



N9OL has graciously accepted the job of Red Cross Liaison officer. The job is important to ensure good communications between the Red Cross and TARS. Thank you John.

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## One man's opinion

The F.C.C. turned down a petition from Expert Linear amps regarding the 15DB gain rule, now a little history about Expert. I have one of their amps and it is quite a machine. I use it mostly on six and 40 meters and rely upon my THP amp for 20/15/10.

I purchased the Expert about six months ago and glad I did, this is a big step forward since I am now fully solid state and full legal power. I put the tube era behind me and have moved on to better technology. For those of you interested in the Expert line of amplifiers check them out in QST since they are running ads every month.

Enough of the sales pitch lets get down to the real thoughts on the proposal to the Commission.

In its April rule making petition, Expert maintained that the 15 dB gain limitation is an unneeded holdover from the days when amplifiers were less efficient and the FCC was attempting to rein in the use of Amateur Service amplifiers by Citizens Band operators.

Although the FCC had proposed in 2004 to delete the requirement that amplifiers be designed to use a minimum of 50 W of drive power — and subsequently did so — it did

not further discuss the 15 dB limit in the subsequent Report and Order in that proceeding.

Expert has pointed to its Model 1.3K FA amplifier as an example of a linear “inherently capable of considerably more than 15 dB of amplification,” the model I have purchased is the 1.3kw amp.

At first when I read the proposal I thought to myself that this would be a good idea, however after reading over this proposal several times I have to be in agreement with the Commission.

The reasons are many, but for the sake of simplicity we can say that boys will be boys when it comes to radio toys. Most amplifiers on the market today are designed so they will not exceed the 1500 watt PEP legal limit. It is the power supply that limits the output, most tubes on the market will exceed the limit if they have higher plate voltage applied, or they are run at their full power capacity.

In fact, I had one amp in my shack that would make 2200 watts and it was using a pair of ceramic tubes, thing is did I run it at legal power? Yes, because I understand gain figures and the difference I would gain by breaking the law would not have given me any satisfaction or great increase in signal strength.

The present rules governing linear amps have been in Part 97 for many years, it was designed to purposely limit the gain an amplifier can provide. It was more stringent in the days when power levels were measured by input power, rather than output

power. In days gone by the input power could not exceed one kilowatt it was computed by multiplying plate voltage times plate current. Considering the class of amplifier you had and most ran Class B, or some variation namely AB2, or AB1 your output was around 700 watts, or less give, or take a few.

If we removed that regulation from Part 97, I would fear that some would violate the requirement on a large scale. Even with regulations in place some hams have been caught with higher powers than the legal limit. In some cases tubes were used that were normally employed in the broadcast services capable of 5 and 10 Kw outputs. Some were caught while others have escaped the wrath of the F.C.C. those caught were slapped with heavy fines.

Granted there are some persons that will build their own gear, design it on purpose to have a higher output than the legal limit. But, can they market the product?, Not unless it meets the legal requirements and is FCC approved. Most hams these days buy an amp and they do not worry about power output since it will not exceed what is legal. The limitations are in place, and although well-meaning by Expert we would have those who would violate the rules if they had a chance.

As a last note, my Tokyo High power 2.5 will at maximum show 1800 watts, but why run it that hard, the extra 300 watts will not make any difference at all on the receiving end of the contact. I have set the ALC to limit my output to the legal limit. My expert 1.3 will make 1500 watts easily and then that is it, the difference of 1300 watts to 1500

watts not even noticed on the receiving end of the contact.

My thoughts are leave the limitations in place, no you will not catch everyone, but you can limit the large masses and that is the purpose of the rule.

As always my friends this is One Man's Opinion, Bill, K4LRX



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## Annual TARS banquet

**Where: Log Inn**

**When: Thursday 4/9/1017 (that's this coming Thursday)**

**Seating at 6:00PM**

**Cost: \$10 for paid up members, \$17 for non-members.** (sorry, since reservations had to be made in advance, paying membership at the door does not count. Cost will be \$17 each)

Covers @ FirstCovers.com

# Friday Night Simplex

## 146.430

## 7 PM



## It's that time of year again

It's dues time again.



A new year is almost upon us. If you haven't yet paid dues for 2017, it's time. We have a new Treasurer starting this year. Be kind to him

You can mail in your dues, or make out a separate check for dues and put it in an envelope with your completed membership form. Be sure you include your **email address** and **name/call sign** at least on the form. The form should be attached to SPARKS. I redesigned it so it could be edited to show the correct year. BUT you'll have to print it (or get one from Jeff) and fill this one in by hand. If someone has a professional version of Adobe, they are welcome to change it in so you can type the information in.

The membership form is the **ONLY** sure way we can be sure to get your correct email address in the books **AND** submit any changes to Bob N9XAW and Chris KE9YK so that you will receive your copy of SPARKS.

As I said, be nice to your new Treasurer. It's hard to keep the books straight when someone gives you 1 check for both their dues and auction items. Or for their meal and dues at the TARS banquet. All of it has to be accounted for separately, so give him a separate check for dues.

Thanks,

Len N9QVQ



Len, for all your hard work.

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## Discussion Junction

The headline read “Eleven Kills and 23 hurt” as deadly tornado rips through Mississippi”. We are starting our annual season of unpredictable weather. Are you prepared?

The first and most important thing you can do is **have a programmed weather radio in your home and business**. It can mean the difference between life and death.

We had a perfect example here in our area not long ago. Evansville area was hit by an F3 tornado that took 25 lives in a very short time. It came at night and caught many totally off guard. Not long after that the Owensboro area was hit by a F3 tornado in the day time. There was a lot of damage but no deaths. The biggest difference between the two was **EARLY WARNING**.

I have seen many business locations and homes that did have a weather radio but it was either turned down, turned off or not functional. It is like having a fire extinguisher that does not work. Most said they did not like to listen to all the bulletins about missing children in Florida, tidal warnings on the Gulf or endless tests.



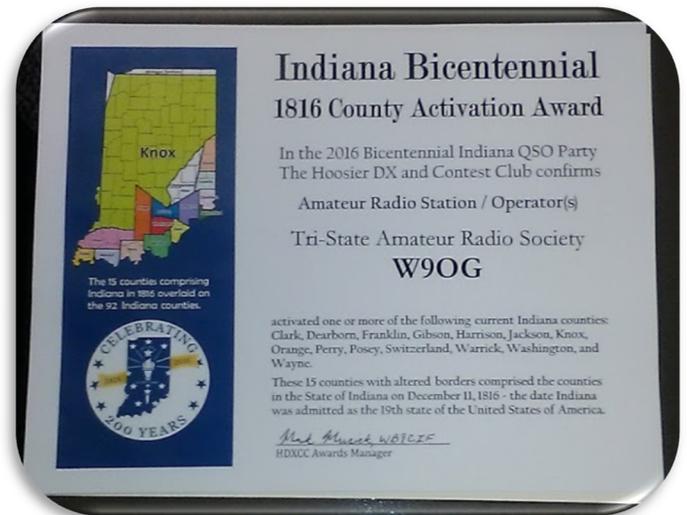
## NPOTA Report



Post by [Ron Hanes](#) to TARS Facebook  
[TriState Amateur Radio Society, Evansville Indiana](#)

Well, NPOTA is in the books. Several area hams took the opportunity to participate as an activator, a chaser, or both. The final numbers are not in yet, but at least two local hams both placed in the top 100 (out of over 16,500 unique call signs that participated) when scores and ranks were combined for overall participation. Congrats to Dennis Martin WA2USA and Mark Thienes KC9TYA for this outstanding accomplishment. Also Kudos to Tom KC9SFQ 199 QSOs and [Steve Wilzbacher](#) K4SAW 192 QSOs as of the last time the leader boards were updated for chasers.

It was a tremendous education in portable equipment, propagation, and working pile-ups among many other things. — with [Mark Thienes](#) and [Dennis Martin](#).



TARS has received the Indiana Bicentennial 1816 County Activation Award for activating Posey County during the 2016 Indiana QSO Party. TARS will need to make plans for the 2017 INQP very shortly. If you have any suggestions for a location get ahold of any board member.

## Winter Field Day 2017

This year's event was held at Wesselman's Park. We had two locations active. The Alcoa group worked at the southern shelter and the TARS group worked the west shelter.

A warm fire and hot bean soup made the cold weather more bearable.



Photo courtesy of TARS web page and KE9YK

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## Hamfest Calendar

02/25/2017 | Dugger Amateur Radio Club Hamfest

Location: Dugger, IN

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Dugger Amateur Radio Club

03/04/2017 | Cave City Hamfest

Location: Cave City, KY

Sponsor: Mammoth Cave Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.ky4x.org>

03/11/2017 | Terre Haute Hamfest

Location: Brazil, IN

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Wabash Valley ARA

Website: <http://www.w9uuu.org>

04/01/2017 | April Fools' Fest

Location: Noble, IL

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Clay County Area Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://ClayCountyRadio.webs.com>

04/01/2017 | Lincoln Trail ARC 38th Annual Hamfest

Location: Elizabethtown, KY

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Lincoln Trail ARC

05/19/2017 | 2017 Dayton Hamvention

Location: Xenia, OH

Sponsor: Dayton Amateur Radio Association

Website: <http://www.hamvention.org>

06/03/2017 | Princeton, KY Hamfest

Location: Princeton, KY

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Princeton Ham Radio Club

Website: <http://w4kbl.org>

06/03/2017 | Georgia Section Convention

Location: Marietta, GA

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Atlanta Radio Club (W4DOC) & Kennehoochee Amateur Radio Club (W4BTI)

Website: <http://atlantahamfest.com>

09/23/2017 | Bloomington IN - Hamfest

Location: Bloomington, IN

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Bloomington Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.BloomingtonRadio.org>

10/07/2017 | Vette City Hamfest

Location: Bowling Green, KY

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Kentucky Colonels Amateur Radio Club

For a more complete listing visit

<http://www.arrl.org/hamfests/search>



they have first choice and anyone occupying them has to leave. State parks are not as expensive but not many members want to travel that far.

Let us know your suggestions by the banquet so that we can confirm a location. A site will be chosen at the banquet so that we may act on it right away.

Some suggestions so far are:

Harmonie State Park, or Lincoln State park

FOP camp, Boy Scout shelter, Mark Thienes back yard and pool.

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## Your input is important

Sparks is YOUR information source for club activities and Amateur radio information of all sorts.

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 club might be interested in.

So far in the last few years we have minimal submissions. Let's make 2017 an even better year for Sparks. Let us hear from you.

## A bit of Trivia

We call it RADIO, but why?

The device we call a radio took its name from radio telegraphy. It was commonly referred to as "wireless" up until World War II when the military preference for radio caused that name to catch on to describe the revolutionary receptacle of sound.

The word radio is derived from radius, Latin for "spoke of a wheel" or "ray of light," because transmitted sounds travel out in all directions from a center hub like the spokes of a wheel.

Now you know.

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## TARS Birthdays for February

Land Donald KB9YWQ Feb. 1  
Lile Ron K0RL Feb. 9  
MaCurdy Keith L. KC9GNM Feb. 10  
Payne William T KC9SFQ Feb.18  
Rudolph Larry KB9KVX Feb.2  
Washburne Jerry WD9GXI Feb. 9



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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.

Chris KE9YK

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## Well phooey, the power is out

How many times have you said that (or worse) when your home lost electricity? The Evansville area is lucky in that our local power company is well equipped to restore power rapidly after a storm takes down part of the electrical grid. But what happens if the power is off for an extended period of time? Are you prepared?

In an era where 15% of adult males can not even change a light bulb, using a generator

during blackout times can be a real challenge. It can be everything to an expensive mistake to a fatal electrocution.

Many people just wait until the power goes out to rush to the store to buy a generator. A common mind set is that you take it home, make a jumper to plug it into a home outlet and power the house. **This is where you can set your house on fire, burn up the new generator when the power is restored and even cause someone else not even in your home to get electrocuted.**

One size does not fit all. There are many sizes and types of generators available. Choosing the right one for your home use takes a little thought and research.

Plan ahead. Do your homework. Seek assistance from an electrician ( not your know it all brother in law). Your local Emergency Management Office can offer advice on what to do when the lights go out. Your local Red Cross chapter can also offer good advice.

Like my old physics professor (Dr. Dufford –rest his soul) once said...”A smart man does not know all the answers, he just knows where to find the answers”.

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## February Meeting

Reminder the TARS meeting this month will not be at the Red Cross but the Log Inn **for members that have turned in their reservations**. The meeting will start at **6:00 pm Thursday Feb 9<sup>th</sup>** and includes your meal served family style with choice of meat and

drink. If you plan to have any extras such as dessert, **you will need to use cash or check**, as the Log Inn doesn't take any form of plastic. After the meal we will have a few presentations, awards, drawing for the 2016 attendance raffle and presentation of the McCutchan Award.

Map to Log Inn: <https://goo.gl/maps/QDraxD6kfgn>

## TARS Attendance Raffle

The TARS board has decided to discontinue the attendance raffle that we have been doing for several years. **BUT GOOD NEWS**, we will now be having door prizes for random meetings. Your chance to get a door prize will start with the March general meeting where you will have a chance for a dual band handheld. *The only way to have a chance to win is be present at the end of the meeting.* See you March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.



NO EATING BEFORE THE MEETING THIS MONTH AS WE WILL BE EATING AT THE MEETING.

If you have any suggestions on where you would like for us to meet, contact

Chris (KE9YK@arrl.net)

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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.

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.

## Tri-State Emergency Net

If you are not SKYWARN trained we will have training opportunities available in the spring.

**Or for those wishing to take some basic spotter classes online, or take refresher courses on the material presented by the NWS, MetEd offers an alternate way to achieve your training.**

### [Role of Skywarn Spotter](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_module.php?id=817#.VQrsP3sYEsI)

[http://www.meted.ucar.edu/training\\_module.php?id=817#.VQrsP3sYEsI](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_module.php?id=817#.VQrsP3sYEsI)

### [Skywarn Spotter Convective Basics](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_module.php?id=816#.VQrsZXsYEsI)

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Once you have completed this training, you may contact ricky.shanklin@noaa.gov or christine.wielgos@noaa.gov for instructions on making spotter reports.

More information can be found on the [Paducah NWS page](#).

<http://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining>

If you are interested in being a net control op contact Chris (ke9yk @ arrl. Net).

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## Call for Elmers

Len pointed out that we have several Extra Class licensed hams in our club. We also have new hams getting their technician license at almost every VE exam session.

These new hams often are overwhelmed. What radio to buy? What kind of antenna works best for my situation? Stuck on a particular area of the General Class question pool? Would like to

try digital modes but don't know where to start?

All this and more is available from the club's Elmers (all you smart people). At one time we had a list of Elmers and their area of expertise published in Sparks. Many of those have moved on and are not available. Now is your chance to help others. Be an Elmer !

The pay is great and the rewards are many.

Send me an email to add you to our list of available Elmers. List any particular areas you can help with (rules, theory, getting on the air etc.) along with contact information.

Be a hero, be an Elmer.

Also, any time you have a question, problem or just need information

P.S. So far I have received ZERO responses to this article.

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## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting will be February 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm at the West side EMA training center, (WEMA) [1430 Harmony Way](#).



Chris Lantaff KE9YK

Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer  
(ke9yk @ arrl. Net)

H: 812.626.0069 C: 812.453.1972

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8:00 p.m. Wednesday nights on 146.79 pl 88.5

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interest and from time to time good old-fashioned rag chewing.

### Net Operator schedule

Feb	1	KB9YWQ
	8	KC9UVG
	15	WB9KQF
	22	N9QVQ
March	1	KE9YK
	8	KC9TYA
	15	KB9YWQ
	22	KC9UVG
	29	WB9KQF
April	5	N9QVQ
	12	KE9YK
	19	KC9TYA
	26	KB9YWQ

### Tri-State Emergency Net

A big thank you to Don KB9YWQ for running several SKYWARN nets and for everyone who checked in during the latest weather events. Remember to tune into the 146.79 repeater during severe weather to make your SKYWARN reports and follow what is happening with the weather.



If you are not SKYWARN trained we will have training opportunities available in the spring. Two local classes have been already scheduled:

Feb 8, 6:00 pm Oakland City

Feb 16, 5:00 pm Owensboro

**Mar 14, 6:00 pm Evansville, Red Cross**

Mar 28, 6:30 pm NWS Webinar

### Elite Spotter Workshop

Apr 4, 5:00 pm Owensboro

**Apr 6, 6:00 pm Evansville, Red Cross**

All classes now require registration, are free of charge, open to everyone and last 2 to 2.5 hours. For details about the classes and to register visit

[www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining](http://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining)

Questions? Email [Ricky.Shanklin@noaa.gov](mailto:Ricky.Shanklin@noaa.gov) or

[Christine.Wielgos@noaa.gov](mailto:Christine.Wielgos@noaa.gov)

**Or for those wishing to take some basic spotter classes online, or take refresher courses on the material presented by the NWS, MetEd offers an alternate way to achieve your training.**

[Role of Skywarn Spotter](#)

[Skywarn Spotter Convective Basics](#)

Once you have completed this training, you may contact [ricky.shanklin@noaa.gov](mailto:ricky.shanklin@noaa.gov) or [christine.wielgos@noaa.gov](mailto:christine.wielgos@noaa.gov) for instructions on making spotter reports.

More information can be found on the [Paducah NWS page](#).

<http://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining>

If you are interested in being a net control op contact Chris (ke9yk @ arrl. Net).

### Net operators WANTED

If you look at back issues of Sparks you will see this column in every issue. Our net operators do a great job of managing the Wednesday night net and weather nets when required.

If you look at the list of net control operators you notice that the list doesn't change much from month to month. Despite repeated requests for assistance, it falls on deaf ears. "Let somebody else do it" is not a good way to run a club.

Nets take only a few minutes out of your week. They also provide valuable experience in running nets and getting to know club members.

If our hams are ever called upon to assist in a community project or disaster we will need more than one or two net control operators. Many say they would help out in a time of need, but when called upon would have to say "sure I can help, but show me exactly what to do, how to do it and stay with me while I do it".

