

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

**** See "TSN Corner" on Last Page ****

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Hello TEX'ans! Lots of things to report this month. The transition to "daylight time" went relatively smoothly with signals a little weaker at the 7 PM timeframe (but no skip, at least not that I observed), and only a few long skip nights at 10.

Travel Time Again

Although it has been nearly 6 months since I went to CA to help my parents, it seems like a much shorter time. I will be leaving on April 5th and will not return until late on April 25th this time. So I'll be gone nearly the entire month. Please send your net reports to Rodney, W5DY, or if you prefer, you can E-Mail them directly to me (see address above) as I will be checking at least once a day most days.

Jack, W5TFB, skip permitting, will take my NCS slots on Wednesdays. Thanks, Jack! Also thanks to Jack, Rodney, and Doug for taking my TCC schedules in my absence.

I'll miss you all, for sure. Please carry on in the fine tradition you have set the last few years.

In Memoriam

I am sorry to report that we have lost another TEX member. Homer, AC5CI, passed away on March 17. The following is an excerpt from his obituary, taken from the 7290 net web site:

Homer, AC5CI

Homer Eugene Franks, 71, of Caldwell, died Saturday, March 17, 2007 at his residence. Mr. Franks was born August 26, 1935 in Ridge, Texas the son of Homer Elbert and Floral Murlean Gray Franks. Homer was a graduate of A & M Consolidated High School and attended Texas A & M University, where he was a member of the Corp. of Cadets. He was retired from the Houston Fire Department and was a Master Carpenter, ham radio operator, enjoyed fishing and loved to play music with the local bands. Mr. Franks was a past Master Mason, Scottish Rite, of Caldwell Masonic Lodge # 56. His family described him as a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

On January 2, 1956 he was married to the former Emma Jean Pennington in Hugo, Oklahoma.

Survivors include his wife of 51 years, Jean Franks, three sons and a daughter-in-law; Homer (Bimbo) Jr., James Alan (Frog), and James Robert (Bobby) and wife Dianne, three daughters and sons-in-law; Teresa (Ressie) and Grady Warner, Nancy (PeeWee) and Ronald Sebesta and Paige (Pumpkin) and Phil Bamberg. He is further survived by his brother James Lee Carter and wife Pamela, eleven grandchildren and one great-grandchild as well as numerous other relatives.

The funeral service was on Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at Strickland Funeral Home in Caldwell and burial followed at the Masonic Cemetery in Caldwell.

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To the above, I'd like to add that Homer had suffered from several strokes in recent years that made it very hard for him to send CW. He never gave up, though, to his credit. At one time he was quite active on TEX and also the higher level CW nets. Homer was also a regular on the SSB nets, especially 7290.

73, Homer, we miss you.

7290 Picnic

This year the 7290 Picnic in Smithville, TX, is a month earlier (April 28) than last year. I must admit it caught me by surprise. I have heard from several of you who attended last year (Bert, Pat, Floyd, Rodney) that you will not be able to make it. Since that is only a couple days after I return from my long trip, and I anticipate being worn out, I am also not planning to go. For those of you who are interested, details are on the 7290 web page, <http://www.7290trafficnet.org/index.asp>

In lieu of the picnic, there is movement afoot to have some type of TEX get-together in conjunction with the upcoming Hamcom convention in June. More on that next month.

Feature Story

I am very pleased to report that I have received permission to reprint the series of memoirs of George Hart, W1NJM, the founder of NTS as we know it today. Many thanks to Sis, WD8DIN, the editor of the "Traffic Call" newsletter of the Hit and Bounce Net (HBN – 0730 CT, 7042 KHz), for not only giving permission but also taking the time to send me the files for the first 23 chapters of his unofficial "book".

I'll try to share one chapter each month here in the TEX newsletter. So here we go...

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD HAM

A journalistic history of the life and times in Amateur Radio of George Hart, W1NJM, by George Hart W1NJM

Part 1 – The Early Years – I never really liked the term "ham" as it applies to Amateur Radio. It has a negative connotation to me, in the same sense as "lid," meaning an inferior operator;

but through the years it has been accepted. An Amateur Radio operator is a Ham, and Amateur Radio is Ham radio. So be it.

It's hard to say just when I became interested in ham radio, except that it was at a very early age. We lived in a large frame house on the campus of Lafayette College, on a high bluff overlooking the city of Easton, PA. My father was an eminent professor of chemistry at the college (see "Edward Hart: a Biography"). There were six of us; my father, my mother and four children: Edward, Jr., the oldest; Watson; George, myself; and Martin, the "baby." Edward, Jr., will be prominent in this account, my father less so, my mother and two other siblings hardly at all. We called him "Bunch," a derivative of "honeybunch" from childhood that lingered for many years. When he was 9 years old he built his first "crystal" set and heard his first on-the-air signal; a faint whistle emanating from a local radio station, WMAP, owned by the Edison Battery Company. This was in 1919.

From then his interest in electronics burgeoned, culminating in his first ham license in 1925 with call letters 3NF. This was an "amateur class" license, which at that time gave him full amateur privileges. My two other brothers showed little or no interest in Bunch's shenanigans; but he was highest in the "pecking order" among the four of us. I was fascinated by and afraid of him, and he did little to mollify this feeling; but my showing of interest in his activities brought me closer to him – a closeness that increased and developed well into maturity.

What activities? When he was about 12 (this would be 1922) he obtained permission to move into one of the two third floor rooms of the big house. The two attic rooms were unheated, used mostly for storage (and a little hoarding during WW-I). Here Bunch established his electronics laboratory and chamber of horrors in which he terrorized the rest of us with his budding electronic genius. The attic rooms were accessible only by a very narrow staircase from the second floor corridor.

Bunch's first act, upon acquiring access to one of the third floor rooms, the one facing south overlooking the city (the other room was used for miscellaneous storage) was to secure his privacy by electrifying the narrow staircase with a spark coil that could create a spark two or three inches in length. The voltage developed was extremely high, but the current very low, so that the "shock" upon contact could be painful but not dangerous. These devices were in common use in the teens and early twenties for radio communication. Only one room in the big house was wired for electricity at that time. This was the room to the left of the third floor staircase, saved for and occupied by my uncle, Martin Marasco, my mother's brother, a chemist employed by the DuPont Film Works in Parlin, NJ, who "came home" every weekend.

Uncle Martin was a great favorite with us kids, indeed of all the family including my father because they had a love for chemistry in common. But Martin had other talents as well, one of which was a knowledge of electricity. During his many visits when we were small children he ran an overhead line from my father's laboratory, which was nearby and wired for electricity, to his room in the house, so he could enjoy the luxury of electric lights in his room, which he was accustomed to at the club where he lived in Bound Brook.

An aside; what did we use for lighting in the rest of the house? Gas. Gas lines were piped all through the house from a central facility in the city. Each room was equipped with a gas outlet, often using mantels to make the light brighter. In some, a fixture using a small pilot

was activated by a pull-chain, and the light emitted was usually brighter than that emitted by most of the carbon-filament light bulbs of the day. My father saw no point in having the house wired for electricity, at considerable expense, when the gas lines were already available, but he raised no objection to Uncle Martin's activity.

(To be continued in Part 2)

Also from the HBN newsletter, this poem, written by Mark, W2EAG, last December just after the Omnibus bill took effect:

OMNIBUS HUM-BUG

On December 15, it was the year of 2006,
The FCC would install their new bag of tricks,
For more space on the air, beyond wild dreams,
You could all hear the EXTRAS loud, joyous screams.

“Omnibus” they called it, don’t ask me why,
For Generals and Advanced, it took a big piece of pie,
How could they do this with a clear thinking mind,
When all they did, was make a huge bind.

All of the folks in NTS somehow must now squeeze,
Into a spectrum like a small pod of peas,
To do the job that we love so well,
It’s going to be tight, but we’ll give it hell,

Because we will never falter, that is our theme,
No matter what the FCC has in their scheme.
The traffic will be passed from station to station,
Even if it goes across the whole Nation.

So, to all of my fellow Traffic Handlers out there,
Have no fear, and have no despair.
What George Hart started way back when,
We are going to finish, right to the end.

Right on, Mark !!!

TEX Mailbox:

Ken, K5RG, is wondering if anyone else is going to the Dayton Hamvention this year. He plans to go. Ken also sent along some new pictures of KC, his feline assistant op and wrote: I am attempting to get a 3-element 40 meter beam onto the tower. It is all assembled and awaiting me to call the crane company to come out and host it to the top of the tower. However looking from the positive side of this story, I am experiencing a number of premature failures which luckily are occurring on the ground rather than at 80 feet. A number of the plastic standoffs for the linear loading wires (the fold-back wires on each of the elements) have experienced hairline cracks that probably occurred from assembling the elements on a

level surface and then watching them flex as the beam was raised. It is currently at 5 feet altitude for its final checkout. I probably 'over-torqued' them too. So hopefully when the replacement parts arrive, we can get this beam to its rightful place on the tower!!

We'll probably make HamCom also so lets give some thought to a get together for the TEX net members at HamCom this year.

Jay, N5PWG, reported that his bug had a bit of dirt on the dot contact during one Friday net so he shifted to the straight key. Which, he notes, may not be a bad idea when conditions are bad. He notes that Radio Shack makes a potion to clean contacts, which has worked well for him in the past. George Washington seemed to clear up the dots this time but he wrote it was the first time in over a year that he had to use a bill to clean them. Nice tip for others of us who have bugs.

Pat, KD5TXD, who was nearly out of business for a while due to severe power line noise wrote (on the 21st): The power company people actually came out to the house today. They worked with Charles some and then pulled out the most amazing fox hunt antenna. They then left to check out the source of the nasty interference. Now these fellows had to be the ultra secret power company noise experts. Their truck was almost unmarked...as if they were some kind of a secret agency. About mid afternoon the overpowering noise vanished. There was some nasty gizmo on a transformer that was making the noise. I am hesitating just a bit before I start begging for traffic again to make sure. After six weeks of this constant noise I am having a hard time believing that it is gone.

Charles is so cool. He called the power company twice. They had some noise specialist call him back yesterday and make the appointment to come out to find our problem. Charles had done most of the work and narrowed it down to a couple power poles and a transformer. He also wowed them with technical talk. After all of the horror stories that folks have told me about how long this would take and how we would have to get the FCC to come down on them I am in shock. What magic power does Charles have over the power company? I always knew Charles was a bit on the odd side, but this is amazing. Maybe I can rent out Charles to others who are having noise problems. Hey, maybe I can rent out Charles to the President as a negotiator and we will finally have world peace. ☺

So, it looks like it is fixed. I will send out the word in a couple days to start getting traffic again. Now I don't know if Charles can do anything to help the rotten bottom of the solar cycle band problems but I will ask, just in case he can work some magic on that, too.

See you on the nets and 73!! Pat KD5TXD

Sam, W5CU, wrote (on March 26): I am officially off the air for a couple of weeks. My wife and I have been watching the housing market around here for several years trying to find a bargain on a newer home without the labor-intensive landscaping and swimming pool and large lot we now have. We found a home with a small yard that we like, listed our house and sold it, so the moving van is coming Thursday prior to a Friday closing of the sale and purchase. I'm taking down the station tonight and the G5RV is coming down. I hope to be back up and running at the new location in two weeks (which would be around Easter – ed.), provided that all things fall into place as they should. Covenants allow outside antennas provided they are no higher than five feet above the structure, so I should be able to get at

least 40 feet apex for the G5RV in inverted vee configuration. I have to run it north-south rather than the current east-west, which is not my preference - but with small lots, you take what you can get. New QTH is only 1/2 mile direct distance from my old one!

I would appreciate TEX covering OK traffic as with my past absences. Most of the traffic continues to be for WB5NKD, and I believe that Doug and possibly others have outlets for the service messages. I hate moving but here goes anyway! 73/ Sam W5CU

Please join me in welcoming **Daniel, AA0NI**, as a new member of TEX. In response to my welcome message to him, Daniel wrote: "I first learned about traffic handling as a Novice in the late 80's. I had some really great guys up in Minnesota help me learn about CW traffic handling through the Minnesota Slow Speed Net. When I finally got my General in 1989 (16 years old), I started checking into the Minnesota Section CW Net when I could. I haven't had much chance to do CW traffic since then.

I'd be curious to know how my peanut whistle was making it down your way. You were quite strong. I run an Elecraft K2 - usually at 10 W - to a 200 ft horizontal loop up 15 ft around the house and part of the back yard. I can usually copy RN5, but I doubt that I can be heard by them well.

I may not always be able to check into TEX, but I'll do what I can. I have a better chance of making the late net than the early net at 7 PM (depending on the day of the week).

Thanks for picking me up, and I hope to work you some more on TEX.

73, Daniel AA0NI, Oklahoma City

Welcome, Daniel. NCS stations note that Daniel can handle OK traffic in addition to TSN routing while Sam, W5CU, is off the air.

Lee, K5UN, suffered lightning damage last Thursday, the 29th. He wrote: "My Icom 756 Pro II is off being repaired. My Icom 756 Pro III was damaged during a lightning strike just before the net started tonight. I have other spares, but it will require some work to get them setup and I am unfortunately very stressed for time with graduate studies this week.

Hopefully within a week or two as there are two big DXpeditions that are coming up, and I need both of the radios. Bummer! Lee – K5UN

TEX Net Topics

Although TEX is not directly involved, several of us have TCC schedules where we check into the Pacific Area Net (PAN). Also, we always try to wind up TEX/2 before 10:30 so as not to interfere with their operation. The net manager, K6YR, has advised: The Pacific Area Net, Cycle 4 moves its primary frequency to 7052 effective April 1 UTC. The secondary frequency will be 3552 and Net Control Stations have the prerogative to shift a net session to the secondary frequency as conditions require. We should still try to finish TEX/2 or QSY before 10:30 as it is very likely that 3552 may be in use, if not for the net itself, for a "side frequency", for a few weeks to come.

The following shows the current NCS and liaison station assignments. I have made some adjustments to the entire schedule to reflect my trip away this month and other stations' being temporarily off the air. I will take my normal Wednesday NCS skeds on the 5th, but will be gone after that. Please, if you are able to be an NCS or liaison and you do not hear the net start by a couple minutes after the hour, please do start it up and/or volunteer for the liaison duty to RN5.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	W5DY	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5Z	W5TFB	AC5Z	W5GKH
Backup	W5GKH		AC5Z	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY	AC5Z
NCS #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	W5DY	K5UN	N5PWG	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup	W5DY		W5TFB	W5DY	W5TFB	W5TFB	W5DY
RN5 #1	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K5UN	K5UN	W5TFB	W5TFB	W5CU
Backup	W5TFB		W5TFB	KA5KLU		W5ESE	W5GKH
RN5 #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K5UN	K5UN	W5TFB	W5TFB	W5CU
Backup	W5TFB		W5TFB	KA5KLU		W5ESE	W5GKH

TEX/1: 3552 at 19:00 local; TEX/2 3552 at 22:00 local
 RN5/1: 3567 at 19:30; RN5/2: 3567 at 21:30 local
 CAN: 3552 at 20:30 local; TSN: 3552 at 19:45 local

RN5 Backup: W5DY, W5ESE, W5GKH, K5JRN, K6JT, KA5KLU, K5RG, W5TFB, K5UN
 NCS Backup: W5DY, N5EL, K5JRN, K6JT, KA5KLU, N5PWG, W5TFB, K5UN, AC5Z

Note: Although "backup" stations are listed above, anyone is welcome to take the RN5 or NCS duty slots when so motivated and it becomes necessary.

Statistics:

This month Pat, KD5TXD, again took top honors with QNI of 41 (66%). Rodney, W5DY, was a distant 2nd with 26, closely followed by David, K7IZ, with 25. Thanks for your support.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic was down from February, but QNI total was up. Traffic averaged 3.1 per net session. Net time averaged 14.8 minutes per session. Check-ins averaged 6.3 per net session.

TEX Net Statistics (March 2007)

Call		QNI	Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
KB0AII	David	1	3						
		2							
N5BA	Brian	1	3						
		2							
W5CDX	Wads	0	8						
*		8			1				

			Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
W5CU	Sam	8	12		4				
*		4			4				
W5DY	Rodney	15	26	6		1			
		11		3		1			
N5EL	Floyd	10	10						
*		0							
AA7FY	Mark	0	1						
*		1							
W5ESE	Scott	20	21					13	2
*		1						1	
W5GKH	Charlie	8	16	4	4	2			
*		8		8	4				
K5GM	Pete	6	7						
*		1							
KA9IKK	Bill	4	5						
		1							
K7IZ	David	11	25						
		14							
KJ9J	Newt	22	22						
*		0							
K6JT	Steve	25	54	8			27		
*		29		8	1		29		
K0KJ	Eric	4	4						
*		0							
KA5KLU	Doug	17	21	3	6	7		9	
*		4		4	4	1		2	
AA0NI	Daniel	2	3						
		1							
N5NVP	Jim	3	12						
		9							
N5PWG	Jay	1	4						
*		3		2					
K5RG	Ken	5	20						
*		15							
W5TFB	Jack	15	23	3	8				
*		8		1	8				
KD5TXD	Pat	22	41			4			23
*		19				1			19
W5UFK	Ken	3	11						
*		8							
K5UN	Lee	9	17		10				
		8		4	8				

			Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
KM5YQ	David	0	2						
*		2							
AC5Z	Bert	21	21	8					
*		0							
Totals		392		62	62	17	56	25	44
				100%	100%	27%	90%	40%	71%
QTC 1		116	194						
QTC 2		78		Sessions:		62	100%		
Time 1		536	916						
Time 2		380							

Here is an updated roster, including our newest TEX members.

TEX Roster

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
# KBØAll	David	Minnesota	K5KV	Benny	Star
N5BA	Brian	Houston	W6LFB	Jim	Denton
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	# N7NET	Scott	Allen
NV5D	Martin	Allen	AAØNI	Daniel	Oklahoma City OK
* W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	# N5NVP	Jim	Leesville LA
* W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	* N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
AA7FY	Mark	Fort Worth	K5RG	Ken	Houston
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	KC5T	Bob	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
KA9IKK	Bill	Houston	W5TV	Tom	Nacogdoches
K7IZ	David	Bridge City	* KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	# W5U FK	Ken	College Station
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	* K5UN	Lee	Leonard
* K5JRN	Si	Denton	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde
KD5JSS	Dennis	Temple	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball
* K6JT	Steve	Plano	AC5XK	Don	San Antonio
KØKJ	Eric	San Antonio	* AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio			

NOT Capable of operating in 3600-3700 band; * Capable of 160 meter operation

Operating:

Scott, W7IZ, who is the STM of Oregon and NCS of PAN on the night I have TCC duty there passed along information from the FISTS web site about a perceived problem with the ARRL petition to modify RM-11306, the petition to define band usage based on signal emission bandwidth. You can get full details of this on the ARRL web site (<http://www.arrrl.org>). The particular item that caused a lot of concern (and, admittedly, made me rather angry) was a

clause limiting digital emissions in the CW segments to 3 KHz rather than what (I thought) was only 500 Hz currently.

I was so incensed over this that I wrote a response and submitted it as a comment on the FCC web site (<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>), where you can look at the comments by first clicking on the "Search for Filed Comments" link on the right side of the page and then entering RM-11306. There were about 1600 comments when I filed and I would not be surprised if that tops 2000 soon.

Comment to FCC (and ARRL)

Here is the comment that I sent, for your information:

Rationale for Not Allowing 3 KHz Data Emissions in 80 & 40 Meter CW Sub-bands

As the manager of the Texas State CW National Traffic System network, a 40+ year participant in CW traffic handling via the NTS, a Transcontinental Corps member, and holder of an Amateur Extra class license for 40 years, I wish to make the following points against further erosion of the CW segments, particularly on 40 and 80 meters:

1. The national traffic system, which is comprised of nightly staged networks all across the country using primarily 80 meter (and 40 meter during summer months) CW, has been a viable wide-area backup communication system for over half a century.
2. The recent change to force CW operations on 80 meters into the very small 75 KHz general allocation has already caused great harm to the reliable operation of the nightly national traffic system; during contests, it has become nearly impossible to carry on network operations, while the larger concentration of stations makes even non-contest operating times much more difficult.
3. Allowing 3 KHz wide data transmissions in this already overcrowded segment, as proposed by the modification to RM-11306, will undoubtedly eventually force abandonment of the only reliable widespread nightly emergency message handling backup system we have. While the digital systems can handle high volumes of messages, they lack the means for local delivery of those messages as well as requiring much more complex equipment that may not be operational during disasters where power is at a premium. While the daytime phone NTS system exists, it is not well staffed or widespread enough, compared to the night time system, due to the need of most operators to work during the day.
4. During the hurricanes in this area (Katrina and Rita), the NTS CW system was the only method available to get messages out of disaster areas in many cases known to me, particularly the Mississippi gulf area and some south Texas areas. Because the NTS operates 365 days a year, operators and the system were ready and available to help out. Killing off this currently well-staffed and well-exercised backup system due to the inability to maintain reliable communications among very wide emission transmissions could have serious consequences should another wide area disaster scenario occur.

In summary, I believe the foregoing provides adequate rationale to deny expansion of wide (greater than 500 Hz) bandwidth emissions in the current CW sub-bands as proposed by the

most recent ARRL Notice of Ex Parte Presentation, RM-11306. Those types of emissions should be relegated to the wideband and recently much expanded phone segments, not the already severely compromised CW segments.

Steve Phillips, K6JT

I also sent a copy to my SM, STM, and anyone else I thought might be interested. My SM sent it to the ARRL, and we received a response from David Sumner, K1ZZ, as follows: "The problem is that 3 kHz (and wider) data emissions are already permitted. What this actually translates to is support for the original ARRL petition, RM-11306, instead of the more recently offered alternative -- but from Steve's perspective, either one is an improvement on the status quo."

Well, that was not too illuminating, but a longer response that I received later does shed more light on the subject:

All ARRL officers and directors are starting to receive email messages about the recent ex parte discussion ARRL had with the FCC about RM-11306; the ARRL's proposal to regulate Amateur Radio Service HF sub-bands by bandwidth. Because of what amounts to a clerical oversight, a number of amateur radio licensees are concerned, even angry, about what appears on the surface to be another move to curtail the use of Morse code communications. This is not the case and those who insist on saying it is, either don't know all the facts or have other motives for making their complaints and threats.

What follows is a summary history of RM-11306 provided by ARRL CEO Dave Sumner, K1ZZ. All the words are his with the exception of the lead-in sentence in the last paragraph.

In July 2002 the ARRL Board of Directors adopted the following policy: "At the next practical opportunity the ARRL shall petition the FCC to revise Part 97 to regulate sub-bands by signal bandwidth instead of by mode." The Board's objective was to update rules that were written long before the development of the current generation of digital modes so that digital emissions can be appropriately regulated in the future, while impacting traditional modes as little as possible.

Turning that statement of principle into a detailed petition proved to be no easy task. The Board received input from an ad hoc committee as well as staff, and twice solicited input directly from the ARRL membership. Hundreds of comments were received each time and helped inform the Board's discussions. Finally, at its July 2005 meeting the Board concluded its review of a draft petition and authorized its filing, following final review by the Executive Committee. The resulting petition was filed on November 14, 2005 and was designated RM-11306 by the FCC, after which additional comments were filed by individuals directly with the FCC.

Once the FCC had dealt with two outstanding proceedings, WT Dockets 04-140 and 05-235, we realized that the bandwidth petition was the next major Amateur Radio item in their hopper. On reviewing the RM-11306 petition, the comments, and the rules changes adopted in Dockets 04-140 and 05-235 it was apparent that some of the proposals contained in the petition had been affected by the changes adopted in the other two proceedings. It was also apparent that some aspects of the petition remained controversial.

After reviewing the situation at its January 2007 meeting, the ARRL Board authorized General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD to determine what changes to the petition had to be made to align it with the new FCC rules, as well as which aspects of the petition were not controversial and could reasonably be expected to be included in an FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making. Chris did so, and a meeting was held with FCC staff on February 13. As are all such meetings, this was made a matter of public record by the filing of a notice with the FCC Secretary that immediately became part of the on-line record in RM-11306.

The FCC staff was provided with a shortened list, or subset, of proposed rule changes from that contained in RM-11306. The list is included with the notice of the meeting. Because the proposals affecting the bands above 28 MHz had not aroused much controversy, they were retained in the shortened list. Regulation by bandwidth rather than by mode of emission remains controversial below 28 MHz because of perceived potential impact on established operating patterns, so these proposals were removed from the list with one narrow exception. The exception is necessary because, as discussed on page 11 of the RM-11306 petition, under the existing rules there is presently no effective bandwidth limit on HF digital operations. Digital emissions using multiple carriers, such as OFDM, can be designed for any bandwidth while staying within the existing rules. So, the subset of proposed rule changes given to the FCC on February 13 includes a bandwidth limit of 3 kHz on RTTY and data emissions below 28 MHz. It is important to understand that this does not increase the allowed bandwidth for RTTY and data emissions; it actually represents a new limitation that accommodates existing practice but prevents future monopolization of large segments of our narrow MF/HF bands by a single digital station. Also, the limit would not apply to phone emissions.

Some confusion has resulted from an item that, through oversight, was not deleted when the list of proposed rule changes was shortened. Because RM-11306 had proposed that bandwidths in most of the band segments now used for CW and RTTY be limited to 200 Hz and 500 Hz respectively, the existing 500-Hz bandwidth limit that applies to certain automatically controlled RTTY/data stations was redundant and could be dropped. However, because the subset of proposed rule changes does not substitute regulation by bandwidth for regulation by mode of emission, the 500-Hz limit needs to be retained. General Counsel Imlay has filed an erratum with a corrected list of proposed rule changes that makes it clear there should be no change to the existing Section 97.221. We regret the error.

Some amateurs have observed that the subset of proposed rule changes provides less protection to CW, RTTY and other narrowband modes than was afforded by the ARRL's proposals in RM-11306. This is true. However, it is not true that less protection is afforded than is the case with the existing rules. In fact, protection against interference from wide digital modes would be increased, not decreased, by adoption even of the subset.

The ARRL Board, having studied the situation literally for years, continues to support the principles of regulation by bandwidth that are contained in the original RM-11306 petition. Regulation by bandwidth provides a better regulatory framework, not only for the introduction of future digital emissions but for the protection of traditional narrowband modes as well. By providing the FCC with a subset of the modifications proposed in RM-11306 the ARRL has offered an alternative that, it is hoped, will make it easier for the FCC to move at least part of the way in that direction.

And for the truly paranoid or perhaps those who are not familiar with the FCC's table of authorized emissions in Part 97, here is specific information about the CW sub-band allocation. CW is not listed in the table of authorized emissions ONLY because it is covered by the blanket statement in 97.305(a): "(a) Except as specified elsewhere in this part, an amateur station may transmit a CW emission on any frequency authorized to the control operator." This isn't mentioned in RM-11306 or in the appendix to the ex parte statement because no change is proposed.

(End of ARRL Explanation)

Note also that I sent my comments to Jack, W0UCE, who has built and maintained the web site listing all the new NCS net frequencies (see the TEX website for a link). Seems he was ahead of me in making some comments directly to the ARRL. Here is what he had to say...

I wish you luck in efforts to talk sense into the heads of the leadership at ARRL Headquarters as well as Division leaders. However, I must tell you I am convinced their mind is already made up and NTS is NOT part of the plan.

In rebuttal to a very harsh letter I sent to the ARRL on March 22nd regarding the proposed amendment and criticism of the ARRL for not supporting NTS, a League official responded and of course supported their decision. In addition, the reply contained the following statement, and note the parts I have underlined: (QUOTE)

"We also continue to support NTS. CW nets are a terrific training ground and I hope they continue to perform that function for future generations of amateurs as they did for me. But they don't provide what the disaster response agencies we serve are currently looking for. We have to find ways of providing what they need."

Notice NTS CW was referred to as "THEY" and the ARRL's intent is to agencies "WE SERVE" – "We have to find ways" etc., which all means in "plain English versus Newington BS" that Data and Winlink are "In", CW/NTS is "OUT"... It is ARRL Headquarters way or no way.

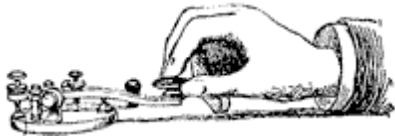
I feel it is time for NTS to be taken away from ARRL through formation of a new Independent National Traffic SERVICE...

73, Jack W0UCE

So, with all this background and diverse opinions, you can make up your own mind about what it all means. For my part, I did not fully understand until I received the final information, but I believe the comments I filed are still germane and what I said in the summary – no wider than 500 Hz – is what should apply.

Until next month, 73,
Steve K6JT

(TSN Corner follows on the next page)



TSN Corner

Texas Slow Net (Daily) 2000 CT 3552.0 Khz
http://www.geocities.com/scottamcmullen/Texas_Slow_Net.html
 Scott McMullen W5ESE
 TSN Net Manager

QNI rose this month, though the number of different stations checking fell slightly. As we enter Spring and Summer, I expect that may continue owing to the reduced range on 80 meters.

Here is an updated roster of active TSN stations. A warm welcome to the new stations AA0NI (Dan), W5GXV (Gene), N5NVP (Jim), and W5NW (Nels). Please join us as often as you can.

Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	City	State	Call	Name	City	State
AA0NI	Dan	Oklahoma City	OK	WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK
KB0AI	David	Ortonville	MN	N5NVP	Jim	Leesville	LA
K0CMH	Craig	St Louis	MO	W5NW	Nelson	Collinsville	OK
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia	AR
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	TX	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
W5GXV	Gene	Spring Branch	TX	W5VDM	Bill	New Ulm	TX
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	TX	KM5YQ	David	Irving	TX
WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches	TX

Field Day

Arley asked me to mention the utility that QRP CW rigs can provide during disaster communications, as they can operate from batteries for quite a long time. Also to point out that this equipment can be used to participate in nets like OTN, TEX, and TSN. He's right, as I've used a few different QRP rigs myself at times to participate in the CW traffic nets, and even crossmode (CW/SSB) on TTN. In fact, Rodney, W5DY, once sent traffic to me on TTN (using SSB), and I copied and asked for fills on a CW QRP rig! An operator with a QRP rig and traffic handling skills could be a real asset in a disaster.

Which got me thinking about Field Day. I've been helping to plan the Field Day effort for the local



A QRP rig: the Small Wonder Labs SW+

ARES group that I participate in again this year. I hope everyone on the net will think about participating in Field Day this June. At the Field Day station I participated in last year, W5ESE (+KD5MMM) / Class 2F, we had eight operators, but I was the only one confident enough in their CW skills to make any CW contacts. I suspect that other groups around the state may be similar. All the contacts I made were on simple QRP kit rigs, and they worked out well despite the crowded band conditions. I was able to help our group qualify for the natural power bonus. Over the next couple months, I'll describe a few ways that you can help your group's Field Day effort with your CW and traffic handling skills. If you plan to participate this year, please let me know about your Field Day group and its callsign, and I'll include it in an upcoming newsletter.

March Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 31, TOTAL CHECKINS 117, TOTAL TRAFFIC 53 BY 14 DIFFERENT STATIONS
 73 Scott W5ESE

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT