter Holmes, WD5GAZ, Madison Jones, AB5TV, Brian Derx, N5BA, Jimmy Kirk, KJ5IP, James Chestnut, KB5BOR, and Larry McCain, WA5SAJ. Our thanks to each of them for their commitment. The next examination session will be on April 22nd at the HL&P facility in Tomball. During the months of June and July, no examination sessions are planned.

## April 94, a busy time for NARS

by Mike KB5WQJ

On Sunday the 2nd, we did the MARCH OF DIMES WALKATHON with the following folks helping out: Herb, KF9RX; Justin, KC5CMT; Tom, KC5IKK; Bob, KC5JZO; Rok, K5VEQ; and his wife Dolly; David, WD5BZY; Rudy, KB5ZXO; King, KK5LU. It was coordinated by Mike KB5WQJ. A good time was had by all and as usual, things went smoothly. Three times as many walkers came this year, but we handled all assignments well. New-comers to events all had a taste of the real outdoors. I am sure we look forward to next events.

What is a SQUID 1???? Well if you were a worker in our BUFFALO BAYOU REGATTA you would know. We at NARS did our usual good job of herding the canoes for 13 miles down the river. The folks that helped in this event were: Ed KB5QLX and wife Eady, and daughter (PART OF SQUID 1), Sid, AB5XU, Nelson, KK5IJ (the other part of SQUID 1), Desi, KB5YGG, Allen, WA5REJ, King, KK5LU, Larry, WA5SAJ; Rok, K5VEQ and wife Dolly; Jimmy, KJ5IP; Jay, KI5MD and wife Cindy, KF5RXT, Scott, N5KEU and Charles, KC5HZZ. The event coordinators Jim, N5SBP and Mike, KB5WQJ survived too. There were 112 boats in the water and this year we had our own people in the water as ...yes... SQUID ONE.. All went smoothly, except for me, WQJ, and I was the first and only person to need first aid for a cut arm. Jim and I both commend our folks for a job well done. We look forward to next time.

# Pouring Concrete

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that it makes for a neater appearance if you have grass surrounding the base, but it is really a matter of preference. If you do use above-ground forms, remember that they must be well braced, because the ground will probably be wet, and the wet concrete is extremely heavy. A couple of nails at each corner will not be sufficient. Failure to preplan will mean that the forms will break, the concrete will go all over the place, the FCC will pull your license, and you will be put in jail.

One thing which you must devote some study to is the matter of maintaining a plumb condition during the pour. While you are banging away with the wheelbarrow full of concrete and dumping it in the hole, your efforts at keeping your base section true before the pour will be put to the test. We taped a piece of wood across the top of the base section, and tied a plumb bob with a sharp point so that it hung down into the middle of the section to make a visual sighting. Unfortunately, many used base sections will be slightly bent or twisted. If you are cunning, you could use the bend or twist to your advantage, but that is best not left to chance. Once the concrete sets up, twiddling the nuts on a tilt over base is your only hope. Leaning towers are acceptable only in Italy, and then only because . . . well, you know about Italians.

Once you have dug the hole and set the base where you want it, find a Saturday when you have nothing else planned, and enlist the aid of a true friend before you put out the general call at Saturday morning breakfast for volunteers for that day. For particulars on that exercise, please refer to the previous installments of this article, because that is the single most important ingredient of the recipe. If you set things up ahead of time, it won't be that difficult for you and a friend to do it by yourself. While it is true that many hands make light work, I found that the pour itself was not strenuous, using only a contractor's wheelbarrow (as opposed to the type the average gardener has gathering rust in the garage), and one body other than myself. Of course, the fact that Bill, K5ZTY, possesses the strength of ten men, an iron constitution, and a Sturdy Pickup Truck, should not go unnoticed. As an aside, he told me that he loved this type of work so much that he would make all of his Saturdays available for concrete pours. Just whistle him up at Bleachers. It's not necessary to call in advance.

Bill and I had purchased black rubber boots from Academy the night before for \$11.99 (other than the shovel, the only equipment which I would not be without for pouring a tower base). Having neoprene work gloves was certainly nice, though not vital. Some type of skin protection, though, is important, since there are things in wet concrete which can cause major skin irritation over time, especially to hands and arms, which do not heal quickly. (If you shower up

after the pour, not only will you be doing your friends a favor, you will actually help yourself.)

Once I had located a source of premix, I found that the trailer to haul it in came as part of the price. It consists of a metal box which can hold 1 1/4 yards of concrete, with a small tailgate/handle arrangement through which you allow the concrete to flow from the trailer to your wheelbarrow. When you pick up the necessary amount at the batch plant, keep in mind that the trailer full of concrete will weigh about 3000 pounds (now you see why the Sturdy Pickup Truck is important), and the stuff will slop over the front of the trailer when you slow down. I suppose if you take off too fast, it will slop out the back as well. That was never a concern to us, however. Depending on how skillful you are in backing a trailer will depend upon how far away the trailer is from your hole.

[Next month's News will contain the final installment!]

## Got an RF Noise Problem? Try the RFI Good Guys at HL&P

by Jim Kirk, KJ5IP

I've had a noise problem on the HF bands at my place for a long time. Not just minor stuff but wipeout S-7 static on many days. It's been tough on DXing and otherwise a serious impediment to happy radio activity.

When I read that people from Houston Lighting and Power's RFI section were coming to talk at the NARS monthly meeting I was more than mildly curious. I had heard there were such folks. But I thought they would probably be busy-busy bureaucratic types who might not have much to offer some ham jerk with a noise problem. Not true. Ed Ramsey's and Arthur Johnson's talk that Friday night made it clear that they really would try to help some noise-weary ham. They even gave out their phone number.

Not wanting to appear too eager, I waited until Monday to call. Ed called back Tuesday to say Arthur would be there the Wednesday to do some snooping. How's that for a response! Over the next ten days or so, with Arthur snooping and Ed working with his helper and truck, at least three sources were quieted on neighborhood poles. A big noise on 15 meters turned out to be coming from an electric heating pad used by an elderly shut-in in a house nearby. Not only was the pad interfering at 21 MHz and with his TV picture but was also a threatening fire and shock hazard. To say the man's daughter was grateful for the discovery is an understatement.

My noise level now is at least 80 percent better. There is still some noise on 14 and 18 MHz but Ed and Arthur say they will hunt for it. I bet they find it too. Their number is 945-6697 if you are interested. Maybe good help isn't so hard to find. Thanks HL&P.

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League. ARRL Club No. 2120

NARS MEETS the third Friday of each month at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 6000 Spring Cypress Rd. (1.7 mile east of Stubner-Airline on Spring Cypress Rd.) Meeting time: 7:30 P.M. Eyeball QSO's : about 7:00 P.M.

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday 8 AM at Bleacher Grill, located at 2318 W FM1960. (@ Kuykendahl) , Informal ragchew.

### NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIRMAN  
Rudy Novotny, KB5ZXO 251-4546

VICE PRESIDENT  
Bill Stientenroth, K5ZTY 376-0718

SECRETARY  
Allen Majeski, A5REJ 353-8652

TREASURER  
Brad Nelson, WD5GNI 370-0934

DIRECTORS  
Madison Jones, AB5TV 350-4330  
David Cole, WD5BZY 370-8711  
Bill Denton, WA5DWX 469-8331  
Mike Lavander, KB5WQJ 357-0614

NARS BOARD MEETS the first Friday of each month at 7:00 P.M. at a location to be announced. All members are invited to attend.

FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL  
KEN EDINBORGH, W5BKK 376-7660

### NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 P.M.  
28.444 MHz (Nelson, KK5IJ)

NARS CW PRACTICE FOLLOWS  
RAGCHEW NET - 28.185 MHz (AB5KK)

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8:00 P.M.  
146.06 / .66 MHz (Ken, KA5AKG)

### EMERGENCY NETS

NORTHWEST HARRIS COUNTY ARES  
WEDNESDAY 8:30 P.M.  
146.06 / .66 MHz (Scott, N5KEU)

CITY OF HOUSTON -  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NET  
SATURDAY 9:00 AM 146.84(-) MHz  
SATURDAY 9:30 AM 3.905 MHz

### NARS REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 MHz  
70 cm - 449.375 / 444.375 MHz  
Digipeter - 145.71 MHz  
Call (W5BKK) Alias (NARS)

NARS  
KEN HARLAN, KA5AKG  
12034 Laneview Dr.  
Houston, TX 77070



7:30 THURS

71.945 KGFRØ

SPRINGFIELD, IL

KØ4CM

Keith Dutson  
WD5DXL  
24415 Deep Meadow  
Tomball, Tx 77375

