



THE BULLSHEET



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DX Packet Clusters - The Waller County Contest and DX PacketCluster Bulletin Board (PCBS) is located in Hempstead, Texas and operates on 144.990 MHz with the call KE5IV. A digipeater node operating on 144.990 MHz with the alias HOU99 is located at Stafford to provide access to this PacketCluster for users in the southern part of the greater Houston area. A second node with the alias MAG99, also operating on 144.990 MHz, is located near Magnolia and gives better access to those users in the northern part of Houston. The preferred procedure is to first connect with the digipeater node (C HOU99 or C MAG99) and then connect to the PacketCluster (C KE5IV). Please leave the cluster with the command BYE. There is a second port operating on 144.910 MHz, also under KE5IV's call. This affords local stations with higher ERP, generally those on the west side of Houston, the option of connecting directly with Hempstead and gives somewhat faster response.

Announcements

Meeting Notice - The Texas DX Society meets on the second Friday of each month, except when the date is changed by the Board of Directors. This month the meeting will take place on Friday, August 9, 1990. This meeting will be held at Gabby's BBQ, 3101 North Shepherd, which is located one block north of Loop 610 North on North Shepherd and is on the west side of the street. It is well marked by a large outside sign and has ample parking. It has "walk-thru" food service and the group will be seated together off to one side of the main dining area. The gathering should begin sometime between 6:30 and 7:00 P.M. with a short meeting starting sometime after 7:30 P.M. Visitors are welcome to attend and may obtain help in finding the location by checking in on 147.96/36 MHz.

The Galveston County DX PacketCluster, located in La Marque, is active under the call KC5SC and operates on 144.930 MHz and 144.970 MHz. It is usually connected with KE5IV via the 446.100 MHz backbone link. Stations in the southeastern parts of Houston may find it easier to connect with this cluster. AB5A located in Dickinson about 10 miles northwest of KC5SC operates another PacketCluster node regularly connected to the KC5SC PacketCluster via 446.100 MHz. This cluster features a 40 Meter HF Gateway on 7.089 MHz as well as limited access for local uses on the VHF port. The local clusters are frequently linked into Austin, Dallas and beyond as far as Midland, TX, Oklahoma City, OK and Little Rock, AR for added DX coverage, especially during contests. In addition to listing current DX spots, the system provides access to a wide variety of DX related information such as the W6GO QSL Manager list, Russian oblasts, WWV propagation, beam headings, etc. Users are requested to limit their use of these "databases" to off-peak hours so as to minimize the side effects on others. A quick check of the status shown in the opening message which appears upon connection will indicate the number of nodes/users active at the time.

Bullsheet Mailing List - TDXS wishes to provide the Bullsheet to those amateurs in the Houston area with an active interest in DXing and contesting. Donations to help defray publication and mailing costs are appreciated. Visitors to our club meetings will receive the Bullsheet for three months free of charge simply by signing the Attendance List and including their mailing address. Articles or other newsworthy items are hereby solicited by your editor. Articles should be submitted in the form of either ASCII files or as MS Word or WordPerfect word processor files. Files may be uploaded to the TDXS area on K2TNO's Bulletin Board at 713-798-4955, or sent to the Editor on either 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" diskette, either DS/DD or DS/HD. If necessary, text may be sent to either "Dr. William Schrader" via FAX at 713-790-1275 or to the editor at the number listed below. Files or other messages may be sent via E-Mail to: Schrader @ BCM.TMC.EDU. For those with VHF Packet and having access to any of the local Digipeaters, or able connect directly, ASCII text can be sent directly to the Editor. Contact W5ASP

Weekly DX and Contest Net - Each Tuesday night a 9:00 P.M. local time the Texas DX Society sponsors a net on 147.96/36 MHz. The purpose of this net is to exchange information of interest to DXers and contesters. The agenda includes current DX and contest information, QSL routings and related announcements. Stations checking-in are urged to report DX heard or worked locally, band openings, contest claimed scores, and any other information that might be of interest. Participation is not limited to members of TDXS, but is open to all and everyone is encouraged to join in.

The Prez Sez

de Jim, N5DC

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING! I am very pleased to present the following news release that has already been sent on to ARRL Headquarters, CQ Magazine, several DX bulletins, and various other interested parties:

"JIM LANE, N5DC, PRESIDENT, THE TEXAS DX SOCIETY, AND JIM CARMODY, NN5O, TDXS CONVENTION CHAIRMAN, TODAY MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT:

We are pleased to announce that Musa Manarov, U2MIR/UV3AM and Boris Stepanov, UW3AX will be the guests of The Texas DX Society for the Houston Ham Convention. The Convention will be November 8, 9 and 10. Musa recently spent many months in orbit aboard the Mir Space Station, and made many contacts on 2 meters by voice, as well as packet, with U.S. Amateur Radio Operators. Mr. Stepanov is a world renown Amateur Radio Operator, and attended the "Goodwill Games" in Seattle.

Travel arrangements are being provided by Continental Airlines. Without the invaluable assistance of Vern Riportella, WA2LQQ (Ripchic), this visit would not be possible.

We wish to invite all interested Amateur Radio Operators to come to the Convention, and meet in person these two illustrious Amateur Radio Operators from The Soviet Union. For further information, please contact N5DC at 713-358-0051, or NN5O at 713-951-0990."

As you can see from the above, Jim, NN5O has been a very busy little bee! I would like to go on record right now with a resounding vote of thanks to Jim for having the vision, and the "stick-to-it" determination to pull this off on behalf of the Texas DX Society. We are definitely going to have the premier event at this year's Houston Ham Convention.

In addition, Sid, K5XI has already lined up a pretty potent program for the DX and Contest Forum. Rusty, W6OAT will present the video tape from the World Radiosport Team Championship held in Seattle last year. Rusty was not only one of the officials but also handled the computer logging for the winning team. An invitation is outstanding to Marty, OH2BH. And our perennial favorite, Tom, K5RC, Editor of the NCJ, will be on hand to talk of those things dear to the hearts of DXers and Contesters.

What's more, "Driv'em Out" George, NR5M has already set in motion plans for printing the tickets for the traditional TDXS prize drawing, which this year will be a Kenwood TS-850.

And once again, the renowned TDXS Hospitality Suite is to be on the agenda. I'd like to see a couple of our newer members step forward to take charge of this. Now's the time to make your presence felt, so give me a call!

I want the help of each TDXS member to make this the biggest and best convention for TDXS ever. We've allowed our participation to slip the past year or so, but this year it's going to be different! Each of you has a part to play, so be sure you are ready when asked to lend a hand.

DX Report

de Bob, AK5B

What happened to July? Boy! The time has flown by and the deadline for this August issue snuck up on me. But per our esteemed Editor, this will be a short column what with solar flares, the lack of rain, and this month's meeting being a dinner meeting, i.e. any excuse in a pinch!

Yes, the doldrums I mentioned last month are still with us. The HF bands have not really been all that good. Lots of noise on the low ones, and high ones not open! Should be some activity this weekend though, as we have two stateside contests on at the same time. The Ten-Ten Phone QSO Party, and the NAQP CW. (Both of which were a total bust!...ed)

While on the subject of the 10-10 program, I received a flyer from Jim Hardy, K4HAV. He is the author of some excellent software programs for use in 10-10 contests, designed to work the same as K1EA and K8CC. Seems he has come up with a new program for the 10-10er's called the 10-10 County Hunter. All 3076 counties are in a text file which is read into memory. When entering a county name a pop-up window appears with the counties and county number for the state in question. The county number is entered (1-3076). This reduces typing and prevents any county spelling errors. Also included is a master list of all 10-X numbers with call signs as derived from the WA6POZ 10-X database. Should be an excellent tool for ANY county hunter plus a great way for anyone interested in 10-X awards to keep all those numbers in order. I'll bring the flyer to the meeting and anyone interested can get the details then. If you miss me and are interested, drop a note to Jim at his CBA.

Last month I mentioned the DXAC approving the admission of North Korea to the DXCC Countries List. Now it is official. The ARRL Awards Committee concurred by a unanimous vote to add North Korea beginning with the first accredited operation. Any Korea you have now, HM, HL will count for South Korea.

Want to go to Truk Island, V6? Joe, WA6VNR and four others are looking for a few more ops to do CQWW SSB. Just \$3K for two weeks. Any takers?

One more goody to look for this month. The Radioclub Garrotxa (EA land) will be putting on Annobon Island (Pagalu). Look for them with the call of 3C0CW from August 4th thru 17th.

As this is being written, we're still waiting to hear the first peep from ZA land. Sure hope they have some smoke to put into their antennas. That was a real missing commodity with the Italians on their YA DXpedition. The few times that they were heard here, they were so weak, and the lids were so obnoxious, that I went on to other things. So here's hoping the HA's will get to do it up right and we all get in the log.

While we're at the end of the alphabet(x, y, and z), anyone still need XU, Kampuchea? Josef, OK1NQ has been operating as XU1NQ, mostly CW after 1600Z or so. He is reported to be QRV till August 14.

One final item. Seems that with the Snake Island operation, there has been renewed interest in the Soviet call assignments. Per my Huffman correspondent (a.k.a. Larry, NY5L):

- 4K1-- Antarctic
- 4K2-- Franz Josef Land
- 4K3-- European Russian Islands

The TDXS Bullsheet

4K4-- Asiatic Russian Islands
4K5ZI Snake Island
4K0-- Floating Ice Flows

Finally, a reminder. Don't forget to be thinking about what you can do to help TDXS during the Houston Ham Convention coming up in November. As I understand it, there should be something for everyone.

Also, this is the month of the ARRL National Convention in Saginaw, MI. Linda and I will be there trying to find a cool spot during the month of August.

Contest Corner

de Kenny, NZ5I

Another NA QSO Party CW has come and gone. Boy was this one a stinker. Activity was low and the high bands were not much to write about. Oh well, maybe the SSB version will be better in a couple weeks. Sounds like the high end numbers were basically in the 200-300 range.

For those of you who got on, the pre-registered teams are listed below. Be sure to mark you hard copy Summary sheet with your TDXS Team # or we will not get credit. Also, please send in your log regardless of the number of Q's, every little bit adds up in these QSO Parties!

NAQP TEAM # 1:

KI3L---Don
W5ASP-Joe
KG5I---Dale
K5LZO-Chuck
K5GA--Bill

NAQP TEAM # 2:

AK5B--Bob
NM5M-Eric
K5WA--Rich
K5RC---Tom
AA5NK-Mike

NAQP TEAM # 3:

WA9VLI-Steve
NZ5I----Kenny
K5DX---Sharp
KE4GY--Frank
K5XI-----Sid

I took the liberty of stabbing names into teams just in case some of you could operate. If you didn't don't worry about it. But if you did, PLEASE SEND IN YOUR LOGS!

The line up so far for NAQP SSB on August 17th (the Saturday a week after the meeting) is as follows:

Team # 1:

N5DC---Jim,
W5ASP-Joe,
AK5B---Bob,
KI3L----Don,
K5LZO-Chuck

Team # 2:

NZ5I----Kenny,
KN5H---Steve,
NM5M---Eric,
KD5SP--Tom,
KG5U---Dale

● YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!

NCJ-CW Sprint Team members needed!

It just takes four hours on the evening of Saturday, September 7th. I would like to hear from: K5LZO, K5GA, K5GN, KG5U, K5WA, K5NA, K5MA, K5TU, W5ASP, AC5K, KN5H, K5RC, NM5M, K5XI, AA5NK, KE4GY, KI3L, K2TNO, N5DU, K7GM and any others who can lend a hand. Come on gang, we use to be a pretty salty CW bunch...let's go for it!

Contest Results

North American QSO Party - January 1991

CW (*)

KI3L/5.....426 Q.....165 M.....70,290
KG5U.....322 Q.....120 M.....38,760
NZ5I.....126 Q.....69 M.....8,694
W5ASP.....111 Q.....62 M.....6,882

(* - Concurrent with TDXS January Banquet)

SSB

TDXS #1 (NR5M,KG5U,KI3L,W5ASP,K5RC) - 1st Place!

TDXS #2 (KE5GY,AK5B,NZ5I,WB5BIR) - 5th Place

NR5M.....989 Q.....233 M.....229,738
KG5U.....610 Q.....186 M.....113,460
KI3L/5.....535 Q.....198 M.....105,930
W5ASP.....625 Q.....163 M.....101,875
KE4GY.....576 Q.....167 M.....96,192
AK5B.....314 Q.....130 M.....40,820
NZ5I.....306 Q.....110 M.....33,660
K5RC.....241 Q.....118 M.....28,438
WB5BIR...200 Q.....46 M.....9,200

North American Sprint - February 1991

SSB

(K5LZO,W5ASP,KG5U,KD5SP,KE4GY,KN5H) - 4th Place

K5LZO.....301 Q.....50 M.....15,050
W5ASP.....240 Q.....43 M.....10,320
KG5U.....237 Q.....41 M.....9,717
KD5SP.....158 Q.....39 M.....6,162
KE4GY/5.....59 Q.....26 M.....1,534
AK5B.....48 Q.....25 M.....1,200
KN5H/3.....28 Q.....16 M.....448

CW

(K5LZO,KG5U,KN5H,KI3L,KE4GY,W5ASP,K5TU) -

8th

K5LZO.....268 Q.....38 M.....10,452
KG5U.....257 Q.....38 M.....9,766
KN5H/3.....253 Q.....38 M.....9,614
KI3L/5.....240 Q.....35 M.....8,400
K5RC.....203 Q.....39 M.....7,917
KE4GY/5.....179 Q.....38 M.....6,802
W5ASP.....160 Q.....34 M.....5,440
K5TU.....130 Q.....31 M.....4,030

CQ 160 Meter - High Claimed Scores

CW

K5NA/2.....781 Q.....247,510 (12th World)

SSB
KE5FI.....671 Q.....112,320 (14th World)

ARRL RTTY Roundup

KSTU.....75 Q.....37 M.....2,775 (1st Okla. Section)

LARU HF World Championship

K5XI (& K7GM,K5RC).....1578Q & 108M
N5EA(& W5ASP,K6GN,KE4GY,W5QZ)..1002Q & 92M

Soviet On-Site Contest

SPECIAL BULLETIN 23
FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS
NEWINGTON CT
JULY 30, 1991
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS

SOVIETS INVITE PARTICIPATION IN ON-SITE
COMPETITION.

THE SOVIET UNION'S RADIO MAGAZINE IS SPONSORING THE STARS OF THE AIR COMPETITION, SOA, TO BE HELD FROM 2300Z AUGUST 17 TO 0700Z AUGUST 18.

AMATEURS WORLD-WIDE ARE INVITED TO COMPETE FROM THEIR HOME STATIONS WHILE SOVIET AMATEURS COMPETE ON SITE. ABOUT 25 SOVIET STATIONS WILL BE ON THE AIR WITH R1AAA THROUGH R1AZZ CALL SIGNS AND WILL BE COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER ON THE 7 AND 14 MHZ BANDS ONLY.

THE RULES ARE NON-ON SITE STATIONS WILL OPERATE CW ONLY ON THE 3.5 TO 28 MHZ BANDS, EXCLUDING THE WARC BANDS. THE EXCHANGE IS SIGNAL REPORT AND CONSECUTIVE SERIAL NUMBER. CONTACTS WITH YOUR OWN COUNTRY COUNT ZERO POINTS, WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN YOUR CONTINENT, 1 POINT, AND WITH OTHER CONTINENTS, 3 POINTS. MULTIPLIERS ARE DXCC COUNTRIES PER BAND. YOUR FINAL SCORE IS THE TOTAL QSO POINTS TIMES TOTAL MULTIPLIERS.

ENTRY CATEGORIES ARE SINGLE OPERATOR AND MULTI-OPERATOR SINGLE TRANSMITTER ONLY, AND THE CONTEST CALL-UP IS CQ SOA.

LOGS, SUMMARY SHEET, AND MULTIPLIER LIST SHOULD BE SENT BY SEPTEMBER 15 TO UW3AX,

Upcoming Events

August 09.....Texas DX Society Monthly Meeting
August 10.....European DX (WAE) CW Contest
August 17.....NCJ North American QSO Party SSB
September 08.....North American Sprint CW
September 13.....Texas DX Society Monthly Meeting
September 14.....European DX (WAE) SSB Contest
September 14.....All Asian Phone
September 15.....North American Sprint SSB

Packet Racket

de Ken, KE5IV

As some of you know, much of my free time during the last several weeks has been filled with yet another "CRASH" course in digital communications. What with beta testing version 5 of AK1A's PacketCluster software, installing the new MS-DOS Version 5.0 operating system, and replacing the Compaq 286 with a new 486-33 machine (housed in a "tower"), things ain't been a bit dull up here on the farm!

I would like to thank all of those users who have recently taken the time to help out, especially the following: AA5NK, Mike; AK5B, Bob; K5EC, John; K5LZO, Chuck; K5XI, Sid; KC5M, Frank; KC5NY, Dave; KC0LM, Vince; KG5IT, Cass; KI3L, Don; N5DC, Jim; N5TC, Tom; N5NMX, Bob; N5NMY, Mike; W5BKK, Ken; W5LLU, John; W5QZ, Dave; W5SG, Bill; W5TCX, Roy; W5UJF, AJ; W5BRUS, Barbara; WC5Q, Randy; Also, I want to acknowledge the help of the Texas DX Society in picking up the cost of the insurance coverage on the system hardware.

There have been quite a few software bugs show up since I first installed PacketCluster Version 5. Most have already been fixed, but a few may still be hiding in the woodwork. This new version is a real RAM eater, but it does have many new features that give the User a lot of control over what (he) (she) chooses to receive.

There is a new addition to the mail function called Home Node. If you are not connected to the Cluster at the time that a user from another Cluster sends you mail, the mail is held for you until such time as you do make a connection. Once you do so, your mail is forwarded to you. If for example, KD5SP sends mail via his local Cluster to W5BRUS it will be sent on to the KE5IV Cluster whenever I next connect with that node. If Barbara, W5BRUS is not connected at the time, the mail will be held and she will be prompted that she has new mail whenever she next connects to the KE5IV Cluster.

Users are in for several pleasant surprises on the Cluster now that I have the vastly improved computing and memory facilities available to fully support the software. There are several new databases that I have added along with the upgrade. To check them out type SH/COM.

Among the new additions is SH/BEACON which will give you a listing of all known amateur radio beacons in the world. SH/QLREC is back. It had been on the Cluster once before but had to be removed due to a conflict with W6GO's QSLNEW when run on the Compaq 286. This database allows users to input information about specific contacts, such as date/time/freq/mode, IRC's or \$'s sent with QSL, the QSL route, and the turn around time. With a number of really significant DX-peditions scheduled to take place in the months ahead, this should be a valuable tool of serious DXers.

I am going to have to revamp the antennas on 144.990 MHz to take account of several changes that have taken place recently. I plan to keep the input on 144.910 MHz for those users who are able to connect directly. The antenna will be the G7-144 presently in use. The 144.990 input will use multiple antennas oriented so as to provide direct links to each of the HOU99, MAG99 and TAMDX99 nodes. This should make for a real interesting antenna pattern on 144.990 MHz. Please take note - I will be asking for your help with the antenna work. Be sure to do your part when the time comes!

Remember the opening of the '91-'92 Contest Season is almost upon us. During the contest weekends everyone should get use to using MAG99, HOU99, and TAMDX99 as "NODES" because they will be disabled as "digipeater" for the contest weekend. (i.e. do NOT connect "via") There

PacketCluster Version 5

de Dave, N3RD

(The following is an extract from an article appearing in the July 1991 *Frankford Radio Club Newsletter*. I have omitted certain portions of the original article which do not apply to local users..ed)

Version 5 incorporates twenty-one new user commands, and enhances four existing commands. In the following list, upper case letters denote those characters to which you can abbreviate the command, while N and E stand for new or enhanced commands.

- (N) Directory/Counts
- (N) EXECUTE
- (N) Read/Nopage
- (E) Send
- (N) SEt/ALIAS
- (N) SEt/ANNOUNcements
- (N) SEt/BEep
- (N) SEt/DX announce
- (N) SEt/FILTER
- (N) SEt/HOMe_node
- (N) SEt/LOGIn_announce
- (N) SEt/LOGOut_announce
- (N) SEt/MAIL_announce
- (N) SEt/PAGe
- (N) SEt/TAlk
- (N) SEt/WWV_announce
- (E) SHow/Dx
- (N) SHow/FILTer
- (N) SHow/STATE
- (E) SHow/Time
- (N) SWITCH
- (E) TYpe
- (N) UPload/Usercmd
- (N) WX

(The "SEt/..." commands usually have a "SEt/NO..." equivalent..ed)

You can almost (but not always) tell from the name of the command what it does. When in doubt, you can ask the system for help by typing HELP followed by the command. I'll discuss the use of those new features which will help everybody out, since they tend to limit the amount of traffic on the 2 meter user frequencies.

Version 5 allows EACH INDIVIDUAL USER to decide what type of output he want to get from the PacketCluster. The list of "switches" which can be either on or off includes:

- Normal and WX announcements
- DX announcements
- New mail announcements
- Talk messages
- WWV announcements
- Beeps
- Login/logout announcements (if enabled by the sysop)

All functions default to "ON," as we're all accustomed to having it. If you decide that you want to turn off normal announcements, you would type SET/NOANNOU, and from that point on IN THE CURRENT SESSION ONLY, you would receive no more normal announcements. When you disconnect, then reconnect, you're back to the default setting of "ON" for all these functions. (There is a way to make these switch settings permanent...more on that later.)

Turning off some of these functions tends to reduce the number of packets which are sent on the user frequency, as compared to sending everything to everybody. However, Version 5 offers a much more powerful traffic limitation device: the SEt/FILTER command. With this command, each user can set up DX announcement filter(s), depending upon his personal preferences and needs. The filters can be set up by specific country, band and mode. Leaving out the optional mode identifier (CW or SSB) defaults to ALL modes. Using the keyword ALL for either band or prefix provides a quick method for screening out everything called out on certain band, or screening a particular prefix or prefix list on ALL bands. As many SEt/FILTER commands as required by your preferences can be entered. The general form of the command is:

SEt/FILTER/mode/BAND = (x,x,...,x) prefix(es)

where:

mode = CW or SSB (optional)

x = 160,80,40,30,20,17,15,12,10,6,2 or ALL

prefix = country prefix list of ALL

Some examples will help to clarify this command's use

- SEt/FILTER/BAND = (10,15,20) G,EA,F,DL
Filter G,EA,F & DL on both modes on 10, 15 and 20

- SEt/FILTER/BAND = (30,17,12,6,2) ALL
Filter ALL callouts on WARC and VHF bands

- SEt/FILTER/CW/BAND = (160) ZA,XZ
Filter 160 meter ZA and XZ CW callouts (need SSB only!)

- SEt/FILTER/BAND = ALL W,VE
Filter W and VE on all band, all modes

This command is great!! If you have no interest in WARC and VHF band callouts, do as I did and type in the second command above. You will never again be bothered by callouts on those bands. I also installed the fourth command, since I don't chase IOTAs, grid squares, or special events stations. Use of the PacketCluster filtering capability is much, much better than that offered by end-user filters (such as DXBase and ClusterLog), not that there are better or more filters available, but that THE PACKETS ARE NEVER SENT IN THE FIRST PLACE, if you don't want them. This will go a long way towards keeping the traffic on the frequency down to the bare minimum required to satisfy the users of that node. Delivery of packets to all users is sped up and people aren't bothered by output they don't want. Everybody wins!

There is one caveat attendant to SEt/FILTER. After having done multiple SEt/FILTER commands, which are PERMANENT, unlike the switches described above, there is no easy way to determine the exact nature of your filters. You can do a SHOW/FILTER prefix, and the system will

tell you which bands and modes are filtered for that particular prefix, but if you had set up a diverse and elaborate filtering scheme, it would be difficult or impossible to decipher.

Your best bet is to write down on paper those commands which you enter, so that you can reverse them later if need be with a SET/NOFILTER command.

If all else fails, you can erase all your filters with one global command:

```
SEt/NOFILTER/BAND=(ALL) ALL
```

I mentioned earlier that you can make the previously described "switch" setting permanent. Type the command U-Pload/Usercmd. You will be prompted to enter text, just like sending a message. Enter each and every command which you would like to have permanently set, as well as any command you normally issue when you connect into the system.

A typical Usercmd file might look like:

```
SET/NOLOGIN
SET/NOLOGOUT
SET/NOWWV
SH/D
```

Review: 2nd OP Version 3.1

de Jim, N5DC

I recently received version 3.1 of the 2nd OP DX Logging program. I had thought that version 3.0 pretty well covered DX logging plus a myriad of other features related to serious DXing, but along comes Version 3.1 with some really top notch enhancements.

For openers, a new "dumb" terminal mode has been added that allows the user the option of switching back and forth between 2nd OP and a DX PacketCluster. This really makes a great deal of sense. It allows the user to be connected to the PacketCluster, pick up a "DX spot", then jump over to 2nd OP to quickly see if it is needed for anything. This is a significant step forward for this great program. It nicely compliments the K1EA and K8CC contest software, now in use by many operators, which also feature "packet windows".

The terminal program itself has some very nice features, such as the programming of the function keys on your computer's keyboard. While the programmable feature itself is not new, there is now a graphic illustration of those keys at the bottom of the screen, displaying a "keyword", that reminds you what you have programmed into each of the keys. This is great, what with my weak mind I can never remember if I have my connect message in F2 or F3, and have to keep a "cheat sheet" handy. Anytime I change one of the keys, I have to scribble a new one. And then it usually gets lost in the pages of my logbook. Obviously, this feature is a welcome addition at my station!

There have been several other enhancements, such as an automatic Sunrise/Sunset calculation that saves a considerable amount of time. There is now better support for DXCC deleted countries.

A new database option has been added that provides storage for a wide variety of different types of information, and the ability retrieve it quickly with a few keystrokes.

The inclusion of QSL bureau and postal information rounds out the package of new features.

I have had a look at several DX logging programs in the past, and 2nd OP continues to be my own personal choice. In addition, like a fine wine, it continues to improve with age.

Propagation Forecasting

de Barry, KI8W

(The following article appeared in the June 1991 issue of the *Bay Area DXers Newsletter*. It summarizes very nicely a lot of the "buzz" words we often hear on WWV and gives some meaning to the numbers we put out on packet..ed)

Casual short term propagation predictions can be made by simply using the information provided by WV (and WWVH in Hawaii) at 18 (and 45) minutes after each hour. In this article I will explain a few terms and show how to quickly calculate current band conditions.

TERMS:

SOLAR FLUX is a measurement of radiation from the sun at 2800 MHz. Values range from 65 at minimum to well into the 300's. The higher the Flux, the higher the degree of ionization. (The higher, the better!)

A-INDEX is a measure of the geomagnetic activity of RADIO ABSORPTION of the ionosphere. The higher the A-Index, the more absorption and the weaker the radio signals. The A-Index is updated every 24 hours. (Recently the daily A-Index update was moved from 1818Z to 2118Z..ed)

K-INDEX also measures radio absorption but on a shorter time scale than the A-Index. The K-Index is updated every three hours and more accurately reflects the current band conditions than does the A-Index.

SOLAR FLARE is a sudden eruption of energy on the solar disk lasting minutes to hours, from which radiation and particles are emitted.

27.5 DAY CYCLE the sun rotates once every 27.5 days (at the solar equator). This means that what happened 27.5 days before may happen again!

POLAR CAP ABSORPTION In short it means that the polar paths will be closed. The energized particles from a flare are guided to the poles by the Earth's magnetic field. This causes the signals to be absorbed.

PROTON EVENT This is hard to explain. It's when the proton flux reaches and sustains a certain level as measured by a satellite. Just remember, if you hear WWV say "a proton event is in progress", it's BAD news for DXing!

STRATWARM ALERT A stratwarm is a large scale warming of the winter polar atmosphere. In other words, more BAD news for DXing!

These are the most important terms to know when figuring out a short term forecast. WWV is broadcast at 18 minutes after each hour on 2.5, 5, 10, 15, and 20 MHz. The chart below will help you find the current conditions and what might be coming.

The probability of propagation is graded from 0 to 5 as follows:

- 0 = Blackout;
- 1 = Very Poor;
- 2 = Poor;
- 3 = Fair;
- 4 = Good;
- 5 = Excellent.

(1) If the SOLAR FLUX is below or at 150, probability of skip is Poor to Good.

(2) If the SOLAR FLUX is at or above 150, probability of skip is Good to Excellent.

The TDXS Bullsheat

(3) If ... the A-Index and K-Index are as below, propagation probability (Grade) is:

A-Index	K-Index	Grade
Less or Equal 7	Less/Equal 2	5
More 7 & Less 15	Less/Equal 3	4
More 15 & Less 30	Less/Equal 4	3
More 30 & Less 50	Equal 4 or 5	2
More 50	More 6	1
More 100	More 7	0

The Macho Nerd

de Slim, COAX

There's a new breed of man around these days. He's known as "The Macho Nerd." The Macho Nerd is the high-tech guy of the Nineties who proves his masculinity by letting the world know about his great computer system and how much he knows about digital technology.

It no longer matters how athletic you are, how good-looking you are, or how much money you make. All that matters is your hardware. When you meet a Macho Nerd, the first thing he asks is "So what kind of system do you have?" This is how The Macho Nerd sizes you up.

Macintosh guys consider themselves superior to Apple II guys, and Apple II guys consider themselves superior to Commodore or Atari guys. In The Macho Nerd dominance hierarchy, IBM guys, naturally, consider themselves to be above EVERYBODY.

I've met guys who were ASHAMED to tell me they still use an old TRS-80 computer. They can't even look you in the eye when they say it, and make sure to add that they'll be buying a new computer any day now.

I myself am embarrassed to admit to Macintosh aficionados that I still use "MacWrite," an adequate but elementary word processing program. "Whattsa matter, wimp?," they sneer, "Not man enough to handle Microsoft Word?"

To these computer literate bullies, bigger is better, new is good, old is bad, and the more money you paid for your equipment, the tougher you are.

It isn't good enough to have a hard disk drive anymore. Now you've got to have an 80 MEGABYTE hard drive. It isn't good enough to have a RGB display. Now you've got to have a TWO PAGE display. And a scanner on your desktop always helps you earn respect.

Real men don't use floppy disks. Bytes are for sissies. Megabytes are where it's at. The more the better. User friendliness is for wimps. And the more desk space your computer system takes up, the more of a man you are.

The computer industry promotes The Macho Nerd mentality by constantly introducing new, improved, better, bigger playthings. "Microsoft Word," for example, was supposed to be a great when it was introduced a few years ago. But how good could it have been if they've since upgraded it with version 1.05, then 3.0, then 3.1, then 3.12 and 4.0? Can't these guys EVER get it right?

Computer people used to hide their hobby from the rest of the world like it was an illicit activity. These days, you can't shut them up. Most conversations, it seems, eventually work their way to spreadsheets and data bases. When it reaches that point, they like to show off their manliness by spouting computer jargon.

I know a few things about computers, but at a trade show recently a guy talked to me for a half an hour and I have absolutely no idea what he said. When he was finished, I felt like I had been beaten up by the neighborhood bully.

The sad part is, it looks like The Macho Nerd is here to stay. Teenage boys used to dream about driving a four-on-the-floor Corvette with 400 horsepower under the hood, mag wheels that could go from zero to sixty in less than seven seconds and a good-looking blonde in the passenger seat.

These days, those same boys fantasize about an IBM XT compatible with four megabytes of memory and a Hewlett Packard laser printer that will go from zero to 500 characters per second ... and a good-looking blonde telecommunicating from her terminal across the country. Some things never change!

ARRL DX Bulletin

FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS
NEWINGTON CT
AUGUST 1, 1991
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS

Thanks to Paul, K1XM, the Yankee Clipper Contest Club, Murph, W4WMQ, and QRZ DX, for the following DX information.

ALBANIA. HA0MM and HA0NNN report they have permission to operate as ZA2QA. They plan to start operating in early August for at least ten days working mixed CW and SSB, primarily on 20, 15, and 10 meters. QSL via QA QSL Service, Box 5, Komoro H-4622, Hungary.

Several stations signing various ZA calls have appeared on the air this past week, including ZA1AP, who made several thousand QSOs on 15 meter CW.

SAINT BRANDON. Various reports say that the 3B8CF trip has been delayed. Some rumors suggest licensing problems.

Meanwhile, several pirates have been on lately signing 3B7CF.

PAGALU. An EA group is expected to be signing 3C0CW some time this week.

CAMBODIA XU1NQ has been active on 15 meter CW. Stateside stations should check around 21015 kHz after 1700z.

THAILAND. HS0AC has been active daily around 1000z, usually on 14025 kHz.

FUJI. 3D2WE is active around 14030 kHz. QSL via LA6VM.

TONGA. Ron, ZL1AMO, is now active as A35EA. Look around 14025 and 21025 kHz.

DESECHEO ISLAND. A group including VP2VE, KP2A, WU2W, N2KW, VP5JM, and VS6CT, will activate KP5 land for ten days beginning August 23. The callsign will probably be KP2A/KP5. Activity will be on all bands, including the WARC bands and 6 meters, CW and SSB. QSLs via WA2NHA.