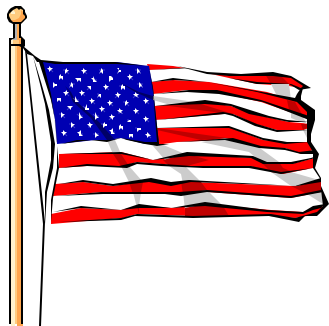


Sparks



Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society
January, 2006--Vol. LX, 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

The President's Corner

The first board meeting went well, and I was not impeached, so I look forward to serving the club. Several new ideas were passed around for this year to make the club more interesting and fun.

We are going to have a contest for the best design for a W9OG QSL card. Put your ideas into a sketch (or sketches). There will be a prize for the one voted as the best design.

I will be starting a new Technician Class on March 11th, running seven weeks, with a test session on National Exam Day on April 29th. I sure could use some volunteer instructors to take short segments of the class. Please let me know if you can help. Flyers will be printed for members to hand out. We hope to add several new hams to our ranks as a result of this effort.

The auction is this Thursday, January 12. Bring your unwanted stuff to sell, and be prepared to bid on valuable electronic equipment to take home. The annual auction is always one of the most interesting and fun meetings of the year, so I hope to see a good turnout. The more stuff for sale, the better!

Finally, I would like to remind all members that to make the club exciting, you must be excited about the club. Participation is the key. When word gets out that TARS is a fun place to be, membership will grow. If everyone contributes a little, no one person has to contribute a whole lot. Get involved and support the club. Get on the repeaters. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Invite them to join our ranks.

73, Bob N9XAW

Calendar

JANUARY

- 4 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 5 TARS Board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 11 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, W9AU)
- 12 TARS club mtg., TARS Annual Auction!
- 18 Tri-State Emergency Net (Len, N9QVO)
- 25 Tri-State Emergency Net (Norm, N9QVQ)
- 28 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg.; bring original and one copy of current license, any previous exam credits, two ID's (one with photo), SS or TIN number, and \$14.00; contact

Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or tbrooks@sigeom.net).

11/16/05	Norm, W9AU	20	21
11/23/05	no report		
11/30/05	N9QVQ	20	22

FEBRUARY

- 1 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)
- 2 TARS Board mtg., Red Cross Bldg., 7:00pm
- 8 Tri-State Emergency Net (Terry, WB9KQF)
- 9 TARS club mtg.; this will be the postponed Holiday banquet; details will be forthcoming.
- 15 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 22 Tri-State Emergency Net (Chris, KE9YK)
- 25 ARRL exam session, 9:00am, Red Cross Bldg.; bring original and one copy of current license, any previous exam credits, two ID's (one with photo), SS or TIN number, and \$14.00; contact Terry, AA9MM for additional information (812-401-9632 or tbrooks@sigeom.net).

These were the results for December:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Net control</u>	<u>Check-ins</u>	<u>Mins.</u>
12/07/05	Terry, WB9KQF	20	22
12/14/05	Terry, WB9KQF	15	18
12/21/05	Chris, KE9YK	9	12
12/28/05	Chris, KE9YK	20	16

I don't have an updated list of stations who participated in the late November or December nets, so I will resume with that part of the report next time. However, you can see by these numbers that net participation continues to be above the level it was a year ago. Perhaps the emergency in early November served to remind us why we should make this a habit. We never know when we might be needed again, and regular participation in the net will let you know that your equipment is functioning properly. Thank you all for helping to make the Tri-State Emergency Net a success!

73, Norm W9AU

TARS ARRL License Exam Schedule for 2006

Terry, AA9MM has announced the following schedule of the TARS ARRL license exams for 2006. Come to think of it, this is a good time to thank Terry for his role in ram-rodging the TARS exam session program, and also to thank the numerous volunteer examiners who show up time after time at exam sessions to help out. Good work, guys! Normally, exams are held on the last Saturday of the month at 9:00am at the Red Cross Building, 29 S. Stockwell Rd. (intersection of Stockwell and the Lloyd Expressway). The only exceptions are September, when we test on National Fall Exam Day on the third Saturday (September 23), and November, when testing occurs at the EARS Evansville Hamfest at the 4-H Fairgrounds. Dates for 2006 are: January 28, February 25, March 25, April 29 (National Spring Exam Day), May 27, June 24, July 29, August 26, September 23, October 28, and December 30.

Repeater Update

We thank James KC9EMT for doing much of the work to get the 146.79 repeater at the Indiana State Police Post operational again. James spent the greater part of a day on the effort, all while he was close to coming down with pneumonia. It went back into service Saturday afternoon (January 7). It is currently running at reduced power, 250 watts, until we can resolve a question of the power handling capability of the duplexers. Norm W9AU will run the net on Wednesday, January 11 using 147.15 again, and we will decide at that time if subsequent nets will return to the regular net frequency of 146.79.

No tuning was done to the 146.79 machine due to time issues, but will follow as time permits. We again have to become aware of the small delay time at the start of each transmission for the voter to select the appropriate remote receiver. *Please allow approximately one full second after you key your mike before starting to speak into it.* All but the Warrick remote receive sites are on line. The Warrick unit needs a new crystal and it will be back online soon.

Tri-State Emergency Net Report

Thanks to net control operators for reporting on the nets they ran. The net control operators for November, and net results were:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Net control</u>	<u>Check-ins</u>	<u>Mins.</u>
11/02/05	Terry, WB9KQF	22	23
11/09/05	Norm, W9AU	26	41

The 147.150 repeater is back on the air after Bill K4LRX and Leonard N9QVQ took it down for service. It seems to be doing well now.

73, Terry AA9MM and Bob N9XAW

One Man's Opinion

Surveys have always interested me. In fact, I hope most of you check the League website regularly for their weekly questions. I suspect there are motives by the League when certain questions are asked, perhaps advertising issues or planned projects come to mind. The results are at times surprising, but it is always interesting to read and wonder what others are really thinking about ham radio. So, I make a point to check the surveys and cast my vote on various questions. I use a lot of this information for my column.

The latest questionnaire from Newington asked "How Do You Rate Your Club Newsletter?" There were a total of 1832 responses, broken down in the following categories. Very Good had a total of 517 votes. Gee, I hope we had some TARS members other than myself voting this way! Fair received 330 votes. Perhaps those who assessed their club newsletter at this level felt many articles were not of great interest--mostly the usual business meeting news and rather dry facts--so they found little reason to read the club newsletter. In the poor category were 148 votes. I would certainly like to talk to the voters in this group to find out what type of newsletter their club has, and why they rated it as poor.

The last two entries were surprising. Three hundred and forty-seven respondents claimed their club had no news letter. This in itself is amazing. Yes, publishing takes time, money, mailing costs, effort, writers, editors, and the list goes on. In the last column of this questionnaire, 490 readers said "I Do Not Belong To Any Radio Club!" I am sure there are various reasons for this. Perhaps there are no active clubs in many areas and little organization on the part of local hams. Perhaps this group of people is just not interested in having a radio club, or there are so few hams in the local area that it just is not practical. There may be other reasons, as well.

So, my fellow club members and radio amateurs, take a good look at our club. How would you rate our newsletter? Every month we publish what we hope is an interesting and well-done club newsletter about

various happenings in our group and in the hobby generally. Over the last few years, we have included articles on most areas of ham radio. Normally there is a column by our President, and input by other club members on a variety of topics including various words of wisdom, ham radio events, personal experiences, projects, and so on. We usually have at least one recap (or reprint) of an article on recent issues in ham radio originated at ARRL headquarters. And, of course, some old codger always has an opinion to share with the rest of you on just about anything involving ham radio.

Norm, W9AU catches our mistakes, misspelled words, and grammatical errors, and arranges everything in a sensible order and format. For those of you receiving a paper copy, it has to be folded, taped shut, stamped, have a mailing label put on it, and mailed early enough that it arrives in time to announce what the next meeting is about (and where)--lots of work for one volunteer.

Perhaps since I contribute to *Sparks* I am a little biased, but I voted that we have a "Very Good" newsletter. However, I would also like to hear from you. What do YOU think? What would you like to see that may be missing so far. I think the results would be interesting. By popular request, results of the Tri-State Emergency Net are now being published monthly, for the first time in recent memory [*or ever--does anyone know?--Ed.*], so changes can be made and new columns begun. Would any of you like to contribute on a regular basis? Let me know. Or just start sending material to Norm. I'm sure he would be delighted to hear from you.

I enjoy our *Sparks*. I read it. I enjoy writing this column. Now it's your turn to present feedback to me. Let's have some "Other Men's (or Women's) Opinions." Drop me a line via E-mail if you wish: k4lrx@lightpower.net. Or, just let me know at club meetings how you feel and what you want to read. It's your club and newsletter, as well as mine. We need your input and comments. As Always my friends, this is "One Man's Opinion."

73, Bill K4LRX

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