

# *The Texan*

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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

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February 2007



Howdy TEX'ans! I hope you are all keeping relatively warm in this cold winter weather that we have been having. When the temperatures stay in the 30's or below, I think of poor Jack, W5TFB, shivering there in his detached ham shack without heating. Brrrrr! NCS's, please excuse him ASAP from net when cold weather has set in.

As if the cold weren't enough, the long skip has been playing havoc with some net sessions, particularly for stations like Jack, who are mid-way between the majority of the north and south Texas regulars. Everyone skips right over him and vice-versa, even when we (north/south) can often hear each other as if nothing were wrong. The pattern seems to be changing somewhat. For the last couple months, it has been the early session that was impacted by long skip. The late session was relatively good. Now, the late sessions are starting to be the ones in trouble. As a result, all NCS stations should be sure to ask one or more of the net check-ins to call for QNI once you have completed the QNA list and called for QNI a couple times without result. Might as well make this a regular practice until we are out of the winter season. The band can (and sometimes does) change without warning, even in the middle of a net session.

Those of you who downloaded last month's newsletter a few days after it was published noticed something new had been added. Scott, W5ESE, the new manager of the Texas Slow Net (TSN) has asked to "piggyback" a page or two onto the TEX newsletter each month. Sounded like a great idea to me, so look for the "TSN Corner" at the end of this and future newsletters. Welcome to all the TSN'ers, too, who are not yet active on TEX. If you want to give TEX a try, please do. Just send slowly (at the speed you would like a response) when you check in and we will be happy to accommodate your needs.

## **A Clear Frequency For Net**

As those of you who regularly listen or check in have observed, the compressed CW allocation has resulted in a lot more activity on net frequency. NCS stations are advised to move off at least 500 Hz when a QSO or other activity is in progress on or near 3552. As a convention, let's first try DOWN from 3552 (i.e., 3551.5 or below) to find a relatively clear spot. If none can be found within 1.5 KHz, then go UP (but no higher than 3553) to find a spot. If all frequencies have activity (such as in a big contest), just pick a spot

with the weakest and/or least QRM and go for it. Net members should tune down first, looking for the NCS if other activity is heard on 3552. Then tune up if nothing is found. Keep in mind that with skip conditions, the NCS may be able to hear a station that you cannot and will move off frequency. Finally, if there is indeed a big contest scheduled, we will move to 3643 on Saturday night. I will try to send an E-Mail to everyone Saturday morning if it looks like we will need to do this. A couple TEX members will be unable to check in there, but the majority of regulars will be OK.

Sometimes problems can be avoided by coming to net frequency 10 minutes early or so and calling each other in an effort to discourage stations from calling CQ. If you have the time and can do this, please try. I try to be there earlier than net time to “test the skip” if nothing else. You can also answer a station calling CQ and invite him to join us on TEX. We are lucky to have a new TEX member, Eddy, K5WQG, in Tomball, who started calling CQ a couple minutes before net time one night. I talked with him briefly before net and Rodney grabbed him after net as he stayed to listen to what we were up to. Eddy had never participated in a traffic net before so he spent some time listening (and reading some of the operating info on the TEX website) before checking in for the first time. Now he is a “veteran” with several check-ins under his belt. Please join me in welcoming Eddy to TEX. Just wait, Eddy, we’ll have some traffic for you sooner or later. That’ll be the real fun ☺

Those of you who can make it a little early, please try to do the same, and introduce some new stations to our net. Note that even if they are not in Texas, everyone is welcome.

### **Drafted Noise**

I am being plagued by some sort of frequency-dependent noise that affects the entire 3500 to 3600 range. It does not appear above 3600 to any degree and drops off below 3530. Thankfully there is a “low point” right at 3552 (imagine that!) where the noise is only about S6. It is not too noticeable down 3 and up 3 (perhaps S7), but by up and down 5 it quickly climbs to S9+ levels. While I can copy most TEX stations up to 6 KHz away from net frequency, assuming conditions are normal and I use the 150 Hz filter, it is making my TCC and RN5 liaison work very difficult.

I have cut the main breaker to my house (I operate my radios from storage batteries most of the time) and noted absolutely no difference in the noise, so it is coming from a neighbor’s place. It is on both day and night, so I suspect it is some sort of switching power supply being used as a battery charger or some such thing. It never goes away although the signal strength seems to be stronger as the evening progresses. That may be only my perception, though, since the panoramic scan on the rig looks pretty much the same and background “band noise” is higher in the early hours, somewhat masking the artificial noise.

If anyone has experienced something like this, please let me know (and how to solve it). In the meantime, NCS stations, please try to not send me off net frequency by more

than 3 KHz. If necessary, you can send me to 3643 to take traffic from another station who also can operate there.

It is noteworthy that 3643 (and most of the 3600 range) is completely unaffected by this noise source. I believe it has been there for years – I just did not pay much attention until we were forced to move down in frequency. Thanks FCC for hijacking our CW frequencies (grumble grumble). Every time I check, 3643 is clear of activity. In fact 3610 to 3680 or so is generally completely empty. So what good did giving away the 100 KHz + spectrum do? None, as far as I can tell. Only create hardship for those of us who try to maintain the ultimate communication backup system.

### **Feature Story (?)**

I did not receive any feature stories for this month, but I do have a couple things that will take their place.

*First, Pete, K5GM, sent me the following link to an interesting article on how to get a wider bandwidth out of your 75/80 meter antenna. This should be of particular interest to those who operate both the SSB and CW nets. Thanks, Pete...*

The latest ARRL contest newsletter has a reference to a technique for broadbanding 80/75 meter antennas, which might help some of our TTN reps!

The URL is <http://www.cebik.com/trans/wb.html> ,

and the page is entitled: “Notes on a Wide-Band 50/75-Ohm Coax Feed System for Low HF Band Dipoles and Vees”, by L.B. Cebik (of course!).  
73, Pete

*Second, I received this general interest story link from one of my local club members:*

Exploits of city’s first amateur wireless operator remembered...

With the flick of a finger on a key, one can carry on a conversation with someone around the world. Many teenagers have been captivated by the magic of amateur wireless radio. For more of this story, click on or type the URL below:

<http://newstribune.com/articles/2007/01/23/community/342com01.txt>

*I hope you enjoy them.*

### **TEX Mailbox:**

**Doug, KA5KLU**, has taken over as the South Texas Section Traffic Manager (STM) from Don, AC5XK, who has had to travel a lot recently. Those of you in the South Texas section can send your station activity and PSHR reports to Doug now. We thank

Don for his many years of service and wish Doug good luck in his new job. Note that Carolyn, KC5OZT, is the STM for North Texas.

**Scott, W7IZ**, the STM of Oregon (and the NCS on PAN my TCC Fox night) sent along some interesting links. First is one to a site that “demonstrates” that Ludwig Von Beethoven was a CW aficionado (sort of). Check out: <http://www.zerobeat.net/morse505.html> for a little fun.

Secondly, Scott forwarded this link to a web site (in Germany) where the sounds made by various types of digital RF interference have been collected and categorized... Here is a link to the website of Leif Dehio, who has recorded and classified just about every digital sound you are likely to come across on the HF bands today. <http://www.signals.taunus.de> .

**Scott, W5ESE**, passed along the following “thank you” from the W5 QSL bureau chief: Hi Scott: I have seen a couple of guys send in envelopes who noted they received a radiogram saying they needed to get stuff in to the bureau so the traffic is doing some good. I imagine Mike the "S" sorter may have a "T" list for you as he handles both. I will make a note to remind the others again of your offer to handle traffic to the folks needing a prodding!

Thanks for the work and pass along thanks to the traffic guys too.  
73 - Jerry K5YAA

Scott also received the following from the “B” letter sorter, Pete, KF5RD:

Got the box from the BURO and in it were the following envelopes:  
KI5BR, KI5BQ, KE5BL, W5BOL, K5BZM, AA5BE, WA5BKN, AD5BV, KC5BJI, KC5BYE, N5BE.  
K5BGH sent five SMALL SASE's!  
W5BUD sent stamps for his SASE's!  
N5BF sent stamps for his SASE's!  
Thanks to you and the CW folks for passing this traffic.  
73, Pete

**Eddy, K5WQG**, our newest TEX member, wrote the following – it is always great to meet another good CW operator and even better to have them join us on TEX: Hi Steve,  
Yes, I knew there were traffic nets, but always stumbled on them in progress (heard the "QNI"s) and would just move on, not fully understanding all that was going on. So now, having stepped on your beginning, I have an excuse to figure it all out and get involved.

Went to your web site - great info! Printed a lot, and will be listening in for a bit to get the procedure down.

73 and I'll be checking in soon, Eddy

**Lee, K5UN**, is recovering well from his surgery and is again back on TEX for his RN5 and NCS slots. Unfortunately, the first night he came back there were severe problems with his “Four Square” vertical array on 80 meters. He tracked it down to somewhere in or around the control box. Bypassing the control box got him back on the air, but he is still having some intermittent problems. Good to have you back with us, Lee, and hope you can get those antenna problems resolved.

In case you are wondering what a “Four Square” set of verticals looks like, here’s a picture of Lee’s antennas up in Leonard, taken from his website ([www.k5un.com](http://www.k5un.com)) along with a description of his “farm”. That’s his “shack” near the middle of the picture.



Can you find these? ... 40 Meters – Delta Loop at 50 ft., 80 Meters – Four-Square (Four 67 ft. phased verticals), 160 Meters – Sloper at 100 ft., Tower 1: 60 ft. with 2-element 5-band quad, Tower 2: 100 ft. with stacked 4 element 20 meter yagis. W O W !!!

I mentioned at the top of the newsletter that **Jack, W5TFB**, has problems in cold weather. The following excerpt from one of his E-Mails gives you an idea of just how cold and icy it was at his place last month:

At 9:30 I couldn't get the door open to the shack. Frozen solid. It is glass and I thought boiling water would be a bad idea. Tried chipping my way in but it was too thick and I couldn't get underneath it. I went up there today to turn off a light and the radio but still

stuck. It's 32, but very light icy snow or light flaky sleet. I'll start on it early before early TEX. *Whew! That's cold! Ed. Later on that day, Jack wrote the following:*

The ice is weak now after all afternoon at 33. I opened the door just a little, and can move the now unstuck ice away with my shoe.

It is cold in the unheated shack but I'm not there long. When I was a kid in Wichita Falls my shack was a screened porch on the north east side of the house. I had a heater: an electric iron with a broken thermostat (it was always on). That kept my feet warm. Later I had a KW amplifier (pair of 813's, 80 and 40 only), and that helped after I had built removable coverings of plywood for the windows. I was active in traffic, both the NTS and with W4PL early in the morning. January and February were cold. My brother Gary and I slept in an unheated garage with a gravel floor.

So I'm no stranger to cold, and was more comfortable in Sioux Falls, Ithaca, and Minneapolis, where I spent the summer almost every year. I spent a year in Europe, mostly in Germany and France, and the winter was horrible.

Anyway, I can take the cold as long as it doesn't last longer than an hour or so.

See you on TEX. 73, Jack

**Doug, KA5KLU**, wrote the following after the first night Lee, K5UN, came back and then had antenna troubles. Doug was good enough to jump in to take the early RN5 liaison:

Believe Lee was having problems with his keyer or maybe antenna. I took the early RN5 but can't be there for the late one. I have to pick up my son from college.

That reminds me one time I was passing traffic on RN5 and my keyer came apart all over the shack. Springs went flying and here I was working like a trojan trying to get it back together. People calling me from every direction. I never did get it together before the net was over. I have a second keyer now that is within arm's reach. If my main one flies apart I just have to plug the other one into the rig. It was funny but not so funny too. :)

**Bert, AC5Z**, let us know about the Space Shuttle Columbia Special Event Station event that took place on Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hope some of you were able to participate. This was the 4th Annual Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery Special Event Station sponsored by the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club. This Special Event is to recognize and remember the effort by all the Amateur Radio Volunteers during the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in February of 2003.

Finally, **Pat, KD5TXD**, provided always entertaining anecdotes as follows:

Hi, I don't think I told you about SKN. I had 21 hours of fun. Couldn't stay awake all 24 hours. I made 31 contacts. Hey, that isn't a lot, but one must remember I am slow. Just think, next year I will be mega fast and y'all will have to eat my dit dah dust.

Most of the folks had interesting stuff to talk about. One fellow up on a mountaintop in New Mexico was bragging about being 6700 feet above sea level with his antenna 70 feet up in the pine trees. What could I say to top that?? I responded that I was 67 feet above sea level in the Wild Horse Desert of South Texas and there wasn't a pine tree in hundreds of miles. He came back stating it must be hard to string the G5RV to the wild horses.

All but one person was willing to slow down for me. One fellow kept sending his information just a bit too fast. I asked three times for him to slow down, QRS. Finally I tapped out that I am old, have been at the key for 18 hours, and just couldn't copy at his speed. He slowed down and told me that he was trying to make 100 contacts on SKN. I wished him good luck but I wasn't going to feel guilty about keeping after him to slow down. He would have made two more contacts in the time it took for him to slow down to give me his name. Am I stubborn or what? *(Yup, a virtue for CW ops ;-)*

I asked everyone what kind of key they were using. Most were on J38's. One fellow had a Vibroplex double key. Oh, the pangs of envy. I have asked Charles to get me one of those. Funny how his hearing is fading in his old age. *(I took a look at the Vibroplex website – at over \$450.00 a pop, my hearing would be pretty bad, too – Ed.)* Many of the QSL cards I have received from SKN had pictures of the beloved straight keys on them. What fun. I also got some kind comments on my homemade QSL card with the picture of my sounder and Bunnell-S *(see previous newsletters – Ed)*.

As you know, I had antenna problems early part of January. I kept telling Charles that my G5RV wasn't working right. He generally ignores me. I finally convinced him to listen to my two antennas. The 80 meter loop is always much quieter but doesn't transmit as well or the same as the G5RV. The G5RV is noisy but is better for longer distances and certain band conditions. He listened and the G5RV was silent. He finally decided I had a problem with my antenna.

In order to perform surgery on the G5RV Charles had to get up on the roof. That is the real reason he was trying to ignore my plight. Well, he discovered the connector was, well, not connected at the apex of the G5RV. He wanted me to get the soldering iron for him. Now, I don't climb ladders. So I had to toss up a rope attached to one of my old purses with the soldering iron, solder, and damp sponge so he could pull up the tools. Charles's rule is "only one trip up the ladder per day". Ok, he soldered the connector back to the legs of the G5RV, came inside, and tried to tune up. No go!!

The next step was to take the whole thing down. So, next sunny afternoon Charles climbed up on the roof and totally removed the G5RV. He replaced it with the emergency spare G5RV. I had wanted him to put up the trap dipole just for a change.



When he took a look at the ladder line he discovered several spots where the line was broken. Gosh, no wonder you couldn't hear half of the traffic I was sending.

Antennas are back up and all is well in the Wild Horse Desert. 73!!! Pat KD5TXD

### TEX Net Topics

The following shows the current NCS and liaison station assignments, which have not changed since last month.

#### TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>NCS #1</b>	W5DY	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5Z	W5TFB	AC5Z	W5GKH
Backup	W5GKH		W5TFB	K6JT	W5DY	W5DY	
<b>NCS #2</b>	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K6JT	K5UN	N5PWG	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup			W5DY	K6JT	K6JT	W5TFB	
<b>RN5 #1</b>	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K5UN	K5UN	W5TFB	W5TFB	W5CU
Backup			W5TFB				W5GKH
<b>RN5 #2</b>	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K5UN	K5UN	W5TFB	W5TFB	W5CU
Backup			W5TFB				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 Rodney, W5DY, edged out Pat, KD5TXD, with QNI of 48 (77%) versus 45 (73%). Bert, AC5Z, came in 3<sup>rd</sup> with 24. It appears Pat suffered from a lack of 3 twice last month. First with the QNI total and second with traffic total. Would you believe she had a traffic count of 497? Yup, just THREE shy of the 500 needed for BPL ! Quite an achievement, Pat. Perhaps 500 in March?

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table, which is then followed by the updated member roster. All statistics were down from December, but that was to be expected considering it was a record high month. Traffic averaged 3 per net session. Net time averaged about 14.3 minutes per session. Check-ins were down, too, averaging 5.5 per net session.



**TEX Net Statistics (January 2007)**

			total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
KB0AII	Dave	0	1						
		1							
W5CDX	Wads	1	5						
*		4			2				
AC5CI	Homer	1	1						
		0							
W5CU	Sam	7	12		4				
*		5			4				
NV5D	Martin	2	2						
		0							
W5DY	Rodney	23	48	5	1	10	1		
		25		4	2	3			
N5EL	Floyd	13	13						
*		0							
W5ESE	Scott	18	22					15	
*		4						4	
W5GKH	Charlie	10	20	5	6	5			
*		10		10	6				
K5GM	Pete	2	2						
*		0							
KJ9J	Newt	16	16						
*		0							
K5JRN	Si	1	3						
*		2							
K6JT	Steve	25	55	5	1		24		
*		30		7	2		30		
K0KJ	Eric	1	2						
*		1							
KA5KLU	Doug	10	15	5	5			1	
*		5		5	5			1	
K5KV	Benny	1	1						
		0							
W6LFB	Jim	1	1						
*		0							
N5PWG	Jay	0	4						
*		4		3					
K5RG	Ken	6	13						
*		7							
W5TFB	Jack	12	20	4	11				

			total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
*		8			8				
W5TV	Tom	1	1						
		0							
KD5TXD	Pat	24	45			2			24
*		21				2			21
W5UFG	Ken	1	2						
*		1							
K5UN	Lee	4	8		3				
		4		2	2				
K5WQG	Eddy	3	3						
*		0							
AC5Z	Bert	24	24	7					
*		0							
Totals		339		62	62	22	55	21	45
				100%	100%	35%	89%	34%	73%
QTC 1		108	184						
QTC 2		76		Sessions:		62	100%		
Time 1		512	890						
Time 2		378							

### TEX Roster

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
N5BA	Brian	Houston	K5KV	Benny	Star
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	W6LFB	Jim	Denton
AC5CI	Homer	Caldwell	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	# N7NET	Scott	Allen
NV5D	Martin	Allen	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
* W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	# N5NVP	Jim	Leesville LA
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	* N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
* W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	K5RG	Ken	Houston
AA7FY	Mark	Fort Worth	KC5T	Bob	Houston
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
K5GM	Pete	Austin	W5TV	Tom	Nacogdoches
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	* KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	# W5UFG	Ken	College Station
* K5JRN	Si	Denton	* K5UN	Lee	Leonard
KD5JSS	Dennis	Temple	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde
* K6JT	Steve	Plano	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball
KØKJ	Eric	San Antonio	AC5XK	Don	San Antonio
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	* AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)

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

Until next month, 73, Steve K6JT

## TSN Corner

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



Activity was up this month, with a QNI of 145 (up from 124), a traffic count of 55 (up from 38), with 23 different stations checking in at some point during the month (up from 17). It's great that participation has picked up now that the holidays are over.

Here is a list of area stations that have been active on TSN in the last month. I've shortened the list a bit to include only area stations and those out-of-state stations that have checked in a few times. I believe this will make the list easier to use, and help everyone get to know other net participants better.

### Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	City	State	Call	Name	City	State
N5AF	Sam	Cleveland	TX	K5RDW	Ron	Vilonia	AR
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	W5VDM*	Bill	New Ulm	TX
KN8KAZ	Franklin	Buda	TX	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball	TX
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	TX	N5XGG*	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches	TX
WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK				

\* need email address

If anyone has addresses for the members that I lack them for, please pass them along.

### January Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 31  
TOTAL CHECKINS 145  
TOTAL TRAFFIC 55  
BY 23 DIFFERENT CW TRAFFIC STATIONS

That's all the news I have for this month; my best to everyone!

73

Scott W5ESE

*The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT*