



# The Bullsheet

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

The Texas DX Society, Houston TX K5DX@tdxs.net November 2019

**TDXS Dinner Monthly Meeting**  
**Thursday 6:30PM Nov 21**  
**Lasagna House Italian Restaurant**  
**13306 Westheimer Road**  
**Houston TX 77077**



## Editor's Note by Allen Brier N5XZ

This month has gone by quickly as I get acquainted with a new job in Houston... Immediately I noticed several things I will miss from my time down in Freeport / Lake Jackson: a lot less traffic and plenty of good seafood! I'm not enjoying that 45 minute drive everyday to work, but at least I am home and planning to get my station back together. As I reported last month, I got my Alpha 78 fixed. Next I will turn my attention to the SteppIR beam. I've taken a few pics of the parts laid out... I basically plan to refurbish the whole thing and get it up in the air asap. I am expecting probably no earlier than spring time, considering the amount of work I have to do, the weather and my schedule.

The TDXS BOD met at Luby's for this quarter's meeting and we discussed quite a few matters in our 2-1/2 hour meeting. I expect there will be a full report on it in next month's Bullsheet.

As mentioned in Doug's article, last meeting N5DTT and K5GZR gave a presentation on N3FJP logger. It was videoed and Scott, K5DD has put that and videos of presentations on N1MM and EZNEC on the TDXS website, just look at the homepage for those.

For those who actually read this editor's note, I am really starving for additional content to put in the BS to make it more interesting. I would appreciate any kind of input, whether it be articles, bio's, pictures, reports, tutorials,

equipment discussions/reviews, etc. That would really make this rag more interesting for you and for me. I know I'm not going to win a Pulitzer for any of MY writing!!

Finally, I heard just today of the passing of Don Busick K5AAD, who was a TDXS member. I haven't seen an obituary as of yet, but I should have something more to report in the next issue. Don (and his father Max W5GJ (SK) and brother David N5JJ (SK) were huge members of the Houston ham community and also huge in the DXing and Contesting world. Old timers will remember Max, Don and David at Madison Electronics. Pat KJ5Y and I went to Jr. High and High school with David, also. 73, Allen N5XZ

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## **FIELD DAY RESULTS ARE IN!**

**The TDXS/BVARC/KARS/ECHO Mega-Field Day results are in! KK5W came in a respectable 6th place this year, behind some formidable competitors! Thanks to all the participants, operators, cooks and helpers! We are already looking forward to doing it again next year!**

## The Prez Sez by Robie, AJ4F

The Prez Sez

November 2019

Our November meeting is scheduled for Thursday 11/21/19 at the Lasagna House Italian Restaurant, 13306 Westheimer RD Houston TX 77077. The main business item for this meeting is election of officers for 2020. We still need a candidate (volunteer) for president. Would someone please step forward for this important role.

For the past few years the Ole Codgers dinner has been held in November. The decision was taken at our October meeting to combine the Ole Codgers dinner with our annual banquet. The combined event will be held this coming January.

Many TDXS members use Elecraft transceivers and the K3s has a reputation for being one of the best rigs available for DXing & contesting. I was very surprised to read in Elecraft's October Newsletter that it was being discontinued. Elecraft had previously announced a new transceiver, the K4, which uses a direct conversion architecture. Other manufactures have been producing transceivers with this architecture for several years now. One of the most successful is FlexRadio. I've received feedback that the appeal of these feature rich transceivers is the driver for the K3s being discontinued. I wonder if a TDXS member who owns a FlexRadio would be willing to make a presentation on this equipment at a future meeting. I am very curious to see what they offer.

Several recent DXpeditions - VP6R – Pitcairn Island, D68CCC – Comoros Island & S79CI – Seychelles for example, have made the effort to work the low bands (160m, 80m & 40m). This effort is driven partly by low solar activity and poor propagation on the high bands. These DXpeditions have been relatively easy to work from EL29 for several reasons. First, they have spent considerable time operating on the low bands, the effectiveness of the FT8 mode, and propagation prediction software, which provides information on times at which the bands will most likely be open. My choice of software is DXView. However, there are many other programs which provide similar information. One of these is DX Atlas which is Shareware and can be found here: <http://www.dxatlas.com/DxAtlas/> One really nice feature of this program is that it will provide an Azimuthal map centered on your location. This makes finding beam headings very easy and will give you a good understanding of the short and long paths from your location to the DX station you are chasing. Openings to these locations on the low bands are often short in duration, so planning is critical to success. Most DXpeditions have websites and many of these tell you when they are active and on what bands. The propagation prediction software identifies times when the path will likely be open and the combination of these pieces of data will identify the likely "sweet spot" when QSOs will be possible. I found this approach to be very successful. TX7T – Marquesas Islands will be active from November 6 – 17 and I plan to add them to my low band totals using this approach!

Robie – AJ4F

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# TDXS Meeting Minutes by Doug Seyler WB5TKI

## TDXS October 2019 Meeting Minutes

**Date:** October 17, 2019

**Location:** Tracy Gee Community Center, Houston, TX

**Attendance: Members:** Doug WB5TKI, Orville K5VWW, Larry KB5WWW, Robie AJ4F, Scott K5DD, Jim N5DTT, Bob WB5IUU, Allen N5XZ, Keith NM5G, Rick K5GZR, Mark K5GQ

The August business meeting was held at the Tracy Gee Community Center, on Westcenter Drive, in W. Houston. Items discussed were:

- Reminder of the upcoming DXpedition to Marquesas in French Polynesia on November 6-17. Among the operators are TDXS members Madison W5MJ and Bob W5RF. The club voted to give a donation of \$250 in support of the effort, and will request a presentation from the group after the DXpedition.
- The preliminary results of the TQP were presented. The contest was held on a new date in September to avoid a conflict with the CQ WW RTTY contest. This may explain the 35% increase in logs submitted (345 vs 259). There were 14 mobile entries and operations overall were primarily on 20 and 40 m.

Reminder that we still need volunteer2 to run for President, VP Membership and VP Programs for 2020. Doug WB5TKI has agreed to continue as Secretary and Larry KB5WWW has agreed to continue on as Treasurer.

The program was a continuation of our presentations on popular logging software. This month it was N3FJP AC Log and Contest logs, presented by Jim N5DTT and Rick K5GZR. They went over the basic setup and features of the N3FJP logging programs, which are extensive, as well as the licensing scheme. One unique feature of the N3FJP offering is that the contest logging programs are contest-specific. Each contest log program is \$8.99 to license, and the license is perpetual. Similarly the general logging program, Amateur Contact Log, is \$24.99 for a perpetual license. There I also a bundle price of \$49.99 for a perpetual license to all of the current and future programs (currently over 100 programs!). The N3FJP programs have a rich set of features and are similar to other top level contest and logging software with respect to Function keys, shortcuts, history file, keyboard CW and many more. They are the choice of several current TDXS members (including your Secretary) for contest and general logging.

73,

Submitted November 3, 2019

Doug Seyler WB5TKI

TDXS Secretary



## DX Report by Orville Burg K5VWW

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

JW/LB2PG Bear Island until Nov

TX7T Hiva Oa Marquesas Is. Nov 6-19

T6AA Afghanistan Sep 2019 until Summer 2021

### Further Information:

Starting **November 6<sup>th</sup>**, **TX7T** will be operational from **Hiva Oa Island in the Marquesas. Madison Jones, W5MJ** and friends VA7DX, VE7KW, K4UEE, K5PI, W5SJ, F6BCW and W5RF, all experienced DXpeditioners, will be on 160M thru 6M. This activity will last through November 19<sup>th</sup> and will have 3-4 stations active. For further extensive information, see: <http://www.marquesas2019.com>.

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>** will be the end of the 19 operator **Mediterraneo DX Club** activity from **D68CCC** in the **Comoros Islands**. All Bands 160M-10M. For further information, see: <http://www.mdxc.org/d68ccc>.

### Additional operations and dates are:

**9X2AW** from **Rwanda** will be on **November 4<sup>th</sup> thru 16<sup>th</sup>**, <https://www.qrz.com/lookup/9x2aw>

**HSØZME** from **Thailand**. will be active **November 12<sup>th</sup> thru December 31<sup>st</sup>**.

**VK9LQ** from **Lord Howe I.** will be on **November 21<sup>st</sup> thru November 27<sup>th</sup>**.

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 off with a summary of contests coming up in November.

- 2 ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, CW
- 9 WAE DX Contest, RTTY
- 10 North American SSB Sprint Contest
- 16 ARRL EME Contest
- ARRL Sweepstakes Contest, SSB
- 23 CQ Worldwide DX Contest, CW

Reported below are the TDXS Member scores for the major October contests, as reported in the 3830scores.com website:

### CQ WW DX Contest – RTTY September 28

SOAB LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	State/Prov	DX	Zones	Op Time	Score	Club
AJ4F			214	62	53	38		55,998	TDXS
KG5U			162	63	45	40	8	37,296	TDXS

SOSB10 HP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	State/Prov	DX	Zones	Op Time	Score	Club
W5PR			97	15	17	12		7,876	TDXS

### JARTS WW RTTY Contest October 19

Single Op LP

Call	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
KG5U			225	75	13.5	37,425	TDXS



## Contest Chairman Report—by Jim Burrough N5DTT

As most of you know, I have a long-standing affinity for the NAQP Contests. I had my first introduction to contesting in the August 2002 NAQP-SSB Contest. From that day forward I have tried to operate in the August and January SSB contests. I have recently added the CW portion of the contest to my list, though I am far from a competitive CW operator.

One of the recent additions to the NAQP SSB Contest held in January is the North American Collegiate Championship (NACC). It is a contest within a contest where university amateur radio clubs compete within the NAQP-SSB Contest. In the first running of this contest, in 2018, seven university club teams participated. That year Georgia Institute of Technology won. In 2019, 13 collegiate teams participated. It was a neck and neck competition between the Georgia Tech Amateur Radio Club and the Indiana University Amateur Radio Club. The lead transferred back and forth several times, but a two-hour burst of activity at the end of the event on the part of the Indiana University team gave them a final victory. Interestingly, IU had only 3 more QSOs and two more multipliers than the Georgia Tech team. The final score was IU 54060 and Georgia Tech 52624. That was a close race. I'd sure like to meet the IU team members who worked the last two hours of the contest. I'll bet they are some of the most tenacious members of the club.

The reason I bring the NACC up that I see this as one of many ways of getting young Hams interested in contesting. As I said, 13 teams participated in this year's competition. I would imagine there are far more college and university radio clubs out there that have not gotten the word about the contest or who cannot muster the teams to compete.

I know that Rice University has an Amateur Radio Club, W5YG. Their faculty sponsor sometimes attends a weekly Ham lunch group that I attend. The next time I see Dr. Patricia Reiff (W5STAR), I'll bring the subject of the NACC up and see if she and the Rice club are interested. If not, nothing is lost but my hope is that Rice will be able to field a team. If there are any Rice graduates in the Texas DX Society, I know she would be very interested in them getting involved with any team they might be able to put together.

Well, that's all for this month. I hope you had a good time in the CQ Worldwide DX SSB Contest.

Jim, N5DTT



## Where in the World Is...by Ron Litt K5HM

Brunei, officially known as the Nation of Brunei, the Abode of Peace. OR Negara Brunei Darussalam in Malay. It's located on the northwest coast of the island of Borneo. On three sides bordered by Malaysia and facing the South China Sea.



It's a good place to live, with its principal product being oil. Considered a "fully developed" country by the IMF. According to Forbes Magazine it ranks as the fifth richest nation on the planet. The country has zero debt.



Brunei's government is a constitutional monarchy. Under Brunei's constitution, the Sultan is the head of state with full executive authority. Since 1962, this authority has included emergency powers, which are renewed every two years. The country has been under hypothetical martial law since 1962. The Sultan, Hassanal Bolkiah also serves as the state's Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Defense Minister. As Mel Brooks observed, it is good to be king.

Petroleum was discovered in 1926. Oil and natural gas have been the basis of Brunei's development and wealth since the late 20th century.

This is a devoutly Muslim nation; land of gold-plated mosques and wooden water villages, a nation so rich from its oil and gas resources that no one pays tax. It is a seven-hour flight from Melbourne but Brunei is little known and very much underrated for travelers. Brunei is clean and virtually free of crime with pristine rainforests, palm-fringed beaches and palatial resorts.

In this land of over 400,000, there are approximately 400 licensed amateurs. According to Club Log, it is 109th on the Most Wanted DX entity, List

Reporting from the Dark Side,

Ron, K5HM



## TS-890 Early Observations—by Bill Garfield W1BG

First full week of ownership & use:

Since dumping my problem-plagued IC-7610 (display issues, now on my 3<sup>rd</sup> screen) in favor of a new Kenwood TS-890S I've had a few folks ask me to comment on it. What follows is just some rambling observations and comments about the beautiful new rig in my shack.

Most noticeable is the Kenwood 890 is much larger and heavier than the IC-7610. It's also gorgeous!

By comparison, here are the approximate sizes of each rig that's been in my shack lately.

The IC-7300 at 316 cu. in. (9½ x 9½ x 3½) plus knobs & connectors, 9¼ lbs.  
 The IC-7610 at 683 cu. in. (13½ x 11 x 4½) plus knobs & connectors, 18.7 lbs.  
 The TS-890s at 1151 cu in. (15½ x 13½ x 5½) plus knobs & connectors, 35 lbs.

And similar to the little 7300, the 890 also has a very nice matte finish, including the display screen.

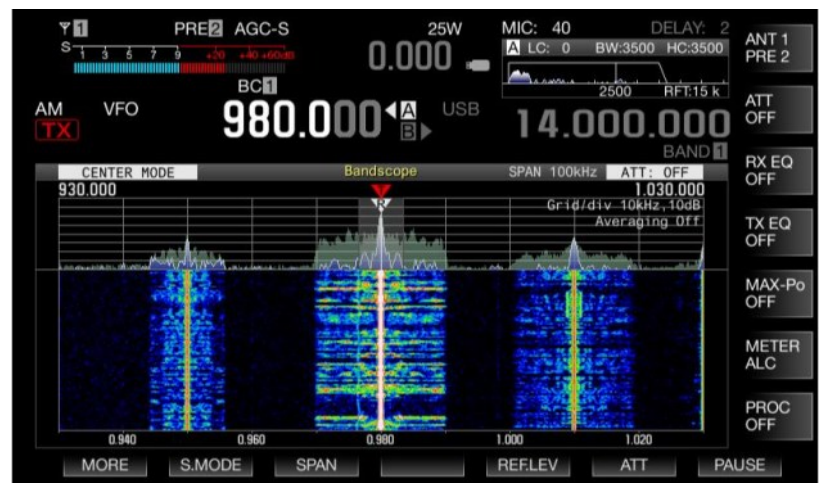


If you like knobs & buttons, you're going to like the 890, with a compliment of 72 individual pushbuttons and a total of 8 knobs on the front panel, counting the VFO. Of the knobs, 5 of those are dual shaft (dual purpose) and every one of them has a very solid, good quality feel to it. None of the knobs have any pushbutton function. They only move two directions, either clockwise

or counter-clockwise.

In terms of menus, all I can say is I'm impressed! If you're the type who feels the need for complete control over every single facet of operation, the new 890 is definitely your rig. Just from the main display screen there are over 160 configurable option settings. The average ham will never use most of them (I only used 46 myself), but if you like to customize things, you can customize to your heart's content. But don't be intimidated, as the menus are pretty well laid out and NONE of the optional settings are even required, as the rig works fine straight out of the box. Hook it up and enjoy!

There's a nice printed manual in the box, but while handy for making pencil notes, I have to say that I found the owner's manual a little difficult to navigate at first. Most of you will want to download an electronic (PDF) copy of the manual so you can spend less time looking for some of the more esoteric settings.





## TS-890 Early Observations—by Bill Garfield W1BG

Before taking the initial plunge into the menus, a word of caution is in order. Something you'll definitely want to make into **Job # 1** is to learn how to make a backup of your settings and then start making regular recurring backups every time you configure another feature. Not likely that you'll mess anything up, but if a 3<sup>rd</sup> party software glitch acts like it has bricked your rig, as a rogue CWID program did mine, you'll need to perform a full factory reset. Without a backup of your settings you'll scream loud enough that neighbors a block away will hear you. So the buzzword of the hour is **backup!** [MENU] then [USB/FILE] then [Save Configuration Data]

There's really no certain order in which to configure your desired settings, so once you're ready, just pick something and go for it. I made my maiden voyage into the menus by learning how to set up the clock & how to display both local and UTC time. (I also kept a written log of everything I changed from factory defaults).

Above all don't be intimidated by your first perception of complexity. It's really not. Configuration/setup can be as granular or as basic as you want to make it. Remember that it works fine right out of the box without having to set anything.

All of the 9 individual groups of menu items in the Top Level menu each have sub-menus under them. Some of those sub-menus contain only a few options to choose from, while others have as many as 32 options. And just when you think you're about there, you will then discover an **ADVANCED** menu button with another 27 options for you to consider. Those 27 are some of the more esoteric settings that you probably won't need, though a couple that may interest you have to do with setup of an external display and the screen resolution. A 32-inch external monitor looks gorgeous, by the way.



Setting up your amplifier keying control is found in yet another menu with an option appropriately labelled "LINEAR AMP". ... and speaking of which, if you have a linear amp but haven't previously had one of the more recent Kenwood models, you're going to discover that you're going to have to build (which means make - in other words, **solder**) your own cable to connect the keying circuit of your amplifier, or else buy one pre-made on the Internet for \$18 or spend \$50 to get one from your dealer. I initially tried making mine using the furnished connector until I discovered that once the connector pin is hot enough to take solder, the plastic connector body has coincidentally also reached its melting point, so the connector pin will now push its way out of the plastic body and you will begin to utter a few expletives. Take my advice: Buy the stupid amp cable already made.

So while setup and initial configuration can be a bit of a learning curve, I vividly recall the Flex 6600 being far worse. Just remember to **SAVE** your work with a **backup**.

# TS-890 Early Observations—by Bill Garfield W1BG

Tweaks notwithstanding, all I can say is gosh what an incredibly swell rig! Overall the rig looks exquisite, absolutely as good on my desk as it does in the fancy display ads in QST & CQ. A beautiful addition to any ham shack, but it's fairly big, so you may have to move a few things around to fit it in.

Operationally, some will love the fact that the TS890 includes a CW decoder along with the capability to decode RTTY and PSK **\*without\*** external software. In fact you don't even need a PC - just plug in a USB keyboard and you're all set to go for RTTY, PSK and CW.

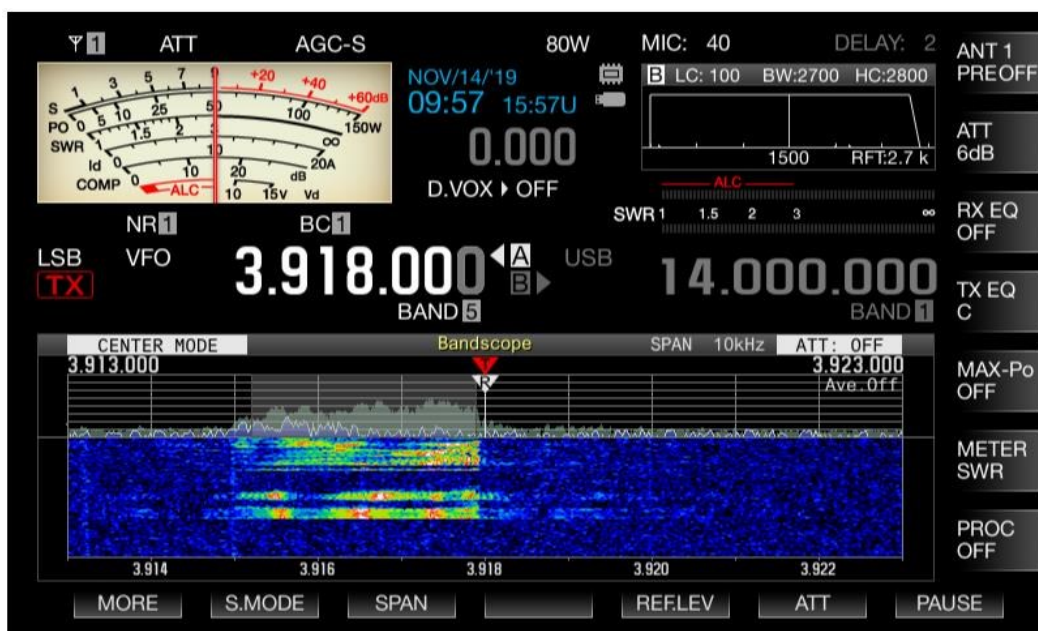
On the air (75 meter phone) I'm frequently getting many unsolicited accolades about the quality of my tx audio, even though I have not yet ventured forth into the EQ. The only thing I did was enable the "TX EQ C" option (default setting is "off").

Kenwood also furnishes free of charge a very nice remote control and some related software packages. You have to download and install it, but the price is definitely right.

As alluded to above, the TS890 also has a swell 18-band Equalizer for both receive and transmit. If you're an "audio person" you're bound to love that. The transmit bandwidth can also be set as wide as 4 kHz with a "low cut" setting all the way down to 50 Hz which a few of the "Bass boys" will no doubt have fun with. No, it doesn't do the really radical wideband ESSB or "VOODOO" audio (thankfully) but giving you a full 4 kHz of transmit bandwidth to play with is unarguably better than Icom's restriction to only 2.8 kHz max.

So what can it do?

Well to start with, currently at #8 on the "Sherwood List" of top receivers it rather handily beats out the Icom 7610, the new Flex 6400/6600 models as well as the Yaesu FTdx-5000 and the original K3. Of particular note it also literally blows away the TS990, which is currently stuck down at the #35 spot. My, how the once mighty have fallen.



## TS-890 Early Observations—by Bill Garfield W1BG

Some of the Pros:

TX Power setting -by band- with the option to place a hard (sticky) cap on the maximum drive power so you don't accidentally overdrive your new solid state amp

TX "TUNE" power also adjustable by band, however much you need, no longer limited to only 10 watts

CW Sidetone is in the USB Audio output to the PC, so you can use CWSkimmer with sending as well as receiving

Magnificent ergonomics (repeating myself, I know, but it really is a handsome rig)

Excellent Transverter support (pushbutton activated)

CW Decode built-in

CW Auto-tune feature is far better than on the 7610

No PC needed - work CW, PSK, RTTY - just add a keyboard and/or a paddle, bug or straight key

Superb NR and NB (two each, NR1/NR2 and NB1/NB2)

Beat Cancel (auto-notch) that actually works! Works so fast that you never hear the guy tuning -up.

Audio Peaking Filter (APF) in my opinion works better than on the 7610

Copy files to your PC as if your rig was an external drive or memory stick

Roofing Filters (15kHz, 6 kHz, 2.7 kHz, 500 Hz) a 270 Hz filter is available (a \$178 option)

Remote Control Software is Free!

18-band RX and TX equalizer built in (that beautiful Kenwood audio)

TX bandwidth adjustable to as wide as 4 kHz (no more of this 100~2900 only)

Legacy Transverse SWL tuning dial display (OMG now that is a trip down memory lane)

Customizable upload your own Screen Saver images (scrolling pictures of those grandkids)

Settings reload feature has built-in automatic power-cycle function

5 band-stacking registers per band

3 user-programmable function keys (8 additional with an external keypad)

Dual cooling fans that are whisper-quiet, literally zero fan noise

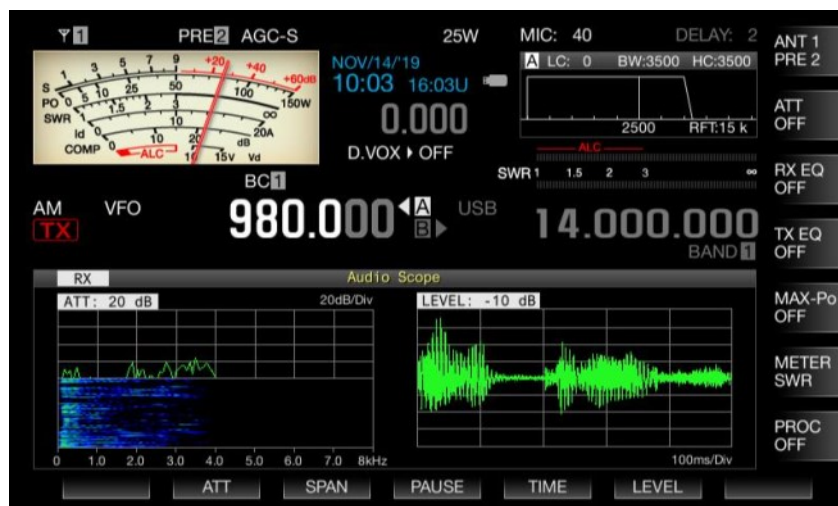
Built-in (included) 3-level advanced Voice Guidance System for vision-impaired operators

Built-in (included) high stability TCXO

Supported option to use TS590 (S/SG) as a 2<sup>nd</sup> receiver with full interoperability

0 dbm DRV signal (another button) for 630 and 2200m work or for driving a transverter

Sherwood says, "The TS-890S has the highest RMDR I have ever measured."



## TS-890 Early Observations—by Bill Garfield W1BG

The few cons:

- Only has a single receiver
- No mic supplied (a \$55 option for a hand mic)
- The waterfall looks slightly “chunky” (see photo below)
- No color customization options for the scope display (default color options are fine)
- Requires special Amplifier keying cable, roll your own w/soldering iron, else \$50 option from dealer or \$18 from eBay
- Icom (7300/7610) scope has slightly sharper detail (in my opinion)

Current street price (HRO, DXEngineering, GigaParts, MTC) averages \$34-3500. (Open box \$3100 @ MTC)

Does it decode CW? Boy does it ever! Here’s my rig following along with a W1AW practice session at 35 words per minute: This is also a good shot of the 7-inch display. (taken with an iPhone 7+)



## **TDXS DUES DUE SOON!**



The annual Texas DX Society dues for 2020 will be due soon.

The yearly dues for 2020 is \$25.00 for local members and \$12.50 for members in excess of 75 miles from grid square EL29hs.

Payment is preferred by PayPal. The PayPal account is: [treasurer@tdxs.net](mailto:treasurer@tdxs.net). Please select the “payment to friends and family” option in order to avoid payment transfer fees.

Payment by check made payable to “Texas DX Society” can be brought to a TDXS meeting or mailed to:

TDXS Treasurer  
9941 Briarwild Ln  
Houston, TX 77080

## Texas DX Society Board members

President	Robie Elms, AJ4F	ruler55 at gmail.com
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Treasurer	Larry Daze KB5WWW	dxon20@gmail.com
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DX Chairman	Orville Burg, K5VWW	Orville at rubyglass.com
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CQ WAZ Card Checker	Bob Walworth, N5ET	rwalworth at charter.net

### 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 November:

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

Keith Huge - KA5F  
 Tom Ashworth - N5EA  
 Joe Staples - W5ASP  
 Charles Brues - N5AM  
 Robert McWhorter - K5PFE  
 Chuck Dietz - W5PR  
 John Davis - KN5T  
 Bill Eckenrode - W5SG  
 Bob Chmielewski - N5PJI  
 Bruce Meier - N1LN  
 Ed Gerber - W5GCX

Chuck Hornburg - K5IX  
 Don Mayhall - N5DM  
 Don Daze - N5DD  
 Matt Thomas - WX5S  
 Willis "Cookie" Cooke - K5EWJ  
 Jim Burrough - N5DTT