

County Hunter News

May 1, 2017
Volume 13 Issue 5

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.

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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 is on 'friendly net' 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://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 . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at 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)

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumblings

Here in Texas we're into spring 'wild weather' season – and tornado alley has been spinning up some nasty thunderstorms in OK and points east. The roof on my house was replaced a few weeks ago. Mid April a nasty cold front comes through and starts dropping hail up to baseball size just north of me- thousands of houses damaged. One local new car dealer had 200 brand new cars totaled by softball size hail. Did them in. Nothing to report here – but you keep your eye on the weather this time of year. Just 'normal' seasonal weather here.

It's still snowing in ID at the QTH of KK7X, and Hollis, KC3X is facing flood waters once again at this QTH from the spring rains. There's more than enough weather to go around!

Wish propagation was as 'wild' but it's been pretty miserable this month – lots of high A index, very few if any sunspots – many days with zero or one – and some CME's to throw monkey wrenches into the mix. We covered a lot of that last month so won't add to it this month. Things haven't gotten any better.

There was some 30M activity with several CW mobiles on the way to the MINI.

We had many good QSO parties and full reports later on them by the participants. I always enjoy the detailed ones from folks like Bob, W0BH, and others who give an interesting accounting of their trips!

2) Dayton Hamvention!

This month!

3) QSO Parties this month – coming up – many many counties up for grab in 7th Area, New England QP – and Indiana, Arkansas and Delaware QSO Parties! Details at the end in Upcoming Events.

Mobile Activity in April

At the end of March, we had

KC7YE, Jack, – in Skagit and Island WA

Bob, K7TM in AZ

Steve, AK8A – in southern TX ready to head north to MI through MO and IL

Bill, K0DEQ headed over to IL and IN, down into MO and back home

N7IV, Jack, headed east from ND to WI

Parks on the Air was active with N9JF, KA4RRU, KB3WAV/KC3RW, KQ6QB and others.

Kerry, W4SIG, was running all over the place – trip to AL, MS, then in TN many times, Also seen in midwest.

WB0PYF, Ray, was out and about in MO – then participated in the MO QSO Party

John, AF5CC made trips from OK to south TX

K0FG, Fred, and Ed, K8ZZ were seen running counties in MO

April 2017 on

Then there was the big weekend with the MO and MS QSO Parties at the beginning of April with loads of activity and mobiles – some of them county hunters – others that just show up for QSO Parties like K0PC and NO5W. Separate report

Jim, N9JF was on from many states and also activating the WWFF Parks on the Air from many states

Bill, K2HVN was in GA and headed north.

Darl, NA8W, was spotted out and about in FL Later in the month he would head north to OH.

WY0A, Butch, noted in AR, TN, MS,

Kraig, KA2LHO, noted in FL activating many parks there.

Mike, KA4RRU, noted up in PA – activated some parks, too

The weekend saw the GA and NM QSO parties with county hunter mobiles K8TE, KN4Y in the fray.

N4CD ran some counties in central TX during the TX state parks on the air event – hitting 4 new parks.

Greg, NM2L ran a few in the GA QP, then was out for a few more a week later.

Peter, N4UP made several trips to WV to run the state end to end

Kerry, W4SIG, was off several times on trips putting out the counties during the month.

Next weekend was the MI QP – didn't see any familiar CH calls -

Terry, WQ7A, headed east from WA toward the MI Mini on a long trip across the north part of the country.

Paul, N7JPF spotted out on several days running OR counties

Mary, AB7NK, and Neil, K7SEN, headed out on long trip to the MI Mini -

AB7RW was on in CA, OR – in some rare counties – putting them out.

Gene, K5GE, headed out to the MI mini via KS and the Dakotas

Bill, K0DEQ, headed over to AR to run more counties there.

Mike, NF0N, put out some counties in NE. Later he would put out counties in the NE QP.

Bob, WA3QNT headed to the MI Mini and ran counties in MI

Ed, K8ZZ, headed to the MI MINI – ran counties in MO -

Mike, NF0N, headed to the MI Mini via KY....the 'county hunter way'.....

Barry, N0KV, and Pat,N0DXE, headed to MI for the Mini

Silver, N9QS, and Kerry, W4SIG, and Ray, WB0PYF, and Tony, WA9DLB, Bob, N8KIE, all headed to MI for the MINI running counties along the way.

- - -

Mississippi QSO Party

There was a fairly decent MS QSO party this year – and I caught two CW mobiles out and about – NO5W and K4ZGB. Conditions weren't the greatest – but that's the way it is with sunspot cycles. Only 40M from here (TX) to MS and in the middle of the day, that's a stretch.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

NO5W - mobile

It's always fun to go traveling in these state QSO parties and having someone to share the driving and operating certainly increases the fun factor. After several years of doing the MS QP solo I was fortunate this year to have Skip-W5GAI join me. Skip did a great job coming up to speed using the software and the radio and antenna setup.

Due to a couple of breaks for gas and heading for supper with about 30 minutes left in the party our total operating time was about 620 minutes. The party was slow at times as indicated by the fact that only 400 of those 620 operating minutes resulted in at least one addition to the log. Those additions to the log came from 215 unique call signs and we appreciate each and every one of those Qs but special appreciation goes to the following stations who contributed more than half of the QSOs: N5NA(28), WB8WKQ(24), K0HNC(17), WB5JID(17), W5TM(15), K5OT/2(14), N4CD(13), K9WA(13), KN4Y(12), VE3WG(12), N2CQ(10), N1CC(10), W1END(10), K7ZYV(10), K9GDF(9), N8II(9), OM2VL(9), AD1C(8), W4NZ(8), K4AMC(8), W8WVU(8), W0MU(7), W4IHI(7), K3WJV(7), TI8/AA8HH(6), N4UP(6), NA2X(6), KJ4IWZ(6), W5XX(5), KC3X(5), K5WK(5).

County-wise we covered every one of the 22 that were planned with some giving much better results than others.

The weather could not have been better and almost all of the Mississippi roads we traveled were top notch. However, one stands out as being more of a cow-path than an actual road but it led to one of our more memorable stories. I prefer not to leave any donut holes in the counties activated and to keep Marion from falling into that category we decided to take a little detour into Marion's far northeast corner.

We navigated the path for a few miles finally arriving at a location that CQ/X said was in Marion and had been parked for about 30 minutes on that path outside a home proudly decked out in a flag that looked like it may have been used in that little disagreement between north and south back in the 1860s, when along came a couple up the path towing a trailer loaded down with a vehicle in serious need of rehabilitation. Pulling into their driveway they gave us a little stare as not many vehicles with a big antenna have been seen on the path, much less parked with strange beeps coming out. At that point we decided that Marion had been worked out and headed on down the path to the next county which featured paved roads. After about 10-15 minutes we made our way into Sumrall to stop for gas. As we were about to pull away from the station the couple pulled up beside us to express concern about our safety and whether we had experienced trouble back there in their little corner of Marion. We assured them we were just hobbyists out doing our crazy thing and after explaining it to them they seemed satisfied and from the nodding of their heads were in agreement that those boys didn't have any ulterior reason for being parked on the road outside their little piece of Marion. We drove to our next stopping point in Covington and assume they headed back to take a look at their new vehicle rehabilitation project.

While the roads were excellent the noise from power lines was just outrageous, so outrageous that you could not even tell whether someone was calling much less make out their callsign. Apologies if you were calling and calling in those periods and we did not answer. The good news in that area was Hancock county where the noise was virtually non-existent. We decided that if we were king, or even just governor, we would pass a decree that all counties in the state must reduce their level of power line noise to that of Hancock county, our final county.

So thanks again to Skip for going along and for all the Qs including several from the MO QP operators who were having their own party. Next up for us will be the Florida QSO Party with Ted-KN5O helping out with the driving and operating. The FQP is without a doubt the most fun you can have in 20 hours of

mobile operating. Hope to see you in the log for that one on April 29-30.

73

Chuck-NO5W
Skip-W5GAI

K4ZGB mobile reported 340 QSOs in five hours of operating.

N1CC - fixed - TX - 29 cw 25 ssb 28 mults

SFI 96, SN 65, A-Index 28, K-Index 4 does not make ANY location have good conditions for this event. Although my final points are 14 TIMES last year's score, I am once again TOO close to do anything significant above 7 MHz. I did manage to make 3 BS contacts on 20M. Ran out of people on 40 and then had hard time finding any that would go down on 80M.

NO5W/M was the mobile star with 10 contacts, W5MMM/M and KK4TE/M were the only two others worked, coming to 14 QSO total for all three! If there were other mobiles I never found them. (According to APRS NO5W was in 22 counties...so the conditions prevented contacts with him during the middle of the day).

This is a challenging contest due to proximity, however, it is a lot of fun so I may be back... Sure glad Cycle 25 is coming!

KN4Y - fixed - FL - 36 cw Qso

Only heard two mobiles on CW, not like the good old days of visiting mobiles stomping the roads sending Crawdads into the potholes. My copy of Writelog logger did not have the newer 3 letter county abbreviations, so log will probably will get rejected. Mostly a 40-meter activity. But fun.

OM2VL – fixed – DX 23 cw 13 ssb

Unfortunately extremely bad condx on Saturday. Very weak stations, sometimes I can't break the USA wall, so I missed some counties which I heard.

Thanks for mobiles and resident stations for QSOs.

K5WK - the only 3bander : 80m, 40m, 20m

Most QSOs with:

NO5W/M 8/8 (QSO/CTY)

K4ZGB/M 6/6

KK4TE/M 6/6

73, Laci OM2VL

On the Road with W5MIG

The Texas State Park on the Air event is an annual event held in April – usually the second weekend. A dozen stations went out mobile – and a few of them were also putting out the POTA numbers as well (and of course, everyone is in a county). From W5MIG who went to two on his motorcycle:



W5MIG at Old Tunnel State Park, TX

KFF-3044 & KFF-3035 Report 8 April 2017

This was my first activation attempt. Had a great time. Got a little too much of the Texas sun. Got a total of 20 in the log at KFF-3044 and 5 at KFF-3035. Had a nice run going on 20m at KFF-3044 when a strong adjacent signal came along and covered everyone up. Sorry to those I couldn't pickup. Cell service was spotty at best at both locations so it was difficult to announce a change in frequency. Had to rely on you guys when you found me. Had a carload of women stop and gaze at the mast attached to the motorcycle. They then asked if I had caught any fish up in the trees!

My setup was determined by what I could carry on the motorcycle. The biggest item was the antenna mast. After researching masts I decided on the Spiderbeam 40ft fiberglass mast. It had the shortest collapsed length at 3'10" so that was my choice. It was easy to set up and take down. The rest of the station consisted of a Yaesu FT-857D, Bioenno 15Ah battery, homebrew endfed antenna, MFJ antenna tuner and my trusty old j-38 that I have had from the beginning. I've never been a speed demon on cw but I always have fun. I'll get back to those parks to add to my qso total and there are many more here in the Texas Hill Country to activate so I will be back. w5mig

Dayton Hamvention

It's the biggest! It's the best. And just around the corner - May 19-21 at the Greene County Fairgrounds outside Dayton OH.

Here are the directions:

From Dayton:

US 35 east to Trebein Road, turn left, third light past I-675
Trebein Road north 0.5 miles to Dayton-Xenia Road, turn right
Dayton-Xenia Road east 0.3 miles to Hawkins Road, turn left
Hawkins Road north 1.0 miles to Fairgrounds Road, turn right
Turn left into Hamvention

With the new location, parking will be available for attendees on the Fairgrounds. There will be no charge for parking. Follow the instructions of lot attendants for parking. People shuttles and golf carts will be going through the lots to facilitate easy access.

The County Hunter Forum, hosted by Tim, W8JJ, is Friday afternoon in Room 2. Yak session outside started at 3:30. No formal after forum meeting planned, but some will head to the Golden Corral.

The ARRL will be out in force – many there – from all departments and functions.

You can order your tickets on line now! See you there!

Info and tickets and directions here:

<http://hamvention.org/>

New Ham Bands

The Amateur Service will officially get two new bands in the near future. The FCC has adopted rules that will allow Amateur Radio access to the 630 and 2,200-meter bands, with minor conditions. A Report and Order (R&O) was released on March 29. The new

rules become effective 30 days following publication in The Federal Register. The R&O, which also addresses several non-Amateur Radio issues, allocates the 472-479 kHz band (630 meters) to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis and amends Part 97 to provide for Amateur Service use of that band as well as of the previously allocated 135.7-137.8 kHz band (2,200 meters). The R&O also amends Part 80 rules to authorize radio buoy operations in the 1900-2000 kHz band under a ship station license.

"It's a big win for the Amateur community and the ARRL," ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, said. "We are excited by the FCC's action to authorize Amateur Radio access for the first time on the MF and LF spectrum."

The FCC said the Amateur Radio service rules it has adopted for 630 meters and 2,200 meters allow "for co-existence with Power Line Carrier (PLC) systems that use these bands." Utilities have opposed Amateur Radio use of the MF and LF spectrum, fearing interference to unlicensed Part 15 PLC systems used to manage the power grid.

Amateurs operating on 472-479 kHz would be permitted a maximum equivalent isotropically radiated power (EIRP) of 5 W, except in parts of Alaska within 800 kilometers (approximately 496 miles) of Russia, where the maximum would be 1 W EIRP. Amateurs operating in the 135.7-137.8 kHz band could run up to 1 W EIRP.

The FCC is requiring a 1-kilometer separation distance between radio amateurs using the two new bands and electric power transmission lines with PLC systems on those bands. Amateur Radio operators will have to notify UTC of station location prior to commencing operations.

The FCC also placed a 60-meter (approximately 197 feet) above-ground-level (AGL) height limit on transmitting antennas used on 630 meters and 2,200 meters. The bands would be available to General class and higher licensees, and permissible modes would include CW, RTTY, data, phone, and image. Automatically controlled stations would be permitted to operate in the bands. More details soon, on the ARRL website.

Courtesy of ARRL Newsletter

On a down note, no mobile operation is allowed, and portable operations have to be cleared 30 days ahead of time.

If you thought working DXCC on 160M was a challenge – look for the serious DX'ers to start working on DXCC on 630M! QRP! Likely digital modes like JT65.

Missouri QSO Party

Yes! There was a great MO QSO party this year with a half dozen CW mobiles running all over the state, plus several on SSB. Thousands of contacts were racked up by the chasers – at least on 40M. 20M seemed to either have a lack of spotters or lack of activity. Not many spotted there for a good part of the two day contest.

Once again, many 1x1 calls were used – you could almost work the entire state with 1x1 calls in one year! Some fixed stations were on with 1x1s as well. For those chasing Natural Bingo, there were loads of opportunities to get the right 'letter' for the county.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N6MU - fixed - CA 196 cw 72 ssb - 93 mults

As usual, the mobiles make these Parties and there was a fine group in this one. Top mobile for me was W0E with 48 Qs followed by K0PC(42), N0O(32), N0E(26), K5YAA(18), K0E(16)and N0W(11).

Kudos to all the fixed stations who played. A special shout out to W0S and W0W who were always there from those three-county lines.

Thanks to BEARS for another good one. 73...

John, N6MU

N0O - Mobile - N0AX Opr - 751 cw 251 ssb QSO

Ellen and I had a great time rambling around the SW MO counties starting in the

lower-left corner of McDonald and winding up in the town where my brother went to college, Fayette, in Howard county. Final tally was 26 counties activated and about 1050 miles traveled.

No bad weather while we were driving and lots of interesting scenery - the no-till fields were *full* of purple henbit flowers, for example. The trees are just a week or so from being fully budded out. We took an hour off to visit the George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond (near Joplin) - highly recommended.

Wound up on 40 and 20 only - not a peep on 15 and there was some kind of odd problem with 75/80 that I'm going to have to troubleshoot. Not having 75/80 hurt the in-state multiplier totals. Nice set of VE multipliers (just missing VE1/VY2/NWT) and only missed AR/NE/ND/MT of the lower 48. Some great county line runs and steady activity the whole time. So more QSOs this year than last but not nearly as many county multipliers.

Funny thing - we passed KI0I near Stockton as he was sitting at an intersection operating. (I think that was Mark...hi, Mark!) Nice to work OM2VL and DL3DXX in many counties and had a large retinue of regulars from the states. I wish we could hear better with the small mobile whip but that's a challenge for mobile operating, for sure.

Ellen and I have one more ramble and we'll have "worked from 'em all" in MO. I've worked from all of the counties in WA state during the Salmon Run in September so I guess that's my thing! You sure wind up going to unusual places in the quest for counties. See you next year from the NW corner of the state!

73, Ward N0AX

AD0DX mobile as N0E - 500 cw 100 ssb QSO

Well that was a lot of fun, even if I couldn't hear many stations in Missouri. I'm sure that this year there will be a lot of out of state stations that get the SHOWME certificate and fewer instate stations.

My friend Bill was my driver on Saturday from 9am to 3pm. We did a nice loop

around NW MO starting and ending in Kansas City where I live.

I have done a lot of work on my Ford Ranger but still seem to have engine noise. I have put bonding strips on the body, doors and hood and put rf chokes on the spark plug wire etc but when the accelerator is down going uphill you can really hear the engine noise in the radio. On Sunday morning after the rain it was much worse.

I worked mostly CW. I did try SSB but it's just so much easier to get a clear frequency on cw compared to phone. And with my K3 and the 500hz filter it does a great job removing those nearby stations.

Just a quick word on the K3; really love it. I program M1 with 'CQ MOQP de N0E/M NOE/' and do not change that throughout the contest. Then I put the county in M2 (memory 2) i.e. PET for Pettis county. Then when I want to call cq I push M1 and then M2 and the K3 chains them together. If you listen there is a slight pause after the second / on my cq but I'm ok with that because it sort of emphasizes the county abbrev.

I program M3 with 'TU MOQP NOE/' so that after I get the report and location of the station I am working I can hit M3 then M4 and get on with the next qso.

I send the callsign of the station I am working by hand and his / her rst and my county using the keyer in the K3, usually at 27 wpm. If I go much above this I seem to make more mistakes.

I worked N0O for a few counties on Sunday morning and I was really having a hard time sending cw well. Thanks Ward for your patience as I sent my callsign wrong a few times.

Speaking of Sunday morning, it all began with sparks for me. That is, I hooked up my inverter backwards and got some nice sparks as I blew it up. Sigh. I ended up stopping in Jefferson City at the Walmart to buy a new one, and this one has blade fuses. Hopefully I will not blow up this one. I bought a 750 W inverter knowing that my laptop only needs 300 W; hoping that the inverter will not generate too much electrical noise. In the past I have bought some cheap inverters, and 3 or 4 hours into the contest when they get hot they can really generate some spurious rf. This happened to me once during the OKQP a few years back; one lesson learned the hard way.

I want to say thanks to everyone who was patient with me when I occasionally sent .-... (wait) to get back to you. I have probably done 10 qso parties as a mobile, and at different times I have asked stations calling me to wait because; we were going around a corner at high speeds, going through an intersection and I thought we were going to be hit by another vehicle, there was a lot of noise in town (electrical noise in the radio due to signs, transformers, power lines etc), the driver was asking me for directions, I was taking a much needed drink of water, then engine noise was too loud while going uphill, I was changing the county / roverqth in N1MM, etc etc.

If you ever wonder 'what is wrong with that guy in the mobile and why is he taking so long to get back to me', you should really offer to drive for someone during a qso party and see how much is involved. When everything is working it's a beautiful thing, but there is a lot involved and a lot that can go wrong.

It's also a lot of fun, and being on the receiving end of a pileup is really something to get your adrenaline pumping. The largest pileup I have ever heard is the 4 county line in the Texas panhandle during the TXQP. I can only describe it as a 'wall of CW'. If you had fun during the NPOTA last year and would like to experience being on the receiving end of some nice pileups, I strongly recommend you give mobile operating in QSO Parties a try. It's a lot of fun with a good bunch of guys (and gals).

Anyway, on Saturday I took a nap from 4 to 5, ate some food at home and then was back on the road, heading south. A good general rule of being mobile in qso parties is to only activate a county once (not always possible though). I sat at the Cass / Bates county line and then the Vernon / Barton county line. I stayed there too long and didn't get home until midnight. In hindsight I probably should have just stayed at Cass / Bates county line and changed over to 80m once it got dark; I probably could have picked up more MO counties for multipliers. Live and learn.

One interesting aspect of mobile contesting is choosing your route.

On Sunday my wife and I headed out to Jeff City and ended at Rocheport. My wife is an active birder and she walked along the Missouri river and I operated from Boone county for the last 30 min or so of the contest.

I'd like to suggest to the MOQP sponsors that the operating hours for mobile

operators be changed to 12 hours (current max is 14 hours). This is a long time to be driving, and if you want to win you are compelled to be on the road the entire time.

If mobile operators were only allowed to operate for 12 hours but the Sat contest hours were 14 hours, this gives the mobile operator another variable to play with to optimize their score. Sleep in and miss the first two hours? Take a nap at mid day? Quit at 9pm and get a good nights sleep while losing 40m being open to the west coast after dark and also the chance for 80m after dark?

My wife and I are currently planning a move west, hopefully June 1st if everything works out. In that case this will probably be our last mobile run in the MOQP. Thanks to the BEARS for sponsoring the MOQP and to everyone for all the qso's.

Cheers,

Ron, AD0DX / N0E/M

K0PC mobile 1292 CW QSO

This was my first attempt at the MO QSO Party. I knew going in that the 14 hour stretch on Saturday was going to be a grind, and it was. I learned a few things though. I scheduled a dinner/gas stop for about 7:30PM (0030Z). Looking back, this was just the time when the rates were going up. Bad choice but I was hungry.

I was able to stay very close to my published schedule both days so I was happy. I arrived at the hotel Saturday night ten minutes early and took that as a good stopping point. When I walked into the lobby there was a large, loud, wedding reception going on in the bar. When I got my room number and found out it was just above the bar. I had to do some renegotiation. In the end I ended up on the third floor and slept soundly.

N1MM reports the maximum one hour rate as 127/hr, this was the last hour I was on the road Saturday night. Rates in the middle of the afternoon were around 60/hr.

Thanks to everyone who followed along during the weekend. The Top Ten List includes:

K1RO - Mark had propagation on 40M & 20M most of the time
N6MU
NE9M
N5NA
K3WJV
W8TM
W0S
KC3X
W0ZQ
N4VV
W3DYA

Thanks to the BEARS for sponsoring the MOQP. I look forward to another run next spring.

73, Pat KØPC

K5YAA mobile 358 cw 15 ssb

Between a number of "mechanical" difficulties and a very tired K5YAA this inaugural run for Mitch, Nw0M became simply a disaster. The years are passing swiftly now and this old op needs to rest in between long trips. A drive to New Palestine, IN for a long time Navy buddy's funeral Bob, WA9JWR and not sleeping or eating well enough before the MOQP took it's toll. I have learned my lesson. Bob Applegate and I were together in avionics school and flew over the North Atlantic out of Newfoundland and Keflavik, Iceland during the years 1962 through 1964. My three boys middle names are the same as his middle name.

Unfortunately a rather sad score this time. I understand conditions were a complete washout on Sunday so only the balance of Saturday's 14 hours would likely have been possible anyway.

Thanks to the great sponsors of the Missouri QSO Party and we shall try again

next year.

73, Mitch and Jerry - NW0M and K5YAA

K4BAI - fixed - GA - 36 cw 13 ssb

Worked my next to last Missouri county all time, Ray. Thanks to K0PC/M and W0E/M. Now need only Bollinger for all Mo counties. Band conditions very poor on Sunday. Thanks for all QSOs, especially the mobiles and portables

K4MM- S Florida Multi OP - 136 cw 72 ssb QSO

Nice Mobile activity. Had fun chasing em. Thanks to all that worked us. See y'all next year.

73 Tom (K4MM) & John (W4IX)

W0M - Opr W0MB - fixed - MO 1326 SSB QSO

My first time using a special call sign in a contest and it was fun the first day. The second day was much slower for some reason and not as many EU calling me. After a break the first day I discovered that my foot switch had fell apart and I was mashing down on the switch and it was even hanging up earlier and I didn't realize it. My 75 meter dipole needed adjusting as the SWR was over 2.5 to 1 and I didn't have enough time on Friday to get it set. I also had some problem with the amp as it was running lower power as one tube was running hotter and I had to shut it off and let the tubes cool a couple of times. I couldn't run the amp on 75 meters but still worked 32 q's with lower power. Overall if I was prepared for a test like list it would have been a total blast!

K1RO - fixed - NH 285 cw 138 ssb

Interesting weekend. I wasn't planning to spend full time this year, but it

snowed here from Friday morning through late Saturday afternoon and my wife was working on a quilting project so I decided to give it a serious effort.

Propagation from here to Missouri is always good on 20 meters during daylight hours. On Saturday I had pretty good luck on 40 meters most of the day, especially on CW. Sunday was pretty rough on 40, but I worked some of the mobiles by waiting for them to fade up above the noise. I know I missed some counties that didn't make it to 20 meters during the day. Saturday night 80 meters was very productive, and I even worked a couple guys on 160. I did not CQ at all this weekend.

Lots of mobiles! Thanks to (QSOs/counties): W0E (80/32), K0PC (54/34), N0O/M (52/25), N0E/M (28/23), K5YAA (21/13), K0E/M (16/16), K0DEQ (13/8), AF5Q/N0W/M, (12/8), KD0VMM (10/7), ND9E/0 (9/8), W0H/M (6/4), N0A/M (5/4), N9JF (4/2), KD0NEO (2/2). Also lots of points from multiband/multimode QSOs with from W0W (15/3) and W0S (18/3) and other fixed stations.

KN4Y - fixed - FL 93 cw

Glad the serial number is history, big signal mobiles on CW zig-a-zaging around the State, worked 7 mobiles, got so excited I scared the cat. Y'all did a good SHOW ME job.

OM2VL – DX 133 cw 48 ssb

Unfortunately very bad condx especially on Saturday. Many times I heard very very weak mobile - many times I can't break the USA wall and many missed at the beginning when mobile was on 40m.

I thought at night 40m will be better, but it was unbelievable DEAF band. I made only 10 QSO. Sometimes I heard some mobiles and called him never ending, but no answer. During last 8 hours I made only 15 !!!! QSO

Most QSOs with:
W0E/M 34/21 (QSO/Cty)
N0O/M 21/16
K0PC/M 20/20

N0E/M 18/17
K0E/M 12/11
K5YAA/M 10/10
W0S 9/3
KD0VMM/M 7/7
K0DEQ/M 6/6
W0W 6/2
N0W/M 4/2
AF5Q/M 3/3
N0A/M 3/3
W0H/M 3/3

73, Laci OM2VL

ND9E rover reported 283 SSB QSO

Book of the Month

This month's obscure 'wireless' book is **The Deep Sea Boys to the Rescue (or Answering the Wireless Call for Help)** by Halsey Davidson - published 1930 – for a youth oriented market. Previously published as the Navy Sea Boys series in 1917-19.

This was one of six navy theme books by Davidson – this is the series of six - written about the period at the beginning of WW1 – The Great War. Four boys from NJ enlist and become friends on the Destroyer Colodia. Their mission is to protect convoys, rescue crew from sunk ships by German raiders and subs, and go after those German boats and sink or capture them. This month's book naturally deals with the only one in the series having any 'wireless' content.



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My copy of the book was printed in 1930..depression era...on real cheap paper – but still readable, and it was now the Deep Sea Boys series. Often books were reprinted for a new generation of youth growing up. (Just like remakes of movies and new releases of old songs).

We start with the four Deep Sea Boys on a shore leave in England. Suddenly two German Zeppelins come overhead and start to bomb the small port city where their ship is berthed. The bombs fall on the port and a school, killing a dozen children. Fortunately a British airplane brings one of the Zeppelins down – and it crashes not far from where the Boys are. The other seems to be damaged by ground to air artillery shells but sails out to sea trying to escape. The 15 members of the crew of the crashed one are quickly rounded up – but a mysterious other – probably a German spy - manages to escape. He manages to capture one of the Deep Sea Boys and trades clothes – blending into the port city. In the new clothes there is a pocket full of correspondence from the Boy's father – about a sailing trip on the family yacht from New England to Bahia in Brazil – with a load of valuables on the Redbird.

It's quickly learned the other Zepp has crashed out at sea, and the Deep Sea Boys on their assigned destroyer, the Colodia, are dispatched by radio and race to capture the Germans - and do.

Not long after, a steamer ship is sunk, but the Boys and their ship are lucky enough to sink the German sub that attacked the ship while the sub waits for the steamer to sink. They continue patrol and hunt for an elusive German sea raider- a merchant ship disguised as friendly cargo ship, but containing massive guns to sink any vessel she comes across. There's nothing about radio till the latter part of the book.

It seems while on patrol near the Tropic of Cancer, one of the Boys befriends the wireless operator on board the ship. Mysterious ghost like transmissions have been detected in the afternoons and it's a riddle for everyone. The code sent does not make sense – it seems like random letters. At this time in history, it's still spark transmission and crude receivers – and the range is fairly short in the daytime.

One of the Sea Boys knows Morse Code – both the American Morse landline code for the telegraph system and the Continental code – used for wireless. He volunteers to help solve the ghost radio transmissions that appear in the afternoons. It takes a while to just pick a word or two out of the jumble. Bit by bit over days, he picks a word out here and there.

George, one of the Sea Boys, finally makes some sense out of the message. It's a distress call from the Redbird in American Morse – with no spacing for words – just a stream of letters poorly sent and repeated several times. The Redbird has been captured by a mutineering crew of Germans and is being forced to sail to a rendezvous with the German sea raider to offload treasure.

In a thrilling conclusion, just as the Germans in the Redbird crew attempted to take the valuables in two long boats from the Redbird to the sea raider, the destroyer Colodia shows up on site. The Germans in the long boats are stopped, the German raider is sunk, and the family is 'rescued' and escorted to Brazil safely. It was the sister of George, of the Redbird yacht, that was sending the message. He had taught her American Morse code and she could only surreptitiously get to the radio in the afternoon while the sympathetic wireless operator took a nap.

The leader of the mutineers turns out to be the spy who had escaped in the crash of the Zepp, and went on to sign on to the Redbird with the aim of capturing the valuables being transported. All ends well for the good guys.

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This was written for a youth market and severely lacking in technical detail....and relegated to the archives of nearly never read old books. The early version is listed on Amazon as the #12,896,886 most popular book. Assuming you read 300 books a day starting with the most popular, you wouldn't live long enough to finally get to it. And you wouldn't regret not reading it either! At least there's some decent wireless mystery in it. Fun read but only for die hard 'wireless fans'.

New Mexico QSO Party

K8TE mobile 256 cw 79 ssb qso

Judy and I put over 600 miles on the K8TE Mobile Command Post by the time we hit San Miguel County where I made just one contact at the end of the event. The antennas (High Sierra Screwdriver for 20m & 80m mounted on the topper) and a 40m Ham Stick mounted on a magnetic mount on the F-150 roof, and the K3 performed flawlessly. However, computer problems began before we even left home! I worked just nine NM counties which hurt my multiplier list! I was surprised to work DL and Japan on 20m!

My Lenovo laptop (nearly three years) old simply died on the way to Tucumcari Friday! It boots to the Lenovo BIOS logo and nothing more. Fortunately, I had ordered a replacement HP laptop which arrived last Wednesday. Setup went well except for some Windows Updates SNAFU's and I had it ready to play not long after the Lenovo died. I did some N1MM+ tweaking on the way to the QUA/DEB county line.

All went well with the laptop/K3 interface for the entire event. I wish I could say the same for propagation. Many stations just were too weak to work through local and vehicular noise.

It was interesting to get unsolicited "strong signal" reports but not

have a lot of answers to my CQ's as I expected/wanted. I guess there isn't as much interest in working NM counties as we would hope. County Hunters really made the difference for me!

QSO rates varied considerably! The first few minutes (3939) were very good because I had somehow enticed several folks to hang around there until the contest began which led to working five stations in three minutes from a county line resulting in ten QSO's. If it weren't for several 3939 regulars, I would have had to stay at the QUA/DEB line a lot longer!

My best 10 minute period rate started at 2341 UTC on 40 CW with W0MU in CO. I worked Mike six different times, half on 40m SSB and half on 40m CW, from five different counties. He's a big contester whose signal was always great to me. That 10 minute period yielded 11 QSO's, all on 40 CW, after which I had one more and moved to 40 SSB where the run petered out. Interestingly, half of those QSO's were with stations I worked multiple times, including AA5B, the only BER station I worked on 40m.

My best hour rate was 62 Q/H starting at 0129 on 40m SSB, of all modes, but only for three QSO's. I worked WA4LND who had a huge signal from Hidalgo County! He began calling CQ up 2 kHz from where I was running. He was kind enough to move down 5 kHz when I mentioned that fact. How pleasant, and surprising, it is to experience such kind behavior!

That run continued for another 56 minutes, mostly on 40m CW with some on 40m SSB. I saw the rate meter pop up to 100+ a couple of times, but not long enough. Even though I used the "begging CQ" on SSB (Any Station Anywhere), I couldn't keep a good rate going in either mode. Obviously, most of the callers were there because of the contest or wanting to work our "rare" counties.

I worked a lot of stations many times:

N6MU 13
K1RO 9
W4YDY 8
K7TM 7
WB0PYF 6
K0BJ 6
K0HNC 4

K5WO 6
K5NA 6
W4SIG 6

At the top of this list was WB8WKQ whom I worked 14 times!

My biggest challenge, other than being old, was the noise my F-150 generates! I probably could have worked a significantly larger number of stations while in motion without that noise. I even had a run in Roswell when we pulled into a gas station for a pit stop which I worked only because the engine wasn't running.

I had Judy pull over near Cloudcroft to work a couple of weak stations. I decided to pull the power cord from the laptop to see if that had an impact--it did! The noise decreased even more and the laptop died! It turns out the band new battery is TU. I'll complete the on-line form for a replacement from HP this afternoon.

I had a litany of issues that made preparation challenging including MS drivers from Windows Updates that cause a string of BSOD's on the new laptop. I'm guessing a normal human might have given up after experiencing these so my time as working in tech support paid off.

While not as good a result as I had hoped, it was still a fun event.

73, Bill, K8TE

N6MU - fixed CA - 54 cw 46 ssb qso

Started QRP but reality quickly set in and went LP after about an hour. Missed CHA for the Sweep. Only had prop on 20 for about an hour all day. Heard K8TE in CHA there but he couldn't hear me. Oh well, next year.

Top mobile for me was KK6MC with 20 Qs followed by W7QQ(16), K8TE(13), N5SJ(7) and NM5DX(4). Thanks to all those that played. 73...

John, N6MU

K1RO -fixed - NH 48 cw 27 ssb qso

Missed CAT and MCK

Operated quite a bit the first 4 hours, then as time permitted while I was working the Georgia QSO Party.

Conditions were not too good from here for most of the contest, and it was a struggle to make QSOs early in the day, especially on 40 meters and on SSB. Signals on 20 meters picked up nicely in the late afternoon, and then 40 meters was pretty good in the evening.

Nice to work so many mobile QSOs - KK6MC and NM5DX (12 QSOs each), K8TE (9), N5SJ (7) and W7QQ (4).

KK6MC mobile 295 cw 18 ssb

The score include bonus points from activating 11 counties and completing 15 QSOs from each. I worked 9 NM Counties, which is pretty good for me as a mobile. Mobile to mobile QSOs in state can be rough. I find it hard to get much momentum going on phone as a mobile in these contests and it is difficult for me to run on phone, particularly under these conditions. Throw in the two points for CW vs one for phone, and the fact that the RBN picks up CW but not phone, and I tend to concentrate on CW. My feeling was that this was a frustrating contest as 20M was never really open like it needs to be, but my QSO total is about the same as last year and the point total a little higher. 20M was completely dead at 1700 local and not really open except for weak NE stations when the contest started. The vertical in the mobile doesn't help when conditions are poor. I worked a handful of DX stations. No AK or HI. Forty was pretty good most of the day, except in the middle, when it was only mediocre.

I took a rather convoluted route this time, starting at the San Juan/Rio Arriba County line and working east on Hwy 64 to the Colfax/Union County line, then to Harding County and through Mora County to I-25 and home. That meant I had to

traverse large counties from one end to the other, which was OK, as I had a driver, but still not too productive after the first hour in a county. I was in Rio Arriba county for 2 hours and there wasn't much on the second hour for example. I ended up the contest at the Bernalillo/Sandoval County line close to home. Then I took Ginger out to a nice NM dinner at Los Cuates.

Having complained about 20M being bad, I did manage to work Dave, K1SWL, in NH on his 3 watt rig!

Thanks to K1RO, WB8WKQ, KK4CLY, K0HNC, and N6MU for following us around and being there when conditions were flat. Special thanks to K4BAI who had an exchange with all of the information needed for several QSO parties included. No need to ask for names.

As always, fun, but it seemed more frustrating than usual, but some of that may have been due to the route I chose. -

Duffey KK6MC

NS5J multi-op mobile 194 cw 6 ssb qso

We operated for the first time from a small school bus and while our signals did get out well we were plagued all day with intermittent problems between the computer and the FT 450 and between the computer and the WinKeyer due to the very rough ride of the bus. It was such a constant problem that we were having to fix "something" every 3-6 QSO's. But we did make 200 QSO's and activated 8 counties, the last 15 by hand logging and using the paddle keyer when communication between the rig and the computer failed completely. But we agreed we do it again. Good fun if frustrating.

NM5DX rover reported 50 cw and 63 ssb QSO in 2.5 hours of operating

On the Road with N4CD

A good weekend for weather was coming up – with clear skies and warm temps. At this time of year, you definitely check ahead for weather fronts and forecasts of severe weather. It's severe weather season with chances of tornadoes – and we've had a few in the area so far – nothing too serious, fortunately. I could get in a two day trip and hit five parks – all nicely located in different counties along the way!

This is usually the weekend for the big Belton Swapmeet – but they got bumped out of this weekend by a bigger group – I guess Easter came early and messed up a lot of plans. The swapmeet was 3 weeks ago and I missed it. Well, Belton would be a good stopover point – and all my favorite motels were booked up so it was back to the low end budget Knights Inn there in Belton for the Saturday night.

This weekend was also the Texas State Parks on the Air weekend. This is an annual event at the beginning of April and a dozen stations were scheduled to hit the parks. Most of the park activators run 'portable'. Most would be on SSB, and likely most would do a lot of operating on 40M trying to work the other parks. So, it would be a 'triple header weekend' for me – counties, POTA, and TSPOTA! That's a good excuse to go mobile with the rotten conditions we've been having. There were no sunspots. The A index was kicking up. Oh well....at least the radio was working. There are 119 listed TX Parks to work – but not all are WWFF sites as well. Some WWFF sites are also “National” wildlife reserves and not in the TX system, too.

So Saturday I headed out about 6:30am down through the Dallas Metroplex down I-35 to Hill County – where I took a jog to the west to run Lake Whitney State Park in the same county. Thanks to county hunters I reached the magic 44 number with some effort.....conditions not the greatest but there was internet access which helps.

KK6MC/m was out in the NM QSO Party that was also this weekend – got him just once. Caught a few more NM stations but not many. 40M worked OK, 30M was good – and 20M had problems being 'open'. I worked half a dozen EU park hunters – ON7NQ, CU3EJ, UT1FG/mm, ON4ON, 9A3NM, 9A7Wand that would be the 'best' time the whole weekend for DX. It got worse propagation conditions after that!

Worked one NM QP station on 40m SSB.....Left after an hour and ten minutes – not many more were coming back to CQ's and couldn't find any others to call! Put 49 in the log.

There was another team setting up at this park and they would be running it all day. No need to stick around!

So I zipped west on over to Meridian State Park – and put it on the air. KFF-3039 and TX Park P021. Bosque County. 20M was up and running – made 20 contacts on 20M SSB and 25 on 20CW. Only one DX station in the log. 6Q on 30M, one on 40M – finished with 59Q here. Nice weather – sun, 80 deg, and strong south wind – 25-35 mph steady. Many signals barely above the noise – others good copy – very spotty US coverage. One guy in IL might be S9, another in IN in the noise. NC good, SC not even there. I had success so it was time to move on.

Next up was Mother Neff State Park – KFF 3042 in Coryell County – and TX P022. I didn't hear many other TX Park activators – but didn't spend a lot of time hunting for them on 40M SSB or calling – called for five minutes there – mostly lots of silence. I started out by seeing how many GA QP stations I could snag. Found 7 on 20cw....and worked them. Others were 599, but were deaf - - people calling them, they didn't hear them for some reason – high local noise there or contest QRM. Frustrating to say the least. Only heard two mobiles, each once – and snagged Ed, KN4Y in one of his runs.

I had over 50 – so after two hours just decided to head on into the motel in Belton – a Knights Inn in Bell County. I've stayed there once before. It's a low budget older place – and you can get a room for \$47.20 plus tax – AARP rate.

So far I had internet in all 3 parks run – and that makes a big difference in being able to spot and round up the troops – for contacts.

Well.....Strange things happen some days. I had made the reservation for this on Friday evening via the Wyndham Rewards site. Got immediate confirmation back. It seems the N4CD mobile arrived at the hotel before the reservation did. Duh! Fortunately they had a room – I think this place always has rooms! It's not high up on the list of quality places. The rooms are OK, the beds OK, it's clean, but it is old. You hear the rumble of trucks down the interstate most of the night – it's just 1000 feet off busy I-30 and on a hill. That started things off on the wrong foot I guess. Had a second floor room – no elevator but I was traveling real light. I'd really be ticked if I got to a place with a 'confirmed reservation' and they hadn't gotten it yet – and no rooms were left. Even the Pony Express would have done better! Be sure to print off your confirmation letter (or

have it on your smartphone).

Went out to dinner at a Jake's Chinese Buffet place - \$10 senior rate plus tax – decent- then watched some TV and hit the hay. Phone rings at 3:30...robo alarm.....grrrr....then it rings again at 5:30...grrr....well I get up , and get to breakfast at 6am.

Day 2 – Sunday Apr 9 – Palm Sunday

I'm not sure why, but the room phone went off at 5:30...so I got out of bed – and made it to breakfast at 6am. Had 1/2 waffle, bowl of cereal (yukky Frosted Flakes – double sugar it seems – only choice other than colored kiddie stuff)...with banana, one hard boiled egg, one cup coffee- no decaf at this place – no half/half either – and that was that. Filled up. Then N4CD was on the road at 6:30am headed west on route 190 – zipping over to Lampassas County to the west – and then further west at 75 mph over to San Saba County and the Colorado Bend State Park about 80 miles away. Wow! **This is in the boonies.** The Texas State Park web will tell you to head to Bend, TX and you'll find signs from there. Hmm...Mapquest thinks Colorado Bend SP is 200 miles further southeast in Colorado County! Bend, TX is not in the Garmin database. Fortunately the State Park is! Listed under a different nearby city – only 25 miles away. Bend has a population of 1500 people, and it's the only town for 25 miles around. The folks are spread out all over the place.

After about 90 minutes of driving, I pull into the park in San Saba County TX. Don't think any of it is in another county as indicated on the park list vs counties. There is zero cell phone coverage. Zilch – at least not Verizon. No internet of course – so I'm on my own for scaring up contacts. Ten are needed to get credit for an activation. KFF2999.

Thanks to the county hunter contingent, I put about 25 county hunter contacts into the log between the 3 bands. Jim, AD1C, spotted me and that brought out the crowds, thankfully! It's tough when the A index is way up there, K is 3 or 4 and propagation is poor. No sunspots! Minor flares! Most signals pretty weak! Oh well. I work at it, work it some more – find a few GQP stations to work and squeak by with 45 QSOs for an official activation. That total included one Special Event station K4S – in FL – one random CQ'er – about 15 park hunters. When I hit 45 total I stopped. It was like pulling teeth to get each one after the first bunch of CH and didn't have the benefits of self spotting. Not much there other than primitive tent camping – and hiking trails and the river – and it is miles from anywhere other than a teeny store near the road into the park.

You've got several miles of Colorado River in the park – with 37 primitive camp sites with composting toilets – no RVs in this park – RV park is outside the state park run privately – and kayaking and swimming and hiking trails and caves to explore. It's good for backpacking and real off the beaten path activities. No playgrounds, swimming pools or anything 'modern' here! Stay in your RV outside the park, and drive in for the day, or tent camp inside the park. You can rent a kayak here at 'the store' just outside the gate to the park.

Took quite a while to get 45 – and that was TOUGH! If you didn't use SSB and CW, you probably would not get to 45 – unless you had some BIG antennas like dipoles up in trees or on tall masts to help out. I double checked and counted again – 45 valid QSOs.....time to bug out. It was taking 10 minutes to get just each additional one!

Dinosaur Valley

Then it was heading back north toward the next park – Dinosaur Valley in Somervell County two hours of driving away. I've been by this dozens of times but never bothered to stop in – heck , it wasn't a new county. At least now I've got an excuse to see a few new things! This is KFF-3004 in the system.

Here, the Paluxy River has eroded the bedrock down to the level of 113 million years ago – and you see fossilized dinosaur tracks in that bedrock. These are some of the 'best in the world'. It's a fascinating place for kids – all sorts of kid activities, hiking trails, amphitheater programs, etc, geared toward kids. Lots of day activities and hiking trails, some camp sites/RV sites, picnic areas. The dino tracks are in the river bed – you might get your feet wet! Probably will – it's wide and shallow.

There's camping in the park – horseback trails. It's an hour from Ft Worth so it's an easy day trip. The place was teeming with carloads of kids.



Exhibits for the Kids

I pulled in and there is weak internet but it's there. Great! Conditions are still pretty miserable but a bit 'recovered'. Some stations are loud but most are weak, weak, weak. For example, WA9DLB in IL is surprisingly S9 and Dennis N6PDB in CA at barely 339. I'm sure lots of folks just didn't hear me at all! I spent 2 hours working it to get 49Qs – with five or six in the GQP again. Anything to get to 44+ for an official activation of the park. It took 2 hours – but the weather was good, I was 2 hours away from home....so I worked at it and worked at it and worked at it to get to 44. Not fun. After the first rush of county hunters – and getting up to 25...you work work work for the next 20. That's about one QSO every 2 1/2 minutes of callingand when you figure the first 20 came in the first 20 minutes...it's about one QSO every 4 or 5 minutes of CQ'ing and hunting for a few more after that.

At this time of year, there are loads of Blue Bonnets along the road and in parks – the state seeds them. This was the view out the N4CD mobile while parked there:



Texas Blue Bonnet Wildflowers

I didn't hear much in the way of GQP – maybe 20 stations total the whole weekend, and worked 2 mobiles – each time one contact. Caught KN4Y in one and never heard him again. There were a dozen GA stations who were S7 to S9 and couldn't hear half the people calling, including me. Deaf – well, probably local QRM and QRN at their end....but it got frustrating calling and calling...then hear others call and call with no response. Not like the good old days of putting 150 GA QP contacts in the log in the two days and tracking mobiles all over the place. 20M is usually a bit tough – but this year it was very 'spotty'. Most of state just 'wasn't there – either 20 or 40m. That made it tough to catch some for the extra Qs needed to reach the threshold of 44. Or catch the needed GA counties.

I enjoyed the weather..... low 80s and sun - had a shaved ice cone there.....and then headed home. Didn't even bother to turn on the radio – just drove – in the traffic headed back home 2 hours away. Ran right by two other parks – but I'd run them before so no need for a repeat so soon – and most park hunters and county hunters got them the first time. In poor conditions, it's not fun trying to give out repeat counties/ parks. Probably most of the park hunters wouldn't show up for a repeat.

This is certainly not as popular as NPOTA sponsored by the ARRL....but hopefully will grow – and is still a good excuse to go mobile and portable. On any given weekend a dozen activators are out giving out their parks. I've encouraged them to spot on ch.W6RK.com so you can chase them. You can track them on Dxsummit.fi and on the POTA page on Facebook.

Home by 4pm. Was a good trip – 561 miles in 2 days and 5 parks run successfully.

The storms return on Monday.....so will glad to be home.

Thanks for riding along and thanks for the QSOs. They really help out to get to 44 – and feel free to work me in each park and you don't even have to bother to log them at your end. You'll be in the WWFF system when I upload my log.

Bob, KA9JAC, will be doing a program on Parks on the Air at Dayton at the County Hunter Forum. See y'all there.

Georgia QSO Party

from the 3830 contest reflector:

KN4Y mobile - 934 cw qso

Saturday band conditions marginal, checked out my old 80-meter resonator, the LDG loaded it and I made 4 QSO's, I could not load it again later, when I got home I saw the resonator was busted off and hanging. Sunday about half way into the QSO party I lost 20-meters. When I got home the 20-meter resonator was gone, broken off at the connection. So the last half of Sunday operation was a one band venture. Weather great and good food. Needless to say I made a call to HRO for new resonators.

N4N multi op mobile - 1350 cw 105 ssb

Wow, another GQP in the bag. Great weather this year. Great outing with the crew. Putting a multi-station, 57 county rover-in-motion effort on the air is not for the faint of heart. The last two year's outings didn't have any hardware failures. This year, not so lucky. One of the (previously working fine) logging computers decided it didn't want to play nice with the radio and

logger software just before the Saturday start. Decided to remove / re-install related software, while the other station dove in.

Sunday morning, one of the station power supplies chose to not work, despite being used all day Saturday. A 45 minute start delay while station power is reconfigured versus dropping down to 1 station. Later in the day, that station went to 80m and RFI crashed the mobile LAN. Usually not an issue for most rovers, but we use Flex 6000 series radios. Laptop to radio connection is through the router (doesn't have to be and future outings won't be), so both stations impacted. Rewired laptop to radio for station operating on 75/80m, removing the networking of the laptops. Another hour delay playing MacGuyver on the side of the road.

The Sunday county route was already aggressive, so no surprise we didn't get to the last 9 counties. Despite GA having 159 counties, many take more than 30 minutes to drive across, shredding the need to spend only 18 minutes or less per county. The route is solid, but no margin for error, hi hi.

A wonderful integration this year was the ability to self spot directly from the logger as we changed counties. Even though last year had the use of 4G access via the router, this year we were able to exploit this capability and not rely on stations we worked to spot us or the driver pulling over and spot us. This also allowed us to keep tabs on GA spots to look for possible 15m openings. We tried several times on 15, but zilch. We also monitored 50.135 (plus 50.125) and called CQ numerous times on the permanently installed IC-7000. We've never heard a peep on 6m over the last 3 years. Seems like there were fewer stations participating this year. Missed hearing several regulars.

A hearty "THANK YOU" goes out to stations K1RO (65, 53/12 mixed), DL3DXX (48 CW), K9CT (39 CW) and W8TM (31 CW) for providing huge numbers of Q's. Didn't have anyone "Clean Sweep" us this year, but RO and DXX came close.

Tim and I missed having Max, N5ZZ, join us this year. However, Mark, KK4VQJ did an excellent job of chauffeuring us around on the ~1000 mile journey. And enjoyed handing out the "N" to spell out N-F-A-R-L in recognition of NFARL's 40th anniversary this year. Yes, we are already planning for next year. GQP roving is in our blood. Sitting in moving, cramped quarters for 10 hours each day with a desk on your lap, trying to type callsigns correctly into a computer or sending CW with the paddles while the vehicle jostles, is so much fun. If the bands were better, maybe we could expand to 3 stations? I need a

bigger truck!

73

For N4N, 2017 GQP Rover

Tim, WK4U, 40 & 75/80, Mike W5JR, 20 & 40, Mark, KK4VQJ, driver.

K4BAI fixed GA 722 cw QSO

Apologies to all who were looking for the promised W4AN/M many county operation. We were unable to solve RFI problems and rig keying problems and gave up the mobile effort. I made a few low power QSOs from the KU8E QTH with my rig. Unfortunately, I used K4BAI believing that further QSOs would be from W4AN/M and thereby caused some confusion when I operated the rest of the contest with the same call, but with the MUSC multiplier instead of HARR.

When I began operating from home, I intended to do both CW and SSB. I did make four SSB QSOs (which are still in the log), but N1MM+ refused to log them on SSB until I edited each QSO. That reminds me of a problem with the original N1MM program years ago. There was some obscure menu item that, when checked, caused the program to log all QSOs on any mode as on CW. If anyone knows where to find that so I can turn it off before the next contest, please let me know.

Band conditions on the low bands were very good and were fair on 20M. Nice to work a lot of Europeans there. The only QSO on 15 was W2RR, who asked me to move there about 1500Z Sunday and we worked backscatter. Otherwise, many checks of that band revealed no signals. 40M had long skip and it was hard to work nearby stations.

Hope we can be mobile again next year. 73, John, K4BAI.

KB4KBS rover in GA reported 294 SSB QSOs

N1CC - fixed - TX 79 cw 71 ssb

The propagation gods were on vacation. 20 Meters, my normal "money band" to GA was second best band with most contacts ESP on 20 as well. 40 Meters turned out to be the workhorse, but not with the normal antenna ... tried the 43' vertical and it was no help, so the 160M Inverted L carried the mail. Starting with SFI of 66 and SN of 27 and ending at SN =0 with high A/K indices both days. High solar noise level.

I found three of the rovers: KN4Y (9), N0G (6) and KB4KBS (1). KN4Y and N0G have superior ears, picking me out right away even though they were down in the noise for me.

Unusual observation: On Sunday afternoon around 1945Z K4BAI had a 150 msec echo on 20 Meter CW here, right after that on 40M CW he was stronger and no echo...that points up something going on in the Ionosphere that really inhibited higher frequency operation.

Cycle 25 is coming ... get out the cheerleaders and maybe it will hurry up!

N0AC as N0G mobile 1161 CW QSO

There are a lot of thanks that I feel needs to be given. First is to the contest sponsors and organizers especially Jeff, KU8E, for encouraging participation. Second are all the station operators that QSOed with me. Third and most important is my wife, Donna, for being patient and driving. Without her this contest would not have been successful. Last is a safe trip.

Equipment

From an equipment standpoint things went well. At the start one of the screwdriver antenna controllers would not stay powered up but if I held down the power button I could tune the antenna. Since this ended up being a two band contest I just left that antenna tuned for 40m and the other antenna for 20m the whole contest. The only other issue was the computer not reading the rig but that turned out to be a backed out USB plug.

Day 1

We spent too much time at the Pizza Hut so got an 11 minute late start in Dade County. Having never operated this far south and east I figured 20m was going to be the best band but it didn't seem to produce so I moved to 40m at 1824z. I tried to give time for 20m and 40m from each county. We ran late all day and at 0016z I signed off since it was dark and Donna was getting tired.

Day 2

In a previous email conversation with K1RO he mentioned I should try to operate from the same frequency spot on all bands which luckily was 7038 and 14038. I bounced back and forth between 20m and 40m all day with 40m producing the best rate. We stayed on schedule Sunday arriving at Savannah at 2058z and my last QSO.

Conditions

I thought conditions both days were good but power line noise Sunday seemed worse. I left one county on the table and operated 13 out of the 20 hours available and I didn't make it to 80m. We drove a total of 3100 miles with 720 of that in the contest. For a description of the mobile station look at my QRZ.COM page. (N0G or N0AC)

Signals were great for the most part. The most consistently loud stations were K9CT and DL3DXX. The stations that worked me 15 or more times were: K1RO-49, K9CT-38, K3WJV-30, DL3DXX-24, W4EE-23, W8TM-23, K4BYN-22, KB3LIX-22, W0BH-21, W5TM-21, N2CQ-16, W2DYE-16, N2CU-15, and ND3R-15.

Beyond Contesting

This trip was not all about me. Donna is an amateur photographer and loves investigating places and things. After the contest I traded my headphones for a tourist hat and spent the rest of our time without the radio. On the way home to Iowa we stopped in Columbus and had coffee and conversation with John, K4BAI. What a treat!

Thanks for all the QSOs, Bill, N0AC

N2CU - fixed NY 83 cw 26 ssb qso

Challenging conditions to say the least. Murphy struck when my TH6DXX showed SWR

through the roof on 20 and 15m. Didn't matter for this contest; heard almost nothing on 20m. The two stations I worked on 20m were on my 40m delta loop and K3 tuner. Good ears by mobiles N0G and KN4Y. I called mobile N4N endlessly but he couldn't hear me.

DL3DXX - 190 cw QSO

Difficult propagation this year. No QSO on 15m for the first time.
More QSOs on 40m than on 20m - another first time.

20m was open until 22:00 on Saturday but not for the weaker mobile stations.
Heard the western EU's working mobiles I could not hear at all.
Sunday 20m closed short after sunset at 18:30 so I had to take
a 2 hour break before first signals appeared on 40m.
Thrill was working N4N so many times on 80 meters and working N0G
long, long time before his sunset on 40m.

Thanks to all GA stations, especially the tireless mobiles.
mobiles worked: KN4Y (25x), N0G (24x), N4DU (5x), N4I (10x),
N4N (48x), NM2L (3x).

Missed W4AN/m and Norm W3DYA/m a lot.

Thanks to the DR1A owners for letting me use this impressive station again.

73, Dietmar DL3DXX

N8II - fixed WV - 18cw 103 ssb

Not too bad for 4 hours total including a few minutes about 3 times on CW. There was very little mobile activity; thanks to KB4KBS/M for a few Q's Saturday. Activity seems to be headed lower, but there were enough stations on 40 to keep it interesting most of the time. Around 1PM Sunday there was virtually no 40M SSB activity. I heard absolutely nothing from GA on 20, let alone working anyone. 40M signals were

reasonable to loud until around 0015Z when they started to skip over me. Activity was nearly nil on 75 around sunset, and I was just a bit too fatigued to try again later. 3 of my 5 Q's there were right at the end Sunday.

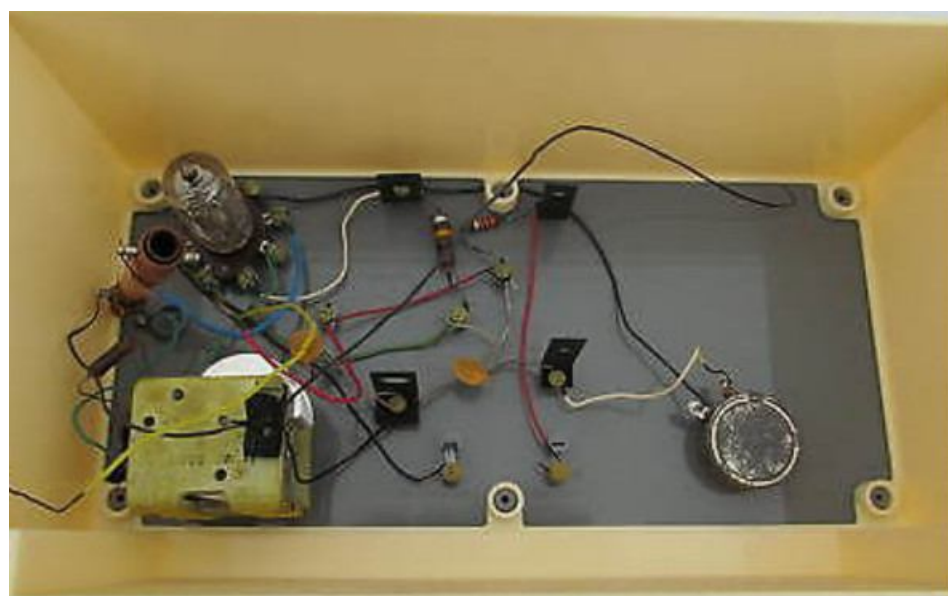
My wife's cousin lives in Toombs county in south central GA (where we have visited a couple of times) and I failed to find any activity there, but I received a QSL from a station in Dublin which is the town immediately east of Vidalia, so I came close. There was a lot activity from the metro Atlanta area, and I worked Gwinnett, Cobb, and especially Cherokee county many times. Thanks for the Q's; hopefully there will be more mobiles next year.

On the Trail Of Regens

You never know what will show up on Ebay! Ah yes....an item from the wayback machine of the early early 1950s – an Aurora Plastic Radio Kit sold via the Scout Catalogs and others (Sears)....at a time when I was about 4 years old. Didn't know what radio was at that time – hi hi. A few senior county hunters likely remember that era better than I do. I've never seen this radio before....so I had to try and add it to the N4CD collection of other Aurora Kits – mostly mid 50s to early 60s. They went bust in the mid 60s. The era of the cheap 'transistor radio' did them in.

This is an early generation of their kits – first I've ever seen with the 'foot' under the radio cabinet – other than one other model from apparently that period. Most are just the rectangular plastic box that was characteristic of these kits – from one and two tube models, to crystal sets, and 1, 2 and 3 transistor ones.

It ran off a 1.5v “A” battery for the filament and a 67.5v “B” battery that mounted inside the case.



AI5P, Rick, to do “Route 66”

Hoping for fulfill one of my "bucket list" items this summer - Driving Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica. By my count, there are 54 counties along the route. I hope to activate all of them on my trip.

I am planning to be on 20/30/40m SSB and CW. Right now the start date is planned for June 18. This could change, of course, based on a variety of variables.

I plan on awarding a prize to the MARAC member who works me in the most counties - SSB, CW, and Mixed. Only one prize per person. In case of a tie, the award will go to the one who worked me earliest.

I also plan to have a Facebook group page (AI5P Route 66) to announce travels as I go. Please join! Should be an interesting experience on the road!

73 Rick AI5P

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de N4CD – Route 66 is the original 'highway' from Chicago to California – it revolutionized travel by car. Back in the day, there were thousands of motels along the road, and tourist attractions all over the place – to get folks to stop. The road is not complete these days – there are sections you can access – but they don't connect. Much of the road was made into Interstate – and bypassed many smaller towns. Still you can drive a good bit of the original 'Route 66' and even stay at some of the way back motels along the route.

Michigan QSO Party

This year many people commented about the lack of mobiles. Never heard one or saw one spotted on 20M. Apparently stormy conditions kept many off the roads. Most multipliers seen was in the 27 area – not anywhere near the total number of counties in MI. K1RO snagged 41 on cw and 55 on ssb. Folks also commented on the horrendous QRN from storms on 40 and 80M making contacts very challenging.

From the N4CD QTH, I worked the stronger fixed stations but only had a few hours that afternoon/evening to look for the few counties in MI I needed. No luck there.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

K8IR mobile 477 ssb 36 ssb

Many years the weather isn't that big a factor for us out on the road. This year the weather was the story.

After driving five hours through the rain to get to our starting point, the skies cleared and we were enjoying a very nice afternoon. The temperature got up to 82 degrees along the southern part of the route, and conditions began better than we had seen in recent years. The notable difference from last year was what we saw in the Wisconsin QSO Party last month, that the lack of sunspots pretty much eliminated the short in-state propagation on 40. That would be on 80/75, and although we checked out 80 early, the only station heard was KM8CC from KZOO who was booming in.

Then we headed back up north, and the line of thunderstorms met us just below the Mackinaw Bridge. So by the time the crowds migrated to 80, it was too noisy for us to be heard by most stations. We managed to pick up a few mults through S&P, but running on 80 was mostly unsuccessful. So we ended up with our lowest mult total since the first year I went out in 2002. Although it was plenty noisy on 40, that band still worked for us to the end.

Unfortunately, the fog slowed our trek across the U-P, and we got to MENO with just 2 minutes to go. We apologize to all who were waiting at the end when the clock ran out.

A big thank you again to my driver, Eric, KG9GH, who between rain, fog, and deer (we saw more deer through the UP at night than we had in-state mults), got us safely around the route. And thanks to all who called in and especially those who followed us through the contest, including WB5JID (22), K4MM (19), K8RYU (16), K1RO (15), and many others.

N2CU fixed NY 60 cw 48 ssb qso

What a difference a year makes. My enthusiasm for operating this event was quickly squashed after finding horrible band conditions. Of course, nothing on 20m, 40m signals were weak, and only two stations were found on 80m during the day. Pretty much made for a no-band contest from my QTH located in far Western NY. My first hour netted only 32 QSOs, compared to 56 last year. By the second hour stations to the East and South were almost twice my QSO count, so I knew there would be no repeat victory. Only one mobile worked (K8IR) who was quite often the loudest MI station on 40m. Thanks for being out there.

Can someone turn on the propagation switch for the next contest?

K8MR - fixed FL 52 cw 15 ssb

After many years of driving around Michigan for the MiQP, I do feel an urge to show up for MiQP. Following K8IR around a lot of the counties I visited many times was fun.

I was able to keep plugging away on 20 during the day, but the last two hours after an evening engagement were brutal. Storms in MI and WI must have made things tough up there, as a number of loud stations CQ'd in my face on 80, and were not hearing other callers as well.

K1RO - fixed NH - 100cw 211 ssb 41 cw mults 55 ssb mults

I was surprised to find loud Michigan stations on 40 meters at the start. From what callers told me, the long band put a damper on in-state QSOs. 40 meters was my money band, although in the evening the band went way long and I

couldn't hear MI anymore. 80 meters was hard for everyone with the ridiculous static crashes. I had short spurts of propagation on 20 meters in the afternoon and probably should have worked that harder.

I ended up with a lot fewer CW QSOs and multipliers than I expected from looking at the results of past MIQPs. Don't know if that was my operating choices or the activity/conditions this year. There were quite a few casual phone ops to keep my interest, although the last couple hours were pretty slow. K8IR led the mobile pack with 15 QSOs and 14 counties. Also worked W8RU (6/4), K7TH (5/5) and W8UE (3/2).

Thanks to the sponsors and all the Michigan stations that got on even though conditions weren't the best.

KN4Y - fixed - FL 37 cw

Worked up and down the band contacting players in the Michigan QSO party. I heard later K8IR was mobile, only worked K8IR in one county. Several MI stations could not hear me, I even stomped my feet. Operating mobile with a serial number in the exchange is difficult, some operators start with the number 1 when into a new county, this screws up the fixed station who now several one's for the same call. Hope MI reconsiders exchange change, Name and State (Name, county) is fun.

N4UP and the GPS

From the K3IMC forum:

N4UP

My GPS Tried to Kill Me (Four Times) in Taylor County, WV

Thursday morning in Grafton WV (Taylor County). I had just run the county from the parking lot of a school in the upper section of Grafton. Entered into the GPS the target location for the next county. And the GPS tells me to drive off a cliff 100 feet above the streets below.

She (GPS) says make a right turn, right here, where there is no street, no guard rail, just a 100 foot drop. I decide not to do that. Drove on a bit. GPS recalculates, says turn here and drive off the cliff in a different spot. And again. And again. Four times.

The I headed in the other direction (several miles) and found a way safely down to the lower level where I needed to be.

The GPS knew where I needed to be, just not how to get me there without killing me. Should I take this personally?

W4SIG

Somewhere in south central KY about 10:00 at night a few years ago GPS took me down a narrow road with low hanging trees. I had to get out and take off my antenna so it would survive. Then it dropped me down to a river that could only be passed by ferry! No one was in sight. Then I saw a distant light come on and what looked like a ferry crossing over to me. It felt like I was in the Josey Wales movie! An odd looking gentleman said he had just shut the ferry down for the night but would take my car across. I thanked him, took the \$2 boat ride, put my antenna back on and continued to run on 80 with pileups!

KN4Y

If you use the GPS to find the TREEO Center on the Florida State campus in Gainesville FL you will go down a hill and find a fence of railroad ties across the road.

W0GXQ

This post and thread was an education!!!

N4CD

Out in Montana one time, the GPS lady said take this road....and I did....paved for five miles.... then it went to gravel...OK.....this road would save about 50 miles....then it turned into a narrower road.....and into not even a gravel road - dirt road – now it is called a Forest Service Road and entered giant forest.....but still OK.....and now it was 20 miles to go back...so I kept going...then it turned into a road of rocks...bouncing over rocks at 10 mph for five miles going up up up.....and no place to turn around.....one narrow lane and a good Jeep type road....car bottomed out frequently. Five to 10 mph. Steep. No cellphone naturally. So I kept going. Car taking a beating. Over the summit.....Down the other side of the mountain on miles of rock road.....to dirt road....to gravel road...and 50 miles later back to paved road. No way GPS should have routed me this way. Now I double check map when it finds 'shorter route' to be sure.....

Matt, W0NAC, wound up on a Forest Service high mountain road in Colorado following the GPS.....and had to call a special wrecker to get him unstuck in his truck.....

And all the time you read about people following GPS in winter weather and winding up lost.....getting stuck..... going 40 miles and finding out road ends.....and the snow is now too deep to keep going.....

WQ7A

Sounds like the road between Melrose and Twin Bridges in MT. That killed my antenna and even the backup antenna. Don't go there.

North Dakota QSO Party

There was a North Dakota QSO Party. A few fixed stations got on to provide some activity

from the 3830 contest reflector:

AC0MN - low power portable - 18 cw 105 ssb

Anticipated more operating time but ran into car trouble which limited operation on Saturday and forced cancellation of Sunday's operation entirely. Thank to the stations we did manage to work.

K7KHR - fixed - AZ 3 SSB

Worked all I heard, including the two strong stations twice and one portable who came across the border from MN. Thanks for the WAS credit, but wish I had been able to work someone on 80. Conditions not very good

KA6BIM - fixed - CA - 3 SSB QSO

Extremely poor conditions, only found 3 stations, but these 3 were LOUD! Sorry I could not find any more ND stations. Tnx for the QSO's

Nebraska QSO Party

Propagation didn't cooperate much for the annual NE QP. NE0QP/m was out and about running dozens of counties. W0BH/m showed up on Saturday to help the activity. Not a whole lot of fixed stations were reported on the air.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N6MU - fixed CA 32 cw 17 ssb

Terrible conditions Saturday really took a toll on my strategy to work NE0QP/m in every county for that 50 point bonus and mult. You can't work him if you can't hear him. That was true most of Saturday on 20. Worked well last year but not so much this year. Only had 14 Qs Saturday.

Thanks to Bob, W0BH, for taking a nice Sunday drive from KS to join the fun. He was a nice surprise that kept me in the chair. Two mobiles are always better than one!

40 of my 49 Qs were with the mobiles. More NE fixed support would help a lot.

John, N6MU

W0DB - fixed - NE - 208 cw 209 ssb

Wow, some rough conditions. Thanks everyone for the contacts.

W4UT - fixed - TN - 7 cw 2 ssb

Did not hear a lot of activity from NE, but was able to work W0BH mobile in several counties. Thanks Bob, for the Q's.

K4BAI - fixed GA 13 cw 9 ssb

"W0BH/M did a fine job of putting out counties including one all time new one for me. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI."

Awards

No major awards issued this month according to the MARAC home page

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

May 6 1300z to 7 0700z

7th Call Area QSO Party

CRS(T), state/county code or SPC

ws7n.net/7QP

May 6 1500z to 7 0300z

Indiana QSO Party

RS(T), county or SPC

www.hdxcc.org/inqp/rules.html

May 6 1700z to 7 2359z

Delaware QSO Party

RS(T), county or SPC

www.fsarc.org/qsoparty

May 6 2000z to 7 2359z

New England QSO Party

W1: RS(T), county, state. Others: RS(T), SPC

www.neqp.org/rules.html

May 13 1400z to 14 0200z

Arkansas QSO Party

RS(T), county or SPC

www.arkqp.com

That's all folks!