

County Hunter News

June 1, 2013
Volume 9, Issue 6

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 - May 2013 has been a good month for working counties. We had a few QSO parties, plus there were a dozen mobiles on the way to and from Dayton OH for the annual Hamvention. Mobiles were out running in CA, WA, MN, down in the southeast states, up northeast and just about everywhere as winter relented and the warm weather spread

We had a couple of awards issued this month as mobiles hit their last counties 'for the whole ball of wax'. The sunspot cycle seems to be headed toward a second peak. Along with higher sunspot numbers, we've had lots of 'disturbed days' and occasional radio blackouts. There's been some wild weather, too, including killer tornadoes – but we're still below the normal count for the year to date.

2) Alan, VK4AAR, has sold his home finally in Australia and is moving as of June 6 to different QTH. The big beam will be down by the time you read this and the big signal out of VK land will be missing. Alan suspects he won't be able to put up the beam in new location.

3) Interstate 5 Bridge Collapses - The 4 lane bridge in Skagit County collapsed into the river. It's the main route and the only truck route going north. Access might be hard to Whatcom and San Juan Counties for a while. There are no reasonable alternatives. Likely it will take a year to replace the bridge.

Mobile Activity this period

KJ8V headed to the Mini in MI, along with **AC0B**, **NX0X/KB0MHH**, , **W0FP**, **KM9X**, **W0NAC/N0LXJ**, **N8KIE**, **WA9DLB**, **K8AO**, **KA9JAC/KB9YVT**, **W9OP**, and many others noted last month.

Barry/Pat, **N0KV/N0DXE** were busy putting out counties in CA then headed back east to CO.

Ron, **KB6UF** headed from LA up to ME for the annual trek north.

Jeffrey, **AF3X**, headed through MO and into AR.

Jerry, **W0GXQ**, headed over to NW MN and a few in ND. Spotted up through 15M. Noted it was 400 plus miles, 514 QSOs and no dead deer this trip. Later in the month, he would head on up to Koochiching and others to clean up needs in MN.

Jerry, **K5YAA** took off to the west on vacation on a long trip.

Karl, **K4YT**, was busy putting out counties in CA and OR and WA on several trips.

Terry, **WQ7A**, took a trip over to Mason, WA. It was a last county for **W7FEN**. Terry noted: "Glad to help. Another 175 mile journey with no selfish needs. "

Bob, **K7TM**, headed across the top of MT putting them out. He noted he ran 35 counties and drove 2300 miles.

Jim, **K0ARS**, ran some in OH. Then was spotted in SD.

W5QP ran some on SSS, CW and data modes on several trips in OK and AR.

Bill, **K2HVN**, ran up to RI area, ran around a few days, and then back south.

Doug, **WA4UNS**, was on the road again putting them out in VA. Later he headed up to NJ and back putting them out. He also headed to Dayton later in the month.

N5KGY, Jerry, spotted in MS.

K0PFV, Jim, Spotted out in NE.

N3RC, Roger, took a two day each way trip to Dayton from MT putting them out on cw and ssb.

N7IV, Joe, headed from ND to Dayton and back, running them mainly on 30cw.

The team of **W8FNW/W4FNW**, Jim and Dee, headed out on a big trip out west from Dayton.

Jack, **KC7YE**, put 'em out in WA on several trips.

KA1YZV, Don, headed up from FL north.

N2JNE, Chuck, was on many days putting 'em out on SSB

Clif, **K6JN**, and Nelda, **W6XJN**, once again headed west from FL to CA.

Jack, **WD4OIN**, was spotted going south through GA to FL.

Chuck, **W3CR** was spotted out in IA. Good to hear him 'mobile' again.

Ed, **KN4Y**, headed up to GA for some needs.

W3DQT, Dick, was spotted out in WV.

Mike, **KA4RRU**, headed in from VA to OH for the hamfest and back.

Around convention time, there were many mobiles to chase including **W9OO**, **WD9EJK/WD9EJN**, **N2OO**, **K1SO**, **WA4UNS**, **N8KIE**, **KA3QLF**, **KB0BA/N0XYL**, **NX0X/KB0MHH**, **K0FG**, **KB9YVT/KA9JAC**, **N3RC**, **KB9AIT/W9WI**,

Mac, **WA0JCE**, was spotted running in NE.

N9CJH, Max, was seen on 14336 putting them out for the folks on many days.

W9COP was out putting some out in IL.

Kerry, **W4SIG**, was active in TN and MS.

Greg, **NM2L**, ran up to TN and back to GA.

W5IL was out on a big trip out west.

Richard, **AC0HW** was back on the road again.

Mike, **WU3H**, was on in several states.

Larry, **W0QE**, headed out to UT for some fun.

KA5GIL put out a few in TX and AR on SSB.

Ed, **K8ZZ**, put out a few in MI.

N8KIE, Bob, headed out - stopping in Dayton for the Friday, then off on a 5000 trip down to AL, across through LA to TX then back home through KS.

Mark, **W9OP**, put out a few in WI and IL.

County Sign Data Base Project

Lowell, **KB0BA**, sent in dozens of pictures of signs in MI from his trip to the MI Mini and to Dayton. Dozens – MI is slowly getting filled in. Half way there.

Paul, **N7JPF** sent in a few from out west. **AB7RW**, Phil, sent in a few to add to the database and **K4BPX** sent in some to add to the total now over 1200. Jeffrey, **AF3X**, sent in a few new ones. Contributions were made by Joe, **WB0CQO**, of IA county signs. Bob, **KA9JAC**, sent in some nice pictures. Rick, **W5QP**, added more in OK and AR.

K8MM sent in a few pictures. Here's one with his mobile



K8MM Teton, ID

Jerry, W0GXQ, headed over to NW MN and into ND. Here's one he sent in of Pennington, MN



W0GXQ Pennington MN

Ron, KA3DRO, sent in some County Line pictures from GA. Here's one with his mobile in the picture:



KA3DRO Chattooga GA

Barry, N0KV, and Pat, N0DXE, were out west in NV and CA and UT. Here's one of the pictures they added to the County Sign database



N0KV/N0DXE Lincoln, NV

Rick, W5QP sent in some from MO and OK. Joe, WB0CQO, sent in a few from IA to add to the database.

<http://www.charchive.com/cntys.asp>

While on my trip, I took about 40 county line signs and sent in those that were already not in the database. We're filling up that database slowly...there are lots of counties to add! Almost 2000 to go yet! I missed a lot along the interstates – just too dangerous to try to either snap a picture while going 70 or 75, or think about pulling over with lines of trucks right behind you. Maybe another trip when I am running back roads I'll get those along I-30 and I-40. Or figure out a faster way to snap them and get them to come out while zipping along....an 'assistant' would be nice – hi hi – to take the pics.

Dig through your files. The pictures don't have to be current.

On the Road with N4CD I

Tuesday, April 30 – last day of the month

The wild crazy weather was still happening up north and the weekly cold front was scheduled

to hit Dallas again on Wednesday. That left Tuesday for a perfect day to do some county hunting at the last moment. I still had some 'self aggrandizing points' left over for April, plus my quota of 'mobiles having fun' had not been exceeded yet. I didn't need anything over that way I was headed – well, I needed some of them on cw, but you can't work yourself for counties you need yourself for Nth time and CW, etc. But you can collect points, I guess, according to the twin twins, for giving out last counties, until you 'get too many' at some point. Hee hee. Several folks needed counties there for next to last or last counties.

The past weekend I spent a lot of time chasing FL mobiles – a lot of time. I only needed six counties in FL and got them within the first 3 hours, but, what the heck – there's the 1x1 calls to chase, and 8 or so mobiles to chase all over the place. I had to crank up my ears to copy NX4N who had to be going 40-45 wpm at times, too. Whew. My keyer in the mobile is set at 27 wpm. I managed to snag 66 of the 67 FL counties, and goofed off and forgot to work Desoto for the last one. Oh well. Missed the 'sweep' by one.

East TX is full of lakes and trees – millions of trees. This would be a 'green trip' - everything green – trees, fields, even the weeds.....maybe later in the summer, after July, when we get no rain for 2 months, it would be less green. It's all pretty flat with teeny rolling hills, and dozens of lakes – and rivers – even some 'wetland' areas in the northeast. Most of the road is lined with trees for 70% of the route just off the sides of the road once you go 100 miles east. .

The weather was supposed to be great – starting out at 65 deg – getting up to about 80 with mostly sun. Can't complain. On this coming Friday morning, with all the recent 'global warming', the weather folks were talking about RECORD COLD temperatures here – under 41 degrees, the old record low for the day. It was also scheduled to SNOW again in Denver and Cheyenne WY and maybe up to 2 feet of snow in NE. Wow....winter is not giving up for them. Every week, it throws some 20 below normal temps here, too, for a couple days. Set the record low last week, too.

Bob, N8KIE, needed a handful for Platinum over in northeast TX. He's gone half the year so he misses them when they are run while he enjoys the sun in HI. Dave, KW1DX, was down to 16 or so for his Bingo, and needed Marion County for his last in TX. Paul, N7JPF needed some. On the list of needed counties were Delta, Red River, Camp, Marion, Wood and Rains – plus likely others needed some of the others I'd go through and had not worked down their needs to under 10 or so to post on the K3IMC Special Needs page.

I sent out half a dozen emails to alert the folks and checked to see if N8KIE and KW1DX would be around. No sense going if they couldn't be there for the runs. Posted something late on the K3IMC CH Forum and in the County Hunting Facebook Page. Clif, K6JN and Nelda, W6XJN, run some these on SSB about once a year on one of their trips back and forth from FL to CA.

I was up early and enjoyed a nice egg beater omelet then headed out at 6:45 am – about sunrise

time. I stopped to gas up the car and clean the windshield, then it was off to avoid as much as possible of the Dallas Metroplex rush hour. I took the old route I used to go to get to work. Whew. Too many cars. Route 75 (8 lanes each way) was going 20 mph and it likely got even worse – 25 miles of stop and go traffic all the way to downtown Dallas, and another 10 miles north of me winding its way down to join the daily traffic jam. Fortunately I quickly got on the President George Bush Tollroad and headed east/southeast away from the backups and down to Interstate 30. I hate to pay the money for the tolls, but it sure beats the other ways time and hassle wise – especially at rush hour. The line of cars coming the other way was moving 20 mph and backed up for 10 miles, too, even on the toll road. Interstate 30 was fine going east once I got to it.

Alan, VK4AAR was in during most of the morning. It was through Dallas, to Rockwall to Hunt, then off I-30 on route 24 northeast through Delta, up to Lamar, then route 271 down to Camp. When you get to Titus, a short jog on 71 lets you pick up Franklin as well with a nice to run county line.

The bands were good. Ron, KB6UF, was running some on his way up to ME. Barry, N0KV would be on later in UT, and Jeffrey, AF3X was putting out a few in MO but nil copy in my mobile on 20m – too close for 20M. That's about the cw activity for the day. 17M was working well. At one time, K5GE was 599 on 17m from under 400 miles! Loud on 20M. That lasted for about 2 hours. I'd bet six meters was wide wide open. When you get short skip on 20M, that's usually a sign of giant E-skip conditions to somewhere.

From Camp, you head east on 11/49 – and wind your way down to the bump in the road town of Avinger, TX, population about 400. If you stay on 49, you hit the C/L of Cass and Marion. I found a spot further down where I could point the car northeast. My car has a bit more signal off the front than off the back, and Dave, KW1DX was fairly weak – think he was in the mobile outside work. We hooked up for his last county in TX for Bingo – Marion - so he is closer to finishing up. When I stopped to run, I'd put the windows down and enjoy the nice weather.

Then it was time to head west again on 155 over to Upshur, then 154 going east. Well, there was a bit of excitement along that road. It's two lanes with no shoulder. 55 or 60 is top speed there – it twists a bunch. I come over a small hill. All of a sudden, a car coming the other way starts wildly fishtailing about 1000 feet ahead of me.....about 4 or 5 wild swings back and forth in both lanes, then swerves violently off the road on my side of me into a small depression along the road no more than 200 feet in front of me. It came pretty close to maybe rolling over, and where it went into the depression on the side wasn't too bad – for half the road, the shoulder would have been steep enough to roll the car or you would have hit a tree.

I had already slowed down quickly not knowing what to expect. Probably about 200-300 feet ahead of me is where it went off the road on my side of the road, and was going 55 mph or so – was down to 20-30 but when the car takes the whole road and there is no shoulder, there's not

too many options if the car keeps coming at you. It was a fairly new sporty car like a Firebird or similar – I don't know the new cars these days. I slowed down even more then and made a 3 point U-turn on the narrow road and came back to see what had happened. Who knows? Might need a 9-1-1 call or a tow truck or ????

The car managed to avoid everything amazingly. Didn't hit the trees. Didn't hit the fence. . The driver, after sitting for a minute or so 30 feet off the road, , managed to get the car back up on the road out of the depression and stopped. I pulled up behind.

I was about to get out and make sure things were OK, that there were no medical issues or a tow truck needed etc, when a young female driver gets out and comes back. She thanked me for stopping and said that her car seemed to be OK. I guesstimate late teens or early 20s.

It looks like she was zipping along at about 70 according to her and dropped the front passenger side wheel off the new pavement (about a 4-8 inch drop in many places) and yanked the wheel hard to get back on the road – a big no! No! - and lost control. I advised her to get the car checked....to make sure she didn't damage anything, bend a wheel rim, ruin a tire, etc, and off she went, and off I went again back on course. Whew.

There was hardly any traffic and if it had happened a few seconds later – well, it might have been a messy situation with major injuries. You never know when something like that might happen. You can't dodge a car fishtailing over the entire narrow road unless you leave the road and head for the ditch yourself. Lucked out.

After that, it was into Rains, zipping along on 276, back into Rockwall, then home on the Tollroad once again. I stopped to fill up the car – 362 miles – 11.5 gallons of gas – a bit over 30 mpg so I can't complain and there were a couple runs where I sat with the engine running. The car a/c was running most of the day. Home by 3:30pm and avoided all the afternoon rush hour so that part of the planning worked out well.

There wasn't much in the way of DX other than VK4AAR in the morning - with G3XVR and DL6KVA in a log only a few times – but it was a 'morning trip' and the DX comes in a lot better usually in the evenings. 17M at times worked better than 20m.

I guess I used up my 'self aggrandizing points' for the month of April...it's over so that will have to be it. I can start all over again in May collecting new points as I try to get more folks finished up.

I'm glad I could put out some of the TX counties. Now to work on plans for the trip for IA, WI, and on to Dayton!

Book Review of the Month- Hardy Boys

The Shortwave Mystery

Another N4CD book review. Bought a copy for a few bucks and sold it for the same few bucks a bit later. This one is not freebie, but your library might have it.

From the web:

A book that I believe may be appealing to fellow static-listeners is one you may have read years ago. If you first enjoyed it before the delights and mysteries of the ionosphere began mixing with the blood and coffee in your veins, you may find that today, you would be reading it in a more critical light. That is not to say you would not return with a smile to the amazing and exciting world of two young Bayport sleuths, Frank and Joe Hardy. This world also includes, among others, chum Chet Morton and his appetite, dad Fenton Hardy and his brain and Aunt Gertrude and her tirades.

The Short-Wave Mystery is the twenty-fourth in this series of boyhood favorites. This particular story was first published in 1945 by Grosset & Dunlap, and, like the others in the series, was written in two steps: First, a plot outline was sketched by Harriet S. Adams. Harriet was a daughter of Edward Stratemeyer, founder of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, a company which has turned out juvenile series books by the hundreds throughout the past century. The outline was then sent to Canadian writer Leslie McFarlane, one of the syndicate's "ghost writers" and first "ghost" of the Hardy Boys series. (The author listed with the books' titles, "Franklin W. Dixon," is as much a fiction as are the stories.) McFarlane, following the pre-sketched plot, smithed out the actual words. This two-step, plotter-author combination was how all of the Hardy Boy books, Nancy Drew, Radio Boys, and many other juvenile series books were put together.

The story begins in the Hardy home attic with brothers Frank and Joe attempting to reach their chunky pal, Chet Morton, by way of a short-wave radio. After a brief conversation with Chet, the boys twiddle the dial for a few minutes and stumble across a strange voice, "little more than a whisper," exclaiming "Help...Hudson." A new mystery was afoot!

The story involves the theft of radio parts and how they are craftily hidden in stuffed animals (not teddy bears but real animals having undergone taxidermy). This leads to 217 pages of casing stores, following suspects, clonks on the head, deductions and an exciting airplane chase to Canada's Hudson Bay country to catch a gang leader and also, hopefully, to find a few

missing scientists. To learn more of the plot, you'll need to read the book itself.

Chet Morton's newest passion is, coincidentally, taxidermy. Indeed, McFarlane weaves a great deal of his usual humor into this story by way of Chet, especially with issues pertaining to the girthy lad's appetite and frustrations in learning how to stuff dead animals. Another regular character, and an invention of McFarlane himself, is the boy's Aunt Gertrude, a "peppery spinster" who loves to give verbal lashings to her beloved nephews. It has been speculated, even by McFarlane himself, that the frightening but soft-on-the-inside Aunt Gertrude may have been the secret to the incredible success of The Hardy Boys series. The Short-Wave Mystery contains plenty of Aunt Gertrude passages, a couple of which involve entertaining (to the reader) encounters with Chet's animal projects.

There are a number of occurrences and coincidences which are hard to swallow, but this gives one the opportunity to practice the discipline of suspension of belief (or is that disbelief?) One such instance involves the use of a walkie-talkie antenna to subdue and kill an attacking lynx. Of course, this might work. I've never tried it. Not even on a DXpedition.

While shortwave radio is used to communicate great distances, most of its use in this story is akin to CB or two-meter radio. Neither Adams, the plot-sketcher, nor McFarlane, the writer, seem to have a grasp on what shortwave really is. Indeed, Frank Hardy offers an awful explanation of how shortwave works”

source: http://www.dxing.info/shop/review_mystery.dx

The book was originally written during WW2 – about 1945. It was revised later to a newer version where they fixed a few things, like giving the hams valid callsigns. You can probably find a cheap copy at a local bookstore or on Amazon dot com. It was intended for 10-14 year old target group. It's a decent read and has some 'radio' content. Your library might have a copy, too.

Florida QSO Party

The mobiles were out and running. There were a dozen to work, including K4KG NX4N K1XX K5YAA K4OJ NO5W N4GI N4AO KN4Y AD8J N4EEB N4FP W5WMU W4FCG NF4A AD4ES N4DAB NF2F N8KH

from the 3830 reflector:

NF4A mobile

Work on the installation of a new FM broadcast antenna did not allow me to do my usual mobile effort in the FQP. I was able to slip away some Saturday to run WAG, BAY and CAH and early Sunday morning to run LIB. When I was operating in WAG, had wear a hard hat as I was at the 1100 ft tower having the broadcast antenna installed ;) Highlight was working UA3AGW on 15 CW in LIB on Sunday morning and JI3MJK on 20 Sunday morning in LIB. Also worked KH6, DL, HA, 9A, I, LY, F, HI, KP4, and KP2. Looks like there were enough mobiles to cover the state....there should be many sweeps

N4FP mobile

First HF mobile operation in nearly 40 years. Had major problem with high noise level from 12VDC to 18.5 VDC power supply for notebook computer. Ended up having to drive between stops without operating while notebook recharged, then operating until notebook died. Great learning experience, first time I have ever been the object of pileups. Last stop of contest, in Putnam County produced 67 contacts in 33 minutes. All keying was manual and logging was manually entered into N1MM. Next year this will be automated!! TS-440SAT to mag mounted mast with horizontally mounted hustlers on roof of Kia Rondo.

AD8J mobile

I ran the same 14 counties that I ran last year with some improvement in Q's in score. Knowing where to go and not getting lost probably helped. It's a grind doing all the driving and operating. Planning ahead with a cooler full of drinks and food results in not having to make any stops. At the end of the contest I drove home to Asheville, NC arriving about 1AM. This year I tried two cans of energy drink on the way home. It did help and I actually got the car unloaded before I hit the bed at 2AM

W4FCG mobile

Covered 26 counties. Saturdays operation flawless using new front seat operating position. Sunday, had to resort to hand logging due to laptop computer problem. The first time Murphy has struck in 5 years. Guess I was overdue. It is really difficult to drive, talk and write at the same time (Hi Hi). Great time and thanks to all the stations who waited for me from county to county.

73
Jack
K1KNQ

K5YAA mobile with K4BAI

What a good time we had. Large pileups and good operators on the other end. We would have made 3,000 QSOs had it not been for Function Key trouble on Saturday.

I recoded the keys for Sunday and things went a lot smoother. Indeed Sunday was a perfect day with no problems at all. The loudest DX station during the entire run was SP5GRM. Sounded local at all times. Worked us in 14 counties. DL3GA was very active working us in 18 counties. The Canadians were out in force. Thanks for all the VE QSOs.

15 and 40 meters were step children bands. 20 meters ruled. The pileups were so large it was hard to go to the other bands. 15 was open to Europe most times we looked and 40 was quite productive when we visited it.

Thanks to all who followed us around. We had a great time working the pileups.

Thanks again for the QSOs and the time spent following us around.

73, Jerry K5YAA and John K4BAI

NO5W mobile with K1DW

Wow, what fun, and what a challenge! The almost continuous intense pileups, especially on Sunday, resulted in a score that is about 43% better than my previous best. It was great to get back into the mobile FQP fray after being away for several years. I had operated as a mobile in 2007-2009 driving over to the panhandle from Houston. After the 2009 event my XYL driver told me that two straight days of 10 hour driving was more than she could endure, she was retiring, turning in her grand prix driving gloves, and I should look around for one of my crazy ham buddies to serve as driver and co-operator. It took me a few years but I found one.

After moving to New Orleans in 2012 I was fortunate enough to be invited to operate in several multi-ops at KN5O's fine station in Covington on the northshore of Lake Ponchartrain. During a break in the 2013 ARRL DX CW I mentioned to Dallas-K1DW that the FQP was coming up in April and how much fun

mobile operation in the FQP would be. Dallas had never operated as a mobile in the FQP, or any state QSO party, but thought it sounded interesting.

Fortunately he was free the weekend of the FQP and ready to see what it was all about. After that I mentioned to him that we would be using a logging program that he had probably not used before. He was still interested! NO5W/m was a go for FQP-2013!

In previous years our route went essentially east on I-10 from Escambia County near Pensacola to Jacksonville on Saturday and then swung south a little past Ocala on Sunday returning up the west coast and ending up in Bay County near Panama City where we would spend a few days of vacation near Grayton Beach. But this year no vacation was planned and we wanted to avoid three nights on the road so we planned to drive all the way back to the K1DW QTH near Folsom, LA after the party. To minimize that after-party drive we wanted to end the contest in Escambia County on I-10 as close as possible to the Florida-Alabama state line -- about 200 miles from Folsom. So we decided to reverse my previous route by driving about 120 miles past Pensacola to Chipley on Friday to allow us a short drive to a Saturday start in Bay County north of Panama City. Reversing the route worked out well as we managed to be parked less than three miles from the state line with about five minutes left in the party. About 40 minutes later we were sitting at a restaurant in Spanish Fort overlooking Mobile Bay, enjoying an adult beverage and dinner before driving the remaining 160 miles to Folsom.

Our route worked well and we arrived at our destination in each session just as the session ended. Saturday we drove the planned route without a missed turn but on Sunday we missed a couple which we caught without any significant lost time. A total of 40 different counties was covered.

There are a few dupes in the above QSO numbers and the total operating minutes is shy of the 1200 available due to one gas stop each day, bio breaks, operator changeovers, leg stretches, etc.

At the break on Saturday evening at Ormond Beach we had 936 Qs in the log and commented at dinner that with a little more push on Sunday we should be able to break 2000 Qs, something I had never done. But Sunday came on so strong with an average hourly rate of 132 that we blew on past that goal.

We learned a couple of things during the weekend:

1. Which end of the mike to use for making SSB Qs, which we are submitting as a check log. However, its obvious from our SSB totals (15 Qs) that we still have a lot of work to do if that mode is to be a significant contributor to our score

in the future. Maybe we need some training by the K4KG crew on how to make quick mode changes!

2. As we came into eastern Tallahassee Sunday on fumes and finally found a station we learned that the 16 gallon tank on the Pathfinder will actually hold 16.5 gallons -- that was close!

In spite of all the FQP mobiles on the road we did not have an eyeball QSO with any but we are pretty sure we came close. On Sunday we stopped in a small sliver of Nassau County on US90 near Mattox, and pulled over just outside a no trespassing gate on the side of the road. While Chuck worked the pileup Dallas got out to explore the area and stretch his legs. He spotted a dark blue police car about a quarter mile away, parked on the other side of the road. The police seemed to be checking us out and then they moved before we did. As they passed us we saw four verticals mounted on the bumpers, one on each end, front and back. Obviously it was not police but another FQP participant. We wondered who that was, tried to catch his attention, but failed, and mostly were glad it was not the police!!!!

Besides the intense pileups our biggest thrill was being called in two counties Saturday evening by RZ0AF. Chuck had never worked zone 18 from his home station (if you saw it you would understand why) and to do it from the mobile was simply amazing.

The FQP is an awesome party and very well organized. If you get the chance to run mobile in the FQP jump into it with both feet -- you will have a blast. Put it on your bucket list.

Look for NO5W/m in the Texas QSO Party the last full weekend in September and hopefully in the Kansas QSO Party in late August.

73

Chuck-NO5W

KN4Y mobile with driver - 1347 Q

Great mobile CW weekend with good weather and band conditions, except 10-meters, I did not get the 10 opening others reported. Missed 8 States only because no-one called me. Worked 6 Canada provinces with great signals. Worked 21 DXCC prefix. If I could just pass a rest area.

NX4N mobile 2800 QSOs

The NX4N/m 'Fun and Run' team started out the gate hot with our best start ever = 66 Q's in the log after only 25 minutes from our annual CLR/MON/DAD starting spot. Unfortunately we hit some butt-ugly construction down there and it cost us some time we never could make back up. This translated to poorer rates and fewer QSO's at the checkered flag. More on road status later...

The conditions were generally better this year- more EU and other DX stations, more W/VE activity too and of course 20m was king. At the end of counties I would alternate QSO's on 20/15 or 20/40; hope you mobile blood hounds keep two-band S&P going next year; if we're not heard on 20m, then check the other bands quickly! New County= back to 20m...

Now the snags:

We did have our struggles this year; driver 'Grand Prix' Lili had chronic back pain that really made driving/sitting even more difficult than usual

We also hit several road construction areas which slowed us down. The worst was at our tri-county starting point which is in the swamp-literally. It is 37 miles west of the Miami airport in the everglades on the small, two-lane Tamiami trail (the original road that connected Tampa and Miami, hence Tamiami). Usually it is a rough road in the sticks with pot holes and no shoulders or emergency lanes- bad enough but it was even worse this year...

Ever see the TV show 'Gator Boys'? Pretty cool show with some crazy dudes catching nuisance alligators in south Florida. Well, I can report that the show must be really popular because on this same little road, in just one year since last FQP there have popped up no less than 4 major Air-boat Ride Gator/Python/Mosquitoes/Whatever-the-heck-else-we-can-show-you Tourist Attractions. All of them were filled to overflowing with throngs of people, cars and buses. All on this little swamp road built in the 1920's. To make matters worse, the lil' ol' Tamiami Trail was being widened in both directions so each direction of traffic takes painfully slow turns using the single open lane. arrrrrgggggg...

Bottom line- it was a mess and we lost a pile of time and rate, but we hope the road will be much better after the construction in time for next FQP.

We missed Duval the first night and the subsequent 2nd pass of Hillsborough at the end Sunday due to the Gater-Boyz and other road construction throughout the state. I noticed my rate took a real hit during the first few hours - getting outta South FL took forever!

Still, we pressed on, remained positive and were blessed with minimal rain and luv-bugs this year. At times I really thought we might have to pack it in due to Lili's back and drive directly home Saturday night. To her great credit, she hung in there and the next day went a bit easier for her. She knew how much time I had taken to prepare for FQP and how much I looked forward to it- and she was determined not to give in. A great contesteer in her own way, and a real trooper.

Meanwhile of course I was having a ball - the non-stop pileups were just amazing! It is so cool to put together a modest barefoot mobile station and end up with pileups that feel like you're activating Kermadec.

On a side note-

This is the first time, for me anyway, that it seemed like FQP had grown in worldwide popularity. Perhaps all of our big signal fixed stations and the 1x1 hunts the past couple of years have helped promote this activity. Wow- FQP is starting to have the feel of a 'for-real' contest (perhaps part mini-SS, part mini-ARRL DX). Did you get that feeling too?

I have been enjoying yet another aspect of FQP since January- antenna and station prep. I have an advantage over others in that my 2002 Chevy Suburban has 296,500 miles and still going strong - it is a real workhorse and I have long since gotten over drilling holes in it. This makes it really fun to experiment!!!

This year I increased the number of antenna hard mounts on the roof from two to four and added six 3/8x24 ground lugs on the roof as well. Also have plenty of braid installed between panels, engine block, chassis, etc. I decided to just use the tried/true Hustler antennas along with a full size 1/4 wave whip for 10m (big, bad whip nets zero qso's = tears). It took me a bit but I got all of the antennas to work fine with low SWR and good performance without interaction.



NX4N mobile

With the antennas set, I then focused on the one factor that probably affects mobile signals the most- the ground plane. I mounted four 12-foot fishing polls to the roof; two sticking out the front by six feet and two sticking out the back in a similar manner. I then ran big loops of wire through each set of poles and tied the ends to the roof, thus electrically extending it.

Some limited empirical testing showed 1-2 dB improvement but that is a very hard number to really pin down; it did make the antenna appear somewhat bidirection although not overly so.

I will send a picture in a separate email so you can see this contraption, which rolled down the interstate without any issues and helped reel in the signals. Lili did sweat a few strange looks by different county and state police but no pullovers!

If nothing else, these extended ground loops created a psychological advantage for the op ;->

Each year FQP just keeps getting more fun- I hope you enjoyed it as much as me. A lot of that has to do with our organizers and our participants.

I also want to thank K0RC and NO5W for providing us with major big-time quality tools that improve the FQP experience for all involved. Bob and Chuck, you guys are top notch.

Finally, a tip of the hat to our out of state friends who support FQP through their loyal participation; you are just super folks and nearly all of you also deserve recognition as superior operators. You did a great job of QRQ, QRS, QRX, QRV, QSY, QSL, QSWho? and often put up with my QLF and QRDeaf. Thank you for making it so much fun here in the Sunshine state; and please encourage your friends to join the Party next year!

CU in FQP 2014!

73/OJ,

Chris, NX4N/m
'dit dit'

K4KG mobile (with K5KG and VE7ZO ops)

This was the 9th season that we have activated K4KG/m in the FQP and it was by far the smoothest and most productive. In this year's running, we achieved our personal bests for Q's, mults, and counties activated.

Our mobile was the same as previous years with a few small enhancements. Except for the small trailer we haul, the components that convert the Toyota Highlander into our mobile contest station are neatly stored away by George in his Siesta Key garage. It takes about 1/2 day to assemble the pieces and then a couple of hours to fine tune and road test. A 5-band Force 12 Sigma 5 vertical dipole sits in the middle of the towed trailer allowing us to switch quickly between 20/15/10. This year we also had ham sticks switchable for 40M and 20M on the vehicle roof that provided needed 20M antenna redundancy and allowed us to do some signal comparison between the antennas. We ran a K3 again and logged with WinTest. WinTest is bullet proof for logging, however there is no FQP module ; we use the TxQP module ; so multipliers are documented on paper as we go. (We have inquired about the possibility of having an FQP module developed for WinTest, but it doesn't seem likely that it will happen.)

Our published route of 53 counties was achieved relatively easily thanks in part to lack of heavy traffic and road construction. We had a small cloud of love bugs show up on the way to Polk County on Saturday morning but fortunately, that was the last we saw of these critters for the rest of the weekend. Weather was sunny and mild.

Operating this contest is just plain fun. Conditions this year were better than any in recent memory with a choice of three bands at any given time and 10M likely being open more than we knew. We heard stations on 10M but were unable to raise any response in the FQP mobile window except for I4IKW on Sunday afternoon. 15M featured strong signals into EU and an easy path to the west coast. 20M stayed open so long that we delayed our move to 40M on Saturday night till the last few hours, so our apologies to the GA, SC and AL ops. Along with the great domestic operators, it was a pleasure to consistently work DX on 15M both on phone and cw. A special thanks as always to those ops that took the time to dust off their mikes and give us a SSB QSO and multiplier. (Once we work one SSB multiplier, then we can leave everyone alone and concentrate more heavily on rate.) Great to see consistent SP, DL and I activity with a special acknowledgment to LY5A who many times moved us to 15 CW/SSB and 20 CW/SSB and finished up with 74 total Q's. K0HC was the overall leader deftly switching between SSB and CW to amass 86 Q's. Bob, VE3KZ managed to work us 52 times, a great effort considering he was CW only.

Memorable QSOs included JI3MJK who provided us with our first JA QSO (twice) ever, former Floridian KH2/N2NL, VK2CZ on 15 SSB, and a number of Russian and Ukrainian stations who were able to break through the pile ups.

N4GI mobile (N4GI WF3C)

First mobile operation for Blake and me. A series of technical miscues cost us time throughout the contest.

In TAY, our primary logging computer failed, we think due to under-voltage. Later in FRA, we found out that our 40m hamstick, which measured fine with the MFJ, caused the SWR-sensing circuit in the IC-7000 to fold back.

Finally, in OSC, our backup logging netbook failed (perhaps due to heat, we're not sure) an hour before the end of the contest and we packed it in rather than attempting to log and send manually.

Thanks for the QSOs and for all the out-of-state entrants for following us around all weekend. Nice to work some AS (JA, 4X) from the mobile.

VE9AA – fixed - NB

One of my favorite contests. The home stations are loud and the mobiles are numerous and moving around. Like chasing cockroaches ! LOL!!! I really enjoy the QRQ mobiles (you know who you are)...**sometimes I think NX4N was over 45wpm....**I couldn't count the dits at times to know exactly what county he was **in...haha...all in good fun.** You guys rock. Not sure how to do stats, but there were some mobiles that really hit it out of the park...N4AO, K4KG, NX4N, AD8J, W5WMU, K4OJ, NO5W, N4FP, N4GI, K1XX, K5YAA, who am I forgetting ? I will always leave one out by mistake and I apologize.

Little Ice Age Coming Again?

A Russian Scientist is predicting that the world will enter a new 'Little Ice Age' shortly. In an article in the prestigious Applied Physics Research, Dr Hallibullo Abdussimov predicts that within a few decades, the Earth will once again see less solar irradiance and thus lower global temperatures.

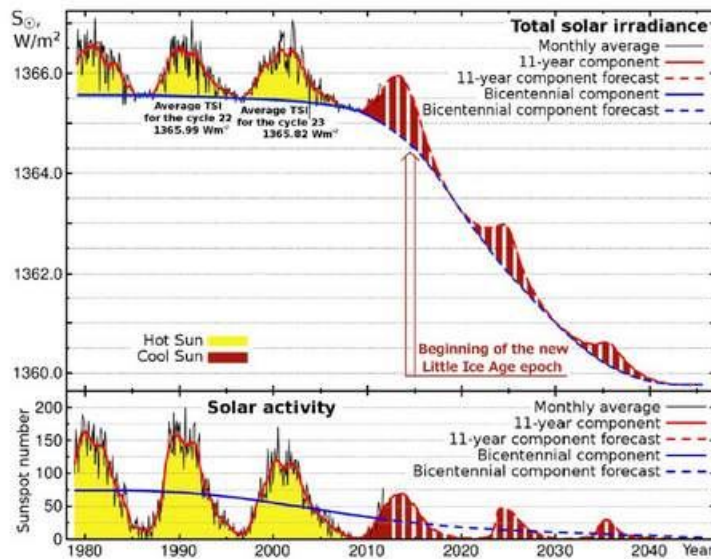
He predicts we will begin to see lower solar irradiance starting in 2014, and that by 2044, plus or minus 11 years, the globe will once again be in a "little ice age" condition as seen after the start of the Maunder Minimum (no sun spots) back in 1600-1700.

Back then, the sun went through 18 cycles of zero or few sunspots each 'peak' – and temperatures were several degrees cooler on average, allowing canals in the Netherlands to freeze each year (hasn't happened in 100 years or more). During high activity, like we have seen since the 1940s, the globe warms a degree or so – thus the 'global warming'.

You can read the full article here:

<http://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/apr/article/view/14754/10140>

Here's graph from the article showing his predicted decline in solar irradiance and the beginning of the new Little Ice Age.



7 th Area QSO Party

This year was another good one with mostly 'good' conditions. There were probably 100 stations to choose from, and a hundred counties to work. 15M was rocking with signals from all over, and 20M was good. The fun continued into the evening with 40M doing well.

All the counties in AZ were on the air likely but never saw Cochise spotted or worked it – and much of OR and probably all of WA was on the air, and a good part of ID with a mobile there, and mobiles in MT and WY.

K7RE (WY, MT), K5YAA (WY) was mobile along with KS5A (AZ), WW6D (ID), some in WA and OR, too. The 7QP is famous for it's 'expeditions' where stations set up in rarer counties and operate field day style for the contest. Some sit on county lines (2 and 3 way) for the contest.

There were half a dozen counties in Utah on the air and several in NV (could use more activity there!).

From the 3830 contest reflector.

N7XU mobile (K4XU , WI6Y - op and driver)

This year we ran in the new multi-op mobile class, CW low power, using a TS-480 and a Hustler tri-band - pitchfork fixed to a ball mount on the left rear fender. The vehicle is a VW Jetta TDI diesel - no ignition noise.

I ran 21 counties in two states. Charlie, KI6Y, did all the driving until ORDES where we had dinner at my house. Charlie left for a well deserved rest and I continued up to Jefferson County and thence to Crook Co before returning home to Bend. The total trip on the car is just under 720 total miles.

Since the 7QP is a single day 18 hour event, we drive 630 miles east to Twin Falls, ID on Friday where we stay for the night. It's not too bad going east because we gain an hour. We get to bed early and don't have to start the contest until 0700 Mountain Time -- gentleman's hours!

The land is quite flat from south central Idaho west to the Oregon border, generally following the old Oregon Trail wagon route along the Snake River. Entering Malheur County and heading NW into the snow-covered Strawberry Mountains, we gradually pick up altitude and the road has more curves. Crossing into Baker County we descend slightly into the Sumpter River valley, follow it west, up over Dixie Summit at 5279' (yes, there was snow on the south side of the road), and down into the John Day River valley and Grant County. This is in the Oregon Gold Country. From John Day we turn South over the Strawberry crest into the valley going towards Harney County.

You can imagine that an ol' Navy P2 pilot like Charlie gets his kicks on those windy roads. I just concentrate extra special hard on the CW in the headphones and the laptop monitor, lest I turn somewhat green. Some of our QSOs were made by the persistence of the party on the other end as we went down canyons where the earth rises at 45 deg or more on each side of the road as the it constantly changes direction following some creek down a slope. We drop down the south side of the Ochoco Mountains and down into Burns in Harney County: 10,000 sq miles and just 7600 population, the 7th largest county in the country.

It's a long way, 77 miles, across Harney Co but the roads are unpopulated by tourists, commerce or gendarmes so we make it in under 70 minutes. From here it's a straight shot into the sunset towards home and a hot dinner. We arrive in Bend at 7:30 PM Pacific time. I eat a hasty dinner, say goodnight to Charlie

and head out again on the road to Jefferson County.

Do not try to operate while in motion. Entering callsigns on a laptop on the passenger seat while driving is foolish, trust me on this. 20 minutes later I open in ORJEF. Here I have the benefit of exchanging the pitchfork for a somewhat more efficient 40m Hamstick . The downside is I have to get out and change antennas to go to other bands. For the first time I tried an 80m Hamstick and was very pleasantly surprised that I could raise KH6LC with a 10% efficient antenna. Good ears, Lloyd! An LED headlamp is the perfect accessory for operating a parked mobile operating in the dark.

At 10 PM I left Jefferson and drove over to Crook County, about 2 miles away, and set up shop on a nice wide berm away from the noisy power lines on the border. The reason I did not run a county line was the power lines plus what I perceive as a slowing factor in handling a more complex exchange. Crook Co was also handled by CODXC member AA5TL, so it was not a new mult for most but more Q's in the log for me. I ended at 0651Z when calling CQ and S&P on either 40 or 80 produced no response. Last Q was KH6LC on 40m for QSO #899 with dupes, about 100 Q's ahead of last year.

Since I log with TR it will take an hour reformatting it to Cabrillo quality and a real score. Then it goes into the famous K2DI 7QP scoring machine and we will await the results, to be published on the 7QP web page one day after the log deadline.

From a 7-lander's perspective, the bands were in good shape. Not as good to Europe as last year, but with lots of participation from the US and JA. 10m was not checked but judging from 15m, it would have been counter-productive to add another band to the pitchfork. There were more mobiles this year. K5YAA made the trip from FQP to 7QP and lit up Wyoming. Great sigs from Jerry's rig.

7QP starts at 13Z and we get off to a good start. Just as things start moderating a bit, the InQP starts at 16Z and the rates pick up again. It gets a further boost at 20Z when the NEQP starts. Many of the fixed New England stations start with their beams on Europe, but as Eu goes to sleep, the rates pick up even more.

I'd like to thank all the folks who followed us along and strained to hear us. It was a good day on the radio. And thanks for your support of the 7QP.

Dick, k4xu

N7SMI County Expedition - 591 SSB QSO

I operated 7 hours SSB only from the Idaho, Wyoming, Utah Three Corners intersection (IDBEA/WYLIN/UTRIC). It's a very remote location that required a four wheel drive, ATV, and a lot of leg work to get to, not to mention the close run-ins with a rattlesnake and a VERY aggressive badger. I had to end early due to extremely strong winds and threat of rain, but had a lot of fun despite few multipliers.



N7SMI – ID/WY/UT

The blue object is his tent – which got blown down toward the end – then he decided to leave.



Here's the triangular marker at the 3 way border of 3 states ID/WY/UT marker

Other pictures here

<http://smithplanet.com/radio/7qp/7qp3.jpg>

and

<http://smithplanet.com/radio/7qp/7qp4.jpg>

and

<http://smithplanet.com/radio/7qp/panorama.jpg>

K5YAA mobile

You'd think driving so many miles from home you would be prepared on the rules. I thought the contest started at 6AM Mountain Time but it was 7AM. That explains why I got no callers from ALBANY county. I woke at 5AM and drove 30 minutes to start in Albany. CQ'd until the laptop got tired with no takers. Worked two 8s on 20 meters that didn't know what time it started either! Around 7AM the activity picked up when I was in LARAMIE county.

The second thing I was ill prepared for was multi county operations. I thought there were no county line ops in this one but there was. I didn't log several multi county operations because N3FJP made me enter multiple QSOs - such a

pain. I did log K7LIX properly for the three QSOs I had with his 3 county operation.

Wyoming is desolate with very few people there. Houses were sparsely located in the eastern side of the state. I kept my eye on the gas meter in the van and filled up before it got to a quarter tank. There were towns without gas stations if you can believe it. I met and had dinner with Alan Brubaker KO7X. One of the Wyoming stalwarts in SS and other contests. We had a fine dinner at the Little Bear restaurant. This after trying Alan's favorite place the Steamboats Grill. No parking spots so on to Outback. 45 minute wait at Outback so on to Little Bear. Alan doesn't like Friday night eat out lines!

I worked all 12 counties I set out to do. Had time in each to work different bands. 15 was quite productive - never looked at ten - probably should have from way out west. The JAs were quite strong on 15 which was a surprise after the GA and FL parties. LY5A has quite a signal everywhere I end up. N6MU provided me a check station. If I was working John then the bands were working.

Thanks for all the QSOs. It was good to have a radio way out west. I saw one house with a ham antenna near it. Maybe was K7RV who was in Sheridan county. A local made it in the log!

N7WA mobile with N7BV

I've had a lot of fun mobiling through Eastern Washington the past couple of Salmon Runs. This year, I decided to add the 7QP to the mix - it's become a popular test thanks to the hard work of the Central Oregon DX Club.

This trip, Chuck N7BV came along to share the driving duties and to operate SSB while I handled the CW side. It was dicey even getting Chuck on the road when his hot water heater broke down a couple days before the test. He made it but Murphy must have followed him over from Port Angeles.

We headed east for Yakima about 4:30PM on Friday after I got home from work. As we came upon the Tiger Mountain Pass, about 15 minutes from home, I realized I had left my vest with wallet and cell phone back at home. We gotta go back. A half hour later we were back at the pass with wallet in hand and only 45 minutes behind schedule. The rest of the trip to Yakima was pretty uneventful and we even had a nice dinner in small bar in downtown Cle Elum. We made it to my step-sons place in Yakima as the sun was setting and

after a few minutes of visiting, it was time to crash. After all, 7QP starts early (6AM) in Washington.

We made it on the road on time and the first contact went in the log at 1302 UTC. We started out on 40M and the activity was decent as we worked the west coast. Checking 20M, it was open too with activity into the midwest and even some JA activity. We were headed for Klickitat County and got stopped for some road work. It wasn't a bad delay (I figure 15 minutes) but enough to be irritating. I knew Murphy was riding in the back of the pickup.

At Satus pass in Klickitat, with 50 CW Q's in the log, it was time to try SSB. I guess I can't really blame lackluster SSB results on Murphy. It's tough enough to be heard as a mobile. Doing it on phone is a real challenge. Non-the-less, Chuck kept up the effort as I drove us back to Yakima County and through to Benton where we switched back to CW.

And that's essentially how it went. One of us would work phone and one would work CW. Murphy was doing his thing too. The battery level indicator on the computer was steadily dropping despite the DC charger that was plugged in and a glowing LED that indicated it was operational. Somewhere in Walla Walla County, the computer was finished and we got to practice our handwriting skills for logging. Me, I also had the pleasure of sending CQ manually innumerable times over the next 12 hours. (We had a Winkeyer but those things are a pain to program manually, especially bombing down the road.)

We wound our way through SE Washington, then back up towards I-90 where we had dinner and had to make a decision. Either head back west on I-90 (and a decent bed time) or keep heading north to US2 before turning west. We choose the latter.

I'll admit, I forgot how dark it gets out in rural Eastern Washington. Plus the towns close down early - even the gas stations. It was like driving down a lonely dark tunnel for most of the way to Wenatchee. It would have been nice to stop and check out the stars in the clear sky but fatigue was setting in and you just want to get it over with. Our last county was Chelan as we reached Wenatchee. Even though there was another hour left to the test, I just said "forget it". All I cared about was getting home. I think there were plenty of other guys giving out Chelan and Kittitas throughout the day so our lack of participation was no big loss. We got home about 1:30AM local time after nearly 20 hours on the road and 800 miles.

Major takeaways.

- 1) No more SSB. It just isn't worth the effort and extra complexity in the mobile setup. We

- could have done more time on 15/40/80 CW with the time instead.
- 2) Bring the RIGHT computer power supply. I finally figured out I was using a supply for an older laptop and it's voltage output was too low for my current laptop (stupid, stupid, stupid).
 - 3) Reduce the complexity of the cabling. I thought I had done that after the last Salmon Run but it still needs work. Getting rid of SSB will help.

Thanks to all those who followed us. We got lots of nice comments while out on the road and put a few new counties in some logs. Look for N7WA/m in September for the Salmon Run.

cheers
dink, n7wa

KS5A mobile

The 2013 7QP is history. As an Arizona mobile, challenges abound, but it is always a great time with a chance to travel through many varied and scenic landscapes plus hear from old friends and make some new ones. Contesting always brings out the best of operators, and this was definitely true this year. You guys and gals were great.

Goal for KS5A/m ops this year: Run those AZ counties that have little or no planned ops posted on the 7QP web site in the prior week. Thanks to those that do list their county planned ops. More use of this feature in any party will save mobiles significant time and expense. When possible, please help them out and list your planned county operations!

If one intends to run a lot of 7QP counties, Arizona is not your state. This year, as in previous parties, those lite or no coverage counties are always at opposite ends of the state. Mountainous terrain creates another obstacle for continuous operations. RF just does not seep very well through those steep rock walls or in the deep canyons. There are no straight roads in Arizona other than in the deserts. Driving safety is always a main priority as half the route was in the mountains.

The actual run counties (9) and number of contacts: Apache(64), Navajo(122),

Coconino(49), Gila(51), Yavapai(66), La Paz(57), Maricopa(77), Pinal(18), Pima(0), Santa Cruz(49). Apache was added at the start and Pima was not run for time constraints.

Other numbers:

7QP Route Mileage: 665
7QP Driving Time: 15:40
Total Trip Mileage: 880
Total Trip Days: 2

Station QSO's:

10 - K7ZX
9 - W4UT
8 - K5WAF, N6MU
7 - N4CD, N4DW, W0GXQ
6 - AA5TL/7, K1TN, KK7S, N5NA, NE7D

Murphy's: Although the hustler radiators remained tuned from their last use, a check of the IC-706 rig output indicated power had dropped to 50w. Deciding not to take a chance the rig would make it through the entire contest, I elected to swap it out with a backup IC-7000. Unfortunately, but probably by design, none of the separation or battery cables are interchangeable. This delayed the pre-contest positioning.

Prior use of the IC-7000 consisted of a few initial tests a few years ago. Once the rig was fired up and memories set, there were no rig or antenna problems during the party. Just in case, I took the operating manual.

The daytime part of the route went as planned and as expected. After sunset, my concern was making it to the last county, Santa Cruz. When leaving on the trip no one had signaled an operation from that county. Thus, little run time was spent in Pinal county and none in the populated Pima county.

Arriving in Santa Cruz a few hours before contest end, the last Murphy hit. After running on 20m, low and behold, the truck developed RFI problems on 40m and 80m. RF was getting into the engine computer or the fuel injector relays and causing misfires. I made a few contacts on those bands and elected to call it quits before being stranded at midnight, and 180 miles from home.

Overall, it was a long day but fun. Sorry the ops time was cut short. Thanks to all for the contacts and hope we did not miss too many calls.

More special thanks to the N1MM guys. The ROVERQTH, COUNTYLINE entries worked great as well as logging multiple counties from other stations.

Mobile equip:
F-350 diesel
IC-7000
Hustler resonators, horizontally mounted on hub, 13' AGL

73/Guff
KS5A/m

K7IA County Expedition

Unlike previous years, this was a single county effort instead of a county line setup. Erin and I parked the camper within eyeshot of the blacktop highway and about 150 yards from the New Mexico state line near Alpine, Arizona. We had scouted the spot years ago but had never used it.

Everything cooperated and worked flawlessly, except for the slingshot used to shoot messenger lines into the treetops for wire antennas. The 80m vee, of lowest priority, stayed rolled up and in the box. Antennas used were a portablized Butternut vertical, wire Moxon Rectangle for 20m, and a vee for 40m.

Highlights:

1. Contest Machine Andy, KK7AC, operated again from his summer cabin in Alpine. Andy and I have managed a few ragchews during 7QP/AXQP's in recent years when I set up in nearby AZ counties, but we've never had an eyeball, so I contacted him by email two weeks ago, and we set up a possible visit. He walked into camp on Friday afternoon, just as Erin and I finished putting up antennas and just before I began testing them. What a delightful hour and a half! Thanks Andy! On Sunday morning, our take down went very quickly, and we had a second eyeball with Andy and his lovely wife, Lisa, before they hit the road for Tucson. Andy has a potent signal from his innovative wire antennas high in the Ponderosa Pines, and his terrain is favorable in all directions. If Andy ever reports "armchair" copy - he really means it--he contests from a recliner!

2. The local National Forest Ranger spotted our camp from the highway on Saturday afternoon and paid us a visit. We were profiled, too! Not a bad thing to do, because one never knows who is alone in the woods these days. Profiling was easy, by his admission--he spotted the antennas first. He just wanted to make certain that our doings weren't a threat to the tinder-dry

forest (no campfire, no BBQ, approved generator spark arresting mufflers, and plenty of ready water next to the generators). Erin and I spent about 45 minutes of op time visiting with the conscientious chap.

3. N1MM Logger: Every year, the gurus of N1MM Logger make improvements in the way it handles the three QSO Parties operating on the first weekend of May, 7QP, New England QP, and Indiana QP. There are lots of states and counties in the mix, and each QP has different ways of reporting similar data. This year, N1MM's focus was on logging QSOs from stations located on intersections of two or more counties. Simply enter the exchange as it's received, press Enter, and two or more correctly formatted QSOs are logged. It never missed a beat, just as long as the exchange strings were sent (and received) in the proper format. Thanks go to the County Expedition ops who formatted their exchanges according to their QP Rules!

All I want for Christmas - is:

7QP, New England QP, and IN QP will no doubt share the first weekend in May for years to come. Wouldn't it be nice if their County and State exchanges be in the same format?

Many thanks go to the QP Sponsors. Bravo Zulus to the NEWE QP and INQP who, out of apparent deference to this 7QP op who called CQ 7QP sent only their state abbreviations and who added their county abbreviations when I pressed my macro key, sending CNTY?; Yes, as long as N1MM Logger will parse county and state, then I want all of it so that I can submit my log to all three event sponsors. I hope that every op will make it a point to send everything next year!

73,
dan k7ia

K7LIX – County Expedition

It all started when Ron KF7IBN mentioned to Rob W7GH that sometime they should do something to combine camping and ham radio. Just over a month ago, Rob said why not a Field-Day-style county expedition effort in 7QP? The idea snowballed with sudden speed, and a week later we had six people on board from two ham clubs, Southern Oregon ARC in Grants Pass and Rogue Valley ARC in Medford. Two more people signed on the week of the contest. None of us were hard-core

contesters, but we decided to do as serious an effort as we could manage on short notice.

Originally we considered a Forest Service campground, until Carl W7BRO casually mentioned that there is a three-county point on King Mountain where Josephine, Jackson, and Douglas counties meet. Wonder of wonders, the three-county site at 5,100' (1,550 m) actually turned out to be suitable, with reasonably level ground and plenty of natural antenna supports (some people call them trees). We also had good luck regarding weather: the last of the snow was rapidly melting on contest weekend, although the wind tore through the trees most of the time.

Most of the contest we had two radios going in two popup tent trailers. For a while we had a third radio on 6m, until SOARC's venerable TS-850S went kaput. We had a tribander yagi on a 30' (9 m) aluminum tower that worked very well, given the dropoff to the east. We had plenty of wire antennas.

We didn't have any first-rate contesters along with us, and we all had a great time learning as we went along. Rob W7GH and Steve K7KO, our CW guys, had never really run stations before. The first time felt like drinking from a fire hose apparently, but somehow they got it together and felt reasonably comfortable doing it by the end of the contest, although the grins on their faces took quite a while to subside. The SSB effort was ably led by Scott KD7EHB and Jeff W7KNX. The rest of the crew, Dan KF7IBL, Ron KF7IBN, Carl W7BRO, and Joe AA7JS, learned very quickly and were soon running stations themselves.

All in all, it was a fantastic fun time that none of us will soon forget. Several of us were introduced to serious contesting for the first time (Field Day doesn't count). Everyone pulled together admirably, and everyone made vital contributions to the effort. Ron, Steve, and Joe served up some fantastic food. What a wonderful weekend. We're already talking about next year!

K7ABC (K6LL op) Yuma AZ

I had planned a full-bore mixed-mode effort using special event callsign K7L, but it was not meant to be.

In setting up for the contest on Friday, I found the SWR on my KT-34XA to be 9:1. I did everything I could to diagnose the issue from the ground, including

replacing the lower PL-259, with no improvement.

I knew that W7WW would represent Yuma County on SSB, so I decided I would just pass out some AZYMA's on CW, using a smaller, lower tribander. I decided not to use K7L to avoid a flood of QSL requests for such a puny effort.

On Saturday, I awakened two hours after the contest started and started making some QSO's on 20 and 15 using the small antenna. After three hours, I decided to look at the SWR on the big antenna again, and found that it was now 1:1! I don't know what happened there, but I switched over to the big antenna, and it worked fine all day. I suspect that an oxidation film formed on the XA, and the high power RF from the other tribander somehow burned through it.

By this time, it was not possible to revert to my previous grandiose plan, so I stayed on CW, and had a good time just doing single-radio CW.

Maintenance on the XA will definitely be upcoming. That antenna has been up since 1979 with zero problems up to now.

One of the three qso's on 10 was North Dakota, who answered my CQ, along with two W1's in the NEQP.

N6MU – fixed – CA

My best 7QP score ever! Thanks to all the participating 7-landers. Many mobiles doing their thing. Top for me was N7XU with 28 Qs followed by WW7D(23), K5YAA(13), N7WA(9), KS5A(8), K7RE(7), N7OU(6) and K7BG(3).

W0BH – fixed KS – 146 counties (out of 258)

Good activity this year with a much increased county count compared to the past two years. In this qso party, I don't focus on mobiles because the rates are so good otherwise. Having said that, I keep checking for mobiles, and invariably they come up with a new county. Great job! There are always a few pop-up mobiles as well, often traveling on the freeway in multiple counties.

The fixed stations, mobile stations, and expeditions once again did a great job. Overall, I worked 441 unique calls, up from 394 last year. Like last year, I concentrated on the 7QP, but I always enjoyed working INQP and NEQP

stations who called needing Kansas. Of course I had to work the mobiles I heard in all the contests!

Here's the top group from the mobiles,

K7LIX/r
N7XU/m
N7WA/m
K5YAA/m
K7BG/m
WW7D/m
KT7G/m
KS5A/m
NX7DX/m
N4DQ/m
KF7ADM/m
KI0RH/m

The Elli Buc Auction

KD6HWD posted a note on the K3IMC about the Elli Buc auction held at Grogan and Co, in Boston MA. Elli Buc was a long time antiques dealer in SoHo in Manhattan, and ran a shop there for 40 years. He also repaired watches, old clocks, mechanisms, old technical instruments from microscopes to telescopes, medical equipment and just about everything else 'mechanical'. He amassed a world class incredible collection of at least 2000 lots of items, and over 10,000 items which went up for auction this year. He passed away last year.

Here's a few of the communications related goodies. I saw only a pair of Hallicrafters radios – vintage SX-42 or so, in the entire collection, along with a 1920 era Marconi phone. There were dozens of telegraph related items, from very rare telegraph registers (the 1840s to 1860 clockwork/gravity machines that copied the incoming Morse message to a paper tape) – (for \$3500 to 5000 each), to undersea cable keys, to a sample case of the 1860s undersea telegraph cables (sold \$4500 plus 23%), fire alarm equipment, old microscopes by the hundreds,

telescopes, dental chairs, dental instruments, quack medical devices, books, old valuable maps – for up to \$15,000 each. Old tubes, gauges and measuring instruments, voltmeters, galvanometers, TV sets – all the originals, Baird receiver, TV cameras, patent models, and tons of other stuff.

The money flowed – millions of dollars were bid. You could bid or watch on line as the thousands of lots were put up for bid. I tried to 'win' a few, but the items went high, high, high in price. Probably worth it, but not to me.

Some early electric motors sold for \$18,000 (plus 20% buyer premium and 3% auction fee!). Typewriters of early vintage, astronomy instruments, and lots of 'weird' one of a kind stuff as well. If it dealt with science, he likely had at least one. There must have been 100 early microscopes (the first ones), mechanical Calculators (the first one – the Millionaire), fake eyeballs, clocks of all kinds, pocket watches, mechanisms, fire alarm systems, house 'telegraph' systems, and on and on. Enough to fill several museums with items.

Here's a few of the goodies



Undersea Cable Key
\$5000

The key above was used on undersea telegraph cables in the 1860s- 1940s time frame. They would switch polarity of the keying voltage, which could be up to 2000v, to send 'dits' and 'dahs'.

and other



Knox and Shain Telegraph Register
\$5000 plus

and another



1920 Marconi-Phone LW Receiver
\$800

An Atwater Kent Breadboard radio in mint condition, inside a wood display case, sold for \$650 – a real bargain – except it would have cost me \$250 or so likely to get it shipped back to TX so

I didn't bid on it. Nice! Oh well – if I had more advance info, I might have been up in Boston in person bidding on this stuff. As it was, I was 0 for 8 bidding – folks wanted it more and the shipping would kill me. A lot of 'regen receivers' – and I couldn't tell from the picture of what/where – looked lab built – went for only \$275 (plus 23%) but it could have cost \$500 to get them shipped back to TX. Who knows how much they weighed? Dang....missed out. Didn't see any 'name' brand stuff, but with the quality of the pieces, who knows – maybe even built by Armstrong himself? Maybe some day I'll find out.

This is a Riker Motor – one of the first makers of motors for 'transportation'. It sold for \$15,000 plus, of course, 23% on top of that! It's about 10 inches high.



Riker Motor - \$15,000 sell price plus 23%

Someone really wanted that motor!

Indiana QSO Party

The same weekend as the NE QP and the 7QP, the Indiana QSO Party was held. Mobiles spotted include WT9U, W9CSX (SSB), NN9S, N9FN, AE8M, KJ9C, WB9CIF, and there were some portable stations as well. W9I set up in Switzerland, IN – often a rare county for the folks.

KJ9C mobile (see his pic later in this issue)

Activated 23 counties and put about 400 miles on the car in 12 hours. Conditions were good, worked a lot of 7QP and NEQP in their parties as well. Single operator/driver.

Rig was a K3 using TR4W and a Netbook (keys rather small, made for interesting entries in the dark). Hamsticks on the roof of a 4-Runner. Weather held off until the last 2 hours. 258 unique calls in the log from 41 S/P.

The INQP managed to field operations in 91 of the 92 counties; the Brown Co op never made it. We'll cover that for sure next year. Log entries ahead of our previous record pace.

WB9CIF mobile

Activated 14 counties. Could not get anything going on 20 or 80 meters or SSB. Propagation was quite different than past years. Was able to work more in state stations than in past years. Was not able to work any DX due to poor prop on 20.

The surprising thing is there was not the usual QRM on 40 from the European RTTY stations in the RTTY contest that falls on the same weekend. I can only guess this was due to propagation as well.

Had a large pile up in Tipton county. Worked 53 stations before leaving the county.

Only equipment problem was the BetterRF screwdriver controller failed and had to resort to manually tuning the Tarheel II using an Ameritron screwdriver controller.

KV9W portable

Had a great time operating portable from the Owen/Greene county line. Thanks to all of those who called and participated in the IN QSO party. Dale KV9W

W9I – Portable – Switzerland, IN

For 2013 again W9I was on from Switzerland County with a team of four W9NIO, K4ZLE, AA8HH and K8DV hit Fred's W9NIO QTH about 9:30AM with a car load of equipment. After about 2 hours of getting coax ran from Fred's workshop to his house to tie into his regular station antennas, setting up the stations and getting the network up and running for the log, we were ready to go. Made the decision that W9NIO would start out on 40 meter SSB, K4ZLE on 40 meter CW and AA8HH on 20 SSB and I floated around to each station to make sure there were no issues or problems. I am glad to say other than one small computer problem and an RF problem with the MicroHam CW Keyer which we were able to correct both fairly quickly with little loss in operating time.

When the clock struck NOON we were off and running and the contacts started pouring in and it was not long before we had the first 100 in the log. Weather in Switzerland County unlike a lot of the state that day was partly sunny with the temperature hanging around the 70 mark. Do not know how we missed the rain but we did. We made a effort to get into as many logs as many times as we could and listening up for the mobiles all day. A word about the mobiles, the team from W9I appreciates the effort and time that all the mobiles, rover and portable stations put in and glad to have most of you in our log several times and thank you again for all the QSOs.

The station line up at W9I:

Elecraft K3 with KPA500 making contacts on 80/40/15 both CW and SSB.
Icom 756 PRO III with Ameritron ALS600 making contacts on 40 and 80 both CW and SSB.
Kenwood TS-570 barefoot contacts on 20 both CW and SSB.

Antennas:

4 element tribander
Flat top multiband dipole
inverted vee mutliband

We also used N1MM logger networked to all 3 stations making any rig capable of

working any band or mode with was much better for us than last year running two stations not networked with one CW and one SSB.

By mid afternoon the crew at W9I had already past our score from last year and was on our way to doubling our goal. The crew was able to keep the 100 per hour rate going throughout the party which kept all three stations busy. By all accounts the InQP was a great success and the crew at W9I is glad to have been part of the party.

Thanks to all for the QSO's and hope to be back next year from Switzerland County as talk has already started. Now have to start planning for defending our M/M win in the Ohio QSO Party in 2012. Hope you will join us on August 24, 2013 NOON to Midnight for the Ohio QSO Party.

73,

Dave, K8DV

The Michigan Mini

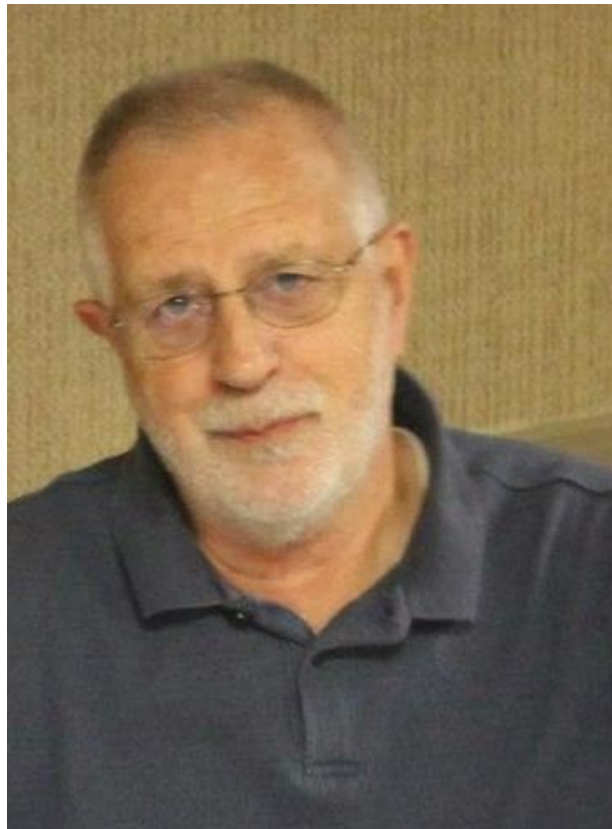
Another successful Mini in MI was held with dozens in attendance from N8OR, AF3X, K8ZZ, W8JJ, N8KIE, WG9A, N8RLJ, K8AO, W8TVT, N8RRR, W7FEN/Rita, NX0X, KB0MHH, NN9K, W0NAC, N0LXJ, W8WKT, W0FP/Cindy, KA9JAC/KB9VYT, KM8X

The hosts were Ed, K8ZZ, and Joe, W8TVT.

Here some faces that haven't been in the CH News before (pics courtesy of Larry, W7FEN).



Bill, W8TZA



Joe, W8TVT

More Greenie Car Fail

Electric car maker Coda Holdings Inc. filed for Chapter 11 protection from creditors after pronouncing its \$38,000 sedan "a commercial disappointment" and failing to sell its assets outside of bankruptcy.

The company's lone passenger car, the CODA sedan, was plagued by delays. Its eventual market debut in March 2012 went poorly; less than 100 units were sold, "falling well short of the company's expectations," according to the Los Angeles company's bankruptcy filings.

The company blamed the car's flop on a variety of factors, including stunted demand for electric vehicles, adverse macroeconomic conditions and insufficient capital to effectively market the car. By the fall of 2012, Mr. Madden said, "it became clear that the company would lack the liquidity required to properly develop and market its products."

In its bankruptcy petition, Coda said it has assets ranging from \$10 million to \$50 million and liabilities ranging from \$50 million to \$100 million. . Coda said it has received equity investments totaling some \$344 million since its founding.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324266904578456941710465834.html>

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For 100 cars...they each cost \$3.5 million apiece to make. Nothing fails like 'greenie' fantasies.

10-10 Contest

Friday night the band looked promising. I worked 3 stations right after the start time of 0001Z (7 pm local time). One in GA, one in NC and one in FL. That's all the stateside stuff I heard, and that was probably E-skip as there was a cold front moving across in between us – came through here last night – and likely churning up some t-storms and turbulence (wind shear) which causes E-skip. Didn't hear KN4Y – maybe he was napping. N0TW was 60 over but only FL station heard. There were 3 ZL's in there, too. Got 2 of them in the log. It was 'sunset' here – the sun at the horizon and probably just rising there – daylight path.

I heard KK5NA, Joe, make a few contacts. It sure would be nice to have a beam up 40-60 feet when sigs are weak. It's amazing how much more you hear on a beam vs a little vertical in the back yard. Heard a VK and a YN in there, too.

Come Saturday and Gator (KN4Y) pokes through for about 2 hours. The same stations I worked yesterday in NC and FL (2 of them) were in again. Worked two stations in Cumberland, NC and one in VA (W4KRN – Karen) and that was it. Nothing else happened on 10M for the rest of the contest despite nice big sunspot numbers. The A was 5 and the K index was 2 – not good signs. Saturday evening around sunset the same two ZL stations were coming in again. That was it – nothing new.

Sunday was even more of a disappointment with ZIP heard other than the one station in FL and the one in NC (KJ4RV and N0TW) again for a short time, then zip. Jerry, W0GXQ spotted KN4Y. Zip, Nada, here. I suspect not many were calling CQ on 10, but who knows? Not much happening on the SSB part of the band either!

I noted from the 7QP logs that most folks out west made ZERO contacts on 10m – yet made dozens or some even 100 on 15 meters – which was good for much of the contest here – at least. I know that the 7QP folks were checking 10M with not much success. So much for the 'peak' of the sunspot cycle. They were trying and checking but 10 didn't cooperate.

Since you have to be a 10-10 member to submit a score, no comments on the 3830 reflector from those who casually contest or aren't interested in paying for an annual 10-10 membership.

Ed, KN4Y, reported via email

I made 97 QSO's. I called the last 5 hours and could not get the 3 more QSO's. Frustrating. Did get 4 new counties on 10-meters and a Natural Bingo. Also worked 36 new 10-10 numbers. Even worked Guff KS5A mobile in Gila AZ. Also worked Jerry W0GXQ and other county

hunters. Friday evening and Saturday were good, Sunday was not. Plenty of ZL's and PY's.
Ed KN4Y

On the Trail of Regens

This month, a 'rare' National SW-2 shortwave receiver from the 1928 era showed up on Ebay. This was one of Nationals first attempts at a consumer set. Readers will recall that international shortwave broadcasting started about then, and became quite craze in the 1930



National SW-2 Receiver

Here's some history on the early radios of National

National's first short wave receiver was the SW-2 (stands for Short-Wave, 2 tubes) consisting of an untuned rf amplifier and a regenerative detector. The basic design was obtained from the RCA Communications Laboratory, then located at Van Cordtland Park, New York City. Several of Millen's college classmates had gone to work for RCA and he had extensive contacts there. The SW-2 was based on a receiver design RCA developed for an "export receiver" sold by the General Electric Co. in South America. This receiver became known as the SW-4 when it was

later manufactured by National.

Tubes – a UX 222 RF amplifier and a UX-112 regenerative detector. The UX 222 is a tube that runs on a filament voltage of 3.3 volts DC (at about .12 amps) – a new 'screen grid' tetrode tube just developed in 1927 by G.E. It eliminated the need for 'neutralization' of previous triode designs. The UX 112 is a triode tube.

The SW-2 was the only receiver National made without sheet metal or production tooling; for example, all holes were laid out by hand instead of using fixtures. The SW-2 was extensively advertised as a TV receiver and Millen wrote an article in the November 1928 issue of Radio News describing his TV experiments. The SW-2 appeared in late 1927 or early 1928. A three-tube version of the SW-2 appeared in 1929; the third tube was an voltage amplifier and apparently was added to provide additional amplification for TV work.

In 1929 the company produced the four-tube SW-4, the fourth tube being an audio power output tube. A sheet metal cabinet was also provided.

As new and improved vacuum tubes were developed, National improved its receivers. In 1930 Millen and Kruse, who was a former technical editor of QST, designed the SW-5 receiver. The fifth tube was added to provide a push-pull output stage for loud speaker operation. This was one of the first short-wave receivers specifically designed for operation from AC power lines. The receiver was completely hum-free and had no dead spots which was quite an accomplishment at that time. A "high fidelity" version of the same receiver - the SW-45 - was also sold which used type 45 tubes for the audio output stage instead of the type 27 used in the SW-5.

As the country was in the midst of the great depression, a low-cost version of the SW-5 was soon developed - the now venerable SW-3. The push-pull audio output stage of the SW-5 was eliminated - which meant headphone operation only - and a wrap-around sheet metal cabinet was substituted to further reduce costs. Both AC and battery powered models of the SW-3 were marketed and two upgrades made; the last right after WWII to use octal tubes. This receiver was in production almost 15 years, from 1933 to 1948, the longest production run of any receiver except the HRO which was in production for almost 30 years. The SW-3 has become a "must" for any collector of early short-wave receivers.

Source: http://www.qsl.net/jms/bio_rem/bhnc.html

This one went for \$400 on Ebay....

- - -

Here's a great site on the Knight Kit Ocean Hopper – the various vintages and close up details

<http://www.ohio.edu/people/poster/bapix/oHopper.htm>

For some reason, there is a cult following on the Ocean Hopper. They sell for insane prices given the very marginal performance of the sets. I guess a lot of folks started out with one in the wayback days.

- - -

Here's another regen that showed up on Ebay this month. It's a one tube plus rectifier Philmore set. Has one coil permanently installed in it – but not sure if it is BC only or shortwave only. Very basic. Sold for \$55 on Ebay



Philmore One Tube plus Rect Regen

New England QSO Party

The mobiles were out and running – a whole bunch to choose from from K1KI, WA1Z, KM3T, KX9X, NJ1F, and others.

Saturday 15m was great – tons of stations to work – and the first couple hours is when lots of

stations get on for a few hours – then disappear. Mobiles were easy to grab on 15. Come Sunday, 15m is in the dumper – opens late – and the same handful of stations on. Not many mobiles going to 15m or at least I don't hear them. I needed about 2/3rds of New England, so it was a fun fest for me. Filled in a lot, but couldn't catch a lot as they ran only on 40m in the evening and that is just 'too far away' and you can't get through the QRM wall of the loud stations. The 7QP stations were often on top of the NE stations in the evening so all I could do is watch the spots...and find that they are buried under a 20 over S9 signal from the 7QP station on the same frequency. It was a busy weekend filling in counties.

KX9X mobile (de N4CD - didn't even realize he was mobile – should have signed /m! But I did work him in 2 counties – He was spotted in six)

Couldn't enter this full-time due to commitments on Saturday, so I was a Sunday Driver. WX was just exactly perfect and it was a great day for a drive. Poked around a bit Saturday night from my parking lot in HARCT, but nothing serious until Sunday.

Started in NLNCT. Found a boat launch on the sound and drove to within 20 feet of salt water. Stuck around for an hour, drove 20 minutes to Misquamicut State Beach in WSHRI, right on the water again. Worked a bunch of folks, when K9YC calls in and sends, “Your radio sounds awful” D'oh. I'd turned off the engine and pushed the +12v too hard. Started the car and all was FB, but had to deal with engine noise. Oh well. Lots of common problems to address if I decide I want to be more serious about mobile operation, but it was nice to just grab the rig and some hamsticks and go. Simplicity is very underrated.

In PRORI, I was at a little pond across from a church in Foster. An older couple drops by to walk their dog. “Whatcha doing” they ask. I explain. The XYL looks very interested. Really? Bob does CB, but he's not having fun anymore. You sure look like you're having fun!; I gave them some ARRL pamphlets I had brought in case of such encounters, gave Bob a QSL card, and he left very excited and curious.

WINCT was from NN1N's driveway. He lives on the tallest hill around. Thanks for the Diet Coke, Carol; it was the best one I had all day.

Finished in HARCT in the ARRL parking lot. Ran out of steam with an hour left. Sorry if you missed MIDCT, NHVCT or LITCT.

Thanks to K9PG for keeping me entertained.

All in all, I had fun, enjoyed the drive and handed out some counties to the more serious competitors. Hope I gave you a new mult.

73,

Sean

WA1Z mobile

Thanks to everyone who called in this weekend. There were literally dozens of repeat callers from the Canadian Maritimes to California. That really makes county changes so much fun in those first few minutes. Thank you to all and I hope all the NEQP activity kept things interesting on your end!

Thanks again to Tom, K1KI, for organizing another great NEQP!

Station:

Radio: Elecraft K3, 100 watts.

Antennas: Hustler monoband resonators 80-10. Resonators mounted on Hustler MO-2 masts. Two antenna mounts available on the rear hatch.

Logging: Computer logging on laptop powered by combination of internal batteries and sealed jump-start batteries

From an implementation point of view, this was a carbon copy of last year's effort. Kurt, W6PH, and I joined forces again with Kurt doing the driving while I operated. I sat in the passenger side back seat with the K3 and Win-Keyer set up on a small table to my left. I used a lap desk to hold the laptop and paddle. With the right amount of pressure against the desk or car door, I managed to keep things stable enough to operate as we traveled through the winding back roads of Maine.

Two Comet antenna mounts are installed on the back of the car for quick switching between two bands. These are trunk-lip mounts that are not designed to be used with the medium-duty MO-2 masts. To make the antennas very secure, I constructed a harness made from PVC sections that extends from the car's roof rack for added stability.

Once again, Kurt kept us on schedule in our trek through 22 total counties involving 32 county changes.

Conditions and activity were fantastic. It was nice to have 15 Meters as another option to keep the rate up, especially in Maine's larger northern counties. I got a couple requests to move to 10 Meters. I moved as soon as we could pull over safely, but found no activity each time.

One of the many highlights of the weekend was getting called by JA4DND and JO7WXN on 15 Meters Saturday afternoon. When we were still looking for OK and MS on Sunday afternoon, Kurt kept crossing his fingers when every W5 called. Lots of thumbs-up signs were exchanged between the front and back seat as multipliers called in, especially in the last hours of the contest on Sunday when YU2A, VE7CV, K5FA (MS), XE1/AA0AA, and TF3Y called in.

NEQP always seems to have a nice activity increase on Sunday afternoon and this year was no different. Combined with the fact that Belknap NH was still needed by many of the NEQP Deserving, the final two hours produced QSO rates of 107 and 123! Funny to hear later that KM3T/Kelly and WA1Z/W6PH were on a collision of sorts, racing to BELNH! Glad we were both able to get a couple sweeps out of it for folks.

The multiplier breakdown is 52 State/Prov and 35 DX mults. 487 unique callsigns were worked this weekend.

KM3T mobile

Wow, that was fun - for some value of fun. :-)

Last-minute decision to go do a little NEQP expedition. I knew WA1Z and K1KI were going north so I decided to head south with a very minimal plan and then work back toward home. Basically did a big loop from home in HILNH down toward Boston from the north, then along the coast of MA to just about Cape Cod and then west toward RI/CT. Then north and east through CT and back north into MA/NH. Stopped at home for a break then went to do MERNH and BELNH because NF4A needed BELNH for a sweep. He will buy me a beer in Dayton I think. :-)
Little did I know that WA1Z was approaching BELNH from the north at the same time I was approaching from the south. Totally randomly we were about 1 mile from each other at the same time. Only second time I ever heard/worked him all weekend!

Hats off to all the out of state ops in this one - they were there religiously for every county change. DX stations had really decent signals - best DX was UA0WW on 15m late Sunday morning. RL3A was loud and even worked me on 40m!

It's easy to get sucked into this contest. Only regret is not staying up Saturday night to work a few more hours! Also regret not trying 15m more - next year will plan to have my K3 and two hamsticks or the IC-7000 and a multiband mobile antenna.

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De N4CD – hope he didn't over do the 'fun' part. Mobiles, according to the 336 twin twins - mobiles can have 'too much fun'. Hee hee!

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AE1P Portable Coos, NH – SSB

Setup /P from my brother's camp in Clarksville, NH, Coos county.
40m and 20m were hopping the whole weekend..
and, there were lots of DX looking for
New England, which was nice.

W1KBN = Multi-Op Suffolk, MA – N1IL W1HIS

Some time ago Chuck W1HIS and I came up with the idea of activating a rare or semi-rare county in this year's NEQP. Suffolk county appears to be usually underrepresented in NEQP and since until recently I was a graduate student at Northeastern University making a 'd Expedition' to the Northeastern's Radio Club W1KBN seemed like a great idea. The problem was I'd never actually been there. I knew the club was there, saw the antenna on the roof but since in the past several years I worked individually with my advisor I rarely ever ventured to the campus and never really had the opportunity to see the club and meet the people.

A few weeks ago I shot an email to N1QD who worked from there last year but didn't get a response (my message ended up in a spam box) and didn't really follow up on that until a week before the contest when Chuck started asking me difficult questions ;) Anyway somehow got hold of Joe N1QD who, turns out, graduated and left the club but he referred me to Dave K1MBO who is a faculty adviser of the club. I stopped by his office on Tuesday morning and he showed me the station and made the club available for us for the contest.

The club has at the moment two antennas - a tribander and a random wire. Chuck and I decided to bring out own radios as the club's TenTec was reported to have some unspecified problems with the narrow CW filter. We were lucky to secure a triplexer and bandpass filters on short notice so the idea was to work two higher bands on the same antenna during the day. As neither of use has an amplifier that would be considered 'portable' we decided to go low power.

We met on the campus around 10am on Saturday morning, hauled our stuff up to the fifth floor of Hayden Hall where the clubhouse is and the fun began. We quickly assembled two operating positions. We connected the triplexer and I connected my radio to 15m port through a bandpass filter. I used the built-in tuner to match the antenna and everything seemed to be fine until I started to transmit. I immediately noticed that the tuner would not rest when I was transmitting - it would randomly try to match and re-match the antenna.

After turning the tuner off and putting low-power steady carrier on just by observing the behavior of SWR meter in the rig it became obvious that the tribander has a bad connection in one of it's elements. That was later confirmed by Chuck's SWR scan of the tribander using a vector analyzer. The prospects looked grim -10m and 15m were unusable with the autotuner on and had SWR high enough without a tuner that the radio was reducing the output power to 30W.

Fortunately I was able to use an external tuner that was in the club to find a position on 15m in which regardless of the beam element's contact the SWR presented to the radio was approx 1.5, which my radio seemed to tolerate without any significant power reduction. We had no such luck with 10m but since 10m never really opened it wasn't a big issue.

The random wire antenna was thought to be usable on low bands. It was actually marginal on 40m. We were able to load it with an external tuner but SWR of the antenna itself was very high so most of the power seemed to go to make the coax warm. No luck with 80m - we couldn't find a match using two different external tuners so we had to forgo 80m operation.

Despite the antenna troubles we had a ton of fun operating and we made more than 700 QSOs. W1KBN seems to have a good location with relatively tame noise level for the center of big city (during a weekend, not sure how worse it is on weekdays).

Chuck and I offered our help with any club projects and fixing the tribander and replacing the random wire with something that works on low bands seem to be top two priorities. I'm sure that was not the last time W1KBN is heard in a

contest.

We would like to once again thank Dave K1MBO for his support and for making the club station available to us for the contest.

Les NI1L

NF4A – 67 mults – fixed – FL

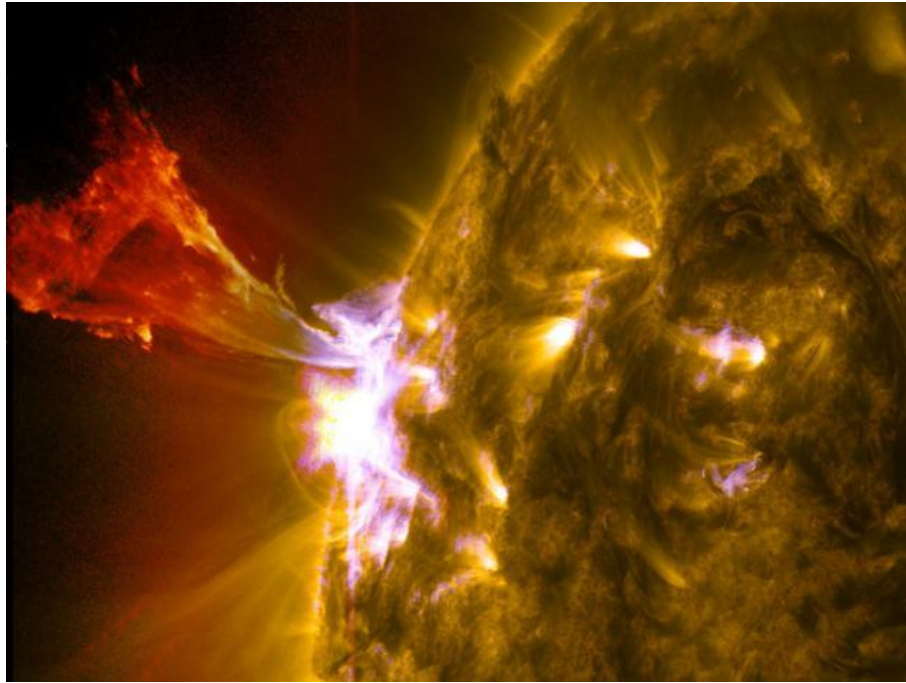
Clean Sweep !!!! Thanks to the mobiles WA1Z, KM3T, K1KI, NJ1F and KX9X for helping me achieve the sweep !! My personal best as far as I know for NEQP.

Sunspot News

NASA has revealed an astonishing image of a giant solar 'whip' on the surface of the sun captured as a solar flare erupted.

The amazing image, captured on May 3rd, shows a solar prominence, a loop of red hot plasma which remains attached to the sun, and appeared just as a solar flare was subsiding.

Experts say it is another sign the sun is 'waking up' as it approaches its 11 year solar maximum, which is due later this year.



The Tragedy of Climatism

Climatism, the belief that man-made greenhouse gases are destroying Earth's climate, has guided world governments since 1992. That year, 41 nations and the European Community signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The FCCC called for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous global warming. For 21 years, world leaders have argued about how and when to reduce emissions. Today, 192 of 193 heads of state say they believe in man-made warming and most are pursuing policies to try to stop climate change.

But, rather than beneficial, efforts to “fight” man-made climate change actually injure people in developing nations. The ideology of Climatism demands that nations forego the use of fossil fuel, use less energy, and force use of expensive or unreliable wind, solar, or biofuel alternatives. Poverty, lack of jobs, and lack of modern energy foster prostitution in developing nations. Climate change from emissions of carbon dioxide, a trace gas in our atmosphere, is a negligible factor.

The United Nations has long criticized the use of “unsustainable energy.” In a 2010 report on Asia, the UN warned, “Asia-Pacific countries must undergo structural adjustment to make key policy changes needed to switch their development mode...Most member countries have followed the industrial model of developed countries, which is the root cause of climate change. This traditional industrial development model results in an unsustainable energy consumption pattern.” The paper says nations must “pursue a low carbon development path” and skip a “growth path heavily reliant on pollutants.” The report goes on to question whether televisions, computers, and networking through the internet are necessary activities.

Yet, world economies remain overwhelmingly based on hydrocarbons. According to the International Energy Agency, in 2010 hydrocarbons provided 81 percent of the world’s energy, while wind and solar provided less than 1 percent. Denying hydrocarbon energy to developing nations is foolish and destructive policy.

At the same time, the theory of man-made warming appears increasingly shaky. Hundreds of studies show that Earth was warmer 1,000 years ago than it is today. Water vapor, not carbon dioxide, is Earth’s dominant greenhouse gas. Arctic sea ice recently reached a 30-year low, but Antarctic Sea ice is near a 30-year high. More than double the polar bears roam the Arctic today than in 1960. History shows that droughts, floods, and storms are neither more frequent nor more severe than in past decades. Sea levels are rising at only about 7–8 inches per century. Global temperatures have not risen for more than ten years, contrary to predictions by the leading climate models.

The tragedy of Climatism is a misuse of resources on a vast scale. Over \$250 billion is spent each year in a futile effort to decarbonize—twice global foreign aid. The world spent over position: absolute; trillion in the last ten years and is on track to spend another trillion in the next four years in a fight against a climate change phantom.

At the same time, real life-and-death problems need to be addressed. According to United Nations figures, 25,000 people die from hunger-related issues each day. More than one billion people try to survive on less than \$1 per day. Two and one-half billion lack adequate sanitation, 1.4 billion lack electricity, and almost one billion lack clean drinking water. Every year, two million die from AIDS. Almost one million die from tuberculosis. Malaria, pneumonia, and diarrheal diseases kill millions more.

Suppose we reallocate the billions spent in the foolish fight against global warming toward solving the real problems of humankind?

<http://investorvillage.com/smbd.asp?mb=4288&mn=115078&pt=msg&mid=12778642>

On the Road with N4CD II

On the way to Dayton for the Hamvention

The annual trek to Dayton started with the usual longer than 'direct' route – starting out straight north up through Oklahoma at 5:30am in the morning. It was time to make some tracks to get to 'needed counties' so the first part of the trip was up I-35 to KS. I estimated it would take 5 days to run the counties and I left another day or two in there to be sure I'd get through and to Dayton in time. They had been having lots of rain, the rivers were high with some flooding, and some of the river crossing bridges on the Mississippi were closed due to flooded approaches. It might take a bunch of detours to get to the counties. It was Friday – 5/10 – a week before Dayton started.

The weather map looked good. 65 degrees outside headed to the 80s in TX. No 'red blobs' hanging over OK, KS, IA or WI. This is tornado season and OK and KS are right in Tornado Alley. Same for MO and parts of IL and IN. Almost totally clear sailing the entire route. I had a spare day or two to avoid bad weather.

Gary, K4EXT, could use more pictures for the county sign database. I marked the coloring book maps to indicate which ones were missing. I'd snap those signs if possible. It's hard to do on interstates and, as I found out, not easy in WI since many small side roads have NO signs at all when you change counties!

Each year I look forward to the County Hunter Forum and dinner at the Golden Corral afterwards. Tim, W8JJ, is the 'moderator' and lead off speaker each year and does a great job. Before that, Dave, KJ8V had it for about five years and Pete, K4QFK had it for quite a few years before him. I had it for about five years. There have been others too – not sure when it all started as I only got 'hooked' on county hunting about 20 years ago now.

You run into other county hunters in the giant flea market – likely the largest in the world where you can sometimes find 'treasure' and always a good source of parts, pieces and accessories, plus you can relive your ham career seeing every piece of gear you ever owned up for sale. If not one year, then the next for sure. Some CH are off at the DX forums or DX dinners so we don't get to see them at our forum. Plus I run into friends that I knew when I lived back in VA 23 years ago. It's always fun and it's a good excuse to go 'county putting out'!

Day One – Friday

The temperature was great – 65 degrees and I was wearing my shorts. The only problem that

Friday morning was you could barely see 100 feet due to intense fog. Wow....I missed two turns on my normal route on 4 lane roads to get to the interstate. Couldn't see the signs in time even with the GPS 'lady's guidance while moving along at 30-35 mph. Or the roads to turn on. Once I got to the interstate I-35-W, it was better as the traffic seemed to clear out a bit of the fog. It took a good hour to get back up to 'highway speeds' as the fog slowly lifted.

Before starting out, I checked the needs page in IA and WI. I had about 15 counties that I needed for Mobile Diamond and I could run those. So I 'connected the dots', added in the needed counties from the K3IMC page and planned the route. The first 'dot' was Morris, KS – somehow I'd missed that one and it's off the interstate – so it was on to two lane roads to get up that way, run the county on Road “G”, then head back east to the I-35 again which heads on up through MO to IA. When you work on awards such as Master Gold, Master Platinum and Mobile Diamond, you can get credit for running the county yourself, provided you make a 'qualifying contact'.

K0FG was headed to Dayton, too. I was working him in IA.

After 800 miles or so, I stopped for the night two counties up in IA in Clarke County. Brrr.... too cold for shorts – time to change to long pants. The ski jacket came out of the back seat on was used, too! The motel was a Days Inn. It had been a Super 8 ten years before. Yet another one that changed. \$72. They had make your own mini-waffles in the mornings, too.

Dinner was at the Family Table – good – right next door. The first day had been 733 miles on the road toward Dayton.

Day 2- Saturday - 50 deg in the morning

The next morning it was 'connect the dots' all day long. I had my coloring book map copy with who needed what county (from the K3IMC needs page). It had changed a lot in 2 weeks as KB0BA/N0XYL had been running there and gotten a lot of the needs done. That's good for the county hunters, but less needed what I would hit two weeks later. The weather was good but chilly! It didn't get out of the 40s all day. I'm glad I brought along my ski jacket! In the care, though, it was nice and warm – shirt sleeve temps. That morning it was north a bit more then heading to the east across Iowa, the up to the NE corner of the state to get the tough ones up there – Allamakee and Clayton. Most of the other folks chasing Mobile Diamond had worked them, but for one reason or another I didn't.

Things went well and I would up in WI for the night. Sure enough, as I crossed the river at Prairie du Chene, it was HIGH. On the east side, you run along the river and the bottom part of thousands of trees were in the water. Rather than run along the river and maybe flooded out roads ahead, I headed inland. I thought I'd stop in Viroqua, WI – called ahead to the Super 8. Nope – that wasn't going to happen as every room was taken by a wedding there and its guests. Well, I could go another 50 miles and the Budget Inn at the interstate ahead had rooms –

checked on the phone – and likely other motels up that way likely. It was getting late but still light – the sun goes down even later 'up north' this time of year. AS you run through woods and valleys, it's shaded along the road with big shadows, or flickering sun coming through the trees. Usually by 6pm I'm tuckered out for the day and if you stop too late, it might be a 'fast food' dinner as restaurants are usually closing by 7:30 or 8pm.

As I approached Viroqua in Vernon County, there was a motel on a hillside – the Hickory Hills motel. Their vacancy sign was lit. I took a chance and stopped in – yep, they had a room so I took it. \$52.50. Not bad at all. Still 'chilly' out and turned on the 'electric baseboard' heat in the room and went to dinner at the place they recommended – the Viking Inn in downtown. Was good and had a \$10 senior special.

At the motel, they had a nice large picture framed – hanging on the wall. It was taken from a plane or helicopter on a day when about 3 feet of snow had fallen – aerial view of the motel before snow plowing started.. It was really 'snowed in'. I commented on the picture and the guy at the desk said – yep- that's what it looks like for months a year and they were still waiting for spring to arrive. It had been 'below normal' temperature wise. Luckily for them, a warm spell was about to arrive with 70s and 80s. The motel guy was tired of 9 month long 'winters' up there. It was chilly outside – even in the middle of May.

Winter is a time I would not want to be there! You can keep 9 months of snow. So far I was way ahead of schedule, it was cold enough to snow - but lots remained to be done before I got out of WI.

Day 3 Sunday

The temp was 35 degrees in the morning. It would never get above 50 degrees the whole day. Winter was still hanging on here.

WI was another 'connect the dots' route. I had missed half a dozen for MD, with one in the SW corner, one in the far NW corner, a few across the top middle, and one in the SE corner! So it was going 'around the state' to get them all. Well, this was a county putting out trip, and I'd go through 30 counties to get the six I needed! So it was off to Pierce (a LC for others as well), then up to Burnett 'way up north' in snow country. The 'James Boys' – that's “PAPA” as in Kay Zed Two **Papa**, and his mini-me “Jay Gee”, - the 'both of us' twin twins - was not around, so I could run on 14336 during the day – and I did. “Papa” usually lets Junior, that is “Jay Gee” run the net and only jumps in occasionally. Then you hear the 'both of them' giving reports. Hee hee.

I was ahead of schedule with time to spare. Doug, WA4UNS was on his way back from New England and was running on net, too. That was real nice to have some of the veteran county hunters ON the net giving out counties.

I confused a bunch of people apparently as I was headed up north and ran Polk and Barron on CW. Then I stopped at the County Line of Barron and Washburn and put it out on SSB. I had already run Barron on CW. If you keep going another 10 miles or so and head west on road "J", you quickly get to Washburn and Burnett, which I ran on CW. It was spotted as Washburn/Barron – the previous line. Twasn't. Hope folks got all the logs correct. That line is horribly noisy on CW and impossible on SSB so I didn't run Burnett on SSB that day.

Next it was then east through Taylor, Lincoln, Langlade and Menominee (entire county an Indian Reservation). I backed tracked 15 for the Super 8 motel in Antigo in Langlade County..... \$57.50.... Since it was Sunday night – you know what that means!

Pizza night. Just across the street from the Super 8 is Buck's Pizza. It's mostly a take out place – they only have one table. Buck is a franchise. This one is run by a family – and the guy who runs it 'retired' from the septic tank pumping business when his dad retired 3 years ago. He didn't want to do it alone and 29 years of hard work in the cold was enough for him, so now he got to work in the warm kitchen of a pizza place. The pizza was good. There's a Pizza Inn in town...but I'd rather try the local places rather than a 'chain restaurant' while traveling. You don't get to hear the guy's story when you go to the Pizza Inn. Oh.....and it had SNOWED there the night before – but it melted quickly by 10am. It was still winter there. Naturally it was chilly – but warmer weather was on the way – at least for a few days.

Monday – Day Four

Come Monday morning and it was time to head south to pick up Dodge. Just as I get there, I work 2 or 3 folks – then the band dies! Major CME and flares had happened Friday....and Sunday...and the propagation disappeared for the better part of an hour. WELL, it was lunch time....and I had my MD contact in Dodge and had finished up all of KS, IA, and WI for MD.....the objectives of the trip. I took a nice leisurely lunch at the Subway place. The band came back. Well, I was way ahead of schedule and it was time to figure out how to get around Chicago and get to Dayton. Slowly. I was still in Dodge when things improved so I ran it again for the folks. Then it was time to 'get out of Dodge' and WI.

Well, there really is no 'easy' way around Chicago. I stuck to the 'bypass' interstate which is a toll road that soaks you for \$20 getting around Chicago. There's probably a cheaper way but this way you wind up feeding them \$3 every time you turn around for 'tolls'. Local folks have a 'toll tag'. We have them in TX for our tollroads but I'd bet mine doesn't work on that tollroad. You never see the money disappear out of your account – painless until you get your statement and see them socking to you in chunks. If you have to commute and do 15 miles a day each way on that road you go broke quickly.

That evening I headed on down to Kankakee IL, then east over to Jasper IN for the night. I had lots of time to kill. I ran a couple extra county lines on Monday just to put them out. I was traveling back roads looking for easy lines to hit without miles and miles of detours.

The motel was a Knights Inn in Rensselaer, IN – 61 bucks including tax. Jasper County. I think I've stayed there before. It sure looked familiar. Dinner was at the Trails End truck stop nearby – good selection of food at a good price. One of the better 'truck stops' I've been at lately.

Day Five– Tuesday

I was up early but no need for a quick start. It was only five hours the 'short way' to Dayton from here. I treated myself to a nice breakfast at the truck stop – eggs and pancakes and bacon and coffee. No sense rushing out as the bands open later in the midwest for 20 and 17.

So when you have lots of time, it was 'back roads' and extra counties added in as I crossed IN. I'd hit some of the less often run ones. Sure enough, you run across lots of small roads – narrow, no shoulders in many cases, and a few small towns to go through at lower speeds. Rush IN is all small roads with no shoulders. The weather was good with only a few sprinkles so far on the whole trip. It was warming up a bit – no more 40 deg in the morning or 40-50 deg all day long. I'd still get to Dayton way early – like a day and a half early. I called the Super 8 Motel where I stay at - after checking the on line rate for Tuesday and Wednesday night, and they gave me the \$50 rate including tax rate for each of the extra two days. I arrived in Dayton by 3:30 pm. Only one or two others were heading in at that time. N3RC was coming from MT. Most others only had a day or two of travel to do.

It had been a good trip – 2318 miles getting there. It's 1000 miles if you go the 'short way' and that would be what I'd do on the way home. If you had another driver, you could do the short way on one long, long day of driving, from 5:30 in the morning EDT to 9pm at night CDST with two five minute pit stops. That's too much for one driver unless you are 21 years old and need to be back at work on Monday.

At Dayton

My favorite motel – at least at the moment – is the Super 8 in Moraine. They jack up the rates along with every other motel for the Hamvention, but it is still \$75 a night including tax and not all that far away from things IF you make a non-refundable reservation a few weeks ahead of time. Otherwise, it's another \$5/night. I'd give it about 1 1/2 stars at convention time. They sort of get 'overloaded' with a full house.

I arrived in the afternoon on Tuesday. The hamfest doesn't start till early on Friday morning when the flea market opens. I'd have a day or two to recover from 2300 miles of sitting in the car and get ready for the marathon flea market hikes. There is always the possibility of finding a 'real goodie' if you are real lucky.

So....Wednesday I went out to the National Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson. You can spend days there, but I take in in 4 hour chunks. They have HUNDREDS of airplanes from Wright Flyers to WW1, WW2, jets, stealth planes and planes you never heard of....prototypes and others. US made, foreign made. Missiles, technology, people.....everything connected with flight and aviation. Great museum. Lots of pictures and documents. Helmets, flight suits, historical items, famous aviator stories, ec. Ya gotta go there if you have never been. It's 'free' too! You can walk miles and not see everything. Even the cafeteria prices are a bargain.

<http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/>

There's always something new to see and you can drop in and see one of the big screen movies – they're showing two in 3D. After a few hours of museum wandering, I hit the IMAX 3D theater for the Air Racers movie. Pretty good. For those you have to pay and you get to wear their special 3D glasses.

<http://www.airracers-thefilm.com/>

Then it was back to the motel and later a dinner at the Eastern Buffet a few miles away in Kettering – a good Chinese Buffet place. There's just about every fast food joint within 3-4 - 5 miles, a Frisch's Big Boy, Frizzolis, Landmark Steak House, Burger King, Taco Bell, DQ, and more. I used to stay at the Red Horse Motel in Kettering, but it's about a 1/2 star rated place now. Friendly people, but for the \$50 hamfest rate they want, you can do a whole lot better for a few bucks more. Probably stayed there 15 years in a row till I switched and upgraded. They probably get \$29/night normally.

Come Thursday and the annual Four Days in May QRP all day event is held. I occasionally attend it. It's \$40 registration/printed booklet fee so you just 'can't drop in' but need to pay up. Some county hunters are also QRP folks. W9UX, Terry, was there. When you hear him, he's running 5 or 10 watts.

<http://www.qrparci.org/fdim>

George Dobbs, G3RJV, gives fascinating talks each year. He is a 'minimalist' and has been building and writing articles about QRP rigs for 40 years. Other prominent QRP folks also gave talks. They have a 'build-a-thon' in the afternoon, QRP equipment vendor display in the evenings with 'special deals', and on Friday eve they have 'show and tell', and their annual awards dinner is Saturday. I just attend the all day FDIM presentations on Thursday.

It was then back to the motel and a dinner at Jimmy's Italian Restaurant. Good but pricey –

tried it out for the first time this year. Great lasagna but enough for 2 people.

Whadday know! Fred, K0FG is staying at the same motel – and of course, the motel is quite full on Thursday night (totally full on Friday night). He comes with a couple others (non county hunters) and gets to run the interstate counties. They don't understand 'the county hunter way' of getting there. hihi

There are also a dozen other cars with antennas on them at the motel, and even more with call letter plates from around the country. There's about 40 rooms at this Super 8.

One of them is Bill W4NFR (never fixes radios). He's an inveterate tinkerer and builder. We ran across paths in our GE days back in the 70s-80s. He built his own 40M mobile antenna. Here's a picture of it at the Dayton Super 8 motel.

Here's his web site detailed article on building it – he built it all including the loading coil (but not the top hat). He's also built 600 w solid state amps for home use and a whole raft of other projects. He spends 5 months a year in Lee County VA and RV's it the rest of the year, spending lots of time in AZ in the winter.

<http://www.moneysmith.com/W4NFR/40mobile/40metermobileantenna.html>



W4NFR homebrew 40m antenna

Bill hangs out around 7157 so I invited him up to 7188. Maybe he'll show up. We always need more County Hunters. He's officially a resident of South Dakota...says there's no income tax, no annual car inspections, and no hassles. He spends less than six months a year at his house in VA and is RV 7 months a year, with most of it spent in AZ where he keeps the motor home. Once every five years he and wife go back to renew the driver's licenses. (TX requires you to get annual car inspection).

I checked the spots – lots of mobiles were headed to Dayton, including Bob, N8KIE with N8RLJ, KA4RRU, N2OO, KA4QLF, KB0BA/N0XYL, N3RC, WD9EJK/WD9EJN, , W9OO, KB9VYT/KA9JAC, NX0X/KB0MHH, K1SO, WA4UNS, K0FG, KB9AIT and others. Some came in cars with no radio – as they joined others to car pool to Dayton.

Friday Morning – Hamvention Starts

Friday – the big day – had arrived. I was up at 5:30 am and hit the breakfast at the Super 8 at 6am when it opened. It was foggy outside. Real foggy. I headed out for the big event at 6:30am and arrived at 7am. You can park at the Salem Mall and ride the buses which start at 7am. It takes about 20-25 minutes from the motel to the Hamvention. Usually. It was really foggy and the speed was down to 35-40 mph on I-75 headed north into Dayton, then off onto route 35w which turns into route 49 right up to the Salem Mall area, and across to the Hara Arena on Shiloh Springs road if you can park there – special permit required or handicap permit which you must get in advance.

You had about 200 foot visibility with worse in the low spots. That morning they had a 20 car wreck on I-70 east of I-75 that shut down the interstate for 4 or 5 hours. Likely some were traveling at a safe speed of 40 mph and someone (an idiot) was trying to do 70 mph, flying blind, and crashed into the rear of a line of slower cars. 20 car/truck crack up. If you were coming in that way it was bad news. It was so foggy that as you drove on Shiloh Springs Road, you could not see the parking lot for the Mall or any of the signs. You could not even tell there was a parking lot off to the side of the road it was that bad. It was nice to have the GPS giving the intersections as you headed on in so you knew where to turn! I feel sorry for anyone trying to get to the Hamvention/parking for the first time.

The flea market officially opens at 8am but I managed to get in early and wander about. Folks were slow arriving with the foggy bad weather slowing them down. It was 60 degrees outside and, naturally, quite humid. I had on my flannel shirt, my N4CD hat, and a light jacket. It had rained that night and everything was sopping wet. The flea market started out slow. You had to walk a lot just between sellers. You had to keep walking to check out what was for sale. The fog delayed many, plus, of course, accidents, and the usual Friday morning rush hour all combined to make it especially slow going this year. By 8:30-9am cars were streaming into the flea market – later than normal.

I didn't spy much to buy until 2 hours later when I was looking at some 'junque' and noticed an MFJ WorldBand regen solid state receiver sitting in a bucket of 'stuff'. It had a 30 buck price tag on it and a note saying 'works fine'. That's a solid state regen receiver that is still current production. I grabbed it, looked it over, and talked to the guy. Said it works fine. I offered him \$20 for it...and he took it. Real bargain. They usually sell for \$40 or \$50. Hey, “the find of the day” so far and it was a good start. It uses 3 FETs and an LM386 Audio Amp to drive stereo headphones. Even came with good 9v battery and a pair of 'ear buds'.

The fog lifted by 9 am or so and more cars in a steady stream came into the flea market and exposed their goodies for sale! The good news – the fog had made it so everyone got a chance to be the first one to spy a 'goodie' and get it, rather than the 6am types who try to 'sweep' the flea market getting all the goodies before the rest of us can enter and check things out! Bad weather has it's advantages!

I wandered and wandered. I bought a few small items. I bought some DVDs with back issues of 73, Ham Radio and CQ Magazine on them. I bought a bag of springs – some of them will fit the dial cords that I need to repair on the old radios – that's a pain in the neck tedious job, up there with winding coils/toroids. There were a few couple buck purchases here and there.

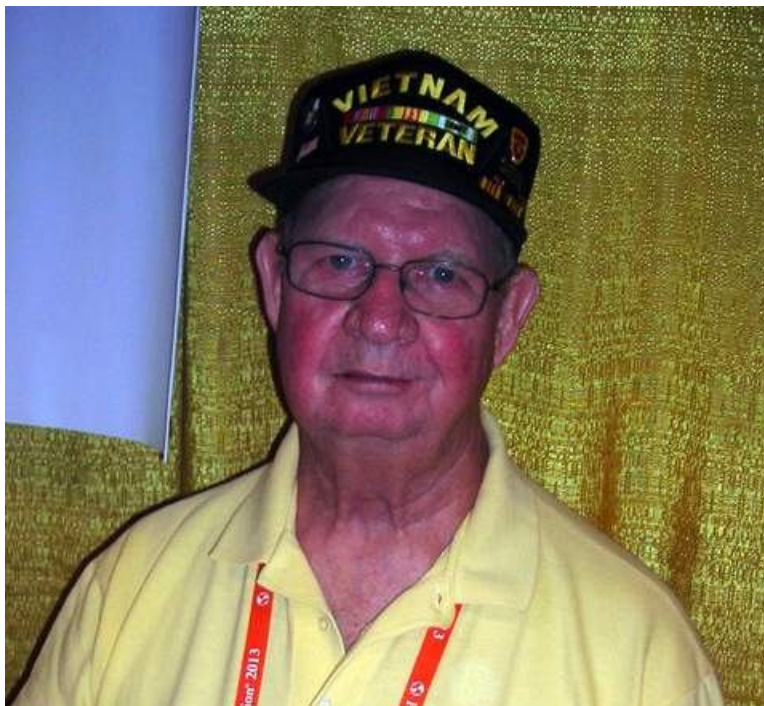
One nice find was what looked like a home made GDO with about 8 coils with 4 pins each – for a large 4 tube type socket. 4 of them looked like typical GDO coils...and 4 of them looked like two winding plug in coils (Main and feedback winding) that would be used in a Knight Kit Ocean Hopper or equivalent regen receiver. Hmmm? They wanted \$15 for all of it – I offered 10 bucks....and it all came home. The GDO even seems to work although there is no calibration on it at all. Another good find. Those coils are a pain to wind and it looked like a nice set of 4 from 2 to 20 plus Mhz.



Ocean Hopper Style Coil

The day started off cool. Then I took off the jacket as it warmed up.....then took off the flannel shirt – I had a good tee shirt underneath. I carry a small backpack to stuff things in so that works out well. By noon, it was getting warm and HUMID - 82 deg, sunny and the humidity way up there. I was going through lots of water. You bring your own bottle and refill it at the drinking fountains! Better than 3 bucks for each bottle of water. By noon, you had to worry about sunburn as the sun peaked out and it got up to 80 plus degrees. The flea market folks had set out 'rest benches' again this year, so you could walk a few rows, rest up a few minutes then hit the next couple rows. I'd bet the heat/humidity got to the senior folks. You had to pace yourself.

There were thousands wandering the flea market with several hundred sellers. Here's a few of the folks I met wandering around inside and out.



K5FBS – Cliff – formerly WB4FBS
USCA #87

Cliff was inside. You might remember him as WB4 Fried Bologna Sandwich with his previous call. He's not been active on the CH net for about 10 years now, but he's in my log many times from the 'wayback' days. He hangs out in Bexar County these days. He finished up first time in 1972! Remember the days on the CH Net where you could use 'fried bologna sandwich' and "left hand gorilla" and similar? Before the era of 'the grouch' that 'occupies' 14336? It was fun, wasn't it?

Here's another county hunter you've likely worked.



Scott, KA3QLF, Lackawanna PA
USCA #1196

I made it through the day with only one slice of pizza....oh...I could eat 3 or 4 but the beltline doesn't approve of that – hi hi. You've got choices of pizza, ham and cheese and BBQ sandwiches, hot dogs, ice cream, chips, burgers and large 24 oz drinks, or bottled ice tea/water. There's no shortage of food to eat there, plus of course, cookies and other snacks. I was working up quite a sweat with the high humidity. Whew!

There were the usual forums on DX, ARRL UPDATE, Drake Radio, Collins Collectors, DX peditions, Public Service, Ham Radio in the Schools, County Hunter Forum, 10-10, etc. They ran all day in 5 rooms simultaneously.

By early afternoon, I hit one of the forums as the feet were worn out, the back was complaining, and the legs were complaining. I'm not used to six hours on my feet in a row during the day – and with the hot humid weather/sun combination, so I did like many and headed indoors checking things out. The a/c inside the building worked fine. Some of the forums were standing room only. There were probably 250 at the Drake forum. Others barely had 20-30 folks in attendance.

Here's a 1960s vintage transmitter. They are fairly rare – sold by Lafayette through their catalog and stores. It's a Starflite 90w crystal controlled unit – and I'd guess from the knobs it was made by Kenwood. Kenwood made the HE-30 and HE-80 receivers and this matches it in appearance and has identical knobs. This was the KT-390, sold from 1962 to 1964. It used a

6146 tube and had a good 3 section low pass filter for TVI. You could select among five crystals or external VFO. It had a built in low level AM modulator (screen grid). It was a good copy of the Heathkit DX-60, except flipped over symmetry wise.



Lafayette Starflite 90w 'Novice' TX

You have all the vendors there at the Hamvention. I played with the Bengali keys/paddles. Nice but pricey - \$325 and UP, not including taxes! They don't have a mobile key that I like though. One with adjustments that you lock in with a locking screw. Their Traveler still has screws that you can touch and change the setting, or can work their way loose. Same for their other keys.

http://www.i2rtf.com/html/keys_paddles.html

I looked at the N3ZN keys...same deal. Good for home, not so good for mobile use.

American Morse has some inexpensive keys.

<http://www.americanmorse.com/>

You might also want to check out N0SA's page

http://n0sa.com/?page_id=56

Lots of keys to look at...and new radios too. Towers, antennas and everything else. I wasn't in the market for a new rig so I skipped a lot of the 'new' stuff.

Here's another county hunter – he runs mobile in lots of the state QSO parties and gets into many other ones as well.



Jim, K8MR

Out in the flea market again this year, Dan, N0DN, had brought along his Meissner T3BK 3 tube regen receiver for 'display'. Well, he had a \$200 price tag on it – he really didn't want to sell it. Last year, he had it out for display and just wanted to 'talk about it'. He had the \$200 price tag on it then, too. It was his first receiver. His dad worked for Walter Ashe Radio in St Louis, one of the biggest outlets for ham radio back in the day – 1950s and 1960s. His dad would bring new radios home to 'check out' and become familiar with, and that got Dan interested. He got the Meissner back in the 1950s

I spent a while talking with him. Last year he had wanted to know what tubes went in it- they were missing. He was going to 'fix it up' and get it going again. It had about 8 of the old paper capacitors in it – wax covered and likely toast, plus, of course, a 60 year old electrolytic – all crammed in tightly. He hadn't gotten around to fixing it up. He just liked keeping the 'memory' around. I made him a reasonable offer. It had the shortwave coil – looked like 2.5 to 8 MHz 'unobtainium' style coil in it. That was the standard coil.

Eventually, he commented that if he didn't sell in Friday, he would take my offer if he didn't get a better one. He said come back and see him Saturday.

Here's a YouTube Video or two at Dayton in case you didn't make it or want to relive part of it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHHZocF997c>

Note the rain outside.....had about an hour of rain Saturday morning

Good 3 minute video from Dayton 2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL08K1ZmeuE>

More good videos of Dayton – if you have never been there

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Up5Vm6auMI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axJjUdbZXVo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5l-0LrGluI>

Bengali keys/paddles demonstrated in the last video above

Each year, it seems there is more of one or two types of items that stand out in the flea market. . This year, there was a plethora of Heathkit stuff – at least 100 units of the HW/SB-100/SB300/SB400 rigs, the HW-12/22/32 transceivers, DX-60s and dozens and dozens of Collins KWM-1 and KWM-2s for sale. Half a dozen Collins Amps, 75A1,2,3,4 receivers and lots of early National Receivers. It's almost like someone said - 'hey, everyone, bring all your old Collins, Heathkit and National gear this year for sale'.

Last year it was AM VHF gear at every 10th table. There was a bit of that with the top of the line Clegg TX and RX for sale, but few takers. I think the era of folks buying, restoring, and using the old tube gear is coming to an end. As the baby boomers retire and downsize, there just isn't room for a hamshack with shelves capable of holding 1000 lbs of boatanchors – and shelves 18 inches apart, 2 feet deep and 8 feet long to hold all the gear! Or folks are losing their 'nostalgia' for their novice rigs of the 50s and 60s, or first SSB radios – and aren't interested in spending tens of hours fixing them up and using them on the air. It's a bit weird – each year there is a different blend of stuff showing up by the dozens of one maker or another. You could find a few Hallicrafter rigs but not many this year.

At 4 pm, the County Hunter Forum started. A quick count put the attendees at about 60-65 folks. Some came in later and a few left.

Tim, W8JJ, started things out. He gave an introduction to county hunting for the 10 or so visitors or first timers at the forum. That was followed by a presentation on “running the island” counties – San Juan, WA, Dukes and Nantucket, MA, and the Hawaiian Islands. Chuck, NO5W, then talked about the 'trip mode' on his CQ/X mobile logging/routing program. After that, we had a quick round of introductions and time for some quick eyeballs.



Chuck, NO5W

Tim W8JJ
USCA 1203

Chuck, NO5W, is very active in state QSO parties. He was the coordinator of the TX QSO Party. Recently he 'retired' to LA. You'll hear him mobile in many of the QSO parties from GA to MS, LA, TX, OK, and more. NM5G is now the new TX QSO Party coordinator.

A bit after 5pm, a large group headed over to the Golden Corral for dinner. It's always busy this weekend, plus, being a Friday night, the Golden Corral was 'overloaded' but we eventually got the 'party room' clear and had a good hour or so yak session over dinner with about 25 in attendance. A few got lost somewhere along the way it seems. Not to worry – there would be more eyeballs in the flea market and other forums on Saturday.

After dinner, it was time to rest up the tired back and legs. Whew. I'd probably walked 3 or 4 miles in the flea market – stopping and starting, looking UNDER the tables for boxes of old goodies, plus of course, digging through what was on the tables. Lots of 'misc' – probably a hundred tons – and of course, all the 'good rigs' up on top of tables along with over valued 'junk'.

Saturday – Day II of the Hamvention

At a bit after 6 am, once again it was time to head over to the Hara Arena along with 20,000 plus others for more fun. The weatherman cooperated. It was a nice 60 degrees in the morning. Flannel shirt, long sleeves, light jacket and hat were fine. I entered the flea market early at 7 am and started checking for new goodies that had shown up. There were no great 'discoveries' and not a single new shortwave regen/regen kit for sale all day. Dang. Well, I got in my exercise. The legs were still complaining from yesterday, but heck, I'd walk out the stiffness. Hah – that might have worked 30 years ago. Hmm. Well, we have to put up with a few aches and pains to check out all those new goodies that might be out there.

Not much to report – ran into a few more county hunters wandering around and some I knew elsewhere. Talked to lots of folks about 'the old rigs'. There was tons of FM gear – Motorola and GE stuff from 20-30-40 years ago. For the 'newer' stuff, you need to have the 'programming' program to be able to set frequencies in them. They're all synthesized and getting the programming info is not always easy. The manufacturers hold on to that tightly. They want to charge \$40 or \$60 to 'program' your radio. There must have been 3000 commercial handhelds for sale. Not many hams were buying them.

Whoa.....after 2 hours in the flea market, it started to rain about 9:30 am. I ran into N0DN earlier at his spot again. He decided to accept by 'reasonable' offer for his Meissner 3BK regen tube set from the 1950s. He took a couple pictures of it before parting with it.



Dan, N0DN, with the Meissner 3BK RX

Here's the Radio Museum web page on it

http://www.radiomuseum.org/r/meissner_t3bkt3_b.html



It takes a 6BJ6(pentode regen detector) and two 50B5 power pentode tubes – one for audio, one for a rectifier. None of those in my junk box, so it will take me a few weeks to get it going.

Everyone headed for the inside of the building and it got toasty warm/humid inside. The crowd seemed down a bit from Friday. The rain lasted about an hour, then things resumed outside. The forecast was for worse rain but it never happened. I wandered around looking at the new gear and accessories. Just about everything made for hams is there – from towers, climbing belts, antennas, brackets, coax, rigs, computer programs, mounting accessories for rigs in cars, mobile antennas, home antennas, keyers, paddles, software, you name it.

The Elecraft booth was real busy – and giving special deals during the hamfest if you wanted a new rig. There were dozen sellers of QRP kits. (teeny parts including some SMD ones). There were none of the Knight Kit regens for sale, not a one. No Heathkit GR-81s. It's like some years there are a handful, next year there are ZERO. You never know. Then again, someone else could have beat me to the 'goodies' if they had shown up! It takes most of a day to get around the flea market just once! If something is put out at a real bargain price it is snapped up quickly.

Here's a few more of the county hunters



Steve N0SM USCA 1207



KJ9C Mel

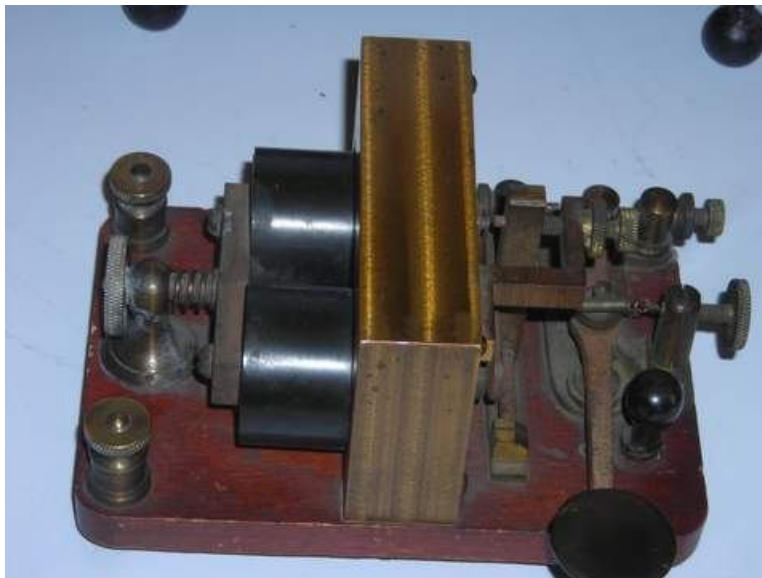
KJ9C is active in the IN QSO Party – one of the big promoters who tries to get all the counties on the air each year! See his report above in the INQP coverage.

There was some new stuff on Saturday in the flea market, but from what I could tell, Friday was the 'big day' in the flea market for goodies changing hands.

I stopped by the Morse Telegraph Club booth. They've got about 4 or 5 telegraph instruments set up and sending and receiving American Morse on sounders. One of the items they had displayed was a very unusual, and maybe a one of a kind 'box relay'. What made this unusual, even though it was likely made in the early 1900s, was that it wound up getting shown in the movie Lincoln, by Spielberg.

There's a story that goes with it. The Morse Telegraph Club members lend their rare and expensive 1950s vintage units to the movie production folks to use in the State Department when Lincoln was there (he spent a lot of time there – that's where all the reports from the field came in - the 'telecommunications center' -). Jim, WB8SIW was one of the MTC technical advisers for the movie on telegraph equipment. He was 'hired' as an adviser.

He set up the instruments as they would normally be installed in a room like the State Department set. That took hours. It was historically correct and neat looking. Along comes the film Art Director, who didn't like it and made them change it all around. He was clueless but he was the 'boss' at the moment. That took hours. Spielberg shows up 15 minutes before the movie shoot time, and tells the art director – the instruments are in the wrong place. Move them here and here – which, as it turns out, is right back to where Jim, WB8SIW had carefully put them hours before but he just spend hours changing them. There is no way to change them back in 15 minutes, so what wound up in the movie was this 1900s era box relay/sounder. They had it on display at Dayton. No one had ever seen one like it either. It is either a prototype or a 'one of a kind'.



It's made as a 'sounder' – a box relay, plus a small key – on a base the size of a normal sounder. It's only about 6 inches wide. If you watch the movie carefully, this is what you see.

I also stopped by the 10-10 both and several others during the day. I think Cliff, K5FBS, was hanging out there. It's a shame with all the sunspot activity we aren't seeing much excitement on 10 meters these days. Unless you live on the coasts.....there isn't any skip most days to the rest of the US to snag counties.

I pooped out about 2pm and didn't see any forums I had a desire to attend, so I headed on back to the motel to give the legs a break and rest up for the trip home on Sunday morning. Whew.

Sunday Morning – heading on home

I checked the weather. It looked good going home the 'short way' through KY down the Bluegrass Parkway into the corner of MO, down I-55, then across I 40 to Pulaski, AR (Little Rock) to I-30 and home. Almost 1000 miles of driving. I'd take two days – no need to be back at work or overdo things. No storms or severe weather expected – and that is a big consideration this time of year.

I left early – like 5:30 am. I'd been getting up early all along. Not much to report as I headed down. Contacts were sparse this early in the morning but I had a few as I headed down I-75 then across to Louisville, KY (Jefferson County). Things went well and I was running all the bands – 40,30,20 and 17 in most counties. I added in a few more county line signs to the database when I could stop – and a few I had to forgo as there was no safe way. I guess I need a camera with a 1/1000th second shutter so I can snap them on the move but even that would be hard to get the sign in the picture and not just some field! Hi hi

There were half a dozen mobiles giving out counties that Sunday so we had a few collisions but in general it worked out fine. We could use a few more 'net controllers'. Every now and then, I'd send 'CHN?'.....and someone somewhere would send 'GA' (go ahead)....and a minute later I'd hear another mobile running way down in the background. I don't know if he was running all along or not, or someone told him 'GA' and he started fter I was runnig – that happened more than once. Happens more, naturally, on 20 and 17. You can usually hear the other noble on 40M and runs on 30M are real short these days. Half the time, you don't even get more than one or two on 30m or 40m. (no spots). It looked like folks did a decent job of spotting. Maybe it was just rotten condx on 30 and 40.

I get to the TN border leaving KY....and there is no C/L sign there. Lots of indications you are entering TN and there are signs giving the miles to Union City, TN about 20 miles ahead. I've stayed there a few times.

I glance at the coloring book map on the seat. Pick it up and look quick while zipping along...yep...the county ends in 'ion'....gotta be Union County, TN as you are headed to Union City...right?oops...major wrong !..... it's OBION county..... Union County is at the other end of the state. I'm busy running "union county" UNTIL someone gets my attention and says 'can't be'....check map again.....oops...yep, it ends in 'ion' but it is Obion....oh well....probably got instantly accused of being a 'magic carpet mobile'. I was just zipping along going through the counties and not all that planned out...just hit whatever the interstates go through. Brain Fade!.....Stuff happens. WORSE..it was the second screw up of the day. Time for lunch breakit had been a long day so far already with 500 plus miles under the belt. Couldn't find the Subway in Union City – so I hit the Burger King for a Whopper Jr with cheese and a small senior drink – wow....\$1.73 – what a deal.

By late afternoon I had done 700 miles of driving. My old favorite Super8 just east of Little Rock at Wheatley had burned down or been destroyed somehow– there's nothing left. It was \$39 a night and included nice breakfast with waffles. This year I stayed at the Super 8 in Bryant in Saline County. \$53 including tax but no make your own waffles. Close to lots of restaurants. It was Pizza night!.....but unfortunately the good places there were closed on Sunday so it was a Pizza Inn pizza tonight. Not bad but nothing different.

That night, I checked the weather. Headed to Dallas area was fine....but storms were likely to the west of Dallas, maybe in Dallas later in the evening, and probable in OKLA and into ARK by late night. OK – it was time to get on home.

Monday – after the hamfest

The distance to home was 300 miles – 4-5 hours all on interstates and Tollroad if you don't mind paying for the 25 miles of Tollroad. After that, it is 6 miles on residential streets to home and about 8 traffic lights. You can leave the motel in Dayton, drive 1000 miles with a total of maybe 15 traffic lights the entire way (five or six in TN). If you elected to take the alternate route to Nashville, then I-40 across TN, it would have only been 8 traffic lights the entire way home, and that the last five miles getting to the house. If you get off for gas/food, there might be a few more lights at the exit to add in. It's sort of amazing to think you can go almost 1000 miles without a stop if you and the car can last that long between stops! My car needs a break every 300-350 miles for more gas – more if you run below 1/4 full. If you have a diesel or big tank in your car – maybe you can go 400-500 miles. Usually I stop every 2 or 2 1/2 hours for a pit stop or meal anyway.

I zipped along, getting home by 2pm and unloading the car. Activity was still good on the cw frequencies although many mobiles had driven all day Sunday till late to get home and save another night on the road. N3RC was still heading back to MT – a two day haul. I ran all the counties along the way on CW. N7IV would be on for 3 days.

Wow..times must be tough in Titus TX. You enter the county and a few miles later, there is a real 'bear in the grass'. The grass is about 30 inches high on both sides of the interstate. A radar cop is buried in the grass so you just see the top half of the car – and can't tell it's a police car. The speed limit is 75 mph and a few are going 'a few miles over'. I was going about 77. No problem. You pass that one by. Some might think, OK, I passed that speed trap. One mile later on the other side of the road...another cop car down in the gully checking for speeders.....that was two....and you couldn't see him till the last moment.another mile later, another ONE!.....and a mile later another one. There were six cars trying to catch speeders in five miles. A mile later, another one had pulled over a car. Whew! More speed traps in those five miles than the entire 3200 mile trip – think I saw only one the entire rest of the way. So watch out if you hit Titus TX on the interstate 30! They're out for blood. Serious.

Then it was time to unpack the goodies and enjoy them, rest up, do the laundry, get the mail and pay the bills, etc. Back to the normal routine of things. It was a good hamfest.

Looks like I headed home the right way. I could have taken a longer route back through OK City.....Monday afternoon at 3:30 PM a Tornado – category 4 or 5, ripped through the OK City suburbs including Moore, OK. Crossed I-35 (shut it down), I-44 (shut it down) and killed dozens and demolished totally over 1000 homes. Plus the elementary school full of kids. It was a mile wide and 17 miles on the ground. The bad weather had been predicted but this was 'exceptional'. Moore OK had been hit by a devastating killer tornado in 1999. This was worse. Preliminary count is 13,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Two billion or more in damage. Worse than the one in Joplin MO a few years ago that I missed by a few hours last year coming back from Dayton! I had stopped earlier about 80 miles to the east of Joplin. Dallas was under a tornado warning all evening as well. You need to keep one eye on the weather. If there are going to be Tornadoes, I'd rather be 100-300 miles away like the last two years.

It was a good trip and I even returned with a goodie or two! Hope you had fun. I enjoyed the CH forum and dinner and seeing lots of old friends again.

National Convention !

Come join the fun in Deadwood SD for the National Convention. Already about 60 have signed up. The rates for the motel are a bit steep – prime holiday season in a prime location – but drop on by for a day or two if you can, more if you can....July 10-13. Maybe you can share a room with others to make it more affordable. More details here:

<http://marac.org/events.htm>

There's lots of activities planned, the annual awards dinner, too, plus meet and greet the county hunters you talk to each year on the air!

Europe Abandons Global Warming

The European Union, which has spearheaded efforts to curb global warming, is set to adopt a change of focus in response to concerns over costs and the impact on companies in economically depressed Europe.

Under the change, the European Union will prioritize the supply of energy at affordable prices over cutting greenhouse gas emissions which impose burdens on industries, in a turnaround of the region's energy policy, an EU official said Saturday.

EU leaders will decide on the shift in energy policy at a meeting Wednesday. The change reflects requests from businesses in the 27-member zone amid the prolonged economic slump.

A draft conclusion of the EU leaders' meeting obtained by Kyodo News said, "Against the backdrop of high pressure on Europe's competitiveness and increasing energy demand from major economies, the EU's energy policy must ensure the uninterrupted supply of households and companies at affordable and competitive prices."

"The European Commission is already in 'do nothing' mode on climate change, and it will obviously put off a decision on ambitious targets," the official said on the European Union's post-2020 goals.

The change in policy comes as some European companies are moving to shift operations out of the region to avoid increasing costs to meet the emissions-cut goals, and amid a decline in emission trading launched in the region in 2005.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/130518/eu-dial-back-measures-against-global-warming>

Back in the US, Obama and his greenies are 'full speed ahead' on destroying the US economy and running up trillions in new debt with porkulus 'green energy' projects that merely line the pocket of AL Gore and other prominent backers of bogus and going to fail companies.

17M and Up Activity

We are at/near the sunspot peak. The upper bands should be humming away. Dang....someone stole all the fun! 17M has been decent – often signals better than 20M, but 15 has not been great for the mobiles and 10 and 12 are 'dead' most days, and few folks even bother to check it. You might catch some E-skips as the weather fronts move through this season (June is prime month).

Who has been **mobile on 17M?** Checking the spots we find:

On CW- WU3H, K0DEQ, NM2L, W0QE, W0GXQ, N4CD, W5QP, N2OO, KA4RRU, W4SIG, K5YAA, KN4Y, K4YT, KC7YE, K7TM, K2HVN, W9MSE, N0KV, K8ZZ, KS5A, W7FEN,

On SSB – WD9EJK, W3CR, N0KV/N0DXE, WQ7A, KM9X,

How about 15M? We note the following spots for the past 3 months

NM2L, W0QE, KS5A, K5YAA, KN4Y, W3DYA, KC7YE, K2HVN, N9AC, VA3XOV, NF0N, N0KV, W0GXQ

There was lots of action during the state qso parties, though, from fixed stations and even from mobiles when conditions were decent.

How about 12M? (Hasn't been cooperating much despite the sunspot 'peak')

Nuttin! Although I suspect a few mobiles have gone up there and made a contact or two, but not spotted!

How about **10m mobile/?**

NM2L, KN4Y, KS5A, and N3MRA on SSB.

There were a handful of spots in the QSO Parties from fixed stations, and a few during the 10-10 contest. Otherwise, not much action at sunspot 'peak' on 10M for much of the country.

Running the “Island” Counties

Of the 3077 counties in the US, some of them are composed of one or more islands, or are a part of an island. You can drive to about half of the 'island' counties, but the other half takes extra effort (and money). If you are trying to run all counties in Washington, Massachusetts, and of course, Hawaii, you will be spending extra money to get to the 'island counties' and spending at least half a day getting to and from them. Lots more time for HI.

At the Dayton Hamvention forum, I talked about visiting the 'island' counties – the ones you cannot 'drive to'. But first – how many 'island counties' and you simply drive to – by going over a bridge at getting there. Think hard. You might be surprised.

We can start with Island County, Washington. That should come to mind quickly. IT's got 'island' in it's name. Island County consists of 2 large islands (Whidby and Camano) plus 7 smaller islands. You can simply zip over a bridge to Island County and run it. No hassles at all. Think of any other 'island' counties where the whole county lies on an 'island' or two? How about Richmond, NY, also known as Staten Island! Aha! You can drive over a bridge (bring \$\$\$ for the tolls) or even take a ferry to get there. OK...the trail is getting warmer, right? That's two. Can you think of more?

Did you think of New York, NY? That 'county' consists of the island of Manhattan, plus a few other islands including Randall Island (a park and the best place to run NY, NY). While we are there in the NY area, I bet you forgot....Nassau and Suffolk, which lie on 'Long Island'! You've got to be on Long Island to run those two – but, other than traffic and toll bridges, you can drive your car there. So that's 4 island counties you can get to by driving. That leaves 7 other island counties you will need to travel to if you plan on running all the US counties. Or all the counties in a particular state(s).

If you thought of Presque Isle, MI – close but no banana. Presque Isle is French for 'almost an island'. It's a small peninsula connected by land bridges at both ends, so it's, as they say 'almost' but not quite an island county. Galveston, TX ...is an island...but also has lots of mainland area – so it both on the island and on part of the mainland. That doesn't count as an 'island county'. No need to go over a bridge to get there.

Now on to the counties you can't easily get to – or drive to.....

The 'easiest' is likely San Juan, WA, which has great ferry service. It consists of several large islands, and the easiest to travel to is Lopez Island. Last fall, I made the trip there. You can read up on it in the August 2012 County Hunter news at;

<http://www.chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20August%202012.pdf>

The one key thing is that you need to remove your antenna so that your vehicle is no taller than 7 1/2 feet, otherwise they will charge you double for the ferry! It's also a good idea when visiting all the islands to NOT install your antenna until you get to the spot you plan to operate. There are few/no large trucks on the islands which normally nicely clear out all the tree branches to about 13 foot clearance. You'll find low hanging branches....and even power lines just 10-12 feet above the road in places! The last thing you want to do is wipe out your resonators or mast after spending the money and time to get out there.

Next up are the two islands off the coast of MA – Dukes County (Martha's Vineyard) and Nantucket. Both are tourist destinations without much in the way of tourist services other than very high price B&Bs and a motel or two. Think \$350/night on Nantucket and \$250 plus a night on Dukes for a room, sometimes with 2 or 3 day minimum stay 'in season'. If you say Dukes County, no one will know what you are talking about. It's Martha's Vineyard – the playground of the Kennedy clan, where Barack Obama vacations for \$10,000 a week, etc. Unless you know someone there and they invited you to stay for a while, plan on a one day trip to each island.

I wrote about my visit to both islands in the September 2012 issue of the CH News last fall:

[http://www.chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20September%202012%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20September%202012%20(1).pdf)

Rental cars are few and scarce. You MUST reserve weeks ahead of time if you plan to take the passenger ferry and rent a car. You can take your car to Dukes – but that too takes weeks ahead reservations and will cost you over \$100. So plan well ahead. Same thing on the antenna – take it off! You can take your car to Nantucket – if you reserve months ahead of time and don't mind the \$350 ferry fee! If you make it a 'day trip', you'll have about 3 hours on the island to operate before you must board the ferry to get back home the same day!

If you go the passenger ferry route, and reserve a car, you'll need a 'rental car' portable rig. There's few hassles carrying anything on the ferry, including all the 'tools' you need, power cables, mag mount, rig, etc. Double check and triple check that you have everything because you won't find a store to buy that missing doo-dad on the islands.

Here's what I used last fall for the day trips as a 'passenger' to Nantucket and Dukes:



PORTA -RIG SET UP

There's a small padded bag (bought it at a flea market – about laptop size) that holds the IC706, microphone and key paddles. It's deep enough to hold the rig comfortably. I use a few spare clothes – socks and underwear work great – to pad it and keep it from moving inside the yellow case. I have short mast sections – about 20 inches – that screw together, plus I take out the resonator tip, and tape it to the resonator. That allows it to fit inside a 'normal carry on' size luggage bag – one with wheels. The power cable has large clips on it to allow quick connection to the car battery. I'm not going to 'driving' while I operate, so there's no worry about them staying on over bumpy roads. The rig simply sits on the passenger seat, or hump, or wherever convenient. Don't forget a log book or pages to fill in, or your recorder, some pens, etc. Not shown is the 3 magnet mag mount that I use. I also take my MFJ antenna analyzer in another small padded bag bought at a hamfest flea market.

If you use the new Hustler resonators with the screws that require a hex wrench....bring one! You might need to adjust it – or reassemble it if you take it apart to make it 'shorter' for travel. On the ferries you can carry a tool bag with wrenches, screwdrivers, VOM, etc. No hassles to the 3 islands mentioned so far.

Before you head on out.....test out your rental station. Make up a list of what goes in. Check and double check, then actually install your rental car system on your car – the temp power cables, the antenna and all the needed pieces, the mic, paddles, connectors, log book. Maybe head over to a local park, take everything out of the packaging/suitcase, set it up. Use it. Disassemble it. When you connect your power cables....double check....triple check...before you push the connector onto the radio....that you have the right polarity. There are no second chances once you get to the island if you hooked it up wrong!

Then the real fun begins as you plan your 'vacation' to the Hawaiian Islands. To get to all five counties takes a visit to four islands including Molokai. Again, on Molokai, there is now one

hotel, and rental cars are limited. It's out of the way for 99.99% of the tourists to Hawaii and off the 'beaten path' with few reasons to go there these days. Most are going to take 10 to 14 days to enjoy the visit and run the counties – or more.

With the new 'security' regulations in place, you cannot carry 'tools' in carry on luggage but do take your radio and accessories ON the plane with you. Carry a copy of the instruction booklet or advertising sheet just in case some snoopy TSA person starts to give you the 3rd degree over your 'strange looking device' – it's usually not a problem. If you are traveling with a friend, and have handheld – same deal – bring copy of your license and instruction booklet. The 'tools', like screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers, etc, will have to be in 'checked' baggage.

Bob, N8KIE, is a good county hunter to check with on the logistics of getting to Molokai these days – and that is where the 'rarest' of the rare counties – Kalawao ' is located. Between that one and Second District AK – those are probably the two toughest to run and also, of course, to work. For all of them, leave yourself enough of a window. With current conditions, the band could go dead for hours. If you've only got 3 hours on an island to operate...and the band is dead...you are in big trouble. Same for propagation which seems to be best sunrise HI time and sunset USA time for 20M and 17M. Bring 15m along, too!

It's a lot of fun running the 'island' counties. Some are a lot easier than others, but the one thing in common is they don't get run very often by county hunters. When they are, the pile ups can be amazing. Dukes and Nantucket get run maybe once a year or every 18 months. Kalawao maybe once every year or two. Sometimes you can catch regular hams on the islands – San Juan is on every 7QP, and Dukes is easy to work in the NE QP with super contester multi op W1ACT, and Nantucket a bit more of a challenge – but it shows up. However, for many of the county hunting awards, it takes a county hunter contact, and that's where the fun begins.

Last summer and fall I had the pleasure of getting to the island off WA and the two off MA and giving them out to the county hunters. Now I guess it is time to think about heading out to HI sometime in the future to run those again. It's been nearly 13 years since I've been there. Meanwhile, others are headed there – so keep your ears open and listen for them! (KW1DX has posted a trip to all the HI counties at the end of May).

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Here's some 'heads up' info from KW1DX:

Leaving for Hawaii on Thursday May 29th and hoping to run all counties.
I will only have a short time on Kauai, Honolulu, Maui and Kalawao.
Here is the current schedule:

Kauai: Friday May 31st 1700z-2100z

Honolulu: Saturday June 1st 1700z-0000z

Maui/Kalawao: Monday June 3rd 1900z-0000z

Hawaii: June 4-6 TBD

Will attempt to run 20, 17, 15, 10, (12 only on prior request) SSB then CW, in that order.

ARRL Newsletter Report on Dayton

Hamvention 2013 began on a foggy May 17 morning in Dayton, Ohio. As soon as the doors opened, it didn't take long for the streams of humanity to fill the indoor aisles. The ARRL EXPO drew substantial crowds throughout the weekend, with attractions such as the W1AW 75th anniversary exhibit, DXCC card checking, the Youth Lounge and free spectral purity testing, courtesy of the ARRL Lab.

Hamvention forums were also well attended. At the ARRL Power Line Interference forum, ARRL Laboratory Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI, offered advice and guidance with assistance from ARRL Lab Engineer Mike Gruber, W1MG, and an arcing "Jacob's Ladder."

At the ARRL Member Forum, ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN, spoke on a number of topics, but placed particular importance on the efforts of new ARRL's Second Century Campaign to ensure the strength of the organization well into the future. To emphasize the point and its relevance during the upcoming ARRL Centennial, she said, "While the past may excite us, it is the future that must inspire us."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, brought the forum audience up to date on the status of ARRL involvement in national and international regulatory issues. While discussing a potential threat to the amateur allocation at 76 GHz, he stressed the fact that even such sparsely used amateur spectrum deserved a vigorous defense: "The 76 GHz band may be of little interest to most hams today, but we need to preserve our microwave allocations for technologies we can't even imagine today and the future amateurs who will use them."

ARRL First Vice President Rick Roderick, K5UR, issued five challenges to the ARRL Member Forum audience.

If you don't belong to a local club, join one today.

If you already belong to a club, actively support it.

Help inactive hams get on the air. Give assistance to new amateurs to help them use their privileges effectively. Volunteer your time to help elderly hams who are no longer able to maintain their stations.

Recruit as many new amateurs as possible. Recruit as many new ARRL members as possible.

Donate to the Second Century Campaign.

Early reports from commercial vendors supported the perception that Hamvention attendance was strong and people were in the mood to buy. The flea market also saw quite a few browsers and shoppers. The rain held off and overcast skies helped keep conditions pleasant. Watch for a Hamvention report, along with new product highlights, in the August print and digital editions of QST.

Awards Issued

USA-CW # 133	Arne SM6VR	May 13, 2013
4th Time # 158	Bob, WA3QNT	May 18, 2013
3rd Time #238	Arne SM6VR	05.13.13,
USA-PA "A" #4	Tony, WA9DLB	05.01.2013,
Bingo #349	Terry, W9UX	April 23, 2013
Bingo II #91	Dennis, N6PDB	April 20, 2013
Bingo II #92	Karl, K4YT	April 26, 2013
Five Star #64	Ken, K4XI	April 28, 2013

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

The State QSO Party season is winding down. This month – West Virginia and Alabama, plus two six meter contests and Field Day. There's just one or two more over the summer, then back into State QSO Party season and Sweepstakes in the fall, along with major DX contests. They'll be lots of mobiles traveling on vacation and trips. Don't forget about the National Convention! It's also prime hamfest season so there should be lots of mobiles on the road.

June 1

Ten-Ten Open Season (10 meters only)

Call, name, S/P/C, member numbers - or none if you don't have a 10-10 number

www.ten-ten.org

Jun 1, 0000Z - Jun 2, 2400Z

Alabama QSO Party

RS(T) and AL county or S/P/C

www.alabamagsoparty.org

Jun 1, 1600Z - Jun 2, 0400Z

CW--1.810, 3.545, 7.045, 14.045, 21.045, 28.045;

PH--1.865, 3.855, 7.230, 14.250, 21.300, 28.450.

June 8

Jun 8, 1600Z - Jun 9, 1600Z

ARRL June VHF Contest

www.arrl.org/contests

Jun 8, 1800Z - Jun 10, 0300Z

June 15

Jun 15, 1500Z - See website See website - CW on Saturday, SSB on Sunday.

West Virginia QSO Party

RS(T), WV county or S/P/C

www.qsl.net/wvsarc

Jun 15, 1600Z - Jun 16, 0200Z CW--35 kHz from band edge,
Phone--35 kHz from General/Nov/Tech segments.

SMIRK QSO Party(six meters)
Grid square and member number
www.smirk.org
Jun 15, 0000Z - Jun 16, 2359Z

June 22-23

ARRL Field Day
ARRL/RAC section or DX
www.arrl.org/contests
Jun 22, 1800Z - Jun 23, 2100Z

This is not a good weekend to be 'mobile' trying to work other county hunters. Many CH are off at their local clubs helping run the FD stations – and the QRM is intense everywhere. It's a good weekend to join your local club, or visit family or friends. If you are mobile, maybe the WARC bands would work OK, and cw up at 14.113 or 7113 or so. Or you could give out your 'ARRL section' as a category “1C” (mobile) station.

That's all folks!