

# County Hunter News

October 2018  
Volume 14 Issue 10

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 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](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://marac.org/awards.pdf>

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)

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

## Notes from the Editor

### **N4CD Rumblings**

1 ) Fall has arrived as of Sept 22 – and the weather here in Texas has been rainy! Record rainfall in this month and 8.8 inches of rain in 3 days on the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup>. It seems to rain every weekend making short trips difficult as it's no fun traveling in heavy showers. Mobile activity is down but fortunately a few wandering here and there to keep up the interest. The east coast – especially the Carolinas got slammed by Hurricane Florence with many county hunters having to evacuate for days. No reports yet of major damage yet to them.

2 ) The MARAC convention in KC, MO is coming up in early October. Many mobiles should be on the road headed there by the time you read this and over 85 people have signed up for the 50<sup>th</sup> annual event. Your host this year is Ed, K8ZZ.

3 ) October has many good QSO Parties including PA, AZ, IL, NV, CA, SD. Hundreds of counties up for grabs. Usually all of CA is on the air and most of IL. Likely all of AZ will be present. PA depends upon whether mobiles get motivated or not – at least

one county hunter will be out there. In November, things swing more to big contests including Sweepstakes – both CW and SSB on separate weekends.

4 ) There were many good QSO parties this month, and a few reports from last month's events that occurred at the end of the month and too late to make it in last month's issue. Lots to read from the mobiles who went out and ran those counties for you.

## Kansas QSO Party - More

This took place at the end of last month – these reports were too late for the last issue but make interesting reading:

from the 3830 reflector:

**N0D mobile (KE0MVM, WB9QAF oprs) 417 CW 39 SSB**

Wife and I had a blast. Melted my rig by the end of day 1. Thought I blew the finals but it was just the power booster. Had the old 897 for backup though. Then Macgyvered the IC7000 back to life at a rest stop. Beautiful drive from the northern border to the southern border and back through the center of Kansas.

IC7000 into Little Tarheel II. Engine off running on AGM wheelchair battery. Spotted myself on KQP website and ran until no more calls heard at each stop. Not hearing the 1,500 stations like the rest of you mobiles. Seems like I need an antenna upgrade? Would be grateful for any suggestions. Want to compete with the big boys!

**W0BH as W0B mobile 379 w 172 SSB**

The 2018 Tenth Anniversary Kansas QSO Party by W0BH as W0B/m

Can you believe 10 years already? I almost can't, but the calendar says otherwise, so we decided to make this year special!

With a record 61 1x1 calls, we spelled KANSAS, QSOPARTY, SUNFLOWER and our new word, YELLOWBRICKROAD. One station reports working 59 out of 61, so we

were out there and available.

We added a special category for FT8 and a new Portable category. FT8 logs are still coming in and nine Portable stations answered the challenge, so a big success on both. At the last minute we had 3 stations who still wanted 1x1 calls, so I decided to apply for the X calls and have an X Challenge to celebrate our Xth Anniversary. It turns out the X calls aren't allowed, so we made a NotX Challenge instead using M calls plus one very last minute J call. You can read about the NotX Challenge on the KSQP web site.

All 105 counties were once again covered both CW and SSB and John/N6MU claims his eighth Kansas Sweep in a row. We double-covered all 105 counties, 95 counties were triple or more covered, and 93 counties were covered again on Sunday. Great work by our 15 scheduled mobiles, at least 4 "pop-up" mobiles, 9 portables, and great fixed stations!

After talking with our sponsors, we decided to offer TShirts and monogrammed Sweatshirts this year instead of plaques .. not to buy, to earn! An antique radio stamp theme TShirt was designed this summer and unveiled at the State Convention in Salina, one week before the QSO party. My goal was to deliver as many Ts as possible by hand because it was more fun and of course saved postage. Forty Ts found new homes in Salina but I still had another 80 or so Kansas Ts to go, so I planned a mobile route to visit 14 operations around the state. A number of the operations were multi-op, so the potential to deliver lots of Ts was there.

Saturday

We had cool weather the entire week before the KSQP, but Saturday was typically warm for August in Kansas. Heading west, my first stop was the W0C portable operation on the Lyon/Coffey county line. I knew about where Vern/AE0TT should be and I could hear him overloading the front end of my Icom 7000 on SSB, but no Vern. Lorna/K0WHY my XYL driver spotted some tracks heading down a muddy dirt road. We followed for a bit but decided we didn't want to get stuck, so we reluctantly bailed. We later found out those weren't Vern's tracks, so good decision. We might still be there!

It went from there, but with lots more success. Many of the ops were in the Kansas City area and it was really fun to visit big stations, little stations, outdoor shack stations, garage stations, old-radio stations, Flex-radio stations, remote stations and a school station. The most fun was just learning

to know the ops. Lots to talk about, so I got further and further behind on my route, arriving at my last stop in Topeka just at the closing bell. At least I covered all my counties! After another FB chat, we finally arrived back home in Hesston after midnight.

## Sunday

An overnight recharge on the deep-cycle batteries and the van was ready to go for Day 2. Aaron/N0QD came along to drive and operate with his own 1x1 call, N0Q. First we headed to Reno county where AC0RL/Jerry wasn't operating N0F. We dodged around downed trees and power trucks, and basically wondered what tornado we'd missed. Jerry said 90 mph downburst winds caught his neighborhood the previous night as storms came through and he spent all day cleaning up. Luckily his tower stayed vertical although a number of his wire antennas didn't. He later put N0F on the air which we appreciate even more having seen the damage.

After visiting another Reno county operation, we headed north to Kanopolis State Park and Rock City State Park where two excellent portable operations were going strong. Either place would have been a great location to finish out the QSO party, but we had one more scheduled stop which turned out to be "way out there!" Aaron/KS0LP has recently moved to the rolling hills of Dickinson county and you can only get there by back, unpaved roads. After going the long way around (maybe a bit lost), we finally arrived to find him operating K0D as a Kansas Rookie from a true ham "shack," and having a great time I might add. The same could be said for most everyone, I think!

## Stats

We operated 8.5 hours, 772 miles, 938 combined Qs, 269 unique calls, 7 dupes, one radio and visited 14 1x1 call operations.

## W0BH Award Winners - First Place - Very Honorable Mention

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Most overall Qs ---- N8II/K7SV/29 N6MU/13 -- N6ZFO/12  
Most CW Qs ----- K7SV/20 ----- N8II/18 -- N6MU/10  
Most PH Qs ----- N8II/11 ----- K7SV/9 --- WA1SAY/KK6TBN/4  
Most counties ----- N8II/17 ----- K7SV/15 -- N6MU/10

Last year I tried to name and thank everyone associated with the KSQP. That turned out to be several paragraphs and I worried that I'd miss someone. This year I'm simply going to say THANK YOU to all in and out-of-state sponsors, ops, and support team (log-checking, web and stamps) who made this Tenth Anniversary Kansas QSO Party so much fun for all. I'm truly overwhelmed with the support and comments from individual ops, clubs and teams in Kansas and out. So let's keep this going and see what we can all do for next year!

73, Bob/w0bh/w0b with Aaron/n0qd/n0q and Lorna/k0why  
2018 KSQP Coordinator

### **K0A (WY0A opr) 790 SSB qso**

Another excellent QSO Party in the logs. Enjoyed my travels around the southern part of the state. Made it to the Colorado border on Saturday and the Missouri border on Sunday. As many have noted, the bands weren't in the best, particularly on Sunday. Saw a couple of crop dusters way out west on Saturday. Those guys are fearless, crazy or a combination of both. Drove by Big Bertha out in Cherokee county on Sunday. It's hard to imagine just how big that crane is until you drive by it.. Thanks to all the stations that followed me around the state. My operating conditions consisted of 2011 Subaru Outback using a Scorpion screwdriver with an Icom 7100 putting out a 100W.

### **W00 mobile (W0ZQ opr) 1053 CW**

Saturday morning, before the contest started, I was plugging in my computers power adapter into the cars power accessory port when the adapters tip fell apart, fell into the accessory port and shorted it out. Yes, smoke was released and yes the fuse worked as intended. The computers battery would only last about 2 hours and then I would be without logging or keying. Fortunately I always bring tools and parts with me in my Go Bag. After 10 minutes of work with wire, tools, and 3M electrical tape, I had MacGyver'ed the computers power adapter with Power Poles and was back in business. I did all this work while parked in front of a gas station and I was waiting for someone to ask me what the heck I was doing with wire, wire cutters, and weird looking things in my car, or for the local police to show up, but no one ever asked.

As a solo op, I drive, stop, run, then repeat. It allows me some time to enjoy the trip as I am not on the radio 100%. KS was beautiful and I spent most of my time in, or around, the Flint Hills. Although the weather was "hot" for this MN boy, the wind was moderate and keep me cool enough. Saturday afternoon it seemed to be the CA QSO party on 20m, but Sunday was different as others have commented on.

After the contest, Sunday late afternoon, while driving home through IA, I saw an awesome double rainbow, and later on at sunset I saw a red sun set with a simultaneous full moon rise. The fun thing about running mobile in the QSO parties is the things you see; its not the destination, its the trip.

Oh ya, the QSO party. A tip of the hat to W0BH and his group for a very fun event and a big thank you to all the op's who stopped by for a Q. At each stop I worked through any pile up to make sure that I worked everyone calling. LoTW will follow for those needing counties and grids.

73, Jon

**KØI mobile** (Operator(s): K1ØI NØUMP WØDR ) 880 CW 37 ssb

Got a late start by about 5hours or so. Dave W0DR and I attended the Joplin MO Hamfest. It was hard to get away from so many radio friends.

When we got on air the bands were quite down, many CQ went unanswered. After a few hours it got a lil better and finally at sunset ,40 came alive and some good runs took place. Sunday saw better condx from 20m as it came alive around 11am. Bill N0UMP was at the wheel on Sunday when we had some awesome pileups on each county change.

Problems: The laptop would hang the rig in send until a couple taps on f1 and esc would bring it back to receive. I had to have some repeats because of this.

Saturday a couple wrong turns and the late start ate up time so we had to drop some counties off the list. Sunday a detour sent us back thru some Saturday activations altho we made quite a few Q`s despite the fact.

Sunday we met a truck on a two lane road and with a lo of wind and the blast of air from the semi , a tri magnet mount came off along with two hamstix ,but luckily the ropes steadying the hustler mast on rear caught the flying mount and it was only dragging the whip ends on the road. the hustler mast was bent in the ordeal but not harmed otherwise. we cringed with every meeting of semi`s the rest of the trip !

This was the first time for trying to run mobile with an amp. A 500w solid state that I drove lightly to 250-350w depending on band. It seemed to do the job as I got some good reports and had some answering stations below my noise level.

Thank you all who took part for making it fun and special thanks to Bob ,W0BH who does so much behind the scene to Make it all happen...

I hope to take part in the KSQP for years to come and log many of you again.  
73 Mark KI0I – K0I/m

Rig; IC-7300 350w from SS amp. DELL PC N1MM+ Logging, hamstix 20-40m  
Hustler 15-40-80m

## Illinois Bicentennial Challenge

### Take the Challenge and Celebrate 200 Years of Illinois Statehood

The Western Illinois ARC will sponsor a special operating event in 2018 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the admittance of Illinois to the Union in 1818. Join us on this special occasion to commemorate this important event in our Illinois State history. The WIARC will offer two award certificates during the Challenge special event period. Contacts made with Illinois stations during the event may be applied to either or both awards where permitted by rule. The two awards are the Illinois Challenge Worked All Counties Award and the Illinois Challenge IL200 Award.

The operating event will take place starting August 9, 2018 with the opening of the 2018 Illinois State Fair and will conclude on December 3, 2018 on the 200th anniversary of Illinois joining the union in 1818. Participating Illinois stations will be on the air multiple times from all 102 Illinois counties during the period using their own calls. Participating Illinois stations will be encouraged to sign /IL200 to indicate they are participating in the special event. Bonus Stations will include the WIARC club stations W9OAB and W9AWE, and the Four State Capital Special Event stations. Other Illinois club stations and many individual operators will also be on the air to provide Illinois QSO opportunities. Included in the award operating period will be the 2018 Illinois QSO Party which will take place on October 21. All QSOs may be applied to both awards where appropriate. Illinois stations may be worked once regardless of band, mode or



county for the IL200 Award. Illinois stations may be worked once per county regardless of band or mode for the Illinois Worked All Counties Award. OSOs with county line or county corner stations are permitted for credit for 2, 3 or 4 counties as indicated by the Illinois station for the Worked All Counties Award. Contacts for both awards may be made by any mode on any amateur band 160M through 2M. (Note: WARC band QSO's are not allowed for credit in The Illinois QSO Party on October 21.)

## **The Illinois Challenge Worked All Counties Award**

The first award certificate offered will be the the Illinois Challenge Worked All Counties Award available to any operator who makes at least one valid QSO with a station in each of the 102 Illinois counties during the award operating period. County line and county corner station QSOs are allowed for credit for the counties indicated by the Illinois operator. The award is band and mode insensitive. Each Illinois station may be worked in multiple counties.

## **The Illinois Challenge 200 Award**

The the Illinois Challenge 200 Award Certificate will be available to any operator providing evidence of QSOs with Illinois stations with an accumulated point value of 200 or more. The award is band and mode insensitive and only one QSO per Illinois station call sign is allowed.

WIARC club station W9AWE: 25 points

WIARC club station W9OAB: 25 points

Illinois State Capitals Special Event Stations K9K, W9V, K9S and W9I (Aug 9-19): 15 Points each

Any other Illinois station: 3 points each

## **Log Submissions**

Logs are to be submitted by email and only by using the forms linked below. Logs must be emailed to the WIARC by December 31, 2018. No paper log submissions or log files using other formats or forms submitted by means other than email will be accepted. The fillable PDF submission forms which may be downloaded below must be used for submitting log data and submitted only by email using the email button included in the form. Applicants are advised to print a copy of the completed form before emailing by clicking on the print button on the form. Your local printer will be automatically selected to print. Once printed submit the form by clicking on the email button. The form will be sent using your installed email client. NOTE: The completed log form cannot be saved to a local storage location thus the form should be filled only when all data is available to complete the application. Partially filled forms cannot be saved and retrieved later

Go here for forms:

<http://www.w9awe.org/challenge.html>

It is anticipated that Illinois stations planning to be active on the air for the award will post their planned activities on the Illinois QSO party reflector. Postings will take place during the entire Illinois Challenge Award period, not just for the ILQP date. For information on subscribing to the ILQP reflector, visit this page:

[www.w9awe.org/ILQP Reflector.html](http://www.w9awe.org/ILQP%20Reflector.html)

For further information or information, please contact Jim, N9JF at [n9jf@arrl.net](mailto:n9jf@arrl.net)

## Colorado QSO Party

Scarce activity this year with just one mobile out.

**W0ETT mobile** – 100 CW QSO

Have yet to sit down and enter the QSOs into Writelog electronically, since I used paper and pencil; I'll know how many mults worked after that. Heard only one Colorado station on: W0CCA, but couldn't get his attention. XYL drove and we make to drive a loop through Byers, Last Chance, Ft. Morgan, Denver, and back home activating 8 counties. Couldn't get 40m hamstick to load on phone band so kept to CW. CWOps and Alabama stations were loud on or near the COQP 20m call freq 14050; however, I was able to work a few of them and hope they got enough info for their test logs. Overall, I worked less than half the number of stations compared to past years.

COQP used to be fun but it needs to be reorganized.

73 Ken, W0ETT/m

IC7300 to 20m and 40m hamsticks on top of van

**N0AC Portable** in Jackson CO - 98 CW QSO

That's all we could take and it wasn't much but at least we got on the air.

Bill and Amanda, N0AC/0

At the foot of the Rocky Mountains, 7100 foot elevation

**N6MU - fixed** - CA 25 CW 14 mults

On CW I worked all of eight CO stations, seven fixed and one mobile. Those who chose to play were: N0AC, K0GUZ, W0ETT/m, K0TER, W0CCA, AF0S, K0FX and KK0ECT. I never heard another CO station the last eight hours of the Party. Where was everybody?

Thank goodness for Ken, W0ETT/m, who I worked 14 times. I had more Qs with him than all the rest combined. Sad. 73...

John, N6MU

**WB8WKQ - fixed - MI** 9 CW 21 SSB QSO

What an incredibly enormous waste of time. Last year, 90 Q's. This year, 30. Thank God the Alabama QSO party (and other contests) were going on simultaneously, or I would have passed out due to boredom. Apparently PPRAA must have been "too high" to inform CO stations that this Saturday was their QSO party. As I said in my soapbox, put a fork in this contest, it's done (or maybe in their vernacular "overdone"). Please find a wasted bum sleeping in the streets of Denver, and turn over the QSO party responsibilities to him. I'm sure he could entice more participation.

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Comment de N4CD - Labor Day weekend is probably not the ideal time to get folks to participate in QSO Parties.....but AL turned out pretty good. Even fixed stations were hard to find this year.

## Park on the Air – KK1TLS

De TEAM KK1TLS. Thanks to all chasers today who made contacts and who tried a 3637. Today's story starts out great but takes a bit of a dive after we took a break. We haven't been doing parks long; this is the start of our 6th month. We are still learning and everyone has been so helpful and kind. It has become the highlight once or twice a week to activate parks up and down the West Coast of Florida and some East Coast. If health was better, we would branch out further.

Today we logged a record (for us) of 102 QSO's on 20M in 2 ½ hours. This was all on the SOTABeam III Inverted V. It has been doing much better now that I have learned how to tune it properly. The help from a couple of you chasers about XIT and Speech Processor has helped a great deal also. THANKS for all the Q's today.

After the 102 Q's, we decided to take a break (Noon), visit the room, and switch the SOTA to 40M. I had already eaten a quick sandwich (took from 11 AM to 12 PM to eat it), and changed the clips on the SOTA for 40M. I tried and tried to make a contact but absolutely nothing. Feeling defeated, we decided to pack up and move to another 2 or 3 parks down the road on 20M in the Subaru with the hamstick on the TriMag mount (another chaser suggestion that works fantastic). We rode about 6 miles to another park, fired up the radio on the 20M stick and it would not tune. After about 30 minutes of nothing and a big storm coming closer, we chose to surrender to the RF gods and quit. I could not get the stick tuned even on the front mobile mount either. Oh, and the laptop died and we had no cell service!



Well, here's where it gets interesting.... When I had eaten my sandwich, I also took a few too many "Stupid Pills" I keep in case I'm feeling too smart!!!! After a record 102 Q's I figured I needed them. When we got home, I checked the SOTA and found I had one side clipped for 30M and one side for 40M. That accounted for "Stupid Pill" #1. I got out my meter to trace the problem with the 20M stick. After 30 minutes, the other "Stupid Pill" wore off and I looked at the stick and realized it was a 75M hamstick not 20M. No more "Stupid Pills" for me..... (Disclaimer... "Stupid Pills" are fictitious)! Anyway, it was a great day Thanks to all the chasers! Hope to hear you Wednesday at Honeymoon Island Beach SP for our 12th trip. Time to get groceries again! Also, an East Florida Coast trip is planned for a couple unactivated parks in a couple weeks!

## Tennessee QSO Party

**W4NZ mobile** 790 CW qso

This was the operation that almost did not happen. Until Thursday afternoon I had no crew. Then I got a message from 2 of my TN Valley DX Assn friends, Paul WA4AA and

Gary K4VIG volunteering to make the mobile run with me. We were in business! Gary had done this before but it was something entirely new for Paul. He decided to be strictly a driver/navigator leaving the radio to Gary and me. I was able to get the mobile ready and checked out by midday Saturday. Our setup consisted of an Icom 756proIII, a Lenovo laptop, WinKeyer and two Hustler mobile antennas mounted on the roof of a 2016 Dodge Durango suv. Initially the two antennas were for 40 and 20m. Around sundown we replaced the 20m antenna with one for 80m.

In each county we tried to spend time on both available bands. 20m was quite disappointing but did produce some good multipliers like DL3DXX and KL7SB. As usual, 40m was the money band. We were hit by Murphy right at the start. A technical snafu (RFI induced we suspect) caused us to be almost deaf to all but a few signals. It took about two counties to realize this and correct the problem. Apologies to everyone for being such an alligator. Our route covered 444 miles taking us through 20 counties.

I've always said that mobiles have the most fun in these QSO parties and this was no exception. Thanks to the many people who called us again and again from county to county. Good to work many of the NCCC NS Sprint gang. Thanks to many of the CWOPS who worked us, too.

Until next year,

73, Ted W4NZ for Gary K4VIG and Paul WA4AA

### **N4ZZ mobile 1091 CW QSO (AD4EB/N4ZZ ops)**

This was our 7th time operating mobile in the TNQP, and fortunately everything went off without a hitch. Our score was down about 10 percent from our previous running back in 2015. We did not have much rate on 20m, but spent quite a bit of time there to get mults and pass out counties to those that could hear us. Stations on both 40 and 80m were very loud, we were pleasantly surprised how much better propagation was compared to the previous couple of days. 24 counties in route

Congratulations go to N8II and K4BYN who worked us 24 times.

Congratulations to Dietmar DL3DXX for working us 9 times, we have learned to always expect his call in these contests.

We appreciated everyone who worked us in this contest. Thanks for your patience as we sometimes struggled a bit to get your callsigns entered correctly as we were bouncing down the road. It is certainly more difficult operating in the back of a van in motion than at home. Our trusted driver/navigator was out of town for this one, she was missed but we managed to make it home safely.

73 - Jim (AD4EB), Don (N4ZZ)

**K4AMC - fixed - TN - 135 CW QSO**

Bad condx with high noise. Had fun anyway.

**K8MR - fixed - OH 51 CW 42 counties**

I came late to the party after a weekend out of town, but it was a good party while I was there. FB mobiles, OK fixed stations. As always, good to work my friends and all who chase me when I'm out on the road.

73 - Jim K8MR

**K4BAI- fixed - GA 62 CW 54 counties**

Band conditions on 40 from GA to TN were the worst I have ever heard in a TQP. All TN signals were usually weak. 80M was quite good, but there was lot of QRN. Great job by the mobiles N4ZZ, W4NZ, K1GU, and W9WI. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI.

**WB8WKD - fixed - MI - 102 CW 41 counties**

Does TN know how to throw a QSO party or what? Excellent job and hats off to the TN folks who put this great contest on. My score was extremely close to last years, with maybe a few points more, which is a huge surprise. My surprise was because last year, I had a lot of Q's and mults on both 20M and a few on 160M. This year, only 1 Q on 160

and 3 on 20M (no short skip this year). So to have a comparable score to last year, was just fantastic. 40M was obviously the money band for me, with over a 100 Q's. The mobiles were incredible, N4ZZ, K1GU, W4NZ, WA5POK! Thanks guys! It was a pretty noisy QSO party. I was getting frustrated that ops couldn't copy my call, until I listened and heard the TN ops were having troubles with everyone's call, not just my crappy call. I think noise must have kept everyone off of 160, whereas I only worked W4RTN on 160M for 4 bands! This was a very fun contest and really well done. Thanks all for the Q's.

### **N8II - fixed WV 119 CW 65 SSB 98 counties worked**

It was not all roses, but I decided to stick with it since there were 4 CW mobiles active vs. probably 2 last year. Don, N4ZZ was "on the road again"; many thanks! I did a pretty good job catching what was there; the 20M Q's were all during about a 12 minute sporadic E opening from 1848-1900Z except for K4TCG. Only W4RTN was not near the noise. I did S&P several sweeps on 40 and 75M. The 75M activity was disappointing, but once it was past sunset, 75/80/160 were fairly noisy (better than Saturday!). However, many more could have been worked if active. 80 was not particularly good, the little gun were fairly weak. W4NZ and K1GU mobiles had good signals on 80 most of the time. 40 was the bread and butter band, a decent turnout from casual ops on 40 phone. But, despite being a 640 mile drive from Nashville, the skip zone went extremely long from 2130-0030Z and from at least Nashville east, no one was above a whisper from TN. Only N4ZZ/M of the 4 active was workable. About the only positive was this fit in well into the dinner hour, not worth struggling to work 5-10 Q's an hour. I went to 80 first at 23Z and there were a few there. Activity on 75/80 peaked around 2400-0130Z. 40 was better than ever around 01Z, but activity had gone down to 80.

Many thanks to the Ted W4NZ and and Don, N4ZZ and their mobile teams for many counties. W4NZ had some kind of RX problem the first 2-3 counties, but was easy to work after that. Thanks also to mobiles Doug, W9WI and Ned, K1GU for many Q's and mults at least while I could hear you. Thanks to the team at K4RO for making K4TCG available on all usable bands. And thanks also to all who made the TNQP pretty active under trying conditions. Without the fade out on 40, over 100 mults would have been easy.

73, Jeff



**WN4AFP - fixed - SC** 48 CW 5 SSB 41 counties

Thank you mobile ops for all the multipliers ... K1GU, W9WI, W4NZ and N4ZZ.

73s Dave

**K7JOE mobile** - 15 SSB qso

40M mobile effort. Lots of fun. Lousy propagation - band was quite long for mid day / afternoon.

## Reader Feedback

It's a small world. Letter received from Aubrey, W7OLY:

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Bob,

I was born and raised in Dickson, TN and from the time I was 16 until my sophomore year in college I was a lifeguard at Montgomery Bell State Park.

It was great to read about your visit and I'm very sorry that I didn't work you there.

Thanks!

Aubrey W7OLY  
CWops #1637  
MARAC Treasurer

# Parks on the Air

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**KD8DEU:** Recap of today's KFF-3313 activation of Holly Recreation Area, Oakland county, MI EN82ft:

Finished the qualifying numbers I needed. :)

Had 22 qso's including 2 P2P's, 3 EU's and 2 Canada's. Couldn't believe my Kx2 defaulted to 5 watts in the middle of my operations . . . moved it under the picnic table on my lunch cooler lid with the blue ice underneath it and then was able to go back to 10-12watts for the rest of the Q's. Thanks for spotting me! In short: last week had 23 qsos there and today 22 qsos so that's 45.





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## **N2CX Mid-West Meandering Aug 31**

The 31st saw two activations in the Columbus, OH area.

First was Madison Lake SP, KFF-1973. It is a small park out in the countryside. It's quite convenient to locals who can walk across their lawns and right into the park. This convenience is why several of them have watercraft in their side yards. There is also a beach though swimming seems to be discouraged by several warning signs about algae and bacteria contaminated water. It is set up nicely for picnicking and even has a fire ring for visitors to use for a peaceful evening lakeside Kumbaya session. Standing under a shady tree and watching a boater fishing made me think of a relaxing mental image I often conjure up to unwind the old brain.



Activating was OK, though somewhat hampered by QSB forcing the need to ask for repeats. 40M was by far best though 20M was weak but long with contacts to VE6, W7 and W6 land. Surprisingly 30M also yielded coast to coast contacts. Not bad for a week day.

In closer to the city was Alum Creek SP, KFF-1933. It's a huge reservoir with a several mile hiking and biking trail around it and a very large parking area. Boaters have access to a marina and, in spite of being there on weekday, we saw plenty of pleasure craft afloat. Likewise the long beach was in use by both sun and water bathers. If I lived in the area I'd certainly spend some time there.

As lackluster as the earlier activation proved, the one here was anything but. 40M exploded with a steady stream of contacts from the get-go so my usual 20 minutes per band practice went by the wayside. 20M was initially fairly weak with only a few West coast contacts. Then 30 picked up the slack with a plethora of coast to coast Q's. Things slowed down as I approached the desired 44 Q total so KG5CIK suggested a return to 20M. He put me over the hump, then the seemingly quiet band gave up another half dozen Q's ranging from Italy to CA and VE7 land. All in all a very satisfying day!

## Alabama QSO Party

**K4BAI mobile** 170 CW

Thanks to Jeff, KU8E, for coming down last weekend and setting up the new mobile rig and antennas for this weekend. Old fashioned operation. No computer. No memory keyer. All sending with paddle and logging on paper entered into computer on Sunday. Lot of driving and a little operating while stopped. Tried to cover as many as possible the counties in SW Ala listed on the AQP website as needed. Very frustrating while driving hearing station I couldn't call and work. Many thanks for all QSOs. Any QSLs and/or MRCs go to John Laney, K4BAI, PO Box 421, Columbus, GA 31902. Moving the date to conflict with part of the CWOpen contest didn't work out well. I did work six CWOpen contestants and exchanged info for both contests. Band conditions on 40 and

80 were pretty good. 20M was awful. Weather was fair, with some light rain. I saw only one lightning flash. Nice to work DL3DXX two times on 40M.

73, John, K4BAI.

TS590SB, 100W, Hustler mobile antennas (+ tophat on 20) mag mounts on my 1997 Buick LeSabre.

### **KN4Y - mobile - 289 CW qso**

Operated mobile CW, lot of CW signals from the CWop open contest. Moved my frequency up during open contest. Great weather. Condition not great on 20 meters, did a lot of calling and no logging. Mostly on 40 meters, tried 80 meters, not much activity. Ran 15 Alabama counties. Had some great food.

### **K4MMW mobile - 108 SSB QSO**

This was my first time to go mobile in the Alabama QSO Party. It was fun. Wish the bands were better and that I had planned my driving time verses operating time better. I was a single operator, drove, set-up, operate, tear-down, drive again.

Equipment: Radio - Elecraft K3; Antenna - Tarheel A200, w 6 ft whip; Amp – Collins 30L1; generator – Honda 2Kwatt; Tuner – Palstar AT2K. I estimate about 600 watts peak out of the amplifier on SSB.

I was on the road about 14 hours. I estimate about 8 hours of active radio time. N1NM logging software said I started late, finished early and logged 253 minutes radio time, that is about 4 hours and 13 minutes.

I chose church parking lots for my operating locations. I was operating in one in Fife county when it got dark. I mean really dark. There were NO lights out there, just me, the glow of the computer and my head lamp. (And mosquitoes.) I was operating on 40 meters when the activity slowed and I decided to move to Walker county. It was no problem finding a place to operate in the daylight but finding a place to operate in the dark in a rural area is challenging. I did not find a spot in Walker county. I'm sure there were some places to stop but this was my first time there and I did not see them. This is a lesson learned for next year. Find places to operate after dark BEFORE you go. I

knew I could operate at the state rest stop in Cullman county just off I 65. However; my timing was off and I arrived there after 10:00 PM. The party was over.

Next year is another story. I'll see how it goes then. I have great appreciation for the mobile operators. This is not an easy task. It takes planning and execution to successfully operate mobile. It was a fun trip and adventure. If you have never operated a mobile station perhaps you should consider it. It is a unique experience operating outside, quite different from your comfortable ham shack. Hope to see you on the road. Thanks for reading.

Warren K4MMW.

**WA1FCN/4 in AL** 20 CW qso

This years propagation was about the worst I can ever remember. It took a lot of effort to get the 220 CW Q's! Last year with out any effort I had over 300 Q's. Oh well I hope some of ya enjoyed the event.

73 Bob WA1FCN

**K0AP -fixed - KS** 35 CW 28 counties

Nice job from the mobiles... had good time chasing KN4Y, K4ZGB and K4BAI across multiple counties. All 3 of them are excellent CW operators.

Missed many counties due to Saturday errands but nevertheless, scored about a dozen brand new Alabama counties for my USA-CA. Thank you for the Qso's!

73 Dragan K0AP

**WN4AFP - SC** - 28 cw

I worked the ALQP while working the CWOpen... a bit challenging. Conditions between my house and the beautiful state of Alabama were very bad. I could barely hear the AL stations all day on 40m and almost zero on 20m. I was away from shack until 0245z when I tuned to 80m and the AL stations were booming into Greenville, SC. I would like shout out a special thanks to K4BAI/m for running around the state of Alabama and

giving me 8 AL multipliers and to KN4Y/m for a few new ones. Between 2000z and 0000z the CW was completely filled with CWO and a RTTY contest which made it very difficult to work the ALQP on cw. Looking forward to the next one.

73s Dave WN4AFP

**WB8WKQ - fixed MI** 54 CW 14 ssb

Pretty fun contest. I was interested in the CO QP, but quickly saw that there was no one on from CO. So turned my attention to the Alabama QSO party. I had multiple storms come through, so unplugged twice. But there was some decent action in this QP and the mobiles made it pretty fun. Thanks for all the Q's.

**AB4B - fixed in AL** 547 SSB QSO

Conditions, what conditions? We all experienced what the "bottom of the cycle" is like through the 12 hours of this event. Thanks to the op's who endured and overcame the QSB and QRN to get into my log .

Tim , AB4B

## IOWA QSO PARTY

Sparse activity this year. It all depends on whether mobiles show up or not!

**KB0LF/mobile** 64 CW QSO

Got to 8 counties in the SW corner of the state. Sorry, my cell phone failed me and was not able to spot. Thanks to all for the many QSOs

**K4BAI - fixed - GA** - 8 CW 4 SSB 12 counties

Worked every IA station I could find. Had hoped to work one or both of the two Iowa

counties that I need all time, Audubon and Shelby, but neither was heard. These two are adjoining counties. If anyone has any suggestions as to how I could pick up one or both of these counties, please e-mail me. Thanks and 73, John, K4BAI

**KN4Y – fixed – FL 10 CW 7 counties**

Up sand down the band and worked the far and few between CW stations as heard. Not enough QSO's to send in a log, Dang

## WWFF/WWFF-KFF vs “POTA”

It seems that in any organization, there is always a group of 'dissidents' who aren't satisfied and want to go off on their own path and 'create' essentially a duplicate of what already exists. Pick your topic. Anything from MARAC 'county hunter net' on 14.336, which was a spin off of another net down the band, or the recent one (where folks moved to 14.328) or the WWFF program.

The WWFF Program was started in Europe more than five years ago – long before the ARRL created National Parks on the Air – NPOTA- for the calendar year 2016. This was a wildly successful ARRL program, but came to a screeching end on Dec 31, 2016. That left a lot of US folks scratching their heads wondering what next. So...a few set off to get the US parks into the existing WWFF system so those suffering hang-overs from lack of NPOTA would have something new to try. Over 350, including most, but not all, of the NPOTA units were uploaded to the WWFF list of entities you could work. Not long after, they added in State Parks running the total up to over 3,000 when you threw in a bunch of State and National Wildlife Areas, etc. You had 4,400 parks in the new system.

NPOTA had rules such that you would get credit for an activation with just 10 QSOs. NPOTA tracked only 'activations' for the leader board, but also included unique parks run. The glory went to the folks with most activations. You could run the same park once you left it for 24 hours again for credit. Hit it every 2 days for a month, and you'd



get 15 activations. Do that for a year, you'd have 100. If it was a multi-way entity, of 2 or 3 units ( a two-fer or three-fer) , you'd get 30 or 45 'activations' a month. That led some to hit many parks in a day, making 10-12 QSOs then moving on to the next. Those that lived in the DC area could hit easily 6-10 parks a day, One case was the National Mall and each monument a separate entity like the Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington, Vietnam, WW2, etc, and you had 'multiples' where you could run several entities at a time around DC. Hit a few 'two-fers' and 'three-fers' and you'd rack up 'activations' by the boatload.

Out west, at one fort, four different National trails (like the Oregon, California, Santa Fe, Mormon) converged and you could give out all five at the same time with one contact. Credit for five for each contact. Of course, it was hundreds of miles to get to them and between them! So no one ran them week after week – just usually once.

Now to 2018

Multiples are not true in WWFF/KFF and POTA-K program. One park at a time, and no trails to start in the system. For WWFF, each park has to be in one state – and only one state. So trails that crossed 10 states like the Appalachian trail were a real problem – you couldn't just enter one 'coordinate' for it. The trails were the most popular sites run in NPOTA.

For the QRP type activators who went out with 5 or 10w and a shorty vertical or end fed wire, it's not easy getting more than a dozen or two QSOs. If you put up a decent antenna, you could rack up a few dozen typically. Exceptional QRP operators (using mostly cw) could rack up 100 or more at times when conditions were better. Now it's more of a challenge. Folks go out and fail to reach 10 these days. However, many took advantage of the requirement of only 10 for an activation for NPOTA. The WWFF required 44 was too many for the low power QRP folks

Most of the folks who wanted to keep activating and chasing in early 2017 then got on board the World Wide WWFF program that had existing primarily in Europe – and a few other countries. Within a few months, it was expanded in 2017 to include most of the entities (503) that were in the NPOTA program, but excluded the multi- state ones including 'trails', and also excluding things like 'associated areas' (AA's) that were not 'federal or state run'. Then they added in State Parks and many National Wildlife Areas giving you 4,400 plus to go activate.

At this point, the majority of folks participating in the WWFF program were in Europe. The Europeans were not interested in creating tons of 'new awards' for the US, just

maintaining those they had. They weren't interested in dropping the number of contacts down to 10. Nor were they interested in 'activations' but only “references”. You get credit for activating a park once. You'd get credit for running the park after making a total of 44Q – in one or several visits. Once you ran a park, that was it. No more credit for revisiting that park if you had achieved 44 the first time. Most WWFF awards started at 44 and went up in multiples, too..

Well, that led to some creating the US Awards for WWFF-KFF. This would work in conjunction with WWFF using it's database. You could get awards in multiples of 10 – for working or activating parks. You could fill up your wall with colorful certificates.

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In addition, the WWFF rules specify that only 200 'new entities' per country per year can be added to the WWFF database system. In the US, there were tons of entities such as wildlife refuges, state and national forests, etc, that could be added and some were impatient to get them added QUICKLY. Well, heck, there were 4000 set up initially – over the first year – and I'm not sure that we needed to be adding 500 a year for a while, but some were upset. It's up to over 4500 plus now for WWFF/KFF.

In addition, most of the WWFF Awards were based upon multiples of 44 – with the first level at 44, then multiples of that like 440. Not so easy to start earning awards.

The US group – WWFF-KFF has a Facebook web page and awards page.

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Then we have another big split. For a while, the WWFF-KFF group used the WWFF database, and would issue US based awards. That didn't satisfy some who liked the old NPOTA rules better. Plus, no limits on 'new stuff' and credits for activations and a leader board based upon that. The spin off group could add thousands more if they wanted to in 'their system' and they did – over 5500 entities in their system – starting with just K-.

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BTW, that always griped me about NPOTA that some folks at the top of the leader board simply ran the same nearby parks over and over again – and got to the top that way – while others put out 2 or 3 times as many parks, zipping all over the country, driving

tens of thousands of miles, but didn't get to the top of the leader board. Oh well.

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So.....what a handful of people decided to do was to set up a duplicate database, create their own list of entities now extending far beyond the initial 4500 or so, and create their own specialized additional awards. In addition, a full activation occurs only with 10 QSOs and you get credit for repeat activations. Their leader board is on 'activation's, so again the people who run the same parks over and over again go to the top. Some RV types are on every day from a park – and of course, get credits for 'activation' each day if they make only 10Q. Gary, N5PHT, spends 2/3rds the year in his RV. With NPOTA, you had to be 'out of the park' for 24 hours to be able to re-run it.(meaning you could only run it every other day at best).

Another Facebook Page was set up and set of award rules – in increments of 10.

Now you have two Facebook Pages – one for WWFF-KFF, and one for 'Parks on the Air' K- . Most of the seasoned mobile type operators, including Kraig, KA2LHO, Rick, AI5P, Bob, KA9JAC, and N4CD, are firmly in the WWFF/WWFF-KFF camp. We upload our files to WWFF. (Some do to the POTA group as well. - I did a large dump of over 380 files to POTA). Might as well give them something to chew on.

However, a lot of the QRP guys, failing most times to make 44 consistently, with some going back several times to get to 44, are in the Parks on the Air group. Two parallel award systems. The “POTA-K” folks have created a whole raft of duplicate awards – plus more - so many it's getting to the point of being silly. Instead of parks designated by KFF-xxxx, they simply use K-xxxx.

Here's the basic awards for both WWFF-KFF and 'Parks on the Air' - and then it goes nuts with all sorts of other awards you can hang on your wall. Dozens of them if you like paper.

### **Activators**

Bronze Award: work from 10 different reference areas.

Silver Award: work from 20 different reference areas.

Gold Award: work from 30 different reference areas.

Platinum Award: work from 40 different reference areas.

Diamond Award: work from 50 different reference areas.

Sapphire Award: work from 75 different reference areas.

## Hunters

Bronze Award: work 10 different reference areas.

Silver Award: work 20 different reference areas.

Gold Award: work 30 different reference areas.

Platinum Award: work 40 different reference areas.

Diamond Award: work 50 different reference areas.

Sapphire Award: work 75 different reference areas.

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Well, it doesn't take much for a county hunter to get to 10 or 20 or 30 different parks – either chasing or activating. There are about 100 in TX and I've been to all but 3 so far. Oops,4..they added a new one this year.....so the top category is...well, not challenging enough. Plus, of course, you only need 10 QSOs for Parks on the Air. Just about any day you can make 10 County Hunter Contacts.

Neil, K7SEN has well over 1,000 parks worked. Bob, N8KIE, has over 440. N8II over 400. K5GE over 370 worked. On the activator side, N4CD has put out over 500 parks now – activated (with 44Q) – and 565 'run'. AI5P over 50. N9JF is at 48 activated, over 100 run. AB4WL has activated 37 out of 101 run.

Here are the other dozens of Parks on the Air Awards

<https://parksontheair.com/pota-awards/#standard-awards>

Let's see...you get awards for running multiple parks in a day. Or running parks after hours night shift (0000z to 1200z). And similar. Trivial awards in many cases that don't encourage folks to really 'put out the park' but get 10 quickie QSOs, then leave.

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Hitting the same half dozen parks over and over again – doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me either – gathering a dozen or two contacts (often the same people – but in Parks on the Air, you get credit for another 'activation' and move up the 'top operators' list. Unlike NPOTA, for Parks on the Air, you can run the park every day – you don't even have to leave it! Camp out for a week, get credit for 7 activations in that week!

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In WWFF, once you've activated a park – that's it. No more credit for another 'activation' or the same park run again. Your QSO count will rise, but that's all. You can go back several times to reach the 44 number if you want if you didn't make 44 the first time. Or run the park once a year for the yearly stats (QSO count) of who is doing what that year.

So for those near a bunch of Parks – they can hit them every weekend and get credit for more activations in Parks on the Air. Now, I'm for each park being on the air a couple times a year but some overdo it running the same park a couple times a week – maybe on the way home from work – month after month to run up their activation total seems like 'gaming the system'.. That sort of discourages those who have to drive 30-60 miles to their nearby parks from even wanting to play in the game! Why bother? You can't win.

On the other hand, the WWFF awards are based mostly on levels of 44 and require – 44 QSOs or more per park to qualify as an activator. (Just one as a chaser). It's not so easy to qualify for higher level awards. Then again, what is Worked All States if you start at an award level of 10, or DXCC when you get the first award at 10 countries? Or if you are traveling to a foreign place, you get credit for 'activation' each day you are there? Or camp out there for a week?

So, I guess the QRP folks and those who set up and run SSB from parks like the Parks on the Air Program – while most of the seasoned operators play only in the WWFF program. Some are in both. I guess I'll upload logs to both, but I don't need more paper to hang on the wall, so I'll just not participate in POTA awards, just WWFF.

To complicate things, the 'POTA' folks use a numbering system starting only with 'K' such as K4423, while the WWFF folks use KFF-4423. The number of parks for POTA is several hundred higher. Well, now, almost 1000 higher. (Note: All parks are in counties – so work 'em no matter what!). Up to 4650, most of the numbers correlate so K-4423 is the same as KFF-4423. Above that, roughly 4650...well, they aren't in both systems.

As a chaser, all you have to do is work the park and sit back. The activator will upload their log and you'll get credit for having worked the park. Either system. Or both if the activator uploads to both.

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Well, that's my 2c on the subject. Right now, it seems that POTA is run by just a few

folks – what happens when they lose interest? Hmm..... It's not unusual for the early enthusiasm to fade away as the drudgery of maintaining things over the years goes on and on and on. Year after year.

So far, WWFF has a good group of Europeans running things at their end, and many in the US doing the uploading to the database. There's a good group in the US keeping things running here.

I think the Parks on the Air group is attracting a bunch of new folks – who struggle to make 10 QSOs. If you run QRP with a 'Super Whip' (shorty short base loaded vertical) or a small Mag Loop, especially on 40M, you'll really struggle. Even an end fed wire or a Buddi-Pole shorty dipole and 10w on SSB is real tough – and 20M isn't great these days for SSB most of the time – which leaves you on 40M and trying to find a frequency or be within range of others.

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So...for now.....two web sites...two lists of entities....two leader boards....two different sets of requirements.....

You never know what the future will bring. I'm just having fun. Different strokes for different folks. So if you see spots for KFF-XXXx or for K-XXXx you'll know the reasons why the difference.

## New Jersey QSO Party

A fair number of fixed stations were on the air. Not many comments

from 3830 scores website:

K2RET in Ocean NJ reported 633 SSB QSOs

N2MM in Burlington reported 209 CW 1121 SSB QSO

K4BAI – fixed – GA reported 31 CW – 18 SSB with 15 counties worked

WB8WKQ – fixed - MI - 27 CW 24 SSB 16 counties worked

“Contest was fun, a bit on the slow side. I didn't hear any mobiles, hence getting a clean sweep of counties was tough. I did get two more this year than last. Only two CW Q's on 20, because of no short skip. Plus, when the Salmon Run folks came in, you basically had to switch bands. A lot of QSO parties going on this weekend, NJ, NH, WA (Salmon Run), IA and even a College QSO party. Thanks for all the Q's.”

## New Sunspot Cycle – Not Yet

The Royal Observatory of Belgium's Solar-Terrestrial Centre of Excellence (STCE) has asserted that the reverse-polarity sunspot group 2720 observed in late August belongs to the current solar cycle -- cycle 24 -- and does not represent the start of cycle 25.

"Because of its reversed polarity, some websites claimed sunspot group 2720 was possibly one of the first groups of new Solar Cycle 25," the Centre said. "This is simply not true, in view of its very low 8° latitude. The next Solar Cycle 25 sunspot group should have both reversed magnetic polarity and much higher heliographic latitude, typically 20° to 40° from the equator. Only two tiny, short-lived numbered sunspot groups are currently assigned to new Solar Cycle 25, sunspot group 2620 in December 2016 and 2694 in January 2018."

STCE said that while both of those small sunspots have been assigned to cycle 25, some uncertainty exists as to just which sunspot cycle they actually belong to. STCE said some additional sunspot groups that belong to cycle 25 were so tiny and short-lived that they were not assigned a sunspot number. "During each solar cycle, about 3% of all active regions have reversed polarity but do not belong to the previous or next solar cycle," the Centre said. "With 2,000 to 3,000 sunspot groups per solar cycle, this means that every solar cycle has a few dozen reverse-polarity sunspots that belong to the ongoing sunspot cycle despite their reverse polarity."

After examining magnetograms of the sun's surface, well-known Amateur Radio solar observer and propagation authority Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, agreed that AR2720 is reversed in polarity from other sunspots in the northern solar hemisphere. What confuses the issue, he said, is its low latitude, as a cycle 25 sunspot area should be at a much higher latitude.

The same weekend of sunspot group 2720, a radio blackout lasting about a day took place, affecting the HF amateur bands as well as GPS systems. Solar watcher Tamitha Skov, in her YouTube report, called the G3-level geomagnetic storm "one of the top five storms of the solar cycle."

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article above courtesy ARRL Weekly Newsletter, ARRL, Inc, Newington CT 06111

## On the Road with N4CD

Fall is arriving – the sun isn't up till 6:45 am now – and it's a bit cooler – only highs near 90 instead of 100F. Plus the rain is falling once again – it disappears for the summer here in TX.

The N4CD mobile hadn't gone anywhere for a while. We had days of storms, then a let up.....where I could run a bunch of errands like getting the oil changed in the mobile – and caught up on all the logging including digging out some old files for the Parks on the Air database – like 350 of them – that had to be typed in again. That took a few days.

Come the weekend...and it's another rainy one. Friday wasn't too bad – on and off rain.....and Saturday started out with no rain as I headed out to breakfast with the Plano Radio Klub group – 7am at Poor Richards here in town. On the way home, it rained again and kept raining for two hours. Then a break – and I decided to put the antennas on the car and head 35 minutes to the local Park – Spring Creek Forest Preserve - KFF-4423 – and see what I could work

This was the weekend of the Ohio State Parks on the Air. Well, this way it was a big flop. Caught all of one park – LGN – Lake Logan State Park in Hocking County OH – on 20m SSB. This is an SSB only event and propagation wasn't too great and the



Worked All Europe contest was clobbering much of the band. In addition, the Route 66 On the Air Annual Event was underway so 20M SSB had a lot of things going on in addition to the usual nets on Saturdays. Saw other parks spotted but they were under other stations here making copy impossible.

I caught a few of the Route 66 stations – W6T, W6G, W6P, W6E – out of the 20 or so that should be on the air.

Worked half a dozen parks including W3VV, N2CX, N4EE, W8MSC and KK1TLS. Six DX stations including park hunters OH6RP, OK1IWS, OK5MM, IK0MHR, as well as OZ5E and I2VXJ in the WAE contest, the USS Hornet and the Indianapolis Speedway Station W9IMS that shows up this time of year year after year.

I watched it rain for several hours then decided to head home – not much happening as 20M wasn't especially good (SFI was 67), 40M was dead for me – and lots of static and thunderstorm QRN, and 30M was pretty empty. So was my stomach. Only county hunter caught out and about was K4YT up in NY state. 35 QSO – had already run this many times before so that worked out fine.

## N2CX – Fort Delaware

Sept 8

Back to the First State for some “fortified” activations. QRP and Loop Antenna for this trip. New Castle County, DE.

We took the ferry over to Fort Delaware SP, K-1736 on Pea Patch Island in the middle of - what else - the Delaware River. It has been activated exactly once by K0BAK with only 26 Q's. The ferry stops service soon so this might be the last chance until Spring.



Isolated from the mainland they have recently installed a solar power system to run their displays and video display equipment. Part of the island is also a waterfowl refuge.

Not terribly convenient for an activation, but I set up in a constant drizzle in a picnic grove with my W4OP loop and KX3. The loop's performance was quite impressive, even on 40 meters. Though signal reports were on the low side, the site's rarity helped encourage hunters to chime in. Understandably 20m was best, even impressing VE6UX with a usable signal, several EU stations were logged and a couple of P2P's were logged. 30 rounded things out before the water-logged operator had to quit! The site had been done once before by K0BAK whose nerd-wagon tallied 28 contacts, while my loop managed 29. Of course Pete did three activations that day!

A docent had noticed this weird guy huddled at a picnic table fiddling with some obscure gear and an odd structure on a tripod and was curious about what he was doing. When told of the park ham radio operation he asked if it had been successful. When told that contact had been made all the way across the continent and the Atlantic he was so impressed that he told a fellow worker and a Ranger about it in glowing terms. Of course he probably privately thought it a screwy thing to do...



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from the web:

In 1794, the French military engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant was surveying for defensive sites. He identified an island - locally known as Pea Patch Island. The Delaware state legislature passed an act in May 1813 ceding the island to the United States government.

War of 1812

During the War of 1812, efforts were made to fortify Pea Patch Island. During this time a seawall and dykes were built around the island. There is no known evidence that any progress was made on the actual fortification by war's end.

Construction of a star fort on Pea Patch island began sometime before Dec. 8, 1817.

The star fort was designed by army engineer Joseph G. Totten and construction was supervised by Capt. Samuel Babcock.

## 1831 Fire

On Feb. 8, 1831, a fire destroyed much of the work. In 1833, Fort Delaware was torn down to make room for a new fortification. According to official records, the rubble from the star fort served to re-enforce the seawall around the island. The sandstone remnants can still be seen today.

## Polygonal Fort

Captain Delafield designed the second version of Fort Delaware "as a huge bastioned polygonal form to be built in masonry." Due to a claim by one person who insisted he had 'owned the island' delayed the construction was delayed for decades. The US Government finally won out again.

## Pentagon Shape Fort

The present Fort Delaware was erected mainly between 1848 and 1860, becoming the largest third-system fortification completed in the United States at the time.

## Foundation

Construction of a deep foundation was necessary since the island's soils were of a "compressible mud" often forty feet deep. In 1849, Sander's crews began using steam-powered drivers to place long piles (similar to modern telephone poles) in excavated areas to provide adequate support. In 1850, pile driving was complete; crews had driven 4,911 piles.

The fort is primarily composed of gneiss, granite, brick and cement.

In 1861, before the war started, Capt. Augustus A. Gibson took command of the fort and a small garrison of only 20 regular army soldiers. Construction languished until the end of the Civil War; redirected focus was centered on mounting cannon inside the fort. In 1861, 20 columbiad guns were received and work to mount these guns quickly began. By 1862, another 17 guns were delivered here. By 1866, approximately 156 guns, were mounted in total, filling the fort's casemates and ramparts to capacity.

During the Civil War, Fort Delaware went from protector to prison; a prisoner-of-war camp was established to house captured Confederates, convicted federal soldiers, local political prisoners as well as privateers. During the war, a total of about a dozen generals were held within the fort as prisoners-of-war.

In 1862 and 1863, two separate phases of construction took place, building "barracks for enlisted prisoners of war" that was known as the "bull pen,". Most of the Confederates captured at Gettysburg were imprisoned here. These barracks were common wooden sheds, affording accommodation for about ten thousand persons

By August 1863, there were more than 11,000 prisoners on the island; by war's end, it had held almost 33,000 men.

After the Civil War, the fort was operated by a small garrison of the 4th U.S. Artillery. In the early 1870s, plans were made to modify the five bastions to support 15-inch Rodmans.

In October 1878, a massive hurricane struck the area causing considerable damage to structures outside the fort. The majority of buildings on the south side of the island were destroyed.

On August 3, 1885, a tornado struck the island destroying the post-war hospital and caused considerable damage to other structures.

During the late 1890s, new gun batteries were constructed at Fort Delaware. These batteries were part of a program initiated by the Endicott Board, a group headed by the Secretary of War, William C. Endicott. Instead of many guns concentrated in a traditional thick-walled masonry structure, the Endicott batteries are spread out over a wide area, concealed behind concrete parapets flush with the surrounding terrain.

During the Spanish–American War, the fort was garrisoned by artillery soldiers stationed on the island during the summer of 1898.

Following a period of care-taking status, the fort was garrisoned for a brief time during the World War I. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the island was garrisoned by a detachment of soldiers from the Delaware Army National Guard.

Delaware acquired the fort from the United States government in 1947 after the federal government declared it a surplus site. Today, Fort Delaware State Park encompasses all of Pea Patch Island, including the Fort. Transportation to the island is provided via ferry. Once at the island, visitors are brought to the fort on a jitney. Tours and special programs are available to visitors. For example, visitors may see the 8 inch Columbiad gun, which is located on the northwest bastion, fired daily. Park staff and volunteers interpret the

roles of people who were at the fort during the Civil War.

Beach erosion affecting Pea Patch Island was recognized as a potential threat to the Fort in 1999. The United States Army Corps of Engineers erected a 3,500-foot-long seawall during the Winter of 2005-2006 which now protects the historical fort site and a migratory bird rookery, considered to be the largest such habitat north of Florida.

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N2CX: The second effort of the day was at Ft Dupont SP KFF-1737 still in DE. It was the second of the three river defense fort, the third being Ft Mott across the river in NJ. There are still barracks admin buildings and utility buildings though they are now used by State Park personnel. The chapel, a theater and other ancillary structures are undergoing much needed restoration, presumably to attract local businesses to move in. Waterfront recreation, mainly fishing is in evidence as is a convenient marina. On the day of the visit, there was some sort of event going on in spite of the dreary drizzle. A course was laid out on an assembly field where some sort of contests were corralled by ropes and marker cones. The purpose was not evident but apparently it was some sort of dog show or race as most humans seemed to be accompanied by damp four-legged, damp friends.

The goal here was simply to pump up the personal contact total since only three dozen had been logged previously. In contrast to the island activity, the usual car-mounted antenna was used. That was fortunate since radio conditions had gone downhill. 40 did work out with the second P2P of the day with WD8RIF and 20 hooped for a while with Q's from CA to EU. 30 even yielded a surprise with a German contact. The goal of added log padding was accomplished nicely with 30 more entries.

Not a bad day in the end. In spite of inclement weather and fears of poor results, all worked out quite well.

## Salmon Run QSO Party

The bands were not in great shape – and this year – 15M was essentially dead with only a handful of QSOs on that band. Zilch on 10M, too, of course. Still, thousands and thousands of QSOs were made.

from the 3830 reflector:

### **KT7Q mobile – 497 CW QSO**

Jay and I didn't see a single salmon! What we did see was many harvested wheat fields, grapes in vineyards, a live porcupine rather than a dead one, and a wild turkey strolling down Main St in Davenport. Between these sights and less than ideal propagation conditions, we managed 497 Qs, 55 mults, plus the bonus station for a score of 83,005 from the 20 counties we put on the air Saturday and Sunday.

A closed bridge over the Snake River into ASO county caused us to go through Lewiston, ID rather than the quicker bypass which gets one into ASO sooner. The Snake and Clearwater Rivers converge here creating a wide spot in the river canyons. We had planned to operate stationary for 15 minutes in this wide spot before continuing on for the 14 mile width of ASO county. However, the detour ate all this time. As you head west on US 12 in ASO, the canyon walls quickly squeeze in making contacts difficult. We managed only a meager 4 Qs in ASO. A poor start to our Saturday.

Our best county was LIN with 67 Qs. We operated the LIN/GRAN line on 80 m in the final few minutes on Saturday and again on 20 and 40 on Sunday. OKA was good to us, too, with 40 Qs split between 40 and 80 in the dark on Saturday and again in the light on 20 and 40 Sunday. In the last two hours of the contest on Sunday, folks were finding us in STE and SPO where we got 22 and 34 contacts.

Our very best "customer" was N7IR, Gary, in AZ, who caught us in all 20 of the counties. In ten other Salmon Runs that Jay and I have done, no one has ever worked us in all the counties we put on the air. Thanks, Gary, for keeping us company! Other regulars were N6MU in CA with 16 counties, W8PI in MI with 14, K2SSS in NY with 10, AA4DD in TN with 10, and K4ORD in VA also with 10. By far the loudest signal both of the days was K2SSS, Zeljko. Of special note was the club station, JA1YNE, who caught us in 8 counties. A fine job from across the Pacific. Many other operators found us frequently. Jay and I thank everyone who worked us or gave us a try.

The rig was an IC-706MKIIG at 100 watts with a Hustler "Pitchfork" antenna. We used N1MM+ on a LT4004u netbook.

**KB7QPS - County Expedition** - 36 cw 464 ssb

County-line expedition station operating from Garfield/Columbia county. Saturday was busy and fun. Sunday not so much, shutdown station at 11:30, departing campsite at 1:30.

Almost clean sweep. Missing Ferry county. Tried hard to snag Ferry county on CW Sunday morning, but no luck. Couldn't stay until WW7D arrived at 4pm.

**KN4Y - fixed - FL** - 50 cw – 29 counties

It was exciting with four CW mobile operators going from one county to another along with a bunch of fixed CW stations. The Salmons were very happy. It was exciting operating in the Washington QSO party and the Washington Salmon Run all at the same time, awesome. Sounds fishy but who cares.

**W5TM- fixed in OK** – reported 158 CW qso and 29 counties

**KX7L - fixed - Shohomish WA** 126 CW

I didn't get started until late in the afternoon, but found 20m already shut down, and 40m very noisy. Poor condx persisted into the evening - I had to ask for repeats on half the stations I worked, even struggled with some in King county on 80! Sunday on 20m, things were a bit better, but not much. Still had fun, even if the BIC time was short. Thanks for the QSO's!

**N7IR - fixed - AZ** 180 CW 38 counties

Came very close to a sweep thanks to dedicated mobile operators K7TQ, WA0WWW, N7WA and WW7D who activated a lot of rare counties. Missed only Jefferson, part of which I thought was in the NW population center. Lots of fun anyway chasing the mobiles on both days - thanks guys!

Thanks for the contacts and your patience.

73

Gary, N7IR



**W7DX (K7RL op) - fixed WA - 539 CW 1614 SSB**

A big King Salmon “Thank you” to the WWDXC for allowing me to pilot the mighty W7DX in the 2018 Salmon Run. My goal was work as many stations as possible on as many bands as possible so everyone could get the 500 point bonus. I hope this salmon is in everyone’s log.

Before the start, I didn’t know what to expect with conditions or activity levels. My goal for the weekend was 2,000 Qs mostly based on potentially slower activity on Sunday. Happily, that didn’t happen, and my goal was exceeded.

### THE QRN ROCK CONCERT

As the sun went down Saturday night, static levels on the low bands went up, and up, and up. At some point, I thought it would quiet down, but that never happened. At the end of the night, I was ready for a break from the noise.

After surviving the QRN rock concert the night before, I was looking forward to the quiet of 20m the next morning. My optimism was short lived. The band was slammed with ridiculous QRN levels just like the low bands the night before. BRUTAL.

I struggled with repeats for several hours before the band sounded somewhat normal again. Thanks to all for your patience and repeats.

### R.I.P. 15M

My only Q on 15m was with N8II, the beacon of West Virginia, after a QSY from 20m. He was barely audible on CW. I kept checking the band for ANY activity and even tried CQing for a while with the second radio.

Zero. Nothing. Zilch. Nada.

Geez, did I miss to the 2.6 second opening at 18:32z?

It’s going to be a tough contest season without 15m (gulp).

## RETURNING W7DX - NO DENTS OR SCRATCHES

After a thorough wash and wax, I'm returning W7DX back to club garage with a full tank of gas and no fishy smell. Thanks to all for the Qs and a fun weekend!

73, Mitch, K7RL

## **WC7Q - fixed - WA - 495 CW 106 ssb**

Conditions couldn't have been worse. Really had to scratch for all the calls but worth the effort even tho I had an early visit to the ER but all was well. Still made the complete SR test.

Sam WC7Q

## **K4BAI - fixed - GA 95 CW 37 SSB 34 counties**

Very poor band conditions, but most WA stations hung in there and gave us a lot of QSOs and fun this weekend. Thanks for all QSOs and particularly the mobiles N7WA, WW7D, and K7TQ. 73, John, K4BAI

## **WS7L - county expedition - 299 cw 71 ssb**

Operated from Ocean Park at a rental cottage. Not one of my best Salmon Runs but better than last year. Came up 5 counties short of a WA state sweep even though Pacific was VERY popular on SSB.

73 and thanks for all the QSOs,

Carl WS7L

K-line, inverted L for 80, inverted V for 40, TH3JRS for 20.

## **N6MU - fixed CA 171 cw 40 ssb 37 counties**

Missed ASO and JEFF. Had no propagation when K7TQ/m was in ASO and never heard

JEFF.

Top mobile for me was WW7D with 25 Qs followed by K7TQ(21) and N7WA(11). I worked them when I could hear them which definitely wasn't all the time.

Nice turnout from all the WA folks. Just wish conditions had been better. 73...

John, N6MU

### **K7IDX/7 - County Expedition - 436 ssb**

First time operating portable and on county line in this event.

My goal was to work all the counties on 75 SSB ONLY, which have done a number of times from home. Which most likely would not happen if not for the mobile stations. I believe these folks should get special consideration....maybe some salmon....or at least a smell.

Also there were a number of portable stations (not at home QTH) however they did not seem to indicate as such? Thanks to those folks too.

There was activity all day long both days. Saturday about 0300 signals got weaker and static crashes loud. Went QRT at 0330. Last county was Ferry.... thanks to the mobiles WW7WL/m and WW7D/m thanks guys.

Operated portable on county line of Mason/Jefferson above Hood Canal. TS-570 battery powered with 150 watts solar. KPA-500 amp at about 400 watts to inverted v at 25 feet with push up mast. Powered with EU-2000 generator. My shack was a 4 wheel pop up camper.

### **WW7D mobile 326 cw 374 ssb**

I had fun with this Salmon run, activating 22 counties as a mixed mode mobile, split between WWA counties on Saturday and EWA counties on Sunday. My route and equipment were almost identical to the 2017 effort. Equipment held up and, aside from one construction detour on Sunday, the route worked out.

The contest started Saturday on the PIE/KING county line. Band conditions were horrible all day Saturday. I made fewer QSOs for the day on Saturday than I usually

make in the first 90 minutes of the contest sitting on the King/Pierce line. Specifically, 20m was totally underperforming all morning and seemed to close early in the afternoon on Saturday. 40m was okay, but not spectacular. The big surprise was 75/80m. I made more 75/80m QSOs than 20m and 40m combined on Saturday. Specifically, I got into the habit of checking into the "net" on 3933 usually run by W7BJN or K7RLD whenever I was on a county line. They were great in letting me hold the frequency for as long as people would respond to my calls. I very much appreciated this, because my time at each county line stop is very limited and, for several reasons, doing 80m while in motion is more difficult than working other bands. I checked 15m throughout the contest, and never heard another station and got no responses to my occasional CQs. It rained on and off throughout Saturday, with a particularly nasty, but short-lived downpour around 0030z.

I finished up on the SKAM/CLAR line on Saturday at midnight, and then drove to a hotel in The Dalles for about 5 hours of sleep. I got up early for a 2 hour trip to the YAK/KLI county line for a 9am start on Sunday. When I arrived, there was a great big rainbow to the West, but I hit rain all day.

The bands seemed to be in good shape Sunday morning (or maybe the difference was being in E. Washington?). Actually, 20m and 75/80m were good all day on Sunday. I tried and tried for 40m QSOs, but only got 5 QSOs total on Sunday until the final hour on the OKA/FER county line, where I got a small run going for 14 more QSOs. At my final stop, on the OKA/FER line, someone saw me and pulled over. It turned out to be AF6TS, who was on his way home nearby. After a brief conversation, he participated by standing on the same county line with a handheld, and worked me on 6m and 2m FM for a total of 8 QSO!

After removing duplicates, I ended up with 700 QSOs (322 CW and 374 PH). This is an improvement over 2017 when I only had 630 QSOs, worse than 2016 with 719 QSO, but well below the 972 QSOs from 2013 when the sun graced us with something resembling serious propagation. There were 186 unique calls in the log.

Multipliers included all but 4 WA counties (missed DOU, LEW, STE, and WHI). I missed 10 states, and only worked two Canadian Provinces (AB and ON). I worked a couple of JAs, but no other DX. This year I did not hear W7DX on CW at all, but got 500 points for phone QSOs. My claimed score, 129,950, is a nice improvement from last year's 119,440.

Top stations worked were WU7H and N7EPD (28), N6MU (25), N7IR (23), K7IDX/7 (22), KB7QPS (20), W7DK (18), N7HCJ (16), K9CW and K7RLD (14), W7PU and

K7RMZ (12), N7PP (11), WW7LW and W7VAS (10). I very much appreciated the portable operations, particularly the folks on county lines.

Even after the slow start on Saturday, I had a great time in this edition of the Salmon Run.

## On the Road with N4CD II

September 15, 2018 - Saturday

The weather was decent for a while – after days of rain and gloom and clouds – seemed like a week – so I decided to head on over to the local park KFF-4423 and sit for a while working all the stations that should be showing up in the NJ QP, New Hampshire QP, Salmon Run, Collegiate Activity Day, and WI Parks on the Air events – along with Route 66 and other things going on. Should be lots of activity.

Texas is back to typical weather with highs near 90, lows in 70s and some showers that pop up here and there occasionally. The sun doesn't get up till near 7am and is down an hour earlier too – definitely headed toward 'fall' but the leaves don't fall till November here. Up north in New England, soon it will be 'leaf peep' season with scads of tourists and the maple sap will flow and folks will be busy making maple syrup. Oh, and loading up the wood pile for the winter to use in the wood stoves.

I checked the propagation – not good – but better than a few days ago when the A was 25 and the K was 5 – absolutely horrible. Today the A would still be high at 16, but the K was down to just two. Not great. The SFI was only 68 – meaning 20m would struggle to open and likely not much above that - 17 or 15m– and 'long skip'.

I didn't have to put out my local park – been there many times, but still I'd like to have a few dozen in the log. For “Parks on the Air” K- activation credit – which I don't worry about – you need just 10 to get credit. Most experience folks when they hit a park want to get the magic 44 for WWFF. I'd run this a dozen times before so that wasn't an issue – just have some fun and chase all the activity. I doubt anyone needs KFF-4423 who has been on the air the last six months. Still, it's a nice place to sit for a few hours and

enjoy the weather.

I got there at 1500Z (10 local time) to be ready for the start of things in an hour. I could search the bands for SOTA (Summits on the Air) guys on mountain peaks – usually QRP at 5 or 10w, special event stations, and county hunters. SOTA folks hang out around 14061-63.5 and call CQ SOTA. Wow – not much going on - one or two stations on 40M, one or two on 30M, and just a few weak ones on 20M. There was a European contest going on – just a few weak stations from EU making it through and heard some US stations working – or trying to work them. Otherwise – slim pickings.

In the first hour, I caught just a handful of stations. One W2AEE Special Event on SSB, one FL Park on the Air – KK1TLS in FL on SSB, One IA QP station on cw, One Route 66 station (saw others spotted – could not hear), 4 county hunters including WB0PYF mobile – and that was it!

Just 12 contacts in an hour!

Then 1600z came and the Salmon Run stations added in another 22 into the log, including county hunter KC7YE out in Pacific WA on 20M CW. Three NJ QP stations showed up on CW and just one from NH in the NH QP (N1FD) on SSB added in over the next hour and 15 minutes. Scanned the band for more activity but there wasn't much going on. There were more Salmon Run stations on SSB but they had pileups and after 10-15 calls, gave up on them. My mobile signal wasn't going to crack the pile ups and propagation wasn't with me.

I figured I might get some IA stations on 40M. Got exactly one all day. Where there any mobiles out there? Either propagation was not there on 40m or no mobiles. Saw no spots for IA mobiles. The lack of spotters didn't help either! Come on guys!

Saw very few spots the entire hours I was there. Where are all the spotters? Only other one spotting was Donna, AG6V, and I know with 6 events going on, there was lots of activity that no one bothered to spot. This was the big weekend for WI Parks on the Air- caught all of one and he was in a K-only park – not in WWFF system. A dozen were planned according to the web site. Like OH Parks on Air day, this is an SSB only event. Duh! Tough for portable operators to get in and compete against the QSO Parties, usual weekend nets everywhere, and Special Event stations I guess others were on but buried by the 20M QRM from all the other things going on. Probably most of the activity was on 40m and that isn't going to work from TX in the daylight hours. Didn't hear any other collegiate radio station activity either.

Not a great day for operating from the mobile, but I wound up with 36Q. Had it been a 'new park' activation, I'd probably have found another 8 Q's somewhere and somehow in the next hour or two, but didn't have to today.

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There should be a pickup in activity with mobiles on the way to Kansas City MO. I hope so. Activity is so ow, low, low. I'll be out mobile in 10 days on the way.

## Mobile Activity in September

WB0PYF, Ray, was active in MO.

KN4Y, Ed, was busy in the AL QSO Party

KB3WAV, Kerri, busy during the month running parks and counties (portable)  
N9JF, Jim, was busy in IL many days/weekends putting out counties for the IL bicentennial event.

KA9JAC, Bob, noted out and about in many WI parks during the month

Bob, N2OO, spotted out in NY, NJ, and CT

Karl, K4YT, took a nice trip up through PA to NY

W0GXQ, Jerry, headed out and ran a dozen in CO then headed down to LA. Ran into a tree limb in TX and had antenna issues after that.

K0FG, Fred, noted out and about in MO during the month, then down through AR, MS, AL, GA.....FL....then return home.

N5KUC spotted in TX

KA3QLF, Scott, spotted in PA and NY

KB0BA/N0XYL – Lowell/Sandra – spotted out in KY/IN

AI5P, Rick, noted out and about in CO counties

W5MIG spotted in TX parks

K7TM, Bob, noted out in OR

K0MAF, Jack, noted headed east in WY and ND. Had some antenna issues after that.

N8HAM, Jim, noted out and about in IL and MO slowly on his way to convention

WA9DLB, Tony, took a trip down through IL and MO headed to the convention

## FT-8 Mode Now #1

---FT8 Mode becomes Number 1 in LoTW

Logbook of The World (LoTW) reports that more than 2.3 million FT8 contacts were uploaded in 1 month — a net gain of 1.2 million contacts on all modes over the same month last year, ARRL Radiosport Manager Norm Fusaro, W3IZ, said. Over the same period, activity in some of the other modes has declined.

“Year-to-date DXCC applications are up by 11% over the same period last year,” Fusaro said. “So far, we have processed 898 Worked All States (WAS) applications — a 72% increase over the same period last year. Of those applications 347 — or 39% — were FT8 endorsements. Application for VUCC are also up by 33% over 2017.”

Fusaro said that while some feel that FT8 is “taking over the



world,” subsuming all other modes, that’s not the case. “Activity in the traditional modes of SSB and CW has decreased only slightly, by 10%,” he said. “The real decrease is in RTTY and PSK activity and in the other WSJT-X modes. I believe poor propagation would have cut into SSB and CW activity, regardless of the new mode.” Anecdotal reports support Fusaro’s hard numbers, with wall-to-wall signals surrounding the FT8 watering holes.

Late last year, Denny Berg, WB9MSM, achieved his goal of completing DXCC using FT8. It took him just 4 months.

“I can tell all of you that this mode is spreading like wildfire throughout all the HF bands,” Berg told The Daily DX at the time. He said he was able to work all states on FT8 in about 6 weeks of operating.

Joe Taylor, creator of the WSJT-X program, has characterized SSB and CW as “general-purpose modes” that are good for ragchewing, DXing, contesting, disaster communication, and other purposes. On the other hand, he has said, FT8 and the other protocols in the WSJT-X suite are “special-purpose modes,” designed for making reliable, error-free contacts using signals that may be too weak to work using more traditional modes — and sometimes even too far down in the noise even to hear.

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Courtesy of the ARRL West Gulf TX Newsletter of September 2018

## New Hampshire QSO Party

From the 3830 reflector:

**N1FD** – fixed- Hillsborough NH – group effort – made 1587 SSB QSO

**NE1RD** – fixed – Hillsborough NH - 90 SSB

tough going, and running barefoot probably didn't help. But, QSO parties are fun because everybody is friendly and glad to make the contact. The pace allows an occasional quick conversation about their motorcycle or airplane. did have a few technical difficulties with my station automation, so this was a good shakeout cruise. It was a fun weekend.

**K4BAI** – fixed – GA 2 CW 3 ssb

Not much activity. Worked everyone in NH that I heard calling. Thanks for the QSOs, 73, John, K4BAi.

**KN4Y** – fixed – FL - 3 cw

A great revelation: There are CW operators in New Hampshire. Went up and down the band and finally found them.

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de N4CD – more NH stations show up in the New England QSO Party each year.

## Some Things to do in Kansas City

Things to do in KC – First, some activities for 3 days have been planned – by Rev Kate

**Thursday – Oct. 4th.** “The Art of Lunch in Kansas City”.  
Meet in the Lobby at 10:45 a.m. and take shuttle to Webster House.

Cost \$15 – 20 for luncheon main selections.

### A MOST UNIQUE KANSAS CITY DINING AND SHOPPING DESTINATION

Located inside a restored 19th century Romanesque style school that is next door to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Webster House offers guests a distinctive shopping experience and truly remarkable dining.

#### **Friday – Oct 5th.** “Buried Treasure – A Day on the Town”.

Meet in the Lobby at 10:45 a.m. and take shuttle to Union Station City Park. We will take a tour of Arabia Steamboat Museum and Coffee KC Style inside Union Station afterwards Cost: \$14.50 or Seniors \$13.50 Groups of 25+ \$12.50

A historic KC Attraction. When the mighty Steamboat Arabia sank near Kansas City on September 5, 1856, she carried 200 tons of mystery cargo. Lost for 132 years, its recovery in 1988 was like finding the King Tut’s Tomb of the Missouri River. Remarkably preserved clothes, tools, guns, dish ware and more. The discovery was truly a modern day treasure hunting story at its best. Nearby, the Arabia Steamboat Museum displays paraphernalia salvaged from a ship that sunk in the Missouri River in the mid 19th century. Broad paths for strolling and biking trace the shoreline in Berkley Riverfront Park.

#### **Saturday – Oct 6th.** “Let’s Go Kansas City Green”.

Meet in Lobby at 9:15 a.m. & take shuttle to City Market. Bring your cash and shopping bags for a morning of culinary delight! A true farmers market Mid West Style. We’ll catch Brunch right there following our time at the Market.

CITY MARKET – Busy River Market centers on City Market, dating to 1857, where casual global eateries, gourmet grocery stores and indie boutiques surround pavillions hosting a weekend farmers’ market.

Since its inception in 1857, the City Market has been one of the largest and most enduring public farmers’ markets in the Midwest, linking growers and small businesses to the Kansas City community..

The hotel is centrally located with FREE shuttle service 7 am – 11pm within 3 mile radius of the hotel. On call service at 816-721-6687.

There are plenty of things to do around Kansas City! Visit these links to find out more!

Check out these links for some of the great sites, sounds, museums, shopping and food around Kansas City. You won't be disappointed!

[visitkc.com](http://visitkc.com) – Don't forget to visit the Country Club Plaza, Spanish architecture, red tile roofs and hand painted tiles. It is believed to be one of the earliest outdoor shopping districts.

[experiencekc.com](http://experiencekc.com) – City of Fountains

[tripsavvy.com](http://tripsavvy.com) – Top 10 Kansas City Attractions – Everything from Country Club Plaza, Nelson – Atkins Museum of Art, Harry Truman Library, Liberty Memorial and the National WWI Museum and much more.

Guaranteed, you'll find plenty to do and see during your stay in Kansas City.

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de N4CD – there are two park units right in KC, too! First one easy to run, second one difficult. A challenge.

### **WW1 Memorial/Museum**

2 Memorial Dr, Kansas City, MO 64108

Plan Your Visit to the National WWI Museum and Memorial

No. 5 Ranked Museum in the U.S. - Yelp

No. 1 Attraction in Kansas City - TripAdvisor

Steeped in history, the National WWI Museum and Memorial is America's only museum dedicated to sharing the stories of the Great War through the eyes of those who lived it. Interactive displays, thought-provoking films and eyewitness testimonies help guide visitors through one of the largest collections of WWI artifacts in the world.

From the first shots fired in 1914 to the last attempts at peace in 1919, this award-winning museum offers a global perspective of "The War to End All Wars," and includes firsthand accounts from the battlefield and home front alike.

Plan your visit to the National WWI Museum and Memorial today, and learn why the First World War wasn't the last.

\$16 admission, \$14 seniors

### **Thomas Hart Benton Home**

3616 Belleview Ave, Kansas City, MO 64111

10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday and Thursday through Saturday

12 p.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday

The site is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Thomas Hart Benton's life is present in both his home and his paintings, and both are preserved at Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site. A trip to the home and studio of the renowned painter, sculptor, lecturer and writer offers a glimpse into how the talented Benton lived and worked. Benton converted half of the carriage house into his art studio, which remains as he left it. Visitors can still see coffee cans full of paintbrushes, numerous paints, and a stretched canvas waiting to be transformed into another of his masterpieces. Thomas Hart Benton died in his studio in 1975.

## **Parks on the Air- N2CX**

### **N2CX Washington Rock activation Sept 15**

Today's effort was kinda over the top.

The chosen site was Washington Rock SP, KFF-1635. Been there a couple of times but it certainly has its charms. GW selected this high ground to keep tabs on the British Forces headed out of New York and its worth is evident from the views it affords. It is surprisingly popular with locals since it contrasts significantly from the surround bedroom communities. A number of avid hikers have also plied its trails in each visit and today there was even a wedding party using the park as fodder for their photo albums (or whatever you call the silicon base storage these days).

The several goals for the day were to participate in the QRP Afield Sprint, the NJ QSO

Party and to fatten the log with park activation Q's. They were met with some challenges. To maximize close-in coverage a 40 meter quarter wave sloper first used in NPOTA was pulled out of retirement. It worked pretty well considering a weak ionosphere, but nearby power lines gave an S7 noise level on 40. The go-to 16 ft vertical served for 20 and 30. 20 was definitely the best band with VE6UX and several EU stations worked, though stateside it was difficult. 30 netted only 2 Q's, probably because everyone was concentrating on other bands for the QSO parties. In the end, 18 QP/QA/Park contacts were logged along with the 2 30 meter contacts, legit only as park efforts. It was 2 hours of hard work but well worth doing.

And... off to VA/WVA for the next week to hit some more parks.

Is this an obsession? You bet!



## **N2CX Virginia is for Park Lovers Journey - Sept 16**

Day one of the trek took us down through DE and MD on the way to the Virginias. Not wanting to spend all of the day on the road, we stopped for an hour at Patapsco Valley SP, KFF-1588 just south of Balto, MD. K. Lynn Wright and company and Jason Johnson know it well.

Situated along the eponymous river, it has a number of sections, each with disparate yet related foci. Urbanites from the Balto/DC area flock to it on weekends to literally get away from it all. We are told that at times they have to close the gates early due to strong interest. The part chosen was the Hollofield Area. It was quite refreshing to see the seeming wilderness within a couple of miles from the dense city scenes of the area. An overlook gave vistas of the valley though the river at the bottom was not visible for all the trees... A visitor sign-in board hinted that a river otter had been seen nearby. That guy must have been lucky, since I know that there are beaver and muskrat in South Jersey where we live but the critters are very shy about revealing themselves.

Later on, actually in West Virginia, a somewhat impromptu stop was made at Harpers Ferry NHP, KFF-0735. We had been there during NPOTA and decided to drop in since it was on the way to our hotel. As one would expect, this area is steeped in history and truly offers multiple activation sites in addition to the NHP. Just to name a few, there are the Appalachian Trail, the C&O Canal and the Lewis and Clark Trail within easy reach. Though it was a repeat visit we spent some time nosing around and reacquainting ourselves with its storied past and enjoying the sights nearly free of tourists as it was early Sunday evening. At that time there was yet another bonus - the large parking lot at the Visitor Center had free parking and it was well above the river valley so that, even though it's surrounded by hills on all sides, the horizon was somewhat visible.



As we hams know, conditions continue to be less than optimal. MUFs are down and signal fading is brutal, but we persist. Things were not bad at Patapsco with many of the usual suspects logged, particularly on 40 meters and gratifyingly some new folks showed up, including WA1WCC at the historic Chatham ship-to-shore site on Cape Cod happened along. It was obvious that 20 was going down hill though VE6 and F2 made the grade. At Harpers Ferry things went farther downhill as the day wore on. It was like pulling teeth to work anybody! There were some highlights though. Probably using

monstrous antennas and Bigfoot scat VE6UX got through on both 20 and 30 for a change and even KO4SB whispered down the lane on 40 from AL. As even 40 meters threatened to shut down for the day and all reasonable hunters had given up, a couple of 9-landers chimed in for ragchews to ratchet up the log total.

And on the 17th VA park-loving continues in the rain.

## **N2CX Virginia is for Park Lovers Journey - Sept 18**

Split-state day with both VA and WV represented. We seem to be straddling the state lines, not difficult along the WV western border.

First off was Shenandoah River SP, KFF-1316 in VA. It's a quite attractive park and very well thought out. The visitor center does an excellent job of defining its mission using very good informative displays and has lots of info on native flora and fauna including taxidermy exhibits and even shells and hides for children to literally get a feel for the animals described. The VC also has a man-made brook running under its entrance walkway and an well-done pond complete with fish and local plant life. There are also a number of trails, some of which were daunting due to recent heavy rainfall. Driving around, we saw deer several times, playing "chicken" crossing the roads, then happy to watch us and graze as if to taunt us human invaders.

The overlook chosen for activation had great vistas of the river, which had obviously overflowed its banks as evidence by partially submerged trees. Interestingly a husband and wife scene-painting duo set up on the overlook to enhance artwork apparently from previous visits.

A disappointment was a lack of cell coverage for self-spotting. A quick search of the auto revealed that apparently we had forgotten our cell booster which might have assisted.

The overlook is a great radio location though an idling RV in the parking lot brought up the normally low ambient QRM level. On-air results were satisfactory though would likely have been helped with ability to self-spot. 40, 30 and 20 were all reasonable, though 20 was very long, yielding Q's mainly on the west coast and in EU.

This location is highly recommended for anyone wanting a pleasant spot to activate and with more time, might give very good results.



Next down to Lost River SP, KFF-1816. It's a very public-friendly park geared quite much to trail walkers and campers. For the latter it also features a number of playgrounds and even a swimming pool in season. Very bucolic, it would be fun explore but certainly not in the rain as on the day we visited.

Its literature had warned that there was absolutely no cell coverage but there was 24 hour wifi in the vicinity of the park office. Taking advantage of this, we did the activation from the parking lot next to the station where we could self-spot. There was some concern about terrain blockage since, after all, it is in a river valley. Fortunately this proved not to be the case. In an hour's time the usual average of two dozen contacts were made, mainly on 40 m. Due to the late afternoon hour, 20 had shut down completely though 30 filled the gap with Q's out to VE6UX (who else?) and much of the US East of the Rockies.

## **N2CX Virginia is for Park Lovers Journey - Sept 19**

Once again the day started - interesting...

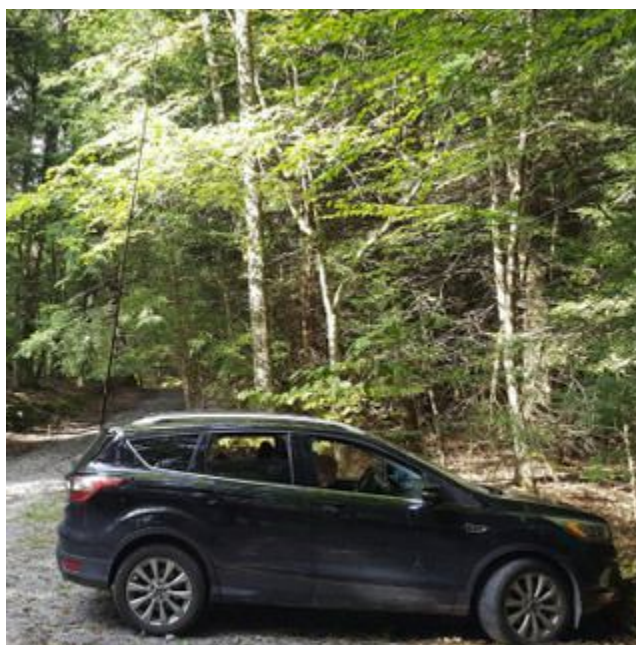
As we left the cabin at the Lost River SP, the river was not the only thing lost. The speaking GPS "witch in the box" got lost, too. She tried to take us off-road down a narrow gravel path so we had to attempt a K turn. In the process, the car's rear ended in in a muddy ditch and we spun wheels trying to break free. With my son at the wheel I got behind and pushed. Success - kinda. Just picture what happens when you straddle a mud-filled ditch pushing with all your might when the car breaks free. Can you say face plant?

On the way to the first site of the day, we passed the famous Greenbank Radio Observatory and had to stop in briefly to gaze upon the huge dish antennas. Unfortunately on-site they are mostly hidden from view, but you can see them as you approach the property. There is, however, a model of an antenna used by Grote Reber (sk) ex-W9GEZ who pioneered radio astronomy in the US. BTW, because of the Greenbank facility there is a large no-radio zone in WV and parts of VA, one reason that cell coverage in the area is sparse.



The activation was in Droop Mountain Battlefield, K-1811. The park was the site of a Civil War battle and its interior roads are dotted with signs detailing the action there with representation of both sides of the conflict. These evoke memories of Gettysburg BFLD, though on a smaller scale. The highlight is an overlook on probably the mountains most elevated spot, with fantastic views of local peaks and valleys. Not coincidentally it is also quite good for amateur radio.

40 and 30 hopped along quite well, though 20 was in the doldrums with only a couple Q's. One was with N4EX, possibly line of site on another mountaintop in NC, for a P2P though I muffed up his park number. Helpful spotters clearly helped giving two dozen in the log. It's great to enjoy a sunny day with great views while beeping away.



Next on the hit list was Beartown SP, K-1799. Totally different from Droop, it is low ground strewn with large rocks said to resemble bears dens. It has trails to explore, though the large number of boulders would make for a challenging effort. There is however, a boardwalk accessible even by wheelchair that leads right through the boulder field which does indeed resemble at least what bear's dens might look like. Of course one might also compare it to Devil's Den in the Gettysburg Battlefield.

On the air, the total lack of cell coverage for spotting was compounded by almost total RF blockage by surrounding rocky terrain. 40 proved the best of the worst bands, likely because high angle radiation was the only kind that could escape! Interestingly 20 netted two distant contacts, one with Italy and the other with CA! 30 was a total washout. Over an hour's frantic attempts netted only 11 contacts. As I've said before, some days the dragon wins.

## FT-8 Version II

### New Beta Version WSJT-X 2.0 Boasts Major Changes

As promised, the WSJT-X Development Group has announced a new "candidate release," WSJT-X 2.0 rc1. This beta version of the popular digital mode suite incorporates many new FT8 and MSK144 features that will be of particular interest to the Amateur Radio contesting community. It includes all FT8 DXpedition Mode changes already developed in WSJT-X 1.9.1.

"Enhancements to the FT8 decoder ensure that in most situations decoding sensitivity is slightly better than for the old protocol. Symbol rates and occupied bandwidths are the same as before, and false-decode rates are significantly lower," the user notes explain. "The decoding threshold for MSK144 is a fraction of a decibel higher than before, owing to the slightly larger message payload and higher code rate." WSJT-X 2.0 introduces no significant changes to the JT4, JT9, JT65, QRA64, ISCAT, Echo, or FreqCal protocols.

The new features are summarized on the WSJT-X website and in the Quick-Start Guide to WSJT-X 2.0. Contest-related changes include:

- Support for standard ARRL Field Day exchanges, such as 6A SNJ.
- Better support for North American VHF contests, with improved handling of grids

and /r rover call sign designators.

- Six-character locators and call sign suffix support for portable operators, focused on EU VHF contesting.
- Support for standard contest exchanges in the ARRL RTTY Roundup, such as 579 MA or 559 0071.
- Support for call signs of up to 11 alphanumeric characters, to accommodate non-standard and compound call signs.

Support for new exchanges should expand the ability of contesters to use FT8 and other WSJT-X protocols during contests that allow digital contacts and where the exchange is a traditional signal report and state/province/country.

According to the release notes, WSJT-X 2.0 also offers "significantly better sensitivity" (about 1 dB) for the WSPR decoder. In addition, color highlighting of decoded messages provides worked-before status for call signs, grid locators, and DXCC entities on a by-band basis. Color highlighting can also identify stations that have -- or have not -- uploaded their logs to "Logbook of The World" (LoTW) within the past year. Those participating in WSJT-X beta tests are expected to report their experiences to the developers and upgrade to the general availability release when it becomes available. Visit the WSJT-X web page for more information.

Above courtesy of the ARRL Weekly Newsletter 9 21 18

## Get Your Parks on the Air Event

Get Your Park ON" Operating Event Set for October

What is hoped will be the first annual "Get Your Park ON" operating event will take place October 14 - 20, in celebration of Earth Science Week. The event is open to Amateur Radio operators around the world and is sponsored by the national affiliates of World Wide Flora and Fauna (WWFF), which encourages radio amateurs to operate outdoors in protected nature parks.

During this on-the-air celebration, hams can participate in one of two ways. North American hams can opt to be Activators, setting up and operating in geological and nature centers, such as national and state parks and forests, national monuments, and

protected nature habitats. They also may decide to be Hunters, operating from home and searching out and making contact with the Activators.

"We are trying to have parks activated in all states of the USA and Mexico and all Provinces of Canada," the sponsor's Facebook page notes. "Let's have some fun." The week-long special event is reminiscent of ARRL's popular National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) event in 2016, but extends to a larger set of national treasures beyond those managed by the National Parks Service.

In October 1998, the American Geosciences Institute organized Earth Science Week, a national and international event to help the public gain a better understanding and appreciation for the Earth sciences and to encourage stewardship of the Earth, a common goal shared by WWFF. Both programs encourage participants to get outside and enjoy nature.

"Get Your Park ON" begins at 0000 UTC on October 14 and continues through 2359 UTC on October 20. Visit the "Get Your Park ON" Facebook page for more.

Earth Science Week 2018 engages young people and others with learning resources and activities exploring the relationship between the arts and the Earth systems. This year's theme of "Earth as Inspiration" promotes public understanding and stewardship of the planet. Of special interest to the Amateur Radio community and their families is an "Inspired by Earth" photo contest and an essay contest for students in grades 6 through 9. --

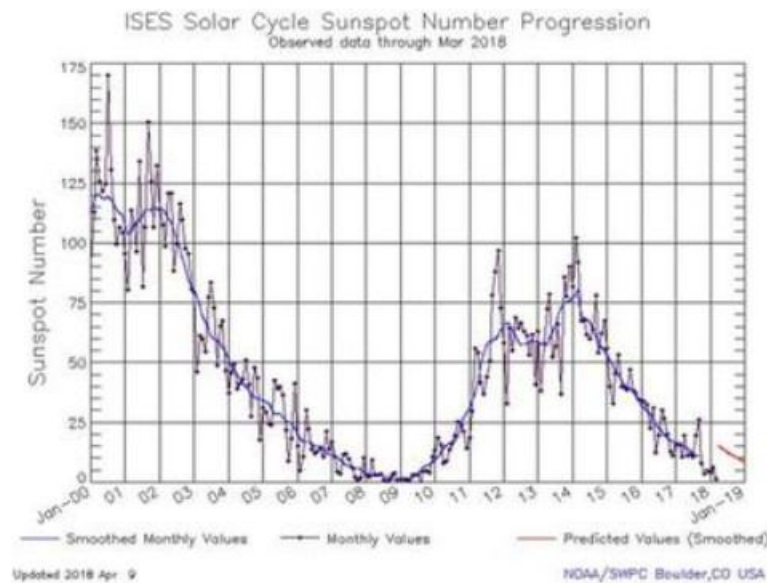
Thanks to Norm Meyers, N9MM

## Sunspots – Geomagnetic Storms

The Next Big Geomagnetic Storm Poses An Astronomical Risk To Modern Man

Scientists are concerned about the next significant "space weather" event, which begins at the sun in the center of the solar system. Severe space weather occurs less frequently than traditional weather on Earth but can be more destructive in nature.

The sun is now headed towards a solar minimum, forecasted to arrive in 2019 as the Sun changes over from Solar Cycle 24 to Solar Cycle 25. The Sun goes through 11-year cycles, during which solar activity increases and decreases.



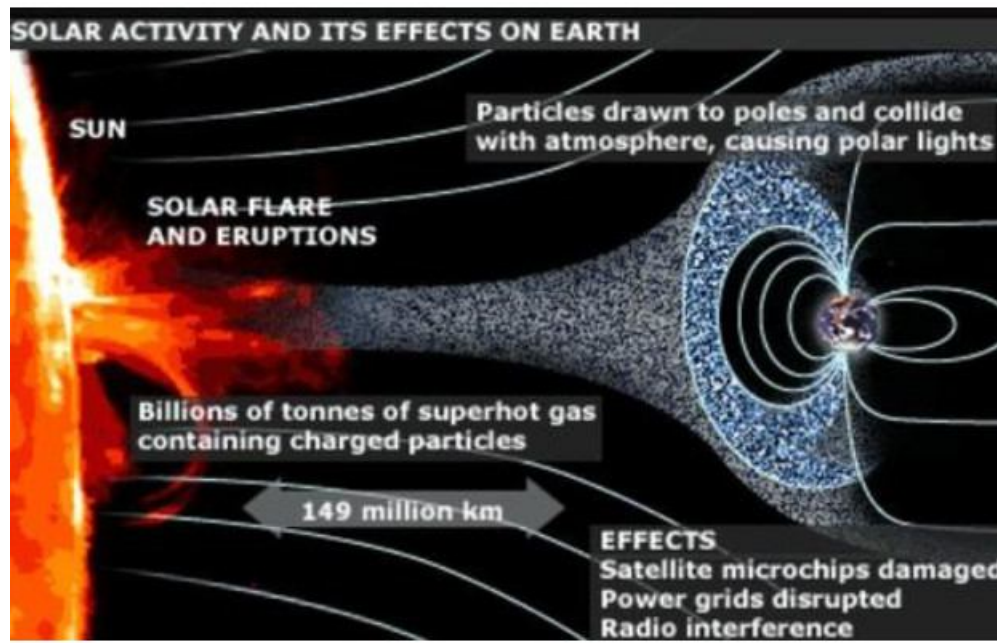
Tracking sunspot activity dates back to the start of the first solar cycle in 1755. Today, simple sketching and counting of sunspot numbers have given way to land-based and space-based technologies that continuously monitor the Sun.

Scientists have discovered that intense activity such as sunspots and solar flares generally subside during a solar minimum. Dean Pesnell of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, said during a solar minimum, that does not mean the sun becomes dull.

He said solar activity simply changes.

For instance, Pesnell warned, "during a solar minimum, we can see the development of long-lived coronal holes."

Coronal holes are large regions in the sun's atmosphere where the sun's magnetic field opens up and allows streams of solar particles known as coronal mass ejection (CME) to escape the sun as fast solar wind.



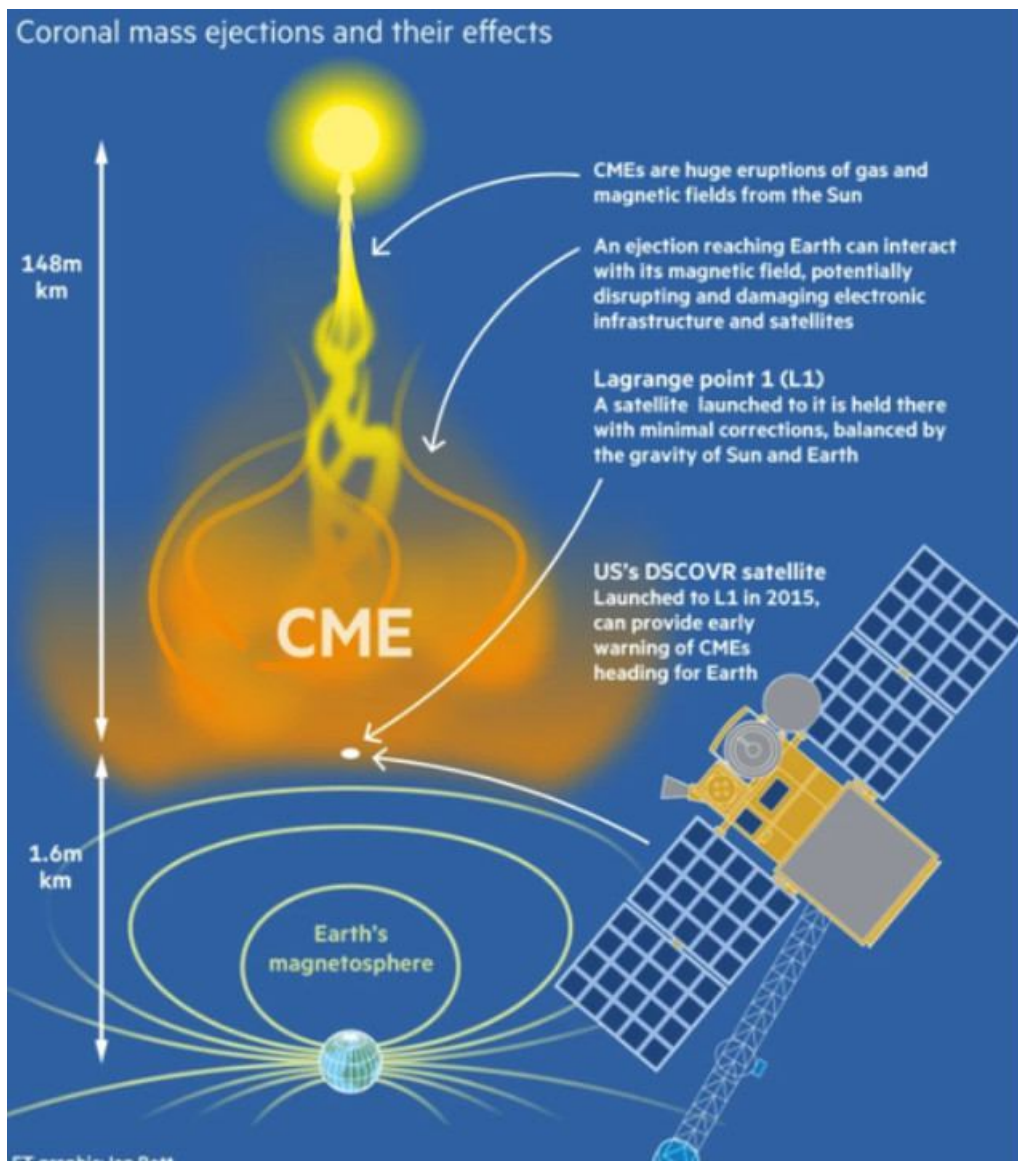
CMEs disrupt GPS, satellites, and astronauts currently in space. Even airline crew and passengers get a markedly higher dose of radiation during solar storms, especially during polar-crossing, trans-oceanic flights.

And a repeat of the most significant solar storm on record, the 1859 Carrington Super-flare, would cost trillions of dollars in damage as power grids, communication networks, and electronic equipment worldwide would be knocked out.

Some scientists believe that Earth is due for a severe space weather event that could send civilization temporarily into reverse.

Another incident occurred in 1989, when an Earth-facing CME rocked the planet, producing a surge in voltage that caused Hydro-Québec power grid in Canada to collapse, leaving millions of people without electricity.

"During a big geomagnetic storm in 2003, a Japanese scientific satellite was lost and 10 percent of the world's satellite fleet suffered malfunctions," said Professor Richard Horne of the British Antarctic Survey.



A recent space weather event in late April 2017, allegedly knocked out power grids across the entire country in one simultaneous fashion. San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles were the three main areas affected. Each region experienced challenges or shutdowns in basic infrastructure such as communication networks and mass transportation.

An unfortunate coincidence of adverse space and Earth weather came in September 2017, when space storms disrupted shortwave radios for hours -- preventing emergency response to hurricanes tearing apart the Caribbean.



"The Sun's been very quiet for the last 10 years. It reminds people not to be complacent," said Mike Hapgood, head of space weather at the UK Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

Scientists tell the Financial Times that satellites can monitor potentially troublesome activity on the sun days ahead of a possible eruption, forecasting the path and effects of an actual CME, well, that is very difficult. If the CME is Earth-facing it takes about 24-hours to arrive, so when the next big solar flare comes racing towards Earth, government officials do not have enough time to prepare the nation or even the world for impact -- it would be devastating.

According to Prof Horne, the most notable satellite for short-term space weather forecasting today is the US Deep Space Climate Observatory, or DSCOVR, launched into low-Earth Orbit (LEO) in 2015. From this tactical position about 1m miles from Earth, DSCOVR provides an early warning of about one hour before impact.

In late 2016, the administration quietly passed an executive order titled "Coordinating Efforts to Prepare the Nation for Space Weather Events," which prepares the fragile nation for economic collapse from a space weather event. The mainstream media, for a good reason, were not allowed to cover the passage of this executive order because it would cause too much panic among the American people. When the next significant solar event strikes, most will not be prepared -- not even government.

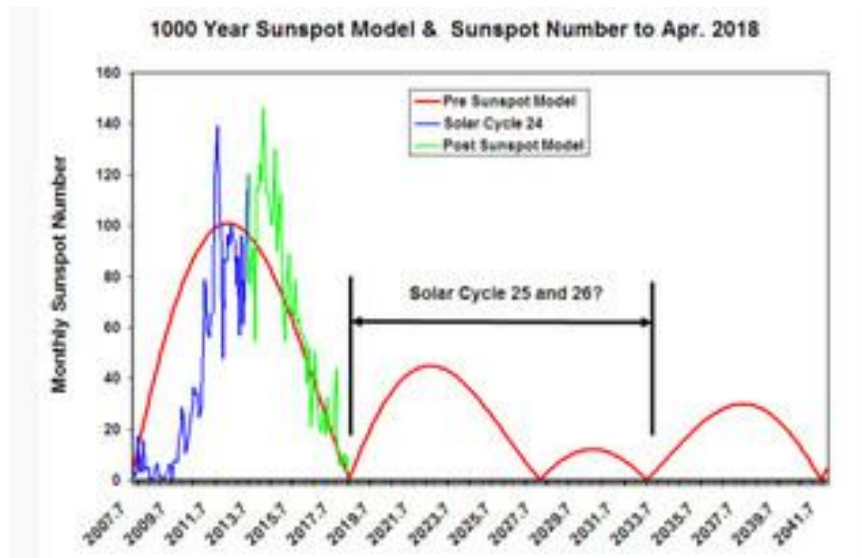
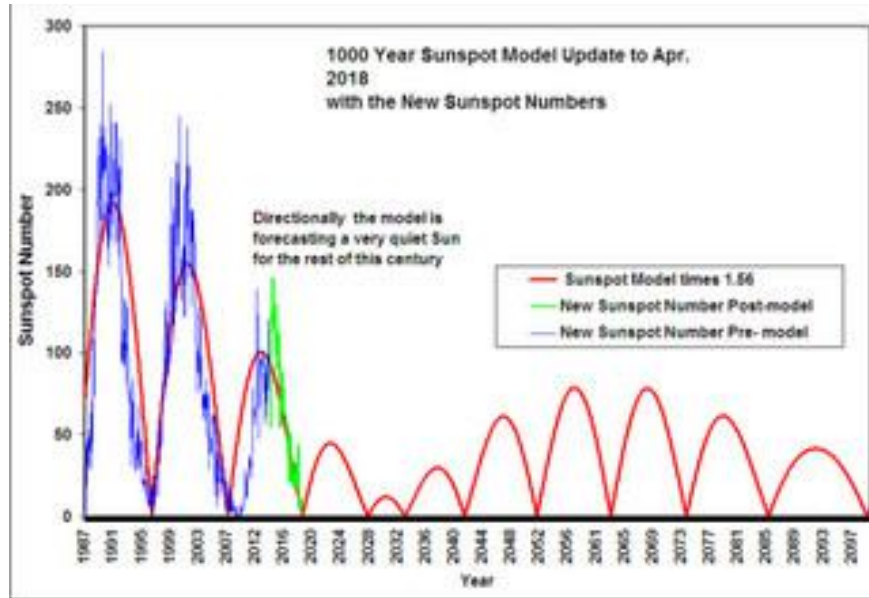
Source: <https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2018-09-19/next-big-geomagnetic-storm-poses-astronomical-risk-modern-man>

## Pessimistic Solar Forecast – Cycle 25

In his 2013 PRP paper 'A mathematical model of the sunspot cycle for the past 1000 years', Rick Salvatore gives a 100 year outlook prediction, which he recently re-scaled to match the new Clette et al numbering system when we discussed its progress recently.

The model is performing well, and has already closely predicted the average amplitude and descent to minimum of SC24, currently occurring, with 90+ spotless days in the first

half of 2018. If the late start to SC24 is repeated, we might estimate that SC25 will get under way during the next couple of years. It may run through to the early 2030s, subsuming the five year blip the model predicts between 2028 and 2037. Solar cycle 25 may be long and low.



If the longer term outlook predicted by Rick’s model comes to pass, we are in for a prolonged solar ‘grand minimum’, which is already starting to have effects on Earth’s

weather, with late and large hailstones falling across northern Europe and June snow in Scandinavia.

<https://tallbloke.wordpress.com/2018/06/09/leif-svalgaard-reveals-his-solar-cycle-25-prediction-at-last/>

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Others are predicting the next cycle, Cycle 25, will be greater than the one we just had – Cycle 24, but not as great as Cycle 20

## Solar Forecast II - Cycle 25

Over the last decade there has been mounting evidence that the strength of the Sun's polar magnetic fields during a solar cycle minimum is the best predictor of the amplitude of the next solar cycle. Surface flux transport models can be used to extend these predictions by evolving the Sun's surface magnetic field to obtain an earlier prediction for the strength of the polar fields, and thus the amplitude of the next cycle.

In 2016, our Advective Flux Transport (AFT) model was used to do this, producing an early prediction for Solar Cycle 25. At that time, AFT predicted that Cycle 25 will be similar in strength to the Cycle 24, with an uncertainty of about 15%. AFT also predicted that the polar fields in the southern hemisphere would weaken in late 2016 and into 2017 before recovering. That AFT prediction was based on the magnetic field configuration at the end of January 2016. We now have two more years of observations.

We examine the accuracy of the 2016 AFT prediction and find that the new observations track well with AFT's predictions for the last 2 years. We show that the southern relapse did in fact occur, though the timing was off by several months. We propose a possible cause for the southern relapse and discuss the reason for the offset in timing. Finally, we provide an updated AFT prediction for Solar Cycle 25 that includes solar observations through January of 2018

In plain language:

After the exceptionally weak Solar Cycle 24 (SC24), there is considerable interest in accurately predicting the amplitude of the coming Solar Cycle 25 (SC25). In 2016, the Advective Flux Transport (AFT) Model was used to make such a prediction. We now have two additional years of solar data. Here we compare the results of the previous prediction to the observations that have since occurred. We then use the additional two years of data to create an updated prediction, with a much smaller uncertainty. We predict that SC25 will be about slightly smaller (~95%) the strength of SC24, making it the weakest solar cycle in the last hundred years. We also predict that, like SC24, SC25 will be preceded by a long extended solar minimum. Finally, these results indicate that we are now in the midst of a Modern Gleissberg Minimum.

<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2018GL078387>

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## An Updated Solar Cycle 25 Prediction with AFT: The Modern Minimum

### KeyPoints:

- Cycle25 will be slightly weaker than Cycle24, making it the weakest cycle on record in the last hundred years.
- Weak cycles are preceded by long extended minima—we may not reach the Cycle 24/25 minimum until 2021.
- We are currently (beginning with Cycle24) in the midst of the modern Gleissberg cycle minimum.
- It is too early to determine if this will remain a short Gleissberg minimum (like the Dalton) or if the Sun will produce a longer grand minimum (like the Maunder).

<https://arxiv.org/pdf/1808.04868.pdf>

## Solar Forecast III – Cycle 25

In a recent paper “The Centennial Gleissberg Cycle and its Association with Extended Minima”, to be soon published in JGR/Space, Feynman and Ruzmaikin discuss how the recent extended minimum of solar and geomagnetic variability (XSM) mirrors the XSMs in the 19th and 20th centuries: 1810–1830 and 1900–1910.

Edited abstract:

Such extended minima also were evident in aurorae reported from 450 AD to 1450 AD. The paper argues that these minima are consistent with minima of the Centennial Gleissberg Cycles (CGC), a 90–100 year variation observed on the Sun, in the solar wind, at the Earth and throughout the Heliosphere. The occurrence of the recent XSM is consistent with the existence of the CGC as a quasi-periodic variation of the solar dynamo. Evidence of CGC’s is provided by the multi-century sunspot record, by the almost 150-year record of indexes of geomagnetic activity (1868-present), by 1,000 years of observations of aurorae (from 450 to 1450 AD) and millennial records of radionuclides in ice cores.

The “aa” index of geomagnetic activity carries information about the two components of the solar magnetic field (toroidal and poloidal), one driven by flares and CMEs (related to the toroidal field), the other driven by co-rotating interaction regions in the solar wind (related to the poloidal field). These two components systematically vary in their intensity and relative phase giving us information about centennial changes of the sources of solar dynamo during the recent CGC over the last century. The dipole and quadrupole modes of the solar magnetic field changed in relative amplitude and phase; the quadrupole mode became more important as the XSM was approached. Some implications for the solar dynamo theory are discussed.

If it is true that the current lull in solar activity is “consistent with minima of the Centennial Gleissberg Cycles,” and the Gleissberg Cycle is a real solar cycle, the current Gleissberg minimum could last a few decades before solar activity begins to rise again.

Solar physicist Habibullo Abdussamatov predicts the current lull in solar activity will continue until about the middle of the 21st century and lead to a new Little Ice Age within the next 30 years.

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2014/08/11/a-gleissberg-solar-minimum/>

A lot more on Gleissberg Cycles here – enough to overload your brain

[http://virtualacademia.com/pdf/cli267\\_293.pdf](http://virtualacademia.com/pdf/cli267_293.pdf)

## Solar News IV

### **Are We Headed Towards Another Deep Solar Minimum?**

May 22, 2018 by David Dickinson

Have you been keeping an eye on Sol lately? One of the top astronomy stories for 2018 may be what's not happening, and how inactive our host star has become.

The strange tale of Solar Cycle #24 is ending with an expected whimper: as of May 8th, the Earthward face of the Sun had been spotless for 73 out of 128 days thus far for 2018, or more than 57% of the time. This wasn't entirely unexpected, as the solar minimum between solar cycle #23 and #24 saw 260 spotless days in 2009 – the most recorded in a single year since 1913. Cycle #24 got off to a late and sputtering start, and though it produced some whopper sunspots reminiscent of the Sol we knew and loved on 20th century cycles past, it was a chronic under-performer overall. Mid-2018 may see the end of cycle #24 and the start of Cycle #25... or will it?

The Sun goes through an 11-year sunspot cycle, marked by the appearance of new spots at mid- solar latitudes, which then slowly progress to make subsequent appearances closer towards the solar equator, in a pattern governed by what's known as Spörer's Law. The hallmark of a new solar cycle is the appearance of those high latitude spots. The Sun actually flips overall polarity every cycle, so a proper Hale Cycle for the Sun is actually  $11 \times 2 = 22$  years long.

A big gaseous fusion bomb, the Sun actually rotates once every 25 days near its equator, and 34 days at the poles. The Sun's rotational axis is also tipped 7.25 degrees relative to the ecliptic, with the northern rotational pole tipped towards us in early September, while the southern pole nods towards us in early March.

**What's in store for Cycle #25? One thing's for certain: if the current trend**

**continues, with spotless days more the rule than the exception, we could be in for a deep profound solar minimum through the 2018 to 2020 season, the likes of which would be unprecedented in modern astronomy.**

Fun fact: a similar dearth of sunspots was documented during the 1645-1715 period referred to as the Maunder Minimum. During this time, crops failed and the Thames River in London froze, making “frost fairs” along its frozen shores possible. Ironically, the Maunder Minimum also began just a few decades after the dawn of the age of telescopic astronomy. During this time, the idea of “spots on the Sun” was relegated to a controversial, and almost mythical status in mainstream astronomy.

We’ve managed to study the last two solar cycles with unprecedented scrutiny. NASA’s STEREO-A and -B spacecraft (Only A is currently active) monitors the farside of the Sun from different vantage points. The Solar Dynamics Observatory (NASA SDO) keeps watch on the Sun across the electromagnetic spectrum. And our favorite mission, the joint NASA/European Space Agency’s SOHO spacecraft, has monitored the Sun from its sunward L1 Lagrange vantage point since it launched in 1995—nearly through one complete 22 year Hale Cycle by mid- 2020s.

...and did you know: we can actually model the solar farside currently out of view from the Earth to a high degree of fidelity thanks to the advent of powerful computational methods used in the nascent field of solar helioseismology.

Unfortunately, this low ebb in the solar cycle will also make for lackluster aurora in the years to come. It’s a shame, really... the relatively powerful cycles of the 1970s and 80s hosted some magnificent aurorae seen from mid-latitudes (and more than a few resulting blackouts). We’re still getting some minor outbursts, but you’ll have to venture “North/South of the 60” to really see the aurorae in all of its splendor over the next few years.

Does the sunspot cycle tell the whole picture? Certainly, the Sun most likely has longer, as yet undiscovered cycles. For about a century now, astronomers have used the Wolf Sunspot Number as calculated mean average to describe the current state of activity seen on the Sun. An interesting study calls this method into question, and notes that the direction and orientation of the heliospheric current sheet surrounding the Sun seems to provide a better overall depiction of solar activity.

Other mysteries of the Sun include: just why does the solar cycle seem baked in at 11 years? Why don’t we ever see spots at the poles? And what’s in store for the future? We do know that solar output is increasing to the tune of 1% every 100 million years... and

a billion years from now, Earth will be a toasty place, probably too warm to sustain liquid water on its surface...

Which brings us to the final point: what role does the solar cycle play versus albedo, global dimming and climate? This is a complex game to play: Folks have literally gone broke trying to link the solar cycle with terrestrial human affairs and everything from wheat crops to stock market fluctuations.

See for yourself. You can keep track of Sol's daily activity online: our favorite sites are SpaceWeather, NOAA's space weather/aurora activity page, and the SOHO and SDO websites.

Source: <https://www.universetoday.com/139189/are-we-headed-towards-another-deep-solar-minimum/>

## Maine QSO Party

Only one county was spotted on W6RK – Cumberland ME with K1JB. There may have been 4 or 5 ME stations on the air. More show up in the NE QP each year.

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from the 3830 contest reflector:

**K1JB - fixed - Cumberland ME - 63 cw 460 ssb qso**

Poor propagation -- especially to Europe and the West Coast -- and miserable fast QSB made this one a real challenge. But at times the pileups were deep. Many thanks to all who stayed with it and were patient with me.

**K4BAI - fixed - GA 4 cw 1 ssb**



Worked everyone I heard in the ME QP. I don't think this format of everyone working everyone in a state QSO party is finding wide acceptance. Thanks for the QSOs. 73,  
John, K4BAI

## Events for County Hunters

Sept 29-30  
Texas QSO Party  
[www.txqp.net](http://www.txqp.net)

6 1600z to 7 2200z  
**California QSO Party**  
CW Ph Serial, county or SPC  
[www.cqp.org](http://www.cqp.org)

13 0300z to 14 2100z  
**Nevada QSO Party**  
CW Ph Dig Serial, county or SPC  
[nvqso.com](http://nvqso.com)

13 1600z to 14 2200z  
**Pennsylvania QSO Party**  
CW Ph Dig Serial, county or SPC  
[paqso.org](http://paqso.org)

13 1700z to 14 0500z  
**Arizona QSO Party**  
CW Ph Dig Serial, county or SPC  
[www.azqsoparty.org](http://www.azqsoparty.org)

13 1800z to 14 1800z  
**South Dakota QSO Party**  
CW Ph Dig RS(T), county or SPC  
[www.sdqsoparty.com](http://www.sdqsoparty.com)

20 1400z to 21 0200z

**New York QSO Party**

CW Ph Dig RS(T), county or SPC

[www.nyqp.org](http://www.nyqp.org)

21 1700z to 22 0100z

**Illinois QSO Party**

Ph RS(T), county or SPC

[www.w9awe.org/ILQP.html](http://www.w9awe.org/ILQP.html)

27 0000z to 28 2359z

**CQ Worldwide DX Contest,**

SSB Ph RS, CQ zone

[www.cqww.com](http://www.cqww.com)

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2018/October%202018%20Corral.pdf>