

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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

Net Manager: Steve Phillips, K6JT, Plano TX

(k6jt@arrl.net , 214-208-8900)

TEX Web Site: <http://k6jt.home.att.net/>

Assistant Manager: Rodney Baker, W5DY, Goliad TX

(w5dy@arrl.net)

September 2008



Dearth of Traffic

If you check the statistics later in this newsletter, you will see that our traffic count on TEX was way down this past month. There hasn't been very much incoming from RN5. From my own TCC experiences with CAN and PAN, I note that not much traffic is flowing through the system. They do seem to have more in the Pacific area than we do here in the Central area, though.

So what to do? How can we increase our traffic counts while having a bit more fun in the process? It is not very interesting checking in night after night and hearing "QRU" all around, is it? I ask your help in this area, as does Rodney. If you have a QSO with another ham, by all means send him/her a radiogram of thanks for the contact. If you have relatives in other areas (as most of us do), send them an occasional "hi thinking of you" message, and include an HXE (or HXEG if you wish) in the handling instructions so we get an incoming message in response. I'd say use HXC, too, but that is a bit much.

You don't have to generate volumes of traffic – a couple messages a month would be enough to keep things a bit more interesting. Let me know if you have some other ideas on how to get things moving in the nets again.

As a side note, I have not heard any H&W traffic coming out of the hurricane damaged areas in Louisiana and Mississippi. Thankfully, we were lucky in Texas this time and "dodged the bullet" for our own Gulf Coast. See "Operating" later on for more about this.

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 17 of George Hart's recollections. Geo relates his hi-jinks at W8YA.

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 17.

PENN STATE AND COLLEGE RADIO STATION W8YA, PART FOUR

Let me get tangential and look ahead for a moment. Gil Crossley was a controversial character. I liked him very much although admittedly some of this was due to the fact that he favored me greatly.

Some of the others, on and off the staff, disliked him and/or thought him ridiculous. Walter Hawk and some of the other staffers made fun of him. Charlie Kearns disliked him intensely, felt he was far from being a competent administrator. Incidentally, Charlie eventually graduated high in his (my) class and became an executive in United Aircraft's Hamilton Standard Division in Windsor Locks, near Hartford. As I also later moved to the Hartford area I had very occasional contact with him, not in person but by telephone. We never "hit it off" and I fancied he had little respect for me. As an additional aside, my wife Louise became acquainted with his wife on the Gamma Phi Beta sorority alumnae group in Hartford. She met Charlie at their home, as I was never invited, and she characterized him as a fine and impressive gentleman, far from my recollection of Charlie as a very young college student. Maturity often does amazing things.

Walter Hawk graduated in 1933, returning to Penn State to earn his EE degree and remained for another year, I believe as an employee of the college, so he was around into my junior year. We became very close friends and shared many experiences at W8YA, some of them hilarious.

A prominent ham I never met at Penn State was Dr. Eugene C. Woodruff, W8CMP, familiarly known as "Doc" by his colleagues. Dr. Woodruff was a full professor at the college (it didn't become a university until after WW-II), a mostly unappreciated electronic and automotive genius who rode around town in a custom-made Dusenbergl automobile said to have been given to him by the manufacturer in lieu of payment for a patent.

Doc was a quiet, soft-spoken man of unorthodox mannerisms. I finally met him when he became the second president of ARRL after its founder, Hiram Percy Maxim. Few people understood him, but those who did were his great admirers. I say I met him, but that's about all. I never became even an acquaintance. He and Gil Crossley, who later became an ARRL Director, were close acquaintances, but I don't think the term "friends" would apply here. To most, Doc Woodruff was an enigma. My friendship with Crossley lasted throughout my 6-year State College stay and intensified after he became ARRL Director for the Atlantic Division, when I was on the staff at ARRL HQ.

Getting back to W8YA, Gil Crossley was in constant battles with EE administration about his conduct of the Radio Station Staff. We did get an HRO receiver to replace the old FB-7, but otherwise the equipment remained pretty much the same. Crossley was a bitter and stubborn antagonist without much "clout" and usually came out on the short end of such controversies, ending eventually in his resignation some time in the late 60's or early 70's. It was expected that Gil would relinquish W8YA so that it could remain, in effect, the call of the college amateur radio club. But he refused to do this, smarting from what he must have felt was his rejection by the college. W8YA became W3YA when the call districts were changed after WW-II and, after Gil's death, became the call of Nittany Amateur Radio Club, having no connection with the College. The facility off Burrowes Street was razed and a new station

established in one of the engineering buildings on College Avenue, licensed to the Penn State Amateur Radio Club with the call K3CR.

COMING IN CHAPTER 18, Geo suffers the trials and tribulations of the station OPs at W8YA.

TEX Mailbox:

Chuck, AA5J had some problems with noise one evening before his Tuesday NCS slot. I have also noticed local noise here, but a bit further up the band (around the RN5 frequency), that seems to wander around a bit. I suspect that it is from a plasma TV that some nearby neighbor has installed recently. Those darned things can play havoc with the RF spectrum, particularly the “inexpensive” variety.

As you may have noticed, Chuck was also experiencing problems with keying his SDR-1000. It worked fine when using the computer keyboard interface but dropped dots and parts of dashes when keyed via the internal keyer. When he connected an external keyer, there were even more problems. Well, happy to say, it was diagnosed as RF getting into the keying line. As of the last contact with Chuck, some filtering seems to have resolved the issue with the external keyer.

Rodney, W5DY, was busy this past month, among other things sending out Section Net certificates in his official capacity as South Texas Section Traffic Manager. These certificates are awarded to those who support TEX in one or more of the following categories: (1) Representation of a Local Net, (2) Liaison of the section net with the region net, or (3) Net Control Station. Congratulations and thanks for your support of TEX go to AC5Z, W5GKH, W5CU, N5EL, W5ESE, K5RG, KD5TXD, and AA5J. If you did not receive a certificate, all you need to do to qualify is volunteer for any of the listed duties occasionally and/or take one of the open liaison or NCS slots listed in the “TEX Net Topics” section. Thank you, Rodney, for your efforts. They are much appreciated.

Pat, KD5TXD, has graced us with another of her fine book reports. Thanks, Pat!

“Crystal Clear” by Richard J. Thompson, Jr. (written in 2007) is about the struggle for reliable communications technology during World War II. I wasn’t so sure this would be a good ham radio book report at first but discovered it is perfect. All the technical type hams should read this for sure.

Before WWII crystals were just getting started in radio usage. They were pretty much hand made and experimental. Experiment is what hams did back then. The U. S. military was still planning on depending on portable telegraph systems and a trench type of warfare as they experienced in WWI. The air force was very anxious for radio development and the newly developed tank forces wanted to go mobile.

The Signal Corps was responsible for answering the communications questions. A movement started to get radio more involved and experimentation with the cutting edge of quartz crystal communications was on the table. Well, they had three problems that were insurmountable: there was NO quartz crystal manufacturing industry to meet military needs, there was NO reliable supply of quality quartz crystals, and there was an annoying aging problem with

quartz crystals. But, don't tell amateur radio operators that something can't be done...they will do it.

The manufacturing issue turned out to be solved mostly by amateur radio operators of the day. There were a few radio manufactures who had started to explore crystals. Many amateurs had developed radio businesses during the depression. Now with WWII cutting off their businesses at the knees they needed new work to do. The call for communications solutions went out and hams answered by working in the infant quartz crystal industry. They set up small businesses, shared information (as hams always do), and were instrumental in making sure that U.S. forces had crystals for their radios.

Brazil ended up being the main source for quartz crystals. This was the realm of geologists, although a few amateurs were involved. Even Brazil didn't have the vast quantities of quality quartz crystals needed. As the war progressed the U.S. crystal industry was forced to use poorer and poorer quality crystals. Well, the hams had always used what ever they could find and were experienced in using poor quality crystals. So they were happy to develop new ways to manufacture usable crystals out of the poor raw materials that were available.

Next was this weird aging problem as the final plague of the crystal industry. No one could figure out what was going on with the crystals. They would get out in the combat arena and after a short time their frequency would increase. They would no longer be unusable. A huge effort was made to get teams out in the field to re-grind the crystals so they would work again. My favorite story is of a combat group way out in Burma, too far out for an official crystal team to get to. In that combat group was a ham operator. John Holmbeck, a ham radio operator who learned how to grind crystals years before for his ham radio license in the 1930's, served as "amateur" crystal grinder. He would salvage crystals from broken radios and re-grind them to the needed frequencies. He did it the ham way by using grinding compound and the glass from a jeep window to re-grind workable crystals for their radios. This action was formally forbidden, but Holmbeck risked reprimand in the name of communications for his combat group.

There is much more to this story than I can report. If anyone would like to read this book, let me know and I will loan it to you. It is mega cool. Thanks and 73!! Pat KD5TXD

Bill, KA9IKK, had a problem with non-delivery of a message he sent via the NTS. He reports: I received an NTS message the other day from a station in Nashville indicating they could not deliver the birthday greetings to my sister due to "unable to locate correct phone number". I thought this was strange since I included the correct address and phone number on my original message. I'm guessing with all the noise, static, and fading on the HF bands the numbers most likely got copied incorrectly at some point during the message routing. This made me curious to know how accurate the NTS system is. Have they ever conducted any studies to check the accuracy of NTS?

Also wonder what percentage of messages actually get delivered. I know over the years I have sent several NTS messages to family and friends that were never delivered and also did not receive any return service message.

This might be an interesting topic for one of the newsletters.
73, Bill KA9IKK

Indeed, it is an interesting topic, Bill. I am wondering if any of you TEX members have any insight into the statistics of NTS traffic delivery and routing? Please send me an E-Mail if so. If you respond to my plea at the start of the newsletter, how about letting us know the success or failure of the messages you send as well as the number of responses back. Thanks. /s/

Sam, W5CU, was out of town for a while last month, during which time we covered for OK on RN5. Sam will be gone again soon and requests our assistance once again. He writes: I have several projects going on in MT and will be out that way the week of Sept. 10th. Just a heads-up so that OK traffic doesn't languish. Wish I could find some back-up in the Sooner State! 73/ Sam W5CU

I will be sending an E-Mail to all NCS and liaison stations regarding Sam's upcoming trip when the dates are finalized. /s/

Scott, W7IZ, the STM of Oregon passed along this humorous story that certainly hits home for us here in Texas: Thanks, Scott. "Only a true Texan would have thought of this.

The testicles of a Texas midget hurt and ached almost all the time. The midget went to the doctor and told him about his problem. The doctor told him to drop his pants and he would have a look. The midget dropped his pants. The doctor stood him up onto the examining table, and started to examine him. The doctor put one finger under his left testicle and told the midget to turn his head and cough, the usual method to check for a hernia 'Aha!' mumbled the doctor, and as he put his finger under the right testicle, he asked the midget to cough again. 'Aha!' said the doctor once more, and reached for his surgical scissors. Snip-snip-snip-snip on the right side... then snip-snip-snip-snip on the left side. The midget was so scared he was afraid to look, but noted with amazement that the snipping did not hurt. The doctor then told the midget to walk around the examining room to see if his testicles still hurt. The midget was absolutely delighted as he walked around and discovered his boys were no longer aching. The doctor said, 'How does that feel now?' The midget replied, 'Perfect Doc, and I didn't even feel it. What did you do?' The doctor replied 'I cut two inches off the top of your cowboy boots.'"

Bill, KA9IKK, has been checking in from Houston quite often, as you can see from this month's statistics. However, his job has "heated up" and that is going to slow him down a bit. Bill writes: "Just wanted to let you know my schedule has become too busy for me to keep up my participation in the TEX nets. I hope to get back on the air when things settle down. For now best 73 to all on the net." Bill, KA9IKK

We'll miss you Bill, but do understand. Best of luck with the job and hope to hear you on again as time permits.

Scott, W5ESE, will be on a "Backpack-pedition" in Culberson County for the Texas QSO Party. See his mobile route posting at http://www.no5w.com/TQP2008_RoutePlans.html and also "TSN Corner".

TEX Net Topics

We have been missing some RN5 liaisons due to the Wednesday through Saturday slots being open. The early slots on Thursday and Friday do not even have a backup. Please consider filling one or more of these slots as a regular or even backup station. Note the open NCS slot on Friday as well. I have been filling this, but I would be glad to have a regular since I am not always home Friday evenings. Don't forget that Friday late is still "bug night". Dust off your prized mechanical keyers and give them a workout.

Please note the changes that have been made to the schedule and advise me if you do not agree. We have **17** open slots!

Although I have not received any formal notification, it appears that early RN5 is now meeting on 80 meters, at least the last couple of weeks that I have been covering it when I am home. I changed the frequency list below accordingly.

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	<i>Open</i>	W5DY	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	W5CU	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	<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>	<i>Open</i>	<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 at 19:45 local; CAN: 7052/3552 at 20:30 local; PAN: 7052/3552 at 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 the lowest in recent memory this past month. There were fewer than 100 messages handled. Hence my appeal at the start of this newsletter.

Rodney, W5DY, with 33 (53%) took top QNI for the month while Bill, KA9IKK, was a close second with 29 (47%). Thanks to all for your support.

We did cover all 62 sessions with NCS stations, but as may be seen in the table, we missed two RN5 liaison slots. So far this month (September), we have missed more than 2 of those slots, so your help is greatly needed.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic averaged 1.6 per net session (down from 2.3 last month). Net time averaged 11.6 minutes

per session (compared to 13 last month). Check-ins averaged 4.5 per session, compared to 5.0 last month.

Hopefully we can improve on those in coming months.

TEX Net Statistics (August 2008)

		QNI	total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
W5CDX	Wads	0	10						
*		10							
W5CU	Sam	9	16		9				
*		7			6				
W5DY	Rodney	15	33	1	6		1		
		18		5	9				
N5EL	Floyd	20	20						
*		0							
W5ESE	Scott	23	23	1				18	17
*		0							
W5GKH	Charlie	8	15	7	3				
*		7		7	3				
K5GM	Pete	1	1						
*		0							
W9GVW	Eric	3	3						
*		0							
KA9IKK	Bill	13	29						
		16						1	
AA5J	Chuck	5	9	3	1				
*		4		3					
K6JT	Steve	17	47	4	8		17		
*		30		13	9		30		
KA5KLU	Doug	2	3		1				
*		1			1				
N5NVP	Jim	4	6						
		2							
K5RG	Ken	5	21		2				
*		16			2				
KD5TXD	Pat	16	26	6		16			
*		10		3		8			
AC5Z	Bert	19	19	9					
*		0							
Totals		281		62	60	24	48	19	17
				100%	97%	39%	77%	31%	27%
QTC 1		40	98						
QTC 2		58		Sessions:		62	100%		
Time 1		406	722						
Time 2		316							

It was nice to have Doug, KA5KLU, join us once again this past month. He even took the RN5 liaison one night. Glad to have you back again, Doug, as your time permits.

The roster, which follows, has not been updated since last month.

TEX Roster

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

I thought you all might be interested in this information, sent out on September 1, prior to the landing of Hurricane Gustav. As far as I know, nighttime NTS was not involved in any of the communications work. There is some good information in the following in any case. Hurricane season is not over yet...

Here is the report, forwarded by Dave, W4ZJY, from Steve Ewald, W1VX, at the ARRL:

Mississippi Section Manager Malcolm Keown, W5XX, sent out an e-mail message to the ARRL members of the Mississippi Section late yesterday with the following news regarding plans for hurricane-related traffic, health and welfare inquiries and other information.

Subject: Mississippi Hurricane Gustav EMCOMM Response

Hurricane Gustav is now forecast (Saturday Afternoon) to make landfall late Monday Night or early Tuesday morning near Morgan City, Louisiana moving northwest with winds starting to affect the Louisiana Coast early Sunday Morning. Although Mississippi is now not on the projected path this will probably mean rain and wind over the Southern part of the state with high tides along the coast.

With this National Hurricane Center forecast it is appropriate to invoke the Louisiana-Mississippi-South Texas MOU as opposed to the Delta Division MOU (AR-LA-MS-TN). As a result the West Gulf Emergency Tactical Net will activate at 0600 Sunday for tactical traffic and operate on 3873/7285. K5WLP will be the Net Manager.

Outbound Health/Welfare traffic will be coordinated by the NTS. KB5W (RN5 Manager) will monitor 7111/3570 every half hour. WB5ZED (DRN5 Manager) has asked NF5B to back him up as manager in case he has to evacuate. The DRN5 frequencies are 3850 and 7280. DRN5 will monitor 3850 or 7280 (depending on propagation) on the hour beginning at noon on Tuesday. No monitoring between midnight and 0700. Independent H/W Nets may also be active on 7290, 3935, and 3925 at various times during the day.

Although most of Mississippi seems to be out of the line of fire, don't let your guard down. The situation can change in a minute. I will keep you advised as the storm event unfolds if there is a major change in our emergency response action.

If it becomes necessary to activate emergency operations and you need assistance and the requirements can't be handled in state, coordinate out of state assistance through W5XX. I will contact surrounding SMs and match up resources with requirements. By using a single point of contact we can hopefully maximize the number of qualified operators who enter the state and mitigate problem areas.

As Lord Baden Powell said "Be prepared!"

Best 73 de W5XX.

Also, the Louisiana Section Manager Gary Stratton, K5GLS, reported the following announcement on the ARRL Louisiana Section Web page:

<http://www.arrl.org/sections/LA.html>

Here is a portion of that announcement:

GUSTAV SITREP 8/30/08 ARRL LOUISIANA SECTION GARY STRATTON K5GLS SM

AS OF 10:00 AM CDT 8/30 THE LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, SOUTH TEXAS MOU HAS BEEN EVOKED. COPY OF THAT MOU IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.LAARRL.ORG.

THE WEST GULF EMERGENCY NET (WGEN) WILL BE ACTIVATED AT 6:00 AM CDT ON SUNDAY 8/31. OPERATING FREQUENCIES WILL BE:

EMERGENCY/TACTICAL: DAYTIME 7285 KHZ NIGHTTIME 3873 KHZ H&W DAYTIME 7290 KHZ NIGHTTIME 3935 KHZ

NET MANAGER FOR WGEN IS LANNY PRICHARD K5WLP OF INVERNESS, MS. FOR H&W TRAFFIC, THERE WILL BE A 72 HOUR MORATORIUM ON TRAFFIC INBOUND TO THE AFFECTED AREA. OUTBOUND H&W TRAFFIC WILL BE HANDLED ROUTINELY. THERE WILL BE NTS REPRESENTATION ON THE H&W NET.

So it looks like we were a bit better prepared this time around.
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

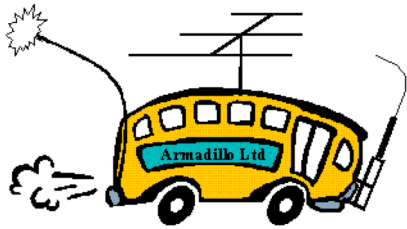
TSN Net Manager

Net QNI was up this month; 111 versus 100, and 13 different stations participated, in comparison to 11 last month. Welcome to first time participants Randy, W5KCM, and Tony, KJ5XF. Come back and join us as often as you can.

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
K0CMH	Craig	St. Louis	MO	K5KV	Benny	Prarieville	LA
W5DY	Rodney	Goliad	TX	WA5LOU	Lou	Kennard	TX
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	TX	WB5NKC	Arley	Oklahoma City	OK
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	WB5NKD	Pat	Oklahoma City	OK
WD0ESF	Mike	Medicine Lodge	KS	N5NVP	Jim	Scott	LA
W5KCM	Randy	Watauga	TX	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
AE5GT	Clint	Wimberley	TX	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	TX	KJ5XF	Tony	Austin	TX
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
KD5MMM	Phil	Fentress	TX				



The Texas QSO Party

The Texas QSO Party is a contest in which participants seek to contact as many stations in Texas as possible, in as many Texas counties as possible. Stations outside of Texas contact only Texas stations, and Texas stations contact anyone. The Texas QSO Party occurs on September 27-28. I am planning to backpack to a remote campsite in the Guadalupe Mountains and participate in the contest

with a QRP rig. The mountain range is in Culberson County. I hope to hear many of you from the traffic nets joining in the fun. The rules in full are at <http://txqp.net>.

August Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 31

TOTAL CHECKINS 111

TOTAL TRAFFIC 26

BY 13 DIFFERENT STATIONS

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT