



# The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net April 2011

## Joint Meeting with BVARC

*Thursday, April 14, 7:00 PM*

**TDXS Meeting Night** Joint Meeting of the Brazos Valley ARC and TDXS at the Sugarland Community Center at 226 Matledge Way, Sugarland (the normal BVARC meeting location). Pre-meeting dinner will be at Vasos Barbecue, located at the corner of US 90A and Dairy Ashford. The program will feature presentations by three-members on activities of the TDXS.

The first will be a slide presentation concerning the TDXS sponsored dxpedition to Mozambique in 2009, presented by Jim N4AL. Next, Paul W5PF and Cal WF5W will describe "How to Organize a Successful Dxpediton". Come and be prepared to chip in and help show BVARC how it is done,



## Editor's Note de Jim N4AL

This month, in addition to the regular officers reports, we have two feature articles you are sure to enjoy. A group of TDXSers has just returned from a dxpedition to Barbados (tough living I'm sure). Cal, WF5W, has sent us a report on their trip along with photos. If we are nice to them, they may give us a more complete report at a future meeting.

We don't see much

now of Madison W5MJ since XYL Millie took him to Austin. But he is keeping in touch by telling us of his latest discovery in his article this month. Madison is a gifted writer with a FB sense of humor. We hope he will continue to keep in touch with articles., and maybe come to see us occasionally.

TDXS had two other groups on dxpeditions during March. We would like to

hear from each of you in future months.

If you have added something to your shack that you want to share with TDXS, don't hesitate to describe it digitally and send it to me. I'll take anything, but Word files are easiest for me to use. Tables work best in separate documents and photos as jpegs.

Please report your latest updates to W9DX so our DXCC webpage is current.

## *Inside this issue:*

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## The Prez Sez de Doug WB5TKI

Ah, April. Spring has arrived, although April showers have been a very spotty thing so far. Band conditions are up and down, but I sure hope that you had fun during last month's CQWW WPX SSB contest, among others.

I recently received an email announcing a DXpedition in September to T32C (Christmas Island). This is apparently going to be a huge operation that will run for several weeks. You can check out the details at [www.t32c.com](http://www.t32c.com). More immediately, a team of 13 operators will be operating T31A from Kanton Island in Central Kiribati. This operation will run for 11-12 days beginning on April 17. Details at [www.T31A.com](http://www.T31A.com).

House Bill 3038 has been introduced in the Texas legislature on behalf of the West Gulf Division that would strike down all existing HOA restrictions against amateur radio operations. This is certainly a worthy cause and it needs our active support. More details are available at <http://sanantoniohams.org/bl>

og/ and the text of the bill is available there.

At the last meeting the club decided to pursue a low key Field Day operation from the Texas City dike. Dave W5BXX is chairing the Field Day operation, and will provide his superb motor home as the base of operations. Details are still being worked out, but it promises to be a fun event. As many of you know, Dave has an RV that is 34' long with a slide-out and a 7.5KW generator. It also is equipped with an Alumatawer 50' crankup w/rotor and Tennadyne T-8 beam and also supports one end of a 80/40 dipole. In addition, it has a 35' tower section hand attached to the left front of the RV (with a rotor) and has a 6el 6m beam.

The April 14 club meeting will be held jointly with the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) at the Sugar Land Community Center. Pre-meeting get-together will be at Vasos BBQ, which is located on the southwest corner of 90A and Dairy Ashford at about 6 p.m. Check the TDXS

website for more details. The program will be a double-header from TDXS, with Jim, N4AL recounting the 2009 TDXS DXpedition to Mozambique, followed by a behind-the-scenes look at the planning and execution of a successful DXpedition presented by Cal WF5W and Paul W5PF. It promises to be a memorable night, so let's make a good showing. See you at the meeting!

73 es gud dx and contesting,

Doug WB5TKI

## From the Bullsheet Archives by Steve W9DX

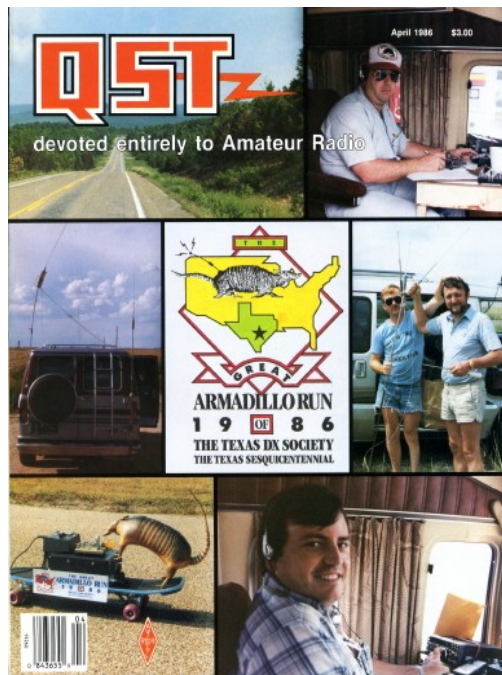
### Twenty years ago this month

**April 1991:** The meeting was held at St. John's School at Claremont & Westheimer. The program was a film on amateur radio in Russia by WA6WXD. President Jim Lane N5DC reported that the Tri-Ex tower removed by club members from the Kinkaid School was now for sale. DX Chairman Bob AK5B (now N5ET) reported on the latest operations in Uganda, Bangladesh, Marion Island, Wake Island and other goodies. Andy GM0ECO gave an update report on his progress setting up a station and antenna farm in Scotland after living in Houston, and the challenges of contesting in Europe (how to manage over 200 Q/hr with a modest station). Mike Bragassa AA5NK/BW1Z (now K5UO) gave a comprehensive report on amateur radio in China. Jim NN5O wrote an article on how to work the Russian MIR space station on 2m with your packet tnc. Ken NZ5I wrote a nice product review of the W2IHY audio keyer.

### Twenty-five years ago this month

**April 1986:** Volume 1, Issue 1 of the Armadillo Press was published, and TDXS graced the cover of ARRL's QST magazine. This was done to mark the Texas Sesquicentennial and encourage activation of all 3076 US counties (see April 1986 QST, page 73). TDXS President Joe Staples W5ASP announced the

meeting program was Kim Carr K5TU showing off the new repeater installation followed by the "dazzling duo of the Carolines" Dennis Motschenbacher KC6DM (now K7BV), and xyl Holly KC6HM telling of their "exploits of skill and daring while travelling among the distant isles of the Pacific". Galen Graff KB5FU reported that the next TDXS Field Day to Armadillo County would take place from the San Jacinto Battleground on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Wes Whiddon N5WW provided some hilarious reading under the guise of a "confidential scientific report" on the electronic tendencies of various animals such as a moose, giraffe, and mouse (consider the month this appears).



### Thirty years ago this month

**April 1981:** The meeting took place at the Chimney Rock Medical Plaza,

thanks to arrangement by Tom Shapiro KA5GJO (now KD5SP), with a program by George Wagner K5KG on his Market Reef DXpedition. FD Chairman Bob Evans N5DU (now K5WA) said Jay Temple W5JQ would be in charge of tower erection, and Al Vacek KN5A handling antenna assembly and checking. Steve Nace KN5H (now AA7V) was in charge of bonus points. The TDXS outgoing QSL bureau had been established in March, and the rules for its use were first published in this BS issue. Orville Burg K5VWW gave his "DX - Before It Happens" report. The TDXS "Contest Crazies" K5RC (op. K5GN), K5MA, N5DU and N5JJ took top honors in that order in the South Texas Section for the ARRL 1980 160m Contest.

### Thirty-five years ago this month

**April 1976:** The meeting was held at the Howard Johnson's on the Gulf Freeway, with program discussion on Field Day plans. A reminder that no matter how many QSO's were made in a contest, every log is important for the club score. Due to the rash of "CB" thefts, insurance companies were no longer covering mobile radio equipment effective January 1, 1976. A ballot was enclosed with the Bullsheet covering proposed constitutional changes establishing monthly meetings.

*[Photo courtesy of April, 1986 QST]*

# TDXS Meeting Notes by Mike K5UO

**Date:** March 11 2011  
7:00-9:00pm

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

**Attendance:** K5UO, K5WAF, N5ET, W5UQ, K5DD, N4AL, W5GCX, W5BXX, W5PF, N5EN, WB5TKI  
Visitors: None

May take Dave's motorhome out on Texas City 5 mile dike with it's almost 360 degree saltwater coverage. K5WAF has used this site as a mobile and highly recommends it.

Scott displayed N1MM Logger and gave a discussion of primarily its RTTY features. Scott also uses it for general logging to create ADIF files for uploading to Logbook of the World. The software seems to have a tremendous amount of features. Like about all loggers; none is perfect; but N1MM seems to be the most popular contest logging program. Scott then continued his presentation with a demonstration of his Flex-Radio 5000 setup. Very nice! Sign of the future for sure!

Recorded 10 March, 2011  
MHBragassa, K5UO

- **President [Doug, WB5TKI]:**
  - April meeting presentation to **BVARC**. Discussion of possibilities: 1) Putting a Dxpedition together (Cal/Paul) 2) Present the C91, Mozambique DXpeditition (?) 30-40 minutes each.
  - **May meeting:** To be a dinner meeting as Tracey Gee is unavailable that month. Location/venue to be announced.
  - **Field Day:** Four members expressed interest in participating ... as a TDXS effort, headed by Dave, W5BXX.

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- **Membership [Bob, WB5IUU]:** Not present
  - **Jackets:** Jacket similar in quality to NARS's jackets but in a navy blue color and with TDXS logo and Member Call signs are available via Bob, WB5IUU. Please coordinate with Bob. Prepayment is required. These are quality jackets priced, out the door, at \$67.00. K5UO had one as an example.

- **Repeater Chairman [Glen, WB5TUF] Not present.**
- **Program Chairman [Bob, W5UQ]**

**Presentation by Scott Patout K5DD**



## Contest Chairman's Report by Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ

Reported contest activity during March was meager.

Chuck Dietz used his W5PR station with the call KZ5MM for the CQWW WPX SSB contest. He entered as Single Op, Single Band on 10 meters and scored 835 QSOs in 401 prefixes for 767,514 score. This appears to be a top North American score by a large margin from the claimed scores on 3830. Keith Dutson, NM5G reported that he al

ong with K5WQG, Eddy Reynolds and N5ET operated YN2ET for 2582 QSOs and a score of 5,879,073 which is the 12<sup>th</sup> best reported score for North America and the 42<sup>nd</sup> best for the world.

W9DX, Steve Smothers reports that he was 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Single Operator Phone category of the Texas QSO party and that W5NA, Leon Pringle won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Non-Texas Single Operator Phone category from his Mississippi QTH.

I, K5EWJ, Cookie received a couple of nice surprises this month from the ARRL with certificates for 2010 ARRL International DX Contest, First Place South Texas in the Single Operator High Power CW and First Place South Texas Single Operator High Power Phone.

### Coming Contests:

April 16 Holyland DX Contest (Israel)

April 16-17 Michigan QSO Party, Ontario QSO Party, YU DX Contest

April 17 ARRL Rookie Roundup

April 23-24 10-10 Spring Digital Contest, SP DX RTTY, Helvetia, Florida QSO Party

April 30-May 1 Nebraska QSO Party

May 7-8 10-10 Spring CW Contest, 7<sup>th</sup> Area QSO Party, New England QSO Party

May 7-8 ARI DX Contest (Italian), Indiana QSO Party

May 27-29 CQ WW WPX CW Contest

June 4-5 Museum Ships Weekend

June 25-26 ARRL Field Day

Club contest participation seems to have slowed a bit this spring. Field Day does not seem to be coming together this year for TDXS so we will have the opportunity to participate with our local clubs. It may be an opportunity for us to meet more hams in the local area and participate with them.

# Report from 8P de Cal WF5W/8P9CW

What a month we had in March! Three groups from TDXS were on dxpedition: K5LBU and W5KDJ to Africa, NM5G, N5ET, and K5WQG to Nicaragua and my group in Barbados.

normal 200. Our big hex beam proved to be a little cumbersome to get up above the roof line but we eventually did so. Everyone on the team worked the contest in rotation and had about 900 plus contacts. We thought we did well, but we were dwarfed by 8P5A with their 3 towers and nearly 5 million points. We did put up a horse wire dipole and later a 12 meter sloper. Both worked well, but not as well as their three towers!

been the owner of some Barbados land. Speaking of Bill, at 5 AM the morning after our return, he had to report to the hospital for hip replacement. Tris says he is getting along well and that the operation was a success. That Bill went to Barbados at all says something about a ham's commitment to radio.

Passing through customs into and out of Barbados was easy with no confrontations. Our concerns about the size of the tubes we carried was unfounded--they did not even look at them.

See you at the meeting...



The

I can't speak for the other groups, but W5PF, WB5IUU, K5WAF and I had a great time in Barbados with the wives. We stayed at a luxury villa right on the beach, which was just one small step from the back door.

remainder of the time we had excellent food. Our in house cook was great and really spoiled us. We went out a couple of times for meals to nice sea side restaurants.

Murphy followed us a bit. My MFJ power supply for the Kenwood TS480 refused to work so we had to use Paul's two 30 amp supplies for both 480s, with about 110 watts out on each instead of the

Our XYL's went out somewhere every day. I don't think



they bought out the island, but probably came close. Tris Frick (XYL of K5WAF) found a land site she wanted very much, so it was probably a good idea that Bill was along or he would have

[All photos courtesy of WB5IUU]

## The Thing That Changed My Life by Madison W5MJ

I Well, sort of it did. The device is a Scherr Tumico Dynamometer. Prior to a month or two ago, I had no idea things like this even existed, though I am sure that's just because I had never given the subject a moment's thought. This nifty little instrument was described in an article I read in some publication or other about setting up you key. I certainly was aware that keys had settings where you could kind of adjust it to you operating style, making the gap a little bigger or smaller and tightening or loosening the pressure on the finger pieces to make it more your style, but that was about it.



My CW technique has always been to get a little rough on the thing when the rate was going up or the pileup got bigger. Over the years I discovered that there is a type of rubber kitchen shelf paper [if that's the right word] which, once you put your key on it, stayed right there irrespective of how wild you got. Of course, heavier is always better from my perspective, and with the rubber shelf paper in place, the key was very unlikely to end up on the floor.

The article I read [which I am positive had me precisely in the author's mind] stated that once you understood what your technique was and made the appropriate adjustments to your key, you would bask in the glow of the admiration of your fellow CW operators, dogs would no longer bark at you, and children

would put away their stones to throw at someone else another day. The article intimated that dynamometers, if you could find one, would make all the adjustments easy. Needless to say, I had never heard such a thing, and always though dynamometers were something you used to test the horsepower of your car.

Knowing that there was always good information to be had on the Internet, I went to my computer and logged into Google. It took only a trice to learn that what I wanted was the Scherr Tumico Dynamometer. It was disappointing to learn they cost about \$300, more than a little higher than my beer budget for the week. Something told me to go to Ebay, however, where I stumbled on an auction ending in 20 minutes for just such a device. There had been a few bids, but the price was still about \$10. I put in my maximum bid of \$13.35 and shut things down, knowing that in 15 minutes or so the price would kick up to about \$125 in the frenzy that always accompanies the item you want immediately prior to the ending bell. At least I now knew I might find one at Dayton or similar.

Imagine my surprise when I got an email the next day, saying the prize was mine for \$12.75! I immediately paid the bill and waited for the mail, which brought it to my desk a couple of days later.

Imagine my further surprise when I discover that the finger pressure on all my keys varied widely, like from 25 grams on one side of my favorite – a Bencher Hex Magnetic – to 40 grams on the other side. I had no idea! Even worse was the disparity among my other keys, going all the way up to over 100 grams on a Zach key I have never liked. Though the gaps were all adjusted about right for me, none of my keys had even approximately the same pressure on both paddles. No wonder I do so much better on keyboards than with keys!

After some experimenting, I determined that even though I get to banging the key around somewhat, I prefer a very light touch. That's something I sensed all along but never really knew. Now all six of my various keys are set to 25 grams on both sides, and while I am still prone to mistakes, at least I smile when I make them.

Ah, the pleasure of learning. The long and short is that pressure adjustments are impossible for folks like me without something like a dynamometer. Even my Zach, which I was going to give away, is as smooth as silk, and the Bencher Hex is even better than I thought. Every shade tree mechanic knows that without proper tools, the so-called Kirschner Rule of Time [which says that you should make a good-faith estimate of the time it will take to do a particular project, then double it and go to the next higher time designation to be even close: for example, a one day project will take two weeks] is indisputable. With the proper equipment, like a dynamometer, the Kirschner Rule no longer applies to getting your key adjusted correctly, and life is good.

And no, you can't borrow it. See you in the pileups.

de Madison W5MJ

## Texas DX Society Boardmembers

<b>President</b>	<b>Doug Seyler, WB5TKI</b>	<b>djseyler at comcast.net</b>
<b>VP Membership</b>	<b>Bob Mennell, WB5IUU</b>	<b>bmennell at consolidated.net</b>
<b>VP Programs</b>	<b>Bob Hardie, W5UQ</b>	<b>w5uq at att.net</b>
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	<b>Mike Bragassa, K5UO</b>	<b>bragassa at consolidated.net</b>
<b>Contest Chairman</b>	<b>Willis "Cookie" Cooke, K5EWJ</b>	<b>wrcooke at yahoo.com</b>
<b>Field Day Chairmen</b>	<b>Dave Topp W5BXX</b>	<b>w5bxx at aol.com</b>
<b>Repeater Chairman</b>	<b>Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF</b>	<b>wb5tuf at earthlink.net</b>
<b>DXpedition Chairman open</b>		
<b>Outgoing QSL Manager</b>	<b>Scott Patout,, K5DD</b>	<b>k5dd at arrl.net</b>
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<b>CQ WAZ Card Checker</b>	<b>Bob Walworth, N5ET</b>	<b>rwalworth at charter.net</b>

### How to reach US

On the World Wide Web <http://www.tdxs.net> email address: [k5dx@tdxs.net](mailto:k5dx@tdxs.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 April.

Frank Montgomery - W5JWM

John Cashen - W5UG

Bob Burns - W5SJS

Bob Bradshaw - N5RF

Orville Burg - K5VWW

Sam Neal - N5AF

Wayne Bailey - NX7K

OJ Quarles - K1OJ

Frank Moore - KE4GY

Steve Flannigan—W5HPQ

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone.