

SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

February 2021 - Issue No. 2



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.

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

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.

Presidents Corner

What is Ham Radio to you? If I would ask 100 people that question and get responses from them, I would hear unique and much different responses from most of them. This hobby is so huge, with many diverse options and interests, that it is really hard to define. Have you ever been asked by a friend or family member 'what is ham radio'? That's a tough question, for me anyway. We all would answer that question in a different way, from a different perspective.

What got me interested in ham radio a long time ago was the prospect of communicating around the world. HF bands, big antennas- that was my goal. When I bought my first VHF radio after being licensed 5+ years, I didn't know what to do with it. I was really mic shy, was afraid I'd say something stupid to someone who is located close to me that I may meet sometime. Weird huh? But that was my experience, my mindset, my focus. Many hams get into the hobby specifically to use VHF/UHF, to connect to digital networks, to be active in emergency preparedness- and they say to heck with HF. That's fantastic! Some get into the hobby to run digital modes on all bands, to experiment with computer systems, digital modes, interfaces, software, etc. Awesome!

So, you're saying 'what's your point ol man'??

So many times- and I have caught myself falling into this rut as well- we look down on things that are different from us. We de-value others, or perhaps are not as welcoming to others who do things different from how we do them. New hams are getting their ham tickets for lots of reasons, and as a club I sincerely want to support the hobby as a whole by welcoming all new ideas, and even old ideas. And I confess, I need lots of help here. I am not creative or broad-minded enough to know how to support the wide range of interests of our club members and prospective members.

This is where you come in. New hams and old hams alike- this is your club. Its purpose is to promote ham radio, to support all of its members, and to provide service to our community. In that spirit, let's do some new things this year. Let's hear about your interests and things you want to do.

Lastly, to all those in the club who enjoy VHF/UHF, accessing repeaters, etc. As you know the club has quite a few repeaters in operation, and we have a few folks who are masters at how repeaters work and how to keep them operational. We would welcome anyone who is interested in learning about our repeaters to join our team to support these systems. It is fascinating how these systems work and we want to continue to be able to support them and keep them running to serve the ham community. These systems play an important role in helping our communities stay prepared for disasters by providing alternate means of communications. Please consider joining the repeater committee- it's a great way to get involved and support ham radio.

Have a great February, and see you on Zoom!

73

John Van Vorst, N9oL

Using Winlink 101

Ken Johnson, K9KDJ

While it may seem trite to say, the best way to become proficient with Winlink is to use it.

Using Winlink goes beyond just practicing for emergencies. If you do the math, the number of days using Winlink as a day-to-day communication tool far outpace the number of days we will use Winlink for an emergency. So, finding ways to become comfortable with Winlink AND preparing for whatever may come our way as an emergency means using Winlink for regular communications daily AND practicing for what may come. So, how do we use Winlink for day-to-day communications?

I've found ham friends with whom to practice sending information both using forms contained in Winlink Express and just sending regular messages. Between us, we can create different scenarios to practice without disturbing or perturbing others! With our practice, we choose what forms to use to communicate different information, and we try to do that daily so they become 2nd nature to us. This isn't hard to set up. You can do it with 1 other ham or with many. You may use forms or just the standard message transmission. Make it work for you. No one owns Winlink, so go for it! Make it your own as you discover all the ways to use it every day.

Of course, there are many ways to practice formally each week, too. What was once the Virginia Winlink Wednesday opened to all Amateurs anywhere, and it's now just Winlink Wednesday. You may find information about it here: [Original Winlink Wednesday](#). Also, the Red Cross practice recently started again, and that happens each Thursday. You may find more information about that here: main@ARC-EmComm-Training.groups.io | [Topics](#). I can tell you that both groups are encouraging, welcoming, and helpful. You will enjoy participating. As a note, try to check into these using an RF connection. If you're in the Evansville area and have a VHF Packet connection, you may use N9QVQ-10 on 145.01. If you're running VHF VARA FM or Packet, you may use K9KDJ-10 on 145.09. If you're using HF, you have many options around the country!

Overall, Winlink is a fun and enjoyable way of communicating daily and a serious and professional way of communicating when an emergency calls. For Amateur Operators, it's a great blend of daily use and emergency preparation.

There are many in TARS who will help you start. They can explain radio settings, sound cards, Winlink Express settings and anything else you need to know. And if you just want to practice daily, send me a message: K9KDJ@winlink.org!

Ken K9KDJ

Hamshack Hotline Number: 5809

Hybrid RMS HF Gateway: K9KDJ; RMS VHF Gateway w

Packet/VARA FM: K9KDJ-10 (145.090)

Silent Key

It is with deep sympathy to announce the passing of Ethel Mae Aders (N9QVE). Ethel passed away December 28th, less than 2 months after her husband Howard (KD4BXV). Married 68 years. Ethel and Howard had participated in a number of TARS functions over the years.

Ethel's obituary can be found at [Colvin funeral home](#)

Parks On The Air (POTA)

John W9FHA

We were tired of working around the house every day during the Covid restrictions and decided to do a POTA activation every week. (I did my first "POTA" about 65 years ago in Audubon Park.) We choose what looks like the best day of the week to schedule our activation using the POTA dashboard. There are tons of information on this page to help you find a park, schedule it and see who else is on the air.

I use a KX2 HF transceiver running ten watts with a 54' end fed wire and a fiberglass pole to elevate it. A random piece of wire serves as a counter poise. I have a 4.5 AH battery lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO 4) battery that supplies enough energy for 3 or 4 activations. While I'm setting up the station, Pam (XYL) gathers up sticks to fire up our Solo Stove (Google that). It takes about 15 minutes to set up the rig and by that time she has the stove going and is heating water for hot chocolate.

On our last outing at Harmonie State Park, I worked 51 stations in 19 states, one Canadian province, and three Europeans using CW. Many of the stations have become regulars over the past few months and I try to call them by name. Sometimes the pile ups become very large and the contacts resemble contest operations. It's always a challenge trying to separate the calls. We usually wind down in 60-90 minutes and cook lunch on the stove (it was ravioli on this outing). We stow all the gear and take a hike in the woods. We arrive home refreshed, log the Q's and start planning the next outing.

Watch for me and join in the fun. I usually call CQ at 20 wpm but will slow down to match the caller's speed.

John W9FHA

Hamshack Hotline, SKYWARN, and Area Severe Weather

Ken, K9KDJ

If you read my article about Hamshack Hotline a few issues ago, I hope you checked it out and find yourself on the way to purchasing an inexpensive VoIP phone and receiving your own Hamshack Hotline number. The service is growing with Hams all over the country signing up, provisioning their phones, and enjoying another way of communicating.

With that in mind, there are several local Hamshack Hotline rooms (called Bridges in HH parlance), for our local area. We have rooms for:

1. TARS Members (This is a private room. I'll ask Chris to send out the entry code via email.)
2. Warrick/Vanderburgh Public (Open to all)
3. Warrick/Vanderburgh EMCOMM (This is a private room. I'll ask Chris to supply the entry code by email to all ARES/RACES members.)
4. SW Indiana SKYWARN (This is a private room. I'll ask Chris to send the passcode to all participants in SKYWARN.)
5. S IN, S IL, WKY Severe Weather (This is a private room only because HH has asked people to start making rooms private rather than public. I'll work with Chris to provide the entry code to all area clubs so they may make it available to their members and others.)
6. Indiana Statewide (Open to all)
7. Winlink Users (Open to all)

These are the groups that I created, but many more exist that may interest you.

Checkout Hamshack Hotline today and join the growing number of Hams who enjoy another way of communicating!

Ken K9KDJ

Hamshack Hotline Number: 5809

Winlink Hybrid RMS HF Gateway: K9KDJ; RMS VHF Gateway w/VARA FM: K9KDJ-10 (145.090)

TARS Foxhunt

The foxhunt last month was deemed a success.

We had 4 hunters with 2 comprised of teams looking for the fox. The weather was tolerably cold but I think everyone had fun. We will be looking to schedule more hunts in the future. If you haven't yet looked into building an antenna for hunting, now would be a good time, while most of us will not be doing much outdoors for a while. More information can be found in the January SPARKS. January foxhunt participants were John N9OL, Len N9QVQ and Susie KC9BLZ, Jeff AA9WJ and his grandson, and Walt WB4ZUT.

W5KUB High Altitude Balloon

W5KUB-24 is now in the air

Mission and Goal

This flight will try to exceed our record flight of 72 days and 3 times around the earth. We are flying an SBS-13 super pressure balloon. The tracker is designed by YO3ICT. I build the tiny tracker under a microscope. When completed the tracker weighs only 1.6 grams. For Reference, a U.S. penny weighs 2.5 grams. The tracker will transmit every 10 minutes via ham radio using WSPR on 20 meters. Although the transmitter is only 10 mW or less, it can be heard over 9000 miles away. Upon each transmission, it will send altitude, speed, heading, system

voltage and will plot that on a real time map. New features on this flight include a CW ID which can be heard on 14.092 Mhz, and a QRSS transmission. Three tracking buttons are provided on the right side of this [page](#). The antenna is a 20-meter vertical dipole antenna made from #36 magnet wire. It is so small you can barely see it. Hydrogen gas will be used since it gives us a couple thousand feet in altitude over helium. We plan to fly at around 41000 to 43,000 ft. The system is solar powered using 7 half volt solar cells providing 3.5 volts at 240 ma. Since we are solar powered, transmissions will only take place when the balloon is in daylight. Transmissions will be turned off over the UK, Yemen, and North Korea due to regulations.

More information and a tracking map are available at

<https://tmedlin.com/balloon-3-2/>

Tom usually has an interesting, Amateur Radio Roundtable Live ham show every Tuesday night 8:00 PM Central Time (0200 UTC Wed) www.w5kub.com or follow on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/w5kub>

DAYTON HAMVENTION

Hamvention 2021 Cancellation Release:

Unfortunately, several setbacks in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic make necessary the difficult decision to cancel Hamvention 2021. Hundreds of volunteers have been working to do everything necessary to bring this Hamvention to the many amateur radio enthusiasts and vendors who support the Dayton Hamvention.

Vaccine distribution both in the United States and around the world is lagging behind what was planned. In addition, the emergence of a more communicable form of the COVID-19 virus increases the potential for further public health problems in the next few months. We make this difficult decision for the safety of our guests and vendors. Those who had their tickets deferred last year will be deferred again.

Stay tuned for information about a QSO party for the Hamvention weekend.

We'll be back next year!!!

Executive Committee, Dayton Hamvention 2021

FCC Reduces Proposed Amateur Radio Application Fee to \$35

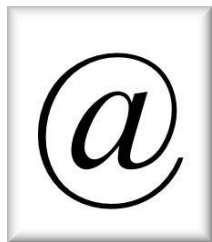
The FCC has agreed with ARRL and other commenters that its proposed \$50 fee for certain amateur radio applications was "too high to account for the minimal staff involvement in these applications." In a *Report and Order (R&O)*, released on December 29, the FCC scaled back to \$35 the fee for a new license application, a special temporary authority (STA) request, a rule waiver request, a license renewal application, and a vanity call sign application. All fees are per application. Administrative

updates, such as a change of mailing or email address, are exempt.

The effective date of the fee schedule has not been established. Read [more](#).

FCC to Require Email Address with Applications and on File

Effective on June 29, 2021, amateur radio licensees and candidates must provide the FCC with an email address on all applications. If no email address is included, the FCC may dismiss the application as "defective." On September 16, the FCC adopted a *Report and Order* ([R&O](#)) in WT Docket 19-212 on "Completing the Transition to Electronic Filing, Licenses and Authorizations, and Correspondence in the Wireless Radio Services," which [appeared](#) on December 29 in the *Federal Register*. The FCC has already begun strongly encouraging applicants to provide an email address and will email a link to an official electronic copy of the license once it's granted.



While many, if not most, amateurs already have provided an email to the FCC, this also will become a requirement.

Licensees can log into the ULS [License Manager System](#) with their FRN and password to update their FCC license record, including adding an email address. For questions or password issues, call the CORES/FRN Help Line, (877) 480-3201 (Monday - Friday, 1300 - 2300 UTC) or [reset the password](#) on the FCC website. Read [more](#).

Indiana QSO Party--2021

It's that time of the year to be planning club activities for the year. And we hope that the INQP is on your radar.

The 2021 dates are May 1-2 and updated rules are [here](#). Revisions mainly concern returning to pre-covid practices for multi-op, rovers, and portable stations with the hope that things will be "(mostly) normal" by then. See the rules for more info. There was lots of activity with club competition in 2020 and we encourage clubs again to participate in this fun aspect of the QSO party. It can do a lot to strengthen club teamwork.

Club Competition:

In addition to individual awards, there is an award for the Indiana Amateur Radio Club whose members turn in the highest total aggregate score.

- 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.

Amateur Radio in the News

ARRL Public Information Officers, Coordinators, and many other member-volunteers help keep amateur radio and ARRL [in the news](#). [Share](#) any amateur radio media hits you spot with ARRL.

- [Balloon Launched by Pella Students Makes 3rd Trip Around the Globe](#). KNIA-KRLS Radio (Iowa), December 28, 2020.
- [Living in space can get lonely. What helps? Talking to random people over ham radio](#). *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 2020.
- [Amateur Radio Crews Celebrate Local Legend with Car Parade](#). WHEC-10 News (New York), December 21, 2020
- [Tecumseh Students Call Space Station](#). *Countywide Sun* (Oklahoma), December 10, 2020
- [Ramona Amateur Radio Club Links Elementary School Students to Space Station Astronaut](#). *Ramona Sentinel* (California), December 9, 2020.

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Kit **\$74.50**
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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

February

3	WB9KQF
10	KE9YK
17	KC9TYA
24	KC9UVG

March

3	N9QVQ
10	KB9YWQ
17	WB9KQF
24	KE9YK
31	KC9TYA

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](mailto:Chris.Lantaff@arrl.net).



Spotter Training Classes now scheduled for 2021

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

SPRING SPOTTER TRAINING WEBINARS: Click on date to register

Thursday [February 11, 2021 6:00pm CST](#)
Thursday [February 18, 2021 6:00pm CST](#)
Monday [February 22, 2021 6:00pm CST](#)
Tuesday [March 2, 2021 6:00pm CST](#)
Thursday [March 11, 2021 6:00pm CST](#)
Wednesday [March 17, 2021 6:00pm CDT](#)
Saturday [March 20, 2021 6:00pm CDT](#)
Thursday [March 25, 2021 6:00pm CDT](#)
Monday [March 29, 2021 6:00pm CDT](#)

Monthly TAILGATE

Icom IC-728

Nice used ICOM-728 with the optional UI-7 AM-FM Unit.



This would be a good beginner rig if you are looking to get your feet wet on HF or an all-round rig for the shack.

Only known issue is one of the LCD display backlights is out, but still fully readable.

\$275 cash local pickup.

Chris Lantaff KE9YK@arrl.net

Titan Gap DX Antenna

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 reduced \$50 firm

Len Schmitt N9QVQ@arrl.net

Icom IC-718

IC-718 along with a LDG AT-200Pro Auto tuner. Both clean, in great shape without any marks, and from a non-smoking home.

Only selling them together.

\$625 for both. Cash on local pickup.

Ken K9KDJ

k9kdj.ham@gmail.com

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



VE Testing

2021 Ham Radio VE Test Sessions

Feb 27
Apr 24
May 29
June 26
July 31
Aug 28
Sep 25
Dec 18



ATTENTION!!!

The Tri-State Amateur Radio Society VE Team is currently holding all VE test sessions at the Vanderburgh Co. EMA west side training facility, 1440 Harmony Way in Evansville. This is the building behind the old school building. Look for the tower and antennas and enter the side door by the tower.

You will need to know your FRN number. If you have a license currently you have an FRN number. If you do not yet have a license you can register with the FCC and obtain an FRN number. Go to www.fcc.gov/register.

If you need help or have questions please let me know at n9ol@arrl.net.

Examinations will start promptly at 9:00 AM Central time. We have no pre-registration, and examinations are administered on a walk-in basis.

Details can be found at: <http://w9og.net/ve-testing>
For more info contact: [John VanVorst N9OL](mailto:John.VanVorst@w9og.net) c: 812.305.4100



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 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 and currently using ZOOM.

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

Watch your email for the ZOOM meeting login details.

If you would like to participate and are not currently a Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES member contact us for the login 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

Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer

812.453.1972

Len N9QVQ 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.

February Birthdays!!!

Jonathan Brenner	KD9MJD	10th
Rick Dennis	KG9AQ	8th
Donald Land	KB9YWQ	10th
Keith L. MaCurdy	KC9GNM	10th
Larry Rudolph	KB9KVX	2nd
John Small	W9FHA	14th



Happy Birthday!

Secretary Report

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

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

Treasurer Report

Budget:

December 2020 (prepared 12/31/2020)

Opening Balance:	\$3,868.26
Receipts:	
Memberships	\$217.50
Total Receipts --->>	\$217.50
Expenditures:	
USPS Post Office box	(\$118.00)
Total Expenditures--->>	(\$118.00)
Ending Balance	\$3,967.76
Red Cross fund	\$1,283.82
Funds Available to TARS	\$2,683.94

Jeff Holt AA9WJ

TARS Treasurer

Looking Ahead

2021

TARS AUCTION January TBD

TARS Banquet February TBD

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

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June Third Saturday

Field Day June 26-27

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 TBD

Route 66 Special Event September

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

TARS 3rd annual Hamtober Fest 2021

SKYWARN Recognition Day, Saturday, December

Straight Key Night January 1 from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC

ARRL Kids Day Jan First Saturday

Winter Field Day January 30-31 2021

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 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: **Jimmy Merry KC9RPX**

kc9rpx@arrl.net

TARS mailing address:

TARS

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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



2021 Club Officers - Board members

President [John VanVorst N9QL](#)

Vice President [Dennis Martin WA2USA](#)

Treasurer [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#)

Secretary [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](#)

Board of Directors

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

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

OPEN (2021)

[Mike Townsend W9KXP](#) (2021-2022)

Scott Hibbs KD4SIR (2021-2022)

Charlie Martin WB8LDV (2021-2022)

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Chris Lantaff KE9YK

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