

Empire Slow Speed  
Net  
Founded 1955 by  
K2DYB

Daily  
6 PM Local Time  
3576 kHz

# The ESS Bulletin

Pete Gellert W2WSS Memorial Net  
September 2010

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## Net Control Stations

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
K2ABX	WA2YOW	WE2G	W2RBA	WB2GTG	KB2ETO	WI2G

## AUGUST ROSTER

AB2WB	Pat	Ithaca	9	WA2WMJ	J. B.	Pine Bush	25
K2ABX	Paul	Apalachin	28	WA2YOW	C. J.	Staten Island	5
K2DYB	Nat	Verona	25	WB2GHH	Jack	Binghamton	6
K2MMW	Bill	Milford	4	WB2YOR	Tom	Clifton Park	8
K2NPN	Phil	Marcy	14	WE2G	Tom	Hudson	26
K2TV	Bob	Copiague	13	WI2G	Anne	Elma	15
K4LV	Rich	Marcy	21	K1PJS	Pete	Concord NH	15
KA2OQB	Dan	Whitesboro	2	N1JX	Arnold	Roseland NJ	31
KB2ETO	Bill	Dryden	21	W1LUH	Joe	Stamford CT	23
KC2HTP	John	Bainbridge	4	AA2SV	Willie	Brick NJ	13
KT2D	Bob	Latham	15	W2EAG	Mark	New Bern NC	2
N2QZ	Nick	Carmel	1	WB2GTG	Bill	Easton PA	22
N2UC	John	Holland Patent	24	K3TEL	Arnold	Towson MD	1
W2CS	Gary	North Chatham	2	K3ZYK	Bill	Penn Run PA	2
W2PL	Phil	Lawrenceville	6	WA3JXW	Dudley	Temple PA	3
W2RBA	Joe	Mount Vision	28	AB8CR	Steve	Glenville WV	1
WA2IAX	Jim	Sidney	6	KA8WNO	Jack	Coalton WV	2

**August Totals:** QNI 423, per session 13.6 (Jul 12.8); QSP 86, per session 2.8 (Jul 2.0). Many thanks for a gratifying uptick in both checkins and traffic; band conditions seem to be improving, and I trust the seasonal doldrums are behind us for another year; another indication that we've turned the corner (propagation-wise, at least) is the return to the roster of W2EAG. By the time you read this, please God, you will soon hear W2MTA on the air; last I heard, Bill is supposed to be sprung from rehab as I'm typing this (Friday afternoon Sep 3rd). What a bummer of a summer for the Binghamton Mets' biggest fan, but all's well that ends....Do a YouTube search for "Shearing Festival Fabius" and you'll find KB2ETO displaying his beautiful textiles (Bill's a talented weaver) at the Springside Farm Shearing Festival, which took place Memorial Day weekend in Fabius. You can see Bill about halfway through the Part II video (nice music too!). Speaking of summer fun, I received excellent Field Day reports from K2TV's Great South Bay ARC and WA2WMJ's QSY Society. It's great to see K1PJS joining us so often; hopefully, Pete will soon be able to help with (reasonable amounts of) traffic into New England--we haven't had direct outlets into 1RN-land for way too long. **Birthdays:** **September**--WE2G 19 and N2AKZ 26. **October**--KA2IWK 8, WA2CUW 16, AA2JI 20 and KA2ZNZ 21. Additions/corrections to Suzi Sunshine, whose learning experience for *this* month is to listen extremely closely for buzzing in late summer when weeding--always the weeding--long-untouched areas. Amazing, isn't it, how far those yellowjackets will chase her (especially when she's screaming and waving her arms like in the cartoons)!

## *The Mother Of (All) Invention(s)*

I was tipped off to the following account of constructing a receiver (and transmitter) by a contributor to one of the newsgroups which fill my inbox; it may have been the Ontario DX Association but I don't remember. You can find the complete transcript of the interview with Lt. Col. Wells (excerpted here) at <http://www.zerobeat.net/qrp/powradio.html>, and I suggest you read it; it's a fantastic example of ingenuity! Sincere thanks to K3HRN and his Zerobeat QRP Page at <http://www.zerobeat.net/qrp/index.shtml> for this article (and many others; it's a good site).

Lt. Col. R. G. Wells was in a Japanese POW labor camp in 1942 after the fall of Singapore when "...we noticed the absence of information as to the international situation, what was happening in the outside world, and the whole camp had a real craving to get news by whatever means...and this is where the building of a radio set became an urgent requirement...we didn't have any components and...it limited our requirement to a regenerative receiver...the BBC, we hoped, would be able to be received...The plan was made to begin building the radio, so until we could build components, there was nothing much we could do. A look at the circuit diagram of a regenerative receiver indicates a number of capacitors--about two or three are required--low capacitors to make the oscillating part of the system work, and in fact from memory we needed in the grid circuit at least one .01- $\mu$ f capacitor and there was no chance we could get this anywhere, or any other components. So we hit upon the idea of taking some tin foil or aluminum foil from the lining of the tea chest which the Japanese supplied with the rice rations, then by the well-known equations for calculating capacity and the relationship of the surface area and spacing of the plates...I built a capacitor which according to calculations should have been about .01  $\mu$ f...we had to insulate the layers by putting a layer of newspaper (we had no other toilet requisites) and by soaking this in some coconut oil we could insulate each layer after we wound it...The resistors were another problem. We found that we could use the impurities in...cinnamon [tree] bark...We used a piece of string with the material rubbed on it from the burning of the cinnamon bark...most grid-leak resistors were about a megohm or thereabouts, and we had no means or any way we could measure a megohm, so it was largely a trial-and-error thing to see if it would work...Eventually about 3/4" to an inch was about the right order of things to get about a megohm resistance...We had to make coils; they were largely trial and error, one could calculate the inductance of these if one had access to some means of measuring the wire gauge and the space between them...we needed some headphones and we needed a valve [tube]...an outside contact smuggled in one headphone and a valve--no valve holder...Two problems remained for the power supply. The first one was the...low-voltage supply necessary for the filament of the valve...Through being friendly with the pharmacist with the [work] party, we got some potassium bichromate and made up a bichromate cell...Two of these cells provided about 3-4 volts...The biggest problem was a rectifier to rectify the AC into DC without dropping it to a low voltage because...in those days we needed high voltages for the anode supply...using aluminum foil again and oxidising one piece of it...with some weak acid and then using the two electrodes, one of clear aluminum and one of a zinc salt and aluminum, we could make a rectifier...it had a reverse voltage of something like 30-40 volts, which wasn't exactly ideal...I made a bridge rectifier but...after 15 minutes the electrolyte began to boil...so a single cell, an extra rectifier cell, was the only way I could close this down a bit, and some smoothing...This was achieved with part of a fishplate [joint bar] from the railway line which was being used at the aerodrome to move dirt from one place to another...and the odd fishplate used to disappear...using palm oil and some bee wire which was in fairly plentiful supply--the Japanese were cultivating a couple of beehives and of course this wire used to disappear..we put the palm oil along the wire, thickening it with a little bit of flour and then heating it; the flour bound the palm oil together and formed a fairly good insulation over the wire...with this bee wire wound round this part of the fishplate, we made a fairly good choke coil...and then a bigger capacitor; having had success with the small one, to just wrap as much tin foil as we could round another sheet of newspaper which finished up about 18" long by 3/4" in diameter...and that, in effect, was a fairly good rectifier--a very dangerous one because we had the 110 [volts] all right but we had a bit over that by the time we had rectified it, and we had no means of measuring it...Finally, the valve; we joined the valve by winding the clean little bee wire around it and then plugging it with any insulating material we could get to make it stick...So eventually we produced a receiver of sorts, except it wouldn't oscillate...So the only avenue open was to bribe one Chinese working at the power station...The capital of China in those days was Chungking, and I

told him we could get him some overseas news from Chungking if he would slowly wind his field coil power up on the generator every night starting at 9:00, and get it up to about 130 on his meter, and after that I said half an hour to drop it again, very slowly because it may affect the lights...'and we will give you Chungking news'...for about six months we had reliable communication. The first trial on air had too much hum, and we had to modify a few things...we heard Big Ben chiming one night...It was the BBC all right; it was quite a clear signal but it was somebody talking about growing hops in Kent...I was asked the next morning by my senior officer what was the news...I said I didn't actually hear any news, and he became very annoyed with me and I said, 'If the [BBC is] capable and able to spare the time to talk about growing hops in Kent, Britain must still be alive and floating with their thumbs up, and as far as I'm concerned that's the best news I could hear!'...

..."No soldering iron, no solder of course, and no other system really available but to twist and wrap with some coconut oil paper, or cardboard or something...It was on a platen of wood we obtained somewhere; it was about a foot by a foot or something, so we just mounted the components on that...[We used] a clothes line [for an aerial]. All the huts had a clothes line of some sort so we just took a thin wire from that and wrapped it round the edge...The toilet in the sleeping block was a hole in the ground and it was verboten to be used by anybody except to put our radio set in when it wasn't in use; everybody respected our wishes in that regard!...."

I hope these brief excerpts will prompt you to visit Tom's FB website and read the transcript in its entirety. While I don't know the source of the original interview, due to the march of time these first-person accounts by veterans of World War II are becoming increasingly scarce. What really discomfited me about Lt. Col. Wells' story was the tremendous difference (compared with today) in the assumed level of electronics knowledge; in a better world than this one new knowledge would augment--rather than replace--the old.

### *New York QSO Party*

While it's a month or so in the future (Saturday, October 16th) the New York State QSO Party, sponsored by the Rochester DX Association, is something to look forward to even if you're not a dyed-in-the-wool contester. There's an excellent, informative website at [www.NYQP.org](http://www.NYQP.org) with rules, FAQs and options for logging software; for Luddites like me who still log on paper, the opportunity to become familiar with computer logging--and the software is free to download--is reason enough to participate. The QSO Party is a 12-hour "sprint," from 10 am local (1400 UTC) until 10 pm (0200 UTC Oct 17). Many thanks to Rick (W1TY), Paul (K2DB) and the RDXA for reviving the NYQP last year after a hiatus of about 25 years. There's a mode for everyone, be it CW, SSB or RTTY/digital. Special attention is being paid to mobile operation and stations wishing to operate from "rare" counties. Among these tough-to-work counties (judged by the number of licensed amateurs) is Richmond. Staten Island--who knew? So keep an ear open for our own WA2YOW if you (and CJ) work the Party. And if you--or anyone you know--is involved with amateur radio in the schools, RDXA is hoping to receive more school entries this year.

Mobile stations will be especially "useful," for lack of a better word; since part of each contest exchange for NY stations is the county of operation, once a mobile enters another county s/he can be worked again (and each station can be worked once per band, per mode). Suggested HF frequencies are: CW--1820, 3550 (well south of the digital ops *and* many traffic nets--great!), 7050, 14040, 21050 and 28050 (the latter frequencies, of course, for working stations outside NY). SSB--1870, 3825, 7200, 14290, 21350 and 28400. RTTY or other digital ops (PSK, Olivia and what have you) should use the ARRL band plan.

After all this hype, I regret to say that I may miss the contest yet again due to family concerns; I was in Maryland last year shortly after our grandson was born and I think our older son Paul and his family--including that grandson--are visiting us that weekend this year, but if their plans change I should be there with bells on. Like Sweepstakes, the QSO Parties are a form of contest-lite which can be a welcome change from the traffic nets and I'm sure glad that the Empire State has its own QSO Party yet again. So visit the NYQP website, familiarize yourself with the rules and the logging software, and have a blast!

*Enjoy the late summer es vy 73 de Anne W1ZG*