The ESS Bulletin
Pete Gellert W2WSS Memorial Net
October 2023

Net Control Stations

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

SEPTEMBER ROSTER

Call	Name	Location	Count	Call	Name	Location	Count
AB2WB	Pat	Ithaca	13	WA2YOW	C. J.	Staten Island	4
K2EAG	Matt	Amherst	2	WB2OCA	Jim	Yorktown Heights	5
K2NPN	Phil	Marcy	10	WI2G	Anne	Elma	19
KA2GJV	Bruce	Fulton	5	K1SEI	Tage	Killingworth CT	28
KC2FD	Rick	Coram	14	W1FEA	Pete	Concord NH	1
N2PEZ	Reiner	Elmira	10	WB2GTG	Bill	Easton PA	26
N2TQT	Colin	Brooklyn	28	WB2U	Vic	Gaithersburg MD	4
N2ZX	Curt	Mechanicville	4	K3ZYK	Bill	Penn Run PA	8
N7RMP	Ralph	Kingston	6	WA3JXW	Dudley	Reading PA	21
W2ITT	Rob	Huntington	20	K4ZXM	Don	Hanover VA	19
W2KYM	Jim	Niagara Falls	3	N8AFT	Lane	Columbus OH	6
W2LC	Scott	Baldwinsville	3	VE3DCX	Jim	Coe Hill ON	11
W2RBA	Joe	Mount Vision	13	VE3FAS	Phil	Shelburne ON	28
W2XS	John	Northport	17	VE3MVM	Mary	Shelburne ON	5
WA2IAX	Jim	Sidney	3				

September totals: QNI 336, per session 11.2 (Aug 9.8); QSP 57, per session 1.9 (Aug 1.9). It's amazing what a little propagation can do; checkins are up, traffic is holding steady (although there's always room for improvement), and the net roster is expanding again. Many thanks to all our first-class NCSs for getting me their net reports by the end of the month; thanks to W2ITT for picking up one of W2RBA's Wednesdays, and to VE3MVM for picking up the 29th for Rob. It's very good to hear Joe again after his well-deserved vacation. Congratulations and thanks to WA3JXW and WA2YOW, this month's net-certificate recipients. Dudley (our former Friday net control) has had health issues, and CJ comes in reliably every Monday despite logistical hurdles—antenna restrictions and noise—which would discourage all but the hardiest ham. W2XS, who kick-started our birthday list many years ago, very kindly compiled and uploaded a net roster to our .io group page. Legibility, John's reason for doing so, reminded me of my byzantine system--dashes, pipes and asterisks, depending on the week of the month--of alphabetizing calls on the newsletter page for on-the-fly reports to W2WSS at the end of each Saturday session (Pete was only on the air on weekends); it worked, but I couldn't begin to explain it. Some of John's information dates back to 2019 (KG2D, sadly, is now a silent key), but there are memory-joggers galore and much useful information; W4VLL (Vic in Virginia), for example, is now K3OU. John's dedication to the net and hard work are very much appreciated! **Birthdays: October**—None, as far as I know. **November**—N2SKP 4. Additions and corrections, preferably by radiogram, are always welcome. Shirley, who's recovering from late-August spinal surgery, advises that WA2WMJ is on crutches as well and unable to get downstairs to the shack. We look forward to hearing them both on ESS again soon!

Many of us handle more than our share of "spamgrams"—mass-originated messages, usually (not always) to new hams. Although we've become convinced that the traffic network—NTS, RRI and the independent nets—would dry up and blow away without them, they're short on the personal touch. Many recipients are vaguely pleased and somewhat baffled when we call to deliver one, and a few are concerned about where we got their information. Not without reason, as I learned a few years ago when a letter from the state unemployment department informing me that I had been turned down for benefits for which I hadn't applied alerted me to the inconvenient truth that my Social Security number (and phone number, and God knows what else) are floating around the dark web courtesy—I'm pretty sure—of Capital One. Therefore, it's very nice to deliver a "real" message from a vacationing ham to the folks back home. Nice, that is, until you dutifully observe the HXE handling instruction (Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back) and the vacationer is having too good a time to check into any net for the replies they requested. HXC (Report date and time of delivery to originating station) is less of a pain because it's in-house ham-to-ham, but we really need to put our best foot forward as ambassadors for amateur radio when dealing with the general public; the optics are less than stellar when a message goes undelivered for any reason, even when that reason is that you don't have a canoe handy to reach an errant recipient.

This is not to say that vacation traffic is not worth originating, or should be discouraged. However, some thought needs to be given to logistics. Not every message requires a reply, but a station originating return traffic ought to have some idea about where to find you. In this case, an op note (always useful) is a godsend; OP NOTE REPLY VIA NYS, after the signature and before the end-of-message AR, tells an originating station that the vacationer plans to check into that net at least occasionally for the foreseeable future. Messages are sometimes delayed for whatever reason, too, so a timeframe for your return is helpful and considerate: REPLY VIA ESS BEFORE SEP 25 tells a delivering station that if it's the 26th and they're still sitting on a reply, an email delivery might be a better choice than continuing to fruitlessly haunt ESS in search of a station who's still unpacking.

Experienced traffic-handlers at the region, area and TCC levels (the Transcontinental Corps, whose members relay traffic between two area nets in one-on-one skeds or digitally) sometimes use shortcuts when sending a large number of messages; the most common is to omit a mass origination text which is thought to be well-known. This, however, can backfire; a text which is well-known to you, the sender, may be unfamiliar to (or forgotten by) the receiving station. I had an unwelcome shot of adrenaline a few months ago when I *thought* I still had a familiar text. Time flies, though, and the text I thought I'd copied a week or two ago had drifted beyond my one-month window and been duly discarded; one of my small pleasures is recycling old traffic each day or so. Fortunately, KA2GJV (who had sent me the traffic) had the text.

ESS is a training net, on which such shortcuts are strongly discouraged. Even on other nets, though, shortcuts can be time-consuming if the station you think has a text doesn't. When message texts were first widely omitted, mass originators were few and far between and the number of texts was correspondingly smaller. As Jimmy Durante said, everybody now wants to get in on the act (or so it seems) and the number of standard texts is truly daunting; NX9K in Wisconsin was simultaneously using two different check-19 texts at one time (a recipe for madness), only one of which was part of a list of common texts I recently received. If you're tempted to leave out the text on a net other than ESS, it's better to start sending it; the receiving station can always break you (if they want to—not everyone wants to paw through papers between nets) with HVE TXT, and you can thank them and move on with the rest of the message(s).

In my opinion, the easiest and best way to learn traffic-handling is to listen to--and emulate--experienced traffic handlers. They (and their nets) may have their quirks--which you may in turn not want to adopt--but a general consensus has evolved about the most effective way to conduct any traffic net, and you don't have to memorize the RRI and ARRL manuals to learn everything you need to know to stay afloat. Keep in mind that the traffic network is just that—a network. Checking into ESS is fine, but it's even better to be able to take traffic to and from other nets. Pitch in on your home section and region nets. It's easy and fun!

Better propagation at last! 73 de Anne WI2G