

NARS NEWS



The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

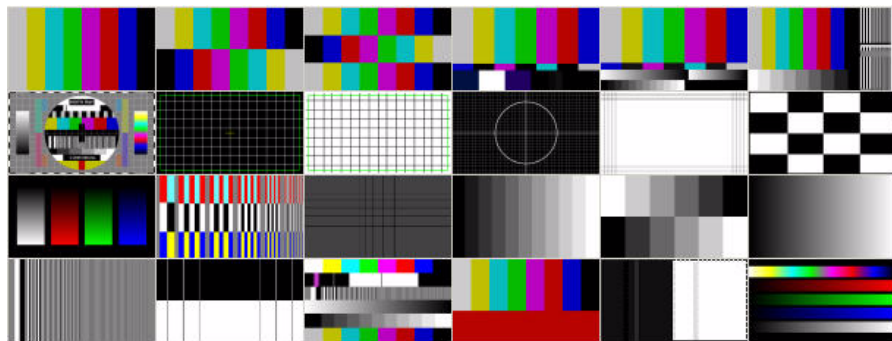
Houston, Texas

November 2007



November Meeting

Digital Television and High Definition TV, HDTV



Several months ago we sent out a survey to find out what the membership would like to see in a program at the monthly club meeting. One of the topics that were recommended was a program on the changes in the new Digital and High Definition television broadcasting system and how it will affect us.

Several years ago, the FCC mandated that all broadcast stations in the US change to a digital broadcast mode in order to improve the quality of broadcast. Until then, the only major change in TV broadcast signals was when color was introduced back in the early 60's. It was thought that digital signals would greatly improve the quality even more. The original plan was to have the VHF stations move to the UHF band and the VHF band would then be available for the FCC to auction off to the various needs of the communication industry, creating billions of dollars of communications real estate. Well, something happened along the way and the plan didn't quite work out the way the government wanted it to. However, the broadcast stations across the country are in the process of the digital conversions and will meet the deadline of February 2009. If you are viewer watching TV on an outside antenna you may be left in the dark if you don't take the appropriate measures.

November Meeting Special Note

Please note, members attending this month's (November) meeting will be required to enter and exit the Annex building by way of the entrance adjacent to the large parking lot only. The doors at the other end of the building will be locked because of the wide assortment of craft items that will be set up throughout the area. A deputy will be on site to provide security. Please refrain from disturbing any of the displays that may be there.

Important Dates

Friday, Nov 16, 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, Nov 27, 7:30 PM - Board of Directors meeting, Ponderosa Fire Station, 17061 Rolling Creek drive.

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - North

Pepperchino's Nov 14th
Luby's Cafeteria Nov 21st
Jason's Deli Nov 28th
Baker Street Pub and Grill Dec 5th
Sweet Tomatoes Dec 12th

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - West

Charlie's Hamburgers Nov 14th
Cafe Express Nov 21st
Goode Co BBQ Nov 28th
Fajita Willies W. Little York Dec 5th
Fajita Willies W. Little York Dec 12th

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - Medical Center

Dimassi's Mediterranean Buffet Nov 14th
Jason's Deli Nov 21st
Buffalo Grille Nov 28th
DJ's Old Timey Hamburgers Dec 5th
Marco's Mexican Bar & Grille Dec 12th

"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

November - 2007

The Holidays are coming and we are looking forward to our annual show & tell projects. Some big, some small, but they are always interesting. Now here is the important information on this event. The 3rd Friday is the beginning of the long Christmas Holiday. So we will have the general meeting the 2ND Friday of the month, the 14th December. Please mark your calendar for this important date.

It is important that if you plan to show to let me know so that we can set the room up with adequate space for viewing.

This upcoming November general meeting will start ½ hour earlier at 7 PM due to the intense content of the subject "HDTV" and it's affect.

Check out the info on our annual Banquet for 2008 it is going to be fantastic

It is still time to help out with the Sunmart 50 mile 50 k run at Huntsville State Park. The more the merrier. To sign up get in touch with Paul Owen N5NXS

Remember our motto " What can you do for NARS". Get involved.

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 nine 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

40-meter Fox Hunt

Bill Stietenroth - K5ZTY
NARS Hound

Once again it is hunting season. Thursday night, November 1st was the beginning of the 2007/08 version of the 40 meter Fox Hunt. It started back in 1993 with a bunch of low power tinkerers hanging around on an email reflector called the QRP-L and talking about building low power radios and accessories. Rarely did any of them hook any of this stuff to an antenna and get on the air. The founder of the QRP-L was Chuck Adams, K5QO at that time and he lived in Dallas, he is now K7QO and lives in Prescott Az. Chuck was trying to encourage these tinkerers to get away from the workbench and get on the air and use the Morse Code that they all professed to know, so he proposed a Fox Hunt. How it would work is, one night a week one of the group, somewhere in the U.S., would get on the air and call CQ and the rest would try to contact him and get in his log. This would run from 02:00z til 04:00z. The required exchange was: RST, State, Name, QRP-L# and Power used.

The long exchange was to be code practice. The idea caught on fast and the pile ups around the "Fox" were huge. Hams who were not familiar with the Fox Hunt many times thought there was a rare station on. The hunt got bigger every year. The Foxes would send their logs to a scorekeeper who would keep a tally of who worked the most number of Foxes in a year and which Foxes made the most contacts. Later, a team competition was formed and all across the country four member teams, (later expanded to five members) tried to out score one another. The total number of contacts for each team was recorded and at the end of the year the team with the most contacts had bragging rights until the next season. In 1998, the QRP Canada group decided to sponsor a team trophy plaque. That first year, a group calling themselves The Houston Hounds

won the plaque. The team included, W5SB, KQ5U, KK5LD and K5ZTY. Dan Clark, KK5LD, has a rabid addiction to the hunt and has several times been the individual high scorer, even taking his home brew portable transceiver and a roll up dipole to family reunions back home and excusing himself from the festivities to "work the fox" on Thursday nights.

Over the years, some of the rules have changed. They dropped the QRP-L number from the exchange, shortened the time frame from two hours to an hour and a half and they added another Fox. Now there are two foxes to work in 2/3 the time.

Last year the team plaque was won by an elite group of Hams who call their team The Houston Foxpelt Roundup Posse consisting of: Henry, W5HNS, Chuck, NO5W, Wayne, W5KDJ, Dan, KK5LD and Bill, K5ZTY.

The team is back this year to defend their world title. There has been one change in membership. Wayne opted out for the good of the team because he has a couple of DXpeditions scheduled during the season that will take him out of contention for a few weeks. He has been replaced by former two time championship team member, Bill Pierrard, K5JHP. Bill used to live in Richardson, TX and was a member of the world championship Northeast Texas Tornados, who won the team championship in the 2004 and 2005 seasons. Bill moved to Houston a couple of years ago and joined NARS a while back. It took some smooth talking and some big time signing bonuses to sign him onto the team but we got him. So, we are looking to successfully defend our title and keep the team trophy plaque right here in Houston. If we don't defend, I'm going to have to pass the hat and see if I can raise enough money to pay postage to send it to the next team winner.

We will have the plaque at the December NARS meeting with all of the team members for photo ops and

autographs so, you don't want to miss that meeting.

You don't have to be on a team to participate. Just remember Thursday nights, 8:00 til 9:30 PM local time between 7030 and 7050 Khz. Tune around until you hear either the Fox calling "CQ Fox" or the pack calling him and throw your call out there and see if you can get into his log. The prize money isn't big but the fun is.

VE Session Results

Eddy Reynolds - K5WQG
NARS VE Session Manager

Here are the Saturday October 27, 2007 VE Test Session Results:

We had a total of 3 candidates.

Please welcome the latest addition to the hobby:

- Russell Ford - KE5RGI - Technician

And congratulations to the upgrades:

- Gary Greer - KE5LYU - upgraded to General
- Ray Clutts - N5VRT - upgraded to Extra

Special thanks to the VEs in attendance for their time and hard work:

- Bob Walworth - N5ET
- Jim Kirk - KJ5X
- Sarah Connell - W0HXO
- H. O. Townsend - K5CX
- Keith Dutson - NM5G

The next session will be held next year on Saturday, January 26, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. at the Tomball Community Center, located at the corner of Market St. & S. Cherry St.

Parking is in the rear (south side) of the building.

The entrance is on the S. Cherry St. side of the building.

DX NEWS

"For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print"

Mike Bragassa - K5UO
DX News Editor

In lieu of the thin submission of DX reports/activity, I will highlight some rather better DX activity coming up in November.

1.KH0 Johnston Atoll. After the hurricane season ends in November, be looking for Susan, W7KFI to be active there as "KH3/". Highlight will be 20 meters, both ssb and cw. (ed: That would be a good one on the WARC and low bands.)

2.V8 Brunei OC-088, using their own V8 calls, is now very active on most all bands...even 80 and 160. This is three Europeans who will be there until November 19. QSL to the their home call sign. See www.v8.pa7fm.nl. I was able to work them on 80 meters recently about 45 minutes or more past my sunrise. They were 579, a terrific signal at that hour.

3.XW3DT Laos by RK3DT has been quite active of recent. Always a good one to work, especially in these time of low sunspot numbers.

4. The "World Radiocommunication Conference 2007" takes place in Geneva until November 16. Listed for quite-active 4U1WRC using the station 4U1ITU.

5.PA The Netherlands. Club station PI4NAF will use the special call sign PA20NARAS in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the "Airforce Radio Amateur Society".

6.Norway rates: Due to the weakening of the US dollar, it will take \$3.00 for an outside of Europe airmail QSL return from Norway. It will continue to take

only one International Reply Coupon (IRC) for this same service. I think IRC's are about \$2.00, now. Quite a savings!

Another reason for LoTW participation!

7.Get all of your antenna's tuned up and ready for this years CQWW-CW test the 24-25 of October. CQWW contest are just that "worldwide" and the best way to pick up some 'new ones' or band counters for your DXCC or CQ awards.

8.YK Syria: YK9SV is quite active now and until November 15 from Arwad Island (a.k.a. Rouad) IOTA # AS-186. This is a group of hams from Greece. QSL SV1JG, bureau or direct.

9.7W5 Algeria. 7W53N has been...somewhat...active in commemoration the 53rd anniversary of the National Algerian Revolution. Always a good catch on the low-bands or the WARC bands.

10. 9M0 Spratly Isls will be activated in November from the Malayasian "sector" by N1UR. This will be a serious effort but with a small crew and "light" equipment. They will focus on the most needed bands in NA and EU.

11. E5/S South Cook Isls K5KG (E51MMM) and KK9K (E51NNN) to be active from Rarotonga Island (OC-013) in the South Cook group November 12 through December 1. Focus will be on 80 and 160 meters!!

That's probably adequate enough upcoming DX activity. The list is almost endless, though. Indicating that even with our poor sun spot numbers and in the clutches of the low of the cycle...there is a lot of DX available!

You just have to listen...a ...lot..and at the right times. With the benefit of the various DX clusters this is made easier, much easier.

Make notes of those DX countries that are scheduled to be active and have those notes in front of you when you are at your radio. Note when "so-and-so" certain country has been active to NA. That is when you need to be looking for him. DX tend to be creatures of habit. They sit down at their radio about the same time every day or so..That is when you will catch him...It might not be convenient for you, but you have to make the allowances, not the DX station.

Many DX stations do make the allowance and come up when other hams have told them when propagation is good between the two countries. Just about every morning (ours) , a Malaysian station comes up on 160 meters to try to work some NA stations. The guys at Diego Garcia, VQ9, do about the same for 80 and 160. There are numerous others who alter their routine to help hams make a contact.

Other times is when a large scale DX operation is active 24/7. In this hemisphere, probably any time. Elsewhere, you will have to "follow the propagation".

Another great source for DX contacts is during this time of year when the big DX contests are running. Just follow the propagation and work them at will. They need your contact!

Maybe with cooler weather coming on there may be more DX activity reports.

Remember....DX IS !

Sunmart 2007

Paul Owen - N5NXS
paul.owen@flash.net

Wanted - NARS members needed to provide radio communication for the SUNMART TEXAS TRAIL ENDURANCE RUNS on Saturday, December 8, 2007. My list of volunteers came up short at the October meeting to help with this event. I still could use a few names for the list since unexpected events have come up in the past. More than once I have worried that I would be more than one operator short. This is a great opportunity for a new HAM with a new HT or mobile radio can get experience doing a public service event and might not feel confident in filling a position alone.

Close to 1000 runners traverse a course through the tall pines of Huntsville State Park. They will be running in two races,

one is 50 kilometers and the other is 50 miles. Yes, I said MILES. This will last from 7am to 7pm. All of the runners, which are ages 16 to 80+, have been the most appreciative for our continued help with this event.

Some will be needed in the morning and the other will be afternoon. You don't have to worry about lunch or refreshments. These will be provided by the race committee. This event has it all. Some of the positions out on the course test even experienced HAMS. You might have to walk in more than a mile with all your equipment. Some use a HT set up to cross band from the mobile radio from the car in the parking lot. There are two positions that you can drive right up to the aid station. I have to set up a net control station in the ranger's lodge. That means a 30 foot mast with

antenna and coax run into the building. Then I set up a dual band radio on a table and connect it to the power supply. All this takes place in about 30 minutes after arriving at the park.

With this event, you can have a dinner, too!!! All the HAM volunteers, and their spouses, have been invited to attend a pre-race banquet at the Sheraton Hotel on JFK Blvd. Friday December 7, 2007 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Dinner line starts at 6pm with a Sunmart program afterwards. Dress is extremely casual. Check the web page link on the w5nc.org for more information. What a deal!!!

So mark your calendars for December 8 and contact me to sign up for a most enjoyable time. If you don't believe me, ask someone who was there last year.

Membership Renewals Back on Track

Joe Sokolowski - KD5KR
kd5kr@arrl.net

An apology is in order to our members, past and present. Seems that during the better part of 2007, Renewal notices were not sent out to remind members that their membership was about to expire. In our organization, renewal dates are determined by the date you initially became a member. It is not unlike subscribing to a magazine, but the difference is that they usually start badgering you to renew a month or two after you initially subscribed. NARS typically, notifies its member a month or so prior his "anniversary date." You used to get two renewal notices and, if

you did not respond, well, we figured you either moved to some remote area of the country or maybe just lost interest in the hobby. You were then dropped from the roster.

Back in January, we re-organized our accounting procedures and in the process neglected to continue sending renewal notices. Human nature being what it is, many members, relying on that service, never renewed their membership and the result was a noticeable drop in membership.

Renewal notices sent via the regular mail costs us about fifty-five cents each to process. That adds up to a big piece of change each year, and to keep the

overhead down, we are now notifying members via e-mail when their renewal date is near. Not everyone has e-mail capability, so, If necessary, I'll send you a notice by regular mail. You can also check the NARS website and look at "Membership." There you will find a list of every active member and his/her anniversary date. You need only to send in a check (\$20 single membership or \$25 family,) write your call sign(s) in the memo line and mail it to NARS, P.O. Box 90387, Houston, TX 77090-0387. I'll take it from there. You will receive from me an updated roster and a notice of acknowledgement. I hope this works for you. If you require special notification, let me know.

Welcome, Congratulations, and Condolences

Welcome: Peter Brown KE5IOV, Chris Brown KE5IOR, Beth Madry KE5IOU, Art Caprio KE5OBY, Chet Farley KG5YF

Condolances: Passing of: Ann Rooney, wife of Dick Rooney W5VHN

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY
281-893-3901, k5zty@juno.com
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Digital Modes:

Marty Fitzgerald W5MF
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VHF/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA
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PC Programming and Operations:

Keith Dutson NM5G 281-351-7683,
keith@dutson.net

Building Electronics & Kits:

Mark Tyler K5GQ
281-587-0256, k5gq@juno.com

Interference (Basic Advice):

Terry Myers KQ5U
281-443-6042,
tmyers1031@sbcglobal.net

Card Checking for Awards:

Bob Walworth N5ET - DXCC
281-292-2221, rwalworth@charter.net

Brian Derx N5BA - WAS, VUCC
281-894-5942

H O Townsend K5CX - WAZ
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NARS Public Information Officer:

Joe Sokolowski, KD5KR
281-353-2196, kd5kr@arrl.net

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Send address, phone, email and other
changes to:

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P. O. Box 90387
Houston, TX 77090-0387

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

URL: <http://www.w5nc.org>
Webmaster: Bill Buoy N5BIA
281-370-3510, n5bia@arrl.net

NARS REFLECTOR

NARS@mailman.qth.net
Coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G
281-351-7683, keith@dutson.net

TEXAS QSO PARTY

Coordinator: Chuck Sanders NO5W
936-273-6930, no5w@consolidated.net

VE SESSION (ARRL) Manager:

Eddy Reynolds K5WQG
reynolds_eddy@yahoo.com

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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281-376-7416 - k5cx@arrl.net

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