



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net March 2010

YN2 DXpedition Wrap-up

Thursday, March 11, 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 feature the

just completed YN2 DXpedition, with Keith NM5G (YN2NM) doing the presentation.

See you there!



Editor's Note de Doug WB5TKI

Part 1—It's the night before my first DXpedition. This one is tame, to Granada, Nicaragua for the ARRL International SSB DX Contest on March 6-7. We're using a rent-a-shack, so the luggage requirement is reduced. Still, we take along a backup rig, amp, filters, and various computers and bits to glue it all together. Weather should be in the 90s

in the day and the 70s at night. I'm excited to finally be doing this.... operating from another country. The proprietor of a local Mexican restaurant is from Granada and showed me some pictures of the city on his smart phone. It should be quite an adventure! I'll have part 2 when I return.

Part 2 — WOW, what a rush! There

really is nothing like being on the other end of a big pileup. Nicaragua isn't rare, but in the contest, everyone seemed to want to contact us. I had the last shift of the contest, and toward the end it was just crazy! Come to the Thursday meeting to hear more! I'm also planning a full length article for the April issue of the Bullsheet.

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The Prez Sez de Paul W5PF

Field Day is less than four months away so it is time to start getting our plans together. For the last couple years Bill K5WAF and Bob WB5IUU have coordinated the event with the help of their XYLs and Keith NM5G. This year Bill and Trish will be out of town during Field Day and Keith will be working with the NARS team. Bill has been talking to the Tomball Fire Department and we have been invited to use the Tomball Fire Station including their 65KW emergency power system. This of course means that we can operate in the station with air conditioning and no mosquitoes. Now we need some folks to step up and help get us ready. We need a coordinator and station captains. If you are willing to help contact Bill or me. I would hate to miss an opportunity like this.

The flux is finally headed in the right direction. There has been a lot of activity on 15M in recent contests and even some on 10M. 12M has been very busy also. One afternoon last week I worked a couple African stations and then reversed my 3 element SteppIR to work a couple Pacific stations. Several new 12M band countries have already shown up on LoTW. Sure beats having to send out IRCs or Green Stamps to get a card back, and it's quicker too! It has been great to hear the higher bands open for a change.

I'm sure others will mention the TDXS crew going to Nicaragua for the ARRL DX Phone contest next weekend. Cal WF5W, Mike K5UO, Keith NM5G and Doug WB5TKI will have two stations on the air before and after the contest. They will have an amplifier so they should be LOUD in Houston. Get on and give them as many Q's as possible during the contest. They will be using YN2EA for the contest. We will have the opportunity to hear all about the trip at the meeting March 11th since the gang will be just back from YN and anxious to tell some tales.

Jim NN5O will activate his EI8KB call on 15M during the contest from County Kerry Ireland. Be sure to look for Jim.

Speaking of NN5O, Jim operates the 21 Again Net on 21.290 at 6:00PM local time on Wednesdays. I hear things have been pretty active lately, check it out this week.

See you all at Pappas BBQ on the 11th. As usual details are available at www.tdxs.org.

73 de W5PF

From the Bullsheet Archives by Steve W9DX

Ten years ago this month March

2000: TDXS Prez Earl Morse N5TU (now N8SS) announced the March meeting would be held at the Valley Ranch BBQ at SH249 and the Tomball Parkway, followed by a tour of the emissions control lab on the Compaq computer campus. DX Chairman Buzz N5UR reported that the month's DXpedition to Clipperton Island netted many easily worked bands and modes. TX0DX from the Chesterfield Islands was due up on March 15 as the newest DXCC entity. Madison W5MJ of XA5T fame had a lengthy article recounting the adventures in the ARRL International DX Contest from Neuvo Laredo and the challenges of operating with the ever present voltage swings at Enrique's ranch. This issue listed 30 active dues paid members of TDXS.

Twenty years ago this month

March 1990: TDXS Prez Ken KE5IV (now KZ5KG) announced the March meeting would be held at St. John's School. The featured program was Bill "Tuna" Schrader K2TNO's famed receiver performance measurements. Andy Burns GM0ECO was in the process of setting up his station at his new QTH but high Scottish winds and rain trashed the 15m trap on his new TH-7-DX. Outgoing QSL Manager Chuck K5LZO (SK) recapped which cards could be handled by the bureau and proper card sorting. In DXCC news, the League will start accepting Walvis Bay cards starting June 1st, and Banaba and Conway Reef cards after March 1st. Two possible DXpeditions to the Spratly Islands were in the works. Congrats were in order for Jim Lane N5DC as he received official word from Don

Search at the DXCC desk for attaining DXCC Honor Roll status. At the January ARRL Board of Directors meeting they voted to approve 17m and 12m DXCC endorsements to the 5BDXCC award.

Thirty years ago this month

March 1980: Bullsheet Editor Tom Taormina K5RC announced the March meeting would be held at the Red Carpet Inn on the Katy Freeway, followed by a buffet dinner. The featured program was a film by Chuck Coleman K5LZO (SK) and his adventures operating as FP8CB/FO8. Discussion was made of the newest ARRL rules for Field Day (pre-positioning of equipment would not count against the 24 hour set-up time, no portable designation needed, no signal report needed, 5 QSO minimum for natural power credit, and bonus points for copying the W1AW bulletin). K5RC gave a recap of the club's fine ARRL CW Contest efforts in spite of a solar flair pushing the A index to 30. The K5RC multi-op crew tallied 2.3 million points, with active participation by K5WA (SK), K5TU, N5RF, K5FP, K5BZU (now K5FK), N5JJ (SK), K5MA and others.

2010 TDXS QSO Party: I am still working on plans for a summer TDXS QSO Party to celebrate our 40th year. Time is getting short and we need to get announcements out as soon as possible. The goal would be to work as many TDXS members as possible and re-establish contact with each other, any band, any mode, maybe even including our local repeaters and Echolink. Exchanges could be name and state (or DX) for non-members, and name and member number (see the [MemberNr web-](#)

[page](#)) for your number) for TDXS'ers. The challenge is finding existing contesting software that would allow such exchanges and how to score them. We can modify the exchange to fit the software if necessary. Member number could probably go in the name field. I need input from our testers so we can get this finalized. Any and all ideas will be most welcome. Let's all participate and make this a memorable event.

TDXS Meeting Notes by Bill K5WAF

Date: February 11, 2010
7:00-9:00pm

Location: Tracy Gee Center,
3599 Westcenter
Drive, Houston, TX
77042

Attendance: TDXS Members:
W5BXX, W9DX,
K5WAF, WB5IUU,
NM5G, WF5W,
NI5DX, K5UO, W5PF,
N5KTN, WD5KCX,
K5LBU, W5MJ,
W5GCX, N4AL,
W5PR, K5EWJ, N5ET,
N5UR, WB5TKI

Visitors: KD5TIO
(Tom Campbell),
W0UN (John Brosna-
ham)

• **Secretary/Treasurer [Bill, K5WAF]:**

○ TDXS financials were reviewed and the clubs accounts remain healthy.

○ During the month, the club paid respects to K5IY by providing flowers at his funeral.

○ 2 DXpeditions received support: post DXpedition support was provided to last years 7P8 team and this years YN DXpedition, scheduled for March 2010. This brings it to 11 DXpeditions and 19 of 25 TDXS Full members participating in TDXS supported DXpeditions since 2006.

○ **Membership [Bob, WB5IUU]:**

○ TDXS shirt orders will be placed prior to the next meeting. Contact Bob Mennell if you have not placed your order (deadline was Feb 15th).

○ **Contest Chairman [Cookie, K5EWJ]**

○ **160m Contest:** Several TDXS members participated in the 160m contest (see this months Bull Sheet). All in all it conditions were very good and it was a great contest for those participating.

○ **10-10 Contest:** There were a few participants from TDXS – and it was a tough go! Hopefully cycle 24 will start providing better conditions next time.

○ **Coming Up:** CQWW RTTY (Feb 13-14), ARRL Intenation DX CW (Feb 20-21), CQ 160 SSB (Feb 26-28). Have fun and participate – and don't forget to submit your scores with TDXS as your club.

○ **DX Chairman [Cal, WF5W]:**

○ **YN DXpedition:** Planning is complete and the 4 TDXS members (WF5W, K5UO, WB5TKI and NM5G) will be participating in the ARRL International DX SSB contest in early March.

○ **Still Planning:** We are looking at a Costa Rica IOTA DXpedition for 2011 – more details later.

○ **Field Day Chairman [Bill, K5WAF]**

○ **ARRL 2010 Field Day Package is now available**

○ **TDXS Field Day is planned to be held at the Tomball Fire Station**

○ **We are looking for a Field Day Leader:** K5WAF will not be in the Houston area during Field Day this year and therefore will not be able to lead the activity. For anyone interested in taking this role, the plans and documents from the last 2 years are complete and will make the 2011 activity fairly easy

to organize.

Business: No other business.

Presentations:

Dave Topp presented the video for K5D, for which he was a significant sponsor.

Contest Chairman's Report by Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ

February has been a busy contest month. The Ten-Ten Winter Phone QSO Party held on Feb 6&7 had some really challenging conditions. Friday night started with some skip to Arizona and adjacent states and Saturday has some skip to Georgia and surrounds. The east coast hams were dealing with a big snow storm, so were more involved in shoveling snow, dealing with power outages and broken antennas. We had a full-fledged solar storm on Sunday that shut down E-skip propagation and few out of town contacts were made. We had good participation by the SHOT group so we may do well in the club competition. Individual scores were lower than in the past all over the US.

The CQWW RTTY Contest was held on Feb 13 & 14. Scott, K5DD reported a major effort

and nice score of 286,000 points. He also represented us in the Mexican International RTTY Contest on Feb 6 & 7 with 9,415 points. Good show Scott! The ARRL DX CW was held Feb 20 & 21. The propagation was great for this one, especially on 20 and 15 meters. The 40 meter band was open all night and the 20 meter band started opening early in the morning. I missed the early hours of Saturday morning, but on Sunday signals disappeared from the 40 meter band before sunup. I decided to take a look at 20 and found that all the stations were there. The band was stacked from 14.000 to above 14.100 with signals close together and good signal strength from Eastern Europe and North Africa. Fifteen opened an hour or two after sunup and had a lot of signals from Europe and progressed

toward the west as the day passed. Ten meters had some good periods of propagation to Central and South America, but we did not get big openings to Europe as I had hoped. Several members reported good scores on the reflector and 3830 web site.

The CQWW 160 CW was held Jan 31 & Feb 1. It was great and reported last month. The CQWW 160 SSB is in progress as I write. Last night was very good with SSB signals stacked across the whole band. With such a small band, there is room for about 60 QSOs at one time so the running room fills pretty fast. The band was open to the entire Continental US and Southern Canada. I heard several Europeans and managed to work OK4A with 100 watts and my Chicken Wire Special (CWS). I made more 160 meter SSB contacts last

Contests coming up:

All Year	CQ DX Marathon
March 6/7	ARRL DX SSB
March 14	North American RTTY Sprint
March 20	Ten-Ten Mobile QSO Party
March 20/21	Oklahoma QSO Party
March 27/28	CQ WW WPX SSB Contest
May 29/30	CQ WW WPX CW Contest

Contest Chairman's Report (cont.)

night than in the rest of my hamming days (157). Tonight is left for another try!

Logging Formats

Most of us have stopped using paper logs by this time. The larger contest organizers discourage paper log submissions, especially for contenders. Computer logging programs afford a lot of advantages, such as exchanging data with your transceiver, controlling some accessories, CW keying, SSB recording play, instant country recognition, instant scoring and other utilities. Some also provide coordination for Multi-Multi and Multi-Single. It takes a combination of many things to be a proficient contester. A good computer contest log, along with the proper computer platform and proficiency with the software is one of the requirements. So far, no one has accepted the task and been successful at writing a program that will perform all the contesting and awards tasks that we desire.

In addition to a contest logger most of us need a general purpose logger to handle daily contacts, QSL printing and tracking, awards tracking and

sometimes digital modes. Also some participate in specialty operations such as Ten-Ten, SKCC and Fists and need either a special program or spread sheets to handle data for our own special activities.

Quite often data generated by one program is needed for another. Since logging programs have a lot of data that is common and other data that is designed for special needs a group of programmers who serve the amateur radio group came together and designed a system for transferring data. The result is the Amateur Data Interchange Format and the acronym ADIF. The files have the extension ADI. This is a format which provides identification of the data, the length of the data and the data so that an ADI file written by one program can be read by another that conforms. For the data common to all programs such as the date, time, call sign, mode and frequency this is fairly straight forward. For other data, such as ten-ten number, SKCC number and other data that may not have even existed at the time the standard was written, the software author is left to define the

data himself. Sometimes, to make it fit the user must change the identity or add some information to provide the information for the receiving program to display and use. Fortunately the ADIF is a special format for a standard text file and can be manipulated by a standard text editor such as Note Pad or Word Pad. It may be easier with a simple editor like Note Pad than with the more capable Word Pad because the standard text format, not the rich text format supported by Word Pad is needed. If you use Word Pad be sure to save in the standard text mode, not the default rich text. ADIF is explained in depth at <http://www.adif.org/> An hour or so with this site will help you a lot in understanding the details.

The contest scorers use another type of text file called Cabrillo. Like the ADIF it is plain text and may be read or modified by a text editor. This file is what ARRL, CQ and other major contest sponsors desire because their contest robots can read, check and score these files. They are usually required for a log to win an award in a major contest. The

Contest Chairman's Report (cont.)

best way to generate one is with a menu command in a contest logger. Most of the problems occur when a person new to contesting logs a contest on paper or in a general logger. Trying to generate a Cabrillo by typing is time consuming and frustrating. The Cabrillo format is explained at <http://www.kkn.net/~trey/cabrillo/>.

If you select your logger programs carefully, you should not

need a converter. But if you do, there are converters to change formats. A list is available at:

<http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/software/logconverters>

If your data is in paper form, the best way may be to type it in. If it is in a format created before the late nineties you may need to write your own converter.

Programs, Dxpeditions and Stuff de Cal WF5W

From the V.P., Programs:

March: the YN2 Dxpediton w/ Keith NM5G (YN2NM) doing the honors with the slide show.

April: Field Day preparations, talk of Ham COM, and Dayton and more.....;

May: Most likly it will be our very own Wayne Rodgers W5KDJ coming back from the historic YI9OSE DXpediton to Iraq.

June: Field day

July: After action work over from Field Day Plus.....

More in the next Bull Sheet

From the DXpediton chair:

Gone to Nicaragua. Hope you all worked the team, we will have tried to be available....

More from the team at the next meeting with pics and stories.

Some General Stuff :

Now for a "dxpediton" to Red Fish Reef , from the deck of the

Sea Pumpkin. . On the 20th, the Eve of the Spring Solstice several hams will meet at Red Fish Reef for an all-nighter. Should be enlightening to say the least. There is a society that does this kind of stuff (non-ham) which will be there as well. So Look for us as /MM there.

The YN2 DXpedition by Doug WB5TKI, YN2TKI

We've just returned from YN2 land, but here are a few highlights of the trip. Much more to come next month.



Texas DX Society Boardmembers

President	Paul Frantz, W5PF	w5pf at cebridge.net	
VP Membership	Bob Mennell, WB5IUU	bmennell at consolidated.net	
VP Programs	Cal White, WF5W	cwhite314 at sbcglobal.net	
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Frink, K5WAF	WAFrink at msn.com	
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	Keith Dutson, NM5G	kdutson at sbcglobal.net	
	Bob Mennell, WB5IUU	bmennell at consolidated.net	
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DXpedition Chairman	Cal White, WF5W	cwhite314 at sbcglobal.net	
Outgoing QSL Manager	Scott Patout, K5DD	K5DD at arrl.net	
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DXCC QSL Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net	

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 March

Al Bayer - WB5CFI

David Bean - W5ZQR

Bob Walworth - N5ET

Ed Seeger - K5EBS

Bill Frink - K5WAF

John Godwin - K5IUA

Buzz Jehle - N5UR

Ken Grabenstein - KZ5KG

Ed Sikorski - AA8PA

John Bonica - K5EC

Dave McCarty - K5GN

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone.