

2020 ILQP Analysis and Musings from N9JF

As 2020 fades into the sunset and the dust settles, the results of the 2020 ILQP deserve some comments.

The number of logs received this year was a bit staggering. The log total for 2018 had been the highest so far at 310. Last year, the number dropped to 260. In 2020, we received (drum roll.....) 456 logs! One can only surmise that this was the result of the year-long State QSO Party Challenge, and we thank the organizers of that activity. “We” really didn’t do anything different in 2020 to encourage activity. Sunspot activity really had not increased all that much; the weather was “OK”. Logs increased from both in and out of the state.

We received logs indicating activity from all 102 Illinois counties, the vast majority of the US and a good portion of Canada as well as several DXCC countries.

Band conditions were generally pretty good. We didn’t get much help from any band above twenty meters, and the low bands “went long” fairly early. Fortunately, some stations stuck it out on twenty long enough to help both the EU crowd and the West Coast chasers. We do, however, need to continue to improve in this regard.

Submitted logs contained 54,832 contacts, which was a total about 40% higher than the previous record. Of these, 37,280 were on CW, 149 on FM, 31 on non-CW digital, and the remainder on SSB. Two meters accounted for the FM contacts. Adventurous and creative souls dropped down to 160 meters for 150 QSOs. Three contacts were mysteriously listed on “2000 khz”. Not sure what was down there? About 6700 contacts were reported on twenty meters, about 30 on 15 meters and about the same on 10 meters. The bulk of the activity, however, was on 40 and 80 meters. There were IL stations to be worked on 80 meters from the very beginning.

If you didn’t chase mobiles, rovers and portables, you missed a lot of the fun. You also missed some counties. The mobile operators activated a majority of the counties in the state: AD4EB: 23, K0PC: 16, K9WX: 10, N9JF: 13, and WA9LEY: 2. Rovers were similarly agile: N9C (N0AC):11, KJ9C: 8, ND9E: 4, W9YS: 3, AA0Z: 2 and KC9PCP: 2. Portable stations activated at least 35 counties. I haven’t dug deeply enough yet to see how many counties you could have worked by logging only fixed stations. We can’t possibly give enough credit to those who came into Illinois from out of state to run counties that would not have been otherwise activated or to those who traveled a couple of hundred miles to set up a portable station and who had to tear down the station long after darkness settled. If you’ve not tried that, it’s not as easy as it sounds! Once again, we owe a big “thank you” to those who helped with “cheerleading” and organizing portable operations, particularly in southern Illinois (thank you, PRIME!).

Log submission and checking:

Melba and I finished our mobile route at 0200z on Monday, three and a half hours from home. I had 138 e-mails in my InBox. That was the first indication that we might have a tsunami of logs on the way! It took me three days to catch up with acknowledging the submissions. Fortunately, I’m no longer working.... It was a week before the flood

abated. Near the end of the submission period, I sent out a few reminders to those who were obviously 'active' but who might have forgotten to send in a log.

There were far fewer problems with received logs this year. I was sent no CQWW logs, NYQP logs or PAQP logs. Only a couple of IL stations listed "IL" as their Sent QTH instead of their county. Only a few sent .adi files instead of Cabrillo or Excel files. Almost all requests for corrections were quickly acknowledged. One issue that persists in the large number of IL stations not listing a local club. I guess that is the prerogative of the individual.

Log checking revealed a huge number of "Unique" callsigns; calls logged by a single entrant. A large percentage of these were "busted" calls or exchanges that resulted in lost QSO and (often) multiplier credit. There were, however, quite a few large logs with few, or no, score reductions. "Golden Logs" (no reductions) with substantial scores included W9DP, AA9VI, AB9YC, K9PG, K4BAI, W9ILY, AI0Y/9, N9SB, N9I (WB8RFB), K9KM, K9ZO, WA0MHJ, K9NW, K4XU, K3WJV, W3WHK, K9CT, KD9MS, W1WBB, K9BGL, AC4G, K3IE, KE0L, W4NZ, KD2KW, N5RZ, K9WX, NE9U, W9XT, N2BJ, W9ZV, WA9LEY. Many others lost only one or two QSOs in the log checking. Well done!

Records and other significant accomplishments:

DX: OM2VL's record from 2018 still stands, but Laci's 2020 score and DL3DXX's 2020 score now rank 2nd and 3rd all-time for DX scores in ILQP. We need some sunspots to wake up the high bands and make this more interesting for the EU crowd!

IL Fixed High Power: K9CT, after taking a year off for a DXpedition, topped this class and set a new record.

IL Mobile: KF9D's record is still intact, though AD4EB made a good run at it. Jim made 165 contacts in the last hour. I heard him when he was in POPE county, and the pileup sounded like a hive of hornets. Upon further examination of his log, this was his *third best hour*. The 2200z hour was just short of 200 QSOs, and 2300z wasn't much below that. He broke the record for number of "raw qsos" for CW. K0PC also had massive pileups as did N9C (N0AC), K9WX and KJ9C.

IL Portable: K9BGL (with KD9FQC) blew away the record for 3-county portables, besting the previous high in this class by almost 50%. KF9D did similar damage to the single-county portable record.

Illinois clubs:

PRIME ARA split their membership to create some more competition, and it made an interesting race with "PRIME 1" topping "PRIME 2" by about 60,000 points. Metro DX was a fairly close third with McHenry County Wireless and Bolingbrook ARS in the same ballpark.

Out of State: K1RO, by the narrowest of margins, beat the previous High Power score (his own from 2018), and worked 97 counties. Way to go, Mark! KI6RRN made the Top Ten list...an impressive accomplishment from the Left Coast, and easily broke the ILQP record for CA.

VA7RN set a new ILQP record from BC. W1QK set a new record from CT, as did K9RS from DE, DL3DXX from Germany, IK2CFD from Italy, OM2VL from Slovakia, OT6M (ON9CC) from Belgium (first ever entry), AC5O from LA, KV0I from NE, W5RJJ from NM, W1WBB from RI, KE0L from TN, AA1SU from VT and N8II from WV.

A few county records fell: BOND (KK9N), WAYN (KD0NEO/9), MCDN (NN1N), MCHE (W9CWO/N7US), PEOR (K9CT), PULA (KD9MS), CLNT (K9BGL/P), WASH (K9BGL/P), STEP (K9UIY), and WTSD (KF9D/P).

If you really want you call in the ILQP record book, there are some fairly easy ways to get there. County records are under 10,000 points in CHRS, SCOT and SHEL. There has NEVER been an entry (fixed or portable) from ALEX! From outside the state, there are easy records to break: AB, AK (the record is two points....), and Australia (the record is four points). There has never been a log submission from Labrador, Newfoundland, Manitoba, Nunavut or the Yukon....or Hawaii! A lot of enticing Caribbean locations are also awaiting activation during the ILQP weekend....

How do we make ILQP better? We get occasional suggestions and welcome them. A few of them make us go, "Huh?", such as the comment (with a log of nine contacts): "As usual I was VERY disappointed in the POOR turnout for this event. I guess I expect too much from PEOPLE'S QSO parties." So....what needs to change? Let us know.

73, Jim N9JF for the committee