

THE KEY



The Riverland Amateur Radio Club is a Special Service Club affiliated with the American Radio Relay League

Wisconsin QSO Party

By Fred Helmstetter, N9FH

This year's WiQP is right around the corner leaving many to wonder, "what the heck is that?" The answer is known to many as the Wisconsin QSO Party, an amateur radio event that is unique for the extremely high level of participation, in the state and in the nation!

One of the great aspects of WiQP is that new Hams and experienced operators who have never given the WiQP a try can enjoy it. That is one of many good reasons you should fire up the radio from 1 p.m. 8 p.m. local time Sunday, March 9 and join in the fun. Keep in mind this is the first day of Day light Saving Time!

The WiQP is our state QSO party in which hams try to contact as many other stations as possible during the seven hour contest period. Hams located in Wisconsin can contact stations anywhere for credit. Each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin counts as a score multiplier and for in state participants other US states and Canadian provinces are multipliers as well. Even members of the USS Wisconsin Radio Club, Norfolk, Va., participate in the WiQP!

The exchange is your Wisconsin county or state/province if you are from outside the state.

The idea is to contact and accurately log as many stations as possible in as many dif-

ferent counties/states/provinces as possible.

You don't need a big station to do well. In the WiQP a ham with a typical small station is in a very good position. Most of the important contacts are made within a few hundred miles and local activity tends to favor the 80 and 40 meter bands. In the years that I've scored well in WiQP most of these contacts were made on a basic 40m dipole hanging 20 to 25 feet off the ground and fed with a long run of RG8/X. Most hams can manage an antenna like this even if it's only up for the weekend of the contest. Since the rules include a power multiplier, very few people seem to be running more than 100 watts.

You don't need HF privileges or fast CW skills. It is certainly true that most of the contacts that are available to you during the contest are on the HF bands. I know of a few VHF enthusiasts who focus their attention on those bands and have been quite active in WiQP. This includes QSOs on

FM as well as SSB. If you only have a 2m radio and a vertical antenna you might want to hang around the FM simplex frequencies and see who you can find (146.55 is usually good). Some years there is quite a lot of activity here. As for CW, there are lots of folks that operate WiQP every year and don't use this mode at all. However, if you really want to maximize your score you can't beat doing some CW since contacts in



By the numbers

What: Wisconsin QSO Party
When: 1-8 p.m., Sunday, March 9
Where: 80, 75, 40 meters mostly
How: Contact stations in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties

Repeater

146.970 PL 131.8



RARC Net

The club's weekly net is 8 p.m. Sundays on the 146.970 repeater.



Program

Tues. March 4, "Lightning Protection."



Club meetings

Club meetings are 7 p.m., Tuesday, at Gundersen/Lutheran in La Crosse. They will be in meeting room 1 on the lower level of the clinic.

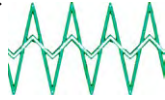
"Meeting of Elmers," advice, discussion and help is at 6 p.m. in the conference room in the Gundersen Clinic.

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President's Frequency Modulation



By Greg Miller, KA9FOZ

I know it may be a little early but I want to get the word out. The Riverland Amateur Radio Club Swapfest will be held Sat. Aug. 9, at the Omni Center in Onalaska.

Last year it was evident that the Community Center was getting a bit too crowded for this activity so it was time to move up to a larger facility. I, for one, am excited about this move as it gives us the opportunity to expand on different things that we can do during the fest. We have plenty of work to do between now and then but that will be half the fun. Watch this newsletter and listen to your radio for more on the swapfest as we get closer.

Also this month I want to repeat what we started at the last meeting, the monthly discussion topics. I bring it up again because some members did not know what the subjects were and what the reason was for them.

The idea is for club members to learn something new as well as to share their knowledge. March will be about lightning protection, a quick look up in a handbook or on the internet can give anyone some insight into this. That shared knowledge will be of benefit to all in the club. Participation is voluntary. By the way, last month's topic, Fox Hunting, surprised us with many having knowledge of this and an interest in doing it.

Here are this year's topics:

- ✓ April: Public Service
- ✓ May: Digital Modes
- ✓ June: Portable Setups
- ✓ July: Remote Control Helicopter
- ✓ August: Special Event Activities and how to improve them
- ✓ September: Dipole Antenna Construction
- ✓ October: Computer Control Radio
- ✓ November: Tools For Mini Work

I have noticed a renewed interest in the club and activities recently that I am very excited about 2014. I encourage anyone reading this to spread the word about our club and some of the things we are planning this year. Lets make 2014 one of our best and we will see you at the March 4 meeting.

Trustees?

A change in club organization has been suggested by vice president and board member Tom O'Brien, WB9BJQ. He has proposed having a trustee board that would handle the club's business matters. O'Brien says the change would shorten the business portion of the monthly meeting and allow more time to socialize.

Sunday Night Net

The new format on the Sunday night net will remain for the time being. It has shifted to a more discussion format which encourages check ins to participate.

At the February club meeting members split on whether to continue or resume the former net procedure. We'll leave it as is for now. Several Hams liked the new discussion format.

Also discussed, with no direction, was the net's time which will also remain as it is, starting at 8 p.m.

Swapmeet Aug. 9

Prepare for selling your old stuff and finding new at the Riverland Amateur Radio Club's Swapmeet, Saturday, Aug. 9, at the Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Rd., Onalaska. Hours will be from 8 a.m. 1 p.m. Details on the event are still being developed.

Riverland Amateur Radio Club

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counties are active. The WiQP might be the only time you're likely to hear some of them on the radio. Last year, only two counties, Richland and Crawford, showed no activity. Also, no logs were received from Door, although there was activity there. All of our northern counties were active, thanks to our mobile friends from Minnesota.

One of my favorite things about the WiQP is the opportunity to say hello to old friends. There is a pretty consistent group of operators that show up every year and after you do it a while you'll start to recognize a lot of call signs. You're also going to hear lots of people you know from the local clubs. Some ops tend to try to keep it moving as fast as possible while others will take some time to ragchew and catch up a bit. It is a "party" after all which amounts to a great way to get as many Wisconsin hams and interested others on the air at the same time.

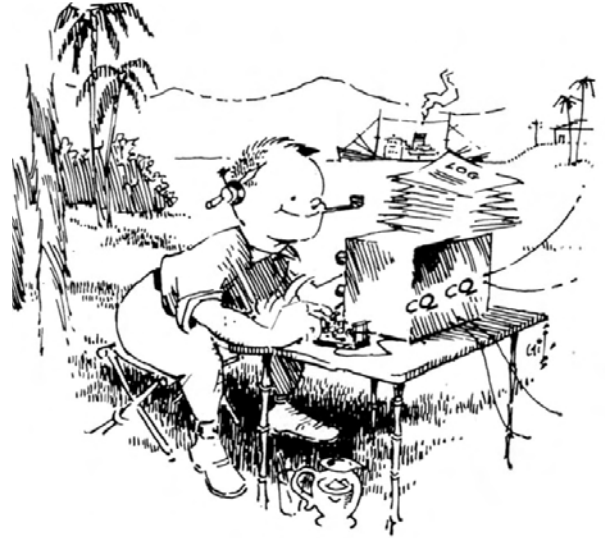
State QSO parties like WiQP are a great way to get your feet wet in contesting. The operating period is short, the rules are simple, and the scoring structure favors low power stations with low antennas. While activity levels are such that you'll be

able to consistently make contacts at a pretty good rate, they are not as high as in other domestic or DX contests when the entire band will be packed from top to bottom with people CQing. Operators also tend to be a bit more laid back in this situation.

Contesting, in general, is probably the best way to develop a whole group of skills including fast and accurate operating, knowledge of propagation, station design and optimization, etc. You can always do something to put up a better score. Importantly, "better" can mean better than the next guy you want to beat or, more often, just better than you did last year. Keeping score and having everyone play by the same set of rules allows you to measure your progress as an operator and quantify the effectiveness of your station.

The most important reason to get on for WiQP is that it loads of fun. There's something in it for everybody from the hard core contester to the casual mobile op with a 2m FM rig taking the kids to their afternoon activities. If you've never tried making contacts in the WiQP I hope you will give it a shot this year. If you've done it in the past but have gotten out of the habit then I hope you get on as well if only to give your club a few more points and to say hello to some old friends.

You can read about the WiQP at www.warac.org and get the information you need to participate.



DX weekend March 1-2

The SSB weekend of the ARRL International DX Contest www.arrl.org/arrl_dx is March 1-2 UTC, and the DX will be looking for you! In this major event on the radiosport calendar, operators in the US and Canada work stations everywhere else in the world. It's not only an opportunity to pit your station and operating skills against those of your peers but to expand your knowledge of propagation on the HF and MF bands and tweak your contesting skills.

We work as many DX stations in as many DXCC entities as possible on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters, while DX stations work as many US and Canadian stations as possible. US and Canadian stations send a signal report and their state or province abbreviation. DX stations send a signal report and output power.

There are entry categories for individual operators and multi operator teams as well as a choice of power levels in each category, from QRP to full legal limit.

There's a place for Big Guns, Little Pistols and everyone in between in this contest. The excitement and enthusiasm levels will be high, and it's a terrific opportunity to boost DXCC totals too.

YOU + The Key = A Great Read

Without your side of the equation, the math just doesn't add up when it comes to your newsletter.

Contributions are welcome!

Not sure of your writing skills? No problem, the Key's staff will edit your manuscript. The important thing is to share your story. Remember: "a good story is a terrible thing to go untold."

Send to Bob Seaquist, KC9IWE, at kc9iwe@arrl.net

Calendar

Sat-Sun March 1-2

↪ International DX Phone, work as many DX stations in as many DXCC entities as possible. www.arrl.org/arrl_dx

Tue March 4

↪ Riverland Amateur Radio Club, 7 p.m., Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse. Elmer session at 6 p.m. "Lightning protection."

Wed March 5

↪ South Milwaukee Amateur Radio Club Swapfest, 7 p.m., American Legion Post #434, 9327 S. Shepard Ave, Oak Creek.

Sat March 9

Wisconsin QSO Party, www.warac.org/wqp/wiqp_rules.htm

Sat March 16

↪ North American Sprint, SSB, www.ncjweb.com/sprintrules.php
↪ Hamfest 2014, Jefferson, Wis. www.w9mqb.org

Sat March 29

↪ Midwinter Madness Hobby Electronics Show, Buffalo, Minn. www.koltc.org

Sat April 5

↪ AES Superfest, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Manufacturers, exhibits, sales, and programs including: "ABCs of Building a Better Shack," and "Fox Hunting." www.aesham.com/aes_su_perfest_2014



The missing Kodak moments

By Carl Thurston, KC9HDS

At a recent RARC board meeting one of the Hams in attendance asked about the location of the club's photo album. No one there could answer that one. Oh yes, there was speculation that this Ham or that Ham was in possession of it but no one was sure who has it. It must have been missing for quite some time, as I personally have never seen it and I've been a member of RARC for going on nine years, the last three of which I have held the post of secretary and as such I've tried very diligently to compile as much of the club history as possible, in the form of meeting minutes and other minutia. Having the resource of the availability of the club photo album would be a boon to not only the club in general but also to anyone endeavoring to build a historic archive of the club and its members past and present.

With that as an intro: does anyone out there know where the club's photo album is? I have now been told where it is but have yet to see it. Even when or if it appears, you could help add to the RARC's history by contributing your photos and memories.

When the older, more experienced Hams sit around and talk about events and people who were notable parts of the club in the past, I always listen intently and try to picture those people and events. Times like that make me want to record as much of it as possible, and I do, but there are a lot of gaps in the record that I'd like to see filled. The club photo album would be very helpful in that effort.

Time marches on and none of us are getting any younger, so it is important to record as much of the club's history as possible for those Hams yet to be, before it is lost forever. If you feel this is a worthy project and want to help filling those gaps, your time and effort would be greatly appreciated. Any information, no matter how trivial it might seem to you, could be the very piece needed to make a more complete picture of how things were and who was in the club in the past. Even if you don't know where the photo album is, if you have photos that you have taken at any club events they should be archived with the club.

It would be a good idea if the club history in text and photos would be collected, sorted, labeled and stored on a disc, copied and distributed to as many club members who would care to have them. That way the club history can be preserved for future use, and we wouldn't have to go searching again for the club photo album or for any of the other related documents.

So I ask all club members, present and past who have access to any historical photos, documents, newsletters, event posters, or anything else that might be of interest; please bring them forward so that they can be preserved for future Hams. Anyone with materials that they wish to loan or donate to this project can either contact me directly or bring them to one of our monthly club meetings. Ham radio is fun and interesting. That joy and involvement should be preserved, so help to do that with your memories, mementos, photos, or artifacts. The more you share, the more you receive. Let's pull together to make this a fantastic tribute to Amateur Radio and the RARC.

