

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

October 2003

October Meeting - Amateur Radio and Radio Control

The October meeting will take a different turn this month. That turn will be radio-controlled (RC) models. George Pierce W5GFP, with support from a local radio control club will present the program. George, involved in RC modeling for more than thirty years, has been a NARS member for the last seven years and is an Extra Class ham. The program will give an overview of the RC hobby. The group will cover RC modeling history and there will be a display of various types of models and components. They will give a demonstration of what can be done with RC models. The models covered will include cars, boats and aircraft. The program and show and tell will be followed by a demonstration flight by an experienced RC pilot of a RC helicopter. The program will be of interest to all kids between the ages of 9 to 99 years and beyond, so plan to bring your family.

Ham and "Sheez" Update

Every time I sit down to write this update, I start with a mental list of the Ham and "Sheez" activities from the prior month. This month, I am truly overwhelmed with everything that we've done since the last time I wrote this article. We are definitely a busy and fun group of people. If you haven't joined in any of our events, you're really missing out . . . just keep reading, and you'll see what I mean!

The **September wine tasting party** at Tina and Eddie Sinclair's house was one of the best Ham and "Sheez" events ever! Seventeen of us enjoyed delicious food -- two hors d'oeuvres, three main courses, and two desserts. With each course, a new wine was introduced to the group and sampled (of course!). Fresh-brewed espresso added the perfect end to the evening. We learned quite a bit about the various grapes, wineries, and wine growing areas in several countries. Collectively, we decided that the wine tasting party will be an annual tradition. Sorry, folks, but you may have to wait until next September to be part of this terrific event. [Well, we might be easily convinced that we should have spring wine tasting party. . . after all, practice makes perfect!] Tina and Eddie - Sincere thanks for allowing us to spend the evening at your home. You are the ultimate hostess and host!



Left to right, front: Teresa's friend, Stacey, Schalee KD5WLL, Pat White. Left to right, back: Desi KB5YGG and Georgina Frantz.

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Important Dates

Friday, Oct 17, 7:30 PM - General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

Saturday, Oct 25, 8:30 AM - VE License Exam Session, Tomball Community Center, S. Cherry & Market streets (just South of Main).

Tuesday, Oct 28, 7:30 PM - Board of Directors meeting, Terra Nova Clubhouse, 5200 Woodville.

Contests

Oct 18 SIRE Special Event, W5NC, Cat Spring, 20 Meters

Oct 18-19 JARTS WW RTTY, Worked All Germany

Oct 19 RSGB 21/28 MHz CW, Asia-Pacific CW Sprint

Oct 25-26 CQ WW SSB DX

Nov 29-30 CQ WW CW DX

Wednesday Lunch Bunch

Oct 15 Woodlands House

Oct 22 Hill Country Kitchen Buffet

Oct 29 Red Lobster

Nov 5 Casa Imperial Mexican

Nov 12 Strack Farms

Wednesday Lunch Bunch - West

Oct 15 Jason's Deli

Oct 22 Luther's BBQ

Oct 29 Skeeter's

Nov 5 Charlie's Hamburgers

Nov 12 Cafe Express

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 2003.

S.I.R.E. Ride-A-Thon: Sat, Oct 18, 7IL Ranch, Cat Spring
The format for the trail ride has changed this year. There will be fewer checkpoints and a vehicle will be placed at each point. The entrance to the trail will be opened to riders at 1:00PM and closed at 3:00PM. After the ride a live band will provide music during dinner and a dance to follow.

There will also be a Special Event station operating during the event.

Contact Keith Dutson (281-351-7683 or WD5DXL@arrl.net) to sign up for this excellent event.

VE Session Results

At the NARS VE Test Session held September 27, 2003 there were five candidates. The results were three new Technicians, and one upgrade to Extra. Congratulations to one candidate, who walked in a passed all elements to become a new Extra. Elements administered totaled nine with eight passed.

The VE's were Bruce Wright WC5CW, Jim Kirk KJ5X, Walter Holmes K5WH, Tom Stamps N5TL, Keith Dutson WD5DXL, and from prospective VE Lee Kinard K5AVY.

Thanks to all of the VE's for their help. Thanks to Walter Holmes for taking over in my absence.

The next NARS VE Test session will be held on October 25, 2003. See ya there.

Walter Hock KK5LO
NARS VE Session Manager

Yeah, I know, the check's in the mail ...

Not infrequently, I receive inquiries regarding membership status. Usually someone will refer to a second renewal invoice received when that person did indeed send in his renewal, and has the cancelled check to prove it! Remember years ago, when you sent in a change of address for a magazine subscription, it was processed in a matter of a week or two. Now, with the introduction of computerized accounting, the change can take three to four months. Well, maybe I'm stretching it a bit, but for the most part, it's true. NARS isn't quite that bad, but in our case, there are a few not so obvious delays built into the operation.

When it comes close to your membership renewal time, Keith Dutson WD5DXL, who maintains the database, sends you a renewal invoice, and a month later, he sends out a second one. When you mail in your renewal to our post office box, I get into the act. Within 72 hours a report is generated and sent via email to Keith so he may update the database. Your check is usually deposited on a weekly basis. Once that happens, you're good for another year.

Now, what happens if you didn't send in the renewal soon after you received it? Ok, now it sits in your bill box for a week or two and by the time it makes the trip to Keith, he's sending out a second notice. Soon after, he receives my report showing you renewed. Oops, too late to call it back. A worse case would be if you cornered a board member, say at Saturday's breakfast, and gave him your check or cash and a name written on the back of a used napkin. He may or may not see me for a week or two (or more,) before passing it on. Hmm. . . Get the picture? Not much we can do about that delay.

What you can do as a member, though, is to call up the NARS website and pick the target labeled "Membership." There you'll see a listing showing your renewal date. If that date has been updated, you're in good standing. If not, send me an email (kd5kr@arrl.net) and I'll put my top people on it! Isn't automation wonderful?

Joe Sokolowski, KD5KR, Administrative Secretary

Ham and "Sheez" Update

Continued from page 1

September Wine Tasting Party at Tina and Eddie Sinclair's house was one of the best Ham and "Sheez" events ever!



Cal WF5W and his espresso machine.



Front: Schalee KD5WLL, Teresa W5MOM, Tina Sinclair KD5FME. Back: Eddie Sinclair KC5UIB, Mike K7LEX



Front: Paul W5PF and Georgina Frantz. Back: Marty W5MF, Mike K7LEX

Desi's diner was the venue for the **first** (of many) **Ham and "Sheez" Bunko parties**. Desi has designed her dinette area like a diner with four tables, a juke box, and wonderful diner décor. It was a perfect place for a game night. Thirteen ladies spent the evening of September 30 at Desi and Nelson Livingston's home playing Bunko. For many of us, it was the first time we had played the game; I guarantee it will not be the last. [Tina - Thank you for your patience in teaching us how to play!] To say that we had a good time would not come close to being accurate. We had a fantastic time playing Bunko and visiting with each other. I'm very confident that you will soon hear of future planned Bunko parties. [Desi - Thank you so much for hosting the party in your diner. We had a great time!]

The **new Ham and "Sheez" vanity call, K5YLS**, was inaugurated in the Texas QSO Party. Schalee (KD5WLL) and I participated in the contest as multi-mobile. On the Saturday of the contest, we traveled through eight counties, made around 160 contacts, and had an absolutely great time. When Schalee was operating, she was able to get several runs going. A woman's voice on the radio is really a powerful draw! To ensure the inauguration was complete, we proudly wore baseball caps embroidered with K5YLS and our names. Yes - we're proud and rightfully so!

The trend of activities doesn't slow down in October. By the time you read this article, four of us will have traveled to **Canton for Trade Days**. This trip has also turned into an annual event. [We use the excuse that we're Christmas shopping with our husbands - so far, it's worked!] We'll be sure to let you know all about the fantastic bargains that we found.

Our **October meeting** will take place on **Monday, October 20**. Please note that this is a change to the "normal"

schedule. We will be meeting at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church at 7:00ish. For those of you who would like to start early Christmas shopping, be sure to come to the meeting. We'll be making a fun, easy Christmas present.

Other activities that are coming up for the remainder of the year include our **Holiday Party on Saturday, November 22**, and **Schalee's 3rd annual Holiday Baking Party on Sunday, December 14**. More detail will be included in next month's update and will also be sent via email. Be sure to join us for these great events.

Monthly recipe:

Glazed Pork Chops -From the Weight Watchers Cookbook [Bruce and I just tried this recipe. It's really delicious!]

4 boneless center-cut pork loin chops (about 1/2 inch thick)
Cooking spray
1/8 teaspoon ground sage
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup minced onion
1/4 cup currant jelly
1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

Trim fat from pork chops. Coat a large, nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Place over high heat until hot. Sprinkle chops with sage, salt, pepper. Cook 1 minute on each side. Reduce heat to medium. Cook chops 4 to 5 minutes on each side or until done. Transfer chops to a serving platter to keep warm. Add onion to the skillet and cook over medium heat for 2 minutes, stirring often. Reduce heat. Add jelly and mustard. Simmer for 2 minutes or until the glaze is reduced to 1/4 cup. To serve, spoon glaze over chops. Four servings.

Enjoy!

Laurie Meier, N1YXU
n1yxu@arrl.net

QUA* Joe Sokolowski KD5KR?

In any group, including NARS, there are four types of people: Outgoing, Analytical, Supportive and Creative. The Supportive are the backbone of the organization; I have had the pleasure of talking with one of these people this week. When we get to the NARS meeting coffee is always ready and when I need a phone number for an interview, who do I call? I'll bet you've called him too! KD5KR, Joe Sokolowski has been at our monthly meetings an hour early for fifteen years to have coffee ready. He also keeps up with the NARS membership, dues and much more behind the scenes. Supporting other people, whether in business or hobbies, has been and I'm sure will continue to be the focus of his life.

Joe was born in Chicago in 1934. He had his first experience with electricity at age two; fingers in light sockets are not a good thing. Luckily he wasn't hurt bad and didn't let that experience keep him from our hobby. His cousin, who was in the Navy in World War II, introduced him to the idea of radios. He had a "cat whisker" receiver he listened to next to the radiator lying on the floor when he was in 5th and 6th grade. But as young people do, he developed interests in other areas, including agriculture. This was enhanced during the summers at his uncle's 1000 acre farm in North Dakota for two months every summer. He enjoyed the work and thought he could devote his life to the farm, but after one year of college he realized that he was in the wrong field (yes, there is a pun intended).

He left college and joined the Navy and was trained as a Signal master.

The Morse code he learned was with lights and he, of course also used flags for communication. When he left the Navy he attended DeVry Institute in Chicago and was trained on Univac computers. Yes, the original, when "bugs" had wings and took down whole computers which filled air-conditioned rooms. He was with them for three years and then went to work for GE. His skills were in demand and he soon found himself in El Paso working for Honeywell in Process Controls. He worked out of White Sand missile Range with the environmental chamber and telemetry data.

In 1978 he began two years in San Francisco as Service Manager. Then he was transferred to Houston, Texas.

He retired in 1999 and thought he would be bored, but his interest in serving people has continued. He edits the newsletter for his subdivision and makes the badges for the kids at the neighborhood swimming pool.

He became involved with Habitat for Humanity (by the way, Joe they are building a home for my cousin and her son in Fremont, Nebraska).

He also helped out at Tamina, east of I-45 once or twice a year repairing homes. It is a community established in 1878 by freed slaves.

In 1971 Joe met Margie while camping near Abilene. He had been in a hurry and forgotten something, when he asked around everyone said to ask Margie, she always had everything. She was a surgical nurse and now

audits medical records part-time. They each had two children and now also have four grandchildren.

Joe's only pet is Ralph, a catfish in a five gallon aquarium. If he ever gets lonely we could introduce him to my fish "Pretty Boy".

Joe started with CB radio in the early 1970's. He then met people in HAM radio and got his first license, WB5WJB. He upgraded to Advanced in the mid-80's. Joe combined his camping hobby with radio and would set-up on picnic tables at Huntsville State Park. His favorite contact was made while there late one evening when he talked with a gentleman in Tasmania on a wire strung through the trees. But the best coverage while camping was always at Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, where the repeater was at 6,000 feet. Wouldn't that be great!

Joe enjoyed teaching the NARS training classes and has held just about every position available in the club, except chaplain, but only because there isn't one! Joe has an Alinco DX 70, a Pyramid power supply and an MFJ tuner. His antenna is a vertical 5-band, and when he has the time while camping he sets up his G5RV.

Joe is "always discovering new things." Just keep your fingers out of sockets and thanks for keeping the coffee hot!

*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 Cal, WF5W, got the ball rolling with a report of two new ones on 80M (Poland and Canary Islands). He also has the beverage antenna back in operation and is just about as ready as he can get for the fall season. Cal is making plans to nab one of the 3C0s before they get off the Annobon Island. However that may be in direct conflict with his annual pilgrimage to the Ten Tec factory hamfest on the 4 and 5 of October. I'll bet he has a few extra stories, news items, for us when he returns. Good luck Cal and fill us in when you return. The good luck is something that may be needed to get through to the 3C0 as the competition is really heavy.

KJ5X, Jim, just got in under the wire with his report. He said: the KJ5X shack has not radiated much DX energy lately. A month out of town and what seemed like poor band conditions are the excuse. The good news is a T5X-Somalia card arrived on Sep 30 for number 323 confirmed. Wish it had got here a week earlier so it could have been included in the annual DXCC report. I heard S2 on the air a couple of days ago and had a chance to work him but he left too soon. I also see where some folks are going to FR/E late October-early November. Don't have him either. Still looking for 9N and S2 and others. Call! Reward!! Now I think it is high time someone collected that reward Jim keeps offering. However, I'd work 'em first, report 'em to the DX editor and then call KJ5X.

Lee, K5AVY, scanned his call book month and found seven countries worked and a few were new ones for him. They are: ON4AEK, Belgium, on 40m phone; Y9RP, Romania, on 15m phone; 9A4D, Croatia, on 20m phone; FO/DL1IAN, Austral Island, on 12m phone and FO/DF6IC on 15m phone as well as V31XW, Belize, on 15m phone. Not a lot of contacts, but ones worthwhile. Lee's confirmed DXCC count is now 56. Cards of interest are: 3B8CF, Mauritius Island; CO3VK,

Cuba; FO/G4MFW, Mangareva Is. on 15m & 20m; HA9SU, Hungary; J88JA, St. Vincent Island; KG4LH, Guantanamo Bay Cuba; OM5DP, Slovak Republic; S58AL, Slovenia; PV7G, Itamaraca Is. (Brazil); V31WD, Belize; VP9/IK2RZP, Bermuda and ZL7C Chatham Is. DXpedition. Lee was not satisfied with just DX so he had some fun working all 14 SE stations along Route 66 from Chicago to California and have 3 confirmed to date. K5AVY also had time to get Logger32 to print the log. Determined that there was another download required. Used L32 in the TQP. Headset not fully functional yet and have still not been on CW. It sounds like Lee has left a few things to look forward to. HI!

Here at the shack of station KQ5U only 19 stations got into the log. All good ones of course and a few that are noteworthy. VK9XAB, Christmas Island; V63SXW, Micronesia; 3C0V, Annobon Island and JT1CO, Mongolia, all worked on 20CW. XF1K, Pearl Islands (Mexico); YJ0VB, Vanuatu; JY9QJ, Jordan; T99W, Bosnia; 9L1JT, Sierra Leone; 3B8CF, Mauritius; FK/AC4LN, New Caledonia and FO/DL1IAN, Tokelau Island, were all netted on 40CW. I must say 40M is a wonderful band with a 100W and a two element beam. 80M also is beginning to show some activity as FM5GU, Martinique; CO2JD, Cuba, were worked CW and FO/AC4LN made a showing on SSB.

The current DX activities for the coming month can be found at one of the following URLs: www.425dxn.org/; <http://www.papays.com/opdx.html>; www.arrl.org.

To continue the topic of propagation from last month and looking at what the numbers from the sun represent. It is time to take a look at the structure of the ionosphere. As a refresher of that long ago science course, our atmosphere is

divided into three layers. The layer closest to the earth's surface is called the troposphere, which extends up to about 10 miles above the surface. The stratosphere is the next level up and extends from about 10 miles above the earth's surface to 50 miles above the surface. The Ionosphere is everything above 50 miles up.

From the perspective of HF propagation we need to look mostly at the atmosphere above about 30 miles up as this is the domain of the "sky wave". That is the top half of the stratosphere and the entire ionosphere. In radio jargon, this region is usually just referred to as the ionosphere. This area is then divided into three sections: D, E, F (F1 and F2). These are in order from the ground up. These layers are strata of similarly ionized atmosphere.

Looking at these layers in terms of the HF amateur bands, we see they have an impact on radio waves in different ways for different frequencies and at different times in the solar cycle.

The D-layer ionization is not very intense as compared to the other higher layers. Ionization peaks around local noon and decreases in the afternoon. Around sunset recombination happens rapidly and the D-layer disappears. The D-layer is mostly an absorber of RF. The lower the frequency the more it is absorbed (VLF does poorly in the D-layer). At times even LF and MF frequencies may be completely absorbed in the D-layer. HF waves are normally not absorbed and pass on through it; however, considerable amounts of RF are absorbed in the HF range. For frequencies above HF (6M and up), the D-layer has no real effect. This explains why some local AM broadcast stations sign at sunset and return again at sunrise as frequency sharing is no longer possible.

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The E-layer is located between about 55 to 90 miles up. The height of the E-layer varies with level of ionization and corresponds to where we are in the solar cycle. The level of ionization here follows that of the D-layer, but variations are more regular and predictable. At sunset the ionization becomes too weak to be useful as an aid to HF communication. During the day ionization is usually enough to refract radio waves back to earth at frequencies as high as 20MHz. The height of the E-layer enables radio waves to be propagated up to about 1200 miles. This seems to explain why there isn't any DX on 40M during the day and why the 40M band goes "long" a while after sunset. At some points in the solar cycle the world is available on 40M as well as the higher bands.

The F-region is from about 100 to 250 miles up. During the daylight hours, especially when solar activity is high and during the summer months, the F-region splits into two distinct layers, the F1 and F2 layers. The F1-layer is usually the area between 100 and 160 miles up. The F1-layer will occasionally be a refracting area, but normally HF waves pass through leaving the main effect of the F1-layer to just add more absorption to the HF waves.

The F2-layer is the most highly ionized layer and is the most important for DX at HF. Unfortunately, the F2-layer is the most variable of the layers. It seems to take all the hits from space and the sun first and is the most sensitive to all the various components of the solar cycle. The F2-layer is important because of its height allows propagation over longer distances than the E-layer. During the night when the F1 and F2 layers merge, sufficient ionization is present to permit propagation over long distances and additional benefits are gained because the lower layers are less ionized and less of the signal is absorbed in

these layers.

It is important to note most of the radio wave absorption occurs in the lower layers where the ion density is the greatest. As HF passes into the ionosphere, it loses energy to free electrons and ions. If these ions do not collide with other particles, the wave continues to be propagated with little loss in intensity. The amount of absorption is dependant on density of the layer making the more dense D and E-layers the greatest absorbers of HF.

It is only fitting that some time be spent on the "surface wave" since it is a principle mode of propagation on 160M and 80M. The surface wave is just what its name implies. It is the wave that travels along the surface of the earth. Its method of propagation is to be diffracted around objects in its path. The smaller the object in relation to the wavelength of the radio wave the more likely the radio wave is to be diffracted around the object. This sounds great. Just like water flowing to the sea.

However, the surface wave has the same problem as water flowing to the sea; the radio wave is absorbed by the earth. The absorption is the result of induced voltages into the earth. The amount of absorption is a result of the electric field of the wave. If the wave is horizontally polarized, the electric field is constantly in contact with the earth and attenuation is high; however, by using vertically polarized waves we can minimize the extent to which the electric field is in contact with the earth. The level of absorption of the surface wave is also a function of the conductivity of soil it is passing over. The more conductive the soil the less attenuation there will be.

The surface wave is of most importance to the amateur operating on the 160M band and to a much lesser extent on the 80M band.

The principle methods of HF propagation are by reflection and refraction. Reflection is just like we think of when we see light bounce off a mirror, but in the case of HF waves they are bounced off densely ionized layers of the atmosphere or the earth. Much of how the HF waves are reflected depends on the angle in which they strike the surface and the frequency of the wave. It can readily be seen how this can lead to some long range propagation of a wave and is especially true when multiple reflections take place or the reflecting surface is a high altitude.

Refraction works much like reflection, but more opportunity exists for attenuation of the signal. In the case of refraction, as a HF wave leaves a layer and moves into a layer of higher density, the HF wave is bent back towards the less dense layer. For example, as a HF wave leaves the earth's surface through an atmosphere that is not ionized, it travels upward to the ionosphere where it encounters an ionized layer and will be bent back towards the earth's surface. For refraction to work the approach angle, frequency used, the density of the layer and thickness of the ionized layer are the main determining factors as to how much and how fast the wave will be bent back towards earth.

Propagation has been bounced and bent enough for one time, but stay tuned as we will do it a few more times in future articles.

There is one more thing that needs to be addressed this month. The DX Column will need a new editor starting with the January 2004 column. If you are interested or know someone who is interested, please contact me or a board member for details. The NARS newsletter needs your help.

Gud DX de Terry, KQ5U

Anatomy of NARS NEWS

This article is intended to be an expose' of the people, activities and actions behind monthly production and distribution of our newsletter. Armed with this information, each reader will be able to clearly see the purpose and meaning of NARS NEWS, possibly offer constructive criticism for improvement and perhaps even contribute in some way to future issues.

Like all periodicals, NARS NEWS is bound by a monthly schedule beginning with collection of articles and other information and culminating with distribution. If you look on page one at the bottom of the Important Dates column you will see that the deadline for articles is the last day of the month. So the starting point of the schedule is the last day of the month preceding the issue month.

At the last Board meeting, attendees agreed that the primary purpose of this publication is to remind members of the upcoming general membership meeting and to announce the featured program. Thus, the end of the schedule is a week before the meeting. Since the meeting is always the third Friday of each month, the length of the schedule varies from two to three weeks depending on the weekday of the prior month end. For this issue, the schedule is two weeks and three days because September 30 fell on Tuesday.

So just what happens in this two to three week period? These are the major activities:

1. Gather articles and information
2. Edit submitted articles
3. Compose and format chosen content
4. Post preliminary copy for review
5. Revise preliminary copy as necessary
6. Print hard copy for distribution
7. Update membership database
8. Extract distribution information from database
9. Print invoices and mailing labels
10. Stuff and mail invoices and hard copies

11. Post electronic version to the web site
12. Send electronic copies via email

What about timing of these activities? Ideally, the first two tasks are completed in a week. The composer is then given several days to fit task 3 into an existing busy contract work schedule. Tasks 4 and 5 can be done in one or two days. Tasks 6 through 9 are completed on Friday, one week before the meeting. Task 10 is usually handled at breakfast the next morning. The final two tasks are normally completed by Sunday afternoon.

If you add up the days in this list, it is clear that a two-week "window" is just barely enough to get all the tasks completed in a normal manner. Complications such as receipt of articles after the deadline can have a detrimental effect on the following tasks.

Let's look at some details of the above task list.

Gather articles and information

Contributors usually email their articles to the editor. Many times the articles are not received by the deadline, and this can be particularly stressful if the schedule is only two weeks. Other information is collected from QST and CQ magazines, and occasionally from individuals outside the membership. For example, last month there was a request from Mark Ziegler W6ZZZ to publish details of the California QSO Party. Later, during the review task, it was determined that the details would detract from another article about our own Texas QSO Party, and possibly confuse some readers, so the CQP detail was omitted and replaced with a link to the CQP web site.

Edit submitted articles

As articles are received, they are edited to eliminate grammatical and punctuation errors. The content is judged for accuracy, relevance and language, with occasional follow-up with the author.

Compose and format chosen content

Articles must appear on certain pages. Page one is reserved for the meeting notice and important dates. There is usually room for one more article, or at least the beginning of an article, so it must be chosen for this spot. The last page is reserved for reference information. The composer decides the best place for the remainder of the articles.

Post preliminary copy for review

The composed newsletter is converted to a PDF (Adobe Portable Document File) and posted to the editor's web site for review by a group consisting of the president, administrative secretary, Webmaster and contributors.

Revise preliminary copy as necessary

Reviewers are given about one day to submit corrections. After corrections are made, a new final edition PDF is generated. This task is necessary to ensure a quality publication.

Print hard copy for distribution

The final edition PDF is printed and taken to the printer for duplication. Print volume is fairly consistent each month, currently 80 copies. This covers about 30 copies for surface mail to members, 15 copies for the administrative secretary, 25 copies for the local Ham store and a few copies to hand out at breakfast on mail-out day. Extra copies are sometime printed for special occasions such as the annual awards banquet and Field Day.

Update membership database

Notice of membership renewals and new members received from the administrative secretary are applied to the database during the month. Other information such as address, phone and email changes, and license upgrades are also applied as they are received. There is often a report received at the last minute before distribution, and it is important to apply these updates to ensure the latest information is reflected on invoices, mailing labels and the web site.

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Extract distribution information from database

Once the database is updated, programs are run to create invoice and label files to merge into word processing documents. Additionally, programs are run to create the email distribution lists for importation to the email client (Outlook) used for distribution.

Print invoices and mailing labels

Invoices and mailing labels are printed from the word processing documents. This is usually done on Friday evening, one week before the meeting. The labels are sorted by first name, with labels for invoices at the end. The invoices are printed four to a page to save on mailing weight and paper cost. They are sorted by last name so that family members may be matched together. The invoice indicates the chosen distribution method: web (email notification), email (email PDF attachment), mail (hard copy) or n/a (invoice only, no newsletter).

Stuff and mail invoices and hard copies

Invoices are matched with mailing labels Friday evening. Invoices for members receiving a hard copy are stuffed with the hard copy. The remaining invoices are stuffed in small envelopes. The remaining labels, hard copies and envelopes are usually handled the next morning during breakfast. Members who regularly meet for breakfast each Saturday know that the second or third Saturday is usually newsletter mail-out day.

Post electronic version to the web site

The final PDF is uploaded to the web site. This is a task performed by the Webmaster and involves updating the newsletter link on the home page and the link to the archive copies.

Send electronic copies via email

The editor sends out email to members who have elected to receive the electronic version. There are two lists: one for notification of availability on the web site and another for attachment of the PDF.

This process has been in use for many

years. It is somewhat complicated but manageable.

Now let's look at the people that are involved in publishing NARS NEWS.

First and foremost are the regular contributors. The activities co-chairmen Terry Myers KQ5U and Danny Richards N5BE provide the meeting notice. Together they are responsible for arranging the programs for all meetings this year. This month Terry wrote the notice. Terry also writes the DX column, a task that involves gathering reports from our DX members. Laurie Meier N1YXU writes the Ham and Sheez report each month. This has become a favorite column for many of our lady hams. Another column growing in popularity is the QUA article written each month by Schalee Lodge KD5WLL. Schalee manages to extract the salient details of life experiences from our better-known members, and present them in the form of a mini-biography. Walter Hock KK5LO reports the results and participating VE's in his monthly VE Session Results column. And last but not least, Gregg Erlenbusch W5IDX writes the President's Corner, which is intended to recognize members for their individual contributions to current club activities, and to promote upcoming activities.

Next are the folks that write articles on an ad hoc basis. For example, Joe Sokolowski KD5KR wrote the article titled "Yeah, I know, the check's in the mail" that appears in this month's issue. Last month H. O. Townsend K5CX wrote "Texas QSO Party Details" to get us revved up for this year's most popular contest. Jerry Whiting KB5VGD put together "The NARS Jacket - 2003" to promote sales of the logo jacket before cold weather arrives. Going back to the July issue, Bruce Meier N1LN gave us a summary report of Field Day 2003 and Bill Denton W5SB surprised us with details of the success of the NARS Golf Team in a local tournament. In the June issue Dr Patricia Reiff KD5IZK had a nice write-up to promote the HMNS Ham

Camp planned for July. In the May issue Harry Gage AC5XD wrote about the dangers of low electrical currents and Mike Hance K5NZ provided an excellent, informative article on special cooling for linear amplifiers. The list could go on for several pages, but there is no room for more details.

There are also contributors that relay information rather than articles. This information is usually license upgrades, new vanity call signs, outdated or incorrect information references (back page), planned events (hamfests, tailgate sales), member/family illnesses/losses and errors in the membership database (wrong new distribution, invoice sent after dues paid, etc).

Last are the folks that are directly involved in production. Chief among them is Beth Dutson who uses her considerable documentation experience and expertise to compose the newsletter each month. We are fortunate to have the use of her professional documentation package (Interleaf) used in contract work for her clients. Membership updates consistently provided by Joe KD5KR are crucial to accurate distribution. H.O. K5CX updates the web site with the latest issue to permit timely email notification. Finally, various persons at the Saturday "mail-out" breakfast lend their hands to stuff hard copies, affix labels and stamps, and seal envelopes.

In summary, it is clear that NARS NEWS is a reflection of those persons willing to provide input and carry out the tasks. All members are encouraged to express their ideas for change to make the procedure more effective and efficient. Please think about how you may be able to contribute your talents to this effort, whether as a contributor or a worker. All positions are immediately available to anyone. There is always room for a new regular or ad hoc contributor.

Keith Dutson WD5DXL
Editor

Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new member Schalee Lodge KD5WLL.

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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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