THE BULLSHEET

Official News Bulletin of the

Texas DX Society

An ARRL Affiliated Club

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Announcments

The 1999 TDXS banquet will be held Saturday, February 6, 1999 at the Confederate House Restaurant, on the northeast corner of Wesleyan and Alabama, a couple of blocks northwest of the Summit (now the Compaq Center), starting with a cash bar at 6:00 p.m. Dinner (entree is prime rib unless you want red snapper) will be served at 7:00 p.m. The cost of the affair is $25 per head

How to Reach Us

On the World Wide Web: **http://www.tdxs.org**
On 2 Meters: 147.96/36 MHz
On 70 Cm: 447.00/442.00 (103.5 Hz)
On Packet: Connect to *TDXS95* on 144.95
                then connect to K5LV
Reflector: Send to: majordomo@n5uh.tech.uh.edu
In the body of your message only put: subscribe tdxs-list
do *not* include your email address, as the reflector will pick
it up automatically. Put nothing in the subject line.

The Prez Sez- de Earl, N5TU

Seems like a long time since we've had a formal meeting. Well our next meeting is also the annual banquet which is about as formal as we get. Madison, W5MJ, has managed to pull together what promises to be a great dinner and a fine evening of prizes, recognition, and the usual reverie that the TDXS conjures up at our big gala event of the year. Contact Madison to get on the guest list. This is also a good time to pay your dues, but I'm sure Madison will remind you of that.

I would like to thank Jim, N5DC, and Dave, W5BXX, for their efforts in pulling together the cocktail party for the ARRL that constituted the January meeting. It was well received and those that attended were able to corner their favorite League Leader and voice their opinions on the future of Amateur Radio. There were plenty of shady characters there but most of them were from the TDXS. Anyhow, I won't mention which W1 commented "Is that a jawbone of an ass or a W4?" during the passing of the TDXS Presidential Jawbone of the Ass. If you are unfamiliar with the powers of this mystical TDXS talisman, I will have it at the banquet so that all may look upon in it in awe. Legend says it rivals the famed Rettysnitch and Wouff Hong.
(ed. See photo page 5)

PREZ SEZ Continued

Ben, KM5OT, has been doing an excellent job as contest chairman. He jumped right into the job and fielded the TDXS NA QSO Party teams in January. He has also set up a web page for the TDXS contest teams. The sprints are coming in February. It takes 10 people to fill a team so let Ben know ASAP that you want to be on a TDXS sprint team. This is only a 4 hour contest so it is over about the time you get warmed up to it. It also comes in SSB and CW flavors, try both.

The next big event will be the ARRL DX contest. Looks like a large group going to Mexico for CW and a growing group going for SSB. If want to go, now is the time to contact Bob, N5RP. If you are not going, then you need to remember to work XA5T on all six bands and spot them so everyone else in the US can do the same. I see that Richard, K5NA, is headed to KH6 for the CW weekend. I'm sure he would like the same treatment. Remember to put TDXS on the club affiliation line when you send your logs in so that your log counts toward the club competition.

Our first real meeting will be in March and the first order of business is going to be finding a fund raiser. We are not out of money yet, but other than dues we have no visible means of support. So start thinking up some ideas. Hope to see everyone at the banquet.

73, Earl, N5TU

We regret to report K5RVK Phil Shedd SK

Thoughts on Headphones by Roy AD5Q

Reversable Perringfones...

This idea came to life at an airport in Montreal, en-route to VO2WL for the CQWW SSB test. We were in one of those high priced airport munchie shops killing time. As the 3 extroverted SSB ops were hitting on the young french girl behind the counter (Nancy), our introverted and not-so-lonely CW guy thought about his own caring friend with the same name. It was time to listen to some french rock'n'roll. So I pull out my Sony Walkman and Radio Shack headphones and begin tuning across the FM band, eventually settling on the english speaking alternative rock station (better than anything in Houston except on Thursdays after midnight). Cool!

At this point, Perring (N5RP) notices the Radio Shack headphones and calls attention to them. Referring to his post on the TDXS reflector and several who responded to it by purchasing their own for amateur use, he is excited that I also purchased the Radio Shack headphones in response to his post. Hance (K5NZ) then brought up an old DX'ers secret - reverseing the polarity of one of the earpieces. I wrote about this trick in the Field Day strategy rants I once used to stimulate a competitive interest in contesting at another local club. I think my original source was Max, W5GJ. It had been a long time since I had reversed the polarity in my own headphones - I had been using a Heil set for years. They sounded pretty good, and I just assumed they knew to wire their headsets for maximum copyability. There has always been a question in my mind as to why everyone manufactures headphones with the ear elements in phase, when out-of-phase is better.

The Radio Shack headphones sounded great. I bought them because my old Heil set had fallen apart too many times. I was not ready to assume they were wired correctly, and feared that by reversing the leads I would be setting them back in phase - not what I wanted. The only way to tell which wiring sounds better is with a side-by-side comparison. I decided to mount a switch in one side of the headphones to selectively change the polarity. It wasn't easy. I used the smallest DPDT switch I could find, and melted a place to mount it in the plastic earcup with a soldering iron. The wire leads to the ear elements are very thin and frail, but I got it all back together again without destroying the headphones. It was time for a proper comparison, and to decide for certain if this DX wisdom was anything more than a myth.

The instant comparison cleared up an old mystery why does everybody manufacture headphones backwards? When you buy a set of stereo speakers, for example, you are instructed to wire both speakers the same way - in phase. If you don't, they won't sound as good. A degree of phase cancellation occurs in the air that effects some frequencies more than others and lowers the range of the frequency response. But what should this have to do with headphones worn on the ears? Does your brain care whether your ear drums are vibrating in or out of phase?

Apparently, the answer is yes - though the difference is very subtle. The headphones sound "better" the way they are manufactured - which explains why they always come with the ear elements in phase. When fed out-of-phase, the frequency response is somewhat dull - not good for hi-fi. Most significantly, the out-of-phase setting is EASIER to copy - especially on weak signals. I don't have an explanation
- it just seems like the source of the sound is further down in your head, and easier to focus on.
- I first appreciated the difference at WX0B in the CW CQWW. Late at night on a 40 Meter European run, signals were getting weak and my ears were hot and sweaty from the new rugged (and clunky) style of Heil headphones. I switched to the Perringfones and flipped my ears out of phase - what an awesome difference! The rates stayed high for an extra hour on weak EU's.

A Perringfone is a Radio Shack headset with an old Heil boom mike securely glued on the side with epoxy. If you have already epoxied your mike element, you can't remove it in case you destroy the headset while mounting the DPDT switch (a possibility). It's probably better to just open up one side, reverse the leads, and glue it back together. If you need convincing, you will need to try out my own set of Reversable Perringfones (tm). They will be in Mexico later this month for the ARRL CW. CU...

Roy — AD5Q

Software Review by Bob, N5RP

Thinking I might be staying home for a bit so as to allow for some shack work, I started making significant changes to Station N5RP about mid December. Changes in station layout, antennas, equipment, and software have been implemented.

ZL1ANJ, on his recent visit, mentioned his likings for his new logging program called DX 4 Windows. I checked it out on the Internet, downloaded the demo version, played with it, and was hooked.

This is a remarkable program. It is easy to learn, very feature rich, wonderfully well vendor supported, has an Internet Reflector that can be subscribed to, and has now become a very necessary ingredient in the N5RP operating environment.
I suggest that you check this program out on the Internet at http://www.erols.com/pvander/

I run the 32 bit version under Windows 98, which allows Packet voice announcements from Packet connections via the Internet or TNC. It also interfaces into about all of the callsign databases on the market such as the Flying Horse CD that I have installed in my CD drive, and can even be set up to gain access to Internet QSL route pages, etc. I also discovered that a fully functional "copy, cut, paste" Windows type operation during the running of the program was a big jump for me as far as Ham Radio software is concerned.

This program even includes several projections of a grayline map in the operating window, and so many "gotta have" utilities that I think you will be very pleased by what this program makes available.
When working a station, or checking one out, you have access to:
Station and Country analysis as to worked, mailed, confirmed.
Same call analysis as to worked, QSL'ed, personal info, etc.
Zone analysis.
Other band analysis.

Oh yes…… The usual question.
"What about importing logs from other programs?"
So far, I have flawlessly and effortlessly been able to import WJ2O. N6RJ, NA, CT, WF1B files into the program.

The other usual question.
"What about new country additions and deletions?"
The program allows for easy user maintenance and changing of the country database.

The other usual question.
"What about the ability to keep track of when a QSO was made as to contest or special event?"
The program allows you to "tag" QSO's so as to be easily recognizable as to when the QSO was made, and under what circumstances, such as a specific contest or operating event.
I decided to order the manual when I obtained the program. As an indication of the class and quality of the program, the manual came well bound, well typed out, and makes an excellent reference for the occasional question that has risen during use.
DX4WIN, written by Paul van der Eijk, KK4HD, operates under Windows 3.1, Windows 95 and Windows NT.

N5ET   N5TU   W6ROD

N5TU   K5FUV

KE5TF, W5BXX, Margie, XYL N5MT

N5TU   N5RP

N5MT   K5FUV

W5JBP   N5DC

N5ET, W5JBP

N5TU   K9VX

Pictures from the recent ARRL Board Meeting, held here in Houston

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