

SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

July 2021 - Issue No. 7



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.

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.

Recent Announcements

Next month will be the Annual TARS Banquet at Log Inn.

The recent closure of Stoll's caused the TARS board to quickly make a decision on the location for the annual banquet. Normally held in Feb it was pushed back to August because of the pandemic. **The reservation form is attached with this email of SPARKS.** Our regular paid 2021 members can enjoy a price discount if reservations are returned to the club PO box by Aug 10th. This is only for current paid members and their spouse/guest. If you are not yet a member and want to attend at the reduced price, return your membership form with payment along with your reservation.

July VE Testing RESCHEDULED

The VE test session scheduled for July 31st has been rescheduled for Aug 7. The start time will still be 9:00 am, at the Westside EMA Training Center.

RAFFLE

TARS is holding a raffle with 2 drawings that will be made at noon during the Hamtober Fest. The drawing will be for 1st prize FT-3DR, 2nd prize FT-70DR, tickets are now on sale and you need not be present to win.

To purchase tickets, contact a TARS board member or purchase tickets at the banquet in August.

Hamtober Fest

The raffle has been approved and the 2021 flier is now attached with this email of sparks.

If you are attending any Hamfest take some fliers and advertise your **Hamtober Fest!**

There are only a limited number of Indoor tables available for \$10 each, so get your tables reserved today! www.HamtoberFest.com

Field Day Photos

Do you have any photos from the 2021 TARS Field Day?

If so please send them to SPARKS@w9og.net to be used in a future edition of SPARKS.

Amazon Smile

To set up your Amazon Smile account to donate to TARS with every Amazon purchase you make, click our unique link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-6042852>.

Now when making an Amazon purchase from your browser online, login via smile.amazon.com



Beyond the Baofeng

Chris Lantaff, KE9YK

First Base Rig/Antenna for a New Tech

During discussions at Field Day, the topic of first base antennas and radios came up. While radios and antenna selection are generally based on a person's preference, I will give you a few tips based in my 40+ years of experience and opinion.

First this column Beyond the Baofeng started because I noticed we had quite a few new hams getting on the repeaters and they all seemed to have baofeng ht's, many had the same complaints and before long they just disappeared. It seems as though most were discouraged when they couldn't hit the repeaters or hear the repeaters reliably. **So first let me say**, if you absolutely cannot get any radio except a baofeng or one of the cheap Chinese knock offs, know they have their limitations with poor quality control, and some even of the same model can have wildly varying performance. A bigger antenna **may not help**, and in many cases will only make the situation worse.

Radio: If you are wanting to buy a radio, HT or mobile, I would recommend you consider a **Yaesu with Fusion capability**. Not because Yaesu is any better than Kenwood, Icom or any of the other name brand manufacturers. But because the Fusion digital platform is the most active in this area and the digital modes (DMR, D-Star, System Fusion) are not compatible with each other. If you look in the repeater listings there are quite a few Yaesu Fusion repeaters that you would not be able to use otherwise. The Yaesu Fusion capable radios will also work fine on any of the regular analog repeaters.

Antenna System: Probably the most gain for the buck is with your antenna system. Vhf and Uhf are for the most part line of sight communications, so you want your antenna to be as high as reasonably possible. This will determine the theoretical distance your radio will be able to cover.

Antenna: The antenna is where you will see any signal gain in your system. Your antenna should at a **minimum** have enough gain to counter any feedline loss in your system. Once again, I would recommend to stay away from the cheap Chinese knockoffs, workman, tram and any other number or rebranded antennas out there. Yes, they might be cheaper initially and may even work ok but you never know what you are getting. I do have experience with workman antennas and can attest to the fact that they are very poorly made and have also looked at a tram antenna that was for sale at a Hamfest and it seemed to have the same lack of build quality. If you stick with quality antennas from the start you will reap many years of issue free service. I have 2 comet GP-6 antennas that have been in continuous use for 15 years without any issues. I know others that have 20+ year old Diamond antennas that are still working as they should. So, your selection options will depend on, how much gain you need/want, how tall an antenna you want to accommodate. The bigger antennas have a larger wind load, which can be more critical on how it is installed and for some reason have less curb appeal from the XYL.

Feedline: Your coax selection can make or break your antenna system. Vhf losses are high and Uhf losses are critical.

For example, with only 3dB loss in your coax you are losing ½ of your signal, and this goes both ways, transmit and received signal. At 6dB you are losing 75% of your signal. Always use a quality coax for Vhf/Uhf. I would recommend a minimum of an LMR-400 or equivalent for good performance. For comparison, at 450 MHz 100ft of LMR-400 has 2.7dB loss and RG8X or mini 8 as it is often referred has 6.7dB loss. Your losses on 2m will be about half of that, but with a moderate coax run your losses do quickly add up.

HAMSHACK HOTLINE—REVISITED

Ken Johnson, K9KDJ

If you recall, a few months ago I mentioned Hamshack Hotline (HH) and how it started growing in popularity. Well, the growth continues, and Hams are discovering the many uses of deploying our own "Hams Only" PBX system.

Recently, I noticed new users in Evansville, Newburgh, Chandler, Washington, and many other places throughout Indiana. Jerry, KC9ZAR, even linked his to his radio to provide RF access. I also received several calls wanting to know more about the bridges (sort of like rooms) set up for Warrick/Vanderburgh EmCOMM; SW Indiana SKYWARN; S IN, S IL, W KY Severe Weather; Warrick/Vanderburgh PUBLIC; WINLINK Users; and IN Statewide in addition to our own TARS Bridge. I set up these bridges early on in anticipation of the service growing, and growing it is!

All Bridges mentioned above are available to all who want to use them, and while that's good, growing the number of users is important to make use of the service. ARES, RACES, MARS, and so many other service organizations started seeing the usefulness of such a service, and I believe we could find so many ways to deploy and use HH. As KE9YK mentioned to me recently, I suggest we deploy a HH in MEOC, Hambulance, WEMA, EMA, and Red Cross. The only cost is purchasing the handsets, and I bought mine for \$40.00 off eBay!

I believe if Amateurs both in Warrick and in Vanderburgh counties embraced this growing capability, we could easily integrate it into our emergency communications and show everyone interested that we grow and change as new technologies come along.

So, how about it? Ready to jump in? When you do, call me at 5809. I'll be glad to talk with you!

Ken K9KDJ

Hamshack Hotline Number: 5809

Winlink Hybrid RMS HF Gateway: K9KDJ; RMS VHF Gateway w/VARA FM: K9KDJ-10 (145.090); RMS VHF Packet Gateway: K9KDJ-5 (145.01)



Hamtober Fest

TARS Hamtober Fest is a go for 2021

October 23rd 2021 at the Lynnville community center.

7am – 2pm

RESERVE your tables **NOW!**

www.HamtoberFest.com

There will be a raffle with 2 drawings at noon and you don't need to be present to win. Contact any of the TARS board to purchase raffle tickets, \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

A Hamtober Fest flier was attached with this SPARKS email.

Most 2021 Field Day Participants Entered in Class D

In the second ARRL Field Day (FD) with rule waivers in place, some 4,815 entries were received at ARRL Headquarters by July 13 -- the majority in Class D (Home Stations). Last year saw more than 10,213 entries and 18,886 participants. Before the pandemic, in 2019, 3,113 entries were submitted, with 36,420 total participants.



"It appears that larger groups were more the norm in pre-pandemic times, as expected," ARRL Contest Program Manager Paul Bourque, N1SFE, observed. "From the discussions I've been having with participants, even though some groups gathered in larger numbers this year, many participants chose either to gather in smaller groups or to operate solo from home as Class D or Class E stations. Although I don't think we'll see the number of entries that we did last year, we're close in terms of the number of participants."

With about 2 weeks to go until the entry submission deadline, the tally of participants reported is 16,166. They made just north of 1 million

total contacts.

"FD was already a success on Saturday, with the stations working smoothly, and lots of local visitors dropping by," said Andy Goss, AA5JF, at Augusta University

Amateur Radio Club's WA4AUG.

"An hour after sunrise on Sunday, we were counting our points, when

Darby, KK4PEQ, announced he had just worked a station on 6-meter phone -- just playing around on 50 MHz using the 20/15/10 tribander," Goss said. "He stayed on 6 [meters] for five QSOs, but we quickly [moved] to 10 and 15, finding those bands were open to just about everywhere, and we doubled our score in just 3 hours. What a rush!"



Andy Goss, AA5JF, took part in the first Field Day for the Augusta University Amateur Radio Club (WA4AUG), which set up in the Georgia school's Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPaR) Center.

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

July	7	KC9UVG
	14	N9QVQ
	21	WB9KQF
	28	WB4ZUT
Aug	4	KC9TYA
	11	KE9YK
	18	KC9UVG
	25	WB9KQF

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.org).

VE Testing

2021 Ham Radio VE Test Sessions

Feb 27

Apr 24

May 29

June 26

July 31 **rescheduled Aug 7th**

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@N9OL) c: 812.305.4100



Be a Radio Technician



Learn at Home to Make
\$30, \$40, \$50 a WEEK

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

Warrick Co ARES/RACES

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.

July Birthdays!!!

Paul Abramson	Associate	3rd
Ted Ackerson	KD9NUC	23rd
Dave Donnelly	KF6XA	2nd
Robert L. Futrell	AF9F	26th
John Henderson	KB9QXO	17th
John McCormick	N9XXK	7th



Indiana Hamfest & Tailgate Schedule

(As of 14 April 2021)

July 31

East Central Indiana Hamfest
Randolph County Fairgrounds
1885 S US Highway 27 - Winchester, IN
<https://sites.google.com/view/ecindianahamfest>

August 7

Elkhart Hamfest Northern Indiana Event Center
21565 Executive Parkway - Elkhart
<https://elkharteasthamfest.com/>

August 14

Hendricks County Tailgate Fest
Avon United Methodist Church
6850 E. Highway 36 – Avon

September 11

Greater Louisville Hamfest 2021
8am - 2pm
Paroquet Springs Conference Centre
Celebrating 60 Years of Kentuckiana Hamfests!
Whatever the Weather We'll Hamfest Together
Tickets \$7 Advance, \$8 (Cash Only) Day of Show, Under 13 Free
Talk-In: 146.700 MHz (CTCSS 79.7 Hz) and 443.700 MHz (CTCSS 79.7 HZ)

October 2

Hoosier Hills Ham Club Hamfest
Lawrence Co. 4H Fairgrounds
11265 US Hwy 50 W – Bedford, IN
http://www.w9qyq.org/pdf/2021_Hamfest_Flyer.pdf

October 16

Shelbyville Tailgate Hamfest
Blue River Valley ARS
8 AM - 12 PM
Shelby Co Fairgrounds
500 Frank St
Shelbyville, IN
<http://www.brvars.com>



OCTOBER 23

Hamtober Fest

7 AM - 2 PM

Lynnville Community Center
416 W ST RD IN-68 - Lynnville, IN
<http://www.hamtoberfest.com>

November 13 & 14

Fort Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo
2021 - ARRL - Central Division Convention
Allen County War Memorial Coliseum
4000 Parnell Ave – Fort Wayne
<http://www.fortwaynehamfest.com>

Secretary Report

The secretary reports were attached as separate attachments with this SPARKS mailing.
Dave Sandine KC9UVG

Treasurer Report

Budget:
May 2021 (prepared 6/1/21)

Opening Balance:
\$4,082.86

Receipts:	
Memberships	\$75.00
Amazon donation	\$13.15
Total Receipts --->>	\$88.15

Expenditures:	
None	\$0.00
Total Expenditures--->>	\$0.00

Ending Balance \$4,171.01

RED CROSS funds	\$1,283.82
Funds Available to TARS	\$2,887.19

Jeff Holt AA9WJ
TARS Treasurer

Looking Ahead

2021

Field Day June 26-27

13 Colonies Special Event

TARS Banquet August

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 Oct 23, 2021

SKYWARN Recognition Day, Saturday, December

TARS AUCTION January ?

Straight Key Night January 1 from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC

ARRL Kids Day Jan First Saturday

Winter Field Day January 2022

INQP 2022

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June Third Saturday

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

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



2021 Club Officers - Board members

President [John VanVorst N9OL](#)

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)

Tom Hilgeman KD9PFH (2021)

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

Scott Hibbs KD4SIR (2021-2022)

Charlie Martin WB8LDV (2021-2022)

SPARKS Editor:

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

E-mail: sparks@w9og.net