

# County Hunter News

November 1, 2017  
Volume 13 Issue 11

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

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

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

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CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now operating 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](http://ch.W6RK.com)

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

[http://countyhunter.com/marac\\_information\\_package.htm](http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm)

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

There is a lot more information at [www.countyhunter.com](http://www.countyhunter.com) . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at [www.CHNewsonline.com](http://www.CHNewsonline.com)

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

## Notes from the Editor

### 1 ) N4CD Rumblings

Special Convention Issue this month with lots of pictures!

We are transitioning into fall. The days are definitively getting shorter and soon we'll be changing back to 'regular' time from daylight saving time (Nov 5). Here in TX, the cold fronts come through and we'll be seeing temps in the 30s by the end of the current week.

Mobile activity peaked nicely around convention time and in several of the large state QSO Parties. Now we are into winter months with less travel and large trips (and winter weather to content with).

Band conditions have gone from miserable to decent – as we bounce along toward the sunspot minimum. Some days are good – other days have high A,K index and challenging propagation.

Many are now exploring the new digital mode FT-8 – a 'faster way' of having QSOs than other digital modes.

## **2 ) MARAC New Awards Chairman**

Phil, AB7RW, has volunteered and been appointed the new Awards Chairman. He is now getting up to speed on the system and hopefully awards will be flowing again in a week or two from now.

## **On the Road with N4CD I**

The MARAC annual convention was coming up in Colorado Springs, CO with 70 people planning on heading that way, including N4CD. Along the way from TX, I could run parks in OK and the south east part of CO on my way there. Bob, N8KIE, Gene, K5GE, and Terry, WQ7A, would be traveling too and giving out Double Diamond (DD) Counties on their trips – which I would hunt down. Those are the only folks good for DD contacts these days so I try to catch them when I can. Otherwise, it would just be a couple day trip ( 4 ½) to get there on the Monday afternoon when things start. There were lots of activities planned there including tours, the annual awards dinner, and lots of meet and greet.

### **Thursday**

On Thursday Sept 21 I head out for OK parks – the outside temp is 82 at 6:30 am. The

first up park unit is Wichita National Wildlife Refuge – KFF-0493 in Comanche County OK - a few hour drive via Jefferson OK – which I need to run for 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Get a few contacts there and keep on driving through Stephens over to the park. Now, you can claim 'self credit' by making a contact from the county for up to 13 different MARAC awards..

From the government web site:

*“Established in 1901, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 556 refuges throughout the United States managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 59,020 acre refuge hosts a rare piece of the past - a remnant mixed grass prairie, an island where the natural grasslands escaped destruction because the rocks underfoot defeated the plow.*

*The refuge provides habitat for large native grazing animals such as American bison, Rocky Mountain elk, and white-tailed deer. Texas longhorn cattle also share the refuge rangelands as a cultural and historical legacy species. More than 50 mammal, 240 bird, 64 reptile and amphibian, 36 fish, and 806 plant species thrive on this important refuge.*

*Visitors to the refuge can enjoy wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, special events and much more”*

I visited – made more than 44 QSOs to 'activate' the park – thanks to the many county hunters on the road that made it quite easy. Often on a mid-week day, you struggle to get enough contacts. With 20 mobiles on the road – it was easier! Lots of county hunters were around for the feast of mobile counties and contacts.

Next up was not far away – in a new county – Kiowa OK - just to the west – is Great Plains State Park, KFF 2782. It's a nice state park with camping and RV spots, even a restaurant on site rock climbing, fishing, boating, etc. Had a good run putting 73 QSOs in the log before moving on. Didn't have too much time to investigate the park – just pulled in, operated, took a picture (all the pics were uploaded to the POTA group of Facebook), got past 44Qs if possible, then left. If I had an RV, I'd probably stop overnight in a park – fees are usually \$15-\$25 for a hook up spot. Tent spots even less. For N4CD- I head toward a motel when it gets to be dinner time. On this trip, I planned ahead on the way there and made motel reservations. I'd see about the return trip.

There are a fair number of 'park chasers' – maybe 30-50 on the air during the week – and more on weekends – but many are out in parks themselves running QRP or wire antennas and tough to catch. With current propagation, many just can't hear folks in

parks for many hours a day. So reaching 44 QSOs can be challenging when the A index is up at 37 and the K at 5 – like many days on this trip. Happily, the county hunters just seem to keep going no matter what the propagation condx! Convention time is a great time for catching lots of contacts!

Next up was Foss State Park – in Custer County OK. Wiki - *“Foss State Park is a 1,749-acre Oklahoma state park located on Foss Lake, in southwestern Custer County, Oklahoma, near the city of Foss. Recreational activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, boating, swimming and camping”*

I pulled in, found a spot to park, and put it out – 60 plus QSOs. I'd catch some DX – park hunters OV4VT, ON4BB, ON7NQ, 9A3NM, 9A7W, IZ5JMZ, F2YT and YL F5MVT, along with K9FD, Merv, out on Molokai.

That night I stopped in Elk City, OK – Super 8 Motel - \$51.44 including tax. Dinner at “Home Cooking” behind the Motel 6 – Chicken dinner \$10. . (Stayed at both motels before - hmmm). I get somewhere and say - “I recognize the place – I've been here before!”). Oh well. Slept well. Between driving and putting out all the counties – it tends to wear you out a bit.

**Friday** – more parks coming up.

Breakfast at the motel and head on out to the next one which is 'Washita National Wildlife Refuge in Custer County (again). Hopefully folks will work me again.

From Wiki *“Washita National Wildlife Refuge is a National Wildlife Refuge of the United States located in Custer County, Oklahoma. Within the refuge, the slow-moving Washita River winds through prairie and cropland to merge with Foss Reservoir, providing a home and resting area for geese and other waterfowl. Gently rolling hills, ravines, and bottomlands laced with creeks shelter wildlife as common as white-tailed deer and as unusual as the Texas horned lizard, a state-listed endangered species.”*

The government web site notes: *“The Washita National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1961 under the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act primarily to provide a resting and feeding area for migrating and wintering waterfowl. The refuge's mixed grass plains of west-central Oklahoma is superimposed on the upper reaches of Foss Reservoir. Canada geese spending winters at Washita NWR thrive on fields of wheat and milo grown especially for them. The hungry birds feed on green wheat first. When the temperatures drop, they shift to the richer milo. Some 2,000 acres of croplands stretch across the flatlands. Local farmers grow crops here, taking part of the harvest and*

*leaving the rest for wildlife.*

*This area of western Oklahoma produces a considerable amount of oil and gas. Custer County is located on top of the Anadarko Basin, one of the largest known reserves of natural gas. There are seven active wells on the refuge. “*

It's 8000 acres. Found a spot to run it – and did with 50Q in the log. Whew. Early morning runs can be tough as the upper bands aren't open yet.

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Time to head on to the next one – Roman Nose State Park in Blaine County – KFF 2801 . From the state web site

*“Roman Nose State Park, named after a Cheyenne chief, is one of the original seven Oklahoma state parks. Set amidst a beautiful canyon, recreational activities at this state park include an 18-hole golf course, swimming pools, hiking trails, two lakes, trout fishing in season, canoeing, paddle boats, mountain biking, horse stables and hayrides by reservation. Rentals include canoes, kayaks, paddle boats and mountain bikes. Swimming in the lakes is not allowed, but fishing and no-wake boating are welcome”*

Like many OK parks, there's a nice lodge there you can stay at for a reasonable price. ( If you remember the way way back days – we had a mini at the Lake Texoma State Park – at the lodge there – that was 25 years ago though – nothing since)

Put out the county/park with 50+ QSOs and moved on.

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Next up was Gloss Mountain SP. I pulled into the first area I found – which is not much other than a parking lot for the trail to head on up Gloss mountain – and the lot is in a bowl surrounded by hills a couple hundred feet in all directions. Not good. The lot was maybe 200 feet by 200 feet – had a restroom and some picnic table shelters and that was it other than the trail leaving the lot going up. This was going to be tough getting a signal out of there – and of course, no internet. Had it for a few brief seconds here and there but not enough to spot! I usually try to spot the park on ch.w6rk.com and dxsummit.fi and the POTA Facebook page. Nope. Not going to happen.

The park is only 640 acres – small. The road 'in' is maybe ½ mile and you drop down

right off the road and can't stop there – narrow 1 ½ lane road down to the 'bowl'.

From the Wiki:

*Glass Mountain State Park is an Oklahoma state park located in Major County, Oklahoma. A recreational-educational park that is accessible 365 days a year for hiking and picnicking, from sunrise to sunset. There are no campsites or other overnight accommodations in the park. Facilities include a restroom, pavilions, picnic areas, grills, public water supply, handicap trail to historical marker, and a hiking trail from base parking lot to the top of Cathedral Mountain and across the mesa to view the valley floor and Lone Peak Mountain.”*

Luckily, with all the mobiles and county hunters around, I did manage to get 66Q otherwise it would really be tough to do it normally.

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How about some sand dunes? Yep, in OK at Little Sahara State Park KFF 2794. A lot of OK is 'grasslands' but here you've got great 4 wheeling and ATV'ing.

*“Little Sahara State Park named for its resemblance to the Sahara Desert. The vast dunes have formed over time from terrace deposits, remnants of prehistoric times when the Cimarron River flowed over the entire area. Little Sahara was founded in the early 1950s as a city park by Grace Ward Smith, head of Alva's Chamber of Commerce. Prior to that, the dunes were primarily seen as a nuisance, encroaching on Highway 281, requiring the road to be re-routed. Smith named the park to lure visitors, hired locals to guide and act as outlaws, and in 1958 purchased a pair of camels. In September 1960, the state of Oklahoma purchased the 339 acre parcel for \$12,500. Later that year, 4,000 visitors viewed a Christmas pageant starring the camels. By 1963, the park had expanded to 1,600 acres.*

*The park offers over 1,600 acres of rideable sand dunes ranging in height from 25 feet to 75 ft Amenities include showers, picnic areas, 86 RV hookups with electric/water and 143 tent sites. In 2015, 128,397 riders paid \$10 each to enjoy the dunes.*

N4CD skipped the dune riding – found a spot to run – and put it in Major County OK out. 66Q then time to move on.

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The last for the day was Boiling Springs State Park KFF 2774.

from the state park site:

*Boiling Springs State Park, an oasis on the plains, captures some of the finest elements of nature. The park is one of seven original state parks built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps and was named after a natural "boiling" spring that still flows. The park's namesake attraction is showcased in a natural wooden shelter and interpretive center below the park office.*

*Wildlife is one of the many awe-inspiring features of the 820-acre park. Various species of animals dominate the area including whitetail deer, wild turkeys, raccoons, coyotes, bobcats, beavers, badgers, rabbits, skunks and opossums. A total of 40 RV sites and 12 tent campsites are available, as well as group camping. “*

It's got a teeny lake for swimming – but lots of 'enjoying nature' activities. Did my 50+ and left. Getting late!

Time to head to the Days Inn in Woodward (\$67). Been there before a couple times. There are two decent restaurants about 4 miles away from the motel – head that way. Check out Big Dans Steak House- it's 5:30 on a Friday – only six cars in the lot. Hmm. Go back across the way to the Chinese Buffet – 20 cars there – so that's where I wind up for dinner. Good. Filled up the car, cleaned the windshield, and back to the motel for the night.

Tomorrow I'd participate in the TX QSO Party – no parks – so we'll continue on after the TX QSO Party bit.

## Texas QSO Party

Yes, there was a TX QSO Party. Several of the regulars were missing and many counties went AWOL. The aftermath of Hurricane Harvey didn't help with the southern counties along the gulf – many ham antennas were destroyed – or the QTH's put under water – and the folks down that way more worried about recovery than contesting. Many of the roads were not in great shape for mobiling, either. Here's the reports from



3830 contest reflector:

### **AF5Q mobile - 412 Q**

This trip started off with loose antennas and late getting out of Oklahoma. Put up 20 counties, and again, just like other QSO parties, I scored just as much on Sunday as I did Saturday, Missed Hutchinson county due to a map error.

Over all I had fun. Stations worked the most included N6MU, WB9CIF, N8UM, W7GF, and NJ4Q. No dice on 15m, as only worked 2 stations on a triple county line.

73 to all, and CU down the log

Ron, AF5Q/M

### **N5NA mobile - 1642 cw qso -**

Score includes 35000 bonus points for activating 35 counties and 1500 bonus points for working N4CD, K5OT, and W5CT each in 5 counties.

With poor conditions leading up to this years TQP I didn't know what to expect. Turns out there were plenty of QSOs to be had. 40m was the money band this year with almost double the QSOs I had on 20m. Had some BIG pileups on 40m I did my best to handle. Tried 15m several times with N6MU but not a peep.

This was probably one of the most trouble free QSO parties I can remember. Almost every QSO party there's at least some minor glitch with something. Everything just worked. No RF problems, no hardware problems, no software problems, and no wrong turns! I even solved an interference problem I had been having with the TPMS in my truck.

Mobile Station Equipment: Elecraft K3, Scorpion SA-680, Dell Latitude D630 running CQ/X logging software, 2015 Ford F250.

Thanks to every one who called and, as always, a BIG thanks to my wife, K5AKS,

for driving!

Thanks to the following stations for contributing more than half the QSOs:

N6MU(44), WB9CIF(34), VE3KZ(33), K0HNC(33), AE5GT(31), WA6KHK(31), K0AP(29), K5YQF(27), WA2VYA(27), VE5SDH(25), KB8OMG(23), N5RZ(22), N8II(22), W4WJ(21), K8FU(21), NY9P(21), W2MN(20), K5SBR(20), K5UV(20), WB5BKL(20), KE0TT(20), KN4Y(20), K4BAI(19), K5KS(19), W5TM(19), N8UM(16), KE5XX(16), WB5JID(16), N5AF(15), K5IZO(15), W9BM(15), K9IG(14), K4ZGB(14), N4CD(14), K4MM(14), W7GF(14), W2RR(14), W0TG(14), WB9HFK(14), NW0M(13)

### **WA6KHK - fixed - CA - 143cw 198 ssb - 163 counties worked**

I knew this year would be rough for the TQP after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Houston area. Hats off to all the rovers that went out and gave it their all !!!! Special kudos to W5CT (Robert and Steve) and N5NA (Alan) for putting out all those counties! Virtual high five guys! Band condx weren't the greatest either. Just like the Salmon Run the week before, 15 meters was non existent. Only worked about half the TX counties this year but had a lot of fun. Thanks for another great state QSO party!

### **N5PHT - fixed - Fannin County - 382 cw**

Probably my best effort at the TX QSO Party so far. Finished for this year - thanks for the Qs and it was fun.

### **K4BAI - fixed - GA 166 cw 52 ssb - 110 counties worked**

Multiple county QSOs with K5GQ/M,, W3DYA/M, W5CT/M, W5WRL/M, AF5Q/M, N5NA/M, and N4CD/M. Thanks to all for the QSOs. Special thanks to W5WRL, N4CD, and W3DYA who gave me my last three TX counties all time! 80M was quite good, but under utilized, particularly on SSB. 40M was the money band this year and was usable from GA the entire contest period. Skip may have been too long for East TX at the end on Sat night. 20M was good to West TX from GA, but the band was often too long for East TX. The mobiles all did a fantastic job. Was never unable to work any mobile I could hear. W5WRL was very loud on SSB and AF5Q was much louder than the other CW mobiles. Good job by all under very poor conditions.

73, John, K4BAI.

**N6MU - fixed - CA 231 cw - 145 counties worked**

Mults were way down this year. NO5W's last minute cancellation due to car problems was probably a big contributor as his whole route was pretty much uncovered.

Top mobile for me was N5NA with 43 Qs followed by W5CT(41), AF5Q/W3DYA(20), K5GQ/K5OT(13) and N4CD(11).

Tried 15 with lots of stations but nary a peep all weekend.

Thanks to all the fixed stations who hung in there as well. 73...

John, N6MU

**K5OT mobile 374 cw - 4 ssb**

Claimed score includes 15,000 points for activating 15 counties and 1,000 points for working N5NA and W3DYA in 5 counties each.

NO5W and I have teamed up for TQP multi-op mobile entries during each of the past three years. We put together a major route-change for our #4 run, planning to activate the northeastern Texas counties this year. However, Chuck's trusty and well-equipped Nissan Pathfinder decided it wasn't ready to play this time. Chuck contacted me on Wednesday before the contest and said that the vehicle had 'stopped cold' on him while on a local errand. No NO5W/M this year, as Chuck needed to stay home in New Orleans and revive the Pathfinder. The prognosis is still undecided.

With this disappointing news, I wasn't sure if I wanted to put together a run on my own. There were quite a few nearby TX counties that showed little or no activation potential, so I re-installed my mobile gear in the truck and cobbled together a part-time route that would cover 15 counties in the area - 4 on Saturday morning and 11 more through the day on Sunday.

I really look forward to the annual TQP multi-op mobile run with NO5W each

September. It was disappointing to miss it in 2017, but I'm certain that Chuck was even more disappointed at this abrupt schedule change. Although I did enjoy getting out for a while on my own, it isn't nearly as much fun as our team efforts. I look forward to resuming our multi-op mobile tradition next year!

Mobile equipment: Icom IC-7100 at 100W, tiny Little Tarheel II antenna, spiral notebook, pen, and 2015 GMC Sierra.

Thanks for the QSOs and your support of the TQP this year.

73,  
Larry K5OT

### **KN4Y -fixed - FL - 120 cw Q - 84 counties worked**

Planned on a full involvement strategy, but thunder storms and unexpected honey-do's revised the plan. Enjoyed chasing the mobiles who would disappear every once in awhile. Enjoyed the venture

### **KG5LRP - fixed -tx 176 ssb qso**

I always love a great QSO party. The Bands were OK at best 40m had a ton of noise, but 20m was great. I would love to add more CW next outing.

### **K4MM - fixed - FL - 112 cw 69 ssb - 110 counties worked**

500 Bonus for K5OT in 5 counties.  
500 Bonus for N4CD in 5 counties.  
1000 Bonus for W5WRL in 14 counties.  
500 Bonus for K5LOL in 7 counties.  
500 Bonus for N5IR in 6 counties.  
2000 Bonus for W5CT in 23 counties.  
500 Bonus for K5GQ in 7 counties.  
1000 Bonus for N5NA in 12 counties

## **NO5W - fixed - LA**

Total score includes 500 bonus points for working K5GQ/m in at least 5 counties, 500 points for working N5NA/m in at least 5 counties and 1000 points for working W5CT/m in at least 10 counties.

It wasn't the way K5OT and I had planned to do the TQP but Murphy struck the Pathfinder about two days before I was set to drive to Texas to meet up with Larry and the shop which was about 50 miles from home could not get the vehicle back on the road in time for the trip.

So I got to listen to the action from New Orleans, primarily on Sunday as I was tied up on Saturday getting the Pathfinder back to New Orleans. 40m was the money band since the only stations I could hear well on 20m were N5NA who was far enough away in WTX and W3DYA who was up in the panhandle. W5CT(12), K5GQ(9), N5NA(7), W3DYA(4), K5OT(3), and KI5AH(1) were all solid copy with excellent mobile signals. I put the aprs map to good use as it allowed me to see when the mobiles were about to transition into the next county.

Thanks to all who participated in the TQP, especially the mobiles. Finally it was good to work K5SBR in Calhoun county as that area was one of the counties that was paid a visit by Harvey. Hope to be back on the road in the 2018 TQP and that hurricane season 2018 will be less active.

73/Chuck/NO5W

## **W5CT mobile - 1637 cw qso**

Our TQP spiritual guide, W5MJ, wasn't available this year but he suggested that WK5S, our talented teamster from 2015 might be willing to take me down the road for a single op adventure. Sure enough, Steve had just tricked out his new Chevy Sonic for HF with a Diamond SD330 screwdriver and a trailer hitch for a second antenna. He recommended a Bug Catcher, and that sounded like a great idea.

It was nice to have such a simple setup this year -- one radio, one computer, and two antennas. Steve got the Bug Catcher installed and we were ready to go. We went to our usual starting point near Brownwood but in our final countdown testing, we found that the SWR on the Bug Catcher was 3:1 and just wouldn't come into spec no matter what we adjusted. So we hit the road and as a

testament to how good that antenna is, I put a heap of 40M Qs in the log with only about 50W. Around noon, we took a quick comfort stop and Steve said he had some things to check. Voila! The matching coil at the bottom wasn't loose but it wasn't quite tight either. We cruised on through the day and except for a couple computer issues, it was smooth sailing. 40M was surprisingly good but 20 seemed underwhelming. Late in the afternoon we hit some rare counties and 40 got even better. 40 was the money band all evening and I finished with 581 Qs on 40 and 391 on 20. I was pretty happy with 93 mults. We were about an hour from our hotel, but that turned into about an hour and a half when a construction detour and a mixmaster in Lewisville tried to outsmart all our guidance systems.

Sunday came off without a hitch as Steve again kept us right on schedule with his paper map and customized turn-by-turn instructions. I kept an eye on Microsoft Streets and Trips, but I hardly needed to. Both 20 and 40 really sagged in the middle of the day but our planned stop on the HEND/KAUF county line made it possible to pull through some very weak callers. After an hour or so, conditions came right back up and both 20 and 40 were very good. Steve kept the pedal to the metal and we made it to the LAMP/CORY line for a rollicking seven minute finish on 20.

Thanks to all the FB ops who tracked us on APRS, or just kept checking our home frequencies. Special thanks to the nice crowds from KS, OK, and Gillespie County. And a huge thanks to Steve WK5S for his engineering skills and for grinding out the miles behind the wheel. It was fun nipping at N5NA heels -- it might come down now to who's the better typist! :-)

See you in the next one!

Robert K5PI

### **K5GQ mobile – 411 cw Q**

My thanks to NM5G, Keith who supplied his truck with hamsticks, Kenwood 480 and computer. And programmed the kenwood vhf/uhf for APRS via digipeater and a tablet to send APRS. I believe as a result more stations worked me multiple times: N6MU 12; WA2VYA 11; WB9CIF 10; NO5W 9; K4MM 8; KE0TT 8; VE3KZ 8; K4BAI,K5KS,N5RZ,N8UM,N8II,W2RR worked me 7 times.

One knows the band is bad when K4BAI's signal is down in the noise rather than its normal strong signal. On both Saturday and Sunday the noise was seldom below S7, and would go up to 15 to 20 over.

Then other noise would move in frequency. I would move either up or down in frequency where there was less noise and try again. Almost 2pm on Sunday the signals came out of the noise and my Q rate shot up to over 100. This lasted until 3pm.

Mark  
K5GQ

### **K0AP - fixed - KS - 113 cw Q     94 counties worked**

The score includes 7000 additional points for working N5NA from 29, W5CT 20, K5OT 11, K5GQ 10, and W3DYA 9 counties. I have always been interested in county hunting but never really got it going seriously until recently. With the band conditions kind of winding down what could be a better choice to stay on the air but chase US counties all across the USA. Since the beginning of the year I have operated in multiple QSO parties and TXQP was not an exception. I was very impressed of how N5NA managed his mobile operation to perfection. He was always there and made sure to switch bands 40m to 20m and vice versa, to give everybody a chance. I worked N5NA in 29 counties but if I did not have to multitask and work on few errands in and around the house, I am quite sure I could've got him from all counties he operated from. His operating pattern was very predictable and all I needed to do is just sit and wait for him to show up from the next one on 7.032.5 +/- . Kudos to N5NA and the other mobiles (W5CT, K5OT, K5GQ and W3DYA) for bringing so much fun to the game. On Saturday morning when the TXQP started I quickly realized that here at my QTH in KS I don't have good 20m band opening (short skip) to Texas so I decided to stick to 40m CW only. 40m was very reliable band and I was able to hear the mobiles almost all of the time, with few exceptions. I am looking forward to TXQP 2018 and I hope next year the mobile participation will be greater. Thank you all TX stations who participated for a great Qso party!

73 Dragan K0AP,

### **N5RZ- fixed TX - 405 cw QSO**

Did better than I expected to with the lousy condx. Had a bit of fun, but mid day absorption really wiped out things on all bands both days! 15M wide open to Northeast Sunday morning but few takers.

Score reflects 6,000 bonus points for TX mobiles. Thanks to N5NA W5CT K5GQ AF5Q N4CD K5OT & W3DYA for taking to the roads of Texas!

Mult breakdown: State/Prov = 44 DX=6 TX Counties = 108

Used a K3/P3 @ 100W to a Carolina Windom 160 with apex at 44'. N1MM+ logging software.

Thanks to all for the QSO's.

73, Gator

**N4CD mobile** – 516 cw 33 SSB QSOs - 84 mults

Ran the top two counties in the TX panhandle from east to west. Most contacts on CW with a few dozen on SSB. Participated 8.5 hours on Saturday only. Conditions were not good with few DX (HA, DL, PA, KP4) and many US states missing. Lack of mobiles in S and SW and SE Texas hurt with top scorers only working 160 of the 254 counties. Had fun and gave out some 'rare' counties.

**K5LOL Multi-op mobile** - 169 ssb QSO

Operator(s): K5LOL K5MBA

de N4CD: Have no idea where they were in TX. No comments other than score by them.

Worse, not spotted once by the county hunters.

**W0BH - fixed - KS** - 66 cw 198 ssb.

I really missed my usual trip down to the Texas Panhandle this year! Our new



president at Hesston College was inaugurated on TQP weekend, so I stayed home this year, but enjoyed working Texas from Kansas.

Activity seemed a bit lighter this year. It was fun following K5CT/m, N5NA/m and K5OT/m around with excellent 40m activity all day long. Sorry Chuck/NO5W had to bow out because of a vehicle issue. Also happy N4CD/m could cover the Panhandle so I didn't feel quite so bad. I think AF5Q was there, too, but didn't hear him and haven't seen a post yet.

We hope to be back in Texas next year! Thanks to the sponsors and ops for another fun one.

73, Bob, w0bh

**NO5W - fixed - LA - 69 cw 8 ssb 58 counties**

It wasn't the way K5OT and I had planned to do the TQP but Murphy struck the Pathfinder about two days before I was set to drive to Texas to meet up with Larry and the shop which was about 50 miles from home could not get the vehicle back on the road in time for the trip.

So I got to listen to the action from New Orleans, primarily on Sunday as I was tied up on Saturday getting the Pathfinder back to New Orleans. 40m was the money band since the only stations I could hear well on 20m were N5NA who was far enough away in WTX and W3DYA who was up in the panhandle. W5CT(12), K5GQ(9), N5NA(7), W3DYA(4), K5OT(3), and KI5AH(1) were all solid copy with excellent mobile signals. I put the APRS map to good use as it allowed me to see when the mobiles were about to transition into the next county.

Thanks to all who participated in the TQP, especially the mobiles. Finally it was good to work K5SBR in Calhoun county as that area was one of the counties that was paid a visit by Harvey. Hope to be back on the road in the 2018 TQP and that hurricane season 2018 will be less active.

73/Chuck/NO5W

**N6MU - fixed - CA 231 cw 145 counties**

Mults were way down this year. NO5W's last minute cancellation due to car

problems was probably a big contributor as his whole route was pretty much uncovered.

Top mobile for me was N5NA with 43 Qs followed by W5CT(41), AF5Q/W3DYA(20), K5GQ/K5OT(13) and N4CD(11).

Tried 15 with lots of stations but nary a peep all weekend.

Thanks to all the fixed stations who hung in there as well. 73...

John, N6MU

**KN4Y - fixed - FL** 120 cw 84 mults

Planned on a full involvement strategy, but thunder storms and unexpected honey-do's revised the plan. Enjoyed chasing the mobiles who would disappear every once in awhile. Enjoyed the venture

## On the Road with N4CD II

### **Saturday 9/24 - Texas QSO Party**

Well, why not join them rather than fight them? This weekend would be the TX QSO Party. I'm not all that enthusiastic about at QSO Party contesting – I'm 'old school' with paper logs and now stopping to run/log the counties so I'm not in the category of those with drivers who go, go, go for the 18 hours of this contest with computer set ups for calling logging, tracking and scoring. I was just east of the TX panhandle, having stopped in Woodward, OK for the night at the Days Inn. Not many motels are pit out this way other than the larger towns.

I planned to run the top two counties in TX across- 10 counties – and maybe one or two more- winding up in Dalhart (Dallam County) at the Super 8 for the night. I've run the

panhandle a whole bunch of times before. You can zip along the county lines – but forget about trying to run 'on the run' because most small roads have power line noise 20db over S9. I know the spots that work for C/L and the ones that don't – having done this 20 times before! The roads are good, mostly with 65, some 70 mph and some 75 mph speed limits. You can fly through on the two lane roads to get places quickly – but there aren't many places out this way to get to! Low population. Many of the roads have no shoulders so you need to pay close attention to driving, too.

I left the motel planning on getting to Hemphill just before the next county line - just before starting time of 9 am local time (1400z). I started on 40m cw – conditions OK but not great. Well, no – they were horrible on 20m. Not much happening. Stopped there for nearly an hour. Then headed up to the Ochiltree/Lipscomb line – great spot on the south side of the road facing east. Work a bunch – and you have to make 2 contacts – one for each county. Nearly everyone knows the drill – 2 QSOs one after the other – just one or two are clueless and miss the second contact. I sat there, too, for an hour putting 60Q calls in log times 2. 120Q – minus 1 for the guy who only got one – hi hi!

Next hit Roberts – usually run this one before as a C/L with Hemphill – but it was too far south for my start – so took a short detour down to get it. There I spent 45 minutes for a single county.

Then the route was over to the C/L of Hansford and Hutchison at 1724z. Most of the same stations go in the log. Did work Norm, W3DYA/m who was also running. Missed him everywhere else it seems – skip was squirrely and 40m 'long'. Caught a few county hunter mobiles for some different multipliers. (and their counties)

Next up was Moore/Sherman line. You can forget about doing much while going between lines – the roads have horrendously bad power lines up this way all across the panhandle on the small roads. Not many houses, but some oil wells and large large farms and not much reason to quiet down the lines. The same group of folks go in the log once again. Make a few qsos on the run but not many - hunting for the TX mobiles. Hit the Hartley/Dallam line on a nice dirt road – the power line ends 300 feet away from the C/L and it is super quiet. It's late in the afternoon but still do OK. I found this gravel road a few years ago and it is always great – low noise. However, some big farm machinery (really big) came by and I had to move over – way over – to let it by. Caught me by surprise as I sat there with full attention to making contacts and logging.

I counted up at the end and had logged 560 QSOs – all but a handful on CW- did work K5GE and N8KIE on SSB when I heard them for their DD counties plus a half dozen

others.

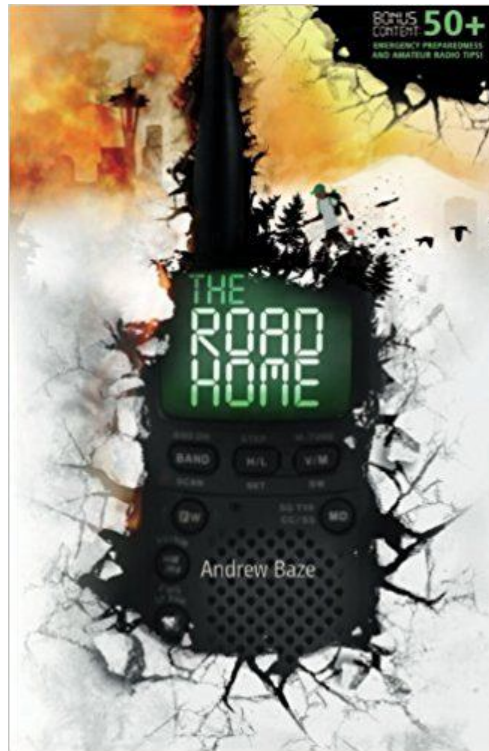
Missed a lot of common states – most of New England – half the eastern US – and many central US states. Missed things like LA (NO5W was on Sunday only from LA), SD, WY, NH, CT, DE, VT, AK,..

I did hook up with Eddie, KH6/G4KHG/m – he called in – wow! DX and it took me a few seconds to decipher the call at the 339 type level! Nice to catch up with Eddie. He spends many months enjoying HI climate each year – mostly on PSK mode – and now FT-8. Worked Merv, K9FD, (Moloka HI) once too! PA3ARM made it in for needed counties. Many CH went in to the log – thanks y'all. Helps make it worth participating. John, K4BAI, noted he got his last 3 counties in TX – one from N4CD – one from N5NA and one from W3DYA mobile. We'll get him finished off one of these days!

Called it quits at dinner time. The QSO Party runs till 9 pm but you won't find me out doing that these days. It was a long way to new counties, too. I'd finished the route across the panhandle and that would be it. I would be into NM in the morning and I'd leave the 9-3pm Sunday part to the other mobiles. Had enough fun and there were parks to run and of course, miles to go to Colorado Springs for the County Hunter Convention. QRT around 2134z.

The motel for the night was the Super 8 in Dallam. Dinner as at the Steakhouse next door. Had chicken and enjoyed the good salad bar there. Only 8000 folks in this population center of far NW Texas. Slept well – was a very busy day. Only drove 300 miles – but lots of time spent stopped making runs. Now getting up in elevation – 4000 feet AMSL.

## Book Review of the Month



Back to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for **The Road Home** by Andrew Baze and a good ham radio read that takes place in Washington State. Robbie, age 14, and his dad Robert Parker are off on a couple day hike into the back country a two hour drive from their home in Seattle. After a few miles on a forest road, they park the truck and take their backpacks loaded with the necessary gear for surviving out in the woods, miles from civilization, on a planned couple mile hike. They have a good couple hour hike that takes them up and up in elevation. The weather is good. Both are licensed hams and have brought along their handheld radios to keep in touch via repeaters back home – where the mom is also another ham.

Both are 'survival' enthusiasts and being prepared for what normally happens is a part of their planning, both at home and on the trail. It will come in handy.

While they are taking a break from the uphill climb, and dad is enjoying the view at the cliff edge, a major earthquake occurs – a 6.7. The ground shakes violently and the dad loses his footing and falls down to a ledge 10 feet down, badly spraining his ankle in the process. Robbie is OK. Robbie has to find his way back to the truck to get a rope to haul his dad up from the ledge. You'll learn a lot about survival techniques, first aid, and other skills while you read this. Oh, all the repeaters and cell phone towers are down – and power is out everywhere.

It turns out the dad can't drive, so Robbie now has to drive – for the first time – and they head back into Seattle – and the traffic is backlogged, there are mudslides blocking the interstate – there's lots of twists and turns in the story. Will they even be able to get home? Whole towns along the way are burning from natural gas fires.

Eventually they get home and find an ex-con is trying to bash his way into the family 'safe room' - to get to what he thinks is where all the goodies are stored. In an exciting finish – they subdue the perp, and all ends well for the family.

The book is filled with survival and preparedness info. Worth a read and a current book. Good amount of ham radio stuff in it too. Found a new copy at Ham Radio Outlet.

## On the Road with N4CD III

### Sunday 9/24

At 1330. I pulled into Clayton Lakes State Park in NM. It's 15 miles outside of the town of Clayton and cell based internet stops before you get there – or you might have a burst every now and then but not enough to spot right at the entrance – and it's downhill to the lake from there. Oh well. It's going to be tough but I'll see. KFF 2693. Maybe the county hunter contacts will help save the day – with a dozen mobiles on the way to CO. At 1900z the TQP starts again. Maybe I'll get a few of them, too. Works out OK – get

my 44 plus so it's time to backtrack to town, then head on. Union County NM.

From Wiki: *Clayton Lake State Park is a state park of New Mexico, United States, featuring a 170-acre recreational reservoir and a fossil trackway of dinosaur footprints. The landscape is characterized by rolling grasslands, volcanic rocks, and sandstone bluffs, set on the western edge of the Great Plains. The park area was a stopover point for travelers along the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail.*

*Visitor activities include picnicking, camping, and fishing at the lake, as well as viewing one of the most extensive dinosaur trackways in North America. The dinosaur tracks are embedded in rock near the lake. They can be observed on the dam spillway at the end of a gentle 0.25-mile (0.40 km) trail. “*

I head toward Raton, NM – gaining altitude all the time. You cross into the Mountain Time Zone. Now I'm up at 6000 plus feet. My home QTH is 600 feet AMSL. The air is getting thinner as I head toward the mountains. You pass by the Capulin Volcano – one of the NPOTA units. I've run that before last year – maybe twice - so no need to visit again and take an hour of travel time. I like putting out 'new parks' rather than repeats when far away from home. The plan is to run Sugarite Canyon next. It's located just NE of the city of Raton at 6900 plus feet AMSL. It's a 'scenic area'. The entrance to the park is between high walls both sides and you descend into the park getting deeper and deeper into the canyon. This doesn't look good RF wise! Colfax County NM.

From Wiki

*“Sugarite Canyon (pronounced “shug-ur-eet”) is located east of Raton Pass in a sparsely-populated region of lofty, steep-sided, flat-topped mesas; cone-shaped volcanoes; and old lava flows. Sugarite Canyon State Park, 3,600 acres in size, consists of a stream valley flanked by basalt cliffs with Bartlett and Little Horse Mesas to the west and Horse Mesa on the east. Elevations in the park are from 6,950 feet at the park entrance to 8,350 feet on top of Little Horse Mesa. The park is about 4 miles long and 1.5 miles wide.*

*Most of the park is heavily forested with ponderosa pine and gambel oak forests.*

*The name Sugarite derives from either the Comanche and Ute name for a bird found in the canyon or the Spanish name, Chicorica, for chicory, a plant found here. Sugarite Canyon was used as a water supply for Raton as early as 1891. The lakes continue to be used for that purpose. Coal mining in the canyon began in 1894 and the town of*

*Sugarite was established as a coal-mining town in 1912. Sugarite had a population of nearly one thousand at its peak. The mines began to shut down in 1941 and in 1944 the post office and railroad were shut down."*

I ran it at the entrance – barely squeaked out 24 QSOs so fell way way short of the 44 needed. Some you win, some you lose. Maybe there was better spot but didn't go further in- the road just seemed to go down, down and down into the canyon. Maybe if you were a hiker you could hike up to the high elevations with a QRP radio/battery and antenna and do better! Of course, if you go 'into' the park, you are supposed to pay the day use fee – I think it was \$7 or \$10. Sat in the parking lot for the 'visitor center' where you register and ran it from there.

On to the next park over Raton Pass – 7800 feet AMSL into Colorado – the county/state line of Colfax NM/Las Animas, CO is high up if you want to run it. Thin air out here – we senior 'flat-landers' feel it. Down into Las Animas and the next park – Lake Trinidad. CO has 'self register' kiosks at the entrance to the state parks. \$7 fee for 'day use'. I found that most of them also have a nice parking lot where you pay for \$\$\$ to 'use' the park and you can park there for a while. It was very overcast and gloomy. Few people entering or leaving. No one bothered me and did my 44+ QSOs at KFF-1248. There were lots of county hunter contacts in the logs from the mobiles and county chasers.

The parks fortuitously were evenly distributed here along the route in different counties. Next up was the next north in Huerfano County – Lathrop State Park KFF-1226. Again, lots of county hunter contacts, DX like VE6UX, F2YT, IK1GPG, 9A3NM, II4ENG, DK3BN. Got over 50 so time to go. I was in most parks for an hour and a half making contacts. Not many people were headed in or out as the weather was yucky. One more to go today – and it was in the next county north – Pueblo.

Again, another 'lake' park – Lake Pueblo KFF-1225. I'm getting tired, it's getting late in the day, the weather is 'gloomy' with no sun – just total overcast. Got to just over 44 QSOs and call it a day. You'll recall that 10 are needed to get credit for a run, but 44Q are needed to 'activate' the park. Over in Europe, they need 44 to get credit for an activation for the mobile/portable, but they have 10 times as many 'chasers' – hihi. Maybe 100 times more. Some folks have put out 600 or more parks and some have worked 6000 different parks! They are fanatical about this WWFF program – just like they are about IOTA – Islands on the Air. Unfortunately for most of them, with current conditions, it's very tough to work the US mobiles/portables from EU these days.

OK...it's been a long day with lots of miles of driving and a couple hundred contacts



made. Time to get to the motel 10 miles away – Super 8 Pueblo.

I check in – upstairs room 213. I'm carrying my radio (IC706) mounted on a 18 inch board – it comes out of the car each night – into the room – on my right side. There's a 3 foot wide hallway into the rest of the room. Whack! What was that? Seems I was too busy looking at the rest of the room and didn't notice the coat rack protruding into the hallway at high head level. Shorter folks wouldn't be bothered by it. Ouch! Double Ouch! Skinned my scalp. Found a place to put the radio down, felt my head, and I'm bleeding a gusher. Into the bathroom and grab a wash cloth, wet it , and hold it on head. Ouch. Done whacked my head good. Dang. The rack had a wooden end – right about the six foot above ground level. Out here – folks will be wearing heavy winter coats a lot of the year and need a place to hang them, but this room layout was a disaster. At a minimum, that end should be padded! It would take over a week for my heal again.

After I settled down and recover from the hurt head, I'm off to the All American Buffet a few miles away. Very good. Chinese, Mexican, Vegetarian, steak – for \$14 on a weekend night. Conked out early and slept 9 hours. Getting up in altitude.

## **Monday 9/25**

Now I'm less than a few hours drive to Colorado Springs – just up the interstate! Things start today – Monday – with the antenna measurements happening in the afternoon. On the way – one more state park – Cheyenne Mountain SP – KFF 1214. (You can find a cross reference for park to county if you miss the county – at [www.countyhunter.com](http://www.countyhunter.com) - click on KFF-County). No lake here but miles of hiking trails, campsites, RV sites and 'back to nature'. Excellent views over CO Springs from up high in the park.

This is a nice park just outside Colorado Springs up on the hillside. There's a self register kiosk but I just wander in to 'look around'. Weather is gloomy – total overcast with temperature in the low 50s. Not many are rushing to be 'outside'. Saw 20 wild turkeys there – crossing the road. Lots of county hunters were still on the road or listening to the radio while in the hotel parking lot so the 44 threshold is reached quickly. Bob N8KIE/m is still up in NE. Gene K5GE is working his way east in CO. A few are there at the hotel sitting I the lot catching other mobiles. Dave and Sandy, KJ8V/KJ8W, are up in MI running around.

I arrive at the Hotel Elegante' just after noon – and they do have a room available. Turns out it's on the 'back 40' way in the back. OK – ground floor room. I wander around to

the back – half mile drive it seems and find the room OK. Then I check the sheet they gave me showing the layout of the facility. I head toward the front – wow – this is a hike – and easy to get lost. I use that layout sheet a whole lot the first few times – and even then take a wrong turn here and there. It's gets easier after five trips – and it's about a good 5 minute walk – probably a quarter mile – down the hall to the end – 150 feet or more – right turn – go 50 feet – left turn – go 300 feet past the fitness center – 45 deg turn right – then right turn at end – 50 feet - then left turn – to past the indoor pool – another 300 feet - – through the doors, then right turn – then left – then right - around the Rustler's restaurant 300 feet and finally into the front of the hotel and the front desk area. The hospitality suite is another 150 feet to the elevator and up to the third floor! Whew – I'm going to get my exercise here – no need for the fitness center! Plus, the altitude is 6300 feet AMSL at this QTH. Thinner air. Less oxygen.

Time to recover a bit. Met and greet at the hospitality room. End of trip north with many parks run.

## New Ham Bands Alive

New Ham Bands Spring to Life;

Veteran LF Experimenter Denied Access to 2200 Meters

Amateur Radio's two newest bands came to life on Friday the 13th. Both 630 meters (472-479 kHz) and 2200 meters (135.7-137.8 kHz) are now available to radio amateurs who have notified the Utilities Technology Council (UTC) of their intention to operate and did not hear anything back during the ensuing 30 days

Many of us filed notices with the Utilities Technology Council on September 15, the day the notification procedure was announced," said Fritz Raab, W1FR, who coordinated the ARRL WD2XSH 630-Meter Experiment. "We did not expect to hear from the UTC, unless they were objecting to amateur operation. Much to our surprise, on Friday, October 13, a number of operators received 'okay' notices. So, the first amateur operations commenced that night."

UTC e-mails went out to an undetermined number of US radio amateurs who had notified the Council, but not everyone got the thumbs up. One of those thwarted in his hopes of operating under his Amateur Radio license on 2200 meters was John Andrews, W1TAG, of Holden, Massachusetts, a long-wave veteran with thousands of hours on the band over the past 13 years under his FCC Part 5 Experimental license. Andrews, an ARRL 630-Meter Experiment participant, said UTC denied his request because he was within 1 kilometer of a power line using PLC (power line carrier). Another who did not pass UTC muster for 2200 meters was Alabamian Dave Guthrie, KN4OK. UTC encouraged him to apply for permission to operate on 630 meters.

### Awash with Signals

Raab said a few operators reported making contacts on 630 meters the first night, although noise levels were high, and a geomagnetic storm was in progress. Saturday night, October 14, "was a bust," he said. The next evening, however, things broke open. "The band was awash with CW and digital signals," Raab reported. "Operating modes included CW, JT9, SSB, and WSPR. Many operators were new to the band and not previously experimental licensees."

On October 17, W7IUUV and VK4YB completed a JT9 contact, possibly the first US-to-DX Amateur Radio contact on 630 meters.

### The Rules

Section 97.313(g)(2) of the Amateur Service rules requires that, prior to starting operation on either band, radio amateurs must notify UTC that they intend to operate by submitting their call signs, intended band(s) of operation, and the coordinates of their antenna's fixed location. The new rules do not permit any mobile operation.

"Amateur stations will be permitted to commence operations after a 30-day period, unless UTC notifies the station that its fixed location is located within 1 kilometer of PLC systems operating on the same or overlapping frequencies," the FCC said in announcing approval of the notification system on September 15. [Read more.](#)

# On the Road with N4CD IV

## At the convention

Monday afternoon Larry, W0QE, has set up to measure the 'effectiveness' of mobile antennas using an antenna range in the back parking lot. He presented the results in a video. You can see the full report here on the dozen mobiles that participated.

The test range was about 200-300 feet with an antenna set up to measure both the horizontal and vertical component of the mobile radiation and at up angle of 15%. That's about the angle you want for 'skip' out to 1500 miles or so. For “DX” you might use a lower radiation angle but few county hunters are only in it for the DX. For each test, the top rated mobile (all running a nominal 100w) was the first listed – and others were noted down below in order.

Larry, W0QE, put together a video – shows each mobile set up and the results – with discussion for 17, 20m, 30m, 40m.

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

20 minutes long and WELL WORTH WATCHING!

Here's the results for 20m

Call	Freq. kHz.	Combined/Corr. Signal				dB.	dB.
		Front	Pass	Rear	Drive	Avg.	F/B
W0GXQ	14056	0.0				0.0	
NC0B	14150	-0.5				-0.5	
N0KV	14060		-0.6			-0.6	
K7TM	14050	-0.9				-0.9	
NF0N	14056	-1.0				-1.0	
W0QE	14150	-0.4		-2.2		-1.2	1.8
N0KV	14060	-1.5	-1.0			-1.3	0.5
W0IVJ	14172	-1.3		-2.3		-1.7	1.0
N5MLP	14324	-1.8				-1.8	
K0FG	14055	-0.7		-8.7		-3.0	8.1
N4CD	14055	-1.5		-6.3		-3.2	4.8
W4SIG	14052	-1.7		-6.1		-3.4	4.4
AB7RW	14056	-3.5				-3.5	
WB0PYF	14056	-1.7		-6.8		-3.5	5.1
N0KV	14328	-4.0				-4.0	
K7SEN	14054	-3.3		-5.4		-4.3	2.1
NU0Q	14056	-4.2		-5.3		-4.7	1.1
WQ7A	14319	-6.4		-14.7		-8.8	8.2
KB0BA	14315	-8.5		-12.0		-9.9	3.5

Now what were these folks using?

W0GXQ had a six foot mast on top of his SUV with 2 levels of resonators.

NC0B had a roof mounted set up – 2 feet mast, coil, more mast, capacity hat, more mast extending up 8 feet or more. Not exactly 'mobile' friendly

N0KV had a 20m Hamstick on side of pickup truck

K7TM had five foot mast/horiz Hustlers on rack on top of pickup truck



NF0N – 3 foot mast/Tarheel – mounted on back bumper hitch



W0QE – six foot mast on top of vehicle



N0KV-2 Six foot mast and Hustlers on top – passenger side of pickup truck at truck bed level

W0IJV – 5 foot mast – resonators horizontal – on plate on rooftop



N5MLP - 5 foot mast on rooftop – resonators horizontal



K0FG – 4 foot mast – with 4 resonators – mounted high on side of rear of vehicle.



N4CD – six foot mast/mag mount on truck deck of sedan (Malibu) with 3 resonators horizontal



W4SIG – Tarheel on back bumper mount elevated – with 8 foot stinger

AB7RW – 6 foot mast with 4 resonators off back bumper mount driver side of vehicle

WB0PYF – 8 foot mast off back corner of Minivan

N0KV-3 – on SSB freq – 6 foot mast and 4 resonators off deck level of pickup truck on side. (likely had some power cutback on higher SWR part of band)

K7SEN – Scorpion screwdriver and bed level driver side of pickup about 2 feet behind cab. (nice installation high up – not blocked most directions)



NU0Q - Little Tarheel – 4 foot stinger – roof mount

WQ7A – Tarheel screwdriver on rear bumper mount



KB0BA – little Tarheel on grounded mag mount on trunk deck of sedan



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Those with big roof mounted antennas excelled. Those with 'mini screwdrivers' had problems.

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Results for 30m

Call	Freq. kHz.	Combined/Corr. Signal				dB. Avg.	dB. F/B
		Front	Pass	Rear	Drive		
W4SIG	10120	0.0				0.0	
N4CD	10121	-2.8				-2.8	
AI5P	10122	-2.5		-6.1		-3.9	3.6
AB7RW	10122	-5.2				-5.2	
N0KV	10120	-5.5				-5.5	
K7TM	10120	-6.9				-6.9	
W0GXQ	10120	-9.5				-9.5	
K8ZZ	10122	-12.8				-12.8	

K8ZZ was using a screwdriver mounted off driver side of vehicle and seemed to have some sort of problem – weak on 20M – results discounted and way down on other bands. Room for big improvement.

Most folks only measured one direction on 30m. Time was short and it was beginning to rain/drizzle.



	Freq.	Combined/Corr. Signal				dB.	dB.
Call	kHz.	Front	Pass	Rear	Drive	Avg.	F/B
NC0B	7140	0.0				0.0	
NC0B	7140	-1.1				-1.1	
W0IVJ	7165	-2.6		-3.3		-2.9	0.7
W0QE	7056	-2.8		-4.1		-3.4	1.4
NF0N	7056	-3.5				-3.5	
N4CD	7191	-3.8		-5.5		-4.5	1.7
K7SEN	7180	-4.1		-5.2		-4.6	1.1
K7TM	7056	-4.9				-4.9	
N5MLP	7188	-5.2				-5.2	
W4SIG	7060	-5.4				-5.4	
W0GXQ	7060	-5.7				-5.7	
N4CD	7056	-5.5		-7.5		-6.4	2.1
WQ7A	7191	-6.5				-6.5	
AB7RW	7056	-7.7		-11.9		-9.3	4.2
N0KV	7060	-9.4				-9.4	
K0FG	7055	-8.9		-11.2		-9.9	2.3
NU0Q	7056			-10.6		-10.6	
N8HAM	7182	-9.6		-13.3		-11.1	3.7
A15P	7056	-12.9				-12.9	
KB0BA	7182	-15.4		-20.5		-17.2	5.1
K8ZZ	7056	-20.6		-23.9		-22.0	3.3

Not all people elected to test both forward and reverse directions to get the front to back ratio – important obviously.

For N4CD, there was about an S unit on some bands – 4.8 dB measured on 20M - which is why when in parks I try to position my car – say – east or NE from CO and NE from OK and TX parks to try and catch the New England folks and the DX. That extra 'S' unit might make the difference. If you center mount on the rooftop you've got a better



F/B ratio – as expected. If your antenna is on the rear on a bumper mount – even more 'shading' and higher F/B ratio – not good for mobile setups.

Not measured this time was also front to side ratio – which can vary tremendously depending on the antenna location on the vehicle.

On 40m for N4CD, the Hamstick on a 3 magnet ungrounded mount on the rooftop beat the 6 foot mast on the back trunk deck by 1.5dB. That's the antenna I use for 40M SSB as the rear resonator set for CW won't hack the SSB part of the band. Interesting.

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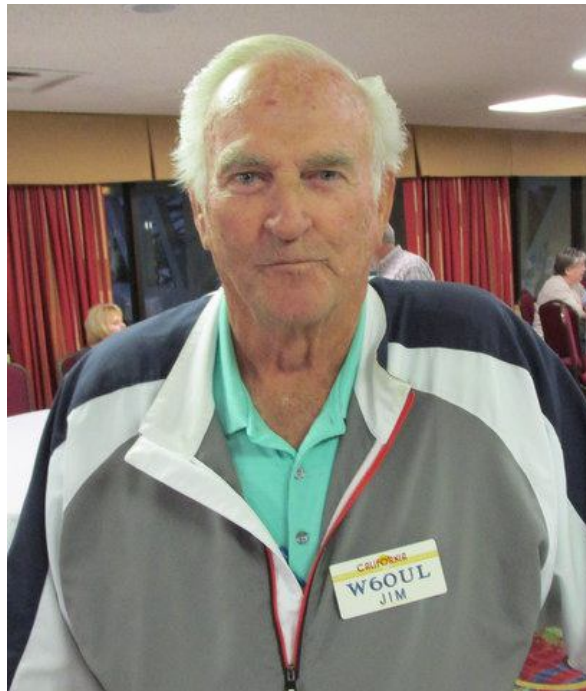
The rain started id afternoon and didn't stop for the next 3-4 days. Rain and drizzle and gloom and temps in the low 50s and even high 40s for the next few days. No more shorts and tee-shirts! It's usually about 70 for a high this time of year in Colorado Springs but the weather did not favor the convention.

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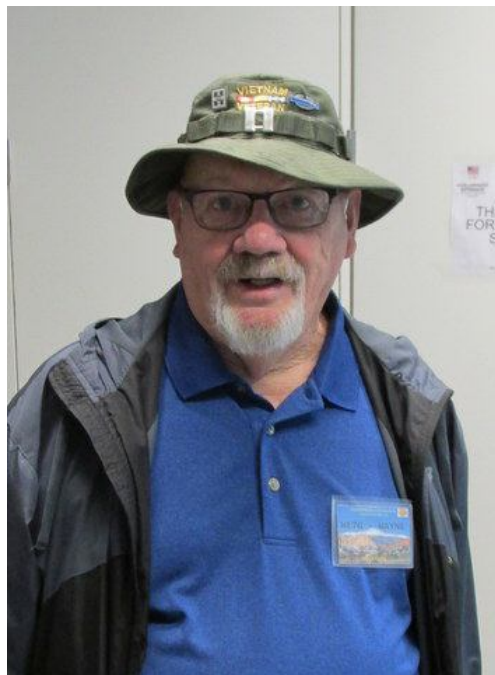
## On the Road with N4CD V

### At the Convention

Events started on Monday – the Hospitality room was open and going full blast Monday afternoon and evening. Wow – I met some folks for the first time there. AG6V and WE7G and W6OUL were there – I think first timers. Seventy two people had signed up and I think most made it.



Jim W6OUL



Wayne, WE7G



Donna, AG6V

Pic borrowed from QRZ page

Frank, AA9JJ and Kay, N9QPQ, Yohe, Mesa, AZ  
Jerry Mertz , W0GXQ, Evergreen, CO  
Jerry Haislip, K1SO, Roanoke VA  
David Kinsey, KS4BO, Roanoke VA  
Jim Curtis, N8HAM, South Lyon MI  
Terry, WQ7A and Boni Dummler, Yelm WA  
Kerry Long, W4SIG, Collierville TN  
Ron, N5MLP and Evelyn Clift, Magnolia TX  
Bob Voss, N4CD, Plano TX  
Phil, AB7RW and Barbara, AC7UH Yasson, Vancouver, WA  
Rick Harris, AI5P, Albuquerque NM  
Ed Eklin, K8ZZ, Topeka, KS  
Elwood , AE5EA and Marleta, W5MAR, Anderson, Placitas, NM  
Bill, NU0Q, and Karen Claypool, Ankeny, IA  
Mike, NF0N and Dianne Nickolaus, South Sioux City, NE  
Mark, W9OP, and Joan, W9PIP, Michel, Neenah WI  
Gene, K5GE and Mary Ida Barnes, Seguin TX

Robert, W0NAC, and Sharon, N0LXJ, Matthew, Parker CO  
John, K0PFV, and Marian, WA0VDO, Lord, Omaha, NE  
Ray, WB0PYF and Debbie Myers, St. Louis MO  
Fred, K0FG and Vee Jay Groce, Sunrise Beach MO  
Mike Fatchett, W0MU, Castle Rock CO  
Bill, WG9A and Sandy Grew, Batavia IL  
Troy Warren, K5OH, Lawton OK  
Flo, K5FLO, friend of K5OH  
Paul Nelson, N7JPF, The Dalles, OR  
Donna Hinshaw, AG6V, Oak Harbor WA  
Jim Robb, W6OUL, Lompoc CA  
Bob, K7TM and Vonnie, WA7YEI Hallock, Coeur d' Alene ID  
Wayne, WE7G, and Arlene Glover, Kingman AZ  
Larry, W0QE, and Beth, K0EAC, Benko, Broomfield CO  
Don, K3IMC and Jean Flynn, LaGrange GA  
Bob Gedemer, KA9JAC and Ann Heimann, KB9YVT, Hortonville WI  
Tony, WA9DLB, and Helen Mazzocco, Barrington IL  
Peter, NN9K, and Nancy, N9DQS, Beedlow, Colona IL  
Roy/Silver , N9SQ, and Bonnie Glascock, Collinsville, IL  
Robert, N8KIE and Jaci, N8RLJ Woody, Clarkston MI  
Barry, N0KV and Pat, N0DXE, Mitchell, Parker CO  
Lowell, KB0BA and Sandra, N0XYL, Tennyson, Blue Grass, IA



Convention attendees – 2017 Colorado Springs

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Monday evening, Mike, W0MU, gave a nice presentation on Parks on the Air program. This is an extension of the very popular National Parks on the Air Program run by ARRL, now being run by a joint international and US set of folks. WWFF is extremely popular in Europe. There are over 4400 entities around the country – including nearly all the state parks – often 60-100 in the larger states!



Mike, W0MU

You can get started here

<http://wwff-kff.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WWFF-checklist-formatted.pdf>

So what does '44' stand for? It's used as a parting greeting – as in '73' at the end of a

QSO. Often you'll hear '73 44' at the end of a QSO on CW. ( It's also the number of QSO's required to 'activate' a particular park and many awards are based on 44)

From the WWFF web site:

The first four (4) stands for the four wind directions : **North, East, South and West**

The second four (4) stands for the four elements : **Earth, Water, Air and Fire.**

## **Tuesday**

On Tuesday morning – 28 folks headed out on the bus to the nearby US Olympic Training Center for a tour of the facilities. Specializing in the summer Olympic Games sports, this facility provides world class training for the many athletes competing both in the Olympics and other games such as World Soccer and other competitions. The weather was overcast and gloomy but the tour was mostly inside the complex – from wrestling to swimming to weight training/lifting, running tracks, rifle ranges, boxing, penthalon, and gymnastics. The rain held off. The tour took about 2 hours. At the complex there are 242 dorm rooms, over 500 beds, and 300,000 meals each year served to athletes and coaches in the cafeteria. (Winter Sports training takes place at the Lake Placid NY facility – ice skating, ski jumping, etc. ) Good tour.





N4CD Bob at the USOTC

We were all getting hungry so the tour headed over to the Garden of the Gods visitor center and cafeteria for lunch. This park has a spectacular set of rock formations. While the weather wasn't great for distant vistas of Pikes Peak and other mountains, it was fine for close ups. Total overcast. The visitor center/cafeteria was still mobbed with visitors.

The day before, the Pikes National Forest had been added to the list of WWFF entities. Each month they add a few more – now including National Forests to the 4400 plus various parks, national wildlife refuges and preserves, monuments, etc. That new one also included the Garden of the Gods park and Pikes Peak. Alas, here I was with no radio, not even a pair of 2m handhelds to make 10 contacts to activate the park. I could have passed one around to 20 others on the tour for 20 quick contacts! Darn. No radios- I wasn't prepared! Well, I could fix that the next day.

From their website:

*“By the 1870's, the railroads had forged their way west. In 1871, General William Jackson Palmer founded Colorado Springs while extending the lines of his Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. In 1879, General Palmer repeatedly urged his friend, Charles*

*Elliott Perkins, the head of the Burlington Railroad, to establish a home in the Garden of the Gods and to build his railroad from Chicago to Colorado Springs. Although the Burlington never reached Colorado Springs directly, Perkins did purchase two-hundred and forty acres in the Garden of the Gods for a summer home in 1879. He later added to the property but never built on it, preferring to leave his wonderland in its natural state for the enjoyment of the public. Perkins died in 1907 before he made arrangements for the land to become a public park, although it had been open to the public for years. In 1909, Perkins' children, knowing their father's feeling for the Garden of the Gods, conveyed his four-hundred eighty acres to the City of Colorado Springs. It would be known forever as the Garden of the Gods "where it shall remain free to the public, where no intoxicating liquors shall be manufactured, sold, or dispensed, where no building or structure shall be erected except those necessary to properly care for, protect, and maintain the area as a public park."*

*Wiki notes: "The Garden of the Gods' red rock formations were created during a geological upheaval along a natural fault line millions of years ago. The outstanding geologic features of the park are the ancient sedimentary beds of deep-red, pink and white sandstones, conglomerates and limestone that were deposited horizontally, but have now been tilted vertically and faulted into "fins" by the immense mountain building forces caused by the uplift of the Rocky Mountains and the Pikes Peak massif. The following Pleistocene Ice Age resulted in erosion and glaciation of the rock, creating the present rock formations. Evidence of past ages can be read in the rocks: ancient seas, eroded remains of ancestral mountain ranges, alluvial fans, sandy beaches and great sand dune fields."*





The resulting rocks had different shapes: toppled, overturned, stood-up, pushed around and slanted. Balanced Rock, a fountain formation, is a combination of coarse sand, gravel, silica and hematite. It is hematite that gives the large balanced rock its red hue. Balanced rock was formed as erosive processes removed softer layers near its base, eventually leaving the precarious-looking formation seen today. The Gateway Rocks Three Graces, and other outcroppings are sedimentary layers that had been pushed up vertically. The largest outcroppings in the park, "North Gateway", "South Gateway", "Gray Rock", and "Sleeping Giant" are composed primarily of Lyons Formation, a stone made of fine sand from ancient sand dunes. “

We drove around the park in the bus – seeing the various formations. Well worth a visit. I'd been here before 40-50 years ago. You've got an amphitheater here with music venues during the year. The park has hiking and rock climbing areas, horseback riding, 4 wheel drive 'tours', camping facilities and more. Right in the CO Springs area. After an hour plus tour of the park, we headed out. On the way out, I noted a nice high up parking lot for about 15- 20 cars just before the road headed down to the park exit. Made a note and said it would be an excellent radio spot if I could find it again....the exit came out at Ridge and Pikes Peak – saw the street signs. Back to the motel.

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At 4 PM the CW Meeting was held with about 40 folks in attendance. Lots of cw operators there days with the band conditions the way they are and many mobiles running on CW due to the 'situation' on 14336 – where many won't or are 'not allowed' to operate. Half the SSB folks run on 14328 or 14322/3 these days or only on 40M SSB. There was a good crowd there.

While there was no standard 'program' we went over a bunch of topics. What was amazing was the number of people with 30M capability- nearly everyone in the room had 30M capability. Those who ran 'screwdrivers' had it automatically and many others had 30M resonators. Others chased from home and had a 30m antenna. With the decline in the sunspot cycle, 30M will become a more useful band. Folks have worked all counties on that band. These days 17 and 15M don't do much – open late, very long skip if any, and few QSOs resulting. Even 20M opens later and closes earlier as we head into the sunspot minimum.



CW Operators at the Convention

Now that we have self credit for the mobiles – you can go out and run counties that YOU need to various awards – 13 of them if you qualify. The issue of 'self credit' is an extension of MARAC policy. It doesn't work for 'first time' USCA through CQ Magazine. The thought behind more 'self credit' was to get mobiles out and running!

Many many years ago, the Masters Gold award was created. There, once you got your Bingo Award (Master County Hunter Award), you could get credit for a county you were in by working someone who had Bingo from that county. For example, if you were in Freestone, TX and worked K5GE, who had Bingo, you yourself would get credit for Freestone. That had been going on for years. When Master Platinum was created, the same 'self credit' was allowed for THAT award once you achieved Master Gold status.

So.....a few months ago, the Awards Committee reviewed all the awards and selected 13 additional ones for self credit. Now if you are working on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> time or whatever, if you run a county and make at least one contact, you'll get credit yourself for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> time. Of course, most county hunters won't stop at one – they'll 'run the county'.

Now, if you are a “K” prefix, you can get self credit for the K prefix for worked all counties with “K” prefix. If you are a 1x3 call, you get that credit for the call combo award. If you are a YL, you get credit for mobile YL for the county you are in. And on and on – with the exception of Natural Bingo which remains 'pure'. No wild cards and no self credit. Some are 'close' but no one has reached the goal yet!

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Ron, N5MLP, talked about awards, including going over in detail the self credit. We had

just touched on it a bit in the CW Meeting and Ron covered it in detail. Now, of course, if you don't want to use 'self credit' – no problem! Some want to do it the 'old way' and some don't take relays.

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As a side note, right after the convention, I noted that Phil, AB7RW, had stepped up to be the new Awards Chairman. It had become vacant when Patti, W8TAX, was no longer able to continue.

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### **Wednesday -**

Larry, W0QE gave a presentation on the results of the Mobile Bake-Off. It was in the form of a video and the link was noted above for the Monday session.

N4CD took off and headed to the Garden of the Gods to put out the new park KFF-4404. I remembered the cross streets – and entered them as 'intersection' in the Garmin GPS. Yeah! The GPS lady recognized it and I was off to find that high up spot once again. It was raining. The rain started last night and would continue for days – 50 degrees and drizzle, drizzle, drizzle. Thirty minutes later I arrived at the nice parking lot high up in the park – only a few cars there as visibility was rotten, it was raining, and it wasn't great tourist weather. Better for me – no guilt taking up a 'valuable spot' if the lot was crowded and people were circling for a spot. The lot only holds 15 cars or so

I pointed the car northeast hoping to snag a few Europeans. Radio conditions weren't all that great either – we've have had many days of A in the 30s and K from 2 to 5. Once the K gets up to 2 or more, the Europeans really have it hard. Things worked out fine – a few county hunters still around- KJ8V/KJ8W – but most hunkered down at the hotel – so with some random QSOs, two park to park contacts found on the POTA FB page, I reached the magic '44' number. Today the A was 4, the K was FIVE – and the propagation banners listed POOR on all the bands. Dang! I'm lucky to have reached 44Q. Without both CW and SSB and 30m it wouldn't have happened.

There were other CO parks up in the mountains – but with the drizzle, gloom, and rotten, bad radio conditions it wasn't worth the effort to drive another 35 miles (each way) up into the mountains to get to the parks at reservoirs (likely low spots). I'd skip it. You'd likely be way up in the clouds too.....back to the motel for more meet and greet.

Wednesday evening the awards banquet was held.



K5OH Troy and Flo K5FLO

Troy is urgently working on finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> time. As of early October, only needed Allen, KY to finish – he's been at it a while and just celebrated his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. Someone please head there soon!



Ray, WB0PYF

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Good dinner – then the big awards were given out.



CW Net Control of the Year – Jerry W0GXQ



CW Mobile of the Year – Kerry W4SIG



SSB Net Control of the Year  
Mike NF0N



Mobile Team of the Year K7SEN AB7NK



SSB Mobile of the Year – winner was Bill K0DEQ (not present)

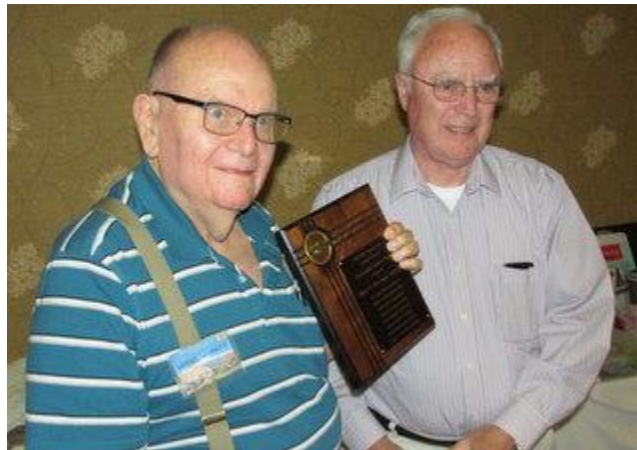


SSB Mobile of Year - K0DEQ

CW Mobile of the Year was Greg NM2L (not present)



CW Mobile of Year - NM2L



Special Recognition Award – to Matt W0NAC  
For work on Logger/Digital

After the banquet, more meet and greet at the Hospitality Suite – then off to bed for an early start in the morning for many mobiles. Kerry, W4SIG, indicated he would be on the road a 4 am headed to NE – and looking for contacts there after he got there early. I'd sleep in to 6 am and hit the great free breakfast buffet at the hotel.





Barry, N0KV and Pat, N0DXE  
Both received Special Recognition awards  
For Hosting the 2017 MARAC Convention

## On the Road with N4CD VI

### Thursday Sept 28

The convention was over and folks would be heading home in all directions. N8KIE was headed to MT to get some there – then east through the Dakotas to home in MI. Kerry, W8SIG, headed to NE to run some there – then make a bee-line to home.

For me, I usually head quickly home after being away for a while. The plan was to head east to one state park in the eastern part of CO – the only one along the way – and then hit 4 in OK that I didn't get on the way up. So it was off down the Interstate to Pueblo and across Route 50. As you get away from Pueblo the population density drops and drops – it's mostly ranch/farm land with now mega-farms – and 'grasslands'. You go through a few small towns – many having seen better days – on the 'main road' heading east. Finally you get over to the town of Lamar, CO, population 7,500 where you can head south to OK on the main highway. Stop for lunch at a Subway there. Don't need gas yet – got more than half a tank and that will easily get me to Boise City OK 100 miles away. My Malibu gets about 32 mpg on the highway – less when making hour long stops at parks – hi hi. No need to worry. Elevation here is 3600 feet as you make your way east from the mountains. It's flat here. Real flat.

While there, I punch in several options. I really want to go to Black Mesa State Park in OK which is about 38 miles northwest of Boise City. It's 95 miles and 1:20 minutes to get to Boise City, then it is about 40 miles NW to get to the park according to my info. There is only one road going NW. OK....I punch in direct to Black Mesa State Park into Garmin – which found it from the 'nearby' to Boise City under 'attractions'. The GPS lady said I could go there direct and save 45 minutes. I've told the GPS lady to 'avoid unpaved roads'.

OK....I didn't see that route on my map – but the GPS lady usually plots a decent route. As I learned later, the GPS lady is NOT to be trusted out in this neck of the woods. No! No! A thousand times No! The GPS lady apparently thinks only 4 foot wide donkey paths are 'unpaved' as I would find out.

So it was off south on nice Route 287 to Route 160 west to just before Pritchett. Pritchett is a teeny town of 140 according to Wiki but I never get there. . It's pretty lonely on 287 – lots of trucks but not much else and no civilization along the roads. Even fewer on route 160 as it goes for 140 milesto the west with lots of nothing. Just south of 160 (running east/west) you have vast National Grasslands for the next 35 miles or so down to the OK border.

The GPS lady takes me on a dirt road – “OK – I think”.....the GPS lady sometimes takes you on a 'shortcut' to the next main road for a few miles. I've told her NOT to go on 'unpaved roads'. She doesn't seem to know paved from dirt. Likely in the summer, this is a nice well maintained 'gravel road'. Well, I can do a few miles on a gravel road. I'm saving an hour this route according to her. The MavCO map I bought (accidentally left my good AAA map at home) when I got to CO just indicated these roads in this neck of the woods were 'roads'. Not state highways. No clue from the map they weren't paved.

It's been drizzling for 4 days. The road is wet – and there are two tracks in the road, which is essentially now mud and slick as driving on ice. If you stay in the tire tracks, you can do about 25 or 30 mph...not great.....but I head on.....then the road gets worse and it's all mud. The 'traction control' light on the dashboard is coming on, and it's taking two hands and all concentration to keep the car moving forward. The mud is trying to bog me down and slow me down. You are 'plowing along'. Through the mud. This is bad news – I'm going to get stuck and I haven't seen a house in 20 miles. But there are fresh tracks in the road. Mile after mile. There's got to be civilization here somewhere. Folks have made it through. There are half dozen ruts in the road. Someone drives here.

Well, the next turn is onto another mud road. I barely can make the turn. You step on the brakes and you don't stop. It's like driving on ice under slush except it's mud and it wants to slow you down to zero. The rear end keeps trying to come around. First to the left ...then to the right.....Now the road is getting worse. But there are still fresh tracks so someone travels this road, right? If I get stuck someone will come along. I keep going probably averaging 15-20 mph. At times the RPMS are up at 3000 and the car speed is 15 and the traction light is going crazy. Without it – I'd been stuck 10 miles back.

Then the road gets worse. Oh dear. I've gone maybe 10 miles. Now, the ruts are deep and even though it is totally “flat”– you've still got little hills and valleys up and down 20-30 feet each – and the mud in the valleys is several inches deep. Maybe even six inches. Instead of one tire track, there are 2 or 3 at the bottoms and folks made their own paths. You try to keep the speed up to about 30 – which is all you can do without losing it – you hit the bottom at 30 and the mud sucks in the car and you might get out of the 30-40 feet of extra deep mud at 3 mph with the car clawing it's way forward – engine RPM up at 3000 and the traction control limiting the slip....then you creep up the other side until you get some traction – and try to keep the car on the 1 ½ lane road as it wants to slide all over the place. When the wheels get traction – watch out - Back up to 30 mph slowly until 500 feet later when you repeat through the multiple sets of tracks at the bottoms. Turn coming up – slow down a little and hit the brakes ever so gently 100 feet before to make the turn. Mistake! I slide off the side of the road....right wheels into a little water filled ditch.

OK..maybe this is it. 15 miles off the paved road – I don't even know what road I am on – no street signs. Am I stuck? Slowly I try to back out. I'm not going anywhere forward. Luckily and ever so slowly I manage to creep out toward the rear– thanks to the traction control. I should note my tires are old – 62,000 miles – soon coming up to get a new set. No snow tires. No mud tires. Not much grip. Not that having an extra 0.2 inches of depth of tread on a regular tire is going to make any difference, right? I manage to back up and make the left turn onto the next mud road. This is not fun. I've turned off the ham radio. It's taking 100% of my driving skills to keep the car moving forward and on the road. It's like a giant skid mud pad. The bottom of the car is taking a beating plowing through mud.

I make the turn. This has been a horrendous mistake. One of the worst worst roads I've ever been on in my county hunting life. There have been a few extremely bad driving experiences in my county hunting career. I guess the top ones I recall are:

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**Montana** - - Maybe 25 years ago - The GPS lady said she could save me 75 miles of driving getting to Route 2 going west from where I was in MT . OK....didn't see that road on my regular road map, but they don't always have the 'secondary roads' . It started out fine – paved roads – then it went to gravel. OK....I can zip along at 30-35 on the gravel. After 10-15 miles it starts climbing. Now 1 ½ lane road and there's not much in the way of houses or ranches. Or gravel - Down to 20 mph. Nothing at all. After 20 miles I pass a sign ' entering forest service road'. Still good road....for a while.....then it gets to 'dirt road'. I haven't seen another car since the beginning. GPS Lady is still happy...still OK...another couple miles – then it starts to climb and climb and climb. Dang – I'm going over 'the mountain pass'. The road is down to one lane and fallen trees and brush both sides. Logs that have fallen across the road have been cut out. If a new tree is across the road, I'm in big trouble. I don't have a saw and it would be miles of backing out – no place to turn around. Dang GPS lady. But it gets WORSE – a lot worse.

Now the road turns to rock – literally rock where you bounce over it at 5 mph with the car bottoming out time and time again. Two tracks over rock – one for each tire - I'm in a Buick LeSabre – not much ground clearance. This would be a great 4 wheeling road in a Jeep with high clearance and good tires. Heck, with all this rock, what if I get a flat tire? Thud. Crunch. The car bottom is taking a beating. I'm trying to pick a path to keep from bottoming. I haven't seen a house, car, barn in 20 miles. Up and up on the rock road at 5-10mph at best. I'm not going to save any time – it's going to take hours more. Finally after miles of 5 mph bouncing over rock and climbing - you reach the top – turns out was 8400 feet AMSL - and head on down – which isn't any better. Five miles later it's back to dirt road and 15 miles later it's back to gravel. Another 10-15 miles and you reach some civilization. I pass some ATV folks – ask them how far to the 'main road' and they say 'only 10 more miles. That was NOT a road for a regular car! No way! And - since there was no traffic – folks agreed with me. I made it through. Never again. Strike 1 for the GPS Lady.

Another candidate for worst road – Driving in WV in the winter time. Can't blame the GPS Lady for this one. My mistake. It was getting late in the day in late December – sun goes down early. It was cold – 30s – with a few snow flurries around as I got into Charleston, WV heading east on I-79. I'm watching for a motel. This likely 25 years ago – maybe even before the GPS lady arrived. The only signs I see are for 'Hilton' and similar places downtown off the interstate. Nope, I'm a budget traveler. They might not even have outdoor parking – and I can't go in a 6 foot high clearance parking garage. There's likely to be motels on the east side of town off the interstate, and I'll avoid the morning rush hour being on the east side. No sweat I think.

So I go through Charleston – and it's beginning to snow a bit. No problem – I'll stop at the first motel I see on the other side of Charleston. A Motel 6 or Super 8 or Comfort Inn or similar would be fine. As it turns out, on the 'other side' of Charleston – there is NOTHING. You drive along. Civilization ends. Heck, there's got to be 'suburbs' right? Now you go up in elevation on I-79. It's snowing a blizzard. The speed on the interstate is down to 20mph, the snow is sticking to the windshield wipers – visibility is rotten and there is one lane of traffic on the interstate – and not much of it. There's six inches of slush on the road and it is not fun driving through it. I see cars off the side of the road. Not good. But I'm going to stop at the first exit with a motel. Can't be long, right?

I drive along expecting to find a town with motels any time now. And drive. And drive. The snow is piling up. There's tons of it off the main traffic lane and it's blowing around. It's also slippery. Poor visibility, wipers getting clogged all the time with wet snow – coming down horizontal, vertical, left and right. There's not even exits to turn around and you keep going up and up. The temp is down to 20 and dropping as you climb....and climb....heck it's been 20 miles.....now 30 miles.....an exit here...not even a 'town listed'....just highway Xxxx.....and of course, no motel or even restaurant. Now 40 miles....now 50 miles – and the hours go by. This is ridiculous. It's an interstate! There are always motels! Very few cars on the road – more in the ditch than on the road. It's at least 80-90 miles until I see a sign for a motel....no name type. Doesn't matter. If they have a room, I'll take it! I get off, wander five miles on back road to a tiny town. Real old style motel with individual cabins. Temp is 15 degrees and a foot of snow on the ground. Snow everywhere. Find the office and inquire. Yep, not too bad a price and the cabins have 'great heat'. Whew! Turns out the cabins had in-floor oil burners – that, after an hour warmed up the place toasty warm. But dinner? Another five mile drive to the next exit on a back road – plowed – to a town that had five or six motels. Ate dinner at an all night place, went back to motel and conked out. Ten degrees in the morning. Didn't even take the radio out. Who is going to be out stealing stuff in a blizzard at 15% and wind? Had a foot of new snow on car to brush off in the morning. That was one of the worst driving experiences.

A year or two later – I'm headed to MD again through WV in the winter time – headed to the sister's house for Xmas. Central WV along a good highway.....until the snow/ice hit.....and it's skid city for the next ten miles literally watching cars in front of me slide off the road into the ditch until I hit a town with a motel – and immediately stop. I've gone by 50 cars in the ditch.....and managed to keep the LeSabre on the road. What choice do you have? Crazy.....but sometimes the weather catches you. That's another candidate for 'worst driving experiences. I got smart after than. Moved my annual

visits up to November and less 'weather'.

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Back to Colorado....the trip hasn't ended yet. Can it get worse! Yes!

I'm churning along – literally. Every 500 feet it's plowing through deep mud in the dips – barely getting out at a few MPH.....and skidding all over the road. The tracks in the road are mostly straight.....must be someone with a nice 4 wheel drive vehicle with good knobby mud tires and high clearance....not some 2 wheel drive sedan...I must be nuts. I haven't past a house or a road sign in 30 miles. I'm working up a sweat and a thirst and can't even take my hands off the wheel to grab the water bottle. If I stop, it might be the end. Oh no....cows in the road.....a dozen cows with hundreds more on both sides of the road....I don't want to stop.....honk the horn, flash the lights....and the cows decide to get out of the road just in time..they have 4 leg drive.....whew.....I really don't want to stop.....you just might not get moving again.....

Then the GPS lady says 'turn left on unpaved road'. Duh....I've been on unpaved roads for maybe 35 miles. The odometer says I've gone 75 miles. However , it's only 3 miles to paved highway 355 in OK.....fantastic. I know 355 is a nice 2 lane PAVED road in OK. Guess I've moved into OK. No signs what-so-ever on this route. Only 3 miles to go!

Turns out 'unpaved road' – not even a name – is a one lane road with two tracks for the tires but not so muddy.....but I'm not going to argue with GPS lady. Only 3 miles to go. Go 1.5 miles over rough road and rock fill and bumps - and there's a farm house! First one in a long long time - well, first one since I turned off route 160 35 miles ago – 2 hours of driving and skidding and sliding and plowing through mud. It looks – well – not very used...no vehicle in yard - but at least the weeds in the center of the road are mowed down. Maybe someone comes home after work somewhere – I dunno where since I haven't passed any place to work at – other than the cows in the road. There have been cattle guards in the mud roads and an occasional fence.

Then the 'unpaved road' takes a 90 degree right turn..... this doesn't look good. The weeds in the middle of the road are a foot high. No one is using this road. I go another mile. Only half a mile to route 355 – the nice wonderful paved highway. I come over a little hill and start down....now 0.3 miles to go.....OOPS.... the road goes into a lake – literally – well, the road goes down – there's at least 100 feet of water – then the road emerges. Panic stop.....barely.....slide a bit DOWN the hill toward the water. Is this the end? Manage to stop....but can't get going backwards. Just slip in place. I'm

STUCK. Just 1500 feet to the paved road.....just 1500 feet and no way to get there!

I have no idea how deep the water is...there's a big pond to to the left. Maybe a beaver has blocked up a little creek? Maybe the road is only used in 'dry weather'. Maybe it hasn't been used in 30 or 50 years? It could be six feet deep where the road is...or 18 inches.....or a foot. There could be a bridge under there. Or not. I'm NOT going to find out. Looks like I'm stuck. I sit and contemplate what to do. A mile back to the house and likely no one home...and maybe never home other than once every few weeks? Who knows? It's a long walk.

And that is the ONLY house I've passed in 35 miles. Check the cell phone. Zip. Well, I've got the ham radio...but I'm not even sure where I am....other than the GPS coordinates the GPS lady will happily say 'You are stuck here at XX.XXXX north and YY, YYYYYY west.' . It doesn't even know the road I'm on, and the map, which I finally dig out – doesn't even show it. Just 0.3 miles to the paved highway.....and I can't get there.

Well, 10 minutes go by..and I decide to try it again. Ever so slowly.....and for some reason I manage to back up this time...creep up to the top of the hill. Back up half a mile to where I can turn around. Then....I ask the GPS lady for a 'detour'. She happily replies it's now 10 miles of more mud roads to get to highway 355. Dang....but what choice to I have? Other than being 'rescued' at horrendous cost probably. So I plow on through the mud, slipping and sliding another five miles till the road turns to pavement. Oh, nice lovely pavement. Another five miles to 355 and then few miles to Black Mesa State Park. It's been one heck of a ride. Never again. Never ever a mud road. 3 hours of plowing through mud. And 100 times plowing through mud where it sucks the car down to a few mph and I'm wondering when I'll not make it through that dip. Or slide off the road – or can't control the skids? I should have turned back after the first 500 feet. I didn't. My bad. Never ever ever again.

- - - -

A little bit about BACA county – where all these wonderful miserable rotten horrible nasty mud roads are located. I guess there are only 3 paved roads in the county other than ones in tiny cities. Or if they ever were paved, like 100 years ago....the pavement is gone. In some counties they rip up paved roads since they can't afford to maintain them. Maybe in dry season these are good gravel roads. Not at this point!

Baca County was formed in 1887 when the Colorado Legislature split off the eastern portion of Las Animas County to create the new County. The 1880's saw rapid population growth in the area that became Baca County and the creation of thirteen

towns. Prior to the 1880's there was little activity in the County other than along the Cutoff Branch of the Santa Fe Trail that crosses the extreme southeastern corner of the County. Baca County is and always has been highly dependent on agriculture. The County has experienced many booms and busts coinciding with the booms and busts in the agricultural economy.

The 1890's saw a large decline in agriculture and in population. Many of the original towns became ghost towns. The 1910's saw wet years and expansion due to the increase in the acreage that could be homesteaded from 160 to 320. World War I also brought increased demand for agricultural products and increased prices for those products. The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1926 created new towns (Walsh, Pritchett, Bartlett) and a population increase – along what is today highway 160.

The Dust Bowl arrived in the 1930's and Baca County was one of the hardest hit counties in the country. Baca County's population declined from 10,570 in 1930 to 6,207 in 1940. The "Dirty Thirties" prompted soil conservation efforts by the Federal Government centered in Baca County. A part of these efforts included the purchase by the government of cultivated land which was returned to grassland.

Today, the U.S. Forest Service supervises 220,000 acres of Comanche National Grasslands, the land purchased in the 1930's.

Years ago, Baca County swelled with homesteaders, cattle ranchers, farm workers and the businesses that sprang up to serve them. By 1930, the county's population peaked at more than 10,500.

But then, the Great Depression took its economic toll just as overcultivation of natural grassland, plus devastating drought, exposed the loose, dry soil to damaging winds that gave rise to that dust-choked chapter of American history.

Many abandoned their homesteads, while those who persisted passed down stories of damp sheets hung around windows and doorways in often futile efforts to keep the invasive dust at bay. Outside, it piled in drifts that could bury almost anything — including automobiles — and shifted the landscape.

In the years since then, the county has been recast as a smarter, more efficient agricultural workhorse, but also a less populous area of around 3,700 where empty storefronts stare blankly onto Springfield's Main Street,"

Source : <https://www.bacacountyco.gov/>



Well...no wonder I saw no houses – since the 1930s the government has been buying up the grasslands....and what they haven't is often under 'conservation' where farmers are paid not to farm but turn it back to grassland. Nearly all the population lives in 10 towns..most along highway 50.

- -

Black Mesa is located in Oklahoma's panhandle along the tri-state border with Colorado and New Mexico. Black Mesa takes its name from the layer of black lava rock that coated the mesa about 30 million years ago. Visitors can hike to the top of the plateau, Oklahoma's highest point at 4,973 feet above sea level, while in the Black Mesa Nature Preserve.

You really really have to want to get park to this to get to it. It's 40 miles from Boise City which isn't worth the gas to visit....and the road past it – goes to a teeny town of a few – and then eventually ends another 40 miles west...with only mud roads going elsewhere else. However it's a park entity – so N4CD had to head there if I'm going to run all the parks in OK.....

- - - -

Drank a half gallon of water.....recuperated.....and put out the park – get my 44...and head on into Boise City. Didn't even have a motel reservation. Try the cellphone. Nope. Keep watching it.....turns out you have to get within 3 miles of the town to get service. Well, the GPS lady says there's two motels there – head on in to the Townsman Motel. Rings a bell. I've stayed there before at least once. \$62 senior rate. Older style motel – from the 50s but nicely updated. Dinner at a Mexican restaurant – Angels. Other choice in town are DQ, Pizza Hut, Subway and Sonic. Population here 1,100 and declining every year in this teeny town in the middle of nowhere in Cimarron County – and this town is the county seat, too, and biggest town in the county. Down 14% since the last census.

I stop to get gas. Noticed back of car is totally 'brown' with mud. I take the window washer thing and uncover the license plate. I don't need a ticket for 'obstructed plate'.

## **Friday -**

Breakfast back at Angel's Cafe – I'm hungry – yesterday was a 'trying day'. Their sign said open at 6am. I show up at 6:15 – the front door is open but the lights off. I wander

in and holler 'Hello?'..someone shows up. Had a nice breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, coffee.....and try to recover from yesterday. I notice I have no tail lights! They are covered with solid mud. Back to the gas station and use the window washer thing to uncover the tail lights under the mud. Don't need someone crashing into me because they don't see the stop lights. My car is going to need a major, major car wash.

I learned my lesson. Don't trust the GPS Lady. I double checked....I told it 'no unpaved roads'. It doesn't know unpaved from paved. 50 miles through the middle of nowhere on horrible roads unfit for normal cars. Maybe in the summer with 60 days of drought the roads would be fine.....but not after 4 days of constant drizzle....or likely any other time! AVOID! Well, today would be all paved roads....I'd make sure of it.

More parks to run.....Hit the Optima NWR in Texas County – do OK there. Lots of county hunters still on the road. 10 or more easy contacts. Get my 44 and move on. Next up is Alabaster Caverns State Park.

From the state web site:

*“The highlight of the 200-acre Alabaster Caverns State Park (Woodward County) is the cavern formed of alabaster, a rare form of gypsum, making it the largest natural gypsum cave in the world that is open to the public and the only gypsum show cave in the United States. “ Hey, pretty cool! Did my thing, made my 44+ and moved on. Didn't have time to sightsee here. Maybe another trip?*

Next up is the Great Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge.(Alfalfa County). Often it's hard to find, these NWRs, however, this one is right off the main roads with multiple entrances. Stopped, did my 44+ for this, then moved another 3 miles to Great Salt Plains State Park – where I pull in to the 'beach campground' and put it out. Nice and quiet, few around, and it is still raining on and off– up to 65 degrees though. Drizzle drizzle drizzle. From the OK site:

*“Great Salt Plains State Park is one of Oklahoma's most unique state parks. The barren landscape of the Great Salt Plains is comprised of salt left over from an ocean that covered Oklahoma in prehistoric times, and the saltwater lake in the park, Great Salt Plains Lake, is about half as salty as the ocean.”*

I leave the park headed south on nice paved highway 38 which has a few jogs here and there. The GPS lady suddenly figures it can save me a mile or two and tells me to go 'straight' at a jog onto a dirt road.....hmmm....I go about 100 feet....it's mud....and back out. No, GPS lady! NO mud runs – especially to save 1 mile of paved road. A

thousand times NO! I double check the map. The paved road is all of one mile longer and I'm going to stay on paved roads from now on out! I triple check. GPS lady is supposed to avoid 'unpaved roads'. It's set correctly. Maybe one of these years I'll upgrade the map program but you can almost buy a new GPS for the price of an upgrade from Garmin for the maps (Like \$49 upgrade).

It's been a long day so I head on in to Enid, OK to the Super 8. Takes me a while since the GPS lady seems to be on strike. It knows the road that it's on, but doesn't know any street numbers on the road – and it goes for miles and miles with stop lights every 500 feet. Finally get out the spotting pad – and with Google Maps – get directions to the Motel. Dinner at a Golden Corral (premium weekend menu). One more day to home! This return trip has worn me out.

## **Saturday**

After breakfast at the Super 8, I head on out to home – with no new parks planned along the way. Yeah – it's finally stopped raining! It's rained for six days. Every day. Temps up to the 80s. I've run them all before and there are only two along the way anyway. County Hunter mobiles are still out on big trips. N8KIE up in the Dakotas. N8HAM up in ND. K5GE finally getting to TX and home. Not much going on on cw. Later in the day, I pass by Lake Murray State Park and decide to stop and put it out. There's still lots of daylight left and it's 100 miles to home from here on 4, 6 and 8 lane highways. Find a spot – run for an hour in Carter County OK – get another 70Qs for the park – then head on out to get home by dinner time. Whew! It's been an 'exciting trip' to say the least.

Great convention hosted by Pat, N0DXE and Barry, N0KV.

Arrive home and it's sunny and 89 degrees! Finally I can defrost. Whoo-hoo.

I'll be busy for many days doing the logs for the parks, answering MRCs and QSL cards, sending in the TX QP Party logs. Everything has got to be typed into Fast Logger Entry (FLE) to generate ADIF or Cabrillo files. Over 2000 QSOs.

Hope I gave you needed counties. I got a bunch from the mobiles out there.

## Future Planning

The next MARAC Convention will be held in Kansas City – hosted by Ed K8ZZ. Details to follow.

Coming up this spring – the Annual MI Mini will be held up in Traverse City- details to follow shortly.

## On the Trail of Regens I

A new addition came into the N4CD collection. I've stayed away from military stuff for the most part as it violates my current 'one hand rule'. That is, if I can't carry it in one hand, I don't buy it these days. This is a nice compact lightweight set from the early 1930s, probably designed in the 1920s. The receiver was part of a pack set – designed to be hauled by mule along with a two tube transmitter and AM modular – which would be powered by a hand crank generator. The receiver ran off batteries.



BC-186 regen receiver

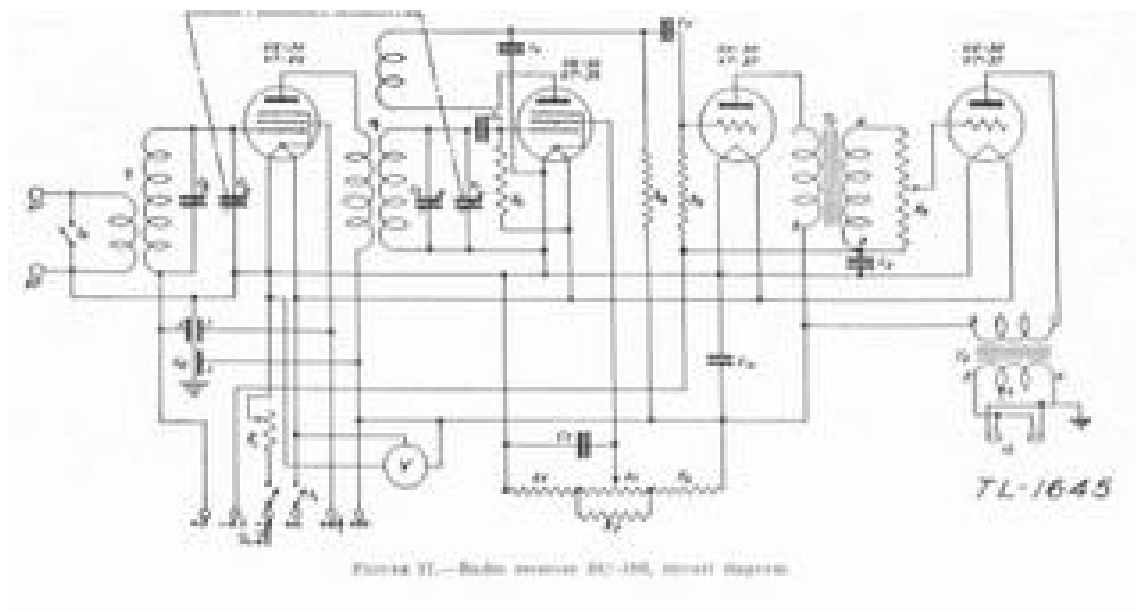
It covers 2.4 to 3.6 MHz making it somewhat useful for 80M. The receiver is a regen design that uses four 2 volt filament battery tubes. VT-50s are used for RF amplifier and regenerative detector, and there are two stages of audio amplification using VT-27s.. It runs on a collection of battery voltages: -4.5, -3.0, 3.0, 67.5 and 90 volts.

Here's the inside



BC-186 internal view

and of course, the schematic



Radio weighs just a couple pounds. It drives earphones.

There weren't many military regen receivers – one significant other one – the RAL - weights about 50 lbs with a 40 lb power supply so I've held off buying one of them! They are super nice but heavy. When they say they are built like a 'battleship' they mean exactly that. You can use one on a battle ship, fire the guns, the whole ship jump feet to the side, and the radio will stay on frequency. Hi hi. One of these days if the price is right I might buy one. Maybe. These were used by primarily the Navy in WW2 – the RAK for long wave – 15-600 Khz and the RAL for 0.3 to 23 Mhz. Both were used the shipboard and shore - including on submarines.

## On the Road with N4CD VII

Friday Oct 6

Twice a year the Belton Swapmeet is held in Belton TX – just south of Temple TX and a few hours of driving down the road from the home QTH just north of Dallas. I decided to head on down there – it starts Friday afternoon up to 6pm, then again starting early on Saturday with the flea market folks setting up at 6am before sunrise and runs till late

afternoon. The 'inside' opens again at 7am for the public.

After the last mud bath in CO/OK, I washed the car off in the driveway. Pounds and pounds of mud came out from the tires, wheels and underneath the car. I thought I got it all off the tires/rims. After rush hour on Friday, I put the antennas on the car and headed out. It's about five miles to US-75 which heads south to Dallas, then to I-35. As I hit 60 mph – whoa! - the car is bouncing all over the place. It's like driving on square wheels. The front end is bouncing all over the place. This isn't going to work. Something is wrong. I turn around at the next exist and head 8 miles back to home now and wonder what is going on.

In the driveway I crawl underneath and look at the tire rims. Hmmm...there's still spots with mud – and it's not evenly distributed. I've got to try to get the rest off because it is unbalancing the wheels badly. I get out the garden hose and nozzle once again and continue working and scraping all the mud I can find on the inside of the rims. Water everywhere. I'm getting soaked. Fortunately it's already 80 degrees outside. Lots more mud and crud comes out – You've got to scrape the caked on, baked on mud now to get it off. I'm getting pooped. I've lost over an hour. I think I've got enough off – not perfect but most that I can feel on the back of the wheels is gone. I head out again more than an hour behind intended schedule.

I-35 has lots of construction – I was going to hit a park two hours down the road – Mother Neff SP KFF-3042 – for a repeat – on the way there but .....the exit was messed up due to construction and I missed it – it would have been another 20 miles more to get there so was running short on time. Just headed to the motel first in Temple (Super 8) then another 8 or 9 miles to the Ham Expo in Belton.

When I arrive, there's already a couple hundred outside selling, swapping and telling tall tales. My car is loaded with a few things to sell including an Eico CW Keyer (tube type), a half dozen books, some power supplies and some ham misc things. After a quick circuit of the flea market – maybe 70-80 sellers – checking for regens - and not finding any – it's off to the inside and a table to sell stuff. The weather is expected to be great – temps up near 90 and no rain.

I set up and sell a few things. The place closes down at 6pm. Friday is indoor 'set up' time but just about anyone can wander in. Only 1/3 of the tables are set up on Friday but a lot of selling/swapping occurs then. I close up at 4:30pm, cover my stuff and head out to the motel again. Between big effort at getting all mud off the bottom of the car – that took half an hour of lying on the ground, groping for the inside of the wheels, lots and lots of water spray, etc....and a mile or so of walking in the flea market and inside,

I'm getting worn out. Time to rest up.

That evening I ate at Jakes Chinese Buffet in Belton. \$10.81 senior rate and good. Back to the motel. Slept well – 10 hours. Whew.

## Saturday

Up at 5:50am to catch the 6am breakfast. No waffle – skipped it - just a bowl of cereal with banana, on orange, two cups coffee. On my way at 6:20 over to the fairgrounds – and there well before sunrise which occurs about 7:30 these days. Folks are wandering the outdoor flea market with flashlights. I head on inside – new people are arriving and unloading. I hoping to find a regen.

Well, turns out there are some regens for sale – but not many. One Knight Kit Space Spanner – nice shape but owner wants \$75. It's a \$30 radio – maybe \$50 or \$60 on Ebay. I've got a few anyway. No interest.

Then there are two very nice ones from NR5Q – Bruce – who wrote Surviving Technology – which details his research into regen receivers over 30 years and his construction of different models. Now he is an SK, but one guy is selling out his estate and had two very nice regen receivers up for sale. I purchased one about 9 months ago in Fort Worth - super nice, built very sturdily with all the features he talked about. These were two similar modes. Didn't need more excellent home made regens – probably some of the best ever made. I don't think they found a home.



This one was part of a pair – RX/TX with identical front layouts. Each included power supply. Likely work very well on 20M – his favorite band. He did super nice



mechanical work assembling them – like a factory made radio A-Z.

AT 10:30 I'd sold a few things – paid for my entrance fee/table and a lot more. Sold a few of the books I reviewed here each month – so others can enjoy them. As the crowd was now thinning out - it was time to go off to the State Park for a few contacts on the way home. I arrived at the park – Mother Neff - at 11:03 local time – just as the California QSO Party started – and the bands were full of CQP CQ CQP. Hmmmm...even on the CH frequency of 14056.5 and everywhere else it was CQP CQP. No internet – dang. Well, why not join them than fight them. I went down the band working CA stations calling CQ. Usually got through in a few calls – right skip zone- and put 20 cw in the log. Tried SSB for another 10 contacts. Then back to CW. Nothing happening on 40M. Band pretty well dead there with just one or two signals on cw, a few on SSB. Too early for CA by hours. Back to 20M hunting for new ones or ones I couldn't work before – too big a pile up on the two mobiles and loud rare counties.

I heard many of the state QSO party regulars - N6MU, N8II, K4BAI, N4PN, in the fray. This is a big big contest with hundreds/thousands participating. Many counties are activated by “County Expeditions” of groups of folks with big antennas, high power, and out to claim top scores for themselves. In the mix, I did manage to find one Park to Park contact – out in CA. Heard two mobiles in CA – could work only one – K6AQL/m. Both had big pile ups. They run some of the rarer counties. Likely all the CA counties were on the air. My receiver was getting overloaded from the half dozen 40 over signals so turned off the Noise Blanker. Worked fine from my quiet location - no need for it. Otherwise, the S meter would sit up at about S7 with the very loud signals (S9 plus 30 or 40) confusing the blanker anywhere on 20M.

When I got to 45 contacts – it was time to head home. Massive traffic along I-35 – like rush hour for the last 60 miles across the Metroplex. Great weather and I guess everyone just had to 'go somewhere'. Didn't come home with any goodies, but you never know.

Sunday -

Well, the weather was great – one of the last 'warm' days of fall with temps in the low 90s. A new park had been added – Spring Creek Forest Preserve not too many miles from the N4CD QTH. Dallas County. The CQP was still raging – and I couldn't work the same stations again so this could get tricky. Probably would have internet from there – it's in a suburban environment down along the flood plain for the Trinity River

system and tributaries.

Headed over there after the morning run to the Walmart for food- and sat for 2 hours enjoying the fine weather. Caught up with more CA stations in the CQP – getting to 100 different ones worked or same ones on two modes – and also put out the park on the CH and POTA frequencies. After a day, it was easy to work the CA stations, now up to the hundreds of contacts, with just a few calls as they were getting desperate for new blood.

Put 70 in the log then headed home for a late lunch. Likely I'll stop by KFF-4423 a few times in the coming months.

## California QSO Party

Another good one with a couple mobiles out there including K6AQL Quite a few multi-op county expedition stations were on the air – many with 1x1 calls good for Natural Bingo.

from the 3830 reflector:

**K6EI - County Expedition** 1057 cw 736 ssb  
operators: KØXI K6EI KF6EMB KZ2V N6GD W9KKN

This past weekend was my favorite California QSO Party of all time - a great site, great weather, great antennas, great teammates, and pretty darn good propagation.

We set up four stations (two CW and two SSB) near Sierraville in Sierra County

(north of Truckee) and managed a clean-sweep of all 58 multipliers while handily beating our previous score -- even making 16 QSOs on 160 meters. Oh, and we had a a lot of fun in the process.

## **W6A - County Expedition -396 SSB**

### **Alpine County Expedition**

Second year doing this... seeing as how we only got roughly 70-80 QSOs last year, this year went much better. Huge bonus... There was no wind on our location this year! Or at least very little... nothing like the 60mph gusts last year. It did get down to the low 20s at night though. Huge thanks to W1SRD for loaning us the amp. We were able to actually hold a running frequency, and chat with CA stations via backscatter. Took roughly 4 hours to get the amp tuned properly, and figure out how to keep the antenna from rotating, and work the kinks out of the station, but once we did, we had an immediate pileup for about 2 hours on 20m, and then a nice pileup at the start of 40m in the evening. We had another station roughly 1 mile from us that was only running 100w off a hex beam, so we had to stay 30khz away from each other. Which limited our S&P efforts. We never saw ND, DE, or MR... even though our signal was ALL OVER the states surrounding those ones. Even got some Europe and Eastern Europe on Sunday. Not bad for a 600w expedition. Overall, we had a great time, and are looking for ways to improve for next year!

**K6VX mobile reported 252 cw 63 ssb qso**

**N6JET mobile 28 ssb qso**

Only operated on Saturday, although Sunday was planned, I had to cancel. Never tried the CQP before and mobile at that. Learned a lot about what not to do next time, so I gained some good experience. When I could find I clear frequency my vertical antennas did much better than anticipated. I will have a horizontally polarized antenna for 10-15-20 next year.

**AI6US County Expedition -Alpine - 270 ssb qso**

Two single operator 100w stations shared camp at 8980 ft Leviathan Peak on

Monitor Pass in remote Eastern California near the Nevada border. Antennas were only separated by about 100 ft, but were almost placed end to end. We coordinated band usage and used single band filters to minimize interference between our stations. A CQP multi-op high power station was located about a mile away to the West, but fortunately, we experienced very little interference.

AI6US station used an inverted "L" 131 foot end fed wire with N/S orientation. The far end was supported on a guyed 35' fiberglass mast on top of the ridge and flew from a 43' Spiderbeam telescopic mast from the top of the RV ladder. The wind was so strong that we had to stop contesting to attach mid-span guy lines to the antenna wires and additional guys to the masts. My Yaesu FT-991 was solar powered via a 320AH AGM battery bank and DC/DC step up regulator providing consistent 13.8Vdc. Expedition photos are on my QRZ page.

Had a great time operating and hanging out with with AI6JB in an excellent location. Great meals and conversations and beers kept us entertained when the bands closed. The aspens the valleys below were nearing full fall colors. The evenings were cool, the sky was clear and we experienced exceptionally colorful sunrises and sunsets!

This was my first contest since getting my license earlier this year. Contesting is a blast! Will be back next year. Bigger, taller, stronger and a few more watts! :)

### **K6WSC/6 County Expedition - San Diego 496 cw qso**

I had so much fun as a single-op county expedition in the 7QP I wanted to do it again in the CQP. In the 7QP, I operated in the next county which was all of a 30-minute drive from my house. The CQP would involve at least a four-day trip. I started looking for a suitable site (120vac, space to set up my antenna, surrounding terrain, showers, food, etc.) in Imperial and later Riverside county. No location met all of my criteria, so I started looking in the next nearest county, San Diego and choose a site in Borrego Springs. San Diego is not exactly a rare county, but CA is a big state and the southern quarter of state only has four counties. Maybe next time I can make it a longer trip and activate one of the rare counties.

The antenna was a 40-10m fan dipole with the center at 20 feet. The rig was TS-590S. The air temperature got to 97 degrees. I am always amazed at how hot the rig can get and still keep working. The rig did quit working however when I moved my feet and the ground strap between the rig and the power supply contacted the plus side of the supply. I quickly fixed that problem.

I worked 50 of the 58-possible state and Canadian area multipliers, with AZ being among the missing. The CA county count was 33, all on 40m except for my neighbor in Imperial county K6QK, both of us on the inland side of the coastal mountains. The DX count was 13.

The food part of it did not work out so well. The park I was staying in did not get their kitchen operational when they said they would. I could not drive my vehicle (Honda Odyssey) to get food as it was part of the antenna support system. I survived on a bag of carrots and a few energy bars for 48 hours.

It was lots of fun. Thanks to the CQP sponsors for a great QSO Party.

73, Bill K6WSC

## On the Trail of Regens II

Something you don't see every day showed up on Ebay. From the really wayback days of the 1930s, it was a two tube 'Doerle' shortwave receiver with plug in coils – sold

<http://www.antiqueradios.com/archives/Doerle4SW.pdf>

“In December 1931 the magazine Short Wave Craft carried Doerle's first article about a simple two-tube regen receiver, the set, being inexpensive to build and get working caught on like wildfire. Doerle wrote one or two other articles and quickly faded from the scene. His design was not lost however, and was quickly picked up and popularized by the radio stores on New York City's "Radio Row". Bill Orr, in April 1979 magazine article, states that ""Doerle clubs" sprang up around the country and "Doerle circuits"

were sold as kits and as complete radios."



Most hams have not heard for the Doerle sets or Doerle circuits as the designs were carried largely by radio magazines catering to the general radio "bug" rather than to the hams.

As for the economy, right on point, back in the 1930s, money was tight and you had to roll your own, not too many Icom, Kenwood or Yaesu dealers about. Interestingly enough, this was a kit, offered by Gernback's "Radio Trading Company", Gernback of "Radio News" fame, whose booklet image follows. “

Gernsback produced tons of radio and sci-fi type magazines and books way into the 1950s.

This particular radio is in need of a lot of restoration. The guts are mostly there but it needs de-rusting and lots of TLC to bring it back. It is, however, very 'rare' in that you'll probably never actually see one in your life anywhere other than possibly on display at an Antique Wireless Convention or in the several Wireless Museums.

The first Doerle designs used a type 30 triode tubes – two of them. The filaments were 2.0vdc and you ran them off 3v off dry cells. This one was probably called an “Electrified Two-Tube Doerle” as it used AC filament tubes – a type 57 and 56 – pentodes with 2.5vac filaments.

# Arizona QSO Party

The conditions were horrible with high A and K index - and probably two mobiles – K8TE and W7USA. Never did hear LaPaz County – the only one I needed on cw.

From the 3830 reflector:

**K8TE/7 166 cw 439 ssb**

This was an interesting event! The K-Index was not helpful most of the time. From my perspective with a dipole at 40 ft., conditions were generally not great. The big guns did well, but this little pistol was challenged and didn't do as well as last year. Still, I had fun most of the time. Perching near the APH/NVO county line helped a lot except for those who couldn't figure out how to log it, including the one op who "dropped my pencil."

The PAQP guys were really racking up the contacts! Many of them are the really big guns from the FRC and it showed. Some of them were even ready to make AZQP QSO's - "thanks! Where were all the AZ ops? There sure weren't many on 40m, and I heard none on 80/75 although I heard a few on 20m backscatter, but they couldn't hear me. Self-spotting would go a long way in helping find the "locals" for additional multipliers. It would also help generate more QSO's which seems good for everybody.

When operating CW, I checked the RBN to see if I was getting out. I was, but found it difficult to generate QSO's, much less any runs. The only reason I had any good runs was the 2fer aspect of working from a county line. I came down with vertigo Saturday and an unpleasant side effect on Sunday which took me out of play for nearly four hours - "that hurt! In spite of it all, I had a fun time. John, N6MU, chased me among 80m, 40m, and 20m but I couldn't hear him on the latter. And as always, John, K4BAI, was there wherever I was calling. Thanks guys and to all who pulled my sometimes weak signal through the mud.



My biggest operating challenge, other than getting sick, was receive noise. The “quiet” Honda i2000 is not as quiet as many think. Jim, K9YC, has some great advice on choking the RFI I need to follow. Like every contest/operating event, I come away with more to do than I seem to have time, maybe because I’m operating so much. Good luck in the contest!

**N6MU - fixed - CA    35 cw   48 ssb**

Score includes 100 bonus points for working WM7RC on SSB. He wasn't on CW.

Virtually no skip on 20. Very frustrating.

Had 71 Qs Saturday and only 12 on Sunday. Hmmm. 73...

## Pennsylvania QSO Party

Looks like several mobiles were out and running including K8MR, KA3QLF and others

from the 3830 reflector:

**K8MR mobile   302 cw   19 ssb**

Once again, this was a Saturday trip combining the PAQP with getting to our daughter's place in NNJ. My wife Linda agreed/was coerced into driving through PA, other than a 35 mile break through Centre and Clinton counties when the bands went pretty dead and she was feeling a bit sleepy. We were in the Prius V (featured in my NCJ article about FQP mobiling), which does have serious ignition noise when pressed into hard action, which included maintaining 75+

MPH going up hills on I-80. I may have been an alligator at times, which is why. Next time I ought to bring the 2007 Sienna (168K miles) which is the quietest mobile vehicle I've owned.

Reasonably good conditions at the start and the end (22Z Saturday), but poor in the mid-afternoon. Not sure if the bands took a dump, or if there had been a 200 mile skip zone all day, which when in central PA would have been enough to skip over the rest of the state.

Not much phone operation. I tried getting some CQ action from Armstrong and (I believe) Clinton, but no luck. Most of my phone QSOs were QSYs from CW with OM2VL.

It was only Friday night that I realized that NHA was a stone's throw south of I-80 on the west side of the Delaware River, which we could then cross and skip the first five miles of I-80 in New Jersey. But that stretch is also at the bottom of a valley with big hills on both sides, especially to the west, so I never got much going there, only eight QSOs.

One casual non-radio observation: I've been doing PAQP as a mobile for nearly 20 years. It used to seem that it fell pretty close to peak fall colors of the changing leaves. This year, in spite of PAQP being on the latest possible dates, even at the highest elevations on I-80, the leaves were barely starting to change.

73 - Jim K8MR

**KD8MQ Portable in Jefferson, PA** 55 cw 312 ssb

Operator(s): KD8KMQ KD8MQ

We had beautiful weather right up until the end. We customarily tear down early for the trip back to Ohio.

This year, we again built the antenna on site. We used a multi-band dipole for 160-20 Meters. It was hung in Inverted Vee configuration at about 50'. We built a 6 Meter dipole and hung it at 15'. Unfortunately, the band never really opened for us. We'll try 6 again next year, but get the antenna much higher.

Thanks go to John, N8PLA for hosting us again this year.

Our normal dining establishment had burned in May, then re-opened soon after, then closed for the season the week before the PAQP. We took the opportunity to check out the other restaurants in the area.

73 all, John, KD8MQ

### **K0BAK - mobile - 689 ssb qso**

Another fun PA QSO Party. This is my fourth in a row, all as a rover. Thank you to all the organizers, volunteers, sponsors, and bonus station operations; and of course especially to Mike Coslo.

I was able to follow my plan pretty closely, and got a nice pileup almost every time I was able to find a band spot to call CQ.

Didn't start too well with an intermittent RF problem, but replaced the cable from radio to amp and all was good again; was an anxious feeling having a major glitch at the first location.

My first stop was CMB; had I known how rare it turned out to be, I would have stayed longer. Only heard one county line station, usually get several. I didn't discover my computer time was horribly wrong for a few hours, took a lot of log massaging afterwards to correct it. Activated FUL, HUN, and FRA on Saturday night using different locations from last year that took a lot less time to get to.

My score went up hugely compared to last year, mostly due to being more aggressive about calling CQ more and S&P less. Didn't even try the CW bands since I can only S&P CW. Got a call from KG4WV in Guantanamo Bay, but it's not a section multiplier!

I activated 3 parks in the World Wide Flora and Fauna program while in BED, PER, DAU; some of my WWFF friends helped me out throughout the contest. Looking forward to having a better and permanent mobile ham station for the next PAQP.

## Mobile Activity in October

The county hunter annual Convention was at the end of September. Many mobiles were still on the road as October rolled around.

N8KIE, WQ7A, N9QS, WB0PYF, N5MLP, K5GE, K3IMC, N8HAM, NF0N, were headed home with some via long circuitous routes.

During the month there was a fair amount of activity – weather was generally good and several large trips occurred.

KB0LF was in NE putting them out

N4UP was in TN – headed to IA, MN, MO, NE, then back through OH to home.

Bill, K2HVN was continuing his trip in SD. Later in the month headed back east.

WJ8Y was out and about in OH several days

Jim, N9JF was out and about – ran various Parks on the Air – later in the month was in the IL QSO Party.

Jerry, W0GXQ spotted in SD and NE – headed to CO

Ed, K8ZZ, noted out and about in SD. Met up with W0GXQ and ran SD, ND and MT, WA, WY and ID counties.

The CA QSO Party had a few mobiles – but mostly county expeditions and loud fixed /portable stations. Lots of counties up for grab.

Kraig, KA2LHO ran parks in PA – and made several trips – one up to PA, several around in PA, and later in the month headed south again to FL.

Bob, KA9JAC, activated parks in WI during the month.

Jack, K0MAF, was on the road in IL and MO

Various parks around the country were put out by W6RLV, K7CAR, KB3WAV, N4EX, W4JL, WB9OWN, N5PHT, KD4TTP,

Paul, N7JPF, busy out in WA counties – over into MT

Bob, K7TM, put out WA counties

We had a busy weekend with the PA QSO Party, Scott, KA3QLF was out mobile.

The AZ QSO Party had - one mobile – K8TE/7 who sat on a county line.

N9AC headed from IL to FL.

Gene, WB4KZW, ran counties in NC

N9QS, Silver, headed down through KY into GA

Ed, K8ZZ, put out counties in KS and MO

WA3QNT, Bob, ran counties in PA for the folks.

Eddie, G4KHG, was on from Kauai on FT-8 digital mode

The NY QSO Party had at least one mobile – N2CU was busy putting them out.

In the IL QP, N9JF, K0PC, and AD4EB were out mobile.

# South Dakota QSO Party

Just heard one SD station on during the day – WB0MQW – and caught him on 40cw. Otherwise, sparse activity.

From 3830 contest reflector:

**K4BAI - fixed - GA - 5 cw 4 ssb qso**

Thanks for QSOs. Great to work W7UT again. Still need a number of SD counties: Bennett, Brule, Dewey. Fall River, Haakon, Hanson, Hutchinson, Hyde, Jerauld, McCook, Marshall, Please e-mail me for a sked if you are or will QRV from one of these. 73, John, K4BAI.

**K3TBD - fixed 7 SSB**

THANKS FOR GETTING ON. NEEDED SD FOR WORKED ALL STATES.

LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT ONE.

73 AND 88

WENDY K3TBD

# New York QSO Party

**K0BAK mobile** - 689 ssb qso

Activated 7 parks in PUT(2), WES, ROC(3), ORA. "High" power was 400w. Only SSB to maximize rate since I didn't operate in motion.

Due to NYQP's stupid rules, I will \*not\* be spotting myself on the cluster, only here in comments assuming cell data. Thanks in advance for your cluster spots when you hear me. I'll be announcing my NY county name for NYQP credit, and will be taking some time for S&P (and P2P if I'm lucky)

**KV2X mobile** - made 366 cw QSO

**N2CU mobile** 464 cw 164 ssb

Not my best effort but not sure what I could have done better. Maybe hitting 80m during the day would have helped (I usually do that). Being single-op, you lose a lot of operating time driving between counties. This year I skipped CHA, which is where my cottage is, because going there creates a long drive to WYO and then another long drive to ALL. With this plan I eliminated one long drive (~45 minutes) and I ended with 9 hours operating time.

I activated 7 counties; ERI, CAT, WYO, ALL, LIV, STE and ONT and then backtracked after dusk to get some QSOs on 80m. After finishing STE I debated backtracking or going to the next county. I chose the latter and hope I provided a needed county to some folks.

QSO leaders: OM2VL 25, K1RO 14, N6MU 9, N2JJ 8, WB2ABD and K2ZR 7, W5TM, W2RR and W0ZQ 6. Lots with 5 QSOs. A special thanks to our southern neighbors (PA) who were the second most worked state at 44. A good showing by OH, VA and IL among others.

32 NY counties, 47 states and provinces and some DX were worked. OM2VL accounted for 25 of my 31 DX QSOs. Thanks Laci for the support and for moving me for additional bands/modes!

Thanks to all who came to our party! It was very much appreciated.

K3/100, KA8KIP Eliminator screwdriver and N1MM Classic. 219 miles driven. Not a whole lot of gas due to my new scooter, a Toyota RAV4. Only two deer in the middle of the road; didn't contact either of them.

73, Tom N2CU

**N6MU - CA** 61 cw

When I finally had propagation on 40 there were few left to work. I think most were watching the Yankees game, hi. 15 was open most of the day. Thanks to those who moved when asked.

The 3830 posts show many NY stations never ventured above 40. Sure makes it tough on the left coast where there is no propagation during the day. Just saying. 73...

John, N6MU



# Illinois QSO Party

Another good one. IL has the distinction of getting many 2, 3 and 4 way county lines on for the event. At least one station was on a 4-way and many were on 'county lines'. Of course, the definition of 'county line' and 'close' varies from party to party.

From the 3830 reflector:

**W3DYA - fixed TX - 14 cw**

Just wanted to let IL know I was listening; mostly one band. It was pleasant to hear some familiar calls; especially a few I remember from my mobile operating times in ILQP years ago!

Lot of good operators and even got a few prefix contacts thanks to AD4EB for those hard-to-find "A" prefix calls.

73, Norm, W3DYA

**WN4AFP - fixed - SC 102 cw 19 ssb**

What a fun contest! I had responsibilities that took me away from the race, but I did enjoy my 5 hours in the ILQP. I even had a 60 Qs per hour S&P rate at one time. Special thanks to all the mobile and rover ops who kept the race interesting... N9JF, AD4EB, N0I, K0PC, WB9CIF, K9CQ and ND9E. What good ears you mobile ops had through the ongoing pileups. I had the pleasure of attending the Egyptian Radio Club hamfest many years ago, so W9AIU always brings back a few memories. Due to my time limitation, I started searching for multipliers and CW only. After about two hours of that, I started working anyone and also made a few phone contacts. I stopped for dinner at 2200z and told my wife that I would return at 0100z after earning an edible prize in the ILQP. At 2230z I only had 51 multipliers, so I had 24 new mults to work during the next few hours. It was 0046z and I had just worked K0PC/m in Mercer for 73. I had 14 mins to work 2 more mults. I scanned 40m and 80m phone and CW and finally found N9WEW at 0058z. I tried to work him on 80m phone with no success... I came up

short, but had a ball trying.

## **K1RO - fixed**

Great turnout! The mobiles, rovers and multi-county portables sure helped keep it interesting. Special thanks to mobiles AD4EB (29 QSOs), K0PC (26 QSOs), N0I (16 QSOs) and N9JF (14 QSOs) for making sure there was always someone new to work.

I was glad to be able to work Illinois stations on 20 and 40 right from the start. Signals on 20 were great, but there didn't seem to be a lot of stations on that band. On 40 many stations, including the mobiles, were weak but workable on CW, but I could only hear the louder stations on phone for the first few hours. It was a little frustrating hearing the closer stations working Illinois stations I could not hear. I ended up calling almost all of my contacts, only getting a few answers to CQs on 75 SSB in the last 15 minutes.

## **Awards Issued**

No new USCA numbers were issued during the month

No MARAC awards were issued. The transition is underway between the old and new MARAC Awards Chairmen and not complete at this time..

## **Upcoming Events for County Hunters**

The QSO Party season is ramping down – but many other contests are held in November – you might need to take action to avoid the QRM. Just one QSO Party during the month.

ARRL CW Sweepstakes – Nov 4-6

**Kentucky QSO Party**

Nov 11 1400Z -Nov 12 0200z

RST and county/SPC

[www.wkdx.com](http://www.wkdx.com)

ARRL SSB Sweepstakes

Nov 18-20

CW WW DX - CW

Nov 25-26

In addition, there are dozen other DX contests in EU, DL, UK, and JA that will fill the bands with signals – especially on the east coast – CW SSB RTTY.

Thanks All Folks!