

2015 ILQP Summary and Commentary

Logs received were up about ten percent from 2014, though the total number of QSO's reported was down a bit due to band conditions, nice weather, football and other situations beyond our control. All in the all, 2015 ILQP was a success.

Multipliers....what was out there?

Well...we did it. Thanks to some intensive recruiting and cheerleading and coordination by some of the club groups, all 102 counties were on the air! Thanks, everyone! In addition, every USA state and VE province was worked except for the elusive NT and YU mults.

Naturally, not every multiplier was equally simple to find!

Mults and # of contacts (approximate):

AB:26 ADAM:545 AK:5 AL:164 ALEX:6 (ND9E/P) AR:252 AZ:123 BC:54 BOND:47 (KM9O/R) BOON:18 (W9MSE/M) BROW:100 BURO:135 CA:282 CALH:133 CARR:136 CASS:38 CHAM:899 CHRS:114 CLAY:242 CLNT:224 CLRK:57 CO:203 COLE:159 COOK:1099 CRAW:47 CT: 110 CUMB:28 (AD4EB/M) DE:58 DEKA:229 DEWT:43 DOUG:390 DUPG:1036 EDGR:368 EDWA:88 EFFG:172 FAYE: 71 FL: 535 FORD:80 FRNK:53 FULT:207 GA:434 GALL:279 GREE:58 GRUN:201 HAML:287 HANC: 30 HARD:21 (ND9E/P) HENR:75 HNDR:37 (N9JF/M) IA:248 ID:17 IN:1014 IROQ:204 JACK:197 JASP:123 JEFF:46 JERS:158 JODA:23 (W9MSE/M) JOHN:69 KANE:494 KANK:718 KEND:83 KNOX:201 KS:131 KY:250 LA:82 LAKE:1124 LASA:83 LAWR:71 (N80OU) LEE:50 LIVG:67 LOGN:13 (K9ZM) MA:441 MACN:41 MADN:397 MARI:52 (AD4EB/M) MASN:34 (KC9IDX/P) MB:11 MCDN:225 MCHE:662 MCLN:370 MCPN:164 MD:155 ME:55 MI: 689 MN:659 MNRD:196 MNRO:300 MNTG:438 MO:819 MORG:80 MOUL:33 (AD4EB/M) MRCR:27 (N9JF/M) MS:66 MSHL:46 (W9MSE/M) MSSC:84 MT:148 NB:7 NC:394 ND:22 NE:52 NH:232 NJ:341 NL:3 NM:60 NS:6 NV:18 NY:445 OGLE:45 OH:915 OK:124 ON:233 OR:126 PA:842 PEI:5 PEOR:856 PERR:99 (WA9TUG) PIAT:98 PIKE:78 POPE:22 PULA:182 PUTN:178 QC:130 RAND:154 RI:219 RICH:120 ROCK:483 SALI:277 SANG:213 SC:364 SCHY:40 SCLA:1010 SCOT:106 SD:62 SHEL:35 (AD4EB/M) SK:104 STAR:34 (W9MSE/M) STEP:267 TAZW:599 TN:747 TX:980 UNIO:207 UT:33 VA:532 VERM:385 VT:21 WA:90 WABA:56 WARR:40 WASH:184 WAYN:100 WBGO:225 WHIT:279 WI:1004 WILL:300 WMSN:53 WOOD:362 WTSD:157 WV:98 WY:27

If you waded through the listing above, a few things stand out....

Were it not for some innovative Portable and Rover stations, and some intrepid mobiles, putting all 102 counties on the air would not be possible...yet. We still need to recruit some fixed stations to ensure that someday....SOME DAY....a station will work them all in 8 hours. I mean, really...MACN....41 contacts? Decatur??? C'mon... BOON...18 contacts? Even a couple of extra fixed stations, or portables, SIGNING UP PRIOR TO THE EVENT would allow mobiles to spend more time in counties otherwise not covered.

The organization (and by this I don't mean just one individual) ahead of time that put an unprecedented number of county line and corner mobiles in the field meant that anyone who really cared could be guaranteed of nearly half of the counties in the southern portion of the state. Many of these counties have few if any active hams on HF, so those operations were critical for the success of the event. Most of them provided contacts on both CW and phone. There is still plenty of room, however, for operations on the "off mode" in most counties in the southern half of the state.

Judging from 2015, one should be wildly popular in ILQP operating from any county that provided under 50 contacts this year. That would include: ALEX (barely made an appearance) BOND BOON CASS CLRK CRAW CUMB DEWT HANC HARD HNDR JEFF JODA LOGN MACN MASN MOUL MRCR MSHL OGLE POPE SCHY SHEL STAR WARR.

Check your maps. Find your corners. Scope out the antenna supports, the best spots to avoid power lines. Get land-owner permission. "Reserve your corner."

Participation from outside the state was enthusiastic and intense. It seemed like there were more VE's than ever despite the 'iffy' propagation. Support from the nearby states, IN/MI/WI/IA/MO/KY was massive and very much appreciated. There were lots of West Coast stations to work. When the mobiles changed counties, bedlam ensued. It was marvelous! ☺

DX: 2015 was NOT the year for memorable propagation and long runs of DX stations, nor for record-setting DX entries. In fact, though there were quite a few DX calls in the entrants' logs (but under 200 total), the only DX station to submit a log was OK2EC, who ground out a massive total of eight...yes, that's EIGHT QSO's. Step, thanks for taking the time to come to the party and send in your log! DK2OY could have been the high-scoring DX station by quite a margin but did not submit a log. Many IL entrants worked no DX at all.

Band conditions and use: As usual, but more than in recent past years, activity was largely confined to 80, 40 and 20 meters. The vast majority of these were on 40, which remains "the place to be" for ILQP. The only contacts on 160 were "moves" from other bands. Only a handful of contacts were made on 6 meters, about 125 on 2 meters (almost all FM simplex). There were a bit over a dozen contacts made on 15 meters, including one on RTTY by KS9A, and a whopping SIX on 10 meters (including two on FM).

Propagation on 20 meters was pretty decent early in the afternoon but faded early and most activity moved to the lower bands. By dusk, 40 meters went "really long", and it was difficult for IL stations to work each other except on 80 meters. The pileups on 80 cw on some of the mobiles were massive in the last few counties they covered.

The “mode mix” was as follows: CW: 18,500, FM: 127 SSB: 17,700. What a few years ago was (sometimes) criticized for being a “CW only event” has become anything but that!

Log checking: The number of non-standard county (and state) abbreviations received in logs this year was noticeably reduced. Those that remained and were not unequivocal were deemed “busted”, resulting in a score reduction. Thanks for the improvement in this area! Log-checking went much more smoothly this year due in part to more logs being received in Cabrillo format, fewer paper logs being submitted (these had to be hand-transcribed) and prompt responses from entrants who were asked to make log format changes and resubmit them.

Uniques: Any callsign that appeared in the log of a single entrant was flagged as “Unique” and investigated for validity. There were a bit over 1800 of these from a database of 36850 contacts (5%). No contact was disallowed just for being “Unique”. However, about 600 (a bit under 2%) contacts were deemed to be “Busted”. About half of these were “Unique”, and the rest were determined by cross-checking to have been miscopied calls or exchanges. These contacts were removed with score reductions but no additional penalties. The vast majority of “Uniques” were stations worked on SSB, proving nothing except that there is a vast reservoir of SSB stations out there on a Sunday afternoon, tuning the bands and willing to call an ILQP participant and “give them a contact just to help out”!

Callsign most-often miscopied: AD4EB/M. No contest. His call was recorded in logs a dozen different ways. Once Jim has been here a few years (hope HOPE) this should happen less.... 😊

How the winners did it: There was a significant dogfight for the top IL Fixed score, with K9CT (high power) outdueling K9PG (low power), 188250 to 180081. Craig (K9CT) alternated between 20 and 40 meters, phone and CW and went first to 80 meters at 2314Z where he maintained a significant run for half an hour, then went back to 40 for a fruitful 10 minutes, returning to 80, then 75, then back to 80 to finish. Paul (K9PG aka “Dipolio”), made band and mode changes more frequently, spent some time on 160 meters (moving a few stations from other bands), and spent the last hour almost exclusively on 80 and 75 meters. Paul had 3 more multipliers, but the 75-QSO advantage to Craig was too much to overcome. Paul easily wins the new IL Fixed Low Power category, while Craig was far in the lead for IL Fixed High Power stations. Karl, K9BGL was in 2nd place for IL Fixed High Power Mixed and led the way for the PRIME fixed stations. The only other IL Fixed station scoring over 100,000 points was Don, K9NR.

W9QL was not far behind in the multiplier hunt. The vast majority of Dave’s contacts were made on SSB, and he had some great runs on both 20 and 40 meters in the phone bands, “owning 14255” for the first 53 minutes of the party.

K3WA was easily in 2nd place in the IL Fixed Low Power category and topped the next-highest IL Fixed CW-only entrant (WX9U) by almost 50%.

Not very far down the list for total score was the winning IL Fixed QRP entrant, Ralph K9ZO. Ralph's multiplier total (123) was outstanding and was topped by only four other entrants regardless of power level. He spent a significant amount of time on 40 meter phone (bold for QRP....) and went to 80 meter CW early and pretty much stayed there for the last hour and three quarters.

The highest-scoring IL Fixed Phone Only entrants were K9K (high power) and KD9VT (low power). The crew at K9K made quite a few more contacts, but Dave (KD9VT) nearly overcame that deficit by finding considerably more multipliers (114-96). K9K stayed on 20 meters for the first 3 1/2 hours, then went to 40 and stayed. In contrast, Dave spent only 15 minutes on 20 before going to 40 and staying there. It's interesting that neither made ANY contacts on 75 meters!

The Illinois Portable results held a few surprises, the first being a new "top dog". The 3-operator crew at W9AUI/P in deep southern IL came out on top of N9FN (with K9FN) for the first time. The QSO gap was a scant EIGHT QSO's, but 'AIU widened the score gap with an extra three multipliers. Other portable categories were won by K9DXA (3-county), N0KTK (2-county) and WA9TUG (single county).

Illinois was invaded by out-of-state help in the Mobile and Rover categories, and the invasion was welcomed! AD4EB and driver (from TN) came in first and W9MSE and driver (from WI) second in the Mobile category. Utilizing a good plan and decent roads, Jim (AD4EB) put twenty-four counties in the logs, and Jeff (W9MSE) added twenty-one more. KJ9C (from IN) did his usual stellar job as a Rover and activated another sixteen counties as a single-op-no-driver entrant. Hmmm....three stations from out of state, sixty-one counties activated. Thanks, guys!! One other Mobile and eight Rovers helped to "fill in holes" around the state.

From out of state, N4PN lapped the field in the High Power category, though he worked one fewer county (91) than did K9WX (92), the Low Power winner. K5KPE was second-high High Power with N4IQ third; WA4GQG was second in Low Power and K4FT third.

In Illinois Local Club Competition, PRIME ARA, scorched the competition with a number of strong scores from their portable operations. In fact, PRIME contributed nearly half of all the points credited to IL local clubs! They have set the bar high, but their strategy is open to any other club willing to put forth the effort and blanket a portion of the state with portable operations (or mobiles...or rovers...). Congratulations to PRIME ARA!

ILQP in 2016 will be on Sunday, October 16. Start making your plans!

73, Jim N9JF for the WIARC committee