



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 2009

Double Feature Program for the August Meeting!

*Thursday August 13,
7:00 PM*

TDXS Meeting Night:

Tracy Gee Center, 3599
Westcenter Dr, Houston.
Pre-meeting Pre-
meeting dinner get-
together starts around
5:30/6PM at Pappas
BBQ on S. Gessner &

Westheimer.

The program will fea-
ture Wayne W5KDJ re-
counting his recent
DXpedition to 5R8-land.

We'll also have a pro-
gram on the upcoming
Texas QSO Party, and
some TQP specific soft-
ware.



Editor's Note de Doug WB5TKI

Summertime, and the
living is easy....if you
call 100+ degree days
easy! With all of the
radios and computers
running in the shack
it's usually 85+ here.
I've been receiving an
online Ham Radio
magazine called HAM-
MAG. It is out of
France, but has an in-
ternational breadth of
contributors. This
month's issue has DX
reports and articles
from SM3CVM, an ar-

ticle on casual contest-
ing from WORAA, a
mike switch with
sound card interface
by WB8YWA and pro-
pogation reports from
ON4SKY, among oth-
ers. The magazine is
free online and is sup-
ported by donations.
Give it a look at
www.ham-mag.com.
Also check out
www.amateurlogic.tv.
Especially recom-
mended are episodes
17 and 18 which were

visits to the MFJ and
Ameritron factories.

Finally, this is your
newsletter. Your fel-
low subscribers want
to hear about your ex-
ploits, your trials and
tribulations. Please
take a few minutes
and write something!
See your name in
lights (or at least 12 pt.
Rockwell text) and
know that you have
helped to make the
Bullsheet worth the
read.

Inside this issue:

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The Prez Sez de Paul W5PF

Summer continues to be HOT, dry and spotless. We did get a little rain up here in the North last week but still need a lot. After a brief spurt of sunspots the sun is bare again. Propagation has not been very good but I have been able to work the 7P8 gang on 40, 20 and 17. Unfortunately I could never get to Wayne in 5R8. Glorioso is not far from 5R8 so that doesn't look good when they get that Dxpedition going. That will be an all time NEW ONE for me.

News from Tom, K5RC, is that he and his team were able to perform necessary maintenance to the N5JJ/K5LZO Memorial Station antenna farm. Unfortunately the legal battle over the building permits is still ongoing. If you haven't done so, check out the work they have been able to complete at www.consultpr.com/Repairs_2009.htm.

I got a note from Leon, W5NA (TDXS #15), saying that he will be in town in November to attend a reunion of the Apollo Astronauts and Flight Controllers at NASA. He intends to be on the K5DX repeater while he is here. If you hear him be sure and say hello. He will arrive on the day of our November meeting, Nov.12. I have suggested that he come to the meeting, but I am sure that he will have a very busy schedule while he is here.

Speaking of reunions, our de facto historian Steve, W9DX,

has pointed out that next year is the 40th Anniversary of the founding of TDXS. That is a great reason to see if we can get some of our long time members to join us for a reunion. I would like to put together a committee to look at the possibilities and see what kind of interest there is in a TDXS 40th Anniversary get together. We will discuss the subject at the monthly meeting. If you have any ideas or would like to help out, get in touch with Steve or me.

I have seen a few contest score postings lately, but I am sure more of us have participated and not posted or sent in a score. I know I am guilty of not entering my log in a couple of contests this summer. Let's support TDXS and our Contest Chairman Cookie, K5EWJ, and submit those logs. I will certainly be more diligent about mine in the upcoming contests.

W5KDJ will cuss and discuss the propagation from 5R8 at the August Monthly meeting. Chuck, NO5W, will talk about the upcoming Texas QSO Party as well as the logging software that he has developed to support mobile operation in the state QSO parties. We should have full slate of topics to discuss so make plans to attend. The meeting will be at the Tracey Gee center as usual starting at 7:00PM. We will meet for the pre meeting dinner at Pappa's BBQ

starting about 5:30PM. Pappa's is located at Westheimer and Gessner. Check www.tdxs.org for details and directions.

Don't forget that information on Dxpursions by TDXS members as well as log lookups are also available on our web site. Many thanks to our web master W9DX for all the work he has put into developing and maintaining the site. It is a very attractive and informative "Front Door" to many who find out about us on the web.

CU at the meeting,
Paul W5PF



(Ed.: Paul strutting his stuff at Field Day)

From the Bullsheet Archives

Ten years ago this month TDXS Prez Earl, N5TU was discussing the problems that the club was experiencing with the repeaters, as well as an encouragement for the members to get into team contesting.

The DX Chairman, Buzz, N5UR was decrying the sorry state of the bands (sound familiar?).

Communications Chairman, Jim, N5DC was discussing the challenges being faced in

maintaining the 2 meter repeater due to contention for the rooftop space.

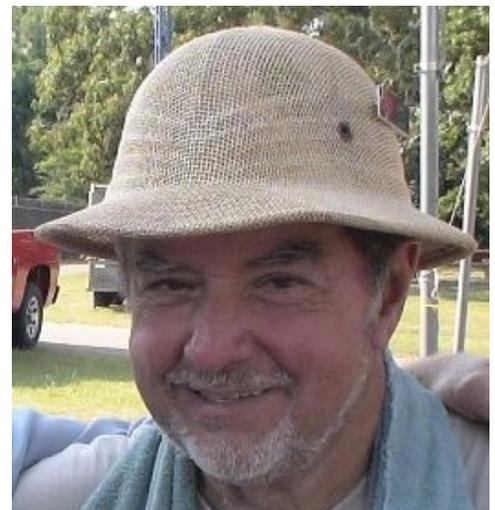
You can find the Archives on the web site under [Newsletters](#).

From the DX Chair de Cal WF5W

(Editor's note: I received this report from Cal. I assume that it is the result of trying to thumb-type on his new iPhone's glass keyboard.)

Doughy, too hot for.much. Here
The pres (w5pf) treas (k5waf) & I
Spent another day at the sea pumpkin getting a new sgc tuner
up a d run ing
Too hot.....
Ex info. Lots of act from our guys I n. Lethoso
Theb
Y will be on the mat for ne xt mo th
This is hard for old mans thumbs to d
,.....
Tnhats it from h

Cal



So I paid this California Ground Squirrel a few pinion nuts to inspect towers and the first thing he points out is a missing bolt.

(Tnx Tom K5RC and Steve W9DX)

Contest Chairman's Report by Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ

The results from the ARRL DX CW were in the August 2009 QST. Texas DX Society had three entries, N5XZ (Single High Power) 785,664, K5EWJ (Single Low Power) 211,578 and W5PF (Single High Power) with 10.725. Our friends in the Central Texas Contest Club had eight entries, NR5M (Multi 2) with 4,580.082, W5KFT (Multi 2) with 21139,372, K5YA (Single Assisted) with 1,492,725, N5AW (Single Low Power) with 1,409,262, K5NA (Single, 80M) 155,376, AF5Z (Single Low Power) 50.445, N5KF (Single Low Power) 25,532, K5DU (Single 10M) 828.

The Ten-Ten Summer Phone QSO party was August 1 and 2. The SHOT Chapter had about 10 or so active stations plus two club stations. N5MT had about 325 Qs with about the same for his club, NM5H, K5EWJ 326 Qs. WS5H had over 200 plus about the same for his club W5DPA. I don't have a list of the other stations or know just how well they did, but the SHOT chapter will no doubt put up a good score.

You guys who shy away from the number clubs are missing some good operating fun. Ten-Ten,

SKCC and FISTS are my favorites but there are several others, each with a devoted group.



Some upcoming contests are:

Worked All Europe CW, August 8-9 (www.waedc.de)

SARTG Worldwide RTTY Contest, August 15-16 (www.sartg.com)

North American QSO Party, SSB, August 15-16 (ncjweb.com)

New Jersey QSO Party, August 15-17 (www.qsl.net/w2r)

Hawaii QSO Party, August 22-23 (www.karc.net)

Ohio QSO Party, August 22-23 (www.ohqcp.us)

Texas QSO Party, Sept 26-27 (<http://www.dxzone.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump2.cgi?ID=14049>)

CQWW DX RTTY Contest, Sept 26-27

CQWW DX SSB Contest, Oct 24-25

CQWW DX CW Contest, Nov 28-29

After advertising all these great contests I want to offer a word of caution. Be careful when you are getting ready to contest. We have lost several hams in the last year to climbing accidents.

A New Mexico ham fell from his tower while trying to go around a guy wire. His safety lanyard was still in his truck.

On field day a ham whose day job was installing antennas was killed in a thirty foot fall when the tower base collapsed. Be sure to in-

spect the tower. Your safety equipment attaches you to the tower. It doesn't save you if the tower falls.

A ham fell from a 100 ft tower and was killed when his safety belt broke. Be sure your equipment is in like new shape. Don't use the stuff they throw away at work and be really careful about bargains at ham fests.

Be careful to attach the gin pole connection above the center of gravity. A group decided not to climb to attach the gin pole and

attached it as high as they could reach standing on the house. When they jacked the tower apart it turned over. They were lucky that it did not hit anyone and the only damage was to the gin pole.

And, you don't have to be very high to get in trouble. A fellow worker was having his two story house painted. One of the painters was killed when an eight foot scaffold broke and he hit his head on a flower bed curb.

YALL BE CAREFUL, YOU HEAR?

Getting Started in Casual Contesting by Dick Thompson - WORAA

(Editor's note: I read this article in the latest edition of HAM-MAG and thought it would be of interest to the TDXS crowd. Dick graciously agreed to its publication in the Bullsheet.)

Having been licensed for many years (45 years in all), I have had an opportunity to partake in many of the various facets of amateur radio. I've been a net control station for the Ohio SSB Net when I was living in Ohio. I have participated in many disaster situations including the 1964 Palm Sunday Tornado that struck Indianapolis, IN and the surrounding communities. (I may be one year off on the year, but at my age, senility makes for a good excuse). I have handled phone patch traffic for troops stationed in far off places like Korea, Viet Nam, Europe, etc. I've demonstrated amateur radio in Special Events and participated in many Field Day operations. All have been very rewarding and in most cases, fun activities. But that's not the purpose of this article. Amateur radio offers something for everyone, and many, if not all, can be fun activities. In the past few years I have found my niche in ham radio: contesting. I am not a writer, so please be kind.

For many years I dabbled in contesting in one form or another. I rarely submitted a log in any of them and my participation consisted of mainly passing out contacts to the seri-

ous contenders. Then, after I retired I decided to get back on the air (after having been off the HF bands for almost 10 years). I live in a retirement community and management kind of frowned on antennas. So, one day I approached the then current manager, and told him I had been a ham for almost 40 years, and I wanted to get back on the air and had intentions of putting up a vertical antenna. (I was mainly on 2 meters and 440 during that 10-year period, so I was never completely off the air). His response was "No problem, as long as the neighbors don't complain about television interference, etc." So, I was on my way.

I decided to get back into doing some contesting and looked at my options for various modes. Of course SSB can be done by anyone, CW has always been a fun mode for me, but I had never experimented with digital modes like RTTY and PSK31, etc. I bought an Icom 757 and put up a Hustler 4-BTV vertical. It was great being back on HF again. I made many contacts that summer, and had only one complaint from a neighbor. I was getting into her computer speakers. A couple toroids solved that problem. No problems since. My antenna situation now consists of a Butternut HF-9V, a Hy-Gain TH5DX on a 40' crankup tower and a short 80 meter dipole. My HF Trans-

ceiver is a Yaesu FT-950 and I also have a Ameritron AL-811 amplifier. I always run low power in contests.

I decided to get into a CW contest, so I entered one of the SS (Sweep Stakes) contest. I can't recall which one but I had a ball. My score wasn't very high, but I had fun and that was my goal. So when the fall contest season started I decided to participate much more than I had in the past. I purchased WriteLog as a contest software package and it worked quite well as it supported many big and small contests. WriteLog is \$35 and renewals are \$30 (or in that area) if you decide that any updates that have been added since your last purchase will be necessary for your needs. All upgrades are free for one year with WL. So, any additional upgrades in that 12-month period are at no charge. The web site for WriteLog is www.writelog.com.

Also, another very capable program (and it is free) is N1MM Logger (www.n1mm.com). It is regularly updated and bugs that may happen as "bumps in the road" are usually fixed in a reasonable period of time once they are reported to the N1MM programming team. N1MM also supports a wide range of contests.

Getting Started in Casual Contesting (continued)

There are other software packages available, but I am not familiar with any of them, so I won't elaborate on them at this time. A Google search for "Contest software" will produce enough sites to keep you busy and off the streets for weeks, if not longer.

Of course, if you don't want to use a computer to log contacts that you make in a contest, there is always the pencil and paper method. Just be sure you can read your writing after the contest is over. Since most log submissions are made over the Internet, and the contest software packages have the ability to create Cabrillo files for submission, I would suggest that you use a computer. Another advantage is that most contests do not allow duplicate contacts on the same band, and the contest software programs will let you know if you have worked a station before. Keep in mind that contesting is not allowed, by gentleman's agreement on any of the WARC bands. The WARC Bands are 12 meters, 17 meters and 30 meters. There are CW, RTTY & Data frequencies on all the WARC Bands as well as Voice frequencies. The WARC Bands were named after the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) held in 1979. The new Channelized 60 meter band is never used in a contest. For those who are not interested in contesting and abhor the QRM created by con-

tests, you can take refuge in the WARC bands and operate with no contesters to bother you.

The use of a computer in a contest simplifies the process and enhances the fun. My favorite form of contesting is using RTTY mode. I participate in most major RTTY contests, including the ARRL RTTY Roundup (I have taken First Place in the Rocky Mountain Division in 2007) as Multi/Single LP (Multi-Op/Single Transmitter, Low Power). Shel (KFOUR) and Jim (NOTUI) were co-operators in that contest. I operated in the Colorado QSO Party last July and took First Place in In-State CW Low Power and First Place in In-State Digital Mode Low Power. Both Single Operator.

CQ Magazine is a huge sponsor of contests. They have the CQWW CW, CQWW RTTY, CQWW SSB, CQWW SSB WPX, CQWW CW WPX, CQWW RTTY WPX, and the list goes on and on. The ARRL sponsors many contest on HF and VHF. The ARRL DX Contest is a big one. The RTTY Roundup is one of the most popular contests also. North American QSO Party contests are very popular and a good way to get your feet wet. A good site to check out, for what contests are happening at any given time, is <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>. Another is SM3CER's site, which is located

at <http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/index.htm>. You may also want to take a look at the National Contest Journal web site located at <http://www.ncjweb.com/index.php>. And there are many more. All are very helpful. Also, there are many contesting forums on www.Yahoo.Groups.com. Do a search for Amateur Radio or Ham Radio. The National Contest Journal magazine produced by the ARRL is a first class publication with a lot of great contesting information as well as hints and kinks type of articles.

Don't forget to look at Amateur Radio Contesting FAQ's at http://www.qsl.net/zslan/contesting_faq.html#warc.

You might ask questions like "What does SOAB mean?" What about "SOLP?" SOHP?" etc.

These are all abbreviations for contest entry categories:

- o SOLP - Single Operator Low Power
- o SOHP - Single Operator High Power
- o SOAB - Single Operator all band
- o SOSB - Single Operator Single Band, often includes the band, e.g. "SOSB/80" for a single band entry on 80m
- o M/S - Multi/Single - Many operators but only a single transmitter
- o M/2 - Multi/Two - Many operators with two transmitters

Getting Started in Casual Contesting (conclusion)

o M/M - Multi/Multi - Many operators with many transmitters

You don't need to have a "Super Station" setup to have fun in a contest. The simplest of rigs and antennas will allow you to participate. Nobody is going to refuse to contact you because your signal isn't 20 over S9. Every contact the big pistols and the small pistols make count for points, and who knows, you may be a "multiplier" contact for someone that may put them in First Place. So every contact counts, and many contesters listen for both the loud and the weak stations.

With the software that is available today and with the sound-cards in the computers, getting into a RTTY or CW contest or any contest is a piece of cake. The Fn keys on your computer can be programmed to send your reports, in RTTY, CW as well as voice. I have actually been in contests and never touched the keyboard of my computer. All I had to do was point and click with the mouse. OK, OK, call it lazy, but it's still fun. Isn't technology great, as the old saying goes? You can set the software to key your transmitter, make the exchange and then log the contact, making you ready for the next one. And believe me, they can come fast and furious at times.

If you have never participated in a contest and would like to get started, I suggest that you start by entering a small contest like a state QSO party. There are also short Sprint Contests that usually last about 4 hours on a weekend afternoon or evening. The NAQP (North American QSO Party - CW, SSB & RTTY) are all great contests to enter. Another short contest, held on the first Monday of each month is the Spartan Sprint. Information is on the following web site: <http://arsqrp.pbworks.com/Spartan-Sprints>. Join the fun of a QRP contest.

I could go on and on and bring up a lot of other thoughts and ideas on contesting, but you really need to get into a contest to learn what it's all about and find out about all the fun you may be missing or could be having, whichever the case may be.

73,

Dick

The author can be reached at w0raa@arrl.net or the address listed on <http://www.qrz.com>.

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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

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone.