



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 2011

Low Budget DXpeditions

Thursday, Oct 6. 7:00 PM

TDXS Meeting Night: Los Tios Mexican Restaurant, 9527 Westheimer, Houston. Pre-meeting get-together starts around 5:30 PM with dinner about 7:00. Program by Jacek Marczewski SP5EAQ, formerly 3D2MJ,

T30AQ, ZA/SP5EAQ, and ZL7/SP5EAQ, Jacek will describe how with good planning, one can operate low budget and light luggage dxpeditons that rival the big ones. Come and learn from Jacek's experiences!



Editor's Note by Jim N4AL

This month the Member Spotlight falls on Bob Hardie W5UQ. Bob is currently serving TDXS as VP Programs, which is a very critical and difficult position.

This month's issue also begins a multi-part article written by Bob on good electrical grounding. Bob did this professionally for decades, and has a wealth of experience. We all have much to learn from him on this subject.

BTW, if you like the Member Spotlight column and would like to see it continue, we are looking for a regular author for it. This is not a difficult or time-consuming task, but does require someone who is comfortable writing and would like to contribute to TDXS. If you are interested, contact me.

We have a special speaker this month, coming all the way from Poland! Many

of us are looking forward to meeting Jacek and swapping dxpediton stories with him. See you there!

Thanks to our authors for making the Bullsheet possible again this month. If you appreciate what they do, thank them!

Please report any updates in your DXCC status to W9DX so he can keep our webpage is current.

Inside this issue:

The Prez Sez	2
From the Bullsheet Archives	3
September TDXS Meeting Notes	4
Member Spotlight	5
From Earth to Ground	6
Birthdays	7

The Prez Sez by Doug WB5TKI

As I write this the temperature is in the 70's, propagation is up, 10 meters is open, and T32C is working big pileups. What a change from a month ago! It sure is great to hear 10 meters alive with strong signals.

I hope that you had a chance to work the Texas QSO Party. I was unfortunately stuck at a company "team building" weekend (poker and paintball, etc.) so missed it. Still, there are lots of contests and Dxpeditions happening in October, so I should be able to get my fix!

At the October meeting we will take nominations for club officers for 2012. If you would like to run for an office you can let Mike K5UO or me know ahead of time, or have someone nominate you from the floor on Thursday. Remember, the elected officers are President, VP Programs, VP Membership and Secretary/Treasurer. You must be an active member to serve as an officer. If you haven't done so before, or in a while, you should read the TDXS Consti-

tution, which is posted on the TDXS website. The election will be held at the November meeting for any contested seats.

We will have a special guest presenter at the October meeting. Jacek Marczewski, SP5EAQ will tell us about his Dxpeditions to ZL7/SP5EAQ, 3D2MJ and T30AQ, all with an emphasis on "small luggage and low budget" planning. He will also have along his logs and cards for T30AQ, 3D2MJ, ZL7/SP5EAQ, ZA/SP5EAQ and his home call, in case anyone needs a QSL. The meeting is a week early to accommodate Jacek's schedule, and will be held in the back room of Los Tios Mexican restaurant on Westheimer. Please check the TDXS website for details. If possible, RSVP to Bob W5UQ ahead of time so that we can make sure that the room is set up to accommodate us. This should be a great program, so I hope to see you there.

73 es gud dx,

Doug WB5TKI



From the Bullsheet Archives by Steve W9DX

Ten years ago this month October 2001: This issue of the Bullsheet is missing from archives. If anyone still has a copy, let me know.

Twenty years ago this month October 1991: The October meeting was held at St. John's School at Clarmont & Westheimer. TDXS President Jim Lane N5DC said final preparations were being made for the Houston Com-Vention '91 in which TDXS played a major role with DX and Contesting forums plus our famous hospitality suite. This marked the 15th consecutive year of the convention in Houston. Special thanks to K5XI, W5ASP, KG5U, AK5B (now N5ET), K5RC, K2TNO, NR5M and AA5NK (now K5UO) for all their hard work on the convention. Special kudos to Jim Carmody NN5O for all the work in bringing our special guests U2MIR and UW3AX from the USSR. DX Chairman Bob Walworth AK5B (now N5ET) announced that the much anticipated operations from ZA were really happening with three operations on the air (ZA1A, ZA1QA and ZA1HA).

Twenty-five years ago this month October 1986: A special "field trip meeting" was held at the KODA tower transmitter site on Senior Road with a tour by Wes Whiddon N5WW. TDXS President Joe Staples W5ASP was spearheading the club's participation in the upcoming 9th annual Houston Com-Ventiiion being held at the As-

tro Village Hotel. The club was raffling a Kenwood TS-440S. Rusty W6OAT was presenting the 1986 Clipperton DXpedition, Dennis (now K7BV) and Holly Motschenbacher presented their experiences operating from the Eastern & Western Carolines (KC6DM/KC6HM). Tom Taormina K5RC recapped the Great Armadillo Run of 1986, Bill K2TNO compared the merits of various receivers, and Dave K5GN presented a revealing look at "Where does the time go" in contesting. Nominations received for 1987 officers included: Kim Carr K5TU for President, Dave McCarty K5GN for VP, Ken Grabenstein KE5IV (now W5AAC) for Secretary, and Dale Martin KG5U for Treasurer. Contest Chairman Steve Nace KN5H (now AA7V) reported that TDXS kicked butt in the fall 1986 Sprint Contests. The 1986 CQWW DX-CW results were in with Dave K5GN operating from YV5TK placing 6th world-wide, Dennis KZ5M (now K7BV) placing #2 for 40m single band from XE2-land, and Chuck Coleman K5LZO taking first place in the 5th district in the multi-multi category, and W5ASP and crew placed 2nd in the 5th district in the multi-single category. Steve KN5H (now AA7V) wrote a great article on his experiences operating the latest CW Sprint contest from Tom N5EA's QTH.

Thirty years ago this month October 1981: The monthly meeting was held at the Chimney Rock

Medical Plaza on Mapleridge. Houston Ham-Vention '81 was about to commence with heavy TDXS involvement. Ham-Vention Board of Directors included: Tom K5RC, Jan K5MA, Jim KD4M, and Dennis N5DKG (now K7BV). Rich K5WA (SK) wrote a summary of the club's 1980 SS efforts to optimize results for the November Sweepstakes competition. Dennis N5DKG (now K7BV) announced the winners of the club's 1980 ARRL Sweepstakes Participation Awards. '81 SS teams were formed with team captains setting score goals for each member. Tips were given for making the best DX spots on the club repeater.

Thirty-five years ago this month October 1976: The bimonthly meeting was held October 8th at the Brisket House on Pierce. The October issue of QST reported the 1976 ARRL DX Contest results with TDXS ranking 12th in the club aggregate scores. Results of member voting on 4 motions were announced: to establish a Board of Directors, to continue submitting club aggregate scores as TDXS (not "TACO"), continue with bi-monthly club meetings instead of monthly, and not to establish a "Contester of the Year Award" at this time. Kim WA5WCT (now K5TU), Al WA5CFI, and Tom WA5LES (now K5RC) were about to install the new 96 machine with autopatch.

TDXS Meeting Notes by Mike K5UO

Date: 8 September 2011

Location: Tracey Gee Center, Houston

Attendance: (11) K5UO, W5UQ, KN5A, N5MT, WB5TKI, W5HPQ, W5GCX, WB5IUU, W5PR, W5MJ, N5ET

Visitors: none

representative from Beldon Cable and the ever popular John Firey, W5ZG and his vintage and historic radio collection; primarily the Collins Radio Company gear.

- Membership [Bob, WB5IUU]:
- Repeater Chairman [Glen, WB5TUF] Not present.
- Program Chairman [Bob, W5UQ] (See above chaired by WB5TKI)
- Treasurer report: While not a regular part of the meeting, Treasurer Mike Bragassa, K5UO discussed the very successful fund raising to purchase a projector for the club programs. The purchase was 100 % funded by members and one guest. Nice!
- President [Doug, WB5TKI]:
 - SP5EAQ, Jacek, also 3D2MJ, ZL7/SP5EAQ, T30AQ, et al, will be in Houston October 1~8 and wishes to meet socially w/ the members. He will have some Power Point displays of his DXpeditions to the South Pacific. These were primarily low-band efforts with wire antenna's. His focus is to have an EFFECTIVE DXpedition while travelling rather light. We will try to move the meeting night up to a night within his travel plans and meet at some place like Los Tios on Westheimer Avenue. Bob Hardie will secure the back room at the Los Tios well in advance. Doug will communicate back to this gentleman of our plans.

Presentations: Al Vacek, KN5A TDXS member #79, gave a very informative talk on estate planning and probarte law His presentation guideline was based upon his understanding of "nine mistakes that even wealthy people make" in their estate planning.

Submitted to record
Mike Bragassa, K5UO
Secy/Treas

○ Program director Bob Hardie, W5UQ discussed his other program plans which include a rep-



Member Spotlight by Jim N4AL

The spotlighted member for October is Bob Hardie W5UQ. Bob is currently serving TDXS as VP Programs, so he is responsible for the fine speakers we have each week. Prior to receiving his current call, Bob was W5EUQ for over 50 years.

When he was 17 years old, Bob began a career in commercial broadcasting. Two years ago he retired from WTTA-TV in Tampa and moved to his current QTH south of Magnolia, Texas. Bob has held an FCC First Class Radiotelephone license since 1958, and has been a member of the Society of Broadcast Engineers for over 30 years.

Bob loves CW and gets on the



air primarily to chase rare DX. If necessary, he will hook up a mic for a SSB QSO or an occasional ragchew. He has 231 DXCC entities confirmed, and many more that he has yet to submit to the DXCC desk.

Bob has a custom-built work-

shop and ham shack in his garage where he spends most of his day. He enjoys repairing and restoring ham gear, and can be seen selling in the flea market at many hamfests in the area. He doesn't fix equipment for hire, but if you buy the parts and are nice to him, he will help you fix your radio for free. He loves to help others.

Bob's XYL Elva accompanies him to many hamfests. Her main hobby is making quilts and she has a room in their house devoted to that purpose. If you are looking for a used rig or a quilt, check out Bob's web page at W5UQ.com and see what he currently has. Be sure and thank him for the vital role he plays in TDXS.



From Earth to Ground (Part I) by Bob W5UQ

Which type of ground do you want or need? A good ground to protect you from electrical shock; a good RF ground; or a ground to protect your equipment from the big *boogeyman*, lightning, entering and burning it up? Well, of course, if you have a ham radio station, then you need all three.

RF grounds will not be covered in depth in this article. If you use good balanced antennas like dipoles, properly fed and cut for low SWR, then RF in the shack should not be a serious problem. If you use good engineering practices to install your antennas, a properly matched antenna will allow you to lift your RF ground from your rig and there should *not* be RF floating on the chassis. But that is another subject for another article..

The Electrical Ground

This article will cover some simple grounding suggestions to help you feel that your rig is properly grounded for lightning. However, unless you install an elaborate lightning-grounding system, one cannot be almost totally protected from a lightning strike. Simple techniques that are not really expensive CAN keep the damage down to a minimum.

The NEC, National Electrical Code, stipulates how our buildings are to be wired to protect us from electrical shock. This is the third, or green, wire in the 3-wire AC cords. Electrical shock should not be a problem with homes that are properly wired plus AC “strips” used to give multiple outlets that are wired properly too.

An Illustration

Let’s first look at and learn something interesting about ground currents. If we took a coat hanger, and cut it in to two 2-foot rods, then pushed them into the ground about 15 feet apart, and ran wires from them to a sensitive voltmeter, then we’d have a test setup that can help explain why we need to tie our grounds together.

Electrical voltages can then be measured in the ground between the two rods, and during a lightning storm some pretty serious electrical activity can be seen on the voltmeter. A word to the wise: Please do not try a “Ben Franklin” here and actually do this yourself.. It is really an unsafe thing to do! Just take my word for it.

This exercise is illustrative of the idea that there are electrical currents being produced in the ground during lightning activity. Varying voltages have been measured with this method, static discharges dissipating through the earth, when lightning was not even really very close!

Let’s continue with this illustration. Next we will place a wire directly between the coat-hanger rods, essentially shorting them together. So now, the readings on the voltmeter will decrease to almost nothing, at least too low to measure without sophisticated equipment.

This example helps one understand why we tie all grounds together. Say you already have a ground system, and that you have more than one ground rod or ground systems, which are *not* tied together. You are asking for the “potential differences” to be seen by any equipment that sees these grounds. And the potential differences can be thousands of volts during a storm. You really do not want these thousands of volts going through your rig or your TV set. Therefore, tie the ground systems together to eliminate this problem.

If we were to build a good lightning ground system from scratch, then we would build a counterpoise around our house, we would put dissipation streamers out from the counterpoise, and we would make sure everything is grounded to the counterpoise correctly. However, since most hams can’t go to that expense, a simpler system is called for.

An Affordable Electrical Ground

To build a good and affordable lightning ground system from scratch, first find a good place to put a ground rod just outside your

shack. Run a 2-inch (4 inch if you have it) copper strap inside your window, closing the window on the strap, to behind your rig desk. Take this to your antenna tuner through your window. Now your antenna tuner is your point to ground to. It now becomes your “station ground”. Each piece of equipment should be connected to it, the antenna tuner, individually, with insulated individual wire. The antenna tuner now is your station ground.

As for your antennas and control cables, make a copper (or aluminum) bulkhead for your antennas to enter the house. A good size is 4 inches high, by 12 inches or more, wide, and at least 1/8 inch thick. A 1/4 inch thick bulkhead is best. Put this bulkhead in the window, or just outside the window. You can make the bulkhead the size of the window opening too. Or fill in the open space with another material.

Bond the bulkhead to the 2-inch strap where the strap enters the window opening. Favor the bulkhead to the outside. In other words, make it to where it is more outside of the house than in it. Cut holes in the bulkhead so that you can put PL259 barrels (threaded feed-throughs) that will allow a PL259 connector to be screwed into both sides of the barrel. Insert the barrels into the bulkhead so that the antenna line will now come in “through the bulkhead”. This grounds the shields. This is also a good place to put your surge suppressors for the antenna line and MOV’s for the control cables. Ground the suppressors and MOV’s to the bulkhead. Preferably outside or on the outer side of the bulkhead.

Again, any control lines or other antennas should *have to* enter through this bulkhead. Put a terminal strip on the bulkhead, and use MOV’s from each control wire to the bulkhead ground. Next month, Part II of this article will continue by discussing further the importance of connecting all grounds together.

Texas DX Society Boardmembers

President	Doug Seyler, WB5TKI	djseyler at comcast.net
VP Membership	Bob Mennell, WB5IUU	bmennell at consolidated.net
VP Programs	Bob Hardie, W5UQ	w5uq at att.net
Secretary/Treasurer	Mike Bragassa, K5UO	bragassa at consolidated.net
Contest Chairman	Willis "Cookie" Cooke, K5EWJ	wrcooke at yahoo.com
Field Day Chairmen	Dave Topp, W5BXX	w5bxx at aol.com
Repeater Chairman	Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF	wb5tuf at earthlink.net
DXpedition Chairman	open	
Outgoing QSL Manager	Scott Patout, K5DD	k5dd at arrl.net
Webmaster	Steve Smothers, W9DX	cougar70 at earthlink.net
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CQ WAZ Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net

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, N0MM

Bob Mennell, WB5IUU

Tom Campbell, KD5TIO

Bob Hardie, W5UQQ

Please notify the editor if I have missed any-one.