

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

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

December 2020 - Issue No. 12



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.

Material in this newsletter may be reproduced provided that TARS and the article author is properly credited. 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 contact one of the TARS officers listed in this newsletter or email [info@w9og.net](mailto:info@w9og.net).

## Presidents Corner

Season's Greetings to you all. I hope you had a great Thanksgiving holiday although they likely looked a lot different from Thanksgivings past.

2020 has been extremely challenging for us all. I have missed so much getting together as a club and enjoying meetings, our picnic, and other club events this year. To those that have joined our virtual meetings – thank you. We have tried to make the most of those times and are open to suggestions for making those better. It looks like the first half at least of 2021 will look much the same. The Red Cross does not know at this point when that facility will be available to our club for events- I don't expect that to happen before mid-2021 and maybe later. So, we need to stay creative and work together to keep our club active and together.

Due to the COVID-19 safety requirements, we will reschedule our annual auction event and our annual banquet, which normally occur in January and February respectively, to later in the year. So, stay tuned for those details.

As for Winter Field Day, we are still discussing whether an outdoor event would be prudent this year. Until we can all get together again, it is important for us all to stay in contact and plugged in. So, I hope you are joining our Zoom virtual meetings. If you are not participating due to technical issues and not able to get the Zoom software working please reach out to me. I don't want that to be a barrier. If you are not receiving the meeting invitations with the meeting ID and password let me know.

I wish all of you a very merry Christmas. Celebrate the season and anticipate great things for 2021. Stay well and 73!!

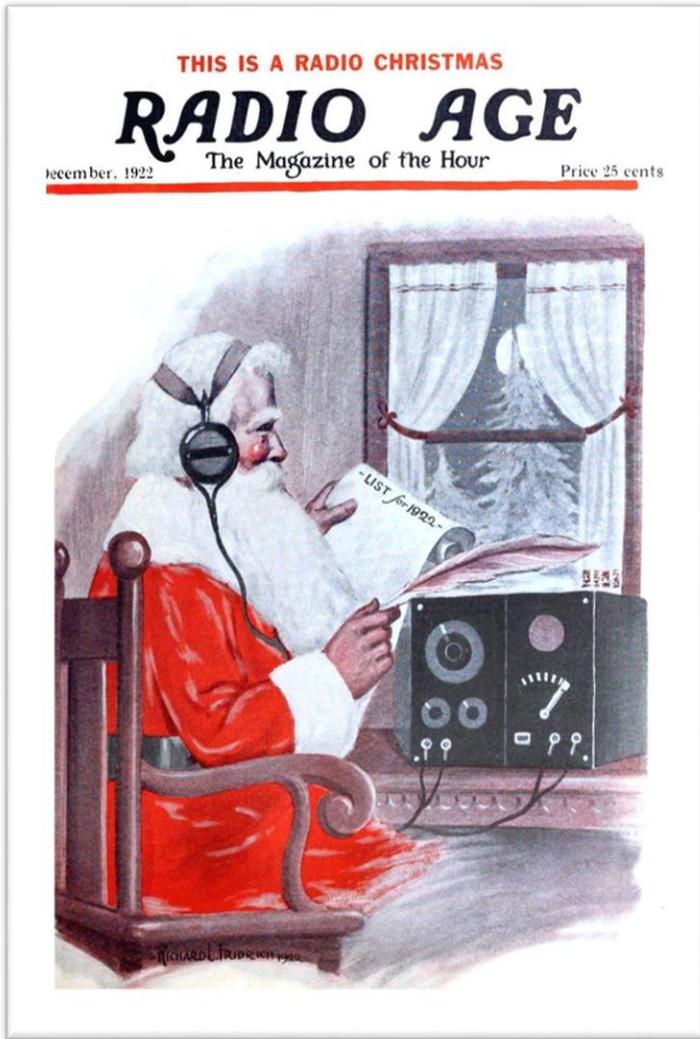
*John Van Vorst, N9oL*

## Reminder TARS Dues are due the first of the year.

Attached to the email with this edition of SPARKS you should have a membership application. Please fill out the application for each membership so we can verify our information on you is up to date.

## Special Election

In January we will hold a special election to fill a vacant board seat for the remainder of the term. If you are interested in running for the board send an email to [info@w9og.net](mailto:info@w9og.net). The only qualification is that you have been a TARS member for one full year.



## Beyond the Baofeng

Chris Lantaff, KE9YK

A great opportunity is coming up for technician class hams, the ARRL 10-meter contest. If you have 10m HF capability this contest brings them out of the woodwork.

### 10 METERS WILL COME ALIVE December 12 - 13 ARRL 10-Meter Contest (CW, phone)

Objective: For Amateurs worldwide to exchange QSO information with as many stations as possible on the 10 meter band.  
Second full weekend of December. Starts 0000 UTC Saturday; runs through 2359 UTC Sunday (December 12-13, 2020)

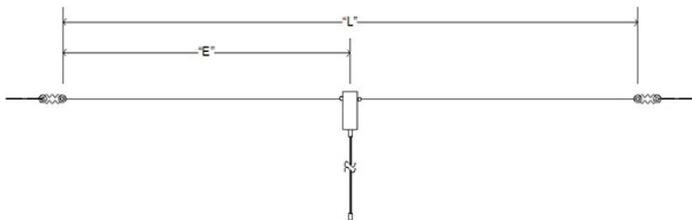
<http://www.arrl.org/10-meter>

A 10m antenna is relatively simple to build.

Frequency: 28.4 MHz

Total Antenna Length ("L"): 16 Feet, 5.8 Inches

Element Length ("E"): 8 Feet, 2.9 Inches



A simple and effective way to install a 10 m dipole is to put it up as an inverted V. Not is this easier as you only need 1 point to attach the antenna but it also makes it close to omni-directional as opposed to a dipole which is mostly bi-directional.

Another easy build for 10m is a J-Pole or End-Fed Zepp.

Instructions can be found at:

<https://www.gsl.net/n1lo/10mjpole.pdf>

## HAMSHACK HOTLINE

Ken Johnson, K9KDJ

In case you missed some of the information over the past couple of years, Hamshack Hotline is growing—and growing fast.

What is Hamshack Hotline, you ask? Hamshack Hotline serves as a Voice over IP (VoIP) connection providing digital services just for Hams. Yes, our own private PBX. When you sign up, you receive your own number (just like a phone number), and you may dial any other Ham on the system for one-on-one rag chews, join both public and private bridges, log into group chats, and participate in a host of other ways to extend what we hams do best—communicate.

You need a VoIP phone to participate, but cheap is the word. There is no cost for the service (We all love free, right?!?), and you can find phones that work with Hamshack Hotline on eBay for \$10.00 - \$40.00. I bought one with a color screen for \$40.00, and the seller shipped it FedEx for no extra charge. It arrived in 2 days, and I found myself up and running within a day after submitting my name, callsign, home address, MAC address of my phone, and receiving provisioning information. One reboot of the phone, and I could dial up other Hams across the Internet, and other Hams could dial me. The clarity is phenomenal, and it reminds me of other digital modes—clear and without a hiccup. You can even dial into bridges that map to Brandmeister Talk Groups. I want to explore that more soon.

This could serve as a perfect communication tool for EMCOMM. As I spoke with one of the Hams at Hamshack Hotline, he informed me the ARRL will embrace it soon and put an extension right on the desk of W1AW. Its synchronous communications capability lets communication flow just like normal conversations, so moving information in an emergency works even better than in asynchronous modes.

I encourage you to try Hamshack Hotline. I set up 2 local groups: **Warrick/Vanderburgh HH PUBLIC (HH#: 1323)** where anyone can connect and talk and **Warrick/Vanderburgh EMCOMM (HH#: 1322)**. The latter one is set as a private group with a PIN needed to join.

I hope you find this new communications mode as fun as I do. Experimenting and trying new things just lives as part of the Amateur Radio Operator's DNA. Jump in, and I hope you ring the Hamshack Hotline in my shack soon!

Ken K9KDJ

HH#: 5809

## Important info about VARA FM

Ken, K9KDJ

There is some confusion when people try to equate Vara FM and AX.25 Packet operation. Packet is a CSMA protocol, and can support multiple concurrent connections. You can also have active multiple connections with a gateway, while it is functioning as a digipeater.

Vara does not have this capability. You need to be careful to explain the differences when communicating with end users. People who are accustomed to Packet operations assume they can just initiate a connection to a gateway when another connection is already in progress. Users are accustomed to letting the protocol handle that.

You really need to practice monitoring for a clear frequency.  
Re-post from - Scott, NS7C (minor changes by me)

## Fox Hunt

TARS is in the planning stages for a Fox Hunt with social distancing. This will most likely be an easy driving type hunt where the fox will be located in public accessible parking lots. It will most likely have more than 1 stage where when you find the first fox you will be given the frequency for the next leg. If you are interested in participating watch for more information.

## LINKS for Fox Hunting INFO and Equipment

SDF-1 Antenna by Rainbow Kits  
<https://www.rainbowkits.com/kits/sdf-1p.html>

Handi-Finder by Northern Ohio Amateur Radio Development  
<http://www.handi-finder.com/>

Handi-Finder mods <http://www.homingin.com/hfinderfix.html>

Tape measure beam optimized for radio direction finding  
[http://theleggios.net/wb2hol/projects/rdf/tape\\_bm.htm](http://theleggios.net/wb2hol/projects/rdf/tape_bm.htm)

The Art and Science of Radio Direction Finding (RDF)  
<http://www.homingin.com/>

## Another one bites the dust!

**Universal Radio closed on November 30.** All existing orders will be filled, and the Universal Radio website will remain open to sell off remaining stock. Owners Fred Osterman, N8EKU, and Barbara Osterman, KC8VWI, are retiring. The new mailing address for Universal Radio is 752 N State St. Unit 222, Westerville, OH 43082, telephone (614) 866-4267.

## Helping New Hams

Dan, kb6nu

Last week, [16 ARRL registered instructors convened](#) to kick off a new program to help new hams get into the hobby. We haven't really come up with a snappy name for this program, so I'm just calling it "Helping New Hams." The idea is to organize instructors all over the country and spread out the work. That way, the onus doesn't fall on one or two instructors in a club who may already be up to their necks in teaching exam classes.

We're focusing really basic topics at first, including:

- Having fun with amateur radio: an overview of all the fun things that you can do in amateur radio—and what kind of gear you'll need to participate in them.
- Choosing a first (or second) radio
- Programming a VHF/UHF radio using Chirp
- Improved antennas for handheld transceivers (telescopic whips, mobile, roll-up j-pole, ...)
- Getting on the air (VHF repeater and simplex)

I'm going to be presenting a couple of trial runs of "Having fun with amateur radio"—via Zoom, of course—on Friday, December 4, at 7:00 pm EST and on Monday, December 7, at 9:00 pm EST. I'd like to invite any and all of you to attend. To get the Zoom meeting info, send me your email address, and I'll send you the Zoom meeting info before the session. If you want more information about what I'll be talking about, you can [download the session outline](#).

Finally, if you're an instructor and you think that you might like to be part of this effort, you can subscribe to our mailing list by going to <https://ham-instructor.groups.io/g/NewHams>. I'm planning on holding a second organizational meeting on Tuesday, December 8.

[Ed. NOTE] I participated in the first meeting on a limited basis as our ARES net started the same time as the ZOOM meeting.

I think what Dan is doing is a great idea, as the fact is that a huge number of new hams get their ticket and never get on the air or only get a cheap HT and soon get bored and loose interest.

TARS have in the past presented programs geared to new hams and should probably do more in the way of recruiting and introducing new hams into the club and getting them active on the air.

Do any of you have any kind of activity to engage new members and encourage them to get on the air more that would make for a good meeting presentation?

## DAYTON HAMVENTION

ARRL Letter for December 3, 2020

"The Gathering" will be the theme for the 2021 [Dayton Hamvention](#)<sup>®</sup>. Hamvention General Chair Rick Allnut, WS8G, said the theme reflects what has been missing from our lives most of this year. "We have spent the last 6 months being bound to our houses and small groups," he said. "We are very optimistic that when May arrives, we will be allowed to get together." Allnut, a medical doctor with a master's degree in public health, said Hamvention management is closely following the coronavirus situation and believes it will improve enough by May that government restrictions on travel and large groups will be relaxed. The Hamvention team will continue to follow developments. Hamvention 2021 will be held May 21 - 23 at the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio.

## FCC to Require

### Email Addresses on Applications

ARRL Letter for December 3, 2020

Amateur radio licensees and candidates will have to provide the FCC with an email address on applications, effective in mid-2021. If no email address is included, the FCC may dismiss the application as defective. The FCC is fully transitioning to electronic correspondence and will no longer print or provide wireless licensees with hard-copy authorizations or registrations by mail. A *Report and Order (R&O)* on "Completing the Transition to Electronic Filing, Licenses and Authorizations, and Correspondence in the Wireless Radio Services" in WT Docket 19-212 was adopted on September 16. The new rules will go into effect 6 months after publication in the *Federal Register*, which hasn't happened yet, but the FCC is already strongly encouraging applicants to provide an email address. When an email address is provided, licensees will receive an official electronic copy of their licenses when the application is granted.

Under Section 97.21 of the new rules, a person holding a valid amateur station license "must apply to the FCC for a modification of the license grant as necessary to show the correct mailing and email address, licensee name, club name, license trustee name, or license custodian name." For a club or military recreation station license, the application must be presented in document form to a club station call sign administrator who must submit the information to the FCC in an electronic batch file.

Under new Section 97.23, each license will have to show the grantee's correct name, mailing address, and email address. "The email address must be an address where the grantee can receive electronic correspondence," the amended rule will state. "Revocation of the station license or suspension of the operator license may result when correspondence from the FCC is returned as undeliverable because the grantee failed to provide the correct email address."

## Straight Key Night

Objective: This 24-hour event is not a contest; rather it is a day dedicated to celebrating our CW heritage. Participants are encouraged to get on the air and simply make enjoyable, conversational CW QSOs. The use of straight keys or bugs to send CW is preferred. There are no points scored and all who participate are winners.

Contest Details

Straight Key Night is held every January 1 from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC.

Information can be found at:

<http://www.arrl.org/straight-key-night>

## ARRL Kids Day

Generally, the first Saturday in January, and the third Saturday in June, see the ARRL Contest Calendar for current Kids Day event dates at <http://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar>

Kids Day always runs from 1800 UTC through 2359 UTC. Operate as much or as little as you like.

With the Covid-19 lockdowns and social distancing in place, this is a good opportunity to introduce your kids to ham radio by talking with other kids and kid friendly ops.

## 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

**December**

2	KC9UVG
9	N9QVQ
16	KB9YWQ
23	WB9KQF
30	KE9YK

**January**

6	KC9TYA
13	KC9UVG
20	N9QVQ
27	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](#).

## INQP 2020 RESULTS POSTED

The long-delayed results have been published.

See <http://hdxcc.org/inqp/scores.php>

Due to the Covid-19 changes and number of logs submitted it has taken longer to tabulate the final results.

TARS is listed 6<sup>th</sup> in the Club Log Scores with 108990 cumulative points.

Tri-State Amateur Radio Society (9 logs)

WB9ONU N9QVQ AA9WJ N9OL WB9YIG KE9YK KC9UVG KK7XT N9JCA

## Brag Rag

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.

## Monthly TAILGATE

### W9HAK SK Equipment

Attached to the email for this SPARKS you will find a separate PDF file with an equipment list, for sale.

### BAOFENG UV5R HT \$20

I have two new Baofeng UV5R 144-148/420-450 MHz handheld transceivers for sale at \$20 each. These are new, in the box, units. They've been unwrapped enough to make sure they work and include all original packaging. I bought them in 2019 and never used them.

Ross M. Cecil

KC9JOV

812-573-1625

[rmcecil@gmail.com](mailto:rmcecil@gmail.com)

### Beam antenna for sale

4 Element-3 Band (20,15,10) Amateur Radio Beam Antenna. Made by TET, Australia. Purchased from Ham radio TET dealer in California. Low SWR across full bandwidth on all bands without tuner. Can use on 17 and 12 meter bands with tuner. 19' boom (see picture). Comes apart in 3 major sections. Can take apart every element if prefer. Have complete manual with full assembly instructions. \$200.00 firm. Local pickup only. Jeffersonville, Indiana. Respond by e-mail. [keepingbees@juno.com](mailto:keepingbees@juno.com)

Thanks, Jerry W5KHW

### COMPLETE DMR SETUP for sale

1 - Radioddity GD-77 running the OpenGD77 software (much better than stock software) (Programmed and including the codeplug)

1 - External Microphone

1 - External drop-in charger

4 - Batteries

1 - Hotspot

This is all about 5 months old. Pristine condition and works with no issues. From non-smoking home.

TOTAL: \$195.00

I'll gladly program call sign, DMR ID, and other info to make it plug and play, if desired.

Ken [K9KDJ.HAM@gmail.com](mailto:K9KDJ.HAM@gmail.com)

### Titan Gap DX antenna for sale

Here's a link to what they look like –

<https://images.app.goo.gl/NFvgiVorH9J9aVLx8>

Antenna is complete and was working, but not as well on some bands as others. I strongly recommend that this antenna be well guyed since it has a tendency to bow in a strong wind.

I have printed a clean copy of the assembly manual and an original user manual.

Price is \$100 firm

Len Schmitt [N9QVQ](mailto:N9QVQ)

If you have something you would like to list for sale in the Monthly TAILGATE, send an e-mail to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net) with all information on the item, pictures are helpful and your contact info.

## Brag Rag

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.

## VE Testing

Watch for the 2021 schedule to be posted.



## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

All Vanderburgh Co ARES/RACES in person meetings are canceled until this COVID-19 emergency has passed and currently using ZOOM.

Our meetings are the third Thursday of the month starting at **6:00pm**.

Watch your email for details. If you would like to participate and are not currently a Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES member contact us for the log-in information.



Feel free to check in to the Vanderburgh Co ARES net **each Tuesday at 8:00pm** on the 146.790 repeater.

### Vanderburgh County Auxcomm

Chris KE9YK [IN82RACES@gmail.com](mailto:IN82RACES@gmail.com)

Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer

812.453.1972

Len N9QVQ [len.n9qvq@gmail.com](mailto:len.n9qvq@gmail.com)

Vanderburgh Co ARES EC

812-963-0027

## Warrick Co ARES/RACES

Meetings...

The Warrick County ARES/RACES group meets on the second Monday of each month. The meeting begins at 6:30pm and generally is completed by 9:00pm. The meetings are held on the third floor of the Court House in the EMA Conference room. Anyone needing additional information concerning meetings or location contact: Chris L. Owen at [KC9CLO@gmail.com](mailto:KC9CLO@gmail.com).

## December Birthdays!!!

Herbert Alvey	KB9MZH	12th
Gene Flick	KC9SYL	25th
Terry Hammers	N9XXH	5th
Thomas Hilgeman	KD9PFH	1st
John Van Vorst	N9OL	9th
Rodney Witherspoon	KD9NCP	10th



## Secretary Report

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

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

## Treasurer Report

Budget:

October 2020 (prepared 11/02/20)

Opening Balance: \$4,417.26

Receipts:

Memberships \$25.00

Total Receipts --->> \$25.00

Expenditures:

Pd Phil Stolz final Lynnville repeater payment (\$200.00)

Total Expenditures--->> (\$200.00)

Ending Balance \$4,242.26

Red Cross balance \$1,283.82

Funds Available to TARS \$2,958.44

Jeff Holt AA9WJ

TARS Treasurer

**DON'T  
BE  
A  
Cap'n  
Kerchunk**

The proper method for kerchunking is to key the radio and say your callsign, followed by the word "Kerchunking." This method identifies your station and simultaneously indicates the purpose of your transmission.

## Looking Ahead

2021

Straight Key Night Jan

**TARS AUCTION January TBD**

ARRL Kids Day Jan

**Winter Field Day January 30-31 2021**

**TARS Banquet TBD**

**INQP 2021** 1600Z, May 1 to 0400Z, May 2, 2021

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June

**Field Day June**

[13 Colonies Special Event](#)

National Night Out first Tuesday of August

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

Light Up 2 Meters Night August

TARS PICNIC Sep

Route 66 Special Event September

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

**TARS 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Hamtober Fest 2021**

SKYWARN Recognition Day, Saturday, December

[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)

OPEN (2020-2021)

## 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)

**SPARKS Editor:**

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

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