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THE BULLSHEET

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Texas DX Society

An ARRL Affiliated Club



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uploaded to the TDXS area on KB5NFN's Bulletin Board at 713-777-0821, or sent to the Editor. If necessary text may be sent to via FAX to the editor by prior arrangement. Files or other messages may be sent to the editor via CompuServe or Internet to 71045.2632@compuserve.com. For those with VHF Packet and having access to any of the local Digipeaters, or able connect directly, ASCII text can be sent directly to the Editor. Contact W5ASP at 713-974-3455 to arrange for either fax or packet transfers. Publication deadline is the first Friday of the month.

The Prez Sez - de Bill, K5GA

Announcements

Meeting Notice - The Texas DX Society meets on the second Friday of each month, except when the date is changed by the Board of Directors. This month the October meeting will take place a week early on **Friday, October 2, 1992**. This meeting will be held at **Moose's Restaurant at 5423 Bellaire Blvd.** The restaurant is located on the south side of Bellaire just east of its intersection with Chimney Rock. It is in the middle of a small strip shopping center. There is ample parking along the front of the center. We will be using a room which can be closed off from the main restaurant dining area. Our reservations start at 6:30 P.M. for those wishing a meal. Menu prices are modest with a traditional chicken-fried-steak at \$4.80. There is a salad bar. Beer is available but only with the meal. The meeting should get underway around 7:30 P.M. Visitors are welcome to attend the meeting and may obtain help in finding the location by checking in on 147.96/36 MHz.

Weekly DX and Contest Net - Each **Tuesday** night at 2100 CST, the Texas DX Society sponsors a DX and contest net on 147.96/36 MHz. The purpose of this net is to exchange information of interest to DXers and contesters. The agenda includes general and club announcements, DX information, contest information, QSL routings, propagation forecasts and related topics. Participation is not limited to members of TDXS, but is open to all and everyone is free to join in.

Bullsheat Mailing List - TDXS wishes to provide the Bullsheat to those amateurs in the Houston area with an active interest in DXing and contesting. **Donations to help defray publication and mailing costs are encouraged and appreciated.** Visitors to our regular monthly club meetings will receive the Bullsheat for several months free of charge simply by signing the Attendance List and including their mailing address. Articles or other newsworthy items are hereby solicited by your editor. Articles should be submitted in the form of either ASCII files or as MS Word or WordPerfect word processor files. Files may be

Hey guys, guess what time it is? Well surprise, surprise! It's time for all you good gentlemen to be reminded that it is **ELECTION** time, not only for our country, but for the TDXS as well. Therefore, all of you politicians within our club should prepare for the tough campaign period ahead. And, read my lips, everyone should understand that K5GA's vote is NOT cheap. I am open to any and all offers. Just remember the support of the incumbent is a mighty weapon.

Seriously, this is a very important event and deserves your attention. The "Past Presidents" committee will present a suggested slate of **club officers for next year at the October meeting**. In addition nominations from the floor will be taken for any elected office, as long as the nominee has agreed to run for that office (and serve if elected!). All members should plan on attending this meeting; everyone should have a say in deciding whose names will go on the ballot.

Nominations will be closed as of the end of the meeting. Ballots will go out, the votes collected and counted, and the winners will be introduced at November meeting.

Convention time is upon us. The **TDXS raffle** is already in motion. Our grand prize will be a TS-450S/AT. It should be in my hands soon. Guess I'll just have to test the machine out, reluctantly of course, to see to it that all bugs are gone before the new owner takes possession. Seems that the Prez's job is never done.

Further, the **hospitality suite** is in place once more, and with the tremendous leadership of **K2TNO**, it will be a success I'm sure. It will also be the site of our November club meeting.

Contest season is finally here. Thank God! Our Cayman Island trip supporting the TDXS in CQ WW PHONE is a go again this year (we were #8 in the world Multi-Single last year!). I encourage all members who remember how to contest to take heed and operate. It sure would be nice to see TDXS once again high on the list in the results with a long list of calls contributing. I just cannot bring myself to accept the thought that we are now just another 2 meter club. The old saying "**REMEMBER OUR ROOTS**" comes to mind. We can do it! Why don't you be a part of it?

Packet Racket

de Ken, KE5IV

September has been a month chock full of changes. The TDXS now has a Digi going, with the alias TDXS. It is located at the One Houston Center site along with the GE repeater. It operates on a frequency 144.930 MHz. Users unable to reach K5DX directly can now connect via this Digi using "C K5DX V TDXS".

HOUBPQ is now on the frequency of 145.090 MHz for it's VHF port in Stafford, Texas. The primary reason for changing the frequency change was to get away from an intermod problem on 144.990 MHz at that site.

I have my G8BPQ Multiport Packet Switch up and running. I have also got the PacketCluster running in the background under Desqview. I would like to thank Phil, WA4IMZ, Hans, N5PBC and Bill, AB5A for helping me sort things out during the early A.M. hours Sunday. Anyone with just a touch of common sense would have been sleeping!

TEXNET has experienced their own set of problems in late August and most of the month of September. The Node in Austin has taken a lightning hit. The Node SDALLAS, a major hub in the system, has developed its own problems. Several problems have also occurred on the fiber-optic lines. These are being sorted out now. Yes, Murphy is alive and well in Texas!

You can now connect to the KE5IV PacketCluster in several ways. For local users it is still "C KE5IV" or "C HMPDXC". If you use another Node, e.g. HOUBPQ, type "C HOUBPQ" and then at the prompt "C KE5IV" (or HMPDXC). If you happen to connect to HMPBPQ:KE5IV-3, at prompt just type "DXC".

Due to all the changes to the system, I will need to map out what my final antenna configuration will be. I hope that the addition of the TEXNET Node will be an easy task.

With the TCAPS system running, AB5A and the group to the east are about to get things flanged in place, i.e. the introduction of TEXNET into the Houston area. I think that very soon now local users will have a viable real time system to use. (See the article in QST, October 1992, pg. 102..ed)

If you are using any of the various packet Networks, please support them with a contribution. For information on TCAPS, including affiliates like MAGBPQ, DKNBPQ or HMPBPQ, just connect to any of the nodes and before you connect to you final destination type "I". You will get a run down on who and how to contact to help out.

Thanks and 73.

Wanted - CQ Magazine Reader Service Cards.

de Sammy, N5AF

I need about 100 of these cards to be used with current and future Novice licensing classes. The cards will provide these prospective amateur radio operators with information on amateur equipment and services.

These cards are separately inserted in each issue of CQ Magazine and can be removed without damaging the magazine. The cards can be from any issue in recent months.

Please send any and all cards to Sam Neal, N5AF, Box 152, Cleveland, TX 77327. Tnx es CUL, Sammy

DX PacketClusters

The TDXS Contest and DX PacketCluster operates on 144.930 MHz with the call **K5DX**. This node is operated by Rich, K5WA from his home in southwest Houston and is sponsored by the Texas DX Society. It is linked to the Texas PacketCluster DX network. This is a "no-frills" packet node intended primarily for DX spotting. While it lacks some of the more powerful features of several of the other southeast Texas PacketCluster nodes, it is intended to provide stations in the immediate Houston area with a convenient and reliable path into the system. A Digi with the alias **TDXS** operating on 144.930 MHz and located in downtown Houston can also be used to connect to K5DX.

The Brazos Valley Contest and DX PacketCluster Bulletin Board is located in Hempstead, Texas and operates on 144.990 MHz with the call **KE5IV** (also available as **HMPDXC**). A digipeater node operating on 144.990 MHz with the alias **MAGBPQ** is located near Magnolia and gives access to those users in the northern part of Houston. There is another port operating on 144.910 MHz, also under KE5IV's call. This affords local stations with higher ERP, generally those on the west side of Houston, the option of connecting directly with Hempstead and getting somewhat better response.

The Galveston County DX PacketCluster, located in La Marque, is active under the call **KC5SC** and operates on 144.930 MHz and 144.970 MHz. It is usually connected with KE5IV via the 446.100 MHz backbone link. Stations in the southeastern parts of Houston may find it easier to connect with this cluster.

AB5A located in Dickinson about 10 miles northwest of KC5SC operates the Texas Gulf Coast DX PacketCluster. This node is regularly connected to the KC5SC PacketCluster via 446.100 MHz. This cluster features a 40 Meter HF Gateway on 7.089 MHz which runs 600 watts into a 2 element yagi at 80 feet. Local users may also access the node via ports on 145.01/.03 MHz.

In addition to listing current DX spots, the system provides access to a wide variety of DX related information such as WWV propagation, the W6GO QSL Manager list, the US, VE and Foreign Amateur Call Book listings, etc. Users are requested to limit their use of these "databases" to off-peak hours so as to minimize the side effects on others. A quick check of the status shown in the opening message which appears upon connection will indicate the number of nodes/users active at the time. Otherwise all users are encouraged to query the various data banks and make full use of their many features.

Upcoming Events

- October 02.....Texas DX Society Meeting
- October 03.....California QSO Party
- October 03.....VK/ZL SSB DX Contest
- October 10.....W5 DX Bash, Lake Buchanan, TX
- October 10.....VK/ZL CW DX Contest
- October 11.....RSGB 21/28 MHz SSB Contest
- October 18.....RSGB 21 MHz CW Contest
- October 24.....CQ WW DX Phone Contest
- November 06.....Houston Com-Vention '92
- November 07.....ARRL Sweepstakes CW Contest
- November 13.....Texas DX Society Meeting
- November 14.....WAE RTTY Contest

Propagation

de Roy, AD5Q

Fall at last! In recent months, lower flux levels and seasonal absorption have substantially reduced DX activity across all daytime paths. September is a month of dramatically improving conditions on 10 and 15, but this year's fall DX season will be different than in recent years.

With flux levels swinging from the 90s to over 150 in a typical month, propagation on 10, 15 & 20 will vary greatly. Ten Meter propagation is reliable at flux levels above 150, but at the current stage of the cycle conditions will often be marginal. There will be much less polar propagation, and the path to Russia will often be difficult. When fluxes are in the 90s, any path to Europe is welcome. Sometimes openings will be mostly confined to western Europe, but the louder east European and Baltic stations will usually get through. The east coast will have better penetration into Europe and Russia than we will, especially before the band opens for us.

The best response to weak 10 Meter propagation will be a move to 15. Eventually solar fluxes will be consistently low, and European propagation will be scarce even on 15. For now, this band will usually supply day path propagation when it is lacking on 10. When even this fails, check 20 Meters for that morning path to Europe or try the 17 Meter WARC band.

Night path conditions will also be effected by the lower solar activity levels. The fall season on 20 Meters does not look good. Last year fluxes were off their peak of prior years, and the band started closing at night during November. We can expect these closings earlier in the season, forcing DXers down to 40 and 80. Some night paths will remain open, but not the ones taking a northerly route. 20 will often be open to Africa in the evening, and to all points south and west. Exploit the grey line path around sunrise and sunset for contacts in the Antarctic.

Any deterioration in 20 Meter night path conditions will benefit 40 Meters, where much of the CW activity will be concentrated in the bottom 10 Kc of the band. SSB activity is more likely to move to 75 Meters due to the short wave broadcast activity on 40.

The Ham's Toolbox

de Joe, W5ASP

I recently came across a very interesting general purpose logging and control program written by Tom Dandrea, N3EQF. Tom's software is called LOG-EQF, and is being distributed as shareware. It's got some pretty slick features, especially its PacketCluster and radio interface. An introductory copy of this program can be downloaded from either the KB5NFN BBS (777-0821) or the K2TNO/Cell Bio BBS (798-4955). The name of the file is LOG_EQF.ZIP.

If you prefer to order the basic version directly from Tom the cost is \$8. Registered users will receive the full package, plus technical support and updates at a cost of \$25. Contact Tom Dandrea, N3EQF, 396 Sauter Drive, Coraopolis, PA 15108.

Due Dates

(Contest Logs must either be postmarked (*) or received (!) by the dates listed...**Get Your Logs In!**)

- October 05 (*).....North American Sprint CW
- October 12 (*).....North American Sprint SSB
- October 15.....European (WAE) DX Phone

Contest Scores

Results

1991 CQ World-Wide DX SSB

NR5M...1105 Q x 35 X x 129 C 474K #1 USA SO/28 MHz
 KE5FI.....835 Q 35 Z x 129 C 356 K SO/28 MHz
 K5NA/2..1997 Q x 164 Z x 593 C 4.1 M #6 USA MS
 GM0ECO..2013 Q x 95 Z 337 C 1.8 M #9 Europe SO/AB
 KI3L/5.....69 Q x 30 Z x 51 C 14.8K SO/Assisted
 ZF8AA(w/K5GA,N5DU,W5ASP,W5VAH)
 7101 Q x 140 Z x 485 C 10.2 M #8 World MS

1992 ARRL International DX

CW

K5NA/KP2..4335 Q x 336 C 4.4 M #4 DX SO/AB
 K5MA/1.....2342 Q x 353 C 2.5 M #2 EMA
 W5WMU.....1295 Q x 104 C 404K #1 LA SO/15 M
 K5GN.....2450 Q x 353 C 2.6 M #1 STX SO/AB
 AC5K.....756 Q x 236 C 535K #3 STX SO/AB
 AA5NK.....160 Q x 84 C 40K
 W5ASP.....670 Q x 90 C 181K #1 STX SO/15 M
 KI3L/5.....491 Q x 168 C 247K SO/Assisted

Phone

GM0ECO.....654 Q x 50 C 98K #1 Scotland SO/40 M
 KE5FI.....1786 Q x 131 C 702K #1 STX SO/AB
 KI3L/5.....586 Q x 186 C 327K #4 STX SO/AB
 WB5RUS.....246 Q x 77 C 57K SO/10 M
 W5ASP.....370 Q x 91 C 89K SO/Assisted

RF-Powered Lightbulbs

(The following article appeared in the Western Washington DX Club's newsletter, Totem Tabloid. The information apparently first showed up in an ARRL newsletter..ed)

Designer Says E-Lamps Clean, Should Not Concern Amateurs

Should rf-powered lightbulbs ("E-Lamps") be a concern for amateurs? No, says the designer and patent holder of the device, Diablo Research Corporation, "Diablo Research Corporation employs a number of Amateur Radio operators," says project manager Mel Farrer, K6KBE. "We are very sensitive to interference on our ham radio frequencies and take pride in designing high quality product with this in mind."

Diablo, a 10-year-old design and consulting company in Sunnyvale, California, designed and developed the E-Lamp, according to Farrer, and has licensed its patents on the device to Intersource Technologies, also in Sunnyvale. While Diablo continues engineering work on the lamps. Intersource will manufacture them, Farrer said.

Diablo says the physical design of the E-Lamp "has been carefully refined for maximum efficiency (lumens per watt) of energy transfer to the plasma within the enclosed bulb structure. To achieve this, the design must reduce any unintentional radiation losses to a minimum. The E-Lamp must conform to Parts 15 and 18 (of the FCC's rules) for radiation and conduction.

"The E-Lamp has no harmonics within any amateur band below 420 MHz," Diablo says.

Even effects above 420 MHz should not be a concern, Diablo says. "Using a FT-470 as a receiver with the squelch set at normal noise free mode, " Farrer said, "the 420 to 447.48

Mhz harmonics (from an E-Lamp) do not open the squelch until the antenna touches the operating E-Lamp. Setting the squelch to the ragged edge and moving the antenna within a foot will open the squelch. There is no modulation detected when the squelch is opened, just weak signal noise."

When asked about the possibility of broadband noise from the E-Lamp, Farrer said there was "virtually none." As for the susceptibility of the bulbs to nearby sources of RF, such as in an amateur's station, Farrer said there would probably be less than that exhibited by a fluorescent bulb.

Intersource Technologies, from whom engineering samples must be obtained, has not yet said when they will be available.

Restore Life to NiCad Batteries

(This note appeared in a Hewlett-Packard catalog. Steve, WA9VLI ran across it and thought it would be of interest..ed)

Many portable HP test instruments use rechargeable Nickel-Cadmium batteries. Occasionally, this type of battery may fail to power up the device properly or the useful operating time grows increasingly shorter.

These are symptoms of the NiCad "memory effect," a temporary condition with a simple cure.

Discharge the battery completely per the instructions in the operating manual of your instrument (usually until the unit no longer functions) and recharge it completely. One, or two, of these reconditioning cycles will usually regain nearly all original performance levels.

If a NiCad battery isn't periodically discharged, the crystals of the active material in the plates begin to increase in size. As the crystals grow, the surface area of active material in contact with the electrolyte decreases.

This causes the internal resistance of the battery to increase and prevents it from being charged to its original capacity.

Because of crystal growth during storage a new battery may arrive seemingly "dead" or unable to hold a full charge. The same discharge/charge cycle should restore it.

Incoming QSL Cards

The ARRL DX QSL Bureau consists of a number of separate call area bureaus that handle the incoming QSLs arriving from foreign countries. This service is free of charge and does not require ARRL membership. For the Fifth Call Area the address is: **ARRL W5 QSL Bureau, P. O. Box 50625, Midland, Texas 79710.** Full details about this ARRL service appeared in the **January 1992 QST** on page 58.

To claim cards ARRL recommends sending the bureau a number of 5 x 7 1/2 in. SASEs. To assist TDXS members in this Bob, AK5B, has obtained a supply of envelopes. He will provide 10 of the 5 x 7 1/2 envelopes along with a single 6 x 9 in which to mail them to the bureau for \$1.00. If you are interested, catch him on the repeater or call a day or so before the monthly meetings.

For those who expect to receive large quantities of cards here are a couple of suggestions. (1) Place \$1.25 postage on each 5x7 self-addressed envelope, (2) Have the post office stamp "THIRD CLASS" in the lower left, (3) Attach a label "50 Cards Minimum" beneath the "THIRD CLASS", (4) Put your call in the upper left and (5) Number the envelopes consecutively (so you will know where you stand as you receive them back from the bureau).

PacketCluster User's Toolbox

de Ken, KE5IV

The **Show/Hamcall** feature on both the KE5IV and AB5A PacketCluster nodes has been expanded to include not only US and VE callsigns but a large number of foreign calls as well. The following countries/prefixes are now available. (Note this feature is also available through K5DX.)

| | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----|----------------------|
| 3B8 | Mauritius | LA | Norway |
| 3D2 | Fiji | LB | Norway |
| 3DA0 | Swaziland | LJ | Norway |
| 4S | Sri Lanka | LX | Luxembourg |
| 5B | Cyprus | OH | Finland |
| 5H | Tanzania | ON | Belgium |
| 5V | Togo | OY | Faroe Islands |
| 5Z | Kenya | PJ2 | Netherland Antilles |
| 7P | Lesotho | PJ7 | St Maarten |
| 7Q | Malawi | PJ8 | St Maarten |
| 8R | Guyana | PJ9 | Netherland Antilles |
| 9H | Malta | PP | Brazil |
| 9J | Zambia | PR | Brazil |
| 9N | Nepal | PS | Brazil |
| 9Y | Trinidad | PT | Brazil |
| A2 | Botswana | PU | Brazil |
| A4 | Oman | PV | Brazil |
| A7 | Qatar | PW | Brazil |
| A9 | Bahrein | PY | Brazil |
| AP | Pakistan | PZ | Surinam |
| AR | Pakistan | T30 | West Kiribati |
| C2 | Nauru | T7 | San Marino |
| C3 | Andorra | TA | Turkey |
| C6 | Bahamas | TK | Corsica |
| C9 | Mozambique | TL | Ctr African Republic |
| CE | Chile | TN | Congo |
| CS | Portugal | TR | Gabon |
| CT | Portugal | V2 | Antigua |
| CU | Portugal | V3 | Belize |
| EA | Spain | V4 | St Kitts |
| EB | Spain | V6 | Fed. of Mironesia |
| EC | Spain | V8 | Brunei |
| EI | Ireland | VE | Canada |
| EJ | Ireland | VO | Canada |
| H4 | Solomon Islands | VY | Canada |
| HA | Hungary | XE | Mexico |
| HBO | Lichtenstein | XF | Mexico |
| HC | Ecuador | XQ | Chile |
| HG | Hungary | YB | Indonesia |
| HJ | Columbia | YC | Indonesia |
| HK | Columbia | YD | Indonesia |
| HL | Korea | YE | Indonesia |
| HP | Panama | YF | Indonesia |
| HR | Honduras | YG | Indonesia |
| HV | Vatican City | YH | Indonesia |
| J5 | Guinea Bissau | YS | El Salvador |
| J7 | Dominica | ZP | Paraguay |
| J8 | St Vincent | | |
| JT | Mongolia | | |
| JW | Svalbard | | |