

# County Hunter News

May 2019  
Volume 15 Issue 5

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

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

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

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

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

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at [ch.W6RK.com](http://ch.W6RK.com)

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

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

## Notes from the Editor

### **N4CD Rumblings**

- 1 ) Wow – busy month for activity with the Mini.
- 2 ) Propagation – some days 'good' and many days not so good on 20M. 40M good back east but if you aren't there.....that doesn't do anything for you  
Long newsletter this month and late.....due to trips. And convention
- 3 ) There will be a MI Mini in 2020. Make plans to attend.
- 4 ) There may be a National in 2020. There is none this year.

# On the Road with N4CD I

The urge to travel hit – despite the rotten propagation days that we've been having - so it was time to plan a few day trip to Arkansas and knock off a few more parks and counties that direction. I've gotten to the point where I have to drive hours and hours to get to 'something new' so it takes a half day there and half day back just to get to 'new territory'. Just like running new counties – as your total climbs, suddenly it's a day drive or more to get to those you haven't run yet! When you get up to 1000 or 1500 counties run, you're looking at trips of a week or 10 days minimum to do much good and knock off more counties (or parks). So it goes. Ed, K8ZZ, has been running all over the country doing just that, too.

This time I'd head to Northwest AK. Many of the state parks there had been 'well run' but mostly from a few years ago with only one recent park activator hitting them. Better yet, there were some less run counties along the way so maybe I'd help out a bunch of county hunters as well.

## **Wednesday April 3, 2019**

So....on April 3 I loaded up the car for a 5 day trip and headed out up rt 75 north to 69 north going NE into OK. Along the way, you pass within a mile of Arrowhead State Park (KFF-2770). I couldn't resist and hit the park for a very quick run(14Q) in Pittsburg County OK. Didn't even spot on the Park spotting site, just county hunters for a 'quick activation'. Anything more than 10Q is an 'activation' in the Parks on the Air system. I was running the counties along the way for the 5 hours it took to get to the first 'new park'.

A bit later, you head east on I-40 into AR, passing by Ft Smith and the Historic Fort there. That's a 10 mile detour so I skipped it. Time to get to I-49 headed north to Lake Fort Smith State Park (KFF-1092) in Crawford County AR. Now at 250 miles from home.



It's a nice park on a lake with swimming, kayaking, camping, fully furnished cabins, group lodges with kitchens, mountain biking, and the west end of the 240 mile long Ozark Highland trail. Had a good run but squeaking by with just over 44Q with a combination of park and county hunters. Whew! Propagation is not so great these days with SFI stuck at 69 even though there are a few sunspots. Not much DX making it through most of the time. This was a midday run during 'slump time' when the bands seem to take a siesta.

Heading further north up I-49 gets you to Devils Den State Park KFF-1082 in Washington County, AR. I hit the CW bands and squeak by with barely 44Q including 4 on 20m SSB – all I can get.

This park was developed by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) in the 1930s (The make work program of the Great Depression) and is one of the best preserved examples of their work with the infrastructure, lodges, visitor center, a man made lake, over 140 camping sites, trails, etc.

I managed to arrive here just before the weekly CW-Test on Wednesdays at 1300z and 1900z for an hour, so I made use of that to put 27 quick cw contacts in the log to help with reaching 44 total Qs.



Did the radio bit then headed out for the next parks. Nice park if you like camping or have an RV.

Next up – Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park – KFF-1113 in Washington County, AR. At 900 acres, the park commemorates the Civil War battle that took place on December 7, 1862, when Confederate and union forces clashed in a fierce day of fighting that resulted in 2,700 casualties and was the last major Civil War engagement in Northwest Arkansas. You've got a museum there (Free admission). This is known as one of the most 'intact' sites in civil war history. There's lots of civil war history here with several sites preserved as state parks. I'd visited two before and later in the trip would stop at one of them – Historic Washington.

Managed to get to 44Q here so I'm a happy camper – even though I stay at motels – hi hi That night was spent at the Super 8 in Fayetteville, AR. Dinner at the nearby Chinese Buffet.

## **April 4 2019**

After breakfast at the Super 8, I headed to Hobbs State Conservation Area, KFF-1085, up near the top of AR in Benton, AR. Despite the 'DX window' time, only IW2BNA made it in the log. This is Arkansas' biggest state park with over 12,000 acres of land along the south shore of Beaver Lake. It's the only park in AR to allow regulated hunting. It's a 'day use' park only. There's a nice visitor center there. Miles of hiking trails for those so inclined. Got there early, worked to get to 44+ and left after an hour.



Now I'm headed a bit east to Withrow Springs State Park KFF-1119 in Madison County. The bands aren't much better with DX of DL8NDG and F1BLL making it into the log. All the rest were park and county chasers. Randy, AJ5ZX, was catching me everywhere on CW. Same for Ron, N5MLP, who worked me frequently on CW.

Withrow Springs lies along War Eagle Creek. You've got your camping, hiking and floating down the river activities here. 29 campsites available.





Whoa...the GPS lady screws up. I'm headed south and it says 'turn on Slaughter Road. I go right past it. Was there a road there? I circle back. Well, there 'might be'. There are no highway signs indicating intersection or side road. There's no road sign. All there is a MUD path barely six feet wide, covered over with trees and maybe six foot clearance. Even if I had a 4 wheel drive Jeep, there is no way I'd go down this road and it's a steep descent off the main highway to this 'road' that the GPS lady says to take. Strike One for the GPS lady. She'd screw up again later on the trip.

A bit later I find I'm in and run into the Ozark National Forest – KFF-4425, which spans a dozen counties with the typical patchwork of pieces – although many are large pieces. Decide to stop and run it – get 32Q. Later I might hit another piece of it. There's a parking area for a trail – so that will work.



My route takes me down Route 23. If you like twisty turning roads with average speeds of maybe 35 mph, this is the road for you. It goes up, down, around for FIFTY miles getting out of this neck of the woods. There are no alternatives. Up and down two mountain ridges with switchbacks on both sides. I've been on this road before getting someone a LC WBOW for Madison County before. You just take it as it comes and you'll be busy for over an hour getting yourself out of here. This road would fit nicely in WV or eastern KY.

Finally reach I-40 but head further south to highway 22 to go east to the next park.

I'm driving along the highway (route 22) and see signs for 'Cherokee Trail of Tears' and "Butterfield Stage Coach" along the highway. Looks like route 22 in Logan County is

the main route for both! Or I should say, WAS the main route. Well dang I can do this 'on the run' – which you can't do with most state parks! So I zip along and make 12 QSOs (enough for a POTA activation). The 'trails' are not in WWFF so no need for trying to get to 44. Realized later I was in a new county but never ran it as such. On the trip, did work a few DX stations on 30M – usually IZ8DFO but sometimes another makes it through.

You'll recall the sad history of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Way back when, President Andrew Jackson ordered that all the Native Americans in GA and SC be forcibly moved to reservations in OK. Gold had been discovered in GA and the folks wanted the people living there 'out of the way' rather than fighting them over rights to mine the gold. So thousands of Cherokee were forced off their lands and marched west (via several routes) to Oklahoma on a trip that took months. Many died along the route from the perils of the thousand mile trek, diseases, starvation, accidents, etc.

Over 100,000 Native Americans were 'removed' from the eastern states between MI and LA and all the points east in the 1830s. 16,000 Cherokees were rounded up, forced into stockades and forced west. Over 4,000 of them died. 25%!

The Butterfield Stage Coach route (Butterfield Overland Mail) ran from 1858 to 1861. It was going to be competition to the Pony Express and others – hauling mail and people from both Memphis TN and St Louis, via Fort Smith, AR, to points west along a southerly route ending in San Francisco. Butterfield received a Post Office contract in 1857 and set about building the system/route. It didn't really get going well – and then the Civil War started – with some of the territory now in Confederate hands – putting an end to things. Not long after, the transcontinental railroad was completed – ending the need for stage coach travel and, of course, mail service to the far west. There are a dozen or more sites along the route that you can visit today although most are in sad shape. Some are in decent shape.

The morning was OK weather wise, but afternoon started with rain, rain, and more rain on and off all day.

I was headed toward Mt Nebo State Park,, KFF-1105 in Yell County, to get there before too late in the day. Most days, 20M is dead after 3pm local or 2000z, leaving only 30 and 40m to try and round up the 44 QSOs.





On the approach to the park, you start to rise in elevation. Today had been totally cloudy and as you get near Mt Nebo, which isn't all that high at 1350 feet AMSL, on this day you go right up into the clouds. Visibility down to 20-25 feet on the narrow, twisty, switchback laden road. Up, up , up twisting left and right where you can barely see the road. Fairly steep, too. Don't try to drive your big motorhome up this road. It gets worse at the top – creep along at 10 mph looking for a parking lot. Found one and just sat there for an hour. Not many visitors here in the total 'fog out'. This park was built by the CCC who constructed many of the buildings, 14 miles of trails, and infrastructure. I couldn't see anything of them other than the road up the mountain and the parking lot at the top for something. Did manage to get 44+ Qs with just a handful on 20M CW – mostly those 800-1000 miles away. Of course, AR is not prime territory for US contacts to the 'east half' of the country on 20M. You're too close for currently skip conditions that often give you 600+ mile plus skip and nothing closer. You've got a handful of west coast stations, maybe some VE's, and if lucky and at the right time, some EU stations making it in the log. Nearly all Qs here were 30 and 40m. The fog dissipated a bit after an hour but still only 30-40 foot visibility – no view from here for sure! Must be nice in good weather! The GPS lady steered me out of here. I was watching it more than trying to read the road signs which I could barely see to get to the road out of the park. (Fortunately the park starts down below so I could get a picture of the sign before the visibility dropped to near nothing!)

Time to try to squeeze in one more. It's close to the motel so if I don't make it to 44, I can hit it again in the morning. It's Lake Dardanelle State Park KFF-1091 in Pope County AR. Pull in 2052z (3:40pm local) to see what I could get. Did work 10Q on 20M – mostly west coast, then 30m and 40m SSB. It's late enough so some of the east coast folks are back home from work – so 21Q on 40M SSB here. Switch to 40M CW

and that gets me to 44Q. Whew! Squeaked by once again. I'm sure it would be better if you put up a 40m dipole and had a better signal than a 40m HamStick on the top of the car which I use for 40M SSB. However, I'm in and out in 60-90 minutes with the mobile. Lots of storms and horrible QRN on 40M though.



This park is close in to Russellville and lies on a 34,000 acre lake – along the Arkansas River. It's also a National Park certified site for the Trail of Tears 'water route'. Some of the Cherokee were forced in their migration along the rivers to get west. Didn't have time or interest to put the Trail out once again. Many of the Cherokee were forced onto boats and hauled under armed guard along the rivers headed to the final destination in OK.

Headed on in to the Super 8 in Russellville and turkey dinner at the Cracker Barrel nearby. Seems on Thursday it's turkey day! There's a different 'special' dinner every day of the week. Good – I like turkey!

**April 5 2019**

First up today is Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Yell County. Hmm...same county as yesterday but maybe folks will show up. This refuge was created in 1957 by the Corp of Engineers doing flood control work on the Arkansas River when work created an ox-bow. Land was set aside – 4000 acres to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Further land acquisitions brought it up to over 7000 acres now.



I start on 40m cw but not many there a 1243z (7:43 am local time) – just 7Q. That's not off to a good start! Switch to 30m and only work 5Q there. Try 20M and only W9DC and F1BLL go in the log this early in the morning. So let's try 40M CW again.....at 1315z band is waking up. Another 16 go into the log. Switch to 40M SSB and catch Kerri, KB3WAV in a park, then another 12Q on SSB. Still need a bunch to get to 44. Two more on 20M CW out west (AB7NK/K7SEN) then 16Q more show up on 30M. Yeah! Made it. Then I'm out of the park and headed to the next!

Petit Jean, KFF-1009 lies in Conway County AR. I arrive at 1430z and get to work on 20M CW. Wow...the band is alive. DX includes F2YT, DL5ME, F5MVT – the YL of F2YT, F1BLL, F4HRR, F4GYG, DK9HN, DL2ND, IZ8DFO, and DL8NDG. Add 9 on 20M SSB and hit 30 and 40m for good runs. Things worked out well.

This is another CCC constructed park with a 24 guest room lodge, three dozen cabins, a 100 acre lake, hiking trails, etc. There's 125 campsites there as well. Nice!

Hey, I'm in a part of the Ouachita National Forest again – KFF-4424. I can do a 'quickie' and run off 10Qs quick and do on 40m SSB for a change.



Most of the time, I only go to 40M SSB if I can't get enough on 20,30, and 40m cw and maybe 20M SSB. Hi Hi. For most of this trip, storms were brewing elsewhere and there were loads of static crashes and often S5 type band noise all across the band making operating there not so fun. This forest spans 10 counties in AR and also can be found in OK and LA.

When you find something like this, you can play the 'activation game' on Parks on the Air, whip off 10Qs, and be on your way in 15 or 20 minutes again. Even better if it is in a new county which sometimes happens.

Next up is Pinnacle Mountain State Park- KFF-1110 Pulaski County AR. This county is on the interstates (both I-40 and I-30) and I've run it many times, but maybe enough will show up today to help out! I pull in the 'west entrance' and head toward the marina and boat parking area. Start on 40m cw, then to 20 cw, 20 SSB for only a few, then 30M CW to finish off with just over 44Q. On this trip, there were lots of parks just squeaking by the magic 44 number of QSOs to get credit on the WWFF system. Whew. Propagation conditions are nothing to write home about. I'm ready for dozens of sunspots, an SFI of 150, 20M open 20 hours a day, ten meters wide open most of the day, and even six meters with good F skip. Unfortunately, that's not likely to happen in my life or maybe even for the next 100 years.



There's a lot going on here with 15 miles of hiking trails and challenging 7 miles of mountain biking – it's a day use park only. On the way out I pass by a BBQ truck in the park – I'm tempted and get a \$5 BBQ sandwich for lunch. Very good!

I can hit one more before the motel so I zip on down the interstate to Lorraine Creek State Natural Area – KFF – 0638. Unlike many of the state parks that have had many activations and QSOs with folks camping there, this is a day use only place with no camping – just hiking in and observing. There's a parking area for it and not much else other than a paved trail leading in. The parking area is just off the road and the power lines give you a S3-4 noise on 40M CW and worse on SSB. Can I make it to 44Q this late in the day?



20M CW is still open mostly to the west, but a few VE's making it in the log at 1935z. (3:35pm local time). 14Q on 20M CW. 27Q on 30M. Getting close! Then 40M CW fills up the roster to 50Q. It's too noisy (like S7-8) on 40M SSB so I skip it. Maybe if you hike in a bit from the road, or run a 40M dipole/inverted vee to minimize power line noise, you'd have success on 40M. Not going to do much for mobiles, though, but you never know. Another day the power line noise might be less. Many days 20M is gone

by 3:30 pm in the afternoon.

I zip back up the interstate, hit I-30 headed to Texarkana, and go about 30 miles to a Days Inn in Benton, AR. Nice place with at least 20 places to eat dinner! Your problem is choosing which one to eat at! I opted for a Seafood and Chinese Buffet not far away. Nice.

## **Saturday April 6 2019**

Both the Missouri and Mississippi QSO parties start today. I'm too close to most of MS and I might hear the top part of MO from my location in central AR. Oh well.....some you win, some you don't. There are big storms scheduled for my QTH and also in MS which might dampen mobile activity.

First up today is, well, another part of Ouachita National Forest – KFF-4424. When you are driving along and suddenly see the sign for it – as in 'entering Ouachita NF' – and there is a place to pull off.....make some quick QSOs and get your 10 or 12Qs in a few minutes and move on. In at 1309z, out in a few minutes! This park is just before the next park and there are places to park for each maybe 400 feet apart – a minute or less away! I didn't post the run to W6RK – just looking for a few park chasers.

By about 1315z I'm running the next state park – Lake Ouachita – KFF – 1094 in Garland County AR. Probably confused a few people who think they worked me in this park already.....but did catch up with enough, including some on 40M SSB to reach the magic number. Moved from the entrance parking lot to the main part of the park – better location and had much better although not great internet there after the first ruin on 40m CW.

My Samsung spotting tablet is on Verizon. I do have GM's Onstar in my car, and for \$10/month more you get a megabyte of data – and their system uses wi-fi in the car to connect to the OnStar unit which is on AT&T's system. By using the outside car antenna, the OnStar data seems to work a whole lot better than the tablet inside the car in most spots. Every now and then you get places with ZERO internet on either system. On rare occasions, there is only Verizon service. Maybe I should pick up a TracPhone that is on T-Mobile? Nah.....at least in the east half of the country – if one works, that's OK but there are rural spots in the mountains occasionally (like in VT or PA) where you are miles from civilization and nothing is going to work other than satellite phones. Who knows? Maybe someday soon you'll have cheap data via satellite phones/car links! Who could imagine back in 1960 and 1970 that you'd be able to spot your county runs -or even have spotting sites at all?



Well, back to county hunting and park chasing. Just for good measure and to confuse a few more people, I run the National Forest 4424 again quickly on the way out on 40M SSB adding in a few more Qs.

I stop on the Hot Springs/Montgomery AR line – and it's tough to even catch up with 15Qs of county hunters these days. I guess with the MO and MS QSO parties going on, with dozens of spots for them flying by, not many noticed N4CD on a county line and showed up in the 10 minutes I was stopped there. So it goes. Maybe the QRM level on the bands was high burying my signal? That's a good reason itself to concentrate on running parks, and putting out counties as you go through them as a secondary point. It's not worth burning gas these days to get just 10-15Qs per county! Sometimes less.

Daisy State Park – KFF-1078 – is located in Pike County AR. It's sort of in the middle of nowhere. I start on 40M and get a good start. Find two MO stations on 40m then go to 30M CW. After find 2 more MO stations on 40M. Hit 40M SSB and work wo Park-to-ark contacts and a good bunch of calls – over a dozen. 20M CW works well for another 2 dozen with only 2 DX stations making it through – DL5AWI and IZ8DFO. Had success with the 44 number so head on out to the next.



Daisy is on a lake – lots of recreational activities, boating, fishing and kayaking, trails and over 100 campsites.

Today was April 6<sup>th</sup> – the day that 'some' GPS units were supposed to have problems as the date rolled over to a new day GMT and some of the older software was not supposed

to be able to handle it as it overflowed some internal counter. The GPS lady had a few conniption fits today giving me a message “there is no parking at your destination. Would you like to park nearby?” then giving me choices for parking 300-500 miles from my destination. Happened 5 or 6 times over 2 hours then suddenly managed to fix itself. Whew!

I'm hearing only the top part of MO on 40M in the MO QSO Party but hear the pileups on 20M as folks work them. Not a peep in AR. Same for MS. I see the spots but no joy. Same for most stations running on 40M. 200 mile skips doesn't happen this day on 40M. I worked two stations in MS way on the far side. Missed all the others.

Off to Crater of Diamonds State Park where you can hunt for real diamonds. Yes, hundreds of carats of genuine diamonds have come out of the ground here to eager seekers (who get to keep them). It's an extinct volcanic shaft. It was very cloudy and looked like some big storms were about to happen. Lots of static crashes on all bands on the radio and dark skies. There must be 500 people here digging for diamonds as the large parking lots are all full!

From the state park website:

“One of the only places in the world where the public can search for real diamonds in their original volcanic source, Crater of Diamonds is a one-of-a-kind experience that brings people from all over the world to Murfreesboro, Arkansas. Visitors to the park search a 37-acre plowed field, the eroded surface of a volcanic crater, for variety of rocks, minerals, and gemstones – and any rock or mineral you find is yours to keep. You may bring your own mining equipment to search with (no battery-operated or motor driven mining tools allowed), or rent tools from the park.

Your diamond search begins here , where you can prepare for your visit by learning about diamonds and how to search for them. At the park's visitor center, you can view real, uncut diamonds and interact with exhibits illustrating the area's unique history and geology. At the Diamond Discovery Center, you can learn more about rocks and minerals found at the park and how to search for diamonds using various techniques. Diamonds come in all colors of the rainbow: the three colors found here at the park are white, brown, and yellow. Amethyst, garnet, jasper, agate, quartz, and other rocks and minerals naturally occur here. Park staff provide complimentary identification of rocks and minerals found at the park, as well as diamond mining demonstrations and other interpretive programs.

More than 33,100 diamonds have been found by park visitors since the Crater of

Diamonds became an Arkansas state park in 1972. Notable diamonds found at the Crater include the 40.23-carat Uncle Sam, the largest diamond ever unearthed in the U.S.; the 16.37-carat Amarillo Starlight; the 15.33-carat Star of Arkansas; and the 8.52-carat Esperanza.

Other amenities include walking trails, 50 class A camp sites and activities for the kids.”

I didn't waste any time getting to work for park KFF-1076 still in Pike County. Could I reach 44 again?

Started on 20M CW. Caught one Polish station in the big “SP” contest going on in Europe – SN2K – probably a gigantic contest station with 200 foot towers and 6 over 6 over 6 over 6 on 20M. Only one I could work – called some others – who were weaker – but no joy. Two dozen in the log on that band. Switched to 30m for another dozen, then to 40M to reach about 50Q. Success. The rain started – and it poured for a while. It let up a bit as I exited the park on the way to the next one.

This is where the GPS lady gets an F. I punched in the next destination – Washington, AR. If you look at the map, there is no direct route. Just from the state road map, you've got miles of going out of the way to circle around either to east or west by likely 20-25 extra miles. However, the GPS lady figured out a route and usually the GPS lady knows some of the back roads not on the state map. Don't ever trust your GPS lady! NO NO NO. Already once on this trip, she tried to take me on a mud lane that had to sign and was six feet wide and consisted of mud ruts. But I was gullible and believed the GPS lady this time.

So I'm off to the next destination. The road the GPS lady says to take starts out as a two lane paved road. Two miles later it's a nice gravel road going through forest land. Nothing around. No farms, no houses.. Two miles later it's a just plain gravel road with some pot holes and not much gravel. Haven't seen a house/farm or passed another car in miles. A few miles later.....there's water flowing over the road. I've gone probably 8 miles at 30 mph so far. It's raining lightly too. This doesn't look good. Well, I get out to inspect the situation. Barely enough road to turn around if I had to, and the sides of the road are pure mud slime. The main road is just about 10 feet wide. If you get stuck you are miles and miles from anywhere on a lonely road and I don't even know the road name or number!

Whoa...it's a river ford – concrete and about 3-4 inches of water at the deepest point and 2 inches most of the way. I can probably make it across. Back up a bit, head on out at 15 mph and easily go through the water. Hurrah. Hope there are no more surprises like

this as it is now raining a bit harder. In another hour, it might not be passable. There's big puddles on the side of the road – then you reach a stretch with a large sign saying 'road may flood in wet weather'. Duh! What am I doing on this road? I drive along it for more miles through the forest. Probably the Ouachita Forest KFF-4424 but I have zero interest in running it. I'm now in Hempstead County. No signs. NO houses. No farms. No side roads, just dense forest. Mile after mile at 30 mph. Finally I emerge on a paved road and see that I was on Hempstead CR335. OK. Don't take that road if you wind up here. Looks like I'm set.

Nope! A mile later, the GPS lady directs me onto another gravel road. I'm headed south, the right direction. Only six miles to go she says on this road so I go along. No houses, no farms, just zillions of trees both sides of the road. It's wet at times and puddles on the sides of the road as it's been raining for a while. Well, six miles later you come to an intersection – and a sign for the road ahead – BRIDGE OUT. Road closed. Dang. Now more miles on gravel roads to get out of here – I'm headed west for miles. Reach another intersection and the GPS lady says head south six miles on the gravel road. I'm thoroughly frustrated. I stop the GPS lady and look at the situation. By zooming out – you can get a 'big picture'. Aha....there's a paved highway 2 miles ahead to the west and it heads to Washington. The GPS lady would save me a mile or two by telling me to go on 30mph gravel roads when for a mile more I could travel on paved roads at 55 mph. She gets a big F for navigation today. She did find a 'direct route' but you would be best served by NOT TAKING IT! If the road is not on the state map – don't be on it! On 20 miles of gravel road – I passed exactly one car – well, pickup truck. Who knows how long you might be stranded there if you had a breakdown? Or were trapped by rising water across the road in front and behind you? Or wound up in a ditch along side the road in a heavy downpour where you could barely see ahead?

I head a mile or two west on the gravel roads and reach route 278 – nice paved road! It starts to pour- gully washer – frog strangler! Downpour. Traffic slows to 20-25 mph and with the wipers going full blast, you can barely see a car 50 feet in front of you. We creep along toward Washington AR. The rain lets up just before I reach the town. I'm glad I wasn't on a gravel road in that rain! Really glad!

**Historic Washington State Park** is a 101-acre Arkansas state park and a museum village contains a collection of pioneer artifacts from the town.



During the 1820s and 1830s, Washington was an important stop on the Southwest Trail for travelers going to Texas. It was originally the county seat of Hempstead County until a new courthouse was completed in Hope, which was designated the seat of government in 1939. The park emphasizes regional 19th century history from 1824 to 1885.

James Bowie, Sam Houston, and Davy Crockett famously traveled through here. From 1863-1865, it served as the Confederate capital of Arkansas when Union forces took over Little Rock.

The 1874 Courthouse serves as the park visitor center. Start there, and you can continue to the Blacksmith Shop, Weapons Museum, Print Museum, and other historic locations that make up the largest collection of 19th-century buildings in the state. (Williams Tavern Restaurant serves home cooking daily from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. )

Washington is filled with historic and replica buildings from the town's hey day. Each day, certain buildings are open and staffed with interpreters, dressed in the garb of the day. The costumed guides tell stories about the town and the historic figures who lived in and passed through the region.

Walking interpretive tours are available throughout the 54 buildings.

The Southwest Trail ran from St. Louis, Missouri, to the Red River port of Fulton in Hempstead County some twelve miles from Washington. At the time, the Red River was the border between the United States and Mexico. The trail was a route taken by people headed to Mexican Texas. In the early 1830s until the 1840s, bands of Cherokee and Choctaw traveled through Old Washington on their way to Indian Territory under the Indian removal policies of U.S. President Andrew Jackson. In 1846, Washington was a

mustering point for Arkansas troops marching south to fight under General Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War.

In the early 1864, Washington was threatened by Union forces under the command of Major General Frederick Steele which moved south along the Military Road en route to Shreveport, Louisiana. A Confederate force under the command of Major General Sterling Price blocked Steele's army. The two forces engaged in battle on April 10, 1864, some fourteen miles north of Washington. Steele was forced to move east to Camden, a movement which spared Washington from invasion. This encounter was known as the Skirmish at Prairie D'Ane. Many wounded soldiers were brought to Washington for medical treatment. Several buildings, including the Washington Baptist Church, were turned into hospitals to treat the wounded. Seventy-four unknown Confederate soldiers from this battle were buried in a mass grave in the Washington Presbyterian Cemetery.

In the early 1870s, the Cairo and Fulton Railroad built a line through southwest Arkansas which bypassed Washington. Instead the depot was nine miles away and became the origin of the city of Hope, incorporated on April 8, 1875. Fire swept through Washington on July 3, 1875 and destroyed much of the business district. A second fire occurred on January 21, 1883. Most of the businesses in Washington relocated to Hope, which proposed that it supersede Washington as the county seat.

In 1958, the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation began preserving the unique buildings and sites that currently lie within the park. The park was established in 1965 and opened eight years later.

- - -

Sat in one of the town parking lots and put it out successfully. I'd been here once before but only managed 22 QSOs on that trip. Didn't have internet with Verizon so no spots back then. AT&T seems to have weak but usable data coverage here – or maybe it's just that over time, coverage has gotten better by all carriers? Ran the totals up over to 44Q.

- - -

Well, heck...there's still some time and on the road to Hope, I see signs for the **Cherokee Trail of Tears**. I pull over – and put it out once again - K-3791 and only in the Parks on the Air system -POTA. No KFF #. Made a quick just over 10Qs and head on in to the Super 8 in Hope AR. Rain and lightning flashes all around as I finish up the short drive. I've stayed here half a dozen times before. Great breakfast in the morning. Dinner at the Two Guys Mexican restaurant not far away. Good!



## Sunday April 7

Time to head home. All around there are threats of storms and dark clouds to the east. It's 3.5 hours to home and a couple hundred miles at 70 and 75 mph on I-30. About 219 miles. I waste no time trekking home. The radio is full of static crashes. I put out the counties along the way and look for some of the MO QSO Party folks. They show up later. Only a few drizzles on the way home but the sky looks angry. You never know when something will whip up this time of year. Fortunately, no storms on my path. They went east.

Near home, I'm driving along the President Bush Turnpike (tollroad) and I'll pass by Park 4423 – **Spring Creek Forest Preserve** – and I get tempted. I take a one mile detour and hit the park for a 'quickie' activation. I work a few MO stations now that I'm further away from MO, three park to park contacts with other park activators, and wind up with over 25Q. Stick around 45 minutes, don't find any other parks I can work (see them spotted by NIL copy at my QTH), then head on home another 20 minutes.

Stats: Drove 1097.5 miles. 19 different parks run, with 3 of them repeats. Over 40 counties run. Car now up to 94,710 miles in just over 3 years.

Thanks for riding along.

## On the Trail of Regens

From a 1950 Russian Regen Book:



The book is the 1950 Soviet book Простейший коротковолновый приемник (The simplest short-wave receiver) by V.A. Egorov, UA3AB, part of the series Библиотека юного конструктора (Library of the young designer), a series of small books published between 1937 and 1964 showing various construction projects, many related to radio.

After a few pages of introduction to shortwave radio, the book jumps right into a description of the circuit. As the title of the book promises, the receiver is simple but elegant. It uses a 6H9M dual triode (that's Cyrillic text, so you would read it as 6N9M), one half being used as regenerative detector, with the other half as audio amplifier. The set employed plug-in coils, and was designed to tune the 40 and 20 meter ham bands. (For those wishing to duplicate the set with Western parts, the tube appears to be equivalent to a 6SL7.)

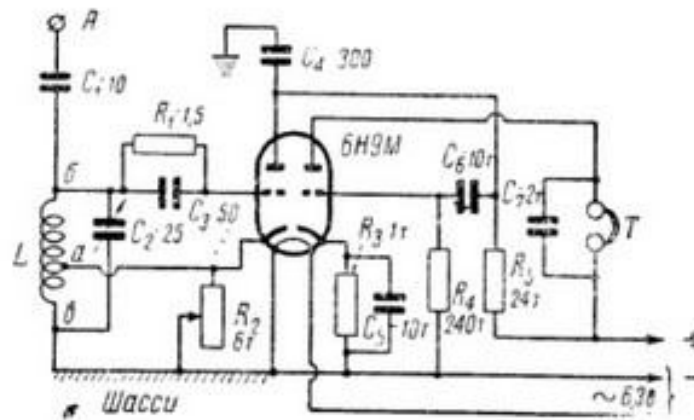


Рис. 2. Схема коротковолнового приемника

If the book were published in the West, it would probably end there, along with a reminder that you needed to go to your friendly radio dealer or even drug store to buy a B battery for the plate voltage, and an A battery to light the filament. But in the Soviet Union, it probably wasn't a sure thing that you could find the battery. So the book describes four methods to get the power.

The first two methods are power supplies that the reader could build, both of which are more complex than the receiver itself. Both rely mostly on factory-made parts, but the second set of plans includes instructions for winding the filament transformer at home, with the B+ being rectified directly from the AC line:

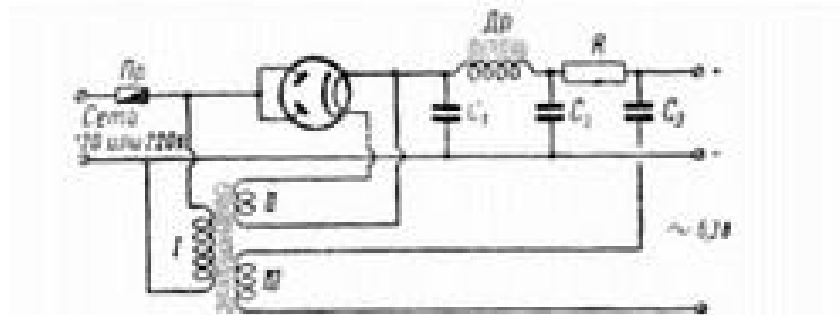
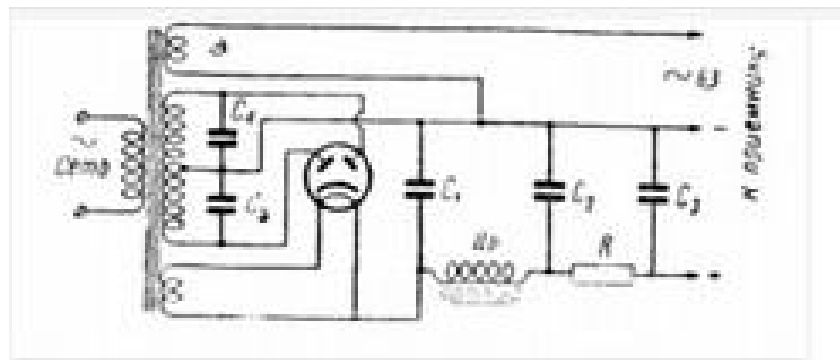
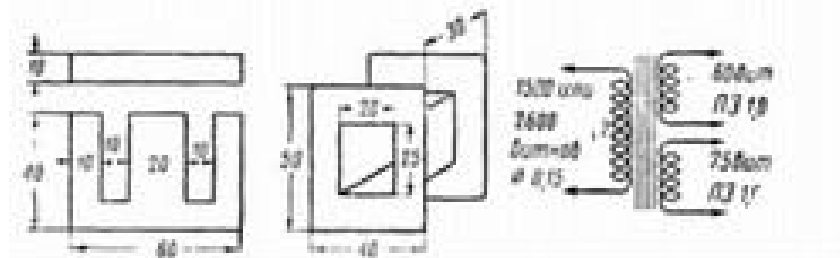


Рис. 11. Схема выпрямителя с накальным трансформатором



But even if the aspiring young Soviet radio fan wound his own transformer, getting the rectifier tube could be problematic. Therefore, the third method of powering the receiver could be very attractive. Chances are, the home was already equipped with a broadcast radio, and the broadcast radio had a perfectly good power supply inside. So the third method involves simply tapping into it by unplugging one of the tubes, and powering the shortwave set right from the socket. The young SWL just needed to locate the 6Φ6 tube in the family radio, remove the tube, plug his radio into the socket, and his radio would come to life! Presumably, the other family members would be supportive of the SWL's new hobby, and forego listening to the broadcast radio as he tuned the

short waves.

The fourth method recognizes that some builders might have enough connections so that they can simply go out and buy the battery. In this case, a BAC-80 battery is required.

After recommending an antenna of 25-30 meters in length, the book jumps into some discussion of how to tune the amateur bands. It notes, for example, that the 40 meter band can be expected to yield stations about 900-1000 kilometers away, with 20 meters pulling in stations more than 1000 km distant. It explains some of what the listener will hear. For example, in addition to listing some foreign call sign prefixes, it notes that UA call signs are in the RSFSR, UB calls are from Ukraine, and so forth.

It mentions some example SWL call signs, and even shows a reproduction of an SWL card from an SWL in Belarus, with the call sign of UC-2-2002, complete with the familiar address of Box 88 Moscow.

You can read more about this receiver at this link at the site of VA3ZNW (ex-UA3ZNW, ex-UA3-117-386). He has a fascinating story of building this set in the 1970's at the age of 13, and using it to tune in the Voice of America and Radio Liberty. Even though the Soviets extensively jammed those stations, they didn't bother jamming them on 16 and 13 meters, since Soviet receivers didn't tune those bands. But with the little one-tube homebrew set, they came in loud and clear.

[http://onetuberadio.com/2018/02/01/1950-soviet-simplest-shortwave-receiver/?fbclid=IwAR1Jky7aOK7JFXBot4yu8zGX7LGB4wnfsN0zEOYXGf9KDUE2hTs7lDp4j\\_I](http://onetuberadio.com/2018/02/01/1950-soviet-simplest-shortwave-receiver/?fbclid=IwAR1Jky7aOK7JFXBot4yu8zGX7LGB4wnfsN0zEOYXGf9KDUE2hTs7lDp4j_I)

- -----

Hmm...with 220v power lines, it's not too hard to get some good B+ voltages – but you have a 'hot chassis' if you aren't careful with 220v or more on the metal chassis! There were a few US designs that actually tied the a/c line to the chassis.....but not many! Most used a floating ground like the Knight Kit Ocean Hopper and Space Spanner – and most table radios of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

# Ed, K8ZZ, Takes a Trip to TX

Wow...Ed took a trip to TX starting out in KS running the counties there. Headed south to OK. Hit the Salt Plains Park – 0489 in Alfalfa OK. More counties then winding up at Ft Cobb SP in OK. He headed down to Wise TX – LBJ Grasslands – and continued south through dozens of counties. Over in Jack County he hit FT Richardson SP. Heading further south in Bosque County he hit Meridian State Park. So far he'd been through a couple dozen counties without parks, just stopping in the parks in the counties that have a park. He was just getting started.

Down to Burnett County and Inks Lake State Park....KFF-3020.....



Over in Bexar County he hit the San Antonio Missions – one of the National Park Sites as well - KFF-0756. Down the road a bit , he stopped at Goliad State Park 3015 in Goliad County. The route took him down to the Gulf coast through Victoria and Aransas (Goose Island State Park – 3016) and to Nueces (Mustang Island – 3043). Kleberg County (Padre Island – 0690 – National SeaShore), Nueces (Lipititalan – 3506),





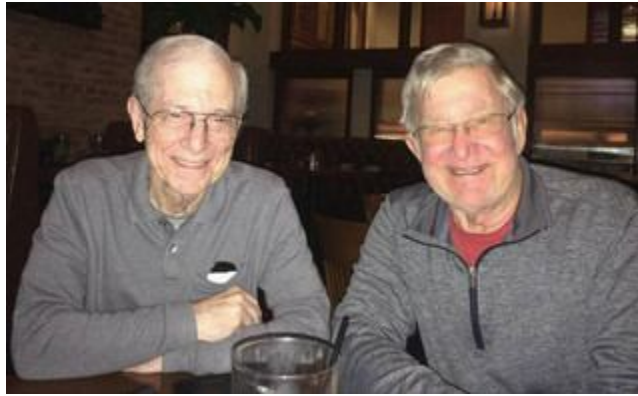
Kimble County (3507 – Lost Maples SNA) , and back up through OK and a bunch of parks there.



It wasn't all parks. Ed stopped for a few days in San Antonio while his XYL was at a convention and did the tourist thing there. He ran into a couple county hunters



Ed K8ZZ and Guff, KS5A



Gene K5GE and Ed K8ZZ

## Florida State Parks on the Air

Every year the Florida gang tries to activate a dozen or more state parks. This year the planned operations were:



Kraig, KA2LHO, was one of the park activations. Here's his operation at Silver Springs State Park

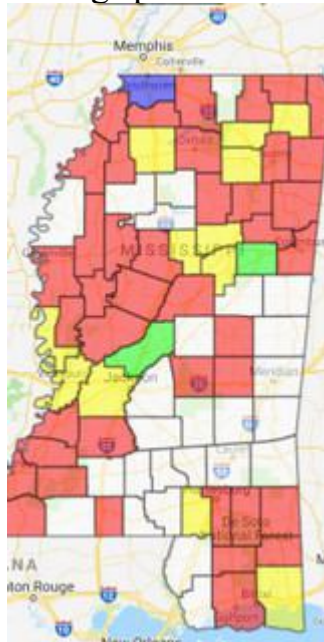


Over 3 days, I caught up with 3 different parks. How about you?

# Mississippi QSO Party

Here are the planned activations. Weather likely impacted those counties in the central part of the state especially near the LA border as severe storms raked that area. Not sure how many of the mobiles completed their routes or changed them to less stormy areas.

Counties in 'white' had no planned activations. They recommended using [ch.W6rk.com](http://ch.W6rk.com) for spotting – the regular county hunting spot site.



**K4ZGB mobile 222 cw QSO**

Thanks for following me thru the day. Condition not so good and I missed the last 3 hours due to storms & lightning.

**WN4AFP - fixed SC - 13 Q**

I found an hour for the MSQP. Seasons are changing in South Carolina... things are blooming... and sinuses are pouring...My XYL was sick, so I had a few more things on my plate this weekend. The mobiles were sounding good in SC on 40m.

73s Dave WN4AFP

**NA5NN - fixed - Pearl River MS 331 cw 413 ssb qso**

K2FF and W5UE originally planned to operate NA5NN portable from two counties, Newton and Neshoba in Union, MS since K2FF's family has property there that straddles both counties... Well, WX uncertainties caused us to scrap that idea at the last minute and just do a M-2 from the NA5NN club station in Pearl River county... Condx seemed down overall but we still had a relaxed and fun event.. K2FF even played with FT8 some and we appreciate those digital Qs... TNX to all who worked us and supported our QSO Party. 73 de W5UE

**W4XK - fixed - Tishomingo MS 176 cw 82 ssb**

Great fun weekend. Incredibly quiet radio location...until the storms brewed down in Texas. Thanks for sticking with us for several repeats on many contacts, due to the static crashes and QSB. Thanks to the TCG folks for stopping by.

**W4NZ - fixed - TN 21 cw 9 ssb 23 mults**

K4ZGB, W3DYA and W4SIG were the only mobiles I heard and worked. All had good signals.

73,Ted W4NZ

**K4BAI - fixed - GA 13 cw 19 ssb 15 mults**

Bad band conditions and many other commitments today. Had hoped to work K4ZGB/M in Montgomery County, MS, the last county I need in MS all time. Heard someone working Tom early in the contest, but skip was too long for me to hear him. When I got back in the late afternoon, I couldn't find him at all. Hope he is OK. Thanks for the QSOs and look for the GA QSO Party next weekend. KU8E and I should be QRV in many GA counties as W4AN/M.

## Sunspot Cycle Forecast

Solar experts predict the Sun's activity in Solar Cycle 25 to be below average, similar to Solar Cycle 24

April 5, 2019 - Scientists charged with predicting the Sun's activity for the next 11-year solar cycle say that it's likely to be weak, much like the current one. The current solar cycle, Cycle 24, is declining and predicted to reach solar minimum - the period when the Sun is least active - late in 2019 or 2020.

Solar Cycle 25 Prediction Panel experts said Solar Cycle 25 may have a slow start, but is anticipated to peak with solar maximum occurring between 2023 and 2026, and a sunspot range of 95 to 130. This is well below the average number of sunspots, which typically ranges from 140 to 220 sunspots per solar cycle. The panel has high confidence that the coming cycle should break the trend of weakening solar activity seen over the past four cycles.

“We expect Solar Cycle 25 will be very similar to Cycle 24: another fairly weak cycle, preceded by a long, deep minimum,” said panel co-chair Lisa Upton, Ph.D., solar physicist with Space Systems Research Corp. “The expectation that Cycle 25 will be comparable in size to Cycle 24 means that the steady decline in solar cycle amplitude, seen from cycles 21-24, has come to an end and that there is no indication that we are currently approaching a Maunder-type minimum in solar activity.”

The solar cycle prediction gives a rough idea of the frequency of space weather storms of all types, from radio blackouts to geomagnetic storms and solar radiation storms. It is used by many industries to gauge the potential impact of space weather in the coming years. Space weather can affect power grids, critical military, airline, and shipping communications, satellites and Global Positioning System (GPS) signals, and can even threaten astronauts by exposure to harmful radiation doses.

Solar Cycle 24 reached its maximum - the period when the Sun is most active - in April



2014 with a peak average of 82 sunspots. The Sun's Northern Hemisphere led the sunspot cycle, peaking over two years ahead of the Southern Hemisphere sunspot peak.

Solar cycle forecasting is a new science

While daily weather forecasts are the most widely used type of scientific information in the U.S., solar forecasting is relatively new. Given that the Sun takes 11 years to complete one solar cycle, this is only the fourth time a solar cycle prediction has been issued by U.S. scientists. The first panel convened in 1989 for Cycle 22.

For Solar Cycle 25, the panel hopes for the first time to predict the presence, amplitude, and timing of any differences between the northern and southern hemispheres on the Sun, known as Hemispheric Asymmetry. Later this year, the Panel will release an official Sunspot Number curve which shows the predicted number of sunspots during any given year and any expected asymmetry. The panel will also look into the possibility of providing a Solar Flare Probability Forecast.

“While we are not predicting a particularly active Solar Cycle 25, violent eruptions from the sun can occur at any time,” said Doug Biesecker, Ph.D., panel co-chair and a solar physicist at NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center.

An example of this occurred on July 23, 2012 when a powerful coronal mass ejection (CME) eruption missed the Earth but enveloped NASA's STEREO-A satellite. A 2013 study estimated that the U.S. would have suffered between \$600 billion and \$2.6 trillion in damages, particularly to electrical infrastructure, such as power grid, if this CME had been directed toward Earth. The strength of the 2012 eruption was comparable to the famous 1859 Carrington event that caused widespread damage to telegraph stations around the world and produced aurora displays as far south as the Caribbean.

The Solar Cycle Prediction Panel forecasts the number of sunspots expected for solar maximum, along with the timing of the peak and minimum solar activity levels for the cycle. It is comprised of scientists representing NOAA, NASA, the International Space Environment Services, and other U.S. and international scientists. The outlook was presented on April 5 at the 2019 NOAA Space Weather Workshop in Boulder, Colo.

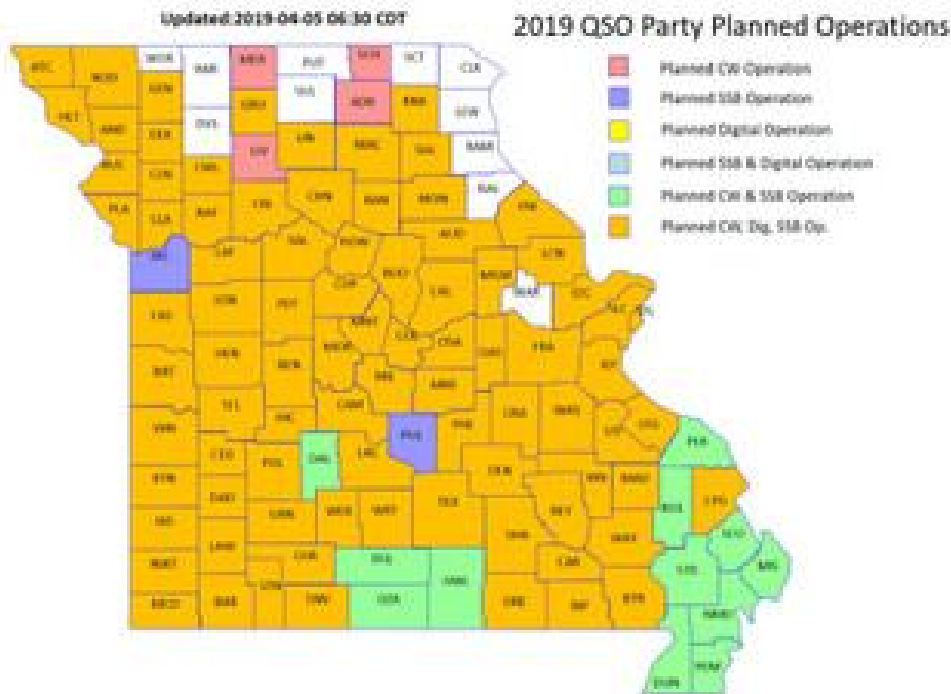
For the latest space weather forecast, visit <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>

For more information, please contact NOAA Communications Theo Stein, 303-497-0163 and Maureen O'Leary, 301-427-9000

# Missouri QSO Party

Nearly all the counties in the state were expected to be on the air with mobiles N0AC, K0R(KE5XX), K0I, K0M (K0FG), N0W (AF5Q), W0E (KD0NEO), W0U, and a dozen fixed stations. N4CD was 'too close' and only heard/worked just a few of the mobiles in the far north/northeast part of the state, but the spots were flying by. Much of the mobile operation was SSB but a good bit on cw.

The MO QSO Party had their own spotting site which makes it tough to monitor all the happenings going on this weekend. Parks on the Air, Florida State Parks, MS QSO Party. And of course, county hunting spotting site at [ch.w6rk.com](http://ch.w6rk.com)



## **N0AC Rover 425 QSO cw**

I don't like to whine or complain so I won't talk about the contest but instead the weather, lunch, and scenery.

The mobile crew were the usual suspects, N0AC operator, XYL Donna driving, and Abby our Scottish Terrier snoozing in the back seat.

The day started off foggy but about 10am the sun came out with beautiful puffy clouds reaching about 75 degrees on the truck thermometer. Our lunch stop was at Sweet Smoke BBQ on E. High Street in Jefferson City. The Saturday special was filling and delicious and being such a beautiful day we ate outside on the patio. We were impressed with the spring colors and loved the country side. What a great day to be sightseeing in Missouri!

Thanks for your QSO, Bill

See my QRZ.com page for the run down on the mobile station.

## **W0M -fixed MO - 713 ssb qso**

I put the vertical for 40 meters in the front yard and the 20 meter on the deck in back and they played fair. The bands were very noisy so there were a lot of repeats. Even with the poor conditions I did work a large number of mobile station even one in EU. I had some distractions that kept me from working all the hours. It was still fun and as always I will look forward to next year.

## **K3WJV - 92 cw 47 ssb**

My 2nd time doing this QP, did it last year but only a few hours for 55 Q's. Even though I had fun the sigs from MO especially the mobiles were variable in strength. There were 2 fixed stations that just kept calling CQ and never heard me. And I understand you guys in the middle of the USA hear much different than I do here in PA, hi. I had to battle trying to time a couple Q's with a loud RTTY station on the same freq or 7040 with digital so I know you hear things differently in your headphones. But that's the way ham radio works, not my first rodeo.

I even switched between 3 clusters I had filtered to hear USA and all 3 never picked up K0I consistently if at all but watching the funspot website let me

know when some stuff was on. Some of that stuff was not readable here. I missed a few counties there. I also checked the planned activations of the mobiles and missed a lot there. I would like to thank the portables & mobiles for making most of these QP's enjoyable. I commend you on the effort involved with activating a big bunch of counties even though I know it might be as enjoyable for you too. Mobile operating is one of ham radio's side effects, hi.

Now for a few stats if you're interested.

Qs per station

QSOs      Callsigns

21	K0I
10	K0R/M W0S W0W
7	N0W/M
6	N0M/M W0U/M
5	K0M
4	K0JPL NW0M WA0I
3	K0O KE0MHJ N0I W0H
2	AD0BI K0DEQ KC0M N0AC/PET N0FY N9BSO NZ0T W0E W0M W0O W0R WA0TTS WZ0W
1	K0GQ KC0CCC KR0RD N0AC/CRL N0AC/LIV N0AC/MOR N0H N0LY N0O/M N5PHT ND9E W0MA WA0BSW WB0TKL

I may have missed some if not called out on funspot and even if in the n1mm bandmap might have shown as a dupe until I checked what county they were in if I could hear them. Hearing MO from here on 80 is mainly a late afternoon or night thing, On 40 is tough during the day especially with a mobile signal, and 20 should be good but 20 fades out the closer you get to sundown here right now. I listened on 15 for a few spots but heard nothing. I did no CQing which may have resulted in a few Q's and maybe a county or two.

K0I was mostly sorta marginal but dependable. If I waited until his sig peaked up a hair so I knew he was working me it was successful. Don't know how loud I was on the mobile end but things are tough enough so I'm turning on the amp, hi.

I got a few good reports from the portables and always good to bump into Mike, WB0SND. I used to do these QP's just cw but was forced to tune up in the phone bands to get more Q's and counties. Sacrifices have to be made.

Thanks for a fun contest. Maybe I can do better next year. Egad, I hope I don't resort to going APRS so I can track the mobiles. 73 & don't forget to look for me in the PA QP, hi. It's in October so lots of planning time left.

QTH: Rural wooded location 1255ft ASL

**N4CW - fixed 61 cw QSO - 42 mults**

Tough sleddin' with weak signals, qsb, and qrn...but that's how it is with QSO parties! Thanks for the fun...just wish there were more mobiles to spice things up. 73

**K6DAJ - fixed - CA 29 cw 19 ssb 24 mults**

Poor conditions here on 20. QSB, weak signals. Several phone stations giving "true" signal reports, which made copying the exchange through QSB hard. Worked K0GQ for 100-point bonus.

Also worked 1x1s spelling out "SHOW ME" and "MISSOURI".  
(That's a fun idea.)

Rules needed to be clearer about how FT8 Qs should work. W0W and others were not sending county. Rules say 'RST', but FT8 does not have that.

**N6MU - fixed - CA 98 cw 69 ssb 59 mults**

Missed many counties Saturday due to the terrible conditions on 20. Just couldn't hear the mobiles most of the time. Sunday was better but the damage was done. Oh well, next year! 73...

John, N6MU

**K1RO - fixed - NH - 69 cw 8 ssb 54 mults**

Nice to work the regulars and chase the mobiles. Nice warm weekend here and the snow is almost gone, so I spent a lot of time doing other things and checking the radio periodically. 40 meters was really tough with low power... Great signals on 20 most of the day.

## CW Stats From KK7X

Each year, Dennis KK7X updates the CW stats from the previous year. Not too many updated their CW totals this year. If there is an 'x' in the 2018 column, Dennis did not hear from you. You can find a better presentation of the list at:

[http://countyhunter.com/county\\_hunter\\_cw\\_stats.html](http://countyhunter.com/county_hunter_cw_stats.html)

CALL	2018	2017	2016	2015	
AA8R	x		2936 #2	2728 #2	
AB7RW	x	819 #4	3069 #3	3051 #3	
AC0B	x	1127	1127		
AE3Z	x		3077		
DL3IAC	x	2715	2685	2603	
DL6KVA	x	3073	3073	3071	
K0DEQ	x	2534 #2	2321 #2	1762 #2	
K0FG	x		3045		
K1TKL	x		3043 #2	3007 #2	
K2MF		2806 #2	2479 #2	1411 #2	664 #2
K4AMC	x		3070 #2		
K5GE		2480 #3	2390 #3	2044 #3	580 #3
K7DM	x	3030	2983	2950	
K7REL	x		2850 #5		
K8IW		3035	3032	3032	3028
K8OOK		1798	2786	2769	2752
K8QWY	x		3050 #2		
K8ZZ	x		2711 #2		
K9MIX	x		448		
KA4RRU	x	3040	3036		
KA9JAC		1677 #2	1549 #2	1197 #2	591 #2
KB0BA	x	313			
KC3X		2766 #5	2138 #5	3071 #4	3028 #4
KC5P	x		3003		
KC7YE		3576	2574	2507	2454

KK7X	2258	2258	2250	2218	
KM6HB	x		1311 #2	3077	
KN4Y	x	3073 #5			
KW4V	x		3077 3#		
N1QY	3058				
N1API	x		2955	2899	
N2JNE	x	3005	2957	2873 - no relays	
N4CD	2687 #6		2565 #6	2239 #6	2210 #6
N4RS	3050 #5		2802 #5	2285 #5	
N4XI	x	2920			
N5PR	x	2484 #2	1959 #2	3077	
N5XG	x		2752 #2		
N6PDB	x		3073		
N7JPF	1063 #2		429 #2	3014	1916
N8CIJ	x		3065		
N8KIE	x		2939		
N9JF 3068	3067	3052	3030		
N9QS	x		3037 #3	2974 #3	
NA8W	x		715		
NF0N	3056 #2		3033 #2	2977 #2	2843 #2
NM1G	x		3077		
NM2L	x		3008 #2		
NT2A	x		3077		
NU0Q	872 #3		3075 #2	3037 #2	3013 #2
NX0X	2601	2601	2567		
NX5G	x		2752		
SM6VR	2995 #2		2922 #2	2714 #2	
VA3XOV	x		3077 #2		
W0EAR	x		2398 #3		
W0GXQ	1005 #8		3077 #7	2954 #7	2261 #7
W0MU	x	2803	2628		
W1ATV	x		2876		
W1ZIC	x		2572		
W3DLM	2958	2945	2911	2854	
W3DYA	x	3068 #3		3036 #3	
W4RKV	x		3002 #2		
W4SIG	x	2761 #3	1640 #3	631 #3	
W4YDY	3070 #2		3069 #2	3056 #2	3040 #2
W6TPC	1164		1093	1036	
W7FEN	x	2999	2996	2982	



W9MSE	3074 #6	3071 #6	3063 #6	3052 #6
W9WOC	x	1793		
WA3QNT	617 #2	3075	3065	3046
WA4UNS	3077	3074	3069	3057
WB4KZW	x		3077	32
WC5D	x	2731 #2	2711 #2	2664 #2
WD4OIN	2379 #2	2234 #2		
WE7G	x	1128 #2	3077	
WQ7A	x	2825 #2	2621 #2	1757 #2
WU3H	SK		2338 #4	

## On the Road with N4CD II

On May 10 at 7:30am I headed over to the Spring Creek Forest Preserve that is 20 miles from the QTH for the weekly CWT from 1300 to 1400z(8-9am central daylight saving time) . When I travel, I often make use of these sessions to add a few Qs quickly when I'm in a park. At this early time in the morning nearly all the activity is on 40M CW – and some are using 80M. You can work most of the country at that time and as time goes on toward the end of the hour, the band shortens up nicely to get the closer in stations. Twenty meters is empty at 1300 but a few show up after 13:30z. One of the regulars is F6HKA, Bert, who has a good signal from France. Today I heard county hunters KM4FO and KN4Y working stations in the CW-Test. It zips along at 25 wpm although several times a year there is 'slow day' with speed of no more than 20 WPM.

The CW organization sponsors an excellent program to teach code – through several levels with mentors – called the CW Academy.

<https://cwops.org/>

Each Wednesday there are three sessions – 1300-1400z, 1900-2000z and a late night session at 0300-0400z (80M) on Thursday GMT.

# Georgia QSO Party

Despite the horrible stormy weather, mobiles were out and running. I caught K5ZGB and W4AN in a bunch. KN4Y, N4N and others were out as well. Considering all the activity and counties run, there were very few spots on ch.W6rk.com which is disappointing.

## **W4AN moobile (K4BAI, KU8T) 1704 CW QSO**

The week before GQP, Jeff, KU8E, moved the antenna wiring for mobile operations from my 1997 Buick and installed them in my 2017 Toyota Avalon. Our plan was to use my TS590SG and Hustler whips to go to most of the GA counties that others had not promised to cover. We used two mag mounts and planned to be QRV on 40 and 20M during the day and 40 and 80M at night. We took a 15M Hustler resonator, but didn't expect that band to be open. Unfortunately, one of the mag mounts was intermittent and we made only about 25 QSOs on 20M the first day and no QSOs on 80M. After a few hours on the air Sunday morning, the mag mount went from intermittent to not working.

Fortunately, we had a spare mag mount. Took a while to make the change, but, after the change, things were just as we had planned. When we were on 20M Saturday, the band seemed very poor. Sunday, the band was much better, but activity on 20M seemed low and skip was often fairly long. However, sometimes it was shorter and we were able to work VA and FL. We got through 43 counties (not including Crawford County where we went through a corner on the interstate, but had no time to make QSOs). We worked a number of DX stations, notably F4FPR, DL3DXX, DL8USA, DK2OY, OK1CF, LY5W, N4XU/KP3. I think we missed these states: NM, HI, WY, AK, OR, ND, and SD. In Canada we worked VE9, VE2, VE3, and VE7. Thanks to all who turned out for GQP. Be sure to upload your logs, no matter how small, to the webpage shown on the GQP webpage. We also had some RFI problems that caused the computer to crash and it took a long time to reboot. We finally stopped trying to have computer control of the frequency and mode, but continued with CW keying from the computer. We also had a Begali paddle to supplement the computer keying. Used N1MM+ which performed flawlessly. It was great to swap off operating and driving with Jeff, KU8E, again.

He is not only a great operator, but a good technician who can repair almost anything. Looking forward to next year already.

73, John, K4BAI.

### **KN4Y mobile 596 w QSO 41 SSB**

Worked 38 states, 3 Canada. Saturday was good, lesser good, not good, better, good again. Late Saturday 80 meters was great. Not much on 20 meters. Sunday encountered high winds, rode out storm in a Waffle House. Trees down some flooding, cut Sunday trip short.

### **N4N Mult Op Rover (KX4MZ, N5ZZ, W5JR, WK4U) 1718 cw 73 ssb**

Thanks to all who followed us around the state through 58 counties. Used the pair of Flex radios again this year (6500 & 6300). Had a second Hi-Q 580 available this year to go along with my normally installed Hi-Q 580. A Little Tarheel mounted to the roof rack completed the antennas for our 3 bands of operation. The LT has been our second antenna in the past. If we sent your call wrong, even though we worked you in the previous county, our apologies. Remember, we are bouncing around in the back seat while going over the bumps and get extra characters tossed in for no extra charge. Bands seemed off a bit during the day on Saturday, but a steady rate with county changes. Activity really picked up a couple of hours before dark. Never able to get a rhythm on 20 SSB like in previous years, but did pick up much needed mults. 40m remains the main band during this part of the solar cycle. Didn't hear some of the regulars this year until late on Sunday. Guess many were watching The Masters, hi. N4N Rover is looking forward to next year already. See you in 2020!!

### **K4ZGB mobile - 1009 CW QSO**

### **DL3DXX - 165 CW QSO**

Another GA QSO party is in the books. No QSO on 15m was no surprise but only 3 QSOs on 80m was a disappointment. Called several stations long time, even mobiles were good copy but no way to break through the QRN. Good copy from most mobiles, they know how to run a party. N4N was readable both afternoons with good signal on 20m CW but did not hear well. Often not successful, also other EU tried without luck - DK2OY, DL8USA, LY5W, UA3AGW.... Sunday evening N4N heard me suddenly - how ? Mobiles worked were K4F, K4ZGB, KN4Y, N4FD, N4N and W4AN. Most QSOs made with W4AN and N4N, followed by K4ZGB. Thank you for an interesting party, however to be bound to 20m during day time and 40m during night was a bit boring seeing stations from needed counties on the "wrong" band in the cluster.

73 Dietmar

**N4PN - fixed - GA** 444 cw 727 SSB QSO

Thanks to all who weathered the weather and poor conditions... Decided to go LP this year as knew it would not be 100% effort... Missed a few hours this year, due to nephews 50th birthday party. Worked K3WJV 6 times - not sure if any others... It was 100% - 80, 40 and 20m contest this year. Thanks to all who showed up in the log.. 73, Paul, N4PN

**N4OO fixed GA** 258 cw 400 SSB

When they start the Sunday Masters at 7:30 am you know there is some serious weather in the state. We had no damage thankfully, but the QRN and heavy rain was the story of this 1 and drew me away from - instead of into this GQP. The Masters became an easy alternative. A little surprised by the mode ratios as I gave each one equal opportunity - just a few more casual SSB guys on late Sunday I guess. Thanks for the q's and sorry to those I missed due to the QRN. 73 N4OO

**W4XO - fixed - GA** 305 cw 427 ssb

Overall FB event. Good activity Sat, 40M was my best band. 20 was OK. 75/80 was difficult with 5/9 QRN static crashes due to the storm moving into the Southeast. Lost power for 2 hours during the Sunday opening. Glad it came back around noon. However Sunday was slow, just casual operating. Logged many CWOp members, thanks for your Q's. Surprised when K9FD/HI and KL7SB/AK called to complete WAS mixed mode. Biggest surprise was IU1DUB/MM called from the MSC Titanio, a container cargo carrier ship cruising near West Africa. Many thanks to the GQP organizers especially John/K4BAI and Jeff/KU8E for their efforts. Thanks for the Q's. 73 Lex/W4XO

**K0AP - fixed - KS** 151 CW QSO

Great QSO Party! Lots of activity by the mobiles. My goal was to work at least 100 GA counties and it was accomplished. Job well done by W4AN, N4N, K4ZGB, KN4Y, N4FD, K4F... I operated on CW only. 40 and 20m were opened for the most part. This is one of the best organized QSO Parties. Thanks for all QSO's!

73 Dragan K0AP

## South Dakota QSO Party

**K0JP mobile** - 51 cw 19 ssb QSO

Don't know if he ran more than 1 county - no comments  
Only spotted in Walsh SD.

--

I noted WA0CSL was on from Traill County on SSB with big signal and big pile-ups. Managed to get that one but heard no others on Sunday. Saturday was a wipeout here in TX for radio activity with the rain and t-storms all day.

-----

Not much other activity noted with most folks having 1 or 2 on cw and 2 or 3 on SSB.

## New Mexico QSO Party

**NS5J Rover** - 186 cw QSO

Operating cw only, we roved in the "cool bus", a older small school bus with Ken, kg5idn, driving. we activated 7 counties trying for 11. We had technical issues on this trip including battery issues but mostly related to the rough ride of the bus vibrating everything. For those of you who heard us calling CQ and not able to raise us, note that

the ft-450's incremental tuning engaged itself an number of times. we would not get call backs for CQ's for a while then note that we were receiving 4 kHz up from where we were calling. We had separate 20 and 40 meters verticals which worked much better than earlier antennas for this same event in earlier years. We traveled about 320 miles to the end of the contest and then another 175 to get home. thanks for all the contacts.

**N6MU - Fixed CA - 44 cw 52 SSB QSO**

Good conditions on 20 made it a lot more fun this year. Top mobile with at least 5 Qs for me was KK6MC with 32(TNX Jim!) followed by N5SJ(11), AF9O(6) and K5KNM(5). Thanks to all who played. 73...

**WB8WKQ - fixed - out of state - 29 cw 29 ssb QSO**

Part time effort, finally nice weather up here in the north, so antenna work took a priority. Fun contest, until the bigger event (GA QSO Party) started up, then it became more difficult. Thanks for all the mobiles who provided many Q's and mults! 73

**NS2N - fixed - NY - 9 cw QSO**

Chaves new 40m county for me Thanks! 81 left for all USA 40m only.

## On the Road with N4CD- Headed North

It was past time to head out out north to Michigan. The weather for Wednesday April 17 was going to be 'potentially serious' with hail, high wind, lightning in the afternoon and it would move into AR the next day. Dang...that was my planned route. A quick delay of one day and re-route got me going north through OK into MO instead. One day of quick rework of the route. Whew. It's spring time in the plains with tornadoes and strong storms and baseball size hail at times. Then, of course, there's the tornado threat. You really don't want to plan to go through the line of storms as it moves northwest if you are traveling northwest! No no no.

So....on Thursday April 18, I headed out for a week long trip. Naturally this time of year, it's 70s and maybe 80 in TX so you have to remember to pack the cold weather gear. For the past two years it never got above 40 degrees the entire time there. You never know.

**April 18 2019**

I'm out the door at 6am. Temp is 66F. Car has 94,833 miles on it and the oil has just been changed and two new tires installed. The route is up 75 to 69 toward Muscogee OK. Along the way, you pass within 1 mile of Arrowhead State Park KFF-2770 in Pittsburg County OK. In and out in less than 10 minutes with 15 QSOs for a 'quickie' activation. Just ran 40M CW at 1346z (early). For repeats, all you need is 10 for credit.

Four hours later, I hit Paris Springs Access in MO – KFF-3674 in Lawrence, MO. You can get to it off I-44 with a ten mile detour. It's not far off the main road but you have to look real close to find it. You'll see the sign with an arrow. Once you find the road in – which is off 'historic route 66' – you discover there's a big 'water ford' you have to go through to get in the park. It looks like there is 4 inches of water flowing over the concrete. 30 feet wide. Hmmm.....can I make it? I might go floating downstream if I don't make it across. I take a chance and go through at about 10 mph. Made it! Not much of a parking lot. I'm lonely here – only one here.

Paris Springs Access (208 acres) is managed for wildlife associated with grassland, old field, glade, woodland, and forest resources with emphasis on upland game; and, aquatic resources are managed in an effort to maximize recreational sport fishing opportunities. Bird watching, hunting and fishing....no camping or other activities here.

Put out the park/county with success and head on out.





Lots of trucks on I-44 – one truck, one car, one truck, one car. Mile after mile after mile. It keeps you busy driving.

Up the road a bit is Nathan Boone KFF-3360 in Greene County MO.



from the state web site:

“Nathan Boone was a genuine Missouri icon – a hunter, soldier, surveyor, and businessman. Boone carried his father’s name – he was the youngest son of Daniel Boone – deep into the Missouri wilderness. His last home, preserved at Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site, is now a place to travel back to the 1830s.”

OK....got there at 1915Z and started on 20M SSB with 15 in the log there. Then ran 20/30/40 cw ending with more than 44Q. Happy! So far so good. Would my luck hold? So far I've had internet which makes a whole lot of difference. These days, if you aren't spotted, 2/3rds the county hunters just snooze through your runs. Maybe 90% at times.

Whoa – I hit a marker for the Trail of Tears - K-3791– time for a real quickie. Run 40m cw only at 2119 and put 10 in the log by 2121z. Not even 3 minutes! Now that's a 'quickie' for sure. (K5GE, W6RLL, N0RZ, WA2USA, 4ARQ, N2IGW, VE3LDT, AJ5ZX, W8LVI, NU0Q). It's only in the Parks on the Air system as they added 'trails'. No need for more than 10 even for a first time activation.

Time for a motel - 420 miles driven today. Days Inn, Springfield MO.

## **Friday April 16, 2019**

First up today is Bennett Springs State Park – KFF-1747 – Dallas County MO. I arrive at 1245z – or 7:45 local time – early. Start on 40m and K5GE is there. 26 go in the log on 40cw. Add in another 25 on 40m SSB, then 19 on 30m cw. Finally, 20m adds in 14 Qs. I'm out of there at 13:55 – just over an hour . Success!



From the state website:

“Bennett Spring State Park is one of Missouri’s earliest state parks and continues today to attract fishermen and nature lovers seeking to make new memories.

More than 100 million gallons of clear, cool water gush from Bennett Spring each day and form a spring branch stocked daily with rainbow trout waiting for lucky fishermen. Fishing may be the main draw but the park also offers many other amenities such as a dining lodge, campgrounds, cabins and hiking trails. “

Next up – Ha Ha Tonka KFF 1761 in Camden County MO.

From the state web site:

“Ha Ha Tonka State Park with its intriguing history and outstanding geologic features, Ha Ha Tonka State Park is one state park that should not be missed. The park is a geologic wonderland with sinkholes, caves, a huge natural bridge, sheer bluffs and Missouri’s 12th largest spring. The ruins of a turn-of-the-century stone castle overlook these wonders and offer impressive views of the Lake of the Ozarks and Ha Ha Tonka Spring.

A series of trails and boardwalks makes it easy for visitors to experience all the park has to offer from its historic castle and geologic wonders to its wooded areas and open rocky glades”



Start on 20 SSB with 10 QSOs, then 28 on 20m CW. Catch Rick, AI5P at Park 0041 Park to Park. Then to 30 and 40M finishing with over 60Q here. Bands working at this time. I usually run 30 and 40m on 10121 and 7043 plus or minus. Sometimes I get stuck on 14056.5 for 10-12 minutes. So far not many mobiles out running but that would change as W0GXQ, NF0N, K3IMC are on CW a bit later. AB7NK/K7SEN and WQ7A were already on 40M SSB. So far, I haven't been able to hear any of the other mobiles.

Nearby is Lake of the Ozarks State Park – KFF 1768 in Miller County.



I get Percy Pics of most of the signs – miss a few – zip by them or can't easily stop, or figure I'll get them on the way out – but don't – hi hi – brain fade. One or two didn't seem to 'take' either.

From the state website:

“Enjoy the solitude of an undeveloped cove hidden along the shorelines of one of Missouri’s largest lakes. Swim, fish, boat or simply take in the view from a shady campsite or picnic area overlooking the Lake of the Ozarks. The park offers the opportunity to enjoy a variety of recreational activities on the lake or on shore. On shore, hikers, backpackers, equestrians and bicyclists can wind through open woodlands, sunny glades, small springs and streams to bluff-top views of the Lake of the Ozarks. Water enthusiasts can make use of the park’s two swimming beaches, boat rentals and paved boat ramps. Park stores sell all of the necessary supplies for a day on the water. Year-round overnight accommodations include campsites, Outpost Cabins and yurts.”

Had good runs. N3VOP, an eager beaver park activator, often winds up on 7188. It's a clear frequency most of the day. So he gets on, and for 20 minutes or so hollers “CQ Parks on the Air, CQ Parks on the Air, This is N3VOP, N3VOP Parks on the Air'. He's got a decent signal – maybe a bit over modulated or compressed. Goes down one page – maybe 25 contacts and when the page is full, he stops, no matter how many more calling. Interesting. He sells new coax at hamfests so if you're an east coaster, you might run into him.

I do 20/30/40 cw and 20M SSB (13Q there) and that's enough. Out in a bit out an hour.

- - - -

Clarks Hill Norton State Historic Site – in Cole County – KFF 3344 is next

from the state web site:

“Walk in the footsteps of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at Clark’s Hill/Norton State Historic Site. The explorers camped at the base of Clark’s Hill between June 1 and June 3, 1804, on their epic journey. William Clark climbed the hill on June 2 and saw a sweeping vista that included the confluence of the Missouri and Osage rivers. Today, a short trail takes visitors past two Indian mounds mentioned by Clark in his journals and to an overlook that shows where Clark stood more than 200 years ago. “



- - -

Lewis and Clark Trail

Ah.....you can do the Lewis and Clark Trail here – only in the POTA system as K-4572. Only 10 needed and I do a 'quickie'. 12 QSO on 40M CW in 6 minutes! There have been thousands of QSOs from this 'trail'.

N4CD can play the POTA activation game too..... hi hi.

- - - - -

Next Park is Jefferson Landing State Historic Site - KFF-3359 in Cole County MO. Same county. No so good as sometimes county hunters snooze since it's the same county. Need my 44+Q no matter what – hi hi.

From the state website:

“After the seat of government moved to the city of Jefferson in 1826, the lower end of Jefferson Street became a lively commercial and transportation hub on the Missouri River. In 1839, James A. Crump built what is now known as the Lohman Building, a sturdy stone structure that would serve as a grocery store, warehouse, tavern, telegraph office and hotel for the growing capital city. After opening a grocery store in the basement of the west section, he sold the east section to John Yount and the center

section to E. B. Cordell and James Dunnica. He then leased the upper floors from the three co-owners and opened the Missouri House hotel. The area became known as "the landing," and Crump's hotel earned a reputation as a meeting place for rivermen and legislators.

With the coming of the Pacific Railroad, business boomed in the 1850s. The capital city became the transfer point for goods coming from the east by rail and heading west by steamboat. Much of this activity occurred at the landing.

The sturdy brick house exemplifies the small, red brick residences common in Jefferson City during this time period.

After the war, river traffic slowed as the railroad offered cheaper and faster transportation.

The state acquired the property in the 1960s with the initial intent of building a parking lot, but concerned citizens led by Elizabeth Rozier spearheaded a movement to preserve the buildings. The Lohman Building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969, and in 1974, the state's bicentennial commission adopted the Jefferson Landing proposal as the state's official bicentennial project. The Lohman Building and Union Hotel were restored, and the Lohman Building was opened to the public on July 4, 1976, as the cornerstone of Jefferson Landing State Historic Site.”

There was a designated visitor parking lot and that's where I ran. It's 'downtown' and built up. Lots of QRN but got my 44Qs. Barely. Ended with 44. Last one was an answer to a CQ as I was desperate! Thanks all.

- - -

Can I get in more parks in one day? Let's try Graham Cave in Montgomery MO – KFF-1759.





From the state website:

“A walk in Graham Cave State Park is a walk through ancient history. Artifacts uncovered in Graham Cave reveal that people occupied the cave 8,000 to 10,000 years ago. To walk through the park’s 386 scenic acres, which includes the diverse Graham Cave Glades Natural Area, is to walk in the footsteps of the hunter-gatherers who lived in the area’s caves during the ancient Dalton and Archaic period. Visitors can go into the mouth of Graham Cave, and interpretive exhibits along Graham Cave Trail detail the life researchers believe early inhabitants lived. Additional interpretive exhibits throughout the park explain the cultural and natural significance of the site. Graham Cave State Park is a prime hiking location, and the campground is perfect for get-togethers in a quiet place. A boat ramp to the Loutre River provides access for boating and fishing.”

Pulled it at 2204z. Bands often die that time of day. Started on 20M with 13Q. Just one on 20M SSB. Six on 30M, the rest on 40m CW and SSB. Ended with 49Q. I'm not fussy. It was getting late and I was tired. It was a major park putting out day!

Headed to the Days Inn in New Florence, MO. Very windy this afternoon – blowing things around including the car!

- - - -

### **Saturday April 20, 2019**

First up today is Great River NWR in Pike MO- KFF 4091. Started on 40m at 1330z with 25 in the log – county hunters and park chasers Usually head down around 7042 as

my car is a bit noisy at 7056.5. Then 30m for another 20Qs and more on 20m CW. Good run.

- - -

Next up is Ray Norbut in Pike IL. KFF 4150. Start on 20M CW with 9Q, hen down to 30m cw for 23Q, to 40M SSB for 20 Q, then 40 cw - ending with over 44Q. Success! Another one in the books.



From the state web site:

“Ray Norbut State Fish and Wildlife Area is a 1,140-acre mosaic of bottomlands, woodlands, wetlands, open fields, steep hills, rocky ravines, hollows, brushy draws and bluffs. Located along the Illinois River, it lies 5 miles east of Griggsville and 2 miles south of Valley City in Pike County.

This site provides exceptional habitat for a wide range of harvestable, non-harvestable, uncommon, threatened or endangered plants and animals. Examples are the bald eagle, a winter resident of the wooded bluffslands, and the jeweled shooting star, a rare pre-glacial relict wildflower species. To provide a refuge for the eagles, portions of the bluff areas are closed to the public seasonally.

Forests, bluffs and limestone outcroppings are rich in wildflowers and ferns. Among the wildflowers are hepatica, Dutchman’s breeches, spring beauties, toothwort, yellow bellwort, trout lily, trillium, wild ginger, larkspur, phlox, wild petunia, Venus looking glass and Mayapple. The ferns include cliffbrake, Christmas and woolly lip species.

Although intended primarily for public hunting, the area also beckons hikers and nature

enthusiasts with several undeveloped trails, one of which has a trailhead parking lot.

Fishing is permitted, too, in the Illinois River and Blue Creek.

No facilities or programs exist for camping, picnicking, horseback riding, water sports, winter activities or other recreational pursuits. “

Not much to see there. Water was high.

- ---- -

KFF-4098 is the Lincoln Trail Homestead in Macon County IL.

From the state website:

“The Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park and Memorial is a 162 acre (0.65 km<sup>2</sup>) state park located on the Sangamon River in Macon County near Harristown, Illinois. This important historic site, only 12 miles Southwest of Decatur, offers hiking, canoeing, picnicking, recreational activities, and a glimpse into the past. The park offers a unique view of central Illinois.



The state memorial, created in 1938, commemorates the approximate location of Abraham's Lincoln's first home in Illinois. The original Lincoln cabin has long been lost but the memorials and the quiet forest and stream easily transport the visitor back to the time when the Lincoln's first settled this virgin wilderness. “

Started on 30M, then 40 cw – reaching 44 Qs already. Caught a few MI QP stations to add in. Just six on 20M CW. Left after 50 minutes.

- - - -

Spitler Woods State Park is also in Macon County. Could I get to 44Q again?



“ from the state site:

“Spitler Woods State Natural Area, a 200-acre site in Mt. Zion in Macon County, is home to one of the largest acreages of old growth woods in central Illinois. Much of the site is dedicated as Spitler Woods Nature Preserve, providing additional protection for the site's valuable natural features.

Spitler Woods mesic upland forest includes red oak, sugar maple, black walnut and basswood on the hillsides and slopes. Dry mesic forest containing white oak, red oak and shagbark hickory is present on the higher elevations. Wet-mesic floodplain forest containing sycamore, hackberry and Ohio buckeye is present along the creek which flows through the nature preserve. The site has a spectacular display of spring wildflowers, including false rue anemone, wild geranium, trillium, spring beauty and mayapple.

Spitler Woods provides outstanding habitat for songbirds, with birders spotting yellow-billed cuckoo, gray catbird, eastern wood pewee and red-bellied woodpecker.”

Parked, ran the county/park, and left. Didn't do any 'nature thing'. Too many parks o run! Got to 44 with a lot of Qs on 40M SSB and 40M CW. Not much on 20cw and a dozen on 30M CW.

I stopped at the Days Inn in Campaign, IL. Dinner was at a nearby Mexican restaurant.

- - -

## **Sunday May 21 2019**

Today I'd have to make tracks to Elkhart Indiana. Time to get further to the Northeast quickly.

Jerry, W0GXQ left home today headed to the Mini. Caught him in Weld, CO as he headed east.

First up – Iroquois County State Wildlife Area KFF-4132 in, of course, Iroquois County IL. Arrived at 1320z (8:20am). Started on 40m cw. Went to 40M SSB, then 30M. Only 4 on 20m cw – half DX. Ended with 50Q. This is about 80 miles south of Chicago.



From the web:

“Iroquois County State Wildlife Area is situated in a low glacial outwash plain associated with the Kankakee River Valley that consists of marshland, sand ridges and dunes. The initial acquisition of land occurred in 1944 for the purpose of protecting Illinois' declining prairie chicken population. Prairie chickens did not survive and public hunting became the major use. The state purchased an additional 560 acres in 1984. Known as the Hooper Branch Savanna, 480 acres of this parcel is considered the largest single tract of rare native savanna remaining in Illinois. The total acreage at Iroquois County is now 2,480.”

My impression of IL is 'flat'. Boring flat land that extends for hundreds of miles as you drive along – no hills – and not much else 'downstate'. If you stand on top of your car, you can see five miles in every direction and it is as flat as a table top. Well, much of the midwest, including IA, NE, SD, ND, KS is equally 'flat'. I'm zipping along today trying to make some time with just a few stops at parks. I've been this way a few times before and have run some of the parks along the route already. No time for repeats today as I've got miles to go.

I've moved into Indiana now

- - - - -

Willow Slough KFF-4233 is in Newton County IN.



from the fed web:

“Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area is dedicated to providing quality hunting and fishing opportunities while maintaining 9,956 acres, which includes 1,200 acres of open water, marshes and flooded crop land.

Willow Slough began with the purchase of 7,800 acres of land in 1949. Land acquisition continued to bring the total size to 9,956 acres. J.C. Murphey Lake was completed in 1951. Parts of Willow Slough were formerly grazed, hayed and cultivated. A railroad once ran through the property, and portions of an old station can be found in the area. Most revenues used in land acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area are derived from the sale of hunting, fishing and trapping licenses. Funds are also received from the federal Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson programs to aid fish and wildlife restoration. These funds are derived from taxes levied on sport hunting and fishing equipment.”

Aha.....the tax man take and some funds wind up doing things.....like this.



Have a good run including a bunch of park chasers on 7191 KHz. Just seven QSO on 20M with W6OUL, ON4AAC, WA1ZIC, AB7RW in the log along with UT5PI, DL2ND and NL7V. Most of the action is on 40M for much of the day. 11Q on 30M.

- - -

A couple hours later I stop at The LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area KFF 4213 in Lake IN. Most of the contacts are on 40M as I am east and too close to most for 20 and 30M.



From the state web state:

“LaSalle Fish & Wildlife Area is dedicated to providing quality hunting and fishing opportunities while maintaining 3,797 acres hardwood forests, cropland and fallow fields, marshes, brush and open water. Bisected by the Kankakee River, LaSalle is an ideal stopover for migratory birds.

The area around LaSalle was once part of the grand Kankakee Marsh. Acquisition of the land began in 1952. About 1,800 acres were purchased and became Kankakee River State Park. In 1963, after additional acreage was acquired, it was determined that the land was better suited for use as a fish and wildlife area. It was renamed LaSalle Fish & Wildlife Area.”

Have good runs, mostly on 40M CW and SSB. Catch K5GE/m and W0GXQ/m but the other mobiles are 'too close'. Terry, WQ7A, wound up with antenna problems and missed many days of putting out counties along his route.

- -

Next up is Kingsburg KFF4212 in LaPorte IN.



from the web:

“Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area is dedicated to providing quality hunting and fishing opportunities while maintaining 7, 280 acres of grasslands, crop fields, thick brush, marsh areas and a 30 acre lake. The Kankakee River forms the south boundary.

Kingsbury is a remnant of the old Kingsbury Ordnance Plant which produced shells, cartridges and mortar rounds for World War II and the Korean conflict. The land was deeded to the state of Indiana in 1965 by the federal government, and wildlife management began at that time.”

OK....good use for old ammo plants.....

Have good runs, again most of 40cw and 40 SSB (7182 KHz). Just a handful on 20M and only 2 CH there.

- ----

Next up is Potato Creek State Park – KFF-2265 in St Joseph County IN. I'm now in the eastern time zone. Lost an hour along the way today.





From the state web:

“Potato Creek is in north-central Indiana about 12 miles southwest of South Bend. The park features a wide array of activities and facilities for year-round enjoyment. Making reservations is advisable to enjoy some of the facilities at this very popular park. A variety of natural habitats await, including the 327-acre Worster Lake, old fields, mature woodlands, restored prairies and diverse wetlands. Each offers unique opportunities for plant and wildlife observation.

Native peoples used the area for hunting and fishing. The area’s first people of European descent settled here in the 1830s.”

Most of the contacts are on 40M SSB with 8 on 40m cw 6 on 30m cw and 3 on 20M cw. There for about an hour to get the 44

After the run head on int the Super 8 in Elkhart IN for the nice. Dinner at the Crowder Family Restaurant – very good.

- - - - -

## **Monday April 22**

Slowly I'm working my way east/north to get to the eastern shore of MI to run the parks there above Bay City. That's the destination for day and it's 250 miles of driving so have to hustle to get there with the park stops.

First up is Pokagon State Park – KFF2264 in Steuben IN. If you can, pick just one park per county as you travel along – if they are nice enough to put a park in the next county along the route – hi hi – and sometimes you skip a few counties (well, put them out as

you head on through) to get to the next park site.

From the web:

Pokagon State Park is located near Angola, just off I-69. The park was originally called Lake James State Park when proposed to be the fifth Indiana State Park in 1925. The name was changed to Pokagon State Park to acknowledge the rich Native American heritage of the state and region. Leopold and Simon Pokagon were father and son and the last two most notable leaders of the Potawatomi. The park's Potawatomi Inn takes its name from these Native Americans, who made their home in the area. The inn, with its up-north fishing-lodge theme, is one of the Midwest's most popular resorts and conference centers.

Being one of the state's original parks, Pokagon features the unique work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, whose members lived and worked at Pokagon from 1934 to 1942. The "boys of the CCC" built the beautiful stone and log structures that dot the park landscape and provide accent to the rolling wooded hills, wetlands and open meadows. Natural lakes created by glaciers that melted 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, highlight Steuben County, which has more lakes than any other Indiana county. The park is framed by Lake James and Snow Lake, which offer abundant opportunities for boating, swimming, fishing and scenic sunsets.

**Pokagon is also Indiana State Parks' winter wonderland, with cross-country ski rental, sledding, ice fishing and a twin-track toboggan run... "What a thrill"... That's what you'll say once you've experienced the quarter-mile, refrigerated toboggan run at speeds of 35-40 mph.** The toboggan run operates weekends from the Friday after Thanksgiving through February, with extended hours during the Christmas holidays"

OK...toboggan runs! Well, I missed out on that!

Between all the bands, just manage to squeak out 44 QSOs here. Early in the morning at 9am eastern. Some of the western folks still sound asleep.

- - - -

Nearby is the Trine State Recreation Area KFF-4182

from the state web:

“The purchase and development of this site is a highly visible example of a public-private partnership to promote outdoor recreation, conserve land and preserve water quality.

In 2006 a group of citizens and groups formed a committee to discuss the purchase of the 200-acre Oak Hill Conference and Retreat Center, which was to be auctioned at a sheriff's sale. The group believed that conserving the site was critical to protection of the Seven Sisters chain of lakes and watershed.

The group, led by the 101 Lakes Land Trust, approached Ralph and Sheri Trine, local business leaders and philanthropists, about assisting with the purchase. The Trines bought the property in 2006, paying \$2.8 million.

The property was transferred to DNR in 2007 with financial support from the Trines, DNR's Indiana Heritage Trust, the Indiana Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, ACRES Land Trust, Steuben County Community Foundation, McClue Nature Reserve, Steuben County Lakes Council 101 Lakes Land Trust, Blue Heron Ministries and a number of individuals.”



Since I skipped 40M SSB in Steuben, I run it here for 30 QSOs, then hit the CW bands to finish with 50Q. Catch DL5ME, F1BLL, IK0MHR, OM1AX and DL4EAM on 20CW along with AB7RW and AJ5ZX. 7 Q on 30CW, 14 Q on 30M CW. NF0N/m is now on the road headed east.

--

Now I move into MI and stop at Coldwater Lake State Park KFF-1493. There's not much here. It's just a small parking lot for the 'walk in' park.



From the state web:

“This is an undeveloped property. The terrain is a mixture of wetlands, woodlands, farm fields and open land leading up to the lake. The park includes 1.25 miles of scenic, undeveloped shoreline, on the otherwise largely developed 1,600 acre Coldwater Lake. The lake, which is part of the largest chain of lakes in the County, is a popular destination for fishing and recreational boating. Coldwater Lake State Park is the only public hunting area in Branch County providing opportunities for hunting of small game, deer, turkey and waterfowl. Wetlands make up over 120 acres of the park area. The emergent and forested/shrub wetlands provide habitat for a diversity of native plant and animal species. Two small, unpaved parking areas offer walk-in access for hunters and fishermen. “

They aren't kidding. If you blink, you go past the road into the small parking lot for a few cars hidden in the trees and with an entrance that isn't easy to find and not even marked! But it's a park and I stop and run it. Just a mile or two off the interstate – although it took me 10 minutes to find it as I drove by it twice!

Have a good run from the park with 40m cw and 40M SSB on 7182. Over a dozen on 30m CW and 10 on 20m cw including Merv, K9FD out in HI. Catch K5GE/m in AR as he is headed north now. Catch WQ7A in Dunn, WI as he got the antenna fixed today. Catch AB7NK/K7SEN in Scott IL. That's about it – just a few mobiles on the road for the mini. Don, K3IMC will show up a bit later.

I'm zipping along the interstate for a few hours putting out counties and catching the

other mobiles. Got miles to go today.

In Oakland MI, stop at Seven Lakes State Park – KFF-1537. All the parks have 'self register stations' as the entrance booths are not manned yet for the season. Likely that starts in another week or after May 1 as that seems to be when the 'season' starts.



From the web:

“An endless variety of topography and ecosystems form the area called Seven Lakes. Its land was a combination of farmland, rolling hills and forests. About 230 acres of water with several miles of shoreline await the park user. The dam, formed one large lake from seven small lakes. Metal detecting area.”

OK.....Get on 40M SSB and catch K5GE/M, WQ7A/m, AB7NK/K7SEN/m. Over 30Q on 40M SSB then off to 40,30,20cw. Again, just six on 20m CW. Got the 44Q. Success.

- ----

I zip up to Bay City, MI – close to Saginaw MI where he had the great National Convention many years ago hosted by Eldon, N8STF. I'm going to stay at the AmericInn (one of the Wyndham properties) here – but first off to Bay City State Park KFF-3305 in Saginaw County MI. This is right in Bay City – and it's pretty full even at 5pm in the afternoon! Wow. Temps are mild here for the moment. Sun is out – good day to be in the park, be having a picnic, etc.

Nice park right on the lake.

From the web:

The Saginaw Bay Recreation Area is located on the shores of the Saginaw Bay. The park

area includes over 2,000 acres of land featuring wooded wetlands, marsh ponds, gentle dune ridges and mile of shoreline. Recreational opportunities include swimming, picnicking, camping, hiking, fishing and bicycling. 193 electric-service sites, modern toilet/shower buildings, sanitary dump station, mini-cabins, organizational camp, amphitheater and playground. The Center featuring a hands-on museum, watershed exhibit and comfortable observation room for indoor bird watching. Nationally recognized as a birding "hot spot" throughout the year, birding is particularly spectacular during the spring and fall migratory seasons. “



At 2120 I get on 40M SSSB for a good run of 38 QSOs! Wow! Park chasers home from work I guess. K5GE, AB7NK/K7SEN in the log but no other mobiles. 40CW works, then 20 and 30m to finish out.

Head to the motel (nice one – never heard of AmericInns before), and have dinner at the nearby Cracker Barrel.

- ----

Now it is time to start the route along the eastern side of MI headed up to Mackinaw City by the big bridge. I'll hit the parks and counties along the way. Not the shortest distance to the Mini but the 'county hunter way'.



As you head north – you note it is not 'spring' here. The trees are just barely awakening from winter – most have no leaves or just beginning to think about leaves. Down in TX, spring started in early March – by mid March the trees had full leaves. Here it's still desolate as far as foliage – other than the 'evergreen' pine trees and other things that keep their 'green' all year long.

**Tuesday April 23, 2019**

I head through Arenac to Tawas Point State Park in Iosco – KFF-1545.

From the web:

“Tawas Point has been referred to as the "Cape Cod of the Midwest." The campground is located on Tawas Bay where the water is shallow and warm for swimming. In the park is the Tawas Point Lighthouse which serves as the sole representative of a true Victorian-era style station on the Great Lakes. Pet-friendly shoreline.”



Try 40 SSB and 40M CW. Hmm....NF0N/m is now in Howard IA traveling east. K5GE/m is now in Wayne IL headed north. I go hunt for contacts. Find a few Parks on 40M and work at getting to 44Q. Just squeak by at 44 after hunting around then 20M opens at 7 more in the log. Whew! Close call. Had to wait to get to the 44Q. At the last moment AB7NK/K7SEN show up in Marshall.

- - -

Next up is Harrisville KFF- 1501 in Alcona County MI. Pull in at 1433Z. Start on 40m – on 7188 then move up quickly to 7191. Catch NF0N, AB7NK/K7SEN, K5GE but no other mobiles heard. 20M CW works well with 23Q! Nice to hear 20M open and

working again!



From the web:

“Harrisville State Park features a campground and day-use area nestled in a stand of pine and cedar trees along the sandy shores of Lake Huron. Established in 1921, it is one of Michigan's oldest state parks. This 107-acre park also offers a picnic area & pavilion, two mile trek hiking trail as well as non-groomed cross-country trails, a metal detecting area and a bicycle rental program. The trail is a three-quarter mile, paved multi-use trail leading out of the park, which connects to the remainder of the trail leading into the town of Harrisville. Pet friendly shoreline.”

Success here with over 55Q.

- - - - -

Well, let's try Sturgeon Point State Park KFF 3328 - still in Alcona MI. Can I get to 44Q? Time will tell. K5GE/m, AB7NK/K7SEN are in the log. No other mobiles heard. Just 13Q on 40M SSB, but 22Q on 20 cw, 11Q on 30M, 6 on 40m cw. Success – got the 44Qs plus!

It's the light house and nearby area. The lighthouse is still used and functional.

“Sturgeon Point Lighthouse is located five miles north of Harrisville on Lake Huron and was completed in November 1870. The tower is 70 feet, 9 inches tall and is 16 feet in diameter at its base. The light is 3.5 order Fresnel lens made in Paris, France. The light is still maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard. The keeper's house is now a maritime museum which is open to the public from Memorial Day to Labor Day but grounds open all year long. “





- - - -

Well, I can hit the Huron Forest – one of the POTA only parks – K-4488. Make a quick 10 contacts and that's it. No need for more and many have put this out, and likely I'll do it again. 10Qs on 40m SSB. You find a 'trail head' and you can easily run it.

- - - - -

The next one is one you really HAVE TO WANT to visit to get there. Traveler be warned!



From the state site:

“ rustic, undeveloped area open for hunting and hiking. The terrain is a mixture of low land areas with small ridges, to mature pine forest, some hardwoods and aspen forest, and some pockets of open meadows mixed in. A beautiful undeveloped sandy beach on Lake Huron. Designated Watchable Wildlife site.

Four walk-in campsite available April through November. Call for reservations.

Please use caution when visiting Negwegon as the roads into the park are often so sandy that a four-wheel drive vehicle is needed. The park entrance is located at Sand Hill Trail and Negwegan State Park Road, north of Black River.”

Well, I didn't read that part of the description before I started out for Negewegon SP KFF 1526 in Alpena County. I programmed in the destination to the GPS lady who seemed happy. Off I went.

You find yourself on a ONE LANE dirt road through the forest that is barely 8 feet wide, with trees 2 feet off the sides of the roads. The GPS lady says it's 3.5 miles of this road. I'm coming from the south. I hope I don't meet another vehicle as it would be very very difficult to pass. This is not the place to bring your 30 foot motorhome! You are literally traveling on a very narrow dirt/sand road. There are no houses and nothing off the side of the roads for mile after mile. What am I doing here? So far, the traction is OK, a few mud puddles to go through but I move along at 15 mph! Just 15 mph. Those couple miles will take quite a while. Eventually the distance winds on down.

You pass one sign - Through Traffic Only – guess someone doesn't want anyone stopping – not that there are any places you can stop on this road! Well, I should say 'trail'. At the end, there's a cabin or two off the sides of the road. Finally you make it to the park. Wow....the park has 20 foot wide gravel roads in great condition. Guess for some reason, the state can't gain access other than on the forest lane in from the south. I've still got to get back out to the west. Hope that road is no worse and even better.

The park roads are great – well, nice gravel smooth roads.

I run the park - now in Alpena and definitely in the middle of nowhere. 22Q on 40M SSB, another dozen and half on 20cw, 3 on 20m SSB, 8 on 30m CW. Get to 44 and happy about that. Whew! It was worth the trip in. Now to get back out.

Same deal – different route – but FIVE MILES of narrow, narrow, narrow forest lane on a dirt/sand road with trees 2 feet off the sides of the car as you churn along at 15 mph hoping NOT to meet another car. Nothing along the road but a gazillion trees. So far so good. Mile after mile at 15 mph and of course, bumps and potholes and puddles and a few places water half way across the road. What have I got myself into? If I break down, how long before someone comes along? Or get stuck! Oh, this is noted at the beginning as a 'seasonal road'. I'd hate to try it with snow. Apparently the park opens April 1 but I didn't see a lot of activity here.

I noted that Julie, K8VOX and W8TAM had been here on 4/21 just before me and made 34 contacts with both calls. For the POTA folks, it was 'activated'. Not so for the WWFF folks but I took care of that running the totals up over 44Q. I think they have a Jeep!

Finally get back to nice PAVED roads once again, and off to the next park! Whew! Enough adventure for a couple days!

- - - -

In Presque Isle County MI is Rockport State Recreation Area. Nice paved roads to get there! KFF-3326.



I arrive at 2006z and get on 40M. Quickly catch Mary AB7NK and Neil K7SEN and Gene K5GE. 35 contacts go in the log quickly. Then switch to 40m cw for another 18, and 18 or so on 30m cw and 8 on 20M CW. New county which helps the totals!

Sometimes I start on 7188 and get stuck there as folks just keep showing up for 20 minutes. You never know. Sometimes you get done in 6 minutes, sometimes 16 minutes. Only DX on 20M is IK0MHR and HA8IB.

From the web:

“Located on the shores of Lake Huron, north of Alpena, the property includes a deep-water protected harbor, an old limestone quarry of approximately 300 acres, a unique series of sinkholes, a dedicated Natural Area (Besser Natural Area), and a broad range of land types, vegetative cover, cultural resources and recreation opportunities.”

It's turning COLD. Break out the cold weather gear. Back in TX, big storms once again as another Pacific front has triggered a line of thunderstorms/hail/wind and worse across the TX regions and into the midwest. In the 70s and 80s back home Here it is calling for 35 degrees tomorrow morning.

Head to the Days Inn in Alpena for the night. Hunan Buffet for dinner.

- - - -

### **Wednesday April 24**

First up today is Thompsons Harbor in the same county – Presque Isle MI – KFF1546.

It's 36 degrees outside. Brrr. This is going to take some doing. Start on 20 CW hunting for DX – 4 go in the log from the park chasers (DL2ND, ON4ON, IW2NXI, OH6RP). Switch to 40cw and not much going on – manage 8 QSO. A couple on 40M SSB. Back and forth between 40m cw and 40m SSB. A few more show up on 20M, a few on 30M, try 40M SSB again. Finally 40m cw wakes up with 20 Q there. Back and forth trying to get the Qs. Later catch AB7NK/K7SEN on 40M. It's too early. I stick around and finally get to 44+ going back and forth from 40M SSB to 40M CW and hunting for stations. Whew! Takes from 1310 to 1454 – almost 2 hours to get the QSOs. Fortunately, there's not too far to go today!



I had to work the bands. Folks were sleeping in.....

- - - -

Over to Cheboygan State Park in the next county – Cheboygan MI – KFF 1491. I catch KB6UF, Ron, on his way to ME. Then a bunch of 40M SSB after Ron is done with his

run. 20M CW yields a dozen, 30M CW yields 8 and that's about it. Finish with 48Q. Mary, AB7NK/Neil K7SEN are on the C/L of Iroquois IL and Newton IN. In da log! No other mobiles heard or worked. Not like the old days when you worked a dozen mobiles! The sunspot cycle doesn't help either with 'long skip' on 40M and nothing close by.



- - - - -

Along the way, you find there is Historic Mill Park – KFF-1505 – and still in Cheboygan County. I pull in to the park...not sure the area I'm in is 'in' the park. A friendly ranger comes by. The main part of the park is not open till May 1 but he advises this area is considered part of the park. Also turns out another ham radio operator had been here yesterday – none other than Julie, K8VOX and Tom, W8TAM. Himm....he said they made 30 contacts. I'd try to beat that, for sure. They only upload to POTA, not to WWFF so no need for them to get to 44Q.



This was an original sawmill – and has been turned into a theme park with costumed guides and all sorts of activities including a zip line. It's like an amusement park. Not open yet, but I didn't have time to do the activities anyway!

Got on 40M SSB at 1722z and 28Q went in the log. Got on 20M cw, and wow...22Qs there. A handful on 30 and 40m cw and out of the park at 1815 with 50Qs. Success!

- -

A few more to go before the direction changes to Traverse City.

If you recall, not that long ago there was a National Convention in Petosky. We took a tour bus to Ft Michilimackinac. It's one of the 'parks' – KFF- 1498 with part in Cheboygan, part in Emmet MI. Also took a tour of the ice breaker located near here.

from the web:

Treasures from the past come to life at this 18th-century fort and fur trading village. As you walk through the site, you are stepping back in time to 1776, as the American Revolution spread. Reconstructed based on historic maps and more than 60 years of archaeological excavations that continue today, Colonial Michilimackinac offers a one-of-a-kind experience from cannon and musket firings to hearth cooking and crafts.



Located on the shore of the Straits of Mackinac, visitors can enjoy stunning views of the Mackinac Bridge, the straits, and the Upper Peninsula.”

The park isn't open till May 1, but the parking lot and visitor center is open so that's where I ran it. Started on 20M at 1830z on 20m with a good run of 25 QSOs. At times 20M is good – maybe there are a few sunspots and the SFI creeps above 70 which helps. At SFI 67 and SFI 68, 20M really struggles to do much of anything!

Hey, it's a Wednesday and it's coming on up 1900 – time for the weekly CW Open Test. I head to 20M and quickly put 35 QSOs in the log between 20 and 40M. Hurrah! Makes it easy! Before it's over, head to 40M SSB for another 2 dozen and out of there in 2 hours. Had too much fun. Well, I'm staying here for the night.



- - -

But wait.....I can go over the big bridge to the upper peninsula and put out Straits State Park KFF – 1543! It's a \$4 toll over the bridge and 20 minutes to get to the new park.

Straits is just over the bridge.

From the web:

“Straits State Park is located on Church Street, in the City of St. Ignace, south of US-2. Within the park is a picnic area and an observation platform overlooking the Mackinac

Bridge and the Straits of Mackinac. Straits State Park was established in 1924.”

Pulled in – lots of RV's there and folks enjoying the clear but chilly weather. Run went good with just over 44Q. Didn't stick around. Time to get to the motel and dinner. Skip running Father Marquette Memorial here. Been there, done that.



Stayed at Super 8 Bridgeview. The second Super 8 in town wasn't even open yet as were probably 80% of the motels. The season starts May 1! Dinner at a nearby pub.

It was so early in the season, the Super 8 didn't have breakfast set up yet. They told you how to get to the Hamilton Standard for their breakfast buffet – located a few miles away. OK....was good.....just remember, most of this town is shut down till May 1! Tourists don't arrive till then!

- - -

## **Thursday April 25**

Time to head to Traverse City – via a few parks along the way.

First up – Wilderness State Park 8 miles to the west along the lake. KFF- 1556 in Emmet County MI. I'm there EARLY at 1200z. Can I get my 44Q. That's 8am. Most of the county hunters sleep in – as do many park chasers. Who's crazy enough to be out so early? It's 7am in TX. Get on 40M and work SSB and CW. Try 30M and 20M – back to 40M SSB. Catch a few on 20M and some on 20M CW, then a few more on 30M CW. Whew! Get to 44Q and call it quits. It's too early to be running things! Takes



to 1400z to get my 44Q – 2 full hours.



From the web:

“Wilderness areas and 26 miles of beautiful Lake Michigan shoreline provide great places to observe nature from the numerous trails throughout the 10,000 acres park. The park offers year-round recreational activities and camping opportunities that include: modern campsites, as well as full hook-up and tent-only campsites. Six rustic cabins and three rustic bunkhouses are additional options for accommodations within the park.”

Wow – 10,000 acres of park !

- - -

Time for Burt Lake State Park – KFF 1490 in Cheboygan County once again.



“Burt Lake State Park is located at the heart of the inland waterway, where Burt Lake and the Sturgeon River converge. The park consists of about 400 acres which include 306 modern campsites with 4 toilet/shower buildings, a day use area with beach for

swimming or shoreline fishing, rentable picnic shelter, a youth organizational campground. The campground is closed November through April. An overlook tower and picnic area, and a boat launch with a skid pier and car/trailer parking. One mile hiking trail is marked within the park. No bicycles, horses, or motorized vehicles allowed on the trail. Cross-County ski trails are non-groomed. Pet friendly shoreline.”

OK.....pull in, run the bands, get to 44Q. Catch Terry, WQ7A mobile but that's it. He's just north of me in Mackinac MI. Out in 45 minutes. No other mobiles heard.

- - - -

Next up is Otsego Lake State Park – in Otsego County MI – KFF- 1531



from the state site:

“Otsego Lake State Park is shaded with large oak, maple and pine. It encompasses 62 acres and provides more than a half mile of sandy beach and large sites near or within sight of the lake. The majority of the sites are large, flat and shady. Otsego Lake was established as a state park in 1920. 155 clean, shaded, modern campsites. Recreation Passport required for entry. Pet friendly shoreline.”

pull I616 Z. Run the bands....20M is good. Out at 1740z. 90 minutes. Got the 44Q

No other mobiles heard.

- - - -

Well, dang, here I am in the Mackinaw State Forest – K- 4778 – a POTA only park. Only need 10 from here but over 20 go in the log from Antrim County MI. The 'state forests' only show up in Parks on the Air. The National Forests are in both. Confusing?

You bet.

Now it's time to head to Traverse City..... so I put the pedal to the medal.....

But wait! Right there in Traverse City is .....Traverse City State Park! I can do a 'quickie' for an 'activation credit' for POTA. Pull in, run Grand Traverse County and 25 go in the log. Don't stick around long. I'll run this again in a day or two. I'm out of enthusiasm for parks at the moment and 4 miles away from the Holiday Inn.

Finally arrive there after 2300 miles of driving. (the short way is 1328 miles). Whew! Seems my spotting pad has forgotten it's password to access the car wi-fi. I have an OnStar dataplan – 10 bucks a month for a gig and the car system is usually much better (it's on AT&T) than my spotting pad inside the car in weak signal conditions. Oh well. Try to get OnStar to give me my password but they are clueless. Will have to drive to TX and get it out of my file. Oh, and the 'check engine' light is on. Well, that will have to wait till TX.

OK...I'm here..end of part one! Whew. I think I over did the parks. Now I have to enter a gazillion contacts into the logging program (FLE). Groan. Newsletter first, logging second. If there are a few typos...well the fingers have been flying.

## Texas State Parks on the Air

This year the TSPOTA got rained out on Saturday. Heavy rain, thunderstorms and tornadoes headed across most of Texas which lead to little activity on Saturday. Most folks stayed home.

The bonus station K5LRK was out late Saturday afternoon/evening after the storms passed through the Dallas Metroplex. That's the only park that may have been on Saturday April 13. It was a club effort.

On Sunday, N4CD headed 50 miles to Ray Roberts Lake State Park – KFF-3051/K-3051 and TX State Park 093. I sat for 2 hours and put 75 Qs in the log, but the 30M Qs don't count for TSPOTA. Later in the day, I saw another mobile hit the same park –

K5WZS- who actually got there after TSPOTA ended. One other park was spotted with KC5GOI and that seems to be about it. N5YPF also noted in TSPOTA 090 according to the POTA Facebook Page. Never spotted elsewhere. Weather and lack of enthusiasm did this in. With 100 state parks and sites, it wasn't a great turnout.

As a note, my score was a big zero since I didn't work another TX state park. Your score is QSO points times power multiplier times number of state parks worked. Didn't work any other so my effort gives me a big zero. Hardly a way to encourage folks going to parks for this event, right? Or be sure to bring a friend so you can work him/her on 2M for at least one park credit – hi hi.

## At the Michigan MI

N4CD arrived at the MI Mini held at the West Bay Holiday Inn in Traverse City, MI with typical weather for the event. It was a balmy 50 degrees in the afternoon with a 20 mph strong north wind whipping up white caps on the lake. The waves were crashing into the rocky shore sending water gushing up 10 feet with spray. Over the next two days it would get colder.

I headed in, checked in, hauled the gear up to the room, then headed to the hospitality room to see who had arrived. Nearly all the others were there with just a few more to arrive.

This event is sponsored by Joe, W8TVT and Ed, K8ZZ, who have been doing in for years and years. The venue is good and you don't have to go outside if you don't want to brave the strong north winds and chill.

Here's the attendees this year/ (courtesy of Ed, K8ZZ)

K8ZZ Ed, Topeka, KS  
W8TVT Joe, Traverse City, MI  
N8RRR Janet, Traverse City, MI  
KB0BA Lowell, Blue Grass, IA  
N0XYL Sandra, Blue Grass, IA  
WQ7A Terry and Bonnie, Yelm, WA

N8HAM Jim, South Lyon, MI  
W0GXQ Jerry, Evergreen, CO  
NM1G Chuck and Sandy, North Kingstown, RI  
WA9DLB Tony and Helen, Barrington, IL  
N4CD Bob, Plano, TX  
W8TZA Bill, Kalamazoo, MI  
W8WKD Sharon, Kalamazoo, MI  
K8EMS Mike and Sherry, Gladstone, MI  
W9OP Mark, Neenah, WI  
W9PIP Joan, Neenah, WI  
KA9JAC Bob, Hortonville, WI  
KB9YVT Ann, Hortonville, WI  
WG9A Bill and Sandy, Batavia, IL  
N8KIE Bob, Clarkston, MI  
N8RLJ Jaci, Clarkston, MI  
NF0N Mike, South Sioux City, NE  
K8AO Duane and Judy, Gladstone, MI  
K5GE Gene and Mary Ida, Seguin, TX  
N8WTQ Dori, Midland, MI  
K3IMC Don, LaGrange, GA  
KJ4NIT Jean, LaGrange, GA  
NN9K Pete, Colona, IL  
N9DQS Nancy, Colona, IL  
W9GUY Don, Walton, IN  
K8OOK Mike, Grand Rapids, MI  
N8IPG Nancy, Grand Rapids, MI  
AB7NK Mary, Cordes Lakes, AZ  
K7SEN Neil, Cordes Lakes, AZ  
WB0PYF Ray and Debbie, St Louis, MO

A few couldn't make it this year – but the good news is THERE WILL BE A 2020 Michigan Mini! So if you missed it this time, be prepared for next year!

On Thursday, it's just meet and greet in the hospitality room and tell tall tails of past county hunting. Lots to talk about.

Thursday dinner I wandered down to the Bob Evans a few miles to the east along the main drag. Then back for more meet and greet – then hit the hay early. I took me 8 days or so to get to MI from TX the 'county hunter' way with stops in many parks.

## Friday May 25

40F and windy in the morning. Typical!

On Friday, there were no planned events – other than in the evening, so I headed out to run to parks to the south in different counties after a nice omelet breakfast at the hotel. Yakked with K7SEN, Neil at breakfast time and swapped some stories.

First up was Manistee National Forest – K4583, and KFF-4525. Two different numbers in the two different systems for mass confusion! There are many trail heads and access points – well marked – where you can run this. From the state site:

“Lying between the shores of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, the nearly one-million-acre Huron-Manistee National Forests are located in a transition zone between forested lands to the north and agricultural lands to the south. The Huron-Manistee National Forests contain rare ecological features, such as dry sand prairie remnants, coastal marshlands, dunes, oak savannahs, fens, bogs and marshes.”

It spans a dozen counties – so you can run it from many locations at the different trail head points or 'river access' or similar. Trails run all over the state – hiking and snow mobile trails for the winter use.

Next up was Tippy Dam State Park KFF-3329 in Manistee County. It's named after Mr Tippy, one of the local politicians in 1918 when it was built – not because it is 'tippy'. Some of the best trout, steelhead and salmon fishing is just below the dam – and anglers come from miles around. The dam provided hydro electricity from the large lake on the Manistee River. During the fall salmon run, anglers are standing shoulder to shoulder on both shores trying for the 20 lb fish! The parking lot was fairly full of anglers coming and going to the water. There's a campground there, too, if you want to spend some time there.

Then it was over to Mitchell State Park KFF-1523 in Wexford County, MI. It lies on the short Clam Lake Canal which connects Cadillac Lake to Lake Mitchell. It allowed trees cut on on lake to be hauled through the canal to lumber mills located on the other lake. The park is in the city limits – about 235 acres – with lots of campsites. Good fishing here, too. Just pulled in, found a spot to run, and put out the park/county.



Then I headed back to Traverse City – not to miss Friday night event.

Each year for umpteen years, the group heads on over for the annual Fish Fry night. Most of the folks attended this year. Fish prepared two ways, plus sides to go with it. No one went away hungry.



The Fish Fry Set Up

Hit the hay early about 9:30pm. It had been a long day.



## Saturday May 26

40F and windy

A few things were going on today. Don, K3IMC presented a program which was followed by K8EMS giving a talk on Logger.

I skipped out and headed for some repeat parks to the west – The Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore with the sand dunes! KFF-0767 – one of the National Parks on the Air parks and very popular back then. If you'll recall, there were HUNDREDS of folks chasing parks back then and you could easily put 100 QSOs in the log in under 2 hours. Now? Well, there are probably a 100 really active park chasers – and a good run is 50-60 QSOs and that is using 20/30/40m cw and 40M SSB. If you are back east, you have better luck on 40M SSB as mos of the activity of the park chasers is on that band. It was WINDY and cool.....40F. Folks were out hiking – it was sunny.



I headed back to town and run the local park – in Traverse City – -KFF- 1547 - which happens to serendipitously be a state park as well. It's 4 miles east of the hotel along the shore – with the campground just south of the road. This time I pulled into the campground, found an open site, and run from there – a whole lot less noise than by the shore!

Back to the hotel – no other parks within range to get to and back before dinner.



At 5PM it was 'picture time' for the group. It only took about five minutes. Then folks headed to the banquet room to get ready for the 6pm dinner. Joe, W8TVT, read from the 'scroll' as is his usual practice. After the talk, we had the annual 'gift exchange'. Then it was more time for meet and greet, or off to bed early for an early start on Sunday as mobiles headed out – either in trips or back home.



Bob N8KIE Jacki N8RLJ



Jean KJ5NIT and Don K3IMC



Ann KB9YVT and Bob KA9JAC



Helen and Tony, WA9DLB



Bill, WG9A and Sandy



N8RTQ Dori



Nancy, N9DQS and Pete, NN9K



Mark, W9OP and Joan, W9PIP





Lowell, KB0BA and Sandra N0XYL



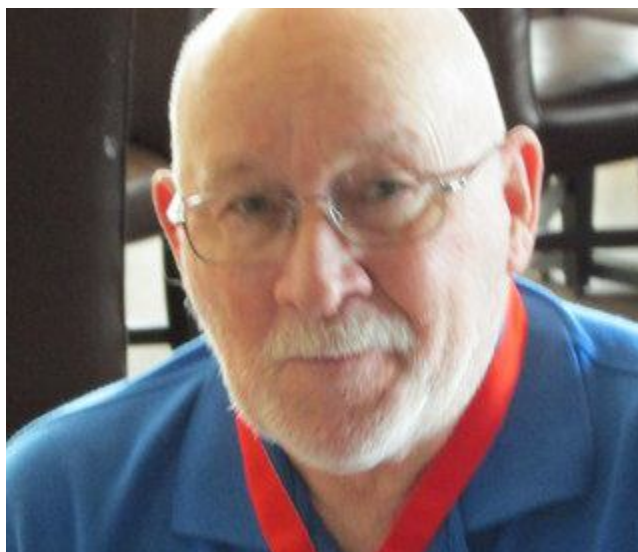
Bill, W8TZA and Sharon, W8WKD



Debbie and Ray, WB0PYF



Terry, WQ7A and Bonnie



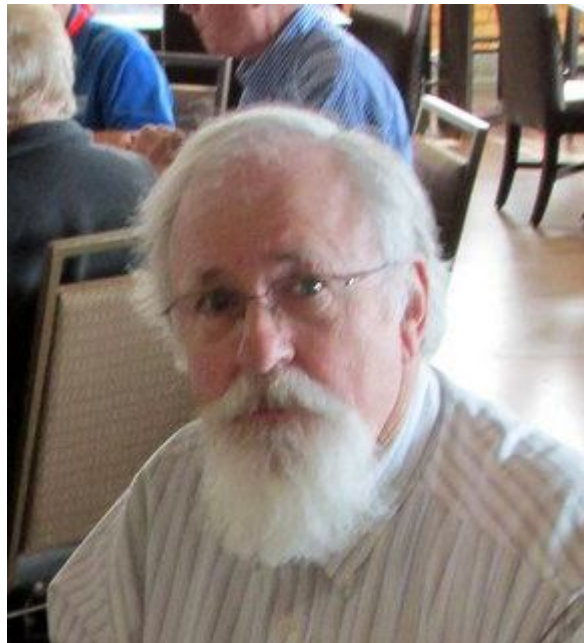
Mike, NF0N



Don, W9GUY and Chuck NM1G



Jerry W0GXQ



Jim, N8HAM





Joe, W8TVT and Janet, N8RRR



Mike, K8EMS and Sherry



Mary Ida and Gene K5GE

# Michigan QSO Party

If you were looking for mobiles to chase – this was NOT the party for you. Think there was one mobile out this year. Weather and propagation probably didn't help and some of the regulars didn't show up. There was the ON QSO Party going on at the same time. You could find lots of fixed stations on – many spending most of the time on 40M.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

**NA8V - fixed - in state - 356 cw 463 ssb**

Another good MiQP although in-state activity seemed down a bit which shows in lower mults than previous years. Decent condx although signal strengths not great and a lot of fast/deep QSB. A bit of cross-pollination with the OnQP, the MM DX and YuDX contests. Surprised that 80/75 didn't produce as expected, could have been the lower activity. 40 could have been shorter but was ok. Worked only 46 counties total (26! cw/43fone), 52 total s/p (44cw/49fone). Last year I had 60 counties. cu next year, greg/na8v

**KU8T - fixed - OH - 50 cw 41 ssb**

Activity seemed way down compared to past MQP's. I think the only rover was W8UE.

**K4BAI - fixed GA - 38 cw 31 ssb**

Fair activity. Fewer mobiles than I had expected.

**K8IR - fixed MI 222 cw 148 ssb**

After being mobile for 17 years, for a number of reasons the road trip could not happen this year. I did beat my last fixed score from 2001. It was nice to be in bed 5 minutes after the contest close. Thanks for all the contacts.

**KN4Y - fixed FL 34 CW QSO**

Did not hear many CW stations, went up and down the band. Heard em worked em.

## Mobile Activity in April

At the beginning of the month, Ed, K8ZZ was zipping around in KS

N4CD headed off to AR for parks.

W8OP spotted in NC.

Kerry W4SIG noted in MS

Karl, K4YT was down in FL running lots of counties there. Then into GA for more counties.

Rick, AI5P was noted in AZ. Later he would head to CA and be guest of at the Queen Mary Station W6RO and run parks/counties in CA.

WB4KZW spotted in MS counties

KN4Y headed to GA for the QSO Party there. Later he'd run in the FL QSO Party.

Terry WQ7A headed out from WA headed to MI

Kraig, KA2LHO, popped up in parks and counties in FL

AB7NK/K7SEN left AZ and headed east via the 'county hunter way' to get to MI

Ed, N8OYY headed down to VA and ran many counties in WV during the month.

K8ZZ headed east from KS via IA to get to the Mini

K8AO and K0DEQ were on for their state QSO Parties

W0GXQ left CO and headed to the MI Mini.

K5GE left TX and wandered to MI...later after convention he would take big trip back east to NY and New England for weeks.

Mike, NF0N, hit the road going east to the Mini – via WI

Ray, WB0PYF left MO and headed to MI

Ron, KB6UF, left LA and headed to ME for the annual trek north.

N5KUC spotted running counties in TX

Karl K4YT noted running counties in eastern VA/NC

Don, K3IMC headed to the MI and ran counties both ways.

## Florida QSO Party

If you wanted mobiles to chase, this was the event for you! Mobiles were running all over the state – most with excellent signals and easy to work if you had propagation. Many of the mobiles must have put 2000 QSOs in the logs as they zipped around the state. There were a dozen or more 1x1 calls for those chasing those. Some of the multi op stations put out over 3000 QSOs.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

### **N4CW County Expedition 2023 CW QSOs**

Expedition Mode: "This Category is for those entrants who erect a temporary antenna." That's what we did: at each stop I'd first get out of the car, take out the home-made mast mount (a large L-bracket made of 2"X12" and 2"X6" boards)and guide Jim to drive over it. Then we'd assemble the telescoping mast (30 feet or so tall, mount it on the mount,

hoist the antenna to the top (a non-resonant doublet about 24 feet each side of the center insulator), then go tie off the ends of the guys (usually a nearby tree, sign, bush, whatever... we even brought some bricks in case we had no tie-down "anchors"). Then I'd jump into the passenger seat and operate. The K3 was on the dashboard along with the WinKeyer. The laptop and paddle were in a serving tray on my lap. That's how I'd operate...a little crowded in Jim's 2006 Prius!!! When the rates would fall, I'd switch band and operate 'til that band dried up. Then we'd shut down, take down the antenna, stow the mast and mount and drive to our next operating point. I believe we did a total of 18 counties, 16 were county lines and two were distinct counties. Some county-line-to-county-line "trips" were well over an hour long...that cuts into your score! Our Ontario neighbors were exemplary in consistently finding and working us! We did work some DX, and a great surprise working KL7SB three times, giving him six mults (and Q's--all were on county lines.) We had a most enjoyable time touring various counties and working so many fine operators. We did try SSB, but found it miserably unproductive, so we decided to not count the ten (eight on 40 and 2 on 20)SSB Q's and four mults, going for a "CW only" posting. It was a fun weekend, intense work setting up, operating, then taking it down and moving to the next spot in our plan. The trips helped to relax us a bit. Jim did all the driving! Thanks to the FQP

#### **KU9E 1199 cw 41 ssb**

I entered the new Expedition class but used the usual mobile antennas. That sure was a lot of driving.. and when it was over I still had a 3 1/2 drive to get home to Georgia. I sure missed my mobile partner K4BAI. Hopefully he can make it next year. I tried SSB a lot but no one was there. Rates were great on CW. I had an unbelievable rate and pileups from both BAY and GUL on Saturday night. It was surprising 20 meters was still open up to 0200 Z. If you haven't been to Gulf County, FL I will tell you it's very desolate. The place I stopped to park was so dark that I couldn't see much of anything without the car lights! Spent extended time in both GUL and FRA on Sunday so no one has an excuse for missing those two counties. I also think this is the first time I activated all the counties I planned to do. As a side note I drove thru many of the areas of the FL Panhandle that were hit by Hurricane Michael back in October. It's unbelievable all the damage that hasn't been cleaned up yet. Thousands of downed trees, Totally destroyed homes and many other homes that still have blue tarps on their roofs. The damage isn't just on the coast but extends pretty far inland. I even saw damage in southwest Georgia on the drive home tonight. Hope everyone had fun. I did. Jeff KU8E

**W4H - fixed - ops K1MM N4WW NM2O W4WF**

979 cw QSO 2564 SSB QSO

### **K4OJ multi-op mobile 3480 cw QSO**

ops K0LUZ, N4KM, NX4N

Wasn't that fun!!! Our K4OJ/m had a great time but after 5 years of fairly bug-free operations (except Love Bugs) we had to work through our own special spelling bee: M-U-R-P-H-Y First, the numbers (approx- still integrating logs):

After the five previous years taking a hiatus, "Murph and Magic Tones" decided to ride along for the entire trip while trying everything to make us sing the Blues. Team K4OJ had their share of troubles, both big and small. But Jake, Elwood and uh, well, Red were on a Mission...we have a full tank, it's dark and we're wearing sunglasses. The First Problem was a Biggie- total station rebuild: My faithful old Suburban finally needed to be retired at more than 400,000 miles. I miss that reliable friend - it had met our multi-multi mobile needs just perfectly.

The new vehicle, a 2017 Sequoia, we just that - new. So this year was 'square one' of everything from the antenna systems and mounts, operator stations and ergonomics, power distribution, cabling and much more minutia. Design work started last September and it was clear that there were simply going to be more compromises to form, fit and function with this smaller(!) vehicle for multi-multi use. Everything came together though and by early February I had the stations and antenna farm built and generally working FB- low SWR's, stable and strong mechanical and electrical functionality, and a nice low noise floor (not easy in a vehicle plus generator). All but just one problem remained - how hard could that be, hmmm? The proverbial Pachyderm in the Pantry: Inter-Station interference, specifically 40m RFI getting into 20m RX, was Elephant sized and stubborn as a mule. I tried, literally daily, for 2 months to mitigate it without success. I managed several EMI labs for years and, while not an expert, I do know my way around most of the problems - not so with this devilish delight. Red and Kevin even came over for a full day of troubleshooting, mods and additional testing but this beast kept snarling at us. In the end, we decided we'd have to just live with it for this year - or go to just one transmitter. In the end, Red and Kevin pronounced, 'Damn the Torpedoes, let's go!'. So the entire FQP was spent with Red fighting S6-8 QRM from the other station. And, great operator that he is - he \*still\* made over 2000 QSO's! There was a whole layer of signals he just couldn't pull through - our apologies to those we couldn't work. I am just amazed at Red's tremendous operating talent and his sheer tenacity in putting up with that QRM for 20 hours - wow! Now that's an A-1 op! At the same time, Kevin - ever the patient team player - would reduce power when 20m was really

hopping.

Many, many of you worked him for hours on 40m when he was running just 15-30 Watts on 40m! This is a terrific example of his selfless teamwork and operator savvy, and even with these handicaps he made about the same number of QSO's as last year (more than 1400!). Awesome performance! I am just stunned how these guys worked together to make our outing a success. Not our biggest score, but a well-deserved victory over the obstacles we faced with this RFI issue. And we plan to beat this RFI thing into submission by next year. But don't stop reading here - Murphy had \*much\* more in store for us: Curve ball turned Spitball: Just 5 minutes after the start of the contest, RFI was no longer an issue because our 20m K3 died- wah! Kevin had brought his TS-590SG as a back up and after pulling one rig, installing the other and jury-rigging cable differences with spit and electrical tape an hour just vanished. No 20m QSO's at the start of the contest (aargh!). The 590 was new to Red so he had to learn it's knobs and functions on the fly - yep, one tough operator! BTW, our other K3 loaned by Jim K5AUP (thanks Jim!) worked flawlessly the whole time. The starting hour we lost meant we had to skip PUT/CLA counties but we caught back up on our route and kept going.

That is until 10 counties later when we pulled in for a quick gas/nature break. During this break two more signs of Murphy: a) No TP or Paper Towels in the bathroom b) Our generator suddenly died and stations went dark - !@#\$#@!%^ After a few minutes of troubleshooting it was apparent that the external fuel tank line had cracked so the gennie ran until there was no more gas in it's internal tank. We made brief repairs to the line, filled up the gennie tank (good thing this happened at a gas stop!) and we were again on our way. But we lost another half an hour in the process. Saturday Night Live that almost wasn't- Because of the skipped counties, we were able to squeeze in a unplanned stop in PIN during the last 15 minutes of the day - gotta keep those rates up! But of course, Murphy took another shot.

Just as we crossed that county line, the 20m WinKey stopped working. The pileups were incredible so those last 15 minutes Red was sending furiously by hand. Yeah! The Day was Finally Done! Home was nearby and my wife Lili had a nice warm meal of baked chicken/sides/dessert ready. Off to bed, early to rise...

Day 2 arrived and we affirmed, "Today will be better!" - or will it??? Some minor annoyances by Mr. M Sunday included a fussy seat-belt alarm and another bathroom problem (this time out of order; sorry ladies!). We made great time working our way South down our sunny state until we hit the Dragon - Collier County. We had to trudge through that monster for nearly an hour before we hit our favorite spot at Monroe



County. The pileups were wonderful, even with K2ZR/4 active there all weekend.

QRP Kevin and QRM Red made the most of their situations and the logs quickly filled thanks to those who tracked us. BE A BETTER BRO! Our Final Murphy entrapment hit us just going into Broward County - total police blockage of US27 (pretty much the only way to go north unless you go 20 miles more east) - Yikes! And there was full-on Police Activity - blockages, road controls, etc - all across the county. We know because we traveled all over that county trying to get North. I-95 was a parking lot and even small streets had more police presence. Dead body? Hazardous Spill? Zombie Invasion? We'll never know but I have never seen anything like it.

N4BP - be glad you were working Remote! Kevin had to multi-task operating and helping us plan a route out of this purgatory. Finally we hit Boca in PAL using back roads and then hopped on the Turnpike, escaping BRO but not until a precious Hour (!!!!) was lost trapped there. By this time we were keenly aware that 5-years of bad karma had just caught up with us in a single year. We were all exhausted - traffic, RFI and hardware problems - what else? Oh, it then started to rain... But we pressed on, the sun came out again and although we had to skip about 4 more counties at least we got out of South FL! We even managed to get back to our LAK starting point to make up for the no-op beginning there. I'm really proud of how we never gave up, and ended up with a respectable score as a result. Certainly we have much improvements to make but Murphy would not dare come back a 2nd year in a row, right? In closing, we'd like to sincerely thank our great Out-Of-State ops that make FQP terrific for all of us on this end while operating Fixed, Mobile or Expedition. YOU are the ones that really make FQP special. We hope you had fun too!

Huge thanks to my very FB teammates Red K0LUZ and Kevin N4KM - you're the best! I am proud to call you friends. Man, you guys are real competitors too. Kudos to our key FQP movers and shakers: Our amazingly A1 FQP VP Dan K1TO, our super FCG Prez Chris W4WF, our FB FCG and FQP Groups admin George K5KG and our very dedicated website admin/guru Seb W4AS. Your endless efforts continue to make our Party the best! Thanks to our FL Fixed stations - you are our Foundation for County coverage and we always can count on you. Also want to give a shout out to our fellow road warriors - whether mobile or expedition, you help take the FQP to a level of excitement rarely seen in other QSO parties. I'm hoping others will give it a 'mobile go' next year - the fun is definitely worth the trip.

Special thanks to Chuck NO5W and Bob K0RC for their endless support for FQP with their simply Outstanding County tracking tools - Chuck and Bob, you both rock! Finally,

sincere appreciation to Bruce WA7BNM for his Log Upload submission tool easy peasy - thanks! NOW - who is ready for FQP 2020? Bet I made ya smile... :-) CU THEN -

73/OJ, Chris, NX4N Captain and VP Latrines - team K4OJ/m

### **N4TO multi op - (K1TO, N4EEB ops) 3142 CW QSO**

Vic N4TO passed away in 2008 after many successful FQP mobile efforts. This operation is another in a long string to honor Vic. First and foremost, huge thanks to John N4EEB for sharing his luxurious ride, complete with 20 & 40 Hamsticks, an IC-7000 and a Begali. John has racked up some fine single-op totals in past FQPs and generously asked if I'd like to join him for this year. Secondly, many thanks to all of you who get on year after year to give us someone to work! If I were to list the frequent callers from memory, I'd surely miss one. In particular, we want to thank those who were the only one active from your QTH. Huge tnx to NX4N whose publicity campaign (channeling K4OJ) really got a lot of people on.

Many lament the absence of 15M, but in the mobile category where you hit the Reset button every 24 minutes or so, there is plenty to work on 20 & 40. 40 was productive for much of the time and John's set-up allowed for very quick QSYs there. The N3FJP software was new to me and we didn't exactly bond at first sight, but we managed to reach a hands-off compromise by late Saturday. We had a few more QSOs on Saturday than on Sunday, perhaps due to the better wx up North on Sunday pushing folks outside to do stuff the rainy wx on Saturday prevented. ON (Ontario, not Belgium) was fully 10% of our log with PA (Pennsylvania, not Holland) at 9%. We worked all States except WY (and also missed DC). DX was sparse this year. Our Sunday route through desolate NE OSC was majorly impacted by a road closure. We went 42 miles out of our way, yet still caught up and went ahead of schedule by the end. A bit surprising to provide CHA as a last one to someone, but it appears that many sweeps were attained again this year even with a few regulars off the roads. The love bug population was depleted by several million, but I don't think John snapped a picture of the vehicle's front. Thank goodness for clear wx and static-free condx.

OJ, AHZ, vy 73, Dan K1TO for John N4EEB

### **K4KG multi op mobile - (K5KG VE7ZO Ops) 2688 cw 182 ssb**

Well, another FQP is in the log. Reading the early soap boxes, it appears that conditions

were agreeable for most of the continent to work the Floridians, however, we found that propagation beyond NA was spotty to non-existent. Once again K4KG/m geared up for the M/S LP MIXED mobile category in George's venerable Highlander, bristling with ham-sticks like a porcupine. Problems with a mag-mount prevented us from having a phone 40M antenna but the tuner on the K3 handled the match satisfactorily and it seemed to play well. We were prepared for high band openings but as it turned out, we only worked stations on 20M and 40M. From the outset of the contest, the rates seemed better than normal with good coverage on 20M for most of the US and Canada. The west coast opened early and we were pleased to work KL7SB for our first AK QSO in the FQP and he obliged to give us the SSB multiplier as well. Although good conditions were widespread, we did miss MS, ND, WY on all modes as well as VY2, VE6 and VE7 among the usually reliable multipliers.

Due to the lack of overseas propagation, we did spend more time on 40M than normal. The rates at times were exceptional and although there have been complements regarding the FQP mobiles, the rates are only achieved with high performing out of state operators who maintain good operating discipline in the pile ups. As a multi mixed operation, we do try and work each state and country on both modes so thanks for all the stations having patience as we ask for the "pse QSY SSB??" and especially to those who make the effort to "find a mic" and make the QSO. Sunday is usually a more productive day, as there are fewer CW ops to be moved to SSB, as we had previously worked their state or province. Although we worked 200 more stations this year than last, the final total score was less due to the fewer multipliers worked. (113 vs 135) Propagation from Florida seems to favor W8, W9 and VE3 each year, and this was no exception. Congratulations to the CCO again for such a strong performance. Thanks to George and Kay for hosting us once again to their fb QTH. We are already making notes for improving the operation for next year.

Vy 73, Jim VE7ZO

## **N8II- Fixed WV - 381 cw 212 ssb**

Conditions left a lot to be desired; I was "out in the cold" when 20 went long around 19Z both days. I also had S7 line noise on 20 until quite late Saturday which made running on SSB and hearing weak CW mobiles much more difficult. There were about 3 guys I had to give up on 20 phone and more could have been under the noise. After being dead to FL by 22Z Saturday, 20M eventually opened to most all of FL around 24Z thanks to sporadic E. But, the troops did not return in enough numbers to work many new stations except mobiles who were mostly on 40.

40 CW was quite crowded Saturday evening. Fixed FL stations were loud. The sporadic E weakened the mobiles (higher MUF = absorption) and buried them in a sea of callers who were all much louder, no skip zone at all for about 2 hours! The pile ups then were so huge that even the best ops in FL were bogged down and my signal was just not enough in about 4 piles.

Sunday morning 2 hours after sunrise, the mobiles were actually louder on 40 than the night before, but 20 failed to open well to even central FL until 14Z. I missed a lot of potential mobile/rover Q's due to no propagation. The good news is that Sunday I was able to run quite a few stations on 20 SSB from 16-18Z, a surprise after a poor Saturday. Many were not that loud, but I have to assume my frequency was clear in FL based on their ease of copy. The other good news is that the mobiles showed up in numbers as usual which kept things interesting the great majority of the time.

Many thanks to rovers/mobiles K8MR, N4CW, K2CIB, N4DAB, K4FCG, KU8E, K4OJ, N4TO, K4KG, KN4Y, N4FP, AD4EB and AD4ES. I probably worked K4OJ the most thanks to their 2 bands at once operation. George, K4KG was the most important boost to my score thanks to CW to SSB QSY's to substantially increase my phone mults, many thanks. Saturday afternoon/evening, I could not find him or others when 20 died which hurt the phone mult total as well as Sunday when he was too busy running 20 CW to ask for a QSY. I had 63 CW counties by the end of Saturday. Sunday I added BAK, N4CW in GIL, AD4EB in OKE, and after I thought he might have already run HOL, KN4Y was found with a good signal at 1747Z for the sweep(unlike last year when nil QSO). He was there for about another 20 minutes.

Thanks to all of the rover Q's and the runs on SSB Sunday, I squeezed out the 600+ Q's. Stations farther north definitely had an advantage. Also, it was weird to be beaten out on 40 at 13Z by N7IR who had the advantage of lower MUF I assume. Thanks for all of the calls and to the mobiles who dug me out. K4OJ probably dug the most, especially on 40 which sounded nearly dead while 20 was open during the day. Around 2130Z, I started getting decent signals on 40. And, thanks to all of the Sunday "drivers" who stopped by for a QSO on 20 phone.

73, Jeff

George, AA4GT, operated in the FL QSO Party using the callsign NV4Z, formerly held by county hunter Mary. It's now a club call.



## FT-4 Contesting Mode

Are you ready for FT-4? Twice as fast as FT-8 and designed for contesting. Somewhat like RTTY.

Read up on it here:

[http://www.physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/FT4\\_Protocol.pdf](http://www.physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/FT4_Protocol.pdf)

Introduction: FT4 is an experimental digital mode designed specifically for radio contesting. Like FT8, it uses fixed-length transmissions, structured messages with formats optimized for minimal QSOs, and strong forward error correction. T/R sequences are 6 seconds long, so FT4 is  $2.5 \times$  faster than FT8 and about the same speed as RTTY for radio contesting.

FT4 can work with signals 10 dB weaker than needed for RTTY, while using much less bandwidth. Basic parameters: FT4 message formats are the same as those in FT8 and encoded with the same (174,91) low-density parity check code. Transmissions last for 4.48 s, compared to 12.64 s for FT8. Modulation uses 4-tone frequency-shift keying at approximately 23.4 baud, with tones separated by the baud rate. The occupied bandwidth (that containing 99% of transmitted power) is 90 Hz. Threshold sensitivity

for 50% decoding probability is  $S/N = -16.4$  dB, measured in the standard 2500 Hz reference noise bandwidth. A priori (AP) decoding can push threshold sensitivity down to  $-18$  dB or better.

--

Right now, you can join the experimental group that will be live until early June. Not available for Field Day this year and formal release about July 7<sup>th</sup>.

## On the Road with N4CD- Headed Home

The MI Mini was over for 2019. Thanks to Joe, W8TVT, and Ed, K8ZZ, there will be a MI Mini 2020 to plan for. Now it was time to get home fairly fast with just a few detours and stops along the way. According to MapQuest, it's 1328 miles and 18.5 hours or so of driving. I guess if you had to make it back to work on Monday, you could drive it straight through but you'd be zonked for sure. Maybe if you're 25 years old. Not for this senior type! I'll take two days and more if I stop for parks. What will it be?

### Sunday April 28

Headed out at 6:30 am after grabbing a cup of decaf from the machine at the bottom of the elevator. My car thermometer registered 27F. Brrrr. Wind blowing, of course, out of the north at 15-20 mph. The flags on the 3 flag poles were straight out. Ah yes, MI Mini weather! It will be 80 degrees in TX today.

I headed on down to Highway 131 which is like an interstate.....and down the road 2 hours took a detour to Newaygo State Park KFF-1527 in - Newaygo County. 20M was productive with DX coming in at the early hour. DL3DXX, IW2BNA, DK2OY, IW2NXI, DL1EBR, ON4ON...and missed some QSOs with OM1AX (weak weak weak), PA1H, and SP5KD.....just couldn't make it with those 3. Only county hunters worked on 20M were N5MLP and KD1CT at this hour (1151Z). Caught on FL QSO Party Station on 20M SSB, then a bunch of county hunters and park hunters on 30 and 40M ending up with over 44Q and a smile on my face. Success. Did catch some FL mobiles at the end – six of them – in the FL QSO Party.

While driving along, caught another half dozen FL mobiles. They'd likely be in

different counties by the time I reached the next park so no problems working them. They'd be good for contacts. N4CW set up fixed antenna and was loud. Ed, KN4Y was tough to work for me. Just got him a few times in his counties.

Hours and hours later, I dropped by Warren Woods State Park along the coast – whoa – what's this? Everything is 'white' on the sides of the road. This area got a couple inches of snow – maybe up to six inches during the night. No problem on the roads as the surface temps were above the melting point, but on the grass, lawns, etc, it was all white! A winter wonderland as you drove along. I think that might be the first snow I've seen this winter. Normally Dallas area gets six inches average a year, and most of the time, if you are not up by 6am, it's melted by 8 or 9am. We worry more about ice storms.

Warren Woods KFF-1553 is a strange park. You drive in on a gravel road about a half mile. Then there is a big loop with cars parked along the outside part – all gravel/dirt road. That's it Hiking trails off the side of the road and about 30 cars there. I took a spot and did the radio thing.

Wiki Notes:

Warren Woods is a 311-acre state park in Berrien County, Michigan, near the town of Three Oaks. It is leased by private owners to the state of Michigan.

The woods are named for Edward Kirk Warren (1847-1919), the inventor of the featherbone corset (which replaced the whalebone corset with turkey bones and secured his fortune). Starting in 1879, Warren bought 150 acres of the woods setting it aside for preservation.

The park is home to the last climax beech-maple forest in Michigan, which occupies 200 acres Because of the size and age of the trees, and the rarity of the ecosystem, the area has been designated since 1967 as a National Natural Landmark.

Most visitors come to walk the 3.5 miles of hiking trails

- - - - -

It was time now to head south seriously. Down through IN to IL and down the interstates to Sikeston, MO in the southeast tip of the state. Gained an hour but still took till 6pm to get that far. Ran the counties as I zipped through them at 65-70-75 mph. Traffic was moving fast on the roads. (Especially in MI, everyone seemed to be doing



10 over – plus – and never saw a car pulled over along the way).

I tune across 20M at times – you never know when a park might show up. Caught one or two. W4EEC is in a park in FL. Hollering away on 20M. I listen for 10 minutes after I work him. He's 59 at my QTH in IL. He works one more station in 10 minutes. Wow..don't know if he spotted himself or was spotted. 20M SSB was rotten most of the time I was on the road with few conversations. The regular nets were struggling to hear check ins if they ran at all. At mid day there might be 3 or 4 QSOs on the entire 20M SSB portion of the band! Needless to say, from IL and MO, not much happened on 20M CW but 'long' contacts most of the time – CA, DX, and New England and south TX and FL.

Ended up at a Super 8 in Sikeston, MO – Scott County – where I've stayed several times before. Down the road is Lambert's Cafe – the home of 'throwed rolls'. It's one of half a dozen of them scattered around. You won't go away hungry. Hit the hay early.

## **Monday April 29**

If I drove all day, I'd be home by late afternoon – taking no detours. Well, the N4CD mobile tends to get distracted by parks. Come morning, I started heading west..oops – should have gone south another 50 miles then west to hit the AR park I planned to hit. Duh! Brain fade. Not to worry, there are lots of parks around, so on the fly planning got me to Morris State Park KFF-1775. Dunklin County



from Wiki

“Morris State Park is a public recreation area consisting of 161 acres in Dunklin County, Missouri. The state park preserves a section of Crowley's Ridge, a unique geologic

feature of southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas. The state park offers a two-mile hiking trail along a portion of the "geologic oddity." The park is named for businessman Jim D. Morris, who donated the parcel to the state in 1999."

I pull in and there's a half mile road ending in a paved parking lot for about six cars. That's it. A rest room (outhouse), a display board, and the beginning of the hiking trail. Not to worry. I've got internet so it was off to the races aiming for 44+Q. K0ATZ had been to all the MO Parks but he only runs SSB. I'm mostly CW. Between the two of us, we'd make all happy if they could hear us.

Caught Jerry, W0GXQ mobile in Iron, WI on 30M and then 20M. Had a good run on 20m with a handful of DX (well 6 of them) and a few county hunters (K4YT/m, W4SIG/r, K8ZZ/r, K2HVN, AJ5ZX). Four park chasers. Wow...20M actually did something. Many times it's just dead or you get 2 or 3. Got on 40M SSB and 21 in the log there. 15 on 30M CW. In the east part of the country, 40M is the best band often. (Like the last sunspot minimum).

Well, time to head to the next – Crowley Ridge State Park in Greene, AR – KFF-1077



The state parks in AR have interesting signs.

From the state web site:

“Atop the forested hills in Northeast Arkansas, Crowley’s Ridge State Park is situated on a unique geological formation and has a rich history. Native log and stone structures, constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, set the tone for this park’s rustic quality. Facilities include five bunk cabins for group lodging, four duplex cabins with kitchens and fireplaces, one rustic cabin with kitchen, 26 campsites (18 Class B and eight tent sites), picnic areas, hiking trails, pavilions, a 31-acre fishing lake, and 3.5-acre swimming area. The park offers fishing boat, kayak, and pedal boat rentals”

Had a good run...left.....working my way toward home. I’m not going to make it today – will have to stop. Too many park runs of one hour plus. That leaves room for one more park.

Last for the day – well, new parks – is Jacksonport State Park KFF-1086 in Jackson County AR.



From the state site:

“In the 1800s, steamboats made Jacksonport a thriving river port. During the Civil War, Confederate and Union forces occupied the town because of its location at the confluence of the White and Black rivers. Jacksonport became the county seat in 1852, and the restored courthouse now stands as a museum. Admission is free. Facilities also include 20 Class A campsites (50 amp service), a swimming beach, pavilion, picnic sites, a playground, and the half-mile Tunstall Riverwalk. Today, exhibits in the park's 1872 courthouse and programs by park interpreters share the story of this historic river port. “

Time to put the pedal to the metal and zip hours and hours down to Hope AR – exit 30 on Interstate 30 for the Super 8 there. I've been there a dozen times, likely. That's 4

hours from home. Check in.....and well, it's only 5:30.

I can run up the road nine miles to Historic Washington – a state park - and put it out again. All I need is 10 for the repeat activation. Zip up there at 2200z and just spot on the county hunter site for Hempstead AR. 11 QSO go in the log on 40M SSB. That's it. That's all I need. Bands are beginning to go at this hour. This town goes back to the early 1800s and was a stop along the main route down to 'Mexican Texas'. Famous folks like Jim Bowie came through here back then. It's a little 'Jamestown VA' with docents that dress up, a tour through the various buildings such as the print shop, blacksmith shop, etc. A few are original buildings and some rare 'recreated ones. At noon time, you can grab lunch in the historic inn.

Switch over to CW now and run the Trail of Tears which is a POTA only – K-3791 and get 20 QSOs there. That runs through here and down the highway to Hope – for the Chickasaw Tribe. You see the markers on the highway. OK, two 'quickie activations' for the POTA game. There are a half dozen routes and you can run the Trail of Tears at probably 500 different spots easily. There is no shortage of contacts for it!

Head back to the motel, drop off the radio, and go to Dos Locos Gringos for dinner nearby. Conk out early.

## **Tuesday April 30, 2019**

Time to get home. On the road at 6:08 am. Breakfast starts at 5:30 so I had my fill of eggs, sausage, oatmeal, a small tangerine, an apple, two cups decaf.....it's 3 ½ to 4 hours home. Wow.....there are more trucks on the road than cars. Maybe two trucks for each car! Traffic moves along at 75 mph in AR and when you hit TX, with the 75 mph speed limit, up to 80 mph. Same boring two lane I-30 toward Dallas. Once you hit the Dallas County limits, one zips up President George Bush Tollroad toward home. It passes within a half mile of Park KFF-4423. I couldn't stop the car from going there for a 'quickie'. Dallas County. Put 30 in the log (no need for 44 as I've run this dozens of times before, usually in the CWT on Wednesdays.). In and out in 20 minutes. Then another half hour to home. Whew!

Now I've got pages and pages and pages of logs to enter into FLE and upload, plus write the newsletter quickly as it will be a day or two late. Lots to write about! Oh, and I'm headed to Dayton in 8 days. My days will be busy for the next week and the car 'check engine light' is on so that needs attention at the dealer. Over 90,000 miles on the 3.3 year old 2016 Chevy Malibu Ltd.

Thanks for riding along.

## Awards Issued

W4SIG

4th time #171

3/24/2019

- - - - -

Lots of QP's in May

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2019/May%202019%20Corral.pdf>

7<sup>th</sup> Call Area QP May 4-5

New England QP – same

Indiana May 4-5

Delaware QP May 4-5

Ark QP - 5 12

73 de N4CD...that's it....for the month!

