

Field Day 2005

We set up Field Day again this year at Ambucs Park in Urbana. 3 stations operated the event. K9BF, KB9NJW, and K9QZI provided the stations and operated. Several others helped during the 24 hour period. The bands were in fair shape, better than last year, but still not outstanding. One of the highlights of the weekend was the visit by Curt Holsopple, K9CH, from Newport News, VA. He was in our area working temporarily for WCIA News during his summer break from his employment as a journalism professor in Virginia. He was working to keep up with the real world to improve his teaching of current skills. He arranged for interviews and videos of our operation. He spent a couple of hours at the site, which shrank down to a 30 second news clip. The clip ran 3 times on channel 3, twice with the video and once with a description only as the video never made it on the air. That was the evening prime time news. The others were early afternoon news and early morning news. A first this year was air conditioning! 2 tents ran air conditioners with varying results. We had our usual evening potluck meal with burgers and brats provided by the club and cooked by Dave, KB9NJW. As always, the meal was a big highlight of the weekend. We did make a respectable number of contacts, but there was a problem merging the logs. The merge was not completed in time to submit to the ARRL, so we won't be listed in the results.

Taste of Champaign

The same weekend as Field Day was the Taste of Champaign in West Side Park. We set up a table and manned it during the event. We did receive several names from visitors interested in the club. We welcome them to our mailing list temporarily and invite them to join the club!

FCC Announces Dropping CW Testing

The FCC announced their notice of proposed rulemaking on July 19, stating that CW will no longer be required for any class of Amateur License. There is a period for comments before it becomes law. However, the FCC put this on their "Fast

Track", which means that it could be law by winter. No other requirements will change under this rulemaking. CW portions of our bands will remain as they are at present.

Please Monitor the Repeaters

There has been some concern that calls on our repeaters sometimes go unanswered. With the improvements to the 146.76 and 444.1 repeaters, we hope to see increased use. If you can monitor for calls anytime day or night, please do so. Scanners help with the monitoring, but they are not always the best. If you have all of the local repeaters programmed into your scanner, activity on one will lock it up and you will still miss calls on the others. If you have extra equipment capable of monitoring, please put it to work. We would like to be known as the club with the friendly repeaters! With EchoLink on the .76 repeater, we often receive calls by someone using that system. Don't forget the 444.525 repeater with IRLP connected. Calls are made on that repeater by others using IRLP, looking for contacts in this area. And, please use both Internet systems for your outgoing calls. The systems are there for everyone!

Repeater Update

The move is taking place! Our 146.76 repeater will soon operate with a new antenna, new feedline, and a new tower. WLRW is replacing the aging tower with a taller one. Both towers are standing at present. Hardware is moving to the new one, now that it is fully up. Within a few weeks, the repeater will be switched to the new tower. There may be periods of low power and/or no service during this time as equipment is moved. Please be patient if the service is out at times. Also, the 444.100 K9SI repeater is undergoing the same move and will be reduced and/or off as well. That repeater has been operating with reduced power for a few weeks, due to a power amplifier failure. Ben, K9BF, solicited funds for the repair and returned the amplifier to operation on September 11. Signals may still be attenuated in some directions until the move is complete and the old tower removed.

Hamfests

Several hamfests have come and gone since our last newsletter report. June saw Springfield and Princeton, both on the same weekend. Princeton expanded to a 2-day event. The two days produced about the same numbers as their single day in the past. Springfield, however, did see a decline in numbers, probably largely due to Princeton on Saturday. The usual 2 Peotone hamfests went well. With the July event moved away from July 4, it was better attended than last year. The Indianapolis hamfest in July was good. The crowd was good, about the same as past years. The August Peotone hamfest opened under threatening weather, but the rain held off until early afternoon, so most had a great time buying and selling. Huntsville in August was the usual excellent hamfest in the Von Braun Center. Numbers were down a little from the past, probably due to high gas prices.

Coming up is Peoria on September 16-18 at the Expo Gardens. If you go, be aware that the I74 bridge over the river is closed. It is best to take I474 to 6, and exit at Allen Rd. Then go south to Northmoor and East to the hamfest. Also, Radio Expo at Grayslake is the same weekend. This is the last year at Grayslake as the fairgrounds were sold and will be torn down by next year. The future of the hamfest is uncertain. The Minneapolis hamfest in October is cancelled. Higher costs and lower attendance forced this. The club is looking at other options for 2006.

VE Exams

Our last exam session was July 17 at the UI Fire Institute. We thank everyone who helped and congratulate our new licensees from that session. Our next one is October 16 at 1:00 p.m. at the UI Fire Institute. Please contact Debbie Fligor, N9DN, for details. And, no, we don't expect the CW portion of the requirements will be dropped by then.

Volunteers Needed

From ARRL Newsletter

The Hurricane Katrina Amateur Radio Volunteers Needed Clearing House now is live on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/agencies/>.

This database will be the primary means for relief organizations requiring Amateur Radio volunteers for communication support to list their needs. Additionally, volunteers looking to help may search the listings to match up their capabilities with the various requirements.

"The purpose of this ARRL Web tool is to make it easier on both the agency in need, and the Amateur Radio operator to find matches to fill various requirements," said ARRL Special Assistant to the CEO Dave Patton, NN1N. "We have rapidly learned that during regional and national disasters such as that resulting from Katrina, bottlenecks and bureaucracy slow down responses to aid requests. This tool should help the Field Organization cope."

Representatives of relief organizations or served agencies can post their *communications* requirements on this site for Amateur Radio operators to see. Patton asked organizations lacking a volunteer coordinator who is familiar with Amateur Radio to indicate in the "needs" section that they're looking for an Amateur Radio volunteer coordinator in addition to radio operators.

Relief agencies seeking Amateur Radio volunteers will be asked to enter basic information about their organizations and their needs, including specific locations in the disaster area. The League anticipates making the Volunteers Needed database available in the future when groups may need the services of Amateur Radio volunteers to supplement or provide emergency or public service communication.

"If you are an Amateur Radio operator wishing to volunteer, use the search engine on the site to find listings of agencies that are looking for your help," Patton added.

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Joe Tomasone, AB2M, the League has been using the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Communications Volunteer Registration and Message Traffic Database he developed as its primary site for prospective Amateur Radio volunteers to offer their services in the current disaster. On behalf of the ARRL, Patton expressed appreciation for Tomasone's prompt response to fill this need on short notice.