

Ham Rag

Rockford Amateur Radio Association

To all members who participated in Field Day operations 1976:

I would like to thank each and every one of you personally, but might just miss a few VIP's, so in the Ham Rag it goes. I am sure all the members read it from cover to cover.

All phases got off to a good start, except one and those of you who were present know the one I am referring to. We have a very respectable score to submit to ARRL. It will be close to thirty-two hundred points, including multipliers. Thanks to the efficient, top-notch operators who were responsible for keeping W9AXD/9 on the air for all twenty-four hours without any interruptions or breakdowns except for generator shut-down for refueling.

To all of you, no matter if you only held on to a guy rope while securing antennas, you were instrumental in making this 1976 Field Day a great success!

To Mr. John Wacker for that Sunday morning sunrise breakfast -- all agreed the ham and eggs were excellent. Also to Mr. Clyde Aspling, WB9KOT, for providing the ideal location.

R.A.R.A. once again has proven that we can provide reliable communication via amateur radio, with emergency power should the occasion arise. Also, operators with the knowledge and responsibility to those we will be serving, if and when a disaster strikes. And who knows when?????? We will be on hand.

Thanks again for your very fine cooperation in making this year's Field Day exercise one that will benefit all area area amateurs and for future Field Days, make this a worthwhile project. SK...--

73 K9UW0
Field Day Chairman
1976

President's Log WN9SGF

From all reports, Field Day was a big success. There were many people who participated, and they all enjoyed doing it. It was gratifying to have a number of people who are proficient in contest work take part in Field Day. Elsewhere in this issue, you will see pictures of the Field Day site. Frank Reiter K9UWO, the Field Day Chairman, did an excellent job. For those of you who didn't visit the Field Day site, it was an impressive lay-out. A great big thanks to our landlord, Clyde Aspling WB9KOT, for letting us use his property.

The Ham Fest Committee held a meeting July 6, 1976. They reviewed what has been done until now, and what needs to be done in the future to have a successful Ham Fest. Paul Dean WB9HGZ, will be contacting some of you for assistance as the day for the Ham Fest approaches. He will need people to sell tickets at the gate, to distribute coffee and donuts, and to help in general the day of the Ham Fest. The two main prizes that we're going to give away that day, are here and have tested.

By now, some of you are on vacation and we hope that you have a wonderful time and will return to the September meeting full of enthusiasm for the activities for the winter.

I have heard many favorable comments about the new format of the Ham Rag. I want to thank Fred Johnson K9KTS and his staff for the fine way they have approached this project.

I would like to remind the membership to send in the money for the Ham Fest tickets as they dispose of them. We would like to avoid a last minute rush the week before the Ham Fest.

See you at the Ham Fest!

73

John WN9SGF

Editor's QRM K9KTS

Field Day has come and gone leaving in its wake some fond memories and a spirit of togetherness among the club members. If someone would have told me just a short time ago that I would spend a night in a barn with a bearded, gray-haired man, I would have questioned their sanity. Never the less, Ham Rag Associate Editor, WB9PBY was my partner for those twelve hours. Together we got butchered on 75 phone, annihilated on 40 CW, and ignored on 6 SSB. After our humbling experience, it was still a pleasure to watch the club's top operators in action. Other events included WB9ILH "speaking" to Field Day Chairman, K9UWO after the latter climbed the tower to secure the beam, WN9SGF sustaining the club with ham and eggs on Sunday morning, and the strange feeling in the stomachs of WA9APA, WB9PBY, and myself as we watched WB9HNJ devour a bacon burger and chocolate malt and ask for a bowl of chili at 4:00 a.m. in a local "greasy spoon." In any case, we are starting now by going into training for next year's Field Day.

The editors wish to thank Clark Bullen, W9COX, for the photographs that appear in this issue and we would like to commend Paul Klein, K9VJJ, for his fine publicity program.

You will notice that the "Tech Topics" column does not have the name of the author on it. This is because all of the editors worked on it. We found that Al Friedman is such an exacting and precise person that we had to pool our talents. It is no wonder that he is the fine operator that he is. While on the subject of W9YRA, WB9PBY and myself spent an evening with Al and Dennis, W9DDL, and Gene, K9IKP. Of course the discussion was DX. After some "milk and cookies," Al showed some slides of stations on the West Coast complete with 40 meter beams on 100 foot booms and "California Kilowatts." Later on in the evening W9DDL bared his soul and confessed that he did other things besides DX. He sometimes operates W9DDL/MM. No, that does not mean maritime but motorcycle mobile. He is using a HR2A on his cycle with a microphone element hung from his helmet on a coat hanger.

July 1976

ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 1744, Rockford, Illinois 61110

OFFICERS - - - - - 1976 - - - - - DIRECTORS

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Tech-Topics

Learning to operate DX phone requires two basic attributes. First is to "listen to numerous DX QSO's. The second is to know your capability to initiate a potential DX QSO," says W9YRA, Al Friedman, who is one of the club's most successful DX operators. Al maintains that if one has the patience for these two things, anyone can become a successful DX operator. His shack attests to his word, for it is literally filled with DX awards -- including an ARRL Honor Roll award. His collection of QSL cards is also astounding. He has two QSL cards he particularly prizes -- both from the Middle East. They are a card from King Hussein of Jordan and another from a Saudi Arabian Prince signed HRH (His Royal Highness.) Al has had other thrills too, though not DX; he's had the opportunity to QSO with Arthur Godfrey and Senator Goldwater.

"That's just great," one might mutter, but he's got to have some secret techniques. "Secrets? Not really," says Al. "Basically it's the ability to listen, concentrate and to know which DX contact is possible." To those just beginning DX work, Al suggests that one simply do a lot of careful observing on the 20 meter band between 14.200 and 14.250. This is where most DX QSO's occur. "The QSO's are usually quicker but the basics are right there if you want them," said Al. For example, sometimes one can turn on his rig and hear a lot of DX. After listening a few minutes, one realizes that only W1's and W2's are being called. Perhaps a half-hour later, W3's and W8's start getting called and a little later W9's and Ø's. It's important to listen to the skip as it moves from East to West across the country. So, when the skip is in 9 land, it's an easy contact? "Yes," says Al. "If you and your station have the capability." By this he means one's station antenna system, power and the operator's timing for the proper moment to make contact. For example, is there a mob of calls for one DX station? Working with only the rig's exciter and a limited antenna system, one would probably be lucky to make a contact. The reason? There are too many KW stations with good beams after that station.

Al set up a vivid example of the importance of a station's capability with WB9PBY (Jim Michna, who has never worked phone DX) just to make some of these points. WB9PBY runs a Heathkit SB 401-303 barefoot into a vertical HT 18. Al's station has a Drake TR-3, a 1KW linear and a 4 element 20 meter beam at 60 feet. Al established a contact with Yozo, KH6HHD in Hawaii at 14.255 and had WB9PBY in the QSO. Yozo was using an SB 401-303, a 1KW linear and a tri-band beam. The effect of the antenna systems was most impressive. Here's a comparison of the S-meter readings:

KH6HHD reports

to W9YRA (W9YRA using exciter only) -- 5 x 6
(W9YRA using 1KW linear) -- 5 x 8
to WB9PBY (WB9PBY using exciter only) -- 5 x 2 to 3

That gives Al 21 db more than Jim and he's not using his linear! It's 33 db if one adds the linear. To top it off, Al's beam allowed him to give Yozo a 5 x 9 plus 10 db and Jim could only give him a 5 x 6. Here's where the

bad QRM really made the difference, for Al could copy solid and Jim only part. Of course Yoza couldn't get all that Jim had to say and Al acted as relay for Jim. This is a good example of a station's capability and what a beam can do. In fact, Al believes a beam is the most important asset any DX operator can have. But, he also stresses that one can work DX without a beam or a linear amplifier. He has done it himself with the TR-3 barefoot and a dipole 4' off the roof. Yes, you bet, to the tune of over 100 countries! By the way, he proved it to Jim in his station with a nice contact into Santiago, Chile.

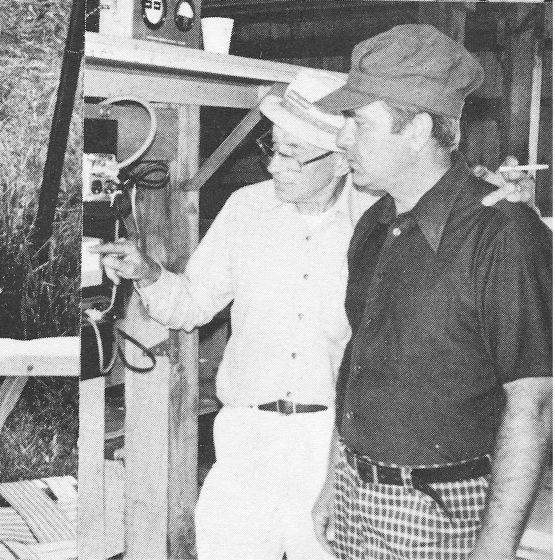
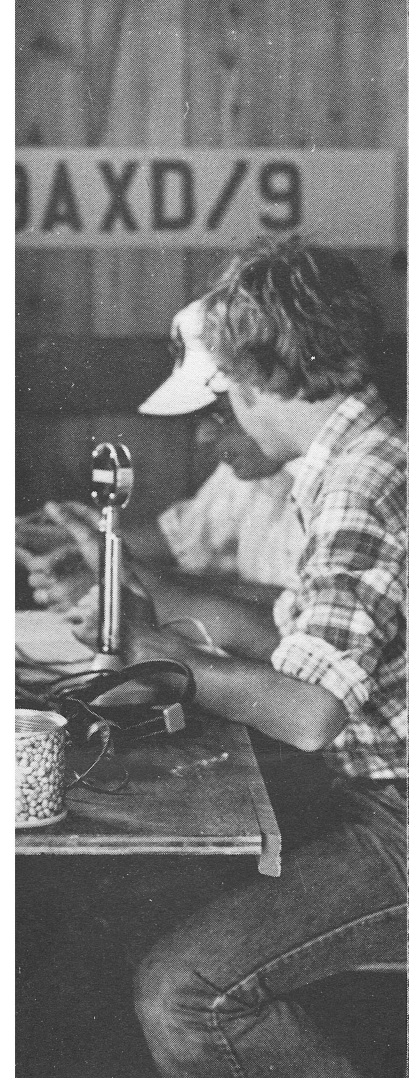
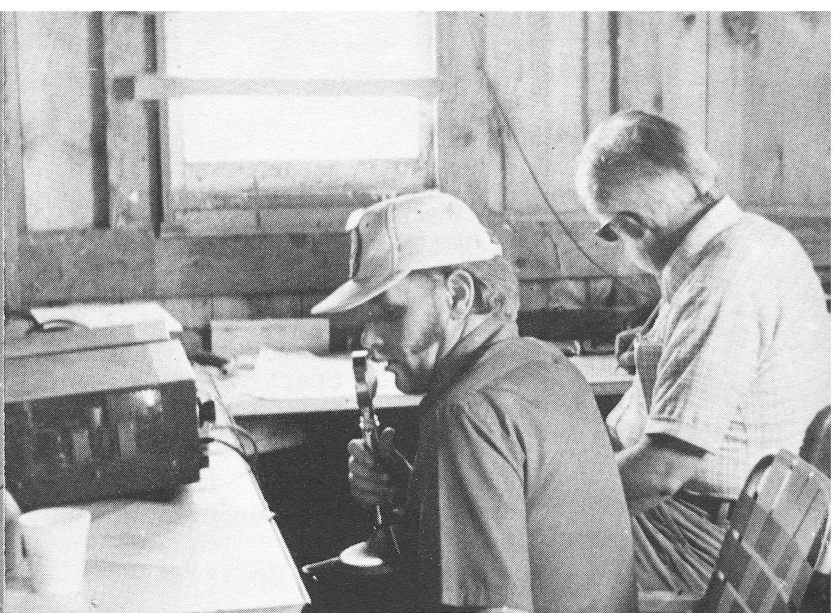
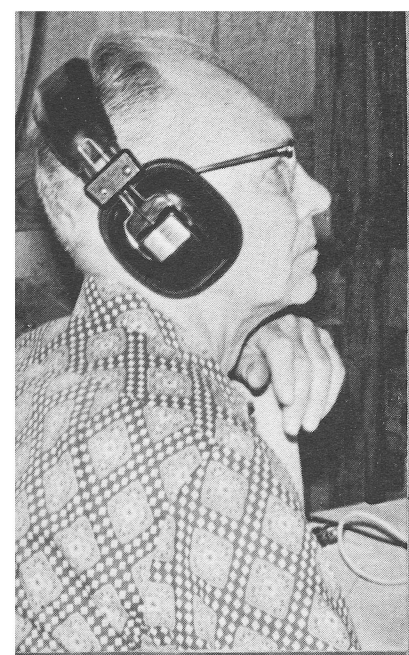
So, how does one do it?

- 1) Listen, observe how the pro's do it and watch for the skip.
- 2) Know your station's capabilities.
- 3) Because the sunspot cycle is near to its minimum, propagation is often poor to many parts of the world. Therefore, it is especially important to know when to listen for a particular part of the world. The monthly propagation column in CQ Magazine is good to refer to since it indicates the best particular time and band to listen for in different parts of the world.
- 4) With lesser gear and antenna, listen for a good signal, but one that's not too popular. (Remember, the mobs will kill you.)
- 5) Work some phone DX contests, for they can help significantly in developing one's operating techniques and you don't have to feel that you must win.
- 6) Most important -- get your feet wet; try and don't be afraid of it. The operators out there won't be mad at you.

Al indicated that he is not the only operator in the area who works DX and that Vic, K9UIY in Freeport, Dennis, W9DDL in Loves Park, Larry, K9LKA in Belvidere, and Gene, K9IKP in Monroe Center, all stand high in the DXCC standings. These few represent a wealth of experience and we are fortunate to have them, but it's a small group and there's room for many more. They would be happy to see others join them as DX operators.

Experienced or not, and with all of the clues given, Al says, "One should expect frustrating days when nothing seems to go right. In fact, that's a special time for patience," he indicates.

A good deal of experience can bring 100 countries in one DX contest weekend (provided the band conditions are good) and it can happen if one works hard at it. Al has done it more than once. You too might do it with patience, work, and experience.



HAMFEST COMMITTEE NEWS

The annual Bel-Rock Hamfest is scheduled this year for Sunday, August 29th. The Committee has been working hard for the last several weeks in preparation for this big event. The main prizes are ordered and have arrived. First prize is a Regency 2m FM Handy Talkie - Deluxe package. The second prize should appeal, not only to the amateur operator, but also the hobbyist. It is a Simpson Model 464 Digital Multimeter. Many other smaller prizes will be obtained in the next few weeks for hourly drawings.

You probably have already received your ten (10) tickets. Please try to sell all ten. Remember that the profits are divided in proportion to the number of tickets sold. Let's be sure we sell our share! It is this money that helps keep the club going throughout the year.

We regret to have to inform you that the F.C.C. is no longer administering examinations at Hamfests. The program was cancelled because of, believe it or not, lack of interest.

Worried about the flies? If you were at the Hamfest last year, you know that we had an abundance of insect pests. Rest easy; this year we are fogging the place before the Hamfest to rid the grounds of these pests. Also what about rain? We have reserved the large building at the Fairgrounds in case of rain.

In all, it looks to be another great Hamfest. We hope to see you all there. John Wacker and Paul Dean will be calling on some of you for help the day of the Hamfest. Let's all try to help out. It's for the good of the Club and should prove to be a good time for everyone. By the way, if you are going to a radio store or Hamfest, take along some fliers! Paul WB9HGZ and Mike K9ORV both have a good supply.

In closing, a big Thank You goes to all who are helping out, especially the fine committee:

Mike George	K9ORV	John Wacker	WN9SGF
Dale Veline	WA9BWK	Claude	WB9PMM
Jack Muntz (treas.)	WB9PCA		

73 and see you at the Hamfest!

Paul Dean
Hamfest Committee Chairman
Phone- Home: 397-6363
Work: 987-6453
(available Lunch break- 11:40-12:10)

Emergency K9QYY

Twenty-three amateur radio stations and two R.A.C.E.S. stations participated in a Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado Watch situation on Sunday evening, June 13th, utilizing both the E.A.R.S. repeater (146.01-.61) and the R.A.C.E.S. repeater (145.65-147.00)

All participating stations furnished weather information to K9QYY who acted as net control and passed this info to the National Weather Service at the Greater Rockford Airport by land line. WA9IYK reported a tree down across Spring Creek Road at Beloit Road. W9QGT kept us posted on the Freeport area weather. WB9PMM reported an automobile accident at Route 76 and Orth Road with no injuries. W9DDL lost the use of his telephone and used E.A.R.S. and the weather net control station's phone to locate an expected friend who did not show. WB9HNJ "baby sat" a downed high tension wire at Elm and Maple Avenues until Commonwealth Edison arrived about midnight, thus freeing a Winnebago Sheriff's Police squad for other duties. K9IKP suffered lightning damage to his rotor after updating our weather info on the Monroe Center area. W9JXN in Dundee relayed weather info from the Chicago area. WA9BWK provided liaison with Belvidere and Boone County C.D. WB9EZY kept us posted on weather in the Clinton, Wisconsin area. WB9HHH relayed 5 state weather info from the T.V. cable and acted as net control when K9QYY went Code 192 as did WB9OGD later in the night. W9VTL checked in from Janesville on his way home to Rockford and provided weather info from that area. W9GKI has a window giving him an unobstructed view to the West and North from his QTH and let us know and let us know what was approaching from those directions. WB9TPY/Mobile 9 passed by on the toll road during the height of the storm. W9RML/Mobile 9 stayed with us from Freeport to Genoa with constant reports. K9AMJ and his crew deserve a trophy for providing excellent lightning protection for the E.A.R.S. repeater which kept going strong during a storm sufficient to knock out the whole Metro Cable system and several broadcast stations. Our County C.D. Director, (7K1) Nate McClure, lead fire trucks to a fire they could not find near his QTH. Others who checked in were WA9PBQ, K9VJJ, W9BAV, WB9KZQ, WA9FFL, WB9SSZ, and 2nd Deputy Director of the County CD, Art Hampton (7K3).

This busy evening also provided a real test of the County's new Weather Alert System on 47.5 Mhz. The National Weather Service at the Greater Rockford Airport used the system several times during the evening to broadcast the original Tornado Watch and the subsequent followup announcements. It worked like a charm and is providing a real service for the people of Winnebago and surrounding counties.

FCC'S FIRST ACTION ON RESTRUCTURING was taken late last week and Novices and Technicians became the principal beneficiaries. This first Report and Order on Docket 20282 liberalizes both license classes' privileges but appears to reject the "Dual Ladder" approach to restructuring that was such an integral part of the docket's original philosophy.

Technician Class Licensees receive the most significant benefit in the form of full Novice privileges -- CW on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. No other Technician privileges were changed at this time, so it's still possible that 10 meter phone and/or expansion of Technician frequencies on the bottom of two or six meters may be part of expected later actions on 20282. Technician exams will no longer be "mail order", either -- the Report and Order makes administration of Tech exams an FCC Field office job.

Novices Recieve two benefits under the just announced Rules changes. Power limits for Novices have been raised to 250 watts, and a Novice who has failed to upgrade during his two-year license term will be permitted to continue as a Novice by taking another Novice exam -- the requirement for a one-year delay before going for another Novice license has been dropped. The new 250 watt Novice power limit actually applies to Novice frequencies, by the way -- any station operating in the Novice sub bands will be limited to 250 watts regardless of what class license he holds.

All "Mail Order" Amateur Exams except Novice are effectively being eliminated. The one exception that will remain is for an applicant who cannot travel because of medical reasons and who can back it up with a physicians's statement. All others (except Novices) will be required to take their exams at an FCC Field Office, regardless of the distance which they may have to travel to get there. All applicants who do not already hold a Novice or higher class Amateur license will also be required to take and pass Element 2 (the Novice written exam) along with the higher class test. Element 2 will only be given after the higher class thes has been taken and passed, however, to avoid burdening the Field Offices with giving Novice exams to applicants who really didn't expect to get a higher class license but wanted to avoid the added delays in getting a mail order Novice license.

All Present Conditional and Technician (C) license holders will be "grandfathered" into straight Technician and General Class licenses as their present licenses come up for renewal. No reexaminations will be required, which should make at least a few present license holders breathe easier!

The Effective Date for the new Rules changes is July 23

Ham Mart

For Sale: - Heathkit SB610 Monitorscope, complete with coils and manuals \$50.00
- Halicrafters Splatter Guard Model HA-8 \$15.00
- Clegg 66'er Six Meter Transceiver \$50.00
- Altronics-Howard Terminal Unit (RTTY) model "L" \$50.00
Jim Clark, W9BAV 226-5696

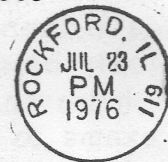
For Sale: - Drake TR-4 Transceiver with Noise Blanker, R.P. Speech Processor, DC-4, and AC-4 power supplies, with MC-4 Mobile console and Shure Mic.
Bud Peterson, WB9CHU 399-6375

For Sale: - G.E. Pre-Prog 2 meter FM, converted to 110VAC base. Fifteen watts out and set up for 146.94. \$40.00
Paul Dean, WB9HGZ 397-6363 or 987-6453

For Sale: - Drake TR3 Transceiver, AC-3 power supply, MS-4 Speaker and wisper fan. Rebuilt, aligned, and tested by R.L. Drake, 12/74. \$385.00
- Tri-Ex heavy duty, three section, crank up tower. Will nest to 20' 8" and includes plate for Ham M, top mounted thrust bearing, three sets of guys including all insulators, turnbuckles and 3/16 galvanized aircraft cable. \$495.00
Al Friedman, W9YRA

For Sale: - Heathkit DX60B with Five International crystals \$90.00
- Haicrafters SR43AC 6 and 2 Meter Transceiver with AM and CW. Also includes a National 62 VFO \$175.00
Jim Michna, WB9PBY 968-7380

**ROCKFORD AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 1744 ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61110**



Nets:
28.7 Mhz. Monday 9:00 P.M.
50.4 Mhz. Nightly 9:00 P.M.
146.94 Mhz Monday 8:00 P.M.
RACES Monday 8:30
145.65 Mhz In
147.00 Mhz. Out

Paul Dean, WB9HGZ
317 Shaw Street
Rockford, Il. 61108

FIRST CLASS