

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

January 2012



January Meeting

2012 Awards Banquet

The awards year of 2011 has come to a close. With the severe drought and heat over the summer several of our activities were not as strongly attended as is the norm. However, our NARS members made a good showing and took home some good places.

In addition to the awards that you normally see, we have several door prizes and a great raffle, the Kenwood HT 72 with built in GPS. You will say goodbye to the staff from last year, and greet the new staff for 2012. Come and visit with old friends, and meet some of our new members including the new owner of the Houston Amateur Radio Store, David McCombs, K5FNG.

Our site is the outstanding Countyline BBQ on Cutten Rd. Served family style. We will get started at 1900 (7:00pm), with the NARS Pickers presenting a few entertaining songs and a lot of laughter. We will move along at a good clip with door prizes drawing coming up as we go through the program. We hope to be done by 2100, (9:00pm).

We hope to see all of you there.

Jerry Seay, KE5PUT
Vice President

VE Session Notice

Keith Dutson NM5G - NARS VE Session Manager

The next session will be held Saturday, January 28 at 8:30 a.m. at the Tomball Community Center, located at the corner of Market St. & S. Cherry St. Official address is 221 Market St.

Parking is in the rear (south side) of the building. Use the entrance on the S. Cherry St. (west) side of the building.

Important Dates

Friday, January 20th, 7:30 PM

Monthly Club Meeting,
Cypress Creek Christian Community Cntr,
6823 Cypresswood Drive

Saturday, January 28th, 8:30 AM

VE License Exam Session
Tomball Community Center
S. Cherry & Market streets
(just South of Main)

Tuesday, January 31st, 7:30 PM

Board of Directors meeting
Ponderosa Fire Station
17061 Rolling Creek drive.

Lunch Bunch - North

Jason's Deli - Jan 18th
Baker St. - Jan 25th
Sweet Tomatoes - Feb 1st
BJ's Restaurant & Brewery - Feb 8th
Gianna Italian Kitchen - Feb 15th

Lunch Bunch - West

Please contact Mark Tyler K5GQ for details.

Lunch Bunch - Medical Center

Morningside Thai - Jan 18th
Pronto Cucinino - Jan 25th
Jason's Deli - Feb 1st
Buffalo Grille - Feb 8th
Southwell's Hamburger Grill - Feb 15th

Taildraggers Lunch Bunch

11:00 am, Aviator's Grill, Hooks Airport

Notice: NARS membership dues are \$20 per year, renewable on anniversary.

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

BREAKFAST

at Denny's
7720 Louetta Road
Saturdays
7:30 AM

President's Corner

It is a New Year, and time to pass leadership to our new president-elect, Jerry Seay KE5PUT. I hope each and every one of you offers Jerry and the new Board the same level of support that has been given to me and the outgoing Board.

Thanks to the 2011 Board members:

- Jerry Seay KE5PUT – Vice President
- Martin Rogoff N5GPS – Secretary
- Joe Sokolowski KD5KR – Treasurer
- Tom Atkins KD5EIJ - Director
- Tom Hoherd KK5YU – Director
- Marty Fitzgerald W5MF – Director
- Jerry Whiting KB5VGD – Director

This group of hard-working officers served NARS well this past year. There were many issues to deal with, and all were discussed and handled with the greatest care and thoughtfulness possible, always considering the needs of NARS members. On matters involving a vote, the President presides but does not vote, unless there is a tie. I am happy to report that there was never a need for this tie-breaking vote. In fact, most votes were unanimous.

Last month I welcomed the new Board members. The new Board will consist of three new members and four other existing members who will serve one more year. I am sure they will do a great job in 2012.

Please join me at the Awards Banquet Friday, January 20. All NARS members who have done an exceptional job last year will receive awards and a well deserved round of applause from banquet attendees. The show will begin with a few music selections performed by the NARS Pickers, including yours truly playing the bass guitar. There will be door prizes given out the whole night, including \$50 worth of raffle tickets. The raffle drawing will be held toward the end of the festivities. The raffle prize is a really nice hand-held Kenwood TH-D72A FM dual-bander with built-in GPS, TNC and APRS.

See you at the banquet!
73, Keith Dutson NM5G

2011 Texas QSO Party

Chuck - NO5W, Coordinator

The results for the 2011 TQP have been tabulated and posted on the web site in mid-December. Plaques are on order so all that remains before preparations begin for the 2012 TQP, with the BVARC Hamfest in early March, is to deliver the plaques to the deserving. Here is a brief report on the 2011 TQP.

It was another successful year for TQP and from all reports a good time was had by all even though conditions were not the greatest and submitted logs were down by about 14% from the 321 submitted in 2010. Perhaps that will improve with the improving conditions on the bands, especially 15 and 10 meters.

Thanks to the participation of the following NARS members the club retained its hold on second place in the Texas Club Aggregate competition: K5SEE, W5MF, K5UO, N5BE, K5CX, N5NXS, KD5EIJ, K5AVY, K5TRI, KD2KW, N5BIA, KB5VGD, W5PDW, KE5DFR, KU5B, NO5W, N5TM, K5END, K5GQ, NM5G.

Thanks are also due the following members who supported the party by sponsoring a plaque or in some cases multiple plaques: KB5VGD, N5EN, W5PF, NO5W, KK5LO, K5CX, N5AOK, KA5AKG, K5UO, NM5G, and KD5KR.

A few of those plaques found their home back on the shack walls of NARS members. Congratulations are due N5TM and K5GQ for their first place finish in the Texas Mobile Multi Operator category. Dan and Mark piloted the N5TM/M station through twenty-seven counties sharing the driving and operating duties to rack up a total of 1099 QSOs and 86 multipliers for a total score of 307542 which was well ahead of the second place finisher. The other winner from NARS was another mobile, NO5W/M, which finished in second place in the Texas Mobile Single Operator CW Only category. With NM5G piloting the station through thirty-nine counties and NO5W operating they put 1389 QSOs and 84 multipliers in the log for a total score of 390028. Plaques for N5TM and NO5W will be presented at the upcoming banquet.

One of the primary goals of TQP each year is to put every Texas county on the air during the TQP weekend. We haven't reached that goal in recent years but we have come very close and 2011 was no exception with 250 of the 254 counties being on the air. The four missing counties were Baylor, Hardeman, Lynn, and Zapata. Thanks to the following mobiles from NARS that assisted in this effort: N5TM, KU5B, K5END, and NO5W.

Whether you plan to be mobile or fixed its never too early to start making sure your station is ready for the 2012 TQP and to mark September 29-30 for some on-the-air fun in the Texas QSO Party. Hope to see you there. 73 / Chuck / NO5W

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267 Cypresswood Drive	281-355-7373
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Houston Amateur Radio Supply, Inc.

David McCombs, K5FNG

www.houstonamateurradio.com

E-Mail: houstonamateurradio@prodigy.net

DX News – December 2011

Colin Jenkins - KU5B

December was a pretty active month for both DX'ers, casual operators, and contesters alike. With the return of the sunspots, 10m provided some great openings around the world daily. Contest-wise, December holds contests for the highest and lowest HF amateur bands as the ARRL 160m and ARRL 10m contests kicked into high gear. DX'ers took advantage of these upswing conditions and turned out in droves for both of these, most being able to easily achieve DXCC in one weekend. Among the participants in the December DXing crew were H.O. K5CX, Steve N5EN, Mike K5UO, and yours truly. Here are some of their reports for December:

Steve, N5EN reports that he took part in the ARRL 10m contest and worked 27 CW contacts including places such as Palau (T8), Morocco (CN), Iceland (TF), Italy (I), Turks and Caicos (VP5), Cape Verde (D4), and many other European countries. Steve reports that this brings his DXCC count to 330 confirmed having recently received a Sable Island (CY0) card and working Guinea (3XY). Great work taking advantage of the 10m conditions, Steve!

At the other end of the spectrum, Mike, K5UO, reports working South Korea (HL), Egypt, (SU), and the Maldives (8Q) on 160 for 3 new ones bringing his 160 DXCC total to around 200. Those are all a pretty tough shot from W5 and Mike reports that the South Korea and Egyptian station he worked may well be

the only 160m operators in their respective countries. The 8Q contact came from a group of UA4's DXpeditioning there for the CQWW CW contest in November. Mike also reports that 12m has been active as of late and his DXCC total shot up from 182 to 233 during the openings. Stations worked included the Maldives (8Q), Cambodia (XU), Central African Republic (TL), Viet Nam (XV), St. Helena (ZD7), and a host of other quite rare entities.

Our NARS News editor, H.O. K5CX reports that December was a pretty entertaining month in the K5CX shack. For one thing nothing blew-up, and the old equipment continued to work pretty doggone well. Made 173 DX QSO's along with a couple of hundred in the ARRL 10-meter contest, and almost 100 in the RAC Winter contest. Both contests were fun outings. Within the 173 DX QSO's, there were 74 DXCC entities, and 30 of the 40 CQ Zones worked. In general, the best propagation was, as expected, at the two gray-lines. Unfortunately, the gray-lines seemed to be noticeably short at my QTH. It was good to hear and work India during both gray-line periods long-path! For some reason, it seems like VU is always a hard one from our area. A few highlights include: Cambodia (XU) on 15, Jordan (JY) on 40, Lithuania (LY) on 80, 12, and 10, and Thailand (HS) on 20-meters. H.O. reports working Portugal (CT) and Tuvalu (T2) on the

60m amateur band bringing his DXCC total there to 13. H.O. also reports that LotW has been paying off with the rise in both domestic and international postal rates.

At the KU5B station, December was a fairly busy month with the fall contest season coming to a close. I participated in both the ARRL 160m and ARRL 10m contests from NX5M in Somerville, TX making 1260 contacts in the 160m contest and over 2400 in the 10m contest. All-time new DXCC entities worked in December included Macquarie Island (VK0/m), Sri Lanka (4S), Uzbekistan (UK), and Palestine (E4) bringing my worked DXCC total to 290 entities. I spent the majority of December gathering QSL information for the entities I don't yet have confirmed and sent cards out to 47 entities in order to have my confirmed total match my worked total!

A short word on upcoming DXpeditions:

As I write this a group is activating Malpelo Island (HK0NA) during the month of January. Additionally, Pitcairn Island (VP6T) will be activated during January and early February. These are both all-time new entities for many DX'ers licensed within the last 10 years! Finally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (9Q) will be active between January 9th and May 12th.

Good DX!

February Contest Corner

Tom King - WK5DX

Four state QSO partys make this month a County Hunter's delight.

There are many aspects within Amateur Radio and County Hunting is just one of them. The goal of County Hunting is to make a two way contact with a station in each of the 3077 counties in the United States. The first award everyone works toward is the United States of America - County Award (USA-CA) sponsored by CQ magazine. The official rules are located at the following website:

http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/cq_awards/cq_usa_ca_awards/cq_usa_ca_awards.html

CQ magazine requires conformation of contacts for this award, a QSL card, or a signed Mobile Reply Card (MRC). MRCs are usually used because they can contain up to 15 or more counties on one card confirmed all at the same time. To avoid the mobile operator of having any expense for confirming counties the usual procedure is for the person needing the conformation to send the MRCs along with a SASE for their return.

Set your sights on making a contact with an amateur operator in all 3077 counties in the United States. It is fascinating to follow the mobile operators as they move about the country, you never know which county they will be in next.

The Phone County Hunter Net which may be found on 14.336 or 7.188 operates during the daylight hours every day and sometimes into the evening. Most of the time the pace is fast and furious with mobiles making contacts at the rate of 8 to 10 per minute. You will also notice that we do not use phonetics in the call signs. The reason for this is obvious if you listen to the net for a while. The use of phonetics slows down the cadence and rhythm of the mobile operator. The mobile operators train their ears to hear call signs and cannot take the time to translate what they are not used to hearing. When you first start working the mobiles you will notice that your call sign will be recognized immediately in just a few days.

The CW County Hunter Nets are held on 14.0565, 7.0565 and 10.1225.

This month's contest challenge: See how many counties you can log this month. Bring your confirmed QSLs to the March club meeting.

NARS recommends CQX Logging program for mobile operators and the MARAC Logger program is designed to replace the once very popular Kwiklog series of logging programs. Gene, KD9ZP, took on the project and has completely rewritten the program using Microsoft Visual Basic and MS Access databases. This effort has produced a very stable and accurate logging program for use by MARAC

members to track their county contacts for MARAC awards. All County Hunters should have this program.

County Hunter Supplies <http://www.cquest.com/ch/n4ujk.htm>

Ed Bunch, N4UJK

The New N4UJK USA Counties Map Book can be purchased from Ed at 2848 Adams Road,

St. Augustine, FL 32092-8950.

County Hunter Links:

County Hunter Web - <http://www.cquest.com/ch/>

County Hunters - <http://www.countyhunter.com/>

Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club - <http://marac.org/>

K0BG's site is loaded with information on mobile operation - <http://k0bg.com/>

U.S. Census Bureau County Maps

http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/stco_wall_2003/stco03_wallmap.htm

http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/CP_MapProducts.htm

GPS File Depot - <http://www.gpsfiledepot.com/>

Maps, Tutorials, Tools and Forums for GPS

US States and Counties Boundaries Map for Garmin GPS Units

<http://www.gpsfiledepot.com/maps/view/10/>

QSO Party Calendar

Vermont QSO Party	0000Z, Feb 4 to 2400Z, Feb 5
Minnesota QSO Party	1400Z-2400Z, Feb 4
Delaware QSO Party	1700Z, Feb 4 to 0100Z, Feb 6
New Hampshire QSO Party	1600Z, Feb 11 to 2200Z, Feb 12
North American QSO Party, RTTY	1800Z, Feb 25 to 0600Z, Feb 26

Contest Calendar

10-10 Int. Winter Contest, SSB	0001Z, Feb 4 to 2359Z, Feb 5
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Feb 18 to 2400Z, Feb 19

This month's contest challenge: See how many counties you can work this month.

DIY ...

Tom King - WK5DX

At our family's last Thanksgiving gathering my uncle, K5JTZ - Bruce Oliver, gave me his old Kenwood TS-520.



He told me that the transmitter did not work anymore because the capacitors had finally given out and he couldn't find a source to replace them. I gladly took the 520 and got on the internet and found a source for the caps in Canada from Peter Simpson in Ontario.

The parts arrived via USPS in about 4 weeks along with instruction sheets for both the TS-520 kit and the HV cap kit (\$58.00). Peter supplies the capacitors at the original rating or above and all the capacitors are new modern parts.

Begin by checking the parts against the parts list included in the kit. Peter recommends that you follow the safety instructions when working on your radio.



SAFETY FIRST

Radios operate with voltages that can be lethal if contacted. Before performing any service work, make sure the radio is unplugged and the HV capacitors are discharged with a screwdriver to ground. To double check, measure the positive terminals of the capacitors with a meter. Whenever the radio has been powered up, repeat this procedure before performing any further service work.

You will need the following tools for this project:

- A 25-35w soldering iron with a good pointed tip,
- solder sucker or solder wick,
- dykes,
- and long nose pliers.

Take this project board by board and make sure everything is working before moving to the next board.

Change the capacitors and re-install and test. Then move on to the next board.

First, we remove the top and bottom covers.



You will find several sub-assemblies. Pick one and start your replacement. I found that by placing your finger on the capacitor you are removing on the top of the board and then placing the finger of your other hand on the bottom of the board helped me find the right pads to de-solder.

Once you have completed replacing all the caps in the kits take the radio down to your favorite ham service center for realignment and checkout.

Welcome, Congratulations, and Condolences

NARS Resource List

General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY
281-893-3901, k5zty@juno.com
Allen Majeski WA5REJ
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Deral Kent K5WNO
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VHF/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA
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PC Programming and Operations:

Keith Dutson NM5G 281-351-7683,
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Building Electronics & Kits:

Mark Tyler K5GQ
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Interference (Basic Advice):

Terry Myers KQ5U
281-443-6042,
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Card Checking for Awards:

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

Brian Derx N5BA - WAS, VUCC
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Bob Walworth N5ET - WAZ
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NARS Information

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Send address, phone, email and other
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Houston, TX 77090-0387

NETS

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

2-Mtr Wed. Night: 8:00 PM, 146.06/66
Coordinator; Jerry Whiting KB5VGD
g_whiting@sbcglobal.net

WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.w5nc.net>
Web master: Bill Buoy N5BIA
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NARS REFLECTOR

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

TEXAS QSO PARTY

Coordinator: Chuck Sanders NO5W
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VE SESSION (ARRL) Manager:

Keith Dutson NM5G
keith@dutson.net

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*
section)

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