

County Hunter News

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Volume 12, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

Wow – another very busy month for happenings. We had a few QSO Parties, the Dayton Hamvention, and NPOTA Fever was raging with hundreds of activations and trips. Mobiles were headed off on major trips. Lots to report on.

1) Bob,N8KIE sent in some pictures from his activation of Rosie the Riveter If you've never heard of her – Rosie the Riveter was a cultural icon - an example of women joining in the work force during WW2 to replace the men who were off fighting the war.

Tens of thousands of jobs needed doing – from electronics to aircraft construction – and Rosie the Riveter became a symbol just like Uncle Sam. Later it became used by the Feminist movement.



There's a National Park unit out in the San Francisco area. The first group to activate this rubbed the folks there the wrong way, and they decided to limit future activations to no more than 3 for the whole year! Bob, N8KIE, approached them diplomatically and was granted an hour stay in the lot right next to the building – which only holds a few cars – and you are on 'park property' . Here's a pics he sent.



N8K1E at Rosie the Riveter

It's a noisy downtown location but he successfully activated it!

2) **MARAC Convention** – coming up in August – time to sign up! See the www.marac.org page for details. Going to be a good one! Lots are already signed up! Memphis TN area

Mobile Activity Report

Where do we start? Lots going on!

At the start of the month, AB7NK and K7SEN once again were headed TX way.

Ray, WB0PYF was out and about in MO several times during the month, including the US QSO Party

Silver, N9QS returned back from his visit in VA.

KZ2P/N2FPM were spotted running counties in SC. Really.

KE3VV was on in VA.

Guff, KS5A was on in TX

Jeff, W9MSE headed to OH once again.

Kent, KV7N was seen running counties in ID.

N4UP was on from NC.

Jim, N4JT was on in NC and put out some National Parks

Ron, KB6UF put out ME counties several times. Conditions rough from there.

Kerry, W4SIG, was on often from MS and TN. Made it down to LA, too.

Ed, K8ZZ was out on several trips this month – lots of counties

Ron, K2RP headed east from CA on a long trip to Dayton – and then more in the midwest after the convention. Still on the road.

Bob W0BH was on in the east – putting out some NP units.

Mike, NF0N, headed to Dayton.

Quite a few mobiles headed to Dayton putting some out along the way including

AA8R/W8TAX, N8KIE, KA4RRU, WA4PGM, KJ8V/KJ8W, N9AOT/KB9AIT,

K8TE was seen out and about – ran some NP units too.

Jerry, W0GXQ spotted heading down into in NE.

Larry, W7FEN, put some out in WA state.

KA2LHO was active in NY and PA.

NX0X/KM0MHH noted out and about in MO.

N0KV/N0DXE headed off on a big trip to MT. Put out some NP's too.

Jim, VA3XOV was down in WV and PA

Jim, N9JF was on from MO

Don, K3IMC was active in Al and MS.

Tim, W8JJ, put out counties in MI

KA9JAC/KB9VYT noted running counties in IN.

There were many mobiles who took part in the QSO parties – we'll try to cover them in the QP sections.

Florida QSO Party

K4KG multi-op mobile (K5KG VE7ZO) 2270 cw 319 ssb

It was good to be back in the mobile saddle again after a year off as a fixed station at K5KG. Geo and I had never activated all the Florida counties in the many years we have participated so that we included the panhandle in our route planning. As it worked out though, the objective of working all of the

counties remained unfulfilled as we ran out of time to work SAN and ESC on Saturday night. Route planning, a large part of the fun and strategy of the FQP requires a little refinement as who would of thought it would take an hour to get through POL, home of Disney World on a Saturday afternoon? After this rough start, tried to get back on schedule after but came up a bit short. Weather was clear and trouble free for the contest, the drive along the gulf on Sunday morning a highlight.

Geo's Toyota Highlander roof now sports a four vertical antenna farm on a compact platform. These are mounted on the luggage rails with a Hustler 40M on the trailer hitch. Credit to Geo's engineering skills that we had no equipment issues during the test. Rig was a K3 and we used WinTest for logging.

Conditions on 20M were so outstanding for North America that we shifted to 40M only briefly to pick up a few southeast states and then closed on 20M Saturday night. Strong signals from the west coast made this event memorable with W7OM, W6KC, W7GKF, K6NA and others consistently in the log. Only missed NE (both modes) DC and AK on CW. The VE3's were out in force as usual (thanks CCO!) but where were the prairies and west coast? No VE4 to VE7 on any mode. Working mixed, we so much appreciate the stations that move to SSB to give us the phone mult.

Thanks for all the Q's look for you next year.

Team KG,

Jim VE7ZO

NO5W multi-op (KN5O, NO5W) 2377 cw qso

Here's the deal if you live in the New Orleans area and plan to operate mobile in the FQP.

Mid-morning Friday drive from New Orleans across the Lake Ponchatrain Causeway to pick up your operating/driving mate in the Covington area. After lunch take I-12/I-10 to somewhere fairly deep into the FL Panhandle - say Chipley. You'll leave those counties to the west of Chipley for Sunday on the way home.

Saturday morning twiddle your thumbs and cool your heels in Chipley until about 10:30am CDT and then head out for your first county. During the day stop briefly for lunch and forgo dinner until the Saturday session ends at 9pm CDT. Look for dinner or, if you're lucky, find a party of FQP operators and join them -- latter approach is preferred. Finally hit the sack between 11pm and midnight CDT setting the alarm for an early rise around 5:30am CDT because the Sunday session starts at 7am on your CDT biological clock.

Sunday morning hit the road to be at your first county by 7am CDT and drive/operate another 10 hrs timing your operations on your way home west on I-10 to make sure you leave time for the big pileups in those panhandle counties and run-run-run until you run out of time in Escambia at 5pm CDT. After dinner in Spanish Fort, just east of Mobile, get back on I-10 for the trip back to the Covington area and eventually back to New Orleans. Arrive New Orleans about 10:30pm CDT. Look at your trip odometer and it is closing in on 1600 miles. Decompress with a class of vino or your favorite brew

Fortunately when we relocated to New Orleans in 2012 and I gave a description similar to the above to some locals I actually had two takers - Dallas K1DW and Ted KN5O. This was the third year that KN5O has shared the driving and operating with me. And it looks like we're good to go for 2017 as Ted has already been strategizing on how we can improve our route to get more Qs in our log.

If this sounds physically and mentally challenging it is. As KN4Y noted, the late finish on Saturday night followed by the early start on Sunday morning is tough on an elder body. So why would you want to operate mobile in the FQP? Great participation, challenging pileups, and perhaps a little socializing with some fellow operators are reasons that come immediately to mind.

Regarding participation we worked 437 unique calls and, of those, 87 were in the log in 10 or more counties, 39 in 20 or more and 17 in 30 or more. So, we had a lot of different callers and many of them stayed with us through a significant part of the trip.

There were no Murphys in the hardware or software and although we got about 30 minutes behind schedule on Saturday afternoon we managed to regroup to activate all 17 of our planned Saturday counties. On Sunday we essentially nailed the schedule with the only deviation being a result of delaying lunch from Madison to Liberty. All 39 of our planned counties were activated during the weekend. The biggest gremlin by far was outrageous power line noise on Saturday during

Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor.

Maintaining schedule is especially important for us on Sunday since we want to reserve time for the Sunday afternoon trek across the western-most counties of the panhandle since this is the most exciting and challenging part of our route.

Generally the pileups were disciplined with the on-set of chaos mostly depending on how much sensory overload and fumbling around with fat-fingering was being experienced by the NO5W/m operator. It is not surprising that the fingers seemed to get fatter as the party entered its final hour. By and large the pile stood by when the operator was trying to get final info from a caller or trying to straighten out the fingering errors. That is surely appreciated.

We seem to always struggle a bit with multipliers although we had good results across the US only missing AK and MS. Ontario operators were out in force and east of VE3 was also well represented. However, VE4, VE5, and VE6 were no shows with our only province west of VE3 being BC. DX mults (16) were from Europe(11) and South-Central America (5). In the DX category SP9LJD was our most frequent caller with 30 Qs and was often louder than US stations. From the WVE states and provinces the top ten contributors to the QSO totals were TX(192), MA(177), ON(169), PA(156), IL(133), WI(115), CA(110), MI(104), NY(96), and OH(95).

This year we spent Saturday night just north of Tampa where Chris-NX4N and XYL Lilli graciously saved us from searching for dinner by inviting us over for pizza where we exchanged tales of the Saturday session with Red-K0LUZ, Kevin-N4KM, John-K4BAI, and Jeff-KU8E & sons.

Finally thanks to the FCG for their continued support of the FQP, one of the finest state QSO parties.

73 es OJ,

Chuck-NO5W
Ted-KN5O

W0BH operating K0HC, KS 389 cw 149 ssb 57 mults

My favorite ham radio activity is going mobile in state QSO parties, but it's also really fun to participate from the other end, especially in a really busy QSO party like Florida. Kansas weather was cool and cloudy and outside was wet from recent storms, so an indoor weekend was just the ticket! I operated K0HC to put Hesston College on the air in the School category. The students were all busily studying for final exams this coming week (including my exams :-).

When the opening bell rang, the mobiles were out in full force. The SUN 1x1 calls were also out there and as I check the log, it looks like I worked all nine of them at least once. A special shout out to K4S who was always on and often the only signal I heard on 40m or 15m during the day.

Conditions were good on 20m the entire party, but that's as far as it went from Kansas. 40m was really noisy for me, and 15m almost non-existent which made for a mostly one-band effort. That seemed to be the case for the mobiles as well, because they stayed nicely on their 20m assigned frequencies and made it easy for us to find them.

Here's the mobile scoreboard from Kansas. These are some very FB ops who make this party rock! K4KG/m tops the list because of his fast-switch CW/SSB operation which gave me a good share of my SSB counties.

71 K4KG
39 K4OJ
33 N5NA
32 NO5W
29 N4GI
27 AD4ES K1XX W4AN
20 N4CW
19 N4FP
18 KN4Y
04 N4DAB
listed but not heard: K4FCG/m and K4ZGB/m

The Sweep is the fun challenge in this party.

One really humorous QSO attempt. I called CQ FL and heard two stations come back, so I said, "ZM again." Both stations came back. "Only ZM." Both stations came back, but I also heard K4, so I said "only K4 ending ZM." Both stations came back and both were equally loud. Finally

there was just enough spacing in their calls that I heard K4EZM, so I went ahead and worked him, "K4EZM, you're 59 Kansas." Both stations gave me a report. I caught K4EZM in Highlands county, but also heard Sumter county, so I was finally able to confirm one and thank him, then said, "the Sumter county station, what's your call?" He came back "K4ZZM" No wonder everyone was confused!

The Florida Contest Group put on another great show this year! I did make a Georgia run this year, and Florida is certainly on my bucket list in the future. Thanks to all who help make this a can't miss / can't wait event every year.

73, Bob, w0bh

On the Road with N4CD I

NPOTA fever struck again. This started the first day of the year when I woke up with a terrible urge to go mobile – right in the 'middle of winter'. Of course, winters in TX are often mild with just six weeks of real 'winter' spread out among the many months of the season. You just don't know from week to week, or even day to day, if the next couple days will be warm and sunny, or stormy with sleet and snow. The weather looked good and the first of many trips started back in January. The 'fever' still strong and there is no cure. It lasts about one year and then disappears, likely with severe withdrawal symptoms. I'll have county hunting to tide me over. I'm not sure what the Park Chasers will do – they might be in serious trouble – hi hi!

So....Dayton was coming up and with some zigs and zags I could hit a bunch of park units along the way – via AR, LA, MS, TN, GA, KY, IN, and IL. For me, there's not much sense in re-doing ones I've done so the goal was 'new ones'. I was on a quest to do 100 different parks this year – maybe by July 1. For NPOTA, you get credit for each 'activation' – which can be a repeat of one you have run before. Some folks live in the DC area and have 30 or 40 parks within 50 miles and can run them over and over. For N4CD – the nearest park is 140 miles away! That's what started the road trips.

This time, I left 10 days before Dayton to hit some 'new ones'. In the past, it's been

counties – finishing up running part of a state, filling in ones missing, getting LC for the folks. This year it is 'connect the parks' planning.

Day 1 on the trip - Tuesday

First Up – Arkansas Post NM01 – Arkansas County

Leaving bright and early – O dark 30 or so on a Tuesday morning to beat the local rush hour traffic – it took six hours of driving to reach the southwest corner of Arkansas and an interesting spot – called Arkansas Post. (A military fort/town). This was one of the first settlements by the French – who migrated south from what would become Canada to establish a trade route with the Gulf area down New Orleans way. For many, many years, this settlement typified the conflicts that went on during the two century period of the life of this spot. History here goes back to 1684 or so as La Salle's expedition reached here. A colony and fort was established for trading. In 1803, France sold this territory to the US.

There were battles here during the Revolutionary War – and the Civil War. Arkansas joined the Confederacy. The Union sent 30,000 troops against the 5000 at the fort – and captured it. The fort never recovers from the near total destruction in that battle and the town from the drop in demand for beaver pelts. Railroads moved in elsewhere, and the river traffic became less significant. The Arkansas River changed course in 1912, leaving this post half a mile away from the river. Good museum/displays there.

Conditions were decent and 137Qs went in the log. As usual, I didn't run the county until I got to the park which usually guarantees enough county hunter contacts (10 or more) for activation credit. Everything else is then 'gravy'.....giving out the park to the park hunters.



N4CD Arkansas Post

Most of early US history is 'way back east' so it was nice to find a spot 'out southwest' that was a part of early American history. You'll find that if you dig a bit into what all these park units are about, you'll learn a lot of fascinating history along the way. From here one can head south a hundred miles to the corner of Louisiana for the next one.

Poverty Point, LA – on the border East/West Carroll, LA

This spot was an active trading network 3,000 years ago that extended out hundreds of miles. Estimates put over 5 million man hours in creating the buildings and other facilities at the time – a humongous undertaking for early people. (1700 to 1150 BC). This is considered one of North America's most significant Archaeological sites.

I arrived late – and the lady ranger came up by the car and said 'the visitor center closes in 15 minutes – as does the park at 5pm. You can hurry inside to get your 'stamp' – before I close it up'. Dang – I just drove 100 miles to try and run the park. Then she said “I'll let you stay to 5:30 – and then I'll let you out as I leave for the day”. Great- I had all of 40 minutes to make a run from this park. Time to go at warp speed! Did that.....then then lady ranger came by around 5:35pm and said time to leave – unlocked the 'gate (a chain across road) and let me out. Nice parking lot to run from there.

Looked for another spot 'in the park' and headed a bit north. Pulled into maintenance driveway.....lady ranger came by and said pull into to the maintenance area. Did....S9 noise there....left – no way to work the remaining folks, if any. She's had a few ham radio operations there. 131 QSOs.



Poverty Point

N4CD headed south to motel on the Interstate - Super 8 in Tallulah, LA. Dinner at a Chinese Buffet nearby. Slept well. There was a lot more of the trip to come. Breakfast at the Super 8.

Day 2 – Wednesday – into MS

Natchez HP29

Next morning it was off to get quite a few 'parks' starting with Natchez HP29– which goes way way back. It's on the river and has been an active trading site for hundreds of years. You can run it at the Melrose Mansion (and several other spots). Good parking lot – and quickly did 105 QSOs from there. SSB and CW. Friendly rangers. There are several spots you can run this park at but this is likely the best. The Mansion goes back to 1841 and is one of the best surviving examples of plantation mansions. This was an early morning run – not much from the west coast. Unfortunately the trip was 'aggressive' so parks were not run at 'optimum times' for the most number of QSOs.



Natchez Historic Park HP29

Natchez Trace Parkway

Just a short distance north you find the Natchez Trace Parkway (PK04) which is another 'park unit'. Several of the parkways – like the Blue Ridge – are in the park system. You can run this one 'on the run' but I found a nice spot and pulled over in a paved spot. The speed limit is 50 – but there are no stop lights or even stop signs so you just keep on moving. Every few miles there are 'historic markers' where you can park. This parkway goes from just outside Natchez MS several hundred miles to Nashville TN area. You can run it anywhere along it. Did and put 51Q in the log.

I stopped by the 'visitor center' at the Mount Locust Inn and Plantation at mile 15 – which goes back to the 1780 period and is one of the oldest still standing structures in the area. The nice lady ranger told me I could easily get to the Natchez Trace Scenic Trail (TR02) either right behind the visitor center or at another spot just north with a parking lot 20 feet from the trail itself at mile 17. This is one of the dozen 'scenic trails' that cannot be run from a vehicle. You must reach it 'on foot' and nothing may be attached to your vehicle. I quickly found the spot she suggested a few miles north. My only portable set up is QRP – others set up portable and run off a car battery – set up BuddiPole type antennas or throw up a inverted vee or a temporary vertical. I had my AlexLoop on a small tripod and 5W rig.

Natchez Trace Scenic Trail TR02

The Natchez Trace Scenic Trail extended 450 miles. It runs parallel to the parkway – or should I say the opposite since the foot/horse trail came first! Likely folks used this trail for thousands of years. As settlers moved west, traders would load up boats and

floated them down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Natchez and New Orleans. There was no way to get them back, so they sold them for lumber, then walked the 'trace' back to home. It was a dangerous journey. There were a few inns along the way to stop at. Others walked it both ways to their destination and back. It was well used. Once the 'steamboat' was invented in the 1820s, this route became 'obsolete' as now all the trade went via the rivers – both ways!

In most cases, the historic trails are no longer in use – like the Pony Express, Santa Fe, Oregon, California trails. The 'scenic trails' are usually in use for long segments, like the North Country Trail, Appalachian Trail, etc. This was – only has some short sections open. Most of it is now on private land or hard to get to. Still, it's 'scenic' which means you can't run it from a vehicle.

Out came the portable set up at the trail parking area.....in the middle of dense woods – and up went the Alex Loop antenna on a tripod – connected to the FT-817 QRP rig. It was tough to get 10+ QSOs with 5w but did.....and I 'bugged out' of there before the bugs bit me to death. Heh heh. You don't need mosquito bites with Zika and other nasty stuff running around (West Nile in TX). I had my shorts and tee shirt on – you really needed long sleeve shirt and long pants here for the bugs. And repellent! There are sections of the trail you can find, and some you can walk on with difficulty – there's lots of debris that falls down on them that you might have to walk around including whole dead trees. It's another park unit, so I ran it. I'm working on getting to 100 park units this year. I was all of 10 feet from the actual trail – which is 'depressed' from all the traffic that went over it – down about 3 feet below the rest of the ground area. Millions and millions of footsteps! At least this 'scenic trail' experience wasn't the usual 40 degrees I seem to find when I ran them in the past up north in MI and WI. I almost got used to sending CW at 40 deg with cold fingers. Made 12Q.

After this, I car wandered north a short distance to Vicksburg. It's sure nice to have an air conditioned car that zips along instead of trudging along on foot for 450 miles for a month long journey!



Natchez Trace Scenic Trail TR02

Vicksburg MS

Next up was Vicksburg MP09 - 'Military Park' – where a giant Civil War battle took place. When stronghold Vicksburg finally fell to the Union forces, the end was in sight. With Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the Union had control of the important river access to the midwest and TN. The war would still continue 21 months. Vicksburg became an occupied city in 1863, and the last remaining armed forces weren't removed until 1877 – 12 years after the war ended. MS was only re-admitted to the Union as a state in 1870, five years after the war ended. The river changed course in 1876 (that darn global warming, right) and moved away from the city. There's a lot to see here and a large preserved battlefield and tour road. Many good spots to run from including the visitor center lot.

This N4CD trip will hit loads of Civil War sites – seems like there are 40 of them in the park system.

Time to move on after 94 QSOs. I headed northeast to the Tupelo MS area. Stopped at an Oak Tree Inn (former Super 8). Dinner at Los Encinos Mexican Grill. Slept well – it had been a busy day. Lots more to come, too. Band conditions weren't all that great, but between 20, 30 and 40 I could put many in the log. 17M did zip most of the trip.

Day 3 - Thursday 5/12

Tupelo and Brices Crossroads

I headed out in the morning headed for the battlefields of Tupelo BF10 and Brices Crossroads BS01 . Major battles took place here. General Sherman had to protect his supply route down to Atlanta – and the Confederates were equally eager to stop him. Major battles took place just north of here at Brices Corner, and what is now the city of Tupelo was where tens of thousands engaged in battle. Tupelo is just a small downtown area in urban Tupelo. Probably best run 'portable' as there is no parking lot for it.

Brices Corner is also a small site surrounded by 1400 acres of preserved battlefield. The Union managed to keep the confederates engaged in MS, keeping them away from Nashville and Chattanooga and their supply routes. Neither side won a 'decisive' outcome.



Brices Corner BS01

From Brices – 147Q into the paper log. When I got home, I'd have to type them into LoTW one by one.

Shiloh MP08

Next on the agenda was a visit to Shiloh – another Civil War battlefield where tens of thousands died in bloody conflict. This is a large preserved battlefield with auto tour route of maybe 10-15 miles where you can visit the different spots overlooking positions. 84,000 troops fought each other for control of this area 40,000 Union vs 44,000 Confederates. You can spend hours here visiting the sites. I put 96 QSO in the log.

These parks have been well 'activated' many times – they are close to population centers and it is later in the year. There were lots of tourists here, not like the rural sites out west! (where at times I have been the only car in the lot!). The Ranger told me that 3,000 troops from Texas fought here. Nearly 24,000 casualties occurred in this battle!



Shiloh MP08

There were hundreds/thousands at the park – busy day. School buses, RVs and campers filled the lot. 96Q in the log. During the run, the skies open and it poured down rain for 15 minutes. Not good for the hundreds of kids at the visitor center doing some outdoor activities! Time to move on – so many parks, so little time!

Trail of Tears TR-12

I headed out and found a nice spot to run the Trail of Tears – water route. Saw signs and decided I could do a quick repeat activation. This is one of the 'most run' park units. It extends from GA to OK with several different routes used at different times. You'll recall this was the forced migration of the Cherokee tribes from their lands in GA to near useless land in OK. Did a quick 36Qs and moved on.



Cherokee Trail of Tears TR12

I saw on Facebook that the 'park' actually consists of a 1/4 mile wide corridor each side of the rivers where boats hauled the Native Americans west from GA to OK. Usually I get within 100 feet of the river.

Natchez Trace Parkway Run II PK04

Hey! I cross the Natchez Parkway, hop on it for a few miles and decide to quickly put it out again for activation credit. Well, it turned out to be a good run – 56 Qs into the log in 45 minutes – some of it while driving along it headed for rare Rutherford County TN for the night.

Turned out there were several events happening in Murphreesboro that night including a dog show and Renaissance Fair that took all the rooms at the first five or six motels I called. Dang! Not good. Finally I found a room at a Knights Inn – maybe barely a two star place but it worked. Old and worn. Waved at the Holidome as I passed it by on the way there. Dinner at a Cracker Barrel 1/2 mile away. (Country Ham, what else?) Slept well.

You get credit on the 'leader board' for repeat activations if they are more than 24 hours

since the last time you ran that park. It was a different county so most of the CH worked me! Nifty.

So far, I'd had good luck with access to the parks – being able to run them when I got to them. Let's hope my luck would hold out. It's no fun waiting for hours for the park to open, or getting there at closing time and having no run at all to get credit – and having to find a motel nearby – if you could.

Day 4 – Friday

How many times have you been to Murphreesboro? Did you ever visit this site that isn't even 10 miles from the Holiday Inn where 25 get togethers were held each fall? I was in the same boat – never heard of this place. Over 25,000 troops died here. The population of the USA in 1860 was about 31 million people. To put this in perspective, just image that in a current war in the Middle East, the US lost a quarter million people in one battle! Dead! Many of the civil war battles were extremely violent with horrendous casualties. The current thinking is 750,000 soldiers died during the Civil War.

Stones River Battlefield - BF09

Just north of Murphreesboro is the Stones River Battlefield- BF09 - another significant Civil War site. 81,000 troops fought each other in 1862 – and 1/3rd died in this battle of attrition. The Union forces were in Nashville and headed south to secure this area under Presidential order. The Union needed a victory after many losses. Vicksburg could not be taken yet. The Confederates made a desperate attempt to keep control – but lost in the end. That allowed the Union to control middle Tennessee and points east. A small part of the battlefield is preserved today.

I ran it at the Visitor Center parking lot early in the morning – 125Q in the log. Time to head southeast – hmmm – that's not the way to Dayton but, heck, there are parks to run!



Stones River TN - BF09

Down the road a bit (southeast) you can easily hit two parks in northern AL – and that is where the car headed next.

Russel Cave AL – Jackson County - MN64

Russell Cave is a natural formation of several large chambers that allowed native folks going back 10,000 years to find winter refuge. A nearby source of water, rock for making spear points were readily available. The cave mouth pointed east – allowing the rising sun to enter, while blocking the cold north winds. This site offers the most complete archaeological record in the Southeast.

Unfortunately for hams, the visitor center is right up against a very high ridge to the north/west that make getting a signal out of here challenging. It's a 45 degree up angle – and that doesn't work well. If you made your own parking spot off the entrance way it might work better – a bit. Just 34Q out of this 'RF black hole'. Next time I'll park by the entrance sign which should be better. Well, you learn from experience! In the pic below, the road goes to the visitor center which is right up against the ridge.



Russell Cave MN64 - Alabama

Heading further south you get to the next park unit – a good one to run!

Little River Canyon – PV12- DeKalb, AL

While this one has 'river' in the title, it's a preserve meaning you can run it anywhere 'in the park'. You don't have to be within 100 feet of the river like with Wild and Scenic Rivers (WR's) , or National Rivers (RV's). That makes life a whole lot easier.

One of the longest rivers comes off the Cumberland Plateau and plunges from 1,900 feet to 650 feet in a short distance. The result is one of the most extensive canyon and gorge systems in the eastern US and one of the clearest and wildest waterway. You can easily run this on Canyon River Drive (high up). Put 109Q's in the log with a good run.



Little River Canyon PV12

[Note: I took pictures of the car at every park I could find a sign, got the passport 'stamp', and signed the visitor log if they had one. A few places I missed when the visitor center was closed, and one or two places just didn't have sign anywhere I could get! Or couldn't stop because of six lanes of traffic! It's good verification.]

It had been a productive day – and the last few hours I spent heading toward the next site over in GA just north of Atlanta. It took some effort to find a motel over that way – did – found a Quality Inn in Kennesaw, GA where the park was located. Dinner at a Golden Corral – got my fill of veggies and fruit!

After this park, I'd head north again to TN. So far I'd been doing well getting contacts for the Double Diamond award. For this, you can get credit yourself if you work a Diamond holder from the county. Wish I could get credit for all the parks I've transmitted from! I'd be way ahead – but that isn't the way parks work. Of course, if you travel with a spouse/SO/buddy, you can work each other on 2M. Or 20. No extra points for multiple bands or modes. You work it once, and that's it.

Day 5 – Saturday 5/14

Kennesaw Mountain BP01

Just outside of Atlanta is the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield. The

Confederates has lost most of the western part of their stronghold, but GA and AL still survived. General Sherman was ordered to head south from Chattanooga and cut the vital rail links. Daily skirmishes had occurred for months in north GA. Sherman finally drove the Confederates from Atlanta in another battle down there after taking this area. That severely crippled the South's ability to continue the war. The end was in sight.

This is a 'day use' site with 20 miles of hiking trails. On weekends it is super crowded. I got there at 7:30am and the parking lot for 150 cars was nearly full. People were off hiking, running, and everything else. I found one of the last spots. Get there early! Not too many QSOs due to the early hour, but there have been dozens of activations here.



Kennesaw Mountain BP01

OK...I've sort of overdosed on Civil War history but there was one more site on the way north to visit.....before I got to other NP units. So I head up the interstate toward Chattanooga again and the NP unit of Chickamauga and Chattanooga MP-01. You can run this at several sites including Look Out Mountain – a famous local popular place on weekends. I opted for the Chickamauga site that was less popular - just needed to be 'in the park'.

Chickamauga & Chattanooga – MP01

I knew that AB4BJ, Bill, was there in the morning and we'd try for an eyeball. I arrive

at the visitor lot park away from the visitor center (don't need to be coming over their PA system inside). I fire up and before you know it, Bill comes bounding across from another parking lot away from the center – and we have an eyeball. He's going to be headed to Dayton to work at the ICOM booth. Put a few dozen in the log. This site, too, has been very well run and Bill had just put out a bunch of contacts. Did my hour or so then departed for greener territory.



Chickamauga MP01

The Confederates won the battle at Chickamauga in 1863, but lost a few months later at Chattanooga – and many felt this was the death knell of the South. They had lost another stronghold.

OK....I've overdosed on Civil War history. I'm into 'overload'. Fortunately the next parks have nothing, absolutely nothing to do with the civil war! Where to next? The Great Smoky Mountains!

I call ahead and reserve a Super 8 room in Gatlinburg, TN. It's the weekend and I expect the place to be crawling with tourists. I wasn't disappointed.

Whoa! Getting to Gatlinburg off the interstate is a frustrating experience. It took TWO HOURS to go THIRTEEN miles. You have dozens of traffic lights as you head past bumper to bumper tourist attractions for nearly the entire length, from Dollywood to five thousand other tourist traps, hotels, motels, eating places, water parks, and you name it. Six lanes of creep and crawl at 5-8 mph, with a traffic light every 1000 feet that you will be stopped at – barely getting through so you can sit at the next one along with ten thousand other cars. Whew! This was mid afternoon, too. It went on for 10 miles! You really should think about avoiding this mess! Seriously! The Great Smoky Mountain park is the most visited park of all of them.

Finally arrived in Gatlinburg – another creep and crawl place – and figured I could make a short run on Saturday.

Great Smoky Mountain National Park - NP26.

You run through a short segment of the park before you get to Gatlinburg. Made 40 QSOs getting into the log late in the day – and would be back tomorrow. Then found the motel. Just parked the car and walked 1/2 mile to a BBQ place down the hill. Slept well. I was actually a bit ahead of schedule so could add in a few more park units. The weather had been good – temps around 55-60 deg for highs. I'd changed to long pantsand discovered I only brought one pair...the extra pairs didn't get packed. I'd have to fix that.



Great Smoky Mountains NP26

Day 6 Sunday 5/15

After the traffic mess getting here, I decided I could do just as well going all the way through the park to the south side, then taking the Blue Ridge Parkway to the east and circling north to get to the next park unit. Even better, I'd hit two new park units! Serendipity. No way was I looking at going back through the 2 hour traffic jam. I still had days to get to Dayton before things started. Plus I'd get some stunning vistas as I headed up in the mountains. Yeah, mountains.

I leave real early. I know the two lane road will be quite crowded later in the day. No sweat...made it up to the summit with no hassles. Up and up and up.

Great Smoky Mountain National Park - NP26. Again

I headed out early going through the park. It's a two lane road that climbs up to 5000 feet at Newfound Gap. Then back down. Switchbacks and all. Scenic. Heh heh. It's also a county line at the summit, and the Appalachian Trail crosses at the top. Hey, that's another park unit.

Well...I run at the county line – which LoTW doesn't understand. How can you be in two states at the same time? Heh heh – Easy for county hunters as you sit on the line marked at the top. I just entered it as one state into LoTW. You have to choose just one state. It was early but put a couple dozen more in the log. This, too, is very well run and run and run. No sense to overdo it.

OK....it's 32 degrees outside. The wind is blowing. Fortunately the sun is out. I'm sitting in a nice parking lot 5000 feet up in a warm car – and what do I do? I get the portable setup out of the car and set it up in the cold! The quest for 100 park units by July 1 continues!

Appalachian Scenic Trail TR01

Since this is a 'scenic trail' you cannot run it from your vehicle. That means you must

reach it 'on foot' and operate portable. Some lug 100w radios and car batteries, set up inverted vee's or dipoles or deploy full size verticals. Some hike a mile on the trail or five or ten. For me, I do QRP and a quick to set up 40-10m AlexLoop on a tripod. It doesn't match 100w and a full size antenna for signal strength, but I only need 10 QSOs to be happy. TR01 is one of the 'most run' parks in the system. My hike is on the order of 100 feet.

I set up and it takes about 45 minutes to set up and make the needed 10 QSO. Got 11. Fine with me. Pack up quickly. It was definitely chilly out. So far, all but one time I've run a 'scenic trail' its but under 40 degrees! Oh, what one will do for one more 'park activation'. Well, The Appalachian Trail was run once by me, and likely that will be it for me for the entire year! You've got to be within 25 yards of the trail. My portable set up works but you have to work at it to get your 10Qs – or head to a rare location where folks will dig you out of the noise to work you! Also it was a 'two-fer' for NPOTA since this is right in the middle of Great Smoky Mtns as well but since I had run that just before, no additional 'activation' credit.



Appalachian Trail TR01

If you start here, you can be at the north end of the Trail in only 1972 miles – after going up and down every mountain in between! (not me but others hike the trail end to end). It starts down by Atlanta at Springer Mountain.

That was good – got my 10+ QSOs - got back in car and now headed on down the mountain going south. Lots of traffic now – continual. The visitor center at the south end was open so stopped by to get a passport stamp, sign the visitor log. Just beyond you hit another park unit!

Blue Ridge Parkway PK01

At the south end of Smoky Mtn Park you find the Blue Ridge Parkway – which runs all the way up to northern Virginia – hundreds of miles. I stopped and put it out. It too, has been run and run so I didn't spend too much time stopped running it. There were more interesting things to get to!



Blue Ridge Parkway PK01

I circled around getting back to north and the car wandered over to the Andrew Johnson site in Greeneville, TN. You'll recall Andrew Johnson was on the 17^t cent stamp in the way back days – 1950s – of stamp collecting – and was the 17th President.

Andrew Johnson NS03

Andrew Johnson took over after President Lincoln was assassinated. The country was in turmoil and sentiments on both sides reached very agitated levels. There was extreme political infighting and a battle for power in the government. “Radical” Republicans succeeded in getting him impeached – the first President ever impeached. It went to trial in the House and it would become a landmark outcome as to whether political factions could essentially vote the President out of office and to whether the President had any actual powers other than being a figurehead.

In a close vote, he was found 'not guilty' of the 'transgression' he had been accused of, thus preserving Presidential powers and preventing opponents from forming groups to simply vote out each President they didn't like time and time again (like some governments in Europe that last 90 days before the coalitions collapse and no one is in charge again).

Here you can find his boyhood home where he grew up – and later the house he moved back into after his Presidency.

Put 51Qs in the log in an hour. Conditions not too good for the past day or two.



Andrew Johnson NS03

It seems many Presidents have 'historic sites' where they grew up, or moved afterwards. Some have them in DC as well – like Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Jefferson.

Well, there was still hours of daylight so I headed to KY for the next one! So many parks!.....

Cumberland Gap HP10

I pulled into town late in the afternoon - probably to run this in the morning – but the park was wide open so in I went – zip – and put out the park with a 100+ Qs quickly.

This is a 'gap' in the mountains where settlers came on through to settle in KY and points west. There's 24,000 acres of park and 85 miles of hiking trails.

That night I stopped at a Days Inn in Middleboro, KY. Dinner at the Mexican restaurant at the motel. Slept well.

Day 7 Monday 5/16

Manhattan Project HP50

Now I had to backtrack a bit to get to Oak Ridge TN.. You'll recall this is one of the WW2 sites involved in producing the atomic bomb. Oak Ridge had the facilities to enrich uranium. The equivalent of about a trillion dollars was spent in a massive building program sprawling all over the area. While much of the actual installation is 'off limits' yet to routine visits, you can run this site at the AMSE Museum/Visitor Center. (Other parts of this program included Los Alamos NM and Hansford, WA)

I got on the radio....noisy at first in the parking lot since it had rained overnight – and as the day moved on – the noise actually dropped. 54Qs in the log. Again, this had been well 'put out' by dozens of other activations and one activator actually works at the park. Nothing rare.

I was there before opening time – and watched as a dozen school buses came by and dropped off kids by the hundreds. Great museum oriented toward younger folks. I spent 30 minutes inside then moved on.



Now it was off the beaten path to some harder to get to NP sites – or should I say wilderness areas?

Obed Wild and Scenic River WR07

According to the NPOTA rules, for the WR and RV designators, you've got to be within 100 feet of the river. That can be challenging as often these are tough to access spots and often in canyons where they flow. Today would be 'challenging'. These are recreation spots – great if you are going to camp out for a few days. Not so great for a day visit getting there, and in and out. The Obed is good for white water rafting Dec-April each year with adequate water flow and rapids.

The Obed visitor center is easy to find – right off the main road – in Wartburg – not that anyone heads to Wartburg TN – west from Oak Ridge and a bit north. The friendly ranger advised me I could get to the river at Nemo which was a 15 mile twisty road. OK...got there...and it's down in deep spot – an RF black hole. There's a parking lot spot where you are within 100 feet of the river boundary – some months the river is narrow – water flow down. Other months it is a raging torrent with wide river cross section.

Did 54Q – and band conditions weren't great. The location wasn't great. You learn from experience. I backtracked out of there and headed toward the next 'river' site.



North of there is the huge river system – equally hard to find a spot to run mobile.

Big South Fork River RV01

The visitor center here is 25 miles off the main road deep in the 'park'. The river itself flows through a 600 foot deep gorge.....which should ring alarm bells. To get down to the river in the canyon– you'll be looking at high hills all around! Not good.

Now, if you run 'portable' you can probably do this from one of the overlooks – East Rim - the walls are essentially vertical at that point, and you can be at the overlook looking straight down at the river. However, the parking lot is further away – and that won't count. I don't do portable except in rare cases, so I opted for parking at the Leatherwod Ford down in the river canyon. Not a great spot – sort of an RF black hole as you sit in a deep gorge hoping your RF will find a way out. WB500Q stopped by – just a regular ham saying 'Howdy'. Only 2 other cars in the lot and one of them was a ham. What are the odds? Pretty slim.

I managed to get 46Qs in an hour. No cell – no internet. Way out in the boonies. After the run, I drove another 7 miles to the Bandy Visitor Center to get my passport stamp and sign the log.



Sign for the landing – RV01
Leatherwood Ford River Access

Whew! I'm beginning to think about skipping any more RV's and WR's in my future trips! Lots of hassles and usually not great operating spots when in canyons!

Time to zip on to the next one. After slowly backtracking (think switchbacks and torturous roads) for 30 minutes, I get back on main roads headed to the next park unit in KY.

Lots of scenery – and a whole lot different than Civil War sites! I'm getting a 'balance' – heh heh.

On to the next! I'm headed to the Super 8 in Cave City, KY. ETA dinner time.

Mammoth Cave, KY NP39

Mammoth Cave has 400 miles of passage ways and is known as one of the largest cave systems in the world! You can take 'easy tours' of a quarter mile to two mile long adventure tours through the nearby cave system. Plan ahead – as you can reserve some of the tours.

I've seen enough caves for a while, so I skipped the tours.

I pulled into town around dinner time – found the Super 8 and checked in – and headed to dinner at the Windmill. There I saw a sign 'Park entrance 5 miles'. Hmmm? They had a buffet dinner there, so I had my fill – drove the five miles to the 'park entrance' and discovered there was no gate - went back to the motel and got my radio and put it back in the car – then headed to the park entrance. Serendipity – no gates. Can run 24/7 if you want. It was still daylight but barely. I found a spot right inside the park – pulled over into a parking spot and 'activated the park'. 40 and 30cw, 40 SSB. Too late for 20m. No one worked on 20M. A quick 69Q went into the log. It was getting dark and some rain sprinkled down. That was a clue to head back to the motel as it was now very dark outside. Another park in the log. I could head out for the next one early in the morning. This park, too, has been activated dozens of times.

Some quick check of stats coming up.....just out of curiosity.....and time for a break – the trip will continue in a bit.

7th Call Area QP

This is usually a great QSO party with over 100 of the counties on the air, and several dedicated mobiles out there. Many folks go out on 'County Expeditions' which are a big thing in this one and in the California QP.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

W7WHY County Expedition – 606 CW QSO

That was a fun way to spend the day. It is fun to be the ones that everyone is looking for for a change :-)

Fifteen seemed like it was open every time I checked, but just no activity up there. Stations that I did work were loud here.

Thanks for all the Q's and 73.

Tom W7WHY

N7XU Mobile (K4XU and driver) - 905 CW

Long day in the saddle. Dave, N6YMM, was the driver. His first time in a mobile QSO party. After 685 miles, he was about wrecked. My ears are still ringing. Band conditions were poor, 15m never opened - 11 QSOs, only 3 DX mults. Never heard ND SD or MS, and the Canadians were lacking - only NB ON SK and BC.

However, participation was pretty good. We left Twin Falls at 13Z and headed into the rising sun for three counties on the south side of the Snake before turning north and joining I-84 for the trip west. With a few side trips out and back for IDOWY IDBOI IDGEM and IDWAS, it was mostly a straight shot to the Oregon border. Up to ORUNI via ORBAK then west into ORGRA. The devastation from last summer's wildfires in Grant County was horrific and one of the casualties was N7YB, the resident HF-active ham. Dutch will be back next year.

Thanks for the fun!

73,

Dick k4xu/n7xu

N7M Mobile (K9JWV WA7LNW) 233 cw

Our (K9JWV and WA7LNW) first foray into any sort of /M ops. It was entertaining, I'm certain, watching us flail about as Murphy came acallin'; e.g., the auto-tuner crapped out at hour six BUT we had a spare manual tuner with us, the RF cable 'between the KX3 and the tuner developed a short at hour seven BUT we'd brought spares, etc.

BUT....with QRP power, was FUN to work a DL on 20 and have an IQ1 send "?, " ?," several times while calling with a 40 meter ham stick.

Will we back?? Who knows.....was a hoot though!!!!

N8II – fixed – WV 265 cw 190 SSB

Welcome to the 20 METER 7QP, made 351 Q's on 20, an all time personal best by far! Seriously, 15 phone was a wasteland of inactivity this year. You guys in 7-land who were serious left some unclaimed 15 meter phone and to a lesser extent CW QSO's on the table. My 15 meter Q's last year were over 160 vs. 49 this year which was less than 40 M. 15 was slow to open, but open to most of 7 land from 17Z until past 2130Z when activity died. The QRN levels from storms out west were pretty close to the worst I can remember for 7QP, even 20 M was affected with S9 crashes around 24Z. Many of the casual SSB guys with small stations were in or near the 20M noise level when at the same time the big guns were booming. The K index had to be on the rise by the time 40 opened well around 0145Z, we had the crashes plus almost everyone had some flutter and a hollow sound, but signal levels were decent.

The activation of rare counties is one of the things that makes 7QP so interesting. It was obvious that home stations from the rarer ones were encouraged to operate along with several expeditions. I worked KB7QPS in 4 OR counties early on SSB and kept hearing them S&P on CW; finally they called CQ on 20 CW and I added the 12 QSO points. Many thanks as always to the mobiles who put in many miles to activate the rare ones. There were 2 in AZ (KK6MC and K5CM) which insured an AZ county sweep after finding NI5L in GHM late on 40 phone. Thanks to N7N, I only missed HUM and ELK in NV. And the ID guys were great: N7XU, K7TQ, K7TM, and WW7D who I missed a lot and was not spotted for a long time. Obviously, more would be better. This year, many MT and WY counties were not on the air. Mobile QSO's were as follows: N7XU-19, K7TQ-13, WW7D-13, N7N-10, K7RE-9, N7WA-8, KK6MC-7, K5CM-5, and K7TM-5.

It sure would be easier to catch the mobiles if they had an assigned channel like they do in FQP to make catching them easier. Quite often here they are weak and in the QRM especially when the NEQP onslaught hits at 20Z. Even a mobile window would help a lot.

Congrats to all for a pleasant event (even with not much on 15). The overall quality of operating was higher than most QP's. I hope to be back next year and

many thanks for all of the Q's and rare counties.

73, Jeff

K7D Multi Op County Expedition – Jackson OR - 726 SSB QSO
(NA7OM W8WOM W7GH KF7IBN WB6FFC N7CGD)

Rogue RF Project sponsored by the Rogue Valley ARC, Medford Oregon.
Set up again at our secret spot in Jackson County. Nice view to the east and ran two stations, one with a 20 meter 5el mono bander on a mobile crank up tower and the other using a AB-577GRC with a tribander and wire dipole for 40. Low power setup out of trailers. Conditions (prop) well... everyone fought for every Q this time around. Had great fun though.
NA7OM

N7SMI County Expedition 140 CW 1662 SSB

I had a great time on the border again. A much simpler setup this year - one radio and a CrankIR vertical. Poor conditions resulted in only 3 DX multipliers! Missed only SD for WAS. Had high noise (S7 on 40 meters) due to a power substation across the street - it was too rainy and muddy to get off-road to my preferred location. I operated from the passenger seat of my truck.

As usual, the complicated exchange required MANY repeats. I'm surprised how many people don't use their existing log to get the exchange - many people asked for repeats on our 2nd and 3rd QSOs when the exchange is right in their log window. 38 dupes in the log - many from the multi-multi stations (inadequate log software? unskilled operators?).

I had some good runs, with ten hours over 100/hour and one hour at 234/hour. I plan to get my CW chops up so I can do more than S&P next year. Thanks for answering my calls.

K7TQ Mobile (K7TQ and WA0WWW) 513 cw QSO

A big thank you to all the stations that worked us as we roved in 19 ID counties, 1 MT county, and 1 WA county. WA2VYA in TX was the top QSO maker

with 19 Qs and 18 band-counties. He got us in our first county, MTBEA, and our last one IDLAT. N6MU in CA and N8II in WV had 14 and 12 Qs. We saved 80 m for the last 15 minutes, but should have gone there sooner. No European stations this year and only 1 JA. More Qs than last year, but a lower score largely because we couldn't find 15 m open. Equipment was a Icom 706MKIIG at 100 W into a Hustler antenna.

KK6MC Mobile 550 CW QSO

Mobile Multi-Single CW low power entry. We visited 7 counties. Conditions were good on 20M and OK on 40M, except in the middle of the day. Rig was TS-2000 and a screwdriver antenna.

N7N - Rover - County Expedition 1279 CW 21 SSB

This was a three-man expedition to seven remote and sparsely populated counties in NV. We operated portable from four locations, two of which were on county lines, from W6GJB's two-station trailer, and mobile from W6GJB's pickup between those locations. A fifth county-line site was planned, but recent rain had turned the road to a sea of squishy mud. As a result, operation from NYE and LAN was mobile only.

Each of the two portable stations consisted of a K3 with P3, KPA500, and KAT500, using a C3SS for 20M, a 40M dipole at about 40 ft, and an 80M inv Vee with apex at about 30 ft. The mobile rig was a KX3 with KXPA100 with 20M and 40M Hamsticks. W6JTI and K9YC did most of the operating, W6GJB drove the truck towing the trailer, and designed and built the really nice trailer that made the trip possible.

W7QC County Expedition - Boundary ID - 572 cw 143 SSB

K3 at 100 watts and a dipole antenna. Conditions were not very good but this contest always has good activity which makes it fun regardless

WW7D Mobile 750 cw 130 ssb

This was a single operator mobile effort. Had a blast hitting 29 counties, mostly in Idaho plus one in Wyoming and two in Oregon. The long tale can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/7QPWW7D16>

Some NPOTA Stats

What are the most run park units? If you are looking for a 'rare' place to go, visit

<https://npota.arrl.org/nps-stats.php>

There you'll find out how many 'activations' have occurred at the park and how many QSO's were made. Things don't always mean that the 'average' per activation is simply dividing the two. One expedition to Dry Tortuga made a couple thousand contacts while the others made 100 between them.

So what's the 'most popular' to run? Top of the list are the trails – Lewis & Clark, Sante Fe, Oregon, California, etc. These have 5000 QSOs made and 50 or more activations. Many likely are QRP with just a few dozen, while others are big scale operations or mobile with hundreds each.

Cape Cod and Padre Island are well run – folks go and stay there for a week or two and put them out.

There are 30 units in AK...with zero.....and a handful up north yet to be activated by anyone. Likely as the snow melts, they'll get on the air.

Russell Cave, AL which I ran, has over 2000 QSO made. I'm sure they didn't run it from the visitor lot! Park down by the sign - make your own spot. The Blue Ridge Parkway has over 2000 made in 40+ activations. Not rare.

There are many building sites with zero activations – Ford's Theater in DC and places in

NYC. Some will eventually make it on the air as groups are trying hard to get permission to somehow run them. Out west there are still some parks not activated – so there is virgin territory.

Things like the Cumberland Gap – have only 400Qs listed and six activations – including one by N4CD. If I had looked, might have put more effort into it, but this was a pretty aggressive trip trying to just get to over 25 parks in less than 2 weeks total and only 11 days driving.

If you are traveling this summer, check it out. Some are still needed really needed, and new people are joining the hunt all the time. It's like counties – it's rare if you haven't worked it already!

Indiana QSO Party

This was about normal – a few mobiles out there and a good dozen or more fixed stations getting on for their counties. It happens during the same weekend as 7QP, NEQP, DE QP, and the MARAC QP. Lots going on.

AE8M Mobile 519 cw 57 SSB

Thanks to all who called, every QSO is appreciated. The most frequently worked stations (outside Indiana) were KV8Q 21, KQ3F 17, VE3NBJ 16, OM2VL 15, WA2VYA 15, KJ4IZW 12, N0LY 11, WB0PYF 11, DL3DXX 10, W9GHX 9, AD1C 8, KB0BA 7, NU0Q 7, W0GXQ 7 and many others at less than 7.

I have gone mobile in state QSO parties a number of times, usually parking to operate. This was my second attempt on the move with a driver. It is much more difficult to pull weak stations out of the noise while moving. I apologize to those that I could not pull out of the noise and I resumed CQing while you were calling.

The noise blanker in the KX3 works very well at eliminating ignition noise when the engine runs at a constant speed. However, the noise blanker is ineffective when the engine speed changes. We were frequently on winding and hilly roads the first half of the contest which caused the engine speed to change constantly, making it difficult to hear weak stations. Furthermore, the thunderstorms in the region, and on top of us the last 3 hours, created frequent static crashes. Consequently, I had to ask for numerous repeats. Thanks for your patience. Once when I mentioned to Bob (the driver) about the static crashes, he commented that “you can hear them, but I can see them.” Indeed, at one point there was almost a constant display of thick, multiple path lightning bolts.

Bob, N9SF, was my driver/navigator. He was absolutely marvelous. He was incredibly accurate at predicting the advent of the next county line. I could concentrate 100% on operating the radio and never had to worry about the route. We ran into several unexpected road closures. It seems to me that Indiana does a lousy job setting up detours, creating a 10 mile detour when a 2 mile detour would suffice. I believe they would prefer that you drive forever in the countryside rather than go through the main street of some town. Bob has an excellent knowledge of Indiana back roads derived from participating in bicycle events in his younger days. This knowledge enabled us to take sensible detours rather than the official detours.

My rig was a KX3/KXPA100 at 100 watts into hamstick antennas. Going mobile in a state QSO party is great fun. If you want to feel popular, at least for a day, I urge you to try it. In spite of what internet gurus will tell you, you do not have to buy fancy expensive antennas and butcher your car to have fun. If you park to operate, it can be pretty easy. Carry a separate battery (AGM is preferred for safety) to power the rig; no need to wire into the car electrical system. Use hamstick antennas (or Hustlers) which are removed while moving so you do not need to worry about the mount falling off at higher speeds. Activate a few rare counties. You will make a lot of Q's and have fun.
73,

John, AE8M/M

KJ9C Mobile 442 cw 64 ssb

Got lost, had antenna problems, line noise was

atrocious... but at least I didn't get rained out like the folks down south did... About 22 counties activated..

K9THN portable - 48 cw 58 ssb qso

operators: NW9N N9TH

This was the first portable operating experience for students from Terre Haute North Vigo High School. It was a learning experience all around. We experimented with antennas, utilizing three different types: 1) a Hi Sierra screw-driver vertical with ground radials for 80M, 2) and 80M dipole set up as an inverted V 20 feet high in the middle, and 3) an MFJ-2010, 40,20,10 and 6M off-center fed dipole supported three feet off the ground on plastic fence poles with a wire screen counterpoise running beneath it as an NVIS (near vertical incidence skywave) antenna. This NVIS antenna is very easy to erect and we were amazed at how well it performed.

Delaware QSO Party

Yes, there was a DE QP. Activity was light. No mobile it seems. There were two or 3 active DE stations giving out QSOs.

From the 3830 reflector:

ND4Y reported 3 QSOs and 2 multipliers

On the Road with N4CD II

The trip continues. Where were we? Oh right, N4CD just ran Mammoth Cave KY in the evening hours, slept at the Super 8 in Cave City, and could head north in the morning

to the next site. Dayton wasn't too far ahead – just a few more stops!

Day 8 – Tuesday

Lincoln Birthplace HP01

Not too far away from the Cave you find the Lincoln Birthplace in KY. You can see the reconstructed log cabin where he was born. Not too many years after his birth the family moved to Indiana. Nice visitor center – and easy place to run the park in the parking lots. Many had run this, so the early morning run put 55 QSOs into the log. Time to hit the next one on the way to Dayton – the end is in sight!

Now it was a bit of a drive to get up to – OH – in the Cincinnati area where you find yet another Historic Site. I've driven through this town 30 times going to and from Dayton – and never realized there was anything here to see.

President Howard Taft NS-78

Taft's home is in downtown Cincinnati – in a fairly dense urban neighborhood. There's a teeny parking lot for 7 to 8 (but more NP parking around the corner on a nearby street). It's noisy naturally with all the power lines and buildings around, but I still could work the county hunters and park hunters. 40Qs into the log. I was in the main lot and parking was at a premium so didn't stick around too long. Went through the visitor center but skipped the house. The house is the yellow one in the picture.

Taft was the 27th President (1909-1913) and was the only person to be both a Supreme Court Justice and President.



William Howard Taft Home NS-78

OK.....interesting place to visit. I couldn't afford 50c stamps even if he was on it....when I was a kid in the 50s. Things got out of sequence. Washington on the 1c, Adams on the 2c, Jefferson on the 3c, Lincoln on the 16c, and a jump to Taft on the 50c stamp. Then again, how many people would need a 27c stamp? Kids collected – marbles, baseball cards, postage stamps.....and TV promoted things like 'decoder rings'. That's ancient history.

Time to move on – Dayton wasn't too far away. Now it was east a bit to Ross County and the next site. I've been through this county a few times – and never knew the history that was here.

Hopewell Culture HP15

Probably if you don't live in southern OH, you've never heard of this location – a site where 2000 years ago, people constructed ceremonial mounds. In the Mound City group there are 23 separate mounds, and other groups nearby. Folks occupied this area as hunter gathers for 500 years before other groups moved in – started agriculture and changed the way of life.

This is an extremely friendly ham radio location. I was wearing my “National Parks on the Air” shirt – I walked inside, the the ranger gave me an ARRL NPOTA pin and decal! They love having ham visitors for this centennial year.

Put 90Qs in the log in short order. When the pileups were worked down, it was time to head on to one more for the day. The jumper cable from the radio to antenna switch had broken off....so I didn't run a lot of 40M SSB as would have had to change coax cables to the radio every time.....I'd let others run 40M SSB and many would be heading through this going or coming from Dayton. Coax jumpers (PL-259s) were on the shopping list for the flea market.



Hopewell Culture - HP15

I was a day or so 'early' for Dayton. Activities don't start till Thursday if you go to the Four Days in May QRP event. Otherwise, the flea market starts – well, Thursday afternoon if you have a flea market access ticket – otherwise Friday morning bright and early.

One more to go before the Dayton area

Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers MN18

This was a new one on me. Never heard of Charles Young? He was born to enslaved parents in the 1860s. He did well in high school and was the 9th person accepted to

West Point, and the 3rd to graduate. He went on to a distinguished military career – leading the 'all black' Buffalo Soldiers in action in the Caribbean, Mexico – reaching the rank of Colonel. He retired to Wilberforce OH (outside Xenia). There you can visit his home, which is under reconstruction inside, but view it from the outside. There's a nice parking lot and no one around so you have 24/7 access. I got there late in the afternoon – serendipity – and ran it. The home is only open on select days during the year for viewing.



Colonel Charles Young
Buffalo Soldiers MN18

Whew – made it to Dayton with no more Civil War battlefields to visit – and some other interesting historic sites. Been a good trip.

That night I stopped in Xenia – 20 miles outside of Dayton. Country Inn – old, worn, 50s style unit but adequate. \$60. Didn't feel like fighting the Dayton area traffic and congestion or finding a motel there that evening. Dinner at new Chinese Buffet place across the highway. Slept well. Not far to Dayton now!

Day 9 - Wednesday

The morning was good with temps in the upper 40s. Not shorts and tee-shirt weather for sure. I headed on out after a breakfast at a Big Boy restaurant a few miles down the

road toward Dayton. There was one more park I could run one more park before getting to the motel a day early.

Dayton Aviation Heritage HP11

The name Wright Brothers is synonymous with Dayton. This is where the two brothers opened their bicycle shop in downtown Dayton - first just repairing bikes, then making and selling a line of them. They did well and prospered. They were inveterate tinkerers and came up with inventions for the bikes – making them more reliable – and producing the first 'coaster brake'. In the 1890s, bicycles were a craze – they would sell for \$40 to \$100 each - which was a lot of money back then – each one hand crafted.

Today, there are six sites preserved in the area – including their 4th bicycle shop downtown – and the Huffman Prairie Flying Field and Interpretive Center. After looking at the NPS info, I decided the best chance for a large parking lot and least noise operating environment would be the flying field – which is out by the Air and Space Museum northeast of town. Yes, it was fairly quiet noise wise and a good lot. Had a good run there. 171Q went in the log in short order. Fun!



Dayton Aviation Heritage HP11

While there, KD8WEY, Mark stops by. He thought he'd have a quick activation. He was running an IC-706 to a hamstick on a single magnet mount on the roof of his car. That doesn't work well.....he only got 8 QSOs after 40 minutes on 40m – just wasn't being heard....(he was spotted by N4CD on all 3 sites – W6RK, Facebook NPOTA, and DXSummit.fi). Good effort. He's had better success in the past. 40M was pretty funky for many days during the trip – 'poor' on the propagation sites/banner.

OK....I stop by the visitor center there.....nice..... and then it's time to head on in to the motel I stay at every year – now a Knights Inn (changed from Super 8) – just south of downtown Dayton. Time to rest up for the big event.

So far it has been 2649 miles on the road. It's only 1030 miles directly from my house to Dayton, but heck, the N4CD mobile seldom goes 'directly'.

Time for other coverage of events/QSO Parties

New England QSO Party

N1FD Mobile

AB1OC Ag1A KC1ENX

We had a great first time at operating the club's callsign during this NEQP. Propagation sucked on day, as it did for everyone. Snagged the mobile's Scorpion ant on a bridge or low tree branch while crossing the river in Windsor, VT. Recovered to a point and soldiered on. Was happy to hand N4PN WASVT for his clean sweep--we await the steak dinner offer for making that possible.

NJ1F - mobile - ops NJ1F, K2XA - 184 cw QSO

Thank You Saul K2XA for being available to do the operating. We were able to put several rare counties in VT on the air Saturday. Everything worked and we were able to reduce the "RF NOISE" in the Imapala

Arkansas QSO Party

from the 3830 reflector:

N5PHT - Portable - 150 cw

Had fun even though band conditions were terrible from here. I am set up at Daisy State Park in Pike County, AR in our RV. 100 watts and G5RV.

K5ZZR mobile -

I didn't have much luck going mobile Saturday in the ARQP. I was in the mountains of SW Arkansas, Servier and Polk, and I guess I'll blame the early morning band conditions and the valleys. I gave up after only 2 contacts for 2 hours of calling CQ and drove back to Oklahoma. At 4:30PM I tried 40M from my home QTH and conditions were much better. For whatever reason my usually trusty Tarheel was not up to the task. I may give up going mobile until the sunspots are more numerous and stay at the home QTH for the nearby QSO parties until the cycle begins to peak again. Darn.....

K4BAI - fixed - GA 23 cw 7 ssb

This seemed like the best AQP ever with more activity and enthusiasm. Congrats to the organizers. Score including 1400 bonus points. Still need ARKANSAS and LEE counties all-time. Thanks for all QSOs and hope to see many of you in Dayton this week.

73, John, K4BAI.

The Dayton Hamvention

Thursday in Dayton

If you are a QRP enthusiast or just have a day to kill, you can attend the Four Days in May QRP event (FDIM) held over in Fairborn. Several hundred show up each year including now a bunch of NPOTA/SOTA type folks. About half the 'activations' are by QRP folks – or folks running a barefoot KX3 (10w cw) at portable set ups along trails, in parks, at monuments, etc. There's a formal program of speakers – then a 'buildathon' and of course lots of meet and greet. It's \$41 including your 'buildathon' gadget – whatever it might be. They have their own group dinner on Saturday night.

One of the programs was given by N7UN – who has put out several park units QRP. He talked about the NPOTA/SOTA program overall. There was a presentation by Elecraft on the new KX-2 hand held radio – half the size of the KX-3, same power – 80-10M. SSB/CW/Data. It's amazing how much they cram into that hand size radio! Another presentation was on easy ways to build 'thermatron' circuits – ie, tube circuits – using bread boarding techniques. I skipped out on the buildathon – which was a single transistor 20M QRP transmitter this year.



The Elecraft KX-2
Eric, WA6HHQ

There would be 25 KX-2s available at Dayton – and yes, you can get an antenna tuner internal option as well! Nifty.

Here's some info from the Elecraft site:

“Our KX2 “stealth” transceiver can go wherever your imagination takes you. Thanks to state-of-the-art construction techniques, it’s only 5.8 x 2.8 x 1.5” and weighs just 13 ounces—making it the smallest full-featured HF radio on the planet. Yet it puts out up to 10 watts, covers 9 bands, and shares many features with the KX3. It also works with the KXPA100 amplifier.

To maximize your freedom to roam, you can outfit your KX2 with an internal 2.6 amp-hour Li-ion battery. Current drain is as little as 135 mA, yielding up to 8 hours of typical operation on a single battery charge. There’s also an internal automatic antenna tuner module (KXAT2), which can tune a random wire, dipole, or whip on multiple bands.

A rear tilt-foot angles the KX2 for use on any surface, from desktop to park bench to rock. The KX2 also makes a great mobile rig, and can even be used hand-held. It includes a built-in mic for HT-style operation.

The KX2's powerful 32-bit DSP offers features dual watch, stereo audio, user-programmable filter bandwidths, noise blanking, noise reduction, and auto-notch. RTTY and PSK data modes are built in—no PC needed—as well as a memory keyer and digital voice recorder for transmit.”

Once again – nifty – real nifty if you are a back packer...or want 'stealth operation' or climb mountains! 13 ounces! (battery not included).....2.6 AH Li-On battery option.

- - ----

Later that day I headed over to the flea market to see what was going on. Met Mike, KA4RRU and Kyle, WA4PGM at their spot. Not a whole lot was going on but lots of stuff is quickly sold as people unload things from their cars. I didn't see much of interest and not a whole lot of sellers were there. The day is mainly for set up by the large vendors with multiple tables, canopies, etc. Dinner with Mike and Kyle at the Mexican restaurant El Toro. Then it was back to the motel to rest up.

- - - -

Friday at Dayton.

Everything begins on Friday – the flea market opens at 6am for flea market ticket holders and at 8am for the crowds. The weather was in the 50s. Not bad – no rain – which had been threatened. The flea market slowly got going. I didn't see a single thing 'I had' to have. Bought a few coax jumpers with PL-259s – average price about 70c. I hate soldering on coax connectors so I bought a few spare ones. I'm set for a couple years. I wandered up and down isles for a while. Hit the pub for a second breakfast. The inside opens – and I go inside. MARAC has a booth – with W4SIG and KS4BO there most of the time. Very nice set up and in a busy place. Lots of CH stopped by – including KB0BA, N0XYL, AA8R, W8TAX, DK2OY, and loads of others. I spent a few hours resting my feet there and giving support.....



W4SIG KS4BO MARAC Booth

Friday afternoon the rain showers threatened. The flea market closed up in anticipation.....but just a few sprinkles occurred. Later than night, the rain would move it. Rained Friday night.

You'll hear DK2OY in many of the state QSO Parties as a regular.



DK2OY

On Friday afternoon the County Hunter Forum is held. I did a quick head count and came up with about 60 in attendance including many first time visitors. The program, with Tim, W8JJ, coordinator, first started off with Randy, AA8R (President Elect) giving a good summary of 'What is county hunting?'. Then Bob N4CD gave a presentation on National Parks on the Air – what it is , how to participate as a 'chaser' or 'activator' and the ins and outs of the program.



CH Forum
Partial view of the room



Tom, K4ZGB
Very Active in QP's

Afterwards a short round of introductions followed – then 20-25 or so headed to the Golden Corral for more meet and greet and chow.

Whew....my legs were worn out from wandering the flea market and inside the buildings. Lots to see but not much tugged at my wallet. Rested up at the motel for the next day.

Saturday at Dayton

I'm up early in the morning and over to the flea market by 6:30. Everything was wet. Time to look for more goodies. There's not much showing up. The sun on Friday morning had turned to total overcast. Looked like there would be showers on and off all day.

There was lots of Heathkit gear from the 1960s. SB-series radios by the dozens. Not too many buying. We're reaching the point where baby boomers are 'cleaning out' and downsizing and the collector 'curve' has moved another 10 years. There were half a

dozen Collins rigs – most still sitting with no buyers – at least at the price asked. Not many Hallicrafters and almost no Knight Kit stuff. Not much old VHF/UHF equipment like Cleggs either. There were some less seen stuff like the GPR receivers, just a big of military surplus – ARC 5s, etc. There were lots of places to buy radio power cables, connectors, etc. Almost no computer stuff this year. Maybe 20% of the flea market spaces were empty and another 10-15% were 'parkers' who just get a flea market ticket, never sell, but park a car so they can load junk into it that they buy. However, it's still the biggest – and you can walk miles getting around it. Hmmmm...tmy legs are getting worn out. Not sure how many more years I can keep doing it. I started way back in 1970 – it was easy to walk the miles then – hi hi.

Did not see a single regen receiver for sale other than a new MFJ solid state unit.

It's time for the big ARRL NPOTA forum at 9:15. The room is packed...a couple hundred people. Sean, KX9X and Norm N3IZ, talk about how NPOTA came about.....and what went into software programming of LoTW to handle it. Very nice. Lasted about 90 minutes and got to meet a lot of other park chasers and put faces to calls.

There were some rain showers in the morning in the flea market – sort of put a damper on things while it was raining. The insides of the building filled up. The MARAC booth is doing well with lots of visitors.

I wandered the flea market again, wandered inside the building, at a slice of Dayton pizza....then got worn out. Headed out about 2pm.

During the event, the ARRL sponsored a station at the downtown Dayton Aviation site at the Wright Brothers cycle shop. John, KD8MQ, and helpers set up a station for Friday, Saturday and Sunday where hams could come by and get on from HP11. This was to provide anyone with the ability to get on and 'activate' a park.

John reported that two new people came and activated a park for the first time, while other experience ops dropped by to make a few more contacts. You'd use your own call to get credit in LoTW for an activation. Rain hurt the time on the air on Friday and same Saturday morning with some showers. The set up was outdoors on a picnic table.

I had some time on Saturday afternoon and the site was on the way back to the motel with a short detour. There's a visitor center there, and on occasion you can tour the bicycle shop (restored interior) where the Wright Brothers operated. After they couldn't get their gliders flying, they set up their own wind tunnel to take data, and found out the

'current wisdom' was wrong. They used their own data and succeeded in hundreds of glider flights out at the flying field. Then they moved on to powered flight. Nice museum there, too.

I operated for a while since no one was using the rig – put another 22Q 40M SSB into the log – and since it had been 24 hours since I ran it before, credit for another 'activation'. Others showed up soon, I let them have their 15-20 minutes and the newcomers kept it going.



KD8MQ at ARRL Special Event Station
Dayton Aviation HP11

Then it was back to the motel to rest up. Dinner at the Eastern Buffet a short distance away. Time to recuperate for a Sunday dash for home via two more new parks in IN and one in TN. It had been a good year in Dayton but no 'treasures found'.

US Counties QSO Party

We'll have more on this once norm digests all the logs and issues the official report. N4CD ran a few in between parks – and even at some parks. This happened on my way to the Dayton Hamvention.

Meanwhile, from the 3830 reflector:

KN4Y Mobile - 624 cw qso - 119 Counties

Band condition varied from coming and going to going and coming. Overall signal strength was good. Ran in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. Only worked 1 VE station but several DX with big signals. Worked a few mobiles I could hear. Weather was great, no rain.

K4BAI - fixed - GA 91 QSO 61 counties

Bands pretty good for domestic QSOs.
Thanks specially to the mobiles. Hope to see many of you at Dayton this week.
73, John K4BAI.

WA6KHK - fixed - ca 294 QSO 255 counties

Lots of good ops and rovers but condx not so hot on west coast. 40 meters never really opened up in early and late hours. We tried our best.

N6MU - fixed - CA 212 qso 194 counties

The cone of silence was lowered most of the weekend. Barely made 200 Qs. Very frustrating. Congrats to WA6KHK and WA2VYA on the big fixed scores. 73...

John, N6MU

K4ZGB was mobile - worked 110 QSO and 51 counties

N8II -fixed WV - 167 cw QSO - 128 counties

We had a dreary, chilly, wet week with only 2 sunny days the week leading up to the QP, so with a backlog of yard work, I didn't even check the contest calendar to find the moved CH QP. I started at 1945Z and found long skip on 20, but thankfully most all of the mobiles were far enough away to work easily. I was able to run quite a few stations on 20 and some on 40. Mobile activity was down a bit from some past years, but not shabby. There was enough activity to keep me fairly busy. Sunday featured slightly better conditions, but less fixed and mobile activity, so I did other things for hours. It was fairly slow.

Many thanks to all of the mobiles who put in long miles to give out points and counties. I think only Ray WB0PYF, Fred K0FG, Ed KN4Y, and Norm W3DYA who I did not work all that many times were active both days. Also worked several times were NF0N, N0KV, W9MSE, K7TM, W4SIG, K4ZGB, and N4CD. Several German hams were active chasing the counties and I had two or three quite loud JA's call on 20 around 21Z. Van, WC5D was stuck at home after a minor car fire.

73, Jeff

On the Road with N4CD III Headed Home!

All good things come to an end – and it had been almost two weeks on the road at this point – so it was time to think about heading home. I'd had good success in hitting all the parks on the way up on the plan, plus a few more! Only two left there in IN to do...one in northern TN, then a bee-line toward home following the GPS lady's instructions.

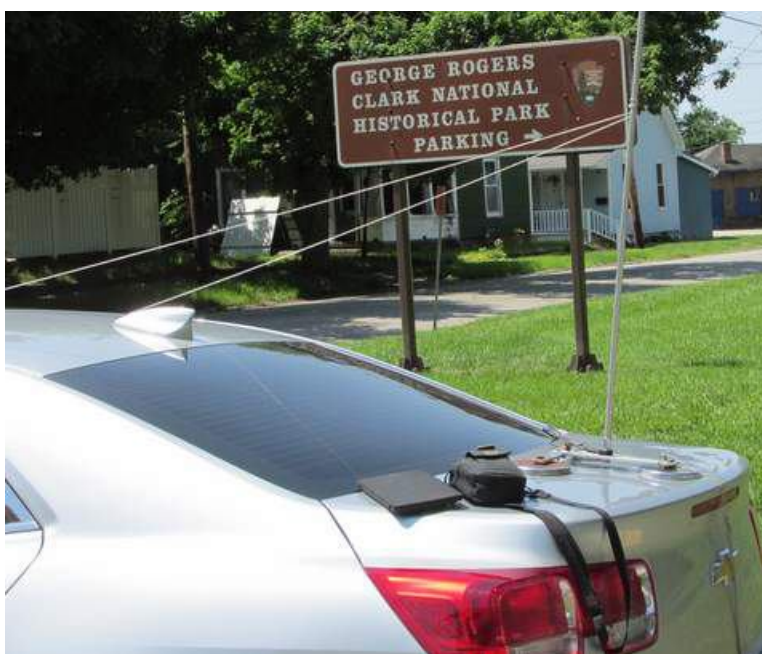
The legs were totally worn out.....I wasn't going to do much anyway at Dayton on a Sunday. Most folks leave but a few folks stay for forum's like NF0N's Bicycle Mobile Forum Sunday morning.

For N4CD it's two whole days (1000 plus miles) to get home so time to get going early in the morning after a quick breakfast. On the road at 6:30am EDT. Fortunately I'd run the first bunch of the first to come up counties already on the way there – didn't need Double Diamond contact for those – and there wouldn't be any propagation stateside at that time. Time to head to Vincennes IN – Knox County - on the far west side of the state.

George Rogers Clark HP13

It took a while to traverse IN from east to west – but there I was. Never heard of George Rogers Clark? Me either, which makes a lot of us. I'd been through Knox County IN several times and even stayed overnight here.

Turns out he was one of the most influential commanders during the Revolutionary War. He fought in the remote country west of the Appalachian Mountains. Here, frontier settlers fought the British and Indians. Settlers were crossing the mountains around 1776 – through Kentucky via the Cumberland Gap. In 1777, the British at Fort Detroit were sending raiding parties down into these regions destroying the settlers settlements. Later, he raised an army and took the battle to the British in northern OH. While he never captured Ft Detroit, his efforts at containing the British led to the US acquiring all the territory in the midwest, with the British relegated to what is now Canada. There's a big memorial, built during the 150th celebration of Independence there on the grounds as well as an interesting visitor center. 106Qs in short order.



George Rogers Clark HP13

One more to go and it is in Indiana – another Abraham Lincoln site

Lincoln Boyhood Memorial NM15

After the the family left KY where Lincoln was born, they settled in Spencer County. This park preserves the most tangible links to his childhood and youth. His mother died here and was buried a short distance from their cabin. Nice visitor center, large memorial, and site of their farm. 75Q's in the log on cw and ssb. Took a quick look around and then had to be on the way toward home.

Next was a long drive down to TN – to Fort Donelson in Stewart County TN.

Fort Donelson BF04

I arrived here late – found a motel – the Dover Inn – think I've stayed there before – it looked very familiar – then headed over to the NP unit to see if I could run it late in the evening. It was 2232z – and serendipitously there was no gate! Many park units have gates and they close them at closing time – usually 4:30 or 5 PM and you are out of luck till the next morning. Sometimes – not always, the gates are recessed a bit so you can be on park property in front of the gates. You never know for sure till you get there. Or unless someone else tells you about the park first. There's a battlefield road you can tour. Back to Civil War era. I was still overdosed on those so didn't get into the history

of this one. Cemetery, auto tour route, the whole deal here. I've been by this NP before – just never had a reason to 'visit it'.

I pulled into the visitor center parking lot and put out the park - 75 contacts – then headed to dinner at Mama Meas nearby. Slept well.



Fort Donelson, TN BF04

Monday 5/23

There are no new parks left to run on the way home. I went through 31 new parks on the way up – bringing the total to 107 different parks, monuments, memorials, battlefields, military parks, etc, run. I reached my goal of over 100 for the year. My average per park is over 100 QSOs/park still. Some folks have piles of 'activation with many, many of them at 10-20 QSOs.

I zip along on I-40 headed to Little Rock (Pulaski County). Boring.....same highway I've driven 30 or 40 or more times before. I realize I'll be passing close to the Little

Rock Central School site. Hmmm...how am I doing for time? That's only been on the air a few times. If I take a 1.5 hour detour, I'll still be home by dinner....soI take the detour. I've run this before. I know the drill.

Little Rock Central School NS-45

This is the place where the first test of school integration took place. Nice visitor center in downtown area – but quite a bit of QRN there. It's only be run a few times (See the stats column on the ARRL NPOTA page for how many Qs and activations have been made). Whipped off 75 contacts in an hour then had to head home.

Arrived home at 6pm after 3,909 miles of driving. The car was up to 18, 607 miles since mid Jan 2016. All miles from running parks. And counties in between!

Hope I hit something you needed along the way – the route went through lots of counties. Now I've got to upload the 2460 QSOs to LoTW

New Coloring Books

Sam, W5GND, is now printing the Coloring Books (county map books) similar to those previously printed by Magellan (N4UJK) and the B&B shop (W0OWY). They are \$15 postpaid. He's gone to extra effort to make the county names 'readable' with larger type for them.

Awards

USCA#1255 KS4BO	Dave	February 9, 2016
USCA#1256 WB0PYF	Ray	March 2, 2016
USA-CW #148 NM1G	Chuck	5.16.16
3rd Time #249 K4YT	Karl	4.29.16,
Master Platinum #26 AB7NK	Mary	5.6.16
Bingo IV #11 WA9DLB	Tony	5.17.16
County Challenge Level 8 K0PFV	John	3.16.16
Digital 2000 #2 K8QWY	Ed	3.21.16,
County Challenge Level 15 K8QWY	Ed	3.16.16,
US Presidents #53 K4PBX	Jim	3.13.16

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

There are two QSO Parties plus Field Day in June. You also have the ARRL VHF contest as well as some smaller events.

June 4 1600z to Jun 5 0400z

Alabama QSO Party

CW Ph

RS(T), county or SPC

www.alabamagsoparty.org

June 18 1600z to Jun19 0200z

West Virginia QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

www.qsl.net/w/wvsarc

June 25 1800z to Jun 26 2100

ARRL Field Day

CW Ph Dig

of xmtrs, class,

ARRL/RAC section or “DX”

www.arrl.org/field-day

That's all folks.....