

SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years



May 2018 - Issue No. 5

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



President's Corner:

A couple of busy months are heading our way for the club. **May 5th, is the INQSO party and picnic, to be held at the FOP camp on the west side of Evansville.** This is a good time to make contacts other counties in Indiana and test out your projects before field day. The club is furnishing chicken and drinks and we ask that members bring a covered dish to share.

Since we are combining the INQSO party with our club picnic, there will be a regular board meeting but **no Thursday night club meeting in May.** The next regularly scheduled club meeting will be June 14th.

June 23 & 24th is the date for Field Day. We have our station captains lined up but we always need extra hands to help with setting up the antennas and manning the stations. Please mark your calendars and join in the fun!

And don't forget that in October, our club will be hosting our 1st Annual Hamtober Fest at the Lynnville Community Center. This should be a fun time for all with plenty to do so please plan on volunteering where you can.

73

Dave KC9UVG

TARS is participating in the Indiana QSO party this Sat May 5th with 2 stations making contacts along with the TARS picnic, at the FOP Pal Camp [5417 N Happe Rd, Evansville](#), eating at Noon and set up starting 9:00 am. Chris KE9YK will have a short demo on Fox Hunting after lunch and we will have the stations operating till sometime in the afternoon. Come on out and join in the food, fun and bring a dish to share.

One man's opinion

Reprinted from 4/14 SPARKS

Being an avid dx hound I use the various cluster networks, namely Dxscape and Radio Arcala that provide valuable information in my quest to add new band countries. I am one that contributes regularly with posts on these sites of stations I have worked and the frequency plus the time. It is hoped that others will benefit with the sharing of this information and are able to work the DX station as well.



Normally, I state the listening frequency, or the signal strength at my location, make it simple and to the point. However, there seems to be some people who delight in posting worthless items or a bogus station and I really wonder what the purpose is of this posting? I am referring to the posting of QZ6TZR then O snap, I was puzzled by this at first then realized you have those with nothing else to do and post worthless information.

As most of you know there is no QZ6TZR and of course this being the more modern age those older bogus stations have long vanished. Such goodies as 5U4GB and 6L6GT, plus the old reliable RG8U, were often rumored to be on the air, old timers will chuckle at this and new comers will scratch their heads.

I also question the usefulness of one station in the North east posting that a DX was heard in many states, or locations that he is not sitting in at the time of reporting. I much prefer the reports of stations that are actually hearing the dx station and an approximate location of the station reporting. DX clusters if used properly save you a lot of tuning and listening time, you see something posted you need, dial up the frequency and attempt to work the DX station. Posting worthless information takes up space provides nothing and wastes the time of the one using the site for real information.

I have heard some comments on the fact that DX clusters are worthless I must debate that statement, I use the listings every day to check on what is going on with the various bands. I could tune every band,

wait patiently, pounce on the dx, but the cluster saves me from a lot of wasted hunting time.

Besides a DX cluster we have county hunting clusters, this also is very helpful if used properly and is a great operating aid. In my quest to work all counties this has certainly saved me a lot of time sitting on one frequency waiting for something to happen.

I also question the wisdom of such comments as "Finally" or profane statements made towards an operation just because they are not working a certain area. Maybe the operation is not split, or maybe they have good copy on Europe, but not North America.

I also question the wisdom of a reporting station stating the number of countries this new is for him or her. No one cares, the only one that does is you about the actual count of countries you have worked.

A simple report such as good signal in Ky is often my report for DX stations heard or worked, this tells other of my location, if others are close by copy should be about the same signal strength.

If you have never used a DX cluster before, give it a try and I am sure if you are a serious minded DX hound you will find this service to be to your advantage. Of course if you post some information be sure it is of use to everyone and not a bogus call.

Of course be on the lookout for QZ6TZR and of course RG8U!

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

Upcoming

Indiana QSO Party / Picnic May 5th FOP Camp

TARS is furnishing chicken and drinks and we ask that members bring a covered dish to share at Noon.

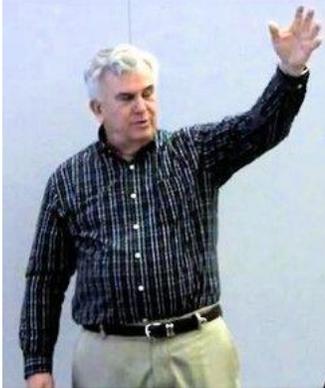
Field Day June 23-24 Red Cross

Hamtober Fest October 27 Lynnville

More-Frequent Spotless Days Signal Start of Lengthy, Deep Solar Minimum Phase

ARRL Letter for April 12, 2018

The sunspot numbers have not been good, and it does not seem they'll be getting much better anytime soon. According to the April 12 "K7RA Solar Update," no sunspots were seen over the April 5 - 11 reporting week. Solar flux has been sitting in the 60s lately and is forecast to remain at that level for the next 45 days. We're not at solar minimum yet,



Frank Donovan, W3LPL, during a 2017 presentation on propagation at the Fair Lawn (NJ) Amateur Radio Club.

though; better days lie ahead -- eventually. Top contender Frank Donovan, W3LPL, asserts that solar precursors like spotless days, which correlate physical solar phenomena with future solar activity levels, are much better indicators of progress toward a solar minimum -- a broad phase of the solar cycle -- than of a specific event, such as the bottom of a broad

solar minimum. Not only that, these and other solar precursors are useful in predicting the likely strength of Solar Cycle 25, although accurate predictions of the strength and timeframe of the Cycle 25 solar maximum aren't possible until the new sunspot cycle is under way.

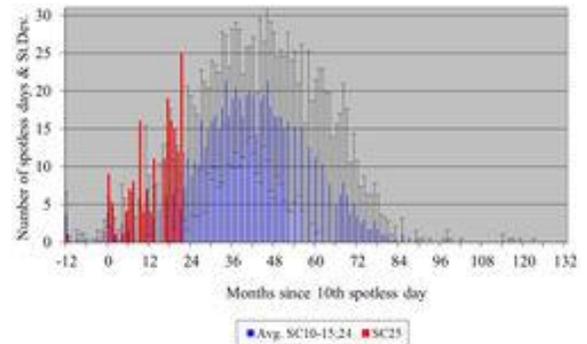
"We entered the Cycle 24 solar minimum with the onset of 8 spotless days in June 2016," Donovan pointed out. "We had only 32 spotless days in 2016. We had 15 spotless days in a row in March 2017, followed by relatively infrequent spotless days for the next 7 months."

The frequency of spotless days accelerated in early November 2017, with 13 spotless days in a row. That was followed by many more spotless days over the next 5 months. In all, 2017 experienced 104 spotless days.

"The frequency of spotless days accelerated again last month, when we had 25 spotless days," Donovan noted. "We've already had 54 spotless days during the first quarter of 2018. This data and comparisons to frequent spotless days during the last solar

minimum suggests that we may have just begun a period of very frequent spotless days for approximately the next 2 years, similar to the period of September 2007 through January 2009."

Donovan said the next solar precursor is frequent extended periods of spotless days. For example, 2016 saw 14 spotless days in a row, March 2017 had 15, November 2017 saw 13, and early March



This chart shows the number of spotless days - in red -- since the 10th spotless day of the onset of solar minimum in July 2016. In blue are the average numbers of spotless days during sunspot minimums following weak sunspot cycles similar to Solar Cycle 24.

experienced 14.

"Long periods of spotless days will become even more frequent as we go deeper into solar minimum," Donovan predicted. Once extended periods of spotless days become more frequent, another solar precursor will become important, he said.

"New high-latitude, opposite-polarity Cycle 25 sunspots will then begin to appear more frequently, perhaps by late next year," Donovan said. "More frequent Cycle 25 sunspots will signal that we're approaching the bottom of the [Cycle 24] solar minimum phase."

An ongoing solar precursor that could herald the future strength of Cycle 25 is the intensity of the solar polar magnetic fields *prior* to the Cycle 24 solar minimum, Donovan said. "The good news is that the solar polar magnetic field strength is already slightly stronger than it was prior to the last solar minimum," he said. "This suggests that Cycle 25 will be somewhat stronger than Cycle 24."

Donovan said if the long periods of spotless days end in about 1 year, that will be a precursor of a stronger Cycle 25. If they take more than 2 years to end, however, it will portend a weaker Cycle 25.

Read [more](#).

ARRL Rookie Roundup SSB Returns on Sunday, April 15

ARRL Letter for April 12, 2018

The [ARRL Rookie Roundup](#) (SSB) returns on Sunday, April 15, starting at 1800 UTC and continuing through 2359 UTC. The aim of Rookie Roundup is to encourage recently licensed operators in North America (including territories and possessions) to operate on the HF bands and experience competitive Amateur Radio operating.

You're a Rookie if you were first licensed in 2018, 2017, or 2016 (send the year you were first licensed in the exchange).

You can *qualify* as a Rookie for just 1 year in two possible ways: if you were licensed before 2016 but made your first Amateur Radio contact during 2018, 2017, or 2016, or if you never made a contact using the mode of the Rookie Roundup event (in this case, SSB) before the 2018 Rookie Roundup (send the current year in your exchange).



The object is simple: Rookies attempt to make as many contacts as possible during the 6-hour event on 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters. Rookies work everyone, and non-Rookies work only Rookies. Experienced operators are encouraged to participate and help new operators -- either on the air or in person.

Experienced hams may want to consider opening their stations to Rookies and serving as contesting mentors. The more operators on the air, the more fun the Roundup will be for everyone.

Rookies call "CQ Rookie Roundup," while veteran operators call "CQ Rookies." Exchange the call sign of the station you're working, your call sign, your first name, the two-digit number of the year first licensed, and your state, Canadian province, Mexican call area, or DX.

To register teams or to submit your score after the event, visit the [Rookie Roundup](#) page hosted by Bruce Horn, WA7BNM.

Rookie Roundup events take place three times a year: SSB in April, RTTY in August, and CW in December. [Contact](#) the ARRL Contest Branch for more information. Read [more](#).

Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting **May 19th**, 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.



On Sat April 28 we had a good workday at WEMA to install a rack mount in the "Hambulance" for the satellite data equipment. We also installed the Dish TV antenna and will need to finish the equipment and TV install at a later date. We also experimented with the WiFi connection in the radio room and unboxed computers that some RACES members have donated for use. We will soon have newer computers for the BPQ packet system, HF digital and administrative / network packet connection.

Chris Lantaff KE9YK
Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer
in82races@gmail.com c: 812.453.1972

May Birthdays

Michael Brewster	KC9BUH	29th
Kullen Cook	KD9GSY	14th
Richard Hockensmith	N9OPS	11th
Jimmy Mathias	KJ4DVR	15th
Rick Neukam	KD9MY	19th
Don Viviano	KB9CYH	17th

VE Testing

2018 Schedule

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 N9QL](mailto:John.VanVorst@N9QL) c: 812.305.4100



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

MAY	2	KC9UVG
	9	N9QVQ
	16	KC9TYA
	23	KE9YK
	30	KB9YWQ

Contacts:

Nice contact for Bill on 80 meters.

Muscat Oman مسقط عمان

A45XR

SP5EXA JW0EQ SP5EXA/JW DL/SP5EXA A71CW
FOC # 1475 VHSC # 159 HSC # 729
Krzysztof G. Dabrowski, Box 2038, CPO 111, OMAN

To: **K4LRX**

A45XR Confirming QSO(s):

Date	GMT	Band	2way	RST
24-May-05	23:13	20 m	CW	599
10-Mar-11	01:54	40 m	CW	599
24-May-15	22:20	20 m	CW	599
29-May-15	20:25	15 m	CW	599
9-Feb-18	00:47	80 m	CW	599

loc: LL93en
from 25-Jul-03 LL93do

Thanks, 73!

Chris

Hamfest Calendar 2018

Upcoming Hamfest from the ARRL website.
This is only a list of Hamfest within a close driving distance. For more info go to:
<http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/search>

Great Lakes Division Convention (Dayton Hamvention)

Start Date: 05/18/2018
End Date: 05/20/2018
Location: Greene County Fairgrounds & Expo Center
120 Fairground Road
Xenia, OH 45385
Website: <http://hamvention.org>

Princeton, KY Hamfest

06/02/2018
Location: Princeton Fire and Rescue Training Center
2001 Highway 62 West
Princeton, KY 42445
Website: <http://www.w4kbl.org>

Hamtober Fest

10/27/2018

Location: Lynnville Community Center
416 West State Road 68
Lynnville, IN 47619
Website: <http://hamtoberfest.com>
Sponsor: Tri-State Amateur Radio Society
Talk-In: 146.790 (PL 88.5)
Public Contact: Raymond Edge , W9KHP
6888 Yankeetown Road Newburgh, IN 47630
Phone: 812-746-5884
Email: hamfest@w9og.net

TALK IT UP !!!
IT's YOUR HAMFEST



Secretary Report

No report this month due to technical difficulties.

Treasurer Report

March 2018 (prepared 4/1/18)

Opening Balance:	\$4,063.13
Receipts:	
VE Room Rental	\$49.00
Memberships	\$62.50
T-Shirt refund donations	\$78.00
Extra T-Shirt sales	\$8.00
Total Receipts --->>	\$197.50
Expenditures:	
Pd N9JCA McCutchan award plaque	(\$10.70)
Total Expenditures--->>	(\$10.70)
Ending Balance	\$4,249.93
Red Cross Account	\$1,113.07
Jeff Holt AA9WJ TARS Treasurer	

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 25th of the month.

Most any document format is acceptable.

Photos or graphics of your subject are welcome.

Send your article to: sparks@w9og.net

TARS is an [ARRL](#) affiliated club
ARRL [Indiana Section](#)
Section Manager: Brent Walls N9BA
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

Facebook Group

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

TARS E-mail: 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)

SPARKS Editor:

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

E-mail: sparks@w9og.net