

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

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



March 2018- Issue No. 3

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:

As March rolls around just a reminder that there are only 21 days till spring! And with the warmer weather, hams are beginning to make plans for antenna repairs as well as getting out to local parks for outdoor contacts. What are your favorite ham related outdoor activities?

Our annual dinner at the Log Inn was once again an enjoyable time for all who attended. A highlight of the evening was when Chris N9JCA turned out to be a very lucky member as his ticket was drawn twice for the door prizes! Upon having the second winning ticket however, Chris graciously declined and another ticket was drawn. Congratulations to Steve Connaughton K9SRC winning on the one year membership to TARS.

Hope to see you at the meeting!

73 Dave KC9UVG



October 27<sup>th</sup> 2018

Lynnville Community Center

Watch for more info coming soon.

Contact: [hamfest@w9og.net](mailto:hamfest@w9og.net)

Web page: [www.hamtoberfest.com](http://www.hamtoberfest.com)

## One man's opinion

Most recently there has been an explosion on the ham bands for the digital mode FT8, I have never seen a mode take off so fast.

Other attempts at revolutionizing the way we communicate have come and gone, so let's take a look.



About twenty some odd years ago Henry Radio introduced a new mode that was supposed to be the greatest thing since sliced bread. It was called Narrow Band Voice Modulation, the idea was to reduce the overall bandwidth of the audio on a SSB signal. There were a few flaws in the system, first of all you had to purchase the magic box that plugged in between your Microphone and the rig. Secondly, you had to feed an output of the received audio back into the magic box and lastly provide some means to hear the audio coming out of the magic box.

The system was cumbersome and would not work unless the person you were talking to also had the same magic box. Needless to say the ham radio world rejected this idea and within three months it folded up never to be heard about again.

Enter Packet Radio a few years later I had to wonder about it and did a little investigation, I only found one ham locally who used it. I asked him to give me a demo of what was on packet. Well, I found out that bulletin boards were about the only thing on packet and the system was very slow in doing what it was supposed to do. After that I lost my interest in Packet, plus I had talked to my former brother in law about it, he was also a ham. He summed it up as being Functionally Useless. I had to agree with the findings and forgot about it totally.

It was not until a few years later that I visited the Late Jim Dawson, KA9IJW, Jim had told me he was trying RTTY and if I wanted to see it in operation come on by some time. I took him up on the invite, after a half dozen CQ's on RTTY and no one returning I began to wonder if this mode was worth the effort? Interest quickly dropped and it was not until a few years later and a new transceiver that I started to decode RTTY on the ham bands. Personally, I did

not copy anything new as far as the usual six point contact, but still maybe I would give it a try.

I purchased an interface from MFJ stating at that time work all the digital modes with one interface and nothing else to buy. Ok, sounded good, price was right ordered it and wanted to see how it worked. When I received the unit all it had in the box was the interface and one CD, it was only for the CW program. Any other mode the CD was extra and ranged in price from over \$50.00 to nearly \$80, thanks MFJ a big lie!

I decided I did not want to spend any more money on a whim and quickly disposed of the interface at a local ham fest. Although, I would occasionally tune in some RTTY stations these modes simply did not interest me. Years later I heard of other modes such as Olivia, JT 65 and PSK, since I had no way to decode it I did not worry about it for some time.

About a year ago, I got brave and purchased a new 990 Kenwood, love this rig and glad I made the jump, on the front panel are two USB connectors and they are for the digital modes. Now if I need anything else other than a computer to make this work I might continue further, but if something else is required we have other projects to pursue. I have gone as far as to load the FT8 program and looked it over, so far pretty simple, but this is what I have heard about it.

No human contact, in effect you are working computer to computer exchanging only quick information, namely grid square, state, or county and that is it. Some hams have expressed opinions stating they were afraid six meters would become an exclusive digital band and lots of dx stations would abandon the normal CW and SSB contacts. However, with poor conditions six meters is pretty dead along with ten and 15, until we see better conditions the normal CW and SSB contacts may take a back seat to FT8. I am debating with myself as to pursue this venture of FT8, or continue on task with obtaining 1500 band countries on my DX challenge. I think I know which one will win, even during propagation lows I have managed to add several new band countries on 80 meters and until I cross the line of 1500 I do not plan to change. But, wait there is 2000, 2500 and the ultimate of 3000 for DX challenge I

have a chance and I know what direction I will follow.

However, I would like to work that last state on six meters and that is Hawaii, only heard it once and the pile up was so bad you could not tell who the station returned to at any time. Let's see what happens in the next few years, maybe I will work it on FT8, or the regular CW and SSB who knows?

Of course if FT8 and digital modes are your thing, by all means pursue it and have fun doing so, be interested to know if anyone is using a 990 on the digital modes and what is needed?

With that my friends,  
this is "One Man's Opinion"  
Bill, K4LRX

## McCutchan Award

Congratulations to David Sandine KC9UVG for receiving the McCutchan award at the February Banquet. Dave has stepped up to move the TARS forward the last couple of years by volunteering to chair and assist with many events. Serving as TARS Vice President last year and again stepping up as President this year.



The McCutchan award reads:

***The strength and progress of Amateur Radio is vested in the hearts and minds of dedicated Amateur Radio Operators who voluntarily give of their time and knowledge.***

***John McCutchan, a dedicated Amateur Radio Operator was a leader in this respect and is honored by his friend Ellis Carson, who promoted and sponsored this award.***

***By your dedication and your contributions you have given inspiration and leadership to others, and have brought honor and dignity to your club and Amateur Radio.***

***As President of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society I am proud to present this citation and honor to you. May you continue to enjoy the rich experience of serving.***

Once again Congratulations Dave.

## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting **March 15th**, 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

MAR	7	KC9UVG
	14	N9QVQ
	21	KE9YK
	28	KB9YWQ
April	4	KC9UVG
	11	N9QVQ
	18	KC9TYA
	25	KB9YWQ
MAY	2	KC9UVG
	9	N9QVQ
	16	KC9TYA
	23	KE9YK
	30	KB9YWQ

## WARRICK COUNTY ARES/RACES...

Winter has given everyone a taste of what spring can be like. Now is an excellent time to check your emergency go kit supplies. Make sure batteries are good, and equipment all functions as it should. Get out the radios dust them off and check in on the weekly net each Tuesday night at 7:30 pm central time on the frequency of 147.075 MHz on the repeater with a 88.5 Hz PI tone.

### Comm Trailer:

The work on the Communications trailer continues. Some of the cabinet doors have been painted. A 30' push-up mast has been added to the work in progress. Additional work will be done weather permitting. Again, thanks to everyone that has helped with the work being done.

### Warrick County ARES/RACES Repeater:

The Warrick County ARES/RACES repeater has been upgraded to the Yaesu DR2 system. One of the changes that everyone has commented on is the short Squelch Tail. After the repeater has been in use for a while we will begin exploring advanced features of the repeater.

### Mesh/AREDN:

Planning of the Mesh/AREDN system is ongoing at each monthly meeting. Several different systems are being looked at and testing of the equipment is in process. The first trial took place on 2/17. The trial was to link the EOC and Boonville City Lake. The trial didn't go as planned. It was a good opportunity to find flaws in the system and to make modifications and corrections to the equipment. Additional trials will be scheduled as needed to continue testing of the system.

### Nursing Home Communications:

The State of Indiana has mandated that all nursing homes have 3 independent modes of communications in their disaster plan. Several nursing homes have discovered that amateur radio is a good fit for the third mode. As of today, 3 nursing homes have contacted the Warrick County ARES/RACES group requesting information about what items are needed to provide this mode of communications. Rick Williams (KT9B) is working with them recommending equipment and commercial radio installers.

73's

Chris L Owen (KC9CLO)

Public Information Officer

Warrick County ARES/RACES group

## March Birthdays

Roger Hyatt	N9RDH	15th
Dan Kelley	N9WJ	24th
Jay King	WB9ICL	26th
Robert Pointer	N9XAW	2nd
Jenny Washburne	KC9NPA	10th

## VE Testing

### 2018 Schedule

January 27

February 24

March **No testing**

April 28

May 26

June 30

July 28

August 25

September 29

October 20

November **No testing**

December 29



Candidates wishing to earn their first Amateur Radio License, or upgrade their present valid license, need to bring the following:

1. **Original signed and valid FCC Amateur Radio License.**
2. **Any previously earned CSCE.**
3. **One copy of the license and CSCE.**
4. **Two forms of Identification, one bearing a recent photograph.**
5. **The current ARRL testing fee of \$15.00.**
6. **You "must" have your Social Security number, TIN or FRN with you.**

**No pre-registration is required for our sessions.**

All examinations will be administered at the American Red Cross, Evansville Chapter, located at 29 S. Stockwell Road, Evansville Indiana 47714.

Examinations will start at 9:00 AM Central time.

We have no pre-registration, and examinations are administered on a walk-in basis.

Candidates are asked to **report promptly, 9:00AM**, to the Red Cross, as we need to vacate the meeting room by noon.

For more info contact:

[John VanVorst N9OL](mailto:John.VanVorst@N9OL) c: 812.305.4100



## Eat'n Before the Meet'n



March 8<sup>th</sup> Eating Before the Meeting will be at [Mo's Southwest Grill](#) 6401 E Lloyd Expressway, in the plaza directly in front of Target. Moe's offers a variety of build your own Southwest/Mexican foods at reasonable prices. 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](mailto:Herb.Alvey@KB9MZH) c:812.499.3729

## Contacts

This one is one of my latest, notice the band used to work this station. Just in case we have those who do not know where this is located, it is just inside the Arctic Circle. – Bill K4LRX



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

## SKYWARN Spotter training

It's that time again.

**Weather spotter** classes have been scheduled for the area.

Mar 5 6:00 pm NWS webinar

Mar 10 9:00 am Mt Vernon

### Elite Spotter Workshop

Apr 3, 5:00 pm Owensboro

**Apr 9, 6:00 pm Evansville, Red Cross**

All classes now require registration, are free of charge, open to everyone and last 2 to 2.5 hours.

For details, listing of all available classes, latest schedules and to register visit:

[www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining](http://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining)

Questions? Email [Ricky.Shanklin@noaa.gov](mailto:Ricky.Shanklin@noaa.gov)



## Power Line For First Reponders & Weather Spotters

Hosted by [Green River Area Skywarn Spotters](#)

Sunday, March 18 at 1 PM - 4 PM

Henderson County Fair Grounds

383 Sam Ball Way, Henderson, Kentucky 42420

## ARRL Requests Expanded HF Privileges for Technician Licensees

ARRL has asked the FCC to expand HF privileges for Technician licensees to include limited phone privileges on 75, 40, and 15 meters, plus RTTY and digital mode privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The FCC has not yet invited public comment on the proposals, which stem from recommendations put forth by the ARRL Board of Directors' Entry-Level License Committee, which explored various initiatives and gauged member opinions in 2016 and 2017.

"This action will enhance the available license operating privileges in what has become the principal entry-level license class in the Amateur Service," ARRL said in its Petition. "It will attract more newcomers to Amateur Radio, it will result in increased retention of licensees who hold Technician Class licenses, and it will provide an improved incentive for entry-level licensees to increase technical self-training and pursue higher license class achievement and development of communications skills."

Specifically, ARRL proposes to provide Technician licensees, present and future, with phone privileges at 3.900 to 4.000 MHz, 7.225 to 7.300 MHz, and 21.350 to 21.450 MHz, plus RTTY and digital privileges in current Technician allocations on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The ARRL petition points out the explosion in popularity of various digital modes over the past 2 decades. Under the ARRL plan, the maximum HF power level for Technician operators would remain at 200 W PEP. The few remaining Novice licensees would gain no new privileges under the League's proposal.

ARRL's petition points to the need for compelling incentives not only to become a radio amateur in the first place, but then to upgrade and further develop skills. Demographic and technological changes call for a "periodic

rebalancing" between those two objectives, the League maintains.

"There has not been such a rebalancing in many years," ARRL said in its petition. "It is time to do that now." The FCC has not assessed entry-level operating privileges since 2005.

The Entry-Level License Committee offered very specific data and survey-supported findings about growth in Amateur Radio and its place in the advanced technological demographic that includes individuals younger than 30. It received significant input from ARRL members via more than 8,000 survey responses.

"The Committee's analysis noted that today, Amateur Radio exists among many more modes of communication than it did half a century ago, or even 20 years ago," ARRL said in its petition.

Now numbering some 378,000, Technician licensees comprise more than half of the US Amateur Radio population. ARRL said that after 17 years of experience with the current Technician license as the gateway to Amateur Radio, it's urgent to make it more attractive to newcomers, in part to improve upon science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education "that inescapably accompanies a healthy, growing Amateur Radio Service," ARRL asserted.

ARRL said its proposal is critical to developing improved operating skills, increasing emergency communication participation, improving technical self-training, and boosting overall growth in the Amateur Service, which has remained nearly inert at about 1% per year.

The Entry-Level License Committee determined that the current Technician class question pool already covers far more material than necessary for an entry-level exam to validate expanded privileges. ARRL told the FCC that it would

continue to refine examination preparation and training materials aimed at STEM topics, increase outreach and recruitment, work with Amateur Radio clubs, and encourage educational institutions to utilize Amateur Radio in STEM and other experiential learning programs.

"ARRL requests that the Commission become a partner in this effort to promote Amateur Radio as a public benefit by making the very nominal changes proposed herein in the Technician class license operating privileges," the petition concluded.

## Secretary Report

### Feb. 2018 Board Meeting

Officers in attendance were Dave, Max, Terry, Mark, Jeff, Don, Chris, and Raymond.

Introductions were given.

Secretary report was given and accepted as read. The treasurer report was given and accepted as read.

Dues and banquet reservations must be given before the end of tonight's meeting.

The club party is next Thursday at the Log Inn at 6 pm. Door prize will be a 2018 ARRL Handbook. Awards will be given to the members who have earned them.

The fusion repeater is in place at deaconess hospital. Dugger Hamfest is on Feb. 17th at 8:00am.

Al has dropped off the tee shirts to the club this evening plus a refund of 212 dollars because of a first time order. 21 extra shirts were printed with the club logo on them were purchased by the club for prizes and sale. Shirts will be available for pickup at the log inn on the 8th.

The board voted to proceed with the plans for an October trunk of treat tailgate fest at Lynnville Park. Summer field day is June 23 and 24, 2018. Setup will be the evening before. Max as PIO will work on publicity for the event.

The meeting was adjourned.

Don Land, KB9YWQ

Club Secretary

## February Tars Banquet 2018

Introductions were made during the brief business meeting at the log inn on February 8, 2018. Guests were instructed to read the secretary report in the February issue of Sparks.

The treasure gave the account balance.

Numerous certificates were given to the members who had earned them. The McCutchan award was given to Dave Sandine for his outstanding work as vice president during the 2017 calendar year.

The meal was served.

Meeting was adjourned.

Don Land, KB9YWQ

Club Secretary.

## Treasurer Report

January 2018 (prepared 2/1/2018)

Opening Balance:	\$3,747.65
Receipts:	
Memberships (including extra donations)	\$338.00
VE testing	\$77.00
Net Income from Auction (including extra donations)	\$518.00
Banquet Reservations	\$204.00
Total Receipts --->>	\$1,137.00
Expenditures:	
None	
Ending Balance	\$4,884.65
Red Cross Fund	\$1,064.07
Net auction income of \$518.00 is from gross revenue of \$748.00 minus \$230.00 disbursed to John Vogel for the estate of Dave Vogel, WA9C	
Jeff Holt AA9WJ TARS Treasurer	

## Hamfest Calendar

Greetings Fellow Indiana Hams,

I am pleased to announce that the 2018 ARRL Indiana State Convention will be hosted at the Indianapolis Hamfest this year.

The Indianapolis Hamfest will be on July 13th and 14th at the Marion County Fairgrounds located at 7300 E Troy Avenue in Indianapolis. You can learn more about the hamfest by visiting [www.indyhamfest.com](http://www.indyhamfest.com).

The State Convention is an opportunity to learn about what is going on around the state from many of our ARRL volunteer leaders. The ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager, Mike Corey KI1U, will be in attendance for the convention and speaking at one of the forums. Mike is a native Hoosier from the Kokomo area. The ARRL Central Division Director, Kermit Carlson W9XA, will also be on hand to answer questions.

I hope you are able to attend the convention this year and look forward to speaking with many of you.

73,  
Brent N9BA

## 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](#)

**Secretary** [Don Land KB9YWQ](#)

**Board of Directors**

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

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

[Dennis Martin WA2USA](#) (2018)

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

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

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

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