

# SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

November 2019 - Issue No. 11



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.

## Hamtober Fest 2019



Congratulations to Mark KC9TYA on winning the FTM 400 XDR



## November Meeting

Tom Washburn WB9ZFN will once again be putting on the program for the Nov 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Nov meeting will also be the election for TARS 2020 officers. You will find the Ballot with instructions attached with this e-mail of SPARKS.

## Eat'n Before the Meet'n

**Eat'n Before the Meet'n, Nov 14<sup>th</sup>** is at the Panera Bread Co. 220 N Burkhardt Rd. 5:30 pm.

Come out and join us for good food, fun and fellowship before the meeting. We will leave with plenty of time to make the meeting. Looking ahead, Dec - Zaxby's and Jan - CiCi's.

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

## December Go-Box Show and Tell

By Scott Hibbs, KD4SIR

If Hamvention is the ham radio Christmas, Field Day is our Thanksgiving and it's still my favorite holiday. I was at a Field Day event in South Bend Indiana about 2005 when a thunderstorm was approaching. The elmers had done the sensible thing and unplugged. The lightning wasn't direct but it was close. The metal and the PL259 weren't touching but we all noticed the spark. Turned out the elmer's really nice TenTec HF rig was dead. It wasn't my radio, or anyone's fault (and he did get it fixed), but it still hurts. I knew then, that my radio at Field Day wasn't going to be a disassembly of my home station. That idea has become my go-box.

So I've always encouraged a Go-Box Show and Tell December meeting in my previous clubs and would one day like to see it become a hamfest like event. It's the perfect time of year for a go-box. Build one in time for Field Day - and it's the perfect weather to be inside working on it. Don't you wish you got a station in a box for Christmas?

Your go-box may be for a different reason. Em-Com, vacation etc. Build your first go-box, learn and another go-box configuration will soon follow. I encourage you to build your own so that you will enjoy it more because they are all different.

I found Norm Dingle, W9IFW online and asked him give my previous club the same demonstration he did for the Indianapolis Radio Club. That demonstration can be found online at <https://www.indyradioclub.org/pictures/GoBoxBuilding.pdf>. He drove to Columbus Indiana and met us to show off his (\$40 Husqvarna Chainsaw) Go Box. Great idea! A picture of it is here:



I had previously built an all-thread go box but how nice to meet Norm for his ideas! He used all-thread with small pvc pipe holding each shelf up. There's also a cloth red strap so he can lift the shelf system out of the box. Noticed he notched the shelves for cords? Small details are priceless if we share them.

So get a box together. It doesn't have to be expensive or great in any way. Even if it isn't finished yet, bring it out to our December meeting. There isn't a correct way to make a go-box and it's a lot of fun to show and tell. See you then! Scott KD4SIR.

## How to get "plugged in" to the amateur radio community

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

This morning, I found this email in my inbox:

Thank you for your website and great content. I passed the Tech and General tests on Saturday, and I will be taking the Extra exam in November. Your "No Nonsense" guides were very helpful.

I do have a question, though. How do I stay current on what's happening in the ham world? For example the CQ WW SSB contest was this weekend. How do newbies know this kind of thing? How do we find local or regional hamfests and other events?

This is a great question. Like any special interest, it can seem daunting to get plugged in (pun intended) to the community. Here are a few of my suggestions:

**Join the ARRL** (<http://arrl.org/>). The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) is really the place to start for information related to amateur radio. *QST*, the ARRL's monthly magazine, includes news about upcoming contests and ARRL-sanctioned hamfests. It also reviews new amateur radio products and provides a wealth of technical information.

In addition to *QST*, the ARRL publishes many email newsletters that members can subscribe to. For example, *Contest Update* is a biweekly newsletter that not only lists upcoming contests, but also includes tips on operating contests. The *ARES E-Letter* is a monthly public service and emergency communications newsletters. There are also email newsletters for ham radio instructors, those interested in DX, legislative matters, and satellite operation.

**Join your local club.** While the ARRL will help you keep abreast of amateur radio news and events nationally and internationally, if you want to know what going on in amateur radio in your area,

you should join your local club. To find clubs near you, go to <http://www.arrl.org/find-a-club>.

### Visit the WA7BNM Contest Calendar

(<https://www.contestcalendar.com/>). This contest calendar has become my go-to resource for any and all contest information. This site provides detailed information about amateur radio contests throughout the world, including their scheduled dates/times, rules summaries, log submission information and links to the official rules as published by the contest sponsors. Its features include an 8-Day calendar, a 12-Month calendar, and separate calendars for state QSO parties, CW contests, and QRP contests. You can also get a weekly e-mail of contests taking place in an 8-day period (Monday through Monday), as well as a list of contests scheduled for the next week and a list of log submission information for recent contests.

**Ham radio blogs.** Blogs are also a good way to keep up with what's going on in amateur radio. I like to think that I do a good job of covering what's going on in amateur radio, but, of course, I can't do it all. That being the case, you might also want read other blogs. Other amateur radio blogs that you might want to check out include:

- The KONR Radio Site (<http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/>)
- QRP—When you care to send the very least (<https://w2lj.blogspot.com/>)
- Everything Ham Radio (<https://www.everythinghamradio.com/>)

There are a bunch of other good ones out there. Find the ones you like and subscribe to them, so that you get a notification when new items are posted.

**Mailing lists.** Mailing lists are kind of old school, but if you have a special interest, chances are that there is a mailing list for it. For example, I own an Elecraft KX-3, so I subscribe to the Elecraft KX User Group mailing list (<https://groups.io/g/Elecraft-KX/>). Many amateur radio mailing lists are migrating to the Groups.io. To find a list, just click on the "Find or Create a Group" link at the top of the page. I just did a search for "amateur radio" and found 910 different amateur radio mailing lists.

**Podcasts and videocasts.** Podcasts are also another great way to stay up with amateur radio. I'm partial to the ICQPodcast (<http://icqpodcast.com/>) because I am on the panel once a month. The podcast not only includes a discussion of what's new in amateur radio, but also a feature, which digs a little deeper into a particular topic. Other great podcasts are Ham Radio Workbench (<https://www.hamradioworkbench.com/>), and Linux in the Ham Shack (<https://lhspodcast.info/>). Internet video shows that are worth checking out are Ham Radio 2.0 (<https://www.livefromthehamshack.tv/>), Ham Radio Now (<https://www.hamradionow.tv/home>), and Ham Nation (<https://twit.tv/shows/ham-nation>).

This is by no means an exhaustive list. If you have an amateur radio information resource that you find particular helpful, please let me know.

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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 often appears on the ICQPodcast (icqpodcast.com). When he's not trying to keep up with ham radio, he likes to build stuff and operate CW on the HF bands.

## CalFire and Amateur Radio Repeaters Posted October 5, 2019

Section members may have heard reports claiming that "[California declares Ham Radio no longer a benefit, severs ties across state](#)" and "[CalFire is causing removal of ham radio emergency communications infrastructure from entire State of California](#)." Our ARRL Pacific Division Director, Jim Tiemstra, K6JAT, offers the following facts that explain the issue that has arisen with few amateur repeaters on CalFire premises that have not properly identified their association with local emergency support.

"The State of California has not made any determination we can find 'that Ham Radio [is] no longer a benefit.' What happened is that CAL FIRE has transferred responsibility for its communications sites to its property management department. That department has the task of evaluating each site, its condition, use and tenants. If a repeater not known to be associated with the emergency management function of a local jurisdiction is found in a CAL FIRE vault, the default action is to move it out or subject it to commercial rental rates."

"Our contact in the California Office of Emergency Services suggests that, if any affected repeater is in any way involved with local emergency or government support activity, they should ask that agency to engage with CAL FIRE concerning the repeater. If the agency makes the case, there is a good chance that the repeater will be unaffected."

"Their advice is not to elevate this to State Legislators or the Governor's office. In Southern California, wherein sites managed by the U.S. Forest Service have required repeater owners to post bonds to cover the dismantling of their sites if they cease operation. Negotiation has resulted in considerable easing of the original requirements and a modification of terms to help mitigate the short-term financial impact on those repeater owners."

73, Jim Tiemstra, K6JAT, Pacific Division Director

In [episode 414 of the Ham Radio Now podcast](#), David Goldenberg, WØDHG, and Jim Aspinwall, NO1PC, discuss and explain this and other considerations for amateur radio EmComm equipment that shares space with government radio facilities.

## NEW HF OPERATORS -- THINGS TO DO

### ARRL Contest Update for October 30, 2019

Kirk, K4RO, posted a message to the new [ARRL Contesting](#) group noting that the "Contesting 101" columns he originally wrote for *NCJ (National Contest Journal)* aimed at beginning contesters are also available on the [Tennessee Contest Group website](#). Topics of the fifteen columns range from Searching and Pouncing to SO2R. The [ARRL CW Sweepstakes](#) contest is the weekend of November 2. This domestic contest is steeped in history and has a non-trivial exchange, but that challenge is part of the fun. The following weekend, the [WAE DX RTTY Contest](#) also has some components that make it a standout - a serial number is part of the exchange, and additional points can be earned by sending and receiving QTC traffic. QTCs are records of other stations that have already been worked in the contest. Most logging programs that support WAE DX RTTY have some provision for sending and receiving QTCs automatically, and it's fun to see what other stations have been working. It's also a good way to increase your point totals.

## 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

### November

6	KE9YK
13	KC9UVG
20	N9QVQ
27	KB9YWQ

### December

4	KB9YWQ
11	WB9KQF
18	KE9YK
25	KC9TYA

the event is to recognize amateur radio operators for the vital public service they perform during times of severe weather and to strengthen the bond between radio amateurs and their local NWS offices.

Developed in 1999, SRD is cosponsored by ARRL and the NWS. Traditionally, radio amateurs have assisted the mission of the NWS through providing near real-time reports of severe weather and storm development. Reports received from radio amateurs have proven invaluable to NWS forecasters.

During SRD, participants exchange contact information with as many NWS stations as possible on 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meters, plus 70 centimeters. Contacts via repeaters are permitted. Stations should exchange call signs, signal reports, and locations, plus a quick description of the weather at your location (e.g., sunny, partly cloudy, windy, rainy, etc.). EchoLink and IRLP nodes, including the Voice over Internet Protocol Weather Net ([VoIP-WX](#)), are expected to be active as well.

[WX4NHC](#) at the National Hurricane Center will also be on the air for SRD, 1300 - 1700 UTC, for its 21st year of SRD participation.

Event certificates are electronic and printable from the main website at the conclusion of SRD. To learn more, visit the [SKYWARN Recognition Day website](#).



## 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



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



## SKYWARN Recognition Day Celebrates 20 Years on December 7

SKYWARN Recognition Day ([SRD](#)) will mark its 20th anniversary on December 7, 0000 to 2400 UTC. This is the day each year when radio amateurs operate from National Weather Service (NWS) forecast offices across the country, celebrating the long relationship between the amateur radio community and the National Weather Service SKYWARN program. The purpose of



## November Birthdays

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Michael Dassell	KD9LAM	10th
Jeffrey Holt	AA9WJ	30th
Michael Keller	K9GPV	21st
Dick Meikle	W9XQ	22nd
C.L. Mitchell	K9PNP	18th
Robert A, Jr. Oberst	K8RAO	23rd
Gerald Schoenbachler	KC9NOY	7th
Willie Wilson	WD9FHA	29th

## Brag Rag

I wasn't expecting this, but WoW was I surprised when this showed up in my e-mail! Guess I should get ready for RAC 2019.



## What have you been doing?

Do you have something you would like to submit for the Brag Rag? 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.

## Hamfest Calendar

2019 ARRL Indiana Section Convention - Ft Wayne Hamfest  
<http://fortwaynehamfest.com/>

ARRL Indiana Section Convention - Ft Wayne Hamfest  
November 16 and 17, 2019 Ft Wayne, Indiana at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

Saturday November 16 - 9 am to 4 pm

Sunday November 17 - 9 am to 2 pm  
Admission: \$6 both days, and \$3 for Sunday only

## Treasurer Report

September 2019 (prepared 10/1/2019)

Opening Balance:	\$3,940.32
Receipts:	
Raffle ticket sales	\$65.00
Total Receipts --->>	\$65.00
Expenditures:	
Pd Mike W9KXP for FTM-100DR and HRI-200 digital node	(\$379.05)
Total Expenditures--->>	(\$379.05)
Ending Balance	\$3,626.27
Red Cross Fund	\$1,255.82

## Secretary Report

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

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

## 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 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)

## 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)**

## Looking Ahead

### 2019

SKYWARN Recognition Day, Dec 7 2019

### 2020

Straight Key Night Jan

**TARS AUCTION January 9th**

ARRL Kids Day Jan

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

**TARS Banquet Feb 6<sup>th</sup> [pending]**

**INQP 1600Z, May 2 to 0400Z, May 3, 2020**

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

Route 66 Special Event September

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

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

**TARS 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Hamtober Fest Oct 2020**

Total Solar Eclipse North America April 8, 2024

TARS is an [ARRL](http://www.arrl.org) affiliated club  
ARRL [Indiana Section](http://www.arrl.org/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](mailto:John.VanVorst@arrl.net)**

**Vice President [Max Wilkinson KD9ABT](mailto:Max.Wilkinson@arrl.net)**

**Treasurer [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](mailto:Jeff.Holt@arrl.net)**

**Secretary [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](mailto:Dave.Sandine@arrl.net)**

**Board of Directors**

[Mark Thienes KC9TYA](mailto:Mark.Thienes@arrl.net) (2018-2019)

[Len Schmitt N9QVQ](mailto:Len.Schmitt@arrl.net) (2018-2019)

[Herb Alvey KB9MZH](mailto:Herb.Alvey@arrl.net) (2019)

[Rick Jackson K9EXY](mailto:Rick.Jackson@arrl.net) (2019-2020)

[Dennis Martin WA2USA](mailto:Dennis.Martin@arrl.net) (2019-2020)

[Mike Townsend W9KXP](mailto:Mike.Townsend@arrl.net) (2019-2020)

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