



ARC OVER



July 2024 Special Edition

Editors Note:

Do to the size of the “regular July 2024 Newsletter” Email wouldn’t let me send it as was thus we have this special edition.



June 15th 2024
Elburn Forest Preserve
Centennial Radio Event
W9CEQ

FRRL 100 Years -- Glimpses of FRRL Field Day History

Since Field Day 2024 was held this past weekend, it seems appropriate to share some of my memories of FRRL FD from many years ago. As I probably mentioned in previous history articles in the ArcOver, I first joined the FRRL in the fall of 1959 at age 15. This was shortly after moving to Aurora when I was a Junior at Aurora East HS. (I was first licensed at age 14, while a Freshman in high school, when living in Angola, IN (KN9MMS, Novice in May, and K9MMS, General in August of 1958).

The following reports of FRRL Field Days of many years ago come from using a combination of my memories (hopefully accurate) as well as from reviewing old issues of the ArcOver that I still have in my collection. Over several decades, I have been involved with FRRL Field Day activities multiple times as both chairman and band captain. For a very long time, the club call W9CEQ was used for FD. In more recent times, W9NE has been used as the primary call with W9CEQ being used for the GOTA station.

Computer logging did not become commonly used for FD until perhaps the early 1990s when the IBM PC and CT radio contest logging software became widely available and affordable. Prior to that, FD and contest logging was all done manually via paper log forms and dupe sheets. For CW, electronic keyers were not commonly used until perhaps around the late 1970s when integrated circuit technology was in early development stages. For extended hours of CW operation in Field Day or radio contesting, the use of keyers was certainly less fatiguing than using semi-automatic keys, a.k.a. "bugs." This advantage did not commonly occur until perhaps around the late 1970s to early 1980s. Perhaps you can sense my bias towards operating CW. That has been my favorite mode in ham radio for 66 years now.

FRRL FIELD DAY 1960

My first participation in an FRRL Field Day was in 1960. I do not recall the exact location used for FD that year. My copy of the July 5, 1960 issue of the ArcOver includes a FD report. Some of the highlights of that article are given below.

On Friday night, many people turned out to help set up. There was a shortage of tents, and one operator had to operate from a pup tent. Later, they lifted the tent from over him and he operated in the open surroundings. Six meters was open that year, but equipment limitations hampered the score. Bob Roehrig K9EUI had been up 48 hours and complained about being tired. Bob Roehrig K9EUI and Benny Benson W9CZA got into an argument and Bob locked Benny in the trunk of his car. The electric coffee pot slowed down the generator for a little while when first turned on. Thor Power Tool Company loaned two 3 kW generators to the club. I am not certain, but I think that Bob Roehrig K9EUI was FD chairman in 1960.

The station summary:	OPERATORS	BAND	QSOs
	K9LUW / K9GHX	15	125
	K9MMS	20 CW	97
	KN9WEY	80 CW	79 (Novice, crystal control)
	K9WFY	2 FM	42
	K9CEM	10	39
	W9KHI	40 CW	25

Logging was all done manually on paper, and CW was via straight key (80m for Novice-class KN9WEY) and Vibroplex "bugs" on 20 and 40m. Sadly, to my knowledge, many of those who were at this Field Day are now Silent Keys: K9EUI Bob Roehrig, W9CZA Benny Benson, K9LUW (Later K9LU) Lou Petkus, KN9WEY (K9WEY around 1961) Danny Lee, and W9KHI Carl Gemmer.

FRRL FIELD DAY 1961

The following article appeared in the Aurora Beacon News just prior to FD 1961. I typed it below exactly as it was printed in the Beacon. I still have the newspaper clipping of the article that the Beacon mailed to me on July 8, 1961 (now well-faded with age). The clipping was sent to me since I authored the article and submitted it to the newspaper prior to Field Day that year. (Perhaps the writing could have been improved, but it was done by a 17 year old, just-graduated, HS senior.

Radio 'Hams' Hold 1961 Field Day

Local amateur radio operators took over Bliss' Woods during the past weekend to observe their annual American Radio Relay League "Field Day 1961"

On this annual event, the amateur radio operators "take to the field" their radio stations and emergency communications equipment.

Experience gained from a field day aids the amateurs in preparing to help the community in the event of a disaster. If all power and means of communication were stopped, the hams could still operate with the aid of portable generators.

Field Day is designed secondly as a contest activity in which hams set up their radio stations at the field day location and use them as a combined unit. The stations communicate among themselves and with other club stations throughout the U.S., its territorial possessions, and Canada. The contest contacts are short, allowing the stations [to] exchange signal reports and locations.

During the contest, about 15 members of the Fox River Radio League operated 8 radio stations on 11 different frequency bands.

Emergency power, 115 volts a.c. at 60 cycles, was supplied to the local radio stations of FRRL by two three-kilowatt, gasoline driven generators loaned to the club by Thor Power Tool Co. All radio stations in the local club unit of the Fox River Radio League used the club's call letters W9CEQ.

The chairman of field day was Gary D. Hornbuckle, K9MMS, and the president of the Fox River Radio League is Erland L. Olson, W9NE.

FRRL FIELD DAY 1964

For FD 1964, the Beacon News published a multi-page feature article about the FRRL and Field Day in its weekly insert "Your Fox Valley Saturday Magazine" dated Saturday June 27, 1964. This edition included a cover photo and four other large photos of FRRL members. This feature article was entitled "The Fox River Radio League has a Two-Day Field Day." The magazine cover, identification of people in the cover photo, the main article (appeared on separate pages), and one of the inside photos are shown on the following pages. I copied these with my phone and then edited them. I hope that they are adequately readable when placed in the ArcOver. Note that K9LUW and K9MMS both had a little bit of hair on top of their heads way back then. My trusty pocket protector, filled with pens and a mechanical pencil, can also be seen. HI HI



Your **Fox Valley**

Saturday

Date:
Saturday,
June 27,
1964

Magazine ▲▲

SUPPLEMENT of **AURORA BEACON-NEWS**



Radio League Has 2-Day Field Day

The Cover

Members of Fox River Radio League erecting portable tower to be used to support rotary antenna for field day exercises. Man on tower with antenna is S. L. Gilliard. Others helping (left to right): Ray L. Sherwood, FRRL president; Dick Korfron, Ed Hollis, A. M. Tillis, Lou Petkus, Rich Stillson and Gary Hornbuckle. (Beacon-News Photo)

The Fox River Radio League will participate in a field day today and Sunday.

Amateur radio operators throughout the world will take to the outdoors during the event. The operators with their radio equipment will be without the aid of commercial electric current. They will attempt to contact fellow operators around the world.

Field day is designed to teach the amateur operator how to operate under emergency conditions and is one of the many projects in which the radio league, an organization of 110 local amateurs, participates.

This year the members of the league have set up six amateur stations in the country east of

Aurora. Temporary shelters and equipment will operate from gasoline generators which have been lent to the club by Thor Manufacturing Co.

The stations and generators along with the radio equipment will be operated continuously until 4 p.m. Sunday.

The local club will be in competition with other clubs of similar size throughout the country. They will attempt to contact the greatest number of stations in the United States and foreign countries as a competitive event.

The real test is the ability of the operators to handle a large volume of communications continuously for a 24-hour period under emergency conditions.

This training would be extremely valuable in time of emergency when commercial communications are disrupted.

While field day is one of the more spectacular of the amateurs' exercises, the league participates throughout the year in various programs designed to further the art of radio communications. In the past year the club has brought to Aurora guest speakers and numerous programs helping the members keep abreast of the latest communication techniques.

The club has sponsored amateur radio classes in connection with the East High School adult education program. During the spring term, 40 persons

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Radio League Has Two-Day Field Day

Cont. from Pg. 3

were enrolled, the students learned the necessary radio regulations, elementary theory and Morse code to pass Federal Communications Commission license examinations.

At the conclusion of the classes, 27 examinations were given by Ray Sherwood, president of the league under the direction of the FCC.

Aurora area amateurs are using the very high frequencies in which considerable experimental work is still being done.

While the activities engaged in by the league are varied, they are classified generally as follows: emergency communication preparedness, rag chewing, or talking with other amateurs throughout the world in foreign countries in which regularly scheduled contacts are maintained.

Amateurs talk about the technical aspects or their equipment and compare notes on performance and characteristics. An unwritten rule among radio amateurs is to raise no question with amateur operators in foreign countries which may tend to embarrass the other operator should his government agency be listening.

Therefore, seldom are politics discussed with radio amateurs in Russia, however, politics would be discussed with other countries if it caused no embarrassment.

Amateur radio is an especially interesting hobby to blind people, cripples and other shut-ins who are limited by their handicaps. By the miracle of amateur radio they can now pass the time of day with friends over the entire globe.

Amateur radio is a unique hobby in that it was established by an international treaty. It is administered in this country by the Communications Act of 1934 under the FCC.

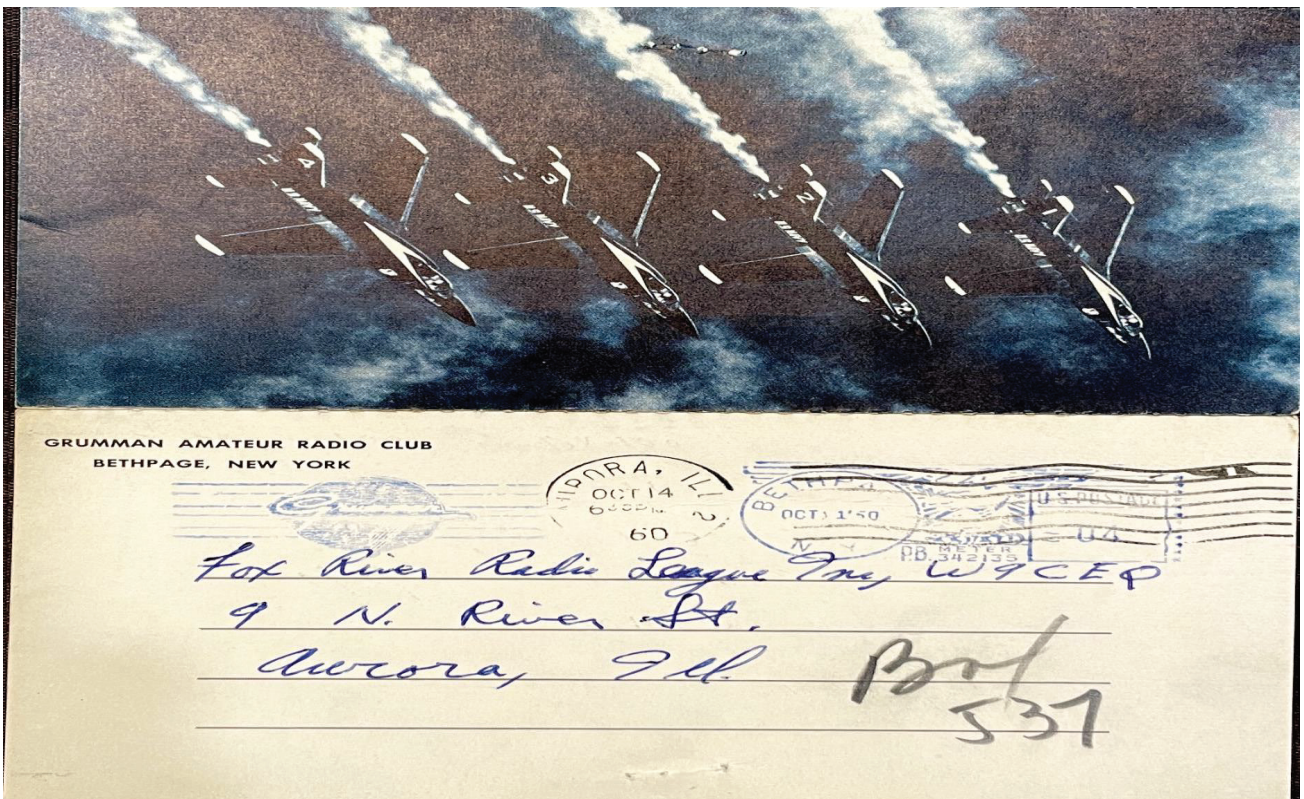
Persons interested in amateur radio are welcome to attend the local club meetings. They are held on the third Thursday of each month in the Starlight Room of Improvement Federal Savings and Loan during the summer. During winter, the meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month.

Club officers are Ray L. Sherwood, president (W9DRY); Rich Stillson, first vice president; Lou Petkus, activities vice president (K9LUW); A. M. Tillis, secretary, and S. L. Gilland, treasurer.

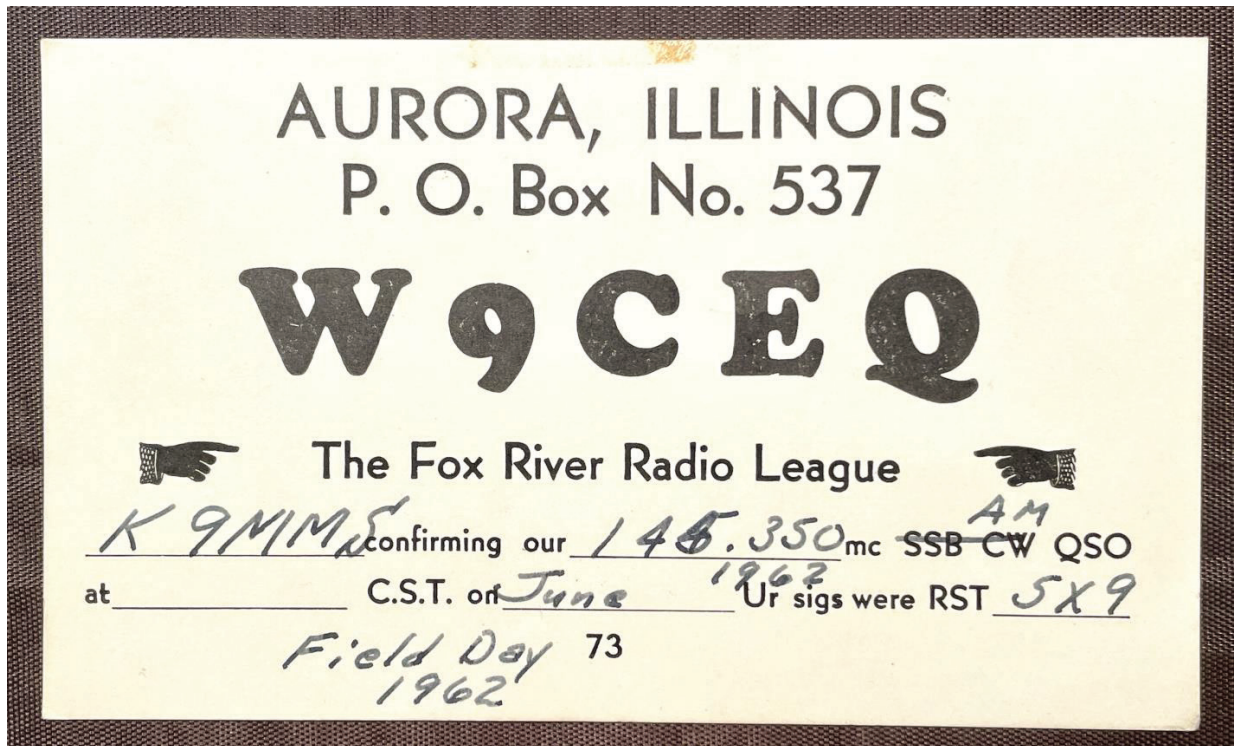


Equipment for field day exercises is housed temporarily in a tent. Operators are Gary Hornbuckle and Lou Petkus while Chuck Solomons makes out the FCC log. (Beacon-News Photo)

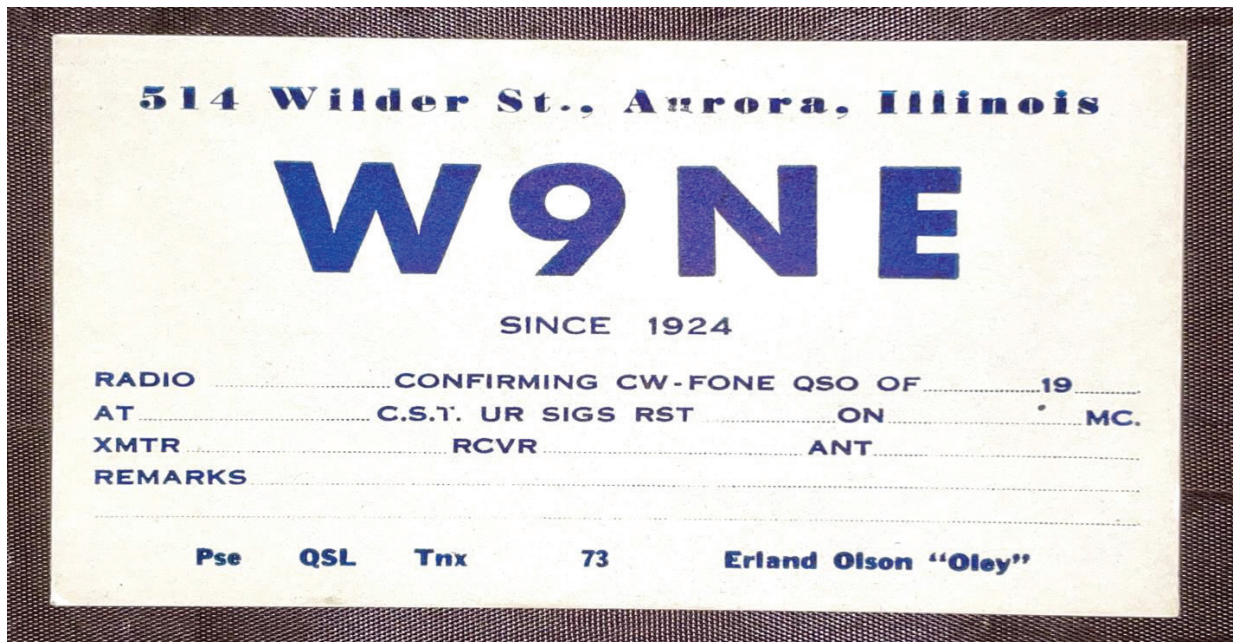
A QSL card sent to FRRL for a FD 1960 QSO between W9CEQ and Grumman Avionics.
 Note the address for the FRRL in 1960 was 9 North River Street in Aurora.
 (From the K9MMS collection)



A couple other noteworthy old QSL cards from the K9MMS collection:



From Field Day 1962



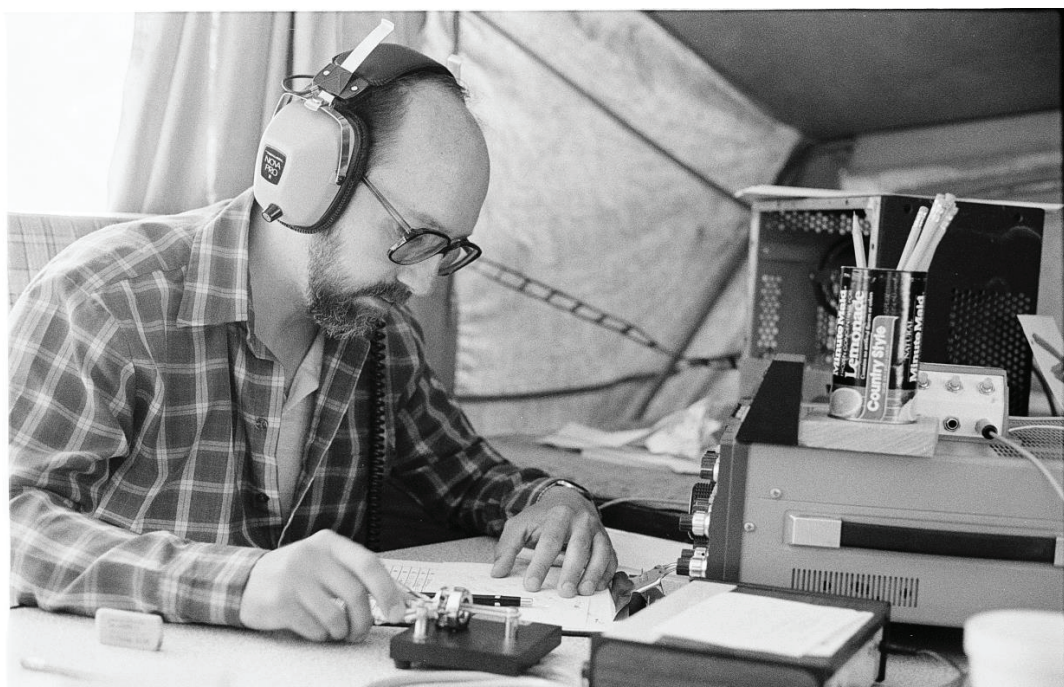
And of course, the QSL card of one of the founders of the FRRL.

FRRL FIELD DAY 1988 -- First Year for FRRL at Mooseheart

**The two 40 meter CW Operators – In the age before PC logging.
(Note the hair that was evident in the FD 1964 photos is missing from both ops now.)**



K9LUW Lou Running Stations with K9MMS Gary assisting with logging.



**K9MMS Running Stations and Logging Solo
(I don't know why there is a Pink Pearl eraser next to my arm. I don't recall using it. HI)**

**FRRL FIELD DAY 2010 -- At the Aurora Police FOP Lodge in Sugar Grove
(If I recall correctly, this location was previously Boy Scout Camp KaDeKa.)**

**Once again, some of the usual CW operators for Field Day (K9LUW and K9MMS).
This year it was not only 40 CW for these old timers, but two separate stations and
bands. Note the ICE switchable, 6-band, bandpass filter (part of MMS gear) on top of the
radio in front of Lou. The radio used by Gary had a 5-band, switchable BP filter made by
Lou using an article in QST circa 1994. Lou and Gary operated together as multi-op
entries in many radio contests from about 1993 to 2004.**

Note that now PC logging and CW keyers are in use. Ah, progress since the old days!



Some of the FRRL FD locations (by no means a complete list):

Bliss' Woods, Sugar Grove 1961 to around 1963 (probably used several other years)

Karthiser's Woods, (Aurora area) 1966 & 1967 for sure (per June 1967 ArcOver)
Probably other years, but unknown.

Waa-KeeSha Park, Oswego 1987 (Per July 1987 ArcOver)

Mooseheart, Batavia 1988 to about 2002
(not sure about the last time, 2000 for sure, since I was FD chairman then)

Park on Jericho Road, Aurora Perhaps around 2004 to 2007 – not sure.
(We were asked to leave Mooseheart sometime after 2000)

Johnson's Mound, Elburn Perhaps a few times in the mid 1960s, 2008
Used several times over the years.

Aurora FOP Lodge, Sugar Grove 2010 (one year only)

Elburn Forest Preserve, Elburn Around 2011 for a few years

LeRoy Oaks Forest Preserve, St. Charles Perhaps about 2015--2024 - not sure of first year.

Some other Field Day items of interest:

FRRL Field Day Manual – the July 1989 ArcOver mentioned plans to compose a manual.
I have a copy of the Fox River Radio League Field Day Manual, VER 3/94/A

Some FRRL FD Scores of the past:

The August 1988 issue of the ArcOver included some statistics gathered by N9AKE Rod Peterson.
K9EUI Bob Roehrig was FD Chairman that year, and it was the first year at Mooseheart.

Rod also worked up this list of historical facts regarding the FRRL's field day efforts:

YEAR	QSO's	POINTS	PLACE
1977	1370	3538	28th
1979	954	3116	44th
1981	1656	5196	24th
1982	2541	7688	14th
1983	2265	6436	14th
1984	1911	5976	17th
1985	2369	6730	11th
1986	1504	4964	27th
1987	2256	6132	10th
1988	2871	9726	??

I could continue for quite a while writing about FRRL Field Days of yesteryear, as well as other experiences being part of the FRRL since 1959, but I must wrap up this set of glimpses of FRRL Field Days since 1960 to 2010. My attendance at FRRL Field Days has not been continuous over these many years, but I have had the privilege to enjoy many of the outings. I had not operated in an FRRL Field Day for many of the more recent years. K9LUW Lou Petkus, K9JE Jack Ekstrom, WA9TPQ Bill Erickson, and I worked together operating CW during FD for many years – mostly on 40 meters.

We also operated together in a lot of multi-operator CW contests in the 1990s. Sadly, now Lou, Jack, and Bill are Silent Keys. I greatly miss them and our shared ham radio times. It was good, and a lot of fun, to again operate at FRRL Field Day this year on 40 meters CW. I want to thank Kermit W9XA for inviting me to operate with him on 40 CW this year. Prior to FD, I had been mostly undecided about where or how I might participate in Field Day 2024.

73,
Gary . K9MMS

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[FRRL] Great event!

Eric Lorenz K9LGE <k0lge@emlorenz.com>

Sat 6/15/2024 7:13 PM

To:Members@FRRL.groups.io <Members@FRRL.groups.io>

THANK YOU to Gary K9MMS and those who worked so hard on putting together the Special operating event. While I was never able to find someone else operating W9CEQ today to work, I *did* operate W9CEQ and made 37 Q's in the space of a couple hours...so my antenna works down here! Unfortunately with about 90 mins to go, all of the sudden the noise floor picked up to S7/S9 at the least to at times 10 over S9 so I had to bag it. BUT, made Q's ALL over the country, so operating should be good here, just need to get a good system so setting up when I want to operate goes quick and easy. Log on the way soon Gary!

73,
Eric K0LGE

