

WNA HISTORY

I. Wisconsin Nets Association, Ltd. Story

A.....WNA History (Minutes)

The first organized meeting of "WISCONSIN NETS ASSOCIATION" was held at the Central Hotel in Hartford, on Monday, January 11, 1960.

The Mayor of Hartford, Mr. Murlin Bernd, officially welcomed all Wisconsin amateur radio operators in attendance. He showed a great interest in Amateur Radio as a hobby. He was particularly interested in its value to the people of this state, in a time of emergency, or a national disaster.

The purpose of the WNA was to organize all Wisconsin Traffic Networks, such as the then existing WIN, WSSN, and the "Old" BEN into one large organization, to be known as the "WISCONSIN NETS ASSOCIATION."

A Constitution and By-Laws were prepared by the Board of Directors, who were elected at that first meeting. The Board of Directors consisted of the following amateurs: W9KQB, W9MPO, W9SAA, W9NGT, K9ELT, and W9SZR. This very same Constitution and By-Laws, with some minor changes and amendments are still the backbone of the present day WNA.

As the ranks of Wisconsin Amateurs grew, a growing interest in public service was seen. New traffic nets were formed just to meet the added needs of serving the public.

The WSBN was started in the Fall of 1961. The Evening BEN was discontinued in the Winter of 1964, after a newly formed BEN was started, operating during the noon hour. At about the same time another net was also formed, gathering daily weather information from stations within the state. It was first called the BEN Morning Session, but later became known as the BWN (Badger Weather Net).

More Wisconsin CW traffic nets sprang into being shortly after, such as the Late Session of WIN and the WNN. The WSSN which had been inactive from time to time, was again active. The Late Session of WIN was established when a need for another later traffic net to handle traffic left from the Early Session was apparent.

The first WNA sponsored picnic was held in Fond du Lac, at the Lakeside Park, on July 10, 1960. Since then, the WNA sponsored picnic has been an annual affair. The location of the picnic is moved to a different part of the state each year. The local Amateur Radio Clubs serve as picnic hosts.

In the Spring of 1968, the first WNA sponsored QSO Party was held. It has also been an annual affair for all Wisconsin Amateurs.

In the Summer of 1975, the WNA filed papers with the Secretary of State to become a non-profit, non-stock 'Corporation.' As of this time forward, the WNA has been known by its new name, The "WISCONSIN NETS ASSOCIATION, LTD."

B.....WNA HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS (Minutes)

January 11, 1960 -- First organized meeting, held at Central Hotel in Hartford.

May 21, 1960 Reading and approval of Constitution and By-Laws.

July 10, 1960..... First WNA sponsored picnic, held at Fond du Lac in Lakeside Park.

January 25, 1961 ... First WNA Election of Officers. Results: W9NRP-Chairman; W9NGT-Secretary; W9VHP-Treasurer.

October 13, 1961 -- WSBN was admitted to WNA.

December 3, 1961 -- First official WNA Net Certificate issued by SCM.

December 14, 1964 -- "Old" BEN discontinued its Evening Session on 3950 KHZ, in favor of newly formed BEN Noon Session, and the Morning Session, later to be known as the BWN.

January 1, 1968 -- BWN admitted to WNA.

April 27/28, 1968 -- First WNA sponsored Wisconsin QSO Party, with a trophy to the winner, and certificates to all that submitted contest logs.

June 15, 1968 -- WNA worked with AAA on their "Bring 'Em Back Alive" campaign.

September 7, 1968 -- WNA started working with the Milwaukee Office of the National Weather Service, providing severe weather nets, collecting daily weather information, which is relayed to other weather service outlets within the state.

March 8, 1969 -- WNA served with the American Red Cross in collecting and relaying information on the levels of the state's river waters, during Spring run-off.

August 1, 1972 -- WIN-Late admitted to WNA.

December 2, 1972 -- WNA established the Flower Fund, to provide a floral remembrance at the funerals of a deceased member, or close member of their family.

March 10, 1973 -- WNA worked closely with the states established 2 Meter VHF repeaters, gathering weather information, and tracking severe weather crossing our state.

June 9, 1973 -- A Committee was formed to put together a usable manual for approval by the delegation. Besides WA9PKM/WNA President and SCM/K9FHI there were K9KSA, K9LGU, K9UTQ and WA9GJU.

March 9, 1974 -- A Committee was formed to "Honor the Top Wisconsin Traffic Handler" each year. That Committee consisted of WA9LRW and W9MFG.

September 7, 1974 WNN admitted to WNA.

March 1, 1975 -- A Special Certificate issued by the SCM, honoring the state's NCS's for their loyalty to their respective traffic nets.

June 7, 1975 Incorporation papers and a \$25 fee were filed with the Secretary of State, Madison. This organization became known as the WISCONSIN NETS ASSOCIATION, LTD.

November 6, 1975 -- Incorporation Paper received from Madison and duly filed under state law in Winnebago County by Register of Deeds.

December 6, 1975 -- WNA, LTD. Manual approved by the delegates in attendance.

C.WNA Function and Mission (WA9GJU)

The capabilities and limitations of the 'WISCONSIN NETS ASSOCIATION, LTD. and its affiliated traffic nets are hereby described in order to give those individual amateurs introducing message traffic, a better understanding of our Wisconsin traffic system. The Wisconsin traffic networks stand ready to do their best to provide an emergency communications facility.

The mission of the WNA, is to create interest and further training in radio communication. To provide the radio personnel in the event of any emergency or natural disaster. To provide a system-in-being designed to serve the state as a back up radio communication system.

The ability to maintain radio communication under all operating conditions depends to a great extent on adherence to standard operating procedures. With a through working knowledge of those procedures, followed by constant and continuing net training and application of those principles involved, proficiency can be obtained.

All operating standards and procedures contained in this WNA publication are in accordance with the FCC rules and regulations. They will provide uniformity, flexibility, and will prepare the operator for any type of emergency. They will also provide the working tools necessary to complete any mission within the scope of radio communication capabilities.

Messages may be transmitted by radio-telephone or telegraph at the discretion of the individual operators. Since all messages are sent free, and all amateurs operate in a strictly volunteer capacity, there can be no real guarantee of a delivery. Delays may also be expected due to atmospheric interference, available operating time, and function of the radio equipment itself.

Generally, the WNA's affiliated traffic nets have the capability of transmitting messages by radio from one amateur to another within the state. There are also the capabilities of amateurs relaying messages from one traffic network to another across the entire nation and Canada. Established within the state's network, and those of other states, including those within the NTS provide such traffic outlets.

The WNA was established so as to insure that maximum effectiveness in message handling can be achieved on all Wisconsin traffic nets.

The Wisconsin radio amateurs, like their counterparts throughout the USA and Canada, are what make up the NTS. They are all volunteers who operate within their own chosen net(s), on their own free time, using their own radio equipment. These operators are always prepared to offer their time, knowledge, and equipment, to better serve the people of this state, during a period of a communication emergency.

These nets operate regularly, (some daily, others weekly) for recreation, training and the improved handling of messages. At times special tests are held, such as the annual SET, for additional net training and evaluation.

The WNA and its affiliates will become inoperative in the event that the "Amateur Radio Service" should be suspended by the FCC. Every effort will be made by this organization, its officers, and its affiliated nets, during such emergencies, to obtain special permission to use the Wisconsin traffic networks as a state-wide backup system.

D.WNA Net Training (WA9GJU)

Every facet of the WNA operation should advance or augment the traffic handling capability of its members. The best known way for any individual member to become more proficient at traffic handling is to handle messages. If each member of each net within the state would originate just one message every month or week, then that member would along with the entire organization, greatly benefit from the experience obtained.

Messages set up in proper form promote accurate copy and prompt delivery. The relays and replies that are generated by the members who originate messages provide additional training. There is training value in the far reaching effects of each and every message sent or handled.

By doing this, the individual net members, the NCS's and the Net Managers, along with the entire WNA administration, will profit from the experience obtained. The Wisconsin traffic network is always striving for reliability in message handling.

II. WNA AFFILIATED NETS' STORIES

A. 'Old' BEN History (Old BEN booklet)

The 'Old' BEN was originated in 1945, when two radio amateurs, W9ESJ (Al Henning, Milwaukee) and W9QIX (Gene Schotz, Merrill) began scheduling nightly contacts. Others joined the QSO which increased in popularity to a point where more than 20 stations were present every evening. This round table usually lasted more than two (2) hours.

It was the opinion of those of the round table, that a traffic net be formed. This was duly acted upon, and the 'Old' BEN went into action on Sunday evenings on 3950 KHZ on November 27, 1946.

W9SQK (Cy Shallow) was elected as its first NCS, with W9ESJ acting as ANCS. The organization functioned for two (2) months when Cy relinquished his responsibility turning it over to W9ESJ. An informal on the air election was held and the results indicated that W9ESJ should carry on as the Net Manager.

This network continued to meet daily at 6pm local time on 3950 KHZ until it was discontinued in the Winter of 1964.

B. BWN (Badger Weather Net) HISTORY (W9AYK)

At the December 1964 WNA meeting, the operation of the newly formed morning session of the BEN was authorized. The first such session was held December ?, at 7 am local time on the frequency of 3985 KHZ.

The first Net Manager for the newly formed morning net was W9NRP. The name of this net was changed in September 1967, from the BEN morning session to the present day name of the BWN. During the earlier days of the BWN, W9IFS (Frank Schactely, West Allis) was pick up station for all weather information.

The present day BWN is still operating with a few minor changes, starting now at 6:45 am local time, Monday to Saturday. The current BWN Net Manager is W9AYK (Jim Merrill, Oconomowoc). The present weather pick up station is K9CPM (Pappy Doe, Land O' Lakes).

There are more check-ins than ever before. The weather information collected is now passed along to the Milwaukee Weather Bureau and is also a daily source of weather information for many Wisconsin Broadcast Radio Stations.

C. BEN (Badger Emergency Net) HISTORY (WA9LRW)

The new BEN was also a spinoff from the 'Old' BEN, operating since December 1964 during noon hour. Its purpose was to provide an additional outlet for messages coming into, within and from the state of Wisconsin.

The BEN, like all Wisconsin phone nets, operates on 3985 KHZ on a daily basis. When the BEN noon net was first formed, it ran only Monday thru Friday.

Very little information can be found as to this net's earlier days of operation, due to some of the key operators having moved out of the state, or becoming silent keys. It was well known by those who operated it during that time that it had to fight to stay alive.

Due largely to the hour of operation, it has had its trouble in getting enough stations willing to act as NCS. As most stations are either home on their lunch hour or getting ready for work. The problem of getting keeping a Net Manager seemed to have been solved by the appointment of WA9LRW (Kev, Appleton).

D.WSBN (Wisconsin Sideband Net) HISTORY (K9UTQ)

The WSBN was started by a group of individuals who operated the SSB mode and did not enjoy checking into the 'Old' BEN, which was mostly AM. The WSBN held its first session on September 1, 1961 at 6 pm local time on 3985 KHZ.

The first Net Manager of the WSBN was W9SAA, who held that post until August 1963. He was followed by K9IMR until July 1967, WA9QNI until November 1970 when K9FHI took over and remained until December 1973 at which time he was elected as the state's SCM. K9UTQ (Gene, Wisconsin Rapids) presently holds the position.

The present day WSBN is still going strong and handles an even greater volume of message traffic. There are between 45 and 60 individuals checking in per session. The only changes that have been made from the "good ole days" is the meeting time, which is 5:30 pm local time.

E.WNN (Wisconsin Novice Net) HISTORY (WB9ICH)

The WNN first appeared in operation on 3725 KHZ at 5:30 pm local time in April 1973. It was started by a group of interested people, some novices, headed by W9MFG (Dan, Plover). They elected as their first Net Manager WN9KMR (Kaukana).

The young net did well, it still averages about ten (10) stations per session and handles a reasonable amount of messages. After the Novice license of WN9KMR expired, WN9MIW (Rick, Oconomowoc) took over the duties of Net Manager.

The WNN can still be found daily on 3725 KHZ at its new time of 5:15 pm local time. This was done so that members of other Wisconsin nets can check in and help it along. Due to the continuing changes of WNN membership, a list of the active stations would be hard to keep up to date, but is provided on other pages of this publication.

The WNN was admitted into the ranks of the WNA March 1, 1975 with WB9ICH (Larry, Wapuca) taking over the job of WNN Net Manager.

F.WSSN (Wisconsin Slow Speed Net) HISTORY (K9KSA)

The WSSN was a charter member of the WNA when it first was formed in January 1960. The mention of a slow speed session was made as far back as 1946.

The present form of the WSSN was born (or re-born) at a WNA meeting around March 1968. At that meeting K9KSA (Don) was invited as a social visitor and left as the newly appointed Net Manager of the WSSN which was decided to again be activated. Initial net participation was very good, but a mailing including some ARRL operating aids and instructions, as well as publicity on other WNA nets surely helped.

In 1968 the WSSN was operating on 3780 KHZ at 6:30 pm local time on Monday/Wednesday/Friday. The spot just below the phone band was chosen to encourage more phone operators to check in to improve their CW skills. The SWR on antennas cut for the phone nets was also the big concern.

A year or two later the frequency was changed to 3662 KHZ, to join the ranks of all other Wisconsin CW nets. An 8:00 pm local time for starting was tried for a year then returned to the present 6:30 pm local time slot. The WSSN normally closed down during the summer months, when the net activity lags. The WSSN took a year off when the WNN was formed to avoid competition.

The WSSN must be judged necessary and successful, since many of the operators who began there have moved on to more responsible positions in the WIN and other nets of the NTS. Although the WSSN is kind of a CW training net, it handles its share of traffic.

G.WIN/E (Wisconsin Intrastate Net/Early) HISTORY (W9MFG)

Although not under the present name of WIN, documentary proof has shown that the CW operators were meeting on a regular basis just shortly after Amateur radio operations were resumed following World War II in 1946. The frequency used then was 3775 KHZ and the times varied in the evenings. There was a fast and a slow speed session in operation.

It's believed that W9LFX (Carl Thoms) was the first WIN Net Manager and was also the first Wisconsin operator to receive the BPL certificate in 1949.

The WIN affiliated itself with the NTS in early 1949. The first edition of a monthly bulletin appeared in June 1949. It was edited by W9DJV with subsequent editors including W9IXA, W9KQB, W9VHP, and W9UCR.

In 1951 there was a frequency move to 3625 KHZ. In 1955 the WIN again moved to 3685 KHZ which lasted until late 1956, when 3535 KHZ was chosen. The move to the present net frequency was made in April 1966, in order to have all Wisconsin CW nets on the same frequency of 3662 KHZ. This also put us clear of the Canadian Emergency Frequency.

It was in early 1958 the name WIN was adopted. The WIN was one of three (3) nets that made up the original WNA in January 1960. It was in 1966 that the WIN "Pink Ticket Club" was formed in order to help others from receiving this unique FCC citation.

Under the guiding hand of W9MFG (Dan, Plover) as the Net Manager, the WIN/Early session still remains very active along with its sister network, the WIN/Late session. The WIN/E meets daily at 7:00 pm local time, while WIN/L meets at 10:00 pm local time, both on 3662 KHZ.

H.WIN/L (Wisconsin Intrastate Net/Late) HISTORY (K9LGU)

The Late session of the WIN, began as the WCWN (Wisconsin CW Net) in the early summer of 1972, under the leadership of WB9CIL and WA9ZAZ. After several months of activity, NTS affiliation was sought and achieved. The WIN/Late session was originally formed to take some of the traffic pressure off the WIN/E.

WIN/L remained under WA9ZAZ's direction until the end of August 1972. At this time WB9HLM took over the duties of the Net Manager and still holds that position as of this writing.

During the summer of 1973, the WNA was asked to consider whether or not the Late session of WIN should be continued and become independent in spite of existing poor band conditions. It was decided that the WIN/Late is serving a very valuable function, especially as a link from the NTS through the 9RN and should be continued.

The WIN/L was admitted into the ranks of the WNA on August 1, 1972, and meets daily on 3662 KHZ at 10:00 pm local time.

I.RTTY NET HISTORY (K9GSC)

The RTTY Net was first started by W9CBE (Hale Blakely, McFarland) in the mid 1960's. Until late 1968, Hale held the position of acting NCS and Route Manager. The RTTY Net met on 3620 KHZ at 7:00 pm local time on Sunday evening.

The net continues to meet, except during the summer months due to the lack of check-ins, operating off and on. The net is presently using a shift of 850HZ, with 170 HZ to have been added by the time you read this. There are about 6 to 10 stations that manage to check and it usually ends up in a gab session due to the lack of traffic.

For any RTTY enthusiast this net is a natural. With the increase in check-ins, perhaps more traffic could be funneled into this net.

J.NTS (National Traffic System) HISTORY (ARRL P/S Booklet)

The NTS is now the fastest and most efficient method for handling message traffic by Amateur Radio. The NTS is still the item of major interest in the Amateur circles since 1914.

At first, random relaying was used, then trunk lines were set up. By the mid-1930's the ARRL was operating as many as 14 trunk lines criss-crossing the country, and the interest in traffic handling had never been higher.

All activities of Amateur Radio were suspended during World War II. After 1945 the trunk lines were again set up, but operating methods had changed and there was much dissatisfaction. Many considered the trunk lines obsolete.

A completely new type of system was set up, operating within all 50 states and the districts of Canada. A complete story of the NTS and how it operates appears in the ARRL publication "PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATION" which can be obtained from the ARRL Headquarters, 225 Main Street, Newington CT 06111.