

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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

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New Year, Same ol' Conditions

Happy New Year, TEX'ans. I hope you had a good Christmas and New Year's celebration. We have turned over a new year (or mounted a new calendar), but ol' Sol does not seem to have taken much notice. Sunspots are still not happening with any frequency and long skip continues to plague us, particularly on early TEX. Seems like things actually improve by 10 PM for the late session, most nights at least.

TEX is not the only traffic net suffering. It is hurting the region nets (RN5 from my observations, RN6 and RN7 from what I read in their reports) and even the Area Nets like CAN and PAN have problems.

I don't know if conditions are partly to blame for the dismal traffic counts this past month. TEX had fewer than 100 messages passed. The RN6 and RN7 nets (I don't get an RN5 report) had counts as low as we did this past month. The only way to improve the activity is to generate some ourselves. I've been thinking of originating messages to some of you on TEX, just to get things moving a little. But we need more going outside the state (and coming in from outside) to keep the rest of the system "oiled". How about a new year's resolution to start sending more traffic to friends and family (or other hams we work outside net thanking them for the QSO)?

Congratulations and Thanks to Chuck, AA5J

As many of you may know, Chuck, AA5J, has jumped in to take the reins of the Texas Slow Net (TSN) following Scott, W5ESE's, notice of resignation effective January 1. Many thanks to Scott for his years of service and all the best of luck to Chuck in his new position. Now *there* is a good topic for a short radiogram from all of us to Chuck and also one to Scott thanking him for his service, too.

As I wrote to Chuck, just think: all CW traffic nets in the state of Texas are now managed from little old Plano, Texas! It would be good for one of you South Texas stations to volunteer to be Chuck's assistant manager. That way we'd have a good spread of representation. It really makes my job easier thanks to the able help and hard work of Rodney, W5DY, our TEX assistant manager! Now where are those West Texas stations???

W1NJM Saga

Thanks to Sis, WD8DIN, the editor of the "Traffic Call" newsletter of the Hit and Bounce Net (HBN – 0730 CT, 7042 KHz), for passing along George Hart's saga of the "early days". Here's Part 21 of George Hart's recollections. Geo continues to do his best for the sake of the AARS.

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. Chapter 21.

CHAPTER 21 - Penn State Rocky Middle Years

Meanwhile, at Penn State I gradually became a mainstay of the Radio Station Staff. By the end of my sophomore year I was in full charge of all AARS operations. Participation in ARRL trunk lines and other operation by myself and other members of the staff took a low priority, and I was empowered to oust anyone from the operating position if I had an AARS or other traffic-handling function to perform. I seldom had to use this prerogative, but I do remember one time when I arrived for a schedule and found Charlie Kearns at the key contacting friends at home. When he refused to vacate, I pulled his key plug out of the jack and moved his chair aside. He protested loudly but not physically (I was sort of wishing he would) and threatened to consult higher authority. I assume he did, but got nowhere. After that incident Charlie was a less frequent visitor to the station and remained cool with me. I regretted this only in retrospect. At the time, my sole determination was to maintain the integrity of our AARS commitment - a goal for which I had Crossley's complete support.

In the middle of my junior year, after a horrendous first semester academically and emotionally, I transferred from the School of Agriculture to the School of Liberal Arts, where I should have been in the first place. My nature was more attuned to the arts than the sciences, but my early farm experiences and love of animals had led me in the wrong direction. I switched from a major in animal husbandry and a minor in chemistry to a major in English composition and a minor in chemistry, the latter because I already had enough chemistry credits to qualify as a minor. The class schedule became easier, the subjects more in line with my basic qualifications. During the first semester, when my grades had reached the danger point, Crossley had restricted my attendance at W8YA, although he did not take away my key. I visited the station at every possible opportunity, trying to bury my emotions about a lost love by something with which I was familiar and at ease. It was a critical period. I suppose it might be said that my love of amateur radio rescued me from an emotional storm that might have had far more serious consequences - but I wasn't aware of this at the time.

During the summer of 1935 I went on one drunken binge after another with reckless abandon. Ed had reestablished W3NF at the farm and I spent a great deal of time in the third floor apartment in which he lived with his wife and child, operating the "rig" and trying to shake off depression. All in all, it was a bad summer. On my return to State College in the fall I found the academic pace easier and became reestablished as the undergraduate assistant manager of W8YA. Walter Hawk, W3AJN, who had returned for graduate work, became Gil's right-hand man. Hawk had become a close friend and confidante and helped me through some bad emotional storms during my senior year, during which I breezed through the academics and

recouped many graduation credits. Penn State was not the mammoth degree factory it is today. The Depression was still on, money was tight, and the college needed students. If it hadn't been for this, it is highly likely that I would not have survived.

During my senior year, although not fully recovered from mental depression, I felt atop the heap, respected if not admired by my fellow students, assured of graduation in the spring of '36. Life at W8YA went on pretty routinely. Walter Hawk changed keying arrangements so that the crystal oscillator was keyed instead of the first buffer stage, thus permitting break-in operation, a requirement in the type of operation conducted in the highest levels of AARS, but otherwise little was changed. In all my tenure at W8YA, which went on for a couple more years after graduation, no operation was conducted by voice or any mode other than CW. Crossley was vigorously opposed to it. Other members of the staff wanted to sack the old "breadboard" construction and build an entirely new transmitter capable of voice operation, but Crossley would not hear of it. I was not opposed to it, but entirely willing to continue with what we had and with our commitment to AARS.

It was the custom for the radio station staff to visit the national capital, Washington, each year with Gil Crossley in charge. I'm not sure just when these trips occurred, probably during spring vacation, or what the arrangements were, but I believe each student paid his own way under group rates wherever available. I went along on such trips at least twice, perhaps three times. Visits were made to the standard tourist attractions and, during the years of our AARS affiliation, to the AARS operating point in the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue and the transmitter location at Fort Myers, across the river in Virginia, about 7 miles away. There was also a receiving station at Battery Cove, MD, but this facility was seldom used for AARS and I don't remember that we visited it - at least not at that point in time. I do, however, have very strong memories of our visits to WLM/W3CXL at the Munitions Building and at Fort Myers.

On my first visit during my sophomore year, we met the officer-in-charge of the AARS facility, whose name I don't remember, and Pvt. Ed Day, who was the principal (not chief) operator of WLM. There were several other operators also. I became familiar with all of them but don't remember most of the names. One was Cal Skaggs, another named Bradley, several more now forgotten. My familiarity with them was mostly on the air, but some of them I met personally during those trips. The WLM facilities were crammed in with all the WAR facilities, largely ignored by the many commercial and military operators present. At the WLM position there was only a receiver and a keying jack through which the transmitter at Fort Myer could be keyed. Also, of course, a typewriter and the ubiquitous military forms. Ed Day was a highly proficient operator, as were also the other operators who attended the WLM position, all of them amateur licensees.

COMING IN CHAPTER 22: *The WLM Fort Myer operation and a visit to a burlesque show.*

TEX Mailbox:

Pat, KD5TXD, sent in a new book report last month, which I saved for this issue. Thanks again, Pat. Sure sounds like an interesting book...

The World of Ham Radio, 1901-1950 by Richard A. Bartlett is a fun and detailed account of Amateur Radio in the first half of the 20th century. The first part of the book went into detail

about events covered in the book, 200 Meters and Down. Details added include a notation that Hiram Maxim was informed that no amateurs south of Austin would be licensed or allowed to transmit during the time of General Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa. Now I don't know how many Amateurs that decree affected, but it was in effect in the Kingsville area.

The book covers communications efforts of Amateurs from World War I till after World War II. The author stated that food and munitions were the most important elements in winning a war, but the third element, communications, took on greater and greater importance with Amateur Radio shining through these traumatic events. There are lots of stories about emergency communications and hams on expeditions.

The part that touched my heart the most is the story of Pitcairn Island and its inhabitants. They had long been a stopping point for ships. A trade of local produce from the island for medicine and other necessities evolved over the decades. The islanders signaled passing ships first with signal fires, later with signal flags and signal lights. They had already learned Morse code before ever getting a spark gap rig. The Marconi Company gave the islanders a crystal receiver in 1922. A few years later a New Zealand ham gave them a code transmitter. They were able to contact ships within a range of about 150 miles. Pretty much the entire island's population was fluent in Morse code.

It was in 1931 that QST learned about the situation. Technology and laws moved on making spark gap transmission less likely to be picked up by passing ships. QST and hams got busy to get a more modern radio for the islanders. They solved the island's power problem with wind generators and batteries to run the rig. They got donations of the finest, most durable and easiest to use equipment of the age. Two shipping companies donated delivery services to get the gear to Pitcairn Island. For Amateurs this was both a selfless and selfish act; better communications for the tiny island and wonderful DX opportunities for hams all over the world.

Threaded throughout the book is also the Amateur Radio life of the author's father, Forrest Bartlett, W6OWP. What better tribute to the history of Amateur Radio could there be! If anyone wants to read this story, let me know and I will lend you the book. 73, Pat.

Sam, W5CU, pointed out a potential problem in retrieving the newsletters from the TEX website each month. If you receive my notification that a new newsletter is available, but when you go to the website all you see is the previous month's newsletter posting, click the "reload" button on your web browser. It turns out that many browsers, including Internet Explorer, cache web pages and display the cached version the next time you access the web site. So what you see is an older version. Since the web page changes very little, evidently the browser logic does not realize it has been updated.

You may have heard **Pat, KD5TXD**, checking into TEX and even running net control using a straight key in December (what a glutton for punishment – my arm and wrist ache just thinking about trying to do that!). She was practicing her sending in preparation for SKN. Now that SKN is over, and Santa apparently brought her some new weights to slow down the bug dots, she is back on again with one of her favorite keys. Let us know how it went on SKN, Pat.

Floyd, N5EL, appears to be located in prime "skip" territory. Too close to both north and south Texas to hear signals on those many nights this past month. Floyd writes: Hey Gang, for the last several early sessions I've not been able to hit any NCS stations for checkins, and

not hearing good sigs at all and having the same problem tonight too. Just barely hearing a weak sig on net freq. Sorry, hope I can get in again someday... 73 all, Floyd

Richard Webb, NF5B, put out another fine issue of the Brass Pounder's Quarterly. There were several very interesting topics covered including: NTS Training: The universal radiogram: still necessary and relevant; NTS outreach: HO HO HO!; and NTS: Past and present, a brief history lesson. You can view a copy of the newsletter by visiting the website <http://home.earthlink.net/~bscottmd/bpq0204.htm> .

Rodney, W5DY, wrote an E-Mail to ARRL asking about perhaps a petition to the FCC to re-allocate at least part of the 3600-3700 KHz range to CW / RTTY / Digital once again. Hurray for you, Rodney, and you can be sure we are ALL behind you in this. An excerpt from his mail is as follows:

Since the changes were made taking away exclusive use of the 3600-3700 portion of the 80 meter band for CW, I have done extensive monitoring in it. There is very little use of this portion of the band now. I have heard some SSB activity in the upper 25 kHz (3675-3700). Percentage of use during a one month period is less than 10%. From 3650-3675, percentage is less than 7%. From 3600-3650, percentage is less than 4%.

That is an awful waste of band space. There has been ample time for someone to make use of these frequencies. Since they are not being used enough, I think it should be given back to CW/RTTY/Digital. During contest weekends, the present allocation of frequencies for CW, etc. makes it almost unusable for net operation and QSO's.

Scott, W7IZ, Oregon STM and RN7 manager forwarded the following info from Dave, VE7DWG: The International Year of Astronomy Special Prefix Canadian Callsign starts January 1st 0h UT and ends Feb 27th 23:59 UT Feb 28 2009.

All Canadian Amateurs are encouraged to use it to commemorate Galileo Galilei's first look through an optical instrument towards the heavens. The Special Prefixes are

VE changes to CG; VA changes to CF; VO changes to CH; and VY changes to CI

The official kickoff date for IYA is January 10th and on that date many astronomy clubs across Canada and around the world will be participating in local astronomical activities. Displays at Shopping Malls, talks in Public Libraries, and star parties for the public will be happening. I am also encouraging those amateur Radio operators who are affiliated with the RASC (Royal Astronomical Society of Canada) that might have local IRLP access to visit node 9005 the Vancouver Reflector on January 10th to join in the across Canada IYA Net.

To find out more about this unique ham radio Special prefix and related projects visit <http://www.hamiya2009.info> .

Scott also had a link to a very nice CW "poem" in his RN7 newsletter. I think you all will enjoy it as much as I did. The URL is: <http://www.2hams.net/WB5KHC/cwpoem.htm> .

TEX Net Topics

We still have open RN5 liaison slots. Please consider filling one or more of the open slots as a regular or even backup station. Welcome back to Jay, N5PWG, who has again taken his "bug night" late Friday NCS slot. Sure glad to have you back again, Jay! But we still have **14** open NCS/liasion slots, with 6 open *primary* RN5 slots! Thanks to Sam, W5CU, and Rodney, W5DY, who have been filling the majority of them with Scott, W5ESE, and Ken, K5RG, helping out when they are able.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	W5GKH	AA5J	K6JT	AC5Z	KD5TXD	AC5Z	W5GKH
Backup	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	KD5TXD	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY	W5CU
NCS #2	W5GKH	AA5J	KD5TXD	K6JT	N5PWG	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	W5CU	<i>Open</i>	AA5J	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	AA5J	W5DY	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU	W5GKH
RN5 #2	W5GKH	W5CU	<i>Open</i>	AA5J	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	<i>Open</i>	W5DY	K6JT	W5DY	W5DY	W5GKH

TEX/1: 3552 at 19:00 local; TEX/2 3552 at 22:00 local

RN5/1: 3567/7045 at 19:30; RN5/2: 3567 at 21:30 local

TSN: 3552 - 19:45 local; CAN: 3552/7052 - 20:30 local; PAN: 3552/3557/7052 - 22:30 local

RN5 Backup: W5CU, W5DY, W5ESE, W5GKH, K5GM, AA5J, K6JT, K5RG

NCS Backup: W5DY, N5EL, AA5J, K6JT, KD5TXD, AC5Z

Statistics:

Traffic count was abysmal this past month, although QNI was a little better. Rodney, W5DY, with 35 (56%) again took top QNI for the month, followed by Pat, KD5TXD, with 31 (50%) and Ken, K5RG, with 28 (45%). Thanks to all of you for your support. Regardless of how often you can check in, every one helps to keep the net alive and well.

Had some visitors this month including Jerry (JV), AD0A, from Colorado, an old friend of mine from years back; Sam, N5AF, in Cleveland (near Houston); Lanny, K0EZ, in Colorado, who is my TCC Echo partner (TCC Golf); Arley, WB5NKC, checked in from OKC during the month; Kevin, K4PG, QNI'd from Florida a couple times; Rob, K6YR, who is the PAN manager, visited us; and Benny, K5KV, in Louisiana joined us from Star, his Texas home, on several nights. It was good to see Si, K5JRN, check in during the month after a long absence.

Welcome to Skip, KA8IXC, in Victoria, who joined us for several sessions this past month. Hope to see more of you in 2009, Skip.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic averaged 1.4 per net session (down from 2.2 last month). Net time averaged 12.7 minutes per session (compared to 12.8 last month). Check-ins averaged 5 per session (up from 4.5 last month).

TEX Net Statistics (December 2008)

Call		QNI	total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
AD0A	JV	0	1						
	CO	1							
N5AF	Sam	1	1						
		0							
W5CDX	Wads	0	4						
*		4			1				
W5CU	Sam	10	17		6				
*		7			7				
W5DY	Rodney	19	35	1	9		2		
		16		5	9				
N5EL	Floyd	14	14						
*		0							
K0EZ	Lanny	0	1						
*	CO	1							
W5ESE	Scott	16	16		3			12	13
*		0							
W5GKH	Charlie	9	19	9	6				
*		10		10	6				
K5GM	Pete	2	2						
*		0							
KA8IXC	Skip	3	3						
		0							
AA5J	Chuck	10	17	4	2		1		
*		7		4	3		1		
KJ9J	Newt	18	18						
*		0							
K5JRN	Si	1	1						
*		0							
K6JT	Steve	15	41	4	2		14		
*		26		7	3		24		
K5KV	Benny	4	6						
		2							
W6LFB	Jim	3	4						
*		1							
WA5MUF	Bill	3	3				2		
*		0							
WB5NKC	Arley	0	1						
		1							
N5NVP	Jim	7	18						
		11							
K4PG	Kevin	2	2						
	FL	0							
N5PWG	Jay	1	4						
*		3		1					
K5RG	Ken	10	28		1				
*		18							
W5SBE	Larry	0	1						
		1							
W5TV	Tom	1	1						
		0							
KD5TXD	Pat	16	31	4		15			
*		15		4		13			

			total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
K6YR	Rob	0	1						
*	CA	1							
AC5Z	Bert	18	18	9					
*		0							
Totals		308		62	58	28	44	12	13
				100%	94%	45%	71%	19%	21%
QTC 1		37	87						
QTC 2		50			Sessions:	62			
Time 1		460	786						
Time 2		326							

The roster, which follows, has been updated with Arley, Skip and Sam. Note the names and QTH's for the visitors are shown in the statistics table.

TEX Roster

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
N5AF	Sam	Cleveland	WA5MS	Marty	Highland Village
N5BA	Brian	Houston	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	# N7NET	Scott	Allen
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
NV5D	Martin	Allen	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City OK
* W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	# N5NVP	Jim	Scott LA
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	* N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
* W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia AR
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	K5RG	Ken	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	W5ROK	Steve	Richardson (K6JT)
W9GVW	Eric	San Antonio	W5SBE	Larry	Austin
KA9IKK	Bill	Houston	KC5T	Bob	Houston
KA8IXC	Skip	Victoria	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	W5TV	Tom	Nacogdoches
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	* KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
K5JRN	Si	Denton	AI6U	Chris	Sacramento (CA)
K6JT	Steve	Plano	# W5UFK	Ken	College Station
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	* K5UN	Lee	Leonard
W6LFB	Jim	Denton	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball
W5KNN	Ed	Bulverde (was KS5V)	# KM5YQ	David	Irving
K5KV	Benny	Star	* AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)

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

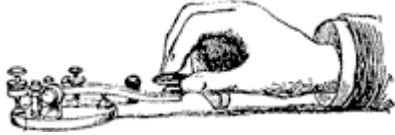
Operating:

Be sure to tune up and down from net frequency 2 or 3 KHz to look for the NCS should there be QRM on 3552 at startup time. For contest weekends, also check 3643, just in case.

Until next month, wish for more sunspots !

73, Steve

(TSN Corner appears on the next page)



TSN Corner

Texas Slow Net (Daily) 1945 CT 3552.0 KHz
http://www.geocities.com/scottamcmullen/Texas_Slow_Net.html
 Chuck Mayfield AA5J (AA5J@Verizon.net)
 TSN Net Manager

Net QNI was up slightly in December, 126 checkins. Here is a roster of stations that have participated in the Slow Net in recent months.

Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	City	State	Call	Name	City	State
W5AG	Arch	Lafayette	LA	WA5MS	Marty	Highland Village	TX
K8BBM	Dave	Selby	SD	AA0NI	Dan	Oklahoma City	OK
AC0BU	Carson	Corydon	IA	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK
W6EOD	Steve	Baker	FL	N5NVP	Jim	Scott	LA
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	K5RST	Ross	Zapata	TX
WD0ESF	Mike	Medicine Lodge	KS	N0SSS	Adam	Oklunion	TX
KA8IXC	Dan	Victoria	TX	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	TX	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	KJ5XF	Tony	Austin	TX
K6JT	Steve	Plano	TX	NH7WB/5	Joe		
W5KCM	Randy	Watauga	TX	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
WA5LOU	Lou	Kennard	TX	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches	TX
KD5MMM	Phil	Fentress	TX				

Straight Key Century Club Special Event, K3Y

Jan 1-Jan 31, 0000Z-2359Z, All US call areas. Straight Key Century Club, K3Y. Celebrating 3 years of steady growth, to over 4,600 members on CW. 14.050 10.120 7.055 3.550. QSL. Dan Rhodes, KA3CTQ, PO Box 3092, Erie, PA 16508. <http://www.skccgroup.com>.

This activity has in the last week spilled over onto our net frequency, so if you don't hear NCS, please scan up and down a bit for the net.

Thank You

Thanks to all of you for participating in the Texas Slow Net. Scott has given me permission to use the info from his Web site so I will be making a new TSN site when I stop procrastinating and finally get to it. I look forward to your continued participation in our Texas CW nets.

December Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 31, TOTAL CHECKINS 126,
 TOTAL TRAFFIC 37, BY 19 DIFFERENT STATIONS

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT