



Arc Over

Fox River Radio
League
PO Box 673
Batavia, IL
60150-0673

April, 2009

President's Traffic

By Mike Urso, K9FE

Here is what we do, turn on the radio, go to our favorite frequency, and listen. Lately there probably has been a lot of silence. In our case it is both on VHF/UHF and HF. After listening and hearing nothing did you give out your call as listening or call CQ on HF? Many times we can be fooled by what we think is a dead band. If everyone thinks the band is dead then no one is there because we are all "listening". If you are into VHF/UHF and our repeaters are quiet then announce yourself. You will be amazed just how many times someone will come back to your call. Don't give up if it still stays silent. There are many repeaters you can probably work. Try a different one. You can even make real contacts in simplex mode. Direct radio to radio. On 2m the simplex frequency is 146.520, no offset, no PL.

The same is true on HF. Often a seemingly dead band has some lurkers but the key is to find them. On HF you can look for some of the daily nets. On HF there seems to be no end to NET OPERATION. Check out the assigned calling frequencies, every band has one for each mode. One favorite place I like to go on 20 meters is the Maritime Net on 14.300. Throw out your call as a check-in. You may not be on a ship, but the net control wants to know just how the band is running. By your check-in you added another bit of data to his or her list. So what is the key to finding someone to talk to? It starts with you. Taking the initiative is a major step. Don't be shy of that microphone/key/computer.

Priorities! Do you have your priorities in line? Have you found yourself taking family time to play radio? Keeping the wife and kids happy should be more important than a hobby. What is that phrase? When momma ain't happy, no one is happy. Hopefully you have found the right balance. If not, keep looking for the point that you have enough radio time and enough family time.

Life is very pleasant when that point is found.

Have you ever found yourself in a near accident situation while you were on the radio in the car? When in high speed traffic things happen very fast. You need to focus on the safety of what you are doing. Often when we get into this hobby it consumes us. For a period of time we eat, drink, and breathe radio. Initially that is normal, but this is a hobby. Family and safety come before radio. I have let radio take over my life more times that I want to admit. Learn to enjoy it as a hobby and you will find that you enjoy it even more.

Coming up in early May is the MS-WALK. The FRRL has provided communications for many years for the Fox Valley MS-WALK which starts and finishes at Potawatomi Park in St. Charles. Michelle, KC9HDB, is the current FRRL MS-WALK coordinator. She will be asking for you to donate some time to the Walk communications. There are 3 areas that need to be covered. The Start/Finish, Langum Park, and Fabyan park (Just downhill from the windmill). Usually 2-4 operators at each point is enough. However more makes it easier for those that only have a couple hours of free time to donate. The Walk starts around 8AM (7:30 AM arrival) and ends usually before 1PM. It is light duty, but being there helps the logistics so the Walk runs smoothly. If you have never worked the Walk give it a try.

The SDR SIG is getting larger. They are building SoftRock SDR receivers from a kit. The techniques are challenging to learn but that is what the SDR SIG is all about: working on your own projects together, trading hints and tips for the construction. Some of the parts are not much bigger than a grain of sand. Yet they are able to solder them to circuit boards to build this top notch receiver. If you have an interest, drop a line to K9DXA, Harry or join the Yahoo FRRL-SDR group.

(Continued on page 3)

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the General Membership of the
Fox River Radio League (FRRL) an Illinois not-for-profit Corporation
Held at Rasmussen College, Aurora, IL

Meeting Minutes March 10, 2009

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Mike Urso K9FE – President with 54 members and 3 visitors present.

Question: Do you have test equipment in your shack and do you know how to use it?

Secretary Report: Bill W9WRS – meeting minutes available on Web and Arc Over.

Treasurers Report: Dean KC9EOQ - Total Assets: \$24526 (Cash/Savings = \$7752 Certificates of Deposit = \$16,774)

Committee Reports

Hamfest: Dean KC9EOQ – July 12, 2009. Celebrating 80 years! 1929 – 2009.

Membership: Justin KC9NYY – The roster will be finalized in the next few days and will be distributed in May.

Newsletter: Tobi K9TCD – We need articles for the Arc Over. Tobi will help rewrite if desired. The deadline for submissions for the Arc Over is the 20th of each month.

Yahoo Group: Bill NF9D – Everything is going smoothly.

Linux SIG: Bill W9WRS – Next SIG will be on 3/14/2009.

Software Defined Radio SIG: Harry K9DXA – Next SIG will be on 3/28/2009.

Repeater Committee: Dick AH6EZ (via K9FE) – The 2 meter is still interacting with the DSTAR system but is better.

Field Day: Eric AB9OS – Field Day is June 27-28, 2009. To be held at Johnson's Mound. For further information, see the website at www.frll.org. If wishing to volunteer as a band captain, contact Eric Needles AB9OS by email at ericneedles@yahoo.com or by phone at 312-401-3742.

Special Events: Bart KC9FQA – This is the current list of upcoming events:

- April 25, 2009 Oswego Adventure Race
- May 2-3, 2009 MS Walk – Chair KC9HDB
- June 7, 2009 Canoe Race – Chair Tobi K9TCD
- June 7, 2009 American Diabetes Bike Race – Kane county Ares
- July 12, 2009 Hamfest - Chair Dean KC9EOQ
- June 28, 2009 Tour De Cure
- July 24, 2009 Cougars Night – Chair Ken N9WCX

Database: Chris KC9BKS – 130 + members have renewed at this point. Renewals for 2009 will be accepted tonight.

Cougars Night: Ken N9WCX – July 24, 2009. Has 50 tickets at \$11.00 each.

Current Business.

Announcements:

Bart KC9FQA - Club logo items are here and can be picked up.

Mike K9FE – We need to clear the building by 10:00 P.M.

Program:

Intro to Multimeter by Denny W9HI

QRP in the Park by Harry K9DXA

Elmers' Corral

Raffle: Jack K9JE

The March 3, 2009 Board meeting will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora, IL.

The April 7, 2009 Board meeting will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora, IL.

The April 14, 2009 General meeting will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora, IL.

The May 5, 2009 Board meeting will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora, IL.

The May 12, 2009 General meeting will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora, IL.

The May 19, 2009, VE Session will be at Rasmussen College in Aurora.

Motion to adjourn by Marty N9NTM, 2nd by Harry K9DXA

General meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Bill Stamps, W9WRS – FRRL Secretary

April Program Notes

By Dick Illman, AH6EZ

National Electronics Museum

Late in February I was able to travel to Baltimore, Maryland on business for a week long training session. I discovered that the training center was just a short walk away from the Museum, so I traveled a day early to be there on Saturday when they were open. I took some pictures of the equipment including a replica spark gap transmitter and lots of old military radar, including the setup that was used to see the Japanese planes arriving at Oahu for the Pearl Harbor attack. We may also have some of the SDR kits built or under way for those that might want to learn about the SDR SIG activity.

New Members

Welcome to the Following New Members:

CALL	NAME
N9EP	Ed Picha
N5EP	Steve Westfall

President's Traffic (Continued from page 1)

The Linux SIG is still operating with W9WRS Bill at the helm. Check out that Yahoo group also for more info FRRL-Linux. At last word I heard they are working with Windows based Thin Client computers. If you have an interest in FREE computing, check the Linux SIG out. There you can find the meaning of free computing operating systems. It is a lot of fun, and personally most of my computers are running one flavor of Linux or another. The laptop that I bring to meetings is running UBUNTU 8.10 32bit and it runs so much better than when it had Windows on it. If you have an older computer just collecting dust think about getting exposed to Linux.

The sunspots still are not behaving and there have been a lot of zero sunspot days. They say that they are due to improve. Well I am waiting like you are. It will be nice to be able to run 10 meters mobile and make solid contacts using 10 watts again.

See you at the meeting!

Bill Erickson HF Challenge Update – Mid-March 2009

By Cyd Runde, N9CV

Jeff, K9BQL excitedly reports working Uganda, Mauritius Island, Chatham Island, Antarctica and South Shetland Island. Those are some great catches!. Herb, W9DTR reports contacts with Kenya, Sardinia, Gambia, New Caledonia, Luxembourg, Djibouti, and Iceland.

Use the nice weather coming to double check all antenna and tower connections, and get those entries in! See you next month.

Limited Class	States	Provinces	DX Countries	Total
K9MMS-CW	50	10	110	170
K9ARZ-PSK31	50	8	108	166
KC9FQV-Digital	23	1	5	29

Operator Class	States	Provinces	DX Countries	Total
W9DTR	48	8	85	141
K9BQL	8	1	115	124
K9TCD	35	5	44	84
WB9CHY	26	2	13	41
K9IH	12	2	17	31

QRO Class	States	Provinces	DX Countries	Total
AH6EZ	50	9	86	145
N4LZ	40	4	76	120
NA9A	7	0	105	112

Ragchewer Class	States/Prov.	DX Countries	Total
W9DTR			38
KC9FQV			7
NA9A	4	1	5
K9IH	4	0	4
WB9CHY	1	0	1

Contest Corner

By Tobi Davis, K9TCD

My favorite thing about ham radio is making contacts all over the world, especially in “exotic” countries. I’m sure many people have dreams about what they would do if they won the lottery or became independently wealthy. If that happened to me, I would travel around the world, seeing as many places as I possibly could. I don’t want to be a tourist; I want to see people in their everyday lives, eat their food, experience their culture and get a better understanding of life elsewhere.

Admittedly, most of my radio contacts are no more than a few seconds, exchanging a report in a contest. But, without the contests, I would have less of a chance to mark off all the countries I am “visiting”. Yes, I am turning into a contest junkie!

What thrills me about contesting is finally getting through, hearing someone repeat my Kilo 9 or Tango Charlie Delta, or sometimes just the Charlie Delta. At that point I know I’ve “made it” and that state or country is now mine. Of course, the ham I am working needs to send a QSL card or post to Logbook of the World in order for the QSO to truly count. I confess I am a paper chaser. I want that Worked All States award and that DXCC is my elusive target dangling in front of me whenever I hear a new country.

In some recent DX contests I was able to test out the new antenna my husband so thoughtfully got for me. It worked great! In the ARRL DX contest I actually got New Zealand and Iceland. I couldn’t believe it! I had to run upstairs to tell Tom, WB9CHY. After I got Iceland I thought to myself, I wonder if Greenland is out there. For some reason I think of those two countries together. About an hour later I did hear Greenland! Unfortunately, he couldn’t hear me. He was running 1000 watts and with my 100 watts I just couldn’t cut through to him. Oh well, maybe someday I’ll get through to Greenland. Two weeks later was the CQ Worldwide contest. My antenna didn’t disappoint me. I reached Senegal, my first African continent contact. Then I got Cape Verde, Morocco and Guinea-Bissau! I was jonesing now! I couldn’t get enough. I kept trolling the 20m band for new countries, and I did get many. Finally I realized that if I didn’t get repeat countries, I would have less of a chance for confirmation in LoTW. I decided to be less discriminating and try for everyone I heard.

As of now I have 37 countries confirmed via LoTW and 43 states. I think I will have a better chance of getting the WAS award with QSL cards. I have made contact with South Dakota twice, with the same man. I think he’s the only ham in SD! He is elderly and only sends QSL cards. I will have to find time between contests to sit down and write up some more cards. Thank goodness for Forever stamps.

For those of you who are new to HF, the best way to get over your mic shyness is to just jump in and get on the air. For me, in the beginning a true QSO with all the protocols was a bit scary. When Tom encouraged me a few years ago to try a 6m contest I listened for a while to figure out what to say, then tried it. I was fine. I didn’t goof up and say the wrong thing. Plus, everyone was pretty nice. Since the response is the same for each contact in a contest, it becomes automatic. Just pouncing (answering a call) doesn’t require much thought. A few years later and I am now comfortable with calling CQ, since I have listened to so many other hams in various contests. I’ve learned what approaches I like and don’t like.

I have had a few longer QSOs, which are great, and I would love to have conversations with people in other countries to find out what life is really like there. However, with language barriers and sometimes thick accents, those longer conversations are not always realistic. For me, merely reaching a far distant place is enough to keep the dream alive. I can visit all over the world, even if it is from behind the mic in the basement with one hand on the push-to-talk button and the other on the log.

For you other testers out there, please contribute to future Contest Corner columns. Send articles to newsletter@frrl.org on your contest experiences. Others would like to hear where you’ve worked, what makes you want to participate in contests and any advice you might have to give to hams who have not yet attempted working a contest.

Club Table at Future Hamfests

By Dean Holste, KC9EOQ

The FRRL will be present at the following hamfests to sell advance tickets, answer questions about the club and to sign up new members or receive member renewals. Members are encouraged to stop by and say hello to Dean, KC9EOQ or Greg, N9CHA. We'll even watch your purchases for you if you get tired of carrying them around.

MAY 3RD, 2009 - DEKALB HAMFEST – KISHWAUKEE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB - SANDWICH FAIRGROUNDS – SANDWICH, IL

Web page: www.w9icu.com, Advance Tickets - \$5.00, Gate Tickets - \$6.00

JUNE 21st, 2009 - 52nd ANNUAL HAMFEST - 6 METER CLUB OF CHICAGO – DUPAGE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS – WHEATON, IL

Web page: www.k9ona.com, Advance Tickets - \$6.00, Gate Tickets - \$8.00

YL Award

By Tobi Davis, K9TCD

Almost a year ago, YL members of the FRRL gathered to work the YL-OM Contest. Surprisingly, a month ago a package arrived in the mail with a trophy. Our YLs had won 1st place in the YL Club division! Carol, WD9CNW brought it to last month's meeting and Greg, N9CHA took some pictures, which are on the website. Carol did tell me that she thinks we were the only ones to submit a log, but we'll take what we can get! (See *March 2008 Arc Over* for participating YLs)

Special Interest Groups

By Harry Jones K9DXA

Ten members of the FRRL Software Defined Radio (SDR) SIG met again on March 28, 2009 at Rasmussen College to build their SoftRock, Lite+USB Xtall v9.0 with electronically switched bandpass filter receiver SDR kit. Four members brought fresh kits and got started with help and work stations provided by Bill, W9WRS, Tom, AB9IN, and Dick, AH6EZ. Everyone successfully completed the first power supply section of the build and passed the first section testing.

Dick, AH6EZ brought his trusty Buddipole antenna for use in demonstrating SoftRock SDRs brought by himself and Tom, AB9IN. Tom demonstrated a 40M SDR set to receive CW and PSK. Dick set up his SDR, laptop and an outboard sound card to show integration and operation of the kit.

Bill, W9WRS demonstrated a technique using a craft "embossing heat tool" and a syringe of solder/flux mix to quickly mount surface-mount components on PC boards. He also showed how easy it is to remove a multipin device from a PC board.

The four happy new kit builders are Bill, NF9D, Tom, WB9CHY, Dean, KC9EOQ, and John, AG9D.

The SIG will meet again on Saturday morning, April 25, 2009 at Rasmussen College to provide building assistance, including soldering techniques and a demonstration on winding those pesky "lifesaver" size toroids. There will also be an opportunity to demonstrate downloading, installing, and using Rocky v3.6 software. There is still plenty of time to get your kit and start the build.

Please send your questions to Harry, K9DXA

About the FRRL

The Fox River Radio League, Inc., is a general interest amateur radio club serving the central Fox River Valley area. Records indicate the club has been in existence since at least 1924, and has functioned continuously ever since. We are an ARRL Special Service Club, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, and a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization as specified in IRS Statutes.

We sponsor training classes for new hams, license examination sessions, an annual hamfest, and participate in various public service events. If you have a specialized amateur radio interest, chances are you can share it with one or more of our club members.

The Fox River Radio League meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at Rasmussen College in Aurora, Illinois. Information tables are open at 7:00 PM, and the

meeting begins at 7:30 PM. After conducting business, coffee and snacks are served while we socialize. Following the break, a program of interest will be presented.

All persons interested in amateur radio are invited to attend. Families are welcome.

We hope to see you there!

License Exams

The Fox River Radio League, Inc., in conjunction with the ARRL VEC, conducts amateur examinations on the 3rd Tuesday of January, March, May, September and November at Rasmussen College, 2363 Sequoia Drive, Aurora, IL, at 7:30 PM. No advance registration is required, but please be sure to bring your license (if you have one) and a photocopy of

it, some form of photo identification and the fee of \$15.00. (The FRRL receives no portion of this fee.)

The next exam session is scheduled for May 19, 2009 at Rasmussen College.

FRRL Dues

Annual dues are payable no later than the January Club Meeting each year. New members joining during the year will have their first year's dues prorated to the nearest yearly quarter.

Regular dues are \$20.00 a year, Senior Citizen dues are \$12.00. Family dues are \$30.00. Members can help support the FRRL Repeaters by making an annual \$10.00 donation.

Check with the Treasurer for details and additional dues rates.

Nets

Net Name	Freq.	Day	Time
FRRL	147.210	Tuesday	7:30 PM Local
10-10 CW	28.150	Monday	8:00 PM Local
10-10 SSB	28.720	Monday	8:30 PM Local

Fox River Radio League

Founded 1924

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60510-0673

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<http://www.frrl.org>

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Vice President

Harry Jones, K9DXA

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FRRL CLUB MEETINGS ARE HELD AT RASMUSSEN COLLEGE, 2363 SEQUOIA DRIVE IN AURORA.
PLEASE CHECK THE FRRL WEB SITE FOR A MAP TO THE MEETING LOCATION.
<http://www.frrl.org>

Send Address Corrections to:
Fox River Radio League, Inc.
3023 Scenicwood Ln.
Woodridge, IL 60517

FRRL Event Calendar

April, 2009

FRRL Board Meeting 7
Linux SIG..... 11
FRRL Meeting 14
VE Session 17
SDR SIG..... 25

May, 2009

FRRL Board Meeting 5
FRRL Meeting 12
VE Session 19

ArcOver FRRL Newsletter

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The ArcOver is published monthly by the Fox River Radio League, Inc. Articles and letters are always welcome. The normal deadline for material is the 20th day of each month for the next month's newsletter. Articles can be sent by email to arc-over@frri.org or via U.S. Mail. Contact the Editor for details and submission guidelines.

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The opinions expressed in the ArcOver are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the FRRL, Inc. or its sponsors.

Local Area Repeaters/Nets

W9CEQ—147.210 Mhz.
+600 KHz, 103.5 access tone
Owned by FRRL

W9CEQ—444.300 Mhz. IRLP Node # 4850
+5 Mhz, 114.8 access tone
Owned by FRRL

W9CEQ__B D-Star—442.10625 Mhz (+ 5.0 Mhz offset)
W9CEQ__C D-Star—145.270 Mhz (-0.600 Mhz offset)
FRRL Digital Voice/Data Repeaters
Contact W9XA for information

KC9OEM—145.470 Mhz. -600 KHz, 103.5 access tone
KC9OEM—444.525 Mhz + 5 Mhz, 114.8 access tone
(2 meter is primary Kane Co. SKYWARN /ARES freq)
Owned by Kane County OEM

W9DWP—Kane Co. Amateur Public Svc. Rptrs.
145.270 -600 KHz, 107.2 access tone
443.025 +5 Mhz 114.8 access tone

W9ZGP—NIARC
147.060 +600 KHz, 103.5 access tone

- Weekly ARES/Skywarn Net—Wed. Eve. at 7:00 pm local time on the KC9OEM 2 meter repeater
- Weekly FRRL Net—Tues. Eve. at 7:30 pm local time on the FRRL 2 Meter repeater.
- Illinois DStar Net - Wed. Eve. at 8:00 pm local time on the DStar 440 repeater.