

Empire Slow Speed Net
Founded 1955 by
KR2RA,
ex-K2DYB (SK)
* *** ***
Daily
6 PM local time
3566 kHz
7112/1815 alternates

The ESS Bulletin

Pete Gellert W2WSS Memorial Net

December 2023

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



Net Control Stations

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

NOVEMBER ROSTER

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|------------------|----|--------|--------|-------------------|----|
| AA2YK | Ernie | Modena | 9 | WI2G | Anne | Elma | 16 |
| AB2WB | Pat | Ithaca | 12 | K1SEI | Tage | Killingworth CT | 26 |
| K2EAG | Matt | Amherst | 3 | WB2GTG | Bill | Easton PA | 26 |
| K2NPN | Phil | Marcy | 22 | WB2U | Vic | Gaithersburg MD | 2 |
| KA2GJV | Bruce | Fulton | 6 | KA2YDW | Barry | Manchester Twp NJ | 1 |
| KC2FD | Rick | Coram | 15 | K3YAK | David | Mendham NJ | 2 |
| N2PEZ | Reiner | Elmira | 12 | K3ZYK | Bill | Penn Run PA | 5 |
| N2TQT | Colin | Brooklyn | 17 | WA3JXW | Dudley | Reading PA | 10 |
| N7RMP | Ralph | Kingston | 26 | K4PY | Vic | Narrows VA | 1 |
| W2ITT | Rob | Huntington | 18 | K4ZXM | Don | Hanover VA | 4 |
| W2LC | Scott | Baldwinsville | 4 | N8AFT | Lane | Columbus OH | 14 |
| W2RBA | Joe | Mount Vision | 29 | VE3DCX | Jim | Coe Hill ON | 5 |
| W2XS | John | Northport | 17 | VE3FAS | Phil | Shelburne ON | 30 |
| WA2YOW | C. J. | Staten Island | 4 | VE3MVM | Mary | Shelburne ON | 9 |
| WB2OCA | Jim | Yorktown Heights | 4 | VE3NUL | Rich | Toronto | 16 |

November totals: QNI 365, per session 12.2 (Oct 11.6); QSP 53, per session 1.8 (Oct 1.8). Another good month and, with the holiday season upon us, I hope we handle a bit more traffic. Not all net controls have an encyclopedic knowledge of traffic destinations outside their area, and I venture to say that *no* NCS knows them all; if you hear traffic listed that you can handle, offer to take it in the usual way (sending your suffix to get the NCS' attention). This keeps them from having to "auction off" the traffic, which is only sporadically successful. Thanks again to K1SEI for picking up another Friday session for W2ITT; Tage advises that his signal strength may vary as he uses different rigs and/or antennas. Due to holiday activities and what-not, the usual net control may be AWOL. If you don't hear anyone calling the net by 6:02, please step into the breach and QNG (take over as net control). It's easy—just call the net and write down what you hear. If you're uncertain about something, willing and able helpers are certain to come in. When you're copying traffic, never hesitate to ask for fills; I recently relearned this the hard way. Glenn (VE1IJ, ex-VE3GNA, now in Nova Scotia) generates and relays a lot of traffic on the Eastern Area Net and has an old-school fist; those who fondly remember W2MTA will know what I mean. I copied a string of new-ham traffic from Glenn the other night through Saturday-night-contest QRM, and had become accustomed to double-checking on qrz.com to save net time. This time, though, I was gobsmacked to find that the calls were not yet on qrz.com; Glenn apparently gets his info (from RadiogramCQ, I think) before it reaches qrz. Learn from my mistake; better safe than sorry! If K4PY (Vic in Narrows VA) rings a bell, it's because he's the former W4VLL. **Birthdays: December**—WA2IAX 10 and K1SEI and WA2WMJ 29. **January**—WA2YOW 18 and ye editor on the 30th. Additions and corrections, preferably by radiogram, are always welcome!

The Golden Rule

Some form of what we call the Golden Rule (“Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”) is a part of all the world’s religions, and it applies as a philosophy equally to amateur radio. Hamming in general, and traffic-handling in particular, are primarily social pursuits; although it’s fun to tinker and build—however modestly—the real pleasure lies in having what we’ve done pass the smoke test and successfully reach another person.

The Golden Rule comes into play for us traffic-handlers in a number of forms. First, of course, is the net itself. The basic structure of traffic-handling (except for the Transcontinental Corps, which links the three area nets and whose traffic should be cleared on an area net—another example of the Golden Rule in action), a net is not a net without checkins. Long-term, a traffic net is not a traffic net without traffic. It seems obvious that traffic-handling involves ... well, handling traffic, but a number of stations seem to check into nets with no real intention of further participation; perhaps they see traffic nets as a variant of the participation-optional ragchew- or WAS-type nets with which they’re most familiar.

The other half of the equation is traffic; willingness to handle traffic becomes moot if there’s no traffic to handle. Nets can have a feast-or-famine quality, however, depending on their traffic volume (or the lack of same).

Experienced traffic-handlers are familiar with the heavy hitters—mass originators of large volumes of traffic, primarily to new hams. The Radiogram CQ website provides an opportunity to exchange radiograms with willing recipients, and generates lists of new and upgraded licensees from the FCC database. Phone numbers can be problematic, however, since the phone-lookup websites are notoriously inaccurate. Even this cloud has a silver lining, though, in that there’s ample opportunity to practice composing effective service messages (I’ll remount that hobby horse another time).

As the Amateur’s Creed has long said, the amateur is balanced; radio is their hobby, and should not impinge on other areas of their life. Some traffic-handlers, alas, seem to forget this—or maybe they never learned it in the first place! Mass originators tend to have a bad rap; some of this is due to the repetitive nature of their traffic (which I’ve never minded, especially in poor conditions), and some is due to the volume with which it’s dumped ... er, listed on nets. It doesn’t have to be this way; I generated new- and renewing-member traffic for FISTS for a couple of years, and rationed the traffic so no more than three messages would go to any one outlet. It takes longer to do it that way (which was why I eventually gave it up—it became too time-consuming), but we have choices.

Over-conscientious traffic handlers run the risk of burning out; relations with long-suffering family members can become frayed, and what used to be fun becomes a chore. A bad sign, both for the individual and the system, is reluctance to check into a net because of the possibility—born of experience--of being hit with a boatload of traffic. No traffic-handler worthy of the name should be responsible for this; it’s hard to destroy a region-level net, but there’s a reason why Eastern Canada traffic is now routed via Region 2 (NY and NJ).

Although traffic-handling can give a person living in isolation an invaluable sense of purpose, it’s important to remember that other people have lives too; like any other joint endeavor, consideration for our colleagues helps to ensure that they remain our colleagues! It’s fine to devote job-like dedication to handling traffic, but former recipients will run screaming for the exit (or substantially reduce their participation) if overwhelmed; unlike a job in which they have no choice other than tolerating an irksome co-worker, they can—and do—quit.

Like the Golden Mean (moderation in all things), the Golden Rule counsels balance. Nets need checkins and traffic, and can more easily accommodate “too many” checkins than too much traffic. Too little of either, though, can easily become a death spiral. It can be tempting to compare traffic-handling, sometimes difficult to explain to the non-ham, to Monty Python’s Society for Putting Things on Top of Other Things. It’s our privilege to live in interesting times, though (a Chinese curse says, “May you live in interesting times), and endeavoring to be a trained communicator—alert to accuracy and attribution—is not a bad thing to be. Consideration for our fellow traffic-handlers will help to prime the pump.

Enjoy the hollydaze! Very 73 de Anne WI2G