



NARS NEWS

August 2017

Important Dates

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

Monthly club meeting:

Third Friday of each month, 7:30 pm.
(except January) Cypress Creek
Christian Community Ctr., Youth Cen-
ter 2nd. Floor, # 203,
6823 Cypresswood Drive

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, Next meeting, August 29,
2017, 7:30 pm at: Ponderosa Fire
Station 17061 Rolling Creek Drive,
Houston

VE License Exam:

Next exam, Saturday, August 26, 2017
Saturday, February 25 at 8:00 AM at
Tomball Regional Hospital, 1st floor
Green conference room.

Lunch Break—North

Aug 16 Baker Street Pub
Aug 23 Sweet Tomatoes
Aug 30 B J's Brewery
Sept 6 Gianna's
Sept 13 Spring Creek BBQ

.Lunch Break—Medical Center

Aug 16 Southwell's Hamburger Grill
Aug 23 Silver Palace Chinese Grill
Aug 30 Pappas BBQ
Sept 6 Morningside Thai
Sept 13 Pronto Cucinino

Tail Dragger's Lunch Bunch -

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

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

August 18th Program: A continuation of Digital Communications

Digital modes for HF

*"Some old, some new, some still being tested,
and a few of the more popular software
applications it takes to make all the magic happen."*

a Walter Holmes K5WH presentation

Technician Class announcement:

A two-day class has been scheduled in Northwest Harris County at Hooks Educational Center in Tomball. The dates are Saturday, August 12 and Saturday, August 19. The week-long separation between the two days is designed to allow students time to review material covered in the first lecture.

The class is free, but students will need the Gordon West Technician manual. Manuals will be ordered and sold for \$23, total price. There will be an exam given by ARRL Volunteer Examiners at the end of the class. ARRL VEC fee is \$15.

See all details on my web site:

<http://www.dutson.net/Ham/HamClass/Index.html>
<http://www.dutson.net/Ham/HamClass/Index.html>

Keith Dutson NM5G

Breakfast at Denny's

Saturdays, 7 a.m.
6504 FM 2920, Spring, TX
Just a few blocks west of
Kuykendahl at the intersection of
TC Jester & FM 2920

Saturday, July 22 VE Test Session Results at Tomball Regional Hospital

We had 7 candidates taking 9 tests.

Element 2 tests given: 6; passed 5

Element 3 tests given: 2; passed 0

Element 4 tests given: 1; passed 1

Congratulations to:

Valerie Diquilio - new Technician

James Adams - new Technician

Samuel Labarbera K5A00 - upgrade to Extra

James Salter - new Technician

Edward Gardner II - new Technician

Kim Graebner - new Technician

Thanks to the VE's in attendance:

Sheree Horton KF5LMJ

Michael Bowen N8ILQ

Martin Rogoff N5GPS

Steve Protz KA5AUD

Larry Hill WA5LSV

Ronald Matusek WA6TQH

William Bierman N5RDO

Ron Horton KF5LFL

The next session will be a special session for a Technician Class, held 1400 Saturday, August 19, at Nona's Italian Grill, 1025 Alma St, Tomball, TX 77375.

The next monthly session will be held 0800 Saturday, August 26, at Tomball Regional Hospital. 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 ARRL VE Liaison

President's Corner

Just a few thoughts....

One of the things that interests me about ham radio is the wide variety of activities it covers, and different modes of operating. I just got back from the Austin Summerfest where I attended sessions about mesh-networking (broadband hamnet); Amstat (balloons and satellite); and Roadrunners Microwave Group (K5RMG) who are interested in mobile operating.

Last month the club meeting briefly covered DMR radio and operating in another country. Before we had a presentation on ARES and EmComm. This month Walter Holmes will discuss digital modes. It's not always the same old thing.

I want to thank everyone for their efforts in making these presentations, and keeping it interesting. But the other aspect of this is no fun doing this alone. Being part of a group and sharing information is important as well. If you're really interested in a topic someone presented, go ahead and drop them an e-mail and get involved. If you have a topic that interests you, and are willing to make a presentation – send me an e-mail so we can schedule it. Or if you know a good presenter, make an introduction.

Just my two cents worth.

Sincerely,

Richard Nelson, KF5WRD



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@ofarc.org for further info.

Who invented the word "electricity?"

Need a little trivia to impress your friends when the conversation starts to tank? This should raise some eyebrows, and if one had a beard, he'd stroke it....

Dr. William Gilbert - who became physician to Queen Elizabeth in 1601. Dr Gilbert gave the name "electric" to static electricity produced by rubbing a piece of amber with a cloth. He derived the name from *electron*, the Greek word for "amber."

Amateur Radio Parity Act is Introduced in US Senate

The Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2017 was introduced in the US Senate on July 12, marking another step forward for this landmark legislation. Senators Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) are the Senate sponsors. The measure will, for the first time, guarantee all radio amateurs living in deed-restricted communities governed by a homeowners' association (HOA) or subject to any private land-use regulations, the right to erect and maintain effective outdoor antennas at their homes. The Senate bill, S. 1534, is identical to H.R. 555, which passed the US House of Representatives in January.

"Amateur Radio continues to be a critical part of our emergency communications operations," Wicker said. "Mississippians learned firsthand after Hurricane Katrina how Amateur Radio operators can provide a resilient, distributed network to first responders and disaster relief organizations when other communications tools fail."

"Amateur Radio operators provide an invaluable service to their communities by assisting local emergency communication efforts when disasters occur and main lines are down," Blumenthal said. "This bipartisan measure ensures that operators have access to the tools they need to support our first responders when lives are at stake."

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai applauded the bill in late January, saying that it would "help Amateur Radio operators, and take several steps to promote public safety."

ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, expressed the League's appreciation to the Senate sponsors. "ARRL is grateful for the support of Senators Wicker and Blumenthal for sponsoring this important piece of legislation, and for advocating this bill for the past 3 years," he said.

"Their continuing support is critical to the success of our efforts." President Roderick also thanked Senator John Thune (R-SD), who chairs the Senate Commerce Committee, for "championing the Parity Act in the Senate since the beginning of our effort."

The bill has enjoyed widespread, bipartisan support. In the 114th Congress, nearly 130 cosponsors signed onto the legislation in the House and the Senate. The legislation, which strikes a carefully crafted balance for all concerned parties, is the result of months of work culminating in the accord reached by ARRL and the Community Associations Institute (CAI). The measure provides for the guarantee of an effective outdoor antenna while protecting the aesthetic concerns of HOAs.

In a statement, ARRL said it looks forward to working with the bipartisan leadership of the Senate and the Commerce Committee to help move the Wicker-Blumenthal legislation through the Senate and to the President's desk.



DX Tips and Tidbits from the Grumpy 'ol Ham

August is upon us. August is hot. Propagation is not. There have been a few chances to work DX, but as I've cautioned, they are few and far between. Furthermore, the outlook for the next few years shows no improvement.

There is excitement this month. August 21st is the date of the next Solar Eclipse. From what I've read, Houston will be at about 75 % coverage, which is not too bad when you consider how often we get to see a solar eclipse. **STANDARD CAUTION: DON'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN!**

There is enough information available to give you guidance on how to safely view this event. Of course, with Houston's variable weather, it will probably be overcast anyway. **STILL, DON'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN!**

Since the sun is a major source of our propagation, this presents a unique opportunity to study propagation effect due to the eclipse. The Solar Eclipse QSO Party has been created to capture propagation data from hams and analyze what affect the eclipse has on the bands. You don't even need to use special glasses to operate your radio and contribute to this experiment. The information for this is: www.hamsci.org/seqp You can probably go to the ARRL website and search for "eclipse" and get additional information.

As for increasing your chances for DX this month, the Worked All Europe CW Contest is this month on the second full weekend (August 12 and 13). Depending on when the newsletter is published, this may not be early enough notice. The Phone contest is in September on the 2nd full weekend (September 9 and 10).

Go forth and make some noise on the air. You may accidentally work something.73 and DX!

Grumpy

NOW THAT'S DX!

Listen up: Can you hear it? Scientists in Puerto Rico can and they think the sounds they've been picking up are signals from a red dwarf star known as Ross 128. Researchers at the Arecibo Observatory first detected these odd communications back in April and May and the news has since been making its way around the internet. Naturally that's led to speculation once again about alien life forms. But Abel Mendez, director of the Planetary Habitability Lab at the University of Puerto Rico notes in his blog that space aliens aren't high on the list of possibilities. He said the source could be a burst from a high-orbit satellite - or emissions like solar flares.

Scientists asked for assistance from two other radiotelescopes: the Allen Telescope Array in California and the Robert C. Byrd Green Bank Telescope in West Virginia. The findings are still pending. Perhaps what's really needed instead - just maybe? - is simply to send a QSL card.

(PHYS.ORG NEWS)

A commentary on DMR

by Brian Derr N5BA

The July NARS Club meeting in July presented a demonstration and discussion on using Digital Mobile Radio (DMR). A very good program, and it sparked a lot of interest in those who were in attendance. Believe me, clubs like ours, and our members especially, need a spark to get them excited about ham radio.

The following comments are from me, N5BA, and not of the club nor the board of directors. I just feel compelled to make a comment or two. DMR was developed for the commercial mobile radio service. Hams have latched on to it and adapted it to ham radio use. From what I've read, there are several aspects of DMR that don't have anything to do with ham activity, because hams were not the original audience. That is neither good nor bad. The fact that hams have found a way to adapt DMR to ham use is a plus. I've looked at several sites on the internet that show how DMR has been incorporated into ham clubs around the country. DMR is growing at that may be a good thing. My initial heartburn comes from the procurement of equipment. The most common way to get on the air is with handtalkies from China. I guess my political bent is that I don't want to send my "capital" to Communist China! I know...probably half of what we buy comes from China, but if can make a choice to not send them my money, so much the better. Yes, there are other models available from other vendors, but their price is easily twice as much.

My primary concern is the mix-master of digital modes. D-Star, Yeasu Fusion, APCO P25, as well as DMR. I'm sure there are others. They all have their sponsors and all have their benefits. At the recent Texas City Hamfest, there was a session on digital voice. The conclusion came down to the major concern of Ham Radio's role in serving our communities in an emergency! The least common denominator, at this time is the tried and true analog FM radio. If Tomball goes to Pearland, or Katy goes to Texas City, or Austin comes to Houston, if there is analog FM, communications can proceed. If analog Austin comes to D-Star Houston, they will have problems. If DMR Spring goes to analog Giddings, no commo.

We all need to ensure that we have working analog FM capability. Myself included. You can, and should, work on whatever digital mode you want to use. But don't do that to the exclusion of the local FM systems. Digital is moving like a freight train and in the not too distant future, (like our home TV sets) we'll be on board. This also begs the desire to get more folks on our local Wednesday night net. It helps to prove our local system and lets us know where the kinks are and what needs to be done to fix it.

Time to get off my soapbox. Again this is my opinion. Agree, disagree, agree to disagree.

SUN CAN'T ECLIPSE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Here comes the sun - or rather, there goes the sun as an eclipse moves in on Aug. 21. So what happens to emergency communications? Jim Damron N8TMW has this report.

JIM: As the saying goes, "when all else fails, ham radio." In this case, with the coming of a total solar eclipse, what's going to fail - in a manner of speaking - is the sun itself, at least for a short while.

Emergency dispatch centers around central Oregon aren't taking any chances. Oregon is expected to have a 70-mile-wide zone of totality when the eclipse happens. According to a report in the Central Oregon Bulletin, a number of emergency services personnel are already making plans that include area amateur radio operators so that emergency calls still get through.

Nathan Garibay, a sergeant with the Deschutes County sheriff's office and emergency services manager for the county has coordinated with Don Shurtleff WB0DVS, information officer for the Deschutes County Amateur Radio Emergency Service and the High Desert Amateur Radio Group. Shurtleff's team will staff a joint-information center throughout the eclipse, joining others from emergency response teams from around the region. If necessary, hams will be sent to locations, such as busy highways, to make sure emergencies are noted and reported.

Meanwhile, to the north in Jefferson County, Mark Carman KI7MRC, the emergency management coordinator there, will staff a communications center where eight hams will be checking in from their designated patrol areas. Their job will be to give real-time traffic reports either by foot patrol, golf cart or any other means that doesn't involve an automobile.

For Amateur Radio Newline, I'm Jim Damron N8TMW.

Non Sequitur by Wiley Miller



"Hey, what does this thingy do?"

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

New members:

Darwin Gilmore Jr. AG5KR, Ann Gilmore, Alan Kinzy KG5TDK
Brian Ladbetter KD5LED & Bill Bierman N5RDO

NARS Resource list

General help:

Allen Majeski WA5REJ
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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

Card checking for awards:

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

Brian Derx N5BA—WAS, VUCC
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Co-coordinator: Keith Dutson NM5G
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VE Session (ARRL) Manager

Keith Dutson NM5G
281 516-1466 kdutson@sbcglobal.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 6504 FM 2920, Spring
(Just a few blocks west of Kuykendahl)

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, jsokolow@sbcglobal.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.