

Four State QRP Group

Terry Fletcher, WAØITP



Rick, KCØPET and his Winning, Whacky, Veggie Key

The Four State QRP Group is devoted to low power amateur radio building and operation. We fund and organize an annual conference, OzarkCon, which fosters radio related education, disseminates information and provides a forum for information exchange. Continuing OzarkCon is a major ongoing goal. We also provide weekly nets to encourage low power communication skills and camaraderie. We intend to be a significant entity promoting

QRP activities within the ranks of amateur radio. The header on our email reflector says it all; we are a friendly and welcoming group. Don Jackson, AE5K, administers the email list. Shared by hundreds of hams worldwide, it connects far-flung members into a community of radio builders and low-power operators.

One can't talk about Four States without discussing OzarkCon, as the conference is a major reason for the group's existence. OzarkCon was the outgrowth of ArkieCon. Jay Bromley, W5JAY, and the Fort Smith QRP Group were instrumental in promoting ArkieCon. After several years a break was needed. In 2003 Joe Porter, WØMQY; Dave Bixler, WØCH; Gene Sailsbury, NØMQ; and Bart Lawson, WØIIT, picked up the mantle, renamed the conference OzarkCon, and moved it to Joplin, Mo. The early kit offerings to get the ball rolling were the Tenna Dipper and the Power/SWR meter, both KD1JV designs. Bart Kitted the PWR/SWR meter and Gene kitted the Tenna Dipper. The kits were well received and the first OzarkCon was held at the Joplin Ramada Inn on April 9 and 10, 2004.

Although Four State originally started out as a regional club encompassing the four states of Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri, it quickly outgrew those four states with members worldwide participating in our activities.

After the Joplin Ramada Inn was sold to La Quinta, it became increasing difficult to schedule OzarkCon near the same time period, and it was decided that a change of venue was needed. Branson, Mo. was chosen and after another search for a suitable location, the Stonecastle Inn and Conference Center was selected. Branson has an ideal mix of family activities for the attendees and the community welcomed us with open arms. While we hams are at the conference, the rest of the family can be entertained at shows, shopping, or sight seeing.

During the Joplin years Joe Porter, WØMQY, organized, and coordinated with the Ramada staff, and OzarkCon became well known and developed a reputation as a first class QRP gathering. The first Branson conference was held on May 1-2, 2009. The Branson location was a hit from the start, the attendees encountering smiling faces and pleasant voices everywhere they turned, both at the hotel and in the community. The 2010 conference went very smoothly as lessons learned from 2009 were applied. The 2011 conference planning is well along and truly will be the best yet. That is a tall order considering the quality of past presentations, vendors, number of door prizes, whacky keys and, most importantly, the friendship QRP'ers enjoy. To lock in dates and costs, a five-year contract was signed with the Stonecastle Hotel and Conference Center, and future dates are posted on the OzarkCon Web page.



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

K9YA Telegraph



Kit Building at OzarkCon



Bart Lawson, WØIIT, with "Big Brutus" in Background

As mentioned, a major goal of the Four State fund is to organize, fund, and conduct OzarkCon annually. Sales of QRP-related kits is the way that is accomplished. A cadre of dedicated kitter/shippers handles hundreds of kits each year. A full listing of available kits, documentation and order pages can be found at the kit link below. Our dedicated kitters are Paul Smith, NØNBD; Dave Bixler, WØCH; Johnny Matlock, ACØBQ; and Bob Ball, KL7AH, and Eileen Hall (we call them the B&E team). Several others have volunteered and will be doing new kits as they come along.

Along with the designers' excellent and continuing projects the kitters' considerable efforts are what keep OzarkCon an annual event. There are several new

*"world-class
designers"*

designs in the works, which we hope to introduce in January 2011. As usual, you can expect them to be of high quality, innovative in design, with good performance, and cost effectiveness—all good ham radio characteristics.

Four States is fortunate to have world-class designers who are, and have been, willing to help support the Group, among whom are Jim Kortge, K8IQY; Dave Cripe, NMØS; Steve Weber, KD1JV; Craig Johnson, AAØZZ; and Wayne McFee, NB6M. Their knowledge and engineering talents have made OzarkCon possible.

Our weekly nets are conducted to encourage improvement in low power communication skills and fellowship. There are three nets, all meeting on Wednesday evenings.



Mert Nellis, WØUFO,
Operating KØN, Special
Event Station

8:00 CST, 0200Z: Comfortable CW net meets on 3.563. Terry, WAØITP, NCS
8:30 CST, 0230Z: New 160-meter net meets on 1.810. Nate, NØNB, NCS
9:00 CST, 0300Z: PSK net meets on 3.580.5. Chuck, K6QKL, NCS

Please feel free to check in anytime, we'd like to hear from you. We are a friendly group, the nets are low key and, for want of a better word, are "comfortable" ones in which to participate.

The group is widely distributed with approximately 200 members across the U.S. and some DX. Those near southeast Missouri meet monthly in Seneca, Mo., and several kitting parties have developed after this meeting. The future looks bright with new kits coming along soon and a great venue in which to hold OzarkCon. Many of the details of the conference plans are already completed and on automatic for next year. An example of one of those will be evident when the new pre-registration page is unveiled early in 2011. Webmaster, Dave Martin, K5DCM, has devised an online registration form that is very quick and easy to use and provides a Paypal option.

The Four State QRP Group will continue to promote QRP building, operating, and radio education, please join us. ■



2010 OzarkCon Banquet



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org