

# County Hunter News

July 1, 2016  
Volume 12, Issue 7

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.

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.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz and 14.324. 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](http://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://countyhunter.com/marac\\_information\\_package.htm](http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm)

The CW net procedure is written up at:

<http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm>

There is a lot more information at [www.countyhunter.com](http://www.countyhunter.com). Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at [www.CHNewsonline.com](http://www.CHNewsonline.com)

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

<http://pages.suddenlink.net/w4ydy/hamlinks.html#County>

Download the file to a flash card that fits in your GPS unit, turn it on, and the county lines should appear!

De N4CD, Editor (email: [telegraphy@verizon.net](mailto:telegraphy@verizon.net) )

## Notes from the Editor

1 ) Wow - It's been a busy month again. Now we are into summer season and time for vacations and trips by many mobiles. Soon we'll have the National Convention. Propagation has not been great but thousands of contacts have been made.

2 ) Pedestrian Portable

If you have ever thought about operating pedestrian portable, there's a nice manual on

the subject on line courtesy of WA3WSJ

[http://w3bqc.homestead.com/WA3WSJ\\_s\\_PM\\_Handbook.pdf](http://w3bqc.homestead.com/WA3WSJ_s_PM_Handbook.pdf)

3 ) National Convention – Aug 1-4 Germantown TN !!!! Still time to sign up! More than 75 have already!

## National Convention

Time to join in the fun! Over 75 have signed up so far. Going to be a good one in Germantown TN.

### Activities

- The hotel has a shuttle that can take you anywhere within a 5 mile radius. This will get you to two of the best shopping centers in town (The Shops of Saddle Creek and Carriage Crossing), and to dozens of great restaurants.
- Want to see the city without driving everywhere? Go downtown and get on board with the Memphis Hop. For one low price this shuttle makes stops at 10 Memphis attractions every hour. Spend as much time as you want in each attraction and catch the next bus to move on at your own pace. The Memphis Hop operates Tuesday - Sunday each week and daily passes are only \$22 for adults. Get the details at [MemphisHop.com](http://MemphisHop.com)

### Tourist Activities:

- American Dream Safari:

In the back of a 1955 Cadillac, Tad Pierson takes you on a journey like you've never experienced. His American Dream Safari company offers themed rides, including Juke Joint Full of Blues, a Delta Day Trip and a soul-soothing Road Therapy Tour. Tad has done personal tours for some very influential folks as the autographed door panels

would indicate, and his rich historic and cultural knowledge are as vast as the Mississippi River is long. He can fit up to 5 people in his Cadillac. A three hour personalized tour for up to 5 passengers is \$200. Contact him directly for a reservation at 901-527-8870

- Memphis Uptown Carriage Rides

Spend any amount of time in downtown Memphis, and you'll surely come across a carriage. Saddle up for a horse-drawn carriage tour with the family or choose a romantic after-dinner trot exploring the heart of downtown. You'll get your own driver for these one-hour tours (with their ever-present canine companion) giving you a spin on the Memphis scene.

#### Other Memphis Sites of Special Interest:

Upon registration you will be sent a vacation guide of Memphis for your vacation planning. Some of special interest are:

- The Peabody Hotel – the South's Grand Hotel.

With a style and tradition befitting one of Memphis' grandest, most legendary hotels, The Peabody Memphis offers a magnificent bridge between the "Blues City's" celebrated past and cosmopolitan present. Nestled in the heart of downtown, this historic Forbes Four-Star, AAA Four-Diamond hotel offers a one-of-a-kind experience just blocks from Beale Street, the Memphis Rock 'n Soul Museum, the Gibson Guitar Factory, Fed-Ex Forum, Sun Studio, the Orpheum Theatre and the Memphis Cook Convention Center. Of special interest are the Peabody Ducks that parade off the elevator via a red carpet ceremony every day at 11AM and return at 5:00 PM to their rooftop palace. A real show!!! Arrive early to get a good view. More details at [peabodymemphis.com](http://peabodymemphis.com).

- Memphis Pyramid Bass Pro Shop

An outdoors store unlike any other! It's a new national destination experience located inside the massive iconic Pyramid in Downtown Memphis, TN. This new, immersive retail experience offers something for everyone from the serious outdoor enthusiast to families looking to have fun. This is much more than just a store. Inside the expansive 535,000-square-foot pyramid are many experiences and features that offer something for everyone. In addition to a vast assortment of outdoor gear, the Pyramid includes a

wilderness hotel called Big Cypress Lodge, nearly 600,000 gallons of water features, a cypress swamp with 100-foot-tall trees an 84,000-gallon alligator habitat, and underwater ecosystems including aquariums teeming with more than 1,800 fish, the interactive Ducks Unlimited Waterfowling Heritage Center, Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill, a nautical-themed restaurant and bar with a saltwater aquarium and a 13-lane ocean-themed bowling alley, Beretta Fine Gun Center, the nation's tallest 28-Story Freestanding Glass Elevator and The Lookout, a breathtaking glass-floored cantilevering observation deck at the top of the 32-story steel Pyramid. With an array of retail, educational and fun attractions for guests of all ages, Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid is one of the most dynamic, captivating retail adventures in the world.

- National Civil Rights Museum- Loraine Motel

At the place of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death in 1968 in Memphis, TN, the National Civil Rights Museum is a renowned educational and cultural institution. The Museum chronicles the American Civil Rights Movement with compelling presentations of iconic exhibits, oral histories of lesser-known civil rights foot soldiers, and visceral, in-the-moment experiences. Visitors will learn through emotionally charged, multi-user, multi-touch interactives, and a visually engaging, contemporary exhibit design that guides you through five centuries of history. More info at [Civilrightsmuseum.org](http://Civilrightsmuseum.org)

- Memphis Zoo

One of only a handful of American zoos to house Chinese Pandas. The Memphis Zoo, located in Midtown Memphis is home to more than 3,500 animals representing over 500 different species. Created in April 1906, the zoo has been a major tenant of Overton Park for more than 100 years.

- Stax Museum of American Soul Music.

The Stax Museum of American Soul Music, located at the original site of Stax Records in Memphis, Tennessee at 926 E. McLemore Avenue, is a 17,000 square-foot museum offering interactive exhibits, videos, vintage musical instruments used to create the Stax sound, stage costumes, photographs, records, and approximately 3,000 other items of memorabilia that tell the unique story, from beginning to present, of American soul music, particularly that of Stax Records and the Memphis Sound. Artists highlighted include Isaac Hayes, Otis Redding, the Staple Singers, the Bar-Kays, Booker T. & the MGs, Johnnie Taylor, Little Milton, Sam & Dave, Eddie Floyd, Rufus and Carla Thomas, Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Ike & Tina Turner, James Brown, Ray Charles, Sam

Cooke, and hundreds of others. More info at [staxmuseum.com](http://staxmuseum.com)

- Memphis Rock 'N Soul Museum

Originally a Smithsonian Institute research project, it became their first permanent exhibition outside of New York and Washington DC. Inside, you'll find seven expansive galleries showcasing instruments, costumes, photographs, artifacts and exhibits like "Rural Music," "Coming to Memphis," "Sun Records & Youth Culture," "Soul Music" and "Social Changes" that take you through a timeline and tell the story of Memphis and its music history. More info at [memphisrocknsoul.org](http://memphisrocknsoul.org)

- Beale Street

All music lovers as well as those just looking for a fun night out on the town will not want to pass up an opportunity to visit Beale Street. This 1.8 mi (2.9 km) stretch of restaurants, bars, and clubs is more than just a place to get a bite to eat. It is now considered "The Official Home of the Blues."

From 1920 to 1940, artists descended on Beale Street and began to collaborate with one another, creating a new music style that blended smooth jazz with hard charging rock 'n' roll. This blend eventually gave birth to the blues, a new and distinctly American genre of music that gradually made its way into the American pop culture mainstream. A visit to Beale Street today allows you to check out the blues clubs that served as the launching sites for some of the most famous American blues musicians of all time

- Mud Island River Park

The Riverwalk is an exact scale model of the Lower Mississippi River flowing from its confluence with the Ohio River at Cairo, Illinois 954 miles south to the Gulf of Mexico. It features twenty cities that are mapped along the Riverwalk. Concrete wedges locate the main rivers flowing into the Mississippi or show river engineering structures such as floodways. There are four watershed walls which map the entire drainage area of the Mississippi River. The model empties into an acre size Gulf of Mexico. The park is designed using Corps of Engineers survey and navigational charts.

- Pink Palace Museum

The Pink Palace Museum is one of the largest facilities of its kind in the Southeast. You can walk through a replica of the first self-service grocery store in the country, Clarence Saunders' Piggly Wiggly. Explore the cultural and natural history of the Mid-South through exciting exhibits, dioramas, and audio-visuals. Trace Memphis' development from the time of Spanish explorers through the Civil War and the yellow fever epidemics. Learn from the award-winning medical exhibit how health care grew to be Memphis' largest industry. You can also enjoy one of many IMAX movies or a show at the planetarium.

- Memphis Botanic Garden

This 96-acre property includes 28 specialty gardens, which provide an in-depth look into various families of plants, flowers, and trees.

- Dixon Gallery and Gardens

Art museum specializing in impressionist and post-impressionist painting, featuring work by Matisse, Renoir, Gaugin, Cassat and Turner

- Brooks Museum of Art

This museum houses an eclectic art collection from early Greek to modern. Brooks Museum is set in a beautiful park like setting. Every Wednesday is no admission charge

- Blues Hall of Fame

The Blues Hall of Fame honors those who have made the Blues timeless through performance, documentation, and recording. Since its inception in 1980, The Blues Foundation has inducted new members annually into the Blues Hall of Fame for their historical contribution, impact and overall influence on the Blues. Members are inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in five categories: Performers, Individuals, Classic of Blues Literature, Classic of Blues Recording (Song), Classic of Blues Recording (Album). Since 1980, The Blues Foundation has inducted 350+ performers, industry professionals, recordings and literature into the Blues Hall of Fame. Of the 130 performer inductees, 120 of them are African-American.

The most popular cruise is the 90-minute sightseeing cruise, which takes visitors a step back into Tennessee history. Historical commentary gives a comprehensive and

interesting narrative of past and present Mississippi River life.

- Memphis Riverboat Rides

Authentic American Riverboat Cruises on the Mississippi River. Take a Paddlewheeler a few miles up and down the greatest river in the U.S.A., The "Mighty" Mississippi. This is a great way to see and learn a bit of Mississippi River history while visiting Memphis.

- Railroad and Trolley Museum

Located in historic Memphis Central Station, the Memphis Railroad and Trolley Museum features "hands on" activities for the kids, model train layouts, memorabilia and displays with emphasis on the role of railroads and trolleys the history of Memphis.

- Hunt Phelan House

Built between 1828 - 1832, the home was host to many well known Tennesseans such as President Andrew Jackson, Jefferson Davis and General N.B. Forest. Confederate General Leonidas Polk planed the battle of Corinth in the home and General U.S. Grant later used the house as his headquarters where he devised the Vicksburg campaign. The home also served as a Union hospital. After the war, one of the first schools for freed slaves was built on the property by the Freedman's Bureau.

## 2016 MARAC National Convention Activities

Hospitality room will be open for those not going on tours.

Monday August 1st-

8:00 PM

Short presentation by W4SIG on the week's activities.

Tuesday August 2nd-

8:30 AM-5:30 PM

Memphis Music Tour (Click for all the fun details!)

6:00 PM

Corky's BBQ dinner (optional but HIGHLY recommended), casual style, including:  
BBQ Chicken

Pulled Pork BBQ

Baked Beans

Cole Slaw

Rolls

Buns

Iced Tea

Lemonade

Wednesday August 3rd-

9:00 AM

CW Forum

10:00 AM

Remote Operation Forum

10:45AM

Mobile Antenna Forum

Thursday August 4th-

10:00 AM

MARAC Board Meeting

11:00 AM

Digital Forum

6:15 PM

Group Pictures at

Germantown Country Club

1780 Kimbrough Road

Germantown TN, 38138

\*\*This is also the banquet location, and is located approximately 15 minutes from the hotel.\*\*

6:30 PM

Banquet at Germantown Country Club

## Mobile Activity in June

At the beginning of June:

Mary/Neil, AB7NK and K7SEN were out on a big trip in MT and other western states including OR and CA and NV.

Paul, WD9EJK was spotted up on WI.

Don, K3IMC was noted in TX putting out the last of the 3077 and reaching his goal of transmitting from all 3077 in June!

Larry, W7FEN was on from WA and ID, and is headed east shortly.

Ron, KB6UF, was up in ME putting them out there, then later headed back to LA.

Ed, K8ZZ, was up in MI, MN, and WI putting them out.

Ron, K2RP, took a week's long trip east – back to OH and MI – ran many NP units along the way including some rare ones.

The AL QSO Party occurred. Ed, KN4Y was one of the county hunter mobiles out running. Full report on this later in this issue.

Karl, K4YT, was spotted out on trips in VA and NC and other states.

K6JN/W6XJN noted on the road from FL to CA once again.

Rick, AI5P put out a few in NM, then headed to Dallas TX for the Hamcom convention.

Darl, NA8W, spotted in KY and OH.

Bill, K8TE, spotted out and about in NM, TX, OK. Ran some NP's.

Kraig, KA2LHO, was out and about in NY

Mike KA4RRU was zipping about in VA hitting some NP units.

Lowell and Sandra, KB0BA and N0XYL, spotted in KY putting them out.

Fred, K0FG noted in MO running some counties for the folks.

Bill, NU0Q, spotted out in IA, MO and KS.

Jack, K0MAF, noted out and about in MO. Later he was up in IA, IL, IN

Tim, W8JJ, ran a few in MI

Bill, K2HVN ran a few over in DE and VA

WA3QNT, Bob, ran a few in PA.

K5TVC, Quent, ran a few in OK, AR,

Jim, N4JT, ran counties in VA.

Ed, N8OYY, ran counties in WV.

WB5TMW was on in TX

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If you want to work some 'parks' check out the Facebook NPOTA page, or watch any of the DX clusters with "US" filter. Nearly all the park runs are spotted there. They're in counties! And there are dozens a week! Maybe 100 activations a week!

# Alabama QSO Party

## **WN4AFP fixed SC - 77 cw 15 ssb**

The mobile ops really came to the party. Thanks to W4AN, N4ZZ, KN4Y, K4ZGB, KC4HW and K4NO for getting out there and running all those counties! Of course, more CW and Phone in this one. From SC, 20m was impossible, but 40m was in good shape during the entire contest for me. Looking forward to the next one!

73s Dave  
WN4AFP

## **K4ZGB - mobile - plus driver 512 cw QSO**

## **N4ZZ/M (AD4EB, N4ZZ) 1267 cw QSO**

This was our 6th mobile adventure in the ALQP, and it was another exciting one. Melody KI4HVY, our trusted driver/navigator, was not able to make it this year, so Don and I split the driving duties. We found it is certainly much more challenging without her at the wheel. We did not score as high as usual, most likely due to low participation during the first half of the contest.

We drove thru rain for a good portion of the contest, at times they were the heaviest downpours we had ever experienced in a mobile contest. In the past, rain caused high SWR issues, but we were able to eliminate the effect by extensive grounding of the roof rack and antenna supports on top of the Montana van. The van now has 240k miles on it, and is still going strong ready for the next one.

Band conditions were exceptional, and even with the local thunderstorms the QRN for us was not bad. 20m was wide open the entire contest, so we did not bother

exchanging it with the 80m Hustler vertical for the last few hours. DX was booming in on 20m, we worked 17 countries including ZL2AGY. And the short skip was also booming at over S9 at times. Totally amazing for this time in the sunspot cycle, and with just a couple of little Hustler verticals on a van (Don thinks we may need to use these at our home stations during the next DX contest HI).

Here are the top 10 stations based on number of times worked:

N8II (38)  
DL3DXX (36)  
ZF2DO (32)  
VE3NBJ (31)  
AD4RE (24)  
VE2FK (24)  
WB5JID (24)  
K4YT (21)  
K6MR (21)  
VA3ATT (21)

N8II Jeff - Had the loudest signal, sounded like you were in the van!  
DL3DXX Dietmar - What a pro, you always find us quick and have a great signal.  
The XX really comes thru the pileups.  
ZF2DO David - Nice job from the Cayman Islands

We worked all but 5 of the 50 states, missing ND, VT, DE, LA, and WY.

Thanks to all of you who worked us. Lots of new calls in there, which is a good sign. And to Jim KC4HW, thanks again for all you do to make this contest happen, and hope you enjoyed the contest as well. We sure did.

73 from the N4ZZ/m team:

Jim - AD4EB  
Don - N4ZZ

### **K4NO Mobile 261 cw 2 ssb**

Late start. Took 15 trips from the basement to the truck to get things

installed and working. Radio K3 + KPA500 in the back seat, Honda EU2000i generator in the bed of the truck, 20 and 40 meter Hamsticks. 200 to 400 watts out depending on antenna tuner in K3

worked a couple of folks from the driveway (MDSN cty) before heading out to JKSN, MRSN, DKLB, JKSN and back to MDSN

lots of great signals, lots of DX worked in this contest. Bands in good shape

Left 15M and 80M hamsticks at house so didn't try there, just 20 and 40 in this one.

Thanks to KC4HW for putting this one on.

Greg K4NO

#### **W4AN - multi op mobile KU8E and K4BAI 799 cw 88 ssb**

IC756ProII, 100W, Hustler mobile whips. Jeff, KU8E and John, K4BAI, and Jeff's two teenage sons, Andrew and Randy, planned a 23-county mixed mode entry in AQP on Saturday. Problems with a non functioning inverter used to power the laptop caused us to start 55 minutes late. Fortunately, we had a spare inverter that worked fine once we determine what the problem with the laptop was. During the day, we also had to stop for short periods of time. Once was because one of the antenna mounts developed a short. Jeff was able to clear up that problem, which had occurred once in the past. We had some RFI problem with the computer, which was fixed by a toroid on the keying line to the computer. During the contest, the rig shut down a few times and finally wouldn't come back up after a shut down. Jeff located the trouble, which was in a section of power cable going from the West Mountain distribution system to the rig. Fortunately, we had another cable like that with our back up rig (an Icom 756Pro).

At the beginning, all bands seemed dead. We were set up with a 20M and a 15M resonator on a tri mount tuned for 20CW and 15CW. On another mast, we had another 20M resonator tune for about 14250 for SSB. After 3 hours and 20 minutes with no antenna for 40M, we determined that the internal tuner in the Icom would allow us to use just the one 20M resonator on the tri mount for both 20CW and 20SSB, so we removed the second 20M resonator and exchanged it for a

40M resonator, which worked quite well. We never pulled out the 80M resonator, since 20M stayed open until the end of the contest period, even though it seemed that only N8II, DL3DXX, and K6MR knew it was still open.

While we were working on the computer problem, the bands picked up a bit and we started in RSSL, although also stopped there to work on the RFI problem and make other adjustments. Running so far behind our planned schedule, we change routes and ended up putting out 19 counties, instead of the planned 23. The sponsors had announced that there was promised activity in all counties before we posted our planned route, so I hope we didn't let anybody down by missing some other counties in south AL, more remote to our home QTHs in and near Columbus, GA. Activity seemed low for the first few hours. We never heard a signal on 15M even though we sent CQs there several time, and no one asked us to move to 15. So far, I haven't seen any 15M QSOs in the 3830 posting for this contest.

Activity and band conditions improved greatly later in the afternoon. We worked a number of DX stations including DL, SM, I, LY, other Europe, ZF2DO and HC2AO. We worked some DLs, LY5W, and IK0MHR on 40M too.

20M was never really long. We were able to work VA and IN and further out from our first activity on 20. Later, it got even shorter and we worked NC, KY, AR, and maybe TN on 20M. But we never heard or worked any GA or FL stations on 20M and no AL stations other than K1DC when we were close to his county.

On 40M, the skip was long during the day in that we could not hear other AL stations at all, except for those local to us. We could hear and work stations in NC and MS and further. Eventually, it shorted out and we worked a lot of other AL stations on 40 and it never seemed to go long until after the end of he contest period.

The volume of QSOs on 20M dramatically decreased when the sun went down, but N8II was still very strong until our last QSO at 0358Z.

40M was quite strange after dark. First, some (but not all) signals developed a RAC-like buzz. We thought there was some maladjustment on the receiver, but with the noise blanker off, signals were still buzzing. 20M signals all sounded normal. Then most non-local 40M signals developed a very pronounced flutter that lasted perhaps the last two hours of the contest. When 0400Z rolled around, the signals returned to normal as we motored back to GA and worked a few European NFD stations on 40M.

As to multipliers, I think we missed DE on CW, LA, HI, WY, and ND on both modes. Thanks to all who found us on phone or moved to phone from CW to give us QSOs and multipliers. We also worked VE1, VE9, VE2, VE3, VE6, VE7, VE8, and KL7 stations. The last three were on SSB only. Great thrill to be called by VE8NSD and AL7KE on 20M SSB. We were also called by a KP4 on 20M SSB, but, of course, that was not a mult.

Thanks to the sponsors and KC4HW for doing his usual great job on AQP. We plan to return in future years. And my personal thanks to Jeff, KU8E, and his sons for planning, engineering, driving, and sharing the operating. Lot of fun and thanks to all for the QSOs.

73, John, K4BAI for the team.

### **KC4HW mobile 264 cw**

First of all, thanks to all that participated both in and out of Alabama. I have received 100 logs/submissions so far, very good turn out.

Also thanks to all those that assisted with promoting this event.

It seems to me that we had better than normal propagation. With all the activity on the band from the NPOTA and the Ships OTA and other operating events, it was busy on 20m at the start. I had to go to 14057 to find an open frequency. Fortunately many stations found me and I was off and running. 40m was good most of the time. I was committed to operating 20m and 40m so that everyone would have a pretty good opportunity to work the counties that I was going to be in. There was a period in the early afternoon that was sort of puny, but for the most part conditions were the best that I have experienced in several years. Lots of support throughout the country as well at DX and VE stations.

With help from two of my friends I was able to get the Kenwood TS-50 and Hustler resonators operational on the ole 1999 Chevy pickup with 390k+ miles working. The biggest obstacle was the key circuit for the TS-50, but my old

buddy Tim/AB4B found the solution--it always pays to read the manual, right Tim...hi Additionally Don/K1DC was very helpful in quickly getting the resonators tuned to frequency. Actually Don/K1DC and I were doing the antennas Friday night around 7PM. Guess you can't start to early.. hi Actually had to re-tune the 20m resonator a bit on the fly, because I was so high in the band, but it was easy to do since I knew where the resonant point was.

Although it all seemed to come together at the last minute, it all work flawlessly. Never had a glitch all day. Used computer logging with Writelog and a W3YY Serial Port Keying Interface. No rig control. Writelog give you the ability to enter the frequency in the log entry window so that made it easy to change bands. The TS-50 is a bit of old technology, it seemed to work fine. I did put in a 500hz CW filter that helped, But would have been nice to have had a 350hz one--I think.

Single operator NO driver! I started early to get to the tri-county area of WASH, CHOC and CLRK which I traveled to each county separately to operate. I left home at 6:15AM CDT and arrived at WASH and was ready to go on time. Was a short ride to CHOC, CLRK then a bit longer ride to the other counties (MNRO, ESCA, COVI, CONE BULT and CREN), tried to make GENE but just could not get there. Actually I spent too much time in each of the previous 9 counties and just could not get to GENE. Drove a total of 490+ miles and was at it for 17 hours and by the time I got home was a pretty beat little boy! hi.

I guess this is it, thanks for all the QSOs and supporting the Alabama QSO Party!

73

Jim/KC4HW

### **KN4Y mobile (with driver) 586 cw**

I taped an over/under on the back window of the van and I was treated as a local wherever I traveled. Weather was great with one little drizzle around noon. mostly 20 and 40 meters, tried 15 meters without success. Too lazy to put the 80-meter antenna on. Worked 42 states and 5 provinces. Ran the NPOTA Horseshoe Bend #MP05.

## On the Road with N4CD I

N4CD was busy working on a 'challenge'. One particular National Park site in Louisiana was 'tough to run' and even though there were 20 'activations', only 117 QSOs had been made from there – and likely most of them were on two meters. Only one other HF activation had been made it seems, and apparently just a handful of contacts. Nearly all the park hunters needed it including a large number of the 'top dogs' who had worked 300 or 400 different parks.

If you visit the website you'll find this place is vastly different than most parks and monuments. They are often large – consist of well defined boundaries – and have visitor centers where you can stop and park on 'park property'. Not this one. This is more of a 'concept' park of celebrating the jazz heritage of New Orleans and the various venues that jazz players performed at over time. There is no 'park' to 'visit' as in Yellowstone or Glacier other than the French Quarter of New Orleans – which obviously isn't National Park property. The park people will give you a map of the various venues where jazz greats performed and you can hoof it around the French Quarter to see them. The 'park' also sponsors, in conjunction with others, jazz music performances, and has rangers who will help you find the 'jazz heritage' in New Orleans.

It took a while to figure out how one could actually run this 'park'. The website talks about performances taking place on the second floor of the US Mint building and in preserving Perserverance Hall, located in state owned Armstrong Park not far away. I did a bunch of web checking – not much there on line other than the 'plan' for the park from 10 years ago and the idea of preserving jazz history. Hmm. N4CD couldn't stop in the parking lot of 'jazz history'. That didn't do a lot for me. Turns out Perserverance Hall is boarded up, and maybe a few times a year they have a performance there. There's no parking and no way to run this there as far as I could tell from a mobile. . . That left the US Mint building as the only other option – and it is in downtown in the French Quarter area and things did not look promising. Looking at the NP web site mentioned nothing about parking – there isn't any visitor parking except on the streets – if you are lucky to find a spot. It's bumper to bumper parking – both sides of street – for miles around. There are thousands of tourists milling about.

They recently moved the Jazz park visitor center into the Mint Building, too.

So I dug a bit more – and came up with a Google Satellite view of the US Mint Building and noticed there was parking in the back! Hmmm...now to track down the right person who could give me 'permission' (I hope) to operate mobile from the back lot. I lucked out. The first person who answered the phone said you need to speak to Yvonne and connected me. Turns out she was the one who controlled access to the back few spots behind the building – maybe 7 or 8 spots in all. You'll recall for NPOTA, you must be 'on park property' to be legal. You can't park on the street in front of the building.



US Mint Building

North at top of picture. The street front and back of the US Mint run NW/SE. Add in at least 200 cars on the streets to this picture.

She seemed receptive to the idea. She wanted a date and time to be able to notify security so I wouldn't get chased out of the lot. At the time, it was dumping inches of rain at my QTH, and New Orleans was also under daily deluges. I said it would be a few days before the weather cleared and I'd get back to her for a specific time. A few days later the weather pattern looked good – no rain in TX, no rain in New Orleans...but

no Yvonne – just her phone mail for two days. No Yvonne on Thursday. No Yvonne on Friday. Not good. I was running into a problem with the upcoming trip and the Hamcom hamfest – only had a 3 day window.

I decided to chance it and leave on Monday, 6/6, hoping I'd catch her on the way down. On Sunday, I put her number in the cellphone – and dialed it expecting to get her voice mail just to be sure I had the right number. Well.....she answered her office phone on Sunday! Turns out she was behind on the work because she was off for two days and catching up! Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning would work. She'd notify security. What are the odds on catching someone at work on a Sunday? Propagation was good on Sunday morning. The plan was put into action.

So.....5:30am on Monday morning the N4CD mobile was headed down to New Orleans – 500 miles – 8 hours 20 minutes without stops. Beat the Dallas rush hour traffic – no sweat and made good time. Long drive but I arrived before 2 pm. Where did the bands go? Turns out late Sunday the A index kicked up to the 30s and the K into the 5 region. Yuk! Coronal discharge was wiping out the bands.

Found the back of the Mint building and carefully drove in through the 6 foot high iron fence gate – barely a car width wide. The streets were bumper to bumper parking. Across the way was a flea market of sorts and there were thousands of people milling about. Traffic crept along at 5mph. People and cars everywhere.

Parked in the driveway away from the building. Now the real operating challenge began.

If you've ever been in NYC or the boroughs you'll know that NOISE can be a major problem. This site is in downtown New Orleans. When you turn on the radio, expect S9 noise end to end on the SSB portion of the band on 20M and 40M. Switch to CW and you have S5 noise on 40m CW in a 500 Hz filter, and S3 noise on 20M. Worse, the spot where you can park is on the southwest side of the building blocked to the north, northeast and east – where most of the people live! To compound the problems, the day I was there – the A index was 35 and the K index 5. It doesn't get much worse than that! So.....there I was in a noisy noisy location on the 'wrong' side of the building with horrible propagation. Yep, a real challenge. Would I even get my 10 contacts for an activation credit? Most contacts on the way down were not much above the noise – lots of 339s....and that was with near zero noise out along the interstates. Here? QRN central!

Three hours later I had managed to put 165 people in the log. Signals were barely

readable much of the time – it was near ESP copy through the noise floor on 20/30/40M but many got through. All CW. Fortunately I recognized most of the calls, so if I just got bits and pieces, often I would know who it was. Tough! Just like in county hunting, after you work park hunters a dozen or two times, the calls stick in your mind. Likely a couple hundred needed this but it was not to be. Signals fading in and out playing peek-a-boo all day. I was happy to get 165, which is 30% more than all the other 'activation's combined previously.

I didn't hear a single station on 20M SSB that I could even copy so didn't try SSB. Stations out west had a bit of advantage due to not being blocked by the building, but not much with the rotten conditions. Someone should run it again when conditions are better.



N4CD at HP31 – 'Jazz'  
Discover Louisiana's Music!

The US Mint building was finished in 1838. Solid construction – good for blocking radio signals!

My time was up. The close the gates shortly after five. I had my 3 hours there and it was time to head on out. Groan! Rush hour in New Orleans...creep and crawl for miles to get to the highway to get over to the Knights Inn in Gretna – 6 miles away. Don't

stay there. They try hard but you can do better. It was one of the lower cost places around. Dinner at Shoney's. I'm not a spicy Cajun food fan. Nor did I want to fight the tourist crowds.

Well, here I was in New Orleans and there was another park I could activate before I headed home. The other park is called Jean LaFitte – it consists of five different areas centered around the southern Louisiana area – including a Cajun music/culture center in Thibidoux and one in Lafayette, a 'preserve area' and the Chalmette Battlefied where the famous American battle clobbering the British took place – the Battle of New Orleans with General Andrew Jackson. He rallied the troops and got the folks in the New Orleans area to mount a tremendous effort to end the War of 1812. The British send thousands of troops against them – and were slaughtered in the process with over 2000 British dead and only 71 Americans killed.

If you're a senior, you'll probably remember the Johnny Horton pop tune - "In 1814 we took a little trip – along with Colonel Jackson down the mighty Mississip"

I chose the nearby Chalmette Battlefield to run this park unit. Supposedly it opens at 9am, but the gates were open at 8:40am. Dozens of folks were walking/jogging around the place which is a lower income neighborhood in St Bernard Parish. Ran the park making 150 contacts, then had to head home.



**Jean LaFitte HP17**

Then I kept the car moving at the speed limit or a few over.....with a small detour to Cane River Creole park (HP05) for an hour and the way home. My car has a tendency to take detours and I'd still be home before dark. Stayed an hour – then left again for home. I'd run that one before.

1100 miles in 2 days – over 400 park contacts – and another 200 or so county hunter contacts as I went through the counties.

More trips planned!

# N0KV/N0DXE Trip Report

## Trip to Wyoming and Montana

Barry had needed Pondera MT for Bingo III WBOW for quite some time so we decided to make a run to Wyoming and Montana in May – had to wait until the snow melted and we had a free week or two. So, we looked at the Special Needs page and put lots of those counties on our route. Hope you got a few. Stops included Thermopolis (Pat likes the Hot Springs), Yellowstone NP (where it snowed on us) and ran both Teton Co and the Park, and then on up to Montana. Heading back thru Montana we stopped to run Little Bighorn Battlefield for NPOTA and ran into N6DQ and K6YL (operating as WK6KW), who have avidly run parks for NPOTA. Since we had an extra day, ran over to NE to go to Cabelos and then slowly made our way home thru N.E. Colorado. All in all, a good trip.

Stats: 3400 miles driven, 65 counties run, 2773 QSO's, 440 call signs, (59 county hunters worked us 11 or more times and accounted for 71% of the QSO's), 2 Parks/monuments run.

We hope to make a few more short trips this summer, one up to Sublette WY, as it seems quite a few folks need that one and a trip to S. Colorado to run Conejos, Costilla and nearby counties. We hope to post in advance, but keep your NEEDS up to date as we often use that as a guide for our trips and running counties.

Hope to see you on the air.

Barry (N0KV) and Pat (N0DXE)

## On the Road with N4CD II

Each year the Hamcom convention is held in the Dallas area. Over 5000 attend this two day event. Naturally, N4CD would stay in town for this one in between the National Parks trip. There is the big Lone Star DX Club dinner/speaker each year, plus a dozen forums.

Not a whole lot to report.

Rick, AI5P and Bill, K8TE, came over from Albuquerque NM for the event. Met up with Alan, N5NA, from west TX. He's active in the TX QSO Party and several others. Ron, AF5Q, also a state party participant, was there as well.



Bill K8TE

Rick AI5P

This year I purchased an indoor flea market table and sold a bunch of stuff. Didn't make a dent in the over 'stuff' but some things sitting around for a long time changed hands. Didn't buy anything other than one book on QRP circuits for a few bucks. Saw a lot of nice new rigs but wasn't tempted. I took a short break from selling stuff to attend the ARRL Forum. Nothing new to report.

# On the Trail of Regens

One of my other hobbies is collecting regenerative receivers. Not much 'new' shows up these days – the collection is full of lots of interesting items, and rarely does something new pop up.

This month on Ebay – something new. A 1938 RACO regenerative preselector. I've got two RACO receivers (regens) in the collection. It appears this might be made for the first superhet receivers to give them a boost. RACO was a job-shop type outfit on Radio Row – advertised in Short Wave Craft and other monthly magazines of the times.

It's a single tube (6K7) pre-amp/preselector with 4 bands from 15 to 550 meters. Both of the RACO receivers have their own RF amps so I'm not sure this would do them any good. It just showed up but the price is too high for me to add an interesting but likely not too useful item (well, most regens are interesting but not too useful for county hunting, hi hi).



RACO Pre-Selector/PreAmp

Not much else showing up. Nothing new at Dayton or Hamcom.

## New Coloring Books

Sam, W5GND, is now printing the Coloring Books (county map books) similar to those previously printed by Magellan (N4UJK) and the B&B shop (W0OWY). They are \$15 postpaid. He's gone to extra effort to make the county names 'readable' with larger type for them.

## On the Road with N4CD III

The travel bug bit again. With 100 degree temps predicted in TX, it was time to head west to the mountains and canyons and other geographic features out in NM, AZ, UT and CO. More Parks! That's the solution to NPOTA fever! (National Parks on the Air).

The car was loaded up for a 2 week trip – and the plan was ambitious trying to hit as many parks as I could in those two weeks. It's almost like county hunting when you have an agenda of counties to hit – but this was a 'connect the parks' trip – going through all the counties in between.

### Day 1

At an early hour on Monday – to escape the Dallas rush hour although I could skirt most of it, the N4CD mobile headed out up route 287 for a couple hundred miles toward Amarillo TX, then onto I-40 headed west. Conditions were good and I made good time. Originally, I planned to stay in Moriarty, NM, just a bit east of Albuquerque, NM -

Bernalillo County – but I was going to arrive there too early, so I canceled that reservation and headed over to Grants, NM close to the two parks planned for the next day. There was even enough time to hit Petrogylph National Monument again – right in Albuquerque for a short run. I'd already done that, but, what the heck, I could get in another 'activation'. You can get it with a five mile detour off the interstate. Just did 42Qs, but anything over 10 is fine. At Petroglyph there an estimated 25,000 imagines carved by native people and early Spanish settlers. Worth a stop and detour. Plan on an hour of tourist time. Then on to the Super 8 in Grants.

## Day 2

Next morning it was off to hit El Morro and El Malpais. You can actually run El Malpais right off the interstate at the visitor center during business hours. Otherwise you can hit it on the way to El Morro. El Morro has over 2,000 inscriptions and petroglyphs, as well as ancestral Puebloan runs. There is water available at a water hole that made this area a popular spot for travelers in the hot dusty area. El Malpais has lava flows , cinder cones, pressure ridges and a complex lave tube system. (there were lots of volcanoes in NM way back when!). The runs went well. It takes a while to get in the road and back out. After half a day of putting out those two parks , it was north for a hundred miles to get to the next park- Aztec Ruins – in Aztec NM. Many parks have summer hours - or you can get to them 24/7. Others you need to be careful when you get there – otherwise you'll be out of luck and won't be able to get in to run the park because they lock the gates up tight. Check the NPS website ahead of time.



El Malpais

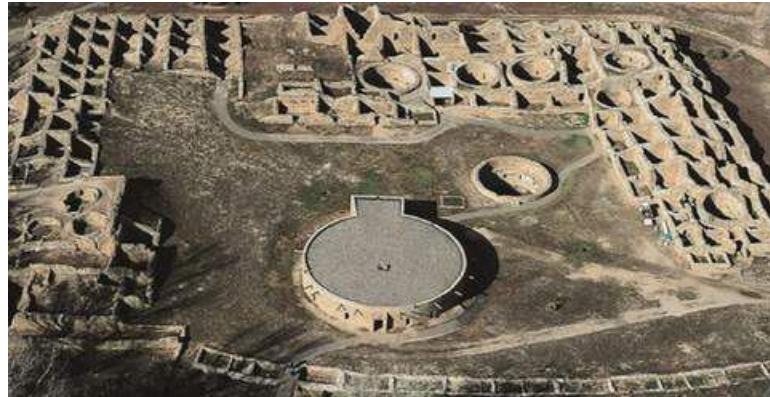


### El Morro National Monument

In Aztec, I stayed at a nice Microtel motel. A few more bucks than a Super 8 but it was in the right spot. Dinner at a 'family restaurant'. After checking in, I headed over to the park – late afternoon run - and put 409Qs in the log from Aztec Ruins– an all time record number of QSOs for a single site for me. Worked most of the county hunters plus hundreds of park chasers and random folks stopping by. Band conditions for most of the trip were so-so or worse with very few days of really good conditions. Around 1100AD, ancestral Pueblo people embarked on a massive project in the Animas River valley. In less than 3 years they build a structure of 3 stories with over 500 rooms. Aztec has one of the few fully restored grand kivas you can walk into. This was the native American ruins trip. More to come! Evening runs can be good with many east coast people home from work!



Aztec Ruins



The Aztec Ruins site

## Day 3

Next day it was down to Chaco Culture, formerly Chaco Canyon. You've got to really

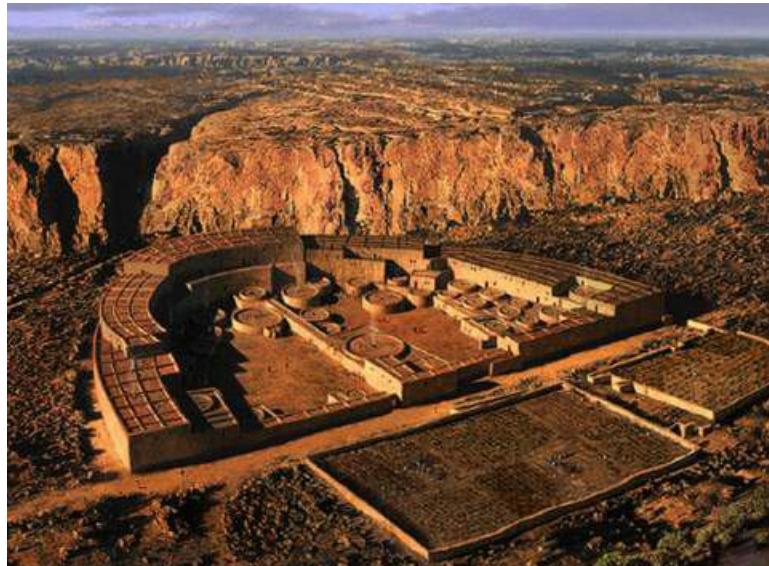
want to go to this one – 13 miles of gravel road from the north. 35 miles of gravel road from the south. I head on down.....35 miles or so of good road then it gets to the gravel/dirt road. There are jackrabbits running all over the place – as well as much of the way being 'open range' where you can have cows munching the grass (what little there is) at the edge of the road. Then you get to the 'washboard' section – 10 mph of teeth tattling bouncing around for a couple miles. Whew! It's out in the middle of nowhere. Of course back then there wasn't any civilization so everything was the middle of nowhere. This was an Indian ruins trip. Back east half the parks are civil war related. Out here, many of them are 'Indian ruins' from ancient folks going back 1,000 to 3,000 years ago.

If there is a plentiful spring and a decent 'valley' or area to plant crops and keep animals – or a river or other source of water – out this way there was likely an early use by early Americans of that location – and a plus was if it was 'defensible' – maybe surrounded by hills on 3 sides, or in a deep canyon hard to get to.

OK...eventually I get there. There's a campground and it's full of people. Strange – I only saw 3 cars the entire way getting here. Must be over 100 RVs in the campground and folks are busy at the visitor center. I get my 'passport' book stamped with the site stamp. Run the park – 168Qs in the log. Take a quick look around. Several thousand folks lived here 2,000 years ago. It was a major center for the Puebloan people 850 to 1250AD. For yet unknown reasons, the site was abandoned or just died away – probably years of drought and too many people for the resources available. Then it was back out the road to get back north.



Chaco Culture



Chaco Culture/Canyon

On the way back through Aztec going north again, I hit the Old Spanish Trail which ran across the top of NM into UT headed west. Other branch went through the top of AZ or southern CO. This is a 'historical trail' so you can run it mobile. Just did a fast run as thousands and thousands of contacts have been made from the trail – like most of the trails – not the least bit rare – and I'd already run this county. Plus there was miles to go for the next motel.

The car headed up into Colorado – next up was Mesa Verde – been there – seen that – so just got into the park, and ran it. No need to follow the mobs of tourists into the Indian ruins. It's impressive if you haven't seen it. Multi-level use of cliffs and housing built into caves with extensive use of ladders. Hard to 'invade' this location.



Mesa Verde NP



Mesa Verde Park

There's time for one more today, so I head up to Hovenweep. Never heard of it? Me either. This National Monument protects six prehistoric Puebloan era villages spread over a 20 mile expanse of mesa tops and canyons along the UT-CO border.



Hovenweep

Motel time in Cortez – Travelodge. ( I tend to stay at Wyndam owned places – get some points for a freebie night stay every 10<sup>th</sup> stay. Super 8, Days Inn, Travelodge, Knights Inn, etc).

On this trip, I plan ahead. You hit 'touristy areas' and things can easily be all booked up, or your only choices left are a Best Western or Hilton at \$175/night.

#### Day 4

Right off the bat, the 'challenge' of the trip came up. This was Yucca House. You cannot drive onto the property of this Indian ruin site. Nope. You can get 'close' but close doesn't count any more in parks as it does in giving out a county. You reach this, you follow directions off the NPS web page. There are NO signs directing you to this site. If you didn't have internet access, you'd never find this on your own. It's not that far off the 'beaten path' – maybe 8 miles off a main highway. You get to the end of the county road and into the driveway of a farm. You park along side the road, and use a 'boardwalk' for about 200 feet through 2 gates to reach the monument – surrounded by a chain link fence. There's a visitor log for you to sign including the time you arrive and your vehicle description. I guess if your car stays there too long, they'll come looking for you. The place is full of rattlesnakes, and there's a health warning about dying rabbits, rabbit fever or tularemia, infected fleas, ticks with a suggestion of taking a shower within 2 hours of leaving the place. Hmm.

This is yet another Indian ruins site - and it has remained largely untouched for the past

800 years. The ruins are buried under rubble and deep growth weeds.

I go 20 feet inside, put down a tarp after checking 20 feet around for snakes and critters, set up the tripod and Alex loop antenna system, fire up the 5W FT-817ND on cw, and make 46 QSO. Not great – this is a fairly rare site that many need – but with band conditions, low power and compact antenna, I'm not going to get the usual 100-200 contacts from a park. While it is only in the 60s, the sun is beating down – blistering hot sun. After an hour, I pack up and leave.



N4CD at Yucca House

You can see the Alex Loop through the top of the gate. This would be the only park run QRP as everything else could be run from the mobile. You have to carry stuff maybe 200 feet for this one. If you want to see the ruins, be prepared to walk a mile or two. Skipped them. Saw enough ruins, with more coming up!



The Boardwalk into the park  
Pic courtesy of KN7D

Then it was a long, long drive over to Navajo National Monument in AZ. This site preserves 3 of the most intact cliff dwellings of the Hisatsinom, the ancestral Puebloan people. The Navajo who live here today call this folks the Anasazi. The villages date from 1250 to 1300 AD. Put it out....and leave headed for Canyon de Chelly.



Navajo Monument, AZ

Canyon de Chelly - This is an usual park – it is comprised entirely of Navajo Tribal Trust Land and sustains a living community of Navajo people. It is one of the longest continuously inhabited landscapes in North America. Got to the park, entered it, ran it. Took a quick look around then checked into a Holiday Inn, the least expensive place here. Three motels. The other two were a Best Western and a Hilton. Ouch. 100 bucks for the night and it didn't even include breakfast. Dinner at the restaurant at the motel. \$20. Had breakfast at the Denny's down the road. \$5.50 plus tip.



N4CD at Canyon de Chelly

## Day 5

Today the plan was to hit 3 parks on the way to Flagstaff AZ where I would stop for 3 nights. First up was the Hubbell Trading Post. Never heard of it? Well, that's just another one I never heard of till NPOTA started, so we're in the same boat. If you're out on lonely roads in AZ, you go right past it. Way back when in 1878, Hubbell set up a trading post on the Navajo reservation – and it is still in operation today.

I got there and sat in the parking lot for 90 minutes putting out over 200Q. Then the lady ranger comes by and says 'you need a SUP' (Special Use Permit) and 'you have to come with me'. So.....I let folks on the radio know I'll be back. I follow the lady ranger into her office and she has me fill out an SUP form. OK...do that. Then she takes it and S-L-O-W-L-Y types it into a form on her typewriter. When she is done, she hands it to me and says 'There's a \$50 fee'. I object and say that for mobile operation, usually no SUP is required, and in nearly every case when an SUP is required for portable operation, the fee is 'waived'. She gets on the phone to the chief HQ honcho. The answer is: For AZ parks

there is no SUP or fee required. Period. For portable set ups – it's up to each park to require or not an SUP and a fee or waive the fee. So at least 30 minutes wasted. She apologizes, rips up the form. I'm nice about it.....they'll likely be other mobiles wandering through there. I go back to operating and finish with over 200Q. Well, it's been an interesting morning.



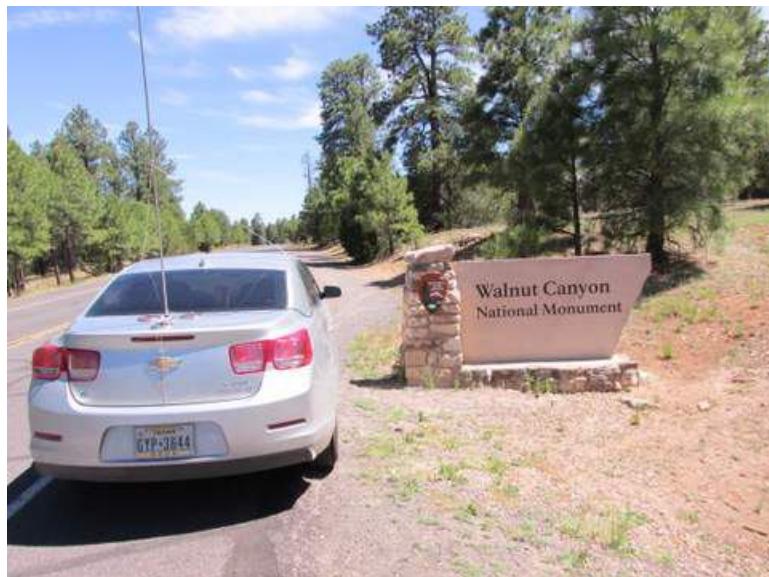
Hubbell trading Post



Hubbell Trading Post

Next up is the Petrified Forest NP. Been there before, so just hit the park, find a spot to operate. It's right off the interstate. Do the bands – 20/30/40cw and 20SSB. In many cases, I pop up on 14.336 often since no net is running and there's barely a mobile out there. Might as well 'occupy the frequency' so no other net starts up there from lack of use. Over 100Q go into the log then it's off to Flagstaff for a few days in the same motel.

On the way there I can hit Walnut Canyon – right off the interstate



Walnut Canyon

More Indian ruins. More than 900 years ago, the Sinagua built there homes here under limestone overhangs, living in these single story cliff dwellings from about 1100 to 1250 AD. Ran the park. Took a quick look at the ruins. Then headed into Flagstaff and the Knights in. In many cases, a Knights Inn is used to be Super 8 that doesn't want to go with six or 8 pillows on a pillow top bed – just 2 pillows and a regular bed. Still \$87/night including tax. Flagstaff isn't cheap. Had a nice pizza tonight for dinner. Not good for the diet.....but it was time.

There's a boatload of parks within easy driving distance of this location. I'd do a couple a day, then head north up into UT.

## Day 6

There are a good handful of parks within driving distance of Flagstaff. Those folks are in luck for being able to activate parks. Today it was heading south to Tuzigoot – more Indian ruins, then over to Montezuemas Castle – even more Indian ruins. Tuzigoot has to be one of the more interesting park names. This is an ancient Sinagua village – they were farmers and traders with networks that covered hundreds of miles around. This pueblo had 110 rooms in two and three story structures from around 1000AD. Had a decent run, then over to the other site.



N4CD at Tuzigoot

Whoa...I get there and there is a multi-op operation already there. N7VF and KD7RCJ others are there with two station set up, nice RV to operate from, good high shortened dipole way up in the air on 20M. I stop by – they are at a nice high point.



N7VF operation – dipole up 30'  
pic by Bob Wertz

I proceed over by the visitor center a mile away and operate – no problem – we are far enough from each other. Mainly ran CW since they were doing a bang up job on SSB. At this location you can see one of the best preserved cliff dwellings in North America – a five story 20 room high rise type apartment building for the Sinagua Indians over 600 years ago. You'll get your fill of Indian ruins out this way!



Montezuma Castle

Well, there was still more time so I zipped up to Sunset Crater, which is north of Flagstaff. Time to get in another park or two before the day ends. This one and the next one is open 24/7 – although the visitor centers are not. You lose cell coverage right off the main road.

Sunset Crater is a volcanic crater from nearly a million years ago. It's the youngest volcano on the Colorado Plateau. Geologically speaking, the volcano's red rim and the dark lava flows seem to have cooled and hardened to a jagged surface only yesterday.



After you do that one, you continue on the same road and hit Wupatki – another impressive Pueblo in this area where 85-100 people lived 800 years ago. Several thousand more lived within a day's walk. This is one of the lowest and driest places around.



## Wupatki

OK....I've had my fill of Indian ruins! Soon it will be on to other things. Back to the Knights Inn in Flagstaff (filled up – no vacancy). It's right on Route 66 through town – one giant traffic mess. Dinner at the Sirloin Stockade nearby.

## Day 7

Not much of a breakfast at the Knights Inn. Sticky buns, bread for toast, OJ and coffee. Have two slices of toast, OJ, and coffee then head out.

I had done all the nearby parks - It's about 5 miles up to the Grand Canyon – I can run that and get it out of the way. I have a day to do it. Head up to the east entrance to the south rim – avoid the west entrance with Grand Canyon Village and tens of thousands of tourists. Hit the park. The senior pass is great – you can get one if you are over 62 for \$10 for lifetime pass. Otherwise, it's typically \$30 to get the car into the park for the big ones like Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountains, Zion, Bryce! Each. The other option is a \$80 a year annual pass for a car full of people.

I stop at the first overlook. Yep, looks like it did before. Been here, done the tourist thing years ago. Run the country and leave. Over the years, on commercial flights, I've flown over it a half dozen times too while working away for decades. Spend an hour playing tourist, run the country, then head back to Flagstaff via repeat visits to Sunset Crater and Wupatki.



N4CD at Grand Canyon NP

You can run Wupatki right off the main highway – where you have cell coverage. Makes a big difference if you can spot yourself on the various bands rather than hoping someone picks you up and spots you! Then down the main highway and jit Sunset Crater again. Just a few spots where you have cell service here too. Added in more contacts to the day before, but since it was less than 24 hours later, no extra 'activation credit'.

Then head back to the Knights Inn for a 3<sup>rd</sup> night – something N4CD rarely does. Dinner again at the Sirloin Stockade.

If you are a park chaser, you want to try to work as many National Parks as possible. There are 59 of them. To make it on the Honor Roll, you've got to work 75% of those that have been activated – and that is 54 of them to date. The remaining ones are in Alaska and American Samoa.

## Day 8

Now it's time to leave Flagstaff area and head north. On the road before 5:30. It would be a long day with lots of miles. First up to the Glen Canyon recreation area – which you can run at many spots along the hundreds of miles of it. I cross over at the dam site (you drive over the dam) into UT and run the area/park.



Glen Canyon

Then on to another park unit – Pipe Springs. This was a site of ancient Publoan and Kaibab Palute Indians for 1000 years. In the 1870s, Mormon settlers built a fort over the main spring here and established a cattle ranching operation. Today the water is shared three ways. OK....run it at the visitor center which is next to the actual 'park'. Visitor Center lots count if they are NPS controlled. This one is locked up tight at night so you've got to get to it during normal business hours.



Pipe Springs Monument

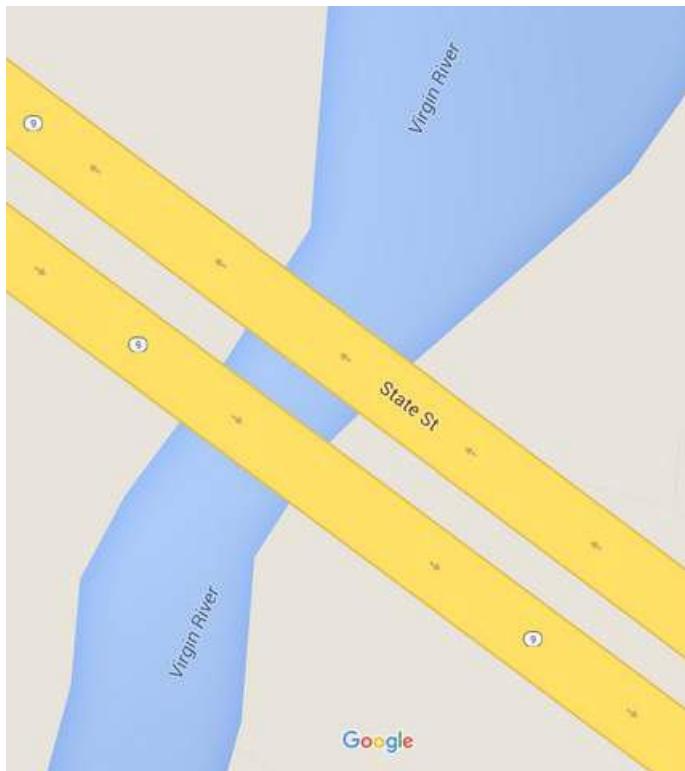
Now it's time to hit Zion Park – and I run the park from just inside the east entrance. There aren't too many good places to run in the 'main part' of the park near the main canyon. I wind through the park at 20-25mph, through the tunnels (one a good long one) that was built way back in the 1930s by the CCC during the Great Depression. Takes a while but I'm headed to a motel west of the park. I've seen this one before so I skip the touristy thing. If you want to see the main canyon, you've got to ride shuttle buses! No cars allowed in it. I see enough. Oh, it's \$30 entrance fee if you don't have a senior pass or annual pass.



N4CD at Zion

OK....the motel is over in Hurricane UT...a Super 8. Anything close to the park is sky high, and this one is a good 20 miles further on. On the way I spy a place to run the Virgin Wild and Scenic River. You've got to be within 100 feet of the river. It starts and goes through part of Zion, but I didn't see a spot to run the 'twofer'. Just before the motel town is a bridge way above the river. Both sides are vertical drops down...and you have several spots you can park and be within 100 feet of the river. Unfortunately a power line crosses and you get a bunch of QRN, but the cw run worked decently.

From Google Maps



Now image the bridge is 300-400 feet above the river and the right side edge goes straight down....and you can park 10 feet from the edge. Well, you can park 2 feet from the edge if you want – nothing to stop you from going over! There's a parking lot for a trail that goes down to the river in the northeast just over the bridge. Did OK. Fairly rare place. Could only run CW as SSB QRN was too high. Powerline!



Got to the Super 8. It had been a long day. More to come. Lost an hour. Arizona is mountain time but does not observe daylight saving time. UT does so I lose the hour.

## **Day 9 6/21**

Time for more parks! Up early, eat the good Super 8 breakfast, then hit the road at 6:30am headed toward Cedar Breaks. Well that's a new one on me.....but it's a cool place to visit. Here, millions of years of erosion have created a 2000 foot deep canyon of rock walls, spires, fins, and columns that span 3 miles. Nifty.



Cedar Breaks NP

The route headed west across UT – big state – to get to Bryce Canyon – yet another of the “National Parks” that folks need for the Honor Roll. I get there – the place is crawling with tourists. Fortunately I’ve seen this close up before. Remember it well so there is no need to join the tens of thousands of tourists. The main road into the park is like main street – almost bumper to bumper. I get a few hundred feet inside the park and put it out. Then leave!



N4CD at Bryce Canyon

OK...time to put some miles on the car getting to the east side of UT with more parks. First you hit Capital Reef National Park. Another new one on you? Yep - but been there before. This is a 'wrinkle' in the Earth's crust – a 100 mile long Waterpocket Fold, or 'monocline'. This park was established to protect this grand geologic feature. Interesting. Put out the park. 77Q in the middle of the day with yuck conditions.



Capital Reef – One of the 59 NP

I'm zipping along for hundreds of miles...and run into another section of the Glen Canyon Recreation Area – which I ran the day before. Hey, I can do a 'quick activation' for one more activation credit. Do – with 12Q in the log. Hit and run type deal. Anything more than 12 counts. Garfield, UT – which I ran the day before. It's out in the boonies – with a lot more boonies to come. Roads where you see one car every 15 or 20 miles for 100 miles. Hours and hours later I reach Natural Bridges – which protects some of the finest examples of ancient stone architecture in the south. Here, three natural bridges formed where meandering streams eroded the canyon walls. Cool. Got there late (0041Z) and still managed to put 100+Qs in the log – mostly on 30 and 40m CW. OK....it had been a 15 hour day- time to head to the Four Corner's motel in Blanding for the night, another 40 miles away. Regular motels too high price here. This was good motel well rated on Trip Advisor and full up. The Super 8 at 50% more price was half empty as I went by it. This was was 'full up' – no vacancy. Lots of tourists and outdoors type here with the close by natural parks, hiking and other activities.

A lot of these parks are at 6,000 and 7,000 and even higher altitudes. If you are a flatlander it takes a while to adapt. Or you don't sleep as well. Or you do some wheezing and gasping on those 'short hikes'.



Natural Bridges

## Day 10 – 6/22

Whew – too many miles – today I'm going to slow down a bit. Yesterday was a long long day with 4 parks. I'm headed north, then east into Colorado. First it's off to Arches National Park in Grand County UT. I get there fairly early but the band is open on 20. There's a two-fer right at the entrance way and the visitor center. One branch of the Old Spanish Trail heads right up through the canyon- following the new roadway. It's in a deep valley. I work all of 3 people from the two-fer site – the south end of the visitor lot and give up. Not going to work. I head up into the park – find a nice high open spot and just run the park. Here there are over 2000 natural sandstone arches. There are balanced rocks, fins, and pinnacles – all highlighted by the striking environment of contrasting colors and landforms.



Arches NP

Put 187Q in the log in short order.



Arches National Park NP02

I leave and find a better spot to make a quick run for Old Spanish Trail – do a quick 'hit and run' type deal and put 34Q into the log and then keep a moving to the next one.

Up next is Canyonlands NP08. I start on 20c – and wind up with 123Q in about one hour. I'm happy with at least 100Q from a park unit. (other than the repeats of trails and similar with 'quickies'). Here, the Colorado River eroded the landscape of sandstone into countless canyons, mesas, and buttes. There are four separate areas to the park – some only accessible by 4 wheel drive or very long hikes. I chose 'island in the sky' – and

it was good radio location. Did the tourist thing a bit. Then time to move on – but only 3 park units today.



N4CD at Canyonlands NP08

From here, it's up to the Interstate 70, then east into Mesa County CO. There, you'll find the turn off for Colorado Monument. The NPS describes this as "Sheer-walled canyons, towering monoliths, soaring eagles, and a spectacular road reflect the environment and history of the plateau-and-canyon country. Historic Rim Rock Drive offers 23 miles of breathtaking panoramic views and numerous overlooks.. I go up the road to the visitor center way on up. It's crowded. I look for an alternate spot and nearby is a picnic area high up with large open lot. No one around but N4CD in the 100 car lot. I orient the car pointed east (my car has about a 2 S unit difference off the front and back of the car so I point it east when I can while I'm out west). No cars nearby to ruin the antenna pattern. Spectacular view out the windows. It doesn't get much better. Band conditions are so-so but put 230Qs into the log.

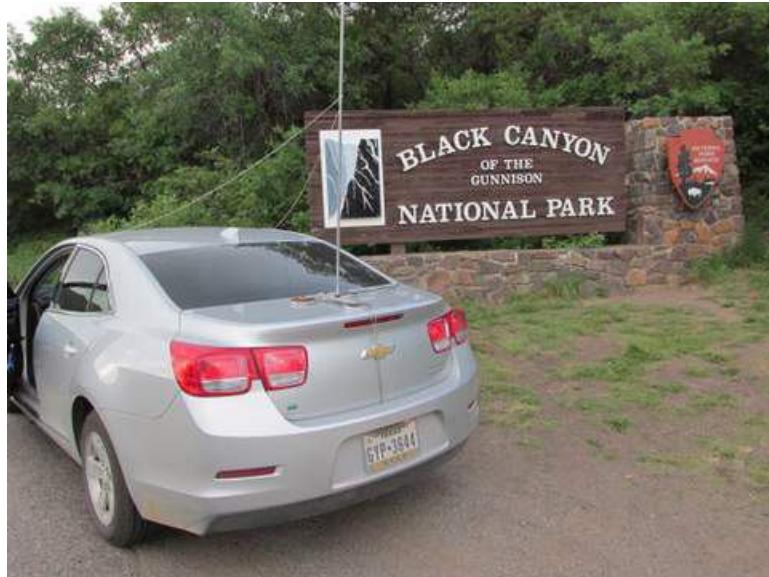


Colorado NM

I head on into the Black Canyon Motel in Montrose. Once again the 'name' motels wanted 50-80% more. Sorry Super 8 – you priced yourself out of the market here. Good motel and 'full up' too. Dinner at a Mexican restaurant across the way. Slept well. Trip Advisor works well for alternate motel choices – tells you which to avoid and which are usually good. Field Day will be coming up in a day or two. You don't want to fight the hordes on FD, and many of the park chasers will be off at FD doing their annual bit of 'emergency preparedness' and 'field operation'. Two more days to go to FD.

### **Day 11 – 6/23 - Thursday**

Today will be another 'easy' day with only 3 parks but a bit of travel involved. First up is Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP06. Out west you have hordes of NP. I've only got one in all of TX. Ain't fair – hi hi! You'll recall that the NP are more in demand as folks want to get on the 'honor roll'. This is an easy park to run and not far off Route 50 – the main road across central Colorado. Do 150 plus Qs in quick order. This canyon was formed by slowly eroding of the land over millions of years. Pretty spectacular canyon. You don't have to go far to get a real good view, and from one of the overlooks you can sit, run the county, and enjoy the view. You want to do this in the summer. Many of the parks can get snowed in or shut in the winter!



Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP06

I'm zipping along Route 50. You run right into the Curecanti National Recreation Area. You've got dozens of places to run it and the further east you go, the better they get. It's various areas long the Gunnison River – picnic areas, boat ramps, campsites. It's 100 miles long. Recently they've discovered dinosaur fossils and traces of 6,000 year old dwellings, too. 216Q go into the log.

Time to move on – one more for today – the Great Sand Dunes more than 150 miles away. Just as I'm getting close – there's a big rain storm ahead. I miss most of it, and the road is full of water – a bit later, there's an inch of hail on the road. Glad I missed that – small marble size hail but that can still do in a car depending how 'hard' it is and how fast it is falling. Whew. OK..... on to the Great Sand Dunes down by Alamosa. It's late and I'm tired, so just get 85Qs. If you stick around and call CQ and CQ, you'll keep getting people. No different than county hunting if you stay on frequency calling and calling. People walk by the hamshack door and hear something going on and call.

There's another park unit called the Great Sand Dunes preserve. It's about 6-8 miles north of the visitor center on a 'primitive road'. They mean it. It's a Jeep track with high center. I try it for a few miles. Not good. One land with pull outs every 1/4 mile into sand. I'd get stuck. 10 mph speed and my Malibu doesn't like it. Go a couple miles and decide it is not worth the risk of tearing something out of the bottom of the car or getting stuck. If you want to do PV19, go in a 4 wheel drive high clearance or pickup truck. Missed getting that one and it is fairly rare.



Great Sands Dune National Park



Back to the motel in Alamosa – Days Inn. Dinner at the local Steak House. Not too many choices in this town other than fast food. Had chicken and shrimp. Good but \$\$.

## Day 12 6/24

Barry, N0KV and Pat, N0DXE invited me to stop by for FD. Now the route would include just two more parks with a stop in Parker CO (Douglas County) for Friday night.

N4CD was on the road to the Florissant Fossil Beds NM in Chaffee County. A mountain valley holds huge petrified redwoods and fossils of ancient insects and plants from 35 million years ago when a volcano erupted and buried the valley. A lake formed, and the sediments at the bottom compacted into layers of shale, preserving the animals as fossils. With a short walk you can see the petrified redwood stumps. Did the radio thing with over 100 Qs.



Florissant Fossil Beds

Then it was on the Rocky Mountain National Park with another couple hour drive up the interstate. Got there late in the afternoon. It was a Friday and the place is crawling with tourists at Estes Park and park visitors. (another \$30 entrance fee if you don't have your annual/senior pass). Went in the 'north' branch from Estes Park. Found spot down low to put out some contacts. I'm sitting there and it gets real dark. A storm dumps a massive amount of water on the car – a deluge – frog strangler – gully washer. My car needed a good car wash after miles of dirt roads – it did a nice job – then gentle 1/2 inch soft slushy hail to end the 'car wash'. OK...enough of that. After the deluge, I decided to head on up the mountain and find the Trail Ridge Road – did and go about 10 miles along it. It's way way up high and just opens for the season in June – the rest of the year it is snowed in at altitudes up to 12,000 feet. I sit in a overlook area – put it out on SSB. NP48. Thin air. I'm above the weather here – clouds down below!



N4CD at Rocky Mountain National Park NP48

Time for a break! Whew! You can overdo things. I head on it to the N0KV house in Parker CO. We have a nice dinner and I hit the hay early. There's still lots of things to do at the FD site in Douglas county. Barry has hauled out the emergency communications van and the 5<sup>th</sup> wheeler to the site. Other folks have their motor home out there for a second site. The Douglas County club runs 3A – a CW station, a SSB station and a data station. There's a GOTA station also – that will be on when the SSB station is not. Since Barry N0KV has the shortest “0” land call, his gets used for FD.

### **Day 13 – Saturday June 25**

Saturday we head out. There are still masts to put up to hold up the 100 foot long center fed antenna. Over on the side is a 40-40 foot tower on a high berm holding up a tri-band beam. We check the SWR on the 100 foot center fed antenna (with 4:1 balun fed with 600 ohm line). It doesn't resonate anywhere other than 10.7 MHz and 18 MHz with under 3:1. Hmm. We spend some time checking things. However, the Elecraft K3 will tune and it and load it and it seems to pick up signals on 40M. OK.....defies all antenna theory but it seems to work. We'll find out shortly. The CW station is in the emergency trailer. There's a PC hooked up – running N3FJP software. Simple. Easier than N1MM to use.

There will be 3 CW ops – K8ZTT, Dick, N0KV, Barry and N4CD. There's a handful for SSB, and one guy on 'data'. We start off taking turns. The CW station is working great. The 40M antenna works like gang busters. We even put HI and AK in the log on 40M

and likely every US state into the wee hours of the morning. Sometime after midnight, we hit the hay. We're all tired out, Next morning we're up early and on the radio.

I plan to leave a bit after 9am to head home to hit the first park about noon – when FD activity comes to a halt as most stations end up. By 9am there's over 630 CW contacts in the N0KV og. About 140 on SSB by that point. The SSB group isn't contest oriented and part of FD is just getting folks on the air.

### Sunday June 26 – Day 14

It's time to be getting home. From here it is a good day and a half drive – more if you stop and give out parks. There's two new ones to hit in CO. I zip southeast toward the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. Sadly, this is where army troops slaughtered Native Americans flying a white 'truce flag'. Just mowed them down. This site commemorates the 1864 attack on a village of the Cheyenne and Arapaho by US Soldiers. I hit it after lunch and FD is essentially over. No problems running. Ranger comes over and says 'no problems' running 'self contained mobile'. For a portable set up you'd need a SUP or more coordination. I run from the visitor lot but there are other spots to run. Nice and quiet. Middle of nowhere and you get there on a gravel road. Still there are tourists about and a very enthusiastic ranger describing in great detail what went on. Spend a few minutes playing tourist, get my passport book stamp, and I'm off headed toward the last planned park”!



Sand Creek Massacre Site

The next site – Bents Old Fort – is a two-fer. The Santa Fe Trail goes right through the fort area so you can do a two for one. William and Charles Bent build a trading post in

1833 to trade with the Plains Indians and trappers. This was the only major permanent white settlement on the Santa Fe trail between Missouri and the Mexican settlements. When the transcontinental railroad was completed 16 years later, all the trails heading west became obsolete.



Bents Old Fort

You've got to hoof it from the parking lot 1/4 mile to the actual fort/post.

Well. Now it was time to head home. I stopped in Boise City OK (Cimarron County) for the night. Two motels in town. Had to wait for the owner to get back – went to dinner at the Pizza Hut – about the only place in town beside the Subway – then got a room for \$68. OK place. Then headed toward home.

## Day 15 - Monday

Turns out with a short 25 mile detour and I can to Lake Meredith Rec Area and Alibates Flint site. Do a quick run at each one, then continue on home getting home by dinner time. Whew.

So – what about some stats? 4877.6 miles of driving. 5,232 contacts from parks plus probably another 500-600 from counties in between. Put out 36 new park units. Now have visited 145 different parks, monuments, rec areas, rivers, etc in the last six months.

15 days on the road, and car up over 20,000 miles now.

Hope I caught you in the ones you needed. Didn't count the counties I went through yet.

## Awards

Ran all USA#18	Don, K3IMC	6/10/16
2nd Time #434	Frank, WA6KHK	6.1.16
9th Time #10	Gene K5GE	6.5.16,
Single Band - 20M #30	Bob, K7TM	6.3.16,
Master Platinum #27	Tony, WA9DLB	5.26.16,
Bingo III #37	Barry, N0KV	5.25.16,
Bingo #370	Jerry, K1SO	5.23.16,

## Upcoming Events for County Hunters

Join in on the fun! Tours! Visits! Barry, W9UCW will do an antenna forum! Meet and greet! Great hotel!

MARAC NATIONAL CONVENTION!

August 1-4  
Germantown, TN right near Memphis

<http://national.marac.org/>

There are no QSO Parties scheduled in July. Contest season resumes in August. Meanwhile, there are various events you can participate in. See

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2016/July%202016%20Corral.pdf>

**That's all folks.....**