

HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL AREA NET

by

1949 - 1969 Fred R. Borchardt W9DYG

1970 - 1979 C. W. Wade WØAM

Introduction - W9DYG

In 1949, the National Traffic System was born, the brainchild of George Hart, W1NJM, with the help of W1JMY and W1IIN. It was formed by these ARRL staff members, aimed at the national integration of traffic handling in a set pattern for standardization, uniformity, simplicity, and therefore efficiency - in other words, a quick and efficient relay of traffic through systematic routines. They planned it to be a better amateur traffic service, in which all amateurs could participate, regardless of their ability or the amount of time they could devote.

Before NTS, our amateur traffic service was handled mainly by Trunk Line nets, with letters of the alphabet to denote the name of the net and the portion of the country is covered.

In the beginning, and for many of the following years, NTS had its troubles. That it ever got off the floor and grew into the finished product it is today is due to the hard work of W1NJM and a few other pioneer traffic people who never gave up. In the early days of NTS, the largest problems were lack of personnel and a lack of understanding as to how the system was intended to work and what it was intended to accomplish. This was compounded by the unwillingness of many old-time traffic men to participate, simply because it was a change from their way of doing things, or, in some cases, meant a loss of their prestige.

What follows is a chronological account of the history of the Central Area Net. It's been pieced together from the records I received from W1NJM, from correspondence to and from ARRL, and correspondence between various traffic people. These records are far from complete, so if someone is left out in the cold, I'm sincerely sorry.

Comments - WØAM

I have just completed reviewing all available CAN records and correspondence for the period 1970 through 1979 with the purpose of continuing the "CAN History" initiated by W9DYG whose history ended with the year 1970. The review of those records was enough to reaffirm my faith in the NTS and in the personnel who have made CAN a viable concern. What performance these records depict. One of the conclusions I arrived at after all this review is that a net of the size and scope of CAN may really benefit from a regular net bulletin such as that by WA9RAK and WAØMLE with WØINH. The net bulletin really ties it all together, and is much more informative, from a historical viewpoint, than those dry net statistics! Further, those net bulletins make for very interesting reading by Historians, almost as good as some of the juicy correspondence

In keeping with the format established by the original Historian W9DYG, I have limited the yearly comments to bare essentials, but I must say, elimination of so-called nonessential remarks was most difficult. There is no way that my necessarily brief accounting of the CAN History can depict the great effort and concern by members that really comprises a history. These people have done a magnificent job under sometimes seemingly impossible odds. They have remained true to the old show-biz axiom: (the show must go on) - the traffic must be handled! Bravo! I salute you all and am proud to have been a part of the CAN history under three calls: W4NNJ, WØINH and WØAM.

1949

After much paperwork between W1NJM, WØHMM, and W5GZU, the Central Area Net was born on October 3, 1949, with Jack Avis, WØHMM, the first manager. The frequency was 3670, the time 0230 - and these have remained the same through the years. CAN operated Monday through Friday, with W4NNJ, W5GZU, W4APC, W4LNN, and WØAUL as Net Control stations. The structure of CAN was basically the same as it is today, with the Fifth, Tenth, and Ninth Regional nets. To make CAN complete, a station from the Eastern Area Net brought traffic into CAN, and an appointed station took traffic from CAN to the Pacific area nets, then MAN and PAN. The region nets had only one session a night, and their first managers were WØAUL for TEN, W4NNJ for RN5, and W9LFK for 9RN.

1950

After only five months of operation, the fireworks began. PAN and the Trunk Lines started boycotting CAN, saying CAN was passing all their traffic. CAN and PAN managers WØHMM told W1NJM he never believed there could be such hatred between traffic men. The ARRL Communications Manager, Ed Handy, told all traffic men to end their feuding and work together for a common cause. NTS was formed, he said, to work with the Truck Lines not to put them out of business. To make things worse, W9LFK resigned as 9RN manager and the net folded completely, due to the boycott of W9JB and others. The WØHMM and W5GZU both resigned, and CAN itself went off the air for the summer. In September, Hale Blakely is talked into starting CAN up again. W1NJM published a set of rules for NTS to follow. 9RN came back into operation again, with W4BAZ taking over the reins. October finds Hale using the first CAN report form. Traffic totaled 38 to 22 sessions, of which only 15 were reported.

1951

The start of another year shows no end of problems. Many old-timers disagree with the layout of CAN, wanting different states in different regions or areas. W1NJM refuses to change any of the regional setup. Some say QRM from other nets is becoming a problem (hi). During March CAN goes to six sessions a week, and all goes fairly well until May when CAN is again closed down due to the sudden resignation of W9CBE and regional managers W4BAZ and W4NNJ. During September W9CBE again takes over after six others turn down the job. WØSCA becomes TEN manager, W5MRK takes over RN5, and W9TT starts to manage 9RN.

1952

The start of 1952 finds W1NJM working with W6CE on the formation of the Transcontinental Corps. Present-day OT's W5KRX (now W5MI) and W9QLW begin checking into CAN. In April, W9CBE again resigns, and the original CAN manager WØHMM takes the job back. CAN is one big mess due to a hodgepodge of stations checking in from other regions and areas, with near complete disorganization resulting. 9RN and TEN bicker and feud. Many traffic people still say that NTS is no good. After only two months, WØHMM again resigns. In June, Peggy Coulter, W9JUU takes over the problems of the fading net. Immediately, she had problems filling the NCS spots, and ended up NCSing most nights herself. To make things worse, 9RN manager W9TT rebels, and 9RN deteriorates. Peggy put out the first CAN bulletin ever in October 1952 in an effort to bring CAN back together. This, along with her extreme patience, soon brought results. By the end of the year, attendance on CAN approached 100% and one of CAN's current top operators, W9CXY, began checking in. By the end of the year, CAN was finally on the upswing. The military told W1NJM that NTS, along with the Truck Lines, was doing a fine job and providing them with a manpower pool of A1 operators.

1953

Peggy published a second newsletter. The TCC seems to be working real well, except that PAN representation has been spotty. W5KRX becomes Tuesday CAN NCS. CAN is again operating Monday through Friday, but 9RN is lagging. WØSCA, WØBDR, and W5KRX are carrying the TCC load to PAN. Another fine newsletter records CAN totals for the year: Traffic 8025, in 253 sessions. TEN was the top region net with 242 session represented.

1954

All went well through the spring of 1954, with CAN returning to six sessions a week. Pat W9UNJ, took over as 9RN manager. Art, W9DO, became a member of CAN, and soon took over an NCS spot. The fall of 1954 found TCC having problems. W1NJM suggested that TCC directors W9JUU, W6HC, and W8UPB get together to iron out their differences. Peggy was still having problems filling all the NCS spots, and getting reports from net control stations. Although traffic was down, sessions and representation continued to improve.

1955

In the Spring of 1955, present mainstays W4OGG and W4ZJY checked in for the first time. W9JUU took a temporary leave of absence from CAN for the summer, leaving it in the capable hands of Art Swinfin, W9DO. In the fall, Peggy resigned as manager, and Art took over permanently. W9KQB first checked in. By December, Art had all the NCS and even alternate NCS spots filled and had CAN running seven nights a week. WØSCA took over as the TCC Central Director.

1956

CAN has 100% representation for the first six months of 1956 under the guidance and expert on-the-air leadership of W9DO. WØLGG became a CAN member. By fall, the TCC liaison to PAN was doing a bang-up job with WØSCA, WØBDR, and WØLGG caring the ball. At year's end, Art told ARRL that CAN was not working in perfect harmony --seven sessions a week, two or three stations checking in from each region. CAN is finally reaching its potential.

1957

The New Year finds CAN flying high with an NCS roster of: W9YYG, W9CXY, W9ZYK, W9YH, W9MAK, and W9KQB. W1NJM tells W9DO that CAN is now the top Area net in the country Region nets are now running two sessions nightly.

1958

W9DO wrote again and again to W1NJM on how proud he was of CAN. WØBDR took over as the Central TCC Director. But just when everything seemed perfect, new problems began to spring up. Some stations were bypassing the region nets and taking their traffic directly to CAN. The EAN TCC stations coming to CAN refused to take EAN traffic back to EAN from CAN. W9CXY, W9ZYK, and W9DO began taking EAN traffic from CAN unofficially and clearing it in EAN the following night.

1960

In May of 1960, W9DO gives up the CAN managership to Fred Borchardt, W9DYG. WISMU becomes Director of TCC Eastern. By fall, the Station C TCC function has become a part of the Central TCC, and CAN TCC members work it under director WØBDR. In November, W9DYG publishes his first CAN bulletin.

1962

CAN ran well until fall, when the long skip conditions really set in. Even on 40 meters the skip was so long that most signals on CAN were skipping over others, and the regular net control stations weren't being heard by most of the net. W9DYG set up an RN5 to EAN alternate NCS system, in which either could take over CAN if the regular NCS was having problems. Fred also set up a schedule of stations to relay traffic off frequency when other stations in CAN couldn't copy each other. W1NJM approved, and after a month of chaos the changes take hold and the gang gets the job done in a business-like manner. Representation on CAN is now averaging nearly 100%, with W9ZYK's 9RN having been present at all sessions for three solid years.

1963

The ARPSC was born. K4AKP became Central TCC Director, W4ZJY RN5 manager, WØLGG TEN manager and W9QLW 9RN manager. CAN ran smoothly through the winter '63-'64 long skip cycle, with the QNB/Alternate NCS system is doing a fine job. In the fall, K4AKP took over RN5 and WØBYV took over TEN. W9DYG tried unsuccessfully to get NTS some publicity in QST.

1964

K5IBZ becomes RN5 manager, and W4ZJY Director for TCC Central. W1NJM wrote the first ARPSC bulletin.

1965

On May first, W9DYG passes his fifth anniversary as CAN manager. Fred tells W1NJM that CAN practically runs itself. On September first, CAN has had 100% representation for a solid year. During the summer, W5PPE takes over as Central TCC Director.

1966

CAN continues to run smoothly, setting a record for two years of 100% representation that still holds today. Traffic in 1966 totaled 19,195 - the best ever for CAN. W9DYG was awarded the TCC Operator of the Year award.

1967

The Central Area Staff was formed by TCC Director W4ZJY and W9VAY was nominated as Chairman. In mid-1967, the CAN NCS roster contains K4QCQ, W9QLW, W9VAY, K4DZM, W9DYG, WA4WWT, and K4BSS. WA4WWT won the TCC Operator of the Year award. At the end of the year, CAN's NCS totals over a six-year period show W9DYG with 220, W9ZYK 208, W9VAY 207, W9QLW 178, K4AKP 150. At the end of the year, WØLCX becomes TCC Central Director.

1968

Fall finds W9DYG busy with other activities and in October Doug Teitz WA9RAK takes over the reins of CAN. In November Doug published his first newsletter, and has continued to do so monthly up to the present. W5MI is TCC Operator of the Year.

1969

W9HRY becomes 9RN manager. WA9RAK shifts CAN to 7090 for the summer to avoid high static levels, and it works out real well. Doug begins a new and better NCS report form, and at the end of the year has CAN continuing its high level of organization and operation.

1970

At the start of another decade of CAN operation, the NTS roster consists of K4QCQ, W9QLW, W9VAY, K4DZM, W9DYG, WA9VZM, and WØINH, with a complete alternate roster of KØAEM, W9HRY, WAØSDC, W5MI, WAØRVR, WAØMLE/9, and WØHI. By April CAN Manager WA9RAK had published 17 issues of his monthly CAN bulletin. Those bulletins were a big asset to CAN, and Doug's were well received. WØINH assumed responsibilities as CAN Manager June 1970 with WAØMLE as Assistant Manager and CAS Chairman. The first bulletin was published in July 1970. CAS met in Des Moines, Iowa.

1971

WØINH distributed new terms-of-reference for CAS. WØLGG resigned as TEN Manager and WØHI assumed the job. W5SBM became RN5 Manager late in the year. The Canadian province Saskatchewan (VE5) moved from RN7 to TEN. Total CAN traffic, excluding SET, was 13,458 versus the 1963 high of 19,088. Daytime NTS SSB NET proposals surfaced. WAØMLE entered a short military career, and WØINH was elected CAS Chairman. W9QLW became 9RN MAL. CAS met in Sioux Falls. S.D.

1972

WØLCX resigns as CAN TCC Director after five years. WØINH resigned as CAN Manager and CAS Chairman. W5SBM resigned as RN5 Manager. WAØMLE became CAN Manager and KØAEM the new TCC CAN Director. KØBAD/4 new RN5 Manager. WØZHN elected new CAS Chairman. CAN did not miss a heartbeat under the able leadership of the new Manager WAØMLE. Daytime NTS SSB cycle implemented on trial basis by ARRL. CAN handled 14,603 messages excluding SET - during 1972. CAS met in St. Louis, Missouri in the fall.

1973

W9HRY as resigned as 9RN Manager and was replaced by WA9EED. WBØHOX convened first session of daytime tenth region net as its first Manager. W4HFU replaced KØBAD/4 as RN5 Manager. W5HWY is the new daytime RN5 Manager. In July, ARRL published a newsletter directed at the daytime national traffic system. CAN traffic for the year was 13,165. CAS met in Lincoln, Nebraska in the fall.

1974

Based on available records, W9QLW had been NCS on CAN 528 times the beginning of the year and K4QCQ was second high with 448 times at bat. Talk about "iron pants" traffic men!! W9DO - CAN Manager from 1955 to 1960 became a Silent Key. WB9AHJ appointed daytime 9RN Manager. WAØMLE resigned at the end of the year and was replaced by WØHI as CAN Manager. WØINH elected TEN MAL and CAS Chairman. WA5ZZA appointed CTN Manager. WØHI, who resigned as TEN MGR to take CAN Manager, was replaced by WØZHN as TEN Manager. WB9FOT was appointed assistant Manager of Continental Traffic Net. WAØMLE, who resigned due to military assignment, left the best set of statistics on CAN data along with very complete records. Well done! CAS met in New Orleans, LA.

1975

WA5IQU becomes RN5 Manager and WB9KPX becomes 9RN Manager. KØAEM is now TEN Manager. W5GHP CAN TCC director. KØAZJ changes call to WØSS and WØINH becomes WØAM. CAS met in Lincoln, Nebraska.

1976

WB9KTR becomes 9RN Manager and KØCVD TEN Manager. WØLCX, ex-TCC director becomes Silent Key. WAØMLE changes to NØIN. WB9FOT appointed 9RN/D Manager. W9QLW now has 682 NCS completions on CAN and K4QCQ has 594. CAS meets in St. Louis, MO.

1977

W5KLV, CAN daytime Manager, began publishing an excellent bulletin which really helped to coagulate the CAN-D into functioning unit. CAN initiated 4 extras sessions during SET and 1977 total SET points 1162 versus 527 points in 1976 with regular sessions. W9NXG appointed TCC Director for CAN Daytime.

1978

W9FC is now 9RN Manager and WØSS is TEN Manager. W9JUU is appointed to replace W9NXG, who resigns from TCC Director CAND appointment.

1979

WA5IQU - RN5 Manager - becomes Silent Key. N4MD new RN5 Manager. A joint NTS staff meeting - comprised of members of EAS, CAS and PAS met at ARRL Headquarters in the fall. WØAM, W9JUU, W9QLW and W5GHP represented CAS in addition to observer K5RG (who was later elected MAL RN5 replacing W5MI). At the meeting, the unified (daytime/ evening) NTS plan was adopted for a one year evaluation period.