

# Sparks

## W9OG



Spring is finally here

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society  
April 2016-Issue No. 4

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)



73!

*John N9oL*



Meetings and planning. Where to next?





no longer interested in the hobby. The FCC has no way of keeping up with silent keys. A lifetime license would tie up a call sign forever until someone brought it to the attention of the bureau. Hams who have lost interest in the hobby are culled out when they have no interest in renewing their license (we do have a grace period for those who simply forgot).

Call signs are not limitless. Already we see current configurations reaching a limit. When we get to KZ9ZZZ, then what? KZA9AAA, and then KZZA9AAAA?

A quick renewal shows the FCC

- I am alive and well
- I am still interested in the hobby

And it gives the FCC a chance to review its records to see if you have complaints or previous violations that might warrant a reason not to renew your license.

Since the FCC has become more interested in selling frequencies and dabbling in politics than in enforcement, they are not very proactive in monitoring the ham bands. The renewal process at least gets them to acknowledge us.

Just another opinion  
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## Wave of the future?

Or should we say Waves of the future?

I came across an interesting headline on the news channel today.

**DARPA wants to use AI to squeeze more bandwidth out of the airwaves**

The article points out that the frequency spectrum we love and enjoy

is getting so crowded it is getting more and more difficult to assign frequencies to agencies, groups. Businesses, media, military, government and on and on.

Over the years we have improved communications and data so more and more services can use narrower and narrower spectrums. You remember when Amateur radio used Amplitude Modulation for voice mode. That mode took up a lot of bandwidth but at the time that was not really a problem. There were not that many hams to share it. As the bands became crowded we invented better ways to use less and less bandwidth. Sideband was one example.

New advanced technologies allowed more efficient use of available frequencies. Trunking systems, spread spectrum systems and even narrower bandwidths were implemented.

Recently [DARPA](#) (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) has launched its latest Grand Challenge, this time to bring advanced machine-learning capabilities to the way the radio frequencies are used. DARPA has named the new competition the Spectrum Collaboration Challenge (SC2).

“These “smart systems” will use advanced machine-learning capabilities and artificial intelligence to optimize the use of the wireless spectrum” it said.

Now, the amateur radio community may be even more important than ever. All of these new technologies share something in common. **All are infrastructure dependent.** We are not.

Someday it may once again be the amateur radio operator with his ability to go to a remote location, throw a wire up in a tree, connect a battery or generator and talk to other hams around the world or nearby cities to call for and receive assistance. You may even provide backup communications for local emergency services that cannot communicate because all of that infrastructure has crashed. It has happened, it will happen again.

Keep your skills up, your batteries charged and practice, practice, practice.

Cite:

<http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2016/04/01/darpa-wants-to-use-ai-to-squeeze-more-bandwidth-out-airwaves.html?intcmp=hphz01>

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## Depends on how you look at it.

I came across an interesting article not long ago. It seems some old timer hams were complaining that the new crop of hams were getting easier and easier tests to get a license. They complained that new hams really had no technical knowledge and were what they called “appliance operators”. They said the new hams simply operate the equipment but had no idea how or why their radios worked.

The article was challenged by a relatively new ham. He explained that his day job was flying an Apache Attack Helicopter for the Army. He went on to say “I guess you could call me an appliance operator too”. He said, “I do not know, nor do I need to know the technical reasons why my

electronics work, it is more important that I have a firm grasp on how to operate it when I need it.”

Kind of puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

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## Upcoming Events -- Plan Ahead

### Things to look forward to:

#### May 7, 2016 Indiana QSO Party

Although it's not yet spring, it's time for Indiana radio clubs and individual hams to start planning for the Indiana QSO Party on May 7. Not only is this the annual running of our popular (and fun ) INQP, it's also a special celebration of Indiana's 200th birthday.

And to mark that special event, we've got extra awards for working or activating our state's original 15 counties.

This is a great opportunity to become "the hunted" and experience pileups on YOU !

There's a link to a powerpoint presentation on the INQP website ([www.hdxcc.org/inqp](http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp), click on PUBLICIITY PACKAGE) that could be used as program material in your club. The website also holds a lot of other info, like rules for INQP, operating tips, and links to special awards, like the Worked All Indiana Counties award, or the one-time award for contacting all 15 original counties.

Perhaps your club will mount a full blown effort to put your county on the air and compete for the TOP CLUB plaque. Your members can participate as individuals, and then combine their scores for a club score. You can also organize a multi-op effort, and perhaps shake out the club gear prior to Field Day. (Check out the rules and operating categories)

If you are not a club member, feel free to operate and compete for individual awards, including our attractive plaques and certificates. Beside operating from home, you can go mobile, or set up bigger (and higher) antennas as a rover.

Whatever your operating choice, please get on the air Saturday May 7 to put Indiana (and your county) out there for others to work.

Once you have made a plan, please let me know what counties and call signs you will activate on May 7. We'll put your call on the activity map.

Thanks

Me1 KJ9C [kj9c@arrl.net](mailto:kj9c@arrl.net)

### April meeting

**April meeting will be held at the west side EMA building on Harmony Way**, just down the street from central dispatch. You will have a chance to see the new radio room and tour the facility. Other activities are in the planning.

### April birthdays

KA9NOO	Tom Dickerson	12th
KC9UPJ	Bob Hudson	23rd
KA9PHZ	Al Letcher	5th
KD9CHH	Mary Sandine	28 <sup>th</sup>

### National Parks on the Air event:

It has been suggested the club operate from Vincennes on July 31<sup>st</sup>. This will serve two things at once.

1. It will get the park on the air.
2. It is the same day the park will host a gathering of solar powered vehicles who will be making a stop at the park that day.

Comments are welcomed.

### ARRL Field Day 2016

It was suggested that we might want to use a different location next year for Field Day. USI has been used for several years and a fresh location may liven things up a bit. This year we narrowed it down to two locations. The EMA and the Red Cross.

The EMA graciously offered us the use of portable housing and a generator. We would be limited in area to set up antennas and we would have to rent a porta-potty. The Red Cross would be the outdoor area west of the building in the wooded area. Plenty of trees and open space with indoor rest rooms.

Looks like the Red Cross this year.

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### Did you know???

**Johnny Cash**, Famous country and western singer and performer was formally a top Morse Code operator for the Army? A very interesting story. Check it out at

<http://www.savingcountrymusic.com/johnny-cash-joseph-stalin-the-great-morse-code-crack/>

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Drop by for food, socializing, "story tell'n" and whatever else comes to mind. Join the group at 5:30, check in on 146.79 if you need directions or just bored on your drive in.



If you have any suggestions on where you would like for us to meet, contact Chris (KE9YK@arrl.net).

Chris KE9YK

### Vanderburgh Co. RACES/ARES



**The next Vanderburgh county RACES/ARES meeting is April 21st, 7:00 pm at the VC West side EMA Training Center (WEMA) 1430 Harmony Way.**

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

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

We now have internet access at WEMA and Len N9QVQ will be updating the packet node to get internet access back online as soon as we have a network address assigned. If you have packet capability connect to N9QVQ-1 on 145.010 @1200 or 440.950 @9600.

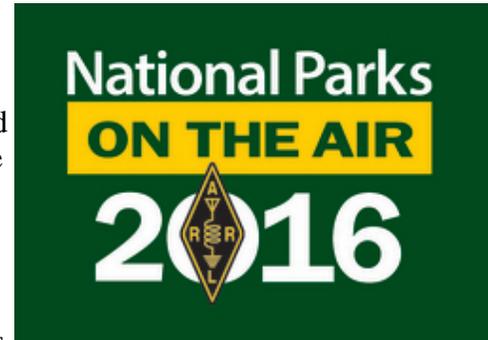
2016 regular meeting dates:

Apr 21	
May 19	Jun 16
Jul 21	Aug 18
Sep 15	Oct 20
Nov 17	Dec 15

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(ke9yk @ arrl. Net) 626-0069

### "ARRL National Parks on the Air" Event to Mark National Park Service Centennial From ARRL Letter October 15, 2015

In 2016, the National Park Service ([NPS](#)) will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and radio amateurs will be able to help mark the occasion with the ARRL National Parks on the Air ([NPOTA](#)) event. The event kicks off at 0000 UTC on January 1, 2016.



"As ARRL just celebrated our own Centennial, and Amateur Radio is often enjoyed in the great outdoors, it seemed fitting to devise a program to help NPS celebrate their own 100th birthday," said ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. NPOTA will run throughout 2016, with activity promoted and encouraged from each of the more than 430 official NPS administrative units and affiliated areas across the US. This includes all 59 National Parks as well as National Battlefields, Historic Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and other units.

The program will have two participation tracks -- Chasers and Activators. Chasers will simply attempt to make contact with operators in as many of the NPS units as possible. Activators will attempt to activate as many of the units as possible. NPOTA participants may serve in both roles. Chaser and Activator totals will be tracked via an online [Leader Board](#) based on LoTW data, just as was done during the Centennial QSO Party. Access the NPOTA Leader Board directly at <http://npota.arrl.org>.

Modeled after the Mixed DXCC award, only one contact with any given NPS unit will be required, and no tally will be kept of NPS units based on bands or modes. NPOTA will be administered entirely through Logbook of The World ([LoTW](#)). No paper logs or QSLs will be accepted for NPOTA credit. Each NPS unit will be added to LoTW as a "location."

Chaser Award and Activator Award certificates will

be available to any radio amateur who has at least one confirmed contact with an NPS unit or who activates at least one unit, respectively. A station's total number of confirmed or activated units will be printed on the certificate. The National Parks Honor Roll certificate will be available to any station confirming contact with at least 75 percent of the 59 National Parks *activated* in 2016.

While there is no formal partnership between NPS and ARRL for this event, the League has been in discussions with the NPS over the past year, and the National Park Service is aware that increased Amateur Radio activity in their parks is likely during 2016.

The NPOTA will use the official [list](#) of NPS Administrative Units and Affiliated Areas as defined and maintained by NPS. [Complete details](#) on National Parks on the Air are available on the ARRL website. Read [more](#).

## Tri-State Emergency Net

### Net Operator schedule

April	6	KC9TYA
	13	WB9KQF
	20	KC9YIL
	27	N9QVQ
May	4	KC9TYA
	11	KE9YK
	18	KC9UVG
	25	WB9KQF
June	1	KC9YIL
	8	N9QVQ
	15	KC9TYA
	22	KE9YK
	29	KC9UVG

## Net operators WANTED

A microphone is nothing to fear. Millions of people use them and none have been harmed by one. Put on your cowboy pants or cowgirl britches and be a net control operator. You can do it.



TARS is in need of volunteers for net control operators. While we could use a couple more for the regular Wed night nets we desperately need volunteers for Skywarn/Weather nets. We have not recently had consistent weather nets I am working to change that. Weather nets are not only good for local hams to find out what coming their way but the National Weather Service depends on Hams via Skywarn to be their eyes and ears to confirm what the radar data is telling them and find out what they may be missing.

If you are interested in being a control operator contact Chris [KE9YK@arrl.net](mailto:KE9YK@arrl.net) 626-0069. Next time there is a weather event check in on the TARS 146.79 repeater and see what is going on.

**Many thanks to our award winning Net Control operators.**



**You provide a valuable service to the club and the community. We often fail to thank you enough for your service. Keep up the good work.**

