



# NARS NEWS

February 2014

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society  
an ARRL Special Services Club #2120

## Important Dates

***Trash the slingshot!  
No tree too high for  
this launcher....***

Monthly club meeting:  
Third Friday of each month, 7:30 pm.  
Cypress Creek Christian Community Ctr.  
6823 Cypresswood Drive

Saturday, February 22, 2014 8:30 am.  
VE License Exam Session  
Tomball Community Center  
S. Cherry & Market Streets  
(just south of Main)

Tuesday, February 25, 7:30 pm.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Ponderosa Fire Station  
17061 Rolling Creek Drive

### Lunch Break—North

Baker Street, Feb 5  
Sweet Tomatoes, Feb 12  
B.J.'s Restaurant & Brewery, Feb 19  
Gianna Italian Kitchen, Feb 26  
Spring Creek Barbeque, March 5  
Pei Wei Asian Diner, March 12

### Lunch Break—Medical Center

Silver Palace Chinese Buffet, Feb 5  
Pappas Barbecue, Feb 12  
Morningside Thai, Feb 19  
Pronto Cucinino, Feb 26  
Jason's Deli, Mar 5  
Buffalo Grille, Mar 12

Tail Dragger's Lunch Bunch—11 am.  
Aviator's Grill, Hooks Airdrome

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

Deadline for articles to appear in the following newsletter are the last day of each month.

Need to run a long wire atop that 100 foot pine tree in your back yard using a sling shot? Good luck, Dude. There has to be a better way without putting someone's eye out in the process. Let Rob Nixon KD5BXZ and Terry Myers KQ5U show you how during their inspiring and innovative method of getting the job done right. They will have a couple of different designs to show and both will have on display some of the individual parts used in building their unique launchers. One launches a tennis ball and the other a PVC capsule. Each can be weighted with whatever you choose; sand, BB's, lead fishing weights, maybe even a cooperative squirrel. (Uh, if you're from PETA, just kidding about the squirrel idea.) Make this program a must see. No educational credits given, but lots of entertainment value, for sure!

Friday, February 21st. Monthly Club meeting 7:30 p.m.

## ***April meeting to be changed to the 25th.***

Okay, it may be a might early to make this announcement, but many of us Narsians are creatures of habit and need to be reminded a few times of anything that alters their mental schedule. The April meeting has been rescheduled for Friday, April 25th. Due to a conflict with the Easter week activities at the Cypress Creek Christian Community Center. Therefore, for **April only**, our general meeting will be held on the fourth Friday.

Periodic reminders will be forthcoming via the newsletter and a variety of other news venues just in case some of our ardent followers need additional stimulus to fire those neurons in the memory sector....

***Breakfast  
at Denny's  
7720 Louetta Road  
Saturdays 7 am.***

## President's corner

Having had our first board meeting of year I am encouraged by the wealth of experience and enthusiasm present. One of the topics at the board meeting was of course Field Day... hence the brief field day poll. I must admit I have missed the mark. I was reminded that field day is a demonstration of the knowledge and skills we have learned during the previous year. We should have begun preparations shortly after last year's field day...as individuals each of us should have assessed our contributions to the effort and set goals on improving our skills and performance.

Developing those skills can only be accomplished by practice and participation. Two avenues to pursue are contesting and emergency communications training. I have made a commitment to myself to take advantage of the opportunities that exist and would encourage fellow NARS members to do the same.

I have dusted off the Morse Code CD's and have started listening to "e", "t" and "a" again...I will be ready for next year's field day! For those who have already put in the time and practice to develop their skills I hope that you will take advantage of the field day opportunity to help NARS regain its place in the spotlight. Of course, we are also planning some fun things to do for the rest of us.

73's to all.  
Ron Horton KF5LFL

### ***Technician class scheduled for March 1 & 2***

A two day class has been scheduled in Northwest Harris County at Tomball Fire Station #1. The dates are March 1 & 2 (Sat and Sun.) The class is free but students will need the ARRL license manual. Eight manuals are available at the discount price of \$25. There will also be an exam given by ARRL Volunteer Examiners at a fee of \$15.

See all details, including a map to the TFD Station on my web site:  
<http://www.dutson.net/Ham/HamClass/HC2014.html>

Exit 68, I-45 North 800-471-7373  
267 Cypresswood Drive 281-355-7373  
Spring, TX 77388 Fax: 281-355-8007

**Houston Amateur Radio Supply,  
Inc.**

**David McCombs NA5CW, President**

[www.houstonamateurradiosupply.com](http://www.houstonamateurradiosupply.com)

## Reflections on Redd Radio

The LABRATS Radio club at Redd School is starting its tenth year of operations! I had to do the math and still couldn't believe it's been so long. As many of you know, the idea for the Ham Radio club started as my special project instigated by Dr. Pat Reiff (Rice University) as I was working on my Masters degree under her tutelage.

Over the years, the "club" has seen many different changes. We started with one radio donated by Dr. Pat and set up a "station" on a converted computer desk. I had one co-sponsor and 3 students. Our first on-the-air contact was documented in an article printed in QST ("*LABRATS: First Contact.*" Garay, L. *ARRL QST Magazine* (2004) 88(1): 89; 88 (3): 96).

As the years passed we've had many students who came to learn about radio, electronics, or how to talk on the air. Some groups were large; some were small. But regardless of the size, the groups brought with them the interest and enthusiasm that made the learning fun. We also managed to get some students, and adults, licensed along the way. However, the one constant in this ever-changing club was the presence of NARS volunteers. They've been the backbone that supports the LABRATS mission: to introduce young students to a technology rich in history and service. Some have come and stayed for years; others come to help when needed.

Recently one of our past mentors, Cal White WF5W, was thrown a bad curve in the game of life. When I learned of this, I sent him a card and in it reminded him of the fun we had as he tried to teach me Morse code. I said fun, he might say differently! But he sat long hours with students, my co-sponsor Tanya and me, patiently trying to impress upon us the difference between "dit" and "da". It was one of the hardest things I ever tackled! But he never gave up, and neither did we. And 4 of us passed the test! It's one of those life lessons that leave a mark. TNX Cal!

I'll end by thanking **all of you** at NARS who have made a difference to our club by teaching us about your passion – radio!

Lollie Garay  
KD5WZM



Jerry Whiting KB5VGD & John Ellis W5PDW at the key

## ***Awards Banquet 2014 recap.***

The 29th NARS Awards Banquet was held on Friday, January 17th. At the Westador Club House with 44 guests attending. While this year's attendance was smaller than many of our past banquets, you'd never know it due to the festive mood shown by all. Although we were unable to have an open bar serving adult beverages, it didn't stop the guests at table #4. Danny and Christy Richards and friends managed to come up with a few bottles of choice vintage grapes and proceeded to enjoy an evening of "elegance and old world formality" throughout the evening. ( Civility is such a rare commodity these days.)

A variety of door prizes was awarded to those with the correct raffle ticket. Bill Buoy N5BIA, our Webmaster par excellence, managed to win the grand prize, a hand held transceiver donated by George Edwards (known to his friends as K5VUU.) Dinner was catered by Lenny's Subs of Houston and consisted of lasagna and chicken fettuccine, tossed salad, and Italian crusted bread .

Award certificates were presented to the outgoing 2013 board members and the newly elected Board of Directors were officially announced for the year 2014. H.O. Townsend K5CX was awarded the NARS Outstanding Service Award for his dedicated work as editor of the NARS News over the past few years. It all ended promptly at 9 p.m. and guests departed in an orderly manner, as all Narsians are prone to do.... So much for the 29th!

## ***Field Day, June 28, & 29!***

Yeah, we know that's five months away, but like Christmas, it'll be on us before you know it. Make a commitment this year to be a participant. We will be needing volunteers for a variety of tasks; help in setting up and tearing down antennas, towers, equipment, and of course, operators to turn all those toys into contacts. All your hard work can turn into fun too and the satisfaction that you were part of an important exercise that can prepare you for the next emergency.

Mark the dates on your calendar and tell our Field Day coordinator, Tom King WK5DX, you're ready to join the team. An email to Tom is a good place to start: [wk5dx@arrl.net](mailto:wk5dx@arrl.net)

Uh, just in case it slips your mind, you'll be hearing from us again to help point you in the right direction...

## **Buffalo Bayou Regatta - March 15th**

Volunteers needed for the Buffalo Bayou Regatta event on Saturday, March 15. Email Keith Dutson NM5G at : [keith1@dutson.net](mailto:keith1@dutson.net) and be part of a fun filled morning!



Board of Directors for 2014

Left to right: Ron Horton KF5LFL President, Al Manard N5VQO, Deral Kent K5WNO, Joe Sokolowski KD5KR, Martin Rogoff N5GPS Secretary, Brad Nelson WD5GNI Vice President, and Sheree Horton KF5LMJ Treasurer.

## Should I Store My Batteries in the Fridge?

Some people swear by storing their batteries in the refrigerator to extend the lifespan of the battery and, apologies for the obvious food-storage joke, keep them fresh. Does it actually help? Is there any legitimate reason for putting your batteries in cold storage?

The five second summary on the subject is that some batteries, in some situations, actually do benefit from refrigeration, but practically speaking, however, most of the time nobody should be putting their batteries in the fridge. Let's dig into the subject a little to see when it would be appropriate.

First, let's look at *why* people are even putting their batteries in the refrigerator. The underlying principle (which is actually scientifically sound) is that the colder temperature slows the rate of energy discharge. Every battery has a rate of self-discharge, the rate at which it loses a percent of its stored energy while just sitting there doing nothing (e.g. in the package, tossed in the junk drawer, etc.)

This self-discharge occurs because of what are known as "side reactions", chemical reactions that occur within the battery even when there is no load applied to it. There is no way to avoid self-discharge, but improvements in battery design and manufacturing have significantly reduced how much energy is lost during storage. Here's how much common battery types typically discharge per month at room temperature (around 65F-80F).

**Alkaline Batteries:** These are your most common disposable batteries: the kind you buy, use until they're discharged, and then dispose of them. They're quite shelf-stable and typically lose 1% or less of their charge per month.

**Lithium-ion Batteries:** Found in laptops, high-end portable power tools, and mobile electronics, lithium-ion batteries have a discharge rate of around 5% per month.

**Nickel-Cadmium (NiCa) Batteries:** Although not widely used today, nickel-cadmium batteries were the first widely adopted rechargeable battery. You can still find them on some portable power tools and in other applications, but few consumers are buying them today for light home rechargeable use. The discharge rate on nickel-cadmium batteries is typically around 10% per month. Looking at the discharge rates, it makes sense that in some applications some people would want to put batteries in the fridge.

**Nickel Metal Hydride (NiHM) Batteries:** Nickel metal hydride batteries largely replaced NiCa batteries for consumer use (especially in the small battery market). Early NiHM batteries had a rather high rate of discharge and could lose up to 30% of their charge per month. Low self-discharge (LSD) NiHM batteries were introduced in 2005 and have a discharge rate around 1.25% per month, which is on par with the low discharge rate of disposable alkaline batteries.

Looking at the discharge rates, it makes sense that in some applications some people would want to put batteries in the fridge. If you were a photographer that needed to store a bunch of early generation NiHM batteries for your flashes, for example, it might have made sense to charge them all at once, put them in the fridge, and then throw them in your gear bag the morning of a big event.

Practically speaking, however, there's next to no reason to put your batteries in the fridge. Whatever gains you might get in shelf-life using the technique would be offset by potential problems. Micro condensation on and inside the battery can damage it and cause corrosion. Extremely low temperatures (such as a very chilly portion of the fridge or placing them in a freezer as some people erroneously advise) can further damage the batteries. Even if you don't outright damage the battery, you have to wait for the battery to warm up to use it and keep it from gathering condensation if the room is humid.

In essence, you're risking ruining your batteries to squeeze a few months of storage out of them and, further, the batteries that benefit most from cold storage are rechargeable and could have just been recharged prior to your intended use. To seal our stance on leaving your batteries at room temperature, the manufacturers themselves officially recommend against it.

*Jean Fitzpatrick—HTG*

### Saturday, January 25 VE Test Session Results at Tomball Community Center

We had 7 candidates taking 13 tests.

Element 2 tests given: 8; passed 4

Element 3 tests given: 4; passed 1

Element 4 tests given: 1; passed 1

Congratulations to:

Mark Hammons - new Technician

Kevin Falkner - new Technician

James Polk - new Technician

George Avera - new Extra

Thanks to the VE's in attendance:

Skip Ferguson K5LLR

Sheree Horton KF5LMJ

Ron Horton KF5LFL

Martin Rogoff N5GPS

Sarah Connell W0AOV

Stephen Protz KA5AUD

The next session will be held Saturday, February 22 at 8:30AM at the Tomball Community Center, located at the corner of Market and South Cherry Streets. Official address is 221 Market Street. Let me know if you would like to serve at this session. Parking is in the rear of the building. Use the entrance on the east side bordered by Cherry Street.

Anyone who wants to observe and/or participate in a session is always welcome. Just let me know if you want to learn more about becoming a volunteer examiner.

73, Keith Dutson NM5G

# Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

New member, Ben Gillis K5TBN

## NARS Resource list

### General help:

Allen Majeski WA5REJ  
281 353-8652 wa5rej.tx@netzero.net

Deral Kent K5WNO  
281 548-7476 k5wno@juno.com

### Digital modes:

Marty Fitzgerald W5MF  
281 251-4301 fitz6@swball.net

### VHF/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA  
281 251-4301

### PC Programming & Ops:

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

### Building Electronics & kits:

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

### Interface (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

Bob Walworth N5ET—WAZ  
281 292-2221 rwalworth@charter.net

### NARS Public Info. Officer

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

## NARS Information

### President & Board Chairman

Ron Horton KF5LFL  
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### Administrative & General Info.

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281 353-2196  
kd5kr@arrl.net

Send changes in address, phone, or email to:

NARS  
P.O. Box 90387  
Houston, TX 77290-0387

### Nets

2 meter Wed. 8 pm. 146.06/66 Tone 141.3  
Coordinator: Jerry Whiting KB5VGD  
g\_whiting@sbcglobal.net

### Web site

URL: <http://www.w5nc.net>  
Web Master: Bill Buoy N5BA  
281 370-3510 n5bia@arrl.net

### NARS Reflector

NARS@mailman.qth.net  
Coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G  
281 351-7683 keith1@dutson.net

### Texas QSO Party

Co-coordinator: Chuck Sanders NO5W  
832 657-4832  
no5w.chuck@gmail.com

Co-coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G

281 351-7683  
keith1@dutson.net

### VE Session (ARRL) Manager

Keith Dutson NM5G  
keith1@dutson.net

### Meetings

Monthly General Membership 3rd. Friday  
each month (except January) at 7:30 pm.  
Cypress Creek Christian Community Ctr.  
6823 Cypresswood Drive

### Saturday Breakfast

Denny's 7720 Louetta Rd. 7 am.

### Wednesday Lunch—11:30 am.

Various places. Info on front page.

**NARS News** is published monthly by the Northwest Amateur Radio Society. Send all articles and materials for the newsletter to:  
Editor, Joe Sokolowski KD5KR, 281 353-2196 kd5kr@arrl.net Deadline for articles to appear in the next newsletter is the last day of  
each month.

Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a Special Services Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League, ARRL Club No. 2120.