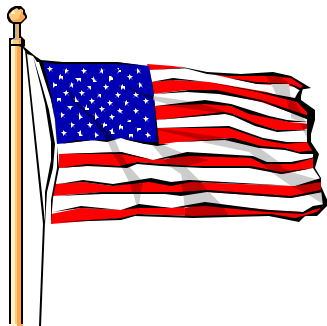


# Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society  
September, 2004--Vol. LVIII, No. 9

**TARS Website:** <http://www.w9og.org>.    **Club repeaters:** 146.79 and 147.15  
**Say "Hello" at the weekly Tri-State Emergency Net, 8:00pm Wednesdays on 146.79**

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## The President's Corner

Well Sparks is finally getting back on track, but we now have some major issues with the 146.79 repeater. As most of you have heard by now, the tower at the Indiana State Police Post fell during a recent storm. The 146.79 repeater is at this location and is off the air as a result. There was some minor damage to the repeater unit due to the feedlines being pulled out as the tower fell away from the radio building, and at this time we are uncertain about any electrical damage, blown finals, etc. The ISP plans to have a new tower up and functioning in 6-8 weeks, so we hope to be back on at that time also. Thanks to Bob N9XAW and James KC9EMT, the backup 6.79 has been put on the air from our remote receive site in Warrick County. It has limited coverage, but is functional. It does not require a pl tone.

Also thanks to Ron KF9RR, Mark N9NYF and Jay WB9ICL who had all headed to the State Post with me after receiving word that they would like to have some ham radio operators for assistance. After arriving it was determined that there wasn't really any need anyway, but I really appreciated everyone's efforts.

Reminder!!!! The TARS club meeting this Thursday, September 9th will be HOBBY NIGHT. You are invited to bring to bring a display or short demonstration telling us about other hobbies you might have besides ham radio. We will give everyone a few minutes to get up and talk about their hobby and then after refreshments you can go around and find out more information on what you might be interested in.

The club meeting on October 14th will be at the new EMA office. Adam KB9SXX will give us a tour of the new facility and the communications room.

Hope to see you at the Red Cross at 7:00pm on September 9th.

Chris KE9YK

## Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

- 1 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVO)
- 2 TARS Board mtg., new Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 8 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVO)

- 9 TARS club mtg., new Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 15 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 22 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 25 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, EVC Emergency Management Bldg.; bring photocopy of current license, any previous exam credits, two forms of ID, and \$12.00; contact Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or tbrooks@sige.com.net).
- 29 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)

## OCTOBER

- 6 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)
- 7 TARS Board mtg., new Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 13 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 14 TARS club mtg., new Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 20 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 27 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)
- 30 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, EVC Emergency Management Bldg. on Stanley St. (just north of Diamond Ave. at Stringtown Rd.); bring photocopy of current license, any previous exam credits, two forms of ID, and \$12.00; contact Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or tbrooks@sige.com.net).
- 30-31 Contest weekend! (see below)
  - Worldwide DX Contest, SSB
  - 10-10 International Fall Contest, CW
  - QRP ARCI Fall QSO Party

## August Issue of Sparks

My apologies again for the missing issue of Sparks (August, 2004). When I agreed to take over again as Sparks editor I knew that August would be a problem, but I thought I would have time to do it. Things didn't work out exactly as I had planned, and it did not get done. I hope that the rest of this year's issues will be on time!

But this year's Northern Exposures field trip (the first rerun since August, 2001) was another success, although we didn't get to see the northern lights this time. And early on we got hit by a nasty weather system that brought nearly steady rain for three days and four nights. But we also had some highlights, including a visit to a diamond-bearing kimberlite deposit northeast of Lake Superior—one of several discovered in recent years that has some people expecting Canada to become a major diamond exporter

in the future. We also studied an impact crater on the north side of Sudbury, Ontario that may be the largest impact crater on Earth. Then we retraced the steps taken during the discovery of Canada's largest uranium deposits on the north side of Lake Huron—the rocks had our Geiger counter needle pinned on the "hot" side. There were many other worthwhile geological experiences. Joanne and I had a great time, and the students who accompanied us had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see geological features we don't have around here.

As for **Sparks**, I have one simple request: Please send contributions by e-mail in ASCII text or in Word or WordPerfect in 10-point Arial or Helvetica font without custom formatting (no special paragraph or line spacing, for example; no font changes other than underlining or bolding). Currently I must spend a great deal of time stripping the custom formatting from texts so I can put it all in a consistent format for the pages of **Sparks**. Thanks.

Norm W9AU

## Roy Cloukey, KA9IWP, SK

Roy Cloukey, KA9IWP passed away at North Park Nursing Home on August 24, 2004. He was 75 years old. Roy was a long-time member of TARS prior to his declining health in the last few years. He had also been a member of Vanderburgh County RACES. Roy had worked for Chrysler, Zenith, and the West Branch Library on Franklin Street. On his last TARS membership renewal, he listed his occupation as "pill popper," showing that he did not lose his sense of humor in spite of his health problems. Roy was an army veteran who served in Korea. He was interned at Locust Hill Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Southerncare Hospice in Evansville.

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the "Bug"

Vibroplex is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the patent for the Original Bug (August 9, 1904) with the release of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Edition Bug. The black powder coated base duplicates the smooth but "weathered" look of the early cast bases and includes distinctive gold pin striping and gold leaf designs in each corner. They are also announcing the new Chrome Warrior, a deluxe version of the popular

Code Warrior Jr. featuring a brushed chrome base with polished brass upper parts and clear paddles. The 100th Anniversary bug lists at \$199.95 and the Chrome Warrior at \$139.95. Photos of these beauties should soon be available on the Vibroplex Web site (<http://www.vibroplex.com/>). (from ARRL Contest Rate Sheet for August 25, 2004)

## Ham News

### MARLON BRANDO, KE6PZH/FO8GJ, SK

One of the best-known names in Hollywood, Marlon Brando, died at the age of 80 on July 1, 2004. Brando held amateur radio licenses in the U.S. (KE6PZH) and in French Polynesia (FO8GJ) where he operated from his private island. In an interview with Larry King on CNN in 1994, Brando said he enjoyed ham radio because it offered him an opportunity to just be himself. Brando was best known for his roles as Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire," a dockworker in "On the Waterfront," and Vito Corleone in "The Godfather." He was nominated eight times for academy awards, and won twice.

### JOHN KRAUS, W8JK, SK

Radio astronomer, antenna designer, cosmic explorer, and author John Kraus, W8JK, died July 18 at the age of 94. He had been a professor at Ohio State University, and authored *Antennas*, a standard reference textbook, as well as several other titles. Kraus was best known for his bi-directional wire beam antenna dubbed the "8JK" array. He also designed the corner reflector and helix antennas, and was a pioneer in radiotelescope design. His "Big Ear" radiotelescope received the still unidentified "Wow!" signal from space in 1978 that suggested the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. He launched the magazine *Cosmic Search* devoted to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

### TERRY, AA9MM IN FLORIDA

Terry, AA9MM went to Florida to help with emergency communications after Hurricane Charley struck. He probably had not expected to remain there for a second hurricane, but that seems to have happened, as Frances ravages another part of the state. Terry may have some interesting stories to tell when he returns.

## ARRL TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

During September, the ARRL will be among dozens of organizations and agencies participating in National Preparedness Month. "The Ready Campaign," produced by the Ad Council in partnership with the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is aimed at making citizen preparedness "a priority for every city, every neighborhood and every home" in the US. The League is an official affiliate of Citizen Corps, a DHS initiative to enhance public preparedness and safety. ARRL will combine its role in National Preparedness Month--which starts September 9--with its own "Amateur Radio Awareness Day" on September 18.

"The two events offer great opportunities for Amateur Radio to showcase its valued service to the nation," said ARRL Field and Educational Services Manager Rosalie White, K1STO. She encouraged ARRL-affiliated clubs and Field Organization volunteers to use the occasion to set up public demonstrations of Amateur Radio and to present or even demonstrate--under the banner of National Preparedness Month--the free services Amateur Radio provides to communities.

ARRL Club/Mentor Program Manager Norm Fusaro, W3IZ, suggests that while displays should be informative, they also need to be neat and simple. "This is also an excellent opportunity to recruit prospective hams for licensing classes that clubs may be forming for the fall," he added. In addition, ARRL encourages all Amateur Radio operators to have a family emergency communication plan in place in case of an emergency, such as a severe weather event. "Get Ready Now" brochures are available. Visit the Ready.gov Web site <<http://www.ready.gov>> for more information.

On Amateur Radio Awareness Day, September 18, W1AW/90 will be on the air from 10 AM until 10 PM Eastern Time with ARRL staff members, new Section Managers in town for the annual Section Managers' Workshop and volunteers from the Newington Amateur Radio League as operators. White encourages amateur groups to invite public officials, representatives of served agencies and first responders to visit their public displays to discuss plans for their Simulated Emergency Test (SET), typically in early October, or other drills.

Some clubs already have jumped on the National Preparedness Month/Amateur Radio Awareness Day bandwagon, Fusaro notes--in some cases by taking advantage of already scheduled events during September.

The Middletown Amateur Radio Club--W2MAR--in New Jersey will take part in Middletown Day activities September 18 with a public ham radio display, information table, traffic handling and ARES/RACES displays. The club expects some 3000 visitors in town, including state and local officials.

In Illinois, Amateur Radio Awareness Day falls on the same weekend as the three-day Peoria Superfest 2004 Amateur Radio and computer show. The Peoria Area Amateur Radio Club will have an all-day demonstration at the Exposition Garden Fairgrounds on September.

The Space Park Employees Association Amateur Radio Club (W6TRW) in Redondo Beach, California, will have its emergency communications team (ECT) van at the Northrop Grumman Space Technology open house September 18.

The ARRL has printed materials available for ARRL-affiliated clubs, ARES groups and others to use for public exhibits and ham radio demonstrations. Brochures may be downloaded free of charge from the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/htdig/?method+and&words=brochure>>. For a small shipping fee, exhibit kits also are available. Contact Linda Mullally, KB1HSV, <[lmullally@arrl.org](mailto:lmullally@arrl.org)> to order.

The League also offers a sample news release <<http://www.arrl.org/pio/handbook/sample-news-release.html>> that clubs and groups can customize to help spread the word. More information about National Preparedness Month or Amateur Radio demonstrations in general is available from ARRL <[clubs@arrl.org](mailto:clubs@arrl.org)> (from the ARRL Letter, v. 23, no. 34).

**Editor's note:** Perhaps with the decreased interest displayed recently by EMA and the reduced operating facilities at the Red Cross, this might be a good opportunity for TARS to organize on its own to begin handling emergency preparations and drills. This would be an ideal time to publicize the potential contribution of amateur radio to the community in times of disaster or declared emergency. I excerpted this from the introductory statement at the <Ready.gov website>:

### **"What is Ready.gov all about?"**

"Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and **developing a family communications plan**, are the same for both a natural or man-made

emergency. However, as you will see throughout the pages of Ready.gov, there are important differences among potential terrorist threats that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. With a little planning and common sense, you can be better prepared for the unexpected."

I highlighted the phrase, "**developing a family communications plan.**" As we all know, one avenue to communications preparedness would be to obtain an amateur radio license. It seems to me there is something for us to run with here. Any ideas out there?

## **One Man's Opinion**

Have you been keeping up with the swirling controversy regarding the use of BPL and how it will affect the use of amateur radio frequencies? ARRL has continually voiced its opposition to BPL, and radio amateurs have strongly objected to its deployment due to interference issues.

The FCC has turned a blind eye towards the argument of spectral pollution, and the present administration wants to push full steam ahead in favor of BPL. Hold on for just a moment! If BPL is not guilty of unnecessary spectral pollution, then why did the Dutch abandon it after a few weeks of trial testing? Why has Amperion of Cedar Rapids, Iowa shut down their system after a month of field-testing? Additionally, Amperion also came to the technical conclusion that notching techniques for amateur channels were unsuccessful.

Why has a power company in the Eastern part of North Carolina dumped all plans for BPL? The answer to all these questions are obvious. Licensed services are complaining about unlicensed services causing interference to them. BPL becomes the villain by its very existence, churning out spectral pollution via every power utility pole in your community.

Radio amateurs are letting their voices echo to the Commission and to ARRL that the FCC is sweeping the enforcement policy about BPL under the rug. The FCC hopes the problem will just go away, and maybe no one will notice or complain about it if BPL becomes operational in their area.

I oppose any service that is not spectrally pure. I firmly oppose BPL due to the fact it infringes upon useful frequencies of other services including amateur

radio. Thus far BPL is not a good idea--the problems it produces far outweigh the usefulness of the service.

For those of you who have not voiced your opposition to BPL, make your opinions known by visiting the White House Website. Submit a letter to President Bush, stating why you oppose this service, and hopefully no one will employ this questionable technology in your area. Our amateur bands depend upon us as a large group of users standing our ground in protest to a service emitting large amounts of interference.

Hopefully, no such ventures exist within the tri-state area for the deployment of BPL. We as TARS members and active radio amateurs should watch, and file objections with the FCC, ARRL and the power company responsible if BPL ever raises its ugly head. Not doing so might signal the end of our service. Give it some thought! As always my friends this is "One Man's Opinion."

**Bill** K4LRX

## **Spectacular Sporadic-E Opening**

Don't you just love it when people tell you about the opening you missed? Hopefully, some of you got in on the 144 and 220 openings on July 6-7, 2004, rated by veteran UHFers as the best ever. The opening occurred in the central to eastern U.S. and southern Canada, and included 220 MHz. People worked up to 1600 miles on 144 MHz and 1274 miles on 220 MHz, and up to five grids on 220 with others heard. WZ1V reported working 52 grids on 144 MHz. 50 MHz was wide open during these times, as well. Some operators were clued in to the opening by the QRM on the FM broadcast band (N2SLN/M reported hearing WOLL in Riviera Beach, FL, KXBL in Tulsa, OK, KSMB in Lafayette, LA, and KKPT in Little Rock, AR on the car FM radio).

Good *Es* propagation had been predicted by those who watch global weather trends, and their predictions so far have been borne out. The good openings may provide opportunities to study the causes and behavior of sporadic *E* more thoroughly than has been done before (there are apparently multiple causes that are not yet fully known, but wind shear seems to play a role in some). Stay alert, and you may be able to cash in next time.

## **Secretary's Report**

### **September Birthdays:**

KC9DYU George DuBord (9<sup>th</sup>)  
KC9BUG Noah Elzroth (22<sup>nd</sup>)  
N9DEO Harold Muensterman (22<sup>nd</sup>)  
KC9BMA Bernie Schmitt (30<sup>th</sup>)  
KB9MZG Michael A. Yates (24<sup>th</sup>)

## **Treasurer's Report**

No treasurer's report included in complimentary SPARKS

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