

County Hunter News

October 2020
Volume 16 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. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – Most of the month had zero sunspots. At the end of the month (9/24) a sunspot group appeared – one sunspot for a sunspot number of 11 (one 'group' and one sunspot). The A index spiked and K went to 5 – giving 'poor' propagation though.

Several articles are included – in this issue – some pessimistic about what this cycle might bring. The longer the lack of significant sunspots – the lower the probability of a good sunspot number in the future. However, there's still a lot we don't know about solar dynamics so stay tuned.

2) State QSO Parties – lots of good ones this month with full coverage on them in this issue. Many more good ones coming up in October – then things slow down with major contests in November including CW and SSB Sweepstakes. Meanwhile, there are lots of parks on the air to chase for their counties with ever increasing activity in that area. Folks are activating in all 48 states these days.

3) Ham License Fees - The FCC has proposed charging for ham radio licenses once again. Full article later in this issue.

Kansas QSO Party

KS QSO Party – with loads of 1x1 calls to spell out words for the bonus. (KANSAS, YELLOWBRICKROAD, SUNFLOWER) - 105 counties all on the air and N6MU worked them all in the contest! (both CW and SSB used).

Loads of others had 90 counties or so.

Propagation not bad but not great all the time and weather in eastern KS not so great ! Lots of mobiles to chase, too.

All counties were on the air in the contest – some many times over.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N0W - mobile 1870 CW 61 mults (N0AC operator)

First thanks is my non-ham wife that did all the QSO party driving. Second thanks is Bob, W0BH, for organizing a great event. Third thanks are all the stations that got on the air to work the Kansas stations.

The N0W/m mobile crew was Donna, Abby our Scottish Terrier who slept the whole trip and your's truly. I wasn't sure if this year's QP was going to happen. While at our Colorado summer QTH we received news our Iowa QTH was damaged in the Midwestern storms and we need to return. After much clean up and contacting the insurance company for repairs we decided it would be okay to run the QP. I changed the route and motel reservations and we were ready to go.

Arriving at our staging point we were welcomed to stifling heat but Saturday morning brought storms and bearable temperatures. Saturday radio conditions were plagued with QRN and weak signals. Stations were sometimes barely readable and I wondered if there wasn't something wrong with the K3's receiver. I just got used to the conditions and pressed on. I still wondered about the conditions as I had not heard from N6MU (who is

always present) and OM2VL. After reading Laci's post I understand his conditions. Later that day after dropping off the XYL at the motel I went back out for my only 80m run stopping after putting another 100 QSOs in the log.

Sunday brought more cool weather and better conditions. Most all of Sunday's counties were straight through. This is the first year I've operated the entire 18 hours except for a few breaks but less than the 30 minute limit. It is also the first time I have made it to all the planned counties and even had to stop in DON to let the clock run out.

Thanks for all the stations that QSOed me in multiple counties, there were too many to mention. I also see I was duped 47 times which are easier to work than saying QSO B4!. Some of these come from county lines QSOs and not sure about the others.

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Thanks for your QSO, Bill

N0I mobile (WY7AA) - 759 SSB - 49 mults

Slow start for N0I/m. Got a nice visit from the state police at stop #1. Just checking out what I was doing. But it slowed me down. Stop #2 was a real loss with only 6 contacts with lots of RFI issues. The 1972 El Camino wasn't produced with allot of EMI protections I guess. After that things started to pick up, and Sunday was a monster of a contact day. Great event. Glad to make the trip from Wyoming in the Elco rovermobile.

K0A mobile (K5CM and K5KW) 2047 CW 593 SSB 54 mults

Conditions were not good at the start of the party. Lots or lighting QRN and just plain weak signals. Mr. Murphy left us alone until an Hour and half till the end on Saturday, then the K3 went dead on RX with no TX power out. I had decided not to spend the night in a motel because of the virus so we headed home early and swapped out the dead K3 with the one in the shack. Got some sleep and head back to the KS border early Sunday morning (2 hr drive). Condition seemed a little better on Sunday, but nothing to write home about. Because of the QSO PARTY CHALLENGE rules, Pam could not operate with me this year, but she did operate some with her call toward the end of the day on Sunday. She did all the driving, a total of 950 miles. Thanks to Bob for putting the party together. I will again re-state my dislike of the 1x1 calls. You lose your identity.

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

49	N8II
46	W5CW
34	K1RO
30	NS2N
29	KA6BIM
28	W6OAT
26	VE5KS
25	KI6RRN
24	K7SV
23	K4BAI VE7CV

20 K4XU KV8Q N6MU
 19 K3WJV WB8WKQ
 18 N4OX
 17 K1IB KE3ZT N6RO W0ZQ
 16 K3TW
 15 AC9BJ
 14 N9NM VE3MV W0VX W2CVW WB2FUE
 13 K5KG NU0Q W0PI W5LXS W7OM W9DC W9QL WB9HFK
 12 AC0W KA9VVQ WA1PMA WB9CIF
 11 K0GEO K3MSB K4ZGB K8NYG KJ8O KK4AMR N0HJZ N8VV NC4H
 VA7RN W3FE W4GMT W5VS W5XX W6OUL W8NOR WA5LXS
 10 K9GDF KD2KW KF3EB N4CW W0BR W2XYZ W6BRY W8KNO WA4DT
 9 AA1SU K4VIG K7GS KM4FO N3RJ N7GR N9SE NO2C VE3AQ W1QI
 W1WEF W2UDT WA1SAY WN4AFP
 8 AB1EP AD0RW K0IP K2QO K4AMC K6PBF K8TE KA0PQW KA4FVE
 KC3WX KE8G KS4S N4MM N6GP N6HC NT1N NU7J NX3A VE3PQ W1END
 W1PR W4JNC W6KC W6RA WA8DXB WB8III WD6T
 7 AC5O AE8M K3RN K4MIL K8CW KQ3F N1SOH N6TVN NA2X NJ4Q NU1O
 OM2VL VE3YT W1WBB W2VM W7JAX WB6BET
 6 AA4TI AB2TB AD7XG AK7G DL3DXX K3DMG K3SEW K7SS K9CW K9RS
 KC0INP KI7OAL N1AIA N3CKI N3KN N4DW N4UC N5RZ ND3R ND4Y NW0M
 W6NKR W7EEC W8CAR WA6URY WQ6X WV2M

73,
 Connie / K5CM /K0A

N0Q - (K7TQ) Multi-Op mobile 1308 53 mults (ops K7TQ WA0WWW)

A big Thank You to Bob for his organization and letting Jay and me participate in our first in-state mobile KSQP. We have done the 7QP and the Salmon Run mobile many times, but nothing as far east as KS. Quite different propagation conditions compared to the Pacific Northwest. For both days one of us would operate for two hours then switch driver and operator.

We started Saturday on the CHY/RAW line with S9 power line noise. After five minutes with only one Q, we headed back into CHY for a somewhat quieter location. For the day we gathered 745 Qs from 18 counties as we zig-zagged in the northwest portion of KS. We felt like conditions were good on both 20 and 40 with QSB especially deep on 20.

Sunday's start was on the RUS/BRT line without any power line noise. After 30 minutes there we did 25 minutes on the BRT/RIC/ELS border which was a great deal of fun handing out triple contacts. The pileups in the last three counties, SMI, PHI, and NOR, were way beyond anything I've ever been on the receiving end.

There are 433 calls in our log with twelve folks contacting us 15 or more times. Our most regular customers were K1RO (NH) with 25; W6OAT (WA) with 24; NS2N (NY), N8II (WV), and K4XU (OR) with 20; N6MU (CA), KI6RRN (CA), and KA6BIM (WA) with 18; N6RO (CA) with 17; N6GP (CA) and KV8Q (OH) with 16; and K4BAI (GA) with 15.

It was a great deal of fun and adventure, and we thank all who contacted us and all who tried but were unsuccessful. Next up is the Salmon Run.

K0I - KI0I opr - unlimited mobile - 1631 CW 216 SSB 54 mults

What a weekend ! Never thought I'd come out with a personal best for any QP thus far. Saturday began in rain and a raging storm. In SE KS lightning strikes were cracking around me and I was a bit nervous with 5 WHIPS in the air over my head !!! I made it thru the blitz zone to find tree limbs in the road that I had to dodge, a very strong wind front had passed thru ahead of me.

Thus the reason for so many repeats needed Saturday morning. Once I made it to I35 area the sun came out and the beauty of Kansas shown thru.

I added a few counties on the far end of the circle and it wrecked my route at the end of day. I ran out of clock at McPherson KS and made the choice to go home vs stay in a hotel and completely change the Sunday route. It was a 3.5 HR trip to my house . I credit chocolate mini donuts and Dr Pepper for keeping my eyes open HIHI !

Saturday bands were a bit odd as areas of the US would come and go. DX was very light. I worked OM2VL a few times and DL, F, G and SP. ALASKA was a nice surprise as well as a few Q`s with VE9VIC.

Sunday seemed a bit better but DX was still rare. There were some great runs both days and the pileups kept going. Sorry for the hacked up sending, I hand sent all callsigns and used a winkeyer to send most exchanges. I must find the reason the dit paddle wont respond at times. I suspect the key jack on the keyer.

Sunday I ran a couple counties short because I tried to get out of GRE faster and wound up on gravel in a Honda Accord. Not good for fast travel. With all the mobiles out I only met one, maybe Con K5CM? We waved as we met but I never heard him.

The car and equipment functioned OK , but if I tried to raise power too high the speedo would jump around and the cruise control would drop out. So around 300-350w was all I dared to do. It's always fun to get out and work all the great ops on air, most of you are quite adept at the sport of chasing mobiles. Varying the tones and speeds of signals helps the mobile op pick a call from an endless droning of callsigns in a pileup.

The assigned freq's Bob set worked well most of the time, SUNDAY at at start time I had to qsy down for a KS station on 7034...

Too many things happen over the course of the weekend to tell all but I can say it's always an adventure to remember. I really appreciate the patience you all showed as I hacked up Morse code pretty badly at times. Hope everyone had as much fun as I did in the midwest's best QSO party ,Thanks mostly to Bob W0BH, the superman of QP COORDINATORS.

Stay safe in this crazy world , 73 C U next one

Mark KI0I K0I/m

Rig , IC7100 and 500w SS amp arb704 and MFJ998 3 Hamsticks on a magnet and a mast with 2 Hustler coils on a 2nd mag mount.

Begali simplex paddle and a Winkeyer USB and 2 numb fingers

N5KW mobile - 120 SSB

I would normally operate multi/op with Connie - K5CM, but because of the "Challenge" rules that was not possible. So Connie finally let me operate a few minutes near the end of the party with my call hi hi.

73, Pam

W0B (W0BH) mobile 1737 CW 1137 SSB 54 mults

To say the Kansas QSO Party was different this year is an understatement. COVID-19 indirectly kept some mobiles home, required a rule change to allow distributed Club operations, brought non-Kansas ops out in amazing numbers, and had "Kansas" stations, including out-of-state mobiles, pulling together like never before.

I'll cover the actual mobile run shortly, but I can't help but comment on what it took for all of us to pull this off in this crazy year. When COVID-19 caused earlier QSO parties to drop mobile categories and change how multi-op was done, I wondered what it meant for the KSQP in 2020. Since then, we've all learned to adapt. When other QSO parties started allowing mobile and multi-op categories again, we decided to as well, but changed some rules a bit to accommodate.

Right off the bat, two new out-of-state mobiles signed up, one from Idaho/K7TQ+WA0WWW and one from Wyoming/WY7AA. This year Colorado/AD0DX, Missouri/KI0I, Iowa/N0AC and Oklahoma/K5CM+N5NK "Kansas" mobiles joined three "local" Kansas mobiles (K0HNC, WY0A, W0BH) to cover all 105 counties. Then on Saturday, N4CD from Texas put in a surprise visit, his first KSQP operation, as he put out parks and counties while braving the early Saturday morning thunderstorms in southeast Kansas. A record 11 portable stations planned operations, and our "regular" fixed and club stations and our intrepid distributed bonus station KS0KS operators were out in full force as well.

I mention some callsigns because during the QSO party, we seem to "hide" behind 57 1x1 calls spelling KANSAS, QSOPARTY, SUNFLOWER and YELLOWBRICKROAD plus our three new "M for Medical Challenge" calls. The spelling challenge and associated certificates and antique radio stamps are extremely popular, so special thanks to those who feel the loss of identity and still operate 1x1 calls for us. Perhaps the increased number of contacts makes up for it a bit as 1x1 calls often generate pileups just like "rare" counties or rare countries. Thanks, too, to Kansas ops who get on with their own call to make even more contacts and counties available. It takes all of us!

My county goals for the KSQP are to 1) have all 105 counties active 2) on CW, 3) on SSB, 4) on Saturday and 5) by two or more operators. Over the years, the mobile ops have really stepped up and helped me out by last-minute route changes. I also wait until the last few days to put out my route to pick up as many "holes" as possible. We had the goals accomplished in record time this year until some mobiles were forced by circumstances to drop out. This year we lost 3 in the last week.

On the night before start, we still had all 105 counties on but were now missing three CW counties, one SSB county, plus a number of counties only covered by one mobile

operator. Thanks to reroutes (KI0I/K0I and AD0DX/N0E to name two), 40 SSB counties from WY0A/W0O, plus a "found" mic by K0WRY/W0E who was planning CW-only in Rice county, we completed the CW and SSB "sweeps" which turned the Mode map back to green!

We also had to cover the last-minute 1x1 call changes to keep our spelling challenge intact. I have to balance CW and SSB ops between letters on the 1x1 calls because otherwise we would end up with a letter that was only available to SSB ops or to CW ops causing obvious frustration. I needed a CW op! The Kansas City Contest Club made some calls, twisted an arm, and we ended up with N9GB/N0T, who had so much fun he's already in for next year! The ARRL knows about our event and made the last 1x1 database change for us late Friday afternoon. That's cutting it close, so thanks ARRL!

Saturday

Once again 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. We had thunderstorms move through several hours before start, but the cold front temps really felt good, and the clouds made the computer screen easier to see. Unfortunately, the QRN and the storms really affected operation in eastern and southeastern Kansas for the rest of the morning. But LOTS of ops, so rates were good for me almost from the start.

The Astro van is set up for multi-multi operation, but I just ran single-op this year to participate in the State QSO Party Challenge. The ICOM 7000 ran 100w to dual Hustler vertical triples (40/20/15/10/CW/SSB) on guyed roof-mounted mag-mounts. External deep-cycle batteries plus filtered power-boosters provided independent power to keep the noise down and the power consistent. I had 80m CW along and it would have been good on Saturday evening, but rates were so good on 40m that I never went there. A Logikey keyer and an MFJ voice keyer provided CW and SSB support.

Usually I have more "travel" stories, but this year I kept my head down because the rates were really impressive. I ran lots of 20 and 40 CW, then 20 SSB when the band came up. Conditions weren't great, but there were so many ops that I could usually hear someone to work. The KSQP Spotting Network worked great (thanks Funspots!) and I see almost all our 1x1 ops used it this year. Check it out on the KSQP home page to see what you missed if you didn't use it or know about it!

Lots of the "regulars" kept me company, but one notable exception was John/N6MU who was really weak and could barely hear me most of the time. I knew John was there and going for his tenth Kansas county Sweep in a row (you read that right) running low

power with no beam. I was worried that conditions would be a real problem for him this year with bigger pileups to break in poor conditions. He missed me completely in the rare northeast counties. Even some of the normally loud stations weren't loud on Saturday. Nonetheless, N8II and K1RO were able to work me in all 31 counties, NS2N missed me in 2, and N6MU only missed me in 3.

My one 3-county line in the far northeastern counties was lots of fun. Lorna had lunch while I operated, then I had lunch as we drove back out to our next county. Sudden hunger! So no equipment problems, no antenna bird-strikes, no car problems, no real weather problems, no missed turns, detours or muddy roads (we kept off those), no hog farm line stops, no friendly law-enforcement interaction, no unfriendly locals, diminishing QRN problems .. nothing to report but contacts!

Our Saturday route was a loop, so we arrived home with about a half hour to go. I dropped Lorna off, then drove 3/4 mile to the Harvey/McPherson county line and ran a final 88 contacts in 14 minutes to finish the day with 1596 contacts in the log over 22 counties and 478 miles. The big surprise was 40m which was in the entire day, almost like being on the east coast. Definitely a good day!

Sunday

It was a bit foggy Sunday morning, but that lifted and the weather folks promised cooler sunshine for the day. I actually had two routes planned depending on county coverage, but as already mentioned, other ops came through, so I went with a "county-line" route which I haven't been able to do for the past number of years. I'm well aware that county lines really add to QSO totals, so decided to really go for it this year and planned three 3-county line stops on Sunday.

I made some last minute KSQP web site updates including the 105th SSB county, so we headed out about 15 minutes later than planned which means we arrived at our first line about 15 minutes late. A quick CQ and ops were there waiting for me on 7037. The conditions were lots better and they stayed better all day. Not great with some deep (I'd even call it unusually deep) QSB from time to time, but lots better than Saturday. We were off!

Lorna is an avid birdwatcher, so one stop turned out to be a beautiful birding area and she disappeared for awhile. I had a big pileup going so she had lots of time. I finally honked to let her know we could go. Later she was busy entering her "log" into eBird, so she had fun, too (which is really important if you want to keep an XYL/driver around for future mobile runs!). As many of you noticed, she didn't operate this year.

We got to the last 3-county line with about an hour to go. It was truly a Kansas out-of-the-way place on sand/dirt roads, fortunately not muddy. We saw no vehicles and no people for the entire 80 minutes we were there. I had planned to continue on to Reno county, but the pileup never let up and Reno county was well covered. Starting with K4BAI on CW and ending with KC2SJN on SSB, I made 534 contacts at a rate of 400.5 Qs/hour. A number of those were dupes, as I just logged one contact and expanded the log later, but what fun! And then we were done, with 1392 more raw Sunday Qs in the log for a personal KSQP best of 2988 raw Qs.

On the way back, I texted John/n6mu, "Did you get Greeley?" because he'd been worried about that one though he later realized a fixed station (K0WPM/K0Q) was there. He texted back, "Yep, and miracles happen. I got the Sweep!!" Ten in a row if log-checking holds. He has all of you to thank for that and I know he will, especially N0AC/N0W/m who gave him Doniphan for #105. I have all of you to thank as well!

Stats

We operated 16.3 hours, 793 miles, 2988 Qs, 613 unique calls, 114 dupes, one radio.

States not worked ----- : AK HI RI

VE worked ----- : NS QC ON SK AB BC NB

KS worked (5 counties) - : MSH THO MCP HVY BRT

DX worked (2 countries)- : OM DL

AFTERWARDS

Logs are piling in with our 2018 log record already shattered in the first week! The World Wide Digi DX Contest on the same weekend explains the increased FT8 participation. Remember to send in a separate FT8 log since we score FT8 logs by themselves.

A request and donation came in to find a way to honor our medical heroes during the pandemic, so the "M for Medical Challenge" was born (details on the KSQP home page). Thanks to our three operators who put K0M/KE0SYO, N0M/N0CS and W0M/AD0IM on the air at the last minute. We truly do appreciate the hard work and service performed by the medical and emergency medical professionals in these difficult times.

THANKS to all the sponsors, ops, clubs, KS0KS bonus station crew, and support teams (log-checking/AD0DX, web/KB0RWI and stamps/KI5TE) who made this twelfth Kansas QSO Party so much fun. You are all much appreciated and we couldn't do it without you! Hope to see you all again next year ..

73, Bob/w0bh/w0b/m
2020 KSQP Coordinator

N8II - fixed - WV 286 CW 249 SSB - 98 mults

I put more effort and time this year than last and somehow came up way short on the sweep. Looking back, I chased maybe a few too many spots Saturday and missed some rare counties covered by mobiles that were not spotted. I did a lot of S&P even on Saturday. My mults at the end of Saturday were 2-3 better than last year at 95, but I only found 3 Sunday missing PHI which was active. The pandemic had its effects with fewer mobiles active especially on Sunday, and bigger pile ups calling them. By 2130Z eastern KS was gone on 20 and by 23Z almost all of KS was in the noise. There must have been a solar flare around 23Z as conditions on 40 that hour were terrible; at 2330Z the mobiles were nearly impossible to copy. I also missed 4 possible 1x1 calls some of which might not have been active or active for long. 20M signals during the day both days were excellent by and large with a little drop Sunday afternoon.

I had significant line noise on 40 Saturday which made the weak mobiles even harder to copy. Adjusting for the fact that Bob, W0B was not offering 2 or 3 calls per QSO, I worked more Q's with the rest of KS than last year.

Thanks do much to all of the mobiles. Butch, K0O (WY0A) put in another stellar performance from his SSB mobile. I worked him 100% of the the times I saw his spot except for once on 75M (did get 2 county lines on 75!). He can hear a pin drop and sorted out the pile ups very efficiently and ran 40 KS counties! Many thanks to Bob, W0BH for organizing the troops and operating mobile both days. Con, K0A did his usual bang up job from county lines, but was pretty silent in between. Thanks to the other mobiles and portables: N4CD, K0T, N0W, N0Q (a lot of rare ones), K0I, N0K, N0E, and others. I ran a few on 20 phone, but other short stabs at CQ's were basically worthless. 18 hours is a long time to S&P!

I would have enjoyed it more if the QP was only Saturday; Sunday was pretty slow especially around 15-17Z.

I am waiting for the K5KG and K1RO shoes to drop, will see how it goes. K7SV beat me consistently in 40M pile ups with 3db less power, a head scratcher with very similar dipoles in use. All in all, it was fun.

73, Jeff

NS2N - fixed NY 245 CW 128 SSB 99 mults

Sorry for the dupes ... I let the logger use the Telnet spot with / but I don't use that normally, so I was working N0XXXX and N0XXXX/M in the same co.

Great job by the KS boys ... the 1X1 calls made an interesting departure from the comfort zone. W0B was worked the most ... ran out of fingers and toes on myself and my wife. Kudos to K0A too.

op time includes 2 lunches, 2 dinners, three dog walks plus hitting the wall

NS2N

K4BAI - fixed - GA 207 CW 81 SSB 88 mults

Very good contest. Lots of activity on 40 and 20 CW and SSB. And this year fair activity on 80 CW. Only heard (and worked) one KS station on 80 SSB. Lots of mobile activity CW and SSB.

K8TE - fixed NM 130 CW 96 SSB 76 mults

More fun in another State QSO Party! I wasn't expecting much after the CHHSS hit, but propagation was "acceptable" for the current solar cycle transition despite increased absorption. It was interesting to read about some ops not finding KS stations. While there are never enough, or so it seems, I kept plenty busy chasing them, especially the mobiles who provided so many contacts—thanks!

There were enough S&P ops from KS to make running from out-of-State barely effective. I managed to have some S&P "runs" around two QSO's/minute and even at least one 10-minute slot approaching 60/hour. That helps push the despair from the

long, empty spots in the log without callers or new stations to work into the recesses of my aging memory. For a State QSO Party, this one makes the time worthwhile and I look forward to next year! Maybe I'll be able to hear and work more 20m stations then? 20m made up only 31 of my 226 contacts, not surprising since my NM location is about 500 miles from central KS.

As an experienced County Hunter, Butch, WY0A, who operated as K0O, provided 21 of my contacts—thanks! I missed a few since my “friend” lightning showed up again “providing” four hours of unwanted off-time. So, this will keep me “in the game” for the Challenge. Next weekend I will likely hear few to no CO stations in their QSO Party on 20m. I hope they all spend some time on 40m and 80/75m, despite the QRN.

Try taking a new or maybe reluctant contester under your wing. Explain the concept of brevity to prevent repeating anything without being asked. Help him or her use a CW or voice memory and especially an electronic logger. Demonstrate how much fun contesting can be and turn the rig over to them. Good luck in the contest and stay safe!
73, Bill, K8TE

OM2VL - fixed - DX 53 CW 39 SSB 53 mults

This year I had big plans because this year the KS QP was on different weekend than OH and HI and I will be focused 100% to lot of KS mobiles. but plan is plan and reality is reality.

Condx were bad and I had big problems to break the USA wall and many times when mobile called CQ with no any answer my call he didn't hear me. Many mobiles from many counties I missed at the beginning of the QP, but the worst came after that.

I had on the QTH big storm with ice and extremely strong wind and electricity shut down at 17:28Z and it takes till Sunday morning 08Z.

I was very disappointed and back to my home. I slept some hours and because I can't give up, I back to the QTH for te 2nd part of the QP. after 2,5 hours of operation I lost the electricity again so QP ended for me this year

I worked 38 1x1 stations + KS0KS, I can spell all words.

Thanks a lot for the QSOs! Thanks to Bob W0BH to organizing the Party. CU next year

with better condx and I hope full time operation!

73, Laci OM2VL

N6MU - fixed - CA - 179 CW 115 SSB 105 counties - ALL

Despite a slow start Saturday, Sunday was magical as all 13 still needed counties fell into place resulting in another Sweep for the 10th year in a row. Just like last year my last county was DON. Not sure why that one is so tough, hi. My last five were: NEM, SHE, PHI, NOR and DON.

As usual, the KS turnout of mobiles, portables and fixed stations was just awesome. Bob, W0BH, really knows how to organize and throw a Party. One of the best!!

Just have to mention Butch, K0O, who pulled my puny SSB signal out in all 40 of his counties. Great ears! 73...

John, N6MU

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 133 CW 34 SSB 9 digi 70 counties

QSO Party #30 is finished and only 16 to go. This was my best score in this contest. The KQP ops were excellent and all the mobiles were amazing! I worked many mobiles a ton of times... too many to remember. The pile-ups were like I was working DX. Thanks to all for the the Qs and we'll see y'all in Colorado and Tennessee next weekend. 73s Dave WN4AFP

K1RO - fixed NH - 255 CW 179 SSB 3 digi 103 counties

Well was interesting. Turns out that I'm far enough away from Kansas that it's a one-band-at-a-time contest. On Saturday, signals on 20 meters were loud right from the start, but I couldn't work anyone on 40 until late afternoon, as 20 started to fade. On Sunday, 20 meters was quite a bit harder, but I did work a few eastern Kansas stations on 40 CW during the day when nobody else was calling.

My main goal for the weekend was to work as many counties as possible toward my USA-CA award, and that part went great. Only missed Graham and Trego. I did hear Graham on CW but couldn't get through the pileup. Didn't hear Trego at all.

I'm probably not alone, but 93% of my contacts were with 1x1 call signs... Looks like I found all of them except N0R and W0C. I made two contacts on RTTY when K0R was spotted. I briefly went to FT8 on Sunday and worked one station. Not sure if that would have been worth more time, but I didn't want to miss any counties on CW/SSB.

Thanks to all the fixed stations and to mobiles/portables who did all that driving to make the contest fun for us out-of-state stations, and to Bob, W0BH, and team for organizing it.

DL3DXX - fixed - DL 57 CW - 33 counties

Extremely poor propagation. Even new 5 element YU7EF beam for 20m did not help nor wearing the Kansas QSO party T-shirt received last year - tks W0BH. Were not able to break the US pileups or did not even hear some stations.

Came into the party with 3 missing KS counties and leave it with the same 3 missing. May be next year...

On the Road with N4CD I

Well, so far so good in the COVID world. I was set to try a longer trip – maybe 4 or 5 days and head to KS to run some parks – and run some counties in the KS QSO Party. Think this was the first time I've run in the KS QP. I stop to run these days so I don't rack up a big score like the mobiles with drivers who run 4x as many counties in the QSO party time. I'd just putt along, stopping in the parks mainly, and even going to 30m for some of them as folks requested 30m contacts from some of the counties I'd be getting to. No hurry. I'd just be one of a dozen mobile/portable stations and every county would be run by two or three different mobiles – some maybe just a handful of contacts, others working the pileup to the end.

This year is the year of the QSO Party – run by Dave, WN4AFP. This was the 30th QSO Party of the year – so we are more than half way through state wise. (well, some had multiple states like the 7QP and New England QP). Still have TX and AL to go and the

CA one – a biggie.

So – I headed north on Friday August 28 to get up to Kansas and also run a few parks along the way. I'd hit a few KS counties even before the QP started on Saturday. The trip was going to be 4 days likely. It's almost 6 hours of driving just to get to the KS border from my house in the DFW area – all at 70-75 mph speeds.

Friday August 27

I head north on I-35 just about all the way through Oklahoma. About 30 miles into OK you pass by **Lake Murray State Park – Park 2790** in both systems. I could do a quickie and take a quick break from the driving. Love County – (parts in Carter)

Lake Murray SP – big place – with lodge, campgrounds, etc. It's five miles off I-35 and easy to get to. Make a quick stop and 20 go in log. Most on 40m, a few on 30M. Took 15 minutes. Back to I-35 for hours more driving.

Just before you get to KS, you can detour to the east and run **Kaw WMA KFF-4812/K6355 in Kay County OK**. This is a new one for me so I work at getting more than 44Q. Succeed and over 50Q go in the log.



From the web:

“Kaw WMA covers 16,254 acres adjoining the upper two thirds of Kaw Lake in eastern

Kay County in north central Oklahoma. Located just four and one half miles east of Newkirk, Oklahoma, Kaw WMA is a mixture of upland and bottomland forest, tallgrass prairie, old fields, and cropland.

Bluestem grasses and post oak- blackjack forests are predominate on upland sites, which are interspersed with sand plum thickets and agricultural fields. Bottom land forests consist of burr oak, hackberry, sycamore, sand plum and other species. The average annual precipitation for the area is 30 inches per year.

Game Species of Interest:

Pheasant: Very few present, most often taken as a bonus for quail hunters.

Quail: Bobwhite quail occur in fair numbers during most years.

Deer: White-tailed deer are abundant and highly sought after.

Turkey: Rio Grande turkeys are present in good numbers and highly sought after.

Rabbit: Cottontails are usually present in good numbers.

Furbearers: Coyote, bobcat, and raccoon are plentiful.

Dove: Good dove hunting is usually available.

Waterfowl: Ducks and geese are usually available in good numbers.

Squirrel: The fox squirrel is present in good numbers.

Nongame Species of Interest:

Greater Prairie Chicken: Present, but only in low numbers.

Bald Eagle: One of Kaw Lake's most popular winter attractions is the American Bald Eagle. Traditionally, Kaw Lake has one of the states largest populations of wintering bald eagles. Numerous sites around the lake offer visitors excellent opportunities to view our nation's symbol. Peak viewing opportunities occur in January.

Osprey: Commonly observed along the shoreline in early fall.

Upland Sandpiper: Present in low numbers on the east side of the WMA.

Texas Horned Lizard: Present in low numbers on the east side of the WMA.

After, I headed north into KS to the first of the 'State Fishing Lakes' which have been added to the system. Many of the counties in the eastern half have a 'fishing lake' run by the state.

First up in KS is **Cowley State Fishing Lake in Cowley County**, only in the POTA system as park **K-7415**. I'm running a few counties on Friday before the KS Qso Party starts – where the parks are! It's taken the better part of a day just to get to KS. Of all the parks I've run, this is about the easiest one to find and run. Right off the side of a

main highway and paved road into the State Fishing Lake. Pull in and have a good run of many dozen. I headed north to get away from the 101F expected temps in Dallas over the weekend. So far it hasn't worked. It's 97F outside here in KS!



From the web:

“The lake was built in 1953. The area is an 84 acre lake and is surrounded by 113 acres of Flint Hills prairie (Cowley Wildlife Area). Water quality of the lake is excellent. Fish species include channel catfish, bluegill, redear sunfish, walleye, and crappie”

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I head east and put out Chautauqua County on the run. No park in this county. I head to **Montgomery State Fishing Lake K-7407 in Montgomery County, KS**. The GPS goes nuts here and takes me back and forth wasting the better part of 30 minutes before it figures out where to go. I had reserved a room in Independence, KS for the night.



Sometimes that's all the site specific sign you find – the board with the state fishing regulations and hunting info on it.

From the web:

“South of Independence, just a mile before Coal Creek empties into the Verdigris River, is Montgomery State Fishing Lake. The lake's marshlands, riparian woodlands, and surrounding grasslands provide habitat for many species of wildlife. Diving ducks (such as ring-necked, common goldeneye, and bufflehead) can be seen on the lake in winter and early spring. Look in the marshy areas for mallards, pintails, muskrats, and beaver. The massive Noxie sandstone formation makes a natural border for this lake. The exposed ledge, often over six feet in height, may be seen all along the south side”

Signs to it – decent road. However, if you are going to run State Fishing Lakes in many areas, get used to gravel roads. Loads of gravel roads, sometimes 20 miles to get to it and out of them! Some very bad 10 mph stretches of really bad gravel roads, well, dirt, rocks and some gravel along the way, too.

Put a couple dozen in log. Only need 10, but I run the pile calling down to zero. Ran 20/30/40m here.

- - -

Head north just a bit to Elk City State Park KFF-2337 and K-2337 in the same county. It's new so I'll be looking for 44Q or more. It's getting later in the day – 2200z – 5pm local time. Still, have good runs and 45+ go in the log. I'm done just before 6pm. Time to find the motel a few miles back and grab some dinner.



Motel: Super 8 Independence KS. Check in lady not wearing mask – not good but room good. Only a few places to eat and head to Maries Mexican Restaurant. Fairly busy – maybe 1/3rd full? Still, tables 10-15 feet apart. Takes a while to get my food. Not the best place in the covid world to eat – but it's a Friday night and folks eat out. In retrospect, I should have ordered 'take out' and eaten in room. Only other choice in town as a steak house (they are always mobbed) and some fast food places. At least I was more than 10 feet from others and most 30 to 50 feet away. Higher risk. Not so good. I'll have to be more careful. (I also carry a few canned dinners and could use the microwave oven in room – got plastic bowls and silverware, too).

Sleep well – tired out – 458 miles driven and a bunch of parks put out on the first day. Ran out of time – so no side trip to Elk County, needed by some. Would have been 1 ½ hour to get there, run it, and back – and bands fading fast at 6pm. I'm not a fan of night driving either! I don't if I can help it.

Saturday August 29, 2020

Today the KS QP would start at 9am. I'm up early, grab a bowl of Raisin Bran and coffee in the breakfast area just after 6:15 all by myself and am ready to go.....it's 79F and the sunrise is 6:58am. I'm on the road at that time headed to the next. The rain would start about 9am (QSO Party time) and last six hours, tapering off at the end. The lightning and storms lasted 4 hours. Not the best weather in very southeast KS.

Neosho State Fishing Lake – K-7408 in Neosho County KS at 7:45am before the QP starts.



From the web:

“Neosho State Fishing Lake was the first state lake constructed with monies of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, now known as the Department of Wildlife and Parks. Since completion in 1927, this 92-acre impoundment has been managed primarily for the recreational angler. The lake has been well developed over the years and has become an attraction for the vacationing or weekend camper/angler. The lake is well noted for its panfish and channel catfish fisheries, and receives heavy fishing pressure for a lake its size.

Recreational activities at Neosho State Lake have evolved primarily around fishing,

camping and wildlife observations. The lake has three sites designated for primitive camping, 18 fishing piers, one cement ramp, three walking trails, two vault toilets, one shelter house, and three automatic fish feeders.”

A few miles of gravel road to get here – not bad. 30 mph max type gravel roads. You head through Maxwell WMA – a small WMA not in either system to get to the State Fishing Lake. Have a decent run and depart. Still not time for QP – just park hunters and county hunters.

I run through Labette for the CH. Just a few in log. Pouring down rain and antennas detuned a bit so lower power output. No park here.

Also run through Cherokee KS - and the QP has started. Work 10 stations and that's about it. S9 rain static on the antennas. Hard to work anything but put out the county. Pouring down rain, lightning all around zipping down, rain and more rain.

The car is getting rocked at times by 55 mph winds. It's not fun weather to be out mobile. Showers come and go and the static is bad news from the storms nearby on 40M. 20M bad but not as bad. I'm in the wrong part of the state. Most of the storms are right on top of me and clear out west KS. Still drizzles in between the storms

Head to Mined Land State Fishing Lake (actually about 10 of them) in Crawford County – K-7406. Still horrendous S9 type QRN from rain and nearby storms all around with lightning bolts flashing nearby.



From the web:

“The Mined Land Wildlife Area is one of the most unique areas to fish in the state. Located in the southeast portion of Kansas, there are more than 1,000 unique previously strip-mined lakes that range in size from 0.5 acre to 50 acres. Depending on the method of how they were mined, strip pits vary in depth from shallow to deep with steep sided banks. The "Trout Pit" on Unit #30 was one of the first strip pits that was mined by Big Brutus. This pit has depths up to 60 ft deep. Another unique quality of the strip pits is the water clarity. Some pits have extremely clear water and clarity reaches up to 10 to even 15 feet. There are boat ramps located on selected strip pits. However, there are a few that are less accessible. Small watercraft and kayak anglers would find that the area is premiere for exploring pits that may not receive as much fishing pressure. Largemouth Bass, crappie, channel catfish, rainbow trout, brown trout, redear sunfish, bluegill, wiper, walleye, spotted bass, spotted gar... These are the main species that can be found inhabiting the strip pits.”

I'm in Crawford County and put it out for those needing it. The KS QP stations are out in force. 20M CW works well with a couple dozen in log. I also run on 30m with 20 Qs (not useful for the QP) and the QRN is so bad on 40M only a couple in the log. I'll be in the same county for the next two so don't waste effort trying any longer on 40M.

Next up is Crawford State Fishing Lake. Duh! I've got 3 sets of directions.....and only the last one seems to work. Unfortunately, try the other two first and I go nuts trying to find Crawford State Fishing Lake K-7402. The last set of directions take me to Crawford State Park - which I am going to run after the SFL. Oh, well, might as run **Crawford State Park KFF-2333/K-2333.**



I'll need 44Q here. I start on 40M and things are better QRN wise. A couple dozen go in log on 40m – mostly testers and park chasers. One CH needs it for LC- NS2N –

success. Then go to 20m and a couple dozen mostly park chasers in the log plus ON4VT. Some additional QP folks add in to get me to more than 50Qs.

After the run (I'm parked by the lake) I see the HQ building for the state park. I go talk to the ranger about the State Fishing Lake. He grabs a booklet and shows me that Crawford State Fishing Lake is in Crawford State Park – and points to the lake. Oh! No wonder I couldn't find it elsewhere! Duh! So it was a two-fer and I upload the same log as a two-fer for K-7402. (You can do that for POTA but not WWFF). Changed the times by a minute or two so no collisions if the POTA system barfed with same time QSOs. That was good since I'd wasted more than half an hour or more in an attempt to use the 'other directions' for Crawford State Fishing Lake – without success. This one park is confusing! You won't see a sign for the SFL anywhere.

From the web:

“The 500-acre park features six campgrounds. There are 28 primitive sites, 38 electric only sites, 25 50amp/water sites, and 20 30amp/ water sites. All of the campsites have a spectacular view of the lake. Crawford State Park offers five lakefront rental cabins with all the comforts of home in a beautiful lake setting.

Pleasure boating, skiing, and swimming are among favorite recreational pursuits. Located on the edge of the Ozarks, Crawford State Park provides a variety of landscapes seen in Kansas state parks. Redbud trees offer spectacular beauty in the spring along with a wide variety of colorful wildflowers, birds, and butterflies. The lush foliage of the surrounding forest is a naturalist's delight.”

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I'm headed north. **Next up is Bourbon State Fishing Lake K-7401** in, naturally, Bourbon County KS. It's already noon time and I'm not making good progress. It's five miles of gravel road in – the last part not so good – really bad....10mph type road. If you didn't have GPS showing a lake ahead, you might have given up. One lane very narrow very bumpy dirt/gravel/rock road for last mile. Not a soul in sight at the park but a small parking area at the south end. Not very popular! Might be some people around the lake. Too many trees to see where the road wanders. Not many come here likely and in the middle of nowhere. It's a new county and the QP folks pile on. A couple dozen go in log and internet is very flaky here. Almost none so can't get spots through most of the time. If you come on in from the west, maybe a better road in. Not good from the south road in.



From the web:

“Aged to perfection! Located in the forest-prairie mosaic of the Osage Cuestas, Bourbon State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area offers great wildlife viewing. Wolfpen Creek's woodland and shrubs along the hillsides provide cover and food for a variety of mammals and birds.

The chatter of squirrels and the clear, crisp call of the northern bobwhite quail are commonly heard. Muskrats and mink are found in and near the water. Eastern cottontails and white-tailed deer can be seen throughout the area.

The secretive American woodcock nests in the thickets; its presence is betrayed only by the springtime sound of a nasal "peent" at dawn or dusk. In May and September many species migrate through including wood warblers, ducks, wading birds, and shorebirds. Watch the lush shoreline vegetation for feeding great blue herons. Prairie wildflowers and butterflies are abundant from spring through fall. Painted turtles, sliders, bullfrogs, leopard frogs, and several species of water snakes are seen around the lake. Ground skinks are found in the rocky areas, with prairie king snakes and six-lined racerunners in the surrounding grasslands.”

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My Malibu wi-fi (connected to AT&T wireless) seems to have given up the ghost. Happened one time before – lost its memory. Not working after this and it was the backup to the now dead Verizon phone. I can log on but it goes nowhere. I'll have to probably bring it to Chevy dealer for a fix again – happened once before.

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Time to head north. I'm not setting any records for number of counties run. Other mobiles (with drivers) have hit 20 counties by now – hitting corners, running county lines, etc and doing it 'on the run'. My priorities are parks/counties with some operation on 30M, and then the QP for fun. I'm probably the only mobile using my own call. Every other mobile is using a 1x1 prefix and folks are hunting the prefixes for special awards.

Work the last 9 contests and get all the letters spelling KS, and you get a free KS T-shirt and certificate. Each year you get another 'stamp' to put on the certificate. Hi Hi – so the letter stations are even more sought out. I decided to use my own call since county hunting awards only count for the mobile/call. Using a 1x1 does not count for MG, or Bingo wildcard, MP, MD, DD, Five star, 20 stars, etc.

I've lost a lot of time going to the parks....in this case, probably a good 45 minutes getting in and out of the park and another 20 minutes going out of the way of the most direct north/south line. But this is a park putting out trip!

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I head north again and it seems **Fort Scott Historic Site 0821** is just a 2 mile detour off my main route. I've run it before for NPOTA back in 2016, but I can make a 'quickie' for activation credit. Head on it – it's a noisy site. Whip off two dozen QSOs quick on mostly 30m cw. (doesn't count for QP) – and still in Bourbon County. (more time wasted but I'm having some fun and putting out the counties on 30m for the CH folks).

From the NPS web site:

“Following the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Intercourse Act of 1834, which declared that the land west of the Mississippi belonged to the American Indians, the United States built a series of forts from Minnesota to Louisiana to enforce the promise of a “permanent Indian frontier.” Erected in 1842, Fort Scott was among the line of forts

established to maintain peace between white settlers and neighboring Indian tribes. Eventually, as the nation developed, tensions over the issue of slavery would place Fort Scott at the center of Bleeding Kansas and ultimately the Civil War. Today, Fort Scott National Historic Site stands as a witness to the history of the conflicts between various cultural groups important in the American story.

At its establishment, Fort Scott's mission was to keep peace and prevent settlers from expanding further into Indian Territory. The atmosphere changed in the 1840's, when the notion of Manifest Destiny encouraged settlers and the United States government to move further west. American Indians grew hostile toward settlers moving into their territory and often made the journey for whites difficult and dangerous. As a result, dragoon soldiers stationed at Fort Scott began escorting settlers who were traveling across the Indian frontier on the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. Despite the presence of soldiers, tensions continued to increase. As the Gold Rush of 1848 further accelerated the nation's westward expansion, Kansas opened for settlement in 1854 and more settlers moved west; with these factors combined, the idea of a "Permanent Indian Territory" died. The Osage Indians and other tribes in the area were eventually relocated to make way for settlers.

When the United States broke its promise to reserve the land west of the Mississippi for American Indians, the United States Army recognized that its services to protect the Indian frontier were no longer required and abandoned Fort Scott by 1853. The military post remained vacant until violent events in Kansas that erupted as part of the nation's growing debate over slavery brought soldiers back to Fort Scott in an effort to restore law and order. The violence began in 1854, when Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allowed people in Kansas and Nebraska to decide by vote whether to be a Free State or slave State. Proslavery advocates, abolitionists, and Free-Staters congregated in Kansas to influence the vote in their favor.

Eventually, the debate in Kansas over the peculiar institution turned into a violent affair that terrorized the State for more than five years. "Bleeding Kansas" offered a preview of what the nation would face in the Civil War. The town of Fort Scott divided over the issue of slavery. Before the Army reinstated Fort Scott, settlers on both sides of the issue gained control of the fort's vacant buildings. The abolitionists took over the former officers' quarters and named it the Free State Hotel, while on the opposite side of town square, the proslavery headquarters was at the Western Hotel, formerly the site of the old infantry barracks.

As violent raids became a daily occurrence, the Federal Government ordered soldiers to return to Fort Scott in an effort to settle the political unrest. The soldiers briefly brought

peace to the region, but the violence resumed, and by 1859, nearly 60 people had died in the struggle over slavery, including John Little, a proslavery advocate killed by Montgomery's Free-State forces.

In time, antislavery forces would prevail, but by the time Kansas entered the Union as a free State on January 29, 1861, the Civil War was about to begin. South Carolina seceded from the Union and other southern States followed suit, and in April of 1861, the war between the Union and the Confederacy officially began.

As a result, the US Army returned to Kansas and established the State's military headquarters in the town of Fort Scott. Troops reoccupied the military post's old buildings and began constructing new fortifications that eventually stretched over 40 miles. Among other buildings, the Army constructed a general hospital for wounded soldiers, a few warehouses, some powder magazines, a blacksmith shop and a military prison.

With the new developments, Fort Scott would become the largest and strongest of the Union posts and a major supply depot for the Union armies in the West. The fort also offered shelter for displaced Indians, escaped slaves, and other refugees who eventually joined the Union Army.

During the Civil War, Kansas was the first State to recruit and train American Indians and African Americans to serve in the Union army. Among those sworn in at Fort Scott was the First Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the first African American regiment to fight Confederate troops. Held in high regard by leading officers in the Union Army, the First Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry Regiment had a successful combat record throughout the Civil War. On April 24, 1864, Colonel James M. Williams declared, "The officers and men all evinced the most heroic spirit, and those that fell died the death of a true soldier."

At the end of the Civil War in 1865, the US Army sold the buildings and military equipment at Fort Scott, closed the hospital, and let the soldiers go home. The Army returned to Fort Scott in 1870 to resolve disputes between settlers and the railroads and to keep the peace during the building of the railroad. In 1873, military involvement at Fort Scott ended.

At Fort Scott National Historic Site, visitors can see 20 historic structures, a parade ground and five acres of restored tallgrass prairie."

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If you have time, you can spend 2 hours here seeing the buildings, the short movie and taking in the history.

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Next up is in Linn County – needed by some CH – and a stop at **Marais des Cygnes Natural Wildlife Refuge – Park 0293** – which I also ran back in the NPOTA days of 2016. However, hard to not stop by and make some Qs. Arrive 1958 and get to work. Only need 10 but many dozens go in log on 20M and more dozens on 40M. 1:20 spent here doing a repeat park.

From the web:

“The Refuge was established in 1992 for the protection and restoration of bottomland hardwood forests. Approximately 5,000 acres of the 7,500 acre refuge are available for wildlife oriented recreation including hunting, fishing, and birding. A wildlife sanctuary encompasses the remaining 2,500 acres of the refuge and is not available for public use.

Refuge habitat consists primarily of bottomland hardwood forests around the Marais des Cygnes River. This habitat is somewhat unique to Kansas. Uplands surrounding the hardwood forests are primarily prairie grasslands. Some of which are native tallgrass prairies; an ecosystem in decline

The Marais des Cygnes River and tributaries provide habitat for species of fish that include minnows, catfish, and sunfish. These species make up the biggest part of the fish population found in the river. Fish populations such as; large channel catfish, bass, bluegill, carp and buffalo fish provide a sport fishery.

The Refuge provides habitat for a diversity of reptiles and amphibians. A total of 58 herpetological species (16 amphibians and 42 reptiles) have been recorded from either Linn or Miami counties. Even though detailed site inventories have not been completed, all of these species probably inhabit the Refuge or land adjacent to it. “

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Just up the road is **Marais State Fishing Lake K-7404**. I do a run on 40M for a bunch

of park chasers and a few testers....then scramble after 25 minutes. Was still in Linn. I'm getting behind schedule. Having gotten lost a few times today and gone in circles with bad info, I just make the minimum needed here.

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Next up is Middle Creek State Fishing Lake in Miami County – KFF-7392. I put a few dozen in the log and scramble. No sign here for the lake once you get to it. You have to really want to get to this lake. It's 10-12 miles on gravel road (decent) and the same or more getting back out. 30 mph speeds max. Just takes a while. You're traveling along a gravel road, and I guess just have to know when to turn left on another gravel road. Not one sign. The GPS does show a lake in that direction so I go and get there. Just the standard KS kiosk with the regulations on it – no site specific sign as at most of the state fishing lakes. While I'm deciding if that is the road in, another car comes along and asks if that's the road to the lake. Guess so – follow me. There's a dozen or more cars at the lake – many camping out along the road at sites (no facilities) – 'primitive' campsites where you better be self contained or camping out.

From the web:

A diverse high quality sport fish population at Louisburg-Middle Creek includes largemouth bass, saugeye, white bass, wiper, bluegill, crappie and channel catfish. The 281-acre lake offers fishermen several different types of aquatic habitats. Especially promising areas include riprap off the face of the dam, the old flooded Metcalf highway bed, the original creek channel, brush piles, standing timber, weed beds, and mud flats.

Hunting opportunities on the 220-acre upland habitat surrounding the lake includes, deer, squirrel, turkey, bobwhite quail, and rabbit. Waterfowl also provide hunting opportunities on the lake itself. The predominant vegetation on the upland area includes oaks, ash, hickory, elm, Osage orange, red cedar, and locusts. Common shrubs are sumac and dogwood. Cool season grasses include brome and fescue while big bluestem and Indian grass are important warm season grasses.

Facilities include access roads, a double boat ramp, one vault toilet near the boat ramp, gravel pullouts for camping, picnic tables, and fire rings. Electricity and drinking water are not available.”

I put two dozen in log on 40 and 20m and head to the next.

Miami State Lake K-7392 – also in, of course, Miami County.
I start here on 40m for a run of 16 or so QSOs. Some KSQP folks in log.

From the web:

Miami State Lake and wildlife area dates back to 1931, when a private sportsman group was managing it as a 90-acre duck marsh. The Forestry Fish and Game, now Kansas Wildlife and Parks, purchased the lake in 1941 to be managed as a state fishing lake.

Today the Miami Wildlife Area about 150 acres of timbered hillsides and the Marais des Cygnes River surrounding the 101 acre State Fishing Lake. A boat ramp, courtesy dock, fourteen earthen piers, and a vault toilet are available for area users.

Wildlife common on the area includes a variety of waterfowl, songbirds, furbearers, squirrel, white tailed deer, turkey, and bobwhite quail. The steep timbered hillsides are a mix of hickory, oaks, maple, ash, and elm. Eagles frequently perch on the tall sycamores along the Marais des Cygnes River.

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It's a good 30 minutes of gravel road headed out west from here to get to a paved road once again. 30 mph type road – just takes time. The GPS takes me over a rickety 3 ton max rated bridge – good thing I'm not driving a huge SUV that might clock in at 6500+ lbs empty – and maybe 8000 lb loaded with a few folks and baggage. It's late – time to head for a motel. It's been a rough day with not great conditions, lots of slower roads (50 miles of gravel roads today I think) and rain for six hours, lightning for 4 hours and lots of QRN most of morning at S5-9 from nearby storms (or in them).

There's no Wyndham properties in the area– or anything else that's a national chain. Everything is up by Kansas City to the north – and way out of my planned route. Only listed motel in Osawatomie is the Landmark Inn – at least it gets 4 stars on TripAdvisor so I head that way 40 minutes away. \$70. Going to be a late night. Check in to a nice motel with outside room right off interstate. Probably 40-50 rooms and get outside entry.

Head into downtown area to the Hacienda Mexican restaurant (not many choices here) and only a handful in this place – probably most business is lunch. Maybe 4 other people inside. Good. Have nice dinner and head back to motel for the night. It's been a long day.

The QP goes on till 9pm but I'm pooped out, don't have 80m and I've done enough for one day. The next park is right here in this town so it's a good stopping point.

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Sunday – August 30 2020

No breakfast at the motel (typical these days – some do have food though). Nearby is a Casey's Convenience Store (a good chain) and grab an egg/ham biscuit and large cup of coffee and head on out to the park not far away. Right off the main road going west with nice pull off area.

Flint Hills Trail State Park – K-5718 in Miami County. Pull in and start on 40m early in day – 7:25am – 1225z. Have a good run including half dozen on 30m. Today my Verizon Cellphone is not working after 1300z. Zero cell access, zero internet access. The wi-fi in the car has just died late yesterday, too. Oh well, It's going to be tough to run counties for the county hunters. Maybe someone else will spot. I'll still be busy in the KS QP until 3pm.

From the web:

“This crown jewel of Kansas trails extends 117 miles from Osawatomie to Herington. It is the seventh-longest rail-trail in the U.S. and the longest trail in Kansas. It follows the general route of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail and is a component of the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail.

As of spring 2019, of the 95 miles that are open and traversable between Osawatomie and Council Grove, about 44.5 miles have been developed. Where open, it is well-maintained. There are currently no restrooms or water fountains next to the trail and some of it is still under construction, so plan accordingly.

Flint Hills Trail State Park crosses the Flint Hills, one of the last remaining tallgrass prairie ecosystems in the world. It is home to abundant prairie plants and wildlife species, spectacular views, national historic sites, and a diverse set of recreational areas. On eastern portions of the trail, hikers and bikers travel along the Marais Des Cygnes River, between rushing waters and towering bluffs, through rolling farmland and riparian woodlands. Flint Hills Trail State Park connects with Prairie Spirit Trail State Park in Ottawa.

History

Flint Hills Trail State Park was established by the Kansas Legislature in 2018. Formerly called the Flint Hills Nature Trail, it follows the rail-banked corridor of the former Missouri Pacific Railroad (MoPac). MoPac discontinued actively using the line in the 1980s. The corridor was railbanked in 1995 and later transferred to the Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy (KRTC), which worked to develop the trail in locations where volunteers and funding were available. KDWP began partnering with the KRTC in 2013 to help develop the trail. While the trail is now a state park, the KRTC will remain a valued partner.

When completed, the trail will connect six counties (Miami, Franklin, Osage, Lyon, Morris and Dickinson). Twelve welcoming communities will await trail-goers, including Osawatimie, Rantoul, Ottawa, Pomona, Vassar, Osage City, Miller, Admire, Allen, Bushong, Council Grove and Herington.

Several segments of the trail are unimproved or closed, but long-range plans call for it to be improved along its entire length. Improvements will be completed in segments as funds become available. Developing the trail will encourage outdoor recreation and provide safer routes for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. “

- -

I head west through Franklin KS to the next - ran it on 3 bands.

Douglas State Fishing Lake – K-7387 in DOU county. I'm there at 1349z and work the park chasers on 40m until 1400z. Then the KS QP'ers pile in and a 40 go in the log on 40 and 20m with some park chasers mixed in. Glad someone spotted me for the county hunters and park chasers. Done by 1430z and on the way out to the next.

From the web:

“The Forestry, Fish and Game Commission of Kansas purchased 718 acres in 1960. Construction of the lake was completed in 1963. Douglas State Fishing Lake is 180 acres in size and contains a variety of man-made fish habitat throughout. The lake is surrounded by a 538-acre Wildlife Area.

The Lake has fair to good populations of channel catfish , flathead catfish, and common carp are found in the lake. Other fish species include largemouth bass, bluegill, and

white crappie .

Fishing piers, two boat ramps with floating docks, primitive camping areas, four vault restrooms, and picnic tables are provided for area users.”

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But wait – a few miles away is a side road marked 'Sante Fe Trail Original Route' along a highway. I stop and put exactly 10 QSOs in the log – same county as before. 40M only. 10Qs is all that is needed for an activation credit and this park likely has 5000 QSOs already as it was in NPOTA. It runs through a several states from MO out to Sante Fe New Mexico through KS, OK, CO, NM.. It's got 500 QSOs listed just in the KS segment.



- - - -

I'm listening for KS mobiles and stations for multipliers but they are hard to come by. Skip is 'too long' for most of them. Catch one every now and then

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Next up- **Osage SFL K-7409 in, of course, Osage County KS.** Not able to spot but a few park chasers find me, and loads of QP'ers. Go with the flow. Not able to spot either of the two ways I use. Both dead.



- - - -

I head through Coffee County -(10 Q) and Lyon County (25Q) – no park in either - to the next in **Chase County at Chase State Fishing Lake K-7414.**



Pic courtesy K0BWR

As I pull in , I see another Park Activator already there! It's K0BWR and he has a big whip set up off the back of his pickup truck! We have a quick eyeball and he agrees to reconnect his antenna (he was just finishing up) so we can have a park-to-park contact –

and I get to work the park – and also get Chase County for the QP – a triple header. In a few minutes he's set and we work on 20m at about 1 watt each from 50 feet away. (had the IC706 power turned down to '1' and he had his power turned all the way down. I pulled up on the road from his site and proceeded to put out the park/county. He put a spot through for me. Excellent run of 81Qs from here! Sure helps to have the spots.



K0BWR Steve at Chase SFL
pic courtesy K0BWR

- - -

I ran through Marion County – no park with 20 in the log headed to **McPherson State Fishing Lake – K-4717** in McPherson County KS. Many SFL just have the 'generic' board /kiosk with the rules but no site specific sign to snag for a picture. Some I just forget to grab a pic, too!

40+ Qs go in the log from here. It's now 1937z and the QP ends at 2000 (3pm local) so I have to decide what to do.

I have a few more parks to run. I'll need 44Q in the next one, but the band is absolutely horrid, I can't spot, and by now, most contesters will vanish after many hours of chasing mobiles. Same for many county hunters who have gotten worn out and won't be looking for any more mobiles. Without spots and abysmal conditions (solar geomagnetic storm under way), I decided to cut the last few parks off the agenda and

head home. Let's see....if I wanted, from here, it was 7 hours of driving, mostly at 75 mph, to home – a long haul.

I decided to just go till dark.....and see where I wound up. The weather in OKLA was going to be very nasty starting Tuesday with rounds of thunderstorms, flash flooding, lightning, possible hail/tornadoes. No reason to stick around in KS for sure and KS weather might be bad, too. TX weather would turn bad on late Tuesday, too! Time to get on home. The other parks are right near I-135 just north of Wichita.

I head toward I-635. Try to put out Harvey County – exactly one answer and Q from a county hunter and that's it. He spots but no one else shows up on 40m. Glad I decided to bug on out. I drive on by Hesston, KS – home of Bob, W0BH, the 'spark plug' behind the KS QSO Party – who rounds up the troops for one of the best QSO Parties of the year. No time to stop by to say hello and no way to contact him either. Some other time!

Hours and hours later, I'm through OK City headed south.

Grab a sandwich at 6pm, get some gas, and keep driving.

By 8pm, sunset time, I'm in the Ardmore, OK area. Days Inn for \$60. Outside entrances to rooms. Good. Nearby just after 8pm I grab dinner at El Tampatio Mexican restaurant half mile away. Only 2 cars in lot there beside mine. Late and a Sunday. Good covid dining...practically by myself in the place. Hi Hi.

Monday August 31 2020

Where did the summer go? End of August already?

No breakfast at the Days Inn. (their COVID decision). Other motels have a 'grab and go' plastic wrapped plate with muffin/apple or similar but no eats here for breakfast.

Have breakfast at the Pioneer restaurant at 6:15am. Not the least bit crowded – big place and just a few others there that early. Have their special – oh, loads of calories and stuff – two eggs, two large pancakes with blueberries, sausage patty, good slice of ham, two bacon, hash browns, two cups coffee. Wow. I'm full.

It's 2 hours to home from here.

I make a quick stop at **Lake Murray State Park – 2790** and then head home through the DFW congestion – not too bad but you've got to be awake. Loads of traffic and not so fun in the dark – so I do it in daylight - with too many aggressive drivers, trucks and everything else all in a hurry. 8 lanes of traffic.

Stopped by the Verizon Wireless Store on the way home. (Hard to find one elsewhere when your phone isn't working!). Seems they had a 'glitch' that shut my service off for no reason. Or maybe an idiotic fraud system decided that since I was in KS, something was fishy? One upset customer! Got 'reset' and I had cell and internet once again. No explanation offered either for service cutoff. One pissed off customer. No way I was going to find an 'open' Verizon store without internet in KS, either.

As for my backup – my OnStar data plan...seems they got confused too. Turned off my service as my monthly period rolled over – and gave me 'zero data' for the next month. Just happened to be during this trip! Spent an hour on the phone with Onstar a few days later and got it straightened out. So I'm good again. Two ways. Verizon for the handheld, and OnStar is AT&T. Usually at least one of them will work. Sometimes, neither of them will work in the boonies.

Home by 10:30. Whew. Did 630 mile sprint home in just over a 7 hours.

Miles driven - 1416 miles in just over 3 days.

Thanks for riding along.

Tuesday the central and eastern half of OK was drenched by rain. OK City had six inches of rain! That would have been my route home if I delayed a day to run more parks. Water rescues! Monsoon type rains and high winds, lightning. Tuesday evening, the skies opened and north of me in Denton TX they got over six inches of rain – right along the I-35 interstate. Lightning all over the place. Would have been a horrendous trip home if I hadn't bugged out early! Whew! Wild weather not usual for OK and TX this time of year..

Mobile Activity in September

At the beginning of the month

AB7NK, Mary, and Neil, K7SEN, were on a big trip – and at this time up in MT. Then into UT then home to AZ.

Ed, K8ZZ, was putting out counties in OH - later headed west through IN , into IL, IA,

Alan, W8OP, headed out from WV for some counties.

The Colorado QSO Parties gave a big boost to CW activity and some on SSB. Next day we had the TN QSO Party with several mobiles and decent activity.

Ed, N8OYY, headed out from WV to VA to the eastern part -

Don, K3IMC was over in SC then up through the eastern shore of VA around through PA, into OH for counties there to KY and TN

Bill, K0DEQ, headed out through IL into IN around through MO. Later another trip to more counties in IL and MO.

The next weekend was filled with TX QSO Party stations with more than six mobiles out and running.

KB0BA, Lowell, and N0YXL, Sandra, headed through IL to IN. Then into upper part of MI

Bob, KC6AWX headed out from CA into NV.

The IA QSO Party filled up the bands for the next two days.

Next weekend we had the Washington State Salmon Run (WA QP) with lots of fixed station activity and one or two mobiles out. A few 'County Expeditions' but not like the past years.

Ed K8ZZ, headed out from KS, stopping by a few parks along the way, to meet up with Jerry, W0GXQ in CO. They were planning on a big trip out to the NW USA – one they would have run to the convention and back – but are running anyway.

They were headed out west through CO into UT, into ID and OR, up into WA, then back into OR, down through NV to UT back to CO. 12 day trip.

Colorado QSO Party

There were a couple mobiles out this year. On CW, W0ETT and W0ZA were busy. On SSB, N0HJZ ran 30 counties filling in needs for many. Conditions were so-so for 20M but 40M seemed to work well. The CW mobiles seem to stick to 40M most of the time. Scoring included separate CW and SSB (and digital) county totals

from the 3830 contest reflector:

N0HJZ mobile 68 CW 1620 SSB

Thanks to everyone that followed me around. A fun day out roving! Started the day near the mountains with 39 degree temps. By midday, I was out on the plains and the temp hit 100. The pile-ups were a blast and I got to see 791 miles worth of Colorado! The rig is an FT991. 100 watts into a hamstick on the rental car. Thanks again to everyone that worked me!

W0ETT mobile 338 CW QSO (via email)

“I made 338 Q's in 10 counties on 20m and 40m CW in about 8 hours of effort. Band conditions were good on the bands.

73 Ken, W0ETT”

N6MU - fixed CA - 61 CW qso 27 CW counties

Never heard either bonus station. 73...

John, N6MU

NS2N - fixed NY 41 CW 62 SSB 21 CW counties 39 SSB counties

Thought there might have been a bit more activity, seeing as hw the rate was 8/hr !

Thanks for the Qs and special thanks to N0HJZ for getting a couple of all-time 40m counties and a third of the Qs.

NS2N

K4XU - fixed - OR 38 CW 55 SSB 23 CW counties 37 SSB counties

N0HJZ deserves a medal. Nice signal and a pro op. I worked him in 26 counties.

thanks for organizing the party. PPRAA's interactive activity map was very useful.

73,
Dick

K8TE - fixed NM - 65 CW 60 SSB qso 20 CW counties 28 SSB counties

I could probably use previous soapbox comments for this event too and just change the event's name. Instead, I want to complement those ops who worked 40m and 80/75m to give us nearby ops the possibility of working them. If this site allowed it, I could show you a picture of ten spots on the W6RK.com. All but one were on 20m. For upcoming QSO parties, don't forget the "locals" who can't work you on 20m. The converse is true too. Don't forget 20m for us distant stations.

Once again, despite no predictions of storms, lightning forced me off the air for a couple of hours. And with contacts so few and far between, N1MM+ thought I took off for half the contest! At least I got caught up on some e-mail while the computer called CQ.

Murphy showed up again this weekend, beginning with no DSL and therefore Internet. Fortunately, Verizon cell service worked as a backup with sufficient bandwidth for spotting. I learned an alleged current choke is not happy with a long period of CQ'ing on 80m. It's "interesting" to watch the VSWR climb so quickly!

Some commented about the missing bonus stations. The only mention of bonus points was from rule changes in 2014. Perhaps there weren't any bonus stations this year? It doesn't seem like there is a lot of effort put forth to promote this event. Making a QSO

Party happen takes a lot of effort! I appreciate all who do that since that effort gives many of us a lot of fun! I noted a lot of the regulars chasing CO stations and had a few conversations with some.

Once again, N0HJZ/M put on quite an effort! I wish Rich could have used 40m more, but from the sound of the pileups on 20m, he may not have had time to do so before the next county. I did manage to snag him for four counties on 20m with amazing signal strength those few times. Other times, he was just a whisper in NM. Thanks to K5ZG for moving bands and modes for me!

Thanks to all for the few contacts I got! If it's safe to travel in 2021, perhaps I'll try another county expedition adventure? I had a great time in 2017! Duplicating that effort could be a big challenge. 73, Bill, K8TE

K1RO - fixed NH 21 CW 49 SSB qso 19 CW counties 31 SSB counties

Weather was way too nice to sit inside all day on this holiday weekend, so I picked away at the contest a little at a time when I was around the house. I was pleased to work several new counties.

I used a calculator to compute phone and CW scores separately and adding the results, as described in the rules. (Writelog scored it the usual way, total QSO points x total multipliers, which would result in a score nearly double this total.) The rules seem overly complicated for a QSO party...

Thanks to the Colorado stations who got on the air for this!

Tennessee QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running. No sunspots showed up for the contest. W4NZ, W4AN, N4ZZ K4O spotted many times in counties.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N4ZZ multi-op mobile 1464 QSO (ops AD4EB KI4HVY N4ZZ)

This was our 9th time operating mobile in the TNQP, and this year we ended up with our highest score ever. Weather was perfect and participation was out of this world, possibly in part due to COVID-19 keeping people at home (307 unique callsigns). Propagation was good and the band noise was minimal. Best band was 40 meters by far. I operated the first half of the contest, Don operated the second half, and Melody did a great job driving the 2000 Montana van and navigating. We drove thru 25 counties over the 377 mile route.

We had a couple places where the GPS took us off course and we lost a little time. When Don started operating, Melody turned the helm to over to me. Within the first 500 feet I hit some tree limbs with the 80m vertical which bent some spokes on the top hat (I tend to do that a lot, Melody never). That messed up the SWR but we chose to not waste valuable time fixing it, and lived with it for the duration of the contest. Other than that everything worked without a hitch.

The top 14 operators based on the number of QSOs were:

K1RO (38)
VE3NNT (27)
NW0M (27)
OM2VL (26)
K9RS (25)
DL3DXX (25)
NA8V (23)
K3WJV (23)
WN4AFP (22)
K5CM (22)
WT2P (19)
N9SE (19)
K8MFO (19)
N8II (18)

Early on in the contest I figured Mark K1RO would probably be the top finisher, he had such a strong signal on all bands and was really quick finding us in each county. Way to go Mark! As usual, Laci OM2VL and Dietmar DL3DXX put in amazing stellar performances. They both really knew how to track us and had powerful signals as well, even on 80m. Mitch NW0M did very well at breaking thru the pileups. We were using APRS during the contest, and the link with the route to APRS.fi was on our QRZ.com webpages. I suspect OM2VL and DL3DXX were using it since they seemed to pounce

on us immediately upon entering many counties. For those that used APRS.fi, I would appreciate hearing how it worked for you and any improvements that could be made.

We appreciate everyone that worked us in the contest. Don and I especially want to thank Melody (KI4HVV) for driving us all around beautiful TN yet again.

Please listen for Melody and me in the TXQP September 12th and 13th. County line crossing times and the APRS link are on the AD4EB QRZ.com webpage.

Take care and be safe.

73 - Jim - AD4EB

W4NZ - mobile 1401 CW

With a successful mobile run last year we kept the same crew for this year, Mark K0EJ, Brandon Million, Mark's son-in-law and I. Our setup was similar to last year except we used an Elecraft K3 at 100w this time. Same antennas, two Hustler whips on top of a 2016 Dodge Durango.

At the beginning 20m seemed like it was going to be very productive with some good rates, but it didn't last long. 40m was the money band. It seemed like a bottomless pit and, unlike last year, was productive right up until the end. 80m was very good with low noise and some pretty intense pileups.

Top QSOs:

Special mention for Laci OM2VL (25 QSOs) and Dietmar DL3DXX (21 QSOs). These guys were right with us the entire trip and always with good signals. Thank you!

And our US friends...

NW0M 32 QSOs! Thanks, Mitch!

W5TM 28 QSOs

K1RO 27 QSOs

K9RS 27 QSOs

K3WJV 23 QSOs

VE3NNT 22 QSOs

... and MANY stations with 10 to 20 QSOs.

Thanks so much to all of you for calling in and making our 450 mile trip through 26 counties so much fun and worth the effort. See you next year.

73, Ted W4NZ (for Mark K0EJ and Brandon, our super driver/navigator)

W4AN mobile 826 CW (K4BAI, KU8E ops)

Jeff, KU8E, and I were privileged to travel to Tennessee for the annual TN QSO Party. Jeff had made a lot of good improvements since our mobile runs in GA, FL, AL, and TN QSO parties last year. We had missed being mobile in FL and GA QSO Parties this year due to the restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 virus. We were able to operate with N4BP in FL QSO Party as N4B doing CW remotely. Jeff had set an ambitious schedule for many counties in east TN. Overall, the improvements were very successful, but we lost some time due to failure to bring one adapter that we had to buy at Lowe's before leaving HAMI. We soon lost computer frequency control apparently due to some RFI. So, we had to manually set the frequency when we changed bands and that was generally no problem. Then, we lost some time when the computer battery ran down. It had not been charging due to a loose connection in the circuit that was connecting it to power in the car. Later on, we lost a few minutes when a warning light came on the dash of my Toyota Avalon. We couldn't figure out what the problem was and made a phone call to my son who has a Toyota. Eventually, Jeff suggested that I turn off the car and turn it on again and when I did that, the warning light went away and didn't return. Last year, RFI apparently got into the computer in the car and the cruise control went out. It came back a few days after each contest. Jeff's superior grounding this year cured that and cruise control worked for the whole contest. We got behind and only got to 13 of our counties, a couple of them twice. We were delighted to give Rusty, W6OAT, my high school buddy a new all time TN county, COCKe County. Nice to work OM2VL, DL3DXX, DL8USA, SM6TKG and a lot of west coast stations. I think we worked all states except HI, AK, ID, WY, and ND plus VE2 and VE3. We had a lot of power line noise in some areas making us glad we didn't live in those locations. Sorry for any we missed and hope to work you all in the AL QSO Party next weekend, part time as W4AN/M. We will return home in time to work the NA Sprint CW contest Saturday night. QSLs go via K4BAI and I can send DX QSLs via the bureau in response to an e-mail request. Congrats to the other TN mobiles and fixed stations who made this a very successful QSO party. 73, John, K4BAI.

K4O Mobile multi-op (AC6ZM WK9M WW5C) 566 CW qso

Our 1st time operating mobile and what an experience it was! Nothing can prepare you

for the onslaught of calls coming in at the start of the contest. It definitely gets your adrenaline going and you have no choice but to put your game face on. After the initial shock wave, you improvise-adapt-overcome, narrow down the CW filter, and use the heck out of RIT to pluck calls from the pileup. I appreciate so many of the ops that were patient and followed CW best operating practices. It surely made it easier to keep moving through the never ending pileups.

Now, for the challenges that we faced this time out. I have been ducking Murphy for a long time. However, this Sunday, he showed up with reinforcements. An hour into the TNQP the brand new 4Runner (23k miles on the odometer) decides to have electronic transmission issues. The vehicle would not move out of 1st gear no matter what driving mode we put the vehicle in. Several attempts at trouble shooting didn't get us anywhere. Luckily, we installed the radio system to be on independent power (not connected to vehicle battery) and installed easily removable antennas since this was not a permanent installation. We limped into a Toyota dealership while still continuing to operate.

Despite the big disappointment, we decided not to lay down and give up without a fight. We quickly found the nearest airport (tri-cities in Blountville) and called enterprise to rent a van. We called an Uber, headed to the airport and rented a van. We worked like the Luigi Pit Crew in Toy Story and quickly swapped out all the gear at the dealership and was back on-the-air by 2308Z. The pileup was still there lurking and waiting, so we pressed on with the onslaught.

Murphy decided to show up one last time before the evening was out. The laptop battery died with 12 minutes to go <LOL>. We did not have an inverter in the van like the 4Runner. WB9HFK, don't worry, I did get you in the log on 80 meters in Union county.

Thanks to all the OPS that were patient as I requested repeats insisting on working a few weak signals to get them in the log. I remember being the small fry and didn't like it very much when runners would not waste time to work me.

Top QSO's - (count in parenthesis):

DX: OM2VL (11) and DL3DXX (9) both LOUD everywhere, VE3NNT (7)

USA: K1RO (15), K3WJV (12), K5CM (11)

TN: N4ARO (8)

P.S. A big thank you to TCG Ops (AD4EB-W4NZ) that helped me through the endless questions about mobile operations, route planning, and mobile antenna installation over the past several months. They gave me personal advice very willingly. This would not

have been a successful event without their wise counsel and tips.

DL3DXX - fixed - DX 158 CW 73 counties worked

Propagation was OK. Did not try 15m but last QSO on 20m was 2347z.
Good activity kept me busy most times.

Mobiles: Good number of mobiles increased the fun a lot.
Most mobiles were present also on 20m during afternoon.
Worked K4O, K4ZGB, N4ZZ, W4AN, W4NZ, W4PV and W9WI there.
KY4L and W3TB were not heard because did not operate 20m and
disappeared when 40m started to open for Europe.
Sometimes it was hard to break US pileups, possible after many calls on 40m but
mostly impossible on 80m where every little pistol
in US with 50 watts and a dipole were louder than DX from Europe.

Thank you for a well done party. Down to 3 needed TN counties now
so its something left for next year.

K4ZGB mobile reported 615 CW QSO

had no comments

W4PV mobile (K1GU op) 522 CW QSO

Nine counties in about 8 hours driving time. Full size Tarheel antenna, K3 at 45W. RF
still got into the car's electronic controls. XYL drove. Much more fun than staying
home.

K4AMC -- fixed TN 551 CW QSO

Band conditions poor with weak signals heard and lots of noise on 40 and 80
Enjoyed contest and working old friends. Mobile stations did great job, but only could
be worked late on 80 meters. 73 Jim K4AMC

K8TE - fixed NM 134 CW 28 SSB 78 counties

It's interesting to note that while farther away, I managed to make more contacts with TN ops than CO! Of course, 20m was the most productive band from NM, especially with my low dipoles. Fortunately, the thunderstorms stayed away so when 40m opened up, I could take advantage of it, at least on CW. 40m didn't fall far behind 20m in points for me.

It's obvious the TCG was engaged with this event! Their members, especially K4TCG, had big signals here. I could hear them working EU when the contest started. With no solar storm, conditions were as good as expected. Thanks to all who provided me contacts! The only complaint I have is some ops didn't ID for as many as six to ten QSO's making me wonder if I needed to stay and work them. It seems once every three or four would be helpful.

Obviously, not everyone is using electronic loggers. One op called me again, just three minutes after our previous QSO! A bunch of ops called me and then asked for my call. Why would anyone call a station when they couldn't get the callsign? We have a lot of mentoring to do! I used K8TE/5 and "New Mexico" on SSB, but still had numerous callers from outside TN. I guess I need to add "I am not in TN" to my CQ's.

I saw several spots on 80m put a few more contacts into the log. See you next year, or in the next QSO party! 73, Bill, K8TE

NS2N - fixed - NY 106 CW 39 SSB 89 mults

Lots of /M action ... thanks guys ... wish I was quicker on the draw.
Noisy contest on the low bands ... my apologies for repeats ... late/slow callers and static crashes don't help

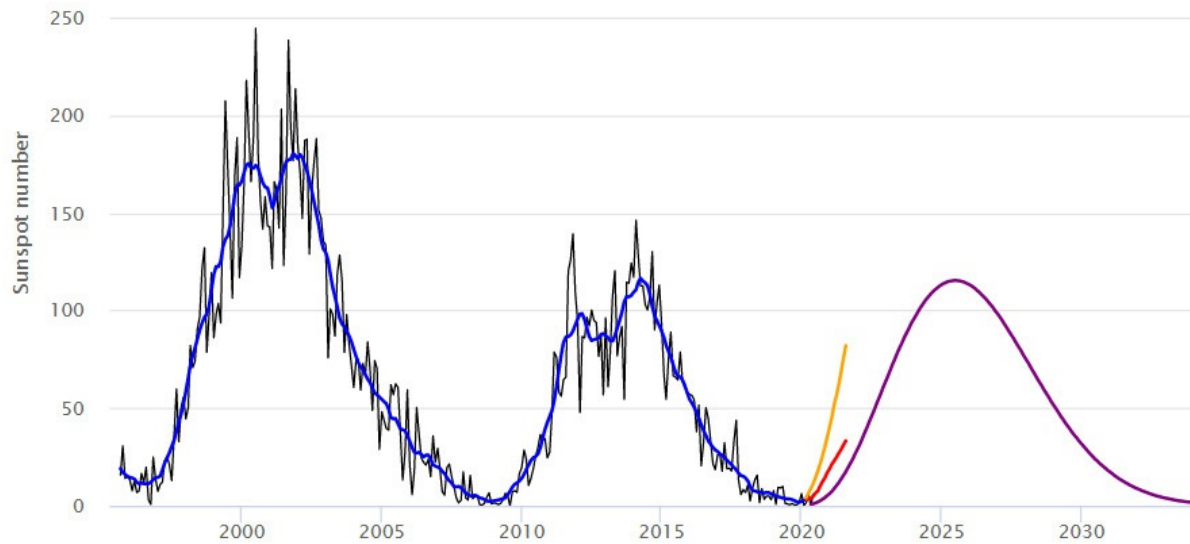
Paul NS2N

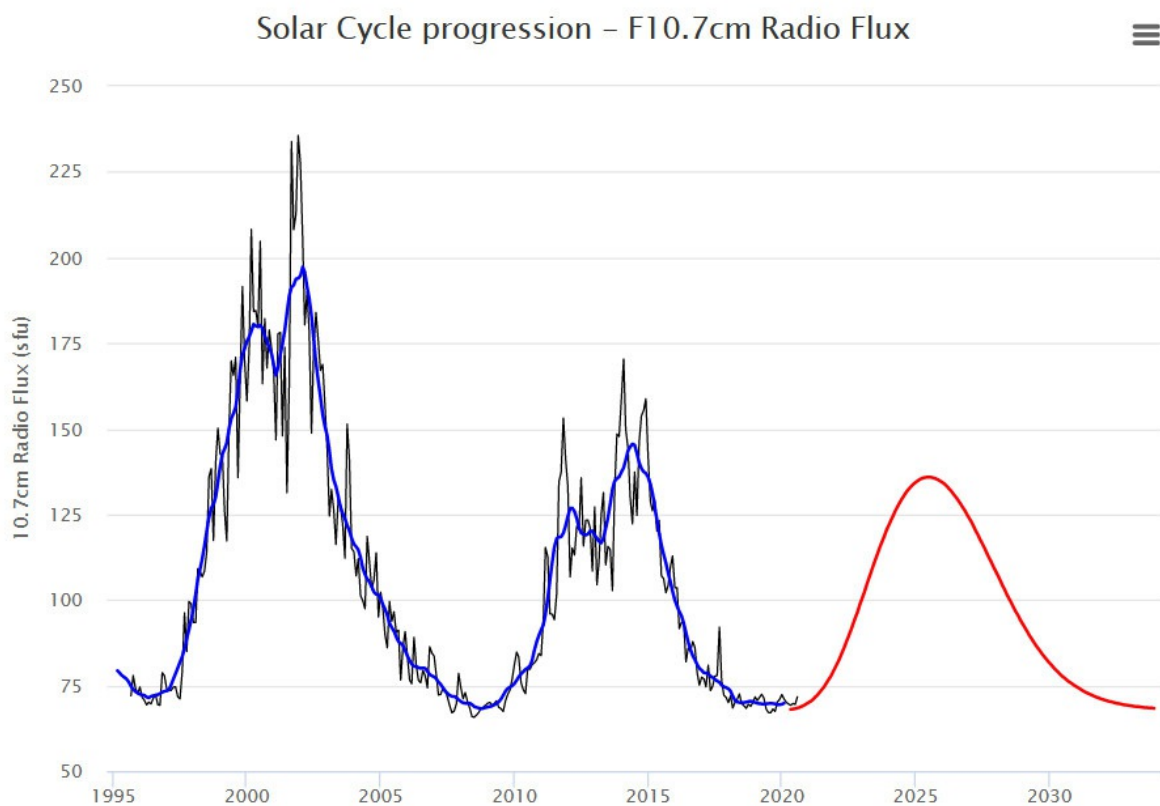
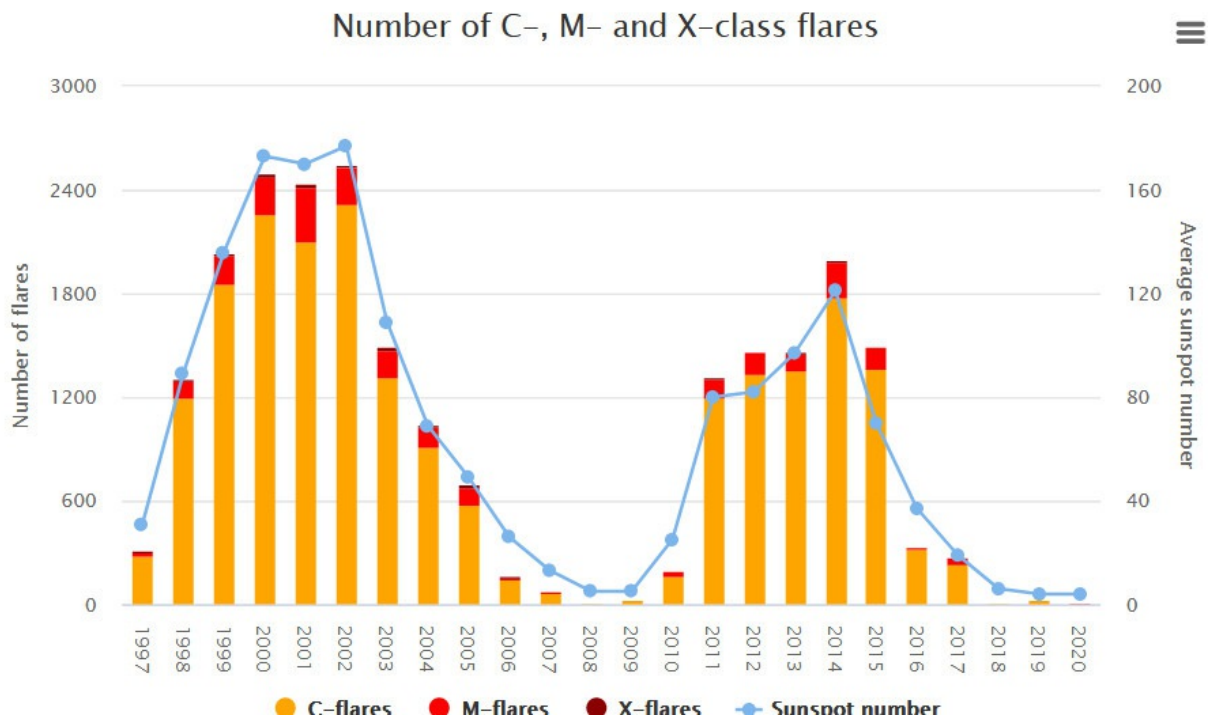
Solar News

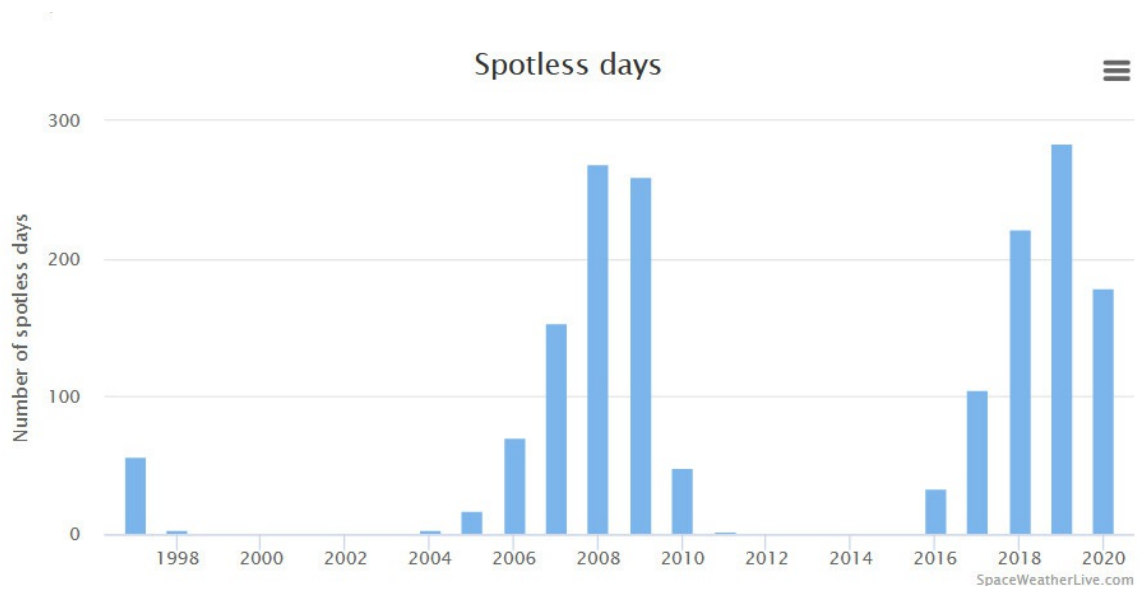
So far there is little joy in the progression of the Sunspot Cycle 25. We had a few sunspots in mid August but it's now been a couple weeks with none! The SFI is stuck

below 70 most of the time which is not the least bit exciting! Forecasts have predicted a rise by now but mother nature is taking it's time starting the new cycle.

from <https://www.spaceweatherlive.com/en/solar-activity/solar-cycle>

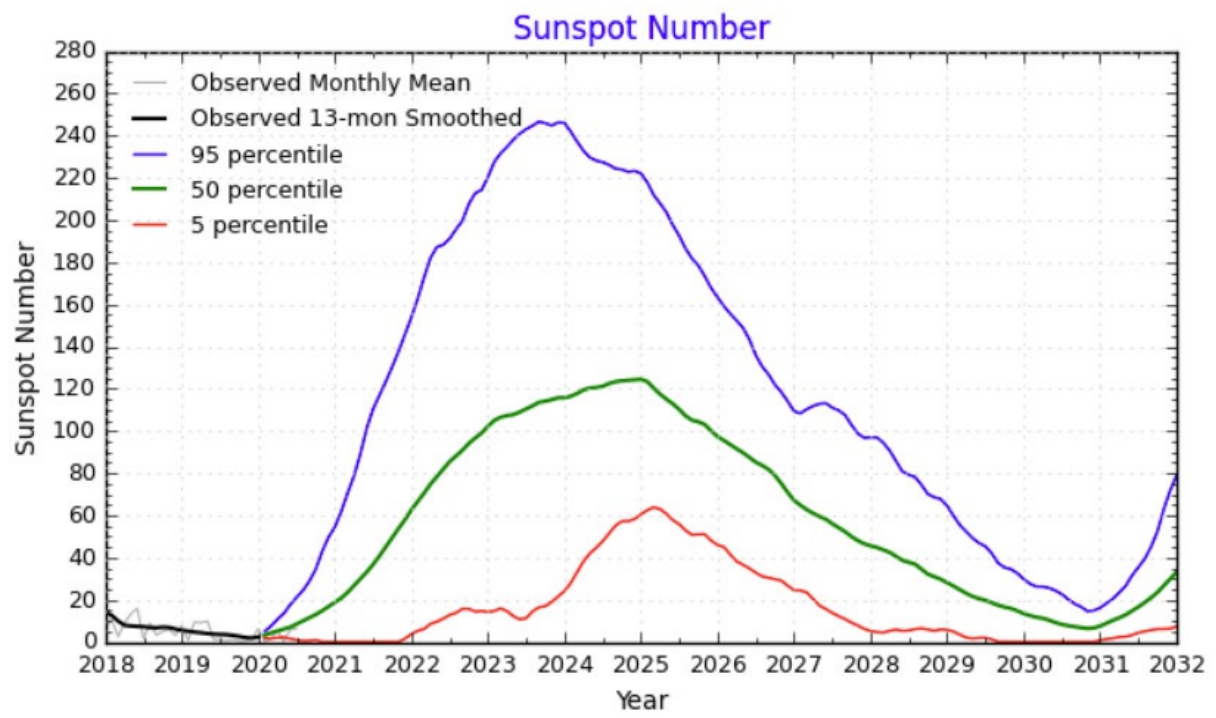


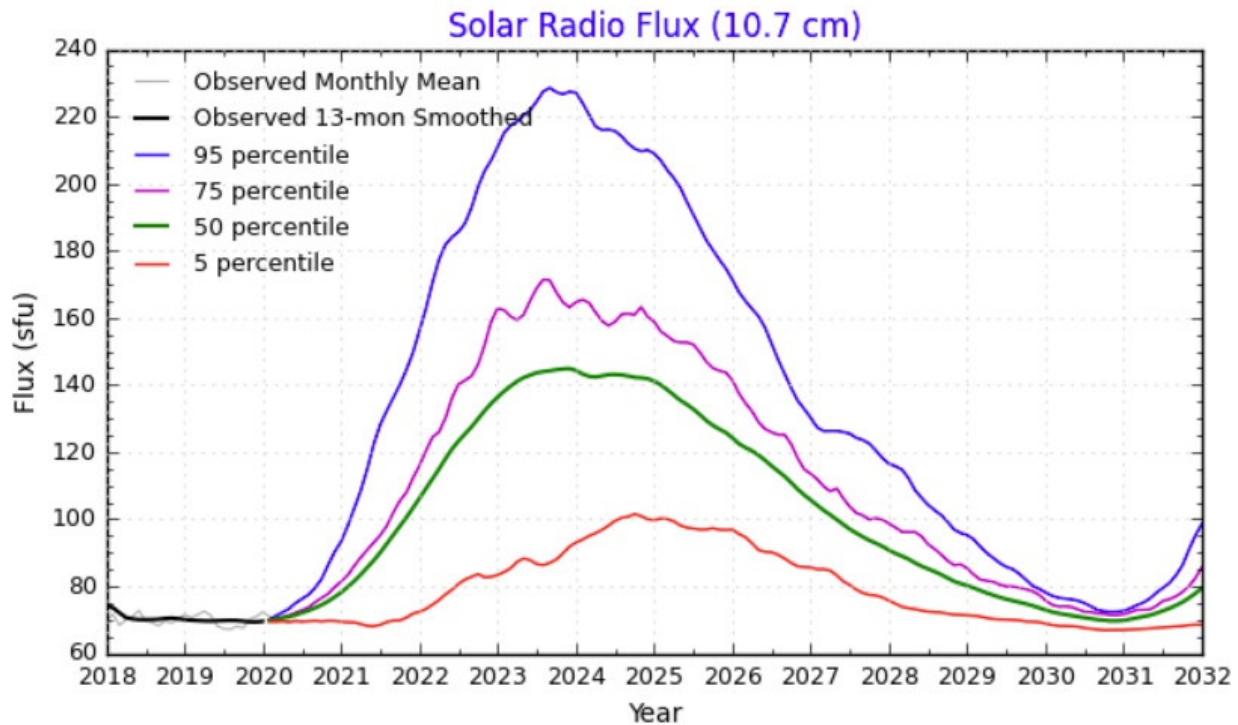




NASA – as of August 6, 2020 is still forecasting the following probabilities :

link <https://www.nasa.gov/msfcsolar>





note de N4CD

Let's hope that the cycle really starts soon! And that the COVID vaccine arrives soon so we can be mobiling all over the country from coast to coast. Near the end of the month, we had one sunspot group with three sunspots (sunspot number of 13) and an SFI of 72 .

Alabama QSO Party

Several mobiles were out in AL in the AL QSO Party. There were a dozen fixed stations to work as well. Conditions – well, no sunspots so things not in the great category but lots of contacts were made. It was the same weekend as the TQP so lots of activity on the bands going on at the same time. Later in the evening was the NA Sprint

to add to the band activity.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

K4ZGB mobile reported 314 QSOs - had no comments

KC4HW mobile 201 CW QSO

Thanks to all for the QSOs and supporting the Alabama QSO Party! Worked DL3DXX, WN4AFP and several others in most counties. Thanks for following me around.

Single Op NO driver, Operating from Covington, Escambia, Conecuh, Monroe, Clarke, Wilcox, Bulter and Crenshaw. Bouncing back and forth between 20m and 40m.

First time operating with an IC-7000, Tarheel antenna with controller in a Ford F-250. Had some trouble getting the RFI solved. Every time I tried TX on 40m the radio would power off. But used some Ferrite Cores on the DC power cord, antenna coax, separation cable and the antenna controller dc cord. That pretty much cleared most of it up. Just a little noise from the engine. Perhaps a DC line filter will help solve that problem.

I did notice that the radio output was down when the truck was not running. So I just never shut it off except a few time when I was out of the truck. While running it was no problem.

All and all, everything seemed to go pretty well considering that I was the last minute getting everything put together.

Congratulations to all the folks putting this on!

Jim/KC4HW

W4AN multi-op mobile (KU8E and K4BAI) 431 CW QSO

KU8E and I planned to run 17 AL counties in the AQP and return to our homes about 2 hours before the NA Sprint CW started at 0000Z Sunday. When we set up the computer,

rig, and antenna in my car, the 20M antenna, which had worked perfectly in the TN QSO Party last Sunday wasn't working. Turned out to be a bad coax connector, which Jeff fixed. But, we were running late. We had planned to drive about an hour north of Columbus and start out in Chambers County. So, we decided to skip Chambers and run our route backwards. We noticed early on that Jeff's laptop wasn't charging off the car battery like it had done in TN QP. We suspect a bad inverter. I had brought along a spare laptop, but hadn't thought to charge up the battery. The computer had not been used for several months. When we stopped for lunch, Jeff's computer was nearly run down, so we got out mine. Turned out that it didn't have a lot of battery life and also wouldn't charge from the car battery system. We stopped at two auto parts stores to buy a new inverter, but they didn't have one of sufficient amperage. We lost a lot of time doing that and skipped three south eastern counties. So, we got 13 of our 17 planned counties. When the battery on my laptop ran down, I logged with pen on paper for the last 150 QSOs or so. After returning home and doing the NA Sprint (thanks to N2NL and W4ER for our AL mults) and going to Sunday School and church Sunday, I entered those QSOs into my laptop computer along with the QSOs we had logged on it. Had to enter the calls and sections and then go into the Cabrillo file and change the dates and times of all those QSOs. The date change is easy, but the times have to be done individually and takes time and patience. We think the final log is accurate except for one call that I forgot before I wrote it down. Sorry about that one. When I was logging on paper, I was also sending CW with Jeff's paddle. I know it sounded bad. Do not blame Jeff. It was all by me, doing the best I could with a bouncing car and a borrowed paddle. Thanks to Jeff for changing the polarity on his paddle so I could send more easily. Thanks for all QSOs. 20M was pretty good to most of the country beyond about 500 miles and to western Europe. We worked 40 states, 3 Canadian areas, plus Germany and the Netherlands. The 10 states we missed were GA(too close I guess), ME, HI, AK, NV, UT, WY, MT, SD, and ND. The changed date may have been no worse than conflicting with the CW Open, but the conflicts with the TX QP and the NA Sprint were significant. Especially the NA Sprint. The CW bands were covering the mobiles and weaker CW signals from AL for the last four hours of the contest. And, it wasn't realistic to move much up the band on 40M because the SKCC group was having their Weekend Sprintathon. We look forward to fuller participation in future years. 73, John, K4BAI.

(P.S. I left out one important visit from Murphy. I was driving on Interstate 85 between Opelika and Montgomery and came upon the remains of a blown truck tire in the road. Didn't see it in time to swerve around it, so I put one pair of wheels on each side of the remains of the tire, but it was up so high that it felt like a collision with my Toyota Avalon. It didn't disable the car, but Jeff inspected it and said that my Protective Screen under the car is broken and there is significant damage to the inside of the bumper. I

hope insurance will help pay for the repairs. Don't know how much of a deductible I have on that car. Probably not too high.

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 51 CW 26 counties worked

I decided focus on the Alabama QP this weekend and try it CW only. Thank you mobile operators for keeping me at the party! Prop was good for me on 40m for most of the day and then 80m was perfect in the evening. 73s Dave WN4AFP

K1RO - fixed - 59 CW 23 SSB 28 counties on cw, 10 on SSB

I wasn't sure about the bonus points so I didn't add them. Worked K4ACG on 80/40/20 CW and W4AQP on 40/20 SSB.

This weekend was a bit crazy with Alabama and Texas QPs, WAE SSB, the FOC contest, and CW Sprint all running. I think the QPs suffered once the Sprint started and the CW bands were full.

Thanks to the mobiles and home stations for a number of new counties.

W4AQP- bonus station - AL - 706 SSB (AD4B opr)

As usual WX played a part during the event which cut my op time short Sat evening. I had my moments using W4AQP which I am sure confused some op's though I just soldiered through my fits. No surprises about prop from here in NW AL as 20mtrs was somewhat cantankerous yet 40mtrs yielded QSO's freely. WX QRN was building late afternoon making 80mtrs a challenge the last few hours which got cut short by flashes of lightning and rain.

I also want to thank the mobile op's for their efforts. W4AN/m (K4BAI/KU8E), K4ZGB and KC4HW. The AQP committee will be working very hard to enlist more mobile operations in the future during the next 12 months. If you are interested in running some AL counties in the future please contact use via the AQP website. We will give you a big " Heart of Dixie " welcome I can assure you.

Thanks for all the Q's es hope you will be active in the 2021 running of the AQP.

CU next year,
Tim , AB4B

OM2VL - fixed - DX - 4 CW 3 SSB

Unfortunately the WAE SSB was on same weekend that TXQP and ALQP and another OP was QRV on the WAE at the big station here. My BIG thanks to Gabi - OM2AGN who allowed me in his QTH operate in the QP and not lose the multiplier in the State QSO Party Challenge!

Thanks for the QSOs!

73, Laci OM2VL

WB8WKQ fixed - Mi - 34 CW 20 SSB

Doesn't make a whole lot of sense to have the ALQP on the same day as the TXQP, but hey, what do I know. It just causes confusion in dumb people like me. With that said, I was pleased to work over 50 AL contacts. I have done better before, but I think that was when there wasn't a major (like TX) additional QP going on. Thanks for all the Q's and K4ZGB being all over the place!

Proposed Licensing Fees

FCC Proposes \$50 fee for ham radio licenses. First issuance, and renewals at \$50.

From the FCC NPRM:

“For these automated processes—new/major modifications, renewal, and minor modifications—we propose a nominal application fee of \$50 due to automating the processes, routine ULS maintenance, and limited instances where staff input is required.

Although there is currently no fee for vanity call signs in the Amateur Radio Service, we find that such applications impose similar costs in aggregate on Commission resources as new applications and therefore propose a \$50 fee. 28. For administrative updates modifications, which also are highly automated, we find that it is in the public interest to encourage licensees to update their information without a charge. We thus propose no application fee for administrative updates modifications. 29. In instances where an applicant elects to receive a physical license by mail (including requests for a duplicate license), the Commission incurs costs for printing and mailing the duplicate authorization. The Commission has proposed to eliminate these services³¹—but to the extent the Commission does not do so, we propose a fee of \$50 to cover the costs of these services. “

<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-116A1.pdf>

If you wish to file comments, you may do so at this link:

https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/filings?proceedings_name=20-270&sort=date_disseminated,DESC

That works out to \$5/yr for your ham radio license, less than 2c a day.

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from the ARRL:

“Amateur radio licensees would pay a \$50 fee for each amateur radio license application if the FCC adopts rules it proposed this week. Included in the FCC’s fee proposal are applications for new licenses, renewal and upgrades to existing licenses, and vanity call sign requests. Excluded are applications for administrative updates, such as changes of address, and annual regulatory fees.

The FCC proposal is contained in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in MD Docket 20-270, which was adopted to implement portions of the “Repack Airwaves Yielding Better Access for Users of Modern Services Act” of 2018 — the so-called “Ray Baum’s Act.”

The Act requires that the FCC switch from a Congressionally-mandated fee structure to a cost-based system of assessment. In its NPRM, the FCC proposed application fees for

a broad range of services that use the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS), including the Amateur Radio Service that had been excluded by an earlier statute. The 2018 statute excludes the Amateur Service from annual regulatory fees, but not from application fees.

“Applications for personal licenses are mostly automated and do not have individualized staff costs for data input or review,” the FCC said in its NPRM. “For these automated processes — new/major modifications, renewal, and minor modifications — we propose a nominal application fee of \$50 due to automating the processes, routine ULS maintenance, and limited instances where staff input is required.”

The same \$50 fee would apply to all Amateur Service applications, including those for vanity call signs. “Although there is currently no fee for vanity call signs in the Amateur Radio Service, we find that such applications impose similar costs in aggregate on Commission resources as new applications and therefore propose a \$50 fee,” the FCC said.

The FCC is not proposing to charge for administrative updates, such as mailing address changes for amateur applications, and amateur radio will remain exempt from annual regulatory fees. “For administrative updates [and] modifications, which also are highly automated, we find that it is in the public interest to encourage licensees to update their [own] information without a charge,” the FCC said.

The FCC also proposes to assess a \$50 fee for individuals who want a printed copy of their license. “The Commission has proposed to eliminate these services — but to the extent the Commission does not do so, we propose a fee of \$50 to cover the costs of these services,” the FCC said.

The Ray Baum's Act does not exempt filing fees in the Amateur Radio Service. The FCC dropped assessment of fees for vanity call signs several years ago.

ARRL is reviewing the matter and intends to file comments in opposition.

Deadlines for comments and reply comments will be determined once the NPRM appears in the Federal Register. Interested parties may file comments by using the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), posting to MD Docket No. 20-270. This docket is already open to accept comments, even though deadlines have not yet been set.”

<http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-proposes-to-reinstate-amateur-radio-service-fees>

Texas QSO Party

It's been a while since ALL the TX counties have been on for the TX QSO Party. The COVID problem didn't help as most mobiles limited their travel to one day trips in loops around their home QTHs but many mobiles were out – at least half a dozen and maybe a dozen. Bands? Well, SFI at 68 and 69 or so, no sunspots, A=3 to 5, K=2 to 3. Not the greatest conditions but tens of thousands of contacts were made. Over 200 counties were on the air out of the 254 and I suspect closer to 230 on the air if you used both CW and SSB. 20M was decent but didn't see many, if any, spots or activity on 15M band. 20M was OK on CW. Not so great on SSB from my perspective.

A big WAE SSB contest was going on at the same time - I suspect taking many New England stations and other DX'ers away from the TQP. Heard not too many EU stations here on SSB – one or two but didn't listen too hard. Also on Saturday, the FOC (Friends of Charlie) stations were calling CQ BW (Bob Willie). Unfortunately, the exchange did not have the QTH so those contacts wouldn't count unless you could get them to give their state. Didn't bother with them. Saturday evening (0000z) the North American CW Sprint took place and filled up the bands till the end of the TQP (9pm central) – making mobile operation tougher. Other than that, and the AL QSO Party going on at the same time, it was a good weekend for the TQP. Oh, I forgot...the ARRL September VHF contest was also underway – so a few 'big guns' skipped TQP and were busy on 6M and up.

This is the year of the State QSO Party Challenge, so many showed up even to make just 5 or 10 or 20 or 30 contacts to have a log to submit to the 3830 reflector where Dave, WN4AFP is able to track who showed up in each of the QSO Parties. States of AK and HI were hard to come by for multipliers for TX stations this year. (The HI party was a tough one to snag at least 2 QSOs in the State QSO Party challenge but TX was 'easy' for sure with a hundred stations on the air from TX and 200 counties plus.)

Didn't see much activity from south tip of TX along the Rio Grande. Big article today (9/14) in the Wall Street Journal about the problems there. In Starr County – one in five residents of the county has come down with COVID-19! There are 60,000 residents there. One in 455 have died. It's 99% Hispanic with many shared houses. It's not much better either along the Rio Grande for miles either side and not the place to be

running counties (and having to stop for gas/food or a motel for the night!). Or worse, a car break down and need for repair that could take a few days. Maybe a few fixed operators down that way did make it on for some contacts. The rest of TX is seeing a slow reduction in cases but there are many 'hot spots' in the 20+ million population in the state. The tail end of a recent hurricane with at least six inches of rain and flooding worsened problems along the Rio Grande River, too, and made many more homeless or having to share quarters and upping the need for welfare and food assistance programs.

A few of the 'regulars' didn't make it this year probably due to COVID related issues or obligations at Hesston College. Bob, W0BH usually ran the panhandle of TX – and probably a few counties not on the air this year. Chuck, NO5W, often shows up in a multi-op but that is, of course, risky this year. Connie, K5CM, from OK, made it a one day trip getting back home Saturday night at 1am after a full day. Most TX mobiles just made it a day trip (or two) staying at home Saturday night. This is the first or second time the QP is on the second weekend of September, I think. Usually it's been later.

Well over 400 unique calls participated in the QSO Party this year – probably because many were 'at home'.

from the 3830 reflector:

AD4EB mobile - 2746 CW QSO

Wow, that was fun! This was our 3rd TXQP and by far the most exciting. Participation was way up with 406 unique calls in the log (possibly related to COVID-19). Previous number of QSOs were 2,071 then 2,070 (in 2010 and 2019), I never thought 2,746 QSOs would have been possible, the pileups were huge.

Everything went pretty darned perfect, weather excellent, band conditions exceptional (especially on 20m), roads good, equipment and 2000 Montana Van no issues, and Melody kept our county line crossing times on track. There were some traffic delays due to accidents and construction, so she adjusted the route to gain time to keep on schedule.

Multipliers were way down from previous years due to not as many DX and TX counties worked. That could be because the pileups were so big that weaker signals did not stand much chance of getting worked. However, that did not seem to apply to DL3DXX, as Dietmar was fairly loud and his timing was really good (he really knows how to work the pileups) and he was one of the first to call as we entered many of the

counties.

Rates were much better on Sunday. There were quite a few contests going on this weekend, and the CW sprint caused the most issues Saturday evening. Lost my run frequency many times, and many sprinters thought I was in their contest. But we got thru it okay, hope I did not cause them many issues in the process.

These are the station who worked us over 30 times:

N4ZZ (62) - Don was loudest and ZZ was really easy to pick out of the pileups.
K1RO (53) - Excellent job Mark, you were great just like in the TNQP last weekend.
K3WJV (50) - Bill, nice signal good timing in the pileups.
W0ZQ (47), WB9CIF (42), DL3DXX (40), W6OAT (39), W4NZ (39),
NS2N (38), N6MU (38), N8II (37), KV8Q (37), K9CW (37), K7TM (34)
WA6KHK (33), K3IE (33), KM4HI (31), KA6BIM (31)

On my QRZ.com page I had our estimated county line crossing times, which we stuck really close to. Also, there was a link to APRS.fi that had our route, county lines, and live position. Hopefully this helped people track us as we entered each county. For those that are interested, there is a write-up in Jan/Feb NCJ about our mobile operation. You can find it at <https://ncjweb.com/bonus-content/2020jan-feb-AD4EB.pdf>

Again, we appreciate everyone that took the time to work us as we traveled around the beautiful state of Texas. The pileups were really big, but everyone was courteous. Thanks to the TQP committee and NO5W who is always a big help to the mobile operations. Melody carefully drove the 823 miles why I played on the radio in the back of our van, I can't thank her enough. She is the one that makes it all possible.

43 Counties Driven

73 – Jim – AD4EB and Melody – KI4HVV

WB0TEV mobile - 275 SSB QSO

This did not go according to plan, which was to have K5PS join me and operate under his call as a Texas mobile multi-op entry with me operating SSB as we drove through a few dozen counties and Scott was to operate CW as we stopped at county lines. Unfortunately, late Friday afternoon I was feeling a little off and took my temperature.

It was 99.5 F. Having just spent a week in Deep East Texas doing disaster relief work with Texas Baptist Men in the wake of Hurricane Laura, the spectre of a COVID-19 exposure reared its ugly head.

So the multi-op plan had to be scrapped. I felt fine Friday night and Saturday AM but went and got tested for COVID Saturday morning. I decided there was no place better to self-isolate than in my radio equipped 2008 Chevy Tahoe, so I hit the road mid morning Saturday for a few hours and activated 6 counties. Sunday I took to the road again for a few hours and activated 4 more. Its a far cry from the 40+ I did last year, but hopefully gave out a few needed counties to folks. I fully expect the test results to come back negative, if not I'll hunker down at home for a while and play with the new 4 way beverage system I just put up.

Just another way that the year 2020 has drawn a serious vacuum. Hope to be on the road for the Oklahoma QSO party in March and have a better showing in the 2021 Texas QSO Party.

Thanks to the sponsors and supporters like NM5G and NO5W for all they've done to make this THE premier state QSO Party.

73, Victor

KI5MM Mobile - 236 SSB QSO

THANKS TO XYL FOR LOGGING. Worked in 14 counties. Conditions were noisy. Thanks to the Non Texans. I could not buy in state QSO's. Only 3 Texas counties. Hope for better conditions next year and back to club event TQSO.

Thanks for the QSO's

K5CM mobile 1130 CW 213 SSB

Still not comfortable staying in a motel so Pam and I just drove down for the day. It did make for along day not getting home till 1:00AM. It seemed conditions were not very good at the start of the party, but did have some nice runs in the evening on 40 and 80 meters.

73, Connie / K5CM

K5IX mobile - 562 CW 18 SSB QSO

Ran 9 counties - no other comments

K5DX mobile 944 CW 46 SSB (ops - K5GQ NM5G)

Great conditions both days. Had a blast. There were huge pileups on CW at times. I did the driving and phone contacts. Mark K5GQ did all of the CW contacts. He had some difficulty at first, but settled in during the event, especially dealing with huge pileups. The most memorable event was Sunday at the county line of Fayette and Lavaca, just south of I10 on Texas highway 95. He decided to give out both counties, and this created a spectacular pileup than was basically unworkable. I talked him into changing to giving out only one county (FAYE), and he was able to work down the pileup. But, the excitement of hearing that pileup was unforgettable. I have been on many DXpeditions and have never heard pileups this big! Another great moment was also Sunday heading north on Texas 36 just south of Brenham, when we reached Washington county. We had only 7 minutes left to work WASH, and we wanted to get at least 5 contacts for the bonus points. Well, Mark worked another huge pileup and he got 16 contacts.

Keith NM5G

TQP is my favorite all year. In the CWops CW Academy Intermediate course; September – October I cover it. Tell where Texas mobiles in counties are posted, phone applications that give the frequency when a station calls CQ, APRS on the Texas QSO web page. Keith, NM5G drove and planned the route. To make many counties one must travel back roads. No gravel roads this trip! Drive into town and make the right choices to end up where you want to be. One hopes for a comfortable ride, air conditioner keeps one comfortable AND propagation is acceptable, noise level low and stations can find you! And YES not much QRM - .. TQP moved from last weekend in September to the second weekend to move away from DEAF RTTY operators. GREAT MOVE. Many contest this weekend, All was good until NA SPRINT; move and get stamped on.

Guess NA SPRINT stations have priority. Couldn't find a clear spot. Will move next time to where they will not bother us (I hope).

Now one only dreams of having enough stations follow you that your idle time is very

low. I have very little idle time. And may pile-ups. It was great! There were some counties, I had a pile-up that lasted from one county to the next county line! Worked DL3DXX a couple of times, a few Canadian stations.

Mark K5GQ

Rig Kenwood TS-480HX

Antenna: Little Tarheel HP with TARGETuner

KS5A - mobile - 647 contacts

Last minute install to run some counties without planned ops or those without CW coverage. Thanks for all the contacts and especially your patience.

IC-7000 F-350 diesel 8 Hustlers, mounted horizontally, 12' AGL

KD5RYN K-3049 Possum Kingdom State Park – 95 SSB QSOs

First time working this park so it took a little time to figure out a set up. I worked out of the day use area right on the water. If you live near by it is worth a day trip out. The Lake is nice and the area around it is beautiful. The Brazos is really rocking and rolling under HWY 16 today.



Set up was Hamsticks on a tripod. Started on with the 20m stick and 2 radials. Worked about 50 stations quickly using my FT-891. Cost to Cost coverage but just about nothing in the near by states. Lucky the east cost has lots of hams to fill the log. It is Texas QSO party weekend so a lot of ops were responding to my CQ when I included I was in TX to get Palo Pinto County. Somebody spotted me on there site and I got a good pile up for a while.

I then switched to the 40m Hamstick and added my longer radials and tried my G1M rig with my 45w ebay amp. This is a new set up for me. I had trouble with that rig as RF was coming back in the rig and making my audio bad. I had a choke but no joy. At the home shack on my wire antennas it was OK so I will have to work out the kinks for that set up. Or maybe just run it QRP.

Switched back to FT891 and made a few more contacts on 40 but the band was not cooperating with my setup. Stopped for a break and went back to 20m to finish. It was working good out of TX.

95 total contacts in about 3 hours of operating. 15 P2P's.
All powered off my deep cycle battery that I lugged 40 yards to the table.

N8AI - mobile - 128 CW

Gave out Qs from Fort Bend, Brazoria, Matagorda, Jackson and Calhoun counties.

N5NA - CW mobile - 1888 CW QSO

My highest number of QSOs ever in the TQP but with fewer mults not my highest score.

Thanks to all the callers contributing to some tremendous pileups! I don't think I've experienced as deep a pileups in any previous TQP. Seems like every county was huge! I had planned to operate in the mixed category but never got a chance to grab the headset.

The score includes 31000 bonus points for activating 31 counties and 500 points for

working N4CD in 5 different counties.

The mobile station consists of an Elecraft K3, a Scorpion SA-680 antenna, a Dell D630 running CQ/X, and a 2015 Ford F250 Superduty.

A special thanks to my wife, K5AKS, for driving me around WTX! I think she almost caught up on her audio books!

DL3DXX - 194 CW 119 counties

What an activity ! Working the mobiles mostly every time was a hard battle competing against lot of American callers. Happy when I found the mobile first without pileup. RBN and APRS did a great job to keep control of the mobile tracks. A few battles got lost, especially on Sunday with K5DX where the pileup was too heavy and the mobile signal weak. Same with N5NA in the early hours on 40 meters. I called fast and slow, changed the TX qrg a little down and up but nothing helped. Made the most contacts with AD4EB. Got most of his counties but missed just a few the hour before and after our local sunset when propagation took a nap.

I am happy with the result and with new YU7EF 5 element yagi on 49 ft boom. Working a few new counties reduced the number of needed TX counties to 30. Congratulations to the organizers and participants of the TXQP. Hope you had as much fun as me.

73 Dietmar

N6MU - fixed - CA 227 CW 144 counties

Mobiles with at least 5 Qs included: AD4EB(38), N5NA(33), K5CM/N4CD(15), K5DX(13), AF5Q(10), KS5A(9), K5IX(8) and KG5U(6).

Still one of the best! 73...

John, N6MU

N8II - fixed - WV - 248 CW 217 SSB 167 counties worked

I was just not in it to win it on Saturday after a busy week. I did well in the ALQP in my "spare" time and stumbled across a few OH parks while searching in vain for AL stations on 40 phone. I also squeezed in a little US Open tennis viewing. It was really a bad weekend to schedule QP's with the competing WAE SSB, FOC BW, and CW NA Sprint. Each contributed its good share of QRM. At least most of the TX ops in the FOC showed up Sunday to hand out some TXQP QSO's, thanks! Luckily the WAE SSB QRM was probably louder in TX than here thanks to a good f/b ratio on my yagi.

Most ops missed a really good late opening to TX on 20 from 23-01Z after east TX had long faded into the noise but completely rebounded around 24Z. 40 was pretty miserable from 16-20Z both days with Sunday being a nearly total fade out. 20 stayed in pretty good shape with decreased signals 17-19Z Sunday. I had good luck with 20 phone CQ's getting many Q's and more rare counties calling in than expected like JHOG and JDAV. Some of the rare ones did show up with the CW mobiles later. Sunday was such a pleasure to operate compared to Sunday in the KSQP with almost no 20 SSB run Q's to be had. If I had pushed it my score would have been easily over 225K, but I'm happy with how it turned out with my 200W "HP". Especially Sunday, many pile ups were hard to break through.

Many thanks to all of the mobiles (had several on SSB call in with a mult). I hope everyone survived the long miles and stays healthy. By the numbers, here are my mobile totals (QSO's/Counties): AD4EB 35/27, N5NA 34/28, K5DX 19/19, K5CM 24/14 (Sat. only), AF5Q 12/12, N4CD 11/6, KI5MM(SSB) 7/7, KS5A 7/6, WB0TEV(SSB) 6/6, K5IX 6/6, KG5U 5/5, KA3QLF 4/4, K0YY 3/2. Many thanks to all of the casual op callers and the serious ops as well, an uptick in activity it seems to me.

73, Jeff N8II

K1RO - fixed - NH - 301 CW 96 SSB 175 counties worked

First time in this contest for a very long time. This was mostly a 20 meter contest for me, although I worked a few stations on 40 CW in the first hour both days, and occasionally I would get one during the afternoon. The FOC contest, WAE SSB, AL QSO Party, and especially the CW Sprint sure filled the bands this weekend.

I didn't call CQ on 20 SSB at all until the last 2 hours Sunday, which was a big mistake because it was much more productive than I thought it would be for both QSOs and new counties. Probably could have done much better on my SSB QSOs if I had called CQ more often.

Thanks to all the mobiles and fixed stations for the activity. I was mainly in this to fill in the many Texas holes in my county hunting list, and it was a huge success in that regard.

NX5M Multi-OP - fixed - Texas 756 CW 1030 SSB 175 mults (opr KU5B N5DUW N5XJ NX5M)

Have not done this in a while. Still some broken antennas...used them anyway. Did not put in full time. Ran between 100-500w most of the time. Did not even turn on an amp when on 20m Sunday. Just enough operating to stay sharp.

N5XZ - fixed - TX 555 CW

This was my first time to operate the Texas QSO Party in any serious way. It was alot of fun but too bad there are several other good contests on the same weekend. Kinda sucks. I think I did pretty well, nothing above 20m so prop wasn't all that great, but what the hec

WA3AER - fixed - MD 55cw 41 counties

Most fun was working mobile stations and their changing counties. Kept me on my toes! Goal was only 50 contacts, but would have done more had condx. been better. Question: Has anyone worked ALL the TX counties during the QP? Wow, there sure is a lot of them.

73

Ted WA3AER

N4CW - fixed - NC - 192 CW 112 counties worked

That was fun! Thanks to the mobiles for making it very interesting. Pileups were horrendous towards the end. Let me suggest the ops be required to send their calls more frequently...it's a disservice to the multiplier chasers to have to wait several minutes for the station to identify! Hats off to AD4EB that consistently gave his call every other Q.

WA6KHK - fixed - CA - 218 CW 211 SSB 174 counties worked

W0ZQ - fixed MN 236 CW 46 SSB 130 counties

Nice to have TWO bands open to the QP state at the same time. A tip of the hat to all the mobiles who did a great job. 73, Jon

On the Road with N4CD II

An adventure for sure in the TX QSO Party.

Headed out Saturday morning to run a few counties not spoken for already on the TX map of 'activated' counties and also had idea to run a few parks for the park chasers along the way. Drove 2 hours down south from DFW area toward Mexia TX. Sat on the line of Limestone/Freestone TX and ran it on 30m for the county hunters just before contest started. N8KIE needed this county. No show. Turns out he had a power failure up there in MI all day Saturday. Contest started and big pileups ensued immediately. Took a while to work them all. I poke along at 23-25 wpm. I can't write any faster! All paper logs here and hand sent code. Computer sits at home for data entry/logging using FLE.

After that line, moved up to FREE/NAVA line and other big pileup. Kept me busy

for a while. Needed to head over to a park to make a few contacts. Arrived about 45 minutes later at Richland Creek WMA - and as I pulled in entrance....the tire monitoring system blared 'low tire pressure'. Yep, tire down to 27 and dropping...hmmm. Not good. Got out my little air compressor and tried to pump it up..... not going to work.....got it up to 30 PSI and five minutes later down to 20 PSI. Well, that's what I pay AAA for - but I picked the worst spot on the run to have a flat tire - 20+ miles from any service place.

Took them about 35 minutes to arrive and change to spare tire. Worked a few more meanwhile but still in FREE county. An hour lost or more.

My car is a 2016 Malibu LTD. New cars seldom come with a spare tire. I paid extra to get a spare tire/jack. There's space for it - one of the compact types. Otherwise you get a 'fix a flat' kit with gunk and hope it works. I don't think it would have worked in this case as it turned out there was a screw through the tread in the center part of the tread.

Checked route and decided to skip next park (40 extra miles). I'm not a fan of lots of miles on the 'compact spare'. They are supposedly good for 1000 miles or more but I got some miles on it already. It's only a 2 ply tire, too. It was a couple hour drive to home. Flat tire cost me over an hour time. And frustration! No, I'm not one to be changing tires on my own car.

Checked direct route home and went that way. Still could get a couple county lines on way home. Did another check and there is a Discount Tire store in Gun Barrel City TX (how's that for a good TX name?) right on the way home. Dropped by the store and it would be 30-60 minutes to get the flat fixed. Decided I'd rather be riding on regular tire so worth waiting. Another hour lost. Turns out it was screw in tire - right in middle of tread. Since I buy all my tires at Discount Tires, they fix flats for zero charge. Also rotate them for free. That worked out well, but of course, lost prime time in the TQP.

After that, headed on home via 3 more counties arriving home at dinner time. A bit worn out - had skipped lunch other than a banana with the problems. Luckily no traffic mess my route but other direction on I-635 around Dallas had 10 mile totally stopped backup. Whew! Lucked out. Stopped at my favorite park in Dallas County for the last county today - then home. Definitely worn out today from the 'excitement' that sure wasn't planned.

Sunday came and still pooped out from Saturday adventure but 45 miles up the road is a 3 way county line for the TQP. (COLN, FANN, GRSN). WB0TEV ran this

the day before on SSB. Started there a bit after 1400z. Made a few SSB QSOs but never got a good run on SSB when I tried before. Likely too many TX stations I didn't hear taking most of the frequencies for SSB. No sweat. Had good run on CW. (TQP allows for 3 and 4 way lines and you just have to be able to see the county line from where you operate.). For regular county hunting, MARAC only allows two counties at once.

After that, drove diagonally 50 miles southwest across COLN county to the corner of DENT and put it out, then headed home.

Ran 12 TX counties. Worked 22 TX counties and N5NA in more than 5 but otherwise, mobiles were tough to find and when I did rarely find them they had big pileups that I wasn't going to bust any time soon. Most TX Qs other than N5NA, KS5A, K5EC, were fixed stations. Never heard the SSB mobiles mobiles but didn't listen much on SSB.

Missed a whole bunch of states - didn't find CT of all things, nor NM, UT, WY, NV, AK, HI, SD, ND, ME. Worked DX - OH, DL, HA.

400 miles driven. Single op, no driver. Stopped to run 98% of the time and just caught a few mults while driving.

Conditions - decent on 20M but EU weak down in TX - DL3DXX and DL9USA in log a bunch of times. Supposedly there was WAE SSB contest but they were zip in TX but took a lot of the New England stations away from TQP. Likely created a lot of QRM there too. Then there was the FOC BW CW contest - but the exchange did not include the QTH so I didn't bother with them but they filled good part of 20M CW band while it was going on. Never checked 6m for the VHF contest but usually not much going on unless the band opens.

The AL QP was also going on and caught about a dozen there. Could only work the fixed stations once even if I changed counties. Looks like 3+ mobiles out in AL QP.

Seems like most mobiles this year made one day trips - returning home at night to avoid motel stays and avoid eating out due to COVID concerns (other than AD4EB). Same here - back home after run on Sat. Out again on Sunday for a few hours.

12,000 bonus points for 12 counties activated. 500 bonus points for working N5NA in more than five counties.

Seems I get a flat tire about once every 50,000 miles these days. Hope I don't see another one for another 50,000 miles.

And that's the story from N4CD for 2020

Sunspots II

NASA's forecast for the next solar cycle (25) reveals it will be the weakest of the last 200 years.

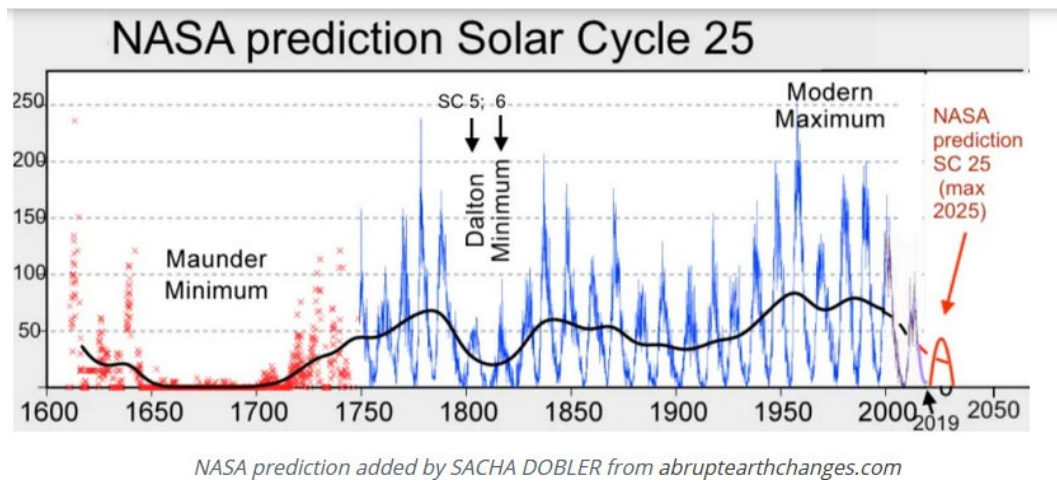
The maximum of this next cycle — measured in terms of sunspot number, a standard measure of solar activity level — could be 30 to 50% lower than the most recent one.

The agency's results show that the next cycle will start in 2020 and reach its maximum in 2025:

The new research was led by Irina Kitiashvili, a researcher with the Bay Area Environmental Research Institute at NASA's Ames Research Center, in California's Silicon Valley. It combined observations from two NASA space missions – the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory and the Solar Dynamics Observatory – with data collected since 1976 from the ground-based National Solar Observatory.

One challenge for researchers working to predict the Sun's activities is that scientists don't yet completely understand the inner workings of our star. Plus, some factors that play out deep inside the Sun cannot be measured directly. They have to be estimated from measurements of related phenomena on the solar surface, like sunspots.

Kitiashvili's method differs from other prediction tools in terms of the raw material for its forecast. Previously, researchers used the number of sunspots to represent indirectly the activity of the solar magnetic field. The new approach takes advantage of direct observations of magnetic fields emerging on the surface of the Sun – data which has only existed for the last four solar cycles.



Mathematically combining the data from the three sources of Sun observations with the estimates of its interior activity generated a forecast designed to be more reliable than using any of those sources alone.

In 2008 the researchers used this method to make their prediction, which was then put to the test as the current solar cycle unfolded over the last decade. It has performed well, with the forecast strength and timing of the solar maximum aligning closely with reality.

Implications

NASA attempts to paint the upcoming solar shutdown as a window of opportunity for space missions, “the improving ability to make such predictions about space weather are good news for mission planners who can schedule human exploration missions during periods of lower radiation.”

This is absurd, and serves as yet another example of government agency obfuscation and half-truths.

NASA is effectively forecasting a return to the Dalton Minimum (1790-1830) but gives no mention of the brutal cold, crop loss, famine, war and powerful Volcanic eruptions associated with it:

Grand Solar Minimum

Solar Cycle 25 will likely be a mere stop-off on our descent into the next Grand Solar

Minimum — a period of even further reduced temperatures and crop yields (research Maunder Minimum, 1645-1715).

And there are other researchers still insisting there won't be a solar cycle 25 at all.

<https://electroverse.net/nasa-predicts-next-solar-cycle-will-be-lowest-in-200-years-dalton-minimum-levels-the-implications/>

More Sunspot News

NASA article from 2019

This would suggest that although magnetic flux would be erupting at the solar surface during Cycle25, only a small fraction of it would be strong enough to form visible sunspots or pores. Such behavior would be highly unusual, since such a small solar maximum has not been observed since the Maunder Minimum. During that period from roughly 1645 to 1715 few sunspots were observed, although cosmic rays studies suggest the Sun did have a functioning magnetic activity cycle (Usoskin, Mursula, & Kovaltsov 2001); this is consistent with the scenario provided by our fit extrapolation. A recent study of sunspot records suggests that the Maunder Minimum began with two small sunspot cycles with roughly the same amplitude as predicted by our extrapolation for Cycle25 (Vaquero et al. 2011). Finally it is interesting to note that there seems to be a strange lack of the normal precursors for Cycle 25 as observed with helioseismic and coronal emission line indicators.

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.431.9272&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Sunspots IV

Note de N4CD – we've had a few other articles like this in past issues of the county hunter news.

This issue – had several articles on pessimistic predictions for the Cycle 25. Definitely worth re-reading!!!! Starting at p61.

<http://chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20October%202018.pdf>

If you wonder where the sunspots are – go back to this issue and read the three articles.

They compares the solar magnetic field activity to sunspot cycles.

The current feeble solar activity and barely a sunspot might be an indicator of the lack of the sun for form sunspots of significance or ones that last more than a day.

Solar News V

The Sun Is Asleep. Deep ‘Solar Minimum’ Feared As 2020 Sees Record-Setting 100-Day Slump

While we on Earth suffer from coronavirus, our star—the Sun—is having a lockdown all of its own. Spaceweather.com reports that already there have been 100 days in 2020 when our Sun has displayed zero sunspots.

That makes 2020 the second consecutive year of a record-setting low number of sunspots—

What does all of this mean? Here’s everything you need to know about the Sun, the solar cycle, and what a deep solar minimum means for us.

While there’s some evidence that the solar cycle affects Earth’s weather and climate, the

status of the Sun has the most obvious effect on the intensity and frequency of aurora. The more charged-up the solar wind headed towards Earth, the brighter and more frequent are the displays of Northern Lights and Southern Lights. What's known as the 'auroral oval' gets larger, too, so people who live in areas that normally don't experience aurora—such as the USA and Western Europe—sometimes get to see them.

Either way, a solar maximum is historically when aurora are at their most frequent and spectacular.

Just as solar maximum sees many sunspots, the trough of solar minimum features zero sunspots—and that's what's going on now. However, it's been continuing rather longer than expected, which means the Sun is in the midst of a particularly deep solar minimum. The most infamous happened between 1645 to 1715 when a "Maunder Minimum" saw a prolonged sunspot minimum when sunspots were very rare for an extended period.

The current record-breaking solar minimum is part of a longer pattern of wax and wane; in fact, it's believed that the Sun may have been in a magnetic lull for the last 9,000 years at least.

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This is at the cutting edge of astronomy. "The origin of the solar cycle is not fully understood, and is thus one of the biggest unsolved problems in solar physics," said Reinhold. "Apart from the 11-yr cycle, there exist other periodicities in solar activity, such as the 70-100 years Gleissberg cycle (and) there are speculations about longer cycles with periods up to several thousands of years." Such long cycles are very difficult to measure.

Although the scientists also took into account stars' age, surface temperature and the proportion of elements heavier than hydrogen and helium, the decisive factor classifying them as Sun-like—used in this paper—was their rotation rate. That's because a star's rotation contributes to the creation of its magnetic field in a dynamo process in its interior. The Sun takes 24.5 days to rotate once around their own axis; the 369 chosen all rotate once every 20-30 days.

"The speed at which a star rotates around its own axis is a crucial variable," said Prof. Dr. Sami Solanki, director at MPS and co-author of the new paper. "The magnetic field is the driving force responsible for all fluctuations in activity."

Trouble is, just between 2009 and 2013 most of the other stars typically showed about five times as strong variation in brightness than our Sun.

It's therefore possible that the Sun has been unusually feeble over the past 9,000 years—and its solar dynamo could still be slowing—or that it's capable of massive fluctuations we've just not yet witnessed. “One possible conclusion of this result is that the Sun did not reveal its full range of activity over the last 9000 years, and could potentially become as active as the other stars that we studied,” said Reinhold. That would mean more intensive solar winds, which could cause power outages, knock-out satellites, and cause dangerously higher radiation levels for astronauts in space or on the Moon.

If solar activity has a huge influence on the habitability on Earth, it will also affect the search for life in the Universe. “The stronger the host star's activity is, the bigger the impact on the exoplanet,” said Reinhold. “However, the impact on the planet would also depend on the distance between the star and the planet, the planet's atmosphere etc.”

The good news for is that, if anything, for the moment at least, the Sun is getting weaker.

Source:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiecartereurope/2020/05/12/the-sun-is-asleep-deep-solar-minimum-feared-as-2020-sees-record-setting-100-day-slump/#6f30d1905e28>
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiecartereurope/2020/04/30/is-our-sun-in-a-9000-year-feeble-phase-similar-stars-are-five-times-more-fickle-find-scientists/#4eb5eec1567d>

Iowa QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running and CW was busy. Several other QSO Parties were going on at the same time along with the SAC (Scandinavian Activity Contest) which filled up 20m quite well. Had KE0TT/R, K0PC/m, W0ZQ/M, WI0WA/R, giving out counties.

There are 99 counties in IA. Top score so far claimed they worked 98 of them. Most had 50-60 max. Not sure how many were on the air.

W0ZQ mobile 844 CW 113 SSB

It was a very nice day to be out and about in beautiful Iowa. Great weather and fair conditions, especially on 40m. 20m early on was good, but then I got pushed around by the Salmon Run later on. Did work the NJ, NH and Salmon Run while mobile handling out Iowa, then later on MN on the drive home. Thanks for the Q's. 73, Jon

KE0TT rover 86 CW

K3/10 at 5 watts to a 66' inv vee with 21' apex. Fed with 300 ohm TV line and an old Johnson tuner. Thanks for the fun ! Enjoyed lots of QSO's with stations on both coasts on both 20 and 40M, and some 20M EU DX. Missing from the log were any Iowa stations... could hear a few, apparently no one could hear my QRP sigs. Got many comments on a big sig farther away though. Was a very pleasant day out in the rural areas of Iowa! 73, and C U next time. Dan ke0tt

K0PC - mobile 682 CW

Well, it was a pretty day to be out for a drive in Iowa. I haven't run the IAQP in several years due to the change of date. I still liked it when it coincided with ILQP on one weekend in Oct. But it was fun to be back in the area I grew up and hand out a few counties.

I had plans to operate a 29 county route but Murphy had other ideas. I got through the first 7 hours and 15 counties but a problem developed with my USB hub. It was intermittent during my last hour and then died completely. I guess I shouldn't have counted on a 15 year old device that I got for free! Without the USB hub my only remaining option would have been to send everything by hand and that wasn't going to work. So I packed it in and made the 5 hour drive home.

I thought most of the first seven hours were great. I averaged almost 100 QSOs/hr even with the USB problems and a stop for gas & lunch. My best 60 minutes was 126 QSOs. This is the first QSO Party in a long time where 40M & 20M were comparable for rate. I had an almost 50:50 split on those two bands, I never made it to 80M.

Thanks to everyone who rode along with me and put up with both my mobile fist and USB keying problems. Thanks also to the Story County ARC for sponsoring the event.

73, Pat KØPC

N6MU - fixed - CA - 60 CW 37 SSB 57 counties worked

Nothing like four Parties on the same weekend.

Thank goodness for the mobiles who kept it interesting. Top mobile for me was N0HJZ with 25 Qs followed by W0ZQ(20), K0PC(14) and WI0WA(7). 73...

John, N6MU

K1RO - fixed - NH 83 CW 50 SSB 60 counties

Spent the day following the mobiles around and finding the home stations amid the other QSO parties and was very happy to work a number of new counties. 20 meters crapped out about 2030Z so I missed a few, but 40 meters was in good shape not too long after that.

WI0WA mobile 273 CW

We had a wedding to attend in Kansas City so there was going to be no activation or very limited. My wife said it would be okay to run counties on the way down to KC. I planned a warm up activation for the starting bell but issues prevented the start. My mobile logging laptop's display was dead so I went to the backup PC. The function keys were not programmed correctly so I did a rush repair job. After about 30 minutes of operating I stopped to pack the truck. I booted up the original PC and the display came alive so I imported my log into the mobile laptop. We ran four more counties before hitting the Ia/Mo state line.

Now after looking at my log I see both PC's dates and times were off so I've got a mess and is the reason for the check log. Thanks for those that worked me, it sounded like there might have been pretty good activity.

Bill, N0AC

N0HJZ mobile 86 CW 1398 SSB

Had a blast in this one! Started the day with a speeding ticket in MN. I was behind getting to the starting line as got busted at 84 in a 70. Yikes!

20M was long most of the day but signals were strong. The QRM got intense when the other three QSO Parties started up. Several times during the contest, I had a NJ station snuggle up 1 kc from me and start calling CQ. They moved when I politely asked them to move up a bit!

The pile-ups were intense and I ended up averaging 124 Q's per hour over the entire event! Laci, OM2VL made it into the log from all 32 counties! Simply amazing! Thanks to everyone who worked me while on my trip. Where to next?!

73

Rich N0HJZ

KB0LF/0 rover 47 CW

limited rover operation, but fun. Thanks to all who called. Thanks to the Story ARC for keeping the IA QP going.

K4BAI - 41 CW 11 SSB 50 counties

Thanks for all QSOs. Good job by all, particularly the mobiles. 20M was too long for GA to IA QSOs for most of the contest period. Worked every IA station I could copy. Not quite sure why the rules put all high power stations into the same category. No chance for an out-of-state high power station to equal an in-state high power station. This is the only QSO party where I have seen such a rule. I guess it is to discourage out-of-state high power participants or to force them to use low power. But this is in many ways counterproductive as it will result in fewer QSOs for all stations, particularly the IA in-state stations of any power. Personally, I don't care whether I get an award or not, but that is not typical of most who enter contests. Lots of IA activity this year.

73, John, K4BAI

New Hampshire QSO Party

As usual, this is a sleeper. Most of the activity shows up in the New England QSO Party. A few fixed stations made it on the air this year to help out with the State QSO Party Challenge. There are 10 counties in NH. Top scorer got 9 of them, and most reports indicated 4 counties or so. Without calling "CQ NH" you wouldn't find many to work and activity shifts to 40 and 80m for most of the contest.

From the 3830 reflector:

OM2VL - fixed - DX 11 CW 29 SSB 9 counties

It was my 1st NH QP...

4 QSO parties on same weekend means missed some or many QSO's on another 3 QP when I call some station and can't break the USA pileup. It happened this weekend many times when I try contact with WA stations. Usually it's take many minutes when I complete the QSO and many times it was only never ending calling with no QSO. I missed GRA county. So pity that on CW was very little activity.

Most QSOs with: K1RO - 6QSO, K1BX & WA1Z - 5 QSO

73, Laci OM2VL

WN4AFP - fixed SC 11 CW 6 SSB 5 counties

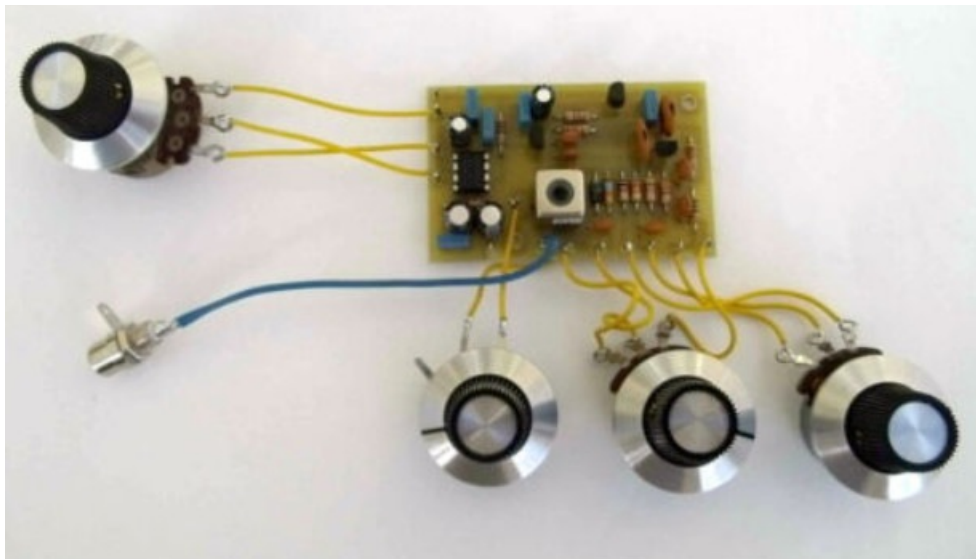
Thank you K1RO, K1RX, K1BX and WA1Z for all the Qs! 73s Dave WN4AFP

On the Trail of Regens

I ran across some interesting kits from the UK that are available for purchase. The basic kit is for one frequency range and uses the G3RJV(SK), George Dobbs, design. He was a prolific QRP enthusiasts (Spoke several times at Dayton Hamfest).

From the ad:

It has been post-designed by myself (G4CFY) and is now known as the G3RJV/G4CFY Regen Receiver. This version is for 3.5-7.5MHz.



Another version is available as a separate Ebay item covering 7-15MHz. It is possible to have versions on 1.8-3.8MHz, or 11.0-23.0MHz. Please send a 'note to the seller' if you wish for either of these versions.

The circuit provides simplicity with good sensitivity and is an ideal entry into home construction of short wave receivers. The kit as shown in the picture includes the PCB

and parts together with potentiometers and a tuning polyvaricon, but not including knobs. Controls are;- Main Tune, Fine Tune, Regeneration, & Volume.

The circuit uses a field effect transistor as an infinite impedance detector which is fed from a tuned circuit coupled to a Q multiplier circuit. When the Q multiplier is close to oscillation it considerably enhances the sensitivity of the radio for the reception of amplitude modulated signals. Just at the point of oscillation a signal is created that mixes with any received single-sideband signals allowing them to be demodulated.

Following the detector is an LM386 audio amplifier to drive a loudspeaker or headphones. Supply to the detector and Q-multiplier is from an 8V 3-terminal regulator and the unit requires an external 12V or 13.5V supply rated at 300mA.”

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If you want to buy it, it's 21 British Pounds and 6.40 Pounds shipping – which would be about \$35 or so.

There is a multi-band kit that has a switch and 4 tuned circuits that covers

“This version now includes a single sided front end coil pack and rotary switch allowing ranges 1.8-3.25MHz, 3.25-5.85MHz, 5.85-10.53MHz and 10.53-18.95 MHz.”

For that version , it will cost about \$56 for purchase and shipping.

Washington Salmon Run

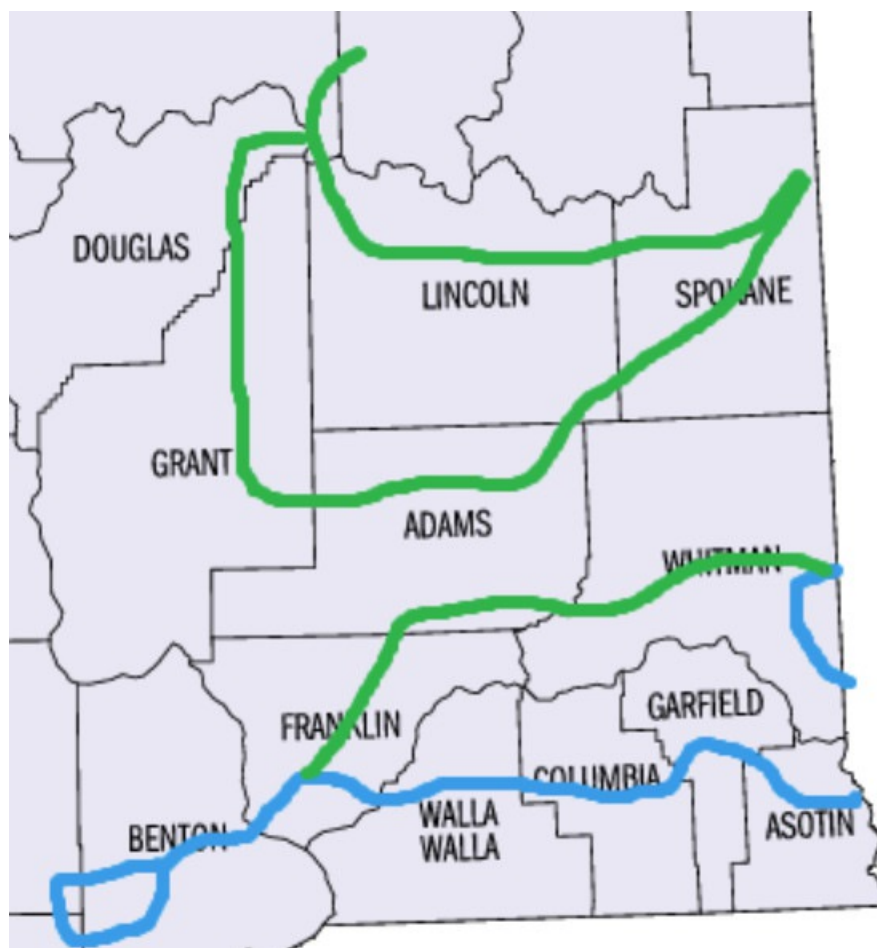
One or two mobiles out but conditions a bit rough to work the mobiles. Only a handful of 15m QSOs reported and next to none digital ones. Lots of fixed stations were on. Tens of thousands of contacts made.

There are 39 counties in WA and several people had a clean sweep.

K7TQ Mobile 703 CW (K7TQ and WA0WWW)

Another great mobile time in the Salmon Run. Jay and I put 16 counties on the air. N7IR and K8MFO caught us in each of our counties.

Saturday we started near my home in Moscow, ID, caught the southeastern counties and as far west as Klickitat then back to Moscow. On Sunday we started at Jay's home in Spokane, WA and caught some of the northeastern counties before returning to Spokane.



In our 18 hours of operating, we managed 703 Qs and 68 mults for a claimed score of 143,412, our most ever in the Salmon Run. Band breakdown was 96 Qs on 80 , 173 on 40 m, and 434 on 20 m. We missed five states, ND, SD, RI, VT, and KY.

Saturday started in Whitman county with OM2VL our first contact. We were in WHI at the beginning and again at the end of the day, 0200Z, which made WHI our best county with 95 contacts. We ended the day with 376 Qs.

Sunday we started in Spokane county but the first half hour our driving through Spokane was unproductive due to S9+ electrical noise. Once out of the city we managed 51 Qs. Our best Sunday county was Adams which we went through mid-afternoon with 80 Qs.

Our plan to be on 80 m for the first ten minutes of each hour so that WA and nearby

states could work us turned out well. We did miss a few of the hours when 20 m contacts were too frequent to desert. On 80 m we made contacts with 16 of the 39 WA counties plus ID, NV, OR, and BC. At least 20 operators made 80 m contacts with us. N7EPD, W7EEC, and W7J seemed to be always waiting for us.



Our most frequent customer was N7IR, Gary in AZ, with 26 Qs and all 16 of our counties. K8MFO, Don in OH, made 19 Qs and also caught us in all 16 of our counties. Other operators with 10 or more Qs were K7GK (14), K7SV (14), N7EPD (13), K1RO (12), KI6RRN (12), W7EEC (12), W7J (12), K4OAQ (11), NU7Y (11), OM2VL (10), W5XX (10), and WA1PMA (10).

The rig was a KX2 and KXPA at 100 Watts to a Scorpion 680 antenna. We used N1MM+ for logging.

We had a great time and thank everyone who worked us or tried to work us.

W4VP - fixed - TN 156 CW 55 SSB 1 digi 36 counties

Sat was fun, 20 and 80m did as expected but 40m never amounted to much, especially on phone. Bonus station was Everywhere and Loud... Lotta folks tried 15 from the spots but it just never happened from TN. Fun Fun.

K7IDX County Expedition 150 SSB Jefferson County WA

I live in Jefferson county....not much participation or interest.

Operate at home..go to another county..or portable from my county.

I did from the other side at South Beach campground ONP. Nice spot on the ocean, however was full my entire stay (a week) and on saturday a big RV came in right across from my site....mass RFI.

There wasn't enough room for a inverted v so used a 1/4 wave wire, 100 watt transceiver and battery. So despite conditions achieved my goal of all counties 75 SSB in less time than ever before. Thanks to the county activation by portables/rovers or whatever.

Heard K7RL about 0230 Saturday evening...called and called nothing... then W7DX...shortly after same...so went QRT. (band was long and not much happening)

Almost entirely my contacts were all Washington with a couple of VE and OR.

W7WA County Expedition - 1 SSB

My portable operation from Grays Harbor was a last minute add on to a razor clam trip. At 5:30am Saturday headed to the coast, dug my limit of clams at low tide then parked off the highway near Humptulips. I knew I would not get out well with a 20 meter mobile whip but I did not realize just how poorly it would transmit. After about 40 minutes mostly on CW I packed it in.

K4BAI - fixed - GA 124 CW 45 SSB 39 counties

Conditions on 20M ranged from pretty good to terrible. 40M was OK with some QRN and not much phone activity. 80M had a lot of QRN but the signals were stronger than usual. Lot of time invested for not too many QSOs. Never felt conditions were good

enough to try to run, so all S&P. Thanks for all QSOs. And thanks to the mobiles, most of whom I could barely hear on 20 and couldn't hear on the lower bands.

WS7L County Expedition - Pacific WA 448 CW 105 SSB

Best Salmon Run score ever, and FINALLY after about 6 or 7 tries I got a sweep! I didn't even realize that I got the sweep because I forgot I'd worked Franklin the day before. Finally figured THAT out and stopped hunting for Franklin! As another plus I didn't blow up the TH3JRS this time. Mostly stayed off of 20 SSB.

Not a peep on 15 meters, and calling CQ there I didn't see anything from the skimmers. Totally dead.

73 and thanks for the Q's
Carl WS7L
Portable from Ocean Park WA

Sunspots Again

An article from the past issue (Feb 2018) presented here again - with some caution about Cycle 25

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“The sun’s magnetic field is much more fluid than the magnetic field of a toy bar magnet. Thanks to the revolutionary work by helioseismologists using the SOHO spacecraft and the ground-based GONG program, we can now see below the turbulent surface of the sun. There are vast rivers of plasma wider than a dozen Earths, which wrap around the sun from east to west. There is also a flow pattern that runs north and south from the equator to each pole. This meridional current is caused by giant convection cells below the solar surface and acts like a conveyor belt for the surface magnetic fields in each hemisphere. The sun’s north and south magnetic fields can be thought of as waves of magnetism that flow at about 60 feet/second from the equator at sunspot maximum to the poles at sunspot minimum, and back again to the equator at the base of the convection cell. At sunspot minimum they are equal and opposite in intensity at the poles, but at sunspot maximum they vanish at the poles and combine and cancel at the sun’s equator. The difference in the polar waves during sunspot minimum seems to predict how strong the next sunspot maximum will be about 6 years later as the current

returns the field to the equator at the peak of the next cycle. The forecasts suggest Cycle 25 might continue the declining trend of polar field decrease seen in the last three sunspot cycles, and be even weaker than Cycle 24 with far fewer than 100 spots.

As the number of spot-free days continues to increase in 2017-2018, we will start seeing the new sunspots of Cycle 25 appear sometime in late-2019. Sunspot maximum is likely to occur in 2024, with most forecasts predicting about half as many sunspots as in Cycle 24.

The bad news is that some studies show sunspot magnetic field strengths have been declining since 2000 and are already close to the minimum needed to sustain sunspots on the solar surface. This is also supported by independent work in 2015 published in the journal Nature. By Cycle 25 or 26, magnetic fields may be too weak to punch through the solar surface and form recognizable sunspots at all, spelling the end of the sunspot cycle phenomenon, and the start of another Maunder Minimum cooling period perhaps lasting until 2100.

But the good news seems to be that none of the current forecasts suggest Cycle 25 will be entirely absent.”

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-sten-odenwald/waiting-for-the-next-suns_b_11812282.html

Another hairy math full article here – which also suggests that falling magnetic activity is a precursor to a decades long sunspot minima. Reconstructing data from tree rings and solar cycles – it suggests Cycle 25 will be weak – or not at all – followed potentially by decades of no significant sunspot activity. (A Maunder Minimum type event)

<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2015ja021123>

de N4CD: You'll note that ...well, there haven't been a whole lot of sunspots for a long time, and the predictions for the 'start' of Cycle 25 have fallen completely flat so far. At the end of September, the sunspot number kicked up to '13' – one group – 3 spots for a change. SFI up to 73! Yay!

New Jersey QSO Party

There are 21 counties in NJ. Top scores indicated that about 21 of them were on the air this year on SSB but most folks had 14 or less multipliers – most in the single digits. Mobile /portable activity needed especially on 20M during the day. To score well, you needed to be within 40 and 80 meter range – and call CQ NJ to pick up random stations and their counties.

K8MR portable/rover 97 CW 4 SSB

The NJQP would not be a reason to visit NJ, but my daughter in Montclair is. I set things up at her house - a HamStick for 20 and a 33 foot wire with a mag mount on my car in her driveway. Two QSOs in the first ten minutes did not inspire me, though she is in a noisy urban setting. So I tried from a park on a hilltop in nearby Passaic county with somewhat better, though not exciting, results. With not much activity I decided it was not worth the trip to Hudson county.

After dinner I plugged away from the house, but still nothing special.

I'm looking forward to better results in the Pennsylvania QSO Party in a few weeks.

73 - Jim K8MR

Hara Arena Gone Forever

Following an attempt to revitalize the tornado-damaged Hara Arena, City of Trowood officials announced plans to demolish the complex and rezone the property.

The facility was heavily damaged in the Memorial Day tornado outbreak in 2019, but was purchased with plans to restore the complex. But due to cost and the extent of the damage, the city will instead demolish the arena.

“However, redeveloping the property would be a challenge due to the extent of the damage, so the decision was made and a contract has been secured to demolish the legendary venue,” a city spokesperson said in a media release Tuesday.

City officials said steps have already been taken to rezone the property for future development and use. City council voted in March to amend the zoning from commercial recreation to a light industrial district. The change allows for businesses, including manufacturing, distribution centers, and call centers to create new facilities on the property, the city spokesperson said.

“This area has been a reminder of the devastation our community suffered from the 2019 Memorial Day tornado,” Trotwood City Manager Quincy E. Pope, Sr. said in the release. “We are ready to move forward and the City has already taken action so that this property is ready for what’s next.”

https://www.whio.com/news/local/trotwood-announces-plans-demolish-hara-arena/BXMTCK2L7RDZBHU4RNO2FCIEHU/?fbclid=IwAR3uO5wh-RBOBmg9iuEPC4-jWjYVJ9m1cEZ3o2WY7-FO748fYc_m80HgczE

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note de N4CD: For 30+ years, the Dayton Hamvention was held at the Hara Arena. Neither rain nor snow stopped the event but Mother Nature did it in. Before that happened, the event was moved to the Greene County Fairgrounds. While the 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19, plans are already underway for another Hamvention in 2021.

A Super Sunspot Cycle?

There was a paper referenced in the latest issue (Sept 2020) of CQ Magazine about the latest sunspot cycle. The authors predicted this will be one of the LARGEST cycles ever rivaling that of the 1958 peak.

From the article:

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Abstract The Sun exhibits a well-observed modulation in the number of spots on its disk over a period of about 11 years. From the dawn of modern observational astronomy sunspots have presented a challenge to understanding – their quasi-periodic variation in number, first noted 160 years ago, stimulates community-wide interest to this day. A large number of techniques are able to explain the temporal landmarks, (geometric) shape, and amplitude of sunspot “cycles,” however forecasting these features accurately in advance remains elusive. Recent observationally-motivated studies have illustrated a relationship between the Sun’s 22-year (Hale) magnetic cycle and the production of the sunspot cycle landmarks and patterns, but not the amplitude of the sunspot cycle. Using (discrete) Hilbert transforms on more than 270 years of (monthly) sunspot numbers we robustly identify the so-called “termination” events that mark the start and end of sunspot and the end of magnetic activity cycles. Using these we extract a relationship between the temporal spacing of terminators and the magnitude of sunspot cycles. Given this relationship and our prediction of a terminator event in 2020, we deduce that sunspot cycle 25 will have a magnitude that rivals the top few since records began. This outcome would be in stark contrast to the community consensus estimate of sunspot cycle 25 magnitude.

. (lots of hairy theory here...)then

Discussion: Our Outside-The-Consensus Forecast

The phenomenological model presented in M2014, and employed above, differs in one critical regard from the conventional physics-based models employed in the SC25PP, similar recently published efforts (Bhowmik and Nandy, 2018), and now for machine-learning-inspired models (Kitiashvili, 2020). The common core feature of these models is that the magnetic fields present in, or generated by, them are dynamically passive with respect to the large-scale flows present in the system (Charbonneau, 2010), or are “frozen-in,” using magnetohydrodynamical terminology (Alfvén, 1942). Conversely, an explanation for the hemispherically synchronized, rapid triggering of mid- and high-latitude magnetic flux emergence following termination events at the solar equator, requires that the magnetic bands of the Hale magnetic cycle are strong and are dynamically important relative to the flows (McIntosh et al., 2019; Dikpati et al., 2019). Over the coming months, as SC25 matures, it will become evident which of these (very different) paradigms is most relevant - such is the contrast in the forecasts discussed herein. Very early indications of the spot pattern are appearing at higher than average

latitudes ($\sim 40^\circ$; Nandy, Bhatnagar, and Pal, 2020). Historically, high latitude spot emergence has been associated with the development of large amplitude sunspot cycles (e.g., Waldmeier, 1935, 1939; Hathaway, 2015)—only time will tell how accurate all these predictions are for SC25

Conclusion

Our method predicts that SC25 will probably be among the strongest sunspot cycles ever observed, and that it will almost certainly be stronger than present SC24 (116 spots) and most likely stronger than the previous SC23 (180 spots).

This is in stark contrast to the consensus of the SC25PP, between 95 and 130 spots, i.e., similar to that of SC24. Indeed, as can be seen in Fig. 5, if our prediction for the 2020 terminator time is correct, such a low value would be a severe outlier with respect to the observed behavior of previous sunspot cycles. Such a low value could only be reconciled with the previously observed sunspot cycles if the next terminator event is delayed by more than two years from our predicted value, which would extend the present low activity levels to an extraordinary length. We note also that the relationship developed herein would have correctly predicted the low amplitude of SC24 (from a terminators separation of 12.825 years) following the 2011 terminator—three years after the 2006 NOAA/NASA Solar Cycle Prediction Panel delivered their consensus prediction (Pesnell, 2008). Finally, the arrival of the SC24 terminator will permit higher fidelity on the forecast presented.

<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2006.15263.pdf>

Awards Issued

USA-CA 2 nd Time #444	Alan, W8OP	8/29/2020
Single Band Award 30M #8	K8ZZ, Ed	8/21/2020.
County Challenge Award Level 18 #2	W0GXQ, Jerry	8/19/2020.
Bingo Award #108	Randy, J5ZX	9/17/2020
Master Gold #72	Randy, AJ5ZX	9/17/2020
5 Star Award #80	Bill, NU0Q	9/17/2020
Roadrunner 1000 Last Counties #12	Mary, AB7NK	
Roadrunner 950 Last Counties - #13	Mary, AB7NK	8/29/20.
Roadrunner Award 2725 Last Counties #1	Bob, N4CD	8/29/20.
Roadrunner Award 75 Last Counties #285	Mike, KA4RRU	7/31/20.
USA-Digital Award #5 Level 2000	Steve AA8R	8/18/20.
Roadrunner Award 300 last counties #27	Neil, K7SEN	1/9/2020.
Roadrunner Award 825 Last Counties #18	K8ZZ, Ed	9/11/2020
Roadrunner Award 975 Last Counties #12	AB7NK, Mary	9/1/2020
Roadrunner Award 125 Last Counties #199	K0DEQ, Bill	9/11/2020.
Roadrunner Award 600 Last Counties #32	K3IMC, Don	9/12/2020
RAS New Mexico #34	KB6UF, Ron	11/1/2016

Events for County Hunters

Oct 3 1600z to 4 2200z
California QSO Party CW Ph
Serial, county or SPC
www.cqp.org/Rules.html

Oct 10 0300z to 11 2100z
Nevada QSO Party CW Ph
RS(T), county or SPC
nvqso.com/contest-rules

Oct 10 1500z to 11 0459z
Arizona QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.azqsoparty.org

Oct 10 1600z to 11 2200z
Pennsylvania QSO Party CW Ph
Serial, county or SPC
paqso.org

Oct 10 1800z to 11 1800z
South Dakota QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.sdqso.com

Oct 17 1400z to 18 0200z
New York QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.nyqp.org

Oct 18 1700z to 19 0100z
Illinois QSO Party Ph CW Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
w9awe.org/ILQP.html

Thanks to ARRL monthly 'contest corral' for above

from <http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2020/October%202020%20Corral.pdf>

More contests listed there for your enjoyment DX – QRP – etc.

That's all folks! 101 pages..... that's enough..... CU next month! Stay healthy.