



THE BULLSHEET

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Software Defined Radios -- The Future is Now! by Gerald Youngblood, AC5OG

is the subject of the August TDXS meeting on Thursday August 12th. Software defined radios (SDR) for amateur radio have moved from the future to today. Now hams from all over the world are both using and helping to enhance SDR technology. Until recently SDRs were only available to military and government customers because of their expense and complexity. This presentation will discuss how amateurs from all over the world are collaborating to continuously enhance PC based SDRs using the FlexRadio SDR-1000. The discussion will include an overview of the hardware and software architecture as well as a preview of coming enhancements.

Gerald Youngblood has been a ham since 1967 as WA5RXV, KE5OH, and now as AC5OG. In April of 2003 he founded FlexRadio Systems to market SoftwareDefined Radio products to the Amateur Radio market. Gerald previously founded and ran five technology companies spanning hardware, software, and electronic manufacturing, one of which he took public in 1996. He holds a BSEE Degree from Mississippi State University. Gerald is a member of the ARRL SDR Working Group.

--- See meeting and pre-meeting dinner details on page 2 ---

The Prez Sez - de Mike, N5MV

TDXS Calendar

Upcoming events of interest to TDXSer's

Sept. 9 TDXS Meeting "Quads" by Ed Gerber W5GCX

**Aug 14/15 WAE CW
Sept 11/12 WAE SSB**

Oct 15 (Friday) Coy Day N5OK West Gulf Division Director Joint meeting with NARS Details TBA

Texas DX Society Officers

President	Mike Anderson, N5MV	n5mv@swbell.net	281-373-4902
Vice President	Don Daze, N5DD	n5dd@arrl.net	713-464-7286
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DX Chairman	Ken Eckel, AB5A	ab5a@clarc.org	832-722-3780
Communications Chairman	Paul Frantz, W5PF	w5pf@ev1.net	281-351-8930

How to reach US

On the World Wide Web <http://www.tdxx.net> email address: k5dx@tdxx.net
On 2 Meters: 147.96/36 MHz (100 Hz) On 70cm: 447.00/442.00 MHz (103.5 Hz)
On Packet: Connect to **K5DX** direct or via **TDXS71** on 145.71MHz.
TDXS Reflector: To subscribe to the TDXS reflector, go to
<http://moonbounce.n5iq.org/mailman/listinfo/tdxx-list>

August Meeting Announcement

Meeting: 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Tracey Gee Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive. One block east of Beltway 8, between Richmond and Westpark.

Dinner before the meeting: TDXS members will meet for eats before the meeting, please join us!
Thursday, August 12, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, at Le Madeline, 10001 Westheimer, at Briar Park
In the Carillion Center. **Guests and visitors welcome.**

Upcoming TDXS Activities

I hope that everyone who could, enjoyed themselves at the DX and Contesting forum at Summerfest, and also got to see and operate K5NA's super station, as well as enjoyed his burgers and hospitality.

Now shifting gears to look at our programs for the rest of this month and the fall.

The August 12 meeting will be our high tech meeting. Gerald Youngblood, AC5OG, will be speaking about Software Defined Radios. Gerald will be traveling in from Austin, where he is the CEO of Sixth Market Inc, a hedge fund that trades equities using artificial intelligence software. He is the recipient of the ARRL 2002 Technical Excellence Award, for his series in QEX titled "A Software-Defined Radio for the Masses".

In September Ed Gerber, W5GCX will build on our antenna program by talking about his experiences building and operating with Quads, and what the ARRL left out of the Antenna Handbook about matching Quads.

The October meeting will feature Coy Day, N5OK, the ARRL West Gulf Division Director. This will be a joint meeting with NARS. It will be held on Friday, October 15, 7:00 pm, at the Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church, 6000 Spring Cypress Road (1.7 miles East of Stubner-Airline). Note this meeting will be held on a Friday, instead of our regular meeting night.

We also are working on the program segment for the remainder of the year. We have some tentative speaker commitments, but if you have any good ideas for programs please let me know. I am especially looking for presentations on tower erection and maintenance, and on VHF Rovering.

Nominations for the 2005 TDXS Officers will open at the September 9 meeting.

73, Don, N5DD

Pictures from the Bash at the K5NA Superstation



15, 40 and 20 Meter stacks



K5NA flipping burgers



K5AB and the CTDXCC crew



N5DD, N5MV and



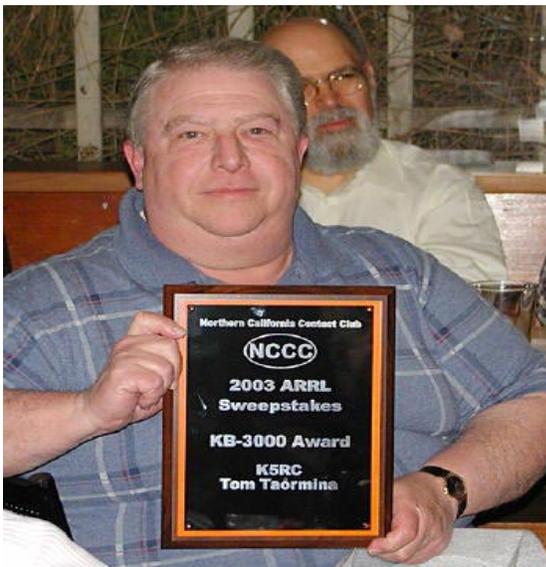
KG5U, N5DD, N5RP and W5PR in the shack

TDXS Congratulates Trey Garlough - N5KO



The July issue of CQ magazine reports that TDXS member Trey Garlough - N5KO is a 2004 inductee into the CQ Contest Hall of Fame! Trey is well known in contesting circles as the creator of the CQ-Contest@contesting.com and 3830@contesting.com internet mail lists, and a co-founder of the contesting.com and eHam.net websites. He holds nine world records in the CQ World-Wide DX Contest, and eight world records in the CQ WPX Contest, and was the first single-op to make 7000 QSO's during a single 48 hour CW contest. See page 27 of CQ magazine for more details. Trey was first licensed in 1974 as WN4KKN. He quickly became an avid con-tester as a member of the legendary N5AU contest team in the early 1980's. Many of you have worked Trey from his contest station at HC8N, as well as 6D2X, 7J7YAA, EA9UK, HC1OT, LU6ETB, K6O, KP2A, ON4UN, PJ9B and ZP0Y, among others. He was also a 1999 member of the ZL9CI Campbell Island DXpedition and the Chesterfield Islands TX0DX DXpedition in 2000. In 1996 and 2002, he participated in the World Radiosport Team Championship competition.

Where are they now? de Steve Smothers K9DX



Tom Taormina - K5RC, accepting the Northern California Contest Club award for his station making over 3000 QSO's in the 2003 ARRL SS.

Tom now lives in Virginia City, NV with his wife Midge - K7AFO.

Mining for Vanity Callsigns by Tom Taormina K5RC

While Vanity HQ (<http://www.vanityhq.com/>) is an excellent resource, it only lists call signs that are currently known to be available or coming available. When a desirable call sign shows up on Vanity HQ, there is usually a competition created among several who file on the same day. I have seen upwards of 20 applicants competing for a single call. The “winner” of the competition is (supposedly) randomly drawn by the FCC. The entire process from filing to issuance takes about 20 days (allowing for paper applications), during which you have no idea who will get the call. There is a better way to be certain that you get a call that you desire.

Let's start with some basic truths and ground rules of obtaining Vanity Call Signs:

1. Detailed rules can be found at (<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vanity.html>).
2. You must have a call sign to trade in for a vanity call. If you are going to trade in your present call for a vanity call, you are all set.
3. If you want a vanity call for a club, you must either have a current call to trade in or fill out a Form 605 and mail it in to get a sequential call sign to trade-in for the vanity call.
 - a. See the ARRL web site for details on filing a Form 605 (<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/605ins.html#club>).
 - b. You will need a trustee and one other person to sign the Form 605
 - c. The trustee's license class must match the vanity call sign (see #4)
4. License class must reflect the call sign you are seeking
 - a. 1 x 2 and 2 x 1's are for Extra Class only (K7AA, AA7A)
 - b. 2 x 2 are for Advanced and Extra (AA7AA)
 - c. 1 x 3 and 2 x 3 are for any class (including no-code Tech)
5. You can apply for any USA call sign, except for HI, AK and the territories, unless you have an address in the state or territory (KH6, KL7, KP4, etc).
6. A vanity call sign must be available as indicated by the fact it is not listed in the FCC database (<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>).
7. If it is listed in the database, it can only be applied for two years and one day from the date of expiration or cancellation in the FCC database. (<http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>).
8. Don't rely on QRZ.com or any other non-FCC databases for official license information.
9. You must be registered with CORES and have a FRN number and password to use the FCC online system ([https://wtbwww05.fcc.gov/cgi-bin/UlsTinRegistration/UlsTinRegistration.exe?FNC=external_\(underscore\)Ahome\(underscore\)html](https://wtbwww05.fcc.gov/cgi-bin/UlsTinRegistration/UlsTinRegistration.exe?FNC=external_(underscore)Ahome(underscore)html)).
10. You apply for (and pay for) the vanity call on-line at (<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>). Again, you must have your FRN and password to do this process.

These are just some basic ground rules. If you have never applied for a vanity call sign on line, you are in for a treat if the FCC web site not acting 100% stable. If you are a novice at filling out forms on-line, I recommend you have someone who has done it successfully actually walk you through the entire process.

Okay, here comes what they don't teach you about vanity calls on the ARRL web site. I have to warn you that the process involves trying to find dead hams whose families have not notified the FCC of their demise. If you find this distasteful, quit reading now.

1. You must have a computer and Internet access to do this process.
2. Decide on the type of call sign that interests you and that you qualify for. Often you will be looking for a W or K 1 x 2 (W7AA, K7AA) in the call district in which you reside. If you are looking outside your call district, you will have to repeat this process for each call that interests you.

3. Make a list of call signs you prefer, followed by those you will settle for. If you will accept any 1 x 2, you have a lot of research to do. Obviously, don't list calls you know are assigned to a currently active ham.
4. Log on to QRZ.com (<http://www.qrz.com/>). Type in the first call you want to research.
5. If your inquiry turns up "The call sign is not in our database," go to the FCC database and confirm that the call sign is not currently granted. In the FCC database a call is available only if there is no listing at all for the call, it is cancelled or expired for 2 years plus one day).
6. If the call sign is not listed in QRZ or the FCC database, it is available for immediate issue. This would be rare for a 1 x 2 call sign, but not uncommon for 1 x 3 or 2 x 3 calls.
7. Given you did not find your dream call was immediately available, the next series of steps are designed to make a preliminary assessment if each subsequent call sign holder is alive and well or deceased and their demise was never reported to the FCC (thus the call may be available).
8. If the call sign is active in QRZ.com, look for the following information on the first page:
 - a. If there is a web site, email address, photo, biography, etc., the call is probably held by someone who is alive and active.
 - b. Check the "Lookups" at the top of the page. If the number is above 100, the person is probably alive and recently active.
 - c. If a. and/or b. are affirmative, move on to the next call sign. The licensee is probably among the living.
9. If the first page of the QRZ.com listing has no customized info and the "Lookup" number is below 100, go to the second page. It can be reached by clicking on "Detailed Info."
10. Look for the following information:
 - a. "Codes"
 - b. Effective date and expiration date
 - c. FRN
 - d. Birthday
11. From the information gathered in #8, you Must next assess the following:
 - a. Codes starting with HA mean the call sign has been issued for a long time. Codes starting with HV mean they were issued under the current vanity call sign program. A desired call that is an HA means the licensee is a relative old-timer. HV means the call was issued in the not too distant past and is probably held by an active ham.
 - b. Effective dates that are more than 5 years old mean there is a greater likelihood that there has been no licensing action with that call. Expiration dates that are two years or less in the future are likely candidates, assuming that the indicators in #7 above make you think the licensee might not be active.
 - c. Licenses that have an FRN number have had activity in the recent past. These licensees are more likely to be active than those who have no FRN.
 - d. The FCC has stopped publishing birthdays. Those listings in QRZ.com that have birthdays are mature listings. This is also an important piece of information if you believe the licensee might be a silent key.
12. Again, the reasoning for weighing all this information is to decide if the licensee is likely not active and may be a silent key. If the QRZ.com research leads you to believe this licensee may have passed and it was not reported, the following steps must be done.
13. Open the Social Security Death Index. A free website for this is <http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/ssdi.cgi>. Enter the name exactly as it appears in QRZ.com. Click the search button.
14. The search may return none to many names of deceased individuals. Obviously if there are none with the legal name you entered, the person is likely alive and the call sign is not available.
15. If there is an exact name match, the birthday in QRZ.com becomes extremely important in determining if the person you are looking for is in the SSDI list. A match of birthdays almost always indicates you have identified a ham that is deceased. If this is the case, print the page from the web site showing the information about the deceased, including date of death.

16. If you aren't sure you found a match, you can subscribe to the Ancestry.com web site. There is a link on the Genealogy page you are currently surfing. There is a charge for using this service, but it can help you assure you have the right person because Ancestry.com contains the last known address of the deceased.
17. Obviously, this process can take hours of research that can be fruitless for you (but good for the call sign holder who is still alive and well!). I have never done a comprehensive search, however, that did not uncover one or two silent keys with desirable call signs who were not listed in Vanity HQ.
18. Now you have the inside edge on everyone else. The following few steps are critical.
 - a. Don't go any further unless you are absolutely sure the person in the SSDI is the very same as the licensee you have discovered.
 - b. Don't tell anyone what you have discovered unless you want to share the chances to obtain the call (or as I have done, do the research for others who are computer challenged).
 - c. If the date of death is more than 2 years and 1 day from the current date, notify the FCC immediately.
 - d. Send a letter to the FCC that includes the following:

To: Rebecca Little
FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
1270 Fairfield Rd.
Gettysburg PA 17325-7245

I am hereby requesting that the FCC cancel amateur license (enter the call sign). The licensee, (enter the legal name) died on (enter the date). A copy of the SSDI page showing the required information is attached.

Thank you,
(signed)

- e. Attach the copy of the web page you printed with the SSDI information and mail the letter. It takes the FCC about a week to cancel the license. You can monitor this by checking the FCC web site every day (<http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp>).
- f. Within a week of mailing the letter, go on-line and apply for the vanity call sign you selected <https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>. Pay the fee by credit card and print copies of all the forms and confirmations you process.
- g. In a few days, your application will show up on Vanity HQ as being "unavailable." As soon as the FCC processes the cancellation request you submitted, the call sign will become available and it should be assigned to you within 3 weeks. Since no one else knew it was coming available, there is no competition.
- h. If the date of death is less than 2 years and 1 day, sit on the information until the time period has passed and then follow c. through e.

As I said this process is complicated, time consuming and not for the weak of spirit. On the other hand, it is totally legal and ethical. A call sign assigned to a SK is not serving that person and you can honor their memory by activating the call and keeping it active.