

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

March 1997

March Meeting: Telemarketing Fraud - How to Fight Back!

Here's one meeting you won't want to miss! The subject for the NARS March meeting will be "Telemarketing Fraud." Missy Lord, from the Office of the Attorney General, will enlighten us on one of life's most annoying invasions of our precious time.

When the Attorney General initiated the Consumer Protection Outreach Program, he had in mind groups just like NARS. He wanted to give

citizens of Texas the ammunition that they need to fight the fraudulent telemarketers that have targeted Texans of all ages. Part of the presentation will be a short video followed by a question and answer period. Bring your questions, junk mail, and complaints to Ms. Lord, and you'll leave better prepared to deal with these rascals on your own terms!

Joe Sokolowski KD5KR

Important Dates

Friday, March 21, 7:30 pm - NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSO's, 7:00 pm

Saturday, March 22, 8:30 am - VE License Exam Session - Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main)

Tuesday, March 25, 7:30 pm - NARS Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Club House, 5200 Woodville.

Contests:

March 15-16 - Bermuda

March 29-30 - CQ WW WPX SSB

April 14 - AARLVHF/UHF Spring Sprint - 144mhz

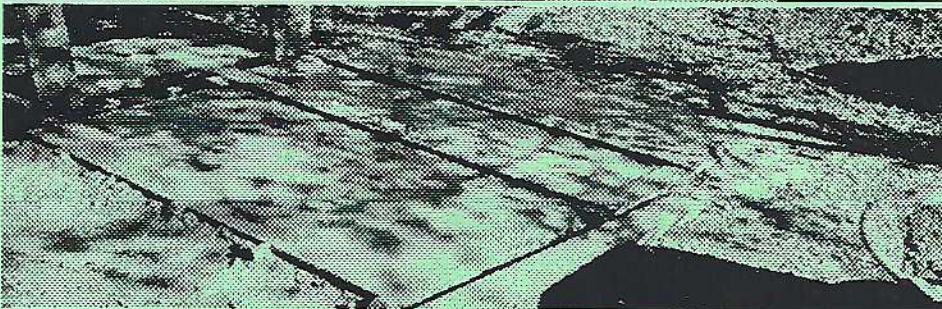
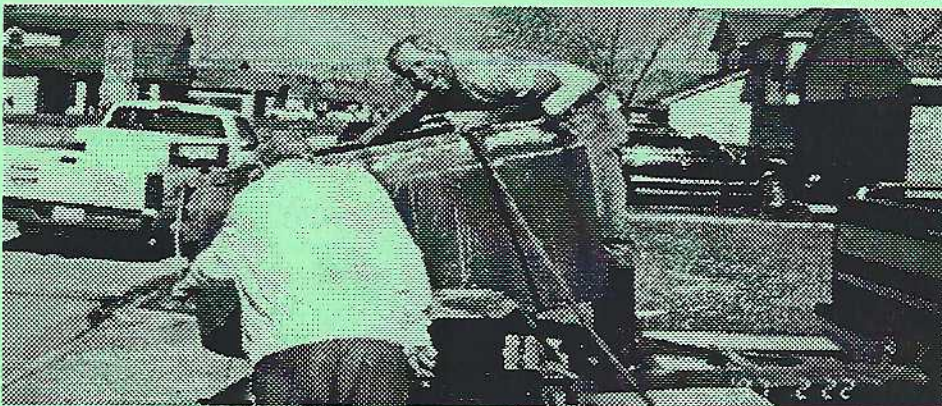
April 26 - QRP to the Field

Notice:

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

NARS News deadline for articles to appear in April issue is Monday, March 31.

Antenna Under Construction - First Step



BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

8:00 AM

President's Corner

March 1997

The NARS novice/technician class starts April 3, with registration and orientation. We have a fine lineup of instructors and nice classroom space. There are about forty technician members of NARS who should use this really splendid opportunity to upgrade.

Need a reason to take your novice or technician test before July? Well here it is: after July 1, the novice and technician written exams will be longer and tougher. Each exam will have five questions added, all on safety standards for exposure to RF, a tough subject. And the total combined number of questions in the novice/technician question pools increases to 923 from the current 632.

Please note elsewhere in this newsletter the announcement about the Buffalo Bayou Regatta on April 5, and the MDA March of Dimes Walkathon on April 13. Give a helping hand to these events and have fun doing it as many NARS members have in the past.

I hope it's of interest to you that thus far the ARRL has received from its members over \$400,000 in donations earmarked for efforts to protect your frequency privileges from commercial intrusion. 144-148 MHz is the current target. The ARRL may not be without blemish over the years in all matters, but when one looks around for someone able to stand up and fight for your privileges, who else will do it?

Thanks to Bill, K8CSG, for a fine talk in February on DX QSLing. Bill is on the DXCC honor roll. He said that one of the requirements for making the honor roll is to keep breathing. He said that on the inhale. On the exhale, he mumbled something about HM and BS7, whatever that is. Good luck Bill!

Donations for our DX cluster are sufficient to start putting it all together. Won't be long I think before we have our own packet-ear to the world of DX. Surely good propagation can't be far away. I had a nice QSO recently with a guy in Trieste, Italy, that was near the audio quality of a morning drive-time QSO on the '66 repeater. Pretty nice.

I had a question about an ARRL matter recently and was referred to our Division Director, Jim Haynie, WB5JBP, who lives in Dallas. I sent him an email and the next day he called me. It was quite a nice response. I look forward to shaking his hand.

Jim Kirk KJ5X

NARS Novice-Technician Class Starts April 3

Registration and orientation for this year's Novice/Technician Class will begin at 7 PM at the Prince of Peace Catholic Community, 19222 Tomball Parkway (Hwy 249), room 204. The Community is about 1.2 miles north of FM 1960 on the east side of the Parkway. Classes will be held every Tuesday and Thursday 7 to 10 PM through May 20, with license examinations given in the classroom May 22. Registration fee for the class is \$20.00 plus about \$20.00 for the textbook which will be available for purchase at registration. Equipment such as a Morse code key/oscillator are optional at student expense.

If you hold a Technician license and you are a current member of NARS you may take only the Morse code part of the class for \$5.00. This is a splendid opportunity for Technicians to upgrade to Technician-Plus.

For further information write to the NARS mail address or call Bill Rister KC5EZQ, 218-537-8596; Marion Denton KB5SGV, 281-469-8331; or Jim Kirk KJ5X, 281-376-0718.

NARS Board of Directors Meeting 2/25/97

Programs - April: Andy MacAllister, Satellites; May: Steve Baum, The Internet. **Treasurer's Report** - 1/31/97 Checkbook balance, \$3746.98; 2/25/97 DX Cluster Fund, \$800.00. **Node Relocation** - Possible location: 150 ft tower north of Louetta and Stuebner-Airline; Committe formed to study site. **DX Cluster** - Set up trial using equipment at WD5DXL QTH; If OK, approve new equipment purchase at next Board meeting. **Novice School** - 40 NARS no-code Techs to receive invitation to code sessions, for \$5.00. **Public Information Officer** - Harry Gage nominated NARS PIO, an ARRL volunteer position to improve public relations. **Annual Picnic** - Date: Sat, May 17; Coordinator: Walter Hock KK5LO; Proposed site: Keith Dutson's farm, Tomball. **Field Day '97** - Date: Sat-Sun, June 28-29; Coordinator: Walter Hock KK5LO; Planning: almost complete; Looking for Novice Station coordinator.

Bob Argo KC5JZO Secretary

Public Service Events - Your radio skills are needed!

Buffalo Bayou Regatta, Saturday, April 5
Contact: Scott Byrd N5KEU, 469-7374

MDA March of Dimes Walkathon, Sunday, April 13
Contact: Paul Owen N5NXX, 894-7758

Here's a chance to take part in two events that NARS members have faithfully supported with radio communications for years. With reasonable weather, they are always fun and require only a 2 meter HT, fresh batteries and a few hours time. Both are important parts of Houston's list of annual civic and charitable events, with big-time media coverage and expressions of thanks to NARS members. The Walkathon this year will be held near the intersection of Hwy 6 and Westheimer. To participate, call Scott Byrd N5KEU, 469-7374, for info on the Buffalo Bayou Regatta, and Paul Owen N5NXX, 894-7758, for info on the MDA March of Dimes event.

Phi Beta Kappa Key to be Awarded

At a date to be set for a banquet in April Janine Simser, honorary NARS member, will be awarded her Phi Beta Kappa Key. Nice going Janine - congratulations.

73 Harry Gage N5WIZ

Transtar Tour

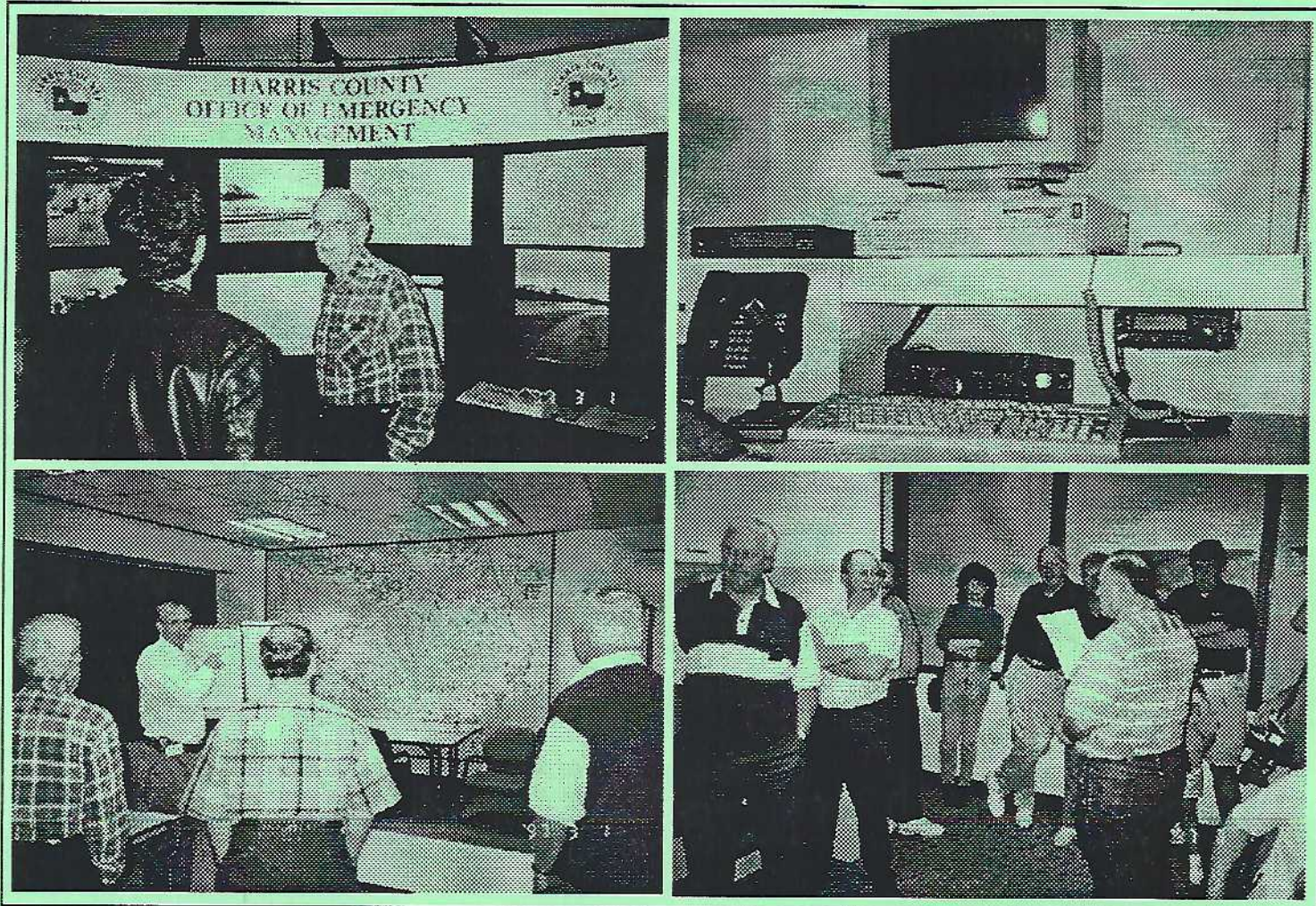
Bob White KF5ZL, Operations Supervisor of the Houston Emergency Management Center and long-time NARS member conducted a tour of the Houston Transtar facility, 6922 Katy Road, Saturday, March 1st.

The Transtar building is the city of

Houston's new communications center and is splendidly equipped to monitor by video city freeways and to handle emergency communications of all kinds including a room dedicated exclusively to amateur radio communications.

NARS volunteers have manned the HF, VHF and UHF amateur equipment stations under emergency conditions in the past and will likely be called on in the future.

Thanks for the tour!



Special Interest Group (SIG) List

K5ZTY, Bill Stietenroth
893-3901, General Help

W5SB, Bill Denton
281-469-8331, General Help, Antennas

K1OJ, O J Quarles
281-955-1555, HF, General Help

WA5REJ, Allen Majeski
281-353-8652, General Help

WA5SAJ, Larry McCain
281-469-6709, General Help

W5MJ, Madison Jones
281-350-4330, General Help, CW

K8CSG, Bill Gary
281-537-9240, General Help, DX

KC5EZQ, Bill Rister
281-537-8596, ATV, General Help

K5WNO, Deral Kent
281-548-7476, RS12/13, Satellite

KC5RCC, George Carlson
281-376-8307, Electrical Design,
Troubleshooting

KA3BKU, Don Bedell
281-370-6576, Packet

N5BA, Brian Derx
894-5942, VHF

KC5JZO, Bob Argo
281-288-7430, Computer Operating,
Win'95

WD5DXL, Keith Dutson
281-351-7683, Computer Programming

W5NKZ, Jerry Smith
444-4491, HF, Advanced OSCAR, Antenna

KB5DTB, Joy Smith
444-4491, HF, Advanced OSCAR, Antenna

N5WIZ, Harry Gage
281-370-7488, Basic Advice - RFI

W5VHN, Dick Rooney
281-288-8424, Satellite

K5GQ, Mark Tyler
281-587-0256, Interference

DX News

I heard Heard and Heard heard me, but I much happier will be, when sure that VK0 IR was really Heard and not some turkey . . .

The new year began with the solar flux index at 72, with A and K indices of 3 and 1. Pretty much the same numbers we have seen for most of a year now. As February progressed the SFI moved upward a bit, reaching 81 on Feb. 4. By 2100 on Feb. 5, it was back down to 75. The number of sunspots during the first week in February was nearly triple the number of the week before. A coronal hole erupted on the sun during the second week of the month and disrupted HF communications for a couple of days. On February 12 the SFI was 71 and the A index was down to 11, with DX conditions fairly good that morning with a nice opening into Europe. Later that same day I worked FH5CB in Mayotte, a relatively obscure island nation off the Eastern coast of Africa north of the Mozambique channel.

DX Worked: TT8WL (Chad); Z22JE (Zimbabwe); ZD8CJK (Ascension Island); 3E1DX (Panama); VK6VS and VK6ACY (W. Australia via LP); IS0YWA (Sardinia); CY0SAB (Sable Island); VK4OH (Australia-LP); V63KU (Micronesia, formerly E. Caroline Is.); ZY0SG (St. Peter & St. Paul Rocks); 9G1BJ (Ghana); 6W1AE (Senegal); VK6LC (W. Australia-LP); VK6NZ (W. Australia -LP); TJ1PD (Cameroon); VK4MGA (Australia on 15m via SP.); HB9T (Switzerland); PA0ALO (Netherlands); F5JYW (France); LX1DM (Luxembourg); FH5CB (Mayotte); JW5NM (Svalbard Isl.); 5N9NJM (Nigeria); A22RV (Botswana); TF3GC (Iceland); YL2AP (Latvia); LY2ER (Lithuania); OE5BJN (Austria); S51SG (Namibia); 9X4WW (Rwanda); VU2AXA/p (Antarctica); JR3NZC, JA3BUO (Japan); Y1IUS (Iraq); 5Z4FM (Kenya).

Other DX Heard: 6K97WU (So. Korea); A61AN (Dubai); US4LCW (Ukraine); D2EV (Angola); Y1FLY (Iraq); SV2ASP/A (Mt. Athos); XV7SW (Vietnam); 7Q7RM (Malawi); 5H3MZ (Tanzania); Y1IUS (Iraq).

Rok K5UEQ worked YV2BYT (Venezuela) on 20-meter SSB. I also heard John W5PDW working AH6A on the big island of Hawaii. K5ZTY had lots of fun working QRP in the ARRL CW DX Contest, including the relatively rare HV4NAC in Vatican City. Some of his other QRP contacts included LZ5W, HB9FAP, ZD8Z, JA1YDU, and a string of Caribbean stations. Nice work, Bill! I understand K1OJ had similar results with similar power. KJ5X worked a string of JA stations in that contest.

The Canadians did Sable Island again in February with CY0SAB carrying the flag.

Their signals were never up to par, but they were workable on 20-meters.

Minami Torishima, one of the oft-elusive JD1s, will be active until approximately the end of April. JG8NQJ will be working on the island and will operate as frequently as possible.

The German lads who have been operating as S21XX from Bangladesh are very proud of their 10000+ QSOs from that rare country. Despite many DX-cluster postings, they have been very faint here in Houston. Anyone worked them from here yet? From S21 they will go to P29 (Papua-New Guinea).

The latest beta version of The Station Program is available from the AMSAT-BDA www site (<http://199.172.219.213>). The new version fixes a number of reported bugs, and adds support for the AEA ST-1 Tracker and older Icom (CI-IV via UX-14/CT-17) radios. The Station Program is a complete ground-station control program for Windows 3.1, WFW 3.11 & Windows 95. Currently it is optimized for the analog birds; it is not the same as WiSP! The Station Program is distributed by AMSAT-UK, and all proceeds are donated to the AMSAT Phase-3D fund.

The Brazilian team that went to St. Peter & St. Paul Rocks did not put on an exceptional show. Although numerous spots appeared on the DX cluster, their signals were never up to a good DXpedition level. An initial problem was a pirate signing their callsign and operating on 14195 KCs. This chap was unmasked by an east coast ham who asked how "Eleanor" was doing. The prompt reply that she was doing well and recovering nicely brought this retort from the east coaster -- "I knew you were a pirate. Eleanor is my wife, which you could not have known, and she has no problems at all." The alleged pirate soon disappeared from the frequency, ending the donnybrook of shouting, bellowing and name-calling on his transmitting frequency. The presence of a legitimate 6W1 station half a kilocycle away contributed to this interesting bit of chaos. I never did work the SSB station on the rocks, but did manage a good 17-meter CW QSO on Feb. 7.

Those who needed the Cook Islands found some relief recently. ZK1DI, a German chap (DK1RV), was operating from the South Cooks AND the North Cooks recently. Conveniently, when operating from the North Cooks, he signed ZK1DI/p. The North Cooks are significantly more difficult to work than the South Cooks, since there is no permanent ham radio population in the North. Most of the Cook Islands activity comes from Rarotonga, a lovely

little island my XYL and I spent a week on a few years ago and which is the home of the governmental activities for the islands and the largest airport in either group.

QSL ROUTES: CY0SAB via VE1CBK; VK0IR via W4FRU; ZK1DI via DK1RV; ZY0SG via PT7AA; ZY0SK via PS7KM; S21XX via DL3NEO; XU2FB via N4JR; 3E1DX via N0JT; V63KU via JA6NL.

QRX DX has advised that there will be no operation from Pratus until at least the second half of 1997. The tight military control of the island was cited as an underlying reason.

As February has progressed we have noted some interesting openings on ten, twelve and fifteen meters, another indication that propagation is improving. Nothing much in the way of long DX, but lots of interesting ragchews with some of the short-haul countries. During the middle of February I made DX contacts on four bands (10, 12, 15 & 20 meters) during one day, including a number into Europe. Another good sign???

HEARD ISLAND WRAPUP: Analysis of the Heard Island logs reveals that our suspicions regarding propagation were not far off. Total contacts with W5 stations (all modes/all bands) were 1583. The DXpedition set a new record for total contacts with slightly over 80700. Previous high DXpedition totals included 4J1FS (1992) ~74500, ZA1A ~69500 and 3Y1PI ~60000. The bulk of the contacts were with Europe, the USA and Japan. Europe garnered something over half of the entire total with over 40000.

The team and their transport vessel was reported to have completely bypassed Kerguelen on the way back to Reunion Island. This is not quite true -- they stopped for several hours on Jan. 31 and a "handful of contacts" were made by the Heard crew from Kerguelen.

There had been plans to give the "little pistols" a chance to work Heard Island near the end of the expedition. Those plans were scrapped due to the rapidly declining weather, and the concern for safety and a timely departure from the island (as well as the seeking of a new world record?).

Of interest to Uncle Zed (KSZTY) and Mary Jane (W5MJ) is the report of an East Coast station who claims to have worked Heard Island using 4.5 watts. A true QRPer, apparently. K1OJ reports he has worked a substantial number of countries running QRP during February.

Of particular interest to me, the Chinese and Japanese will jointly mount a one-week operation from Scarborough Reef at the end of April. Keep your fingers crossed for me!

73, Bill Gary, K8CSG

NARS and Westchester, NY Club – Not Quite the Same

The Westchester Emergency Communications Association (WECA) has been providing public service and emergency communications in Westchester County, New York and the surrounding area since 1972. It's membership of over 300 ham operators provides special event and emergency communications services, free of charge, to various organizations in the Westchester and New York City areas. WECA also provides educational and informational services to its members, the amateur community and the public at large. However, their #1 priority is emergency preparedness. They conduct numerous drills toward this end throughout the year.

It is not intended to minutely compare our club with theirs, because we are organized somewhat differently, and we are smaller as well. However, we are both ARRL Special Service Clubs and provide services to the public as well as education, training, recruiting, and the administration of FCC licensing exams – among other activities.

Just two of NARS activities are highlighted below as examples of what we are about:

Comments from Scott Byrd, N5KEU, NARS Director of ARES:

· We are still active in ARES; after the 1st of the year I hope to reestablish the net for ARES.

· I will make a report to the ARES Emergency Coordinator and ARRL by the end of Jan. 1997.

· We rely heavily on volunteers from NARS.

· There's a yearly drill for an ARES simulated Emergency Test in October.

· Dave Paperman, from his home in Conroe operates as area net control.

· I recently attended an open house conducted by Bob White KF5ZL who is Operations Coordinator for the Houston Emergency Management Service.

· Some NARS members have been trained by Red Cross.

· Many NARS members volunteered in the Oct. 1994 flood emergency in the Montgomery County / Harris County

area. One of our members, Mike Hance K5NZ personally rescued about 100 people and pets from their roof tops during that flood emergency with his Jon boat.

Comments from O.J. Quarles, K10J on Santa program:

· The idea is to have hospitalized cancer kids and others to talk to Santa via amateur radio.

· Have Santa outside in a vehicle using a 2 meter HT to talk to children.

· In the hospital an 'elf' uses HT from room to room and bed to bed to have children talk to Santa.

· A lap top packet 'elf' on simplex moves ahead of HT 'elf' gathering child's name, personal information, letter to Santa, etc.; sends data to packet 'elf' in outside vehicle who passes it to Santa.

· This would have occurred the week before Christmas this past December. Unfortunately I could not do it this year but next year (1997) it is definitely on.

· Kids will get a QSL card as proof they talked with Santa.

O.J. also said we were in approximately 8 contests the past year plus there were several QRP contests. Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY was the star of QRP in 1996.

Walter Hock KK5LO, NARS President, says we supplied communications for five public service events in 1996.

As stated earlier WECA is a much bigger club and finances its activities through dues and donations from corporations and benefactors so they're able to do more. However, I think NARS holds its own with many other clubs across the country regardless of size in that we are primarily a general interest club. Members have generously donated their time for many projects and have such a diversity of interests.

While comparing WECA and NARS would be somewhat like comparing apples and oranges we do most of the same things, but we do it with fewer members and a smaller budget. As stated we are organized differently and do not have a club house, so we are not quite the same.

(Background material on WECA supplied by Brian Derx, N5BA, from CQVHF magazine)

73 Harry Gage N5WIX

VE Session Results

At the February 22 examination session sponsored by NARS/COMPAQ six candidates were examined on seven elements. Resulting were one new Novice, one new Technician and one new General licensee. Two others received CSCE credit for elements passed. With the exception of one candidate, all others passed the elements taken. Seven VEs participated: Bill K8CSG, Walter K5WH, Bill K5ZTY, Jim KJ5X, Pat KK5VN, Bill K5ZTY and Mark K5GQ. Willie KB5TES, a non-VE, also assisted with administrative details. K5GQ supervised the testing of four candidates on code elements, three of which passed.



by Keith Dutton

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Well, WE DID IT! We raised enough money to purchase the equipment needed for a remote packet cluster operation attached to the NARS digipeater node. A big THANK YOU to all those who contributed.

If you wanted to contribute, but just didn't get around to it, we are accepting additional contributions that will be used for the move of the node from the present location in the Northwest Medical Center to a more central location. This should greatly enhance the chance for more users to make use of the new packet cluster facility.

Now we need the packet experts to help set up the computer for the remote operation. If you are familiar with requirements for this, please contact me. If we need to purchase software, just let me know. A test is now being set up at my QTH. Call me at 281-351-7683, or send email to kdutton@wi.net.

Contest Connection

!!!BANG!!! Now that I have your attention, last month Bill Denton W5SB encouraged us all to get ready for the contesting season. What does this mean? It means doing whatever it takes to get your shack or mobile rigs in good working order. This includes antennas and accessories such as SWR/power meters, antenna matching boxes, etc. It means reading up on the rules of the chosen contest to learn what is required for logging; you'll find these in QST and CQ. It means getting used to logging your contacts accurately, whether it be by paper, computer or a combination of methods. It means getting some on-the-air practice. It means setting a goal for the number of hours to work and contacts to be made. It means asking an experienced contesteer for tips on operating methods.

Maybe you're thinking "Hey, I don't know anything about contesting and I probably wouldn't be any good at it." Balderdash! Take it from me, you'll

have a good time talking to all those people that you don't know, but who are hams just like you. And don't let the fact that you are not on HF bother you. There are lots of VHF/UHF contests around, which can be more of a challenge than HF. But if you want HF experience, just speak to one of the active NARS HF contesters, and chances are, you'll get invited to operate at their station.

There's a reason for asking you to get active in contesting; it's called FIELD DAY 97. Get some experience and then come out and help NARS place in the top three this year. Walter Hock KK5LO is coordinating the effort and would LOVE for you to volunteer to operate during the event, right Walter?

Keith WD5DXL

NARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Rudy Novotny, KB5ZXO 251-4546
Mark Condit, KM5AO 550-5659
Bill Gary, K8CSG 537-9240

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Please send address, phone, email and other changes to Marian Denton at NARS, P.O. Box 690342, Houston, TX 77269-0342.

FOR NARS INFORMATION CALL

Marian Denton, 469-8331, for General Information and Bill Gary, 537-9240, for VE Exam Information or send E-Mail to novotny@tenet.edu

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday 8 AM at Victors, located at 4710 W FM 1960. Informal ragchew.

NARS LUNCH BUNCH every Wednesday - location decided Tuesdays on the informal morning 2 meter net.

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8:00 PM
28.444 MHz
Net Coordinator Jim, KJ5X

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8:00 PM
146.06 / .66 MHz
Net Coordinator Bill, K8CSG

*All telephone #'s are 281 Area Code

NARS REPEATERS

2 M - 146.060 / 146.660 MHz
Digipeter - 145.71 MHz
Call (W5NC) Alias (NARS)

NARS Web Page

<http://www.flash.net/~nars/>
Coordinator HO, WA5MLT
Trustee Walter, KK5LO

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League.

ARRL Club No. 2120

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