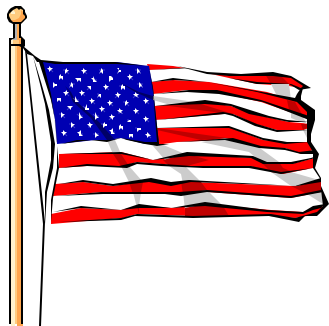


# Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society  
February, 2005--Vol. LIX, No. 2

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'd like to thank all who attended the Auction, old and new hams. I had fun, and hope y'all did too. K9HVI makes it fun for all. Thanks Ed. See ya next year (or sooner!).

One month down, 11 to go. Next we will build small handheld antenna's and some Direction Finding kits. KE9YK has some extra ones to sell, so for those of you who didn't get to do it last year, come to the February meeting!

TARS will have a brick to be inscribed on the front walk of the RED CROSS up by the door. Details are in the Secretary's Minutes.

A reminder: if you're not a TARS member, or haven't re-upped for 2005, please fill out an application/renewal form. We need your support and input. Well that's about all I have to say. See ya.

73, Herb KB9MZH

## Calendar

### FEBRUARY

- 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 (Chris, KE9YK)
- 23 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 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@sigecom.net).

### MARCH

- 2 Tri-State Emergency Net (Kyle, KC9GFM)
- 3 TARS board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
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- 31 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)

# Tri-state Emergency Net

Thanks to Chris (KE9YK), Kyle (KC9GFM), and Terry (WB9KQF) for their willingness to serve occasionally as net control station for the Tri-state Emergency Net. All three are scheduled to try their hand at it in the coming two months (see the Calendar). Of course, if anyone sees his/her name listed as net control and can't make it on a given date, just call or e-mail another control operator to trade off or get a substitute, or notify a club officer or me (**Sparks** Editor and net manager, W9AU) and you will be covered. You can see from the Calendar that with five net control operators (W9AU, N9QVQ, KE9YK, KC9GFM, and WB9KQF), it is no longer a burden to our stalwarts W9AU and N9QVQ, who will nevertheless still be in the rotation.

The script we have used for several years for the net was last published in March, 2002 (we are always open to suggestions for improvement in the script). Of course, in a pinch, we'd rather have somebody jump in and take the net rather than back off just because he/she doesn't have the script memorized. But, for the benefit of ALL(!) you net control operators, here it is again:

Calling CQ for the Tri-state Emergency Net.

This net meets each Wednesday evening at 8:00pm local time for the purpose of handling club business and traffic, and to prepare for an emergency. All amateurs are invited to participate.

This is a controlled net, and control station this evening is [YOUR CALL SIGN]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am located in [YOUR QTH].

After check-ins, we'll have traffic, announcements, queries, informals, and swap shop. If you have any business for the net, please say so when you check in.

First, is there any priority traffic that needs to be handled at this time?

[Pause for possible response.]

Hearing none, do any club officers have important information for the net relating to club business?

[Pause for possible response.]

[You may wish to repeat any important news, and thank the officers for their information.]

Any stations who are on short time or using a hand-held unit may now check in.

[Pause for check-ins; stop after a few to recognize them by callsign, and by names if you know the names; then ask for short-timers and HHT's again, until all have checked in. Short timers who indicate they have announcements, queries, etc. should be allowed to transmit their business. When this is finished, then go to general check-ins.]

I will now take calls from base and mobile stations whose suffix begins with:

Alpha through Foxtrot

[Listen for check-ins, and recognize a few at a time, as you did for short-timers and HHT's; then move on through the alphabet.]

Alpha through Lima

Alpha through Romeo

Alpha through Zulu

[If any of these operators indicated he/she has business for the net, call the appropriate station after check-ins; typically, do this in the same order in which they checked in, but use your judgment; for example, general announcements for everyone should come before individual informals; when these are completed, ask for late check-ins.]

Are there any late check-ins?

[Recognize any additional callers.]

Having no further business for the net, I wish to thank everyone for checking in this evening, and invite you to come back again next Wednesday. This

is [YOUR CALLSIGN] closing the net at [TIME], and returning the repeater back to normal operations.

73 and good evening. This is [YOUR CALLSIGN].

Just as a matter of good practice (actually, a legal requirement), if the net goes on for longer than 10 minutes, and it usually does, you should announce your callsign during the middle of the net. You know-the 10 minute rule for identifying.

Finally, please tally up the number of check-ins and keep a record of how long the net lasted. Be sure to count yourself as a check-in! Report these numbers to the net manager-currently Norm (W9AU): W9AU@insightbb.com. He will report our monthly net activity to the ARRL section manager.

## **Emergency Communications Class: February 19 and 26**

Brian, WB9QVR will hold an emergency communications class on Saturday, February 19 and 26 from 8am until 12 noon at the Southwestern Indiana Red Cross office at 29 S. Stockwell Rd. (off the Lloyd Expressway) in Evansville. The class will combine material from several different sources and is intended to provide an overview of a large number of subjects related to emergency communications. [Bill, K4LRX, suggested some issues we may want to discuss in his "One man's Opinion" piece this month-Ed.]

Anyone with an interest in emergency communications is invited to attend. To help add relevance to the class, veteran and knowledgeable emergency communicators are encouraged to share their experiences.

The class is free of charge, and will be open to registrants on a first come, first served basis. To register please send an e-mail to Brian WB9QVR at besche@sige.com.net.

## **Ham News**

### **TWO ACTIVE AMATEURS CELEBRATE 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAYS**

Zeke Dorsey, W3DHL, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania turned 100 on January 15. He was first licensed as 8DHL in 1922, giving him 83 years in ham radio. Dorsey got his start in amateur radio while still a teenager attending Duquesne University in 1921. He

assembled his first spark gap transmitter from a Ford spark coil, powering it from homemade glass jar batteries. A galena detector was his receiving set. He subsequently upgraded to a 1 kW rotary spark transmitter and a regenerative receiver. He also developed an interest in aviation and got his pilot's license. When World War II broke out, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps at the rather advanced age of 37.

Because of his specialized knowledge in aviation and radio, his basic training was waived and he was immediately sent to India to set up radio navigation aids and homing devices in the China-Burma-India theater of operations. As the war progressed, Zeke later served in the Pacific, setting up and servicing radio beacons for the air force.

Dorsey remains quite energetic, still driving his own car, mowing the lawn, shoveling snow and maintaining an electronics repair shop, and he still exercises his Amateur Extra-class license on the air.

Emma Berg, WØJUV of Lawrence, Kansas turned 100 one day later, on January 16. She had to give up HF when she and her late husband (also a ham) moved to a condominium development a few years ago, but she remains active on VHF. She also continues to participate in MARS where she has been active since 1961 and signs AAR7AX.

A retired teacher, Berg writes articles for Sunflower Seeds, the Kansas MARS quarterly newsletter. She edited the Sunflower Seeds newsletter in her younger years--when she was in her 90s--and now pens the publication's "Fun & Relaxation" articles. Over the years Berg has served as net control operator on Kansas CW nets and was a first lieutenant in the Civil Air Patrol. The philosophy she expressed in the lead item of her New Year's Day 2005 column may sum up her view of retirement, if not of human existence in general.

"Bread may be the staff of life," she wrote, "but this is no reason anyone's life should be a continual loaf." Emma Berg certainly has no plans for loafing. She recently renewed her Amateur Radio license for another 10 years. [These notices condensed from the ARRL Letter, published on-line by the American Radio Relay League.]

### **FCC CHAIRMAN RESIGNS**

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell announced January 21 that he'll step down, effective "sometime in March." Nominated by former President Bill Clinton, Powell joined the FCC in 1997 and became its chairman two

days after President George Bush was sworn in for his first term in 2001. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, called Powell's performance "a deep disappointment" after some initial optimism--especially given his unabashed cheerleading on behalf of the FCC's broadband over power line (BPL) initiative.

"It's no secret that we thought Chairman Powell was going entirely in the wrong direction on BPL and dragging the other commissioners and FCC staff along--willing or not--because he was, after all, the chairman," Sumner said. "A new chairman might be a chance for a fresh start."

When the FCC adopted new Part 15 rules for BPL last October, Powell called it "a banner day." While conceding that BPL will affect some spectrum users, including "all those wonderful Amateur Radio operators out there," Powell implied that the FCC must balance the benefits of BPL against the relative value of other licensed services. He listed the FCC's adoption of BPL rules among the "policy highlights" of his tenure.

Possibilities to replace Powell include the other Republican members of the five-member FCC--Kathleen Q. Abernathy, a staunch BPL supporter, and Kevin J. Martin. Speculation also has been raised about various outside candidates. "We look forward to the opportunity to work with the new chairman, whoever that may be," Sumner said.

In his announcement, Powell said it was "with a mixture of pride and regret" that he informed the president of his decision to step down. "Having completed a bold and aggressive agenda, it is time for me to pursue other opportunities and let someone else take the reins of the agency," he said. "During my tenure, we worked to get the law right in order to stimulate innovative technology that puts more power in the hands of the American people, giving them greater choices that enrich their lives."

The chairman said the seeds of the Commission's policies under his leadership "are taking firm root in the marketplace and are starting to blossom." He cited the increased use of cell phones, digital TV and other digital technology "increasingly connected anytime, anywhere by a wide variety of broadband networks." Proclaimed Powell, "Our children will inherit this exciting future."

As FCC chairman, Powell also was in the forefront of enforcing the Commission's rules on indecency, largely through imposing huge fines on violators. He also supported changes in media ownership rules that

permitted even greater concentration of broadcast station ownership. [from the ARRL Letter.]

## One Man's Opinion

Twice during the last few months our club had the opportunity to show the community what we can do in the event of an emergency. The first occurrence came when the Indiana State police post tower went down in a roar of thunder and a cloud of dust. The police asked for our help, yet there was little response to this inquiry. Apparently, people felt that if the repeater was down, we could do nothing.

Let's take a look at things overall. First, the simplex channels worked fine, and most 2-meter radios with a modest antenna will cover a few miles even with a hand held and rubber duck. Base stations on simplex work well with a ground plane, quad, beam or what have you; even a whip or gutter mount will do the job. 146.52 and 55 are open most of the time and available for any use including emergencies.

You say your power was off at your house? What about your hand-held unit? You will be heard on simplex with it for a few miles. Ever consider removing the rubber duck and attaching your base antenna to your handy talkie? A gel-cell battery of 12 volts will provide your HT or your base station with enough power to make the local repeater. You say the connector on the outside antenna is a PI-259, and your HT uses a BNC for the rubber duck? For about three dollars an adapter is available to correct this problem. How about using the 715 machine? It works fine and has a range of about twenty miles from downtown Evansville.

Even better is Terry's (AA9MM) 440 machine. It puts out a good signal for about thirty miles, yet it sits idle for most of the day due to lack of users. Additionally, the 440 simplex channel of 446 MHz sits idle most of the time in this area.

During the recent heavy snowstorm on the south side of the river I heard no one assisting anyone on the Henderson repeater. In fact it remained pretty dead for two days. I only heard one local station making a call to someone else and that was it. At least in Evansville, I did copy activity from Bob (N9XAW), Joanne (KB9LXZ), Terry (AA9MM), Brian (WB9QVR), and Len (N9QVO). Most of them were involved in assisting stranded travelers on a Greyhound Bus that was stuck on the Interstate. Many of the passengers

were routed to the Red Cross or the EMA center where food, shelter and assistance were offered.

We need a definitive plan for such emergencies: what to do if the repeaters are down, what frequencies to use, who will serve as net control, what agencies should we contact, and how will we handle emergency traffic?

We need to know who has radios that will work on 2 meters, 440, 6 meters, and HF; who can use digital modes; who has a license class that allows HF, CW, RTTY, and even AM and other modes; who can make it to the EMA or Red Cross center in times of emergency.

Inevitably, we Tri-staters will be confronted with other emergencies and disasters. Earthquakes, tornadoes, thunderstorms, and snow storms tend to happen with little advance notice. Judging from the recent past, we may not be as well prepared as we should be to assist our friends, neighbors, and even families in the Tri-state area. It's time to prove that amateur radio is alive and well, and we will be here to serve the area if needed.

During our first club meeting of the year, we discussed getting involved with emergency operations. Brian Esche, WB9QVR is planning two half-day sessions (February 19 and 26) on emergency communications. [See information elsewhere in this issue of **Sparks- Ed.**] Think about what we should do as a group, and how YOU can join in. Sign up for the emergency communications course. We welcome your suggestions and your willingness to help our community. Let's not fumble the ball again. As always my friends this is "One Man's Opinion."

73, **Bill** K4LRX

## Secretary's Report

### February Birthdays:

N9XAW, Robert Pointer, Feb. 2

K9BLL, Bill Leonard, Feb. 4

WB9NAU, Russell Commens, Feb. 7

KB9PAG, John W. Davidson, Feb. 17

WA9ZVY, Keith Haynes, Feb. 21

WB9ICL, Jay King, Feb. 26

KC9AFS, Kurt Pritchett, Feb. 30 [that's what I was told!-Ed.]

### Minutes

not included in complimentary Sparks

## Treasurer's Report

For those who want to renew or start up membership in the ARRL, did you know that you can give part of your ARRL dues to TARS without paying any extra for your ARRL membership! The club gets to keep \$2 of ARRL dues for renewals and \$15 for new memberships or renewals of membership where membership had lapsed for more than 2 years. Join ARRL for the benefits and to help protect our frequencies AND help out the club at the same time. Ask me or Joanne for an ARRL membership form to use. Just fill it out and send it to the club address: TARS, P.O. Box 4521, Evansville, IN 47724. You can either make out a check for the full \$39 to TARS (we will send a check from the club account for what you owe the ARRL) or make out 2 checks, one to TARS and one for ARRL. You can also pay ARRL with a credit card if you like. I check the TARS mailbox at least once a week so there should be no delay getting your membership in to ARRL.

### Budget:

not included in complimentary Sparks

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