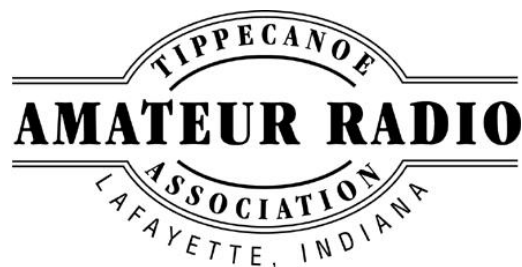


The Official Newsletter  
of the

Tippecanoe Amateur  
Radio Association

*Serving the  
community since  
1951*

# TARA TATTLER



209th Edition

SEPTEMBER 2004

## Lafayette's Castle on the air

*Business Meeting:*  
2nd Tuesday of each month  
at 7:30 p.m.

*Program Meeting:*  
4th Wednesday of each  
month at 7:30 p.m.

*Meeting Location:*  
Tippecanoe County  
Chapter of the Red Cross  
111 S. 7th Street  
Lafayette, IN 47901

Visit us on the web at:  
<http://www.w9reg.org>

Email us at:  
[tattler@w9reg.org](mailto:tattler@w9reg.org)

Local history buffs will recognize the name of William Digby. On Christmas Eve of 1824, William attended a land sale at Crawfordsville and purchased property with the intention of establishing a town. The town of Lafayette Indiana was born when he platted it in May of 1825, naming it after the Marquis de Lafayette, the French hero of the Revolutionary War.

Marquis de Lafayette was born September 6, 1757 in the magnificent castle of Chavagnac, in Auvergne, France. In celebration of his birthday, a special event station will actually be operating from the castle with the special call sign, TM5LAF.

TM5LAF will be on the air Saturday and Sunday, September 4-5, with plans to operate on or near the following frequencies: 3643 kHz, 7043 kHz, 14143 kHz, 21143 kHz

For those of you who speak French, or just to look at the pictures of the castle and the antenna installation, visit the web site of the club that is activating this castle  
<http://www.membres.lycos.fr/radioclub43/dfcf.html>

Special QSL cards will be available for this event, and you may QSL via:

Radio Club du Velay  
PO Box 41  
Brives-Charensac 43700  
FRANCE

Special thanks to F6KQJ for getting the word out about this unique event and helping to make it all possible.



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*from the editors, WR9A and K9HER:*

We're working hard to make the Tattler *your* newsletter. We'll try to keep you up to date on all the latest ham radio news, events, contests, hamfests, and club activities. Have an idea for an article that you think others might be interested in reading? Write one and send it to us! Like to see something new and different in the Tattler? Let us know what you're thinking!

Email us any time at: [tattler@w9reg.org](mailto:tattler@w9reg.org)

## Making Contact with the International Space Station

by Stephen M. Parker, WR9A

So you'd like to work some exotic DX station but don't have a kilowatt hooked up to a beam at 120 feet? How about listening to a signal that is literally out of this world? It's much easier than you might think and all it takes is a 2-meter or 2M/440 radio! Even an HT will do!

Approximately every 90 minutes, the International Space Station (ISS) completes one orbit around the Earth. During that 90 minutes, the planet is rotating underneath it, allowing the ISS to "see" different parts of the Earth every orbit. We won't get into orbital mechanics here, but let's simply say that this provides amateur radio operators in most parts of the world an opportunity to communicate either to, or through, the ISS a few times every day, even if its in range for only 7 or 8 minutes at a time.



On board the International Space Station are a couple of Ericsson MP-X handheld radios and a relatively recent addition, a Kenwood D700 dual-band mobile. For the past 2 or 3 years, the most common configuration of the radio equipment on board has been as a packet digipeater and BBS. Mostly used for passing APRS position packets and short messages, it has been very easy to work. I've personally made several contacts through the packet digipeater on the ISS from my handheld Kenwood D7 HT using its rubber-duck antenna with only 2 watts!

The crew on board the space station is usually busy doing experiments or just "keeping house". When they do have some free time, they occasionally take the radio out of packet digipeater mode and make a few voice contacts. Some prearranged schedules are made with stations set up at schools all across the country and elsewhere, allowing kids a chance to talk live with an astronaut. But on their own time, the astronauts occasionally surprise us Earth-bound hams with impromptu QSO's. So, how does one go about talking with the astronauts on board the ISS? It takes a combination of two things: a little knowledge and a bit of luck. The luck I'll leave up to you. Here's some of the knowledge you'll need. Communicating with the space station requires that it be in line-of-sight of where you are. How do you know if it's within range? The easiest way is to listen! That may seem like a silly answer, but it works.

I was driving through downtown Lafayette one afternoon last year and had my mobile rig scanning the memory channels as I often do. It suddenly stopped on 145.800, and I heard one of the astronauts in a QSO with a station in Wisconsin. As soon as he cleared with him, I picked up the mic and gave my callsign, transmitting on the voice uplink frequency. He came right back to me and there I was, talking with an astronaut on board the space station, who was traveling at 17,000 miles per hour some 240 miles above the Earth, while I was driving along in my car in Lafayette, Indiana. Very cool.

Was I using any special equipment? Nope, just my regular dual-band mobile transceiver and half-wave antenna on the trunk lid, running only 10 watts of power. We didn't chat long, of course, since others were undoubtedly waiting in the wings, but we exchanged names, QTH, and friendly greetings with one another. This was one of those lucky contacts. The astronaut on the ISS happened to have some free time and decided to make some voice contacts, I just happened to have my radio on and scanning the downlink frequency, and the space station was in the right position of its orbit to be within line of sight of my location. I was set up to transmit on the uplink frequency (not 145.800) and knew that the ISS would only be in range for about 6 or 7 minutes.

You can increase your odds of hearing or working the ISS by doing a little planning and even predicting exactly where the ISS is and when it will be within range of your station. There are computer programs available to allow you to do this, and even a web site. ([www.heavens-above.com](http://www.heavens-above.com)) Try these web sites for some good information about amateur radio on board the International Space Station: [www.rac.ca/ariss](http://www.rac.ca/ariss) and [www.amsat.org](http://www.amsat.org)

In the meantime, try keeping a 2-meter radio tuned to 145.800 MHz, or put it into a memory channel and scan it for a couple of days. You may be lucky enough to hear some activity. Right now, the Kenwood D700 on the ISS is configured for crossband repeating. Amateurs transmit on the 440 band, and the signal is repeated on 145.800 MHz. Try your hand at listening this month, and in the next issue we'll get into the nitty gritty and provide details on what you need to do to make your own contacts through the crossband repeater on the ISS, and get you prepared to make voice contacts with the astronauts!

## Minutes of the TARA Business Meeting - 10 August 2004

by Tim Gardner, N9LF, Secretary

### Members in attendance:

Alex Younts, KC9CYK	Bob Niewerth, KC9LI	Jay Welsh, KC9AFE
Steve Parker, WR9A	Greg Dean, N9NWO	Bob Lusby, K9FOH
Dave Dull, WB9BRX	Tim Gardner, N9LF	John Parker, KC4YGO
Cheryl Parker, K9HER	Curt Sherwin, WB9SWD	Jeff Stewart, KF9UP
Tak Ryuzoji, KC9AMT	Bruce Stewart, N9GKE	

The meeting was called to order at 19:30 by N9GKE.

The minutes of the July 2004 meeting were read. WR9A moved to accept the minutes and KC9AFE seconded. Motion passed.

The Treasurers report for June shows income of \$37.63 and expenses of \$827.80 with an ending balance of \$8109.52. K9HER moved to accept, KC9AFE seconded. Motion passed.

### Old Business

None.

### New Business

We received a donation of \$250 from the Greater Lafayette Soap Box Derby as thanks for our assistance with this year's race.

KF9UP announced upcoming events. Your participation is needed for both the Feast of the Hunter's Moon and the Wabash River Cycle Club family bicycle ride. The Feast is scheduled for October 2-3 and the WRCC ride is August 28. Contact Jeff if you can help out.

Jeff reminded us that he has four table tops that could be used to replace the desks in the station. They are tops only and it would take some effort and materials to get suitably installed.

WB9BRX reported that things are well set for the hamfest. Setup begins at 1PM Saturday, and the hamfest doors open at 8am Sunday.

The drawing for \$6 was won by Greg Dean, N9NWO.

Meeting adjourned at 19:55.

## Society of Midwest Contesters (SMC)

by Bill Muhr, KB9YSI

Recent news reports state that renowned scientist Stephen Hawking has revised his original theory and now believes that matter CAN escape from a black hole. These articles remind me of a group called the Society of Midwest Contesters. This group of rabid radio fans has been pumping out signals from the Midwest (the black hole of radio propagation) for almost 20 years.

The Society of Midwest Contesters (SMC), was formed early in 1985, with the goals of uniting Midwest contesters into a competitive group and promoting radio-sport in the Midwest. From the 51 charter members in the summer of 1985, the group has grown to a membership of over 300 contesters, mainly in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Led by then president, Steve Dubberstein, K9WO, SMC launched their first major contest effort in the 1985 November Sweepstakes, winning the unlimited class. They repeated that performance in the 1986 SS. Since then, familiar calls like NT1N, K9ZO and K9NW have led the group, which draws together the experience of the Midwest's contesting greats to train up-and-coming operators.

Paul Gentry, K9PG, took over as President in May 2000. Since then, the SMC has quintupled in size. They came out of nowhere in 2000 to win the Unlimited Team Title in the ARRL Sweepstakes. SMC won again in 2001 by amassing over 22 million points. Then, in the face of intense competition, SMC completed the "3-peat" in 2002, winning by almost 7 million points.

This year the club is again gearing up for major efforts during the 2004/5 contest season. If you are interested in contesting and would like to add your score to the SMC total, visit the club website at [www.w9smc.com](http://www.w9smc.com). Membership is free, although donations are welcome. Once you join, you will be part of a premiere contesting club and have access to a first class newsletter and an email reflector. You can also participate in club sponsored NAQP and Sprint teams, visit the Club Suite in Dayton, and help to support plaques awarded to contesters around the world.



Contesting is a challenging and entertaining part of our hobby, and it's better when you are a member of a contest club. Give the SMC a try and you'll see what I mean.

73 — Bill, KB9YSI

SMC Web Site: <http://www.w9smc.com>

### \* CLASSIFIED \*

#### TARA Birthdays

K9HER	September 6
KZ9Z	September 9
W9YA	September 21
KF9UP	September 23

**Wanted:** HF SSB transmitter (not a transceiver) such as a Drake, Hallicrafters, or Johnson. Want to mate it with a Drake R-8B receiver.

Also looking for a Heathkit HX-30 six-meter SSB transmitter. Not interested in a restoration project. Bob, k9foh, 477-1280

**Wanted:** QRP and six-meter equipment. Always interested in models that I have not used before as well as old favorites. Bob, k9foh, 477-1280

**Wanted:** Drake VHF converter for the R-8 series receivers. Drake accessories for the TR-270 FM transceiver including the TNC-270, Demod 270, and the carrying handle. Bob, k9foh, 477-1280

**Kit building service:** Will build any of the Elecraft transceivers and/or accessories for a nominal fee. Special price for Senior Citizens and anyone with a physical disability. You purchase the items you want and I will build it for you. You must include the pre-wound toroids. Have built two K-2s, two-K-1s, one KX-1 and most of the accessories for these units. Bob, k9foh, 477-1280

**This classified ad service is free to TARA members and placing an ad is easy. Just contact WR9A or K9HER, or email us at: [tattler@w9reg.org](mailto:tattler@w9reg.org)**

# September 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 TM5LAF
5 TM5LAF	6	7	8	9	10	11 Louisville Hamfest
12	13	14 TARA Business Meeting, 7:30 pm	15	16	17 W9DXCC Reception	18 W9DXCC Convention Radio Expo 2004
19 Radio Expo 2004	20	21	22 TARA Program Meeting, 7:30 pm	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## Schedule of Events

- September 4-5: TM5LAF castle on the air, birthplace of Marquis de LAFAYETTE
- September 11: Louisville Hamfest, Paroquet Springs Conference Centre, Talk-in 146.70-, \$6 admission
- September 14: TARA Business meeting, Red Cross, 7:30 p.m.
- September 17-18: W9DXCC Convention & Banquet, Elk Grove Village, IL, Talk-in 147.36+, \$55 convention & banquet, \$30 convention only, special guest speaker ON4UN, <http://www.w9dxcc.com>
- September 18-19: Radio Expo 2004, Grayslake, IL, Lake County Fairgrounds, Talk-in 146.76-, \$10 admission
- September 22: TARA Program meeting, Red Cross, 7:30 p.m.

**Tippecanoe Amateur Radio Association**  
111 S. 7th Street  
Lafayette, IN 47901

#### **TARA Officers**

*President:* N9GKE  
R. Bruce Stewart

*Vice-President:* WR9A  
Stephen Parker

*Secretary:* N9LF  
Tim Gardner

*Treasurer:* KC4YGO  
John Parker

*Director:* W9TN  
Steve Van Frank

## **Contest Corner**

We're heading into the contesting season, and even though we're on the downward side of the 11-year sunspot cycle, it's expected to be a good one. Here's a sample of what's on the agenda for September:

- WAE DX Contest, SSB - 0000Z, Sep 11 to 2359Z, Sep 12
- ARRL September VHF QSO Party - 1800Z, Sep 11 to 0300Z, Sep 13
- North American Sprint, CW - 0000Z-0400Z, Sep 12
- North American Sprint, SSB - 0000Z-0400Z, Sep 19
- CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY - 0000Z, Sep 25 to 2400Z, Sep 26

State QSO parties being held in September include Tennessee, South Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, and Alabama.

Because of the large number of contests, we don't have room to list them **all** in our newsletter, but we do try to highlight the major ones. For a more complete list, visit the WA7BNM Contest Calendar on the web:

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal>

