

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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

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May 2008



7290 Picnic



The 7290 picnic was held in Smithville, Texas, on May 3. There were four of us there to represent TEX – Rodney W5DY, Steve K6JT, Ken K5RG, and Pat KD5TXD. Bert, AC5Z, had planned to attend but he had to cancel, having been sick the night before and unable to travel. Charlie, W5GKH, also had planned to attend but the unexpected arrival of his granddaughter also prevented him from making the trip.

The four of us still had a good time and enjoyed the “eyeball QSOs” along with the company of a lot of other traffic handlers from 7290, DTTN, and TTN. The

barbeque dinner was great, too, with BBQ chicken and beef, baked beans, potato salad, bread, and some really great home-made (on the premises) ice cream.

Many thanks go to Jo Ann, KA5AZK, the 7290 net manager for providing time for TEX and also TSN to have our meeting there. Unfortunately, Scott, W5ESE, was also unable to make it to the picnic so I said a few words on behalf of TSN following the TEX presentation. Who knows, perhaps we can get some new ops from among the 7290 and TTN groups.

The Pfeiffer Pfist Award was presented to Pat, KD5TXD

The highlight of the TEX meeting was the presentation of the 2008 Pfeiffer Pfist award to Pat, KD5TXD, who I am sure you will agree really deserves it. Pat came from a terrified CW-challenged SSB operator to a confident, proficient CW traffic handler in a very short time. She has done a great deal to support TEX in the past year and we are all very proud of her achievements. Congratulations, Pat !!





Since Rodney, W5DY, was last year's recipient, he was given the honor of making the presentation to Pat. Rodney also provided another "first" – a very nicely done box in which to carry the Pfeiffer Pfist award. As you can see, it is a first-class job, nicely finished, with an inventive "carrying handle" made from a piece of coax he found in his "junk box".

Pretty neat, eh? Many thanks, Rodney, for all your hard work as well.

Thanks go to Ken, K5RG, who took movies of the presentation, which will (eventually, when I have time to edit it) be put on my secondary website with a link from the main TEX site. Other pictures taken by Charles, WB5IZD, Pat's OM (thanks, Charles) will also be either merged with the movie or separately displayed.

W1NJM Saga

Again, 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 13 of George Hart's recollections. Geo and Ed encounter Mother Nature and her ways.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD HAM

A journalistic history of the life and times in Amateur Radio of George Hart, W1NJM, by George Hart, W1NJM. Part 13.

LIFE ON THE FARM, PART TWO

Ah, dream on boys! We soon found that the tent idea was highly impractical. On that high hill the wind blew lustily, the rain penetrated the tent during storms, dampness invaded everything, insects from tiny bloodsucking flies to mammoth moths visited us at night. We expected great things from our new super antenna, but they were not forthcoming. Our dry cell batteries kept becoming discharged. Contacts were so seldom as to be almost nonexistent. The poles were erected during the summer of 1931, but by fall we had become totally disenchanted and the equipment was re-installed in the farmhouse with an antenna in the trees.

We were still living in the College Hill house, but the 852 transmitter and SW-3 receiver had been moved to the third floor of the Chemical Publishing Company. I tried to maintain our traffic schedules from the printing plant, but it was a losing battle with all the noises and chilly environment, because the heat was turned off at night and the place, not very secure, was spooky and intimidating.

The radio fortunes of the Hart brothers, W3NF and W3AMR were at a low ebb.

The winter of 1931-32 at College Hill was an uncomfortable one for us. The "den" had been torn down and our electricity disconnected. The house was in partial disarray, because we

had already started moving the furniture and other items to the farmhouse. As winter waned and spring blossomed I was completing my postgraduate year at Easton High School and the exodus from the College Hill house to the farm started to gain momentum. With four sturdy boys, a farm truck and a sturdy woman (my mother) in charge, we disdained professional movers and undertook the job ourselves; but it turned out to be a bigger job than we had expected. My father and his two families had lived there for over 50 years. The truck was not a big one. My two older brothers, Ed and Watson, loaded it at College Hill and unloaded it at the farm once a day. On weekends and holidays, with my younger brother Martin and I to help, we managed three or four trips a day -- interspersed, of course, with other activities.

It was a grueling period, rife with difficulties, disagreements and strife of various other kinds, but by the end of June, 1932, we took the last truckload down the river road and got set up for permanent residence at the farmhouse. W3NF remained at the printing plant, abandoned most of the time. W3AMR was set up at the farmhouse, but seldom used. The 65-foot poles on top of the hill stood silently, unused and almost forgotten.

The farmhouse was wired for electricity in expectation that the utility would run a line up from the highway, a distance of 3/4 mile up a private dirt and gravel road, but negotiations with the electric company fell through and we were faced with the prospect of a winter in the old house without electricity, inadequate telephone, no indoor plumbing, no central heating, the nearest neighbor over 1/4 mile away down the private road which we must maintain ourselves, including plowing snow, which was sure to come. There were seldom any snowless winters in the thirties. And, of no concern to the rest of the family, but of great concern to Ed and me, no amateur radio except the inadequate battery-operated W3AMR.

I was involved in the feverish preparations during the summer of 1932 – getting in a supply of firewood for use in the five fireplaces in the house, maintaining the road, cleaning the house for permanent residency and many other chores – but I never spent a complete winter in the farmhouse. In August I went to Allentown and took the Penn State entrance examination and, much to my astonishment, was accepted in the freshman class as a pre-veterinary student.

Coming in the next installment: Off to Penn State and the College Radio Station.

Propagation – Take 2

I guess we were celebrating a bit early last month. As summer draws ever nearer, propagation on 80 meters at 7 PM has started to become a bit of a problem. It is noisy and signals are pretty weak for the north to south Texas path. There are nights when I can barely hear Pat, KD5TXD, and she can similarly barely hear my signal down there. Frequent T-Storms around our state also cause a lot of very bad QRN.

We may need to move early TEX to 40 meters, but I don't want to use 7052, as we tried last year, due to QRM from another net that meets there several nights a week. We will try to do some experimenting and find another suitable 40 meter frequency (if 40 meters is OK at that time, that is). It will be announced via an "all hands" E-Mail when finalized.

In the meantime, NCS stations on 80 please ask for others to do a "net call" or "call for QNI" on early TEX so that we pick up as many checkins as possible.

TEX Mailbox:

Newt, KJ9J, has been off the air for a while due to rig problems. We miss you, Newt. As of now he is back in Indiana for the summer. Newt writes: I found the trouble in my Omni but will have to wait to repair it back in Indiana. It is in the low-pass filter board prior to the final. The bands other than 80 meters work fine. We will be here until the middle of April. Look forward to being back with TEX in the fall.

73, Newt KJ9J

Scott, W7IZ, Oregon STM, passed along the following information, which may be of interest to some of you: International Lighthouse / Lightship Weekend

This highly popular annual amateur radio event (not a contest) will be held over the weekend of 16-17 August 2008. There were 380 lights on the air from 48 countries last year. All you need to know about the event is contained on the official web site at <http://illw.net> which has been the official web site since 2001.

The event is organized and managed by the Ayr Amateur Radio Group in Scotland since the passing of the founder of the weekend, Mike Dalrymple, GM4SUC, in December 2005.

Pat, KD5TXD, passed along this very interesting event that occurred at Texas A&M University in Kingsville on April 16: This was supposed to be our VE testing night and I was NOT supposed to make it home in time for TEX. WellLLLLLLLL... about 3p.m. I was hanging out in the W5ZD radio room and Charles was teaching a class. One of the students ran up to the door and (wide eyed) announced that the university was on "lockdown". It was true!! TAMUK (sometimes pronounced Texas run A MUck) was on lockdown. The Border Patrol was running down a truck load of illegals just west of the campus. The illegals bailed out and ran in all directions. The police and other officials managed to catch the driver who claimed he was innocent and had been forced to drive the truck load of illegals by a gun toting coyote (not the carnivorous quadruped kind). As the action was so close to the university they called for a lockdown and we were all trapped like rats.

Oh, the poor college students suddenly realized they were hungry and trapped. All they could talk about was pizza and escape. The one who was talking most about making a run for it was the one kid who spends every weekend with his family just across the border in Mexico and seriously looks like he just jumped out of the truck. I suggested that he was not the best person to make a run for it at that time.

I got on the local 2 meter repeater and called to see if any of the hams were on the air. One of our old time professors, K5ERF, lovingly called K5 ERror Function, answered. I told him we were locked down and asked if he knew what was going on. He said they tried to lock him down at the exercise center and he just walked out and went home. (He does not look like someone who might have just jumped out of the truck.) He reported all the dirty details to me from watching TV news. I reported to the trapped and hungry students. (Hello!! You students just ate lunch a couple hours back...)

Then I called our Kleberg County Fire Marshal who is in charge of our Explorer Scouts who were planning on testing for their Technician license tonight. He estimated we would be on lockdown at least until 7 p.m. Well, I made the decision to cancel the testing session and

asked the Fire Marshal to contact the Explorers and break the bad news to them. Then I switched to one of the Corpus repeaters to try to get someone to contact the VE's who were supposed to drive over to help us out with the testing session. The first guy to answer me recognized my voice even though I was using the university's call sign and said, "You guys are all on lockdown, you are going to miss supper!" The hams over there quickly passed word to the VE's and had them telephone me at the university so we could complete the cancellation and reschedule for next Wednesday.

Now all I could do was sit back and wait it out surrounded by whining, starving students exhibiting the first signs of cabin fever (uhmm...it has only been 30 minutes). What a bunch of wimps. I switched back to our local repeater and several of the local hams who weren't on lockdown with the hungry students proceeded to give me a hard time. I had offers of sandwiches to be tossed over the fence and suggestions that we BBQ the smallest student so the others could survive. Hmm...maybe that suggestion was for the largest student to be BBQ'ed. Then one of the hams driving south on 77 going home from work about 6:30p.m. reported that the Starr County Sheriff had just passed him going south and numerous border patrol cars had zipped past him as if he were standing still. It was not 30 seconds later that one of the frantic, hungry students rushed in to announce that the lockdown had ended and we were free to go (to go eat).

Oh, joy!! Oh, thrill!! Oh, blessed freedom!!

73!! Pat KD5TXD

P.S. As you know from experience I never embellish at all when I tell these events. This is pure fact, a true accounting of the great TAMUK lockdown of 2008. ☺

Dave, W4ZJY, the Central Area digital and TCC Cycle 2 manager passed along this humorous musical tribute to those of us over 60 (and I think that includes the majority of us on TEX): Some of you may not have reached the magic year of 60 yet and some may have been enjoying the 60's for a while but we can all enjoy this. (Note: If you don't have a Microsoft browser, scroll down and click the link that says "non Microsoft browsers" to hear the music). http://home.att.net/~hideaway_today/t054/hymns.htm

Doug, KA5KLU, passed along this bit of humor (originally from Arley) that, sadly, has some truth to it: How to use your IRS Rebate check.....

As you may have heard, the Administration said each of us would get a rebate check to stimulate the economy.

- If we spend that money at Wal-Mart, all the money will go to China,
- If we spend it on gasoline it will go to the Arabs,
- if we purchase a computer it will go to India,
- if we purchase fruit and vegetables it will go to Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala,
- if we purchase a good car it will go to Japan,
- if we purchase useless stuff it will go to Taiwan and none of it will help the American economy.

We need to keep that money here in America.

The only way to keep that money here at home is to spend it at yard sales, since those are the only businesses still in the U.S.

Lee, K5UN, sent in the following: I have been thinking about the net lately, but at the moment my station is down while we work on putting up new antennas. I hope to have the project finished by the end of summer. However, like any project, it continues to slip further behind.

Work on my Ph.D in Management begins in June, but I still plan on trying to get back on the net during the week a couple of nights.

Travel arrangements for CQWW CW in Martinique have been confirmed again for this year as TO5X and hope Scott (W5ESE) and others drop by for a point or two.

I continue following net activities each month through the newsletter and really do appreciate the effort you and the members put into writing it.

Hope to talk with everyone on the net soon.
/lee - k5un

TEX Net Topics

Those RN5 liaisons, Wednesday through Friday early and Wednesday through Saturday, late are still open. If you are able, please take one (or more) of the open slots. Have not heard from Jay, N5PWG, since we were last informed by his son that he had gone to the hospital. Sure hope you are OK, Jay, and we look forward to hearing your great bug on the air again. Meanwhile, Charlie is taking Jay's Monday early NCS slot and either Rodney or myself generally take the Friday late slot.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	(N5PWG)	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5Z	KD5TXD	AC5Z	W5GKH
Backup	W5GKH	AA5J	KD5TXD	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY	W5DY
NCS #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	KD5TXD	K6JT	(N5PWG)	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT	AA5J	K6JT	Open	K6JT	Open	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	KA5KLU	Open	Open	Open	W5ESE	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	Open	W5DY	W5ESE	W5CU	Open	W5GKH
RN5 #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	Open	Open	Open	Open	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	Open	W5DY	K6JT	W5CU	W5DY	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

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

RN5 Backup: W5CU, W5DY, W5ESE, W5GKH, K5GM, K6JT, KA5KLU, K5RG

NCS Backup: W5DY, N5EL, K6JT, KA5KLU, N5PWG, KD5TXD, AC5Z

I heard from John, W3FAF, the new CAN manager that CAN NCS stations may change frequency to 7052 if 80 meters is not viable, starting immediately.

Statistics:

This past month was a fairly slow one with fewer than usual QNI and less traffic. Rodney, W5DY, took top honors with QNI of 40 (66%). Thanks to everyone for your support, and hopefully activity and traffic will pick up in coming months.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic averaged 2.3 per net session. Net time averaged 12 minutes per session. Check-ins averaged 5 per session.

TEX Net Statistics (April 2008)

Call		QNI	total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
N5BA	Brian	1	1						
		0							
W5CDX	Wads	0	8						
*		8			1				
W5CT	Joe	0	1						
		1							
W5CU	Sam	7	11		4				
*		4			4				
W5DY	Rodney	17	40	1	5		3		
		23		9	11		8		
N5EL	Floyd	23	25						
*		2							
W5ESE	Scott	27	28		11			26	9
*		1			1				
W5GKH	Charlie	8	17	7	4				
*		9		9	5				
K5GM	Pete	6	6		1				
*		0							
W9GVW	Eric	6	6						
*		0							
W5GXV	Gene	0	1						
*		1							
AA5J	Chuck	14	19				7		
*		5					3		
K6JT	Steve	17	35	4			15		
*		18		3	3	1	18		
KA5KLU	Doug	9	14	5	5				
*		5		5	5				
N5NVP	Jim	9	12						
		3							
K5RG	Ken	5	14						
*		9							
KD5TXD	Pat	12	24	4		13			
*		12		4		11			

			total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
AI6U	Chris	0	1						
*		1							
K6YR	Rob	0	1						
*		1							
AC5Z	Bert	20	20	9					
*		0							
Totals		284		60	60	25	54	26	9
				100%	100%	42%	90%	43%	15%
QTC 1		91	140						
QTC 2		49		Sessions:		60	100%		
Time 1		445	703						
Time 2		258							

The roster, which follows, has been slightly updated to include Chris, AI6U, who is a friend of mine in California and who has been checking in on late TEX on occasion.

TEX Roster

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
N5BA	Brian	Houston	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5BYQ	Earl	Houston	# N7NET	Scott	Allen
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	AAØNI	Daniel	Oklahoma City OK
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
NV5D	Martin	Allen	# N5NVP	Jim	Scott LA
* W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	* N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia AR
* W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	K5RG	Ken	Houston
AA7FY	Mark	Fort Worth	W5ROK	Steve	Richardson (K6JT)
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	KC5T	Bob	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
W9GVW	Eric	San Antonio	W5TV	Tom	Nacogdoches
KA9IKK	Bill	Houston	* KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	AI6U	Chris	Sacramento (CA)
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	# W5UFK	Ken	College Station
* K5JRN	Si	Denton	* K5UN	Lee	Leonard
K6JT	Steve	Plano	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball
K5KV	Benny	Star	# KM5YQ	David	Irving
W6LFB	Jim	Denton	* AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)

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

Operating:

A reminder that on Friday and Saturday nights, if there is a major CW contest that fills up the band, please go to 3643 KHz to see if the net is there.

Until next month,

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

Scott McMullen W5ESE

TSN Net Manager

Here is a roster of stations that have participated in the Slow Net in recent months.

Net Stations (QNS) April 2008

Call	Name	City	State	Call	Name	City	State
K0CMH	Craig	St. Louis	MO	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK
WX5CW	Chris	Ruston	LA	WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	N5NVP	Jim	Scott	LA
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	TX	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia	AR
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	KI5T	Wade	Walker	LA
WD0ESF	Mike	Medicine Lodge	KS	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
AG9G	Dwight	Phillips	WI	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	TX	AD5VC	Dana	Baton Rouge	LA
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
K5KV	Benny	Prairieville	LA	KM5YQ	David	Irving	TX
KD5MMM	Phil	Fentress	TX	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches	TX

Pacific Crest Trail Through-Hiker to Make Use of NTS CW Nets



Veteran QRP operator and QST author, Bruce Prior, N7RR, is planning to backpack the Pacific Crest Trail this year, and make use of NTS CW nets along the way to keep in touch.

He's carrying a four-band Elecraft KX1. The trail begins in southern California, at the border with Mexico, and extends through Oregon and Washington to the Canadian border; 2650 miles from end to end. He'll be checking in to several CW traffic nets along the west coast to send and receive traffic. As a QRPer and backpacker myself (although at a

much less ambitious level), I'm enjoying following his blog at <http://www.n7rr.com/>. At press time (April 30), he had reached Mount Laguna, east of San Diego.

April Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 30

TOTAL CHECKINS 115

TOTAL TRAFFIC 37

BY 11 DIFFERENT STATIONS

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT