INDIANA FIREFLIES QRP CLUB

Issue 2

Letter from the Editor

Hello fellow QRP'ers and welcome back! Spring has finally arrived here in Central Indiana and I have been able to get out and enjoy a little "two wheel therapy" on my QRP scoot, a 50cc Maddog made by Icebear. It does not set any speed records, but man is it loud and fun to ride! For me it's more about taking time to enjoy the ride and not how quick I get to the destination. The ability to ride 80+ miles on 1 gallon of gas is a big benefit as well. "Doing more with less" … isn't that what QRP is all about? I am excited to share our second issue of the Fireflies QRP e-newsletter with you. If you would like a copy of issue #1, just let me know.

Happy reading!

72 de NR9R Mike

Hello, my name is …?

Last month we asked everyone for ideas on names they had for this e-newsletter. We received several suggestions and narrowed it down to a list of 7 names. Now, it is up to you all to vote on which one you like best. Thank you to everyone who took the time to send in a name.

The name with the most votes wins and will become the new name of this monthly e-newsletter.

- The Buzz
- The Bug Light
- The Spark
- The Guided Light
- The LIGHTer Side
- Seven Two
- Five Lights

Please send your vote to firefliesQRP@gmail.com …the winner will be announced next month.

Monthly QRPizza Gathering

The Fireflies QRP Club does not have regular formal meetings like most clubs. Instead we choose to meet at a local pizza restaurant to swap stories about recent QRP adventures, show off our latest creations, and plan future outings and contest.

QRPizza Gathering

May 1st at 5:55PM
Chicago Pizza
2230 Stafford Road
Plainfield, IN 46168

Last month's QRPizza gathering was a blast. I am really looking forward to continuing this tradition. I hope to see you all out there.

Do you have a local pizza restaurant in your area that you would like to host a QRPizza event at? Please let us know by emailing firefliesQRP@gmail.com

Frisbees in the Park

Over the last two years we have hosted a variety of “In the Park” events and shared everything from donuts to chili dogs while operating QRP in the park. These were definitely our most popular events and we plan to do several more in 2019.

During an “In the Park” event we invite anyone and everyone interested in operating QRP to join us at a local park and get on the air. They can bring their own equipment or use one of our stations already setup. This is a great opportunity for those new to the hobby to get some great hands on experience. Are you learning morse code? Come out and join us and we can help you with your first CW QSO.

Brian KB9BVN will be hosting our next event called “Frisbees in the Park”. Join us and enjoy a little disc golf and QRP amateur radio.

Frisbees in the Park

May 8th at 5:55PM
West Park in New Whiteland
300 Mooreland Drive
New Whiteland, IN 46184

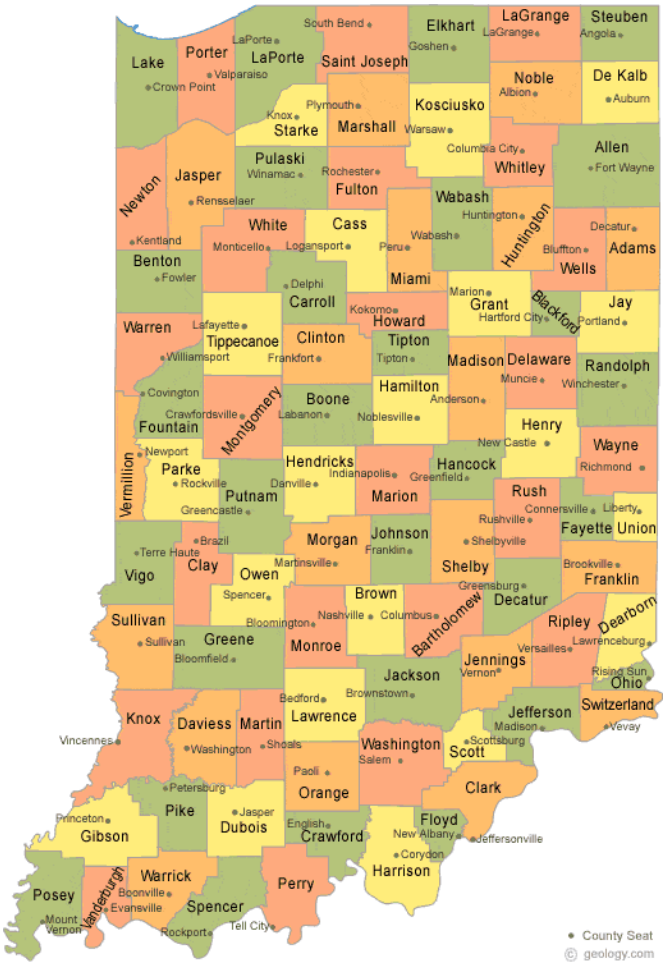
Indiana QSO Party

The Indiana QSO party, also known as INQP is quickly approaching, are you ready?

The Hoosier DX and Contest Club sponsors this fun event and provides awards for many different accomplishments including “worked all counties” if you can work 60 counties. One of our Fireflies QRP founders, Ivin W9ILF has won the QRP category several years in a row.

Is anyone going to give Ivin a run for his money this year?

The event is May 4, 2019. If you are participating good luck and May the 4th be with you. ☺



Indiana QSO Party

May 4th 11AM-11PM (local time)

For more information about INQP, check out their website at: http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp/

Firefly QRP Adventures

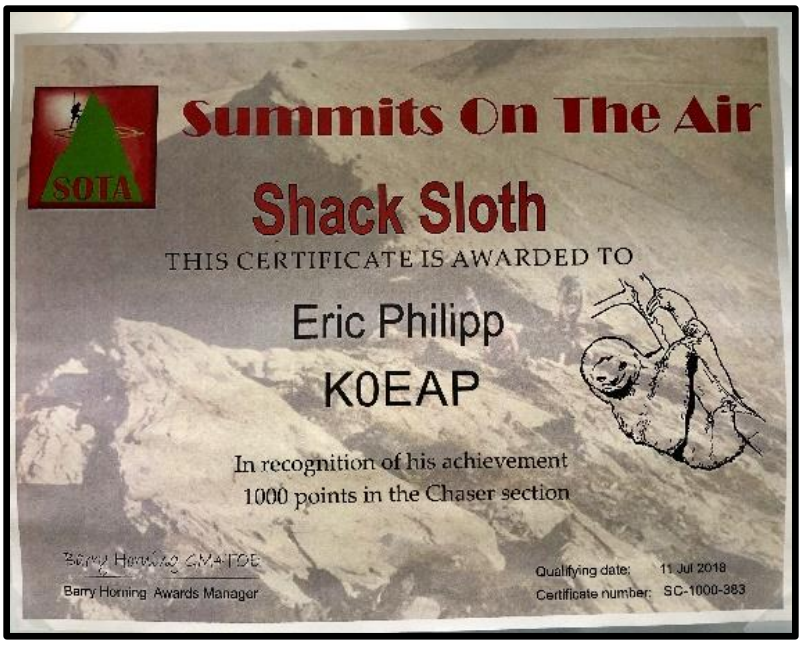
This month's adventure comes to us from Eric K0EAP from Lakeville, MN. Eric has been an amateur radio operator since 2008. After completing CW academy in 2018 he became very interested in operating CW and chasing both DX and SOTA activators. Eric is very active in the amateur radio community and he is a great ambassador for both QRP and CW. Eric's enthusiasm for the hobby is very contagious. One thing he really enjoys is QRP "Lunchtime on the Air" or as he calls it on Twitter… #LTOTA, and that we pick up on his adventure.

CQ "Lunchtime on the Air"

My name is Eric, my amateur radio call sign is K0EAP and I am a QRP CW operator. First, I am very active on Twitter. My Twitter feed is @KD0FZT which is my old call sign, please follow me if you like.

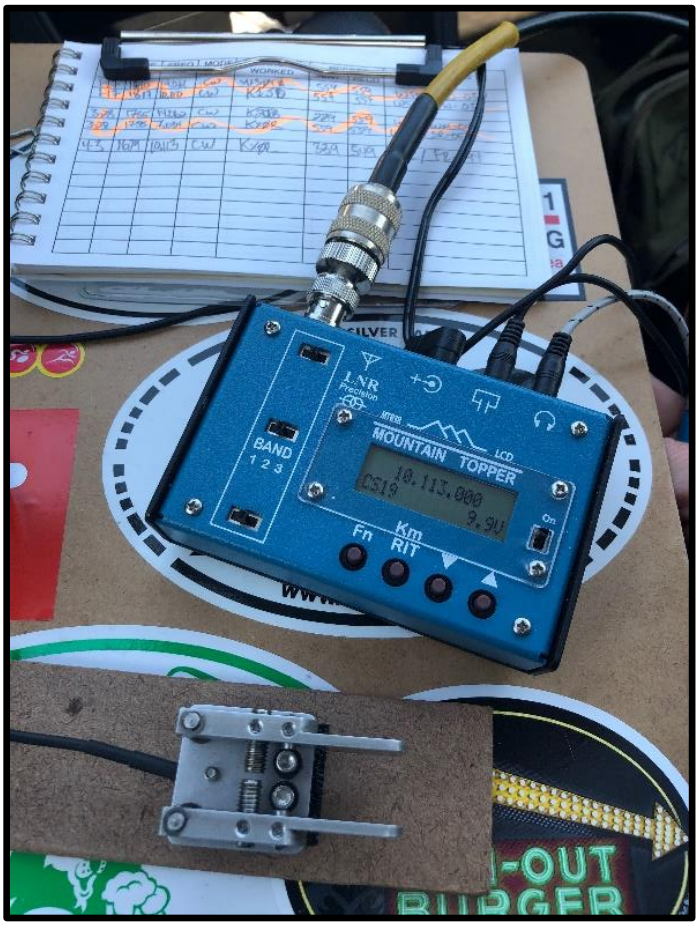
Second, I am going to make a bold statement here. I am pretty sure I invented the hashtag #LTOTA which stands for Lunch Time on The Air. After finishing CWOPS Academy Level 1, I started bringing a small portable station to work with me every day. I would go and setup at a local park not far from where I work and have lunch, get on the air and practice my new skill, CW. I quickly discovered that I was hearing a lot of SOTA (Summits on the Air) stations during my lunch hour so I started chasing them, and then more of them and then still more. As a new CW operator, I discovered that SOTA was a perfect way to practice my CW and make some contacts with highly skilled CW activators that want to work me and are incredibly patient in doing so.

Why SOTA chasing for the beginner CW operator or for the expert alike? The spotting network is wonderful and like I said the activators are top notch and they want to work you! With the spotting network you know what frequency the activator is on and you know their call sign, so when you spin the dial you know what to listen for I find that very helpful. The exchange is easy as well which is perfect for a new CW operator. When I make a contact it usually goes like



this, I will send my call, they will reply with my call and my RST and then I will send their RST, my state, a thank you and a 73. They will usually then respond with a 73 and a dit dit. I send a dit dit as the final good bye and we both move on. As always listen before sending, each activator has a flow to how they run their activation and if you listen for a few minutes you will get that rhythm and know when you should send your call!

Since I started chasing SOTA over lunch I have worked 340 SOTA stations in just over a year that I have been running my little lunch time station. Of the total 444 SOTA stations to date I have worked since I started chasing, 340 of them are over my lunch hour running QRP! I became a SOTA CW Shack Sloth in July 2018 with a 20m CW contact to a SOTA station in Washington State. It was very exciting!



I then started tweeting about #LTOTA, chasing SOTA and all the fun I was having on Twitter. I started seeing others doing the same, setting up over lunch and tweeting with the #LTOTA hashtag. In a few cases I have setup quick contacts with other lunch time QRP stations, they are called LTL or Lunch to Lunch QSOs. It has been so much fun to get to know other QRP Lunch time people over Twitter and see what others are doing for their stations. Myself, I usually run an LNR Precision MTR3B into an Alpha Antenna HD FMJ Vertical antenna. I have had great luck with this setup. I even worked Hawaii from my lunch station.

3 watts from Minnesota to Ninole Hawaii on the big island is just over 3900 miles. So, about 1300 miles per watt! Not bad at all.

Give Lunch Time on the Air a try! Check out SOTA as well if you are new to that! It's a lot of fun. I will always be up for a quick lunch contact!

CQ CQ DE K0EAP K0EAP LTOTA K

73 de K0EAP Eric

A note from NR9R about #LTOTA…

I follow Eric on Twitter and was inspired by him to pack my "ham lunch box" this past winter. My setup was quick and easy using my mcHF QRP radio with the W9ILF hamstick mount antenna. I did have to operate from inside the warmth of my car thanks to mother nature, but it was a great way to unplug from the stress of work for 30-45 minutes. The highlight for me was when Eric and I had a "lunch to lunch" QRP QSO on 40 meters, after that I was hooked. Now that Spring has arrived I look forward to continuing to participate in #LTOTA from the comfort of a good old picnic table in the park.

See below for some of my #LTOTA photos.

Single Band Radios

Who says you must break the bank to get on HF? There are several single band QRP radios available both as kits and complete radios for less than $200. Over the next couple of months Ivin W9ILF is going to share with us some of his experiences with building and operating single band QRP radios. If you have any questions for Ivin about single band QRP radios, just send it to us here at firefliesQRP@gmail.com and Ivin will answer your question in next month's newsletter.

Hello, my name is Ivin and my callsign is W9ILF. For years I have been enjoying single band QRP radios. There are many reasons I prefer using these radios for casual use on the ham bands. They typically have low power consumption. They are inexpensive. Simple to operate. You can often build them yourself and, Oh, you might just learn from them as well.

My first single band radio was a Small Wonder Labs SW+ series 40-meter radio. This has been replaced by the hilltopper single band radio offered by four states QRP club. I believe most of us in the hobby of amateur radio remember our first HF radio very well with fond memories. The radio that could exceed that is the first radio…you build. I met Brian KB9BVN before getting into HF and he recommended this kit along with telling me if I ever wanted to build a radio to get ahold of him. In the mean time I met Bill on Straight Key Night one New Year's Eve. We decided that night to both buy and build this kit. This turned into a great friendship and weekly SKEDS that lasted many years. Of course, I got ahold of Brian and he gave me extra parts I would need but had no idea really what they were. Things like potentiometers, phone and power jacks. I was on a shipping list with Small Wonder Labs and it took weeks to get my kit.

It took me a couple weeks to build my SW+. I went slowly, and I learned what each part was. I had earned my general class license but most of us know that doesn't mean we know what

component parts look like and are called. I had opened electronic things before and seen parts. I leaned some electronic theory studying for my exams. However, it took building a kit to put the two together. So, when the instructions said to put a resistor in R1 I had to look up on my dial-up internet what that looked like. Soon I got the hang of it all and was going strong. Then, hmmm… a glass diode sure looks like a resistor. Which way do you position a transistor on the board? Which end goes where on putting in the diode? Does a capacitor have polarity as well? Wrap magnet wire through a toroid how many times??? Not to mention get that red film off somehow on the ends before soldering it into place. Each step is a learning process. Go slow and there are no stupid questions when you can ask in the secrecy of the internet. The only stupid move is to move forward by guessing. When I needed a life line I would call Brian and ask questions. Once I even caught him at a funeral visitation, but he was just fine with it and answered my questions and told me jokes along the way. I got the board done and carefully followed instructions about installing those parts Brian gave me. Remember…. Jacks and potentiometers…. Oh yea…. Brian gave me a 10-turn pot for some reason for the VFO. So, I used it. Brian recommended a stepper drill bit to not leave a burr on the project box. "tricks of the trade" Later I learned that 10 turn pot allowed me to tune slower through the bands easier.

The time came to hook an antenna to it and hope beyond all hope it would actually work. Sure enough, I heard stations and keying up I had output power! Unfortunately, it was only temporary because cold solders caused me problems down the road and remember that red film on the magnet wire. Oh yea, that is important as well. The radio would work a little while and then quit. Just poking around on the board with my finger could normally show me intermittent problems. Push a part around and it works, then it won't. That can easily uncover a cold solder. My SW+ isn't so pretty under the board. I left the leads too long, but it still works. I burned the pad off the antenna connector, but I bypassed that pad and got it going anyway.

As years have gone on I have played with this radio a lot and modified things. I put a freq-mite with it. This tells the frequency your operating on in Morse code. I decided the project box I had was too big and put it into something smaller. I added a mod that increases the bandwidth another 50k. I talked to Bill, the guy from SKN, with it. He got his working as well and we shared our joy and frustrations together weekly. This radio has gone to the woods with me hiking and every QSO is pure joy because I built it.

This first radio I built has taught me an awful lot about component parts. Trouble shooting. It helped me build friendships and how to humbly ask for help. At 1.5 watts output it has very low power consumption. The receiver is good for casual operating but not a contest grade

receiver. If you are new to HF I recommend something with at least 5 watts to ensure good quality QSO's often. However, I have had very nice QSO's with my SW+ that lasted at least 30 minutes or more. Just hook a good antenna to it and enjoy!

72 de W9ILF Ivin

CQ Fireflies (FF)

Did you know that we not only have Fireflies members here in Indiana, but also across the United States and around the World?

One of the things we discussed at our last get together was the possibility of doing a monthly "Fireflies Sprint" on the air. Groups like ours will typically have a two-hour event each month where points are rewarded for QSOs with any station and bonuses for completing a QSO with another Firefly (FF) station.

If we are not wanting to do this monthly, we can look at doing it quarterly or annually instead. It would require us to assign Firefly (FF) numbers to everyone for the exchange.

What do you think? Should we give out "FF numbers" and do a monthly two-hour sprint? If so, is there anyone out there who would be interested in organizing the sprint?

Please send all feedback to firefliesQRP@gmail.com

QuirkyQRP

The founder and creator of QuirkyQRP, James Hannibal KH2SR, has offered to send our club one of his latest creations, the "QuirkyQRP Slinktenna". In exchange, we have agreed to use this antenna at some of our events this summer and share our review of the product with everyone. I am very excited and looking forward to finding out what we can do with this new twist on a classic antenna.

Once we receive the antenna we will announce a date and location for the event.

For more details on the Slinktenna and other products made by James like the QuirkyQRP keychain transmitters, check out his website at:
https://www.etsy.com/shop/QuirkyQRPHamRadios
and follow him on Twitter at @QuirkyQRP

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Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this, the second issue of our monthly newsletter. If you have something you would like to see in future issues, please let us know.

If you would like to share one of your QRP adventures with the rest of us, please send in your story and photos to firefliesQRP@gmail.com

Until next time, 72 and have fun! de Mike NR9R