

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

September 2019 - Issue No. 9



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](mailto: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](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:

Wow! September already! I hope you all had a great summer. Fall is right around the corner and your club has some great activities still to come in this year! We will kick fall off with our club picnic on September 14! Please plan to come out and share a meal with us, bring a dish of something to share and your favorite beverage. The club will provide the chicken. After lunch there will be a fox hunt, so be ready to locate that wily ol fox! Hamtoberfest will be great again this year. And we are raffling off a Yaesu FTM400xdr dual band Fusion capable radio! Raffle tickets go on sale this month and will be available at Hamtoberfest, then the drawing will be held at the close of the Hamtoberfest event. You don't have to be present to win but I'm sure you will want to be there.

You may or may not be familiar with Yaesu C4FM digital, Fusion, and Wires-X. But the club is planning to install a wires-X node open for all to use. I hope you take a look at this technology- it is the leading digital FM communications for Hams especially in this area, and allows you to make contacts worldwide from your HT. It also has promise for use in emergency communications. Jerry KC9ZAR is building a large digital network in SW Indiana that you may want to check out as well. Digital is the future and it is here! Stay tuned for more developments with the club's Fusion repeater, and a club wires-X node connected to the W9KXP repeater systems.

Lastly, and most important, it is the time of year where TARS seeks out new leadership for the coming year. Officer and board member nominations are being taken NOW. If you have been a member for at least one year you are encouraged to server on the board or as an officer. New people and ideas are always welcome and make for a healthy club. Three board member positions are open for replacement, and all officer positions- President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer- are up for election in November. All the folks in those position welcome others who are willing to lead and you will not hurt anyone's feelings by running for any office- me included! Please consider a leader position!

That's it for me! Looking forward to seeing you at the meetings and the club events through the end of the year! Remember- Hamtoberfest! Talk it up, invite others, bring friends and family!

*John N9oL*

**REMINDER, NO Meeting this Thursday!!!!**  
**This month's meeting will be the club picnic.**

## Club Picnic SEPTEMBER 14th

TARS general meeting for this month is the club picnic

Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> at Mesker Park 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 / dessert to share*

*and your own drinks. You might also bring lawn chairs as there is some talk of a washer tournament or other activities.* We will have a fox hunt with Mark KC9TYA as the fox, at 2:00pm after we have had our fill of food and also your MacGyver key contest entries will be judged.

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



**10/26/2019**

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

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

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

## DXpedition to use FT8 robot?

By Dan Romanchik, [KB6NU](#)

It's inevitable. At some point, machines are going to render humans irrelevant. It's been a recurring theme in science fiction since before I was born (1955), and there are numerous predictions of the Singularity, the point in time when machines will be smarter than human, occurring between 2030 and 2045.

It may happen in amateur radio sooner than we think. A couple of days ago, one of my readers, sent me a link to a blog post by John, AE5X: [Automated FT8 "FoxBot" in upcoming DXpedition – confirmed](#). He wrote:

"A [DXpedition to Tokelau](#) will take place from 1 to 11 October and it will be your chance to work an FT8 robot operating in Fox/Hound mode.

"Stathis SV5DKL has been working on a "FoxBot" for some time now, is listed as a partner to this DXpedition and has confirmed that the DXpedition will be using his FoxBot."

John has since updated this post, noting "The SV5DKL logo has now been removed and the DX team will be in 'full compliance' with the mode." Full compliance meaning following the rules set up by the ARRL DXCC rules.

The ARRL is, of course, against the use of robots. A recent *ARRL Letter* noted:

"ARRL has incorporated changes to the rules for all ARRL-sponsored contests and DXCC, prohibiting automated contacts and requiring that an actual operator is initiating and carrying out a contact. These changes also apply to Worked All States (including Triple Play and 5-Band WAS), Fred Fish W5FF Memorial, and VUCC awards. The changes are effective immediately and affect the rules for both HF contests, and VHF/UHF contests as well as DXCC.

"A resolution at the July ARRL Board of Directors meeting pointed to 'growing concern over fully automated contacts being made and claimed' for contest and for DXCC credit. The rules now require that each claimed contact include contemporaneous direct initiation by the operator on both sides of the contact. Initiation of a contact may either be local or remote."

As AE5X says, however, the use of FT8 robots in the future is a certainty. Sooner or later, some DXpedition is going to use an FT8 robot without saying anything about it. How is the ARRL going to know that a DXpedition is using robots if the DXpedition operators don't tell them?

I'm wondering when some DXpedition is going to give up on SSB and CW altogether. Why bother with those modes when you can make hundreds or thousands more contacts by just operating FT8?

Another thought just occurred to me. If the ARRL gets its way and Techs are awarded HF digital privileges, how long will it take for some enterprising Tech to make the DXCC Honor Roll using FT8 exclusively. Oh, the horror of it all!

## ARRL Contest and DXCC Rules Now Prohibit Automated Contacts

**ARRL Letter for August 22, 2019**

ARRL has incorporated changes to the rules for all ARRL-sponsored contests and DXCC, prohibiting automated contacts and requiring that an actual operator is initiating and carrying out a contact. These changes also apply to Worked All States (including Triple Play and 5-Band WAS), Fred Fish W5FF Memorial, and VUCC awards. The changes are effective immediately and affect the rules for both HF contests, and VHF/UHF contests as well as DXCC.

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## Eat'n Before the Meet'n

**No Eat'n Before the Meet'n this month.** This month is the TARS PICNIC at Mesker park shelter #17.

We will meet again on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>.

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

## Brag Rag

### What have you been doing?

Radio Shacks still do exist, even in locations as remote as Haines, Alaska, population 1713!

Dave KC9UVG



Do you have something you would like to submit? Send your QSLs, special event certificates, awards, interesting photos, 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.

## Calling All Members

Looking forward to the Election of officers for 2020, we will open nominations from the floor of the general club meetings in September **[the picnic]** and October. To run for an office you must be a member in good standing and have been a member for at least one full year. Offices up for election are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and 3 board positions.

You can nominate someone you feel would be a good choice or nominate yourself.

The election ballot will be published in the November SPARKS and you have the option of returning the ballot via mail or casting it in person at the November meeting.

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

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](#) Chairman

[Dennis Martin WA2USA](#)

[Chris Lantaff KE9YK](#)



## October Meeting

Hello all...just a note to let you know October's meeting will be held at **Central Dispatch on Harmony Way...7:00pm**. I've arranged a tour for us... should be fun and informative!

Max KD9ABT

## 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

#### September

4	KB9YWQ
11	WB9KQF
18	KC9TYA
25	KE9YK

#### October

2	KC9UVG
9	N9QVQ
16	KB9YWQ
23	WB9KQF
30	KC9TYA



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

**10/05/2019 | 8th Annual Vette City Hamfest**

**10/05/2019 | HOOSIER HILLS 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](mailto:Dennis Martin WA2USA)

## VE Testing

### 2019 Schedule

Jan-26	Feb-23
Mar <b>No TEST</b>	Apr-27
May-25	Jun-29
Jul-27	Aug-31
Sep-28	Oct 26 <b>at 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](mailto:John VanVorst N9OL) c: 812.305.4100

## Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting **Sep 19th**, 7:00 pm at the Vanderburgh Co. West Side EMA Training Center (WEMA) [1440 Harmony Way](http://1440HarmonyWay). 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



## ARRL Policymakers, Staff Continue Efforts to Enhance ARES Program, Add Resources

**ARES E-Letter for August 21, 2019**

The ARRL Board of Directors, committees and administrative staff have focused on enhancing the venerable ARES program. A major [ARES Plan](#) was adopted, providing new direction going forward. A standardized training plan was adopted and a new [ARES](#)

[Emergency Communicator Individual Task Book](#) was approved and published.

Last month, the Board considered the [report of its Public Service Enhancement Working Group](#) (PSEWG). A "change log" is proposed for the Task Book that will highlight changes made as the book is periodically revised and updated. ARES position guidelines were posted to the on-line ARES workbook and major revising and updating of ARRL's *Introduction to Emergency Communications* course (now designated as IS-001) has been completed. [The course is now available at no cost to any ARES registrant, and a "tutor less" format has been added as a parallel path for completing the course. Additional tutors were successfully recruited to help handle the huge initial interest as the changes were extremely well-received by the field organization. A "challenge" path directly to the final exam is also being implemented.] Similar updating and introduction of IS-016 - *Public Service and Emergency Communications Management for Radio Amateurs* -- will follow in the next few months.

The ARRL HQ staff has brought veteran Ohio Section Manager Scott Yonally, N8SY, on board to assist in the implementation of *ARES Connect* and to field questions about the new software package from users.

The League's Ham Aid program was reviewed, with some modest revisions to procedures. Most recently, the PSEWG has begun its examination of the future role of the League's National Traffic System in concert with ARES. A brief survey of selected SMs, STMs and SECs is to provide a beginning point for a more extensive analysis of the program. This review and evaluation is expected to be a major part of the PSEWG's efforts in the upcoming months.

A Board *Ad Hoc EmComm Manager Requirements Report* specifies the job requirements of a new position at ARRL HQ -- Director of Emergency Management -- who will lead a team responsible for supporting the ARES program and will work with HQ staff to develop standards, protocols, and processes designed to support the Field Organization. The report can be found [here](#).

## For Sale

Station equipment that George Loudon (N9CCI) has for sale. He purchased it all new, comes with owner's manuals and service manual plus new, spare finals.



Additionally, he is including a Heath Cantenna, full size G5RV antenna (new, never used), B&W antenna switch and all cables.

Kenwood:

TS-830s transceiver

AT -230 antenna tuner

SP-230 speaker

MC-50 desk mike

He is asking \$590.00 for everything. George can be reached at 812-838-2880 or via email at ifly400ft@gmail.com

## September Birthdays



Steve Connaughton	K9SRC	13th
Bill Cunnane	KK7XT	6th
Monie Owsley	KC9HSG	17th
Earl Pfettscher	WN9HRB	9th
Bernie Schmitt	KC9BMA	30th
Tom Washburne	WB9ZFN	20th

## Secretary Report

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

## Treasurer Report

Budget:

July 2019 (prepared 8/1/19)

Opening Balance:	\$4,243.59
Receipts:	
Membership	\$12.50
VE room rental	\$63.00
Total Receipts --->>	\$75.50
Expenditures	
Pd Mike Townsend W9KXP for FTM- 400XDR raffle radio	(\$395.00)
Total Expenditures---->>	(\$395.00)
Ending Balance	\$3,924.09
Red Cross Funds	\$1,227.82

## 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)**

## Amateur Radio Resources

Dave KC9UVG ask everyone at the Aug 2018 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 Newsline – [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

Route 66 Special Event September 7-15

[http://w6jbt.org/?page\\_id=15](http://w6jbt.org/?page_id=15)

Jamboree-on-the-Air third full weekend in October

SKYWARN Recognition Day Dec 7 2019

### 2020

Straight Key Night Jan  
**TARS AUCTION January**

ARRL Kids Day Jan

**Winter Field Day January 25/26 2020**

**TARS Banquet Feb**

**INQP May**

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June

**Field Day June**

13 Colonies Special Event July

National Night Out first Tuesday of August

International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend (ILLW) third full weekend of August

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 N9QL](#)**

**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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