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# NARS NEWS

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**FEBRUARY 2022**

Northwest Amateur Radio Society  
P.O. Box 11483  
Spring, TX 77391  
[w5nc.net](http://w5nc.net)

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**NARS News** is published monthly by the Northwest Amateur Radio Society (NARS). Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a Special Services Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League, ARRL Club No. 2120.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter by publishing an article, adding calendar events, or any other contribution, please send all submissions before the end of the month to the newsletter editor:

Brandon Rogers (K5BLR)  
Newsletter Editor  
[k5blr@arrl.org](mailto:k5blr@arrl.org)

# President's Message

BY RON MATUSEK, WA6TQH

## A NEW YEAR, A NEW BEGINNING!

After several years of planning, spending, searching, disappointments, our Repeater Team has installed a new VHF repeater downtown also linked to our UHF repeater in Klein. The repeater is about seven hundred feet on one of the tallest buildings in Houston and has a coverage unmatched. This repeater is a real testament to a team that worked endlessly giving their time and knowledge to bring this to a reality. Here is the list of members whose efforts made this happen: Marty Fitzgerald -W5MF – Team Lead & Technical support; John Parmalee – K5VGM – Site Survey and technical support; Paul Kent – K15FJS – Instrumental in contract negotiations along with mechanical and technical support; Walter Holmes – K5WH – Technical support and instrumental in how to put this all together; Keith Dutson – NM5G – Technical Support; Ron Matusek – WA6TQH – helped in contract negotiations and signed the contract representing NARS.

Be sure to check in on our weekly Wednesday evening VHF net at 8PM 146.66 PL 100.0. The UHF link is 444.376 PL 100.0 and we still have ECHO link operational at W5NC-R.

I appreciate your commitment to the NARS Club and ongoing financial support. It is the support of the membership that makes it possible for NARS to be



able to provide the services to the Houston community. We will be looking to make further improvements to another repeater in the Galleria location so stay tuned for those announcements. This means we will be encouraging those who are able to donate to our Repeater fund so we can update and maintain the systems.

Given the Current state (RED) of the Harris County Health department, NARS has delayed ALL in-person meetings at Station #3 and will re-evaluate again for our March meeting. We will continue to use ZOOM as a back up to our general meetings.

Do not forget our Awards Banquet has moved to Friday evening February 18th. This was a result of Harris County Health announcements. More information will be available on our web site at [www.w5nc.net](http://www.w5nc.net). We will also announce the "Ham of the Year" at the banquet. See you all there!

Happy New Year!

Ron Matusek  
President NARS

## The ARRL Letter

An excerpt from the weekly ARRL Letter

### Research on Ancient Massive Solar Storms Suggests a Need to Prepare for the Next Ones

Numerous powerful X-class solar flares occurred last fall as Solar Cycle 25 activity picked up. Jon Jones, NOJK, covered the event in his QST column, "The World Above 50 MHz," in the February issue, and he pointed out, "More powerful flares than these have taken place, such as the Carrington Event of 1859, during which aurora was seen in the South Pacific and in Cuba, and it sparked electrical fires."

Similar events took place in the 20th century, but, as Jones notes, scientists are researching spectacular solar storms that took place as early as 7176 BC and in 5259 BC. The huge solar flare some 9,200 years ago has convinced researchers that we are not ready for the next one, and our modern technology would take a major hit.

"Also worrisome is that Earth may have narrowly dodged a 'Carrington-level event' in 2012," Jones said. Daniel Baker of the University of Colorado -- speaking at a NOAA Space Weather Workshop -- said, "If it had hit, we would still be picking up the pieces."

Jones said his reading has led him to conclude that these solar superstorms occur more frequently than

people think. "As more ice cores and tree rings are sampled, scientists are finding there have been more of these [major solar storms]," he said.

In his February column, Jones cited a 2013 Royal Academy of Engineering report that discussed the risks of a Carrington-level event.

"An extreme space weather event, or solar superstorm, is one of a number of potentially high-impact, but low-probability natural hazards," said Paul Cannon, a Royal Academy of Engineering fellow and chair of the study working group that developed the report. "Extreme space weather [can have] impacts on engineered systems and infrastructure."

Cannon said the hazard and risks of extreme space weather on the electricity grid, satellites, and air passenger safety had not previously been critically assessed. His group's report attempts to address that omission.

The Live Science article, "Ancient solar storm smashed Earth at the wrong part of the sun's cycle - and scientists are concerned," cites a study, "Cosmogenic radionuclides reveal an extreme solar particle storm near a solar minimum 9125 years BP." Study co-author Raimund Muscheler, a geology researcher at Lund University in Sweden, said, "These enormous storms are currently not sufficiently included in risk assessments. It is of the utmost importance to analyze what these events could mean for today's technology and how we can protect ourselves."

### Did you know...

that the ARRL sends a weekly letter describing some of the current events, activities, and policies that are taking shape in the Amateur Radio world? The following is an excerpt from these letters in January.

View all the ARRL letters at <http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter>



"A Carrington Event taking place today could destroy orbiting satellites, disrupt GPS, and damage undersea cables and internet infrastructure on the ground," Jones said in his QST column. "An event in 775 AD was believed to have been 100 times stronger than the Carrington Event."

### ARRL Podcasts Schedule

The latest episode of the On the Air podcast (Episode 25) features a conversation with Michael Fluegemann, KE8AQW, about how to get started with CW.



The latest edition of the Eclectic Tech podcast (Episode 52) features a chat with Sal DeFrancesco, K1RGO, about his 630-meter receiving loop antenna design that appears in the February issue of QST. Also,

there is a brief discussion of the new YubiKey Bio password protection device

The On the Air and Eclectic Tech podcasts are sponsored by Icom. Both podcasts are available on

iTunes (iOS) and Stitcher (Android) as well as on Blubrry -- [On the Air](#) | [Eclectic Tech](#).

### Amateur Radio in the News

ARRL Public Information Officers, Coordinators, and many other member-volunteers help keep amateur radio and ARRL in the news.

["Freeport ham radio operator gets thrill from being part of airwaves"](#) / Journal-Standard (Illinois) February 1, 2022

["Youlou Radio Movement hosts second 'Summit on the Air'"](#) / Searchlight (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) February 1, 2022

["Telling Alaska's Story: John Bury talks about 67 years as a ham radio operator"](#) / Alaska's News Source (Alaska) January 31, 2022

["Gainesville residents demonstrate how to use ham radios in case of severe emergency situations"](#) / WCJB-TV (Florida) January 29, 2022

*Arrl.org. 2022. ARRL Letter. [online] Available at: <http://www.arrl.org/arrlletter?issue=current> [Accessed 1 January 2022].*

# NARS Special Meeting

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 on Zoom

The January Club Meeting was postponed due to health risks and concerns. However, a special meeting was called for and held on January 20, 2022. During this meeting, several important announcements were made and actions taken, including:

- Changes to club activities schedule due to the ongoing health risk related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The club banquet was postponed and club meetings will be held on Zoom.
- Two new board officers were approved by the body of the club:
  - Brandon Rogers, K5BLR, as Club Secretary (Board Voting Privileged Officer)
  - Neal Naumann, N5EN, as Administrative Secretary (Board Non-Voting Associate Member)
- A new repeater was installed as is now functional! Read the article in this newsletter to learn more!

## Next Club Meeting

The January club meeting, scheduled as our annual Awards Banquet, was postponed due to complications with COVID-19. The banquet will be rescheduled, hopefully for the February Club Meeting. Keep your ears open on the airwaves and check the [club website](#) to stay up to date on February Club Meeting plans. As of the publication of this newsletter, the club still plans to hold the banquet at Valley Ranch BBQ, 22548 Texas 249 Access Rd, Houston, TX 77070.



### NOTE!

Due to the risk associated with the COVID pandemic, the Fire Station is currently not open and all meetings will be held on Zoom, until further notice

## NARS General Club Meetings

NARS holds monthly club meetings where a variety of topics are presented from a number of guests. Come learn anything from antenna design, phasing, emergency response, and more!

Who: All club members, friends, or anyone interested in the Amateur Radio hobby

When: The Third Friday of the Month at 7:30pm

Where: Klein Fire Station #3, [9755 Landry Blvd, Spring, TX 77379](#)

Zoom Conference Call, Meeting ID: 2815436502, Passcode: 123456

# A New Repeater Comes Alive

BY MARTY FITZGERALD, W5MF, AND PAUL KENT, KI5FJS

All licensed Amateur Radio Operators are welcome to the Northwest Amateur Radio Society Repeater System. Stop by and say hello. This system is sponsored by NARS and its members, thank you.

From the beginning, this has been a team effort.

The repeater site that NARS had been using since about 1985 was a very worthy site. Ken/KA5AKG who was the original owner and installer improved the system early on. The antenna for 146.66 was raised well above the railing it was attached to and performed very well. However, since there was a helicopter pad in the middle of the building and the antenna could be seen from the ground, new management decided it needed to be lowered. This created a problem in that the repeater began



to suffer from interference and noise.

Through the years, there were several attempts to solve this issue. Finally, the whole system died and was off the air.

To get back on the air, Marty/W5MF, Keith/NM5G, and Walter/K5WH installed a new Kenwood TKR-750 VHF Repeater. Unfortunately, the system still suffered from noise, so a second TKR-750 VHF Repeater was installed at the Klein VFD with a different tone. This was intended to be a temporary situation. This was not a good situation because the 2 repeaters did not know about each other, so Marty went looking for other locations. Later KVFD needed the location for other services, so the club was required to move. A few false starts on a new location occurred, but we were unable to find a good location. At the same time John/K5VGM found a repeater controller that Marty/W5MF purchased for future use, ARCOM RC-210.

Finally, John/K5VGM also discovered a repeater site that was becoming available. John contacted Marty/W5MF Repeater Team Lead, and went on a site survey trip while the exiting club (W5SFA) was decommissioning their equipment. The other team left the coax and antenna behind and John “tagged it” for NARS. He also got in touch with the building personnel and found that they were interested in letting us use the location. John presented the location to the board and the other members on the repeater team and the adventure began.

In the meantime, Marty/W5MF, Mike Pate, and Rich Jones found a new location for the UHF 444.375 repeater and installed it. Thank you to the KVFD.

After a few months of negotiations with the management of the VHF repeater site, Marty/W5MF, John/K5VGM, Walter/K5WH, Paul/KI5FJS, and Ron/WA6TQH conducted a site visit. They identified the site

as a very worthy option based on elevation and downtown location. The club started the paperwork effort, which ended up being a lot more than expected, but location is everything and worth the wait.

Paul/K15FJS and Jimmy/NA5D, located a HP Server Rack to enclose the equipment; an excellent buy.

John/K5VGM laid out the rack with input from Marty/W5MF and Walter/K5WH and then assembled the rack with shelves and sliding keyboard draws.

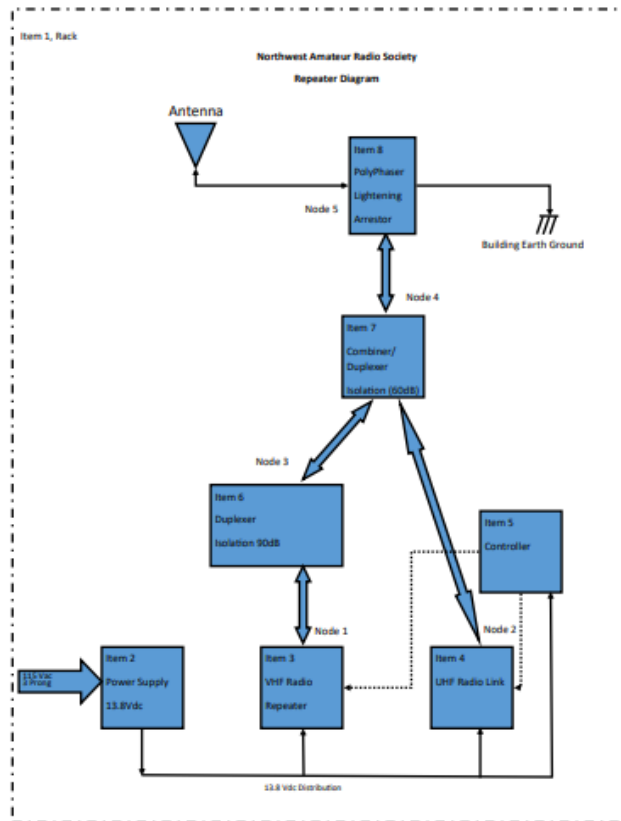
Marty/W5MF, Keith/NM5G, and Walter/K5WH obtained, procured, and aligned VHF and UHF repeaters. Duplexers and diplexers were added so it could all run on one antenna.

Marty/W5MF began work on the ARCOM controller, Kenwood TKR-750 Repeater from the old KVFD site, and linked the radio to that new UHF 444.375 repeater. This required alignment of the radios and controller. The controller was programed and tested over an 8-month period and contains over 70 macros and timing programs.

Back to the paperwork, Paul/K15FJS fixed the contract. After reviews by the rest of the team, most of the bugs were worked out and mitigated. We managed to secure insurance and contracts as needed for the operational site. All of a sudden, we found ourselves with an executed Agreement. Ron/WA6TQH took care of the execution of this on behalf of NARS.

Things got a little “iffy” again while getting an installation date, but we finally nailed down the date. The rack was in storage in the trailer with limited access at Fire Station 3. The hardware was at Marty/W5MF garage – logistics.

On January 20, 2022 the system was installed. It took 3.5 hours. The installation team consisted of Marty/W5MF, Walter/K5WH and Paul/K15FJS. The equipment was moved to the site and carried up service elevators 50 floors. A powered overhead winch was used for the last two floors.







Those doors were a life saver. We lifted all the equipment, rack, radios, duplexers and tools up to the penthouse.

The door on the right of the cabinet is 8ft above the lower doors.



Assembly for the first time, thanks to John/K5VGM cabinet layout design, everything went together smooth as silk. About 2 – 3 hours later the rack was fully populated.



Assembly completed.  
Only one thing left to do.  
As Marty/W5MF turned the main power ON, the repeater, fan, and controller came on.  
You can see Walter/K5WH two radios in the foreground to monitor the initialization.  
"Worked first time."



Finally, the switch was turned on. Marty/W5MF using a hand held called for a radio check..... No one answered. RADIO CHECK. No answer. We all looked at each other!!!! Then we heard:

**"This is K5DSJ I hear you."**

We all started laughing and jumping for joy. IT WORKED.

Estimated Coverage – black circle  
Approximate mobile range – orange circle





### **Top to Bottom**

AC Power Distribution

Astron 40-amp Power Supply

UHF Duplexer

UHF Link Radio mounted on top of Fan Shelf

Arcom RC-210 Controller

Kenwood TKR-750 Repeater

Quad Fan with controller blowing on Kenwood Repeater

VHF Duplexer

Not seen: Diamond UHF VHF Diplexer combiner and Polyphaser Lightning Arrestor

### **NARS Repeater Information**

146.66/146.06 Tone 100.0 Houston Downtown

444.375/449.375 Tone 100.0 Klien/Spring

Echolink W5NC-R

All Radio Amateur's Welcome

# Amateur Radio Activities

The “Amateur Radio Activities” feature of NARS News highlights various activities related to ham radio. Each issue provides a quick overview for beginners and those who may be interested in the learning new aspects of the amateur radio hobby.

## Buffalo Bayou Regatta

BY BRANDON ROGERS, K5BLR

From emergency support to logistics coordination, ham radio operators help make our communities better. In March, ham operators will lend their assistance to the Buffalo Bayou Regatta.

### What is the Buffalo Bayou Regatta?

The largest canoe and kayak race in Texas and takes place along Buffalo Bayou. ([Buffalo Bayou Partnership Website](#), January 2022). This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the competition!

Buffalo Bayou is a slow-moving body of water which flows through Houston in Harris County, Texas. Formed 18,000 years ago, it has its source in the prairie surrounding Katy, Fort Bend County, and flows approximately 53 miles (85 km) east through the Houston Ship Channel into Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. In addition to drainage water impounded and released by the Addicks and Barker reservoirs, the bayou is fed by natural springs, surface runoff, and several significant tributary bayous, including White Oak Bayou, Greens Bayou, and Brays Bayou. Additionally, Buffalo Bayou is considered a tidal river downstream of a point 440 yards (400 m) west of the Shepherd Drive bridge in west-central Houston. ([Wikipedia](#), January 2022)

The Buffalo Bayou Regatta takes place annually in the early spring. The race consists of several different boat classes and will last until early afternoon. This year’s event will be March 5<sup>th</sup>. You can find more information about the Regatta on their [website](#).

### How can I help?

Lee Glassman, WA5LEE, a long-time member of the NARS club coordinates Ham activities at the Regatta each

year. The coordination required for this year’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary race is bigger than ever. As such, ham volunteers are needed to help in many ways.

According to Glassman, “We will be providing an even more expanded support role to the BBR this year. Learning from issues we experienced in 2021, we will have better communication options, a 30' Command Post truck at the Finish Line (with coffee & donuts!), new, more accessible spotting locations, multimedia displays for tracking, race participant timing”

The first step to helping out is signing up. Any operator can do this by:

- 1) Clicking this link to see our SignUp on SignUp.com: <https://signup.com/go/sZzHQxP>
- 2) Review the options listed and choose the spot(s) you like.

Once you have registered, over the next few weeks you will receive an email with ICS 201, 205, Frequencies, Maps, Assignments, and other helpful information.

### Is there training?

Yes! Glassman mentioned on the NARS email reflector that several Zoom Meetings will be held to prepare volunteers for their tasks. Once you sign up, you will receive information for all the trainings you will need to be effective as a volunteer for the event.

### What if I have questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lee Glassman, WA5LEE, on the NARS reflector.

## VE Sessions and Results

### VE Session

Unfortunately, due to COVID precautions, a public VE session was not held in January. The next test session will occur when the Fire Station re-opens for use. Watch the club website for updates and details!

## New Club Members



The NARS Club welcomes its newest members:

John Garcia, KC5CSP (General)

Matthew White, KG5MTE (Technician)

Inga Woods-Waight, KI5SNB (Technician)

## Renewing Club Members

Thank you to all the members who renewed their NARS membership this past month:

Frank (Tony) Anthony Jr., KG5QAP

Teresa Holmes, W5MOM

Samuel Barnes, NE5IE

Walter Holmes, K5WH

Scott Blanchette, K5RSB

James Kershaw Jr., KC5HTY

Rick Braddy, W5FCX

James Lovett, KI5NVD

Lawrence Castillo Jr., KI5GGJ

David Meine, KI5MJD

Jay Close, K0GEO

Loyd Overcash, KM5OE

Jerry Davis, N5EKO

John Parmalee, K5VGM

Ralph DiGuilio, KF5AHC

Marie Rogoff, N5VLA

Keith Dutson, NM5G

Martin Rogoff, N5GPS

David Harnish, AD6ME

Nora Stovall, KB5FYJ

## Training and Education

### NARS

NARS Member Articles and Tutorials -

<http://w5nc.net/index.php/2014-03-31-00-54-20>

### ARRL

ARRL Online Course Catalog - <http://www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog>

ARRL Emergency Communications Training -

<http://www.arrl.org/emergency-communications-training>

ARRL Webinars - <http://www.arrl.org/ARRL-Learning-Network#schedule>

### Other

Amateur Radio License Practice Tests - <https://hamexam.org/>



## Of Interest to the Club

### Houston Local Traffic Net

The Houston Local Traffic Net meets each Monday from 6:30-7:30pm on 146.940 / 167.9 and each Thursday from 6:30-7:00pm on 147.000 / 103.5. The purpose of the net is to pass National Traffic System (NTS) radiogram messages into and out of the Houston area. The Monday night net includes an instructional segment as well as handling radiogram traffic.

### GHSN monthly Simplex Propagation Net

Beginning January 2022, the [Greater Houston Simplex Network](#) will return to its regular schedule of the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evening of the month, with 6:15pm for the Zoom meeting and 7:00pm for the beginning of the net. Simplex frequencies are 146.540 MHz.

I would also like to restart the relay nets for the 2nd week of each month, so I need volunteer(s) to help out as Net Control Operator. I am just swamped with developing our cool new propagation application. Please contact me if you can help with this. The script is fully developed, and can be found on [the website](#). Contact Mark - [N5PRD@yahoo.com](mailto:N5PRD@yahoo.com)

## From the Community...

The "From the Community..." feature of NARS News shares articles and information coming from the ham radio community, reprinted with permission.

### Stories from Social Media

*Radio operations is a great way to learn and to grow, but it can also be a source of funny stories! Enjoy this month's selection of amateur radio stories from the subreddits s/amateurradio and s/hamradio.*

#### I'm not a moron! - u/ve3scn

Last year I tried participating in a CW contest using Fldigi. The exchange was name and state. I had made about 18 contacts and FLDIGI was doing alright decoding most messages. For contact 19 I copied the call from the CQ message just fine, but I couldn't get the exchange right. I couldn't figure it out by ear and Fldigi couldn't decode it. After about 4 or 5 "AGN?" I see the following print across the decode screen.

MORON

MO RONMORON

I got pissed off and sent 73 then shut off the radio. What asshole would call me a moron just because I was having trouble copying his CW? I decided to look him up on QRZ. His name was Ron. He was from Missouri.

#### Tone Squelch u/rem1473

I was meeting a fellow ham at a state park. He was arriving first to secure a campsite. We agreed that when I arrived, I would call him on 146.55 simplex and get directions to the campsite.

He secured the campsite and was monitoring 146.55. I called him when I arrived. He called back: "k8md? Is that you? I see a signal on the RSSI

indicator, but there's no audio." I called him again. Can you guess why he could not hear me?

He responded: "you probably have tone squelch enabled. Turn it off and call again. I see a signal, but get no audio." Argh!! I called again, telling HIM to turn off TSQ. But since he's the one that had it on, of course he could not hear me. We went back and forth several times. I always heard him, but he could not hear me. I thought he'd figure it out eventually.

I gave up and drove around the park until I found him, and explained that he was the one with TSQ enabled. If he was in CSQ, he'd be able to hear me!

#### Lost Keys u/kawfey

NOAX and I were driving back from Dayton hamvention. I'm driving his car.

We pull off at a rest stop in Indiana, and find a few other hams there. We sit and chat for a while, first guy leaves, a few mins later second guy leaves.

When we're getting ready to leave, I realize the car keys are gone.

We looked everywhere, on the picnic bench, on the ground, in the car, bathroom, pockets. We're going to be stuck here for a long time.

On a whim we turned on the 2m radio, which was thankfully directly wired to the battery (as they all should). We call out on 52 about our missing keys thinking that one of the guys might have taken them accidentally.

Guy two comes back, and says he doesn't find him, but will relay to guy one (assuming he's got 52 on too!)

HE DOES! guy one, too far for us to hear, heard the relay from guy two, and realized he took the keys by accident! And he's on the way back! Phew. Ham radio saves our asses (and also got us there in the first place lol) and we make it home.

Apparently Wards keys looked just like guy one's wife's keys so mindless instinct kicked in.

### Blocking the Neighborhood u/falcon5nz

A mate and I put an MMDVM repeater up one Saturday. All licensed correctly and engineered by NZART. Repeater set at 15w, Rx 439.05MHz, Tx 434.05MHz... I'll repeat that, a repeater transmitting 434.05MHz at 15w, polling every minute.

On an unrelated note, and just for your interest, 433MHz LPD (like car remotes) operate from 433.050 MHz to 434.790 MHz @ 10mW. I'm sure some of you have figured out where this is going! If not, apparently a 15w transmitter will block out a 10mW on a nearby frequency. We blotted out remote central locking to all of the [central business district].

I learnt this when I got a phone call from my mate on Wednesday. The local dealerships had done 4 years' worth of battery replacements in 4 days. We made international news and laid rather low.

### Garage Door CQ u/dan\_kb6nu

When I first got back on the air about 15 years ago, I built a 40m dipole. I got it up into the trees, tuned it up with my antenna analyzer, then went down to the shack, put on my headphones, and started calling CQ.

Shortly after the second call, my wife comes barreling down the stairs and yells, "what the heck are you doing?" I replied, "I put up a new antenna and now I'm calling CQ." She said, "Well, you're opening and closing the garage door!"

Apparently, the the wire running from the switch on the garage wall to the garage door opener was picking up enough RF energy to trip the input. The wire was roughly parallel with the antenna, so I could easily see how this could happen.

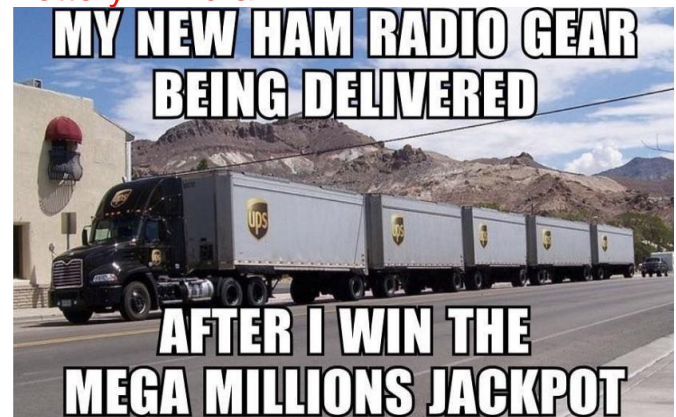
The solution was to disconnect the wires from the garage door opener, wind a few turns around a ferrite core, making a ferrite choke, and then reconnecting the wires. It worked like a charm, and has been working like a charm ever since.

I tell this story every time I teach a one-day Tech class. It's very illustrative and very entertaining, and I'd bet that 99.9% of the students get the ferrite choke questions right.

### Accidental Space Station u/kawfey

This guy was aboard the ISS, and on a whim I called NA1SS in 2m from my parents home's front yard when I was 15. He returned, and I was beside myself and forgot to record any of it.

### Lottery Windfall





# Just for Fun

## The Great Harvey Wells Caper

### Part 2

BY RON LITT, K5HM

*If you think you missed Part 1, you are probably right. Fageddabout it! Just enjoy the story.*

I stared at her for a long time. A pristine beauty with big black eyes and creamy white face. She looked back at me from the magazine. A salty trail of perspiration formed on my upper lip. Six months earlier, I discovered her buried in the back pages of QST. Each month as a new issue arrived, I grabbed it, turned quickly to the ad to be sure she was still there; the Harvey Wells Band Master Z-Match Antenna Coupler. I had to have it.

For the last two years I had one single band antenna for 20 meters. It was great, but I was getting close to my WAS and I needed practically all the New England states. Connecticut and New Jersey were almost impossible from New York City without a 40 or 80 meter antenna. I was desperate.

As a 17-year-old kid with no car and no money, I had next to no social life. You might convince a chick to ride the subway to night court in Lower Manhattan and watch the evening folk routinely scooped up by the cops. Or take the Staten Island Ferry for a nickel moonlight cruise across the harbor. After that, your options for a second date were badly limited without personal mobility.



My life was like a fully charged electrolytic capacitor; ham radio was my only way to bleed off the stored energy. The informal Saturday Night Nerd net was regularly attended by hams at high school who couldn't get a date. I was a regular member. We lasted until one or two in the morning talking about antennas and Q-multipliers and Collins gear we could never afford. It was my only relief from the teen age hormones running amok.

In those days the \$70 price for the coupler was beyond astronomical. It cost more than a senior prom date! Day after day, I sunk deeper into depression. The kind only pubescent teenagers know when they are rejected by the head of the cheerleading squad. Little did I suspect salvation was at hand. The very next Saturday, fate struck a blow right out of left field, KAPOW!

I had gone to Saturday breakfast with the Queens County Bagel, Bowling and Spark Club (QCBB&SC). For about the twentieth time, I bent my old buddy Ralph's ear about the Harvey Wells Coupler. Ralph, the greatest Elmer of all time, listened patiently while preparing his bagel. I whined on for five full minutes. He was quiet but nodded appropriately and grunted in assent when I paused for a breath.

Precision was Ralph's key to fame as a ham. He could lay down 25 turns on a coil form without a gap or an overlap; as if it had come from a machine. So too, Ralph had a system for preparing a bagel with cream cheese and lox (smoked salmon, for you non-yankees). Like a brain surgeon with a scalpel, he spread the cream cheese evenly, carefully leaving no space uncovered; trimming any excess cheese that drooped over the edges. Then he layered the lox on top, using a fork to mash down the smoked fish so it was buried into the cream cheese.

Finally, he looked me straight in the eye and said, "Listen kid." Everybody was a kid to Ralph. "Whyncha go home and work the South Dakota QSO Party? There's only two hams in the whole state. You might get lucky."

Lucky? I hadn't gotten that lucky, since I got to second base with Wanda Louise Schwartzberg on the ferry ride last month, but I needed South Dakota for WAS. This might be the day. I threw down a couple bucks for my share of the bill and took off for the bus stop.

I had bounded up the front steps and into the house when the old man hit me with the letter. The mail had arrived early this day and clutched in his trembling hand was the dreaded pink ticket. "You better take care of this", he said. The old man didn't get the enormity of transgression that a pink ticket represented. But he knew that anything that came in an envelope with no stamps and "Official Business" printed on it was trouble. As far as he was concerned, I was as good as being carted off to Leavenworth.

Without uttering a word, I snatched the letter from his hand, turned and fled down the basement stairs. I had to figure out what to do. I sat for a long time; thinking. The U.S. phone band ended at 14200 KC. Most of the good DX was always just below that. We worked split back then, running full carrier double sideband AM, pushing as close to the band edge as we dared, calling for that DX station we needed on the other side.

Late at night, my stubby little fingers would be numb as I gripped the band spread knob and tuned my receiver into the low end of 20 meters. Across the electronic wall at 14200 KC between the U.S. phone and CW bands. You could hear them calling CQ; siren's voices from places like Australia, Tahiti, Japan and Pitcairn. It was a drug. The call signs and those strange accented voices from exotic places drew me in. I had to make the contact.

From 14205 and down the QRM was like shock and awe in the Iraq war. Screaming heterodynes beating against one another. Guys over-modulating their rigs and the infamous Kalifornia Kilowatts tuning up. Kaah-Chunk! Hello Test . . .Hello TEST...HEELLLO Test...1,2,3,4...4,3,2,1! Okay, okay, I know you can count already.

Night after winter's night I spent in my chilly basement shack looking for that rare one on 20 meters. The only warmth came from the glow of the parallel 6146's in the final and the 807 modulator tubes.

Finally, I snapped out of my reverie and mustered the courage to call my old buddy Ralph on the land line. I laid it all out about the pink ticket. In one breath, I unloaded on Ralph non-stop. There was silence for an eternity. "Listen kid", he began; his voice had a way of piercing through the QRM in my head. "You just need an accurate marker for the band edge. A crystal calibrator. You can pick one up at Harrison Radio for about ten bucks."

“Hey Ralph”, I said. “What about the letter I have to write? What should I say?” Ralph started in again, “Just tell them the truth kid, you’ll be fine. See you later kid.” And then there was a click. That’s it? Tell them the truth? Somewhere from the dark reptilian part of my desperate brain, the thread of a diabolical plan began to form. A way to solve my FCC problem and snag the Z-Match in the bargain.

Anyone who has ever gotten a pink ticket will tell you it is a serious matter. In my kid mind it was like getting called to Mr. Murphy’s office. Mr. Murphy was the Vice Principal at Millard Fillmore High School. Like the FCC, he knew everything. He was the most feared man at school. It was rumored that he had some medieval torture mechanism in his office. A relic from the Spanish Inquisition that would make the toughest kid confess. Just like the FCC, when you went to see the Vice Principal, you had to confess your transgression, explain why and then describe how it was never, ever going to happen again.



I spent the rest of the day composing the response to the FCC notice. I pulled out my No.2 Dixon Ticonderoga, the same pencil I use in my logbook. The same pencil that was an accomplice to my crime. Its penance would be to help me contrive this document of contrition. I began writing and correcting phrases; adding more verbiage where it was needed.

I skipped lunch and supper. Skipping meals did not sit well with Mom who believed that food was the solution to every problem. I was hungry but I didn’t want to stem the creative juices while they were flowing. Mostly, I wanted to avoid the old man until I was ready.

It was a work of classic prose worthy of the Pulitzer Prize. In the first part, I acknowledged my crime; pled guilty and promised not to do it again. I said, I’m sorry three times in the first paragraph. In the second part, I described what I was going to do. Purchasing a crystal calibrator, using it to mark the band edge and NEVER operate any closer than three kc from the marker. Then I really poured it on. I swore to check my receiver monthly against WWV, recalibrate my VFO and receiver every 90 days. I even promised to buy a crystal for 14.203 in the event my VFO became unstable.

Then, in the midst of my epistle of contrition, I slipped in a tiny little paragraph about adding an antenna impedance matcher, like the Harvey Wells Band Master Z-Match Coupler. I went on for a couple of sentences about how it would eliminate spurious emissions and reduce any TVI.

There it was! My secret was out. I was betting on the TVI thing because the old man hated most of the neighbors and he didn’t want any of them complaining to the cops, let alone the FCC! I finished the letter with a recap of the whole incident and how it would never happen again . . . ever. Finally, it was ready for typing.

As a southpaw, my handwriting was beyond bad. I was the only kid in Mrs. Shapiro’s fourth grade class to flunk Penmanship. When you got to be thirteen, most guys I knew got a fancy fountain pen for their birthday. Instead, the old man wisely decided on a typewriter for me. Carefully, I typed each word on the Smith-Corona. To avoid any erasures or mistakes; I redid whole pages until it was perfect and pristine. I

wanted to make a good impression on the FCC about the sincerity of my penance. Finally I signed it and typed the envelope too.

By the time I was done, it was after eight in the evening. I could hear the TV in the living room. The old man was watching Sid Caesar; his favorite show. He was laughing; a good sign. At least for the moment he wasn't thinking about the FCC or Leavenworth. I slipped out of the basement, up the stairs to my bedroom without notice and turned out the light. I'd decided to wait till Sunday morning to launch my plan. By now, I was drained.

Saturday night, I hardly slept. The adrenalin was redlining my blood pressure. I pictured the neighbors standing outside my house as the squadron of FCC men swooped down. They'd all be wearing the official FCC uniform; black pants, long sleeved white shirts, rolled up to the elbows; black neckties; pocket protectors full of pencils and those little slide rules. No nonsense and grim faced, they summarily clapped me in handcuffs and collected me to pay for my crime. Or so the nightmare went; repeated each time I nodded off, with different endings. None of them good.

Now it was Sunday morning. Time for the final act.

I came down to breakfast with the letter in my hand. The old man was eating an onion roll with smoked whitefish; his favorite. He had a copy of the Sunday New York Times on the table. Even though he was a blood sworn Democrat he read the Times, a Republican bastion from cover to cover each Sunday. Mom was cooking eggs and my kid sister was nowhere in sight.

Nervously, I proffered the letter with the pink ticket on top. The old man looked up from the Times. He was reading the financial section and mumbling about the Republicans. He took the letter and started reading.

I'd worked up my simple letter into a literary masterpiece. I mentioned the purchase of additional equipment a couple times in the letter to include the crystal calibrator. In addition to the letter itself, I added a diagram of the shack, descriptions of my equipment, including the Z-Match and my ARRL membership certificate.

I tried to maintain an air of calm detachment but inside I was shaking like a nervous cat as the old man looked it over. As usual, he got right to the heart of the matter. "How much is this all going to cost?"

The old man was a depression era high school dropout. He was really committed to seeing his kids get the education he had to forgo but he would never let on. He would never understand the ins and outs of Pi networks or Heising modulation. He inherently believed that there were only four acceptable career paths for young male children; Medicine, Dentistry, Accounting or Engineering. As long as my interests fit into one of those niches, he was willing to grudgingly help it along.

I mumbled something about eighty dollars. "What? How Much? Eighty?", he raised his voice raised to the fight or flight level. I am sweating through my eyeballs. "You better make sure this fixes it!" Then in one single motion, he reached into his wallet and dropped four brand new twenty dollar bills on the kitchen table.

I grabbed the money and the letter and dashed from the kitchen. Took the basement stairs two at a time and called Ralph on the phone. Once again, I unloaded on him about the letter, the crystal calibrator and the Z-Match. Through the signature wheeze of his breath, I could swear he was smiling on the other end of the phone. He was of course, the greatest Elmer of all time, so he probably knew how it was going to come out.

“I know kid. That’s great.”, he said. He knew? How could he know? I took the cash out of my pocket and stared at the four crisp, sequentially numbered bills. I wondered for a second if Ralph and the old man had worked it out in advance.

Ralph’s raspy voice broke into my thoughts, “Make sure you mail the letter, kid. I’ll meet you down at Harrison Radio Tuesday afternoon.” “And go work that W0 from South Dakota on 14235.” Click went the phone in my ear.

## Calendar

### Club Activities and Events

Club Activities are pending due to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please check the club website at <http://w5nc.net> or an updated calendar of activities

### Social Events

#### Lunch Break – North

Jan 05 Spring Creek BBQ on 2920  
Jan 12 Mi Rancho  
Jan 19 Cheddar's 21001 IH-45, Spring  
Jan 26 Jason's Deli at Champion

#### Lunch Break – Medical Center

Jan 05 Jason's Deli  
Jan 12 Mia's Table  
Jan 19 Buffalo Grille  
Jan 26 Antonio's Mexican Grill

#### Saturday Breakfast

Saturdays at 7 am Broken Yolk Café, 16803 Stuebner Airline Road, Spring, TX 77379

#### Monday Lunch (Taildraggers Lunch)

Mondays at 11 am; Aviator's Grill at Hooks Airport Terminal

## Hamfests and Conventions

February 10-13, 2022 - [2022 ARRL National Convention](#) at Orlando HamCation®, Orlando, Florida

February 18 - 19, 2022 - [Yuma Hamfest](#) hosting the ARRL Southwestern Division Convention, Yuma, Arizona

March 4-5, 2022 – [Greater Houston HamFest](#), ~~Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, 4310 Texas 36~~

~~Rosenberg TX 77471~~

### CHANGE TO GREATER HOUSTON HAMFEST!

Due to the rise of COVID infections and other issues, The Greater Houston HamFest will not be held in 2022. However, after careful consideration and detailed planning (read - a spur of the moment thought), there will be a replacement. This year will mark the beginning of the Greater Houston Tailgate or the GHT.

This will be an informal event held at Duhacsek Park in Southwest Houston. The date is April 16<sup>th</sup> and will held from 7 am to 3 pm. In addition to the tailgate, there will be license testing, exhibits, food sales, and equipment raffles. All tailgate sales will be held outdoors in the main parking lot of the facility with parking in the grass south of the parking lot.

Admission will be simple - \$5 per vehicle. Whether you are selling or buying, the entry fee will be \$5. People will be able to pay as they drive into the park and from there, they can either park to sell or park to buy.

The raffle will have two main prizes – an Icom IC-718 HF radio and an Anytone AT-D878UV11 DMR handheld radio. The raffle tickets will be sold at the tailgate and on-line.

More information for the GHT and the raffle tickets will soon be on the web site and weekly e-mail blast so stay tuned.

Hope to see everyone at the Greater Houston Tailgate on April 16th!

April 23, 2022 – [Emory Hamfest](#), Emory, TX, Rains Amateur Radio Association

June 17-18, 2022 - [Radio Fiesta](#), San Antonio Radio Club

### Did you know...

NARS has a social media presence! Thanks to Sam Labarbera, N6HB, we have a Facebook page for those who would like to follow us there. Visit the [W5NC Facebook page](#) and join! It is open to ham radio operators, so there is a short quiz to qualify new members.

We also have a Twitter feed. Follow us on [https://twitter.com/nars\\_w5nc](https://twitter.com/nars_w5nc)

## Contests

<p><b>January 2023</b>            1: <u>Straight Key Night</u>            7: <u>Kids Day</u>            7-8: <u>RTTY Roundup</u>            21-23: <u>January VHF</u>            TBD: <u>Winter Field Day</u></p>	<p><b>February 2022</b>            8-12: <u>School Club Roundup</u>            20-21: <u>International DX – CW</u></p>	<p><b>March 2022</b>            6-7: <u>International DX– Phone</u></p>
<p><b>April 2022</b>            18: <u>Rookie Roundup – Phone</u></p>	<p><b>May 2022</b></p>	<p><b>June 2022</b>            12-14: <u>June VHF</u>            19: <u>Kids Day</u>            26-27: <u>Field Day</u></p>
<p><b>July 2022</b>            10-11: <u>IARU HF World Champ</u></p>	<p><b>August 2022</b>            7-8: <u>222 MHz and Up Distance</u>            21-22: <u>10 GHz &amp; Up – Round 1</u>            22: <u>Rookie Roundup – RTTY</u></p>	<p><b>September 2022</b>            11-13: <u>September VHF</u>            18-19: <u>10 GHz &amp; Up - Rnd 2</u></p>
<p><b>October 2022</b>            18-22: <u>School Club Roundup</u>            23-24: <u>EME - 2.3 GHz &amp; Up</u></p>	<p><b>November 2022</b>            6-8: <u>Nov. Sweepstakes – CW</u>            20-22: <u>Nov. Sweeps. – Phone</u>            20-21: <u>EME-50 to 1296 MHz</u></p>	<p><b>December 2022</b>            3-5: <u>160 Meter</u>            11-12: <u>10 Meter</u>            19: <u>Rookie Roundup–CW</u>            18-19: <u>EME - 50 to 1296 MHz</u></p>

# NARS Club Officers and Information

## Board Officers with Voting Privileges

President: Ron Matussek, WA6TQH, 713-825-9606, [officers@w5nc.net](mailto:officers@w5nc.net)

Vice President: Paul Kent, KI5FJS, [officers@w5nc.net](mailto:officers@w5nc.net)

Treasurer: Tom Hoherd, KK5YU, 281-370-2941, [treasurer@w5nc.net](mailto:treasurer@w5nc.net)

Secretary: Brandon Rogers, K5BLR, 713-294-6630, [officers@w5nc.net](mailto:officers@w5nc.net)

Director: Rob Nixon, KD5BXZ, [officers@w5nc.net](mailto:officers@w5nc.net)

Director: Kirc Breden, N5XJB, [officers@w5nc.net](mailto:officers@w5nc.net)

## Board Non-Voting Associate Members

Administrative Secretary: Neal Naumann, N5EN

Social Media Liaison: Sam Labarbera, N6HB

Newsletter Editor: Brandon Rogers, K5BLR

Public Information Liaison: John Parmalee, K5VGM

ARRL/VEC Liaison: Sheree Horton, WM5N

Repeater Team Lead: Marty Fitzgerald, W5MF

Webmaster: Bill Buoy, N5BIA, [webmaster@w5nc.net](mailto:webmaster@w5nc.net)

Trustee: Paul Owen, N5NXS

## Club Nets

[DMR Weekly Net](#) – Every Tuesday at 7pm. Tune in on Talkgroup 3146211 for information on configuring codeplugs, see the DMR pages on the Club website (<http://w5nc.net>) or contact a club Elmer. Sam Labarbera, N6HB, coordinates this Net.

[The Weekly Wednesday Evening Net](#) - Every Wednesday at 8:00 pm. Join us on one of the W5NC repeaters: 146.660 MHz, -600kHz offset, PL 100.0 - wide area centered on downtown Houston and/or 444.375, + 5 MHz offset, PL 100 best in the Spring / Klein area. You can also join from anywhere in the world by connecting to EchoLink node W5NC-R. Neal Naumann, N5EN, coordinates this Net.

## Repeaters

For information on NARS-managed repeaters, please see the club website at <http://w5nc.net/index.php/club-info/repeaters>

### Did you know...

that NARS has an email list service (sometimes known as an email reflector, Listserv, or email distribution list) that allows you to connect with a giant group of experts, club members, and resources. Register today at:

[http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/  
listinfo/nars](http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/nars)