

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

April 2020 - Issue No. 4



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

I hope everyone reading this is healthy and well! These are certainly strange times right?! We all are experiencing a situation that has never occurred before- not exactly anyway. This drives home to me that we need to be prepared- as individuals, as families, and as hams! Personally, my wife and I were in a habit, or lifestyle, where we ate out a lot and really didn't have much food and supplies in the home. Had this been a situation more dire requiring shelter-in-place and staying put, we would have been in trouble. This time we had the opportunity early on in this event to get required supplies and get prepared. We won't make that mistake again. I urge everyone to assess how prepared you and your family were for this stressful unusual situation, and stay prepared!!

As you may know, until further notice all TARS club meetings will be via a conferencing application called Zoom. You can download it to your PC, phone, tablet, etc. Each meeting will have a unique ID and possibly a password to get into the meeting. Turn your cameras on so we can see each other- after being cooped up it is nice to see smiling faces! If you don't have a camera or choose not to use it that's OK too- join in the audio portion. Stay alert for meeting announcements and meeting codes!

You may also know that TARS is putting up a new repeater! This repeater will be in Lynnville Indiana, will be VHF Yaesu Fusion. You will hear more about the project in the coming weeks, and if you want to get involved in set up and supporting our repeater systems I am sure we can get you involved with the Repeater Committee. The more help the merrier!!

Everyone stay safe, and stay alert for changes in the COVID-19 situation. Hope to see you soon!!

73!

*John Van Vorst, N9oL*

TARS members:

The Red Cross facility management has informed me that the **Red Cross facility in Evansville is closed and any meetings and functions scheduled there have been cancelled.** This is in response to the COVID-19 crisis. We will be notified when normal schedules can resume.

We will tentatively still plan to hold meetings in April anticipating that the crisis may be behind us at that point, but stay alert for that to change.

Until further notice please do not go to the Red Cross.

If there is an urgent need to get into the radio room please call me.

John Van Vorst, N9oL

812-305-4100 cell

**PLEASE NOTE: The Red Cross Blood Center is open and everyone is encouraged to donate.**

## ARES update

My name is Len Schmitt N9QVQ and I just accepted appointment as ARES EC (Emergency Coordinator) for Vanderburgh County. Are you ready to help if our community had a disaster and the normal lines of communication were overwhelmed? Think about the tornado that hit our area in November, 2005. Even though police, fire, etc. still had their systems intact, the Salvation Army sent in several emergency mobile kitchens. Their cell phones didn't have coverage and ham radio operators stepped up to give them communications.

Every time there is severe weather we try to initiate a Skywarn net. In addition to Net Control, we try to have someone dedicated to pass reports to the NWS in Paducah. Take a Spotter class - all the Basic classes for this spring were webinars, but here's a link to take an online course you can take anytime: [https://www.meted.ucar.edu/training\\_course.php?id=23](https://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_course.php?id=23)

Also check out Paducah's Spotter page:

<https://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining>

Want to help? You don't have to be an ARRL member to participate in ARES. Listen to the Wednesday night TARS net to find out when we will start our usual meetings again (usually 3rd Thursday, 7pm at West Side EMA training facility - 1440 Harmony Way).

Len Schmitt N9QVQ

812-963-0027

[Len.N9QVQ@gmail.com](mailto:Len.N9QVQ@gmail.com)

## INQP -Update

On Saturday (May 2nd) join us for the TARS Indiana QSO party. TARS is planning to operate as a multi-multi class at Interlake State Recreational Area Park at the shelter. We'll set up antennas starting about 930am. The club will provide hot dogs and buns. Bring a side dish if you can to share with the group. We'll plan to eat around noon. We hope to have 3 stations for the INQP and we'll probably operate the stations at Interlake State Recreational Area Park until ????

The Interlake State Recreation Area is just east of Lynnville, In. on Indiana 68. Map LINK <https://goo.gl/maps/h331q3pSWC9Yhggr7>

Now because of the Coronavirus and the Governor mandate this may not happen.

### **There is a backup plan for us to work INQP.**

TARS can be in Club Competition. This means every member of the club can operate from home.

Clubs must be legitimate radio clubs, meeting FCC requirements for club licensing. Clubs need not have a club license. The sponsor of Indiana QSO Party, currently the Hoosier DX and Contest Club, is not eligible for this award.

Logs turned in by a club's members must be for contacts made from within the state of Indiana for the Indiana QSO Party.

**Club members must CLEARLY indicate only one club affiliation when submitting logs.** Cabrillo format logs should show club

affiliation in the log header lines. Submissions using other log formats should be suitably marked.

To be eligible for the club competition award, at least three club members must participate. One of the following conditions must be satisfied:

At least three club members submit individual logs meeting the above requirements for single operator logs, or the club submits a single log for a multi-operator station (single or multi transmitter) with at least three club members shown as operators, or the club submits a combination of single and multi-operator station logs to meet the minimum participation requirement.

It is not necessary for a log to be from a station using a club's call sign, although the activation of club stations is encouraged.

Awards:

The top scoring station in each category receives a plaque.

Sponsors for additional plaques are always welcomed. Contact HDXCC for additional information.

The top scoring club (aggregate score of three or more members' logs from Indiana operations) will receive a plaque.

So as time get closer to May 2 we will know which method that TARS will be able to work INQP.

Note: For Amateurs worldwide to contact as many stations in Indiana as possible on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meter Amateur bands. What does this means. It means tha even members that Have only a Tech license can operate on 10 meters cw 28.0 - 28.3 cw and 28.3 - 28.5 ssb.

This really is a fun contest. Hope you can join in.

Questions? Just ask.

73's

Jerry - WB9ONU

## ARRL Field Day 2020 -- A Time to Adapt

**From the ARRL letter April 2, 2020**

Many individuals and groups organizing events for ARRL [Field Day](#) 2020 have been contacting ARRL for guidance on how to adapt their planned activities in this unprecedented time of social distancing and uncertainty.

"Due to the unique situation presented this year, this can be an opportunity for you, your club, or your group to try something new," ARRL Contest Manager Paul Bourque, N1SFE, said. "Field Day isn't about doing things the same way year after year. Use this year to develop and employ a new approach that is in line with the current circumstances." Social distancing and state and local requirements very likely will impact just how -- and even whether -- you are able to participate in Field Day this year. ARRL continues monitoring the



coronavirus situation, paying close attention to information and guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)). If social distancing means that Class A with a 30-member team set up in a city park won't work this year, then it's time for a Plan B. Part of the Field Day concept has always been adapting your operation to the situation at hand. At its heart, Field Day is an emergency communication demonstration. Field Day rules are flexible enough to allow individuals and groups to adjust their participation and strategies in a way that still addresses their needs while being fun. Some possibilities include:

- Encouraging club members to operate from their home stations on emergency power (Class E).
- Using the club's repeater as a means for individual participants to keep in touch during the event.
- Setting up a portable station in the backyard with a temporary antenna for family members interested in operating Field Day, who are now unable to participate as part of a larger group.

One big impact this year will be a decline in public visibility and any interaction with the visitors. Prudence may dictate dispensing with the ham radio PR table to attract passersby, should you set up in a more public location. It's okay not to score all the bonus points you may have attempted in the past. Local and served agency officials may be unwilling to visit, which is understandable under the circumstances. Do be sure to reach out to them as part of your preparations and remind them that you look forward to continuing your working relationship with them in the future.

The impact will differ from place to place, so ARRL recommends that all amateur radio clubs participating in Field Day stay in regular contact with local or state public health officials for their advice and guidance on hosting Field Day activities.

"With any emergency preparedness exercise, it's not about adapting the situation to your operation; it's about adapting your operation to the situation that presents itself," Bourque said. "Try something different." Read [more](#). -- Thanks to Paul Bourque, N1SFE, and Dan Henderson, N1ND

## ARRL Celebrates Successful Launch Carrying Interoperable Radio System to ISS

From ARRL letter March 12, 2020

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARRL](#)) is celebrating the successful launch and docking of the SpaceX-20 commercial resupply mission to the International Space Station (ISS). One payload on the flight is the ARISS Interoperable Radio System (IORS), which ARISS calls "the foundational element of the ARISS next-generation radio system" on the space station. Amateur radio has been an integral component of ISS



missions since 2000. The *Dragon* cargo capsule docked successfully with the space station on March 9. ARISS-US Delegate for ARRL Rosalie White, K1STO, said hundreds of ARRL members contributed to make the IORS project happen, and ARISS is celebrating the 4-year-long project.

"ARRL is truly grateful to ARRL and AMSAT for their co-sponsorship and support of ARISS since day one," White said. "ARRL greatly appreciates the hundreds of ham radio operators who have stood by ARISS, sending financial support and encouragement. A robust ham station is on its way to replace the broken radio on the ISS, and tens of thousands of hams will enjoy strong ARISS packet and ARISS SSTV signals as a result. In addition, thousands of students will discover and use ham radio to talk with a ham-astronaut. We hope to see the trend continue where more ARISS teachers and local clubs set up school ham clubs." The new system includes a higher-power radio, an enhanced voice repeater, updated digital packet radio (APRS), and slow-scan television (SSTV) capabilities for both the US and Russian space station segments.

White called the March 7 launch, "beautiful, flawless." ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, told ARISS that he had his fingers crossed for a successful launch.

According to NASA Mission Control, it will take the three ISS crew members up to a month to unload and stow the 4,300 pounds of cargo on board the *Dragon* capsule, and the IORS is not a priority. The actual ham equipment will be installed in the ISS *Columbus* module. Another IORS unit is in line to be launched and installed in the Russian segment of the ISS later this year.

The IORS consists of a custom-modified JVC Kenwood TM-D710GA transceiver, a multi-voltage power supply, and interconnecting cables. The ARISS hardware team will assemble four flight units -- and 10 IORS units in all -- to support onboard flight operations, training, operations planning, and hardware testing. Future upgrades and enhancements to the next-generation system are in various stages of design and development. These include a repaired Ham Video system -- currently planned for launch in mid-to-late 2020, an L-band (uplink) repeater, a microwave "Ham Communicator," and Lunar Gateway prototype experiment.



## See what's trending in the March/ April issue of On the Air Digital

The perfect companion for members on the go! Includes current and back issues of On the Air magazine and QST, ARRL's monthly membership journal. Stay up to date on the latest happenings and features right from your mobile device. The ARRL Magazines App is available free for download in Apple's App Store and Google Play, or visit [www.arrl.org/ota](http://www.arrl.org/ota) for more info.



Learn how to choose the right feed line for your setup. Page 14

Be inspired by ARRL member Amy Herndon's, AI6ZU, love of building. Page 8

See what happens on 2 meters -- VHF's most active band. Page 10

Find out where to hear a new jazz piece with a Morse code beat. Page 6 and more...

### Eat'n Before the Meet'n

Due to the coronavirus concerns we will restart Eat'n Before the Meet'n when it is once again deemed safe to go out.

### 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

**We are currently running the net every night at 8pm during the Covid-19 Lockdown.**

#### April

- 1 N9QVQ
- 8 KB9YWQ
- 15 WB9KQF
- 22 KE9YK
- 29 KC9TYA

#### May

- 6 KC9UVG
- 13 N9QVQ
- 20 KB9YWQ
- 27 WB9KQF

#### June

- 3 KE9YK
- 10 KC9TYA
- 17 KC9UVG
- 24 N9QVQ

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](#).



*The SKYWARN Spotter classes have been canceled and replaced with webinars. If you would like to attend the webinar you must register online.*

**SPOTTER TRAINING: ALL ON-SITE CLASSES CANCELLED.**  
WEBINAR OPTIONS AVAILABLE BELOW:

ELITE SPOTTER TRAINING TRAINING WEBINARS:

TUESDAY APRIL 14, 2020 6:00 pm CDT: [Click here to register](#)

The latest SKYWARN spotter classes are listed on the Paducah NWS page. <https://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining>

### VE Testing

#### 2020 schedule

**All VE testing is suspended at this time due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Testing will resume as soon as it has been deemed safe to do so.**

~~Apr 25~~, May 30, Jun 27, Jul 25,  
Aug 29, Sep 26, Dec 5

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.

## Brag Rag



Congrats to Jerry WB9ONU

### 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

All Vanderburgh Co ARES/RACES in person meetings are canceled until this COVID-19 emergency has passed. We may try using ZOOM for meetings and are actively planning to participate in a Nationwide Red Cross drill May 30.



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

## Secretary Report

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

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

## Treasurer Report

Budget:

March 2020 (prepared 4/1/2020)

Opening Balance: \$6,651.70

Receipts:

Memberships \$12.50

Total Receipts --->> \$12.50

Expenditures:

Pd Chris Lantaff KE9YK for awards materials, W9OG web hosting and Hamtoberfest web hosting (\$151.21)

Lynnville Hamtoberfest reservation (\$375.00)

Total Expenditures--->> (\$526.21)

Ending Balance \$6,137.99

Red Cross Account \$1,283.82

## Looking Ahead

2020

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

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June

**Field Day June 27, 28**

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**

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

2021

Straight Key Night Jan

**TARS AUCTION January**

ARRL Kids Day Jan

**Winter Field Day January**

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

Total Solar Eclipse North America April 8, 2024

## 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: **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)

[Chris Matthews N9JCA](#) (2020-2021)

**SPARKS Editor:**

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

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