

## CALIFORNIA TRAFFIC NET HISTORY

By Bob Ringwald, K6YBV

The California Traffic Net, (CTN) was organized in August of 1957. I discovered it and joined within 2 to 3 days of the net's start.

The original name of the net was the Northern California Traffic Net, (NCTN). It met on 3905 kHz at 1830 PT. It was formed by members of the American LEGION Net, (now renamed the Golden Bear Net). Many members of the ALN from northern California were unhappy with the ALN's regime. They felt that Northern California's members were not being fairly represented, so they broke away and formed the NCTN.

Unfortunately, the only two original members of NCTN that I can remember are K6GUL and the net secretary Marv Hansen W6PZE.

Originally the NCTN operating rules and procedures, as set forth by the founding members, were as follows:

1. The NCTN start time was 1830 PT on 3905 kHz so as not to conflict with most other traffic nets, voice and CW, which mostly started at 1900 PT. There were times, due to band conditions when the net's start time was temporarily moved to 1800 PT and even rarely 1730 PT. But the regular start time remains at 1830 PT.
2. There was to be only a Net Secretary; No President, Vice-President, treasurer, etc.
3. There were to be no membership dues.
4. All decisions regarding the net were to be made by an on the air vote of the membership.

5. At 1830 PT the NCS, (Net Control Station) would open the net and call for traffic by a roll call of Northern California counties. Then, the time between traffic listings and 1845 PT was reserved for QSTs and to discuss net business.

6. At 1845 PT, traffic listings would be read and roll call would begin "By towns of member stations in alphabetical order," (not by call signs and not reversed by odd and even days). The theory was that a station could tune in at 1844 PT, hear the traffic listing and if nothing for his/her area, tune out at 1846 PT. Stations were not required to check in a certain amount of times to keep their membership in the Net.

7. When a station volunteered to take traffic, unlike other phone nets at the time, the station with traffic and the station receiving the traffic would quickly be instructed to move off to a designated frequency by the NCS. This procedure was patterned after CW nets to facilitate message traffic being handled quickly AND efficiently. It enabled the traffic handlers to pass more traffic in a shorter length of time.

I was Net Secretary/Manager in the 1960's and Sarge WB6MAE was my assistant. Since we were getting many check in's from Southern California, sometime after 1966 the word "Northern" was dropped from the name of the net. It then became the California Traffic Net, (CTN).

In 1976, a Bicentennial Net was started just below 3905 kHz. Because of the sun spot cycles i.e. band conditions at the time; it was not a problem as the nets did not hear each other. Gradually as the conditions changed, interference between the two nets became a real problem. Thus, sometime after 1985, CTN was moved to 3906 kHz where it continues to meet today at 1830 PT, 365 days out of the year.

Currently, at 1800 PT, the NCS begins monitoring the net frequency, 3906 kHz, for traffic listings, early check in's and informal chat. This serves a dual purpose of getting a jump on handling traffic if there is a large amount, plus securing the net frequency for roll call at 1830 PT.

Roll is called after traffic listings at 1830 PT, in alphabetical order by suffixes of call signs of member stations. On even days of the month, roll call begins at the top of the list. On odd days roll call begins at the bottom of the list. Late and visiting stations are checked in at the end of roll call.

Through the years there have been many stations who have volunteered to be Net Secretary/Manager. Some of these stations were:

W6PZE, K6YBV, WQ6H, W6IJ, KD6WLH, KC7WEU, W6IO, K6FE, KI6OBE, K6ZOA, WB6YGU.

Submitted by K6ybv, November 1, 2020.

Note: We are always looking for old NCTN and CTN rosters.

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