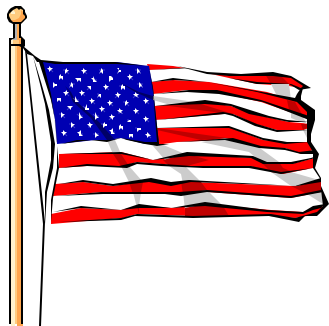


# Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society  
January, 2005--Vol. LIX, No. 1

TARS Website: <http://www.w9og.net> 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

I would like to thank Chris KE9YK for his leadership this past year. Way to go, Chris! I thank all of you for honoring me with my new post in TARS. I may call on you all for assistance at some time, because a "senior moment" may sneak up on me at any time.

I hope everyone had a good time at the Xmas party. The new year will bring many challenges, and some fun, too. Let's go out and recruit new members for TARS. We need the good ideas they will bring with them. Our annual auction is at the first monthly meeting of the year, on January 13th. We can rid our closets of our old radios and other stuff someone else might want.

Then we need to restore the small trailer we purchased from Ch44-WEVV-TV via Bill K4LRX. We can use it for Field Days and other community service activities, parades, etc. This portable station could help bring us some good PR for Ham Radio. It requires cleaning and painting, installing electrical connections for HF and VHF/UHF equipment (radios and antennas). So let's roll up our sleeves and let's get started!

See you at the auction on the 13th.

73 Herb KB9MZH

## Calendar

### JANUARY

- 5 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)
- 6 TARS board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 12 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 13 TARS club mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm, **annual club auction**
- 19 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 26 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)
- 29 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 \$14.00; contact Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or [tbrooks@sigecon.net](mailto:tbrooks@sigecon.net)).

### FEBRUARY

- 2 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)
- 3 TARS board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 9 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 10 TARS club mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 16 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 23 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVQ)

26 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 \$14.00; contact Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or tbrooks@sigeom.net).

## THE PSALM OF RADIO

I just relocated this gem after losing it for about a year. Dave, W9AJR, sent it, and it got forgotten in my e-mail Inbox. This may be the longest anyone has had to wait to get a contribution published in Sparks. (Really, folks, we need contributions!) John R. Elliot wrote this ditty in 1930, and transmitted to Dave, W9AJR by Larry Woodworth, WØHXS, President of the Marshall Ensor Memorial Organization (Marshall Ensor, W9BSP, was an ARRL approved Code Practice Station in the 20's and 30's. It is estimated Ensor helped over 10,000 obtain their amateur tickets. To learn more about Marshall Ensor, visit the MEMO Web Site at <http://www.w9bsp-w9ua.org>.) Enjoy!

Radio is my hobby: I shall want no other.  
It maketh me to stay home at night.  
It leadeth me into much trouble.  
It draweth on my purse.  
I go into the paths of debt for its sake.  
Yea, though I understand it perfectly, it will not oscillate.  
Its concerts and speeches, they comfort me,  
Yet it will not work in the presence of my friends.  
I anoint the coils with shellac:  
But the tube spillith over.  
Surely the bug will follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the radio fan forever.

## Ham News

### TSUNAMI!--HAMS LEND A HELPING HAND IN ASIA

When four amateur radio operators from India headed to the Andaman and Nicobar islands a few weeks ago, armed with only basic ham equipment, backpacks, and sun blocks, they had no idea that their hobby would soon become the islands' only lifeline. They went because it's a "high value" country for hams. You need special permission from the Indian government to operate there, and that has been

difficult to get. The last time a ham operated in the Andamans was about 25 years ago.

The team, which came from across India, left on December 3 for their DXpedition. They went to Port Blair, set up the equipment, and had contacted about 35,000 hams across the world. Then the earthquake began, followed by tidal waves, which swept over the small islands. They were actually in operation when the tremors began. Bharthi, the team leader, was talking to an Australian on the radio. The ham in Australia said her voice suddenly rose by a few octaves and she yelled "tremor." Then, her radio went dead.

The islands were devastated by the quake and crashing waves. Phones died, the electricity went out, and life in Andaman and Nicobar came to a stunned halt. On the airwaves too, there was a loud silence, as hams across the world held their breath, wondering whether the team had survived. However, about two hours later, unbelievably, they were back on the air. Every other form of communication was down. They were the only link from the Andamans to the mainland for several hours after the disaster. The ham radio was operating from a tower, which remained in working order, although the team did have to scavenge for batteries since it had been running on commercial AC power.

In the tradition of hams, the team stayed on to help, the DXpedition was converted into an emergency network, and hams from across the world, especially India, swung into action. The Indian Army is providing the hams with food, camping, and batteries, the station on Port Blair continues to operate, while another station has been set up at Car Nicobar, which was practically obliterated by the catastrophe.

Right now the main concern of the Andaman team is to find missing people. The teams in the islands field phone calls from worried relatives, ask where the missing person was last seen, and send people out to look for them. The ham team radios back news so that relatives are informed.

Meanwhile, although the state government has said they have the situation under control, hams from across South India are being mobilized locally to help in whatever ways they can. They have established stations in several cities, and have also set up control stations in the bigger cities. Their role is to co-ordinate rescue efforts and help transfer information, since most of the emergency ham stations work on batteries to save power and use long wire antennas, generally tied to a tree, and are hence relatively feeble.

In Sri Lanka too, the hams have moved to the east coast, which has been devastated. Since there are very few hams there, hams from India have traveled to the island.

Although Indian hams have helped their government a number of times in emergency situations, red tape is slowly choking amateur radio as a hobby. The laws, which were laid down in the days of British rule, are ridiculously outdated today. For instance, it is illegal for hams to leave their homes with a radio. Hence, ironically, every time they head out to help with disaster management, they're actually breaking the law. However, last month, the Home Department and Ministry of Communication had a meeting in Delhi with the Amateur Radio Society of India, and seemed to finally acknowledge the efficacy of ham radio. The society submitted a paper asking for changes and has been told that it's been studied and the departments concerned are looking into the issues. [Revised from The Hindu, on-line edition of India's National Newspaper.]

## **TSUNAMI RADIO OPERATIONS NOTES FROM THE ARRL LETTER, V. 24, NO. 1**

Just three days after the calamitous tsunami, Radio Society of Sri Lanka (RSSL) President Victor Goonetilleke, 4S7VK, declared that "uncomplicated short wave" radio had saved lives. "Ham radio played an important part and will continue to do so," he said in an e-mail relayed to ARRL. Goonetilleke said Sri Lanka's prime minister had no contact with the outside world until Amateur Radio operators stepped in. "Our control center was inside the prime minister's official house in his operational room," he recounted. "[This] will show how they valued our services."

Horey Majumdar, VU2HFR, in Calcutta, said improvisation was "the name of the game" in the emergency's aftermath. "Hams had to switch to good old CW and switch frequencies from 14.190 and 14.160 MHz to 7.090 MHz," he said. Majumdar noted that hams from all over "have been checking into the VU emergency nets and extending their fullest cooperation in the truest spirit of Amateur Radio."

Although the US does not have third-party traffic agreements with any of the countries affected by the disaster, international emergency and disaster relief communications are permitted unless otherwise provided. FCC staff stated that if the government agencies responsible for the Amateur Service in affec-

ted countries do not object to their amateur stations receiving messages from US amateur stations on behalf of third parties, the US has no objection to its amateur stations transmitting international communications in support of the disaster.

## **GEORGIA COMMUNITY TO ALLOW HAM ANTENNAS IN CC&R-GOVERNED SUBDIVISIONS**

Tim Richardson, W4IOU, an alderman in Acworth, Georgia, reports that his city has added language to its Residential Development Standards that allows antenna installations for amateurs living in subdivisions governed by deed covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) and homeowners' associations.

"While a special stipulation previously was added to each new residential zoning request before the city, this incorporates the language directly in the zoning and development standards," Richardson explains. According to the language incorporated into the ordinance November 5, "Antennas for amateur radio stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission will not be prohibited by Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions or homeowners' association, and the installation of such antennas must be reasonably accommodated."

Richardson emphasizes that the CC&R restriction only applies to residential development occurring on or after the ordinance's date of adoption. "Any neighborhoods with existing CC&Rs will not be affected, since those constitute a legal agreement accepted by the property owner at the time of purchase," he said. Nonetheless, he called the city's action "a step forward" and said he hopes other hams will work to get similar provisions enacted in their communities. He had help in Acworth. Bob Weatherford, KI4COP, also sits on the Board of Aldermen. A city of some 20,000, Acworth is about 35 miles northwest of Atlanta, and is one of the state's fastest-growing cities.

The ARRL has supported the repeated introduction of a bill in Congress--"the Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Consistency Act," designated HR 1478 in last year's session--to require private land-use regulators such as homeowners' associations to "reasonably accommodate" Amateur Radio antennas consistent with the PRB-1 limited federal preemption. Introduced by Rep Steve Israel (D-NY) the CC&R bill attracted 36 cosponsors during the last Congress, but it was not acted upon and will have to be reintroduced.

ARRL discusses a variety of amateur antenna restrictions on its Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/antenna-restrictions.html>>.

## One Man's Opinion

On the last business meeting of this year we had a discussion about how we could increase the number of stations checking in to our Wednesday night net, and what we could do to increase the participation? To be quite honest, few area nets offer much incentive to check in, whether they are HF or VHF nets.

Why check into a net? Some might argue that in doing so we test our radios, antennas, band propagation, emergency power, or mobile operation. But since most of us who are active every day from the home station or the mobile rig feel confident our gear is working, the local repeater is functional, and if we had an emergency we would be able to contribute on the air. So, other than checking in with the usual "no traffic" response, there is little motivation.

In contrast, listen to the net hosted by Terry WB9KQF on 146.52 Sunday evening. Numerous stations check in and the net lasts for at least two hours. There is so much interest in this Sunday night gathering because there is something for everyone: code practice, discussions of SSTV and DX, tech talks, and question and answer times.

I often listen in on Sunday evenings just to see how many call letters I recognize. I must say I know very few of them. This indicates many new people are getting on the air for this net due to the fact it piques their interest and offers an incentive to be join in.

My praises to Terry for undertaking such a project and planning an agenda of varied topics that are interesting and instructional for new comers in ham radio. Perhaps some of us should take a cue from Terry.

If you are free on Sunday evening, whether new comer or old timer, drop in on 146.52. Make a few new friends, talk to some old ones, gain some knowledge, and just plain enjoy yourself through ham radio. What do you have to lose? You just might be glad you made the effort to spin your VFO to 146.52 on Sunday evenings around 8pm. For more information feel free to contact Terry, WB9KQF. Then tune in, turn on, have fun. This is what it is all about, my fellow radio amateurs. Have a happy 2005! As always my friends, this is "One Man's Opinion."

**Bill** K4LRX

## Secretary's Report

### January Birthdays:

K4LRX Bill Hilyerd Jan. 11th

N9QVQ Len Schmitt Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>

KB9LXZ Joanne Alexandrovich Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>

KB9IJI Andy Justison Jan. 19th

## Treasurer's Report

Not included in complimentary Sparks

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