

2002 Illinois QSO party analysis by N9JF

The 2002 Illinois QSO party brought a number of surprises. All the planning that went into the event, the extensive discussion on the reflector, the coordination of the mobiles throughout the state...all of these would ultimately be at the mercy of the propagation gods. With the sunspots on the decline, days of high A and K indices were common; some days surrounding the party saw little activity on 10 and 15 meters. The short skip on 20 meters, so important for enabling contacts within the state, simply did not match that of two years earlier. On the other hand, fifteen meter conditions were some of the best ever seen during IQP, making numerous DX contacts possible. In fact, there may have been as many DX-IL contacts made during this one party as in all previous IQP's combined! Records were set in several categories (see IQP Top Ten on the RAMS site). Not long ago, forty thousand points was a winning score for an IL fixed station; this year, it barely made the top ten.

Truly remarkable was the the performance by DL5ME in working 75 of the 102 counties! A total of twelve stations met the criteria for the "Edible Awards" by working either 75 counties or 200 contacts. The mobile and portable activity made the vast majority of the counties available, but there were lots of fixed stations as well, especially on SSB. Several portable stations put out good signals on SSB; most mobiles made the majority, or all, of their contacts on CW.

Who was where?

As the party began, it was fairly certain that more than 90% of the IL counties would be active during the event. That last 10% is where things get tricky in a fairly large state with a lot of counties and diverse terrain. The only way to determine for certain whether or not all counties were worked was to do a search of all the logs submitted. So...what was there to find?

CTY MODE STATIONS LOGGED

ADAM	P/C	AB9CB KR9L N9DT/P NA9Q W9AWE/P WB9EWM/P N9GXW/P K0RL N0RL K2PEY NA9DM
ALEX	C	KF9D/M
BOND	P/C	KF9D/M
BOON	P/C	N9OH/M W9DY/P KA9FOX/M
BROW	P/C	W9CUN WB9EWM/P N9DT/P N9GXW/P
BURO	P/C	KF9TL/P W9PZT K9WA/M W1NN/M
CARR	P/C	K9KUP K9IUA/M
CASS	P/C	N9HHE W9EBK K9WA/M
CHAM	P/C	K9CW K9JLS/P KX9X W9YH NO9Z N9OH/M
CHRS	P/C	W3DYA/M NG9R/M W9HLY
CLIN	P/C	KF9D/M
CLRK	P/C	KJ9C/M

CLAY P/C KJ9C/M KE9DK N9JF/M W3DYA/M
COLE P/C KJ9C/M W3DYA/M W9LYN W9ADS
COOK P/C K9DXR K9PG K9PL K9PPW KG9PF KQ9L/M N9BOR N9US
W9OL W9ZJX WA9FBC W9JUV AA9KH AK9Y W9CB
N9TUQ WB9VIV KB9VHA NV8V N9REP NW9S N9DTU
W9OP/M KA9FOX/M
CRAW P/C KJ9C/M
CUMB P/C W3DYA/M KJ9C/M
DEKA P/C K9NU W9DY/P W1NT W9CEO W1NN/M
DEWI P N9OH/M K9JLS NG9R/M
DOUG P/C K9XE/M W3DYA/M W9ADS
DUPG P/C N9VV N9WW W9DUP W9JQT K9XD K9VIC N9REP KQ9L/M
W1NN/M KB9DVC
EDGR P/C K9XE/M KJ9C/M W9ADS
EDWA C N9JF/M
EFFI P/C W3DYA/M WR9N KJ9C/M
FAYE P/C KJ9C/M W3DYA/M KF9D/M
FORD P/C K9JLS/P K9LY/M
FRAN C KF9D/M N9JF/M
FULT P/C K9WA/M AB9DU/P KC9BNV/P
GALL C N9JF/M
GREE P/C W9FGH/P
GRUN P/C K9LY/M K9CS/M
HAMI C N9JF/M
HANC P/C W9AWE/P N9GXW/P KN0E/P
HARD C N9JF/M
HENR P/C KF9TL/P N9MZP K9WA/M WW9CW/P
IROQ P/C K9CS/M WB9Z K9LY/M
JACK C KF9D/M
JASP P/C W3DYA/M KJ9C/M N9JCO

JEFF P/C KF9D/M N9CXH
JERS P/C W9FGH/P
JODA C WK9O/M K9IUA/M
JOHN P/C KF9D/M N9JF/M NY4N/P
KANE P/C K9MMS KB9YSI KC9UM N9WW W1NN/M AA9D W9AX K5UJ
W9NB N9REP K9JLS/M WD9EJK AK9F WB9RRO
KANK P/C K9LY/M K9NR WB9STR K9CS/M
KEND P/C N9REP N9OH/M W1NN/M
KNOX P/C K9GCI K9WA/M WB9QVY
LAKE P/C K9DX K9IJ W9AX W9VA N9IJ N9NJ N9LZ N9REP
LASA P/C WA9TPQ N9PLM KB9UPS N9AVY N9DRU W1NN/M
LAWR P/C KJ9C/M N9JF/M
LEE P/C W1NN/M WK9O/M K9WA/M
LIVG P/C W1NN/M K9LY/M K9JLS/M
MADN P/C KF9D/M KE9NZ K9SD
MARI P/C KF9D/M KJ9C/M W3DYA/M W9IL KF9L
MARS P/C W9VOS/M W1NN/M K9WA/M
MASN P/C W1NN/M K9WA/M NG9R/M
MCDO P/C K9WA/M WB9GQW AB9DU/P KC9BNV/P KN0E/P
MCHE P/C KA9OZP KG9X KK9DX N9KHR KY9DX N9REP WD9EJK
MCLE P/C K9LY/M K9ZO N9OH/M W1NN/M W9SE KD9AC
MCON C W3DYA/M
MCPN P/C W9FGH/P KF9GT
MNRD P/C KX9DX
MNRO P/C KF9D/M KD9CN
MONT P NG9R/M
MORG P K9YDG K9PN N9HHE W9EBK
MOUL P/C KJ9C/M W3DYA/M WC9V

MRCR C K9WA/M
MSSC C KF9D/M N9JF/M
OGLE P/C K9OT WK9O/M W9DY/P WK9M/M N9OH/M W1NN/M K9IUA/M
PEOR P/C KF9D/M W9VOS/M K9WA/M N9MSG
PERR C KF9D/M
PIAT P/C N9OH/M W3DYA/M K9JLS/M WB9TVD
PIKE P/C N9DT/P WB9EWM/P
POPE P/C NY4N/P N9JF/M
PULA C KF9D/M
PUTN P/C N9GZ W1NN/M
RAND P/C KF9D/M
RICH P/C KJ9C/M N9JF/M
ROCK P/C K9AHH KG9IE K9WA/M N9CDX N9EHP WW9CW/P
SALI P/C NY4N/P N9JF/M
SANG P NG9R/M
SCHY P/C W9AWE/P N9GXW/P AB9DU/P K9WA/M KC9BNV/P KN0E/P
SCLA P/C KF9D/M K19A
SCOT P NG9R/M
SHEL P/C KJ9C/M W3DYA/M
STAR P/C K9WA/M WA9KRT W9VOS/M
STEP C K9UIY W9YS WK9O/M W9SJW K9OT K9IUA/M
TAZE P KA9YMF
UNIO C KF9D/M
VERM P/C K9CS/M K9LY/M
WABA C N9JF/M
WARR P/C WQ9T K9WA/M
WASH C KF9D/M
WAYN P/C N9JF/M

WBGO P/C KA9FOX W9TMW W9DY/P WK9O/M
 WHITE C N9JF/M
 WILL P/C KQ9L/M N2BJ NC9T K9LY/M N9GH N9REP W1NN/M
 WMSN P/C NY4N/P K9TJL N9JF/M KF9D/M N9BAY
 WOOD P/C W1NN/M W9GIG/M N9OH/M
 WTSD P/C KF9TL/P K9WA/M N9XBG

It would appear that, despite our best organizational efforts ("best-laid plans o' mice and men" and all that), there was no reported coverage of CALH and HEND....So, we work harder in 2003....!

Out-of-state mults:

The following multipliers, USA, VE and DX, were found by IL stations:

AL	AK	AR	AZ	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI
ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI
MN	MS	MO	MT	NE	NV	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND
OH	OK	OR	PA	SC	SD	TN	TX	UT	VA	VT
WA	WI	WV	WY	(yes, all 50 states!)						

AB	BC	MB	NB	NL	NS	ON	PEI	QC	SK	YT
(no NWT or NU)										

4X	9A	9Y	CT3	CU	DL	DU	EA	EA8	EI	F
FM	G	GI	GM	HA	HC8	HK	IS	I	JA	KP4
LA	LU	LX	LY	OE	OK	ON	PA	PY	SM	SP
ST	SV5	TI	TK	UA	UA9	UR	VE	XE	W	YL
YN	YU	ZD8	ZL7							

High-scoring stations: How they did it:

Portables:

Entries in the county-line portable class face a number of challenges. The first is location; scoring gives a substantial advantage to 4-county points, and there are few (actually 5) of them in the state. While there are many 3-county corners, actually operating from one of them poses the same problems. Some are not accessible by conventional vehicle, or perhaps they can be accessed only in dry weather. Some are difficult to find, though the wide availability of GPS is making this less of an issue. Some are plagued by a large amount of traffic, others have high line noise, still others have absolutely nothing to offer for antenna supports. Most portable antennas are compromises, offering little gain and high losses. The logistics of supplying sufficient power for an amplifier means most portables run low power. Since they do not change counties during the contest, the trick to maximizing score as a portable is to move other "serious" stations between bands and modes, CQ enough on the open bands to attract casual participants, and find as many mobiles in as many counties as possible. Periods of low rate are almost inevitable; avoiding or shortening the duration of "dry spells" is critical.

On the positive side, the lure of 3 or 4 points per QSO, and multiple counties, makes the county-corner portables much sought-after; and the pileups can be a real rush at times. In addition to the Illinois residents who entered the category in 2002, NY4N came up from Tennessee to join the fun.

The high-scoring county-line portable entry of W9DY and KN9T put together a log of a bit over 400 raw QSO's, about 90% on CW, and did so from the 4-county corner of BOON/DEKA/OGLE/WBGO. They amassed a score nearly twice as high as their nearest competitor. Bud and Mike began on 20 cw, jumped to 40 cw for about 20 minutes to pick off a number of in-state multipliers, then went back to 20 cw for nearly an hour, during which they worked a total of 10 DX stations and eight DXCC countries. What a contrast to some years when it wasn't possible to work the "permitted" 5 countries in the full eight hours! They next spent 15 minutes on 15 meters in which almost half of their contacts were in Europe, then went back to 40 cw to grab some more IL counties. Almost two hours into the contest, they went back to 20 cw and found a crowd of Europeans waiting, along with some IL mobiles anxious for the four-in-one QSO "plum". At 2049Z, they changed modes for the first time and found several IL mults on 40 SSB in about 20 minutes. They would not go back to SSB for almost two more hours, again to 40 meters, and again primarily to work IL portable and mobile stations in new counties. Despite good success on 20 cw, they made no contacts on 20 SSB. The last hour and 40 minutes of the contest, they spent the majority of their time on 80 cw. Their hourly rates (raw QSOs) were: 67/53/41/53/46/62/50/35. Their log included nine QSOs each with KF9D/M and KF9TL/P and ten each with KJ9C/M and N9JF/M,

The high-scoring cw-only county-line portable was a solo operation by K0CA at the helm of club station W9AWE. Cliff shared a 3-county corner with a phone-only operation by N9GXW et al., coping with interstation interference and a nagging sinus infection but benefiting from the cuisine offered by the SSB group. His raw QSO total and his multiplier count were not far behind those of W9DY/P, but Cliff made no SSB contacts and gave up a 33 1/3% handicap by operating from "only" 3 counties. Cliff spent an hour on 40 cw, the next on 20 cw, during which he worked sixteen Europeans, a brief foray to 10 cw and to 15 cw, and then back to an extended stay on 40. Not until almost 0000Z did he go back to 20 meters, and then only for half an hour before finishing the contest on 40. Part of Cliff's equation was to NOT be on the same band as the SSB station! He made no contacts on 80 meters. Cliff's hourly rates (raw QSOs) were: 61/60/39/31/29/39/32/29. His log included five QSOs with KF9D/M and seven with N9JF/M.

Trailing only slightly behind W9AWE/P in mults, and exceeding his raw QSO count was the portable team of KF9TL and KE0FT. They made about 40% of their contacts on phone, however, and therefore finished just behind Cliff in final score. From the 3-county corner of BURO/HENR/WTSD, they mixed in a few contacts on 2 meters and even one on 160 meters with a good number of 80 meter CW contacts and the expected activity on 15, 20 and 40. Their 15 meter log consisted almost entirely of DX contacts, and they spent more time on 80 SSB than did any other portable station. They moved other portable and mobile stations aggressively from band to band and between modes, especially early and late in the contest. Like the other high-scoring portables, they had no trouble working their five DXCC mults; and in the time they spent on SSB, they found quite a few stations not worked by either W9DY/P or W9AWE/P. K9WA/M found their way into the KF9TL/P log a whopping sixteen times! Their hourly rates were: 76/55/46/61/40/37/71/32.

Another four-county portable that generated quite a bit of interest was NY4N/P on the county or JOHN/POPE/SALI/WMSN. Jeff's location was stuck in between three "mountains" with the open view to the north. NY4N/P was the only contact with any of those counties in several logs. He made approximately 2/3 of his contacts on CW and managed to put out his counties on 40/20/15 and 10 meters on both modes. Jeff got a bit of a late start, had an hour of "down time" from 2330Z to 0030Z, and his best hour was the

second one with 41 contacts. He spent the last hour and a half on 40 meters and had no 80 meter contacts.

W9FGH (on phone) and NM9C (on cw) teamed up as W9FGH to activate the GREE/JERS/MCPN corner. They were the only contacts from these counties in numerous logs. While their score was not as high as several other portable operations, it was interesting that they worked several counties not found by higher-scoring stations. Perhaps they spent more time in search and pounce mode? They made slightly more SSB than CW contacts with heavy emphasis on 40 meters.

The largest number of phone QSOs by a portable came from the N9GXW/P crew, who operated alongside the cw-only W9AWE/P position. N9GXW, N9UPG, KB9VEI and trainee Matthew spent more time on 10 and 15 ssb than any other portable and consequently worked several "unique" stations. In fact, they spent a solid 2 _ hours on 15 for their best rate period.

Mobiles:

Many of the obstacles faced by portable stations have to be overcome by mobiles, only more-so. Mobile antennas are for the most part notoriously inefficient, especially on the low bands, most mobile operations are low-power, and line noise can crop up at any moment (and usually does!). Mobiles often find that other mobiles are difficult to work; signals are not strong, and breaking a pileup on a mobile when you *are* one can be extremely time-consuming. Couple these difficulties with driving, map-reading, keeping track of your current county, operating, logging, dupe-checking, sitting for long periods in unnatural positions, and it's no wonder not *everyone* goes mobiling for IQP! Fortunately, a record number of operators accepted the challenge in 2002, including a capable contingent from out-of-state.

The great part about being a mobile is that you get a "clean dupesheet" with every county line, so you never run out of stations to work! All but a handful of the 102 counties were activated by mobiles, with KF9D/M putting out the largest number, twenty-one.

Roger KF9D and his navigator, W9HB, have made a science of route planning and do a great job of keeping a rhythm of frequent new counties to maintain interest in those looking for new multipliers. Their team again topped the field in final score (and set a new record) with about a 15% advantage over W1NN/M. They used a combination of county corners, county lines and contacts "on the fly" and made just a few SSB contacts along with their CW effort. They spent 30 minutes on the first three-county corner, jumped quickly to a county line for a 35 minute stay, and then were off to the races until 50 minutes spent on a final three-county corner. Forty meters was their "money band", but they used 20 extensively up until 2345Z, especially when moving. After 2345Z they interspersed 40 and 80. Fifteen meters was used some during the daylight hours, largely for European contacts. They had six DXCC countries in the log within fifteen minutes of the start and worked a total of sixty-one IL counties, including a few on two meters. They averaged an even 85 contacts per hour for the eight hours!

Trailing KF9D/M by a bit was Iron Man Hal, W1NN/M, who put out an even dozen counties while driving and logging on paper. Hal's average of 76.5 contacts per hour was amazing under those conditions, a result of his extensive experience in mobiling in various state's parties over the years. He made about 20% of his contacts on SSB. Hal produced the "quote of the event": "Preparation is everything in one of these events; and when there isn't enough time to prepare, things can go awfully wrong." Hal spent an hour and twenty minutes on his first three-county corner, where he developed quite a following of Europeans. He then kept on the move until the last twenty minutes, which he spent on a county line. Along the way, he worked more IL counties than any other mobile and

logged some countries (ON, KP4 and I), states (VT) and provinces (NB) that most others missed.

N9JF and driver KB9JIZ traversed sixteen counties in southern IL, beginning at the corner of LAWR/RICH/WABA and making a clockwise loop through the southern end of the state. They actually managed to arrive at their planned starting point before 1800Z, unlike in 2001, and drew a following of Europeans on 15 meters who descended like vultures at the starting gun. No problem with the five DX mults this year! A fifty-minute stay on that corner, and a similar setup on a later county line (CLAY/WAYN) made it impossible for them to finish their planned route. A maddening RF-in-the-shack problem made SSB operation impossible, causing them to miss a number of mults and in-state 40 meter contacts. They made limited use of 80 meters and only one contact on 10 meters; their average rate was just under 70/hr.

The K9WA/M crew, consisting of K9WA, NN9K and driver KA9BSU similarly provided sixteen IL counties, beginning at the three-county corner of BURO/LEE/WTSD for a 45 minute kickoff and then not pausing until the end of the contest. They made about 15% of their contacts on SSB and worked 20 meters for all it was worth for the first five hours of the contest. They made a large number of DX stations from Cass and Mason counties and averaged just under 80 contacts per hour for the entire period.

W3DYA/M came up from Texas. His day began with “horizontal verticals” (see his posting on 3830), and progressed through a number of strategic county-line stops. His all-cw entry would have been sufficient to have won in most years the IQP has been held. Norm’s log included an amazing sixty-six DX contacts, including several calls worked by no other mobile. He must have been loud in Europe!

KJ9C/M invaded from the east...from Indiana, to be precise, and also posted a score in excess of 100,000 points. Mel, like W3DYA and W1NN, did all driving, logging and operating. Without the three of them, coverage of the entire state would have been impossible. Mel and Norm covered several of the same counties but at different times and in many cases on different modes, thus adding to the fun.

Commentary on the mobile operations would not be complete without mentioning K9IUA’s mobile QRP effort. That is doing it the hard way! He cut the contest a couple of hours short with the note in the log: “I know it’s early, but I’m pooped!”. I should think so!

Other good mobile efforts were mounted by N9OH (mostly on phone), NG9R (all on phone), WK9O (all on cw), K9LY (mostly on cw), K9CS (mostly on cw), K9XE (mostly on cw), KQ9L (all on phone), KD9AC (all on phone), N9NL (all on phone) and W9GIG (all on phone).

Illinois Fixed Stations:

Those who lack the equipment, or the time, to go mobile or portable still add a vital dimension to the IQP by activating IL counties from their regular fixed station locations. Many of the uncertainties of mobile and portable operation are thereby eliminated, but the challenge becomes finding enough stations to work for the entire eight hours. A successful fixed station must be loud, aggressive, efficient and versatile. A high score requires a constant stream of log entries, effective coverage of the entire USA and careful tracking of the IL mobiles to maximize multipliers.

K9ZO narrowly missed the 150-multiplier mark en route to a new fixed station record score. Ralph noted that it was difficult to justify much time on 10 or 15 meters as working there made it more difficult to follow the IL mobile stations as a source of multipliers. (How about SO3R??) He made 99 band/mode changes and moved a few

stations through the entire gamut of HF ssb/cw combinations. He reported working 85 IL counties, the largest number ever worked from inside Illinois. DX in the log included 4X, CU, ZD8, and ZL7; and Ralph found a two KH6's that eluded all of the mobile and portable entries. He made almost indential numbers of QSOs on SSB and CW. Though his best hour was the first one, Ralph averaged 92.6 per hour for the entire contest.

The battle for second place among IL fixed stations was a tight one. K9PG lagged KI9A in QSO points but found three more multipliers to claim the number two spot. Chuck worked more states and provinces and more IL counties, but Paul's location in the highly-populated northeast and some moving of stations from band to band garnered him several extra 8-county-QSO multipliers. Both of them placed more emphasis on SSB than did K9ZO. Paul found a VY2 and a VO2 that eluded higher-scoring stations. Chuck's band strategy was a bit different in that he began on 10 SSB and did not spend any appreciable time on 20 meters during the first hour. He added VE4, VE5 and VE6 to the "worked" list for IL stations.

N2BJ broke his "all SSB" string by making six cw contacts along with averaging 82/hr on SSB. Barry found the elusive KL7 and some other interesting DX on 10 SSB and logged quite a number of "unique" stations on that band/mode.

KG9PF made almost 400 QSOs on 40 SSB alone!

It was necessary to go all the way down to NA9DM's 6700-point log to find a contact with Yukon Territory. It's amazing how many "unique" non-IL stations were worked!

QRP entries:

In addition to K9IUA's mobile QRP effort, there were two non-IL and three IL QRP entries in 2002. Topping the list was a great score from W9SE, who found half of the IL counties and six DXCC countries in setting a target for subsequent QRP enthusiasts. There have been some good QRP entries from outside IL in the past; we need to bring them back now that there is an entry category for them.

Outside Illinois:

With the prospect of all 102 counties *possibly* being active in 2002, the question became, "Can anyone outside the state work 75 or more of them?" A total of a dozen stations met the challenge. Who will be the first to "sweep" the state in an IQP? Will 2003 be the year this happens? Several spots on the "Top Ten" list were filled in the non-IL category in 2002 as those determined to attain an "Illinois Edible" (or whatever else the incentive) tried to find every active IL fixed and portable station and simultaneously track the numerous mobiles from county to county. Not only were there record numbers of non-IL logs submitted, there were a lot of very good scores. Rest assured that we in Illinois appreciated your calls whether you made two contacts or two hundred!

Former in-state participant NE0P narrowly edged out AD1C in final score for non-IL honors en route to a new record. John found 84 counties and made a bit over 75% of his contacts on CW. He first ventured to 40 meters at 2230Z and then to 80 cw at 0010Z to supplement a good QSO total on 20. John was a bit too close to make much use of 15 meters, and he made no IL contacts on 10. AD1C, who also topped the previous record score, was apparently at just about the "right" distance. Fifteen worked well for him from the beginning, and he was able to work IL stations on 40 early in the event. However, he made only half a dozen QSOs on 80 and did not work the last hour of the contest.

Leading the pack in multipliers was K4XU with 88 counties and over 200 contacts

in his log. Dick was at a bit of a disadvantage early in that he was beyond 40 meter range. He made good use of the high bands before finally working an IL station on 40 meters at 2320Z. Nearly _ of his contacts were with IL mobile stations.

Other non-IL notes:

N4UOH probably missed a mult or two by operating only CW; nevertheless, he found 83 counties for the highest cw-only mult total in an 80/40/20 effort. Illinoisan N9CO ventured to Colorado and put together an aggressive 80-15 effort on both modes to find 82 counties and post one of the higher non-IL scores. The IL stations welcomed K1PQS from Maine as he logged over 200 contacts on cw along with a few on SSB and worked 78 counties. George may have made the most band changes per QSO of anyone in the contest! K4BAI worked his 75th IL county with under a minute to go in the contest. That's cutting it pretty close on the "edibles", John ☺! N6MU picked up a bonus mult for eight contacts with Saline county... probably the first time *that's* happened!

DX participation:

Certainly one of the highlights of the 2002 IQP from an Illinois perspective was the cooperative solar situation and the response from DX stations. Led by DL5ME's 143 QSO and 75 mult effort, the DX contacts and logs simply poured in! The Europeans battled 40 meter QRM and copied amidst the QSB on 15 and 20 to add a lot of excitement to the event. Thanks go to the USA stations who stood by when a mobile would change counties and ask for "DX only pse" to give them a chance at a new one. At times, the EU crowd was just a buzz at the noise level and it was extremely difficult to copy any call signs; but thanks for trying to call in!

Though not "DX", VE2EM's signal from QC was a welcome multiplier in logs in 72 counties. Also working at least half of the IL counties were HA0DU, DL6KVA and DL5MC. Several DX stations sent in logs with under two dozen contacts; we appreciate the fact that you took time to come to the party and that you reported your results! This year's DX results have been added to a new category on the "Top Ten" list to serve as goals for subsequent years. Perhaps in a year or two we will have IL-DX activity on 160 meters during IQP?

Club participation:

For the last few years, the Western Illinois ARC has sponsored a traveling club plaque to be awarded to the local club submitting the highest combined score. In 2002, they won "their own" plaque, narrowly missing a record. Along the way, their members activated 32 counties with RAMS and the Green Valley club also mounted nice efforts. All Illinois participants are encouraged to submit their scores for their own local clubs and to "talk up" the event in those organizations. There are strong local clubs in parts of the state that had almost no participation in 2002.

Challenges for 2003:

Through the reflector, mailings, e-mails, and word-of-mouth, all but two counties (Calhoun and Henderson) were activated in 2002. We can do all 102! Should there be a "meeting" on 40 SSB at around 2300Z to coordinate activity? Indiana tried this in May of 2003; did it help? A strong fixed station from out-of-state and one from in-state might have to cooperate to make this work. Several stations mentioned that the "activity times" for 15 and 10 meters did not seem to do much for activity on those bands. Was that the general feeling? With sunspots headed for the tank, making *any* QSOs on 10 meters will become a challenge. What can be done to encourage more participation on VHF? Was 146.49 widely recognized as the IQP 2 meter frequency in 2002? Did anyone make any six meter contacts except on a move from another band? Phone activity was markedly

increased compared to a couple of years ago when IQP was threatening to become a “CW only” event. How can this trend be continued while maintaining the great level of CW activity? The contribution made by dedicated mobile and portable participants from out of state was *greatly* appreciated by those of us in IL! How can we keep this interest and bring in even more? We could sure use W0GXQ, W9MSE, NE0P, K8MR, WT9U, W9OP and some others! It would be terrific if out-of-state stations could find at least half a dozen mobiles *in new counties* every time they made a sweep of a band! This is one mark of a state QSO party that has “arrived”.

There were several suggestions submitted regarding “tangible rewards” for participation. What IL clubs are willing to work with RAMS to make this possible? The recognition in the “Top Ten” report now includes QRP and DX. An “Illinois Edible Award” will again be offered in 2003, though the level for qualifying may be raised a bit (and the award itself may be something less expensive to mail!) If you are in a category that needs more incentive to participate, what is it, and what can be done? The RAMS group is VERY small, and the active members go to a lot of effort in doing what they are doing for IQP.

There are a few things that everyone can do to make IQP go more smoothly, especially in the log-checking stage. [*Note that this comment is coming from one who does NOT have to check the logs but has access to them after-the-fact....*] Entries should conform as nearly as possible to the published guidelines, including dupe sheets and summary sheets. Be sure your logging system (computer/paper/charcoal-wooden shovel) includes the QTH of the stations worked and logs the times in UTC.

All participants need to recognize the importance of using the standardized county abbreviation list included on the official summary sheet. Though we don't have problem Texas has with 254 counties (!), there are several similar county names in IL that can cause confusion. Watch Clark/Clay, Henderson/Henry, Kane/Kankakee, Macon/Macoupin, Mason/Massac, Monroe/Montgomery, White/Whiteside, Will/Williamson and a couple of others. If you're not sure, ASK!! At least two stations logged N9MZP in “HEN” and their logging program counted it as “Henderson” instead of “Henry”. As usual, a few entered “COL” for Colorado and the logging program credited them with “Coles”.... Your logging program is only as smart as you make it. Confusion can result on both the sending and the receiving end; I will plead “guilty” to the charge of sending “MASS” in 2002 when I meant “MSSC”. Hey, it was getting late and I was hungry.... ☺

Thanks again for all the participation. Sign up for the IQP reflector (see the RAMS home page for details), send your suggestions, and we'll see you in October! 73, Jim N9JF