

County Hunter News

June 2020

Volume 16 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. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. 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) Sunspots – Nope. Missing in action. None. Nada. Zip. Tried for a day but two areas of 'activity' didn't turn into sunspots. SFI (solar flux) sat at 67-70 nearly all month with many days at 67, 68...and only a few up at 69 and 70. 20M doesn't work well at 67 to most distances. This is supposed to be the 'bottom' of the sunspot cycle. So far, we aren't getting out of the bottom quickly – or at all at this point.

2) COVID-19 – the big hamfest in June (HamCom in Plano TX) has officially been canceled. In IL, the big Antique Radio Club Meet in August (300+ folks) canceled this year as IL is forbidding anything that attracts more than 50 people (like all the hamfests) until fall. Likely will be the pattern just about everywhere in the US for ham radio events, conventions, hamfests, auctions, etc. Field Day will likely be small groups, remote set ups in town parks or at an EOC to let club members operate from their houses. No way to 'share' equipment in person – with folks touching microphones, keys, logging computers, etc as shifts change. Maybe many small expeditions – one to a few people socially isolating somewhere – maybe 2 or 3 trailers together with folks 'isolated' in each for the different bands? Who knows? It's going to be different. The biggest part of FD here for most members – some who only help set up – is the big Saturday night dinners – with typically 50 to 100 folks showing up. Not going to happen this year for sure!

Dayton Hamvention (May) , Friedrichshaven Germany (June), etc all canceled – or postponed to 2021. Same for the Summer Olympics in Japan this summer. Baseball will start with zero fans in the bleachers and seats. Probably the same for football this fall. Many colleges for fall are already planning for on-line only classes. Schools are up in the air about this.

Our local ham radio clubs are 'on-line' with monthly programs – on ZOOM. No date set for in person meetings and might not happen till next year.

Big trips by county hunters/park activators have been near zero – and that also includes most state QSO Parties as the states are 'locked down' or have strict 'stay at home' orders. Few mobiles venture out – and usually just day trips here and there.

3) **MARAC Annual Convention** – hopefully 'good' in the COVID world when it happens in October. Plan for the best – sign up now!

MARAC Convention
October 25-27, 2020.

<http://ag6v.com/MARAC//>

4) **QSO Parties** - Two more QSO parties this spring in June. Hope y'all participate and if in state or nearby get out and run a few counties for a day. Then a dry spell till late August or so.

Sunspot News I

Solar Cycle 25 Has Started

Guest post by David Archibald

The heliospheric current sheet has flattened meaning that Solar Cycle 24 is over and we are now in Solar Cycle 25.

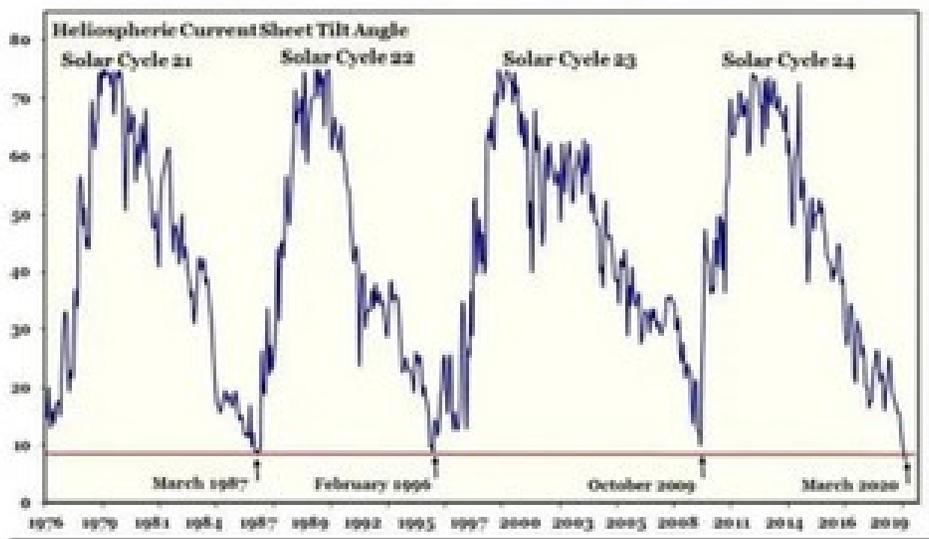


Figure 1: Heliospheric current sheet tilt angle 1976 -2020

The solar cycle isn't over until the heliospheric current sheet has flattened. The data is provided by the Wilcox Solar Observatory at Stanford University. There were no observations from about 19 December to 5 February; so the values in between have been interpolated from the rotations before and after.

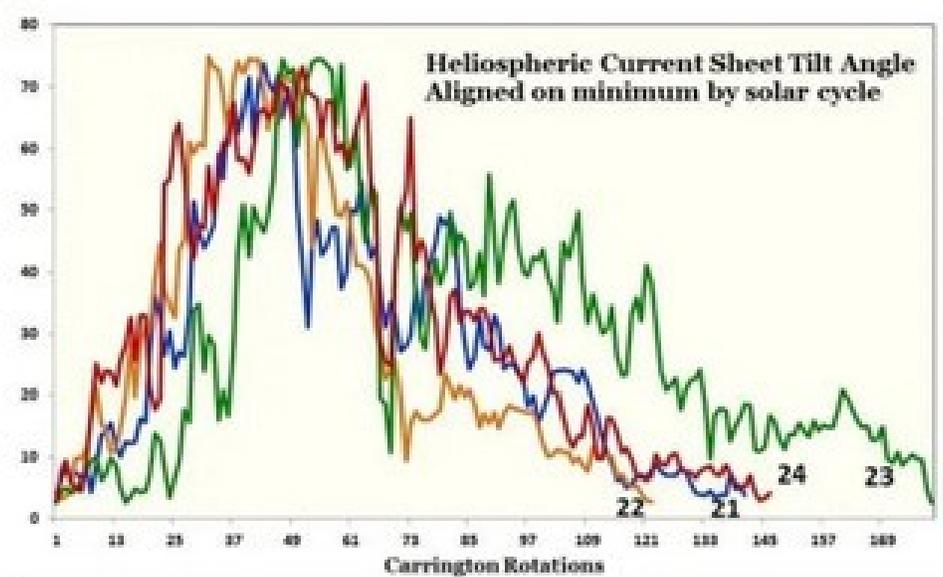


Figure 2: Heliospheric current sheet tilt angle aligned on solar cycle minimum

As measured in Carrington rotations, averaging 27.23 days, Solar Cycle 24 was of average length.

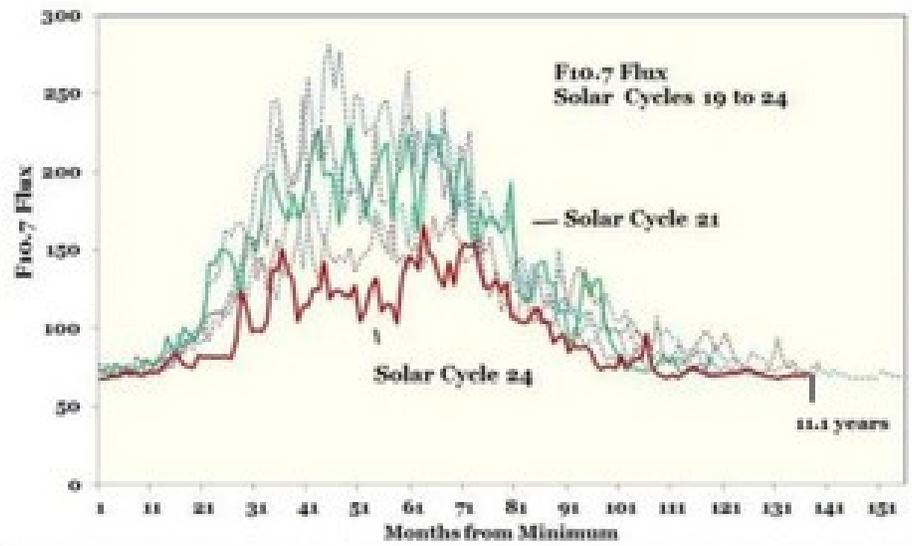


Figure 3: F10.7 flux aligned on solar minimum

On the basis of the F10.7 flux, Solar Cycle 24 was 11.1 years long – which is the average solar cycle length.

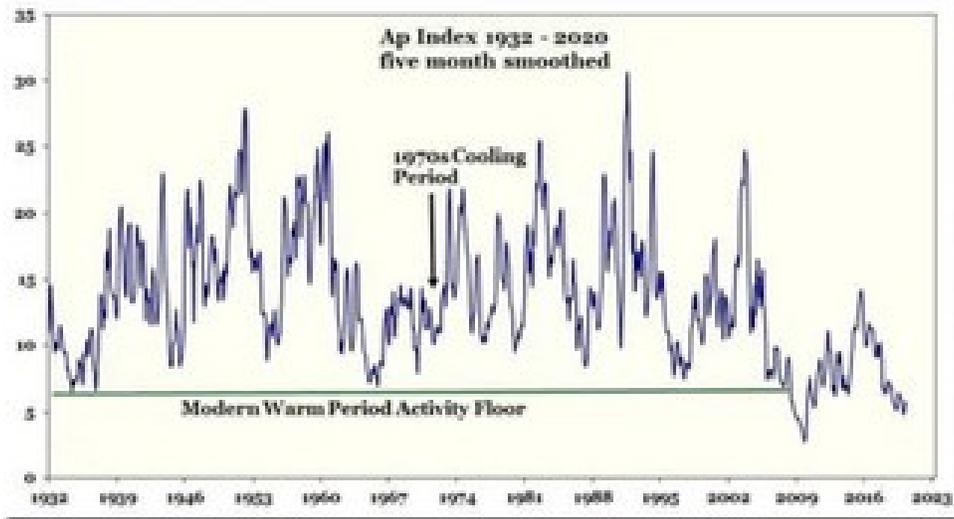


Figure 4: Ap Index 1932 – 2020

What this figure shows is that there has been a permanent shift down in the Sun's magnetic flux into the New Cold Period. The breakover was most probably in 2005 when the Ap Index suddenly dropped to solar-minimum type levels just above the Modern Warm Period activity floor. Then there was another sudden break down in 2008 with the absolute low in 2009.

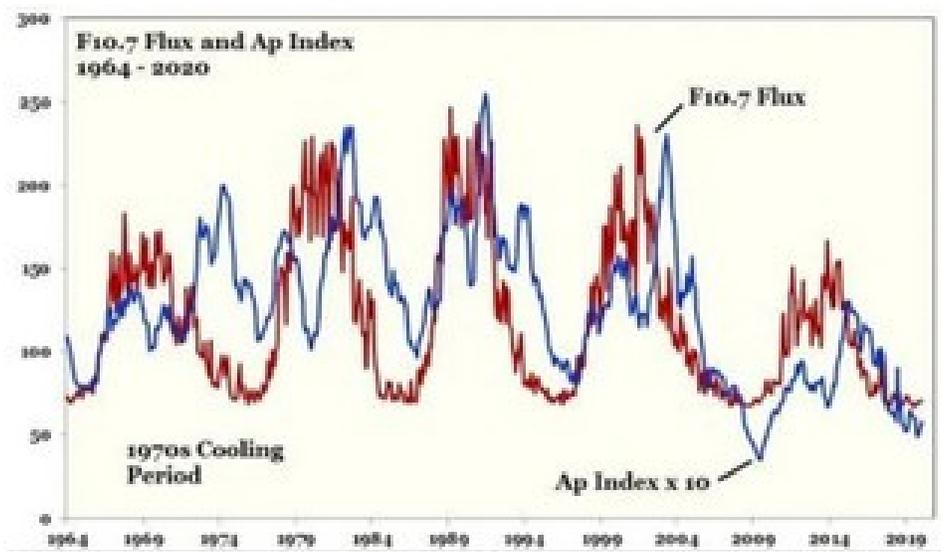


Figure 5: F10.7 Flux and Ap Index 1964 – 2020

More than anything else, it is the variation in the Sun’s magnetic flux that changes the Earth’s climate on decadal time scales. Higher magnetic flux pushes cosmic rays away from the inner planets of the solar system. The Ap Index averaged 13.6 from 1964 to the end of Solar Cycle 24. It averaged 8.1 over Solar Cycle 24. If the 11 year lag in terrestrial response to solar input holds, then the much-anticipated solar-driven cooling should start now.

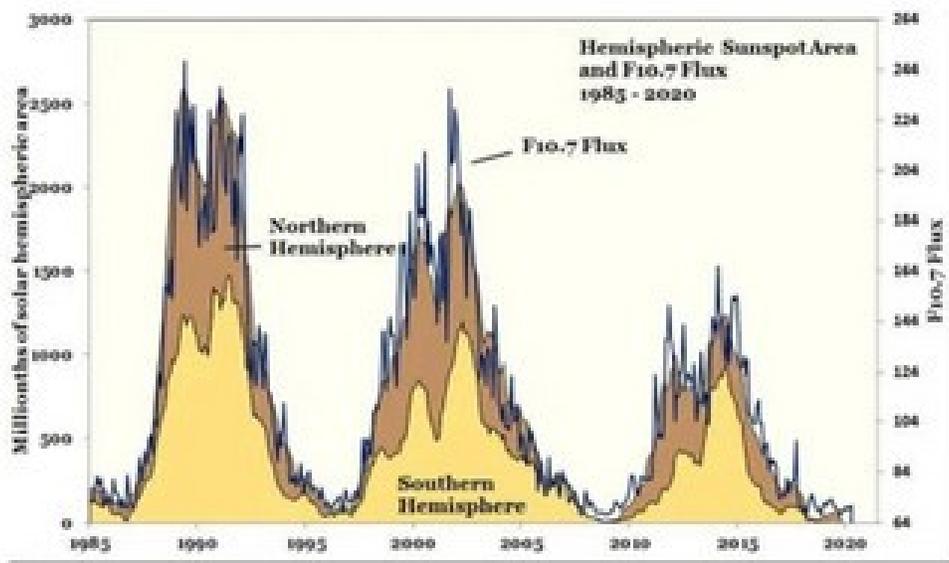


Figure 6: Hemispheric sunspot area and F10.7 flux 1985 – 2020

As Figure 6 show, the F10.7 flux equates to the sunspot area of the Sun.

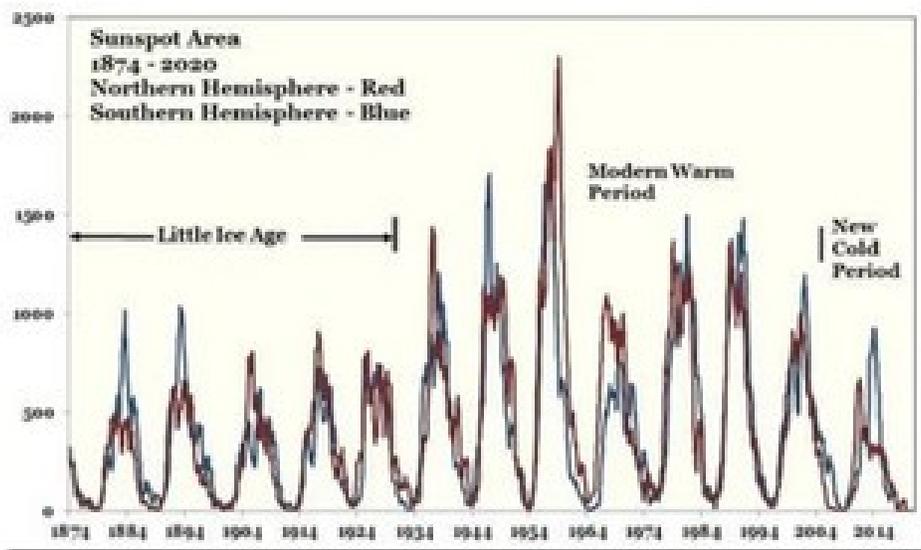


Figure 7: Sunspot Area 1874 – 2020

The change in character from the Little Ice Age to the Modern Warm Period is quite evident in the hemispheric sunspot area data. Apart from the much lower amplitude, there was far more asymmetry between the northern and southern solar hemispheres in the Little Ice Age than in the Modern Warm Period. Solar Cycle 24 returned to the sunspot area amplitudes of the late Little Ice Age and has north-south asymmetry similar to that of Solar Cycle 12 from 1878 to 1890.

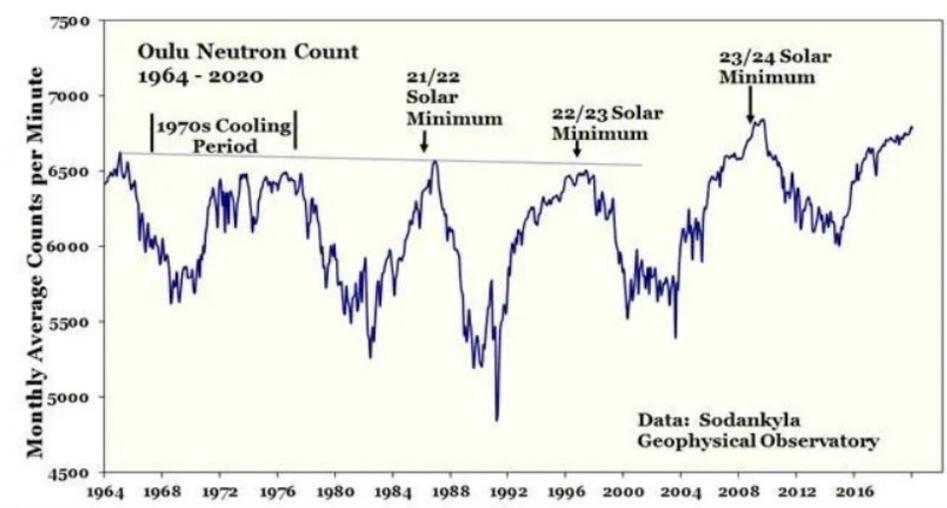


Figure 8: Oulu Neutron Count 1964 – 2020

Now that the solar minimum is in, the peak in neutron count should be one year from now. The amplitude of the peak is likely to be close to the amplitude of the 23/24 minimum.

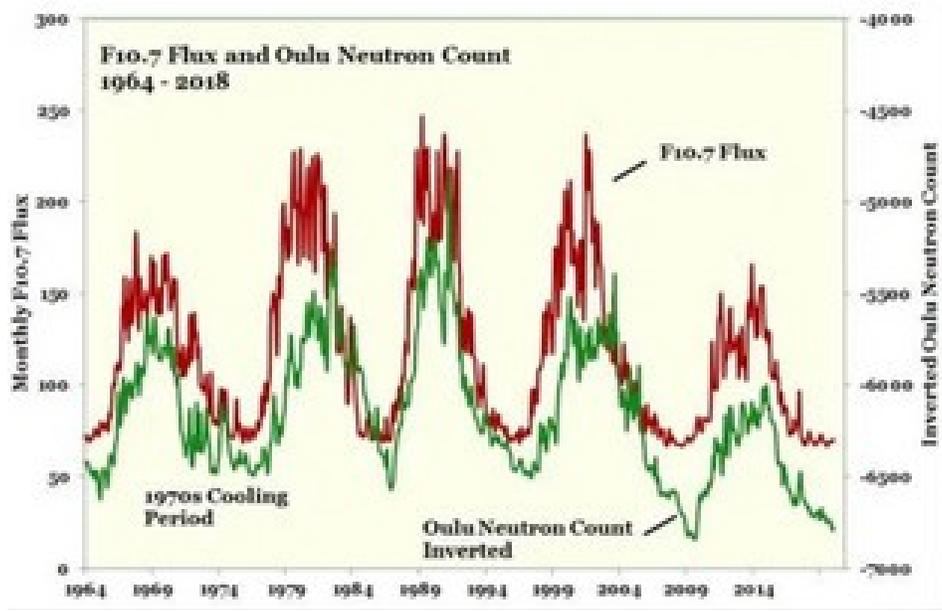


Figure 9: F10.7 flux and Oulu neutron count

As with Figure 5, this figure shows the result of the sudden step down of the Sun’s magnetic activity in 2005. The Sun has entered a new regime of activity with the New Cold Period.

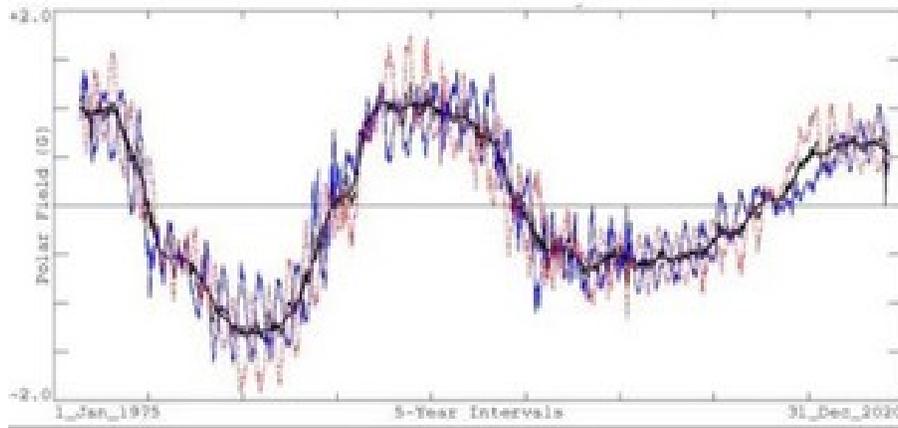


Figure 10: Solar polar field strength 1975 – 2020

This figure is from the Wilcox Solar Observatory. The solar polar field strength at solar minimum is the most accurate predictor of the amplitude of the following solar cycle. Figure 10 indicates that the amplitude of Solar Cycle 25 will be close to that of Solar Cycle 24. The New Cold Period continues.

Source: <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2020/04/22/solar-cycle-25-has-started/>

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de N4CD – someone get this news to Old Sol.....nothing is happening yet radio wise!

Indiana QSO Party

Decent activity occurred from fixed stations this year as folks 'stayed at home'. I saw 35 mults (counties) reported on SSB but most had in the 20s. On cw, mid 20s seemed to be about it for multipliers. No mobiles this year with state 'lockdown'. The big guns in IN each made several hundred contacts, with one HP mult-op making over 1,000 Qs combined SSB and CW. Out of state folks reported up to 30 counties on SSB and mid 20s on CW. Most had in the 10 range on CW and a few more on SSB.

This even occurs same weekend as DE QP, New England QP and 7th Area QP. Busy

weekend!

K9IU fixed IN - 491 CW 1 SSB

Lots of activity on the bands with shelter in place, no multi-ops, no rovers, no sports on TV, and not much else to do! Good fun, Bands were in nice shape, although I was disappointed to not hear anything on 15 or 10 some day....

N3KN in VA reported working 28 CW and 28 SSB stations in IN with 18cw and 17 SSB mults

WT2P - fixed - IL 34 CW 15 SSB 21 CW mults 12 SSB mults

Couldn't hear IN most of the day, however decided in the early afternoon to check 80 where I came across loud IN stations. 40 improved slightly into sunset and I could work a handful there.

Normally a group of us would go with K9NR to operate portable from INPER but this year that was not in the cards.

73,
WT2P

K4BAI - fixed - GA 28 CW 21 SSB 15 CW 17 SSB mults

Good activity and fair conditions on 40 and 80. 20M was soo long, but was surprised by an evening QSO on 20 SSB with N9SE. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI.

K9NN - fixed IN 345 CW 383 SSB

Had a great time during INQP this year and entered in the single op, low power class. I started on 20M as 40M sounded pretty "dead" at 11AM. My station is definitely on the "small size", especially on 20M, as my antenna is a 10M-80M Off Center Fed Dipole (OFCD) at 20 feet and power of 100W. Not very conducive to a run mode, "pile-up generator". It really helps to have the 7QP contest start two hours before INQP as that provides a reasonable number of stations to "search and pounce". Also, the NEQP group adds a good many stations later, when it starts at 4PM. I really utilized the telnet

network to feed the N1MM+ Band Map to help me find the unworked 7QP and NEQP stations quickly. The needed multiplier window of N1MM+ was a great help in keeping track of where the unworked multipliers were located.

Stayed primarily on 20M and 40M CW until about 4PM and then tried some 40M phone, with muted success. Moved back to CW and wondered if phone was going to work much at all with this station setup. Boy, was I in for a pleasant surprise later !

By about 5PM had worked most of the 7QP folks on 20M CW so moved to 80M CW and phone. I have a LDG 600ProII Automatic Antenna Tuner that works really well, except on 80M phone. I need to manually insert a section of coax into the OCFD feed line to get the impedance lowered enough so the LDG would work. Definitely slows down band changes to 80M. I need to work on adjusting the dipole wire lengths for optimum operation on all bands.

Bounced between 80M and 40M CW before going back to 40M phone at 9PM, to see if the band had opened up. It had! I sat on one frequency for the next 90 minutes and worked 167 QSO's, with rates hitting over 200 Q's/hr for two, 15 minute stretches. What a blast!

Big thanks to the INQP folks for putting this event together.

73, Dale K9NN

N4CD - in TX - 6 CW 5 SSB QSO

Caught a few IN stations while giving out parks in TX.

Delaware QSO Party

Good activity with things locked down along the east coast and elsewhere. Many DE stations on – and some making hundreds and hundreds of QSOs from DE. All three counties were on the air. Most outside of DE worked from 5 to 20 QSOs.

K4BAI - fixed - GA 15 CW 5 SSB

Thanks for all QSOs. Good activity from the three counties of DE. 73, John, K4BAI

K8TE - fixed - NM 5 CW 2 SSB

What an interesting weekend! Last year, we had planned to travel to UT for the 7QP, then COVID-19 got in the way for this year. I usually concentrate on the 7QP and miss the DEQP. Instead, we stayed home and I spent a lot of time in the shack feeding RF to my two dipoles. I was happy to get a few DE contacts in the log.

Thanks for the contacts! Let's hope we have a COVID-19 virus in use by the same time next year. And maybe HF propagation will be a little better too and my noise level will decrease. And I give a big thanks to Bruce, WA7BNM for this web site and the parsing tool for this past weekend's contest! 73, Bill, K8TE

DL3DXX - fixed - DX 17 CW QSO

I don't remember ever working so many different Delaware stations in the Delaware QSP party.

N4CD - 3 CW – 2 SSB QSO – all three counties

While out giving out parks and in-between, caught five DE stations for the QP.

On the Road with N4CD I

The 'stay at home' ban ended at midnight April 30, not that everyone was now headed to meet ups and church and everywhere is in big numbers. The majority were still staying at home or close by. Restaurants, Bars, Hair Salons, Nail salons, were still under tight restrictions. Restaurants could open with 25% of seating capacity but most remained

only 'order on line' and pickup or delivery – at least in the Dallas/Ft Worth area. Movie theaters 'could' open but most chains didn't – waiting to see what would happen. Traffic on roads increased a bit.

It was time to get away for a weekend. So far – during April – only one or two day trips to local parks. I could chance an overnight trip (one motel stay) for this senior park activator/county runner to get two new POTA parks and a few repeats. It was going to be a warm, sunny weekend.

So I did some planning. Here, you have to make reservations at the state parks on line and obtain (and pay if no state pass) a permit on line. Many of the parks near the cities are 'full up' on weekends for day use. Well, it's usually 85 to 90F this time of year. The boating is great. Lakes are still a bit COLD though. Groups limited to 4 if not immediate family members. Turns out two local parks were 'full up' but those further away were not.

So bright and early on Saturday May 2 I headed west – up I-35 to 380 west. If you stay on 380 you wind up in NM in about 6-7 hours. Just before Decatur TX you can head north to the LBJ Grasslands – KFF-4371/K-4371 in Wise County TX. The 7QP had started so I put a few of them in the log before heading to 20M CW. Conditions were decent with some DX like DL3DXX, OH1XT, IW2BNA, ON4ON, DL1EJA, DL2ND, DL8NDG F6EOC, ON4VT, IW2NXI, F4HZR, and ON3YB making it in the log along with dozens of county hunters and park chasers. Those DX stations have 'big signals' this way and if propagation is decent, you can log them while the band is open to EU.

The Grasslands are composed of a 'swiss cheese' like affair with a hundred small parcels and it is difficult to know what is in and not in the 'park' other than two designated sites. I headed to the TADRA trailhead which is in the park – about 10 miles north of 380. Nice parking area there and signs.

Tried 17M but it was too early for anything here. Good run, too, on 30 and 40M. Easily made 44Q for the WWFF Challenge. This was repeat – ran it several times before. (71Qs here)

Fort Richardson State Park

Headed west out to Fort Richardson State Park KFF-3011/K-3011 in Jack County TX an hour or so. (14 previous activations – 584 QSOs).



To get in, you show your printed off pass. They ask your name, check the list, and in you go. No reservation – you are out of luck.

From the web:

Fort Richardson was a United States Army installation located in present-day Jacksboro, Texas. Named in honor of Union General Israel B. Richardson, who died in the Battle of Antietam during the American Civil War, it was active from 1867 to 1878. Today, the site, with a few surviving buildings, is called Fort Richardson State Park, Historic Site and Lost Creek Reservoir State Trailway. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963 for its role in securing the state's northern frontier in the post-Civil War era

As much as any frontier army installation, Fort Richardson facilitated white immigration and settlement in north-central Texas. It was part of a system of forts along the Texas frontier to protect and encourage settlement in north-central and West Texas. Others included Forts Griffin, Concho, Belknap, Chadbourne, Stockton, Davis, McKavett, Clark, McIntosh, Inge, and Phantom Hill in Texas, and Fort Sill in Oklahoma. The original site selection was ordered for a location near Buffalo Springs in Clay County about 20 miles north of Fort Richardson. The location proved untenable and unfit for a semi-permanent installation. The area lacked timber and adequate water resources, and the U.S. considered it "hostile" territory, with Native Americans often raiding the area. In 1862, an entire town, Henrietta, northwest of Buffalo Springs, was abandoned due to lack of security. As a result, the U.S. 6th Cavalry Regiment moved south to the present location of Fort Richardson.

In 1867, construction began by the 6th Cavalry on the 300-acre site along "Lost Creek, a small tributary of the West Fork of the Trinity River", at a cost of \$800,000, and

occupied on 26 November. It became the anchor of the frontier fort system, and the last army outpost in north Texas along the military road to Fort Sill. Originally a five-company post, it was expanded to accommodate ten or more companies so that in 1872, with a population of 666 officers and men, it was listed as the largest U.S. Army installation in the United States.

Life was hard for a soldier at Fort Richardson. Routine duties included long, arduous patrols along the frontier from Clay and Jack Counties west to Palo Duro Canyon near present-day Amarillo. Battles with Comanche and Kiowa Indians became commonplace as the U.S. cavalry and infantry units sought to prove their ability to repel attacks and facilitate white settlement.

In 1871 while touring the system, General William T. Sherman stayed at Fort Richardson and narrowly missed the Warren Wagon Train Raid. General Sherman arrived at Fort Sill and arrested Kiowa chiefs Satanta and Big Tree and had them sent to Jacksboro to stand trial for their role in the massacre. In July 1871, they were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death, which was later commuted to life in prison. They were the first Indians tried and convicted in a Texas civil court system.

Following these events, General Sherman authorized the commander of the 4th Cavalry, Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, to begin offensive operations against the Comanche and Kiowa in the Texas Panhandle. One scouting party fought in the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon in September 1874, a U.S. victory that ended the Red River War with Quanah Parker's Comanches and Red Warbonnet's Kiowas. The cavalry captured so much of the tribes' provisions that they were forced to move back to reservations in Oklahoma before winter. This battle was largely responsible for the end to Comanche and Kiowa raids along the northern frontier between Oklahoma and Texas.

After its victory, the army saw no need to maintain Fort Richardson and abandoned the post on May 23, 1878.

Thanks to a group of Jacksboro residents, the fort was declared a state historic site in 1963 and came under the management of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In 1968, extensive renovations began, and in 1973, it reopened as "Fort Richardson State Historic Park."

Visitors can tour seven restored original buildings, including the post hospital, officers' quarters, powder magazine, morgue, commissary, guardhouse, and bakery. Two replica buildings of the enlisted men's barracks and the officer's barracks house the Interpretive

Center. Guided tours of the buildings are held daily.

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The 7QP was raging so I put a dozen of them in the log quickly by search and pounce. Then started on 20M high up in the band – down low was full of 7QP'ers. A few DX stations (6) made it through. Did work two (K0DEQ and W6LEN) on 17m. 30 and 40M provided 10Qs each. Got my 44+. I'd been here just once before. (87Qs in the log here)

Now it was a couple hour haul to Fort Griffin Historic Site – through Young and Throckmorton over to Shackelford County. 65 and 70 mph the whole way.

Fort Griffin Historic Site K-6557 – POTA only - ATNO



from the state site:

On July 31, 1867, Lt. Col. Samuel D. Sturgis and four companies of the 6th Cavalry established a new post high on a plateau, overlooking a bend of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River to the northeast. First designated as Camp Wilson, the name of the post was changed to Fort Griffin in honor of Gen. Charles Griffin, the commander of the Department of Texas who died of yellow fever the previous September in an epidemic sweeping Galveston.

Although the original intention was for all buildings on the grounds to be permanent stone structures, they retained a temporary appearance throughout their existence. In the beginning, log houses called “picket” huts (built with vertical logs), tents and rough frame buildings with earth and canvas roofs were erected as provisional shelter. The scarcity of materials, shortage of funds and daily demands of military duty allowed for only six of the more than 90 structures of the garrison to be built wholly of stone.

Although Fort Griffin was known on the frontier to be a very tidy, disciplined place, it was an especially active fort and the troops were kept busy with protection and settlement of the frontier with little time for building construction or maintenance. The town of Fort Griffin, also known as The Flat or Hide Town, was considered one of the West’s five wildest towns with streets thronging with soldiers, buffalo hunters, drovers, gamblers, saloon girls, surveyors, outlaws, clerks, merchants and ranchers. As early as 1868, The Flat’s gaming tables, restaurants, livery stables and bordellos provided general amusement for the soldiers at nearby Fort Griffin. Besides spending most of their wages there, soldiers from the fort were often called upon to police the town.

Fort Griffin became a major support post during the Red River War of 1874, with Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie utilizing the fort as a base of operations for several years. Troops from Fort Griffin, including units of the Buffalo Soldiers and Tonkawa scouts, participated in all the decisive campaigns that ended Kiowa and Comanche domination of northern Texas.

In May 1881, the U.S. Army determined that Fort Griffin was no longer necessary for defense and the post was abandoned. With the soldiers and buffalo gone and the cattle trails replaced by railroads, the roaring town of Fort Griffin slowly dissolved.

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Yes – it is really, really in the middle of nowhere now. It sits on a high plateau – you can see for miles – and there is nothing but nothing there. **It was hot – 100 degrees F and sun sizzling.** There were no other visitors there. You've got several sites to run from including the 'overlook' parking lot nice and high up. This is not the place to operate portable in summer time – there's no shade around. Humidity low. Wind 20-30 mph. Bring lots of water. I went through two quarts today.

Had good runs but the DX was gone. So were most of the signals! Where did my bands to? I struggled work stations. Fortunately the 7QP was still going on and I put a dozen of them in the log. You need only 10 for a POTA activation – but this was the first time

this park was on the air ever. (Yeah, it's not on your scenic route and it's 50 miles north of the interstate.). There's nothing else around that makes it worth your while usually to go here!

Only caught 20 county hunters and park chasers from here! It should have been 50-70 as this was first time activation. Checked – dang. A index had dropped a whole bunch – I saw A=65. It had been up at 70 a few days ago – that's when 20M does a good job of providing contacts. There was a half dozen on 30M and just 3 on 40M. Well, it's been activated but it is a bit frustrating to drive hundreds of miles to get the park and the band just dies on you. The 'mid day' slump didn't help either.

There's a visitor center here and a couple buildings to see. The campground is shut down at the current time.

The forecast for this area was temps over 100 for the next two days. No need to stick around. It was up at 103F on Monday. Yuck!

Left the park and headed to the Super 8 Motel in Eastland TX. \$55 for the night. Exterior doors on rooms so you don't have to go through hallways, lobbies, etc. Checked in – the guy is behind a glass window. Got my key (electronic – hold to door) and was set for the night. It was 20 miles over to another seldom run park so I headed over there.

Palo Pinto Mountains State Park – KFF—3047/K-3047. Palo Pinto County.

(4 previous activations with 154 contacts)

This is an undeveloped 5,000 acre park – most of it currently inaccessible. However, the City of Strawn donated Tucker Lake – a small lake – limited to electric motors or no motors for fishing – with no boat ramp – where you can run along with a small picnic area at the end of the road – also considered part of the park. You can run there at either spot. There's no campground or visitor center but there is a ranger HQ building but it's not 'inviting' – more like a private residence.

Pulled in late in the afternoon. Band conditions not great – only got 25 in the log. Hotter than blazes, too! Near 100F. Caught a bunch of NE QP stations fortunately. Only a handful (like 6) of county hunters/park chasers made it in the log. Between NEQP, 7QP and IN and DE QP, the bands were full and many chasing them. Maybe I just got clobbered on the frequency I was using on 20M? Few takers there. 30M for a few. Wasn't going to get to 44 any time soon. I'd already worked most of the 7QP and

NEQP stations and the few DE and IN ones I heard calling. I couldn't work them again.

Well, didn't really want to stick around. Conditions were pretty miserable right then. Headed back to motel. 98F in Eastland at dinner time.

Dinner at the La Hacienda Mexican restaurant next door. Ordered – went back to motel room next door and in 15 minutes went back for pickup. Ate in room. No inside seating available like most eating places along the route – only drive through and pickup. (Restaurants 'can' open with 25% seating but most have chosen to continue only take out).

Air conditioning in room worked fine although every AC outlet in the room was sloppy and hard to get a charger to work as they kept falling out. Hmmm..... this place needs some electrical work replacing outlets. Hi Hi. Slept well.

Sunday May 3

Not too bad in the morning temp wise. Ate a bowl of cereal in the Super 8 motel and cup of coffee. One table in food area. No one around at 6:20 AM. Washed hands again for the umpteenth time this trip. 70F but headed up near 100F here and 'only' 94 in Dallas.

Was a comfy 70F at 7 am but headed to the high 90s again today. Fort Griffin would see another 100F day. I headed a bit SW to the next park and it would 'only' get up to 96F along my route. Hey, it's only early May, too!

There are two parks to run down this way

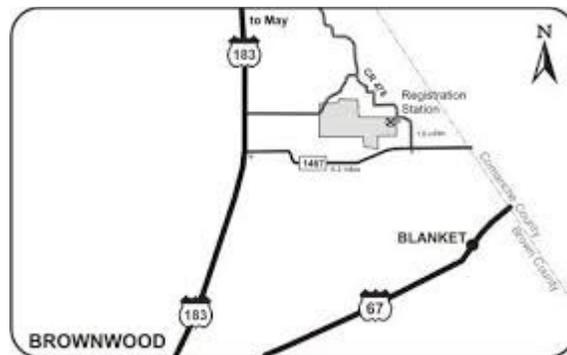
First up was the **Muse Wildlife Management Area – K-6585 ATNO in Brown County TX.**

From the state web site:

“Established in 2006, the McGillivray and Leona McKie Muse WMA consists of 1,972.5 acres in Brown County, 15 miles Northeast of Brownwood, Texas East of U.S. Highway 183 and north of F.M. 1467 on CR 478. The operation of MWMA includes the development and management of wildlife habitats and populations of indigenous and migratory wildlife species. MWMA also provides areas to demonstrate habitat development and wildlife management practices to landowners and other interested groups; develop new techniques for managing wildlife populations and habitat through

on-the-ground research designed for local issues and conditions; and provide public hunting and appreciative use of wildlife in a manner compatible with the resource. “

This WMA is 'closed to the public' except drawn hunts – where you apply – along with dozens/hundreds of others – and hope to get a permit for hunting on the property during deer season. However, as I've luckily found at a few – there are often 'indented gates' or other spots you can be 'on the WMA' property. I checked the web for maps. I headed west on County Road 477. Just before it turns north, it turns to gravel and intersects the NW corner of the WMA. There was a bit about running a water pipe along the fence in the WMA and some maps and discussion about that corner in the local paper. Luckily, right there in the short stretch is an 'indented gate' for a road into the WMA. Serendipity.

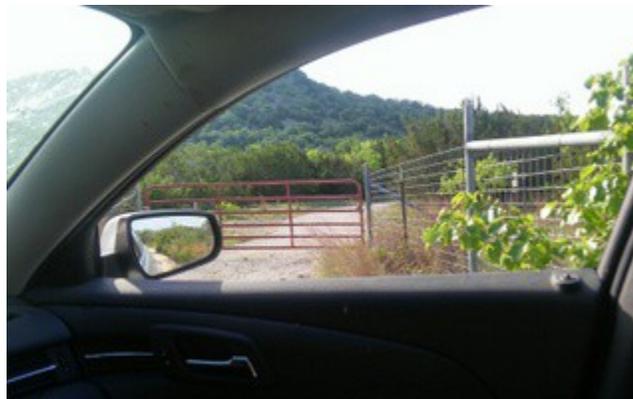


This is a 2,000 acre WMA so it doesn't qualify for WWFF – which requires 5,000 or more acres.

As you drive along a short stretch of highway 477, about one mile or so, you'll see this sign along the road indicating you have found the WMA.



Fortunately, there's an indented gate allowing you to park completely on the WMA property.



The property line runs right along the edge of the gravel road – with a fence – and the gate is inset about 20-25 feet. It's used to allow a vehicle to park off the road while the person unlocks the gate without blocking traffic. A while back, I had a good conversation with the ranger at Nannie Stringellow WMA – which also has an inset gate – and he agreed that 'technically' if you park there you ARE in the WMA. So it was the same here.

I started at 1310z and worked some NEQP stations and a half dozen on 20M early in the morning on 20M. Headed to 30M and added in two dozen there, and 4 on 40M. Lots of lightning static QRN on 40M. Someone was getting clobbered by storms! Out of park at 1400z. Only needed 10 here for a POTA activation but put many more in the log. It was a first time activation.

There may be other spots to run this from on the other side of the WMA. Didn't investigate them. There's a ranger office somewhere over there, too, for the park.

Not far away is **Lake Brownwood State Park – KFF-3024/K-3024 – still Brown County, TX.**



From the web:

The citizens of Brown County voted in 1926 to organize the Brown County Water Improvement District for the purpose of creating a reservoir to control flooding along Pecan Bayou. The dam was completed in 1932 and the reservoir filled the same year. In 1933, the Texas State Parks Board acquired the deed for the land for the state park from the water improvement district. Work began on the park in 1933 under work relief programs of the Civil Works Administration. CCC Company 872 arrived in November 1934 and worked on the park for a year. CCC Company 849 arrived in October 1936 and remained at the park until 1942 when the camp was closed.

The National Park Service designed the park and the CCC used locally quarried stone to build the recreation hall, cabins, benches, culverts, picnic tables and fire pits. During World War II, the park served as a recreational site for soldiers at Camp Bowie. “

Campground closed but folks putting boats in and enjoying the lake. Day use only at this time. Here, they actually take your printed off pass – and issue you a window day pass as before which you put on the front windshield.

Pulled in at 1430z and had a good run. Worked more NE QP folks and a few on SSB. Caught two Delaware QP folks on SSB. Switched over to CW again to put out the park. Lots went in the log including just a few DX stations. Tried 17M CW and found 5 QSOs there, but just a very few on 30M and 40M. 87 QSOs total from here.

Headed back to interstate running a few counties on the way – then zipped toward home with a stop once again at Palo Pinto Mtns State Park. Added in another 20 getting the total for there over 44Qs. (49Qs total in 2 days). Temps up in the mid 90s here.

Worked a few more NE QP on the way home – arrived at 4pm.

290 miles the first day with 4 park visits

615 miles for the two day trip with 3 park visits the second day.

West TX is huge – often 100 to 150 miles between parks so you can put on the miles just getting a few. Not like TN or MD or NJ where every time you turn around there is another park unit!

Most of the roads were 70 mph – the interstate was 75 mph speed limit and TX folks tend to drive a few miles over the limit. However, you'll still do hours of driving just getting to the next park here.

Thanks for riding along. Got to two new never activated parks on this trip. Still more than a dozen POTA parks to get to in TX.

7th Area QSO Party

The 7QP, like the CA-QP, usually has 'County Expeditions' where folks go out, often set up beams and amps and get on for the event. No exception this year. Also there were a couple mobiles out and about this year. Lots of activity and 100+ counties on the air. Propagation wasn't great – but ten thousand plus contacts were made and many 'rare' counties showed up – especially in NV and UT. Naturally, MT was scarce for the most part.

N7T County Expedition AR-GLA - MultiOp 350 CW 507 SSB

We did an expedition again this year and really enjoyed it - other than the various 'Murphy issues'. Many thanks to the stations and operators we were able to work in this year's 7QP. Unfortunately, we had high local noise issues which prevented a number of contacts from being completed. There seemed to be more stations on this year.

Again, tnx to all es 73.

John, N7NWL
Paul, AE7VA
Davis, AG7GB

NR7T COUnty Expedition - IRON UT 1026 CW 80 SSB

Was planning on single County expedition from Piute County, however our previously selected camp spot had too much snow and was forced to another location. Plan B took us to Iron County at Bumble Bee Springs 7370' Elevation. Relocating cost us antenna set up time and finally had the tent, radios, and Triband Beam set up and operating at 9am local time all powered by a Honda eu2000i Generator. I still had no 40/80 wire antennas in the air yet so at about 7pm I pulled off of 20 meters and put up the 40/80 antennas and once again it was off to the races.

The contest was both exhilarating and exhausting but already can't wait to do it again next year.

AE7EU COUnty Expedition 138 CW 63 SSB (lake/Klamath OR?)

~200 contacts here solo, which is an improvement over the 150 lazy contacts made last year by the group (though still down from a peak of 750 in years past), the notable difference this year was that 2/3'rds of my contacts were CW. Notes for me next time - Need a comfier operating position, back of truck really doesn't cut it - need better sleeping arrangements; took a 4-5 hour nap in the middle of the day during some of the best 20m propagation as I hadn't slept well - Need to learn morse code better to handle a pileup better. I had a few piles going and had to QRT because my brain just couldn't take it and I had to basically just "oh crap I'm outta here".

The new 80m OCF did pretty good this time around, and the 160m vertical was fun to listen in on too for 7 CW contacts, though I didn't really stay up late enough.

OM2VL and a few VE3's threw my brain in to a tailspin a couple times. But, I consider this good practice, and a good time.

The weather... was not as much fun. Had to QRT a couple times because it suddenly started raining and I realized I'd left windows open letting water into the back of the truck. Snowed on me at 8pm. Overnight waking up this morning, my water container outside had 3" of water, and the water that had pooled on top of my totes was frozen solid.

I want to take a second too and thank every single person who responded to my CQ's on CW. I thank you for your patience, as I know I was not always fast at picking up your callsign or exchange. For a few of you, somehow, for some silly reason, N1MM decided to wipe the contact instead of log it. I apologize, it probably hurts me more than you. For others, if you are reading this, and found me in a pile just to have me leave... well, I'm not yet to the point of working a pileup. But, I will get there!

W7WHY County Expedition 159 CW

Been looking forward to this for a couple of weeks. Got on this morning and Murphy showed up with a vengeance. First the rig wouldn't key in the CW mode. Finally figured out that the 1/4" phono plug was open. Changed cables and off to the races.

Worked a station that told me I had a bad chirp. Stopped to check the power supply, as low voltage will cause the rig to chirp. Took a break. Found was all OK. Listened to the signal on another radio and for some reason, it sounded fine. Off to the races again.

Then the 'dah' side of the keyer decided not to work. Checked it and the wire had broken off. Never happened before. Was thinking the Gods were against me.

Finally got thing fixed and got a little run going on 80, but by then had pretty much lost interest.

Thanks for calling in and make the time I was on fun. 73 to all and stay safe.

Tom W7WHY

K7IDX/P County Expedition OKANOGAN WA 278 CW

Social distance in Okanogan NF. Had not planned to operate 7QP. Used what i had with me. TS-570 100ah battery 400 watts of solar. Low dipole/inverted Vs for 40 & 20 1/4 wave wire for 80 all about 20 high with fiberglass poles.

Can not recall having such poor conditions on 20. Only HEARD southwest CA/NV/AZ/OR area. Could hear some Puget Sound folks working all over however. Perhaps location choice wasn't the best being up a valley with close mountains all around except to the West. My location was just East of Pearygin Lake near Winthrop. Heard all states except CT on 40

K7E Mineral Nev County Expedition 119 SSB QSO

Operated from a 7,000 ft mountain top expedition style using my Jeep to transport me, my KX3/KXPA100 and two 40ft masts, one with a 40-10 dipole and the other a 100ft+ end fed.

All fun and enjoyed the remote location and super quiet receive. Views were spectacular and WX good all round all though it was hot operating in the Jeep mid to late afternoon. The end fed didn't seem to want to tune up on 80m (nor 160m) but did prove pretty good on 20m. The dipole (SpiderBeam) seem to work best on 40m.

Propagation seemed tough on 20m but I was excited to get Italian and Croatian stations in the log.

Contesting with a 100w SSB is a form of masochism at this point in the sun cycle but as a battery powered station 500w+ isn't an easy option. Maybe a generator is on my shopping list!!

The peak was exposed (but the views great) and around 2pm local time the wind picked up and took out the end fed mast.

I think being able to borrow a 1x1 call sign a real treat and thank the powers that be that we in the US can do this.

This was my first time contesting from my Jeep and I really enjoyed it. As a very active

Summits on the Air participant this was like SOTA on steroids.

I blog some of my radio life at www.nomadic.blog

Paul W6PNG/M0SNA

WY7N /QRP County Expedition Daggett UT/WY Sweetwater 742 CW

W7TR QRP (KH2TJ opr) County Expedition Elko NV 24 CW QSO

Set up on a SOTA peak just south of Elko. First time I used/humped up a laptop. Everything played well the day before while setting up the K1EL keyer, laptop, and KX2. Up on the hill, I wasted almost an hour trying to get things working. Turned out that for some reason the cheap 4 port USB hub adapter decided not to play! Only had enough time afterwards to Spin and Grin on 20M. Sigs sounded good, but could only work sta's in the NEQP and a few others in 7QP. W6OAT was extremely loud in the little earbuds. Had to cut it short as I was due to go back to work around 1800hrs local time. A check of my RBN spots sure look pretty dismal. I usually get better reports, so not sure if the bands were just in bad shape, or the KX2 doesn't like being mated up with other gear - she's spoiled that way ;-). I usually get to play this one up at W7RN - guess I've been spoiled on what great antennae can do...C ya next year...73, Todd KH2TJ

N7A - Multi-OP - remote in Graham AZ 1391 CW 1544 SSB -
ops (AA7A KC7V KY7M NA2U)

This was our first ever M/M effort from the Safford remote station where we have only two radios. We were amazed at how 20m was the band that kept on giving and giving SSB QSOs and equally disappointed that 15m gave us nothing on any mode. Our remote station continues to evolve each year and we have plans to further expand its capability in 2020. Thank you for all the Qs and we look forward to doing this again next year.

K7KC mobile 124 CW 300 SSB

Drove 424 miles and worked from 12 Utah counties, stopping on several county lines.

K4XU mobile 1003 CW QSO

A long day in the saddle. A solo CW mobile effort makes for a very long contest. 18 hours on Saturday and almost that on Sun/Mon transcribing the audio tape into the computer and meshing it with the logged contacts made while parked. There is 5:30 of sitting time at various places on the route and I only need to average 41 mph to do the route in the remaining 12:30. I can listen, paddle and drive, especially since there is very little traffic on these back roads.

This is the second time I have run this route. It's a easy route covering eleven of Oregon's counties on the east side of the Cascades. But I cannot find anyone willing drive the 512 miles while I sit in the other seat and play with my radio.

I planned to do all 18 hours. Started a few minutes late, had an almost flat tire that required patching (thanks to the Les Schwab store in John Day for the 40 minute turnaround - while I operated!!), and a 20 minute thunderstorm delay somewhere in Morrow County. You know it's time to shelter in place when a continuous static buzz level goes full scale on the S-meter. Plus the lunch and dinner sandwiches and pee breaks, I lost two hours total.

However, even though 15m was a non-starter, the conditions were generally good and quiet. The work I invested in new antennas really paid off. A picture of them is on the N7XU QRZ page. I have a ball mount antenna on the left fender and a (new-to-me) refurbished screwdriver on a stinger in the trailer hitch. In daylight the 20m home brew is on the fender and the screwdriver is on 40m. When 20m died, I swapped in the 40m home brew and tuned the screwdriver to 80m. The screwdriver (an old High Sierra) is not as efficient as the new fender-mounted 40m but much more efficient than the old Hustler 40/20/15m pitchfork it replaced.

Covid-19 can be blamed(?)for changing this weekend's demographics. K7RAT and I were the only mobiles in Oregon. But it seemed that Everyone was on the air. I could hardly find a clean spot to CQ and when I did there was an instant pileup. The Covid-special Distributed VPN-networked Mullti-multis added a new dimension to an old game. We may see more of this in future contests, maybe even 7QP. Skimmer readers were very active: K9CT worked me within five minutes of each new county line and OM2VL got me five times. I made 811 QSOs last year. My target this year was 900, I

finished with 1003.

So it was a good run. No tickets, mishaps, or failures. My thanks to all who called and I look forward to the next one.

73,
Dick

KJ9C mobile 189 CW 42 SSB

Mobile from 2 ID counties, 1 WY COUNTY, and 3 MT counties

K8TE - fixed - NM 293 CW 79 SSB

CW was the money mode with 79% of my contacts. Being adjacent to AZ and relatively close to the rest of the 7th Area, 40m was the money band with just over half of my contacts. 80m was "productive" despite using a low dipole (the same for all bands).

Thanks for all the contacts! I hope to return to a location in the 7th call area next year for a county expedition. Let's hope we have a COVID-19 virus in use by then. And maybe HF propagation will be a little better too and my noise level will decrease. And I give a big thanks to Bruce, WA7BNM for this web site and the parsing tool for this past weekend's contest! 73, Bill, K8TE

N8II - fixed - WV 147 CW 180 SSB 109 counties

It was a 4QP effort, total Q's for all 4 was 828. 7QP took the biggest hit in order to be competitive in IN and NEQP. There was a surprisingly high level of activity on 40 phone from IN which took away from 7QP and then at 20Z NEQP was tacked on. Conditions on 20 were weak backscatter into NE (not worth trying to break through many callers out west), so I spent some time on 20 in 7QP until activity built on the low bands. I had a good 20 SSB run in the 22Z hour and all day until 2330Z conditions were decent into 7 land on 20. I checked 15 several times, another first time goose egg like FQP. I did a poor job of finding N7XU/M and K7RAT/M, but I did do S&P on 20 several times.

The only time there was reasonable prop to IN/NE/7's on the same band was on 40

around 24Z. 40 CW was loaded at that hour! Some 7's were lost in the QRM, but the big guns were already fairly loud. Later, around 03Z both 80 and 40 were excellent, but the QRN crashes on 80 was high out west. Sorry for the lack of breakdown by bands. WA7BNM's parsing tool for breaking out totals for each QP works very well (a big thank you!), but does not break down by bands.

Hopefully next year will see the return of prop on 15; we seem stuck around a SFI of 70. Thanks for the Q's and all of the expeditions and roving to rare spots. Overall activity from 7 land seemed close to other years.

73 and stay safe, Jeff

N4CD – mobile in TX 41 CW 14 SSB 41 counties worked

Was out mobile putting out parks and used 7QP to help get to 44Qs in the various parks and working a few 7QP stations from the mobile as I drove between parks in TX. Stopped early at 5pm local time to grab some chow and rest up for next day. Lots of activity and stations on but tough to break the pileups at times. Caught a new county here and there.

Mobile Activity in May

At the beginning of May, **Tony, WA9DLB** was headed from TN back to IL putting out the counties. **Kraig, KA2LHO** was running some in FL.

Bob, N4CD took a two day trip out west TX way running parks/counties.

May 4, 6, 11, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26

Ed, K8ZZ was running counties in KS early in the month, middle of the month and end

of the month on day trips. Some parks, too.

W8OP, Alan, was out running counties in WV.

Ron, KB6UF, ran all of ME during the month of ME. Then made a quick trip back.

Bob, N4CD, took a 2 day trip to AR via some TX counties/parks, then ran in the AR QSO party putting out 11 counties – then scooted on home.

Jerry, W0GXQ, took a trip to western CO.

Jack, WD4OIN, put out counties in NC

K0DEQ, Bill, put out counties in MO

KT7Q put out counties in ID

Seth, N3MRA, spotted in a few in NM.

Scott, KA3QLF, put out counties/parks in LA and TX.

AB7NK, Mary and K7SEN/Neil, were out running counties in AZ.

End date 5/28.....

During the month, dozens of parks were run – spotted on the park spotting page – and parks are in counties. Most are portable operations – but still count for counties, band counties, no-star award, CW, SSB, etc. Kerri, KB3WAV, occasionally spots on ch.w6rk.com . During the month, a few FT-8 stations were spotted – one in Second District AK.

New England QSO Party

It looked like most folks caught 40 or so counties in the NEQP. Lots of activity with fixed stations on air but some counties not on CW (many) and some you had to catch on 40 or 80m SSB.

Nantucket showed up on 20M CW for a dozen QSOs – then stopped suddenly– then switched to 20M SSB after that and never ran CW again.... (K2LEK)

This was conducted along with 3 other QP's so the bands were full end to end with NEQP, DEQP, 7QP, and IN QP.

NN1C - multi-op -fixed 1414 SSB 641 CW qso

Wow! What a weekend. We started this weekend with a goal of 2,000 Qs, and the M/S record in sight (354k).

At the end of the first session, we had 195k, and were stoked. The question was going to be how the activity on Sunday was.

It was fantastic. Solid rates all day, left us with an hourly average north of 100 QSOs/hr. Before the contest, I spent time installing a stack match on our 20m antenna system, allowing us to split power between our 20m stack, and separate 5 element beam. The combo proved useful for 1,002 QSOs on 20m.

40m and 80m each had decent rates, although EU runs never quite materialized in a big way. Suffice it to say that conditions to EU on 20 were quite poor. OM2VL and OT6M were always blazing through when we went to a new band.

W1UE's trip to 15m on Saturday netted us 7 QSOs, including the elusive LU mult.

The operation was 100% remote. W1UE and NN1C from MA, and Axel, KI6RRN from CA. (I'm told the cool kids on SSB call it "Cal", but I digress...). We networked our computers using N1MM+ and Hamachi VPN, and it was flawless, as soon as this lid figured out the importance of checking the "Log QSOs at all stations" box.

Thanks to Greg, W1KM for the use of his fantastic station. It is great fun to hold our own with a 40m foursquare.

For the team,

Marty
NN1C (Dennis, W1UE, and Axel, KI6RRN too)

Station:

Elecraft K3 + KPA1500 LDMOS PA

80m: Foursquare array in salt marsh

40m: Foursquare array in salt marsh

20m: 4/4 @ 130/85Ft on EU and 5el@90Ft West

15m: 4el@65' West

10m: What's 10m?

K2LE - fixed - VT - remote 1231 CW 651 SSB

Covid19/100% remote operators from K2LE/1, with K2LE on Long Island, K1EP near Boston, W1VE in southern NH and VE4EA operating from Winnipeg.

A lot of fun despite pretty crappy band conditions. Actually amazed by the amount of activity!

Congrats to the NN1C team. Very motivational on the scoreboard. Amazing Mult number -- eu was hard!

Hamachi network and N1MM+ behaved very well. Thanks to Tom and team for a great job.

Thanks to all the ops out there for supporting New England! We won't forget you in your QSO Parties!

Really missed hearing Papa November on the bands. I hope Paul was watching over us all and keeping track on the scoreboard, while sipping ice tea from heaven.

73,

Gerry W1VE
for the K2LE/1 remote crew

NE1QP - fixed - BERMA - remote 967 CW 662 SSB (ops K1MK KC1KUG NJ1F

W1TO)

All operators were remote. We had a sound card failure in the logging computer that took an hour or so to trouble shoot and fix.

Thanks to Dave, K1TTT, for the use of his station and helping us all with our remote operation.

There were many great scores out there, congratulations to all

K1B - fixed - remote BRIMA 713 CW 309 SSB (ops N1RR, N2ZN)

First use of the remote - very basic. TU to WA1BXY / N1NK / N1KM for their support of this project.

So great to have NO RAIN / NO COLD / LOTS OF SUN
TU to N2ZN for trying the remote.

K1NVT - fixed - Grand Isle VT 306 CW 467 SSB

Virus, schmirus!

This was a Park on the Air activation from Knight Point State Park (K-3125) in Grand Isle County. We hauled up the big amps to run a lot of power to neutralize any pathogens in the air. The stiff breeze helped too. The 3 ops operated from inside their own safe bubbles(vehicles)into their own dipole antennas, with coordination on 2 meters. Masks and gloves were used outside the vehicles. Ample amounts of alcohol was used (but not drunk). We had a ball and managed to put 773 QSO's in the log.

WA1Z - fixed this year - no mobile 1486 CW 755 SSB

Thanks to everyone who spent time this weekend looking for New England stations. Great rates until the last couple of hours when things really started to slow. Having operated this contest as mobile for so many years, it's interesting to experience it as a fixed station where the contest has a more "traditional" feel with regard to rate. Some of the best rates at as a mobile tend to come at the end of the contest on Sunday when there seems to be the highest number of stations on, concurrently, which makes for fun county line changes.

This was really fun, but I'm really looking forward to getting back out on the road again in this one.

Got a US State "Sweep" pretty early Saturday night with South Dakota being the last state worked. VO2 and the VE territories were not worked. Activity across the US and Canada was absolutely fantastic.

Great weather both days made it really hard to stay in the chair, but I made it!

Special thanks to Tom K1KI for all you do to keep this contest humming every year.

73,

Bob WA1Z

N8II - fixed - WV 164 CW 181 SSB 60 counties

I was trying to seriously compete in all 4 QP's which left a few Q's on the table Saturday for sure. Trying to work NE on 20 CW Saturday was really difficult due to loud callers out west (a waste of precious time), and Sunday was not much better with quite weak signals. There were no really loud 1's on 20 the whole contest; on Sunday a few ME and very Eastern MA stations were starting to not skip over here.

The saving grace was nearly perfect conditions on 40. Saturday was good on 40 until about 0030Z and then 80M activity gradually improved. On Sunday, 40 was about as good as it could get into NE from here. I was able to run stations on 40 SSB off and on all day and they were still loud at 2320Z when my attention shifted to 80 trying to catch stations which were not there the evening before. Some pretty rare counties called during my SSB runs making up for mults otherwise very difficult without a 20M opening. Franklin, ME called on 75M with 3 minutes left for 60 counties, about 10-14 more than I expected to work. Home station activity made up for the lack of mobiles. The large number of stations chasing spots from outside of NE made for extreme QRM on CW "fresh meat" Sunday and cost everybody time.

73 , Jeff

N4CD mobile – 74 CW and 9 SSB QSO 43 counties worked

Caught a few New England stations as I was putting out parks in TX and on my way back home to Plano. Lots of activity and big pileups. Found K2LEK on 20CW

on Nantucket but he only made 8 QSOs before switching back to SSB. Never heard Dukes on cw. Good activity but missed the mobiles. Conditions not great from the mobile to New England but still worked a bunch just about all on 20M. Went QRT before the sun went down here as I reached home by 5pm. Many NE stations likely buried from QRM from the 7QP which was underway at same time.

On the Road with N4CD II

I was getting a bit tired of 'stay at home' and decided to risk a one night visit at the Super 8 Motel in Hope AR for a 2 day trip to east TX and then in AR for the QP and some parks. Turned out Saturday was mostly counties and bypassed a few park opportunities that were just a bit out of the way but would have taken too long for me to get back home Saturday night. Decided after the first night that one night on the road was 'enough' in the COVID world.

The 'lockdown' in TX had ended but most businesses and restaurants were closed. A few eating places were open inside with 25% capacity limit but very few. Other than some businesses, allowed to open as of May 8, with strict rules, there wasn't anything to do in TX as movie theaters, venues, concerts, most museums, etc, were shut. If you wanted to eat out, it was 98% 'take out' or delivery and of course, 'social distancing' and 'stay mostly at home' advisories. Other than grocery stores, most 'retail' was order on line and pick up at the curb, or for large items like big screen TVs, furniture, appliances - delivery to your door stoop but no further. They wouldn't take away your old fridge or washer either.

Well, other than a stop for gas once a day, and maybe a short break at a convenience store (risky) to grab a lunch, I wouldn't be seeing anyone along the route. I'd be sitting in the car 99% of the time. I'd use a plastic bag (from the daily newspaper) for the gas pump avoiding direct contact and throw the bag away immediately after use.

AR sort of had a 'stay at home' policy and nearly all restaurants were 'delivery only', drive through, or pickup. They would allow business to re-open on May 11 with restrictions. It wasn't May 11 just yet.

The weather? Well, just north and east of me, there were tornado/severe storm warnings

in Lamar and Rains counties and OK had seen a lot of storms Thursday/Thursday evening with high winds. Here the front moved through with 50 mph winds. Hopefully I'd be skirting it just to the south.

Friday May 8

The car was filled up with \$1.31/gal gas. Prices seemed to be going up as it bottomed at \$1.21/gal here. It was a rainy, drizzling morning at 6:30am, 65 deg F with 100% humidity as I headed out along I-20 to Marshall TX a few hours away to reach the first destination. Drizzled just about all the way there with the wipers going. Light traffic on the interstate. Lots of trucks and not so many cars.

There was constant lightning flashes up north – hmmm.....hope it's not coming my way – reflected off the low cloud layer. Somewhere it was storming bad to the north. Made it out the I-20 going east with no problems almost to the LA border. Severe storm warnings just north of me along the route in Rains and Hunt County, then for southeast OK and NW TX and the NW corner of LA. Hmmm.....the sky was 'angry' but so far so good. I was headed that way after a few parks.

The Starr Family Home State Historic Site (POTA Park K-6604) is located in Marshall, TX in a suburban type neighborhood. There's designated parking lot for it. I arrived at 9:30am and there was no one else there. It opens at 10am for visitors. This is a POTA only 'state historic site' in Harrison County TX. .



From the state site:

Born in 1809, Dr. James Harper Starr moved to Nacogdoches, Texas on January 17, 1837, with his wife Harriet J. Johnson, with whom he had five children. On December 14, 1837, the Texas Congress established the General Land Office, and President Sam Houston selected Starr as president of the board of land commissioners and receiver of the land dues for Nacogdoches County. He was appointed Texas' Secretary of the Treasury by President Mirabeau B. Lamar in 1839. As a member of the Lamar cabinet, Starr participated in the relocation of the government offices from Houston to Austin. For financial reasons, he resigned in 1840 and returned to Nacogdoches and his medical practice. Before long he had changed careers to become a land agent for those who exchanged property for Republic of Texas debts.

In 1844, Dr. Starr partnered with Nathaniel C. Amory in a land agency, and he gained a reputation as an authority on Texas property laws. The agency grew and served as a bureau for advertising Texas land to prospective settlers from all parts of the United States until it achieved statehood. The business continued to be successful until Texas seceded from the Union. Starr's sons, Frank and Amory, and his son-in-law Henry W. Raguet volunteered for Confederate service and served in the New Mexico campaign. After the Congress of the Confederate States passed the Sequestration Act in 1861, Starr was appointed to act as a receiver in the enforcement of the laws and served until 1864. In March of that year, he was appointed Confederate agent for the postal service west of the Mississippi River. His government career concluded with the end of the Civil War in 1865.

In 1870, Starr and his son Frank relocated their land and banking agency, James H. Starr and Son, to Marshall. This was Marshall's first bank. Their efforts to survey, map and sell land throughout the state made them instrumental in Texas' growth, as they helped bring railroads and new settlers to Texas throughout the remainder of the 19th century. Starr purchased 52 acres of land including the residence where he and Harriet lived and the eventual location of Maplecroft, the centerpiece of today's historic site. Starr spent the later part of his life at his home in Marshall, and continued to advise clients on Texas land. He died on July 25, 1890, and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Marshall. **Starr County was named for him.** Frank Starr married Clara Fry Clapp in 1868 and built Maplecroft in 1871 on land deeded to him by his father. The family renovated and modernized it through the years. Frank and Clara Starr raised six daughters in Marshall, most of whom settled nearby when they married. Ruth Starr Blake was the second youngest and her home still stands on the historic site. She moved back to Maplecroft when her husband Arthur died, and eventually inherited the family home. Blake remodeled and redecorated the house during her residence in the 20th century to

accommodate her extensive glass and china collection. When she died, her niece, Clara Pope Willoughby, inherited Maplecroft and later granted the property and furnishings to the state of Texas. The historic site opened to the public in 1986. “

Lots of history there but I skipped the house tour. Seen enough 'historic houses' and they do nothing for me, but the history is fascinating if you're into old houses, China collections, etc.

Only needed 10Qs here for a POTA activation, but this was an ATNO – all time new one that needed to be run. Put a couple dozen in the log. A index was 68 today. No DX heard. Then again, most DX only goes after the WWFF parks. 40M was horrendously noisy with giant static bursts from nearby storms making SSB impossible at the time from here. CW on 40M not much better.

If you want to visit this historic house now inside, you've got to make reservations ahead of time. By the time I left after 10am (opening time) there were still no visitors.

Drizzling the whole time while I was here. Flashes continual in the distance.

Next up would be a 'repeat' but seldom run park in both systems. It's **KFF/K-0633 the Caddo National Wildlife Refuge** still in Harrison County TX.



From the state site:

“The site of the refuge was a part of the territory of the Caddo nation, native Americans whose powerful confederacy dominated the Red River and Big Cypress wetlands. The Caddos were a clever and generally peaceful confederacy whose wetlands skills contributed to their mastery of agriculture and pottery. Earliest accounts of the Caddos reported by Spanish and French explorers describe them as self-sufficient, resourceful, and the most advanced of Native Americans west of the Mississippi.

Texas in fact got its name from the Caddo Indian word "tay-shas," meaning "friend" or "ally." Not far from the present day Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the Spanish were the first Europeans to encounter the Caddos. They mistakenly thought that tay-shas was the name the Caddos gave to their lands and transcribed it in Spanish to "Tejas," which subsequent Anglo-Americans pronounced "Texas."

Eventually this area of the refuge became home to a great mix of early pioneers, including settlers who took up residence and trappers and fishermen who camped along Caddo Lake's shoreline. Timber operators and cotton plantations took advantage of this site's abundant forests and rich, river loam soil. Obtained by the U.S. Army in 1941, today's refuge was once a munitions site until the end of the cold war. Recognizing the importance of the wetlands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approached the Army about turning the munitions site into a wildlife refuge to be managed for the benefit of wildlife. On October 19, 2000, the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge was established.

The refuge protects one of the highest quality old-growth bottomland hardwood forests remaining in the southeastern United States, the bottomlands along Harrison Bayou. Along the refuge shoreline of Caddo Lake are wetlands that are designated under international treaty as "Wetlands of International Significance" under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Today the refuge's forests and wetlands have been set aside for the benefit of wildlife and are home to a diversity of wildlife and plant species that can be found on the refuge for all or part of the year. Free of charge, visitors can enjoy wildlife watching, hunting, hiking, biking, an auto-tour route and horseback riding. “

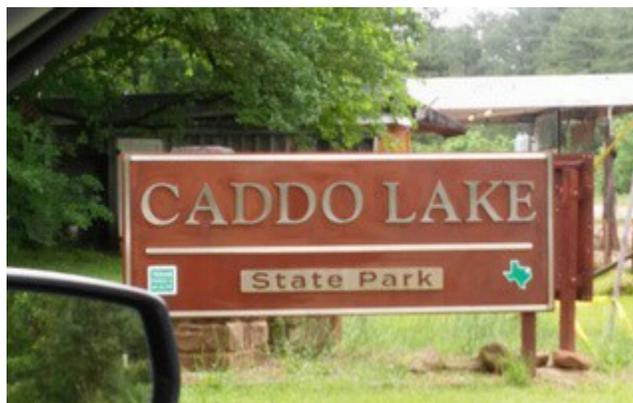
- - -

It's easy to get to – and signs off the main highway to get you there. Had a good run

here with 44+ needed for the KFF-Challenge in 2020. A few DX stations in the log (ON4VT, OH1XT, DL2ND, OH6RP) but the rest all US. 40M yielded only 4 QSOs. Conditions were so-so. It seems the only activator here has been N4CD with 3 previous activations. Hmm...it's a bit off the beaten path but not that far!

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With a few miles you get to **Caddo State Park – KFF/K-2994** still in Harrison County TX. Will I ever get out of the county? Twenty one other activations had occurred here with 638 previous Qs. N4CD had been here three times before.



Naturally , you reserve state parks ahead of time – otherwise you don't get in! I did and this one was a bit different. At the entrance, they had a display board of the passes – with names on them. You picked it up (complete with some tape to put it on your windshield) with no interaction with anyone at the gate. Looked like there were a few yet to show up. Probably only a dozen or two came today in the gloomy conditions but it was getting better. Parks are only open for day use and this is off the beaten path.

From the web (edited) :

“Legend has it that the lake was formed by the 1811-12 New Madrid earthquakes. Caddo lake and has an average depth of 8' 10" with the deepest water averaging about 20 feet. Caddo Lake offers many bayous, channels, waterways and sloughs which delight the fishermen. The state has marked 42 miles of "boat roads" to guide the sportsman through the maze of channels.

Caddo lake has an abundance of cypress trees, plant life, birds and wildlife. Birder

watchers have discovered about 240 species of birds at Caddo Lake. Some of the wildlife includes: white-tailed deer, raccoons, beavers, minks, nutrias, squirrels, armadillos, frogs, turtles, snakes, alligators, and a large variety of waterfowl. T

Caddo Lake is the lake that the state park encompasses, and is one of only a handful of natural lakes in Texas. The park consists of 8,253 acres (3,340 ha) west of the lake itself, in Harrison County, near Karnack, Texas. The lake and surrounding area was drilled for petroleum in the 1900s. The lake was created by a gigantic log jam known as the Great Raft in the early 1800s (1811?). “

Had a good run – but no DX. Reached 44+Qs here for the 'challenge'. Got on 20M SSB for a dozen Qs but I run mostly CW.

Off to the next not far away.

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Caddo Lakes National Wildlife Refuge KFF-4872/K-6542 in Marion County TX

Finally I escaped from Harrison County. This park lies just a short distance north of Caddo Lakes SP but finding it isn't so easy. There are two designated 'boat ramps' but neither one is 'in the park'. If you launch a boat, you're 'in the park' but on the shore at the boat ramps, you're not. As far as I can tell, there's only one spot you can run from that you can drive to – and that is on county road 3414 – if you can find it.

I would up at the boat ramp just off the main highway and found a WMA map there and figured out how to get to Camp Fire Road – county road 3414 which is a ½ mile long spur off 806. Didn't find the map online – maybe I missed it.



WMA map



From the web:

“The Caddo Lake WMA has 8,124 acres in Marion and Harrison counties. The Caddo Lake WMA was established in 1992 when land was purchased for conservation with the help of The Nature Conservancy. In 1993, Caddo Lake was selected as "a wetland of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat" under the Ramsar Convention. The Ramsar designation includes state, federal and private lands surrounding Caddo Lake. The WMA protects a permanently flooded bald cypress swamp, seasonally

flooded bottomland hardwood forests, and mixed pine-hardwood upland forests... Fishing, trapping and public hunting of white-tailed deer, feral hog, waterfowl, dove, other migratory game birds, squirrel, rabbit, hare, coyote, raccoon, beaver, nutria, and frogs is permitted with the Annual Public Hunting permit. Primitive overnight camping is available. Outdoor recreational opportunities include wildlife viewing, birding, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and nature photography. This WMA is entry by permit only. The two accepted permits are either an Annual Public Hunting Permit or a Limited Public Use permit.

The first site is on Goat Island accessible by boat for 'camping'. The second can be reached by vehicle and is on the west side of the WMA, at the end of F. R. Camp Road (County Road 3414)”

As far as I can tell, the only spot you can drive to is at the end of short road 3814. You'll find a sign just as you get to it – and it's a one lane raised hard surface dirt road with foot drop-offs on the side. . Best to do this in a dry spell. At 3 spots there was water over the road. Hmm...I had gotten stuck a month ago on a 'muddy road' getting between parks. I didn't want to do that again. That cost me \$350 to be rescued. I headed down the road carefully. Water on both sides in ditch. Water flowing over road in 3 or 4 spots a few inches deep!

Oh no – a vehicle coming the other way. I stopped the car, got out, and looked at the situation. No way for vehicles to pass and not get in the water filled ditch on both sides. Luckily, the other vehicle, actually turned out to be a truck, backed up 1000 feet to the parking area – to let me through. The water was 3-4 inches deep for 100 feet over the road in one spot. Horror! Made it through OK and thanked my lucky stars. Turned out the driver of the other vehicle was a nice lady who is great at backing up at 15-20 mph. We waved at each other. She headed out. There were no other cars in the parking area -used to launch boats and kayaks, etc. There's a small primitive campground here but like all the other parks in TX, no camping at the current time. Not sure why here – there's no one around!

Had a good run for this ATNO – and in a new county, too, finally. Reached 44+. Made it back out the road OK. Lots of water splashing but good traction. There had been major rain here overnight. Turns out this area had high winds (60mph) and the NE corner of TX, the NW corner of LA and the SW corner of AR had really bad storms just a few hours earlier with 60+ mph winds, lightning, and inches of rain! Whew! Missed that by a few hours!

Note: If you want to legally visit the WMA's in TX, you should get your “Limited Use

Permit' for a few bucks (or a hunting/fishing license). That allows you 'legally' to visit and 'use' the WMA for bird watching, fishing, camping, boating, ham radio activation, etc.

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One more park planned today and that was **Atlanta State Park KFF/K-2984** in Cass County TX. There had been five previous activations with 394 QSOs made. Folks go camping in the parks and put them out. N4CD had been here twice before, and two others had put it out.

From the web:

“Atlanta State Park is on the south shore of Wright Patman Lake, about 11 miles northwest of Atlanta, Texas”

It's 18 miles or so south of Texarkana TX off the interstate and very popular on weekends. There's great fishing, boating, and 10+ miles of trails. Usually it is 'reserved out' on weekends so if you don't have an on-line reservation, you won't get it. It would be 'full up' on the following Saturday and Sunday. At most parks, if you don't have an online reservation even during the week, you won't get it – they won't handle the paperwork/money for it. So plan ahead in TX. (there's a daily use fee – or your state park pass).

In TX, groups are limited to five people and 'day use' only at this time. Face masks are strongly suggested although if you sit in your car, that's not a problem with not wearing a mask.

It was a new county, so lots of contacts went in the log. Got to 44+ with county hunters and park chasers. The park closes at 5pm – which the nice lady ranger at the gate advised me. I arrived at about 3pm. She probably wondered why I was entering so late in the day (plus it had rained much of the day and was 100% humid, cloudy and yucky).

Well, that was the plan for the day, other than heading to Hope AR about an hour away. Pulled in there to town just before 5pm. Stopped at the Shell station nearby and put \$15 in gas into the car. Price up to \$1.60/gal in AR. I use an old newspaper plastic wrapper on my hand to push the pump buttons, hold the pump handle, then dispose of it in the trash receptacle near the pump! No touching things with bare hands – especially on things likely touched by 100 others a day! (some places clean the pumps regularly – I suspect in rural areas and small cities, they never get cleaned/sanitized)

Checked into the Super 8 there (\$50). Hand Sanitizer at the counter. Had to show ID-check in lady looked at it from 4 feet away. Had to sign one form. OK. They had one container of 'sanitized pens'. After you used it, they had a container for 'used pens'. Good COVID practices here. Exterior door type motel (I prefer them). I'd been there a dozen times before.

Well, I could run up the road a few miles and put out **POTA only Park K-3791 – Cherokee Trail of Tears (Southwest Route)** for a quick activation in Hempstead County AR. It runs along the highway between Hope and Historic Washington. Way back when, when 'Indians' were forcibly removed from GA,NC and other eastern states, one of the routes was by water – to Shreveport LA– then north along this highway for a bit winding up in OK.



Put two dozen in the log then bugged out. Time for dinner.

I'd eaten at the Dos Locos Amigos restaurant down the street from the motel a half dozen times or more. The inside naturally was closed by the 'drive through' was open.

With my big antenna, I don't fit through McD or Burger King drive throughs. No problem – I always get the 'Kinda Big Dilla' (quesadilla). Ordered – and the nice lady said 'just wait there'. OK.....it was about 10-15 minutes. Apparently not many use the drive through at 5pm. (Our local Tex-Mex place in Plano at 5pm typically has 4-10 people waiting to pick up orders). Dinner good – ate it in the motel room. Comes with guac, salsa, sour cream, etc and a bag of chips and salsa.

Then it was rest up for Saturday and the Arkansas QSO Party. It looked like there were only fixed stations planning to run on Saturday – no mobiles posted trips days before but one portable operation was going to be on a three-way line.

Saturday May 9 2020

I'm up at 6am – normal wake time. The QSO Party doesn't start till 1400 (9am). Hmm...well, there's NO BREAKFAST offered at this motel during COVID. Usually it's a great breakfast with fruit, eggs, sausage/bacon, pancakes, cereal, etc. Today nothing but coffee! Hmm....that won't do. Hop in car and head ¼ mile to the Shell station/E-Z Mart and grab an egg biscuit and head back to room. Wash hands again – and again all the time on the trip. Well, it's 7am and I'm raring to go.

I head up the road to **Historic Washington KFF-1106/K-1106** for a quickie activation. It's a weekend and maybe folks will be around early? Just 8 miles up the road from Hope. Another chance for Hempstead County which I won't run in the QP unless I return for another night at the Super 8. Maybe – depends how the day goes.

Pull it at 7:30am and put 20 in the log. Not going to reach 44 here – it's too early. Ran 40M CW and SSB.



Then head 20 miles up the interstate highway I-30 to Clark County AR where I'll start the QP.

First up for the QP will be Clark (CLRK) which I run at 1400Z. I stop to run every county on the trip. Wow! 20M CW is filled with 'CQ-M' stations from EU – not loud except for a few but they are everywhere from 14000 to 14070.... finding an 'empty' 20M frequency is a challenge. The QP is only the standard bands so 30M won't provide a place to escape to during that CQ-M contest. Lots of US stations are calling them, too, with good size pileups and the US stations go from weak (big beams east) to LOUD.

Darn...my radio seems to be developing a problem. When it gets warm – from five minutes of operation on 20M, it goes hiccup every now and then – just shuts down for a second or two then comes back on. Happened a lot only on 20M so I suspect some RFI but haven't had that problem before. Bothered me all day long – but only on 20M.

Hit Hot Springs next – with good runs then over into Grant County and a convenient park – **Jenkins Ferry Battlefield State Park – KFF/K-1087**. Had planned to hit a few other parks but ran short of time and skipped the detours to the other parks. Just one park on the route today.



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 land where this Civil War battle took place was settled by Thomas Jenkins, who started the ferry in 1815. It was run by his sons, William and John DeKalb, until the Civil War circa 1861. The Battle of Jenkins Ferry, the third leg of the Red River Campaign, began after the first light of the foggy day. Despite their disadvantaged position, the Confederates launched one unorganized attack after another. Rebel commanders knew that letting up the pressure would allow Steele's army to cross the Saline and escape. Jenkins' Ferry Battleground State Park features interpretive exhibits, picnic sites, a pavilion. “

It's really a small park with a short road in, maybe ½ mile total road in the park with a couple different small parking areas, and not much there to attract crowds. I sat alone with no one with 100 feet for the time I was there. Maybe 10 other cars there.

With all the QP folks and park chasers, easily reached 44Qs here. OM2VL was in the log most of the day in the counties along with DL3DXX. Did catch a few DX park chasers here – but they all counted for one multiplier – 'DX'.

Hit the Dallas/Cleveland line next (Skipped getting to Marks Mill State Park here – would have been a 20-25 minute extra round trip to get there). Runs were taking too long. Grabbed a mini-pizza at a convenience store for lunch – in and out quick – no hand to door contact. Probably the worse places as many visit them, but I was hungry. Minimized contact. Most have plastic shields up at counter between clerk and customer. I use a paper receipt or something like that to open the door so I don't touch the handle. Credit card goes in the machine – no handling cash. Don't lay my purchase on the counter – hold it up if they need to scan it off the counter top.

Next down to Calhoun (stop). Then a bit down to Columbia/Ouachita line. That followed in a bit by Lafayette/Nevada line.

I could either head back to the Super 8 in Hope (Hempstead County) or head home. I decided to head home. Went west to Miller County – stopped to run it. It was now about 5pm. Car needed gas so I stopped and filled it up (\$1.60/gal). Grabbed a taquito

thing for dinner (2 of them), along with a banana I had brought along.

It's about 3 hours to home. The GPS lady says I can be there by 9pm. The sunset in Plano is now about 8:10pm. I hot foot it back along the interstate- speed limit 75 – many doing 80-82 mph. Me-too! No problem other than a few idiot drivers doing 75.000 mph in the fast lane – sometimes next to another car doing 75.000 mph in the right lane. Otherwise, half the traffic was trucks – and traffic relatively light. Made good time. Butt getting tired from sitting.

Beat the GPS lady's time. Home at 8:25pm. I was zipping along at a continual 82 mph until the Dallas metro -area when it drops a bit. Sun had gone down but still light by the time I got home. Whew! Long day sitting.

I noted K5CM had been mobile – started on Interstate 30 at the eastern border – and ran along it with several detours for more counties – looks like he hit about a 18+ counties on his part – winding up on I-40 back to OK - usually has a driver (N5KW- Pam) but dunno this time. He was doing CW and SSB. Saw him spotted.

Well, probably 42 AR counties made it on the air between CW and SSB. See the AR QP section for results.

I made 537Qs in the QSO party. Overall trip was 791 miles with 273 miles driven in the state QSO party. (too many stops!). Worked 41 states but only VE3 in Canada. Radio did the 'hiccup' thing on 20M half the contest. Now I gotta figure out what is going on with it!

Arkansas QSO Party

Two mobiles ventured out in the COVID world. N4CD and K5CM put out counties – with K5CM headed along the interstate from the east border back toward OK with a few detours. N4CD hit the SW corner of the state. There was one or two 'expeditions' to 3 way county lines and a dozen or so fixed stations putting out other counties – at least for a while. Some showed up only for the first few hours. Or later in the evening.

Likely 44+ of the AR counties showed up on the air

K5XK portable was at the Carroll/Newton/Madison AR line and spotted on 20m CW

from the 3830 contest reflector

K5CM Multi-Op Mobile (K5CM & N5KW ops) 184 CW 512 SSB 55 Mults

Pam and I were planing on spending Friday night in Arkansas so we could be near to our starting point, but we had read that out of state travelers might have problems renting a motel room, so we stayed home and got up very early on Saturday morning to make it to our first stop on time. Conditions were poor the first few hours of the party, but improved as the day went on. Driving conditions were good for the driver with what I call "Severe Clear". This is bad for the operator as it makes it difficult to see the screen at times. I hang a towel from the visor in front of me, but this is a problem for Pam to be able to see to the right, so I have to take it down in heavy traffic. Other than that Mr. Murphy pretty much left us alone.

My High-lite contact was working Laci, OM2VL on 75m SSB Saturday evening. Laci has a 2 el Yagi at 165 feet on 80 meter CW, but has to use a standard dipole on 80 SSB, but still made the QSO FB. This was our best ever ARQP score. I guess many of us have nothing else to do right now because of the Corona virus.

All QSO are important, but here are a some of the most worked:

50: OM2VL

40 - 34: W8MET, K1RO, N2CU

30 - 21: N8II, AC0W, K2SSS, K3WVJ, N6MU, AA4TI, NE4S, W9CPV

20 - 18: DL3DXX, N5DO, K4AMC, KA6BIM, NS2N, VE3WG, K9CW

17 - 16: KA4ZGB, K9WX, N0HJZ, WB9CIF, K8TE, KS5N, NC4H, W4UT, WR3R

15 - 14: KM4FO, W0BH, WI0WA, KI6RRN, N1SOH, WB2PJH

13 - 12: K0AP, KD2KW, W1QK, W5XX, W8BZY, WB9HFK, K4BAI, K4ORD, N9HDE, ND4Y

73,

Connie and Pam K5CM / N5KW

N6MU - fixed - CA 55 CW 33 counties

After the first few hours this one was just waiting for N4CD and K5CM to change

counties and hope I could hear them which wasn't always the case. Missed the bonus stations on 40 at the start and was hoping they would be on at the end but no joy. They weren't. 73...

John, N6MU

N2CU - fixed - NJ - 96 CW 34 SSB 1 digi 41 counties

Big thanks to mobiles N4CD and K5CM who made it fun. Surprised to get a bonus station on RTTY. Score includes 14 QSOs with bonus stations, who were quite active.

73, Tom N2CU

K3WJV - fixed - PA 82 CW 47 SSB 42 counties

Tnx to K5CM & N4CD for going mobile and giving us all a bunch more Q's & counties. Hope you both have a safe trip home. I did no CQ-ing at all and my score includes 13 bonus Q's. Tnx to all the fixed stations too.

NS2N - fixed - NY 72 CW 36 SSB 41 counties

decent activity. Thanks for all,AR.

Took dog for quick emergency walk and grabbed a fast gulp of dinner - missed N4CD in Calhoun. Never fails ... blink and kit's gone.

K8TE - fixed - NM - 67 CW 29 SSB 42 counties

As always, thanks to all Arkansas participants for the contacts, especially K5CM/m with whom I made 12! I caught Bob, N4CD, in another 9 counties! Both had big pileups and it was fun breaking those. Despite a part-time effort, and considering the number of AR participants on 80, 40, and 20m I could hear, I was pleased with 98 contacts and 42 mults. I had hoped to break 100, but there weren't enough stations I could work for that.

With just 28 AR callsigns (and a few others who missed the fact I called CQ AR) in my log, it was challenging to run up a significant score, especially with limited time available. But, it's always fun to chase ops in QSO parties. I know how challenging it is to motivate folks to get on-the-air. It's also challenging for many who have

compromised antennas. With just low dipoles and high noise, I'll take what I can get.

I had already worked or activated all AR counties so that task wasn't necessary. I was able to make some recordings for upcoming presentations. I'll use those to demonstrate what works and what doesn't work well. There was a wide spectrum (pun intended) of skills demonstrated. It takes courage to operate a contest when you're new and inexperienced. Thanks for those who took the gauntlet—thanks!

73, Bill, K8TE

N8II-Fixed – WV - 96 CW 65 SSB 44 counties

This was a pleasant surprise, a good turnout from AR along with 2 CW mobiles: Bob, N4CD and Con, K5CM. Between a 25 minute break and then another to walk the dog, I missed Bob in 3 counties two of which would have been mults. So, I am surprised to have the 2nd highest reported mult so far. Congrats to Laci, OM2VL for a great score and 47 mults. My effort was a bit laid back after the 4QP weekend.

Thanks to sporadic E which was very strong into the Caribbean at 23Z, 40 and 20 stayed open well into the evening. Activity did die out, but K5CM was workable after my sunset from his last 3 county line on 20. To boot, no one seemed to try 15M where I did hear a station in 5 land. The QRM from the CQ M contest and RTTY on 40 was no fun. Several ops on 40 were clobbered by RTTY QRM.

Thanks to the fb mobile efforts and good home station activity it was an interesting contest. I got maybe 10 stations to answer my CQ's on 20 phone. The louder stations on 20 were very loud and the same on 40 after 2330Z.

Thanks to the Razorback CC and all who turned out, especially the 2 mobiles. K5CM/m provided 30 Q's and N4CD 14 Q's.

73, Jeff N8II

K1RO - fixed - NH 89 CW 64 SSB 47 counties

I didn't intend to operate much in this contest, but it was snowing when I got up Saturday and temps never got out of the low 30s, so it was easy to stay inside. Once I heard N4CD and K5CM mobile, I knew it would be a fun day. Plus I recently started

county hunting and need many Arkansas counties. The bonus stations and good home station activity added to the fun.

I had some success on 40 meter CW at the start, although it was spotty until late afternoon. Signals on 20 were excellent most of the day. I was really surprised to work N4CD and K5CM during the day on 40 at a couple of their stops. Signals were in and out of the noise, but they picked me out. My last 20 meter contact was at 2210 with K5CM. The band was still open, but nobody new left to work. But 40 was starting to pick up and I was able to start working stations on SSB as well as CW.

Ended up with 36 Qs/16 counties from K5CM, and 14 Qs/10 counties from N4CD. I took a break for lunch and a run to the dump, and missed Bob at one of his stops.

I really like these one-day QSO parties. There is enough activity to keep it interesting and it leaves time for other weekend activities.

N4CD mobile - 537 CW QSOs 46 Mults

Went out on an overnight trip to AR leaving on Friday and stayed overnight in Hope, AR at the Super 8 there – Hempstead County. Started on Saturday in the QP at 1400z in Clark County. Ran 11 AR counties with one stop in a POTA/WWFF park. Band conditions not the greatest all the time and the CQ-M contest filled 20M with weak signals end to end at my end and likely very loud up in New England and the northern states. Later in the day, RTTY contest infested much of 40M CW band in late afternoon – just before I went QRT and sprinted home. Had lots of fun for the trip. Socially isolated as much as possible. Dinner was 'take out'. Full report in another section of newsletter.

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From the AR QSO Page – comments on 2020 QP

First time in this one for a long time. Thanks for the fun! – VE3TW

First time in this qso party. I had extra time for this contest due to the lock-down. – W8MET

It seemed like more out-of-state and DX activity this year. Bands were in decent shape and the EU stations calling me on 40 and 80 were a bonus. – K9OZ/5

Thanks for your work sponsoring the ARQP, always a fun event. – K2HT

A fun time. Thanks! – W3LL

My personal best contest ever, at least of this type. Had a ton of fun. Hope to participate in many more in the future! – WA5SOG

Lotsa fun! Lotsa calls! (QRP...hi hi hi). Got the bonus stations 4 times.....very nice! – WB4OMM

Thanks for a great QSO Party! Lots of fun. – KBØLF

Was a low-key effort on 20m only. Glad to provide some QSOs for the AR stations. – VE3RKS

Appreciated all operators phonetically spelling the county names. Thanks. – KF5MU

My first ARQP after being on the air for 44 years. It was great and the AR stations were all excellent operators. They represented AR professionally and with great, positive attitudes. I will look for you next year! 73 & Tnx for a fun time! – NF7E

Only had three hours to participate. Great to work K5CM with that multi-county multiplier. Lots of competition from a couple other contests. 73. – K4QD

Personal best for me! – K5QBX

Thank you for a great QSO Party. – K5EDM

Couldn't get thru on 20M, as the band was weak, but 40 and 80M were wide open to AR. Thanks for the fun! – KEØTT

Had a few minutes to hand out AB to those I heard. – VA6RCN

Enjoyed the contest this year! Some really great pileups. Thanks to the many US stations that were around all day and worked those of us in Arkansas on multiple bands and modes. Too bad 15m & 10m didn't cooperate for us all. – N5KI

I enjoyed working my first Arkansas QSO party. I didn't get to spend a lot of time working it but it was fun. – W9WGN

Excellent QSO Party. See no room for improvement. – KD5ILA

Much Fun! – KB4LWT

Thanks! Enjoyed it. – KE8VU

Great QSO Party again this year...Lots of AR stations on air again this year and lots of folks all over the world wanting to work us. I had a great time and am already looking forward to next year. – W5HB

Didn't have much time to work, but wanted to help with VT multiplier. – N1SP

This was the first time in years I've operated from home instead of the K5BAT club station. I missed the fellowship of the multi-operator effort, but maybe next year will be better. – W5RZ

Thank you! We had so much fun! – AB7AA & AB7BB

Lots of fun, with great WX, on the Carroll / Madison / Newton County line. K5XK was exclusively on CW, and W5AEN alongside with SSB. – K5XK

Had a total blast! Good times! – N5HOG

First ARQP in a long while. Lots of fun. Didn't get to spend a lot of time and missing a 80M antenna. Thanks to organizers for all their work. 73. – W5VY

Enjoyed the party - looking forward to next year! – W2QL

Fun contest. I thought this was my first time , but now see I played in it in 2018. Thanks for the QSOs – KA6BIM

Thank you for sponsoring the contest. Many thanks to Connie-K5CM and Pam-N4KW for activating many AR counties. 73. – W1QK

Even though I didn't make many QSOs, I enjoyed the contest and look forward to next year's! – KY4MAK

Lots of fun! – WT8WV

Good show this year. I had fun! – AA4TI

Just too close to Arkansas for 20M being in the DFW area. Could hear folks working AR but the AR stations were too weak. Still enjoyed the QSO Party. – KD2KW

Had a great time. Many thanks. – N3JUY

On the Road with N4CD III

Fixing the radio system in the Malibu.

On the last trip to AR, the radio developed a problem never seen before. After 5-10 minutes on 20M, it would go 'hiccup' – shut down for a second or so, then come back on when keyed. Made it a pain during the QP with intermittent hiccups – to the point where they happened every 10-15 seconds. Didn't happen on 40M which was strange. So after I got home and finished the logging, I checked the fuse in the power lead. Nope – that fuse is good but that is another story

A couple years ago, the folks who put in the power lead from the engine compartment to the rear seat area (nice #10 flexible stranded wire) - put an in-line fuse holder right next to the battery – where it should be. In modern cars, your ground wire goes directly to body ground with a short lead. That too was done with a ground point in the sill. On one trip out, the radio quit. Hmm...checked the voltage with a voltmeter. None at the power connector. Checked the fuse. Dang....the fuse holder had melted with the engine heat. I couldn't even remove the fuse - it was melted in to a glob of plastic. This is the type you find at Auto-Zone or Pep Boys – fuse holder with a couple inches of wire each side. Apparently not very heat resistant. Since I run with the engine running – and often at times with 100 deg days, sometimes 110-115 as in AZ, it gets very hot under the hood. Those fuse holders aren't made for those kinds of temps apparently. Also, the fuse has some drop across it contributing to even more heat – maybe a watt or two more. Probably 140+F under the hood. Replaced that with a AutoZone type fuse holder to finish the trip. After that, I dug out one of the original IC-706 fuse holders – a lot heavier construction and installed it.

So I checked the fuse holder for something flaky. Nope, perfectly good, contacts clean, no sign of damage. First thing off the list of possible causes. Checked the battery connection, too. It was solid. Two items down.

So that left the antenna next as a culprit. I run the Lakeview mag mount and have been for over 20 years. They went out of business at least 10 years ago so spare parts are hard to come by but they are the best of the mag mounts out there for sturdiness. I've seen others quickly develop problems. The MFJ beehive ones are junk and quickly go intermittent if you intent to drive and operate. Any flexing makes them become intermittent and they are impossible to fix. Same for three or four other brands I've used for the top of the roof antenna.

On the Lakeview, the coax comes in and goes to a plastic assembly on the top of the mag mount with the mast above it, held by an insulated bolt from the bottom. On one side, the inner conductor makes contact with a washer on which the mast sits. On the bottom side, the coax shield is held against the mag mount providing a ground. After a while, the aluminum on the mag mount tends to oxidize, so you have to take a Lakeview apart every couple months and sand it down. (well, if you don't go mobile much, maybe once a year or two – hi hi). So....I took it apart and cleaned it and put it back together. Should be fine now.

Wednesday morning I'm all set to head out. Each week there's a hour long CWT – either at 1300 (8am now) or 1900 (2pm). Put the antenna on the car, make a quick check – and – no antenna! Infinite SWR and no receive signals. Well, the fix didn't work too well. Fortunately had an older cable so quickly installed that and it's back to working. Now to find out where the old coax/connector went bad. Open inner conductor – maybe from where it goes through the back door time after time? I'll let you know next month.

Awards Issued

None announced/posted this month.

Events for County Hunters

My bad – there are TWO more QSO Parties this Spring/Early summer! Yeah – more county activity! Over 150 counties up for grabs. Hope you all join in. Maybe someone will venture out mobile for more counties? CW, SSB and digital – so maybe some digi only ops will show up? There's one active county hunter there in KY (KM4FO) and several in WV. (N8OYY, W8OP, N8II)

Also looks like digital allowed so if you are digital equipped, look for them. Likely many on the digi modes this year. Might be some park activations, too.

June 6 1400z to June 7 0200z

1.8-144

Kentucky QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

www.kyqsoparty.org

June 20 1600z to June 21 0400z

3.5-28

West Virginia QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

qsl.net/wvsarc/wvqp/wvqp.html

Don't forget **Field Day** – a couple hundred counties – – all modes - maybe a couple thousand – all standard bands – and many 'at home' or in their back yards as 'groups' are not going to happen as in previous years. Many one or two person operations likely. Maybe some multi-multi-remote operations? **Weekend of June 27-28.**

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MARAC Annual Convention – hopefully 'good' in the COVID world when it happens in October. Plan for the best – sign up now!

MARAC Convention

October 25-27, 2020.

<http://ag6v.com/MARAC/>

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That's all folks!