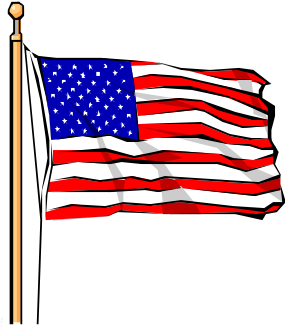


# Sparks

## W9OG



Good time to operate from a park to enjoy the seasonal colors and smells.

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

October 2014--Vol. LVII, No. 10

TARS Website: <http://www.w9og.net> Club repeaters: 146.79 and 147.15

Say "Hello" at the weekly Tri-State Emergency Net, 8:00pm Wednesdays on 146.79

Please feel to submit articles or suggestions to

Editor: [ftg2pointer@gmail.com](mailto:ftg2pointer@gmail.com)



### Presidents Corner

John C VanVorst Manager of Systems  
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812-305-4100 cell  
73s. DE N9oL.



N9OL



In the interest of the HF Ladder contest (informal) I thought Bill's comments are timely. For those new to HF (and some old farts too) we often forget our manners and "good operating procedures" on HF. What we are used to on VHF and what we may have brought over from our CB days may not be

appropriate on HF. So, what say you old man? Lay some words of wisdom on us.

## One Man's Opinion

As most of you know I am a cw man there are a few reasons for this besides my own love for the mode. In my early days of ham radio CW, or a non voice mode was my way of hiding my identity on ham radio. No, I was not trying to run from the law, on the contrary I was trying to avoid any nosey neighbors.

During those times if any neighbors heard your voice coming through a TV set, or record player you incurred their wrath. With CW no one could tell what it was and if your neighbors heard anything it was thumps, or clicks.

I quickly learned this in my early years and old cw became my friend of course helped me to hide what really was going on under those antennas. Your back fence gossip in the neighborhood that really does not understand, or have the slightest idea what they are talking about tells another neighbor. By the time anything gets back to you the truth is so distorted that any resemblance to radio, or the effects of it are just not believable.

Couple this with so called service techs telling customers that all that energy from the ham radio station in your neighborhood is being sucked out of the air by the transmitter since it is so powerful.

I have shared little information with my neighbors even to this day some have assumed my tri-bander is for TV reception. One woman thought it was hooked up my microwave oven and of course some thought it was a bird roost. The normal reaction to your DX boasting that I have worked many countries of the world is normally associated by the non-ham as having a very powerful transmitter! Such assumption is far from the truth, as we hams know with certainty

Last time I was working in the yard on one of my beams a neighbor assumed it was for TV reception, he looked at my tower and asked me if I got great reception? "Of course", was my response and I added, nor subtracted any more information.

In the past some hams would transmit for a few minutes checking for TVI, they would give their phone number so people could call and complain. Nice practice for good intentions, but we know what they say about good intentions. During the last thirty years in my same location I have kept mum about my tower, beams and who I talk to on the radio. I tell my neighbors nothing, if they assume I let them but I never volunteer any information.

I suppose one of the most ridiculous rumors I ever heard was directed toward my mentor the late W4GVY in the Louisville area. Don often would have the window open to his shack and have some qsos on ten meters working into Europe. One night a young teen aged girl slipped up in his yard and listened to his conversations. Don was working some Russian stations at the time, so what was the assumption? Well, he was a spy, a Communist just because he had a ham radio. Wrong information, plain example of not having the facts, jumping to conclusions and not knowing what you are talking about in general.

Yes, those non voice modes do have advantages and serve to hide us from those nosey gossiping neighbors. Try it sometimes, it works!

This is as always "One Man's Opinion" Bill, K4LRX



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## The return of the



### Soap Box

A follow up to last month's column by the Great One K4LRX.

Have you ever experienced a bad first impression? You know, like when you meet someone and immediately feel it? Well, Bill's column kind of reminded me of how it can happen on ham radio. You hear the voice or the CW and immediately think "I really don't look forward to conversing with this individual.

Here are some of the things that can trigger such a reaction.

- Station has his voice compression turned on and cranked way up. Ladies voices and speech compressors are not meant for each other.
- Person talking excessively fast, like the infomercials.
- Ham using his VOX and continuously uses ummmm and ahhhhh to keep the transmitter keyed.
- Person using VOX with hold down time too short causing clipping of his words. Very annoying.
- Ham is receiving 40 over 9 signal reports but keeps running his Kilowatt amplifier.
- All he talks about is how he made his SSB signal sound like a studio FM quality signal (regardless of his signal taking up half the spectrum.
- Contesting ham continuously repeats "Again, Again" over and over again.
- A poor fist on CW. Hasn't learned yet that dashes are three times longer than the dits or that spacing is important. Being able to copy 20 wpm is great if you can send equally well. Spacing and timing are all

important and can only be learned with practice. Send a message to your tape recorder and play it back. This is how you sound to others. Work on accuracy first, speed comes later.

- You are doing your best to send 10 wpm and the other ham answers you by blasting you off the interest scale with a 20 wpm answer.
- All the other ham can talk about is his radio and antenna. Can't seem to get the hang of just normal everyday stuff to talk about. I really don't care if he is running a Kenwood or something else. There are thousands of them out there. Now if he says "rig here is home brew" or "I am trying out a new home made antenna", now we have something to talk about.
- Microphone gain way to hot causing distortion or picking up every sound in his shack (the canary singing three rooms away)
- The person yelling at the microphone. I am sorry but yelling at the microphone does not increase your power.<sup>1</sup> That only works if you are communicating with megaphones.
- The ham that can copy 20 words per minute but never really practiced sending. Spacing and timing are all important and can only be learned with practice. Send a message to your tape recorder and play it back. This is how you sound to others.

We all take pride in our signal (at least we should). We also help each other out. Giving an honest signal report will help the other ham make any necessary corrections on his end. Everyone is not a 5-9 and not everyone has the ability to hear his own signal.

You can probably add to the list. Drop me a line with your favorite (or most irritating) poor operating on the ham bands. It might be fun to post a few so others will be sure to avoid making the same mistakes.

---

1. I know increasing the volume of your voice will increase the SSB peak power however overdoing it will cause distortion and possibly clipping of your audio or splatter of nearby conversations.



## HF Ladder Contest

The HF Ladder for 2014 is ready to start Oct 9th after the Club Meeting. The contest will be running through Jan 31 2015. The contest is open to ALL TARS Members.

Contest runs on a monthly basis; score sheet(s) for the previous month are to be turned in at the Monthly Club Meeting. Please total out your score sheets before you hand them in. IF you Contact a Country/IOTA etc without points just leave it blank and I will figure out the points need for that Contact and add them to your score.

If you know you won't be at the Meeting, scan it with a scanner and attach it to an E-Mail send it to me at [n9jca@wowway.com](mailto:n9jca@wowway.com)

I will send Bob Pointer a list of the scores and ask him to post them via Mass Mailer (like getting SPARKS)

Rules are simple and on Honor system

Each Country has its own Points

Modes are: Digital=4points, CW=3points, Rag Chew=2points and SSB=1point

Power points are: 1-10W=3points; 10W-100W=2points, 100W+=1point

Antenna: Beam=1point  
Dipole/Wire/Vertical=2points

Which ever Mode you start with for a particular Month, please stay with that Mode (NO starting in one Mode and adding another)

If you are still working (as to being Part Time and/or Retired) I will Double your Points at the end of the Month

Each Month will have a Bonus Country/Continent depending on Propagation

Here is an Example:

Antarctica=88Points X 3points for CW X  
100W=2points X Dipole=2points

Total points = 3168

Best of luck to All; see you at the Club Meeting on Oct 9th

73

Chris N9JCA

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## Herb needs your help

He volunteered to head the Election Committee this year. As usual, when he goes in search for possible candidates people flee from him. He wonders what is it about holding a club office that scares the bee-geebies out of people?

Any club can not operate without its officers. You can do your part, if just for one year to help the club and feel good about yourself too. It is not hard work and takes very little of your time. The current officers have done a great job, but they do get a little tired of being elected each year because no one volunteers to take a turn.

Step up to the plate. Do your part to support your club. Fresh ideas are always welcomed. Contact Herb if you would like to run for an office.

Herb Alvey KB9MZH 477-2757

[Halvey1813@aol.com](mailto:Halvey1813@aol.com)

And thanks Herb, for all your work and support.

Board Member positions that are due to be filled:  
Herb KB9MZH (was filling in for N9JCA's 2nd year),  
Dave WA9C (also filling in for Ron's 2nd year)

Steve KC9SOE filled 2 yr board position

Current nominees: TARS 2014 election ballot

President: (we really need someone to step up )

Vice President: Steve Wilzbacher K4SAW

Secretary: Ron Hanes KC9OUT

Treasurer: Len Schmitt N9QVQ

TARS Board (we will elect 3)

Zach Crawford KJ4TKJ

Herb Alvey KB9MZH

Stephan Wells KC9SOE

Terry McCrary WB9KQF



Herb Alvey KB9MZH

## Upcoming Events -- Plan Ahead

Things to look forward to:

**October Meeting: PSK 31 demonstration**

**November Back from Parts Unknown our own WA2USA Dennis will tell of his adventures in backpack hiking, camping and ham radio.**

**December: QSL card show and tell, A talk on QSL information and etiquette, how-to and more. Also bring any projects you want to share or stories of interesting QSO or ham events. Open topics so all are welcome.**

**January meeting: Once again the Wise and Powerful Wizard of Auctions: K9HVI (Little Ed) will again host the annual TARS auction. Be sure to attend and bring items to donate or sell. (at least we hope Ed accepts again, he hasn't missed one since he could pick up a microphone)**

**February meeting will be our annual TARS banquet. Got any suggestions as to where to hold it?**

## Presentations and demonstrations

Be thinking about topics for our meeting presentations. Let us know what you want to see or do as a club.



Presentations and demonstrations are a fun part of our meetings. Join us!

**We have several openings for demonstrations or lectures if you care to give one. It doesn't have to be technical or long winded, just something of general interest**

## Trivia Time.

Nostalgia Time

Least we forget our roots.

Can you remember?

1. The first telephone conversation was
  - a. Hello Hello Can anyone hear me?
  - b. Watson come here I need you.
  - c. Testing Testing Can you hear me?
  - d. Can you hear me now?
  - e. Mary had a little lamb.
2. The first message sent by radio across the Atlantic Ocean used what mode?
  - a. SSB
  - b. AM
  - c. CW
  - d. FM
  - e. PSK31
3. What was that first message?
  - a. A weather report
  - b. CQ
  - c. The letter S . . .
  - d. The letter V
4. What mostly determined the frequency of the early spark transmitters?

- a. A VFO
  - b. Crystal oscillator
  - c. The size of the loading coil
  - d. The antenna
  - e. Luck
5. Samuel Morris invented modern Morse Code T / F
6. Who is credited with receiving the first confirmed trans-Atlantic radio connection?
- a. Samuel Morris
  - b. Thomas Edison
  - c. Nickoli Telsa
  - d. Heinrich Hertz
  - e. Guglielmo Marconi
7. While CW ruled the airwaves for many years what was the next mode to be introduced?
- a. AM
  - b. SSB
  - c. PSK 31
  - d. Double sideband reduced carrier mode
  - e. Simplex
8. For this mode to be received the receiver had to employ what device?
- a. Oscillator
  - b. Detector
  - c. Condenser
  - d. Filter
  - e. Colepits oscillator
9. CW mode is sent by turning on and off the carrier of the transmitter. The receiver employed what circuit to make the normally quiet carrier signal an audible one?
- a. QSO
  - b. MCW
  - c. BFO
  - d. AGC
  - e. RCVR
10. When did the FM mode appear? Bonus Question: Who is credited with its invention?
- a. 1901
  - b. 1933
  - c. 1947
  - d. 1956
11. Early in radio history many people could construct a simple radio to listen to close radio stations with little or no expense. What was it called?
- a. Magic radio
  - b. Magnetic Coupled coil circuit
  - c. Electric Earphone circuit
  - d. Crystal radio
12. Early AM transmitters used what kind of microphones?
- a. Crystal
  - b. Magnetic
  - c. Carbon element
  - d. Ribbon elements
13. A vacuum tube that employed a heater, a cathode, a grid, a control grid a suppressor grid and an anode was called what?
14. A receiver that converts the RF signal into an intermediate frequency and then converts it again to a lower intermediate frequency is called what?
15. To increase the efficiency of your long wire antenna you might construct a device with an adjustable coil or variable condenser. It was called a
- a. Armstrong circuit
  - b. Signal booster
  - c. Ground loop
  - d. Q-multiplier
  - e. Magnetic loop
16. Early 6 meter radios caused many problems with the neighbors. What was bothered the most by transmitting on 6 meters.
- a. Electrical lamps
  - b. Table top radios
  - c. Telephones
  - d. Televisions
  - e. Ceiling lights
17. Very popular with early hams were 2 meter and 6 meter AM radios made by \_\_\_\_\_ and nick named the \_\_\_\_\_.

\*■■ ■■■■■+ ■■■ ■■■  
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### **Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES**

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting is October 16, 7:00 pm at the VC EMA Training Center 1430 Harmony Way.

November 15th will be the first state wide S.E.T.. Mark your calender and plan to participate.

Anyone interested in emergency communications in Vanderburgh Co. is invited.

Chris Lantaff KE9YK  
Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer  
(ke9yk@arrl.net) 626-0069

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### Interested in helping our community?

All ARES/RACES members and any Amateur interested in emergency communications are encouraged to participate

For ARES/RACES announcements you can join the Emergency Comms yahoo group at

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/emergency\\_comms/join](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/emergency_comms/join)

Contact Chris KE9YK or John WB9EFH for more information on how you can help out.

\*■ ■■■■+ ■■■ ■■

### Trivia Answers: for this month

1. b. Thomas Edison talking to his assistant Watson in the other room.
2. c CW mode
3. c the letter S sent several times (although many skeptics say it was only static crashes he heard)
4. d. Early experimenters did not really understand frequency so the length of the antenna had a lot to do with frequency of the signal. Luck had a lot to do with it also.
5. False His versio was used for the wired station to station set up using clicks (or dots) only. The dashes came along later and was called the International Morse Code.
6. a. Guglielmo Marconi at his receive site at St. John's Newfoundland on Signal Hill.
7. a. The carrier wave was modulated in a mode called Amplitude Modulation or AM

8. b. a detector was needed to separate the audio frequency from the RF frequency. It could be a simple diode of some sorts.
9. c. The Beat Frequency Oscillator circuit mixed a carrier with the incoming signal to produce an audible tone that the operator could hear. Normally about 800 cps.
10. b. In 1933, FM radio was patented by inventor Edwin H. Armstrong
11. d. So I gave you an easy one. Many a young boy was introduced to the magic of radio by building his first crystal radio.
12. Early AM radios transmitters often used carbon elements (many stolen from telephone handsets)
13. We are talking about a Pentode
14. This is a very selective Double Conversion Receiver.
15. d. a Q multiplier increased the efficiency (Q) of the antenna circuit.
16. d. Televisions. The lower channels were near the 6 meter band. In fact the 6 meter band used to be television channel 1.
17. Made by Heathkit called the Lunch Box radio.

\*■ ■■■■+ ■■■ ■■

Learn More:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_radio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_radio)

### **Eat'n Before the Meet'n**

October 9th Eating Before the Meeting will be 5:30 at McAlister's Deli, 2220 N Green River Rd. Drop by for food, socializing, "story tell'n" and whatever else comes to mind. Join the group at 5:30, or whwnever you can make it. Check in on 146.79 if you need directions or just bored on your drive in.





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**VE Test information**



**Test dates:**  
 10/25, 12/27

## 2M Simplex Contest Held In June

The results are in. Not everyone sent in there results but this is what I have on record. The contest was a lot of fun and we had great participation. We will definitely do this again next June. If you have an idea to make it better or more fun let me know! Congrats to all who joined in- it was a lot of fun and we didn't do too bad at all on Simplex!

Name	Call Sign	Total QSO's	# of distinct Power		Total Score
			Zip Codes	Mult	
John Van Vorst	N9oL	34	29	2	1972
Chris Lantaff	KE9YK	20	14	3	840
Tom Washburn	WB9ZFN	35	22	1	770
Steve Wilzbacher	K4SAW	23	16	2	736
Donald Land	KB9YWQ	12	7	2	168
Chris Politano	KC9HWQ	5	5	3	75

**Don't forget to check out our web page  
[www.w9og.net](http://www.w9og.net)**

***2013 Club Officers and Board  
members***

***2014 Club Officers and Board members***

**President** [John VanVorst N9OL](#) 812-305-4100

**Vice President** [Steve Wilzbacher K4SAW](#) 812-453-6402

**Treasurer** [Leonard Schmitt N9QVQ](#) 812-963-0027

**Secretary** [Ron Hanes KC9OUT](#) 812-568-1168

**Board of Directors**

[Bob Pointer N9XAW](#) 425-2118 (2014-2015)

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](#) 812-963-6455 (2014-2015)

[Terry McCrrey WB9KQF](#) 812-760-8007 (2014-2015)

[Stevan Wells KC9SOE](#) 812-473-5918 (2013-14)

[Dave Vogel WA9C](#) 812-430-5727 (2014)

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