

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

May 2023



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

Net Control Stations

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

APRIL ROSTER

AB2WB	Pat	Ithaca	14	WB2OCA	Jim	Yorktown Heights	4
K2EAG	Matt	Amherst	4	WI2G	Anne	Elma	16
K2NPN	Phil	Marcy	15	K1NN	Jan	East Calais VT	2
KA2GJV	Bruce	Fulton	3	K1SEI	Tage	Killingworth CT	25
N2PEZ	Reiner	Elmira	11	WB2GTG	Bill	Easton PA	29
N2TQT	Colin	Brooklyn	16	K3ZYK	Bill	Penn Run PA	6
N7RMP	Ralph	Kingston	21	WA3JXW	Dudley	Reading PA	1
W2ITT	Rob	Huntington	17	K4ZXM	Don	Hanover VA	14
W2LC	Scott	Baldwinsville	4	VE3DCX	Jim	Coe Hill ON	4
W2RBA	Joe	Mount Vision	27	VE3FAS	Phil	Shelburne ON	29
W2XS	John	Northport	16	VE3MVM	Mary	Shelburne ON	6
WA2WMJ	J. B.	Walden	29	VE3NUL	Rich	Toronto	1
WA2YOW	C. J.	Staten Island	5				

April totals: QNI 319, per session 10.6 (Mar 12.5); QSP 44, per session 1.5 (Mar 2.0). We've gone off the cliff in checkins and traffic, but conditions have been awful. Forty meters has usually been a good workaround for traffic, and stations relaying other stations (and traffic, if needed) will hopefully keep our numbers from falling too much more. If conditions warrant, any net control station should feel free to move the entire net to 7110 kHz at QND or during the session; if you don't hear anything on 3566, check our 40 meter alternate frequency before assuming that the NCS is absent (or has disappeared). Speaking of absences, I'll be AWOL for about a week in mid-May; our good friends from New Jersey are visiting for a few days, and then I'm off to North Carolina for Mother's Day weekend to hear our daughter play in her community orchestra. NCSs can hold their reports for my return, or email them. With conditions poor for our operations at the moment, never hesitate to ask for clarification if you don't understand something; it takes less time than, say, sending someone off frequency who can't copy (or comprehend; don't forget that ESS is a training net) what they're being asked to do. Congratulations to N7RMP, AB2WB and W2XS, this month's net-certificate recipients, with thanks for their support of ESS. K2EAG reports that the Long Island CW Club (for whom VE3MVM and I have spoken) has published an excellent 27-page newsletter which is available for download at <https://longislandcwclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/LICW-Spring-2023.pdf>. N2PEZ has been very kindly helping me with an ESS website, which may be hosted on qsl.net if I can upload some net archives (old newsletters) from the W2WSS era and earlier; my better half says that it's possible with HTML and CSS, and it's the one radio-related item on my bucket list. W2XS emailed a link to the NYS traffic-routing guide, a 1980s labor of love by John, W2YGW and others; my second hard copy is nearing the end of its useful life. It's a bit outdated, but let me know if you'd like a link to the file. **Birthdays:** May—None, as far as I know. **June**—KW1U 8. Additions and corrections always welcome, preferably by radiogram!

More Tricks of the Trade

“Be careful what you wish for; you might get it.” As if D-layer absorption wasn’t enough to content with when ESS meets during daylight hours (a good chunk of the year), after what seems like ages of low solar flux we also have to contend with the odd geomagnetic storm this year. We had a G4 storm the other day; W2ITT was a bit fluttery Sunday night on the Eastern Area Net, but I thought it was One of Those Things until I saw the following day that the K index had peaked at a whopping 8 (indices over 3 indicate disturbed conditions) and I was lucky to get the net done—fortunately, there wasn’t much traffic. Forty meters has been very good to us so far now that the skip is short, but when I went to 7110 on Monday to get a net report from WB2GTG (and, presumably, two from WA2YOW) the band was deadsville; this prompted me to learn the bad news from the Space Weather Prediction Center’s radio dashboard. Interestingly, there was still no propagation on 40 even though the K index was down to 2; we still have things to learn about the magic carpet that is radio.

No sense beating one’s head against a brick wall. If you can’t check into a net or clear traffic today, there’s always tomorrow. I learned this early in the game when Darlana, KB2EPU (SK) and I were hit with a tsunami of traffic and tried to bring some of it directly to EAN. Trouble was, we walked into the March 1989 geomagnetic storm (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_1989_geomagnetic_storm); it was a biggie, and lasted four days—as long as we had sideways snow during last Christmas’ blizzard.

Adverse conditions also allow us to work on our savvy, and I can’t overstate the importance of our net controls asking at least one other station to call the net during trying times like these. If you’re asked to QNV another station (“Establish contact with ___ on this frequency. If successful, move to ___ and send them traffic for ___”) before moving off frequency to clear traffic, doing just that can make the difference whether or not a message is cleared that session; nets—and the rest of our lives—are constrained by time. QNV is an exception to the general rule that the receiving station calls first, since it makes a lot more sense to ascertain whether or not the sending station is copyable. If the NCS says “QNV”, there’s a pretty good reason; don’t skidaddle off without checking!

Q and QN signals (the latter, like QNV, are used only on CW nets) may be a statement or a question, and there’s a huge difference between QNJ WI2G? (“Can you copy that little pistol in Buffalo?”) and QNJ WI2G. This becomes an issue occasionally when two stations have traffic for each other, and QRV-QRV? each other until it all works out. Again, time is of the essence; a net that can use its time well is a thing of beauty.

Soon after we get involved in traffic-handling, we usually encounter book traffic. In its most common form, it’s similar to a form letter—a common preamble, text and signature, going to different addressees. Book traffic going to different nets needs to be unbooked, of course, but less commonly known is that any common elements in a group of messages can make the messages candidates for booking. I learned from W2WSS to explain this in plain text at the beginning of the book (FIFTH WORD IN TEXT VARIES, for example). This is cumbersome in real life, however, and N1OTC’s (SK) use of BLANK in message text as a placeholder is elegant in its simplicity. It’s especially useful in service messages to the heavy hitters. Say, for instance, you have two undeliverable messages from VE1IJ with wrong phone numbers; on CW, it happens. You can send Glenn two separate messages, or book’em—ARL SIXTY SEVEN BLANK PHONE NUMBER INCORRECT. The uncommon parts are your message numbers and the fill-ins for BLANK, which would be Glenn’s original message numbers. Better still would be to send two separate messages with the incorrect phone numbers, but we live in an imperfect world. Composing service messages as needed is a good way to learn message composition in general. Brevity is key; I used to think of a radiogram in terms of an old 25-words-or-less contest entry, but it’s better to pretend that you’re paying Western Union by the word. Don’t be so terse, though, that you leave out information which could make an undeliverable message deliverable; a phone number that got garbled along the way can be corrected, with minimal delay of the message. Mass-origination traffic is well-intentioned, but it’s easy to start thinking of it as ultra-routine and undeserving of ordinary effort in relay or delivery; we should make the same effort to ensure delivery of what is dismissively known as a “spamgram” as we would for a welfare message from a disaster area!

Enjoy our roller-coaster spring! 73 de Anne