

# NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

January 2007

## January Meeting – Annual Awards Banquet

*Need we remind you . . .*

The Annual Awards Banquet is scheduled for Friday, January 19th. This event is in lieu of the NARS monthly meeting at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian School, so if you show up and discover that “There ain’t nobody there,” you are at the wrong place. This year’s banquet, as in the past, will be held at the Wyndehaven Terrace, 12716 Cutten Road, about 1/2 mile south of F.M. 1960. The cost is still a moderate twenty dollars per person. But reservations are coming to an end, so get yours in before it’s too late. Check with Joe KD5KR, to see if he can, maybe, leave the back door open for you . . . (kd5kr@arrl.net or 281-353-2196) Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and a refreshment bar will be open for those who require an adult beverage or two, at additional cost, of course. There will be some surprise door prizes, one of which is rumored to be a 2007 Bentley, (four on the floor and a fifth under the seat . . .) or something of lesser value! So, come on out ‘cause deals like this will not last!

*Uhh, back to you, Dominique.*

## LABRATS Score!!

Redd Middle School students Audrey Lebovidge, KE5IOT, and Austin Ellsworth placed 3rd in a national NASA Podcast competition of 150 teams sponsored by Boeing and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics! The Podcast answered the question “what does the future of Space Exploration mean to me?”

The Podcast is available for viewing through the Redd school website at [www.reddschool.com](http://www.reddschool.com). From the home page, click on “Latest News from the Lab” and follow the links!

Both students are active members of the LABRATS After School Program at the school.



*Lollie Garay KD5WZM*

## Important Dates

**Friday, Jan 19, 6:30 PM** – Annual Awards Banquet, Wyndehaven Terrace, 12716 Cutten Road

**Saturday, Jan 27, 8:30 AM** – VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

**Tuesday, Jan 30, 7:30 PM** – Board of Directors meeting, Ponderosa Fire Station, 17061 Rolling Creek drive.

### Contests

All Year 2007, CQ DX Marathon

Jan 20–21 NAQP SSB

Jan 20–22 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

Jan 27–28 CQ WW DX 160M CW

Jan 27–28 UBA SSB DX, BARTG RTTY Sprint

Feb 3–4 VT QP, DE QP

Feb 10–11 PACC DX, CQ WW WPX RTTY

Feb 11 NA CW Sprint

Feb 24–25 CQ WW DX 160M SSB

### Wednesday Lunch Bunch – North

Jan 17 Casa Imperial Mexican

Jan 24 Strack Farms

Jan 31 Pepperchino

Feb 7 Luby’s Cafeteria

Feb 14 Jason’s Deli

### Wednesday Lunch Bunch – West

Jan 17 Goode Co BBQ

Jan 24 Skeeter’s

Jan 31 Charlie’s Hamburgers

Feb 7 Cafe Express

Feb 14 Willie’s Grill 290

### Wednesday Lunch Bunch – Medical Center

Jan 17 DJ’s Old Timey Hamburgers

Jan 24 Marco’s Mexican Bar & Grille

Jan 31 Silver Palace Chinese Buffet

Feb 7 Pappas Barbecue

Feb 14 Fred’s Italian Corner

### Monday “Tail Draggers” Lunch Bunch

11:00 am, 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 Denny’s**  
7720 Louetta  
**Saturdays**  
**7:30 AM**

## President's Corner

January 2007

I hope to see many of you at the January Banquet. Have you purchased your ticket?

Hams who enjoy building and showing off presented during the December meeting. I finished up the Winkey2 by K1EL: <http://k1el.tripod.com/wk2info.html>

The purpose of Winkey2 is to operate a CW logging program, WriteLog, using an operating system of XP. After completing the assembly of all the parts, one must install the drivers on the computer. (Search through many files on the disk.) Next plug in the ICs. Plug the USB cable into the computer, and hear dit dah dit. What does dit dah dit mean. I will discuss that later. Plug in the paddle and test it. Yes, all works. Next try the software. This is the Winkey Test Bed. Click on the OpenWk and the boxes fill up with information; showing communication. Type in the keyboard entry window and it keys the sidetone. So far, so good. The instructions to get the dit dah dit were clear. The winkeyer is using Comm5, Writelog only addresses 1-4. Next go to the Writelog Archives and see what other's have done. (Change Writelog.ini.)

Yes, output from the Key jack! Now make a special cable for the K2. Put a diode in series with the output from the keyer. (A diode was put in the connector that plugs into the K2.)

This brings me to the point. This is what hams do! New hams must start off with a simple kit.

Let's back up. Soldering is very important. I was ready to sell my K2 until I fixed a soldering problem. I found solder was applied with the dab method of soldering. This is where one melts solder on the soldering iron and puts it on the joint. Under many of the solder joints was flux. I removed the solder from every connection and soldered them allowing the solder to flow at the joint. Wow, the K2 worked so good I am keeping it.

When was the last time you showed someone new to ham radio how to solder or help with his or her station?

Mark K5GQ

## Events

### *Your Radio Skills Are Needed*

Events officially sponsored by NARS include Buffalo Bayou Regatta (October) and Sunmart Texas Trails Run (December). Events supported by NARS members include Houston Marathon, MS 150 and Wings over Houston.

Plan to help with one or more of these events in 2007.

## Public Service

By the time you read this the Houston Marathon will be over. If you volunteered for the marathon, plan to attend the volunteer appreciation barbecue that will be held soon at the SPJST hall in the Heights. I will pass along details when they are announced.

The next big event is the year's biggest event, the MS150 bike ride from Houston to Austin. It will be on Saturday and Sunday, April 21st and 22nd. You will hear more from me about this one as it draws closer but be planning to volunteer to help with it this year.

In the mean time there will be several smaller events that will give you a chance to stay in practice and have some fun on Saturday doing something besides cutting grass. Coming up on Saturday, February 3rd, the Harris County Citizens Corp is putting on a C.E.R.T. rodeo where 16 neighborhood and business C.E.R.T. teams compete against one another in events related to their C.E.R.T. training such as fire suppression, search and rescue, first aid and so on. It will be held at the Harris County Fire and Sheriffs Training Center at 2318 Atascocita Rd. in Humble, TX. They are wanting Ham Radio communications for the event. If you are a C.E.R.T. trained Ham and want to help out with this one, Bill Rimmer, N5LYG, is the coordinator for communications. Send him an email at [n5lyg@n5lyg.org](mailto:n5lyg@n5lyg.org) and put your name in the hat. You have to have your C.E.R.T. badge to work this one.

It is the first of the year and time to think about Skywarn training. Classes are forming around town now. This is a spring time event put on by the National Weather Service in preparation for the spring stormy weather season. The N.W.S. encourages Hams to participate in watching the weather. Here is the web site to see where classes have formed:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/hgx/severe/skywarn/schedule07.htm>

I don't think NARS has scheduled a Skywarn class for this spring. If you don't see a class that fits you, keep checking the site as new classes will be posted.

Another training site on the Internet is the Department of Homeland Security / FEMA Independent Study Program / Emergency Management Institute:

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIW/eb/IS/crslist.asp>

This site is to train emergency responders in the use of the Incident Command System. This system is used to manage large and small scale responses to any kind of incident. There are different courses that are tailored to the type of organization that is involved. A basic introduction was covered in the C.E.R.T. training program. All responders should take these courses so they will know how to work within the framework of the response. Start by taking IS-100, Introduction to the Incident Command System. It takes about 45 minutes on line and FEMA sends you a certificate of completion when you finish. IS-100, IS-200, and IS-700 are recommended for Amateur Radio responders. ARES is now suggesting that we also study IS-800 covering the National Response Plan and how to work in concert with the federal government. I think that is above my pay grade.

*Continued on page 5*

# DX News

## *“For All the NARS DX News Fit to Print”*

DX IS! Yes . . .

DX IS . . . what you make of it.

DX Tips:

“I need VQ9— ; but I never hear him on the air? ”

“I missed that one and sure needed it. How did you do that?”

“How did you know to look for him there? ,,, And so on . . .

In your quest for DXCC, you oft times hear this from other DX-ers. “How did you find him there?” DX hams are people and people are creatures of habit; right? OK; then find out what his habit is.

There are basically just a few types of DX “out there”:

1. DXpeditions: Generally, these run around the clock on several different bands. No problem to catch them. Know your propagation and tune those available frequencies.

2. DX on a holiday/DXPedition: Usually active just certain times a day as they are at the beach part of the time. See later “Tip”; it applies.

3. DX that are residents of that DXCC country. What’s his habit? He has a job; a home and family; when is he active? He probably sits down at his radio the same times each day, much like you do at home. Remember, he is at home also. See later “Tips” as it applies.

4. DX that is in the country for an extended time for a work project; but on a temporary basis; much like we have seen some of the UN guys. He has his habits; he cannot be working the radio all the time. See later “Tips” as it applies.

Let’s stop there. That probably covers most of the DX.

“Tips and techniques”:

1. Of course, the DX clusters are a real asset in seeing what DX “is active now”. But what DX “was active”? On your cluster do a “sh/dx VQ9XX”, for example. It will scroll out VQ9XX’x last 24 hours activity.

2. Make note of spots from North American (NA) stations; the frequency and time. This tells you when there was propagation between VQ9XX and North America.

3. Listen on the bands and pickup conversations regarding a particular DX stations activity. Make note of this.

4. One other little known tool is a www site (<http://www.dx-central.com/>) that logs all of the spots for DXCC countries prefixes your request and sends you a daily email with that list.

The site is run by a ham couple as a service to fellow hams and exists on very voluntarily donations only. A donation is not requirement.

When you register (free!), you list the prefixes you are interested in. You can list as many as you desire. Make note of the data from this report; again, DX spots from North American amateurs.

5. DX spots from other hemispheres are useful to an extent. Many hams do not like spots coming from other regions of the world. They do not consider them useful in their quest for DX. Wrong!

To a lesser degree than the other techniques listed above; foreign DX spots are helpful in determining that a station is active. Maybe someone is traveling to a DX location and you don’t know if they are active yet.

Sometimes propagation is such that maybe you can make a DX contact while they are working other regions. If the DX station has a decent signal; maybe it is both ways? Many a DX station wasn’t aware of propagation to NA until you made contact. He was directing all of his efforts and

antenna at another region. No NA stations know this and, hence ‘no spots’. Propagation changes gradually; not all-of-a-sudden.

6. “DX Bulletins”: Subscribe to some of the bulletins that come out on a daily or weekly basis. This will give you a heads up about activity planned or active now. Make note of the data critical to your DX quest.

Take these notes and make a short list of the details on a small piece of paper or an index-size card and have this in front of you at the radio. Follow up and listen for them on those times and frequencies. Maybe even make a CQ on that frequency or near about (assuming the frequency is clear). You might bring him out of the woodwork! It happens a lot. Adjust your schedule to suit the operating habits of the DX station in question. Don’t expect them to adjust . . . their schedule. You know very well that the DX is not going to come to you. You need to go to them. So plan your time spent in this quest.

Many DXers have determined that a certain station is active in the middle of the night. They have set the alarm clock; worked the station and back in bed in just a few minutes. Not a big deal or sacrifice.

How about getting up an hour earlier? Maybe, the station you are interested in is active in the early morning hours; say, on 80 meters . . . at or near your sunrise (SR). This is an excellent time to try to work that station. Sunrise or grayline conditions on 80m or 160m can bring a far off DX station’s signal out of the noise and fully copiable. It may only last 10–15 minutes, too. But get in there and work him.

Same thing in the late evening. Stations that are 6–10 hours ahead of North America have a sunrise, also, Hi! I have heard very weak DX stations or worse, come up out of the noise on 80 meters to be fully copiable and QSO-worthy! But only for a short duration. Timing is everything! Be ready; be propagation smart.

*Continued on page 4*

## *DX News continued from page 3*

If you are working those low bands; make note of their sunrise and sunset times, also . . . and use it to your benefit. You can improve your DXCC count and at the same time minimize the pain of getting up early or late to bed. I maintain a little note pad at my operating position with data listed like this:

DX callsign – Bands needed – Frequencies active – Times – His SS/SR.

Little techniques like this are good for time management. OK, you can cruise the frequencies when it is convenient for you. But to improve your DX quest; you need to make the radio-time useful without having to 'live on the radio'.

Member reports:

I am very appreciative and grateful for these monthly reports from our fellow members, believe me. Makes this assignment and effort much more appreciated and satisfying. I ask for all of you to please submit your DX activity or radio activity, for that matter, as another worthy contribution to your club. It takes all of us, you know.

Don't be bashful! And for those of you just in the beginnings of DXCC; don't be ashamed; don't be bashful. We all started out with zero at one time . . . Let us know how you are doing. Need any help? Let a DXer member know about it.

Madison, W5MJ should be in transit as this is written to LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS (VU2RG). This multi-cultural DXpedition should be active and running

by the time you view the newsletter.

His official VU call is VU7JMB, but the DXpedition will only use the callsign VU7RG. He mentions focusing on 30 meters for NA QSO's.

Madison has been busy preparing for his trip to VU7-land; but squeezed in working some DX (As all true DXers will do!).

Band not reported, but he worked on CW: 9Q1EK (Congo); 3XD2Z (Equatorial Guinea); EA8/OH9MM (Canary Is.); 3B8CF (Mauritius) and C91VB (Mozambique)

Cal, WF5W, has a new HyGain "HiTower" vertical up and running; especially for the lower bands. Busy getting it fine-tuned for 80 and 160 meters.

For 80 meters he reports; and of course, all CW: JA, ZL, OX, and G-land. Good contacts for 80 meters, too. He was able to work a VP8-lander on 20 meter SSB: They still remember the rowdy bunch from Tomball, Texas. They still haven't healed from that visiting group!

The finished VU7LD DXpedition eluded his logbook, like it did a lot of us in South Texas. He is hoping for better condition . . . and practices from the VU7RG group of seasoned (well, most are) DXers!

Cal mentions that "Texas-style SKN" is up and running. First time was January 2; 3550 MHz from 7:00PM until 8:30PM. I think it meets once a month; or is it weekly ? Get your old J-38 out and oiled up.

'Ya' all come"!

John ("Juan"), W5PDW, made a whopping 38 entries during December; of which six were special-event stations; his expertise and fourteen were DX. Rare DX, I am sure. John has big antenna plans for this year: A second tower with a 2 element Yagi for 40 meters and a WARC Yagi above the 40 meter antenna! Look for a big signal out of south Montgomery County!

Bruce, N1LN / NC4KW ("NARS-East") reports a good month for December even though he hasn't set up his killer towers and antenna's. With some low wires and a multi-band Yagi up, what, 30 feet, he has been able to keep his mark in the DX world. I guess Bruce told me that 160 meters is a 'pass-by' this season until the monster towers are up.

New countries: (327 worked / 325 confirmed)

VU7LD- Lakshadweep Island, 20 CW/SSB

New band / mode countries:

1. V51AS, Namibia 30 CW
2. OX3XR, Greenland 80 CW
3. LX6T, Luxembourg 40 CW

Bruce asks for the members to look for him in the NAQP CW and SSB in a few weeks.

*Thanks-gud DX es 73,  
Mike Bragassa, K5UO*

## **News from ARRL West Gulf Division NTS CW Nets**

In response to recent changes repartitioning the 80 meter band, some of the CW NTS traffic nets have moved. Here is a table of the current schedules of the NTS CW nets in the West Gulf Division.

Oklahoma Training Net (OTN) Daily 5:20 PM 7120.6 KHz

Texas CW Net (TEX) Daily 7:00 and 10:00 PM 3552 KHz

Texas Slow Net (TSN) Daily 8:00 PM 3552 KHz

*Scott McMullen W5ESE*

## *Public Service continued from page 2*

Paul Owen and I met with Methodist Willowbrook Hospital on Friday morning Dec. 29th to discuss the next step in providing them with Amateur Radio backup communications. They have offered us use of a meeting room for holding training meetings. Our first order of training is to become familiar with the hospital and its personnel and communications needs. Immediately thereafter we need to put together a plan for meeting those needs. We will provide communications internally from floor to floor nursing stations, emergency, admitting, security, maintenance, shadow operations for key personnel as well as connections to the outside world. We need to work this out in training. There will be a Coast Guard drill in February simulating a contamination disaster. This drill will need very little Amateur Radio support but they want us to at least put the equipment on the air and prove it works. Then there is their big seven day hurricane drill in May.

There will be a communication failure. We won't be involved all seven days but we will be needed during the communications failure. They have tried buying FRS radios and handing them out to their personnel and found out that their personnel weren't disciplined radio operators and that didn't work. They also don't have the time to train their personnel to be radio operators and they are glad to turn that over to us.

### **Pop Quiz.**

1. If the phones in a hospital in your area failed right now, would anyone at the hospital know that Amateur Radio could be used as a backup both for internal and external communications?
2. Does an organized group of knowledgeable, prepared hams exist to support a hospital in your area?

3. Would you be willing to drop everything and respond to an isolated communications failure at your neighborhood hospital or go there immediately after a widespread disaster?

4. If so, would a person at the hospital know how to call up a ham radio group in your area?

5. In a widespread emergency, would your local hospital be one of the first agencies to be supported by ham radio communications or would it be an after thought?

6. Is your radio equipment always organized with batteries charged and ready for emergency responses?

7. Have you volunteered to help?

*Become Active! Bill, K5ZTY*

## **VE Session Results**

There was no session in December.

The ARRL will be notified of our 2007 VE schedule; the regular Tomball VE sessions for 2007 are:

January 27

February 24

March 24

April 28

May 26

June – NONE

July 28

August 26

September 22

October 27

November – NONE

December – NONE

The next regular VE session will be held on 01/27/2007.

73

*Norm Covey/K5OS*

*NARS VE Session Manager*

# Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members Randle Bain KE5LRL, Al Crosby K6AHG, Marion Crosby KD5NBM, Jerry Green K5IHK,  
Bill Pierrard K5JHP and Marvin Volz W5MTV  
Condolences to Bob Helton K0DQW on the passing of his XYL, Darlene.

## NARS Resource List

### General Help:

Bill Stietenroth K5ZTY  
281-893-3901, k5zty@juno.com  
Allen Majeski WA5REJ  
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Madison Jones W5MJ  
281-350-4330, w5mj@hal-pc.org  
Larry McCain KN5Z  
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Deral Kent K5WNO - Antennas  
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### Satellite:

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### Digital Modes:

Don Bedell KA3BKU Packet  
281-257-6425  
donka3bku@houston.rr.com  
Gregg Erlenbusch, W5IDX PSK/RTTY  
281-970-6860, W5IDX@ARRL.net

### VHF/UHF:

Brian Derx N5BA 281-894-5942

### PC Programming and Operations:

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### Interference (Basic Advice):

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### Card Checking Awards Managers:

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H O Townsend K5CX - WAZ  
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### NARS Public Information Officer:

Joe Sokolowski, KD5KR  
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## NARS Information

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### ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN

TBA

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL INFORMATION

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### Send address, phone, email and other changes to:

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### NET

10M Ragchew: Mon 8:00 PM, 28,444 ssb  
Coordinator: Jim Kirk KJ5X  
281-376-0718, kj5x@swbell.net

### WEB SITE

URL: <http://www.w5nc.org>  
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### NARS REFLECTOR

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### VE SESSION (ARRL)

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### REPEATERS

2M: 146.660 / 146.060 (KA5AKG)  
Tone: 141.3  
70 cm: 444.375 / 449.375 (KA5AKG)  
Tone: 103.5

### MEETINGS

#### Monthly General Membership

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

#### Saturday Breakfast

Denny's, 7720 Louetta, 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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Northwest Amateur Radio Society is a  
Special Service Club affiliated with the  
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