

SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society

Serving the Tri-State for over 70 years

November 2021 - 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.

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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

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 contact one of the TARS officers listed in this newsletter or email info@w9og.net.

Presidents Corner

Hamtoberfest was a huge success again this year! If you didn't make it to this years Hamfest you really missed it. Huge kudos and 'thank you's' go out to Dennis Martin wa2usa and Jeff Holt aa9wj the co-chairs for this years Hamtober fest. There were also several club members who helped out a lot to make the show a big hit. Everyone had a great time catching up with friends and familiar voices, and the flea market was a success for everyone. TARS had quite an inventory of equipment that had been donated over the past few years, and most of it sold! That's great for our club, and great for the buyers who got some great deals. I am already looking forward to next year!!

Great news! We are planning to meet IN PERSON for our November and December meetings! We will meet at the Westside EMA (WEMA) facility. So plan to attend and say hello. Hope to see you there!

As you know, at the November meeting we will hold elections for club officers and board members. Check Sparks for more info on that. If you cannot attend the November meeting you can vote by mail. Elections are an important part of making our club a success. Also important is having active members taking an interest in serving in a leadership role. If you're not running this year, please consider running next year. The club needs you. And you don't have to wait until you're a board member- get involved now and help the club with ideas and assistance at club events.

Lastly, as you probably know in October, we said 'goodbye for now' to Len Schmitt n9qvq. Len was a long-time devoted supporter of TARS who along with his wife Susie served for years in a number of leadership positions in the club. Len also supported our community and the EMA and was key to building radio facilities and processes for emergency preparedness in our district. Most importantly, Len was a devoted family man. Join me in keeping Len's family in your prayers through this difficult time.

73, and see you at the meeting!

John N9oL

Officer Elections

You should have received your ballot for the election of 2022 Officers and Board Members. The election will be held Nov 11th at the TARS general membership meeting. If you are not able to come in person to the meeting, please follow the instructions for mailing your ballot.

November TARS Meeting 11/11/21 7pm

The meeting will be held at the West side EMA Training Center (WEMA) [1430 Harmony Way](#). Many will be happy to have an in person meeting once again. Masks are optional but recommended along with distancing as much as possible. *As always, if you have any covid symptoms, not feeling well or have been in contact with anyone with covid symptoms PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND.*

Hamtober Fest Raffle Winners

Scott Hibbs, KD4SIR won the FT70dr.



Brian Frederick KD9SDQ won the FT3D



Hamtober Fest door prize winners:

Laminated ARRL Band Plans	KD9PFH
\$25 ARRL Gift Certificate	KF0TL
ARRL Antenna Classics book.	WB4GZK
\$25 ARRL Gift Certificate	KD4SIR
ARRL Antenna Tuners book	KC9UVG
\$50 ARRL Gift Certificate	KB9BNM
ARRL License Manual	W9KBJ

Light Switches as Coax Switches

By Scott Hibbs, KD4SIR

I've been slowly building my shack since moving here a couple years ago. I posted a couple videos on YouTube regarding this (which can be found with a search for my name or callsign). Recently I redid my pass through with 5 coax cables – because that is what fit the hole. However the inside plate wouldn't be wide enough for all these connections. Guess it's just hanging coax from the wall right? QRM from the wife (KC9EOU) kept me from leaving it this way.

So I thought building a “switch board” would be adequate wife approval. Have you priced coax switches lately? They are like \$25+ a piece brand new. If I want five of them – one for each of the coax connections - they would be \$125+. Always frugal, I began searching for alternatives or wholesale pricing.

A forum was found with a comment about making them from light switches and this ARRL article titled “Inexpensive RF Switches for the Ham Shack” by Paul Follini, VE1CZX in the Aug 1986 issue of QST was referenced.

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Technology/tis/info/pdf/QST_Aug_1986_p25-27.pdf

I also referenced a video by W5CYF / Tinker John on building one here: https://youtu.be/5xn_EjhlYA

I would love for an engineer to help me with Table 1 in that article on the “Reflection Coefficient and SWR vs Return Loss”, but what sold me was a line regarding a test on 15 meters at 1kw with an SWR of 8.5:1 (a 600 watts returned) without arching, and with another line stating these light switches “should handle the RF levels encountered in amateur HF radio use.” I am only using 100w HF now, and if they arch when I use them on VHF/UHF at 50 watts, I'll let everyone know.

Until recently, I always disconnected my coax (not my electrical cord) when I wasn't on the air. What I didn't think through was that my station and antenna counterpoise was also attached to the electrical ground of the house (to help eliminate noise) as well as my radio power supplies with the three prong outlet. I was always connected to my antenna anyway even disconnecting the coax because of the shared ground.

Years ago at a South Bend field day we had all disconnected for a good quick storm and I happen to catch sight and sound of a coax connector arc against the metal ridge of a wooden table. The lightning strike was about a mile away. That metal ridge acted like an antenna and it killed the transceiver. Put a damper on the whole field day. I still feel horrible about it and it had nothing to do with me. I think we are probably more likely to be hit by lightning via the mains or Lightning EMP instead of a direct hit.

There's the old joke that where there are three hams in town there is two clubs. I know from experience that if you want a good discussion (maybe even a good scholarly debate) just ask someone about grounding especially within earshot of a few other hams. You see there is a difference between ac ground (or lightning protection) and an RF ground. Folklore and misconceptions don't help either. We are all lifetime students on this topic, and I'll leave it to someone else to write the grounding article for Sparks or TARS presentation.



So I made 5 light switches with a 2 way switch connected to a 3 way switch. The 2 way switch is my connect/disconnect and the 3 way switch is the A/B switch. Yes, I'm lazy and I don't want to disconnect my coax after each use anymore. If I'm hit by lightning close enough to arc the switch, it was a goner anyway.

The 5 light switch boxes cost me about \$30 and my switches disconnect too. So each antenna gets two transceivers to connect too. I need like 6 or more radios and three or more antennas. I told my wife about my shack's new radio and antenna capacity and she just looked at me. I call that consideration!

Scott Hibbs
KD4SIR

ARRL Clean Signal Initiative on the horizon

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In recent message to his Northwest Division membership, Mike Ritz, W7VO, described a new program that he's gotten the ARRL to take on—the Clean Signal Initiative. He writes:

“After a few months gathering support from the amateur community for the project, the ARRL Clean Signal Initiative (CSI) is finally getting off the ground. The Board's Programs and Services Committee approved the concept several months ago, and since then I have been canvassing some of the best known RF engineers in amateur radio to get their support and input. As a result, the team will be conducting our first Zoom call next week to lay out the next steps for the project. All I can say at this time is that there are some amateur radio “heavy hitters” behind this, and I believe will be a game changer for the ARRL.

For those that may be unaware of this project, here is a synopsis (or at least my vision):

1. The CSI gets the ARRL formally in the “technical standards” business. (Other technical organizations already do it: IEEE, UL, ASTM, and SAE, and others.) The ARRL currently tests new products to informal standards, with no real hard benchmarks for manufacturers to meet, other than the minimal standards outlined in FCC Part 97.307.
2. Creates and incorporates documented “best practice” standards and testing methodologies to ensure commercial amateur radio transmitters and amplifiers meet not only minimum FCC requirements for signal cleanliness, but push the envelope.
3. These new standards can be “home grown”, or passed through the IEEE, but I think it's important they be also branded as “ARRL Technical Standards.”
4. Test new commercial transceivers and amplifiers against these standards.
5. Certify the transmitters and amplifiers that pass the standards: “CSI certified by the ARRL.”
6. Work with manufacturers to ensure compliance of those that don't. (Market pressure will drive this.)
7. Market the program to the amateurs through QST.
8. Work with manufacturers and social media experts to create training materials to teach hams how to set up their equipment to ensure the cleanest transmitted signals. (This education part is key!)”

Rob Sherwood, NCOB, of Sherwood Engineering, who is most well-known for his [ranking of receiver performance](http://www.sherweng.com/table.html) (<http://www.sherweng.com/table.html>), is part of this effort. You can see a video of a talk that he gave recently to the Sutton & Cheam Radio Society by going to <https://youtu.be/lloApKRecl>. [Also on the committee is Ward Silver, NOAX.](#)

Based on my knowledge of how IEEE standards committees work, I stressed that the initiative should make every effort to get as many stakeholders—including manufacturers and users—involved as possible. Involving so many people may be cumbersome at times, but standards require consensus for them to be effective, and the only way to do that is to get everyone involved. I'd suggest that if you feel that you have something to contribute that you contact Mike directly. His email address is w7vo@arrl.org.

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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 (<https://KB6NU.Com/study-guides/>), and often appears on the ICQPodcast (<https://icqpodcast.com>). When he's not worry about how clean his signal is, he operates CW on the HF bands and teaches ham radio classes.

Crozet Islands DXpedition on the Far Horizon

The ARRL Letter for November 4, 2021

A radio amateur in France is planning a DXpedition to the Crozet Islands (FT5/W) for mid-December 2022 to mid-March 2023 with the call sign FT5WQ. Thierry Mazel, F6CUK, spent months getting permission to operate from the third most-wanted DXCC entity. TAAF, the agency that administers the French remote islands, is allowing a one-person operation. The Crozet Islands archipelago is divided into east and west. They once were the destination of



seal hunters from the US and elsewhere. The last ham radio activity from Crozet was in 2009 by Florentin Bard, F4DYW, also as FT5WQ. The solo DXpedition is anticipated to cost

as much as \$58,000.

The Twitter account is [@Crozet2022](#), and a website is expected to be online soon. When it's up and running, it will include details of how donated funds will be used, and Thierry pledges that all contributions will be refunded if the operation does not take place.

Crozet Islands, a subantarctic archipelago of small islands in the southern Indian Ocean, form one of the five administrative districts of the French Southern and Antarctic Territories. It consists of several small uninhabited islands of volcanic origin. The islands cover an area of some 195 square miles. The islands are now a national conservation area. Radio amateurs are not the only ones hoping to visit.

According to a [description](#) Thierry posted on the website of the IARU member society [REF](#), "[T]he climate is particularly difficult, the islands of Crozet are strongly committed to the protection of nature (fauna and flora), and the prefect's offices are faced with a significant solicitation of visitor requests."

"Many obstacles had to be overcome," Thierry said.

While people are scarce, the islands boast a broad array of wildlife, including penguins, elephant seals, and giant albatross. In common with other subantarctic islands, the inadvertent or intentional introduction of alien species has proved a problem. Rats and mice arrived accidentally, cats were brought in to control them, and rabbits were introduced as food.

Mazel will release further details as they are available. -- *Some information from [Discover France](#)*

2022 Winter Field Day

Ok if you are new to the hobby. What is Field Day?

Field Day is a temporary setup of transmitting stations in public or private places to demonstrate amateur radio's equipment, knowledge, skills, and the ability to provide a service to the communities and the nation. This happens twice a year. We have a Winter Field Day and a Summer Field Day.

It's time to show that we can operate and use our communication skills in a non-ideal environment. We know how to use our skills and equipment in our homes, but can we do it outside under any type of weather conditions.

So, to make doing field day more interesting a contest theme was added years ago.

2022 Winter Field Day is less than 80 days. It's time to start planning and preparing. Where do we want to have winter field day, do we want any food, how many stations will be operating, and how long do we want to operate? If you are interested in helping to organize this event let me know my email is WB9ONU@HOTMAIL.COM.

Remember an event is only as good as a result of great planning. Jerry - WB9ONU

Brag Rag

Do you have something you would like to submit for the Brag Rag? Send your QSLs, special event certificates, awards, interesting photos, projects etc. to sparks@w9og.net to have them included in your newsletter.

For SALE

Hammarlund HQ-100 receiver.

I need to downsize my radio table. The unit works great and is cosmetically beautiful.

Many young hams got their start with what was considered a deluxe receiver like this and a home brew transmitter.

It certainly looks sharp on the radio shack table.

specs:

Hammarlund HQ-100 general coverage 10 tube receiver that tunes medium wave and shortwave in four bands: .54-1.6, 1.6-4, 4-10, 10-30 MHz and 20 meter bandspread. Other enhancements include: antenna trimmer, noise limiter, RF gain, S-meter, standby and AVC on/off. This radio does not have a built in speaker. There are 3.2 ohm speaker terminals on the rear panel. Connections for a single wire or dipole antenna on the rear. I have an external speaker to go with it.

Both operating manuals and service manuals are available for download on the internet.



Asking \$250 to public. \$200 to Hams.

Bob Pointer N9XAW
ftg2pointer@gmail.com



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

Nov	3	KE9YK
	10	KC9UVG
	17	WB9KQF
	24	WB4ZUT
Dec	1	KB9MZH
	8	KC9TYA
	15	KE9YK
	22	KC9UVG
	29	WB9KQF

If you would like to be a Net Control Operator for the Wednesday Night Net or learn how to run a SKYWARN net.

Contact: [Chris Lantaff KE9YK](mailto:Chris.Lantaff@ke9yk.com).

Vanderburgh Co. ARES/RACES

The next Vanderburgh county ARES/RACES meeting Novemberber 18th, 6:00pm on ZOOM.

Anyone interested in emergency communication in Vanderburgh County is invited to participate.

Feel free to check in to the Vanderburgh Co ARES net **each Tuesday at 8:00pm** on the 146.790 repeater.



Vanderburgh County Auxcomm

Chris KE9YK IN82RACES@gmail.com

Vanderburgh Co RACES Officer

812.453.1972 Hamshack Hotline 12604

Warrick Co ARES/RACES

The Warrick County ARES/RACES group meets on the second Monday of each month. The meeting begins at 6:30pm and generally is completed by 9:00pm. The meetings are held on the third floor of the Court House in the EMA Conference room.

Anyone needing additional information concerning meetings or location contact: Chris L. Owen at KC9CLO@gmail.com.



November Birthdays!!!

Ross Cecil	KC9JOV	29th
Michael Dassell	KD9LAM	10th
Tom Fisher	KD9PSK	2nd
Jeffrey Holt	AA9WJ	30th
C.L. Mitchell	K9PNP	18th
Robert Oberst Jr.	K8RAO	23rd
Garlan (Willie) Wilson	WD9FHA	29th

VE Testing

2021 Ham Radio VE Test Sessions

Dec 18

ATTENTION!!!

The Tri-State Amateur Radio Society VE Team is currently holding all VE test sessions at the Vanderburgh Co. EMA west side training facility, 1440 Harmony Way in Evansville. This is the building behind the old school building. Look for the tower and antennas and enter the side door by the tower.



You will need to know your FRN number. If you have a license currently you have an FRN number. If you do not yet have a license you can register with the FCC and obtain an FRN number. Go to www.fcc.gov/register.

If you need help or have questions, please let me know at n9ol@arrl.net.

Examinations will start promptly at 9:00 AM Central time.

We have no pre-registration, and examinations are administered on a walk-in basis.

Details can be found at: <http://w9og.net/ve-testing>

For more info contact: [John VanVorst N9OL](mailto:John.VanVorst@arrl.net) c: 812.305.4100



Hamfest & Tailgate Schedule

For the latest ARRL Hamfest list go to

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

November 13 & 14

Fort Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo

2021 - ARRL - Central Division Convention

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

4000 Parnell Ave – Fort Wayne

<http://www.fortwaynehamfest.com>

Secretary Report

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

Dave Sandine KC9UVG

Treasurer Report

Budget:

Budget:

September 2021 (prepared 10/1/2020)

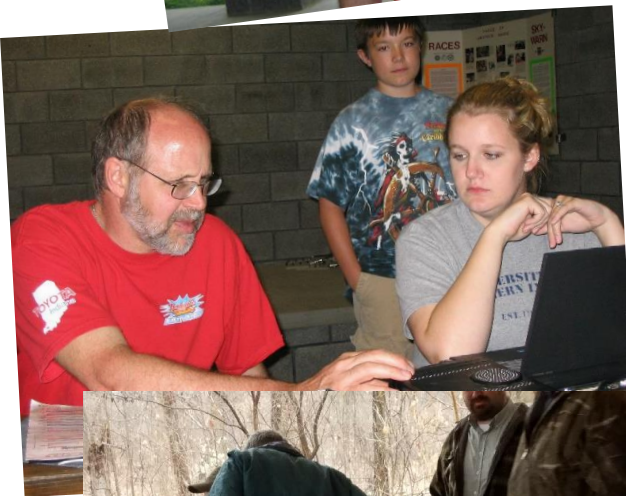
Opening Balance:		\$3,454.91
Receipts:		
None	\$0.00	
Total Receipts --->>		\$0.00
Expenditures:		
None	\$0.00	
Total Expenditures--->>		\$0.00
Ending Balance		\$3,454.91
Red Cross Fund		\$1,283.82
Funds Available to TARS		\$2,171.09

Jeff Holt AA9WJ

TARS Treasurer



**In Memoriam
Leonard Schmitt N9QVQ SK**



Looking Ahead

2021

SKYWARN Recognition Day, First Saturday, December

2022

TARS AUCTION January ?

TARS PICNIC TBD

Straight Key Night January 1 from 0000 UTC through 2359 UTC

ARRL Kids Day Jan First Saturday

Winter Field Day January 2022

TARS Banquet

INQP 2022

MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June

ARRL Kids Day June Third Saturday

Field Day June 26-27

13 Colonies Special Event

National Night Out first Tuesday of August

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

Light Up 2 Meters Night August

Route 66 Special Event September 11-19

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

TARS 4th annual Hamtober Fest 2022

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



TARS mailing address:

TARS

P.O. Box 4521

Evansville, IN 47724

Don't forget to check out our web page www.w9og.net

Facebook Group

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

TARS E-mail: info@w9og.net

2021 Club Officers - Board members

President [John VanVorst N9OL](#)

Vice President [Dennis Martin WA2USA](#)

Treasurer [Jeff Holt AA9WJ](#)

Secretary [Dave Sandine KC9UVG](#)

Board of Directors

[Herb Alvey KB9MZH](#) (2020-2021)

[Don Land KB9YWQ](#) (2020-2021)

Tom Hilgeman KD9PFH (2021)

[Mike Townsend W9KXP](#) (2021-2022)

Scott Hibbs KD4SIR (2021-2022)

Charlie Martin WB8LDV (2021-2022)

SPARKS Editor:

Chris Lantaff KE9YK

E-mail: sparks@w9og.net

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 25th of the month.

Most any document format is acceptable.

Photos or graphics of your subject are welcome.

Send your article to: sparks@w9og.net