



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net January 2014

January: 2014 TDXS Annual Banquet Rio Ranch Restaurant, 9999 Westheimer, Houston, TX

The 2014 TDXS Annual Banquet will be held on Saturday January 11 at 6:00 PM, in "The Lone Star Room" at the Rio Ranch Steakhouse, 9999 Westheimer, Houston, TX.

Come join us for a fabulous evening of great food, awards, and great conversation.

Start gathering between 6 and 6:30 PM for social time and cash bar.

Dinner will start at 7:00PM and ceremonies will commence at 8:00PM.

See page 7 for more details.

2014 TDXS Annual Banquet



Editor's Note by Allen N5XZ

We have some new TDXS officers this month (check out the back page). Be sure to thank them for volunteering and donating their precious time for TDXS.

As you might know, I am the program manager for the Greater Houston Hamfest. I am still open and looking for volunteers to give presentations. What "I" would like to see are programs which will help budding hams get on the air and programs to help all hams to take

advantage of the current solar cycle peak. But there has also been an increased interest in contesting and Radio-sport. I am sure TDXS has many members who are capable of putting on a great presentation to lure more unsuspecting young hams into the black hole...just kidding. Anyway, think about it and get back to me.

For the benefit of those who do not subscribe to the many reflectors that I posted it on, I am repeating my little story of the "TOF" (tired old fuse) on page 6.

The sun has apparently completed its polarity reversal, indicating that we are at the peak of the solar cycle RIGHT NOW. So please take advantage of it...get that rig, amp, antenna setup of yours on the air!

73, Allen N5XZ

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The Prez Sez by Doug WB5TKI

The Prez Sez

Tis that time of year to be happy, caring and jolly. It is also time for our annual TDXS Banquet. For most people, January can be "a non-event month". However, we have elected to have at least one event that we all can all enjoy and that is our TDXS Annual Banquet.

It is scheduled for Saturday evening, January 11th, 2014 and will begin at 6pm and last until 9pm. It will be at the Rio Ranch Restaurant at 9999 Westheimer Rd., Houston, TX 77042 --- 713-952-5000. So far there are 38 people who have promised to attend so we should have a lot of fun. See you there, where we expect to be happy, caring and jolly having fun with a wonderful group, The Texas DX Society. (See TDXS.NET website for more details.)

Officiating over the banquet will be Doug Seyler, WB5TKI, our 2013 President. Doug has actually served three years. Since I have been a member now for four years, most of my time has been with Doug as president. And of course, Paul Franz was the president when I joined. Both Paul and Doug were very good presidents for TDXS and we all thank them very much for their contribution.

The TDXS has been going for over 40 years. There have been many presidents and officers/BOD. And I am now one of them. Well, I begin a year now of being president. When I was elected I emphasized that I was not into contesting. Nor do I know the Houston area, such as restaurants. Someone needs to know them as we elected to have five of our meetings away from Tracy Gee this year. Those will be dinner meetings and will happen in May, July, September and November. Of course, the banquet in January does count as a meeting.

Further info on meetings and unless otherwise decided, there will not be a TDXS meeting in June due to Field Day and

HamCom in Plano. Lance Rumfield, WD5X, is now VP of Programming. Several very interesting programs for the year have already been set. (Such as **February: It will be at Tracy Gee and is Professor Patricia Rieff W5TAR, a lady ham from Rice University, presenting a program on Space Weather and How It Effects Ham Radio.**)

March will be our annual joint BVARC and TDXS meeting. We expect a large crowd for this one and have reserved a larger room at Tracy Gee for this event. The February BS "Prez Sez" will have more about some of the programs planned for this year. Plus each month the TDXS.NET website will have info on that months meeting.

I want to thank those who will be continuing on as Officers of TDXS and those who will be joining us. I've mentioned Lance already. Steve Smothers, W9DX, will continue as Webmaster and this year is also our new VP of Membership. Then Joe Staples, W5ASP, is our Contest Chairman with Cookie, Willis Cooke, K5EWJ, changing chairs from Contest Chair to DX Chairman. Joe used to be Contest Chairman a few years back. And Cookie has hit the ground running with the DX position. We look forward to all these guys will be bringing us.

We cannot say enough about how much Mike Bragrassa has done as Secretary and Treasurer for TDXS. His reports in the BullSheet have been great, as has his support of TDXS. He and Steve Smothers are regular what I call "ole time members" who have helped keep us going each month. My hat is off to you both.

Mike will continue as Treasurer, and Arthur Alvarez, N5KTN, has volunteered to be our new Secretary. Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF, is continuing as Repeater Chairman. And Scott Patout, K5DDD, has agreed to continue as Outgoing QSL Manager. Both Glenn and Scott have been

loyal officers for a long time and have done a good job. Thanks guys.

It is my contention that we have at least two Board of Director meetings this year. Those will be separate from the regularly scheduled TDXS meetings. BOD meetings TBD.

We feel that TDXS has a lot of good times set for its members this year. Of course we encourage other members that have not been attending, to attend this year. As well as those who are not members. Come visit. The meetings are typically the second Thursday of each month. However, with dinner meetings being planned, that allows us to vary the meeting night if we so decide. They will always be listed in advance on our TDXS website. But keep a watchful eye out as they may change.

For those of you that do not know, we have a great group of hams who typically meet for dinner at Papa's BBQ on Westheimer at 5:30PM before going to Tracy Gee for the 7pm meetings. Of course, the dinner meetings will probably have some arriving around 6pm to 6:30pm. We have a short business meeting at 7pm and then the program there after. As stated, those meetings will all be announced in advance at our monthly meetings and on our TDXS.NET website as well as in our monthly BullSheet. Look for them.

Have a great year and come be with us in 2014.

It should be a fun year.

Bob Hardie, W5UQ
TDXS President 2014

TDXS Meeting Notes by Mike K5UO

TDXS Meeting Minutes

Program: John Firey, W5ZGFirey

Date: December 12 2014

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

Attendance: TDXS Members:
WB5TKI, K5UO,
WB5IUU, W5UQ,
W9DX, N5ET, K5DD,
K5VWW,
N5MT, W5ZG,
N5KTN
Visitors: WG5H (Curt
Fletcher)

• **President [Doug, WB5TKI and Bob, W5UQ]:**

Announced new officers for 2014:

President: Bob Hardie W5UQ

Vice-president/Membership: Steve Smothers, W9DX

Vice-president/Programs: Lance Rumfield, WD5X

Secretary: Arthur Alvarez, N5KTN

Treasurer: Mike Bragassa, K5UO

DX Chairman: Needed

• **Membership [Bob, WB5IUU] Nothing to report**

• **Repeater Chairman [Glen, WB5TUF] Not present.**

John gave an excellent presentation of his radio and key collection via some fine pictures of this equipment.

He high-lighted certain pieces and gave excellent descriptions of the history of development, e.g. Collins and Central Electronics who were both active around the same time frames.

John featured a Collins "32-G" transmitter, vintage 1939. We were able to see the "before" and "after" of the rebuilding process. It was pretty rough to start with. In fact, it was extremely rough; ready for the trash bin! But, John did an excellent job of refurbishing it. He explained his procedure for refurbishing extremely rusty chassis's and components.

He presented the Central Electronics "100-Z" transmitter. Central Electronics was approximately in business from 1953 into the 1960's. They were best known as the developer of the SSB mode.

John showed his large collection of CW keys featuring many of the well known manufacturers like Vibroplex and McElroy.

Also featured were some pictures and discussion on British WWII airplanes and radio equipment, e.g. "Marconi".

His current project is rebuilding an E.F. Johnson "Viking Invader 2000" transmitter.

The members always look forward to John Firey's excellent presentations of radio equipment of past times. It's always presented well.

Submitted December 14 2013

Mike Bragassa, K5UO

Retiring Secretary



DX Report by Cookie K5EWJ

From the DX Chairman

Hello Everyone! I have changed my by-line with this issue as I have passed my Contest Chairman hat to Joe Staples, W5ASP. I will watch with interest to see how Joe handles the job as I have racked my brain to try to encourage contesting for the past several years and I hope that the new chairman will have some better ideas. With this issue, I will be trying to encourage DXing, which is a little different, but not in conflict with encouraging contesting. I expect to have more time for radio in 2014 than I have been able to devote for the past few.

As I am writing this, I am listening to Wolfgang, DH3WO run an orderly 15 meter USB pileup from Namibia. He is talking on 21.241 and listening on 21.246. The unwashed are calling on his frequency and the kilocycle police are yelling UP UP. The nasty and profane bunch is remaining quiet at the moment. Every now and again, I hear a partial call as an experienced DXer makes a mistake and starts to call on the DX frequency, but realizes that he is making a mistake and stops mid call. Others call several times before they realize their mistake. Fortunately Wolfgang had a 20 over signal to my beam and is easy to hear over the callers and the police. Of course, we are all experienced DXers and either know that the DX station nearly always listens on a different frequency than he transmits on. Most transceivers have the ability to work split, you just need to learn how to set your transceiver up for this. If your transceiver is so old that you can't do this, either buy the companion VFO from eBay or get a new transceiver. If you call and do not get the DX station right away, use the time you are waiting to think about what you are doing and quit calling as soon as you realize your mistake and start trying to figure out where the DX is listening. There is a YY1 at the moment who has been calling since before I started

writing and apparently thinks that eventually Wolfgang will call him on his transmit frequency because he is rare DX—will not happen!

A couple of days ago Orville forwarded me an email from Wim Hamblok, ON6TT which describes all the things he went through to get permission to operate from Benin and obtain the call TY1TT. This is a fairly rare country which has not been active for a while and Orville needs it for Honor Roll. I was fortunate enough to work Benin and get SSB confirmation in 1991 but still need to confirm on CW and several bands. Wim outlined his expenses for me, many of which would be illegal under US law which does not affect Wim. The cost he estimated is 2325 Euro or about \$3200. This is not a great deal of money, but quite a bit to make several thousand QSOs while your significant other enjoys the scenery or the beach. I informed Wim that TDXS as an organization is not positioned to fund expeditions, but I certainly support members making individual donations. Whether you make a donation to an individual expedition is up to you. I usually take into account my best guess about the finances involved by looking at the donee's QRZ page and any web page that he publishes, how badly I want or need the QSL, how many times I worked the expedition and anything else I can find out. Bear in mind that sending a QSL from Europe costs more than a green stamp, usually about two green stamps, so if you add a couple of green stamps to your envelope, you have not made a contribution. A Lincoln may be enough for a safe country where you want to make a small contribution, a Hamilton for a hard to access location and a Jackson for an area where some risk is involved as it is in many 3rd world countries. Save the Grants and Franklins for expeditions to South Sandwich and Scarborough.

Bear in mind the while postage is pretty safe for the US, Europe and the Pacific,

some areas are prone to pilfering in the mail. It is better to use Pay Pal if you can for larger donations to a lot of places. Some places are not trust worthy for two Washington's and while you maybe can afford the loss, you will not get the QSL you seek. Of course we all have varying budgets and you need to take that into account. If you are starting in DX and need everything you can wait for that card a while. It may take a couple of years for cards to come through a bureau, but they will come eventually if you keep envelopes at the incoming bureau. Look at ARRL.org for the address and rules for your bureau. Bear in mind that Europeans and other countries use metric card measurements and they will not fit the 3x5 small envelopes that we use in the US. You can buy larger envelopes at Office Supply stores and usually at Walmart, but they are a little more expensive. Spend a little so that the card will fit your SA envelope. US Stamps only work in the US and Possessions so the First Class Always stamps are worthless in other countries.

I asked for and received lists of DX countries that are needed by members. I am interested so that I can watch for cluster listings and coming DXpeditions to let you know about them. Also, I wanted to encourage all of you to make lists so that you readily know if you need the various countries. It is important for each of you to keep your lists evergreen. Most logging programs have utilities to do this for you if you will enter at least the qsos that you have confirmed.

Wolfgang has QRTed now and so will I. It was a productive day for Wolfgang as he worked a lot of eager DXers. I hope that I have touched a few points that will help you work and confirm more DX. If not, you are an accomplished DXer and I hope that you will give me some useful hints about what I should include next month.

73, Cookie

Contest Chatter by Joe W5ASP

From the Contest Chairman

It's been quite some time since I last wrote the Contest column for the TDXS Bullsheet. It's good to be back. I hope that in the coming months what I have to say will be of help to those who are already active contesters, and will encourage others to venture into the fascinating world of Radiosport, i.e. contesting. Let me assure you that contesting is not merely about winning or losing, but about playing the game and having fun. I have been actively contesting for over 30 years, and I still find it challenging and satisfying.

I should first point out that I operate CW and Phone in the HF bands. RTTY and UHF/VHF are not my forte. I will need the help of those TDXSers who have this background, if this column is to gain everyone's interest. In this column you will not find a detailed chronological list of every contest known to man ... there are other places where you can find out what's going on week after week. Nor will I be listing the scores of each TDXSer who operates in the various contests. I will however attempt to focus attention on those contests which I feel have the most to offer for both the serious operator, and for those with only a casual interest. In time I would like to see TDXS team entries in the major contests with perhaps a chance to regain some of the statue once held by TDXS. I going to want

to hear from individual members with their contest questions, comments and experiences. You can reach me at W5ASP@Yahoo.com I encourage anyone who spends any time on the air during a contest to do two things. 1) Turn in a log to the contest sponsor. Logs are the lifeblood of contesting; and 2) Report your score, however minimal, on the TDXS Reflector. This will encourage other members to join in the fun and give me a chance to see what progress we're making.

As a first step, I'd like to urge that interested members take a moment and read the comments appearing on the TDXS website under the topic "Contesting". It's a clear and concise summary of the basics. While you are there you might want to look over the article I wrote a while back ... "How to pick a Contest". It's good starting point for sorting out your options in the year ahead. The next step is to go the ARRL website, select "Edit your Profile", pick "Edit Email Subscriptions", and then check "ARRL Contest Update". This is a bi-weekly collection of contest related information compiled by Ward Silver, N0AX, and is without question the best source of what's happening in contesting available anywhere (Yep, I do have pretty strong opinions ...) Read it regularly ... it will guide you to the best in contesting. There's lots of other sources of good contest information out

there ... we'll talk about some of them later.

At this point you may start to wonder about the mechanics of contesting, particularly contesting software. It's a big and often complicated subject. I'll have comments on this subject another time. For now stick with whatever logging software you are currently using. If you need help with a specific contest or with submitting a log, send me an Email and I'll try to help.

Oh yes, contests ... the National Contest Journal's two major contests, the North American QSO Party and the Sprints are set for January and February. And the ARRL DX CW is in mid-February. Each of these is ideal for both the avid contester and the mildly curious. Regardless of which group you fall into, have a go at them, keep a log, submit your score and let us know how you did. Again, if I can help Email me.

Although I have lots of other stuff to talk about, it will have to wait. The Bullsheet Editor may choke on this initial submittal ... I tend to be verbose, particularly on subjects that interest me [No problem, I have unlimited space—Ed]. Till next time ... "dit dit" Joe Staples, W5ASP

BOY, WAS I WORRIED!

Last night, in the middle of a QSO with an EU, my Alpha 78 just turned off....nothing spectacular...the amp simply shut down. WHAT THE ^%#%\$#%? I signed off, disconnected power, pulled the fuses and sure enough, one was open. My first thought was that the transformer had blown. OH CRAP!!! **OHH-MY-GAAAWD!!**

WHAT WILL I DO WITHOUT MY AMP!!!!???? &@%*(&&\$@!!!!!!!

I went to bed but couldn't get to sleep for hours worrying about it. In the morning I went to work and at the office I scoured the internet for replacement transformers, didn't find any, but I did find a transformer re-winding service up north that listed Alpha 78's. Good! I also sent an email to Dick Byrd N4UQ who did some modifications on my amp before, then talked to him over the phone. He said it was probably NOT my transformer, but most likely a TOF ("TLA" for Tired Old Fuse). He said he would send me a couple and to give him a call back ("Take two fuses and call me in the morning!") (BTW, TLA stands for "three letter acronym", in case you're wondering..)

Anyway, I just couldn't wait for Dick's shipment so I stopped at Home Depot on the way home from the office. OF COURSE! Plenty of ABC-10's and ABC-20's on the rack but no dang ABC-15's! Boy was I mad! (More %\$%#^*!!) So then I drove to the other side of the freeway to Lowe's. Well, Lowe's didn't have two packs of one size fuse for \$2.89 like Home Depot. Instead, I had to buy a 5-pack with 1 ABC-10, 2 ABC-15's and 2 ABC-20's. Now I had to pay \$5.89. But it was worth it!

Finally I got home, made dinner, cleaned up the kitchen and got to go upstairs. I gently installed two new fuses, plugged in the Alpha... and...it turned on just like before!! Glorioski!! My Alpha is working again!!! I cranked up the power, worked a few EU's and all was right with the world again.

Slept like a baby!

That's my Christmas story for this year, children.

Allen N5XZ / KL5DX

Note: Dick Byrd N4UQ at www.n4uq.com is a great resource for repair and modifications of Alpha Amplifiers, including vintage ones like my Alpha 78. He does wonderful work, and is always very helpful on the phone. He added 12 meters to my '78, added a soft start, meter modifications, etc. He added another position to the band switch for 12 meters (between 15 and 10) and it looks like it came that way from the factory. So don't worry about Alpha's announcement that they won't fix legacy amps which was later retracted, (but only back to Alpha 89's I believe). I can't say enough about his service...the fact that he offered to send me new fuses for free speaks for itself.

BTW, check out this YouTube video of his Alpha 77SX modification:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxibGMB5MX4>

Allen N5XZ



2014 TDXS Annual Banquet

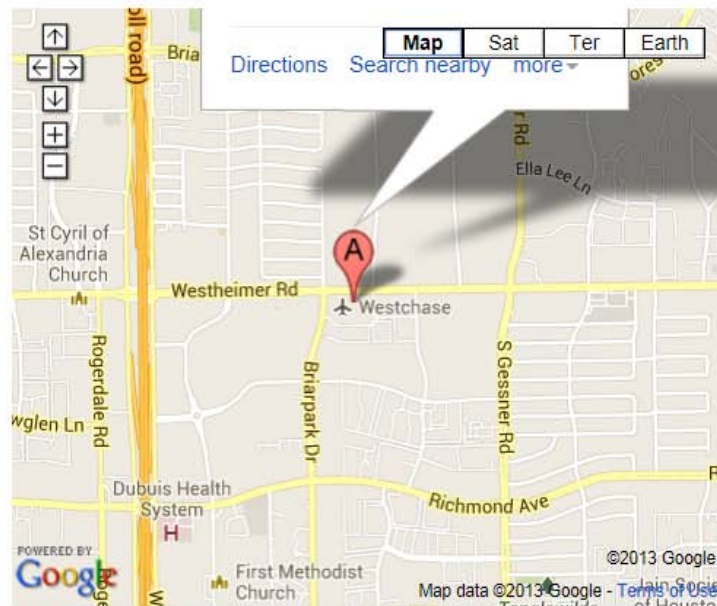


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Price per person is \$40 payable in advance by check to TDXS,
Mike Bragassa - K5UO, TDXS Treasurer
15039 Runnymede Street, Conroe, TX 77384

You can also pay via PayPal to account bragassa@consolidated.net

When using PayPal, please select "Send Money"; then "I'm sending money to family and friends". This should eliminate any PayPal fees. If you don't want to do that, please add 3% to the payment transfer. If you have any problems with this procedure, please email me. This should work satisfactorily as we have done this before.



[View Larger Map](#)

Texas DX Society Board members

President	Bob Hardie, W5UQ	w5uq at att.net
VP Membership	Steve Smothers, W9DX	cougar70 at earthlink.net
VP Programs	Lance Rumfield, WD5X	ltrumfield at sbcglobal.net
Secretary	Arthur Alvarez, N5KTN	KingArthur at msn.com
Treasurer	Mike Bragassa, K5UO	bragassa at consolidated.net
Contest Chairman	Joe Staples, W5ASP	w5asp at yahoo.com
Field Day Chairmen	need volunteer	
Repeater Chairman	Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF	wb5tuf at earthlink.net
DXpedition Chairman	Willis "Cookie" Cooke, K5EWJ	wrcooke at yahoo.com
Outgoing QSL Manager	Scott Patout,, K5DD	k5dd at arrl.net
Webmaster	Steve Smothers, W9DX	cougar70 at earthlink.net
Bullsheat Editor	Allen Brier, N5XZ	n5xz at arrl.net
DXCC QSL Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net
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 January

Barbara Coleman - WB5RUS

Lon Cottingham - K5JV

John Stevens - K5JS

Dale Martin - KG5U

Al Vasek - KN5A

Dennis Motschenbacher - K7BV

Bill Bradford - K5GA

John Duncan - WA5ZVE

Mike Hance - K5NZ

Allen Brier - N5XZ

Ben Worrell - NE5B

Ken Eckel Jr. - AB5A

Earl Morse - K8SS (ex-N5TU)

Doug Seyler - WB5TKI