

# NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

April 2001

## *Meeting Location Change for April XA5T ARRL DX Contest*

This month's meeting topic will be the XA5T ARRL DX Contest that was operated by several NARS members in both CW and SSB. Both teams are currently in second place.

This will be a joint meeting between NARS and Texas DX Society. Many of both teams are TDXS members. TDXS has been operating and maintaining the XA5T station for many years.

The location for this special monthly meeting for NARS has changed location for April only. We will be meeting at the Spring Branch ISD Career Center, Instructional Television Department at 10670 Hammerly. This building is located 1 block East of the Sam Houston Tollway on Hammerly. If you are coming South from the 290 area, take the Tollway South to the Hammerly exit. Turn left under the Tollway and left into the first driveway past the Texaco-Burger King. The building to your right will be the SBISD Career Center. Take the driveway to the Northwest corner of the building. There is a satellite dish behind a chain link fence in the front of the building and several more satellites on the roof plus a 200' self supporting tower in the back. There is also a 70' tower on the roof of the building.

The outside door will have the address 10670 over it. We will be meeting in the theater. It's the first door on the left as you enter the building.

If you are coming from I-10 go North on the Tollway, take the Hammerly exit and right on Hammerly and left into the driveway past the Texaco-Burger King.

Hope to see you there. If you have any questions e-mail me at w5sb@arrl.net.

*Bill W5SB*

### **Public Service Events Your radio skills are needed**

MDA March of Dimes WalkAmerica, Sunday, April 29  
Contact: George Levandoski KD5AYF, home: 713-895-0700, email: kd5ayf@arrl.net  
Location: George Bush Park (Cullen Barker Park), just west of Hwy 6 and Westheimer.

We will need to show up at 7:30am and the walk will start at 9am. About 10 hams are needed for this event. We should be done about 2pm. If you would like to volunteer, please call or send email (see above).

## **Important Dates**

**Friday, Apr 20, 7:30 PM** – NARS monthly General Membership meeting, Spring Branch ISD Career Center, Instructional Television Department, 10670 Hammerly (1 block East of the Sam Houston Tollway on Hammerly) – Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

**Saturday, Apr 28, 8:30 AM** – VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just south of Main Street).

**Tuesday, Apr 24, 7:30 PM** – NARS Board of Directors meeting, Wynwood Apartments, N E corner 290 & 1960.

### **Contests:**

**Apr 12-15** – JA Int'l HF DX

**Apr 14-15** – MARAC County Hunter SSB

**Apr 21-22** – YU DX, Michigan QSO

Party, Holyland DX, Ontario QSO Party

**Apr 28-29** – Florida QSO Party, Nebraska QSO Party

**May 5-6** – ARI Int'l DX, MARAC County Hunter CW

**May 12-13** – Oregon QSO Party

**May 26-27** – CQ WW WPX SSB

### **Wednesday Lunch Bunch:**

**Apr 11** – Original Pasta Co

**Apr 18** – Carlos Mexican

**Apr 25** – Charlie's Hamburgers

**May 2** – Jason's Deli

**May 9** – Woodlands House

**May 16** – Brown Sugar's BBQ

### **Notice:**

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

*Deadline for articles to appear in the May issue is Tuesday, Apr 24.*

## **BREAKFAST**

### **at Victors**

4710 W FM 1960

**Saturdays**

**7:30 AM**

## President's Corner

April 2001

Spring is here, according to the calendar anyway, and usually this provides us with two more opportunities to participate in public service events. This year, however, there will be no Buffalo Bayou Regatta, a long time NARS tradition. We are assured that it will be back next year. This leaves only the March of Dimes Walkathon, which is scheduled for April 29th. There are several walks held around Houston, but ours will be at Bush Park, which is west of Highway 6 off Westheimer. Contact George Levandoski, KD5AYF, or any board member if you are interested in participating. This is a fun event and is generally over by about noon. These events give us a chance to show the public what Amateur Radio can do for the community so good participation is important.

Speaking of participation, this year we are making changes to our usual Field Day effort in order to accomplish a couple of things. We will use a new, more public location near the West Belt and Hammerly. By doing this and making a couple other changes, we hope to generate more participation by NARS members. This location will certainly provide more exposure of our hobby to the general public. Our goal is to provide increased public awareness of the benefits of Amateur radio, and possibly interest some people in becoming hams. More details are coming. Mark your calendars for June 22 – 24 and help us make this a very successful Field Day. Field Day co-chairmen are Bill Denton W5SB, and OJ Quarles K1OJ; please give them your support.

As you read this, I will be in sunny Grenada with Dee, W1HEO, and our xyl's. We will look for you on the air; our intended operating frequencies were listed in last month's DX column.

73, Paul Frantz W5PF, President

## Xray America Five Taco

Someone referred to the location across the river in Nuevo Laredo as the Radio Ranch. I think "Brer Rabbit and the Cactus Patch" is a more accurate description. I heard it described on the air as rare DX. Another proclaimed it to be Nuevo Laredo Island. However you describe it, it's third world like in every way. From the lack of modern facilities, such as hot and cold running water, flushable toilets, microwave, TV's and Internet. You have to stand in the perfect spot to get a cell phone to work and NO INTERNET!! In a weird sort of way it's fun.

I think the most pleasant part of the trip is the scenic drive down the Monterey Highway that skirts along the romantic Rio Grande River. Once leaving the highway, you see countryside in its real glory. The trash dumps were in full bloom. Almost every plastic milk bottle and mounds of Huggies brought color to the desert. The occasional piles of truck tires added a sense of luster to drive to the rancho. The quaint country roads lead past a well-kept cemetery and the occasional aromatic carcass of an exotic animal. The delicious hint of fresh pasture patties and rotting garbage was rampant in the clear Mexican Air.

I will have to admit however, the highlight of the trip was dealing with the most efficient customs officials you would ever encounter traveling in a foreign land. The way they handled our two SUV's loaded with all sorts of unidentifiable gear, they knew the four Gringos could be up to no good. We had honest faces. We somehow got the mysterious green light and passed unmolested.

After an all too quick a trip through the well-maintained country lanes flawlessly kept landscaped, the first glimpse of the massive radio towers come into view. Thoughts are racing thought our heads of big pileups, high rates and huge scores. Could this be the year that we will finally beat the power curse? Could we have more than 65 volts on each leg? Would we be able to operate the entire contest without a sandstorm, or have to shut down because of heavy rains and thunder storms? Will Murphy stay home? Stay tuned.

We will finish the story at next months meeting. The cast and crew will be on to fill in the details. We have an A/V presentation that will rival the premier of "Titanic". I also understand Black Beard the Pirate may pay us a visit.

The meeting place is the SPRING BRANCH I.S.D. Telecommunication Department's theater. The building is the SBISD Career Center at 10670 Hammerly. That's on the NE corner of West Belt and Hammerly. It's very easy to find.

This is what we did in CW and SSB:

CW Multi Single HP; 4914 Q's, 334 mults and 4,920,822 points.

Currently in second place

Crew K1OJ, N1LN, K5NZ, N5TU

Equipment: Ten-Tec Omni VI, Ten-Tec Hercules amp, Compaq Lap Top with TR log.

SSB Multi-2; 10,379 Q's, 342 mults, 10,603,712 points

Currently second place

Crew, K5NZ, W5BAK, NX5M, N5XJ, W5PF, W5MJ, W5IDX, W5SB

Equipment: FT-1000D, FT-1000MP, Ten-Tec Titan, Ameritron AL-811H, Top Ten Devices band decoders and Dunstar band pass filters, Dunstar Stackmatch, and 2 Compaq Lap Tops with TR log.

Backup equipment, FT-890, Clipperton amp and NEC Lap top

See you at the meeting for the Rest of the Story.

Bill W5SB

# DX News

## “For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print”

In like a lamb and out like a lion pretty well describes the solar activity for March 2001. The month opened quietly posting a solar flux of 131, an A index of 7, and a K index of 3. The month closed with a solar flux of 246, an A index of 131, and a K index of 2. In between there really wasn't much to foretell the month's incredible end. On the 8th we reached an interim peak of 177 then the activity started a slow downward drift to 136 on the 16th. One final remaining peak occurred on the 23rd. at 183.

Then our solar britches got blown off on the 28th when the SFI jumped to 274. Just prior to this, the A index was slowly rising through the low to mid-20's. As the geomagnetic cloud hit the earth on the 31st., the A index jumped to 140! These events are hard to believe, but exciting to experience.

Of course as Murphy would have it, this all happened just as Paul W5PF and Dee W1HEO were opening up for some DX R & R from J3 Grenada.

Overall, the increased activity has provided some great band conditions on 80 through 10 meters, or at least until mother earth was engulfed in the geomagnetic cloud. 10, 15 and 20 meters had really been delivering some good DX up until that point. It seems that with the string of cooler lows moving down out of the Colorado Rockies, our winter has stretched into a very mild early spring meaning that 40 and 75 meter DX has been good.

Finally, interesting news from Tad Cook – K7VVV via W1AW, Tad says, “it now seems that Cycle 23 did not peak and begin declining in 2000 after all.” Tad also reports, “the peak solar flux values in 2000 were 262 on May 17 and 261.9 also reports that on July 18, but this week, on March 26, a growing region 9393 produced a new high for Cycle 23 of 263.7 and the next two days produced even higher solar flux numbers of 273.4 and 273.5! (The highest recorded solar flux for the week actually was at 2300 UTC on Wednesday, at 293.8—a magnitude not seen since 1992—but the official daily number is always taken at 2000 UTC.)”

### Local Events:

Looks like the good DX conditions from the first of the year are beginning to pay off. Steve – N5EN is walking pretty tall after receiving new QSL cards for VK0MM Macquarie Is., YK9A Syria, and C91RF Mozambique. Now for the best part, Steve has several new ones including Spratly 9M0M on 10 SSB, 15 SSB and CW; Pratas BQ9P on 10 CW, and Lord Howe Is. VK9EHH on 20 SSB. I'll tell you, Steve just keeps pushing beyond the 300 mark. Congratulations! I hope more of us make it.

Paul W5PF has been pretty busy preparing for the J3 Grenada trip and making the trip to XA5T. Paul also found time to work a little DX including H40RW Temotu on 15 CW, BQ9P Pratas Is. on 10 SSB & CW, 3G0Y Easter Is. on several bands on SSB and CW. The mailman was also kind to Paul dropping off QSL cards from the HV0A the Vatican, TI9C Cocos Is., VK0MM Macquarie Is., and S21YJ Bangladesh for numbers 299 and 300. Congratulations, Paul that 300 mark seems to be a real challenge!

If you had to make three nice DX contacts, you might choose the three Walter KK5LO reports. Walter started out with Egypt SU9ZZ on the 1st., Niue Is. ZK2BQI on the 9th., and Tajikistan EY8MM on the 14th.

Bruce N1LN says March was pretty good. In between his two-steppin' Bruce added some QSOs towards his 5BDXCC. Check this out: on 160 meters he worked KG4IZ – Guantanamo Bay and 3G0Y – Easter Is. on CW; on 80 meters he snagged TE8AA – Costa Rica on SSB, BQ9P – Pratas Is. and T32RD – East Kiribati on CW; on 40 meters FR5FD – Reunion Is. and 5U3T – Niger on CW; on 15 meters 5U2K – Niger on SSB and H40RW – Temotu CW; on 12 meters our old friend Claudio Vascotto ET3VSC – Ethiopia. And to round things out TR8CX – Gabon is in Bruce's log on 15 SSB. Way to go OM, that's busy.

Cal WF5W reported earlier this month on the Monday night net that he was in

serious negotiations with his mail carrier. From his report, it looks like he was very persuasive with new QSLs in the file from YI9OM Iraq; ZM8CW Kermadec Is.; YK9A Syria; XT2OW Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta); and SU9ZZ Egypt. Cal also reports working Easter Is. 3G0Y on 160; BQ9Y Pratas Is. on 40; 3B8GF Mauritius Is. on 20; ZK2BQI Niue Is. on 15, and Taiwan BV9O on 10. This brings Cal to 318 worked and 309 in the file! Yikes!! Congratulations Cal, Wow. By the way, Cal says, “If anyone hears the EP station on, call him.” Then, Cal can call the rest of us. hi hi

I think this next note confirms what a number of us have suspicioned for sometime. NARS members do not go to bed on Friday nights before the Saturday morning breakfast. Gerald W5BA worked the Easter Is. 3G0Y group on 3/17 at 1139 on 80 meter CW prior to going to the breakfast. (It's all this writer can do to get up.) Gerald also worked A92GE Bahrain on 20 meter CW on 3/20 at 0343. Earlier in the month, he was in very interesting round table with ZL1JY and ZL1QI at what must have been their sunrise (0510) on 3/05 along with IK7MCJ in the same group on 75 meter SSB.

Jim KJ5X had a good month with new cards arriving from EP3SMH Iran, YK9A Syria, YI9OM Iraq, and VK0MM Macquarie Is. Jim says he didn't work any new ones, but his note indicates a fine business log with these QSOs: EZ8AQ Turkmenistan 15 meter SSB, TA3DD Turkey 20M CW, EK6YL Armenia 20M SSB, 5U3T Niger 15 meter CW, 3G0Y Easter Is. on several bands, and FM/IV3TDM, KG4IZ and HI9/DJ7ZG on 80 meter CW. Jim save some for the rest of us! Congratulations.

George K5VUU had a heck-of-a-month working new counties and dragging more new cards in than anyone. Seven, count' um seven new countries confirmed. K5VUU logs show new countries of: HV5NAC the Vatican on 10 meters SSB; 3W2LWS Vietnam on 15 meters CW; and 5W0DA Western Samoa on 10 meters SSB!

*Continued on page 4*

## *DX News – Continued from page 3*

George also worked the Falkland Is. VP8DCD on 20 meters SSB hoping that this time the card comes through. New cards include: 3W2LWS Vietnam, JT1CC Mongolia, SV9CVY Crete, UK8GH Uzbekistan, VK0MM Macquarie Is., VP2E Anguilla, and JD1BCK Minami Torishima. This brings George's count to 281 worked, and 265 confirmed. Outstanding operating, Congrats!

John W5PDW also reports a good month. John reports working the XA5T group on 80 through 10 meters plus the radio arial on his Ford Econoline. (John that 10 meter QSO was tuff!) In addition, John's log contains the following: 5W0DA Western Samoa at 2242 hrs on 28.393, 9M0M Spratly Is. at 1524 hrs on 14.260, 3G0Y Easter Is. on both 21 and 28 MHZ, FO0ARE Clipperton Is. at 0342 on 14.254, 4K8M Azerbaijan at 0421 hrs on 14.246. John says he was begging! Heard but not worked: C31 – strong but couldn't get past the East coast pile up; 3W readable but working California; ZC4 went QRT just when I was about to call; HZ working a list and went QRT before he got back to the 5's! For the best the part, John received five new cards K5K Kingman Reef, VK0MM Macquarie Is., ZA/S51F Albania, EY1HQ Tajikistan, EX2T Kyrgyzstan all new ones!! In closing, John reports that the March hailstorm did not damage the DX traps he put out.

In short, this was an outstanding month for NARS DXer's! Can it get any better? It might; kept the faith!

From this Station:

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March turned out pretty good at this QTH also working 135 QSOs representing 83 countries. Further the breakdown looks like this: 39 Qs on 10 meters, 20 Qs on 15 meters, 25 Qs on 20 meters, 32 Qs on 40 meters, and 19 on 75 meters. It would be interesting to know how your logs breakdown. Over a period of time with several reporting, maybe we could chart or relate the number of Qs by band to establish a trend that would tell us what propagation was generally like in our area.

On second thought, nope, too hard!

I added two new countries to the "worked" list: 5U2K Niger and C91CU Mozambique.

Best of all were the new cards that arrived. New country confirmations arrived for: ER1IM Moldova and EZ6DK Turkmenistan. Yes, of course the Moldova card arrived via the buro only after I had just sent out 6 in direct mail! I'm hoping to team up with John W5PDW to watch a few extra mailboxes during April.

Good luck everyone.

### Scheduled DX Operations

Here are some of the scheduled DX operations for April.

- \* March 26/April 5 Western Samoa 5W0BQ
- \* March 28/April 2 Juan Fernandez
- \* March 28/April 2 St Maarten PJ6(xx)
- \* March 28/April 2 Grenada J3(xx)
- \* April 1/15 St Helena
- \* April 1/15 St Peter & Paul Rocks
- \* April 1/30 Malpelo Island

- \* April 2/16 Madeira Islands
- \* April 4/10 Anguilla
- \* April 5/24 Conway Reef
- \* April 6/12 Seychelles
- \* April 9/24 St Kitts & Nevis
- \* April 10/20 Namibia
- \* April 10/21 Malpelo Island
- \* April 13/16 Djibouti
- \* April 13/19 Seychelles
- \* April 14/20 Aland Islands
- \* April 14/21 France
- \* April 14/22 Midway Island
- \* April 19/26 Marshall Islands
- \* April 21/24 Mellish Reef
- \* April 21/28 Sweden
- \* April 23/30 Gibraltar
- \* April 23/May 8 Falkland Islands
- \* April 24/May 6 Chesterfield Islands
- \* April 24/May 9 Switzerland
- \* April 26/29 Italy
- \* April 26/May 4 Trinidad & Tobago
- \* April 30/May 4 South Cook Islands

There are some nice new countries in this group like Malpelo Is., the Seychelles, and Mellish Reef. You can bet that there will be some big pile-ups for these. Remember that all of these can count toward a DXCC, 5BDXCC, CQDX, or CQ WAZ award. Looking back to the same period last year, I almost think that this year has yielded a wider variety of DX. Maybe not, but I sure like soaking up that new stuff!

Thanks to Steve N5EN, Paul W5PF, Walter KK5LO, Bruce N1LN, Cal WF5W, Gerald W5BA, Jim KJ5X, George K5VUU, and John W5PD. If you have DX info for the column, e-mail to wa5mlt@arrl.net.

*73 and gd DX to all ... de H.O. WA5MLT*

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## *VE Session Results – March*

At the NARS March 24, 2001 test session we had 12 candidates. This resulted in five new Technician class amateurs, three upgrades to General, and one who passed three elements to become a new General.

The VE's were Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY, HO Townsend WA5MLT, Gregg Erlenbusch W5IDX, Bob Walworth N5ET, Bruce Meier N1LN, and prospective VE Norm Covey K5OS.

We had a surprise VE drop in, none other than H. Wayne Carroll (Mr. QSL Card) W4MPY himself. He commented that he was impressed with our test session organization.

Thanks to all for their help.

*Walter KK5LO*

*Dear Keith and Team – – On behalf of SIRE, I would like to thank you and your team for all your efforts and hard work.*

*Your continuing support of the Ride–A–Thon enables SIRE to keep its mission and vision alive. We could not ever do the wonderful, professional job that you all do and the Ride–A–Thon just wouldn't be the same without you!*

*And so, with our sincere appreciation, we send thanks again to you all! Sincerely, Carol Ghani*



**HOUSTON**  
AMATEUR RADIO  
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**George DiLetto, KDORW**

President

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# Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members Jim Beard K5JDB and Rod Neumann AD5CH

## NARS Resource List

### General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY  
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Dick Rooney W5VHN  
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### Electrical Design, Troubleshooting:

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### Packet:

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Bob Argo KC5JZO  
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Keith Dutson WD5DXL  
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### Interference (Basic Advice):

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### NARS Public Information Officer:

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## NARS Information

### PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIRMAN

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### VICE PRESIDENT

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### ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL INFORMATION

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281-353-2196, kd5kr@arrl.net

*Send address, phone, email and other  
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NARS  
PO Box 90387  
Houston, TX 77090-0387

*For general information call one of the Club  
Officers or Board Members.*

### NETS

75 M Ragchew: Mon 8:00 PM, 3861KHz  
Coordinator: Jim Kirk KJ5X  
281-376-0718, jrkirk@wt.net  
2M Information: Wed. 8:00 PM, 146.66MHz  
Coordinator: O.J. Quarles, K1OJ  
281-955-1555, k1oj@ditdit.com

### WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.w5nc.org>  
Webmaster: H.O. Townsend WA5MLT  
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### NARS REFLECTOR

NARS@qth.net  
Coordinator: O.J. Quarles, K1OJ  
281-955-1555, k1oj@ditdit.com

### REPEATERS

2M: 146.060 / 146.660 (KA5AKG)  
70 cm: 449.375 / 444.375 (KA5AKG)

### MEETINGS

#### Monthly General Membership

Third Friday each month at 7:30 PM  
Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 6000  
Spring Cypress Road

#### Saturday Breakfast

Victor's Restaurant 7:30 AM

#### Wednesday Lunch 11:30 AM

Various locations (Info on 146.660 and listed  
on front page in Important Dates column)

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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a  
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