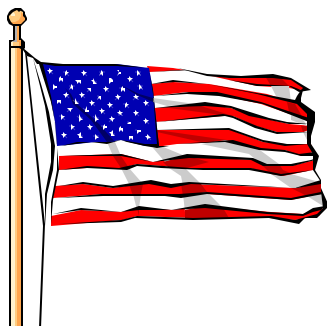


Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society
March, 2005--Vol. LIX, No. 3

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

The President's Corner

CQ,CQ! Did everyone enjoy the informative talks Bob, N9XAW and Terry, WB9KQF gave at the meeting? I certainly did. And Chris, KE9YK gave a wonderful presentation on the antennas he built. In the March issue of QST there's an article on how to build a j-pole antenna just like Chris'.

By the time you read this, the Emergency Communications seminar offered by Brian, WB9QVR will be history. I'm sure both days (February 19 and 26) will include useful information, and that new ideas will emerge from the brainstorming session at the end. In the mean time, we hope to continue having short presentations on various kinds of communications activities during the monthly club meetings, and that will include emergency communications.

I won't take up more of your TV time with more chatter. CU later.

73, **Herb** KB9MZH

Calendar

MARCH

- 2 Tri-State Emergency Net (Kyle, KC9GFM)
- 3 TARS board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 7 Advanced Skywarn training, Oaklyn Library, 3100 Oaklyn Dr., 6:00pm
- 9 Tri-State Emergency Net (Kyle, KC9GFM)
- 10 TARS club mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 14 Emergency communications mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 16 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVO)
- 23 Tri-State Emergency Net (Leonard, N9QVO)
- 26 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg. (just off the Lloyd Expwy on Stockwell 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).
- 31 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)

APRIL

- 6 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)
- 7 TARS board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm

- 13 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 20 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 27 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 30 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg. (just off the Lloyd Expwy on Stockwell 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).

Skywarn Training

There will be an advanced Skywarn training on March 7th at 6 PM at the Oaklyn Library by Ron Fields, Special Liaison Officer to the Evansville area from the National Weather Service office in Paducah. Unfortunately, the **Sparks** publication schedule this month may make this make this announcement late, but NWS is always ready to offer Skywarn training, so we TARS members may wish to plan a session intended especially for us. Let a club officer know.

Emergency Communications Seminar

Brian, WB9QVR did a magnificent job with the two half-day sessions on emergency communications he organized and presented at the Red Cross Building. This class was open to all hams, regardless of club affiliation. Hams who might be identified with TARS were there, as were some affiliated with E-hams, others who are not members of any local group, and still others from neighboring areas. In that vein, these meetings hold promise of leading the way into new territory as far as emergency communications is concerned in this area--new territory that, if we can pull it off, is certain to benefit the entire Tri-state community. An emergency communications group that may emerge from continued discussions (the next meeting will be Monday, March 14 at 7:00pm at the Red Cross Bldg.) will not be a subgroup of either TARS or E-hams. Nor will it be identified with the Red Cross or ARES or RACES. It will consist of all hams in the Tri-state area who are interested in providing professional-quality emergency and public service communications assistance to any and all agencies or organizations that request it. For the present time Brian, WB9QVR will continue to be the contact person for this group (besche@sigecom.net).

We humans tend to develop human foibles, and it is probably no secret that over the years personality conflicts between influential members of the local ham community have caused rifts that have divided us. There have been nasty confrontations between strong-willed individuals vying for supremacy of either the Red Cross or RACES programs, and they have tried to recruit others to join their clique. Also, ARES members have touted the greater flexibility of their program, while the RACES people crow about the special access privileges they have during declared emergencies. Other people maintain festering dislikes of organizations, procedures, government-sponsored programs, and other issues that prevent them from reaching their potential.

All of this has been self-destructive. It is self-destructive for the individuals involved and self-destructive for ham radio. Petty squabbling and a "divide and conquer" mentality will project a poor public image. Those who can benefit from our services want nothing to do with such political problems. We have to rise above them, or face the prospect of falling beneath the radar screens of local agencies. We should be more interested in providing public service than in taking stands to publicize our feelings.

We now have the opportunity to form an umbrella organization of emergency communicators, one that recognizes and respects the social organizations to which we belong (e.g., TARS, E-hams), the formal political divisions separating us (e.g., Wabash, Vanderburgh, Henderson Counties), and the special allegiances we have developed for service (e.g., Red Cross, ARES, RACES). This group might someday become *the* reservoir of communications talent in the Tri-state area. When asked, it would be able to mobilize **hams**, not TARS, RACES, or ARES members, but **hams**, to respond to the call for emergency or public service communications assistance. Our group would include everybody--inclusion would be the name of the game! If Red Cross needs a dozen operators during a snow emergency, they would come. If local hospitals need communicators, they would come also. Even when RACES mobilizes its group, we might be able to supply communicators to assist at non-sensitive posts while the certified RACES members work at the restricted locations.

There are hundreds of licensed amateurs in the Tri-state area. I suspect that I have never met most of them. They have remained out of view, many adrift

without Elmers to point the way to productive amateur radio activities. If we do a good job in this effort, many of them will join us and participate. With an active training program there will be no shortage of qualified operators. Perhaps a certificate of completion of our training schools can serve as the "badge" that identifies to local incident managers who is qualified to serve them.

I hope there is a big turnout for continued discussions at 7:00pm, March 14, 2005 at the Red Cross Building. **Spread the word!** Let's build something new and better, before the *status quo* gets worse. We welcome any and all input. For information, contact Brian, WB9QVR at besche@sigecom.net.

73, **Norm** W9AU

Ham News

AMATEUR RADIO SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT OF 2005 INTRODUCED

At the urging of the ARRL, Rep Michael Bilirakis (R-FL) has introduced The Amateur Radio Spectrum Act of 2005 into the US House of Representatives. The bill, designated HR 691, has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee where Bilirakis serves as vice chairman. Like previous versions of the proposal, the current measure would require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio if the FCC reallocates primary amateur frequencies, reduces any secondary amateur allocations, or makes additional allocations within such bands that would substantially reduce their utility to amateurs. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, expressed his appreciation to Bilirakis this week.

"As president of the American Radio League and on behalf of the more than 670,000 federally licensed Amateur Radio operators throughout the country, I would like to thank you for once again sponsoring the 'Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act,'" Haynie told the Florida Republican. "As you know, this legislation is vital for ensuring that the Amateur Radio Service, the only 100-percent fail safe emergency communication capability, remains a viable public safety option."

HR 691 references Amateur Radio's role in providing "voluntary, noncommercial radio service, particularly emergency communications," and it points out that hams have "consistently and reliably" provided communication support in the event of emergencies and

disasters including tornadoes and hurricanes, chemical spills, forest fires and rail accidents. As the measure notes, FCC actions already have led to the loss of at least 107 MHz of spectrum to radio amateurs.

Rep Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) has signed on as the bill's first co-sponsor. Bartlett chairs the Projection Forces Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee. One of three scientists in the 109th Congress, Bartlett also is a senior member of the House Science Committee.

Efforts now will focus on attracting additional cosponsors for the legislation. The League is encouraging members to urge their congressional representatives to sign aboard HR 691. A sample letter is available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/hr-691-sample-letter.html>>. More than 100 lawmakers agreed to cosponsor similar legislation in the 108th Congress, where it was designated HR 713. Work is proceeding to have identical legislation introduced in the US Senate.

The text of HR 691 is available on the Government Printing Office Web site <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:h691ih.txt.pdf>.

For general guidance on the best methods of contacting your members of Congress, see "Communicating with Congress," by Derek Riker, KB3JLF, on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/bandthreat/0304046.pdf>>. [this article reproduced from The ARRL Letter, published on-line by the American Radio Relay League.]

One Man's Opinion

I am sure everyone by now has heard the announcement regarding Michael Powell's resignation as Chairman of the FCC. To be very candid about this situation, I cannot shed any tears over his departure, nor would I lose any sleep over the departure of Commissioner Abernathy. I feel that both of them did not do their homework on the issue of BPL.

We provided the FCC with facts, figures, and instances of the negative impacts of employing BPL, yet for reasons known only to the FCC they decided to push full steam ahead! The main reason they gave was not wanting to stand in the way of technology. Of course, what really happened is the FCC [comprised of political appointees-Ed.] promoted this particular technology without understanding the consequences of spectral pollution.

An additional example of BPL problems emerged in the Netherlands. They were smart—they gave BPL a trial run for a few weeks. It did not take them long to arrive at a conclusion the interference caused to existing services outweighed the benefits of the system. More recently the Briar Cliffe subdivision in the state of New York has provided a prime example of interference levels on the 20-meter band, resulting in flippant replies from power companies who could care less about the spectrum. To add insult to injury, the FCC has failed miserably to enforce its own rules regarding spectral pollution. Regardless of the complaints, some newly installed systems are operating with impunity, and whom do we have to thank for this? Take a look at the Powell tenure and what he touts as his major accomplishments: Broadband over electric lines—the third broadband pipe to the home? Broadband to power plugs would lower prices, expand deployment. Adopted new rules to minimize regulatory hurdles for broadband over power lines (October 2004) Voice over the Internet: Clearing regulatory barriers to valuable new consumer services? Fought for an unhindered, innovative regulatory environment for VOIP. Consumers can buy phone service off the shelf in local electronics stores that is now cheaper and more personalized, portable and more innovative.

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania borough officials cited state legislation effective last year that encourages telecommunication companies to provide broadband to consumers. But Chambersburg officials said there wasn't enough money in the municipality's Electric Department budget to go forward with a BPL deployment this year. Luckily, hams were able to put time in to fight BPL right up front, before the municipality had thrown so much money at it that it came to have a stake in it succeeding. Cumberland Valley ARC President David Yoder, KB3HUC, told ARRL, "I can't emphasize that enough--putting people in front of the decision-makers, working with the press and so forth paid off because we jumped in as soon as we heard BPL was being considered." The BPL initiative is now off the borough's 2005 projects agenda. Among other things, CVARC members had told the Borough Council last year that BPL would interfere with Amateur Radio and its ability to provide emergency communication. This is how we can win at the local level.

It is time for our group to register opposition to this technology. If you want proof it is alive in Evansville just go by the EMA office and listen to the

spectral pollution on 40 meters. This is an excellent reason for our club members to register a complaint. If we do nothing, we lose. If an emergency presents itself in the Tri-state area, we will be subjected to harmful interference generated by BPL. Indeed, we already are! I suggest we draft a petition stating the interference noted on the various ham bands and submit it to the FCC. Remember the warped logic of the Commission? "No complaints, No Interference!" Well, we HAVE interference, now let's complain! As always my friends this is "One Man's Opinion."

73, **Bill** K4LRX

Secretary's Report

March Birthdays: N9XAW Robert Pointer (2nd), K9BLL Bill Leonard (4th), WB9NAU Russell Commens (7th), KB9PAG Jay Davidson (17th), WA9ZVY Keith Haynes (21st), WB9ICL Jay King (26th), KC9AFS Kurt Pritchett (30th).

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