



Arc Over

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

June, 2004

President's Traffic *by Bill Schaben, W9AX*

By the time that you read this, the Canoe Race will be history, assuming that the race was actually held. . With the river levels as high as they are today (Memorial Day) the race may have to be canceled. If it is held, I'll have a wrap up article next month.

The Payton Run will be held Sunday (June 13) and I also want to thank everyone that is coming out for it. As of today Lou still needs a few more volunteers, so please read his article for information about how you can help out.

At the last month's meeting, the question was asked, "What facet of ham radio most interests you?" Well, the answers were everything from Antennas to Zip files. This told me that there are a number of areas that you would like more information on. I know Dick, AH6EZ was taking notes for future programs and articles in the Arc-Over. I want to thank everyone that filled out our membership survey. This also will help guide the club activities.

Mentioning activities, there are a couple of goodies coming up. The first is Field Day. This is a chance for everyone to help, observe and try out something new. No matter what license class, or even if you don't have one, you can get on the air and experience something new.

Field Day can be broken down into three or more parts. The first is set up. This is an exercise in problem solving. How can we get this rope over that tree? Where do we want this? It's a challenge, but enjoyable.

Next comes operating. The sit down, grind them out time that give Field Day the competitive flavor of a contest. Remember, our club is going against other clubs for number of contacts made.

The last main activity is tear down and going home tired but still fired up about the weekend. However, we have a sub-activity that keeps the

mood light. And that's eating. Our FD activity includes time for some social interaction. What better interaction than sitting down and having a meal together.

Mike and Denny are our coordinators for Field Day. They are doing the nuts and bolts details that are required. I want everyone to give them a hand in all four of the activities listed.

The other activity that comes up is our Hamfest. I don't think I need to tell you what the Fest is all about. However, I do want to remind you that everyone has tickets to sell. We each know other hams that might not be a member of the FRRL. These are the ones to ask to buy a ticket and come on down.

Maurice, W8CEO, no; W9CEO, no; W4CEO, that's it, is in charge of the Hamfest. There are a number of activities that he needs covered. So give him a call and let him know you are available.

That's if for this month. I'll see you at the meeting and these other events.



2004 Bill Erickson HF Challenge—June, 2004

HF is alive and well. 4 new countries from my car on 17 meters is proof for me. Quite a few of the FRRL went to Dayton for the Hamvention. There was a lot of nice equipment to be seen. The ICOM IC-7800 was really nice looking. Seemed to always have a crowd around it. They had the display hooked to antenna and to be honest, I couldn't fight the crowd to get to it. Picked up some literature so I can dream. Then I went over to the Yaesu booth to see their new FTdX-9000. A couple of problems jump out at you when you are standing in front of it. The first one is the extremely large size of the radio. The thing is well over 24 inches wide. I think it is actually it is closer to 30! The radio has basically duplicated everything. The only thing I don't think it does is sign for the loan.

After looking at radio costing over \$12,000.00 I thought the trip to the ALPHA amplifier corner should be next. The ALPHA is the American answer to BPL. <GRIN> There are of lot of foreign amps, like EMTRON, and TREMENDOUS, but the ALPHA is **THE** amplifier to get and still buy American. Oh, if you want the complete ALPHA setup, do not forget the \$999.00 wattmeter with ALPHA on it!

The HF bands have been pretty good at times and just plain ole STINKO at others. 40 meters has been pretty noisy in the early evening. It is open, but the static crashes will keep you awake if you doze off.

Heard this month by our heavy hitters were ZA, 7Q7, ST2, 5N, 5Y, YB, 4Z. Of those the ST2 (Sudan) is one of the rare ones.

Get active, turn the radio on and call CQ, answer a CQ, join a net. Don't just stand there and complain the bands are not open because they are. Sure they are not the greatest, but that makes the challenge sweeter.

Remember, just because you started in one class doesn't mean you are tied to that class all year. You can go from **Limited** to **Operator** to **QRO** easily. Going backwards poses a problem since you cannot use your **QRO** contacts for **Operator** **IF** they were gotten with higher power than the class you want to be eligible to be in. Remember the 250-watt output power limit on the **Operator** category.

Remember to get your updated **totals** to me by the 15th of each month to have them included in the **Arc Over**. If you are a day late of so, don't worry, I'll still get them in. Send them to challenge@frri.org. Also include a list of rare and not so rare entities you have worked so we can all be a part of the HF hunting. The bands may seem dead, but make sure you try...you never know how the propagation can change.

The standings lists can be found on page 5.

Good Hunting!
73 de K9FE Mike Urso

Cougars Night Planned

by Maurice Schietecatte, W4CEO

Again this year, a group of FRRL members, their family and friends will be going to a Kane County Cougars baseball game. Mark your calendar for Thursday, July 29, 2004.

We again have a block of 50 seats behind home plate, which provides an excellent view of the field and are close to the concessions and rest rooms.

Tickets are \$8.00 each and will be available at our July meeting. Please reserve early so I can figure the seating. For more information, or to reserve your tickets, contact me at scat42@msn.com or phone me at (815) 786-2860.

We have had a great time in the past – don't miss out this year. In addition to some great baseball, there will be fireworks and the Zooperstars.

Share the Excitement!

by Dick Illman, AH6EZ

Here is what I have heard of recently. If you had fun with ham radio, share it. If you have not been having fun with ham radio, why not?

In the aftermath of Dayton, I have heard some new radios and antennas on the air.

KC9CBBY, Kirt got an Icom 2720.

K9FE, Mike is now back on HF mobile.

W4CEO, Maurice got a 15/10 meter hex beam for field day.

AH6EZ. Dick managed some QRP QSOs from almost 10,000 feet in the Rockies using his Elecraft KX1 during a business trip.

KB9YSI, Bill has been having a ball with QRP also with his new FT817 rig.

NA9A, Bill has a new GIGANTIC straight key. If you hear a signal with loud key clicks, you know where they came from.

AI9U, Lance bought the new fancy and EXPENSIVE Alpha watt meter. I lusted after it but could not justify the \$995 price tag.

NT3J, Ted bought one of the Alpha watt meters and a new Alpha amplifier as well. He is going to fry his brains with an attic antenna and a second floor ham shack.

Let me know of fun you are having with ham radio by email (AH6EZ@aol.com), on the Fox Repeaters, or telephone 630-584-4388. I will share it in the next Arcover. If I do not receive any input for this column, I may discontinue it.

June Program Notes

by Dick Illman, AH6EZ

Rod Simon, N9MCX, who works for the Red Cross will be making a presentation about the recent Utica tornado disaster and recovery. Mike, K9FE and Denny, W9HI will have more details on Field Day.

Fox Repeater and IRLP Update

by Dick Illman, AH6EZ

The repeaters have been steady performers this month. Most of the users are adjusting to the new 60 second time out timer on the two meter repeater.

The IRLP computer and software will need to be upgraded from Linux 6.2 to 9.0 soon. I got a second IRLP interface board at Dayton so that I can make a transparent cut over.

Solar Flux

by Bill Muhr, KB9YSI

Hello? Anybody out there? Or have you all been washed away by the torrential rains that we've been experiencing this past week?

I hope those of you with two meter capabilities have been listening to the KC9OEM repeater (145.470 MHz). It has been transmitting National Weather Service alerts for the Kane County warning area. This is a valuable service, particularly for those who don't have weather radio access in their cars and trucks. HTs can come in handy (no pun intended) during severe weather.

Speaking of severe weather, the program for the June meeting features a presentation by the Red Cross concerning the Utica tornado recovery efforts. It should be an interesting and timely topic.

I've been focusing on QRP operating recently, so I have not been racking up countries for the HF Challenge. Despite that, I am really enjoying QRP. Who knows, I might just manage to snag a QRP Worked All States award one of these days.

Don't forget the ARRL June VHF QSO Party that's coming up (18:00Z, Jun 12 to 03:00Z, Jun 14). Fire up those VHF rigs and see what you can work. Two meters can be surprising this time of year, and if six meters is open the contest could be spectacular. See you on the air ...

73 — Bill
KB9YSI

FRRL Hamfest at a New Location — Help Wanted

By Maurice Schietecatte, W4CEO

Sunday, July 11, 2004 is the date of the FRRL Hamfest. This year the Hamfest will be in a new location, Aurora Central Catholic High School, located at the northeast corner of Edgelawn Drive and W. Indian Trail Road in Aurora. Edgelawn Drive is between Orchard Road and N. Randall Road.

The ACC location is temporary due to construction at Waubensee Community College. After reading an article in the Beacon News. The FRRL may have to use the ACC location for a couple of years. As construction of the new buildings at WCC is scheduled to be completed some time in 2006.

Everyone should have received ten (10) advance tickets to sell and/or buy. This is our club's only moneymaking project. It's the event that funds most of our activities. So please try selling all your tickets.

Besides selling advance tickets, help is needed to make our Hamfest a success. Volunteers are needed for Saturday set-up, which includes helping the vendors unload. Sunday help is needed with gate sales, parking, flea market, talk-in, FRRL table, VEC and clean up. Some of these activities need chairmen, so please volunteer.

I have done most of the preliminary work...now it's your turn to help, so please pitch in.

In the past our talk-in station was not visible, this year I would like to have the station set up on location so people can see it. Anyone interested, please let me know.

Also, don't forget to turn in the MONEY from your advance ticket sales and/or return your tickets.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer, please call me at (815) 786-2860 or email me at scat42@msn.com. Remember, due to the new location, more help is needed this year. The Hamfest can only be successful if everyone helps.

Peyton Run is June 13 — Volunteers Needed

By Lou Petkus, K9LU

The annual Walter Peyton Sweetnes Run is scheduled for Sunday, June 13, 2004, from 7 am to 10 am.

As of this time 10 more volunteers are needed.

Thanks to all of you who have already volunteered to help with communications. 22 have already signed up to help but we still need about 10 additional people.

If you can help please call Lou Petkus at home 630-879-6350 or on the cell phone 630-750-7291. You can also make contact via email lou-pet@comcast.net.

There are some changes from last year. The start and finish line activities will be on the West side of Broadway across from the Payton Roundhouse including the free breakfast. No activities will take place at the Roundhouse! There will be some changes to the race course. This year the runners will run the course in the opposite direction from last year. There are also some minor changes in the course route. I will have more information after I meet with the park district.

As in the past volunteers will receive a free breakfast and Sweetness Run T-shirt. Please let Lou Petkus know what size T-shirt you will need. T-shirts will be given out after the race is over.

I will have more information at the next club meeting.

This is a fun event, and a highly visible way to give back to our community and to those in need. I hope every member will give a thought to volunteering.

Lou Petkus, K9LU

Erickson HF Challenge Standings as of 5/15/04

| RagChew Class | States/Provinces | DX Countries | Total |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| K9COE | 43 | 21 | 64 |
| AH6EZ | 29 | 18 | 56 |
| K9FE | 23 | | 23 |
| K9IH | 12 | | 12 |
| NA9A | | 7 | 7 |
| W8DTR | 6 | | 6 |

| Operator Class | States/Provinces | DX Countries | Total |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| K9JE | 48/10 | 109 | 167 |
| K9COE | 50/10 | 68 | 128 |
| AB9CC | 38/9 | 69 | 116 |
| NT3J | 40/6 | 65 | 111 |
| KB9YSI | 38/8 | 63 | 109 |
| J68AR | 33/8 | 62 | 103 |
| W4CEO | 37/4 | 47 | 88 |
| W9XA | 38/4 | 37 | 79 |
| W9DTR | 40/8 | 28 | 76 |
| K9IH | 33/3 | 15 | 51 |
| KA9OBH | 0/1 | 36 | 37 |
| W9DNJ | 11/1 | 3 | 15 |

| Limited Class | States/Provinces | DX Countries | Total |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| K9MMS | 49/7 | 93 | 149 |
| M/AH6EZ | 3/0 | 28 | 31 |
| MM/AH6EZ | | 11 | 11 |
| KB9YYX | 7 | 0 | 7 |

| QRO Class | States/Provinces | DX Countries | Total |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| AH6EZ | 50/11 | 177 | 238 |
| NA9A | 11/1 | 199 | 211 |
| WB90 | 38/4 | 101 | 143 |
| K9FE | 20/4 | 22 | 46 |
| WOHED | 36/2 | 2 | 40 |

Product Review: Ramsey DF1 Direction Finder Kit

by Dick Illman, AH6EZ/9

Partially because of the recent interference related direction finding that I did with just a portable and a yagi, I decided at Dayton that I would look into something more accurate. I found the Ramsey DF1 kit for \$74 to be a reasonable compromise.

This kit includes the case, sensitivity adjustment, null meter, all coax and wire, and telescopic whips. You need to provide \$2 worth of 1/2" white PVC pipe, a Tee, and end caps. You also supply 2.5 mm cables to connect to your portable receiver audio output and a monitor speaker. I found a small speaker and mounted it inside the enclosure for monitoring. You also provide a coax cable from your portable antenna connector (mine needed SMA male) to the RCA jack on the bottom of the enclosure.

On their instruction manual they say that there are 201 solder points and estimate 2.5 to 5.8 hours of construction time for advanced to beginners. It took me 3 hours including making the PVC antenna support.

The three ICs and one switched capacitor filter were all soldered directly to the PC board, without sockets. It was required to do some external jumpering between pins on the switched capacitor filter. There was an extra bypass capacitor to be installed on the bottom of the board, "for added stability".

The component holes on the PC board were all drilled the same size. I needed to enlarge the holes for the potentiometer. It called for a 27 pf capacitor to be installed to couple a little of the transmitter energy to the TR switching circuit. They supplied a 100 pf. I found a 33 pf in my junk box. I ended up with an extra RF steering diode.

The operation is to attach a 9v battery inside the case (It will be difficult to change later), connect a 2m or UHF portable audio and RF cable, and turn on the sensitivity control. There are left and right hand LED indicators which get you in the ball park for directions (it is bi-directional) and then you look for a null on the meter or a null in the audio tone. There is an internal adjustment control for the switching speed which also determines the audio tone. The whips can be collapsed for 440 work or extended for 2m or 220 work.

I first turned it on in my basement. It was pretty confused by the metal beams and heating ducts.

Since it was midnight when I tested it out, I found that I could locate the direction of the Plano and Crystal Lake weather transmitters. These were moderate signal strengths.

I also wrapped a rubber band around my base station PTT and could see the direction of my roof top antenna from the driveway, even though the signal strength was VERY strong. This is the advantage of a switched phase array direction finder.

This Ramsey kit is designed with RF TR switching such that you can transmit with less than 5 watts without rearranging any RF cables. There is a jack for external 12v dc if your 9 volt battery is not installed or goes dead.

I recommend this kit for everyone, even beginners with limited soldering experience. You could even find your way home in the dark...

Advertising Item

Personalized Wooden Name Plates From WOODNAMES.NET, Specializing in Amateur Radio Call Signs!

Our personalized woodcrafts are unique and are very reasonably priced. Depending on your tastes, you may decide to leave it unfinished (beautifying the natural grain of the wood), or they may be finished with an appealing coat of wood stain, or even painted! Our Name Plates are always given a brilliant protective topcoat of polyurethane for years of lasting enjoyment! You decide. After all, it is your Name Plate and will be at no extra cost to you!

Fox River Radio League Discount: Order a wooden call sign now, or at the hamfest and you as a club member will only pay 13.00 PLUS 3.95 S/H (Regular prices are \$15.00 each)

To check out our workmanship and our many satisfied customers comments, (in the guest book area), Go to **WWW.WOODNAMES.NET**. We guarantee you will be satisfied with your personalized wood call sign nameplate!

Email: Woodnames@woodnames.net or Craigcelia@sbcglobal.net

The Photo Page—1



Ready for Dayton—An anonymous FRRL member shows off his radio tool belt for the Dayton Hamfest. He is ready to communicate with anyone, any where, on any frequency known to man.



Colorado QRP— AH6EZ/W0 hard at work operating QRP CW from Colorado. The blue line running up to the top left of the photo is the wire antenna.

The Photo Page—2



FRRL at Dayton — Club members pose at the ARRL Appreciation Dinner held at the Air Force Museum in Dayton on May 13, 2004. The plane in the background is the Bockscar B-29. From left to right, Ted Jennings NT3J, Maurice Schietecatte W4CEO, Don Hed W0HED, Mike Urso K9FE, Joe Dubeck NA9A, Alan Ahasic W9AN, Caron Carlson W9QLT, Kermit Carlson W9XA and Dick Isely W9GIG. Photo courtesy NA9A



A Really Big Key— If you have been hearing a big signal on 10 meter CW lately it is coming from Joe, NA9A. This is the M. D. Martin Model 2004 straight key he is using on the City of Lights CW net. The pencil in the foreground is to show the scale. Photo by NA9A

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©(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 the Prisco Community Center in Aurora, Illinois. 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, Marcy, May, September and November in the basement of the Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Street, (South East corner of Lake and Illinois) in 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, original CSCES and a photocopy (if needed), some form of photo identification, and the fee of \$12.00. (The FRRL receives no portion of this fee.)

The next exam session is scheduled for Sunday, July 11, 2004, during the FRRL Hamfest (see the article on page 4).

FRRL Dues

Annual dues are payable no later than the January Club Meeting each year. Persons 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. You can also help support the FRRL Repeaters by joining as a combined Club/ Repeater member for \$30.00. Repeater dues are \$20.00.

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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FRRL CLUB MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE PRISCO COMMUNITY CENTER AT 150 WEST ILLINOIS STREET IN AURORA. PLEASE CHECK THE FRRL WEB SITE FOR A MAP TO THE MEETING LOCATION .

Send Address Corrections to:
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 29-W-458 Candlewood Lane
 Warrenville, Illinois
 60555-2639

FRRL Event Calendar

June, 2004

FRRL Board Meeting 1
 Canoe Race 6
FRRL Meeting 8
 Peyton Run 13

July, 2004

FRRL Board Meeting 6
 FRRL Hamfest /VE Testing.... 11
 FRRL Meeting 13
 FRRL Cougars Game.....29

Handy Web Links

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| FRRL Web Site | http://www.frrl.org/ |
| ARRL Main Site | http://www.arrl.org/ |
| ARRL Central Div. Site | http://www.central.arrl.org/ |
| ARRL IL Section Site | http://www.central.arrl.org/illinois.html |
| ARRL IL Section News | http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=IL |
| ARRL Contest Page | http://www.arrl.orgcontests/ |
| Contest Calendar | http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/ |
| Callsign Lookup (QRZ) | http://www.qrz.com/ |
| Vanity Callsign Info | http://www.vanityhq.com/ |
| IRLP Main Page | http://www.irlp.net/ |
| AMSAT | http://www.amsat.org/ |
| FCC Services | http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/amateur |

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 six days prior to the end of the previous month. Articles can be sent by email to kb9ysi@arrl.net or via U.S. Mail. Contact the Editor for details and submission guidelines.

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Local Area Repeaters

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

W9ZGP—146.580 Mhz.
 +1.08 Mhz (147.660)
 Owned by NIARC

KC9OEM—145.470 Mhz.
 -600 KHz, 103.5 access tone
 Owned by Kane County OEM

W9XA — 224.40 Mhz, +5 Mhz, IRLP Node #4846
 — 443.65 Mhz, +5 Mhz
 — 1292.00 Mhz, -20 Mhz (1272.00)

* Weekly FRRL Net—Tues. Eve. at 7:30 pm local time.