



The Bullsheet

The Official News Bulletin of The Texas DX Society
An ARRL Affiliated Club

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net August 2008

Amplifiers, Tuners and Bazookas !!

Thursday August 14th
7:00 PM at the Tracey Gee Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive, Houston See www.TDXS.net for directions

Tom Rum, W5RUM, is our speaker at this month's meeting. Tom is the Technical Support Representative for Tokyo High Power Labs in the U.S. He will present the current line of THP solid state amplifiers and antenna tuners. He will discuss the care and feeding of no tune solid state amplifiers and why they require different treatment than tube type amplifiers. One of the amps he will talk about is a light weight 600 watt

that is ideal for DXpeditions.

Tom is also into antenna launching. He has constructed a pneumatic bazooka that launches tennis balls for great distances. It was used at the TDXS field day site to help install wire antennas in the trees. He will have it along to show and talk about.

This should be an interesting presentation, make it a point to be there.

As usual many of the club members will meet at Pappas' BBQ located at Westheimer

and South Gessner for a pre meeting dinner. Story telling and eating will begin between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. Visitors are always welcome.



Watch out for low flying aircraft!



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21again.net is Growing de Jim NN50

Thanks to Paul, W5PF, Frosty, K5LBU and Ed, W5GCX for checking in to show the TDXS flag. Ten total on August 6th. Not much of a pileup, but that will change. We are now up to member #63, so you still

have chances for two digits! Winter has got to be better and a Flux of 66 is bottom. Talk it up, please and try to show for a couple of minutes on Wednesdays 0000Z. Our activity by 0015 scared up a

couple of Florida stations which were 20 over 9. So there IS some prop on 15. I will be listening for the beacons next week.
73, Jim/nn50

TDXS Member Profile—K5LBU Charles “Frosty” Frost de Cal WF5W



K5LBU is TDXS member # 146 from 1998. He was born in Beeville, Texas Feb 14, 1941 Got his first Amateur Radio license in 1959. Frosty was a missionary in Africa for 15 plus years (so that's how he knows all about Africa !!). For about 5 years he had a radio/electronics store in Alief. He has operated in Many of the African States under local call signs, and is connected at the hip with some of the South Afri-

can hams even today. Currently is a teacher at Olle Middle School in Missouri City (In between his Safari trips). He is the current President of Brazos Valley ARC (BVARC). That's just the facts.

Frosty, as we all know him, is a DX hound from Africa. He travels to the continent several times a year, taking groups of hams from all over the world to set up and do dxpeditions from Mozambique, Swaziland, & Lesotho. (forgot where else) He is looking to see if something can be done from Zambia. Frosty says his idea of going to Ham Heaven, would be to be able to operate from Victoria Falls. He is patiently waiting to see what is going to happen in Zimbabwe. He is hoping things will get worked out so he can make his trip to the falls.

Frosty claims never to have had any CW operations, (except one) He does not keep track of his country lists but knows he is somewhere around 290. He was surprised to see that he attained DXCC on the Log Book of the World recently. This is a guy who knows DX. Probably has spent more time dxing from far places than all of the rest of us together.

He has a daughter who works for Continental and so he does take advantage of the family flights, that helps with his trips.

Frosty says that Ham radio is his hobby and a great part of his life (as many of us feel the same). He is going to speak to our group at the September meeting and describe where he can set up trips in Africa and set the stage for the First TDXS DXpedition to Africa in March 2009.

DXpedition Chairman's Report for August de Cal WF5W



Not much going on this month - too hot.... Had Frosty over this week to talk about AFRICA. We have tried to get several locations available for the membership, but interest seems to have waned with the hot weather or something. Thought we would

try something new. Frosty talked about his African friends in Jo-Berg, their set up in the surrounding states and the ease for guys to get there for DXpeditions. All you really need to take is your shorts and t-shirts, everything else is included including the radios, amps, towers, mikes and even CW keys.. Probably have to take a computer or two for logging... Sounded good. (he is going to talk to us in the September meeting about specifics.) I suggested a possible trip for next year and in a short while there were 4 and possibly 5 members who indicated they were ready to go. NOW that's the

way its supposed to be. If you are interested in a trip in 2009 contact me or come to the meeting in September to see what Frosty has to offer. Guess I was off base with the other destinations.

Mike K5UO and I have our reservations and paid for plane tickets to San Andres for the CW 160 contest in January. They have advised the old chicken wire has rusted and we will have to buy new. oh well....

That's it for this month, Good dxing from the home QTH.

Cal WF5W

The Prez Sez de Steve W9DX

President's report:

July was another busy month for TDXS members who were scattered abroad putting on DXpeditions, and working various contests. Eddy Reynolds K5WQG (V31MR), and NARS member Colin Jenkins KU5B (V31UB) went to Belize to have some fun and work the IARU contest with 1875 contest Q's for 841,236 points. At the same time Wayne Rogers W5KDJ made a solo run as YN2KDJ racking up 5060 Q's during his stay with 824 contest Q's. It was thrilling to hear one TDXS DX group calling another TDXS DX group, as I ran across Eddy V31MR working Wayne YN2KDJ on 15m RTTY on July 8th at 1920Z. Other TDXS participants in the IARU contest included Allen Brier N5XZ as KL5DX (SOHP CW only) in Alaska with 843 Q's, 3139 pts, 104 mults= 326,456 score; Laurent Thomin W0MM as F/W0MM running only 50 watts with 272 Q's, 65 mults and 17,680 points. Laurent says he managed to work K5WA and K5NA. Allen also reported working Texas locals: K5WA, K5NA, W9DX, NR5M, NX5M, N5DO, and NO5W.

Speaking of contesting and the fast approaching fall contest season, a visit to K9JY's website for 30 valuable contesting tips to consider is worth a visit:

<http://k9jy.com:80/blog/2007/10/10/30-days-30-ham-radio-contesting-tips/>

Frosty K5LBU and his crew of 6 operators are now back from their 2 week DXpedition to Mozambique and Swaziland (see www.tdxs.net/C9.html). They managed to make over 26,000 QSO's, and keep our website busy as eager DX'ers checked the online logs every day. The peak was over 1000 hits/day on July 24th with 62% from Japan. Internet connectivity was poor and they only managed to send me one set of logs by e-mail about half way through, and had to wait till everyone was back to get full logs



Ops (left to right): Tom C91TK (NQ7R), Ben C91YI (DJ0YI), Jay C91SL (W5SL), Frosty C91CF (K5LBU), Bob C91OK (K0OK), Bill C91NZ (NZ5N), and John C91XO & 3DA0OK (9M6XRO).

(except for some paper logging during the last few days due to computer problems). This reminds us all to keep backups of logs each time our shifts end or make daily backups to flash drives. Heaven forbid your hard drive crashes on the last day of your DXpedition! If you have internet connectivity where you go,

send a daily log home to a pilot station, webmaster or your own address. If you're on a desert island in the middle of nowhere, you can still e-mail your logs by HF using "Airmail". Joey W5BAK gave us a presentation on this about a year ago. For more info see www.airmail2000.com.

In other news, TDXS globe trotter Wayne Rogers W5KDJ has been issued T88KD for his planned trip to Palau November 13-24. Too bad he can't extend his stay to include CQWW-CW. If you're itching to go somewhere and do a contest, don't miss the next 2 TDXS meetings.

Plans are underway now for another TDXS DXpedition Extravaganza to another exotic location during a major contest. Start saving your money and plan to go!

If you haven't seen our 2008 FD pictures yet, there's a small sampling on

www.tdxs.net/FD2008.html along with Bill Frink K5WAF's summary. I think we did quite well with a claimed score of 6,646

points. I know we can do better next year if we can eliminate technical problems and avoid dead air time. Accordingly, we'll be having a pre-Field Day meeting next April to gather up, assemble and test all antennas and equipment before June.

The Prez Sez (continued)

In other news, Tom Taormina K5RC says all tower work has stopped at his N5JJ/K5LZO Memorial Super Contest Station due to a "stop work order" by the county building department. Tom does not have deed restrictions or restrictive covenants covering antennas or towers. Over the last 11 years, he has installed 8 towers without complaints by any individual or governing body. Until just recently that is! One irate neighbor has apparently made such a pest of herself at every county office, that all work has been stopped and now they are saying that he must get retroactive permits for all existing towers! This even precludes maintenance and repair of existing installations! While we may all be comfortable with PRB-1 and various state adaptations of the federal rule (which Nevada has), we should never let our guard down when it comes to rabid petitioners. Public servants have their breaking point too, and often cave in to pressure whether justified or not. Tom has retained one of the preeminent real estate attorneys in the area and armed with the ARRL book on zoning, he has already fired the first salvo at the DA. Assisting with the case is Fred Hopengarten, K1VR, who has litigated over 200 tower cases. Tom reports, "He has some very encouraging scenarios for me." This may go all the way to federal courts. Tom says, "I will not give up until they pry my hands off the tower and haul me to jail. Even then, the law will not be preempted by whining neighbors." Defending our rights will not come cheap. If you

can help Tom, send your contributions marked "Legal Defense Fund" to Tom's callbook address.

On July 14th, our ARRL West Gulf Division Manager Coy Day N5OK sent a message to area ARRL members that the West Gulf Division Legislative Affairs Group intends to introduce legislation in the 2009 Texas and Oklahoma legislative sessions to eliminate CC&Rs that prohibit the operation of ham radio stations and the erection of ham radio antennas in residential subdivisions. But to successfully pass this legislation, the Legislative Affairs Group needs information and help from you. If you are affected by CC&Rs, or if you want to help make it possible to enjoy ham radio without unreasonable CC&R restrictions, please send an email to K5RAV@arrl.org and KE5ISX@arrl.net. Include your call sign, physical address and a copy of the sections of your deed restrictions/CC&Rs that limit your ability to operate or erect antennas in the e-mail. Please send the CC&R copies as PDFs. If you can't e-mail the copy of the sections of your deed restrictions/CC&Rs that limit your ability to operate or erect antennas, please mail them to:

CCR Investigation
PO Box 2232
Austin, Texas 78768-2232

Our heartiest congratulations go out to John Cashen W5UG (ex-W6KNC) who tied the matrimonial knot with girlfriend Kathy on Au-

gust 2nd! Let's hope she knows what marrying a contester is all about! Hi hi! Well done John.

The regular TDXS August meeting will be Thursday the 14th at 7 PM in the Tracey Gee Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive, Houston. Our featured program will be presented by Tom Rum W5RUM who is the U.S. distributor for Tokyo Hy-Power solid state amps. If you've ever considered the purchase of a no tune solid state amp, you'll definitely want to see this program. Tom is also bringing along his air pressured rope launcher that proved to be a great success in putting up our FD dipoles. Don't miss it! As usual, most members will have a pre-meeting dinner get-together at Pappa's BBQ on South Gessner, just south of Westheimer starting around 5:30-6:00 PM. Plan to join us. Visitors are always welcome.

See you there!

Steve - W9DX



Product Review- Rotor EZ de Steve W9DX

I've been using a Hy-Gain Tail Twister rotor for almost 25 years now, and have often wished my controller had a "point-and-shoot" feature like the pricey controllers. In the heat of a major contest, it often became a pain in the rear to break your rhythm, hold the break button down and rotate the beam. Typical of T2X rotors, you often have to back rotate the rotor a bit to unjam the brake before getting the desired rotation. Yea, I know

you SteppIR guys have a 180° and Bi-directional button, but never mind. For the last 2 years I've admired the Green Heron Engineering control boxes at Dayton, and this year was no ex-

ception. Their reviews on eHam.net are 5.0/5.0. The digital readout was great, and the "point-and-shoot" feature made it a real possibility, but I couldn't quite justify spending \$500-600 on a new controller box.

Hams are bargain hunters, and I'm no exception. A friend of mine mentioned having the Idiom Press "Rotor-EZ" board in his T2X control box. After a visit to the Idiom

Press booth, I was convinced this was the cheapest way to go. Idiom's "Rotor-EZ" offers hands free control and a RS-232 port (if desired) for Hy-Gain's CD45, Ham-II, Ham-III, Ham IV and all TailTwister Rotors. You simply rotate the modified calibrate knob to the desired heading, and hit the brake release paddle momentarily, and it automatically goes there. Not only do you get a real "point-and-shoot" capability,



but it automatically backs the rotor bit with an "unstick routine" to avoid brake jams, and gives you a 5 second brake

delay function. It also gives you overshoot protection by removing power from the rotator 3 degrees before reaching the desired bearing (especially if you have large arrays). Another valuable feature is preset electronic end points, which prevent the system from slamming into the end stops by removing power from the rotator motor 5 degrees before the end point is reached (been there - done that). Manual control is

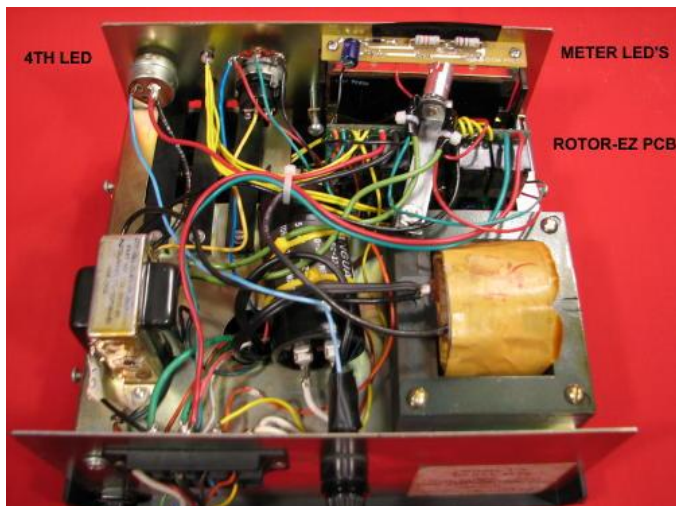
still fully functional. Idiom offers several versions depending on your needs, and whether or not you want to build the controller board from scratch or buy a pre-assembled and tested board. Depending on options selected, prices range from \$99.95 to \$164.95, although they usually have special hamfest pricing. Main features are:

- 5 second delay before releasing brake after any operation
- Really slick "Auto-Point" feature
- Full manual override always available
- Algorithms to deal with pot strip "Dead Spots"
- Control Accuracy: Better than 3 degrees
- Programmable Anti-stick routine
- Programmable Electronic End Points
- Programmable Overshoot option for large arrays
- Full 90° Offset support for secondary antennas
- LED's give brake and rotational status
- RS-232 support optional, commands compatible with HyGain DCU-1 control
- Free Windows 9X RS232 pointing program available

Product Review- Rotor EZ (continued)

- 90 day warranty on parts; repair service and installation service available
- Works with Ham-II, Ham III, Ham IV and all TailT-wister rotors
- Installs in any unmodified Ham-M series or TailTwister rotor control box with three paddles on the rotor control box

Always being in a hurry for quick results, I selected the pre-assembled board. The conversion process will take you a couple of evenings of work even with the pre-assembled PCB board. You will have to remove some existing wiring, take out the original controller board that's mounted to the back of the meter, and any brake delay kits that you may have added in the meantime, and solder supplied wire from the board pin-outs to various locations on the controls.



You are basically re-routing most of the existing wiring, and adding about a dozen more. If your control box already has 3 LED's, you'll have to drill one more hole in the face-plate for the 4th LED. If you have one of the older boxes with no LED holes, you'll need to drill 4 holes. No big deal. The directions are clearly written, and if you take your time to recheck your work as you go along, there's little chance of error. While I had the pilot light bulb out for some wiring changes, the bulb failed on re-installation.

As you've probably discovered, 24v bulbs are getting a little hard

to find. As luck would have it, I also bought the \$10 optional LED meter illumination kit. The meter kit gives

you the option of 3 illumination settings by installing jumpers or not. I found the brightest setting to be the best, and only had to jumper one resistor on the board. Now the box will run cooler and lights last indefinitely. I don't mind having a meter instead of a digital read-out, especially considering

the price difference. I'm an analog kind of guy anyway. After installation and verification of functionality, you only need to do a quick calibration by adjusting a couple of pots on the PCB board, and you're done! For the features, optional functions, and ease of installation, I think this is a real bargain.

Idiom also has rotor enhancement kits for Yaesu rotors, plus CW keyers, and audio filters. For more info, visit their website at <http://www.idiompress.com/>. Additional reviews can be found on eHam.net at:

<http://www.eham.net/reviews/detail/849>.

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How to reach US

On the World Wide Web <http://www.tdxs.net> email address: k5dx@tdxs.net

On 2 Meters: 147.96/36 MHz (100 Hz) On 70cm: 447.00/442.00 MHz (103.5 Hz)

DX Cluster—On Packet: Connect to **K5DX** on 145.71 MHz or telnet via IP address 75.148.198.113

TDXS says "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to these members with birthdays in August

Jim Lane - N5DC

Evie Lane - W5XYL

Frank Wyatt - KC5M

Richard King - K5NA

George Wagner - K5KG

Bill Wibker - WI5P

Kirk Kridner - KV5Q

Randy Thompson - K5ZD

Brent Levitt - NT5D

Eric Silverthorn - NM5M

Trey Garlough - N5KO

Upcoming TDXS Member DX Trips

Look for NN5O/LU and /CE from 9/10 to 9/18 Hotel/QRP--probably on 20 CW and PSK-31. Buenos Aires and Santiago. **QSO awards!** Jim/nn5o