



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net December 2014

December 11, Thursday, 7:00 PM - TDXS Meeting Night at the Tracy Gee Center,
3599 Westcenter Drive, Houston, TX 77042.
Program by John Firey W5ZG on vintage radio

Don't miss this next chapter in vintage ham radio by one of the nation's foremost collectors and restorers. Pre-meeting dinner get-together is at Pappa's BBQ on S. Gessner, just south of Westheimer. Visitors are always welcome.



Editor's Note by Allen N5XZ

It is with a very heavy heart that I must report the passing of a beloved TDXS member: Jim Carmody NN5O. (See page 10).

Bands were great again for the CQ WW CW contest a few weeks ago. 10 meters was again busy well past 29 MHz, and the band scope was full. I missed making 2 million points by "that much". Maybe next time.

During the month of November, I was able to put the following good DX in the log:

FT4TA, S01WS, 5R8M, VK9DLX, TR8CA, FT4FA, V63XZ (great call, eh?), 9W6EZ, 3W3B, XV4F, XU7AEZ, 3B9HA, VU4KV, 3B9FR, VP8KF, V63YY, JG8NGQJ/JD1, V85TL, 5K0A, 8Q7DV, 3B8/M0CFV, ZD8JR, 7U60AR, BA7IO, 3W3O, BG9XD, BU4II, 3V8SS, 5W1SA, V55V, 9M6NA, OH0Z, 9K2HN, A25DX, 9V1PW, HS0ZAR, 7O2A, A71BX (Dave K5GN), A65BD, SU0ERA, 5X1XA, 6W1RW, E51RAT, 9M6YBG, 9M2TO, B4W, BD5FFK, 9M6NA, TX8C, to name a few. Many were

worked in the CQ WW CW contest.

Finally got that hole dug on the property for my 18HT vertical, with the able assistance of Jim Burrough N5DTT, Doug Seyler WB5TKI and a really new ham from north Houston: Joey Lammond KC3DYY who is from Pennsylvania. Joey has only been licensed for a few days and passed his Technician and General first time out. He does come from a ham family, so that certainly helps. Thanks again the my great crew! After we dug the hole and returned the auger to the hardware store, I brought Joey up to the shack and he made his first three HF QSOs. We worked W1AW/9 in Illinois and two KL7 stations. I think Joey was pretty impressed with HF and how the station was automated with the computer, microKeyer interface and SteppIR controller. Next I have to rebuild the concrete form and base fixture, get some rebar and call the "Concrete-on-Demand" guys back who will do the whole job for only \$400

which is a great deal for them to come to the house, mix on site and provide 4000-5000 PSI concrete.

I recently asked on several reflectors about the old and sacred tradition of dropping rare DX QSL cards to the tower hole while pouring cement. I did that for my first tower and the sacrifice to the "GORF" (Gods of RF) seems to be working well. (BTW, I mentioned to Martti Laine OH2BH that I buried one of his QSL cards along with many others in the base and he asked for a chuck of left-over concrete, which I did send him!)

On page 8 of this newsletter I will post some of the responses I received from my question.

Until next month:

73eeeeeezzz
Allen N5XZ

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The Prez Sez by Bob, W5UQ

Prez Sez for December 2014: just didn't know it.

This is the last Prez Sez for this year. The year sure went fast. Too fast for this ole codger. Bet you probably feel the same way.

The meeting on December 11th, is at Tracy Gee and will be our annual December program by John Firey, W5ZG. Of course, it will be a new presentation. And it will be about vintage radios, mostly ham radio. John may throw in some other vintage pictures and/or stories. He always is a lot of fun telling us his stories.

I first met John in 2009. We were moving from Tampa Florida to the big metropolis of Magnolia, TX. At that time the highway sign said "Population 1113". We are four miles outside of Magnolia and thought we were "in the country". But about two years later, the highway population sign was replaced with, "Population 138,000"..... WOW.... Either a whole lot of people moved in or they were here all the time and I didn't know it. Now that we've been here over five years, I can see where they are. And they were here, I

Anyway, we met John since we moved into the same housing division or property owner's association. It is a very big division with over 600 homes.

So, John and I became friends and I soon found out that he is full of stories and knowledge of vintage radios plus he has most all of them too. He buys them generally in terrible shape and restores them. His work is absolutely marvelous. And he does buy some that are already in pretty good to excellent shape. But I'd say that most of them he had to do some restoring to them. Since he's been doing this from his youth and he's hung out with some of the best ole timers that know and restore ham gear and antique equipment too, that has allowed him to gain a large repertoire of stories.

I highly suggest that you make it to the December TDXS meeting. I don't see how you will get the least bored with his presentation.

Well, the TDXS Annual Banquet is next month. January

24th actually. It is a Saturday and Lance and I managed to get Brady's Landing on the Houston shipping channel, as I believe it is. We will post it all on the website and it will be in our January Bull Sheet. Also, Steve Smothers, W9DX will be telling all about that event at the next meeting. Thank you Steve.

That is about all for this month. Oh yes, we still need a Contest Chairman. Cookie graciously volunteered to handle that post, along with his DX Chairman position, until someone is found, drafted or volunteers. Thank you Cookie for volunteering to cover the post.

Thanks to everyone for a good year. Have a good holiday season and "see you next month" at the banquet.

Bob Hardie- W5UQ

TDXS Prez -2014/2015

Contest Chatter by Joe W5ASP

CONTEST CHATTER

For the average non-contester the idea of spending hours of intense operating time glued to the rig in a continuous cycle of repetitious activity is simply not a fun thing to do. Unfortunately this image of contesting prevails in the minds of many otherwise versatile amateur radio operators. However there are other aspects of participating in on-the-air events which do not require the total dedication of time and effort of a major contest effort. There are a several such events that are well worth knowing about.

One of these is an event that the North American QRP CW Club holds each month, known as the NAQCC. It is strictly CW (now don't panic ... it's slow speed) and nearly all operate QRP. The competition is among the club members, but anyone can join in. Club membership is a simple sign-up process.

The two hour event is held on the 3rd Wednesday evening of odd

numbered months and on the 2nd Tuesday evening of the even numbered months from 0030-0230 Z (e.g. Tuesday, Dec. 3rd this month, local time, i.e. the 4th UTC). Activity is confined to 20, 40 and 80 M.

The exchange is brief ... RST, State, Member Number (or power level for non-members).

Complete rules can be found at the NAQCC web site, www.naqcc.info/

There are a couple of interesting features in this even. Bonus points are awarded to those using a straight key (X2 Mult) or bug (X 1.5). And there are two categories, SWA – simple wire antennas, and GAIN – yagis, arrays, etc. Participation runs at 100 plus logs submitted and up to 60 contacts each for the leading entries. There are active stations in every call District and Canada.

Operating QRP can be a unique challenge as well as a relaxing change of pace. It provides a great venue for those wanting to improve their CW skills away from "madding

crowd". And while straight keys and bugs are uncommon these days, there is a certain nostalgia in their use amongst those who have held their license for many years.

Thought not strictly a December operating event I want to call your attention to ARRL's Straight Key Night to be held on January 1st from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC. You can get the details at <http://www.arrl.org/straight-key-night> As pointed out by Dan, N1ND "This 24-hour event is not a contest; rather it is a day dedicated to celebrating our CW heritage. Participants are encouraged to get on-the-air and simply make enjoyable, conversational QSOs. There are no points scored and all who participate are winners."

These two events should offer a welcome change of pace in keeping with the Holiday Season. Do enjoy and to all ... Happy Holidays !

Joe, W5ASP

TDXS Meeting Schedule for 2015

The dates are finalized for Tracy Gee meetings at 7pm.

And they are all on the Second Thursday of that month :

- Feb 12th,
- April 13th
- No meeting in June
- August 13th
- October 8th
- December 10th.

Then the DINNER MEETINGS will be (random days):

- January 24th, 2015 a Saturday (Annual Banquet)
- March, actual day and date TBD
- May, actual day and date TBD
- July, actual day and date TBD
- September, actual day and date TBD
- November, actual day and date TBD

A good rule of thumb is:

The Dinner meetings are always in the ODD MONTHS being the ODD meetings.

The Tracy Gee meetings are the EVEN months, being "standard or even".

Thanks,
Bob Hardie
TDXS President 2014 and 2015



DX Report by Willis "Cookie" Cookie K5EWJ

The DX Chairman's Report

The 2014 DX season is nearing a close. I hope that you were able to work some new ones. This year has been a triumphant one for some members who made the Honor Roll this year. There have been a number of DXpeditions in the field this year, too many to list all of them. The star seems to be the Amsterdam Island DXpedition that traveled by the Braveheart Motor Vessel from Fremantle, Australia for 9 days to Amsterdam Island south of India and near the Arctic Circle. This was the most expensive DXpedition known to me at \$450,000. The lease on the Braveheart was over half of the cost. 14 operators stayed on the Island for about 10 days, but needed to leave early because of a bad storm.

The second DXpedition in complexity and high on the need list was FT4TA to Tromelin Island in November. This DXpedition was not as expensive and took less time than FT5ZM because ocean travel and the expensive ship charter was not needed. The island has a landing strip and is within light aircraft range of Madagascar. The team was limited to 7 by the French Government, presumably because of the limited water supply and the smallness of the island. The Island is a wildlife sanctuary and great care was required to limit detrimental effects on the rare species. Conditions were good, but my DX antenna was down from a lightning strike, so I did not get this needed contact. Congratulations to those who did make a contact, as it has been 14 years since the Island was activated and it may be quite a while before it is activated again.

Zorro, JH1AJT has been a good representative for the DXers of the world. Zorro took Myanmar from a country that everyone needed by making thousands of contacts in 2013 returned in March 2014 and brought many more into the fold of having worked Myanmar. This year Zorro visited Mt. Athos and helped Monk

Apollo repair his station. The Elders of Monk Apollo still restrict his operation and did not allow Zorro to run a DXpedition. Zorro and some diplomats from Japan also visited Eritrea and Zorro was allowed to operate. Unfortunately, I was unable to hear him with my dipoles. Zorro had problems with his computer interface and his amplifier, so he did not have much time, was low power, SSB only for this trip. He was able to help some Europeans, but few Americans. Zorro spent most of his time laying the groundwork for future DXpeditions, so hope for future activity in this rare spot.

I mentioned the lightning strike on my QTH. Some of the damage included the loss of my keyboard, mouse, monitor driver, at least one USB Port and the RJ-45 connector to the router. I have my computer running now, but I am connecting with Wi-Fi to the router. I lost my cable modem and router, but Comcast replaced them with a combo modem and router. I lost my driven element stepper motor on my SteppIR beam and the controller was destroyed. I hope to have the beam back in operation in the next few days. I have a tail twister on order and bought a new thrust bearing. (I think this has more to do with buying my bearing in 1968 and using it for 45 years!) When I get to it I plan on installing PolyPhaser and grounding switches on all antennas. I bought a SteppIR Controller with remote control card, lightning protection card and amplifier interruption when tuning the antenna. A new rotator controller and a new protection delay for my old rotator and I am installing a ATV winch to fold my tower. My final transistors failed in my amplifier, maybe to the lightning damage, maybe other reasons. I found one insulator fractured on my tower.

We need more members! Be sure and invite any good prospects to any TDXS activities, let us get to know them and them get to know us! We need more members of all ages, sexes, races or whatever. We do not expect every new

member to be a seasoned DXer or Contester. Wannabes are very much welcome. I will see you at the next meeting and hope to bring a couple of prospects.

I just discovered after 11 months that my title is DXpedition chairman, not DX Chairman. I have been trying to help those who are working on goals to get there. I am interested in helping those going for basic DXCC as well as those who are already Honor Roll #1. I have accepted Contest Chairman as well as DXpedition Chairman, not to try to hog it all, but because we need more input to the Bullsheet and we need a Contest Chairman. If someone wants to share the honors, I will welcome the help! If someone is out there wondering why I don't do something or the other, talk to me and maybe I should do that very thing! Maybe if we talk it over we can come up with a better idea than either of us had to start.

Happy DXing, Happy Contesting, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year. Tell Zeus, Thor, Odin and them other cats where to put the lightning bolts. Most of all, I think I was lucky to not have this damage for 58 years of Hamming. 73, one and all.

An Aggie in Zone 21 by Dave McCarty K5GN Part III

Part III – Amateur Radio in Qatar

The Qatar Amateur Radio Society is the IARU member society playing a similar role to the ARRL as the national organization for hams. However, the old timers who make up the leadership of “the Society”, as it is called by the locals, have neither the vision nor the organization of the League or any of its western peers such as RSGB, or DARC. The president of the society is a very close friend of the former Emir. In the early 2000’s he was the Minister of Energy and served as chairman of OPEC for a time. He was so busy that he became disconnected from the hobby and from the Society. The Emir abdicated in favor of his heir apparent a few years ago, but the tribal connections remain intact. The QARS activities are closely connected to the Boy Scouts, and often the young Qatari men taking license classes are scouts or scout leaders. There have not yet been any female Qatari licensees, though 9K2 and A6 have one or more in each country.

When I came to Qatar I was disappointed to learn that there is no routine system that would allow the licensing of foreigners. The only foreign hams who have received licenses have been granted them as favors through diplomatic channels or other schemes. Old timers will remember A71AD and later, A71CW. Apparently this did not endear them to the Society members. Your average expat resident currently has no chance at an A7 callsign.

After my departure from the scene, some changes have occurred in permitting of foreigners to operate, however, the Society does not currently license anyone but nationals. An uneasy relationship exists between the QARS and the Information and Telecommunications Commission or ITC (similar to our FCC). The rules and regulations for amateur radio are not well codified in Qatar, and this leads to some confusion and some autocratic exercise of authority by the QARS Secretary and board. However, locals do get licensed and get on the air, and guests are allowed in one way or another to join in the fun.

I was permitted by a verbal agreement to operate on my own using my British li-

cense. This was customary for some time here. However, at some point there was a conflict between another American ham operating under his British license and a Qatari operator and he was told that his permission was cancelled and if he stayed off the air he would stay out of jail. About six months later I got the same treatment, but never learned what the precipitated it. Of course that was a very sad moment for me.

The Society recently began moving its headquarters to a new location north of the downtown area. The Society maintains a club station, A71A, with a small tower, tri-bander and multi-band vertical at the old location on a major ring road in the Al-Sadd district where it suffers terribly from line noise.

One of the more active hams in Qatar is Juma Al-Kuwari, A71EM. Juma heads up part of the maintenance department for the national police force, keeping much of their vehicle fleet in good operating order. He is married to one wife and has a university-age son and several daughters.

Up to 2013, his station consisted of a 70-foot crank-up tower next to his home in a suburb of Doha with a two-element 40m yagi and a Force-12 tri-bander complemented by a 40-foot crank-up on top of the house with a SteppIR four element yagi (including 6m). An 80m sloper and a very short vertical for 160 rounded out the rooftop farm. Inside the shack were two complete stations, one of a Yaesu FT-920 driving an Emtron amplifier and the other of an FT-2000 and an Alpha 86, plus VHF and older gear on the shelf. He even has a homebrew 6m kilowatt amp.

Recently his operations have been limited due to reconstruction of his house. Originally a two-story house, he began a project two years ago to expand it to a three-story house of about 5000 square feet. The shack is moving from a small building that was demolished to make way for the expansion up to the third floor of the new building. His two towers will be re-installed soon and he will be back to his usual level of activity on all bands, mostly CW. Meanwhile he manages to get on regularly from his winter camp

location out in the desert where he has installed a multi-band vertical.

Ali Al-Mohannedi, A71BX lives about a half a mile from Juma. In the time I lived there Ali became my best Arab friend. His day job is as one of four human resources managers for Al Jazeera, very large job for a fairly young man. His part of the organization includes about half of the Qatar staff as well as the new BeIn Sport network.

Ali’s station was originally set up at his parent’s home where he lived as the youngest son, responsible for taking care of his aging widowed mother. It included a small locally made tower on the roof holding an Optibeam five-band yagi for 20-10 and a 90-foot guyed Rohn tower holding an Optibeam four band yagi for 40-10. An 80m sloper and 160m inverted vee were hung from the taller tower below the big beam. Inside his shack were two FT-2000’s with Emtron and Acom amplifiers.

Ali got married about five years ago. I had the privilege of attending the men’s wedding celebration and sitting with him and some of his closest friends at the feast. He now has two young daughters. His station is down for now while he finishes the construction of a new house for his family. It is going up next door to his parents’ villa in the space formerly occupied by his shack, a wide courtyard, and his guyed tower. Ali’s command of the English language, his leadership, and his ability to learn made him a great partner in crime for this American expat!

In addition to those two hams, I became well acquainted with Khalid, A71CO, Abdullah, A71CV, Saif A71AM, and many other Qatari amateurs. These men formed the nucleus of a team that has become somewhat of a force in the Arab contesting world. More on that in the next article.

73eeeezzz by Ron Litt, K5HM

73eeeezzz

Ah yes, the time honored end to every ham QSO. It has been maligned, corrupted and talked about down through the years of Ham History. Whether one prefers 73 or whatever variation on the theme, it's the feeling that counts.

Some operators have expanded on the time honored word, if you can call it that. It is a number that seems to have evolved to a phrase but is not yet a complete sentence. Like Best 73 or Very 73, to emphasize that we REALLY mean it. Is that a level of sincerity greater than 73? The last time someone was that sincere, I was checking to be sure I still had my wallet.

At the beginning of the 20th century, people were a lot more graceful and courteous. 73 was a sincere expression of thanks for a good conversation. We are not that formal anymore and it seems that just plain old 73 is no longer enough.

Lately, I've been experimenting with 73 in hopes of conveying a more accurate expression of sincerity. After all, if 73 means "best regards" then should 73s mean "best best regards regards" or "best regards best regards" or even "best regardses?" Is that even a word? How many times do you repeat best regards when you mean 73s? Perhaps 73s should mean more plurals that two. The degree of your sincerity is hard to express this way.

Amateurs didn't invent 73. We borrowed it, along with other convenient numbers for use in passing messages. Thank Walter Phillips. His original code was a shorthand for newspaper reporters who filed their stories by telegraph. In 1879 he published 73 and host of other abbreviations that ran from 1 to 92. Included were various codes for handy phrases like; 73, "best regards" 30, "good night" and 22 for "love and kisses."

By 1905, the navy adopted many of these codes and along the way, promoted "love and kisses" from 22 to 88. Nobody knows exactly when or why this happened. Perhaps sailors placed more importance on romance. 73 and 88 remained the most used number codes and eventually they

made the leap from CW to radiotelephone vernacular.

Now a part of Hamspeak, we use 73 to end a contact, send good feelings and confound those who are unlicensed. Hams have all sorts of ways to use 73 at the end of a QSO; 73s or Best 73s being the most often heard on the air.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a stickler for ham grammar or any other grammar. I'm from New York where English is merely a subject taught in school and understanding "Street English" requires total immersion for a period of time.

I understand 73 but the plural form, 73s is confusing. Do you mean 73 73? Or 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73 73? Just how many times is 73 repeated in 73s?

If I spell 73's with an apostrophe, it becomes the possessive form of a word, like "My best regards". Perhaps that is better in meaning but 73s and 73's sound the same on sideband and the nuance is lost. And what CW operator will use an apostrophe anyway?

About now, I can hear my third grade teacher, Mrs. Goldblatt screaming at me from the beyond. "I can talk until I'm blue in the face and I can't seem to get through to you. 73 is a number and can't be conjugated!" Mrs. Goldblatt was a professional level screamer and when she got wound up, she really could get blue in the face.

After a polite but uninteresting contact I tried using half of 73. I might end it with just "7" or "7's" or even "3". Polite but not over the top. Too often though, the operator on the other end missed the point entirely and saw it as just QSB. "You faded away there OM but thanks for a great contact and best 73's."

I tried using 73 with more mathematical precision to more accurately convey the level of my feelings. After a not very interesting contact, instead of "7", I will say 36.5, meaning polite but half hearted sincerity. After a really good one, 146. This allows the use of the full range of numerical values. It just depends on how I feel.

These days, I am working on a more rigorous approach. I developed the Sincerity Index (S) to guide me in my use of 73. Where S = any positive number. So, a better way to express the feeling in your 73 is to say 73(S) where S = the Sincerity Index for this QSO; the number of times you want to repeat Best Regards. That way people can see how you really feel. If you say 73, that is mildly sincere. 73(10); that is really sincere.

If S < 0, it might look like an insult to some, so I limited the Sincerity Index only to positive numbers. After all, it is a hobby. On the other hand, if you set the value of S too high, like S=100, people will think you are making fun of them and they'll be insulted anyway.

The great comedian Don Rickles said, "There is a delicate balance between sincerity and ridicule." He should know.

So have fun with it and 73eeeezzz!

Ron Litt, K5HM



DX News and Propagation Report by Mike Davidson, N5MT

Mike Davidson N5MT

Many DX'ers have used the **DX Summit** website since 1998 to help them find that rare new country on the Internet! The website changed its name and looks in November so you now have to go to the new name: New.DXSummit.fi. The website displays DX calls for all bands and modes, so you may need to set a filter if you only want one band or one mode. Use the HELP function if needed. This website is used during all contests to spot calls and any band or net activity for all to see. It is not just for DX but for helping you work a new one or just to find a friend.

The upgraded MY DX SUMMIT introduces an easy-to-use propagation forecast tool that users can use to watch the HF spectrum better. Ken K4ZW #18573, will host a Webinar in early December to explain the essence of MY DX SUMMIT and its prop prediction tools for ham radio. Thanks to Radio Arcala for this website and all the time and money it has saved us over the years!

Since MY DX SUMMIT is a sponsored website, you do have to live with the advertisements. So enjoy the DX this winter, Europe has been strong for the past month and the flux has been much higher than expected/predicted.

The December solar flux prediction has been revised up from the previous NOAA published forecast. A flux level of 174-185 peaked the last week of November with peak days on the 16th, 23rd, and 27th. So what does the Ten Meter contest hold for us as to propagation? The best guess is a solar flux of 140-155 with a chance of a flare. The winter contest season begin in October and we have been hearing Europe almost on a daily basis in the USA since then because of the higher solar flux.

The US Fish & Wildlife Services has announced that ham radio will be allowed from **Navassa Island** in 2015. Navassa is located forty miles west of Haiti and this two square mile island is the number two most wanted DXCC country after P5 North Korea. There has been only one 10-10 member worked from Navassa Island many years ago. A group now has permission to operate a DXpedition on the island in January 2015.

Miscellaneous Items & Notes:

Propagation forecast: <http://www.solen.info/solar/> .

DX Calendar: <http://www.dxwatch.com/> .

More propagation: <http://dx.qsl.net/propagation/> .

Propagation: Over the past eleven months, average propagation was about the same as during the first peak of the cycle in November 2011 when the monthly average flux reached 153.5. The maximum flux was 193.5 in February and 181.4 this November. The solar flux has been higher than expected due to more solar flares occurring on the sun surface! I expect the solar flux to range from 130-180 this next quarter, which is the same as the past three months. Since we have been hearing Europe this fall on a regular basis, this has helped increase our contest scores above last year! **On December 1st the solar flux was 168, the A index was 10 and K index 2.** Look for the best conditions: December 17-19th; January 2015 11-13th; February 2015 7-9th; March 2015 2-5th. Conditions for the 2015 Winter QSO Party look like a flux of 150-160 for the February 7- 8th contest which will be equal to the 150 level we had in 2014. Over the next three months, for USA stations, expect a 50-70% chance of DX in the mornings to Europe or Africa and the same chance into Asia, South America or the Pacific in the late afternoon. To see what DX paths are open, listen for the beacons from **28.175-28.300 (especially 28.200).**

DX IS! 73 Mike Davidson N5MT #24949

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Question About an Old and Sacred Tradition—By Allen N5XZ

I asked recently on a couple of reflectors about an old tradition to drop rare DX QSL cards in the hole of a new tower to make it play better (which I did on my first tower, BTW). Here are some of the responses I received:

I know about that tradition and have seen many people do that. However, I have never seen someone put QSL's from a different call sign. To put QSL's in the concrete from KL5DX would give bad information to the "Air Wave Fairy" and it might even wake up "Murphy". OH NO! It's like sitting on Santa's lap and telling him what you want, noting that you live in Alaska. Just think, all your toys would end up in Alaska.— **Marty W5MF**

This tradition only works if you place your P5 card there. — **Michael AC0TX**

Sounds like a whole bunch of Bovine Scatology to me.— **Mike KA5CVH**

I buried a JA card under my 90 ft. Rohn 45 & waited till the next sunrise & had a JA Priest bless the setup & Evie & I both made the honor roll the following day! — **Jim N5DC**

I did that. In addition: My Dad was a barber. I wound up with some pretty nice tools. I took his "Gold" straight razor, and wired it to the rebar before I poured
- in hopes that it would help to "slice" thru the QRN! — **John K5XA**

I'd always heard you put one of your own QSL cards at the bottom of the hole— **John AC4CA**

Typically, I now put a rare DX QSL, a JA QSL, and one from a high QSO concentration from Europe (DL, IK, etc.) under my towers. This should cover us for both the DXing and contesting efforts. I was led to believe it was a proper & fitting sacrifice for some of our "excess" 10m & 15m JA QSLs.— **Phil NA4M**

Richard (K5NA) is/was my contest elmer when I lived in NY. I'm finally building my own station here in Amarillo. My first tower went up 3 years ago and it has a JT card along with a few JA and EU cards. I poured concrete for my 2nd tower a few weeks ago and it has the same, another JT card and a few JA and EU cards. It works. **Rich - N5ZC**

I would guess that the tradition harkens back to biblical times and the custom of making burnt offerings. Taking something of value and burning it to allow the smoke to carry it up to God. I once offered a 3850 net lizard (before the phone bands were expanded on 80M) as a burnt offering in one of my tower bases but that tower would only play on SSB and any antenna placed on it would only resonate within +/-1 kHz of 3850. On top of that my radio, once keyed, would only unkey after 10 minutes and then only long enough to reset the timer and allow me to identify. I would recommend that you tape together your old W5 novice card, then place it on top of a KZ5 card and place that in the tower base in the hopes that the Republic of Texas will rise again and become its own entity. You can tell I am not at work today and that I am 23 hours from boarding a plane to Houston where I will spend the next month.— **Earl N8SS**

I might suggest another worthwhile item for the tower base. I recommend an old call letter license plate. Keeps your callsign just a bit louder in the pile ups. — **Mike K5NU**

You guys have been drinking too much lately.. 73 de **Rob HK3CW**

Years ago when Bob Evans K5WA built his contest station here, we did one better and added a "not-ready-for-prime-time" E.F. Johnson Valiant to the bottom of the hole. The DX rolled in every day! Anyone who wants it can have it if you don't mind chipping about 3 yards of concrete away.— **Sam N5AF**

In construction lots of traditions or superstitions exist. Mrs. Linbeck the wife of Leo Linbeck used to throw Catholic medallions into the first concrete placed on projects and pray that no one would be injured. Others would throw coins in the concrete like into a fountain or well.
73 ... **Scott KD5FBA**

Jimmy Hoffa, "Freddy" Dimitri Ivanov and Igor Maloskovich all missing and possibly thrown into a building foundation for safe keeping.. Who's buried in Grant's Tomb? — **Rick W5RH**

Question About an Old and Sacred Tradition—By Allen N5XZ

As I remember, My tower was planted in 1978 and a large contingent of TDXS experts were on hand to assist. I was told that a single card was all that was necessary, and the decision to direct the ethereal energies with a card from Majid, Y11BGD (SK), was performed. It was a difficult decision as another card from A51PN was a close second due to its attractive nature. It must have worked. Being predominately a DX hound was my goal at that point, but it had other side effects as well. Dave, K5GN, came over for a Sweepstakes operation and let the smoke out of the station and no contest operation from here has ever come close to that performance. **Orville K5VWW**

My contest Elmer (K5RC) told me a single JA card was all that was necessary. I have done that with every tower and can attest that it works! **Chuck W5PR**

P.S.: I was really wet behind the ears when RC took me under his wing. I had worked my first contest (single band 10m of course!) and I told him my score. He asked me how many "dupes" I had in there. "What's a "dupe" I asked. He told me and told me about the old "Dupe Sheets" (this was before computers). It had not even occurred to me that there might be "dupes" in my log!

I recall that Richard did start the tradition. I have followed it for the last 40+ years. I use rare cards from as far away as possible, without actually using a one-of-a-kind QSL. Tradition must be tempered with pragmatism. I have also scanned all of my one-of-a-kind cards, just in case. Several years ago one of the locals took my 600lbs of QSL's home to sort them and create a DXCC display for our local club. He never did either and wound up throwing them in the trash before he moved. I still have the super rare cards, but all my novice stuff is gone. - **Tom K5RC**

Richard, K5NA, is the keeper of the mysteries surrounding this tradition. Richard? I put a single JA card in the base of my 2 towers. Both cards were old (approximately 30 years) and from JA stations running 10W. **Kim, K5TU**

I don't know if I was the originator of the idea, but I am sure I was the first in the TDXS to do this. In 1973 I put a JT1 QSL card under my first big tower in Alvin, TX. It was just that one card and the tower played well and worked lots of DX. Kim (K5TU) remembers this because he helped put that tower up along with Jan, K5MA. W5NA helped me pour the base. I also remember that, after the tower was finished and guyed, I climbed it. It was the first time I ever climbed a tower. This happened because Kim and Jan badgered me to do so until finally I put on my brand new climbing belt and up I went. I still have that climbing belt. I remember that moment well. I looked south and could see the refineries in Texas City. Then I noticed the smell of salt spray from the gulf; something I had never noticed on the ground. After checking my connections and with a leap of faith, I released my hands and leaned back to let the belt and lanyard support me. Then I lit a good cigar and relaxed. You had to be in my shoes to appreciate that moment. I quit cigars on November 5, 1984, but who's counting. Since that time I have placed a QSL card under the concrete of every tower I have put up, both in New York and back in Texas again. I call it my sacrifice to "GORF" (the God of RF). Depending on what purpose I planned for the use of the tower (DXing or contesting or both) depended on what QSLs I used. It never mattered how many QSLs, but the significance of the cards. I remembered once that I put a Fred Laun card (HS5ABD) under one tower. That was because of the great respect I had for Fred. I think that was the first tower that we installed here in Austin. Typically, I now put a rare DX QSL, a JA QSL, and one from a high QSO concentration from Europe (DL, IK, etc.) under my towers. his should cover us for both the DXing and contesting efforts. I have 8 towers here in Austin now and I don't anticipate ever putting up another. I always thought it was a nice tradition and, in its own way, honored our hobby. 73, **Richard - K5NA**

I remember the day you poured that tower base and saw the card go in the hole. I was a junior at the Univ of Houston! I also remember the day you climbed the tower for the first time. Jan and I were on the ground looking up and laughed that you were smoking a cigar! I also remember climbing that tower in Alvin to fix the 2 el 40 just before a contest and I wasn't sure I could get it back in the boom-to-mast bracket due to the wind. After several unsuccessful tries, I finally got it back in the bracket and we worked a lot of JAs on 40 that weekend. Good times, Richard! 73 **Kim, K5TU**

Then there was one of our members (SK) who put in a rare QSL and poured the concrete. But, he had forgotten to get credit for it with DXCC and it was years before he got another. So take care.- **Bob, n5et**

I think cards with your own callsign(s) are best, but it's also nice to honor the memory of some of our SK members and put some of their cards in too. I have hundreds available if you need them, but no way to get them to you by this weekend. - **Steve W9DX**

I will let you know next issue what sacrifices I made to give my new 18HT its MOJO. 73, Allen N5XZ

Jim Carmody—NN50 TDXS Member #116 - SK

It is with a very heavy heart that I must report the passing of a beloved TDXS member: Jim Carmody NN50. This was just posted on the TDXS reflector as I write this article:

Hello Everyone,

I am writing on behalf of my family to say that my father passed away this past weekend. He was diagnosed with Liver cancer Nov. 4, 2014 and passed away Dec. 6th in his home surrounded by his immediate family. Obviously this occurred very, very quickly, but he was in little pain and he went very peacefully.

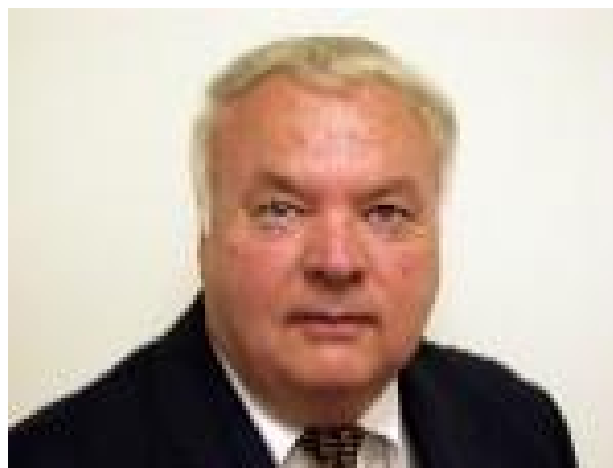
The funeral visitation will occur at Klein Funeral home @ 1400 W. Main St. Tomball, TX 77375 from 4pm to 6pm on Sunday, Dec. 14th. A funeral mass will be held the next morning at St. Anthony of Padua @ 7801 Bay Branch Dr. The Woodlands, TX 77385 at 11am on Monday, Dec. 15th. It will be followed by a lunch reception at the church. Anyone is invited to attend, but we know with the busy holiday travel that not everyone can make it.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that you donate to Wounded Warrior Project (<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>), Star of Hope (<http://www.sohmission.org/>), Doctors without Borders (<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>), or a charity of your choice.

Many of you have sent kind notes over the past week. We just wanted to mention we have gotten them and we appreciate your support. Please feel free to share this with his many groups/associates, as we may have missed people close to Jim.

Best, Tippy, Leigh, and Paul Carmody

Jim was always very friendly and helpful to anyone who knew him. He will be sorely missed.



Texas DX Society Board members

NEW and CHANGED BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE LISTED NEXT MONTH

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How to reach US

On the World Wide Web <http://www.tdxs.net> email address: 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 December

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone

- Arthur Alvarez N5KTN
- Mike Young W5RRX
- Sid Leach K5XI
- Buzz Loeschman NI5DX

