

County Hunter News

April 2019

Volume 15 Issue 4

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation.

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://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 . Please check it out.

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Wow – some sunspots this month with sunspot number up to 48 and solar flux up to 80 at one point. First part of the month started out with zero sunspots that lasted two weeks. Now, we have some sunspots from old cycle 24 appearing along with coronal holes and solar flares. Propagation on 20M has not been much better and 15 and 17m are still poor most of the time. Some contacts being made there in state QSO parties but not many.

These sunspots are from the last cycle and not indicative of a new cycle starting. That could be a year or more off in the future.

2) The Awards System Program was rewritten by Don, K3IMC. The old was so obsolete it was very hard and labor intensive to use. Shortly we should see lots of LC Awards and others appear – ones that have been backlogged for months .

3) Two new proposals for entry level ham licenses have been put on public notice by

the FCC and are available for comment. We cover both proposals later in this issue.

4) Lots of reports this month on State QSO Parties – and more coming up in April along with several “State Parks” on the Air event.

5) The MI Mini is coming up next month. Still time to get on board! Many mobiles will be making long trips to and from the convention so check the K3IMC planned trips page. It's one of the biggest events of the year and one of the busiest times for mobile activity! Pack for possible COLD weather. For the past two years, it never got above 40F for the entire time at the Mini. Then again, it could be 60F.

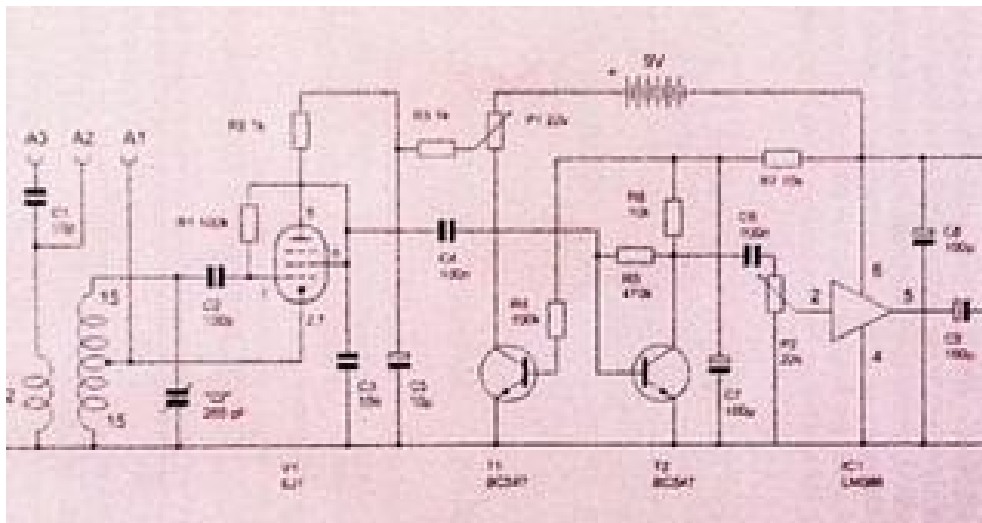
6) Dayton/Xenia Hamvention is coming up in Mid May. Are you on board? About 30,000 folks head to this largest event in the world for ham radio enthusiasts.

On the Trail of Regens

While 'regen' receivers are now a 100 year old design, new kits using this technology keep appearing – many for short wave listeners. A German kit that was only available in Europe is now available on Ebay to make yourself a compact one tube/IC amplifier radio that tunes 3-12 MHz.

It joins kits from MFJ and others than are available for a couple hour construction to make yourself a 'shortwave radio'. Runs on batteries.

Back in the 1950s, after WW2 and during the 'Cold War', many of the now senior hams got into the hobby by first building Knight and Heathkit shortwave radios (all tube back then) like the Ocean Hopper, Space Spanner, Span Master. You'll see those at hamfests for sale, with the then lowest cost Ocean Hopper now commanding the highest price – up to \$250 with all the coils and the accessory cabinet in good condition.



It's a design with a tapped coil in the cathode circuit for feedback. There is no 'fine tuning' but instructions for adding one if you want. Probably a good idea, too!

South Carolina QSO Party

The SC QSO Party got off in good style. Two mobiles, N4CW and K5CM were there and workable from most of the USA with good mobile setups. Likely most or all of the 46 counties were on the air for the event. Multipliers are 'per mode' so those that operated digital, SSB and CW could have 3 times as many multipliers. Several bonus stations were on the air – but tough to find on CW – and one bonus county – Abbeville – was there on CW for the extra points.

N4CD/m was on the air for a few hours and caught 13 counties there.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N4CW mobile 824 CW 102 SSB QSO

Quite a workout in the rain! Jim, W4TMO drove (navigated and planned route strategy). This is our first mobile attempt at working on county lines...why didn't we think of this before? N1MM+ Logger made it real easy. The biggest difficulty was finding a safe-enough place to pull over and operate.

We were going to stop for dinner in Abbeville but were too early for it to be open, so we just pressed on!

Conditions were pretty rough, between propagation, car in motion (did I mention that when you go over a bump or pothole in the road that my right index finger, right over the letter "J" tends to create a lot of J's in the logger entry field? Also, if I'm entering a call it's never right -- thanks for being patient while I made corrections!).

Definitely, mobile operation in a small SUV is a challenge.

Statistics (approximate): we made QSO's from 18 different counties and the most Q's were in KERS and CLRN. We made a few SSB Q's, all on 40. Notable number of Q's by DL3DXX, VE3UTT, and K4AMC...we appreciate the Q's and the amazing ability to find our signal wherever we were!

The rig used was my old K3, and the antenna farm consisted of a "bug catcher" type antenna using the "bug catcher" coil and home-brew copper pipe mast along with a "bug catcher" top hat! Along with that I had a small Outback antenna on 20 which gave us trouble with r.f. into the car's computer (weird false error condition...didn't impact driving), and used an MFJ heliwhip on 40. The Outback and MFJ were mounted on an L-bracket on the roof rack...grounded the bracket to the top of the car with braid and sheet metal screws.

Suspicion is that the hood, not having grounding straps to the body didn't shield the engine compartment where the car's computer resides. More experimentation is in order before the FQP in late April. We definitely need at least three antennas to give us the flexibility in band changing from the operator's seat...I suspect a screwdriver antenna is too slow for rapid band changing.

Anyway, Jim and I had a great time and want to thank the SC sponsors of this event; we enjoy participating.

73, Bert N4CW

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 254 CW 591 CW

I want to thank everyone who participated in the 2019 SCQP. Even with poor band conditions, contacts were made we still had a blast! I want to thank Bill N4IQ for hosting the SC station for the Chairman's Challenge special event station. Our operators were N4IQ and W4MY mainly on CW and I enjoy the SSB more for a change. The event began with a call from Bill on Friday morning at 9:00 am asking me to come over and help him get his Windom antenna back in the air. Of course, it was pouring rain on Friday, but the antenna was back up and ready for the big day. Marty W4MY is the chairman of the NCQP and he arrived in Simpsonville on Friday evening to help us operate on Saturday. On Saturday morning close to 9 am, Marty and arrived at the N4IQ Mega station. I began running SSB on 40m and Marty took CW on 20m and we went to work. Bill was manning the spotting page filling in as needed. Toby and Sarge (Bill's K-9 s) also assisted.

The first few hours were pretty busy. 20m was EU and West and 40m was everywhere except for NC/SC/GA. We worked everyone that we could hear. We took a break around 1800z and came back for the second shift. Of course 40m we long and 20m started to tank in the early afternoon, so we moved to 40m CW 80m. 80m was in good shape for us. I was finally able to work some SC and NC stations. Around 2200z, I believe that

Bill asked me if I wanted to operate 160m SSB . I had been going almost non-stop since 10 am on Phone and I was also thinking about the long drive ahead of me....but then I said we'll I'll try it until the end of the contest. I had never been on 160m with power and an amazing antenna, so I tried it. Prop on 160m was amazing. It was open to the Eastern US and we ended up making another 104 contacts on 160m during the last 90 minutes of the contest. We had a great time at Bill's QTH.

NE4EA handled the digital mode of WN4AFP from his home in Horry county. Thanks for all the Qs! Until next year.. .73s Dave WN4AFP

K5CM mobile 884 CW 250 SSB

Melissa (N5KK) and I drove down from Cary, NC and were a little late getting started. Melissa did the phone operating and I did the CW. Conditions were fair with 20 meters going out early in the afternoon. 40 was our best band, but 80 had some good runs in the evening, even working DL3DXX before sunset.

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

18 or more: DL3DXX, VE3UT, W6OAT, W5CW, N5KW, W5TM, K3WJV,
10 to 16: W8PI, K4YT, N2CQ, N2IGW, W4IHI, KA3QLF, K4HQQ, K3TW, K0PC,
W8TM, K0HNC, N6MU, K4BYN, K3MAW

Thanks to Dave WN4AFP and crew for putting this party together.

73,
Connie and Melissa

K2SX - fixed - SC 183 CW QSO

Activity within SC seemed down a lot or maybe skip was just too long to hear any SC stations. Good outside interest though. Thanks to those who worked me

- - -

NI7R - fixed - Charleston SC 135 CW QSO

I had a lot of trouble copying the weaker stations here due to high noise level. Thanks for your patience. I think I need a receiving antenna. Also, my amp kept going into fault on 80 meters, so a bunch of 80 meter QSOs were made with low power. I never did hear a bonus station. I think they all crowded into the phone bands.

K3, KPA500 amp, 17 foot whip (with coils for 40 and 80 meters) on top of an all metal ladder

- - -

K4BYN - fixed - NC 49 CW Q Mults 30

Short prop was difficult on Saturday on 40 meters. Thanks to Bert, N4CW and to K5CM for their outstanding mobile operations.

- -

K4AMC - fixed - TN - 45 Q 25 mults

Thanks for contest. Storm last couple hours had to QRT.

- - - -

KS4YX - fixed - SC 4 CW 36 SSB 141 digital Q

I had a grand time, but figuring the multipliers for this scoring review is somewhat confusing. I worked 9 bonus stations and included their value in computing my score. I realize that the review committee will have the final tally.

- - - - -

N6MU – fixed- CA 20 CW 18 SSB QSO 31 mults

N6MU with SSB Qs? Poor conditions and little CW activity on 20 drove me to it. Never heard W4CAE on CW and only got WW4SF there by asking a SSB station to give me one and he did. Got K2SX to try 15 and it worked. By the time 40 opened up out here WN4AFP was the only one I could hear and I heard NO SC stations on 40 CW the last two hours. Where did everyone go? 73...

John, N6MU

Bakelite Patent 100 Years Old

Bakelite Patent Awarded 100 Years Ago

Radio amateurs of a certain age are more familiar than most newcomers with the trade name Bakelite, which derives its name from its inventor Leo Baekeland, who developed Bakelite phenolic resin, the first thermosetting plastic, in 1907. His process patent for making insoluble products of phenol and formaldehyde -- the components of Bakelite -- was filed that year, and Baekeland was awarded a patent a century ago come this December. Bakelite found a place in numerous technologies, including early ham gear and radios, widely employed as an insulating material.

Once a Bakelite product is formed, it will not change shape or melt under heat. In compression molding, the resin is generally combined with fillers such as wood or asbestos before it's pressed into the ultimate product shape. Tube sockets often were constructed using Bakelite. It later found its way into such products as jewelry. In February 1909, Baekeland officially announced his achievement at a meeting of the New York section of the American Chemical Society.

Source: ARRL Weekly Newsletter

de N4CD: All the radios from the early 20s had Bakelite front panels and tube sockets made from it. For decades, knobs were made with it.....

North Carolina QSO Party

There were a bunch of bonus stations to work – W4DW, W1VOA, NI4BK, W4MY but not that many mobiles out running. N4CW was busy on CW and K3TD ran a few. On

SSB , K4AQL ran six counties.

Heavy rain hit the western part of the state. Eastern part enjoyed above normal temps.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

K4AQL mobile - 286 CW QSO

Six counties activated, one bonus station I think. Tad, K3TD, and I planned the weekend for maximum fun, minimum stress while at the same time trying to host all the party goers all over the country and the world to the greatest extent possible. We considered our own scores unimportant. We split our time between K4QPL/m (this report) and K3TD expedition mode, multi-op, mixed CW/SSB High Power from Pender County. (Separate report to follow.)

SC contest was also cut short to 5 hours so we could get over to my Topsail Beach house (Pender County) in time for leisurely dinner and a good night's sleep. HP made SSB more fun also until about 1900Z when we shut down, packed up and then took the long way home mobile CW.

Conditions were pretty poor on Saturday in SC with 40M being the only game in town. We had some intermittent RF issues which were frustrating trying to keep N1MM in line with the IC-7610. That persisted Sunday with high power but an extra ground and a tightly wound coax common mode choke made the Sunday mobile experience less of a challenge with much improved rate. Tad did a great job navigating and driving to get us through 6 counties in just 3 hours.

Thanks to all the friends of the Carolinas who made the weekend so much fun for us with a new pileup of friends at every county change. Love it!

73,

Jim, K4QPL and Tad, K3TD

--

K3TD County Expedition 78 CW 61 SSB

Expedition to Topsail Beach NC (PENder County)

Station: IC-7610, KPA-500, 80M OCF Dipole at about 20' apex. (No tall pine trees on the beach!)

Plan was to have more presence on SSB with HP using the KPA-500. While it definitely helped, we were "antenna challenged" and didn't get out as well as we hoped. We also didn't have a good ground and RFI created computer crashes and inaccurate logging. Much of the time we were having to send CW by hand.

Team time was split with CW LP mobile as K4QPL in 6 rural counties that were very much in demand. (See K4QPL mobile report). Also lost time for takedown and reinstalling rig in the car.

We could have spent more time in the countryside giving out rare NC county mults but we decided all CW and long hours of rough roads reduced the "fun factor" more than we wanted. We cede the "Ironman BIC" trophy to N4CW!

Thanks for all the participation.

73,

Tad, K3TD

Jim, K4QPL

- - - -

K0AP - fixed - KS - 30 CW 26 SSB q

From what I can tell, there was only one mobile station this year, N4CW who's done FB job as usual. NC has 100 counties and I am not sure if even half of them were activated. Fixed stations participation was very good. The organizers should do better job promoting this QP and try to bring more mobiles into the game. It is a shame such a big state with thousands of active HAM's to have such low mobile activity. Unless I see more mobile participation I will skip NCQP 2020.

73 Dragan K0AP

--

KI4MZC - fixed - GA 43 CW qso mults 25

I think I worked most of the CW stations participating and apparently I got the chairman on 40 & 80m. Seemed like it was a 2-band only contest.

- - -

N4YDU - fixed - Franklin NC - 458 CW 721 SSB

Kind of an up and down day in terms of rate - had fun chasing N4CW and K4QPL around for county mults.

73,

Nate/N4YDU

--

VE3UTT - fixed - Canada - 98 CW 39 SSB 58 mults

Thanks to the rovers keeping the contest going.
Especially N4CW; 16 Qs in the SCQP and 28 in the NCQP - amazing on the road two days straight.

K4BAI - fixed - GA 71 CW 44 SSB 52 mults

Nice contest with good in-state participation. Band conditions much better than for the SC QP on Saturday. Thanks for all QSOs, especially the mobiles, N4CW and K4QPL.

- - -

AD8J Remote - fixed - Buncombe NC - 339 CW 166 SSB

Less Q's but more mults than last year. Score about the same.

- - -

K2RYD - fixed - NY - 137 SSB QSO 62 mults

- - - -

On the Road with N4CD I

Time for a 'road trip' out to the eastern part of New Mexico and a bunch of counties there – and of course, parks. Ed, K8ZZ, had run some of the parks – some quickly – and uploaded to the WWFF (KFF-WWFF) database via his area coordinator, KA9JAC. I'd be running some of the same parks and uploading to both WWFF and the POTA (Parks on the Air) systems to give a few more folks credit. Yeah, it's confusing, and it gets worse as I'd wander through some parks that were only in one system, not the other, and vice versa. It makes for some challenges to keep things straight.

Sunday Mar 3

First, I have to get out to west TX, so the first day is nothing but driving 456 miles out to Fort Stockton, TX - one of the few big cities out that way along the interstate via I-10, Tarrant, Palo Pinto, Erath counties then down to Stephenville on route 181 into Somervell – then route 67 for a couple hundred miles going southwest through Comanche, Brown, Tom Green, etc. Just route 67 for mile after mile after mile. Hi hi. Speed limit gradually rises to 75 mph on highway 67 that goes from 4 lanes to later 2 lane road. Just before Fort Stockton, you hit I-10 with the 80 mph speed limit. Many doing 85 mph here but I stick to 80 as the car only gets 26-27 mpg at that speed. I hit some less run counties along the way. Rain and drizzle on and off all day but well above freezing! After Ft Stockton, it really gets to be smaller town TX with fewer motel and dinner choices. Stopped at the Super 8 there in Ft Stockton. Dinner at a Dragon Chinese Buffet place across the street. (drove past two repeat parks today without stopping - would take time to get to them, plus usual hour to 90 minutes there – just no time – parks I'd run before). Arrived in late afternoon. My car wanted to turn in to the parks but I resisted. Hard for park activator!

Monday Mar 4

There was still miles to go to get to the far ends of TX at Presidio. First you head through Alpine TX (on route 67 again) – a nice 'small town' fairly high in elevation that has about a 40 deg drop in temperatures from daily high to daily low. It's one of the few places in Texas a 'passive solar house' can work if you make the walls insulated enough – with the daily temperature variations – which averages out nicely in the hot, hot

summers. A passive solar house needs no a/c and minimal heat in the winter time. It's on the dry side, though. Elsewhere in TX, the humidity and typical 20 degree difference from high to low just won't let 'passive solar homes' to work – you need a/c to handle the summer heat loads with humidity. There are a few eco-types there in the nearby hills, but most houses here are just typical houses. The only thing there that keeps the town alive is a branch of TX State University, the fact that it is the county seat for the Brewster County, and the people traveling through to Big Bend National Park. This is the last place to grab a motel until you head 70 miles down the road to the park. There are some rooms at one lodge in the park – but reserve well ahead of time and not cheap at \$150/night or so.

What's this? On the road west to Marfa – there's heavy frost on the ground, grass and trees turning everything into a winter wonderland at 26 deg F and 4800 feet AMSL. The road is clear fortunately!



Alpine to Marfa Road – Heavy Frost

Brewster County which is larger than the whole state of Connecticut has a population under 10,000 people. Once you leave the town, there isn't much of anything along the highways – NOTHING. No Walmart here – folks drive the 70 miles to Ft Stockton! There are a few 'snow birds' that spend the winters here in trailer parks. There's a few motels here but most \$\$\$.

I head over to Marfa - to the west – another small town now in Presidio County and the county seat. Population under 1,800 folks. Not much here. One hotel from way back. Presidio County is 3,800 square miles, and if you combine it with Brewster, it's the same size as the entire state of Massachusetts with a whole lot less people! (10,000 square miles). 6.8 million folks in MA, and 14,000 folks in Brewster/Presidio. About 680 times less people! Of course, most of these two counties is 'desert' with less than 12 inches of rain a year so it is not prime territory for settling down. Whoa – everything

white up in the 'hills' here.

From Marfa, you head south on route 67 again – another 60 miles with almost nothing along the way. You do pass through the ghost town of Shafter – I should say 'former town' with a few fallen down buildings. Population now 10. Back in 1880 to 1940s, there were six working silver mines here with a peak population of 4,000! Folks made lots of dollars. Over 50 million oz of silver was mined from this area.

When the last mines shut down in the 1940s – due to lack of workers (WW2) and union activity, the town died and the people left. In 2012, one mine re-opened here. There's nothing to see and what is there is fenced off. It's the only bump in the road and there is not even a gas/convenience store here. Another 18 miles later you arrive in Presidio TX

I decided to spend two nights here at the Riatta Inn – one of the two motels in the town of 4,100 people. Nearby are two never run parks and I'd do some sightseeing and enjoy the warmer weather. Back at home it was in the 20s and 30s. Here it had been 85, but only was in the 60s/low 70s when I was there. (in the summer time, you can count on 100+ for most of June – September). It gets so hot down there that most of Big Bend National Park shuts down for the summer months! It's across from Ojinaga, Mexico and there's an 'international bridge' if you brought your passport, leave all your radio equipment in the motel room, and want to head across. Even less on that side of the Rio Grande North branch of the river.

I head over to Fort Leaton, TX. I'd never heard of it, but it's one of the state historic sites and a park in the parks on the air program, so I'd check it out. Located a few miles just east of town, it goes back to the 1800s. This area was part of the Chihuahua Trail which ran from San Antonio to Chihuahua Mexico and was a trade route for a couple hundred years. At best, maybe 200 people traveled the trail in a year.

In the 1840s, John Leaton acquired the property and built a 'fortified' trading post adjacent to the trail. This fort was never a military use fort, but had to withstand Native American raiding parties that frequented the area. It continued as a trading post till 1884 with the death of the second husband of the widowed Leaton. The property was abandoned in 1927 and fell into disrepair. In the 1940s, the WPA did extensive survey work here, and eventually the site was acquired by the state in 1967 and work done to restore the fort to the condition it was in during the 1850s. The place is built of adobe bricks with walls from 18 to 44 inches thick! There are over 30 rooms here in this spacious facility. Lots of work was done to build this place! (a hundred thousand man hours?).

Well, Wiki paints the 'true picture' of early TX history – which is not all that great by modern standards

“ Benjamin Leaton was a trader, freight hauler along the Chihuahua Trail, and a bounty hunter paid by various local governments in Mexico for each scalp taken from an indigenous person. He also traded munitions to the Apache and Comanche for any stolen cattle they brought him. When Presidio County was established in 1850, Fort Leaton was its first seat of government. Leaton died in 1851, and his widow married Edward Hall who continued operating the freight business from the fort. Hall became financially indebted to Leaton's scalp hunting partner John Burgess. Hall defaulted on his debt to Burgess in 1864, and was murdered. Burgess took over the fort, and was in turn murdered by Leaton's son in 1875. The Burgess family remained in the fort until they abandoned it in 1926”.

So goes Texas history. The early history of the west was brutal with short lives for many.

I took the tour of the fort (Texas state pass gets you in free otherwise a few bucks), then got on the radio to activate this never run park. You really have to want to come here as it's miles and miles of driving off the interstate. In several runs in this and the next day, I put 196 QSOs into the log.

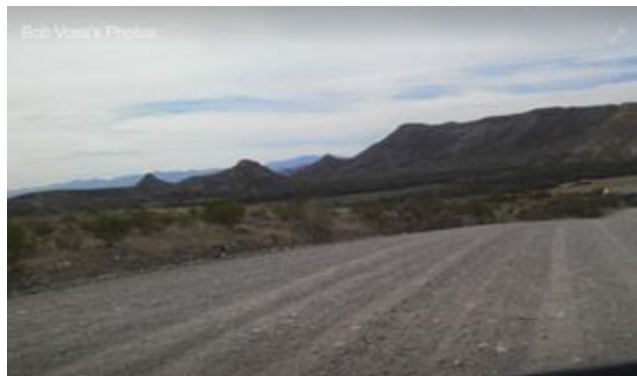


Nearby is Big Bend Ranch State Park – not to be confused with Big Bend National Park a bit to the east from here – another 60 miles. This park is HUGE with an area of 486 square miles! It's 4 miles east of Ft Leaton – and Ft Leaton also serves as the 'western visitor center'. You could probably apply the 'visitor center rule' from the NPOTA days

and run it at the fort, but why when it is 4 miles away? I head the 4 miles and find the gravel road to the visitor center in the park. You've got to go 27 miles on the 'well maintained' gravel road, but why? That's nearly an hour at 30 mph then an hour back, and the visitor center at Ft Leaton had all the info on the park. (and you could get your park permits there. I renewed my TX State Annual pass here - \$70).



I just go into the park a mile or so, find a spot on the side of the road, and put out a 'lightly' activated park.



Big Bend Ranch State Park
Gravel Road to visitor Center

Only 34 previous QSOs from here – not enough to 'quality it' in the WWFF system. I'd

take care of that. Sure enough, over the next two days, over 100 Qs go into the log for Big Bend Ranch SP. Not much to see here but great scenery and the drive on 170 along the river is rated 'one of the best drives' and 'one great motorcycle ride' by many travel sites. I head a dozen miles along the way later – then head on back to town.

Grab dinner at the Oasis Restaurant – one of two in town -which does American and Mexican dishes.

Later that afternoon, after dinner I'd hit Ft Leaton again for the folks who get home late and get on 40m SSB . Put 2 dozen in the log on that band but noisy with T-storms over good part of the country giving S9 static crashes. Catch a few more on CW on the bands.

Back to the Riatta motel on the north side of town. . There's not a movie theater or bookstore or much of anything in this town. Bring your own reading material!

Tuesday March 5

No breakfast at the Riatta Inn despite the \$90 price tag so I head over to the Oasis Restaurant for breakfast. Enjoy a nice omelet.

Repeat of yesterday with the same two parks run again. Try for early times to work DX. Tough for propagation from about as far away from EU as you can get in the US other than far west CA. Some DX goes into the log.

Did a bunch of sightseeing – but ran out of things to do. Finished reading book. Ran the parks a few times, and then late afternoon at Big Bend state park on 40m SSB . Actually run a bit after 2359z GMT time so get credit for another 'activation' on that date – hi hi. Got more than 10 on that date. It's getting dark so back to the motel for the night. Nice motel but \$\$\$\$. Not many choices here! My batteries are recharged so time to get moving and run a bunch more parks over the next week! Lots of miles to drive and places to be!

Wednesday March 6

Skip breakfast but grab a breakfast burrito and coffee in Marfa an hour later as I pass through quickly. I leave early (dark) in the morning to get underway. There seem to be a fair number of cars headed into Presidio but not many headed north. Hmmm?

Today I'd hit two new for me parks in west Texas. First up is Hueco Tanks State Park – a good 3 ½ hour drive from Presidio and an hour to the east of El Paso, TX. If you plan to go here, they accept 70 reservations for access to the park for hiking. That's about the only thing here. There's no camping, swimming, boating, etc. I didn't plan ahead and got to the gate outside the entrance where a ranger said 'only reservations' allowed in. Get in the line of cars and maybe they'll be some cancellations. Ooops.....I talk with him a bit later and tell him I don't want to go 'hiking' – just sit in the parking lot. He explained the parking lot for hikers is small so that is why they limit access. A bit more conversation and he says 'let me check'. Great - he speaks to head ranger on the radio and I can to and park by the HQ building parking lot just inside the park, not near the 'hiker's lot', and sit for an hour or so. Fantastic. Be aware if you go here for just radio, you might have access problems. Loads of folks were there hiking in the not too hot spring weather. Come summer time, and it is punishingly hot here.



Hueco Tanks is a small park in the low desert mountains in El Paso County TX. Here you'll find depressions in the rock that hold water year round – a scarce resource in west TX – and it's a site that goes back thousands of years. There are thousands of pictographs in the surrounding hills and it's a sensitive site for artifacts and history. “Hueco” in Spanish means 'hollows'. Luckily, I got in and had a good run from KFF-3018.

After that park, it was over to Franklin Mountains State Park just north of the city of El Paso. KFF-3012. It's easy to find off a major artery. There are a few access points. I picked the main one for the campground and large SP and it's on the west side of the

hills.....a bit tough for propagation going east – but it worked out OK. At 1900z on Wednesday the CWT occurs – 25+ wpm weekly test (1300z and 1900z for an hour each time). That's an easy way to put a pile of QSOs quickly into the log to get to the magic number of 44. Zipped along and after an hour, had 43Qs in the log already. Then hit the regular county hunter/park frequencies and added in another couple dozen. 20/30/40m CW. Skipped SSB here as others had been here before and put it out.



Texas has several mountain ranges – this being one of them. You've got the Guadalupe Mtns by Guadalupe Mountains National Park 200 miles east, Chisos Mountains fully contained within Big Bend, the Chianti Mountains down by Presidio, The Christmas Mtns near Big Bend National Park, and the Beach Mountains SE of Big Bend, and the Sierra del Carmen that starts at Big Bend and heads into Mexico with peaks up to 9,000 feet AMSL. Of course, most of TX mountains start at 4,000 to 5,000 AMSL so it's not mountains going up 8,000 feet from average ground level like Colorado...but it's still scenic and a challenge for mountain climbers! The eco-systems at mountain tops is different from 'down below' as well.

There was some time left today, so it was off to Chamizal National Memorial – one of the old National Parks on the Air sites from 2016. I was the first (and apparently only one) to get 'permission' to operate here with a special use permit needed that took weeks and weeks to get. So this was a return visit- the fourth. Wow – this place is now under massive reconstruction of the roads/parking lot with most blocked off. Just 20 parking spots remain and I occupy one for an hour with trucks whizzing by and machinery running all over. My usual spot way in the back is blocked off. Hmmm. It's a bit noisy here as it is right in downtown El Paso and 500 feet from the big giant 40 foot high fence between the US and Mexico just south of the 'park'.



This park also is where the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail passes by. You see the 'auto route' markers on the adjacent street Piasono Blvd. . This trail is only in the Parks on the Air system, not WWFF-KFF. Confusing? You bet. The "historic" and "scenic trails" were added to POTA – state by state – but not in WWFF at all. Well, I could whip off a quick 10 for an activation – that's all that's needed there – and get credit and be the first to run the TX part of this trail which heads up to Albuquerque NM then to Santa Fe along I-25 and US Route 1 for a bit. Made a quick run from POTA K-4568. There are 55 sites recognized along this 1800 mile route that was known as the 'silver route' from Mexico City north. The silver from the mines in Mexico was hauled north to the Spanish missions and HQ in ALB and Santa Fe up north – then usually sent overseas to Spain. It was in use from the 1600s to about 1900.

Then I made a quick run for KFF-0770 at the same parking spot – Chamizal. Didn't even spot on the park sites – just county hunters to get credit for an activation. It was getting late in the day and I wanted to avoid rush hour which is bad here. It still took 35 minutes to go the 7 miles to the motel with major construction on I-10 going east. Likely would have been an hour at 5pm!

Super 8 motel here – bargain price of \$50 including tax! I've been here several times before. Always good! Dinner at the Lin Buffet a mile away. Excellent. Probably 100 choices of places to eat in El Paso.

Thursday March 7

Today it's into NM for a lot of parks strung out along I-25 nicely. Near Las Cruces you find a semi-urban park – **Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park – KFF-2705** in Dona Ana County NM. It preserves a riverside forest (a bosque). It's a small 300 acre type park. You can take a ranger led tour of the various eco-systems here. Good bird watching at the right times. Elevation here is 3,900 feet. Had a good run then left. Ed, K8ZZ, had run many of these just a few weeks ago.



I wound up spending \$40 on a New Mexico yearly park pass – good for a year. Most of the parks have a \$4-7 entry fee. I might come out ahead – but some parks you can go in – and skip the 'self register' likely and not pay. Well, I'm running enough NM parks so I might as well contribute a bit to the state coffers to keep them running. We need to be good 'ambassadors' so radio operators have a good reputation at the parks. You can get the pass whether resident or not. I'll hit a half dozen or more state parks – and who knows about later in the year?



Next up is Leasburg Dam SP. Both Ed, K8ZZ and Rick, AI5P have run the parks along I-25 and Rick has run most of them in the state of NM. It's 25 miles north of Las Cruces. It's KFF-2702 still in Dona Ana County NM so I'm hoping folks show up for it. Not disappointed as over 50 go in the log. This is on the Rio Grande River. You've got camping and bird watching here – and kayaking, fishing and canoeing in the river in winter season. Nearby is historic Fort Seldon – where the ‘historic' trail crosses.

There's a sign for a marker for the El Camino Real de Tierra Ardentro National Historic Trail in NM. It's only in POTA so I can whip off a quick 10 or so and get credit for another park in that system. AI5P has made over 300Qs from here. After a bit further, the trail diverges from I-25 and you can't get to it easy headed north without detours.

Time to head north – I've got a busy day planned. **Percha Dam State Park** is next headed north. K8ZZ was here, too Now it's Sierra County NM. It's only 80 acres and the dam is used for irrigation of the chile crop downstream. It just raises the river level a few feet. No problem. I pull in at 1900z and whip off a few dozen contacts for KFF-2711.



More parks to come today. Next up headed north is **Caballo Lake State Park** – with a much bigger dam to generate a good size lake. KFF-2690 and still in Sierra County. The dam is 96 feet tall and 4600 feet wide and creates a 15 mile lake – the third largest lake in NM. Lots of good fishing here in the lake. Hiking, horseback, 170 campsites here. Had a good run then hustled to the next to get it in. Elevation now 4, 477 feet AMSL.



Yet another 'Percy Pic'. N4CD was there!

The weather is great – 79 degrees and warm ! Back home it's still in the deep freeze but going to defrost there soon in Dallas.

The last for the day – busy day – is **Elephant Butte State Park – KFF 2697**. I pull in late in the day at 2145z. I'm on Mountain Standard Time and have been since leaving Presidio TX. It's getting dark back east. It's still in Sierra County. I get on 20M SSB and the east coast folks are home from work. Lots go in the log – over 50 on SSB ! Then I hit the CW bands and finish around 2236z. Time to head on in to the motel in Truth or Consequences, NM.



You've heard of Truth or Consequences NM before? If you are an oldster – and remember TV shows from the 1950s and 1960s, it will ring a bell. Well, it ran till the 70s in syndication. Other than being the county seat for Sierra County, it's history goes back a bit.

From Wiki:

“Originally named Hot Springs, the city changed its name to "Truth or Consequences", the title of a popular NBC Radio program. In March 1950, Ralph Edwards, the host of the radio quiz show Truth or Consequences, announced that he would air the program on its 10th anniversary from the first town that renamed itself after the show; Hot Springs won the honor, officially changing its name on March 31, 1950 (the program broadcast from there the following evening, April 1). Edwards visited the town during the first

weekend of May for the next 50 years. This event was called "Fiesta" and included a beauty contest, a parade, and a stage show. The city still celebrates Fiesta each year during the first weekend of May."

Later it became a TV show – with a wacky quiz and stunts – running till the late 70s.

At T or C, there are several hot springs around, and the US government even experimented with geothermal energy here.

Stayed at the Travelodge here – very good. It was a long day with many parks. Dinner at the Cochina Restaurant.

The town name is too long for most road signs and you'll see signs for T or C on the highway! 50 miles to T or C. Hi hi.

Friday March 8

Interstate I-25 now is going up and down good size hills. In many places there are 'wind tunnels' and highway signs saying 'danger – high wind area'. So far no problems. I'm headed to **Bosque del Apache NWR KFF -0458**. Many NWRs are not easy to find. This is well marked and easy to find just off the interstate with a big visitor center. Arrive at 1447z and get to work. I'm now in Socorro County – a new one. Run goes well with 50+ in log. Whoa! Did I hear AJ5ZX on CW? Great to have you join the CW gang, Randy, along with W6TPC who worked me many places this trip.



The name means 'woods of the Apache'....and this NWR comprises over 50,000 acres of land in the Rio Grande Valley. Over 180,000 visitors stop by each year. Not even a mile off the interstate. There have been over 358 different bird species spotted here!

Up the road a bit is another NWR off the interstate with a short detour. Oh....you take the exit – then 1.5 miles of gravel road to get to US Highway 1 headed north to get to **Sevillita NWR** – KFF-0462 - same county. There's a nice parking lot for it along US-1. No one else around there but a ranger later comes by and circles and leaves. Get my 44+ and head out.



Do print out directions to the various NWRs. They'll come in handy. Some are well marked. Many back east are challenges to find on your own – no signs, back roads, sometimes limited access, too.

Hey, just up ahead is another sign for a trail marker for the El Camino Real de Tierra Ardentro National Historic Trail – K-4569 for the part in NM. Find it just to the east and whip out just over 10 Qs. Not sticking around long! Leave. Another day, another 'activation' for a POTA only K-4569. In that system, the leader board goes by 'activations' so quickie hits seem to be the norm for many of the operators there. Make 10-20 contacts and head to the next park. They repeat next weekend. Etc. POTA rewards activations just like NPOTA did. The WFF system rewards 'parks run' and you aim for 44 Qs per park to fully activate it and get full credit. Repeats count for nothing there. So if have already run the park, and pass by it, I might do a quickie for POTA credit.

I'm averaging 70+ per the regular parks that are in both systems on this trip. Some over 100 Qs.

Wow.....a noisy vehicle comes up from behind on the interstate.....it wipes out the radio from 300 feet away.....and passes me by – A Honda Hybrid.....noise till it is 300 feet past me! Don't buy one of these if you plan on operating radio!

Now I've got to head Northeast to keep on schedule. I head to Mountainair, NM – high up in the hills at 6500 feet AMSL, population 1,100 folks. Cooler in the summer time and this location is near the geographic center of the state of NM. On the way here, you find the Salinas Pueblo National Monument at Abo. There are 3 different sites you can run in the park system – and this was 'big' in the NPOTA days. It's carried over into the park systems for POTA and WWFF as KFF-0961 (and K-0961). Now I'm in Torrance County NM. Pull in quick and do the CW bands and leave with 24Q, I ran this before in NPOTA (216Q) and I'll hit two more parks in Torrance so don't push it.



Later I check and no one has been here since 2016. Hmm...maybe I should have spent a bit more time here? Oh well. Wasn't really on the schedule, but the road went right by it! It's hard to resist not getting an 'activation credit'. These are the ruins of Spanish built missions/churches to try to convert the Native Americans here – built in the 1600s. They fell into disrepair just 50 years later as the native population seemed to vanish, but now there are protected ruins at 3 separate locations. The Abo site is just a mile off the highway and if you are traveling route 60 – an easy stop. The other ruins, which are more massive, take some doing on back roads to get to them – did that in 2016.

from the gov't website:

“The Abo Unit of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument sits west of the town of Mountainair, New Mexico, and contains approximately 370 acres. The number and size of unexcavated pueblo mounds suggest that when the Spanish arrived in 1581 they would have found a thriving community. In 1622 Fray Francisco Fonte was assigned to the Abo Mission. An early smaller Abo Church and Convento were built starting in 1623. Similar to Quarai, the convento for this church curiously contained a Circular Kiva. Construction on this earlier church and convento was completed by 1628. In 1629, a second missionary, Fray Francisco Acevedo, was assigned to Abo. In 1640 Acevedo began to renovate the Abo church and convento. This renovation increased the size of the church and included many improvements. This new, larger church was built around the smaller church.

Like Gran Quivira, a combination of disease, drought, famine, and Apache raiding led to the abandonment of Abo in 1673. For over 100 years Abo was quiet. In 1815 Spanish sheep herders attempted to return to the area, but were pushed out by Apaches in 1830. Settlers would permanently return in 1865.”

- -

Possibly, the Spanish brought European diseases that wiped out the indigenous folks, or it could have been some 'climate change' as El Nina and La Nina cycle back and forth bringing different rainfall patterns here to the high desert, along with the Apache raids, that did this in. It's sad to think how many million man hours were spent trying to 'convert' native belief systems to western god belief systems and the grief it caused through centuries, even Millennia of wars throughout the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and through many countries worldwide in the name of 'religion'— and is still causing grief, death as various religions – mainly two, try to extend and convert populations to their belief/ideologies. Oh, well. Throughout the western US, you'll find hundreds of 'missions' whose aim was exactly that throughout Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California up the coast, often enslaving the native population to mine minerals, produce agriculture products, and cough up wealth and manpower for the 'church' back in Rome.

More parks to run today and time is short. Head to **Manzano Mountain State Park KFF-2704** in Torrance NM at 7250 feet AMSL. Air is getting thinner here. Manzano is 'apple tree' in Spanish. Up north in the top part of NM, it's snowing and the ski areas are doing big business at this time. I'll wait till summer to run things like Eagle Nest State Park! It's cool at this park. Only gravel roads in the park. Not much here but camping and hiking. Find a spot to run and have a good run. The pavement ends as you enter the park. This park closes for the season in November and re-opens later. It was open in mid March fortunately. Depends upon the snow pack.



Hustle a bit. Talk with the ranger at the ranger station about how to get to Cibola National Forest.. It's 'SEE''- bow-luh' NF. OK...got to have the right pronunciation to be understood – hi hi. Right adjacent to the park. Easy to get into after Apr 1 but don't venture far without 4 wheel high clearance vehicle on the dirt/mud roads. Run the Cibola NF at a different spot, KFF-4476 with a good run. There are many areas of Cibola NF around the state - it's spread out in 7 counties.

Tine is short so I hustle to Santa Rosa and the state park there. Arrive at KFF- 2714 in Guadalupe County NM at 2247z late in the day. Can I get my 44+? Start on 20m SSB – usually good for a dozen or two but the bands shut down fairly early – 24Q - good. At 2301z switch to 20m CW – 13Q there, then 30m for 21Q, and 24 on 40m CW. Success. This park on a nice lake but take a sharp right when the GPS says you are there. You are almost there but aren't until you find the sign and road in to the state park which isn't all that obvious! Hi hi. It's all Corps of Engineering land otherwise and that doesn't count. The GPS lady has been good finding things but not all the parks are in her database. Sometimes she gets real close but not exactly there. Had to use the spotting pad and Google Maps to navigate to a few places on this trip.



After the park run, I stayed at a Days Inn in the town of Santa Rosa which is right on I-40. Turkey dinner next door at the Santa Fe Grille. Very good. This town is along 'historic route 66' – which follows the highway. If you drive the main drag in town, it's a throwback to the 1950s with now closed motels, restaurants, service stations for a mile or two along the main drag. Some of the original motels still open, though, and some of the original restaurants still going. However, most folks just keep driving on I-40 and don't take the scenic detours. Here, you can get on 'main street', drive the original route for a few miles, then easily get back on the interstate.

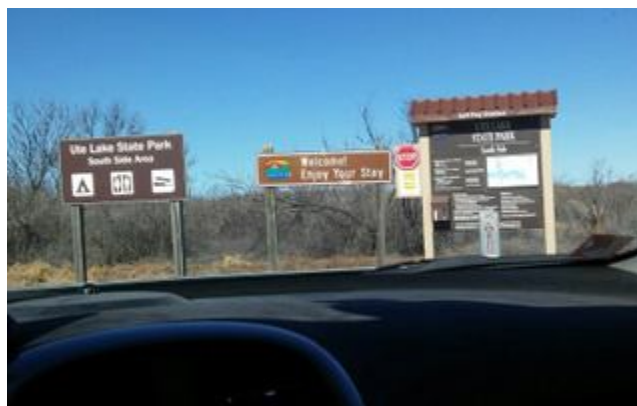
Saturday March 9

Today will be a busy day. The OK QSO Party runs 9-9 central time today – just about all day. My clock is on mountain time – an hour slower. I might be able to hear eastern OK on 40M and work a few mobiles or fixed stations. Otherwise, I'm likely to just hear people working them! I'm headed to the very northwest corner of OK but it's miles and miles to get there. Tonight is the shortest “night” of the season as Daylight Saving Time starts and we lose an hour of sleep.

First up is Conchas Lake State Park KFF-2694 in San Miguel County NM. It's a 30-40 mile extra trip to get there – and pretty much in the middle of nowhere. Pull in early in the morning and have a decent run. Don't stick around longer than it takes to put a bunch in the log.



Next up is Ute Lake State Park KFF-2718 in Quay County. A good crowd shows up with 40+ on 20M SSB . More park chasers around on weekends by far. Run 20/30/40 CW, too. It's a 13 mile reservoir on the Canadian River. Boating, fishing, all the usual water sport type activities as well as camping there.



Head north running a few county lines. You can reach Harding County with a 1 or 2 mile detour off the main route – so run the Quay/Harding C/L.

You can catch the Santa Fe Trail in NM in many spots – but the Cimarron Branch, which was 100 miles shorter but lacked water most of the way – hits the top NE corner of NM as it heads to the city of Santa Fe in NM over 100 miles to the west. It's 17 miles north

of the town of Clayton, NM where you find markers and you can run the 'historic trail' for the Parks on the Air system. It's not in the WWFF-KFF system. I do a quick run of 20 and leave.

Next up are the 'grasslands' of this corner of NM, into TX and OK. You'll recall the dust bowl of the 1930s when land was first farmed in the late 1880s with the invention of the steel plow capable of working and plowing up the tough grasslands. For thousands of years, this had been fertile grassland with deep rooted grass anchoring the top soil down through the arid climate. They only get maybe 15 inches of rain a year here – and much of it comes in storms that pass overhead quickly. Some years are good – some not so good for rain. The grass survived the tough winters and variable rainfall years and with deep roots, held the soil in place all year long. Large herds of buffalo roamed the area – the buffalo ate the grass, and pooped all over the place – fertilizing the grass. It worked out well until settlers moved in and the buffalo were killed off. Much of this land was settled by 'homesteaders' – farm the land for at least 5 years and it became yours.

When the land was farmed, poor practices were used for erosion control – straight line deep plowed rows, no rows of windbreak trees, and cutting the crops down to ground level at harvest. When years of drought started, with the shallow roots of most food crops – that died at the end of the summer, the land simply dried up, the new crops failed due to lack of soil moisture and rainfall, and the dust began to blow, piling up drifts 8 and 10 feet high in places. Most of the population headed elsewhere (many to California) as it was impossible to farm any longer. Or breathe! Animals died from the dust and lack of food, and places were abandoned left and right. By 1940 most of the area saw a 90% reduction in people. Naturally, as the farms disappeared, so did the towns that served them. (NW panhandle of TX, panhandle of OK, SW KS and SE CO)

At one point, the dust from here reached all the way to Washington DC with choking dust falling on the Capitol. It was only then that Congress sprung into action to help out.

The government moved in and bought up much of the land – in the NW corner of NM (Kiowa Grasslands), in TX and OK (Rita Blanca Grasslands), and in CO (Comanche Grasslands). Hundreds of thousands of acres in five states were acquired by the government and 230,000 acres in NM, OK, TX in this corner area. All of these grasslands are a patchwork quilt of government and private holdings. Much of the area is 'leased' for grazing as well.

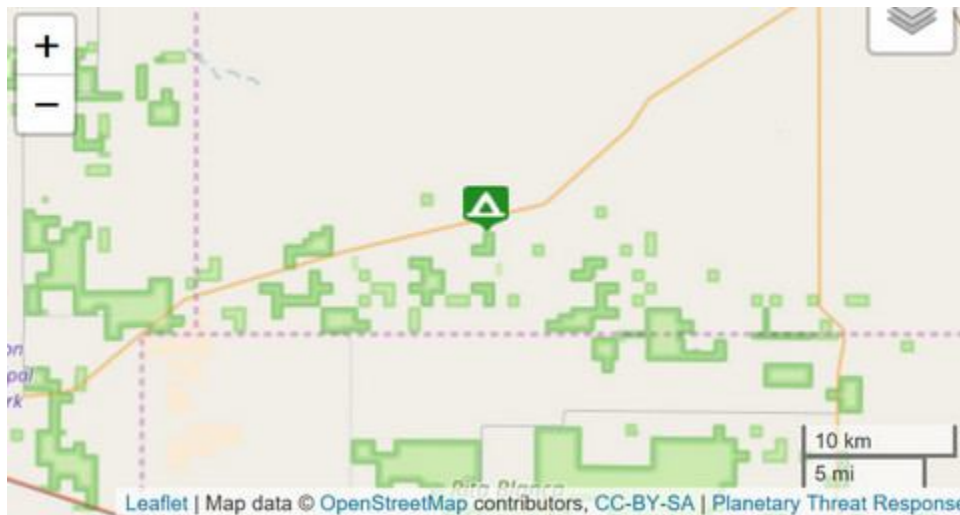
There's a picnic area for the Santa Fe Trail along the main highway – 17 miles north of Clayton - and a gate you can go along 2 miles of trail with a high clearance 4 wheel drive

vehicle with some campsites along it. It's also in the Grasslands so you can run them here. Finding a spot that is marked otherwise and where you stop is sometimes challenging. Do your homework ahead of time! It's not like a state park with an 'entrance' and well marked. Ran the Kiowa Grasslands in Union County NM, then headed to OK and did the Rita Blanca Grassland there (Cimarron County OK) .

If you want to run it, look for 'picnic spots'. There are no 'campgrounds' other than primitive ones or where you can park on grasslands. Fore example, in OK:

“In OK panhandle, from Boise City take US-412 SW to village of Felt. Turn south and pass through village, 1/2 mile to end to "roadside" picnic area at end of street. “

That's about your only option.....there.



Above is a map of the grasslands the feds own....you can see it's bits and pieces so finding the right spot is challenging. If you look at the state maps, they'll show giant square blobs covering all of this area.....10x30 miles – but it is NOT all 'park' grassland!

In TX in the 'grasslands', there is a picnic areas.....look for Thompson Grove picnic area to find a place you can run it. You can also camp overnight here in your RV – but there are 'plague warnings' out for this area (from infected fleas) ...so don't touch any dead critters, use insect repellent, and be careful. People live out here on the farms nearby and survive, so just be cautious. Dallam County TX.

Otherwise, it's a Swiss cheese of pieces of this and that land where you'll be challenged

to be 'in the park'. Hi hi Same in NM, OK, TX.

After the 3 grassland runs....with the part in OK being used for the OK QSO Party – Cimarron County – I head on in to Dalhart TX to the Super 8 motel there via the grasslands and picnic area there. Been in Dalhart in Dallam County several times before. Dinner at the nearby Bar-H steak house. Great salad bar there.

Sunday Mar 11, 2019

Today I can run some counties/parks in OK in the OK QSO Party. We're now on Daylight Saving Time...well, other than AZ that doesn't change. Lost an hour. It's dark out in west TX at 7am. Dark at 7:30. Sunrise is after 8am now...but I'm moving along headed to OK from Dalhart. Hit the corner of Sherman, TX and run it early then head to Texas County, OK and the Optima NWR KFF-0487 and put it out just as the OK QP starts.



I'm in the OK QP and giving out the park. I get a good run here – OKQP chasers, park chasers and county hunters running up the totals. Good! I do both SSB and CW – running 'multi-mode' in the QSO Party. Don't know if any other mobiles are on both modes. I've heard a few mobiles out there – K5CM, K5WE but not getting to them where I am for the most part. Skip is too long on 40m. I do catch ID stations over the weekend for their ID QSO Party – some on SSB and some on CW. The WI QP will start here shortly and I'll be hunting for them when I'm not putting out something.

I've run this park before. I head east – first to Beaver County OK – and put it out – and then to the county line of Ellis//Harper and just do that for the county hunters and QP folks looking for OK mobiles. Takes a while to go the 150 miles through the panhandle.

It's a ways down to the next park at Black Kettle Grasslands in Roger Mills County. KFF-4575 only in WWFF-KFF system. There's a nice 'recreation area' right off highway 283 here about five miles north of the town. Stop and have a good run from here on SSB and CW. Even a few DX in the log at 1700z. No other OK mobiles worked from here on out but do catch several WI QP mobiles. They're hanging out mostly on 40M and I can work them on CW at times.

From the gov't website:

“The Black Kettle National Grassland contains 31,300 acres with 30,724 acres located near Cheyenne, Oklahoma, and the remaining 576 acres located near Canadian, Texas and comprising the Lake Marvin Recreation Area.

The McClellan Creek National Grassland contains 1,449 acres near Pampa, Texas, and includes the Lake McClellan Recreation Area.

The tracts that make up these National Grasslands were acquired by the United States Department of Agriculture in the late 1930s.”

I'd run Black Kettle today, and hit the McClellan one tomorrow!



The OK QP goes on for another hour and a half. I zip into the Washita Battlefield National Monument from the NPOTA days a few miles away. Still Roger Mills County. Don't have a lot of time so have a quick SSB only run. Catch 3 WI QP on the way out of the park. You've got a nice visitor center here for both the Battlefield and the Grasslands. No CW from here for the Battlefield. (Dang, I checked later and it seems that only N4CD has uploaded logs to the POTA system here, and they were from 2016!). I suspect there were a few more logs uploaded to WWFF along the way and I know others ran it in NPOTA. (For NPOTA you uploaded to ARRL LoTW for credit.)

There's also a small piece of this Black Kettle National Grassland that spills over into TX, with one area you can access (Lake Marvin) but that is not in the system and may never be. It would need a separate park number.

I want to get to Beckham County with a bit of time left to put it out. Zip on down there and quickly get 14Q in the log before the QP ends at 2100z. Then it's over. Ends early on Sunday – just 9am-4pm local OK time. Caught a few but not all that many. Later run it for the county hunters again.

Last, I head down to the motel in Erick, OK – a bump on the interstate I-40 only 7 miles from the TX border. It's small. It's got a Loves super convenience store with a Subway and gas station, one motel across the street – Days Inn, and one pizza place. That's it. Population 1,100 or so. So it's a small Simple Simon's veggie pizza for dinner. Not bad. Days Inn.

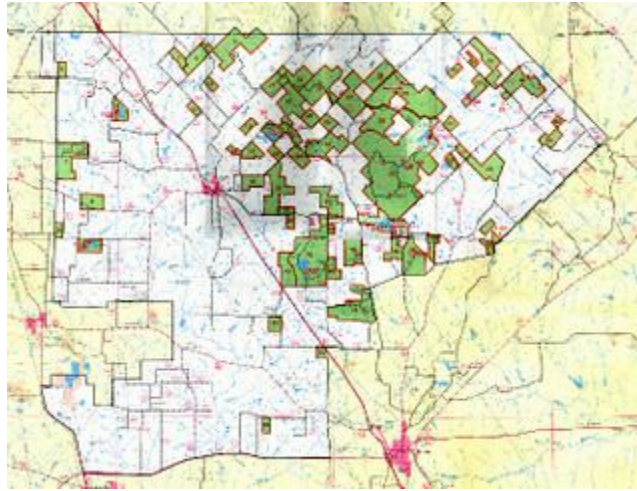
Monday March 11

It's time to be thinking about getting home. So far it's been a week on the road. But first....one more park – never run – 50 miles to the east over in Gray County TX. I zip through Wheeler early in the morning – not many around and head to **McClellan National Grasslands** with a nice visitor center just a few miles off the interstate. KFF-4581. I have a good run from there (44+) catching some of the EU park chasers on 20M CW. Things work out well. Rainy, foggy morning here at this early hour.



Next stop – home – 7 hours away and a couple hundred miles at 60-70 and 75mph on Route 287 going southeast. I run the counties as I go through them – Donley, Hall, Childress, Wilbarger, Hardeman, Wichita, Clay, Montague..... driving past signs for 2 or 3 different state parks. Seven hours to home driving 60, 65, and 70 mph.

Well, dang...there's still some time left before evening rush hour starts – I can make a quickie at the **LBJ Grasslands** with only a minor detour. I head for Black Creek Lake – one of the two spots that are 'in the park' and easy to find, the other being the TADRA trail head. Like the other 'grasslands' it's a Swiss Cheese of bits and pieces of private and fed land.



The 'green' is LBJ Grassland in several dozen small tracts. You've got two choices of spots within it that can be found easily. Otherwise, often the road goes by it, you have no idea when you are there and usually no way into it off the highway. If you are going to run things like this, do your homework ahead of time!

Get there, whip out 16 QSOs, mainly CW county hunters for Wise County TX and skedaddle out of there to get home. One more activation. Did not even spot on the parks web pages. Two hours to home and I can beat rush hour on mostly 6 and 8 lane roads with tons of urban traffic. Make it home with minimal delay.

- - -

Trip – 2330 miles in 9 days. Lots of parks and QSOs. Thanks for riding along.

OKLA QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running. Every county was on the air during the QSO party – some covered by 2, 3 and 4 mobiles. County Lines were allowed running up the QSO totals – you got credit for 2 or 3 counties with one contact but they counted for 2 or 3 separate QSOs. Maybe 9 mobiles were on the road giving out counties.

Looks like top scorer, K4BYN, reported working 69 of the 77 counties. Some were run late in the evening, maybe some not at all?

Connie, K5CM, is the 'spark plug' that keeps this event going year after year and does a great job. It seems I get up there for the QP about every five years or so.

From the 3830 reflector:

K5CM/m 1440 CW 582 SSB

As always thanks for the great mobile operators that really made the QP fun. KS5P, KE5XX, K5CM, N5KW, W0BH, KK6MC, K5WE, N4CD, AD0DX.

Conditions were fair but not great, but I guess that is to be expected as we are at the bottom of the sun spot cycle. We can only go up from here.

Pam did most of the SSB operating and I did the CW. Pam also did the driving (around 650 miles). The score includes 11k pts for operating in 22 counties

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

40 or more: W5CW, K4BYN, W6OAT, W5TM

30 to 39: VE7CV, N6MU, N1SOH, NU0Q

20 to 29: WB9HFK, NS2N, W7ON, W5VS, K4AMC, VE3NBJ, N2CU, K5GA, W1END

15 to 19: N9NM, K0AP, W3WHK, KN4Y, AD1C, VE3HED, AA1AR,

14 to 13: NU4N, NK7L, KV8Q, K9NW, K9CW, W3DYA, W2UDT, W0GXQ, VE3AQ, KY7M, AE1T

12: DL3DXX, K1IB, W0MHK, W8BZY, WA1SAY

11: W8POF, W2CVW, NJ4Q, K0HNC, WA9LEY

10: K4BAI, KA5VZG, KI4MZC, N4CD, W9DC

73, Connie and Pam



Pam, N5KW and Connie K5CM

- - -

W0BH/m 327 CW 343 SSB

Since this was a part-time Saturday-only effort, I'll do a different type of write-up.

1. XYL Lorna/k0why broke her foot in two places a couple of months ago so we only went Saturday. Lorna was able to drive, but was glad to rest her foot on Sunday. It was sunny all day but REALLY windy (40+) in the morning which made driving the van interesting. Once we got on the turnpike, it was almost a direct tailwind across most of the state.

2. We really enjoyed meeting up with Ron/ad0dx and Ron/ks5p (formerly af5q) and their XYLs in Lawton on Friday evening.

3. Lorna and Kathy (ad0dx's xyl) went looking for a chestnut collared longspur in the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge and found one, a new bird for both of them. While they were birding, I got lots of contacts in Comanche county and Ron/ad0dx worked a satellite pass from the rare grid.

4. Because birding went long, we skipped Logan county and dropped my stop in Cleveland county to help make up time. With only a few minutes scheduled in McClain and Cleveland, I worked them on SSB and had quite a nice list of ops waiting for the counties. I knew both counties were scheduled by other ops later.

5. We missed our exit on the turnpike in Wagoner county and couldn't turn around or exit for about ten miles. Instead of going back, we forged ahead and substituted Delaware for Rogers county.
6. I really missed working county lines but was going for counties to help out Connie. My only line was Ottawa/Delaware in the far northeastern part of Oklahoma as a result of our missed turn. Lorna made a sandwich for me while I was working down the pileup :-)
7. Osage is a BIG county and got even bigger as we detoured about 7 miles to go around a bridge under repair.
8. 20 and 40 were both good most of the day. Very little DX, but DL3DXX got through and I worked Japan twice.
9. We met up with Ron and Kathy again in Kay county and had supper after the Saturday close.
10. The equipment worked great with no problems. I even made some 80m CW contacts the last hour. I was hoping to use the spotting network on the OKQP web site, but my phone wouldn't scroll over to the Post button, so I couldn't use it.

Stats

Operated 7.6 hours, 697 combined Qs, 280 unique calls, 2 dupes, 462 OKQP miles.

States not worked : HI ME NE RI WI WY

Canadian mults worked : AB BC MB ON

OK worked : 4 counties : MUR MUS OKL OKM

DX worked : 2 countries : DL JA

01 COM 85 Comanche

02 CAD 14 Caddo

03 GRA 42 Grady

04 MCL 14 McClain

05 CLE 16 Cleveland

06 OKL 34 Oklahoma

07 LIN 59 Lincoln

08 CRE 54 Creek

09 TUL 29 Tulsa
10 WAG 33 Wagoner
11 MAY 36 Mayes
12 CRA 45 Craig
13 DEL 28 Delaware
14 OTT 27 Ottawa
15 NOW 41 Nowata
16 WAS 33 Washington
17 OSA 62 Osage
18 KAY 18 Kay

Special thanks to my top scorers:

35 N6MU
25 W6OAT
17 VE7CV
15 K7YMA
13 VE3NBJ
12 WA1SAY
11 K4BYN
10 AE1T KV8Q NC4H W1END W3WHK WB9HFK WZ6ZZ

W0BH Award Winners

----- First Place - Very Honorable Mention -
Most overall Qs - N6MU/35 ----- W6OAT/25 --- VE7CV/17
Most CW Qs ----- N6MU/19 ----- W6OAT/15 --- VE3NBJ/13
Most PH Qs ----- N6MU/16 ----- K7YMA/15 --- WA1SAY/12
Most counties --- N6MU/18 ----- K7YMA/15 --- W6OAT/14

Afterwards

Thanks to Connie/K5CM (and Pam/N5KW) for managing the OKQP and getting us all organized!

73, Bob/w0bh and Lorna/k0why

- - - -

KK6MC/M 811 CW 346 SSB

I had a good contest. Conditions were good with 40M open all day both days, although not as good as I remember last year being. 20M was better than last year with openings to EU both mornings.

I improved my mobile antenna and can operate on the entire 20M band, so I operated some phone on 20M when the CW QSOs had petered out. I think it paid off. The mobile antenna is 10.5 feet of mast with 20M and 40M Hustler resonators mounted horizontally on the top. The base is 18 inches off the ground. The antenna is wide enough to cover both the CW and phone portion on 20M, but it is still fairly narrow on 40M. I like the resonators rather than the screwdriver I have used in the past as one can instantaneously QSY with the resonators.

The phone QSOs helped my score a lot, and I ended up with 60,000 more points than last year. They fill in dead space.

On Saturday the bands were noisy from distant thunder storms, but that noise was gone on Sunday. Mobiles who operate from county lines can't be choosy and I ended up in a couple of locations that were pretty noisy from power lines. On the other hand I found a couple of good spots with no power lines that had very low noise.

I want to thank all of the stations that followed me around and were there on the band almost as soon as I showed up on frequency. I used APRS for much of the trip and I hope that helped.

When I was on the Kiowa/Comanche county line I got a FaceTime call from my daughter and 6 year old grandson. I took 10 minutes out to talk and show him what I was doing. When I got out of the car and showed him where I was and explained it was Oklahoma, he asked "Are you lost in Oklahoma?" That was the highlight of the contest!

--

KS5P/m 639 CW 21 SSB

Lost the main contest truck and had to return home and do a quick install on another. The first Q went out at 19:51z in Pushmataha/Choctaw county. Sunday was a better day as no issues except cold damp weather hit.

I am now a believer of the Hustler resonators. I used them instead of the Tarheel. Bob,

W0BH...here's a shout out to you!!!

Great contest, just need better prep next year.

73 to all!!

--

N4CD mobile – 282 CW 101 SSB QSO

I was on a week long trip that started in south TX running PARKS for the park hunters and counties for the county hunters. It worked out that I was in the northeast corner of NM on Saturday evening, so scooted over to the Rita Blanca Grasslands in Cimarron County OK late on Saturday to put that out for the park hunters, county hunters and OK QP folks. That's the far west county in the OK panhandle. Stayed overnight in Dallam County TX just south of there. Dinner at the Bar-H Steakhouse nearby.

On Sunday, I headed to Texas County and the Optima National Wildlife Refuge and ran it there for the park chasers, county hunters and OK QP folks. Was still dark at 7:30 am with the change to Daylight Saving Time as I headed out to get to the park by 9am – the start time for the OKQP. Did catch a few OK mobiles along the way on the trip but only hearing far east side of OK - skip too long on 40m most of time I was in OK myself. Stopped to run the parks for at least an hour. Also had over 100Q on 30m for those folks on Sunday but they didn't count for QP. County hunters make good use of 30M CW.

Headed east to Beaver County. Stopped to run it 20/30/40M. No park located here. Then headed east to county line Ellis/Harper (ELL/HRP) then south 60 miles to a the Kiowa National Grasslands in Roger Mills (RGM) - another 'park' in the WWFF-KFF system. Got the park chasers, the OK QP folks and the county hunters in the log (and 30M QSOs too).

Nearby is another 'park' the Washita Battlefield and pulled in for a quick run there. I had run this before. Some duplicate contacts had to be eliminated from log here as same county but different park.

Time was getting short (QP ends at 4pm local time) so zipped on down to BECKham County and added a dozen Qs there including more than 5 on 40M just before 4pm. 260 miles driven in OK for the QP.

Then headed down to motel in Erick, OK – a bump on the interstate. One motel, one Love's gas/convenience store with a Subway, and one Simple Simon Pizza place. Had a veggie pizza for dinner. Not too many other choices in this burg of 1,100 people. My park trip continued the next day – getting home Monday afternoon at 4pm after a 2300 mile trip.

Counties run: CIM TEX BEA ELL HRP RGM BEC

Had fun - but all paper logs and had to be sliced and diced, entered into the computer QSO by QSO, to upload ADIF to WWFF database, ADIF to Parks on the Air Database, ADIF file to LotW and then filtered and Cabrillo file (Dupes and 30m removed) for the OK QP log using Fast Log Entry (FLE) logging program which many park activators use. Not so easy to add in county/state/province/DX plus my county for each entry with FLE.

KN4Y - fixed - FL 79 CW 43 mults

My feet are tired running after the nine mobiles speeding around Oklahoma territory. But I am retesting as I type this and when finished will enjoy my coffee. If you did not have fun, you did not try.

- - -

DL3DXX - 57 CW 42 mults

thanks to all for the contacts.

mobiles wkd: K5CM 12, KE5XX 7, KK6MC 10, KS5P 3, N4CD 4, W0BH 2

- ----

KV8Q 88 CW 55 mults

Lots of noise made this a rough way to go. I had fun working old friends and picking up almost all of my missing OK counties. I still need to get Kay County. I had W0BH and KE5XX both heading over there but 40 went long before they got there and I never heard them there. No 80 meter antenna here made the last few hours of Saturday night rather boring. Thanks for all the Q's

and chasing the mobiles. Hope to do it again next year.

73 Tom

Rig = TenTec Eagle @ 100 watts
Antenna = Mag loop in attic above garage

--

The following folks sent in logs. Are you listed?

NW4WB NW8U NY9P OM2VL VA2CZ VA3TTB VE2GT VE3CRU VE3RUA
VE7JH W0BH W0SEB W0YJT W1AKI W1ARY W1END W2CVW W2RR W3DYA
W4LID W4ZPR W5CT W5CW W5GFI W5M W6ABM W6OUL W6SX W6UZ W7GF
W8KNO WA1SAY WA2JQZ WA8ZBT WA9LEY WB0IWG WB2ABD WB6ETY
WB8LBZ WB9HFK WD5CSK WN4AFP WN7Y WQ5R WZ6ZZ N4CD

Technician License Expansion

FCC Invites Comments on ARRL Technician Enhancement Proposal

The FCC has invited public comments on ARRL's 2018 Petition for Rule Making, now designated as RM-11828, which asks the FCC to expand HF privileges for Technician licensees to include limited phone privileges on 75, 40, and 15 meters, plus RTTY and digital mode privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. Interested parties have 30 days to comment. The Technician enhancement proposals stemmed from the recommendations of the ARRL Board of Directors' Entry-Level License Committee, which explored various initiatives and gauged member opinions in 2016 and 2017.

"This action will enhance the available license operating privileges in what has become the principal entry-level license class in the Amateur Service," ARRL said in its Petition. "It will attract more newcomers to Amateur Radio, it will result in increased retention of licensees who hold Technician Class licenses, and it will provide an improved incentive for entry-level licensees to increase technical self-training and pursue higher license class achievement and development of communications skills."

Specifically, ARRL proposes to provide present and future Technician licensees:

- Phone privileges at 3.900 to 4.000 MHz, 7.225 to 7.300 MHz, and 21.350 to 21.450 MHz
- RTTY and digital privileges in current Technician allocations on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters.

Under the ARRL plan, the maximum HF power level for Technician operators would remain at 200 W PEP. ARRL's petition points to the need for compelling incentives not only to become a radio amateur in the first place, but then to upgrade and further develop skills.

ARRL stressed in its petition the urgency of making the license more attractive to newcomers, in part to improve upon science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

The ARRL Board's ad hoc Entry-Level License Committee, which recommended the proposals, received significant input from ARRL members via more than 8,000 survey responses.

Now numbering some 384,500 licensees, Technicians comprise more than half of the US Amateur Radio population. ARRL stressed in its petition the urgency of making the license more attractive to newcomers, in part to improve upon science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, "that inescapably accompanies a healthy, growing Amateur Radio Service."

ARRL said its proposal is critical to develop improved operating skills, increasing emergency preparedness participation, improving technical self-training, and boosting overall growth in the Amateur Service, which has remained nearly inert at about 1% per year.

Source: ARRL Weekly Newsletter of 3/15/19

Mobile Activity in March

At the beginning of the month:

K4YT was on a trip in PA

N8HAM was in GA and headed north

N4CD was out in west TX headed up through NM, into OK, and back home.

AI5P spotted in parks in AZ

Fixed stations running parks included K4CAE, KQ6QB, KB3WAV/KC3RW, AE4GS,

AG6V ran counties in WA

There were spots for the OK and WI QP - several mobiles out running in each. Fixed stations noted in ID QP.

N8OYY noted out in PA

K8ZZ left KS and headed down through OK to TX for a week long visit.

VE7LYC/KL7 was spotted several times. He's in the Second District AK on a DX pedition there trying to run IOTAs.

KN4Y left FL and headed to Memphis TN for a bowling tournament. Headed back to FL but lost the 30m resonator due to overhang.

N9AC left FL, ran through AL headed back to IL.

WI QSO Party

WI9WI/m 267 CW QSO

In my never ending quest to work the WIQP solo from all 72 counties I had 10 left

before this year's edition. I was going to meet NE9U and KK9K at Scott's cabin in FLO and start in MAR, but the weekend storm put the kibosh on that. Scott and Ron started in the middle of the state and I drove up to DOO on Sunday AM. The drive up was fine, and the main roads were all OK. The start was slow with problems with RF into the computer, and the antenna tuner refused to hold a tune on the 40 antenna. These were solved by some ferrite, rearranging some cables, and replacing a connector at the antenna base. Unfortunately this took some time and several trips out of the car, and probably cost me a number of QSOs. The temperature was fine but winds up to 40 mph kept the car cold if I had the heater off and shook it quite a bit. As the day went on the weather got a bit better as did the bands. Twenty was open with some big signals, but nobody was there. I only made 24 QSOs in the first hour, but had 93 in the 44 minutes I operated in the last hour. As a solo op I don't operate while driving which costs me operating time in this short event. Actual op time was about 4 1/2 hours with the remainder spent driving between operating locations. It took 1 1/2 hours to move between BRO and the CAL/MAN county line.

Some data:

Counties: DOO, KEW, BRO, CAL, MAN.....only 5 more to go MAR, OCO, MEN, OUT, WIN

Gear: K3, Microham Keyer, Acer netbook/WriteLog

20 ant: Hamstick 40/80 ant: Bugcatcher

Miles driven: exactly 400 door to door

Time on the road: 14 1/2 hours

Thanks to all who participated, see you next year from northeast Wisconsin

73

Jim WI9WI

KE0TT/rover 213 CW QSO

K3/10 driving a Ten Tec 405 amp to 50 watts out. Ant: 66' inverted vee up 20' at apex, fed with 300 ohm foam TV twin-lead. An old Johnson Matchbox did the tuning chores. Enjoyed the activity at each of four stops, thanks for the fun ! WX was great, blue skies and sunshine, after an overnight ice/snow storm cleared out. Thanks for all the multiple Q's, and C U next time. 73, Dan ke0tt

NE9U/m 561 CW 159 SSB

Normally for this contest, we start at my up North cabin in Florence County and work our way south back home.

But a big snowstorm was forecast for northern Wisconsin so we started at the KK9k QTH and made a big southerly/westerly loop, sticking to 4 lane roads. roads were in perfect condition and we had time to add a couple extra counties...but by doing so got on some pretty badly drifted 2 lane roads for about 50 miles. Everything went OK radio-wise, but 20 meters was the worst I've ever heard it in WQP. Plus, I don't know if it was conditions or just lack of participation, but our rates never approached our best score back in 2013. I've noticed that lately in other state QSO parties we've participated in also. Maybe when sunspots come back, participation will come back???

Anyway, another fun time. We even found the usual steak dinner for N9BCA...this year a 32 ounce for \$22! and it was darn good!

equipment:

k3, Homebrew vertical, TR4W

73

Scott NE9U
Ron KK9K
Art N9BCA

- - - -

NS2N – fixed NY - 101 CW QSO

20m busted. Power outage and some blips... another hefty windstorm this weekend.

IC-7610 KPA500 3el Steppir 45ft 40invv 45ft 80 full west sloper apex 60ft

Thanks everyone !

Paul NS2N

--

WE9V - fixed WI 335 CW 260 SSB

Tough going again this year with the bands quite long immediately. Glad that some of the mobiles spent time on 80M from the start. Second lowest score for me since 2011, and second lowest QSO total ever.

Big thanks to all those that got on the air, out-of-state, in-state, and the mobiles to brave the still winter conditions in Wisconsin.

W9XT - fixed WI - 213 CW 255 SSB

Very frustrating. We had a power outage/surge that took out the shack PC Saturday night. I was able to stick in an other PC, but it was rather under powered and didn't have enough ports. Also it was Win 10 and the shack PC was Win 7 and I was not able to get everything configured. Then two hours into the contest Windows decided to do an update. I was able to kill that. Then the COM port used for CW keying stopped working.

Very frustrating! Still a fun time.

KN4Y- fixed - FL 50 CW 27 mults

Worked 3 mobiles, I think. Also got a 160 meter QSO, does not happen often in a State QSO party.

SuperComputer News

Intel and the U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday that they will start to build Aurora, the U.S.'s first exascale supercomputer.

An exascale supercomputer is capable of processing one quintillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000) calculations per second, and it can be used for testing military weapons, modeling weather patterns, energy research, and even prevention of cancer, cardiac risk, traumatic brain injuries and suicide.

When Aurora is completed in 2021, it will be the U.S.'s most powerful supercomputer, and potentially the world's, although other countries may also have plans to build their own exascale supercomputers.

Intel will start to build what's set to be the U.S.'s most powerful supercomputer, and it will be so fast, it can process one quintillion calculations per second — or one billion times one billion calculations per second.

To put that in perspective, if every person on earth did one calculation per second (say, a math problem involving algebra), it would take everyone over four years to do all the calculations Aurora can do in one second.

Intel and the U.S. Department of Energy announced Monday that the construction of Aurora, the U.S.'s first exascale supercomputer, will be completed by 2021. An exascale supercomputer has a performance of one exaFLOP, or one quintillion (1,000,000,000,000,000,000) calculations per second. That kind of number-crunching brawn, its creators hope, will enable great leaps forward in everything from cancer research to renewable energy development.

Aurora will be developed by Intel and its subcontractor Cray at the Argonne National Laboratory in Chicago. Once it's finished, it's poised to be the most powerful supercomputer in the U.S., and it will far surpass the abilities of existing supercomputers today.

It's likely that this will be the most powerful supercomputer in the world, although Dr. Rick Stevens, associate laboratory director at Argonne, notes that other countries may be working on exascale supercomputers, and the U.S. does not know when they will be deployed.

The effort marks a "transformational" moment in the evolution of high performance computing, Dr. Rajeeb Hazra, corporate vice president and general manager of the enterprise and government group at Intel told Business Insider.

What Aurora can do

A computer that powerful is no small thing: Aurora will have more than 200 cabinets. Intel has not yet unveiled the technical details of the system, but typically, supercomputers cover thousands of square feet and have thousands of nodes.

When it's finished, this supercomputer will be able to do outer space simulations, drug discovery, and more. The government plans to use it to develop applications around science, energy and defense. Aurora can also be used by universities and national labs.

For example, it can be used to safely simulate and test weapons, without actually setting off weapons or endangering people. It could be used to design better batteries, wind power systems and nuclear reactors. It could be used to better understand earthquake hazard and model climate change risks.

It could even be used for research on cancer, cardiac risk, traumatic brain injuries and suicide prevention, especially for veterans. The supercomputer can apply large scale data analytics and machine learning to understand the risk factors for these physical and mental health problems to better prevent them.

Out of the top 500 supercomputers, Intel says it helps power over 460 of them. Intel has worked with the Department of Energy for about two decades.

Currently, the most powerful supercomputer in the world is IBM's Summit, and Aurora will be five times faster.

Secretary of Energy Rick Perry authorized the building of Aurora in 2017. This contract with Intel and Cray is worth over \$500 million. The Department of Energy also has plans to build additional exascale supercomputers besides Aurora that will start working between 2021 and 2023.

"The biggest challenge is also probably the most exciting part, to envision and create technologies that have never been created before," Hazra said. "Because this machine requires a level of capability we haven't seen before, the biggest risk is we're inventing something new, but to us, that's also the most exciting part."

Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/intel-department-of-energy-aurora-first-exascale-supercomputer-2019-3>

Idaho QSO Party

NI7DX (KT7Q and N7ZUF operators) 66 CW 67 SSB QSO



On March 9 and 10, 2019, Jay, N7ZUF, and I, K7TQ, put the Idaho DX Association club call of NI7DX on the air in eight counties in the Idaho QSO Party. We started in Idaho County a bit farther south than I had planned because snow berm covered the planned operating spot. Our plan had been to operate both in motion and stopped, but that didn't work out. Jay had two new Wolf River Coils plus collapsible whips plus two radios with Dunestar bandpass filters. The bandpass filters worked fine as did the coils and whips which allowed us to operate 40 m SSB and 20 m CW at the same time without interference. What didn't work as planned was that we could not operate while in motion. That seriously limited our planned operating time in each county.

Saturday we had good 20 m CW results in Idaho County with 34 Qs. Jay added four 40 m SSB ones. In our next stop, Lewis County, we split eight Qs. Our best county of the day was next in Nez Perce where we stopped at the top of the Lewiston Grade with a 2,000+ foot drop toward the south and east. Jay did all the operating for a whopping 51 - 20 m SSB contacts. Our last county of the day was Latah where it was too late for 20 m and too early for 40 m. Only one Q, a 20 m CW one.

After spending the night at my house in Moscow with no IDQP operating, we headed east for Clearwater County early Sunday morning. My favorite operating spot there had way too much power-line noise so we had to go an additional nine miles to the end of the paved road in Elk River. We split our stationary operating time on 20 m and got 8 CW Qs but couldn't scare up any SSB ones. Jay took the next county, Shoshone, on 20 m for a single SSB Q. In Benewah County we again split the 20 m time for 13 CW and four SSB Qs. Our final county, Kootenai, was good for 6 CW and three SSB contacts.



Overall we made 66 CW and 67 SSB contacts, 79 mults including DX of DL and S5 on CW, for a claimed score of 15, 721. The most frequent CW "customer" was K4BAI in GA with four counties followed by K9CW in IL with three. Customers with two CW contacts were K0UU, NU0Q, W0MHK, KN4Y, N4UP, KI7ID, and W9ILY. There were two calls on SSB that got us in two counties, KL7YE in AK and another IDQP rover, N7JCT. A special thanks to those persistent customers as well as a thanks to all who gave us a Q and those that tried.

We had a great time and have changes planned for next year's event.

--

N7JCT/m was out there – no news

KV8Q - fixed OH - 7 CW 5 mults

I worked everyone in this QSO Party that I heard and that wasn't many folks. Not very good conditions. Maybe I'll have better luck with Idaho next year. 73 tom

- - - -

K4BAI- fixed GA - 8 CW 6 SSB 8 mults

Very poor radio conditions. Activity seemed pretty good compared to recent years. Many thanks to NI7DX for one of my last three ID counties all-time. Two more to go. 73, John, K4BAI.

- - - - -

KA7T fixed - ID - 192 CW 261 SSB

no comments filed

- - - -

Book Review of the Month

The American Communicator, Volume 2 by Gerald j Chouinard (K5YAA)

from the rear cover:

“The American Communicator Vol 2 is the second in a two-series volume. This

continues the story beginning with the days of Chris (their son), our businesses and other 'tidbits' from the life of Gerald J and Carol A Chouinard.

Gerald J Chouinard was and still is a dreamer spreading as much peace and friendship around the world as any one man can. In this quest he has the privilege of meeting many of the world's people, tasting her food, walking on her beaches and marveling at the grandeur of her untold beauty and majesty. Many people from around the world, through his Amateur Radio hobby have become lifelong friends who share the same feeling of peace, brotherhood and friendship.

The dreamer's years in business as a designer, developer and manufacturer of mobile radio-telephone and data systems are written about here in this second memoir. Including, the dark days of grief when our eldest son Chris was killed in a tragic truck accident on a lonely dark road east of Centertown, MO, on the morning of December 10, 1987. The siren of the ambulance going past our Kaylor Bridge Road home on his way to the emergency room in downtown Jefferson City still wails in my mind at times.

The love of family keeps me going Forward! Everyone has a story! “

- - -

de N4CD:

Most of it is a good read – better than part one which gets a bit bogged down in detail in places. Enjoyed reading it. He describes the various products he designed and produced – including equipment for the predecessor of Nextel/Sprint, airline communications systems, etc. Copies are floating around as Jerry sent out and gave out a few.

Louisiana QSO Party

W3DYA – mobile

As far as I could tell, I was the only CW mobile. Did see a few SSB fixed spotted.

Due to the DX QRM on 20M, 40M was the only band where I got any responses in most of the counties. Then 40M shortened up around noon and only a few contacts in a county.

20M was open pretty good and I worked a few European stations; very little in the U.S. I ran 11 counties and only had 172 contacts and it got worse after 40M lost long skip.

73, Norm, W3DYA

N6MU - fixed - CA 21 CW 13 SSB 20 CW mults 12 SSB mults

Only 11 different stations gave me 34 Qs. Thanks to those few who did participate. It was so bad the only mobile(W3DYA) stopped half way thru his route. 15 was wide open in the afternoon but only N5LCC and K5LSU were around to go there with me. 73...

John, N6MU

VE2FJM - fixed - ON 10 CW QSO 28 SSB QSO - 5 SSB mults

W7KAM - fixed - MO 7 SSB

"One all time new county, Orleans. 20 meters was terrible toward the south so I spent most of my time on 40 meters. 100 watts into a Junior G5RV up 25 foot."

K4BAI - fixed - GA 4 CW 7 SSB 4 CW mult 6 SSB mults

Not a lot of activity heard here. But many thanks to N5TZH for an all time new county (CATAhoula).

Peak Oil Coming?

The struggle between a weakening global economy and the shrinking availability of oil supplies seems to be tipping in favor of the latter as oil prices slowly make their way higher. The electric power disruption in Venezuela has combined with the US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela and reports that the rapid increase in US shale oil production to add a bullish tone to the oil markets. Last week oil prices climbed \$1-2 a barrel to close at \$67 in London and \$58 in New York. Last week a new EIA forecast cast doubt on the optimistic projections for US shale oil production which was slated to increase from 11.9 million b/d at the end of 2018 to 13.5 million by the end of 2020.

For the last ten years, the US shale oil boom has been primarily financed by multi-billion-dollar loans and stock offerings. As is well known, most firms in the shale oil industry have never made money despite the rapid increase in production and it now seems that the lenders that the sector has been depending on have had enough. Data on the issuance of debt and equity by shale firms and their positions in futures markets are providing an indicator of their future production, and these are pointing to a significant decline in output in the next two years. A new analysis suggests that US shale oil production may fall in the next two years to some 11.3- 11.5 million b/d rather than climbing to 13.5 million as currently forecast.

Should US shale oil production peak in the next two years, and as seems likely, Venezuela's oil output fall by some 500,000 b/d, the global oil market would undergo a sea change. Oil could move strongly higher—to \$80, perhaps even to \$100 again—which could lead to a fall in economic growth, perhaps precipitously.

World oil prices have been held in check by ever-growing US shale oil production. When this comes to an end, there is little to replace it as a way to keep increasing the world's oil supply. Investment in development dropped rapidly a few years ago and has yet to increase to the level that can supply world demand that has been growing at 1.5 million b/d. Some are looking to the major oil companies to take over the majority of production in the Permian Basin from small drillers and to keep production growing. Although these companies have a lot of spare cash from conventional operations, they have to prove they can be any more profitable than their smaller rivals.

Discussions of just when world oil production will peak have been dormant since the development of shale oil production ten years ago. Now, these discussions have begun

again with some observers, outside of the industry and the mainstream financial press, talking about the peak being very close.

We seem to be entering a time of much disagreement about the immediate future of the oil industry with some seeing lower production and higher prices just ahead, and others plenty of oil and moderate prices for many years to come.

Source: <https://mailchi.mp/2b8d7ee04316/peak-oil-review-13-february-49337?e=1f61e69e31>

“Quote of the Week

“Total open interest has fallen by twenty percent. Swap dealer short positions have also contracted. The message is clear: producers are hedging less, and they are hedging less because they expect to produce less. The statistics point to a one to two-million-barrel decline in production from the frackers. Some but not all this loss may be made up by the increased activity of firms such as Exxon. In short, the growth in US oil output is about to be reversed.

Philip Verleger, energy analyst”

Michigan Mini

The MI Mini hosted by Ed, K8ZZ, and Joe, W8TVT, will be held in Traverse City, MI April 25 – 26 & 27th

<http://michiganmini.superhosts.net/>

Time to sign up now if you already haven't done it. Last few years attendance has been near 100 folks.

Virginia QSO Party

As usual, this was mostly a 40 and 80m event, with 40m during the day and 80 and even 160 at night as VA stations tried to work each other. 20M was poor on Saturday and even worse on Sunday as the K index spiked. Looks like there were two mobiles out running – and probably staying on 40 and 80m the entire time. Lots of counties with fixed stations were on the air if you could hear them on 40 and 80m. Mostly an SSB event, too.

K4HQB - fixed - Alexandria VA 191 CW QSO

All CW operation. Saturday morning: Slow to start but 40m activity picked up as the hours passed. That afternoon, as 40m "went long," other contests began to interfere (Russian, RTTY, etc.) so I switched to 80m at 2130Z and found plenty of activity, increasing as the sun went down with no QRM our own. Busy evening.

Sunday we took a major hit from an ionospheric event that sent the A index to 12 and K index to 3. All bands were tagged "poor" during daytime. Started in the a.m. on 80m for a few more QSOs. By midday all bands seemed dead. Nothing on 20m, either. Then tried 40m around 1900Z but it was awful; almost no activity thanks to other-contest interference and very poor band conditions. (Strong RTTY QRM had ruined the Virginia 40m frequencies.) Stations 30 and 50 miles away could barely hear me on 40m. I went back to 80m at 2000Z and stayed there the rest of the contest.

This was a fairly slow-speed contest. To maximize my QSO rate, I CQed at 21-23 wpm, midway between the straight-key and keyer operators.

John K4HQB
400w to dipoles

WN4APF/QRP - fixed - SC - 50 CW 69 SSB 61 counties worked

This is now my only QRP contest during the year. I'm located at the 'sweet spot' for communication with VA on 40m and 80m. Every contact in this contest seemed like I was working DX. Repeats and fills was the norm during this test of my endurance. I ended Saturday night with about 6k and a decent score in this race and I was considering making this a one day event. However, I ran into W4GO/m, Matt and I had to follow him around on Sunday afternoon on 80m if I could. After getting home from church, I saw the spotter page and everyone was running on 80m. This was going to be a challenging finish. After calling Matt for 2 hours without a response, he finally heard me and I worked him in 16 counties. 80m finally opened up for the last few hours and it was a big boost to my score. Thanks to all of you for pulling me out from below the noise floor! Thank you Gordon and your team for putting on a very strong VAQP!

73s Dave WN4AFP

W4KW - fixed - TN - 115 SSB QSO 63 mults

Nice Contest. Fair conditions. Great to work our TCG folks at K4VIG a couple of times. Mobiles produced some Great Mults. Worked KJ4OAP/M with 11 mults & W4GO/M with 12 mults. The KX4O spotting network was a invaluable assist. Tnx to all for the contacts.

73's,
Bert

K4BAI -fixed - GA - 75 CW 65 SSB QSO 61 counties

No VA signals heard above 40M. 160, 80, and 40M seemed pretty much OK. Thanks for all QSOs, particularly by the mobiles or rovers.

KN4Y -fixed - FL - 47 CW 24 counties

Had a senior moment & screwed up my serial numbers but time okay. Mostly a 40 meter operation with a later 80 meter run.

Parks on the Air

The Parks on the Air system is currently 'on hold' for adding new parks. Well, dang, there are already over 5000 references to work and lots in each state. It's not like there is a shortage although folks come up with new ideas for adding things daily

So.....how do we get to 'activating' half of the current references? (and does anyone know how many have been activated so far and what the percentage 'done' is at the current time?)

I'm trying here to do my best to help out. Texas has about 100 references and all but three have been activated. Two of them are 'parks in development' One has nothing but a 4 wheel drive road into it - and is blocked off for access. Another is plain 'future park' in development and not accessible. I'm working on it. A 3rd is one where you only get to access on a ranger led tour on Wednesday. No parking lot, no vehicle access, no other access. Well, maybe - I'm working on it. However, 97% done isn't bad.

I've done all of OK other than one they recently added - I'll get that one. So that state is 96% done.

AR looks pretty good - I've done more than half and working on getting to the ones I haven't done. Others have done most of the others – although not all activators upload to both databases.

LA still has lots of zeroes but another trip here should wipe out some of those zeroes.

KS looks pretty well activated. I've done half and probably will wind up doing the other half as well. Again, not all upload to POTA database so it might be a while.

MI looks pretty good. AK is always going to be a problem. Heck, less than half every made it on the air for NPOTA, and unless you have a float plane or like 40 below and dog sleds.....the rest are going to be scarce or non-existent.

So - anyone know what percent of all the parks have been activated? I suppose one could go through it state by state, but even there, the stats are frequently wrong with the state page indicating 'zero activations' but if you click on the specific park, it shows 1 or

2 or 3 folks have been there and done that. What's the percentage done? Anyone figured it out?

For county hunters, parks are in COUNTIES so if nothing else is going on, you've got the option to snag some counties with parks – there's at least one in just about every county in the US.

- - - -

Update – it looks like about 48% of all the parks in the POTA system have now be 'activated'. Some only with a dozen or so QSOs, but officially activated. That's over 2500 so far.

Proposed TYRO License?

In addition to the Technician Upgrade Proposal Above:

“The FCC has also invited public comment on an entirely unrelated Petition for Rule Making (RM-11829), filed in 2017 by ARRL member Gary A. Hampton, AD0WU, of Longmont, Colorado. Hampton has asked the FCC to create a new "Tyro" entry-level license class, which would require a minimal online examination as well as mentoring by an Amateur Radio licensee of Technician class or higher. Tyro licensees would have to be at least 11 years old and would earn operating privileges on 99 channels in a 70-centimeter segment that Hampton calls a "TyroSubBand." It would offer no HF privileges.

These are not competing petitions. Members of the Amateur Radio community should evaluate both proposals on their own merits and comment if they desire. ARRL has provided a summary of the Technician Enhancement proposals and explained their advantages.

Interested parties have 30 days to comment on both proposals”

Source ARRL Newsletter 3/21/2019

Awards Issued

Pending.....as of 3/25.....

Don, K3IMC, has re-written the code for the Last County part of the awards system that stopped working 3 months ago. New awards should be forthcoming soon. Much of the software for the awards system is now obsolete.

Operating Events for County Hunters

Lots of activity this month and places for mobiles to get out and run some counties from the mid section to the southeast. A feast of over 600 counties up for grabs!

Apr 6 1400z to Apr 7 0200z
Mississippi QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.arrlmiss.org

Apr 6 1400z to Apr 7 2200z
Florida State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig
Park ID SPC
flspota.org/rules

Apr 13 1400z to Apr 14 0200z
New Mexico QSO Party CW Ph Dig
Name, county or SPC

www.newmexicoqsoparty.org

Apr 13 1400z to Apr 14 2000z

All Texas State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig

RS(T), park abbreviation or SPC

www.tspota.org

Apr 13 1800z to Apr 14 1800z

North Dakota QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

www.kg0yl.net/QSO.html

Apr 13 1800z to Apr 14 2359z

Georgia QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RST, county or SPC

www.georgiaqsoparty.org

Apr 20 1300z to Apr 21 2200z

Nebraska QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

[FT8: S/N, grid]

www.qCWa.org/chapter025.htm

Apr 20 1600z to Apr 21 0400z

Michigan QSO Party CW Ph

Serial, county or SPC

www.miqp.org/Rules.htm

Apr 27 1600z to Apr 28 2159z

Florida QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), county or SPC

floridaqsoparty.org

That's all folks !