

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

December 2003

December Meeting – Home Brew and Auction

The program for the December meeting will be “Home Brew Night” and the “Silent Auction”. Bring your latest project to proudly explain and display (and show off) to your fellow members! Also, bring that stuff that you just won’t use anymore that you just know someone else will want! As this event is also used as part of the annual fund raising, the proceeds will be donated to the NARS treasury. There will also be a table available for NARS members to sell non-donated items. These items may have a minimum bid listed and NARS would ask you for 5% of your sale price (up to a max of \$ 5.00 / item). Please bring along some cash (small bills) or your check book. I am sure that item you are looking for will be on sale. (NOTE: As always, if your item(s) don’t sell you are expected to take them back home with you.)

Come one – come all, this just could be the year that “BIG FOOT MAKES IT BACK TO THE MEETING ”!!!

Annual Awards Banquet

The 2004 Annual Awards Banquet will be held on January 16, the third Friday of the month, our usual meeting night. We expect the tradition of an evening filled with friends, food and fun to be continued. The menu will consist of sliced roast beef in mushroom gravy, marinated chicken breast in a tomato/onion/cheese sauce, tossed salad with assorted dressings, corn, green beans, rolls / butter, assorted deserts and coffee / tea. A cash bar will also be available if desired.

The location will once again be the Wyndehaven Terrace, located at 12716 Cutten Road. Plan to arrive at 6:30 PM for the QRM hour with dinner served at 7:30 and the evening coming to a close around 9:30.

The cost for members and non-members will be \$15.00 per person. Reservations may be made by contacting any NARS Board member and at the December general meeting (Dec 19th). If you have an item that you would like to donate as a door prize please bring it along. It will be appreciated.

Hope to see you all there.

Bruce – NILN



Important Dates

Friday, Dec 19, 7:30 PM – General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church – Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

Tuesday, Dec 30, 7:30 PM – Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Clubhouse, 5200 Woodville.

Saturday, Jan 24, 8:30 AM – VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main). NOTE: NO VE SESSION IN DECEMBER.

Contests

Dec 19 Russian 160M
Dec 20 OK DX RTTY
Dec 20–21 Croatian CW
Dec 27 RAC Canada Winter
Jan 1 Straight Key Night
Jan 3–4 ARRL RTTY Roundup
Jan 4 Kid’s Day
Jan 10–11 NA CW QSO Party
Jan 17–18 NA SSB QSO Party, Hungarian DX
Jan 24–25 CQ WW 160M

Wednesday Lunch Bunch

Dec 17 Woodlands House
Dec 24 Hill Country Kitchen Buffet
Dec 31 Red Lobster
Jan 7 Casa Imperial Mexican
Jan 14 Strack Farms

Wednesday Lunch Bunch – West

Dec 17 Luther’s BBQ
Dec 24 Skeeter’s
Dec 31 Charlie’s Hamburgers
Jan 7 Cafe Express
Jan 14 Chili’s

Monday “Tail Draggers” Lunch Bunch

12:00 Noon Aviator’s Grill, Hooks Airport

Notice: NARS membership dues are \$20 per year, renewable on anniversary of last year’s full payment.

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

BREAKFAST
at Victors
4710 W FM 1960
Saturdays
7:30 AM

Public Service Events

Your Radio Skills Are Needed

Events officially sponsored by NARS include March of Dimes WalkAmerica (April), Buffalo Bayou Regatta (May), SIRE Ride-A-Thon (October) and Sunmart Texas Trails Run (December).

Plan to help with one or more of these events in 2004.

DXpedition to the Island of Stone Money – YAP

[Editor's notes: The following is an intriguing story of a unique trip by our own Cal White WF5W and Paul Frantz W5PF. I have been involved from the early planning stages until the publication of this story. My part was to put up a web site before they left and to keep it updated as the action unfolded. It was truly a pleasure!

Cal has separated his report into "pages" similar to the method used by long-time radio broadcaster Paul Harvey. Since it is too long to publish in one issue, it will appear in the next several issues. If you just cannot wait, the complete story will soon be available on the web at <http://www.dutson.net/Ham/Yap/Index.html>. Scroll to the bottom and it will be under Epilogue link. There are photos referenced in the story and these are all posted under the Photos link.]

BACKGROUND

About 18 years ago when in Korea as HL9EP, several of us HL9's wanted to go to Siapan or YAP for a DXpedition. Things did not work out; some guys got transferred and others just did not have the time or money.

So, forward to summer of 2003 – YAP was still on the very back burner – HAMCOM 2003. Paul Frantz (W5PF) had been contemplating the STEPPIR for home QTH.

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VE Session Results

At the NARS VE Test Session held November 22, 2003 there was one candidate. The result was one new Technician. One element was administered and one passed.

The VE's were Keith Dutson WD5DXL, H.O. Townsend K5CX, Kirby Van Horn W7SV, Virgil Stamps K5OOR, Steve Niles N5EN, and Al Crosby K6AHG.

Thanks go to all of the VE's for their help.

There will NOT be a NARS VE Test session in December. The next NARS VE Test session will be held on January 24, 2004. See ya there next year.

Walter Hock KK5LO

NARS VE Session Manager

HARS to host ICOM Day January 17

George DiLetto, KD0RW, of Houston Amateur Radio Supply will once again host ICOM Day on Saturday, January 17, 2004. There'll be a tailgate sale in the parking lot starting at about sunrise, for all you "junkologists." Here's your chance to get rid of all that stuff you've been hoarding in your garage from last year's tailgate event. Come on, dude, let someone else see what they can do with it!

The store will open at 8:30 a.m. and will be offering door prizes throughout the day. And, as before, free hot dogs and soft drinks will be available for those wishing to indulge themselves in these culinary delights. (Eat your heart out, Emeril!) The ICOM sales rep. will also be there to answer any questions you may have about the ICOM product line, and will make available discount coupons for the purchase of certain items.

If you need further information on this event, give George or Charlie a call at 281 355-7373. They're located at Exit 68, I-45 North, 267 Cypresswood Drive, close to the new Target store.

Ham and “Sheez” Update

Our **second annual Holiday Party** was held at the home of Georgina Frantz on Saturday, November 22. Ten of us enjoyed a very event filled evening. To get the night off to a relaxing start, we pampered ourselves with a Body Shop foot spa. [Gentlemen – If you’re searching for an appropriate holiday gift for your wife or significant other and cannot find one, let us know. We have some great suggestions from the Body Shop that are sure to be a hit!] The combination of soothing peppermint for our feet and delicious Portuguese wine was a perfect initiation to the evening. Yes, there’s that wine theme again! After the foot spa, we all indulged in the finger foods that we had all brought to the party. Yet again, the food was outstanding and the time spent catching up with friends even better. The evening was topped with our Yankee Swap gift exchange. There are many other names for this type of exchange. Essentially, each person picks a number. In order of the number chosen, each person picks a gift and opens it. If a person with a higher number prefers a gift that has already been open, she has the option of taking it. The person who picked number one has the last option of choosing any gift she wants. All in all, there was little swapping that happened, and everyone when home with a lovely gift. [Georgina – Many thanks for being such a wonderful host! We had a terrific time.]

Make sure you reserve Sunday, December 14, for **Schalee’s 3rd Annual Holiday Baking Party!** It will be held at Carrie’s Kitchen on

SH 249 in Tomball, beginning at 4:00, directions to follow in a separate note. As in past years, for a nominal charge Carrie will allow us the use of her commercial ovens; access to her pots, pans, and other baking utensils; and even the use of basic baking ingredients such as flour, sugar, butter, brown sugar, baking powder, and baking soda. In return, we leave the kitchen cleaner than the condition in which we found it. Please bring \$10, copies of the holiday recipe that you’ll be making, and any ingredients that are not basic (e.g. coconut, walnuts, chocolate chips, chopped fruit). In return, we’ll guarantee that you’ll have a great time, sing a few holiday songs, maybe sip on a little hot chocolate or cider, add a few more recipes to your holiday collection – and, most importantly – take home a bag full of “samples” to share! Please let either Schalee or me know that you’ll be coming by Sunday, December 7.

Since one of the most hectic times of the year is upon us, we chose to skip our monthly meeting in November. We will, however, have our **December meeting on Monday the 29th.** It will be held at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church at 7:00 p.m. in the same room as the monthly NARS meeting. The themes for the meeting include planning for the upcoming NARS banquet, planning for the next few months, reflecting on the year just ending, and munching on some holiday treats. Please be sure to mark your calendars and join us for a fun evening. Many of the ladies who work bring their dinners and eat

before the meeting.

Our **January meeting will be held on Monday, January 26,** at the home of Nancy Kinard. The evening will be spent enjoying a BeautiControl product demonstration, makeovers, and (yes, probably) some finger foods and wine! Be sure to mark your calendars. After a hectic holiday season, we’ll need another excuse to pamper ourselves!

Monthly recipe:

Ham and Potatoes Crockpot Recipe [Great for the busy holiday season. Put all the ingredients in the Crockpot, and go shopping!]

6–8 slices ham
8–10 medium potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced
Salt and pepper
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
2 cans cream of celery or mushroom soup
Paprika

Put half of ham, potatoes and onions in Crock Pot. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, then grated cheese. Repeat with remaining half. Spoon undiluted soup over top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover and cook on low 8 to 10 hours, or on high 4 hours.

Enjoy!

*Laurie Meier, NIYXU
nlyxu@arrl.net*

QUA* Dick Rooney W5VHN?

Until my latest conversation with a NARS member I thought my dad was involved at the very beginning of computers, in the mid-50's (before I was born, in case you were calculating!) But, I just talked with W5VHN and he was in the really early stages in the late 40's. And he has some fun stories. Dick Rooney, his friends call him "Doc", may be NARS' oldest member at 84. I'm sure if I have misstated someone will let me know – here's his story.

Dick was born in Lynn, Mass. His family then settled in Malden, Mass., north of Boston, Where he graduated from high school. While living in the New England area he taught snow skiing and was even involved with a team from Austria teaching a new method of parallel called Arlburg, which rivaled the Swiss methods. The team was used to teach a troop of skiers during the war.

Speaking of methods, his grandfather was a professor and developed a method of penmanship which challenged Gregg. He concedes that Gregg won, because we have never heard of his grandfather.

Dick, he doesn't become "Doc" for a few more years, then joined the Navy. He was lying on the beach in Key West, Florida when war was declared. He went to sea where for starters he saw the Missouri get hit by Kamikaze pilots.

His boat was an LFT which was for communications and sat low in the water. There was a new technology, called fire controlled radar, being tested on a neighboring ship. The machine gun would follow the Kamikaze, but it sighted his ship and swept the deck. One of Dick's friends was hit and he was as mad as a hornet because he was hit by friendly fire. This friend was an Electrician's Mate and created an electro magnet to pull the shrapnel out of the wounded.

Dick was chief radioman and had a team of 40 working during a typhoon. Some were very sea-sick. Dick asked an especially bad case if he wanted to leave. He croaked "No," then threw up again in his helmet and kept going.

Dick served for six years and then left to attend Georgia Tech, where he received a degree in Electrical Engineering. There he met his wife of 56 years, at a dance. Her name is Anne. They both love gardening, she concentrates on roses.

Together they had three girls and one boy and now have five grandchildren and even two great-grand-children. Three of their children live in the Houston area. One daughter remained in Tennessee.

"Doc", received his PhD in Business at American University in Washington, D.C and began his professional career. He worked for several years with the government in Washington, D.C. and various locations around New England.

One of his favorite stories is about a computer "storage" system consisting of six 25 foot mercury filled tubes with cylinders at each end. The signal would be sent through the mercury.

Another problem was the reel-to-reel tapes. They moved so fast that when they stopped to reverse directions they would break. So they tried a tube with air flow to dampen the effect. It didn't work very well.

At one point his delay was a roll of coax! And one time he flew to Sylvania's plant to test each Dipole for its front to back ratio because they needed it to be very high.

Doc left his government position and worked with ITT in New Jersey and then from there back to Georgia where he was Director of Science and Technology Commission of Georgia. His initial responsibility was to win the bid for a facility to be built in Georgia. In this endeavor he met Hubert Humphrey during Governor Maddox's term to present his proposal. The site was put in Miami, but their group was one of the first to use "space technology" for commercial endeavors.

He went from there to Lockheed in Atlanta and was involved with the design of the C5A. They used a computer program to design the plane; what happens if you change the wing, make the tail larger, etc. When the bottom fell out of the aeronautics industry Lockheed went from approximately 35,000 employees to 5,000 in one week. Doc was one of the casualties. He then accepted a professorship at Emory University and from there to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. For five years he taught the MBA program to Nuclear Engineers who were unemployed.

His final move was to the University of Houston to become the Chairman of their newly established Business Program. He retired from this position in 1986.

When I asked W5VHN about his radio equipment he said, "It's old.", but it must still work well because he has "somewhere around" 340 countries. And, can anyone match this? Satellite DXCC confirmed about three or four years ago! His one disappointment is that as he was moving around the country and changing call signs (he's had one in all!), he threw away the QSL cards.)

Oh, yeah, the equipment; an ICOM and a 34 foot tower in the front yard (there are too many power lines in the back), with a tri-bander and all the necessary satellite gear.

He has made so many contacts that few stand out as special, but he talked many times on voice, CW and satellite with a ham in Japan who always says for instance, "This is the 18th time we have talked". He has his picture climbing his tower.

His son has his license with the call KC5VHN, purely by the luck of the draw! It kept W5VHN from getting one of those vanity calls. He qualified to do so when he became an Extra the "old" way testing at better than 20 wpm. In fact Doc has his First Class Commercial license and also a First Class Telephone/Telegraph license received in Honolulu around 1943. The only way to get this is if you have served at least one year at sea.

"Doc" and Anne have been involved in the community in various ways over the years since retirement began. Enough that the North Spring area in which they live named a park after him, "Doc" Rooney Community Park. Franny and I will have to have Michael take us over for a visit!

When I asked him to sum up his life he said he "wouldn't change a damn thing. I had a good education and career, wonderful family and friends." "Doc", we can only hope that when we are 84 we will be able to say the same.

*Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL
Ham & Sheez Reporter*

* QUA: "Q" signal meaning "Have you news of . . . ?"

DX News

“For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print”

This month the DX reports from club members were a little on the short side, but Lee, K5AVY, reported that the bands seemed dead, but then his report came in before the Thanksgiving holidays. He worked ZP5MAL, Paraguay, on 20 and YN4SU, Costa Rica, on 12 meters. And that is it! But he got a landslide of QSL cards this month from: JW7QIA, Svalbard; FY5KE, French Guiana spaceport radio club; ED7VG, Cadiz, Spain; CX5ABY, Uruguay; EA4WF, Madrid, Spain; YR9P, Ploiesti, Romania; Z36A, Macedonia; GP0STH, Guernsey Is.; VP5DX, Turks & Caicos Is.; VP5/AH6HY, Grand Turk Is.; KP2A, St. Thomas, VI; VP2E, Anguilla, BWI; KG4CM, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; CP6XE, Santa Cruz, Bolivia; P41P, Aruba. Worked dates ranged from January through October '03. Lee now has 68 confirmed for DXCC, up from 58 last month. That is doing well Lee at the rate of 10% per month you will have DXCC completed by the end of March 2004. With luck you will be able to get Yap by working Cal V63WC or Paul V63PF during the next week.

Bruce, N1LN, actually has something to report this month. Bruce had an interesting QSO with a traveling NARS member Sunday morning. About 07:30 CST (13:32 UTC) I had the opportunity to work V63WC, Cal (WF5W) on 40 CW. He was calling CQ NA, working up 5 and running mostly JA's. Since then I also worked Paul on 15SSB and tried to help coordinate the 15 SSB schedule with Lolly (KD5WZM), Tania (KD5WZN) and John (W5PDW). Unfortunately neither station could hear the other. N1LN also reported several new band countries worked this month: ZA / K7ZV, Albania, on 75 SSB, 80 CW; 6W / ON6TN, Senegal, on 160 CW, 80 CW, 30 CW; V63PF, Yap, 15 SSB; KH5 / KH7U, Palmyra Island, on 15SSB, 20 SSB; 5X1X, Uganda, on 40 CW. For the best part of his report Bruce has QSLs confirming these new band countries: G0NVD, England, on 75 SSB; V26B, Antigua, on 75 SSB and 160 SSB; T12KAC, Costa Rica, on 75 SSB; 9Y4TBG, Trinidad, on 40 SSB; C56R, Gambia, on 80 CW and 40 SSB; ES6MO, Estonia, on 12 CW; OA4/DL2JRM, Peru, on 40 CW. From a report like this we can see his antenna farm is really beginning to pay off for him. Rumor has it that the low-band antennas are still growing to take care of bottom of the solar cycle. Nice report Bruce. Now that you have the 5BDXCC completed what is the new goal?

I've got to warn you now that I have a report from John, W5PDW, and I am not sure if it is fit to print or not, but here it is just the same. "B'noche, con ta bia; Bon dia; Bon pascu y feliz ana nobo." Now I have no idea what that all really means, but I'll bet you can get it figured out. Now the tail continues: "Did I ever tell you that I used 2-b PJ9AK? Yep, I was. Or is it Yap, I wuz? That was in Aruba in 1969. 5 of the best months of my life!" John pauses and leans back a bit to deliver another thought from somewhere as he continues to warm up for the real story. "Am I ever having fun with my new radio? Yep/Yap! The Icom 775 has more buttons/menus/functions and knobs than all the other stuff I own combined!" Well, here comes the story. "Better save an extra page for me. Got the new radio, pulled the amp out of line to re-tube. All the following contacts were worked bare-foot. My first contacts were with WF5W and W5PF. Now that I have Harris County confirmed, I decided to try for something a little more challenging. Here is some of the DX from the November log: KC4AAC, TS7N, 9A3OS (no kin to Norm), VP8DGA, CD1C, 9Y4/DJ7ZG, CO8TW, OM5DP, 9Y4/DL7AFS, FS/W3ARS, VK3ZZ, 3B9FR, HR1RMG, MN0USK (nice rag chew), CT3/DJ6QT, HC1AJQ, KH7U/KH5, K8ND/PJ2, YN4SU, V63PF and V63WC." That is good but the real story within the story follows. "We had a sked with the Yap guys on Monday the 24 from the Redd Middle School. We could tell Paul was in there, but not good enough to copy. It was fun and we tried. N1LN tried to help us make it happen. Bruce did visit with several of the LABRATS and 2 of the teachers. Wait till you see the looks on their faces!!! Better not miss the banquet. The kids couldn't have been more excited if they had been talking to Huntsville or even Dallas!" John rambles a bit too much at times so I edited some of it out, but the concluding sentence is John's. "Look for a Redd Middle School article in the Jan QST."

Well, John's act is a hard one to follow, but that is what I've got to do now. Here at the KQ5U shack November was a month of ups and downs, some the solar cycles and some the operators. I did manage to get two new countries worked: 5X1X, Uganda, on 40CW and KH7U/KH5, Jarvis Islands, on 10 & 15 SSB. I worked a few new band countries:

S50G, Slovenia, on 40CW; ZK1/AC4LN, Cook Islands, on 40CW; TI5/NOKE, Costa Rica, on 40CW; TS7N, Tunisia, on 40CW; CO8LY, Cuba, on 80CW; VC3AT, Canada, on 80CW (You have to do it some time.) and the bonus of working Cal and Paul, V63WC and V63PF, on 15 SSB & CW for Yap on a new band. I did have a few new 80M CW cards show up 8N1OGA, Ogasawara Islands and 6D2YFM, Mexico. The 6D2YFM was really hand delivered as well. Two other QSL came as well they were: ZC4VG, Eastern Sovereign Base Area - Cyprus - Asia, on 20CW and J5UDX, Republica da Guine-Bissau, on 10SSB. That is the total action around the KQ5U shack this month.

I did manage to pick up some information of interest to the DX'er from the web. This rambles a bit but it comes in bits and pieces so try to follow along.

Members of the Russian Robinson Club (RRC) are planning a unique mountain radio expedition into Africa to the highest apex of the African continent - mountain of Kilimanjaro (5985m) in Tanzania. The team plans to climb to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and erect the Russian Robinson Club flag. The team will consist of RW3GW, RW3GU, RZ3EM, mountain climber Gennadi Khryukin (g.Lipetsk) and video operator and journalist - Boris Mamlin (g.Novosibirsk). The expedition is planned to take place during December 2-17th. Also, look for them to be active from the United Arab Emirates as A61AR during the evening of December 2nd to 3rd and December 16th to 17th. From Tanzania, they will use the call sign 5H3GW and also 5H3AA (EK6DO), 5H3RK (VK4VB). The climb to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro will take 8 days, while the descent taking 2 days. QSL via operator's instructions.

TO4, EUROPA. The TO4E team is now active. Floyd Gerald, N5FG, East Coast USA Pilot Station for TO4E/TO4WW, reports that Rafik, F5CQ, has lost E-mail contact with the FR/E team on Europa due to malfunctioning PSK (??) equipment. This means that unless they are able to get the problem fixed, there will be no updates or skeds sent to the pilot stations. This also means they will not be able to upload any logs to the on-line log on the web site.

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DX News – Continued from page 5

All the antennas are not installed yet, especially for the low bands. However, they think that they will be ready with the antennas soon. Flo, F5CWU, Editor of “La Gazette du DX”, also provided OPDX with the following update on the latest news from Europa (dated Nov. 27th): “Tonight, I (F5CQ & F5IPW) spoke with Dany F5CW on 20m and I asked him why the team has to QRT so often. He told me that they must QRT due to restriction with the generator, probably due to a lack of gas, even if the propagation is so good. The team will not have the possibility to work around the clock. Here is the schedule of their operation: from 0400–0730z; from 1000–1030z; from 1300–1330z; from 1515–1945 or 2000z. Remember, the TO4E Europa Web page is at: <http://europa2003.free.fr/>.

ZW0, ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL ROCKS. Karl, PS7KM, plans to be active as ZW0S from St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks (SA–014) between November 26th and December 19th. QSL direct to PS7JN: Joaquim das Virgens Neto, Rua Carlos Serrano 1969, 59076–740 Natal RN, Brazil.

That is the total of the reports for the month, but with the sun putting on the show that it is we just may be getting a bonus month or two as the solar flux has been above 175 and we are going into the real bottom of the cycle. The web is just loaded with pictures of the sun putting on quite a show. Look around on the web and you will find them without much trouble.

As a feature of the column, I have been talking about propagation for the last few months and this month will be a bit different. I thought I would take a look at the computer related tools we can use to apply our knowledge of propagation. I went to the internet and took a look at what was available. I was quickly overwhelmed with what was seen.

There are all kinds of propagation software out there. The good news is that about half of it is FREE and the remainder ranges from shareware to down right pricey. I do not have the time to test all these programs out to see how well they perform, as was the original plan. I may not live long enough to get the job done. There are just too many programs out there.

Some of the programs are so extensive one could spend most of their free time or radio time just figuring out the program and miss all the DXing time. This is certainly not productive for a DX'er or at least not this one. I have used just three simple things beside my gray matter to aid in the search for DX and I

will recommend all three of them.

First on the list is the Internet, the site of interest is the DxSummit. This site is the core of many DX clusters that exist. The DxSummit is a reporting board, a message board and a search site for historical operations. As a reporting board it can be seen who is working whom, on what frequency and at what time. This is near real time reporting and is world-wide in scope. From these reports the DX'er can get a feel as to what is happening on the other-side of the world. It is kind of a idea of what is to come as the world turns and the sun rises.

The second program, I use is DxMonitor. DxMonitor is a freeware program and it works in conjunction with DxSummit. DxMonitor uses DxSummit and flags entities as they are posted and can notify you with audio as well. You can create your own list of entities to be flagged. It also contains maps of the world centered on your QTH and will display them in either Mercator or Azimuth projections and supply the gray-line. This is really a neat little program and the price is right.

The third program, I use is called Grayline. It is a DOS program and uses a text screen presentation. Grayline is small enough to fit on a floppy. The neat features of this program are it shows you the beam heading from your QTH, the major cities involved, and the length of the opening via gray-line propagation. This little program is neat in that you can play “what if” with it very easily. I like to look ahead a week to a month and get an idea of what countries will be available via gray-line propagation or if any countries will be available. For instance, I noticed that gray line will not yield much in May as most of the gray-line is over open ocean.

Now there are many more very fine programs out there and with luck some of the readers will tell about them. Hint! If I do hear of some I will certainly see that the information gets passed to the membership.

My trip through the internet did uncover some sites that just needed bookmarking. So without farther ado I will list them here. Most of these have some really good links to DX information.

<<http://www.dxworld.com/dxprop.html>>
<http://www.k4lrg.org/Contests/DX_Contests_Links.htm>
<<http://hamcall.net/cgi-bin/dxspots.exe>>
<<http://hfradio.org/propagation.html>>
<<http://www.sec.noaa.gov/ftpdir/latest/27DO.txt>>

<<http://home.teleport.com/~nb6z/solar.htm>>
<<http://www.spacew.com/www/zenith.html>>
>
<<http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/Software/Propagation/more2.shtml>>
<<http://www.pacificsites.com/~brooke/RCS-5A.shtml#Listening>>
<http://sec.noaa.gov/rt_plots/>
<<http://www.mindspring.com/~helmsman/>>
<<http://www.dxlc.com/solar/>>
<<http://sec.noaa.gov/>>
<<http://www.spacew.com/www/course.html>>
>
<<http://sidc.oma.be/index.php3>>
<<http://www.qsl.net/ylradio/dx.html>>
<<http://www.qsl.net/ylradio/dx.html>>
<<http://www.ac6v.com/dxsoft.htm#dx>>
<<http://oh2aq.kolumbus.com/dxs/>>

Now with all the tools you may want at hand, it needs to be pointed out that nothing matters except being on the air. It is always an advantage to know something about propagation, but that does not mean anything if you are not on the air. Most hams world-wide are a lot like you. Amateur radio is a hobby and the time to enjoy the hobby is second to those things that must be done to earn a living and meet the obligations of your family.

Amateurs will get on the air when they can and that is not necessarily when the propagation is the best. Many are limited by the kind of antenna they can get in the air and access to electrical power. Yes, neat tools to help with the predictions of nature are nice and a great planning device, but they are of little value if you are not at your rig and tuning around.

It is nice to know that 160, 80 and 40 meter bands are best when the sun is down and DX is enhanced when the terminator crosses your location. It is also known that propagation is best on these bands in the winter in the northern hemisphere, but it is of little value if you are not on the air.

The moral of the DX story is to just get on the air.

This is my final DX column for the NARS newsletter. At this point there has not been anyone to step forward to take the reins and keep the column going. If you know someone who is interested or who might be interested please let me know at KQ5U@arrl.net or inform one of the board members. Whoever picks up this column, will get my support and I wish them much success.

73 de KQ5U

DXpedition to the Island Of Stone Money – YAP

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We had some informal talks about “let’s go to YAP” for fun. We then met with John of the STEPPIR family at HAMCOM and in a lighthearted way asked him if we went to YAP would they provide an antenna. They said YES, and they DID!! That really cemented the idea to make the DXpedition happen.

Internet work up with the Manta Ray Bay Hotel and some very helpful staff led to the trip. Call signs were assigned by Mr. Tilson Kephars of the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure of the Federated States of Micronesia in Pohnpei in June: V63WC (Cal), and in July: V63PF (Paul).

A week before we were to leave, STEPPIR was true to their promise and a 2 el was sent via UPS to the house. We put it together about 10 feet off the ground to see if all parts were there and if it would work – it did. We even made some contacts at that height. So it was ready for re packing into 6” PVC tubing and the remainder in our bags.

TRAVEL

On 20 November we boarded our Continental Flight to Honolulu via LA. Only worry was what would happen at the security gates at various airports. Not to worry – the only challenge was to one of the Bencher paddles – they did not know what the heavy metal was.

Long flight – Houston to LA – short run to the Honolulu flight – then one day lay over in Hawaii – that was good. Rented a convertible and drove up to Diamondhead, around the island and had a fantastic dinner at the Sorobol Korea restaurant. Good start to the plan.

Next day at 3 boarded the flight to GUAM – longer ride than from Houston to Honolulu – then short walk to the plane to YAP.

ARRIVAL in YAP

One would have to be there to appreciate. The international Airport is a 30 X 30 thatched roof A-frame. The baggage handlers used a fork lift and pallet to get the bags off the plane, brought into a lean too and you get the bags – several stern faced customs and immigration officers (the same mannerisms in every country)

waiting at the door. BUT, on arrival, before you come in, the tourism ministry posted a young man and a young lady at the entrance to welcome you to YAP and to put a flower head band on your head. Hard to keep eyes front – they were dressed in native custom – they don’t wear shirts or blouses, just flowers.

The van from Manta Ray Bay Hotel was waiting for us and others who had come to dive. Happy crew brought us to the hotel with a short orientation of the place.

Page Two – Yap DXpedition

We could not stand to have the gear here, only 9:30 at night, and not be on the air. Peter (manager) had told us we had the run of the roof but it was dark. We climbed up on the roof, walked slowly around the dozen or so air conditioners, pipes, water heaters, etc and put a 20 meter dipole over the side hanging down on the East with the other end up over a wall on the roof. It was kind of an L shape. It worked, and we were on the air in about an hour after arrival!! As you know, Murphy always comes along on these kinds of trips. But must say he missed the ride with us. We did not forget anything – those months of prep paid off. As you can see from the photos, the room is perfectly set up for two operators.

The next morning (Sunday) I took the digital camera on the deck to attempt to replicate the photo from our deck that was in the Manta Ray Bay web site. As you can see, it worked. I had to take about a dozen photos and bring them in to Paul for the computer to see if we had a match – on the last one it was perfect. This place is truly an island paradise: tough place for a DXpedition – Hi.

On Sunday morning Peter and his maintenance men (4 of them) greeted us in the lobby. We explained what we wanted to do with the beam, thinking we would have to do the work. We asked if we could borrow a pliers, screwdriver and wrench. Well, we got the maintenance men in the bargain. We really only had to supervise what we wanted – up went the beam, with several guys and additional positioning. I then asked Peter and the Captain of the Mnuw about the boat – we couldn’t figure where the 40 meter dipole could go. I really did not think they would do it, but had to ask. The Mnuw has two huge masts about 50 feet apart. Could we put the dipole

between the masts on the ship?? Of course!! The Captain is about as agile as any person you could think of. He and his crew were barefoot. The Captain actually climbed the 3/4 inch steel cables barefoot to get up on the masts to place the antennas. Up and down, up and down, to get them just right.

Of course we did have just enough extra coax to make the run from the ship to our room – in fact we even had about 100 feet left over “Just in case” – more on that later.

Sunday morning was spent getting all the antennas up and running, checking out the SWR, etc.

The old Pirate Vessel – Mnuw

There is a story about the ship (now our antenna ship) that has to go with this yarn. The Mnuw was purchased in Indonesia in 2000 – it is about 100 years old and was a pirate ship in its early life. It is registered in YAP now. Ships are registered by tonnage (for tax purposes I’m told). Any way, the Mnuw weighs in at over 250 tons, all teak and Asian hardwoods. The owner, captain and crew brought her to YAP via several islands, several administrations that did not want to give out permits, etc. So as the owner told us, they sailed in the night on the last leg and hoped to get into international waters – they did it! Captain Ramlih Mohammad came with the ship. He is on her all the time, tending the flags, treating her like a partner. Goes home once a year but will not leave his ship.

They spent a year renovating the ship and it is now used for their restaurant and bar. While we were hanging antennas, the guests were having a good time checking out the odd hams. They wondered about us and said, “You came 9000 miles to sit in a room and talk on a radio?” We just answered, “You came 9000 miles to ride in a little skiff and look at some dumb fish?” We got along with lots of laughs after that.

Sunday night brought the huge pileups from JA’s. No matter the band or mode, they were there in force. We are wondering how we are going to get around them.

Look for page 3 in the next newsletter!

WF5W

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members Albert Peacock KA5MIH, Tom Rum KD5QO and Cheryl Tompkins KD5AXC.
Get well soon wishes to Harry Gage AC5XD.

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REPEATERS

2M: 146.060 / 146.660 (KA5AKG)
70 cm: 449.375 / 444.375 (KA5AKG)

MEETINGS

Monthly General Membership

Third Friday each month at 7:30 PM
Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 6000
Spring Cypress Road

Saturday Breakfast

Victor's Restaurant 7:30 AM

Wednesday Lunch 11:30 AM

Various locations (Info on 146.660 and
listed on front page in Important Dates
column)

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