THE KLARION

First Quarter 2021

Winter to Spring Edition

Quarterly Newsletter of the Keuka Lake Amateur Radio Association

Skywarn Recognition Day

by KLARA Member Belinda Connor KD2BPJ
ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinator/KLARA

I participated in Skywarn Recognition Day this past December and had a great time! I got to make contacts with the Hurricane Net and numerous weather stations including Mount Washington which is always very interesting.

The information we exchanged was our assigned number, which mine was BMG-525 (showing Binghamton weather area), the current temperature and whether it's snowing, raining, cloudy etc., and also your first name. You keep track of all the information. You send in the total number of contacts, how many were weather stations, how many on amateur radio using HF, 2m, echolink, FT8, and how many via facebook. I made 75 contacts. I learned a lot. I've only used echolink to talk on our own local frequency. I learned how to find other stations and talk to them which was interesting and fun. I highly recommend this to everyone to participate in next year! Making contacts is always fun. Not really a contest but you will get a certificate to print after you submit your logs.

The following is from the National Weather Service www.weather.gov website:

SKYWARN™ Recognition Day was developed in 1999 by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League. It celebrates the contributions that SKYWARN™ volunteers make to the NWS mission, the protection of life and property. Amateur radio operators comprise a large percentage of the SKYWARN™ volunteers across the country. The Amateur radio operators also provide vital communication between the NWS and emergency management if normal communications become inoperative.

Skywarn Recognition is about Skywarn Spotters and given the current situation, we have a chance to encourage and

Major KLARA Events

Winter Field Day
January 29-30, 2022

KLARA 2 Meter FM Simplex Challenge
Spring 2021 TBD

ARRL Field Day
June 26-27, 2021 with setup on June 25

Annual Red House Picnic
TBD

National Warplane Museum Airshow
July 9-11, 2021

Wine Country Classic Boat Regatta
July 17-18, 2021

KLARA Booth at Steuben County Fair
August 17-22, 2021

KLARA Hamfest
August 21, 2021 TBD

KLARA All Day Tech Question Review and VE Testing
TBD

KLARA Annual Meeting and Elections
TBD

Wineglass Marathon
October 3, 2021

Annual End of the Season Picnic
October 2021 TBD

Annual Christmas Dinner
December 2021 TBD

Talk with us on-the-air using our linked repeater system:
Bath, NY 145.190- 110.9
Arkport, NY 147.045+ 110.9
Jasper, NY 147.330+ 110.9

Visit us on the web:
https://klara.us

recognize **all** Skywarn Spotters. The amateur radio component is different, because honestly there are only a handful of NWS offices participating this year. That being said, almost 900 amateur radio operators have signed up to participate. **Who can you reach?**

Above all else, this is meant to be fun. We have participants from across the NWS service area and Canada registered to participate. This is more than one region, one state, one county, one city, one person, this is the community of Skywarn Spotters, spanning shoreline to shoreline, from ocean to highest mountains. It will be inherently messy - and that's what we are called to do, make it work and bring out the best in us in service to our country.

Operating Procedures - this is probably where the greatest changes have occurred. The NWS offices will not have volunteers in their facilities this year, so we had to improvise. The idea this year, for amateur radio operations, reach out to as many registered Skywarn Spotters (again, the list of registered participants will be online at the link above) and NWS offices as you can. There are almost 800 registered participants.

What about Skywarn Spotters without amateur Radio Licenses? How do I participate? Join in on the local NWS office social media pages, work with local spotter groups, have Zello or other communications tools in place? Lacking those options, the **Skywarn Recognition Day Facebook Group** will be hosting a number of live events.

Belinda Connor KD2BPJ. KLARA Secretary and ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinator.

KLARA member John, K2GQG, participated in Winter Field Day with the Englewood Amateur Radio Society (EARS) Club in Englewood, Florida where the Babbitts spend their winter months.

Field Day with my XYL

by KLARA Member Jim Caneen W2JTC

With my able logging assistant and XYL Donna, W2JTC participated in Winter Field Day for the second time. Over the 24 hour period we made and logged 46 phone contacts and 40 PSK31 digital contacts. We worked 80, 40, 20, 15, and 2 meters with phone and digital on 80, 40, and 20. We used the ICOM 7300 bare foot, with the Ham Radio Deluxe Digital Master 780 software and the N3FJP Winter Field Day Logging Software. Our 80 and 40 meter contacts were using the Off Center Dipole,and the 20 and 15 meter QSO's were made using the HEX Beam. Our 2 meter contacts were using the Yaesu FTM 400XD rig with the Comet GP-3 antenna. The bands were very crowded, but we had lots of fun. We made a very good team!

Make a Date with Ham Radio

Join in on some fun and friendship. Share a little laughter, maybe learn something new, and spend some time with a great group of hams. This all happens weekday mornings at 8:45. The KLARA (along with Friends) weekday morning net meets on 3.896MHz. Early check-in begins at 8:30. Gary KC2YTD is the net control station. He is assisted by Jim W2JTC and Rick W2RMT. The net usually closes by 9:45-10:00. Need a little more? The Sunday morning net begins at 9:00 with Rick W2RMT as net control. 3.396MHz plus or minus depending upon activity on the band. Often you can find the frequency on Netlogger software.

History of the KLARA morning net

by KLARA Member Rick Torrey W2RMT

- November 2019. Rick Torrey (W2RMT) proposed an HF net to Gary Stratton (KC2YTD).
- December 2, 2019. First record of the KLARA HF Net posted on Facebook November 2019.

- December 3, 2019. Rick published the Net to the ARRL and a large net listing managed by N1YZ.
  - (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cpaIUPJOG9Kdb0Xo-hyzhcVKcyvOr37vrGIF1mIETHs/edit#gid=906307814).
  - At this time our frequency still varied as we learned what other nets were close by.
- February 2020. Gary began looking at Netlogger (http://netlogger.org/) to help track the rotation during the roundtable. This highly successful solution is now used by almost every member of the net.
- March 4, 2020. After several weeks we finally landed on our current 3.896. Gary and Rick updated the ARRL and N1YZ.
- April 2020. Word spread and by late March/Early April we grew to 12-18 participants. Gary assumed the duties of Net Control and moved the start time up 15 minutes. Currently the net lasts about one hour.

January VHF Contest

by KLARA Member Harold Scharmberg N2FMS

Just for fun I participated in the ARRL January VHF Contest. Had a great time and got a chance to make some non-repeater simplex VHF/UHF contacts. For 6 meters I used my 80 meter dipole fed with ladder line through a remote tuner. It loaded up fine but had absolutely no gain and probably a significant amount of signal loss. I was quite surprised to make 9 SSB contacts. For VHF/UHF I used my vertical ground plane antenna. Made 27 2 meter contacts. About half on 146.550 FM simplex and the rest on 144 SSB. Even had 4 SSB QSO's on 432MHz. My best "DX" for the day was a station in Hamlin near Lake Ontario - not bad for 2 meters. Had QSO's in 4 different grid

Just a Suggestion . . .

from KLARA Member Glenn Seiler W3LSW

Glenn has noticed a lot of sloppy operator habits especially with station ID. He suggests to read or review the Part 97 - Rules of the Amateur Radio Service www.arrl.org/part-97-text

Sub Section 97.119a states each amateur station must transmit its assigned call at the **end** of each communication, and at least every 10 minutes during a communication.

Free Parts

Received the following from Friend of KLARA Brian Tyndell:
50 years of scrounging. Well into cleaning out of attic, basement, garage, workshop. I have an almost lifelong interest in helping novices in any way. So parts, parts, parts for the "**newbees**" which are free. <tyndell_brian@yahoo.com>

KLARA Member Gary Stratton KC2YTD reports he earned 3024 points during the Winter Field Day. He was active as a 1H home station using 2, 20, 40, and 80 meters. Had 30 phone contacts and a whopping 93 digital QSO's.

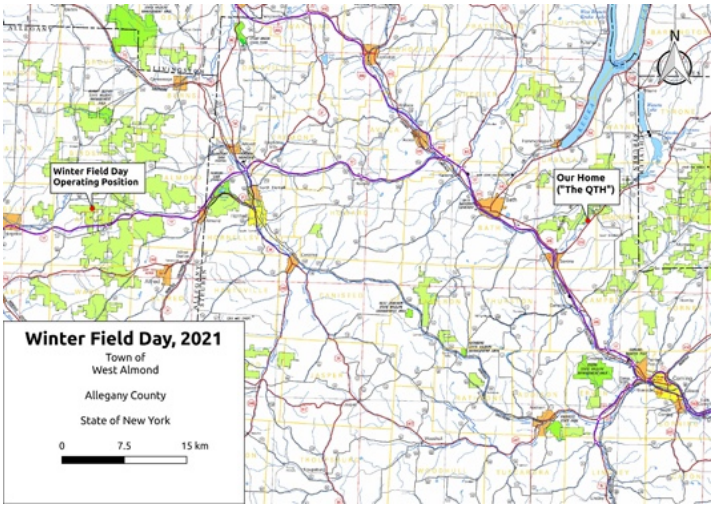
Member Harold Scharmberg N2FMS earned 1520 points by making 152 phone QSO's into 37 states and 2 Canadian Provinces. Used 80, 40, 20, 15 and 2 meters from his home station. Was especially pleased with two 2 meter contacts into Eastern Ontario, Canada.

Winter Field Day - Outdoors!

by KLARA Members Joel KC2VAW and Donna KD2CZY Fiske

The annual Winter Field Day occurs in the last full weekend of January. The mission of this contest revolves around the idea that "emergency communications in a winter environment is just as important as the preparations and practice that is done each summer but with some additional unique operational concerns".

KC2VAW and KD2CZY worked this years edition of Winter Field Day by establishing a portable, outdoor station located on Palmer's Pond State Forest. This area is located in the Town of West Almond in Allegany County. The operating location was located about 45 minutes west of our home in Sonora, NY.



We worked from an unheated, uninsulated vehicle, which meets the requirement for an "outdoor" station, so our class was "1 Oscar". This, added to our ARRL section ("WNY" for Western New York") formed our exchange. "Please copy 1 Oscar Western New York".


Outdoor "Ham Shack"

The station consisted of a Yaesu FT-857 transceiver, an LDG Z-100+ antenna tuner, and a Wolf River Coil antenna feeding a 102" telescoping whip. The station was powered by a 100 Ahr RV / Marine deep cycle battery.

If you are not familiar with the rig, it's a "DC to daylight" transceiver. This particular radio is one of the originals, not a "D" model. I've owned it for a long time and I am fairly familiar with the way it operates. It's capable of 100 watts output and, at least during my ownership, has always been run "barefoot" (no amp).

The antenna tuner is not, strictly speaking, necessary. The Wolf River Coil has a set of collars which can be used to tune the whip to resonance. However, it does tend to be a bit "touchy". When the weather is sub-optimal, I will often tune this to "close enough" in the driveway, at home. When we set up the portable station we then run the antenna input through the tuner to protect the finals in the radio. The nice thing about this tuner is that once it has a tuning solution and the relays are locked up, it makes no further demands for current on the battery.

Our RV battery is two years old. When the time comes to replace it, we'll look hard at one of the larger (over 20 Ahr) Bioenno or Miady LiFePo batteries. What we have is fine for now, but battery technology is evolving very rapidly. I fully expect that by the time we need to replace this that there will be a lot available which is faster (to charge), cheaper, better, etc.

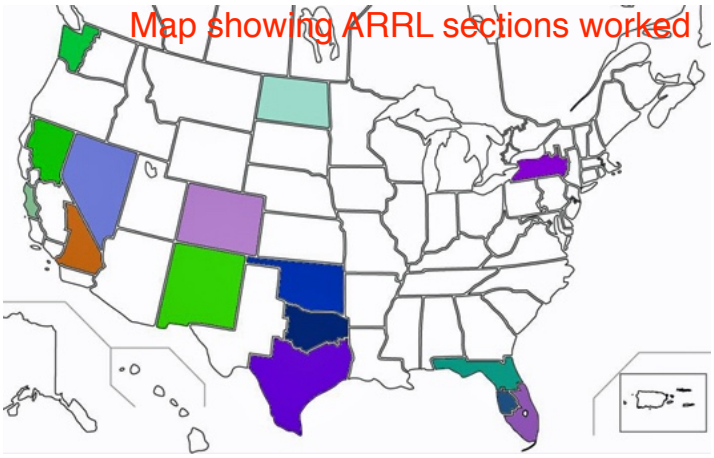
So that's about it for the toys. How did they play? What's the data look like? First and foremost you should know that our operating time was limited. We felt we could justify operating about 6 hours in this style, and were able to do so. We worked from 2:00 PM local to 8:00 PM local, on site. As above

our transit time from home was about 45 minutes, each way. This operation used about 30% of our battery. In general, we ran at full power (100 watts maximum).

During this period we made 20 contacts on 20 meters. We also earned a number of bonus points (4500) for operating a battery powered station, with 100 watts or less power, outdoors and away from our home. Our total score was 4540 points.

I was somewhat disappointed that our number of contacts was not larger. For that time period, I would have liked to see twice this number of contacts. That did not happen, primarily due to the number of "home" stations in the contest this year. The vast majority of these stations were "running power" (using an amplifier). They were able to easily blow the 100 watt stations right out of the pile ups.

O.K., so much for the bad, how about the good? I was tickled that we were able to make contacts over a lot of the continental US. Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, California, Washington were all represented. 20 meters certainly held up



it's reputation for "going long" once the sun went down! The other nice thing about this time period was the fact that many stations were off the air for dinner between 5 PM and 6 PM, which gave us an opportunity for some "clear air" to stake out a frequency and try to establish a run. Sadly, our longest run was four contacts … also related to the fact that everyone was eating dinner!

Unfortunately, we were disappointed by some very bad behavior by other amateur operators. Talking over an ongoing QSO, tuning on top of the station you wish to work, repeating your call sign numerous times in a pile up, and many more.

Some of this behavior is probably related to propagation (the people doing some of this may not have been able to hear what they were doing). However, a lot of it was not. Very disappointing … it seems like we have forgotten how to treat each other!

I think we all know we can do better. Let's make Cycle 25 a model of good behavior, not a free for all fistfight!

Weather? Yes, we had some … it was about 14 degrees when we arrived on site, with some sun. When we picked up to come home, it was in the single digits with a little bit of breeze. It let you know right where the holes in your clothes were, that's for sure!

Would I do this again, next year? What would I do differently, if we do it again? Is there anything about the contest you would like to see changed?

First and foremost, yes, I think we would do it again. We enjoy this type of operation a lot. Donna and I have done enough of this type of work that we are fairly good at it. We have fun with it!

Things to do differently? I'd like to find, or build, some type of power meter / voltage regulator. We need to be able to monitor our battery life in real time. Being able to maintain 12.8 volts, even when the battery enters it's downward slope on the power curve, would be very nice. With this radio, once battery voltage drops below about 11.3 volts, the crowbar circuit folds back the power … you may think you are operating 100 watts, but when you check RF power out, you discover you're only making about 65 watts!

Things to change in the contest? I think it's time to run this on two separate weekends. One weekend for the home and other indoor folks who want to "run power", and another for those who choose to run a true "outdoor" station on 100 watts or less. This would provide a much more level playing field, for both groups.

What was your Winter Field Day like? How and where did you operate; what kinds of contacts were you able to make? Inquiring minds want to know!

Want any photos or stories published in *The KLARION*? Please send them to n2fms@frontier.com