

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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Hello fellow TEX members. We have now “officially” entered into the fall / winter season with the change back to standard time and the attendant varied and unpredictable propagation conditions on 80 meters. During these times of low sunspot activity, we can generally expect long skip to be a problem, particularly on the late session of TEX. During the past week I observed an inability on TEX/2 to copy Doug, KA5KLU, who is located about 300 miles from here, while stations in the Midwest (about 1000 miles distant) were coming in at S9+. That is unusual, though, as the skip zone is normally shorter. We do have an advantage of sorts in Texas, with the very large area to cover (roughly equivalent to the entire Region Net 6 area), all in one state. That means the stations in the north and south can generally communicate, even when skip is a problem for those in between. So if you are listening to TEX/2 and don't hear anything, wait a minute or so to see if a station that you **can** copy checks in. Then you can try to get that station's attention to relay for you. Do keep transmissions short, though, limited to sending your call and “pse QNB” or “QNP NCS” or something similar, since you may be interfering with reception of the NCS by the station you do hear.

I received some good inputs for this month's newsletter from Roger, K5HHS, who is working hard to become a good NCS on TEX, and from our neighbors to the north in Oklahoma, Arley, WB5NKC, and Pat, WB5NKD. Roger sent along an area code map that should be useful in routing traffic around the state. I have included it on the next page for your use and information.

Arley and Pat have been active for years in trying to recruit and train CW operators for NTS. I'm sure all of you have seen their messages to other hams, urging them to use CW and join a traffic net. Pat conducts the Texas Slow Net, which meets at 8 PM each night on 3719 KHz. Training materials are always provided, and her and Arley's hard work are much appreciated. Arley sent along the following information, which I am happy to share with you all...

“A person will do a lot better if they are able to start out at a slower speed and learn the basic rules. Of course, for different nets there are different rules, but most of the time they are the same or very similar.

The training lessons we use were written by someone in the Baltimore, MD, area a long time back. That person, whoever it was, has been a silent key for a long time. At one

time, there were over 175 lessons, but with all the changes at ARRL on traffic handling, we have had to drop many of them.” (Continued below)

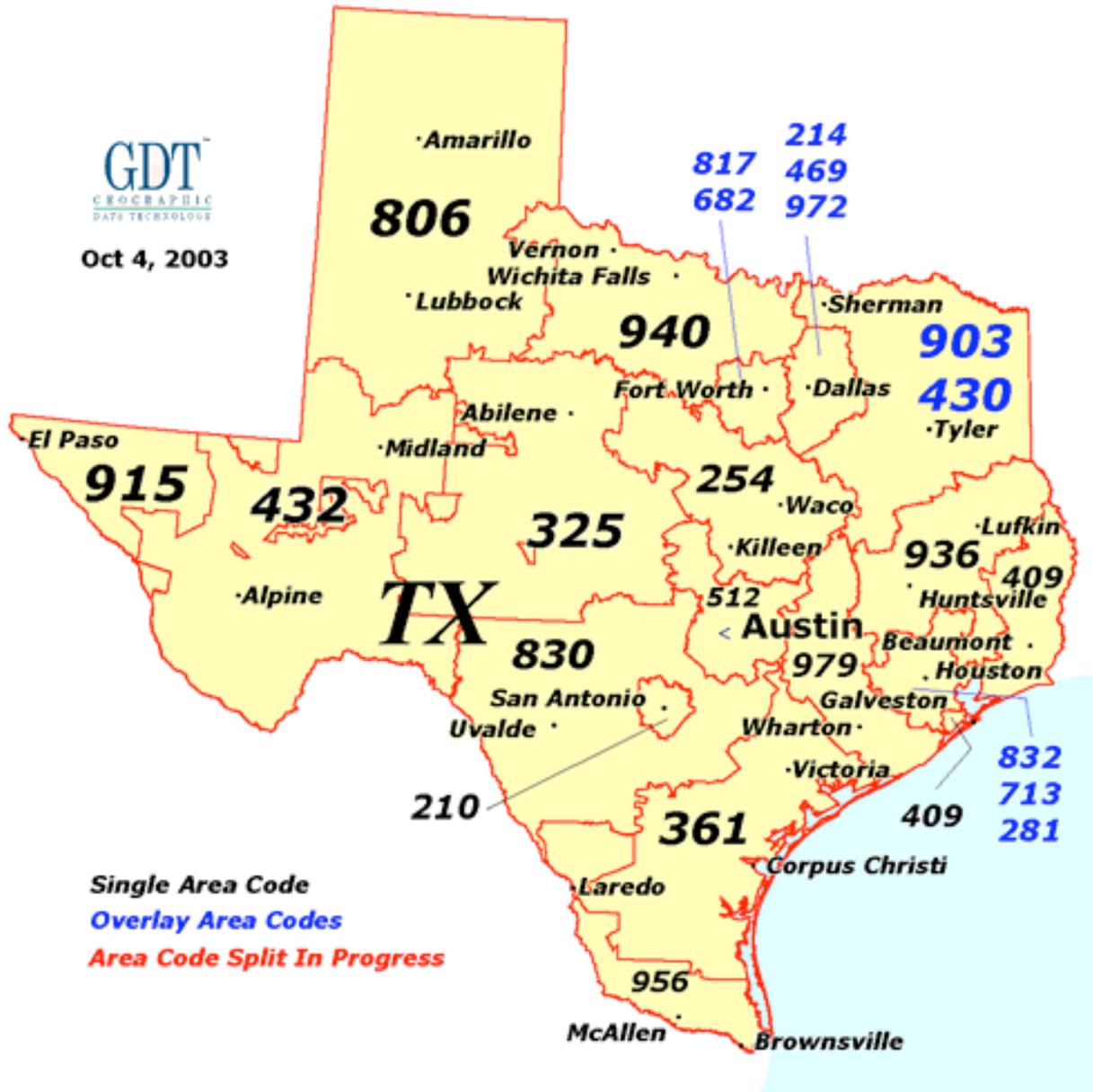


Figure 1. Texas Area Code Map, Courtesy of Roger, K5HHS

(from WB5NKC, continued)

“The training lessons at one time were sent by an instructor, not the net control. But with all the dropouts, we have had to go to having the net control do the instruction.

On our training nets, we do not have “graduates”. The ones sending the lessons are “still in school”. All learn each time. If they aren’t there, then they are playing “hooky

from school” and they aren’t getting that day’s instruction. If they want us to have all the fun, they we will just keep on having the fun, as long as we can get ourselves and the rig to work.

We are supposed to return to winter up here in central Oklahoma today. Breeze will be from the north at 40 MPH (and COLD!). If you listen to the 7290 net, you might hear Hubert talking about the fact that Arley and Pat let the hole in the Oklahoma weather fence get open again.

Pat is “housebound”. When I take her to the doctor’s office, it is in a wheelchair. Hubert is the same way, but to listen to the radiograms going back and forth, you would not know it. A couple winters ago I was telling Hubert that we had Pat outside with a chain saw, cutting down trees, and we had mules pulling the wood up to the hole in the weather fence where I was keeping the fire going, trying to warm up the air for you folks down south. So Hubert sends up his “ole faithful mule, Ole Blue” to help. There was just about no end to all the garbage we were passing back and forth, using everybody to “QSP” the traffic. The point is, have a bit of fun. Also train to help out in the disasters. We know disasters will happen, we just don’t know where or when.

So that is the reason for the traffic that I am having Pat send out to the new ones. She was bedfast for 8 years, and I had to move her computer away from the bed for her to use it. Looking up calls of the issued licenses, and looking for the telephone numbers is my way of giving her something to do, to keep her out of the bed. Although she nearly died 2 different times in that bed, we want all the traffic handlers to know she “ain’t a silent key YET”. Look up her call on QRZ.com and notice the number of lookups – a few times, to be sure.

On the ARTS net (more on that below – ed.), she sends just the preamble, date, and her signature. All the relay stations have the text, so it speeds things up. Sometimes she has tremors of the right hand so bad that she uses the left hand on a right handed keyer – sometimes makes a few extra dits or dahs, but if you notice, all the good old relay stations figure out what she is sending. Many of them are a lot older than Pat and me and they are excellent ops. So that’s what it takes, a motto of “Never giving up”.

73 to all,
Arley and Pat”

Arley also sent along some additional information about the ARTS net. Those of you who are “early birds” (unlike me, a confirmed “night owl”) might want to give it a try...

The Amateur Radio Telegraph Society, at the present time, meets on 7052.10 CW. We start about 6:30 AM Central Time. Net control station at present is WB5NKD and sometimes WB5NKC. All stations are invited to make net calls. If you cannot hear the Oklahoma stations due to band conditions, maybe you can hear Fritz, AD6JS in San Diego, CA, Henry, WD8Q in Ohio, JB, WA2WMJ in NY, or Sid, WB4GGS in GA, who are all regulars.

We try to wind it up a little before 8:00 AM, 'cause generally WB5NKC is wanting the Rig / Wire for Pactor Skeds with Gordon, W5JPI in Stillwater, OK and Doug, KA5KLU in San Antonio, TX. Then a little later we make the DTTN net (7285). At 9 AM, Pat, WB5NKD, sends a training lesson.

There are about 151 total training lessons in the series we obtained via the Indiana Code Net and the old Alabama Slow Net. Originally they came from the Baltimore Code Net. We also use them on the OTN (Oklahoma Training Net), 7120.65 KHz at 5:20 PM Central time and the TSN (Texas Slow Net) on 3719 KHz at 8:00 PM Central. If you hear one number on the OTN net, the next number will be on the TSN net.

73, and hope to see you on the air,
Arley and Pat

Many thanks to Arley for taking the time to send all this information and to both Arley and Pat for their hard work to keep CW traffic alive.

TEX Net Topics

Below is the schedule of NCS and RN5 liaison slots. Note that I have added "backup" positions to both NCS and RN5 liaison slots for some days. We really miss Charlie, W5GKH, who has not yet been able to restore his antennas to operation in the aftermath of hurricane Rita. Thanks and kudos go to Roger, K5HHS, and Jay, N5PWG, who are getting better and better each week with their Friday NCS operation.

TEX CW Net Weekly Schedule

Local	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NCS #1	AC5Z	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5Z	K5HHS	Open	W5GKH
Backup						AC5XK	K6JT
NCS #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5XK	N5PWG	Open	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT					AC5XK	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	Open	Open	W5GKH
Backup	W5TFB				K6JT	W5TFB	K5JRN
RN5 #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	Open	Open	W5GKH
Backup	W5TFB				K6JT	W5TFB	N5EL

TEX/1: 3643 at 19:00 local; TEX/2 3643 at 22:00 local
RN5/1: 3650 (7045) at 19:30; CAN: 3670 (7052) at 20:30; RN5/2: 3650 at 21:30 local

If I listed you as a "backup", and you do not feel you have the time, please let me know and I'll change the listing. I selected backups based on the following:

- a. Has experience performing that function in the past,
- b. Checked in some of the time or performed the function on that day during the past month.

If the backup position is blank, and you would like to be listed there, please advise. Also, if you are not listed as primary or backup NCS, but you are on frequency and don't hear the net at startup time, first give the primary a call, followed by the backup. If neither responds, feel free to jump in and start the net. Similarly, if you can go to RN5 and neither primary nor backup checks in or responds to the QNA RN5 call, go ahead and inform the NCS you volunteer for either or both sessions. NCS stations should ask for a volunteer for each RN5 session if nobody comes forward. Most critical is the late RN5 session when there is no outgoing RN5 traffic that evening.

We are always looking for new ops to be NCS stations and RN5 liaisons. I have published helpful information on these in past issues of the newsletter. If you want or need more help to get started, don't hesitate to ask. I have additional operating aids available, particularly for NCS.

Note all the "Open" positions. If you think you may be available most of the time for any of those, please let me know. It doesn't have to be 100%, just "usually".

Note that backups are for reference only and are not expected to make a special effort to check in / monitor the net on the listed days like the assigned stations – you are only listed for "duty" when it fits into your normal schedule. Assigned stations will occasionally have family or work situations arise that prevent performing the function. That is normal and expected from time to time – after all, this *is* a hobby, even though some of us take it a bit more seriously (perhaps more than we should). If you are the assigned station with a conflict and are able to get to your E-Mail, please let me know as far ahead of time as possible so I can try to fill in or find a substitute / backup.

Statistics:

This month the "prize" for most check-ins goes to Homer, AC5CI, in Caldwell. Way to go, Homer! Honorable mention goes to Si, K5JRN, and Floyd, N5EL, for the next highest QNI totals. Thanks for your support, men, you are all "batting over 300". We missed one each TEX/1 and TEX/2 during the month due to no NCS or report received.

TEX Statistics for October 2005

Call		QNI	Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
W5CDX	Wads	3	5					
*		2						
AC5CI	Homer	22	36					
		14						
N5EL	Floyd	20	30		1			2
*		10			1			
W5ESE	Scott	11	11					
*		0						
K5HHS	Roger	13	13	6		8		

			Total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
Call		QNI						
*		0						
K5JRN	Si	21	32	1	4		17	
*		11			3		7	
K6JT	Steve	20	48	7	5		13	
*		28		18	10		22	
K0KJ	Eric	6	7					
*		1						
KA5KLU	Doug	11	18	4	8	5		
*		7		4	6	4		
W6LFB	Jim	4	4				1	
*		0						
N5PWG	Jay	1	5					
*		4		3				
K5RG	Ken	1	1					
*		0						
W5TFB	Jack	12	19		6			
*		7			7			
W5TV	Tom	0	0					
		0						
KD5TXD	Pat	1	1					
*		0						
AI6U	Chris	0	1					
*		1						
AC5XK	Don	8	22	4	4	4		8
*		14		5	2	10		14
AC5Z	Bert	14	14	8				
*		0						
Totals		267		60	57	31	60	24
				100%	95%	52%	100%	40%
QTC 1		106	156					
QTC 2		50		Sessions:		60	97%	
Time 1		422	695					
Time 2		273						

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 11 and a half hours this past month, a new record. QTC totals were also up.

TEX Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
KF9AS*	Megan	Dallas	W6LFB	Jim	Denton
N5BA*	Brian	Houston	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
AC5CI	Homer	Caldwell	KA5NNG*	Mike	Marshall AR
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	W5RCP	Ron	Houston
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	K5RG	Ken	Houston
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	N5SIG	Randy	Huntsville
K5GM	Pete	Austin	KC5T	Bob	Houston
K5HHS	Roger	Mathis	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	W5TV*	Tom	Nacogdoches
K5JRN	Si	Denton	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
K6JT	Steve	Plano	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde (SA)
KA5KAB	Carl	Baytown	AC5XK	Don	San Antonio
KØKJ	Eric	San Antonio	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	AI6U	Chris	Sacramento CA (visitor)

* I do not have the E-Mail addresses for these stations. If anyone knows how to contact them via E-Mail, please advise me. I am happy to report that Jack, W5TFB, has finally been able to restore his E-Mail capability.

Just one final word about the use of Q-signals. I was confused more than once with how some of you were using the QSP signal. I had never heard it used to indicate "relay" from one station to another. On all my previous (CA) nets, QNB was used for that purpose while QSP was used only to mean you could handle a particular piece of traffic, either for delivery or relay to another net. After looking up the definition (again), I see that using QSP to indicate relay does appear to be correct, at least from the definition, which has changed since the last time I looked, perhaps 35 years ago ;-). My recollection is that it used to mean, "Can you handle this message free of charge?" or something similar. It now means, "Will you relay to...", which is somewhat redundant with QNB. To help out an old dog traffic handler keep from getting confused, please use QNB during net sessions to indicate relay and QSP to indicate you can take a piece of traffic. New tricks come hard to old dogs, you know ☺

Thanks to all of you for your participation this past month. It is getting close to time for Newt, KJ9J, to return to Texas for the winter. I've worked Newt on CAN a couple times (he is the 9RN liaison some nights) and we're hoping he will be able to get up a better antenna this year and help us out sometimes with RN5 from this end of the country.

A special thanks to those of you who carried on while I was visiting my daughter and new grandson in Salt Lake City, Utah, for a few days this past month. See you on TEX!!

73, Steve K6JT