

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

**Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years**

August 2019 - Issue No. 8



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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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](http://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 call or email one of the TARS officers listed in this newsletter.

## Presidents Corner:

Well here we are in the summer doldrums. Field Day is done, Independence Day is past, and now it's just a slide back toward fall and winter. That is how it feels to me (or maybe I'm just a bit depressed by how crummy the bands have been lately). But there is still lots to do with ham radio and there are still some hamfests happening yet this summer. If you have never been to the Huntsville hamfest it would be worth checking out!

I hear lots of hams talking about portable operating. You do not need fancy gear to do this- a simple antenna and your radio and you're on the air! Get out to a park and play radio! Take lots of pictures of your setup and share it with everyone by sending them to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net). I love seeing pictures and stories of other hams' outings and what their stations consist of in the field.

Hope to see you at the meeting! 73!

*John N9oL*

**10/26/2019**

Lynnville Community Center  
416 West Street, Road 68, IN-68  
Lynnville, IN 47619

**Website:** <http://hamtoberfest.com>

**Flier:** [\[Click Here\]](#)



## Club Picnic

**SAVE THE DATE!!! SEPTEMBER 14th**

TARS will have a club picnic Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> at Mesker Park.

We will be at **shelter #17 located off Buchanan Rd**. The festivities start at 11:00 am with lunch served at 1:00 pm. TARS will provide fried chicken and table ware, **you are asked to bring a carry in dish to share and your own drinks**. We will have a fox hunt with Mark KC9TYA as the fox, at 2:00pm after we have had our fill of food.

[\[Click here for a google map\]](#)

## Beyond the Baofeng

Chris Lantaff, [KE9YK](#)

### Beginner Radio

#### Antennas

One of the first newbie questions always gets to antennas. What's the BEST antenna? **Well the best antenna is one that suits your need and fits your budget.** On 2m and 440 I would recommend a minimum of a Comet GP-3 or Diamond X-50, if you can afford it I would recommend going up to the next level, like a Comet GP-6 or Diamond equivalent. I know you can buy others cheaper, Tram and Workman come to mind but you will generally find the quality of workmanship lacking. I have experience with Workman dual band antennas and have received trusted reviews of Tram that were not at all complimentary.

If you are interested in building, a [2m J-Pole](#) is an easy build, has some gain and works well.

The most important thing on Vhf and Uhf is the feedline. ALWAYS use a quality feedline, because at higher frequencies the losses will add up quickly. For a mobile install of less than 20ft you can get by with a *good* quality RG8X, but for a home station you should use LMR 400 or a quality equivalent at a minimum.

#### HF antennas

One thing to keep in mind is that any *One-Size-Fits-All* antenna is usually a compromise on most every band and whatever the tuner has to do to match your antenna/feedline to your radio is turned into heat. How well most antennas work are dependent on any number of installation considerations and are subjective depending upon the operator for a comparison.

Coax loss on the HF bands is not as great for runs up to 100ft but you might need to consider the power handling capability if you plan to run an amplifier. As always higher quality coax will have better performance. With shorter runs RG-8X will probably suite your needs and is easy to work with. For more permanent installations or longer runs most low loss double shielded RG8 types are a good choice. Next month - First HF Rig.

## TRANSMISSIONS

Cory Davis [KD9MHB](#)

Greetings from the Mothership! Station here is KD9MHB. I just got off a plane from the Emerald Coast and amateur radio is alive and well across the pan handle. Most of the time it was simplex, which was super awesome to see used on a daily basis. But the real magic was listening in on the SARnet (Statewide Amateur Radio Network) across all of Florida. It's a standalone UHF linked repeater system for the entire state. Which got me thinking, what all linked repeaters do we have here in the Tri-state area? Do I know how to use DTMF tones for Echolink and IRLP nodes when I need to connect to other cities and states? Hopefully you answered yes to those questions, but if not, join me in learning and finding out!

Until Next Time~

73s de KD9MHB

"There are no strangers in HAM Radio, only friends who haven't met yet"

## WMPLOTA 2019 RECAP

Cory Davis [KD9MHB](#)

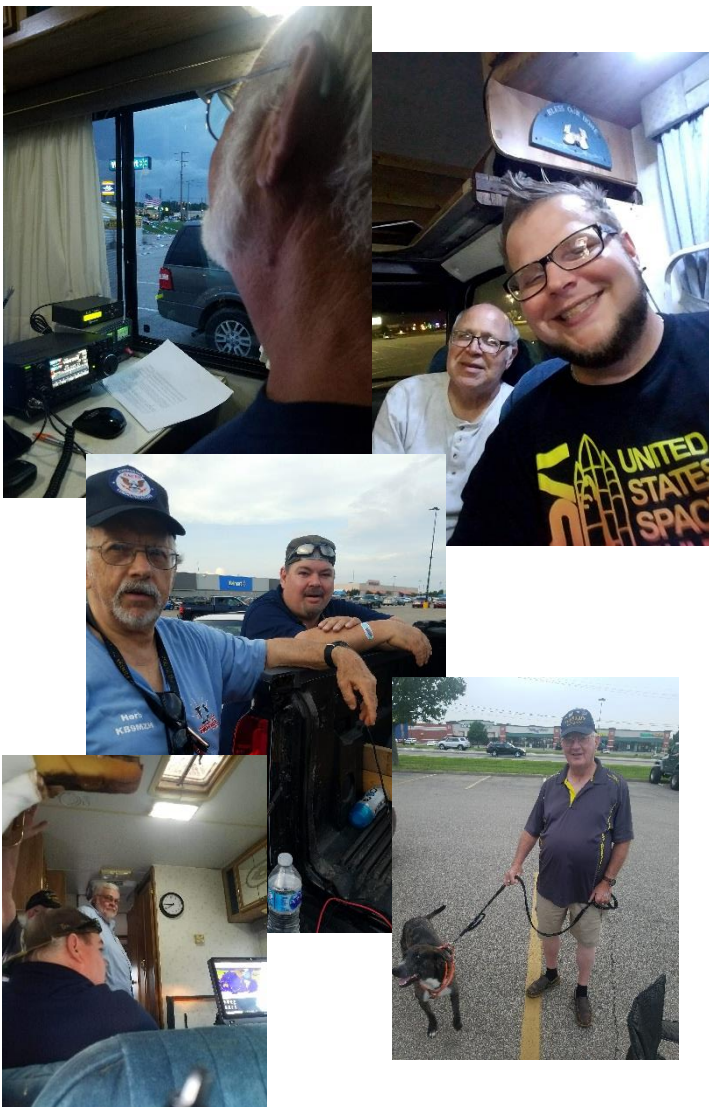
Last month the T.A.R.S. club participated in the 2nd annual Walmart Parking Lots On The Air event and it was a huge success!

For those who were unable to attend, WMPLOTA is a new contest that encourages the use of amateur satellite radio by actively engaging new ideas to accumulate points for the contest. Over the course of Sam Waltons birthday weekend (The creator of Walmart), operators are to try and make as many QSO's as possible on FM and linear birds. But there's one catch, making QSO's on a satellite that is only 4 inches square, traveling 17,000 miles per hour and 1,400 miles away is not easy. We were able to make 21 contacts on 7 different satellites and activated from 4 different parking lots throughout the weekend. After it was all said and done we totaled around 3,441 points for the contest. Now this is where the event gets ever so clever with ways for everyone to participate! In order to get point multipliers you have to rove around to different Sams Club or Walmart parking lots to activate those grid squares. While you're waiting for your next satellite pass, you can get different awards and point multipliers for picking up trash, returning shopping carts, eating birthday cake, bringing your pets, explaining to other non-hams in the parking lot just exactly what is going on with all these antennae and a list of other crazy things! Even if you weren't able to participate by making a QSO with someone you could still contribute points to the event, and the T.A.R.S. club did just that! Literally everyone that showed up managed to add to the score in some way or another and that was really an amazing thing to be a part of.



I do want to make a special mention and thank Dave WB9YIG for quarterbacking this whole thing and even getting the brand new ICOM 9700 and setting it up for everyone to use. We couldn't have done it or had so much fun without you!

This year was the 50th anniversary for AMSAT and I hope to see us all as a club doing it again next year and the following years to come, keeping amateur radio alive in space!



## 2019 Field Day Was Exciting!

TARS Field Day is always a great fun event and this year was no exception. I want to thank everyone who helped organize and execute the event and everyone who came out and enjoyed getting on the air and making some points! Our stations made a ton of contacts- via satellites, HF/VHF/UHF digital, Sideband, and CW!

The storm that blew through at 2:00 in the morning was a bit intense, and took us off the air for a period of time. We learned some things this year!

First, we need to be better prepared for bad weather, with more adequate shelters for our stations. A couple of our stations' shelters did not hold up during the storm and the stations had to move to dryer positions!

Also, the server that hosted our shared contest log did not make it through the downpour. Luckily all the station laptops had local copies of the shared log up until the time of the storm so we continued using them in standalone mode after that. But next year- the server will be set up inside a building or shelter!

Despite all that, we had a great time! The food was great- thanks for all who assisted with that and for those who brought goodies. We had a CW demonstration for the kids, and great participation at the GOTA station. Many folks stopped by to operate and some just to trade stories and tall tales.

A huge **THANK YOU** to the **Evansville Red Cross** for hosting us again this year and allowing us to take over the Red Cross grounds for the weekend. I hope to see even more folks enjoying next year's Field Day- it really is a great event! Thanks again for all who participated.

**John N9OL**

## 2-Meter Simplex Contest Winner!

TARS sponsored a 2-meter simplex contest on May 25 2019, and the results are in! Congratulations to **Jonathan Brenner KD9MJD** of New Harmony Indiana. Thank you Jonathan and all the hams who joined in the fun. We will do another contest in the fall/winter so stay tuned for that.

## Can you copy at 20 words per minute by hand?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

About a month ago, this email from the ARRL was sent to the CW Ops mailing list:

**From:** Fusaro, Norm W3IZ [<mailto:w3iz@arrl.org>]

**Sent:** Monday, July 1, 2019 4:00 PM

**Subject:** W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate

Greetings Morse Code Enthusiasts.

I have some exciting news that I want to share with you! The ARRL has reinvigorated the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate program. Several things have changed beginning with our new sponsor, Vibroplex, a legend in Morse telegraphy equipment. If you see Scott Robbins W4PA and the Vibroplex team at a hamfest or convention please be sure to thank him for his support. The Vibroplex logo will appear on the newly designed certificates (see below) and in the award recipient page that will appear every month in QST.

That's right, each month in QST we will publish the most recent recipients of the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate, beginning with all the 2019 recipients. As a bonus, we are sending all the 2019 CPC holders a new certificate at no cost to replace their older style award.

The award is available to anyone who copies one solid minute of code during the qualifying runs.

Complete program details can be found on the web at <http://www.arrl.org/code-proficiency-certificate>.

And to make the award available to more people we will double the number of opportunities to copy the CW text. Beginning September 2019, the qualifying runs will increase from twice per week to four times per week.

I am sharing this advanced notice with the Morse code clubs so that you can share it with your members. I have attached PDF files of the new certificate and the announcement that will appear in August QST, available in digital format July 8. I hope you are as excited about this as I am.

In closing, I want personally thank all of you who promote the use and proficiency of Morse code on the air waves and ask that you challenge your club members to submit their copy for the W1AW Code Proficiency Certificate.

73,  
Norm Fusaro, W3IZ  
Director of Operations

Almost immediately after I posted this to my blog (at KB6NU.Com), my friend, Paul, KW1L, replied, "How does one copy legibly at 40 wpm?" When I replied, "Typing," he countered, "On page 98 of the July 2019 QST, it says, 'Legibly copy at least 1 minute of text by HAND...'"

To this, I replied, "Well, I guess you and I are both screwed then. I can't copy by hand at 20 wpm, and it's really not worth it to me to practice and get that fast. I'm guessing that I'm not alone in this regard. The upshot is that the ARRL is going to be sending out a lot fewer of these Vibroplex certificates than they think."

I then emailed W3IZ for a clarification. He shot back, "By hand is to mean not using a code reading machine." I suggested that he clarify this, both on the ARRL website and in QST. Of course, they haven't yet taken my suggestion, and the website still reads, "Copy one of W1AW's qualifying runs and submit one minute of solid copy (legible)."

=====

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog (KB6NU.Com), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (KB6NU.Com/study-guides/), and is one of the presenters the ICQPodcast (ICQPodcast.Com). Feel free to reply to his CW CQs at any speed you so choose.

NOTE: You can find an image of the new certificate at <https://www.kb6nu.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-Code-Proficiency-Certificate-Vibroplex-768x597.jpg>

## Navajo Code Talkers special event

Look for the special event station, **N7C**, from the Navajo Code Talkers Memorial Park located in Window Rock, Arizona, from August 14-18th.

The special event is commemorating the Marine Navajo Code Talkers and their contribution to winning the War in the Pacific at the end of WW II.

Activity will be on 40/20/17 meters, the suggested frequencies are 14265, 7265 and 18133 kHz.

QSL Manager is N7HG.

## Eat'n Before the Meet'n



August 8<sup>th</sup> **Eating Before the Meeting** will be at Moe's Southwest Grill, 6401 E Lloyd Expressway, in the plaza facing Target. [\[MAP\]](#)

Drop by for good food, socializing, "story tell'n" and whatever else comes to mind. Join the group at **5:30**, or whenever you can make it. Check in on 146.79 if you need directions, or just get bored on your drive in. Everyone is welcome to join us.

If you have any suggestions on where you would like for us to meet, contact: [Herb Alvey KB9MZH](#) c: 812.431.1037



## Calling All Members

Soon once again we will be looking forward to the Election of officers for 2020. To run for an office you must be a member in good standing and have been a member for at least one full year. Nominations for office will be open from the floor of the general club meetings in September and October with a slate published in SPARKS before the November meeting, when the election will take place.

If you are interested in running for an office or would like more information, contact an election committee member.

[Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#) Chairman

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](#)

[Chris Lantaff KE9YK](#)

## Brag Rag

### What have you been doing?

Well John Small W9FHA was busy 62 years ago listening in to history being made. October 10, 1957 Evansville Press



Do you have something you would like to submit? Send your QSLs, awards etc. to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net) to have them included in your newsletter.

## Club Code Key Contest

This contest is a **just for fun** event and will have certificates awarded for various categories.

Judging will happen in the time between the meeting program and the business meeting.

A code oscillator will be set up to check the operation of the keys.

The fun started in March and the next installment will be at the **July** meeting with **Bug or Cootie Key** competition.

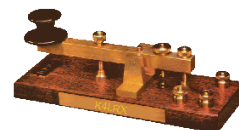
### The rules have been kept simple.

- You must have built the key **YOURSELF**.
- It may be a KIT or Homebrewed.
- It must **WORK**.

The last key contest this year is.

### September - MacGyver Key

What is a MacGyver Key?



This would be a key made from any scraps or non-functioning device you might have laying around using minimum tooling, cutting etc.

Paperclips, duct tape and bailing wire could be your friend...

Even if you don't work CW, this can be a fun contest just to get everyone up and doing something. Perhaps we could even get a CW learning net on the air and put them to use.

## ARRL Announces "Happy 150!"

### Hiram Percy Maxim Birthday Celebration

07/02/2019 ARRL News

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of ARRL's first president and cofounder Hiram Percy Maxim (HPM), W1AW, born on September 2, 1869. ARRL will hold an operating event this summer to celebrate HPM's legacy from **0000 UTC on August 31 and continue until 2359 UTC on September 8**. It is open to all radio amateurs.

<http://www.arrl.org/hpm150-birthday-celebration>

### N3FJP - Hiram Percy Maxim Contest Log is Now Available

Hiram Percy Maxim Contest Log is **free for everyone!**

No password or registration is required. This is a great opportunity to introduce your buddies to my software and have them join us in the celebration, so please tell a friend to download the software and give it a try! [www.n3fjp.com/hpmaxim.html](http://www.n3fjp.com/hpmaxim.html)

Enjoy Hiram Percy Maxim Contest Log and welcome to the birthday party!

Happy 150! The Hiram Percy Maxim Birthday Celebration!

As announced in September 2019 QST - page 86

## 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

#### August

7	KC9TYA
14	KE9YK
21	KC9UVG
28	N9QVQ

#### September

4	KB9YWQ
11	WB9KQF
18	KC9TYA
25	KE9YK



US National Weather Service Paducah Kentucky advises, Two SKYWARN spotter training online webinars available coming up in Sept/Oct. Visit this website for the dates and registration link: <https://www.weather.gov/pah/spottertraining>

## Hamfest Calendar

08/17/2019 | [Alabama State Convention, Huntsville Hamfest](#)

09/07/2019 | [Greater Louisville Hamfest 2019](#)

10/05/2019 | [8th Annual Vette City Hamfest](#)

10/26/2019 | [Hamtober Fest](#)

#### Location:

Lynnville Community Center  
416 West Street, Road 68, IN-68  
Lynnville, IN 47619

**Website:** <http://hamtoberfest.com>

**Sponsor:** Tri-State Amateur Radio Society - TARS

**Talk-In:** 146.790 (PL 88.5)

**Public Contact:** Dennis Martin, WA2USA  
5577 Victoria Court Newburgh, IN 47630  
Phone: 812-598-8333

**Email:** [wa2usa.ham@gmail.com](mailto:wa2usa.ham@gmail.com)



If you are attending an area Hamfest, fliers are available to distribute.

Contact: [Dennis Martin WA2USA](#)

## VE Testing

### 2019 Schedule

Jan 26	Feb 23
Mar <del>No TEST</del>	Apr 27
May 25	Jun 29
Jul 27	Aug 31
Sep 28	Oct 26 at <b>HAMTOBER Fest*</b>
Nov <b>No TEST</b>	Dec 28

\* Testing will be at TARS Hamtober Fest and not at the Red Cross for this test session.



All examinations will be administered at the American Red Cross, Evansville Chapter, located at 29 S. Stockwell Road, Evansville Indiana 47714. **Examinations will start at 9:00 AM Central time.** We have no pre-registration, and examinations are administered on a walk-in basis.

All the details can be found at:

<http://w9og.net/ve-testing>

Or for more info contact:

[John VanVorst N9OL](#) c: 812.305.4100

## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting **Aug 15th**, 7:00 pm at the Vanderburgh Co. West Side EMA Training Center (WEMA) [1440 Harmony Way](#). Anyone interested in emergency communication in Vanderburgh County is invited.

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer  
[in82races@gmail.com](mailto:in82races@gmail.com) c: 812.453.1972



## 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 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

**Most any document format is acceptable.**

**Photos or graphics of your subject are welcome.**

**Send your article to:** [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net)

## Birthdays

### July

Ted Ackerson	Associate	23rd
Robert Futrell	AF9F	26th
John McCormick	N9XXK	7th

### August

Dennis Adams	AC9KQ	9th
Rollie Cooper	KD9GUY	4th
Ron Hanes	KC9OUT	22nd
Darlene Pfettscher	KA9AZS	15th
David Sandine	KC9UVG	17th
Matt Schmitt	KD9JGE	21st
Randal Schoenbachler	WB9QAV	27th
Mike Townsend	W9KXP	5th

## Secretary Report

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

## Treasurer Report

Budget:

June 2019 (prepared 6/27/19)

Opening Balance:		\$4,304.14
Receipts:		
No Income	\$0.00	
Total Receipts --->>	\$0.00	
Expenditures:		
<b>Pd</b> Charlie WB9LDV for field day pork barbecue		(\$41.98)
<b>Pd</b> Chris KE9YK for field day barbecue sauce, buns, condiments		(\$18.57)
Total Expenditures--->>		(\$60.55)
Ending Balance		\$4,243.59
Red Cross Fund Balance		\$1,164.82

## Amateur Radio Resources

Dave KC9UVG ask everyone at the Aug meeting for ideas on Amateur Radio Resources that we could publish for anyone looking for information.

If you have any suggestions send them to [sparks@w9og.net](mailto:sparks@w9og.net).

### Books:

The Man Who Caught the Storm by Brantley Hargrove:  
The life of legendary tornado chaser Tim Samaras, 2018. EVPL Call # 921 SAMAR HARG  
Facebook Magazines NASA Tech Briefs – [www.techbriefs.com](http://www.techbriefs.com)  
Nuts & Volts [www.nutsvolts.com](http://www.nutsvolts.com) and at Barnes & Noble

### Antennas:

<https://archive.org/details/SimpleLowCostWireAntennasForRadioAmateurs>  
<http://www.hamuniverse.com/basicantennas.pdf>  
<http://www.antentop.org/w4rnl.001/radio.html>

### Podcast:

Neil Rapp WB9VPG – Ham Talk Live!

[www.neilrapp.com/hamtalklive](http://www.neilrapp.com/hamtalklive)

Ham Radio Workbench – [www.hamradioworkbench.com](http://www.hamradioworkbench.com)

Amateur Radio Newslines – [www.arnewslines.org](http://www.arnewslines.org)

W5kub Live ham show every Tuesday night 8:00 PM Central Time (0200 UTC Wed) - [www.w5kub.com](http://www.w5kub.com)

## Looking Ahead

### 2019

National Night Out Aug 6

International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend (ILLW) Third full weekend of August 16-17

Route 66 Special Event September 7-15

SKYWARN Recognition Day Dec 7 2019

### 2020

Straight Key Night Jan

ARRL Kids Day Jan

### Winter Field Day January

TARS Banquet Feb

### INQP May

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June

### Field Day June

13 Colonies Special Event July

Jamboree-on-the-Air

Total Solar Eclipse North America April 8, 2024

TARS is an [ARRL](#) affiliated club  
ARRL [Indiana Section](#)  
Section Manager: **Jimmy Merry KC9RPX**  
[kc9rpx@arrl.net](mailto: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](http://www.w9og.net)

**Facebook Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TARSw9og>

**TARS E-mail:** [info@w9og.net](mailto:info@w9og.net)

***2019 Club Officers - Board members***

**President** [John VanVorst N9OL](#)

**Vice President** [Max Wilkinson KD9ABT](#)

**Treasurer** [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#)

**Secretary** [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](#)

**Board of Directors**

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](#) (2018-2019)

[Len Schmitt N9QVQ](#) (2018-2019)

[Herb Alvey KB9MZH](#) (2019)

[Rick Jackson K9EXY](#) (2019-2020)

[Dennis Martin WA2USA](#) (2019-2020)

[Mike Townsend W9KXP](#) (2019-2020)

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Chris Lantaff KE9YK

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