



# The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net May 2015

**May 6th, Wednesday 6:30 PM: TDXS Dinner Meeting Night was held at the Silver Palace Chinese Buffet, 4005 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, Texas 77305**

## Editor's Note by Allen N5XZ

Propagation is starting to diminish, at least around here. The bands haven't been opening as soon and closing way too soon, especially ten meters. Well, I guess this is the inevitable fall of the current solar cycle. Many of us have been through it before. Maybe, if I'm good or lucky (which is most likely?) I will live to see one more solar peak. I've at least been lucky enough to work the following notable DX throughout the month of April: C21EU, 5J0B, R120C, 9W6EZ, 5V7BD, PQ0T, ZL7E, V6Z, FW5JJ, 9H3KA, SU9IG, 3A/IK3TND, VP8LP, C35KC, 5V7JH, C37NL, TF3JB, VU2CPL, A65CA, E21EJC, 9K2NO, 9K2GS, 5W0MA,

CY0/VA1AXC, 5W0JK, SV5DKL, SV2ASP/A, HZ1SK, ST2NH, V63DX, FW1JG, TX5P, VR2XMT, VK9NT, BD3CB, and 7X4AN. Not too shabby, I guess, for declining conditions.

I've also been spending a bit more time with another hobby: High End Audio (although my equipment ranges really between entry level and mid-range when it comes to pricing.) If you think Ham Radio equipment and accessories can be expensive, you haven't priced real high end audio! It makes ham radio look like five and dime! Sheesh!

Good news! Texas House Bill HB 939 which allows the use of permanently installed emergency gen-

erators in HOA subdivisions has Passed the Texas House...now on to the Texas Senate. You can find the bill at <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/text.aspx?LegSess=83R&Bill=HB939>. (Y: 139 N: 2 NV: 1 Abs: 8) [PASS]

I would like to put out a reminder to all regular and guest article submitters: **PLEASE GET BS ARTICLES TO ME BY THE FRIDAY NIGHT BEFORE THE REGULARY SCHEDULED MEETING!** That way I don't have to spend my Sunday night working on the newsletter.

Thanks and  
73, Allen N5XZ

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## The Prez Sez by Bob, W5UQ

Prez Sez for May 2015.

Field Day is just around the corner. It is the last weekend in June. Mike Davidson, N5MT Cookie K5EWJ and Allen N5XZ attended the BVARC/TDXS/Echo Society Joint FD meeting last week to help work out the details for this year between our groups. Mike is our FD Chairman and Cookie is assistant FD Chairman, plus he just wants to help and does so each year. *[Mike Hardwick N5VCX is the BVARC FD Chairman—ed]* Our gratitude for their work each year is highly expressed. Thank you both very much.

Our association with this event has been successful and we are enjoying a larger "group effort" on field day because of this "group effort". Please support Field Day, participate as much as you can. [Watch the BVARC and TDXS websites for Field Day information.](#)

Contact the people involved and volunteer to help. Bring a ham friend to FD this year. Be sure to communicate with Mike and Cookie of your plans. However, if you find your plans now allow you to attend, at the last moment, then "come on down". I'm sure they will find something for you to do and man a station making contacts. This is a very gratifying event each year and a lot of

fellowship with your fellow (and lady hams). Remember that your participation counts as a TDXS meeting for June.

We are heading for the largest hamfest in the USA this week. Dayton "HamVention" is attended by well over 20,000 hams from all over the world. It is a very interesting and tiring event at the same time. However, everyone that goes seems to really enjoy their time there. If you are going, how about jotting down some of your thoughts about your trip and send them to me. If I get some interesting input, then the June Prez Sez could be include your input.

Those of you that have input on the "re-writing of the TDXS Constitution" please contact Doug Seyler with your thoughts and suggestions. Send to: [dseyler@comcast.NET](mailto:dseyler@comcast.NET).

We need your input, not just comments, but please read through the current TDXS Constitution first. Then make notes of those things you feel need to be retained and those that need changing. Then your thoughts of why and how on both.

July is another TDXS Dinner Meeting. We had about 27, as I recall, attend the TDXS Dinner Meeting last Wednesday. And I sure got the idea that all were

sure enjoying themselves. I know I sure did.

Watch the TDXS email forum for announcements as well as the TDXS.org (or TDXS.net) website for the location. The next location for the dinner meeting is being worked on this month and will be announced in June sometime. Possibly even sooner, we shall see.

This month's article for the BS is going to be a shorter one. The main ideas I want to communicate is that if you are able to participate in Field Day, do so. You will be glad you did. And please help the committee with the updating of our TDXS Constitution. Contact Doug Seyler. As we have said before, it is not to make TDXS "just like the typical ham club". Instead we are really working to bring our constitution into the twentieth century to make our "unique group an even a better unique group".

Have a good month. Remember to bring to our meetings more visitors. Who knows, they just may be eligible to join our "unique club". In numbers is strength.

CU next Prez Sez.  
Bob Hardie W5UQ  
TDXS Prez for 2015

# Secretary's Report by Doug, WB5TKI

Attendance:  
[April 9th, 2015 meeting]

Members -

- WB5IUU
- WD5X
- NM5G
- K5UO
- K5DD
- N4AL
- N5XZ
- N5MT
- W5GCX
- W9DX
- K5EWJ
- W5UQ

Guests -

- AJ4F
- KG5U
- WG5H
- Jeff Hoke from Centerpoint Energy  
(speaker) KD2KW Angela Boockholdt  
WB4KTF

Program -

Jeff Hoke gave a very interesting program on RFI, it's source, detection, and elimination.



## Contest Report by Willis "Cookie" Cookie K5EWJ

### Contest Chairman's Report:

#### [ABBREVIATED] CONTEST SUMMARY

Go to [www.contesting.com](http://www.contesting.com) for information on all contests

#### May 9-10

CWOps Weekly Mini-CWT Tests (May 6)  
Alessandro Volta RTTY DX Contest  
Armed Forces Comm'ns Test  
CQ-M International DX Contest  
Straight Key Weekend Sprintathon  
Portuguese Navy Day  
Nevada Mustang Roundup  
FISTS Spring Sprint--CW  
50 MHz Spring Sprint

#### May 16-17

Worldwide EME Contest  
Portuguese Navy Day--Digital  
His Majesty King of Spain Contest--CW  
Feld-Hell Hamvention Sprint  
Worked All Britain - 7 MHz Phone  
Run For the Bacon--CW



## Lightening Protection / Antenna Spacing by Willis "Cookie" Cookie K5EWJ

David wrote.

I'm considering stacking the Cushcraft A503S 6M yagi with my MA5B mini-beam rather closely — like five-foot vertical separation (Rohn five-foot tripod on the roof in a tight lot). Cushcraft recommends using an antenna switch to ground the unused antenna since the two would react with each other at 17M. Both would be connected to the KAT500. So here's the question: are the un-selected antennas out of the three on the KAT500 grounded through the KAT500 or do they remain just un-attached but active?

73, David

Jim Answered.

Several MAJOR points of confusion here. First, what do you mean by "grounding?" Do you mean shorting the coax? Second, because any transmission line transforms the impedance by an amount determined entirely by its electrical length, shorting the coax in the shack will only short the antenna if the line is some multiple of half-waves long AT THE FREQUENCY WHERE INTERACTION IS THE CONCERN. Not only that, an OPEN in the shack would be transformed to a short at the antenna if the line were some odd number of quarter-wavelengths.

So -- if you're going to implement that switch in the shack, you need to MEASURE the electrical length of the transmission line to that MA5B to pretty good accuracy. If you don't own a good VIA or VNA, find someone who has an AIM or VNWA and have them measure it for you. With that information, use TLW (comes on the ARRL Antenna Book CD) or SimSmith (free Smith Chart program, runs in Java) to figure out how much coax to add or subtract to put the short or open.

73, Jim [*Who are David and Jim? - ed*]

Jim, I am afraid that you are ignoring the fact that RF ground and DC ground are not the same thing. Any grounding discussion that refers to wavelength of coax is talking about RF grounding. Any grounding that refers to lightning protection or personal protection refers to DC grounding. Anything that refers to antenna spacing refers primarily to interaction between the antennas. For interaction between the antennas a five foot mast is possibly enough. If you have an option for more, go ahead with more spacing. The widest spacing that I see is about 10 feet, but try what you think and see what you find. You can always extend the mast if you have to because a six meter beam is small and the extension can hold a lot on a 1 inch mast that is 5 or 10 feet long. It is easy enough to add a coax switch such as an MFJ-1702 Which has an alternate selection for a dummy load or second transceiver which you can install on each of your antennas. If the antenna is connected to your amplifier or transceiver there is surge protector which will protect your equipment to a certain extent if there is a strike when you are operation and a ground position when you are not operating or using a different antenna. (continued)

## Lightening Protection by Willis "Cookie" Cookie K5EWJ

You can also use the center position to ground your antenna to the station ground to check for interaction with the other antenna. If the SWR improves or your signal to the other station improves enough to consider, then you have a strong clue that you should ground that antenna when you are using the other antenna. Your path to the station ground must be low enough for the strike you are considering to bleed off without harming your equipment. The coax wave length property is a good one to use if you are having trouble with the SWR or Tuner settings. Personal protection is usually good enough from the power source if you have a DC bond to ground and watch what you touch because a direct strike will cause many amps of current in the ground path and only a few milliamps are needed to harm you or your equipment.

As most of you know, I suffered a lightning strike last July and I have not fully recovered yet. My protection scheme was not too elaborate, but I am not sure that an improved grounding system would have helped a lot. Like a lot of engineers I tend to design for what happened last time or what I have read in the literature. I suppose that I was lucky to have hammed for 59 years and have owned a station of various descriptions for most of that period. The lightning entered my station by striking near of the top of my tower with enough force to break a strain insulator on one of my top guy wires. The damage was the broken insulator and the return motor in my SteppIR beam had an open coil. voltage to destroy enough surface mount components to destroy the box. Enough The voltage traveled in my control wire to my shack and hit my controller with enough voltage traveled to my Expert 1K-FA that the finals were damaged and needed to be replaced 4 months later. My Ham-M Rotator brake circuit was shorted which blew the fuses and destroyed the brake delay circuit. Either this damage, my computer damage or something else tripped my shack circuit breaker. Another spike came into my Hewlet-Packard desk top and destroyed my monitor interface, my cable modem and my router. Com-Cast replaced the modem/router free of charge. With my monitor working, I could check my computer and found that I needed a new mouse and keyboard. With the computer now working, it would not connect to the internet, so the RJ-45 connector did not function and I need to connect by Wi-Fi. My Winkey USB will not communicate with the computer so it needs to be fixed and my TS-480 will not communicate with the computer, so I think have a problem with a serial port. I am still working on that list and will let you know when I get it fixed.

So far I have purchased:

- One HyGain DCU-3 (upgrade & replacement)
- One SteppIR SDA-100 (upgrade & replacement)
- One SteppIR Electronic Housing Unit -40 thru 6 meters
  - One Strain Insulator
- One Monitor Driver
  - One Keyboard and Mouse
- One Serial Port Board
  - One Winkey USB Keyer
- One Cable Modem/Router

No one knows what else will be required or that I bought and forgot.

I am planning to install Poly Phasers on all antennas to some and MFJ switches and lightning arrestors on the antennas. I also have done some work and have more to go to upgrade my earthing system. If I ever finish I will let you know. I hope to bond with Cad-Weld when I am finished. DX Engineering has a supply of copper plates, bonding strap, Poly Phasers and other items you will need.

# DX Report by Orville Burg K5VWW

## DX Report by Orville Burg, K5VWW

In order to provide maximum assistance for the recipients of this column I would like to request your aid. I believe it might be beneficial to determine the level of individual achievement, as evidenced by your DXCC standing.

I would appreciate your sending an email to [K5VWW@TDXS.Net](mailto:K5VWW@TDXS.Net) indicating your current DXCC status. I believe that general groupings will be sufficient as:

- Less than 100 DXCC Entities
- 100 to 150 DXCC Entities
- 150 to 250 DXCC Entities
- 250 to Honor Roll
- #1 Honor Roll

This will allow determination of the level of assistance which would be most helpful.

This past month several unexpected DXpeditions and/or activity appeared without previous notice, such as 3XY5M from Guinea and VK9NT from Norfolk Island (through May 4<sup>th</sup>.) Both of these are currently active.

Might you need an 80M RTTY QSO with Viet Nam? 3W8MD will be operating from the beach at Da Nang, Viet Nam. There will be operating 24 hours per day on all bands from October 31<sup>st</sup> through November 10<sup>th</sup>. They will have 20 operators...

Of interest is that the VKØEK operation to Heard Island has received permission to go to Kerguelen Island (FT/X) after December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Announced DXpeditions for May and June include:

- FS – St. Martin. FS/K9EL will be active May 28<sup>th</sup> – June 16<sup>th</sup>. All bands.
- JD1 – Ogasawara. Several JA stations will be active from Chichijima May 2<sup>nd</sup> – May 11<sup>th</sup>. All bands and modes.
- XT – Burkina Faso. DF2WO will be active as XT2AW from May 20<sup>th</sup>-June 25<sup>th</sup>.
- 5T – Mauritania. Jean, 5T0JL, has been active as 5T1ITU this week.
- A5 – Bhutan. 5 JA stations are active until May 5 as A52LSS.

Some of the band activity reported in the Houston area in the past few days or weeks includes:

9M2/R6AF – West Malaysia – 17M CW
VK9NT – Norfolk Is.- 30M CW
YB4IR/8 – Indonesia – 40 CW
5T1ITU – Mauritania – 15 CW
5T2MM – Mauritania – 15 CW
9V1YC – Singapore – 17 CW
3XY5M – Guinea – 15 CW, 12 CW
VQ9ET – Chagos Is. – 12M CW
Z81Z – South Sudan – 10M CW
PYØF/PP1CZ – Fernando de Noronha - Many Bands
ZF2CI – Cayman Islands – 12M SSB
XE2OR – Mexico – 2M SSB



## Broken Parts, Broken Hearts by Madison Jones W5MJ (Part II)

### Kosrae 2015

(continued from last month)

I did 177 Qs in about 90 minutes before 17 died out, nearly all to NA [including N5XZ—ed], even though it was somewhat after NA sunset when my run began. My experience from past adventures told me that when it was time for a particular band to close, it did without delay. It took only a couple of minutes to go from good-sized pileup to nothing at all. It was just as if someone had thrown a switch. I figured that 20 – a very quick band change -- would be very workable at my target audience even though it was then darkness throughout the North American continent. Besides, changing to 30 or 40 with my Force 12 vertical dipole takes 15 or so minutes, and since I had them sufficiently stirred up on 17, I did not want to lose my audience by staying off the air too long.

When I sat down after changing bands, I noticed the SWR was high – about 2.0, very unusual with this antenna – but forged ahead anyway thinking it must be the salt water, and in any rate, I would be able to fix whatever was causing the difficulty when I changed bands again

I called CQ again on 20 for 10 minutes or so but again without any answers. I kept an eye on the SWR as I went, and noticed that it seemed to be edging upward a little. Since there was no action anyway, I went to the antenna again, but found nothing amiss. On my return to the operating table, the SWR was now about 2.5, and still no takers. Aaackk! This I have to fix before the finals give up!

About this time I thought I should probably start getting my 160 antenna up in the air. I knew that project would take several hours, and my sunset was marching ever closer. Inertia had me, however, so I thought it would be a good time to check my amplifier from the long 160 haul to NA. I wired it up to the K3, hit the “on” button and watched the information window on the amp switch as I changed bands a couple of times. So far, so good! I disconnected the feed line to the vertical dipole, hooked up a dummy load [good operating procedure, eh?], and hit the key. Nothing . . . Again, the key and . . . nothing. Hmmm.

Thinking I must have wire things incorrectly, I checked all the connections, tightened all the myriad thumb screws, sat back down, and . . . nothing!? I checked in information window on the amp, and saw “Invalid.” I cycled the on/off switched several time, and changed bands. Every time the amp thumbed its electronic nose at me with an “invalid” message. By now, I was in anguish because without an amp, my chances of making NA on 160 were hopeless! I fired off an email to Elecraft with the symptoms, hoping the techs there would be able to supply a quick fix to my problem. Even though it was not business hours in California, I was pretty sure they would get back to me during my night hours. I would be on 160 tomorrow night, and in the meantime I would use 40 meters to work the piles.

Figuring I could change the vertical dipole to 40 meters and be off and running pretty fast, I went to the antenna, climbed up on my support log, and . . . found the source of my high SWR: one of the bottom legs of my antenna [it looks like a capital H on its side] had a broken weld and was now totally unuseable on any band!!

About this time, while bemoaning my fate and considering my options, if any, my wife sent an email to me that a niece was in the hospital. It appeared to me that all my planning, all my efforts, were cast upon the DX ash heap, and it was now going to be 160 or nothing, and that only if Elecraft had a solution. I awoke the next morning about 0300 local, checked my email, and found a response from Elecraft. They had not experienced my amplifier problem before and had no quick fixes. Time to pack up and go home!

So there it was: all my planning for naught, and my DXpedition was on the ash heap of history. Ninety minutes of operating time, 177 Qs, and all kinds of memories. I will have to think about what lessons I learned from all this, but I can assure you of one thing: like General MacArthur, I will return!



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**Broken Parts, Broken Hearts** by Madison Jones W5MJ (Part I)

More pics from Kosrae



## Texas DX Society Board members

President	Bob Hardie, W5UQ	w5uq at att.net
VP Membership	Bob Mennell, WB5IUU	bmennell@consolidated.net
VP Programs	Lance Rumfield, WD5X	ltrumfield at sbcglobal.net
Secretary	Doug Seyler, WB5TKI	djseyler@comcast.net
Treasurer	Mike Bragassa, K5UO	bragassa at consolidated.net
Contest Chairman	Willis "Cookie" Cooke, K5EWJ	wrcooke at yahoo.com
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Bullsheat Editor	Allen Brier, N5XZ	n5xz at arrl.net
DXCC QSL Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net
CQ WAZ 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](mailto:k5dx@tdxs.net)

On 2 Meters: 147.96/36 MHz (100 Hz)      On 70cm: 447.00/442.00 MHz (103.5 Hz)

DX Cluster—On Packet: Connect to **K5DX** on 145.71 MHz or telnet via IP address 75.148.198.113

**TDXS says "HAPPY BIRTHDAY"** to these members with birthdays in April

Please notify the Editor if I have missed anyone

Leon Pringle, Jr. - W5NA

John Guida - K5XA

Henry Schneider - W5HNS

Jan Carman - K5MA

Mike Mauldin - K5NU

Mitch Whitney - AD5W

Kenny Manchester - NZ5I

Gregg Erlenbusch - W5IDX

Joey Clements - W5BAK