

County Hunter News

December 1, 2017
Volume 13 Issue 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumblings

County Hunting activity continues as fall is in full swing. Up north, snow has fallen along the Canadian border and in the high mountains. It's 'leaf season' in New England with folks out to view the foliage. Down this way in TX, the trees are turning brown and gold and some dropping leaves. Others take a few more months to get them all off.

A few mobiles have been out on major trips including AB7NK/K7SEN with a long trip back east to GA, AL, MS and surrounding states and in the process cleaning up lots of needs and helping people finish up for various awards along with N9QS who just seems to be going and going and going.

The transition to the new awards custodian is underway but the backlog still remains and no new awards have been processed for weeks now. Soon it will change and get back to normal.

2) Parks on the Air

The Parks on the Air program – via WWFF – continues in full swing with multiple parks on each day – and of course, parks are in counties – sometimes rare ones. This is a continuation in the USA of the very popular National Parks on the Air program that was sponsored by the ARRL for just a year. Parks on the Air is the US version of the very popular World Wide Flora and Fauna (WWFF) program that has been going strong for over six years in Europe with millions of contacts made. It's simple to participate – if you just want to work parks. Just work them. If you want to activate them, there's a simple registration procedure to be able to upload logs to the database. In this activity, only logs from the 'activator' are uploaded and 'chasers' get credit when their QSO shows up in the database.

Next year the ARRL will sponsor another one year Special Program – the ARRL International Grid Chase – details below. Over ONE MILLION people have now signed up to use Logbook of the World (LoTW) which is the the only way to participate and get credit and your 'score' and count of grids worked. Well, you can work the grids for the counties – but it sure is nice to really participate fully. If you are not on LoTW, now is the time to sign up. It takes a few weeks to get it all done. If you are not and don't intend to be there, don't give out your grid. Just say “too lazy or too old school to get on LoTW”. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE AN ARRL MEMBER TO USE LOTW!**

First you go to WWW.ARRL.ORG/LoTW and register as a new user. They will send you a POSTCARD in the mail to your FCC listed address. You then take the one time password and use it to activate your account. You will get a new password which allows you to access your QSO record, to upload your QSOs via the TSQL utility. All this is necessary to retain the integrity of uploaded logs as coming from YOU.

FROM THE ARRL WEB PAGES:

Introducing Logbook of the World

Logbook of the World (LoTW) is an online service that enables you to

- electronically submit contacts (QSOs) for confirmation
- view your submitted QSOs and resulting confirmations online
- view your DXCC, VUCC, WAS, and WPX award progress online
- electronically submit confirmations for credit toward DXCC, VUCC, WAS, and WPX awards

As stated in LoTW's Mission and Objectives, **membership in the ARRL is not a requirement.** To use LoTW, download the free TQSL application and direct it to request participation. You'll be issued a unique Callsign Certificate, and provided with access to an LoTW Account via the world wide web.

After you're registered, you can submit QSOs to LoTW by either using TQSL to digitally sign those QSOs and convey them to LoTW via the internet, or by using one of the many logging applications that provide this capability.

If the information in a submitted QSO matches the information submitted to LoTW by the your QSO partner, the LoTW Accounts of both you and your QSO partner will show the submitted QSO as confirmed.

A Callsign Certificate authenticates the source of each submitted QSO, and no operator is permitted to see the information submitted by other operators. This combination maintains the integrity of the QSO verification process that has long been the hallmark of ARRL awards.

Via your LoTW Account, you can submit a confirmed QSO for credit in one or more of the DXCC, VUCC, WAS, and WPX award programs.

There is no fee for obtaining a Callsign Certificate, submitting QSOs, or using one's LoTW Account to view submitted QSOs, confirmed QSOs, or award progress. A fee is only charged when submitting confirmed QSOs for Award Credit.

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Getting Started with LoTW

Before you can submit QSOs to Logbook of the World (LoTW), you must install the free TQSL application on your computer. TQSL will enable you to obtain a Callsign Certificate that identifies you as the source of the QSOs you submit, and will also enable you to define a Station Location that specifies the geographical details of your operating location. A flowchart illustrating these steps is available [here](#).

The QSOs you've submitted will be confirmed when your QSO partners submit matching QSOs. Before you can submit these confirmations for DXCC, VUCC, WAS, or WPX award credit, you must setup the linkage between LoTW and the award families you're pursuing.

Getting Started with Submitting QSOs

Note: If your primary callsign was issued in the United States but the postal address registered with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is not current, update it via the FCC ULS website before proceeding.

Start by downloading and installing TQSL, and using it to request a Callsign Certificate for your current callsign.

1. Download and Install TQSL
2. Request Your Initial Callsign Certificate and LoTW Account Password

The next step depends on whether or not you're licensed in the United States.

If your primary callsign was issued in the United States, the ARRL will send a postcard to the postal address specified in your FCC license. The postcard will specify an 8-digit "postcard password"; using your web browser, navigate [here](#), and type in your "postcard password". In response, the ARRL will send you an email message containing your LoTW Account Password, with your Callsign Certificate attached.

If your primary callsign was not issued in the United States, you have two options:

A. Mail a copy of your Amateur Radio operating authorization and a copy of one other official document that shows your name (for example, a driver's license) to the ARRL. When the ARRL receives your documentation, it will send you an email message containing your LoTW Account Password, with your Callsign Certificate attached.

B. Present your documents in person to an in-country ARRL DXCC Card Checker, The Card Checker will inspect your documents and, if accepted, inform ARRL's LoTW staff that the applicant's identity and license have been verified. The ARRL will then send you an email message containing your LoTW Account Password, with your Callsign Certificate attached.

Not every DXCC entity has DXCC Card Checkers, and Card Checkers are not required to participate in this verification process. Thus you should contact an in-country Card Checker in advance to ask if they are willing to check your identity and license documents. A list of DXCC Card Checkers is [here](#).

Direct TQSL to accept the Callsign Certificate you received from the ARRL:

3. Accept Your Initial Callsign Certificate

Next, define a Station Location that describes the location from which you operate using your current callsign. If you have operated from more than one location, start by defining a Station Location for your current location; you can define additional Station Locations later.

4. Define Your Initial Station Location

Before using TQSL or your logging application to submit QSOs to LoTW, employ the username and password contained in the email you received from the ARRL to verify that you can log in to your LoTW Account. Be sure to remember this username and password, as your LoTW Account enables you to confirm that the QSOs you submit to LoTW have been accepted, determine which of your submitted QSOs have been confirmed via LoTW, and submit confirmations for Award Credit.

5. Log in to your LoTW Account

Now you can submit QSOs to LoTW!

If you've made QSOs using other station callsigns or from other locations, then after

accepting a Callsign Certificate for your current callsign, you can obtain additional Callsign Certificates and define additional Station Locations.

Every Callsign Certificate expires after 3 years, but is easily renewed before it expires. You'll receive an email message from the ARRL several weeks before one of your Callsign Certificates will expire.

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OK....if you want to play in this game, now is the time to register to be a LoTW user and give out 'grid contacts'. If you run mobile, you're likely to hit a bunch of grids during the year and make lots of folks happy. Now is the time.

The ARRL Grid Chase 2018

2018 ARRL International Grid Chase Rules

In the spirit of the Fred Fish Memorial Award, VUCC, DXCC, WAS and WAC, we bring you a world-wide event in which all Radio Amateurs can participate where the goal is to contact (each Month during 2018) as many maidenhead 4-digit grid squares as possible on all amateur bands.

Building on our successful 2016 National Parks On The Air (NPOTA) event (providing a year-long focus of fun activating or contacting US National Parks), and considering ARRL's existing grid-square based award events (including our Fred Fish and VUCC Award programs where the objective is to contact stations in as many 4-digit maidenhead grid squares as possible), we introduce for 2018 the ARRL International Grid Chase to bring international grid-chasing on all amateur bands (HF, and VHF and above) to an all new level.

In a fashion similar to NPOTA, using Logbook of the World (LoTW - see <http://www.arrl.org/logbook-of-the-world>) as the QSOs data source, the 2018 ARRL International Grid Chase activities will be scored MONTHLY on the ARRL web site at <http://www.arrl.org/aigc2018>. Each month we will start fresh, recognizing participation

through various tables and data selection options on the web page. Monthly pages will be added to track each calendar month's activities. Once the year is completed, an annual summary will be released.

Rules:

1. Objective: On a Monthly basis, on amateur frequencies from HF to Microwaves, to contact amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees by 1 degree maidenhead 4-digit grid squares as possible.

2. Dates/Event Period: The event runs from 0000 UTC January 1, 2018 through 2359 UTC December 31, 2018. At the beginning of each month during 2018, the monthly scores will be reset to zero to begin the new month of competition.

3. Bands: All FCC-authorized frequencies (excluding the 60 meter and 600 meter bands). Permitted bands: 160m, 80m, 40m, 30m, 20m, 17m, 15m, 12m, 10m, 6m, 2m, 1,25m, 70cm, 33cm, 23cm, and all higher FCC-authorized microwave bands.

4. Modes: Three mode categories will be recognized - CW, Phone and Digital (all voice modes count as Phone, all digital modes count as Digital).

5. Methods of contact: All methods of contact are permitted (excluding QSOs made through repeaters, digipeaters, Echolink, IRLP, or non-satellite cross-band QSOs which do not count in this event). Satellite and EME QSOs are permitted.

6. Station types: Fixed, Portable, Mobile/Rover and Maritime Mobile (MM) stations may participate (MM stations are not eligible for DXCC, WAS or WAC credit however).

7. Exchange: Call Sign and Maidenhead 4-digit grid-square locator (see www.arrl.org/grid-squares). Exchange of signal report is optional. When operating during a contest, the contest exchange takes precedence over the grid square exchange. QSOs made with a club or special event (eg, 1x1) call count only for the club, not for the operator. **As with other similar award's criteria, if a station is located on the intersection of 2, 3 or 4 grid squares, the over-the-air exchange need only include just one grid square (confirmation for the adjoining grid squares will be made by the station operating from the intersecting grids through the station location in TQSL https://lotw.arrl.org/lotw-help_devel_en/stnloc/?lang=en).**

TQSL Station Locations will allow multiple adjacent grids (formatted as "grid,grid," etc). MM stations would have DXCC Entity set to "none". For information on LoTW

TQSL, see <http://www.arrl.org/quick-start-tqsl>.

All QSOs within your DXCC entity qualify.

See also section 9 below for Awards with specific requirements.

8. Event participation - contact submissions: All submissions are made through LoTW. See <https://lotw.arrl.org/lotw/default>

9. Awards: As all contacts are being uploaded to LoTW, in addition to the overall monthly and annual recognition of the ARRL International Grid Chase, participants may use their contacts toward other ARRL awards (see the list of ARRL awards at <http://www.arrl.org/awards>). These include ARRL's grid-based awards of VHF-UHF Century Club (VUCC) and the Fred Fish Memorial Award (for contact with all 488 US 4-digit grid squares on 6 meters), as well as Worked All States (WAS) and WAS Triple Play, DX Century Club (DXCC), and Worked All Continents (WAC).

10. Recognition: Achievement in collecting grid squares in the ARRL International Grid Chase will be recognized by categories of Band, Mode, and Continent (other leaders types will be developed as warranted) through our interactive web page monthly and at year end summary. Online certificates of achievement will be developed for Monthly and Annual recognition.

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Comments de N4CD

You can run grid lines, but the requirements are VERY strict. Part of your set up must be in both grids (like county hunting) but no fudging. No being 'between the signs' that might be 50-100 feet apart. You've got to use GPS and preferably the one with less than 3 foot location determination. Take a picture and be prepared to submit it – of your location and of the GPS display showing your location. If you run a 3 or 4 grid line (allowed) you'd better document it with many photos and a picture of your GPS display showing that location to within 3 feet. And, of course, there are no grid line signs by the highways. I suspect most 3 and 4 grid intersections are not on/near roads or easily accessible. There are likely hundreds of 2 grid points you can run along highways – if you can stop at the exact point and there are no noisy power lines to interfere with your operations.

The typical grid in the US is 70x130 miles so you won't be running a lot of grids each

day. They are smaller as you head north to the North Pole. In the continental US there are 488 grids – and you can easily drive to about 470 of them. There are a few with only a few square miles of land in them and some very inaccessible. There's one in CA that is 'hike in' for miles to get to. In south TX, there is one down in Big Bend National Park that takes miles and miles of 'high clearance 4 wheel drive only' dirt/sand roads to get to – plus the hazard of banditos/drug dealers/smugglers and other things to worry about. That “road” is often called the 'worst road' in the park. That leaves over 460 'easy' grids to get to – just like counties.

Don't know what your grid is? A few of the Garmin GPS units will display 'Maidenhead' locations but not many, but if you have a iPhone, Android phone, there are apps to show your grid. One I found for my Samsung Tab is HamGrid that shows your six digit grid. You only need to use the first 4 – like 'EM13'.

Mobile Activity in November

Starting at the beginning of November:

Silver, N9QS is in KY – was still on a long trip. Snagged at least one WBOW contact in KY.. Ran much of KY on this trip. Then over to VA.

Karl, K4YT, was in WV and southwest VA on a multi-day trip

Rick, AI5P spotted running county/park in AR and TX

K7CAR was running parks – noted in Mineral NV at KFF-4442

K0ATZ busy running more parks for the folks in MO

Doug, WA4UNS, noted out in VA

Kraig, KA2LHO, spotted in parks in FL

N5PHT, KB1VSX, N6MMA, WK2S, KQ6QB, W9WB, KN7D, KB1CBQ, KB3WAV, AB1ZJ, KX9X, N9MM, W1TEF, KD4TTP, AE4RM, spotted in parks on W6RK

Fred, KB0LF was active in NE putting out county lines

Al, W8OP was on from WV counties.

Jack, WD4OIN, noted out and about in SC and NC

Jim, N9JF, on from many states and many parks – down to FL for a rest – then more counties and parks.

Bob, K7TM on from WA and OR

Ron, KB6UF, on from LA and TX headed to CA

Jack, KC7YE noted out and about in WA

The last of the state parties was held – not much mobile activity – none? - and a few fixed stations to work mostly on SSB

Lowell, KB0BA and Sandra, N0XYL, noted out and about in IN

Bill, K2HVN spotted in DE

Mary, AB7NK, and Neil, K7SEN started out on a major month long trip east to GA and other states.

Pete, N4UP was seen in VA.

K5MZF noted mobile in MS – over to MO - IA -

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Super Mobiles this month were Silver, N9QS and Mary/Neil, AB7NK/K7SEN. All ran over 100 counties. Jim, N9JF was also on many many days during the month from a dozen states.

Top List 2-Year Summary 2016 - 2017

by Barry Siegfried, K2MF

Since my tenure with taking over the job of maintaining the CCA Top List is getting close to 2 full years now it is motivating me to talk a bit about some of the extraordinarily good operators who participate in the Top List standings and have been consistently in the highest ranks of specific mode categories and/or are getting close to completing all 3077 counties on some bands in some modes. All rankings reported below are taken from the December 2017 posting of the Top List and there were some changes before this article went to press.

Traditional Top Lists

16 county hunters consistently occupy the highest 8 ranks in the Top List by mode (in “callbook” lookup order):

NM1G - #3 in the Phone modes.

KC3X - #1 in the Mixed and Combo modes, #2 in the Phone modes and #3 in the CW modes.

WB4KZW - #4 in the CW and Combo modes and #5 in the Mixed modes.

KN4Y - #1 in the CW mode and #4 in the Mixed modes.

W4YDY - #8 in the Combo modes.

K4YT - #7 in the Phone modes.

K5GE - #1 in the Phone modes, #2 in the Combo modes, #3 in the Mixed modes and #5 in the CW mode.

WQ7A - #6 in the Phone modes.

K8QWY - #3 in the Combo modes and #6 in the Mixed and CW modes.

W9MSE - #8 in the CW mode.

N9QS - #8 in the Phone modes.

KØDEQ - #6 in the Combo modes and #7 in the Mixed modes.

WØEAR - #5 in the Phone and Combo modes and #8 in the Mixed modes.

WØGXQ - #2 in the Mixed and CW modes and #7 in the Combo modes.

NØKV - #4 in the Phone modes.

WØQE - #7 in the CW mode.

And of these 16 county hunters, 5 of them have achieved the highest CCA Levels so far by mode (in ranking order):

Mixed modes Level VI (18462 band slots): **KC3X** (#1) and **WØGXQ** (#2).
CW mode Level V (15385 band slots): **KN4Y** (#1), **WØGXQ** (#2) and **KC3X** (#3).
Phone modes Level III (9231 band slots): **K5GE** (#1), **KC3X** (#2) and **NM1G** (#3).
Combo modes Level III (27693 band slots): **KC3X** (#1) and **K5GE** (#2).

Interestingly, if you like real horse races then you might be interested in the Digital modes category where rankings change frequently, sometimes by leaps and bounds, each month. This is primarily because there is considerably more upward movement amongst a greater number of operators due to the high levels of activity and interest in some of the newer Digital modes which are becoming extremely popular.

In recent months, the top 8 ranks in the Digital modes have been occupied by (in ranking order):

K8QWY, WD4OIN, WA4EEZ, N6PDB, AD1C, AA8R, WQ7A and **KA4RRU**, each of whom has achieved CCA Level I (3077 band slots) and right behind them are **NX4W** and **N1API** at #9 and #10, respectively. It is definitely interesting to watch this modes category evolve and it seems that new milestones are being reached with the passing of each month. Who will be the first to achieve 3077 counties on a single band in the Digital modes?

Single Band 3077 (9231 or 3077 x 3 in the Combo Modes) Lists

The Single Band 3077 Lists **on 20m** in the Mixed and Phone modes are relatively well populated. But there are 6 county hunters who have achieved working all 3077 counties **on 20m** in the CW mode (in ranking order):

KN4Y, AB7RW, N4AAT (sk), N4RS, AA0IP (sk) and **K8MW**

and there are 5 county hunters who have achieved working all 3077 counties on multiple bands and/or on bands **other than 20m** (in “callbook” lookup order):

N4AAT (sk) - 40m in the Mixed, CW and Phone modes (**extraordinary!**).

N4CD - 30m in the Mixed and CW modes.

K5GE - 17m in the Mixed modes (**only county hunter to achieve this so far**).

WØGXQ - 30m in the Mixed and CW modes.

WØQE - 30m in the Mixed and CW modes.

There are also 7 county hunters who have only 3 or fewer counties remaining to finish working all 3077 **on 20m** (in “callbook” lookup order):

WB4KZW and **W7FEN** - 1 county remaining in the Phone modes.

WD4OIN and **NX4W** - 2 counties remaining in the Phone modes.

N4XML - 2 counties remaining in the Mixed and Phone modes.

KK7X - 1 county remaining in the Mixed modes and 2 counties remaining in the Phone modes.

N8KIE - 3 counties remaining in the Phone modes.

There are several other county hunters who are getting close to the magic number of 3 remaining to finish working all 3077 counties on different bands in different modes. Most of these are on **20m**, **30m** and **40m** in the Mixed, CW and SSB modes and on **17m** in the Mixed modes and if you look around the traditional Top Lists you can easily find them.

Highest Band Totals Lists

These are lists of the highest 3 contact totals on each band in each mode. Although these rankings are also somewhat consistent from month to month, there are often some surprises which occur and the really interesting thing about these lists is that a participant who has one of the highest 3 contact totals on any band in any mode also occupies one of the highest 3 ranks for that mode in the traditional Top Lists only 25-45% of the time. Conversely, this also means that a participant who does not occupy one of the highest 3 ranks for any given mode in the traditional Top Lists can very easily have one of the highest 3 contact totals on any band within that mode.

Here are some of the currently highest band contact total rankings for participants who have not already been mentioned above in the traditional Top Lists or in the Single Band 3077 Lists (in “callbook” order):

K2NJ (sk) - #1 on 10m and #2 on 6m in the Mixed modes and #1 on 10m and 6m in the Phone and Combo modes.

KM6HB - #2 on 15m in the Digital modes.

DL6KVA - #3 on 10m in the CW mode.

KD7KST - #2 on 30m in the Digital modes.

KV7N - #1 on 15m and #2 on 10m in the Phone modes.

K7REL - #2 on 30m in the Combo modes.

K8OOK - #1 on 160m and 6m in the Mixed modes.

NA8W - #2 on 160m and 6m in the Digital modes.

K8ZZ - #1 on 160m in the Combo modes, #2 on 160m in the CW mode and #3 on 80m in the Digital modes.

VE9DH - #2 on 15m in the Phone modes.

N9JF - #1 on 160m in the CW mode, #2 on 160m in the Combo modes and #3 on 160m in the Mixed modes.

W9JL - #3 on 40m in the Phone modes.

W9OO - #2 on 160m and #3 on 80m and 10m in the Mixed modes.

NFØN - #3 on 6m in the Digital modes.

WØNAC - #3 on 30m and 20m in the Digital modes.

KØPFV - #2 on 12m in the Phone modes.

I offer many congratulations to each of these great operators listed above! It is a pleasure to hear and work them on the air. It also might be interesting to revisit this in another 2-3 years to observe how things may evolve. I do know that I am having a really enjoyable time maintaining the Top List and developing new techniques to display the data that is stored within its columns in more challenging and interesting ways. I am also working hard on my own numbers so I am taking advantage of the lower solar flux and sunspot numbers to focus on 40m (Mixed modes) and 30m (Mixed and CW modes) and to finish the relatively few I have remaining on 20m in both the CW and Phone modes, which may not even be possible until we are well into the next solar cycle in several years' time. If I am lucky, perhaps I will be in a position to turn my attention to 17m and above when good propagation becomes a bit more consistent again on the higher bands.

I always welcome the participation of any and all county hunters in the Top List. If you have never submitted contact totals before (or haven't submitted them in over a year's time) please consider doing it (again). I look forward to receiving monthly submissions to the Top List, which on average run about 20-30 per month. The more county hunters who regularly participate in the Top List, the more accurately it reflects the comparative levels of our standings and the more interesting it becomes to keep watching and following.

You can always view the current posting of the Top List at:

<http://countyhunter.com/Toplist/CCAtoplist.htm>

If anyone has any questions about the operation of Top List or how the Levels in each modes list are calculated, you may view the Top List rules of operation at:

<http://countyhunter.com/Toplist/CCArules.htm>.

The CQ Magazine USA-CA and MARAC awards programs, prevailing mobile activity and the Top List give us all so much to work on that the sport of county hunting never

seems to get old or boring and is (at least in this author's opinion) one of the most interesting and entertaining activities in amateur radio. There is always some new goal to achieve and somebody who is willing to help. Here's hoping that I get to see you all "down the log" and receive your Top List submissions sometime!

DE K2MF

Book Review of the Month

Radio Pals - Marooned

by Charles Ludwig

This month it's another exciting adventure with the Radio Pals- Jim, Tom, and Porky who live in the Seattle Washington area. The story starts with the three on their island just offshore with their ham radio – powered by a bicycle run generator. The sprocket gives up, and they need a few dollars to buy a new one. After exhausting other ideas, they come up with a plan to go fishing in their rowboat and catch a salmon that they can sell. They get distracted and lose an oar – and can't make it back to shore. A storm comes up and takes them away from land. They are lost.

After drifting for several days they are 'rescued' by some pirates and taken to a small island where they are held captive for ransom. Spike and Mugsy are smugglers and worse. The Radio Pals beg the captors to have the portable radio that was in the smuggler's motor boat and they agree to give it to them while it takes a few days to get the ransom money delivered.

The Radio Pals manage to take components out of the radio and built a Hartley oscillator transmitter and send out an SOS. It's picked up and the good guys radio direction find and home in on the hide-a-way. The resourceful kids are rescued, the smugglers captured, and all ends well with a nice reward that will keep the Radio Pals in needed equipment for a long time.

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The book is written for the youth market – probably 8-15 year old kids – in the 1952 time frame. A quick read and one of the six or so Radio Pals in the series. Can't find it on line yet, but you can buy a copy on line for a few bucks.

On the Trail of Regens

This past month, a nice WW1 design radio showed up on Ebay- a BC-9 'transceiver – part of the SCR-77 'Loop System. Billed as a 'trench warfare' transceiver, this is a early couple watt transmitter combined with a receiver operating in the 4100-4400 KHz range. You need a 4.0v battery (wet cells) and a 120v dry cell battery to run it.

Before it was developed in France – they tried using spark gap equipment with standard antennas for short distances – between HQ and outlying units – but keeping antennas in the air while under bombardment proved impractical. WW1 was trench warfare with gains measured often in a few feet a day on a 'successful day'. Millions were killed by forces facing each other at 500-1000 feet in trenches – with 'attacks' that failed time after time to gain territory.

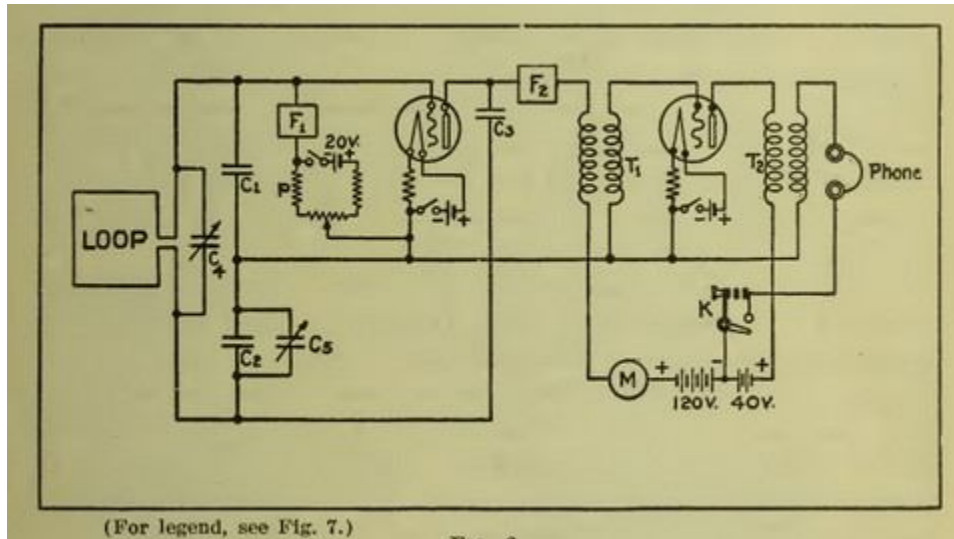
Then they tried spark gap equipment with a loop antenna about 7 feet in diameter. The spark gap equipment took 30w of power and had a range of several thousand yards. Next up was a tube version – the BC-9.



Production actually started after 1921 – after the war but it was designed earlier. It's pretty primitive to today's technology, but it was interesting to see how they did it.

Tube complement was three VT-1 tubes. (the first production tubes). Reading the manual gives one a sense of how marginal early radio systems were to use in combat. The VT-1 was the first production tube made in quantities – over 100,000 of them but they were great for audio but not so great for RF work! They ran off a 4v wet cell battery for filament power. B+ was nine 22.5v batteries in series in this unit.

This unit had no tubes – still sold for \$380. Individual working tubes from this time frame can bring \$75 to \$300 each!



Now- this is not a regen. The circuit works by having two sets – one the 'master' and one the outlying unit – working together. The first tube in each set is an oscillator and it is on all the time – except to send a message when it is keyed. The outlying unit is tuned 700 Hz or so off the frequency of the other set – to heterodyne the signal so you have an audible note. One then keys the oscillator on and off to send a message, then closes the key to receive response.

Today we would call this a 'direct conversion' receiver.

Only 1 in 15 tubes off the production line actually works as an oscillator /detector. Remember these were the first production tubes and they had not got it down to a science yet. Your first job as a radioman is to go through 100 tubes and pick out five or six that will work as an oscillator detector and put them in your spares box. It's a tedious process to determine that with trial and error and meter readings on current consumed. That before you leave the HQ. The rest of the tubes work fine as audio amps in the two following stages.

You can read the original manual here:

<http://www.skywaves.ar88.net/mil/SCR-77/radio%20pamphlet%206%20scr-77-a.pdf>

On the Road with N4CD

There was still time for a western TX trip before winter weather might make it more risky. Time to fire up the mobile and head west a few hundred miles to get to some of the not yet activated state parks. I planned for an 8 or 9 day trip. I've got a year long TX Parks pass (\$70/yr) so I might as well use it! Folks could also use contacts from all the other counties I'd be going through along the way. Gosh, it was already getting into November. Where did my fall go?

Saturday 10/28

First up was Lake Brownwood State Park – Brown County – a couple hour drive to the southwest if you manage to miss the mess getting across the 'Metroplex' that expands west from Dallas for another 60 miles to past Ft Worth. Leaving on Saturday minimized that although there is moderate traffic it seems 24 hours a day these days here. More and more folks move here.

Lake Brownwood is a typical 'lake' state park in TX. When there is a big enough lake, a state park seems to pop up. After you get west of Ft Worth, there aren't too many lakes out that way! Most are man-made. Out here, the local folks dammed the river which frequently flooded and created a lake in the 1920s.. . During the 1930s, the CCC folks came here and built lodges, cabins and other facilities. You can still stay in the lodge and the cabins or the campgrounds they built. Came in and did a run of 48Qs then headed on to the next one.

The second one the first day was Abilene State Park in Taylor County. There's a small lake and fishing pond here as well as a large swimming pool – and lots of other facilities built by the CCC folks back in the 1930s and 40s. Did my thing with 53Q from the park – as park of the Parks on the Air program. I believe I was the first to 'activate' both parks today.

After the usual 1 ½ to 2 hours in a park, I headed in to the Super 8 South in Abilene. \$76. Dinner at King Chinese Buffet - \$11.90.

Sunday 10/29

Next up is Lake Colorado City State Park in Mitchell County – getting a bit west here from home. There's a shortage of water in the lake. Just campsites, boat ramps, 5 miles of shoreline here. Swimming, birding, hiking. Did 63Q and moved on.

Out here in the interstate you'll see “Rest Area Ahead – Next rest area 133 miles”. If you gotta go....now is the time! There are towns about every 30 miles, though, for gas and a snack.

Big Springs State Park is in Howard County. The town grew up around a large natural spring. In the 1930s, the CCC folks created a nice – high up – park. You've got a fantastic operating location in the park with a great view. . The CCC folks did massive amounts of work - 50,000 of them in TX – at 29 different state parks. So far I'd hit 10 and by the end of the trip it would be close to 20 of them.

Still time for one more – headed out to Monahans State Park. It's actually in two counties. The first day I sat in the Ward County area and put 83Q in the log. About 1/3rd county hunters and the rest park hunters. Off to the motel in Odessa. Hmm....

So far I've had good success with Wyndham Properties – Super 8, Days Inn, even Knights Inn (lower price/value). I reserved a room at the Ramada west in Odessa on the west side of town. It would be good for leaving in the morning avoiding traffic. Well....

I got to the motel – looked like an old Holiday Inn – multi-story building. Not many cars there. Go to check in. The desk clerk advised me that they had

- 1) NO HOT WATER
- 2) NO INTERNET/WI-FI
- 3) NO BREAKFAST – couldn't have it without hot water
- 4) NO WORKING PHONES OR COMPUTER TO CHECK FOLKS IN.
- 5) AND.....almost no guests – the place was empty – the parking lot devoid.

Needless to stay, even though I had a 'guaranteed reservation' I wasn't going to stay there. I should have checked TripAdvisor.com first. Usually there is no problem with Wyndham Properties.

They couldn't 'check me in anyway'. Their computers were down. They couldn't cancel my reservation. Got on the phone to Wyndham Rewards service number and gave them heck. How do you wash sheets without hot water? Hmmm....

Found a Travelodge (also a Wyndham Property) a few miles away, got a room and

headed that way.

Later that night, I checked TripAdvisor to see what folks had posted about that Ramada. It appeared the problems had been going on for 10 months - lack of hot water – no breakfast – no internet. A disaster of a motel.

Travelodge was OK. Bare bones breakfast. Slept fine.

Monday 10/30

Well, back to Monahans Sand Dunes. Yes, there are real sand dunes 30 feet or higher out here for dozens of square miles. You see signs on the park roads – beware sand on road – and the sand tends to drift onto the road as you head into the park toward the dunes. The HQ office will rent you sand toboggans to slide down the dunes if you want. Great for the kiddies. Put a few more into the log again. You can bring your horse here and ride the dunes – or camp. Not much else other than bird watching and riding the dunes.



If you run parks, you'll find there are a half dozen 'big guns' in Europe that will work you in each park – if there is propagation. Calls include ON4VT, ON7NQ, ON4BB,

DF1YQ, EA1DR, IW2BNA, IW2NXI, I5FLN, DL1EBR plus another half dozen that show up from time to time. Most are really 339, some 319 copy but if you work at it, you can work them. Of course, we have county hunters IK1GPG, DL3DXX, DL3IAC, PA3ARM, in there as well.

It's a different day and you get credit for another 'activation' and more QSOs. Short run there – got to get other places today! It's getting warm too – into the 80s and 90s!

A few hours away you hit Balmorhea State Park in Reeves County. Speed limits on the interstate here is 75 or 80MPH! Two lane roads are usually 70 or 75. Miles go by but there are lots of miles between places out here!

A while back, I think it was Norm, N9MM, who commented west Texas is dry as a bone and there aren't any spring fed lakes out this way. True – but at Balmorhea State Park you have **the world's largest spring fed swimming pool!**

More than 15 million gallons of water flow through the pool each day, gushing from the San Solomon Springs. The pool is up to 25 feet deep, covers 1.75 acres, and holds 3.5 million gallons of water. The water temperature stays at 72 to 76 degrees year-round.

And yes, the CCC folks built all the facilities here in the 1930s – improved the water flow. Now, after the water comes through the pool, it goes out to a local lake and irrigates thousands of acres of crops. Back in the 1800s, the locals raised food to sell to the soldiers at Fort Davis – not too far away. Now there is still farming around this oasis in the desert.

Most of the camping area of the park was closed for reconstruction but the main lot and pool was open. You can even get scuba certification here or go scuba diving! Did my thing, didn't go in the pool - wasn't that warm – put 65+Q in log and headed out to the next. I'm getting into 'hilly country' down this way – can't do 75 any longer - some stretches are 35 around curves and hills. I'm headed to Ft. Davis TX.

As you get near Ft Davis, there's a nice state park – Davis Mountains – just before town. I head over that way. Hmm..getting into high hills with the road down in the gully. Not good for getting a signal out. I hope the park is not down here along some river with high hills all around. Been there and done that – but not very successfully at places like Sugarite Canyon in NM with high canyon walls and little RF escaping.

I arrive at the HQ, check in with my park pass, and ask the ranger where is a good spot

to park and operate. She says Skyline Drive – high up on the ridge. Yes! There's a nice spot right up on top of the hills with a great view – and great radio location. Lots of contacts quickly go in the log. 50Q in short order. I'm a happy camper. I try for a minimum of 44 at each park. Time to find the motel after an hour and a half in the park. It's been a long time since I've stayed overnight here in Ft Davis. Prices are a bit on the high side but this is where the travel plans ended up on this trip. It's another 30 miles to another town with motels and they aren't cheap either. Headed to the Ft Davis Inn and RV park. \$85. Plus tax. Ouch. Oh, well.

Wait – there's still time! Head on over to Ft Davis Historic Site – one of the NPOTA sites from last year – but no one has been here in 2017 so I'll activate it for the new park chasers. This is where the Buffalo Soldiers ('colored troops or African Americans) provided most of the manpower to run the fort and chase the renegade Native Americans – aka “Indians”. Pull in, do a quick 65Q and leave.

There aren't too many places to eat in Ft Davis. Not on a Monday night when the other restaurant is closed. Well, both others if you count the real boutique small one. It's the 'Whole Foods' place with a sandwich counter or the Ft Davis Inn and Drug Store. I'm not alone as the place is full of folks eating. It's the place on Monday – and probably Tuesday and Wednesday till the other place opens for the 'weekend' Not bad – chicken dinner with sides for \$11. No fast food in this town at all – no McD, Sonic, Burger King, Taco Bell. Zip. You can also grab a room at the Drug Store (more like a general store). This is a small town – really small.

October 31 Tuesday

At breakfast I meet a group who wound up at the same motel. Seems they couldn't find a room in Alpine TX – the next town south and they had to drive the 30 miles up to Ft Davis for a room. Hmmm..... Must be something going on there but there aren't a whole lot of rooms there – maybe 250-300. Stayed in Alpine in Brewster County. It's the 'gateway' to Big Bend National park from the west/north. You've still got 90 miles to go from there but it is about the only big town to stay in. I'm headed that way via a short detour (well, 60 miles) to get Presideo County. So it's 30 miles SW down to Marfa – then 35 miles east to Alpine in Brewster. Not much down here park wise without hundreds more miles of driving – there is a Big Bend state park as well – but another time.

It started raining and getting cold. Brrr – 40s. Rained all day. Yuck.

I'm headed back east at 75 mph but it still takes more than 4 hours to reach the next

park! Big spaces out here. That's over 300 miles between parks! I'm usually on the road by 1300z. It takes till 1800z – five hours to reach the next one - “Devil's Sinkhole” - a State Natural Area in Edwards County. From the state website:

“The main attraction, the Devil's Sinkhole, is a National Natural Landmark that houses one of the state’s largest colonies of Mexican free-tailed bats. This enormous vertical cavern is thought to be the largest single-chamber cavern in Texas. The opening is a shaft approximately 50 feet wide that drops 140 feet into the cavern. Here, the shaft balloons out to a diameter of over 320 feet and reaches a total depth of over 350 feet. From late spring through early fall the sinkhole provides an amazing venue to witness over 3 million bats stream out into the evening sky.”

Most of the area is fenced off with only 'escorted visits' to the actual cavern but you can run it at the indented gate. 75Q in log and time to get to the next – to the South Llano River SP in Kimble County. Still raining and cold. Weatherman says it will clear up and back to 70s tomorrow. OK.

No lake here – it's a river - “activities include camping, picnicking, canoeing, tubing, swimming, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, bird-watching and nature study. The park offers approximately 18 miles of hiking/biking trails, 58 campsites with water and electricity, six walk-in tent sites, and five hike-in primitive campsites.”

I'm not staying long – no more than 2 hours – 53 in the log. I was just able to run two parks today. Getting late so I head on in to the America Best Value motel in Junction. \$85. Not a whole lot of motels here and none in the Wyndham chain. Dinner at Isaac's Restaurant - \$11.

Halloween - No trick or treat at the motel.

Nov 1 Wednesday

I wake up and it is up to 60 degrees. No complaints after a day of cold rain. Now it is off to Lost Maples State Natural Area in the hills of hill country. Down some windy, twisty roads to get there. It's down in a valley but the RF seems to get out OK to the east where most of the folks are. 78 degrees by the time I leave. Great – I'm defrosting from yesterday.

Texas has a few hundred miles of some really small, windy roads that would fit well into eastern KY or in WV. If you like 'driving' – try the road from Vanderpool to Leaky TX. It's definitely a two hands on the wheel the whole time with speeds down to 10mph on

some curves. It's also a roller coaster road as well – on a par with northern MO for 'ups and downs' of several hundred feet. You're really into TX Hill country here – and NOT much population either. Towns of 1,000 or so – where there are towns.

Lost Maples - “Take a hike or a photo, go fishing, look for birds and other wildlife, camp, backpack, stargaze and hunt for geocaches. Lost Maples protects a special stand of Uvalde bigtooth maples. Many folks come here to see colorful leaves on these and other trees in autumn. The show varies, depending on weather conditions”

Well, I was too early. Didn't see the foliage changing. Probably soon. Nor did I hike in to where most of them were. Still too warm for the intense color I guess. Just green trees with some turning golden brown – not the maples.

Many of the TX State Parks have wi-fi at the entrance station and you can sit in the parking area and use it. Otherwise, most are seriously out in the boonies in this part of the state and no data available on the over the air networks. Spots make all the difference to bring people out – both county hunters and park chasers.

Next up was Garner SP – another CCC special – down in Uvalde County. 88Q in the log. I guess it's a rare county and more county hunters showed up! Ran on 20 SSB, too, that adds in a lot. From the state web site:

“Garner State Park is a great place to visit for a swim or hike, or to enjoy a relaxing weekend. With 2.9 miles of Frio River winding through 1,774 acres of scenic Hill Country terrain, the park offers lots to see and do! Swim in the Frio River or float its waters on an inner tube, operate a paddle boat, and hike 11 miles of scenic trails. You can also camp, study nature, picnic, canoe, fish, play miniature golf, geocache and ride bikes”

Time for one more today – Hill Country State Natural Area. You start in the town of Bandera – then head south on the main road till it crosses the river 0.2 miles later there's a paved farm road headed southwest. It starts with 2 lanes – gets down to a lane and a half five miles later – and when it turns to gravel you've arrived 10 miles out from town. NO internet. NO cellphone. Boonies. Pulled over near the 'entrance' and ran the county – Bandera and the park. Fortunately, Jess, W6LEN, and Bob, VE6UX were around and spotted me on the www.dxsummit.fi site and on the POTA Facebook page. That brought out the crowds – and 100 went in the log. Someone spotted me on the county hunter site too. Great run even though it was a repeat of Bandera County. I sure appreciate all the county hunter contacts.

Time to head on in to the Super 8 in Kerrville. Dinner at the Asian Buffet down the road. I've been on the road for a bit – time to think about getting back home in a bit.

Thursday Nov 2

More Parks – First up is Old Tunnel. This is an unusual 'park' for Texas. Back in the 1913 era, the good folks of Fredericksburg decided they wanted a railroad into their town from San Antonio, TX to move their farm goods to market. To complete the system it required building a 920 foot long railroad tunnel. The railroad company operated until 1942. It sat abandoned for decades. The bats found it and moved in by the millions. The state acquired the property and this became a state park in 2012.

from the state web site:

“The abandoned railroad tunnel that gives Old Tunnel its name is home to up to 3 million Mexican free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis mexicana*) and 3,000 cave myotis (*Myotis velifer*) bats from May through October. During those months, visitors come to watch the bats emerge from the tunnel nightly. Bat-viewing opportunities are available seven nights a week, and nightly educational presentations are given Thursday through Sunday”



I parked at the upper parking/viewing area at mid day. No one around – good. No bats – they were all sleeping or gone south for the winter. You can walk down the trail to the lower viewing area – best at sunset from June-October.

Had a nice run of 90+Q from Kendall County. Then the route was into Fredericksburg then east to the LBJ State park – which is right next to the LBJ Ranch – an NPOTA unit I ran last year. Just ran the state park in Gillespie County. 85 in the log. Good.

Now it was backtracking to Fredericksburg then north to Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. Whew! Roller coaster roads! Up and down for miles like northern MO. Got to the park. Most of this park is “not developed camp grounds.” Not much here but a giant granite rock formation to climb on – or go rock climbing with ropes and rapelling. There's camping – most of it 'primitive' – you hike in.



from the state web site:

“Climb the ancient dome for amazing Hill Country views - The massive pink granite dome rising above Central Texas has drawn people for thousands of years. But there’s more at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area than just the dome. The scenery, rock formations and legends are magical, too!

You can hike, backpack, camp, rock climb, picnic, bird, study nature, geocache and

stargaze. (You cannot swim here or ride bikes on the trails.) Explore nearly 11 miles of hiking trails. “

There's supposed to be wi-fi at the entrance station but it doesn't work. Zero cell and data this far in the boonies. Still I manage to have a good run from Llano County with 50Q. Part of this park is in Llano – but as far as I can tell, only the 'group picnic area' - where you can actually park and be in Llano. Much of the park is primitive camp sites you hike in to get to them. The main entrance station/parking is in the county below.

That night is spent in Fredericksburg at the Super 8. Best bargain around. **\$40.80 including tax!** (double that on weekends as this is tourist Mecca – with a mile of antique shops, German restaurants, bier gardens, and yuppie places/stores like a beach resort town – everything from salt water taffy, tee-shirts, postcards, candy treats, and trinkets. On weekends, crowds from Austin area descend in great numbers and prices for motels double.

Friday Nov 3

Waffle, bowl of cereal, coffee and OJ at the Super 8, then head to home. First a quick stop at the LBJ home site in Johnson City – and old NPOTA site that has a WWFF number, so it's a quick 'hit and run' with 17 in the log for an activation. There have been hundreds of QSOs from here and it is early in the morning – not many around.

Next up is Pedernales Falls in Blanco County. From the state web site:

“Here at Pedernales Falls State Park, you can camp, hike, mountain bike, picnic, geocache, bird watch and ride horses. On the river, you can swim, wade, tube or fish. Look for local wildlife and plants at the bird blind and butterfly garden.”

It gets very crowded on weekends as it is just 30 miles from Austin. They have to limit visitors most weekends. Did 100Q in an hour and a half then moved on to the next.

Longhorn Cavern SP is in Burnet County – This is a day use park only – and you can either picnic or take the \$17.50 1.5 mile cave tour. The CCC cleared the cavern of debris, and built the facilities of this park and the scenic byway accessing it in the 1930s. There's no entrance fee to the park – just if you want to take the 90 minute cave tour. Did not have the time or the energy to do the cave bit, so operated the radio and 75Qs from there. I was headed northwest toward home.

Just a few miles up the road is Inks Lake State Park – still in Burnet County. Here's

what the state web site says about it:

“Inks Lake State Park is great for a day trip or a weekend getaway. Because the lake’s level usually stays constant, you can play here year-round. On land, you can camp, backpack, geocache, play volleyball, picnic, and observe nature. We have 9 miles of hiking trails through shady forests and across rocky hills. On the water, you can swim, boat, water ski, scuba dive and fish. Rent paddle boats, canoes, one- to two-person kayaks, life vests and paddles at the park store. Stay at one of nearly 200 campsites or 22 cabins. Fish for sunfish, catfish and several species of bass. We have two fishing piers, fish cleaning stations, and a boat ramp. You do not need a fishing license to fish from a pier or the shore in a state park. Borrow rods, reels and tackle boxes with hooks, sinkers and bobbers.

During the 1930s, the CCC built roads, culverts, a boat house and dock at Inks Lake, as well as parts of Park Road 4 and facilities at Longhorn Cavern. “

Nice state park and busy on weekends with visitors from Austin – not too far away. Did my thing and headed out with 102 the log. Ran on SSB which runs up the total if you can find a good frequency on 20M and keep it for a while.

That night was spent at a Super 8 in Copperas Cove, TX.

Saturday Nov 4

Time to be getting home before the CW Sweepstakes started at 2100Z – 6pm Texas time. No sense to fight the CW bands with hundreds of stations creating QRM. Nothing new to hit on the way home....but I could do a repeat for more QSOs.

Mother Neff State Park in Coryell County was next. Back in the 1860s, Jacob and Isabella Neff moved to TX and created a nice farm that prospered. Over the years they kept it going and expanded it. She was known as 'Mother Neff'.

“Along a scenic stretch of the Leon River southwest of Waco lies Mother Neff State Park, one of Texas’ earliest state parks. Isabella Neff donated the original six acres for the park in 1921. It's been expanded a bit.

You can hike, picnic, camp, geocache and observe nature. Enjoy the wildflowers in the prairie and explore the canyon trails. (Due to river conditions, swimming and fishing are not allowed.)

Explore nearly 3.5 miles of trails for beginners to more experienced trekkers. Trails take you to the Wash Pond, to the CCC Rock Tower, and to a cave used by the Tonkawa Indian tribe in the 1800s.”

Every park has a story and there are over 4000 of them in the US. Some are more interesting than others. This is great for 'recreating' but I did the radio bit and left after an hour and a half. 110Qs

One more to go – Cedar Hill State Park in Dallas TX. Been here before back in January and no one has activated it since despite 3 million people and likely 5000 hams within a fifty mile circle around this place just on the south side of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Stayed an hour and a half and 91Qs went in the log.

Next up – home! Been away more than a week so time to just enjoy being 'home' for a bit. 1,798 indicated miles on the car. 1,859 QSOs logged for the parks, and more in between parks not entered to LoTW. All the QSOs for the parks were uploaded to ARRL Logbook of the World with the county, and to the WWFF database for the park.

Thanks for riding along with N4CD on a fun trip.

In Memory of George Franklin W0AV

Submitted by Jerry, W0GXQ:

A part-time county hunter on the CW nets, George passed away July 2, 2017 at the age of 96. George was licensed for 84 years!

He had worked for the Missouri Highway Patrol as a radio operator, Wilcox Electric, and Maxon Corporation. George had a PhD in Land-Mobile Communication, and had served in WWII as a Master Sergeant.

I visited George a few times in Kansas City, and have in my possession the brass Navy hand key that he used while serving at the Rolla Missouri Office. The key was presented to George at his retirement. When he learned that I started with an identical key given to me by my father as a Novice in January 1952, George wanted me to have it to replace mine which had been borrowed and never returned.

Some may remember a station coming on the net frequency and sending “Arf” . . . that was George. Rest in peace my friend.

Jerry/W0GXQ

On the Road with N4CD II

Not much was happening so I thought I'd head on up to Eisenhower State park about 1 hour 15 minutes from the QTH and give out a few more contacts. After you have reached 44 from a park, the next level award is the YOFF award – where you need at least 200 contacts from a park. If you activate 10 parks with 200 QSOs or more, you

can apply for a nice certificate. To date, I had 133 Q from the park. The weather was yucky – overcast, not much sun - just a few minutes here and there, but temp was going to about 70 so why not? Headed that way about 10am arriving 11 am.

Eisenhower state park is a small one – right along the Red River - with camping, boat ramp. It took me a while to find the 'least noisy' spot as noisy power lines run all over – and there is lots of humidity from the proximity to the river which isn't great for power line insulators.

There's often a friendly ham park volunteer at the gate, and he was there again. Used my state park pass – otherwise it's \$6 to get in.

Found a spot with only S3-4 noise on 20 SSB after a while. I added another 70Q to the log getting over 200 for this park now. I have a few from the NPOTA days where I racked up 200Q from a site – like Big Bend, and the Rio Grande Wild River parks. Now, unless you are in Europe, or sit in a park for 5 or 6 hours or overnight for a couple of nights, you aren't likely to rack up 200 in a single visit. We'll see how the Grid Chase affects the park QSO count.

Well, after 2 hours, there was still lots of daylight left, so I headed up to Lake Texoma State Park in OK – in Marshall County to add to the total there. I'd only been there once and it had 70Q. There is no internet in most of the park – I did wander around and found the high spot by the lodge – where we had a mini a few times back in the early 1990s – that had internet service. Yeah – finally I could spot myself later in the run and it sure helped. Without spots, you are going to talk to yourself on 30M these days. Even 20m on the CH frequency of 14.0565 where you can call and call and no one answers.. No one home unless you are on an announced trip to rare counties - then folks will be listening – or watching the spots. Today – no spots – no contacts – from county hunters for the most part.

I added in another 70 or so – not there yet to the 200 level. Maybe I'll run grid EM14 here – not many people live in that neck of the woods. Hi hi. I can do a two-fer.

Stayed till a bit after 3PM. Took 1.5 hours to get back home where I uploaded logs to the POTA database via the coordinator, and to the ARRL LoTW with the county – not that does anything for county hunters.. Maybe someday.

On the Trail of Regens II

Not a regen but an early wireless unit from about 1916 or so. From Ebay



“This is a beautiful example of an Audio Tron Sales Company No. 1A Junior Receiving Panel! Something like this is truly amazing to find and is in "as found" condition! I have never seen another panel from Audio Tron in all my years of collecting, and it is very hard for me to sell this item...

The panel is 9-7/8" wide and 5-1/4" tall. The original mounting brackets on the back side are not there, but period brackets would work fine to place this unit on a base. The panel is a faux wrinkled Bakelite cover over a maple (?) panel. Everything looks original/period. The Audio Tron is an early, pre-war (c.1916) tubular audion with the first used label. The filaments are open and the label is faded

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Up until 1915, DeForest had a monopoly on audion tubes. You could only buy one if you bought the whole 'detector panel' at a high price. Then Cunningham came out with a competitive tubular audion, and DeForest then sold individual tubes to the market and

other manufacturers.

“Lee DeForest did not have a very good understanding of how the "grid Audion" vacuum-tube worked, and, beginning in 1912, more capable electrical engineers began teasing out its full capabilities, finding, in particular, that the tube worked best as an electron device with with a high level of vacuum, in contrast to DeForest's insistence that it operated using ions, and required a residual level of gas. Edwin Howard Armstrong's seminal paper, Operating Features of the Audion from the December 12, 1914 Electrical World noted "the explanations advanced to account for its action do not appear to be satisfactory", then went on to gave a comprehensive review of the actual working of the grid Audion. This greater knowledge led to the development of regeneration (also called "feedback") which provided greatly increased amplification as a receiver, and also led to vacuum-tube transmitters, and Armstrong reviewed the expanded functions in Some Recent Developments in the Audion Receiver from the September, 1915 Proceedings of the Institute of Radio Engineers. Armstrong had received a U.S. patent for his discoveries at the time this paper was published, and DeForest responded by filing his own competing patent application, claiming he stumbled on the same general idea in 1912. A long series of court battles ensued, and DeForest eventually prevailed, although the engineering community was largely unconvinced by his claims.

Device for Receiving Wireless Time Signals from the March 27, 1915 Electrical World magazine, announced that the DeForest Radio Telephone & Telegraph Company in New York City was now selling a vacuum-tube receiver designed to receive time signals from the navy's station, NAA, located at Arlington, Virginia. But as late as 1916 the Audion vacuum-tubes produced by the DeForest company were still plagued by quality control problems, and the company supplied usage tips, such as the March, 1916 QST magazine's Practical Pointers on the Audion by A. B. Cole, which actually revealed how little they still understood about the operation of the device. In 1915, the American Telephone & Telegraph Company purchased the U.S. commercial radio patent rights for the Audion from DeForest. However, the DeForest company retained the right to make sales for non-commercial use. Eventually this restrictive policy was relaxed somewhat, after the Elmer T. Cunningham's AudioTron Sales Company in Oakland, California began selling a cheaper bootleg vacuum tube, and the DeForest company responded with the Type "T" Tubular Audion Tube, recently added to the MESCO catalog, for experimenters "who do not wish to buy complete Audion Detectors with the necessary accessories, and for those whose limited means will not permit the complete instruments to be purchased".

Source: <http://earlyradiohistory.us/sec010.htm>

This is a detector only - there is no tuner – you had one of those before you connected this. \$14 price tag in 1916. Now – sky high.

Kentucky QSO Party

from the 3830 reflector:

KN4Y - fixed - FL

I listened with my right ear, listened with my left ear, listened with both ears, next put in my hearing aids. Listened with my right ear, listened with my left ear, and being hopeful listened with both ears and lo and behold logged a contact. Than nothing, I am devastated. The Bluegrass State has ignored me.

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 4 cw 8 ssb 9 mults

This was a tough QP on 40 and 80m QRP. Thanks for the Qs. Dave WN4AFP

WI0WA - fixed 4 cw 3 ssb - 3 mults

I worked the three station I heard, W4CDA, KJ4AOM, and KY4NA.

VE3CRU - fixed - ON - 9 ssb - 9 mults

I forgot the contest was on till I heard K4TG at 2:12 pm Eastern on 40. Only have a 40 dipole up. Periodically checked for more activity, heard nothing at cw end of the band. At 6:38 pm, heard KY4DXA, the mothership and had to work it

K4KK - fixed - TN 34 ssb - 18 mults

On the Road with N4CD III

Part One – VRPS Convention

Each year in November, the Vintage Radio and Phonograph Society of Dallas TX holds an annual convention. This year it was held in Plano, TX at a Comfort Inn – a new location. The old one jacked up prices too much and bid them farewell. It's a two day event featuring multiple auctions of old electronics – going back over 130 years now.

The event starts off with the 'paper and tubes' auction – with everything from boxes of tube pulls (taken out of equipment) to brand new 80 year old power tubes (\$\$\$) and oddball tubes. Some 6146 type tubes, 813s, etc, show up along with their predecessor tubes from the 1920s, 30s, 40s. You've got whole tube caddies full of 'new old stock' up for bid as well as tested 201A tubes that ran most of the early radios. The paper consists of catalogs, magazines from the 20s through 80s, advertising posters and sheets, etc. One popular item is the old guides to repairing radios – the SAMS type books with circuit diagrams/voltage tables/tube listings of each year's new production of radios – really handy if you are fixing up old sets. It took 4 hours to go through the couple hundred of items up for bid. I didn't see anything I had to have.

There was a short break for dinner and I hit the King Chinese Buffet across the street for a quick dinner then back for the evening auction. This was \$10 minimum items – from radios from the 1950s, common wood radios from the 1920s, 'farm radios' from the 1930s that were designed to run off batteries charged up by windchargers – typically 32v sets – parts and pieces like bags of new capacitors, cabinets of resistors and parts, early TV sets – black and white, novelty radios like a Mickey Mouse radio, and on and on. A couple hundred items went up for bid. Most sold, some didn't. Only one or two ham related items I recall and nothing special. Didn't buy anything – no shortwave regens up for sale.

Next morning started with a 'silent auction' – and I sold two books that I have/will review in the County Hunter News for about what I paid for them. During the day, folks check in their items for 'display section' to compete for prizes for 'best of show'. I brought along my National 'Screen Grid Tuner' – later called the SW-2 – to see if I could snag a prize in the contest. Judging would come later on Saturday.

During the day, folks checked in items for the 'big auction' of \$20 and up items – mostly 'wood radios' in nice condition – almost mint – or restorable to mint. Lots of consoles, Zenith, RCA, and Atwater Kent models. Many nice shape 'plastic radios' and one or two Catalin radios. There were TV sets including a Hallicraters one. You did know that Hallicrafters made a TV set? Didn't stay in that very competitive business long. A couple hundred people show up for this auction.

When the time for the auction started, things went quickly. There were 400 items up for sale. Some fetched only \$20. Some brought in \$800. It took over five hours to finish up selling everything. Total sales for two days was over \$33,000.

After the 'contest judging' it turns out N4CD picked up second prize in the 'ham and military category'. Some stiff competition in that category with a dozen entries. There were 15 categories overall including post-WW2 tube portables, 'tubes', TV related items, novelty radios, best restoration, advertising, etc.

In the evening the annual banquet was held with 100 or so in attendance. Dinner was catered by a local BBQ place.

Sunday morning featured a small flea market. Jim Sargent drags out his knob collection. If you need a knob, he likely has it among the five or seven thousand knobs he brings out.

The convention kept me busy till Sunday morning – and Thanksgiving was coming up. I only bought two small items the whole convention. Hmmmm.....Guess I already have too much junk!

Part II – Annual visit to MD

Nearly every year I drive to MD for the Turkey Day. It's 1350 miles and I usually go via some back country counties to get a last one for someone or run something I haven't run lately. The convention ended Sunday morning so that would be a crunch. Worse,

my sister called me and asked if I could get there for Tuesday evening – which is when her grandkid – my niece's kid (second cousin?) was having a fifth birthday party. Hmm. That didn't leave a lot of time to get there – a mad dash by car. I checked the airlines and even at a late date could get a reasonable ticket round trip. So....rather than a real mad dash up the boring interstate – I-30 to I-40 all across AR, TN – to I-81 up through VA to I-64 over to DC and then up I-270 to her QTH – I flew. No counties run this year – first time in maybe 20 years? Well, I've done 25K miles of county hunting/park activation in 2017 so I can't complain and the year isn't over.

So....on Tuesday it was up to DC on American Airlines. There are 4800 parking spots in the Remote Parking area at DFW and nearly all were full – had a good hike in from the far reaches of the parking lot. No shuttle seen. Flight full to capacity – airport busy but would get busier the next day. A few hours later made it to the birthday party – and then on to my sister's house in Gaithersburg, MD (Montgomery County). Traveled light with a 12 lb small carry on bag for a 4 day visit. Just the bare essentials – no room for even a KX2 transceiver and wire antenna and charger.

Before I left I posted a note on the Parks on the Air web page and asked if anyone around G-burg would be around and maybe we could put out a nearby park – Seneca State Park not far from sister's house. Got a message back from Kerri, KB3WAV who said she and hubby KC3RW, Ray, would be glad to pick me up and go run the park. Fantastic. I could get in an activation despite not having a radio with me.

Kerri has a mobile set up in her car – and Ray drives an SUV with attached mobile trailer. This is an army surplus communications shelter – with now added heating and a/c unit for stopping where there is a/c power available. Inside, Ray has set up shelves, a TS-480 transceiver, - with lots of room for 2 people to operate.

At the first location – Seneca Creek SP – we set up a cobweb multi-band antenna up on a 25 foot high pole. After 15 minutes we realized we had a system problem and the antenna system wasn't working. On to plan B – using the KB3WAV mobile with a military surplus 14 foot vertical off a mag mount on the back.. Worked pretty well but only managed to snag 35 QSOs – fell a bit short. After 2 hours, we took down the non-working cobweb antenna and packed up headed to the next one. A index this day was up at 28 which didn't help.



At the next site – Patuxent River SP – we set up a 35 foot high vertical off the back corner of the communications van. It also happened to be a Wednesday and at 1900Z I participated in the weekly CW-Open Test - CWT – which zips along at 25-35 wpm for an hour. Started at the bottom of the band and worked my way up search and pounce – for a quick 30Q. Then hit the CH frequencies. There was no internet there but Kerri headed off to a different part of the park with internet and spotted from there. When you run a big set up you can't pull off in many of the areas- only a few parking spots. We talked to her on 2m and she spotted for us – and did some SSB runs there herself. I did mostly CW – getting over 60 in 2 hours. We packed up and headed home. Both these parks had been on the air many times.



KB3WAV/KC3RW Van/Vertical

Awards Issued

USA-CA #1262

Gary, KB9AIT

11/3/17

USA-CA Third Time 253	Phil, AB7RW	9/20/17
USA-CW Fourth time #16	Phil, AB7RW	9/20/17
USA-CA Seventh Time #26	Bob, N8KIE	9/10/17

Upcoming events for County Hunters

Contest/State QSO Parties

There are no state QSO Parties in December. They will start after the first of the year – mostly held in the Spring through Fall.

During December, you have the ARRL 160m and 10m contests to snag counties and band/states.

There's the Rookie Roundup – and the year ends with Straight Key Night – SKN on New Years Eve into New Years Day. (Jan 1 GMT).

Meanwhile you can chase 'parks on the air' and get ready for the ARRL International Grid Challenge. Sign up for Logbook of the World to really enjoy that event. Don't be giving out contacts with your grid if you aren't going to upload it. You'll just make folks unhappy.

Future Planning

Date for 2018 MICHIGAN MINI is April 26 – 27 & 28th..

It will be held at the Holiday Day Inn West Bay Beach Resort again in 2018 with room rates of: \$91.95 plus tax per night if reserved by March 25th, 2018.

National Convention will be held in Kansas City – Oct 3-6

That's all Folks – de N4CD