



# The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net August 2020

## **TDXS ZOOM On-Line Meeting:**

**TDXS Monthly Meeting via Zoom: Thursday August 20, 2020 7PM**

**Check the TDXS Reflector for an announcement..**

### **Editor's Note by Allen Brier N5XZ**

#### **Field Day!**

This is a big newsletter. We have a lot to cover, including the TDXS 50th Anniversary and activation of K5DX/50 for 30 days following the Texas QSO Party in September. We also have unfortunately, sad news of the passing of two more long time members, Evie Lane W5XYL and Grady Ferguson W5FU. You can read more about them later in this issue and also go to TDXS.ORG.

As mentioned, this year is **TDXS's 50th Anniversary**. We are planning to allow all TDXS members to activate and operate as **K5DX/50** to commemorate the event. Please refer to Robie's article later in this issue for our current vision of this event. As Robie states, I will set up a virtual sign-up sheet for TDXS members to operate during their chosen time slots. We are currently gauging club interest in

doing this, so please send a note to me and/or Robie with your ideas, thoughts and intents to operate and how much you might want to do so. We have a very short time to compile this information before making a final decision on how to structure the operating slots, so please let us know asap. Everyone loves to work special event stations, and if we can spread the word well enough, we hopefully will have the opportunity to be on the other end of a pileup! I can tell you from experience that is a lot of fun! It will be excellent contesting experience also!

You may notice at the end of each Bullsheet that we include TDXS members birthdays that occur during the month. I have not received any updates of birthdays of new members in a long time. If you would like for me to recognize your birthday each month, please send me a

note. Thanks.

After the great success of Field Day in June, the North American QSO Party, CW was not disappointing! We had a lot of member activity with several members making EXCELLENT scores, including K0NM, K5TU, KE8G and others. Congrats, guys! And I am seeing more use of the contestonlinescores.com website for real time reporting. Let's try to do more of that, too. It is exciting to see other team member's scores move up and to compete with them! And as always, do not forget to report your score late to 3830scores.com ... and to submit your scores, too.

Before any major contest, please check with Jim, N5DTT to see if teams are being formed.

Whew! That's it for now!  
CUL!

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 Robie, AJ4F

The Prez Sez

August 2020

The Texas QSO Party is less than 6 weeks away! Please take time to advertise this event at any club meetings you attend, nets in which you participate and on your QRZ.com web page. We each have one and it is an easy way to let the hams that visit your page know about the TQP. Simply log into QRZ.COM, Select your callsign on the upper right-hand side of the page, and click on Edit your biography and insert info about the TQP! The 2019 TQP had a significant increase in participation over 2018 and we want 2020 participation to eclipse 2019!!

2020 is the Texas DX Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we are planning a special operating event and details are in an additional article in the Bull Sheet. I want to emphasize that this event is designed showcase the TDXS and provide a method for ALL TDXS members to participate! You will use our club call with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary suffix – K5DX/50 at your own station. We need everyone to participate in the event as well as advertise it. The methods I described for the TQP are great for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well!

Participation in our monthly meetings has been good lately. Clearly, the use of ZOOM is a key factor. We also need interesting content. I'd like to see the Show Us Your Shack idea presented. You can share a video or photos of your setup. It's easy and we all can learn something. I'm especially interested in the ergonomics of various operating positions and I am working to improve mine. Proper ergonomics makes operating less tiring and the operator more effective.

The Tech-Topic segment went well in July. Please take the time to send Kim K5TU another interesting question. He and his team need some lead time to prepare a good response so send in your question as soon as possible.

There is an old adage "variety is the spice of life" and that can translate into try something new. Orville K5VWW traveled to Groves, TX to activate Grid EL39 on 6 Meters. EL39 is a rare for grid chasers and despite marginal propagation, we had great time and gave out the rare grid to over 30 stations. Other nearby grids that are "rare" include EL28 and EL19 and trips to these grids are likely in the future!

TDXS officers will be elected on November 19<sup>th</sup> for 2021. We need candidates/volunteers for several offices. The TDXS desperately needs "new blood" to keep the organization alive. It's time for you to "give back" by volunteering!

Robie – AJ4F



# TDXS Meeting Minutes by Doug Seyler WB5TKI

## TDXS July 2020 Meeting Minutes

**Date:** July 16, 2020

**Location:** ZOOM Virtual Conference

**Attendance:** Robie AJ4F, Doug WB5TKI, Kim K5TU, Scott KB4KBS, Steve W9DX, Larry KB5WWW, Mike N5MT, Jim N5DTT, Orville K5VWW, Don N5DD, Allen N5XZ, Rick K5GZR, Scott K5DD, John K5EC, Keith NM5G, Ron NN5DX, Ron K5LLL, Jim N4AL, Gerald K9GEM, Ben NE5B, David KE5ZZO, Mark K5GQ

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

A reminder of the upcoming NAQP RTTY contest on July 18 and CW contest on Aug 1.

Field Day follow-up – generally positive opinion of the modified rules.

Texas QSO Party Prep – Discussed ideas such as extending the daily hours or making it a 48 hour contest.

Keith NM5G said that the 2020 rules are set in stone, but we may be able to modify them in the future.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event – 2020 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Texas DX Society. There were early discussions of how to commemorate this event, but Covid-19 got in the way. Now, mid-way through the year, the topic came up again. Various ideas were suggested, including an operating contest with 1x1 special calls and associating it with the Texas QSO party. Further discussion was deferred until the July 25 Board of Directors meeting.

Tech-Topic – Robie AJ4F gave an interesting talk on the NANOVNA, a \$40 credit card sized Vector Network Analyzer for testing feedlines and antennas.

The full meeting video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/1ns7T7O0d8M>.

73,

Submitted August 2, 2020

Doug Seyler WB5TKI

TDXS Secretary



## DX Chairman's Report by Orville Burg K5VWW

The TDXS website, [WWW.TDXS.NET](http://WWW.TDXS.NET), reports the following activity:

[KC4USV Antarctica active now](#)

RI1ANM Antarctica until early 2021

Several stations around the globe are active signing the suffix FTDMC which is commemorating the FT8 Digital Mode Club. Some of these are located in the Mid-East, such as: Kuwait, [9K8FTDMC](#); A91FTDMC; HZ8FTDMC; OD5FTDMC; SU8FTDMC; and ZL65FTDMC

**Six Meters continues to be very active with propagation all over the globe. US stations have been having openings to Europe, Africa, Alaska and Japan. Operation is predominately FT8 on 50.313, or 50.323 for DX, with increasing CW and SSB activity.**

**Due to travel restrictions attributable to the Corona Virus, most currently planned DXpeditions have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. The few planned operations are mostly single ops from:**

**Iraq – YI**

**YI/IU5HWS** will be active from **July 30<sup>th</sup>** until **November 30<sup>th</sup>**. On 40M, 20M and 10M.

**Please continue to monitor the main page of the TDXS Web Site, [www.TDXS.net](http://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.

### August

- 1 10-10 International Summer Contest, SSB  
North America QSO Party, CW
- 8 Maryland/DC QSO Party
- 12 VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest
- 15 North America QSO Party, SSB
- 22 Hawaii QSO Party  
Ohio QSO Party
- 29 World-wide Digi DX Contest  
W/VE Islands QSO Party  
Kansas QSO Party

### September

- 6 Tennessee QSO Party
- 12 Texas QSO Party  
Alabama QSO Party
- 19 Iowa QSO Party  
Wisconsin QSO Party  
New Jersey QSO Party  
New Hampshire QSO Party
- 26 CQ Worldwide RTTY Contest  
Maine QSO Party

TDXS Members participated in some contests since the July Report. Their scores, as reported on the 3830scores.com website, are provided below:



# Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

## RAC Canada Day Contest 2020 Jul 1

SOSB/20 LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	CW Qs	Ph Qs	CW Mults	Ph Mults	Op Time	Score
N5DTT			4	2	3	2	1	350

## Marconi Memorial HF Contest 2020 Jul 4

Single Op HP

Call	SO2R	Remote		QSOs	Countries	Op Time	Score	Club
KØNM x		x		27	9	3	243	TDXS

## RTTYOPS Weeksprint 2020 Jul 14

Single Op LP

Call	SO2R	Remote		QSOs	Op Time	Score	Club
KG5U				1	0.5	1	TDXS

## North American QSO Party, RTTY 2020 July 18

Single Op LP

Call	SO2R	Remote		QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Team
WB5TUF			453	126			57,078	TDXS
KG5U			287	112	9:49		32,144	TDXS
KC5TT			208	82	10		17,056	TDXS1
N5XZ			200	53	3:33		10,600	TDXS1
AJ4F			155	62	5:52		9,610	TDXS
KB4KBS				89	30	4.5	2,670	TDXS1
K5GZR			60	37			2,220	TDXS1
K5DD			12	9	1.5		108	TDXS



# Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

**2020 Jul 18**

SOAB LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
K5GZR			104	62		7,068	TDXS
WB5TUF			87	52		4,680	TDXS
K5EC			9	5		65	TDXS

SOSB/6 LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
AJ4F			87	58	6:55	5,046	TDXS
N5DTT			7	3	4	21	TDXS

**2020 Jul 25**

SO12CW LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	CW Qs	CW Mults	Ph Qs	Ph Mults	Op Time	Score
K5HEM			35	0	0	0	1.5	35

I am going to keep it short this month so that this report gets to Allen earlier than usual so he can get the next issue of the *Bullsheets* out with some important information.

I want to commend everyone for their efforts over the last few months for participating in the available contests. We have some very serious contesters in the ranks of TDXS and they always represent us well. I am a more casual contester and my scores often reflect it. As more work is completed at my Fayette County place, I expect my scores to improve as I have a decent tower and tribander as well as a couple of 40-meter antennas, one primarily NVIS and the other an elevated vertical for lower angle radiation.

August offers many more opportunities for contesting. There are some State QSO Parties, the NAQP contests for CW and SSB and a couple of digital contests. There is another Island Contest, the W/VE Islands OSQ Party, that should provide some interesting contacts.

September is going to be a big month for contesting with a number of State QSO Parties (including our own Texas QSO Party), the CQ WW RTTY contest and an on-the-air celebration of TDXS' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Stay well and stay safe.

Jim, N5DTT



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

It's so big and so close you might actually overlook it or not count it as DX. As I write this Canadians to the North are celebrating Canada Day (July 1) or Fête du Canada.

Canada is officially bi-lingual; everywhere you go in Canada things are both English and French. I sometimes feel there is an echo as I write this, EH?



Despite the crummy propagation, the bands are awash today with Canadian hams, participating in the annual Canada Day Contest, sponsored by the Radio amateurs of Canada/Radio Amateurs du Canada. See what I mean, EH?

It is the national day of Canada, celebrating the anniversary of the July 1, 1867, enactment of the Constitution Act, 1867 (then called the British North America Act, 1867), which united three colonies into a single country called **Canada** within the British Commonwealth. In 1982, it was officially renamed Canada Day.



It's hard to miss. After all it is just north of Dallas. Canada's population is around 35 million, 80% of whom live within 100 miles of the U.S. border. Who could blame them, EH? If I lived in Canada, I would need to be close to a Walmart.

The rest of Canada is pretty empty with a population density of only 1 person per 2.75 square miles. Wow! What a remote antenna farm that would make, EH? And no HOA's either.





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

Canadians are great people. Some of the most laid-back people I've met are from Canada, rather than California. And, for the most part, they like Americans and it's easy to figure out their Currency, the Canadian Dollar.

Some say they speak funny and they have spelling problems with certain words like colour, calibre and tonnes. That should not bother anyone; the U.S. schools gave up on spelling some time ago. Besides, it is quaint, EH?

Like the U.S., Canada has multiple DX entities within its territory. The uninhabited islands off the coast of Nova Scotia, with the DX prefixes of CY0 (Sable Island) and CY9 (St. Paul Island) are Canadian territory.

Reporting from the Dark Side, EH?

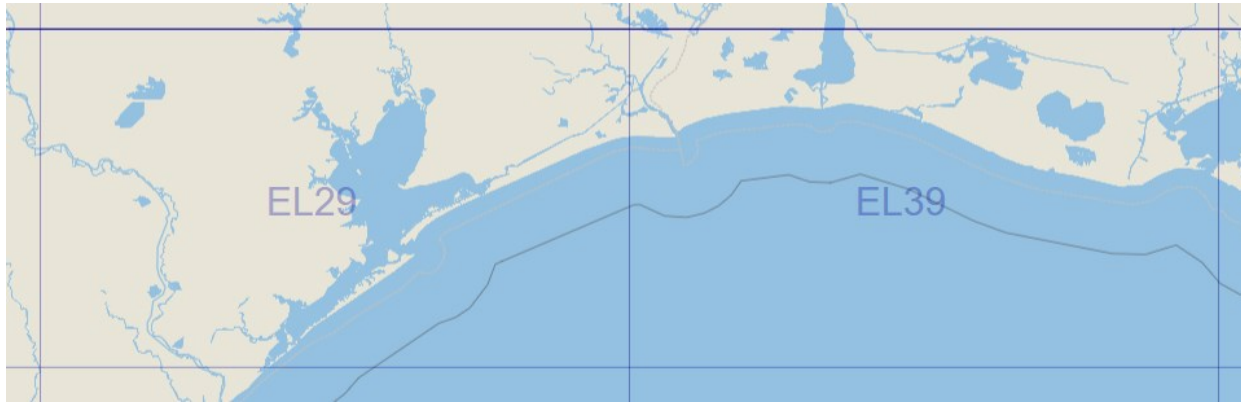
Ron, K5HM



## Where is EL39, you ask? by Orville K5VWW

EL39 is the adjacent grid square to the east of Houston's EL29.

What is the significance of that, you ask? If you were attempting to work for the ARRL's Fred Fish award by working all 488 of the continental US grid squares on 6 Meters, it would be a big deal. This grid square is mostly either swamp, or the Gulf of Mexico.



The only significant cities within the grid are Port Arthur, Nederland, and Groves. All are located within a small area in Texas, known as "The Golden Triangle", bordered by the Sabine River on the East and the Gulf of Mexico to the South.

There are quite a few licensed hams in EL39, but very little activity on VHF other than repeater activity.

With the recent activity on 6 Meter e-skip, and several rover mobiles active through North and South Dakota, Grid Hunting has been quite active. Some discussion with 6 Meter folks pointed out a need for activity from Grid EL39.

I started looking for a location where we could put on a mini-DXpedition for only one day and pass out as many 6 Meter contacts as possible. Since Groves is only a couple miles from the Intra-Coastal Canal and a hop, skip, and a jump from the Gulf of Mexico, I started looking in that area. I was introduced to Mr. Kyle Hollier, KE5ZQJ. Kyle is on the City Council and made arrangements for a short operation.

I approached Robie, AJ4F, about making the trip as we had been discussing such a trip for some period of months. The "hot" period of 6 Meter activity was rapidly coming to a halt and we needed to get on the air ASAP to pass out EL39 QSOs.

The only radio I had to operate was an Elecraft KX3 and it seemed to be a bit short in the Watts for such a trip. Robie has an Elecraft K3 which would give us 100 W. Perfect. Robie had a lightweight 4 element Comet yagi which we could put on a 20' pole and an Armstrong rotator.

After discussions with Kyle, the offer was made to allow us to use the pavilion in the Lion's Park in Groves. It even had power! We would be able to drive to the pavilion for unloading equipment, and operate from there during rain showers, and it did rain.



# Where is EL39, you ask? by Orville K5VWW



We erected the antenna at the end of the pavilion.

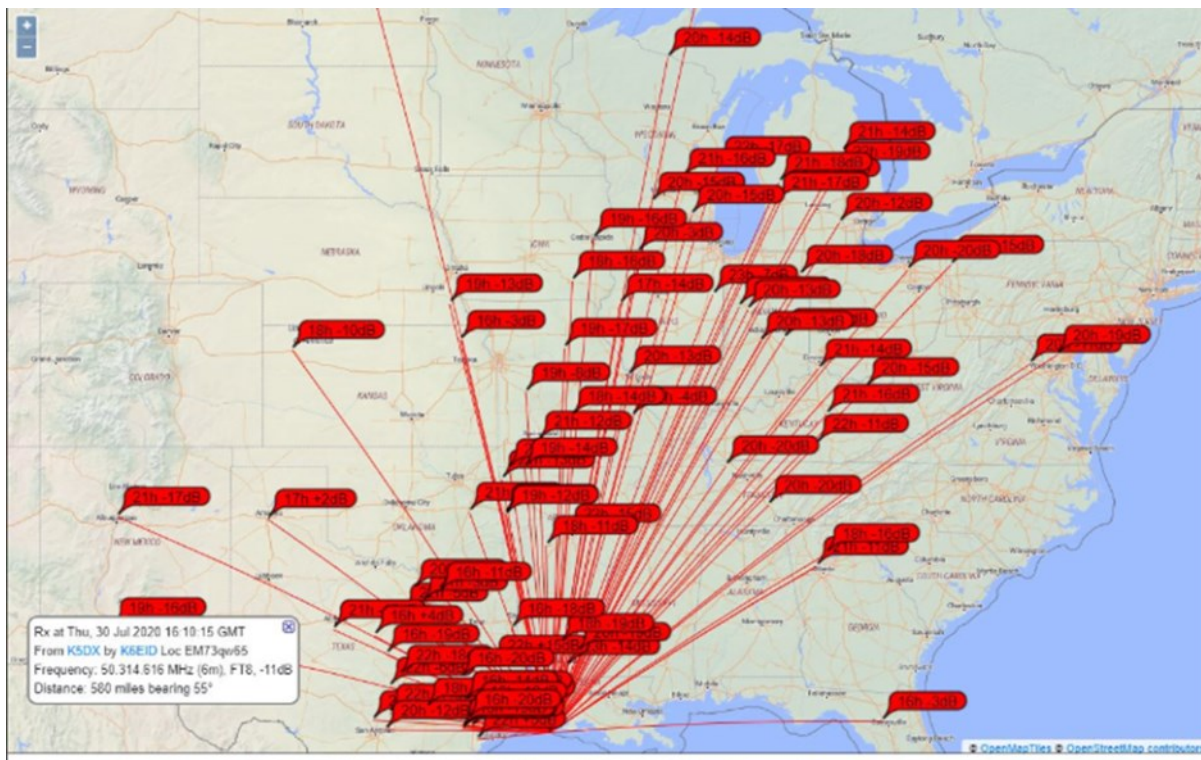


Operating area was a portable table brought by Robie.



# Where is EL39, you ask? by Orville K5VWW

The only thing we forgot in order to make this great was to insure that 6 Meters would open. Unfortunately, there was truly little activity and we only worked 34 stations on a combination of FT8 and MSK144 modes. No stations were heard on CW or SSB. Openings to other than "local" stations were often less than 10 seconds and we did move to the MSK144 mode to take advantage of the short pings. We were heard well as shown below:



We were fortunate to be able to work a lot of these stations including three VE3's. We also were able to work Richard, K5NA in Manor, TX, via tropo, and stations north of Dallas near Oklahoma. W5PR, Chuck, almost blew the front end out of the receiver.

We are already investigating mini-DXPeditions to other Grid Squares needed by the 6 Meter aficionados, as well as just "Quickie" operations to locations and parks which do not have Covid-19 restrictions locally. Easily erected antennas such as the End Fed Half Wave will be utilized to allow operation on the low bands.

Those stations we did work passed on the word that they were highly appreciative of the new grid toward the Fred Fish Award.





# **TDXS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Operating Event**

To celebrate the Texas DX Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we are planning an on the air operating event in which **ALL TDXS members can participate** using the call sign K5DX/50! This method provides a way to participate that does not involve a risk from close personal contact, traveling any significant distance, use of un-familiar equipment etc. Members can be located anywhere in the United States! Here's the proposed plan, please review it and provide feedback. Do you like it? Does something need to be changed? If so, what?

Each member will use the TDXS Club call sign K5DX with the suffix /50 (for 50 years) and make as many QSOs as possible.

We want operation on all bands & modes, CW, SSB, RTTY, FT8, etc.

The operating period will be 30 days beginning on September 14, 2020 and ending on October 12, 2020

Members will sign up for specific operating slots using an online scheme similar to what Allen N5XZ set up for Field Day operations in the past. **The current thought is to have 24 hour slots.** We can have multiple stations on the air at the same time, but we don't want them on the same band and mode. We don't want two K5DX/50 stations on 20 CW for example. However, having one on 20 CW, 20 FT8 and 20 SSB would be OK. **We really need feedback on this part of the plan! The object is to get as much activity as possible! For example, how long should an operating slot be? We want each member to be active during his time so shorter slots seems like a good idea, however it complicates the signup process.**

Each member will submit his K5DX/50 log in ADIF format for uploading into LoTW. Orville K5VWW will do the uploading. He will also need your location data to prepare the appropriate TQSL location for your station.

We will have a special QSL printed for those who want one. We need a volunteer to lead the design effort! Here's a great participation opportunity!

We want to consider offering a certificate for each station working K5DX/50 on 10 or more Band/mode combinations. **We need feedback on this issue. We would need a volunteer to lead this effort.**

Once the details are finalized, we need to advertise this event as widely as possible. We need to compile a list of websites, reflectors, FB pages, etc. to advertise the event prior and during the operating period.

We will publish a document with all the details for you to use in your communications.

This is a great opportunity to show case our club, our members and good operating practices!

Robie – AJ4F

## Evie Lane W5XYL TDXS #114—SK

In Memory of our friend Evonne "Evie" Georgina Lane (ex-W5XYL, KF5MY, WA5NQJ)

August 29, 1929 – July 13, 2020

Evie joined TDXS in 1988 as TDXS Member #114. Her husband Jim Lane – N5DC (SK) was TDXS Member #88. Evie loved chasing DX, and at the time of her passing had achieved DXCC Honor Roll status with 331/353 Mixed.

Evonne's obituary

Evonne Georgina Lane Passed Away July 13th, 2020



Evonne was born in Chicago to her father Herbert Martin and Norma Johnson. Her father died when she was very young. Her Father's Brother, Robert Martin and his wife Muriel Martin adopted her when she was 2 years old. She grew up in Minneapolis, MN. Later she attended Stephens College in Columbia, MO. Here she took up her passion of flying.

On May 25, 1951 she married Granville Boynton Lane II (Jim). He was her husband for 64 years, until his passing. In December of 1951 they had their first children, Twins; Granville Boynton Lane III (Bob) and Pamela Evonne Lane. During her early years of marriage she was a flight attendant for Braniff Airlines which allowed her to pursue her love of flying.

In 1954 she and Jim had their third and final child James Michael Lane (Jim). They resided in several different cities around Texas and Oklahoma including Longview and Tulsa. In 1962 they moved to Dallas where they lived for the next 18 years. During this period Evie and Jim became very active with Amateur Radio, both receiving their General Licenses. Jim eventually upgraded to Extra Class and Evonne to Advanced. Evie's call sign was W5XYL and Jim's N5DC. They spent many hours during the Vietnam War managing phone patches. This allowed the soldiers in the war to call their loved ones at home for no charge. They were up all night every night engaged in these activities.

Through Ham Radio, they made and met many very good friends around the World. At one point the Russian Cosmonauts that eventually went to the space station stayed in their home. These friendships lasted for the rest of their lives. During this period, they were also very involved in their children's activities including football and other sports at Lake Highlands High School in Dallas.

In 1980 they moved to Houston where they made many good friends. Around 2008 they relocated from Houston to Las Vegas, NV. Here Jim passed away in 2016. After that, she lived with her youngest son Jim and wife Nancy and later in an Assisted Care home in the East Bay Area of San Francisco until her passing.

Throughout her life, Evie was known for being a lady with a very special heart. All whom she encountered were touched by her kindness, warmth, and ability to impart a calming and soothing touch. She will be deeply missed by her three children, five grandchildren, Jimbo Checksfield, Nicola Herbert, Hannah Branning, Andrew Lane, and Jonathan Lane. See is also survived by many Great Grandchildren.

While there is currently no service scheduled, we would ask that in lieu of Flowers, a Donation would be made in Evonne Lane's name to the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Both Evonne and her Grandson Jonathan were adopted so this holds a special significance to her.



# Grady Ferguson W5FU TDXS #81—SK

In memory of our friend Walter “Grady” Ferguson – W5FU (ex-NA5R, N5CDO)  
June 15, 1944 – July 14, 2020

Bio written by Tom Taormina – K5RC

Walter “Grady” Ferguson  
W5FU/NA5R

Grady and I met in 1966. We were both electronics technicians at Philco, the prime contractor for Mission Control, Houston. At the time, we were little more than co-workers building the green consoles for Mission Control. Grady left after a few years and I stayed on for 14.



Grady founded Ferguson Valve. He invented the first Teflon-lined ball valve for the oil industry. It grew to become a highly successful enterprise.

Grady was an avid CBER and frequented Madison Electronics in Houston where he met David Busick, N5JJ (SK). David convinced him to come over from the dark side to ham radio and he got licensed as N5CDO. David invited Grady to attend a Texas DX Society Field Day operation in the late 1970’s. That hooked Grady on contesting.

One fine Saturday, David brought Grady to my station, the K5RC/K5GA multi-op that we had cobbled together in the southern part of Harris County. He quickly became one of the “regulars” that included N5JJ, K5ZD, K5GN, K5LZO, K5GA and other TDXS members. Grady joined TDXS as member #81 in 1980.

He soon became the leader of the TDXS “Rowdies”. We met at a bar we called Momma’s where we hatched legendary radio activities including competitive Field Days, The Armadillo Runs, the XE2FU contest operations and a passion for 160 Meters that led David and Grady to take over an abandoned transmitting site in Hitchcock.

The antics of the Rowdies became legendary in the Houston ham community and created a fellowship and passion for pushing the envelope that became

the legacy of TDXS in the 1970’s and 80’s.

Grady and David hatched an idea to mobilize the TDXS and activate all 254 counties in Texas in one weekend. We crisscrossed the state in cars and RV’s equipped with mobile ham stations. Over the next two years, we activated every county in Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.

Perhaps our crowning achievement was convincing then Governor Mark White to proclaim Armadillo County for the Texas Sesquicentennial. We converted The Texas Independence Trail to a separate county for 1986. We have no idea how many hams drove Armadillo County during that time, but it is officially a deleted county. We also attempted to activate every county in the USA over two weekends. We fell short by several hundred, but it got us a cover of QST Magazine.

Grady grew weary of every weekend repair parties at the poorly constructed K5RC/K5GA station. He sold Ferguson Valve and bought 5 acres in Manvel. I was the design engineer and he would be the contractor. He moved a double-wide coach on to the property and Radio Manvel was born.

We discovered that W7KW was taking down his station in Arizona. We loaded the rowdies into W5BZN’s GMC Motor Home and headed West. In the scorching heat of August, we somehow survived taking down four AB-105 towers and loaded them into tractor trailers, along with thousands of feet of guy wire, insulators, and other goodies.

The plan was to transition from the K5RC/K5GA station to NA5R over the course of a year or two. Unfortunately, mother nature and fate had other ideas. Hurricane Alicia in 1983 leveled both stations.

Grady got divorced, I got divorced and I moved to Dallas for a year and we lost touch with each other.

Over those years, Grady and Geri married and had their wonderful son Andy. He is a Down Syndrome child and has been their joy for more than 30 years. Grady went back to school and learned pipeline and refinery inspection as his second career. He formed Impro Technologies and grew the company into one of the premier inspection services in the Country.

Having been an Airborne Ranger in Vietnam, Grady moved away from ham radio to his first passion of flying and sky diving. We moved to Nevada in 1997 and lost touch with him and most of the TDXS gang.



# Grady Ferguson W5FU TDXS #81—SK

In 2005, I was pondering the wild days of the TDXS Rowdies and put out a call for a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Armadillo Reunion in 2006 at our station. More than forty people came from across the Country. It was held over Field Day weekend, 2006. To keep in the tradition of TDXS pushing the envelope, we set up operating positions around the existing towers and powered the stations with a bio-diesel generator. We successfully entered the “natural power” category.

During a relaxing evening, over adult beverages, Grady suggested that we pick up where we left off in 1983 and build a world-class station at my place. He said he was selling ImproTech and I would be the chief engineer and he would provide the resources. Déjà vu all over again!

We started building the station at first with donated towers from N5JJ’s station, then, as plans came together, Grady’s mandate became stacked beams on every band from 80 meters to 10 meters. He wanted to build a 160 beam from an old construction crane, but I finally talked him out of a horizontal antenna for 160.

His role was to be the benefactor to give contesters a world class station to operate, continuing the tradition we started in Texas. As the station was progressing with local volunteer labor, Grady started Texas Aviation Sales. At one time he owned a Cessna Caravan single engine turboprop. It was mostly leased for hunters in South Texas, but he flew it here once. He also owned a Hawker 800A jet that would do Mach .87. He got rated to fly it and then sold it. During these years he was also doing competitive skydiving.

We had much of the station built when it came around to the dream of stacked 80M beams. I found two monopoles buried at W7UA’s station in Carson City. We had them refurbished, powder-coated and new bearings installed. Unfortunately, when they were delivered, they were offloaded at the bottom of my driveway for everyone to see. The neighbors and the new California interlopers who had moved into our rural area decided six towers was enough. They started a vigilante committee and talked a deputy DA into ordering the Building Department to issue a ten-year retroactive “stop work” order in July 2008.

Their intent was for us to dismantle the station and apply for permits for each tower that would go through the Planning Commission, public hearings, and a vote of the County Commissioners. Their complaint was that the towers lowered their property value and, ultimately, caused the real estate crash of 2008. That raised Grady’s ire to the boiling point and, as he so colorfully stated, by God that just ain’t right.

A four year-long battle ensued that led us to sue the County in Federal Court. It took its toll financially on Grady and emotionally on me and Midge. We finally prevailed and were granted a special use permit for 8 towers.

We had two monopoles professionally installed. 120’ that has a stack of four ten-meter beams and a 2 element 40. The 175’ monopole was home to four stacked 15-meter beams and two 3 element 80-meter beams.

Grady’s vision to have stacked beams on every band from 80 through 10 meters had finally been realized, at least for a few weeks. The Optibeam 80-meter Yagi’s self-destructed in the first windstorm. After several rebuilds, K7NV completely redesigned one of the beams and rebuilt it using American aluminum. It has survived several winters, and the project was deemed complete in 2015.

We formed the Comstock Memorial Station as a not for profit and Grady retired as its benefactor. The “memorial” theme was to honor other friends who had passed on, or became “silent keys (SK)” as hams call them. The operators are now responsible for maintenance and any station upgrades. He came out several times a year to keep his hands on the key, but basically was preoccupied with skydiving and other business ventures.

Bottom line is that his goal to provide a venue for hams without stations to have a first-class venue to operate and hone their skills was realized. It also continued the tradition of hosting multi-operator contests including being designated as the ARRL host station for Nevada during their Centennial year.

The other area of mutual pride was providing a home for WX5S and N6TV to line the wall with Sweepstakes plaques. N6TV has won SS CW twice from W7RN. WK6I has pioneered RTTY contesting using three radios and three computers. Another wall is lined with his plaques.

Over the last five years, we moved from multioperator contesting to installing remote hosts where contesters could use the station from home over the Internet. We now have a cadre of remote users from coast to coast who keep the two remotes regularly active. Of particular pride to both of us was providing a venue for the Grand Dame of ham radio, W1YL, to operate from her retirement home in Florida. She had logged 10,000 contacts in the first four years over the remote system.

Aside from ham radio, over the decades, Grady became involved in a least four business ventures surrounding my management consulting and expert witness practices. We valiantly attempted to raise the bar in business excellence but were less than successful in being the champions of quality and risk avoidance.

Those experiences transitioned me back into sole proprietorship and Grady into his last push to have a positive influence on the world. He was a principal in a gym in Houston, where he worked out five days a week. The gym has a large outdoor training venue that he remodeled into a youth sports center. Pro Fit Soccer provides indoor and outdoor sports fields for many youth activities.





# Grady Ferguson W5FU TDXS #81—SK

Grady took title to the gym just before he contracted COVID-19 and was preparing for the grand opening of Pro Fit Soccer when he was hospitalized. It is now in operation, but he left a huge leadership and inspirational void. Midge and I are on the Board of Directors and will somehow ensure that his legacy and dreams are continued.

Rest in peace my brother from another mother, knowing the profound influence you have had on ham radio and now on youth sports.

The Taormina Group at a defense attorney convention in New Orleans

Tom Taormina – K5RC

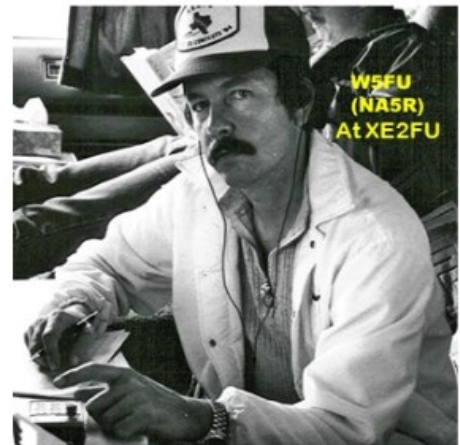
Grady and Tom in Houston



Grady at the Controls of his Hawker 800A Jet



His last time on-the-air at W7RN in 2017



One of our operations at XE2FU in Nuevo Laredo Mexico



One of the Great Armadillo Runs where we activated every county In Texas



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### How to reach US

On the World Wide Web <http://www.tdxx.net> email address: [k5dx@tdxx.net](mailto:k5dx@tdxx.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 August:

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

Frank Wyatt - KC5M  
 Richard King - K5NA  
 George Wagner - K5KG  
 Bill Wibker - WI5P  
 Kirk Kridner - KV5Q  
 Randy Thompson - K5ZD  
 Brent Levitt - NT5D  
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