

# NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

September 2003

## September Meeting - Traffic Handling and Emergency Preparedness

September 11, 2001 - Tropical Storm Allison - the space shuttle Challenger tragedy - the Northeast blackout of 2003 - what do all these have in common? The answer is amateur radio. In each of these events, amateur radio operators were among the first to respond and send critical information.

The emergency preparedness and emergency communications facet of amateur radio has received quite a lot of attention recently. In late June at the ARRL national convention in Arlington, the Office of Homeland Security acknowledged amateur radio operators as critical first responders in emergency situations.

At the NARS September 19 meeting, Laurie Meier and other NARS members will present information on traffic handling and emergency preparedness. You will learn ways in which you can become a more effective first responder by participating in specific NARS activities and activities that are sponsored by other local organizations. Be sure to attend, and invite friends and neighbors who are interested in learning about emergency preparedness.

## Your NARS Dues at Work in the Fight Against BPL

At the NARS Board meeting held Tuesday, August 26, 2003, the Board members approved sending \$200.00 to the ARRL to help in the fight against the recent FCC proposal for Broadband Over Power Line (BPL).

The Board urges all NARS members to write their Congressperson to express their views on this proposal. Steve Niles N5EN provided the following information on how to contact your representative:

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Subject: FCC ET Docket No. 03-104, Notice of Inquiry on Broadband Over Power Line

The ARRL also has provided much information on this subject, including a video clip showing testing in the field during BPL demonstrations.

When you write, be sure to include the word "pollution" as it seems to be one of the "hot buttons" in Washington today. An example is "I am writing about my concern of noise pollution in amateur radio receivers heard during an ARRL field test near a recent demonstration of BPL..."

If we all work together, there is hope that BPL will be defeated.

Keith Dutson WD5DXL

## Texas QSO Party Details

QST to all 'Dillo's - Worldwide - It's that time again. The time we've waited for all year. 2003 Texas QSO Party Time!

*Continued on page 2*

## Important Dates

**Friday, Sep 19, 7:30 PM** - General Membership meeting, Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church - Eyeball QSOs, 7:00 PM.

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

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

### Contests

Sep 14 North American SSB Sprint

Sep 20-21 SAC CW

Sep 27-28 CQ World-Wide RTTY, SAC SSB

Sep 27-28 Texas QSO Party (see details in TQP article)

Oct 4-5 California QSO Party (see more in CQP article)

Oct 25-26 CQ WW DX SSB

### Wednesday Lunch Bunch

Sep 17 Pepperchino

Sep 24 Luby's Cafeteria

Oct 1 Jason's Deli

Oct 8 Horn's Texas BBQ

Oct 15 Woodlands House

### Wednesday Lunch Bunch - West

Sep 17 Cafe Express

Sep 24 Chili's

Oct 1 Fuddrucker's

Oct 8 Escalante Mexican

Oct 15 Jason's Deli

### Monday "Tail Draggers" Lunch Bunch

12:00 Noon Aviator's Grill, Hooks Airport

### Swapmeets / Hamfests:

Aug 23, 8:00 AM: Taildraggers / Tomball Repeated Group, 1119 S Cherry, Tomball; info: <http://www.dutson.net/Ham/TomballRepeaterGroup.htm>

Sep 13, 7:00 AM: Katy A.R.S. / Houston Vintage Radio Association (H.V.R.A.) swap meet and auction; Katy VFW hall on Ave D in Katy, TX; Info: <http://www.omnilaw.com/karsradio>

### Code Classes:

Aug 18-23, 7:00-9:00 PM, KD5VJU (Robert) and N5CEP (Charlie), FM1774 and Gayle, Magnolia; info:

<http://www.dutson.net/Ham/TomballRepeaterGroup.htm>

**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**

## President's Corner

September 2003

Nothing to report this month.

Gregg Erlenbusch  
W5IDX

## 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 August 23, 2003 there were seven candidates. The results were four new Technicians, and one upgrade to General. Elements administered totaled eight with five passed.

The VE's were Steve Niles N5EN, Bruce Wright WC5CW, Gregg Erlenbusch W5IDX, Keith Dutson WD5DXL, and Bob Walworth N5ET.

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

The next NARS VE Test session will be held on September 27, 2003. See ya there.

Walter Hock KK5LO  
NARS VE Session Manager

## Texas QSO Party Details

*Continued from page 1*

The purpose of the TQP is to provide competition for Amateur Radio Operators to contact as many Texas stations in as many different Texas counties as possible. And, there are 254 counties to choose from. We also want to provide county hunters with the opportunity to contact rare Texas counties during the published contest time and in accordance with the rules of operation. Here are the details:

### Dates and Times

Saturday - September 27 -- 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (UTC 1400Z Sept. 27th thru 0200Z Sept. 28th)

Sunday - September 28 -- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (UTC 1400Z to 2000Z Sept. 28th)

If you are a little undecided, check out the Official TQP web site at: <http://www.txqp.org> for a list of what's new. For entrants who meet the qualifications, there is a Tee-Shirt available; and thanks to the Alamo DX Amigos, there is a new traveling club trophy to be awarded to the top scoring club. And, more! Check it out!

For a complete schedule, rules, award categories, and general information, please see <http://www.txqp.org>. You can also see September QST, page 106.

Best of luck to all entrants.

*Northwest Amateur Radio Society, Houston*

*H. O. Townsend - K5CX*

*Coordinator, Texas QSO Party*

## California QSO Party Details

California QSO Party (CQP) 2003 - <http://www.cqp.org/>

1600Z October 4, 2003 -- 2200Z October 5, 2003

Sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club (NCCC)

See the CQP web site (shown above) for details of this contest, including Introduction, Object, Exchange and Awards.

*Marc, W6ZZZ, a member of the CQP Publicity Team*

# Ham and "Sheez" News

If you've never played the Chinese tile game called Mahjong, you should have attended our **August meeting** to learn how. Cheryl Tompkins, KD5AXC, graciously taught us the basics and patiently helped us through two games. Some of us had played Mahjong and others had not even seen the tiles before the meeting. By the end of the evening, we were confidently discarding tiles and trying to be the first to get to Mahjong. Hopefully, Cheryl will bring her tiles to another meeting in the near future. [Cheryl - Thank you so much for a very fun evening!]

Our **September outing** will be on Saturday the 13th when we have a wine tasting party at Tina Sinclair's (KD5FME) home. [Tina - Many thanks for offering to host this party!] As you've probably noticed, several Ham and "Sheez" related activities in recent months have shown a common theme - wine tasting. We now feel that we are educated enough to conduct our own wine tasting, and you are invited! Here's the scoop - each couple who attends the wine tasting will research a specific wine and tell the group about it (for example: winery information, types of grape, trivia about the region where the wine is produced, etc.), and each couple will bring a hors d'oeuvres to compliment the wine. We'll get to know several wines and enjoy different types of foods. The idea is to have the wines and hors d'oeuvres served in the order of a meal. Here are the types of wines/foods that are already part of the menu for the evening: Pinot grigio/appetizer (Georgina and Paul), merlot/entrée (Schalee and Mike), chianti/entrée (Laurie and Bruce), port/dessert (Tina and Eddie), and cappuccino/dessert (Cal and Pat). If you would like to join in the fun, please send a note with the type of wine and hors d'oeuvre to nlyxu@arrl.net. Please send the note no later than Wednesday, September 13 - we need to get a headcount of those who will be attending. The festivities will begin at 7:00 on Saturday, September 13.

Directions to the Sinclairs will be sent directly to the NARS reflector and to the Ham and "Sheez" distribution list. This is guaranteed to be quite an experience - don't miss out!

While you're marking your calendar for the wine tasting party, be sure to note that our **September meeting** will be on Tuesday, September 30. Since we enjoyed learning how to play Mahjong so much at our August meeting, we're carrying the game theme forward to our September meeting. Desi Livingston (KB5YGG) will be hosting the meeting at her home, where we will have a Bunko party. In fact, we'll be playing in "Desi's Diner" - You'll just have to come and see for yourself. Directions to Desi's home will be mailed under separate cover to the NARS reflector and to the Ham and "Sheez" distribution list. Please be sure to join us for a very fun evening.

We started an annual tradition last year when we went to Canton for the **October Trade Days**. On Friday, October 3, some of the Ham and "Sheez" ladies will venture north to Canton for a second time. Since we were only able to cover a very small portion of the Trade Days last year, we have quite a bit left to explore. We will spend Friday night at a hotel near Canton then complete our trip with a full day of shopping on Saturday. Trust me - we'll let you know all about the bargains that we find!

Be sure to listen for members of Ham and "Sheez" in the upcoming **Texas QSO Party**. Last year's first place single op mobile, Anita Townsend (N5AOK), will be one of the most active stations you'll hear during the weekend. Schalee Lodge (KD5WLL) and I will also be operating mobile. We will be using the **new Ham and "Sheez" club callsign!** We are currently assigned the call, KD5YYP; however, we have applied for a vanity call, and the FCC website shows the club as most likely to receive our first

choice vanity call. Hopefully, we will have the vanity call before the Texas QSO Party. We'll keep everyone posted.

There are many more exciting activities planned for our group for the remainder of the year. Since we're running out of space for this month's update, more details will be coming next month.

## Monthly recipe:

Lazy Lasagna - Definitely not from the Weight Watchers Cookbook!!

1 lb hamburger  
1 lb Italian sausage (That's the "ham" part of this recipe!)  
16 oz cottage cheese or ricotta cheese (small curd is preferred)  
1 egg  
1 jar of your favorite spaghetti sauce (Prego, Ragu, etc.)  
1 box of rigatoni noodles (cooked per instructions)  
Parmesan cheese  
Shredded mozzarella cheese

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees. Take casings off the Italian sausage. Scramble the hamburger and sausage until brown. Break into small pieces and drain. Put the meat into a dutch oven. Add the spaghetti sauce, cottage cheese, and egg. Combine well. Add the cooked noodles. Add about half a cup of parmesan cheese. Combine well. Put the mixture into a baking bowl or 13 x 9 pan. Sprinkle well with mozzarella cheese and top with a little parmesan cheese. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until the cheese is lightly browned and bubbling. Serve with Caesar salad, Italian bread, and a little chianti! Be sure to save enough room for tiramisu for dessert. Makes a meal for 6 to 8.

Enjoy!

Laurie Meier, N1YXU  
nlyxu@arrl.net

# QUA\* Ken Harlan KA5AKG?

I've had a chance to journey back to the beginning of NARS and why this special group of people was created. In the words of KA5AKG, Ken Harlan, "It has been good for more people than we ever imagined." Ken described himself as a generalist ... part-time contester, wood-worker, etc. But, mostly he enjoys people.

Ken was born in the Heights, and you can't get much more "Houston" than that! He attended Reagan High School, but graduated from Lamar. He then went to A&M (I know, I know: gig'em must be said now). He received a geology degree specializing in Petroleum Engineering.

When Ken was in the Army the Korean War was winding down. He was stationed for a while at Ft. Knox (no he didn't get samples!), but finished serving eight years in the reserves.

He began working for Exxon and was with them for 37 years. Most of his work was done domestically and concentrated in the Gulf Coast states: New Orleans, Lafayette, Kentucky, Mississippi and, of course, Texas. They moved 13 times!

He was responsible for tracking Exxon's reserves. In other words, (and these are mine), "How big is that hole down there and how much stuff is in it?" The times he enjoyed most were when development in the Gulf coast area was strong and the business was "loose and fast".

Ken and his wife Norma are just two years from their 50th wedding anniversary! They met in school and went to church together. They have two children, a son, who lives in CA and has two boys, and daughter, who lives here and is working on her doctorate in Psychology.

Currently he and Norma have no pets, but he used to train labs for field trials, a man after Franny's own heart!

He and his son have a couple of businesses together. They own ATM's

and pay phones. The biggest problem with these is the government regulations.

When Ken was out in the field in the oil business he was intrigued by a colleague who used a radio to "phone" in a question. Especially when he had to sometimes travel 100 miles to reach a phone and then 100 miles back to the site. But it wasn't until 1975 that he got his license. He is currently an Advanced class and has kept his original call sign, KA5AKG, which he received while living in Louisiana.

He has Kenwood and Icom vhf mobile stations, Kenwood and Harris base stations. His antenna is currently a Telex, which he is about to replace with a Force-12, on a 55-foot tower.

Speaking of towers, Ken climbs them, and likes it! He has been interested in climbing and rigging since he was young. The highest he has climbed was a 30-foot tower on the 500-foot Greenspoint Tower. The worst part of tower climbing is that he can almost always expect to find a wasp nest at the top. So far he has never been stung, but when you are swiping at wasps 530 feet above the ground there is nowhere to run! Ken is the trustee for the NARS repeater, which is now at the Galleria.

In the 80's Ken answered CQ from a contact in Jordan. He thought the guy was a little reserved, but was glad to make the contact. When he signed-off he heard a great whooshing sound and the pile-up behind him was the biggest he had ever heard. He didn't know he had been talking with King Hussein!

He also contacted a fellow on a steel hulled sailboat in the Pacific. But the hardest to get are the Aussies; they tend to be conversationalists and it's hard to get a word in edgewise.

Ken and several others (see list below) started NARS in 1985 to fill a void in the north Houston area. The closest club was downtown. They had 45

members at the end of the first year.

Their objectives were three fold. First they would create a "general interest" group, rather than just DXer's, etc. They also wanted to have a program at the monthly meeting instead of just getting together to eat and swap stories (which, by the way, still happens, just not at the monthly meetings!). Finally, they wanted the group to be "dynamic" and to accomplish this, the by-laws require changes in the officers and board so that new people can bring in different ideas every year.

Therefore, we have DXers, contesters, 2-meter drive-timer's, beginners, old-timers and everything in-between. And we can't forget the Ham and Sheezer's! We also have a presentation each month that concentrates on a specific topic. I personally have learned something new every month! And last but not least we have new people each year, so if you aren't happy with the way things are going this year, just be patient and it will change; or better yet, jump in and help - it's OUR group.

By George, and we have several of them, I think they did it!

Ken, by his own description of himself, "just piddles at things". Well, I, for one am very glad he piddled in amateur radio and that he found a few others to join him!

*Schalee Lodge, KD5WLL (that's me!)  
Ham and Sheez Reporter*

NARS Founding Members-  
Dick Combs N5DRM  
John Ellis W5PDW  
Paul Frantz W5PF  
Henry Freedenberg N5HF  
Ken Harlan KA5AKG  
Dee Logan W1HEO  
Dick Rousseau KU4QK  
Joy Smith KB5DTB  
Jerry Smith W5NKZ  
Joe Sokolowski KD5KR  
Bob Welch KE5IC

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

# DX News

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

The column opens this month with a quick note from NILN before his departure on yet another trip. As Bruce puts it: A slow month but a happy one. The QSL from LU6FFL put me at 100 confirmed on 75 / 80 and was the final QSL for 5BDXCC. QSLs received: KH6ZM - Hawaii - 75 SSB; 9L1AB - Sierra Leone - 80 / 40 / 20 CW; LU6FFL - Argentina - 75 SSB; OHOR - Aaland Isl - 160 CW. It looks like vacations and tower construction for the coming fall season has taken a toll on Bruce's airtime. There is always next month and the next goal.

WF5W, Cal, from the White house seems to already be ready for the fall season. As Cal put it a big change in the 80-meter loop brought big changes in DX. Took the horizontally polarized loop down and replaced with vertically polarized full wave loop. What a difference! I worked Chile, New Zealand (7 AM local) and in the US -1,2,4,7,8,9,0 call areas late daytime on CW. Definitely an improvement for that band. Other contacts H40, V63, CY9 on 40 CW, TZ6L on 20 CW. With that big 80-meter loop Cal is going to be dangerous on 80 meters this winter. I sure hope he spots all the good DX he hears on 80 for the rest of us in hopes we can hear them as well. Way to go Cal and good luck this winter.

W5ADF, Al, reports a good brisk business at the Tomball hamfest / swapmeet. He even had time to work some really decent DX, but his story is a little different. As he put it: Rather poor conditions for August. I don't think I saw the A index below 10 for the whole month. Not surprising for summer and the cycle stage. Did not work any new countries but did get a couple of cards for new ones. VU2WAP India worked 9-02. That gave me 200 confirmed on Phone. Of course as soon as I had Bob check my cards, the next day got another new one from J5UCW Guinea-Bissau for 201. Looking over my little paper log, I have a few in the hopper. TU2DP Ivory Coast worked April 03, EI2AR Liberia worked April 03, ZA1B Albania worked April 03, FO/G4MFW/P French Polynesia worked 7-03. Funny thing about the FO, I have confirmed Clipperton, Austral and Marquesas Islands but never a vanilla French Polynesian. Go figure. Well Al we are figuring you for BIG DX reports in the coming months and will make it a red letter day when you get that French Polynesian card. Thanks for the report and get on the air no matter what the A or K indexes are.

August Report from K5CX, (H.O.): Every DX QSO that goes in the log is a good one, and these days each QSO is really appreciated with the bands under assault from the Solar

gods. A total of 42 DX QSOs drifted into the log. That's just a little more than half of that reported last month. In the mix are 19 zones and 31 countries. Been doing a little work inside and outside the shack. It's nice to have a new rotor control on board. Here's the K5CX log for August 2003: 5B4AGN, 5R8FU, A61AU, CO2XN, CT1/EA4ST, EA7RU, EA8AM, EA9GW, EA9IB, US4IXQ, FS/W6IZT, GM3PPG/P, HK70AXY, HP3XBS, JA3CZY, KG4CM, KG4DP, KG4LH, KH6BB, KH6VV, P29TL, PT2ND, PU2WDX, ZV7AA, PZ5RA, SM4THN, T95LSD, TI5AA, TU43CI, TZ6L, TZ6RD, RU9TS, V73T, VE3XD, VE6AO, VP5IK2QPR, VP5VAC, YU1YV, YZ3CAO, ZL2KOT, ZM4A, and ZS5BBO. I just wonder what bands and mode he found these guys on. The TZs and EA9s were really some fine DX. H.O. share a little more insight with us on how you made the good African connections. Nice going! I guess the repaired rotor made a big difference.

John, W5PDW, has a different kind of report this month and it is a really good one. He explains that he had about a dozen contacts for Aug. Some DX, some special event stations, Elvis!, and some light houses.

The real news is...

The REDD Middle School amateur radio station is on the air! Thanks to a work crew and donations from WF5W, W5PF, K5IHK and W5PDW, the Kenwood 820S was humming for the schools open house. Daniel, KD5YIT made his first amateur radio contact on 20 meters with WF5W coaxing him. Daniel talked to Ohio and Los Angeles. Both were armchair copy. Then Ms Lollie talked to Florida followed by her husband Rey working another Florida station. The 20 meter inverted vee worked really well. On top of the pole is a 5/8 for 2 meters. Contacts were made on the Tomball and NARS repeaters. Lot of "Lab Rats" and their parents dropped by to look the station over. The classroom "Science Lab" is really neat. Nothing like that when I was in skule. I believe there are 6 newly licensed operators that graduated the Museum of Natural Science classes. None of the 6 operators have HF privileges. They are ready to jump on the Morse code so they can get on HF. They need some help. I have the Koch program. Not sure of the best way to get them started. Suggestions?

Now it is just hard to top a report like this one, so I'm not going to try. I'll just move on to selected information gleaned from the various DX Bulletins.

Bill Moore, NC1L, ARRL DXCC Manager,

announced that the E4/DF3EC operation (August 7-10th) has now been approved for DXCC. This is one of those you should have worked first and asked questions later about. The operator made a public announcement that he had operated with that call: my mistake and did not think he had permission to operate legally. But it looks like everything has come out in the wash. He was loud and yes, I missed him, as I just didn't make it through the pile-up.

It was announced by the ARRL Awards committee that Timor Leste (4W), which was formally known as East Timor (4W), would NOT be added to the DXCC List as a new entity. There will NOT be a removal from the DXCC List, but East Timor's name will be changed to Timor Leste. More details are available via the ARRL Web at <http://www.arrl.org>.

The DX events that are reported to be active during the month are:

ZS0, ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL ROCKS. "The Daily DX" reports that Joca, PS7JN, will once again be active from here between September 1-14th. His expected call sign will be ZS0S. QSL via PS7JN

3B9, RODRIGUES ISLAND. Robert, 3B9FR, (now a NODXA member) was quite active last week (with a great signal) on 20 and 17 meters CW. Watch around 14022 kHz (+/- a few kHz) after 1230z or 0230z. Watch around 18070 kHz (+/- a few kHz) after 1230z and as late as 1700z.

3XY, GUINEA. Johnny, KA5BQM, is working at the American embassy in Conacry and got the call sign 3XY8B during his stay. The length of his stay may last several months if not years. QSL via KA5BQM.

YI, IRAQ. Robert, S53R, arrived in Baghdad together with Ghis. He will be on the air as YI/S53R for several months. QSL via K2PF.

BQ9P, PRATAS ISLAND, AS-110. The Chinese Taipei Amateur Radio League (CTARL) plans a DXpedition to Pratas Island for October. Paul, BV4FH, is still looking for four more experienced operators. Interested hams should contact Paul as soon as possible. His e-mail address is [bv4fh@ms2.hinet.net](mailto:bv4fh@ms2.hinet.net).

S9, SAO TOME and PRINCIPE, AF-023. After staying in the USA Tom, S9TX now returned to Sao Tome for one more year. He is looking forward to some interesting 6m openings. QSL via W7KNT.

*Continued on page 6*

## *DX News - Continued from page 5*

ZC4, UK SOVEREIGN BASES on CYPRUS, AS-120. Geoff, ZC4CW, is based there now for the next few years. QSL via G3AB.

From the 425DX calendar we have some other events this month:

30/08-12/09 9G1AA: Ghana \* by PA3AWW, 641; 30/08-12/09 G3HTA/P: Saint Mary's Island (EU-011), 639; 30/08-06/09 VK9XAB: Christmas Island (OC-002) \* by G3AB, 641; 30/08-31/08 YO DX HF Contest \*\*\*; August N6XIV/KH9: Wake Island (OC-053), 638; August P29SI: Papua New Guinea \* by JA1PBV, 633; August-Sep YI/ON5NT: Iraq, 641; 04/09-21/09 7Q7CE: Malawi \* by IN3VZE, 641; 04/09-18/09 9Y4/DL1MGB and 9Y4TBG: Tobago (SA-009), 641; 04/09-07/09 XF1K: Todos Santos Islands (NA-162) \* by Ws and Xes, 641; 05/09-08/09 3DA0MT: Swaziland \* by NA5U, 639; 05/09-08/09 S61FD: special station (Singapore), 641; 06/09-07/09 C37URA, C31PM, C31US: Andorra, 641; 06/09-07/09 All Asian DX Contest, SSB \*\*\*; 06/09-07/09 IARU Region 1 Field Day, SSB \*\*\*; 07/09 DARC 10 Meter Digital Contest \*\*\*; 07/09 North American Sprint, CW \*\*\*; 08/09-20/09 EA6/DL8LAS: Mallorca (EU-004), 641; 09/09-16/09 VP5: Turks & Caicos \* by K7BV, 641; 13/09-14/09 COOT: special event station, 614; 13/09-17/09 IS0/IZ2DPX/P: Sardinia (EU-024), 635; 13/09-14/09 WAE DX Contest, SSB \*\*\*; 14/09 North American Sprint, SSB \*\*\*; 16/09-22/09 JW7QI, JW8AW, JW8D: Svalbard (EU-026) \* by LA7QI, LA8AW, 639; 17/09-24/09 IM0/IZ2DPX/P: Maddalena Island (EU-041), 635; 19/09-26/09 OJ0LA and OJ0RJ: Market Reef (EU-053), 641; 20/09-21/09 IO1DCI: special event station, 633; 23/09-27/09 S79IRN: Seychelles (AF-024) \* by G4IRN, 633; 20/09-21/09 Scandinavian Activity Contest, CW \*\*\*; 23/09-09/10 FG/EB2DTP, FG/EA2RU, FG/EA2RY: Guadeloupe (NA-102), 639; 24/09-27/09 IS0/IZ2DPX/P: Sardinia (EU-024), 635; 27/09-10/10 3C0F, 3C0A, 3C0R, 3C0V: Annobon (AF-039), 637; 27/09-28/09 CQ/RJ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY \*\*\*; 27/09-28/09 Scandinavian Activity Contest, SSB \*\*\*; 27/09-28/09 XIX Italian HF-DX Convention, 635

The feel of DX is in the fall air already with a handful of DXpeditions having been announced already. The action will most

likely fall as well to the lower bands as 10 meters fails to open worldwide and 15 meters becomes less dependable for long openings.

What happened to the sunspots? I never seem to hear of them anymore. The "Old Timer" always talked about them as if they were the "Ruler of DX." I seldom hear talk of just the sunspots anymore. It is usually more about something called an A-index, SFI or K-index. It just isn't sunspots anymore.

It turns out the "Old Timer" was kind of on target, but not quite on the bull's eye. In the days gone-by, the "sunspot number", "Zurich sunspot number" or the "Wolf sunspot number" was the indicator of the condition of the ionosphere. It turns out that as technology has advanced and instrumentation has gotten better other things have a substantial influence on the condition of the ionosphere.

The sunspots are just not the only things affecting our ionosphere and radio propagation. We now know the role played by sunspots, solar flares, coronal mass ejections and other solar burps and belches are the big players in propagation of RF. The stuff coming from the sun that has the biggest effect on Ionosphere condition and propagation are: ultraviolet rays, extreme ultraviolet rays, solar x-rays, certain spectral lines (Lyman alpha, etc) and cosmic rays are the key players in order of importance. These are directly related to the massive microwave energy coming from the sun (solar radio noise) and the measure of the microwave RF is called "solar flux" and the number assigned by the formula used by the observatories is known as the Solar Flux Index (SFI).

The SFI is measured at 2.8GHz or 10.7 cm daily. The SFI is computed by the Royal Observatory of Belgium as a weighed average of measurements made from a network of participating observatories.

In a nutshell, here is what is going on. The terms we need to know are SFI, A-index and K-index. These will be enough to get us started in understanding the reporting system. SFI is measured hourly by the participating observatories and is reported as a two or three digit number. The SFI is broadcast by WWV at 18 minutes after the hour. It is the measure of solar radio noise and it is linear. The K-index is a 3 hour average of hourly readings that is expressed as a "single digit" number. There are some mathematical

gymnastics taking place here to get us that single digit number. Now the whole day gets wrapped into the A-index. The A-index is the average of the 8 K-indexes of the average of each of the reporting observatories. This A-index is a mathematically derived number used to represent a daily index. What we have then is a system of representing solar/band conditions in hourly, 3 hour and daily format.

What do all these numbers mean? They are really just different measuring scales, much like feet and meters. They are predictors of what is happening in the various time ranges. Each has "break points" at which certain things usually happen.

For example, a SFI above 200 and the higher bands like 10M will be open nearly 24 hours a day. At a SFI of 150 it is expected that 10M will be open during daylight hours. A SFI below 100 indicates that conditions on 30M and below should be good.

The K-index is usually a number between 0 and 5. The K-index is a good indicator of the band noise during the last three hours. The lower the K-index the better propagation will be and the lower the noise level.

The A-index is derived from the K-index and is a number between 0 and 50. Just like the K-index the lower the number the better propagation will be. The A-index just represents a larger time frame (the last 24 hours).

An important thing to remember about these indexes is they are historic. They are telling us what has happened and not will happen. However for the short term one can reasonably expect things will stay about the same.

The bad news is these indexes don't have the same influence on all the possible propagation paths. The best way to learn what these indicators mean is to make observations as you operate and compare notes with other operators. Talk to a contester about propagation. Most contesters study propagation very closely.

To understand propagation we also need to have an idea of what is going on in the ionosphere, but that will have to wait until another article. Stay tuned.

*Continued on page 7*

# The Nars Jacket - 2003

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## *DX News - Continued from page 6*

|   |             |     |    |             |             |     |    |   |
|---|-------------|-----|----|-------------|-------------|-----|----|---|
| Now the current prediction from NOAA.   | 2003 Aug 29 | 125 | 12 | 3           | 2003 Sep 15 | 115 | 12 | 3 |
|   | 2003 Aug 30 | 130 | 12 | 3           | 2003 Sep 16 | 115 | 12 | 3 |
|   | 2003 Aug 31 | 130 | 12 | 3           | 2003 Sep 17 | 120 | 40 | 6 |
| Prepared by the US Dept. of Commerce, NOAA, Space Environment Center                | 2003 Sep 01 | 130 | 15 | 3           | 2003 Sep 18 | 120 | 30 | 5 |
|   | 2003 Sep 02 | 130 | 30 | 5           | 2003 Sep 19 | 120 | 30 | 5 |
|   | 2003 Sep 03 | 135 | 30 | 5           | 2003 Sep 20 | 118 | 25 | 5 |
| Product description and SEC contact on the Web                                      | 2003 Sep 04 | 135 | 25 | 5           | 2003 Sep 21 | 118 | 20 | 4 |
|   | 2003 Sep 05 | 130 | 15 | 3           | 2003 Sep 22 | 118 | 15 | 3 |
| <a href="http://www.sec.noaa.gov/wwire.html">http://www.sec.noaa.gov/wwire.html</a> | 2003 Sep 06 | 130 | 15 | 3           |             |     |    |   |
|   | 2003 Sep 07 | 130 | 15 | 3           |             |     |    |   |
| 27-day Space Weather Outlook Table Issued 2003 Aug 26                               | 2003 Sep 08 | 130 | 25 | 5           |             |     |    |   |
|   | 2003 Sep 09 | 130 | 20 | 4           |             |     |    |   |
|   | 2003 Sep 10 | 130 | 20 | 4           |             |     |    |   |
| UTC Radio Flux Planetary Largest Date 10.7 cm A Index Kp Index                      | 2003 Sep 11 | 130 | 15 | 3           |             |     |    |   |
|   | 2003 Sep 12 | 125 | 15 | 3           |             |     |    |   |
| 2003 Aug 27   | 120         | 12  | 3  | 2003 Sep 13 | 120         | 12  | 3  |   |
| 2003 Aug 28   | 120         | 12  | 3  | 2003 Sep 14 | 115         | 12  | 3  |   |

Now this is about all the number stuff I want to handle at one time, so we are at a good stopping point for this column. For all of you who have asked about what the numbers mean, I hope this has been of some help.

*Gud DX de Terry, KQ5U*

# Welcome, Congratulations and Condolences

Welcome new members Tanya Cantrell KD5WZN, Lollie Garay KD5WZM, Rey Garay KD5YLN and Stephen Schuster WA5G.

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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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