

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

**** See "TSN Corner" on the Last Pages ****

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A new Word Processor

I have changed over to using Apple's Pages word processor instead of MS Word for preparing the newsletter. You might see a few differences (and then again, you might not). Please let me know if you spot some unexpected misplaced text or pictures. I am now also able to generate an "E-Book" from the newsletter as well as the normal PDF. Is anyone interested in having it in that form (used primarily with a tablet device such as an iPad, which I now have)? If so, please advise.

Some Thoughts from EAN

A couple of months ago I reported that Pete, K5GM, had sent me an email digest of some thoughts about traffic handling from the Eastern Area operators. Here is a (somewhat) condensed version of that, which I am sure you will find interesting. You may not agree with all they have to say (I didn't), but it is worth reading. Note also that Richard Webb, NF5B, who is the Central Area NTS Chairman, has published a very thoughtful "White Paper" about NTS and its demise or future, as the case may be. A letter sent by Richard, and forwarded by Frank, W4DLZ, RN5 manager, follows after these EAN thoughts.

1a. Bulk originations

Posted by: "W2RU - Bud Hippisley" W2RU@frontiernet.net

To NTS- EAN and NTS-EAS groups:

It's been rather quiet (!) on the reflectors lately, so I thought I'd "think out loud" for a bit about the "bulk traffic" that currently seems to form the vast majority of the traffic handling we're doing in NTS. The reason for this posting is to encourage the rest of you who have handled (or refused!) any of this traffic to chime in with your own reactions and views regarding the utility or efficacy of this class of traffic. When responding, please post to both the NTS-EAN and NTS-EAS reflectors if you are replying publicly.

What follows are simply my observations as a "manual" traffic handler -- not as a net manager -- based on operating within our classic modes of message handling, not any automated or

semi-automated digital modes, although observations about origination and delivery are obviously independent of the mode.

I've been doing a TCC Alpha sked for a few weeks now, and I'm beginning to understand a little better the reasons why some stations in some parts of the country are declining to handle the bulk traffic that's out there. Bulk traffic represents perhaps 90% of the messages I have cleared to date on that sked, and I've found myself occasionally "resenting" this traffic. Why? Well, read on.

First, here are my personal feelings as to what is "good" about this traffic:

G1. Especially on CW, but not limited to CW, I think these messages provide excellent practice -- both sending and receiving. The sequence of Zip Code following by 10-digit Area Code is really challenging. I have a couple of high speed CW certificates here, but they were for text-based code proficiency runs; in contrast, the addresses in these messages are about as close as one can get to random code groups in plain-text messages! So nobody should feel badly about getting "bogged down" when handling them.

G2. In an emergency, Health & Welfare messages having a lot of common parts might well represent the bulk of the traffic coming out of, or going into, the affected area. Our ability to efficiently handle, re-route, process, and keep records of these Book messages currently found on all our traffic nets could be quite important in the period immediately following the event causing the emergency, before alternative systems are back in operation.

G3. (The obvious.) In the absence of "conventional", randomly originated traffic, these bulk originations keep our nets humming.

Next, here's what I personally dislike about these messages or the way we're dealing with them:

B1. I strongly believe that the only time we in NTS should be "skipping" the text of the message is when we have a standard, published ARL text number assigned to the entire text or part of it and we have referenced it in the Common part of the message. Here's why:

a.) The only formal "publishing" of any of these bulk message texts that I've seen was in WI2G's April ESS Newsletter. Each time I start a TCC Alpha pairing on CAN, I start into the Common parts of the Book message, and sometimes I'm interrupted by the RX station and told to skip the text, sometimes I'm not. Being a wimp, I haven't always stuck to principle, and I've gone along with the request to skip the text. This is wrong. The RX station is assuming that a message from N1IQI (for example) with CK 25 (for example) is a certain specific text. How does s/he know that? What happens if N1IQI dreams up a new bulk text that just happens to result in CK 25? How would that change get promulgated throughout the System? This is really sloppy SOP.

Editor's Note: This is where I disagree. There is little utility in wasting my time, or the receiving station's time, when we both know the text. There has been only a single instance in all my years of handling these bulk messages where the text had changed. But I knew it changed, and when the receiving station broke me, I simply said "new

text" and proceeded to send it. If you, as the sender, know it is one of the standard texts, then don't worry if the receiver breaks you and says QSL or some such before you finish the text. On the other hand, if the receiver does NOT break you, continue to send the text. They may not have a copy handy.

b.) I don't think we should have to be dealing with multiple lists of "standard" texts. I think if a text is worthy of having thousands of messages created around it, it should be voted into the ARL standard text numbering sequence. In a real emergency, I would expect those on the scene would possibly create an ad hoc list of standard texts based on that specific emergency, but that's not relevant to the current nonsense and slipshod procedures we have for handling these messages.

B2. I don't think most of the stations originating these bulk texts ever learned how to create a radiogram. "Brevity is the sole of wit"....and it should also be the sole of every radiogram. There are so many useless words in most of them, they should be rejected by the station who first receives them from the originator.

B3. These messages, in and of themselves, are not doing ham radio any PR favors. Specifically:

a.) Although they are technically "3rd party" messages by FCC's definition of same (since the recipient is not the Control Operator of any of the amateur radio stations involved in their relay), they flunk our historical 3rd party presumption of the originator and/or the recipient being a member of the lay public or a served organization.

b.) In the same vein as (a), they do nothing to bring about contact between amateurs and the lay public, or between amateurs and potentially served agencies, or to acquaint non-amateurs with some of the good that amateurs can do. It would be (slightly) better if the originator used a telephone book and sent messages to all residents of Massachusetts, reminding them that their automobile registrations run out at the end of the year. At least in that case, the recipient would be hearing someone saying "I'm an amateur radio operator and I have a message for you from...."

c.) Nobody requested these messages. There's no real originator, no served person or organization at the origination end. And they come as a surprise to the recipients.

d.) The originator of these messages does not have to move out of his/her own "comfort zone". What PR is involved, what risk is incurred by copying and pasting addresses and phone numbers from your own PC? All the "risk" of misunderstanding or rejection is thrown onto the delivering station and even then it's only minimal because the recipient is a ham. Of course, if the intended recipient is a dead ham, there's a lot of risk. But the originator doesn't give a damn about that....s/he's safe, hiding behind his/her monitor and keyboard.

I decided, after listing all the above points, that the source of my "resentment" mentioned at the beginning was ultimately the various points of item B3. I don't think bulk traffic is bad in and of itself, but I think the current originators of same are anti-social wimps who -- while they may be trying to keep the traffic nets busy and net members trained -- are failing to grasp the broader sense of why we do what we do.

You can't climb a mountain by pushing on a rope from below. If you want NTS or any system of nets to thrive and its members to grow in capability, you are best advised to create an external demand for that system. That requires contact with the public and with the agencies we claim to serve. It requires it at all levels -- from your own neighborhood to your local municipal government, your local hospitals and NGOs (non-government organizations), on up to larger areas. (Just make sure to ask your neighbor if s/he knows for sure that Uncle Fred she's originating a message to is still alive.) It requires working with your local (or nearby) radio club(s) to see that there's a message-originating amateur radio booth at your county fair or state fair; it requires extending an offer of help (uh, oh....that smells of commitment; sure don't want to do that!) to local emergency preparedness officials. And so on. You're all smart people; you don't need me to list all the levels of society it's possible for us to connect with. Yes, I realize it means you have to come up with a good reason why they should humor you instead of texting or sending an e-mail. (Hint: Mention Katrina. Mention Fukushima. Mention....)

And of course it should go without saying that it requires our sponsoring organization to be promoting our services to their counterparts in served organizations at the national level and to be assisting our recruiting efforts by promoting the merits of participation in NTS through a variety of enticing articles, blogs, etc., in QST, on the ARRL web site, etc.

If we want to exercise NTS, we should be identifying real, legitimate sources of true 3rd party traffic. Actually, ideally we want "4th party" traffic -- traffic from a lay person or served organization at one end going to another lay person or served organization at the other end. That builds business for us, it builds reputation for us, and it builds our own social skills. The originators of the current crop of bulk messages don't understand this.

Yes, I know that many of us (myself included) gravitated to this hobby because we began life as anti-social "geeks" and it was easy to hide behind the anonymity of the ionosphere when connecting with other people. But in any radio club I've been a part of, there's always been one or more PR types -- people who just love being "on camera", connecting with others using real "face time". If we don't want to do that ourselves, we need to find some of those folks and work with them, using them as our lobbyists and as our ad agency.

As Bob, KT2D, has observed in his recent posting, "I enjoy handling traffic but I think a string of six or more of these 'spam-o-grams' is not really in the spirit of the purpose of NTS. A few is fine but...I think it is overdone."

The current crop of bulk messages is a poor substitute for "real" traffic. Ultimately, the risk to NTS associated with these messages is that they tire us out and distract us from thinking about how to bring "real" traffic on behalf of real "third and fourth parties" into the System.

Bud, W2RU

1b. Re: Bulk originations

Posted by: "Glenn Killam" ve3gna@xplornet.ca

Bud: While there is considerable merit in many of the points you bring up regarding "bulk" messages, I must take exception to the comment about stations declining bulk traffic. Many stations do in fact prefer not to handle such traffic but I have been told by at least one digital station in Washington state as well as a couple of phone ops in Wisconsin, that they thoroughly enjoy handling the traffic that I produce. Often times a recipient of a birthdaygram has never seen nor been the recipient of any form of NTS message and it is a new experience for him/her. The same can be said for traffic welcoming a new ham to the fraternity and extolling to him the virtues of net participation.

I cannot say the same about those reminders that one's license is about to expire. I think that the average US ham knows when his license needs to be renewed. Here in Canada we do not have that issue, as after 2000 we all got permanent licenses. I do agree, however, that the practice of not sending full text for each batch should be discontinued, but at the same time some operators not only request omission of a known text, but also wish to have only the msg nbr, callsign and telephone number of the addressee. Obviously they prefer to look up the ham on their own. I am as guilty of that practice as anyone else. I can probably copy and paste with the best of them, and databases such as WB0TAQ's make it so fast to do so, that to require oneself to copy each individual addressee becomes a chore. Having said that, it must be stated that this is a form of negative training.

The problem is, that by so doing, one is not achieving the level of proficiency which will be needed in time of emergency when ostensibly the computers will not run without electricity which may well be nonexistent. Personally speaking, if I were to need to run a generator in the middle of February to keep my furnace running along with a few lights, then my computer could sit there silent until the emergency is over and the infrastructure is repaired. My radio gear, on the other hand, takes precedence.

BTW, I am not a wimp, HI. At least I bring my own traffic to the nets rather than sending it to another amateur via packet or e-mail to send out. That may elicit me a few enemies along the way, but I welcome controversy.

73,
Glenn

NF5B's Request for Inputs

If you have the time, take a look at Richard's White Paper, referenced below. I have read it (a very long read) and he offers some unique ideas that do have merit. As he himself says, these are only ideas and he is looking for more inputs. Here's the info he sent to Frank, which was forwarded. Some of this is also contained in his most recent Traffic Handler's Quarterly newsletter, which Frank also sent recently, but since it has not been put on the file servers yet, I'll wait for next month to send the link to it. Richard wrote:

The ARRL Emergency Communications Advisory Committee (ECAC) has been tasked by the Programs and Services Committee to recommend improvements to ARES and NTS so that the Amateur Radio Service can better serve the public in providing emergency communications. Specific topics for which comments are sought include, but are not limited to:

1. ARES and NTS objectives and organizational structures
2. Integration between ARES and NTS
3. Training, certification, and credentialing
4. Relationships with served agencies.

Comments should be submitted to your representative on the Emergency communications Advisory committee. Those representing divisions within NTS central area are listed below.

Central Bill Niemuth, KB9ENO <bniemuth@new.rr.com>

Dakota Jim Zahradnicek, KD0S <kd0s@kd0s.com>

Delta Jim Coleman, AI5B <wpcde911@itsfast.net>

Midwest Reynolds Davis, K0GND <reynoldsD1@aol.com>

Southeastern Barrett Kanne, W4TGA <radio.w4tga@gmail.com>

Now, please read carefully before your knee jerks because you think I'm advocating the destruction of your favorite mode or activity. If that's what you think then you're not paying attention. Again, read carefully and consider carefully what I am saying to you.

As you might surmise, Ares and NTS are under the microscope. From indications I get, those doing the scrutinizing aren't willing to listen to assertions that nothing is broken and the status quo is just fine. They know that NTS participation is falling off, that NTS can often be considered as too slow and unreliable. They are concerned about the level of training of ARES members and leaders, etc. If NTS cannot use its expertise to help them see a way forward which improves the linkage between NTS and ARES then there's going to be a real possibility of a baby going down the drain with the bathwater.

More than one person in an ARRL leadership position has been trying to tell NTS leaders now for years that it's time to wake up and smell the coffee. Today's radio amateur does not participate in NTS, or benefit from the training it offers. More book traffic and otherwise the status quo is not the answer these folks want to hear from us. As I said to a couple of NTS leaders recently, we can stand there preaching to the choir all day long, but it's not getting us anywhere. First we need to get a congregation into the pews to even hear the message.

So, the question is what will bring them into the tent, and we're not doing well at asking that question. Obviously exposing them to formal traffic on their section nets isn't working, section phone nets don't get enough good third party traffic to make a difference. Our section phone nets become largely social organizations that provide inconsistent training, if any. Some region liaisons and net managers are already getting more negative feedback than positive from these nets regarding the handling of bulk book traffic. The only time I might hear from most if any members of central area staff, other than the usual monthly stats which some submit to ARRL HQ and copy to me is a note that this or that section net is refusing to handle bulk book traffic.

Today's radio amateur is highly mobile. Often times his HF operations are mobile operations, and not using Morse. Nets such as those on 14300 khz, midcars, southcars, etc. are not hurting for participation, but NTS nets are. Offering today's amateur population nets which suit his operating style and provide him services and real training he can access is a must for NTS to grow and thrive. More book traffic exhorting him to learn the code is not going to get it done.

Organisms and organizations that survive adapt to changing conditions. We've begun the work of evolving NTS to meet the challenges of today's telecommunications environment, and should continue that work by bringing the manual system into the present with systems and procedures that meet the needs of today's radio amateur, and the public. People such as George Hart spent a lot of time building a system that could adapt to current needs and expectations. If we fail to do this, then we are giving them the opposite of our respect and appreciation. I truly believe that improving participation overall will encourage more folks to learn Morse, to send the code by hand, and receive it by ear. It's obvious that what we're doing now to promote it isn't working. Those newer hams I talk to who do venture into the world of telegraphy are doing so to participate in awards chasing using low powered equipment. In most cases they never bother to seek out, and participate in, their section or region NTS nets. They're on 20 meters with a quarter watt home brew transmitter in a can.

Why aren't they coming to their section and region NTS nets? Often they don't really know we exist, or don't feel welcomed, usually the former. If they participate in their local ares group they might get exposed to traffic handling by a training session at a meeting once every couple of years.

NTS has an image problem within the amateur radio community. Note I didn't say a negative image, although within some circles this is true. By and large the image problem is that there is no image. NTS doesn't even show up on the radar of most hams. Many who would call themselves serious EMCOMM operators don't consider NTS to be relevant or reliable. Many ARES leaders have never handled a formal message, except maybe as part of a drill once or twice. If they learn a little bit and ask questions of other leaders regarding NTS they aren't given positive comments.

Over the last year I've been working on, and made available to the public, a white paper discussing one viable way forward for the manual NTS system. I keep hoping others will come forward with ideas too. In this white paper I discuss the concept of region or area "guard frequencies" to be used for some scheduled nighttime phone nets, as well as monitored by interested stations in the intended coverage footprint of the net. These "guard frequencies" can provide reliable methods of making contact for amateurs with appropriate privileges. When those attempts at direct contact fail real traffic handlers can then assist them in formulating a formal message if desired. Rapid emergency and disaster response will be enhanced, and the public awareness of NTS increased. These nets coupled with our CW nets can sure provide good service to the public, especially when one considers the capabilities we can offer in digital messaging via WL2K, etcetera.

IF you have not had a look within the last few months, a later draft of this white paper is available at

<http://www.wpusa.dynip.com/files/FDIST/HAMNEWS/NTSFUTUR.ZIP>

or

<ftp://ftp.wpusa.dynip.com/pub/FDIST/HAMNEWS/NTSFUTUR.ZIP>

You'll need winzip or equivalent to unzip it, then just load it in your favorite word processor.

I'm not asking anybody to gush over how much they love the idea, but I am asking that folks revise it, or propose their own ideas. NTS and ARES are under the microscope, and those peering down the barrel have made it clear they're not satisfied with the status quo on the NTS or ARES side of the equation.

Part of this general dissatisfaction comes from folks not actually reading, or understanding the ARRL Public Service Communications Manual. I've talked to more than one leader in Ares recently who seemed to have little idea how ARESMAT is supposed to work, for example. ARESMAT is a great concept, a blueprint for how to obtain, and render mutual aid. It too might need a bit of tweaking but even if that doesn't happen it's still useful for ARES leaders to know and understand. If we in NTS expect to retain ARRL support we need to do something more than the same circular discussions of issues surrounding bulk book traffic. If we don't, manual long haul messaging by amateur radio will be an ad hoc affair, catch as catch can. If NTS should choose that option, maybe a viable way for it to continue would be an affiliation with the Antique Wireless association.

Did that last statement cause your blood pressure to rise a bit? Sorry about that folks, calm down, take a couple deep breaths now. None of us want to see ARRL support for NTS go the way of the dodo. That doesn't change the facts however. The thought process has always been that NTS and ARES were part of the same system. This has been true in theory only now for nearly a quarter century. The relationship between the two becomes more distant with each passing year. As that disconnect grows, ARES becomes even more disconnected from the concept of directly serving the public and concentrates its efforts on serving agencies, even in locales where agencies have either rolled their own auxiliary communications capabilities or have no interest in formal relationships.

Many argue that even without formal relationships ARES has a vital role to play on the local level. CERT teams, various agencies, all need to communicate with each other. We've heard all about this great buzzword "interoperability." ARES was primarily intended to provide this capability to those who need it. That primary mission has been deemphasized in recent years, and I see the disconnect between ARES and NTS as a major factor.

Today's radio amateur is pulled in a variety of directions. There is much more specialization within amateur radio than there once was. There are many facets to enjoy, weak signal work; contesting; a wide variety of digital modes, just to name a few. Contrast today's amateur radio environment with that of yesterday when learning the essential skills to provide service was built in, as those essential skills were utilized no matter what facet of amateur radio caught one's interest. Every ham was going to learn the code, and at some point in his ham radio career was going to end up sending and receiving formal traffic occasionally. Your elmer could teach operating techniques easily enough, and there were plenty of reference books and periodicals you could access. The web has made entry into amateur radio easier, but actual hands on training is not enhanced by rote memorization, or even videos of lectures presented on the VGA monitor. NTS, that hands on training in basic radio operating skills isn't

even on most hams' radar as something they should take an interest and active part in. These later generations of hams can't be blamed for this. One doesn't ever learn about what one isn't exposed to. Would you know you liked chocolate if you'd never had any?

It's time for us in the NTS community to start discussing how best to bring the manual system into the world of today's radio amateur. Work we've done with radio email helps us take a big step forward, but our leaders expect to see a robust accessible manual system as well. Should we fail to do this we might find that league support of NTS is a thing of the past.

Let's look at that possibility for a moment. If the folks giving serious study to ARES and NTS would advocate abandoning NTS then they'll still need to come up with something similar to PSCM appendix B chapter 6. They'll still need to plan for long haul circuits and devise procedures for routing traffic, administration, etc. As I've said before, they'll essentially end up reinventing the wheel. The time for thinking and discussion is now, and that discussion needs to include the members of the advisory committee who are scrutinizing NTS and ARES, as well as leadership outside the National Traffic system. Turning inward and remaining isolated from the mainstream of amateur radio is not going to preserve the system.

Richard Webb, NF5B

TEX Mailbox:

Jay, N5PWG, has heard some sounds on the air that he (and I) are unable to identify. Perhaps someone out there can give us an explanation. My thought was that it is some sort of "new" digital mode, but from Jay's explanation, it may just be CW with a twist. Jay wrote:

I'm sure that you have heard a rare station with a very musical sound to the CW. The best verbal description that I can give it is: a series of dots sounds like "diddle/diddle/diddle/dit" rather than the more customary ""di/di/di/di/dit." In other words, the dots seem to blend somewhat into one another very pleasantly, as contrasted to the usual sharply defined dots.

I suspect that this is created by some combination of reactance and resistance that alters the rise and fall of the pulses. Another theory is that it is created by the particular key, like a bug. The adjustment of the bug doing the same thing.

AA5IJ, Bob, and I were talking on the landline recently and neither of us could explain this sound but we would like to know how it happens.

73, Jay

Si, K5JRN, and I have been communicating via Winlink to handle a few Austin outlying area messages. Si prefers to mail them, and wrote: I now have received some NTS postcards from ARRL and can take a few non-urgent messages via Winlink/VHF AirMail to deliver to hams in Austin and the outlying area in this part of the state.

73, Si, K5JRN

Thanks, Si, and hope you get your new HF antennas up soon.

Pat, KD5TXD, had a bit of fun on Field Day. Here is her report:

It is a bit early to tell for sure, but I think I survived Field Day. We had nearly 100 percent of our members out at one time or another during the event. We had only one AWOL member who was traveling for Field Day weekend. To make up for him we had three new local hams get on the air for the first time at our event. That was kind of cool!!

All of the Wild Horse Desert Hams were getting a bit panicky when we got a few sprinkles of rain during set up. But the sky cleared off and we had excellent, but hot, weather for the weekend. One of our very technical fellows put up a 10 meter vertical antenna on top of a 40 foot pole at the KCVB Visitor Center. 10 meters was smoking for us. It turned out to be the rig that everyone wanted to be at. We got almost as many 10 meter contacts this field day as we have gotten total in the previous 8 years. There were a bunch of very happy hams at the KCVB.



We racked up the usual bonus points; generator power, solar power, media printings, literature table, elected officials and served agency officials. However, the real treat was when Charles hooked up to send our Field Day messages and received one from K6JT for our host, Carol Ann Anderson. I got to deliver that and she was very pleased. It was a neat way to get her involved in the action rather than just being on the sidelines for Field Day. Thanks, Steve, you put the frosting on our Field Day cake.

The bands stayed open most of the night. One of our fellows was snagging 40 meter contacts all night. I couldn't keep my CW from interfering with him so I had to stay off of 40 meters at what had been the best time in past years. Slow me, I still pulled down 37 CW contacts. Someone suggested that I pick a spot and call CQ FD. I discovered two problems with that. First problem is I have to ask for repeats on call signs and exchanges except for the folks who are slower than me. The second problem was the very first contact to answer my CQ decided to take over my frequency and started calling CQ right on top of me. I think he had high power and we are about 100 watts so he might not have realized that I was still there. Oh well... I went back to my more successful hunt and pounce method. If they ever connect me up to an amplifier things will be different for sure.

We also enjoyed all the best of Field Day; A/C, snacks, pizza and gallons of coffee. As I am also a volunteer at KCVB I was put in charge of coffee. I don't mind, but I haven't a clue how to make coffee as I don't drink coffee. There are two of us who are KCVB volunteers and we hunted and hunted for the KCVB stash of pre measured coffee filter thingies but were unable to find any. They keep the coffee under lock and key; this is coffee, not gold! I dashed over to the neighboring truck stop and bought a small can of coffee and some filters. We were then in the coffee business. The first pot of coffee I made was little more than slightly brown water. I tossed that out and quadrupled the amount of coffee I put in the filter. The second pot of coffee could melt spoons and was well received by the club. As long as the night shift kept making contacts and didn't complain about the coffee I kept making it. ...and they tell me I drink rotten stuff such as sodas. Even with all that coffee the night shift still fell asleep at their radios about 4:00a.m., and I was finally in total control of the CW bands. I guess if I had stuck

with the slightly brown water version of coffee I would have been in control about 1:00a.m. I made a note of that for next time.



Well, I do covet the flag pole at the KCVB. It is the best 40 meter vertical antenna around. Since Charles doesn't seem all that anxious to put up that crank up fold down antenna tower, I wander around town admiring all of the wonderful local flag poles. This Field Day I didn't even have to bring up the topic of Charles horizontal antenna tower. At a lull in the action one of our club members found a picture in QST of a similar tower and showed Charles saying, "Charles, this is what your antenna tower is supposed to look like, vertical." Another said, "I'm sure Pat would be willing to use the clothes dryer instead of the tower to dry laundry." They all laughed. Unfortunately when Charles asked how many were going to come out to help him put up the tower they all suddenly had to get back to the radios. I think I am going shopping for a flag pole.

Notice the 10 meter antenna on top of the pole behind the Visitor Center. I almost suggested that they load up that ladder, too. The ladder is chained to the pole. I did not want to watch while that 10 meter installation was going on.

73!! Pat KD5TXD

Frank, W4DLZ, sent along the following concerning CW being re-instituted for MARS operation. About time !!!

If you weren't aware, all the MARS branches have re-instituted CW.

I'm in Navy MARS and we have at least 15 or more traffic handling CW nets per week in Navy Mars ...

The following is from the NorthEast Navy Mars Area as an example :

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Greetings to all MARS members in the Northeast Area, Navy - Marine Corps MARS (NAVAVMARCORMARS) who are interested in CW operating, CW training, and CW networks. We encourage operators at all levels (CW training, CW experience and background, and CW expertise) to join in one or more of the Northeast Area CW networks. Address questions, comments, or recommendations to Dave Vittum, NNN0GKV (NNY) nnn0gkv@navymars.org.

In 1992, DOD directed all CW transmission cease in all MARS programs (Army MARS, Air Force MARS, and NAVMARCORMARS). In the years following, there were many experiences of saturated cell phone circuits, interference on HF voice nets, and other severe

problems during emergencies which made it evident that it would be prudent to re-institute CW as a viable and authorized mode of communication on the MARS networks.

In June 2008, Chief NAVMARCORMARS promulgated a broadcast which re-instituted CW nets as authorized modes of communication. For general information and background, that message is included as the next section of this web site page. In fact, the Chief strongly recommended that at all levels of NAVMARCORMARS (state, region, and area), CW nets be restarted and training be conducted. This tab to the Northeast Area web page establishes the basic policies and operations for CW ops in the Northeast Area.

DE NNN0ASA 050
R 292200Z MAY 2008
FM CHNAVMARCORMARS WILLIAMSBURG VA
TO ALNAVMARCORMARS
INFO CHIEF ARMY MARS FT HUACHUCA AZ
CHIEF AIR FORCE MARS SCOTT AFB IL
BT
UNCLAS
SUBJ: CHNAVMARCORMARS BCST 06-08
A. DRAFT RADIOTELEGRAPH PROCEDURES

1. WHEN I ASSUMED THE CHIEF, NAVMARCORMARS POSITION IN NOVEMBER, 1997, WE WERE MORE THAN A YEAR INTO THE DOD MANDATED BAN ON CW ON MARS FREQUENCIES.

A. SINCE THAT TIME THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION HAS, IN STEPS, ELIMINATED THE MORSE CODE REQUIREMENT FOR AN AMATEUR LICENSE. ALL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATORS KNOW THAT WHEN VOICE AND OTHER DIGITAL MODES SLOW TO A CRAWL OR BECOME UNUSABLE, CW CAN STILL BE USED.

B. I REMEMBER THE NORTHEAST ICE STORM SHORTLY AFTER I BECAME CHIEF AND THE UNNECESSARILY LENGTHY EFFORT BY ALL OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TO RECEIVE ONE VOICE EEI FROM A NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND MEMBER WHOSE ANTENNA WAS COVERED IN ICE AND LYING ON THE GROUND. IT TOOK OVER AN HOUR WHEN CW COULD HAVE HANDLED IT IN A FEW MINUTES.

C. AS MORE AND MORE OF OUR MEMBERS ENTER MARS WITH NO MORSE CODE EXPERIENCE, I AM AFRAID THAT WE WILL SOON LOSE THAT SKILL SET IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING.

2. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE AND EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, AREA AND REGION DIRECTORS ARE AUTHORIZED TO ESTABLISH CW TRAINING AND TRAFFIC NETS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS AND REGIONS. ALL STATE DIRECTORS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO BEGIN CONDUCTING TRAINING IN CW ON THEIR TRAFFIC AND TRAINING NETS.

3. SINCE THE RADIOTELEGRAPH PROCEDURES WERE ELIMINATED BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF NTP 8(C), REF A WILL BE POSTED UNDER THE DOCUMENTS TAB

ON THE NATIONAL WEB PAGE SOON. USE THESE DRAFT PROCEDURES UNTIL A FINAL TRI-SERVICE MARS PROCEDURE FOR RADIOTELEGRAPH IS DEVELOPED AND PROMULGATED.

4. MARS: TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.

BT

NNNN

Frank W4DLZ RN5/4 CW Net Mgr..

NNN0XNK Navy MARS..

Finally, to lighten things up a bit, I received this from **George, K5BMR**, the assistant manager of the 7290 net (and my main liaison station to that net for TEX and other traffic). It has certainly been hot up here in the north, but at least we are not under the severe drought conditions you are facing in the south. George is in West Texas, where it has been very hot and dry. Here is a little story for your amusement (I hope).

Dear Diary

Just moved to Texas from Minnesota ! Now this is a state that knows how to live!! Beautiful sunny days and warm balmy evenings. It is beautiful. I've finally found my home. I love it here.

June 14th:

Really heating up. Got to 100 today. Not a problem. Live in an air-conditioned home, drive an air-conditioned car. What a pleasure to see the sun everyday like this. I'm turning into a sun worshipper.

June 30th:

Had the backyard landscaped with western plants today. Lots of cactus and rocks.. What a breeze to maintain. No more mowing the lawn for me. Another scorcher today, but I love it here.

July 10th:

The temperature hasn't been below 100 all week. How do people get used to this kind of heat? At least, it's kind of windy though. But getting used to the heat is taking longer than I expected.

July 15th:

Fell asleep by the community pool. (Got 3rd degree burns over 60% of my body). Missed 3 days of work. What a dumb thing to do. I learned my lesson though. Got to respect the ol' sun in a climate like this.

July 20th:

I missed Lomita (my cat) sneaking into the car when I left this morning. By the time I got to the

hot car at noon, Lomita had died and swollen up to the size of a shopping bag, then popped like a water balloon. The car now smells like Kibbles and Bits. I learned my lesson though. No more pets in this heat. Good ol' Mr. Sun strikes again.

July 25th:

The wind is bad. It feels like a giant blow dryer!! And it's hot as the sun. The home air-conditioner is on the fritz and the AC repairman charged \$200 just to drive by and tell me he needed to order parts.

July 30th:

Been sleeping outside on the patio for 3 nights now, \$225,000 house and I can't even go inside. Lomita is the lucky one. Why did I ever come here?

Aug. 4th:

It's 115 degrees. Finally got the air-conditioner fixed today. It cost \$500 and gets the temperature down to 85. I hate this stupid state.

Aug. 8th:

If another wiseacre cracks, 'Hot enough for you today?' I'm going to strangle him. By the time I get to work, the radiator is boiling over, my clothes are soaking wet, and I smell like baked cat!!

Aug. 9th:

Tried to run some errands after work. Wore shorts, and when sat on the seats in the car, I thought I was on fire. My skin melted to the seat. I lost 2 layers of flesh and all the hair on the back of my legs. . . . Now my car smells like burnt hair and baked cat.

Aug 10th:

The weather report might as well be a recording. Hot and sunny. Hot and sunny. Hot and sunny. It's been too hot to do anything for 2 months and the weatherman says it might really warm up next week. Doesn't it ever rain in this state? Water rationing will be next, so my \$1700 worth of cactus will just dry up and blow over. Even the cactus can't live in this heat.

Aug. 14th:

Welcome to Texas ! Temperature got to 115 today. Cactus are dead. Forgot to crack the window and blew the windshield out of the car. The installer came to fix it and guess what he asked me??? "Hot enough for you today?" My sister had to spend \$1,500 to bail me out of jail. Ah Texas. What kind of a sick demented idiot would want to live here??

Will write later to let you know how the trial goes...

TEX Net Topics

The early TEX move to 7053 KHz appears to still be working well. NCS stations are reminded that they can still move stations to 3541 KHz to pass traffic should there be a problem on 40. They can also move the net to 3541 if for some reason 40 meters is not working well.

We still need help with **11** open NCS/liaison slots, including **2** open *primary* NCS slots and **4** open *primary* RN5 slots on Thursday and Saturday (all shown in **red**). Please consider taking one of these, or even just an open backup position. Thursday and Saturday RN5 liaisons are sorely needed.

Note that I have taken the late Tuesday NCS slot, with Jay, N5PWG, as backup. Also note that Mike, W5TMO, has added Wednesday late to his NCS slots. Pat, KD5TXD, still has early Wednesday NCS, but she is willing to give that up if anyone else would take it.

Thanks to Jay, N5PWG, Scott, W5ESE, and Rodney, W5DY, we managed to get through the month missing only one RN5 liaison spot (a Thursday night).

Because participation on Saturday night is generally quite low, and even RN5 often fails to have an NCS and/or CAN liaison, I am seriously considering designating Saturday night as an "off" night with no early or late TEX sessions. That can change for special occasions (such as we just had with Field Day). I'd like some feedback from y'all on whether or not you think that would be a good (or bad) idea.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	W5GKH	N5PWG	KD5TXD	Open	N5PWG	Open	W5GKH
Backup	Open	W5ESE	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY	W5CU
NCS #2	W5GKH	K6JT	W5TMO	W5TMO	N5PWG	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT	N5PWG	K6JT	K6JT	K6JT	Open	W5CU
RN5 #1	W5GKH	N5PWG	W5CU	Open	N5PWG	Open	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	Open	W5DY	Open	W5ESE	W5ESE	W5GKH
RN5 #2	W5GKH	N5PWG	W5CU	Open	K6JT	Open	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	Open	K6JT	W5DY	N5PWG	K6JT	W5GKH

TEX/1: **7053/3541** at 19:00 local; TEX/2 **3541/7108** at 22:00 local

RN5/1: **7108/3567** at 19:30; RN5/2: **3567** at 21:30 local

TSN: **3552** - 19:45 local; CAN: **7052/3552/7108** - 20:30 local; PAN: **7052/3552**- 22:30 local

RN5 Backup: W5CU, W5DY, W5ESE, W5GKH, K5GM, K6JT, N5PWG, K5RG

NCS Backup: W5CU, W5DY, W5ESE, K6JT, N5PWG, K5RG, W5TMO, KD5TXD

Statistics:

Traffic was down a little compared to last month, but check-ins were up. Jay, N5PWG, took first honors with 35 (58%). Rodney, W5DY, with 32 (53%) took second, and Scott, W5ESE, came in 3rd with 23 (38%). Thanks to all who checked in for your support.

We had Benny, K5KV, again with us for a couple sessions from his Star, TX, QTH. We also had visitors Jim, N0JL, the CAN manager, from Iowa, and Jeff, WB8WKQ, in Michigan, who again brought us some EAN traffic direct.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic averaged 2.4 per net session (2.5 last month). Net time averaged 13.7 minutes per session (compared to 12.7 last month). Check-ins averaged 5.3 per session (4.4 last month).

TEX Net Statistics (June 2011)

Call	Name	QNI	Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	TSN
W5CU	Sam	11	20		5			
*		9			6			
W5DY	Rodney	18	32	4	4			
		14		3	1			
N5EL	Floyd	9	9					
*		0						
W5ESE	Scott	23	23					
*		0						
W5GKH	Charlie	7	15	6	7			
*		8		7	6			
K5GM	Pete	6	9					
*		3						
N0JL	Jim	1	1					
*	IA	0						
K5JRN	Si	6	9					
*		3						
K6JT	Steve	21	50	7	1		20	
*		29		5	8		29	
K5KV	Benny	0	2					
		2						
WA5MS	Marty	15	16					
*		1						
N5NVP	Jim	0	14					
		14						
N5PWG	Jay	17	35	9	13			
*		18		4	8			
K5QOW	Gary	16	17			16		1
*		1				1		
K5RG	Ken	4	13					
*		9						
N5RL	Randy	13	20					
*		7						
W5TMO	Mike	0	20					
*		20		4				
KD5TXD	Pat	4	12	4				4
*		8		7				4

Call	Name	QNI	Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	TSN
WB8WKQ	Jeff	0	1					
	MI	1						
Totals		318		60	59	17	49	9
				100%	98%	28%	82%	15%
QTC 1		54	145					
QTC 2		91		Sessions:		60		
Time 1		408	820					
Time 2		412						

The roster has not been updated since last month.

TEX Roster

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
N5BA	Brian	Houston	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City OK
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	N5NVP	Jim	Scott LA
* W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	* N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	K5QOW	Gary	Reagan Wells
* W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	* K5RG	Ken	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	N5RL	Randy	San Antonio
W9GVW	Eric	San Antonio	W5ROK	Steve	Richardson (K6JT)
AA5J	Lee	Arkansas	N0SSS	Adam	Oklaunion
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	W5TMO	Mike	Austin
K5JRN	Si	Austin	W5TV	Tom	Nacogdoches
* K6JT	Steve	Plano	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia AR
* K5KV	Benny	Star	W5U FK	Ken	College Station
* W6LFB	Jim	Denton	WB8WKQ	Jeff	Michigan
WA5MS	Marty	Highland Village	* NK5Z	Tom	Conroe
N7NET	Scott	McKinney	W5ZD	Pat	Kingsville (KD5TXD)

* Capable of 160 meter operation

Operating:

Lots of operating information in the earlier part of this rather lengthy newsletter, so no extra information here.

Until next month,

73, Steve

(TSN Corner starts on the next page)



TSN Corner

Texas Slow Net (Daily) 1945 CT 3552.0 KHz +/- QRM
http://www.atcweb.com/tsn/Texas_Slow_Net.htm
 Pat Allison KD5TXD (pja@atcweb.com)
 TSN Net Manager

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT

Greetings from the Wild Horse Desert – home of your TSN Manager

Traffic and checkins were a bit down this month. Conditions were poor on 80 meters at 7:45p.m. TEX meets at 7:00p.m. and has moved for summertime to 40 meters. TSN is staying on 3552 as those new to our net expect us there. We will struggle on and the seasons will change back. Again, special thanks to the TEX folks who have stopped by during the month to pass some real traffic to WB5NKD on our TSN net. It is a welcome addition to our training lessons and Pat and Arley are ALWAYS there. Visit TSN any time. We run a bit slow, but everyone is welcome to join us.

June 2011 TSN Roster

Call	Name	City	ST	Call	Name	City	ST
W5AG	Arch	Lafayette	LA	KD5MMM	Phil	Fentress	TX
W5AS	Club Call			N7NET	Scott	Allen	TX
K5AVJ	Lynn	Abilene	TX	N5NK	Rondel	Zephyr	TX
ND0CW	David	Newburg	ND	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK
K0CMH	Craig	St Louis	MO	WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	N5NVP	Jim	Scott	LA
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	AA5NZ	Web	Goldthwait	TX
WD0ESF	Mike	Medicine Lodge	KS	N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena	TX
K5FAL	Curt	Edmond	OK	KE5PYF	David	Fort Worth	TX
K5GM	Pete	Austin	TX	K5QOW	Gary	Reagan Wells	TX
KD5GM	Louis	Deer Park	TX	N0SSS	Adam	Oklahoma	TX
W9GVW	Eric	San Antonio	TX	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
AK4GY	Russ	Lewisberg	TN	W5TMO	Mike	Austin	TX
WR9H	Herbert	Rockford	IL	KD5TXD, W5ZD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
KE5HCM	Patti	Kerville	TX	WB5UPS	Ron	Port Neches	TX
AA5J	Lee(Chuck)	Cabot	AR	N5UZ	Rick	Cedar Park	TX
K6JT, W0CXX	Steve	Plano	TX	KD5VGJ	Jay	Flower Mound	TX
N0JL	Jim	Chilliecothe	IA	K4VIZ	Tom	Conway	AR
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	W4VLL	Victor	Pembroke	VA
K9JWV	Jim	St. George	UT	W5VXI	Dave	Caddo Mills	TX
KT4KL	Alton	Bandera	TX	WB8W	Bob	Cincinnati	OH
K5KV	Benny	Star	TX	WB5WKQ	Jeff	Dryden	MI
KB5KWO	Steve	Norman	OK	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
W8LKI	Wolfe	Defiance	OH	NK5Z	Tom	Conroe	TX
KC0M	Larry	Branson	MO				

This is a great place to learn how to handle traffic on CW. If you are a voice net traffic handler this is a great addition to your amateur radio skill set. See you on the air!!

TSN Activity Report for June, 2011

Total Sessions 30, Total Check-ins 113, Total Traffic 22 by 11 different operators.

May 2011 QNS

June	Callsign	Name	QTH
30	WB5NKC	Arley	OK, Oklahoma City
30	WB5NKD	Pat	OK, Oklahoma City
20	AA5JW	Carl	TX, Stafford
9	KB5TCH	Carroll	TX, Douglassville
9	KD5TXD, W5ZD	Pat	TX, Kingsville
3	KD5MMM	Phil	TX, Fentress
3	W5VXI	Dave	Caddo Mills, TX
2	W5AG	Arch	LA, Lafayette
1	K5QOW	Gary	TX, Reagan Wells
1	KD5GM	Louis	Deer Park, TX
1	W5DY	Rodney	TX, Goliad

73!!

Pat KD5TXD

July 5, 2011