

Empire Slow Speed Net
Founded 1955 by
KR2RA,
ex-K2DYB (SK)
*** *** ****
Daily
6 PM local time
3566 kHz
7110/1815 alternates

The ESS Bulletin

Pete Gellert W2WSS Memorial Net

September 2024

Anne Fanelli, WI2G, manager
 541 Schultz Road
 Elma, New York 14059
 (716) 652-6719 (mobile)
 Email afwi2g@gmail.com

<https://www.qsl.net/ess/>
<https://groups.io/g/empire-slow-speed-net>



Net Control Stations

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| W2ITT | WA2YOW | KA2GJV | W2RBA | AB2WB | K1SEI | WI2G |

AUGUST ROSTER

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------------------|----|--------|--------|------------------|----|
| AA2YK | Ernie | Modena | 4 | WA2YOW | C. J. | Staten Island | 4 |
| AB2WB | Pat | Ithaca | 14 | WB2OCA | Jim | Yorktown Heights | 4 |
| K2EAG | Matt | Amherst | 2 | WI2G | Anne | Elma | 16 |
| KA2GJV | Bruce | Fulton | 6 | K1SEI | Tage | Killingworth CT | 28 |
| N2PEZ | Reiner | Elmira | 14 | WB2U | Vic | Gaithersburg MD | 27 |
| N2QFD | Mal | Elmira | 3 | K2TV | Bob | Fairfax VA | 11 |
| N2TQT | Colin | Brooklyn | 19 | K3YAK | David | Mendham NJ | 56 |
| N7RMP | Ralph | Kingston | 23 | K3ZYK | Bill | Penn Run PA | 10 |
| W2ITT | Rob | Huntington | 17 | N3AAK | Bob | Levittown PA | 13 |
| W2LC | Scott | Baldwinsville | 6 | WA3JXW | Dudley | Reading PA | 19 |
| W2PHD | David | Head of the Harbor | 1 | VE1AJF | Gordon | | 1 |
| W2RBA | Joe | Mount Vision | 29 | VE3DCX | Jim | Coe Hill ON | 6 |
| W2XS | John | Northport | 15 | VE3FAS | Phil | Shelburne ON | 24 |
| WA2IAX | Jim | Sidney | 1 | | | | |

August totals: QNI 325, per session 10.5 (Jul 9.3); QSP 42, per session 1.4 (Jul 1.3). Another good month, with a bump-up in checkins and traffic holding steady (with room for improvement. Although QRM is increasing on 40 meters and the band is probably starting to lengthen, I'd like to stay there as long as possible to accommodate our more-distant members. Heartfelt thanks to all our first-rate net control stations for getting their reports to me by month's end; Mike is scheduled for surgery on the 3rd, and I'm tying up as many loose ends as I can. Congratulations and thanks for their support of ESS to this month's net-certificate recipients, WA2JXW, K3ZYK and our webmaster, N2PEZ. Reiner emailed a link to the ARRL's NTS Letter (https://www.arrl.org/nts-letter?_zs=c1rxl&_zl=uCJ33, which also seems to work for non-members of the league) and posted links to the updated ARL numbered texts (<https://nts2.arrl.org/numbered-texts/>) and handling instructions lists (<https://nts2.arrl.org/hx-handling-instructions/>) on the net's .io group page. It's great to see that K2TV is still writing for the *Compass* (the Great South Bay ARC newsletter) despite his move to Virginia; Bob's column in the September issue is "I Just Passed My Technician Class Amateur Radio Test: What Do I Do Now?" GSBARC has excellent Elmering and upgrade programs. N2QFD, a former Warren County RACES op, has returned to CW and is checking in with 5 watts from Elmira; Mal, who's familiar with propagation, has received advice and encouragement from W2ITT, K2TV, N2TQT and N2PEZ. K1SEI is recovering from a bout with the covid, which still seems to be very much with us despite the season; our older son's family has also recently had it, despite being vaxxed to the max, and we're looking forward to rolling up our sleeves for the updated vaccine. **Birthdays: September**—W2ITT 28. **October**—None, as far as I know. Additions and corrections, preferably by radiogram, are always welcome!

The Deep End

As an inevitable (albeit long-delayed) consequence of the dropping of any degree of Morse proficiency from any class of amateur license, the CW nets seem to be at a watershed moment. This is interesting (as in the Chinese curse, “May you live in interesting times”), because Morse is surviving quite nicely for DXing, contesting and ragchewing. Perhaps it’s because traffic-handling (whatever the mode) is perceived as fundamentally dull and persnickety, and traffic-handling in what’s seen as a foreign language (Morse) seems damn near impossible.

My radio “garden” has been mainly limited to CW for some time due to other obligations and interests, and I don’t know if a similar labor shortage exists on the voice nets. I’ve noticed, however, that there is much greater participation at the lower levels of the traffic network (such as ESS and the section and local nets)—regardless of mode—than at the region and area levels and the Transcontinental Corps. (TCC is not a net, but a network of individual skeds which relays traffic between the area nets.) The only explanation I can come up with for this is inertia; I’ve always done things a certain way, and therefore see no reason to change.

ESS is fortunate in having a different scheduled net-control station for every night of the week, although I fondly remember the dear dead days when W2WSS also had a full stable of alternate net controls. NYS and 2RN/745 are somewhat less fortunate, with NCSs and liaisons doubling up to fill the nets’ duty rosters. This creates a death spiral in which an absence by a “heavy hitter” further burdens stations already doing more than their share, leading sooner or later to the burnout of our most capable stations. I haven’t burned out completely (yet), but have had to cut back on my traffic-handling activities a couple of times to avoid doing so; half a loaf, I figure, is better than none. I’ve also learned the hard way that “no” is a complete sentence. It’s terrible, for the individual traffic-handler and those who have come to rely on them, to see someone run up the white flag after doing a great deal. It’s far better to cut back than to burn out.

Chronic underachieving is a related problem. I’m familiar with several traffic-handlers who have been on the nets for decades and can send (and, presumably, copy) fast enough to hold their own on a region and/or area net; one, I believe, is a former Eastern Area Net NCS. Perhaps they’re unaware that many of the rest of us are frantically treading water to keep the system afloat; please consider this a notification and a cry for help (your choice). A once-weekly NCS or liaison sked is hardly an overwhelming burden. Jesus and Karl Marx expressed a similar sentiment—from those who have much (copying ability and power, in this case), much is expected.

If you’re already active on a number of nets, please don’t drive away a station who is willing to pitch in but isn’t yet fast enough (or loud enough) to meet your expectations. Under disaster conditions, a weak-signal station may be providing life-and-death communications by touching two wires together. If a station checks into “your” net with 5 watts or a plain-vanilla antenna, put on the cans and listen up; armchair copy, start to finish, is unrealistic on a traffic net and does nothing for real-world training.

When I was a kid, my mom brought me to a community swimming lesson but I was afraid to put my face in the water, got out of the pool and watched while everyone else there dutifully conquered their fear and learned to swim. A little later, I also learned to swim by “walking” with my arms in the shallow end at first. Sure enough, I soon learned that I didn’t have to touch the bottom to move around in the deep end.

Traffic-handling is not that different; it’s mainly an issue of whether we care enough about this stuff to want it to survive and, perhaps, thrive. If you’re new (or new-ish) to CW traffic handling, at least listen to a net which is one level higher than the level with which you’re currently comfortable. You’ll probably find, that the net’s “cruising speed” is little (or no) faster than the speed you can now copy.

2RN/630 manager KB2QO has wisely advised against approaching the “deep end” (region and area nets) with the assumption that we will somehow fall short. Experienced traffic handlers (even the decreasing number of speed demons, who can confuse intimidation for admiration) make mistakes too, and it’s incorrect to think that every little glitch on an unfamiliar net is our fault. It’s never wrong to send QRS or AGN (or ?) and we learn the “dialect” of Morse (like any other language) by practice. It’s well worth the effort!

Happy Labor Day es ry 73 de Anne W12G