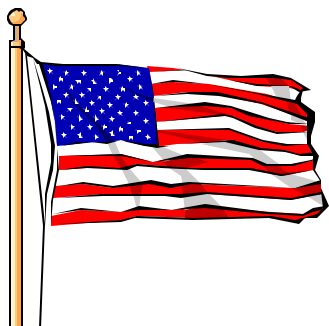


Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society
July, 2005--Vol. LIX, No. 7

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, CQ. Wow! June really flew by. Dan Mitchell showed us the new and improved electronic gadgets highlighted at Dayton Hamvention, 2005. For example, a radio you could accidentally drop in the water, and it would still operate. Sponge Bob Squarepants would enjoy that one!

Field Day came and went as fast as you could say it. But everyone who came out to the Boy Scout Center enjoyed themselves--SSB radios squawking, and the code guys dashing and dotting away. The news people were out there, and we got a good write-up in Sunday's paper, including photos. That's what ham radio is all about--communication with low power, low cost antennas you can throw up in a short time. Different times of the day offered good conditions on different bands. Let's give Len Schmitt, N9QVQ a big **"Thank you"** for the wonderful job he did in organizing the event. That's another successful Field Day for TARS. Happy trails to you all.

73 Herb, KB9MZH

Calendar

JULY

- 6 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 7 TARS Board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 13 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 14 TARS club mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 20 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 27 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 30 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg.; 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).

AUGUST

- 3 Tri-State Emergency Net (Len, N9QVQ)
- 4 TARS Board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 10 Tri-State Emergency Net (Len, N9QVQ)
- 11 TARS club mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 17 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)
- 24 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)
- 27 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg.; 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 (Chris, KE9YK)

What a Deal!

John, W9FHA reports he did not sell his C-3 beam, so he has sweetened the pot. Here's the new deal:

Force 12 C-3 giant killer 7-element beam

3-10' sections of Rohn 25G tower

Rotator

The beam is rated for 15 KW and its never seen more than 5 watts CW. All John wants for this package is \$275. Call (812) 401-0433.

Field Day, 2005

(Len, N9QVQ supplied these notes on our 2005 Field Day activity [from assorted e-mails to your Editor]).

Thanks to all who helped or participated in Field Day. Dave, WB9YIG put in an enormous amount of work on the trailer and brought in a great deal of the computers and equipment that made it happen. Just about everyone who came by for setting up had parts that they contributed to the station. That's the way it's supposed to be. We can't count on any one person being able to bring all that we need if there is a disaster (we don't schedule those). Thanks to Joanne's hard work we had numerous extra points--a display for the public, a public official (Cheryl Musgrave and her husband signed our log). In addition, Joanne's press release must have generated enough interest at the Evansville Courier for them to send out a reporter and photographer (who was that old looking geezer in the paper, anyway?)

We had a total of 301 CW contacts, 1 digital contact, and 592 SSB contacts (243 of those were GOTA contacts). We were able to claim 1070 Bonus points (see below). Our grand total claimed score was 2392 points. I could account for at least 33 participants. Five unlicensed visitors were interested enough to sit behind the mike with a control operator and make a few contacts. Maybe by next year they will be licensed hams! We had visits from an elected official (Suzanne Crouch) and a rep from a served agency (Adam Groupe). Hopefully no one starved, and we had an awesome fireworks display to watch just down the hill on Saturday night.

Bonus points summary (the most we've ever had-Ed.):

100% Emergency power 200

Media Publicity 100

Set-up in Public Place 100

Information Booth 100

Site Visit by invited elected official 100

Site Visit by invited served agency official 100

Youth participation 20

(Youth operators = 1, Youth participants = 1)

GOTA station 100 QSOs achieved 100

(actual count = 243)

Submitted via the Web 50

Non traditional mode: SSTV 100

Non traditional mode: APRS 100

Total Bonus Points = 1070

QSO Points:

	CW	Digital	Phone
QSO's	301	1	592
Points	602	2	592

Total QSO points: 1196 X 2 (power mult) = 2392

Total score: 2392 + 1070 = 3462

Thanks again to everyone who contributed to this very successful Field Day.

Thoughts on the Fox Hunt (TARS Meeting in May at Mesker Park)

[Editor's note: Terry, WB9KQF sent me this for inclusion in the June issue of Sparks, but I spaced it (senior moment?), so here it is at last--**late!** Sorry, Terry.]

Hello, I Just wanted to comment on the Fox Hunt that the TARS club had on May 14, 2005. I believe that everyone had a great time; I know I did as the fox. The person who actually won the TX hunt was Keith KB9WAC. Larry K9OXX and David KC9HQJ came in 2nd, Mike WB9VUZ was 3rd. Chris KE9YK and Roger "getting ready to pass his Tech test" rode together and came in next. Leonard N9QVQ and Susan KC9BLZ rode together and came in next. Keith won the Fox Hunt first prize of a variable voltage solar panel to charge his HT. Larry and Mike won 2nd and 3rd place prizes of a book reading light.

The Fox TX was my portable repeater, and I was hiding at the new library, next to Central High School. The antenna was of my own design, made to throw people off the trail, Ha Ha... I took a dummy load, placed it inside a coffee can, grounded the coffee can, and then using some PVC plastic pipes I made a plumbing arrangement that would hold a pot pie pan suspended in front of the coffee can. The potpie pan was hooked to a ground wire also. As the wind would blow, it made the pot pie pan move which made the radiated pattern move, making the signal harder to trace. My only clue was "The signal level is blowing in the wind." A few people said that they were looking for flagpoles and one said he was looking for a weather balloon. Actually, the coffee can was lying on the ground and the potpie pan was about 2 inches above ground. The wind was still blowing the potpie pan around, which made my claim, "The signal level is blowing in the wind." Keith was using a tape measure antenna, Larry was using a spectrum analyzer, and others were body shielding and other antenna arrangements to find me. All proved somehow to be good and effective.

This TX hunt was done on the basis of time, which would find me first. Normally, I use the military method of least mileage, and record each person's car mileage readings. I want to elaborate on this activity, as a whole! I do give Keith credit for finding me first. Keith and Larry have had a lot of practice. They are two people who make many of the Saturday morning TX hunts of the Sunday Night Net group. What I want to say is that each person or group who participated in this activity was actually a winner! Each person or group did find me, no matter how long it took. The mission was still accomplished, and they still had fun in the process. Let's face it, the target was actually a moving radiation pattern, via the moving potpie pan, and while it took a little longer to find it, each person or group did find the Fox. Congratulations--job well done!

It would be great if we had more people take part in this kind of activity! Not only is it fun, but locating hidden transmitters is a vital skill that each of us needs. I have been taking part in TX hunts for most of my Ham Radio life, plus I did this very activity in a round about way, each day, while I worked for Cable TV. I found Cable TV signal leaks using the same type of antennas used for TX hunts. So, this kind of TX hunt can actually be carried over to our everyday life.

As hams, you never know when there might be a person who accidentally has his radio keyed and does not know it. With the small size of the newer radios, it might be easy to have a radio stuck in the back pants pocket and have the radio keyed in some way or another. If it were on a repeater frequency, the repeater would be locked up. With the potential of keyed or sticky mikes, radio problems, or a person needing help, etc., we may actually need to find the problem via a signal pattern coming from the problem transmitter. Having as much practice as possible will help us find the problem-generating transmitter faster. These days, with gas prices so high, having more practice will cut down on expenses also. This is the reason I like the military version where the least mileage wins.

Keeping our airwaves clean of problems as good as we can is our responsibility, as well as the FCC (when they are not making stupid rules to help BPL or selling frequencies!).

Check out the TARS web site for a slide show of this year's TARS Tale Gate Party Fox Hunt! I encourage each and every one of you to take part in these TX hunts. They are fun, help improve your skills, and help the Ham Radio community! Remember, you don't have to be a football player to win a TX hunt. Patience and practice will help you win. If you would like to get more practice at TX hunts, check in to the Sunday Night Net, 8PM, 146.520, and I will let you know about each TX hunt that group has. With time permitting (and no snow around), I try to have one TX hunt a month. 73, and hope to see you at the next Fox TX Hunt! Your Friend, **Terry** WB9KQF.

One Man's Opinion

Quite often I like to look in my QSL card file and just think back about the contacts I have confirmed over the last forty-nine years. It is often a trip down memory lane. I have QSL cards dating back to my first year on the air--1956--including reminders of my chase for worked all states, DXCC, and the county hunting craze that went on for several years. I have never counted all my cards. However, just using some math and the amount of space they take up in the file cabinets, I have a conservative estimate of around twenty thousand.

Over the years I have made a lot of fellows happy with a contact from Kentucky, very often their last

state. County hunters often find Henderson County a prize. I have a large stack of cards from my six meter activity. It appears that when the band opens I am swamped by stations needing my grid square or state. About once a year I receive a large number of QSL cards from the ARRL QSL bureau. These are from DX stations, with more requests for QSL cards.

You might ask why all this madness about QSL cards? Well, in my early days of ham radio it was considered rude not to respond to anyone requesting a QSL card. In fact the statement was often heard that a QSL card is the final courtesy of a QSO. Over the last few years the stateside demand has diminished, and various paperless computer programs have emerged claiming to save you postage, time, and money by using their system. Even the ARRL has offered their paperless "Logbook of the World" (LOTW) just to make QSL chasing easier.

Recently I read about a fellow in a Northeastern state who submitted enough contacts for his DXCC all on the League's paperless program. I thought to myself, why not just have a paperless award as well? After all, this fellow cannot look at his cards and treasure the memories because he never got any cards or sent out any requests. For his efforts the only recognition he will receive is a statement from the league stating he submitted the necessary proof. OK, let's see the cards. He cannot produce them because they do not exist!

I spent some time looking over the League's LOTW program. It still will cost you some money to use the instant paperless program, although much less than to mail paper cards. However, in a recent questionnaire by the League it was found that only a small percentage of active DXers are using this program. Most still prefer the tried and true method of a paper card. Maybe it's just something about mail arriving from some far away place, or something about a personal card from the operator you worked--perhaps a personal note in real handwriting, complete with postage stamps. Even the unique design of a card itself may tell you something of the operator's personality or something about his life outside of ham radio.

In my opinion, paperless QSL programs offer very little. I need only three countries on the current DXCC list. If they ever appear for me, I want a paper QSL card to show it. I have yet to have anyone request a card via the paperless system only. I still

receive many requests via the paper route, and will continue to use this system for as long as other hams want paper cards.

Call me old fashioned; tell me I am not in tune with the times! But on those nights when the bands are dead, I have something to remind me of the good days--of great band condition and the thrill of bagging that elusive "new one." Well, I can open up my file cabinet and produce those memories--over twenty thousand of them, with more coming all the time.

Paperless programs? No, thank you! Give me the paper QSLs to put in my file cabinet. I can look at them with pride, cherish the operating moments, relive the sense of accomplishment. Yes, that is ham radio! This is of course "One Man's Opinion."

73, **Bill** K4LRX

Treasurer's Report

July Birthdays

N4XI John Bennett (1st)
W9LBS LaRue Cleveland (4th)
KC9EPM Mary Davis (5th)
KA9EIV Blanche Elpers (8th)
N9VGN Robert Futrell (19th)
W9NJE James Marsh (21st)
N9RLD Marc Millhone (21st)
K4IUI James Monroe (24th)
Jane Parker (26th)
N9NCG Richard Schaefer Sr. (27th)
KA9KRD Delores Shoptaugh (29th)
WA9C David Vogel (29th)

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Herb Alvey, KB9MZH

477-2756 (halvey1813@aol.com)

VICE PRESIDENT Bill Hilyerd, K4LRX

270-826-2687 (k4lrx@lightpower.net; billh@wevv.com)

TREASURER Leonard Schmitt, N9QVQ

426-2003 (lsradio@evansville.net)

SECRETARY Joanne Alexandrovich, KB9LXZ

963-5872 (kb9lxz@insightbb.com)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Noah Elzroth, KC9BUG

867-8387 (noah@roundbox.ws)

Jay King, WB9ICL

985-3886 (wb9icl@arrl.net)

Chris Lantaff, KE9YK

473-5382 (clantaff@sigecom.net)

Terry McCraey, WB9KQF

760-8007 (terrymccraey@yahoo.com)

Bob Pointer, N9XAW

425-2118 (bpointer@sigecom.net)

Dave Vogel, WA9C

453-9566 (wa9c@arrl.net)

RED CROSS LIAISON: Bob pointer, N9XAW

425-2118 (bpointer@sigecom.net)

Sparks is published monthly as the newsletter of the

Tri-State Amateur Radio Society, P.O. Box 4521,

Evansville, IN 47724; **Editor: Norm King, W9AU;**

9334 Motz Rd., Evansville, IN 47720; 963-5872;

w9au@insightbb.com.

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