

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

December 2007



December Meeting

Annual Show and Tell

What have you built lately? Special project?

Well, here's one of the many interesting items to see.

Since the December meeting is home brew night, I thought it might be a good time to give our members a chance to do some quick checks of their HT's.

I'm going to bring an *HP (Agilent) 8901A Modulation Analyzer*. With a small antenna mounted on the instrument, it can precisely measure the frequency of your signal. With the help of a tone box, it will check the signal deviation or modulation.

So bring your HT(s) and we'll do a quick check on their transmitter. Nobody likes an over-modulated off-frequency signal!

George KC5RCC

Melvyn Adams KB5GES sk

Long time NARS member, Melvyn Adams KB5GES, died Friday November 30th after a lengthy illness and complications. Melvyn attended one of the NARS Novice Classes and received his General Class license in 1999. For many years, he could be heard on the NARS repeater going to and from work and he was always very pleasant to talk to and always had something nice to say. He had many interesting stories to tell. Several of the NARS members would go to his house over the years and help him with his antennas or other Amateur Radio problems that he might have. The best thing you could say about Melvyn was that he was a very nice person. We will all miss him very much. Please see a reprint from the August 2003 *Nars News* by *Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL Ham & Sheez Reporter* later in this issue.

Bill W5SB

Salvation Army NARS Bell Ringing

Kelvin Scott (KE5NPD)

Northwest Corp Red Kettle Coordinator

When a group of "Hams" are sent out to ring bells for good cause, good results are always expected. However your efforts went beyond that. When both kettles were counted the total was.....\$1132.67. This the most money I can remember ever coming from a local Wal-Mart by a group of volunteers. There will be a lot of children that will have a much better Christmas this year thanks to your efforts.

God Bless you and Merry Christmas to you all.

Important Dates

Friday, Nov 14, 7:30 PM - General Membership meeting, Cypress Creek Christian Community Center - Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

Saturday, Jan 26, 2008 - 8:30 AM - VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

Tuesday, Dec 18, 7:30 PM - Board of Directors meeting, Ponderosa Fire Station, 17061 Rolling Creek drive.

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - North

Sweet Tomatoes Dec 12th
BJ's Restaurant & Brewery Dec 19th
Casa Imperial Mexican Dec 26th
Spring Creek Barbeque Jan 2nd
Pepperchino Jan 9th
Luby's Cafeteria Jan 16th

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - West

Fajita Willies W. Little York Dec 12th
Fajita Willies W. Little York Dec 19th
Fajita Willies W. Little York Dec 26th
Jason's Deli - Katy Fwy Jan 2nd
Skeeters Jan 9th
Cafi Express Jan 16th

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - Medical Center

Marco's Mexican Bar & Grille Dec 12th
Silver Palace Chinese Buffet Dec 19th
Pappas Barbecue Dec 26th
Fred's Italian Corner Jan 2nd
Dimassi's Mediterranean Buffet Jan 9th
Jason's Deli Jan 16th

"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 Denny's

7720 Louetta Road

Saturdays

7:30 AM

President's Corner

December - 2007

Guess what, the banquet is just a few weeks away, Jan 18th. Now from what I've heard there is good food, and some fantastic presentations. Your don't want to miss it. So get you reservations in now.

Now this months meeting is the 2ND Friday December 14th and the subject is Show & Tell Projects, so bring your project to the meeting.

I have heard from George Carlson KC5RCC. He said, "since the December meeting is home brew night, He thought it might be a good time to give our members a chance to do some quick checks of their HT's. He is going to bring an HP (Agilent) 8901A Modulation Analyzer. With a small antenna mounted on the instrument, it can precisely measure the frequency of your signal. With the help of a tone box, it will check the signal deviation or modulation.

So bring your HT(s) and we'll do a quick check of the transmitter. Nobody likes an over-modulated off-frequency signal."

Next year after the Regular meeting we will be conducting brief learning courses to teach our new Hams the old tricks of the trade. Look foreword to more details later in the newsletter

Remember our motto "what can you do for NARS"

Jerry Whiting Kb5VGD

Annual Awards Banquet Scheduled for Jan 18th

Another year has passed and we are fast approaching the NARS Annual Awards Banquet. This event marks the twenty-second year that NARS has been in existence. Clubs come and go with time, but it's satisfying to know that NARS with its 180 plus members is still a healthy and vibrant organization after all these years. It is only fitting that we celebrate, once again, our good fortune by gathering together to enjoy good eats, good conversation with our companions, and to recognize the accomplishments of those who worked so hard to keep NARS what it is today.

In order for us to have a party, we need to know who will be attending, and that's where you come in. As usual, reservations are limited, so you need to get your name on the list as soon as possible. Here are the details:

- When: Friday, January 18, 2008. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.
- Where: Wyndehaven Terrace, Cutten Road, just south of FM 1960.
- Cost: \$20.00 per person.
- Refreshment bar available at additional cost.

One problem we had to address was the way we handled the reservations and payment. Last year we were burdened with a number of reservations that promised to pay at the door but never showed up. Unfortunately, NARS had to pay for those "no shows." This year we must insist that payment accompany your reservations. No money will be collected at the door. Cancellations and refunds will be honored up to seven days prior the banquet. Once we give Wyndehaven Terrace the final count, that's it. You're locked in! Your understanding is appreciated.

Reservations can be made by mailing in your check with the names of those wishing to attend to NARS, P.O. Box 90387, Houston, TX 77090-0387. It may seem early, but this annual event is only about six weeks away.

***Please note the
date change of the
December meeting***

Due to the close proximity of the Christmas holidays, our December meeting has been changed to Friday, the 14th. Please mark your calendar as a reminder.

Friday December 14th

Melvyn Adams KB5GES sk

This is a reprint from the August 2003 *Nars News*.

Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL Ham & Sheez Reporter

Those who know me are aware that I very seldom just sit silent and listen, but my latest interview required very little questioning. I started with, "I hear you have had an interesting life" and started listening. Two hours later my hands were tired from typing, yet I'm sure he has more stories to tell... If you ever get an opportunity to sit and chat for a while with my newest friend, KB5GES, Melvyn Adams, just sit down, relax and let him tell you stories of his life. You won't be disappointed because he has accomplished much and is still going strong.

Born in Houston's 5th Ward in 1923, he is now 80 years young. He first saw an antenna when he was 10 years old. Not a bit shy, he went up and asked what it was. W5FTO (yes, he still remembered!) said, young man, if you have this much interest I need to show you my shack. He did. Melvin was intrigued, but didn't yet have the means to pursue the hobby.

He was awarded a scholarship to Prairie View A&M to play football after high school, but another "world event" interrupted those plans. A lieutenant colonel from the Army came to visit his school and said that he had been given the task of setting up a new battalion at Ft. Sill in Mechanized Field Artillery. Many said it couldn't be done...an all black battalion, but he took the challenge and signed up. There were 1245 young men picked up by a special train that made several stops along the way. Melvin boarded that train on August 18, 1940. They started out as the 349X. After several months of training and exercise they demonstrated their skills before General Marshall.

He was so impressed with their execution that he ordered the flag with

the "X" immediately replaced with Battalion 349. They then trained all future recruits sent to Europe.

Melvyn trained all the radio operations men. His men would string wire to the forward position and call back the coordinates of the "hit" and any wind conditions, changes, etc. to the artillery crew.

When he left the army he quickly went to the Houston Federal building to get his amateur license, but was ignored. They didn't and wouldn't take him seriously. He became frustrated and didn't pursue the hobby again for 40 years.

In the mean time, he was involved in his other hobby, camping. Melvin was also in the first black Boy Scout Troop in the United States. There he developed a lifelong love for camping and nature. His favorite campground is Spring Creek Park.

He was camping one weekend and heard a group of people having a good time. He wandered over and asked what the "Good Sam" flag meant. They explained that there were clubs across the United States who enjoyed camping and organized outings. He got several friends together and formed a group called the Pioneers. Their flag was a covered wagon pulling a camping trailer! The group became so large that it was divided into several smaller groups after a couple of years. The original group recently celebrated their 25th anniversary.

While out camping in 1989 he saw a vehicle with an antenna and again, asked about his radio. He was told that the hobby was very different now than it was 40 years ago.

WA5CBW, who lived in San Antonio got him in touch with the NARS club, where he found the study materials he needed and he was licensed KD5GES in a few months. He also met people, such as Joe KD5KR and John, W5PDW who

have encouraged him and helped with his radios and antennas. He then began promoting the hobby to everyone who would listen.

His shack was started with help from the Bob Welch Foundation, which provided a used TS520 and a G5RV, which he used for many years. He now has a TS930, which is currently giving him some problems. (Maybe there is someone who can give him some help with it...unfortunately he didn't learn to work on the rigs in the service, he just used them and another crew fixed them)

When he returned to Houston after leaving the army, he found a job working on the dining car of the Argonaut train from New Orleans to Los Angeles. The crew would work for five days and be off for five days. Melvyn would wait tables from Houston to the Louisiana border, tend bar to New Orleans and back to the Texas border, then wait tables to the New Mexico border where he would begin tending bar again. The conversation he learned to carry-on was a skill that would introduce him to many people over the following years. Isn't amazing how such an insignificant piece of our lives can lead us to many other opportunities.

In 1951 he married Ocie. They began to work for some very wealthy families, such as the Root's, Link's and Hobby's in the Houston area and was in many instances "running" their homes with great efficiency. Melvin learned to manage people supplies and time very well. But he also learned to listen and learned how to manage his own money and skills. He was in the confidence of knowledgeable people and learned from them.

While tending bar at the Conroe Country Club, he met a pilot who suggested he drive out to the new Clearlake Airport to see if he could find an interesting job. He did and found the owner, who was a former "bush pilot" in Alaska. He gave him a job on the ramp,

Melvyn Adams KB5GES sk - Cont.

which Melvyn soon used as a springboard into Airport Manager for Metro Airlines. Their mission was to fly the "pilots" who were part of this new government project, "NASA" from the commercial airports to the Clearlake airport nearby. It grew very fast and was adding new operations in Beaumont, Victoria, etc. After a few years the job was continuing to grow and taking more of his free time so Melvyn decided to relax and pursue his hobbies.

But during those days he met and was on a first name basis with men such as Armstrong, Neil, and Grisham....

Melvyn is now working at Woodway place II Tower in Houston. He was originally head concierge but because of changes in the building management is now only working two days a week as a night watchman. He is always looking for the next challenge in his life.

One of these challenges is his 14 year-old grandson, Mookie, also known as Robert. He was adopted by Melvyn and Ocie when he was an infant. . Melvyn tells the story of Mookie at four standing at the microphone, which was turned off, saying "KB5GES, over." His plan is to pursue a career in oceanography. When I asked if he had his license, Melvyn sighed and said,

"no, I don't think he will." In spite of his lack of interest in radio he is very proud of Mookie.

Writing this article each month has added an extra "spark" to my enjoyment of amateur radio. Thank you, Bill Denton, for pointing me in Melvyn's direction. I am always looking for new people to talk with about their life experiences. And, especially, thank you Melvyn for sharing yours with me. I can't wait to sit down with a cup of coffee and hear more!

DX NEWS

"For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print"

Mike Bragassa - K5UO
DX News Editor

DX IS! Yes...

DX IS...what you make of it. It can be far away countries, orbiting satellites, moon bouncing or the next county on UHF.

Running thin again this month for member DX reports. ...And the bands haven't been too awful poor, either. The recent CQWW-CW contest had excellent conditions up to and including 15 meters. I thought that 15 meters was in excellent condition. I don't venture too high in the bands unless there is maybe a contest running. It is a great way to fill in those band-counter needs. Work the low bands after dark and then the high bands during the day. "Sleep": What's that! You snooze, you looze..

Where were those contest reports? You know who...

The weekend of December 1-2 was the ARRL 160 meter contest. This contest borders more on a stateside/province contest, than a DX contest, even though DX is welcome and counts for points and multipliers. With wall-to-wall North

American stations, it was a bit difficult to sort out the farther-reaching DX. The Caribbean is no problem, usually. Operators from Texas will usually work 15 to 20+ DX stations. There is probably a lot more DX "in there" but their signals in this region are not too strong, especially compared to the "wall-to-wall" NA stations at 599++. You could have worked all states (WAS) five times over! Hawaii and Alaska? No problem.

I do know that both Paul, W5PF and just recently, Cal, WF5W, both have their new 72 foot crankup towers....and SteppIR antenna's up and running. Several of us were at Cal's when the SteppIR multi-band Yagi was installed..... from a six foot step ladder. Beats anything I have seen. See photo in this newsletter.

Your columnist, K5UO, has his 3 element 40 meter fire-breathing Yagi up and running. Come on 40 meters! Need about 21 more DXCC countries to have them all on 40 meters.

I wish to thank the members who helped me in raising and re-installing my 40 meter Yagi. It's a big 'hummer'!

Especially Tom, W5RUM and Bob, WB5IUU, up the tower. Hopefully I will get back to climbing....soon.

I have also been playing with two wire switchable (or reversible) Beverages using military 2-conductor "comm wire." The jury is still out. Need to see if the reception looking one way is corrupted in any way by the wire looking the other way due to the close proximity.

Some of us have changed over from climbing belts to full-body harnesses. If you saw the demonstration at the Plano Ham Convention, you would know why and agree. You might not get killed using just a climbing belt; but you are going to be laid up for many months when you hit the end of the belt lanyard that is clipped to the tower with something like 2500 lbs. of bone crunching force!

A full-body harness with a "slow-release" (my word) lanyard hooked on your back, yes, will have you back to work on Monday.

DX NEWS

"For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print"

DX Reports:

1.Lee, K5AVY. Lee reports that he caught, rare these days, a 10 meter opening: KH7T (5x9) , a PJ5 and a VP5. he says signals were all across the band.

Messr. Kinarad reports he now has a R8 vertical for 40-6 meters; a 2 meter Ringo and an inverted vee for 75 meters (up 40 feet).

Lee is having the usually common problem in obtaining permission to put a tower up. He feels confident that it will happen. Persevere !!

2.John, W5PDW reports having worked lots of DX these last couple of months: HB9(ed: Probably talking w/ his banker, eh?), JW8 , VP8, 5L2 (special call) Serria Leone, TY2 , LZ , DJ, PJ2, ON8, VP5, HC8, C52, PY , ZF, J3, V73 and NH6. All were mostly on 10 and 15 meters. He was also able snag about a dozen special event stations . Most were Veterans Day stations . Others were W4M, commemorating the marines 232 year old anniversary and "Pappy

Boyington," Several U.S. ships, two stations at a S.A.C. base in Nebraska.

DX Active and/or Planned Activity:

ROTUMA ISLAND, 3D2. Tony, 3D2AG/P expects to be QRV from December 3 to January 20. QSL to home call, FO5RK. Online log checking will be available. Most likely be more active December 15 due to work. His expected times for North America:

1800-2000 UTC 20m longpath
2200-0200 UTC 15m - 10m shortpath
0400-0600 UTC 20m shortpath
0600-1400 UTC 30m / 40m / 80m

THAILAND, HS. Look for HS80A to be QRV on December 1 to celebrate the 80th birthday of Thailand's King, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, HS1A.

QSL via operator's instructions.

BURKINA FASO, XT. Michael, F1IQH will be QRV as XT2WC from Bobo Dioulasso from December 5 through early January 2008. QSL to home call. JERSEY, GJ. Look for Rob/MJ0RLJ (MW0RLJ), Anthony/MJ0JZE

(MW0JZE) and Russell/GJ5XW (G5XW) to be active from Jersey (EU-013) on 7-10 December. Their main plan is to operate SSB (with some QRS CW) on 40, 80 and 160 metres during their nights. All QSLs direct to G5XW.

SAIPAN, KH0. Hiro/JF1OCQ (W1VX and KH0D), Toshi/JE1SYN (N3YS) and Hide/JI1JPJ.

(AB2WE) will be active from Saipan, on 7-10 December. They plan to operate CW, SSB, RTTY and FM on 80-10 meters. QSL via home calls.

AUSTRALIA, VK. For you special event DX-chasers: Special event station VI2BMARC50 (That's a mouth full!) will be active on 18-28 January to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Blue Mountains Amateur Radio Club, VK2HZ (<http://www.bmarc.org/>). QSL via bureau.

New images of Cal's tower follow.



2007 Year in Review

Jerry Whiting - KB5VGD NARS President

The year 2007 is almost over and NARS and its members have accomplished a lot. The club's move to a new location at Cypress Creek Christian Community Center has proven to be beneficial. The new facility has full handicap access and a larger venue is available if a larger attendance requires it.

With the hurricanes of Rita and Katrina plus our involvement with ARES, we have learned how to communicate through "Airmail Winlink 2000." This is a program to access the internet via 2 meter VHF. The local ARES network in Harris County has several new contact

points. Many of our fellow Narsians are involved in this venture.

Our Volunteer Examiner sessions have been a solid factor in the area with the foundation set by previous directors of the VE examinations, such as Walter Hock, Norm Covey and now Eddy Reynolds. This past year we have licensed twelve new Hams and upgraded twenty-five others. Another job well done!

Narsians are doers. That is proven by the involvement in the many public service events in which we participate, including the Houston Marathon, MS 150, Cert Rodeo, Buffalo Regatta, Wings Over Houston and of course, the Sunmart Texas Trail Endurance Run.

One of the most important features of NARS is the one you are currently reading, our newsletter. The newspaper editor and publisher retired after ten years. Paul Frantz and Ken Harlan stood in as interim editors. The present editor and publisher, H.O. Townsend took the job to task. Thanks to him, the newsletter now has a new look and is well received by all. The web site has also been updated by Bill Buoy with a new format that makes it more appealing and is easier to navigate. These two guys deserve a special "well done" for maintaining the vital communication links that keep our members informed.

Remember this year's motto "What can

ARRL Winter Board Meeting to Be Held in Houston

NARS and TDXS to Co-sponsor a Reception for League Officials and Club Members

NARS Board of Directors

NARS and the Texas DX Society (TDXS) will co-sponsor a 2-hour reception for League Officials during

their annual Winter Board meeting in Houston.

The reception is open to club members and will be held at the Marriott Greenspoint, Saturday January 19th from 4-6 p.m..

When you enter the main lobby, follow the signs to the right!

There will be more in next month's newsletter!

See you there!

Welcome, Congratulations, and Condolences

Welcome: Austin Schilling W5GOV, Robert Payne N5KUC, Charles Turpin KE5RBX, and Lisa Stapp KE5RSA.

Condolances: Passing of: Melvin Adams KB5GES sk

NARS Resource List

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H O Townsend K5CX - WAZ
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NETS

10-Meter Ragchew: Mon 8:00 PM,
28.444 MHz Coordinator: Open

2-Meter Wedneaday Night: 8:00 PM,
146.06/66 MHz, Coordinator; Jerry
KB5VGD

WEB SITE

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REPEATERS (KA5AKG)

2-m: 146.06/146.66 MHz Tone: 141.3
70 cm: 444.375/449.375 MHz Tone:103.5

MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership

Third Friday each month at 7:30 PM
Cypress Creek Christian Community
Center, 6823 Cypresswood Drive

Saturday Breakfast

Denny's, 7720 Louetta, 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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