



October 2015

Important Dates

Monthly club meeting:

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

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, October 27, 7:30 pm.
Ponderosa Fire Station
17061 Rolling Creek Drive

VE License Exam:

Saturday, October 24, at 10:15 am.
Lone Star College Tomball Library
located at the south entrance to the
College. Official address is:
30555 St. Hwy 249.

Lunch Break—North

Oct 7, Jason's Deli
Oct 14, Baker Street Pub
Oct 21, Sweet Tomatoes
Oct 28, BJ's Brewery
Nov 4, Gianna's
Nov 11, Spring Creek BBQ

Lunch Break—Medical Center

Oct 7, Southwell's Burger Grille
Oct 14, Marco's Mexican Bar & Grille
Oct 21, Silver Palace Chinese Buffet
Oct 28, Pappa's BBQ
Nov 4, Morningside Thai
Nov 11, Pronto Cucinio

Tail Dragger's Lunch Bunch -

Mondays, 11 am.
Aviator's Grill, Hooks Aerodrome

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

Breakfast

Saturday 7 a.m.

**Search continues for a permanent
Saturday morning breakfast site.
Please monitor the NARS reflector
for further info.**

NARS NEWS

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

Double feature For October!

**Texas QSO Party 2015:
"Hitting the road
with Keith Dutson NM5G &
Brad Nelson WD5GNI"**

(A Keith Dutson presentation)

**Al Manard N6VQO
Outlines the new
MARS collaboration with
ARES/RACES in a
Coronal Mass Ejection
Disaster Exercise**

Morse Code class in full swing!

Alright, you voice turkeys, CW isn't dead by a long shot. You can still get in on the action. You've had the fundamentals, but over the years, your code efficiency has tanked. But all is not lost. A class on Morse Code is in continual operation every Tuesday and Saturday. Give those dits & dots renewed meaning. Get off your "Como say Howdy" and join the excitement!

Details on page 5

Saturday, September 19 VE Special Test Session Results at Step-By-Step Christian School for the General Class

We had 10 candidates taking 15 tests.

Element 2 tests given: 0; passed 0
Element 3 tests given: 12; passed 6
Element 4 tests given: 3; passed 0

Congratulations to:

John Thibert KF5YHO - upgrade to General
Kenneth Peabody KF5PJA - upgrade to General
Gary Iles K5IGI - upgrade to General
Richard Nelson KF5WRD - upgrade to General
Lubo Jakab KG5DJS - upgrade to General
John Bradley KG5FAR - upgrade to General

Thanks to the VE's in attendance:

Jimmy Kirk KJ5X
Ronald Horton KF5LFL
Robert Ferguson K5LLR
Sheree Horton KF5LMJ
Marty Fitzgerald W5MF

The next monthly session will be held Saturday, October 24 at 10:15AM at Lone Star College Tomball Library, located at the southern entrance to the College. Official address is 30555 State Highway 249. Let me know if you would like to serve at this session. Parking is in the lot to the right of the entrance.

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
NARS VE Session Manager



**4721 Watonga Blvd.
Houston, TX 77092
www.ofarc.org**

*V.E. Exams every 4th Saturday
of the month at 9:30 a.m.
Contact: John Westerlage
N5DWI@oafrc.org for further
info.*

President's corner

The NARS repeater which normally operates on 146.660 MHz with a PL tone of 123.0 Hz has suffered from noise interference for an extended period of time. The repeater has been experiencing interference that is apparently digital in nature that causes a background noise that sounds a bit like a 4 engine propeller driven bomber whenever it detects a weak signal on its receive frequency.

Strong local signals in its local area near the Galleria appear to let it operate normally.

Keith Dutson, NM5G, has been instrumental in working toward getting a usable repeater back on the air and has been working with an experienced repeater operator to get a repeater into operation for NARS. There has been a partial solution with a backup repeater operating on 146.660 with a PL tone of 100.0 Hz on borrowed tower space North of Magnolia, but the coverage area is weak by the time the repeater signal gets down to the 1960 and I-45 area unless you have a tall receiving antenna and more transmit power than a handheld transceiver can provide.

For many years the NARS repeater had coverage that reached nearly to Galveston and North to Conroe if you were operating mobile. I am looking forward to the time when it will give good coverage again. I used to spend nearly an hour driving to work in the morning and often more than an hour driving home from work 5 days a week. The repeater gave me a chance during that time to have conversations with friends, keep up with amateur topics and other news. Drive time was not the only use for the repeater. Bill Gary, K8CSG (SK), monitored it and frequently chimed in with words of wisdom. Unlike our cell phones of today in contact with only one other specific person, repeaters work more like the "party telephone line" of yesterday where anyone connected could listen or participate.

Thanks to all of our members who have already contributed to the NARS repeater fund. If you have not contributed yet, please consider doing so in any amount you choose. Contributions can be made to the repeater fund by sending a check payable to NARS with the notation "Repeater Fund" placed in the Memo field on the check. Mail the check to **NARS, P.O. Box 90387, Houston, TX 77290-0387**. Keith will continue to keep us informed about repeater progress toward full operation.

*Brad Nelson – WD5GNI
NARS President*

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Dave McCombs, NA5CW
Owner

281-355-7373
contact@harsradio.com

2558 E. FM 1960 Rd.
Houston, TX 77073

Annual K5ZTY Show-n-Tell scheduled for December 18th meeting!

The **K5ZTY Show-n-Tell** night will once again be held at our December meeting. Any projects, kits, or mods you've made to your station over the past year, we'd like to hear about it. Just three months to get your bragging rights in order. Don't wait until the last minute....

CREW BACK HOME ON EARTH

Now here's a real example of two hams being safely grounded: The two radio amateurs and a third crew member from the International Space Station have arrived home on Earth again. European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Andreas Mogensen, KG5GCZ, Denmark's first astronaut, and Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, RN3DT, the Soyuz commander, are back on terra firma along with Aidyn Aimbetov, Kazakhstan's first cosmonaut, as of Saturday, Sept. 12.

Padalka's stay in space this time around was 168 days, bringing his total tenure during five flights to 879 days – a new record, beating the previous record holder, cosmonaut and fellow radio amateur, Sergei Krikalev, U5MIR, by more than two months. Now that their feet are back on the ground, Padalka and Mogensen can look forward to getting on the air again – this time without being IN the air. (NASA, ESA, ARRL)

What's in a word?

Where did the word *radio* get that name?

We use words in our daily conversations with others but seldom think where a particular word or phrase came from. Take the word, *radio* as an example. The English language, as we know it, made use over the centuries of many of our words from other languages

The word is derived from the Latin *radius*, meaning a staff, or the spoke of a wheel, or a ray of light. Radio waves travel like rays of light– going out in all directions like the spokes of a wheel. See? There's a little Latin in all of us!



"I'm here for that 43 year old 2 meter rig of yours. Instead of fear, you should be ashamed!"

The wonders of GFI

If you're living in a house that was built back in the 70's chances there's one or more of these wall gadgets installed. Usually they're placed in washrooms and kitchens, and will afford protection at multiple outlets throughout the building. That outlet is called a **ground-fault circuit interrupter** (GFCI). It's there to protect people from **electrical shock**, so it is completely different from a fuse.

The idea behind a fuse is to protect a house from an electrical fire. If the hot wire were to accidentally touch the neutral wire for some reason (say, because a mouse chews through the insulation, or someone drives a nail through the wire while hanging a picture, or the vacuum cleaner sucks up an outlet cord and cuts it), an incredible amount of current will flow through the circuit and start heating it up like one of the coils in a toaster. The fuse heats up faster than the wire and burns out before the wire can start a fire.

A GFCI is much more subtle. When you look at a normal 120-volt outlet in the United States, there are two vertical slots and then a round hole centered below them. The left slot is slightly larger than the right. The left slot is called "neutral," the right slot is called "hot" and the hole below them is called "ground." If an appliance is working properly, all electricity that the appliance uses will flow from hot to neutral. A GFCI **monitors the amount of current flowing from hot to neutral**. If there is any **imbalance**, it **trips the circuit**. It is able to sense a mismatch as small as 4 or 5 milliamps, and it can react as quickly as one-thirtieth of a second.



This is a GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) safety outlet. This type of outlet constantly monitors electricity flowing in a circuit, to sense any loss of current. ©iStockphoto.com/Don Nichols

So let's say you are outside with your power drill and it is raining. You are standing on the ground, and since the drill is wet there is a path from the hot wire inside the drill through you to ground. If electricity flows from hot to ground through you, it could be fatal. The GFCI can sense the current flowing through you because not all of the current is flowing from hot to neutral as it expects -- some of it is flowing through you to ground. As soon as the GFCI senses that, it trips the circuit and cuts off the electricity. Whoa, Dude! You could have missed the next episode of Dr. Who on the tele....

The button on the GFCI is for testing the circuit. When you press the button it simulates an unbalance in the current and a little light turns on. For you electrically challenged individuals, things stop working. Push the reset button and all is well again! Cool, huh?

Okay, I know that most of you know all that, but there are a few that don't and are reluctant to ask for fear of looking , uh, less than intelligent. Now you know, and that knowledge could get someone to buy a round at the neighborhood tavern. "Hoorah!"

MARS Invites ARES/RACES Participation in Coronal Mass Ejection Disaster Exercise

A disastrous coronal mass ejection (CME) will be the focus of a national Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) communication exercise in early November, and MARS is hoping to collaborate with Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) groups. The MARS exercise will get under way on November 8 and continue into November 10. It will be a quarterly contingency HF exercise in support of the US Department of Defense.

"The exercise scenario will simulate a CME event and focus on actions that radio operators should take prior to and following a CME event," explained Army MARS Program Manager Paul English, WD8DBY. "One thing we want to continue to work on is the interface with the greater Amateur Radio community."

CMEs are huge explosions of gas, plasma, and electromagnetic radiation from the Sun, which are responsible for geomagnetic storms. Solar flares can accompany CMEs, but they are not the same thing. A

CME can take anywhere from 1 day to 3 days to reach Earth. CMEs occur all the time, but most bypass Earth with minor effects. A major CME that hits Earth directly could damage or destroy satellites as well as terrestrial communication and electrical power infrastructure.

English said the November exercise would simulate a radio blackout as well as infrastructure damage. "During the exercise, we will simulate the blackout with a 3 hour pause, and then we will bring stations back on air and begin handling requests for information," he told ARRL.

Training objectives for this exercise will include understanding what a CME is and how much forecast lead time can be expected; the effects associated with a CME, and what precautions radio operators take to protect their equipment prior to a severe CME.

After the simulated CME, operators will assess its effects and begin reporting that information. This will involve "interoperation with Amateur Radio operators and groups to assist in assessment."

Individual radio amateurs as well as ARES and RACES teams are encouraged to participate in this exercise. **Contact** MARS and provide your contact information, if your organization is interested



NARS in rewind... December 2003

The December meeting consisted of the Homebrew Night and a silent auction where Narsians brought their latest project to proudly explain and display to fellow members. In addition, stuff that one just doesn't use anymore but knowing that someone else just gotta have it was auctioned off. NARS turned this into a fund raising event to help bolster the NARS treasury by skimming off a modest 5% of the sale price up to a maximum of \$5 bucks.



Big Foot, KD5KR's legendary power supply made an unexpected showing at the meeting that night, so all could marvel at the fine workmanship and detailing of its inner soul. Although Bigfoot was not part of the auction activity, an obviously deranged individual made an erroneous bid of 78 cents. The bid was quickly withdrawn when the bidder's hand was inadvertently placed across the fully charged 76,000 mfd. filter capacitor. *Bigfoot had no sense of humor....* Ah, those were the days!

THE CODE OF SISTERHOOD

Only one person could possibly be prouder than a 10-year-old ham herself after successfully competing her first QSO in CW. And that, of course, would be the young ham's dad. Faith Hannah Lea, AE4FH, did just that recently from her Florida home, with her father, Jim Lea, WX4TV, alongside her. He recently told Amateur Radio Newline's Cheryl Lasek that it was one of the many proud moments given him by his homeschooled daughter, who earned her Extra class this year. Said her father, "When she decides that she wants to do something, she simply does it." That also includes speaking this past May at the Dayton Hamfest with her brother Zechariah, WX4TVJ.

Faith Hannah is also big fan of CW because, she noted, it is one of the last communications options available when the Internet and the grid have failed. And she credits her dad – her Elmer - with helping her practice, practice, practice – especially, she said, sending "weird messages" back and forth to amuse themselves while she learns.

With any luck, in a few years – actually, QUITE a few years – Faith Hannah may know the Morse Code accomplishment celebrated some months ago by Carol McGee of Reno, Nevada. Shortly before her 95th birthday, the former World War II Navy nurse was honored with a Legacy Award from the Sisterhood of Amateur Radio for her service as a radio operator during the war and beyond. McGee had been licensed in the 1930s, as W8UCY. Tom Loughney, AJ4XM, general manager of the Quarter Century Wireless Association, said his group was also present at the annual dinner, where McGee expressed an interest in perhaps becoming more active again. We eagerly await word of her next QSO in CW.

Morse Code Class

NARS is sponsoring a Morse code class. This is a continuous class and students can “jump in” at any time.

The goal is to get on the air at a speed of 18 or 20 words per minute (WPM). Learning at a slower or faster speed will extend the time to learn. Also, starting at this speed will give you a good base to work almost any CW operator, and you will naturally gain speed while on the air. You can also work at a lower speed if you prefer to work a slower operator, and the time to learn a slower rate will be easy.

There are three important parts to learning to operate using code:

- Learn the code;
- Learn to recognize call signs and the typical QSO format;
- Learn to send using your favorite key.

Code will be learned at a speed of 18 or 20 words per minute (WPM). However, those new to code will average about 5 WPM at first, and eventually be able to copy at 18 or 20. Each class will include code practice, call sign practice and sending practice.

Code practice for beginners starts at 18 or 20 WPM, with a minimum of four characters to learn. This code group will be practiced at 1 character at a time, progressing to 2, 3, and 4 characters at a time. Performance is expected to fall off as you learn to “buffer” more characters. Once you achieve satisfactory performance at 4 character groups, it is time to add four more characters to learn.

Each student will practice sending via their chosen key. Bring a keyer if you have one. There are a few that may be loaned during the class. If you find sending with a key too difficult, you can use a keyboard.

The learning curve of each student will depend on private practice at home. However, I believe all attendees will be operating on the air by the end of about 12 weeks.

Program

We will use CW Teacher, written by Scott Davis N3FJP. Use the link below to download the free program to your laptop. Bring your laptop, key and keyer to each class.

CW Teacher Download link:

<http://www.n3fjp.com/cwteacher.html>

When you run the program for the first time, read the help screen.

When you are done reading, click Settings at the top of the window.

Change Sound Options to MIDI, and click the Test button.

Change Sound Options back to Wave, and click Test again.

Finally, change the text in the F9 text box to your call sign, and click Test again.

You should now hear your call sign at 18 WPM.

Close the Settings screen and select your practice parameters.

Classes

There are two classes each week:

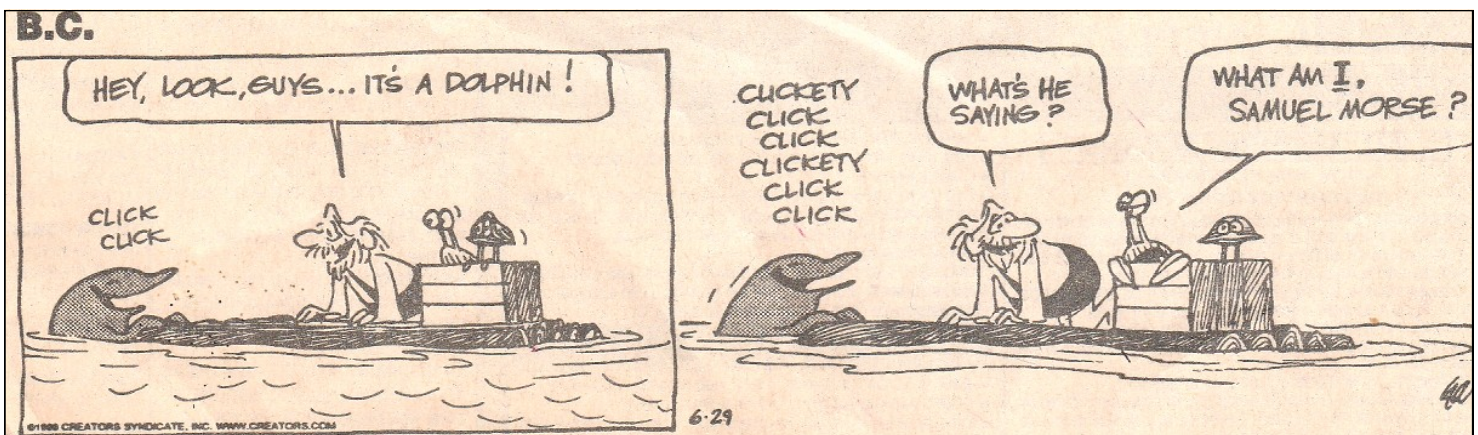
Saturday at 0830-1000

Tuesday at 1800-1900

Location of classes is Charles R Hooks Education Center, 7111 Five Forks, Spring, Texas 77379.

Thanks to Toivo Sari, Cypress Creek Information Technology Manager, for providing the education center for our use.

73, Keith NM5G



Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members,
George Paxson KF5NRO

NARS Resource list

General help:

Allen Majeski WA5REJ
281 528-0673 wa5rej@yahoo.com

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

Al Manard N6VQO
281 292-3113 almanard@gmail.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
281 516-1466 keith1@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

Bob Walworth N5ET—WAZ

281 292-2221 rwalworth@charter.net

NARS Public Info. Officer

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

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kd5kr@arrl.net

Send changes in address, phone, or email to:
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P.O. Box 90387
Houston, TX 77290-0387

Nets

2 meter Wed. 8 pm. 146.660, tone 100
Coordinator: Jerry Whiting KB5VGD
g_whiting@sbcglobal.net

Web site

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

NARS Reflector

NARS@mailman.qth.net
Coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G
281 516-1466 keith1@dutson.net

Texas QSO Party

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

Co-coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G
281 516-1466 keith1@dutson.net

VE Session (ARRL) Manager

Keith Dutson NM5G
281 516-1466 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 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.