

The

March 2026



# NARA Newsletter

## President's Message - Mason VE7PMD

All amateur radio clubs want to keep their membership subscriptions as reasonable as possible. This helps to attract members who enjoy amateur radio as part of a group; as a member of a community. By any standard, NARA is a very active association. We train prospective amateurs and organize a wide range of activities. These include: contests, the bike race, the bathtub race, the operation of many repeaters, our club station VE7NA, regular meetings and nets, Canada Day, coffee klatches, technical discussions and presentations, a monthly newsletter and much more. We also interact with our national representative body, RAC, to recommend improvements to Canadian amateur radio regulations. There is no doubt that being a member of an active radio club can enhance and benefit the amateur radio experience.

Every so often all radio clubs need to increase their membership fees. At its February meeting, the NARA Executive voted in favor of a modest increase in fees. The facts are simply these. Since we lost the use of our Departure Bay clubhouse in 2022, NARA has had added expenses for the club station and meeting rooms. We have also had to increase our insurance costs. The NARA membership subscription has not been increased for some 30 years. If we had kept up with inflation our subscription would now be a little under \$60. At its February meeting, the Executive passed a motion to increase the NARA subscription by some 16%. This is to sustain the viability of NARA.

The Executive will be making the motion to members at a future general meeting. The increase for full members is proposed at \$5 a year and at \$2.5 a year for a full family member. We will also address the junior and associate fees. The new proposed fees for full members will come into effect on November 1, 2026. This increase represents the cost of about one cup of coffee at Canada's favorite coffee shop!

Island Events for 2026	Date	By
NARA General Meeting	Mar. 12 (on-line)	NARA
808 Wing Pancake Breakfast	Mar. 15 at 9 am	808 Wing
NARA NVIS Tests on 60m	Mar. 22	NARA
808 Wing TGIS Lunch at 11:30	March 28	808 Wing
Comox Flea Market	Apr. 12	CVARC
NARA POTA Activity	Apr. 18-19	NARA
NARA Fox Hunt	May 9 at 9:45 am	NARA
Bike Race (MIVA)	June	MIVA
Field Day (ARRL)	Jun. 27-28	NARA
Canada Day Event/Contest	Jul. 1	NARA
Nanaimo Bathtub Race	Jul. 26	RNBS
NIARS Campout	Aug. 16-23	NIARS
Ham Happenings (Nanaimo)	Sep. 12	NARA
Canada Winter Contest	December	NARA

NARA certainly organizes a wide variety of activities. At \$35 I am more than happy to support NARA with this financial contribution, and I certainly value my membership. I hope that you feel the same. Thank you to those who volunteer to help NARA achieve its goals. Thank you to all those members who support our, more active than most, amateur radio association.

## NARA Fox hunt



On Saturday, May 9, NARA has organized a fox hunt. The rules will be slightly different from previous fox hunts organized by NARA. On this occasion the winner will not be the team that reaches the fox first. In the interests of safety, the winning team on this occasion will be the team that drives the shortest distance to locate the fox. So skill and accuracy will be the criteria. Full details of this event will be emailed to members nearer the date; please participate in this fun event.

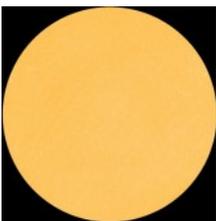
## Scouts Presentation

NARA Director Darryl VE7DDU will be hosting a meeting at the NARA Club station VE7NA (808 Wing) with members of the First Nanaimo Scout Group. The meeting will be on Mar. 18 in the evening between 7-9 pm. During this time a number of short interactive presentations are to be made on a range of amateur radio topics. If you feel that you can assist Darryl with this endeavor, please volunteer. You can contact Darryl at [darryldowney@gmail.com](mailto:darryldowney@gmail.com).

## A Spotless Sun

On Feb. 22-24 there was a completely spotless sun. There were no sunspots on the solar disk, breaking an uninterrupted four years of non-stop sunspot activity.

What does this mean? It's an early warning of Solar Minimum, the low point of the 11-year solar cycle.



During years around Solar Minimum, whole months can go by without a single sunspot, racking up dozens of spotless days in a row. Between 2018 and 2020 (the last Solar Minimum) there

were more than 700 spotless days in total.

Thanks [Spaceweather.com](https://www.spaceweather.com).

## VE7NA Radio Room

NARA wishes to thank member Jason (no callsign yet) for donating a new Cat 5 switch for the VE7NA radio. This will replace the old rather clunky switch previously in use.

## BC QSO Party

The BC QSO Party took place over the weekend of February 7-8. Unofficial claimed scores have been published on [3830scores.com](https://3830scores.com). The final results are not expected to be available for several more months. Several Vancouver Island stations appeared to be doing really well.

## NARA Lost Lake Site

NARA is considering a spring cleanup. We don't have a date yet, but if you want to assist please email Devan VE7LSE at [ve7lse@gmail.com](mailto:ve7lse@gmail.com). NARA is also looking at pruning some of the trees that are close to the radio tower later this year.

## NARA POTA Event - April 18-19

Make a note in your diary for the next NARA POTA activation on Apr. 18-19 at Rath Trevor Park near Parksville. The event is called 'Support Your Parks Weekend' and for NARA the covered building in the park has already been reserved. This is another fun event and whether you are an experienced radio amateur or not all are welcome to attend.



## COMOX Hamfest

Billed as Vancouver Island's most popular Hamfest, the Comox Ham Swap Meet takes place on Apr. 12 from 8:30 am to 1 pm. This year's venue is the Florence Filberg Centre at 411 Anderton Avenue, located in downtown Courtney. Admission is \$5 and this includes the normal door prizes. If you are planning to have a table at this event contact Brian VE7RD at [sells795@telus.net](mailto:sells795@telus.net).



The Florence Filberg Centre

## NARA lapel badges



NARA lapel badges are available for NARA members.

The cost is \$18. To order a badge please contact David VA7DXX at [va7dxx@gmail.com](mailto:va7dxx@gmail.com).

## How is DX – David VA7DXX

**Bouvet** – Just to recap, the vessel taking the 3Y0K team to Bouvet, the Argus, arrived at Duncan Dock in Cape Town on Feb. 17 as expected, and departed on Feb. 21 with the 3Y0K team. On Wednesday Feb. 25 the team reported, in their words, that they had encountered ‘adverse weather and were slowing down’, giving a revised ETA for Bouvet of Friday morning, Feb.27. Other reports indicate that there is a storm forecast for Bouvet upon the team’s arrival.

As predicted, the 3Y0K team arrived off shore on Friday morning, Feb. 27 but conditions were not suitable for a helicopter landing. Hopefully over the weekend of Feb. 28/Mar. 1, with any luck.



*The ship Argus taking the 3Y0K team to the Bouvet Island and on Feb. 27 standing off the island in 7m waves and high winds.*

As keen DXers are well aware, it is an unfortunate fact of life that there are a few who want to spoil the fun of the vast majority by causing deliberate QRM (DQRM) to DXpeditions. The 3Y0K group realize that this could be an issue. If DQRM persists, the 3Y0K team is prepared for this and they will tune up from their normal transmit frequency and reply to callers on the frequency of the caller. This has been done before and is somewhat unusual, but it does work. So listen carefully. Never call the DXpedition on their own transmit frequency, call up (higher in frequency), but also be prepared to listen on your own calling frequency if there is DQRM.

The AU7RS DXpedition to the Lakshadweep Islands (VU7) concentrated largely on the FT8 mode with little CW operations. Although they did really well in terms of contacts, some 20,000 in ten days, much of the time they were on the wrong bands at the wrong

time of day for propagation to the Pacific Northwest. They report that some 20% of their contacts were with North and South America. On Friday Feb. 13, I was lucky enough to work them on 20m FT8. The next day, on Valentine’s Day, their 30m FT8 signal painted on my screen, but they were in and out of the noise. Likewise, on Feb. 15, I did just copy AU7RS on 20m SSB, but they were really weak and I only read a few words as their signal peaked above the noise. I did work AU7RS on 30m FT8, and on the morning of Feb. 17 they were on CW on 30m at the right time of day. Unfortunately, the group did not appear to be hearing very well, maybe local noise, and were only working the occasional European stations. They were 529 with me on CW, but the CW contact which I really would have liked sadly eluded me.



*Pictures from the AU7RS DXpedition to the Island of Agatti In the Lakshadweep islands.*

Active HF DXer member of NARA, Tom VE7TOM in Nanoose, reports that DXCC-wise he has now worked 254 countries and has confirmed 242, with DXCC on all bands from 40-10m. He has WAS (Worked All States) on every band 80 through 6m except 60m.

However, Tom was encouraged to use the 60m band following the NARA 60m tests and he has now worked 47 states and 18 countries on 60m. Tom is looking forward to working Bouvet and other DXpeditions during March.

The ARRL CW International DX Contest held over the weekend of Feb. 21-22 is my favorite HF contest! Everyone from all over the world is beaming towards North America, which of course gives us a real advantage to make contacts at a faster rate than normal. I operated for about nine hours and made 500 contacts and then stopped. On Saturday afternoon stations from Japan were really loud and I worked several JA's who were running only 5 watts.

On Monday Feb. 23, five members of the Bavarian Contest Club from SE Germany started operations from the Bijagos Archipelago (AF-020) in Guinea-Bissau, west Africa. J51A hit the airwaves in style putting in strong signals on just about all of the HF bands. In the first 48 hours of their operation I worked J51A six times on five different bands mostly on CW. I was especially pleased to work them on 60m FT8 and on 12m CW for a new country on those two bands. These contest operators are amongst the best. My 17m CW contact with them was especially impressive. They replied to me as UA7DXX, but without me having to send my callsign again the operator corrected it to VA7DXX. An excellent use of the partial callsign checking in their logging system. To do this in a DXpedition setting is really impressive and demonstrates terrific operators.



During March you can expect a plethora of DXpeditions to be operational, inc. Anguilla (VP2E), Philippines (DU6), Palau (T8OK), Benin (TY5FR),

Guadeloupe (FG), Sint Maarten (PJ7AA), Saint Kitts & Nevis (V47JA), Svalbard (JW8EKA), Ogasawara (JD1), Guam (KH2), Dominica (J79C), Austral Is. (TX5EU), Anguilla (VP2EYO), Vanuatu (YJ1JXZ), Mariana Is. (KH0), Jamaica (6Y), Cape Verde Is. (D44OA), Macao (XX9W – see below), Sable Island (CY0S), Bangladesh (S21WD - see below), Samoa (5W0AF), Bahamas (C6AFD), Martinique (FM), Palau (T88KH), Canary Is. (EA8) and, of course, 3Y0K from Bouvet Is. as referred to above.

And don't forget the ARRL International DX SSB Contest over the weekend of Mar. 7-8.

A team of Spanish, French and Italian operators will operate as XX9W from Macao from Mar. 19-31. I last worked Macao in 2019 and I have only worked this DXCC entity on CW. So, this DXpedition will be most welcome. Macao is located some 60 Km from Hong Kong on the west bank of the Pearl River Delta. The group plans to be active on CW, SSB, and digital modes on all HF bands and 6m with four stations planned. Macao has an interesting history and is a special administrative region of China maintaining separate governing and economic systems from those of mainland China. In this respect, Macao is rather like the former British colony of Hong Kong. The territory of Portuguese Macao was first leased to Portugal by the Ming dynasty as a trading post in 1557. The colony remained under Portuguese rule until the 1999 handover to China.



**XX9W will operate from Macao from Mar. 19-31.**

Another DXpedition worth following is to Bangladesh, signing S21WD, by a team of German, British and Bangladesh amateurs. This operation will be from Mar. 20 to Apr. 1 to the Khuina/Barisal Regional group of islands, AS-140 in the IOTA system.

## 808 Wing Pancake Breakfast

Support our hosts. The next 808 (Thunderbird) Wing pancake breakfast is on Mar.15 starting at 9am. It's a great way to start any Sunday and many NARA members are usually in attendance.



## Weather Radio Service in Canada

The President of the Radio Amateurs of Canada has responded to the closure of Canada's Weatheradio.

*Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) is saddened to learn about the closure of the Weatheradio Service provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada (<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weatheradio.html>).*

## NARA Monday Night Net Controllers

NARA is looking for additional net controllers for its Monday night net which starts at 8pm. Volunteers should contact NARA via the email address [its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca](mailto:its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca).

## The Satellite Downlink

Bruce VE7PTN is taking a break this month but will be back with more satellite news and information for the April edition of the NARA Newsletter.

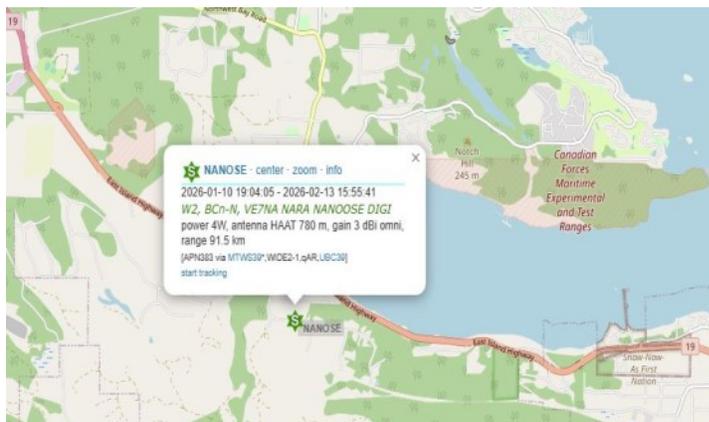
## NARA Coffee Klatches

NARA supports two regular coffee Klatches every week in the mornings, and one monthly evening event. All events are well supported (details below).

Day	Frequency	Time	Locations in Nanaimo
Tuesday	Weekly	10:30 am	South End Smitty's - 50, 10 Street
Thursday	3rd Thursday of each month	7:00 pm	Tim Horton's - 2320 Northfield Road
Saturday	Weekly	9:00 am	North End Smitty's - 2980 North Island Highway, Rock City Centre

## Nanoose APRS Digi Operational

The Nanoose APRS digipeater sponsored by NARA became operational during the afternoon of Feb. 13. On the ARPS.fi map look for the digipeater icon and the word 'NANOSE.' The callsign of the digipeater is VE7NA. The equipment for the digipeater was supplied by Mason VE7PMD which is hosted by Alex VE7IRU at his station location on the west side of Nanoose Bay.



## Artimus II

The Artimus II moon mission has been delayed, likely until April. Three of the four NARA astronauts who are going to circle the moon are licensed radio amateurs.



*K15BKC, KF5LKT and KF5LKU will hopefully be circling the moon during April.*

The volunteer group of NARA members producing this newsletter would like to thank all those who provided material for this month's issue.

The deadline for the April 2026 issue of the NARA Newsletter is noon on Saturday Mar. 28, with an intended publication date of Tuesday Mar. 31.

News items, comments or articles for publication should be emailed to:

**[news@ve7na.ca](mailto:news@ve7na.ca)**