

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

October 2022



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Net Control Stations

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

SEPTEMBER ROSTER

AA2YK	Ernie	Modena	2	WA2YOW	C. J.	Staten Island	4
AB2WB	Pat	Ithaca	17	WB2OCA	Jim	Yorktown Heights	3
K2EAG	Matt	Amherst	5	WI2G	Anne	Elma	17
K2NPN	Phil	Marcy	13	K1SEI	Tage	Killingworth CT	24
KA2GJV	Bruce	Fulton	5	WB2GTG	Bill	Easton PA	13
KT2D	Bob	Latham	4	WB2U	Vic	Gaithersburg MD	4
N2PEZ	Reiner	Elmira	13	K3ZYK	Bill	Penn Run PA	11
N2ZX	Curt	Mechanicville	9	WA3JXW	Dudley	Reading PA	10
N7RMP	Ralph	Kingston	14	K4ZXM	Don	Hanover VA	14
W2ITT	Rob	Huntington	26	VE3CMM	Mike	London ON	1
W2LC	Scott	Baldwinsville	12	VE3DCX	Jim	Coe Hill ON	8
W2RBA	Joe	Mount Vision	27	VE3FAS	Phil	Shelburne ON	29
W2XS	John	Northport	16	VE3MVM	Mary	Shelburne ON	7

September totals: QNI 308, per session 10.3 (Aug 9.3); QSP 48, per session 1.6 (Aug 2.0). Thanks to all for a pretty good month, as we move into fall with an increase in the net roster; about the traffic count, however, the less said the better. You'll notice a change in the NCS roster; after WA3JXW's valiant return to (relative) health, Dud asked to be relieved of his Friday NCS duties after a seven-year stint. He replaced KB2ETO in late 2015, after Bill developed the brain cancer which took him from us too soon. Dud and I go back a ways (to the 75-meter morning Clearing House net), and his unfailing courtesy and patience with my flea-powered signal from Queens was very encouraging. We're glad he's continuing to join us, and he's expressed a willingness to pinch-hit as NCS occasionally. W2ITT has very kindly offered to take the Friday slot; Rob is doing a fine job, and enjoys the net's relaxed atmosphere. Our thoughts are with AB2WB and WB2GTG, whose spouses have been dealing with health issues; Pat and Bill are too, of course, as caregivers. If you're the NCS and they QNI, keep that in mind and QNX them ASAP. Speaking of QNI, there's no need to send that when you check in; it's implicit. Congratulations and thanks to K3ZYK and VE3DCX, this month's net-certificate recipients; a couple of other members are almost at the magic eight-oh (points in a calendar year—one for each checkin and a bonus point for running the net). Radio Relay International's new-and-improved (arguably, over the venerable ARL list with which we're familiar) numbered radiogram text list is available for download at <https://radiorelay.org/publications>; it's the last item under "Operating Aids and Reference Materials". The lists shouldn't be confused, since an ARL text is indicated in the check of a message preamble; RRI texts are similarly indicated in the check by RRC, followed by the word count. Many have the same text number, and the RRC list is more relevant to current emergency communications. **Birthdays: October**—None, as far as I know. **November**—N2SKP 4. The birthday list is getting shorter, courtesy of Father Time; additions and corrections (as always), preferably by radiogram, to ye editor.

Balance

According to the Radio Amateur's Code (or Creed), available at <https://www.arrl.org/amateur-code> and elsewhere, the amateur is "Balanced ... Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community". In my opinion, a similar balance is required for public service in general and traffic-handling in particular. There needs to be a balance between the digital network and the real-time voice and CW nets, between participation in the real-time nets, and between message origination, liaison between nets and "last-mile" delivery. Although such a balance has long been more wished-for than real, at the moment it seems to be teetering more than it was previously.

Jim, KY2D, and his wife are soon moving to Maine; we'll miss him, and wish them both much happiness in their new home. Jim's station was a digital hub, however, and KT2D reported "connectivity issues" of some kind between NLI digital stations and W2AH (the new digital hub); it sounded like NLI digital traffic may be dead-ending at Ron's hub, and W2XS and W2ITT are the only HF traffic handlers on the real-time nets. According to Bob, the only other route for NLI traffic was on VHF; KC2PDO in Jersey City checks into the Capital District Traffic Net (Bob's local net) and can relay NLI traffic via the Big Apple Net. Such convoluted routing would delay any traffic, but fortunately the hiccup has been resolved. I don't know the current viability of the Hudson Valley or Southern District Nets, and NLI was a slender thread when I was briefly its STM over 30 years ago; I know all too well (after surviving an FCC field inspection requested by our next-door neighbor in Queens) that it's not easy to maintain a decent HF station in an urban or suburban environment, and restrictive covenants have also taken their toll.

We do the public (and ourselves) a disservice when we promise more than we can realistically deliver. On the HF nets (particularly at the regional, area and TCC levels, and most particularly on CW), a shrinking pool of stations is expected to do more and more. This is sure recipe for burnout, which (ironically) affects the most dedicated stations who originally have the best of intentions. Ye editor has burned out several times; what kept me from saying "*arrivederci*" altogether on each occasion was making a list of all my skeds and giving up (always after notifying the net manager) the skeds I liked the least or found the most inconvenient. Daytime nets were the first to go when I had two horses to look after, followed by voice nets; life is short, and I love CW most of all. I and others—KA2GJV, KB2QO and KT2D come to mind—have found some semblance of equilibrium by concentrating our skeds on one or two days a week, which often seems to work better (and is easier on our long-suffering families) than having to be on the air every day.

KB2QO forwarded a report from NYPON manager AA2Y; Shelly seems to think that traffic is on the upswing, which may be true on the phone nets but isn't the case on CW. The Long Island CW Club is sponsoring a series of slow-CW traffic net classes (contact W2ITT for more information; the next course begins in December), and WB8SIW reported that Radio Relay International has begun posting instructional videos at <https://radiorelay.org/publications>; scroll down the page to "RRI Training Videos". The ARRL had a couple of Zoom meetings to express some willingness to revisit its approach to public service and emergency communications; an overhaul of the National Traffic System (largely unchanged since shortly after the resumption of amateur radio after World War II) to reflect current real-world conditions may be in order. The league's annual Simulated Emergency Test, an interesting let's-pretend exercise, is coming up; it seems counterproductive, however, to make additional demands on a system which is already creaking.

As individuals and as members of a network, we need to work smarter instead of harder; many of us work harder than we signed on for as it is. If something isn't working as advertised, we need to admit it and proceed from there instead of merely tweaking paperwork to maintain the illusion that it's still all good. If the digital network (which eases the burden on real-time nets with a shrinking number of checkins) is breaking down, the mass originators—who seem to be working at cross-purposes, given the number of new hams who receive not one but several welcome messages—need to coordinate (perhaps by region) to avoid the duplicate welcome messages which seem pointless to new hams and delivering stations alike.

The system's heaviest burden, which has sent many a good traffic-handler screaming out the door, may fall on a shrinking pool of liaison stations who are expected by net managers to wear more and more hats.

Happy Fall, with better condx! 73 de Anne