

County Hunter News

October 2019
Volume 15 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.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz. The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Fall has arrived – officially at least. Here in TX, the days are still running 90F+ even though the sun rises later and sets earlier. Seems the east half of the country is running a few degrees above normal, the west half a few degrees below.

Bands haven't improved with SFI numbers of 65-68 most days – not great, and even a few days of high solar winds, disturbed conditions, geomagnetic storms to make things even more challenging.

Fortunately, several large QSO parties on weekends brought about lots of activity with mobiles running in the larger ones. Even more are coming up in October!

2) MARAC is hunting for a newsletter editor. If you would like to help out, get in touch with any MARAC officer. They've been using Microsoft Publisher to put the Road Runner together. With KU4YM now a SK, the newsletter is in suspension until a new editor is found.

3) Gas prices spiked 25c a gallon due to the Iranian attack on Saudi oil facilities. Still only \$2.49/gal here in TX so not too bad when your car gets 30 mpg. Worse prices are up north in MI and IL with 3.35/gal gas. Or even higher in CA.

4) (Hicksville, NY August 29, 2019) - Eddie De Young, AE7AA, of Clearwater, Florida, has been named Awards Editor of CQ Amateur Radio magazine, Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, announced today. His first Awards column appears in the September 2019 issue. De Young succeeds Ted Melinosky, K1BV, who was both Awards Editor and USA-Counties Award Custodian for more than 20 years. CQ previously announced the appointment of Brian Bird, NX0X, as the new USA-CA custodian.

De Young has been licensed since 1954 and has, over the years, held more than two dozen call signs from 11 different countries. He spent 38 years in the Pacific, Asia and Antarctica, including many in Australia. While there, he served as Awards Manager for the Wireless Institute of Australia, where he helped modernize the program and developed software to improve award processing. He has also been on nearly a dozen DXpeditions.

Since returning to the United States, Eddie has worked summers for the National Park Service as a park ranger at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and at Glacier National Park in Montana. On the ham bands, he is active via remote stations and with limited operation from his new apartment, with 100 watts and a homemade fractal square loop on his balcony. Eddie enjoys operating primarily CW and digital modes.

De Young says he plans to offer hints in his column on earning CQ awards of all kinds, inform newbies how to get started on their award hunting quests and share how much fun and educational award-chasing can be. Eddie also says he plans to include occasional competitions, award nostalgia and ideas from readers.

CQ Editor Rich Moseson said, "Eddie brings a world of experience from all over the world to this position. As an avid award chaser as well as someone who has 'been the DX,' he understands both sides of the award-hunting equation and is uniquely qualified to help CQ's readers achieve the greatest possible success in their own award-hunting efforts. Plus, as former awards manager for a national association, he understands the administrative side of award programs as well. I look forward to working with Eddie."

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note de N4CD – the Awards Chairman is now shared. Brian, NX0X will be doing the USACA part and the new person the rest of the CQ Awards including WPX, WAZ, etc.

Kansas QSO Party – More

This occurred last month at the very end, but late reports trickled in after our deadline. They're included now – from the mobile stations.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

The 2019 Kansas QSO Party by W0BH as W0B/m – 833 CW 418 SSB

Kansas was out in full force once again for the 2019 KSQP. All 105 counties were covered by 56 1x1 calls both CW and SSB. We double-covered all counties, 79 counties were triple or more covered, and 96 counties were covered again on Sunday. Excellent work by our 12 mobiles, 6 portables, and great fixed stations resulting in at least two claimed Kansas Sweeps: N6MU and N8II.

Saturday

Wearing our KSQP T-shirts, XYL Lorna/k0why and I headed out toward the furthest northeast county in Kansas (Doniphan) on a cool and cloudy morning. One of our mobiles had to cancel at the last minute, so in addition to W0B, we ran N0U to help put the U in SUNFLOWER on the air for everyone to find. I recently tore out my mobile installation and reinstalled it in the Astro van. Besides simplifying the installation, rewiring things cleaned up some RF issues that occasionally caused my logging computer to crash on 20m and also played with the van's ammeter. A nice improvement.

The day really went well from an equipment standpoint, but band conditions were tough most of the day with weaker signals and noise. The only "glitch" was me sending CLA instead of CLY for Clay county on 20m until N6MU pointed that out to me. I'll be sure to correct that in all logs during log checking, so no one will lose any contacts. Anyone else who did something like that let me know and I can watch for it.

In Atchison County, we took a short break on the beautiful high grounds of the

St. Scholastica monastery. Lorna had visited there several weeks before and was quite impressed with the peace and quiet. I did notice we were the only vehicle with antennas and a ham radio license plate in the lot!

We got back home about an hour before time ran out for the day. I dropped Lorna off and headed for my last two-county line where everyone was waiting for me. Low band conditions were good, but 40m was so busy that I didn't have time to go to 80m. We ended Saturday with 1118 combined contacts, hooked up the batteries to the battery chargers, and settled in to watch the developing overnight storms.

Sunday

As forecast, storms moved through central Kansas overnight and were still in the area when Aaron/n0qd appeared on our doorstep at 8:00am. Aaron has run Sunday with me the past number of years as N0Q. We delayed our departure a few minutes to let the rain move out. As we got to the freeway on-ramp in McPherson county to start our journey, there was WY0A/Butch (K0O/m) on the side of the road counting down the seconds. A short chat and a good start!

Our planned route covered a bunch of counties in south central and southern Kansas that needed a Sunday operator. Because of the storms, I planned all highways for this leg and it's lucky I did. We ran through one rain squall in McPherson county before breaking out into sunshine on the other side of the front, and we stayed on the back side in the clear after that. Surprisingly, given the lightning to our south, band conditions were really good compared to Saturday, with nice loud signals on both 40 and 20.

We kept watching for flooded roads. Driving southeast in Pawnee county, we saw lots of activity and flashing lights on the highway in front of us. Sure enough, water flowing over the highway. The highway patrol was there and was letting cars go through slowly since the water was only an inch or so deep. No danger, but I'm sure they kept a close eye on it. We also had two bird strikes. The first was to the front of our car, then a dove hit the SSB antenna stack but didn't do any damage like the pheasant did a few years ago.

Sunday also had a few minor equipment glitches. The power connector to my logging computer came loose and caused the computer to go black in the middle of a contact. It didn't take long to figure out, but during a pileup, it seems like an eternity! That's another reason I still like mobile logging with a DOS

computer. That type of computer crash doesn't effect the log file, and it just takes a few seconds to reboot once power is restored.

Aaron and I were also switching headsets which required different connections for each headset. Towards the end of the event, it appeared that my headset mic quit, so we switched to Aaron's headset. It turned out I was using a three-pin to two-pin adapter on the mic connection for Aaron's headset, and I plugged my "bad" headset into that by mistake. Problem solved, but not until after the party.

Because of the pileups, we stayed on lines a bit longer than scheduled and didn't get to my last county of Sedgwick. Fortunately, Wichita is in Sedgwick county and was well covered by fixed stations, so it made more sense to finish on the Sumner/Kingman line. In 6 hours on Sunday, we put another 874 contacts in the log. Both Aaron and I call that a success!

Stats

We operated 16.4 hours, 833 miles, 1992 combined Qs, 400 unique calls, 11 dupes, one radio.

States not worked ----- : AK WY IA
VE not worked ----- : NS QC AB NT NU YT PE NL
KS worked (6 counties) - : (MCP SAL) ATC JAC JEF GEA
DX worked (5 countries)- : OM DL R F HA

Combined rate : 110/hr

Special thanks to the following ops for 7 or more contacts:

53: N8II
43: OM2VL W6OAT
38: N6MU
34: WB9CIF
24: N5RZ
22: K7SV
21: K7TQ
18: KA6BIM

15: WA1SAY
14: DL3DXX K4AMC K4MM KE3ZT KX4FR WB0TEV
13: K0DEQ K3TW
12: K4BAI
11: K7IA
10: K0HX K2ZR
09: W8PI
08: AD1C KN4VV N0AT W4EE K7YMA
07: K6DAJ K7QDX KE6FQC N9NM NX6T VE3AQ

W0BH Award Winners - First Place - Very Honorable Mention

Most overall Qs ---- N8II/53 ----- OM2VL/W6OAT/43 ---- N6MU/38
Most CW Qs ----- N8II/36 ----- WB9CIF/34 ----- N6MU/W6OAT/27
Most PH Qs ----- OM2VL/19 ---- N8II/17 ----- W6OAT/16
Most counties ----- W6OAT/29 ---- N6MU/N8II/OM2VL/27- WB9CIF/25

THANK YOU to all in and out-of-state sponsors, ops, bonus station crew, and support team (log-checking, web and stamps) who made this eleventh Kansas QSO Party so much fun for all. I very much appreciate the support and comments from individual ops, clubs and teams in Kansas and out. We couldn't do it without you!

73, Bob/w0bh/w0b with Aaron/n0qd/n0q and Lorna/k0why/n0u
2019 KSQP Coordinator

N0Q 167 CW 181 SSB

Hi all,

I had a great day running mobile with Bob, W0B/W0BH, on Sunday. On Saturday, I had a grand total of three QSOs from home in Wichita, so Sunday was my big day. Weather was great for the most part, with a couple of rain showers and a flooded section of road to challenge us. While we didn't quite make it to Harvey and Sedgwick counties at the end of our run, we were able to operate from all of the counties we needed to activate. Switching seats in the van gave us both a chance to operate (and rest), with Bob handling all of the CW operating, and I jumped in the hot seat for SSB. This event is my

annual inspiration to practice CW and get to a level that will allow me to work both modes. So far it hasn't happened, but this time we'll see if I can keep focused and get it done.

Thanks to all of you who participated, and I'm looking forward to next time!

73 de N0QD

N0R (N5NA op) 1359 CW

Conditions were better than I expected with quite a bit of QSB. Had some thunderstorms in the area late Saturday afternoon making copy difficult, especially on 40m.

Thanks to all who called! The top ten callers were: WB9CIF(41), N6MU(33), N8II(31), N5RZ(29), K7TQ(27), OM2VL(23), DL3DXX(21), W6OAT(21), K7SV(20), and WB0TEV(20).

Station equipment: Elecraft K3, Scorpion SA-680 antenna, Dell Latitude D630 running CQ/X, and a Ford F250.

Thanks to Bob, W0BH, for organizing a GREAT QSO party!

And a BIG thanks to my wife, K5AKS, for driving!

AI5P - Rick's Visit Down Under

During my recent trip to Australia, I had the pleasure to visit my friend June, VK4SJ, in Queensland. County Hunters from the 1990s - early 2000s will remember her call along with the other VK stations active on the CH Nets. You might only imagine the challenges to work the counties from "down under!" It's quite an achievement! From the MARAC files:

Rex, VK3MW. USA-CA 1018 in 2001

Cliff, VK3CB. USA-CA 1078 in 2003

Bernie, VK4EJ. Still needs a few to finish

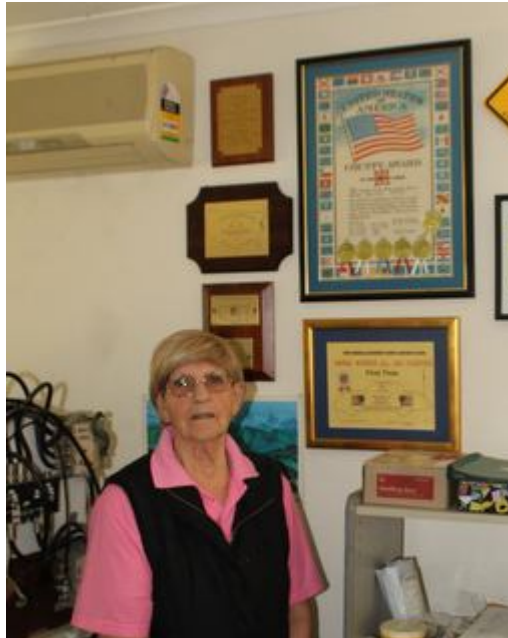
June, VK4SJ. USA-CA 1034 in 2001

Alan, VK4AAR. USA-CA 1014 in 2001 and 2d time in 2006

Graham, VK5AQZ. USA-CA 731 in 1991 and 2d time in 2000.

Those were the days! 73 Rick AI5P

Picture: June, VK4SJ, in her shack - August 2019.



Dateline CW by KN4Y - Ed

While the MARAC Roadrunner is in suspension pending a new editor, Ed's monthly column for September was posted on the K3IMC forum.

Here it is for other readers who didn't see it

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“DATELINE CW - By: Ed, KN4Y

Sweet day, cool, calm, bright, the mobile CW county hunter is on the prowl.

Well, whether we like it or not the month of September has arrived and another distraction for CW mobile county hunters is to look out for school buses. Starting the month is Labor Day when only a few do labor. I hear Gator's 4X4 as he downshifts and slides to a stop at the recycled railroad tie. He slides out of the cab, slams the door, stops at the mailbox, and enters the radio shack carrying the mail and a large white cardboard container. “Good morning Dude, are you planning to do some labor on Labor Day?” Gator is laughing as he opens the white cardboard container and hands me a latte. “Enjoy the moment Dude.” I shake my head in agreement. Gator sits in the chair and turns on the computer.

In a few minutes Gator yells out, “Dude you did not get CW mobile of the year. I just brought up the list.” “Well Gator you have to be a frequent CW mobile operator to get that award.” “Picky, picky.” I am intrigued, “Gator who got the CW mobile award?” Gator turns the screen in my direction, and I read:

First place CW Mobile of the year is Bob, N4CD. I shake my head in agreement. “Makes sense. Every time I turn on the radio there is Bob calling. Before I forget, check out my North American QSO party. I was on the Florida Contest Group team, Orange Juice.” Gator is laughing as he brings up the North American QSO party log module. Gator laughs, “Not bad Dude, you made 301 QSOs in the North American QSO party, but your team, Orange Juice, was not number one.” I fake a sad look.

Gator is staring at the computer and gets a sad expression, “Dude did you know John, KØIO?” I think for a minute. “Yes Gator, I remember working John back in 1999 in various contests. I do not think he was a MARAC member.” We turn the volume down on the radio, dim the lights and bow our heads as Gator recites The Shepherd’s Psalm.

Gator starts laughing, “Wow Dude, you made three QSOs in the Maryland-DC QSO party. Looks like a winner.” I give a thumbs down. “No Gator my daughter and her husband arrived, and I only got to operate for a few hours.” Gator shakes his head. “Dude, you told me you planned to operate in the Russian District Award contest from your mobile while at the bowling tournament in Hernando County. I see no log.” I sip my latte. “Well Gator to make a short story long, when I arrived in Hernando County the weather was horrible, with storming and possible flooding. I stayed in the motel until it was time to bowl.”

Gator is not paying attention; he picks up an envelope off the pile of mail, takes out his ivory handled switchblade and opens the envelope. “Dude in the XXIII Marconi Memorial Contest you received a certificate of merit for Number 4, low power in the USA. What is XXIII?” I ignore Gator and take another envelope off the mail pile. “Gator I have no idea what XXIII means, here open this envelope.” Gator takes his switchblade knife and slices open the envelope. “Dude you are fifth in North America and number three in the United States in the UBA DX contest. I guess not many United States radio operators worked that contest, at least not on low power, and what has this to do with county hunting?” I shake my head in agreement and again ignore Gator’s question.

“Dude let me ask you again, what happened at the senior center?” I laugh. “Gator, I tried to tell you but...” CQ, CQ, CQ, goes Gator’s cell phone. Gator answers. “Sorry Dude, I must eject pronto because a truck of corn came in full of rats.” He is gone faster than Ed or Kerry running a county. I hear him yell, farewell Kirk. The printer stops and I extract the printout listing of the mobile county hunters that checked into the county hunters’ CW call frequencies during the month of August. I read:

KØFG, K2HVN, K3IMC, K8TE, K8ZZ, KA4RRU, KB6UF, NØSM, N4CD, N9JF, WØGXQ, W3DQT, W4SIG, W8OP, WB4KZW and WK2S.

The month of September is a bonanza for State QSO party activists with eight QSO parties and a total of 684 counties are up for grabs. The list of fun includes the Tennessee QSO party (95 counties), the Nebraska QSO party (93 counties), the Alabama QSO party (67 counties), the Texas QSO party (254 counties), the Iowa QSO

party (99 counties), the New Jersey QSO party (21 counties), the Washington QSO party (39 counties) also known as the Washington Salmon Run, and rounding out the month is the Maine QSO party (16 counties). For the CW operators, operate in the FOC QSO party and the CWops OPEN.

NOTE: KN4Y plans to operate mobile in the Alabama QSO party in the following counties: Houston, Geneva, Covington, Conecuh, Monroe, Clarke, Marengo, Sumter, Hale, Perry, Dallas, Lowndes, Crenshaw, Coffee, and Dale.

I am exhausted, Nap Time.”

Colorado QSO Party

CO QSO Party – held Saturday Sept 1 2019

W0ZQ mobile 266 CW QSO

This was a mixed bag of lousy conditions, not many stations on the air, rough Colorado roads, and noisy power lines in places. Driving 500 miles, 15 counties, averaged 17 qso's per county which is poor for contest standards, however it was a nice day, getting on the air operating mobile contesting. My 80 meter mobile antenna wasn't working which might of gave a few more qso's. Thanks to all the stations who worked me and my driver Pam for doing most of the driving.

N6MU – fixed – CA 76 CW

Score includes 2000 bonus points for two Qs each with AF0S and WA0VTU.

Thanks to mobiles W0ETT and W0ZA for keeping it interesting despite poor conditions. I had 17 Qs with Ken and 24 Qs with Greg. 73...

John, N6MU

W0VOA – fixed – Montrose CO - 5 CW 196 SSB - all 40m

Very part-time and only 40M available. I read I was in a 'rare' county so I wanted to get on and give out the mult, even for a short time.

Didn't want to monopolize the suggested SSB freqs for too long, but every time I went QRX I left a big pile-up behind. Sorry guys :)

EQUIPMENT:

YAESU FT1000MP MKV + HENRY desktop (2X 3-500)

1/4 wave vertical with 1300' counterpoise ground

QTH: MONTROSE COUNTY, CO

K0GUZ - 40 CW QSO - from Rio Blanco, CO

Most of these contacts were from a ridgetop (DM59pp) near Douglas Pass about a half mile into Rio Blanco County using a KX3 and a Buddistick antenna. The weather was great, my son (KE0HNW) also participated. I used CW, he used SSB. Conditions for SSB were pretty sad, and they weren't a lot better for CW. But we had a great time. I got NO Colorado contacts from Douglas Pass, but did get New Brunswick and Yukon Territories on 20M CW. Came home and tried to see what was happening on 40; not a whole lot, but if I could hear them, I could work them...eventually.

Tennessee QSO Party

W4AN- mobile (KU8T and K4BAI) - 585 CW QSO

Jeff, KU8E, did a fantastic job of setting up the mobile station in my car and getting the antennas tuned and the computer set up with little or no RFI. Used Jeff's TS590SG with Hustler mobile whips for 20, 40, and 80. We had two mag mounts on the trunk lid of

my 2017 Toyota Avalon. We could go instantly from 40 to 20 during the day and 40 to 80 during the night time hours. We had previously a problem getting a good dip with low SWR on 80M, but this time were able to get the SWR down to 1.5 to one with a lot of trial and error and the use of the internal tuner in the TS590SG. Thanks for all QSOs and thanks to the TQP sponsors. We had dinner Saturday with N4ZZ and AD4EB near Nashville.

Our route was planned to cover a lot of counties that the other mobiles and fixed stations didn't seem to cover. Unfortunately, a lot of these were in the mountains and we didn't get to all the counties we had expected. However, those we missed were on I75, so hopefully everyone was able to get the ones we didn't get to from others. One highlight was to give our old buddy W6OAT one new AL county and seven new TN counties during the TQP. We got hopelessly lost on small mountain roads in the darkness Sunday night in UNION county. Lost a lot of time and, in retrospect, should have skipped UNION, or just deadended across the line. Congrats to all the mobiles.

20M seemed very long and only a few areas such as TX, NM, W6-7, and northern WI and New England, and isolated QSOs with NY, QC, and WO4O in FL were made. 40M seemed pretty good. Skip was long during the day and we worked few TN stations there. Later skip went very long and then everyone stopped working 40 and we made our last 40M QSO at 0124Z in spite of calling CQ there in every county. Toward the end, it seemed that everyone almost had quit or gone to bed and the rate fell way off. We did work K7IA in NM on 80 for our most distant QSO on that band. Only one DX station worked and that was EA2VE on 40M. No DX on 20 at all. We missed UT, WY, OR, AK, HI, SD, ND. We were QRV from 16 counties and made well over 10 QSOs in each, so the score includes 8000 bonus points for mobiles. We called K4TCG several times, but the ops there never heard us, so no bonus points from them.

Congrats to all the other ops, especially the mobiles. Hope there will be a "next time" for us. 73, John, K4BAI.

W4NZ Mobile (K0EJ, W4NZ ops) 1036 CW qso

This is the 7th year that K0EJ and I have teamed up to do the TnQP as a multi-op mobile. For our third team member this trip we enlisted the help of Mark's son-in-law Brandon Million, to help us with driving and navigation. He proved to be a valuable asset because for the first time ever, we completed the route, arriving at our starting point just minutes before the final bell. We had set a route which took us through 26 counties, starting and ending in Hamilton county, our home. The route covered 490

miles and included some of the rarer Tennessee counties, like Moore, Van Buren and Polk. The equipment setup this year consisted of an Icom 756proIII at 100w, laptop, Winkeyer and two Hustler antennas mounted on the roof of my 2016 Dodge Durango. The operating position in the Durango was comfortably snug but entrance and egress was not quick, especially for us seasoned operators.

Conditions were pretty stinky, especially on 20m and later 40m. Before starting Mark asked me if I had heard any information on the propagation forecast. I said no but if enough people get on we'll make our own. After the party I mentioned to Mark what the solar indices had been and his remark was, "glad we didn't know".

And people did show up. Even when the bottom fell out of 40m we had roaring pileups on 80m (441 QSOs), we hardly gave a thought to 40. We did occasionally check there and caught a late multiplier or two. Poor conditions did not diminish the FUN! We had a blast! And we thank everyone for calling us in each new county.

Familiar and often callers:

K1GQ (31)
K9OM (30)
KB3RC(K3JWI)(26)
W5TM (26)
K4BYN (23)
K0AP (21)
K3WJV (21)
K7SV (21)
NU0Q (20)
VE3NNT (19)
WA8KAN (18)
K0PC (17)
WB9HFK (17)
W3WHK (16)

....and many more. Thank you!

Congratulations are in order for the W4AN(K4BAI/KU8E) and N4ZZ(N4ZZ/AD4EB/KI4HVY) mobile teams. It takes quite an effort to do this. John and Jeff traveled quite a distance to join us this year and we really appreciate their efforts. Don, Jim and Melody are consistently high-performers and their participation makes it more fun for everyone.

All the best and safe travels!

73, Ted W4NZ for Mark K0EJ and Brandon Million

K1GQ - fixed - NH - 174 CW QSO

Fun to be near the perfect distance from the target state in a QSO party. Also fun to work many calls that I recognize as part of the WA1Z/m crew in NEQP.

85 QSOs with rovers, 89 with with fixed stations. A good test run for new logic in my logger that automatically identifies rovers.

K0PC - fixed - MN - 89 CW

Enjoyed this contest, especially chasing the mobiles around. That's always the best part of a state QSO Party for me. Thanks to mobiles W4NZ for 18 QSOs, N4ZZ for 16, K1GU for 7, W4AN for 6, and KY4L for 2.

KN4Y - fixed - FL 62 CW QSO

Heard stations mostly on 40 meters until later. Lot of mobiles but I had a problem finding them. Had fun.

K1GU/m - 307 CW qso (9 on 20m, 158 on 40m, 140 on 80m)

Relatively slow going during daylight but what a finish after dark.

FM Channelization – Some History

How Ham VHF FM Channelization Came About - The 1960s History

By the mid-to-late 1950s a few hams were already beginning to convert crystal-controlled commercial FM gear for 6 and 2 Meter operation. By 1960 it was apparent that changes in FCC regulations were going to make much of the FM gear in use by commercial services obsolete. Surplus gear was already showing up with a glut sure to follow. Unfortunately, when picking frequencies for new FM nets localities were choosing frequencies seemingly at random leaving the gear useless when traveling.

In the early 1960s several hams working for GE's Mobile Radio Department in Lynchburg, VA recognized the absurdity of this and set about to bring some standards to the frequency selection process. A national first-frequency of 146.94, with other channels spaced multiples of 60 KHz from it and a minus 600 KHz separation for the corresponding repeater input frequency were promoted for 2 Meters. 146.94 MHz was chosen because it was the highest 60 KHz channel that Technician Class hams could operate on at that time as well as being closest to the original 150+ MHz operating range of the commercial gear. Six Meter operation was already going strong in the mid-west on 52.525 MHz and it was promoted as the first 6 Meter channel to be activated.

The GE hams published mimeographed "FM Nets" and "FM News" to help spread the standards. Warren Middleton (SK), W4DYE (later W8CXD) - George Rose (SK), W4GCE - Seymour Paul, K4FSU and Tom McKee, K4ZAD were the most active in this effort.

In 1963 QST VHF Editor, Sam Harris started including a little box in his columns promoting 52.525 and 146.94. As FM operation spread across the country 2 Meter repeaters appeared on many 60 KHz spaced channels, and soon others got involved in the standardization efforts which evolved into the VHF/UHF band-plans in use today.

Recently some copies of the "FM Nets" and "FM News" were found and scanned. The early issues were composed on a typewriter and the later ones on a Teletype machine using punched tape to make typing-error corrections quick and to easily make the additional mimeograph masters needed for the larger circulation. Reproduction was by a labor intensive mimeograph process using trays of blue gel which would only produce a limited number of readable copies from the master. The blue print on many pages is quite faded and restoration efforts were not always as successful as one might desire, but here they are in PDF format. Depending on your browser and its settings these may appear in a new window or as a download.

FM Nets was the first publication in 1960. The first issue is missing. Beginning with the third issue of FM Nets 52.525 MHz and 146.94 MHz were promoted as first FM

frequencies to be activated in new locales.

http://www.radio.imradioha.org/VHF_FM_PDFs/3_FM-Nets.pdf

Publication of FM News followed in 1962. Issue 4 is a superb remote-station and repeater dissertation by Warren, W4DYE-W8CXD.

http://www.radio.imradioha.org/VHF_FM_PDFs/4-FM-News-3-1963.pdf

In 1961 two information sheets were created for distribution at club meetings and hamfests. One promoted FM, 52.525 MHz, 146.94 MHz, and the other urged FM users to contact ARRL to get the frequencies mentioned monthly in QST.

Hope you enjoy this bit of Ham-Radio history.

Tom McKee, K4ZAD
Cary, NC

note de N4CD – the commercial FM equipment of the day operated on 60 KHz spaced channels with 15 KHz deviation. The 'new' FCC rules set up 30 KHz spacing and 5 KHz FM deviation. Hams initially used the equipment 'as is' but later 'narrowbanded it' to the 5 KHz standard. That persisted all the way through to 2000, when even more demand for channels forced the industry to narrower and narrower bandwidths. Now you've got 'sliver channels'.

Most of the public safety market (police, fire, ambulance) have gone to digital transmissions but loads of surplus equipment(Motorola, General Electric) is available at hamfests for not all that much money. Of course, new ham rigs are also a lot less expensive than 40-60 years ago, with new 2M FM radios going for \$30 and up at hamfests or on-line!

Nebraska QSO Party

The Nebraska QSO Party was held Sept 8. Sadly there were no mobiles – one was

scheduled to be out, but had to cancel. Mike, NF0N, ran 2 counties before he reached home early in the morning but only on 20M - he self spotted. Band was still long at that time. I listened for him, but not there on 20M and didn't see him spotted on 40M.

While this was going on early in the morning, the CW Open contest, which ran from 1200-1600Z, filled the CW bands up to about .050 on 20 and 40m, and above that the WES and SKCC events kept the rest of the band occupied.

Fixed stations were reported on the contest reflector - being on the air from several NE counties including W0DB with 79 CW and 186 SSB QSOs, KB0LF with 19CW and 16 SSB QSOs, and KA0VNV with 5 SSB QSOs. W0SST reported 12 SSB QSOs.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

W7CD - fixed - WA - 1 CW qso

Very challenging to find NE CW stations during the CW Open contest.

K4VBM - 3 CW 4 SSB 5 digital 5 counties

My best score ever! Snagged KA0BOJ bonus station on 20m SSB.
Separate FT8 score was 30.
Thanks for the great fun!

W7DCM - fixed - AZ 2 CW qso

This was all I could do, for three reasons.

1. Not many NE stations to be found.
2. The whole state shuts down when the Cornhuskers are on the field
3. Conditions stink
4. QRM from NA CW Sprint on 40 didn't help.

I suggest moving this to an earlier weekend.

On the Road with N4CD

The travel bug hit again at the N4CD QTH. Coming up soon would be the Texas QSO Party – and while I'm not a fan of QSO Party mobiling, I occasionally get on and put out some counties. I'm not the type to run all day long zipping through counties with a driver or assistant just go-go-go all day long. These days I stop to put out counties most of the time and of course, always stop to put out parks. I can make county hunter contacts while moving but logging the required info for contest QSOs takes a bit more, or you use a recorder and get to do the QSO Party twice – once doing it and once re-doing it with the recorder.

The weather was sizzling hot pushing 99 degrees most days and sunny. It would continue to be hot the whole 4 day trip planned. It got down to the mid to upper 70s at night.

Along the way down to south central TX, I could also hit a few repeat parks and also try to hit two new ones for me. Folks needed some of the counties down that way so that would be a bonus, plus I could get self credit in a few I needed as well. So why not?

Before the sun got up on a Thursday morning, I was on the road at 6:30 am to head on down through the TX Metroplex before rush hour started. The trusty Malibu has 104,904 miles on it now. I've got to go right through downtown Dallas early enough (long before sunrise) to beat the traffic and succeeded. Traffic is still 'busy' even at this hour. Later, it would take another hour or more to go the 25 miles to downtown. If there was an accident, maybe 2 hours.

Before long – well, a bit over 2 hours, I was in McLennan County at Waco Mammoth National Monument – at 1324z. KFF-0975 which was popular in the NPOTA days but is still a valid park just outside of Waco, TX.

Waco also notoriously known for the Branch Davidian Government Slaughter.

From Wiki:

The Waco siege was the siege of a compound belonging to the religious sect Branch Davidians, carried out by American federal and Texas state law enforcement, as well as the U.S. military, between February 28 and April 19, 1993. The Branch Davidians were

led by David Koresh and were headquartered at Mount Carmel Center ranch in the community of Axtell, Texas, 13 miles (21 kilometers) east-northeast of Waco.

Suspecting the group of stockpiling illegal weapons, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) obtained a search warrant for the compound and arrest warrants for Koresh and a select few of the group's members.

The incident began when the ATF attempted to raid the ranch. An intense gun battle erupted, resulting in the deaths of four government agents and six Branch Davidians. Upon the ATF's failure to raid the compound, a siege lasting 51 days was initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Eventually, the FBI launched an assault and initiated a tear gas attack in an attempt to force the Branch Davidians out of the ranch. During the attack, a fire engulfed Mount Carmel Center. This resulted in the deaths of 76 Branch Davidians, including David Koresh.”

Hollis, KC3X, was out mobile in VA. I only needed 10 QSOs for a repeat visit here at the Mammoth site and easily hit that with county hunters and park hunters. Didn't stick around too long. One DX station in the log – DL8NDG.

I spent the money on the Austin Bypass Tollroad - expensive and run by a foreign company – and you'll will pay \$15 to go 30 something miles....but the alternative is an hour creep and crawl down I-35 when you get near Austin that is horrendous! Always. 24 hours a day and even worse at rush hour. Maybe 10 mph for 10 miles. The good news about the tollroad is the speed limit is 75 to 80 mph, with the last section posted at 85 mph – the highest speed limit on any road in the USA. I didn't bother with 85 – just cruised along at 75 or so....not willing to burn the gas to go 85 mph where the car gets about 20 mpg and you have to worry about antennas flying off the car.

Next up was Lockhart State Park KFF-3033 in Caldwell County TX. There's a 9 hole golf course here built by the CCC in the 1930s, who also built other facilities at the park. You've got fishing in the river, camping, hiking trails, etc. Pulled in and whipped off a bunch of QSOs then headed for the next park. This was a repeat.

Next up was Palmetto State Park KFF-3045 in Gonzales County. Hollis KC3X was mobile in VA headed north. Put 2 dozen Qs in the long and headed on out.

I took a 3 mile detour to get to Victoria – needed that one myself – and others noted needs for it. A quick run for the county hunters then backtracked and got back on course to Goliad.

At Goliad State Park you actually have two WWFF/POTA entities. Within the larger park is the Goliad Historic Site KFF-3502. The last time I was here, I only ran Goliad State Park, not realizing there was another 'park' here to run! Well, I'd take care of that mistake.

From the TX State Page:

“Spanish missionaries originally established the Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga in 1722 near Matagorda Bay. The church moved the mission to its present site in 1749.

This mission was the first large cattle ranch in Texas, supplying its own needs and those of Spanish colonial settlements as far away as Louisiana. The mission closed in 1830. Neglect and plunder left the buildings in ruin. The Civilian Conservation Corps rebuilt the mission in the 1930s.”

I ran the Historic Site from the visitor center which is right next to the mission. Then I moved into the main part of the park for Goliad State Park KFF-3015. Not longer after that, I'd be back at the Historic Site to make sure I reached the needed 44 QSOs for a new activation. Success!

There's also a POTA only National Historic Trail – which was popular in the NPOTA days – but now is only in Parks on the Air system, not WWFF. It connected Spanish missions together from Laredo up through San Antonio – and to the east toward Louisiana. From the National Parks web:

“During the Spanish colonial period in America, royal roads tied far-flung regions with Mexico City. One such road was El Camino Real de los Tejas, which provided the primary overland route to the Red River Valley, in what is now Louisiana, from Mexico across the Rio Grande.

Settlers, missionaries, and soldiers followed various roads and trails along the 2,500 miles of this route to populate the settlements, missions, and presidios of East Texas and Northwest Louisiana.

El Camino Real de los Tejas connected a series of Spanish missions and posts, from Mexico City to Los Adaes, the first capital of the Texas province. It linked a variety of cultural and linguistic groups, and served as an agent for cultural diffusion, biological exchange, and communication. Routes used by Spanish explorers that became the

camino real followed established Indian trails and trade routes, and its development had irreversible impacts on the native people of Texas and Louisiana.

Spanish entradas and the establishment of missions and presidios along the camino real routes indicated Spanish claims to the region, part of the larger 17th century power struggle among Spain, France, and England to control North America. The road served as an agent of change, being a conduit for exploration, trade, migration, settlement, and movement of cattle and other livestock.

The Camino Real provided access to armies on the move for more than 150 years, including those of Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the United States, and helped determine the southern and western boundaries of the United States and Mexico. Thousands of American immigrants into Texas arrived via a section of the Camino Real known as the San Antonio Road. Their presence and activities led to revolt against Mexico, and to Texas independence and eventual statehood.”

“The new visitor’s center was originally built as a cottage for the keeper of Mission Espiritu Santo but has been refurbished to provide interpretive displays highlighting the cultural and historical significance of the site. Mission Rosario State Historic Site’s enhancements include the addition of interpretive panels for visitors to learn about the history of the mission, as well as an etched panel of what it looked like in its heyday. A parking area was also added, and the fencing at Mission Rosario was replaced and moved closer so visitors can have a better view of the ruins than ever before. This project brings the story of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail to contemporary travelers following the historic route through four TPWD sites.”

You can also run this historic trail at McKinney Falls State Park, Bastrop State Park, Mission Tejas Park, and along the route where it ran. I was on the Old San Antonio Road for a segment – later on the trip and that, too, would be 'on the route'. The Missions in San Antonio - another NPOTA and park site, also were a stopping point on the 2,500 mile long trail.

The weather was looking ominous. The large visitor center just ¼ mile from the main part of the park. I made a quick run for this POTA only park - K4568 before the rain started. It's needed by many and you can run it at many spots. Probably should have put it out again – I likely was on the route a few times after that. Not many Qs have been made from here since the NPOTA days.

Then the skies opened up and a deluge commenced for the next half hour. Oh well....that was the end of the runs. 40M antenna went south with rain sitting on the

resonator detuning it during the downpour. 20M was OK but I'd worked everything there for the first two parks. It was getting late in the day, I was tired, and the motel was 35 miles to the northwest so it was time to head on out. It rained heavily most of the way to the Super 8 in Kenedy, TX. Dinner was at the 5D Grill and Lounge with a BIG chicken dinner. Slept well. Motels on this trip were about \$80/night. Dinner about \$15. The car was taking 25-27 bucks a day in gas.

Friday September 13

Today I'd try and get to some new/lightly activated parks along the way. First up would be **Honey Creek State Natural Area** that I missed before. Comal County. This is a ham UNFRIENDLY park. Normally, the only way you get into **KFF-3505** is on Saturdays with a two hour guided walk in tour. They aren't interested in ham radio or allowing anyone into the park at any other time other than for 'organized events' that happen once or twice a year maybe – and for invited guests only. Maybe if you volunteer for work there they might be more accommodating and let a ham do a bit of both. Who knows? Almost all the parks are looking for volunteers to help out.

The State Natural Area contains 2,761 acres, bisected by Honey Creek, an approximately 2-mile long permanent stream. The area was acquired in 1985 and 1988. Due to the fragility and relatively pristine nature of the area, access is restricted to guided interpretive hikes and other supervised events and activities.

One enterprising ham did some map work and discovered there is a maintenance road into the SNA on the opposite side from the state park. The good news is that there is an indented locked gate, which allows you to park a vehicle on 'park property' off the road. The fenced property line goes along, and the gate area allows you to pull in about 30 feet before the actual indented gate. That's the good news! You can park and be on park property. That enterprising ham made 10Qs and 'activated' the park for POTA. He wrote about it on the POTA website and got his 10 Qs before me .



Now for the bad news. There is a horrendously noisy power line across the street that creates 20 over S9 noise on 20, 30 and 40M CW. Ouch. Maybe I hit it on a bad day with temps up in the 90s already – and the power lines carrying lots of juice to run those a/c units. Humidity was up a bit, too. I tried moving the car a few feet either way. Turned the car around. No difference. You could tune across the band and not hear a QSO in the noise.

Well, I'd try it. I self spotted – and hoped to get at least 10. I really hoped for 44Qs but that wasn't going to happen from there! Made 11 Qs after 30 minutes of trying with only really, really, really loud stations making it. I'm sure lots more were calling! It was 'rare'. Dang. Some you win, some you lose....some you don't succeed as well as hoped. Maybe someone will get access and put out a lot of QSOs here. It's a long way from home so not likely to be me! (San Antonio area).

I scooted over to **Guadalupe River State Park KFF-3017** and whipped off a few dozen QSOs there. No QRN problems on that side of the State Natural Area but no way into the SNA other than a locked gate for the footpath into the SNA open only on Saturdays for the 'tour'. However, you never know. I didn't ask but previous folks have gotten a big 'NO'.

Frustrated, I headed north to Blanco State Park KFF-2990 in Blanco County. Whipped off a couple dozen Qs for this repeat activation. Only DX was IW2BNA and KQ6QB/VE3 in a Canadian Park (he's doing CNPOTA – the year long Canadian Parks on the Air event). This was a repeat for me but new park chasers show up all the time and county hunters always need counties and stars and other awards. I was circling around San Antonio.

Next up to the west was Old Tunnel State Park KFF-3044 in Kendall County. Here you have the old abandoned railway tunnel that is home to a gazillion bats. It's not bat season so no one around in the middle of the day. You have the parking area to yourself. You've got to walk down a steep path to the best viewing area early in the morning or evening to catch the bats during the months they are there.

Added ON4VT to the DX list for this one but not much else happening QSO wise. Made a few dozen Qs then headed out to investigate an ATNO – the only remaining unactivated park in TX.

Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area – KFF-3494 is a “yet to open” park. From the state web site:

“The Albert & Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area will protect a very special piece of the Hill Country. You’ll be able to see wildlife in natural settings, hear coyotes in the distance, view stars to the northwest, go camping and hiking, and try your luck at fishing.

Albert and Bessie Kronkosky began buying property in this area in 1946. By 1973, they were hunting, taking photos, and entertaining guests on their 3,814-acre ranch. The couple willed their beloved land to the state of Texas to protect it from development. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department accepted the donation of the ranch in March 2011.

A state natural area is a piece of land with unique natural, cultural and historical features. We have found several rare or endangered Hill Country species here. These include the golden-cheeked warbler, alligator lizard, sycamore-leaf snowbell, big-toothed maple, Boerne bean and Texas spring salamander. The site also features interesting geology due to several springs and weeps. “

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There is no timeline to complete all the work (and get funding) to be able to open the park. To date, no one had succeeded in getting permission to operate from there. I was going to investigate that. Checking the maps and Google Earth – there were no maintenance roads other than the main road into the 'ranch house' area. It wasn't going to be run that way. Hiking in the back way would require a 10 mile trek cross county in rough hill country terrain – each way to get to to a spot 'in the park' and you'd be there without permission.

So I plugged in the address into the GPS lady and headed on that way – a few miles off the interstate to see what was there. There's no signs off the highway but is a street address sign in front. I pulled in the 300 foot long driveway and up to the small parking lot – where there's a locked 'volunteer center' building and some garages for maintenance equipment. There were 5 'park service trucks' parked there. Hmmmm.....well, I'm here – why not try and put it out. I'm on the west side of the 'ranch house'. The sun is shining bright in late afternoon. I'm there about 7 minutes into the run and a friendly park superintendent (James Rice?) comes out of the ranch house over to my car. He tells me the park is 'closed' to visitors. (I believe he is the only full time employee there). We have a short chat.....and I plead for a few more minutes to make a few more radio contacts. He says 'since you've already been here a few minutes, I'll give you 10 minutes more'. Only 10 minutes and then you have to leave. That's it. Oh, and tell your radio friends NOT to come. We're not open to the public!.....OK...I'd

have 10 more minutes to frantically make as many QSOs as possible.

From Google Earth:



37 total go in the log before the ranger re-appears and says it's time to leave. Deriously. And “be sure to tell your radio friends that we are 'not open'.” Hi hi. I thank him for his consideration and leave. Didn't get to 44Q but a lot of folks got a real rare one. It might be four to five years before it's open officially. This is a good case of 'it's better to plead for forgiveness than ask for permission' that worked out OK for me! Hi Hi. This was the last park in TX to be activated in the POTA system.. Now, all have at least 20 QSOs. Not all the folks upload to WWFF.

The ranger also said that if he had seen me come in, I would have immediately be asked to leave. They are also looking for volunteers.....so maybe some local might put in a few hours or days of volunteering and be able to sneak in some radio contact time in exchange. They are doing large scale surveys of trees, flowers, animals, critters, and everything else 'biological'. Who knows?

Now, every single park in TX has been activated! Finally. (N4CD has 3 to go to get to all of them – but one is 25 miles access road 4 wheel drive high clearance only)

Last up for today is Government Canyon State Natural Area. Be aware it's closed on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. Park KFF-3503 in Bexar County TX. Twenty QSOs went in the log from here at the repeat activation. For that, anything more than 10 is enough. I was tired – it was late in the day and I'd have to fight rush hour traffic in San Antonio to get to the motel.

Headed on in to the LaQuinta Motel by Seaworld for the night. LaQuinta is now one of the Wyndam Rewards motels so I pick up a few more frequent stay points. Dinner

at a nearby BBQ restaurant -with a 3 meat, 3 side dinner plate. Whoa – that's a lot of food. The place was pretty full and doing a big business.

Saturday September 14

The TX QSO Party starts at 9am local so I had to drag my feet in the morning. I'm ready to go at 7am. The TQP runs till 9pm local and again on Sunday from 9-3pm. I'd be stopped by about 6pm as I'm not a fan of night driving or operating from the mobile that late – too many chances for accidents at dusk and dark.

I enjoyed a leisurely breakfast at the LaQuinta. I noticed my tires were a bit low. My little tire inflator seemed to give up the ghost. Fortunately, there was a Discount Tire store a mile away so headed there. They open at 8am and usually have a 'tire check' lane for free air (and they usually inspect your tires for wear and hope you'll buy a new tire or 4 if they are 'worn'). At 8am I got a few more pounds of air in the tires and by 8:15 was off to the first county line to be run in the TXQP. On the way I went through Atascosa County and ran it for the county hunters. Had to stop as it's only a few miles on the interstate with one exit. Others were planning on running that for the TQP folks.

I reached the Medina/Frio line – there's nice little parking area off the road there and sat there till 9am. Was there almost an hour after the QP started giving out the county line-off to a good start!

From there, it's along drive to Uvalde County - and even further if you plan on stopping by Garner State Park to run it. It's up near the north border. Fortunately the speed limits are 70 and 75 mph this way but it still takes an hour to get there. It's only a mile off the main route. The park is 1775 acres of Hill Country with several miles of the Frio River inside. There's a large 'concessions building' and other facilities constructed by the CCC boys back in the 1930s. Folks still come for dances here with the Juke Box playing the tunes. It's hard to get in many nights. You can also rent kayaks and paddle boards here. Whipped off a bunch of contacts then headed up north through the counties headed to Abilene.

All went well and ran the county lines going north. When I reached Taylor County I took a detour to Abilene State Park to run that county – the last for the day. You've got a small lake – and a popular swimming pool built by the CCC boys in the 1930s. They also did other work at the park. Pools are a lot safer than in the small lakes here.

Down here this time of year, it's a bit dangerous to go into some of the small lakes and even the rivers. Seems there's some nasty amoebas in the warm waters – and even in

some water parks!

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From ABC news site:

“A 10-year-old girl died in a Texas hospital early Monday morning, about a week after she had contracted a rare brain-eating amoeba while swimming in a river. Lily Mae Avant is now "in the arms of Jesus," her aunt, Loni Yadon, told ABC News in a statement.

Lily spent Labor Day weekend with her family swimming in the Brazos River, which winds through their backyard in Whitney, Texas, a small city near Waco. Soon after, she came down with what seemed like a common viral infection, a headache and fever. But over the following days, she began acting strangely, according to her family.

After becoming incoherent and unresponsive, Lily was flown to Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth last Tuesday. Doctors say she had contracted *Naegleria fowleri*, a rare but deadly amoeba that lives in warm freshwater such as lakes, rivers and hot springs. The single-celled organism typically infects swimmers by traveling through the nose and into the brain.

The fatality rate for *Naegleria fowleri* infections is over 97%. Only four out of 145 known-infected individuals in the United States have survived since the amoeba was first identified in the 1960s, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

There's zero to one case in TX that happens every summer. Last year a kid died in CA from the same thing – he caught in a hot spring. So far at least nine cases have been reported. Don't get water up your nose! Safest bet is wear a nose clip to keep water out and don't go underwater. However, the odds are very small....one in a million type event. Your odds of dying in a car crash or lightning storm are greater.

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The run in this repeat park went OK considering band conditions. JO7WXN made it into the log during the day along with one other JA. There wasn't a whole lot of DX in the log – only DL8USA, DL3DXX, HA8IB, F5FJ, ON4AAC made it in the log from Europe – they had a big SSB Work All Europe (WAE) contest going on that filled their SSB bands and also made a mess of 20M for much of the US as US stations tried to

work them.. In addition, the September VHF contest was going on and it too took away some folks from chasing TX stations. Here in TX, unless the band opens, VHF contests are very dull unless you have a REALLY big station with REALLY big antennas.

Pulled into the LaQuinta just off Interstate I-20 for the evening a bit after 6pm. It had been a busy day. Right next door was a Denny's.....so opted for a chicken skillet plate for dinner.

Sunday September 15

I had hours until the TQP started. I was up at 6:30 and ate breakfast. Walked across the street and bought a local paper (\$2) and read it end to end. Dragged my feet more then headed to the Jones/Shackelford line ten miles away to be there at 9am local. Quite a bit of noise there, however, so ran Shackelford/Callahan next at a very quiet location.

Then it was east along the interstate with a couple county lines – arriving at Palo Pinto Mountains State Park (another 'yet to open' park) but with indented gates and another spot to run it) – but no internet at the park. Ran Palo Pinto PPIN there for the TQP. Those contacts count. Ran a few more counties and wound up at Lake Mineral Wells State Park in Parker County to finish up the TQP.

Then headed home! Over 1000 QSOs in the TQP, another couple hundred on the way south for 2 days.... enough! 19 counties in the TQP and 30 on the trip. 1250 miles.

Had fun.

KC3X Trip Report

The trip was 2,500 plus miles. We were in 6 different states and I ran 88 counties toward my MD needs. I like to express a special thanks to all the MD/MP holders that gave the contacts I needed and to those who spotted and ran me. The hardest part of the trip was after 2000 it was hard to find 3 contacts on 40 meters. We did have a flat tire but all in all it was a great trip. Thanks to everyone who gave me contacts.

73's KC3X

Texas QSO Party

More than 10 mobiles hit the road to put out 200 Texas counties (out of the 254) for this year's TQP.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N6MU - fixed - CA 218 CW qso 125 counties

Couldn't hear the mobiles all the time so missed a bunch of mults. Top mobile for me was N5NA with 43 Qs followed by AD4EB(36), N4CD(18), KO5G(17), K5DX(12) and KS5A/W3DYA(9).

Kudos to the many fixed stations as well. Still one of the best Parties around. 73...

John, N6MU

K4AMC – fixed TX – 211 CW 113 counties

Put in 11 hours this year. Loads of activity on CW. Thanks for having the contest.

AD4EB mobile all over the place with 42 Qso's and 32 counties..N5NA next with 29 QSOs and 24 counties. N4CD 21 QSOs and 17 counties.

73 Jim K4AMC

W5CT - Multi -Op TX 937 CW 1003 SSB QSO 181 (at K5NA QTH)

Operator(s): AA5EX K5CD K5DU K5LLA K5NA K5PI K8LS KF5CSO KI5DR
N5NAA N5YHF W5MJ W5TA W9DPY WA5MOD

Susan and I had a lot of fun hosting many CTDXCC members and friends for the 2019 Texas QSO Party.

73, Richard (K5NA) & Susan (K5DU)

N8AI Multi-OP Mobile 173 CW QSO (ops N8AI WB5TKI)

Total includes 6000 points for making at least 5 mobile contacts from 6 different counties and 500 points for contact with N4CD/m in 5 different counties.

Rig: Elecraft KX3 to KXPA100 @ 70w. into Hustler mobile vertical

W3DYA - mobile - 320 CW QSO 71 mults

Submitted just to show anyone interested that I was mobile on Saturday in TXQP.

Norm posted on the County Hunter Forum:

“I feel bad about this, but after being mobile today I think it's time for me to give it up! I would like to thank everyone who followed me around today; and I even had contacts with some of the guys who have been around for many years. I have been thinking about retiring from mobile operation for the past couple of years. After today, I think I can do it, although it has been a lot of fun over the years.

I think I spent more time today spotting myself than actually operating hi! So I will not be mobile in TXQP tomorrow, Sunday. Best regards to everyone!

Norm, W3DYA”

WB0TEV - mobile - 300 SSB QSO 25 multipliers

The last time I went mobile in the Texas QSO Party was 2016. Ever since then I've been running off to Belize the last weekend in September to do the CQ WW RTTY contest as V31VP. This year the TxQP contest date was moved two weeks earlier, a move I applaud as I can now do both and the CW ops don't have to fit with the RTTY on 40 late Saturday.

My operating conditions are rather retro. The vehicle I use for mobile HF contesting is "the olde grey lady" my aging 1986 Pontiac Parisienne. Unlike the boxy modern SUV's, a sedan like this works better antenna wise with a long Hustler whip mounted on a fender with minimal vehicle body blockage. The rig is of similar vintage, a mid-1980's Yaseu FT-757 mounted on the transmission hump. I run the contest solo and almost constantly in motion. In order to produce a log I record all the contest audio using a tiny Sansa Clip mp3 player /recorder clipped onto an old sock tied onto the inside rearview mirror with its microphone pointed down towards the FT-757 speaker. I also record the trip using a dash cam with audio as a backup.

In most contests, using recordings like this to make a log would be verboten, but when I asked the TxQP sponsors a few years ago if they would accept this, they agreed. So, I've got 18 hours of recordings to play back over the next couple of weeks so as to transcribe a log and put it in Cabrillo format. (Why do I do this to myself??!!) Next time though, I think I'll bring along a capable CW op to put the 40+ counties I traverse on CW and also log for me when I'm doing SSB, taking turns at the radio.

I had a very ambitious plan to do 46 counties, but I fell behind schedule on Saturday and had to take a short cut to catch up to my time line plan and had to forgo Leon county.

Saturday was painful. Conditions seemed poor. Seemingly not being able to get much traction on 20m, I spent the bulk of Saturday on 40m. In hindsight that was a mistake and I learned my lesson the next day. Its hard to do 20m mobile as you often end up calling close to or on the same freq as another Texas station and you can't figure out why no one is coming back to you. The competition from the WAE SSB contest was also a factor. Sunday I figured out that I needed to go really high in the band and once I settled in a bit above 14300 things got a lot better. A lesson learned for next time.

My performance on Saturday was also hindered by yet another bird strike. If you go

read my write-up from my last TXQP mobile foray in 2016 you'll see how I creamed a buzzard. This year I had another avian incident. (Time to stencil another buzzard silhouette on the old grey lady, 3 more and I'm an ace!) Around 2225 Z I see a big buzzard come across my field of view followed by a WHOMMPPFF! I see the base of my spring loaded fender mounted HF antenna wobble and a burst of feathers in my rear view mirror, but nothing seemed to have fallen off so I just kept on truckin'. Thing is, I didn't seem to be getting anywhere. Doing Search and Pounce, stations would CQ in my face. I was hearing a funny noise from the rear of the car at times too. A quick check of VSWR showed that forward and reflected power were essentially the same so I knew it was time to stop and investigate. I needed a bio break anyway.

Once I parked outside a convenience store in Walker county I saw the first problem. The 2m/440 mag mount that had been on my roof was hanging by its coax over the right rear fender. Looking up at the Hustler HF vertical I could see that the 20m coil and stinger mounted on the triple plate adapter had gotten bent from the bird strike folding it up closer to the 40m coil and detuning both bands. The bird likely first clipped the VHF mag mount before colliding with the HF whip. I stuck the mag mount back where it belonged. After bending things back and making some length tweaks on the HF stingers I got the VSWR on 20 and 40 back where they should be and got back on the road with improved results.

My last county for Saturday was slated to be Bastrop and I was concerned that even with bypassing Leon I was still running behind. Luckily I made it to Bastrop in plenty of time. I'd still managed to activate 29 of my planned 30 counties that day, but there were a couple where, for the first time, I hadn't been able to scare up the 5 QSOs needed for a 1000 point bonus. One thing I re-learned (that I now remember experiencing in 2016) is that AT&T cell coverage in far SE Anderson county is non-existent. My route only had me in Anderson for but a few miles too. If/when I do this again I'm going to modify the route to avoid that cell-forsaken spot.

While Saturday was primarily a 40m day, Sunday was almost all 20m. 40m conditions on Sunday also really went down the tubes.

On Sunday I was aided greatly by KK7AC in Arizona who followed along with me all day Sunday acting as "mission control". Andy would help me find (and keep) clear frequencies and could always be relied on to get me one of the minimum 5 QSOs I needed for the 1000 point bonus for activating each county. He didn't have internet at his shack, so couldn't aid in spotting me, but when I needed to I pulled over and did that myself.

After starting off the morning at the Hays/Caldwell county line on 7222 (where I found KK7AC waiting for me), by mid-morning I was primarily up on 14304 (later moving to 14307 to avoid a net) and gained a growing following. Unlike Saturday where I fell behind schedule I ended up as much as 30 minutes ahead of schedule. This was largely due to the fact that I didn't have to use the extra time I'd budgeted to linger in counties where I just clipped the corner in order to scare up at least 5 QSOs. With a dedicated following I could get a good pileup going and clear it in much less than the 12-15 minutes of stop time I'd figured in.

The tail end was to be a 4 mile dash through the SW corner of Wood county and then park at the Wood/Rains county line in the closing minutes. I had a tremendous pileup at the Wood/Rains line which I eventually cleared. Looking at the GPS and clock I realized that I had a shot at getting across Rains and back to Hunt county (where I'd started Saturday AM) with a few minutes to spare. Announcing my intentions, I put threw the Olde Grey Lady in gear and sent the gravel flying from the shoulder as we headed northwest at 70 mph (except where the speed limit was lower). Would we make it? I made a few more Rains county QSOs as we rocked up US 69 from Emory Texas headed for Lone Oak just across the Hunt/Rains county line.

I made it with several minutes to spare, pulling into the parking lot of Lone Oak High school (just across the county line) and made several more QSOs with "the deserving".

Then it was just a 20 minute drive to my QTH and some much needed refreshment.

It had been quite a ride. Ever since I bought the Chevy Tahoe last year, the Olde Grey Lady hasn't gotten out much, but this weekend I put about 1000 miles under her wheels and feed her about 50 gallons of gas and quart of 10W30. Her AC was nice and cool, she ran well and got almost 19 mpg. As I unloaded her and parked her for the night, I could have sworn that I saw her wink a turn signal at me and whisper from under the hood:

"I may be old, and I've been around the block a few times, buy you know I've still got it." Had 18 hours of mobile SSB contesting incited an auditory hallucination? Had WB0TEV's mind finally been flung off the edge of the Smith chart?

CQ THE TEXAS QSO PARTY, CQ THE TEXAS QSO PARTY, from Hunt county Texas, whiskey bravo zero tango echo victor mobile.....

AD4EB mobile 2070 CW 102 multipliers

Another fantastic TXQP, it was certainly worth the drive from Tennessee. Everything went off without a hitch. Weather was perfect, roads were good, and Melody kept us on schedule getting all 43 planned counties in.

This was our second time mobile in the TXQP, the last time was in 2010. We ended up with 2071 contacts in that contest, and strange enough ended up with 2070 contacts this year (both before log checking). This year we ended up with less county multipliers for some reason.

We had much better rates on Sunday, averaging 155 QSOs/hr versus 95 QSOs/hr on Saturday. Seemed like propagation worse on Saturday, and having multiple contests taking place may have impacted Saturday's results. Best hour was 238 QSOs, likely a new record for me. Missed ND,ME,AK,MT,WY and only worked BC, ON, and QC Canadian stations. There were 342 unique callsigns in the log, lots of new ones to me (possibly new CWOps recruits?).

These are the station who worked us the most:

K4AMC(42), W6OAT(42), K0PC(41) , N6MU(38) , K3WJV(36), K9CW(35)
WA6KHK(33), DL3DXX(32), W8BZY(32) , W9DC(32), N4ARO(30)

This year we used APRS (APRSduino app on a cellphone), so those who wanted to could track our position. We also published our estimated county entering times on QRZ.com, which we stayed very close to. It was very evident that DL3DXX and N6MU took advantage of these, as they were almost always one of the first to work us in each county.

Thanks to everyone who worked us, you were all excellent and courteous CW operators. Some of the pileups got really large, thanks much for your patience. Special thanks to the TQP Committee, NO5W Chuck, and most importantly Melody, who was willing to drive me around for 2 days and 851 miles in Texas.

73 – Jim – AD4EB and Melody – KI4HVY

N5NA mobile 1684 CW 26 SSB 97 mults

The above score includes 34000 points for activating 34 counties and 500 points for working N4CD in 5 counties.

Considering where we are in the sunspot cycle I didn't think conditions were too bad. I made more QSOs and multipliers than last year.

I had some amazing pileups. I did my best to work through them. Maybe one of these days I'll learn to pick out calls more quickly!

Because of the WAE contest I missed a number of European stations I usually work. I did work DL3DXX with 28 QSOs, DL8USA with 8 QSOs, HA8IB with 7 QSOs, F5FJ with 2 QSOs, ON4AAC with 1 QSO, and JA7BZU with 1 QSO. Thanks for calling!

I worked the following stations 10 or more times: N6MU(43), W6OAT(42), WA6KHK(39), KA5VZG(38), WA2VYA(37), W5TM(34), K5IB(32), K4AMC(29), W8BZY(28), DL3DXX(28), N8II(28), K9CW(27), K0HNC(24), K5LH(23), AE5GT(22), K5KDG(21), N2IGW(20), VA7RN(19), AB7RW(19), K3WJV(17), K5OJ(17), N7NM(17), KF5DDV(17), W9DC(17), WQ5L(16), W7OM(15), NY9P(15), K4MM(14), N5RGH(14), N5NYM(14), K5WAF(14), K7TM(14), WB9HFK(13), K0PC(13), W5XX(12), W0SK(12), DL8USA(12), WD5CSK(11), K3TW(11), N4ARO(11), N4DPM(11), NA5YO(11), W9PA(10), KE5LQ(10), N5TM(10), K0FG(10), W5CT(10), WA8ZBT(10), W8CAR(10), K3DMG(10), NW0M(10), and K8MFO(10).

Thank you to everyone who called! A special thanks to my wife, K5AKS, for driving over 1000 miles this weekend!

My mobile station consists of an Elecraft K3, Scorpion SA-680 with cap hat on a 3' mast, Dell Latitude D630 running CQ/X, and a Ford F250.

73, Alan N5NA

K5DX - mobile - 609 CW 2 SSB

Sunday was a great day. Many followed us every county change. We ran the rig's audio over the truck radio. Keith & I could both hear the pile ups. What a thrill when we got spotted. I recognized many of the ones that work ME mobile in past TQPs As well as many of the CWOPS members.

Rig Kenwood TS480
Antenna Tarhill Jr.

COVERED 25 counties;
worked 19 TX counties,
States 41
CANDIAN 3
DXCC 4

Thanks Keith, NM5G for a great weekend!

N4CD mobile 1024 CW 41 SSB

Headed south 2 days before to run some Parks on the Air. Started southwest of San Antonio at the Frio/Medina line Saturday morning and headed north from there and would be stopping in Abilene TX at the LaQuinta for Saturday night. I usually stop by 6pm - not a fan of night driving. Dinner at Denny's next door.

Friday night I was at the LaQuinta near Seaworld in San Antonio. Dinner at the 5 D BBQ next door. (excellent). In the morning I was raring to go but it was too early on Saturday morning – the first line was 30 miles away along the interstates. Stopped by the Discount Tire store at 8am and got some air in tires. My little tire inflator died earlier than morning and tires needed a few pounds more air. Out by 8:15 and off to the line. Got there and sat 15 minutes until the QP started. Well, actually made some QSOs on 30M for the county hunters. Then it was off to the races at 9am - sat there for an hour putting Qs into the log.

95% of contacts made in the QP were when I was stopped - with just search and pounce for mobiles in between stops. There's lots of miles to drive in central TX to get from one place to another. Worked 10 Alabama counties in that QP with W4AN and KN4Y mobiles there and a half dozen fixed stations.

The weather was sizzling warm with temps running at 99F both days and lots of sun. Speed limit on the roads is 70-75 mph in rural TX. Stopped at 4 parks during the trip to put out those Parks on the Air as well (Garner State Park, Abilene State Park, Palo Pinto Mountains State Park, and Lake Mineral Wells State Park) and maybe attract a few more park chasers into the mix. Didn't have too much luck on 20M SSB as the bands were full of high power TX stations, usual nets, Alabama QSO Party stations, and generally poor conditions on SSB for a mobile, so just ran 20M SSB at the parks - and not all that many takers. Was able to spot on all but two county lines or locations.

Went through two quarts of water a day. \$27/day in gas and \$80/night in motels.

Next morning on Sunday had to wait and wait till 9am. Up at 6:30. Had breakfast at the motel. Walked across the street and bought a Sunday paper (\$2) and read it end to end. Surfed the internet. Drove the 10 miles to the Jones/Shackelford line and waited for the start. Ran the county line on 30m for the county hunters before 9am. From here headed east stopping to run the day's counties/parks on the way back toward Dallas - a five hour drive.

Worked 42 states - missing AK, NH, ME, NV, ND, WY, ND. Put DX stations in log including F, DL, HA, ON, JA and 3 Canadian Provinces. Caught 58 TX counties with 10Qs from AD4DB, five from N5NA for 1,500 bonus points, and just a couple from W3DYA, KO5G, N8AI, and KS5A. Heard W5CT all along my route S5-S7 on 20M but not much joy getting heard. 40M was the main band for working other TX stations. Never heard anything on 40M SSB other than 2 or 3 rag chews/nets but didn't spend more than a few minutes there.

W0BH/m and driver were missed for all those panhandle counties - MIA this year due to illness.

W3DYA/m got frustrated with the poor conditions and didn't run on Sunday. Missed those counties. Caught him in a few on Saturday but mobiles tended to stay on 20m it seemed for most of the time.

Activated 19 counties with 5 or more Qs for 19,000 bonus points.

73 de N4CD

Rig: IC-706, 500 Hz CW filter, six foot mast on trunk deck mag mount on the 2016 trusty Chevy Malibu with 105,000 miles, with the resonators horizontal for 17, 20, 30 and 40M.

Alabama QSO Party

Looks like two mobiles out this year in the AQP – W4AN/m and KN4Y/m. Many fixed stations to work and a very busy W4AN/m ran through many counties. It was going on at the same time as the TX QSO Party.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

W4AN multi-op mobile (K4BAI, KU8E ops) 671 CW QSO

We met up with both AB4B and W4NZ at the Huntsville Hamfest this year and both mentioned they needed help activating counties in the Tennessee and Alabama QSO Parties. So John (K4BAI) and I took two extra rover trips this year.

We ended up activating 24 Alabama counties. We had planned a few more counties but we started getting intermittent high SWR during the last couple hours on both of our mobile antennas and had to stop several times to troubleshoot that. That put us behind and we were 1 1/2 hours away from home when the contest ended.

The antenna setup is two magnet mounts (3 magnets on the antenna mount) on the trunk of John's Toyota Avalon. I have a nice ground that goes to the bracket for the muffler. We used Hustler 80 and 40 meter resonators and a 15 meter resonator on 20 meters with the DX Engineering top hat. So we were able to QSY quickly between two bands. The station is setup in the backseat of the car on an operating table I built. We used a Kenwood TS-590SG with a Winkeyer. I ran an audio cable from the radio to the audio input of the car radio so the driver could listen when driving.

I think the antenna problem we had was caused by the wind load on the mobile mast which caused it to partially unscrew from the bolt on the mobile mount. That caused a bad connection. It was strange because when I stopped to look at it the SWR went back to normal but when we got going again the problem returned. The problem with the 2nd mount is probably because it's a MFJ that developed an intermittent connection. Someday I will get all these problems we have had in the past fixed. At least I solved the RF problem with the radio/computer that has plagued us for years on 40 meters. Sometimes it's hard to tackle these issues with the temporary setup we use.

John and I had fun despite our visit from Murphy. We had some unusually short skip on 20 meters that helped our QSO totals on that band. We were also glad to give John's old high school classmate W6OAT his last county in Alabama!

CU in the next one.

Jeff KU8E

KC4HW- fixed - AL 122 CW

Could not get the mobile installation together, so operated from my home station. 20m seemed pretty good, with good signals from EU; 40m not so good, maybe I just hit it as the wrong time; and 80m was very noisy as we have come to expect. It did seem that conditions were pretty long.

I had really hope to out do my FT4 effort from a few weeks back, but could not gather up the time to operate a few more hours.

Used latest Writelog and it worked very nicely. The only glitch was the operator...hi It seems that my typing dexterity is not what it use to be. I am not sure if my score is correct, but I am sure that logging checking/scoring will sort that out.

As always slow CW, about 20 wpm.

KN4Y mobile 350 CW QSO

Great weather not so great band conditions. Lot of QSB. Called a lot without a reply.

Washington Salmon Run

Lots of fixed stations on the air this year – most of the counties were on. N7WA/m hit many of the rarer counties including Ferry. I believe he was the only mobile this year.

W7CD - county Expedition - 114 CW 39 SSB

Ye old Scout Commissioner set up at beautiful Camp Parsons on Jackson Cove with wood stove, mess kit, and an inverted vee fed with balanced line(EXP-SOST). Slept in

my Hennessy hammock with a rain fly. Probably spent more time demonstrating and teaching than actually contesting and logged more Radio Merit Badges than SR multipliers.

W6OAT - fixed - Kitsap WA - 880 CW

This was my first Salmon Run and I thought conditions were terrible. With the exception of one skew path QSO made with K5CM on 15m, all my contacts on 15, 10 and 6 meters were made with locals. There were a few good, but short, runs on 20 and 40m. I spent most of the contest calling unanswered CQs. Two highlights of the contest for me were discovering the number of locals I can work from my new QTH, and chasing the N7WA mobile around the state picking up a lot of rare-county multipliers that I never would have worked otherwise. I'm already looking forward to next year when hopefully we'll have some high band propagation.

KN4Y - fixed - FL - 48 CW - 20 counties

Signals good, they heard me. Just sat there and S&P'ed. Did not do Sunday due to Church and bowling tournament. Did not hear bonus station on CW.

N6MU - Fixed - CA reported 129 CW 33 SSB QSO

Iowa QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running. WI0WA/m was very busy and KE0TT/r kept CW humming. On SSB, N0SFH was giving out the counties.

Several other QSO parties were going on at the same time so the bands were busy with the Scandinavian SAS event, the Washington Salmon Run, the NJ QSO Party and NH QSO Party.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

K3WJV - fixed - PA 54 CW 1 SSB 51 counties

TNX to Bill & Toni @ WI0WA for driving all over Iowa for 28 of my QSOs. I had 33 different counties. Not much SSB activity that I could find with only 1 Qso with N0DFF. TNX to the mobiles or portables that make these QPs fun.

K0AP - fixed - KS - 29 CW 27 counties

Iowa is too close to KS but still managed 29 Qso's, most of them with WI0WA. Signals were 229-339 for the most part. Great ears Bill! Thanks for another great CW mobile operation.

73 Dragan K0AP

KV8Q fixed - OH 54 CW 49 counties

Thank goodness for WI0WA (N0AC & N0NI) for the 30 QSO's (16 in new counties for me) and for KE0TT for 8 QSO's. The other 16 contacts were with a handful of fixed stations that came to the party. Thanks for the QSO's and I hope to play again in this party another time. 73 tom

K2DSW - fixed - IA 382 CW QSO

Thunderstorms here in Iowa made for strong QRN and difficult copy on weak sigs especially on 80M & 40M during the last few hours of the contest. I struggled with keeping my aching BIC and had to stand up many times and thought about giving up and quitting early. However, since I missed the 2018 IAQP because I was back in NJ for the wedding of my granddaughter I promised myself to make up for it in the 2019 IAQP. Also some local competition with my buddy Gary N5PHT kept me going to the end. Thanks to all the callsigns that made it into my log. Special thanks to the mobile team of Toni N0NI & Bill N0AC for all the new counties I logged.

73-Bob-K2DSW

N5PHT - fixed - IA 231 CW

Thanks for the Qs. It was fun even with poor conditions.

Mobile Activity in September

At the beginning of the month, the TN QSO Party was going on – no mobiles outside TN spotted

W8OP was noted out and about in WV

NF0N, Mike, ran counties in IA

Then we had days without a mobile until NF0N spotted in IA and NE.

N5MLP, Ron, was spotted running TX counties for several days

N5KUC spotted out in west TX

Several park activators including KB3WAV, Kerri, and Peter, KQ6QB were noted

KC3X headed out on a long trip of over 80 counties in several states including WV, NC, VA, PA

N4CD headed south in TX - then ran in the TX QSO Party

KA4RRU, Mike, ran counties in VA/WV

K6YEK spotted running CA counties

KB0BA/N0XYL, Lowell and Sandra, noted out in IN and KY

Then we had the TX QSO Party with county hunter mobiles Bob N4CD, Norm, W3DYA, Guff KS5A participating along with another 8 or so mobiles.

KN4Y, Ed, headed over to AL for the AL QSO Party – ran FL counties on the way there and back.

K8ZZ, Ed, put out IN and OH counties. Spent many days in OH.

K5GE, Gene, took off from TX, headed to NM, up into CO winding up in SD along with AB7NK/K7SEN. Spent a week up that way then headed back through NE, KS down into west TX.

AB7NK, Mary and K7SEN, Neil, took off on a long trip from AZ heading toward South Dakota via KS and NE - where they put out much of SD and many, many other counties. Then they hit ND counties.

We had the IA QSO Party but no county hunter mobiles participated....same for the NJ QP. And the NH QP. Also the Washington Salmon Run.

Rick, AI5P, spotted in counties and parks out west in UT and other states.

- - -

Most active mobiles - AB7NK/K7SEN and KC3X with K5GE not far behind as far as total county count. K8ZZ was on many days from OH counties.

New Jersey QSO Party

Only one mobile and he was part time. Maybe a dozen fixed stations were on – some on SSB, a few on CW.

Peter, K0BAK/m, put out a few during his Parks on the Air Activation. He ran some of the 'state forests' which are only in the POTA system. His rove report:

K0BAK Sept. 21 rove and casualty report

I had announced here my intention to activate all New Jersey state forests this weekend, covering northern NJ on Saturday and rest of the state on Sunday. The rove was cut short by a vehicle failure, but at least I was able to activate a few forests on my plan before that. (I realize these are not in the WWFF program, but I thought those of you not in the other group might find this entertaining.)

My first planned operation location, picked as the most convenient in Worthington State Forest, is also on the Appalachian Trail so I could also activate the Trail for the first time in NJ. When I arrived a little after 9AM, the little parking lot was filled. I pulled over in the circular lot to look up alternate Worthington sites, when a parking helper came over to give me directions to other parking lots for trail hikers. He asked what I was doing, so I began my 30-second description of POTA ... but about 5 seconds in, he said "oh, parks on the air". Ha! Word's getting around about us crazy park ham operators.

This tight little area in Delaware Water Gap has recreation parking, trail access, and Interstate 80 intertwined. One wrong move would send me west over the I-80 bridge to PA or east through tolls, so I wanted to be sure I knew exactly how to drive the few hundred yards to the long narrow road along the north side of the mountain forming the horseshoe of the Delaware River through the Gap. Part of the road is so narrow it's controlled by traffic signals to alternate traffic uphill and downhill. During rove planning I considered some parking along this road, all within Worthington, but didn't really map it out. Now I'd drive up the road knowing I'd find something, although the parking I could spot via satellite was some slow miles up the hill. I was glad to spot an unoccupied gravel parking lot much closer to the entrance than I could see on satellite, parked with my higher-signal van back pointed westerly away from the mountain, and got on the air. I made 21 contacts on 40m in 21 minutes with the aid of POTA spotting, which I think is a very good result at 9:30AM local especially given the geography and trees. I did try to hear other POTA activators on 40m for P2P opportunities, but could not.

Back down the hill and back on I-80 westbound toward the rest of the northern NJ forests, the next stop was in Jenny Jump State Forest. While most of the apparently-available parking was on top of Jenny Jump Mountain, I chose a small lot on a lake instead, hoping the lake would give me good RF launch area to the west whereas the top of the mountain seemed to be tight forests all around. Some of the roads to the site were uncomfortably narrow and winding, but luckily I didn't encounter many vehicles coming the opposite way. The lake, informally named "Ghost Lake", is along locally-famous "Shades of Death Road". I wasn't intimidated though, at least in daylight. [Look up the name of that road on Wikipedia or the WeirdNJ.com sites for some interesting legends.] The tiny lot looked like it would accommodate only 3 to 5 cars. There was only one car there when I arrived, and he was fishing in a boat on the lake, so I decided I could park perpendicular to his car (blocking him in) to point the back of the van toward the lake, since I'd have plenty of warning to move the van if he started paddling back. Of course, only a few minutes after I arrived, more cars drove around me to park, and I felt pretty awkward parking the way I did, though the folks were friendly. Sixteen 40m contacts in 20 minutes wasn't bad, but not as good as the previous park. It

didn't help that I was anxious to leave to get out of the way of the other park visitors.

Stokes State Forest was almost an hour away, the most northerly, and the farthest away from the other Forests on my rove plan. But at least it appeared to have a decently-sized parking lot and a visitor center for civilized comfort breaks. Once I got out of the Jenny Jump area, my route had many turns but the roads were fairly easy to drive. Passing through a village close to the Stokes entrance, I noticed that the Appalachian Trail crossed there, so I thought I might have a second chance to activate the Trail on the way back since I couldn't do so at Worthington. The paved parking lot and visitors' center at Stokes made it seem more like a popular State Park than State Forest. I started operating just after noon, which was the start of the NJ QSO Party, so my CQ recording included both the NJQP and POTA. Although I had entered the NJQP contest as a mobile station most years since '14 and even won once or twice, this rove was aimed at POTA with NJQP just as a sweetener. I had the most contacts at Stokes, with 23 Qs on 40m and 5 on 20m, including two incoming P2P contacts. Hunting for other activators unsuccessfully on both 40m and 20m took some time, so overall my Stokes operation was about 50 minutes.

I looked at the satellite view of the village I passed to try to find a roadside parking location close enough to the Trail. From the type of paving, it wasn't clear if the roadside spots were public or private, and in any case there were overhead utility lines that would keep me from extending my antenna whip. Two businesses' small parking areas were a possibility, and I found on street view that one of them was a delicatessen. I drove to the "Sunrise Appalachian Trail Deli" (see pic), ordered a sandwich I didn't really want, and asked if it was OK to park there for 20 minutes or so. Overhead was wire-free, so I could fully extend my 17-foot whip. Not too surprisingly being in a village, baseline RF noise was S5-6, rising to over S9 in a regular pattern. Vehicles on the busy state road sometimes made overwhelming noise too. I was just barely able to complete 10 contacts on 40m and got out of there to save my ears.

The next stop was to be Abram S. Hewitt State Forest, never before activated ("ATNO"). Although it was a full hour's drive, the next two parks were only 20 to 30 minutes' drive each, with a possible bonus activation of a historic trail on the way back home ... but it was not to be. Twenty minutes into that hour drive, about a mile after getting on a short segment of limited access highway, the van lost almost all power. The engine revved but little was being delivered to the wheels. I pulled over, shut off the engine and turned off A/C (for whatever that's worth), then restarted. Same problem, the van wouldn't get much over 20-30 miles per hour, so I pulled over, put out my traffic cones, and called AAA.



At this point I wished I had checked on coverage for a commercial-type truck. After quite a bit of phone redirection and surprising confusion about where I was located (I could see an exit sign so that should have nailed it down well), my tow truck was scheduled for 3:20, an hour from now. My AAA coverage included 100 miles tow, so I decided to get towed to my usual mechanic's place and to pay the ~20-mile overage. I accurately predicted it would be rescheduled at least an hour later than that, given AAA history. Although a breakdown is never fun, I was pretty chill with the situation given the age of the van, and that being on a highway with wide shoulders, good weather, and an operators chair I could sit on away from the van, this was about as good context for a breakdown as possible considering where I go with the van.

The tow truck operator was angry when he arrived 2 hours after I called AAA. He argued multiple times with his boss over the phone that the tow truck was under-sized for the job, and his reaction afterward made him even more angry, even rageful ... not necessarily directed at me, but so emotive I thought his blood vessels would burst. The entire 3-hour ride back to my mechanic's garage was super uncomfortable, and his angry demeanor continued with dangerously angry driving. The route he was taking didn't make much sense to me, plus I was concerned that the total height of truck and van must have been almost 14 feet, so I hated taking any non-highway routes. But once we got to the Philly area I was familiar with, the route he was on was clearly crazy, heading toward crossing through the center of Philadelphia on a Saturday night. After some persistence in talking to him about the route, he revealed that his navigator was programmed to avoid tolls. "Are you ***** kidding me?" I thought to myself. I'm the one who pays for any tolls, and among other things he was complaining about how late he'd be getting home (which didn't prevent him stopping to take two smoke breaks), but

still he took a route that would have been an hour longer than necessary. I managed to persuade him to reprogram the route in time so we could turn around and head back toward the Penn. Turnpike like we should have done 15 miles before.



We finally arrived at the Meineke garage that did work on the van before. While the tow operator was preparing to drop the van from the tow truck, I was hurriedly disconnecting and removing the screwdriver antenna from my van's trailer hitch receiver, because it had scrapped hard as the van was pulled onto tow truck. I had asked for my van to be placed in front of the service bays rather than in the downhill parking spots available to make its removal from the truck as easy as possible. I paid the operator with cash, not wanting him or his remote coworkers anywhere near my credit card; I barely had enough though, keeping only a few singles and a ten. After they left and I put the antenna away in the back of the van, I had planned to drive the van down to a double parking place. However, the van would now not start. The space in front of the service bays was flat, and then it was downhill to the parking spots. After a couple failed rocking starts, I finally pushed the van far enough for gravity take over and I rolled the van into place and stopped without power brakes. The fun finally was over, and my wonderful wife picked me up; on the way back she was punished with my stories of my day.

(Note de N4CD- van died because of bad fuel pump. Now repaired.)

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 12 CW 5 SSB 7 counties worked

I finally found a few hours in my weekend to work the NJQP. Thanks to several who operated on both modes. 73s Dave WN4AFP

WA2VYA - fixed - TX - reported 18 CW 10 SSB and 9 counties worked

W8KNO - fixed - OH - reported 5 CW 10 SSB and 9 counties worked

New Hampshire QSO Party

This was a big dud as usual. Most NH wait for the NE QP.

Five stations reported on the 3830 contest reflector and each had one digital contact and one had a grand total of 2 digital contacts.

I heard/worked one station on CW.

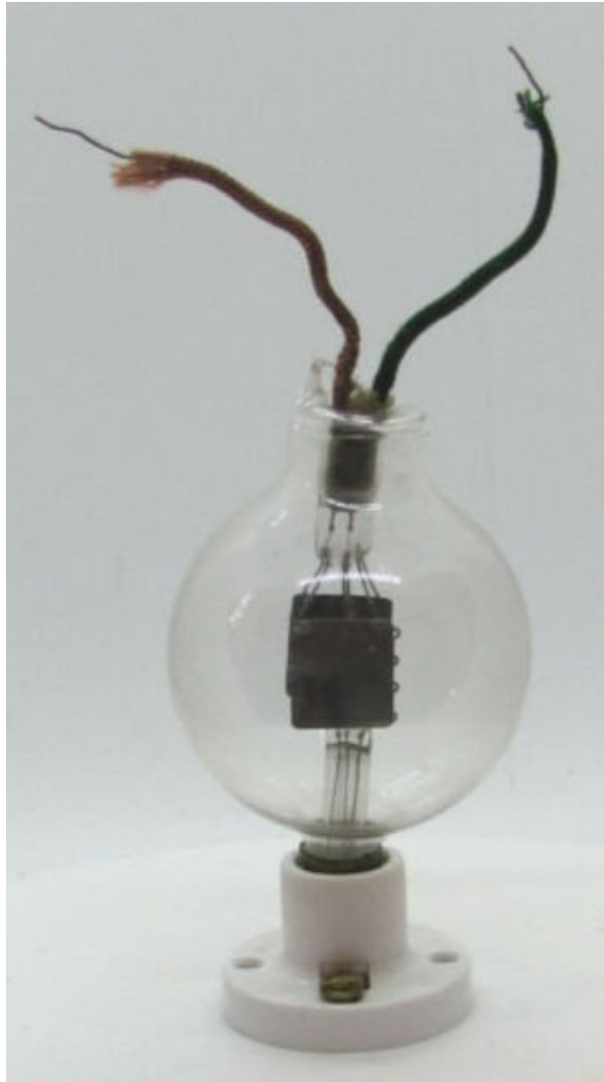
That was it.

In the Beginning

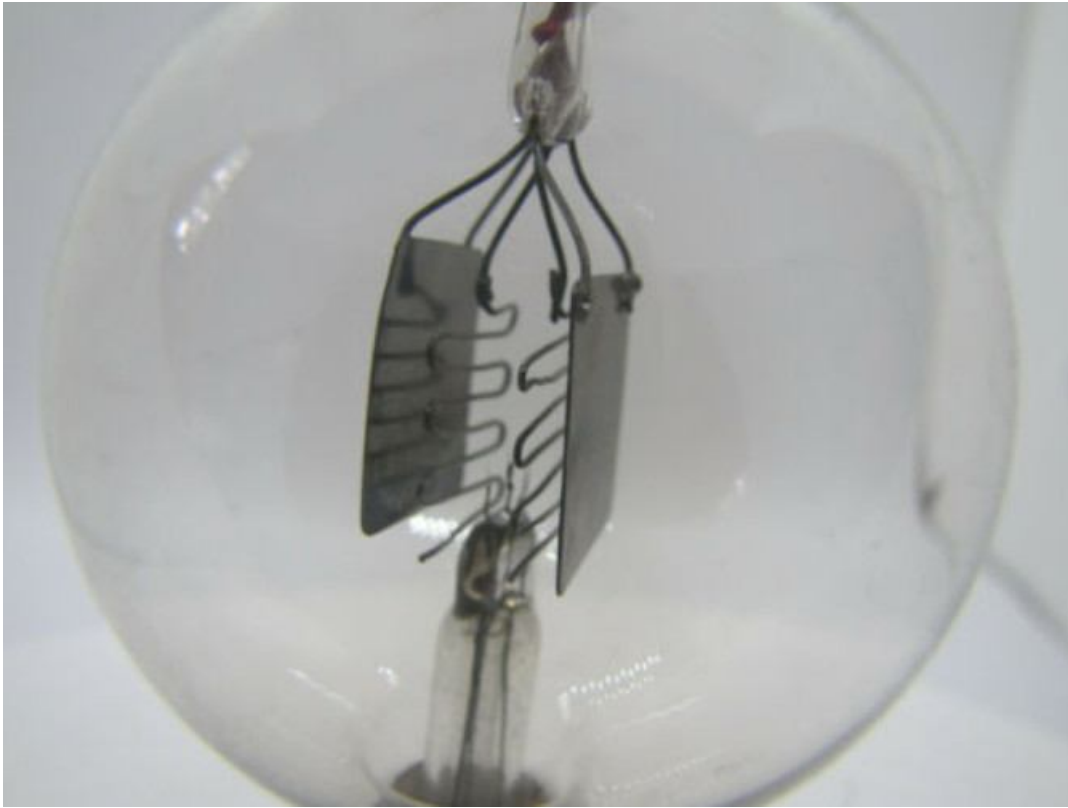
If you were a ham radio enthusiast in the 1910s, you'll drool over the possibilities of getting your hands on an 'audion'....the first vacuum tubes that were designed by Lee Deforest. They were very expensive – all hand made.

The first 'tubes' consisted of an ordinary light bulb – about 5 watts – in which an additional element – a plate – often then called 'wings' – was added. Maybe two of those wings tied together. It made a 'detector' and a curiosity. It didn't work better than a crystal detector (galena crystal and cat-whisker) or a Marconi Magnetic Detector. The crystal detector was the least expensive, and only if you had a lot of bucks, could you afford a 'vacuum tube'.

Lee Deforest added in a third element – a grid – making a triode tube. Here's one of the first designs. You'll note it is built on a light bulb based – screws in – and then you connect the wires for the plate and grid. This is called a 'spherical audion'.

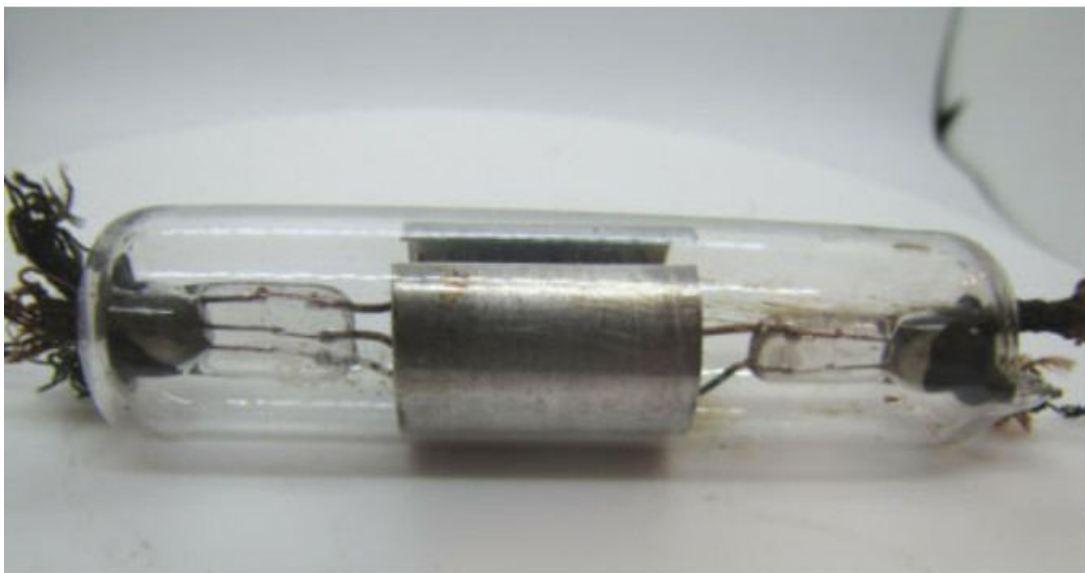


Detail of the grid.



This tube sold for \$160 on Ebay this month – filament burned out.....

Another design was the 'tubular audion' seen below. Wires came out both ends



Tubular Audion



Inner Detail of Grid

These tubes barely worked at audio frequencies and were not very good at 30-600 KHz where nearly all the radio activity took place. Most of the communications was 'marine' – ship to ship and ship to shore at the time – oh, and 'spark gap' transmitters. Ham radio enthusiasts had been banned in 1912 to frequencies above 1.5 MHz (200 meters and down). These tubes didn't work up that high in frequency.

Nearly all the work then on tube development was being done by Western Electric- the manufacturing arm of AT&T – who had a big interest in developing amplifiers to allow cross country communications on telephone lines. That progressed slowly but steadily.

In another 10 years, Western Electric would be one of the main suppliers for the theater industry when 'talking movies' appeared in the 1920s with high power audio amps.

Not much happened with tube development otherwise until WW1 started. Then there was a tremendous push to build working tubes for military communications. The Europeans were actually ahead. The US came up with the VT-1 and VT-2 tubes and a hundred thousand were massed produced. The VT-1 was a receiving tube and small signal oscillator. The VT-2 was a power amplifier tube.

The VT-1 led to the development of the UV-201 triode tube which was massed produced when AM broadcast radio started in the early 1920s. A hundred million UV-201 tubes were made during the 1920s. Many of the early sets had between 1 and 5 of them in the TRF (tuned radio frequency) designs of the day.

It all started, though, with the 'audion' – hand made in a few laboratories and sold for big bucks (\$100 and up in 1910s dollars) to experimenters and the government. The average 'life' of an audion was less than 100 hours before the filament burned out. Later ones had two filaments. When one burned out, you'd connect the second one and use it until it died.

That folks – was the beginning of vacuum tubes which reigned supreme for 6 decades till the modern 'transistor' came about in the late 1940s at Bell Labs – and into commercial use in the 1950s.

Awards Issued

Master Gold #71

Sandra N0XYL

7/28/2019

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

Many good state QSO parties with several hundred counties up for grabs in October. Once we hit November, it's time for big DX contests and Sweepstakes when state QSO parties wind down.

Oct 5 1600z to 6 2200z
California QSO Party CW Ph
Serial, county or SPC
www.cqp.org

Oct 12 0300z to 13 2100z
Nevada QSO Party CW Ph
RS(T), "NV" and county, or SPC
nvqso.com

Oct 12 1600z to 13 2359z
Arizona QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.azqsoparty.org

Oct 12 1600z to 13 2200z
Pennsylvania QSO Party CW Ph Dig
Serial, county or ARRL/RAC section
paqso.org

Oct 12 1800z to 13 1800z
South Dakota QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.sdqso.com

Oct 19 1400z to 20 0200z
New York QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.nyqp.org

Oct 19 0001z to 20 2359z

10-10 International Fall Contest, CW CW

Name, 10-10 mbr or "0," SPC

www.ten-ten.org

Oct 20 1700z to 21 0100z

Illinois QSO Party Ph CW Digi

RS(T), county or SPC

www.w9awe.org/ILQP.html

Oct 26 0000z to 27 2359z

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB Ph (good weekend to avoid 20m SSB)

RS, CQ zone

www.cqww.com

That's all this month. 73 de N4CD