



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 2014

March Meeting: Swaziland– The 3DA0ET DXpedition of November 2014 by Bob W5UQ

Here is Bob's bio:

Retired TV and Radio RF Engineer in broadcasting of over 50 years. Licensed May 1954 as WN5EUQ. Held W5EUQ for 53 years then got W5UQ vanity call. Now.. I work in my workshop that I built when we moved here 4 years ago. That keeps me very busy repairing ham gear and having FUN with electronics and test equipment. Love repairing Collins gear and test gear. When I do get on the air, which isn't often, I love CW. Chase DXpeditions mostly. Been doing some RTTY and if I have to..... SSB. HI. 160M through 2 meters mainly. DXCC is around 290 now. Been thinking about doing EME on 2m and 6m. My wife and I really enjoy going to hamfests all over the USA and now to Germany for a big one. Attend regularly HamCom Dallas/Plano, Orlando HamCation, Dayton HamVention, Of

course we attend BVARC, Belton, Austin and try to attend San Antonio, Texas City, Orange, etc..... We have four kids, seven grand kids and now a great-grand baby boy.



Editor's Note by Allen N5XZ

It's been another great month for DXing. The sunspot numbers & flux have been hanging high, no doubt we are having a 2nd peak to this mediocre sunspot cycle, but almost everyone I know is taking good advantage of it, myself included.

Seems I have been having a rash of minor equipment failures, this time my Green Heron rotor controller, in the form of a voltage regulator gone bad. "Never seen that happen before" says the company owner. So he is going to fix it for free while doing

an inexpensive upgrade to the unit. In the mean time, I thought my antenna had turned on the mast so I climbed up the tower to turn in and in the process broke a pair of pulleys on the truss lines, so something else now that needs to be fixed!

DO NOT FORGET!
SATURDAY MARCH 22nd is the 2014 GREATER HOUSTON HAMFEST!
As usual, it will be at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg, TX. See details and info at www.houstonhamfest.org.
This year's keynote speak-

er is Bob Allison WB1GCM ARRL Senior Test Engineer and featured speaker is Joe Eisenberg K0NEB CQ Magazine Kit Builder Editor "The Ultimate Elmer".
I don't know about you, but I have been having a heck of a time trying to work ZS8C on 10 or 12 meters! He was on 10 yesterday and 12 today. Oh I could hear him finally, but still no luck getting through. If you know the secret, let me know! I have a feeling it's a bigger antenna (for both of us!)
73, Allen N5XZ

Inside this issue:

The Prez Sez By Bob W5UQ	2
DX Report By Cookie K5EWJ	3
Contest Chatter By Joe W5ASP	4
Nancy Kott WZ8C—Honorary TDXS Member #171—SK	5
Brief update on Remote Radio Operation by K0NM	6
TDXS Birthdays	7

The Prez Sez by Bob, W5UQ

Ya think March is coming in like a lion? Well, if so, then hopefully it will go out like a lamb.

One can be optimistic even with all the ice on the trees and bushes as I write.

When I was elected president, I made a promise to have Board of Director's meetings. So, on Saturday March 1st, we had our first Board of Directors meeting of the year. Several topics were discussed and I would like to feel that our officers made some very good decisions for our group.

One of the first subjects to discuss was setting up rules for our upcoming Dinner Meetings of the year. You may recall that the club had voted, last year, to have "Dinner Meetings" in 2014 and have them every other month where practical.

They are to begin at 6:30pm allowing those that have to come from work to attend.

Since the typical restaurant atmosphere is more conducive to talking amongst ourselves and not so good for "a speaker", we elected to not schedule a program. Instead, we would spend the time getting to know each other better. You know, "like visiting while eating".

We also feel bringing visitors and prospective new members is good. It is also a very good time to bring our "significant other". So guys, our wives are welcome at the Dinner Meetings. Tell them and bring them. It "could be fun".

We also plan to have one Dinner Meeting that we call the "Ole Codgers Meeting". Meaning that we invite those who have been members of TDXS for years and years. This is a meeting like Orville Burg, K5VWW,

so successfully organized last year. It was really fun. Hopefully, this will become an annual event.

When we voted in Dinner Meetings last year, it was also decided that the Dinner Meetings could be other days of the month, not just the second Thursday.

Therefore, our first Dinner Meeting of 2014 (excluding the Banquet in January, of course) will be on May 1st, the first Thursday of May. It will commence at 6:30pm and at a place "yet to be determined".

Let's pause here for this bit of information:

Please note that All the other regular monthly meetings at Tracy Gee WILL STILL BE on the second Thursday of each month due to having to reserve Tracy Gee rooms in advance, last year in fact. Those Tracy Gee meeting months are the 2nd Thursday of: March, April, August, October and December.

The months for the Dinner Meetings are: May, July, September and November. Note that January could be considered to be the first one, being the "Annual Banquet Meeting". Then March should have been a Dinner Meeting. However, the joint TDXS/BVARC meeting was scheduled for this month and works much better being at a place like Tracy Gee. The month of June is skipped due to conflicting with HamCom and Field Day happens that month too.

Back to the Board of Director's meeting:

We covered several other topics, like collecting 2014 dues, ideas for 2014 Field Day and increasing membership of TDXS. Steve Smothers is our new VP of Membership and has a

"slew of ideas". We discussed several of them and I know he will be coming up with a lot more. Before we knew it, we had been meeting for almost two hours and everyone was ready to "give up the ghost". However, I must say that all seemed to reflect that it was a very good first BoD meeting. We voted to have them every three months this year and set our next BoD meeting to be in June.

Accolades to TDXS member:

We all should take time to congratulate Orville Burg, K5VWW, on his exceptional achievement. In "ONLY six months" he achieved the ARRL DX Challenge. That is quite an accomplishment in my book.

Not only that, but he only needs 1 more entity on 80 meters for 5BDXCC and is pushing 8BDXCC really close too. Orville, we are very proud of your diligence and tenacity. Let's all tell him about it when you see him.

REMEMBER:

That March 13th, Thursday at 7 PM will be at Tracy Gee. We will have two rooms reserved as we will host the TDXS/BVARC Annual Joint Meeting. Many of us will meet at 5:30pm at Papa's BBQ for dinner before going to the meeting at 7pm. **Come join us.**

Remember to think of those hams that you feel could enjoy TDXS as a club for them. Bring them to our meetings. Let's get some new blood flowing in our group.

See you Thursday night.

Bob Hardie W5UQ



DX Report by Cookie K5EWJ

From the DX Chairman:

This is a new year and with it are a number of DXpeditions in the field. It is a great time to run up the score by working a lot of new stations. You can enhance your chances of working your desired stations by thinking about what you are doing and listening carefully. You can also enhance your chances by studying what is happening and adding some tricks to your arsenal.

First, you should build your station to put out as strong a signal as you can. Some will be restricted by the place you live, deed restrictions, local laws and your personal finances. You can get a lot of help from fellow club members and your family, but when the pile ups begin, you will not have so many friends and DXing is a dog eat dog world. The guys with the big amps and big antennas will definitely have big advantages, but that does not mean you can't work some nice stations and grow your country count. The DX station will be forced to work the loudest stations first in hope that they will QSY and leave the frequency open for the next tier of stations. Appending your call with QRP or Mobile will work sometimes, but most of the time it will not get through the pile. Some guys will get their wife to call in hope that a female will get through when a guy cannot, but that only works occasionally. Mostly it is a game of increasing the QSO count as rapidly as possible so that the stronger stations will get their QSO and leave the pile to the remainder.

Most DX stations will listen a few kilohertz higher in frequency so that the pileup will not keep the stations trying for a QSO from hearing instruction from the DX station. Sometimes the DX station will find a clear range below the transmit frequency and listen there. Usually, the DX station will announce where he is listening, up or down. So if you hear the phrase "Working Split", "Listening Up" or just

"Up" that is what they mean. You will hear guys calling and calling on the DX station Frequency and making it difficult for others to hear the DX station. They will never work a DX station that is working split that way because he can't hear them because they are not transmitting on the frequency where he is listening. I think that these guys often do not have a good receiving situation and are calling on the frequency where they have seen the DX station listed on the cluster. Do Not call a DX station that you are not hearing well! You must hear him to work him.

Sometimes the DX station will be working stations on his frequency. This is rare for rare DX except in contests, but for not so rare for stations who do not create a pile up or when contacts are sparse because the band is just opening. When you hear a station calling CQ, he will probably be listening on his frequency or if he is working a pile up and you hear him answering stations on his frequency it is obvious that he is sending and receiving on the same frequency. If you do not hear the station that he is answering he may be listening on a different frequency, or it is possible that you just do not hear the station that he is answering because of propagation. It is more likely that this will be happening on higher frequency bands, but if you listen to several QSOs you will hear one or more of the stations. If you hear stations calling, but do not hear the DX answer any of them, it is likely that he is working split and the callers are just wasting time and causing interference. Always listen to the DX transmit frequency! The DX station is in charge of the pile up. There will usually be several stations issuing orders and causing difficulty.

There will usually be several stations who think they are helping control the pile up. They are mostly contributing to the confusion and keeping the pile up from hearing the DX station. Do not yield to the temptation to try to get them to QSY be-

cause you will only become one of them and contribute to the confusion. There will usually be stations that ignore the DX stations instructions to call up or down in frequency and insist on calling on the DX transmit frequency. They will never work the DX by doing this, but we never seem to run out of people who try. Occasionally you will make a mistake and call on his transmitting frequency. The best method is to just QSY when you discover your error and limit your contribution to the mess. Say as little as possible, a simple OOPS will do. If you are not sure, listen up from his frequency for the pile up and listen to the instructions from the DX. If you hear the "Kilocycle Police" shouting UP, UP, cursing and calling people names, check your settings to be sure that you have not made an error.

Make no mistake, the "Kilocycle Police" are part of the problem just like the people they are cursing at and the people causing intentional interference. All of them, no matter what their intention are interfering with communication. If they are trying to make DXing less fun, they are probably succeeding, but a large part of their fun is to hear the DXers complaining and fighting back. So do your best to not give them the satisfaction they want. Ignore their antics and above all do not create your own interference by fighting with them. Joe Izzu and Mr. Mayhem are bad enough, don't join them. Your revenge is to work the DX and quietly go away.

My apologies for preaching to the choir, but there seems to be an unending supply of those who need to be reminded. Of course, no TDXS members are included.



Contest Chatter by Joe W5ASP

CONTEST CHATTER

TDXS contest activity in the past month or so was pretty good, e.g. ARRL DX CW – N5XZ, WB5TKI, K5TU, N5EA; ARRL DX SSB – K5EWJ, WB5TUF, K5HM, W5PR; CQ WW WPX RTTY – N5XZ, WB5TUF, NI5DX, K5TU; CQ WW 160M – K5UO; BARTG RTTY Sprint – WB5TUF, K5UO; NA QSO RTTY – NI5DX; ARRL VHF Sweepstakes – W5PR. [And 10-10 Summer Contest – N5MT, WS5H, K5HM, WB5TUF, W9DX, K5DX, K5UO, N5XZ – Ed]

As I mentioned in last month's column, it is important that every member who is active in any contest report via 3830 with TDXS as his club. It's the best way for us to rebuild the recognition of TDXS as a viable contest group. Big scores are not as significant as general participation. Let's "wave the flag" guys!

I was wrong last month when I said that TDXS was no longer the sponsor of the Sharp, K5DX Memorial Plaque for World Single Operator, Combined Score, Low Power in the ARRL DX Contest. I talked with ARRL headquarters again, and found out that our sponsorship of the 2013 plaque entitled us to first claim for 2014. The 2013 Plaque was awarded to Dave, G3TBK operating as J88DR. The formal requests for 2014 sponsors have not been sent out yet, so we're good to go for this year. Mike's on the lookout for the letter.

Along this line TDXS has long been the sponsor of the Texas QSO Party's First Place, Multi-Op Mobile award. Mike, K5UO has checked with the TQP "powers that be", and was assured that it was still allotted to TDXS. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that sponsorship of DX and contesting awards is an essential element of maintaining TDXS's fine reputation.

One of the major events in contesting this year will be the World Radio Team Championship (WRTC) to be held in conjunction with the IARU HF Championship event in mid-July. We'll discuss this more as the time draws near. However, it was reassuring to find out that TDXS has joined with several other Texas clubs in supporting the WRTC, and has donated \$ 200 for equipment to be used by one of the teams. A very useful way to spend our limited funds.

Mike, N5MT has pointed out that filing your

log with the "robot" used by contest sponsors on their web sites is not as simple as one might wish. One instance is the need to spell out the club name as "Texas DX Society" rather than simply enter "TDXS". I know this to be the case on several sites, so don't let it slow you down. Another thing is to be careful with are the "drop down" boxes used to gather such things as power, mode, classification, QTH, etc. Pay attention and get it right the first time. Computers don't like omissions. Never hesitate to ask for help if you get in trouble.

While I don't use this column to provide a detailed list of upcoming contests, there are a few that I think a well worth noting. One of these is the CQ WW WPX Phone set for the last weekend of the month. One of the features of this contest is the option to work any station you hear regardless of continent or country. Its prefix is the multiplier ... a WA6 is a good as a HB9 or a ZS8. The contest lasts from Friday evening until late in the day Sunday, and there is always someone to work. Forget power, forget propagation, avoid pileups ... just work whoever is around. Heck, find a clear frequency and CQ ... you may be surprised at what turns up. HB9.HBHB

And then go to 3830 and let us know how things went for your TDXS station. [Online at <http://www.3830scores.com/> - Ed]

Depending on the software program you use while logging contacts during a contest, you may have the option of connecting to the Internet and accessing one of the many DX clusters which put out a steady stream of "spots", i.e. stations listed by call and frequency. Now there is a school of thought that scorns the use of cluster spots as "not properly playing the game". True, if you are a diehard contester. But for many others it is a convenient way to work other stations as they are spotted. However, if you use these spots you must always listen carefully until you clearly hear the station clearly give its call. You simply cannot rely on what you see on your monitor as being correct. If you don't actually copy the call, don't log the station. Should you chose to use spots be sure report your log as "Assisted" (or sometimes Multi-2 if there isn't an Assisted entry category).

In my January column I urged anyone interested in contesting to subscribe to NOAX's great newsletter the "ARRL Contest Update" available to all ARRL members from

its website. The next best thing for contesters of all levels is the "National Contest Journal". While you have the option of subscribing to the bi-monthly magazine, the website itself is an excellent source of contest information.

If you visit the website at <http://ncjweb.com> and look under the tab "Bonus Content" you'll find a variety of articles covering various aspects of contesting. One of the more interesting is the Power Point presentation by Gary, W5ZL, "Getting Started in Contesting". It's well done, brief and to the point. Try it, you'll like it. Another one I like is Jack, W1WEF's "The Thrill of it All". The sub-title "Contesting Isn't just for, well, contesters" pretty well describes the content. Jack does a great job.

I've probably overdone my stay for this time so ... Until Next Time ... "dit dit" ... Joe, W5ASP

WZ8C—Honorary TDXS Member #171—SK

It is with great sadness that we report Nancy Kott WZ8C is now a silent key. Nancy passed away on March 2nd. Nancy was Honorary TDXS member #171, and was an integral part of the TDXS DXpedition & FISTS group to Belize in September 2006. Team members included: Nancy (V31AN), Cal White WF5W (V31EA), Eddie Reynolds K5WQG (V31MR), and Bob Mennell WB5IUU (V31UU). See: www.tdxs.net/FISTS.html. She was also the former editor of WorldRadio Magazine and WorldRadio Online Magazine. She was an accomplished brass pounder, and was one of FISTS' most active members and promoters. Dayton HamVention attendees will remember seeing Nancy manning the FISTS booth and always had a big welcoming smile and eagerness to share stories. She also operated as VP2V/WZ8C in 2007 and was a member of the A-1 Operator's Club. She will certainly be missed. Thanks to WB5IUU and K6DF for sharing this information. Condolences may be sent to the family: Tim Lange and Family, P.O. Box 47, Hadley, MI, 48440.



Nancy, V31AN, at the shack operating position.

A Brief Update on NN5O & K0NM Remote Operation—By Nizar K0NM

While Jim is in Belize operating his V31AJ QRP station, I decided to check out the Remote operation during the ARRL SSB contest this weekend.

The goals of this operation were as follows:

- Test the reliability of remote operation over extended period of use, as in a contest
- Compare the signal strengths of Remote versus Home rigs for DX stations
- Get a feel for advantages and disadvantages of Remote versus Home QTH operation

HOME RIG

The Home QTH rig is an ICOM 7600 with an ICOM PW-1 amplifier running at 700 watts. The antenna is a VEE with 110 feet long legs at about 40 feet average height. The antenna is pointed in the NNE direction with a gain equivalent to a 3 element Yagi for 10 through 20 meters.

REMOTE RIG

The Remote Rig is an ICOM 7600 with a THP 1.5K amplifier running at 700 watts. The antenna is an 11 element Optibeam with 5 elements on 10 and 3 each on 15 and 20. The antenna is at a height of 50 feet and was pointed NNE for this test. The remote operation is achieved using the Remote Rig RRC devices hooked up to the Internet via a Verizon 4G LTE service. To get optimum data rates from the remote site, a Cradlepoint 4G LTE router with an external antenna is used. The Remote ICOM was controlled by TRX Manager Software for the whole time.

RELIABILITY OF EXTENDED OPERATION

I operated the Remote Rig simultaneously with the Home Rig for approximately 15 hours total and made 130 QSOs during the ARRL DX SSB contest. There were three four-hour sessions and three one-hour sessions. During the 15 hours of operation, there were NO interruptions in connection to the Remote Rig. Both the Remote Rig and the TRX Manager program worked smoothly during the contest. So, the reliability of the connection would be rated A+.

SIGNAL REPORTS

Most every contact made by Remote Rig was also monitored for signal report with the Home Rig. Because of the orientation of the antennas, most of the QSOs were with European stations. One of the most important difference in the two rigs is the background noise level. The Remote Rig is surrounded by farm land and has a noise level of less than S1. The Home Rig is located in Sugar Land and has a noise level ranging from S2 to S7.

The low noise level at the Remote Rig means I can hear European stations about one hour before the Home Rig. Whether the earlier band opening is due to a slight height difference or the lower noise, I do not know. My gut feeling is that it is due to better hearing capability of the Remote Rig location.

During the contest, I compared the signal strengths from the two rigs and found about 6-12 dB better signal strength from the Remote Rig most of the time. The 12 dB difference is mostly on 10 meters where the 5 element beam has a better radiation pattern than the VEE. QRM also seemed to be lower for the Remote Rig probably due to unidirectional radiation pattern of the Yagi compared to the bidirectional pattern from the VEE.

I used the Remote Rig for transmission most of the time. I did not do a direct comparison of transmitted signal strengths from the receiving station for the two rigs. But, previous work with the two rigs suggest that the Remote Rig probably has a better signal strength consistent with the receiving signal strengths.

The average number of calls I had to make to make a QSO was approximately three. A lot of the QSOs were made with the first call from the Remote Rig and several DX stations commented on my big signal in Europe. So, I would have to rate the receiving and transmit capability of the Remote Rig as A+.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The biggest disadvantage of operating remotely is caused by the fact that there is NO rig for you to rotate the dial. All the controls are through the computer. But, it did not take very long to get used to scanning the

frequency by clicking on the frequency display digit for increasing or decreasing the frequency. Once you get used to it, it is much faster to skip 100 Kcs rather than rotating the dial several times. Zeroing in on a station using the mouse requires getting used to it. Being used to the presence of a rig in front of me, I would have to grade the operation of the Remote Rig as a B.

Otherwise, the operation of the mike (and the CW keyer) is very good. They are both connected to the RRC device and operate similar to having them on the rig. There is a slight lag time when transmitting due to the delay in signal transmission from the Home QTH to the Remote Rig. The return path for this lag time is twice the ping time and is approximately 120 ms for my system. So, I have to allow about an eighth of a second longer time before speaking into the microphone or after finishing talking on the microphone. This delay is transparent to the user when operating CW because of the built in CW keyer, which regenerates CW at the Remote Rig site. Overall rating for SSB and CW operation would be an A.

SUMMARY

I was very impressed with the operation of the Remote Rig during the contest. It worked for several hours without a hitch. I also used it during the CW contest two weeks ago and made several QSOs without any problems. In fact, most people I talk to using the Remote Rig are surprised that I am operating remotely. The audio and CW quality seems to be very good. Bottom line is that it works great.



Texas DX Society Board members

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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 March

Al Bayer - WB5CFI

David Bean - W5ZQR

Bob Walworth - N5ET

Ed Seeger - K5EBS

Bill Frink - K5WAF

John Godwin - K5IUA

Buzz Jehle - N5UR

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