



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net July 2009

A Recap of Field Day 2009

Thursday July 9 , 7:00 PM

TDXS Meeting Night:

Tracy Gee Center, 3599 Westcenter Dr, Houston. Pre-meeting Pre-meeting dinner get-together started around 5:30/6PM at Pappas BBQ on S. Gessner &

Westheimer. The program was a recap of Field Day 2009 by the Field Day Captain, Bill K5WAF, followed by pictures from the event by Keith NM5G. You find a lot more pictures from Field Day inside this issue.



Editor's Note de Doug WB5TKI

Well, Field Day 2009 has come and gone and BOY WAS IT HOT! It was so dry that the bugs were mostly non-existent.

I hope that you had had as much fun as I did. the opportunity to participate in Field Day, and I hope that you

I was the GOTA station captain again this year, and we had a blast. Our youngest operator (a non-ham) made 20 contacts!



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The Prez Sez de Paul W5PF

Field Day 2009 is now in the books. It was probably the hottest Field Day I have ever participated in. One of the biggest successes was that we had no heat related issues. Everyone drank lots of water and stayed out of the sun enough to avoid problems. A lot of folks were really ready to relax in the cool air conditioning when it was over. Judging from the traffic on the reflector everyone got their equipment back OK after it was over.

Another success was the number of contacts made on the GOTA station by some folks who have been inactive on HF. Hopefully this will stir their interest and get them on the air more in the future. There were also some drop ins who saw our signs and came by to see what was going on. One of them sent a note on the reflector saying that he is looking at becoming licensed.

The results will be discussed elsewhere in this issue of the Bullsheet and at the meeting this coming Thursday so I won't go into that. I would like to say Thank You to all the participants who helped make this a successful and enjoyable weekend. Our Field Day Chairman, K5WAF, and his co chairs WB5IUU and NM5G did a great job. XYL Captain Trish Frink and all the ladies who helped out put on an excellent supper Saturday evening. Our GOTA station captained by

WB5TKI was a big success. The CW station captained by W5KDJ and the SSB/RTTY station captained by W9DX worked smoothly with no antenna problems this year. NN5O got us our satellite contacts and handled traffic for us. The 6M station by W5BXX also chipped in with a significant number of QSO's.

Finally there were all the operators who put up with the heat and those that stayed overnight to keep everything running. This was a true team effort that included almost all of the active club members. Again, thank you to all who made this a great Field Day.

One highlight of Field Day was the visit by our West Gulf Division Director Dr. David Woolweaver, K5RAV. Dr. Woolweaver toured all of our stations and chatted with many of the participants. He was impressed with our set up and the way we were organized. We invited him to stay for dinner but he had to keep his schedule so he didn't miss his flight back home Saturday evening. Thanks for stopping by David, we enjoyed your visit.

This month's meeting is Thursday July 9th starting at 7:00PM at the Tracey Gee Center. We will recap the Field Day and have plenty of time to tell stories. Dinner will be at Pappa's BBQ at Westheimer and Gessner starting around 5:30.

Wayne, W5KDJ, is in Madagascar as 5R8KD until July 17th. Look for him on CW and Ratty. The Solar Flux is up a little so we may have some propagation. Check out the clusters for spots of his activity.

Frosty, K5LBU, and Laurent, W0MM, will be in Lesotho from July 29 to August 13th along with several others.

See you all on the 9th,

Paul W5PF

Field Day 2009 by Bill K5WAF

TDXS Field Day was again a success this year. We had 18 Full/Associate members present plus several visitors that significantly helped with both setup/teardown plus operating.

Results this year are:

CW Q's	1,048
Phone Q's	817
<u>RTTY Q's</u>	<u>118</u>
Total Q's	1,983
Bonus Pts	1530
Total Pts	7828

We will have a complete analysis of our performance this year at the next meeting, but as a preview, we got 1200 pts more this year than last year. We didn't do quite as well as we would have liked and we had some problem areas. But all in all it was a very good operation, yet one that we can improve on next year.



Contest Chairman's Report by Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ

The TDXS annual Field Day event has come and gone. Hats off to the Field Day Committee for another well planned event. The weather was hot as usual and the bands were not in too good shape, but it was great fun.

Some upcoming contests are:

Fists Summer Sprint, July 11, 0000Z to 0400Z
SKCC Weekend Straight Key/Bug Sprint, July 12, 0000Z to 2359Z
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint, July 16, 0230Z to 2300Z
NCCC Sprint Ladder, July 17, July 24, July 31, 0230Z to 0300Z
North American QSO Party- RTTY, July 18, 1800Z to July 19, 0600Z
CQWW VHF Contest, July 18, 1800Z to July 19, 2100Z
Run for the Bacon, QRP Sprint, July 20, 0100Z to 0300Z
SKCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint, July 22, 0000Z to 0200Z
10-10 Summer Phone QSO Party, August 1, 0001Z to August 2, 2359Z

Much of this data comes from www.dxzone.com the WA7BNM list. August is not up yet, so if you are looking for a contest this is a good place to look. Several other contest lists are also on the DX Zone web. Also you can always check the Google and Yahoo search engines. Just put in the key words that you know. Ham Radio Contest works well, as do SKCC Contest and Ten-Ten or 10-10. If you know the name of the contest, that works well too.

The 10-10 Summer Phone QSO party is a big event for the local Space Houston on Ten (SHOT) chapter. We try to have a good turnout each year and many years we are the top chapter. If you are not a Ten-Ten member or a member of the SHOT chapter, we meet on Tuesday nights at 2000 Local time on 28.488 USB. Mike, N5MT calls the net. If you have a ten meter beam up at a reasonable height you will be able to hear most stations. If

you have a lesser antenna, you will hear someone and they will relay for you. If you are not a member it requires that you work 10 members of Ten-Ten, which you can usually do in one check in to the SHOT chapter. There is plenty of time to get your number before the QSO party. If you have a number, it is still good no matter how long it has been since you paid your dues, but to enter the QSO party you need to pay up for this year. Back dues are not required. See www.ten-ten.org and you can pay on line.

SKCC has a new event to encourage more activity by DX stations called the DX-Travaganza. This is a Straight Key/Bug DX contest which anyone can enter. You can work DX stations or home country stations, but DX counts more. We had a great time and some very nice plaques are being awarded to the top three US stations and the top DX station. I was

fortunate enough to win 3rd place in the US and I am looking forward to receiving my plaque. Info about SKCC is at www.skccgroup.com including how to join. It just takes an email, no cash to join. It is a great organization for brushing up your code or learning from scratch if needed.

The Texas QSO party will be coming up in September. I hope we have a nice turn out for that event. It is always a lot of fun to see how many Texas counties you can work and advertise the state.

Keep on contesting and sending in the logs. Don't procrastinate too long like I did in the Ten-Ten Spring CW QSO party. I passed up a fourth place by getting my log in too late. Don't forget to list Texas DX Society as your club for the contests that have club entries. List the SHOT Chapter for Ten-Ten Events.

From the DX Chair de Cal WF5W

Most of you know Wayne is in the field, he really did go to 5r8 land !!! I have not heard him but the dx sheet has him being heard all over ASIA and some Europe. Next to go is Frostys' group. Anybody else up for DX??? Have heard that ET may be

going back to GM land but not confirmed.

The clubs Big IR vertical is back at Steppir for new drive Sprocket as it failed on the first day of field day. Should be back with no charge in a week or so should any of you need it.

The two element Steppir yagi is up and running and available as well. The 80/40 Chicken Wire Special is tuned flat on 80/40 and is also available.

That's it for this month. Keep COOL>>>> if that's possible.

21st Century Contest Rules by Tom Taormina, K5RC and Grady Ferguson, W5FU

After fifty years of participation, it is our observation that those of us who compete in radio sport/contesting do so for some combination of the following:

1. Bettering ones personal skills
2. Contributing to a club or group effort
3. Peer recognition
4. Exploiting resources to their maximum advantage

Advancing radio sporting

As in other “amateur sports,” some contesters receive incidental benefits such as product endorsement stipends and discounts. I have yet to meet a contesteer, however, who was in the sport to make financial gains or career moves. That said, we can assume that what motivates most contesters is #1, #2 and #3. The highly competitive of us are mostly driven by #1 through 4. Those with altruistic motives are concerned with #2 and #5. When I was inducted into the CQ Contest Hall of Fame I discovered that the honor was bestowed on me for #2, #5 and some of #4, not on how many contests I won.

The reason for this prologue is to open our paradigms about the current state of contest rules. It is our belief that they are overly restrictive, prescriptive and onerous. At the same time, we continue to add categories, sub-categories and matrices of listings. This proliferation of categories and certificates may help #3, but, it may also be diluting the meaning of recognizing “winning” achievements. Don’t get us wrong. We are delighted that KY7M took the Zone 3 plaque from our station in the 2008 CQ

160CW Contest. Because of physics, geography and population, being a top-ten USA contender on top band from Nevada is not going to happen, so these kinds of categories and specialized awards make sense, as do demographic score breakdowns. On the other hand, Being #1 in Nevada in the VHF QSO Party on 432 is not a motivational accomplishment.

While the sponsors continue to add categories and grind out certificates, the rules are also in a constant state of revision, changing points of reference from previous years. The rationalization for these changes is usually to ostensibly fix some perceived inequities. This detection and prevention mentality has a direct negative effect on #4 and #5. We have been on both sides of this dichotomy. We have been the object of prescriptive rules and We have helped invent new categories. Let’s look at the benefits and the downsides of each.

In the 60’s and 70’s, K5LZO and WA5LES (K5RC) invented an interlock system for SS that became known as the Octopus. It allowed us both to man radios but only have one signal on the air. Since we were (“unfairly”) dominating multiop SS, the rules were changed outlawing the Octopus. Was our ingenuity unfair? Did the rule change help or hinder the enthusiasm and creativity of SS participants? Was the playing field more level or did subsequent new technology just create new challenges?

Later on, Tom led the initiative to

adopt the Multi-Two category for ARRL DX Contests. The point was to give operators who enjoyed the fellowship of multiop, but who did not have the resources to build a large station, an arena to compete with one another. It was the answer to the class of competition we could reasonably compete in at the NA5R (W5FU) multiop station. Inventive station owners who couldn’t fully staff a multi-multi, however, saw a new opportunity and the Multi-Two category has taken on many more dimensions than originally envisioned. Some embrace the changes. Others denounced them as an attempt to “level the playing field.” Is there a need for a Multi-Two category with restrictions on band changes?

We have discovered the hard way that there is no such thing as a level playing field in any aspect of life. Each of us creates our own advantages and disadvantages. Each of us creates our own degree of success. For some, the more treacherous the playing field, the greater the challenge. For others, overcoming obstacles to success is their greatest success. Chance and timing can be friends or mortal foes and we are seldom totally in control of either. For those who require some form of handicapping system, however, we suggest you take up golf.

To make our upcoming suggestions have direct purpose, we vehemently disagree with those who predict the eminent demise of ham radio and, contesting in particular. At ages 63 and 65, K5RC and W5FU are currently building another large contest station. We

21st Century Contest Rules (continued)

are very much looking forward to massive new contest records being set at the peak of the coming solar cycle. Over the last three years, the number of new licenses issued is up significantly in the US. The hobby did not spiral into a CB-like abyss when the code requirements were removed. Aside from the usual cycle of contest activity attributable to the lack of propagation, participation in contests has not suffered measurably and may be on the increase. We met a fellow at Dayton in 2007, a computer devotee who discovered ham radio contesting. He found phone contests to be a new frontier in competitive video gaming. When we spoke, he was mastering CW, because, in his words, he was missing half the fun of contesting. We believe this is the new archetype for future contesters. If the sponsors continue to make the rules of radio sporting more restrictive and prescriptive, however, the prophets of doom may be the ones who bring about the demise of contesting. Our rationale for a huge investment in equipment and resources is, therefore, objective and based on current positive trends, not on the wrinkled egos of a couple of aging TDXS Rowdies.

At the root of overly-restrictive rules are the viewpoints of the current ham-radio-traditionalists who believe that every technology advance is the downfall of our historical values. Tom heard this when I was 13 years old and the first electronic keyer was demonstrated at a radio club meeting. He heard it when the first memory keyer was marketed, when the first computer logging program was introduced and about every

other advance in operational efficiency in the last 50 years. For more than 100 years, hams were the undisputed leaders in communications innovation (until digital noise reduction, bandwidth compression and other needs of cell phone development took over). While most of us have replaced our boat anchors with more modern equipment, straight key and legacy equipment groups proliferate and grow in popularity, making the argument that there is a place in the hobby for every special interest.

More to the point, however, is that the new generation of hams is coming from folks who have always had digital technology and the Internet in their lives. Many have no knowledge of CW and vacuum tubes and no understanding of radios that lack a computer interface. As has always been the case in the evolution of society, every new generation eventually sees the previous generation as an anachronism and as relics. They are accurate in the sense that many of us choose not to learn new technologies and new skills.

As the recently-appointed Emergency Coordinator for our County, Tom attended EMCOMM West last May and discovered he knew nothing of the current digital communication methods used in emergency communications. These folks spoke a different language he nearly resigned his position because of ignorance of technology and procedures. We have also just had a very satisfying senior moment. The State ARES group is building a 2 meter

backbone in case their VOIP and digital communications systems go down. It will poetic for us to host their “ancient” RF repeaters and remote bases on our towers. Tom is, however, now voluntarily going through the painful process of being a novice in the emergency protocol of the current technology and of the Homeland Security rules and guidelines, reinforcing our driving value system of lead, follow, or get out of the way.

That brings us to our proposal for new general contest rules. They are as follows:

Categories of Entry

Single Operator (SO) – One person performs all operating and logging functions. No more than one signal on the air at any time.

Multi-One (M1) – One or more persons performs all operating and logging functions. No more than one signal on the air at any time. Single operators using any form of outside operating assistance (packet, spotting nets, etc.) during the contest period are considered Multi-One.

Multi-Two (M2) - More than one person performs all operating and logging functions. No more than two signals on the air at any time, but not on the same band.

Multi-Unlimited (MU) - More than one person performs all operating and logging functions. No more than one signal on any band at any time. All broadcast RF radiation must occur from within a 1,000 meter radius circle or on one contiguous parcel of land, all in the same country or multiplier

21st Century Contest Rules (conclusion)

entity (CQ Zone, ARRL Section, etc.).

Technology

The use of innovative technology is encouraged in all classes of contest entry. The following defines the current application of technology. Use of remote stations must comply with the restrictions of each entry class.

SO – Any technology that uses only the resources of the single operator during the contest period. Examples include SO2R, SuperCheck Partial, prefills, skimmer, etc. Operators can receive logistical help (food, equipment repairs, etc.) from others, but not operating assistance.

M1, M2 – Any additional technology that uses the resources of more than one operator like networked computers, packet clusters and spotting nets.

MU –Any additional technology such as remote receivers and advanced digital technology. The Unlimited category is designed to encourage innovative technology and strategies.

Compliance

Contestants and stations must comply with all applicable laws of the jurisdiction of their licenses (Band segments, power limits, etc.). Logs must represent actual real-time operating events and categories (M1 or M2 cannot operate as Unlimited and then selectively submit log segments). While it is expected that operators will strive to submit as correct and accurate logs as possible, logs shall not be changed based on data received after the contest period (comparing logs to packet-spot data bases, other logs, etc). Following the “intent” of all rules and regulations is the basis for

compliance adjudication.

That’s it! We submit that all the whereases and wherefores in current rules are unnecessary, overly burdensome and stifle creativity. We chose the few constraints that we did include because the problem of remote operation latency is destined to be cured, however, one station transmitting from multiple locations and political entities in the same contest presents legal issues we have yet to contemplate.

Let’s rid ourselves of run and multiplier radios, counting band changes, trying to legislate the use of skimmers, and creating obfuscated rules that encourage those who live on the dark side to find loopholes. Instead, let’s encourage all contesters to find innovative new ways to make contests more enjoyable by pushing the technology envelope and continually advancing our passion.



Left, W5FU (NA5R) Right, K5RC

Center, Two rotating towers, 120’ and 190’. This summer they are scheduled to be in the air. 120’ = 5/5/5/5 on 15M. 195’ = 5/5/5/5 on 10M and 3/3 stacked 80M Optibeams.

These two former TDXS Rowdies built the NA5R multiop station that was destroyed by Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Reunited 20 years later, they are now in the third phase of constructing the N5JJ-K5LZO Memorial Station in Virginia City, NV

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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 July

Tom Lay - AA5Y

Pat Sonnier - W5WMU

Dennis Alexander - W5KU

Tom Wheatley - K5CNN

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Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone.