



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net October 2009

Lights, Camera, Action!

*Thursday October 8,
7:00 PM*

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

Westheimer.
The program will fea-
ture Dale Martin
KG5U with tips on how
to use your digital
camera to take pic-
tures like a pro.
So bring your camera
to the meeting. See
you there!



Editor's Note de Doug WB5TKI

The hummingbirds are buzzing like flies around my feeders so I guess, somewhere, Fall has arrived. Here, however, it's 86 degrees, so it doesn't feel very Fall-like. We would like to welcome Neil Gardner NG5NG as the newest member of TDXS. Jim Carmody NN5O

reports that he will again be QRV as NN5)/EI2VNO from Cahirciveen, Kerry, Ireland for CQ WW SSB, single band 15 with a Force 12 SVDA. All bands and mostly PSK before and after the test. He also reminds us that the 21 Again Net meets every Wednesday at 7 P.M. CDT (0000Z) on

21290 khz. The purpose of the net is to sample propagation and keep interest in 15 meters alive. I'm told that Don K5DD has a shiny new Flex - 5000. Perhaps we can convince him to do a product report for the Bullsheet. Keep those cards and letter coming!

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The Prez Sez de Paul W5PF

October is a busy month for TDXS business. The first order of business is to accept nominations for next year's officers. Voting is done in November. If you are interested in being an officer in your club, please let me know or volunteer at the meeting. In August several proposed changes to the TDXS constitution were read at the meeting. These changes would affect the requirements for Full Member Status, add the Outgoing QSL Manager position to the Board of Directors and modify how we elect officers to conform to recent practice. More details can be found in the September Bullsheet or contact me or Bill K5WAF and we will email you a copy of the proposed changes. We will discuss these proposals at the meeting in preparation for the vote in November.

Another important item for discussion is the TDXS Christmas Party. Chuck and Ruth Dietz have been our hosts for several years but no longer have the office that was our venue. We will have to come up with another plan and will be asking for your suggestions.

Another topic will be the meeting location for next year. This should have been addressed last month but with two of our officers out of town for the meeting it was deferred. I have received a letter from the Tracey Gee Center

asking for reservations requests for next year. I want to respond to that before we lose our spot if we choose to continue our current meeting place.

Dale KG5U will present our program for October. He will show us how to get the most from our digital cameras. Bring your camera and Dale will give pointers on taking great photos. Dale has been a photographer for the Houston Zoo for several years. He took some spectacular photos during the C91 Mozambique DXpedition this Spring. The meeting will be this Thursday October 8 at 7:00PM at the Tracey Gee Center. Pre meeting dinner will be at the usual Pappas' BBQ at Gessner and Westheimer. Directions are available on our web site www.tdxs.net.

Finally, I will get up on my soapbox to express my disappointment with the ham community in general during the current FT5GA expedition. The number of jammers, hecklers and just plain bad operators has been much larger than usual. Admittedly this has not been a very well run operation, but there are some circumstances that many amateurs don't seem to consider. First of all the operators involved are not experienced Dxer's. They are encountering the other side of a pile up for the first time. In addition they are members of the French

Military and have other duties to attend to besides Amateur Radio. Add to this the poor propagation and it is no wonder it is a mess whenever they are on the air. Rather than trying to improve the situation many of the pile up participants seem to do everything they can to make it worse. It is amazing how many don't know their own call and continue to call when the DX operator asks for a partial call that is in no way similar to theirs. And there have been several instances of a pirate showing up on top of the legitimate FT5GA operation and causing havoc. Add to this the usual wrong VFOers and frequency cops and it has made for a very unpleasant experience. I have worked them several times but have lost track of the number of times I have decided to turn off the rig rather than participate in the madness.

I doubt that this will have any effect on those that are the biggest contributors to the mayhem, but I feel better. Thanks for listening and see you at the meeting,

DE Paul W5PF

From the Bullsheet Archives by Steve W9DX

Ten years ago this month:

TDXS President Earl Morse N5TU (now N8SS) was getting ready for the CW Sweepstakes contest with the new TR-Log on order and plans to finalize his 40 and 80m antenna work before the contest. In 1998, TDXS had 22 Sweepstakes logs submitted netting 2.3 million points and placing TDXS 7th in the medium club category. Contest Chairman KG5U reported that the ARRL had adopted the Cabrillo format for all ARRL contests. TDXS took 3rd place honors in the 1999 ARRL DX CW Contest for North America with 5,922,000 points for its XA5T operation. XA5T ops were: XE2KB, N5RP, N5TU, KG5U, K1OJ, W5MJ, K5NZ, and AD5Q. DX chairman N5UR reported on the active T31 DXpedition, the hunt for a newly reported 9U5 station, and Houston openings to Europe on 10 meters. N5DC gave a list of packet parameters to check and adjust for staying connected. TQP Chairman W5HNS provided the results of the 1999 TQP with a list of logs and claimed scores submitted.

Twenty five years ago this month:

(President KZ5M, VP K5DX, Sec N5JJ, Treas. N5EA, Contest Chairman K2TNO, Repeater Chairman K5VWW, DX Chairman KC5M, Bullsheet Editor, K5TU). The October issue of QST reported the results of the 1984 ARRL International DX Contest pages 77-89

in which K2TNO declared that "we had demolished all comers with two scores that would set the standard for years to come". QST said: "One call says it all this year in the multi-operator unlimited class, XE2FU. The Texas DX Society vacated the Lone Star State and ran away with the multi-multi plaque - to the tune of 14.3 million points on phone and a little over 8 meg on CW." Ops were: AK5B (now N5ET), K5GN, K5IY, K5LZO (SK), K5RC, K5TU, K5VWW, KB5FU, KC5CP (now N5MT), KC5M, KD5SP, KG5U, KN5H, KZ5M (now K7BV), N5AF, N5DU (now K5WA), N5JJ (SK), NA5R, NM5L, NM5M, W5ASP, W5SJS, W5BZN, W5VAH, WA5PQK, and WA5QOK. QST also featured a full page color picture of XE2FU at sunset taken by K5RC on page 151 that would be used on the cover of the 1985 ARRL Handbook. K2TNO also reported that the Sept-Oct issue of NCJ gave the results of the February SSB Sprint where TDXS placed second with 72.9K points (only because 2 TDXS team members didn't turn in their logs), otherwise we would have been 1st. NCJ Contest editor said, "TDXS will be another team to be reckoned with."

TDXS was beating the drum for the upcoming November ARRL Phone and CW Sweepstakes contests and declaring those dates as "Texas Send Your

Family to Aunt Harriet Weekends". Accordingly, a point quota was set for all members for the CW and Phone Sweepstakes, and locations where they would be operating from, with the added comment, "If you feel your number seems too low to you, feel free to beat it by a bunch. If you feel your quota is too high, you are obviously delusional about your station and/or your operating skills, so just go out and kick butt, and meet your quota or better yet top it."

In other news, The ARRL has requested that the FCC issue a declaratory ruling of limited Federal preemption of state and local regulation of amateur radio station installation and operation, or antenna zoning rules, in short (still waiting, ed). ARRL's DX Advisory Committee voted to reject a proposal to delete Baker, Howland, and American Phoenix Islands and add a new DXCC listing for Baker and Howland. American Phoenix will count as Kiribati since it's been under its sole jurisdiction since September 23, 1983. Hence no deletion or addition to the DXCC list.

Contest Chairman's Report by Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ

The fall contest season is now underway. I like to kick off the season with the Texas QSO Party. I missed it last year thanks to Hurricane Ike, but I had a good time this year.

I found a lot of stations to work on 20 meters during the day on Saturday with a fair number of DX stations calling in. Short skip was not so good on 20 meters so I worked very few rovers on 20. I switched to 40 meters in the evening and found several rovers there. I also found a large number of RTTY stations working the CQ Contest. Lots of tweedle made for a crowded band.

It seemed like there were not as many stations as two years ago. I wonder if some of our potential participants decided to work the RTTY contest instead. What ever, it was a fun contest. As usual I stayed on CW and worked from my home station.

Sunday was a bit slower. I guess a lot of guys worked all 254 counties on Saturday or decided the RTTY contest would be more fun and switched.

The QSO party is a great place to break in to contesting. The pace is not as fast as some and it is easy to run if you are a

Texas station. I find that in the QSO Party, Field Day, etc. about 22 WPM works the best for speed. I found a fair number of guys that needed slower speed so I kept my bug plugged in and slowed to 12 or 13 for several who seemed to need it. The major DX contests seem to run a bit faster, maybe 28 average with some at about 35 WPM.

There are several more QSO Parties coming up. By the time you get this the California party on Oct 3-4 will be over. Pennsylvania will be Oct 10-11, and Illinois on Oct 18-19.

Major contests this fall are:

Oct 24-25 CQ WW DXSSB

Nov 7-8 ARRL CW Sweepstakes

Nov 21-22 ARRL Phone Sweepstakes

Nov 28-29 CQ WW DXCW

Dec 4-6 ARRL 160 Meter Contest

Dec 12-13 ARRL 10 Meter Contest

TQP Soapbox de Bill K5WAF/m and Paul W5PF

This turned out to be a 1 day event – CW Mobile only – K5WAF op, W5PF drove. We got 9 ¼ hr op time, ran 19 counties and accumulated 651 Q's.

Actually we didn't know we were even going to go mobile until last Thursday. NO5W sent note saying that the operation planned for the counties north and east of Houston had to be scrubbed and asked if we would go mobile in those counties. I agreed and called Paul, W5PF who also agreed. So we had 1 Day to plan and get ready. Initial thoughts were that we would op SSB as W5PF/m and CW as K5WAF/m but getting into it, we only operated CW. Paul developed the maps and I got the equipment ready in my 2001 PT Cruiser with 185,000 mile on it (a bit chancy!!!) and off we went Saturday morning.

It all came off like clock work with a 577 mile route. Everything worked (including the car), the weather was great, the driving was excellent and traffic wasn't a problem. And despite the fact that we could not find the computer to transceiver interface cables, operating everything manually worked ok – in spite of the bumps in the road – that is if everyone out there could tolerate what sounded like a bad fist!

Results – 651 QSO's from 39 states (584Q's or 90%), 3 provinces (28 Q's or 4%), 8 DX entities (39Q's or 6%) but only 23 Texas Counties. We operated 100% CW on 20 M (556Q's or 85%) and 40 M (95Q's or 15%). 40 M was a total mess with the CQ WW RTTY contest which covered the band all the way down to 7.025. Finding an opening that wasn't being blasted by RTTY was problematic.

Observations:

1. Only heard 1 other TX Mobile the whole time!
2. Made contacts with 216 unique call signs. N6MU took the cake with 18 Q's – only missed 1 county. KV8Q and NT2A had 17 Q's each, W0GXQ had 16, N1LN (Bruce) and WA3HAE had 13, DL5AWI had 12, DL3DXX and KM1C (Bill) had 11 and N3KR, VE3KP, W7GVE and W9MSE had 10 each.
3. Q's in each county were fairly well balanced – a low of 15 Q's in SABI and a high of 61 Q's in WALK.
4. W4 land was the most active for us with 109 Q's (19%), followed by W8 land (83 Q's or 14%), W6 land (63Q's or 11%). We were a bit surprised at the low participation by our neighbors up north in VE land.

5. The Germans were surprisingly strong and both DL3DXX and DL5AWI did a great job finding us. We also had Q's with CU, HK, OK, F, HA, SP and SM.

So Saturday ended and TQP was history for us. For me, I was given a one day reprieve on a Saturday and Sunday commitment to help renovate my son's bathroom, so I made up for lost time on Sunday.

Paul and I had a blast. We probably should think about doing both days next year – with a bit more than 1 day to plan.

After-Action report on the TxQP effort at NR5M de Scott KB4KBS/5

In a quirky twist of fate, my article on NR5M that I wrote back in January was finally published in the October 2009 QST, just in time to coincide with the invitation from George to operate at his mega-station during the Texas QSO Party weekend. I was honored and excited. I had hoped that there would be an opportunity for me to be behind one of those radios some day and finally the chance had arrived.

Having been a ham for over twenty-five years, and having had very little exposure to a well set up and equipped station, I had always had that nagging question, "Do I have what it takes to be a first rate operator in a pile-up as a contestator or DX operator?" I have listened over the years to DX-pedition operations and read reports about how many tens of thousands of contacts were made over a week or so of operating, and marveled at the fete. Now it was time to "put up or shut up".

I invited a friend from LaPorte, Mike Urich, KA5CVH, to join me in the adventure and the two of us arrived at the Round Mountain Ranch around 8AM to get oriented and acclimated

before the 9AM start. We set up on the 20M and 40M stations primarily, but had the 15M and 10M stations warmed up as well. As the 9AM hour passed, we began our assault. I took the helm at the 20M post and Mike went to work on 40M. Things were a little slow at first, but by the time ninety minutes had past, things were in full swing. We had the amplifiers throttled back to around 900-1000W, but were working everything we heard with ease. Mike is mostly a VHF/UHF guy, but he did a great job on 40M. This was our in-state money band as we racked up county after county in Texas. On 20M, I was hitting both coasts quite well thanks to a four-stack set of beams set about 30-40 degrees apart from west to east.

Just as we were hitting our stride, however, we were requested to QRT. Part of the weekend activities at the ranch included the installation of two 75/80M three element beams. One of them had gone up on Friday, and was still in need of some tuning to optimize it. It seemed that our 1KW outputs were messing with the antenna analyzer readings (imagine

that!). Over the course of the next hour, we would start and stop several times until the antenna was finely tuned.

When we operated, it was amazing. I was actually having to work pile ups! I tried to emulate what others had done by listening to the mélange of calling stations and picking out two or three partial calls at a time and working them down a list. This seemed to work well, and I had a great time. Of course, there were always the very strong stations, but there were lots of weak stations also. As a perennial weak station myself, I tried to show some bias toward them as well as the QRP and mobile stations. I was amazed at just how many mobile HF stations were on the air all over the Midwest and east coast. It may have hurt my "run rate" to dig a S1 station up out of the noise floor, but having felt the exhilaration on the other side of that QSO many, many times, I just had to do it. I could hear in those faint "QSL! QSL! QSL!" voices the sense of victory and accomplishment that is so easily forgotten by the big guns. In my opinion people who espouse, "Life is too short for QRP" have

After-Action report on the TxQP effort at NR5M cont.

never experienced that thrill, but need to.

One other departure from hard-core contesting that I took was to take time and “chat up” the several new “/AG” stations that I heard. These newcomers to HF – I was the first HF contact for one young voice from South Carolina – need to be encouraged, and so I seized my “bully pulpit” to exhort them to be active and to get on the HF bands frequently. I also did the same for several self-identified “attic antenna” stations. As wonderful as it was to be behind the mic of a “clear channel” giant signal, I didn’t want to forget what it was like to be “the other guy”.

At about 2PM on Saturday, the contesting effort came to a halt. It was time to raise the second 75/80 meter beam. This beast was huge. George had hired a 215’ boom crane to hoist it to the top of a 180’ tower. Once it was tuned, the lift began and before long, the monster was ever so gently lowered in to the cradle of the ring rotator and bolted into place by the two tower climbers. We took lots of photos and I’m certain that they’ll be on the www.nr5m.com web site soon.

Two hours or so later I was back on the 20M mic working like a devilish fiend and having the time of my life. Mike had to head back to LaPorte, so I bounced between the 20M and 40M radios, with an occasional spin of the 15M and 10M dials to check for activity. I logged contacts until about 8:30PM when we called it a day.

On Sunday, George jumped in and helped and we had a go at 40M for a good while. He has a set of beverage antennas for 40M that were amazing. A faint signal would raise at least two S-units when the proper beverage direction was selected. We went full guns on 20M and 40M all the way to 3PM, the official end of the contest. When it was over, we had worked every state but SD. We missed several of the Maritime Provinces, as well as Yukon and Nunavut, but I did work NWT on 20M which was a personal first.

The finally tally was just shy of 1400 QSOs and a pre-audit score of around 385K. From the 3830 rumors, this was a good score, indicative of effort and the interruptions. I guess putting a positive face on it means claiming the high score

for High Power, Multi-Operator, SSB only. The giant goose egg in the CW column will have to change to post the kind of score this station is capable of making however. I had a blast, I learned a lot, and I fulfilled a dream. I proved to myself that I could handle the pressure of pile-ups and got a little glimpse of what it would be like to be a DX station.

I know that the TDXS is putting together an adventure to the Caribbean for a contest over the Thanksgiving period; can I suggest that a DX-pedition to South Dakota might be in order for the near future as well?

73,
Scott Straw
KB4KBS/5
Houston, TX

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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)

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 October

Jim Whitmire - KD4M

Wes Whiddon - N5WW

Ron Marosko, Sr. - K5LLL

Bill Schrader - K2TNO

Jeff McClain - K5MV

George DeMontrond, III - NR5M

Kim Carr - K5TU

Laurent Thomin - WOMM

Bob Mennell - WB5IUU

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone.