

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

Net Manager: Steve Phillips, K6JT, Plano TX
(k6jt@arrl.net, 972-517-3332)

Assistant Manager: Don Perese, AC5XK, San Antonio TX
(dogan@perese.com)

January, 2006



Happy New Year fellow TEX members! I hope you all had a great Christmas and safe New Year celebration. Many thanks to those who jumped in to help during the holiday weekends when many of us were otherwise occupied with family affairs. Thanks to your efforts, we missed only one net session (early Christmas eve) and we only missed one other RN5 session during the entire time. A very good showing, I believe, considering all the other activities during that time. Thanks again for helping to make TEX a vibrant and growing net.

Welcome to new (or returning, as the case may be) net members: Jim, N5NVP, in Leesville LA; Ken, W5UFG, in College Station; and Lee, K5UN, in Leonard (NE Texas). Jim, 'NVP, is an AEC in Vernon Parish and has been active on TSN. He is interested in learning good CW traffic handling procedures for use in times of need. He used to be an Air Force CW intercept operator, so you can throw traffic at him at any speed you can send ;-). Ken, 'UFG, has a lot of experience handling traffic on SSB, but now is interested in becoming more familiar with the CW net procedures. Lee, 'UN, used to check into TEX and was active on both TEX and RN5 back in the 70's. Please join me in welcoming them to our "family" on TEX.

Conditions were again mixed this past month, with the band changing around even during the 7 PM net. That makes it really tough on the NCS stations and confusing for the net members as well. But you all did a good job with it. Remember to ask for QNB as an NCS and if you detect that the band may be out a bit, have a station that is far away from you send a "QNI" call to pick up some members that may not be able to copy you (or that you may not be able to copy). Refer to last month's newsletter for other tips on relaying when conditions are poor.

In keeping with presenting some profiles of our TEX members, this month I am happy to be able to share some inputs from Floyd, N5EL, and Sam, W5CU. I find it very interesting to learn about the experiences of our members outside of net operation and I hope you will, too. It also puts a face and personality behind that key on the air.

Floyd has been a long time TEX member and helps out a lot with the hard-to-deliver West Texas traffic as well as his own local area around Temple, which is located about midway between Waco and Austin, 65 miles north of Austin along highway 35.

What you may not know is that Floyd has a twin brother, Lloyd, in California. His call is N6EL. The story of how the twins managed to get identical calls in different call areas was published in QST in May, 1996, and an excerpt of this article follows. The picture also appeared in QST. Can you guess which is Floyd and which is Lloyd? E-Mail me with your guess and I'll publish the results in next month's bulletin.



Floyd is N5EL. His identical twin Brother is N6EL. How'd they do that? In 1977, when the FCC allowed Extra Class licensees to apply for special call signs, Floyd was K5OKQ and Lloyd was W6PXB (ex-K5ELY). They wrote a joint letter to the FCC and sent a Form 610. On the same day, April 2nd, they received N5EL and N6EL.

They got interested in ham radio near the end of World War II when their oldest brother was captured by the Germans in the Belgian Bulge. The war department sent a "missing in action" telegram to the family. A few months later they received a post card from an Amateur Radio Operator living in New York City saying he'd intercepted a message from a German station giving a list of prisoners being transferred from one prison camp to another. The brother's name was on the list. Within a few weeks they had a postcard from the brother in the prison camp, as had been noted from the radio operator.

The callsign K5OKQ now is issued to Floyd's son and K5ELY to a nephew in AR. Lloyd also has 3 sons who are Amateur Operators, WD6ACO, ACP and ACQ. Floyd and Lloyd could be heard making CW contacts as well as some ARQ on 15 and 20 meters several times a week back in the 90's.

Floyd's XYL is Wilma R., N5ELW, and he has 3 children: Linda Kay Lake, granddaughter Kim, great grandkids Kelsea, Kori, and T.J.; Floyd David Jr., K5OKQ; and Bonnie, WB5YTH, with granddaughters Jamie Jay, Roxanna Louise Ginnett, and grandson, Rocklin Conner Elliot. Note that Bonnie has David's old call of WB5YTH.

Sadly, Lloyd, N6EL, is no longer able to operate the radio due to health problems. As of August 2002, he and Floyd made their last CW contact together after 45 years of many from all over the world. Lloyd is still licensed and listed in databases.

Quite a story, eh? Floyd is also active as a tour guide in a local railroad museum and yes, he does know "real" Morse Code (as opposed to the continental code we all use on the air) and can still read a "sounder" like the railroads used with their wireline telegraph system. He also collects and customizes bug keys – more on that in a future issue.

Sam, W5CU, our neighbor to the north in Oklahoma, is a regular QNI to TEX. There is no CW NTS section net in Oklahoma, so Sam has been working overtime as the sole RN5 liaison station for some time now. Only Arley, WB5NKC, also operates QRQ CW in Oklahoma, according to Sam, so an NTS CW net is not very practical. Information from Arley, who is active on TSN and the ARTS nets, appeared in a previous issue of

The Texan. Sam provided the following information in an E-Mail exchange, and I am pleased to be able to share it with you...



I typically run 500 watts into a G5RV in a dipole configuration up about 30 feet. The rig is a Yaesu FT 1000 MP to a Yaesu solid state amp.

I was TEX manager for three or four years in the late 70's during my post-graduate education phase in Houston (and later Lufkin), and I tried to crank a bulletin out every couple of months. Of course, we had no computers or Internet then, so I had to rely on a marginal electric typewriter, a copy shop and the US Mail. It was not a very slick product, but I quickly observed that there is a direct correlation between the use of a newsletter, no matter how primitive and barebones my versions were, and QNI. They really keep folks interested and involved. TEX seems to be doing well, and I think the current version of the old TEXAN has much to do with the success of the net.

As a little background on me, I was licensed in 1965 at the tender age of 14. I've always been into nets; I was NCS on the 8E7XY Navy Mars net and on the Texas Traffic Net before my voice changed. I stayed on the air throughout college up to my years as TEX manager when I discovered CW and it became my favorite mode of transmission. Later, in 1980, I moved to OK and soon took on NM responsibility for OLZ for 3 or 4 more years. Unfortunately, most of our regulars died off or moved away, we could not seem to attract any newcomers, and the net folded in 1984. The Garvins (Arley and Pat) have kept the slow-speed net going, mostly with out-of-state check-ins, however.

I moved away from traffic handling and into ARRL politics after that, serving as Vice-Director and Director of the West Gulf Division until 1994. I traveled all over Texas and OK during that period to attend most of the hamfests and twice a year to Newington for the Board meetings. I learned about many phases of the amateur radio service that I had never experienced before and met many interesting people during this period, but I was ready to hang 'em up for awhile. Since then I've been helping with our local club here in Edmond, working some island DX (ZF2CU using the Cayman Amateur Radio Assn. club station three times) and keeping my hand in traffic through RN5. I enjoy DX and have worked hundreds of countries I suspect, but after 40 years I still don't have DXCC due to my general laziness and lack of attention to QSLing!

BTW, did you hear the story about my chance encounter with one of our RN5 regulars? Back in October, my wife and I were returning from a business meeting in Santa Fe. We were driving through Amarillo east-bound on I-40 when the hunger bug bit, so we exited and pulled in a parking lot at a nearby Fazoli's. My wife was driving, and as I was getting out of the car I watched a minivan with Alabama plates scoot into the space next to us, and a woman about my age rolled down the window and asked if I was Sam.

Long story short, Pat, W4QAT, piled out of the minivan and introduced himself. Pat and I have been sending CW to each other on RN5 for, I don't know, maybe 15 or 20 years and had never met. Pat saw my callsign license plates and practically forced his driving daughter to follow us off the interstate. Pat, his daughters, and a son-in-law were headed back to Alabama from Arizona, I think, where he had attended a reunion of his military unit (WWII vintage). We all went inside and had a nice meal, took some photos and went our separate ways. Even my wife, who has not always been an amateur radio fan (due, I concede, to some of my past operating excesses), thought this was a pretty neat event.

73/ Sam W5CU

Thank you Sam for the mini-bio and interesting anecdote. It is a small world, after all, and our amateur radio brotherhood helps to make it a friendly place.

TEX Net Topics

You will notice that there are quite a number of changes in the weekly schedule of NCS and RN5 liaison stations below. It appears that Charlie, W5GKH, is QRT for a while, so his Sunday and Monday slots have been partially filled. Bert, AC5Z, consented to take the hard-to-fill weekend early NCS slots in exchange for his two during the week. Roger, K5HHS, stepped in to take the Monday slot. Sam, W5CU, has now taken the Sunday night RN5 slots. Don, AC5XK, and I have shuffled around some of the other slots for NCS and RN5 as well. We still have many openings, as you can see, so please give them a try if you are able.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	K5HHS	KA5KLU	K6JT	K6JT	K5HHS	AC5Z	AC5Z
Backup			N5EL	AC5XK		AC5XK	K6JT
NCS #2	<i>Open</i>	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5XK	N5PWG	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>
Backup	K6JT		N5EL	K6JT		AC5XK	K6JT
RN5 #1	<i>Open</i>	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU
Backup	K5JRN			N5EL	KA5KLU	W5TFB	
RN5 #2	<i>Open</i>	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU
Backup	N5EL			N5EL	KA5KLU	W5TFB	

TEX/1: 3643 at 19:00 local; TEX/2 3643 at 22:00 local
 RN5/1: 3650 at 19:30; CAN: 3670 at 20:30; RN5/2: 3650 at 21:30 local

RN5 Backups: N5EL, K5JRN, K6JT, KJ9J, KA5KLU, K5RG, W5TFB, AC5XK
 NCS Backups: N5EL, K5HHS, K5JRN, K6JT, KA5KLU, N5PWG, AC5XK, AC5Z

I listed some specific backups in the chart, but those are only guidelines based on past performance. If you are available, please respond to the NCS's call for the RN5 station.

If you are not listed in the chart, feel free to volunteer to take RN5 later on in the general QNI callup. Finally, if you don't hear the regular NCS start the net by one minute after the hour, give him a call and then, if no answer, please QNG.

Statistics:

This month the prize for most check-ins goes to Floyd, N5EL, who edged out Homer, AC5CI, by only 2 QNI. Floyd will be receiving a "key pad" – a section of non-slide shelf liner to put under his bug of choice for the evening to keep it steady, thanks to Jack, W5TFB, who sent me a couple sections and put forth the idea.

TEX Net Statistics (December 2005)

Call		QNI	Total QNI	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
W5CDX	Wads	3	7					
*		4			2			
AC5CI	Homer	22	47					
		25						
W5CU	Sam	5	5					
*		0						
NV5D	Martin	1	1					
		0						
N5EL	Floyd	22	49		1			
*		27		1	2			1
W5ESE	Scott	1	1					
*		0						
K5HHS	Roger	17	17	6		14		
*		0						
KJ9J	Newt	16	16					
*		0						
K5JRN	Si	17	30		4		8	
*		13			4		6	
KD5JSS	Dennis	0	1					
		1						
K6JT	Steve	23	51	9	3		18	
*		28		14	6		23	
K0KJ	Eric	4	4					
*		0						
KA5KLU	Doug	11	18	4	7	2		3
*		7		5	7	5		1
K5KV	Benny	2	2					
		0						
W6LFB	Jim	2	2					

			Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
Call		QNI	QNI					
*		0						
N5NVP	Jim	2	4					
		2						
K9PUI	Dick	1	2					
		1						
N5PWG	Jay	3	8					
*		5		4				
K5RG	Ken	8	22		1	1		
*		14			1			
W5TFB	Jack	11	14		5			
*		3			3			
W5TV	Tom	1	1					
		0						
KD5TXD	Pat	3	3			1		
*		0						
W5UFK	Ken	3	11					
*		8						
K5UN	Lee	0	2					
		2						
AC5XK	Don	16	29	3	8	5		16
*		13		7	6	11		13
AC5Z	Bert	16	16	8		1		
*		0						
Totals		363		61	60	40	55	34
				98%	98%	66%	90%	56%
QTC 1		111	162					
QTC 2		51		Sessions:		61	98%	
Time 1		528	861					
Time 2		333						

Notes on the TEX Net Statistics: Each station has 2 lines, the first is for session 1 at 7 PM and the second for session 2 at 10 PM. Similarly, the totals at the bottom are divided for each session. Percentages are calculated based on the total number of net sessions for all except “sessions”, which is based on total net meeting times.

Note that we were in session for over 14.3 hours this past month, a new record, but QTC totals were slightly down. QNI totals were slightly up, and I think a new record was set (as far as the recordkeeping I've been doing) with an even dozen QNI during a single session last month (Dec. 29, local time, TEX/1).

I've updated the net station list, shown below, with our newest members, but I also dropped a couple previous entries that were essentially "visitor" checkins. Nevertheless, the list continues to grow. Thanks to all of you who support TEX.

TEX Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
KF9AS*	Megan	Dallas			
N5BA*	Brian	Houston	W6LFB	Jim	Denton
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
AC5CI	Homer	Caldwell	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	N5NVP	Jim	Leesville LA
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	W5RCP	Ron	Houston
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	K5RG	Ken	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	N5SIG	Randy	Huntsville
K5HHS	Roger	Mathis	KC5T	Bob	Houston
KB5IZO	David	Irving	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	W5TV*	Tom	Nacogdoches
K5JRN	Si	Denton	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
KD5JSS	Dennis	Temple	W5UFK	Ken	College Station
K6JT	Steve	Plano	K5UN	Lee	Leonard
KA5KAB*	Carl	Baytown	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde (SA)
KØKJ	Eric	San Antonio	AC5XK	Don	San Antonio
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)

* I do not have the E-Mail addresses for these stations, or their E-Mail stopped working. If anyone knows how to contact them via E-Mail, please advise me. Jack, W5TFB, still has only intermittent E-Mail capability.

Operating:

This month's operating tips have to do with procedures during marginal band conditions and receiving traffic off frequency.

When conditions are poor with long skip, as we can expect more and more now that winter has set in, the NCS should always use the "QNV" directive when pairing up stations to move traffic. QNV means "Establish contact with ____ on this frequency. If successful, move to _____ and send traffic for ____." Thus, for example, if N5EL has one for RN5, and W5CU is the RN5 liaison, the NCS should send: "N5EL (wait for acknowledgment) QNV W5CU up 3 RN5". In response, Floyd would send "W5CU de N5EL up 3 K". Sam would then respond with something like "R de W5CU u 3 gg" if he hears Floyd OK. If he does not hear Floyd well enough to handle traffic, he would send something like "de W5CU QNP N5EL". In response to the "QNP" (unable to copy) condition, the NCS should find another station to help relay, using the QNB directive as outlined in last month's newsletter.

Although most of you “old timers” are familiar with moving off frequency to handle traffic, which is the normal process on CW nets, we have some new refugees from the SSB world who may not be all that comfortable with this procedure. When the NCS sends you off frequency to handle a message, for example using the QNV procedure outlined above, according to my recollection of the old operating manual, it is the station that will RECEIVE the traffic that first calls the sending station. The reason is that the receiving station can choose a clear spot where he/she hears no QRM (or local QRN) while the sending station may have different propagation conditions at his QTH.

This is not a “hard” rule, only a guideline. It works either way, of course. So when you are sent off frequency to receive traffic, choose your spot as close to the assigned frequency as possible and make a call. If you are the sending station, and you don’t hear a call within about 20 seconds after the QSY, go ahead and call the receiving station. Using the example above, if the net is on 3643, and “up 3” was assigned, then Floyd and Sam should set their rigs to 3646 and Sam should call Floyd there. While it is good practice to send “QRL?” first before making a call, it is generally not necessary in the upper CW sub-bands on 80 meters since activity is light. Obviously, don’t make a call if you hear someone else on that frequency – instead, move up 1 KHz more (if sent up) or down 1 KHz more (if sent down from net frequency) and make the call. By standardizing on the receiving station calling first, it will also allow the sender to tune around slightly to find the call if it is not right on the assigned frequency. Most of us have digital frequency readouts, so only a little arithmetic is needed to exactly hit the side frequency spot. If you are still working with an analog dial (yes, some good rigs with analog dials are still in use), then eyeball it as closely as possible.

Finally, if you have been sent off and cannot find your partner within about 2 minutes, return to net frequency and report this to the NCS, where Floyd would say something like, “No W5CU up 3” (using the example again). The NCS should then call the other station and repeat the process, sending the stations to a different offset frequency, possibly in the opposite direction.

I hope that helps sort things out better. Patience is a virtue, it is said, so please continue to be patient and helpful to each other on the net. I am very happy to say that I have observed NO cases of outright rudeness on the net, in spite of the fact that many of us OTs have to deal with various aches and pains on a daily basis, tending to make us a little crusty at times. Perhaps it is also a case of better “southern manners”, as I have recollections of some rather rude and impatient behavior from stations during my days on the nets in California. Slow and patient repeat of misunderstood directions and slower sending under poor conditions will go a long way toward making our on-air experience a happy one. With practice and patience, every one of us can become an A-1 CW traffic handler.

73, Steve K6JT