
THE FEEDLINE

Volume 46, Issue 4 The Voice of the Western Illinois Amateur Radio Club April 2022

From the Presidential Dungeon,

I want to thank the Quincy Public Library for allowing us to use their fine facility for our March meeting. We may look at using it again, if the need arises.

I don't know about you, but I am rather happy to see the temps we have been experiencing in our area. We actually have rain coming down with basically no worry about it changing to something freezing, and I have no problem with that. While the weather seems to be improving, so is activity on the HF bands. The sun has been fairly active, keeping the Solar Flux Index at an elevated level and spending more time above 100 than below it. This has translated to better propagation on the higher HF bands; and if you have been monitoring, I am sure you have noticed an increase in activity on 15, 12 and 10 meters. On the other hand, we have had a few solar flares that have made radio conditions a bit unusual. One evening I managed to work half a dozen Russian stations on 15 meters well after sunset. Europeans are pretty much a daily thing on most bands if you look at the right times. Of course, most activity is still on FT8, but I have tuned across many SSB QSO's on 15 meters and made a few myself.

We had a couple of new members join the club, Jeff Hammontree, N0BIT (then KF0HTI), joined in February and Ed Cozart, W9US, joined at the March meeting. Jeff lives in Center, MO and Ed lives north of Quincy. If you hear them on the air, be sure to welcome them to the club.

As local COVID numbers continue to decline, hopefully it will not be much longer before we can return to the Red Cross for our monthly meetings; but in the mean time we still will be floating around. As I write this, I am still not 100% sure where we will meet for April; but once I know for sure, I will send a message out over the club email reflector. With warmer weather brings the opportunity to meet outside as well, but I imagine we will still be meeting inside until June at the best.

Speaking of warmer weather, severe weather is a real possibility. W9WE sent out an email with a link to an online weather spotting class. Please take advantage of it if you possibly can. Even if you do not intend to do any weather spotting yourself, you will increase your own knowledge of what to watch for when the weather starts to change and then can act accordingly.

I will soon be creating an online poll to get a better feel for what ham radio activities our club members enjoy and are participating in. When I send out notice about the poll, please take the couple of minutes to answer the few questions so I can get a better feel for where we might focus upcoming programs, training and operating activities.

See you on April 6.
Danny W9DP

Moved and Seconded: Minutes of the March 2022 WIARC Meeting

The March 2022 meeting of the WIARC was held in the community room of the Quincy Public Library on Wednesday, March 9, 2022. The meeting was called to order by President W9DP at 7 pm with the following members and guests present:

W9DP N9JF K9VXD AB9DU W9WE KB9FIN WB9EWM KD0DKE KB9CES WM4D
WA9GBC KD9QGE W9US (Ed) KA9WTK W9GQK NR9Q (via Zoom) Ryan (visitor)

Minutes of the February meeting were approved as printed in *The Feedline* as corrected: Correction: WB9EWM installed a new power amplifier. KB9FIN moved, KD0DKE, seconded. Carried

Treasurer's Report not delivered due to Arnold's computer blowing up. Report pending.

Station Committee Report: Things are opening up...may improve.

Repeater Board Report: WB9EWM; new amp and power supply are on .03; all seems to be working; official copy of license will be posted at both repeater sites; John has been in contact with WGEM regarding when they plan to begin relocation; have a location at EMA where we can put the antennas from .94 when it's moved; passed around a picture of the new cabinet at .03; getting 68 watts out of the duplexer (ERP 160 watts); survey re DStar: 6 or 7 responses; consensus seems to be to move .195 to Fusion; Motion by WA9GBC, seconded by KB9FIN to dispose of the DStar equipment and program .195 for Fusion; carried;

Applications for Membership: W9US, Ed Cozart, (ex-N9WYV); WB9EWM moved, KB9FIN seconded, carried.

Contest Committee Report: KD9QGE and W9US reported on recent activity; Drew has W.A.S. on 3 bands in Logbook of the World in just a few months!

Old Business: membership cards discussion; WB9EWM moved, WA9GBC seconded to spend up to \$250 for ARRL materials to donate to library; carried

New Business:

W9WE: 5/7, 8/6, 11/5 test sessions

NWS storm spotting training; Mar 21 and Apr 2 virtual classes;

NCS Stations: Mar 9: W9GQK; Mar 16: WB9EWM; Mar 23: N9JF; Mar 30: W9DP
Apr 6: W9WE; Apr 13: WM4D Apr 20 WB9EWM Apr 27 W9DP May 4 WM4D

Thanks to W9GQK for his first NCS session!

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 on a motion by W9WE seconded by WB9EWM and carried.

Respectfully submitted, N9JF Secretary

From the ARRL Members Only Website:

It is with heavy heart I have to announce Ron Morgan AD9I (past Illinois Section Manager) has passed away. We are awaiting further information about a wake/funeral. Thom W9RY

ARRL Illinois Section
Section Manager: Dr Thomas H Beebe, W9RY w9ry@arrl.org

Very sorry to hear this. I know Ron had been in ill health for some time. He was quite active as an SMC member and served for some time as the IL Section Manager. He met with our club Exec Comm several years ago. -.ed

DX info cheerfully borrowed from ARRL DX News:

QST de W1AW
DX Bulletin 11 ARLD011
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT March 17, 2022
To all radio amateurs

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by KK9A, The Daily DX, the OPDX Bulletin, 425 DX News, DXNL, Contest Corral from QST and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM web sites.
Thanks to all.

KENYA, 5Z. Andy, 5Z4VJ has been active using FT8 on 10 meters around 2030z. QSL to home call.

IRAN, EP. Zahra, EP5CZD has been active on 15 meters using SSB. QSL via RW6HS.

GUADELOUPE, FG. Jean-Luc, F1ULQ will be QRV as TO1Q from March 24 to April 6. Activity will be holiday style on the HF bands using SSB and FT8, possibly EME, and on satellite. QSL to home call.

NEW CALEDONIA, FK. Erwann, LB1QI is QRV as FK/LB1QI from Noumea. Activity is in his spare time on the HF bands. QSL to home call.

CHAD, TT. Nicolas, TT8SN is QRV from time to time on 10 and 6 meters using CW and SSB. This includes being active on Satellite QO-100. QSL via DL9USA.

SOUTH SUDAN, Z8. Diya, YI1DZ is QRV as Z81D from Juba until September 11. Activity is holiday style on the HF bands. QSL via OM3JW.

Please see March QST, page 72, and the ARRL and WA7BNM Contest web sites for details.

QSO Today Online Ham Radio Expo review

I have attended the QSO Today ham radio expo three times now; and while I have been mildly disappointed by some things, I was still impressed enough with them to keep coming back. The first one was free; the past two had a \$10 registration fee. There has been an average of about 45 different speakers at each one, and every expo attracts more speakers. Each speaker delivers online presentations of subjects they are quite familiar with and many are experts in their fields. Each presentation has been 20 to 40 minutes long with the chance to ask questions that will be addressed at the end of each session. There is something for practically everyone, even a couple of kit building sessions! In some cases, it was hard for me to decide which session I wanted to listen to. All presentations are recorded and are available for viewing for 30 days after the event.

You can browse vendor booths and chat online with sales representatives of several ham radio companies and organizations. Most vendors have hamfest deals going on that are valid for a week or more after the event. There are also many chat rooms that have recommended topics and great places to ask questions and meet others that share the same interests you have.

Some things missing from this type of event are the chance to lay your hands on a just-released piece of equipment to twiddle the knobs and a flea market. If you only go to hamfests to browse the used equipment, this probably is not the event for you.

The best part of attending this kind of event: no travel! You sit in your easy chair and watch and listen using your PC, laptop, tablet or phone wherever you are.

Danny W9DP

For Sale

Icom 756 Pro II \$650

Alpha 76CA 160-10 meter amplifier \$1300

Kenwood 9130 2 meter all mode radio \$225

Mirage 2 meter amplifier 25 watts in 150 out \$175

KLM 432-30 LBX 432 beam \$75

222 10 watt transverter \$75

Bencher BY-1 paddles \$75

Danny W9DP w9dp@w9dp.us

Parks and such with N9JF/N9G

Most of you know that I've been actively "running parks" since the National Parks on the Air program in 2016. "Runnable entities" included parks, trails, monuments and other sites. Once that year (the 100th anniversary of the National Park system) was over, interest in parks continued courtesy of two other programs. The WWFF (World Wide Flora and Fauna) program was already well underway and was primarily a European program. A couple of years ago, the POTA (Parks on the Air) program began as an offshoot of WWFF. I don't know all of the politics behind the split, but it was apparently a somewhat acrimonious separation. The two programs continue, and one can participate in either or both as long as one does not say the wrong things in either forum.

Criteria for inclusion of an entity differ a bit between the two programs. Once begun, POTA expanded rapidly and now includes many of the old WWFF sites and a lot of others. WWFF is gradually adding some of the POTA sites that were originally adopted by POTA in the USA. Beyond number 4423, the numbers are different. One program or the other occasionally splits a site into multiple numbers or may delete a site for some reason. Yes, it gets confusing. The main thing for most of us is to either run a park or chase a park and have fun, and let the admins worry about the details. There are currently more than 10,000 parks in each system. In the USA, as of March 14, POTA has 9682 entities and WWFF has 5947.

The 2016 NPOTA program was run by ARRL and required logs (both activators and chasers) to be uploaded to Logbook of the World for credit to be awarded. Both WWFF and POTA put the responsibility entirely upon the activators. You can "register" in either program as a "hunter"; but you only get credit for working an entity if the activator submits a log for the activation. These are submitted to regional representatives who upload the logs to a master database. Those who care about the details can go to <https://wwff.co/> (for WWFF) or to <https://pota.app/#/> (for POTA). There are numerous awards available for both activators and hunters in both programs, and no, they are not the same awards. Yes, it gets confusing.... Both programs have active Facebook pages. The popularity of activating and chasing parks has been nothing short of amazing and grows by the day. As I write this, (4:45 on a Monday afternoon), there are 19 activations "on the board".

In addition to everyday activations, each program has occasional special events to call attention to certain parks or celebrate particular times of the year. WWFF had its "Spring Fling" last weekend, and there were several stations who sported 1x1 callsigns. I obtained the use of N9G for the weekend as I had done during a week last October for "Get Your Park On". While I activated more than 20 parks in October, my impact last weekend was much more modest and consisted of only two park activations. The 1x1 call is sometimes an advantage in terms of attracting attention; at other times, it's merely an irritation and identifying correctly is something else to remember.

Every activator has a slightly different equipment setup and strategy. The Facebook site includes a lot of questions and commentary on the "best way to activate", and there are no "bad ways". Many operate from a picnic table, card table or pavilion in a park. Some set up signs or banners to advertise what they are doing. Some hike to trails, riversides or summits and operate with portable batteries and low power. Others are strictly "stealth operations" that try to avoid public attention. Many use ground-

mounted verticals or supports for dipoles or wires in trees. Given that some parks strictly prohibit anything in trees, stakes in the ground or anything that would constitute a public hazard, some are entirely self-contained. Many operate from the cabs of their pickups, vans, cars or RVs.

At one time, I put together a drive-on mount that supported an 18' pole from which I hung a 40 meter open-wire dipole. This was an effective antenna that could be erected in about 5 minutes. I could either support the ends of the dipole in trees or tie them to signs or anchor them to concrete blocks. The antenna did, however, require some space (70 feet end-to-end) and created a possible tripping hazard. As long as the park was mostly vacant, I never had any issues. However, that particular antenna did not work well on 20 meters or any band below 40 meters, and I felt that it was not an especially good DX antenna due to a high angle of radiation. There was always the potential issue of encountering a park official who did not appreciate the sight of a wire antenna. This was the antenna I used on the 2018 trip to Alaska, and I was not very impressed with its effectiveness up there. In 2020, when we went back to Alaska, I instead took along an extra long mast to support my Hustler mobile resonators on the van, and I thought they worked better than the dipole. I have since used this system when activating parks.

My recent N9G activity was fairly typical of my park activations and will be detailed in the following paragraphs for anyone interested....

The Spring Fling for WWFF spanned only two days (UTC), March 19 and 20. I had applied for my usual 1x1 call, N9G and set up my logging program (and hopefully, my brain) to use that call. Given that I knew that Saturday would be taken up with a driving job, I planned for only a couple of park activations. I began by heading over to Siloam Springs State Park (SSSP) on Friday evening, as the event would begin at 7 pm local time. SSSP is a convenient 15 minutes from our house and is one of only half a dozen parks within an hour of home. It is always open (unlike Fall Creek Overlook, which is closed until April 1 and Bob Bangert Park, which is closed until???). Parking is not a problem, there are usually areas that are not crowded, there is no admission fee and I'm familiar with most of the areas of the park. One can operate from either Adams or Brown County (and Brown is fairly rare for the county hunting crowd.) The disadvantages include the fact that some of the nicer areas are down in a canyon and that the cell coverage is minimal or non-existent.

"Cell coverage", you ask? "Why does that matter? Isn't this ham radio? We don't need no stinkin' cell phones!" Well, it sort of does matter, because the way to get a pileup in a hurry is the be able to "spot yourself" on one of the internet sites. More on this later....

Arriving at the park, I set up at the parking lot of the main shelter house. There was no traffic in the park, and it was almost dark. I assembled two antennas: one mast (at the rear of the van) with resonators for 10, 15 and 20 meters and the other (at the front) with the 40 meter resonator (which also works on 6 meters). Climbing back into the driver's seat, I fired up the laptop with the logging program and verified that it was set to log with the N9G call and at the proper park number (KFF-1023 and K-1023).

There are numerous logging programs which will work for activating a park. Many use a program called HAMRS. It apparently is free and user-friendly. However, it also has a reputation for occasionally losing logs due to operator error or unknown issues.

Others use N3FJP's logging program. For a long time, I used N1MM+ without any problems. More recently, I've been using a program developed by KG5OWB called "Park Logger". It has a couple of disadvantages, but I get along fine with it and have never had any problems. The debate rages as to which is the "best" program; I stay out of the discussion and keep on logging...

The bands and modes to use depend upon many issues. Some activate only on SSB or only on CW or only on digital modes. Some stick mainly to 20 meters or 40 meters. I usually try to "mix it up" in order to work as many different stations as possible from a given park. My band-mode decisions are usually made depending upon the time available, the propagation, the time of day and my activation history at the park. In the case of SSSP, I've been there numerous times and have operate phone, cw and FT8 on various bands. I knew I wouldn't have a lot of time on this occasion, so I wanted to make some noise, get some stations in the log and head for home.

Right off, I listened on the high bands and heard a lot of activity on 10 meter FT8. This was encouraging as I had never made a 10 meter QSO from the park. I spotted myself on both the WWFF and POTA sites and fired up on 28044 on CW. It wasn't very long before KH2TJ in California called. I was off and running.....and the "dah" side of my paddles quit. Five minutes of trying various things to fix the paddles failed to yield a solution. I tried FT8 on 10 meters with no callers. Then I tried 12 meter FT8 with the same results....nada.

At this point, thoroughly disgusted with my failure to pack an extra set of paddles (which I usually do include), and looking at an activation with minimal success, I resorted to 20 meter SSB. Once again, I spotted myself, and "they came". In fifteen minutes, I had 25 stations in the log. I decided to try 17 meter SSB, and it was fairly productive. Neither band produced any DX; however one VE3 and an Alaskan made the trip. It was DARK and trying to rain. I decided that 38 contacts wasn't exactly a failure, shut everything down, took off the antennas and headed for home. I certainly could have logged a lot more had I gone to 40 meter SSB, but I was looking at a very early morning rising and called it a night.

(Insert 21-hour day driving on Saturday with no radio and a lot of very flat ground in Arkansas....)

On Sunday after church, I fought off brain fog and headed to another park. My first choice was going to be Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge. However, a call from a birding friend alerted me to the presence of a Northern Shrike in southern Pike County, which was exactly the wrong direction. I yielded to the bird chase and headed southwest instead of northeast. Unfortunately, I did not find the bird. They fly. Nearby, however, was Great Rivers National Wildlife Refuge; and this was the park I activated. In mid-afternoon, there was activity on most of the high bands. I began on 20 meter CW (fixed the paddles...don't ask me how because it makes no sense...). The first station who called was Amy, AG7GP in Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon. She was without cell coverage and asked me to spot her on 14049 khz, which I did. I learned that, on limited sleep, I was not capable of typing on my cell phone and sending CW at the same time. I managed to phat-finger the phone and accidently spot MYSELF on the wrong frequency and then with the wrong park number.

At this point, I realized I probably should not have been out unattended in public...but it wasn't very "public". The ducks in the refuge chuckled as I struggled with technology.

I had a decent run on 20 and then moved to 17 meter CW where the signals were excellent. Both bands produced some European callers. I was able to spot myself when I moved from band to band, and I could check the spotting site for other parks that were activated. I spent some time tracking down and logging other parks on 40 and 20 meter CW and then had a brief run myself on 40 meter CW. The high bands sounded good. I could never work anyone on 10 meter FT8, but 12, 15, 17 and 20 meter FT8 all yielded some contacts.

At about 5 pm local, I moved to 20 meter SSB. In the next 30 minutes, I logged 69 contacts and decided that was a pretty good time to quit. I removed the antennas, stowed the laptop and started the van....started the van....started the van....

Oops. Apparently a couple of hours without starting the van was not a good strategy, especially when running a lot of FT8 at 100 watts out. The good news: I had a battery booster in the overhead luggage carrier. Five minutes later, the van was happily purring, and I was headed for home. Whew!!

Overall, the N9G activations for the weekend amounted to a bit under 200 contacts. This wasn't very impressive compared to over a thousand from more than 20 parks during the October event, but I learned a lot. Plan ahead, take extra stuff, and keep the battery booster charged!

POTA ON! De N9JF/N9G

Operating Events the first weekend in April

Mississippi QSO Party

[http://www.arrlmiss.org/2021 - 2022 MS QSO PARTY RULES.pdf](http://www.arrlmiss.org/2021-2022-MS-QSO-PARTY-RULES.pdf)

Louisiana QSO Party

http://laqp.louisianacontestclub.org/laqso_rules.htm

Florida Parks on the Air

<http://flspota.org/rules/>

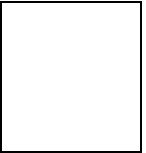
Missouri QSO Party

<http://www.w0ma.org/index.php/missouri-qso-party>

I plan to get out and make some noise in this one. There are few stations active in the northeast corner of Missouri, so the county hunters always appreciate someone who shows up from Lewis, Clark, Scotland, Knox, Schuyler and Adair counties. Given that there are at least ten runnable parks in those counties, it's likely that I'll operate primarily from parks on April 2 and 3. And yes, I'll take along extra paddles and a battery booster...

De N9JF

Western Il. Amateur Radio Club
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Quincy, IL 62305-3132



April meeting: Wednesday April 6, 2022
7 pm
Location to be determined
Watch the club reflector and listen to
Wednesday night nets!

W9AWE – W90AB
The Western Illinois Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
WIARC homepage: <http://www.w9awe.org> e-mail to w9awe@qsl.net
WIARC email reflector: wiarc@mailman.qth.net

Sponsors of
Voice repeater W9AWE/R on 147.630/.030 Quincy
Voice repeater W9AWE/R on 146.340/.940 Quincy
Voice repeater W9AWE/R on 448.900/443.900 Quincy
147.03 and 448.9:103.5 sub-audible tone; 146.94 123.0
D-STAR repeater W9AWE on 147.795/.195
D-STAR 446.89375/441.89375
ILLINOIS QSO PARTY

Newsletter input due by the 20th of the preceding month
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