

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

**Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years**



January 2018- Issue No. 1

TARS Website: <http://www.w9og.net> Club repeaters: 146.79 and 147.15

Say "Hello" at the weekly Tri-State Emergency Net, 8:00pm Wednesdays on 146.79

Please feel to submit articles or suggestions to

Editor: [SPARKS@w9og.net](mailto:SPARKS@w9og.net)



## President's Corner:

Happy New Year! 2017 was a fun year for the club with plenty of activities, including Winter Field Day, INPOTA and a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Field Day in our category! We start off the New Year with the auction at our January meeting so clean out your closets, garages and basements for your stuff and bring it to the meeting so it can become someone else's stuff (less a small donation to the club). Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> is Winter Field Day and we will be back at Wesselman's Park in one of the shelters there. Setup begins around 9AM so come out for the day or just an hour or two.

Then in February, we have our Christmas dinner, again this year at the Log Inn. A lot going on and the year is just beginning!

A special thanks to last year's president Chris N9JCA for all his dedication and work to make the year so successful. Chris introduced some new ideas that helped to increase participation in the club activities.

Also a special thanks to Bob N9XAW for his dedication to publishing Sparks for many, many years. Bob has handed over the reins of publishing Sparks to Chris KE9YK. Please let Chris know if you have any contributions you would like to have included in Sparks.

73 Dave KC9UVG

**It's Dues time!** Please use the attached form which you can mail in with your dues or bring to a meeting. This keeps your personal information up-to-date and helps to insure you receive SPARKS in a timely manner. If you have any special topics for a meeting program you would like to see or are willing to present a program, please be sure to indicate this in the space provided. **As a reminder, if you are paying both dues and banquet fee by check, please provide a separate check for each.** It makes the accounting and management of the banquet much easier and would be greatly appreciated.

## One man's opinion

When my monthly QST magazine arrives I normally scan through the pages and see what is in the Product Review, then I look at some of the articles and DIY projects. As a last look I check the back pages of the magazine for the survey results conducted by the league. Most of the questions ask about your modes, types of antennas and contest participation.

Just prior to the November Sweepstakes contest the league had a survey about it. Now just in case some of you newcomers are not acquainted with Sweepstakes, it is a yearly contest and happens in November of each year. One week end is SSB and the other CW, the idea is to work as many state side stations as you can in a certain period of time.

There is an exchange of information, a progressive qso number, followed by an "A" for 150 watts and below, or a "B" for power above 150 watts. The check is your call and then the first year you were licensed, plus your ARRL section.

My exchange would look like this, Nr 1B ck K4lrx, 56, Ky not so bad on phone, but CW it becomes a grind after a 100 contacts, or more. Keep in mind all this info for each qso has to be logged before it can be counted for scoring.

In looking in QST one of the questions asked in the survey was, were you planning to operate in the November Sweepstakes, phone, or CW? There were several stations responding and the total were in four figures, but this is where it got interesting. Only 16% indicated they were going to operate in the SSB category, while a dismal 8% said they would use CW.

This tells me a few facts, one, I think the Sweepstakes has outlived its usefulness, and our number of CW ops is dwindling. Once the phone contest started I tuned across the bands, what I

found on 20 and 40 were large gaps with no one and only a few contest stations.

Regarding the CW contest, at that time I was involved in a pile up trying to work VK9MA on Mellish Reef for a new 40 meter band country. A few inconsiderate contesters started calling CQ SS without listening, or checking the frequency with a QRL? The avid dx hounds chased them off and advised the offenders to listen before transmitting. The pile up continued and I was successful in gaining a contact with VK9MA, I went away smiling.

In the past I had worked Sweepstakes since I was first licensed, I used it to gain states that I had not worked before and add to my total for WAS. I also used it for my quest to five band WAS and gained a lot of new ones. However, that was more than ten years ago, in my last contest of Sweepstakes I logged 400 contacts, I received only one request for a qsl card.

In previous Sweepstakes, I was besieged with requests a few days after the contests were over, in years to come, the demand shrunk to near nothing. In the last few years I have not done any operating in the Sweepstakes, lots of meaningless exchanges, but no substance and near nothing requests for any confirmations. I quite personally thought it was a waste of time, I think the exchange is far too long. Even Field day has a shorter exchange, actually who cares about your first date of licensing? Or the check, if you are transmitting it is coming from you and this is just a wasted effort.

My streamlined exchange would drop the CK, the date of licensing, give the contact number, the "A" or "B" and then the section. Done, move on to the next contact, exchanging all this pointless dribble is unnecessary, time consuming and for what?

Personally, I think we have too many contests each month, or, once a year, state parties, Sweepstakes, DX contests, phone, CW, FD, RTTY it is just out of hand and we should do less contest activity. In my operation, if the contest is on CW, I move to phone, and vice versa, that way I do not have to tolerate interference and inconsiderate contest ops.

The phone contest showed a lot more activity, but there were still gaps on the band where there were no stations. Some fellows were conducting normal contacts and round tables, others just complained about the interference. Personally, I have no interest in Sweepstakes any longer, I can explore the non-contest bands and perhaps gain a new band country.

It is very likely Sweepstakes will continue to survive for some years to come, nothing has changed much in the exchange, a few new rules regarding operating class has emerged.

The choice is ours, by less and less activity in a certain contest it will eventually collapse, Sweepstakes is one contest we could either streamline, or let it fall under its own weight.

As always my friends,  
this is "One Man's Opinion"  
Bill, K4LRX

## **Eat'n Before the Meet'n**

**January 11<sup>th</sup> Eating Before the Meeting** will be at **Firehouse Subs**, before the regular TARS club meeting. Located at **1031 N Green River Rd.** Drop by for food, socializing, "story tell'n" and whatever else comes to mind. Join the group at 5:30, or whenever you can make it. Check in on 146.79 if you need directions or just bored on your drive in. Everyone is welcome to join us.

If you have any suggestions on where you would like for us to meet, contact:

**Herb Alvey KB9MZH** c: 812.431.1037

## **February Meeting LOG INN**

The February club meeting will be **the annual TARS banquet**, February 8<sup>th</sup> at the Log Inn. **Please arrive by 6:00 pm** so that your choice of meat can be ordered, followed by a short business meeting and award presentations before our food is served family style.

The Log Inn is fully handicap accessible using the entrance on the east side of building. [\[MAP\]](#)

**The cost will be \$12.00 per person for 2018 paid members and spouse / guest.**

**Non-members will be full price of \$18.00.**

All reservations must be **PAID IN ADVANCE no later than Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>**. Preferred by the regular club meeting Jan 11, 2018.

*If paying both membership dues and banquet fee by check, please provide a separate check for each.* You may bring your payment to the meetings or mail to:

TARS  
PO Box 4521  
Evansville, IN, 47724

***Please do not mail cash.***



## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county  
ARES/RACES meeting **January 18th**,  
7:00 pm at the VC West side EMA  
Training Center (WEMA)  
[1430 Harmony Way.](#)



Anyone interested in emergency communication  
in Vanderburgh County is invited.  
Chris Lantaff KE9YK  
Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer  
[in82races@gmail.com](mailto:in82races@gmail.com) c: 812.453.1972

## Tri-State Emergency Net

**8:00 p.m. Wednesday nights on 146.79 pl 88.5**

If you haven't checked into the **Tri-State  
Emergency Net**, please take a few minutes at  
8:00 p.m. Wednesday evenings on 146.79 and  
get updated on what is happening, the latest  
club information, calendar of upcoming events,  
topics of general interest and from time to time  
good old-fashioned rag chewing.

## Net Operator schedule

January 3	KC9UVG
10	KC9TYA
17	N9QVQ
24	KB9YWQ
31	WB9KQF
February 7	KC9UVG
14	N9QVQ
21	KC9TYA
28	KB9YWQ

## Warrick County ARES/RACES:

### Auxiliary Communications Trailer....

The Warrick County ARES/RACES group has been  
assigned an enclosed trailer to be converted into  
an Auxiliary Communications Trailer. Members  
of the group have spent several days replacing  
flooring, insulating and covering the walls and  
ceiling, painting, wiring, carpeting, and  
constructing custom cabinets. It will be some  
time before the trailer is completed. There is

still a lot of work needing to be done. The  
transformation of the trailer indicates the many  
talents that Amateur Radio Operators possess.  
Many thanks for all of the hard work being  
supplied. And a thank you to the Warrick  
County EMA for the trailer.

### Communications...

During the November meeting the main topic of  
discussion was communications. Mike Koester  
(KA9VKO) provided an exercise for the group  
that showed how "to much" or "to little"  
information can change the outcome of the final  
understanding. This exercise involved wooden  
blocks and isolation from one another. One  
person would build a structure with the blocks  
and then communicate with the other persons  
what he had in front of him. The other people  
would then attempt to duplicate the structure  
with the information received. It is amazing how  
the same information can be interpreted  
differently by each and every person in the  
room. By the third attempt everyone present  
knew what to give as information and the  
questions to ask to confirm the information  
received was what they needed to know.

### Meetings...

The December Warrick ARES/RACES meeting will  
be held at Archie & Clyde's in Newburgh. The  
meeting will be December 11th at 6:30 pm.  
Warrick ARES/RACES meets at 6:30 pm, on the  
2nd Monday of each month. Meetings are held  
at the EMA facilities on the 3rd floor of the old  
courthouse in Boonville and is open to anyone  
interested. We hold a net on the 147.075,  
Boonville repeater each Tuesday evening at  
7:30. We invite everyone to check into the net.  
More information is available on the net or by  
e-mailing Steve [K9SRC@ARRL.net](mailto:K9SRC@ARRL.net) .

Until next time:

Happy Holidays

73's

Chris L Owen (KC9CLO)

Public Information Officer

Warrick County ARES/RACES group

## VE Testing



**2018 Schedule**  
1/6 1/27 2/24  
Complete schedule  
coming soon!

All TARS ARRL examination sessions are held at the Evansville Chapter of the American Red Cross. The ARC is located at 29 S. Stockwell Road, at the intersection of Stockwell Road and Lloyd Expressway. Sessions start promptly at **9:00 AM**, Evansville time. For more info contact:  
[John VanVorst N9OL](mailto:John.VanVorst@arrl.org) c: 812.305.4100

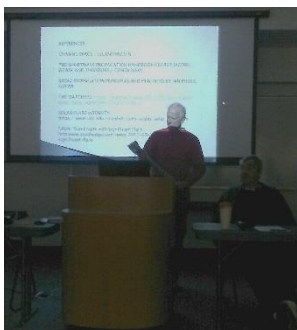


## Meeting Presentations

January will be TARS annual auction with Little ED, K9HVI everyone's favorite auctioneer. February will be our dinner and a meeting at the Log Inn. More information is in this issue.

### What have you missed at meetings lately?

TARS has given away attendance prizes, but you can't win if you don't attend! It happened again in December, 22 people attended and the number picked for the door prize..... **23** !  
*Had YOU been there you could have WON!*



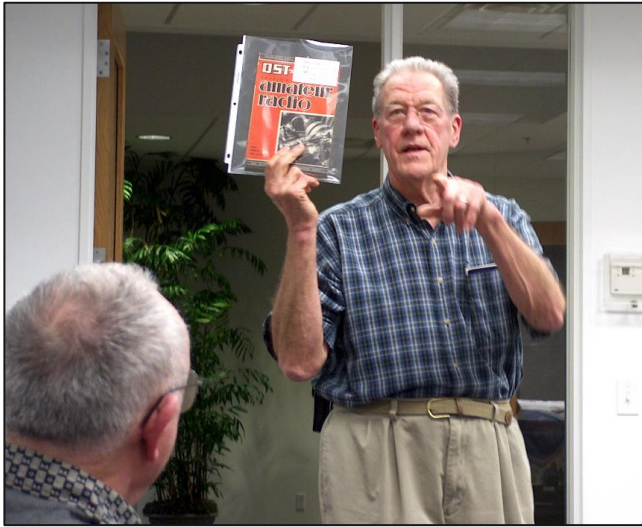
WA2USA presented a program on his SOTA activities at the Dec. TARS meeting.

## Winter Field Day

**January 27<sup>th</sup>** at Wesselman's Park. Set-up 9:00 am. Chris KE9YK will have bean soup and cornbread at NOON. You are welcome to bring any side dishes for lunch if you wish. Most importantly, come out and enjoy the FUN!



# Auction



January 11<sup>th</sup> will be TARS annual club auction. **NOW is the time** to start cleaning out your shack closet and operating position to make room for your new toys. TARS will accept any of your radio/electronics donations, or you may sell your wares with only a small percentage of the selling price going to TARS. You may also set a minimum starting bid price if you wish.

A few of the Ham Station items for the auction.



Join us at the auction to see the rest.....



A big **THANK YOU** to Dan Mitchel N9APA, of the Ham Station for a nice assorted donation to the auction. You never know what might turn up. If you stop in, tell Dan Thanks!

## January Birthdays

Raymond Edge	W9KHP	17 <sup>th</sup>
William Hilyerd	K4LRX	11 <sup>th</sup>
Kelli Lynch-Land	KD9COS	8 <sup>th</sup>
Betty Lantaff	KC9VDA	27 <sup>th</sup>
Charles F Martin	WB8LDV	28 <sup>th</sup>
Dave (Jerry) Purcell	KC9ZAR	15 <sup>th</sup>
Leonard Schmitt	N9QVQ	12 <sup>th</sup>
Brian Walker	KC4FIE	19 <sup>th</sup>
Max Wilkinson	KD9ABT	1 <sup>st</sup>
Steve Wilzbacher	K4SAW	17 <sup>th</sup>



## Contacts

Bill K4LRX has sent a couple of his latest QSL's.

**A5A Bhutan** 29th Sep – 8th Oct 2017  
QJ.H. Royal Thimphu College (RTC)

**K4LRX** Confirming Our QSO.

DATE	UTC	MHz	RST	2Way
06 Oct 2017	0033	14	599	CW
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

operators  
E21EIC Champ JH1AJT Zorro  
VR2KF Kazu paypal@fgc.or.jp

<http://www.seisagroup.jp/>  
<http://www.fgc.or.jp/>

**VP8SGI**  
South Georgia Island

**VP8**

CC Zone 13 ITU Zone 73 IOTA AN-007 Locator HD1SPT

If you have anything to share, recent contacts, awards, projects or anything of club interest contact [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net).

## Secretary Report

December General Meeting 2017

The meeting was called to order by n9jca, Chris. Introductions were given. An invoice for two baofeng radios was approved for 50 dollars to be paid to Don, kb9ywq.

The floor was then given to Dennis, wa2usa, for his sota and propagation presentation. He gave a very interesting slide show showing the different layers of the atmosphere and the effect of solar flares on rf signals. The program was accepted as very informative and interesting. After the presentation the regular business meeting was started with the reading of last month secretaries report. The report was accepted as read.

Following the secretaries report the treasurer report was given. The treasurer reminded

everyone that this was the last opportunity to order tee shirts with the club logo on them. The treasurer further reminded everyone that the board meeting in February was the last opportunity to have member dues paid and reservations for the club banquet. The treasurer report was accepted as read and accepted. The clubs attention was then turned to committee reports. The first report was that of the election of officers for the upcoming year. The new president and vice president were informed that they needed to sign paperwork at the Evansville Teachers Credit Union. The next discussion was about a special election for the Board seat vacated by Max, kd9abt, who is the new vice president.

The next order of business was about the club Christmas party to be held on February 8th at the Log Inn. Again everyone was reminded that both the dues and reservations for the banquet needed to be paid by the February 1st board meeting. The door prizes will be the 2018 ARRL Handbook, a one year club membership, and the McCutchan award.

Discussion was then opened to Dave, wb9yig, for the Yaesu DR2X repeater. It was suggested that the repeater committee meet with Dave for assistance in installation of the new repeater. Everyone was reminded that the club auction will be during the general meeting in January. Ed Folz has agreed to be the auctioneer again. New business was opened to the subject of Winter Field Day. Saturday January 27, 2018 from 9am till dark or cold.

We discussed the possibility of having a tailgate type of hamfest again and it was tabled again for further investigation.

Summer field day will be June 23rd and 24th. in 2017 the club placed third in the nation for our classification.

Chris, n9jca, has volunteered to take care of the inventory of the clubs articles.

The meeting was adjourned.

Donald Land, Secretary

## Treasurer Report

November 2017 (prepared 12/1/2017)

Opening Balance: \$3,727.10

### Receipts:

Memberships	\$132.50
Banquet Reservations	\$48.00
Total Receipts --	\$180.50

### Expenditures:

Don Land KB9YWQ 2ea.	
Baofeng HT door prizes	(\$50.00)
Mark KC9TYA 2018	
Handbook Banquet prize	(\$50.45)
Indiana Farmer's Mutual	
-Liability insurance	(\$359.00)
Total Expenditures---	(\$459.45)

Ending Balance \$3,448.15

Red Cross fund \$987.07

Jeff Holt AA9WJ

TARS Treasurer



Thank You to Donut Bank for furnishing donuts at the December TARS meeting.

Your input is important.

Sparks is **YOUR** information source for club activities and local Amateur radio information. In each issue we ask for submissions from club members. Tell us about your station, projects you have made or are making, anything interesting the TARS membership might be interested in.

**Submission deadline is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.**  
**Most any document format is acceptable.**  
**Photos or graphics of your subject are welcome.**  
**Send your article to: [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net)**

TARS is an [ARRL](#) affiliated club  
ARRL [Indiana Section](#)  
Section Manager: Brent Walls N9BA  
[bwalls@arrl.org](mailto:bwalls@arrl.org)



### TARS mailing address:

TARS  
P.O. Box 4521  
Evansville, IN 47724

Don't forget to check out our web page

[www.w9og.net](http://www.w9og.net)

Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TARSw9og>

TARS E-mail: [info@w9og.net](mailto:info@w9og.net)

### 2018 Club Officers and Board members

President [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](#)

Vice President [Max Wilkinson KD9ABT](#)

Treasurer [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#) 812.858.2968

Secretary [Don Land KB9YWQ](#)

#### Board of Directors

[Raymond Edge W9KHP](#) (2017-2018)

[Rick Jackson K9EXY](#) (2017-2018)

Position OPEN (2018)

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](#) 812.963.6455 (2018-2019)

[Len Schmitt N9QVQ](#) (2018-2019)

[Terry McCraey WB9KQF](#) (2018-2019)

#### SPARKS Editor:

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