

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

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

January 2020 - Issue No. 1



The SPARKS Newsletter is published monthly by the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society as a source of information about Club activities, and general news items of interest to the Amateur Radio community.

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Complimentary issues of the SPARKS Newsletter are available to amateur radio clubs on a newsletter exchange by e-mailing your request to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net).

E-mail subscriptions are provided to all regular TARS members.

News contributions and letters/emails to the editor are always welcome.

TARS regular membership is open to all licensed Amateur Radio operators for \$25.00 a year. An Associate membership is also available to those who are interested in Amateur Radio but do not currently hold a license.

Associate membership is \$25.00 a year. Student memberships are also available for \$12.50 a year.

Membership information is available at [www.w9og.net](http://www.w9og.net)

The Tri-State Amateur Radio Society meets the second Thursday of each month at the Red Cross, 29 Stockwell Rd, Evansville IN, at 7:00 p.m.

Family and visitors are always welcome to attend.

For more information, please call or email one of the TARS officers listed in this newsletter.

## President's Corner

Welcome to 2020! I am looking forward to a new decade of challenges and opportunities and lots of ham radio!! I want to thank all of the folks who have stepped up to take an officer or board position with TARS. It is so important to the club to have good leaders and organizers. And by the way that doesn't just mean board members and officers! We are looking for every club member to contribute in some way, in whatever way they are capable. We all have something to add to make TARS a more vibrant club, to make meetings and events interesting and successful, and to help TARS continue to grow. TARS was formed in 1947 and through the years has grown and thrived because of all of its members.

Again in 2020, your radio club has some exciting things planned and being planned, and we need your help to pull those off. Attend meetings and participate in events, make your voice heard – all ideas are welcome. There will be great field events such as Winter Field Day (just a couple weeks away!!) and summer Field Day that are lots of fun and great opportunities to experience remote operations, building or hanging antennas, and exchange tall tales with other hams. Other events include the Indiana QSO party, the club picnic, and of course the Hamtoberfest event in October!

So get involved! Let's make 2020 a great year for our club and for ham radio.

Happy New Year!!

*John N9OL*

Mark your calendar, **HamtoberFest October 17<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

Featuring a raffle with a chance on 2 radios, an FTM-400XDR and FT-70DR HT.

A huge thank you to John N9OL for stepping up to be the 2020 HamtoberFest chairman.

**Special Election** in January to fill the vacant board position. If you have been a member for at least one year and are interested in serving, contact any board member or just come to the January Auction meeting.

**Field Day 2020** will be held once again at the Red Cross. Thanks to Dave KC9UVG for stepping up to be the field day chairman.

Mike W9KXP is making arrangements for the September TARS 2020 picnic. Keep your eyes out for more information.

## 2020 TARS Officers and Board

Congratulations on the election of our Officers and Board members for 2020.

President John Van Vorst N9OL  
Vice-President Max Wilkinson KD9ABT  
Treasurer Jeff Holt AA9WJ  
Secretary Dave Sandine KC9UVG  
Board Members  
Don Land KB9YWQ (2020-2021)  
Herby Alvey KB9MZH (2020-2021)

We are still short 1 Board member at this time and will be holding a special election at the January TARS meeting. If you have been a TARS member for at least 1 full year and would be interested in serving your club in a board member capacity, please contact a club officer for further information.

## It's DUES time!

Attached with this issue of SPARKS should have been a 2020 membership application. TARS dues run with the calendar year and come due in January. You may pay at the December or January meeting or mail to the club P.O. Box address on the membership application.

## TARS Annual Banquet Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 5:30

Our annual banquet meeting will be held on Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 at Stoll's Country Inn buffet. Stoll's is located at 19820 Castle Creek Drive, off Hwy 41 just south of Interstate 64. [\[MAP\]](#)

**Please note this meeting is a week earlier than normal** to keep from conflicting with Valentine Day. **Gathering will start at 5:30, eating at 5:45 followed by a short business meeting and award presentation.**

*TARS member cost will be \$7.00 ea. for member and guest if 2020 dues are paid and reservations are made at the January membership meeting, or no later than Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>. Full price otherwise.*

**If paying for dues and reservations by check, separate checks should be written for dues and reservations.**

A Reservation Form is attached with this SPARKS mailer.

## Eat'n Before the Meet'n

Eat'n Before the Meet'n, Jan 9<sup>th</sup> is at Cici's pizza 101-B N, S Green River Rd, Evansville, 5:30 pm.

Come out and join us for good food, fun and fellowship before the meeting. We will leave with plenty of time to make the meeting.



If you have any suggestions on where you would like for us to meet, contact: [Herb Alvey KB9MZH](#) c: 812.431.1037

## Winter Field Day

TARS will be participating in Winter Field Day on January 25<sup>th</sup>, Wesselman Park 10:00 am set up and contest start at 1pm (1900 UTC). Chris KE9YK will have his almost world famous bean soup and cornbread at NOON. You are welcome to bring any side dish to share for lunch and deserts are always welcome. If you have a some wood for the fireplace it would be appreciated also.



<https://www.winterfieldday.com/>

**Most importantly, come out and enjoy the FUN!**



## TARS GOOGLE Club Calendar

We now have a Google calendar for TARS events. Depending on the calendar app used on your phone or computer you should be able to integrate this calendar into your own personal calendar.

[Google web browser link to TARS calendar](#)

[Link for iCal format using other applications](#)

You can add to your calendar by clicking add calendar in the lower right hand corner.

Third-party apps that have access to Google calendars should also be able access the calendar.

## It's Auction Time !!!

Little ED K9HVI will once again be the master of ceremonies / Auctioneer. Now is the time to clean off your station desk and closet of those things cluttering your space. Those old antennas in the rafters of your garage, someone can put them to good use. That half-finished project you lost interest in might be just the thing someone is looking for. Bring them in and sell them at the Club Auction for just a small percentage of the sale price or if you want to donate the sale to TARS it would be greatly appreciated.



TARS will have a Kenwood TS-450S with built in antenna tuner up for auction. This would make a great beginner or station rig for someone looking to get into HF.

## Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler" is a quote attributed to Albert Einstein (<https://quotationcelebration.wordpress.com/2017/01/07/ever-thing-should-be-made-as-simple-as-possible-but-not-simpler-albert-einstein/comment-page-1/>). Here's one way to apply this principle in amateur radio, specifically to code practice oscillators.

A week ago, my friend, Paul emailed me:

"I am planning on teaching a two-hour introduction to Morse code to 14 girls ages 8 to 9 *[[Paul's granddaughter is a Girl Scout.]]*. I plan on having the girls build a code practice device. I need your help in selecting a low cost buzzer and battery holder. Please take a look around and see would you can find. I would like to limit the power to one or two AA batteries."

I replied that I'd be happy to help him with the demonstration, and offered the following advice:

"A while back, I built the QRPGuys' K7QO Code Practice Oscillator (<https://qrpguys.com/k7qo-code-practice-oscillator>). It uses a CR2032 coin battery.

"Unfortunately, they don't sell it anymore, but the assembly manual is still online

([https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cpo\\_assy\\_012616.pdf](https://qrpguys.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cpo_assy_012616.pdf)). The assembly manual doesn't call out specific parts, but here are some Amazon SKUs:

- B00J4BK0NS, Black 3V Electromagnetic Type Piezo Buzzer, 20 pcs/\$6.58
- B06XF3K4NP, Coin Cell Button Battery Holder, 30 pcs/\$9
- B008SNZUYC, 3 Pin PCB Mount Female 3.5mm Stereo Jack, 10 pcs/\$5.40
- B071RMD6FD, 1/8" 3.5mm Stereo Male Connector, 10 pcs/\$7

"Batteries are available at the dollar store for about 30 cents each. So, you could do the whole thing for less than \$5 for sure, even with a printed circuit board, which I would suggest that we do. Heck, if you ask nicely, the QRPGuys might even give us the artwork, or even better, have some boards still in stock. Even if they have neither, you should be able to get the boards in plenty of time."

Later that day, Paul replied:

Thanks, Dan, for the information and making yourself available to help. I am just going to use a buzzer, key, and battery. The buzzer has a frequency of 400 Hz.

- <https://www.xump.com/science/Buzzer-Leads15V.cfm>
- <https://www.xump.com/science/ContactKeySwitch.cfm>
- <https://www.xump.com/science/Single-AA-Battery-Holder.cfm>

And this morning, he sent me this photo, noting, "FYI. Also sounds great."

I think that this is as good an example of "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler" as there can be. I've volunteered to help Paul with his class. That will be fun, too.



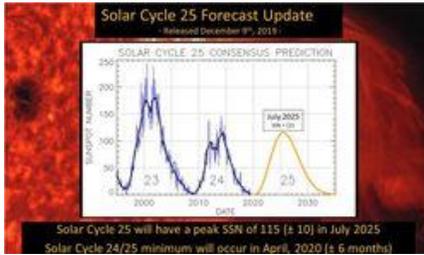
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Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog (KB6NU.Com), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (KB6NU.Com/study-guides/), and often appears on the ICQPodcast (icqpodcast.com). When he's not trying to keep things as simple as possible, but not simpler, he likes to build stuff and operate CW on the HF bands.

## NOAA/NASA Panel Concur that Solar Cycle 25 will Peak in July 2025

The ARRL Letter for December 12, 2019

The NOAA/NASA-co-chaired international Solar Cycle Prediction Panel has released its [latest forecast](#) for the coming Solar Cycle 25. The panel's consensus calls for a peak in July 2025 ( $\pm 8$  months), with a smoothed sunspot number of 115. The panel agreed that Cycle 25 will be of average intensity and similar to Cycle 24. The panel additionally concurred that the solar minimum between Cycles 24 and 25 will occur in April 2020 ( $\pm 6$  months). If the solar minimum prediction is correct, this would make Solar Cycle 24 the seventh longest on record at 11.4 years. In its preliminary forecast released last April, the scientists on the panel forecast that Solar Cycle 25 would likely be weak, much like the current Cycle 24.

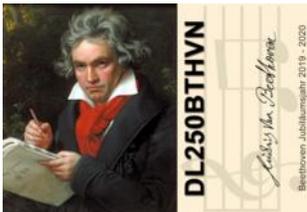


"Solar Cycle 25 may have a slow start, but is anticipated to peak with solar maximum occurring between 2023 and 2026, and a sunspot range of 95 to 130. This is well below the average number of sunspots," the panel said last spring, adding with "high confidence" that Cycle 25 "should break the trend of weakening solar activity seen over the past four cycles." The panel said the expectation that Cycle 25 would be comparable in size to Cycle 24 suggests that the steady decline in solar cycle amplitude seen from Cycle 21 through Cycle 24 has ended and that there is no indication of an approaching "Maunder-type" minimum. Cycle 24 peaked in April 2014 with an average sunspot number of 82.

The Solar Cycle Prediction Panel forecasts the number of sunspots expected for solar maximum, along with the timing of the peak and minimum solar activity levels for the cycle. It is comprised of scientists representing NOAA, NASA, the International Space Environment Services, and other US and international scientists.

## A year-long special event will honor Beethoven

The ARRL Letter for December 12, 2019



German special event station [DL250BTHVN](#) will be active between December 16, 2019, and December 17, 2020, to honor the 250th anniversary of the birth of famed composer Ludwig van Beethoven. The Beethoven

anniversary year will take place under the auspices of Germany's Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Beethoven was born in December 1770 in Bonn, Germany, and lived there for the first 22 years of his life. The anniversary event is aimed in part at highlighting Beethoven's extensive oeuvre as a composer and to boost Bonn's reputation as a "Beethoven city." QSL via direct or by the bureau.

## 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

1	KC9UVG
8	N9QVQ
15	KB9YWQ
22	WB9KQF
29	KE9YK

#### February

5	KC9TYA
12	KC9UVG
19	N9QVQ
26	KB9YWQ

If you would like to be a Net Control Operator for the Wednesday Night Net or learn how to run a SKYWARN net.

Contact: [Chris Lantaff KE9YK](#).

## VE Testing

2020 schedule coming soon!

Normally the last Sat of the month

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.

All the details can be found at:

<http://w9og.net/ve-testing>

Or for more info contact:

[John VanVorst N9OL](#) c: 812.305.4100



Reminder the current Extra class (Element 4) **Question Pool** is valid until **June 30, 2020**. After that date you will need to update your study material.

## January Birthdays



Raymond Edge	W9KHP	17th
Betty Lantaff	KC9VDA	27th
Charlie Martin	WB8LDV	28th
Jerry Purcell	KC9ZAR	15th
Leonard Schmitt	N9QVQ	12th
Brian Walker	KC4FIE	19th
Max Wilkinson	KD9ABT	1st
Steve Wilzbacher	K4SAW	17th

## Brag Rag

### What have you been doing?

Do you have something you would like to submit for the Brag Rag? Send your QSLs, special event certificates, awards, interesting photos, projects etc. to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net) to have them included in **your** newsletter.

## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting will not be until **January 16th**, 7:00 pm at the Vanderburgh Co. West Side EMA Training Center (WEMA) [1440 Harmony Way](#).



At the November meeting we installed a Yaesu FTM 400XDR in the West side EMA radio room. We now have dual band and Yaesu Fusion digital capabilities from that location.

Currently we are working on the ARES standardized training plan Individual Task Book and working to update our ICS-217 file to create a recommended radio programming list for Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES members.

Chris Lantaff KE9YK  
Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer  
[in82races@gmail.com](mailto:in82races@gmail.com) c: 812.453.1972

## Take the New ARRL Introduction to Emergency Communications Course - It's Free

The newly revised ARRL *Introduction to Emergency Communications* Course is now available on-line - it's free, and designed to provide basic knowledge and tools for any emergency communications volunteer. The course has six sections with 28 lesson topics. It includes required student activities, a 35-question final assessment and is expected to take approximately 45 hours to complete over a 9-week period. You will have access to the course platform at any time of day during this 9-week period so you may work according to your own schedule. You must pace yourself to be sure you complete all the required material in the allotted time.

At the end of the course an online final assessment is taken. A score of 80% or better is required for successful course completion. For the student to receive a "Pass," Mentors must also verify student completion by evaluating work on required activity assignments and notify the Continuing Education Program that the student has successfully completed both the course work and achieved a satisfactory score on the final assessment.

This is an online course hosted on the Canvas online learning platform, and is best accessed using the Chrome or Firefox browsers.

Before you begin the course you should have completed the following prerequisites. These courses provide a foundation for the content of this course. These are free mini-courses you can take online:

- [ICS-100 \(IS-100.c\)](#) Introduction to the Incident Command System
- [IS-700 \(IS-700.b\)](#) National Incident Management System

For more information, click [here](#). To register for the EC-001 course [click here](#)

## Treasurer Report

November 2019 (prepared 12/1/2019 )

Opening Balance:	\$5,632.68
Receipts:	
Lynnville Community Center deposit refund	\$150.00
Memberships	\$50.00
Total Receipts --->>	\$200.00
Expenditures:	
Indiana Farmer's Mutual liability insurance	(\$414.00)
Total Expenditures--->>	(\$414.00)
Ending Balance	\$5,418.68
Red Cross fund	\$1,255.82

TARS Treasurer  
Jeff AA9WJ

## Secretary Report

The secretary reports were attached as separate attachments with this SPARKS mailing.

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

## 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)**

## Looking Ahead

### 2020

Straight Key Night Jan

**TARS AUCTION January 9th**

ARRL Kids Day Jan

**Winter Field Day January 25/26 2020**

**TARS Banquet Feb 6<sup>th</sup>**

**INQP 1600Z, May 2 to 0400Z, May 3, 2020**

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June

**Field Day June**

13 Colonies Special Event July

National Night Out first Tuesday of August

International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend (ILLW) third full weekend of August

**TARS PICNIC Sep 12 - pending**

Route 66 Special Event September

Jamboree-on-the-Air third full weekend in October

**TARS 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Hamtober Fest Oct 17th 2020**

SKYWARN Recognition Day, Dec

Total Solar Eclipse North America April 8, 2024

TARS is an [ARRL](#) affiliated club

ARRL [Indiana Section](#)

Section Manager: **Jimmy Merry KC9RPX**

[kc9rpx@arrl.net](mailto:kc9rpx@arrl.net)

**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)**



## 2020 Club Officers - Board members

President [John VanVorst N9OL](#)

Vice President [Max Wilkinson KD9ABT](#)

Treasurer [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#)

Secretary [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](#)

**Board of Directors**

[Rick Jackson K9EXY](#) (2019-2020)

[Dennis Martin WA2USA](#) (2019-2020)

[Mike Townsend W9KXP](#) (2019-2020)

[Herb Alvey KB9MZH](#) (2020-2021)

[Don Land KB9YWQ](#) (2020-2021)

**Position OPEN** (2020-2021)

**SPARKS Editor:**

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

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