

County Hunter News

April 2021
Volume 17 Issue 4

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

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CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now occasionally on 7188 KHz. The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.W6RK.com

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:

<http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm>

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

<http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm>

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can

find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://marac.org/awards.pdf>

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

De N4CD, Bob Voss, Editor (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumbleings

1) Sunspots – We got sunspots! Then we didn't. Then they disappeared for weeks. What's up with the sun? Now mid March we've had a couple weeks of sunspot numbers in the 20s. Let's hope it ramps up from here! Conditions still not great and 15 and 10m mostly dead. Around the 20th, a major geomagnetic storm took conditions to the poor area for a few days. A index up at 29, K at 5 and not so great propagation for many. We had sunspots most of the month for a change.

2) The Electric Grid - “The real problem, not just in Texas but everywhere where energy demand is growing, is grid reliability and resiliency. **The US electrical grid is the largest interconnected machine on Earth: 200,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and 5.5 million miles of local distribution lines, linking thousands of generating plants to factories, homes, and businesses.** This is one massive system, and the sources that feed it electricity have become increasingly diversified. Grid reliability has come to the fore because of the decarbonization of electricity generation. While the Texas legislature will have to deal with Texas's current mess, there are more important problems that can only be dealt with in Washington.” (source – the The Energy Bulletin, of March 8, 2021) .

3) One Year Ago

One year ago – in mid March – I took a 4 day trip to Oklahoma for parks and for the Oklahoma QSO Party. The world had not heard much about COVID at that point – in fact were referring to it as 'novel corona-virus' or 'the Chinese one'. Travel restrictions? Just beginning with some international travel starting to stop from Asia and Europe. Some European countries going into quarantine. Otherwise? Nope. Masks and social distancing? Just being talked about. I had no problem staying motels, zipping in and out of convenience stores, eating in restaurants on the trip.

Then suddenly the world changed from March 11 to March 13, 2020. Pretty much carefree before. Trip fine.

When I got back home, COVID was all over the news. Dayton Hamvention – canceled. Belton Hamfest in April – canceled. Hamcom Dallas (8000 people) – canceled. MI Mini – canceled. Just about every other hamfest/event – canceled. Suddenly – over one weekend, the world had gone from care-free to 'oh,my gosh' lock-downs, masks, social distancing, closing of restaurants, stadiums, sports and just about everything else. Killer virus out to get you and seniors dying left and right. MARAC National Convention in Portland – canceled. Tokyo Olympics canceled. Airlines saw passenger counts drop by 90% overnight.

Toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning stuff (Lysol) as well as bread, milk, canned goods, meat – vanished from store shelves in panic buying. You saw pictures of hoarded stacks of toilet paper in garages 3000 deep. Duh! Likely be sold at 10c on the dollar one of these days if they can even find a buyer. Took 3 months for stores to get back to normal.

It's a year later. Things are still locked down or shut down. Dayton Hamfest – canceled. Orlando – canceled. Dayton – not this year! Hamcom- - canceled. Belton TX Swapmeet – canceled. MI Mini – canceled. Most hamfests – canceled. We're just beginning to see very limited attendance at sports games – maybe 10%? Going to 100% at some games in Texas soon. Still no music concerts, venues, and many state parks and national parks very limited as to what happens and how many folks can be there at any given time. Well, a few music venues here now starting to open. Texas just started to open up, after a year of no inside seating or limited seating, no music venues, bars, etc. A slow re-opening in TX after 'capacity limitations' across the board for most – but some restaurants going for 100%. Now TX is somewhat back to normal, but masking and capacity limitations persist. You've got to wear a mask to enter food stores and restaurants around here.

A year later, gas prices have gone from \$1.60 a gallon to \$2.59 and rising in TX in one year. Thanks Joe Biden and the 'greenies'.

The good news is that vaccine is flowing by the tens of millions of doses. Hopefully all county hunters have either gotten their shots or are in line. The 'end' of this can't come soon enough, but we're still wearing masks, social distancing, Likely no large gatherings for another six months. Even then, with 'variants', who knows? Likely they'll be booster shots coming this fall/winter, too, to handle the new strains.

The faster and MORE people who get vaccinated, the faster this will end. Sadly, it looks like 30% of US folks just can find excuses to prolong the agony by not getting their vaccination.

Europe has just entered it's 'third wave' with new variants spreading like wildfire. Part of the problem is 'lockdown fatigue' as they started early and didn't open till recently or at all. Month long lockdown in France now and Germany talking about it. Amazingly, the big hamfest in Friedrichshaven Germany is 'still on' at this time, but likely international borders will still be closed – or require quarantining for 14 days if you head there from other countries – so who is going to show up? Vendors from out of country? Not likely. A dozen EU countries are now seeing spikes once again from the variants and most EU countries are far behind Britain and the US in getting folks vaccinated.

This pandemic could easily drag on till the end of 2021. Don't make plans to travel overseas, to Canada, any time soon. Maybe next summer 2022. The more idiots who are anti-vaxxers, the longer this will drag on as they continue to get sick and spread the variants among the non-vaccinated. Joe Biden causing 100,000 border runners a month, NONE of them tested for COVID, coming to the US – is another potential covid disaster as they bring all sorts of variants with them from overseas.

What can you say? Well, maybe some short trips here in the mean time till things are really headed down in new cases.

South Carolina QSO Party

At least 3 mobiles were out - W4AN, K4ZGB, K8MR

Some contest regulars were distracted by the 160m contest going on at the same time -

W44N MOBILE 1218 CW

That was a fun QSO Party. It was nice to give our good friend W6OAT his last few counties in SC. The pileups were great. 80, 40 and 20 meters had excellent conditions.

Unfortunately we had a mishap when taking everything apart on Saturday night, When removing the antennas off the trunk lid we whacked something against the back windshield of John's Toyota and shattered it. We tried to get some help by calling the insurance company and the AAA which was a total exercise in frustration. It appears there is no one that can replace the window or do a temporary fix (crash wrap) during the weekend. It's not drive-able for the four hour trip home. We need to get home by Monday so we are probably going to have to rent a car to get home on Sunday and John will leave his car behind to have it repaired and we will have to come back next week to get it.

So I guess that means no NC QSO Party for us on Sunday. Sorry to disappoint everyone. We are disappointed as well since we were looking forward to it. As the saying goes sh*t happens :(

Jeff KU8E for the W4AN team

N4CW multi-op mobile 565 CW

Isn't it great when trying something new and everything goes right. Left the house at 6:15AM headed to first stop in SC for QSO Party and arrived 45 minutes early! Within 5 minutes a trooper pulls up, great :(. Just curious about the antennas. Nice guy. Turn the rigs on and the TS590 decides it doesn't like any antennas now that it's left home. OK, we'll run just the K3. It's a veteran of these runs anyway. We're up and running from our first county line!

After the allowed 25 mins per stop, off I go and there's something rattling on the roof. Sounds small, I'll check it on the next later. Arrive at next county line, Bert (N4CW) is running, and the noise on the roof turned out to be the external antenna for cell reception. Weak magnet so it got lashed to the luggage rack. Fixed.

Couple of stops later and a nice couple pulls along side while I'm stopped on a gravel road. Woman wants to know if I'm Google mapping. I give a quick explanation of ham radio and she exclaims "Kinda like CB isn't it!" There's a flash of how I'll explain the difference, how long it'll take and how blank the look on their face will become. So my answer is "Yep, pretty much". Ended the conversation with how I'd build everything as a kid and my Dad would offer the words of wisdom "Why don't you just pick up the phone and call him". They left laughing, guess they enjoyed the talk.

On to nightfall, Bert's running 80M as I'm driving thru a small town and the K3 suddenly shuts off. Turn it on, a CQ and it shuts off. It's 14 hrs since I started driving this AM, fuzziness is beginning to set into my brain. Pull into parking lot, do a walk around, check connections, try again. Same results so I decide to call it with an hour left in contest. Plug "home" into Google maps on my phone and head out.

Something seems odd about the directions and after about 10 minutes I'm at a 3 way stop and Google wants me to continue straight -- onto a dirt path that leads into the woods. Decide to reboot phone and start over. Won't reboot. Screen is frozen at 8:03PM, I'm in the middle of nowhere South Carolina, no houses and no phone! I scan the horizon and decide to head toward the TV tower in the distance. A sign for Rt 378 comes up, then another that says 23 mi to Sumter and I know I-95 is between me and Sumter. Salvation! A few minutes later I'm headed north on I-95 and I know the rest of the way by heart.

So that was my day as a Rover station in the SC QSO Party. The "new" part? Bert operated from home in Raleigh NC to make 95% of the contacts. Connected to the rig in the car using Internet via cell towers. Surprisingly, Verizon kept us connected for a large majority of the time while driving.

It's 8AM Sunday. The K3 problem: turned out to be low voltage as we'd drained the external battery (oops, my bad). And apparently my cell phone needed to completely discharge as it came on when I plugged in the charger this AM and all seems OK. I'll be heading out in an hour for the NC QSO party, remote op again. Hope it ends with less drama than yesterday.

Thanks to everyone for all the Q's. Wouldn't be a party without ya'all!

[by Bert, N4CW]

I operated remotely TO HIS MOBILE STATION. It was our first attempt at this remote thing, and operating mobile made it really challenging. Jim engineered the

communications setup, made an operating "desk" for the passenger seat, and even built the antenna setups (one on the trailer hitch, and two on a roof rack)...all on a Prius!!! Ignition noise wasn't a problem, and what noise there was came from the power supplies. I had no control over the situation while operating...I could only use the keyboard and a vision of N1MM+ that reflected what was on Jim's laptop in the car. We pretty much licked the latency problem, but cell communications wasn't 100% reliable and at my end I would frequently get "pops" when the signal dropped for a few milliseconds, enough to miss a dit! That usually wasn't a problem, but necessitated lots of "?" or "AGN?"...then, as a final blow, the batteries were exhausted with two hours (more or less) to go! All during the event we maintained cellphone voice communications.

I'll bet remote/mobile a first! But, we definitely maintained "social distancing"; yet, we managed a fun operation! I apologize for not chatting much; that was due to the fact that I rarely chat via keyboard, only using a paddle for that...but we haven't figured how to do the paddle thing yet!

Thanks for all your patience, all y'all...it was a great day!

73 from Jim and me!

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de N4CD – wonder how that actually works for county hunting credit? One of the ops is sitting at home, maybe a state away, and making contacts via a remote 'mobile'? I guess it's unexplored territory for MARAC to worry about – above my pay grade here. Usually you've got to be 'in' the county to give it out. Sort of like putting a repeater in Kalawao HI and letting anyone 'repeat' via it or log on from home using their callsign? Dunno. Now a days, a good number of stations in QSO parties are being run remote by someone in another state so if you work XYZ county, you've worked a 'station' in that county but the operator might be 1000 miles away. I guess if you count 'station' that works. For county hunting where often the 'credentials' of the operator determine what awards they count for – like Bingo, MG, MP, DD, stars, etc- who knows?

W6OAT - fixed - WA - 48 CW 29 SSB

Thanks to W4AN/m and K8MR/m, I worked all five of the remaining SC counties I still needed for USA-CA.

WB8WKQ - fixed MI 61 CW 42 SSB

Well, for the first time, I topped 100 QSOs in this contest. Was close in 2017 with 93. I wonder if the fact I worked AA4TI four times, with four counties per, threw me over the top? Pretty fun contest. Couldn't work much (3 Q's) on 20M. And, nothing on 160M, probably due to the 160 SSB contest. With that said, using only 40 and 80, I guess it went pretty well from an outsider's point of view. Hats off to my buddy WN4AFP and his "gang" for putting on a great contest. Many thanks to the mobiles too, who really made this contest. Thanks for all the Q's!

North Carolina QSO Party

W4AN mobile 746 CW

This is the rest of the story. See the SCQP 3830 post for the beginning. My "new" 2017 Toyota Avalon ended the night after the SC QSO Party with a shattered back window. USAA (my insurance co), Safelite, and AAA were unable to find anyone who could replace it on Sunday. I spent a miserable night knowing that we would be letting down people (e.g. W6OAT and N0KV among others) who needed some rare counties that we had planned to cover. I thought we would have to sit around the hotel or have to rent a car and drive home, but didn't know where I could safely leave my car.

Sunday morning we did reach a car glass repairman who has promised to replace the window by noon or 1 PM Monday. Jeff,KU8E, broke the rest of the glass out of the back window. We went to a car wash and used a vacuum and got up most of the tiny pieces of glass. We then got a plastic painter's drop at Lowe's and taped it over the back window. After lunch, we went up into NC as far as we could and get back to our hotel where we are to meet the repairman Monday.

Very sorry we didn't get to the rarer of the counties on our route. I had thought we wouldn't operate at all, but Jeff insisted and I am glad we did. It wasn't too noisy, it didn't rain, and we got home before it got too cold. So here are the results of operating almost half of the contest all on CW. 20M was not very productive. I assume it may have been earlier. We kept going to 20M in every county until about 2300Z when we replaced the 20M resonator with the 80M resonator. We could switch between 40 and 20 during the day and 40 and 80 at night instantaneously selecting the desired band on

the TS590.

Thanks for all the QSOs and in particular thanks for those who persevered until the end when the Slow Speed Test QRM was intense on 40 and not quite so bad on 80M. Might suggest starting an hour earlier next year and finishing at 2359Z so there will be no conflict between the two worthwhile activities. Thanks to the organizers. We worked K8MR in one county, but missed hearing N4CW and K4QPL. I hope they were QRV. Special thanks to Jeff, KU8E, chief engineer, main driver, and superb navigator. 73, John, K4BAI.

K3TD Mobile 536 CW

What a party! Jim, K4QPL, only returned from VP5 (ARRL DX CW) late Saturday night and we only started preparing the mobile Sunday morning. A few glitches when the DC line to the rear of the Audi wouldn't hold key-down voltage and K3 shut down.

Had to quickly put a motorcycle battery in parallel inside the car. Worked fine but couldn't get N1MM+ loaded properly to insert the {roverqth} county. Probably op issue but got it working and we only started at 1545. Noise was the theme after that--band noise and line noise, sometimes lasting for miles along the highway.

Nevertheless we had fun with our loyal following of VE/K and DX ops tracking us into each new county. When we tried to move to 15 we found RF was getting into the USB line and locking up the computer which required reboots and that took time to trace the problem and get going again. Thanks to Rusty, W6OAT, while we tried to get it working and eventually just logged him without the K3 attached.

Tad as usual did the heavy lifting on navigation while having his ears blasted from the noise and pileups on the speaker. We took regular breaks and tried to enjoy the trip so our hours were limited.

Thanks to the organizers for making things happen and most of all to all the ops who chased us around this great state of North Carolina.

73,
Jim, K4QPL
Tad, K3TD

W4TMO Multi-Op Mobile 1113 CW QSO (N4CW and W4TMO ops)

The SCQP was "practice", and Jim and I learned a lot! It wasn't easy. Relying on cell

phone communications for audio as well as video/control is tricky at best, and Jim found a way! Jim engineered the communications setup, made an operating "desk" for the passenger seat, and even built the antenna setups (one on the trailer hitch, and two on a roof rack)...all on a Prius!!! Ignition noise wasn't a problem, and what noise there was came from the power supplies. I had no control over the situation while operating...I could only use the keyboard (and earphones) and a vision of N1MM+ that reflected what was on Jim's laptop in the car.

We pretty much licked the latency problem, but cell communications wasn't 100% reliable and at my end I would frequently get "pops" when the signal dropped for a few milliseconds, enough to miss a dit! That usually wasn't a problem, but necessitated lots of "?? or "AGN?"... I maintained cellphone/voice communications with Jim all along so there were no surprises. Sunday went much smoother except for a late start due to "left over" problems from Saturday. I drove over to Jim's house early to bring him a replacement K3, in case it had a problem (turned out, it didn't). We got off to a slightly late start with Jim operating at the beginning. There weren't many "hiccups" along the day, and we almost fulfilled our scheduled county run, missing JOH, I believe. That's it. We stayed within the rules and had fun, thanks to all the folks we worked and the ones who persisted until they got through! Oh, one final thing; line noise (oddly enough) wasn't a problem ALL weekend! I remember in years past, particularly in Nash county where the noise was like S9+10dB!!! Some places in Florida when we operated FQP/mobile were really bad...but not THIS weekend! Must be due to all the rain we've had in NC! 73,

N4CW and W5TMO - Bert & Jim

AD8J - fixed - remote in NC 738 cw

Decided to make an all out effort with the new CW High Power Category. XYL delivered meals and snacks while I stayed in the chair full time. It was tough working the in-state mobiles until they got on 80 meters. I only worked 5 of the N4 bonus stations so maybe some were only on phone. Missed tons of counties but got all the states except for SD, ND, KL7 and KH6. Only got 4 VE sections. I can't believe there wasn't a VE2 on CW.

Remote operation using:

TS-480

Acom 2000A

SteppIR DB-36
80 meter inverted L

KV8Q - fixed - OH 112 CW

Once again, the mobile stations kept things fun with W4TMO - 17, K8MR - 13, W4AN - 7, K3TD -5, and AA4TI - 3 Q's each. Jim, K8MR, is like the Everready Bunny - he just keeps on going and going!!! Lots of fixed stations kept me busy as well. Thanks - 73 tom Rig = TenTec Eagle @ 100 Watts Antenna = Mag Loop (40 thru 15) and an Isotron-80 in attic 12' above garage floor and an indoor 10 meter dipole.

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 69 CW 76 SSB

Quite a bit of activity early in the day, slowed down later as NC Stations went 40 and no propagation to West Coast at that time. When 40 opened up they had gone to 80.... Worked about 1/2 the counties plus 2 of the 12 counties. I have not worked there before. Fun contest. Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

W6OAT - fixed - WA 88 CW 16 SSB

It was great fun chasing the mobiles around. Also fun going after "WOLFPACK" although disappointing that some of these letter-stations apparently never went to a band higher than 40m so there was little hope of spelling the whole word from out here on the west coast.

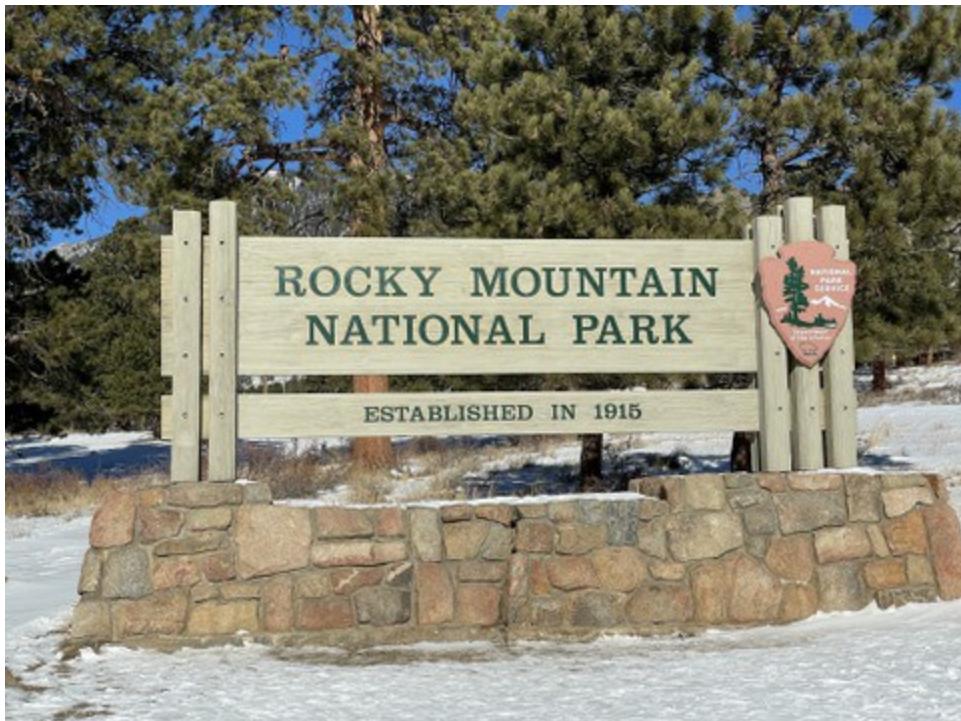
WB8WKQ - fixed - MI 78 CW 40 ssb

I feel bad not putting a full effort into this one. Signals were very good on both 40 and 80. Even worked a couple on 20M, thanks for digging me out. Missed only the "W" for "WOLFPACK". Score indicates 350 bonus points. My goal was to get over 100 Qs, which I usually do, but this Sunday I was distracted. After a cold long winter, we had 50s in Michigan today. I sat out on the deck and listened to the first preseason Detroit Tiger game. Does this scream I'm ready for spring? Anyway, great participation, great signals and good ops. Thanks to all the mobiles, even though i didn't chase them too much. Just did all S&P. Boy, there were some tough pileups too! Great contests and thanks to all who put it on.

NS2N - fixed NY - 82 CW 22 SSB

went for 1st Covid shot, lost a few hrs there

AI5P Trip Report



Rocky Mountain National Park was established in 1915 with an area of 415 square miles in northern Colorado. It has an additional 395 square miles of the U.S. Forest Service adjoining the park boundaries. The Continental Divide runs generally north-south through the center of the park. The headwaters of the Colorado River are located in the park's northwestern region. The park contains approximately 450 miles of rivers and streams, 350 miles of trails and some 150 lakes. More than 100 peaks rise above 11,000 feet with the highest - Longs Peak - at 14,259 feet. More than 3,000 elk, 800 bighorn sheep and herds of mule deer and moose roam throughout the park. Other wildlife include lynx, bobcat, cougar, black bear, and coyotes.



It is one of the most visited parks in the National Park System. Unfortunately, band conditions didn't match the beautiful weather of the 1st of March. Quite dramatic shifts in signal strengths with some disappearing almost instantaneously. Only 13 managed to make it into the SSB log with 32 finding me on CW. Larimer County CO.

Rick AI5P

de N4CD – It's KFF-0059 or K-0059 for the park chasers. Millions visit but not that many take the time to put out the park. N4CD, AB4WL, N9JF, and AI5P have been there in the last 5 years(from NPOTA in 2016 to present) but only 16 activations are included in all that time for POTA, and many of them only were 14-22 total contacts. Hmm.... sounds like a good place to enjoy the scenery and the radio! It's one of the 60 or so 'National Parks' but there are now over 8,300 in POTA and over 5,000 in WWFF, so that might be distracting folks a bit – hi hi.

You can check the stats for park activations on the POTA site – with the 'parks stats' pull down, selecting the location – in this case, Colorado. There are 88 POTA parks in Colorado at the moment. Some of the state parks have yet to be activated, but others have 4,000 plus contacts. Sounds like a good place to visit once the COVID mess is over!

It's fun to put out the park at 10,000-11,000 feet along the Trail Ridge Parkway – but you got to wait till June until they plow the ten plus feet of snow that falls up there! Take it easy on your radio – cooling fans at that elevation don't work as well and radios can get real hot – real fast – hi hi.

On the Road with N4CD I

With the pandemic situation, the road didn't go too far – over to the local park on weekends and on Wednesdays. Caught a few park to park contacts and logged them. Put out the park, usually on 20M. Conditions nothing to write home about but sunspots are up. So are solar winds which sort of cancels out the good propagation you'd like to see. Sunspots up and 20-30 level at start of month so it looks like we're finally on an upswing.

Kyle, WA4PGM was in the March 3 CWT – operating from J6 – maybe getting ready for the big ARRL SSB contest coming up the weekend after.

Local parks for the first half of March – that was it – twice a week.

State QSO Party Challenge 2021

Just like last year – the 2021 State QSO Party Challenge. Participate in each QSO party and get a point.

2021 State QSO Party Challenge Rules

The State QSO Party Challenge program is administered by the State QSO Party Group and it is sponsored by Icom America. These awards are available to all licensed amateur radio operators who meet the specified award requirements. To qualify, all applicants must adhere to the State QSO Party Challenge rules.

Purpose: To provide a means of recognizing Amateur Radio operators for their active participation in State QSO Party contests.

Time Period:

January 1, 2021 – November 30, 2021. November 30th is the last day to make a 3830scores.com form submissions.

Approved Contests:

Points will be awarded for participation in an “Approved Contest”. An “Approved Contest” is one in which out of state/province stations may only make contacts with stations in the target state/province.

Two exclusions to this definition include the 7th Call Area and the New England QSO party contests which are regional contests in which out of region stations may only make contacts with stations located in the target contest region.

Links to all of the approved contests can be found on the State QSO Party website at stateqsoparty.com

Participation:

All Amateur Radio operators submitting scores to 3830Scores.com are automatically included in the State QSO Party Challenge.

Scoring:

The participant’s Score is based on the total number of QSOs made in each approved state QSO party contests as reported on 3830Scores.com multiplied by the number of State QSO Parties entered in the current year before the November 30th submission deadline.

Source:

Oklahoma QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running. K5CM, K5ZG, W0BH, N4CD, K5PS/WB0TEV, N5KW, N5K, WW5X, N5XTR noted.

Jeff, N8II, reported working 68 of the 77 counties. KA6BIM in OR reported working 71 counties. Likely 75 or more counties out of the 77 were on the air.

From the 3830 reflector

WB0TEV mobile – SSB - 309 QSO SSB

While I'm a regular participant as a mobile SSB only op in the Texas QSO party, I'd only done the OKQP once before, in 2014.

This year I recruited my friend Scott Davis (K5PS) as a CW op and together we spent Saturday only motoring across SE OK taking turns on the radio; he as a CW only entry using his call and me doing SSB only under my call. We targeted 20 counties but had to forgo McCurtain at the end.

Prior to the contest I went to the special needs page of the countyhunterweb.org website to see who might need any of the counties we planned to activate and sent emails to a number of them giving them a heads up. That apparently paid some dividends in sparking interest not just in us, but in the OKQP in general.

The weather Saturday was perfect for going mobile. Earlier in the week, rain had been forecast for Saturday, but as the weekend approached the rain got pushed until after midnight. Temps were in the 60's and 70's with generally cloudy skies. The clouds are nice in that they cut down on the glare on the laptop screen, although we did have it shrouded in a hood made from a small cardboard box.

We were almost constantly on the move. I drove and operated SSB, while K5PS

rode shotgun and logged for both of us (switching between separate databases in N1MM+). I had a small netbook zip tied down to a 16 inch x 16 inch plastic pegboard to which my Bencher paddles were also attached. Scott had that pegboard sitting on his lap pretty much the whole trip.

The radio was on old Yaesu FT-757GXII with a special USB CAT cable going to the netbook laptop. The antenna was a short Hustler mobile vertical with heavy duty spring with a 40m and 20m resonator bolted to a triple mag mount on the roof of my 2008 Chevy Tahoe LS. Between the radio and antenna I had an MFJ 949D Deluxe Versa Tuner II strapped atop the center console cubby with a bungie cord.

Whenever we'd change bands/modes, K5PS would readjust the tuner to get a proper match since short vertical antennas have very narrow natural bandwidth. Three strips of copper braid made from the shield of some old RG-8 coax ran from the ground connections of the radio, tuner and USB connector on the laptop to a single point ground bolt by the gas pedal. I'd learned earlier that the strap to the laptop was necessary to keep RF from upsetting the USB port.

Saturday morning we set out from Greenville, Texas and crossed the Red River into Bryan County about 30 minutes before the start of the contest. At the starting bell, K5PS went to work on 20 CW and OM2VL (who I'd emailed the day before) was sitting there waiting and was the first one in the log. Both Scott and I would work Laci several times on CW and SSB respectively.

It was off the races as we motored up Hwy 78 past Durant crossing into Johnson county just long enough to put some QSOs in the log for JOH before heading back through BRY on HWY 199 across Lake Texoma in Marshall county, getting delayed somewhat by construction on the bridge there. Passing Madill we then drove down thru Lebanon, OK and into Love County on Hwy 32. Then it was north on Hwy 77 (avoiding I-35 for the moment) and up into Carter county where we took I-35 north to US70 which took us west into the northeast corner of Jefferson county passing through the booming metropolis of Ringling (named after John Ringling, founder of the Ringling Brothers Circus).

As our foray thru Jefferson County was but a few miles long I stopped just short of the Stephens county line and let K5PS work a big CW pile. I then moved onto the county line itself and did a county line run on SSB so as to knock out both counties quickly.

The Jefferson/Stephens county line run was incredible. A huge pileup ensued which I worked down as quickly as I could as we were already falling behind

schedule. Sorry to those I couldn't pull out at the end, but we had to keep moving if we were going to activate all the counties on our dance card.

BTW, a big thanks to OKQP head honcho Connie Marshall (K5CM) for making a rule change to further incentivize mobiles to activate as many counties as practical. The old rule for a mobile to earn a bonus for county activation was to make at least 5 QSOs on 80 and/or 15m which given current propagation just isn't practical. Instead, this year mobiles were offered 500 bonus points for making at least 10 QSOs in each new county activated. I managed to do that in all but 3 of the 19 counties we did, falling short in Johnson, McClain, and Pushmataha.

After catching the very SE corner of Stephens, it was back east thru Carter county then onto I-35 into Murray county through the Arbuckle hills and into Garvin county where we stopped in Pauls Valley to refuel the Tahoe and grab some fast food.

As we were getting ready to hit the road again, Murphy struck. The computer interface stopped working, the radio seemed to have lost its mind, and the paddles wouldn't cause any CW to come out. After several minutes in a Walmart parking lot down on my knees to reach the two buttons on the back of an FT-757 that you need to push to reset its microprocessor, a reboot of N1MM+, and a power cycling of the computer, we got it all working again, but the time we'd hoped to make up by taking a shorter lunch than planned had evaporated... and then some.

Heading up highway 133 we caught the short little SE tongue of McClain county to the little town of Byars (there are a lot of little towns in Oklahoma!) then north on Railroad Bridge Road so as to cross the Canadian River into Pottawatomie County and the town of Wanette.

The bridge across the river is a story in itself. I'd first crossed it back in 2014 when I discovered that it is a single lane bridge only about 10 feet wide! It's held up by a big iron truss over the top and going through it is like driving through a leaky Faraday cage. Back in 2014 there was a traffic signal on each end of the bridge to signal to each entrance whether it was there turn to cross but that signal was gone in 2021 so you just have to take a long (~800 feet) look down the bridge and go when it looks clear. As we crossed we could see a number of folks in dune buggies tooling around on the mud flats below.

That was the furthest north we would go as we turned east on Hwy 39 across

Pottawatomie County and into Seminole. Next it was south down US377 to re-cross the Canadian River towards Ada in Pontotoc County.

At around 2245Z we entered Coal County which was apparently in relatively high demand. I pulled off to the side of the road and let K5PS do a nice CW run while I took a break from driving to take a bio break and hop into the back of the Tahoe and eat the Subway sandwich from Paul's Valley that I'd stashed in my cooler.

Turning north on US 75 we crossed into Hughes county around 2310Z, turning east on US270 to head towards McAlester in Pittsburg county and the Indian Nation Turnpike.

Somewhere along the turnpike we had another Murphy visitation. As Scott was QSYing from 20m to 40m he couldn't match the antenna on 40m. The SWR stayed way up no matter how the knobs got twisted on the tuner. I pulled over to help diagnose, but no joy. Bypassing the tuner and sweeping across the 40m band I couldn't find a resonance dip anywhere and I feared that the 40m coil had died. I pulled the 80m resonator out of the back of the Tahoe thinking we might have to forgo 40m and use 80m for the rest of the trip, but then in one final test I noticed the problem.

When the radio was keyed it would switch itself from 40m to 20m. Our eyes had been fixed on the tuner's VSWR meter and hadn't noticed that at first.

Looking further, the rig wasn't in split mode, nor was N1MM+ but I did notice that the RIT indicator on the N1MM+ bandmap was red. Clicking on it turned it black and the radio stayed on 40m when keyed. It all loaded up properly again and we got back on the road, but we lost more time than we would need if we were to make it to McCurtain county. A look at the clock and our time plan showed that a foray to McCurtain just wasn't going to work so that plan was abandoned.

Heading south we left Pittsburg County and caught just the 5 mile stretch of Atoka county that pokes out to the east near Daisy OK. We pulled off the highway and parked to spend enough time to try and bag at least 10 QSOs each to get the county bonus. K5PS was successful, but I struggled. The sun was setting, 40 was mediocre and 20m was dying. After several minutes of fruitless CQ's and some desperate search and pounce where I worked some stations in the Idaho QSO party, I got the 10th Atoka county SSB QSO, threw the Tahoe into gear and headed down the road and into Pushmataha county.

Even though we were in PUS for a good while, I didn't make 10 QSO's in that county. Maybe I should have accepted K5PS's offer to relinquish the radio earlier but he was making money as they say, while the SSB crowd was falling off.

By this time we were in the final hour and were both relieved that we weren't going over to McCurtain. We were both pretty spent by this point and the thought of running down county roads in the dark and getting even further from home was not at all appealing. After exiting the turnpike at Hugo, OK I pulled into a church parking lot and we each gave it our final effort. After I finished working all I could on 40m I swapped out the 40m coil for the 80m one, spotted myself on 3857 kHz and called to no avail. I offered Scott a chance to try 3536 on CW but his eyes had glazed over so we called it a night and headed for home, which thankfully was only about 75 minutes away at that point.

Mults:

DX: OM, EA

US: missed IA, ND, SD, AL, LA, AK, HI, IL, WI

VE: worked AB, BC, ON, SK

OK: only MUS!

Frequently worked stations (5 or more QSOs):

K7SEN-8, K9RS-7, KA4RRU-5, KA6BIM-8, KI6RRN-13, KK7AC-7, N2QVY-8, N8II-5, OM2VL-11, VE5KS-8, VE7CV-5, W4SIG-6, W9DC-5, WA1SAY-7, WA3QNT-11, WY0A-5

Many thanks to K5PS for providing the CW and logging for us both!

A big thanks to Connie K5CM and the OK sponsors for their many years of organizing and promoting the Oklahoma QSO Party. I hope to be back next year. Look for me (and possibly K5PS too) in the Texas QSO party in September.

73,

Victor – WB0TEV

note de N4CD – K5PS, along in the same car and running continuously most of the time, had 597 reported CW QSO. No comments filed as of pub date.

K5CM mobile assisted 1825 CW 17 SSB

Conditions were fair at the start of the party Saturday morning working several Eu and 300 Q's in the first hour. But in general conditions went down hill as the party continued. Pam and I spent less time at county lines in favor of trying to put more counties on the air. This included 30 counties, with many of them being the large counties in the South East part of the state.

All Q's are important but some of the most worked:

OM2VL - 42

KA6BIM - 37

KI6RRN - 35

W5CW - 34

W5TM - 34

K8MGO, N8II, ND2N - 32

N6MU, WB8WKQ, WN4AFP - 25

VE5KS, VE7CV - 24

AA4TI, WA8ZBT, WC7Q - 19

AD1C, K9RS, W8BZY - 18

K9CW, N6GP, W1WBB - 17

KI0Y - 16

K0AP, N5DO, WA2JQK - 15

AC5O, K9NW, N4UOH, W0PI, W9QL - 14

N1SOH, N4DPM, W0ZQ, W1QK, W3US, W8WVU - 13

KB4CG, W1END, WA1Z, WB9HFK - 12

AB7RW, AC0W, K1NY, KN4JN, KS4S, N4IJ, W2AAB, W7OM - 11

AG6V K4AMC, N8RW, N9NM, VE3PQ, W3WHK, W7GF, W8OP - 10

73, Connie / K5CM

W0BH mobile - assisted - 730 qso (400 cw, 330 SSB approx)

2021 Oklahoma QSO Party by Bob Harder, W0BH

Has it really been over half a year since I last went mobile in a QSO party? That had to change and did as we planned a Sunday run to Oklahoma. Dusting off the trusty Chevy Astro (literally), charging and installing external batteries, and tuning antennas for the

IC7000 were familiar tasks the week before. Both XYL Lorna/k0why and I spent Saturday recovering from our second COVID shots on Friday, but by Sunday morning we were more than ready to go. It was fun working Oklahoma stations and mobiles from the home QTH on Saturday in between long naps.

The Oklahoma border is an hour and a half south of our south-central Kansas QTH. The forecast was for morning rain followed by clearing, and that's exactly what happened. One final heavy downpour just north of the border completed our car wash, then we saw blue sky as we crossed into Kay county with five minutes to go.

I really like my Hustler antennas (two triples for CW/SSB 40-10, and one single for 80CW), but as they age, moisture can get inside and short out the coils. I left them in the van during the rainy drive, so we continued on to a rest area to fire things up. At the rest area, travelers were sitting on benches enjoying the morning sun. One masked YL was curious enough to come over and ask what we were doing, so I took some time to explain our hobby / sport. Sounded crazy even to me!

I had plenty of time built into the ten-county schedule with the goal of making as many contacts as possible while helping to cover the 77 counties that Connie needed. Eight out of ten of my counties were unique, so I was expecting good action. Because of the rain, no three- or four-county lines this time around. I did plan to stop at as many lines as needed if there were still ops to be worked.

With Lorna in the driver's seat, we were off at 1523Z (and yes, I did remember Daylight Savings Time started this morning but Lorna didn't. She thought she had another hour of sleep :-) After just one fruitless CQ on 7037, I quickly worked NF0N, WA8ZBT and W0ZQ and we were off. Signals were loud at first then dropped off, maybe from the power lines as we turned west. As we got closer to noon, 20m really picked and I was able to go "around the bands" 7037 - 14037 - 14237 - 7197 in most counties. I used the FunSpots page from the OKQP web site to post my changes and tried to respond to requests for 3537 from the close-in Oklahoma stations. I need to get a cell phone holder so the spots are right in front of me. I missed some spot messages because of that, but I do try to read them if I'm not too busy in a pileup.

It's always fun when you all let me know some of your goals. W0SK from TN called me on 40SSB in Grant county to let me know that he needed my next county, Alfalfa, for his last Oklahoma county. I had a big CW pileup in Alfalfa and worked him without realizing it was him. When I got to the end of Alfalfa county and got back on 7197, I was planning to stop on the line because I was worried that I had missed him. Just as I had that thought, he called in and we worked .. again as it turned out!

The only Murphy moment (a new one) was when the radio suddenly went dark. When I turned it back on, it immediately went off again. Then it worked for a few minutes before repeating the cycle. It wasn't RF because it would also go off when I wasn't transmitting. The radio wasn't overheating because the temp gauge showed nice and cool thanks to the external fan blowing over the cooling fins. It wasn't low battery because my battery booster provides a steady 13.8v and the external battery showed nearly full. Perhaps it was a loose power connection? Lorna stopped the van and I recycled the booster and went through the power connectors all the way back to the battery. I didn't find anything obvious, but after that, no more problems. The jury is still out on this one.

After that 15 minutes of power problems it was smooth sailing. Because of the rains, I planned all paved roads, so the only time we got red Oklahoma mud on the tires was at county line stops where we pulled off the pavement. Lorna got some of her new book read and even took a nap at one of our 30 minute county-line stops. You all kept me way too busy to take a nap! I averaged 142 Qs/hr over the 5.2 hours of operating time .. a record for me in the OKQP as you can see in the stats below.

Noble is a big county, but the I-35 speed limit made up for the size as we headed north. It looked like I might have 3 minutes back in Kay after we crossed the line. I chose SSB as the mode so I could easily let the last stations know about the "new" county, and I worked ten of them before time ran out. One of them was KB4CG/Jack in VA, who had a nice comment about it in his 3830 post. Happy to help!

When time ran out at 2100Z and after a nice chat on 20SSB with some of the ops, I realized the WI mult was missing from my log. I should have gone looking and I'm sure it would have been an easy mult because it was WIQP Sunday. I also noticed no DX contacts for the first time ever. Not even OM2VL. Someone told me he was calling once and I listened but I couldn't hear him. Conditions will get better.

It was still a nice, sunny day as the south wind blew us back to Kansas. During the OKQP, I worked some ID stations in the IDQP and got home in plenty of time to work a number of WIQP stations for the State QSO Party Challenge. Lorna said later that this was the most relaxing QSO party run she's ever had which made it all worthwhile!

Stats

Operated 5.2 hours, 738 Qs, 246 unique calls, 8 dupes, 230 OKQP miles (413 total miles).

States not worked : AK HI IA ND SD VT
Canadian mults worked : BC MB ON SK
OK worked : 7 counties : CAR COM COT MUS OKL OKM TIL
DX worked : none (first time)

Special thanks to my top scorers:

27: KI6RRN
26: KA6BIM
18: N8II
13: WC7Q
12: AA4TI VE7CV
11: VE3YT VE5KS
10: KB4CG NS2N WA8ZBT
09: KI0Y N5DO W8BZY WA1SAY WA3RHW/4
08: N6MU W5CW W5TM WB8WKQ
07: AC5O K0AP K4VBM N6GP NF0N WN4AFP WZ6ZZ08
06: KE8FT W1SSN W2CVW WD5CSK
05: AB7RW AD1C K7SS N7GR NN2NN NY9P W0SK W4SIG W8OP

OK Mobiles Worked: none

Thanks to Connie/K5CM (and Pam/N5KW) for organizing us all once again! We hadn't been out mobile since last August, so it felt especially good this year. And thanks to all who took a moment to chat as we drove along.

The 2021 Kansas QSO Party is scheduled for August 28-29, the last weekend in August. With 105 counties, we need all the help we can get, so mobiles, head this way! Everyone else, thanks for the Qs in Oklahoma, and see you down the log in 2021 ..

73, Bob/w0bh and Lorna/k0why

N5K - mobile – assisted - (K5CM opr) - 103 CW

I used my 1x1 for a few minutes Sunday afternoon.

N5KW mobile -assisted - 29 CW QSO - drove most of the time for K5CM/mobile but made a few contacts herself

KA6BIM – fixed – OR 142 CW 44 SSB 71 counties worked

“Great contest, lots of activity. I only missed 6 counties, filled in 30 of the 34 I still needed. Especial thanks to the mobiles who braved the rough weather!

Dave KA6BIM”

WN4AFP - fixed - SC - 111 CW 55 counties

That was my best score in the OKQP! Thanks to everyone for the Qs, especially the many mobile operators who heard my LP signal 73s Dave WN4AFP

WC7Q fixed WA - 73 CW 15 SSB 56 counties

The mobiles did a great job. I made contact with more counties than ever before in a QP Test.

N6MU - fixed - CA 90 CW 62 counties

Part time effort. Watching my granddaughter play volleyball both days had priority! 73...

John, N6MU

K0AP - fixed - KS - 63 CW 51

Thank you for the QSO's! Nice job by the mobiles.

73 Dragan K0AP

OM2VL - Fixed DX - 85 CW 44 SSB 57 counties

Nice beginning and horrible end ... On Saturday last QSO on 20m at 2106Z but unfortunately 40m opened late with very LOW signals. On Sunday bad condx, 20m closed at 1651Z and it meant for me game over.

129 QSO / 55 mults on 1st day and only 12 QSO/2 mults on 2nd.

Most QSOs with:

K5CM/M 45/25

K5PS/M 13/13

WB0TEV/M 12/12

WW5X/M 11/11

N4CD/M 8/8

N5XTR/P 6/2

K5ZG/M 4/4

and from resident W5CW 5/1.

Thanks for the FB job of mobile stations and for the nice QP! 73, Laci OM2VL

AA4TI - fixed - FL - 83 CW 25 SSB 57 counties worked

I enjoy this QSO Party. Lots of activity and mobiles. Did not quite repeat last year performance however. I had my second Covid VAX the day before and I had to take a lot of breaks and short naps...lol

WB8WKQ - fixed - MI 83 CW 24 SSB 54 counties worked

Well, not my best OKQP performance. But it was still fun. The bands seemed a bit tough for propagation from MI to OK. Switching between OK, ID and WI qso parties seemed to be a challenge. Eventually on Sunday I just went to all WI contacts, since they were so plentiful. Thanks to all the mobiles who made it fun.

VE5KS - fixed - SK - 95 CW 35 SSB 65 counties worked

Good ears on the mobiles.

Had lots of fun, conditions were ok.

Looking forward to next year.

73

John

W1WBB - fixed - RI 55 CW 13 SSB 46 counties worked

Pretty much exclusively made QSOs on Day 1, Saturday ... up until the start of Stew Perry TBDC Spring event that eve.

Mobile QSOs: K5CM-16, K5PS-9, N4CD-6, WB0TEV-3 N5XTR-3, K5ZG-2, WW5X-2, W0BH-2

The non-OKQP Digital QRM on 40m CW was extensive and awful here in W1-land. I missed many OK mobiles/fixed stations in that QRM!

Also, one County Line station on CW was giving out his 3-county exchange *in separate QSOs for each county*!! This was painfully slow to wait for, a poor operating practice that confused the receiving stations (who didn't always confirm the additional counties), and is not a requirement by my understanding of QSO party rules (only *logging* the QSOs as separate counties is needed). Clarity from event sponsor and mentoring within OK suggested on this subject!

Nice mobile/portable activity overall within Oklahoma!

N8II 126 CW 39 SSB 68 counties worked

I enjoyed this QP until 20 closed around 2330Z (18 minutes past my sunset) Saturday. From then on, it was a real slog. There was a digital contest on 40 as low as about 7035 KHz which may have covered up a few weak signals, but the biggest problem was a lack of activity.

My last logged Q was with WB0TEV/M at 0136Z and I kept searching until the 0200Z stop with some CQ's as well. Sunday was a bit stressful as very few new fixed stations were found; so, it was a matter of waiting for the mobiles/rovers to hit a new spot.

Saturday, we had mobiles/rovers N4CD, WB0TEV(SSB)/K5PS(CW), K5ZG, K5CM, and WW5X to chase. Sunday, only K5CM and WW5X plus K5ZG from the CIM/TEX line only were repeat mobiles and Bob, W0BH a new one. I made 52 Q's during the 6 hours Sunday when I operated about 4 and 1/3. Next year if I try again, I will definitely bring my laptop into the shack to watch spots without switching screens. I missed at least a dozen Q's I could have had.

Thanks to all of the mobiles for making so many Q's and counties available. K5PS, K5CM, and WW5X were on the road all day Saturday, lots of miles! And thanks to out of state ops WW5X, N4CD, K5ZG, and W0BH for adding a lot to the fun.

A one day 12 hour event would be a lot more tolerable than the current 18 hour event. I had great conditions on 20M both days until the darkness close Saturday. 40 was fine a night except QRM, very difficult during mid day especially Sunday when line noise buried most OK signals. Thanks for the Q's!

73, Jeff

note de N4CD – lack of activity Saturday night was also caused by severe line of thunderstorms moving across the state and several mobiles headed for home to avoid said severe storms/hail/high winds Saturday eve. Western part of OK not far from the 11+ tornadoes that spun up in TX and that line moved across the state – and of course, caused a lot of 40M QRN! Sunday morning rain continued in south central/southeast part of state and line of storms didn't exit the state till after noon Sunday.

On the Road with N4CD II

The world was slowly recovering from COVID. Maybe I should say the USA recovering? The rest of the world not doing so well.

Had my two shots along with 70+ million others and 100 million with first dose to help the recovery get going. Back to some activities that were off the list just a few months ago as restaurants opened (here to 100% capacity if wanted by owner/staff), but most businesses still requiring masks. 2.5 million new shots are given a day as Operation Warp Speed ramps up. At that rate, in 2 months, only idiotic anti-vaxxers will be dying by the dozens, hundreds, or thousands, from COVID-19. Worse, a UK study shows one in ten who get COVID have long term effects that can last months, more than a year – or possibly for the rest of their lives! Don't be one of them if you can help it! Another survey shows that up to 30% of people who get COVID wind up with damage to your bodies, brains, organs, etc – brain fog, fatigue, heart damage, lung damage – that

can last years or a lifetime! Another survey showed that if you wound up in the hospital, you'd probably have symptoms lasting at least 5 months after – and maybe beyond for who knows how long! One in 8 hospitalized initially will die within five months and 1 in 3 will be back in the hospital within five months.

It was OK QSO Party time last year when all of this started to be a problem as cases in the US arose.

The OK QSO Party was coming up. Last year I took a nice 4 day trip with little worries about rampant COVID.....until I returned home and the floor had dropped out of activities – shut down – hamfests canceled across the board – many states closing restaurants, others to take out only – or outdoor dining. Wow – in a week the world had gone from normal with a bit of concern to total lock down. Schools shut down – going virtual on line for nearly all. Same for colleges. It would be a year before most even thought of opening up again.

Now, things were beginning to open up in 2021 – so I checked the weather forecast for OK. Not good! Storms brewing to west part where I'd like to go on a couple day trip. OK is right in the middle of tornado alley – the whole state – with a history of really bad ones there wiping out whole towns and whole subdivisions. If you've seen the movie Twister (a rerun often on TV), it took place in north central OK – filmed in Wakita, OK, but typical of the every few years severe storms that ravage OK (and other states).

So plan A to go over to Greer in the southwest corner and the new parks there – then head north through a few more border counties up to Elk City then to Woodward OK for the night – that plan was scrapped. Part of that area was in the 'probably severe storm area' forecast. Nope – too much of a chance, even at 'moderate' , to head that way. Those parks can wait! And they're really out in the boondocks with no place to find 'shelter' if the tornado warnings hit –or tornadoes spin up - if you are even aware of them in nasty thunderstorms and rain.

This was the forecast:



The southwest corner was in the 'high risk' of severe storm area – Greer County right in the hot spot and all of the border up to Woodward in the 'slight' category of 'severe' just to the east a few miles. You can still get nasty hail and t-storms. It would likely be later in the afternoon or evening on the first day of the QSO Party.

As it turned out – that was the right decision. Just to the west in the panhandle of TX – 11+ tornadoes were on the ground in late afternoon/evening, including a likely EF4. No reports of injuries but damaged housing, trailers, one cellphone tower wiped out. Town of Happy TX took a direct hit and it crossed Palo Duro State Park with a big one. Here's a pic of one of them that spun up on Saturday 3/13. 80 mph winds and baseball size hail in some of t-storms nearby! 150+ mph winds in the tornado itself. It's right next to the western border of OK.....and the threat there was also high for 'severe storms'.



pic by Michael Marz

Weather wasn't so great along the Rockies either! Record snows in WY and feet of snow along the 'front range' in CO from the south to the north. WY had all the interstates shut down – nothing moved. That storm would head east – mostly as rain.

Here's another tornado near Hart, TX courtesy of Chad Casey.



OK had the weather front move through later in the day that spun up t-storms and put some stations off the air for a while while lightning zipped down nearby as the QP continued into the evening hours Saturday. On Sunday there were storms along the eastern border of the state and some good rain storms. Fortunately, most mobiles missed most of the storms by careful planning – or getting home before the storms hit Saturday.

So plan B would be a one day trip up to south central OK to hit two new parks there plus two repeats on the way home. I'd hit nine counties for the OK QP including 2 that no one had planned to hit already. Connie, K5CM – the QP guru – was trying to get all 77 counties on the air there. Don't know yet if he succeeded.

So...I got up at 5:10am....yawn – and made breakfast with a quick nuked McMuffin biscuit deal, and a cup of coffee. Quickly scanned the morning paper, then loaded up the car for a one day trip – antenna on the back plus additional hamsticks inside for the 4 magnet roof mount. It's an S unit or two better than the rear antenna so I'd use it most of the time for 20/40cw. I was on the road at 5:50am headed the 104 airline miles to the first destination – Jap Beaver State Fishing Lake in Jefferson County, OK. A lot more road miles, though.

Tried putting out the counties on the way up on 40m but no takers through Denton, Wise, Montague as I drove the 2:30 hours by road to Waurika, OK (County seat of Jefferson County OK), and then nearby to Jap Beaver State Fishing Lake K-8126 arriving at 8:20am – before the QSO Party started at 9am Oklahoma time (1500z).

from the OK state site:

“Lake Jap Beaver was constructed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation in 1953 and first opened to fishing in 1955. When first opened the lake was known as Waurika Lake.

The lake has one boat ramp. Waurika is the nearest town in which to obtain picnic and fishing supplies. This lake is known for its abundant quality size bass with good numbers of sunfish and channel catfish. Two entrances on the east and west side of the lake, the west entrance access the boat ramp, roads were renovated in 2018.”

Hmmmm.....change of plans. On to Plan C.

Jap Beaver is 'closed' to vehicular traffic. OK to walk in. Fortunately had put the KX2 10w QRP rig in car. Been playing around with it for some other sites that take 'portable operations' in TX – 4 of them – building sites, no parking lots. Had 40 feet of wire, a low power 9:1 unum and the battery in the radio. Not good. I put the tarp on the ground but had no table/chair with me. Took some string – connected to main antenna on car to get a bit of height – 10 feet as no trees nearby and car was just outside gate – and ran sloping wire down to ground. Maybe I'd get 10? Eeked out 11Qs on 30m and decided this would not be fun in QSO Parties and rig not happy on 20 and 40m anyway with rinky dink antenna not up high enough. Me? Not happy sitting on ground trying to operate KX-2 and log and keep antenna out straight. Got my 10+ Qs for the park and need to go back with better set up some day or when they finish their 'renovation'. Others had been there. Or I'll wait till the 'renovations' done. Would be nice if they would show it 'closed' on their state web site – but nothing but a surprise when you get there.

So it was on the Plan D- headed over to the county line on the way north – of JEF(ferson)/STE(phens) hoping to get there by 1500z. Missed by a few minutes but arrived 1507z and wow – what a pile.....more than 50Q go in log, and that's double since it counts for 2 QSOs – one for each county – 100 logged QSOs. Unfortunately , the POTA spotter keeps spotting for 30 minutes after the last QSO in a 'park' so probably a few park chasers worked me thinking they were getting the park before. Nope. Oh well. No way to stop the POTA spotter once it starts. If you show up again within 30

minutes, it assumes you are still in the park – on CW. Uses the RBN (reverse beacon network) to update the spots. Great when you are IN the park but not so great if you leave it and keep active maybe running counties!

Weather was so far good with STRONG south winds of constant 20-25 mph gusting to 40 MPH. No sun – total overcast but I'm not going to complain. After more than an hour at the county line, it's time to move on. I head north – and have two choices – run CAD (Caddo) separately, or run it with GRA (Grady). The next park is in Grady county. Hmm... well, decide to go to the county line to see what it looks like – sometimes they are impossible to run with criss-crossing power lines and 20 over QRN, sometimes nice and quiet. Some you can't park at – others are easy with a dirt county line empty road. This turned out to be good – so the plan was run the C/L and hope to get at least 10 in the park when I got to it later for an 'activation'. There's always 30m for the park but that doesn't count in the QSO Party. Didn't need 30m.

Another 50 go in log – doubled because it is a county line. Busy! I'm there quite a while. There are some BIG pileups calling. After things quiet down, I slide over to Lake Louis Burtschi State Fishing Lake K-7689, a POTA only park like the previous. Less than 10 miles from the C/L. Nice access points, quiet and easy to run!



Lake Louis Burtschi State Fishing Lake

I spot myself on the POTA spotting page looking for park chasers. I'm just in one county now – Grady (GRA). One or two dupes will have to be removed later as some also need the park who worked me before.

From the OK web site:

“Lake Burtschi was constructed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation in 1954 and renovated in 1990. Roads to all boat ramps and fishing jetties were renovated in 2017, ramps are located on north and south sides on Burtschi.

The lake has two boat ramps, five fishing jetties, two fishing piers, several picnic tables and grills, and latrines. The lake holds good populations of largemouth bass, crappie and channel catfish along with a popular new addition of saugeye.

Physical Description:

Surface area..... 168 ac.

Volume 2,140.0 ac.ft
Average depth..... 5 ft.
Maximum depth 30 ft.
Shoreline length 4 mi.

Put 30 in the log here for the park and the county, then move on to the next county line of McClain/Garvin (MCL/GRV) about 35 miles away. Wow - get there and have to change plans - S9 QRN at first site – head east along county line road and find a quieter spot. Have a good run with 40 in log (doubled). Conditions not getting better and mid day drop off very noticeable. 40M is 'poor' in my estimation and getting worse as the day goes on. Have a decent run but not like the morning runs. Maybe other folks have been here already? Not to worry.

I'm not hearing much of OK stations – which is typical when you are in the state for the QSO parties. Hear some weak ones on 20M but they don't hear me. They're S2 and probably running 500 or 1000w in a neighborhood of noisy devices. Do catch a few and of course, mobiles are even tougher to find/work. I listen for them, but only catch 2 other mobiles all day, one close by and one way northwest in OK.

The weather forecast is storms brewing up later in the day, including passing through my home QTH in the DFW area in late evening/night. I'll be home by then! It's already churning up storms in the TX panhandle with worse to come. When you have lots of 'day heating', the storms spin up in afternoon/evening easily with the added heat to the atmosphere and the ground radiating heat upwards. Later, they'll be tornadoes there in the panhandle of TX - which is right next to OK and the line of weather than generates them can move into OK. I'm not planning on sticking around till evening. There's no sun which helps (less heating of the atmosphere) where I'm at, too. Fingers are crossed here to get out of OK safely.

Meanwhile the storm chasers are HEADED right that way to get pictures of the 'expected' bad weather! (Some will get bad hail damage in the process!).

So after the county line run, I peddle southeast on down to Paul's Valley working my way home. K5PS is mobile in the same county and catch him from 20 miles away in Garvin – same county as me. Later we'll pass on I-35 as he heads north and I head south and he's 50 over S9. He's got a driver so he runs continuously county to county. (WB0TEV on SSB and K5PS on CW in that dual operation).

I stop to put out Murray County. Then on to Carter with a stop at Lake Murray State Park KFF-2790/K-2790. K5PS/m has already run this on his way north. Make 30Qs and call it a day. It's getting later in the day and I'm getting tired. Bug out after that. 40M is really dismal! There's QRN on the band – maybe from the t-storms out west? Never drops below S5 and there's not many strong signals there at all. Maybe the A index was up a bit? I've run this park half a dozen times before – but heck, why not? Just a few miles off the interstate at the exit for 70 eastbound.

There's a 20 minute slowdown on I-35 as traffic is routed to only one lane south getting there. Hmm... A big mess. There's a lot of traffic on I-35. What pandemic? The highway is full of trucks and cars everywhere on I-35 headed on down to Dallas.

After Murray County/Park, get some ethanol free gas as tank was down to less than quarter full, then head on down I-35 to the last exit – and go over to Love Valley WMA – KFF-4815/K-6358 for the last run from LOV (Love) County. I'm sure someone has already run the county ..but what the heck. Another park activation and only 3-4 miles off the interstate at exit 1. Roads in park not bad (all dirt) and it hasn't rained much lately – otherwise, pulling off the main dirt road (narrow) can get you into axle deep mud if you don't watch out! It's right along the Red River and can easily flood in many areas.

25Qs and I'm out of there. 40M isn't good – lots of noise. I'm tired. 20M has faded away for the day for the most part. Do catch OM2VL on 40M from here!

During the runs, do catch a few ID QSO party stations but don't hear any mobiles there. Good number of fixed stations on.

It's 90 minutes to home from here – and just turn the radio off – because it's lots of traffic, moving at 75 to 80 mph – two lanes first then later six and eight lanes as you approach the 'metroplex' and still moving 65 to 70 mph. Tons of traffic, too, mixed with 18 wheel trucks.

Home at 6pm after 430 miles of driving. Whew! I'm not used to this! I'm out of practice. 12 hours on the road. Banana and two fig newtons for a lunch.

Thanks for all the Qs. I'm hunkered down on Sunday as the QP continues - as it's expected to be gloom and rain – and worse to northeast from here in southeast OK. No new parks nearby – nearest one now in OK is 4-5 hours of driving. But...more trips planned to get them. Will be overnight trips.

Looks like 583Qs. Missed a bunch of states including AL, VT, ME, ND, HI, AK, NV and most of Canada. A few DX in the log including JO7WXN who I've worked a dozen times on 17M in different counties but he was working mobiles on 20M CW late Saturday. Got OM2VL on 40M later in the day and many times on 20M. DL8USA once, HA8IB a few times, IK4IDF once – he's a park chaser, but not many other DX stations. Interesting trip.

Thanks for the Qs. All QSO's appreciated.

1940 Sears Ham Radio Catalog

Karl, K4YT, sent along the following link to the 1940s ham radio catalog. All sorts of National transmitters and receivers available. If you think ham gear is expensive, look at the prices then multiply them by 19. So if you buy a \$119 receiver – back then, you'd need \$2000 bucks today to buy it! Wow – no wonder so many 'homebrewed' their own rigs.

It's interesting to note the National SW-3 regen was still be offered for only \$39.95 – or about \$800 bucks today! Ouch!

Many of the transmitters didn't even have a VFO – and 'modulators' were another \$90 bucks back then to get you on AM for your \$119 transmitter. Then you'd spend money on a VFO.

- - -

https://www.waynekirkwood.com/images/pdf/Sears_Roebuck_1940_Radio_Amateur_Test_Equipment_Sound_Systems_Catalog.pdf

Solar Flares Origins

The source of potentially hazardous solar particles, released from the Sun at high speed during storms in its outer atmosphere, has been located for the first time by researchers at UCL and George Mason University, Virginia, USA.

These particles are highly charged and, if they reach Earth's atmosphere, can potentially disrupt satellites and electronic infrastructure, as well as pose a radiation risk to astronauts and people in airplanes. In 1859, during what's known as the Carrington Event, a large solar storm caused telegraphic systems across Europe and America to fail. With the modern world so reliant on electronic infrastructure, the potential for harm is much greater.

To minimize the danger, scientists are seeking to understand how these streams of particles are produced so they can better predict when they might affect Earth.

In the new study, published in *Science Advances*, researchers analyzed the composition of solar energetic particles heading towards Earth, and found they had the same "fingerprint" as plasma located low in the Sun's corona, close to the middle region of the Sun's atmosphere, the chromosphere.

Co-author Dr Stephanie Yardley (UCL Mullard Space Science Laboratory, MSSL) said: "In our study we have observed for the first time exactly where solar energetic particles come from on the Sun. Our evidence supports theories that these highly charged particles originate from plasma that has been held down low in the Sun's atmosphere by strong magnetic fields. These energetic particles, once released, are then accelerated by eruptions that travel at a speed of a few thousand kilometers a second."

"Energetic particles can arrive at Earth very quickly, within several minutes to a few hours, with these events lasting for days. Currently, we can only provide forecasts of these events as they are taking place, as it is highly challenging to predict these events before they occur. By understanding the Sun's processes better we can improve forecasts so that, when a major solar storm hits, we have time to act to reduce risks."

Lead author Dr David Brooks (George Mason University and Honorary Associate Professor at UCL MSSL) said: "Our observations provide a tantalizing glimpse into where the material that produces solar energetic particles comes from in a few events from the last solar cycle. We are now starting a new solar cycle, and once it gets going we will use the same techniques to see if our results are generally true, or if these events are somehow unusual."

“We are lucky in that our understanding of the mechanisms behind solar storms and solar energetic particles is likely to advance quickly over coming years thanks to data that will be gained from two spacecraft – ESA’s Solar Orbiter and the NASA Parker Solar Probe – that are heading closer to the Sun than any spacecraft has been before.”

In the study, researchers used measurements from NASA’s Wind satellite, located between the Sun and Earth, to analyze a series of solar energetic particle streams, each lasting at least a day, in January 2014. They compared this to spectroscopy data from the JAXA-led Hinode spacecraft. (The EUV Imaging Spectrometer onboard the spacecraft was built by UCL MSSL and Dr Brooks is a member of the mission’s Operations Team in Japan.)

They found that the solar energetic particles measured by the Wind satellite had the same chemical signature – an abundance of silicon compared to sulphur – as plasma confined close to the top of the Sun’s chromosphere. These locations were at the “footpoints” of hot coronal loops – that is, at the bottom of loops of magnetic field and plasma extending out into the Sun’s outer atmosphere and back again.

Using a new technique, the team measured the coronal magnetic field strength at these footpoints, and found it was very high, in the region of 245 to 550 Gauss, confirming the theory that the plasma is held down in the Sun’s atmosphere by strong magnetic fields ahead of its release into space.

Solar energetic particles are released from the Sun and are accelerated by solar flares (large explosions) or coronal mass ejections – ejections of huge clouds of plasma and magnetic field. About 100 solar energetic particle events occur every 11-year solar cycle, although this number varies from cycle to cycle.

The latest findings support the idea that some solar energetic particles originate from a different source than the slow solar wind (the origin of which is still debated), as they are confined in specific conditions in hot coronal loops at the core of the source region. A faster solar wind is emitted continuously by the Sun; its encounter with the Earth’s atmosphere can generate the Northern Lights.

The high-energy particles released in January 2014 came from a volatile region of the Sun which had frequent solar flares and CMEs, and an extremely strong magnetic field. The region, known as 11944, was one of the largest active regions on the Sun at the time and was visible to observers on Earth as a sunspot – a dark spot on the surface of the sun

A strong radiation storm alert was issued at the time by the NOAA / NWS Space Weather Prediction Center but the solar energetic particle event is not known to have caused any disruption within the Earth's atmosphere, although computer systems on the Hinode spacecraft itself recorded several particle hits.

A measurement was taken of the magnetic field strength within the region 11944 in a separate study shortly after this time-period, and was one of the highest ever recorded in the Sun – 8.2kG.

The researchers were funded by the NASA Hinode program and UKRI.

Source: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2021/mar/source-hazardous-high-energy-particles-located-sun>

Entire technical paper here:

<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/7/10/eabf0068/tab-pdf>

Idaho QSO Party

There were maybe a dozen fixed stations and one mobile. Usually one or two venture out.

I caught up with half a dozen while mobile in OK later in the day after the QP there had started on cw. Didn't listen on SSB and you could work digital but few QSOs reported on that mode.

KI6RRN reported 37 CW and 68 SSB qso's for 12 CW mults and 21 SSB mults. No idea of how many overall counties worked.

From the 3830 contest reflector: (those that had comments)

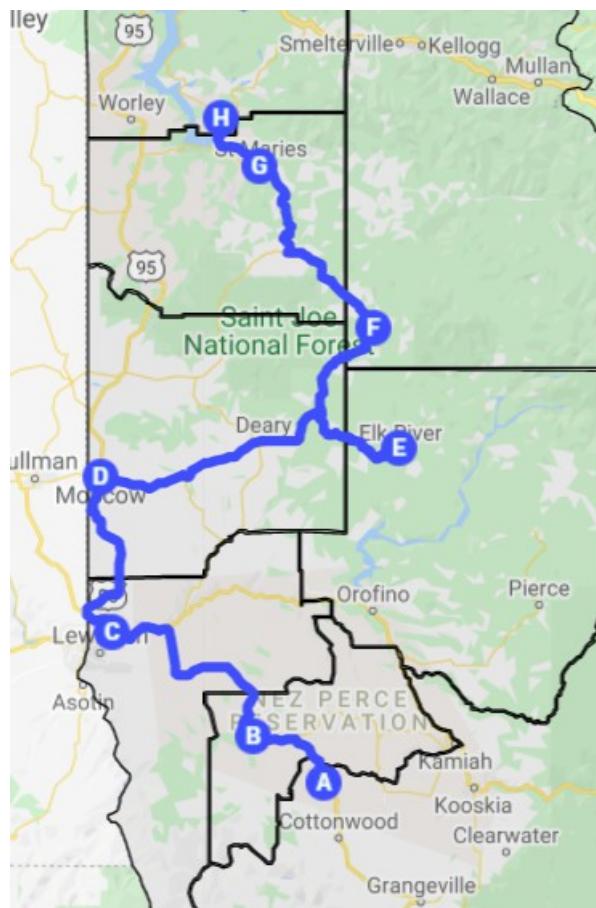
NI7DX mobile 137 CW 124 SSB QSO

Jay, N7ZUF, and I, K7TQ, activate eight counties in the northern part of ID. Jay operated 20 m SSB exclusively and I operated 40 m CW exclusively. Our best county was Nez Perce on Saturday. KA6BIM found us on CW in each of our eight counties.

Jay and I had a good time and thank all who contacted us and those who tried. More details and a few pictures are at

<https://sites.google.com/site/randyk7tq/home/2021-idaho-qso-party>

Saturday we were in Idaho, Lewis, Nez Perce, and Latah counties. Sunday route in Latah, Clearwater, Shoshone, Benewah, and Kootenai counties.



NI7DX route in Idaho

W6LEN - fixed - CA 27 CW 13 counties

My first Idaho QSO party. It was low key and fun. I will be back next year

KV8Q - fixed - MI - 15 CW 9 counties

Found a couple of new counties in that endeavor. No mobiles heard here in OH.
Worked everyone I heard.

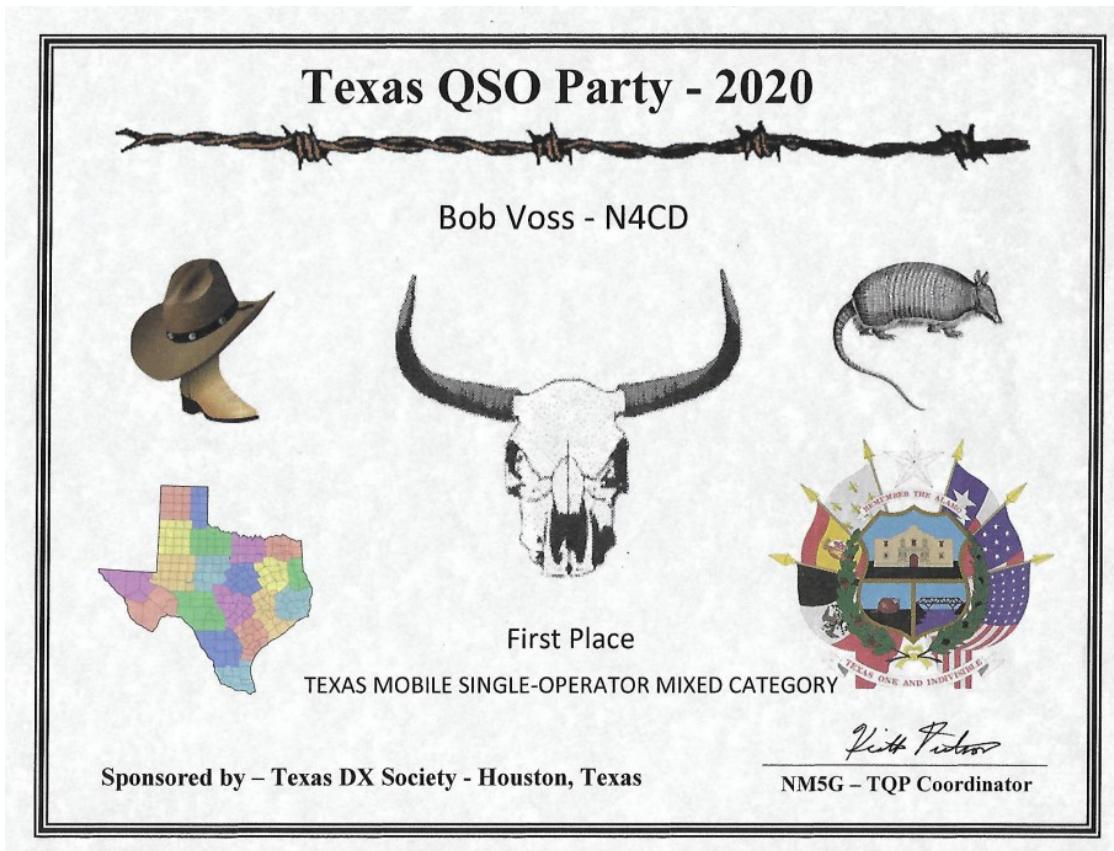
Thanks - 73 Tom

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 36 CW 16 mults / 19 SSB 12 SSB mults

Thanks for the qso's found 4 of the 9 counties I still needed from Idaho.

Dave ka6bim

Texas QSO Party Results



Nice to 'win' something. Probably the only entry in mobile 'mixed'. Most run multi-op and CW mostly and with a driver. Ran a bunch of parks along the route for some fun.

TX QSO Party comes up in September 2021.

Long Covid

Long Covid Is Not Rare. It's a Health Crisis.

Lingering symptoms from the coronavirus may turn out to be one of the largest mass disabling events in modern history.

Researchers have now established that long Covid is a debilitating condition with full-body symptoms that can range from months long fevers to respiratory problems. The National Institutes of Health recently announced an initiative to study it. Many sufferers are unable to return to work or care for themselves or their loved ones and will likely require long-term medical attention.

But the long Covid is not a footnote to the pandemic or a curious human-interest story. It is America's next big health crisis, and we should prepare for it now.

The misconceptions around long Covid are due in part to the mistaken belief that it is rare. But it's not. Approximately 30 percent of Covid patients in a new but small study from the University of Washington reported that symptoms persisted months after their infection. If confirmed on a bigger scale, this suggests that long Covid could be one of the largest mass disabling events in modern history.

There could be millions of Americans experiencing long Covid, and many may need health care and workplace accommodations. Patients report long waiting lists at the few medical centers with programs to specifically treat people with long Covid.

Long Covid is one of the most devastating outcomes of the pandemic, and will likely put a strain on our society and economy for years to come. There is little to indicate that global health systems are prepared for it. In response to this lack of recognition, long Covid patient advocacy is emerging as a health movement that will be increasingly hard

for governments to ignore.

As the world moves toward what many are hoping will be a final phase of the pandemic, governments and policymakers must begin to deal with long Covid. And when we talk about vaccine efficacy or when to reopen schools and businesses, we should also consider the possibility that the health crisis may not end when infections decline. For example, while the approved vaccines are remarkably effective at preventing severe illness and death from Covid-19, they may not prevent mild or asymptomatic infections that could subsequently develop into long Covid.

WI QSO Party

A few mobiles were out and running.

N9SD, single op mobile, reported 758 QSOs – the majority on 40 and 80m.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

OM2VL - fixed - DX 56 CW 32 counties

Unfortunately 20m closed here at 1651Z - no any QSO on this band.

40m was also so light at the beginning but later was OK. I try some SSB RUN, but no any WI come back to my call.

80m was FB most of station back to my 1st call and I can made also some mobiles.

Most QSOs with:

K0PC/M 9/9

NE9U/M 7/6

KE0TL/M 3/M

N9SD/M 3/3,

WI9WI/M 3/2

W9FK BONUS station not worked

73, Laci OM2VL

KB9S mobile 749 CW

This was our second year of going mobile. Only major equipment change this year was to add a Hustler VP-1 tri-band antenna mount so changing bands was much easier than having to stop and change band coils like last year.

Our route plan worked out well. My wife Kitty K9KTT did the driving and keep us on course hitting all 15 counties on our planned route. In Taylor county she had to navigate though Amish buggy traffic and in Pierce county the GPS took us down an interesting township road that you wouldn't want to drive in the winter!

Qso rates were good the entire day and at times it was hard to pull out a single call from the pileup.

Thank you to all the stations that followed us along our route all day.

Here are top ten:

- 12 - NU0Q
- 11 - K0SN,K9CW
- 10 - AF8A,K4BAI,N0UR
- 9 - K9CT,K9NW,KI0F,KU8E,W9HB

73, Mark KB9S

N9SD mobile reported 758 CW contacts - had no comments

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NE9U mobile 968 CW 44 SSB

Wow, what a year!

I knew things looked good after a 165 opening hour!

Originally our plans were to attempt a multi/multi operation. But on Wednesday our other HF operator dropped out. So it was back to our normal Multi single. N9ISN volunteered to be my driver.

Al and I headed to my cabin in northern Wisconsin on Saturday and we went out and did our usual carbo loading on Prime Rib and Rib eye steaks at the best restaurant in the Northwoods. Annie's on Keyes Lake.

Sunday morning we did more carbo loading at the best breakfast stop in northern Wisconsin. Grandma Sally's in Long Lake.

We then drove to our starting line in southern Marinette County and were off to the races!

Hour one was 165 and we averaged 144 for the entire contest.

Winners with 18 qso's were K0TI, K9CT, and N0UR

OM2VL worked us on 40 and 80 meters 9 times. Amazing!

73 Scott NE9U
Al N9ISN

Equipment:

K3
3 Hustler spider whips
TR4W

K0PC mobile 1061 CW

Very good rates all day long topping out at 183 the last hour. Overall average of over 150/hr.

This is not my highest WIQP score (219k in 2013) but it's the first time I've broken 1,000 QSOs.

Many stations followed along all day and the top ten list contains many of the usual

suspects.

18 - AF8A

17 - K9NW, NUØQ

15 - KØTI, W6OAT, WB9HFK

14 - ACØW

13 - K4BAI, K9CT, NØUR, NUØQ, W8BZY, W8WVU

Thanks to everybody that tolerated my mobile fist all day and thanks to the West Allis Radio Club for sponsoring the WI QSO Party.

73, Pat KØPC

WI9WA mobile 507 CW

After finally completing my long term (it took almost 30 years) project to operate the WIQP solo (no driver) single-op mobile from every Wisconsin county last year, I decided to go to our cabin in Sawyer County for the weekend and put on a few of the less active counties. I drove up Saturday and operated the NA RTTY Sprint from the cabin. Sunday morning I got on the road to BAY.

I don't operate while moving, having never mastered the art of operating, driving and logging at the same time. For me, at least, it is too dangerous. So I find a good spot and operate from the back seat of the car. I had a slight problem right off the bat, and lost a few minutes tracking down an RFI problem with my computer. I always carry ferrite along, and an FT-31 core around a suspect cable cured the problem for the duration. Twenty was hot right off the bat, though activity waned as time went on. Forty was great all day, and eighty was the go to band the last couple of hours.

There was an endless supply of stations to work. I only worked a few DX, OM2VL 3 times, including a late QSO on 80, and a single very loud JA on 20. The only other mobile station I worked was NE9U once. Before the contest I spent time making some adjustments to my antennas, making them easier to tune. I also tracked down a couple of noise sources, one large and one small. This was time well spent with basically no noise problems this year.

The biggest new thing I did this year was to use a Bioenno 40 A LiPo battery as my primary power source. For years I had used RV AGM batteries, but if you don't keep them charged constantly they go bad quickly. I have had at least 3 of them crap out

during the WIQP necessitating me to switch everything over to the car's electrical system on the fly. I prefer not to run the engine while operating since it does generate some low level noise. The new battery worked perfectly without the need for a "battery booster". The LiPo battery is pricey, but it will last longer than several RV batteries. Actual operating time was a tad short of 5 hours. The other 2 hours were spent driving between counties and fixing the RFI problem and a small antenna problem on 80 meters. I had to change my route on the fly because of thaw and muddy conditions on some of the unpaved forest service and county roads, though I didn't really lose any time over this. After ASH I ended driving back to the cabin to get a warmer coat because the temperature on Sunday was about 20 degrees less than Saturday and I was underdressed. But that was on the way anyway.

Gear: K-3, Texas Bugcatcher for 40/80, Hamstick for 20.

Thanks for all the Qs and see you all next year from somewhere.

73

Jim WI9WI/m

KE0TT – mobile/rover - 189 CW QSOS

ran 3 counties PIE BUF PEP

K3/10 at 5 watts to inv vee up 21' at apex. Used 66' during the day and 130' toward evening when 80M was warming up. Thanks for your copy of my QRP signals. Lots of activity, enjoyed the Party. 5 Q's with k0pc and ne9u, because WI stations could be heard this year. C U next time, 73, Dan ke0tt

KB9VBR mobile reported 165 SSB QSOs. - all 40M.

K9CT - fixed IL 145 CW 15 163 SSB 65 counties worked

Pretty good conditions but as bands got long it was harder! Still pretty good signals most of the time. Great mobile activity!

NE9U 18 QSOs

N9SD 8
KB9S 9
K0PC 13
KE0TL 7

73, Craig K9CT

WB8WKQ - fixed - MI 79 CW 139 SSB 60 counties

Well, what a year difference makes. Last year, I struggled on 40M due to longer skip. This year, 40M was my money band. I made two long runs calling CQ WI and had quite the pileup. I guess I should have road that even longer. Didn't do as well on 80M as last year, but the 40M band made this my best WIQP ever in terms of Q's and score. Getting over 200 Q's for an "out of station" in a 7 hour sprint, is not too bad, considering I even got a nap in and was watching sports during the contest. Maybe WI participation was up, there was never really a dull moment. Thanks to all the mobiles, who did a great job. Fun contest!

W9AV - fixed - WI 269 CW 332 SSB

I set all the clocks ahead the night before...except the one on my arm which of course is the one I looked at 40 minutes before I thought the contest was to start. So Chad got a head start, and I couldn't catch up. I did a bit of SO2R, which slowed me down a bit. Otherwise, I was pleased to beat last year's score but with fewer multipliers. If anyone was spotting the rovers, I wasn't seeing their spots.

ARRL 2021 Handbook

It's here! The ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications for 2021 — your complete guide to radio experimentation, discovery, and innovation — now is available. The Handbook is written by radio amateurs for everyone who has a desire to advance the pursuit of wireless technology. It's available in three formats: Traditional softcover, a six-volume, shrink-wrapped book set (box not included), and eBook digital editions.

The 2021 Handbook features new projects and tools, including an FET-controlled power switch, transmitting tube tester, 432-MHz utility Yagi, off-center-fed dipoles, a loop for 30 and 40 meters, RF sniffer construction, RFI loop antenna, and more. This invaluable resource offers new material on the behavior of RF chokes; circuits for PIN-diode RF switching; adding SDR panadaptors to older radios; digital modes FT4, FT8, and MSK144; care and feeding of power grid tubes; new feed line chokes for receive and transmit; ac power connector types and wiring, and more.

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I usually buy an ARRL Handbook each year to help support the League. Lots of good stuff in the current edition. If you haven't bought a handbook in a couple years, time to 'update' to the latest version! Hundreds and hundreds of pages packed full.

Virginia QSO Party

As usual, this was mostly a 40 and 80M contest where the VA stations try to work each other. Band conditions were not great on 20M either – but most VA stations did not spend much time, IF ANY, on 20M. Top scorers worked 99+ counties.

K9RS - fixed DE - 99 CW 277 SSB 99 counties worked - no comments

WB8WKQ - fixed - MI 90 CW 99 SSB 75 counties worked

I usually have well over 200 Q's and sometimes over 300. Didn't even make 200 Q's this year. I take some of the blame for not having "butt in the seat" and also, I think the conditions may have been less than favorable. I missed the first three hours on Saturday, but from what I've learned it was pretty miserable conditions with a solar flare. Sunday was hard to concentrate, when it was in the 60s up here in Michigan. The mobiles, especially W4GO and N4CW were GREAT! I think a lot of the VA stations were affected with QRN this year. Anyway, thanks to all the mobiles and the folks for putting on this contest. A bit long IMHO, though.

K0PC - fixed - MN 44 CW 29 mults

I didn't realize this was a 75M phone event. Too bad, it could have been fun with more general activity.

73, Pat KØPC

AB7RW - fixed - WA 9 CW 9 counties

DAY TIME 40 METER SIGNALS DO NOT TRAVEL TO THE WEST COAST

K4BAI - fixed - GA - 92 CW 26 SSB 59 counties worked

Thanks for all the QSOs, especially the mobiles. This is a long QSO party and a full time mobile operation must be exhausting. I think because the contest covers so many hours, the rates for out of state stations are pretty low. In state stations seem to want to QSO each other and many don't call CQ at all and many don't seem to want to call out of state stations. Band conditions varied. GA is too close to VA for many QSOs on bands above 40M. There was a lot of QRN toward the end on Sunday night.

73, John, K4BAI.

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 91 CW 34 SSB 58 counties worked

Band conditions horrible on 1st day, finally 80 sped up towards the end of first night. 2nd day was better. Had to work around family arriving and taking grandson to Ocean on Sunday afternoon. One problem I saw was that many operators were on 80 all during the day, but with no chance of contact with West coast on that band. Thanks to all the operators for activating so many counties, especially the portable and rover stations! Glad to give out the Oregon multiplier

Thanks for the Qso's Dave ka6bim

W4PK - county expedition - 274 SSB QSO - all 80/40m

First time for me in this contest. I thought I would quit at 275 but it turned out that I had one dupe. It was fun to be able to work all the locals.

73, Sam W4PK

KK4BZ/P County Expedition 261 SSB QSO

Icom IC-746 connected to 160m-6m Wire OCF Dipole antenna; TYT TH-9800 connected to Diamond X50A Vertical antenna

Much more difficult than anticipated putting up and taking down 134 ft wire antenna. Finding a location was tough in densely populated areas.

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 81 CW 64 SSB 68 mults

It was great to spend 13 hours at the Virginia QSO party. It all started on Saturday morning...couldn't work anyone on 80m, so a marginal 40m was all I had to use. What's most interesting is that I didn't work a mobile station until I finally heard N4CW/m after 5 hours into the contest. One interesting point was that a majority of my 60+ contacts on the first day was with different fixed stations.

. I finally found Matt at 12:30z and later started chasing N4CW too. Thank you W4GO and N4CW for keeping me in the chair for your many mobile runs which resulted in 35+ Qs and many multipliers.

The serial numbers heard were in the 4 digits on Sunday... Congrats to Gordon and the club for another enjoyable VAQP.

73s Dave WN4AFP

NB3A mobile (?) 633 SSB/Phone QSO

CondX very bad, K index so high had splitting headaches after operating Saturday through Sunday Morning. Bands never really opened until late on Sunday, at that point very little motivation left other than to make some more points with club mates and get home from hours away. Couldn't really run much in the mobile so had to make as many 3pt mobile-mobile v/uhf qsos as possible. Still did better than last year which is surprising due to lack of running. All-in-all good proof of concept run for next year when we will dial everything in just a bit more. As always we'll have plenty of stories to tell about this years effort.

Tks 4 the QSOS de NB3A

Note de N4CD - had 285 QSOs on 2 and 432 Phone.....

- - -

KG3V/P county expedition 295 CW 70 SSB

Enjoyed the contest. Thanks to the SPARC sponsors and their support team, for all the work they do to make this happen every year.

note de N4CD - 270 contacts on 40 and 80m. Only 9 on 20M

- - -

K1HTV - fixed - VA FAU 373 CW 687 phone

"Conditions on the HF bands were pretty terrible on Saturday with a magnetic storm in progress. The K Index remained at 4 for most of the contest until late Sunday afternoon, when it dropped to 1. The mag storm really depressed propagation but was I was able to contact 88 countries, mostly on CW with 19 made using FT4/FT8. It was tough working DX on SSB, but CW got through with low power. I missed working 6 of the 48 continental States and didn't even hear stations in Hawaii or Alaska, but did manage to work one station in Japan Sunday evening.

On FT4 & FT8, In order to follow VQP rules, I created a Tx5 macro "CUL VQP 73". CUL is the abbreviation for Culpepper County). When a station answered my CQ DX, I pulled down the Tx5 macro and prepended the 3 digit QSO. After receiving the station's Tx4 message, instead of me sending the normal Tx5 "73" message it sent the macro with the required QSO number and county. The "space 73" at the end, when received by the other station, ended his transmissions. If it was not copied, he would resend his Tx4 message.

Logging was done using the WSJT-X "Log QSO" window. The QSO number was entered into the "Comments" field and "CUL" was typed into the "Power" field which had a checkbox the allow the CUL to be retained for each QSO. So for each QSO all I had to do was type in the sent QSO number. After the contest, using Excel I opened the comma delimited "wsjtx.log" file and formatted the QSO data and columns to match the

normal Cabrillo format. This file was submitted along with the N1MM+ Cabrillo file where they were merged into one log.

It was kind of a pain logging FT4 and FT8 QSOs,

73,
Rich - K1HTV

note de N4CD - 286 contacts on 2 and 432 band....

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On the Road with N4CD III

Mid part of the month after the OK QP - was just wandering over to the local park K-4423/KFF-4423 for the Wednesday CWT. I can put 50 in the log for that easy – and make another 20-30 contacts in about 2 hours. Gets me out of the house to enjoy the weather.

On the following weekend – watch out – a major coronal hole earlier in the week gave forth a gigantic coronal ejection – that slammed into the Earth and generated a 3 day geomagnetic storm just in time for the VA QSO Party and the SES(WWFF Park Activation) weekend. The propagation banner was poor across the board – A index up to 29, K of 5, flux at 73 and sunspots at 12. Horrible conditions. Went over to the park anyway on Saturday to work some VQP stations – if I could for the State QSO Party 2021 challenge. Found a few to work – but not many on 20M. Put out the park for a bit but only logged a dozen stations – everyone other than CA was weak, weak weak and the only thing I heard on 40M was one station in AR working VA QP stations.....and nothing else! 20M SSB had just a few signals coming in – and mostly noise. Hardly worth the gas to get there. Didn't bother to go back on Sunday although this was special parks activity weekend. I didn't hear more than 2 of them on Saturday despite 50 or more out there – most on 40M SSB back east. Sunday was better but not great propagation according to the reports filed by others.

Well, I've got lots of time for planning some trips – and getting the newsletter done now. Hi hi.

FCC License Fees

If you are thinking of upgrading...or have friends that want to get their ham license for the first time – or are within 90 days of renewal – NOW is the time to do it!

From ARRL:

“The FCC Report & Order on new licensing fees that was adopted in December 2020 was published on Friday, March 19, 2021.

As we all remember, the FCC originally proposed to burden Amateur Radio with a licensing fee of \$50.00. This was vigorously opposed both by the ARRL and Amateur Radio licensees across the nation. Although we were not successful in persuading the FCC to exempt Amateur Radio completely, the combined efforts of the ARRL and many individual Hams did result in the FCC’s agreement to reduce the \$50 fee to \$35.00.

Although the majority of the new rules and fees become effective 30 days after the publication of the FCC’s Report & Order — April 19, 2021 — the new fees for Amateur Radio license fees will NOT become effective on April 19, 2021.

The FCC explicitly stated on Page 15061, Paragraph 44 of the Report & Order (<https://tinyurl.com/y52ff2zy>):

It is further ordered that Commission’s rules are amended as set forth in the back of this summary, and such rule amendments shall be effective 30 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register — except for §§ 1.1102,, — which require notice to Congress and also require certain updates to the FCC’s information technology systems and internal procedures to ensure efficient and effective implementation. Sections 1.1102, will not take effect until

- (1) the requisite notice has been provided to Congress;

- (2) the FCC's information technology systems and internal procedures have been updated; and
- (3) the Commission publishes notice(s) in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of such rules.

Section 1.1102 is the section of the Report that applies to Amateur Radio.

It is the opinion of the ARRL's FCC counsel that the three prerequisites will NOT be completed before this summer. But, whenever those conditions have been met, the Report is clear that the FCC will provide advance notice of the actual date the new licensing fees will become effective.

Thus it is not necessary for VECs to collect, or for any new licenses to pay, any license fees until the FCC publicly publishes in the Federal Register the date on which such fees must be collected/paid.

So, encourage everyone to get their licenses before this summer — it will save them \$35.00.

John Robert Stratton
N5AUS
West Gulf Division Director”

Mobile Activity in March

The beginning of the month saw the NC QP, which followed after the Feb SC QP.

Kerri, KB3WAV, ran Baltimore City County MD and a park. Spotted on W6RK

W8OP headed down through TN to NC to MD and VA putting them out on various days during the month. WB8III wound up on eastern shore of MD putting out counties and also DE. Was he with W8OP? Yes....Lots of eastern VA run by one or the other.

Bob, KC6AWX spotted in home county and then San Francisco

Kerry, W4SIG, headed to LA – ran around counties down by New Orleans -

Mike, KA4RRU, spotted out and about in a few in VA.

Bill, K0DEQ headed to IA and ran a bunch there. Lots.

Lowell KB0BA and Sandra N0XYL, spotted out and about in IA

Kerry, W4SIG, wound up in AR and ran a bunch of counties there

Jim, N9JF, headed east from IL through KY to VA. Participated in VA QP and put out parks in VA.

We had the OK, ID, WI QSO Parties for the weekend

The following weekend was the VA QSO Party. Lots of fixed stations, most activity on 80,40 and 2m and 432.

After running in QP, N9JF heads back to IL.

K8ZZ hits the road running a bunch in MO headed east through IL to IN- still going as of 3/25.

Awards Issued

Roadrunner - 700 LC's #25 Kerry, W4SIG 8 March 2021.

Roadrunner - 350 LC's #61 Mike, NF0N 15 June 2013

Roadrunner 1675 LC's #2 Ron, KB6UF 13 February 2021

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Ran All Iowa #35 Bill, K0DEQ 10 March 2021.

Roadrunner 150 LC's #175 Bill, K0DEQ 10 March 2021

Ran All Delaware #76 Alan, W8OP 3/16/2021

Ran All Maryland #34 Alan, W8OP 3/16/2021

Roadrunner 150 LC's #177 Alan, W8OP 3/16/2021

Events for County Hunters

Wow – activity to keep you busy every weekend with good QSO Parties!

April 3 1400z to April 4 0200

Louisiana QSO Party CW Dig Ph

RS(T), LA Parish or SPC

laqp.louisianacontestclub.org

Apr 3 1400z to 4 0200z
Mississippi QSO Party CW Ph Dig RS(T),
MS county or SPC
www.arrlmiss.org

Apr 3 1400z to 4 2200z
Florida State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig
Park ID or SPC
flspota.org/rules

Apr 10 1300z to 11 2200z
Nebraska QSO Party CW Ph
County or SPC (or grid for FT8)
www.nebraskaqsoparty.org

Apr 10 1400z to 11 0200z
New Mexico QSO Party CW Ph Dig
Name, NM county or SPC
newmexicoqsoparty.org

Apr 10 1600z to 11 0400z
Georgia QSO Party CW Ph
RST, GA county or SPC
gaqsoparty.com

Apr 10 1800z to 11 1800z
North Dakota QSO Party CW Ph
RS(T), ND county or SPC
ndarrlsec.com

Don't forget income TAX filing date! Estimated taxes due April 15 – however, regular income tax filing postponed till May 17 this year!

Apr 17 1600z to 18 0400
Michigan QSO Party CW Ph
Serial, MI county or SPC
miqp.org/Rules.htm

Apr 17 1800z to 18 1800z

Ontario QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), ON county or SPC

www.va3cco.com

Apr 17 1400z to 18 2000z

Texas State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig

RS(T), TX park or SPC

www.tspota.org

Apr 24 1600z to Apr 25 2159z

Florida QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), FL county or SPC

floridaqsoparty.org/rules