

ARRL ILLINOIS SECTION

PIO NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Thanks to those who responded to the *Special Field Day Wrap-Up* ARRL Illinois Section PIO Network Newsletter issued on July 27.

Your comments, ideas and information about your club's activities are always welcome, so keep those messages coming!

First, some quick addendum/corrections from the Field Day Wrapup:

The **415 Amateur Radio Club** PIO Sam Haldiman's call sign next to the composite photo credit is KC9GPY, not KZX9ZY And on the contact list for the club, N9WH is the Club's call sign. So much for late night editing and proofing!

Also, hats off to **Lake County RACES PIO** Paul Van Zuyle, K6PVZ who though ailing, was able to get its Field Day listed on the two largest Lake County newspaper calendars. *"My colleagues here have well-established relationships with county staff and elected officials, so we did get those visits, too," writes Van Zuyle, "but the most satisfying outcome for me came from Dave Pritchard, W9QL, our GOTA station mentor who got at least five under-18 youth on the air. "* Nice work!

COMING UP FAST

August is turning out to be a busy month for some PIOs (myself included) and with fall approaching, I'm sure we'll all have more work to do as clubs get into the full meeting mode. There are at

least two events that provide some interesting public relations approaches. I'll take them up in order of date.

Next weekend, on Saturday, August 13, there's the four-club sponsored **West Central Illinois Hamfest** at the Macoupin County Fair Grounds, an event that will soon approach a decade as a joint activity. (The Macoupin County Amateur Radio Club held its first hamfest in 1998. It became a multi-club event in the early 2000s, planned and is now run by a committee composed of representatives of the Macoupin, Okaw Valley, Montgomery and Sangamon Valley clubs that two years ago embraced participation of a Springfield radio-controlled model airplane club. I've been doing the PR for this event for several years.

PR TIP: *Even though an event is in a community in one county, having multiple co-sponsors allows you to extend your promotion for it to the media in areas where the other organizations and their members are located. Now add in a cross-over hobby--like people who fly radio-controlled model planes (for which they may need an amateur radio license to use certain frequencies) or (as in the case of a previous WCI hamfest, an amateur radio link to a non-radio project (displaying a solar car built by students at the direction of their teacher, a licensed ham)--and you suddenly have a "family-fun event" hook that's sure to catch an editor's eye, maybe even a weekend television crew if they haven't a distance to drive.*

And while we're on the subject of hamfests, I wanted to make note of the **Hamfesters Amateur Radio Club's W9AA Hamfest** coming up this Sunday, August 7 in the air-conditioned Main Exhibition Hall at the Will County Fairgrounds, 710 South West Street in Peotone. Admission is \$10 at the door, children under 12 free. [Gates open at 6 a.m., the main building at 8 a.m.].

As you well know, hamfests are more than buying and selling radio equipment and catching up with old friends. A good program can be a draw and in this case, the Hamfesters have a terrific topic: ***Distracted Driving Laws and Amateur Radio***.

Attendees will be able to learn more about state laws--not only in Illinois, but in neighboring states, specifically Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Michigan--that impact on mobile amateur radio stations. The presentation, by Jim Hull, W9JGH and Ron Delpiere-Smith, KD9IPO, from the Chicago Suburban Radio Association, will also look at laws across the country and provide pointers on what to do, what to say, and what to have with you in the event you are pulled over for operating your amateur radio while driving. Presentations start at 10 a.m.

PR TIP: *Whether your club is putting on a Hamfest or other event alone, or joining with nearby clubs, as the PIO you need to get into the discussions early to see if there's any unusual angle you could use to promote it. (Think people, location, speaker, big prize, celebrity visit, etc. that you can use in the headline on your press release....or Family-Fun Event -- which I used for this year's WCI event) -- or Family-Friendly). Catching an editor's eye is half the battle).*

EXPAND YOUR PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

That's what members of the **Moultrie Amateur Radio Club** will be doing on Saturday, August 20 with a manned display at the popular Coles County Memorial Airport's "Wings Over Mattoon 2022," a public event that draws huge crowds to the air show, reports Club PIO **Shane Ramos, KD9RDO**. Clubs often overlook opportunities to be represented at community events and/or do not have the materials to display, a sign-up sheet or giveaways. It

won't be the case for Moultrie which has been gearing up for this event and started well in advance in thinking how it can draw visitors to its display (including in this case being a source of ice-cold bottled water on what is likely to be a hot summer's day)! There's free parking and free admission to the site at 432 Airport Road in Mattoon. Gates open at 11 a.m. Stop by and say hello! (Rain date is Sunday, August 21).

PR TIP: *As I suggested last month, PIOs should always have a handy supply of give-aways (like back issues of QST that members are willing to donate), brochures and general information handouts about your club for the taking both at meeting sites and external events. What coming events are there in your community (like science and STEM fairs, PTAs and civic group meetings, newcomer's clubs, AARP gatherings, shopping malls, business groups, municipal facilities) where your club might want to have a display, preferably manned (so that someone's there to answer questions)? And is your traveling set-up attractive? Do you have a club banner or table cloth? A club seal or sign that can go on a wall behind you? Club shirts? A sign-up sheet? (And for the PIO and officers, business cards)?*

Last but certainly not least, I want to share with you the existence of a brochure, ***A Parent's Guide to Amateur Radio*** written and copyrighted by **Dan Romanchik, KB6NU**, that I've found valuable and think you will too...provided he gives me permission to distribute it to you for your club's use. [I'm working on that].

Dan is Communications Manager for ARRL's Amateur Radio Digital Communications Committee that administers the sport of Amateur Radio Direction Finding in the United States for sanctioned events and International Amateur Radio Direction

Finding competitions. You may know the fast-growing sport by its more current branding, "Orienteering," a term that's become so popular that in June, ARRL unit officially changed the unit's name to "ARRL Amateur Radio Orienteering."

But if you haven't heard much about it here in the mid-west, there's reason. In the United States, most of the activity has been in the West and in a handful of Eastern states that have rugged terrains. The most competitive events are held in Europe and Asia.

The sport involves taking a map, a compass, and a direction-finding radio into the woods in a timed foot race. Competitors track down transmitting radio stations stashed among the trees as quickly as they can. The competitor finding the most transmitters in the least amount of time wins. There are categories for men and women of all ages, and youth too. A ham license is not required to participate (but it helps to be in good shape). You can read more about it on the ARRL website.

There have been some efforts in the past and at least one current attempt to engage amateur radio operators and clubs in radio orienteering events here in Illinois and elsewhere in the midwest but it's still a work in progress.

Romanchik, who got his first amateur radio license at the age of 16, is broad ranging in his interests in radio. Author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, he has served as an Assistant Section Manager for Training for the ARRL Michigan Section Training Manager and over the years, he helped thousands get their first amateur radio license or upgrade their licenses. You can catch his blog at kb6nu.com.

PR TIP: And when you do, be sure to read the piece on "ARRL Should Rethink the Gil Mug" that he described to me when we

chatted by phone last month. There's an important public relations lesson to be gained from it and it serves to underscore the need of all of us to be conscious of the communities we serve as we try to recruit as members and supporters of amateur radio.

REMINDER: if you haven't done so as yet, send me a detailed list of the media in your area and keep it current. I hope to be able to provide a detailed state list to any club PIO needing to promote an event beyond their usual coverage area...but your cooperation is needed to make that possible.

AND STAY CONNECTED

We're continuing to grow thanks to our Section Manager Thom Beebe's push to get all ARRL-affiliated clubs to realize the importance (and national requirement) that they have a Public Information Officer in their ranks. This newsletter is also distributed to select ARRL counterparts outside Illinois and to the ARRL Illinois Section Cabinet.

Our ability to spread information about amateur radio is vital to the future of our hobby and our ability to exchange and share our know-how, ideas and more will help all of us as PIOs and our clubs, grow.

Need to reach me? Here's the info:

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