

HOOTERHAM NEWS.

February 2018

The newsletter of the Great Southern DX Association, K5GDX.

Welcome y'all to the very first edition of the K5GDX newsletter. Read and hopefully enjoy it. If you don't like it remember that it is free, that should make you happy! After you read it pass it on to others so that they may know that there really is life in south Mississippi, and along the Gulf Coast.

If there is enough interest we will try to send it out monthly, if there is not enough interest we will go back to what we do best, chasing DX.

We will write about K5GDX and what the club is doing, its members, and anything pertaining to amateur radio, and maybe other topics as well. Part of the motivation for the newsletter is to spread the word to others who are not active hams that we exist and that we have come a very long way from the days of "10/4 good buddy" which was never a part of our vocabulary anyway.

We are a small club with a diverse and friendly membership who each have a range of interests and activities. We are an active club, Field Day really gets some of our members motivated.....



One of our highly skilled 160meter DX chasers recovering from a long night of putting them in the log.



whilst others prefer to erect antennas. We hope to publish more information on individual members in due course.

As our members know, in September of 2015 a clubhouse was acquired, and we started preparing it for operation. All the materials were donated and many of our members contributed much time and effort into turning it into a real radio shack.



Currently we can operate five stations simultaneously, each with its own antenna system. This facility is invaluable in allowing members with limited facilities the opportunity to operate.

Here we see a young visitor making her first contact under the supervision of one of our lady members.



Early last year we started having an open house at the clubhouse on the fourth Saturday morning of every month, and that has been very successful. We are delighted that we have had visitors from other clubs and visitors who have never been associated with ham radio but were curious. As a club we always like to make visitors welcome and show off our progress. Talking of progress, it will not stop here, we have several projects that we would like to undertake this year. In a later newsletter we can outline these ideas.

Each year we have well attended picnics or barbeques, funded by the club. Everyone is welcome.



As we all know, we are close to the bottom of the 11-year solar cycle and propagation conditions are not great. That does not mean that we cannot work some very worthwhile DX, but generally the signals are weaker and the openings shorter. You just must be on at the right time and do a little hunting, and don't believe all that the DX cluster tells you. Check all of the bands, some of the rarer operators prefer not to work a big pileup and will opt to go where they are less likely to attract a lot of attention. Also, if the numbers indicate that a band is closed that is no reason not to just check, you may find a short, sudden opening that will make your day. Go ahead! Never be shy of calling CQ on a "dead" band a few times, you never know!

In the last week or so I have talked to at least three dedicated DX'ers who need very few or no new countries. That doesn't mean that they sit by a cold radio. They choose to try other challenges, one is a serious Islands on the Air chaser, another collects hilltop contacts (not me!) and a third is getting way up there in the ARRL Challenge list. There is always something to do.

This is also an excellent time to explore new modes. With the current upsurge in digital modes, none of which I understand, there appears to be great opportunities to work new countries in poor conditions. It is also an appropriate time to revamp or upgrade the station and antennas. Maybe some new software? It's also an opportunity to acquire or spruce up our Morse code skills. Even though Morse is no longer a license requirement it remains a popular mode. Just listen in on a major CW contest to see how popular it is.

Talking of contests, although we are a DX club we have been active in numerous contests, most of which involve long distance DX contacts. We have placed well in the Oceania DX contest and the Polish DX contest, and our individual members have operated in many other DX contests.

Now, playing radio is not all about microphones. In this modern age almost all of our equipment is interfaced with a computer and it will utilize software, sometimes simple, sometimes complex, and we make extensive use of the internet. Our radio and computer, however are no use without an effective antenna and many of us need some degree of engineering proficiency to set up a good antenna system. If you are an avid DX'er you will quickly learn a lot of geography and maybe a smattering of foreign languages. There is always something to be learned in this hobby.

Our club has been very active in the annual Field Day event, which we operate from the clubhouse, and we have been very successful. Intended as a test of our proficiency in setting up and operating in adverse or emergency conditions it brings together many of our club members and is a great social event for all. Visitors are especially welcome. For several years we have deployed a helium balloon to hoist our 160 meter antenna which has been highly entertaining, to say the least, without going into details!



There she goes....up, up, and away, and away, and away, and away.....you get the picture!

Complaints Department.

We are always happy to receive complaints about anything but there is a proper protocol to be followed. Complaints should be sent to one of our dedicated committee members as follows:

To the club President: Our president is a highly qualified computer guru and therefore all complaints must be in the form of a series of ones and zeros.

To our club Secretary: Our Secretary is a highly experienced former Federal Employee, therefore all complaints must be in triplicate and will be filed at the bottom of the pile in the order received and will never be seen again.

To our Treasurer: Only complaints including greenbacks will be considered. Enough greenbacks are mandatory to elicit a response. Enough is never enough.

To our Vice President or our Member at Large: This is the most effective method of getting attention to your complaint. It will be carefully considered and properly filed in the container under their respective desks.

Seriously, to learn more about our club and to contact us we are ever present at www.k5gdx.org or e-mail [WM5DX @yahoo.com](mailto:WM5DX@yahoo.com) and remember to check our Facebook page.

Getting the word out about our club, our members and our hobby is paramount to our success as a club and passing this article on to others is a great way to do it.

Articles, comments and anything of general interest from anyone will be warmly welcomed, junk mails will not.

Finally, good luck to all with Bouvet Island.

73, Mike, WM5DX.