

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

November 2022



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Net Control Stations

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

OCTOBER ROSTER

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------------|----|--------|--------|------------------|----|
| AA2YK | Ernie | Modena | 1 | WB2OCA | Jim | Yorktown Heights | 6 |
| AB2WB | Pat | Ithaca | 17 | WI2G | Anne | Elma | 18 |
| K2EAG | Matt | Amherst | 6 | K1SEI | Tage | Killingworth CT | 24 |
| K2NPN | Phil | Marcy | 3 | N1EA | David | Green Harbor MA | 1 |
| KA2GJV | Bruce | Fulton | 5 | WB2GTG | Bill | Easton PA | 25 |
| N2PEZ | Reiner | Elmira | 10 | WB2U | Vic | Gaithersburg MD | 3 |
| N2ZX | Curt | Mechanicville | 7 | K3ZYK | Bill | Penn Run PA | 11 |
| N7RMP | Ralph | Kingston | 18 | WA3JXW | Dudley | Reading PA | 10 |
| W2ITT | Rob | Huntington | 20 | K4ZXM | Don | Hanover VA | 19 |
| W2LC | Scott | Baldwinsville | 6 | VE3DCX | Jim | Coe Hill ON | 5 |
| W2RBA | Joe | Mount Vision | 30 | VE3FAS | Phil | Shelburne ON | 31 |
| W2XS | John | Northport | 21 | VE3MVM | Mary | Shelburne ON | 7 |
| WA2YOW | C. J. | Staten Island | 5 | VE3NUL | Rich | Toronto | 1 |

October totals: QNI 310, per session 10.0 (Sep 10.3); QSP 68, per session 2.2 (Sep 1.6). Checkins were down a bit last month (surprising, given the improved conditions), but oh me of little faith—the traffic count has rebounded; hope it's not just a blip. KB2QO asked for the alternate 160-meter frequency for 2RN/745 (1815 kHz), which reminded me how long skip has besieged us the past few years. Long-skip season (which generally runs from mid-November to February) seems to be more of a problem during periods of low solar activity, so we'll think a good thought this winter. Since ESS meets earlier in the evening, we're less impacted by long skip but it's not unheard-of. Our alternate Top Band frequency is also 1815, but keep in mind if you're the net control station that not everyone can operate on 160. According to my pencil-and-paper records, KA2GJV, KT2D, W2ITT, W2XS, WA2WMJ, WI2G, VE3DCX, VE3FAS and VE3MVM have 160m capability; please advise any additions or corrections by radiogram. Long skip, too, tends to be temporary; a band can "go out" for a few minutes before coming back in. Don't panic—there's always tomorrow! Congratulations and thanks to WA2YOW, this month's net-certificate recipient. It's always a great pleasure to send CJ the wallpaper; our longtime Monday NCS, he copes ably with noise and logistical concerns which would send a less-dedicated ham out the door and personifies the amateur spirit. It was great to see W2XS, N3ARB, facilitator W2ITT and other members of the Long Island CW Club at a session of the club's eight-week slow-speed net class. With over 3,000 members in all 50 states and 47 countries, the club has a wealth of resources and enthusiasm; more info at <https://longislandcwclub.org/>, or just ask John or Rob! **Birthdays:** **November**—N2SKP 4. **December**—WA2IAX 10 and WA2WMJ 29. We miss JB's help with ENY traffic; N2SKP reported early last month that his health has been better, but he's DXing. Hope we hear him again here soon. The birthday list is getting shorter, courtesy of Father Time; additions and corrections (as always), preferably by radiogram, to ye editor.

Comfort Zone

We all have comfort zones, largely dependent on our expertise (or our perceived expertise) in a variety of endeavors. Amateur radio is no exception; when we're first licensed, it's a milestone (and somewhat terrifying) when someone answers our CQ. Traffic nets, and nets in general, are *terra incognita* until we swallow our timidity and begin to participate in them.

Life can be viewed as a flowchart, however. Some stations are content with merely checking into a net, enjoying its camaraderie—a big selling point, admittedly—while apparently forgetting that the purpose of a traffic net (unlike a ragchew net or a WAS net or similar) is to relay traffic as practice for facilitating disaster communications if needed; amateur public service has long been cited as the reason we have our frequencies. Other stations take the other fork, originating and relaying traffic and performing net-control and liaison functions. It's fine to check into a traffic net, but if you do so the NCS can reasonably expect you to be available to accept traffic for relay or delivery if possible. "If possible" is an important caveat; the weather is the boss, after all, and no one would be faulted for demurring from taking traffic (or heading out the door—send QNO first, though) if lightning threatens or the noise floor is 20 over 9.

"Dead zones" (generally, regions of New York State not covered by a VHF net and/or active traffic-handlers) were in existence when I came in during the late 1980s, and I'm sure they weren't new then; I was struck by the number of entries in my new ARRL net directory which were no longer around. Life is change, and the number (and size) of the state's dead zones seem to have increased. This is ironic, since long-distance telephoning has become much less expensive; many (if not most) stations now have unlimited long-distance calling in the U.S. and Canada as part of a cable or cellphone plan.

Although the number of checkins to ESS and its traffic volume have gradually fallen over the years (probably due, at least in part, to the elimination of the Morse requirement for a license), we still have a decent—if not overwhelming--amount of both. As a training net, a fair number of stations should be expected (or hoped; this *is* a hobby, after all) to eventually move up to the traffic network's higher levels—section, region and area nets and the Trancontinental Corps, which connects the area nets with one-on-one skeds.

When you're comfortable checking into ESS, why not consider also checking into NYS (the multi-section state CW net)? It meets at 7 pm (an hour after ESS, at an arguably more-convenient time) on 3569 kHz, very close to "our" frequency. You'll generally hear the same stations you hear on ESS, just fewer of them (again, that comfort-zone thing). If you live outside New York, there's a section CW net near you too; type the keywords "net directory" at <https://www.arrl.org/> for the league's online directory, or download Radio Relay International's directory at <https://radiorelay.org/publications> (third from the bottom of "Operating Aids and Reference Materials").

The higher you go in the traffic-network hierarchy, the more help is needed. Many stations wear more than one hat due to a smaller labor pool, most (if not all) not by choice. We all seem to be like George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*; as Clarence the angel tells George when he hopelessly contemplates ending his life, every person's loss leaves a mighty big hole. The National Traffic System was not designed after World War II to be like this; it was intended to replace the iron-man model of the prewar trunk-line system, which had been demonstrated to not work effectively. The wartime break in amateur operation gave the ARRL a golden opportunity to reinvent the wheel, but the traffic network has inexorably drifted back over the decades to the iron-man model—loads of checkins at the local level (which has the lowest volume of traffic per checkin), dwindling to a precious few at the area and TCC levels where the need is greatest.

Although ESS is an independent net (independent of NTS routing, scheduling and coverage guidelines), it proudly remains a part of the wider traffic network. We're a bit short of newcomers, but have a broad base of experienced operators for Elmering. Never be afraid of making a mistake; we've all made them (and still do), and the grade for effort is always A. If all you do on ESS is check in, we're more than happy to hear you but you should ask yourself why. One of the great appeals of traffic-handling for me has always been that it's a lot more than chasing wallpaper or QSLs; in a hobby which can be isolating, you're part of something that's bigger than yourself. "Graduate" to a greater function (or net), and return to ESS--your "alma mater"!

Don't forget to fall back! 73 de Anne W12G