

2016 ILQP COMMENTARY de N9JF

The 2016 ILQP was unremarkable in that there was no extreme weather in either the troposphere or in the ionosphere. It was a nice day for a drive in the countryside. Sunspots and propagation on the high bands? Um..not much. If you quit early or didn't have an 80/75 meter antenna, you missed a lot. Twenty died early and forty went really long in mid-afternoon. One "feature" of low sunspot numbers is the ability to work coast-to-coast, on 40 meters, mobile, during daylight hours! There were 32 contacts made on 15 meters and 25 on 10 meters. There were 3 times as many contacts made on 160 meters as on 15 and 10 combined!

A couple of years ago, as a mobile, one could work the "allowed" 5 DXCC countries from the first county. This year, it was tough to work ANY DX from mobile stations, and even many high-power fixed stations failed to find 5 countries to log.

There were 64 CW-only logs, 115 Mixed-mode logs and 103 Phone-only logs submitted. The 282 logs (a record), contained a total of about 40,400 contacts. Only 18 IL stations entered as CW-only while 43 non-IL stations did so. If ILQP was ever a "CW event" that is no longer the case. Many of the top mixed-mode competitors made almost identical numbers of contacts on phone and cw. A few counties were workable on only one mode. Thanks to WA9GBC and NA9Q for doing most of the magic via Excel on the logs so they did not have to be processed manually! The log-checking procedure continues to evolve as we try to extract more information each year and deal with a variety of log submission formats (including, so far, paper logs....).

Contacts were made from Illinois to every state and all of the VE entities except VY0, VY1, VO1 and VO2. Every IL county was contacted at least once. LAWR was nearly a no-show, with ONE contact reported. We're not sure what happened with that one. Considerable cheerleading and recruiting was done ahead of time, in thanks largely to some local clubs. PRIME ARA pulled out all the stops and put a large number of southern IL counties on the air with portable and rover operations.

IL Fixed High Power: K9CT outdistanced the rest of the field (of 36) by a fair margin. Craig not only had the high score overall for IL Fixed stations, he found the most counties (98), tied for the most states and provinces contacted (52, with K9NR), and had the most CW contacts of any fixed station. He was one of the few to work at least 5 DXCC countries. K9NR and K9BGL were not separated by many points for second and third, with nearly identical phone totals and Karl winning the CW battle. However, Don found significantly more multipliers (142 vs. 132). Rounding out the top five in this category were K3WA and KI9A, both of whom emphasized CW over phone; but Bill had quite an advantage in total QSO points. They had an identical number of multipliers (125). Further down the list in 7th place was W9ILY, a cw-only entry, who was one of 3 to get the 5 DXCC mults (with K9CT and K9BGL). NV9L was the highest-scoring phone-only entrant in IL Fixed HP and claims the plaque for that mode.

IL Fixed Low Power: This was the most popular IL entry category with 64 contestants. K9PG blew away the rest, more than doubling the score of the next-closest entrant. Paul's 93 counties worked were second only to K9CT (HP), and he was the only IL Fixed LP entrant to work at least 5 DXCC entities. Paul and Skip, WS9V, worked 52 states and provinces, equaling the number by K9CT and K9NR. That might have been just about all there were to work! In second place, W9QL made more phone QSOs than any other entrant and added some cw work. WS9V and WD9CIR were separated by only 1500 points, with Skip's QSO total overcoming Steve's multiplier advantage. K9DRP, in 7th place, made a valiant run at the "most phone QSOs" plaque but was just edged out by HP entrant NV9L. He was closely-followed by KD9GY, who made fewer contacts (also phone-only) but found more multipliers.

A total of TWENTY-EIGHT Portable stations activated a total of 56 counties (with some duplicates). W9AIU/P was the top-scoring portable (and 4-county-portable) from deep southern Illinois and found an outstanding 86 counties to work. N9FN/P put on the usual strong effort and had more phone QSOs than W9AIU/P, but lagged significantly in CW QSOs and multipliers snagged. NR9Q/P from west-central IL led the 3-county category with a great phone-only operation. W9W/P easily topped the 2-county group, and KF9D took his operation off the road to a single-county portable operation to lead that category handily. We recognize the difficulty in putting on a successful portable operation and applaud all of those who pulled it off this year! Several counties would have been difficult or impossible to work without this group of operators taking to the field.

K0PC made his ILQP debut and topped the Mobile category list of four entrants. We sure appreciate his coming in from out of state and traveling through 19 counties! A distant second found N9JF and KB9CES (driver) coping with antenna problems. (He always has Murphy as a second op....or maybe he's just disorganized?).

KM9O entered the Rover category and wound up with a significant lead when the smoke cleared. Dennis's great signal attracted the attention of 69 counties, far more than any other mobile or rover entrant. KD0NEO took second and operated from an impressive 16 counties, including some otherwise not covered. The six Rovers and four Mobiles put a good portion of the state on the air.

Out of State:

High Power: There was a significant tussle for top spot in this category with only 2500 points separating the top four scores. In the end, John, K4BAI, put in enough effort to lead the group, though his CW total was just under that of 4th-place WA3HAE and his multiplier total (77) was under that of 2nd-place KJ9C. Mel was a "chaser" this year instead of an IL Rover and put in a great effort from IN. Bill, N4IQ, perhaps inspired by the new QSO Party Reflector group, was sandwiched between KJ9C and WA3HAE for 3rd place. The top five (including K0JPL) were from five different states, demonstrating there was no clear-cut geographical advantage. However, one has to go all the way to #17 W6OUL to find a station west of Minnesota in the listings.

Low Power: More than any other, this was the popular entry category with 91 contestants. K4FT came out on top, finding an outstanding 87 counties to work and beating the top high-power score by about 500 points. W9PA and W8TM were also in the top 10 out-of-state regardless of power level. In positions 7 and 8, N9CK and NW0M were separated by a single CW QSO (advantage NW0M) and multiplier (advantage N9CK). Every contact makes a difference!!

QRP entrants: Three non-IL and one IL stations braved the ether with 5 watts or less. WS2E won the out-of-state race. AC9OH was the sole IL entrant in QRP.

DX: This was not an easy weekend to work IL from across the pond! Thanks to those who tried and who submitted logs. Of those, DL3DXX, DK2OY and DL3GA made the most noise. It was also good to hear from UA3AGW in several counties. There were other DX stations found in several logs who did not submit a log of their own.

Edibles: A total of 12 out of state entrants were awarded "Illinois Edibles" (including a couple of "horseshoes and hand grenades qualifiers") based upon the number of QSOs and/or number of counties worked.

Awards:

Plaques are awarded in twelve categories. Some of them are sponsored by WIARC and others by different individuals or groups. A few are "available" for sponsorship: IL Fixed Low Power, IL Portable, and Total Mixed QSOs. Plaques already sponsored include IL Fixed High Power (Society of Midwest Contesters), Non-IL High Power (NA9Q/NB9Q), Non-IL Low Power (N9JF/KB9CES), 2-County Portable (N9FN), IL Mobile (PRIME ARA), IL Rover (PRIME ARA), Total QSOs CW-only (KN9T), and Total QSOs Phone-only (AB9DU). We wish to thank those who are sponsoring plaques for their support! Suggestions are considered from those who might wish to sponsor additional awards.

Records....

The all-time records for various categories have been updated as of the 2016 event. Looking at the great efforts put forth but the relative lack of record scores, it becomes obvious how much we miss sunspots! It's tough to generate constant activity when there is almost no propagation on 15 or 10 meters. You can't move stations if you can't hear them. When 20 fades in late afternoon and 80 becomes the big producer after 2200Z...well, all you can do is play the hand you're dealt.

There were some records set and some others challenged in 2016. A few categories are a bit difficult to track with significance as our record-keeping has changed a bit. The calculation of multipliers changed in 1996 and again in 2007. High and low power categories have recently been added.

Here were the additional high scores recognized in 2016:

K9CT narrowly missed beating his 2015 for IL fixed. His becomes the top “IL Fixed HP” score. Likewise, K9PG becomes the top “IL Fixed LP” scorer though he didn’t quite match his 2015 score. W9AIU/P reset the bar for IL Portable. The IL Rover and IL Mobile lists remained unchallenged, as did those for QRP entrants and the Non-IL group. It was a tough year to be a DX station; none of those entries made the all-time Top Ten. There was, however, a new entry on the list as UA3AGW became the first-ever entrant from that DXCC entity.

Added to the chart this year is a category for “Counties Worked IL Stations”. The history for this category is not real easy to track; scores included go back only through 2013, with K9CT and K9PG holding the top 5 spots.

In the records for counties, states and other entities, there were a few records:

N9PPJ/P submitted the first-ever entry from BOND. AC9FL took over the top spot for CASS. NV9S/P filled the vacancy for EDWA and set new highs for RICH and WABA. W9W/P set the bar high for FRNK and JEFF. W9AIU/P moved up the ladder in GALL, HAML and WHIT. KF9D/P replaced a long-standing record in JODA. K9NR replaced his own high score for KANK, and K3WA did the same for WOOD. NR9Q/P set new highs for HNR/MRCR/WARR.

With the exception of UA3AGW’s entry, there were not many new high scores outside IL. Exceptions were K4FT, who beat his previous score for KY and N4IQ who did the same to his previous record for SC.

If you want to “see your call in lights”, there are still some entities with *NO* ILQP scores of record. In-state, there has never been a fixed or portable entry from ALEX or CUMB. There are a few records begging to be broken, notably MORG, SCOT and SHEL. How about a MORG/SCOT Portable in 2017? Outside the state, there has never been an entry from KH6 nor from the provinces/entities of VO1, VO2, VE4, NB, VY0, nor VY1. The high score from KL7 is....2.... North American top scores from AB and ID are under a thousand points. Of course, if your travel tastes are more exotic, we still need entries from C6, ZF, KP4, KP2, XE, and from about 300 other DXCC entities!

Club Competition

PRIME ARA put a tremendous group of portable operations into the field; and with a total of 16 entrants, topped the list with over a million accumulated points. They narrowly missed taking over the top of the historical list. Kankakee ARS was a distant second, followed fairly closely, in both score and number of entrants, by host WIARC.

Society of Midwest Contesters, while a great contest club, is not an “Illinois Local Club” by ILQP rules. SMC members turned in a total of about a million and a half points.

It is always gratifying to hear the “familiar calls” in the pileups when ILQP kicks off at 1700Z. It wouldn’t be ILQP without those guys and gals who show up in our logs every year. At the same time, we had many first-time entrants in 2016, some of whom scored

very well and won certificates or other awards. Every year, we get a few entries with the note, "My first contest entry ever!" Those are especially nice to see. We try to improve the party each year and are willing to listen to any reasonable suggestion regarding rules, implementation, cheer-leading, organization, scoring or reporting. Please send such comments to n9jf@arrl.net and they will make it to the committee.

Plans are already underway for the 2017 ILQP and even for 2018, when we hope to do something special to recognize the Illinois Bicentennial. Put together your portable, rover or mobile stations and prepare to make lots of noise on the air on October 22, 2017!