

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

March 2005

March Meeting – Digital Photography

Paul Flagg will discuss: Is it time to go Digital

Paul WA5EE will discuss the pros and cons of going digital. He will address cameras, the digital darkroom, and some of the problems / advantages of transitioning from film to the pixels.

Journey to the Falklands CQ WW 2004 Pictures



Important Dates

Friday, Mar 18, 7:30 PM – General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church – Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

Tuesday, Mar 29, 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.

NOTE: March VE session cancelled.

Saturday, Apr 23, 8:30 AM – VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

Contests

Mar 19–20 BARTG RTTY, Russian DX
Mar 19–21 VA QP
Mar 20–21 YL ISSB QP SSB, Bermuda, AK QP
Mar 21 QRP Homebrew Sprint CW/PSK31
Mar 27–28 CQ WW WPX SSB
Apr 2–3 SP DX, EA RTTY, MO QP, QCWA Spring QP

Wednesday Lunch Bunch

Mar 16 Casa Imperial Mexican
Mar 23 Strack Farms
Mar 30 Pepperchino
Apr 6 Luby's Cafeteria
Apr 13 Jason's Deli

Wednesday Lunch Bunch – West

Mar 16 Luther's BBQ
Mar 23 Skeeter's
Mar 30 Charlie's Hamburgers
Apr 6 Cafe Express
Apr 13 Chili's

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 Joey D's

5918 W FM 1960

Saturdays

7:30 AM

President's Corner

March 2005

Greetings Fellow NARSians,
Great program on VP8 land by Cal White, Paul Frantz and Bill Denton at the February meeting. Everyone enjoyed it. Great job guys and a big THANKS.

Reflecting on the previous year and the banquet, it is but a memory now. It began quietly enough for me and gained steam to the social climax of the year. Now it is gone and we are charging through another year. Now, how can we foster and support Amateur Radio? There are many ways, but here is one.

The introduction of SKN (straight key night for those of us acronym challenged) seems to be a success. All those who have participated have sent positive notes. I look forward to cranking up my courage and finding a night not committed and participating in it myself. In fact, I haven't owned a straight key since I began as a novice in April 1960 when I was first licensed in Temple, TX. My key was one of the cheap Japanese copies of a good J38 and it was mounted to a rather jaggedly broken one inch thick piece of otherwise good looking and polished marble provided to me by my Elmer (didn't know that term then), Jess Coleman SK, W5LM (now a repeater call in Temple). I'm like our own W5PDW during his first QSO; scared to death pounding out the first few rattles from that key and trying to copy the other guy with my nervous hand. But it was a joy and it was EXCITING! Can that excitement be re-lived? Well, since Cal introduced the idea of SKN, I have been slowly gaining momentum and I finally purchased another key (don't know what happened to the original) mounted to a bakelite base. Someday, I will get some wire and a plug and connect it to my radio. Oh my gosh! Then I will have to get on the air; logical next step! Will I be as excited as that night in 1960? Will I stumble over the dits and dahs and copy only half of the otherwise received message? Can this lead to something else and perhaps provide some prospective new Ham the same encouragement and excitement that I found? Yes! Now there is the whole idea! Eh Cal? Yes! Now we are catching on and catching the spirit of Ham radio. This is where it's at folks. The unbelievable possibility of communicating with another person in some other country far distant from Houston or Temple without wires or any visible means. I still find it incredible and that is the thrill of Amateur Radio. Now, limber up the key, light the fuse to spread the joy and get someone else involved in SKN. We never know where the gunpowder will lead and where the next explosion will take place. We have been adding new Hams to the ranks through the VE sessions and I expect they need some encouragement to get on the air. Maybe they are waiting for an experienced Ham to teach them the ropes and help them not look or sound like a "Lid." With the ground rules of SKN (slow code) it is a perfect opportunity to introduce a new Ham to functional Morse code and experience the excitement of Amateur Radio. Let's do it!

73, Lee K5AVY

Public Service Events

Your Radio Skills Are Needed

Events officially sponsored by NARS include Buffalo Bayou Regatta (October), SIRE Ride-A-Thon (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.

MOTORCYCLE HAMS NEEDED

If you are an Amateur Radio Operator, with or without a motorcycle, interested in volunteering for the BP MS-150 on April 16-17, please contact:

Jerry Irwin, WAØGLD

Home: 936-856-5178 Cell: 936-537-7524

email: F16Jock@earthlink.net or visit: <http://www.ms150.org>

VE Session Results

VE Test Session 02/26/2005

The February, 2005 VE Test Session is now history. My thanks go out to Eddy Reynolds-K5WQG, Tom Rum-KD5QO, Paul Frantz-W5PF, Jim Kirk-KJ5X, Bob Walworth-N5ET, Rick Aikman-KZ5E, Walter Holmes-K5WH and Keith Dutson-NM5G. Without the support of volunteers, the session could never happen.

Today's session was a wonderful success as five candidates tested, yielding one new Extra Class and three new Technician Class licensees. One of the candidates also passed his Element 3 and received a CSCE. I'd like to offer my congratulations on a job well done.

I'd like to recognize Robert Parker-KE5CEA-Katy as he enters the ranks of an Extra Class licensee. New Technician Class licensees are Amanda Parker-Katy; Louie Matthews-Tomball and Timothy Sommer-Cypress, welcome to our wonderful hobby.

I have decided to call off the March 26th VE testing session in Tomball. That's Easter weekend and I'm concerned that if I wait any longer some VE's and candidates might be inconvenienced. The Tomball Community Center has already notified me that they will be closed but they were going to make arrangements for someone to be there. I have notified them that we have cancelled the session.

The next session will be April 23rd at our regular time. I'll post a notice the week before.

Thanks again to all those who volunteer their time.

73, Norm Covey/K5OS
NARS VE Session Manager

Ham and “Sheez” News

February Activities

Yet again, we had a very fun and busy month. Several of us, fifteen to be exact, celebrated a slightly early Valentine’s Day by having dinner at Buca di Beppo’s. You’ll see only smiling faces in the pictures from the restaurant. The smiles are due, of course, to the great company and also to the delicious food. Buca di Beppo’s (translated as Joe’s Basement) serves family style southern Italian cuisine.



The portions are definitely sized for families. If you haven’t eaten there before, it’s absolutely worth a visit. Reservations can be made at the kitchen table where you can see the food being prepared and paraded by your table. Reservations can also be made at the Pope’s table, a round table that seats somewhere in the fifteen people range and has a huge lazy Susan in the center. If you can’t make it there before next year, I’ll bet we’ll be celebrating Valentine’s Day at Buca di Beppo’s again. Next time, we’re going to reserve the Pope’s table.



To break tradition, the ladies decided to have a “ladies night out” rather than a February meeting. We met at the

Willowbrook Joe’s Crab Shack for dinner and then headed over to the theatre to watch the movie, *The Wedding Song*. Both parts of the evening were thoroughly enjoyable. Eight of us laughed, caught up, and enjoyed our seafood feasts. We were met by four more ladies at the theatre and just about took over two full rows of seats. The movie was very good and definitely a chick flick. (Guys – If you want to make some true positive points and your significant other has not seen this movie, I recommend that you consider going!) We saw a few previews of upcoming movies that will, most likely, be candidates for another “ladies night out” within the next few months.

Upcoming Activities

Our March outing will be on the weekend of March 19 at the Tomball German Heritage Festival. There will be plenty of food, crafts, and antique shopping. Of course, there will be opportunities for German beer sampling! There will also be live music. A popular band called Alpenfest will be performing. They have called themselves the “busiest German band in Texas” and have performed all over the United States, Germany, and Austria. The festivities will take place near the corner of Main and Cherry streets. More information will be sent shortly regarding where and when the ladies will meet to begin the tour of the festival. If you would like to get some more information about the festival, go to the following website:

<http://www.tomballsistercity.org/heritage-festival.html>

Our March meeting will be held on Monday, March 28, at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church. Jo Nan Carr has graciously offered to share with us pictures and information from a recent trip to China. She and Paul Flagg traveled to China and chronicled their journey in pictures and memories. Please be sure to join us for what is sure

to be a very interesting evening. The program will begin at 7:00. Several of the ladies who work bring their dinners to the church and have an opportunity to catch-up before the meeting begins. For those of you who have not attended a Ham and “Sheez” meeting, I encourage you to join us. I know you will find the group very welcoming and very involved in several areas. We look forward to seeing you.

We will also be taking recommendations for upcoming meeting themes and monthly outings. Be creative! Bring your ideas to the meeting.

Monthly Recipe

Ham and Cheese Stromboli from the Campbell’s Kitchen

Thaw time: 30 min -- Prep time: 15 min -- Bake time: 25 min

Ingredients:
1/2 package Pepperidge Farm Frozen Puff Pastry Sheets (1 sheet)
1 egg
1 tablespoon water
1/2 lb sliced cooked deli ham
1/2 lb sliced cooked deli turkey
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Direction:
1. Thaw pastry sheet at room temperature 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400. Mix egg and water.
2. Unfold pastry on lightly floured surface. Roll into 16 x 12 rectangle. With short side facing you, layer ham and turkey on bottom half of pastry to within 1” of edges. Sprinkle meat with cheese. Starting at short side, roll up like a jelly roll. Place seam-side down on baking sheet. Tuck ends under to seal. Brush with egg mixture.
3. Bake 25 minutes or until golden. Slice and serve warm. Serves 6.

Enjoy!

*Laurie Meier, NIYXU
nlyxu@arrl.net*

QUA* Jim Kirk KJ5X?

We have a few – shall we say – over-achievers in our group. But this is amazing. My latest interviewee was first licensed in 1992 and now has all but 10 (ten) of the DXCC countries confirmed! I was licensed in 2003 and have John, W5PDW and Tom, KD5EIJ confirmed, so there. Jim Kirk, KJ5X, retired and needed something to do with his spare time – he found it! Here's the rest of his story.

Jim was born in Okmulgee, OK. He gave me a history lesson (which I love!) and explained that it is the Nation Council House Museum. It is also one of the certified spots on the Trail of Tears, which is where four Indian nations converged. They were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole. There is a good recap of this story at www.nationaltota.org/the-story. (A good reporter checks and re-checks her facts.)

Jim went to Okmulgee High School, which had the distinction of being started in one of the richest oil towns of the 1920's. They had one of the top ten schools in the country, with an aircraft mechanics class and a chemistry lab that rivaled the one at the university. For his birthday a few years ago his son found postcards of the school in 1920 and 1950 and gave them to Jim.

He then attended Oklahoma A&M, which became Oklahoma State University, receiving a degree in geology. He spent four years in the Naval ROTC, but was not accepted because of having flat feet. He did enlist in the Army as a Second Lieutenant and served at the Presidio in San Francisco, CA (cushy assignment!). From there he was with the Corp of Engineers as a topographical surveyor, at a site in eastern California, on the Nevada line. The only building for miles

was a Texaco station at a crossroad. Well, we know about crossroads in our lives – the person running the station was Judy; they struck up a conversation that has lasted for 47 years this past Valentine's Day. When he left the California site he went to Lafayette, LA and she took the Sunset Limited train to join him. Jim and Judy have two children, David, an A&M graduate and Mary Kay. Between them they have provided four grandchildren.

Their home includes a 16 year old cat named Zoe

In Lafayette Jim interviewed for a job he found out about through his sister who worked for the Vice President of the company. In the interview he mentioned his two uncles, who were in the business. He was hired on the spot because of their integrity.

After eleven years the family moved to Tulsa where Jim accepted a position with Kewanee, the oldest independent oil company in the U.S. They lived there for ten years and then he was transferred to Oklahoma City.

As happens in our current corporate environment, Chevron bought his company and he was transferred to Houston in 1980. He retired in 1990

KJ5X was, as I stated earlier, licensed in 1992 as KB5SGW, but he had an interest in radio as a small boy and bought an SX100 shortwave, studied the Amateur Radio Handbook, but didn't know any Ham's and had no idea how to pursue his interest. After retirement he took a class down on 1960 and met Ken Harlan. He qualified for his Extra license in 1994.

Jim has an HF Kenwood TS950 SDX, a TS50 and a TS450. His antennas are a 15 meter loop in the

pine trees and an 80 meter dipole. He also has a Force 12 beam on Rohn 25 in his attic, which is a duplicate of George's [K5VUU].

But the amazing piece of this story is that he confirmed 278 countries on the wire! He is close to confirming his five-band DXCC.

His favorite contact came one evening shortly after he was licensed. It was the Maldives Islands with 100 watts using CW.

When I asked the question about other hobbies, such as reading, he said he loves science fiction. I couldn't help it, I had to ask the obvious question – what did he think about them using his name in Star Trek. He replied it wasn't that unusual, there were several Jim Kirks in Houston. The "Captain", first used by Uncle Zed, has stuck over the years. He has gotten used to it.

He played football and basketball in High School and now loves golf, but is in need of lessons (his observation, not mine!).

His favorite pastime is archeology and he enjoys hunting fossils on Cypress Creek. He has three arrowheads registered with the state.

My question about how he would sum up his life was quickly answered with "I'm the luckiest guy in the world! I look back on how things happened, meeting Judy, beautiful children and grands, good job, good health – just how Blessed can a person be?" Well, Jim, we should all look at our lives based on our blessings as you do!

*Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL
Ham & Sheez Reporter*

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

DX News

“For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print”

Well gang, February was uneventful at this QTH. No new ones worked and no cards received. If this keeps up I may take up basket weaving until the next cycle starts. OK enough of my sob story; let's see what the other boys accomplished.

Bruce NILN sent in this report early. As I write this he is trekking through the jungles of West Malaysia. Wish he had a radio with him.

This will be the final 160 report from N1LN for this year. This could have been the best month yet – so I will stop on a high note.

As of Jan 29th: 107 worked / 100 confirmed

As of Feb 20th: 114 worked / 102 confirmed

New Band Countries Confirmed:

PZ5RA – Surinam – 160CW

UA0FLZ – Asiatic Russia – 160 CW

New Band Countries Worked:

MD4K – Isle of Man – 160CW

LX7I – Luxembourg – 160 CW

VP2V – British Virgin Isl – 160 CW

PI4D – Netherlands – 160 CW

T98U – Bosnia Herzegovina – 160 CW

UU7J – Ukraine – 160 CW

LY3UM – Lithuania – 160 CW

Cal, W5FW sent in this fine report.

Good month here: 160 and 80 were pretty good. New on 80 PJ7/K3TC (card here after 10 months).

Almost 3000 contacts into LOTW – and 41 hits counted for new band QSOs, one on 80. Getting closer. Worked Somalia on 40, Namibia on 40/80.

K9AY RX loop system has been up for almost two months. It's a winner if you can't put up lots of beverages. Just put up a 2nd TX/RX full wave loop on 80 – am attempting to phase the two – if it works, should do well.

Thanks Cal and BTW just read your

write-up of the Falklands adventure in World Radio magazine. Well done.

John, W5PDW, a born again CW op thanks to Cal wrote this.

Here's the happenings from the piney woods. I will list this month's events in order of the most fun.

Slo Key Nites – That was a blast! Woke up another old timer that hadn't been on CW or 10 meters for a LONG time. K5IHK dusted off his trusty old J-38 for a 23 minute QSO from Stagecoach, Texas. Also in the log, K5ZTY and K5WQG. The 3 contacts lasted exactly one hour.

OK, I know this is a DX column, so worked CT3MD, VP2/DL4WK and VP2 QSO Party NP2I, NP2B (the other John Ellis) and KP2D. Only 17 entries for Feb, 12 were SSB and 5 CW.

My rotor is stopped on 180 degrees that has hampered my operations a bit. Will get that resolved soon as the yard dries.

Al, I just missed you on the 10 meter net. The National NCX-5 sounded great.

Just worked VP8LF in the Falklands on 10 meters and the Battleship North Carolina on 20 meters. Maybe that will help pump up my shabby report!!

John, I wouldn't call it shabby. Thanks.

And next from the Ham that never turns his radio off, *H.O. K5CX*

DX, DX, and more DX. It just seems to be raining out of the air at this QTH. February has been a very good month with 123 Qs in the log!

Here are the stats: 36 Qs on 80-meters, 5 on 40, 31 on 20, 21 on

17, 18 on 15, 10 on 12, and 2 on 10-meters. Not too bad under the current band conditions. Add 69 prefixes. Here are some highlights: 5T0CW Mauritania, 9H1ET Malta, 9Q0AR Zaire, CE0Y/K0HML Easter Island, D2DX Angola, D4B Cape Verde, GW3XHG Wales, GW4RIB Wales, NP2B Virgin Islands, NP2I Virgin Islands, KP2D Virgin Islands, NP2/N2TK Virgin Islands, KP2BH Virgin Islands, KP4ATF Puerto Rico, LY1CX Lithuania, S92RI Sao Tome & Principe, 3Z9IARU Poland, 6O0CW Somalia, TF4M Iceland, TF3XEN Iceland, V5/SP7VC Namibia, V73GE Marshall Islands, VK0MT Macquarie Island, VP8LP Falkland Islands, VP8BKF Falkland Islands, R1ANF South Shetland Island, ZA/Z35M Albania, and ZK3HC Tokelau Island

Good job H.O.

And last but not least *Jim, K5JDB*

I didn't think I had much in the way of DX during February until I started counting. I ended up with 65 DX contacts. None of them were too exotic and I guess that is why it seemed less than stellar. The only two worth mentioning were 9G500, Ghana, and 4T750, Paraguay. All the rest were mostly duplications. I did manage to find some activity on 50 meters the last weekend in February and actually worked South Carolina. Does that count? Anyway, it was the most distant contact yet on 50 meters. Hearing a lot of activity on 160 meters but I still cannot transmit. Hope some of you are. 73 from K5JDB

Thanks Jim, South Carolina on 6 Meters definitely counts.

Well that's it for this month.

73 and Gud DX

Al Fritsche W5ADF

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Get well soon wishes to H. O. Townsend, K5CX.

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY
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Larry McCain KN5Z
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Digital Modes:

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REPEATERS

2M: 146.660 / 146.060 (KA5AKG)
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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