

County Hunter News OnLine

April 2023
Volume 19 Issue 4

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – We got them. Seriously! Some days great with 17, 15 and above active. Lots of DX from fixed stations, especially FT-8 being worked world wide, on upper bands. In general, higher bands good. Lots of technician licenses now on 10M SSB and FT-8 digital.

One day – March 11 – saw the sunspot number go to over 100! Lots of flares happening, too. Loads of solar activity. On March 17, the SFI hit 400! Major storm from glancing CME. HF blackout for an hour or two, then great DX on upper bands. We had two days with K=7 = a major geomagnetic storm that did a number on all the bands, but contacts were still being made although many signals very weak to not even there.

One day (2/28) the sunspot number hit 192. Local stations were working HI and ZL's on 6m FT-8 with the F2 skip!

2) Gas Prices - in most places , gas prices are dropping slightly from the highs. Here in TX , you can fill up the tank for \$2.87/gal mid month. Up in OK during the QP, gas was about \$3/gal. Of course, in CA, OR, NV and Chicago , look for \$4 and up gas. Toward the end of the month, gas prices inched up to \$3.19/gal at the Walmart and

Costco. \$3.29 elsewhere in TX.

3) Feb 27 Propagation Situation – OMG!

As predicted, a CME hit Earth on Feb 26 at 1925z sparking a G2 Geomagnetic storm. Another CME followed behind. Levels expected to be G3 level Geo storm on Feb 27-28. It happened! Wow! With sunspot increases you also get serious solar flares and following CMEs that radically affect HF propagation.

Long time since I've seen a K index of 7. Basically horrible conditions on HF. Only FT-8 seems to be working for most and just about nothing on SSB in the mobile. Started in the afternoon in middle of NC QP with K index hitting five. Got worse as Monday arrived.



Another day to stay home from running counties

Solar-Terrestrial Data - click to add to web site						
23 Mar 2023 1644 GMT	Condition	K-In	A-In	Calculated Conditions		
SFI: 159 SN: 87	Quiet	0-2	0-7	Band	Day	Night
A-Index: 17	Unsettled	3	8-15	80n-40n:	Poor	Poor
K-Index: 7 / PIntry	Active	4	16-29	30n-20n:	Poor	Poor
X-Ray: B8.3	Minor storm	5	30-49	17n-15n:	Poor	Poor
304A: 152.3 @ SEM	Major storm	6	50-99	12n-10n:	Poor	Poor
	Severe storm	7-9	>100	Sig Noise Lvl:	S9+	
SFI>180 A<8 K<3=E-W open SFI>180 A<8 K>3=N-S open SFI>250 A>30 K>3=Aurora						
http://www.n0nbh.com - Copyright Paul L Herrman 2023						

Holy cow....March 23A = 7 K= 7 Major Geomagnetic Storm!

This banner is on the County Hunter Forum page and many other sites if you want to check propagation. A few times in the past I've been out on CH trips when this happened and struggled to find a single QSO to get credit for running a county! Not good. However, you might do "OK" if some CH with good antennas are around. Propagation will be flaky for sure.

4) ChatGPT , etc in the AI (artificial intelligence) World

The latest version of chatGPT is up to 3.5 for general users and 4.0 for those subscribing monthly to the service.

Google launches a rival called Bard. It's an 'early experiment according the Alphabet (Google) that offers it as a dedicated site bard.google.com There's a wait list to sign up for it, but heck, in a few months, it likely will be available 24/7. China's search engine giant Baidu introduced a chat-bot Ernie this month. Smaller rivals including Duck Duck Go are jumping on the bandwagon.

Michigan Mini !!!

The 2023 MARAC Michigan Mini is about to happen! Mega thanks to Dorie, N8WTQ, for picking up the task on this excellent MARAC get-together.

The dates are April 20-22 at the Springhill Suites hotel in Midland, Michigan. Address is 800 Joe Mann Blvd, Midland, MI 48642. Good highways to get there.

The negotiated rate for each room is \$119 plus tax. Breakfast is included. There will be a conference room for us to gather in each day. Rate with tax about \$132.

The Banquet is Saturday night 6 pm with picture at 5 pm. If you attend the banquet, you probably want to plan to leave on Sunday April 23.

Registration is \$30 with \$15 for the cost of each additional badge for spouses. Banquet tickets include dinner the last night at \$40 per person.

Go to the marac.org website for a link to more info and to the Registration page and hotel page. You can register on line via the link.

Or go straight to the link of MI-Mini.marac.org Time is short, so get your plans made soon.!

SpringHill Suites Midland
800 Joe Mann Boulevard
Midland, Michigan 48642
(989) 837-2700

This is the weekend after the MI QSO Party. If you get up that way early, you can participate and put out a few counties (or a lot) in the QSO Party. It's a couple weeks later than the Traverse City event so weather should be fine. No need for 40F type clothes. If you're going from west to east, the North Dakota QP is also the weekend before. They could use some mobile activity.

Disappearing AM Radio in Cars

Several former federal emergency officials have written to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg warning of the potential consequences of AM radio's discontinuation in new cars. They advise that by dropping the radios, drivers could be unreachable during times of local or national crisis.

New cars, particularly electric vehicles, have begun to phase out AM radio receivers over the last decade or so. As of last summer, those abandoning the technology mostly encompassed European makes, which cited compromised audio quality as the reason for

AM's elimination. (It's likely that may have been caused by radio listening habits in Europe.)

With the launch of the 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning however, Ford reportedly axed the AM band from its radio. We reached out to Ford for comment, but haven't yet heard back. That could put owners of new vehicles at risk of missing emergency broadcasts, former emergency officials say.

On Sunday, seven former Federal Emergency Management Agency administrators sent a letter to Buttigieg expressing concern over the AM radios being excluded from EVs, according to The Wall Street Journal. Because of AM's low cost and long range, more than 90% of people in the U.S. are reportedly reachable by just 75 AM stations equipped with backup communications and generators. They can broadcast through just about anything, but the former officials are now worried that citizens may one day be unable to receive the broadcasts.

"Should this continue, it will represent a grave threat to future local, state, and federal disaster response and relief efforts," the letter warns.

"When all else fails, radio stations are often the last line of communications that communities have," added Craig Fugate, head of FEMA under President Obama and one of the letter's signatories.

"AM radio has been tested over and over during the most devastating natural disasters—and has withstood them all," added Antwane Johnson, a current FEMA official.

AM radios aren't on the verge of extinction however, as plenty of EVs still include them as standard equipment—the Hyundai Ioniq 5, Toyota BZ4X, and Chevy Bolt. The format also retains an audience of 47 million nationwide according to Nielsen, and it remains a must for many new car buyers.

source: https://www.thedrive.com/news/automakers-are-dropping-am-radio-from-evs-that-could-be-disastrous-in-emergencies?utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR3XFIscT2NzN0p61vaLxd7cWNvZmrhYB9GLJNbAnyWNHQt2PLe7xzNXOrY

note de N4CD: Tesla cars come with no AM radio.

South Carolina QSO Party

Looks like top out of state scorers got 29 counties on CW and 25 counties on ssb. Most a bunch less. Conditions good on Saturday. Hard to figure out how many worked how many different counties overall.

From the 3830 contest reflector comments:

K5CM/mobile 1339 CW 596 SSB QSO

For this trip I did all the operating and Melissa my Daughter (N5KK) did all the driving and a lot of the route planning. Pam (N5KW) my XYL, stayed home and operated from the home station in Oklahoma. Conditions were good for most of the party. 10 meters was open but very few stations could be found there.

All Q's are important but here are the most worked stations.

QSO'S CALL

73 OM2VL
61 N5KW
26 W5TM WB9HFK WS2E
24 W9QL
23 DL3GA
19 NE8P NS2N W8PI
18 AF5J K3TW W1SSN
17 K3QP K4DR K5KPE N9NM
15 N4IJ NJ2OM W3WHK WB2FUV
14 KA6BIM N1CGP
13 K4YT N6AR W7GF
12 AC2YD AF5CC K9CW W2LC W2XL WA2JQK
11 AA8FM K5GE KE0TT KE6GFI KG4CRJ KM4RO W8EWH
10 AA4TI K3JZD K8BB KA0PQW KA0REN KV0I NM5M

73, Connie / K5CM / N5KK

WZ4M County Expedition - Dillon SC 680 CW QSO
no comments

W1MRC - county expedition 154 SSB QSO

I had fun running expedition in Saluda, Edgefield, and McCormick Counties. I also went into Abbeville and Lexington Counties, but I was too tired to setup camp any more. It was a blast. I am looking forward to next year already. I may setup for the GA QP in April if I can.

Thanks to everyone who participated!

W1MRC

OM2VL - fixed - DX 120 CW 95 SSB QSO

Thanks for the QSOs!

I worked 36 different counties.

Most QSOs with:

K5CM/M 73/13 (CTY)

KY4ID 12/5

AA4GA 5/4

WW4SF 15/4

W4CAE 6/4

(8): WN4AFP (missed 10m)

(6): KB1AWM

(5): K2SX, KY4GS

(4): 6x

73, Laci OM2VL

AA4GA - park rover 322 CW

KX3 @ 5W to Par End-Fedz Trail Friendly antenna.

Operated from: Oconee Pickens Anderson Abbeville McCormick

KY4ID - park rover 700 CW 358 SSB

What a crazy ride! The day started out easy enough. Setup was at 8am at Henderson Heritage Area in Aiken County. We wanted to leave plenty time to work out any glitches. There were a few, but nothing major. RBN spots showed great propagation. Had a couple of visitors beforehand which was neat. “It that a science project?” “Are y’all fishing for something with that thing?” Yes, as a matter of fact we are. Ha! Rainy and a little chilly, but great action with 180+ Qs in 2 hours. Calls from all over, including AK, DX, and close in stations as well.

Next up was Edgefield. Not a POTA entity, but we did have a large, beautiful park in Trenton, SC all to ourselves. CW was steady and SSB was rocking...which was a nice, casual buildup to what awaited us next.

From the beginning, we had our sights set on McCormick and Abbeville counties. 36 total Qs from both last year. We expected the action to be strong...being asked MCOR? In Edgefield reinforced those predictions. McCormick (Hamilton Branch) was an absolute 5 alarm dumpster fire. Y’all brought the heat and we loved every second of it. Almost half our Qs came from there. Unfortunately, that heat didn’t transfer to the physical world. It got very dark, cold, foggy, and all of that had an impact on operating. Lot’s of busted sending, fat fingered keywork, etc. Pretty embarrassing, but we appreciate y’all sticking with it.

We ended the night in Abbeville (Sumter National Forest), going live with only about an hour to spare. Y’all were still with us. Great action all the way to the end.

Conditions were excellent! Great short/long skip on 20m/40m all day long. Couldn’t have asked for a better day. Huge shoutout to my partner in crime, Andy Goss, AA5JF, who floated the idea of this crazy M2, 4 county portable mission. 4 counties ended up being the magic number. As the action was dying down, it was time for us to move anyway. And being able to operate M2 meant someone was on SSB and CW at all times. No mults left on the table. It was a blast and we look forward to doing it again!

Thanks again for hunting us and for all of the Qs!!

Equipment – N1MM+, 2x FT-991a, resonant dipoles, doublet, EFHW, BPFs (surprisingly not needed most of the time)

N8EP - fixed - FL 69 CW 27 SSB 0 CW Mults 27 Ph Mults
17

Had fun! Discovered that on 15 meters my 40 meter vertical worked better for SC than my dipole at 32 feet. (Makes sense, I guess. Very short skip from here to SC.)

Thanks to all who participated!

Mike, NE8P

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 421 CW 199 SSB

First... some SCQP thoughts...'d like to thank everyone for getting on the and participating in the 2023 SCQP! This was our first year allowing FT8 Qs. I've already seen some "FD" logs coming through, so it looks like the digital mode activity will only increase in the future. Thank you Bill N4IQ and Jim W4JLP for putting together the new FT8 instructions in record time. Thank you W4CAE and WW4SF Bonus Station operators. You guys were on all the time! A special thank you goes to all of our Mobile and Expedition stations. We had 2 mobile stations and 7 expedition stations on the air this year. These are the 'guys' that keep us in the chair and coming back for more.

Now let me share a little about my experience...WOW! I was in the chair for 10.75 hours during the 11 hours SCQP this year! I was running an IC-706MK2 (with a stuck VFO knob) to an 80m OCF dipole at 50'. I had to spin the knob using the N1MM software. What a challenge... I love spinning the big knob, even when playing assisted. I get started on time and struggled to determine which band to start one. Throughout the contest, I was flying from band to band. Conditions were pretty darn good this year. This was my best score ever! In the evening I tried a new (for me) operation method. I was alternating CQs between 40m and 20m using N1MM+ band sections with good results. During the last two hours, 80m became active, so there were many more new Qs to make. I 'busted' the K5CM 3 county point on CW and SSB. At first I thought that 3Y0J was back on the air. My rate was pretty good at above 60/hr for the entire contest. I enjoyed working the QP regulars, my CWOps guys and some of my Swamp Fox bros.

Let's go to North Carolina tomorrow.

State QSO Party Challenge

NS2N received a nice award from the State QSO Party Challenge Group – headed up by Dave WN4AFP. If you participate in the state QSO parties, and list your claimed score on the 3830 reflector, you'll automatically be part of the QSO Party Challenge. The idea is to work as many of the state QSO parties as possible each year - to promote activity. There are not 50 state QSO Parties as some are regional like the New England QSO Party that covers MA, RI, CT, which do not have separate QSO Party events. Same for 7 land where WA and ID have QP's but other states out that way don't.

You only need 2 QSOs in any QSO Party – but of course, most county hunters will work anything they can for the counties, prefixes, call combos, bingo, etc

<http://stateqsoparty.com/>

The annual State QSO Party Challenge recognizes all radio amateurs' participation in the U.S. State and Canadian Province QSO parties. It is open to any radio amateur who participates in any of the approved State QSO Parties (SQPs). Participants must simply submit their scores to 3830Scores.com to be included in the Challenge.

Participants are recognized for reaching five levels of achievement – Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond. Using the submissions to 3830Scores.com, each callsign's cumulative score is calculated by totaling up his/her number of reported contacts and multiplying by the number of SQPs entered year-to-date. The use of the number of SQPs entered as a multiplier is to encourage radio amateurs to enter more state/province QSO parties. The use of the number of contacts as a metric is to encourage participants to operate longer in each SQP, increase the effectiveness of their station and improve their contesting skills. To qualify for an award level, the participant must have participated in at least two State QSO Parties. Each State QSO Party entry must have at least two QSOs

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The “Worked All QSO Parties” awards (WAQP) program is administered by the State QSO Party Group and it is sponsored by Icom America. These awards are available to all licensed amateur radio operators who meet the specified award requirements. To qualify, all applicants must adhere to the State QSO Party Challenge AND WAQP program rules. Awards include certificates for participating in at least 50% of the SQP Challenge approved contests with a goal of participating in ALL of the approved contests. The WAQP requires that the operator submit a log with at least TWO valid contacts to the state/province QSO party contest manager in addition to the 3830scores.com scores submission.

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North Carolina QSO Party

Looks like K9CT worked 60 counties, K4BAI got 62, but most others were in the 30-40 area of counties worked. A couple mobiles out there giving out the counties. NS2N had 39 worked. KM4FO got 32.

from the 3830 reflector:

K3TD/M

Operator(s): K3TD K4QPL 846 CW QSO

Thanks to all of our loyal "followers" who created a huge pileup with every new county. You were great and apologies for busting so many calls I actually knew but fingers bumped the keyboard or I touched something else. Mobile antennas aren't the greatest for receiving either. Bands did well and line noise on this western route seemed less severe than eastern NC although we did hit a few places which just blanked out everything.

Our best and most fun NCQP ever and this may be the last one for our team as Tad, K3TD may be returning to TX. Our loss will be their gain.

Last, and for sure the worst, I accidentally put WIL as the county abbreviation for Wilkes county. Someone pointed it out just as we were ending our second pass through Wilkes. I've already gotten in touch with the organizers to find a way to fix it so no one loses a Q or a mult or a county if you need Wilkes for county hunter. We will confirm all QSO's as Wilkes as we were a couple hundred miles from Wilson County and never were there.

Thanks again and 73,
Jim K4QPL
Tad K3TD

N4CW mobile Total: 902 CW QSO

Operator(s): N4CW W4TMO

Exhausting! Great conditions in the morning, deteriorating by late afternoon. Great following, topped by OM2VL for DX, and K9CW for stateside. Super job, everyone. I was delighted at all the stations that stuck with me to finally eke out a QSO...especially late afternoon! Jim, W4TMO, did a superb job planning the route and driving...all I did was operate and go on "pit stops" when absolutely necessary. Many, many thanks to all who followed us around and managed to work us. Only major problem encountered was late in the day when the 100 Ah battery depleted and shut down. Fortunately, Jim engineered a "fix" and we were back on the air within a short while. Thanks again, everybody.

Bert, N4CW

K5CM mobile 658 cw 148 SSB QSO

No Comments

KN4RZD mobile - in Franklin NC 360 SSB QSO

Operator(s): KN4RFT KN4RZD

worked mobile in multiple counties

N4W Portable (Operator(s): AA4XX W4MPS) 318 CW 262 SSB 580 digi

Operated under special use permit at Wright Brothers National Memorial, Kill Devil Hills, NC. Bonus station for NCQP.

W4PH (Operator(s): K2JB W4PH) 362 cw 208 ssb

We operated from the county line of Jackson and trasylvania.

OM2VL - fixed DX 231 CW 93 digi 77 mults

My big thanks to everyone who helped me reach this nice score!

- K5CM - Connie, N4CW - Bert, K3TD - Tad for many QSOs on several bands!
- KN4RZD/M who was on 20m during my daylight and not only on 40m. Unfortunately 20m closed here much earlier than on Saturday and I lost some his counties.
- KE4HUD/M who called me during my pileup on 40m.
- Nice activity of BONUS stations: 25 QSO!
- For stations who come down on 7.187 when I try some CQ on 40m SSB. (I can transmit only below 7.200)

- And of course for every QSO!

The highlight when on Sunday evening I try some CQ on 80m CW and 9U4WX called me

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Most QSOs with:

N4CW/M 54/27 K5CM/M 34/8 K3TD/M 26/13 KN4RZD 5/5
AA4GA 2/2 KE4HUD/M 1/1 K4J 6/2 WZ4M 6/2 K4MLY 4/4
(6): N4I (5): N4G, N4W, N6NT, WA4J (4): 15x

73, Laci OM2VL

KA6BIM fixed OR 119 CW 78 SSB 58 counties worked

Nice contest, but conditions only fair. The SST really interferes with the NCQP in the last hour when 40 meters is just opening from NC to Oregon. Worked 2 new counties.

Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

N8II fixed WV 111cw 151 ssb 70 mults (counties)

Not the most fun I have had in a QP, 20 meters was disappointing, solar flux 153, just low enough to prevent good conditions from here. 20 only opened to most all of NC for about 30 minutes around 1815Z; the rest of the time nothing or only far western NC. 20M scatter was unexpectedly weak for the most part. Activity was slow to build the first hour on 40 SSB, perhaps some already on 20, but 2nd hour was better. I had 47 Q's the first hour and 2nd best was the last with 41, 39 on 80M, last 15 minutes were slow.

I seriously considered quitting at 16Z as the mobiles had seemed to largely disappear on 40 (on 20 and up). At 16Z, 40 was fading, 20 only open to far western NC, and I was feeling tired. 40 improved greatly by 19Z and so did my energy level. Finding the mobiles on 20 and 40 seemed difficult all day, and when I did work one it was often not a new mult. K5CM/M was not worked until 1923Z. I had pretty good luck scarfing up the mults from phone QSO's. One guy on a line I tried to move up for a QSO a couple of times, never worked him. My best run on 40 phone started around 19Z. Somehow I was off nearly an hour at lunch time, did not seem that long.

Thanks for all of the QSO's. I definitely could have done better with the mobiles, surprised at how many Q's N4CW and K3TD made on 40 CW; I was looking for you.

73, Jeff

WA4M portable 641 CW QSO
Operated from Columbus & Bladen counties.

K4TMC portable LP 576 SSB QSO
Portable operation from Atlantic Beach, NC (Carteret County, FM14PQ, IOTA NA112, USI NC010S)

WT4U portable QRP 132 CW
No comments

AA4GA QRP rover 211 CW (park rover?)

KX3 @ 5W to Par EndFedz Trail Friendly 40/20/10 EF"HW". Hung as a vertical from an excellent 40' SpiderBeam mast.

More sightseeing today than operating, compared to yesterday and the SCQP.

Operated from: Clay Graham Swain Macon

VE9VIC - fixed - Canada 147 CW 44 mults

Thanks to all, it was one of my best QSO party. thanks also to mobiles N4CWZ-N4CW-AA4GA-K3TD (worked more than 20 times)

73 ve9vic.

N4W 318 CW 262 SSB QSO

Operated under special use permit at Wright Brothers National Memorial, Kill Devil Hills, NC. Bonus station for NCQP.

On the Road with N4CD I

Fairfield State Park was scheduled to disappear on 2/28 from the park list. It looked like many recent SSB and data activations had taken place from here in the past week but not much on CW. So I decided to head to Freestone County TX and make some CW contacts there. 98% of all contacts from this park were data or SSB.

As you may recall from last month's issue, Fairfield SP is leased – and the land owned by Vistra Power who operated a coal power plant there for decades. It takes a lake or river usually to provide cooling water and water for the steam to run the turbines – and this was a good size lake. The power company leased the lands to the state for a state park from 1976 on with a 50 year lease period. With the de-emphasis on fossil fuel plants, especially coal, Vistra shut down the coal plant two years ago. About the time of the rolling blackouts in TX where there wasn't sufficient power to go around. Hmmm....this was about the sixth coal power plant taken off line in the past five years.

The state had a 50 year lease on the land. 50 years was up.

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Now in the northeast USA, the grid operator is warning that coal plants are vanishing faster than 'renewable' sources are coming on line. This should be interesting if you live up that way!

So at 6 am I left Plano in the drizzle and fog to head on down through downtown Dallas on a Sunday and out of downtown on I-45 toward Houston. Stopped along the way for a McD Egg McMuffin and decaf coffee. Two hours later you arrive at Fairfield State Park – nice place with 100 trailer friendly camp sites, beaches, boating, cabins, shelters, etc.. Sort of out in the middle of nowhere 10 miles off the Interstate. No charge to get in today. It will be closed to the public after the Feb 27th at 9 pm.

Found a nice spot to operate and proceeded to put 110 QSOs in the log. 100 on CW, 10 on SSB. Went searching for NC QSO Party folks and caught about 10 of them. Hard to break the pileups of the mobiles. Not much going on on 15m to there. Didn't hear too many county hunters- and called CHN CHN de N4CD on 140565 with no success.

Everyone off chasing NC stations I guess other than HA8IB.

Left after a few hours. While there KI5WLK/KI5WLJ came by – they set up portable on 10m about 200 feet away. Never heard him. Later they went to 20M after I left. K5NON was there in a camp site. He made a couple hundred on SSB and data. Probably 3000 QSOs made the previous two weeks as this was a last ditch effort to 'give out the park' by KM5RF and others. Hi hi.

Headed home. Tried to put out Navarro and Ellis but no replies on 14056.5 in minutes of calling. Chased a few more NC stations in between. Two hours to home.

The park has had over 100 activations and 10,000 QSOs – probably half of those QSOs in the last two weeks! KM5RF made 3,400 of them! Some folks take their travel trailers and camp out for a week – and spend lots of time on the radio!

This was the 3rd visit by N4CD (and likely the last).

W5KZJ was there on the last day – Monday. Made a couple hundred to bring the contacts to an end.

There is talk of the state using eminent domain to try an end run on the park. The land was sold to a developer for \$110 million. To date, the state has spent 75 million on 'improvements' to the park building roads, campsites, plumbing, power, etc. We'll see what happens in the future. Meanwhile, there are 200 other park sites to run in TX. Ten or so have eluded a visit from N4CD for one reason or other. A few are 'portable' operations on small lots of historic sites.

Hope you got this if you are a a park chaser – or needed the county – or just wanted to say hello while someone was there.

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Update

Note de N4CD – the park is back open again for day use. Negotiations underway to see if the park can be operated and the land taken over by the state again. Who knows? You can run the park now but no camping.

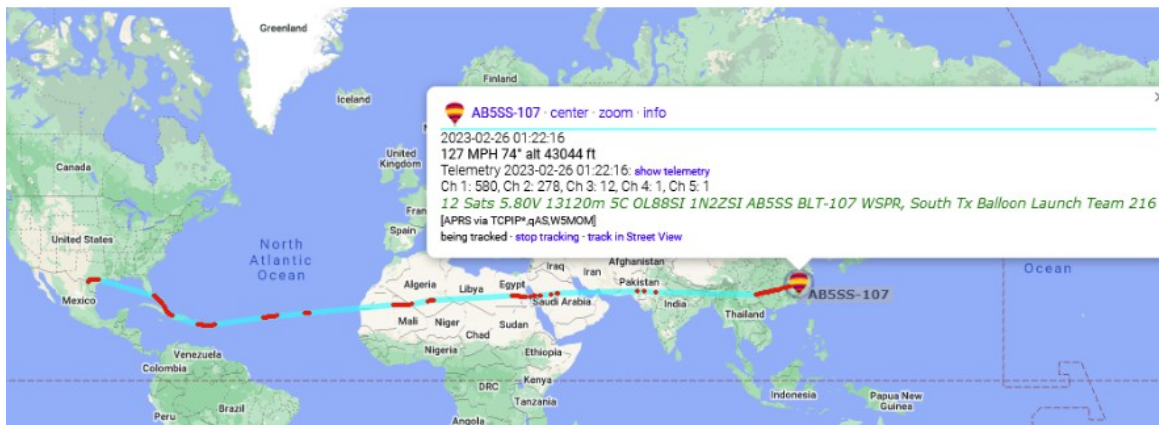
Texas Ham Radio Balloon Shot Down?

South Texas Balloon Project AB5SS-107 Lost Over China?

I've been watching a pico balloon that was launched by the South Texas Balloon Project last week (Feb 21). The balloon has a small solar-powered WSPR transmitter and the received telemetry is being uploaded to APRS.FI.

You can see the path here: <https://aprs.fi/#!call=a/AB5SS-107&timerange=604800&tail=604800>

It skirted the Gulf Coast before flying over Cuba and the lesser Antilles islands before zipping across the Atlantic at over 100MPH. From there it swept over Africa and Saudi Arabia, southern Iran, and Northern India. I was hoping that it would continue a southern track and avoid China, but it took a northward track over the Chinese mainland. The last status was two days ago (Feb 26). Did the Chinese shoot it down?



Winter Field Day

Back in January there was a National ham radio event called Winter Field Day. Many groups and clubs participated. You had several categories to enter – from multi-station clubs 'outdoors' to 'portable' but indoor - like in a cabin – or mobile (first time this year) or 'home stations'. N4CD was out in OK as noted in last issue.

The local radio club – Richardson Wireless Klub – set up stations to encourage Techs and newbies to get on the air and participate. From the club newsletter:

RWK had a POTA-style Winter Field Day 2023 at our POTA Park-of-choice – Spring Creek Forest Preserve (in Garland – about 6 miles east of Richardson City Hall). We had just under 20 participants and 4-5 stations on the air at various times. The weather cooperated for the hours that we were there and I think 50-60 QSOs were made. None of us were shooting for a high Q count – some (me) were testing antennas, others were just enjoying operating in the park. It was the perfect amount of Winter Field Day! Thanks to everyone that participated!



Chris White WX7V working “parking lot 6M” on his stressed moxon, while 3-4 other stations were working HF. (Photo: KD4C)

- - -

note de N4CD– the local club RWK sponsors a once a month event at the park to get new hams and newbies active on HF. Elmering. This plus the annual FD. Lots of new hams getting licensed these days.

Low Cost Portable Antenna

from the March Richardson Club Newsletter:

By Bob Hill KG5WRY

After watching the video, “Lowest Cost Antenna Ground Spike You Will Find”, (featured in the January 2023 Chawed Rag), I decided to try this antenna build. I purchased a MFJ-1979 17 foot telescoping antenna from DX Engineering, a CB Radio Antenna Mirror Mount and a right-angle UHF adapter from Amazon, and a 12 inch nail from Home Depot. The radials for the antenna are made from four 40 foot sections of surplus communications wire I had on hand. Total cost: less than \$100.

This turns out to be a very quick antenna build. The 12 inch nail bolts onto the CB mount. The telescoping antenna screws into the CB mount 3/8 thread. The right angle UHF adapter keeps the coax from being bent as the antenna is pushed into the ground. The radials are connected to the CB mount using a ring connector and a butterfly nut. The longest part of the build was measuring out the 40 foot radial wires and connecting them to a crimp ring terminal.



Tuning the antenna was also straight forward. Using a nanoVNA, I tuned the antenna for each band by extending the antenna to the calculated height (1/4 of wavelength) for a band, adjusting the height of the antenna for band resonance and marking that resonance point on the antenna with a permanent marker. By repeating this measurement I marked resonance points for 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 meters. I have been pleasantly surprised that the resonance points of the antenna are repeatable by extending the antenna to the marked indications on the antenna. So to change bands, just extend the antenna to the marked height and it is ready to transmit on that band.

The SWR of each band is very good, with the worst SWR being under 2.0:1 for the 20 meter band. All other bands are close to 1.2:1 SWR.

The antenna is very portable with quick easy setup and teardown. The typical deployment is to connect the coax cable to the antenna, press the spike into the ground, raise the antenna to the desired band, unroll the 4 radials, and unroll the coax back to the radio site. The deployment time for the antenna is less than 5 minutes. Teardown of the antenna is almost as quick. I take care in rolling up the coax and radials so they will not kink on the next deployment.

The performance of the antenna is typical of a 1/4 wave vertical. I can easily make coast to coast, North and South America contacts. With good conditions Europe and Japan are possible. As I was writing this article, I made two contacts to Moscow on 15 meters and got 5×7 quality/strength marks in the QSO.

This is now my primary portable antenna for the park.

Parts Listing:

MFJ 17 foot telescoping antenna: DX Engineering (Part Number: MFJ-1979)

CB Mirror Mount Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07GDGVSQ7>

12 inch Nail: Home Depot Model# 12HGSPKE Grip-Rite 3/8 in. x 12 in. Galvanized Spike Nail

Right Angle UHF Adapter: <https://www.amazon.com/Degree-PL-259-Connector-Adapter-Coaxial/dp/B076GXHXV8>

chatGPT Short Story

While goofing off on the web, I asked chatGPT to:

short story about ham radio emergency rescue

and this is what chatGPT produced:

It was a calm day in the small town of Pineville, nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. John, a retired electrical engineer, was tinkering with his ham radio equipment in his backyard when he heard a distress call on his radio.

"Mayday! Mayday! This is Delta 23, our boat is sinking in Lake Pineville, we need immediate assistance!" the voice crackled through the static.

John's heart skipped a beat. He knew he had to act fast. He quickly radioed back, "This is KJ4BRR, can you give me your location and any other pertinent details?"

The voice on the other end responded, "We are about a quarter-mile from the north shore, there are three of us on the boat, and we are taking on water fast. Please help!"

John knew he had to contact the local authorities right away. He grabbed his portable radio and rushed to the nearest police station. He burst into the station and alerted the officers of the distress call.

With John's help, the police were able to locate the boat and send out a rescue team. They arrived just in time to save the stranded boaters, who were cold and shaken but otherwise unharmed.

After the rescue, John received a call from the police department, thanking him for his quick thinking and action. They explained that without his ham radio skills and expertise, the rescue could have been much more difficult and may not have been successful.

John felt proud of himself for being able to help out in a time of need. He realized that his hobby of ham radio wasn't just a fun pastime, but it could also be used for emergency situations. From that day on, John was even more committed to maintaining and improving his ham radio equipment so that he could be prepared to help in any emergency situation that may arise.

- - -

Well, other than messed up callsign Delta 23, not too bad for a computer. I'll play around with it some more to see what else it can come up with. Hi hi.

- -

this is what it produced the second time:

“It was a quiet evening when Frank, a seasoned ham radio operator, was scanning through frequencies on his radio when he heard a faint distress call. A voice crackled through the static, calling for help from a group of hikers who had gotten lost in the nearby mountains.

Frank quickly sprang into action, grabbing his map and compass as he keyed his microphone to respond. He asked for the hikers' location and their status, and learned that they were cold, hungry, and disoriented. They had wandered off the main trail and couldn't find their way back.

Frank knew the area well and used his radio to guide the hikers back to the trail. He gave them instructions on how to build a fire for warmth and light, and advised them to conserve their water and energy until help arrived.

Using his ham radio, Frank contacted the local search and rescue team and relayed the hikers' location and situation. The team quickly mobilized and headed to the area.

As they arrived on scene, the rescue team was able to locate the hikers thanks to the precise coordinates provided by Frank. The hikers were cold and tired, but otherwise unharmed.

Thanks to Frank's quick thinking and his expertise with his ham radio, the hikers were rescued safely and returned home to their families. Frank's actions were a testament to the power of ham radio and its importance in emergency situations.”

- - -

Story 3 courtesy of chatGPT:

“It was a quiet evening in the small town of Clearview, nestled in the mountains of Colorado. John, a retired electrical engineer, was tinkering with his ham radio equipment when he heard a faint distress call.

"Mayday, mayday, this is a hiking party on Mount Everest. We are in need of immediate assistance. We have one hiker who has fallen and is in critical condition. We need medical help as soon as possible."

John's heart raced as he quickly identified the frequency and responded to the call for help.

"This is K7ELE, I copy your distress call. What is your current location?"

The voice on the other end responded with their GPS coordinates, which John quickly wrote down and relayed to the local search and rescue team.

With his expertise in electronics, John was able to boost the signal and keep communication open with the hikers as they waited for rescue. The injured hiker's condition worsened, and John quickly contacted a local doctor who was also a ham radio operator.

Together, they were able to guide the rescue team to the exact location of the hiking party. The injured hiker was airlifted to a nearby hospital and received the medical attention they needed.

John's quick thinking and expertise in ham radio communications played a crucial role in saving the life of the injured hiker. He knew the importance of being prepared for emergencies and having the necessary equipment and knowledge to respond quickly and effectively.

From that day on, John made it his mission to educate others in his community about the importance of ham radio communication and the role it can play in emergency situations. He knew that with the right tools and knowledge, anyone can be a hero in a time of crisis.”

- - -

well, enough for now. Seems a common thread throughout of 'retired engineers'.

- - - -

Update. ChatGPT was version 2.0. Now it is smarter and up to version 3.5 for 'free use' and version 4 if you subscribe to \$20/month service. Microsoft is including similar AI into the Office Suite products. Also into search engine BING.

MI Mini – Are you headed there?

The dates are April 20-22 at the Springhill Suites hotel in Midland, Michigan. Address is 800 Joe Mann Blvd, Midland, MI 48642. Good highways to get there.

The negotiated rate for each room is \$119 plus tax. Breakfast is included. There will be a conference room for us to gather in each day. Rate with tax about \$132.

The Banquet is Saturday night 6 pm with picture at 5 pm. If you attend the banquet, you probably want to plan to leave on Sunday April 23 or later.

Registration is \$30 with \$15 for the cost of each additional badge for spouses. Banquet tickets include dinner the last night at \$40 per person.

Go to the marac.org website for a link to more info and to the Registration page and hotel page. You can register on line via the link.

Or go straight to the link of MI-Mini.marac.org Time is short, so get your plans made soon.!

SpringHill Suites Midland
800 Joe Mann Boulevard
Midland, Michigan 48642
(989) 837-2700

Mobile Activity in March

Several hundred POTA sites activated from HI, AK to probably most states and hundreds of counties. Lots of good activity in the state QSO parties this month with hundreds of counties up for grab.

Didn't see too many county hunter mobiles out in the contests, but lots of county hunters were busy chasing counties!

The first seven of March days saw nothing spotted by parks on the air (with counties)

N8OYY was mobile in TN counties

On the 10th, N8KIE ran Honolulu HI

There was a busy weekend with the OK, ID, WI QP's going on. Many mobiles in WI and OK, one or two in ID.

Followed by a couple days of just park spots

N4RS ran MO and into IA. Then parks for 2 days

W5VS very active in VA QP. Lots of other VA activity that weekend. Later out in MD putting them out.

W0GXQ and NF0N hit a bunch of NE counties on a several day long trip. Later, hit a few more in NE. second trip had horrible propagation -'severe' geomagnetic storm.

K8ZZ ran a few in MN. Later, out again on a day trip in the midst of the severe geo-storm. K=7 type.

End date 3/25

POTA Pile Up de AE5X

AE5X took a trip to Atsena Otie Key in FL. It's a short boat ride from the mainland and this was the first time activated. You can hear the massive pileup on this ATNO

Atsena Otie Key FL: the island, the pile-ups, the video - K-0234 /KFF-0234

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFpWu8epRqs>

Well, that was certainly fun.

I arrived at Cedar Key almost an hour early for meeting my water taxi sked. "No problem - we can go over now."

The boat ride was \$16 round trip, staffed by friendly folks. It took less than 15 minutes to land on a sandbar that would be underwater not long after the time I left the island 3 hours later, thanks to the incoming tide.

For anyone considering an activation of this park, the boat schedules do take into account the tides, as they are quite pronounced in this area. No boat travel within 2 hours either side of low tide.

There were about 25 people on the island while I was there. Most had kayaked over, the rest had arrived via a skiff as I had. They consisted of picnic'ers, hikers and folks just wanting to explore the ghost town aspect of this old settlement. Pencils were made here until 1896 when a hurricane devastated the island and killed 31 people.

It's a pretty little place to spend a day.



My operating position faced directly toward Europe and the antenna was on (and then, in!) the water. I knew it would perform well and it did. Set-up took 15 minutes due to all the POTA practice I've been obtaining for a few years now.

I've had the MFJ-1979 for exactly 5 years this month. It's been all over the US, to Ecuador and now an island beach. Still looks like new. Still retracts and extends smoothly.

The vise-grip base I use with it is much older, and it shows. But it clamps anywhere and on anything. Add a few elevated radials and you have a no-compromise antenna for 10-20 meters.

My future plan is to get to Atsena Otie early some morning and use the same set-up with the addition of my Wolf River coil for operation on 30 and 40 meters. I'm also going to see if it's possible to get a special use permit to camp on the island.

As you'll hear in the video, there is much demand among POTA and WWFF hunters for this park. This was the first activation for WWFF hunters and the first CW activation for POTA. Any local FL hams who read this and want to make a joint activation, just let me know.

Cedar Key is a funky little town with an authentic "Margaritaville" vibe. It's socially acceptable to have a beer or three at 11am, sit on the bar's outdoor area and watch

pelicans and gulls while the Stones or Dire Straits play on the juke. February attire is T-shirts and flip-flops.

Passers-by during the activation were numerous, wanting to know what I was doing. A young woman brought me a sand dollar she found to "pay me for the radio tour".

OQ5M (future POTA/WWFF op), PE4BAS (future 30wpm CW op) and K4SWL all went into the log but I was wearing headphones by then and didn't get them on video. Thomas, were you really QRP? You were loud, dude! And I saw the "blowtorch" comment LOL!

Thanks for the contacts, the spots and the awesome level of activity. I'm looking forward to doing it again.

Story From Facebook

note de N4CD:

On this barrier island in 1860, there were about 200 residents. A hurricane in 1896 destroyed just about everything and nothing was rebuilt. No residents today but a good day trip location. Cedar Key is in Levy County FL

95 Years Ago – Historical Tidbit



The early days of AM broadcast radio didn't have built in antennas. They used long wire antennas – up as high as you could get them, and a good ground. Many early radios were battery only – but if you lived in the 30% of the country that had A/C power, you might have these in a hotel room or apartment you rented.

There would be a longwire antenna placed in the attic that connected to a convenience jack such as the one posted, for the purpose of connecting the radio. Also during this time, there were no standardizations on jacks, as there were more than one style. Below is an example of one such type. Circa 1928, notice this is a duplex outlet with a divider, as one side is the power side while the other side is connected to the longwire antenna in the attic. There was a capacitor to ground (the power line ground side, hopefully) that connected your radio to a 'rf ground'.

--

No way you could do this today with current electrical codes. Can't even have internet and A/C in same outlet. AC only. Or internet jack only.

Idaho QSO Party

A good amount of fixed station activity. Mobiles were challenged by poor weather up north. There are 44 counties in ID. With separate multipliers on CW and ssb, it's impossible to tell how many of the 44 counties made it on the air!

N7CKJ Rover 90 CW 163 SSB -

Had yet another great time, especially with the addition of my newly improved CW skills. There were a couple stations with bad drift, probably due to power issues, and there was ONE dupe to deduct.

My score reflects 700 bonus points for special event stations and county activation.

K7TQ mobile 301 CW

Weather and other events conspired to cut our planned 16 county operation to just eight before the party even began. Further events on Saturday morning cut our operating time even more. We didn't get to our planned start in Idaho county and only had nine minutes in the second one, Lewis. After that we remained on our Plan B schedule. We stopped operations at 0200 UTC Sunday.

Jay, WA0WWW, and I operated for six hours making 301 Qs and 48 mults for a score of 28,800. Our most frequent customer was NS2N in NY with eight Qs in five of our counties. Next most frequent with six or more Qs were K9CW in IL with seven Qs in 5 counties, KA6BIM in OR with seven Qs and six counties, OM2VL with seven Qs in seven counties, WB9HFK in IL with seven Qs and six counties, DL3GA with six Qs in five counties, KD2KW in TX with six Qs and four counties, and W5XG also in TX with six Qs and five counties. For DX in addition to OM and DL, operators from F, HA, LA, PY and SP made it into our log. This was more DX than we've ever had in the IDQP.

This year we had much more powerline noise than in previous years. Roads were clear, but we did get a few bouts of snow and mixed precipitation in Clearwater county. Wildlife sightings included wild turkey and a raccoon.

We missed working eight states, DE, LA, ME, ND, NV, SD, UT, and WY. The rig was

an Elecraft KX2 and Elecraft KXPA100 to a Scorpion 680 antenna mounted in the center of the bed of my 2002 Ford Ranger. We used N1MM+ on an HP laptop with full rig control and a MORTTY for CW keying.

A shortened party time for us this year, but we had fun regardless. A thank you to all who worked us and those who tried.

AH7RF - at KH6LC - Maui HI - 30 CW 11 CW mults

Hello from Keaau, Big Island, Hawaii!

I operated from Lloyd KH6LC's place, and used a Yaesu FTDX5000, monobanders, and 100W. Operating from about Mar 11 18Z to about Mar 12 04Z.

This is my first time to participate in the OK and ID QSO Parties, new states for my WAS :)

Lloyd seems to have adopted me, as a new(ish) ham in need of more experience / elmering. I have found several CW/HF elmers in the past year or so, and it's been incredibly helpful, each elmer has a different sort of operating style and different sorts of stations. This has been a great experience for me! Lloyd's station is a multi-multi station, with lots of watts and very nice antenna towers. Lloyd offered that on a free weekend, I could come visit his station and operate a contest, to get more experience. I couldn't say no to that! So I suggested this weekend, and one of the QSO parties, and he suggested all 3 (before we realized Wisconsin was on Sunday). It had never occurred to me to participate in MULTIPLE contests at the same time!

Wow! I'm usually QRP / Portable, with a variety of different wire antennas. It was quite nice to hear more than I'm used to hearing, and easy to get contacts with 100W (instead of QRP 5W). Also quite nice to just have stuff that works (no weather, no antenna failures, no random other self-inflicted problems I encounter on my usual radio adventures), and Lloyd did all the work of setting everything up (including N1MM), so it was ready to go for me when I arrived! The 2 QSO parties were at a more leisurely pace than the weekly CWTs, and during some of the slow times, I had fun practicing with the Begali, and (carefully) poking around on the radio, which has a whole lot more knobs and dials than my KX2.

Wow! I'm kind of at a loss of what to say. It was an amazing experience! Thanks everyone for the QSOs and your patience to work the Hawaii station :)

Thanks very much to Lloyd for his generous hospitality, and I hope I can visit again, it was a lot of fun!

Aloha and 73

Heather
AH7RF

K9CW fixed IL – 50 CW 14 counties
no comments

OM2VL - fixed DX 55 CW 48 SSB 17 counties on CW 15 on SSB

Thanks for the QSOs! I never worked over 100 Idaho stations during 10 hours!
Nice activity and good opening on high bands!
I hunted also OK and WI stations, so I missed sure some ID.

Most QSOs with:

K7TQ/M 7/7

Resident:

(7): WG7MM

(5): K7ID, N7CKJ, W7I, K7QDM

(4): K7I, KE4EW/7, KG7CW, W7BOB, W7JRD, W7ZRC

(3): AB7R, K7BSV, KI7PMQ, KK7A, W7TMD

73, Laci

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 38 CW 87 SSB QSO 14 counties on CW 18 on SSB

I managed to work 3 of the last 5 counties I need for Idaho. Now just need to find Butte & Caribou. (if you operate from there please drop me an email!) Thanks for all the qso's

Dave ka6bim

K4BAI - fixed - GA 24 CW 20 SSB 10 counties on CW 7 on SSB

More activity than I have heard in previous ID QSO Parties. Good job by the organizers. But I still need two ID counties all time in ID. They are Lincoln and Caribou. Any suggestions for those two appreciated. I heard K7TQ/M in only one county. Thanks for all QSOs.

N8II - Fixed - WV 34 CW 41 SSB 12 counties CW 12 on SSB

Score includes 400 points bonus with W7I(7 Q's),K7I,K7ID all worked multiple times. 10 and 15 meters were open well both days, but the most activity was on 20. I heard one ID station working 2 UK stations in a row on 10M Sunday before 10 was open well from here to ID. I was out until first QSO at 2047Z which hurt score, did not have the staying power to operate past 0122Z, but 40 was open well at that point with no one home.

Several SSB ops were over "flowery" full of thanks and good wishes while those waiting to work them were kept waiting. But at the same time they did not sign their calls, not very smart. Also a few convoluted exchange very slow CW QSO's. Not my most enjoyable QP, but I stuck with it for a decent score.

Thanks for the QSO's and 73, Jeff

N4CD/m in OKLA 11 CW 8 counties

Was mobile in the OKLA QSO Party. Caught a few ID stations from time to time while running counties in OK.

The recommended frequency of 035 +/- is JUST below the mobile window (035 to 040 for OK mobiles) for the OK QSO Party. Stations operating above 035 often clobbered low power mobiles in the OK QSO Party with big pileups. Not good. Should move this up to 045 to 055. or 030 to 035.

ID mobiles trying to run above 035 likely wiped out by OK mobile pileups too. Think only K7TQ was out there on CW but maybe another rover. .

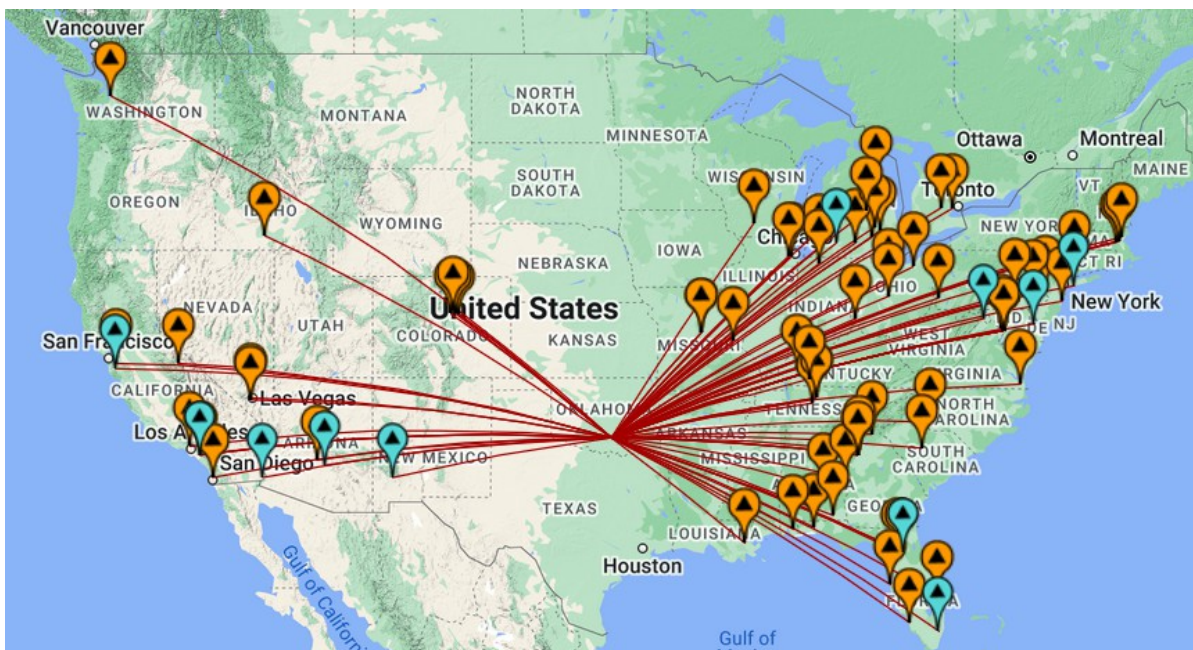
QSO Map Program

One of the things you see on Facebook under some of the groups (POTA and WWFF) are maps of contacts. You can get your own map of contacts. Upload an ADIF file to:

http://tools.adventureradio.de/analyzer/?fbclid=IwAR0940MBMVKT6X5NMy32mrbGC8OIJtQUauj_d-GU1ltFFvYHpV2Wgvv9fDo

It's part of the Qsomap.AdventureRadio.de site

It will produce a nice map like the following for one of my weekly trips to the local park for the Wednesday CWT (1900-2000z).



On the Road with N4CD II

The Oklahoma QSO party is held every year – by K5CM and other volunteers. It's usually a good one with half a dozen mobiles out running around, including W0BH, K5CM, WW5X, often N4CD, and K5ZZR and WB5CTS on SSB. The weather was supposed to be half decent. Some years there are nasty storms in some parts of OK – or all of it. Oklahoma lies right in tornado alley – and this spring has brought a half dozen tornadoes, including some bad ones, right up that way. So you watch the weather very carefully before heading out and have a Plan B in case the weather where you want to head is not great.

Looks like a few regular mobiles didn't make it this year. Some counties might not be covered.

I looked at going up to NE OK – half a dozen new parks that I haven't run up that way in Cherokee and Adair. Unfortunately, they've been getting lots of rain and many of the Wildlife Areas are on dirt roads – or what might be mud roads with the extra rain they've been getting. Sometimes you drive miles (10-15) on dirt roads to get into the WMA. So Plan A was eliminated and I elected to stay closer to home running already run parks in south central OK. I'll get those Northeast ones later.

I renewed my OK wildlife permit. You're supposed to have one if you visit the WMAs unless you have a hunting or fishing license. \$26 a year. Figure that I'll get enough visits to spread the cost out. I've never been asked for it, but you see signs – OK entry permits required.

So, bright and early, at 6am, the car headed up US 75 to OK. Drizzle rain all the way up there. It would be gloomy and drizzly till well after 1pm today! 2016 Chevy Malibu with 150K miles on it now.

No problems getting to Atoka WMA in Atoka County other than 20 miles of construction and narrow lanes and slower speed limits – down to 30 mph at times. Up to the WMA with a quick stop at McD for an Egg McMuffin and decaf coffee. You can easily miss the road into the WMA. If you've never been there, you will miss the road in. If you are cruising along at the speed limit, you won't see the road down across the RR tracks. There are no signs to indicate a turn.

If you pass the prison entrance on the west going north, you've gone too far. Missed it even though looking for it. Circled back and rode in the shoulder lane. Even then, tough to see the road in. Found it. Parked in the 'primitive campground' area – a circle drive and an outhouse. No one else was there at 8: 15 am. Had to kill some time till 9am so chased a few parks. Got on 10m but nothing there yet. Worked one park on 30M and 9 park chasers. Went to 17m and 30 folks made it in the log. These don't count for the OK QP. It's both a POTA park and WWFF.

From the state site: “Atoka WMA covers 6,537 acres in Atoka County and is located 12 miles north of Atoka on Hwy 69. The area also has an additional 12,897 acres which makes up the Atoka PHA. “ (Public Hunting Area)

If you're a hunter, look out for:

Quail: Bobwhite quail are present in fair numbers.

Deer: White-tailed deer exist in good numbers but are highly sought after.

Turkey: Eastern wild turkey are present in good numbers but are highly sought after.

Rabbit: Cottontails are present but not abundant.

Furbearers: Coyote, bobcat and raccoon are available.

Dove: Very limited numbers occur for during annual migration.

Waterfowl: A few wood ducks and mallards can be found on Bluestem Lake and area ponds.

Squirrel: Fox and gray squirrels are present in good numbers

At 1500z the fun begins. ATOKA COUNTY. Went to 20 and wound up with 120 QP QSO contacts and 155 QSOs all together for the park in 1 hour and 40 min. Time was flying by. At 10am had to leave to continue on.

As usual at this point in the sunspot cycle, 15 and 10m were rated 'good'. 20M was decent but died early in the day. Lots of short skip on 20M , too, the entire weekend. Working stations 100-200 miles away on 20M.

Back tracked to the city of Atoka 10 miles then took highway 75/3 north to the Coal county line. I'd run the C/L – having to eliminate later those who already worked me in ATO before for ATO credit. Started out on 15 then ran 10m. Good run there. Then off to 20m for a few dozen more. Back to Atoka then across to the next park in Johnston County.

From the state site: “3,874.34 acre Arbuckle Springs WMA is located one mile west of the small town of Bromide in far northeast Johnston County. The WMA has very

shallow soils overlaying limestone rock. The shallow limestone soils produce plant communities that are uncommon in the state. Native grasses and shrubs are dominant, with smaller patches of oak and other hardwood timber.”

for the hunters and wildlife peepers:

“ Quail: Bobwhite quail are present in low numbers.

Deer: White-tailed deer are present in good numbers.

Turkey: Rio Grande turkeys are present in good numbers.

Rabbit: Cottontails are present in fair numbers.

Furbearers: Coyote, bobcat, and raccoon are available.

Dove: Present in low numbers.

Waterfowl: Present in limited numbers on the farm ponds.

Squirrel: Fox and gray squirrels are present in fair numbers in forested areas.”

Only 8.5% of the area is public hunting area, though.

It's out in the middle of nowhere near the small town (pop 130) of Bromide OK. It got it's name from nearby mineral springs.

Ran 10 and 15m for 80 contacts. Didn't run 20 – I'd run it later at another C/L and a quick stop in a park or two.

I'm headed to Tishomingo and pass by Blue River State Fishing Area K-7684 – hmm....better make some contacts even though the same county. A quick run on 20M – first 20m run in JOH – for 50 more contacts. Wasn't on the plan, but what the heck.

Then to Tishomingo and to Texas Washita Arm WMA. Just there a few weeks ago, but didn't get many. This time, didn't get many. This is an RF black hole that sucks RF out of your car. The antennas don't like it – move off frequency. Made 11 QSOs – enough for an activation. Still JOH county so not many need it.

If you want to rack up points in the QP, you run only county lines if you can. That way you get 2 contacts for each person worked – one for each county of the county line. I wasn't too worried about score. Some run 3 and 4 way lines if they can. There are a few 3 ways in OK. Not sure about 4 ways – there are a couple in TX.

Headed down to the C/L of Marshall/Johnston. Ran it. Sitting at 20 deg angle on side of road.

Last I zipped west toward Ardmore. Took a detour to run the Love/Carter county line which is in Lake Murray State Park. Did that as the upper bands were fading. Got two dozen and called it a day. Headed to the Microtel in Ardmore. Decent but no grab bars in shower. Small toilet for small people. Otherwise good. Got up to 74 deg today after the morning clouds/drizzle stopped.

Dinner at the Sirloin Stockade. Very good – been there a half dozen times as Ardmore is where the big hamfest in south OK is held each year. Nice salad bar, then good veggies and meat to fill you up. Then choice of dessert item(s). No one leaves hungry.

Sunday March 12 2023.

Chilly morning! Brrr. The wind was blowing strongly.

The time changed to Daylight Saving Time overnight. I was still up early. The QSO Party doesn't start till 10am! 1500Z. I had to kill some hours. Breakfast at the motel – half a waffle, bowl of oatmeal. Two cups coffee, 1 cup OJ. No fruit there. Just OJ that has too high sugar content. Decaf coffee. Other motels like the Days Inn and Super 8 have no breakfast – still following covid routine where they did away with it, or only have coffee. Sat around for while then headed to C/L of Murray and Garvin where I would start. Hunted for other parks for an hour. Got a couple ID QP stations, too.

At 1500z the fun begins again. Put a couple dozen in log. Then head west. I pass by a mobile, a van, with a roof full of antennas in Carter as I head west. Mobile is headed east. Dunno who – maybe W0BH? Head to county line of Grady/Stephens an hour away. Good run there on 10-15 and 20m.

Then back south to Jefferson (JEF) for a run there. I'm sitting on the side of the road in a driveway. Zipping along on 10M CW making contacts.....and

A big van with BIG antennas on top stops. Bob, W0BH is at my window along with Lorna, K0WHY. We yak for five minutes. They're headed west, I'm headed east. Only managed to work him in a few counties in OK. Same for K5CM – heard them both in a few but nearly useless to try to bust the pile up of S9 plus 30 dB callers – when I'm hearing them S3-5 from 100-250 miles away. Did get a couple counties.

I head east and south to I-35. Southbound is always it seems under construction with one lanes (and 20 mile backups). Hope to avoid all that by getting on at Marietta. Didn't happen. An accident in TX backed up the interstate 15 miles. Moving at 3-4 mph then 10 mph then 3 mph for half an hour or more getting down to exit 1 for my last stop.

Lots of stops on the interstate for no reason. Worked a few WI QP stations while creeping along at 3 mph. Time was running out. The QP ends at 4pm local on Sundays (not enough hours on Sunday!). Make it down the exit 1 and the Love Valley WMA with 20 minutes to spare. Put out the park and LOV again. Some contacts might be duplicates of last nights run. My logging program doesn't do dupes either. I've got to try to do it manually.

Later I noted that Love Valley WMA was well represented in the OK QP. Seems a group from just south of the OK border headed up there to run it – and between KG5VOZ with 257 SSB QSOs, KC4EEL with 158 SSB QSOs, that park was well put out – on SSB. Not so on CW. I was wondering why there was S5 hash on 20m while there – they were not too far away.

Times up! Leave the park with a few minutes to spare, work a few more WI, then it's over. Still 3-4 mph for another five miles till the accident scene and one lane getting by. Then fairly heavy traffic (where did all the cars come from) the rest of the way home – for 1 ½ hours. Home by 5:30pm.

Notes

1) Worked lots of county hunters. K4AMC, NS2N, NF0N, K8TE, KC3X, were in there everywhere on multiple bands. K8ZZ, KA9JAC, K0DEQ, N4RS, KA9JAC, K8MW, KA7ICF, LY5W, K5GE, K6YK, and others in there , too

2) Averaged 15+ contacts on 15cw and about 10 contacts on 10M per stop. Went to 10m just about everywhere. If it weren't contest time, 17 and 12M would have been good, too. I had to change resonators to go from 10 to 15m on the Hustler mast on the top 4 mag mount antenna. Took 2 minutes or so to change. Might have to figure out a better system if I go out again. Upper bands are decent.

3) DX included SM, OK, OH, 9A, DL, G, MI6, SP, , HA, NP4. Missed a bunch of states including ND, SD, WY, UT, HI, AK, LA, RI.

Highway Patrol in Aussie Outback

If you're in the middle of nowhere in the Australian Outback – the patrol cars are

equipped with HF radio. Some have a short mast – car on right – and others have larger auto-tune 2-30 MHz antennas like the picture. Probably a Barret or Codan system with auto tuner in the trunk. Lots of dollars. You can move frequencies in 130 milliseconds, even use frequency hopping for security if that your thing. The car with big antenna also has the shorter antenna.

The frequencies used range from 3.2 MHz to 10 MHz in the outback. Think an area as big as the entire central part of the US from OH to Nevada -



Rear big antenna is adjustable 2-20 MHz. One on left side is the regional HF freq. On top are 450 MHz antennas.

Oklahoma QSO Party

Top scorer seemed to work 60 counties.....the weather cooperated. Weather fronts were

coming from the Pacific every 7 days like clockwork bringing storms, tornadoes at times, and nasty t-storms and showers. Fortunately, this year they came every Thursday. Some years they come on weekends messing up the QSO Party! We lucked out this year..

K5CM mobile 1179 CW 1123 SSB QSO

Conditions were good. Maybe the best I have heard in several years for the OKQP. Thanks to all the mobiles..., W0BH, K5CM, N5KW, WW5X, WB5CTS, K5ZZR, N4CD, and WX5SR. A couple of key mobile dropped out at the last minute so we did not have all the counties on the air this time. The mobile's really help make the State QSO parties fun. The weather was good with mostly overcast skies making it easier to see the screen. As usual, Laci (OM2VL) is at the top of the list for the most worked. I know its because of his fine station that makes that happen. Dave (KA6BIM) was a close second.

All q's are important but here is a list of the most worked.

- 70 OM2VL
- 62 KA6BIM
- 52 NS2N
- 44 N6MU
- 40 W5TM
- 39 WB9HFK
- 36 WA2JQK
- 35 W8PI WN4AFP
- 34 NE8P
- 32 W0ZQ
- 31 W7GF
- 30 W0PI
- 28 K8TE W2LC
- 27 K9CW
- 26 W9QL
- 25 W9DC
- 24 VE7CV
- 23 LY5W WA5SOG WA8ZBT
- 22 AC0W K3QP
- 21 K4DR
- 20 KV0I
- 18 KK5I
- 17 K3TN
- 16 K5GE KI0Y LA8OM N4IJ W1END W4TMO
- 14 K4BAI KR4AE N8II VA4JP WB2PJH

13 K2YG W8WVU WW5X
12 K4AMC K5GA K5TIA W1SSN
11 AA4TI AD1C KJ9C KK7AC N3KN NR0P VA3GKO

73,
Connie / K5CM Pam / N5KW

WB5CTS mobile 344 SSB QSO

Activated 8 Counties CUST,WAT,KIO,GRE,RGM,BEC,CAD,BLA

Thank You ! to all of the Chasers who helped make it happen.

73, Hutch WB5CTS/M

N5KW mobile (YL) 204 SSB

See above. N5KW is XYL of K5CM

K5ZZR mobile - 97 SSB QSO

Had a ball but had a few technical issues as well which of course lowered the overall score. Met WB5CTS Steve at the motel Saturday night and rehashed our day's good times running the Western Oklahoma counties. Looking forward to next year's efforts.
73's Russ

W0BH mobile 1450 CW 855 SSB QSO

It was once again the first weekend of Spring Break from Hesston College for me. Lorna/k0why and I decided to run the same OKQP route as last year which went border to border center north to center south. The big difference was 15 and even 10 meters! We followed up with hiking in the Wichita Mountains west of Lawton and with a visit to the Washita Battleground National Monument west of Weatherford.

Saturday

Saturday started out cloudy and cool with occasional light mist, great for seeing the logging and GPS computer screens. It continued to clear as we got further south with the

sun popping out from time to time. The Astro van and IC7000 ran great (no more intermittent power cable problems), the deep-cycle batteries were new from last year, no road closures appeared and back roads weren't muddy, so no complaints!

I got a number of questions about my antennas this year both during and after the QP, so here are the details. My goal is to be able to switch "instantly" between 10/15/20/40 CW/SSB and 80CW without a tuner. To be able to do that, I have three triple mag mounts on top of the big metal roof of the Astro van with Hustler quick disconnects on all three. Hustler vertical short masts attach to the mags.

Front center is my guyed CW stack with tuned 15/20/40 Hustler high-power resonators attached using the triple adapter. The high-power resonators give a bit more bandwidth, and 15 covers both CW and SSB. Rear center is my guyed SSB stack with tuned 10/20/40 Hustler resonators. 40 is a high-power resonator, 10 and 20 are low-power resonators and 10 covers both CW and SSB. Middle right carries an optional unguyed high-power 80CW resonator.

The triple adapter leans all the resonators over at an angle, so I have the two 20m and two 40m resonators also at right angles to each other to minimize interaction. Don't get me wrong, they all interact with each other! It took two high and low power versions of each resonator and lots of trial and error over two days to figure out the one combination that allowed all the antennas to work without a tuner. For example, a low-power resonator wouldn't replace a high-power resonator and keep the tuning stable. The presence or absence of the 80m antenna doesn't appreciably affect the tuning of the other antennas.

The only drawback I've found to Hustler mobile antennas is their susceptibility to moisture as they age. The plastic coating which wraps the coil breaks down over time allowing moisture to get in and short out the coil during drizzle or rain. Once the rain stops, they eventually dry out and SWR returns to normal. I always keep spare resonators handy and swap them out when this happens. Luckily, none of the antenna parts are expensive and are easily replaced.

County lines are the most fun. When working county lines, I just make one log entry then use a program to expand my log with multiple entries. That means I sometimes log dupes even though I know I've already worked the station going into the line. Ops can either ignore the dupe or log it just to be safe. The big disappointment was once again not being able to use the QSOPartyHub spotting site. I was hoping it had been fixed when it did the same thing during the Kansas QSO Party, but it continues to crash when lots of people try to use it as noted by others in their posts. Other than that, Saturday

went well and I finished the day with 1639 Qs in the log including dupes.

Sunday

Sunday was not a good route to optimize Qs, but it was short and had some good birding sites for Lorna. Because of the time change, we actually left the hotel early and got a ways down the road before the 10am start.

The big Sunday highlight was first seeing N4CD/m going the other way in Jefferson county, then finding him parked beside the road on the return. Lorna pulled in and we had a short eyeball QSO with Bob as he continued to run. Bob often visits the Kansas QSO Party as well and it was really a pleasure to see him in action!

Idaho and Wisconsin also had their QSO parties this same weekend. Conditions were good and it was easy to put some of them in the log. It was also fun to work a number of different DX stations this year, including ones who don't normally find their way into my log. Thank you solar cycle! I posted 810 more contacts in the log for Sunday. It should have been more, but the last three-county line had some major power line QRM which made hearing tough.

Stats

Operated 16.5 hours, 2449 Qs, 498 unique calls, 144 dupes, 535 OKQP miles.

County Breakdown (in visited order)

Saturday

01 KAY 128
02 NOB 82
03 GAR 82
04 GNT 73
05 ALF 124
06 WOO 91
07 MAJ 100
08 BLA 148
09 DEW 80
10 CUS 80
11 KIN 102
12 CAN 73
13 OKL 60

14 LOG 46
15 CLE 96
16 MCL 103
17 GRA 50
18 CAD 20
19 COM 25

Sunday

20 STE 100
21 CAR 209
22 GRV 73
23 MUR 87
24 LOV 75
25 JEF 40
26 COT 82
27 TIL 53
COM 23 (again)

Special thanks to my top scorers:

76: N6MU
57: NS2N
51: OM2VL
48: W2LC
44: W9DC
43: W8PI
39: KA6BIM
34: W0PI
30: K9CW NE8P
29: VE7CV
27: W7GF
25: W1SSN W9QL
24: K2AL W0ZQ
23: K5GE
22: LA8OM WA2JQK
20: N8II
19: K4DR WA8ZBT
15: W4TJM W8WVU WA5SOG
14: N4IJ
13: AC0W K2YG KA0PQW KD2KW KE6GFI VA3GKO

12: AC2YD K5TIA NF0N

11: AA4DD K2QO K5GA N8DNA W3US W4XK

10: K4RUM VA3IDD VE3RGO W2CVW W4SSF

N6MU fixed CA 206 CW 53 counties

Great high band conditions made this one fun. Only four mobiles made it this year so another sweep wasn't in the cards. Top mobile for me was W0BH who I worked 76 times! Next was K5CM with 42 followed by N4CD with 26 and WW5X with 20. Nothing like walking thru the bands with the mobiles from most counties. Kudos also to the fixed stations who kept plugging away right to the end. 73...

John, N6MU

NS2N - fixed NY 140 CW 60 SSB 49 mults

Thanks to W0BH, K5CM, N4CD and the other mobiles for majority of the contacts
Good activity. Many new CH Toplist counters for 10 and 15 meters.

Thanks

NS2N

NE8P - fixed - FL 96 CW 66 SSB 53 counties

Increased solar activity and corresponding better high band conditions resulted in more overall QSOs, mults and points than last year. Good participation, especially from the mobiles. Thanks to all who participated!

Mike, NE8P

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 126 CW 30 SSB 50 counties

The OKQP kept me jumping all over the bands. It was and is great to see 15m in play much more this year. Thanks to Con and OK folks for putting on a fun QP! Special thanks to the amazing mobile ops listed by number of Qs... W0BH 44, K5CM 31, WW5X 23, N4CD 17 and N5KW 3. See y'all next year! 73 Dave WN4AFP

OM2VL - fixed – DX – 174 CW 76 SSB 59 counties

Thanks for the QSOs! Nice activity mobile stations.

Unfortunately K5ZZR I found only 2 times, I assume he was mostly on 40m ...

High bands was open so long especially on Saturday. The best band was 15m with excellent signals. My big thanks for stations who will also on 15/10m.

I don't know why, but I had big problems with the spotting page. After some minutes dropped down and so long time when I can connect again, but again it took only some minutes. I missed so many, because many station was spotted only here and not on W6RK.

Most QSOs with:

K5CM/M 68/13

W0BH/M 55/23

WW5X/M 34/17

N4CD/M 22/10

WB5CTS/M 4/4

K5ZZR/M 2/2

WW5X 3/3

Resident:

(4): K5UV, K5WE, KK5I, N5DY, N5UM, NE5A, W5TM, WD0GTY

73, Laci

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 159 CW 69 SSB QSO 60 counties

Thanks for all the QSO's! Especially to all the Rovers! I worked the last 4 counties I needed and a couple of ones that I still need confirmed. Fun contest with a lot of activity. The Spots page kept crashing and was useless. did not have that problem with the Wisconsin spot page. please remember that here on the West Coast 40 meters do not open until much later so if you move up there, please cycle thru the bands so we can get your counties as well on 10,15 & 20. They were all still open here to the end of the contest.

73 Dave ka6bim

K4BAI - fixed - GA 49 CW 22 SSB 38 counties

Activity seemed down from previous years. Probably was just the hours I had available to operate this year. Continue to notice no activity on 80 or 160M. Probably due to the early start time on Saturday night, but we could have plenty of QSOs from GA to OK in the last hour on Saturday. Thanks for all QSOs, particularly the mobiles. Hope to work you all in the GA QSO Party the second full week end in April. The only 10M QSO was with K5UV. Thanks, Mike. 73, John, K4BAI

W3US - fixed - FL 48 CW 5 SSB 28 counties

Nice turn out by Oklahoma Hams. Thanks for the fun.

KC4EEL portable in Love OK - club group - 156 SSB

There were three of us together that came up from North Texas, our club is K5LRK. Randall Patrick, KG5VQZ and Scott Croft N5FKU were also there. We were in park K-6358 – Love Valley WMA in Love County. Randall had about 266 contacts, you know mine and I believe Scott had around 20 contacts. We were visited by a couple of park rangers throughout the day. We used a DX Commander as our main antenna. We arrived around 9:00 to set up and get prepared for the day. We had a nice little set up and we left at dusk.

We had many interesting contacts but the one that stands out to me was me made contact with someone who was in an Airbus over South Carolina. She said he was presently flying at 35,000 feet. I said I am sorry could you repeat that? I have never talked with someone in a plane before, Scott was listening and came over and made a contact with him as well.

Early Codes in Wireless

by Paul Bock, K4MSG

In a New York Times interview dated April 19, 1912, the surviving wireless operator of RMS Titanic, Harold Bride, made some interesting comments regarding his difficulties in achieving efficient wireless communications after his rescue and delivery to RMS Carpathia.

In the interview Bride singled out the wireless operator on the American Navy cruiser USS Chester for the latter's ineptitude, particularly his inability to copy Continental Morse rapidly and efficiently. To clarify the problem of differences in telegraphic codes at the time of the Titanic disaster the following historical background and explanation may be of help. The chart on page 16 illustrates the telegraphic codes in use in 1912. When Samuel F.B. Morse invented his land-based telegraph around 1840 he also developed (with the possible help of his assistant, Alfred Vail) a code made up of dots and dashes to represent letters, numerals, and punctuation. This code, which came to be called American Morse code, was used on American and Canadian railroads and the land-line telegraph messaging services (Western Union, etc.) and was eventually phased out completely in the 1960s. It is also sometimes referred to as the "railroad code".

In Europe in 1848, a similar code was created by Friedrich Clemens Gerke and initially used on telegraph circuits in Germany. First known as Continental code (since it was developed on the continent of Europe) it was eventually adopted by the International Telecommunications Union and renamed International Morse code. It is of similar construction to American Morse code – 15 of the 26 letters of the alphabet are identical in the two codes - but there are also significant differences.

Eleven of the letters, nine of the numerals, and all the punctuation marks use different dot and dash combinations in the two codes, and American Morse uses a different timing relationship between the various elements of the code (dot, dash, and space).

There are also additional letters in the alphabet of Continental code to handle various accented characters commonly found in some European languages. These differences make it more difficult for an operator to become proficient in both codes.

As maritime use of wireless began to grow in the period between 1900 and 1912 the Continental code (later named International Morse code) became the default standard for European transatlantic ocean-going vessels while in America there was a tendency to cling to maritime use of American Morse code.

As there were no internationally regulated standards for ship radio communications at

that time, this created the possibility of confusion that might hinder communications between vessels of different nationalities during an emergency.

A further complication was the fact that in the early 1900s the U.S. Navy developed its own code for use by Navy wireless operators. Known simply as the Navy code, it shared only four letters with Continental Morse and two with American Morse, and in three instances the same dot-dash combination was used for a letter and a number, the theory being that a Navy operator would know which character was meant by the context. The not-too-surprising result was that Navy operators, while proficient in their own code, could hardly be expected to know both American Morse and Continental Morse as well and this shortcoming was evident at the time of the Titanic disaster.

As stated by Harold Bride (telegraph operator on the Titanic) in his interview, the Navy operator on the USS Chester (and perhaps Navy operators on other unnamed U.S. ships) was singularly inept in Continental Morse. In Bride's words, "Chester's man thought he knew it, but he was as slow as Christmas coming."

All this confusion regarding codes came to an end after the Titanic disaster when the international community adopted the International Morse code as the universal code to be used for maritime wireless telegraphy (later called radio telegraphy), eventually extending to all wireless telegraphic communications. American Morse was confined to landline and U.S. coastal vessels, the latter until just after WWI, and the Navy code disappeared completely.

Source. CWT Solid Copy March 2023

POTA

This month, Parks on the Air – POTA – will cross the threshold of 13 million QSOs recorded in the database, with 10,000 registered activators, and 400,000 different hunter calls in the log.

This is the power of 'electronic confirmations' – being done. Activators upload logs and hunters get the confirmation of the contacts and parks. There are a hundred different awards (given out instantly when you qualify) including Worked All States POTA, multiples of parks worked or activated, etc.

Each day there are close to 50 different parks on the air during the week day and likely 100 on each weekend day.

Wish we could attract giant numbers like this for county hunting.

POTA has 150 volunteers keeping things running.

Thousands of new hams are 'on the air' due to POTA activity. Most are on SSB and digital modes.

ChatGPT on Cut Numbers

Note de N4CD

Cut numbers are abbreviations for numbers, often used in contest exchanges. Every day hams probably use them without thinking when they send 599 signal report as 5NN. If you listen to some higher speed contests, often folks will send 'one' as A as well. Some go beyond that as noted here:

Cut numbers are used primarily in contesting or in DX QSO's. It is a method to send shorter numerical characters as a substitution. Commonly in CW contesting a RST report of 599 is sent. Instead of sending the number 9, which is "----.", you can "abbreviate" it as the letter N, "-.". It is then generally understood to indicate the number 9. Remember all numbers in CW have 5 elements in each character, letters have 1 to 4 elements. The cut numbers are derived by their beginning character elements of their respective #'s (for #'s 0 through 5); (and the ending character elements for #'s 6 through 9); and "transposing" them to their "equivalent" letter. The # "0" in Morse code is dah-dah-dah-dah-dah, and to abbreviate it, we take the 1st character element, which is "dah", and the "equivalent" letter is "T". The # "1" is dit-dah-dah-dah-dah; so to abbreviate it, it becomes "dit-dah", for the "equivalent" letter of "A".

Another of the cut numbers that is commonly used is "T" instead of "0"

Number	Normal Morse	"Cut" number	Equivalent character
0	dah-dah-dah-dah-dah	dah	T
1	di-dah-dah-dah-dah	di-dah	A
2	di-di-dah-dah-dah	di-di-dah	U
3	di-di-di-dah-dah	di-di-di-dah	V

4	di-di-di-di-dah	di-di-di-di-dah	4
5	di-di-di-di-dit	dit	E
6	dah-di-di-di-dit	dah-di-di-di-dit	6
7	dah-dah-dit-dit-dit	dah-dah-dit	G
8	dah-dah-dah-di-dit	dah-di-dit	D
9	dah-dah-dah-dah-dit	dah-dit	N

- - - -

From the CW Open Newsletter March 2023

by Dick Strassburger, N9EEE (CWops #3113)

Periodically, a conversation about the merits of cut numbers surfaces on the CWops reflector (groups.io). Of course, the difference of opinion never gets resolved because it's not legislated by the sponsor; it's a preference dictated by the culture of the club that nurtures it or dissuades it.

Still, you would think there would be some tilt in the balance, pro or con. So, I've gone in search of an answer from the latest iteration of search engines: an AI chatbox. The one I selected is the one garnering all the media attention, ChatGPT from OpenAI.

ChatGPT is the new darling of search capabilities with sentences and paragraphs containing thoughts and explanations instead of the multitude of links Google and other search engines have provided us for many years. Though its general use capability has only been accessible for a few weeks, this might be a good opportunity to give it a test drive and see how ChatGPT might approach this same topic. Now bear in mind that the architects of the system readily acknowledge that errors may occur as the knowledgebase and generative responses are still being finessed to eliminate bogus or misleading information.

I chose Google, which harnesses ChatGPT in the consumer realm. Originally, I gave the smaller guy, Bing, the opportunity but I've been wait-listed for nearly two weeks. I'll try them again when they resolve their capacity issue. Google gave me instantaneous access to ChatGPT.

So it was interesting to see the response to a simple question...actually, I was highly impressed that ChatGPT actually knew what CW was. And if I asked the question a second time, the response came back more refined. And that is our own reality. If you asked me a question, you'd get a knee-jerk response. Ask me again, and it would be a

considered response since I had more time to think about it, collect my thoughts, and prepare a more knowledgeable reply. Hmm. I get how this is going to work. So, let's give it a go. What follows is the actual transcript of my dialogue with ChatGPT:

Me: Should amateur radio operator operators use cut numbers during a contest?

ChatGPT: Cut numbers, also known as "phonic alphabets," are a standardized set of words used to represent numbers in voice communications, such as during radio contests. These words are often used to avoid confusion between similar-sounding numbers, such as "four" and "five" or "eight" and "nine."

Using cut numbers during contests is generally recommended for amateur radio operators. Doing so can help ensure accurate communication and avoid mistakes that could result in lost points or penalties. Additionally, using cut numbers can help save time, as it allows for faster communications of numerical information.

However, it is important to note that the use of cut numbers is not mandatory, and some operators may prefer to use numerical digits instead. Ultimately, the decision to use cut numbers or not during a contest is up to the individual operator and should be based on their own preferences and requirements of the particular contest.

Me: Ok, so there are favorable outcomes from using cut numbers, yet it is a preference. What ChatGPT didn't address was the attitude of someone receiving cut numbers involuntarily yet they do not use them themselves. Let's see what happens when we refine the question by adding "CW" as a descriptor.

Me: Should amateur radio CW operators use cut numbers during a contest?

ChatGPT: Cut numbers are not typically used in Morse code (CW) communication during a contest. (Whoops! Conflicts with the last response) In CW, numbers are represented by a series of dots and dashes, and there is little risk of confusion between similar-sounding numbers. However, in some cases, such as in a situation where a signal is weak or distorted, it may be useful to use cut numbers in Morse code to ensure accurate communication. In these cases, the operator may send the cut number followed by the numerical digit to ensure clarity.

Ultimately, whether or not to use cut numbers in Morse code during a contest is up to the individual operator and their own preferences. Some operators may prefer to stick to standard

Morse code number representation, while others may find the use of cut numbers helpful in certain situations.

Me: did you note how ChatGPT tried to strike a balance so as not to offend? This is what scares some people...a little too real. While the scales are starting to rebalance compared to the first response, let's put it on the line with a direct question.

Me: What are the disadvantages of using Morse code (CW) cut numbers?

ChatGPT: While the use of cut numbers can be helpful in certain situations, such as when communicating numerical information quickly during a contest, there are also some potential disadvantages to using them in Morse code CW communication. These include:

1. Increased complexity: Using cut numbers adds an additional layer of complexity to communication, as the operator must first remember the corresponding cut number for each digit before sending the message. This can be challenging for some operators, particularly those who are new to Morse code or who have limited experience with cut numbers.
2. Increased likelihood of errors: There is a risk of errors when using cut numbers, as operators may accidentally send the wrong cut number or misinterpret the cut number sent by the other operator. This can result in confusion and errors in communication.
3. Reduced clarity: Some operators may find that cut numbers are more difficult to understand or less clear than standard Morse code number representation. This can be particularly true in noisy or weak signal conditions, where the cut numbers may be distorted or difficult to hear.
4. Limited usefulness: In most cases, Morse code operators are already familiar with standard Morse code number representation, which is simple and easy to use. Therefore, the benefits of using cut numbers may be limited, particularly in situations where the communication is clear and straightforward.

Overall, while there are some potential benefits to using cut numbers in Morse code communication, there are also some potential drawbacks to consider. The decision to use cut numbers should be based on the individual operator's preferences and the specific circumstances of the communication.

Me: What are the advantages of using Morse code (CW) cut numbers?

ChatGPT: The use of Morse code (CW) cut numbers can provide several advantages in certain situations. Here are some of the advantages of using Morse code cut numbers:

1. Faster communication: One of the primary benefits of using cut numbers is that it can

help to speed up communication. By using cut numbers, an operator can quickly communicate numerical information without having to spell out each digit in Morse code.

2. Reduced confusion: When communicating numerical information, there is a risk of confusion between similar-sounding numbers, such as “four” and “five” or “eight” and “nine.” By using cut numbers, an operator can avoid this confusion and ensure that the correct number is communicated.

3. Improved accuracy: Cut numbers can help to improve the accuracy of Morse code communication, particularly in situations where the signal is weak or distorted. By using cut numbers, an operator can ensure that the numerical information is accurately received by the other operator.

4. Standardization: Cut numbers are a standardized set of words used to represent numbers in Morse code communication. This helps to ensure that there is consistency in communication and reduces the risk of errors or confusion caused by using nonstandard or unfamiliar terms.

Overall, the use of Morse code cut numbers can be beneficial in certain situations, particularly in contests or other situations where the quick and accurate communication of numerical information is important. The decision to use cut numbers should be based on the individual operator’s preferences and the specific circumstances of the communication.

Me: So, there you have it. It’s an individual operator’s preference. Did you notice the contradictions between both advantages and disadvantages, and in comparison, to the general question?

Given ChatGPT feels cut numbers are an advantage in a frenzied contest environment, or not, would ChatGPT advocate the use of cut numbers to speed the exchange rate?

Me: How do I make a quick exchange in an amateur radio Morse code contest?

ChatGPT: Making quick exchanges in an amateur radio Morse code contest requires a combination of practice, skill, and strategy. Here are some tips to help you make quick exchanges:

1. Keep your keying speed up: The faster you can key, the more information you can exchange in a shorter amount of time. Practice regularly to improve your keying speed.

2. Use standard abbreviations: Use standard abbreviations to save time. For example, instead of sending “how copy?” you can send “HW CPY?”
3. Use prosigns: Prosigns are special combinations of Morse code characters that have a specific meaning. For example, the prosign “AR” means “end of message.” Using prosigns can help you save time.
4. Use macros: Macros are pre-programmed messages that you can send with a few keystrokes. Set up macros for commonly used phrases to save time.
5. Be prepared: Make sure you have all the information you need before you start the exchange. Write down the exchange in advance so you don’t forget anything.
6. Listen carefully: Pay close attention to the other operator’s transmissions. Make sure you understand what they are saying before you start responding.
7. Be efficient: Keep your exchanges brief and to the point. Don’t waste time with unnecessary chit-chat.
8. 8. Keep practicing: The more you practice, the better you will become at making quick exchanges. Joining local amateur radio clubs or participating in online forums can help you practice and learn from others.
9. Remember, Morse code contests are all about speed and efficiency. By practicing these tips, you can improve your performance and make quick exchanges during the contest. Making quick exchanges in an amateur radio code contest requires a combination of good technique, practice, and familiarity with the contest rules. Here are some tips to help you make quick exchanges:
 10. Use a comfortable and reliable key: Make sure you are using a key that is comfortable to use and you are familiar with. This will help you send accurate and consistent Morse code.
 11. Be familiar with the contest rules: Before the contest begins, make sure you are familiar with the rules, especially the exchange format. Knowing the exchange format ahead of time will help you prepare your responses quickly and accurately.
 12. Listen carefully: It is important to listen carefully to the other station’s call sign and the exchange information they send. Make sure you copy the information

accurately before responding.

13. Send at a comfortable speed: Don't try to send too fast, as this can lead to mistakes and slow you down in the long run. Aim to send at a comfortable speed that allows you to send accurately and with minimal effort.

14. Use abbreviations: Using standard abbreviations for common words and phrases can help save you time during the exchange. However, be careful not to use abbreviations that are not commonly understood, as this can lead to confusion.

15. Practice, practice, practice: The more you practice sending and receiving Morse code, the more comfortable and efficient you will become. Try to participate in practice session and smaller contests to improve your skills.

By following these tips, you can improve your speed and accuracy in making quick exchanges during Morse code contests.

Me: I am blown away by all of this. The content was gleaned from multiple sources (hence no attributions), compiled, organized, and re-generated with proper grammar in a sentence and paragraph structure. Yes, there are some inconsistencies, perhaps an error or two, and some of the information left questions unanswered. But, wow! Impressive. And by the way, about cut numbers? it was a toss-up, just like the ongoing dialogue on groups.io

- - - -

de N4CD

The CW Ops group sponsors weekly contests on Wednesdays that run at 25-30 WPM. You'll hear folks sending "1" as an "A" and 9 as "N" but seldom more than that. For someone with a CW Open number like 1109, it's often sent as AATN with a dash for 10. Good fun to get the cobwebs out of your rig if no mobiles running. I'm member 1928 - sent as 1N28. Or for stations that send me A53A first, AN28. Hi Hi

Often I'll make it over to the park K-4423 for 2 hours on Wednesdays to chase some parks and then run the CWT hour long test.

Wisconsin QSO Party

There are 72 counties in WI. Not all made it on the air this year. Lots of snow in the north including snowing the day of the QSO Party.

N9SD mobile 827 CW QSO

Wow, what a day. The real hero for our roving this year is my son-in-law, Dave Hanus, who drove like a madman to get us through all 18 counties. This included a 15 minute stop to change a FLAT TIRE along the route, and we still made it into Waukesha with 5 minutes left, which got us 8 additional contacts.

Excellent band conditions. We were trying out a new antenna stack designed just for the WIQP and it worked quite nicely.

We worked OM2VL SIXTEEN TIMES!!! What a signal. Along with SP5SA (10 contacts) and LY5W (also 10 contacts), we worked a bunch of people multiple times.

Thanks for listening for us weak rover stations!!!

A great time was had by all.

Total Contacts by Band and Mode:

Band	CW	Phone	Dig	Total	%
80	56	0	0	56	7
40	250	0	0	250	30
20	521	0	0	521	63
Total	827	0	0	827	100

K4BAI - fixed - GA 86 CW 76 SSB 49 counties

Another fine WI QSO party. None heard on 10M, but 80 to 15 were pretty good.

Nothing on 40 during most of the daylight hours. Thanks particularly for the mobiles.

KA6BIM - fixed - OR 86 CW 72 SSB 49 counties

I wish this contest was a little longer and went a little later. Lots of counties to fit into that short contest window. I only managed to find 1 of the last 5 counties I need for WI. Pepin country. I'm still looking for Forest, Iron, Langlade & Menominee. If you operate from there please drop me an email so we can set up a schedule. Please keep in mind that 40 and 80 are not open here in the West until the very end of the contest. Please cycle thru the bands so we can swap multipliers!

Thanks for all the qso's

KB9S mobile 746 CW QSO

Thank you to the West Allis Radio Amateur Club for sponsoring the Wisconsin QSO Party.

The day started with snowblowing our driveway and sidewalks then watching the Wisconsin winter road condition website.

The county roads though the first three counties were not very good so we decided to avoid the county roads and stay only on the major highways the rest of day so we missed a few of our planned counties. Roads were good the rest of the route until the last hour when it started to snow. My wife Kitty K9KTT did the driving hitting 13 counties on our original planned 16 county route.

We made a quick stop in Wisconsin Dells and I decided to make a quick QSY to 80 meters to call a few CQs from Juneau country in the parking lot. On the first CQ I heard a car alarm go off. It stopped as soon as the CQ ended and started up again on the next CQ! Nothing happened when I switched to 40 or 20 meters.

One thing was missing this year, no Qsos with K3ZO and W7OM who both became Silent Keys in the past year. Miss their big signals!

Thank you the many stations that followed us all afternoon.

Here are some of the top station QSO counts:

15 – K0TG

13 – K0TI

10 – K9PW, WA1UJU

9 - K4RUM,KE0L,LA8OM,OM2VL,W8PI
8 - K4AMC,N0BUI,N8SS,N9DJ,NE8P,W0PI

73, Mark KB9S

KX9RT mobile 526 CW 19 SSB

What a great first time experience going HF mobile! Todd, N9NE, approached me many weeks ahead of the QSO party asking me to operate while he would drive. I would have been crazy to refuse such an offer with the opportunity to learn from a seasoned CW and mobile operator. Going into this I had no mobile HF experience much less CW mobile. Bouncing around the back of a van with a keyboard and CW key...what could possibly go wrong!?

I'll admit that I was nervous not knowing how big the piles ups would be on the receiving end and if I had the experience to be able keep it together. I spent weeks leading up to contest practicing pileups in Morse Runner get over that concern.

With the preparation leading up to the contest, Mother Nature had different plans. Waking up to 6+ inches of snow what later turned into 9-13 inches in central WI, I was preparing that Todd and I would come to the conclusion of bagging the mobile ops due to bad weather. Luckily the weather let up and we decided to give it a try. Starting out I was still doubtful we'd make it through the 12 county planned route, but we kept pushing and made it all of the way to 8pm without issue. I couldn't have asked for a better first time experience and the added spice of a snow storm to make things a little sketchy.

On the radio side of things it was a great to experience with all of the repeat chasers. Thank you to everyone that contacted me. The highest occurrence was N9DJ with 11 contacts followed by N5AU and OM2VL for 10 contacts, and then LA8OM, SP5SA, and LY5W.

I wish I could have done better in many areas, but that is motivation for coming back next year with goals. For some reason I wasn't able to produce a pileup on 40M CW with many strong stations on phone and first time calls and RBN reporting respectable signals. From a numbers standpoint lack of 40M contacts was probably the largest gap. This was my all time high scoring record (and only one) mobile WIQP entry!

Thank you N9NE for your generosity and encouragement! Thank you WARAC and sponsors for hosting the WIQP.

KE0TT mobile QRP - 118 CW Pierce county

K3/10 at 5 watts to a 66' inv vee fed at 21' apex. 300 ohm TV line and Matchbox tuner. Fun contest, with lots of stations on. Thanks for your copy of my QRP. Enjoyed 6 DX Q's in Europe, always a QRP thrill for this op. C U next time, 73, Dan ke0tt

Dave KA6BIM

WO9B mobile 741 CW

We had an outstanding time in this year's WIQP. The team consisted of KA9FZR, AA9RK and WO9B. Great to have a 2nd CW op. WX for the mobile op was a concern, but we focused on SE WI so had the best end of the snow. Bands were very good with an unusual number of DX stations. 20 meters really delivered this year. Nice to have it back in the fold. Thanks to the WIQP Committee and the sponsors. The WIQP is a rite of spring which we look forward to every year.

Route: MIL -> RAC -> KEN -> WAL -> JEF -> WAL -> ROC -> DAN -> COL -> DOD -> FON -> SHE -> OZA -> WAS -> WAU -> MIL. 14 counties, 13 of which were non-home counties in which we made 12 QSOs for the bonus. We also worked W9FK for the bonus.

NE8P -fixed -FL 88 SSB 51 CW 43 counties

Better band conditions and my venturing on to 80 meters yielded much better results this year than last. Wisconsin was noticeably more difficult to work than Oklahoma and Idaho from here! Thanks to all who participated!

Mike, NE8P

K4AMC - fixed TN - 97 CW 44 counties

Lots of activity on cw. Good condx on 40 and 20m. Also tks mobile stn. Thanks for contest, one of my favorite QSO contests. 73 Jim K4AMC.

NS2N - fixed NY 78 CW 37 SSB 45 counties

health issues, visitor (es, The Hermits had a visitor) and dinner really shortened BIC time. Condx sounded great.

TNX NS2N

Call: K9M mobile 204 CW 408 SSB

Operator(s): KB9VBR KZ9V

no comments

Call: K9TIT mobile 437 SSB QSO

Operator(s): AB9TE KC9FSH KC9IZF

no comments

Call: WO9B 741 CW QSO

Operator(s): AA9RK KA9FZR WO9B

We had an outstanding time in this year's WIQP. The team consisted of KA9FZR, AA9RK and WO9B. Great to have a 2nd CW op. WX for the mobile op was a concern, but we focused on SE WI so had the best end of the snow. Bands were very good with an unusual number of DX stations. 20 meters really delivered this year. Nice to have it back in the fold. Thanks to the WIQP Committee and the sponsors. The WIQP is a rite of spring which we look forward to every year.

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OM2VL - fixed - DX 116 CW 86 SSB 56 counties

High bands was open so long especially on Saturday when I was QRV on the ID and OK QP's. During WI QP not any QSO on 10m and "only" 25 on 15m.

My big thanks to mobiles who was QRV also on 20m when 40m was closed here.

My main problem in all QP's that on 40m I can transmit only below 7.200 and 99,9 % of

station are only above 7.200. During the last hour I try some SSB CQ on 7.192 - thanks a lot for all station who listen also below 7.200 and give me some points/multipliers.

Most QSOs with:

N9SD/M 16/14
WO9B/M 12/11
KX9RT/M 11/11
KB9S/M 9/8
K0RC/M 5/5
K9TIT/M 5/4
K9M 2/2

My score including 500 points for 5 QSO with W9FK
73, Laci OM2VL

N4CD/M in OK 21 CW 18 counties

N4CD was out mobile in the OK QSO Party busy giving out the OK counties. Caught a few WI in between while headed from county to county. Never heard bonus stations. Propagation good on 20 and 15. Giant pileups. Couldn't stick around long to try and break through with mobile signal so missed a bunch, plus busy with my own pileups when in new county for 20 minutes or more.

Rig: IC-7100, Hustler 54 inch mast on 4 mag mount with 20, 15, 10m (and 12).
Hamstick 20M. Six foot mast on 3 mag mount with 40/30/20/17 horizontal resonators. Paper logs.

K9M mobile 204 CW 408 SSB

Operator(s): KB9VBR KZ9V

no comments

K9TIT mobile 437 SSB QSO

Operator(s): AB9TE KC9FSH KC9IZ

no comments

ChatGPT the Poet

So, for fun, I (Joel Ohmer) asked ChatGPT to write a poem about POTA

In fields and forests, by streams and lakes,
A radio operator awakes,
He packs his gear, and sets out to play,
With Parks on the Air as his aim today.
The airwaves crackle, his antenna high,
He calls CQ, the world replies,
From mountaintops to valleys low,
His signal travels, to and fro.
The sun shines bright, the sky so blue,
The breeze is cool, the view so new,
He sets up camp, under the trees,
And operates with skill and ease.
The birds sing sweet, the wildlife plays,
The radio hums, throughout the day,
The contacts pour in, from far and wide,
As the operator beams with pride.
Parks on the Air, a hobby so dear,
Connecting people far and near,
Nature and radio, a perfect pair,
A bond that grows, beyond compare.

Michigan Mini 2023

The 2023 MARAC Michigan Mini is being announced. Mega thanks to Dorie, N8WTQ, for picking up the task on this excellent MARAC get-together.

The dates are April 20-22 at the Springhill Suites hotel in Midland, Michigan. Address is 800 Joe Mann Blvd, Midland, MI 48642. Good highways to get there.

The negotiated rate for each room is \$119 plus tax. Breakfast is included. There will be a conference room for us to gather in each day. Rate with tax about \$132.

The Banquet is Saturday night 6 pm with picture at 5 pm. If you attend the banquet, you probably want to plan to leave on Sunday April 23.

Registration is \$30 with \$15 for the cost of each additional badge for spouses. Banquet tickets include dinner the last night at \$40 per person.

Go to the marac.org website for a link to more info and to the Registration page and hotel page. You can register on line via the link.

Or go straight to the link of MI-Mini.marac.org Time is short, so get your plans made soon.!

SpringHill Suites Midland
800 Joe Mann Boulevard
Midland, Michigan 48642
(989) 837-2700

Note: The MI and ND QSO Parties are the weekend before if you want to pile up some contacts and have some fun on your 'northern trip'.

Virginia QSO Party

This is a pain in the neck QSO party with serial numbers required. One of a few. Mobiles were out and running.

WY7AA/M county expedition to somewhere 307 SSB QSO
no comments

VE9VIC - fixed - Canada 158 CW 68 counties

It was fun, thanks to the organization, well done, nice website, the APRS mobile tracker is amazing, a special thanks to N4CW for picking my little 100 watts, I worked N4CW more than 30 times.

K1GQ fixed NH 251 CW 80 counties

Score is a guess, because there is no way to know when I made a QSO with a “Mobile, Expedition or Rover”, which affects QSO points.

K4BAI 156 CW 61 SSB 64 counties

The sponsors did a wonderful job of getting many VA stations QRV. Thanks for all QSOs. Especially the mobiles. Some of the phone mobiles were incredibly loud here. I think 20M was a bit too long from here to Southern VA at least. No VA signals heard on 15M. May I suggest that this contest is far too long? 73, John, K4BAI

Castner Range National Monument

President creates two new National Monuments

Over 7,000 acres of land that makes up the Castner Range is now protected as a national monument site, making it the third one in the entire state.

It took 52 years for local environmentalists and lawmakers to achieve their goal of protecting this piece of land. Castner Range is not only the home of Mexican Golden Poppies and various other plants and animal species in the Chihuahuan Desert, it also holds a vast history.

Castner Range used to be a training and testing site for the U.S. Army during World War II, Vietnam and Korean wars and is still managed by Fort Bliss.

This designation ensures more effort is put into cleaning up parts that are not accessible to the public and still contains an unknown amount of unexploded munition.

Fort Bliss used the area for weapons training and testing through the 1960s. Because military ordnance and explosives pose a safety risk, the site is closed to public access.

Commanding General of the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss, Maj. Gen. Jim Eisenhower III, explained that Fort Bliss will continue the cleanup efforts but it might

take several years for more areas to be accessible.

However, just the fact that the area is protected caused an outpouring of celebrations in El Paso as activists and lawmakers saw their efforts come to fruition.

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Another one in Nevada, the Kwa Ami NM, of over 500,000 acres was created with a 'stroke of the pen. Between the two, the areas protected are 2/3rds the size of the state of Rhode Island.

Last October, he created the Camp Hale Continental Divide NM, a WW2 era military training ground in CO.

Wonder if they'll turn into POTA parks?

Bill Gates on AI

Bill Gates calls AI Most Revolutionary Tech in Decades

Note: Bill Gates is founder of MICROSOFT

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Bill Gates said he believes artificial intelligence (AI) is the most revolutionary technology he has seen in decades on a par with computers, cellphones and the internet. The development of AI is as fundamental as the creation of the microprocessor, the personal computer, the Internet and the mobile phone – he wrote in a blog post. Entire Industries will re-orient around it. Businesses will distinguish themselves by how well they use it.

He and other technologists have theorized about AI's different applications for years, a debate that has intensified since the startup Open AI launched ChatGPT in November.

Essentially, AI refers to a computer's ability to learn from large amounts of data and subsequently mimic human responses.

He said AI could help scientists develop vaccines, teach students math and replace jobs in task-oriented fields like sales and accounting.

Mr Gates has said for years that he believes AI will change lives.

OpenAI set off a race among tech giants to release similar technologies, including Microsoft AI Bing search engine and Bard.

Microsoft said this year it was making a multiyear, multi-billion dollar investment in OpenAI, the startup behind viral ChatGPT chatbot. He has been following the development since 2016.

Still, Mr Gates acknowledged AI's shortcomings. We should keep in mind that we're only at the beginning of what AI can accomplish. Whatever limitations it has today will be gone before we know it.

Source: WSJ March 23 2023

Nice Little Paddles from Germany



If you're looking for a small set of paddles that will fit in a modern car – you might look at the Bamakey TP III. It will cost you about \$185 to buy and get it shipped to USA.

It has 4 magnets underneath to mount on a metal surface. You can easily hold it in the palm of your hand.

<https://www.bamatech.net/morsetasten/bamakey-tp-iii-twin-paddle-key-rot.html?language=en>

You can go with a MFJ or similar \$45 new , 20-25 hamfest price – but if has parts that easily fly off like the Bencher/MFJ, it is not a good mobile key! Sooner or later, you'll bump the paddles, it will then not work, or worse, parts will fly off to recesses in your car, necessitating a search for the missing pieces. Keys like the Bengali Traveler and others with no parts to fly off, or adjustments locked down by set screws that are recessed, are best for mobile use.

Spring Yet?

Toward the end of the month (25th), it's snowing in MN, IA, NE, SD, etc. Winter seems to be hanging on up north – but should end soon. But it's been known to snow way north into June some years. Ed, K8ZZ, in MN, posted some pics on Facebook – about the snow and the aurora from the severe geomagnetic storms. Snow, sleet and ice in the Quad cities (IA, MO) at this time.

Meanwhile, in the south, it's severe storm season. Here in TX, storm fronts roll through every Thursday eve. The drenching rains, snows in higher elevations, in CA come every 7 days in CA then move east. Nasty weather along the Gulf in LA, MS, north FL.

I recall visiting the Devils Postpile National Monument in June 2016 in CA. You have to wait for the road into it to be plowed by then. It's right next to Mammoth Lake – up at 9,000 feet, where they've had 66 feet of snow this winter! It's going to be a long time before all that snow is gone! Mammoth Lake is huge ski area – and summer recreation spot. You can park and ride the shuttle down to the Devils Postpile NM once it opens – maybe July this year. For a month or two before the snow starts again.

The road in typically opens in mid to late June (sometimes into July) and is closed in early October to late October – depending when the snow flies.

This year the snow pack there is over 235% of normal. Some regular pics on the NM here

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=devils%20postpile%20national%20monument>

Won't be long before we'll be going without too much rain, 90-110F temps here in TX. You can always complain about the weather. It's a good time to be where the weather is nice on a county hunting trip!

Awards Issued

Single Band Award:

W4YDY attained 17M level 2000 on 24 February 2023. He received #9

Roadrunner Award

W0GXQ has attained 1550 last counties on 20 August 2020. He received #4

Ran All State Award

N8HAM completed Florida on 20 February 2023. He received #44

KJ7OKW completed Delaware on 15 March 2023. He received #81

Events for County Hunters

Lots of good QSO Parties this month! Many allow digital (not FL, MI or GA) this year.

Listing courtesy of ARRL Contest Corral for April 2023. (for dig the exchange is the grid square usually). Dunno how you figure out how many 'counties' you get out of that? Some digi programs allow you to change the FT-8 message so we'll see how this works out. Some only RTTY and PSK – read rules carefully.

Apr 1 1400z to Apr 2 0200z

1.8-28,50, 144

Louisiana QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), LA parish or SPC

laqp.louisianacontestclub.org

Apr 1 1400z to Apr 2 0200z

1.8-28,50, 144

Mississippi QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), MS county or SPC

www.arrlmiss.org

Apr 1 1400z to Apr 2 2000z

1.8-28, V/UHF

Missouri QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), MO county or SPC

www.w0ma.org

Apr 1 1400z to 2 2200z

3.5-28

Florida State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig

Park ID or SPC

flspota.org/rules

Apr 8 1400Z to Apr 9 0200z

1,8 to 28, 50, 144

New Mexico QSO Party CW Ph Dig

Name, NM county or SPC

www.newmexicoqsoparty.org

Apr 8 1800z to Apr 9 2359z

1.8-28,50

Georgia QSO Party CW Ph

RST, GA county or SPC

gaqsoparty.com

Don't forget to file your income taxes! Due date!

Apr 15 1300z to Apr 16 2200z

1.8-28, V/UHF

Nebraska QSO Party CW Ph Dig

NE county or SPC (FT8: grid)

nebraskaqsoparty.com

Apr 15 1400z to 16 2000z

No WARC

Texas State Parks on the Air CW Ph Dig

RST, park ID or SPC

www.tspota.org

Apr 15 1600z to Apr 16 0400z

3.5-28

Michigan QSO Party CW Ph

RST, MI county or SPC

miqp.org/index.php/rules

Apr 15 1800 16 1800

1.8-28,50, 144

Ontario QSO Party CW Ph RS(T),

ON county or SPC

www.va3cco.com/oqp/rules.htm

APR 15 1800z to Apr 16 1800z

1.8-28,50, 144

North Dakota QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), ND county or SPC

www.ndarrlsection.com

Apr 16 1200z to 16 2000z

1.8-28,50, 144

Quebec QSO Party CW Ph RS(T),

QC zone or SPC

wp1.quebecqsoparty.org

Apr 29 1600z to 30 2159z

7,14,21,28

Florida QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), FL county or SPC

floridaqsoparty.org/rules

That's all this month. That's enough! 73 de N4CD