The Texan
Newsletter of the Texas NTS CW Net (TEX)

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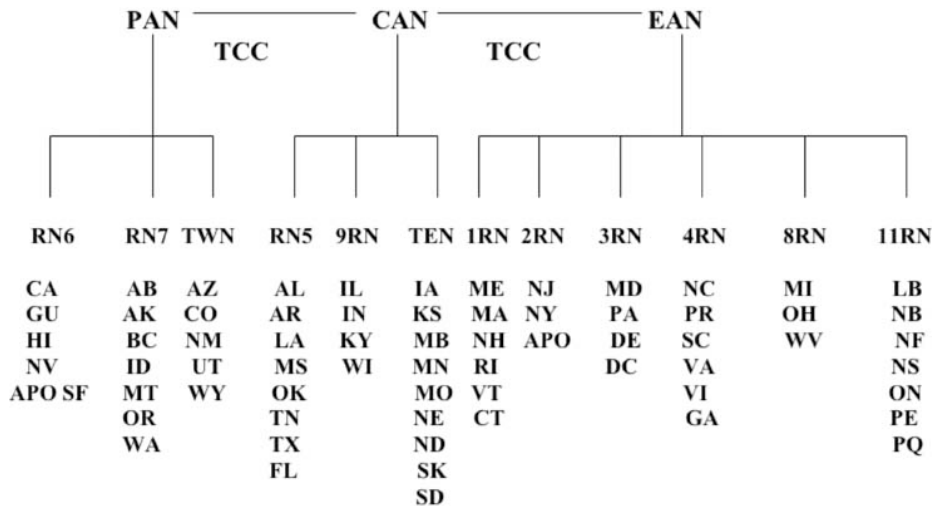(dogan@perese.com)

December, 2005

Hello fellow TEX members. Is it possible that yet another month has gone by? The days seem to blur into hours and the weeks into days. I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving. Many thanks to those of you who jumped in to help while I went to Arkansas to visit family. Special thanks to Floyd, N5EL, and Si, K5JRN, for taking out-of-the-ordinary NCS and RN5 slots as well as Jack, W5TFB, for covering my TCC schedule. We had a great trip and it was worth every mile of the 480 or so it took to get to Mountain Home just to see my grandson, Kaleb, interact with 2 of his second cousins there, all of whom were under 6 months old.

Conditions were mixed this past month, but generally pretty good outside of a few nights. As I mentioned last month, it is a definite advantage to have such a large area to cover as we do with TEX, since the skip is seldom longer than from one end of the state to the other. These are the times when a station in the far south of the state, such as Newt, KJ9J, is a great asset for relaying messages. Newt is now well settled into his winter digs in Pharr, Texas, which, if it were any further south, would be in Mexico. He reports that he has still not been able to follow through on plans for a better antenna (he is using a Hustler mobile vertical), but he hopes to do so in the near future. Even with the compromised antenna, on long skip nights, he is about S8 into northern Texas.

I received some great inputs for this month's newsletter from Doug, KA5KLU, whom you all know so well, and from Ken, K5RG, who has become much more active from the Houston area these past few weeks. I got a hint a few nights ago on RN5 when I checked in and Jim, KB5W, the RN5 NCS (and manager) called me "Ken" upon QNI. When it came time to excuse me, he called K5RG. Jim apologized for having "something in his ears" when I answered the call for Ken and set the record straight, but from the fact that Jim knew Ken so well, I deduced that Ken had once been a stalwart on RN5. Yes, it is true, I've been listening to Sherlock Holmes stories recently, which have been a real inspiration ☺

At any rate, Ken always has a potent signal up here in the Dallas area, which I now know to be due to his recently revised antenna work. He was kind enough to share some anecdotes and even pictures of what has transpired in his area since Rita made her sweep through Texas and Louisiana. I've included them in this issue. But first, Doug sent along an NTS routing table that appears on the next page. If you've not

been active in the upper-level NTS, you may have wondered how it all worked. This routing table will give you a "big picture" overview. Thanks, Doug.

PAN ——————— CAN ——————— EAN
        TCC   TCC

RN6	RN7	TWN	RN5	9RN	TEN	1RN	2RN	3RN	4RN	8RN	11RN
CA	AB	AZ	AL	IL	IA	ME	NJ	MD	NC	MI	LB
GU	AK	CO	AR	IN	KS	MA	NY	PA	PR	OH	NB
HI	BC	NM	LA	KY	MB	NH	APO	DE	SC	WV	NF
NV	ID	UT	MS	WI	MN	RI		DC	VA		NS
APO SF	MT	WY	OK		MO	VT			VI		ON
	OR		TN		NE	CT			GA		PE
	WA		TX		ND						PQ
			FL		SK						
					SD						

The routing table for U.S., Canada, Guam, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The Region Nets normally meet at 7:30 and 9:30 their local time. The Area Nets Pan, Ean and Can meet at 8:30 in their local times. TCC is Trans-Continental Corps, which move traffic between the Area Nets on set skeds via the Public Service Manual.

Now for Ken's story… You guys might be interested in my tales of woe regarding trying to get my 80 meter delta loop back in the air after one of the legs broke in Hurricane Rita. The last time I fully erected the antenna must have been longer ago than I realized since the trees adjacent to the house (all trash trees near the side of the house, e.g. china berrys, hack berrys, tallows, etc.) have grown quite a bit. I have replaced the antenna over the years but I must have used the existing wire to pull the new wire over the trees. I had erected a 40 meter windom a few months ago since I couldn't run the linear with the mismatch on the 80 meter antenna (antenna tuners are really a boon for hamkind). I was able to get it up over 60 feet since I found myself seeing a better branch each time I got to a certain level on the pine tree that was to be the other support from the 80 foot tower. Anyway, after losing the 80 meter delta loop, I spent over two weeks trying to get one particular leg up and over the trees by the side of the house. My XYL (Camille) finally got fed up with having to 'assist' me on what was turning out to be a futile effort, so she called a tree service.   I had one 60 foot tree in particular that was causing me problems but the tree service recommended topping all the trees. So two days later I had some air-level real estate that I never had before and I was finally able to get the loop back in the air all by myself. The pictures show the before and after. The only bad news is that the antennas are far more visible from the ground. So what had been hidden behind a good screen of trees was no longer.

Before Rita

After Rita

(Note: I had to decrease the resolution of the pictures to keep file size from growing too large – hopefully these are still clear enough – Would you look at the size of that tower out behind the house !!! – Ed.)

I did run into one odd problem that I solved pretty fast. I replaced the center insulator/feed point with a new Alpha Delta C, which has an arc-plug between the two wires. There must have been a slight defect in the arc-plug since it shorted out at power levels about 600 watts (input) even though the SWR was very low. I never had a problem with the one I replaced so I just cut out the existing arc plug and will replace it when I get one ordered.

One other addition to the shack is an FTdx9000D. Not sure how I justified the expenditure but if asked I would tell you that my primary goal in retirement was to get

the station back into prime condition so I am not going to 'budget' in this area. Life is getting short! Anyway trying to get my hands around the 3 inches of manuals, the 37 rotary controls, 96 push buttons and 160 software variables is an on-going exercise!! A good story when I first got into amateur radio (1960), the selection criterion for my first receiver was to purchase the one with the most knobs. So on that basis, I have just reached nirvana!! It has been pretty straightforward with the exception of the differences between the 9000 and the FT-1000. Hopefully now I can dive into the FT-1000 trying to fix the oddity I've been having with the antenna tuner, which wasn't matching a 50 ohm dummy load very well. The SWR fold back circuitry was not allowing full output and thus "forcing" me to use the linear for the first time in years. I suspect the problem is a latent result of the nearby lightning hit about a year ago that nailed the control board and probably caused the antenna tuner to partially fail four months later.

So that is the current status from Houston.
73, Ken K5RG

TEX Net Topics

Below is the schedule of NCS and RN5 liaison slots. Note that I have updated the "backup" positions to both NCS and RN5 for some days, based on feedback from you all and additional assignments. I have tried to reach Charlie, W5GKH, via E-Mail to ask about his status, but have not received a response. Sure hope Charlie is OK. Roger, K5HHS, and Jay, N5PWG, are starting to sound like "old pros" 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			N5EL			AC5XK	K6JT
NCS #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	K6JT	AC5XK	N5PWG	*Open*	W5GKH
Backup	K6JT		N5EL	K6JT		AC5XK	K6JT
RN5 #1	W5GKH	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	*Open*	*Open*	W5GKH
Backup	W5TFB			N5EL	K6JT	W5TFB	K5RG
RN5 #2	W5GKH	KA5KLU	W5TFB	AC5XK	*Open*	*Open*	W5GKH
Backup	W5TFB			N5EL	K6JT	W5TFB	N5EL

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

If I put you down as a backup and you don't think you will be available at least some of the time on that evening, please let me know. If the backup position is blank, and you would like to be listed there, also please advise. I would really like to have backups listed for all slots, but I realize that is difficult. 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, please inform the NCS you can take either or both sessions when you check in. NCS stations should ask for a volunteer for each RN5 session if nobody steps forward during the QNI sequence. If you can make one session but not the other, it is OK to have 2 different stations for early/late RN5.

Statistics:

This month the "prize" for most check-ins goes again to Homer, AC5CI, in Caldwell. Homer set a new record for most QNIs during a month since I've been keeping statistics with a nearly perfect TEX/2 total of 29 of 30 and 27 of 30 for TEX/1. A very close second overall goes to Floyd, N5EL, who takes 1st place for TEX/1 with 28 of 30. Anybody else want to join the stiff competition? It does take a lot of dedication, for which I am grateful to all of you.

TEX Statistics for November 2005

Call		QNI 1 / 2	Total QNI	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
W5CDX	Wads	1	1					
*		0						
AC5CI	Homer	27	56					
		29						
W5CU	Sam	0	2					
*		2						
N5EL	Floyd	28	54	1	1			
*		26		1	1			1
W5ESE	Scott	11	11					
*		0						
W5GKH	Charlie	1	1					
*		0						
K5GM	Pete	0	1					
*		1						
K5HHS	Roger	15	15	5		14		
*		0						
KB5IZO	David	0	1					
		1						
KJ9J	Newt	14	14					
*		0						
K5JRN	Si	17	31		4		11	
*		14			6		8	
KD5JSS	Dennis	2	4					
		2						

Call		QNI 1 / 2	Total QNI	NCS	RN5	TTN	DFW	CTTN
K6JT	Steve	24	51	10	4		17	
*		27		17	5		21	
KØKJ	Eric	5	6					
*		1						
KA5KLU	Doug	12	19	5	7	3		1
*		7		4	7	3		
W6LFB	Jim	1	1					
*		0						
N5NVP	Jim	1	1					
		0						
N5PWG	Jay	3	12					
*		9		4				
K5RG	Ken	4	10					
*		6						
W5TFB	Jack	19	29		9			
*		10			8			
W5TV	Tom	2	2					
		0						
AC5XK	Don	12	24	3	4	5		11
*		12		3	2	10		12
AC5Z	Bert	14	14	7				
*		0						
Totals		360		60	58	35	57	25
				100%	97%	58%	95%	42%
QTC 1		119	170					
QTC 2		51		Sessions:		60	100%	
Time 1		480	791					
Time 2		311						

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

Please join me in welcoming our newest member, Dennis, KD5JSS, in Temple, whom Floyd, N5EL, has been mentoring. Glad to have you with us, Dennis! Also welcome to David, KB5IZO in Irving, who has some antenna problems on 80 meters.

Bug Night?

Ever noticed how Jay, N5PWG, expertly uses a bug to run the net on Fridays at 10 PM? It is a joy to my ears to hear a good bug on the air. I know others of us also have bugs, including myself and Floyd, N5EL, but Jay and Si, K5JRN, are the only ones who regularly use one on the net. How about a "bug night" on Fridays on the late session? If you have a bug, and you can QNI at 10 on Friday, please plug in the old beast and lets all join Jay (albeit most likely not nearly as expertly) in practicing our "swing". I have to dust off my old Vibroplex Blue Racer, which I received as a gift after passing my General exam at the FCC office in San Francisco in 1961 (for those of you who have been licensed for less than about 20 years, note that we used to have to appear in person at an FCC office to take the amateur radio exams). The contacts don't always make good connections, and my fist has been spoiled by using a keyer for so many years, but it is still fun to use.

TEX Net Stations (QNS)

Call	Name	Location / Notes	Call	Name	Location / Notes
KF9AS*	Megan	Dallas	KA5KLU	Doug	San Antonio
N5BA*	Brian	Houston	W6LFB	Jim	Denton
W5CDX	Wads	Crowley LA	WA5MUF	Bill	Watauga
AC5CI	Homer	Caldwell	KB5NJD	John	Duncanville
W5CU	Sam	Edmond OK	KA5NNG*	Mike	Marshall AR
N5EL	Floyd	Temple	N5PWG	Jay	Pasadena
W5ESE	Scott	Dripping Springs	W5RCP	Ron	Houston
W5GKH	Charlie	West Columbia	K5RG	Ken	Houston
K5GM	Pete	Austin	N5SIG	Randy	Huntsville
K5HHS	Roger	Mathis	KC5T	Bob	Houston
KB5IZO	David	Irving	W5TFB	Jack	College Station
KJ9J	Newt	Pharr TX (winter)	W5TV*	Tom	Nacogdoches
K5JRN	Si	Denton	KD5TXD	Pat	Kingsville
KD5JSS	Dennis	Temple	AI6U	Chris	Sacramento CA (visitor)
K6JT	Steve	Plano	KS5V	Ed	Bulverde (SA)
KA5KAB	Carl	Baytown	AC5XK	Don	San Antonio
KØKJ	Eric	San Antonio	AC5Z	Bert	Nacogdoches (Lufkin)

* 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 sorry to report that Jack, W5TFB, has only intermittent E-Mail capability once again.

As a follow-up about the use of Q-signals, in particular QSP and QNB, I heard from an old friend of mine, Ken, K6CTW, who is the manager of RN6 in California and an expert on all things related to the code(s), as follows (E-Mail extract):

According to: "ITU Radio Regulations 1990, Appendix 13 : Miscellaneous Abbreviations and Signals to Be Used in Radiotelegraphy"

QSP is, as a question, "Will you relay to .... free of charge?" or as an answer or advice, "I will relay to ... free of charge."

Thus, your usage for delivery of traffic seems to be correct, at least according to the ITU!   This is also the one that I remember. I also agree that QNB is for relaying from one station to another during net.

(End E-Mail extract)

Since then, I did hear a station on PAN use QSP to mean "relay" of instructions during net, so it appears the truncated definition on the ARRL "pink card" has been picked up in places other than the central area. I again request that we use QSP on net to mean delivery of traffic to an end destination (or to another net) and QNB to mean relay of instructions or messages between 2 other stations when copy is otherwise difficult.

One last "op note" for our new NCS stations – if conditions seem a little squirrelly, before sending stations off frequency, have them make contact on the net frequency using the QNV directive, which means "Establish contact with ___ on this frequency. If successful, move to ___ and send him traffic for ___." So, for example, if W5TFB has one for San Antonio, and Eric, KØKJ has checked in, you would send: "W5TFB (pause for acknowledgment) QNV KØKJ D3 San Antone". Jack would then call Eric, who would respond, and they both will move down 3 KHz to pass the traffic.

But if either of them has trouble copying the other, they will so indicate during the QNV. If that happens, assign a 3rd station to QNB. To do that, assume the problem is long skip when normally the two would have no problems copying, and then choose the station on net that is farthest from both of the stations having difficulty. Ask that station if he can copy the other two all right. Then ask each of the two stations if they can copy the 3rd. If the answers are all "yes", send them all off together. For example, using the above link of W5TFB and KØKJ, the farthest station away would likely be Newt, KJ9J, assuming he has checked in. After asking each if they can copy OK, send something like: "KJ9J (pause) QNB W5TFB KØKJ D3." Then send W5TFB (pause) QNK San Antone KJ9J D3". Finally, send "KØKJ (pause) QNR KJ9J D3 after W5TFB". Other variations are possible, and you can substitute words for QNK and QNR if you wish (e.g., "Send" for QNK and "From" for QNR in the example). Note that the use of QNB makes it clear what is to be done.

That'll about wind 'er up for this month. I hope all of you have a great holiday season and all the best in the New Year!

73, Steve K6JT