

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

August 2023



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Net Control Stations

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WB2GTG	WA2YOW	KA2GJV	W2RBA	AB2WB	W2ITT	WI2G

JULY ROSTER

AB2WB	Pat	Ithaca	15	WA2WMJ	J. B.	Walden	11
K2EAG	Matt	Amherst	5	WA2YOW	C. J.	Staten Island	5
K2NPN	Phil	Marcy	6	WI2G	Anne	Elma	16
KA2GJV	Bruce	Fulton	4	K1SEI	Tage	Killingworth CT	27
KC2FD	Rick	Coram	3	WB2GTG	Bill	Easton PA	29
N2PEZ	Reiner	Elmira	12	K3ZYK	Bill	Penn Run PA	7
N2TQT	Colin	Brooklyn	21	WA3JXW	Dudley	Reading PA	8
N7RMP	Ralph	Kingston	9	K4ZXM	Don	Hanover VA	8
W2ITT	Rob	Huntington	14	VE3DCX	Jim	Coe Hill ON	2
W2LC	Scott	Baldwinsville	6	VE3FAS	Phil	Shelburne ON	27
W2RBA	Joe	Mount Vision	27	VE3MVM	Mary	Shelburne ON	6
W2XS	John	Northport	16				

July totals: QNI 284, per session 9.2 (Jun 9.9); QSP 34, per session 1.1 (Jun 1.5). Checkins and traffic are continuing to fall, and I hope we've bottomed out because our numbers are as anemic as I've ever remembered them; propagation is difficult but not impossible, and 40 meters (knock wood) has been good to us this year. It's much easier to go up in frequency than it is to go down, as we sometimes must with long skip in winter when we muddle through on 160 meters. As the days almost-imperceptibly begin to shorten, propagation on 80 meters is a tiny bit better. Please keep checking in, and bring traffic if you can; we'll move it one way or another. It's been good to hear N2TQT/VE3 with a very good signal from the Hamilton, Ontario area; Colin and his family have been visiting his in-laws via the Adirondacks (which brought back happy memories of vacations in Lake George when we lived in Queens). Congratulations and thanks for their support of the net to N2PEZ and K4ZXM, who still manages to check in from Virginia. Thanks to Reiner, ESS now has an honest-to-goodness website at <https://www.qsl.net/ess/>. It's very much a work in progress, and I hope to add more newsletters (especially older ones, from the W2WSS era and before) when I learn enough HTML to get by. The net also has an .io groups page at <https://groups.io/g/empire-slow-speed-net>. I'll be AWOL in the middle of the month (from the 13th to the 23rd) due to very-welcome visits from our two older kids and their families; our older son lives in Maryland, and our daughter is in North Carolina. Fortunately, our younger son and his family live nearby (no guarantee that we see them often enough, but still ...). Please hold net reports until I return, or email them if it's more convenient. If you're in (or near) the New York City area, N2NOV reports that the NYC RRI Traffic Net now meets on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:30 pm--after BAVHF, if I remember correctly--on 145.230 (PL 114.8) and 441.100 (PL 136.5) MHz. Stations who can check into VHF/UHF and HF nets are a welcome bridge in the traffic system, and I learned the phonetic alphabet from N2IMP on BAVHF back in the day. **Birthdays:** August—W2RBA 12. September—W2ITT 28. Additions and corrections always welcome, preferably by radiogram!

Handling Instructions, “Op Notes” and (again) Service Messages

Handling instructions and “op notes”, although very different, can both often be overused. The most common handling instructions we see are HXG (Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and service originating station), HXE (Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back) and HXC (Report date and time of delivery [TOD] to originating station). Full lists and a wealth of other useful information are available to download at <https://www.arrl.org/public-service-field-services-forms> (click on FSD-218, “Amateur Message Form” to download the PDF file) and <https://radiorelay.org/publications> (click on RRI-TRAFFIC-OPERATIONS-AID-1720r3). The list may be a bit outdated; in over 35 years of traffic-handling I’ve never run across a message with HXA (Followed by number. Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within ____ miles; if no number, authorization is unlimited), but it’s good to be familiar with the often-used-for-birthdays HXF (Followed by number. Hold delivery until ____ [date]) and HXB (Followed by number. Cancel message if not delivered within ____ hours of filing time; service originating station). If you see HXB (which is sometimes used for exercises), be on the lookout for a filing time in the preamble between the place of origin and the message date. HXD (Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered report date, time and method of delivery) mercifully rare, is sometimes used to troubleshoot a traffic circuit weak spot. Shortly after I started checking into traffic nets, I originated a birthday greeting to my sister. Its disappearance somewhere between Queens and South Jersey (which is why nondelivery service messages are so important) told me that I could do some good here.

Not every message requires one (or more) handling instructions. With the advent of less expensive long-distance phone service, which has largely rendered the concept of a “toll call” obsolete—our daughter in North Carolina still has the same area code she had for her first cell phone while attending college in the Rochester area--HXG has become largely meaningless except for the no-need-to-mail caveat. Since a postcard stamp now runs over half a buck and a first-class stamp is pushing 70 cents, however, I would need a compelling reason indeed to consider mailing a radiogram. Your mileage may vary, though, and some traffic-handlers (less jaundiced than I am) still seem to enjoy mailing messages. Unless a traffic-handler has been burned by a non-delivery (as I was long ago with the birthday greeting to my sister), I see no reason whatsoever to tack HXC—or, heaven forbid, HXE—onto bulk traffic. Suggestions have been made over the years for an ultra-routine precedence, however (some ops substitute SVC for R on service messages, which I find unnecessary), and I guess HXG has largely evolved into that.

“Op notes”, instructions for routing and/or delivery, used to be attached to the end of a message (after the signature and before the end-of-message AR); you’ll now find it either there or after the address block, before the BT separating the addressee from the text. A when-to-deliver op note would be beneficial to a shift worker, for example, but in my opinion the DELIVER ON XYZ NET op notes are presumptuous in expecting a station to check into an “extra” net in the hope of finding an elusive addressee; even the most dedicated traffic-handler is unlikely to be on deck for every session of a designated net. We’re a relatively small group, and can generally find each other as needed.

Composing a truly useful service message shouldn’t be tricky. Two ARRL/RRI numbered radiogram texts exist for deliveries, which only require filling in the blanks. ARL (or RRC) FORTY SEVEN (Your message number ____ to ____ delivered on ____ at ____ UTC) has four blanks to fill and is straightforward. ARL SIXTY SEVEN (Your message number ____ undeliverable because of _____. Please advise), however, has only two blanks but requires a bit of thinking. The more problematic blank involves the reason for non-delivery. BAD PHONE NUMBER, without including the phone number you received, is little help to the originating station; is their phone number wrong, or did it get garbled in transit? I thought I had handled every type of sketchy service message in existence until I got this six-word gem: 979 239 9227 DISCONNECTED SORRY 17. No message number; the check matched the word count, and I presume that 17 was once 73. VE1IJ originates a lot of traffic, and I guess Glenn’s ouija board couldn’t unravel that one because the next message I got from him had an op note: INCLUDE WRONG INFO IN SERVICE MESSAGE. God is in the details ...

As days shorten, propagation improves! 73 de Anne