

County Hunter News

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Volume 15 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, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz. The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://marac.org/awards.pdf>

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) 30M CW Frequency. OK.....there's confusion.... some say to use 10.122.5 unless the 'beacon' is there. That's the WA4SZE/B that sits on 10122.1 or so and spews digital crap onto our frequency but I haven't heard much out of it lately. But how do you know when the beacon is on if you can't hear it? So folks are supposed to go to 10.124.5 when the beacon is there. That leads to folks missing QSOs on 30M as they are listening on one frequency or the other, or having to tune back and forth continually. On the trip to the MI Mini, some ran on .122.5 and some ran on 124.5 all the time. If 10.124.5 works, why don't we all sit there instead of trying to guess when we need to change frequencies due to the beacon? Is the beacon still around?

2) MI Mini Afterthoughts

It was a great get together. Jim, N8HAM forwarded the group picture



Many headed home quickly, but N8KIE, Bob, and Gene, K5GE headed to New England to work on their Double Diamond Awards. Bob ran Dukes for the folks as part of that. Out west, Jerry, W0GXQ headed back to CO via many counties in NE, and Terry, WQ7A had a long trip back to WA. Don, K3IMC, was planning a 'county hunter' route home but Murphy caught up with him and nixed his antenna half way home.

3) State Annual Park Passes

If you visit a lot of state parks (or visit the same one frequently) you can often get an annual pass. Some states only provide them to residents. Others let non-residents buy them – perhaps a little bit higher.

In TX, it's \$70 bucks a year so unless you are running lots of TX parks, it doesn't pay to get a park pass as the fees are usually \$3 to \$7, with some 'free' – maybe half of them. Or you can find an area just inside the park but not inside the entrance gate. On the trip to MI, since I was going to run about 20 parks, I decided to get an annual park pass. \$33. However, this year, since it was before 'the season which starts May 1', not one of the entrance gates was manned, but they have the 'self register booth' so you feel a bit guilty sneaking in for an hour without paying. So I buy the MI pass and have one from NM as well. Guess I better head that way again this year to get my money's worth – hi hi.



Headed through IN to Dayton soon – Checked IN – ouch.....out of state park pass there is \$70 for a calendar year. No thanks...but their entrance fees are \$8 to \$9 per park-double ouch. Only have 3 IN parks on the route so I'll bite the bullet and pay....or maybe look for a way to run the park without reaching the entrance gate(?).....we'll see. Some are 'free' – no gate. Hard to justify \$10 for a 1-2 hour visit. NY state is bad that way too and no options for out of state folks to even buy a pass. Same for VT – think I spent \$40-\$50 in each state on entrance fees so far.

4) Crimped on Coax Connectors

There often a pain in the neck and about half of them go bad sometime during their life. On my big 4 magnet mount one, the one I use for 40M SSB, the coax became intermittent at the connector. Turn the coax a bit and it would go open. Drove me nuts coming back from MI. Not a problem if you stopped – you could get it working, but when you drove along and hit a bump – it would go bad. So I dug out the coax connector replacing stuff and fixed it. That's not one of my fun activities.



Bad connector

Most of these only have a poor mechanical connection (no soldering) to the shield and it goes bad - either corrosion or wear and tear. However, if you buy a new or used mag mount, you'll get a crimped on connector buried under the rubber jacket. Likely within a few years or sooner it will go bad.

K0BAK Rove Report

K0BAK rove report for April 24 – 28.

My attendance at the 2nd triennial VHF Superconference in Dulles VA afforded an opportunity to activate parks in DC before, during, and after the conference in my quest to earn the award for activating them all. 11 parks were activated, 8 of which were new-to-me DC parks. As a result, I should have “only” two townhome Historic Sites left to complete DC parks.

Location, location, location

My Washington DC rove last week was all about that real estate cliché. Finding just the right operating locations beforehand was the key to activating DC parks that week.

April 24 was my travel day down to the conference hotel. I wanted to activate DC

locations on the way to Dulles within the fairly short time between horrible DC rush hours and the hotel check-in time. The trip did not start well. About 5 miles from my home, the TV van “service engine soon” light came on. This is a van that’s almost 20 years old, so it would have been prudent to cancel the POTA part of the trip and travel down to the conference in my normal car. But I took a big chance to continue the trip, partly because I wanted to activate POTA parks, and partly because I had struggled for several days to install microwave equipment into the van that I wanted to show off to my VHF friends at the conference.



In POTA, multi-state trails have separate counts for each state. One of the most unusual type of trail in NPS is the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT (K-4567): it is a water trail. Absent renting a boat, I needed to be within 100 feet of a waterway that’s part of that extensive trail system. The only publicly-accessible spot I could find within DC was a parking location in Anacostia Park that is 90 feet from the Anacostia River according to Google Maps. I was a bit worried that on that beautiful Spring day visitors such as lunchtime office workers would take up the handful of parking spots. Luckily there were several spots available so I was able to activate K-4567. Since I was in Anacostia Park, this location was also in National Capital Parks (K-0654) so I was able to make back-to-back contacts with strong stations to activate that park too. Starting on 20m, I made 10 contacts in 20 minutes; not great but not too bad considering how crappy 20m has been lately. Switching to 40m I made a decent rate of about 1 per minute, for a total of 30 contacts at K-4567 as well as 11 for K-0654.

The last park of the day was National Mall Park (K-0655). This was a strange designator in NPOTA. There are quite a number of small parks on and near the National Mall, all of which I activated in October 2016 pedestrian portable. NPOTA automatically gave a second contact to National Mall Park for each contact from a constituent park (for example, Washington Monument, WWII Memorial, etc.). When I submitted my NPOTA logs to POTA, K-0655 was not explicitly in my logs. If I was smarter, I could have carved out some constituent park contacts to submit for K-0655, but did not. Now I was in the position to have to activate K-0655 explicitly even though I actually made hundreds of contacts from that location in 2016. Fortunately, the NPS provides NPS-owned parking lots in the Jefferson Memorial area that are official lots for the National Mall, so I could activate K-0655 from the van. Unfortunately, Metro train lines surround each of these lots. You haven't experienced RF interference until you've had an electric train pass a few feet away (I first experienced this in the Bronx with Amtrak trains), and the Metro trains run quite often. Plus I had one eye on a greasy sketchy guy who parked uncomfortably close to me despite the mostly-open lot. Despite those challenges, POTA chasers came through with 22 contacts on 40m in 15 minutes. I wanted to get out of there out of fear of the legendary DC rush hour traffic, so I packed up without going to 20m, waved to the sketchy guy, and headed west to check into the hotel.

April 25 was not a conference day so it was dedicated to DC activations. Again I was time-constrained by weekday traffic, so I didn't start traveling back to DC till 10AM. The first of two DC locations was a small parking lot for Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP (K-0015) directly on George Washington Memorial Parkway (K-0670) within DC. Only a few miles of K-0670 is within DC, so that was the main goal, though having the C&O Canal NHP at the same location was a nice bonus. I had a good run here, marred only by the occasional loud (RF or AF) vehicle pass by on the Parkway less than 10 feet away. Strong stations got back-to-back contacts, though I alternated spotting myself at K-0015 and K-0670. 45 contacts were logged at the C&O and 27 for the Parkway; 40m dominated but I had 20m contacts as far west as TX and OK. One station answered my call from Jamaica, providing one DX contact in an otherwise DX-less week, although he was just looking for a radio check.



The second parking location was on Columbia Island in the Potomac River, which is much closer to VA than mainland DC though it's within DC borders. Columbia is the only possible location to activate Potomac Heritage Trail NST (K-4564) in DC. From the first location, I drove across the Chain Bridge and down the Parkway on the other side of the Potomac to get to the Island. During route planning, I carefully checked the clearances under the many older bridges along this route where commercial vehicles are prohibited. (My van may look like a commercial vehicle, but it's used for non-business purposes so it's legal on the Parkway. That doesn't necessarily mean it clears overpasses.) There is a fairly large public parking lot on the Island that is the official parking for LBJ Memorial Grove as well as for an NPS-associated marina and for users of the Trail. I had tried hard to find a parking location within 100 feet of the Trail, but was not successful. Therefore I had to activate the Trail with my pedestrian portable Stoooper Station. I operated at the Merchant Marine Memorial since it was on a knoll, photogenic, and well within 100 feet of the Trail. Despite only 100w into a hamstick dipole 10 feet above the ground, I got 28 contacts in about an hour, including a P2P with super-activator N4CD. Only 4 of those were on 20m, hardly worth the time to change the antenna. I swung the dipole from E-W to N-S, and it did help to get stations to the south.

After I walked back to the van and packed away the Stoooper Station, I decided I had time to activate wordy park Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac (K-0784) at the van's parked location. This was an abbreviated session because of the looming afternoon rush hour, netting 14 quick contacts on 40m in 10 minutes. I then took off west to the conference hotel.

April 26, my birthday FWIW, was the first full conference day and there were no significant conference events in the evening so activations were possible then.

Unfortunately, there are relatively few POTA locations in that area of Virginia, but two locations to the south were reachable in about a half-hour in non-rush-hour traffic. My plan was to wait till about 6pm for the traffic to mostly die down, and that time might also get more activation credits by operating in a park as a new UTC day began at 8pm local. I arrived at the primary operating location parking lot only to find the gate closed close to the highway due to in-park flooding. Looking on satellite view, there was another entrance that might work, so I doubled back to that one. Luckily that gate included a few parking spots for staff on property but before the closed gate, so I was able to park on a diagonal there, with little room for my 17' whip to clear the surrounding branches. The operation was a bust though because my screwdriver antenna would not budge. There had been a few times in the past where it would be stuck but manually nudging it upward a bit would clear the problem, but none of that worked. Note that it had worked without hesitation for dozens of operations before that including the day before. Since the gravel lot was muddy and rain was approaching, I reluctantly canceled that evening effort and drove back to the hotel.

The next day was Saturday April 27, with conference talks starting late in the morning. I took that schedule opportunity to work on the screwdriver. The afternoon before there were very heavy rains and a tornado watch, so I suspected that maybe water was forced into the 4-pin control cable connection at the foot of the screwdriver, despite what I thought was a good weatherproofing. With some patience and time, I was able to remove the layers of self-fusing silicone tape and electrical tape without cutting into the cable itself. I did find what looked like corrosion on the male pins and scraped them as best I could, but I didn't have anything abrasive that was small enough to do a good job. After reconnecting the cable, my controller still showed an error. This programmable controller includes a current limiter, so I "removed the safeties" by substituting the simple up/down switch that came with the screwdriver. I was happy to hear the screwdriver move up, after which I was able to substitute back in the fancy controller and it seemed to work again. I "weatherproofed" the exterior connection again and put away my tools just in time to get cleaned up for the first conference talk of the day.

Since it was a weekend day, I could drive to the same two parks again without traffic worries right after the last conference talk of the afternoon (which was Dr. Joe Taylor of WSJT fame). But, I had a time constraint on the other end because the conference wraps up with a 7pm banquet and geeky door prizes for everyone. Knowing the park I went to yesterday was tight, I aimed instead at one of the wide-open parking lots at popular Manassas National Battlefield (K-0712). I had an excellent QSO rate of 37 contacts on 40m in just 22 minutes. Switching to 20m, I had high expectations even maybe for DX since setting sun has given me good results in the past. Alas, 20m was disappointing with only two contacts before I had to leave to stay on schedule, but included loyal

POTA chaser KG5CIK so it was worth changing bands. The next park was the one I went to the day before, Conway-Robinson Memorial State Forest (K-5510). I had a similar good rate on 40m with 29 contacts in just 17 minutes. Given the lousy results on 20m in the previous park, I stayed on 40m till I had to leave to get back to the conference banquet.

Sunday April 28 was hotel check-out and the trip home. This was my day to attempt parks in downtown Washington. I had hoped to also activate Wolf Trap that was along the way, but it took a lot longer to get out of the hotel than I had expected, including an 8-point turn to back my van out of a parking spot where a truck was sticking out on the other side of the parking aisle. With the assistance of two VHFers giving me clearance feedback, I finally got clear and headed for downtown.

Free parking on Sundays attracted me and a lot of other visitors to downtown Washington on this beautiful Spring day. I drove down Pennsylvania Avenue (K-0854) hoping to find a legal spot, but many otherwise available spots were reserved for permits which are probably unused on a Sunday. I wanted to park along the actual Avenue, even though Penn. Ave. Park actually extends into neighboring city blocks (I had a border map if necessary). Continuing down southeast as the city buildings give way to the open Mall and U.S. Capitol area, there was a wide-open and little-used parking area at the end of the Avenue. There may have been a sign about “reserved for Members of Congress and Staff” sign, I’m not sure. :-). With some other trucks parked in the area, I thought I might get away with parking there for a short time since I tried to make my van look plausibly like it’s on Official Government Business. Half-expecting to be surrounded by LEO within minutes, I went about setting up. Using that unusual-looking screwdriver antenna, 17’ mast, and a red traffic cone that says “I’m working here”, I did not get challenged. Netting 24 contacts on 40m in a mini-pileup of 11 minutes, I quickly packed up and got out of there.

Next on my plan was to Uber around the city to try for one or more of the 3 remaining DC parks I needed. But that plan included having to find a spot to park the van. I was very lucky to find a large enough pull-in spot on the north side of Franklin Square (no tight parallel parking this beast for me). Dropping a cone behind to give me a little more room to pull out later, I got out the Stoooper Station and the Uber app, which I last used here in Washington during NPOTA in 2016. Note that the Stoooper Station consists of a heavy backpack with the electronics (and scary-looking rats nest of red-and-black wires), and an even more suspicious rifle-sized bag with a long PVC pipe sticking out. In my paranoia in high-security areas, it feels like it’s shouting to LEO to check it out.

My first Uber stop was White House Park (K-0657), which NPOTA really should have

named Presidents Park because it includes Lafayette Park to the north and The Ellipse to the south of the actual White House grounds. Using satellite and street-view images, I had long targeted specific park benches, one in the NE corner of Lafayette and several in the SE corner of The Ellipse along 15th Street. Although probably more open and better for RF, the Lafayette bench was more exposed to observation by LEO, so I first tried the 15th St. benches, starting at the Constitution Ave. corner. Since I had first seen this area on street-view, some glorified-chicken-wire metal fencing was added right at the edge of the Park, but with cutouts for my targeted benches. This was actually good news I thought because I speculated that that meant the benches were outside of the first security perimeter for the Park ... perfect for POTA activators. I had to bypass the first bench because it was occupied by an unconscious homeless guy, but the next bench was available so I took it. There was a large tree and its low branches quite close to one side that would absorb a lot of my signal, but an available bench with heavy vegetation beats a string of better-situated but possibly-occupied benches. The tree would also only allow the main lobes from my hamstick dipole to point east-west because I couldn't turn it, plus while the whips are over peoples' heads at about 10 feet, I think it still would have felt hazardous sticking out over the sidewalk.

I set up the antenna to include a bungee cord around the tripod and bench for extra stability and spread out the interface equipment on the bench and ground. But after I fired up the radio, it stayed in transmit. After simple debugging I surmised that the footswitch was shorting. In fact, the ridiculously thin wire pair to the female ¼" footswitch connector adapter had exposed copper at the point of the connector. Oh come on! These Heil adapters are not cheap, you'd think they could spend another nickel and have a strain relief there. (A similar failure occurred in a Heil headset during NPOTA; same thing, an expensive product with stupid-poor physical cable connection points.) Luckily, I had a backup hand mic and could still use the headset for receive audio. Not having a footswitch made spotting and logging on my iPhone more challenging, and if you heard me on air you heard my frustrations. After finding a spot to call on 40m and spotting myself, I was obviously not getting out very well because I got very few responses though the callers I did get were strong. I was relieved to hear loyal Mike W8ZST make the first contact, including a second club call. Wanting to make my minimum on 40m first because the hamstick swap would take even longer than normal in this constrained location, I stubbornly continued to call and spot myself on the POTA site, on the DX Cluster, and expressed my surprise and frustration on this Facebook group. Contact number 10 was special though; K8VOX not only provided my tenth contact, but also a P2P contact. Thanks Julie! One additional caller who had been trying multiple times earlier finally made a confirmed contact, then I switched to 20m hamsticks. Five more chasers were successful on 20m, including my awesome log coordinator Jim NU0C and legendary NPOTA chaser Larry K5RK. I was getting

uncomfortable in more than one way, so I packed up, elated that I was able to activate this famously difficult park. Thank you chasers, I'm sure many tried to get me but were unsuccessful because of my compromise location. Maybe someone local will do a better, sanctioned activation in a good RF location.

Since I had such difficulty getting my signal out from White House, I abandoned the rest of the plan to try activations right against town home historical sites at Carter Woodson and Mary McLeod. After getting an Uber back to my van, I had considerable difficulty pulling the van out because a car had parked in front of me just inches from my front bumper, and a scooter was parked a few feet away perpendicular to the curb. I managed to get out of my spot after about 4 shuffles without tipping the scooter, though I did possibly have the option of picking up the scooter and moving it. I met my daughter and SIL for a quick post-birthday ice cream in the northern DC suburbs, and continued on to drop off the van at "my" garage to clear that service light that came on at the start of my trip, and also for preventive maintenance for my planned longest-rove-ever to the Canadian Maritime provinces in just two weeks.

Stats:

11 parks activated

285 POTA contacts

About 520 miles driven

Driving cost not determined but included a number of tolls

Top chasers:

There was a 5-way tie for top chaser with 8 contacts each:

K8PRK, K8VOX, VE3LDT, W8ZST, W9AV

K8VOX is a first amongst equals by bringing *two* park-to-park contacts.

Honorable mention with 7 contacts: KD8EDN, VE3ZN.

Park to park:

N4EX, K-2732 twice

N4CD, K-1531

AD4XT, K-0139

K8VOX, K-4779 & K-0363

W9KHP, K-4667

Logs have been sent to my coordinator, and LotW uploads will occur after successful POTA uploads.

ARRL- DIGITAL WORLD

ARRL Reply Comments Stress Need to Update Technician Privileges in a Digital World

In reply comments to the FCC (comments on comments already filed) on its Petition for Rule Making (RM-11828), ARRL has stressed that updating HF privileges for the entry-level Technician license "is the sole subject and intent" of the petition. ARRL filed its reply comments on April 29, urging the FCC to disregard comments irrelevant to its petition and maintaining that Technician privileges must be relevant within the context of today's technological environment.

"The increasingly rapid pace of change in communications technologies, coupled with the national need for self-training in science, technology, engineering, and math" necessitate the rule changes requested, ARRL asserted. "ARRL made its request because of the gap between today's digital technologies and the privileges accorded the current entry-level Technician license." ARRL characterized its proposal to update the rules as "balanced and modest."

"If adopted, there would be no change to the operating privileges for all license classes other than those of the Technician class," ARRL said. In 2018, ARRL asked the FCC to expand HF privileges for Technician licensees to include limited phone privileges on 75, 40, and 15 meters, plus RTTY and digital mode privileges on 80, 40, and 15 meters. The FCC invited comments on the proposal in April.

ARRL pointed out that some comments filed on its petition address subjects related to other open proceedings rather than expanding Technician privileges, citing comments cross-filed in such proceedings as WT Docket 16-239, RM-11708, RM-11759, and RM-11831. "Those filings should be considered in the proceedings that they address, rather than here," ARRL said.

ARRL said some opposition appears based on fears of increased interference potential due to additional digital operation by Technicians. "It is improbable that all, or even a majority, of Technician licensees suddenly would develop a passion for the same digital

technology," ARRL said. "Our hope and expectation is that many will engage with digital modes on the high-frequency spectrum at issue, but it is unrealistic to suggest that every Technician licensee blessed with new privileges would suddenly appear on the same band."

The comments note the development of very efficient digital modes, such as FT8, which occupies just 90 Hz of spectrum per signal. "The experience with FT8 clearly demonstrates the attraction of the digital modes and the spectrum efficiencies that can be achieved," ARRL said. "This is why opening up limited digital opportunities to new radio amateurs so clearly would serve the broad public interest as well as the specific purposes of Amateur Radio in experimentation and innovation, as enumerated in the governing FCC rules."

ARRL further said that comments regarding disagreement on the definition of encryption for masking the content of certain digital transmissions are also "out of place in this proceeding" and "should not delay initiation of a proceeding" proposing to update Technician privileges.

"Technology has changed dramatically in the Amateur Radio domain, and ARRL believes the requested Technician license enhancement would foster the regulatory goals for the Amateur Service and continue to increase amateurs' historical experimentation and service in a meaningful way," ARRL concluded.

MO QSO Party

MO QP Late **Mobile** Reports the MO QSO Party was at the end of April.

K0I mobile 687 cw 65 ssb qso

First off thanks to all the patient ops who repeated their call or report for us. The condx Sat were weak and SSB would take a caller down right after the call was sent. The reply was gone ! We only had 400 q's after Saturday was done. Sunday things perked up a lot and we stayed busier. 346 q's in 6hrs compared to 400 in 14. Geeez. There were some followers on the spot page and as soon as I sent the spot to the MOQP page U guys were there ! Great! W0S crew was on us with 18 of 24 counties visited. K5CM and W5TM of OK did a fine job of chasing , and even got em in the log on 20m in several counties.

N6MU did his usual chase and made the log 47 times ! Congrats John!

Other frequent calls were K3WJV ,K1RO, W6OAT and WB9HFK . Many others with multiple log entries and we Thank you . The radio was a 7300 Icom with a 500w solid state amp behind it. I ran 3-400w as my Hustler coils are not KW models and hamsticks are rated 300 pep. The 40m Hustler coil split the skin like an overcooked hotdog! Black tape was applied in case of rain and we went on. Logged and sent cw with a Dell laptop and N1MM+. Outside of a few pc hiccups everything went well with rigging and motoring. A big thanks to my driver buddies Bill N0UMP and Dave W0DR. We had fun despite some despair over conditions. It's always fun to hit the roads and see what happens , I'm looking forward to the next contest wherever it takes me .

Thank you all and 73 , Mark KI0I K0I/m MOBILE UNLIMITED HP

N0W/M (AF5Q opr) 110 cw QSO

Called from 12 counties on Saturday, and heard no one. Not even one of the regular people I generally work. Decided Sunday not to repeat Saturday. Conditions were soooo bad, that I only ran 110 contacts. I posted on DX Summit, the W6RK page, called from each county for about an hour total, tried SSB, but to no avail. One request to the people working the party.....look for other stations instead of just a "few" Next year is expedition class. New ground, new type of operating. Saves from people duplicating your route and running your counties identical on both days. Sorry about the bad attitude.

Vy 73, Ron AF5Q (N0W/M)

7th Area QSO Party

A good percentage of all the counties in the 7th call district were on the air – many fixed stations showed up. Propagation again was challenging.

On Saturday, I headed over the local park and worked 70 stations out west – unfortunately just a few in counties I needed. As always, this QSO party has many 'county expeditions' where folks go, set up decent stations with good antennas, and put

out some of the less run counties. Just a few mobiles were out and running this year.

K7DPS County Expedition

(ops AA7VA, AG7GB, WA7NWL) 255 cw 543 cw - GILA AZ

Very poor propagation conditions compared to last year. We were over 400 Qs short of last year's total (we operated under call N7T in 2018 and 2017). Propagation on 20, 40 and 80 could best be described as everything west of a line drawn north/south through New Mexico. AK and HI was open all day and for the most part 20m was only good for local AZ contacts, NM to MT, CA, and the Pacific Northwest. Anything east of NM (mid-west to east coast) could best be described as spotlight propagation; where, we'd get an opening to one narrow area or one single state and within just a few quick minutes that opening would be gone never to return. We heard almost essentially nothing from the eastern seaboard; which was very unusual. We were hoping the 4pt Qs would entice the RTTY operators to come out and play; but we were wrong on that. Thanks to the RTTY ops that were out there for the contacts. Spending time calling in RTTY probably cost us contacts on phone. Maybe FT4 next year? DX would be a few contacts from Spain and Italy in the late afternoon. While last year we made WAS, this year we missed Delaware and Nebraska. As always, thanks to everyone in 7QP, IN QSO Party and NE QSO Party for making contacts with us. It's a LOT of work to deploy as an expedition, but we enjoy the annual tradition of getting together to do this.

W7EEE County Expedition

(Ops AC6CA, N7CPM, W6IA, W7EEE) 242 cw 408 ssb PAC WA

Band conditions not ideal but a great time in WAGRY/PAC. Thanks for the Qs!

WS7L County Expedition 560 CW - PAC WA

Very similar to last year, down by a few dozen QSOs. Events occurred Friday that cost me half a day's delay so I never got my 160 antenna up. I made a K6MM helically wound vertical for portable use that I'm itching to try. Maybe in this fall's Salmon Run. Also compromised on the height of my 40 m vee but it still played very well. High point for DX was a call from a very weak TM6M on 20 meters. The only other real DX (not counting VE/KH6/KL7) was JF1KWG on 40. High points for scoring were all the county lines and mobiles. N7N was everywhere! 12 QSOs in 6 counties. 73 and thanks

for the Q's, and to Kathy KC7USE for antenna help and keeping me fed. Carl WS7L 500 W K-Line, TH3JRS, Inv-L for 80, Inv-V for 40.

K7IDX County Expedition - Okanagan WA 220 SSB

Just happened to be out traveling and Dan W7WA mentioned 7QP was happening so got on to give out a few points. Operated portable at Sullivan Pond in Okanagan county. Using TS-570 with 60 foot piece of wire and a 75 inverted v at 25 feet. First time with new "Battle Born" lithium battery 100ah.....much better than lead acid/agm etc. 270 watts of solar power and EU 1000 generator (which didn't use much)S&P except 75.

K7JSG - County Expedition 14 cw 85 SSB

County Expedition in Skagit County Washington from Bay View State Park. I'm a member of POTA so all contacts get hunter credit for K-3157. Used my FT-897 with a Alpha Antenna End Fed up about 35 ft. The solar flair really messed up 20 meters in the afternoon but in the evening 40 and 80 meters were great. I made almost 1/2 of my contacts after 5:00pm PDT. I was hearing stations on the East Coast on 40 meters out here in Washington. It was a fun contest. First time I was able to participate for the entire day.

K7TQ Mobile (K7TQ and (A0WWW ops) 603 CW QSO

Jay and I had a great time wandering across ID. This year was our best effort in 7QP. We thank everyone who worked us, especially our nearly constant companions N6MU, K0AP, K9OM, and W6TDX who got us 9 or more times.



On May 4, 2019, Jay, WA0WW, and I put 1 Montana, 1 Washington, and 21 Idaho counties on the air. We started on the MT Beaverhead - ID Clark county line on a dirt road at the top of Monida Pass. It was a great start to the day with 72 Qs in a mix of 20 and 40 m. From there we meandered westerly across the Snake River Plain in Idaho before turning north at Boise, then again westerly to nearly the OR border before heading north to my home in Moscow, ID. We covered about 850 miles in the 18 hours.

Our final QSO count was 603 with 51 mults for a score of 92,259 which far exceeded any of our previous 7QP efforts. We had 285 Qs on 40, 317 on 20, and a single one on 15 m when I was able to run our available bands with KK7A as we were passing through his ID Ada county. With an hour and half remaining in the contest we put on the 80 m stinger ready to get several Qs in the last three counties. To our displeasure we got feedback into the computer and were not able to use 80 m. Sunday morning well after the end of the contest at my house, 80 m worked fine.



Operators in 44 states found us. States not heard from were MT, ND, AR, MS, VT, and DE. Only one DX, TM6M, was able to get our attention. Our most constant customer was N6MU, John in CA, who got us in 20 of the 23 counties followed by K0AP, Dragan in KS, who got us in 15 counties. A total of 349 different calls made it to our log.

The rig was an IC-706MKIIG at 100 Watts with a Hustler "Pitchfork" antenna which can do 40, 20, and 15 m with no retuning. We used N1MM+ on a LT4004u netbook. For this 7QP we used a Mortty for keying which successfully overcame the netbook's apparent like for occasional CW stuttering.

K7KC County Expedition 1488 cw 1874 ssb
ops K7UT, N7RXL, NG7M

In 2017 Max/NG7M, and I, Darryl/K7UT, operated from the Grand/Emery county line in Green River as K7UM, the UDXA club call. We obtained permission from the director of the John Wesley Powell Museum to set up and camp over night in their park which placed us within 400 feet of the county line. We set a class record for multi-two operation with 485,000 points. This location is ideal as it offers lawn, shade, potable water, power and tall trees! And the motel next door offers all the other amenities including WiFi. We decided it would be fun to break our existing record for Multi-One

County Line class. And began to make preparations for an effort as K7KC, with club call of the Great Salt Lake Contest Club. On Saturday, April 20th, I along with Graydon/N7RXL, went to Max's home and set up the Spiderbeam we intended to use.

Graydon demonstrates how strong he is by holding the finished product in one hand. We checked out the trailer and equipment that had not been used since Max's 2012 record breaking 409,344 point Single Op effort from a three county line from the Utah/Wyoming border. During the next week Max set up the entire station in his family room and checked that everything was automated as possible. The station consists of an Elecraft K3, an RF-Kit legal limit amplifier, Palstar automatic tuner, laptop with N1MM+, 20 inch monitor, keyboard, an SDR radio to provide a Panadapter display, and other stuff.

On Thursday, May 4th, Max drove the trailer and all the gear down to Green River and began the set up. He was able to find a source of 240 vac power in a sprinkler control box and with permission from the powers that be, ran 220 to the trailer for the amplifier. Darryl and Graydon arrived the next morning with willing hands and more antennas and equipment and the rest of the setup began. We put up an 80 meter dipole fed with ladder line about 50 feet high between two trees oriented north/south. Then the Spiderbeam went up on a 60 foot mast and a 40 meter inverted V was put up, oriented north/south with its apex at 55 feet.

The location was ideal. The weather was perfect. We were excited and in good shape waiting for Saturday morning. We started out on 40 meter SSB with a 151 Q first hour followed by a 165 Q hour, then 260, 136 and 140 hours on CW, and with another 260 Q mixed hour were at 1113 Qs by 1:00 o'clock. Another really productive three hours on 20 meters followed. Then, Graydon came running into the trailer shouting "We have a catastrophic failure!" Sure enough. A microburst came, seemingly out of nowhere, and the mast supporting the Spiderbeam failed.

First order of business was to secure everything we could and decide how to put up the 40 meter Inverted V so we could get back on the air. After about 90 minutes of Chinese Fire Drill we had a antenna back up and continued operating. The rest of the day and evening went well. Sometime in the Midnight hour we pushed over 500,000 points. In the last fifteen minutes Max was able to work the last really valuable DX multiplier AM70URE/8 which was worth 50 Qs to bring us up to 525,312 total points. We think we have another new record. We know we gave it a good effort. We had great fun. During the long hours of set up we kept asking each other, "is this worth it?" Ya it was. It is. On the drive home we started planning for the next one.

K7A County Expedition AZ CHS 513 cw 13 ssb
K6WCS op

County expeditions are a lot of work. There is work in preparation, travel, setup, and finally station and antenna tear down after the contest. The thought of the latter makes the midnight end of the 7QP seem far off. I stopped at 10:15. However, there is no way to rationalize stopping before the end of the contest if you hope to be competitive. It's all worth it though, lots of tremendous run fun. Does anybody else wonder why there is typically no power differentiation in expedition entry classes? Maybe it's time to get an amp. I brought a microphone with me this time and even set up some wav files. I managed to make 13 SSB QSOs. The 2019 7QP was my fifth county expedition (three 7QP and two CQP). Each time I made an antenna change. This was the first time I had effective antennas on all bands 80 thru 10. I used two inverted-Vs, each with its own feedline. The top antenna with a peak at 24 feet has a shortened 80m & 40m element, and a 20m fan. The lower inverted-V is a 15m & 10m fan. With this arrangement, I find there is little tuning interaction between any of the bands. Even though 10m was dead, I tried hard to breathe life into 15m. You never know when you might need antennas on all the bands. Rig: IC-7300 Thanks to all the callers and to all the hams that make the fabulous 7QP happen. See you next year.

73, Bill K6WSC - K7A in the 2019 7QP

K4XU mobile 836 cw

Things started off very slowly. 20m was not open at 6AM local. 40m was the go to band until well after 8AM. 20m never really produced as it has in past years. Virtually no DX, nil from the east coast until way after noon, and it closed as soon as the Back East crowd could use 40m. 15m was a non-starter. This year I could not find a driver. Except for Charlie, KI6Y (SK), nobody who has driven for me in the past has ever volunteered to do it again. I can't imagine why.... So this year I did a solo route again, all in Oregon. It's a 512 mile circular route covering 11 counties in Central Oregon's high desert. I posted the route and schedule on the N7XU QRZ page. It's no fun going solo and potentially dangerous. I can copy and send CW in my sleep, but multiplexing that while driving at speed, usually 9mph over the limit, is taxing. You have to forget about logging so I did. A simple splitter in the headphone line sends audio to a small Olympus digital recorder. One problem is keeping track of what band you're on, helped by the TS480's band change beep and a paper list kept when changing antennas. The other is you must endure the entire contest over again without scenery while transcribing the recording into N1MM. There ought to be a way to couple something like Skimmer with N1MM to

automate this task but it eludes me.

For the past 10 years I have used a Hustler 40/20/15m pitchfork mounted on the rear fender of the Jetta. Doing some modeling based on accurate physical measurements of the Hustler coils, I was blasted by the inefficiency of this setup. On 40m, the antenna efficiency is just 18%. This is neglecting ground loss. EZNEC calculates efficiency as 1-P_{Loss}/P_{IN}. That is -7.5 dB! 20m was a little better at 52% and 15m was 73%. Sure, it makes changing bands easy to keep N6MU happy, but radiating just 18W on 40m is a major handicap.

So I designed new antennas. It starts with a 5/8" diameter x 31" mast topped with a Breedlove elbow. The top of the 80m antenna is at 14 feet, the legal max in Oregon. The coil Q is 620, with a 24 inch diameter top hat. EZNEC says its efficiency is 55%. It must be guyed two ways – to each doorpost – so I usually operate 80m while parked. The 40m resonator has a similar Q, no top hat and max height of 11 feet, also about 57% efficiency. The 20m coil has a Q of 600, 96 inch stinger, and efficiency of 69%. Disaster: I left the 40m coil/stinger on the trunk lid at the base of the rear window after a fast band change to 20m. I drove off and lost it somewhere in Wheeler County. Fortunately I had packed Hamsticks for 40 and 20 in case I hit something like the overhead limit at the Wendy's drive through. A 40m Hamstick mounted on a 31 inch mast works pretty well. Though I have not modeled it, its impedance is 22 Ω at resonance so it is far better than the Hustler's 50 Ω . But I digress. I made as many Q's on 40 as 20m, about 332 each and 171 on 80. The single QSO on 15m caused me to ditch the pitchfork antenna for good. Later in the day I heard a few DX stations working the ARI test. Snagged an IT9. CE2LR begrudgingly gave me a report. Got called by JO7WXN three times. Missed ND and MS, AB and the rest of the rare Canadians. 836 and 55 mults for a final score of 145k. That's 30% better than last year on basically the same route. Yes Virginia, antennas make a difference. Next year I will add a ball mount on the other fender so I can use the ANT 1-2 feature on the 480. As a sponsor of the 7QP, I've got "skin in the game". I hope by giving a good description of my gear it will encourage more mobile operations in next year's 7QP. I'd be happy to help you.

73, Dick K4XU ...N7XU/m

N7WA mobile 403 cw

This year, my wife Diane decided to accompany me on my journey around eastern Washington. I hope she enjoyed it. The scenery was nice as usual and the weather was fine though it had to be boring for her at each stop. However, she came prepared with books, tablet, and music. We started way up north of Grand Coulee Dam and worked our

way slowly through the center of the dry side with a jog to the southeast. I tried one new county line combination (Grant/Lincoln) just west of Odessa. It was a good choice and I'll keep it in mind for the future. We even reserved time for a nice lunch in Ritzville. (By myself, I would have just kept going and I could probably have slipped in one more county.) Propagation wasn't that bad considering the point in the solar cycle but I was surprised when both Japan and France showed up.

Then, there was the totally unexpected solar flare with put a definite crimp in my operations from Columbia, Walla Walla, and Franklin counties. I didn't know about the flare until I got home but I thought something strange was going on at the time. Bad enough being mobile – never mind dealing with the effects of a propagation brown out. I think I could have put another 100 in the log without the flare. Fortunately, after it cleared up, it was gangbusters from the hills of Benton and Klickitat counties. Forty was hot as a pistol and eighty made a good showing after dusk. We called it quits about 10PM local with an estimated 3 hour trip home. I figured Diane had been a good sport and it had been a long day split between 8 hours of drive time and 8 hours of operating. It gets really dark in the hills of Klickitat - too bad the skies weren't quite clear enough for a good view of the stars. No real equipment issues. I did find that the combination I was using to charge the new laptop had noise on 20M – it was fine at home. It wasn't a real consideration since I only charged while driving between stops. I'll play with some ferrites to see if I can fix that. I have two antennas, one is a big bug catcher I normally mount on some copper pipe. Never was strong enough and kept working loose. This time, I tried out a solid one inch aluminum rod drilled, tapped, with a grade 8 bolt insert to hold the coil. Solid as a rock all day. Learned my lesson from last year when I pushed too hard as a mobile single op. Too much driving – too little operating. I saw myself scheduling it that way this year as well and forced myself to back off. We only did 14 counties in all but I had way more fun this year. See you in the Salmon Run...

N6MU - fixed - CA 289 CW

Decent conditions on 20 until 22Z when the band folded and I couldn't hear the mobiles any more. 15 was open nicely for a while but few were there. Top mobile for me was K7TQ with 22 Qs followed by N7XU with 19 and N7WA with 12. Thanks to the many county line operations and expeditions. This is always a fun Party!

73... John, N6MU

Life in the Digital World

N4CD Editorial

Today's kids grow up in a digital world. By the time they become 'teenagers' they've had at least 10 years of constant computer/smartphone use. They watch "TV" on a smart TV connected to the internet and likely most never watch a 'network news broadcast' but get their news via 'social media' – everything from Facebook to Twitter to SnapChat to Instagram and everything in between. The average home probably does not even have half a dozen books on a 'bookshelf'.

Way way back when, say in the 1950s and 1960s, kids growing up didn't have the 'instant' gratification of today. If you had to write a paper for school, it was digging details out of an encyclopedia and the local library where you hunted books on a hundreds of bookshelves hunting for the right category of interest. Maybe you typed up your report on a manual typewriter or did it 'long hand'. You had to work at it and it didn't provide answers in minutes, sometimes not even hours. There was lots of spare time for recreation and most kids had one or two activities outside of school, perhaps scouting where many got exposed to 'signaling' – everything from signal flags to Morse Code. Some got their 'radio' and 'electronics' and 'electricity' merit badges and were exposed to what might be their future hobby of ham radio.

Today? If you don't know the answer – Google it and you've got a good change of finding out the answer. Or put out a query on your Facebook page or other social media account and someone will likely respond. No need to go hunting for a 'how to fix it' book – just look on YouTube for answers on everything from house painting to how to change wheel bearings on a 1957 Volkswagen Bug. Many kids today have short attention spans.....you've got to constantly change things. I doubt many even read hard copy books and work their way through them. Heck, why buy 'paper books' when you can download an E-book for 1/3rd the price?

So where does that leave us for ham radio? If you look at ham radio folks' pictures on QRZ and other sites, the most prominent feature is usually the computer screen. Sometimes two or three of them? If you're doing something like FT-8 digital contacts – one screen for watching the 'waterfall display' and decode – another screen for a logging program perhaps or a spotting site. Where's the radio? Heck, some of the radios today don't even have a 'front panel' – everything is done via the computer interface and your computer is it. You make contacts with it. Or if you are on CW or SSB, same deal. The

microphone and maybe headset connect to the radio along with the antenna. Everything else is on the screen including volume, band, mode, etc.

You can watch the CW spectrum and see who is on what frequency – calling CQ or giving their call.....or on FT-8 or RTTY or other digital modes. You're decoding the whole band. Check the Reverse Beacon Network to see if you are getting out.

Now...some actually listen to the radio and manually tune the dial. Not everyone is 100% computer driven ham radio. But certainly the 'newcomers' to radio often get sidetracked to digital. Heck, you can work DXCC on FT-8 these days in 2 years or less with a decent station – anything from 100w and a dipole up. Try that on SSB with current conditions!

* * * **

(Not that much different than county hunting these days where folks set up their computer logging program to set off an alarm when a needed county appears!) How many actually listen to the radio rather than just watch spots? If you don't spot yourself, you might wind up talking to yourself if you are out mobile. Just a few monitor the frequencies.

* * * * *

So....where does that leave us for the world of County Hunting? You can sort of tell how well things are going by going out on a long trip and seeing how many folks work you in the various counties – and then after the trip by how many MRCs show up in your mailbox. It's not a whole lot these days! Maybe 3 to 7? Back in the 'hey day' of county hunting, you often would fill an entire 10 minute run. On the way to conventions, there would be 20 mobiles on the list at times and often 10 or more. That on 20M and full on 40M as well. Now? A list? You gotta be kidding! Most days there's a mobile or two out there. We're lucky to have folks like Randy, AJ5ZX and George AA4GT who seem to always be around on the bands.

If you remember back when – at conventions – probably 10 or 15 folks would be circulating trying to get MRCs signed. At the MI Mini, one person come up to me and asked to have an MRC signed. Big difference in just 20 years. Attendance has dropped. The 3M in Murphreesboro peaked at over 240 attendees in the 1990s. Last year's National did fairly well though but not as many as some prior ones.

Each month, I take of a few folks from the County Hunter News distribution list.....and

seldom add a new name. Each year ends with 10 less than the year before on the list, and while we have many readers, half of them are seldom heard on the air these days.

So where are we going? What's the future for county hunting that seems to be on a downward spiral despite efforts to recruit newcomers to the hobby?

We face several big problems and one of them is the 'aging' of the 'old time hams' who had lots of 'spare time' to devote to county hunting and those workers who had ham radio as their primary hobby and interest. For a long time, county hunting was oriented toward retirees and older folks and those that grew up in the 50s and 60s. Some could get on at work, or were travelers – some 18 wheel cross county truck drivers. Others had jobs that took them over wide ranging areas – and back then, companies were less restrictive about putting radios in vehicles. Not so today, and the trucks are gigantic noise generators with all the new systems in them.

We started losing newcomers from the 1970s on, and once the computer era started in the 1980s even faster. Then came along cable TV with 200 channels to take up more of your time. Now, the 'smartphone'. Once the 'internet' hit in the 1990s – well, that was a game changer. There were dozens of other things to occupy teens times and middle age folks.

The second problem we face is today's new hams are used to 'electronic confirmations'. Once ARRL's Logbook of the World (LoTW) gained mass support, the world changed overnight. A major factor was National Parks on the Air that got thousands and thousands of new users on LoTW. As postage costs skyrocketed, there was a nice incentive to try to get things done via LotW.

Now, instead of \$3 to \$5 to get a DXCC country confirmed with overseas postage and 'green stamps' (\$1 bills), you uploaded your logs to the secure website and hoped the DX station would too. You could watch your totals climb and it tracked countries confirmed per band and mode. No need for expensive QSL cards and long waits (sometimes forever) for that needed card. Of course, not all DX stations did participate, but enough did so you could run up your totals quickly. They could earn DXCC credits too. Same for WAS and other ARRL events like DX Challenge, ARRL Centennial, etc

CQ Magazine got the hint, and now you can do your Worked All Zones – another popular CQ Magazine Award Program via the ARRL LoTW. You can also work on your basic WPX Award (Prefixes) via LoTW. Some \$\$\$ had to be exchanged, and ARRL takes a 'fee' for awards issued via LoTW for CQ Awards.

The ARRL created the National Parks on the Air program in 2016 – NPOTA – which was wildly successful. It had two parts – but the 'confirmation' process was all via LoTW. It caused me, a non-DX'er, to finally get on LoTW just to participate in that program along with probably 10,000 others for the first time.

The two parts of the program were – Activators – those who went out to the 503 National Parks, Trails, Associated Areas, National Monuments and Memorials – around the country and put them out. Make 10 or more contacts and you got credit for an 'activation'. There was a 'leader board' to track who had how many activations. It was a bit competitive as well where various mobiles could compete for 'top honors'.

There was also a 'chaser' leader board which was VERY competitive – with folks spending endless hours trying to catch the various parks and the ones they didn't have already. Top honors went to K5RK in TX who managed to work more than anyone else.....460 different parks. Not all made it on the air – several were 'off limits', one was in Guam, and half a dozen in AK that took float planes to get to. Not like counties!

Left side of graphic below is activators – right side is chasers. As of 5/5/2019 but it hasn't been updated since Jan 2017 as the program ended.

1 to 25 of 1,492 > >>			1 to 25 of 17,027 > >>		
Rank	Call Sign	Score	Rank	Call Sign	Score
1	KB1HQS	503	1	K5RK	460
2	N4CD	336	2	KR0P	459
3	W7ISG	332	2	W900	459
4	AD0P	326	2	W9RF	459
5	KB3WAV	292	5	K4XO	458
6	WA2FON	289	5	KA9CFD	458
7	AB4BJ	280	7	K0BJ	456
8	AB4WL	254	7	K1RO	456
9	W3MSR	239	7	K5TA	456
10	NA4RR	238	7	KG5CIK	456

You can see that despite my best efforts, N4CD came in second place in activations – hi hi. Ran more parks than anyone else, but since you could run the same parks over and over again, KB1HQS who lived in the DC area with 30 parks within 30 miles took top honors by running the same parks over and over again. That's the way the cookie crumbled on this one. Lots of logs were uploaded and over 30,000 QSOs that year to LoTW for N4CD. A few of the county hunters were in the top hundred as they worked the parks for the counties primarily but if they uploaded their logs, got credit for the parks. It was a fun year.

There were almost 1500 folks 'activating' and over 17,000 chasing – probably several thousand real serious ones. You could easily work 100 stations from a park, and my record was over 390 QSOs from a single park! I had several with over 200 QSOs!

Well, all good things come to an end and at the end of 2016, December 31 at 2359z, the bands fell silent. No more NPOTA. Nothing would happen for most for another two years when ARRL came up with another program.

Now – the point here is that ALL of this activity occurred via 'electronic confirmation'. The ARRL LoTW requires that 'activators' and 'chasers' both upload logs and if they 'match' within certain parameters', both get credit for their activity. I'd hate to think about how many MRC type cards I'd have to sign, and how many QSL cards I'd have to send out if it was all 'via paper'! No way!

In 2018, the ARRL came up with the Grid Chase program. This turned into basically a all digital FT-8 event – partly because band conditions had deteriorated significantly since 2016 as we hit the sunspot minimum or close to it.....and it was easy to work grids on the digital modes. Again, both stations had to upload their logs to LoTW to get credit. Part of the reason ARRL had for this program was to get more foreign hams signed up for LoTW – and LoTW is 'free' to any ham radio operator – both in the USA and worldwide. No charge. Grid chase started over each month, and did include CW and SSB and the 'big guns' were on all three modes. Still, not the same as NPOTA. At the end of the year, FT-8 activity dropped in half. The best I ever did was about #800 in the rankings for working grids – I wasn't on FT-8 or SSB most of the time. There was no activator part which limited it's appeal for me and many others.

Now.....both ARRL's NPOTA and Grid Challenge programs allowed you to operate from anywhere within your DXCC entity and get credit. The same for the ARRL DXCC program. That's different from ARRL's other awards such as WAS that require contacts

from your home area.

So where does that leave us for county hunting? Well, two other things to attract new hams and others have appeared to siphon off more potential county hunters. Let's review what they are.

World Wide Flora and Fauna – which started in Europe about 8 years ago and is very popular there. After the end of NPOTA, folks started looking about for a replacement. Hey, there's a European program we can 'add' the US parks and carry on. And that was exactly what was done with Jason, W3AAX spearheading the charge. Over 3500 US state parks and monuments were added to the European database. This is a system where only the activator has to upload logs. Then both chasers and activators get credit. To receive credit for a 'full activation' you have to make at least 44 contacts from that park – which you can do on one or several visits. There's a leader board and it's competitive – especially in Europe, but more and more US folks are getting on board. Let's call this the 'senior' program. I got involved seriously in 2018. You could get credit for almost all the NPOTA sites you ran, too, so I was off to a good start!

There's two parts - just like NPOTA with 'chasers' and activators. We're talking SERIOUS chasing with some European stations having worked over 10,000 different parks! Same for activators! It's world wide competition and the Europeans have a big head start.

Here's the leader board for WWFF. (at www.wwff.co) as of 5/5/19

Columns across are

Parks Worked

Parks Activated

Contacts Made

Aggregates on Hunter Callsign (without prefixes or suffixes)			NB: Aggregates activity based on exact match of OPERATOR callsign (Quorum: 44 QSOs per reference)								NB: Regi (Quorum:	
#	Callsign	Refs	#	Callsign	Refs	QSOs	#	Callsign	QSOs	Refs	#	Ca
1	I5FLN	13,939	1	SP5UUD	1,267 (1267)	162,230	1	SP9YFF	311,042	1,077	1	-
2	IW2NXI	12,117	2	SP9YFF	1,075 (1077)	311,042	2	SP5UUD	162,230	1,267	2	-
3	DL2ND	12,003	3	SP5ZIM	720 (724)	111,479	3	SP5ZIM	111,479	724	3	-
4	DL1EBR	11,821	4	N4CD	672 (716)	72,589	4	IQ5QQ	100,505	355	4	-
5	UR7ET	11,664	5	SM7FSK	545 (572)	55,006	5	IZ5GST	89,092	290	5	-
6	ON4ON	11,611	6	SP2SV	498 (498)	83,962	6	SP2SV	83,962	498	6	-
7	S52KM	11,379	7	OK1FRT	458 (459)	24,829	7	F4GFE	79,775	25	7	-
8	IK1GPG	11,333	8	OK1VEI	455 (456)	62,316	8	F2YT	74,528	319	8	-
9	UTSPI	11,146	9	SQ9LOM	413 (413)	72,480	9	SP1MVG	73,552	133	9	-
10	S58AL	10,781	10	SP2YMX	365 (370)	27,351	10	N4CD	72,589	716	10	-

Yeah...serious with I5PLN having worked nearly 14,000 parks! First column is chasers. N4CD is way down at about 300 parks worked. I'm not a serious chaser. On the other hand, worldwide(!) N4CD is in 4th place for 'activations' with 672 'full' and a total of 716 total including 'partial' activations. (Some of that was from NPOTA where I only got 20-30 contacts – more than enough for NPOTA) at sites around the country.). I've got a ways to go to match SP5UUD who has put out 1, 267 different parks.

Third column is total contacts made from the parks N4CD is at 10th spot with 72,589 QSOs (and all of them in the last 3 years). Hmm.....got to work at it. SP9YFF is at an amazing 311,042 QSOs from the parks! Wowie! Now, most 'runs' in Europe go 100-200 QSOs with QRP to QRO power. They are serious! Not so much here as there with the high number of QSOs.

So that's the 'senior' program. Just remember it's 44 QSOs you try to get and you register and upload to WWFF via your regional coordinator. For many these days, running set ups like the NPOTA days, you struggle with the propagation. QRP just doesn't hack it very well to reach those 44Qs. Not in the US. In Europe, it does.

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Then later, a splinter group broke off. Seems WWFF only allows 200 new parks per year to be added, and there were at least another thousand or two US entities waiting to be added, including the 'trails ' from NPOTA and 'state forests' and similar. So....a competing program, PARKS ON THE AIR started up. Again, you'd upload your QSOs to the POTA database via a different regional coordinator. Same log – two places to

send it if you participate in both. All the national parks from before, now including the trails, got uploaded along with not only all the state parks but even more. Over 4500 entities. Another thousand are soon to be added.

To make life simple for activators, only 10 QSOs are required from a park to get credit for activation. I call it 'park lite' or NPOTA clone. I've made 10 QSOs in 3 minutes from repeat parks for a 'quickie' just to gain a point for activation credit since their leader board goes by 'activations' just like NPOTA did. (WWFF only gives you credit once for a park – repeats just run up the QSO totals and maybe get you over the 44 threshold if you missed it the first time).

Like NPOTA, there's activators and chasers. Even with QRP and 'buddi-poles' and short verticals with base loaded 'Wolf River' coil verticals, folks can usually get their 10 QSOs. The program has gained traction and hundreds are participating. There's likely a state park or two within easy driving distance of most folks. Here's the POTA leader board. Again, just the activators upload – and folks get credit 'electronically' for the parks worked.

Here's the POTA leader board for activators – down to 10. You can pull up the whole leader board down to 1, unlike WWFF that just lists the top 100.

Call Sign	Activations	Unique Parks	Total Contacts
N4CD	933	715	70514
KB3WAV	795	285	26832
N2CX	532	306	14734
N5PHT	442	47	23443
K0ATZ	387	170	19462
K4CAE	303	178	17518
N4EX	275	215	10331
K0BAK	274	215	12421
KC3RW	268	162	5687
K8VOX	262	186	8912

If you look further down the list, AI5P is one of the listed folks at 153 activated in 121 parks followed by N9JF at 115 in 100 different parks. AB4WL has 221 activations in 86 parks. Not too many county hunter mobiles play in the POTA game

Here's the top 10 chaser list:

Call Sign	Unique Parks	Total Contacts
W8ZST	2024	4694
VE3ZN	1852	4182
N4EX	1817	3239
KO4SB	1813	3314
KG5CIK	1690	4328
KG8P	1567	3256
VE2GT	1562	3562
KD1CT	1513	2495
K8HQ	1334	2182
K0ATZ	1180	2242

About the only call you might recognize is KD1CT – county hunter – who is in the top ten now. If you worked N4CD in a park, you're in the database! AB4WL is a 450 worked. AD1C is at 346. AB7RW is at 325. If you haven't done a quick 'registration' your stats won't show up on POTA. But you are in the database.

Well, that's interesting but what does it have to do with county hunting? The main thing is it is DIVERTING interest from our hobby. Other than state QSO parties when hundreds show up to work the fixed and mobile stations (Some mobiles in FL QP made over 3000 QSOs in the weekend!), not many new folks are chasing counties for the USA-CA Award. For most, it's just bragging rights, and if they are 'high score' they might get a nice certificate. Some QSO Parties you get a 'participation certificate' for just sending in your log! Some QSO Parties are 'sleepers' with not much enthusiasm.

USA-CA suffers from 'lack of electronic confirmation'. Oh, yes, if you can get a eQSL, and PRINT IT OUT, CQ Magazine will accept that. However, eQSL is painful for mobiles to use and painful to go through the confirmation process. I don't use it or plan to. Most county hunters don't. It's mainly a few fixed stations that use it.

Discussion with former Awards Chairman K1BV, Ted, said there 'have been discussion's with ARRL but it is going to take some \$\$\$ to make it happen. So far, nothing. Worse, at this point, CQ has gone five months without an Awards Chairman for all their awards

since K1BV retired. At least, my issues of CQ Magazine are catching up.....they got 3 months behind. Now, I actually got my May issue in May! If anyone wants to volunteer for Awards Chairman at CQ, let them know! So nothing is likely to happen here soon as far as getting USA-CA on LoTW.

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UPDATE DE N4CD: W2VU at CQ Magazine told me at Dayton they have found a new USACA Custodian. He's one of the long time county hunters – but the formal announcement will take place in a few weeks so you'll be in suspense till then!

- - - - -

Yes, newcomers can use Logger to track their progress and even print the MRCs, but it still takes mailing them with over buck in postage both ways for a county – or bunch of counties. None of the other popular logging programs (N1NN,N3FJP, etc) track confirmed counties. Probably you'd spend a couple hundred bucks over the period it takes to get your USACA in postage. Not many venture into the hobby when there are other awards to go after for 'free' or a few bucks for the certificate. Even though it might be five or ten cents a county overall for confirmations at the start with mobiles out, it adds up to get to the end, when you have one or two counties on an MRC as you close in.

In POTA, you can print off reams of awards. For example, you can start earning awards at just the 10 park level. (If you have a decent station back east, you might work ten in a weekend!)

Some of the POTA awards:

Activators

Bronze Award: work from 10 different reference areas.

Silver Award: work from 20 different reference areas.

Gold Award: work from 30 different reference areas.

Platinum Award: work from 40 different reference areas.

Diamond Award: work from 50 different reference areas.

Sapphire Award: work from 75 different reference areas.

Hunters

Bronze Award: work 10 different reference areas.

Silver Award: work 20 different reference areas.

Gold Award: work 30 different reference areas.

Platinum Award: work 40 different reference areas.

Diamond Award: work 50 different reference areas.

Sapphire Award: work 75 different reference areas.

Then you have awards at every 100 level after that.

There's even a dozen more awards for different things. You can fill up a wall with them. All free (sent electronically as a PDF).

So what are we up against? We do have the County Hunting Spotting sites and they are well used. We have Logger – for tracking. For those who have worked all the counties, the second time can go fast. However, we lose about half the people who have done USA-CA. They move on to other challenges or drop out of county hunting. IF Logger would go away, then county hunting would steeply decline.

There's a 'ham radio county hunting' group on Facebook with 118 members, but no one has posted there in months. Maybe we need to revive it? Get it moving once again?

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/241729982564453/>

Fortunately Kerry, W4SIG, has done the work to get and man the MARAC booth at Dayton. No one volunteered to pick up the County Hunter Forum a few years ago and it is defunct now. So the MARAC booth is our main source of recruitment these days. Everyone comes by and wonders what happened to the County Hunter Forum and is there a dinner get together. Its NO to both right now.

Can folks do more in the 'electronic world'? Would something like a leader board make it more competitive? I'm a doubter but, heck, newcomers might enjoy the challenge and might enjoy the 'competitiveness' of a leader board? Any thoughts on this? How would we integrate it with CQ Magazine? Unless you did a LoTW type database, where both the activator and chaser had to upload logs for a 'match', you'd probably have only a POTA or WWFF type system where only the activator uploads the logs. Would something like this count for CQ's USACA? Might be a point for discussion with them if someone would step up to setting up and maintaining a POTA like database.

I had a discussion with Don, K3IMC, at the mini. He was wondering if there was something he could do, along with his website, to help further county hunting. We didn't come up with an answer then.

Some county hunters are working on TopBand – counties on different bands and modes to run up their totals. Usually it's the same 30-50 folks doing it. We've got a core of less than 100 people these days getting on the air and working counties on a regular basis. Even fewer going out and running counties. Risto, W6RK, maintains the TopBand listing. Just log data like MARAC Awards.

While you can look at each individual record on LoTW to see if a county was uploaded, there's no way to calculate a total of counties worked and which ones.

Until CQ Magazine and ARRL get 'counties' into LoTW, we're in a heap of trouble attracting newcomers to the hobby. The average ham is 'watching' his computer screen connected to the radio – and making contacts – DX countries, grids, VHF, Parks on the Air, WWFF, prefixes, WAZ.....and not following or working 'counties'.

The era of 'paper confirmations' has passed for the newcomers. The era of electronic awards is now in full swing. If county hunting doesn't join the trend, the future isn't looking good.

My 2c

de N4CD

* * * * *

From last years issue of the CH News – June 2018

Ted, K1BV, had a short article in the latest CQ about electronic confirmation for CQ Awards. After FIVE YEARS of working with ARRL, you can now earn WAZ (Worked all Zones) through LoTW. LotW requires 'secure' certificates for each station to prevent bogus contacts or uploading false info or 'gaming the system'. It's a simple registration process to get onboard.

Many other popular award programs already have electronic confirmation. The Summits on the Air program, with hundreds of active people and probably a thousand or more worldwide chasing summits – has it's own database system. All QSO s are entered by

both sides of the QSO – like LoTW - and you receive awards based upon the 'points' you earn, the number of summits, the points you get for your activations, etc. Makes it easy to earn awards. No QSLs or confirmation by mail needed.

The very popular WWFF program in Europe, spreading to the US, with over 100,000 QSO s made a year or more, has it's own database system, although only the 'activator' has to upload the file of QSO s. You receive awards based upon that. No QSL cards or equivalent needed. It's now being duplicated by the US Parks on the Air Program.

That gets us back to county hunting. For the first time to qualify for the CQ USA-CA, ,you need all 3077 counties confirmed. CQ will take E-QSLs but very few use it, and it, too, is county hunter hostile. You've got to print off each E-QSL you will use, too. Not simple and most go the mail route.

Even worse for newcomers, the ' Mobile QSL buro' seems to be defunct and a relic of the past. I'm not sure what is going on with that. With so few new county hunters, there isn't a lot of sense 'bunching' cards via a buro these days. The cost effectiveness of a buro depends upon lots of participants and being able to send 3-4-5-or 8 MRCs in an envelope for for checking, signing, and returning.

Most award seekers are using LoTW – for DXCC, Triple Play, Per band WAS/WAZ, counts of countries worked per band/mode, etc, or SOTA, or WWFF. That sort of leaves MARAC and county hunting out in the cold for getting newcomers into the fun of the hunt. The ARRL International Grid Chase is all through LoTW and the wildly popular NPOTA was all LoTW.

Setting up a massive database is not something that MARAC is likely to do – as well as meet CQ requirements for 'hack proof 'contacts. Would MARAC be around in 10 or 20 years and have the expertise to maintain such a database unless we get a lot of new folks?

Most county hunters at this point are not set up upload counties run to any database although that could certainly change. I never touched LoTW until NPOTA in 2016. Now I've uploaded over 60,000 Qs in just 2½ years. (and that is only park contacts! Don't upload counties not in parks). That leaves LoTW for county hunting– hopefully someday – but LoTW has some major issues the way it is set up.

Some of the things that would have to be addressed:

1) LoTW thinks that N4CD, N4CD/m, N4CD/p, N4CD/0 , etc are all different call signs and won't match unless both parties put in the same call. Now, when I run parks, I'm just N4CD but when I'm running counties, it's N4CD/m. WWFF or POTA database doesn't care. N4CD=N4CD/M=N4CD/P=N4CD/7. It only goes by the call. Of course, WWFF awards count no matter where you are in the country!

2) Now, for each county, you have to set up a separate 'station location' and upload the info for a county as a separate log. Maybe 50-80 counties on a trip – meaning 80 separate logs uploaded. Some way of uploading just one file, with 'county' as a parameter for each contact, would be very helpful.

3) Currently, LoTW issues awards based upon 'station location' other than the current International Grid Chase that gives you credit for a grid no matter where you are in the US – if you enter yourself as, say, N4CD. N4CD/m would be earning separate awards. Things like WAS, Triple Play, only count from your 'home location'. Grids this year are the exception and NPOTA was also an exception where your location didn't count to get credit for grids or parks. There you got credit for parks worked no matter where you were. For county hunters, maybe half my counties come while I am out mobile! So if were working on first time as an active mobile, I would want all that credit for them. You do get credit for WAZ, DXCC no matter what your 'station location' as long as it is in the lower 48. Somewhere in the vast coding, there is the ability for awards to be from anywhere in the DX entity like the NPOTA and Grid Challenge.

4) For ARRL, HI and AK are DX, but they would be part of the USA-CA so somehow that would have to be addressed to work those AK and HI USA counties. Again, the computer code was there in NPOTA to eliminate the 'HI and AK' problem.

5) LoTW doesn't understand 'county lines'. While with Grid Chase, you can enter a multiple grid line – up to 4, and for NPOTA there were combinations of 'two-fers' and up to 'five-fers' at one location. Credit for 5 entities with just one contact. That would have to be addressed. County hunters love those 'lines'. So do QSO Party folks. The computer code exists already to do 'multiples'.

I don't know if ARRL will ever get around to getting USCA into LoTW. It sure would be nice and likely attract thousands of new county chasers! Likely 10,000 out there already have 500 counties confirmed in LoTW – and NOT A ONE of them count for the CQ award. Maybe there would be some way of 'scanning' the LotW database and printing a file of confirmed counties – but LotW would have to get smart about the 3077 counties in the US, understand 'independent cities', the 4 Judicial Districts of AK, new additions/deletions, etc, to do that. But who knows? Maybe ARRL's next big event next

year will be working counties? (Well, we can dream, can't we?)

Indiana QSO Party

Rovers scheduled to be out included WN8O, K9WX, KJ9C, W9KHP/m, KA9GDW, K9RBH, K9IZ, N9SE

Every county was scheduled to be on the air. From TX, I didn't hear more than two IN stations on 40m during the day and just a handful on 20M. Not the 'right distance' for me. Much of the activity was on 40/80M

from the 3830 contest reflector:

N3DPB - multi op 13 cw 177 ssb

Operator(s): AC3BU K000 K3WDC K6ZO KB3VQC KM4ND N3DPB WA3EKL

ALWAYS GREAT AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE INDIANA QSO PARTY. THIS IS A ONE HOP SPECIAL. WE COME READY FOR BEAR. THIS PARTY IS A GREAT ASSET TO THE WEEKEND AND ALWAYS A LOT OF FUN FOR ALL. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT ONE. THANKS FOR ALL THE QSOS. 73 PAT K000 AND THE CONTEST CREW

WT9U - fixed - IN 387 cw 306 cw

40 Long from the start. Didn't work a lot of mobiles.

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 72 cw 29 ssb

Nice activity in this QP! Thanks to Mark and the INQP gang for putting on a fun QP 73s
Dave WN4AFP

K9WX mobile - 488 cw 8 ssb qso

No further comments

from Facebook:

AJ9C mobile

“Well another INQP is in the books. Originally I thought maybe I would forego being a mobile but circumstances had too many counties uncovered so I relented and went into battle once again. As I thought about it, why the heck did I buy the KX3 and amp if not to go mobile!

I was successful this year in getting the 75m hamstick to resonate on 80m cw. Last year the Fancy Feast cat food can cap hat only moved the needle from 3700 to 3625. This year the bottom of the old Folgers can (36 oz) got it down to 3525! Everything set up in the car easily and WORKED!

I had what I consider a bit of an advantage this year. Many of the counties I was going to activate this year I had done last year. So I knew where I wanted to go to minimize local Po-Po interest and RF noise. Usually my operation from the mobile gets me the same 40-50 folks at each stop. For whatever reason wandering the band and calling folks never results in much success especially on SSB. This year was no exception. I had no responses to my CQs on 20m SSB and no responses to calling stations on 20 SSB. 20 cw was marginally better. Thirty QSOs is all I could muster on 20m. I did stick with 20m until about 4pm mainly to work DL3DXX who responded to an email I sent him about the INQP.

After 4pm I switched out the 20m Hamstick to the 80m antenna. I have two mag mounts for the Hamsticks I usually dedicate one to 40m and then use the other for 80/20. Next year I think I will put the 80m on right from the start. Signals and multipliers were better on 80m. The consensus was that I was late to the game on 80m as signals from the start of the contest were good just not plentiful. (note to the INQP crowd check 75/80 from the start of the contest and call CQ).

The most QSOs were made from the Adams/Wells county line with 66. The fewest was Rush at the very end of the contest with 15. Folks if you are going to be active try and send a email to the HDXCC to get placed on the activity map. That is where our internet

presence is and the more activity we show perhaps the more activity we will get from folks looking for us. While operating the DeKalb/Noble line. I heard two other stations sending Noble for the exchange and 3 sending DeKalb. Both of these counties were "empty" on the activity map until I went mobile. Had the stations announced maybe I could have moved my start location which would have allowed more time to cover counties KJ9C wasn't able to get to due to his Murphy-fest.

A few less contacts than last year but a couple of more mults so about the same this year as last.

Thoughts for next year, I think I will look for a mobile mount for the KX3 at Dayton. This year the rig just sat on the passenger seat. Tidy up the cables and placement of the KXPA100 so it doesn't look like a rat's nest. I will also bring a computer for logging. I just kept a paper log and had to transfer to N1MM+ after the contest. Paper logging might have affected the rate on the negative side, cw by hand, paper logging perhaps not the best choices. Guess that means I should add an inverter to my Dayton shopping list. Anyone know of a good, quiet inverter that would be good for a laptop? Perhaps a third mount for 20/75m and dedicate mounts to 40m and 80m cw.

Anyway that's all for this year. It was fun and I'll see you next year with any luck.

Delaware QSO Party

Looks like all three counties were on the air this year. No mobiles noted. W3PP had big signal and easy to work. Caught N2CX and KB3WAV on the Parks on the Air program for New Castle where they were running parks.

WN4AFP – fixed – SC - 10 cw 5 ssb

I placed 1st in 2017 and 2nd in 2018... I hope to place on the leader board again this year. Thanks to all the DE stations!

73s Dave

VE9AA - 10 cw

Only thing I am sure of is.....there aren't a lot of Stations in Delaware and I am pretty sure I got all the mults - hi

Mike

New England QSO Party

K1IB mobile 445 cw qso

Mobile operation, including county line stops for which each QSO counts twice. Did much better than my rookie mobile attempt last year, more than doubling my number of QSOs. Running 100 watts to a Hustler vertical. Conditions generally not good, including occasional strange noise. This event would be so much more fun if we had propagation on 15 and 10 meters!

K1KI mobile 199 cw qso

I had an overly ambitious route through CT-MA-VT-NH-ME-MA-CT all planned, but it didn't go as planned. Haven't been mobile for the NEQP since 2013. Have a new car (Honda Clarity PHEV) and it took a while to get things all set up. What I failed to check was the RFI from the car while in motion. Tolerable when stopped, but S-9+ when in motion.... Ugh. Gave up in the first 5 minutes on Saturday. On Sunday I regrouped and headed for some of the usually low activity counties - FRAMA, CALVT, ORLVT, ESSVT and COONH. Found decent places to park in each one and had a bit over 3 hours of operating along with 8 hours of driving (~500 miles). The bonus was that while in CT and MA it was a dreary, rainy day in the 40s/50s while in northern VT/NH it was in the mid-60s and mostly sunny! Mt Washington and nearby peaks still had some snow visible from the north side. Even saw a field with a dozen deer/fawns. I knew I was near Canada when the menu at the truck stop in Lancaster NH had poutine prominently placed on the menu. Couldn't hear much of any W1 stations from northern NE. Only worked NZ1U/m in MA when he passed me on I-91 in FRAMA, and my NH QSO was

WA1Z/m when I was in the same county in COONH. Had a partial QSO with K1JB in ME and no RI or VT QSO either. Did have 10 Eu mults, 30 states and 5 provinces. So I have a year until the next NEQP. I bet it will take that long to tame the electronics in the car... I can re-use my map with the planned 30+ county route... Thanks for the QSOs!!
73 Tom 80-40-20m Hamsticks on magmount on roof TS-2000, MFJ-561 paddle paper logging...

K1EP mobile 179 cw

Had a few hours between other obligations and events. Biggest run was in Suffolk which always seems to be rare. Thanks for the Qs and picking out my weak mobile signal!

W1NVT – Portable – Grand Island VT 728 QSO
ops: W1SJ, KB1FRW, AB1DD and K1BIF

Operated from Park KFF/K-3125 – Knight Point State Park.

NZ1U mobile (KB1SBC, N1WK, W1UJ ops) 1000 cw QSO

What a weekend! As we do these year-after-year, so much knowledge is gained; however, it is neglected before the next event while hastily assembling the LMR/Last Minute Rover. N1WK gets a gold star yet again for safely traversing the beautiful New England countryside. He did not tell me he had a cold until we were 2/3 of the way through day 2, deep in Vermont.

The Dude drove more than 1000 miles / 1600 KM! The call went out from K1KI for coverage to lightly covered counties in Vermont, we had hoped to cover all on the list but 1 or 2 with an aggressive Sunday ride. Saturday, we stayed in Southern New England. Started in Central CT and moved East towards Rhode Island and Cape Code (MA) headed North to offer some QSOs from the nearly-always lightly covered SUFMA from Boston. Although we still held to the title LMR, or Last Minute Rover, everything was tested, or so-we-thought.... Could not get the CAT to work when we started out. Changed out the Kx3 USB Cat Cable and everything was great. Met up in PLYMA with Barnstormer and NZ1U operator/Driver KB1SBC where we made the difficult decision to have Mexican food, whilst knowing N1WK and W1UJ would be in the same cabin for the next 1.5 days. Ended up working out OK!

Thanks to KB1SBC for dinner... Timing was perfect as was the break and company (3

Amigos) Weather was OK- Roads were pretty rough in RI as usual with BRIRI having the same bone-jarring roads as detected in years' past. The bridges to and from NEWRI are always scenic. Saturday / Day 1 410 Miles TOLCT 6 HARCT 18 MIDCT 18 NHVCT 6 MIDCT- NLNCT 18 WASRI 33 NEWRI 19 BRIRI 15 BRIMA 31 PLYMA 67 BARMA 27 PLYMA- NORMA 17 SUFMA 29 MIDMA 24 WORMA 40 WINCT 12

Day 2 started a bit later than planned, but the good night's sleep at home was terrific. Weather was amazing 'up North' windows-down... fresh air. (Well except when we had to hear stations calling...) GRAVT was surprisingly flooded. The water was high and it seemed as if many of the lake's cottages were not accessible. We hit traffic on the horrible route chosen right through the middle of Burlington VT--- there were marches and things and young people with brightly colored hair everywhere, and way too many stop-lights..... in Northern RUTVT county we hit a horrific looking motorcycle accident. Research of the accident shows there were 'non-life threatening' injuries, thank goodness. This held us back, in an RF hole, for about 40 minutes.

Sunday / Day 2 624 Miles HMDMA 53 HMPMA 26 FRAMA 37 WNHVT 53 WNDVT 34 ORAVT 51 WASVT 27 LAMVT 50 FRAVT 44 GRAVT 44 CHIVT 49 ADDVT 50 RUTVT 55 BENVT 47 WNHVT- FRAMA- HMPMA- HMDMA-

Most importantly, a colossal thanks to the guys that follow us around. This is exactly why we put forth the effort in this event. It keeps us coming back for sure. N8UM 31 WN1GIV 21 K4QS 20 N3XF 19 N4PN 18 N4DW 17 DL3DXX 15 * K3WJV 14 R7NW 14 * VA3EC 13 WA1FCN 12 WN4AFP 12 K3QP 11 K4BAI 11 K5LH 11 N8II 11 K0AP 10 K0LUZ 10 K1GQ 10 K4GMH 10 WB8WKQ 10 We missed the following states- AK HI LA MS MT ND NV SD UT WY

And many, most.. Canadian Provinces. For DX it felt like DL3DXX and R7NW were loud and everywhere. DL F G HA I ON S5 SM SP UA XE We have great success using the Elecraft Kx3 in the dash and the KPA100 on the floor in the back-seat. A very nice radio without the footprint of the K3 while holding what seemed to be similar performance. It was very very quiet, we had 2 large car batteries on the floor in the back seat with the Kx3 completely isolated from the Ox's power supply. The Kx3 needs more drag on the VFO knob or a freq lock. If we weren't paying attention, it would have mechanical drift quite a ways... changing the tuning rate, to a setting of fine, helped.

Audio was just pumped in to the car stereo. No headphones. SR2O Operation. N1WK and W1UJ chatted the entire way. We pretty much do not stop.... Stretch breaks and food, meet up with KB1SBC in PLYMA... other than that, always moving. Antennas are High-Sierra screwdriver for 20m and 80m and a 40S High-power 40m Hustler resonator

on a triple-mag mount on the roof of the 'Blue Ox' 2017 Chevy Equinox. We miss the Contest Caddy, that may make a comeback. Only NewE county NZ1U/m has not operated from is NANMA..... Got to figure something out for that one. We had a freshly acquired dash-cam installed in the 'Ox on Friday before the event. It seemed to work pretty well. There are some 'time lapse' 6x speed videos of the trip from the dash cam. As of this writing there are many videos to upload. But check it out, see what things are like driving around New England.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-2Zm_tIRxU&feature=youtu.be

Thanks for the QSOs The NZ1U Barnstormers.

N4PN - Fixed - GA 230 cw 308 SSB

Another great NEQP in the books...Condx on Sunday much better than Saturday. Thanks to all who made this a fun weekend. Bob, WA1Z, in the log the most times with NZ1U in there second most... Thanks to Tom, K1KI, for all his hard work....it really shows in NEQP!! I thought I had the sweep when he gave me CALVT, but discovered I still needed LAMVT....found W2HDI in Lamoille a short time later.. Hopefully, see you next year. 73, Paul, N4PN

WA1Z mobile 1169 cw 37 ssb

Thanks again to K1KI for organizing everything involved in making the NEQP possible every year. This remains one of my favorite contests. Great mobile scores by K1EP, K1IB and W1UJ/NZ1U! It's nice to see more mobile activity in the planned activity list, too. Sorry to hear Tom had troubles with the new car. Looking forward to seeing KIKI/m in full action next year.

This is the 6th time Kurt W6PH has come out to do the driving duties in the NEQP. It's always a ton of fun. Kurt and I joke that I follow something I call the "Noah Principle" which is to bring on our ark two-of-every-kind of piece of equipment needed to operate the contest in case something breaks. When a radio goes south in Aroostook County Maine in the middle of a county line pileup, nothing feels better than reaching into the back of the car and pulling out another one and being back on the air in minutes (yes, this happened once). This principle has saved me from inconveniences to disasters more than once over the years, but this year it was 20 Meters that broke! Next year, I'll have backup sunspots... Propagation was very spotty on 20 with the exception of a few good

hours on Sunday morning. Otherwise, it was definitely a low-band year - and the first year that 40 Meters ended up having the most QSOs. As always, it's the out-of-region activity that make this contest so much fun. The most frequent 20+ QSOs crowd being K1GQ (45), N4PN (43), N8UM (31), K4QS (25), WN1GIV (23) and M4J was worked 23 times. Many more repeat callers, too. Also, special thanks to the DX stations in addition to Jonathan M4J, also DL3DXX, R7NW, UA6LCN, and SP6JOE all calling in more than once. In total, 413 different calls were worked. Thanks to everyone for all the QSOs! Must breakdown was 47 St/Prov and 17 DX worked. Worked VE2/3/4/5/9. Missed LA, MS, AR, NM, NE, ND, SD and KH6.

Thanks to KL7SB for a surprise AK mult! Route: This year's route is a path we have done a few times now. We started at Kurt's QTH in Amherst NH (HILNH). We continued east across southern New Hampshire and picked up RT 95 in Maine up to Lewiston. From there, we turned back towards the sea coast and picked up RT 1 to activate the coastal counties northeast of Portland. Our overnight stop was in Bangor. On Sunday morning, we got about a 30 minute head start, continuing up RT95, towards Aroostook county. We activated AROME from a small corner of the county on RT 157. We then turned west to travel through the large northern counties until we crossed into northern NH (COONH). We then turned south on RT 115 to pick up RT3 and 93 to return home. Mobile Station: 2008 Honda CRV Elecraft K3, 100 watts, powered from car battery Logging with MacBook Air laptop using SkookumLogger contest logging program, (with some power-saving adjustments, I was able to operate entire contest on internal laptop battery with a charge overnight.)

Two Hustler MO-2 54-inch masts mounted on hatchback door secured by a home-brew roof rack harness Hustler RM-model resonators The roads in Maine were not in great shape. But the state has spent a ton of money on a fix. They have put up signs that say "ROUGH ROAD" to warn us. (humor, courtesy W6PH) Kurt drove nearly 730 miles through 22 counties. And he kept us on schedule within a few minutes at almost every county change. Already looking forward to next year. Now, where is my backup sunspot junk box....

On the Trail of Regens

An interesting item showed up on Ebay this month. The listing called it a Lafayette 'Band Spread' receiver from the mid 1930s. I found it in a 1937 Lafayette Catalog (on

line at https://people.ohio.edu/postr/bapix/LafArt_60_3.htm)

Back in 2013, I wrote about it in the County Hunter News as a potential find someday. Well, someday arrived – one is for sale on Ebay.

Here's the pic from the listing – in 2019. It's now about 85 years old! The receiver uses two type 30 tubes (early triodes) with plug in coils for 20,40, 80 and 160 meters and for the 19, 25, 31, and 49m shortwave broadcast bands. Price for the kit was \$7.95, \$.80 for the two tubes, and \$2.10 for each set of four plug in coils. Batteries to run it were \$1.18. By 1937, in the Great Depression, house prices had fallen by over 50%. Much of the country was still suffering – and the depression didn't end until the war forced full employment and got everyone back to work – or in the armed forces - on 'borrowed money'.



On the Road with N4CD

[Note to POTA folks – all the parks run have corresponding 'K' numbers – I use the KFF numbers but all of them have a corresponding K-XXXX number, too]

My car and I only got a few days rest after the long trip to MI. Just enough time to do all the logging and upload the contacts, write and publish the last issue of the County Hunter news with the trip report to MI and all the pictures, get the 'start-stop' battery replaced in the 2016 Malibu (which was the cause of the engine check light) for \$250, That's a little LiPhON battery in the trunk sidewall that is used for the 'start-stop' mechanism. When you stop at a traffic light, the engine shuts down. Typically will stay off for a minute or two, or 'instantly' restart when you take your foot off the brake. Might get you a mile or two per gallon increase in city driving but does zip for long road trips on the open highway.

What am I doing leaving so early for the Xenia/Dayton Hamvention? Well, there were were two things on the agenda – lots of parks on the way and the AR QSO Party which was coming up this coming Saturday. So.....N4CD hit the road again.

May 10

On Friday, May 10, I packed up the car for a 10-12 day trip and headed about 9am to reach Hope, AR for the first night – a couple hundred miles on Interstate I-30 just into the southwest corner of the state – which would be a good starting point for the next day.

On the way, decided to hit Millwood State Park – which had only been run two times previously – one by N4CD and one by Rick, AI5P . It's in Little River County – often needed by County Hunters. KFF-1101 in the system. [K-1101 for you POTA only folks] No need to reach 44Q as it was a repeat for me. However, it was popular with over 80 in the log. If you like serious fishing, this is the place for you



“This 29,260-acre lake abounds in largemouth bass, catfish, and crappie. Birding is also popular at this Audubon-designated Important Bird Area with sightings of over 300 of the state’s 400 species on record. A marina offers gift items, groceries, bait, gas for sale, and rental fishing boats, canoes, kayaks, and more. “

Then it was on to Hope AR. Stopped at the Super 8 there, checked in and drove the 8 miles north up to one of the AR State Historic Sites – Historic Washington – KFF-1106 - which goes back to the early 1800s. It was a stop along the trail to “Texican Mexico” followed by the pioneers – Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, Daniel Boone, and others. We've discussed it before in more detail. I could do a quick 'activation' from here and work a few new park chasers – Hempstead County. Also along the road from this location to Hope, AR is the southwest route of the Cherokee Trail of Tears – which was used for “Indian Removal” where over 100,000 'Indians' were forcibly removed from their lands and forced to 'migrate' to reservations in Oklahoma. It's a Park on the Air only site (K-3791) and I could do a quick activation (just 10 or more) for a credit.



Did that then hit the Dos Locos Gringos restaurant for dinner. Tomorrow would be a full day.

May 11

The AR QSO Party would start at 9am local (1400z). I was ready for action but had to drag my feet. OK – I could do another 'activation' on the Trail of Tears – which runs right up the main road from Hope. You've got to leave the town of Hope to get away from the power line QRN – so up the road a few miles – park along the road which is good for the Trails (you can actually do this 'on the run' since the road is the trail – now paved – which wasn't the case in the 1830s-40s.) Most of the day I would stop to do the QSOs for the QP. Did a dozen Qs from the trail and moved on. That's enough for credit.

I wasn't seriously doing the AR QP. To get a high score there, you need to hit 3 and 4 way county lines. For this QP, you only need to be 'within a mile' of a county to be able to run it, and in past years, rovers, portables and mobiles have run counties from that distance – some 'impossible' to reach county lines in the middle of lakes, sometimes counties that don't even border each other but are 'close'. I'd only do a couple county lines and a half dozen single counties. I was just in it for the fun as I ran parks and

headed to northeast AR to work my way toward Dayton. Stopped to run each time.

I headed over to **White Oak State Park – KFF-1118** in Nevada County where I would start the QP at 1400z. From the state site:

“This quiet state park is situated on White Oak Lake, a popular fishing lake. Watchable wildlife and birding opportunities also abound here. Park facilities include 45 campsites (four Class A, 37 Class B, and four tent sites), a newly renovated private bathhouse, visitor center with exhibits, store with fishing supplies, marina with boat rentals, launch ramp, pavilion, picnic sites, and playground. Hiking trails and a mountain bike trail lead through marshlands and up to tree-lined ridges. Bicycles can be rented at the visitor center. In the summer, enjoy interpretive programs.”

Found a spot to run – often the boat launch area – and the large parking lot for it – are great spots to run the parks. Otherwise, look to 'picnic areas' for somewhat open spots where you aren't surrounded by RF sucking trees to operate. Since this was a QSO Party, I'd stay mostly on 20 and 40M. Contacts on 30 and 17m don't count for the QP and I'd use them at times for other reasons. Success here with a combination of park chasers, county hunters and QSO Party folks. There were only maybe 10-15 folks really into the QP though. Got more than enough (>44), worked the piles to the bottom, the moved on to the next.



Close by is **Poison Springs State Forest. KFF-4426.** You can find the county line of Ouachita and Nevada here – which I did. Hmmm.....I've got a problem. The next state

park is also in Ouachita and I'll need 44 there. This park was run on 30M, 17M and 40M SSB reaching 46Q. Enough! Only the 40M SSB QSOs counted in the AR QP.

From Wiki:

“The Poison Springs State Forest encompasses 23,506 acres in Ouachita and Nevada counties in the U.S. state of Arkansas, and is under the authority of the Arkansas Forestry Commission. The name derives from the 1864 Battle of Poison Spring, so-called because of a legend about the poisoning of local water at the time of the battle. The actual battle site is preserved as Poison Springs Battleground State Park, located on 85 acres (34 ha) inside the forest.

Within the forest are numerous campsites, with more than 350 annual permits issued. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission oversees hunting and fishing on 22,162 acres of the forest that it designated a Wildlife Management Area in 1972, qualifying it for Protected Area status. “

Very close by is the **Poison Springs Battlefield State Park KFF-1111** in Ouachita County.



This is a small park with not much there. Small parking lot, signs around and trails to see where the skirmish took place. No camping or other facilities.

from the web:

“Three Civil War battles took place in south central Arkansas in the spring of 1864 as part of the Union Army’s Red River Campaign. The sites of these skirmishes – Poison Springs, Marks’ Mills, and Jenkins Ferry – and the 1836 Courthouse at Historic Washington State Park, which served as Arkansas’s Confederate capital, comprise the Red River Campaign National Historic Landmark.

The attack on April 18 began near a place the locals call Poison Springs. When the battle ended, the Union force of more than 1,100 had been reduced to 800. Another 80 Federals were killed as they clawed their way back to Camden through the bottomlands. Fewer than 20 Confederates were killed in the victory that kept much-needed supplies from enemy hands. Poison Springs Battleground State Park features outdoor interpretive exhibits and picnic sites. “

Ran 20 and 40m cw, hit 50Q and headed out.

- - -

Along the route, I hit Calhoun County, followed by the county line of Cleveland and Dallas, then on to Grant, Pulaski, Lonoke, finally reaching Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge in White County AR. Lots of single counties which didn't help the scoring but someone had to put them out. The best strategy to win this QP is to find the 3 ways and run them – for each contact, you get credit for 3 that way. Then drive to the next 3 way. Well, I wasn't in it to 'win' for sure. I just can't see being 300 or 3000 feet from a county and running it as several others do!



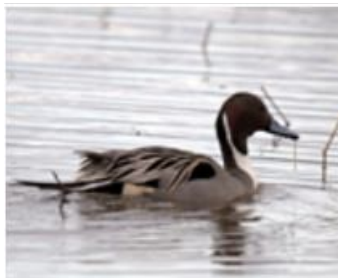
From the web:

Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1993 to protect and provide feeding and resting areas for migrating waterfowl. Acquired as part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, this refuge provides a winter home for large concentrations of a number of species of ducks and geese.

Located south of the town of Bald Knob in White County, Arkansas, Bald Knob NWR encompasses approximately 15,000 acres of forested wetlands and croplands.

“Bounded on the south and east by the Little Red River and characterized by Overflow Creek which winds through its middle, Bald Knob NWR is a cross section of cypress tupelo brakes, oxbow lakes, bottomland hardwoods and agricultural fields. This variety of habitats supports a tremendous array of plants and animals throughout the year.

Bald Knob National Wildlife refuge is the largest staging area in Arkansas for Northern Pintails. (at one time there were over 200,00 recorded in a single day) Visitors are likely to see them during the fall migration.



During the winter months, visitors are likely to see bald eagles. They can be seen perched high above the refuge or flying overhead. At times, there can be as many as twenty bald eagles in a given area.

Due to its diversity in habitat, Bald Knob NWR offers a wide array of wildlife species. White-tailed deer are very abundant on the refuge and can be seen at any time throughout the year.”

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After the park run, I hit Jackson, Poinset, Craighead and Greene Counties – then shut down at the Super 8 Motel in Paragould. Dinner at the Iron Horse BBQ. Did 320 miles in the QSO party and it took 11.3 gallons of gas.

The QSO Party would go on for another 3 hours but I'm not a fan of evening/night runs and a full day is enough! Made 583 QSOs in the QP, plus another 30 on 30M in the one park.

The only mobile I heard and worked was K5CM when I was in the SW corner and he was in the NE corner starting out. Otherwise, nothing from the other mobiles. Only worked a few AR counties from within the state with fixed stations(5) , but did work all US but AK, HI, ND, RI, and NV during the QP. DX was very scarce other than a very loud TM6M from France.

Time for a break so let's see what others did in the AR QP!

Arkansas QSO Party

K5RM Multi OP mobile 656 CW QSO
k5lg and K5RM ops

Well this was the first ever mobile contest that I've tried too work. Les (K5LG) and myself tried and mobile run this time at the last minute. Planned it the weekend before the contest. We had a lot of fun running mobile. Might of found a new way to do the AQP and possible the surrounding states during there QSO parties.

Les and I and his brother JD who was our spectator, a long for the ride, started out close to Lester's house and was able to find a spot that in the corner of four counties. We stayed there for about an hour and half. It was neat watching the points and Q count go up quickly with every contact being worth four Q's. We then started moving south towards Marshall and then over to Mtn. View. We found another spot on the other side of Mtn View to activate 2 counties and sometimes 3 counties. That's the way too go, so

next year I will study my map better and try to find more places like that to sit an operate and not have to drive through every county. We were on some roads that I've not been on in a long time and some that I've never been on. Had to stop and turn around a few times to get on the right road. We didn't go as far south as I thought we were going to, but I think we still activated most of the counties we intended on. Forty was our best band, 20 at times was OK too but not as good as forty was. We tried eighty meters a few times, but our 75 meter resonator wouldn't tune out good, so we just gave up on that. We had three different 75 meter resonators and all were good at about 3760 mhz and even with the stinger all the way out never could get resonate 3540 Khz. Will have to figure that out next time or buy a new one. After dropping Les and his brother off at Lester's QTH, I drove close to home and activated Carroll county with about 30 minutes left in contest and made a few more Q's there and got one more multiplier, so that made it worth it. I would like to thank everyone for the Q's and congrats too all of the other mobile station's. I hope we activated most of the counties in AR. We only worked two AR counties and no bonus stations this year. We even worked a few DX station's TM6M was really strong and we worked him several times on 40 meters. Always nice to work DX mobile, at least you know your getting out. Thanks again and see everyone on next contest.

73's John K5RM

TS590 Hustler 20 & 40 meter resonators 2 batteries..

K5CM mobile 1156 cw 226 ssb

Condx were not that great, and the noise level was high from all the spring storms, but still a few nice runs. Pam got sick at the last minute, so I was on my own and unsupervised on this one hi hi. She stayed home and worked me from the home station. Thanks to Don (K5DB) and crew for organizing the event. All Q's are important, but here are a few of the most worked. 20 or more: N5KW, WB8WKQ, NS4X, W9DC, W6OAT, N8II, KN4Y 14 or more: WI7N, N8NA, K4BYN, K1IB, K0HNC, AG6V, W9AV, W8PI, N2CQ, K3YP 10 or more: W8TM, W6OUL, W5VS, VE3AYR, N1SOH, K8NYG, K1PDI, WB9CIF, W7OM, W5WJN, KE0TT, KA9FCZ, K2MK

73, Connie / K5CM

W3DYA mobile - 306 QSOs

KN4Y - fixed - FL 84 CW QSO - 48 mults

Got a pitcher of non-sweetened iced tea, Went up and down the bands working stations heard. Big surprise was working W3DYA/m on 10 and 15-meters. Worked the bonus station that operated on CW. Did not hear anything on 80-meters.

N8II fixed WV - 80 cw 52 ssb 55 counties worked

I got sucked into this one, because activity for the first 2 hours was quite good. There were several mobiles which always helps keep the interest going. After the first 2 hours activity declined, and the last 3 hours (quit with 1-1/4 hours to go) were very slow as several mobiles had finished their routes and fixed ops had also gone QRT.

The bonus stations were both weaker than the average fixed signal from AR. N5BVA was heard buried in QRM from other AR stations on 20 SSB more than once. But, their op was good and gave me 4 Q's on 40 and 20. KE5XX was even weaker. My score includes 6 bonus Q's + 1200 points. 40 was basically completely closed to here until 1915Z, then signals suddenly appeared. This was probably due to an improving solar storm. Signals on 20 were good all day until 2215Z. Many thanks to all of the mobiles. Con, K5CM put out at least 3 multi county lines which really increased my score. Norm, W3DYA went through a lot of counties; he is easy to miss, does not run on one frequency for very long and does not come back. Thanks also to mobiles K5DB, K5RM, and Bob, N4CD for several QSO's each. Thanks for all of the calls and QSO's; the score was higher than I expected.

73, Jeff

On the Road with N4CD II

Whew...the AR QSO Party kept me busy for a day but now to just run parks for the folks and the counties as I head eastward.

May 11 – Sunday

In Mississippi County AR there's a small park called **Herman Davis State Park**. Don't blink or you'll miss it – KFF-1084.



From the web

“Herman Davis State Park is a 1-acre state park in Manila, Arkansas. The park includes the grave of and a memorial to Herman Davis (1888-1923), a U.S. sniper during World War I. It consists of a grassy area, with a concrete walk leading to the memorial. The memorial is a granite obelisk, 25 feet in height, in front of which stands a full-size granite likeness of Davis in his infantry uniform. The site is the only location in Arkansas associated with Davis, a native of Manila who won distinction in the war for taking out a nest of German machine gunners with his marksmanship. Davis modestly rarely mentioned the awards he received for this and other actions (including the US Distinguished Service Medal and two French Croix de Guerre), but was called out by General John J. Pershing, who placed him fourth on a list of 100 heroes of the war. After his death, Arkansans rallied to erect a memorial in his honor, resulting in the establishment of this site as a local memorial in 1925. The park was formally designated a state park in 1953 and the park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.”

There's a few designated 'off street' parking spaces along one edge – right under power lines. There are power lines on 3 sides of this 'park' and you can't get away from them in a car. The parking spot is such that the back of the car is right under the line and the

noise level is S7 on 40m CW. I managed to work only 22 QSOs from here. The noise is horrible. Perhaps with a portable setup and horizontal antennas (or a loop receiving system) you could reach 44, but I failed. First and only failure in a new park on the entire trip. Oh well. Can't win them all and this is bad news. This was the sixth state park created in AR. It was also early in the day so 30 and 20m weren't open yet to much of anywhere. I wasn't going to hear 339 signals on 20M from EU if any were calling.

Off to **Big Lake NWR KFF-0162** still in Mississippi County AR. Ah, peace and quiet!



From the web:

The refuge annually winters several species of waterfowl. Peak numbers in January and February can exceed 200,000. Wood ducks are year-round residents and annually raise approximately 2,500 young on the refuge. There have been over 225 bird species have been observed on the refuge. Other wildlife to look for are beavers, otters, raccoons, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, bobcat and the occasional armadillo.

Big Lake NWR is located near the town of Manila in Mississippi County, Arkansas. The refuge was established in August of 1915 by Executive Order of President Woodrow Wilson to serve as an inviolate sanctuary, reserve, and breeding ground for native and migratory birds. It is one of nation's oldest refuges and is 11,038 acres in size. Once a free-flowing river system, the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811- 1812 changed the river into the lake and swamp environment that exist today. Due to the refuge's location, significant bottomland forest habitat, and abundance of bird life, it was recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy in March of 2001.

The wood duck is a beautiful bird found on the refuge year-round. It nests in cavities of bald cypress and other bottomland hardwood trees. The mother duck will lay around 8 eggs in a nest and incubate them for about 25 days.



Wood Duck

The green treefrog can range from light to dark green. They have a white or yellow stripe that runs from the upper lip down its side. They have a white or yellow belly. The treefrog has round, adhesive pads that help them stick to trees and other structures.”

Nice and quiet RF wise here. No problem racking up 44Qs. There's a visitor center and the main part of the refuge just up the road – away from all the power lines!

Time to change states and head on over to Dyer County TN for the **Bogota Wildlife Management Area – KFF- 3927.**



Some of these can take a bit of work 'finding them' or finding a spot you can access them. This one had six entrance points identified on the web with directions and all but one was locked up tight – most awaiting hunting season and special permits. Found one point where I could go in and run the WMA. The instructions on the web will take you to closed and locked gates probably most of the year. Plan ahead Another quiet location.

Next up was **Three Rivers KFF-3963** over in Obion County. Easy to find and right off the main highway.



From the state website:

Three Rivers WMA is a 1,577 acre site dominated by early successional habitat. Extensive acreage of reforestation is present across the site that borders the Obion River. Access is via gravel roads.

Early successional specialists such as Prairie Warbler, Field Sparrow, and Common Yellowthroat are common in summer. Mississippi Kites are present in late spring through mid-August. If there is standing water in low, wet areas, egrets and herons may be abundant. Wildlife that one may see varies greatly with the water levels of the Obion River. “

Had a good run and moved on with my trip along the north border of TN for a few more counties. So far, I'd managed to mostly hit one park per county which is ideal.

Heading east, you get to **Big Cypress Tree State Park** , **KFF-2924**, in Weakley County TN.



From the web:

Big Cypress Tree State Park is named for the national champion bald cypress tree that once lived in the park. The tree was the largest bald cypress in the United States and the largest tree of any species east of the Mississippi River. In 1976, during a lightning storm, a strike caused the tree to die after living for more than 1,350 years.

The stately cypress, historically referred to as the “Tennessee Titan”, stood at 175 feet tall, 40 feet in circumference, 13 feet in diameter, and was estimated to be 1350 years old. The park is a quaint, clean and relaxing spot to enjoy nature’s purity and beauty. A variety of native wild flowers and trees may be seen such as showy evening primrose, black-eyed Susans, yellow poplar, bald cypress and dogwood. Along with plant life there is an abundance of wildlife at Big Cypress and the park is popular location for birdwatchers. “

Did the radio bit and moved on to the next park in the next county! (I tried 17m but no one around – but spotted by the Reverse Beacon Network – signal into VE6 land).

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Up next in Henry County TN is **Paris Landing State Park** – right off the main highway. KFF-2965.



From the web:

“Paris Landing State Park is an 841-acre park located on the western shore of the Tennessee River, which is dammed to form Kentucky Lake (160,000 acres). The park sits on the widest part of the lake making it the perfect location for all water sports such as fishing, boating, swimming and water skiing. The park also offers a beautiful and challenging Par 72, 18-hole golf course. The park pro shop provides golfing supplies, lessons, rental clubs and carts.

The park is located inland from the original site of Paris Landing which served

steamboat traffic on the Tennessee River. The site is now under the waters of Kentucky Lake, which was created by TVA when the Tennessee River was dammed in 1944”

Although it was late in the day, I had a decent run even with a bit of QRN from the power lines that were everywhere. It was still a weekend and more chasers around then. Likely there are other spots to run with less power lines.

That night was spent at the Super 8 in Paris TN. Buffet Dinner at the Old West Steakhouse nearby (good). I was slowly winding my way to Dayton running a handful of parks a day. In most cases, you could do maybe 5 or so if they were located along your route in new counties – not always the case. Some days less, some days more. I usually wind up spending an hour or more at a park.

A few more mobiles were about to hit the road headed out to Dayton as well. NU0Q would head there as would KA4RRU in a few days. KB0BA/N0XYL would show up at Dayton along with a few dozen county hunters but not much heard from many of them on their way there!

Monday May 13

First up today – early is Fort Heiman KFF-3790 in Calloway County KY – a bit off the beaten path. It's not too far up the road from Paris Landing. The GPS lady takes me on a lot of little back roads to get there – 25 mph ones. Hmmm....seems there ought to be a shorter route on main roads. I finally get there – and there isn't much there to see! There's a lot of history here though if you're a Civil War buff.

From the NP website:

“This is actually a sub-unit of Fort Donelson on the other side of the river.



Not one of my better pictures

From the National Park Site:

"By early 1862, as the Tennessee River was rising, many Confederates recognized that the high water was threatening Fort Henry, their fortification on the east bank of the river. Knowing that an attack by the Federal Army and Navy was not only inevitable, but likely imminent, General Sidney Albert Johnston decided to erect another fortification on the west side of the river. Named "Fort Heiman" after an architect-turned Confederate soldier, Adolphus Heiman, This new position was strategically placed on a high bluff in Calloway County, Kentucky. General Johnston instructed the Confederates: "...occupy and intrench the heights opposite Fort Henry. Do not lose a moment. Work all night."

However, this new fort remained under construction when Federal Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant launched his offensive. On February 4, 1862, as Grant was landing his men to the north, 1,100 Confederate troops, with the exception of a small section of cavalry, evacuated from Fort Heiman, a process completed by 5:00 AM the following morning.

The next day, February 6, Federal forces under the command of Brigadier General Charles F. Smith took possession of an all but abandoned Fort Heiman.

Across the Tennessee River, Smith's troops saw the American flag flying at Fort Henry, which had fallen to the Federal gunboats after a brief, yet heated, fight that same day.

Grant then ordered Federal gunboats to proceed up the Tennessee River, destroying anything of Confederate significance. In less than a week, Grant's army proceeded eastward and attacked Fort Donelson.

After a raging, three-day naval and land fight, Grant received the surrender of Fort Donelson on Sunday, February 16, 1862. By the end of that month, Nashville was in Federal hands, and the American flag was flying over three former Confederate forts. The Civil War had now entered into a new dimension.

Federal forces occupied Forts Heiman and Henry for a year, until abandoned in early 1863. Before withdrawal, portions of the fortifications were razed, so they could not be of future use to any returning Confederates.

The Fort Heiman Unit of the Fort Donelson National Battlefield is a remote but

impressive unit of the National Park Service. As a relatively new addition to the park, the Fort Heiman Unit is not largely developed.”

A year later, Confederate forces again occupied the remains of the destroyed forts on both sides of the river. However, the final outcome was not in their favor as you know.

There's not a lot to see there other than some razed ruins and signs pointing out where things were. 160 year old wood structures don't survive well. Not to worry as it was a quiet location, and even though early, had a good run there. Left at 8:15 am. GPS Lady took me on nice 40-50 mph highways back to where I started. Go figure!

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Next was a quick repeat of Paris Landing SP run the previous late afternoon. A few on 20m cw , then a good bunch on 40M SSB which I had skipped yesterday. Only needed 10Q here for an activation credit and put 30 in the log.

Off to another KY State Park – the **Land Between the Lakes – State Recreation Area** – KFF-3792 in Trigg County KY.

From the state park web:

“As part of America’s great outdoors since 1963, Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area manages over 170,000 acres of forests, wetlands, and open lands on a peninsula between Kentucky and Barkley lakes in Western Kentucky and Tennessee. The family friendly recreation area offers one of the largest blocks of undeveloped forest in the eastern United States.

With 300 miles of natural shoreline, lake access provides idyllic settings for camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, wildlife viewing, and water sports. Licensed hunts for deer, turkey, squirrel and other small game animals occur throughout the year. Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area draws visitors from around the world to escape into nature. People also enjoy the authentic experiences provided by Woodlands Nature Station, Elk & Bison Prairie, Homeplace 1850s Working Farm, and Golden Pond Planetarium and Observatory. Dispersed conservation education can be found throughout the recreation area.



Spicebush butterfly and Coreopsis Flower

We maintain over 500 miles of trails for hiking, biking, off-road riding, and horseback riding. A horse camp stays open year round for all campers. Scenic drives provide optimum wildlife viewing areas in the comfort of your car.

Innovative resource management draws 240 different species of birds each year. A festival celebrates the hummingbird migration in August and boats take visitors in search of eagles in the winter months.

Cover crops, timber management, and dedicated nature watch areas provide much-needed habitats for a variety of native animals and plants.”

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Long, narrow park with loads of recreation activities! Had a good run and moved on. It helps to be in a 'rarer county', too!

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The route was back into TN and I made a quick stop at Fort Donelson, KFF-0703, run back in the NPOTA days 3 years ago. It's in Stewart County TN so I ran the county/park with a good run. Amazingly, since then, only one other park activator had been there and made 16 QSOs. Guess there aren't many active mobiles in this part of TN any longer. Over 80 went in the log quickly. There are several spots you can run this.

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Headed east, the next park is **Dunbar Cave in Montgomery TN – KFF-2943.**

From the state park web:

“Dunbar Cave is a remarkable prehistoric site, not just for Tennessee but for the entire Eastern Woodlands. Dunbar Cave has been used for thousands of years and is the site of significant prehistoric Mississippian Native American cave art dating to the 14th century. The park is 144-acres and is located in Clarksville, Tennessee.

For the Mississippian people that lived along the Red River in the 14th century, Dunbar Cave was a sacred place. Though the cave is a physical place, the Mississippians believed it to be an actual portal into the Underworld, or the level of the universe that existed below the level where we live. The Mississippians left many drawings on the walls of the cave, some in charcoal, some carved into the limestone itself. While we do not know exactly what the drawings meant, the symbols hold sacred meanings even today for modern indigenous peoples of the southeastern U.S.

Today, these drawings are protected at Dunbar Cave State Park. During the cave tour season (May - September), we encourage you to take one of our tours to experience the awe of these drawings for yourself.”

Well, no time for tours – but I had a good radio run! I'm headed east – but there's another park in the same county – hmmm.....will I get 44Q from it?

- - -

Port Royal State Park – KFF-2969 – same county – 26 acres – small....



from the state park web:

Port Royal State Historic Park was the site one of the earliest colonial communities and trading posts in Middle Tennessee. It was first settled in the early 1780s and was a longhunter camp as early as 1775. The town of Port Royal was founded in 1797 and rose to great prominence in the early part of the 19th century because of its strategic location at the head of navigation on the Red River, serving all of Northern Middle Tennessee and South Central Kentucky and at a major stage line route. In 1977, the state of Tennessee received the deed to 26 acres of land at Port Royal, and designated it a Tennessee State Park in 1978.

Port Royal is designated as an official site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The Trail of Tears recognizes the forced removal of Native Americans from their homelands in the Southeastern United States and the paths they traveled westward in 1838 and 1839. Records of the removal mentioned Port Royal, the last stop before leaving Tennessee, as an encampment site where the Cherokee stayed overnight or longer to resupply and rest. Port Royal State Park is the second Tennessee State Park to be named an official site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, joining Red Clay State Historic Park.

With Port Royal being such an important place of travel, transportation themes play heavily into the parks and communities history. As you stroll through the park you will notice the remains of the foundations of stores, homes and warehouses with some dating back to the 18th century. Also, existing within the park are the remains of several old roadbeds, with one dating back to prehistoric times including the certified Trail of Tears site.

Preserved within the park is a very excellent example of an early Pratt Truss design steel bridge that was built in 1887. This bridge spans Sulphur Fork Creek and presents a very picturesque view of both the Red River and the Sulphur Fork Creek. This bridge is available to foot traffic only.”



Pratt Truss Bridge

Some info on the bridge design for the techie types.....like me

“Since its introduction in 1844, this bridge design became part of hundreds of bridges created up to Second World War. It was designed by the Thomas Willis Pratt (1812 – 1875) and his father Caleb Pratt, a pair of American engineers, just several years after William Howe patented his famous Howe truss design. This bridge design immediately became widely used during the period when many bridges moved from wood components toward all-steel construction designs.

Its most compelling feature was the ability was to span great distances using simple construction methods. It was regularly used to span anchor points that are up to 250 feet apart. It was most commonly used in railroad bridge construction, although it was also a preferred choice for creating other types of bridges all around the world until early 20th century.

Thomas Willis Pratt was born in 1812 in from Boston, Massachusetts. He was schooled at college in Troy, NY at the Rensselaer Institute and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He returned home and worked at Boston and Worcester RR and the Providence & Worcester RR engineering companies when the majority of bridges were built using wood and with truss designs made by S. H. Long, Elias Towne, and William Howe.

Seeing how Howe’s designs that were enhanced with vertical metal members started replacing long-used Long and Towne Trusses, Pratt decided to enhance 1840 Howe truss and Long Truss design by making diagonal structures made from steel, verticals from wood switching diagonals to flow into other direction than Howe’s. With proper camber and pre-stress, newly created Pratt Truss became structurally stable, enabling it being used over long spans and fixing several disadvantages present in all then commonly used truss designs. Pratt truss patent was accepted on April 4, 1844, under a category of “TRUSS FRAME OF BRIDGES (Truss Bridge)”.

Source: <http://www.historyofbridges.com/facts-about-bridges/pratt-truss/>

Got my 44Q so left a happy camper. Forgot this was a Trail of Tears site or could have whipped off 10Q for a 'quickie'. Darn. Opportunity missed.

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Well back to county/park hunting.....and the **Cedar Hill Swamp KFF-3932** in Robertson County TN. Hmm...no picture for this one.....and NOT easy to find. The web will tell you to do the following:

“Go toward Springfield and travel 10.4 miles to Kinney's Rd. Go left on Kinney's Road and travel 5.1 miles to Old Washington Road.

Turn right on Old Washington Road and go approximately a half mile to Goodman Road (signage may be absent) and turn right.

The entrance to the WMA and a small grassy parking area can be found about one third of a mile on the left alongside a small wooden shed.”

- -

Google Maps can't get you there. Says 'no possible route'. GPS lady plays dumb. You are on your own.

No road sign, no indication it really is a road rather than a driveway. It took me more than half an hour to find this from the north, and it was only by asking a couple of locals. From Cedar Hill, you go south from the main part of town to the 'Y' and bear left. You go past the row of white houses on the left and turn left after the last house on what looks like someone's driveway or 1 ½ lane county road maybe. No road sign. GPS just has it as county road XXX. You go 1000 feet and park by 'the red barn' on the left....no signs, no nothing other than a grassy 100x100 foot parking area off to the side with a small entrance way. That's it. It looks like someone's yard. The barn is in bad shape. OK..maybe it's a 'shed'. The local who gave me the accurate directions grew up 500 feet from here so I trusted what he said! Small world.



N4CD at Big Swamp

From here, if you want to see the wildlife, you hoof it into the main part through the trees.

Got to >50Q and left for the next.

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I'm running out of time for the day and got to make some miles, so I zip on up the Interstate to Cave City, KY....through Simpson Warren, Barren Counties on the Interstate. Check on into the Super 8 there.....but wait...there's still a bit of time. . so I zip up to Mammoth Cave National Park – KFF-0050 and hit Edmunson County – for a quickie 25Qs. Just 10 miles up the road. I'd run this several times in the NPOTA days when it was popular. (back then I put out 200Qs or so). Back to the motel in 45 minutes – and dinner at the El Mazatalan Mexican Restaurant.

Well, it's 10 miles there....10 miles back..and 20 minutes there.....40-45 minutes. There really aren't too many 'quickies' – hi hi. Slept well. I'd been making 200-350 QSOs a day on the trip so far.

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Tuesday May 14

First up today is **John C Williams Wildlife Management Area (WMA)** in Nelson County KY. KFF-3817. Nice parking area that worked radio wise. Didn't find out much info on this on the web – just from hunting sites.



From the web:

“John C Williams WMA is a 688 acre area just south of Boston, KY running along Beech Fork Creek. Mostly used by rabbit, squirrel, and wood duck hunters, some fishing opportunities exist in the sloughs or Beech Fork. The area is only open to archery for deer hunters, but is extremely thick brush with limited areas to hang tree stands. Deer trails do criss-cross throughout the area, so with effort you will get opportunities.. Wood duck hunters in the September season will find the most opportunities. Even with just a few hunters, this area gets over-crowded quickly. “

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Headed to the next one – **My Old Kentucky Home State Park** also in Nelson County. KFF-1267.



From the web:

“The Visitors Center serves as the main entry point to the popular historic mansion, "My Old Kentucky Home" of Stephen Foster's ballad. Don't miss your opportunity to tour Kentucky's premier historical site that features over two centuries of antiques, paintings, and architecture rendered beautifully in the Federal Style. Formal gardens, outbuildings that include a smokehouse, historic kitchen, carriage house, cabin, and springhouse are set amongst century old magnolias, maples, and cedar trees. Hear the song "My Old Kentucky Home" sung on your tour by our guides in period costume for your adventure finale. The quintessential Kentucky experience is awaiting your arrival at My Old Kentucky Home State Park! “

There's 39 campsites there as well and 1300 acres of mansion/gardens, etc

Had a good run, skipped the tourist bit and moved on.

-- ---

I crossed into IN from Louisville, KY, and hit **Falls of the River State Park** in Clark County IN, KFF-2691.



From the web:

“Located on the banks of the Ohio River at 201 West Riverside Drive, Clarksville, Indiana (I-65 exit 0), is the Falls of the Ohio State Park. The 386-million-year-old fossil beds are among the largest exposed Devonian fossil beds in the world. The park features a spectacular interpretive center overlooking the fossil beds. New interactive, immersive exhibits can be seen.

While the interpretive center is closed, the rest of the property is open. Fishing, hiking, fossil viewing, bird watching and picnicking are among the most common activities. While fossil collecting is prohibited, the park staff encourages visitors to explore and discover the many different types of fossils that can be found on the ancient sea bottom. The months of August thru October provide the best accessibility to the 220 acres of fossil beds, as the river is at its lowest level during this period.”

The Falls is where Lewis and Clark met to start their trek to the Northwest US. Hmm....maybe another missed opportunity there to run the 'trail'. Oh well.

Caught Rick, AI5P who was running Park 2696 – Eagle Nest Lake State Park on 20M SSB from here.

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On to the next in the same county – Clark, IN - Charlestown State Park. KFF-2253 in the system.



From the web:

“Charlestown State Park was established in 1995. The park's 5,118 acres include 4,756 acres transferred from the U.S. Army and 362 acres purchased from private owners. Once a largely undeveloped portion of the huge (15,000-acre) Indiana Army Ammunition plant, Charlestown State Park is located in southern Indiana. With scenic vistas of the Fourteenmile Creek valley and the Ohio River, with elevation changes of over 200 feet, Charlestown has much to offer the visitor with its rugged hills and deep ravines. While hiking the rugged terrain you will see Devonian fossil outcrops and areas of karst sinkhole topography. Bird watchers will enjoy the 72 species of birds, including bluebirds, black vultures and an occasional bald eagle.”

Had a good run. Caught Rick, AI5P, in another park – KFF-2719 – the Vietnam Memorial in NM near Eagle Lake high up in the mountains. Eagle Nest, the town, is at 8,300 feet AMSL – getting to 'thin air'. No problem here in Indiana – a couple hundred feet above sea level. I'm headed northeast toward Dayton – slowly.

On to Clifty Falls State Park in Jefferson County IN - KFF-2254. This is a nice park with lodge on hilltop, restaurant in lodge, campsites, picnic areas.



From the web:

“The park’s waterfalls change moods with the weather and the seasons and can range from roaring plunges to delicate bridal-veil mists to gleaming frozen titans. Winter and spring visits reveal them at their best. The rugged splendor of Clifty Canyon offers exciting year-round hiking and scenery.

Clifty Creek’s stony bed is littered with fossil remnants telling of a long vanished marine ecosystem that teemed with life that included ancient corals, ancestral squids, brachiopods and more. Fossil collecting within Clifty Falls State Park is prohibited but nearby collecting locations are readily accessible

Clifty Falls 1852 Railroad Tunnel is open to the public from May 1-Oct. 31. It is closed Nov. 1-April 30 to protect hibernating bats. All caves, sinkholes, tunnels and mines on DNR properties are closed to provide protection from white-nose syndrome, a fungus that is killing bats in large numbers in the Eastern U.S. and is now spreading west. This includes the old railroad tunnel at Clifty Falls.”

Stayed nearby at a Super 8 Motel. Dinner at the King Buffet (good). Only drove 170 miles today with all the park stops. Took 7.2 gallons of gas – lots of engine idle time. I keep the car on to keep the voltage up to the radio. This car instantly drops to 12.2v at the battery once you shut it down and the radio doesn't like that – and it drops below that quickly.

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OK...time to get to Dayton – not that far, but I'll stop at a few parks. First up is Big Oak National Wildlife Refuge in Jefferson IN – same county – will I make it to 44Q? It's early in the day – I'm on eastern time and I'm raring to go at sunrise. Pull in to the park

and start on 40m CW. 10 go in the log. Only 2 on 30m and some DX park chasers on 20M – ON4ON, IW2NXI, ON3YB, ON5SY, IK4DRY and one US station – KD1CT. Well, maybe later the band will open to the US.

I repeat 40M cw again and catch more....then more on 30M and just two on 40M SSB. Leave with 50Q after an hour and a half. Time to head to the next.



From the web:

“Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 50,000 acres in 3 counties (Jefferson, Jennings, and Ripley) and overlays that portion of the former Jefferson Proving Ground that lies north of the historic firing line where munitions were once tested. Jefferson Proving Ground was established by the Army in 1940 as an ordnance testing installation and closed in 1995. Beginning in 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed the wildlife resources of the proving ground. Big Oaks Refuge was established in June 2000 as an “overlay” national wildlife refuge through a 25-year real estate permit from the U.S. Army. As an overlay refuge, the Army retains ownership and the Fish and Wildlife Service manages the property as Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge.

Our mission is to preserve, conserve, and restore biodiversity and biological integrity for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. More than 200 species of birds and 46 species of mammals are found on the refuge. Stream corridors and forested

areas on Big Oaks Refuge provide excellent habitat for the federally-endangered Indiana bat, which uses the refuge for summer foraging, roosting, and for rearing young. The refuge also supports breeding populations of the river otter that were reestablished here in 1996. More than 500 pairs of state-endangered Henslow's sparrows are estimated to breed in the large grasslands of Big Oaks Refuge. The refuge has been designated as a "Globally Important Bird Area" because of its value to Henslow's sparrows and other migratory birds. Bald eagles and golden eagles are also known to use the refuge as a wintering site."

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Next up is **Versailles State Park in Ripley County IN** – KFF-2273.



[sometimes the pics are hard to get – but I try! - all these 'Percy Pics']

From the web:

“This area has deep history rooted in both the Civil War and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Versailles State Park dedicated a CCC commemorative statue in 2010. Numerous fossils tell the story of an ancient sea that covered the region. During the Civil War, Morgan's Raiders made their way through the area that is now the park. The town of Versailles was briefly under Confederate control.

Relax while fishing on the 230-acre lake where you can rent a rowboat, kayak or canoe. Get a workout and see the beauty of the park by taking a walk on the hiking trails or a ride on the mountain bike trails. Bring your horses for the day to enjoy the more than 20 miles of horse trails. Steps to a scenic overlook at the dam are a prime spot to see herons

and other aquatic wildlife.

In the early 20th century, the area was farmland. In the 1930s, the National Park Service acquired the land and hired the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to improve the land into a Recreational Demonstration Area. The 230-acre Versailles Lake was formed in 1954 when a dam was built across Laughery Creek.

It is a recreation area, with fishing and boating on Versailles Lake and Laughery Creek. A covered bridge, the Busching Bridge, crosses the creek. This Howe truss bridge was constructed in 1885, is 176 feet long, and although within the state park, Ripley County owns it. The bridge was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record in 1973.”



Busching Covered Bridge

It's Wednesday and 1300Z so I get into the CW-Test Fray to add in a bunch of QSOs quickly. In 50 minutes, I've got my 44Q. Now on to 20M, 30M and 40M for the county hunters and park hunters – finishing with over 70Qs.

Bill, K8TE/0 was putting out parks on his way to Dayton – caught him in Long Branch SP in MO on 40m SSB.

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There were several choices of parks around the lake – there are at least two parks around one lake but settled on Mounds at Brookville State Recreation Area in Franklin County - KFF-4162. Pulled in at 1600z and had a good run. Left at 1648z with 48Qs. This is a park on Brookville Reservoir – mostly campground/beach but opportunity for wildlife viewing.



Finished up and headed to the next. Time to get to Dayton eventually today!

- - -

Now to Whitewater Memorial State Park – still in Indiana...KFF 2275 but in Union County – a new one.



From the web:

“A part of the Brookville Lake-Whitewater Memorial State Park Complex, Whitewater Memorial State Park is a great family getaway because of its 200-acre Whitewater Lake, access to Brookville Reservoir, and other recreational facilities.

Shoreline hiking, flat-water boating, swimming, fishing and camping opportunities are abundant around the man-made lake. The access to Brookville Reservoir provides many opportunities for seeing migrating flocks of birds.

Whitewater Memorial State Park boasts 9 miles of horseback riding trails with access

both for day users and from the horsemen's campground. The saddle barn concessionaire offers hayrides, guided trail rides, and sleigh rides, weather permitting.

The land for the park was originally purchased by the surrounding counties of Union, Fayette, Franklin and Wayne as a memorial to the men and women who served in World War II. It became the 16th park in the Indiana State Park system in 1949."

Caught KV3WAV , Kerri, on her way to Dayton via parks – she was at K-4770 (a POTA only park) – Savage River State Forest in MD. She's one of the top park activators and park chasers way way up there on the leader board. Later in the run, I catch her again at a different park – KFF-1562 – Calvert Cliffs State Park in MD.

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Just one more park KFF-1957 in Butler and Preble Counties OH to go and I'll arrive in Dayton! Whew! Last up is Hueston Woods State Park. Arrive at 1835z.

From the web:

"Hueston Woods State Park, located in Butler and Preble counties, has nearly 3,000 acres of outdoor recreation, such as hiking, fishing, canoeing, and unique to this region -- fossil hunting. The park surrounds 625-acre Acton Lake, with campsites, cabins, and a resort lodge."

I stop in the Butler side and put it out. I move to a different part of the park in Preble and run it again. After 1900z, I get into the CW-Open test for a while to add to the QSOs and after I hit 45, I go back to 30m and catch more county hunters. You've got a large golf course, convention center, lodge, lots of camp sites, swimming areas, boating, etc, here.

It's time to head on into the motel in Dayton. I've been staying at the Super 8 , which went down quality wise to a Knights Inn over the years. The neighborhood was going downhill as well for a decade, so this year I upgraded to a Microtel right along the main highway 35 that connects Dayton to Xenia. A lot more dollars, but I used 'points' from all those stays at Wyndham properties (Super 8, Days Inn, etc) from all my other trips! Otherwise, it's like \$160/night for the 'jacked up' Dayton Hamfest rate – hi hi. Turkey dinner at the nearby Bob Evans restaurant. Good.

It's 985 miles the short way to Dayton. I did 1379 miles the 'county hunter way'.

Ah....I can rest a day or two to get ready for the big event starting Friday....

Thursday May 16

Well, it turns out there is still some time. I have a flea market entry ticket and parking pass....but things don't get going till late Thursday afternoon as folks arrive and set up for the Friday start of the big event. I can go off and run a park or two. If you're a super scrounger, you get there at 9am and rush to each new vehicle pulling in, waiting to see what's in their trunk. I'd skip that.

First up is Kiser State Park KFF-1066 in Champaign County OH. Lots of rural roads to get north from my motel up about 40 miles to the park. You pass by 150 and 200 year old houses/farm houses in very nice condition for the most part. Well maintained. Dozens and dozens of them.

From the web:

“The quiet and relaxing atmosphere of Kiser Lake State Park makes it a favorite Ohio getaway. 531 acres of rolling wooded hills and diverse wetlands add to the beauty of this scenic 396-acre lake known for its clean, clear waters.”

It's a nice park, and radio conditions worked to put in over 60 in the log. Now lots of mobiles were headed to Dayton. Bob, N2OO was on the road and Kerry, W4SIG would be on a bit later as he streaked north from TN to Dayton.

Next I zipped over to Buck Creek State Park KF-1937 in Clark County OH....

from the web:

“Located in west-central Ohio's Clark County, Buck Creek State Park is surrounded by rich agricultural lands and is rich in Ohio history. The park's recreational facilities surround a 2,120-acre lake and offer endless water-related opportunities. Visitors will also enjoy discovering the wetlands, broad meadows and wildlife at this diverse 1,896-acre park in western Ohio. “

Another good run followed, with a few DX stations making it through – county hunter DL8USA, and park chasers OH6RP, F1BLL, DL1EBR, ON4VT and IW2NXI. Worked AJ5ZX and K5KJ on 17m. About 60 went in the log.

Now I'd head toward Xenia and the Hamvention at the Greene County Fairgrounds....but wait.....I have to run Greene OH and there is no better place than another park just a few miles from Xenia. I've been here a few times in the NPOTA days. It's Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument – KFF-0916. It consists of an old house/museum dedicated to the Charles Young.

From the web:

“In 1883, Charles Young's father encouraged him to take the entrance examination to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Young scored the second highest on the exam and was not selected to the Academy that year. When the candidate ahead of him dropped out of West Point, Young would receive his opportunity the following year. He entered West Point on June 10, 1884 to become only the ninth African American to attend the Academy and only the third to graduate.

Throughout his life, Charles Young overcame countless obstacles in his ascent to prominence. In spite of overt racism and stifling inequality, Young rose through the military ranks to become one of the most respected leaders of his time. A well-rounded man with a steadfast devotion to duty, Young led by example and inspired a generation of new leaders.

Because military leaders would not allow an African-American officer to command white troops, the Adjutant General's Office waited three months after Young's West Point graduation in 1889 before assigning the newly-commissioned 2nd Lieutenant to the 9th Cavalry at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. After a year, marked by isolation and hostility, Young transferred to Fort Duchesne, Utah, where the command and fellow officers proved more welcoming. Here, Young mentored Sergeant Major Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. who later became the first African American to attain the rank of General.

Between 1889 and 1907 Young served in the 9th Cavalry at western posts and rose to the rank of captain. He also taught military science, served as a military attaché, and fought with distinction in the Phillipine-American War, winning the praise of his commanders for his troops' courage and professionalism in and out of combat.

In the fall of 1894, Charles Young received a detached service assignment that wound up sending him to Wilberforce, Ohio. Young was to take over the planning and eventual

teaching of the new Military Sciences & Tactics courses at Wilberforce University. Eventually, Lieutenant Young would build the program to just over 100 cadets by the 1898 class

In 1904 Captain Young became the first Military Attaché to Haiti and the Dominican Republic on the island of Hispaniola. Young joined 23 other officers (the only African American among them) serving in these diplomatic posts in the Theodore Roosevelt administration. He won President Roosevelt's praise through an introduction Roosevelt wrote for his monograph on the people and customs of Hispaniola. Young's experiences in foreign service and as a commander in the Philippines formed the basis of his book, *The Military Morale of Nations and Races* (1911).

From 1912 to 1916, he served as the military attaché to Liberia, helping to train the Liberian Frontier Force. After returning from Liberia, he then served as a squadron commander during the Punitive Expedition in Mexico against Pancho Villa. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Agua Caliente, leading his men to the aid of a cavalry unit that had been ambushed. During the same period, Young won additional promotions, to major in 1912, and to lieutenant colonel in 1916.

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March 25th, 2013, was the date which officially established the long-awaited Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument when President Barack Obama signed the document creating the nation's 401st NPS site. “

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Well, lots of history there....saw it before so just pulled into the lot for the historic site, ran the park again, then headed over to the flea market to see what was going on.

Time for a break.....

Mobile Activity in May

At the beginning of the month:

WQ7A was on the way home from the MI Mini

AB7NK/K7SEN were in KY putting out the counties

K5GE and N8KIE were headed to New England to run the counties there. Used 75M a lot to be able to work each other.

K8ZZ was spotted running MI state parks then headed on to NY and ran dozens of parks there over the next month. Many on Long Island (Suffolk and Nassau counties).

K1YAG was noted running TX counties on CW

W0GXQ was noted in IA headed back to CO with a stop there. Then ran through NE on the way back home.

N5PHT, Gary – park activator, ran parks in IA – camped out in his RV for several days in each

KC7YE spotted running WA counties and he ran in the 7QP from Wahkiakum County

N8OYY ran counties in VA and WV on many days. Later he would run many on the way to and from Dayton Hamvention.

The 7QP saw just 2 or 3 mobiles out - with N7XU spotted in a few. Lots of fixed stations were spotted. Only known County Hunter participant was KC7YE putting out a county. Many 'chased'.

The New England QSO Party saw lots of activity. A few mobiles were out but few spots. No county hunters seemed to have participated other than 'chasing'.

Just a few stations showed up for the DE QSO Party and most on 40 and 80m, but all 3 counties made it on the air.

K7Y, and iota activator, showed up in First AK.

The AR QSO Party saw W3DYA, K5DB, N4CD and other mobiles giving out the counties. Probably nearly all the counties made it on the air this year. Some years are good, some years almost no mobile activity. This was a good year.

KB6UF ran counties in ME.

NU0Q started toward Dayton.....running many counties in MO

K8TE started in CO and headed east to Dayton – activating a few parks along the way.

Rick, AI5P, noted out and about in CO and NM in counties and parks.

N2OO headed from NJ toward Dayton and back, running them on CW.

KA4RRU, Mike, put them out on the way from VA to Dayton...and back.....

Kerry, W4SIG, spotted on the way to /from Dayton.

KL0H was spotted in Second District AK on 20M SSB

N8HAM was spotted in OH counties.

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Note de N4CD: Seems we had at least 35 to 40 county hunters show up at Dayton....but looking at the spots....only 5 or 6 actually put out a county and were spotted. Where were all the others?

- - -

After Dayton

KA4RRU later put out counties in VA and WV.

NU0Q was still heading east – running them in PA.....

KA9JAC/KB9YVT spotted in OH and points toward the home in WI

K0FG ran counties on the way home.....same for N2OO

K8TE was headed east from Dayton – putting them out in OH, KY,

K0DEQ spotted in a few in MO

K8ZZ was running all over NY including some of NYC boroughs

End date 5/24

Dayton Hamvention

Thursday May 16

Mike, KA4RRU, has two flea market spaces and I stopped by to see what was going on. It was on the warm side.....sun.....and not a whole lot of people set up yet. I wandered a bit, but it was 100-200 feet between sellers so you wore out your feet/legs quickly and didn't see a whole lot. I did spy a set of plug in coils from the 1930s.....4 coil short wave set, and inside had an instruction sheet on how to build your one tube radio with a type 30 tube! \$10.

After a few hours, headed out as I had an event that evening to attend. Also didn't want to overdo the sun exposure. It was a nice sunny day. Usually, it rains at Dayton – sometimes a little, sometimes torrents of rain. You never know but you can almost bet it with certainty it will rain. So far so good.

Each year the ARRL holds an ARRL Donor Recognition Dinner on Thursday night. This year it was at the Schuster Performing Arts Center in downtown Dayton with several hundred attending. The ARRL President K5UR and other officers gave rousing speeches about the era of the digital ham. We've talked about that before. Ham radio is changing. Today's youths are living in the 'social media' age and the ARRL has to respond, encourage, woo, and succeed in that environment. Good talks.

Thursday night at about 3 am it rained – lightning all over the place and downpours. Yep, Dayton got some rain. Woke a lot of people up with the thunderboomers. There were a few puddles around Friday morning but the paved 'roads' in the flea market kept problems to a minimum, plus good grass cover eliminated nearly all the mud problems of the past. There was no more rain for the next few days! Perfect sunny weather with temps getting up to the 80s. Fortunately there was a small breeze most of the time keeping things tolerable.

Friday May 17

On Friday, the big event starts in full gear. I headed over at at 7am to beat the traffic rush. The police were everywhere making sure the roads in to the event were moving quickly. No sweat. Got there in 20 minutes for the 10 miles of driving from the motel. Parked in the flea market area around the track near the gate into the rest of the area.

Here's some pictures from the flea market

[copy the link – open a new window – past into the URL. Then is easy to return here to page 86 or so]

<http://www.virhistory.com/ham/dayton-19.htm>



Herman, N4CH, found an early, early Ocean Hopper circa 1953 or so

I wandered around the flea market for an hour and a half – as folks were setting up or uncovering from yesterday's set up. Nothing new spotted. One Knight Kit Ocean Hopper with coils and cabinet in decent shape for \$150. Fair price but don't need another one. Didn't see anything else in my wanderings. I was hunting for early regen kits. None spied.

Around 9am the main gates opened and folks flooded in. Julie, K8VOX and Tom, W8TAM, gave a talk in Room 5 (one of the tent 'rooms') to about 100 folks at 9:15am. I attended although it was a basic talk. Met a dozen of the park chasers there. You can watch the presentation on Parks on the Air here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhsyEB2fsZE>

{Note: The best way to watch these and then return to this same spot is to open a second window, copy the URL, paste it in , and watch. Then simply return to the other opened window and continue on. Otherwise, you usually wind up at the beginning of the newsletter if you click on the URL here when you return }

Yep, we live in a 'social media age'.....on YouTube for the rest of the world to enjoy!

Dayton Hamvention Videos - Looking for Vintage Radios

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1pQ1H7YhNo>

At the convention, Elecraft introduced the K-4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g2HvoBcewI>

160-6M state of the art. VHF/UHF modules coming in future.

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Later in the day, I noted that Tamitha Skov – the Space Weather Lady – was giving a presentation on the current solar cycle and it's progress at the Antenna Forum. . She talked at length about the current solar dynamics going through quite a bit of theory – and ending with the NOAA forecast of solar minimum sometime in late 2019 to late 2020. You reach a point called the terminator – the end of one cycle and start of the next. Once that occurs, she expects a quick rise to about the level of the last sunspot peak.



Tamitha Skov
The Space Weather Lady

Here's a tutorial on solar cycle basics

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7_Nn09mpNI

She gives a weekly solar forecast that comes out every Thursday. He's the 5/23 edition if you are not familiar with it

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKDyUd1RC5Q>

If you were at Dayton and missed her presentation, you missed a good presentation. One had to check the program real carefully to find out who was giving talks in which forums. Naturally, the ARRL and DX forums were very popular but there were 4 simultaneous things going on at once...sometimes five or six. The YASME area had several smaller presentations, too.

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Friday evening had a NPOTA reunion type get together at the Buck and Ear Bar and Grill in downtown Xenia. Probably about 20 park activators and chasers showed up including Mike, KA4RRU, Kerri and Ray, KB3WAV/KC3RW, and many others (not

into county hunting). Lots of other activities go on Friday evening from DX club receptions to VHF and QRP get togethers, etc.

Sadly, we had no county hunter forum this year or dinner, but Kerry, W4SIG, arranged for the MARAC booth. Lowell, KB0BA and Sandra, N0XYL spent many hours there. I stopped by for an hour or two Friday, and spent a couple hours there on Saturday helping out.

So who stopped by the MARAC booth? Here's a partial list of those who signed in.....

N8OYY, Ed - USA-CA #1059

N5JJC

AK8A Steve (pic below)

K0ERE- Bill

K8TE – Bill

KJ8F – Sharon - #1043

KB0BA – Lowell - #1154

N0XYL – Sandra - #1214

WB4ELK/WB8ELK

K8CMO – Dave

W8OP – Alan – pic below

K1SO – Jerry - #1215

K9WA – Jim - #1260

NA8W – Darl – pic below

NU0Q – Bill - #1171

N4CD – Bob - #883

N2MH – Mark

KF8UN- Byron - #994

W0FS - Clayton

KB8OMG – Barry - #1152

N4MM – John - #899

N1QY – Ron - #1243

NM1G – Chuck - #216

KM4FO – Dwight - #1252

KB9YVT – Ann- #1170

KA9JAC – Bob - #1079

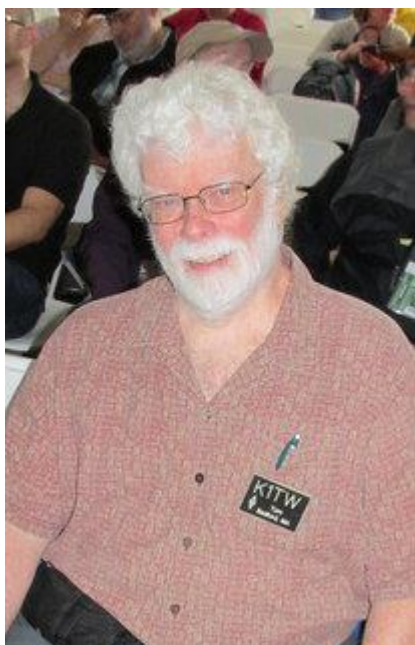
WA4UNS- Doug - #276

W4SIG – Kerry - #1205

K9FZ – Alex

W8TVT – Joe -#1091

WD4OIN – Jack - #1055
KE4UP – John
N8HAM – Jim - #682
KA7RAA
AB4WL - Ken – pic below
W9OP – Mark - #748
W8JJ – Tim - #1203



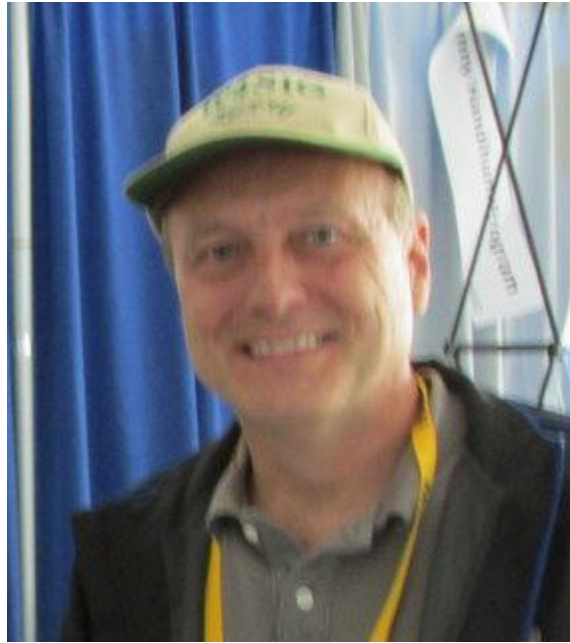
K1TW Tom



KB3WAV Kerri and Ray KC3RW



Alan W8OP USACA #1077



W4SIG Kerry USACA #1205



Steve AK8A USACA #524



AB4WL Ken

Saturday May 18

No rain in sight. Temps up into the mid 80s and sun! Hope you brought your sunscreen!

Saturday morning I made it to the flea market by 7:30am and wandered around for an hour and a half. Nothing new found and my feet were getting worn out so I headed for the MARAAC booth at 9am. No one was there yet so I opened it up – uncovering the display items – and got ready for business. Thirty minutes later Lowell and Sandra came in – they had parking problems with the handicap parking and wound up taking a shuttle bus to get in. Kerry came a bit later. The MARAC booth was in 'tent city' but the ventilation was good so no problems. And it's paved.

I pooped out about noon time and decided it was time to conserve some energy. Wandering around the flea market for the mile or two of walking gets to me these days - and I'd seen enough. Lots of newer radios from the 90s and 2000s.....mixed in with vintage stuff including Collins, Hammarlund, Hallicrafters, National, Drake, Johnson, Eldico, Swan, Heathkits, Knight Kits, Ten-Tec, and older Kenwood and Yaesu. Tons of parts and misc, coax, and accessories. Towers, antennas..... useless things like phone patches. Even SWR meters are almost defunct as every new rig has them built in.

Since the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers Memorial 'park' was just a few miles away, I headed to that park unit and put it out. Only took 15 minutes to get there from the hamfest. Had a quick run of three dozen, including half a dozen 'park to park' contacts, then headed into downtown Dayton and the Dayton Aviation Heritage Site there. You've got the museum, the Wright Bicycle Shop, open for browsing. It's KFF-0916 and was popular during the NPOTA days. No one had been there in a year so it was time to 'activate it' again. No need for 44 since I've run this before – several times! You can run this at several locations in the Dayton area. The best site is out by Wright Patterson Air Force base and the Air Museum there. (don't miss that! Worth the trip).



Then it was back to the motel in late afternoon. Time to get set for early departure on Sunday.

ARRL Report on Hamvention

Dayton Hamvention Attracts a Happy Crowd

Dayton Hamvention®, hosting the 2019 ARRL National Convention, chalked up its third year at its new venue, the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio. Amateur Radio's largest annual gathering took place May 17 - 19. Hamvention officials have not yet released a 2019 attendance figure, but last year's show drew 28,417 -- the third largest attendance ever. For many hams, Hamvention offers an opportunity each spring to renew old acquaintances and make new ones, and for manufacturers to debut their latest and greatest gear.

"These were some of the biggest crowds I've seen since Dayton Hamvention relocated to Xenia," ARRL Product Development Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, said. Hamvention visitors enjoyed largely comfortable weather, with some drizzle on opening day. By all accounts, the crowd was animated and amiable. This year marked the first that Hamvention offered free Sunday admission.



ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR.

"Dayton Hamvention 2019 was a fantastic event and was a great setting for the ARRL National Convention," said ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR. "Thank you to everyone for stopping by the ARRL exhibit area to visit with ARRL officials, staff, and volunteers. It's always a pleasure to be able to have a face-to-face QSO with everyone. Isn't ham radio great? The greatest hobby in the world!"

A free ARRL/Dayton Hamvention mobile event app helped visitors navigate the landscape of exhibitors and forums. Attendees also used the app to follow the hourly prize drawings, connect with other visitors, and view maps of the sprawling fairgrounds. The new app got a positive reception.

The Nashua (New Hampshire) Area Radio Society (NARS) -- the 2019 Dayton Hamvention Club of the Year -- led the "ARRL Spotlight on Radio Clubs and Mentoring" forum. NARS members described the ways the club builds and maintains a strong and active membership through its website, licensing classes, and programs that fit members' schedules. The success rate for licensing classes is 93%, and the club retains 70% of active members. Instructors from the ARRL Education & Technology Program shared resources available for introducing radio science and wireless technology.

In step with the shared ARRL Convention-Hamvention theme, "Mentoring the Next Generation," the 2019 Youth Forum moderated by Carole Perry, WB2MGP, drew attendees of all ages.

It was standing room only at Saturday's ARRL Member Forum, which featured a panel of ARRL Board members with ARRL Great Lakes Division Director Dale Williams, WA8EFK, moderating. Pacific Division Director Jim Tiemstra, K6JAT, who chairs the Legislative Advocacy Committee, addressed the Board's decision to hit the pause button on the Amateur Radio Parity Act. He said the Board intends to renew efforts to get a bill passed and will craft a new strategy to make that happen.



Riley Hollingsworth K4DZH

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, discusses the new Volunteer Monitor Program. [Allison McLellan photo] Above.....

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, headed up a Sunday forum on ARRL's new Volunteer Monitor Program. Hollingsworth explained how the program evolved out of an FCC request. Hollingsworth explained that he polled FCC District Directors to see which areas of the US needed the most attention. He said that's where most Volunteer Monitors will be deployed.

President Roderick and CEO Howard Michel, WB2ITX, stressed the need to attract more Technician licensees into ARRL. Roderick challenged forum attendees to make sure their clubs are welcoming newcomers and helping them to get active and engaged as radio amateurs. At Michel's "Engaging Today's Radio Amateur" presentation, audience members expressed support for the new directions Michel is taking ARRL in terms of delivering more value to members.

ARRL's Public Service Communications Panel Discussion drew a large crowd of Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members and other active volunteers.

Audience members expressed constructive concerns over the new ARES Plan and with reinforcing Amateur Radio recognition nationwide.

"ARRL's big team included 118 members supporting exhibits, activities, and presentations to help all radio amateurs become more active, involved, and engaged," Inderbitzen said. "Together we helped represent the very best of our Amateur Radio Service and ARRL."

Source: ARRL Weekly Newsletter – dated 5/23

Canadian National Parks on the Air

Canadian National Parks on the Air: January 1 to December 31 2019

May 15, 2019 – Freezing temperatures and snowy conditions have not deterred avid Radio Amateurs from activating Canadian national parks and historic sites as part of the year-long CNPOTA event. To date, there have been 101 successful activations of Parks Canada sites. Each of these activations required Radio Amateurs to travel to one of Canada's 48 national parks or 172 national historic sites and set up portable radio equipment to make contacts with Radio Amateur Chasers who were following their adventures.

A typical CNPOTA activation takes a few hours and involves either a solo operator or teams of operators representing a club or radio group. Band conditions have made this more challenging and activators will typically attempt multiple bands and multiple modes to increase their point totals. All Amateur bands except 60m and 4m are allowed and there are three accepted modes: CW, phone and digital. FT8 has been a popular digital mode.

Here are some highlights of the activations so far:

Most activity was on the east coast with confirmed activations in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. There have been

recent activation attempts in British Columbia and Alberta, but so far these have not been confirmed. As of May 15, no activations have been attempted in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. We're hoping the "rest-of-Canada" will come join in the fun!

The husband and wife team of Rob Noakes, VE3PCP and Alicia Noakes, VA3KGZ, along with their son Justin Noakes, VA3AQZ, operating as VE3IHR, Inverhuron Ham Radio Club, continued their activations of the Point Clark Lighthouse National Historic Site (ON37) and have now completed 20 activations of the lighthouse! They also completed an activation of Bruce Peninsula National Park (ON01) and Woodside National Historic Site (ON47). The activations have been done mostly with mobile antennas and 100 Watts of power with their classic Kenwood TS850 running strictly on dedicated battery power separate from the vehicle power system and no generator. They have run both SSB and FT8 digital modes at all locations on many bands from 80m through 10m.

Pierre Jolin, VE2GT, visited eight Parks Canada sites in the Montreal, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Quebec City and Ottawa areas and completed 11 activations. Pierre says "people are often surprised when I tell them that I'm a Radio Amateur and can talk to Europe from my car".

Al Penney, VO1NO and Scot Austin, VA1WTF, operating under the Annapolis Valley Amateur Radio Club VA1AVR call sign, visited nine different Parks Canada sites in the Annapolis Valley area of Nova Scotia and completed a total of 15 activations. Unlike many activators, Al and Scot have decided not to rely on mobile antennas and operating in the comfort (and warmth!) of a vehicle's interior. Instead, they set up half-wave dipoles outside on telescoping poles and operate underneath the tailgate of Al's Xterra. With propagation conditions as bad as they are, they try to take advantage of the benefits of full-size antennas. They also regard this as excellent practice for emergencies, and they can set up a complete HF station in minutes. Of course, winter in Nova Scotia can be unpleasant at times and, as veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, they have been overheard using the expression "embrace the suck" on occasion!

Denis Rule, VE3BF, activated seven Parks Canada sites in the Ottawa area operating under the Manotick Amateur Radio Group VE3AIR call sign and another two under his own call sign.

Sheldon Hartling, VE1GPY, visited seven Parks Canada sites and completed eight activations. In addition to three local Halifax sites, Sheldon ventured out on roadtrips to the Fort Beauséjour National Historic Site (NB13) in New Brunswick, and to the Fort

Edward (NS17), Fort Lawrence (NS18) and Fort Sainte Marie de Grace (NS20) National Historic Sites in Nova Scotia. The activations have been done with mobile Hustler antennas and 100 Watts of power using an Icom IC-7300 running on dedicated battery power using an SLA battery and solar panel. His last rove ended a little early when his Santa Fe broke a spring in some winter potholes in LaHave, Nova Scotia and had to be towed 120 kilometres back to Halifax.

The North Atlantic Amateur Radio Club / NARP Field Ops Team VO1NAR visited two Parks Canada sites in the St John's area and completed eight activations. Operators were Ira Stacey, VO1IRA, Sheldon Tower, VO1TWR, Paul Price, VO1CRP, Paul Sherren, VO1ZAP, Matthew Webb, VO1WEB, Chris Hillier, VO1IDX and Brian Kidney, VO1CDR. Being an island in the North Atlantic, Newfoundland can experience harsh weather conditions especially during the winter months. The team experienced frigid temperatures reaching windchills below -20C, and wind gusts over 70 km/h that caused their vertical antenna to bend and resemble more of an upside-down-U. With warmer months in their future they are planning to activate addition parks in Newfoundland. Chris Hillier, a member of the group, is currently driving to Dayton OH and visited two sites along the way. These additional VO1NAR activations should be confirmed once log files are uploaded.

John Bignell, VE1JMB, a new Radio Amateur, completed two activations in Halifax and another one in Quebec. John has embraced the spirit of the event and says "whether I am sitting beside the Mersey River with tall trees and the sun trying to peak through, or digging a snow shelter to block the cold winter Québec snow, spending time in our beautiful Canadian National Parks while connecting with others from around the world allows me to pursue two passions as one. I have been focusing on a simple portable QRP setup that fits in my knapsack and that I can bring everywhere my paddle, bike, or snowshoes take me."

Dave Goodwin, VE9CB, activated two sites in New Brunswick: Fort Beauséjour – Fort Cumberland National Historic Site (NB13) and Carleton Martello Tower National Historic Site of Canada (NB12).

Several parks were activated by separate teams at the same time:

VE2GT and VE1JMB activated Cartier-Brébeuf National Historic Site (QC14)
VE2GT and VE3AIR activated Fort Wellington National Historic Site (ON25)
VE2GT and VE3AIR Laurier House National Historic Site of Canada (ON30)

There were two activations of the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site (QC36) with Pierre Jolin, VE2GT, as the operator using the RAC station call sign VA2RAC.

Several parks have been activated entirely with satellite QSOs:

Point Pelee National Park (ON03) by Ron Bondy, ADODX. This included a park-to-park satellite contact with Mike Diehl, VE6LID at Fort Malden National Historic Site (ON22).

Fort Beauséjour – Fort Cumberland National Historic Site (NB13) by Dave Goodwin, VE9CB.

Congratulations to Peter Kobak, K0BAK, of opening day fame, for confirming “Five Star Activator” status on the first day of CNPOTA! Peter is currently on a mid-May mega-rove to the Maritime provinces with hopes of activating up to 33 parks; most of these will be for the first time. As of May 14, he was about halfway complete, having activated 14 parks with 437 contacts in 10 countries!



K0BAK 2700 mile route to-through Canada

Pete’s vehicle is a former “TV van” or ENG (Electronic News Gathering) truck. He is in the process of building it into a 20-band rover vehicle for HF and VHF contests and events. Pete has visited Canada many times with his family, including a cruise with stops in the Maritimes, but this is his first drive through the area. Having sampled the beauty and history of the area, he is looking forward to returning with his spouse for a more leisurely visit.

And finally, congratulations to the North Atlantic Amateur Radio Club / NARP Field Ops Team VO1NAR and to Sheldon Hartling, VE1GPY for also confirming “Five Star Activator” status! Five Star Activators engage in exceptional outreach during activations

and must perform a minimum of five items on the Five Star Activator list and provide documentation upon request.

A big thank you to all of the CNPOTA activators. These activators are the stars of the event! Please listen for them on the air and watch for them on the spotting networks and in the CNPOTA Facebook group. Most importantly, if you make a CNPOTA contact, be sure to log on to the cnpota.ca website and upload your log file. Activators only get credit for confirmed QSOs and they need five confirmed QSOs to confirm their activation. It means a lot to them.

<https://wp.rac.ca/canadian-national-parks-on-the-air-update-may-2019/?fbclid=IwAR3Y5kkKmc18oXNS-as0WAILLahm611j6zt7D8wL3mVKYppUfBq9RRjM2K0>

<https://cnpota.ca/>

On the Road with N4CD- Headed Home

I left Dayton at 6:15am on Sunday. Drove all day long – putting out the counties on the interstate route from Dayton to Cincinnati to Louisville to Nashville to Little Rock to Hope AR in Hempstead County AR for the night at the Super 8 there.

Stopped at 5:30 after long day (and gained an hour as went from Eastern to Central Time). Half hour major traffic backup – creep and crawl in Little Rock – Pulaski County – for 30 minutes then on to Hope AR - 750 plus miles.....checked into motel....then decided there was till time so zipped up 8 miles to Historic Washington for a quickie 'activation' there. Then hit the Trail of Tears for a quick dozen, then back to Hope. Dinner at the Chinese Buffet there in Hope.

Next day home in 4 hours...but with a one mile detour to Spring Creek Forest Preserve in Dallas County for a 'quickie' activation for 20 minutes. Then 20 minutes to home.

The 2016 Chevy Malibu Ltd turned over 100,000 miles shortly after I left Dayton.....arriving home with 101,017 miles on the odometer and a trip of 2601 miles to/from the Hamvention. I had a great time. Hope you were able to attend, and if not, attend vicariously through the dozen YouTube presentations – easy to find.

Meanwhile, it will take me a couple days to convert all the paper logs to ADI files on the computer using FLE (Fast Log Entry).....and massage several park files, Filter out 30M and 17M and dupe contacts in a county, and add in the extra counties run for the AR QSO Party log....and get them off to the custodians. Lots of parks. Over 1,500 QSOs...lots of typing! Then write the County Hunter News for May. A week will disappear quickly.

No big trips planned for a month.....time to get the oil changed, take care of a few doc visits, get things done around the house.....enjoy the upcoming Hamcom convention in Dallas in early June.....and then worry about the next trip to wherever in a couple weeks. Hmmm...seems like Colorado is nice in the summer time and there's parks to run there! As well as all over the western USA.

Awards Issued this Month

Other than last counties sent out, not much seems to be happening. Maybe no one is earning awards with the not so great conditions.

CQ Magazine has a new USACA Custodian, so maybe we'll see things happening there and maybe a new USACA number? Certainly lots at the 500 and 1000 level probably backlogged for the past five months should be issued.

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

The end of QSO Party spring season is winding down. Just two to go. Jump on in and work the stations! Better yet, go mobile!

June 1 1400 June 02 0200

Kentucky QSO Party

CW Ph Dig RS(T), county or SPC

www.kyqsoparty.org

June 15 1600z to June 16 0400

West Virginia QSO Party

CW Ph Dig RS(T), county or SPC

qsl.net/wvsarc/wvqp/wvqp.htm

June 8 1800z to June 10 02 59z

ARRL June VHF Contest

CW Ph Dig4-char grid square

www.arrl.org/june-vhf

June 22 1800z to June 23 2100z

ARRL Field Day

CW Ph Dig Number of xmtrs, operating class, ARRL/RAC section or “DX”

www.arrl.org/field-day

That's all this month. Whew! That's enough! See you next month.