



# The Bullsheet

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

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

## February: Mentoring and the Future Direction of Amateur Radio by Dave McCombs NA5CW

Dave's bio:

I was licensed in March 1973 as WN5NWZ, age 13. After upgrading my license in 1975 I became WB5NWZ. I received vanity call NA5CW in 2012.

My preferred mode of operation is CW, where I spend probably 99% of my operating time. I love the way CW forces me to always get better in the hobby, and I'm able to advance my CW skills simply by increasing the speed. While I'm not a "high speed" CW operator, I do enjoy 40-45 wpm contacts. I try to promote this mode of operation with every new ham I meet. It's a dying mode that needs constant promotion to keep it alive.

Mentoring new hams is probably the most important part of this hobby and is a necessity that cannot be ignored. Today's new

hams have a unique vision of Amateur Radio. I am looking forward to sharing some of my thoughts and experiences in hopes of helping everyone understand the importance of mentoring those just starting out in the hobby.



### Editor's Note by Allen N5XZ

Hi y'all!

Another great month for DXing and Contesting in January. The Solar Flux levels hit 190 and more at times, which made for some great operating. FT5ZM continues to be hard for 5 landers (especially upper bands) due to its geographical location near our anti-pode, so the path could be almost anything. I have found them mostly direct or LP, but sometimes between 20 and 60 degrees over Europe.

I want to sincerely thank all those who gave me a contact during the 10-10 Winter Contest which I hope to make my 13th win in 26 entries starting in the early '80's. Band conditions were just great (although not as good as

during the 10 Meter contest last December) and I was blessed with several great EU runs. Propagation was weird again, with a big, black hole through the center of the US. It was easy to work New England, the west coast and Canada, but the rest of the US was very difficult.

BTW, can you believe I blew another fuse this month?...yes, this time in my Green Heron rotor controller...I have no idea why it blew. It is a tiny 1.6A GMA size fuse, and luckily, I found two spares in the bottom of my junk drawer! I don't know what's going on around here, but maybe, just maybe I need to replace all my fuses. They are getting old, just like me.

I heard Dave NA5CW as he was signing off of the BVARC repeater yesterday...told him I liked his call. I don't know if he heard me or not. Now I read in his bio that he's not a "high speed" CW operator, but he enjoys 40-45 wpm contacts!! Whew! Dave is my kinda guy!

Have a great February on the air and try to participate in as many contests as possible. Regardless of your station setup. They are fun and help with awards. Not only that, but I think contesting is great exercise for that grey matter, which often needs more stimulation as the hair starts to match it in color.

73, Allen N5XZ

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## The Prez Sez by Bob, W5UQ

### The Prez Sez

By Bob, W5UQ

Boy howdy, the time is flying fast. Seems like we just had the banquet and here it is time for another TDXS meeting. Speaking of the TDXS Banquet, which was on January 11<sup>th</sup>, a Saturday night, everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves.

There were 37 attending and we sure had a lot of fun. This year we managed to get a private room at Rio Ranch on Westheimer Road. Weather cooperated too, as it was not too hot.... and not too cold.... It was just right.

Doug Seyler presented the DX award to Orville Burg, K5VWW. However, Orville was not able to make the banquet due to an emergency. The decision to award Orville with that award was unanimous, as I was told. Then Doug presented me with an appropriate symbol, The Jaw Bone of a Ass. Humph, I hope that wasn't unanimous, however, as I recall the voting, it was. J Oh well, at least, I'm in good company. (Past Prez's)

On a better note, some nice prizes were given as "door prizes" because of the hard work of Lance, WD5X, and Debbie, K5DSR, Rumfield. And I thank them for doing such a great job. Debbie got some special prizes that were "just for women". Then Lance got some that were more suitable for men. And then everyone got a neat flashlight.

Most of the prizes were donated by the new and better Houston Amateur Radio Supply, which is much different now. You need to visit it to see why.

Dave and Caren McCombs are the new owners along with Brittany McCombs, their daughter. Please SUPPORT your local Houston Amateur Radio Supply at 267 Cypresswoods Drive, Spring, TX 77388.

The "Grand Prize", donated by Houston Amateur Radio Supply, was a handie talkie, A Duet Dual Band Handheld Model UVD1P. Guess who won it. Mr. Handie Talkie himself, Bob Mennell, WB5IUU. Lucky him. Neat talkie too.

The room at Rio Ranch was just about right and we could hear as well. It seemed like everyone liked the new location. Well, most everyone. J But that's life.

The staff of the Rio Ranch was very attentive, courteous and cooperative. We had no problems with having everyone's drink bill separate and all were paid this time too. That all worked out great.

So, here we are at the beginning of another year. And at my age, they sure are going by way, way too fast. Before we know it, it will be Field Day 2014. Speaking of that, we need to get at least two or three members going towards getting it organized. That is if we are to have it separate to other clubs. Last year we seemed to melt into the other clubs and were invisible as far as anyone else knew.

How about some suggestions and help this year. Like who will take charge and with help from one or two others, make it possible. That way, the work will be spread out so it won't overwhelm one person.

One suggestion I heard and agree with is that the Tomball Fire Department location sure was a good one and worked out great too. That shouldn't be too hard to organize again as Mike Bragassa did such a good job and one could work off his notes. (I cleared it with him already.) The Tomball Fire Department let us set up in an inside room and put antennas at fairly good places outside. Plus Dave Topp put his RV a reasonable distance from the main building. That made a nice setup. As I recall we had a good Saturday night dinner too.

The Board of Directors (BOD) is planning to meet on March 1<sup>st</sup> and will be discussing Field Day 2014, as well as other subjects important to the group. We hope to have some good ideas and how to implement them, or at least get them started. Some subjects may take more than one meeting to organize. So plans are to have at least two more BOD meetings. Please note that any suggestions and ideas are welcomed. Mention or send them to one of the Officers.

The BOD is all of the current TDXS officers plus the last president. I feel that the last president had a lot of input during his year of serving. And in Doug's case, he served three years. Therefore, I feel that his input will be very valuable to the BOD

group.

Our program for Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting at Tracy Gee, was to be Professor Pat Reiff, Associate Director for Outreach, (and Expert on Space Weather) from Rice University Space Institute. However she has to be out of town and cannot make it now. Instead, our new VP of Programming, Lance Rumfield, WD5X, managed to get a future program moved to February.

Dave McCombs, NA5CW will be presenting "Mentoring Today's Amateurs". Dave and his wife are the new owners of the Houston Amateur Radio Supply, As it turned out, Debbie McCombs, Dave's daughter, was on the Carnival HamCruise with us January 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. She awarded the door prizes at the meeting there.

And NO, we didn't have any problems with "the virus" on that cruise ship. In fact we all had a blast. Oh yes, Debbie Rumfield did have a very painful bout with her back. I'm sure she doesn't want to remember that.

Speaking of the HamCruise, more of you need to join us next time. My wife and I have been twice now, and some have been three times. We all felt that it was a real pleasure cruise and we had fun hamming too.

Thank you all for your support. I'm gonna need it. As Doug knows, "it ain't easy being Prez". After all, most of us are retired and it IS a volunteer position. Sometimes I think some of us forget that. Oh yes, we sure could use some new members to become future officers, not to mention, president. J Just one more thing we will be discussing at our BOD.

Have a great month and "see you at our next meeting" where Dave McCombs, NA5CW, will enlighten us about Elmering.

**TDXS Meeting Notes** by Arthur N5KTN

**TDXS Meeting  
Minutes**

Nothing received from Arthur,  
perhaps because there was no  
BOD meeting.



## DX Report

I didn't receive anything from Cookie this month, but I did get these pictures from Orville, K5VWW. They are of Wim, TY1TT who just proposed to his fiancée, Cendy while in Grand Popo, Benin.

To the right is a picture of Wim and Cendy in front of the "ham shack".



Here is a picture of Wim, Patrice TY2BP [who I just worked Sunday for a new country on 10 meters—Ed] and Florence, who is Patrices' girlfriend.



In addition, it appears that all the QSL's from the TY1TT operation to US stations will go through K5VWW. It costs a bunch to mail to US from Belgium.



## Contest Chatter by Joe W5ASP

The response to my request for a "show of hands" as to who among the TDXS had an interest in Contesting was somewhat better than I'd expected. The group included Doug, WB5TKI; Earl KZ8E; Tom, N5EA; Jim, NN5O; Cookie, K5EWJ; Chuck, W5PR; Ron, K5HM; Bob, W5UQ; Mike, K5UO; Paul, W5PF; Mark, K5GQ; Allen, N5XZ; and Glenn, WB5TUF. That's a pretty good turnout, and certainly provides a good starting point for a renewal of TDXS's statue on the contest scene. If there are others interested, let me know who you are, and we'll include you in our plans.

January was a good start. We had a modest but solid level of contest participation. Among those active were: Glenn, WB5TUF - ARRL RTTY Roundup, NAQP CW, NAQP SSB, BARTG RTTY, 10-10 SSB *[actually the first weekend in February—Ed]*; Allen, N5XZ - ARRL RTTY Roundup, 10-10 SSB; Buzz, NI5DX - BARTG RTTY Sprint; Ron, K5HM - NAQP SSSB; Ron, K5LLL - ARRL VHF; Mark, K5GQ - NAQP CW. There were some good scores posted to the TDXS Reflector. Kudos to all who made an effort.

If you are going to be active in contests, even casually, it's important that you "report" your scores. The first step is to go to <http://www.3830scores.com/> immediately after you finish operating (whether the contest is over or not). This is the focal point for gathering the scores of all participants. While the scores are "unofficial" and only "claimed", it does provide a quick overview as to who did what. It may be months before the final scores are available, and by then they often tend to lose their interest.

There are two parts to the web page. The column on the left lists all current contests. Select the one you did. A simple form appears. Fill in the blanks. BE SURE to select "Texas DX Society" as your Club. (It's quite a ways down the list, so don't give up looking.)

When you're finished click "Submit". It's easy ... make it habit anytime you make contest Qs. To the right of the entry column is a listing of contest summaries. They list all scores submitted via 3830. They can make for interesting reading. Keep an eye out for TDXS club entries to see who else in the group was active.

Submitting your log to the contest sponsor is crucial to supporting individual contests and to promoting contesting in general. In spite of comments to the contrary, overall contest participation is growing. Throwing your "hat in the ring" does help, and is the primary reward to those who work "behind the scene". Unfortunately, sending in your log is not quite as simple as it once was. Gone are the days where you can bundle up your log sheets and mail 'em in. The overwhelming preference today is for a formatted digital file. This is where that strange work "Cabrillo" comes in. (Interestingly enough the term was originally coined by a TDXS member.)

Rather than get into the details of the what, why and how of the Cabrillo format for contest logs, suffice it to say that most of the major contest logging programs take care of this for you. It's possible that some of the conventional logging software don't have this feature. While there are conversion programs that produce a log in Cabrillo format, it can be a tricky process and one to be avoided. There are several excellent contest logging programs out there that are easy to use and better yet ... free!

So once you've shut down the rig and done the 3830 bit, go ahead and dump your Cabrillo log to convenient resting place, look it over to be sure that all the pertinent info is there, and send it on to the contest sponsor's designated email address. This address is listed in the Rules for the contest and on the sponsor's web site. The bi-weekly "ARRL Contest Update" compiled by Ward Silver, N0AX, that I

mentioned last month, also has the details for submitting logs.

As with many other activities, you'll recognize that is not over until the "paper work is done" ... but then it's well worth the effort. If you ever need help in getting your score/logs sorted out, just email me.

I did inquire about the status of the three contest awards that were once sponsored by TDXS. These were the two ARRL International DX Contest plaques ... Europe Multi-operator Unlimited CW, and World Single Operator Combined Score Low Power (C. Sharp, K5DX Memorial), and the NAQP Multi/2 CW plaque. None of these are still sponsored by TDXS. Whether or not this is an area of interest to the club might be worth some discussion.

This month plays host to a number of interesting contests, e.g. CQ WW WPX RTTY, NAQP RTTY, CQ 160 SSB and ARRL DX CW. They are all top notch events and well worth some of your operating time. ARRL DX CW is especially productive for those needed band/countries, as is ARRL DX Phone in early March. Be sure to post your scores to the TDXS Reflector (and to 3830).

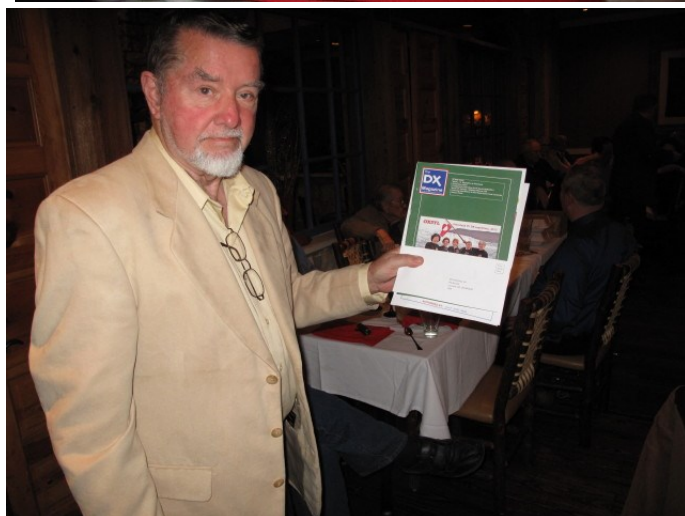
Finally, I could use some help. I'd like to compile a list of those contests the have "team" and/or "club" categories. My internet search hasn't turned-up much so far. Going through the Rules of every significant contest isn't too appealing. Anyone got any ideas?

Until next time ... "dit dit" ... Joe, W5ASP

# TDXS Banquet Pictures



# TDXS Banquet Pictures



## Texas DX Society Board members

President	Bob Hardie, W5UQ	w5uq at att.net
VP Membership	Steve Smothers, W9DX	cougar70 at earthlink.net
VP Programs	Lance Rumfield, WD5X	ltrumfield at sbcglobal.net
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### 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 February

Dave Blaschke - W5UN

James Clark - N5RO

Bob Cooney - K1TU

Mike Bragassa - K5UO

James Parnell - W5JAW

Charles Frost - K5LBU

Bob Moorman - K5VMX

Don Butler - N5LZ

Marshall Dues - K5MMD

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