



The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net January 2021

**TDXS Monthly Meeting via Zoom:
Thursday January 21st, 7PM CST
Program:
Topic "Portable Operation" by AJ4F
Topic "Ham License Plates" by K5VWW
Check the TDXS Reflector for detail**

Editor's Note by Allen Brier N5XZ

Welcome to 2021!

2021 is here and so is a new solar cycle (well, Cycle 25 actually started last year, but who's counting?) The good news is that most are now predicting it will be at least somewhat better than Cycle 24 was. Still, at its peak, Cycle 24 provided us a lot of fun and excitement so I am definitely looking forward to this new cycle, which is predicted to peak in 2025. We have already had some nice openings, even on 6 meters, and bands that have been effectively closed for months are now once again alive with activity. Why, just the other day I worked a VK on 18 meters long path! Gotta admit, you haven't seen anything like that in a while! So get that rig humming again, and you don't

have to make all of your contacts on FT8 anymore! I have made plenty of CW and SSB contacts that would have been impossible last year!

It also appears that contesting for TDXS is continuing to be more active than before, as can be seen I think in Jim N5DDT's report later in this newsletter. Let's keep up the trend and participate in more contests, even if it is part time (which most of mine are anyway). Don't forget to (1) Submit your logs to the contest organizer, (2) Send in your results to 3830scores.com, (3) Indicate Texas DX Society as your club, (4) Sign up with contestonlinescores.com for real time contest scoring (if the contest is supported). If you have any

questions about any of these, let me know and I will try to help.

Now we have a really urgent situation in that we currently do not have a club president or a DX Chairman. Both Robie and Orville have retired from these positions. (Orville was good enough to do one more DX article for this months issue). Will somebody please volunteer to fill these positions? We also need a VP of Programs and a Field Day Chairman! All of your Board of Directors have been serving in our respective positions for years and it is now time for other TDXS members to commit to serving the club. TDXS should not be club of followers, we need some leaders also.

73, Allen N5XZ

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We are now holding my Thursday "EX-ZED SPRED" lunches on Zoom and it is every week! If you would like to be invited, send me at note at n5xz@arrl.net

The Prez Sez by ????????

Since we do not currently have a president for the club, there is no “Prez Sez” article. Will someone step up to become President of the Texas DX Society? Most of the rest of the officers have been serving in their capacities for a number of years now. We need membership to contribute to the club or it will become stagnant.

C'mon, anyone?



TDXS Meeting Minutes by Doug Seyler WB5TKI

TDXS December 2020 Meeting Minutes

Date: December 17, 2020

Location: ZOOM Virtual Meeting

Attendance: Robie AJ4F (Pres.), Doug W9LCQ (Sec.), Larry KB5WWW (Treas.), Jim N5DTT, Orville K5VWW, Allen N5XZ, Scott K5DD, Keith NM5G, Rick K5GZR, David KE5ZZO, Skiddy K5NZ, Bill W5SG, Dale KI5KSE, Dale KG5U, Don K5LZ, Ben NE5B, Don N5DD, James K5PCJ, Jimmy NA5D, Kim K5TU, Leslie AD5WB, Michael K5WRN, Sid K5XI, Tanner W9TWJ Rick W5RH, John K5EC, Rick Garcia, Jeff Hoke (Speaker)

The December TDXS Meeting was held, as usual, via ZOOM Video conferencing. The agenda was:

Officers Report –

Still need nominees for President and VP Programs

Newest member is James Clark WM5L #232

Texas QSO Party results are out

Tech Topic – Jeff Hoke from CenterPoint Energy presented “Power Line Noise and What CenterPoint Can Do to help”.

Jeff heads the RFI Dept., for past 15 years

RFI sources, location techniques, and repair procedures

Listed contact information – Radio Shop is 713-945-6555

Followed by extensive Q&A

A full recording of the meeting is at [TDXS Monthly Meeting December 17, 2020 - YouTube](#). The Tech Topic is at about 8:33.

Submitted January 15, 2021

Doug Seyler W9LCQ (ex - WB5TKI)

TDXS Secretary



DX Chairman's Report by Orville Burg K5VWW

The TDXS website, WWW.TDXS.NET, reports lots of activity on the front page:

The SUN HAS SPOTS again. While the Solar Flux is only at a 77 level on January 18th there are 23 sunspots currently active!

Niger, 5UA1HM, is active on 40M and 20M CW only until February 11th. QSL via F4IHM.

JW/LB2PG on Bear Island (Svalbard) operates on 80M-20M SSB! Active until 1 June 2021.

Greenland – OX/SE3A will operate from Narsarsuaq on 40M and 20M until January 28th.

Bolivia – CP1XRM will be on HF SSB and Digital until January 26th.

Dominican Republic - HI9/F5PLR from Las Terrenas will be active until January 30th. Operation will be HF CW for several months.

Our Friend Tony, 3D2AG/P is now QRT from Rotuma and is on the way back home. He has not posted LoTW QSOs yet!

JX2US – Jan Mayen was worked on 40M CW by Allen, N5XZ, and was heard on January 18th on 30M FT8 by Orville, K5VWW.

Please continue to monitor the main page of the TDXS Web Site, www.TDXS.net, for updates to activity on the bands.

Good DX,
Orville, K5VWW



Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

Hello again. As usual, we will start with a summary of major contests coming up in the next two months.

January

- 2 ARRL RTTY Roundup
- 9 North American QSO Party, CW
- 16 North American QSO Party, SSB
ARRL January VHF Contest
- 23 UK/EI DX Contest - CW
- 29 CQ 160-Meter Contest - CW
- 30 Winter Field Day

February

- 6 10-10 Winter Contest, SSB
Vermont, Minnesota and British Columbia QSO Parties
Mexico RTTY International Contest
- 13 CQ WW WPX RTTY Contest
- 20 ARRL International DX Contest, CW
- 26 CQ 160-Meter Contest, SSB
- 27 South Carolina QSO Party
North American QSO Party, RTTY
- 28 North Carolina QSO Party

TDXS members participated in a number of contests in December. Here is their score information as reported in the 3830scores.com website.

[ARRL 160-Meter Contest 2020 Dec 4](#)

Single Op HP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Sections	Countries	Op Time	Score	Club
N5XZ		354	85	0	5:38	61,965	TDXS

Single Op LP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Sections	Countries	Op Time	Score	Club
K5GQ		210	61	0	8	26,718	TDXS



Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

ARRL 160-Meter Contest 2020 Dec 4 (cont.)

AJ4F	56	29	2	2	3,335 TDXS
KØNM		50	18	3	2,701 TDXS

ARRL 10-Meter Contest 2020 Dec 12

SO CW HP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
KØNM	x	x	542	59	11	127,912	TDXS

SO CW LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
AJ4F			180	38	6	27,360	TDXS
K5GQ			70	104	3:21	7,280	TDXS
K5TU			11	6	1	264	TDXS

SO CW Unlimited HP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
N5XZ			566	64	11	144,896	TDXS
W5FMH(KJØD)		x	493	66	11	130,152	TDXS
K5HEM			175	44	12:49	30,800	TDXS

SO Mixed HP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
W5GCX			225	82		62,484	TDXS
WD5CAY			71	30	13.5	5,700	TDXS
NM5G			45	1	2	2,496	TDXS

SO Mixed LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
N5DTT				79	35 9	9,520	TDXS

SO Mixed Unlimited HP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
W9LCQ			98	33		12,672	TDXS



Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

ARRL 10-Meter Contest 2020 Dec 12 (cont.)

SO SSB Unlimited HP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
W5PR		1207	76		183,464	TDXS

RAC Winter Contest 2020 Dec 19

M/S HP

Call	SO2R Remote	CW Qs	Ph Qs	CW Mults	Ph Mults	Op Time	Score
K5HEM		94	0	15	0	6	9,390

SO Mixed HP

Call	SO2R Remote	CW Qs	Ph Qs	CW Mults	Ph Mults	Op Time	Score
W5GCX		76	37	29	17		60,750

SO Mixed LP

Call	SO2R Remote	CW Qs	Ph Qs	CW Mults	Ph Mults	Op Time	Score
N5DTT		8	7	4	4	1	1,440

Stew Perry Topband Challenge 2020 Dec 26

Single Op HP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Op Time	Score	Club
N5XZ		364	8:14	1,436	TDXS

Single Op LP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Op Time	Score	Club
K5GQ		81	3	370	TDXS

K1USN Slow Speed Test 2020 Dec 28

Single Op HP

Call	SO2R Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
K5HEM		14	8	1	112	TDXS

Not much to say this month except “Stay well, stay safe and get your vaccination when its Available to you”. Jim, N5DTT



Where in the World is... Ron Litt, K5HM

The French Southern and Antarctic Lands - Terres australes et antarctiques françaises

(FT)



Where in the World is... Ron Litt, K5HM



These lands include Adelie Land, Crozet Islands, Kerguelen Islands, Saint Paul and Amsterdam Islands. The population of these islands varies Approximately 150 (in the winter) to 310 (in the summer). Persons live in the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, they are military personnel, officials, scientific researchers and support staff. The territory has legally no permanent civilian population.

Adelie Land (IOTA AN-017) sits squarely on the Antarctic continent and named by the French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville after his wife. It is claimed by France and stretches from a portion of the Southern Ocean coastline all the way inland to the South Pole. France has administered it since 1955 and followed the Antarctic Treaty System rules since 1961. France has had a permanent station in Adélie Land since April 9, 1950. The current Dumont d'Urville Station has a winter population around 25, but this goes up to about 78 during the Antarctic summer.



Crozet Islands (IOTA AF-008 FT#W) The **Crozet Islands** are a subantarctic archipelago of small islands in the Southern Indian Ocean. It is generally uninhabited. They were discovered in 1772 by French explorers. The archipelago was named for the second in command Jules Crozet.

In the early 19th century, the islands were often visited by sealers, and the seals had been nearly exterminated by 1835. Vessels also visited the island for whaling was the main activity around the islands. Such exploitation was short-lived, and the islands were rarely visited for the rest of the century. There were many shipwrecks on the Crozet Islands. For some time, the Royal Navy dispatched a ship every few years to look for stranded survivors. Crozet is listed as number 3 on the Clublog DXCC Most wanted list

Kerguelen Islands (IOTA AF-048 FT#X) The **Kerguelen Islands** also known as the Desolation Islands (Îles de la Désolation in French), are a group of islands in the Antarctic. The Kerguelen **Islands** are located 2,051 miles away from any sort of civilization. There are no native inhabitants of the **island**, but as part of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands it is permanently occupied by 50 to 100 French scientists, engineers, and researchers at any given time of the year. The climate is subantarctic, which means cold. It was discovered in 1772 by a French expedition commanded by the guy at right, Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Trémarec. Soon after its discovery, the archipelago was regularly visited by whalers and sealers (mostly British, American, and Norwegian) who hunted the resident populations of whales and seals to the point of near extinction, including fur seals in the 18th century and elephant seals in the 19th century. The sealing era lasted from 1781 to 1922 during which time 284 sealing visits are recorded, nine of which ended when the vessel was wrecked. Kerguelen ranks tenth on the DXCC Most wanted list



Where in the World is... Ron Litt, K5HM

Amsterdam and St Paul Islands (IOTA AF-002, FT#Z) **Amsterdam Island** in the southern [Indian Ocean](#) that together with neighboring Saint Paul 49 nautical miles away to the south. The islands of Île Amsterdam and Île Saint-Paul were first claimed by Martin Dupeyrat for France in 1843 and took formal control only in October 1892.



In January 1871, an attempt to settle the island was made by a party led by a party French. After seven months, their attempts to raise cattle and grow crops were fruitless and abandoned the cattle on the island

From 1987–98, there were frequent amateur radio operations from Amsterdam Island. There was a resident radio amateur operator in the 1950s, using callsign FB8ZZ.

In January 2014 ClubLog listed Amsterdam and St Paul Islands as the seventh most-wanted DXCC entity. On 25 January 2014 a [DX-pedition](#) landed on Amsterdam Island using MV *Braveheart* and began amateur radio operations from two separate locations using callsign FT5ZM. The DX-pedition remained active until 12 February and achieved over 170,000 two-way contacts with amateur radio stations worldwide.

I was fortunate to be among those who made several confirmed contacts with FT5ZM during that time in 2014. Today, Amsterdam and St Paul rank 47th on th DXCC Most wanted list

Reporting from the Dark Side
Ron, K5HM



The Dark Side of Ham Radio... Ron Litt, K5HM

The Dark Side of Ham Radio May the Force Be With You!



Whang! Another swing with my brand new made in China three-pound sledgehammer and it's about a foot down. I'm trying to get my ground rod in the ground; eight feet of stubborn, heavy cantankerous metal. I'm sweating like a galley slave. This is Houston and it is about 4000% humidity. I am losing more water than the spillway at Hoover Dam.

I've been hammering for about an hour and the hard packed clay soil is winning. So is the ground rod. If I don't hit it squarely dead center the thing whips wildly back and forth. You must grab it with your free hand to keep it from knocking out a tooth!

WHANG! Another blast with my new sledgehammer. Only this time, I hit it off center, the hammer goes flying wildly through the air. I duck. Only to contact the ground rod as it recoils back at me. There s a big welt on my right ear which is swelling to twice its size.

OK, giving up on the hammer. Time to try the waterboarding approach. First a trip to the hardware store for a length of copper pipe and a hose clamp. I don't really need a hose clamp. I have a dozen at home but on the off chance I need one this size I buy some assorted clamps. I used to work for NASA and learned their procurement slogan long ago. "Always buy two when one will do."



Back to the house. Cut off the brand-new brass fitting from the new garden hose I bought last week. AR-GHH! Slip the pipe into the open hose end, slip on the clamp. I am ready. The water stream flies back in my face. I scream several expletives, that I haven't used since high school. I remember to tighten the clamp, jam it into the hole, turn on the water. I am drowning in muddy water. The clay soil gives up grudgingly. I am done. I need a shower and a beer.



Who said a ground rod must be eight feet long? Maybe it's better to have eight one-foot rods instead! Why does it have to go eight feet down? Wouldn't eight feet horizontally be just as good? Cover it with some dirt and let the grass grow over it. Just how far down do you have to go before you hit ground? After all, I am standing on it right now!

It's Saturday afternoon. 3 o'clock. I need a couple parts to finish this project. Forget about the fact that I did not check the parts against the project's part list before I started. Who does that? Whatever it is, if it involves as little as two parts I need to solder or screw together it is likely that I will not have one of them or the solder or screw. Or one or both is the wrong size, or I am running low on the type of solder or glue.



The Dark Side of Ham Radio... Ron Litt, K5HM

The number of unnecessary trips to the store will be directly proportional to the square of the number of parts needed. I better make sure I have plenty of gas in the car. I know from experience that I will make at least one unnecessary round trip.

So off to Best Buy or Ace Hardware or EPO. No more Radio Shack! Oh well, there is still Microcenter but it's at least an hour's round trip. Got the wrong size? Rats! Didn't write it down before I left for the store.

That's how it begins. I find the part I need, hoping that I guessed the right size as I didn't write it down. Better include a few extra parts in case I guessed wrong. Let's see was the 10 Megohms or twenty; half watt or one watt? In addition, I pick up three or four kinds of glue or a five-pound roll of solder. I don't want to get back with the wrong kind of glue or solder. Maybe I need that new variable heat solder station with the adjustable LED swivel light too. HMMM. \$90 later, I discover I left the credit card at home.



This is the part of Amateur Radio they don't talk about, The Dark Side. You won't find the Dark Side mentioned in the ARRL Handbook. Where is The Force when you really need it?

Reporting from the Dark Side,
Ron, K5HM



My First DXpedition—by Doug Seyler W9LCQ

My First DXpedition

I've been a ham since 1964, and have enjoyed many facets of this fascination hobby. But I've never operated outside of the U.S. With a young family, work commitments, and now a daughter in college, I haven't been able to justify going on a DXpedition. Recently, though, Cal White, WF5W, proposed a DXpedition to Nicaragua for the ARRL Worldwide DX SSB contest. Low cost, just a long weekend, hey, I can do this!

So I found myself on a short 3-1/2 hour flight from Houston to Managua, Nicaragua. We arrived at about 12:30 and were met by a van which took us on a 1 hour ride to Granada. Our hosts were Octavio and Martha Miranda. In a flurry of activity we set up our TS-480 and ALS-600 amp. Cal was on the air within an hour. Octavio has a wealth of antennas: an A3S tri-bander, 6m. quad, dipoles for 160, 80, 40 and 30 m, 40 m. wire quad, 17 quad, and 15 m. delta loop. Octavio also has an FT-950 with an Sb-220 amp and an IC-706. We were going to operate the contest as a single multi-op high power.

Octavio has a spacious home, with 3 bedrooms, a large living room, and a dedicated radio room. The two guest rooms have 2 beds each, and share a bathroom. There is also a large back porch with a comfortable hammock for snoozing.

On Thursday we had both the FT-950 and the TS-480 on the air on CW, SSB and RTTY. We had the problems getting a laptop to talk to the FT-950, eventually swapping out the laptop. Octavio has wireless internet, so we had access to spots. Also, I was able to talk to my wife over Skype from my iPod.

The weather was wonderful, and we left the windows open all of the time, except at night, when it became cool enough that we had to close the windows. This was the dry season, so the grass was a bit yellow, but the trees looked very healthy. They have lemons, avocados, mangos and plantains. There is no ground water, so during the dry season Octavio get water delivered several times a week. During the rest of the year he has a cistern to store the abundant rain water.

The contest started at 0000Z on Saturday (UTC). The first rotation was Mike K5UO, Keith NM5G, Cal WF5W and me, WB5TKI. We did 4 hour shifts first, then 2 hour shifts for the rest of the contest. We had a generator staged in case the power went out. We hit 1, 000,000 points Saturday night, 2, 000,000 points by Sunday morning, with 10 hours still to go. We had strong winds on Saturday, and internet went out in the afternoon. We had several power outages on Saturday between 6 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. The 7.5 KW generators kept us on the air with only brief outages.

One thing that I hadn't really anticipated is the downtime between shifts. Luckily I had brought along a Sony Reader with a book to read. Usually used the TS-480 for the contest, and couldn't use the FT-950 for the WARC bands because the ICE filters did not cover those bands, so we did not want to interfere with the contest station. Cal had brought along a Kindle. Otherwise it was walk the grounds, snooze, or surf the web.

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My First DXpedition—by Doug Seyler W9LCQ

Sunday operation was crazy. 15 meters was the money band for us, and we ran it for most of the day. During my last 2 hours I started on 15 and then tried 10 for a bit. I was able to get a few Q's, including Chuck, W5PR. Then I moved to the low end of 20 and all hell broke loose. I got up to a rate of 262 Qs per hour for the last 20 minutes of the contest. Then, with about 8 minutes left in the contest, the power quit. We debated trying to get the generator going, but decided that it wouldn't be on line in time, so we were done. Our final score was over 2.5 million points. It was a pretty fair score for a casual effort.

We continued operating on Monday, adding another ~1000 Q's into the logs. Mike, K5uo satisfied his RTTY habit and Cal did a lot of CW. I did both CW and SSB Q's. Lots of 17 M. SSB with Asia and Europe.

On Monday we decided to play tourist for a few hours. It was another beautiful day, temp in the 60's. We drove through Granada to Lake Nicaragua and took a boat ride among the islands on the northern shore. Lake Nicaragua is, by the way, the only lake with fresh water sharks. The islands were probably formed by an eruption of a volcano to the west of the lake that, Mt. St. Helens-style, blew out a side and deposited ejecta into the lake. Most of the islands are privately owned, and some have quite grand homes on them. Afterward we went into the heart of Granada to observe the colonial buildings in the city center.

By the way, driving in Nicaragua is an exciting adventure. I'm glad that Octavio was driving. Cars, buses, bicycles, horse and mule-drawn carts, and pedestrians were on the roads. The town was very laid-back, however. At noon, the school kids were going home for lunch.

The food was great throughout the visit. Rice dishes with vegetables and meat, fresh fruit, ham and eggs, plantains, yucca, black beans, hamburgers, olive-stuffed cannelloni, pineapple pie, BBQ beef, huevos rancheros, just wonderful food! Most of the fruit was from their own trees.

On Tuesday the van showed up at 5:30 a.m. to take us to the airport. By noon we were back in the U.S. What a wonderful, exciting, stimulating, exhausting experience! I'm really looking forward to my next DXpedition!



Mike Bragassa K5UO TDXS #127 - SK January 19th, 2020

Mike Bragassa K5UO/SK passed away on December 19, 2020. He was a member and former President/VP of NARS. Great guy who loved CW and contesting. He will be missed.

For more information:

[Michael H. Bragassa Obituary - Visitation & Funeral Information \(stephenson-wyman.com\)](http://stephenson-wyman.com)

Pix from the TDXS Team Malta 2006



Mike K5UO



Back row (l to r): Keith NM5G, Don N5DD, Bill K5WAF, Mike K5UO, Cal WF5W, Madison W5MJ
Front row (l to r): Paul W5PF, Steve W9DX



Mike K5UO and Paul W5PF working the ARRL DX Contest- SSB March 2006



Bill K5WAF and Mike K5UO enjoying the chili dinner party hosted by TDXS for the local Maltese hams.



Mike Bragassa K5UO TDXS #127 - SK January 19th, 2020



Mike Bragassa K5UO TDXS #127 - SK January 19th, 2020



W9DX Antenna Farm January 5, 2021

Did I mention that it's cold up here?



The sun is finally out today, and hopefully the ice will melt. Ice sure wreaks havoc with the loading and shunt coils!

Happy New Year to all!

73, Steve W9DX



Texas DX Society Board members

President	OPEN!	
VP Membership	Gerald Muller	gmuller885@aol.com
VP Programs	OPEN!	
Secretary	Doug Seyler, W9LCQ	djseyler at comcast.net
Treasurer	Larry Daze KB5WWW	dxon20@gmail.com
Contest Chairman	Jim Burrough, N5DTT	jandpburrough at sbcglobal.net
Field Day Chairmen	OPEN!	
Repeater Chairman	Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF	wb5tuf at arrl.net
DX Chairman	OPEN!	
Outgoing QSL Manager	Scott Patout, K5DD	5dd at arrl.net
Webmaster	Scott Patout, K5DD	k5dd at arrl.net
Bullsheat Editor	Allen Brier, N5XZ	n5xz at arrl.net

DXCC/WAZ/WAS		
QSL Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net

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

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TexasDXSociety/> (new)

TDXS says "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to these members with birthdays in January:

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone or of any updates:

Barbara Coleman - WB5RUS
 Lon Cottingham - K5JV
 John Stevens - K5JS
 Dale Martin - KG5U
 Al Vacek - KN5A
 Dennis Motschenbacher - K7BV
 Bill Bradford - K5GA
 John Duncan - WA5ZVE
 Mike Hance - K5NZ
 Allen Brier - N5XZ
 Ben Worrell - NE5B

Ken Eckel Jr. - AB5A
 Earl Morse - K8SS (ex-N5TU)
 Doug Seyler - WB5TKI