



ARRL Midwest Division Newsletter November 2020



SEK Weak Signal Net

by Rick Tucker, W0RT
Parsons, KS EM27

I have been active on the weak signal modes on the VHF/UHF bands since the late 1970's along with my main interest of DXing and rag chewing with CW on the "low bands." The thing I have enjoyed the most on the VHF bands is the fellowship among hams and the challenge of reaching out to greater distances on all the bands. I am currently operational on 6, 2, 222, 432 and 1296 and each have their own traits, requirements and challenges.

Other than six meters during the sporadic E season, two meter SSB has by far been the most popular band. Until recent years, there has been enough activity on two meter SSB that one could almost always find a QSO or two from my southeast Kansas location. CQ's were often answered. More hams watched for openings and the excitement that comes with them.

I always monitor 144.200 (the calling frequency) when in the shack. Sad to say in recent years the band has been silent much of the time for many of us. This may not be so around metropolitan areas but it has been here. I attribute this to the graying of our vhf community, loss of many experienced operators with "big" stations and the rise in popularity of digital modes. (not a bad thing)

For that reason, I decided to start a net on two meter SSB to get a feel for the number of hams in the 4 state area (KS, OK, AR, MO) active on two SSB. I decided to keep it low profile and let it expand by word of mouth. There was a small group of operators in the Springfield, MO area who were meeting on 144.250 several evenings a week and I discussed it with them. All thought it was a good idea.



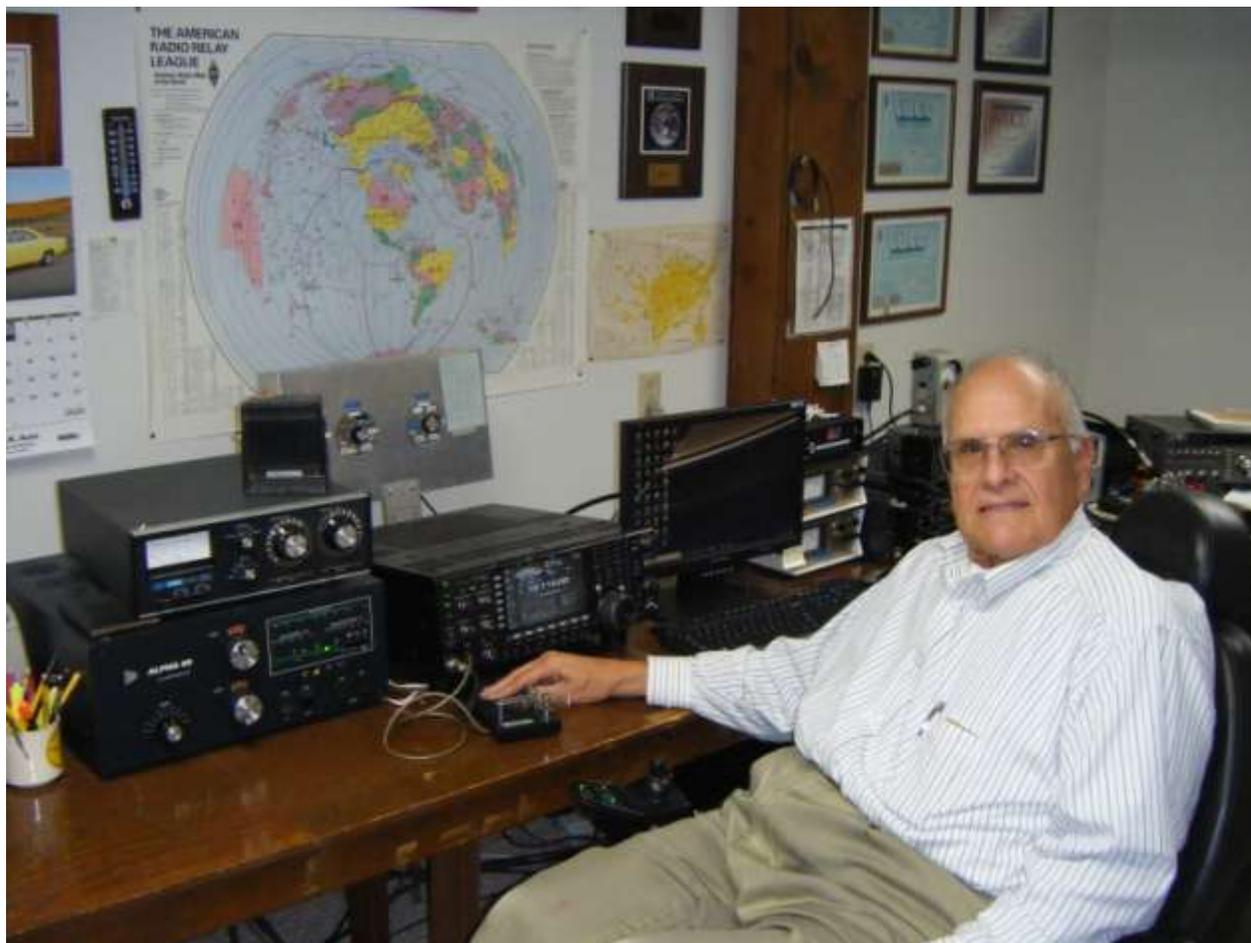
Thus the **South East Kansas (SEK) Weak Signal Net** was born on February 19, 2020 on 144.250 at 8:00PM CDT with W0RT as net control and 12 check-ins. Since that time, we have met most Tuesday nights and now average 25 or so check-ins. There have been 67 different stations check in since the first night with word of mouth “advertising.” I know many operators who have not chosen to check in. We have regular check-ins from KS, MO, OK, AR, TX and LA. Rod, K0DAS has checked in from IA. To say that I have been pleasantly surprised is an understatement.

Several stations within 75 miles of me check in with Big Wheels or verticals. One station in Pittsburg, KS checks in with low power and a small beam indoors in his apartment. As most know, horizontal polarization is the convention for weak signal work on the VHF bands. It is encouraged. The most important thing is to install a horizontal antenna, preferably a yagi as high and in the clear as you can get it and use the best feed line you can afford due to increasing coax losses at VHF. A receive preamp often helps as does a small PA boosting one to 100W + but, depending on your distance from net control is not essential. Main thing—give it a try.

If interested in getting on two meter SSB, talk to experienced VHF’ers about rig, antenna, power, etc. It doesn’t have to cost an arm and a leg to give it a try. There is lots of used stuff floating around out there. Lots of rigs now have the two meter band built in. Watch for tropo openings when the band stretches out. Get on during the ARRL VHF contest weekends. (June, September, and January). They are mainly activity weekends when a lot more operators than usual get on the air—some trying for a big score but many just wanting to make some contacts. If you do, turn in a log to show continued support for the event.

You are welcome to check in to the SEK Weak Signal Net on Tuesday nights at 8:00PM on 144.250. I start on the east side of south and work my way around to the east, north, west and end up on the west side of south. Some months I have to miss the second Tuesday net due to a work obligation (city council meeting in nearby town).

Rick Tucker
W0RT



Rick Tucker, W0RT, HF Operating Position – on the Left !



Rick Tucker, W0RT, VHF Operating Position – on the Right !

Radios for FIFI

By Rod Blocksome, K0DAS (Written in April 28, 2012)

What? A two meter HT for someone's pet poodle? No, Sir – FIFI is the only flying B-29 (in 2012), is owned by the Commemorative Air Force (CAF), and until recently only carried a few empty "shells" of the original radio equipment. But this all changed over the past few months and FIFI now carries an authentic, fully functional, Radio Operator's position thanks to a bunch of Hams in the Rockwell Collins Amateur Radio Clubs in Cedar Rapids, IA and Richardson, TX.

It all started back in 2004, when the Cedar Rapids club created a working mock-up of the B-29 radio position for the local History Center. Lawrence Robinson, KC0ODK, was the "spark plug" behind the project. We used a photograph taken during WWII and published in a Collins Company Magazine called "The Collins Column". The Collins AN/ART-13 Auto-Tune Transmitter figured prominently as all B-29's carried it for long range liaison.



WW II B-29 Radio Operator



Clyde Hussey, B-29 Radio Operator Veteran (taken in 2005)

In the course of the project, we met many fantastic people – including veteran WWII B-29 radio operators and our own Jules Yoder, KW0Y, who maintained ART-13's during the Berlin Airlift - all who contributed to the project. The exhibit ran for a full year and then was dismantled and the equipment put in storage where it languished until 2007 when it was reassembled and put on the air to support a rally for the Boeing KC-10 tanker replacement program.



Steve, WA6GFK, Lawrence, KC0ODK, and Jules, KW0Y at the Tanker Rally



After the tanker rally, it was returned to storage until the fall of 2011 when we got the idea of offering it to the CAF. The CAF welcomed us with open arms and we quickly learned that FIFI was based in the old Collins Hangar at the Addison, Texas airport. “Spark Plug” Robinson quickly “ignited” hams in the Richardson Rockwell Collins Plant and a new B-29 Radio Position Restoration Project was born practically over-night.

The Cedar Rapids team went into radio restoration mode while the Richardson folks became the aircraft integration and installation team. The goal being to restore the radio operator’s position on FIFI as close as possible to original and have it all operational on the ham bands. It was quickly discovered that FIFI did not have the original HF wire antennas so professional aircraft antenna engineers joined the team to provide them.

Operational spares of all the equipment were needed. A short article in the magazine “Electric Radio” soon brought donations of equipment from all over the country.

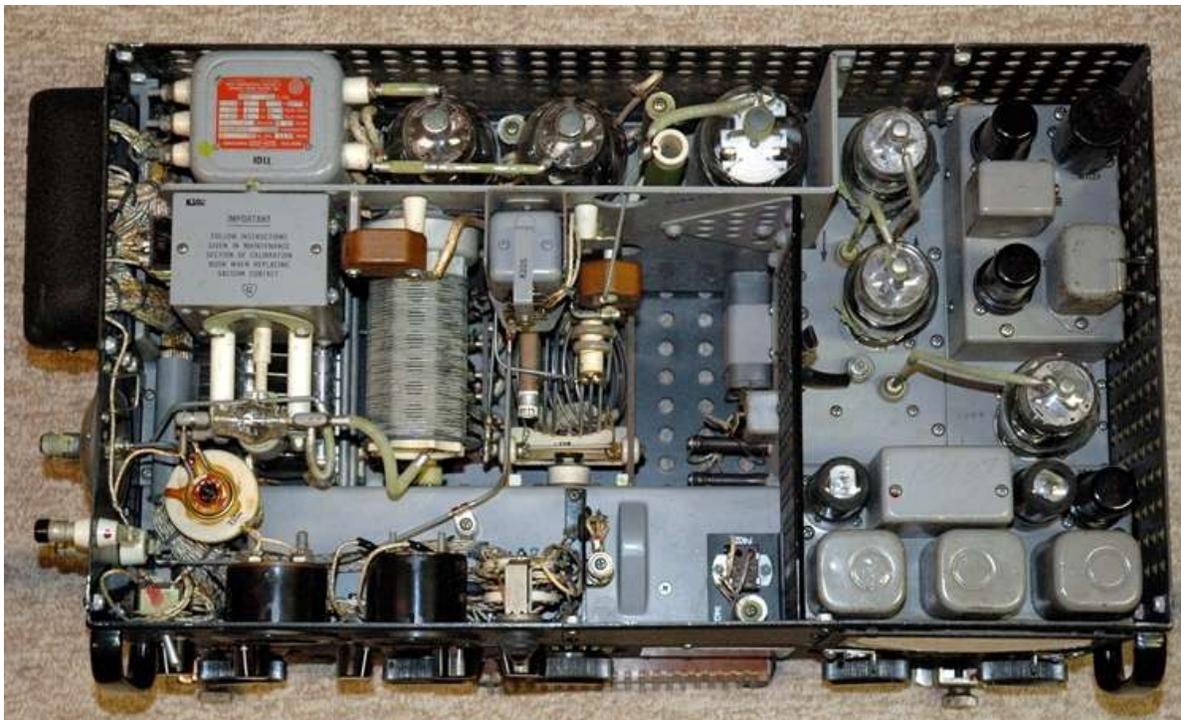
FIFI is an educational experience for young and old alike. It regularly tours the country and now if you can’t travel to see it, perhaps you can at least work it on the air.



Part of the FIFI Radio Restoration Crew (L to R): Bryan McCoy, KA0YSQ; Rod Blocksome, K0DAS; Paul Veenstra, KC0TEG; Ross Terry, K5SRT; Bob Kirby, K3NT; Loney Duncan, W0GZV



A Pristine AN/ART-13 (actually the Navy version called an ATC)



Interior of the Collins AN/ART-13 Transmitter



Restored BC-348-Q Receiver



Interior of the BC-348-Q Receiver



W0HXS – Larry Woodworth Presented With Prestigious Award

by Randy Schulze - KDØHKD

President Mo-Kan Regional Council of Amateur Radio Organizations

As part of the Mo-Kan Regional Council's on-going mission to recognize the outstanding work of Hams from the Kansas City Bi-State Region, the Mo-Kan Council's Awards Committee has presented the 2020 Silver Eagle Award to W0HXS – Larry Woodworth of Olathe Kansas!

The award citation reads: "For his extensive effort in his almost 20 years of service at the Ensor museum. During his tenure Larry was responsible for getting the museum listed on the national register of historic places. He was instrumental in ensuring that the Ensor Park and Museum would continue operation by engaging the city of Olathe to manage the site. Larry has passionately and ably communicated the history and contributions of the Ensor family to the amateur radio community and to the public. In Larry's own words "You have to see it to believe it!"

The award consists of a handsome, framed certificate and a custom made trophy which has an Astatic D-104 Silver Eagle Microphone incorporated into the trophy.

This year's award presentation was done virtually. You can view a recording of the presentation on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/ia51e_9paUQ>

Please join all of us in extending our congratulations to W0HXS – Larry Woodworth!



Citizen Corps Council of the Year Award 2020 For the State of Nebraska

On September 28, 2020, The Dodge County Citizen Corps Council, based in Fremont, received the Citizen Corps Council of the Year award, for its work responding to severe flooding in the Fremont area in 2019, and its volunteer work during the COVID-19 pandemic. This award was presented to the Council during a Zoom meeting on the 29th with the Lt. Governor Foley and Volunteer groups from around the State.

The Dodge County Citizens Corps Council is made of groups who respond to the needs of our community and county during times of emergencies. In addition, this group leads training and education of various groups in our area to help them prepare for disasters.

Groups who are members of the council include:

- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD)
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)
- REACT
- Civil Air Patrol (CAP)

Steve Narans, WB0VNF and is our Dodge County Emergency Coordinator, is currently our representative on this team and is following the leadership that was in place from Dave Theophilus, W0NRW who served on this group in previous years. The Dodge County Citizen Corps Council is lead by Tom Smith, our Emergency Management Director for Dodge County.



Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES)

Pioneer Amateur Radio Club – Fremont, Nebraska

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes



Here and There

by Rod Blocksome, K0DAS

Congratulations to **Cecil Higgins, AC0HA** on his election to a new 2-year term as Missouri Section Manager beginning January 1, 2021.

Also –

Congratulations to **Matt Anderson, KA0BOJ** on his election to a new 2-year term as Nebraska Section Manager beginning January 1, 2021.

Both are the current section managers and both ran unopposed in the recent elections in their sections.

As I announced my retirement from the ARRL board last summer, Vice-Director Art Zygielbaum, K0AIZ ran for Midwest Director, was unopposed, and therefore declared elected. Art will be your new director as of January 1, 2021 and I hope you will support his work as he tackles the many changes and issues confronting ARRL today.

There are two candidates for the Midwest Division Vice-Director position – Dave Proper, K2DP and Lloyd Colston, KC5FM. Your mail-in ballots are due in NLT Noon, Eastern Time, November 20th.

Reminder: The Midwest Division has purchased a subscription to Zoom for use by ARRL clubs in the division to conduct virtual meetings and other related activities. Contact Director-Elect Art Zygielbaum, K0AIZ to schedule your use of the account. Please plan ahead, as we only have the one account at this time.

The ARRL Learning Network: Did you know about the ARRL's new learning network? There is a wealth of good solid information for the newer ham in the form of webinars. Past webinars are recorded and also available.

Check out www.arrl.org/arrl-learning-network



We at the Mid-MO Amateur Radio Club take Covid-19 seriously.

73, Kent, K9ZTV

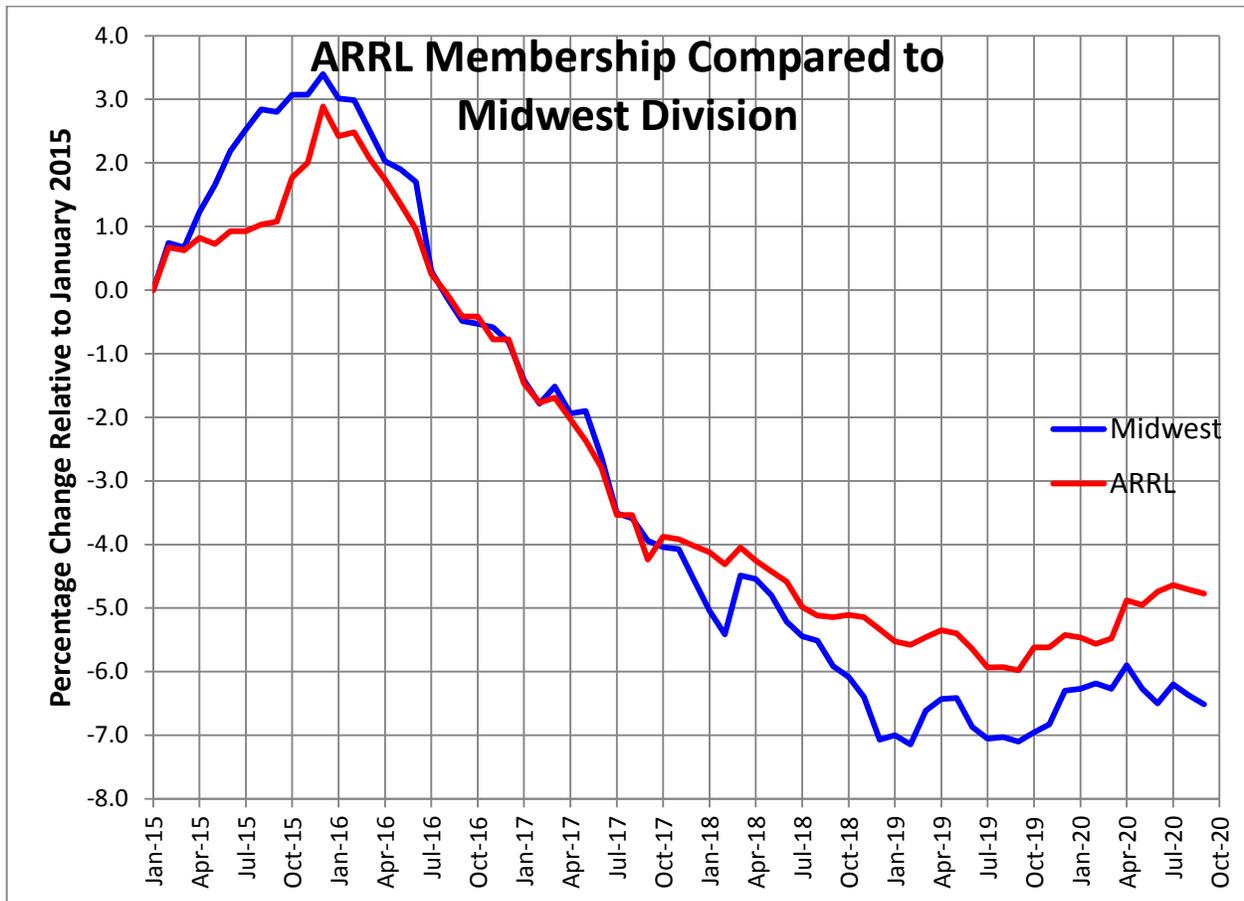


ARRL Membership Statistics Update

by Rod Blocksome, K0DAS

During the month of September, total ARRL membership decreased 0.1% while the Midwest Division decreased by 0.2%. Contrast this with membership change over that last year where total ARRL membership increased by 1.3% while the Midwest Division increased by only 0.6%.

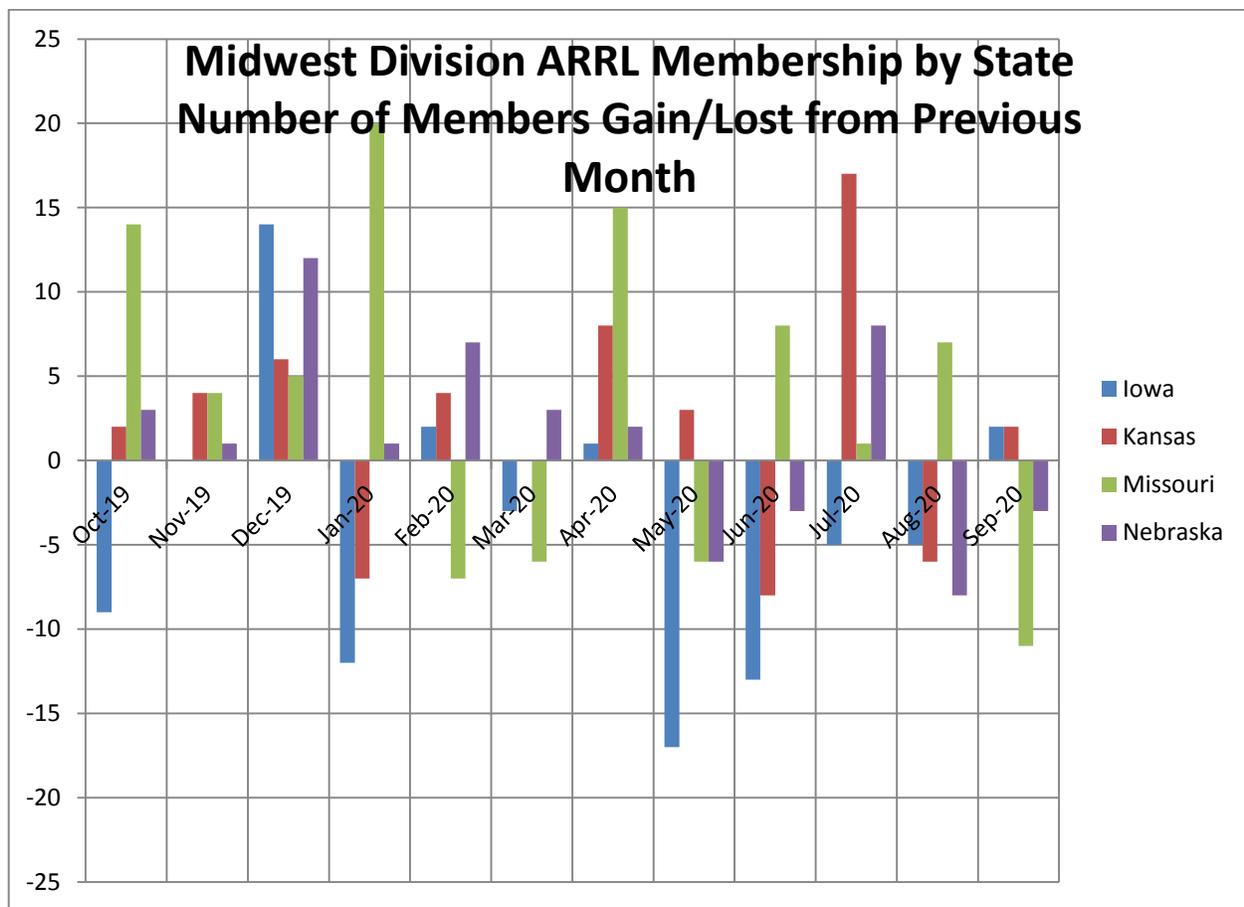
Below are the charts updated as of **September 30, 2020**. Let's get innovative and move this graph upwards. Invite a non-member ham to consider joining ARRL and explain to him/her the benefits of membership. ARRL is so much more than just a subscription to QST. Invite them to browse the ARRL web site at www.arrl.org





Included this month is a chart showing **section membership change from the previous month**. As you can see, the results are a “mixed bag” but in general we are seeing a slow trend over time of a decline in ARRL memberships. The COVID-19 restrictions and lack of hamfests have no doubt affected memberships.

Let’s all work hard to bring more hams into ARRL membership. It won’t be easy with all the hamfests canceled, but hopefully this will change in the future.





Midwest Division ARRL Hamfests & Conventions

11/01/2020 - 49th Davenport Radio Amateur Club Hamfest

Location: Davenport , IA

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: W0BXR Club

Website: <http://www.arcsupport.com/drac/>

11/21/2020 - Northeast Nebraska Hamfest – CANCELLED

01/23/2021 - Winterfest, ARRL Midwest Division Convention – CANCELLED

04/17/2021 - ARARAT HAMBASH 2021

Location: Kansas City, MO

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: ARARAT RADIO CLUB

Website: <http://www.hambash.com>

06/05/2021 - Northland Radio Rendezvous

Location: Mason City, IA

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Northland Amateur Communications Group

Website: <http://www.ke0pou.com/nrr>



Midwest Division Special Event Stations

01/01/2020 | Iowa State Parks On-the-Air Centennial Celebration

Jan 1-Dec 31, 0000Z-2359Z, various, Dubuque, IA. Great River Amateur Radio Club. All bands, all frequencies, as available. Certificate & QSL. IASPOTA-2020, c/o Great River Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 1384, Dubuque, IA 52004. Members will operate with their own call signs from state parks throughout Iowa. Operating as time permits, mostly weekends. QSL for contact; certificate for 5 parks. See website for complete information.

11/06/2020 | 85th Anniversary of Amateur Radio in Sedalia/Pettis County Missouri

Nov 6-Nov 22, 1500Z-2359Z, WA0SDO, Sedalia, MO. Sedalia Pettis Amateur Radio Klub (SPARK). 80M 40M 20M 10M. Certificate. Paul Withers, 19449 Hwy H, Hughesville, MO 65334. The first three weekends in November we will be operating. A certificate will be available for download. wa0sdo.org

11/07/2020 | Honoring Veterans for Veterans Day

Nov 7, 1500Z-2200Z, W0FSB, Waterloo, IA. Five Sullivan Brothers Amateur Radio Club. 18.124 14.240 7.240. Certificate & QSL. Five Sullivan Brothers ARC, 3186 Brandon Diagonal Blvd, Brandon, IA 52210. For QSL card: Send card and #10 SASE; For Certificate & QSL: Send QSL, address label and 3 Forever stamps; For eQSL & Certificate: Send eQSL, then an email to w0fsb@outlook.com, requesting a .jpg file of the certificate that you can print yourself www.qrz.com/db/w0fsb

02/27/2021 | 17th Annual "Freeze Your Keys" Winter Operating Event

Feb 27, 1400Z-2200Z, W0EBB, Leavenworth, KS. Kickapoo QRP Amateur Radio Club. 14.058 7.035 14.325 7.240. QSL. Gary Auchard, 34058 167th Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048. SASE please for return QSL cards. w0mna74@gmail.com or www.qrz.com/db/w0ebb



ARRL CONTESTS – November & December

As Fall turns to Winter and we are 'bogged' down with avoiding the COVID-19, more time for operating on the air presents itself. If you've never considered yourself as a contester, there are several in the next few months that offer an opportunity to "give it a try".

Sweepstakes is unique in that the exchange is designed to sharpen an operator's skill at copying message formats under less than ideal conditions. Other than trying for a winning score, some groups compete among themselves for score, or in some cases, who can achieve a "clean sweep" first. And here is a new one to consider: who can work the most states in alphabetical order during the contest? There are all kinds of local contests-within-a-contest one can conjure up to have fun in these contests.

Here is what the ARRL Contest Menu offers for the next two months.

November 7 – 9: CW Sweepstakes

November 21 – 23: Phone Sweepstakes

November 28 – 29: EME Contest (50 to 1296 MHz)

December 4 – 6: 160 Meter Contest

December 12 – 13: 10 Meter Contest

December 20: Rookie Roundup - CW

Details on these contests may be found on www.arrl.org/contests

ARRL Midwest Division Leadership



Director: Rod Blocksome K0DAS

k0das@arrl.org 319-393-8022

Vice Director: Art Zygielbaum K0AIZ

k0aiz@arrl.org 402-421-0839

Iowa Section Manager: Lelia Garner, WA0UIG

Kansas Section Manager: Ron Cowan, KB0DTI

Missouri Section Manager: Cecil Higgins, AC0HA

Nebraska Section Manager: Matt Anderson, KA0BOJ

DX Advisory Committee: John Yodis, K2VV (MO)

Contest Advisory Committee: Glenn Johnson, W0GJ (IA)

Midwest Division Volunteer Counsel: Craig Long, K0CSL (IA)

Division Legislative Action Chair: Mike Edwards, WB9M (MO)

Legislative Action Coordinators: Nick Critelli, K0PCG (IA); Bruce Frahm, K0BJ (KS & NE); Mike Edwards, WB9M (MO).

Assistant Directors (Missouri): Paul Haefner K0JPL, Dave Propper K2DP, Kent Trimble K9ZTV, Roger Volk K0GOB, Cecil Higgins AC0HA, John Frederick N8GOU, Eric Zust W0TT, Randy Schulze KD0HKD, and Ron Lowrance, K4SX.

Assistant Directors (Kansas): Mike Albers K0FJ, Jim Andera K0NK, Bill Henderson K0VBU, Charlie Hett K0THN, Richard Johnson K0RCJ, Rick Tucker W0RT, and Jon Jones N0JK.

Assistant Directors (Iowa): Tim Busch N0CKR, C.W. Pantel K0IIR, and Jim Spencer W0SR

Assistant Directors (Nebraska): Matt Anderson KA0BOJ, Joe Eisenberg K0NEB, Allen Harpham WD0DXD, and Todd LeMense KK0DX.

Midwest Division Webmaster: Steve Schmitz W0SJS email: w0sjs@arrl.net

Midwest Division's website: <http://www.arrlmidwest.org/>