

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

August 2005

August Meeting – Galapagos Islands

The misanthropic, iconoclastic William Tompkins, local internist, the true amateur in Amateur Radio [judging from what he has seen of NARS members], will speak at the NARS August club meeting about Darwin's Tromping Grounds – the Galapagos Islands, and showing his first attempt at digital photography. Bill has had his HAM license since 1986 and is now an Extra Class, AD5WT.

NARS Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Thanks to Joe KD5KR, I have most of all the NARS newsletters since the original one was published in August of 1985. It has been very interesting to read about all the early club activities and the progression of growth since the beginning. The original charter list had only 25 members and now 20 years later we have around 200 members plus or minus QRM. One of the things in common with those early beginnings to current times, we NARSians like to operate our radios and eat. The June 1986 issue of the News announced the beginning of a Saturday morning breakfast. It would be an informal gathering and eyeball QSO's located at Uncle Tom's Kitchen on Kuykendahl. That tradition still exists today and has moved around a bit since then. When I came into the club in 1991, breakfast was being served at Stacks Restaurant on Louetta.

In the early days the club sponsored nets on several of the HF bands as well as a 2 meter simplex net, and later when the 146.660 repeater was put up, nets on the repeater were organized. One of the HF nets was a CW practice net. I even found a listing for a 75 meter NARS calling frequency, 3.880. My first contact with NARS was via the 2 meter repeater. As far as I know that was my first ever contact on 2 meters. I had been off the air for about 20 years and a fellow Ham that I worked with told me about this radio club that was in the area where we lived. We moved to our current location in 1971 and it took 20 years for me to finally get back on the air. It was with a two meter radio. I hadn't made a radio contact of any kind in all those years. I was a refugee from 75 meter AM. Boy . . . little did I know how all that was going to change.

In looking through the first few years of the newsletters I have found some interesting tid bits of information as follows:

Walter Holms WD5GAZ and Terry Myers KQ5U were some of the notable names added to the original charter member list. In the September 1985 issue, Don Busick K5AAD from Madison Electronics said that Kenwood will soon drop the TS 830 and the TS 530. The best selling radios of that time were the ICOM IC 735 and IC 757. In Dec '85 monthly meeting, Chuck Coleman gave a report of his dxpedition to Desecheo Island. In February 1986 issue announced the first NARS Award Banquet to be held on March 15 at Uncle Tom's Kitchen. I do not have the April issue of the newsletter to find out how many attended but the following year 47 attended the banquet also held at Uncle Tom's.

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Important Dates

Friday, Aug 19, 7:30 PM – General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church – Eyeball QSOs, 6:30 PM.

Saturday, Aug 27, 8:30 AM – VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

Tuesday, Aug 30, 7:30 PM – Board of Directors meeting, Ponderosa Fire Station, 17061 Rolling Creek drive. This is one signal light west of Ella on 1960, go north about 200 yards and park on the south side of the fire hall, NOT in front of the big doors.

Contests

Aug 20–21 NA SSB QP, NJ QP, SARTG RTTY

Aug 27–28 YO DX HF, Ohio QP

Aug 28 SARL HF CW

Sep 11 NA CW Sprint

Sep 24–25 TX QP, CQ WW RTTY DX

Wednesday Lunch Bunch

Aug 17 Olde City Pub & Grill

Aug 24 Farm To Market Grill

Aug 31 Casa Imperial Mexican

Sep 7 Strack Farms

Sep 14 Pepperchino

Wednesday Lunch Bunch – West

Aug 17 Escalante Mexican

Aug 24 Jason's Deli

Aug 31 Luther's BBQ

Sep 7 Skeeter's

Sep 14 Charlie's Hamburgers

Monday "Tail Draggers" Lunch Bunch

11:00 AM Aviator's Grill, Hooks Airport

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

Deadline for articles to appear in the next issue is the last day of this month.

BREAKFAST

at Victors

4710 W FM 1960

Saturdays

7:30 AM

President's Corner

August 2005

Squawk! SZZZZZZZ! Zaaaaaaap!

Sound familiar? Yes it is the sound of the NARS .06/.66 repeater sometimes. But not always. Yes, unfortunately, we have been having difficulty with range and receive signals with our repeater since we had to replace the Motorola unit and reduce the height of the antenna. Everyone seems to be pulling their hair out; those because they don't like the noise and those that are trying to repair it. Bad situation, everyone agrees and everyone is frustrated.

Now, what to do about it? Some say replace the repeater. Some say replace the location. Some say throw money at it. Some say to Hell with it.

But let's look at some facts that we know about the repeater and its location. The location is one of the best in Houston for height and for cost (free!). We don't even pay for electricity. At one time, we had excellent coverage. However, the location has its negatives too. The antenna height above the roof/parapet must be limited so that it cannot be seen. It is in the Galleria area which isn't easy to get to from the northwest. The hours of access are limited to Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM and not on holidays. Some are thinking that interfering signals have come up in the area since we have begun to have problems.

The repeater itself is a commercial GE unit that by rights should function very well. The range issue is due to having to reduce the height of the antenna to satisfy the demands of the new building owners who do not want anything visible above the roof/parapet. This makes it tough to get the range we used to have. The squawks seem to be a function of the receiver only. Listen to the IDer; it is very clean and is not dependent upon the receiver. There are several things in the receive linkage; antenna, coax, tuned cavities and the receiver itself. The antenna we have discussed, the coax has been changed (including that on the cavities), the cavities have been tuned (but in place) and the receiver has had many hours of work by several people, including by George DiLetto.

Now, what is being planned and done at present?

1. Improve the antenna by adding a reflector element. This is in the works, but falling behind our schedule.
2. Check the antenna for possible mechanical ringing.
3. Try a different antenna or separate receive and transmit antenna.
4. Retune the cavities in a lab environment. George Carlson has volunteered.
5. The Motorola repeater is being repaired in spare time and will be used to swap out the repeater to verify whether we have equipment problems or interference problems.

Many things are possible; replace the repeater, spend the big bucks to have a frequency analysis done in the area, temporarily put the repeater and antenna in a different location to see if the suspected interference goes away. And I'm sure that we can think of other experiments that might give us a clue about what is going on.

But when we look at the big picture, we see that what we don't have is an analysis of the problem – a root cause analysis. What is the real issue here? No one really knows. We are shooting from the hip. We have solved a few issues with this approach, but this particular one (or ones) refuses to relinquish its grip. This is where the hair pulling is for those trying to fix the repeater. And they are asking for help. If anyone has a method to find the root cause please step up. I'm sure we can find a fix once we know the root cause(s). Anyone out there want to give it a go? Or maybe we want to turn it over to the professionals. Your response to the board is welcomed.

73, Lee K5AVY

Public Service Events

Your Radio Skills Are Needed

Events officially sponsored by NARS include Buffalo Bayou Regatta (October) and Sunmart Texas Trails Run (December). Events supported by NARS members include Houston Marathon, MS 150 and Wings Over Houston.

Plan to help with one or more of these events in 2005.

VE Session Results

Saturday's VE was another rousing success. Fifteen elements were administered and out of that we gained six Technicians, two Generals and one Extra. The six Technicians are: Amanda Bressler–Katy, TX; Rachel K. Pack (Bob Pack's (NX5M) lovely daughter)–Somerville, TX; Subramani Sambasivan–The Woodlands, TX; Michael J. Stone–Cypress, TX; Jon V. Franklin–Houston, TX and Robert T. Gordon III–Cypress, TX; great job folks and welcome to the wonderful hobby of amateur radio. The Generals are Eric Bressler–KE5DQV (yes, his wife is a new Technician)–Katy, TX and Donald J. Sternberg KC5SYP–Alvin, TX; accept my heartiest congratulations on your upgrades and I really hope you will enjoy your new privileges to the fullest. Our new Extra is Kenneth R. McWatters of Cypress, TX, who after passing elements 3 and 4, joins the elite ranks of the Extra Class amateur operators.

Let me thank the ones that make it happen, without the volunteers the sessions can't be done; Jim Kirk–KJ5X; Paul Frantz–W5PF; Eddy Reynolds–K5WQG; Nora Stovall–KB5FYJ and Steve Smothers–W9DX.

The next session will be held August 27; I hope to see you there.

73

Norm Covey/K5OS

NARS VE Session Manager

Ham and "Sheez" News

Goodbye to July

It's hard to believe that the summer is slipping away. Although July had a wet start, it has ended on a hot dry note. Next month, the kids will be back in school and we will all be wondering where the days went.

Here is a short recap of what we did in July.

The Stampin Up Club members met at the home of Darlene Buoy this month. We had a great time learning new stamping techniques and playing with the "stampin" toys.

Ladies Night Out

The ladies elected to schedule a Ladies Night Out in place of our monthly meeting. What a great turnout and a fun time. I stopped counting how many ladies attended when I reached 11. We started the evening at Saltgrass Steakhouse and enjoyed a wonderful meal. Following that, we took a short drive to the movie theatre where we all went to see what we thought was going to be a "chic flick." The "Wedding Crashers" was not quite the movie we thought it was. Most of us are quite sure that our husbands would have enjoyed it a little more than we did. The evening did have its moments. For those of you who have seen the movie, imagine having to describe what is happening on the screen to Schalee. Enough said!

Upcoming Activities

Saturday, August 20th – Dinner and a show at the Texas Opry Jamboree in Magnolia. The Ham and Sheez attended this about two years ago. If you have never been,

you are missing a one-of-a-kind treat. What do you think about bringing the men along this time ladies? I think a full meal is approximately \$10.00 per person. We need you to RSVP to Laurie or Anita absolutely no later than August 10. Because, we'll have to give the place fair warning about how many folks will be there. The seats are generally all sold out before the night of the performance. The tickets to the show are \$10.00 per person. Here's a URL if anyone might be interested in getting more background information.

<http://www.texasopry.homestead.com/files/>

Sunday, August 21st – The Stampin Up Club meeting will be at the home of Darlene Buoy (again) at 2:30. This time, the party is actually being held by Darlene. The party in July was for her daughter, Shannon. I am ready to start making some cards and scrapbook pages for the holidays – aren't you?

Monday, August 29th – Our regular monthly meeting at the church. Laurie has put on her thinking cap and is whipping up a craft for this month's meeting.

Looking into September, we've decided on Saturday, September 17th, as the next wine tasting party at Tina and Eddie's. Folks have already started planning on the types of wines that they are going to bring. It's definitely not too early for folks to be thinking about which "course" of the meal they want to bring as finger foods. Each Ham and Sheez couple brings a bottle of wine to share with the group along with a

finger food that goes best with the wine they have chosen. Then they are asked to tell a little something about the wine while everyone has a taste. This has become an annual event for the Ham and Sheez and one that should not be missed.

A Personal Note – I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the wonderful ladies and their families for the cards, letters, food, and favors that helped H.O. and me following my recent surgery. There is not a greater group of people than the Ham and Sheez. They prove it every day.

August Recipe

The August Recipe is compliments of Cheryl Tompkins. Cheryl prepared a huge bowl of this for me last month and believe me, this is a wonderful summer treat.

SHARON NATERNBERG'S BROCCOLI SALAD

4 cups fresh broccoli, cut into small pieces
1/2 cup sweet onion, chopped fine
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup cheddar cheese cubes
Sprinkle of sunflower seeds

DRESSING

1 cup mayonnaise
2 tsp. vinegar
1/2 cup sugar [Splenda]
Mix dressing and pour over salad.
Best when served the same day.

*Keep Smiling,
Anita – N5AOK*

DX News

First, let me thank everyone in your club who responded with their recent DX and band activity. It is needed and appreciated. I hope to hear from more of you in the coming months. DX-ers, QRP-ers, SAT-ers, VHF-ers, IOTA-ers, County Hunters, EME-ers, RTTY-ers, Lighthouse chasers; museum ship chasers; SWL-ers, been-on-a-DX-trip; going-on-a-DX-trip: Let me hear from you! Your fellow club members want to hear what everyone did this last month; especially you lucky DX-peditioners.

Propagation:

What numbers? The way band conditions are there are no numbers. You read the various DX bulletins and see the DX-ers that are traveling only to not be able to work them. And it is some pretty good stuff! (See below) Ya' gotta at least be able to hear them.

But, I do see some pretty good member reports. The DX is there, always. You just have to find it. Remember: "DX Is"!

I see on the clusters Europeans still working DX, usually north-south on 160m. At lot of us put up our 160/80 receive antennas in the summer. Too much noise. But remember; south of the equator it is winter time. Prime time for DX-ing on 160m. Maybe where you live?

Also, in our winter time, there are VK's active on 160 - every morning. Even a good time for sub-equatorial Afrikaners around 0400 UTC; and they are in their summer time! Never give up.

You have to study the propagation and listen hard during the "primmest-prime" times and then hope they have a readable signal.

I know a lot of you see DX bulletins throughout the month; but let me highlight some 'good stuff'. To borrow a saying from an old bygone DX editor:

"DX Alerts for the Deserving DX-ers:"

1. P5/North Korea: Yes; it may be active in August. KA2HTV is supposed to operate from P5 starting August 9 thru the 23rd - supposedly has authority. He asks that those that have a P5 QSO to please standby so that those that do not have P5 can make a contact. (So that K5UO can get a contact.) QSL via KK5DO. In the recent past, P5/4L4FN was active north of the 38 Parallel. I'll be looking for this operation as that is one of several I missed while in Russia the last 12 years!

2. 3C0/Annobon Isl. Is always a good one to get, especially for the "5+-band DX-ers!"

EA5BYP and EA5YN are licensed and will be active "As soon as possible" all bands-all modes. Additional details - soon - at www.tabarca.es.mn.

3. CY0AA/Sable Isl. is active now and causing quite a stir on the bands. I haven't seen them on the WARC bands, though. They were even on 6m Sunday 31 July but nothing heard here. The Europeans need this one bad. Logistically, it is supposed to be a very difficult place to travel to; with something like 200 days a year dense fog.

4. It's holiday time in Europe! You can read in the bulletins where they are going for their annual holiday: The Italian, Russian, Croatian and Greek islands for the IOTA-ers but also for their holiday. The Seychelles or other places in the Indian Ocean for the DX-ers - - - but, also for their holiday. So don't expect 24/7 activity.

5. North Americans can be heard from the Caribbean, South Pacific (along with the JA's).

There many more to report; so activity is there; if only the numbers were there, too! One bulletin has weekly reports on 201 countries active.

Reports from local Deserving DX-ers:

First on the list, as local DX-peditioners get to go to the front of the queue:

KU5B / V31UB/ Colin recently returned from Belize, Central America as V31UB. It may have been a holiday trip; but Colin spent a lot of time on the radio giving out V31 to the Deserving. He was also able to make a big presence during the worldwide IARU contest: 3252 QSO's. Would be nice to see the country and mode breakdown, Colin..huh? Good job, Colin.

Local Deserving who made the grade:

K5CX: 6 bands/SSB
KK5LD: 6 bands/SSB
K5PTC: 4 bands/CW
N1LN: 2 bands/CW
K5UO: 4 bands/CW
K5ZTY: 1 band/CW
K5JDB: 1 band/SSB
K5NZ: 2 bands/CW
NM5G: 1 band/SSB

He expresses his thanks to all for making this such a fun trip. I am sure the Deserving are awaiting their QSL's.

Brian/N5BA: If we were giving awards for longest distance DX or miles/watt, I do believe that Brian has it hands down: On July 25 he worked Slovenia/S52 - with 150 watts - via 2 meters. (Surely wasn't using the

repeater; it can't get to hwy 1488.) via THE MOON. "Antenna a single long boom Yagi, with no elevation. Low power EME using JT65, a soundcard DSP program that hears much better than I do." (Brian)
(ed note: Some of that may need translation; for me, anyway.)

Colin/KU5B, himself at home like the rest of us mortals:

Colin worked a couple of new-ones for himself in spite of having the terrible job of having to go to Belize: A35YL: 20 CW; TZ9A and CY9SS: 20 SSB.

New QSL's in the box (received): YJ0AII, MJ/DF5AU: both 20 CW. DL9MWG/HI9: 40 CW and the DX-pedition, T33C: 12 CW, 15 CW/SSB, 17 CW and 20 CW. That's be good for modes and bands you won't regret for years to come, Colin. Good work.

Total worked: 208 and total confirmed: 51 !! What? Friendly tip, Colin: While I was in Russia, 1992-2004 and the little time I was home, I worked a lot of WARC and didn't do much QSLing. Now that I am home full time, I sent these QSL's out. My recovery rate? About 50% or less. Stale cards can equate to no QSL received. Better on the last few years; but terrible for the early-mid 90's QSL's. You can't be the last one to sit down at HamCom DX luncheon when they do the DXCC countdown.

When the bands are open "DX is". That is what Jim, KJ5X found out. One evening, with 150 watts and modest effort worked a string of DX on 20 meters: Y19, EU3, OK2, 4L4, 4Z5, HA3, YU1, UR0, OH6, UA4, F5, DG5, MM0 and LZ2. I've seen evenings like that, too. No big deal; no big pileups with frequency-police; just a bunch of nice DX QSO's without turning on the 'smoke', too!

Jim is up to 327 on his DXCC with the arrival of the VU4RBI QSL. What is ironic is that the QSL he sent, (and some others) he forgot to put postage stamps on. Jim reports that this broke the jinx he was having in getting VU QSL's. Just don't put stamps on them. If they get past our post department; it's a sure thing for a QSL. Figure that one out.

Jim is also getting prepared for the Glorioso/FR/G DX-pedition this fall with a new tube in his AL-80B. Now he will have the smoke to get through the deserving-DX-er pileups. Jim is still looking for 9N/Nepal and S2/Bangladesh who are occasionally active. If you hear them on give KJ5X a ring.

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DX News – continued from page 3

Cal/ WF5W, (AKA “Popeye”), wasn’t able to work any new-ones, to speak of, but his mail carrier was friendly to him this last month with lots of new-one QSL confirmations which is half the battle. Eight new 80m cards and ten on other CW bands. He is trying to get his CW count up there where his mixed DXCC is. That’s a good thing to do, especially when a more-rare DX-pedition is active. Even though, today, you don’t chase band-counters or other mode DXCC. Try to work them on as many bands/modes as possible. You never know how your DXCC focus or efforts will change. I think at one time all 5-band DXCC, Mixed-DXCC, etc. members thought that just one QSO was enough and then 5–10 years later when they were looking for additional challenges, and ‘that’ country has not been active since; thought “If only I had got them on SSB – or other bands – back then” Been there; done that!

A lot of Cal’s time has been on the good-ship (sailboat) “Sea Pumpkin” either at sea or in the marina at Kemah. He has the good graces of expertise from George/K5VUU to engineer one of his Super-Duper-DX-Getter-QSO-Getter-Fire-Breathing screwdriver (maritime) mobile antennas for the “Pumpkin”. Should be mounted by now and ready for the pile-ups and also to work the SKN nights.

Rick/KZ5E our resident VHF-er has crossed the line to HF with a brand new Kenwood TS-2000, “Do anything; do everything radio”. Along with his new Force 12 C 19 antenna, he is your clubs next threat on the HF DX bands.

Rick got a unique opportunity to test his radio by working a VK motorcycle-mobile on 20 meters. The VK was running 400 watts to an Outbacker antenna mounted on his side car.

Rick, I wonder if the side car was for the 400 watt amplifier and batteries? It probably shut the motor and lights off when he keyed the microphone. Later 9M6BZ joined the QSO saying he is the “Borneo Zebra” and the only zebra in Malaysia!

Rick can also work 6 meters with this new radio.

Wayne, W5KDJ gives us a DX-pedition summary as he is just back from Swaziland as 3DA0KDJ. Working only CW he was able to make 3548 contacts from 3DA-land. Wayne was part of K5LBU / Frosty’s DX-pedition to Africa. Too bad it wasn’t in January as there are several of us that could use Swaziland on the low bands. I could use it on 160m.

John/ W5PDW was co-pilot one night this last month on the infamous Sea Pumpkin during SKN. Had heck using WF5W/Cap’n Cal’s J-38 standard key. Cal had it set to tight for John’s way. “You couldn’t slide a piece of paper between the contacts.” PDW likes a little more daylight between his key contacts.

John about used up the pages in his Big Chief log tablet. He worked 32 special event stations of which 22 were museum ships. Also worked KK5LU on the battleship Texas, too. He says he never could find Zed/K5ZTY from the ship. . .

Seems like a lot of us can’t find a rare-one to chase and get a kick out of working a string of regular “DX-es”. **Bruce/N1LN** picked up a few new band-counters: CY0SS-17SSB/CW; T32Z-17CW and OM8AA a 20m CW new counter. He ran across a pileup for YI9LZ and was able crack the east coast RF-wall with one call using his smaller amplifier. You never know who/what will be on the band and Iraq/YI is always a good one to catch. Later, much like KJ5X he

worked a string of UA’s, OK’s and a F5. DX IS!

Mike/K5UO: No new ones; not in a long time. Some band-counters, though. Missed North Korea and Scarborough back when they were active due to being away. DXCC stands at 344. I have submitted a lot – a lot of cards in the last year to get my records uptodate; especially the WARC bands. I now have (is it?) 8-band DXCC! And the DX Challenge: somewhere between 1800 and 2000 countries. Haven’t given any attention to that number at all. It just sort of grows with you by itself.

Been doing a lot of antenna work to get ready for fall. Going to try two each 400 foot reversible Beverages. I’ve been putting my little trencher (edger) to work laying coax and control wires.

Got interested in 6 meters and am replacing my 4 element yagi with a 7 element yagi on a 26.9 foot boom at 74 feet! But I see why they call it Sporadic-E . . . Have a whopping five countries worked!

In closing:

Like a lot of us, we have submissions into the DXCC desk; some since May. What I have heard is that the Dayton Hamconvention so (over?) loaded the DXCC desk up with DXCC submissions that it caused this current bottleneck. I don’t know how many submissions were made at HamCom; but I am sure a lot. Those checkers were busy every time I went by the Lone Star DX Clubs booth. I am sure HamCom and other conventions all contributed to the bottleneck.

But that is no problem as The Deserving are a patient lot!

Tnx es 73, K5UO

2005 NARS 20 Year Anniversary continued from page 1

From the beginning NARS monthly meetings where held at the Cypress Creek Emergency Center building at 16650 Sugar pine. We met there until sometime in 1993 when we outgrew the meeting room at the EMS center. A committee including Jim Kirk KJ5X found the place where we now meet, The Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church on Spring Cypress Rd.

In November of ’86 it was announced that the 146.660 NARS repeater was operational on a building in the Greenway Plaza area. In the same issue John Ellis, W5PDW placed an ad to sell his Collins KWM2 and Collins 30L1 amplifier.

In going through all the past newsletters the one thing I noticed, with all the dxing, rag

chewing, eye balling, a whole lot of public service work and field day activities, hardly anything was mentioned about contesting until about 1994. Since then contesting has been added to all the other things NARS does.

Since I had spent the early part of my ham radio life on 75 meters, I took a sabbatical from it from 1971 to 1991. As I remember I did the first serious contest from my shack in November of 1994. It was CQWW WPX SSB contest and we operated in multi op 2 radios category. We used the call sign KJ5IP. Anyone remember who that is or was? I think about 20 people showed up to operate and more came just to see what kind of madness that was going on. It was a real hoot. We managed 1142 Q’s but the real fun was in the

doing! This was the start of a major NARS activity. More about all of that and more interesting things if found in the old NARS Newsletters in future articles.

Our January Banquet will be dedicated to celebrating the 20 years of NARS. If you have any interesting stories or information concerning the past 20 years please forward them on to me at w5sb@arrl.net. Please make early plans to attend the banquet. We would like to see many of the past members and board members there.

Correction: In last months article I erroneously typed Dick Rooney’s call sign as W5VJN. We all know Dick as W5VHN

Stay tuned . . . Bill W5SB

QUA* Sarge K9DOG?

I'd like to introduce the newest member of NARS. I have been interviewing him for the last few weeks and, although he is still young, (he'll be three November 27), he is quite wise. Franny "dogfathered" her call sign, K9DOG to Sarge. He is my new Guide and contrary to some opinions, a girl can have a dog named Sarge.



Here is the beginning of Sarge's life . . .

He was born in the whelping room at the Guidedog kennel at San Rafael, California to – (you Aggies in the group will not believe this!) – his sire was Tex and his Dam was Pride. I'd say he had a good start in life! His first eight weeks were with his mom and Brothers; Smitty and Sheridan and sister, Suki. All are active guides, which is amazing for a complete litter.

Then he went to live with Alisha Lorson in Lake Hughes, California. He was her second puppy to raise and both have become Guides – very impressive! She is currently training her third and her club leader says this one will probably also make the cut as a Guide.

Alishia's father is a missionary and they manage a Christian camp so Sarge has been quiet through many Bible studies and prayer meetings – maybe he won't snore in church like Franny!

She sent notes about him for me to

keep. He loves hiking and playing with toys. She says he "puts them away", but I need to call her and find out the secret word! He was always excited to put on his "green jacket" the puppy-in-training uniform. His favorite game is "hide and seek". I have figured that one out. I give him the sit/stay command and "hide", usually around a few corners and tell him to "come". He comes bounding around, and then stops dead still to listen, then hears me and runs in to touch me with his nose! It teaches him the commands; sit, stay, come and rewards him with praise at the end.

Sarge was placed for four months with another woman, who lives in a large city. She needed a very fast dog to catch buses, trains and metro. He is fast, but not at the speed of some of the stories I have heard. It was a hard decision for her, but I'm really glad she made it, because we are a perfect fit.

Here is my part of the story . . .

On June 11 I flew to San Francisco and was picked up by one of my instructors. I had to wait until the next day, Sunday afternoon to be introduced to the Guide they had chosen for me. As many of you heard through e-mail, I met an adorable little yellow lab named Neve. She came running into the room to meet me, jumped into my lap, licked my face and then threw herself on the floor to show me her tummy! All this in about three seconds. Her weight was 53 pounds and her height was 20 inches tall. In a few hours she was nick-named "Toasted Marshmallow" because she was almost snow white except for the tips of her ears and her tail. She was also known as Nevaliscious.

But alas, after working very hard

together for the next four days and bonding quite nicely the instructors suggested that I try working with another dog because we were having difficulties with street crossings. This doesn't happen very often and almost never in the two week class because of the accelerated conditions. We had had an especially difficult route, redoing several street crossings many times and she knew that we were close to the lounge. We needed to cross, turn immediately right and cross again, then turn left to our stop. She decided to take me diagonally into oncoming traffic. Bob Helton suggested she should be placed in Denver because they have diagonal street crossings! She went back to the kennels and will go back into the string of dogs for additional training. She will probably be a good fit for someone who has a little sight.

Our start together . . .

I asked if I could meet Sarge before I tried to sleep for the night. He was already in the kennel, sleeping very soundly and regally walked up next to me, sat down and leaned against my leg. He sat there quietly as if he was saying "hurry up and decide if you like me; I need to get back to bed!" When I picked up the leash and was walking him back to the kennel I felt something brush up against my elbow. I asked the instructor what it was and she stopped, laughed and said, "His tail, it stands straight up, like an antenna." I figured he would fit into our group!

Sarge is a medium yellow lab, weighs 66 pounds and is 22 1/2 inches at the shoulder. His most striking feature is the "eye-liner" around his eyes, which really makes them stand out.

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QUA Sarge K9DOG? continued from page 6*

I knew within an hour of working with him that it was a perfect fit. I was as relaxed with him as I was with Franny after eight years. His guidework is exceptional. I like the fact that at a curb he stops with the edge at his toes. Neve and Franny both used to stop back three feet and I had to find the edge. With Him, I just put my foot forward and it's there! We worked in San Francisco four times and once I lined up incorrectly on a curb, pointed toward the car waiting at the light. When I gave him the forward command he didn't go. So, I said more forcefully, "Sarge, forward." He leaned his head against me to move my leg the correct direction and then went across the street. He has made these kinds of decisions many times in the last couple of weeks. It is known as "intelligent disobedience".

My friend Rachel took us to the air-conditioned H.E.B. to give Sarge a work-out. He was doing a great job down each aisle, around the corner to the next one. It seemed I was hearing quite a few people, when I heard an announcement. "Please forgive the inconvenience of our store reorganization." Rachel explained that every aisle had at least three people unloading shelves and moving to another aisle. He went around fork-lifts, boxes and shopping carts and I never knew except I could hear more people than I expected at nine in the morning.

He has learned several new things since moving to Texas. Christopher and I taught him to help me count driveways on our street. I tell him left when we get close to one and he puts his front feet on the drive. I give him a kibble called "counter-conditioning". He then tried

turning left when I didn't want him to, to see if he could get one more kibble! But, I'm smarter than that!

He has also learned to wait until I tell him OK before he eats his food. He will come in, sit down by the bowl and wait for me.

My favorite is that he has learned to answer my questions. I ask him if he wants to go outside and he will think and if the answer is yes, he will shake his head. Franny used to do this also and he learned very quickly.

The Monday after we flew back was our Ham and Sheez meeting. I had no idea, but everyone brought presents. Desi called Guidedogs to find out what toys they recommended. He now has a "toy bucket" and sometimes takes all of them out to find the right one! That's when I need the "put them away" command. His favorite gift disappeared within about three minutes. One of the bones was a "ham and cheese" flavor and it was devoured, much to my surprise!

I have included a picture of Sarge on his new "bean bag bed" provided through a Ham and Sheeze gift certificate at Petco. I learned he likes bean bag chairs and took out the pillow filling. Michael laughed hysterically when I put down his new "bean bag bed" and he walked over and lay down on the pillow I removed!

Michael and Sarge tried Frisbee. He has never played with one and is confused about what he needs to do. He runs right over it and then around in circles. We'll keep trying on cooler

days.

We have also been to a birthday party and our annual 4th of July ice cream party. He believes he is a "party hound".

He will be at the next NARS meeting, and can't wait to meet more friends. He asked me to include some "Guidedog etiquette" as a refresher. He knows the rules, but is easily distracted – he's still a puppy, you know.

When he is in harness please don't talk to, touch or give him food or wine (the Ham and Sheez group will understand this).

If we are sitting or obviously not working, you may ask to pet him and I will probably take off his harness.

The harness is the key. He knows he is supposed to concentrate when he is wearing it.

He never eats anything but Eukanuba dog food and if he does he throws-up in the middle of the night, which can bring both Michael and I out of a deep sleep. You know the phrase "sick as a dog".

His theory of life, so far is this – "If you get sent back to the kennel, just keep doing good work and life will get better." Well, Sarge, my life has improved since I picked up your harness handle and felt your tail tickling my elbow.

*Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL
Ham & Sheez Reporter*

* QUA: "Q" signal meaning "Have you news of . . . ?"

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members James Blackburn WB5AW, Donald Speth KH7MV, and David Vier KE5EEX

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Tone: 141.3
70 cm: 444.375 / 449.375 (KA5AKG)
Tone: 103.5

MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership

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

Saturday Breakfast

Joey D'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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