

The Texan

Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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

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Off to 6-land Again

I am sorry to report that my mother passed away this past month. As a result, I will once again be traveling to California for her memorial and to offer support to my father, who is having a lot of trouble. I will be leaving on the 3rd and will not return until the 13th. My Wednesday early and Thursday late NCS slots will need coverage. Rodney has offered to cover my TCC Fox schedule on Thursday nights for the 3rd and 10th local time. Please send your net reports to Rodney in my absence. Thank you all for your support at this difficult time.

7290 Picnic

I have heard from several of you that you plan to attend the 7290 net picnic in Smithville on May 3. As of this time, I also plan on being able to attend. For those who have not responded, details are available on the 7290 net web site at <http://www.7290trafficnet.org/> including a New menu, maps, and lodging information. Remember, the Pfeiffer Pfist award will be passed on to our 2008 recipient at the picnic.

The Art and Skill of Radio Telegraphy

This is something that most of us will enjoy. In case you missed it in last month's TSN Corner, check out the website at <http://www.qsl.net/n9bor/n0hff.htm> where you can download the 3rd edition of the book by the name of the title line above (free) written by William Pierpont, N0HFF. The 4th edition is out but the printing was sold out. He describes it as "A Manual For Learning, Using, Mastering And Enjoying The International Morse Code As A Means Of Communication". Sounds like something we all share on TEX.

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 12 of George Hart's recollections. The effects of the '29 Crash continue to challenge.

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 12.

LIFE ON THE FARM, PART ONE

I'll omit other details except for those which have some bearing on our (Ed's and mine) amateur radio activities. With no commercial electricity, operation at the farm didn't seem possible. Ed set up a battery-operated station of very low power, with an antenna strung between tall trees surrounding the house, but batteries had to be replaced frequently. We used W3AMR at the farm, but the contacts were few and far between and the whole setup was highly unsatisfactory. Ed decided that the only solution was a superior antenna, which would make up for our very low power capability.

Down in the valley in front of the house, along the wet weather stream there, we had noticed a stand of tall trees, some of them over 60 feet. Ed decided we should cut down two of the tallest, drag them to the top of the hill behind the house on which there was a vast open meadow, get them erected and string an antenna between them. He felt that an antenna at such a high elevation (one could see up the Delaware River Valley all the way to Phillipsburg, NJ) would give us an outstanding signal even with our meager little two watts or so of power. But how to get two trees cut down, stripped of branches, dragged up the hill and set?

The tasks involved seemed insurmountable to me, but Ed got in touch with Raymond Holloway, our 30-year-old cousin who worked the farm in the other valley. Ray took an interest in the project, enlisted the aid of a couple of other cousins and two hired workmen. One Sunday they all came over, with tools and the old Fordson tractor. Ray engineered the whole project. The two tallest trees were duly felled, dragged up the hill and placed 140 feet apart after halyards and ropes were in place at the top of each pole. The way all this was done was most interesting and most ingenious, but I won't take the space to explain it here.

Suffice it to say that the poles were duly erected and stood tall, like silent sentinels, overlooking two valleys and a clear view for many miles north along the Delaware River Valley. Ed and I were most gratified and foresaw great results.

"Those trees are poplar," Ray told us, even before they were felled. "Very pithy, I'll give 'em two years, then they'll rot away and fall."

Ray was mistaken. The trees were tulip, but they were pithy. However, they lasted much longer than two years, which was surprising, considering that wood from tulip, or magnolia trees is not considered useful for either lumber or firewood.

"How you gonna feed the antenna to the house?" I asked Ed, skeptically. The house was over 700 feet away. "We'll worry about that later," said Ed. "Maybe an off-center Windom feed. But right now we'll put up the tent and operate from it until the weather gets too cold. Maybe by that time we can have a real radio shack built.

Next in Part 13. Life on the Farm, Part 2.

Propagation – Much improved?

Have you also noticed that we have pretty good conditions for both early and late TEX with nary a skip zone to trouble us? Most likely it is due to the increased level of sunspots. The following narrative by Larry, N6TW, taken from the February issue of “The Eager Beaver” (Oregon state net newsletter – thanks Scott, W7IZ), may explain what is happening (tailored to refer to equivalent Texas rather than Oregon locations):

We are currently at a minimum of the 11 year sunspot cycle. In November almost every day had no sunspots at all which resulted in a low flux level from the sun. The flux creates the ionosphere which reflects our signals around the world as well as from Plano to Lufkin. The difference between Plano to Oregon and Plano to Lufkin is the angle at which the signal bounces. The signal reaching Oregon bounces at about 16 degrees and to Lufkin at 65 degrees. Smaller bounce angles support higher frequencies than large angles.

The highest frequency bounced off the ionosphere at an angle of 90 degrees (straight up and down) is called the critical frequency. If the critical frequency is higher than the frequency we are using, there will be no skip zone, the area where the signal is not reflected back to earth. Plano can talk to a station in Denton, which is 30 miles away (approximately 85 degrees), as well as Lufkin. But when the critical frequency drops below our operating frequency, Plano will lose communication with Denton and further out as it continues to drop. We can sometimes still hear a station within the skip zone because of ground wave like 2 meters or via backscatter from the ionosphere, but the signal is typically much weaker. Other factors are involved also.

What happened to the nets last fall and winter is that the critical frequency dropped below 3552 kHz before or during the net session time. The close-in stations dropped out first (for example, I could not hear Bert or Si from Plano). That's why north Texas stations were a good relay to south Texas and vice-versa. We were far enough away to remain out of the skip zone on most evenings. When things are very bad (i.e., critical frequency is very low), the skip zone can encompass the majority of central Texas. In that case, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas stations may be the best relays.

The earlier sunset time in winter means the critical frequency will be lower earlier and earlier until the end of December. By the end of February, sunset will be after net start time, the critical frequency will be higher than the net frequency and no skip zone will occur on the 80 or 75 meter nets.

The difficulty we had will probably not occur again for 11 years but may occur again next year depending on when the next solar cycle begins. A smoothed sunspot number of 50 is required to avoid conditions as they were this winter. The smoothed sunspot number for December 2007 was 16. The few days around 10 December 2007 were better than the previous few weeks. This was due to a new sunspot group, which provided sunspot numbers in the region of 45.

TEX Mailbox:

Si, K5JRN, reports: The house renovations are going slowly. I'm living in a very RF-noisy location, and all I have is a small collection of 2m and 440 gear, plus a QRP HF rig. I have a

short helical whip mounted in the attic, and it will load on 40 and 80. But I doubt that my 2-watt signal will travel more than a couple of miles, especially on 80. Some night when I have time, I will listen to TEX and see if anyone can hear me. 73, Si

You may have noticed that **Jay, N5PWG**, has been absent of late. His son informed us that he is having some health issues and has been in and out of the hospital. We all wish you a speedy recovery, Jay, and look forward to hearing your great bug keying once again on TEX.

Pat, KD5TXD, reports that she managed to handle 500 messages in March, so she will get her 3rd BPL, which qualifies her for the medallion. Congratulations, Pat, good job! Pat also reports that due to work schedules, she will not be able to participate at the same level as she has been, particularly for daytime nets. She will join us on TEX often, though, but will only be able to take local area messages for delivery.

Pat also sent a report on how well the technician classes are going at her club. She writes: We have been enjoying great Wednesday evenings with the Explorers in our Technician class. There are about 10 who make it for every class. They seem to be understanding the material as we go through the Technician study book. I really get a kick out of our old timer amateurs who seem to turn up at the class for the opportunity to expound on their favorite parts of amateur radio. They have really been a great help. We have one fellow from Alice TX who has presented most of the technical stuff for the students. The first time I invited him to help with our first class he was nearly shaking with stage fright. Now (this is our 4th class) he is comfortable and excited about sharing his knowledge with a group. He has been a ham for over 50 years, worked as a broadcast engineer for his career, so radio is in his blood, so to speak.

I also twisted the arm of our ARES DEC to come last night and tell the class about ARES. He is a good deal younger than I am and zooms in on his motorcycle. That is a treat for these teens. Kind of gave the impression that not all hams are gray haired and old.

Also, one of the old timers brought me a "present". He turned up with a metal box. I am not too sure yet exactly what it is or how it works. The metal label calls it a "Telegraph Set TG-5-B". I think it is a 1930 vintage army portable telegraph rig. It has connections for incoming and outgoing wires, a bell, a plug for earphones (missing), a space for 45 volt batteries, a code key, and other stuff that I haven't a clue about. Now I have to figure out how to make it work. The batteries must have been specially made for it. The spot where they go looks like D cells should fit, but I am not sure. Life is an adventure and here is another one more for me. 73!! Pat, KD5TXD

Our enthusiastic reader and reporter, **Pat, KD5TXD**, sent in another of her great book reports. She writes: Hi all, here is another book report for the next newsletter. I am going to get the book in the mail to Floyd. I think he will enjoy it and it is a short book. Thanks and 73!!

Book report: "World War II Radio Heroes - Letters of Compassion" by Lisa L. Spahr.

There is a lot of love and compassion and deeply personal feelings connected with radio. Because the radio is a piece of technology there seems to be a tendency to not see or notice the very personal side of amateur radio. It is easier to talk about antenna gain, S-meter

readings, power amps, pass band filters, and other such impersonal things than to talk about the human interactions.

During World War II ham radio was off the air. The amateur radio operators and shortwave listeners could listen all they wanted, but no one could transmit. The passion for radio kept these folks tuned into various broadcasts. They encountered the German and Japanese propaganda broadcasts where prisoners of war information would be transmitted. These radio folks picked up the transmissions and were compelled by their own compassion and humanity to write to the POWs' families to give the family every bit of detail about their imprisoned family member.

The author's grandfather was a prisoner of war in Germany. His mother received 69 such letters from amateur radio operators and shortwave listeners. The author discovered the letters in 2006 in a family trunk and began to research to try to find the people who sent these letters to her great-grandmother during World War II. Ms. Spahr found some of the families of the letter writers and even a few of the letter writers themselves were still alive.

My favorite, of course, is K3JA, Flavius Jankauskas, who listened for the POW broadcasts and wrote postcards to the families. Flavius had gotten his amateur radio license before WWII and was 16 when he wrote to the author's great-grandmother. Flavius later enlisted in the merchant marine at 17 and went to war himself.

This is a touching book that shows the tender heart of radio people and the tradition of helping others that is such a strong part of amateur radio.

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. Thanks to Chuck, AA5J, who has signed up as alternate Tuesday NCS, backing up Doug.

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	<i>Open</i>	K6JT	<i>Open</i>	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	KA5KLU	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5ESE	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	<i>Open</i>	W5DY	W5ESE	W5CU	<i>Open</i>	W5GKH
RN5 #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>Open</i>	W5CU
Backup	W5DY	<i>Open</i>	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 at 20:30 local; PAN: 3552 at 22:30 local

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

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

Statistics:

This past month Rodney, W5DY, edged out Pat with QNI of 43 (69%), while Pat, KD5TXD, had 42 (68%). Thanks to everyone for your support.

The complete list of stations and traffic / liaison totals are shown in the following table. Traffic was a little down from February, but QNI was about the same as last month. Traffic averaged 3.2 per net session. Net time averaged 14.1 minutes per session, also slightly less. Check-ins averaged 5.6 per session. All in all, a pretty good month.

Note that we missed 3 of the RN5 session liaisons, all for the second session. If you go to RN5 late, please check into late TEX, even if you are QRU.

TEX Net Statistics (March 2008)

			total	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN	TSN
Call		QNI							
W5CDX	Wads	0	5						
*		5							
W5CU	Sam	10	19		7				
*		9			9				
W5DY	Rodney	20	43	1	5		1		
		23		5	10				
N5EL	Floyd	26	28						
*		2							
W5ESE	Scott	23	24		10			20	8
*		1			1			1	
W5GKH	Charlie	8	17	5	3				
*		9		9	4				
K5GM	Pete	4	5						
*		1							
W9GVW	Eric	6	6						
*		0							
AA5J	Chuck	16	24				5		
*		8							
KJ9J	Newt	2	2						
*		0							
K6JT	Steve	21	51	5			19		
*		30		8			30		
KA5KLU	Doug	7	11	4	4			2	
*		4		4	4			2	
K5KV	Benny	0	2						
		2							
N5NVP	Jim	10	12						
		2							
K9PUI	Dick	0	1						
		1							
N5PWG	Jay	2	4	2					
*		2		1					
K5RDW	RD	5	5						
*		0							
K5RG	Ken	9	21		1				

*		12		5	1				
KD5TXD	Pat	22	42	5		22			4
*		20		4		20			5
AI6U	Chris	0	1						
*		1							
AC5Z	Bert	22	22	9					
*		0							
Totals		345		62	59	42	55	25	17
				100%	95%	68%	89%	40%	27%
QTC 1		114	199						
QTC 2		85		Sessions:		62	100%		
Time 1		505	872						
Time 2		367							

The roster, which follows, has been updated to reflect Jim (N5NVP)'s new QTH.

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	# W5UFK	Ken	College Station
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	* K5UN	Lee	Leonard
* K5JRN	Si	Denton	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde
K6JT	Steve	Plano	K5WQG	Eddy	Tomball
KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio	# KM5YQ	David	Irving
K5KV	Benny	Star	* AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)
W6LFB	Jim	Denton			

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

Operating:

The change back to daylight time appears to have not adversely affected early TEX operation. Signals are a little weaker, but still copyable all around.

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

Welcome back to Bert, AC5Z, who is no stranger to net members who also participate in TEX.

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
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	TX	K5RDW	RD	Vilonia	AR
WD0ESF	Mike	Medicine Lodge	KS	KI5T	Wade	Walker	LA
AG9G	Dwight	Phillips	WI	KB5TCH	Carroll	Douglassville	TX
AA5J	Chuck	Plano	TX	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville	TX
AA5JW	Carl	Stafford	TX	AD5VC	Dana	Baton Rouge	LA
K5KV	Benny	Prairieville	LA	N5XGG	Joe	Colmesneil	TX
WA5LOU	Lou	Kennard	TX	KM5YQ	David	Irving	TX
KD5MMM	Phil	Fentress	TX	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches	TX

Centennial of Amateur Radio 1908-2008

According to '200 Meters and Down – The Story of Amateur Radio', by Clinton B. DeSoto;

The most significant dividing line in amateur history comes at about the year 1908. It was during this period that from the welter of experimenters, scientists, commercial engineers, inventors and would-be inventors hoping to establish "systems" of wireless or to exploit stock companies, all of whom combined to make the heterogeneous group whose border-line activities can be called either amateur or not as one prefers, there emerged the type of individual who constitutes the radio amateur as we know him today.

So it happened, that approximately 100 years ago this year, amateur radio emerged in a form we would recognize today. (See the picture on the next page.)

7290 Traffic Net Picnic

The 7290 Traffic Net Picnic is scheduled for May 3, at Riverbend Park in Smithville, Texas. This is a popular outing with traffic handlers from several traffic nets. Jo Ann Keith, the 7290 Net Manager, asked me to be sure to extend an invitation to everyone on TSN. See page 1 of this newsletter for more information.

March Activity Report

TOTAL SESSIONS 31

TOTAL CHECKINS 128

TOTAL TRAFFIC 36

BY 14 DIFFERENT STATIONS



WIRELESS TELEGRAPH

The "Telimco" Complete Outfit, comprising 1 inch Spark Coil, Strap Key, Sender, Sensitive Relay, Coherer, with Automatic Decoherer and Sounder, 4 Ex. Strong Dry Cells, all necessary wiring, including send and catch wires, with full instructions and diagrams, \$8.50. Guaranteed to work up to one mile. Send for Illust. Pamphlet & 64-page catalogue.

ELECTRO IMPORTING CO., 32 Park Place, New York

An early advertisement for amateur wireless equipment, from Scientific American

The telegraph key image is courtesy of FCIT