2023-06-20 Hamlet Net - Field Day - Operating Tips and Logging

Announcements:

- Test Session Info
  - Next VE session is this Saturday, June 24th in the Clover Building at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, and starts at 10am. It is an ARRL VEC exam session, so there will be a $15 fee to take the test. For more info, see the Licensing/Testing page on the club web site, https://w0eno.org/, under the Education menu.

- Chuck is putting together a special event to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the Peak-to-Peak highway involving multiple area radio clubs on September 30th. They're currently looking for volunteers to work this special event. They will be operating HF SSB voice, CW, and FT8 stations from 8am to 4pm with three operators at each station. There is a signup link on the club web page at https://w0eno.org/, or contact him for more information!

- Field Day is June 24th! Join us at the park at the south-west end of the Boulder County Fairgrounds. Setup starts at 9am. Teardown will be Sunday at noon. The site will be operating all night. We will have a potluck dinner Saturday - come on over even if you aren't operating. If you are planning to attend the dinner, please let Dick know via email at: gwabi2@gmail.com so we know how much food to order. See the Club website for more information.

- Our sister club up in Nederland is looking for some help with events they are running. They have a weekly Monday night net with no predetermined agenda, so you can lead it however you want. They are also planning a Field Day site at Golden Gate State Park and are welcoming anyone who wants to participate. Finally, they are looking for operators for the Ned Gravel run on July 8th. They have signup links for all these events, so head over to their web site https://w0ned.org/ for more information!

- You can start earning your 2023 membership or future renewal by acting as NCS for at least 5 nets this year. You can run either this Tuesday night net or the Thursday night net (or both). We have scripts available for both, so all you need is a good connection into the repeater, and somewhere to keep track of names and call signs as people check in. If you're going to be on the net anyway, why not save some dough at the same time! There are four free memberships available for 2023, so don't wait to get started!

- Chuck has set a goal for the Club of running at least one activity a month. This can be a hands-on construction activity, an operating activity like Field Day, a fox hunt, or a special event station. The goal is to get people together to have fun with amateur radio! We have multiple locations at our disposal, as well as lots of Club equipment, so if you have an idea for something you think others hams would like to do, please let us know, and if you're willing to run it, even better!

- The Club is also looking for presentation topics for 2023. If you have any ideas, or better yet, would like to present, please let Chuck know and we'll get you on the schedule!

- All club activities are open to anyone - members and non-members. ~~If you have questions, ask them on a net or~~ **send email to elmer@w0eno.org**

Presenter: Bryan, AF0W

Topic: Field Day - Operating Tips and Logging

Operating Tips

- To continue with our Field Day focus, I wanted to bring up a few more operating tips

- Remember to log the contact! If it's not in the log, it didn't happen!

- If the other side repeats your call sign or exchange and has something incorrect, be sure to let them know. Say something like "Negative - AF0W, alpha-foxtrot-0-whiskey"

- One thing to keep in mind no matter how you operate are the frequency limits of your license class

    a. It can be very easy to get caught up in the action, and respond to a station calling CQ in the Extra Class portion of a band while you have a General license

    b. It's not enough to make sure that your VFO is tuned inside your range - you need to make sure that your entire transmission is inside the limits.

    c. For example, on the 20 meter band, the upper limit for Extras and Generals on SSB is 14.350 MHz. If you tune your radio to 14.350 MHz and transmit, is your transmission legal?

        ■ While the carrier frequency is at the band limit, since upper sideband is used on 20 meters, the bulk of your transmission will actually occur above that limit, making it illegal.

- You need to take the bandwidth of your signal into account - for example, when using SSB, you should assume a 6 kHz bandwidth.

- This means that on 20 meters, the highest you should set your VFO is 14.344 MHz

- Note that this assumes your VFO display is accurate - with older radios, this may not be the case, and in fact, the difference may change as the radio heats up

- Another thing you will likely notice is that contests, especially large ones like Field Day, can bring out the worst in people.

a. You will hear people stepping on others, responding out-of-turn in a pileup, tuning up over a QSO, incorrect phonetics, responding to a CQ with just the last two letters of their call sign, etc.

b. While the urge to make contacts is great, don't be a ham that flouts the rules to do so at any cost.

- Some things you should avoid:

  a. Don't say "Please copy" - this is unnecessary and time-consuming

  b. Don't repeat the other stations' information back. Some stations say something like "I copy your 2A CO, we are 1B PA" - again, this wastes time. If you aren't sure you got their exchange correctly, just ask them to repeat it. Say something like "Repeat exchange" or "Negative copy"

- It's easy to get caught up in the excitement, and start talking louder (or even yelling) into the microphone. Avoid this, as it is likely your audio will be overdriven and distorted, making it difficult for others to understand you.

- Remember, one of the goals of Field Day is to have fun. If you find it getting too stressful, just take a break.

Logging

- Logging your Field Day contacts is essential if you are going to submit an entry

- When participating in a contest or an operating event like Parks on the Air or Summits on the Air, one thing that is very important is to have a record of your contacts

- Typically, you would record information such as the date and time, frequency or band, other stations' callsign, and the information exchanged (both what you sent them, and what they sent you).

- After the contest or event, this information is typically uploaded to the contest website where it is analyzed and compared against other submissions to verify that the event exchange information was correctly sent and received

- Every contest I've seen has rules specifying that the exchange information must be exchanged during the actual QSO - you can't get it from a spotting site, or exchange it via email or a phone call, for example.

- Some contests won't give you points for incorrect (or missing) contact information - some will actually penalize your score, so strive for 100% accuracy

- Recording your contacts is called "logging"

Paper Logging

- The "old school" method of logging consists of writing your contact info down on paper

- The ARRL sells pre-printed log books in a large and small size, but you can download and print log pages from the Internet, or create your own

- You can even just record your QSO info in a spiral notebook

- The form of the data is not important - but the information is

- Paper logging does have some drawbacks - one major one is that if the contest requires electronic log submissions, you must type in all the information at some point

Computer Logging

- This limitation and a few others are addressed by using computer-based logging applications

- There are many to choose from, and they run on just about any device - computer, tablet, or phone

- Some benefits of electronic logging include:

  a. Automatically populating fields with the date and time

  b. Ability to interface to your radio via CAT control to automatically fill in information such as band or frequency and mode

  c. Ability to control antenna rotators to automatically point your antenna based on the callsign entered

  d. Warning you if you have already contacted this station (sometimes called "dupe checking") - most contests do not award points for multiple contacts to the same station, so taking time to work that station again will not help your score

  e. Keeping track of various goals during the contest - such as how many counties you've contacted in a State QSO party, or how many unique states or grid squares you've communicated with

  f. Showing real-time statistics for things like QSO rate (number of contacts per hour), contest multipliers, and overall contest score

  g. Interfacing to spotting sites to show you frequencies being used by other stations - although note that some contests or categories prohibit the use of spotting sites

h. Automatic QSO serial number tracking (some contests include a serial number as part of the exchange)

i. Easy preparation of electronic log file for submission to contest or tracking sites such as the ARRL's Logbook of the World, eQSL, and QRZ.com

j. Morse code generation

k. Multiple logging computers can be networked together to consolidate logging, statistics, dupe checking, etc.

● Not every application supports all of these features

● There are a couple of broad categories of logging applications

● One is a general logging program. It is designed around non-contest operation and meant to be used to log your everyday QSOs

● Another group are contest logging applications. As the name implies, these are geared toward contesting, and include additional functionality in that area.

● Some of these are generic for all contests, while some are contest-specific

● For example, one widely-used general contest logging program is N1MM Logger Plus (november-1-mike-mike)

a. It is free, Windows-only, and uses configuration files to support the requirements of different contests

b. While it has an extensive list of features, this also makes it somewhat intimidating for new users

● On the other hand, N3FJP (november-3-foxtrot-juliet-papa) has large set of logging applications - each one customized to log for a particular contest

a. This is the software that is being used at LARC events such as Field Day, Winter Field Day, and the Radio in the Park event

b. They also have a version set up to perform general logging

c. Most of his applications require a registration fee, but there are some that are free, such as the one for ARRL Kids Day, the ARRL Rookie and School Club Roundups, and Jamboree on the Air

d. The registration fees for the rest of the logging applications are $8.99 each, or you can register for all of them for $60

    e. You can try out all the programs for free - I believe they are just limited by the number of contacts you can log without registration

    f. If you are planning to operate a station at the LARC Field Day site, you can download the software and get a feel for how it works prior to the event

    g. The web site is: https://www.n3fjp.com/ (november-3-foxtrot-juliet-papa)

● There are many other options as well - some of which even support multiple platforms (like Windows, Mac and Linux)

● There are a few web-based systems, but these obviously require a working Internet connection - good for home use, but not so much for SOTA!

● There are also tablet- and phone-based applications - these might work fine for general QSO logging, but I would think they'd be cumbersome to operate in a fast-paced contest environment.

● In fact, there are so many options that it becomes difficult to choose one!

● You will likely wind up trying a few before you find one that you are comfortable with

● Don't forget, you can always fall back to paper logging - your spiral notebook will never crash or run out of battery charge!

● Whatever application you use, be sure to have multiple back ups of your log data in case you suffer a computer crash!

Questions:
● **The question for the week is:** If you log any contacts, what method do you use (paper, computer, etc.) and how has it worked out for you?

● **In my case,** I've probably got three logs going:

    a. The first is the one built into the WSJT-X software that logs my FT-8 contacts.

    b. The second is the N1MM software that I use during contests.

    c. The third is a paper notebook.

    d. I suppose a fourth is used during contests where I jot down details of stations I want to try to contact on a big desk calendar we got from our insurance agent. I'll log frequencies and call signs that I want to return to. Once I actually make the contact, I enter it into either my paper notebook or N1MM.

    e. I occasionally sync the WSJT-X and N1MM logs with eQSL and LoTW.

More Info:

- ARRL Field Day: https://www.arrl.org/field-day

- LARC 2023 Field Day page: https://w0eno.org/w0eno-2023-field-day/

- N3FJP Amateur Radio Software (Logging): https://www.n3fjp.com/

- N1MM Logger+: https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/

- ARRL Field Day log sheet:
  https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2019/2019%20FD%20Log%20Sheet.pdf

- ARRL Field Day 2-page Duplicate Call Sign sheet:
  https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2019/2018-Field-Day-2-page-dupesheet.pdf

- If you have ideas for net topics or general meeting topics / presenters, please let us know! Tell us on a net, or send email to k0itp@w0eno.org

Email to elmer@w0eno.org

1. K0DBL - Don - Mead

Clarifications:

- Club call sign (W0ENO) **cannot be used** by club members (or anyone else) from home - only while at official LARC Field Day site

- The LARC club license for the N3FJP Field Day logging software does not permit it to be used by individual club members outside of official club events (see https://www.n3fjp.com/faq.html#q70).

  Individual members can register the Field Day software for just $8.99 at https://www.n3fjp.com/purchasepackage.html - this allows them to use it "forever," not just this year.

  They can also purchase a license for all the N3FJP logging programs for a one-time fee of $59.99

- When submitting a Field Day entry to the ARRL, the second line of the form is titled "Club of Group Name." All entries having exact matching info here will be aggregated together as a "club."

  In the past, we've used "Longmont Amateur Radio Club" (all spelled out). I have seen

web sites for other clubs named "LARC," so probably not a good idea to use that. Doesn't matter what we use, but need to make sure everyone is on the same page and uses the exact same text.