

County Hunter News

August 1, 2016
Volume 12, Issue 8

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

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

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

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

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz and 14.324. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) The Annual MARAC Convention is coming up at the beginning of August. Lots of mobiles will be on the road (or already are) headed that way. Please keep an ear out for them on 40M and CW.

2) KC6AWX, Bob, announced he is resigning as MARAC Awards Chairman. Recently his family has undergone multiple health issues plus the passing of his 94 year old father after a long illness. He's done a great job for the past 10 years and it's time to pass on the task to someone else.

3) Sunspot counts continue a downward trend. We had a few days of zero sunspots. Solar activity has kept the A index elevated many days and there have been a few flares to keep the bands in 'fair' to 'poor' conditions on some days. We're headed down in the sunspot cycle. Expect shorter 'open times' on 20M, almost no activity on 10 and 15 meters other than E-skip/tropo, and not much happening on 17M. There are still loads of counties to be had. QSO Party season starts again this month with several coming up.

Annual Awards Announcement

from the MARAC Awards Chairman:

“It is an honor and a privilege for me to announce the winners of the 2016 MARAC Awards. These individuals were selected by the vote of the MARAC membership:

CW County Hunter of the Year – KB6UF Ron Jones
SSB County Hunter of the Year – AB7NK Mary Vince

CW Net Control of the Year – W0GXQ Jerry Mertz
SSB Net Control of the Year – WY8I Jim Odam

CW Mobile of the Year – W0GXQ Jerry Mertz
SSB Mobile of the Year – KB6UF Ron Jones

Team of the Year – AB7NK/K7SEN Mary & Neil Vince

Congratulations to the winners and to all of the participants in the various categories. I am attaching photos of the County Hunter of The Year plaques.

Robert Devine – KC6AWX
MARAC Awards Manager

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West Virginia QSO Party

which took place in June -

from the 3830 reflector:

KN4Y – fixed – FL 9 cw qso

“I am excited that I probably worked all the QSO party CW operators in West Virginia. A slow and exacting process. I heard no mobiles, Listened a lot.”

KG4MC – fixed – SC 6 cw 4 ssb

N8II – fixed – WV 50cw 315 ssb

Last year was pretty disappointing despite having the highest score. My audio was not up to par and downright bad on 20 M which resulted in only making exactly 400 QSO's. So, I decided to spend the day with my friend going to 2 indoor antique/flea markets and the Woodrow Wilson presidential library and museum in Staunton, VA; the antique market in Verona, VA is HUGE, but most prices were high. I drove about 260 miles and did not return home until evening; after dinner it was past 23Z. I fired up on 20 SSB and ran a decent QSO rate up to about 45 Q's at which time I started calling about 2-3 CQ's to each QSO. I announced a couple of times on 20 I would QSY to 21300 where I worked two loud stations on Es, a camper in Caledonia Co., VT and a MN station, but no others. So I moved to 20 CW where the rate was erratic, did get called by A45 in Oman and a few EU. After 30 Q's it was down to 40 CW for 20 Q's at steady pace at which time WN4AFP asked for QSY to 40 SSB when things were slowing down.

Thanks so much Dave, because the rest of the time I was on an absolute tear of running phone QSO's! On 7230 I worked Dave and buddy Tom, K3TW moved up from CW and then the floodgates opened for a fantastic solid run of over 190 stations without ever calling a CQ. What an impressive amount of casual op activity!

After less than 10 minutes break, I spent the last 20 minutes on 20 phone where I added mults HI, ND, SD, XE, AB and AK with 10 seconds to go! My overall QSO rate was 149 Q's per hour, so from the start of the 40 meter phone run, it must have been around 200/hr. Thanks to all of the guys who called in to give me a QSO and the WV guys in KAN, HAN, MRO, WOO, and BER who called in on 40 phone along with K3JT in MON on 20 CW.

It looks like I should plan nearly full time for next year.

73, Jeff

W1TEF/M QRP – SC - 1 cw

Only ONE Q - horrible conditions, couldn't find any WVA stations on the air except for ONE. Well, it would appear that I will have to travel to WVA next year and put the state on the air by myself. :)

Tough all around - I heard DX, but nothing stateside. Hey, it happens. Not much of a score, but then it is a score.

Best regards,

Tom, W1TEF

KG4IGC – fixed – SC – 7 cw and 7 ssb

Band conditions were terrible today on 40 and 80 meters pretty much most of the day. The band was long on 20 meters, hearing DX all day and none of the other bands were open. N1MM+ reports that I was only on the air for 1:58 minutes when actually I sat here listening for WV stations until about 4 PM. Took a short break and cut the lawn, when I got back 40 seemed to have improved some and worked a couple more stations. My main focus was following N8OYO/M around, saw him spotted quite a bit on 15, 40, and 80 meters but was only able to work him when he was on 40. I did get to work one bonus station W8WVA at the beginning of the QSO party, but did not hear them again all day. Thought I might hear fellow Swampfoxer WN4AFP running on 40, but did not. Concentrated on S&P all day, but I really don't think that I would have done much better running.

WN4AFP – fixed – SC 14 cw 14 ssb

I was hoping for a very solid 40m band today, but didn't happen! Conditions were very difficult today for me on my favorite band and playing in one of my favorite QSO party. In this contest, every contact is HUGE. I worked W8WVA at 16:08 and never hear another bonus station for the rest of the contest. Thanks to mobiles KA3NZR and N8OYY for being out there on the roads. I made only 3 Qs on 80m and was hoping for more. I did pick up two nice mults during the last hour that really helped my score. Thanks to N8II for the QSY to 40m phone. I heard my fellow Swamp Fox KG4IGC in the mix. I'd love to see a few more mobile ops in the future. It's always fun to say a quick hello to many of my fellow QP fanatics week after week. Good luck to all!

73s Dave WN4AFP

K3JT/8 – fixed – WV 68 ssb 15 digital

CW, PSK31, PSK63 and FELD-HELL MODES. Gave a thrill to some stations who needed WV for awards.

N4JRI/M – mobile – WV 27 SSB

Lone-wolf mobile using FT857D with Little Tarheel II and West Mountain TargetTuner. Ran 75w early increasing to 100w after a couple hours.

This is my second year doing WVQP, and the first-ever QSO Party where I made absolutely no in-state contacts--although I did try to work N8II's pileup around 0150Z. Band conditions were obviously not good. I activated Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Webster, Randolph and Pocahontas counties, and was unable to activate Barbour on 40, 20 or 80 despite a fantastic mountaintop location. Because of this, I blew off Upshur, took a dinner break in Elkins, and started heading for home (Richmond, VA) also skipping planned activations for Tucker, Pendleton, Grant and Hardy. Could not get a reply, or find another participating station from 3:30-7:00p local time. Finally activated Randolph County fully 5 hours after I first entered it (at the POC county line on Cheat Mt). Spent the last 45min at the VA State line on US250 and found conditions sharply improved and pileups in place on 40 and 20m.

Two equipment lessons learned. First, I need a better screwdriver controller. Second, I desperately need a voice keyer for operating mobile alone.

I think that WV could learn a few lessons from Virginia's event:

1 - VA allows FM simplex up to 70cm which opens a number of options including the inclusion of Technicians, and allowing mobiles to do band-hopping when conditions are bad, or when they cross paths. Unless there's a Quiet Zone issue, it would be good to consider here.

2 - VA allows a mobiles to use an activated county as a multiplier if they make 10 or more contacts from there. It's a good incentive, since we often talk to the same people from each county we activate. I always give out way more multipliers than I get.

3 - WV needs better preliminary communication. VA & NC have a means of ops communicating their plans prior to contest time and it's very helpful. NC uses a Yahoo forum, & VA publishes emailed comments. I would imitate NC.

4 - Make clear where we are being spotted. I found no evidence that the qsoparty.com site was used. Was it the DX cluster or MARAC? There's no place to find this stuff out.

I'd like to see this be a great event. I work it hard and have even talked it up to other mobile ops in VA. More mobiles would certainly help, but it's got to be worth that long drive. I came from Richmond, VA for a very lonely, voice-straining, deer-dodging event where I was tempted to just stop and check out all the yard sales. Even so, I'll probably be back next year, fueled by the enthusiasm the VA event generates, and my love of WV's countryside.

Sometimes It's Hard

Sometimes you just don't want to take your car to one of the National Park 'units'. In this case, the Great Sand Dunes Preserve in Colorado.



The Road to the Preserve

Needless to say, N4CD didn't venture on this road.

On the Road with N4CD I

Time for another NPOTA trip. This time N4CD will head far west....following that old saying "Go west young man - go west".....and that's what I did – all the way to California and Oregon. The car was loaded up for a 2 to 2 1/2 week trip. So many parks, so little time! There were parks with ruins, major parks like Sequoia and Yosemite to visit, monuments of various sorts and lots of mountains and scenery. There would be lots of 'history' along the way, too! The schedule was ambitious but I'd see

what I could do. This would be all new for third time transmit and Double Diamond award, too.

Day 1 – 7/9 - time to get a ways west. I head out early and drive and drive all day getting to Las Cruces NM by evening. No new parks along the way. I've finished off everything in NM already. Days Inn. Dinner at the Golden Corral. Still have to head west for new parks. I run the counties as I go through them. There's a big cw -CWO – cw open contest going on making a mess of the bands later in the afternoon. I head up to 14113.5 for some of the runs. That contest runs for a few hours.

Day 2 – 7/10 – time to keep heading west to AZ. Through Luna, Grant and Hidalgo NM into Cochise Arizona for National Historic Site NS-18 – Fort Bowie. You've probably never heard of this. Me either. Fort Bowie was built at Apache Pass/Apache Springs in Cochise County Arizona. Native folks had visited the springs for hundreds of years and the pass provided a route through the mountains between the different areas down that way. It seems that as the frontier moved west, there was some unrest among the natives. The Butterfield Stage Coach route ran through the pass and there is still the remains of one of their stations within the Historic Site boundary. The fort was used for 30 years, even coming into play in subduing Geronimo. After his surrender, the Indian wars came to an end and the fort wasn't needed any longer.



Fort Bowie, AZ

When you get into this 'park unit' – on a dirt road – not bad from the north – just a 1/4

mile or so to the parking lot – you then have a mile and a half walk to the visitor center and the actual remains of the fort. It hasn't been preserved well – and in many cases, these forts weren't built to last long. I elected to run from the parking lot and skip the 3 mile round trip (it was hot) to the visitor center.

I read up on the Butterfield Stagecoach route from the net. Most likely you've heard of the Pony Express – which only ran 18 months. This service carried thousands of time more mail. From 1858 to 1861, Butterfield set up a system of 139 relay stations with horses, food and supplies from the end of the railroad in the midwest to California. . He ran a regular twice a week stagecoach service – 25 days or less from St Louis to San Francisco. The US government gave him \$600,000 a year to carry the mail. In the three years the system ran, it was late delivering the mail only 3 times – one time due to an Indian attack. When the civil war broke out, part of the route was in Confederate territory so the mail contract was terminated and the service stopped. Only a few of the 240 station houses along the way survive. This one is protected by the historic site area. The route went through Ft Smith AR, over to El Paso, and then across southern NM and AZ and was 'snow free' year round.

Native Americans and bandits harassed travels on the Butterfield Overland Route – and that is why Ft Bowie was built to protect the travelers and mail route.

In 2009, President Obama signed legislation to conduct a study to determine if this route should be designated a National Historic Trail. So far it has gone nowhere. Still under study. Who knows? It might become a new 'national park unit' along with the Oregon, California, Santa Fe, Mormon and other 'historic trails'. Well, you learn something new every day. Or for us seniors, relearn it...seems that had run a dim bell somewhere before – hi hi.

The Pony Express started later in 1860 – but failed to obtain a government mail contract and wound up bankrupt 18 months later – when the Civil War broke out.

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Now some other interesting 'trivia' from the NPS website on Ft Bowie:

“In April 1886, Brigadier General Nelson Miles was assigned the command of the Department of Arizona replacing Brigadier General George Crook. Miles' first assignment was to capture or secure the surrender of the Apache leader, Geronimo. By utilizing troops in the field, and a new instrument- the heliograph- Miles hoped to

succeed where his predecessor failed.

Through advancement in the field of communication, the U.S. Army Signal Corps adapted inventions such as the telegraph for military uses. One such device that saw prominent use in the southwest was the heliograph.

The heliograph was the invention of a British engineer who attached a mirror to surveying equipment in order to redirect a beam of light on distant points. Through the use of sunlight, mirrors, and a keying system to interrupt the signal, flashes could be thrown on and off a receiving station. The duration of flashes corresponded to the dots and dashes used in Morse Code.

The American version of the heliograph differed from the British in that the Americans favored a fixed, square mirror, and the British used a tilting, round mirror to produce the 'flash'. The square mirror created 25% more reflecting surface (creating a brighter flash) for the same amount of packing weight.

If needed, the heliograph could also reflect moonlight, but were generally closed at nightfall. The device also saw intermittent use during the monsoon seasons. The greatest distance recorded between points utilizing the heliograph was 183 miles between mountains in Colorado and Utah. General Miles first used the heliograph in Montana in 1878, and realized mountainous terrain, clear atmosphere, and plenty of sunlight would make it easily adaptable in his pursuit of Geronimo.

By August of 1886, Miles was utilizing 23 heliograph stations in Arizona and New Mexico, with each station approximately 25 miles apart. The Bowie Peak Station kept a camp of five men: three operators and two guards. The crews were rotated periodically to, "...reduce monotony and promote efficiency..." and were supplied by pack mules over a 2.5 mile trail.

The Fort Bowie (#1) and Bowie Peak (#2) stations were headquarters of the system, as they were centrally located. In addition to relaying messages to other stations, a telegraph line ran down to the Adjunct's Office at the fort. When a message was received of a logistical nature, resupply, etc. its contents would be telegraphed to the fort for action. During the final campaign against Geronimo, station #2 dispatched 334 messages. This was the exact scenario in June 1886. Captain Henry Lawton left Fort Huachuca and entered Mexico on May 8, but returned within a month when he was informed that the Apaches were north of the border.

On June 5, the heliograph station at Antelope Springs observed and reported the Apaches

moving south toward Mexico. The message was transmitted to Forts Bowie and Huachuca and relayed to Lawton's command, via courier, who was currently at Calabasas. Lawton sent four detachments in pursuit. Lt. Robert Walsh, 4th Calvary, surprised the raiders in their camp in the Patagonia Mountains, capturing their stock and equipment. This was the last Apache raid into the United States, and the only time the heliograph system intercepted a party of warriors.

As Apaches were reluctant to travel at night, the heliograph provided a barrier to mobility. The effectiveness of the heliograph was best stated by Lt. Stephen Fuller, architect and engineer of the system: "From the time that the heliograph was put into a particular section of the country, it was noticed that the Indians were never again seen in the vicinity...". “

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You never know what is going to show up in the County Hunter News! History, technology,etc.....

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OK....one new 'park unit down', one new 3rd time transmit county added to the log. Time to get to the next one. I usually sit for as long as it takes for the pile-up to die down. Sometimes that's just half an hour (county hunter frequencies first, then off to the frequencies I use for NPOTA contacts) and sometimes 2-3 hours depending how 'rare' the park is. Most aren't rare as thousands of 'activations' have taken place. I would hit just one really rare on on the trip.

Chiricahua is the result of a 27 million year old volcanic eruption that laid down 2,000 feet of ash and pumice. That ash fused into rock known as rhyolite tuff, which eventually eroded into spires and unusual rock formations found in the park. Did 164Q's. Still in Cochise County. Took a look around in the park – drove the road to the end – and back out. Good spot to operate from at the end of the road on a high view point!



Chiricahua AZ

Next up was Coronado - still in Cochise. Big counties out that way! This is a National Memorial that is concerned with the 'culture' and 'rich traditions' of the groups that came from Mexico following the Francisco Vasquez de Coronado expeditions in 1540-42. OK....way south along the border, but, heck, it's a park unit. Zip into the park, run it, and leave. It's getting late. 110 QSO's. You've got panoramic views from the mountains, but there are zero artifacts and ruins. They just picked some nice territory and turned it into a 'memorial'.



Coronado Memorial AZ

There were lots of border patrol vehicles around. This area is just across the border from Mexico - and there are two sister parks nearby across the border.

Overnight in the town of Sierra Vista- Days Inn.

Day 3 – 7 -11-16

On this day, I'd start with Tumacacori in Santa Cruz County. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail passes through this site, so you can run it as a 'two fer'. Two park units at the same time. This is the site of the abandoned ruins of three Spanish missions. San Jose de Tumacacori and Los Santos Angeles de Guevavi, established in 1691, are the two oldest missions in Arizona. The third, San Cayetano de Calabazas, was built in 1756. I pulled into the parking lot at 8am.



Tumacocori Spanish Missions

Started running the park. The pileup died around 9am, when the visitor center opened and you could go inside to see the ruins. Went inside, took a quick look around, showed my senior pass and ID, and talked with the lady ranger. She mentioned she had seen me go by the window with 'the big antenna' on the car at 8am– hi hi. Only one other car in the lot. Sharp eyes – small window in her office. Well, I put 112Q in the log – still early in the day and bands not quite open to everywhere, but time to get moving to the

next one. The 'trail' connected various missions along the way from Mexico headed north.

I'd seen several missions so far – no need to spend time here at the 'ruins'. So many parks, so little time!

This was a 'historic place' – an HP designator. HP45. The park service has 'parks' as in Yellowstone and Grand Canyon, monuments, memorials, battlefields and many types of park units. I'd hit some of just about everything on the trip.

Now I'm in southern Arizona – and Saguaro National Park is ahead. NP49. The park hunters often go by designator and have no clue as to what the park unit is. They're just trying to work 'all the parks'. In Saguaro NP you have the giant cactus – that can grow to 50 feet tall – and that live up to 150 years. OK...see the giant cactus. It's hotter than blazes outside. Car says it's 112F outside and the sun is blazing away. This park is on both sides of Tuscon, AZ. Two pieces of it. I hit the western piece as it looks closer off the interstate with less travel.



Saguaro National Park

Not far away in Phoenix they are into the 115 degree regions. Do 89Qs and bug out.

Next up is an unusual 'ruins' site – Casa Grande MN13 – Pinal County. For over 1,000 years, pre-historic farmers occupied the lands here. When the first Europeans arrived, all that remained of the ancient culture was the ruins of villages, irrigation canals and artifacts. It seems that there were many migrations of people, a lot starting around 1300 when things changed. All throughout New Mexico – it seemed that 'civilization' as they knew it changed – probably due to overpopulation for the resources available, and some decades of continued drought. Hundreds of sites were abandoned within a short period of time, and folks moved on – or I should say the survivors moved on.

At Casa Grande, you have an ancient “Great House' preserved with a giant canopy. In order to run this site, you have to coordinate it ahead of time (and it must be approved by the ARRL NPOTA folks). I did and had permission to be at the site that day. The head person there didn't want conflicts of people arriving at the same time to activate the park. It's close to Phoenix and lots of hams.



Casa Grande National Monument

It's listed on the NP list as 'requires ARRL permission to run'. I stopped in the visitor center and discovered when I presented by senior pass and ID (drivers license) that I was expected and 'welcome'. OK....nice to be 'welcomed' officially. Sat in the hot parking lot for 2 hours or so making contacts from Pinal County. 107Qs in the log. In nearly all cases except the 'quickie' repeats of the trails – where once I got 10 or 12 I was happy, I tried for 100+Qs per park. Usually I'd run 20/30/40 cw and 20 SSB. Some days

conditions aren't good and I don't reach the 100+ goal, or maybe just that park isn't needed as it has been run by several 'expeditions' making hundreds of contacts each or it is late at night or I can't do SSB because of the QRN at my operating spot. Most of the park hunters, just like county hunters, are on SSB.

Larry, K5RK, who always seems to be around, did me many favors by spotting me on the NPOTA Facebook page and on the DX clusters (dxsummit.fi) to alert the NPOTA folks. Probably in less than half the locations I had internet ability, and maybe 80% of the time had cell service for voice calls. Larry is one of the 'top dogs' now having worked over 434 of the 487 park units. He seems to almost always 'be there' to help out.

Temps were running well over 100 degrees in Arizona. I was going through lots of water. It's also hot in my home town in TX this time of year but this is a bit more – another 10 degrees and baking sun. I'd get to cooler territory eventually.

OK....there's still maybe time for one more today. I head up to Globe Arizona in Gila County. It's a bit of windy road and lots of construction – at times they shut down the road in mid day for 4-6 hours at a time! Luckily missed that. Tonto, MN70 is 30 miles up the road from Globe. Maybe I can activate it that day. I take a chance the site will have a place I can run it – looks like I'll be getting there at 'closing time'. Make it at 4:50. Go inside to get a stamp in my passport and they tell me the park is closing in 10 minutes and I have to leave. Dang.

Tonto , MN70, is another site with well preserved cliff dwellings. Seen enough of them. These were in use in the 13th, 14th and early 15th centuries. People here farmed the salt river valley and supplemented diet with hunting and gathering.

Well, maybe I can sneak in 10 quick QSOs for activation credit. I head down the road – find a spot – but the ranger comes says you've got to go all the way down the road past the 'gates'. Hmmm. OK. He follows me down and locks the gates at 5pm.

Turns out there is still a turn around outside the gates within the park property. The park property even extends on the other side of the main highway – but the highway isn't park property so you can't run from it. There's no roads into the park on the other side of the road either. Check – and nope. The turn around will work – not well since there are two power lines passing overhead and S3 noise on cw and worse on SSB. No other options than coming back in the morning – and I'd rather be heading elsewhere. I manage to work 46Qs from there. No SSB, just 20 and 30cw. 40M has horrible noise there. A bit later the two rangers come down in their park service SUV and sit 30 feet

away in the turn around lot. Guess they didn't believe I would just sit there and talk on the radio. Sat there another 30 minutes and then when I couldn't hear anything else, leave. They were still watching – hi hi! Guess it must have been a slow day for them. Time to get back to the motel in Globe - Days Inn - (not a cheap place) up in the 'hills' of AZ. Dinner at Elono's Mexican Restaurant across the street. Good. Slept well. Cooler temps at the higher elevation here.



Tonto Cliff Dwellings

Just beyond the sign – is a large turn around area where you can park when the gates on the road are closed. Note the power lines (2 big ones) going overhead. It's 'in the park'. No way to operate SSB at that location.

Day 4 7-12-16

I zipped on back down the road toward Phoenix from Globe. Good thing I left early. Today the road would be CLOSED from 10am to 4pm! Totally shut down. If I hadn't run Tonto the evening before, I'd be sitting for hours waiting for the road to open. Sometimes you just luck out.

Now I was off to Organ Pipe Cactus MN58 'monument' in Pima County. Here you get to 'enjoy' the Sonoran Desert with dramatic mountains, plains scenery, and desert wilderness of plants. Here you'll find the unique organ pipe cactus. It's hot outside. 104F. Really hot. Sun beating down. I look around, do 42Q in the middle of the day (mid day slump) and bug out. It's not rare – and propagation isn't good today. You really really have to want to go to this one. 300 mile detour off the interstate to do it!

Back up to Maricopa,AZ. Well, gotta run that one too for the county hunters.

Along in here, I see a Toyota Prius ahead of me – with an NPOTA bumper sticker. Obviously he sees my antenna on the back of his car. The YL holds up a QSL card – he is NA6L. I fumble around and find one of mine and hold it up. A mile up the road we turn off and have an eyeball on a side road. Turns out he drives to parks, puts a mag mount on the top of car and operates – activating parks. He extends a 17 foot high pole, and has one horizontal – both mounted off the mag mount assembly. Runs QRP. How about that? Chance meeting on the highway. It was 104 degrees outside. Had a five minute eyeball before heading out once again.

Arizona was done – all that could be run. One park was 'off limits' (Native American 'sacred site') and another had just been put on the 'do not activate list' – Rainbow Bridge – another ginned up sensitive 'native American site'. OK...if you can't visit them, take them off the NP list. National Parks mean that – for people in the US to enjoy. If they are off limits....well, they should not be park units. Half the mountain tops in the west half of the country are sacred to some Indian tribe now or in the past. Zillions of them.

Next up was a journey over into California to run Joshua Tree National Park – NP32. This is a place where two desert environments join – the Colorado Desert features natural gardens of creosote bush and cholla cactus. The higher moister Mohave Desert is the habitat of the Joshua tree. I hit the park at the south entrance and run it. 102Qs. The further west you get, the harder it is to reach the east coast. OK...time for a motel in Yucca Valley, CA – Super 8. Dinner at Sizzler next door. Slept well.

Day 5 7/13

It's been hot – hot hot – temps up at 100 plus degrees. It's the 'desert southwest'. Time now for the Mohave Preserve –PV13 - another type of park unit – a “preserve”. Here you find rose colored sand dunes, mile high mountains, Joshua trees while there are big horn sheep and deer roaming around. It hit the south part – it's really in the middle of nowhere and run it. You are miles from anywhere and any service. It's early in the day. Make 86Q and leave. Not rare.



Mohave Preserve PV13

Next up is the Lake Mead Recreation area. This spans dozens of miles, but I'll try to hit just the western part of it. It's a very popular site for boating, swimming and summer recreation fun. The plan is to go into the park, head across Christmas Tree pass and out the top end of the small western part. That doesn't work too well. I get into the park- you start going down and down and down. I didn't see the road to Christmas Pass. Turn around and head back up the hill – and halfway up is the turn off. Seems this is a dirt road despite the map showing it as a nice solid black line. Hmm.. well, time for Plan B. Sit and run the county then head back out the way I came in. It's RC-13. Again, it's been run and run so no need for an all out effort. Clark County NV. Just 30Qs for a mid day 'slump time' run. Half county hunters and half park hunters. Not the best spot to run it either – but didn't feel like driving miles and miles more! Hot, hot, hot too! 105F plus. Thank goodness for car air conditioning!



So what do you do if you are a park hunter and it's already hot, hot, hot? How about heading to Death Valley NP15 – often the place with the hottest US temperatures! Yep, that's the next one. I zip around it through Nye County NV, over to Beatty, NV where I have Motel 6 reserved for the night. I get there and there's still lots of daylight left so the car zips over the 15 miles to Death Valley park for a late day run. Not bad – 168Qs go in the log that evening. At least the sun isn't beating down too bad – still over 100 degrees, though. Eat at the Denny's nearby – not many choices in this small town – and the Denny's is in the back of the Casino there. You've got to walk 400 feet through a gazillion one arm bandits to get back to it. I didn't waste a nickel.

Slept well and get up early in the morning to beat the heat.

Day 6 – 7/14

I'm on the road early (after Breakfast at Denny's) to beat the heat. I've got to drive across Death Valley and out the other side. Now I'm in Inyo County, CA. At 7:30 in the morning, at 'sea level' it's already 100 degrees and climbing as I'm just halfway through t through the park. I stop and make another 15Qs on 40 and 30m. Then get the heck out before the 'real heat' hits. There's a bunch to see here – but do it some time other than mid summer!



N4CD at Death Valley CA NP15

Now the original plan was to try to get to Devil's Postpile (DEPO) on July 15 in the afternoon. This is a park unit that had not been on the air at all! Never. Virgin territory. I exchanged some email with the folks at DEPO. Most of the parks have an administrative code of the first four letters of the park name, as in SAGU for Saguaro NP. This was DEPO. A few emails went back and forth.

If you want to go to DEPO, you have several things to consider. The park doesn't open usually till mid June when they finally get the road into it plowed open. Yes, snowed in till mid June! It stays open till late September or when the snow flies. The park had just been open for a month. If you are a normal visitor to this monument, you park at the Mammoth Mountain ski area, along with thousands of others using that facility (big entertainment, recreation, gondola ride to the top of Mammoth Mtn, etc), and ride the \$7 Shuttle Bus down to DEPO to visit it. There are very limited ways to get your personal vehicle into this place. If you are handicapped, you can drive it with handicap plates/permit. I was trying to get an exception to bring in the N4CD mobile. The discussion had gone on for a week.

There's a small 21 place campground there – but it was closed for the season while reconstruction was going on. That would have been another way to have a 'reserved camp site' which would allow you to bring your car in. There was a checkpoint at the top of the road that blocked all but 'approved' cars from entering the road down to the park.

Others had first 'asked' to set up portable. That triggered a 'no way' response. Seems it's

usually best NOT to ask permission to use your ham radio in your car – just drive in and operate. Park like any other visitor. If you don't have to 'set up' and put up temporary outside antenna of any kind you can usually do it. This is a very small park – limited parking. 99% of visitors ride the shuttle bus.

Eventually, they seemed inclined to let a 'self contained' mobile unit come and visit the park for a few hours – with of course, some strings attached. They seemed to be paranoid about 'creating noise' and 'a disturbance' to their park unit. After assuring them that nothing would be heard outside the vehicle, that my car was just a normal passenger car, not some monster with 20 foot antennas all over it, they seemed to be gradually willing to let me come visit – using a Special Use Permit. Out of 175 parks, I've only had to do that 2 times before – at Chamizal (another case where someone 'asked' to do a portable operation and the wheels of progress came to a grinding halt) and the William Clinton House in Hope AR that has no parking where you have to set up portable on the property). Was the first 'activation' in both of those.

Starting in Globe AZ, I had to zip to the post office to send in my Special Use Permit (they only way I was going to be allowed to be there) along with a \$50 money order, via 'overnight mail' that takes two days to reach DEPO. So I was hoping things would fall in place to run this on the 15th. I had to change my route a bit and skip 2 park units to manage to do it. Hopefully it would be worth it, but folks told me DEPO was way down in a valley in a RF black hole. I'd find out soon enough. Meanwhile there was time for one more park unit.

Next up was Manzanar NS-48. This was one of the ten 'relocation' interment camps for people of Japanese origin during World War II. Over 110,000 people, living in the US, were giving 3 days notice that they would be 'transferred' to a 'safe location' for Japanese origin citizens/aliens. This occurred not long after Pearl Harbor. Camps were set up around the country – 10 in total. About 10,000 spent the rest of the war here in a quickly thrown together facility, surrounded by barbed wire fences and guard houses. Most were way out in the boonies – as was this one. If you want to visit one of the three remaining ones, this is the one to visit. It's been partially restored.



Manzanar Relocation Camp

It's sad to realize that US CITIZENS were sent to these camps. In most cases, they lost all their assets and businesses as they were given 3 days notice to pack what they could carry, and then transported by bus to these facilities.

Well, time for a break.

After this one, I headed into Mammoth Lake, CA for the night. It's an expensive, up in the mountains, recreation area full of condos and high price motels. Would you believe \$120/night for a Motel 6? Ouch! Dinner at a pizza/pasta place across the street.

Do you know why it's Mammoth Mountain and Mammoth Lake? It's not because of the size.....way back when in the gold rush days, someone found a gold strike here. The claim was taken over by a gold claim promoter who advertised this as a 'mammoth find' to sell gold shares in a venture to mine it. Turns out it wasn't so big....but the name stuck.

The DEPO story will continue after a break.....

K3IMC, Don, TX All Counties #18

From the MARAC Awards Chairmain, KC6AWX:

“Congratulations to Don Flynn – K3IMC!!! Don has completed his Ran All USA Award, #18, on June 10, 2016. I had planned to present the award to Don at the MARAC National Convention, but circumstances beyond my control (family) will not allow that to happen. Don also indicated that he would prefer a plaque, instead of a trophy, commemorating his achievement. This is a great idea! I have attached a picture of Don’s plaque.

Don’s quest took him 26 years and he joins the list of MARAC Road Warriors. “

Robert Devine, KC6AWX
MARAC Awards Manager



On the Road with N4CD II

The Devil's Postpile Story. Continues.

I arrived in Mammoth Lake, CA in early afternoon. There were no other parks I could activate this afternoon. Why not do some reconnoitering? I drove up to the checkpoint at the top of the hill – up at 9176 feet AMSL. I'd see what was the 'obstacle'. In order for me to get to DEPO, I would have to leave early in the morning, long before 7am

before the checkpoint is manned for the day. I learned from the DEPO people they stay till 7 pm or a bit after and there are no exceptions granted. I would have to get through the check point before 7am.



OK- today I wouldn't get through – but I could ride the shuttle bus down. You buy your shuttle bus ticket at the Mammoth Lake Adventure Center right at the bottom of the gondola ski lift to the top of Mammoth mountain. There must be a thousand cars there – parked along side the road for a mile. The shuttle buses go past the various parking areas picking up people. It's a giant entertainment/restaurant area – plus all sorts of activities for the kids. There's all sorts of hiking and biking trails. I find the place to buy a ticket, and quickly am on a shuttle bus down to the DEPO.

Now this isn't your normal road. The first 3 miles are one lane, with pull off spots every 1000 feet or so to let vehicles get by, including other shuttle buses. The speed limit is 15 mph and you start a steep descent down to the valley floor. Down, down, down. Later the road is barely two lanes wide for another 4 miles as you descend to 7600 feet at the valley floor.

OK...I ride the shuttle down – it makes six or seven stops along the way – you get taken all the way to the end, at Red's Meadow Resort, and then it comes back to DEPO where most folks get off. They run shuttle buses every 20 minutes during the peak summer months. At one point, they seem to know the schedules as there is only one or two spots where the shuttle buses can pass each other on the single lane road – and they wait

for the other to pass. It's a bit hairy. You really don't want to take a motorhome or fifth wheeler down this road!

At the bottom, I take a chance to see if Head Ranger Chad is around or the staff people with whom I've been corresponding. Otherwise, things are set for the next day. I've got to 'sign' the SUP to make it official. Luckily I meet the head guy, and he has the paperwork ready. All officially approved to 'run' this site. Had I known how to get down there on my own, I would have just driven down and operated, but the access was a problem I didn't solve on my own. OK.....the head ranger had picked out two spots – one in the parking lot, one in the 'closed' campground – for my use.

To the east you have a high ridge and high mountains. Mammoth Mountain is 11,000 feet high, five miles away and about 80 degrees from the campground site. Another mountain is over 10,000 feet and about the same distance. It's pretty much 'up' at a steep angle from way down in the valley. Will a signal even get out of here? We'll find out soon enough.

Turned out the trip was useful. I know where to park the next morning and have an idea of what the road down is like. (no guard rail, steep drop offs – like 2000 feet straight down). Rode the shuttle bus back up the road. Get the car and head back to the motel. Traffic everywhere. One main road and tons of cars, parking lots at restaurants full and hard to find a spot. Grab some dinner, head back to the Motel 6, hit the hay early and plan to be on the road EARLY.

Day 7 7/15

The big day arrives to 'activate' Devils Postpile. I'm up at 5:30 and find a convenience store to grab some breakfast (egg McMuffin type deal and coffee) at 6am. Just after that I'm headed up the hill to the checkpoint and through it before 6:30. Now it's carefully down the hill at 15 mph. You don't want to go over the edge here. I arrive down the hill at 6:50 and get set in the parking spot in the campground – car pointed east.



DEPO Entrance – 6:50 am

At 7am, when the permit 'starts', I put out a CQ NP on 14041 and K5RK down by Houston TX comes by with 20 over S9 signal. I'm set – going to be a good day. RF makes it in and out of DEPO. Of course, K5RK has big beams and a KW but so do many of the park chasers. Three hours later there are 280 contacts in the log from Madera County, CA. Fun! Pileup! Half a dozen of the folks had worked over 400 parks already and dozens had over 300. This was a 'new one' and the pileups were big for a while. It wasn't a perfect location but worked surprising well considering the mountains immediately to the east. Guess there were enough gaps (you couldn't see through the forests) that allowed the signal to get in and out.

I stayed 4 hours – until the pileups died and we got into the mid day slump. Ran the usual 20/30/40 cw and 20M SSB. Took a quick look around. Maybe 15 cars in the parking lot (those who came in early and construction workers), 1/3rd the parking lot filled with construction equipment, but still some empty spots. People were streaming in by the bus load – maybe 150 an hour and the rangers met them as they exited the bus, gave them a 10-15 minute talk and pointed out the path to the main attraction down the 0.4 mile long trail.

So what is the Devils Postpile? Ah....Not all that long ago, a volcanic eruption laid down 2000 feet of lava here. It cooled slowly as ash fell on top of it. In an usual form, the cooling lava formed large columns of rock (basalt). Then came the last glacier that stripped the top layers away, ground away the sides, and left a spectacular exhibit of 60

foot high columns of basalt – from 3 to nine sides.



The Devils Postpile

In the winter time, they have measuring instruments here that measure how deep the snow pack is – usually tens of feet deep! This place gets a lot of snow each winter! Lots of tall pine trees in abundance. Cool in the morning, too! I'm enjoying it.

Success! First time activation and lots of folks happy they got a contact.

Time to move on. Now it was a quick zip up to the east side of Yosemite. Ran it just inside the entrance. Tons of cars going by. Then ran it again later at the 'river' for more contacts. The place was mobbed with tourists – must have been ten thousand there on that Friday. Slow moving traffic and tons of it. Parking spaces nearly impossible to find. Lucked out and found one by the river that would be a 'two fer' for 20 contacts. I was hanging out a bit so didn't stick around too long there either.

Once again, this national park had been run a lot, so didn't put too many Q's in the log. I had miles to go to get to a motel in a Travelodge away from the park on the west side in Merced,CA (Merced County). If you wanted to stay nearby, say in Mariposa, you had \$150 and \$250/night motels! BBQ Pit for dinner.

Day 8 7/16

My schedule had been messed up, but there were still parks I could get to north of me without too much hassle, so it was off heading north. Sutter and Yuba went in the log as I headed for Lassen NP in Tehama County. Did OK with 105Q's from there. Lassen Peak (Volcano) has been active as recently as 1914! Zipped into the park, found a spot to operate, did some sightseeing, and then headed out for the next unit. I could get one more in before evening. Now I'm seeing lots of pine trees and higher elevations. Lots of twisty roads out this way!



Lassen Volcanic NP

Whiskeytown Recreation Area – RC14, is right off the main interstate highway in Shasta County. There's a giant lake there. I checked into a Howard Johnson motel in Redding (yes, they are still around). Low dollar motel – adequate – then headed west 10 miles to the area. It's a large area in multiple spots with a visitor center (closed by the time I got there) that is easy to run. Put 132Qs into the log then headed off to dinner at a nearby Denny's. Not too many places to eat at that exit of I-5. Well, at least it's a bit cooler as I head north away from the desert southwest! Slept well.



Whiskeytown Unit - RC14

Now it's getting time to think about heading back around toward home. I've got to get home to do the logs, upload QSOs to LoTW, plan the next trip east and be ready to leave for the National Convention. Seems I go off for 2 or 3 weeks, come back home and need an oil change and tire rotation.

Day 9 7/17 Sunday

The car then wandered over to Modoc County for the Lava Beds Monument. Here you'll find hundreds of miles of lava tubes and caves you can enter – the result of volcanic eruptions. You can see an incredibly rugged landscape punctuated by cinder

cones, lava flows, spatter cones, lava tube caves and pit craters. There are more than 700 caves there. Hit the visitor center. They are worried about a disease spreading in bat populations – wiping them out. You'll be 'decontaminated' before entering any cave if you have been in other cave sites – and that is true of nearly all the caves out that way that you might visit. It's a fungus that can be carried on shoes and pants. Did 148Qs from there.



Lava Beds Monument

Not far away is the Tule Lake internment camp – in two parts. NM31. What is still there is less than half the size it was during the war. This is another of the 3 yet existing 'relocation camps' for people of Japanese heritage during WW2. This particular one held over 20,000 people for 3 years during WW2. You can't see as much as there is at Manzanar. If you want to see the best one go to Manzanar. Put 148Qs in the log.



Tule Lake Segregation Center

I was headed north – and there was still time for another park. I headed through Klamath Falls OR up to Crater Lake. You see lots of 'snow zone' signs with warnings about chains and snow tires. Well, I'd been seeing those all day – even on the interstate with 'chain up areas'. You won't be finding me out this way in the winter!

I got to Crater Lake late in the evening – 2300Z – drove in a few miles to a decent spot to operate - and only did 55QSO. Band wasn't cooperating, I was tired, and just didn't push it. It had also been activated a lot with thousands of QSOs before.



Crater Lake

Just beyond this sign is a big 'SNOW ZONE' area!

Way way back when, when I was a teenager, the family used to go tent camping on long trips. We were headed toward the campground here in early July. Couldn't stay in the campground – they hadn't plowed it out! This year, the low down campgrounds were open. Didn't check others. Drove in few miles, found a spot to operate, then came back out. Nice DEEP lake there.

That night was spent in a Super 8 in Klamath Falls. I read the Sunday paper that was there. It had SNOWED in the past week in Klamath Falls (mid July). OK.....time for N4CD to head back home.

Day 10 – 7/18 Monday

Now I was headed east – to circle back around toward home. Not too many parks to run in Oregon – and one that is there , Oregon Caves, is in an RF black hole with only 300 QSOs made to date. It's way west, so I've got to skip it. It takes half a day of driving just to get out of OR headed to Idaho to the east.

I do some looking and find that the next one 'can' be a two fer – or not depending where in the park you run. It's Hagerman Fossil Beds – and the Oregon Trail goes through there. To count the 'trail' you've got to be within 100 feet of it. There is 3 miles of road that is 'on the route' but you can't park.

So to play it safe, I do a 'quickie run' for just the Oregon Trail at Glenn's Ferry where the trail crossed the river. You see signs for 'original route' and there's even an Oregon Trail road there. 11Qs and activation credit for TR07. Not the least bit rare..

Then it's over to the Hagerman Fossil Beds which contains the largest number of Hagerman Horse fossils in North America. This monument preserves the world's richest known fossil deposits from the late Pliocene epoch – about 3 to 4 million years ago. I park up on the Oregon Trail Overlook – good spot – but the trail is more than 100 feet away, so don't run it as a 'two fer'. 179Qs. Good run. Evening run. Stayed nearby at the Amber Inn. Dinner at Ziggy's Express Cafe – good.



Day 11 7/19 Tuesday

Breakfast at Ziggy's, then off to the next park – Craters of the Moon – a couple hour drive away. This can be a 'two fer' with the Park and a Preserve. I run from the 'visitor center' parking lot so claim the 'two-fer'. Here a rift in the Earth's surface opened and lava flowed out covering almost a half million acres. This happened just 15,000 years ago, and lava was flowing just 2,000 years ago! Future events are likely, too! In this

part of ID, there is a distinct lack of roads through the entire area! 133Qs go into the log from there.



N4CD at Craters of the Moon, ID

Then it's off to Minidoka - the third 'relocation center' or interment center used during WW2 that still exists. There's not much there to see compared to Manzanar – but – it's a park unit so I stop by, read the signs, note what is there. It's a site for future development and renovation. NS-52. 166Qs go into the log. Hit the visitor center and do the loop drive. First time I've been to these ID parks.



Minidoka 'Relocation Center'

I'm on the home stretch now – not too much left to do other than head back to home near Dallas TX.

I can hit one more today – and head down to City of Rocks – which is also a 'two fer' with the California Trail – TR14 – if you stop in the right place. I zip on down there – stop by the visitor center, sign the log, get a stamp (as I do as most parks), then take a pic on the way into the park. Here, the California trail follows the road for a few miles then turns south avoiding the high areas.

This is a strange area – way back in 1843, this was a landmark for emigrants headed west on the CA trail. This area, born of molten lava and shaped by millions of years of erosion, it looked to travelers like a dismantled rock-build city of the stone age. The trail avoided that. I found a spot to operate and did 209Qs. Good run. K7CAR was headed to the same park but we never met up. He was going to be camping and headed to a high spot to get cell service. This area is way way way off the beaten path now. I had to go away to find a motel – Motel 6 after the runs – 100 miles away in Tremonton, UT. Dinner at the Grille.

Day 12 – 7/20 Wednesday

Breakfast at Denny's early – then off to the next site.

Next up was the Golden Spike Historic site. Back in the 1860s, two companies were building the transcontinental railroad – one building east from California, one building west from MO. At some point they would meet. It was 'decided' that the location for the meet and joining of rails would be a Promontory Peak in UT. The final spike, a 'golden one' was hammered in – completing the entire system on May 10, 1869/ . This park commemorates that event – there's 1.5 miles of original system preserved – a steam locomotive ride for tourists to enjoy, etc.



Golden Spike , UT Box Elder County

Next up was Timpanagos Cave in Utah, UT. This turned out to be the worst site to run during the trip. You head up into a canyon with steep sides. The park is rather small, maybe 1/2 mile by 1/2 mile. There's not many places to park and the visitor center lot is mobbed. Luckily find a spot as someone pulls out. The cave is actually up on the hillside.

I try two different spots in the small park – one at each end – but signals only seem to squirt out toward WI and MN, and to the Pacific Northwest. Nothing from the rest of the country. Not many QSOs have taken place from here – it's an 'rf black hole'. I do my best and wind up with only 43Qs – rather disappointing. You'd have to be a mountain goat and head on up the cliffs to find a decent spot to run.

Well, it's time to be heading home. One more new park to go.....then can zip the rest of the way home. I'm headed to Vernal UT – and an American Best Value Motel. I get there – and there is still time so head to Dinosaur National Monument. This was discovered in 1909.



Dinosaur Monument UT

It's late in the evening but 134Q go into the log from this run. Back to Vernal with dinner at a Golden Corral.

Day 13 Thursday 7/21

I head on out in the morning going east into Colorado. The coffee has just kicked in when I see a sign for Dinosaur Monument again – this one the piece in Colorado. This park is in two states. OK.....there's the visitor center. It's early – they aren't open yet....but you can run from their lot – counts – and I do adding in another quick 45Q.

I'm zipping along in Moffat County CO...and the car starts beeping at me. “Low Tire Pressure”...hmmm...front left tire is down from normal 35 to 28 psi. Not good. It was OK last night. There are no towns around of any size. I get my little compressor out and pump up the tire. Seems to be doing OK.....maybe losing a pound every ten miles. I'm headed for Craig Colorado about 30-40 miles away.

I get on On-star. My new car comes with a six month free trial. Ask the On-Star lady for a place to get a tire fixed in Craig CO. She comes back with answer and address and turn by turn instructions on how to get to Arrowhead. Get there – and it turns out the place doesn't repair tires but he knows who does. Craig Conoco. I'm in luck. The guy stops working on other cars, jacks up the car, takes the tire off....and finds a small leak in tire. Fixes said leak with a plug. \$19.50. I'm back on the road within a hour, but lost about 2 with all the things going on, misdirection, etc. Oh well, there's a few bumps in

the road every now and then.

I'm zipping along headed for Raton NM for the night at a Motel 6 (cheap but adequate). I've been there before. As I come up Raton Pass from CO – I notice signs for 'original route' Santa Fe Trail. Check the web. Sure enough, the Santa Fe trail came right up through Raton Pass – and with a short detour you can be right next to the original trail route. Did that and got 21 quick Qs for TR-11. It's a repeat but you get credit for anything more than 9 QSOs. My car just seem to pass by these opportunities.

Then to the motel and dinner at the Asian Buffet. Turns out I've been to that dinner place before too. Small world but there aren't too many places to eat there. Hit the day. It had been a long day and another long one would be coming up.

Day 14 - 7/22 Friday

I'm zipping along the short route to home....and what do I see? Hmmm...the coffee just kicked it....it's 28 miles to Capulin Volcano. I've run that one before, but I can do a repeat quickie for more 'activation' credits. Heh heh. The sun is barely coming up. Looks pretty nice behind the big volcano – some clouds about. It's 11:30Z – 5:30 am NM time. 6:30am TX time. I get there at 11:50z and only 40m is open. Do 13Qs and move on. Got to get home. Anything more than 9Qs counts for 'activation' credit. Don't have time to wait for the other bands to open.

Then I zipped on home through the panhandle of TX.....but I wasn't home yet. The GPS lady routed me within a few miles of the Lake Meredith Recreation Area – RC14. I couldn't resist. It's a bumpy 10-15 minute ride in at 20-25mph on a sand road great for Jeeps. You get to the west edge of the park. Run it for a quick 45Q and get back on route. I'll still be home by dinner time with lots of driving at 75 mph on the TX roads.

Make it home with 30,600 miles on the car (in six months) and a trip length of 5712.3 miles. Average gas economy about 30-31 mph including lots of hours sitting with engine running. Gas went from under \$2 in TX to near \$3 in parts of CA, OR, and AZ. Had lots of fun, hit 29 new 'park units', did 3,323 NPOTA QSOs – uploaded to LoTW, plus another thousand plus CH contacts. Worked W0GXQ, K8ZZ, and N2JNE on CW for their counties and AB7NK, K7SEN, and WA9DLB for theirs on SSB. Had fun, spend a few bucks, and hit dozens of counties along the way.

Took two days to type in the NPOTA contacts to LoTW.

Got the oil changed, tires rotated, and soon ready to hit the road to Memphis for lots of

'eyeball' QSOs. Hi hi. CU there!

Special Needs Section

Lots of folks will be traveling. Maybe you can help finish off these folks. Selected needs from the K3IMC webpage:

NØXYL - Master Gold Award using SSB Only - Updated:7/16/2016

AK: Fourth
ID: Boundary
MT: Garfield,Powder River,Teton
OR: Deschutes,Douglas,Lake,Tillamook,Yamhill
PA: Greene
VA: Prince Edward,Pulaski,Southhampton
WA: Snohomish

WBØPYF - USACA Award using CW Only - Updated:7/13/2016

Cell # 314-486-4484, email, n288ds@sbcglobal.net

GA: Dawson, Jones, Lincoln
KY: Calloway, Johnson, Lee, Martin, Nicholas, Owsley
MS: Wilkinson
NC: Ashe

NFØN - Master Platinum Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/17/2016

CO: Archuleta
KY: Harrison
NC: Clay,Macon
NY: Sullivan

WØEAR - 8th Time Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/24/2016

AK: Second
GA: Bacon, Jeff Davis, Wheeler
IL: Calhoun
IN: Cass
NC: Wilkes
NE: McPhearson, Nance
PA: Sullivan

VA: Brunswick

KØDEQ - Bingo Award using Any Mode - Updated:6/23/2016

AL: Bibb, Cherokee, Hale, Tallapoosa

AR: Cleburne, Independence, Stone

GA: Chattooga, Evans, Harris, Muscogee, Tattnall

KS: Edwards

MD: Somerset

MN: Wright

MO: Cedar

MT: Garfield,Pondera

NC: Swain

NE: Cass, Sarpy

NY: Fulton

TN: Rhea

TX: Real

VA: Lee

WA: Chelan

HA9RE - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/13/2016

CA: Mariposa, Yuba

CO: Conejos

IL: Hardin

KY: Lewis

OK: Johnston

W9MSE - 5 Star Award using CW Only - Updated:7/21/2016

CA: Nevada 1), Placer 1)

IL: Boone 1),Carroll 3),DeKalb 4),Dupage 1),Kane 1),Lawrence 1),McHenry 1)

WI: Buffalo 1)

N9JF - Bingo Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/2/2016

25 to go for Bingo THIS IS THE WHOLE LIST.

AR: Marion

IA: Howard

IN: Fayette, Madison, Monroe, Orange, Rush

KY: Carroll, Monroe

LA: Beauregard

MT: Deer Lodge

NC: Jones, Perquimans

NE: Saline
NV: Mineral
OR: Josephine, Marion, Yamhill
PA: Cameron
TX: Cass, Frio, Marion, Medina
WA: Cowlitz, Ferry

AA8R - Master Platinum Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/13/2016

AK: First
AL: Monroe
CT: Middlesex
FL: Baker,Putnam
GA:
Bleckley,Candler,Echols,Lanier,McIntosh,Putnam,Twiggs,Wheeler,Wilkinson
HI: Hawaii
ID: Adams
MD: St. Mary's
MI: Gladwin
MO: Lincoln
NC: Transylvania,Wayne
NY: Schoharie
OR: Lincoln,Wheeler
PA: Bradford, Clinton, Lycoming
RI: Bristol,Newport
TX: Jefferson
VA: Cumberland
WA: Chelan

KA7ICF - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/18/2016

EMAIL ka7icf@cableone.net cell 775-340-0121 SSB/CW GUARD 20m 30M 40M
PERRY, KY LAST FOR WKD ALL CNTYS. THANKS JR
KY: Perry

N6PDB - Master Platinum Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/18/2016

MD: Anne Arundel, Calvert
NH: Grafton, Merrimack
NJ: Cape May, Monmouth
NY: Clinton, Franklin, Jefferson
PA: Schuylkill
RI: Bristol

VT: Essex, Lamoille, Washington

N6PDB - USACA Award using CW Only - Updated:7/18/2016

A heads up would be nice and THIS is the list of ALL

CA: Alameda

GA: Jasper, Pickens, Rabun

NC: Anson, Brunswick, Jackson, New Hanover

SC: Georgetown, Pickens

KG5RJ - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/23/2016

AR: Franklin, Little River, Madison, Perry

KS: Clay, Comanche, Grant, Greeley, Wichita

KY: McLean, Union

ME: Lincoln

NY: Lewis

OK: Blaine, Harmon, Tillman

SD: Campbell

TN: Lake

TX: Brooks*, Comanche, Foard, Freestone, Irion, Jack, Kent, Limestone, McCulloch, Robertson, Scurry, Throckmorton

N5PR - 5 Star Award using Any Mode - Updated:7/5/2016

TN: Carter (1)

TX: Terrell 2)

W4YDY - 2nd Time Award using CW Only - Updated:7/21/2016

CA: Alpine

CO: Conejos

GA: Long

IL: Lawrence, Pulaski

IN: Lawrence, Miami

KY: Breathitt, Monroe

MT: Mineral, Rosebud

NM: Curry

OR: Crook, Wheeler

PA: Greene, Mifflin, Montour

SC: Lee, Newberry

WV: Calhoun, Jackson, Putnam

K4PBX - USACA Award using SSB and Digital - Updated:7/11/2016

Thanks to everyone getting me this far, getting close...

CA: Alpine, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado

KY: Clinton, Johnson

KC3X - Mobile Diamond Award using Any Mode - Updated: 7/13/2016

Operate Sunday-Friday NO Saturday Contact: 919 394 2627 or
hdsoftail01@embarqmail.com

GA: Fannin

NC: Ashe, Hoke, Scotland, Union, Wilkes.

VA: Brunswick, King George, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg.

WI: Lafayette

There are lots of needs in the east half of the country so check out your route and who needs what. Let's get a few folks done. There were no awards issued in July up until 7/26 – press time.

Mobile Activity in July

Ron, N5MLP, started out the month running counties in LA and AR.

K0MAF, Jack, was on the road.

Barry, N0KV, and Pat, N0DXE were out in WY on a trip to/from MT. Into UT.

Bob, WA3QNT, was spotted out and about in PA.

Larry, W7FEN, headed east during the month.

Terry, WQ7A, was noted out and about in WA/OR.

Lowell, KB0BA, and Sandra N0XYL, were out and about in IA, SD, and MN.

Jack, N7IV, was noted over in MT and ID. Over to WA and OR, too.

Scottie, N4AAT, ran counties in SC.

Kerry, W4SIG, was spotted in TN and MS. One trip to GA and AL, too.

W4A, a special event call, started down in SC and headed to the Midwest running through more than a dozen states putting out loads of counties.

Jack, WD4OIN, ran counties in NC and SC.

Fred, K0FG, was seen in NE. Put out counties in his home state of MO, too.

Tony, WA9DLB, took a trip to WI then headed west to MT and back.

Scott, KA3QLF noted in PA and NY.

Hollis, KC3X, ran a few in NC.

Jim, N4JT, was spotted in NC.

Guff, KS5A, was seen running counties in TX.

Ron, KB6UF, ran counties in MS.

Mary, AB7NK, and Neil, K7SEN, left mid month headed to TN via UT and the north part of the US taking over two weeks to reach TN. Tons of counties run.

Alex, K5XY hit counties in NM.

Mike, WU3H, ran a few in KS (cw).

Mike, KA4RRU, ran some in VA and did some NPOTAs as well.

Jeff, W9MSE, headed to MN running them the way there and back.

Ed, K8ZZ, did a run in southwest KS

Jerry, W0GXQ, headed down to IA from MN.

N2JNE, Charlie, was out and about in NY and PA.

Karl, K4YT, headed up to northern NJ from VA.

KB2KBC, Frank, hit a few in NJ.

Darl, NA8W, headed from OH to FL.

Bob, KA9JAC, and KB9YVT, Ann, put out counties in WI.

Dave, KW1DX, was noted in NY, NH, and VT.

Dick, K5VYT, was over in NE headed out on a trip to MN.

Kyle, WA4PGM, fired up the mobile to get to Hertford, NC, a LC WBOW.

Randy, AA8R and Pattie W8TAX were noted headed south from MI down through IL and IN into NE.

The team of AB7NK and K7SEN were still going strong as of press time, having reached MO then up to NE on their way to the national convention.

WB5TMW put out counties in TX.

The last week of July should be real busy with at least a dozen mobiles headed to TN, maybe 2 or 3 dozen!

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end date 7/26.

National Parks on the Air

NPOTA Information from AD1C

I dug through the thousands of listings and found these county hunters listed:

Sorry if I missed your callsign. There were 924 activators listed and almost 7000 chasers. I only checked the chasers down to number 1500.

Activators:

Rank	Call	Number
3	N4CD	177
7	KA4RRU	93
10	W0BH	74
49	K2RP	28
49	W5IL	28
56	AI5P	25
144	KA9JAC	9
173	K8TE	7
173	N8KIE	7
211	KB9YVT	6
426	KA2LHO	2
	NF0N	1

Chasers:

Rank	Call	Number
174	KA9JAC	278
202	AD1C	261
277	AI5P	226
422	NF0N	163
423	NU0Q	158
444	W0BH	152
542	K0FG	123
632	N4CD	104
741	K2RP	85
741	N0KV	85
858	KW3F	68
918	K7TM	61
918	W4UT	53
1006	KA4RRU	51
1152	AB7RW	41
1152	KM4FO	41
1305	W6OUL	33
1354	K4XU	31

1354 KU4YM 31
1446 KA2LHO 28

Note de N4CD - Many former County Hunters, like W9OO, and W0FF, are chasing - some way on up there. Other folks like Bob, W0BH, very active in QSO Parties, are major activators and chasers.

Kerry, W4SIG, put out one in the Virgin Islands – a rare one.

Operating Events for County Hunters

13 Aug 1600z go 14 Aug 2359z

Maryland-DC QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

Category, county/city or SPC.

mdcqsoparty.w3vpr.org

27 Aug 0400z to 29 Aug 0400z

Hawaii QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

HI: RS(T), QTH ID. Others: RS(T), SPC.

www.hiqsoparty.org

27 Aug 1400z to Aug 28 2000z

Kansas QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

ksqsoparty.org

27 Aug 1600z to Aug 28 0400z

Ohio QSO Party

CW Ph

RS(T), county or SPC

www.ohqp.org

That's all folks.

Reminder – if you are running Win 7 or 8, the free upgrade to Windows 10 expires at the end of July. If you wait, it will cost you \$110 for the upgrade!