

# County Hunter News

October 1, 2016  
Volume 12, Issue 10

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

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

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

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

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at [ch.W6RK.com](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 ) Fall is here – at least the daily sun cycles indicate it with later sunrises, earlier sunsets – and cooler temps. On the trip back east in September, I'd be sitting and running a county/park and leaves would be falling. Contest season has started in a big way with half a dozen in September, and many more scheduled for October and November including Sweepstakes and DX contests. The sun sets here at 6:30 and doesn't show till near 7am. Where did the summer go?

2 ) A new version of SpotMe is available. Details later.

3 ) National Parks on the Air continues with tons of activities. Three new parks have shown up in the last few months creating even more excitement. You can still join in the fun! The program goes to the end of the year, and there are dozens of activations each weekend, and many during the week.

4 ) We're a little late this month. Hope no one notices. Lots going on after the trip back home.

## On the Road with N4CD I

The eastern adventure started in mid September with a plan to hit at least 50 new park units, head through MS, AL, GA, into FL, then north up to SC, NC, VA, MD, and the DC area. With NPOTA fever still raging, 'counties' were on the side, but I'd be going through 100 counties along the way and putting them out for the folks when not sitting for an hour or two in each of the park units. Of course, it would be a history lesson, too, with all sorts of interesting places to visit and make quick stops at the visitor center to see what they were all about – when possible.

### **Day 1 September 11 - Sunday**

I headed east on I-20 after an early morning on a Sunday morning of 9-11. That put me in the far side of Louisiana by shortly after noon where I hit Poverty Point Monument – MN62 . I'd run this before – it commemorates a culture that thrived during the first and second millenia BC. This site has some of the largest prehistoric earthworks in North America – at one of the most important archaeological sites on the continent. To date, it had not been that well 'run' so I'd activate it once again. (West Carroll Parish). After that, next up was Vicksburg battlefield - MP09 — the site of one of the most decisive battles in the Civil War. A siege started and the city held out for 47 days, finally falling to Union forces. One can reach it with a 3 mile detour off I-20. It was considered the Gibraltar of the Confederacy. I pulled into the visitor center parking lot and put it out. Last time I took the tour route around the park, so no need to do much 'touristy thing' this time. At the end of the day, I arrived at a Super 8 1/4 mile away. There were no 'new' parks for me – just time spend getting to where the 'new' adventures began.

You can check on the ARRL NPOTA webpage how many 'activation's and how many QSOs have been made from each park to date. One must be a bit careful because one

big operation many months ago may have made half the total Qs for a park – in one case, there were 2 or 3 activations and 800 QSOs- but if you weren't chasing in March, you might not realize that 750 of them were for a March multi-op group and hardly any were made since.

## **Day 2 – into AL – 9/12**

I was headed generally east connecting the 'parks'. It took a while to get across MS into LA where you find the Selma to Montgomery Trail TR16. This is the route the civil rights group took on their historic journey. Midway there's an 'interpretive center' with a large exhibition. Less than 2% of the blacks in Alabama were able to 'register' to vote or vote.



The first 'march' was turned back. The second march was also turned back by law enforcement. After getting an injunction, the third march had 25,000 participants on the 54 mile journey. Five months later, President Johnson signed the landmark civil rights act ensuring that all Americans can register and vote.

Then it was off to two other famous sites – the Tuskegee Institute and the Tuskegee Airman 'parks'.

In 1881, Booker T Washington started building the Tuskegee Institute (NS72) to give an education to newly freed African Americans and their children. . He recruited G.W. Carver, in 1896. Carver's experiments with crops, including peanuts, expanded Tuskegee's standing throughout the world. There's a museum and his home to visit

here. Today there are thousands of students studying here. Lots of traffic.

Not far away is the Tuskegee Airman site. This is at one of the practice fields that the famous “Red Tails” used during their training. As you may recall, the 'Red Tails' were an all black fighter squadron in WW2 stationed in Italy. They flew hundreds of missions protecting the bomber pilots with exceptional skill and bravery.



N4CD at Tuskegee Airman Park NS-71

There were near zero visitors late in the afternoon. The parking lot holds 200 cars and there was one other car in the entire lot.

Time to hit a motel nearby. Slept well. Breakfast at the motel. Only had 1 or 2 waffles the whole trip and when I did I made half a waffle! I can put on too many pounds in just a few weeks of eating 'too well'.

### **Day 3 – 9/13 AL and into GA**

Next up was Horseshoe Bend Military Park MP05. Civil War? Nope! Now we are back to the War of 1812. Here in 1814, General Andrew Jackson and 3,300 men attacked Chief Menawa and 1,000 Upper Creek warriors in the 'horseshoe bend' of the Tallapoosa River. The Creeks lost, and were forced to give the US land that later became Alabama

and Georgia. The Indians had sided with the British. Andrew Jackson became a national hero after this battle.



Horseshoe Bend AL

Now it was a couple hundred miles up to Ocmulgee GA MN56. This park is a prehistoric American Indian site. American Indians first came here during the Paleo-Indian period hunting Ice Age Mammals. Many Indian cultures lived here over the millenia. About 900 they starting building mounds for the elites – still in existence today. It's near Macon GA in Bibb County.



Ocmulgee Monument GA

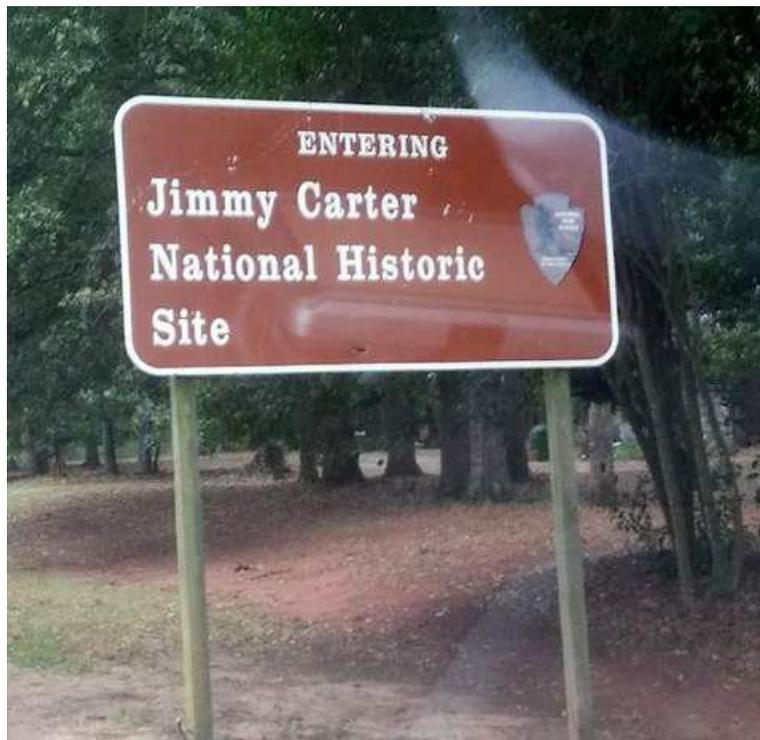
Next up was Andersonville, GA – the site of an infamous Civil War Confederate Prisoner of War camp. Over 30,000 entered. Over 10,000 died here from the horrific conditions, their original battlefield injuries, or the poor sanitation. There's a large

cemetery and a visitor center. I was running late. The park closes at 5 (there are gates) so I had to make a very quick run for an hour to get most in the log. Still had folks calling when the rangers indicated I had to leave and locked the gates behind me. Oh well. Didn't get to the visitor center but put 125 contacts in the log for NS02.

Then it was off to a motel half the distance to the next site – a Days Inn in Americus.

#### **Day 4 – 9/14 – GA to FL**

President Jimmy Carter was born and raised in Plains GA. It's a very small town – tiny. If you blink, you'll pass through it without realizing it. There's a visitor center, the Carter farm a few miles outside of town, the former gas station, and not much else there. I zipped into the 'RV parking lot' away from the visitor center and was there for two hours. A lady ranger came by (seems the staff parks in this lot) and says “Howdy”. Do stop by inside and thanks for 'transmitting from our park'. They didn't seem to get much business. I was there for a couple hours and there was only one other visitor I saw enter the main lot. There were six cars for staff. Put 90 in the log in the early morning run. Time to get to the next one. Some you run early (not much on 20), others you run late in the day – but I had an itinerary and wanted to hit as many as I could. I did stop in the visitor center for a quick look around. I aim for at least 100 QSOs per park. Sometimes you fall a bit short, other days you get 150Qs or more from a park.



Jimmy Carter NS-40 in GA

It's amazing to know that half the folks in the US were born after Jimmy Carter was President. Guess you have to be a senior citizen to remember voting in that election. Whew.

Off to the next park – headed down to Canaveral Seashore. I study my options. Some parks close early – gated – and you can't get in after closing time. Others are open late. I jiggle the schedule as I'm zipping down I-95 decide to hit Castillo de San Marcos MN14 on the way. From Wiki:

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The Castillo de San Marcos is the oldest masonry fort in the continental US. Located on the western shore of Matanzas Bay in the city of St. Augustine, Florida, the fort was built in 1672, 107 years after the city's founding by Spanish Admiral and conquistador Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, when Florida was part of the Spanish Empire.

After Britain gained control of Florida in 1763 pursuant to the Treaty of Paris, St. Augustine became the capital of British East Florida, and the fort was renamed Fort St. Mark[ until the Peace of Paris (1783) when Florida was transferred back to Spain. In 1819 Spain signed the Adams–Onís Treaty which ceded Florida to the United States in 1821; consequently the fort was designated a United States Army base. . The fort was

declared a National Monument in 1924, and after 251 years of continuous military possession, was deactivated in 1933. The 20 acre site was then turned over to the United States National Park Service.

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This fort is actually in old town St Augustine. You have to pay to park, but the NPS owns the lot and leases it out to the city to charge for parking! Or you can run from the admin center lot – also NPS owned property. Had to check with the head ranger to be sure. You want to be 'on park property' for it to count for NPOTA.

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OK....I was zipping down I-95 again to a motel near Canaveral Seashore. Most of those seashore parks stay open either 24/7, or to late hours in the summer – in this case 8pm. I could get there by 6pm and have a good evening run. Maybe – all round storms were forming. Lightning was zipping down on the horizon and large rain clouds were everywhere. This part of Florida gets frequent (daily) showers during the summer months, and the humidity is 100%. Maybe it will work. I get there and the storms seem to be everywhere else but where I'm at. Lighting flashes and strikes miles away. OK....I'm not setting up big antennas like many portable operators so I'll go ahead. I hit the first parking area inside the park, which happens to be a parking lot for a boat ramp. No one is putting in or taking out boats in this weather so serendipity there. 140 contacts go in the log. Lots of static crashes make it interesting to get the calls. The memory fills in many letters in familiar calls. Well, it's getting real dark and gloomy with some rain now coming down so time to leave a bit after 7pm and find my motel. (Days Inn, Daytona Beach, Golden Corral for dinner). Dinner at 7:45. too late. I've got to slow down a bit! I hate driving at night in strange places these days.



Canaveral Seashore SS06 FL

In the park system, you've got a handful of 'national seashores' including Padre Island, Assateague Island MD, etc. They are preserves of the ecology, plus often camping, boating, swimming and other recreation opportunities as well as hiking paths.

So far, so good on the trip. N4CD managed to get in all the planned parks along the way, no 'shut outs' with locked gates, early runs possible at the sites. You just never know with traffic and other things going on. (I stayed at a lot of Wyndam properties – Days Inn, Super 8, Knights Inn, etc, for the points – and most are usually good – and their web site makes it fairly easy to find the next motel around 2pm where I know where I'll wind up for the night). No real hassles finding motels, although many were totally booked up by the time I got there with 'no vacancy' signs on if you hadn't reserved ahead of time.

## **Day 5 9/15/2016**

Next up was the Wekiva 'wild and scenic' river close to the Orlando area in Seminole County. You've got to get within 100 feet of the river to give these out. I tend to avoid them as it takes too long most of the time to find a spot to run them. Fortunately, at Katy's Landing, a state park, you can easily do that. I pulled in early in the morning. There's a boat launch area (not for parking) but no one around. Oh, it's \$2 to get into the park – self pay – bring 2 one dollar bills. You can sit in the boat launch area and be right next to the river. Worked for me! Watch out for low hanging 'antenna eating' trees and Spanish moss that you have to dodge on the way in and out. Only 65Q but it was way early. Well, time to get a moving. So many parks and so little time! This has

been well run by others.



Wekiva River WR37

From this point it is 'north' for the rest of the trip. Canaveral and Wekiva were the southern most points. There are more parks in FL but it would take too many miles to reach them. My goal was the most parks per mile of travel. Someone else will have to keep activating them to catch others – especially on 40M SSB which I didn't run. (Everglades, Biscayne Bay, etc). Now it was back up I-95 to get to the next. There are a handful right next to each other.

Around St Johns Florida is the Fort Matanzas monument MN30. Built by the Spanish in 1742, to guard the southern access to San Augustine, it was a building 50x50 feet with a large tower that held several guns. It's still standing. To get to the fort, you park and take a free ferry ride out to the island on which it is located. The Spanish later abandoned it, and when it transitioned to the US, it was never used and now is just 'ruins'. I ran it from the visitor center parking lot. Good runs happened as it was later in the day with 120Q logged.



Fort Matanzas MN30

Next up was a 'two-fer' – like a 'county line' where you get to give out two at one time. This was the Timucuan Preserve and Fort Caroline.

Never heard of Ft Caroline? Or French colonies in Florida? Me either. This was a French colony and fort. Spain and Portugal were busy getting colonies and 'seeking riches'. So were the British. The French jumped in and built a colony at Ft Caroline. They didn't find riches, and of course there were conflicts with the Spanish who thought they owned all of Florida. Most of the settlers were from the royalty (300 settlers) who didn't realize how tough life would be. They were assisted by the Timucua Indians who showed them how to survive in the FL environment. The Spanish attacked in 1565 and most of the residents were killed. There's almost nothing left of Ft Caroline – it wasn't a sturdy built stone one. This site is combined with the Timucuan ecological Preserve – PV16. Did near 200Q from there. Of course, there was no 'gold' to be found in FL, unlike Mexico later where the Spanish plundered hundreds of millions in gold from the natives.



NM08 and PV16 in FL

Time to head north along the coast. Next up was Cumberland Island Seashore SS06 in GA. If you want to really do the island, you park and take a ferry ride out – for a day – or for primitive camping. Just one B&B on the island and it's over \$250/day. However, you can run from the visitor center parking lot on dry land! (the visitor center rule for NPOTA). There's actually NPS owned parking lots for those headed out to the islands. Fine with me! Cumberland Island goes was back and was settled mainly by African Americans. It's been very isolated. You can't bring your car over to the island. Be prepared to do lots of walking/hiking.



Cumberland Island NPS Parking lot

The lot was very noisy on 30M for some reason, and not good on 40M, but I still managed good runs on CW.

It was getting late, so I headed to a nearby motel.

## **DAY 6 9/16/2016**

OK...How about another fort? Lots of them along the Atlantic Coast. Next up is Fort Fredricka MN29. Located on St Simon Island in GA, this was a British fort with adjoining town of 500 residents in the 1736-51 period. It protected the coast from Spanish invasion successfully (Britain claimed GA, the Spanish FL). Shortly after, the Spanish no longer posed a threat and it was abandoned. It wasn't under FDR and the CCC dug into ancient history at many sites that it became a historic site. There's not much left to the fort but you can see the ruins and a good visitor center presentation on what it was at the time. 142Q from here.



Fort Fredricka MN29

Well, so far we've had Spanish, French and now getting north to British forts once again. Good history lessons as you soak up the visitor center presentations (usually 20-30 minute video presentations).

Up next is another fort – this one Ft Pulaski MN33. Following the War of 1812, when we had to fight the British once again and defeat them, President James Madison ordered that forts be built along the Atlantic Coast to protect the US. Ft Pulaski near Savannah was built as part of this program – made of brick. 25 million bricks on a base of piers sunk 70 down into the muck. At the beginning of the Civil War, naturally GA

quickly took over this installation. Unfortunately for them, new technology (rifled cannons) on the Union ships, which could fire at twice the distance of standard cannons, allowed the Union ships to rip the fort to smithereens – and it surrendered. Within six weeks, the Union forces rebuilt the fort and stopped all commercial traffic in and out of Savannah – a severe blow to the Confederacy. After the war, there was no need for it. President Calvin Coolidge named it as a National Historic Site and it became a park unit in the 1930s. 140 Qs went into the log

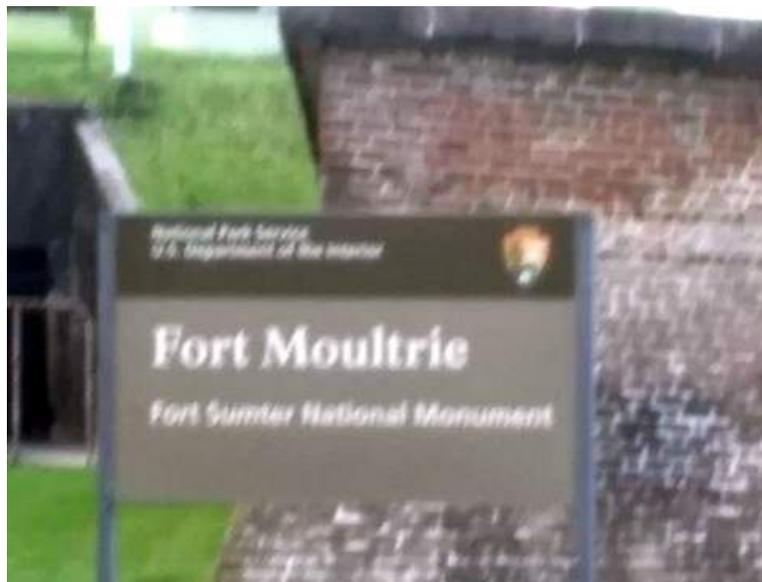


Fort Pulaski - Chatham GA MN33

That night spent at a Days Inn out by the Airport in town.

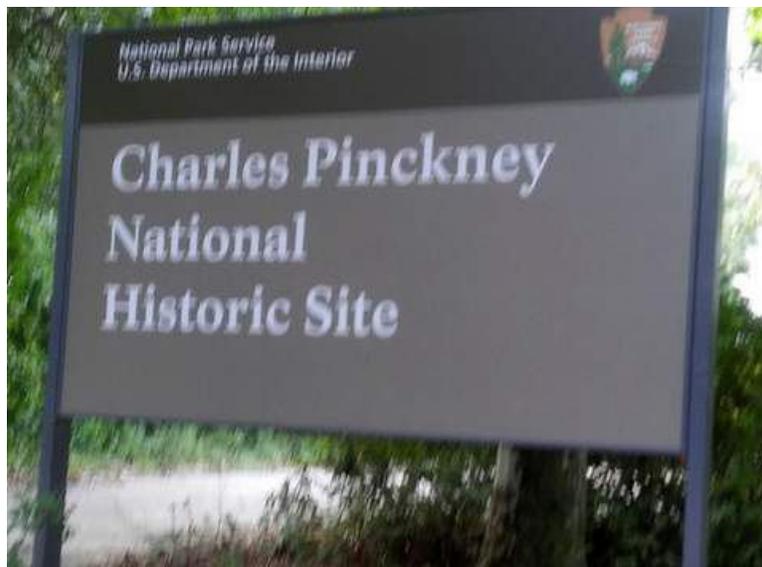
### **Day 7 9/17**

Next up is Fort Sumter. This fort is on an island in Charleston – you need to take a ferry to get to it – passengers only. However, another part of Ft Sumter Park is Fort Moultrie across the bay, and you can drive to it and park. Did that and had a nice early morning run. Fort Sumter is where the Civil War started. South Carolina succeeded. The Union wanted to stop shipping in/out of Charleston. The first shots of the Civil War were fired here.



Fort Moultrie – Part of Ft sumter

Then it was up the road to Charles Pinckley historic site. This was his farm – he was one of the most important folks in the writing of the US Constitution along with Madison. NS09



It's not far from Charleston but likely few stop by.

Next on the list is Congaree State Park. I'm zipping along the highway , planning on hitting the main entrance. I spy a 'trailhead' parking sign. Hmmm....OK...that will

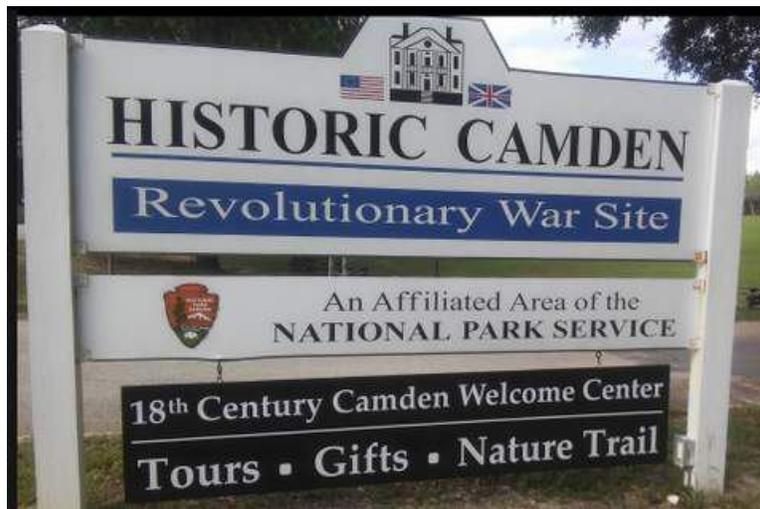
work. I pull in and put out the park. Turns out the park actually crosses the road I'm on and extends a bit beyond. The 'trail' heads into the main part of the park and was the original road connecting towns. Works for me! Saves me 30 miles of driving, too.



Congaree National Park NP12

I'm headed toward one more today. Camden Revolutionary War site. This was a small inland trading town (maybe the only) in SC. There were battles between British Loyalists and American Patriots here. The Loyalists took over – and had to defend it. It's an 'Associated Area' of the park system. I pulled it, operated....then wasn't looking as I went to leave. I was looking out the side window to see what was there – and missed low hanging trees that wiped out the antenna system. The 40m resonator was fractured – part up top, and most on the trunk, with feet of wire stretched out. It was dead. The mast was bent back above the guy point at a 30 degree angle. I managed, with some local bystanders, to mostly straighten it. The 17m resonator took a hit and stripped out the threads on the six way adapter, that was already in not too great shape. You can straighten a mast, but it will slowly bend back. Once it's bent, the only cure is to replace it, and I don't know who supplies six foot long masts these days. Oh well.

That evening I replaced the 40M resonator. Had to leave off 17, but it wasn't doing much anyway. Maybe a dozen contacts in a week. Stayed at Days Inn in Lugoff, SC.



Camden Revolutionary War Site

### September 18 – Sunday

It was off to Ninety Six South Carolina! What a town name. Imagine if you have to tell folks you're from Ninety Six SC. Huh? No one is sure how the town got it's name. Could be it was 'about' 96 miles along the road (really 74) between trading stops. Well, The first land battle south of New England was fought here in 1775. The British fortified the town, and the Patriots later laid siege with 1000 troops against 500 Loyalists.



Next up was a jaunt up to NC to hit the Carl Sandburg site. He was a famous poet and biographer. Won Pulitzer Prizes for his works. Here you find his home and nice visitor center. Lots of folks there on this day – lot full.



Had a fair run then it was off to the next.

“To the Cow Pens – To the Cow Pens” was the rallying call as Patriots fought the British and Loyalists. Here, you also find the Overmountain Victory Trail TR10. The Brits succeeded in ticking off the Scots and Irish in the hills of TN, and they formed a small band and headed over the mountains via the trail to join up with the Patriots. Here, the Brits were beaten in one of the most important battles of the Revolutionary War.



You can run the two as a 'two fer' here.

That night I stopped at a Super 8 in Gaffney nearby. Dinner at Appleby's.

In most cases the crowds at parks was way down from the summer time. Folks were busy with school activities, vacations were over, and other things kept them from visiting.

## September 19 Monday

Today I start out at Kings Mountain – Here, once again, the Patriots clobbered the British and Loyalists in a pivotal and significant battle. The rout destroyed a good part of Cornwallis' army, and ended the Loyalist ascendance in the Carolinas.



The OverMountain Victory Trail also goes through here.

Next up was Guilford Court House in NC. The battle fought here between 4,500 Americans and 1,800 British regulars was a 'loss' for the Patriots....but inflicted severe damage to the Brits – and few casualties to the Americans. It was the largest most contested action of the war's climatic southern campaign. Shortly thereafter, the Brits moved north to VA and abandoned the Carolinas and GA.



I could get in one more today, so headed to the Booker T Washington site in Franklin County VA. This is the plantation where he was born into slavery. He was freed after the Civil War – and went on to found the Tuskegee Institute in AL. The plantation is preserved as it was 180 years ago.



There are lots of windy roads in VA – and the GPS lady takes me on many of them getting here and then over to Alta Vista VA for the night at the Days Inn. Little twisty windy 35 mph type roads – farm roads from the past that went around, up, over , and around going down. Ah, yes, rural VA when not on a major highway! Hi hi.

## **Tuesday September 20 Day 8**

Today started out with a visit to an Associated Area AA20 – the Patrick Henry Red Hill Home. He bought this home when he retired. Henry was a fiery orator and leader in the Revolutionary War period and after. There's a nice visitor center, and a small charge to tour the grounds.



Patrick Henry Red Hill Farm

This was just a short distance from where I lived in the '71 to '83 period (Lynchburg VA ) but I never managed to visit it before. My van got 13 mpg back then so I guess I'd have thought long and hard about trips that weren't radio related! Hi hi.

Next up was over to the Appomattox Court House site. Here, General Lee surrendered to General Grant – ending the Civil War. You can see the court house where the surrender occurred and visit the various sites where the troops were located and skirmished until the surrender. I'd been here before, so it was just a quick put out the park visit then head to the next one.



If you are into history, you'll get your fill in the various sites around the east coast –

from the 3000-5000 years ago, to the wars throughout the last 300 years. Next up – Petersburg, VA BF08. Here, the Union tried to cut off supplies to Richmond which was the capital of the south. It's just south of Richmond. Did 100+ Qs and left. Bands not cooperating and many had run this before.

Then it was off to Richmond. The battles for this city took place all around – and I didn't find any good spots. The NPS web page listed a visitor center at the Tredwell Museum in downtown. I headed there – you have to pay \$3/hour (exact change required) to park there. I pulled it – they close at 5 and it was 4pm. Did a quick run – only had 3 one dollar bills. High QRN level as it is right downtown near big power lines. 56Q in 45 minutes and left and put the 3 one dollar bills into the machine to get out of the lot. Yuck. I hate places like that! Maybe there are other sites around to run. I'll let others look for them.



Richmond Battlefield Visitor Center

I found a Days Inn not too far away in Richmond. High security check in – what was I getting into? Bullet proof glass and the whole bit. 3 story building with a decent parking lot. I wandered out and found a 'family restaurant' – got a 'baked chicken dinner' – adequate - and headed back. Slept well. On the trip I'd hit the hay a bit after 9pm and was up at 5:45 raring to go. Of course, the bands slept in – and the sun didn't come up till 6:30 – but I had time to get to the next park and be ready after the normal breakfast at the motel.

## Wednesday September 21

I leave Richmond, VA and head toward Louisa County – and Green Springs Historic District Associated Area – AA09. There aren't any signs. You get off the interstate on route 15 and supposedly you are in it. Fortunately I printed off a map, but I didn't find a sign for it. Parked along the road and ran it. Weird. It's on both sides of the highway, too. Nothing noted. One of the stranger one of the 'park' units. Did my thing and took off to the next which was the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Battlefields. You can run this at at least 4 different locations. Stopped at the first one – the Wilderness Battle field in Orange County and put it out. A bit later, I stopped at the Chancellorville visitor center for a few more contacts. Later I passed by the historic church site, too. Good runs with 100 Qs total. We're back in the Civil War days again for the next couple.



Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania Park MP2

In between, there's a nice park you can run – Prince William Forest Park. This is another CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) from the Great Depression (1930s) that employed out of work folks on government programs. Nice preservation of the local Piedmont forest/trees. I sat in the 'picnic area' - only car – it was overcast, a weekday, and a few sprinkles coming down. Half an hour later a park security guy pulls up behind me. Sits for half an hour, then comes up and introduces himself. He's already checked me out. We chat about what I'm doing. He's fine with that but advises me to 'check in with the visitor center' next. I promise I'll do that when I leave. He sits behind me for another hour until I leave. Must have been a slow day for park security people. Later I stop by the visitor center (only car there) for a passport stamp. Guy at counter mentions that on weekends you can't even find a parking spot. Serendipity.



Prince William Forest Park DZ08

There's still time so I head to Manassas – another place where two significant battles took place. Once in 1861, the other in 1862. At the first one, tourists from DC actually came out to watch opposing forces fight each other. Many thought the Civil War would be over in a few weeks. It went 4 years. Did my runs then decided to head further north to get near the next site.

Drove an hour up to Knoxville MD in Washington County MD for a Knights Inn. Whoa....the C&O Canal, another park unit, is 1/4 mile from the motel! I pass over it getting to it...but have to drive 5 miles to find a spot to run it. Do – evening run and only 40 and 30m are working. 20 is dead. It's getting dark so back to the motel. Harpers Ferry is just a few miles away.

Dinner the restaurant across the street – NOT recommended. First time I've gotten a chicken salad with a load of french fries on top of it. Somehow, I don't think of french fries as 'salad ingredients'. Not much chicken in either. Sometimes you strike out.

### **Thursday September 22**

Today I'd hit Harper's Ferry historic site. This is where John Brown – the abolitionist, attempted to raid the armory at Harpers Ferry. The plan was to get the arms to give to slaves to fight the battle for freedom. He didn't succeed – was caught and hanged.

When the Civil War started, this site has on the border between the north and south. It

changed hands 8 times during the war. The armory and equipment was a prize – it was one of a few such installations. The south wound up moving most of the equipment further south while they had it. There were battles all around. It was early but I had a decent run. Many other have run this. Didn't stick around long.

Jeff, N8II invited me to stop on by his QTH. He lives not far away. I took a quick detour when I saw a sign for C&O Canal /towpath parking. I'd run this the night before – but 20m was dead. I pulled into the lot and did a quick run just on 20M. It wasn't a different activation since it was within a 24 hour period. Still, made a few folks happy with Jefferson County, WV and the park. HP08 on 20m.

Then on to an eyeball with Jeff, N8II. He's got an impressive antenna system.



Jeff, N8II

We yakked for half an hour, then I had to get moving to the next parks. So many parks and so little time, plus I wanted to hit DC on a weekend, so had to keep a moving.

Next up was Antietam – the site of the bloodiest one day Civil War battle in which 23,000 were killed, wounded, or went missing never to be found. Good lot and a good run. Can you imagine what the reaction would now be if the US lost, say, the same percentage of people in a single day battle in the mid east? Like 250,000 people

adjusted for the increased population of the US?



Antietam Battlefield BF01

Next up was Catocin Mountain Park – DZ01. This is a large park that preserves a large area northwest of DC. Set aside and improved during the Great Depression, and used by federal workers, this park also contains Camp David – the presidential retreat – although that is off limits to visitors. I found a spot to run it and put it out in one of the multiple trail parking lots. Not the best spot but it worked. Did 60Q. It has been run many, many times. Took what I could hear – then moved on. Bands is so -so shape many days.

Next up – Monocacy – the site where the South's third invasion of the North was stymied and Washington DC escaped destruction. Did 125Q in short order - then headed to a motel nearby in Frederick – Days Inn – and Golden Corral for dinner.



Monocacy

Tomorrow I'd head down to DC to fight the traffic to try and run some of the urban units.

Lots and lots of traffic and congestion and opportunities to get lost.

## Friday September 23

Today I start in Frederick MD – a bit late hoping to avoid the DC area morning rush hour. There's 47 miles down to DC. Doesn't work – get caught in Gaithersburg (Montgomery County) – in a creep and crawl 10 mile backup – gawkers looking at an accident on the other side of I-270. After a while, I get back up to speed, take the 'inner loop' of the Beltway and the GPS lady directs me to the north entrance to Rock Creek Park. It's a big urban park in DC that runs from downtown up to the MD border. I find the first parking lot – I'm almost the only one there – one other car – in a good size lot. Probably on a weekend you'd be lucky to find a spot at all. Good run – this hadn't been run very often for some reason. Not too many 'mobiles' in the DC area – just portable operations and often QRP. Had good runs then moved on.



Rock Creek Park

They've got nature centers, a planetarium, the old stone house and a raft of other places to visit within the park.

Next up – the Clara Barton site. While it's closed for renovation, the parking lot isn't! So one can run from the NPS lot and I do. Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross – and was active way back to the Civil War days. She lived in this house for half a dozen years and it was the HQ and Warehouse for the Red Cross.



Clara Barton – Montgomery County MD

I threaded my way through DC once again – and the antenna eating trees hanging down on most of the residential streets that you have to dodge, often using the middle of the narrow roads to escape them. Over the Chain Bridge into VA onto the GW Parkway – if you turn right you're in Fairfax VA – left in Arlington County VA. Somehow I got going the right direction. I find a spot to put out Arlington County, the Parkway and the 'three fer' with TR21 and TR22 – Captain John Smith Historic Trail and the Star Spangled Banner Trail. Those 3fers are nice. This is a bit nerve wracking. Good run.

Then it was out to Wolftrap for the Performing Arts. There's a beautiful amphitheater here. When I lived in DC ('83 to '90) I was lucky to catch name acts like Peter Paul and Mary and a dozen or more other fantastic shows there. In the winter, things move to the smaller Barns of Wolftrap. I found a parking lot – and it was nearly empty – 500 spaces to choose from. Good run.



Wolftrap National Park

Sat for 2 hours then realized I better get going to miss evening rush hour. You pay \$2.50 on the Dulles toll road to go the 3 or 4 miles to the exit for Wolftrap...and get to pay another \$2.50 for the 3 miles back. Ouch! Onto the 'outer loop' once again down to Alexandria to the Days Inn – one of the least expensive motels I could find in the DC area. Still \$80/night but many places were \$150 and up and many have parking garages – not exactly compatible with ham radio antenna systems. Dinner at a Mexican restaurant just up the road.

### **Saturday September 24**

Today, I'll head to some of the DC perimeter parks. I start out from the motel in Alexandria – and hit the Beltway a few miles away. I take the 'outer loop' over to MD and get off, heading south to Fort Washington Park. Located right on the Potomac River, this has been a strategic location with several generations of forts going back 200 years! The latest use was in WW2 to protect the shipping up the Potomac to Washington DC. There's a nice parking lot – so sat and ran the county down by the river. You can see the latest fort and a visitor center describing the site's history. After a quick early morning run (not many on 20), I headed to the next park just down the road.

Piscataway Park is a nature preserve type deal located right across from Mt Vernon. Using easements, the park has kept urban encroachment from the site – where you can see bald eagles, foxes, deer, beaver – in their natural environment. Good parking lot and quite a few visitors there. Better run – but these parks have been well run. No need for all out effort.



Piscataway Park MD – PG County

N4CD got back on the Beltway – outer loop up to Greenbelt MD – and Greenbelt Park. Hmm...congestion – creep and crawl for a bit on a Saturday. Finally the slowdown stops and I'm on my way. I get there and find – no cell data service. Dang. Well, I make runs on 20cw. Put lots of DX in the log – 15 stations, plus the usual US crowd – although not as many. Band conditions have not been great. I move to a different parking area (it's a park with half a dozen places to park) that is closer to the interstate and get marginal data service so I can spot myself. Works. More contacts in the log – and 30 and 40m. Almost no one shows up on 30M without a spot – parks or county hunters.

So far so good. Three parks knocked off in eight hours. Now a real adventure was about to start. I was going to try to run “Pennsylvania Avenue”. The part of this Avenue between the Capitol and the White House is a national park unit. There's no visitor center or parking lot for it. It's just the road, the sidewalks, the urban teeny parks along it with the statues – that's it. I'd hope to get 10 or more contacts – maybe as I drove along or was stopped at a traffic light. I punched in 1000 Pennsylvania Ave into the GPS – figuring that would be about half way between the two ends. Ugh! GPS

routed me back onto the Beltway and then east on Highway 50 in DC. Went smoothly for a few miles, then came to a creep and crawl situation. Highway signs said 'congestion ahead – special event - use Metro'. Huh? There's always a special event going on in DC. Metro is the subway and that won't do my mobile any good! So I head on in slowly. It's stop and go – 500 feet to the next traffic light it seems. Stop. Wait. And always 'red'. It takes half an hour to do the last mile or two.

As I get near, I hook up with Larry, K5RK. He'll spot me immediately when I get there. As I turn right onto PA avenue – I think it was from 5<sup>th</sup> street – there's a half a parking spot sitting there. Not quite enough space from the corner, but I take it anyway. I figure if I'm sitting in the car, I call pull right up behind the car in front, and probably won't get a ticket..

The noise is S5 to S7 on 20M SSB but start there. Larry is 40 over and so are the loud park chasers. Whew. Ten QSOs go by quickly, then 30 and 40. The lady driver of the car in front of me comes back and is going to pull out. As she does, I immediately pull up into a legal spot. Serendipity. Someone else immediately parks behind me and leaves. Finding a parking spot here is TOUGH. An empty spot stays empty for 10 seconds. People circle blocks looking for a space continually. I really lucked out. I sit there for another hour and 130 Qs go into the log. That's almost as many as had been made from here in the past 8 months! Most operations have been QRP stealth portable. The spot isn't perfect. I'm facing WNW – good shot to the west, blocked by 6 story buildings to the north and east, and partially blocked to the south 200 feet away by six story buildings. I'm a happy camper.

While I'm running I happen to glance in the rear view mirror and what do I see? I zoomed in the picture a bit here.



US Capitol Building on Penn Ave

This is what the traffic looked like out the window. Often it was bumper to bumper between the traffic lights.



Pennsylvania Ave looking NW

I'm worn out. The QRN isn't fun but I log what I can hear. Work everyone I can hear. Soon it is time to go. The place is crawling with people and cars and trucks and buses. It's a Saturday, too! I follow the GPS lady and she takes me right past the Mall and the brand new Smithsonian African American Museum – which opened today with a special Grand Opening. Yep, there's a big music venue to my right as I cross the mall and I see the museum. There are tens of thousands of people crossing streets and traffic control cops on every corner in every direction. Likely half a million people were there for the Grand Opening and celebration. Oh well. I eventually get through and get out of DC

back to the motel area. On the way I do a quick run for the Washington Rochambeau Trail TR23 – put 15 in the log and that's enough. I'm worn out. Back to the motel, Days Inn, in Alexandria. Dinner at a great American Steak and Buffet place nearby. It's been an exciting day. However, I'd had just about enough excitement. Time to plan an escape from DC area and head home.

## **September 25 Sunday**

Time to get home, but first a few more parks. I head out from the Days Inn in Alexandria and go north up into DC. First up is National Capital East Park. GPS doesn't seem to know where it is at, so I get lost trying to follow the written instructions on the web site. Things don't correlate. Finally use the Google Maps on the spotting pad to get to where I want to be – 15 extra miles and 20 minutes or more lost going in circles. OK.....I pull into the address on the web site – but there's a sign 'Authorized Vehicles Only'. OK...I'm not going in.

I pull out my DC maps (AAA maps good and the AAA Dallas area HQ is a 1000 foot walk from my house so I make good use of all their maps – dozens of them this year! There are 3 separate ones for the DC area)...trying to figure out exactly where 'capital east park(s) is.....and then the local security folks stop me. I spend the next 20 minutes sitting there while they check me out. Check the car registration, my driver's license, the car – front to back, under the hood, etc. Third degree. Seems the 'big antenna' has upset them for some reason. Eventually, after 3 cars pow-wow, they give up and I go down the road a half mile to pull off spots in 'the park' so they say. Dang. Well, DC is super security sensitive but no right minded terrorist is going to drive around with big antennas on his car. They use cell phones to set off their remote controlled bombs. Have a short early run and bug out for the next one – the LBJ Grove on the Potomac. After getting lost, another 20-25 minute delay by the security patrol folks, I'm not in a good mood.

Off to the next. Nice spot but there is no GPS address to use so once again use the spotting pad and Google Maps turn by turn directions to get there. Success. Still early in the morning so fairly short run, and I'm anxious to be heading home. Here's the view from the car of the marina there in the Potomac. Nice. So far the weather has cooperated with very little rain.



LBJ Grove on the Potomac

Now it was time to make my escape from DC and head out I66 to the Front Royal area for two more parks. I'd had my fill of DC, DC traffic, and DC parks. Enough!

Larry, K5RK calls me while I'm in DC. He tells me that yesterday a new park unit, Natural Bridge State Park and NPS Associated Area, were created – AA26, and that this is on my way home. No one has run it yet. Well, dang - virgin territory that EVERYONE needs. I get the info and put it on the agenda.

First, though are two more parks. Out near Front Royal, VA is the Shenandoah National Park. I head to the north entrance – go a few miles to an overlook and run the park. Good run. I don't push it because dozens of others have been here.



Shenandoah Park NP51

To get on the Honor Roll of park chasers, you've got to work 3/4 of the National Parks

that have been activated – 55 to date. So work the NP's from 1 to 59 when you hear them.

Then, at the intersection of I-81 and I-64 you can hit Cedar Creek and Belle Grove – another Civil War site – where once again the south was kept from invading Washington DC by a one day battle that slowed them down. Belle Grove is a plantation you can visit. This site is run by a foundation. Did a good run then back to the interstate.



Then it was back to the interstate for a couple hour trip down to the Roanoke VA area. I learned from Larry, K5RK, that Todd, N4USS and W4JAM , both from the Lynchburg VA area, were headed there and would be there hours before I arrived. OK.....we'd have a whole group giving it out. We'd have a good first day showing! It took a couple hours of driving to get down there. It's just a few miles off the interstate – and well marked. I found the visitor center and sat in the lot – a bit of QRN – and did the first runs. Didn't hear N4USS. He called me half an hour later and invited me to the hill top half a mile away where they were sitting. Went up there – better spot and we took turns giving out the park. A couple hundred contacts went in the log for all of us.

This had just been created the day before when Virginia made it the 37<sup>th</sup> state park officially. It also turned into an NPS “associated area” - AA26 at the same time. Likely half the park hunters or more weren't even aware of the new entity and missed it.



Natural Bridge VA - AA26

That evening I stayed in Roanoke at the Super 8. Dinner across the street at a Mexican restaurant. Tomorrow it would be all day headed to home over 1000 miles away. I had to resist the NPOTA Auto-pilot that tugged at me for turn offs for the Blue Ridge Parkway, Cumberland Gap NP, Great Smoky Mountain NP, Shiloh, Little Rock Central School, William Jefferson Clinton Boyhood Home, etc. Just down the road at the speed limit plus a few. Stopped that night in Hazen AR just before Little Rock - and made it home the next day after noon. Whew.

Stats: 4774 miles in 16 1/2 days, 5,300 park QSOs plus another thousand plus county hunter contacts, 56 new park units bringing the total to 260 different units run, and 41,300 miles on the car in 7 months.

## Kansas QSO Party

**K0S mobile (K5CM, N5KW ops) 1134 cw 114 ssb QSO**

All Q's are important, but stations worked the most:

20 or more: N6MU, N8II, W1DWA, K4BYN

13 or more: K4BAI, KN4Y, K7IA, VE7JH, W2YC, W4UT, K0CCM, VE7CV

11 or more: SP9LJD, NO5W, K3TW, W9FZ, K9NW, W7GF, W4OC, K7TQ, K0DEQ, K3WJV

9 or more: W7OM, N3RJ, WB5JID, KM4FO, NA2X, N2CQ, NW0M, WA4GQG, KJ4LTA

The strongest DX: SP9LJD.

Not the strongest DX but patient to get his call through: UA3AGW

Strong and easy to pick out of pile up: N8II

Not the strongest, but easy to pick out of a pile up: VE9AA, N6MU

Only one station on 15 meters (LW3EX).

Should have followed W0BH - Bob's advice about dirt roads. Didn't get stuck but sure took a while to get the truck clean.

Frequency assignment did not work for me but did find one that worked most of time. The only mobile we crossed paths with was N0U in Harper county. He quickly found my CQ frequency and worked me.

We are not yet to the bottom of this cycle so were just going to have to get used to the conditions and make the best of it.

73,

Connie and Pam

K5CM and N5KW

### **N8II - fixed – WV - 315 cw 160 ssb**

I have to say without a doubt that the KS guys with some out of state help mobilize more operators to take part in their QSO party for longer periods than any other state per capita by at least a factor of 2 times! In only VA (not from here!), FL, PA, TX, or CA QP's is it possible to work more Q's. I am not sure, but would guess that I may have broken the out of state record even with no activity and very little prop if any on 15M (the band may have opened around 24Z on Es). This was aided by a certain mobile who passed out multiple calls, K0A (W0BH) and company. There were so many mobiles who operated nearly the entire party and it was a wonder two didn't collide somewhere in eastern KS

where several times mobiles in the same county were worked within a few minutes. Eastern KS was very well covered and all counties were active. I am sort of getting used to the 40+ 1X1 calls active; It is getting a bit easier to wrap my brain around logging them. I did not chase spots endlessly; spotters seemed to be pretty sparse.

The first 2 hours or so has down right hectic with many fixed 1X1 calls on 20 along with the mobiles along with a few 40M Q's. During the middle of the day, 40 was nearly a lost cause especially on Sunday from here; many guys spotted were in the noise with N0R/M having by far the best mobile signal and he was quite loud on 20 was well. It is about 1000 miles to the east border of KS from here. That was about the ideal distance to KS on 20 meters with the lower solar flux; even the weaker guys never really disappeared into the noise and some mobiles were over S9 along with fixed stations using wires. Things did weaken up slightly mid day and around 23Z Jerry W0L/M with his KW was barely readable, but I guess some Es started by 24Z and OH stations which had been fairly weak or mostly skipping over me on 40 became quite loud which kept 20 open until the end of Saturday at 02Z. Luckily there was only backscatter to OH on 20 which helped my ability to S&P without exhaustion, but 40 and 80 were a different story and activity on 40 from KS never seemed to take off during the evening. By far the biggest strain and slowest QSO rate period was the last 2 hours Saturday with low activity on 20 and almost nothing on 80. Some mobiles finished their routes early as well. Sunday was not too bad with seldom over 5 minutes between Q's and no OH competition on phone, but few new fixed stations were worked on phone. The OH QRM at 16Z Saturday probably cut the KS 20M phone activity by 50%, but it was largely gone by 20-21Z.

Congrats to N6MU for his annual sweep and making essentially the same score. Dedicated great op with few breaks equals out better signal with less dedication. I was a bit surprised John equaled my 20 M phone total as I was able to run a few KS stations.

73, Jeff

**W0O - mobile - 1182**

My apologies to those who tried to work me from BRO/ATC/DON at the end of the

contest on Sunday afternoon. Mother Nature decide to park a Kansas style thunderstorm over my head and between the hard rain, rain static, and pea size hail it was hard to hear anyone. You haven't operated mobile contesting until you try operating when it's hailing; I can cross that off my buck list now. I also discovered that mobile antennas make for excellent E-field probes and I found myself as an unwilling participate in a study of E-field build-up vs lightening. I had at least a half a dozen really near field cloud to ground lighting hits in that last hour. I could hear the static build up from nothing to 20 over S9 and then BAM, lightning, only to start all over again. So if you called me and I didn't respond during that last hour, this was why. I also discovered that the weather for the Kansas QSO party tends to be bit warmer than that during the Minnesota QSO party. A benefit is that I found that my cup of coffee stayed warm for a lot longer.

Thanks for all the Q's

73, Jon

**W0L - K5YAA 694 cw 26 ssb qso**

Recording can be hazardous. The mic slipped out from between the headset used to gather audio from the K3 when WAB county came into play and remained on the seat until the last Q on Saturday night so the score is an estimate until Bob W0BH can sort things out.

I found activity to be considerably reduced from last year's run even though 20 was in fairly good shape for the entire run. DX signals were stout much of the daylight hours. Every state except ND and AK were worked and all but VO1 VE4 and VY1 were worked in Canada. 720 Qs are less than half of last years tally.

My assigned "mobile" frequency of .041 often found NPOTA, /VY0 and Ohio base station KWs that didn't stay above .045 occupying .041 so to not be a nuisance I slipped down to .0405 trying to avoid the QRP ragchewers who have gripped before about a fast loud mobile upsetting their work. Had to walk a fine line on 20 most of the time. Evening hours were better but the daytime found all sorts of hurdles.

The WX was actually outstanding for Kansas this time of the year. A few momentary rain downpours had the wipers on full blast but those events were few and far between.

SP9LJD, DK3BN and SM5CIL called often and had some VFB DX signals. Thanks to the many stateside ops who followed the van around the Eastern part of the state. Keyer usage was improved this year from last but that doesn't mean a / an L and even numbers like 0 had all the parts sent in the correct order every time. The road wasn't causing the missteps it was simply the operator.

Thanks again to Bob Harder W0BH for his untiring effort to "get out the vote" as I know the time it takes to organize these things.

73 - Jerry K5YAA AKA W0L

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### **N0R - mobile N5NA operator 1158 QSO**

Activity seemed down a bit from last year or it could have been band conditions. My total QSOs and mults are both down compared to last year. I probably could have made a few more QSOs on Saturday. I arrived at my destination about 2 hours early so decided to call it a night and have dinner.

I covered a total of 32 counties this year, 20 on Saturday and 12 on Sunday. I made it to my last county, Wyandotte, with two minutes remaining and only made 6 QSOs in that county. I should have skipped lunch I guess!

Sunday afternoon I had some thunderstorms in NE Kansas making copy difficult, especially on 40m.

Thanks to everyone who called and a big thanks to my wife, K5AKS, for driving!

Thanks to the following stations for contributing more than half the QSOs:  
N6MU(34), N8II(31), WB5JID(27), K0DEQ(27), K4BYN(23), NW0M(20), W1DWA(20), W9FZ(20), W7OM(18), WA8REI(18), AC0CU(17), NO5W(16), K7TQ(16), K0CCM(15), W4UT(15), VE7JH(15), W2CVW(14), K3WJV(14), KA5VZG(13), W2YC(13), K5KDG(13), K7IA(12), K3TW(12), W5LXS(12),

W2RR(12), WA4GQG(11), W4OC(11), N4RS(11), VE7CV(11), K4BAI(11), W0PI(10), KN4Y(10), KM4FO(10), KJ4LTA(10), DK2OY(10), N2CQ(10), W7GF(10), KE0TT(9), KF3G(9), SP9LJD(9), ON4AAC(9), K4YT(8), NA2X(8), WC7Q(8), K5HP(8), K4ORD(8), ND3R(8), N3RJ(7), AI6O(7), N4DW(7), K5WAF(7), WX4G(7)

### **KN4Y - fixed FL - 166 cw QSO**

What a fun exciting QSO party on CW working the mobiles as they sped from county to county. Active fixed stations added to the CW mix. Spelled out the stamp words. Missed several counties taking wife to eat and attending church, but 78% better than last year.

### **NO5W (at W5GAD - fixed -LA 137 cw 23 ssb QSO**

This was a fun QSO party! Having operated mobile in two KS QP but unable to go mobile this year, I wanted to put in a fairly serious effort from the outside looking in. Fortunately I had time to do that, although I had to terminate Saturday operation early due to a thunderstorm in the area.

The mobiles were outstanding. I worked sixteen different mobiles: N0R(16), N0U(12), W0O(12), W0L(11), K0S(11), N0Y(10), K0A(10), W0E(8), N0K(8), W0R(7), K0P(5), N0N(4), N0T(4), N0A(3), N0Q(3), N0P(2). All had excellent signals into the New Orleans area and apparently I was being heard in KS as most responded on the first call and required minimal fills.

The only slow period for me was around 1500z Sunday morning when it seemed like all of the CW stations had vanished. It was so slow I decided to try SSB and that set the stage for going to SSB periodically throughout Sunday.

Many thanks to the Jefferson ARC (<http://w5gad.org/>) for use of their antennas and their BYOR operating position. Also thanks to the mobiles who made the effort to rove around KS and to Bob-W0BH for outstanding organization of the KSQP.

## **WB0TEV mobile 120 SSB QSO**

My first foray into the KSQP from within the state. Only operated for 1 hour as my prime reason for coming to KS from TX was to visit my daughter in Wichita. Set up on a 4 county intersection BUT/COW/SED/SUM and went at it for an hour. Had fun. Tried 15m once but no joy.

## **K0A (W0BH N0QD ops) multi mobile 737 cw 353 ssb**

The 2016 Kansas QSO Party by W0BH as K0A/m

There are two questions that usually wait until the last minute to be answered in the Kansas QSO Party. Will we be able to field all 45 1x1 calls? And what route should I take this year? True to form, question one was answered during the last week when several new Rookie ops stepped up to cover the last several 1x1 calls. And question two waited for an answer until Thursday (last year it was Friday) with several last minute routes coming in that really helped the county situation.

To cover all the calls this year for our KANSAS, SUNFLOWER and QSOPARTY spelling challenge, XYL Lorna/k0why applied for N0T and Aaron/n0qd who has driven for me before, applied for N0Q. Then Ron/af5q emailed from Texas with a broken down car and said he would be unable to put K0P/m on this year, so he gave me permission to run his call as well. This was turning out to be an interesting weekend!

As coordinator, I wait until the last minute to put out a route so I can cover holes in the maps. Our main goal is to have all 105 counties covered both CW and SSB, preferably by more than one operator. I also try to have all counties covered on Saturday and as many as possible on Sunday for our Sunday-Only operators. Last year we had all the counties scheduled to be covered but came up one short. John/n6mu missed only that one on Saturday, so I was determined to not have that happen this year. I also wanted to cover as many NPOTA sites as I could since 2016 is the year of the National Parks on the Air.

My Saturday route went north to pick up several NPOTA sites and the only missing Saturday county. Sunday went west to cover a number of missing (and sparsely covered) Sunday counties and another NPOTA site. I really wanted to get to Haskell county which was our only county with just one operator. With

only six hours on Sunday, I decided to put myself in a position to go there if necessary (it's almost on the Colorado border), but left it off my planned route. Luckily, KK6MC did a great job of covering it and saved me lots of driving. Thanks, Duffey, and thanks to all our other mobiles for similar good coverage.

## **Saturday**

We had a tremendous amount of rain in the days leading up to the KSQP, but the weekend was forecast to be relatively dry and the forecast was mostly correct. Lorna volunteered to drive on Saturday. We were immediately found on 40m by N6MU and it went from there. My listed frequency was 37 which worked fine on 40m but was occupied by K5KG/m on 20m. George was a surprise visitor from Florida who just happened to find himself mobile in Kansas during the Kansas QSO Party and didn't know about our frequency assignments. He's famous for (among other things) his mobile exploits in the Florida QSO Party as K4KG/m, so we were honored to have him join us. I just went to one of the alternate frequencies and stayed there the rest of the day with no problems.

When we first went to SSB, I started putting out K0P for Ron and let Lorna put out N0T with a hand mic while she was driving. She was so popular that she started to worry about safety, so she told me to go ahead and put her call out, too. She concentrated on driving and didn't miss a turn, but enjoyed listening to the conversations. Putting out three calls gave me the instant equivalent of a three-county line. On SSB it wasn't hard to explain and everyone liked collecting the new letters. On CW, some ops got confused as would be expected, so I did less of it on CW. On CW, the easiest was to simply pick a call and call CQ. I logged everything into one log with a designation of which call I was using, then split out the logs later. Of course it really cut down on my personal K0A/m QSO total, but the idea was to get the calls out there so everyone could find the letters they needed. That worked!

I was so busy operating and logging that I honestly don't remember much of the run itself. I do remember the stops. Our first NPOTA stop was at the Kansas Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, a very green place this year with all the rain. As I was finishing up my run, I was visited by W0NXS/Lonnie and K0EMP/Tim who were running an all day NPOTA operation there at PV15. While we were talking, K0GPJ/Murl and KE0AKL/Lalana who lived close to the preserve, came over and joined the conversation. One of my favorite parts of the KSQP is meeting you all, and this was really special!

The other NPOTA stop was at the Hollenburg Pony Express Station where the Oregon, California, and Pony Express trails come together. The site has the actual restored station which was being prepared for a celebratory event on Sunday (activated by K0ASA). Lorna was able to visit the station while I made contacts and had a quick lunch.

The trip back to W0BH near Hesston went smoothly, but with an hour to go, my radio (an IC7000) rebooted. I was using batteries with a power booster, so my first thought was power, but I had a solid 13.8 volts to the the radio so that wasn't it. My next transmissions showed good SWR but reduced power and more reboots on both CW and and SSB on both radio stacks. Antenna? Radio? Wasn't sure. By then, we weren't far from home in a county I'd already worked, so rather than blow a radio, I decided to stop, head home, and check it out. I took off all the antennas, tightened a few coax connectors, and everything seemed back to normal. After I cleaned up the van, Ron/ad0dx and his XYL, Kathy, drove up for their overnight stay. Great fun rehashing the runs over a good meal. We ended the day with 1277 contacts in the combined log.

## **Sunday**

We were up early Sunday to a beautiful, cool morning. Ron and I spent some time readying the vehicles, and Aaron/n0qd arrived in time for breakfast. We headed out a few minutes late with me driving and Aaron putting out N0Q for the first time. McPherson is a big county, so it was about 45 minutes before we crossed into Rice county and switched seats.

I started out on CW and my first call caused the radio to reboot. Uh-ooh. Same story on SSB. Fresh batteries, so for sure that wasn't the problem. After more antenna swapping, I decided it was likely the radio or something in the radio feed which was hard to get to, so I decided to swap out the entire radio system and antennas. I had a second radio system installed in a milk crate which worked great multi/multi from 73 counties in the Georgia QSO Party last April, so I just connected the batteries and antenna and we were good to go. I still couldn't get the antenna stacks to tune (maybe it's an antenna issue with one of the stacks), so I put on a single 20m resonator which gave us full power on 20CW. We had to stop and switch out resonators to get to 20SSB, and for some reason 40CW didn't tune, but at least we were on the air. The whole process put us 45 minutes behind schedule and everyone was worried since they couldn't find us, but we were back!

With Aaron's call, we could now put out four 1x1 calls, so the pileups were crazy! On Saturday, I made a real effort to always go to 40m for our close-in gang, so I'm sorry we couldn't do that on Sunday. We took a bit of a break at NPOTA site Ft Larned which was also on the Sante Fe trail. I recalculated our route and found out our radio issue cost us a net of two counties (which had already been covered by other mobiles). I've been really lucky to not have radio issues the last number of QSO parties, but it's happened before and it will happen again. That's mobile contesting!

## Stats

We operated 14.9 hours, 793 miles, 2174 combined Qs, 429 unique calls (down from 493 last year) 22 dupes, one radio.

States not worked ----- : ME VT DE OK AK WY NE ND

## W0BH Award Winners - First Place - Very Honorable Mention

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Most overall Qs ---- N6MU/46 ----- N8II/37 ---- W1DWA/N4UT 19  
Most CW Qs ----- N6MU/27 ----- N8II/22 ---- W1DWA/19  
Most PH Qs ----- N6MU/19 ----- N8II/15 ---- KE3ZT/10  
Most counties ----- N6MU/27 ----- N8II/23 ---- W1DWA/19

There are lots of people to thank for the 2016 Kansas QSO party success. The Santa Fe Trail ARC once again ran KS0KS as our BONUS station and "wild card" in the spelling competition. We also had two Kansas school stations (Emporia State and Kansas University) to thank as well as our non-1x1 Kansas stations. Our mobiles and fixed stations covered all 105 counties. Preliminary reporting has N6MU with his sixth sweep in a row, and N8II missing only one county. We also had a number of enthusiastic Kansas Rookies joining us who represented Kansas well. We hope you all return next year!

Special thanks to our out-of-state mobiles Ron/ad0dx, Jon/w0zq, Jerry/k5yaa, Bill/nu0q, Alan/n5na, Mark/ki0i, Connie/k5mc and Pam/n5kw, Duffey/kk6mc, George/K5KG and Victor/WB0TEV for visiting our state (and Ron/af5q for trying to!). That gave us fifteen mobiles this year, or 19 mobile callsigns if you count all the extra 1x1 calls put out by the mobiles. Ron/ad0dx put out N0N/m

for Nate/N0NB. THANK YOU THANK YOU to all.

Thanks to those of you who spotted the mobiles on the traditional spotting networks. Those spots, and our customized spotting network link, once again set up by Richard/k0rcj and Kent/kb0rwi, allowed a number of you to find that last letter needed to spell KANSAS, SUNFLOWER, or QSOPARTY and grab an antique amateur stamp or three for your certificate. Thanks to Bruce/ki5te for his continuing help with the stamps.

We also want to thank the Ohio and Hawaii QSO Parties for sharing the weekend with us. It was fun putting OH in the log and it was really nice to have matching exchanges. The Ohio stations for the most part respected our mobile window, and I gave instructions to our Kansas CW ops to stay low and out of the listed Ohio QSO Party frequencies. We personally put only one HI contact in the log, and it wasn't even for my own K0A/m call! DX conditions both west and east just weren't great again this year, but thanks to the DX who did make it through.

As before, the best part of this was getting to meet or exchange emails with many of you as we all tried to make this work. With your help, we did. Keep in touch. Any suggestions for the 2017 Kansas QSO Party (our ninth), or comments about this one are always welcome ... !

73, Bob/w0bh/k0a with Lorna/k0why/n0t and Aaron/n0qd/n0q  
2016 KSQP Coordinator

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**N0T mobile - (W0BH K0WHY) 190 cw 236 ssb**

Lorna drove as part of the K0A/m operation and got on the air from time to time to put out the T in QSOPARTY. W0BH operated the CW contacts for her. See the K0A/m post for the complete story.

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**N0Q (N0QD W0BH) mobile 64 cw 146 ssb**

Aaron drove on Sunday as part of the K0A/m operation and got on the air from

time to time to put out the Q in QSOPARTY. W0BH operated the CW contacts for him.

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### **K0P (W0BH) mobile 180 cw 236 ssb**

Ron/AF5Q had every intention of driving up from Texas and running a route, but he had last minute car problems and was unable to come. He gave me permission to put his call on the air as part of the K0A/m operation so everyone had a chance at the P in QSOPARTY. It was a fun call to put on the air. Hope you can make it next year, Ron!

### **N0U mobile (NU0Q operator) 793 CW QSO**

Thanks to W0BH for organizing another great Kansas QSO Party and thanks to all who worked me. The weather was relatively cool, but we did have to deal with a few storms.

We made 793 QSOs, all CW. There were 517 QSOs on 20 meters and 276 on 40 meters.

I rarely encounter other mobiles on the road, but this year was an exception. As we passed the Seward/Meade county line, we could see N0Y just south of the highway straddling the county line. Then in Harper county, we worked K0S going the other way on the highway. Late on Saturday, we spotted W0E on the other side of the median on I-35. Of course, in all of these instances, I knew someone was close, as my IC-706MKIIg was swamped, even with the attenuator on. I guess with so many mobiles around, we were bound to encounter a few on the road.

About two hours into the party, my computer decided to shut down suddenly without warning. Fortunately, it only happened once, and I have no idea what happened. I don't think I lost any data. We were only about ten minutes away from our planned lunch break, so I was able to let the computer restart while we ate our Subway sandwiches in Medicine Lodge. Otherwise, the CQ/X software written by NO5W worked reasonably well. All three of my USB ports are in use by the GPS, rig interface, and K1EL keyer. And I run Street Atlas in a

separate window so I can see the county lines approaching.

The assigned CW frequency plan for mobiles worked well most of the time, but there were a few times that an Ohio station or a Kansas 1x1 fixed station showed up below 040. The bigger problem was the DX on 14034 (I didn't listen long enough to find out who it was, but it looks like it was VP6J on Pitcairn) that was listening up. This was a problem on both mornings for a few hours. I went up to around 14043, and most people seemed to find me. I'm sure others had to deal with this also, and I hope I didn't end up on someone else's frequency.

We thought our planned Saturday route was aggressive, but we got to the end of the route about three hours early. So, we decided to extend the route eastward into Franklin County so we could eat some famous fall-off-the-bone ribs at Guy and Mae's tavern. As we arrived, the skies were threatening, so I took down the antenna (Little Tarheel II) and thought the day was over, but after dinner, the storm was gone, so we reran a few counties on the way back to our hotel in Emporia. Sorry for the confusion.

Sunday went according to plan for the most part. However, we saw a storm south of us when we were in Elk County. Following our plan, we turned south to Chautauqua County, but when we got into the rain (and lightning!), we decided to turn around. We did make some contacts there, but we would have made more if the weather had been better. As it was, we arrived at the end of our route at our hotel only five minutes before the end of the party. It was really busy at the end. I was surprised that Sedgwick County would be so popular!

I tried to run both 20 and 40 meters in every county, but I somehow missed 40 meters in a few counties. Sorry about that. Both bands worked fairly well, with a little bit of DX showing up both days. I was pleased that there was a fair amount of activity on 40 meters, more than I remember in prior years.

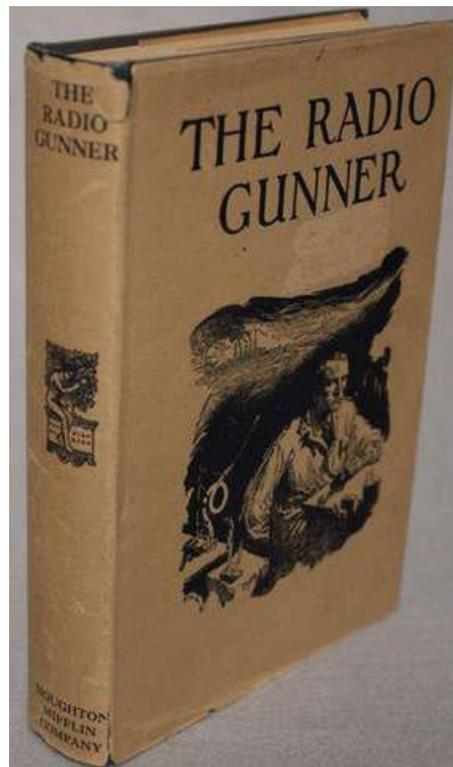
## HI QSO Party

Reports of activity from the west coast were numerous, but not too many others across the country. Ed, KN4Y, caught 3 from FL. The lack of 15m for most hurt. Darn sunsots.

### AH6KO 422 cw QSO

Tried for a more focused CW effort this year. The 3-band dipole is up a little higher in the ohia trees now. I planned to go for 18 hours, but could only hear signals for 13. All bands went quiet at 2100Z on Sunday for a few hours, but 20m came back nicely for an entertaining finish. I was surprised to work only 6 Hawaii mults on CW; perhaps with spotting I could have found more of you (no Internet at our radio QTH)

## Book Review of the Month Radio Gunner



This month we head back to the 1920s.....1924 to be exact for Radio Gunner – by anonymously - Alexander Forbes – a Harvard physiologist. It's fiction.

This 318 page book is about a future war (taking place in 1937) utilizing "modern" weapons including advanced radios and torpedoes.

It starts out in 1924 as two good buddies, just back from the War to End All Wars – WW1 – was over. Mortimer and Evans are good buddies. Then it quickly moves to 1937 and back into a war situation.

In 1937 Sam Mortimer is Secretary of the Navy, and Jim Evans in an almost unknown but highly successful physicist who has made radio his life study. In this year a world war breaks out and the United States is, after a few months, inevitably drawn in. It seems that Turkey and Russia have managed to convince all the major powers around the Mediterranean to form together (Spain, Italy, Greece) and take over that sea- totally – wiping out all the navies of the 'northern Europeans in the Mediterranean quickly.

Malta is lost. Gibraltar has fallen. They've developed deadly new submarines.

Mortimer, as Secretary of the Navy, turns to Evans as the most capable scientific man available. So Evans becomes the "Radio Gunner" and it is his genius which forms the most thrilling thread in this romance of the navy. Radio signaling in the air and water, marvelous photography from airships, psychological detectors which make it possible to tell whether or not a man is lying, the thwarting of traitors, and destruction of fleets, form interesting features of the story.

What's a bit disturbing is that folks are still using ancient transmitters in 1937. Onne gets zero input on whether they are even using vacuum tubes....but it's a bit hilarious as they struggle to use ancient technology in the late 1930s. Well, amusing but it really shows how dated things can be in just 13 years!

The main focus of the book seems to be on 'coordinating things' – like an entire fleet of battleships spaced out – to move in synchronization as if 'one organism'. That was Forbes main area of interest at Harvard.

This isn't a book you want to rush out and read. However, the price was right for me, and it was digested in a few hours – with some dispensation of technology belief – for a fairly good story. Very very light on technology and the advances that came about quickly. In fact, they missed most of them and were wrong on a bunch of other things. No wonder folks have never heard of it before!

## Ohio QSO Party

**W8JPF - fixed OH 206 CW QSO**

Thunderstorm rolled through about halfway through; seemed to cause problems for many people. Worked two people from Germany, one from Czech Republic and one from Costa Rica (twice). 15m was pretty much dead, as expected; 20 was light;

40m died pretty early and 80 started hopping late. Things got so quiet in late p.m. that I went and mowed the lawn then got soaked by a T-storm. Overall conditions disappointing. My vertical antenna is clearly not good for in-state contacts. Thanks to all who came by. 73.

## Colorado QSO Party

It looks like there were one or two mobiles and up to 30 counties on the air this year. Band conditions were not good for the event.

### **N0AC/mobile 270 cw qso**

This was my first single operator mobile/rover contest and I see a lot to be learned. My XYL is an amateur photographer and rode along so our first objective was to trade ham radio time with amateur photography.

The day before the contest we drove to The Great Sand Dunes for sunset pictures. While she shot I activated NP25 then PV09. The next morning we got up early for sunrise pictures but were plagued by thick fog. It seems like conditions for photography is sometimes like propagation, poor as I found the rest of the day. We traded sites throughout the day looking for photo opportunities in each county we visited. We quit at Gunnison where after dinner I drove to the GUN/MOT county line until it got dark then pulled the plug for the day.

The next morning I activated Curicenti RC06 and Black Canyon of the Gunnison - NP06 then we began the trek home to EstesPark via some of the most scenic, historic, and photo rich parts of Western Colorado.

If I include my 138 NPOTA QSOs to the CoQSO party QSOs I beat Donna's 350 photos for the weekend but not by much.

Thanks to those that QSOed or tried to QSO with me this weekend. For a run down

on the mobile station see my QRZ.COM page

**N6MU - fixed - CA 67 cw qso 31 mults**

Poor conditions along with a lack of activity on CW made for a loong day. Heard three mobiles. Top for me was W0ETT with 21 Qs followed by W0ZA with 10 Qs and N0AC with 8 Qs. Basically just waited for the mobiles to change counties. Thanks to those few fixed stations who did play. 73...

John, N6MU

**N8II fixed WV- 444 cw 76 ssb qso**

Conditions were disturbed with a high K index throughout the day. 20 was barely open at 1404Z when I started only on for 5 minutes, and still pretty poor when I got back from family lunch at 1755Z. About an hour to 90 minutes later signals started to improve quite a bit on 20 and the band stayed open through 0148Z when I quit for the day with a booming signal from KT0DX right before that. Many thanks to mobiles Ken W0ETT who I managed to work on 40 all daylight a couple of times, Bill N0AC for all time new county Hinsdale, and Greg W0ZA for keeping it interesting. I was able to run quite a few CO stations who just happened by on 20 phone which also kept me going. Jefferson and El Paso counties were very well represented and many rare to semi-rare ones were on as well.

Thanks for the Q's and counties,  
73, Jeff

## Tennessee QSO Party

Lots of QSO's from fixed stations, some racking up over 300 QSOs. W4NZ multi-op

mobile did a great job (over 20 counties). Still many counties were missing.

### **K1GU mobile QRP**

Operated from three different counties and two NPOTA NPS parks using a KX3. In accordance with the rules, entry is either three separate fixed logs, or a checklog as I set up anew at each stop. This was my first foray doing multiple locations in a contest.

### **W4NZ multi-op mobile** 1007 cw QSO (W4NX and K0EJ, ops)

The W4NZ/m team this year was Mark K0EJ, Maegan (Mark's daughter) the chief navigator/schedule keeper and myself. We made a couple of adjustment in our route from previous years which allowed us to add a new county(MARSHALL)for a total of 25. It's still roughly 450 miles of travel. Our setup consisted of an Icom 756proIII @100 watts and two Hustler mobile antennas mounted on the roof of my Chevy Trailblazer. Things were a bit slow in the early hours. We always tried to spend some time on 20/40M in each county but conditions on 20 were not good and the long skip did not support any rate. Seems only a few stations were on 20, namely VE9AA, K9YC and VE3KZ-thanks! As sunset approached everything changed. It was a different contest. 40m did go long early but before it did we had some full-blown roaring pileups which also moved to 80m late. Thanks to all those who called in and for waiting as we worked our way through all the callers.

Some of the QSO leaders were:

VE9AA - 33!! loud on most bands, Mike! Thanks!

NW0M - 26 thanks, Mitch!

VE3KZ - 26 you always seem to find us, Bob, thanks!

K9YC - 23 always there when we went to 20m, Jim, thanks!

N8II - 26 never have to worry about a WV mult, thanks, Jeff!

WE5EE - 19 - love that call!!

Thanks to every station who stopped by and gave us a call.

73, Ted for the W4NZ/m team.

### **KI0I - fixed MO 64cw 18 ssb**

No 20m q's from western MO, only a couple very weak signals copied there. Seemed that the mobile activity was limited , thanks to W4NZ and K4ZGB plus a couple others for the mobile qso's.

### **KJ4LTA - fixed - AL - 32 cw 29 ssb 31 cw mults 29 ssb mults**

### **WB9KPT - fixed - CO 472 SSB QSO**

Had some intense pileups on 20M and 40M. Signals kept changing direction and strength on 20M, never quite sure who would call you! Most surprising QSOs were VP8NO on 20M and TI2EMG on 40M.

### **K4ZGB mobile made 420 cw contacts**

### **N8II – Fixed WV – 113 cw 84 ssb**

It was not an ideal TQP, stalwart N4ZZ, Don did not go mobile this year and conditions were very poor above 40M with a high K index. There was never a hint of anything on 20 except mostly very weak backscatter. I think I caught W4NZ/M up there twice. I check 20 phone a couple of times and heard nothing and nil on QSY with N4BCD although he heard me. But what was lost on 20 was somewhat gained on 40 and 80. Even western TN was within range on 40 all day and signals were loud from 2030Z until the skip zone crept over eastern TN starting around 2215Z, but improving around 2330Z. By 0030Z eastern TN was mostly skipping over on 40 and my last QSO there was just after 02Z. By 2330Z, 80 was open well and perhaps at its best around 0030Z as signals did not seem to improve later and the noise level from distant storms which at first was very low was a steady drone the last 90 minutes. 160 was very workable, only W4TTM was weak when we moved. I moved guys who were fairly loud on 80 and would be new mults on 160, did not bother the rest. K4TCG was the only TN station who gave 160 a real go and he was not busy. By 0130Z activity on 80 was well on its to a very slow

last half hour as TN stations had worked out most of what they could. I had very good results running on 40 phone, a stark contrast to 75M where activity was quite low despite very good conditions; K4TAX/QRP was a solid 10 db over S9 on my generous S meter. 80 CW activity overall was decent. At about 0020Z I asked W4NZ/M for a QSY from 40 to 80 where I think they had not been yet; they were pretty solid copy the rest of the evening and more that doubled their 20M QSO total on 80 CW!  
80 became their money band.

Mark (K0EJ) with Ted W4NZ/M logged me 26 times, thanks so much for keeping it interesting until the end. Tom, K4ZGB/M was on until a least 0210Z and provided many rare mults; thanks Tom for so many QP QSO's over the years. I also worked mobiles K1GU and Jules, N2WN just a few times. There seemed to be no mobiles active on SSB. K4TCG was quite active which helped and a couple other fixed stations were worked 4 times including N4VV and NS4X.

I tried to concentrate on mults with a lot of frustrating listening on 20 and no answers to 80 and 75M CQ's. Some nice mults called in on 40 phone. Many thanks for the QSO's and thanks to TCG for sponsoring TQP.

73, Jeff

## Our Expensive National Parks

Here's some interesting tidbits from a National Park Study. (From a few years ago)

- -----

Visitors to national parks have been threatened with trespassing charges , obstructed from paying their respects at a memorial to those who lost their lives in service to our country, and turned away from other National Park Service sites closed due to a lack of funding. All of this began occurring before the government shutdown in October. Perhaps more than any other part of the federal government, our National Park System has become the symbol of Washington, DC dysfunction

.  
These cherished national treasures , which were entrusted to the National Park Service to

be preserved and protected, have instead been neglected or abused for political gamesmanship. Just as important programs like Medicare and Social Security have been raided for decades to pay for politicians' pet projects, Washington has also plundered the National Park Service budget to create new parks and programs with little national significance. And as the lack of budget discipline has driven up the national debt and jeopardized the solvency of retirement programs and our nation's future, the misplaced priorities within the parks budget are endangering the care of the very sites we all revere.

Last year alone, the National Park Service delayed more than a quarter billion dollars in much needed maintenance projects, adding to the \$11.5 billion maintenance backlog already threatening the health, safety, and accessibility of park visitors.

This year, mere days after sequestration supposedly caused the delay in the opening of and shorter hours at national parks, the President single-handedly established three new National Park units. Likewise, Congress spent \$57 million to purchase more property for the parks, some land for nearly \$1 million per acre. No one would purchase a new car while ignoring a leaking ceiling or broken pipes in their own home, but that is essentially what Washington is doing with our national parks.

Now some members of Congress are proposing the creation of a national park on the moon! The legislation would require the park to be established within a year even though no one has walked on the moon in 40 years and it could be decades before anyone does so again. This spaced out proposal is just another example of how Congress has turned the National Park Service into its own national "pork" service, with Washington politicians earmarking new parks for purely political and parochial purposes rather than taking care of the national treasures that are already part of the park system. Every new site added to the National Park Service further divides the \$3 billion park budget, which currently provides for 401 park units, 27,000 historic structures, 2,461 national historic landmarks, 582 national natural landmarks, 49 national heritage areas, and over 84 million acres of land.

Yet, barely half of the National Park Service annual budget goes to the actual park units, with much instead diverted to sustain an expansive bureaucracy or to various programs that often duplicate the goals of other federal agencies.

The NPS is subsidizing Washington DC area concerts, preserving parks in foreign countries, and purchasing even more park property – including real estate on the U.S. Virgin Islands for nearly one million dollars per acre

Meanwhile, more than 70 national park units attract fewer than 100 daily visitors. There are more employees at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site than visitors on a given day. The staff of the Arkansas Post National Memorial say "we try everything we know" but still have little luck attracting many people to the site, noting the occasional visitors to the area "have to be lost, or coming here." And when someone shows up at the Thomas Stone National Historic Park site in Maryland, the ranger says, "I hope it's not UPS again."

No one is even permitted to visit Hohokam Pima National Monument, and according to its own website, "attempting to go to the site is trespassing." This year, over 9 million people will hike in the Great Smoky Mountains, but more Americans will be struck by lightning than visit Aniakchak National Monument. More than one million people have already visited Yellowstone in the first half of this year, before the park's busiest season even began. Meanwhile, "the staff far outnumbers the visitors" at Steamtown National Historic Site many days and there has been a "steady decline" in visitors there since the site was opened in 1995.

A national park unit can be created in one of two ways: an act of Congress or a presidential proclamation under the power of the 1906 Antiquities Act. Of the 401 park units in the National Park Service, Congress established 306. The other way national park units are established is by a presidential proclamation to designate a national monument on federal lands. This authority comes from the Antiquities Act of 1906, which allows the President to establish a national monument on "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest."

This law has been used to establish 95 park units, including the five most recent additions to the system. Since 1906, 15 presidents have used the Antiquities Act to establish a National Monument. President Jimmy Carter created 15 national monuments in Alaska on December 1, 1978 using the Antiquities Act

There are 59 national parks, which are considered the most significant parks or colloquially as the "crown jewels." In addition to the national parks, there are 78 national historic sites, 85 national monuments, 46 national historic parks, 29 national memorials, 18 national recreation areas, 18 national preserves, 16 national scenic rivers or trails, 15 national battlefields, 10 national seashores, 9 national military parks, 5 national parkways, 4 national lakeshores, international historic sites, and several other unique designations including the White House.

Congress has not only exponentially increased the number of park units in the National Park System since its creation in 1916; it has also expanded NPS responsibilities far beyond the original purpose of managing the parks. NPS programs now intervene in activities at the local, state, federal, and even international levels. This expansion of responsibilities beyond the original scope of the park service dilutes the budget while removing the focus on preserving the true treasures of the United States. The National Park Service's mission has become lost, its budget has become convoluted, and the funding priorities have become misaligned. Wine trains, neon sign restoration, teachers' symposiums, car shows, DC area -concert subsidies, covered bridge conferences, folk festivals, inflatable fair rides and video games are all activities that have been funded by federal tax dollars that have dubious merit or value to the NPS. These frivolous activities draw resources away from critical maintenance needs at sites such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, which have a combined \$1 billion deferred maintenance backlog.

The park service's expansive bureaucracy equates to an average of \$1.5 million in overhead costs for each of the 401 park units, four federal entities manage memorials in the nation's capital area, at least six different federal programs provide support for international cultural sites, and a panoply of programs, grants, and tax credits support local historical development projects at an enormous expense to the taxpayer. The National Park Service has strayed far from its original mission set by the National Park Service Organic Act in 1916 to "promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations.

The park service spends limited resources on a variety of low – priority programs, including Heritage Partnership Programs, the National Capital Area Performing Arts Program, and the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. Moreover, many grants and other activities of questionable federal merit have been funded by NPS, including folk festivals, inflatable rides, and video games

Taxpayers subsidize Washington DC residents' entertainment options through the Park Service's National Capital Area Performing Arts Program. NPS has provided nearly \$15 million since 2007 to supplement DC area concert venue budgets for activities such as advertising, televised productions, lighting, sound, performers, instruments, ushers, stagehands, cashiers and other support staff costs. This funding supported free shows as part of the 2012 summer concert series at Carter Barron Amphitheatre, which included Jazz Night, Reggae Night, Boogie Blues Night, Neo Soul Night, and East Coast Dance Concert hosted by Culture Shock while hosting free jazz and R&B concerts as part of the Fort Dupont Summer Series. Even the National Park Service has

identified this program for elimination, stating it is “not directly related to the mission of the National Park Service” and the resources could be directed towards “maintaining the most critical park operations and fulfilling its core mission.”

Yet, Congress has ignored the administration’s request to eliminate the National Capital Area Performing Arts Program, maintaining \$2.1 million in annual entertainment subsidies for the Washington DC area

The Filene Center at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts hosts over 90 performances every year, including musicians Harry Connick Jr. and Ke\$ha and comedians Bill Cosby and Steve Martin. The non-profit Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, the organization that partners with NPS to manage the venue, generates between \$25 and \$30 million in revenue every year, including nearly \$15 million in ticket sales. Despite this significant revenue stream, the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts receives \$4.1 million annually through the NPS budget. Wolf Trap also receives funding from the \$2.1 million National Capital Area Performing Arts Program, which helps provide funding for Wolf Trap’s ushers and stagehands

The \$4.1 million in annual NPS funding offsets the lavish salaries paid to the Wolf Trap Foundation’s board. The NPS spent at least \$731,000 on three studies over a seven year span to inspect the Gateway Arch for stains to be cleaned, without actually doing any cleaning.

The massive bureaucratic support structure of the NPS equates to an average of \$1.5 million in support and overhead costs for each of the 401 park units – larger than more than 150 individual park unit budgets. The superintendents are able to accomplish these tasks with a total of \$1.3 billion in appropriated funds for operations directed amongst the 401 park units, or an average budget of \$3.4 million per park unit and an average staff size of 31 to 45 employees.

Staff positions include interpretive park rangers, park police, botanists, maintenance mechanics, archaeologists, historians, and facility managers. Nearly 50 of the park units have 100 or more employees, half of the park units have more than 30 employees, and 75 percent of the park units have 10 or more employees

Yet, only half of the funds appropriated by Congress even go to the park superintendents, while the national headquarters and regional offices consume more of the NPS budget than facility maintenance projects

The National Park Service spends \$201 million annually and employs 1,598 employees for the National Park Service headquarters and seven regional offices. The National Park Service headquarters in Washington DC is home to the Office of the Director and six Associate Directors. The headquarters receives \$91 million annually, or nearly triple the budget of Yellowstone National Park.

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In addition to the national level headquarters, there are seven regional offices, each headed by a regional director. These seven regional offices, including the National Capital Regional office located in a separate Washington DC facility from the headquarters, cost a total of \$117.3 million annually.

Despite the \$117.3 million and more than 1,200 employees at the seven regional offices whose task, in part, is “budget formulation and financial management ,” the National Park Service spends \$101 million on park administrative support offices.

With a total of 5,557 administrative employees in 2009, one in every five National Park employees works outside of any National Park unit. The administrative employees’ average salary and benefits are more than \$79,000 annually

The National Register of Historic Places , created by Congress, is deemed the “official inventory of historic places that have been determined to be worthy of preservation.” The National Register consists of over 80,000 listings covering 1.4 million entities that are the “districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.”

The National Register honors everything from bowling alleys, putt putt courses, giant animal structures, and Butler Cabin within the private grounds of Augusta National Golf Course. While placing a National Register of Historic Places plaque on a

building may be a point of pride for some property owners, with such an expansive listing that grows by more than one thousand new listings per year, one must question its value relative to the large taxpayer commitment.

A property listed on the National Register gets federal support throughout the entire process of nomination to development, with the federal government spending up to \$63.3 million in administrative costs to dole out \$600 million in tax breaks. The Historic Preservation Tax Credit has been used for professional baseball stadiums (including a reported \$40 million in tax credits for renovation at Fenway Park) , beer gardens and breweries, and a private golf country club. Congress also continues to direct funds towards studying potential new park units . Congress can authorize a study to examine a proposed area to ensure it meets the criteria for significance, suitability, and feasibility for inclusion in the National Park System. During these special resource studies, the National Park Service will “solicit stakeholder and public engagement; explore partnerships with local communities, States, or Tribes; and determine potential for National designation by Congress.”

In FY2013, NPS spent \$2.4 million paying 15 full -time employees to evaluate potential candidates for inclusion the National Park System , utilizing scarce budgetary resources to make future promises at the cost of realistic expectations

#### EARMARKING PET PROJECTS.

Despite the National Park Service describing the site as having “no importance” and “no historical significance,” a Kansas congressman turned what was “essentially a slum” into the Fort Scott National Historic Site. But perhaps no park better demonstrates how the threats of one powerful politician can override wisdom and common sense than Steamtown USA. Founded by a steam train enthusiast and embraced by a powerful Pennsylvania congressman, the railroad museum was designated as a national historic site over the objection of the Reagan Administration and the National Park Service. A NPS official referred to Steamtown USA as a “white elephant” that “didn’t fit our basic missions, to preserve historic sites, actual places that are significant in American history.” A former Smithsonian transportation curator called it “a third - rate collection in a place to which it has no relevance.

The practice of creating new park units by way of inside -the -beltway politicking, rather than in getting a new park approved through merit, has resulted in a growing number of

marginally significant and sporadically visited national park units

Of the top 25 most visited national park units in 2012 , only 8 have been approved since 1970. In comparison, of the 25 least visited parks, 20 have been established since 1970

The largest bill during Rep. Burton's chairmanship was the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, authorizing \$1.2 billion for more than 100 parks, rivers, historic sites and trails. While some may consider this Act a great victory for conservation, a closer examination shows this legislation was one of the first major political earmark bills whose impact continues to resonate in today's National Park System. The National Parks omnibus package was the brainchild of Rep. Burton, who came up with the strategy when he needed a path forward to move legislation that affected his home district in San Francisco. Figuring out how to cobble together enough votes to pass his bills, he inquired with his staff, "Why not get something for everyone? Christ, we'll pork out."

So it began, Burton piled provisions into the package so that everyone had a pet project, thus nobody could vote against it. Visits Rio Grande W&SR, 107, Thomas Stone NHS 6,791 Maggie L. Walker NHS 9,222 per YEAR. Subsidy per visitor is over \$50 per visitor.

In the late 1970s, Representative Robert Bauman of Maryland was the appointed Republican "objector" for the House floor. The "objector" is stationed on the House floor to object to any bill proposed for unanimous consent that is not congruent with the party's principles. In order to obtain Bauman's support, Chairman Burton fed him a \$1 million park project to acquire a burned -out shell of a home in his district that had been severely damaged by fire a year earlier. This home, located near Port Tobacco, Maryland, was the residence of little-known signer of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Stone. Stone argued for reconciling with the British before changing his mind and becoming one of the 55 men who signed onto our founding document.

## **THOMAS STONE**

The provision creating Thomas Stone National Historic Site in the Parks Omnibus bill contradicted the official opinion of the Park Service Advisory Board, who had recommended against acquiring the property as a National Park Site, even prior to the home being gutted by a fire. The chief historical architect for the Park Service said of the Thomas Stone Historic Site that it represents just one example of "many things Congress has authorized which we feel are of marginal value and don't

meet the standards for inclusions in the National Park Service.” After the National Park Service was forced to purchase the recently burned estate from a private owner for \$525,000 in 1978, the Maryland home was not open to the public for two decades. Besides a temporary roof placed on the estate, renovations did not even begin at the house until 1994, when the house was compared to a “bombed-out structure from World War II.” These renovations included the construction of a \$420,000 restroom facility that more than doubled the median housing value in Charles County, Maryland at the time. The pricy facility was designed like a corncrib in order to blend in with the nearby subsistence farm structures.

Twenty years and \$4 million in tax dollars later, the Thomas Stone National Historic Site was finally opened to the public with predictions of annual visitation rates of 50,000 people. These predictions never came to fruition, as the site has yet to surpass 6,500 visitors in a single year and remains one of the nation’s least visited national park units

When the front door chimes, one ranger working the site gets excited hoping that one of the infrequent visitors is coming to the house rather than a UPS driver. Today, the price for Robert Bauman’s vote is \$629,000 in annual operating costs to a site that averages 17 visitors per day. With 9 full time employees working the site, the American taxpayers are paying nearly \$100 for every person who steps on the grounds.

## **EDGAR ALLEN POE**

As one of America’s most celebrated writers and poets, Edgar Allen Poe’s legacy is memorialized all around the country. Even a professional football team is named after a famous Poe poem. Unfortunately not all these tributes are created equal. The taxpayer-funded Edgar Allen Poe National Historic Site in Philadelphia is basically “an empty house” which most visitors “don’t understand what the site has to offer.”

The Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site is located in a city of 1.5 million people and is only one mile away from Independence National Historic Park, which had more than 3.5 million visitors in 2012. Yet despite the dense population, proximity to a popular national park unit, and the author’s cultural importance, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site had only 17,000 visitors in 2012. Even the National Park’s management plan notes the legislation “offers few insights into congressional aspirations for the park.” Poe fans have no shortage of sites to visit to celebrate his life and works. “As the city he is most closely identified with,” Baltimore “lays claim to Edgar Allan Poe, going so far as to name its football team after his great poem.”

The Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore, which is currently closed, is

expected to reopen in October. Poe's grave is also in Baltimore. The Edgar Allan Poe Museum is located in Richmond, Virginia, while the Edger Allan Poe Cottage where the author "penned many of his most enduring poetical works" is located in the Bronx, New York. Even the visitors that do visit the Philadelphia site will not get a historically accurate representation of the home as it was when Poe briefly resided there between 1842 - 43. The Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site does not include any items originally owned by Poe or his family. In fact, the site does not even replicate the appearance of the era in which Poe lived there. The site is "simply a shell, with interior surfaces stripped to reveal historic wall finishes."

## **ST PAULS CHURCH**

Only 35 families remained at Saint Paul's in 1980, when the Diocese of New York finally gave up on the nearly empty old church and sold it to the National Park Service. Although admission is free, Saint Paul's NHS is among the least visited of all New York City's National Park Service units, attracting on average less than 50 visitors per day.

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## **FORT SCOTT**

Built in 1842, the Fort Scott Army Base served our troops for about three decades. It saw limited action during both the 1850s as "Bleeding Kansas" erupted and also during the Civil War as one of the Union's western outposts. By the mid twentieth century, however, the old fort was "essentially a slum." The three remaining buildings of the fort were in shambles and were being used as a mix of low-rent apartments and storage units. Numerous lawmakers attempted to save Fort Scott, but they could convince neither Congress nor the National Park Service to take interest in the decrepit fort. The Park Service had at various times described the site as being of "no importance," "not nationally important," and of "no historical significance."

Kansas Representative Joe Skubitz had been a congressional staffer for 20 years prior to taking office and knew the inner workings of the Hill before his election.

The lawmaker launched into rescue Fort Scott. Skubitz first took action in 1964, sprinkling Fort Scott with a tiny \$25,000 appropriation. Under the radar, he was successful at showering the fort with more money year after year: \$46,000, \$116,000, \$188,000, and \$493,000. With each successive yearly appropriation, Fort Scott was incrementally transformed to a national treasure in the eyes of the public and, more

importantly, the National Park Service. Decaying structures were restored. Studies specifically designed to underscore the historical significance of the fort were undertaken. The Park Service eventually changed its tune on the importance of Fort Scott, and in 1978 the site became the newest addition to the National Park System. Skubitz left Congress that year, the total amount of federal funding he had secured over the years for Fort Scott totaling over \$5 million

## **RIO GRANDE WILD & SCENIC RIVER: THE RIVER TO NOWHERE**

A 176 -mile stretch of the Rio Grande River is the second most expensive National Park unit per visitor , costing \$320 in operating funds for each of the 604 visitors in 2012.

Created by Congress in 1978, the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River in Texas is one of two official park units that are designated as a “wild & scenic river.” The National Park Service proclaims “quiet and solitude are rare qualities in today’s modern world, but ones that exemplify the majesty of the Rio Grande.” Indeed, this park unit averages less than 2 visitors per day while costing the taxpayers \$176,000.

## **PATTERSON GREAT FALLS**

The Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park is the latest Congressional addition to the National Park System. In approving, Congress ignored an extensive three -year National Park Service study of the area that found that the site failed to meet any of the criteria for becoming part of the National Park System. The study concluded “the resources of the Great Falls Historic District are not suitable for inclusion in the national park system.” Further, the “estimated costs associated with the Great Falls Historic District are not feasible when considering the impact that such costs would have on existing units of the national park system in the Northeast Region.”

Nonetheless, sponsors of this legislation successfully moved to make it the 397th park unit in the National Park System. The main sponsor and reportedly strongest proponent of the park’s designation was the mayor of Paterson, New Jersey, for more than 6 years prior to being elected to Congress.

**DISREGARDING THE CONCERNS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, CONGRESS ESTABLISHED THE PATERSON GREAT FALLS NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK IN 2009. A COSTLY ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN UP COULD COST AS MUCH**

AS \$10 MILLION, FAR MORE THAN CONGRESS PROVIDED FOR WHEN IT CREATED THE PARK.

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### **FIRST LADIES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE - A NATIONAL PRIORITY OR PAROCHIAL PORK?**

The First Ladies National Historic Site in Canton, Ohio became the 386<sup>th</sup> unit of the National Park System in 2000. The Founder and President of the National First Ladies' Library is Mary Regula, wife of the lead sponsor of the bill that created a federal funding stream for her library. The park was created by an appropriations bill that's purpose is to provide funding for Interior agency programs, without any hearings or studies, and without being in any legislation prior to its inclusion in the conference report after both the House and Senate had already voted. Perhaps a study or hearing on the necessity of the library as part of the National Park System would have found what we now know.

### **STEAMTOWN**

The National Park Service spends nearly one million dollars per year on a site that only accommodated 9,063 visitors in 2012. That equates to the American taxpayers funding the 25 daily visitors at \$110 each. Described as a "Walt Disney movie set that will be absolutely phony from the word go," Steamtown USA has the ignoble distinction of being saved from bankruptcy by the United States Congress.

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Steamtown USA was originally founded by railroad enthusiast F. Nelson Blount, who started collecting vintage locomotives and rolling stock in the 1950's.

After Blount died in a plane wreck in 1967, his train collection was moved to Bellows Falls, Vermont. After an unsuccessful stint where the museum could only attract 17,000 annual visitors, the collection of 39 vintage engines and over 100 train cars was relocated to Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1984. This move came with much fanfare and projections of hundreds of thousands of visitors per year. Four years after the move to Scranton, Steamtown USA was \$2.2 million IN debt and on the verge of bankruptcy. Fortunately for the museum, a powerful lawmaker was about to change the fate of this unsuccessful venture forever. A National Park Service official warned Congress "the federal government will not become a dumping ground for white elephants.... If Steamtown officials want our money so they can continue to operate the excursion, we are not interested."

NPS had already rejected the inclusion of Steamtown USA when it was located in Vermont, stating the collection “didn’t fit our basic missions, to preserve historic sites, actual places that are significant in American history. These facts were not enough to keep local congressman and key appropriations committee member, Rep. Joe McDade, from earmarking \$8 million in funding and creating a “historic” designation for Steamtown USA on must-pass appropriations bill, putting the museum on track for permanent federal funding. Without ever being considered before a Congressional committee, and despite the administration proposing to strip the earmark from the budget citing that no park service feasibility study for the project had been conducted, Steamtown USA became the newest unit in the National Park Service.

Thus, the National Park Service was forced to purchase what a former Smithsonian transportation curator called “a third-rate collection in a place to which it has no relevance.” Of the 29 locomotives acquired with the collection, only three were operational. The 85 other pieces of rolling stock had been stored outdoors for decades and had not seen a paintbrush in more than three decades. Prior to the official grand opening of the park in 1995, 24 of the 100 pieces were in such poor condition that they were moved to a nearby Army depot in order to get them out of sight.

Given the deteriorating conditions of the new federal possession, it is not a surprise that the original 1986 earmark would not be sufficient. Taxpayers would pay for an additional \$73 million in renovations for Steamtown over the next seven years. Outside observers would label Steamtown as the “the mother of all pork barrel” and “a virtual pork poster child.” Some elected officials called the museum a “national disgrace” with others calling the park “the god-darnedest boondoggle joke you ever saw.”

One observer noted following the vote, “It’s [Steamtown National Historic Site] been a waste of taxpayers’ money for years, and will be a waste of taxpayers’ money for years to come.” In total, more than \$150 million in federal funds have been spent on this project. Despite these resources *Railfan & Railroad* magazine has previously described Steamtown National Historic Site as “in bad shape and in need of attention” and the site’s “success in returning old locomotives to service has been disappointing at best

## **KEWEENAW NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK**

Located on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP) was created by Congress in 1992 to “preserve and interpret the story of the

rise, domination and decline of the region's copper mining industry.”

Although copper mining in the area dates back to when Native America tribes extracted the copper to make tools thousands of years ago, a modern “copper boom” began here in the mid -1800 s and lasted about 100 years. Then the copper industry collapsed.

Companies left, and many residents moved, leaving decaying building and ghost towns.

James Ridenour, who was director of the National Park Service at the time , said Congress “added another slab of pork to the parks” by establishing Keweenaw National Historical Park. Ridenour described Keweenaw as an “interesting place” with “a lot of charm,” but he “didn’t think we should be adding it to the NPS list.”

Ridenour questioned “whether or not the area was sufficiently nationally significant to warrant park status” and noted it contained “acres of old mine tailings in the area” draining into a lake that the Park Service could be forced “to spend millions and millions of dollars to clean up.”

Expectations of the establishment of a national park on the Keweenaw Peninsula included the development of heritage tourism to assist in economic recovery,” according to the Department of Interior. In the first two decades since becoming part of the park service, “about \$42 million has come to the area because of the park ,” according to the executive director of the KNHP Advisory Commission.

But nearly half of that amount, \$18 million, paid for “operational expenses, including staff salaries and utilities.

From its creation up until the earmark ban in 2010, Keweenaw “had a well-established patron in the U.S. Senate who actively pursued funding earmarks for heritage projects.” In FY 2009, Michigan’s senators directed \$285,000 for the Quincy Smelting site located within Keweenaw. In 2008, the senators earmarked \$496,000 to “rehabilitate the interior of the 1889 Union Building owned by Keweenaw National Historical Park.”

The congressional earmarks for Keweenaw were not limited to the Department of Interior’s budget either. Several earmarks, for example, were included in the Senate -passed appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture for fiscal year 2010

Despite its lavish Congressional support, Keweenaw does not function as or resemble a national park. “Unlike the typical national park, Keweenaw’s boundaries are a bit confusing .” This is because “most visitor services for Keweenaw National Historical Park, such as guided tours or museums, are provided by the park’s partners known as Keweenaw Heritage Sites. These sites are not owned or operated by the National Park Service.

## THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial pays tribute to a Polish revolutionary hero who assisted American leaders during the U.S. war for independence. Do not feel ashamed if you have never heard of Mr. Kosciuszko, as even the National Park Service readily admits that most visitors do not “have prior knowledge of Kosciuszko.” The Philadelphia row house is the smallest and one of the least visited of all park units. Notwithstanding Kosciuszko’s relative obscurity in American history, the actual row house was not even significant to Kosciuszko’s life. Upon returning to the United States after leading a Polish revolution against the Russians, he instructed his secretary to find him a place “as small, as remote and as cheap” as possible. Kosciuszko used the Philadelphia home as temporary residence for only nine months, where he recovered from wounds suffered while leading a Polish uprising against the Russians and petitioned Congress for payment for his service during the American Revolution. It is not always clear how certain park projects get green lighted. In this case, the answer lies with an influential Polish-American businessman lobbying Congress to overrule the National Park Service. Edward J. Piszek, founder of the frozen seafood company Mrs. Paul’s Kitchen, bought the Philadelphia row house with aims of donating it to the National Park Service. However, when Mr. Piszek offered the row house, a Park Service advisory committee turned him down, reasoning that the row house was not Kosciuszko’s home and nobody even knew in which room he had stayed. Not to be deterred, Mr. Piszek opted to convince Congress to force the National Park Service to accept it anyways. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1972 Congress acquiesced to Mr. Piszek’s request, passing a bill to add the house to the National Park System and setting aside \$600,000 to rehabilitate the dilapidated structure

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Averaging only six visitors a day, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial gets more use as a personal study for the lone Park Ranger that works the site than it does as a shrine to American history. One ranger working the site a few years ago promised that they get at least one visitor per day while admitting that it’s a pretty “quiet gig for a ranger.”<sup>464</sup>

Another Ranger admitted “it can be somewhat boring” after spending most of his shift reading a book about President Franklin D. Roosevelt while waiting for visitors to walk in. As the smallest unit in the national park system, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial may have the shortest hours as well. Open only 9 hours per week, this Philadelphia park unit costs an astounding \$352 per hour to operate.

While the merits of this memorial as a national park unit are questionable, there is no

doubt the \$73 in federal funding for every person that walks into the tiny row house is worthy of increased taxpayer scrutiny

## **EUGENE O'NEILL**

As reclusive as its namesake, the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site has found the same isolation that its one - time owner relished. Honoring American playwright Eugene O'Neill, this site averaged less than 10 visitors per day to the California mansion and grounds. With nine employees, the National Park Service often has more staff working the grounds than daily visitors. The site is located among the 7.5 million individuals living in the San Francisco Bay Area. At the current visitation rate, it would take about 2,054 years before everybody in the heavily populated area would visit the nearby national park site. Congress created the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site after a six-year lobbying effort by movie stars and California lawmakers . When the private owner of the estate proposed to sell the property, the Eugene O'Neill Foundation was formed to include the estate as property in the National Park System. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation garnered support for the designation from Charlie Chaplin, Sir Laurence Olivier, and Ingrid Bergman, among others from the theatrical community. Despite National Park Service opposition to the bill, who called for local and private preservation efforts instead, Congress sided with the movie stars and passed a bill in 1976 to establish the unit. Identified as "America's most famous unknown theatrical landmark," this federal park is only accessible for visitors by advanced reservations of a NPS shuttle van from the adjacent town of Danville. With an annual budget of \$687,000, American taxpayers spent about \$244 for every visitor that boarded the "free" shuttle to the site

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Our National Park units are often referred to as American treasures. In some cases, these treasures remain buried, kept hidden away from the public or sometimes not open at all. Of course it is to be expected that many of the most majestic landscapes in the United States will be located far away from major thoroughfares. Yet, miles of dirt roads, expensive plane and ferry rides, and even "no trespassing signs" would seem to be surprise experiences when traveling to a National Park. From the shuttered Carter G .Woodson Home in Washington DC to the hidden Yucca House in Colorado, the American people may be shocked to learn that some of the taxpayer funded parks are difficult, if not impossible to access.

With "no trespassing" signs (two) outnumbering signs directing travelers to the entrance

of Yucca House National Monument (zero), visitors are likely to confuse their trip to this Colorado monument with breaking and entering. Yucca House National Monument is so desolate that the National Park Service does not recommend it for casual visitors, and traveling to this unit requires a 2 .2 -mile trek down dirt and gravel roads that become impassable during inclement weather. Guests are asked to respect the local property owners by closing the livestock gates behind them as they make their way to the lonely gate representing the entrance to the national monument. Without any facilities or permanent staff, the only thing waiting for visitors upon arrival is a box of brochures next to the stile to pass through the fence.

The information contained within the brochure is vital to discern what landmarks to see in this National Monument, two areas with large mounds of rubble covered with vegetation” representing an unexcavated Ancestral Puebloan surface site. Guests will have to imagine what the 13<sup>th</sup> century pueblo would have looked like because the site will reportedly remain buried until an indeterminate time in the future. Guests may also need to use their imagination when trying to determine what the \$104,000 in annual federal funding is used for on a site without any facilities, staff, or even paved roads

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## **FORT BOWIE**

One enthusiast of Arizona’s Fort Bowie National Historic Site explains that it “takes some effort” to get to.” What an understatement. Interested visitors first have to drive 20 miles from the small town of Wilcox, Arizona, and then must traverse eight miles of unpaved roads to the trailhead ; from there, one is required to hike another 1.5 miles to the visitor center to finally arrive at the Fort Bowie National Historic Site.

This may explain why the former 19<sup>th</sup> century US Army outpost receives an average of less than 25 people per day. In its early years, Fort Bowie was a “crude, rag-tag” fort that was built in three weeks. In 1863, one officer lamented that the Fort had been built without “system, regard to health, defense or convenience.” A few years later , the fort was enhanced substantially.

Fort Bowie NHS Authorized: 1964 Visitors (2012): 7,966 Funding (2012): 452,511  
Subsidy per Visitor: \$31.17

Fort Bowie NHS has recorded a total visitation over the last four decades that would still

only rank it as the sixth most visited National Park unit in Arizona in 2012. with the additions of a “barracks of adobe, officers [sic] quarters, corrals, storerooms, a post trader's store and a hospital [that] were built around the four sides of a parade ground.” Additionally, “the new fort even had a post office, a stop on the mail run from El Paso to Tucson.”

In 1964, “ruins of the old post, diminished by time, weather and vandals, were declared a National Historic Site,” in commemoration of the conflict between the Apaches and the U.S. Military “that culminated in the surrender of Geronimo in 1886.”

### **Hohokam Pima**

Attempting to visit one of the National Park Service locations in Arizona could get you charged with trespassing. Hohokam Pima lies on the Gila River Indian Reservation, and the resident Pima Indians strictly forbid access to the site. In fact, this National Monument has never been accessible to the public since Congress approved it four decades ago. Don't bet on vacationing here with the family anytime soon, either. It only takes one visit to the Hohokam Pima National Monument webpage to find that the park will not be accessible to the public for the foreseeable future

The site's webpage provides little detail about what is so important about this monument that taxpayers are forbidden from visiting. However, other sources relate that within Hohokam Pima National Monument lies the Snaketown archaeological site, a remnant of the vanished Hohokam civilization that flourished in the area from about 300 B.C. to 1500 A.D. The 300 -acre site contains pit houses, irrigation canals, and even a ball court. It was abandoned most likely between 1100 and 1200 A.D. and excavated in the 1930s and 60s Seeing the park is even more difficult. Snaketown is six feet under, buried under layers of dirt after the completion of the last archaeological dig in the 1960s. This was reportedly done to protect the ruins from the harsh weather of the Arizona desert. Some old black -and -white photographs exist of the Snaketown excavations, but no one has seen the site for decades

### **Woodson Home.....**

Located in Northwest Washington DC, the Carter G Woodson Home National Historic Site was authorized by Congress in 2003 to honor the home of the founder of Black History Month. Despite spending \$2.1 million in federal tax dollars for the purchase of the site and its adjoining units, it has yet to be visited since its formal establishment in the National Park System in 2006. Blazoned with a “no trespassing” sign, the site has remained closed ever since its passage. Despite the Carter G Woodson National Historic

Site receiving over \$50,000 per year in funding , this nascent National Park unit remains dormant, waiting to be renovated. The site remains in disrepair with little hope for the foreseeable future. On December 19, 2012, DC Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton relayed a letter to Congress from the National Park Service stating that it "cannot accurately estimate the timeline or total cost for the rehabilitation of the Woodson Home at this point." Norton criticized the delay, unsurprisingly, seeing as it was she who authored the bill in 2003 that created this park unit in the first place. One can certainly empathize with Norton's outrage.

"Drug addicts and prostitutes lived in the home before we got it," mused Park Service Manager Joy Kinard. "It was a den of iniquity." "The flooring is so tenuous that the architect hired by the association said there should not be more than five people in the house at any one time," reported Sylvia Cyrus -Albritton of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, a nonprofit founded by Woodson. According to the Washington Post:... a windowpane is broken, allowing tall passers-by to peer directly into what Woodson used as office space. The rear yard, which backs up to an alley, is overgrown with weeds. A chain-link fence, topped with barbed wire, surrounds the rear yard, and a jumble of dangling telephone wires is visible behind it. The roof has leaked, causing water damage inside the house. Presently, the cost of renovating the Woodson Home is \$10 million, not including \$1 million that has already been spent in emergency stabilization.

This dwarfs the preliminary cost estimate of \$675,000 for renovation in 2001 and CBO's 2003 estimate of \$5 million, which included the costs of developing exhibits.

Unfortunately, if only the Park Service's 2003 recommendation not to establish the site had prevailed over a lawmaker's desire to see yet another national park established in DC, millions of taxpayer dollars could have been used to refurbish other parks frequented and beloved by the public.

## **Isle Royal NP**

Isle Royale National Park in Michigan is allocated an annual operating budget of \$4.35 million. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, also located in Michigan, has nearly the same operating budget of \$4.3 million, but accommodates nearly 100 times as many guests annually. Only accessible by four ferries and a seaplane, this 42-mile-long island in the middle of Lake Superior is home to the least visited National Park in the continental United States. The \$4.35 million annual operating budget pays for the 55 full time employees that work

in the park unit. These 55 full time employees outnumber the 44 average daily visitors that come to the island. The federal funds used to support the visitation at this National Park do not stop with the Park Service budget.

The Department of Transportation spends nearly \$1 million annually through the Essential Air Service program to subsidize a SkyWest Airlines flight from Chicago-O'Hare to Houghton County Memorial Airport, where passengers board one of the ferryboats to the island. This rarely visited park now costs federal taxpayers more than \$4 million per year. Those travelers that do plan a trip to Isle Royale National Park must pay \$120 for a round-trip ferry ticket. This is on top of the average cost to the federal government of \$273 per visitor

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## **ALASKA PARK UNITS**

Given the remoteness of the “the Last Frontier” state, it does not come as a surprise that Alaska is home to some of the least attended and least accessible units. However, it may come as a shock that one park unit in Alaska costs more than \$1,300 per visitor to operate, the highest subsidy per visitor in the entire National Park System. Alaska also contains the least visited park unit in the Park System. With only 19 visitors, the total visitation to Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve's in 2012 was less than the size of a typical classroom.

The total national park land acreage in Alaska is roughly the size of Utah.

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As we will read, many instances of this problem occur simply as a result of bad decision-making or forethought. For instance, Port Chicago Naval Magazine, a stirring memorial to both wartime sacrifice and victims of racial discrimination in the military, goes unnoticed by the American public because of its inaccessible location on an active military base. Other parks such as Kalaupapa utilize cumbersome management schemes that make the parks difficult or expensive to access, leaving their commensurate stories lost to the American people

When a site languishes in the National Park System with high costs and low visitors neither the honorees nor the taxpayers benefit. Alternative sites (such as a display in a heavily trafficked location) or engaged managing entities may yield better results for

spreading the tragedies and triumphs of American history to the public.

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### **Port Chicago Magazine**

In 2009, tucked away on page 497 of the NDAA was a provision that established a new park named Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial.

Located on Concord Naval Weapons station, an active military base, visitation to the memorial requires a two -week in advance reservation and significant personal information. The site is only accessible once a day, three days a week, and requires a guided tour to enter the grounds. Consequently, Port Chicago Naval Magazine is the least visited National Park unit in the continental United States, hosting only 599 visitors in 2012

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### **Kalaupapa**

There are only three ways to get to Kalaupapa, by hike, by mule, or by plane. Each require a permit from the State Health Department and guide from a private tour group. In 1975, hiking to the colony was free, and Damien Tours charged \$30 for a round trip by mule, or \$16 round trip by air. Today, in order to access this historic park , a private tour company charges \$298 per visitor plus tax for a flight, \$199 per person for a mule ride, or \$69 per person for a hike.

For those seeking to visit the site on their own accord, the National Park Service policy is clear: no one can access the park without a guide. Unbeknownst to most visitors, taxpayer s have already paid more than \$70 for each of the 58,357 visitors to the island in 2012. Kalaupapa NHS receives \$4.1 million annually in federal funds and has 40 employees. The funding provided through the National Park Service is not the only federal support given to the area. In addition to the federal government's reimbursement of medical expenses provided by the Hawaii State Health Department, the Department of Transportation provides subsidized commercial air travel for the Kalaupapa residents. Announced in November of 2011, the Essential Air Service Program will subsidize service by Makani Kai Air Charters between Kalaupapa and Honolulu at a cost of \$932,772

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One of the most effective solutions available for an underperforming park is to remove it from Park Service control through a decommissioning process

The federal government has decommissioned national parks units a total of 26 times. The argument behind decommissioning is not that certain parks do not deserve preservation. Rather, it boils down to questions of priorities : Is the park still of national importance? And even if a certain site does qualify as nationally important, is the federal government the most appropriate entity to manage it? If a park is found to be no longer a priority project in the National Park System, Congress can pass a law decommissioning the park, eliminating Park Service ties to the property and generally naming a specific grantee to which the park will be transferred. Parks have been decommissioned, and numerous success stories have come out of this process. In fact, it is not uncommon that a park unit flourishes when it is decommissioned.

The first park decommissioning occurred in 1895 when Michigan's Mackinac National Park was transferred to the state of Michigan, immediately thereafter becoming a state park at the request of the state's governor. With Mackinac Island's Fort Mackinac as its centerpiece, the park gained its national park designation in 1875 and was the nation's second national park after Yellowstone. The War Department administered the fort until the 1890s, when the U.S. Army decided to abandon it. Mackinac has remained a popular tourist destination as a state park ever since its decommissioning in 1895 , recording its 20 millionth visitor in 2009.

Transferring a park unit from the National Park Service to a state park system is just one of many options available when considering the decommissioning of a park. Additional solutions include transfers to local governments or private foundations.

[https://www.novoco.com/sites/default/files/atoms/files/coburn\\_parked\\_how\\_congress\\_misplaced\\_priorities\\_are\\_trashing\\_our\\_national\\_treasures\\_110713.pdf](https://www.novoco.com/sites/default/files/atoms/files/coburn_parked_how_congress_misplaced_priorities_are_trashing_our_national_treasures_110713.pdf)

# New Jersey QSO Party

## **K0BAK rover 461 SSB QSO**

Very few NJ stations heard, but mostly called CQ. 13 NJ contacts in 6 counties. I even had 30 DX contacts, more than twice the NJ stations (wish I could count DX countries as multipliers)! Didn't have time to look for CW stations. Operated from NJ NPOTA sites, which generated a lot of contacts. This sure isn't like the PA, VA or NY QPs where there's a lot more QP contestants on the air.

mults: 44 states, 3 provinces, 6 counties, 1 DX (30 contacts)  
activated 9 NJ counties (planned for 11 though)

**WN4AFP**, Dave, in SC reported 14 cw and 19 ssb QSOs. He noted:

Thanks to the mobile/rover stations K0BAK and K2AA for several contacts. It was a tough contest from South Carolina.. my only NJ band was 40m. Conditions were tough during the daylight hours and better in the evening. I also 'ran' some on phone and CW which resulted in one contact. Thanks to the NJ stations who heard my 70 watt - dipole. Due to a two-day event and limited NJ stations, I couldn't give it a full-time effort. Also worked the NHQP and a bit of the Salmon Run. Score includes contact with K2TD, 73s Dave WN4AFP

**KM4FO** reported 14 cw contacts

## **KN4Y – fixed FL – 24 cw QSO**

Not a CW prone QSO party but I did get to work the New Jersey CW participants. Mostly a 40 meter party here in the panhandle. Glad I did not have to contend with serial numbers, a great modification to the QSO party, thanks

all.

### **K4BAI fixed GA - 18 cw 16 ssb QSO**

Better activity this year than in recent years. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI.

### **W2NPT – fixed – club – NJ 138 cw 380 ssb QSO**

This was a club weekend activity and many of the operators had never participated in a contest before -- some "lights were lit" and many skills were honed. Could not get the N1MM+ laptops to network so merging logs was a challenge, but the math all worked out in the end!

## **New Hampshire QSO Party**

### **WN4AFP fixed SC 4 cw 6 ssb qso**

I worked W1WQM and K1RX to make up for 6 of my 10 Qs the rest included K1EEE, WA1ZYX and K1LKP. My best rate was 16Q/hr. Where were all the NH stations this year? I worked all I heard... and that's all I could do. 73s Until next year.  
Dave WN4AFP

### **KN4Y – fixed – SC - 5 cw QSO**

This is primarily a sideband QSO party but I did work the 3 CW operators in New Hampshire, awesome. Never know until you try or something like that.

**De N4CD** – this is mostly a no show contest. Nearly an NH stations hold off for the New England QSO party when they come out of the woodwork.

## SpotMe Version III

Spot ME Version 3 is now available with many new features. I have put together two You Tube videos explaining the new functionality.

You do need to register to be added to the database for it to work, so once you have viewed the tutorials please send an email to [spotme@kw1dx.com](mailto:spotme@kw1dx.com) with your callsign and I will add you to the database and send you back the link for your call.

Spot Me V3 - Youtube Tutorials: [Part 1: Overview, Spotting and Spots](#), [Part 2: Messages, Settings and Help](#)

de KW1DX 9/30/2016

## Washington Salmon Run

The big gun contest stations worked 150 cw and 150 ssb QSOs. The 'salmon' were there for the taking. Conditions on the bands were so-so.

**NG7Z fixed in AZ - 97 cw**

Saturday only and just a couple of hours spread out over the day. After working the fixed stations, at least the ones I heard, it was a matter of chasing WW7D and N7WA as Darryl and Dink ran the counties. Most of the time they were barely detectable in the noise. But both guys are great CW ops and can pick out a whisper in a crowd.

**N6MU fixed CA 204 cw 67 ssb QSO**

Always nice to get the Sweep. Only made 52 Qs Sunday and they were mostly with the two mobiles, WW7D and N7WA. Pretty much worked all the fixed stations Saturday. Overall, had 45 Qs with WW7D and 26 with N7WA. Never heard much on 40/80 SSB. Never heard anything on 15 either. 73...

### **KN4Y – fixed – FL 100 cw Q**

Enjoyed the Salmon run CW, not sure how they get an antenna and key mounted on a salmon, but it works. Had a great opening on 15 meters. Late Sunday arms and legs started cramping, so shut down at 100 QSO's

### **N8II fixed – WV 77cw 89 SSB QSO**

I was not expecting what happened, Sunday is usually a real grind and not worth nearly full time. This year propagation was excellent on 20 meters to WA throughout the daytime hours even when the MUF was up to 15 meters which it was for several hours. 15 was very underutilized/ignored. With my modest 100W, I was able to run and hear even the weakest stations quite well on 20 phone; it was never this great in past years. In the last hour I ran quite a few more on 20 phone including a call from rare Asotin county (many other rare ones called earlier). I did not work the mobiles much at all Saturday and did not notice them spotted either, but was distracted trying to work the SAC CW on the side as well as NPOTA stations. Mobile activity seemed down, but the increase in general activity and casual WA ops more than made up for it. Thanks to mobiles WW7D and N7WA for some Q's/mults on Sunday. N1MM shows 26 hours off, but not the time on.

This was really fun most of the time. The ionosphere has not been my friend lately with dismal conditions/disturbances, but no complaints this past weekend for sure! Thanks for the Q's.

73, Jeff

### **WW7D mobile**

The Salmon Run is one of the great state QSO parties. This year, it was held on the 17-18 September. Six years ago, the Salmon Run was the first state QSO party I ever

participated in, and the first mobile contest I ever participated in. I've done every Salmon Run since, and learned a lot since that first contest in 2010.

One thing that has greatly changed over six years is propagation. Conditions were a bit tough this year, from what I could tell, although not nearly as bad as last year, when a solar flare wiped out the bands for much of the contest. The only thing one can do is make the best of whatever the sun dishes out. And have fun trying.

## Route

The day before the contest, I published my route and schedule. This is, pretty much, the route I've followed for the past 4 years, although I spent a little time tweaking the route, and some more time unsuccessfully trying to find major improvements. The two-day, 22 county trek would begin an hour southwest of my home in Redmond on the King–Pierce county line and would end a little east of the Grand Cooley Dam on the Okanagon–Ferry county line.

The Saturday route begins on the King (KING)–Pierce (PIE) county line and then goes through Kittitas (KITS), Mason (MAS), Grays Harbor (GRAY), Pacific (PAC), Thurston (THU), Lewis (LEW), Cowlitz (COW), Wahkiakum (WAH) and ends on the Clark (CLAR)–Skamania (SKAM) county line for the last hour or so until the contest suspends at midnight.

unday morning begins with a 2.5 hour drive to Eastern Washington before the 9:00 am starting time. The contest resumes at 9:00am on the Yakima (YAK)–Klickitat (KLI) county line. The route continues through the Benton (BEN), Franklin (FRA), Adams (ADA), Lincoln (LIN), Grant (GRAN), and Douglas (DOU) counties, and ends on the Okanagon (OKA)–Ferry (FER) county line for the last 90 minutes.

I spent much of Friday installing equipment and making other preparations for the contest. Everything was installed, tested, and antennas were calibrated by Friday night. The journey began at 7:30am for the 75 minute trek to the first stop on the King–Pierce (KING/PIE) county line. After arriving, I spent the few minutes remaining before the contest to explore the bands. This revealed that 20M was open to Europe for the Scandinavian contest, 40M had some local activity, and 15M was dead.

I began on 20M CW, and first worked OG300J. Domestic signals were not great on 20M, but I managed 17 CW QSOs in the first 25 minutes before turning to 40M CW for about 15 minutes and half a dozen QSOs. The log then shows me moving between bouts

of 20M and 40M CW with a brief foray to 20M SSB. I also called CQ on 2M SSB and worked one station. That was it for 2m for the rest of the contest.

In all, I made 38 pairs of QSOs at the opening county line in a little under 2 hours. Several years ago, from the same spot, I made at least double the QSO count. My assessment was that the bands were in mediocre shape. Making QSOs took some effort. Long “runs” of QSOs were not likely to happen often. That is how it would be for most of the contest. Of course, some of the “bad conditions” could reflect reduced participation or changes to my station that made things worse, but at least the latter seems unlikely as I’ve used the same radios and antennas in recent year, but now have more efficient antennas from the longer whips.

It was a 30 minute trip through PIE and Kitsap (KIT) to my next stop. Part of the trip was through heavy traffic, so I didn’t work on making QSOs. Still, I managed to work SM5COP, LA8OM, LY3T, and OG3G while in-motion! A spell on 40M yielded a handful of QSOs.

The next stop was on the Mason (MAS)–Kitsap county line on a little dirt road I used for the first time last year. This is an excellent, secluded location. The 40 minutes spent there did not feel very productive with only 21 pairs of QSOs.

The contest next took me to the Grays Harbor (GRAY)–Pacific (PAC) county line along a gravel road west of Oakville, WA, about 1/3 of the distance to Raymond, WA. Here, I first set up and tried the NVIS antenna for 40M. It seemed to work well. Overall, however, the QSO rate happened at the same rate, about a QSO every 2 minutes (but worth 2 QSOs each for being on a county line).

A 30 minute dash to the Thurston (THU) and Lewis (LEW) county line produced about 30 in-motion QSOs primarily on 20M CW. Once I was stopped on the THU-LEW line, the QSO rate slowed down (uggh!). Eighty minutes later, I had about 43 more QSOs. Last year, from this same location, at the same time, I had twice the QSOs.

Twenty meters fizzled out by the time I left Lewis county and hit Cowlitz (COW) county.

After leaving YAK–KLI, I headed toward Benton (BEN) county. K2SSS called me on 20M SSB with the KLI–BEN county line sign in sight, so I pulled over for a few minutes to work several stations. From Benton, I drove into Franklin (FRA) county and then to the FRA–Adams (ADA) line for a 15 minute stop. The QSO rate picked up a bit here giving me 27 non-duplicate QSOs for the stop.

The 30 minute drive from Adams to Lincoln (LIN) county produced one 15M CW QSO, a few 20M SSB QSOs, and 14 40M QSOs. The drive through Lincoln county is over 1.5 hours long but only yielded about one QSO for every three minutes, mostly on 20M CW, but one on 15M CW and a couple on 40M CW.

With a little over 2 hours left in the contest, I had four counties left to cover at the near-intersection of Grant (GRAN), Douglas (DOU), Okanagon (OKA) and Ferry (FER) counties, with one intersection on each side of the Grand Coulee Dam. After passing through Grant county, with about 1 QSO/minute, I came to the GRAN-DOU line on a utility road, just off the highway. I could see large transmission lines in front of me, and the Grand Coulee Dam below and off in the distance. Twenty nine QSOs later, I was off to the OKA-FER line. I made a handful of OKA QSOs in motion, but managed a couple of mildly productive runs once on the OKA-FER line. The last 70 minutes produced 66 QSOs

Overall, I made 311 QSOs—264 CW and 47 SSB—in the eight contest hours on Sunday. (Last year I only managed 167 QSOs as a solar flare and a Seahawks game conspired to wipe out the bands.)

After the contest, a 4.5 hour drive home was before me. But before leaving, I took the screwdriver antennas down to save them the wear and tear of the highway. For the first 30 minutes, I simply enjoyed the silence. Eventually, I turned up the radio and listened to classic rock and the blues. It was a pleasant trip home.

## Results

After eliminating duplicates, 719 QSOs were made—a little over 100 more than last year. 590 of these were CW and 129 were phone. Like last year, I only worked W7DX on CW, for 500 bonus points.

Multipliers included 38 states, 28 Washington counties, four Canadian provinces (AB, BC, MAR, ON), and six DX entities (JA, LY, OH, OM, SM, UA) for a total of 76 multipliers. Last year, I worked far fewer multipliers. Therefore, I spent a lot more time on 40M and 75/80M, particularly SSB, trying to pick up more multipliers. The strategy worked.

# Maine QSO Party

Just a few stations on. Most show up in the New England QSO Party.

## **K1ESE – Oxford County ME – 66 QSO**

Only a bit over 1 1/2 hours available. Started on 20m and conditions were awful. Later went to 40m and much better, but lots of noise.

**John, K4BAI**, reported 4 cw and 7 ssb QSO

## **W1WMU - with W5WMU operator - fixed ME 207 cw 1151 ssb QSO**

Started slow but got better as time went on. Used this as a test for upcoming CQWW and surprisingly all went well...If the weather cooperates, we're ready for the 2016 contest season..73 to all Pat

# On the Road with N4CD III

The Belton Hamfest is held twice a year – really it's just a big swap meet – down in Bell County Texas. I just got back from the big trip back east, but heck, a hamfest is a hamfest and I needed some antenna hardware – to repair the worn out pieces on the main antenna system. So off it was. I still have 'park fever'. Emily, KB3VVE, said my car has “NPOTA Auto-Pilot”, meaning it seems to steer itself to National Park units.

Luckily the Waco Mammoth National Site (MN81) is 2/3rds the way down there – so I

could do two things at once. I headed out about 10am and got caught in traffic on I-35. Yuck. Two or three major slow downs and creeps and crawls. Parts are 75 mph and parts are 20 mph or slower. I got down to Waco and took the 8 mile detour to the park. Hit the county hunter frequencies and NPOTA frequencies in McLennan County. Then after 2 hours, it was down the road another hour (took almost two) to the Knights Inn in Belton. That's the first time I stayed there - usually hit the Super 8 in Temple, but this was \$20 less. The 'inside' part of the exhibition grounds is open for 'set up' on Friday. You can just wander in - I did. Found a nice National SW-3 regen receiver to buy at a good price, so picked it up. Bought some of the 'studs' - 3/8 inch by 24 by 3/4 inch from one of the vendors, plus some new hex coupler nuts that my mag mount uses. The hardware on my antenna is 'stripped out' - hanging by a thread or two. Guess that happens after 50,000 miles including some nasty gravel roads for 40 or 50 miles. Nothing else seen. I checked the outdoor flea market but only 1/4 there. Nothing I had to have.

Back to the motel and dinner. I sure miss 'summer' sunshine although you can keep the Texas sizzling temps. I was gone for 2/3rds the summer - but it was still in the 90s even in mid September. Now the sun doesn't come up till 7:20am and it sets by 7 pm. Out in AZ, the sun in July was up at 5:30am and headed down after 8pm. Oh well.

Saturday morning came. Dark at 6am when I got up and hit the breakfast at the Knights Inn. Not as good as Super 8. They are 'lower cost/service' than Super 8. Adequate. It was 59 degrees in the morning and I put on the long pants for the first time in a long time. Headed over to the fairgrounds just before 7am. Most of the indoor folks were already inside. Made it inside. Nothing new in the way of regen receivers. Not a one. I did find some nice antenna goodies for a great price. A Hustler tri mount with hardware in original packaging, two 20 inch HO Hustler Mast sections with the resonator tips if you use a short mast (good spares), and a bag of 3/8 inch studs. - for \$10. That was pretty much it. I looked around for 2 hours. Didn't run into any other park chasers or activators. I picked up a 'leg key' for a good price. No, not one you mount on your leg, but one that has extensions so the key can be bolted to the table so it won't 'wander away'. One fellow was selling the collection of a SK - must have been 100 keys - most not 'valuable' and most not that old (40s to 70s).

At 9am I headed up I-35 to Waco to run the park. No extra activation credit was earned as it was within 24 hours, but I added another 140 contacts - some from the CQP - some from county hunters and the rest from park chasers and random folks stopping by.

The bands were a mess with CQP, a DX contest somewhere and horrible numbers (A=25, K==4, Aurora=3) and the traffic was very busy, so just drove on home without

trying to put out the counties again. Ran them on the way down.

## Texas QSO Party

Another good one with loads of counties on the air!

**N6MU – fixed – CA 284 cw 186 counties**

For whatever reason, CW activity was way down this year. There were only six CW mobiles where there have been twice that many in recent years.

Top mobile for me was K5YAA with 48 Qs followed by NO5W(45), N5NA/W5CT(35), W0BH(31) and KS5A(22).

Never heard a signal on 15. Thanks to all the TX stations that played a little CW. 73...

Score includes 18000 mobile bonus points.

John, N6MU

**WN4AFP – fixed – SC 157 cw 24 ssb**

The was my best TXQP so far (my 3rd one)! Thanks to all the great mobile ops for keeping the contest fun for the entire period. Mobiles worked included: W5CT, K5YAA, N5NA, NO5W, KS5A, W0BH and K5SVV. Regarding conditions...20m was good all day Saturday and 40m was good Saturday evening. Sunday 20m was long for the entire day and 40m wasn't a player. I only made 35 Qs on Sunday. I heard so many QP regulars in the mix. I'll be back next year! 73s Dave WN4AFP

**KN4Y fixed FL - 159 cw QSO**

Six mobiles galore the dream of a QSO party enthusiast. Mobiles running from county to county at breakneck speeds. A low county shrimp boil at the church cost me a few hours, but I was hungry. Heard nothing on 15 meters and Sunday band condition were just shy of impossible. Missed Norm.

### **KS5A mobile 815 cw QSO**

This was strictly a solo mobile operation, stopping to run the counties - on county lines when possible. I used N1MM+ for all logging and rig control for the single county runs. For the county lines, with the rules requiring separate transmits for each county, I used an Logikey memory keyer for transmitting and N1MM+ for the logging. And yes, it did cause some screwy xmits when I left N1MM+ in ESM mode on county lines.

My planned route was to fill-in some of the open counties on the TQP web site. I did this, plus one extra county thrown-in (20 total - could not let the Okie be the only one to put out my home county)! K5YAA, I will look for the toll pennies you threw-out while passing through, when it stops raining!

Specific county runs consisted of a low of 23 to the high of 67 contacts in a county. 41 was the overall trip average per county.

WX wise, it worked out great - just warm and warmer with HUMIDITY! What had been a somewhat dismal forecast with thunderstorms and heavy rain (as in last year), abated somehow and waited until the QP end to open the flood gates. I spent over an hour on the I-state, moving at speeds down to 30 mph due to the downpours.

All equipment worked fine. The only exception was the 40m resonator that took a limb hit (that was driver error). After 40+ years of on-again, off-again mobile ops, it finally happened. The resonator in question was the lead (pointed forward) in an 8 element, horizontally mounted array. The resonators extend out from a custom hub, approximately 12.5 feet AGL. If the stinger of the resonator had gone over the limb, I most likely would have lost the entire array, mast and connecting hardware included. As such, I only had to contend with a bent stinger. Vice grips and elbow grease allowed for a somewhat [straight-curved], new-looking stinger. Re-tuned it and ops normal for the

remaining contest.

It is always nice to take a break somewhere in that long first TQP day. K5IX provided that with a meet for late lunch in Brackettville and Kinney County. A good, first eye-ball with reminisces of our USAF days, CWOps, and general radio stuff that replaced the fast paced dits and dahs of the road.

Propagation wise, I would say, good overall. As usual in the declining sunspot years, early afternoons bring on the band blahs. No different this time - most of the EU guys disappeared when I was trying to help out on a couple of their county needs. Stateside was more normal. Once I was found or spotted, the masses returned from a somewhat subdued band. Nothing was heard or worked on 10m or 15m, and I did xmit there, hoping to generate some interest. I also tried 80m in the day, which should start to be better with solar minimums. Again, No Joy.

Pileups were normal and manageable. If one finds themselves among the masses, trying to get through the pileup, move a little off freq, 50 or 100 Hz and not only will you help the mobile, but also may bag the contact a little earlier. Just do not move so far off freq that you move outside the mobile's passband.

And there was the RTTY mess on 40m. Nothing new here, most know of the driving force that supported this, and I'm a Life Member. But when you limit some of the CW ops to 7.025-7.030, something is wrong. And for a RTTY station to start calling in your face on the freq you have been on for awhile, it shows a total lack of awareness or respect for some others freq. Just because one is operating RTTY does not mean one cannot hear CW on a freq. And, I like to operate RTTY!! Enough on the box.

To all that worked me, I say a much appreciated Thanks for the Q's! And, thanks for following me around. You guys and gals made it a great trip for me. I tried not to leave anyone still calling, but if I did, sorry, it wasn't intentional.

**N5DO - fixed - Victoria TX 259 cw 112 SSB**

As my wife is fond of saying, I've failed retirement for a second time. I have

taken an interim job in Victoria, TX after living in Alpine for the past 42 years. When this job is over, probably sometime in the late spring or early summer, I will return to Alpine and west Texas.

In the meantime I put up a G5RV in a tree in the backyard of the house I'm renting and tried it out for the first time in the Texas QSO Party. I believe the antenna worked fine (although not as well as my SteppIR in the backyard of my home in Alpine), but conditions were down somewhat. I felt that it was better being in the center of the state on 40M, but on 20M it was almost impossible to work any TX stations -- I only worked 3 Texans (all mobiles operating close to Victoria) on 20M.

It was good to get back on the air!

### **K5YAA mobile 1474 cw 126 cw**

Texas is a big place. Running in 42 counties as we did sounds pretty hefty but with 254 counties a mere drop in the bucket even though we were hauling for the entire 18 hours.

It was my pleasure to have Jason, N5NU as my guest for this one. He told me a ways back he would like to run with me in a QSO party so he was able to arrange to take a weekend off among his busy schedule which I am glad he did. A top young operator who handled the pileups so well I found myself driving and navigating more than usual simply enjoying the driver's headset listening to the Morse music and Jason's very capable SSB operating. Aggressive and somewhat exciting to experience. An old slow talking Morse man who rarely ventures to SSB I did indeed like the way Jason handled the pig farmers on 40 especially! After a few expressions of, "Yes the frequency has been busy for sometime now, adding another few Qs to the log then simply tossing in the towel by saying "Back to CW now." More civil QSOs were to be had on CW anyway.

Friday evening before the party I had the privilege to be around some one hundred young gentlemen who were having a fellowship at a local park. A few hours before the gathering I was chauffeured around Huntsville while Jason gathered the "tools" for the gathering. Parking cones and an extension cord, a photo of the "Big House" where Texas State executions are carried out then we stopped at a local grocery and picked up our

dinner fixins. The gathering was a "bring your own" type of cookout. A steak, brats and some potato salad with a jar of steak seasoning and even plastic utensils for not only us but several others who might benefit from a fork and knife.

Music was playing on loudspeakers and several grills of all shapes and sizes were set up in the parking lot. It was a pleasure to watch so many young men hustling around, some with their pets on leashes others playing volley ball with a Frisbee or two flying. Several eyed the mobile and wanted to see what all the "ruckus" was about. It's not every day you get to see such a contraption from Oklahoma. Jason and others have efforts ongoing to get a few of the fellows their license. I met a couple who have recently joined our ranks and who have been "exposed" to the craziness of contesting at a couple of large Texas hoosgow collection of antennas and gear courtesy of Jason and big time station owners in SE Texas.

Now for a few statements about the actual running of the Texas party. At the outset in the parking lot of the Holiday Inn Express in Huntsville Jason had confirmed all was set at 8:45AM. We pulled out to start right there in Walker county. At 9AM off we went. What? No power from the amp. Minutes ago all was well. Hmm, a quick pullover and check of all the cables, power OK fans running etc. I should have known quickly what the trouble was but not until Jackson county did the loose plug for K3 keying of the amplifier get "wiggled". All of a sudden HP on the power meter and Jason said in a few minutes, "The pileup is a layer or two deeper now." Good, that's what we came for. It is somewhat interesting though what 100 watts and a stick will do. Perhaps we missed a few dozen Qs due to the lack of HP but the rate wasn't too bad for the first eight counties.

Part of the reason for the particular route that was mapped out was to get two of the last four counties needed by DL6KVA for his USA-CA award. Along the way to the first one, Jackson, Axel was heard calling but he never responded to us calling him back. Dang, 100 watts not quite cutting it but as we pulled over to the roadside on a slight hill in Jackson, #1 on Axel's list that plug wiggling perked up the mobile's output. Axel heard us and one was down. Later in Gonzales, #2 needed he had no problem making the log! One objective of the long drive to Texas down. Numerous other Europeans were logged Saturday all the way into the early morning hours in Europe.

Some 14 countries made the log which is about regular for these

state parties. A call from JF1 midday Sunday on 20 was a treat.

To finish up here are a couple of road warrior happenings. Some time ago the cover for the generator was "lost" when the operator failed to bungee the thing down. Never to be found a new sort of rain protector was quickly cobbled up for the Texas run as rain showers were predicted for both days. The new one is a tight fit and after a few hours warmth begins to creep up on the generator's sides so it was hoped rain would not show often. Harris county and all the way to Jackson county Saturday morning showers kept popping up but a stop to install the cover wasn't made. With the pullover in Jackson to restart the stalled "water in the carb" generator it was decided a swap out with the "dry" spare generator was in order. The cover was installed after starting up the spare. Good news too as HP was restored with the amp keying cable plug reinsert. A worthwhile stop indeed.

On up the road the cover was removed as rain showers seemed to come to an end at least for a while. Later on here came another shower but the spare kept on ticking. Let's push it a bit and see if it will stay with us. Somehow it did and it ran the rest of the evening and even all six hours on Sunday. The battery bank and laptop(s) stayed charged, the radio kept perking and only a couple of mysterious SWR hikes on both 20 and 40 meter hustlers were the only mobile anomalies so overall a good and Murphy non-eventful run both days.

Just North of San Antonio in Bexar county showers were beginning to stall but the road remained wet. Jason was doing the driving as I took the keyboard for the few hours I operated. On these state parties the mobile takes no prisoners on the road so after a couple of miles following a semi truck that was spraying the van with road water I looked up and noticed no one was in the left lane that would keep us from taking a shot at getting around this nuisance. I said to Jason, "Punch it and let's get out from behind this 'ol boy." He put his foot down, scooted into the left lane and gunned it right on past the semi. A little background here. Jason drives their second vehicle and his wife has the good car. Hmm, sounds familiar. Anyway seems his second vehicle lacks real get up and go so he said to me, "I'm just not used to such acceleration." Chuckle here from the operator. The balance of Jason's time at the wheel resulted in no more strolls behind water spraying semi trucks! Now we're cooking Jason. Roll on boy!

No animals of any sort crossed our path and only the usual odd looks from those we passed or those on the sidewalks of Fredericksburg, Texas happened. We did

get questioned at gas stops and even by the hotel operator in Waco. What are you guys doing with that thing. Of course the standard answer of "We are Amateur Radio Operators and we talk all over the world with this thing" seemed to calm the curiosity of onlookers. The usual eye roll and words like "Cool" always result after that simple explanation of why all the sticks are on the roof. A small price to pay for so much fun.

Thanks again for all who chased us around making our weekend and also to the following two fellows who put a great deal of time into the Texas party each and every year. NO5W, Chuck and N5NA, Alan whose mapping and postings are indeed magnificent. Thanks fellows for your dedication to our hobby.

My special thanks to Jason for his willingness to experience one of these things with an OT such as myself. Youth, oh where have thou gone? Jason your company, friendship and companionship will be remembered son.

Now best 73 from us both. Jason, N5NU and Jerry K5YAA.

The Rig: A 2006 Dodge Grand Caravan, K3, 15/20/40 meter HP Hustlers.

### **W5CT multi op mobile with W5MJ, K5PI, W9MC, W5UP 1283 cw 306 ssb**

This year, we simplified things a bit -- just two radios and two antennas. We signed up Mike W9MC to drive and John W5UP to work some SSB. Our route was about 75% the same as last year, with just a little variation on Sunday afternoon.

It wouldn't be TQP if we didn't have some technical challenges. This year it was power distribution. Not power to the radios -- Madison, KV5V and WK5S engineered a solid solution for that. Rather, it was power to the laptops. Take a look at a laptop power supply sometime -- they take quite a bit of current. We thought we might use a cigarette lighter splitter to run a laptop and a low wattage device, but no luck. We melted a couple of these top quality Chinese splitters and had to make a midnight run to Walmart to engineer a workaround. We've decided to get a RigRunner for next year. No more cigarette lighter plugs for us!

Conditions seemed okay on 20, but pretty poor on 40. We hit a hard rain on Saturday afternoon in North Texas. It was noisy during the rain, but nice and

quiet afterwards. Sunday, there were storms all around and the noise level was high almost all day.

Thanks to Mike for keeping us on schedule and out of the ditch, and thanks to John for being Mr. Fix-It when we had some computer trouble. John and Madison really ground out the Qs through the noise on 40. Thanks to all for hanging in there with us!

## Mobile Activity in September

Hollis, KC3X, was out and about on several days in September.

N1QY was putting them out up MA way.

AB1OC showed up on CH frequencies from parks in ME including the 'new one'.

Various mobiles were out in the CO QSO Party – covered separately

Team KJ8V, KJ8W were out in MI.

Jack, K0MAF ran counties in KS and MO.

K6YEK was busy putting out counties all over the west.

Larry, W7FEN, was noted in FL then moved north a bit putting out the counties.

Phil, AB7RW, started cross country trek – major trip.

N4UP was noted out and about in VA.

KB0BA and N0XYL were noted in KY running counties.

W0EAR headed down to IA to run counties.

Mike, KA4RRU, popped up in various counties and parks in VA.

WY0A was spotted out in KS counties

N2OO ran a few in NJ.

K0PFV was noted out and about in KS.

Jim, N4JT headed to GA to put them out on five mode. He hit a few parks along the way, too.

N5KUC was noted out and about in TX. And NM.

WB5TMW was busy in TX.

N9JF was spotted in a park in KS. Then over into CO and more counties and parks.

Bill, K2HVN spotted in PA and DE – in a few parks, too.

Tony, WA9DLB was running counties in OH.

K8ZZ headed to IA...then joined forces with W0GXQ for a trip to MT.

Kerry, W4SIG noted out and about in TN a few times.

N9AC hit the road headed south to FL.

## Awards Issued

USCA III #250	Bob, K7TM	July 24, 2016
Master Platinum #24	Kerry, W4SIG	July 14, 2016
Bingo IV	Don, W0EAR	August 15, 2016

# Events for County Hunters

Oct 8 1600z to Oct 9 2200z  
Pennsylvania QSO Party  
Serial, county or ARRL/RAC section  
[www.nittany-arc.net](http://www.nittany-arc.net)

Oct 8 1600z to Oct 9 2359z  
Arizona QSO Party  
CW Ph Dig  
Serial, county or SPC  
[www.azqsoparty.org](http://www.azqsoparty.org)

Oct 15 1400z Oct 15 2300z  
Iowa QSO Party  
RS(T), county or SPC  
[www.wa0dx.org/IAQSO](http://www.wa0dx.org/IAQSO)

Oct 15 1400z to Oct 16 0200z  
New York QSO Party  
RS(T), county or SPC  
<http://www.nyqp.org/>

Oct 15 1800z to Oct 16 1800z  
South Dakota QSO Party  
RS(T), county or SPC  
[www.kb0wsw.com/SDQP](http://www.kb0wsw.com/SDQP)

Oct 16 1700z to Oct 17 0100z  
Illinois QSO Party  
RS(T), county or SPC  
[www.w9awe.org](http://www.w9awe.org)

Oct 29 0000z to Oct 30 2359z  
1.8-28

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB  
RS, CQ zone  
[www.cqww.com/rules.htm](http://www.cqww.com/rules.htm)

That's all folks. 73 de N4CD