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# THE FEEDLINE

Volume 48, Issue 7 The Voice of the Western Illinois Amateur Radio Club July 2024

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*Editor's Note: This newsletter is being thrown together in Northwest Territories in one of the spots where we have WiFi. It is short. There will be a lot more to report next month when we (hopefully) return to the States. - N9JF*

First things first:  
In memory of KOCA

Another ham community stalwart has become a Silent Key. KOCA, Cliff Ahrens, passed away on May 23. While we have lost other several other local hams in recent years, a few comments seem appropriate regarding Cliff. They are included below:

*When I was first licensed, Cliff spent hours helping several of us improve our CW speed to upgrade. He and a couple of others would get on 10 meter CW in the old Novice band and have QSO's with us. They also would send code practice over the 146.940 repeater for us.*

*Cliff was instrumental in the start up of the Great River DX group, with the intent of fellowship and sharing the love of chasing DX.*

*It really is a shock for me when I start looking back at all those that helped me grow in the hobby and realize so many are no longer here. I missed my chance to show many of them how much their efforts were appreciated.*

**Danny W9DP**

*Cliff was a great promoter of the hobby and a valuable mentor to many in both HARC and WIARC. He served as an ARRL director and as a card checker for DXCC for many years. He regularly went to Dayton to help in this regards.*

*I had the privilege of operating with Cliff a few times at K4VX and several times at both HARC and WIARC Field Days. He was a great CW op and was at the top of the Honor Roll for DXCC. Not sure if he had "worked them all" but he was awfully close!*

*He will be sorely missed by his family and the ham community.*

*RIP my friend. SK N9JF*

*Indeed, Cliff was at the Top Of Honor Roll which does mean he had worked them all on the current DXCC list. A notable indication of his dedication to DXing and to ham radio in general. And yes, Jim, he was a great operator.*

**Mike NA9Q**

I was able to attend Cliff's funeral and hear many give their thoughts regarding his life and contributions to his family, his church, his profession and his community. His son, Todd, gave the eulogy and included several stories relating to Cliff's ham radio experiences. One of the most amusing was Todd's statement that an aspect of ham radio that Cliff eventually abandoned was "putting out counties". "When we drove to Minnesota on vacation, we had to stop at *every county line* to 'put out the counties'. And it wasn't just one person who wanted to work him; it was a whole pileup!" -- N9JF

## Moved and Seconded: Minutes of the June 2024 WIARC Meeting:

The June 6, 2024, meeting of WIARC was called to order at 7 pm by Vice President, Dave, KB9FIN with the following members and guests present:

KB9FIN, W9WE, W9WEB, KB9WDC, KB9YN, WA9GBC, WB9EWM, KA0SNL, KD9VUW, KD0DKE, WA0VHI, KD9PPJ, K9AJC and KD9GIY via ZOOM.

Introductions made...

Dave KB9FIN asked if everyone had looked at or read the minutes from the May meeting, seeking a motion to approve, John, WB9EWM made the motion to approve and second by Jack KD9PPJ and approved by members present.

Treasurers Report: Jack KD9PPJ stated that all banking issues have been cleared up and that he now has full access to the accounts. KD9PPJ reported that there is \$9300 dollars in the account not making any dividends and would like to see that money in a Certificate of Deposit. Conversation was had about other CD, and the amount and time left before CD could be accessed. KD9PPJ stated that the other CD would not be up till October of 2024 and its amount was \$6300 dollars. Jim N9JF sent out membership emails to all that have not paid dues as of this year and KD9PPJ stated that everything is paid for and up to date.

Discussion was had about the \$9300 dollars and motion was made by KD9PPJ to place \$5000 dollars into another CD and second by WB9EWM. W9WE asked about the term of the CD and KD9PPJ said that he believed that it was 8 months. Votes taken and all were in favor by members present.

Repeater Board: John WB9EWM reported that the KHQA site is going well and he has a good working relationship with the personnel out there. WB9EWM reported that they had to move a cabinet and as a result that created a coax issue that needed to be moved. An engineer there said that he would get the tower guys out and get everything moved around. WB9EWM and KB9FIN went out to the site and took the UHF and the 443.900 repeater out and put it in the cabinet with the 147.195 repeater along with the duplexer and got rid of the other cabinet because it was no longer needed. WB9EWM stated that the club is down to 2 cabinets now. The other duplexer that was there for the D-Star, Scott KD0DKE is going to take it and place it in storage with the rest of the equipment there.

KB9FIN had called WB9EWM about Ron AA9GL reporting about the transmissions that the 146.940 repeater was picking up. WB9EWM investigated and found that there was a Fusion room, coming out of St. Louis or from Kansas City, that had the same frequency as our 146.940 Fusion repeater. WB9EWM spoke with someone from the KC Fusion room

and cleared up the confusion finding that with propagation being high that the far away repeater was being heard through our 146.940 repeater. Shawn KD9VUW asked if there was a tone squelch that could be used, but the answer is no. WB9EWM spoke with Fusion repeater techs and found that the old repeaters were capable of doing just that but the with the new Fusion repeaters that answer is no. WB9EWM explained that if you come into the repeater in Fusion, it will come back out on analog, even though the repeater is FM, tone squelch is already on, if the repeater picks up Fusion it will come out on FM. The only solution would be to go back to a DR1 repeater, or a non-Fusion/digital repeater. At this time, WB9EWM reported that everything is working as it should at this time.

**Contest Committee:** Dave W9WE reported that he tried to work the Kentucky QSO party but bands were not in the best shape with only 23 contacts. Nothing else was reported You can find more information about upcoming contests and QSO parties at <https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php#16199>.

**Membership Committee:** Jim, N9JF not present. There were no new applications for membership at this time.

**Club Station:** KB9FIN reported that Ed W9US Shawn KD9VUW and himself went to the Red Cross building and put all the equipment back into the radio room. Nothing has been set up or connected. We are still going back into the Red Cross but right now they are still getting everything completed with the refurbishing of the interior of the building.

**New Business:** KB9FIN brought up Field Day 2024 and what we are going to do. Usually, the club uses the Red Cross building and the radio room as an EOC, due to remodeling this will not be the case this year. KD9VUW suggested that we have it at Siloam Springs at the pavilion. WB9EWM stated that the Emergency Management is having training there that weekend and will have their tower trailer at the park, and it was offered to the club to use. Wire antennas can be used if they are taken down after use and there is no destruction to the trees. The cost of the pavilion is \$50 dollars per day, Ed W9US called and found this out. A short conversation was held, motion was made by KD9VUW and second by KD9PPJ. The vote was approved by membership. KD9VUW also made the motion for the funding of \$150 dollars for the rental of the pavilion and was second by Dave WA9GBC. The vote was taken and approved by membership. KD9VUW was assigned as committee lead for the Field Day activities

KB9FIN conveyed the funding for new locks on the cabinet at the Red Cross, as He cannot find key to open the lock. W9WE suggested that Alex WA0VHI, who is a Locksmith, look at the lock before being cut and replaced.

Andy KA0SNL presented the project about paying for membership online through the website. All connections for sign-ups and to the bank accounts have been completed and KA0SNL stated that he made all the connections to the website last week. There are about 7 different conditions for membership per the By-Laws. KA0SNL has taken all into consideration and implemented them into the website. All conditions for membership have been accounted for within the website. Currently everything is done but trying to keep it simple to start, so it is now just a way to pay online. Payments can be made several different ways and email confirmation will be sent after payment has been made.

The processing fee was spoken about, and it is 2.9 % plus .30 cents per transaction. Currently there is an option for the person paying to cover the fee, but it is not the default. There will be a box that needs to be checked by the payee to cover the fees. Conversation was held about convenience fees being put on automatically to the payee and points were made about getting people to use the system as is. Dave W9WE made the motion to accept the payment system as it is currently written and was second by K9AJC. Motion passed by membership vote. Currently the pay online process is in testing phase and testing should be completed by the end of this month before KA0SNL puts it online live.

Old Business: John WB9EWM brought up the Hamfest and if there was any news about it. Conversation was had about it being a successful Hamfest, as it being the first one and breaking even. Pam KB9WDC stated that she returned an unopened box of chips and returned the \$20 dollars to KD9PPJ.

KD9PPJ informed everyone to a class that he had attended, which was an introduction class for Bee Keeping. He explained the way the class was taught and thought it would be an excellent way to educate others that might be interested in or just want to find out what Amateur Radio, by conducting a class that introduces others to the hobby. KB9FIN thought it was a great idea and that he would speak to W9US about the possibilities

NCS stations: June 12 – W9DP, June 19 – WB9EWM, June 26 – W9US, July 3 – W9DP, July 10 – KD9VUW, July 17 – K9AJC, July 24 – WB9EWM, July 31 – KD9PPJ, August 7- W9WE

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:57pm. Motion to adjourn was made by WB9EWM and seconded by KD9VUW, motion passed by members present.

Respectfully submitted by K9AJC.

ARRL Site hack woes.

Some weeks back, the ARRL system was hit. Here is a member bulletin that was received:

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## **MEMBER BULLETIN**

**June 6, 2024**

**Dear ARRL member,**

**We are writing to inform you of a serious incident that has impacted ARRL's operations. On or around May 12, 2024, ARRL was the victim of a sophisticated**

**network attack by a malicious international cyber group. We immediately involved the FBI and engaged with third party experts to investigate.**

**On May 16, on the eve of the ARRL National Convention in Ohio, we posted a notice on our website to inform members about the incident. Since then, we have made substantial progress to mitigate the impact of this attack on our organization. We have been posting regular updates, including the status of restored services. Please refer to our dedicated news post at <https://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-systems-service-disruption>.**

**We are aware that certain members believe we should be openly communicating everything associated with this incident. We are working with industry experts, including cyber crime attorneys and the authorities, who have directed us to be conservative and cautious with our communications while restoring the ARRL network.**

**Many of our services and programs have been impacted by this attack. We have been diligently assessing each system to ascertain the extent of compromise. For example, while the Logbook of The World® server and related user data were unaffected, we have taken the precautionary measure of keeping the service offline until we can ensure the security and integrity of our networks. Similarly, access to Online DXCC is unavailable, although individual award data remains secure.**

**Fortunately, some of our key systems, such as the ARRL website and our association membership system, were unaffected. Despite the severity of the attack, no personal information was compromised. Additionally, ARRL does not store credit card information anywhere on our systems, and we do not collect social security numbers.**

**Our Directors have heard from some members who are concerned about managing their membership renewals. Members can renew online at [www.arrl.org/join](http://www.arrl.org/join) or by phoning ARRL.**

**We understand the frustration and inconvenience this incident has caused, and we sincerely appreciate your patience and understanding as our dedicated staff and partners continue to work tirelessly to restore affected systems and services.**

**Thank you for your ongoing support.**

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**And more information from NB4C:**

**FYI,,,,got this from one of our club members....**

**Bob  
NB4C**

**Jon Bloom (ex-KE3Z) was the original developer of LoTW. Yesterday, he posted this on the ARRL LoTW Discussion Group: "Despite ARRL's statements that LoTW and DXCC data are safe, it seems that some users are concerned that this may not be the case due to the time that it is taking to restore service. Perhaps it will ease some minds if I tell you that I know for certain that these data are safe. I know this because I personally assisted ARRL staff to get these data backed up to locations and systems that are in no way connected to ARRL's HQ or cloud systems. The LoTW data, for example, exists in multiple physical locations and cloud backup services. Such is also the case for the LoTW source code. In addition, I imported the LoTW data backup into a separate, new test database system to verify it. This took several days since the database is about 3 terabytes in size. (It's a LOT of data!) Getting the systems themselves back on-line is another matter, and I have no information to share about that as I'm not involved in the ongoing process of restoring them. ARRL has apparently made the decision, wisely in my view, not to bring any affected systems back into service until all parts of them can be vetted and secured. But the data itself is safe, and LoTW will definitely be back at some point."**

**That is good to know. Like many of you, I have used Logbook of the World for years. It might be 'antiquated', and some think it's 'complicated', but it is what it is, and I would miss it. – N9JF**

## **Solar Activity**

**Yep, we have sunspots. If you were waiting for a solar maximum, you need not wait longer. Enjoy high band propagation. BUT.....it's a two-edged sword. Solar disturbances have been doing weird things to band conditions. There might not be visible aurora where you are, but you can hear the effects on signals on many days.**

Up here in the Far North, propagation is weird enough on “normal days”, but where the aurora is going, signals are weak, fluttery and sometimes just disappear altogether. We have not seen aurora on this trip, largely because it never gets dark!! “Sunset” last night (in Fort Providence NWT) was at 11:34 pm, and it wasn’t “dark” at 12:30 pm! Here is a recent article:

## **Solar Activity Significantly Affecting Ionosphere, FCC Opens Docket for Comments on Impact**

### **Aurora Propagation, Northern Lights**

The sun has been busy, and it’s been a mixed bag for radio amateurs. Earlier this month, millions of people got a chance to see the aurora borealis for the first time, as the northern lights were active farther south than they had been in decades. The brilliant displays, visible as far south as Mexico, were a result of a series of coronal mass ejections. The energy from our star interacted with particles in the upper atmosphere, causing them to glow in dancing curtains of multicolored light.

VHF aurora activity was up significantly, according to DX spotting clusters and activity heard on the air. The 2- and 6-meter bands were especially active, as the aurora acted like a reflector in the sky to enable signals to propagate much farther than they normally can on those bands.

### **G5 Storm Significantly Impacted Ionosphere**

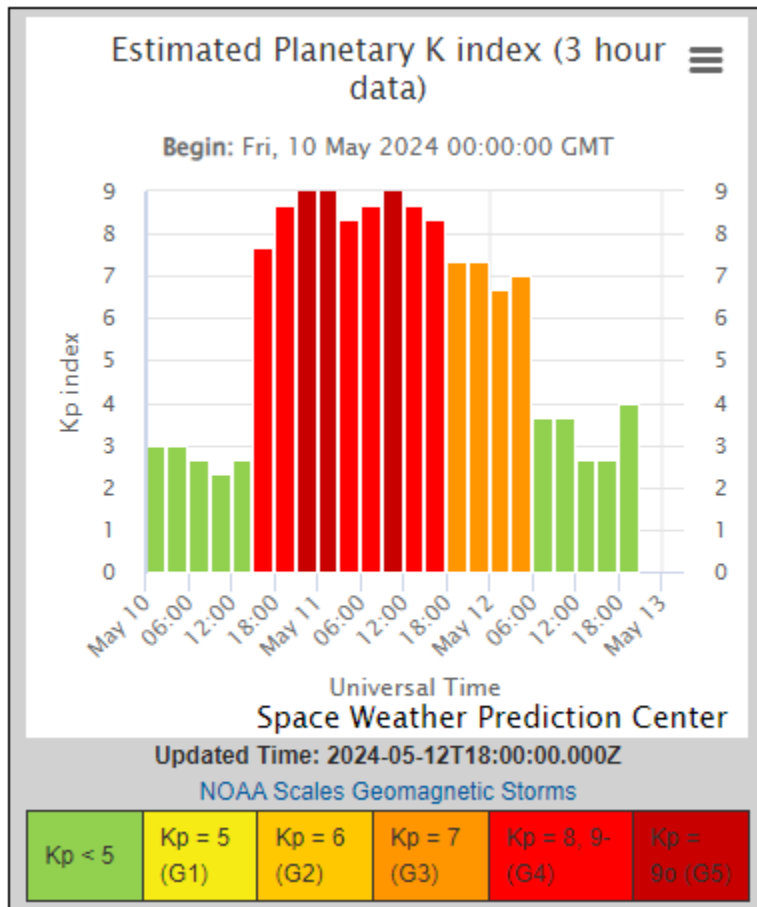
ARRL Central Division Director Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, is a leading expert on propagation. He’s provided the following analysis of the situation:

May 10, 11, and 12 of 2024 may go down as one of the greatest space weather storm periods of our lifetimes. It all started with two big sunspots in early May. These two big sunspots were identified as AR3663 (in the northern solar hemisphere) and AR3664 (in the southern solar hemisphere). AR stands for Active Region.

Both of these sunspot regions produced multiple M-class and X-class solar flares, which caused radio blackouts (signals were significantly attenuated) on the sunlit side of Earth. Typically, a radio blackout lasts for an hour or so, is most severe on the lower frequencies, and is due to the x-ray radiation from the solar flare increasing D-region absorption.

Not only did the big solar flares cause radio blackouts, they also caused solar radiation storms due to energetic protons that increased ionospheric absorption in the D region in the polar caps (the area inside the auroral ovals). Solar radiation storms can last for a couple of days and can result in degraded propagation on over-the-pole paths.

But the biggest impact to propagation started on May 8, when AR3664 released multiple Earth-directed CMEs (coronal mass ejections). CMEs manifest themselves as geomagnetic storms by significantly increasing the 3-hour K index. The K index indicates the activity of the Earth’s magnetic field and ranges from 0 (quiet) to 9 (extremely disturbed).



The image (from <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>) shows the [data from May 10 - 12]. When the K index is this high for such a long time, the electron density in the F2 region of the ionosphere can be significantly depleted for days, not allowing higher frequencies to be propagated. On-the-air activity confirmed this.



In summary, early May was a very interesting period. We saw all three categories of disturbances to propagation — radio blackouts (x-ray radiation from solar flares), solar radiation storms (energetic protons from solar flares), and geomagnetic storms (elevated K indices).

#### **FCC Opens Comments About CME Comms Impacts**

The Federal Communications Commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau wants to know if you noticed any impacts to radio communications during the storm. In a public notice, the FCC wrote:

*To better understand the impacts of the geomagnetic storm on the U.S. communications sector, the Bureau is requesting information from communications service providers and the public regarding disruptions in communications between May 7 and 11, 2024, that it believes to be a result of the storm. The Bureau is encouraging commenters to provide any available evidence, particularly electromagnetic spectrum analyses, imagery, or chronological logs relating the storm's impacts. Where possible, the Bureau asks that commenters include the description of the impacts; make and model of affected communications equipment, which could include transmitters, receivers, transceivers, switches, routers, amplifiers etc.; make, model, and type of affected antennae and their composition; frequencies affected; type and composition of cable adjoining communications equipment and the antennae, if applicable; duration of the impact; and any residual effects observed in the hours following restoration.*

The public notice is [at this link](#) (PDF). Comments may be submitted using the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) at <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs> and referring to PS Docket No. 24-161. ARRL's guide to filing comments is at this link: <https://www.arrl.org/arrl-guide-to-filing-comments-with-fcc>.

Trip report and park stuff.

**KB9CES and I are in Northwest Territories, Canada. We left on June 3, drove up through Iowa, the Dakotas, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and are on the way to Yellowknife, the territory capital.**

**I won't say much about the trip at this point but will be happy to bore anyone interested at some later date with the entire account.**

**I will just mention that it's been a blast running parks and especially catching several club members in most of them. So far, I think I've turned in 40 logs to both WWFF and POTA and made about 1250 contacts. Band conditions have ranged from pretty good to challenging.**

**Equipment so far has cooperated for the most part. I'm still learning.**

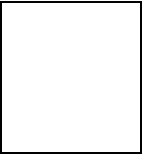
**It's great to read about how you guys are getting ready for Field Day and the effort that is being put into it! I'm hoping to get on from up here somewhere and put W9AWE in the log.**

**All for now....**

**73, Jim N9JF and Melba KB9CES**



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



July meeting: Wednesday July 3, 2024 7 pm

*Location TBD but PROBABLY at*

Adams County American Red Cross  
Building, 24<sup>th</sup> and Koch's Lane, Quincy (west  
½ block from intersection then north on  
driveway)

**W9AWE – W90AB**

**The Western Illinois Amateur Radio Club, Inc.**

WIARC homepage: <http://www.w9awe.org> e-mail to [w9awe@qsl.net](mailto:w9awe@qsl.net)

WIARC email reflector: [wiarc@mailman.qth.net](mailto:wiarc@mailman.qth.net)

**Sponsors of**

**Analog repeater W9AWE/R on 147.630/030 Tone Rx and Tx 103.5**

**Analog repeater W9AWE/R on 146.340/940 Tone Rx and Tx 123.0**

**Analog and Fusion repeater W9AWE/R on 448.900/443.900 Tone Rx and Tx 103.5**

**Analog and Fusion repeater W9AWE on 147.795/147.195 Tone Rx and Tx 103.5**

**All repeaters are located on the north side of Quincy IL**

**ILLINOIS QSO PARTY**

**Newsletter input due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month**

**Editor Jim Funk N9JF**

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