

County Hunter News OnLine

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Volume 19 Issue 5

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

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

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CW County Hunter 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 generally good up to 15m and sometimes good on 12 and 10m depending upon the sunspot numbers. It's been lagging a bit through April.

This month we had some SERIOUSLY BAD solar storms with Geomagnetic storms up to K=5 type – SEVERE storm. Bands horrible for a day or two at a time. Happened several times.

2) Articles – thanks to Rick, AI5P for two articles included in this issue

3) 10M - Well, it perked up a bit then the sunspot numbers dropped off. Great FT-8 activity, but unless you live on the coasts or HI, a bit rough from the mobiles. Even 15m QSO party activity down a bit with 20M the main band for mobiles.

Stealth Solar Storm

Strongest solar storm in nearly 6 years slams into Earth catching forecasters by

surprise

By Daisy Dobrijevic

The most powerful solar storm in nearly six years slammed Earth today (March 24), but strangely, space weather forecasters didn't see it coming.

The geomagnetic storm peaked as a severe G4 on the 5-grade scale used by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assess the severity of space weather events. The storm's unexpected ferocity not only made auroras visible as far south as New Mexico in the U.S., but it also forced spaceflight company Rocket Lab to delay a launch by 90 minutes.

Geomagnetic storms are disturbances to Earth's magnetic field caused by solar material from coronal mass ejections (CME) — large expulsions of plasma and magnetic field from the sun's atmosphere. It turns out that this particular geomagnetic storm was triggered by a "stealth" CME which — as the name suggests — is rather tricky to detect.

NOAA's National Space Weather Service originally announced a "geomagnetic storm watch" on March 22 ([opens in new tab](#)), to come into effect on 23-25 March with possible moderate G2 storm conditions expected on March 24. So forecasters weren't completely caught off-guard, they however didn't expect a magnitude G4 storm.

It wasn't until 00:41 a.m. EDT (0441 GMT) on March 24 that NOAA uprated the warning to a severe G4 storm, which was after a stronger than forecasted G3 storm escalated to a G4 at 12:04 a.m. EDT (0404 GMT).

U.S. space weather forecaster Tamitha Skov explained to Space.com in an email why the space weather community got it so wrong with this latest storm.

"These nearly invisible storms launch much more slowly than eruptive CMEs and are very difficult to observe leaving the sun's surface without specialized training," she said, adding that the stealth CMEs can also be "camouflaged" by other, more dense structures emanating from the sun, which makes them difficult to observe.

"This is why they are the cause of "problem geomagnetic storms" like the G4-level storm we are in now." Skov continued.

NOAA ranks geomagnetic storms on a scale running from G1, which could cause an increase in auroral activity around the poles and minor fluctuations in power supplies, up

to G5, which includes extreme cases like the Carrington Event — a colossal solar storm that occurred September 1859, which disrupted telegraph services all over the world and triggered auroras so bright and powerful that they were visible as far south as the Bahamas.

Strong geomagnetic storms can be troublesome for spaceflight as they increase the density of gases in Earth's upper atmosphere, thereby increasing the drag on satellites and other spacecraft. In February 2022 SpaceX lost up to 40 brand-new Starlink satellites when they failed to reach orbit after being launched into a minor geomagnetic storm.

Rocket Lab delayed its launch this morning by approximately 90 minutes while assessing the evolving conditions of the geomagnetic storm, the company announced on Twitter. They successfully launched at 5:14 a.m. EDT (0914 GMT).

Another side effect of powerful geomagnetic storms is the incredible aurora displays they trigger. When energized particles from the sun slam into Earth's atmosphere at speeds of up to 45 million mph (72 million kph), our planet's magnetic field funnels the particles toward the poles. The ensuing supercharging of molecules in Earth's atmosphere triggers the colorful spectacles, which usually remain limited to areas at high latitudes. This time, skywatchers around the world were treated to a dazzling auroral display that reached as far south as Colorado and New Mexico.

We can expect more extreme space weather events like this powerful geomagnetic storm as the sun builds towards a peak in its 11-year solar activity cycle, expected to occur in 2025.

Mobile Activity in April

At the beginning of the month, WY0A headed through TX and into LA, putting out a bunch there. Then into MS, AL

K2HVN ran the counties in DE

Not much for a few days of no mobiles

W4SIG headed down into MS

N9JF noted in a Park in MO

K0DEQ made a trip to IL running counties there

K8ZZ headed out on a month long big trip to the east – through MN, WI to NY to NJ – will run a lot of NJ and into NYC. Up to RI and MA and out to Nantucket and Dukes.. to Maine - then around and head back home. Had to catch the ferry to Nantucket before summer rates doubled the prices which are already high. Would miss the mini.

WY0A headed to MS then back through AR towards home.

K0FG headed to Nebraska for a bunch then home.

AB7RW was mobile in OR headed to WY, NE, IA, IL on his way to the Mini in Midland. Had a few antenna problems coming and going.

WY0A hit the road again for a trip to OK and NW ARK.

W0BH was very busy in the NE QSO Party. No report as of press time.

N8HAM hit the road toward the mini running counties along the way.

N4CD was on the road to the mini

K8ZZ made it out to Nantucket! Lots of last counties there!

K3IMC was on the road headed north to the Mini

AI5P was out in CA – giving out a few parks and counties. Wound up in Clark, NV.

KA4RRU was up in PA giving out counties.

N8OYY was busy headed to the mini running the counties.

K3IMC and WA9DLB went out to run a bunch

KA9JAC/KB9YVT hit the road to MI from WI

AB7NK/K7SEN headed to UT and CO running counties in UT – hooked up with K5GE I think – both in same county. Then into CO together.

End date April 25.

Mississippi QSO Party

The weather situation in MS wasn't great. Just before the QSO Party, several very large tornadoes tore across the state. Entire small towns were 'wiped out' like Rolling Fork, MS hit by an EF-4 tornado with 170 mph winds! It was the better part of a mile wide then. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for 59 miles from northern Issaquena through parts of Sharkey, Humphreys and Holmes Counties.

Many of the amateur radio operators in the state were involved in rescue/emergency communications across the entire state. Now clean up operations. The storms were at the end of March (24th-27th). The QP was April 1. At least 26 people were killed during these storm days. It then went on to Tupelo and further northeast.

WQ5L/P 153 cw 122 ssb

Operated 1st half from home station (HAR), second half portable (HAN). This is the 2nd half. Thanks for the Qs! -- Ray WQ5L
Operated 1st half from home station (HAR), second half portable (HAN). This is the 2nd half. Thanks for the Qs! -- Ray WQ5L

OM2VL fixed DX 23 cw 26 ssb qso

My big thanks to K5OMC/M who come on my 40m CQ frq from 4 different counties.

Most QSOs with:

K5OMC/M 4/4

(6): W5YD

(4): N5N, N5YT

(3): NA5DX, W1AW/5, W5XX, WQ5L

73, Laci

K4BAI fixed GA 18cw 17 ssb qso

Not too much activity from MS heard. Remarkable to have made 9 QSOs on 20M and one on 15M. Too close for good skip and too far away for ground wave. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI

KA6BIM - fixed OR 13 cw 8 ssb

I found 4 of the 36 counties I still need from Mississippi. This contest needs more MS stations getting on and active plus some rovers to cover the state. It would be nice to see a lot more counties activated and that would increase outside MS participation.

Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

N4N - W5UE operator 377 cw

Enjoyable joint portable operation with K2FF. Glenn was operating as KZ5DX from Newton county and I was in Neshoba county. Glenn's family in Union, MS has a unique feature with the Newton/Neshoba county line dividing their property. N5N antennas were positioned on the Neshoba side and KZ5DX antennas on the Newton side. de W5UE

KZ5DX 308 FT-8 qso

Enjoyable joint portable operation (K2FF and W5UE). K2FF Glenn was operating as KZ5DX from Newton county and W5UE Randy was operating as N5N from Neshoba county. The outdoor operating shack sits on the Newton/Neshoba County line! We had a ping-pong table set up simulating the "county line" inside the shack. On the outside, we positioned all KZ5DX antennas physically in Newton County, along with all N5N antennas physically in Neshoba County. It was indeed a FUN outing!

Louisiana QSO Party

N0AC mobile 394 cw qso

A big thanks goes to my wife who drives and puts up with my radio excursions.

Thanks also goes to the contest sponsors who support the party.

Finally thanks to all those that got on the air for the 2023 LaQSO Party. The contest would not work without you.

Do to a late breakfast we got a 20 minute late start but the breakfast venue was well worth the stop. Our first hour was pretty shaky. A last minute route change went south and I had to focus my attention on getting us back on track and try to operate at the same time. Finally about 1520z we were back underway and I could focus all my attention on making QSOs. With so many bands open these days I was going to try to give time to 10-40m. As it turned out the money band was 20m. 40m was a bust and 15m was slim. I tried 10m but found every time I keyed the transmitter RF got into the logging computer and I lost Winkeyer keying. After reading 3830 reports it looks like I didn't miss anything. Mid-afternoon the logging computer decided to re-boot and I had to do some N1MM logger maintenance. Luckily I was able to recover the log. Power line QRM was terrible and only the loudest stations were able to make it through those times. I hope this doesn't sound too much like a sob story. Things actually worked well.

The big numbers this time go to the DX stations. DL3DXX-16, DL3GA-12, OM2VL-10. The other DX worked was HB9DCM, F8PDR, and LY5W. The only domestic station with at least 10 QSOs was KA6BIM.

The highlight of the Louisiana QSO Party was a dinner date with Art, KZ5D, and his wife Connie. Art and I work regularly in the Wednesday CWTs and Thursday night NS Sprints. What a treat to have an eye ball QSO.

Bill, N0AC and Donna, XYL

K7SV - fixed VA - 17 cw qso

With one exception every Q was with folks I frequently work in CWTs!

K5TS - fixed - LA - 64 cw 733 ssb qso

Appreciate all the guys out there participating in this contest. Wish there had been

more La operators. BiC time is important!

W5GAD - fixed LA 188 cw 17 ssb

NO5W and W5CMM ops

Thanks for the Qs. Conditions were poor but some fun was had.

73/Chuck & Chris

WN4AFP - fixed - SC 14 cw 7 ssb

Prop was perfect from SC to LA on 20m. Thanks to all for the Qs and especially to the mobile/portable stations like N0AC and WQ5L. I was really confused with I worked WQ5L in HAR then later I worked WQ5L in HAN. I thought I had miscopied the location, but I copied it correctly... 73 Dave WN4AFP

OM2VL - fixed DX - 25 cw 17 ssb qso

Thanks for the QSOs!

Most QSOs with:

N0AC/M 12/10

WY0A/M 8/5

KZ5D - 5

KA3M - 3

73, Laci

KA6BIM - fixed OR 18 cw 5 ssb

I only found 3 of the 23 counties I still need from LA I hope participation picks up and some more rovers help cover the state. Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

Missouri QSO Party

N0I mobile

N0I Mobile operated from Saint Charles, Warren, Montgomery, Audrain, Ralls and Marion. Mostly CW with a little SSB. We'll be back out Sunday for more

Had a great weekend operating out of a Yurt in Ozark Lake State Park! The weather on Friday night got pretty windy and started a fire in the camp but it was beautiful the rest of the weekend. We had to cut out early on Sunday because checkout was at 11 and the rangers stopped by to make sure we knew what time it was. My wife chatted them up so I could knock out a few last Qs to make it over the 100k mark. Quite a big difference from 2021 when I had just started learning CW and was excited at the 34 q's I made that year.

K5CM mobile 1193 cw 442 ssb qso

This was a Saturday only operation. Conditions were fair and got better later Saturday evening.

Stations worked the most:

45 OM2VL
39 N5KW
33 K0I
27 KA6BIM
24 WA4PGM
18 NE8P
15 DL3DXX K4BAI NW0M W0W W5TM W9DC
12 AA4TI DL3GA K5TIA K7SV NM2A VE5KS
12 W0PI W1SSN W6GMT W8WVU WA2JQK WB2FUE WB9HFK WN4AFP

73,

Connie / K5CM

K0I county expedition 1070 cw 359 ssb qso

I set up the same place as last yr but this yr it was a solo effort.

Putting up antennas on Friday with wind gusts to near 60mph was a real workout! The bands were pretty decent I thought , very busy with 2 other QP's and rtty plus SPDX. It made it hard to find and keep a run freq.

I think if I had used DxScape to spot instead of the linked spotter from bears website I wud have had less lonely cq periods. Regardless there was good activity for the event , this years score topped last yr.

I tried to spark some RTTY action but to my dismay ,there were only a couple takers. I

know there's a lot of RTTY contesters out there , so why not in a qso party?
Nice to hear so many old friends and greet many new callers.
Thank you to all who called in and helped make it a fun time !

Portable operation setup had a 130' center fed doublet,linked with Ladder line to a mfj 974hb balanced tuner..20-15-10m were sent thru rg8 coax to an 18avs 5band vertical with 8 35' radials. Both worked quite well I thought.

Radio is a 7300 Icom @ 100w.

Thanks and 73 to all,

Mark KI0I aka K0I/p CASS and HENRY county MO

K0U county expedition 585 cw 127 ssb

Operator(s): KB9LLD

Operated from Saline County, MO at Arrow Rock State Park and Historic Site. Main antennas were a 140' doublet at 32' (firing east/west) and a 40/20/10m fan dipole at 28' (firing north/south). The weather was pretty rough while setting up on Friday afternoon, mostly high winds and a brief storm that brought 1-inch hail. It was a fun event and great to hear so many other ops participating, both in and out of state. I was amazed to be able to work 48 states, 5 provinces, and 45 Missouri counties. If only my antennas back at home were that good...

W0O Cnty Exped SO QRP 738 cw qso

QTH: MIL/CAM

Operator(s): KK9U

Had a great weekend operating out of a Yurt in Ozark Lake State Park! The weather on Friday night got pretty windy and started a fire in the camp but it was beautiful the rest of the weekend. We had to cut out early on Sunday because checkout was at 11 and the rangers stopped by to make sure we knew what time it was. My wife chatted them up so I could knock out a few last Qs to make it over the 100k mark. Quite a big difference from 2021 when I had just started learning CW and was excited at the 34 q's I made that year.

W0W - multi op fixed 768 cw 525 ssb

Operator(s): AA0Z KD9LSV KD9WHO N0SSC W0JSG WT2P WZ0W

Multi Op 100W effort at W0ECC contest club. We had a great time for the weekend. We had new contester Kaitlin (KD9WHO) who absolutely killed it on 20M SSB. CJ (WT2P) and Connor (KD9LSV) held down the fort on CW. Friday night was windy which made it challenging to put up antennas and keep them up. We had a few equipment failures and the DX Commander broke in half before the contest even started, but we pushed through. Conditions on Saturday was much better than Sunday. We started Sunday morning with 970 Q's and 105 mults in the books. Sunday was slow going with an high A index. Thanks for all the Q's from the mobile and portable stations. You put these counties on the air! We'll see you again next year!!

OM2VL fixed DX - 132 cw 76 ssb 51 counties

Condx on 20m was light, but 15m was excellent with big signals. 10m was also so long open (especially on Sunday) but not many stations was here.

From 27 1x1 stations I worked with 24. (missed: K0E, K0H, K0M)

Most QSOs with:

K5CM/M 42/9

N0I 5/5

ND9E 2/2

K0I 16/2

W0O 6/2

N0R 4/2

(6): NW0M, W0TT, W0W

(5): K0R, K0U, N0M, NT0C

(4): 7x

73, Laci

KA6BIM - fixed OR 125 cw 78 ssb qso 48 counties

Nice to see lots of activity from Missouri hams! Many home stations plus a few rovers and portable operations were active. Contest was well organized. I still worked less than 1/2 the 115 counties though. Found 3 of the 22 counties I still needed to work and several more that I have not confirmed yet. Thanks for the QSO's

Dave ka6bim

WA4PGM - fixed - VA 99 cw 55 ssb qso

Started out just to work my brother(N0BDS) operating as K0O. Had fun in between doing chores outside on this beautiful day!!

Thanks for the contacts.
73 Kyle

W0H mobile reported 554 cw and 201 ssb QSO . WB0TUA operator.
Had no comments.

NR0P mobile reported 103 ssb qso
Had no comments

Gasoline Prices

Gasoline Is About To Get More Expensive

Here's some bad news for drivers of luxury cars and large sport-utility vehicles who are pumping the top grade of gasoline: the premium they pay over regular fuel is getting pricier.

US and European refiners are scrambling to get enough octane to make high-quality gasoline. There are several potential reasons for the shortfall, including the fallout of Russia's war in Ukraine, the impact of US environmental regulations and a lack of refining capacity.

The net effect is that it's making the fuel even more expensive than usual, when compared to regular unleaded. In the US, the price gap is around 75 cents a gallon — about 15% more than during the same period last year — data from automotive group AAA show. In the UK, the premium has widened by 25% on an annual basis, the most recent monthly data show.

Octane itself is a hydrocarbon, produced in the refining of crude oil, though consumers generally know about it through the so-called octane rating for gasoline. A higher value means the fuel is more stable and less likely to cause engine knock. Vehicle manufacturers often recommend high-octane gasoline — the premium grades at the pump — to get peak performance from turbo-charged or high-compression engines.

Even regular gasoline contains octane. However, the shortfall shouldn't be problematic because there are more low-octane components available for making regular gasoline than high-octane fuel.

The octane shortage for premium gasoline is of particular concern as refiners move away from winter-grade. That type of fuel uses butane which is generally more plentiful, from natural-gas processing to increase octane.

The European Union and the UK last month banned most seaborne imports of Russian petroleum products, reducing the region's supply of naphtha, a key component in making gasoline. Meanwhile, the European petrochemical industry has cut supply of octane-boosting additives as high energy costs and weak demand curbed operations.

The loss of these Russian feedstocks is critical for gasoline markets this year, according to consultant Energy Aspects Ltd. Octane tightness is set to become more evident as refiners switch to the production of summer-grade fuel in April, the researcher said.

Separately, US "Tier 3" environmental regulations, which require lower sulfur content in gasoline, have created complications.

Compliance with the rules requires more severe hydrotreating of naphtha and gasoline during refining. The process destroys octane, thus contributing to a shortage and helping to widen the value of premium gasoline to regular grade.

The gasoline sulfur standard for the rules took effect in 2017. In 2020 fuel demand dropped due to pandemic-related travel restrictions. The true effects of the regulations started to become clear last year as gasoline consumption recovered, according to analysts at Bank of America Corp.

"Meeting lower sulfur requirements comes at the expense of octane levels, which likely contributed to soaring prices for high octane blending components," they said in a recent note. "This dynamic should continue in 2023 and may lead to similar explosive upside in gasoline prices this summer."

To be sure, there is debate on what's behind the octane shortfall. Wide octane spreads — the price difference between wholesale prices for premium and regular-grade gasoline — were primarily driven by a shortage of refining capacity, according to Robert Auers, manager of Refined Fuels Analytics, a division of RBN Energy.

Because of the lost capacity, there aren't enough reformer units to upgrade low-octane naphtha, to raise its octane levels for use in making premium gasoline. That may eventually change as new refinery capacity comes online this year. "Still, we have octane spreads staying moderately wide," Auers added.

Source: <https://peakoil.com/consumption/gasoline-is-about-to-get-more-expensive>

Note de N4CD – OPEC also cut output – driving up the cost of a barrel of oil.

Gas is creeping up to \$3.50/gal here in TX in early April. Could hit higher come summer. However at the end of the month, it was down to the low \$3 range, and in MO gas was just over \$3 on the way to MI. Less than \$3.60 just about everywhere. You never know.

MARAC Annual Contest 2023

MARAC County Hunting Contest returns for 2023!! New MARAC Contest Coordinator John, WA4JA, has worked hard on getting this long-running contest back in action. The dates are July 29-30. More details will be in the upcoming RoadRunner and on the marac.org site soon.

US Making Vacuum Tubes Again

Whitener, a 69-year-old self-described inventor, vintage hi-fi collector, and Led Zeppelin fanatic, bought and revived AT&T's shuttered vacuum tube business in 1995. The business has ticked along in the era of cheap overseas tubes primarily by serving the small market for vacuum tubes in premium hi-fi equipment with a model called the 300B, originally designed in 1938 to enable transoceanic phone calls.

But recently US trade restrictions on Russia and China, over the former's renewed invasion of Ukraine and the latter's ideological disputes with Washington, have sent vacuum tube prices soaring. At one point in 2022, tubes that typically retailed for \$10 were offered at prices over \$100, says Daniel Liston Keller, who does public relations for recording industry clients. Although shipments of Russian tubes have resumed, prices remain high and the quality of overseas tubes has always been unreliable. "You have to buy 100 tubes to get 30 you like," says Justin Norvell, an executive vice president at Fender. An affordable tube for a guitar preamp is now roughly \$30, meaning the company can spend about \$90 to get one tube that meets its standards.

Whitener has seized on the current moment of high prices as a chance to reinvigorate his company, the US tube industry, and even the idea of what a vacuum tube can be. Western Electric is currently working on a modernized tube design, an iteration of the all-but-obsolete technology fit for the 21st century. It's an improved version of a tube called the 12AX7, which is common in guitar preamps and other music gear—a market Whitener estimates is more than 10 times the size of the premium hi-fi business and is today served almost wholly by overseas suppliers. The recently high prices create economic cover, he calculates, to make a better version in Rossville that can be more reliable, durable, and economical than existing designs, turning the US into a powerhouse of vacuum tube technology again.

That makes Western Electric an oddball member of the swelling movement to bring technology manufacturing back to the US, assuring the supply of crucial products, such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries, that are generally sourced overseas. The company is in the process of restructuring its factory floor with a combination of vintage and new machinery to turn out the modernized tubes, at the volumes Fender and other music companies need.

Whitener is a perfectionist. He aims to launch the 12AX7 this summer, but previous debuts have slipped. His factory is poised to make America the dominate source for audio vacuum tubes, improving the fortunes of Rossville, audiophiles, guitar heroes, domestic manufacturing, and Whitener himself—if he can just get the damn things out the door. "This landscape for the Russian tubes could change tomorrow," he concedes. "It's a Walmart world, and that's a risk."

How Hard Can It Be?

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the American vacuum tube industry thrived. RCA,

General Electric, Raytheon, and other manufacturers competed to invent and manufacture more reliable tubes, which were needed to regulate current and boost the faint signals from analog microphones and instruments enough to drive speakers. But the arrival of transistors, then circuit boards, made tubes obsolete for most uses. American manufacturers couldn't match prices from overseas. Factories closed.

Engineers moved on.

Many musicians and audio obsessives stayed loyal to the tube but increasingly got them from outside the US. Russia and China became the leading suppliers, with companies such as Shuguang Electron Group cranking out tube designs established between the 1930s and 1950s, such as the 6L6 and EL34.

By the time Charles Whitener took a career break in 1990, the US did not make any consumer audio tubes. He thought about changing that after noticing a steady stream of ads in hi-fi magazines offering Western Electric 300Bs, a design from 1938 that was popular with audio enthusiasts. Whitener was looking for a new venture after using his experience in his father's yarn factory to invent a quality control system for the fiber optics industry that he then sold. "I thought, how hard can it be to make these tubes?," he says. "People are willing to pay \$1200 to \$1500 a pop for them."

Predictably, it was harder than Whitener thought. It took him two years to persuade AT&T, which hadn't made a tube since 1988 but still owned Western Electric, to license the brand and sell him its tube-manufacturing equipment. He set up shop in Western Electric's former tube factory in Kansas City, Missouri, where the mothballed machines were stored.

After a fortuitous meeting with retired AT&T employees on a visit to Bell Labs, Whitener combed the northeast tracking down veterans of the storied facility, Sylvania, and RCA who knew the arcana of tube-making. When his factory started production of 300Bs in 1996, almost all of his 20 or so employees were tube-manufacturing veterans.

Western Electric was up and running again, but in 2003 AT&T sold the building. Whitener moved the company to Huntsville, Alabama, a NASA stronghold with skilled workers that was convenient for his tube contracts with the Department of Defense. In 2008, he moved the company to Rossville, Georgia. It was there that he began modernizing vacuum tube designs that are more than 70 years old.

Whitener's team devised a way to apply an atom-thick layer of graphene to a vacuum tube's anode to extend its lifespan by improving heat dissipation and reducing

contaminating gases. Those enhanced tubes hit the market in 2020. Quality control—Whitener’s former field—became more automated, and he claims more than 90 percent of tubes now pass inspection off the line.

Western Electric sells pairs of 300Bs in a cherry wood presentation box with a certificate charting their performance characteristics and a generous five-year warranty—yours for \$1,500. Copycat sets of 300Bs, offered at the same price, are sold with a 30-day warranty. Most tubes have a warranty of just 90 days.

Whitener has spent more than a decade preparing for Western Electric’s next act. In 2006, he won an auction for machinery and tooling needed to make 12AX7 tubes; the pieces had started life in Blackburn, England, but were then in Serbia. It took five years of legal battles with a competing bidder before the intervention of then-Tennessee senator Bob Corker and the US Embassy, Whitener says, gave him possession.

Today that equipment is being installed on Whitener’s factory floor, along with additional machines shipped over from Slovakia in 2007. New machines that will automate processes like the hand-bending of wires needed to make 12AX7 tubes are being peppered in. All the while, Western Electric continues to produce 300Bs. Depending on the day of the week, the space may clickety-clack to the sound of a lathe winding molybdenum wire around side rods, or the ragged hiss of gas flames heating and sealing glass bulbs.

Very Pleasant Distortion

The promise of better sound is, like most things among high-fidelity fanatics, subject to vicious debate. Some hear vast differences between brands of tube, or even individual tubes of the same make and model. Others will tell you each tube is indistinguishable from the next. Most agree that tubes in general have a sound that transistors, circuit boards, and algorithms can only approximate, one often described as warm, rich, or even romantic.

“Tubes just distort things in a very pleasant way,” said Daniel Schlett, a sound engineer whose Brooklyn studio, Strange Weather, is known for the analog punch it gets from tube-powered mics, amps, consoles, and equalizers. Artists who have sought Schlett’s hallmark sound are as diverse as Ghostface Killah, Booker T. (of MGs fame), and The War on Drugs. “Tubes are part of the equation,” Schlett says. “It’s big and amplified, and it has the voodoo on it.”

But voodoo is exactly the problem, say tube skeptics like Glenn Fricker, an engineer of

25 years who specializes in metal bands at Spectre Sound Studio in Ontario, Canada. He sometimes uses a 1966 amp with its original tubes, but he doubts expensive replacement tubes would improve the sound.

“As a kid we are led to believe there is some dark art in tubes which will inherently change the sound of your amp,” Fricker says. But when he devised an experiment using sound canceling to reveal the audible differences between tubes, all he uncovered was “a little clicking sound”—they were otherwise identical. He advises guitar slingers to skip the \$1,300 vintage Telefunken “Diamond Bottom” 12AX7 online at Tube Depot for the \$20 JJ brand from Slovakia. While Fricker is rooting for Western Electric, he says, “Are they going to sound any better than your dear, cheap JJs? No.”

Price spikes during the recent great tube panic suggest plenty of people still believe in the voodoo. That presents Whitener with an immense opportunity. He says he aims to launch Western Electric’s 12AX7, America’s first new tube in decades, this summer. After that he plans to add a string of additional models, versions of the 6L6, EL34, EL84 12 AT7, and 6V6 tubes—a lineup he calculates makes up almost 80 percent of the relevant music equipment, such as guitar and studio amps. If all goes to plan, the US could once again dominate vacuum tube manufacturing.

Whitener concedes that he’s taking a big risk. Russia looks determined to keep attacking Ukraine, keeping trade embargoes in place, and China-US relations remain tense. But the geopolitics of vacuum tubes could shift again. It’s unclear how loyal people might be to his US-made tubes.

Whitener hopes that even if international supply prices drop, customers will stick with Western Electric after having gotten a taste of the reliably durable tubes. “They are looking for a stable product they can count on,” he says. Schlett, the sound engineer, is hoping Whitener can deliver. “My advice is please, quality control, please, please, please,” he said. “I don’t want to throw out 70 percent of the \$180 tubes I buy. That’s not OK.”

source: https://www-wired-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.wired.com/story/one-mans-quest-to-revive-the-great-american-vacuum-tube/amp?amp_gsa=1&_js_v=a9&usqp=mq331AQGsAEggAID&fbclid=IwAR0wmjlkZE14sPmuSKfCyY0__wDwriMqmNP7r5nMOsecHeR76ohQYKrRxF4#amp_tf=From%20%251%24s&aoh=16800669501356&csi=1&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wired.com%2Fstory%2Fone-mans-quest-to-revive-the-great-american-vacuum-tube%2F

WY0A Heads to AK

Future planning purposes. WY0A posted trip on K3IMC. Kark, K4YT may join him in Second AK. Tentative schedule:

Sunday, June 18th through Monday, June 19th
AK: 3rd Judicial District

Tuesday, June 20th
AK: 3rd Judicial District, 4th Judicial District

Wednesday, June 21st through Saturday, June 24th
AK: 4th Judicial District

Sunday, June 25th through Monday, June 26th
AK: 4th Judicial District, Stay in Coldfoot, AK
Next day 2nd Judicial District all the way to Deadhorse, and return to Coldfoot. Next day 4th Judicial District

Tuesday, June 27th
AK: 4th Judicial District

Wednesday, June 28th
AK: 4th Judicial District, 1st Judicial District

Thursday, June 29th
AK: 1st Judicial District

then back to lower 48 a couple days later.

FreeDV Digital Voice

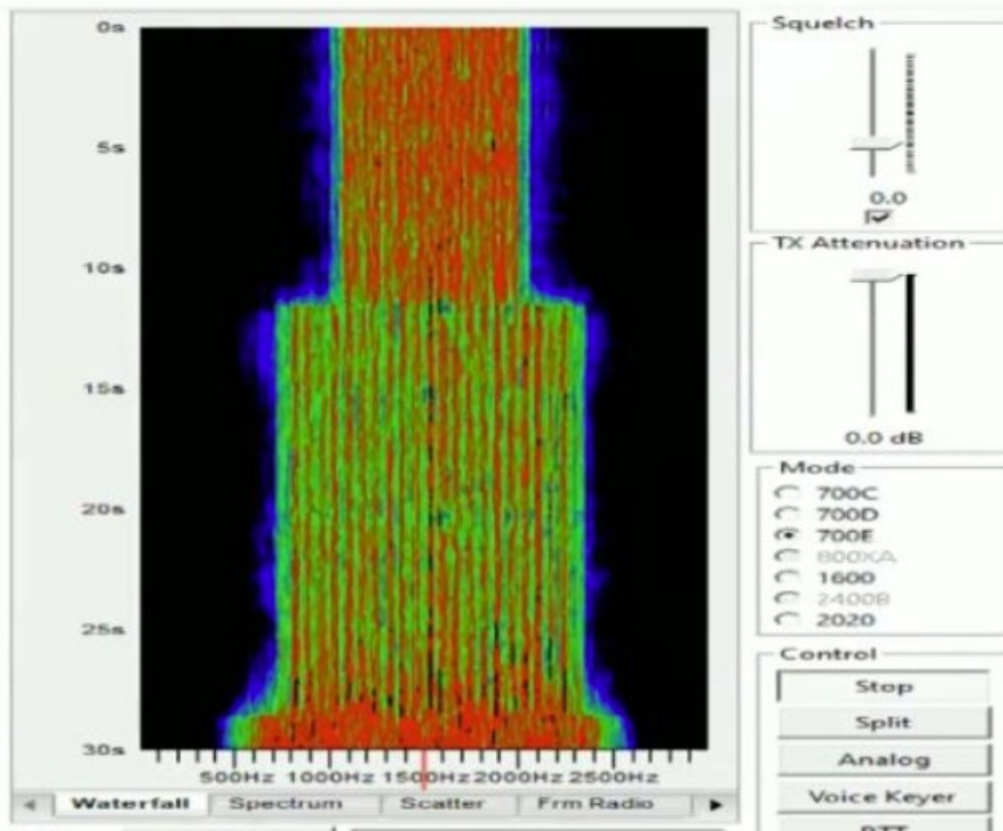
FreeDV – There's A New HF Mode In Town
By Chip Coker KD4C (from the RWK Chawed Rag Monthly Magazine)

We've had Digital Voice modes on VHF for years, as well as other digital modes on HF that are very popular (FT-8/4, PSK, even RTTY). We've had Digital Broadcast TV since 2009 and digital satellite radio in cars since before that. But until now, we've still not managed to have wide success in bringing Digital Voice to the HF bands. Oh sure there were some pet projects a dozen or so years ago, but these were clunky and largely went overlooked by the masses.

Well the time might have finally come that we have a new Digital Voice mode on the HF bands – FreeDV is a low-bit-rate digital voice mode for HF radio. Initially developed by David Rowe, VK5DGR, an international team of radio amateurs are now working together on the project. The “free” in FreeDV is because it is open-source software (released under the GNU Lesser Public License (LGPL) version 2.1). The modems and Codec 2 speech codec used in FreeDV are also open source. That means that you can use it, tinker with it, and incorporate it into your projects. That also means that vendors can incorporate the software into their products, so there is hope of HF Transceivers in the future that incorporate FreeDV as a mode right next to (analog) SSB.

I won't go into the details of the modulation (and I'm not sure I understand it – it involves 16 QPSK carriers), but suffice to say that (like other Digital Voice modes) it's designed to take the full range of your voice, throw out the parts that don't matter, and encode the rest into a low data-rate stream that can be sent in the space of a normal SSB channel. There are multiple “modes” with different sampling – all the way from narrow (for bad conditions) to wide (almost FM quality for good conditions). And as with other DV modes, there's very little noise – you either hear the audio cleanly or you don't. Here's an example of what the FreeDV waveform looks like in the FreeDV software:

Digital HF Voice



The FreeDV software (showing a received signal changing from wide to narrow in mid transmission) - above

If you have a modern HF rig that has a built-in sound card interface (that you are probably already using for FT-8/4), then you have what you need for FreeDV. The FreeDV software will run on the same computer that you are using for WSJT-X (there are downloads for Windows/MacOS/Linux). If you are already on the HF data modes, this should take about 5 minutes to set up.

The only part that's still a little clunky is that you use the computer for audio – you listen to the received audio on your computer speakers (instead of your radio speaker) and you speak your audio into the computer microphone (instead of the radio microphone). If that's too clunky for you, someone is already making a stand-alone box that does all the FreeDV parts and accepts a microphone and speaker. If you have an SDR, there is already a plug-in for the popular SDR software packages, so you can start eavesdropping today! There is also an add-in for the FlexRadio package.

Who do you talk to? Well there are already some established net schedules for FreeDV,

and calling/monitoring frequencies have been established for each band. There is also a spotting network for FreeDV and PSKreporter supports FreeDV as a reporting option.

I'm betting that, after some false starts in the past, Digital Voice finally takes hold on HF. It will make listening to atmospheric noise crashes a thing of the past, and might make 75 Meters tolerable again. It's easy and "free" to get started and try it out. Give it a try and let me know what you think!

To find out more on FreeDV: <https://freedv.org/>

Freedv frequencies

1.997

3.730

3.817

5.403 (5.355 daily DV and SSB from 1500 UTC)

7.177

7.190

14.236

14.240

18.119

21.313

24.933

28.720

Category: Freedv

Driving to AK – Deadhorse

The Dalton Highway is one of the few roads that actually cuts its way through northern Alaska and the only road in Alaska to reach the Arctic Ocean. This remote and rough road runs from north of Fairbanks and ends at Deadhorse in Prudhoe Bay near the Arctic

Ocean. The Dalton Highway does not go to Point Barrow - the northernmost point of the United States.

The Dalton Highway was built in the 1970s to service the Prudhoe Bay Oil Fields and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. It has featured in TV shows like the BBC's World's Most Dangerous Roads and America's Toughest Jobs.

Dalton Highway - America's Most Extreme Highway

Those familiar with the TV show Ice Road Truckers will also be familiar with this 414-mile stretch of gravel road. If one was to drive it, one would only find three very small towns along the way, otherwise, the only sign of civilization is the Trans-Alaska pipeline running parallel to the road. This is pure Alaskan wilderness. The Dalton Highway is unpaved and even muddy in places.

The Dalton Highway was built by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company but is now owned and maintained by the State of Alaska and is open to the public year-round. The Dalton Highway first opened to the public in 1994.

This is indeed a lonely road mostly used by truckers servicing the oil industry in Deadhorse. Only the most adventurous of Alaskan tourists hazard this road.

The highway also separates two of Alaska's remote but spectacular national parks - Gates of the Arctic National Park and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Dalton Highway also has the highest pass in Alaska as it crosses the Brooks Range. The pass reaches an elevation of 4800 feet or 1463 meters.

Plan Ahead To Drive The Dalton Highway – Alaska Highway 11

If one would like to drive the length of the Dalton Highway, one will need to plan ahead. If one is hiring a vehicle in Alaska, it is likely one will not be permitted to drive along the highway. Most rental car companies in the state forbid their rental cars to be driven on the road. But there are some rental companies that do permit it these include:

- Arctic Outfitters Dalton Highway Car Rentals
- Alaska 4X4 Rentals
- Alaska Overlander
- Alaska Auto Rental

People driving this route need to have plenty of survival supplies, spare parts for breakdowns, and plan for breakdowns where no one will be helping. One should bring extra fuel, water, food, first aid supplies, spare tires, appropriate clothing, and other emergency gear.

Other things to have in mind about traveling the Dalton Highway (and remote roads in general in Alaska) include summer being construction season, the weather being extreme and unpredictable, road conditions being rough, and some gas stations only operating seasonally.

Not only is the Dalton Highway cutting through some of the coldest regions of the Arctic, but it is also one of the remotest roads in the world.

Traffic along the route is sparse indeed. There are around 150 trucks navigating the road in the summer and around 250 trucks during the winter.

One can find the current conditions of the road on the Alaskan Government's 511 Traveler Information system.

<https://www.thetravel.com/reach-the-arctic-with-the-dicey-dalton-highway/>

Note: At least a dozen county hunters have driven part way up the Dalton to north of Coldfoot. You have to drive up to Atigun Pass to find propagation back to the US – 30 miles more than the border of the Second AK. From Coldfoot, there is essentially nothing for the next 250 miles but road other than the tiny town of Wiseman, pop 12. K6HZI, KB6UF/W6TMD, N0KV/N0DXE, W1TEE, KL1V/now KV7N, WA0SBR, N8KIE/N8RLJ, K3IMC(?) and others have wandered the road up way north of Fairbanks in their own cars.

Others have hopped planes to cities/towns within the Second – from Nome (N4CD) to Prudhoe Bay (AI5P). AB4YZ and AF3X just had 2m and worked the YL – not sure where they went.

So far 18 people have transmitted from all 3077 – so AA9JJ/N9QPQ, N7AKT, N7ID, KK0L, N9JF, K3IMC, K0GO, N4JT, KB7QO, made to to somewhere in the 2nd District. Maybe a few more who never finished up (yet) made it there, too. As you

might recall, KB7QO was the first to finish running all 3077* in 1988. - (whatever number of counties there was at the time). Some have been added – some have disappeared. One was renamed.

WY0A is headed that way in June. Let's hope for clear roads, no mud, minimal construction delays. It's more than 2000 miles just to drive through Canada to get to AK, then hundreds and hundreds more to get to Fairbanks, and if you want to go to Prudhoe Bay, 414 more gravel miles. There are only 3 towns along that route – Coldfoot (population 268) Wiseman (pop 12) and the end at Prudhoe Bay. Coldfoot and Prudhoe Bay are truck stops - and oil worker facilities.

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Read about AI5P's trip (flying) to AK here in previous issue of CHNews
<https://chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20August%202012.pdf>

N4CD's second trip to AK here
[County Hunter News July 2014.pdf](#)
[County Hunter news August 2014.pdf](#)

W6TMD/KB6UF ran the counties mobile back in 2006. It's no longer available on the CHNews way-back-archives so here it is again. From the Aug 2006 issue:

“Darrel, W6TMD and Ron, KB6UF went to the Second District, AK in June. From the K3IMC forum post:

“Bob N4CD described our first day in the North Slope Borough quite well in the July edition of the County Hunter News. Exactly as Bob had assumed, we got to Coldfoot earlier than we expected based on all the stories we had heard about the ‘Haul’ road. The haul road definitely isn’t the best in the world but it was about the same as the roads in Northern Idaho when I was growing up. It is mostly gravel road with an occasional stretch of pavement (pavement starts and ends in the middle of nowhere – must be some story there).

As you get further north (past the Atigun pass), there are stretches of road without much gravel. This would have qualified as a dirt road except it was drizzling and the road could only be described as a ‘mud’ road. I was in 4-wheel drive and still squirming around. But I’m getting ahead of myself. We arrived at Coldfoot at 2 PM local time on

15 June, checked into the 'motel', and headed north to the second district. I knew that many needed the 2nd district on 30 meters and our best shot at working the lower 48 would be after 0000Z. I wanted to have two shots at finding decent propagation on 30 meters.

We entered the 2nd district 60 miles north of Coldfoot (about 1 and ½ hours drive) and headed up to the Chandalar shelf about 3 miles past the North Slope Borough sign. It looked to me like we should be able to get out from this location. At 0000Z on 16 June I called on 20 M CW and worked 2 stations but didn't hear anything more. At 0030Z I tried 30 M and worked 6 stations after which we went to 14336 and worked 9 stations in about 10 minutes. At 0100Z I tried 20 CW again and more stations had obviously seen the spots that we were around. I had 14 contacts on 20 followed by 15 additional contacts on 30 M.

Bob N4CD was mobile but helped with relays on both 20 and 30 meters. We tried again on 20 SSB but heard nothing further so we decided that was about all we were going to work until the next day. We got back to Coldfoot about 7:30 PM but happy that we had had a reasonable opening for our first day in the 2nd district.

On 16 June we drove back to the 2nd district and started listening about 1400Z. Crackle, crackle, crackle on all bands and modes. We hadn't heard a signal from the lower 48 but we tried every ½ hour to call but no response. We decided to go over the Atigun pass and see if propagation might be better on the other side of the pass. We came across a group of 11 caribou before we started up the pass and took some good pictures. At the top of the pass, we had a Dall sheep just off the road and took more pictures. A cloud was covering the top of the pass and our pictures turned out mostly white with a more concentrated white in the middle (the sheep). The temperature at the top of the pass was 32 degrees F. Down the other side from the pass, the cloud was still around us and the drizzle had turned the road to mud. But on we went to a point about 33 miles from the beginning of the 2nd district (just past pump station #4 there is a nice parking area – 68 degrees, 55 minutes according to Ron's GPS). I can't say how good a location this should be since the entire mountain in front of us was enclosed in the cloud.

I called on 20 CW and a strong signal came back – oh boy, some action. I worked SM6VR followed by OH3JF and then heard AB7RW/M and worked him with 559 reports. But that was the end. Nothing heard on 20 SSB for about 2 hours then we heard WQ7A weakly calling us. Terry announced us but he wasn't hearing anything else from stateside while pointed north. No one else was heard but we hadn't given up. After 3 hours on the north side of Atigun pass we decided to go back to the Chandalar shelf area.

Coming back down the other side of the pass we had a flat tire. I knew Ron was good for something as he did all the hard work in changing the tire. We stopped at a location still a little further from the mountain to the southeast with a better take off angle. I must have gotten tired of watching Ron do all that work so I took a nap. Still nothing heard on the bands and no one responding to us by 2200Z. Now we had to decide whether to stay and hope that the band might open after 0000Z or head to the tire service building at Coldfoot. We were not in the best of spirits after 8 hours on the North Slope and 4 total contacts. We headed south to Coldfoot. Luckily the tire person was still working and looked at the tire. Tires on a 20 inch rim are dear in Calif. – you can imagine how dear they are at Coldfoot. At least they had a tire so we were back in business for our trip to Denali Park the next day. Ron and I wish we could have given a few more of the deserving contacts from the second district but K3IMC had a nice run from the 2nd district a few days later so I hope that everyone erased 2nd district from their needs list.”



North Slope Borough Sign - the C/L 4th and 2nd Districts -

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Some snippets from the W0RRY/N4CD trip north to South Dakota to work W6TMD on 30M - July issue 2006

“Incredibly, Charlie, W0RRY, had gone from needing 20 to needing just one for the WBOW in less than a month. It didn’t hurt that right after the trip to Dayton we made a 2 day mad 1300 mile dash around KS, getting his last 7 in KS, and dropping that number down significantly.

Also, W6TMD was headed to the Second District AK, and N4CD was trying hard to finish up working all counties on 30M. I was down to under 25 to go, and the toughest one to get was going to be Second AK. The signal from there would be extremely weak in TX on 30M, and I don’t have a great antenna system (inv vee up 28 feet in the middle) – not especially good for the “DX” distance to AK. I wanted to ‘get north and west’ by at least 500 miles or more

Charlie called, and said he was down to one to go for the last for 5th time. We worked out a trip route. Lots of folks needed counties in KS, and NE despite several previous trips there! So many counties – so little time. It was time to do a ‘connect’ the dots trip – hit counties not run for MP yet – or not transmitted from second time – or LCs for someone – needed by Charlie on cw, and of course, hit Perkins, NE, Charlie’s last WBOW, in the southwest part of NE.

I headed up to Tulsa, OK. Mary, Charlie’s XYL, has gotten used to our county hunting trips, and headed off to visit family for a few days. The next morning, very early, we headed to KS.

After a little zigging and zagging just before NE, to run some MP counties, and get some of the ‘needs’, we stopped for the night, having done 650 miles. The next morning we were off to get Perkins NE. So far things had gone well. It was the usual county hunting set up – 2001 Buick Lesabre – K8CW antenna system for 20/30/40m, plus a separate 40M hamstick for 40SSB, and a 30M QRP rig. Shortly we hit Perkins, NE, worked each other.

So we added in another 130 miles, and ran up to Jones SD, and a few others, and stopped in Tripp, SD at the Super 8 motel. The schedule put out by KB6UF and W6TMD said they would be running the Second the next day.

Ron and Darrel were scheduled to drive up to Coldfoot, stay overnight, then go up to the Second the next day. I had a sneaking suspicion that if they got up there with few hassles (if the road was in good shape and no problems with tires or other things on the

way up), that maybe after spending 30 minutes doing ‘everything there is to do’ in Coldfoot – basically a truck stop/motel – they might head another 60 miles up to the Second and put it out in the evening – the best time for 30M propagation. I left the radio in car, and we went to dinner. Normally the radio comes out when we stop at the motel. The line is only 60 miles north, but the rock there is so iron laden, you can’t get any sigs out – you have to go another 25-30 miles to be heard! (Atigun Pass)

On the way into Winner, SD, Tripp County, we had noted a very quiet area on the way in to town...near a abandoned Drive In Movie Theater. Near zero noise - I commented this would be a good place if W6TMD was running today and not tomorrow.

I knew that if I had gotten to Coldfoot, there was almost nothing that would not get me up the Second to have another few hours to run it - especially late in the evening – best for 30M. No problem with ‘driving in the dark’ as you have 24 hours a day of daylight in June. We ate dinner, talked about that, and other things, and as we came out and turned on the radio, there was K2JG busily doing the last of relays for W6TMD in Second AK. Oh my gosh! He had already run 30M according to what the Club said..... I didn’t even know if I could hear him or work him on last call. It was a mile or two to the quiet location we had spied before! We got there QUICKLY!

Fortunately, the propagation gods cooperated. Ron and Darrel took a last call, and were 55 on 20M SSB. I worked him and asked for 30M again please,

Next he ran 20M CW. Nice 559 signal – worked a good number of stations direct, but others were calling. No one stepped up to do QSP – as he was about done, no one had helped....so I jumped in and did relays (QSP), sitting in the drive in movie, mobile. Another bunch got through. I asked for 30M at the end. This would likely be the ‘best shot’.....30M conditions in the middle of the day are not good for 3000-4000 mile distances. Even 5000 miles to the east coast. It was ‘sunset’ time in the USA – about the best time you could pick perhaps. Grey line conditions. In SD, the sun was headed down to sunset in about an hour or less. Nice sunset out the window, as we sat the car pointed NW, for best sig to AK. (Mobile systems are directional! – about 2 S units difference off the front vs the back). The sun was already down on the east coast. Now came the anxious moments as I switched over to 30M, and called W6TMD on 30M.....was he going to be there and be copyable? I had missed working KL7HBK with his non-resonant antenna and a few watts – some of the others up north had snagged him during the winter. Wow, I heard him come back, barely barely 339....about 50-70% copy – fading up and down, with some flutter on the signal. We worked. Success.

Charlie got him next. Another 10 or 15 worked him, but I heard another 10 or more calling. Oh my gosh – there was K2NJ calling and many others – likely all 339s or 229s

up in AK, and no one stepped up to do QSP!!!! Likely, it was tough to pull out the calls in AK. All about the same strength ,and killing each other! I've been on the far end trying to copy – no fun. They were all good copy in SD. Well, not many were copying Darrel all that well anywhere in the country! He was about to sign for the day! Dang...well, with so many calling, but with maybe 60-70% copy on Darrel, it would be tough to do QSP....but we did it.....and relayed in K2NJ, and another 10 or 15 from all over the USA...AZ, CO, KS and WI and NC and TX. Just about everything 229s or 339s, and some repeats needed. It took a while to get everyone through. I think all but one made it through. Wow!....a successful run from Second AK. And it caught just about everyone by surprise – their getting there early. Many were not expecting it. The run on 30M the second time also not spotted. I don't know how many made it through the first run.

It had been fantastic day – Charlie finished up 5th time, got his number already (#79). I had snagged Second AK on 30M. We did relays for W6TMD on both 20 and 30CW to help out everyone we could hear. Bill, K2NJ called the cellphone – he exclaimed “There is a Santa Claus!” – he had gotten through to Second AK on 30M. Everyone was pumped.

POTA QRP Hawaii

WK4DS Amateur Radio Blog

Activating a park in Hawaii with with the Elecraft K1
March 29, 2023

I will be honest here, I thought this would be easier...

Let me explain. You see first off, I live on the east coast of the mainland USA where getting an activation completed or even dozens of QSOs in an activation, is rather easy even at QRP power levels. I have done activations with 4 watts and once I think it was only 1 watt. But someone joked in the past, “that is because you are where all the HAMS are at!” Nothing could be truer as I found out.

So here is the setup for the opportunity. We decide after some travel plans fall through, to goto Hawaii (the big island) for a week or so. This is two fold, we want to see the active volcano as that is a bucket list item for us and it is warm in February...which is

always a plus. Well, I talk to the wife and come to the conclusion that there will be time to do a park or two while we are there as well. So I start figuring out what radio to bring.

We are staying in the town of Hilo so I naturally started looking near there for possible parks. My criteria was that I wanted a park that wasn't blocked by mountains or in a canyon, preferably one near the beach (I mean, who doesn't want to do an activation on the beach???) and has a tree to allow me to get the antenna up as close to vertical as possible. This last part is going to be the biggest challenge I would come to find out. Since I packed only wire antennas in my kit, I would need something I could throw a line over to haul up a wire with.

Well, the first park I chose was not really suitable as it didn't have any trees near the parking lot and also no tables near the trees that are there. The next problem showed up on day two and lasted till almost time to leave...the rain... seems Hilo is a literal rain forest and I failed to do the proper research to learn this ahead of time. Maybe I was not supposed to know this so I would take my gear, I don't know either way, but it rained 14" of rainfall in a 36 hour period of time at one point. yes, FOURTEEN inches fell in a 36 hour period... The rain was near continuous for many days. Well, on day four, we had about 3 hours to kill in the afternoon so I looked at a park in Hilo proper, it is down by the beach and runs all the way down the the royal gardens. I drove by it and scouted the area and found some trees that would hold a wire. This is park number K-6407 (Wailoa River State Recreation Area) and basically it fit all the criteria.



This is where it gets messy... I decide to give it a try as it is a good time of day to reach the west coast of the US. Grey line would be coming across the US for the next few hours and I need all the help I can get with my measly 7 watts. The only problem is that the rain is coming down in sheets at this point... where to setup??? I opted for the car.

So I get out in the deluge and throw a line over a nearby tree and haul up the antenna which turned out to be more of a sloper this time than a vertical. This antenna is a 41' radiator and a 13' counterpoise and is almost resonant on the 40 meter band. I roll the window down a little and run the counter poise and radiator into the car and hook them to the radio.

Once the radio was connected I tried to run the car for the heater and power port only to find it was producing a significant amount of rf hash that the little Elecraft radio couldn't handle. So I got out the battery and shutoff the car. This actually worked really well, I could hear much better and the car was actually quite warm so I and Teresa were happy. Yep, she sat with me in the car and read a book which I worked you guys on HF.

The next problem I ran into was the contest... I had no idea there was a contest running this weekend and had planned around that literally zero... Well, now what? I went to where I couldn't hear anyone and started calling CQ and called for ten straight minutes with no answers.

You can see in the log that I got on the air and spent ten minutes finding a clear frequency and called CQ for probably 20 minutes before giving up and moving to 17

meters. Now remember that the whole time this is happening that it is pouring rain. So I am starting to lose hope...

17 meters proved to be MUCH more productive. I found a clear spot tuned up and went to work. Here it still took several minutes of calling for people to hear me. I am going to guess they swung their beams around to me as some of them came booming in to my little wire in the middle of the ocean! I was starting to get somewhere when it seemed my band opening on 17 just stopped so I tried the 30 meter band in hopes of getting something there but no one replied. Next I figured I would give 20 meters another try. I went fairly high in the CW area to get away from the contesters and it seemed to work. I did get a couple of contacts, but it was at this point that I had to pack it up so we could go to the airport to pick up our daughter who was flying in... with 7 QSOs in the log. I really wanted to get this activation and as fate would have it, I started right after the new UTC day began so I actually had time. This was the most difficult hour and half of my POTA life thus far. I had netted 7 contacts in over 90 minutes of air time...I had not anticipated this. Normally, due to the spot page, I get an activation in short order. I have a new appreciation for Hawaii call signs now that I could not have before.

The next thing that happened was fate working in my "POTA" favor. You see the airline let Sierra wait in Maui for an extra two hours due to issues with the gates in the airport. So since the airport in Hilo is 10 minutes from this park I was activating, we just drove back over to the park and I found a better tree to get the wire almost completely vertical this time.

Launching into the "second session" I got on 30 meters hoping to get something there but nobody answered me after quite a while. So I just moved back to 20 meters and again went high in the CW portion. I have never went to 14080 mhz before so I wasn't sure how this would work. It worked fairly well to be honest, as I got my activation completed during this time part of the time!!!

Since I had my 10 QSOs finally, I wanted to try and work someone on every band I could use on the radio which meant moving down to 40 meters for a while. I finally worked NA7C in Utah on 40 meters with just 7 watts!!!! I also learned from the RBN that my K1 needs to be aligned. It was consistently off frequency by at least 200 hertz.

So for this trip I took the Gemini travel key as I really like the form factor of this key for these kinds of operations. It is the perfect size and design for ops where there is no surface to set the key on



The QSO map looks a lot like I thought it would other than I didn't expect the mid west and eastern contacts at all. I also figured on a few Japan contacts to be honest, I really thought I would get a couple with how active the Japanese people are in POTA. I only heard a few "J" calls the whole time and none of them could hear me. So when I was spotted by 5W1SA in Samoa then again by VE6WZ in Canada I was just sure I would get some Japan calls, but nothing. Figures. Maybe I did the grey line wrong...who knows.

So when I wrapped up the activation, the antenna was drowned and when I got back to the room I spread all of it out to dry. Note it took more than one day to dry since it rains here almost nonstop and the humidity won't let the stuff dry very fast. It probably won't be done drying it till I get home.

Well, that is the story of my activation from the isle of Hawaii while I was on vacation. Thank you for reading along and now go have some fun! What is your most insane story about an activation?

Note de N4CD – the Elecraft K-1 supports 4 bands – 40,20, and two others when being built. This one apparently was 40,30,20 and 17M. He could have used 15m (which you can do by eliminating one other band). Don't think it will do 10M. Likely the best bands from HI now are 15 and 10M as N8KIE found.

New County in Hawaii

From the MARAC Newsletter April 2023

Date: April 1 2023

Big news coming out of the Aloha State! Apparently a new county will be announced soon. Reports are that it will be off the coast of Kalawao. Apparently there is a small rock formation that is unfortunately only accessible at low tide, but will soon meet the qualifications for a new county. Locals learned of the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Park, which is totally under water, and decided that they, too, could utilize this reef as a new Park and county for tourism purposes. Accessibility will be difficult.

There are currently no boats for rent on Kalawao. There will be a new National Park program where one can sign up and learn to carve your own boat out of local wood, just like those that have been done by the native Hawaiian people for generations. Once you make your hand-made boat, you can paddle out to the island with your ham gear to access this new county for activation. More details coming. N4CD already has begun plans to activate this park/county. The name of the this new county will be called Nowayo, pronounced, "No-Way-Oh".

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Note de N4CD - Kalawao, known as Kalaupppa to the locals, is a National Historic Site. It is dedicated to Father Damien, who tended to the lepers at the leper colony. Started over 100 years ago, lepers in HI were banished to very isolated peninsula with high cliffs that prevented 'escape' or even visits.

Fortunately, a cure to 'arrest' leprosy (Hansen's Disease) was discovered – removing the need for isolation of victims. There are only a few elderly 'residents' there now.

When the last remaining survivor passes away, this park this will be easier to access. Now it is super restricted to limited tour groups (the Kalawao Mule Ride) and one small, small airplane that spend 2 hours at the park on a short tour then leave. Likely then this new program will be put in place for all those interested in learning about HI culture and

building outrigger canoes. The dense forests above have the necessary trees for use.

If you're not familiar with outrigger canoes, and haven't watched an Episode of Hawaii Five O, you can check them out here in a short trailer on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-71FVm1K9Kg>

Fortunately for county hunters, there is small area above that is 'in the county' and can be run mobile. Getting to Nowayo will be tough. The next update on this from the US Park Service is expected in about a year on April 1, 2024. Stay tuned!

Old Call Books Online

If you'd like to check old callbooks for ancient calls, from 1909 to about 1997 (not all issues there) you can check out

<http://leehite.org/callbooks/>

Found my first general call WB2KQL there in the summer issue of 1964. Wow...way back when, call books were the only way of sending QSL cards between hams. No LoTW, eQSL, QRZ, etc. All paper. No QRZ on line to look up addresses. If you've been a ham for many years, you've probably got a collection of QSL cards somewhere.

I guess starting in the 1970s, the B&B shop put out directories of County Hunters with addresses (and “stars” as time moved on). Also another outfit in SC (?) put out some county hunting info. There were at least two systems of MRC forwarding. CQ Magazine put out the book where you entered contacts and map books became popular from two sources. (You can still buy a Map book today from W5GND) Now all that info is all on line at MARAC and incorporated into Logger. Works for county hunters – and regular folks through QRZ.com .

Note: The files are big – 250 Mbytes typically – so downloading is slow. Not recommended for where you pay for data usage on a mobile phone.

AI5P Trip Report I

A Quick Visit to the Cabin Creek Battlefield State Historic Site in Mayes County, Oklahoma. K-6335

Not too many Civil War battles were fought in the Indian Territory - now Oklahoma. But there were a few and two were actually fought in the same location.

From Wikipedia: Two Civil War military engagements were fought at the Cabin Creek battlefield in the Cherokee Nation within the Indian Territory. The location was where the Texas Road crossed Cabin Creek, near the present-day town of Big Cabin (population 174 !). Both the first and second battles were launched by the Confederate Army to disrupt Union Army supply trains out of Fort Gibson.

The first raid in July 1863 failed to stop the Union supply trains. The second raid in September 1864 resulted in the Confederates capturing over a million dollars worth of mules, wagons and supplies. However, this victory was too late to have any strategic impact on the outcome of the war.

I see that the first activation here was by our own N4CD in March 2020. I made a quick stop and 23 contacts were in the log - all on 20 meters SSB. Interesting place if you are a Civil War history buff!



Park entrance



Battle monument

New Mexico QSO Party

There are 33 counties in NM. Looks like top hunters got 21 of them. Some counties have populations under 5,000. Some are way off the beaten path.

KU5B mobile 742 cw qso Multi Op

First and foremost, a HUGE thanks to Ellie for driving me around all day. We had a great time and she was a trooper for keeping us on or, many times, ahead of schedule! Of course, I did promise her that we would have a late lunch in San Antonio at The Owl Cafe as we had stopped at the Buckhorn Tavern a couple of weeks ago and needed to

decide for ourselves which of the two establishments had the best green chile cheeseburgers. Our opinions differed :)

To all my radio friends that followed me around throughout the day, a massive thanks. You're the ones that make this enjoyable. Conditions seemed to be in pretty good shape. I felt very loud on 20m and as the sun began to set on the East Coast that feeling transferred to 40m. The only issue I have with this set-up is that when I introduce the laptop and keyer into the equation, I have major RF issues on 10m so I'll need to diagnose that before the next outing. I moved to Santa Fe in July of last year for work and haven't had the opportunity to do much radio in the state until now, but NX5M has been really gracious to get a remote setup going back in Texas so I'm able to fuel my radio habit every now and then.

Thanks also to the Georgia folks for coming to work me when you could. Nice to have the exchanges match up with the other QSO parties this year.

Hope to see some of you in Italy for WRTC!

FT-891
ATAS-120A
CQ/X by NO5W

73,
Colin KU5B + Ellie

K5ZZR mobile 65 ssb qso Single Op

15,000 Bonus points from Mora, Union and Colfax counties. Really enjoyed my antelope viewing in Colfax and Union, and later seeing the gorge in Mora on the Canadian.

NS2N fixed NY 29 cw 12 ssb 17 counties

thanks especially to KU5B on a long drive

County Sign Database Project

It's been a while since I've looked at the MARAC county sign database at

[www.CHarchive.com \(marac.org\)](http://www.CHarchive.com(marac.org))

Under 'the hunted '

There, you'll see pictures of county line signs for over 2900 different counties. Some states are missing quite a few county line signs – states that get run here and there. Maybe you can check your state (or planned trip) and see if you can't add to the database to get it to 3077 counties.

The following states are NOT completed -

CA only 47 of 58 present

CT – all missing – are there any county signs in CT?

GA – 153 done of 159

IL – only 95 of 102 done

IN – 75 of 102 done

KY - 110 out of 120 done

MA 8 of 14 done

MD – 20 of 24 done

ME 12 of 16 done

MN 86 of 87 done

NC 94 of 100 done

ND - 46 of 53 finished

NH 7 of 10 done

NJ 13 of 21 done

NV 14 of 16 done

NY 54 of 62 done

OH 85 of 88 done

PA 56 of 57 done

RI 0 of 5 done

TN 89 of 94 done

UT 28 of 29 done

WA 38 of 39 done

Many of the western states – barely populated – are done. What's strange is some highly populated and run states are missing a lot of county line signs! Sometimes the challenge is finding a place to pull over and take the picture on urban roads.

Can you help 'get it done'? Is your home state complete?

Georgia QSO Party

It looks like well over 100 of the 158 counties in GA were on the air. GA has the second most number of counties.

AD4EB mobile 2998 cw QSO !!!!

This was the first time Juan AC6ZM and I teamed up for a mobile QSO party, and we had a blast. Band conditions were superb, participation was good, weather was not so great due to rain all day Saturday and drizzle Sunday but we managed. We worked all 66 planned counties and stayed mostly right on schedule.

Here are a few observations:

- 1) Pileups seemed much bigger than usual, was expecting smaller ones due to the Easter celebration. This was possibly because there were only a few mobiles in the contest, which increased the focus on us.
- 2) Too many folks were zero beat on our frequency, made it very difficult pulling calls out, and for people to hear us come back to them. Would sure be nice if operators made a point to spread out a bit more.
- 3) The pileups got pretty unruly at times, some were sending their call repetitively too often which kind of made a mess of things. But most were very polite, made a single call slightly off frequency, waited their turn, and got picked up quickly. Thanks to you guys.
- 4) Those that used my posted information on QRZ.com had the best success. On QRZ.com you will find a link to APRS.fi where you can track us live during the contest. It shows our exact location within each country and where we are going. No reason to

jump into a big pileup, just watch APRS and wait a bit. Also on QRZ.com are the estimated times we enter each county.

5) Stations were incredibly loud on all bands both domestic and DX. 15m was open but not many takers. DL3DXX and OM2VL moved us up there numerous times.

6) We took advantage of the new GAQP rule that allowed self-spotting. When rates got slow, it sure picked up after we sent out our spot with county. I like this option, but understand why many do not. It is not allowed in the FLQP by the way.

7) We used my new 2023 KIA Carnival which worked flawlessly. If anyone is in need of a new vehicle for mobile operations this one is RFI free, both to the vehicle and from the vehicle.

9) Missed ND, NM, HI, AK, UT, WY and only worked 5 provinces

Here are the top 20 ops based on number of QSOs:

DL3DXX (96) - Congratulations Dietmar!

W5TM (91)

OM2VL (88)

NS2N (68)

KA6BIM (64)

W4NZ (59)

NM2A (55)

VE3YT (47)

W8WVU (47)

AF5J (40)

N8NA (39)

K9CW (38)

AA4DD (37)

W0PI (36)

W5MX (36)

N4SS (34)

NX3A (34)

AA7V (32)

N4RS (32)

VE3MV (31)

DL3DXX Dietmar and OM2VL Laci were loud and they sure have the knack. We could

tell they were using APRS.fi to track us, and their timing as to when to send their calls during the pileups was impeccable. And W5TM Ed always had a great signal and was easy to copy. Often, seconds after we entered a county or switched bands, one of them would there.

Thanks to all those that took the time to work us, and to KU8E who now gets to process all these logs. Thanks also to Ted W4NZ for getting Don N4ZZ, then AD4EB, and finally AC6ZM into mobile contesting. It is all your fault Ted.

But most of all thanks to Melody and Melisa, our wives, that enabled us do ham radio away from home during this Easter holiday weekend. Juan and I are blessed with two wonderful and supportive ladies.

73 - Jim - AD4EB and Juan - AC6ZM

AA4GA QRP Portable 646 cw qso

Saturday all from MADI due to nasty WX - I didn't want to put antenna up and down in the rain so I just operated from our yard.

Sunday operated from six POTA parks in six counties: BARR, MORG, WALT, JASP,NEWT, & BUTT.

Easter seemed to reduce activity a bit, but still fun!

W5TM Fixed OK 258 cw 101 counties

GREAT OPS!!! Great conditions! Thanks for the fun!

K4BAI - fixed - GA 626 cw 465 ssb

Due to my being out of town with the family while kids were on "spring break" from school for four days leading up to Saturday and Sunday's being Easter with church services and a big family meal, Jeff, KU8E and I decided not to do our usual W4AN/M mobile run on CW this year. We got home and had lunch so I was only a bit late starting on Saturday. I got in 9 hour and 45 minutes on Saturday. 10M was a bit of a disappointment, but 15 through 80 were pretty good. 40M was very short until just

before nightfall, but 40 and 80 were fine thereafter. Still no antenna for 160M. Used all single element wire antennas. Use no assistance and did not spot myself, but know that it would have been helpful especially on phone. Missed four states: SD, HI, AK, and WY. Missed the usual VE mults, VY2, VO, and the Northern territories. Worked a fair amount of DX in this hemisphere and a few in Europe. OM2VL and DL3DXX were quite loud most of the time and had no trouble working OM2VL on 15 through 80 CW and SSB. Got DL3DXX on most bands on CW. HC5DX was worked on all bands I worked except 10M where I made no SSB QSOs.

Thanks a lot to AD4EB and N4N who kept the mobile operations going for this year. Thanks for all participants and we look forward the the second full weekend in April next year which surely won't be Easter weekend again for a number of years.

Thanks to everyone for getting on for the GQP on a holiday weekend. A big thanks to the AD4EB (AD4EB, AC6ZM and Melody) and the N4N (K5JR and crew) teams for driving around Georgia and activating a lot of counties on Easter weekend. The skip was so short on 40 meters that I had a 2nd radio on 40 CW to work them when they changed counties. K4BAI and I missed doing our W4AN rover effort as we usually do. We will be back next year and from Florida in the FQP in a couple weekends.

It was different to operate from home and make a lot of SSB contacts in the GQP. 20 SSB was especially good. Now the real work starts for me checking logs which is a big task!

73's Jeff KU8E

NM2A fixed NY 152 cw 70 counties

Wow! What a show by AD4EB and N4N!!!
Was a blast watching Jim on his trip
around the state. Fantastic QP....Nice
job to all who made this fine QSO Party a
great success. I just couldnt rip myself
away from the rig/Lol

See ya'll next year with a little luck....

73

AI5P Trip Report II

Fort Larned, a National Historic Site, sits along the Santa Fe Trail in Pawnee County, Kansas. It's certainly worth a visit if you are in the area. Park K-0818/KFF-0818.

From their brochure: At Fort Larned, which lies just steps from the Santa Fe Trail, cultures mixed every day. Soldiers met Plains Indians, European American and Hispanic teamsters, homesteaders, hide hunters, scouts, and railroad workers. U.S. Army regulars served with paroled Confederates. The fort housed African-Americans later known as Buffalo Soldiers, who formed Company A of the 10th Cavalry.

The post evolved from a rough, temporary camp set up in 1859 to guard the construction of an adobe mail station. It was a bustling soldier town by 1867 but became a near ghost town by 1878. The soldiers' primary purpose was to escort mail coaches and military supply wagons on the trail. Their broader mission was to keep the peace on the plains - and take action when required.



Ft Larned

The fort also hosted Indian agents for the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Plains Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche tribes. In 1867 peace commissioners

appointed by Congress met at Fort Larned to plan the Medicine Lodge treaties.

A huge American flag flew atop a 100-foot pole at the parade ground center. Many travelers saw the flag as a beacon of strength and security, but for the Plains Indians it symbolized lost freedom.

Although Fort Larned is one of the best-preserved western forts, its appearance today belies that of the late 1860s. The many wood and adobe buildings outside the central parade ground quickly deteriorated and did not survive. From 1865 to 1868 over 200 civilians labored to complete ten sandstone buildings, boosting the local economy. Nine of these buildings still stand.

After touring the fort, I put 48 contacts in the log - all on 20 meters SSB.



Bachelor Officer's room



Barracks

Note de N4CD – this was first activated by N4CD on 4/10/2016 as a National Historic site in the National Parks on the Air Program. Didn't do the tour though. There are at least a dozen preserved forts around the country – from the French and Indian Wars, Indian Wars, Frontier Wars, Spanish American War, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, etc. Many have been rebuilt, or just a few buildings remain of the forts. Some go back 300-400 years.

On the Road with N4CD – to MICHIGAN

A mini in Midland MI was coming up. This year hosted by Dorrie N8WTQ and a change from Traverse City which is way north in the lower 'thumb' of the state. Just about as far to go though for N4CD. Maybe a bit closer for others from the 'east'.

This trip would be fairly straight up to MI, but with a dozen stops along the way for parks not far off the interstate route. To MT Vernon IL – to Effingham, IL, to Indianapolis, then Fort Wayne, to Lansing, MI – then on some back roads wandering toward Midland MI.

Saturday April 15

I headed out on a Saturday – same interstates up to Little Rock then across toward Memphis, then north to Blytheville, AR. Seems that all my favorite motels were booked solid. Something must be going on. Had to find another hotel and it was the OYO – a chain. Some great, some not so great. No breakfast provided. Accommodations were OK but had some hassle with booking.com – the service that his OYO Motel uses. Rate at motel was not honored. Booking dot com hit me for 'did not show' charge even though I stayed there and paid with cash as the host demanded. Will have to fight this out. Never again an OYO motel. Did one once before with no hassles. Nor will I use booking.com. Dinner at the Greek Steakhouse.

This was going to be a trip to NOT repeat the experience of the last big trip where I wound up in the hospital with major constipation problems on the way to the National Convention in Bozeman MT. . My Gastroenterology doc recommended taking Miralax every day. At home and on the road. Take ½ cap full at home each day and full cap when traveling. Seems to have solved the problem. Yeah. You can't overdoes on it either. If you've ever had a colonoscopy, the goop they give you is 17 times the normal dose – along with a gallon of water. That will clean you out completely. It's available at your local pharmacy, or giant size at Costco and Sam's Club places. It's both a stool softener and laxative. It's hard to eat a healthy diet while traveling – fruit and veggies, etc, fiber, and avoid high sugary foods.

Just before Blytheville, you can take a 5 minute detour and get to **Wapanocca National Wildlife Area**. 5.500 acres in Crittenden County AR. I've been there once before, but had some extra time as travel was good with no delays and had a half hour to spare. Park K-0170/KFF-0170. This was also the weekend for the MI, NE, ND QSO Party. Caught a couple of them in the log. There have only been 16 activations of this park since 2016 even though it's right off the interstate. I'd add in one more. Didn't run too much as other mobiles were on the road – with K8ZZ keeping things busy day after day. K3IMC, AB7RW, KA9JAC were active, too, on the way there and while there out running more during the day at convention time. Did 532 miles the fist day getting to MI.

Sunday April 16

First up today would be **Black Island State Conservation Area** – K-82239/KFF-6313 near Hayti MO. Pemiscott County. Early in the morn and not too many county hunters around. Nothing spectacular.

Next one was a ways up in IL on the way to Effingham IL. **Stephen A Forbes State Recreation Area** k-4104 and KFF-6317 in Marion County. It's considered a state park there. 3,100 acres around a lake. Camping, boating, hiking, jet skiing, etc. Short visit.

You head to Mason IL and there you find **Wildcat Hollow State Nature Preserve** K-0526. There are several parking areas. Fayette County. Overnight in Mt Vernon.

Monday April 17

I then head to Indianapolis with some stops along the way. First up is **Fox Ridge State Park**. **K-0994/KFF-0994**. Coles County IL. They are always easy to find- the GPS lady knows the state parks and directs you there without winding on back roads from written down instructions. Google maps know some of the state nature areas, wildlife areas, and historic sites, but only about half of what are 'parks' can you use google maps to get there. Some you have to investigate ahead of time, dig out route info, and hope you can find it. Some are easy. Some you'll spend time hunting for the right road to get there as a named highway is only marked county road XXX and somehow you're supposed to figure that out. Maybe later you'll see a sign for the named highway. Many intersections have zero road signs in places.

Next is **Lincoln Trails State Park** – **K-1007 /KFF-1007** in Clark County IL. Had a decent run – both county hunters and park chasers. Typical state park.

Moving east, I hit **Wasbashi /state Fish and Wildlife Area** near Terre Haut IN. Vigo County. . K-4231 and KFF-4231. The numbers are for the POTA and WWFF designations. There are 9800 POTA parks in the US and about 6500 WWFF parks. After about 4400, the numbers diverge and are different.

From the state site: “Wabashiki Fish & Wildlife Area (FWA) is 3,652 acres of mostly bottomland forest along the Wabash River and some upland habitat. Certain parcels are only accessible by the river.

In 2010, Vigo County Parks Department and the Department of Natural Resources joined together in a cooperative effort to offer this bird viewing paradise to all Hoosiers.

Most revenues used in land acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of Wabashiki FWA are derived from the sale of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses. Funds are also received from the federal Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson programs to aid fish and wildlife restoration. These funds are derived from taxes levied on sport hunting, shooting, and fishing equipment. Indiana hunters and anglers are proud to provide this property for the enjoyment of all people.”

It's right off the main road a few miles from the interstate - easy to find!

Chinook State Fish and Wildlife Area K-4190/KFF-4190 was next. Clay, IN County. To get here you follow the directions:

Take exit 23 on 59 going so. Go ¼ mile and turn west on IN42-W. 4.3 miles then turn north on N Cory Staurton Rd. go 1 mile, turn right, destination will be on your left.

That was easy to find with good directions on the web. As I head north, many are more challenging to get to.

Deer Creek – K4194/KFF4194 Putnam IN. It's nice when there is a string of parks, each in a new county! Great for county hunters. However, many times there are clusters in the same county.

From the state site: “It has 2,175 acres of mature woods, interspersed with rolling agriculture, including a 4-acre pond. and motorboat fuels supports Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.”

Time for the motel in Cloverdale. Super 8. Good breakfast including eggs.

Woke up to heavy frost on car windows. 34F. Brrr. Had to dig out the ice scrapper and work at it.

Tuesday April 18 tax day! Hope you filed your return by now!

Lieber State Recreation Area K-5685 POTA only. However, this seems to be the same as **Cagles Mill Lake Nationa Recreation Area WWFF K-4163/KFF-4169.** Putnam IN

From the web: “In 1952, Cagles Mill Lake was built as Indiana’s first flood control reservoir, protecting the Eel and White river watersheds. Mill Creek feeds the 1,400-acre

lake and is home to beautiful Cataract Falls. These falls resulted from two pre-glacial bedrock ridges buried beneath ancient lake sediments of the Illinoisan glacial period.

In the 1800s, Lieber State Recreation Area was populated by the Miami, Shawnee and Potawatomi. In 1809, what was left of the great Miami Indian Confederacy sold the now southern one-third of Indiana to the U.S. government, when the 10 O’Clock Treaty Line, which passes through Lieber SRA, was laid out. To learn more about the history and legends of the area, stop at the Nature Center and speak with the Interpretive Naturalist staff.

The state of the art Aquatic Center is open during the Memorial Day to Labor Day recreation season. The Aquatic Center has a zero entrance pool, water bubblers and a tornado water slide. There are also shelters, a volleyball court and a playground. Other family fun opportunities include hiking trails, boat access to Cagles Mill Lake and a campground. The 115 Class A and 94 Class B campsites make this a lovely place to visit. Plan a picnic in the activities field, where you will find horseshoe pits, basketball courts, and plenty of play areas for the kids.”

Next up is a **White River State Park** in downtown Indianapolis. Marion County. K-2274/KFF-2274. You head right downtown not knowing what you'll find for urban parks. The website doesn't really tell you enough. . I was very pleased to find a nice parking lot, no QRN, for a good run. You do have to pay to park in the lot – pay the robot machine and put ticket in windshield area. If an event is going on there, the lot will be full and they have evening concerts, too. Some urban parks are impossible to run mobile as you park on the streets. Decent run there.

Fort Harrison State Park K/KFF- 2256. Same county. Working my way northeast now. A lot of history here:

“Fort Harrison occupies part of the former site of Fort Benjamin Harrison. The park features a former Citizen's Military Training Camp, Civilian Conservation Corps camp, and World War II prisoner of war camp. There are also picnicking and walking/jogging trails including a connection to the Fall Creek Greenway. The park receives nearly 900,000 visitors annually.

The park is 1 of 14 Indiana State Parks that are in the path of totality for the 2024 solar eclipse, with 3 minutes and 48 seconds of totality.

History

Fort Harrison was opened in 1906 by United States President Theodore Roosevelt,

honoring former President Benjamin Harrison, who was from Indianapolis. The idea came from Lieutenant Colonel Russell Harrison, son of recently deceased Benjamin Harrison, who wanted to keep a military facility in Indianapolis due to the legacy of such Indianapolis military facilities as Camp Morton.

The fort was finished in 1908, after the construction of brick barracks, headquarters, officer's houses, and hospital. Other support structures, such as horse stables, were finished at the time.

The fort represented the first effort to make a national army using state militia forces. It acted as classrooms, soldier support, and troop reception for all United States military activities from World War I to Operation: Desert Storm. During World War II, the base had a prisoner of war camp.

The athlete village for the 1987 Pan American Games was built inside Fort Benjamin Harrison. Complete with restaurants, dining facilities, dorms, etc.

Following the Cold War, the United States government began downsizing by closing bases. Thus, in 1991 Fort Harrison of Indianapolis was decommissioned.

The United States Department of the Interior chose in 1995 to give 1,700 acres of Fort Harrison's 2,500 acres to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for use as a state park, similar to how Charlestown State Park started in Southern Indiana.”

Above borrowed from Wikipedia....

- - -

Mounds State Park K-/KFF2261. Easy to find. Madison County IN

from the state site:

“Mounds State Park, located off I-69 east of Anderson, features 10 unique earthworks built by prehistoric Indians known as the Adena-Hopewell people. The largest earthwork, the Great Mound, is believed to have been constructed around 160 B.C. Archaeological surveys indicate the mounds were used as gathering places for religious ceremonies, from where astronomical alignments could be viewed.”

Conditions were rough today. Solar storm! Yuck.

Just a bit north you can find 3 parks around Lake Rousch.

JE Roush Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area K/KFF-4208 Huntington County IN

“Roush Fish and Wildlife Area is an area dedicated to providing hunting and fishing opportunities while maintaining 8,217 acres, 870 acres (350 ha) of which are water of J.E. Roush Lake. It is located along U.S. Route 224 east of Huntington, Indiana.”

Little Turtle State recreation Area K-5681 Huntington County IN

It's located on the south shore of the lake. Camping and access to the lake. The lake is a Corps of Engineer lake.

Kil-So-Quah State Recreation Area K-5683

This is on the north side of the lake.

Whew! Worn out and time to stop in Huntington IN at a Super 8 for the night.

Wednesday April 19.

Time to head to Lansing MI area. The mini starts on late Thursday – through Sunday.

Early in the morning, make a few dozen contacts on 40m in the early 1300z CW Wednesday Test. On the way to the first park.

Lake Interstate State Game Area K-5683. Just a mile off the interstate. Eaton County. Put 14Q in the log on 20m and skedaddle to the next. Nice parking area – easy to run.



From the state site:

“Lake Interstate State Game Area (SGA) was gifted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from the Department of Transportation for the purpose of general wildlife management. The area remains utilized for general wildlife purposes as well as by anglers for year around fishing. The area is about 123 acres and is located just southwest of Lansing Michigan in Eaton County. The area includes a large borrow pit pond and the surrounding shoreline.

Due to the small size of the area, limited hunting opportunities exist but a small group of hunters use the area for hunting. The featured wildlife species of the area are cottontail

rabbit and deer. Small game, waterfowl and archery deer hunting occurs on the area as well as year around fishing.”

Roseland Game Area K-6771 in Shiawassee County MI – easy to get to – a mile off the interstate at exit 96.

“4,140 acres of moderately rolling farmland, abandoned fields, oak and lowland woods, and marsh. The area includes several special features, like: wildlife management features (ponds, floodings, brush piles, food patches, trees and shrub plantings), soil conservation practices, wildlife research, rifle and skeet ranges, and more. Please do not tamper with any research equipment or markers you may encounter; please insure you read all signs and posted information for any special rules. The area offers popular options for outdoor educational features, such as being available as a biological study area for high school and university classes”

Maple River State Game Land k-6730 - Clinton County MI - takes a bit of navigating to get there. Not much in the way of parking area either.

The Maple River State Game Area follows the Maple River and several smaller creeks for a distance of approximately 16 miles and a total area of 9,252 acres. I

The area once contained numerous industrial factories and small settlements, but most have disappeared over time. The only incorporated settlement located directly within the state game area is the small village of Maple Rapids in Essex Township. In Washington Township, U.S. Highway 127 (US 127) passes through the area with a large marshland on both sides. The artificially created marshland is referred to as the Maple River Flooding. The city of St. Johns is to the south on US 127, and Ithaca is to the north. No other major roadways pass through the area, although there are numerous local roads and bridges.

From wiki:

“The Maple River State Game Area has a diverse environment consisting of old forests, wetlands, and grasslands centered along the Maple River. The game area is noted for its large bird populations, as well as an abundance of rabbits, turtles, deer, possums, coyotes, turkeys, snakes, and numerous rodents, such as muskrats, porcupines, squirrels, chipmunks, and beavers. The Maple River is also a popular fishing destination. The river includes many common fish, including black crappie, bluegill, smallmouth and largemouth bass, northern pike, pumpkinseed, rock bass, yellow perch, bullhead and

channel catfish, and bowfin. The Maple River is dammed in several locations, but none are within the river's course in the state game area.

Water levels along the river and surrounding wetlands have started to dry up in recent years, leading to a sharp drop in the number of some animals. From 2010 to 2015, the area underwent an extensive restoration project to improve the depleting wetlands to provide a more hospitable animal refuge to accommodate increasing animal populations. The project increased water levels through a new water pumping system, upgraded miles of levees and hiking paths, and built boat launches for river access. The project was supported by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with contributions from Ducks Unlimited.”

Gratiot-Saginaw Connector State Game Land K-6729 Gratiot County MI

from the state site:

“Acquisition of the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area (GSSGA) began in November of 1939. Prior to purchase, much of the land consisted of open farmland and recently cut over woodland. Due to sandy and poorly drained soils farming was marginal at best. Since then, plant succession has filled in most of the openings and much of the area is now predominantly forested. Forest management practices (selective and clear cutting) have been the primary habitat management technique on the area. In addition, over 700 acres of artificial impoundments and ditching/potholes were constructed to improve habitat for waterfowl.

The majority of land on the game area was purchased with federal Pittman-Robertson Funds, but some land was acquired through tax reversion, trust fund, and license fee monies. The GSSGA is located in the Southwest Region (SWR) of the Lower Peninsula along Gratiot-Saginaw county border. Over time, the GSSGA has been expanded to include 16,966 acres and is managed to provide quality habitat for wild turkey, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, wood duck, and ring-necked pheasants and for recreational opportunities associated with these species”

Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area K-6694

from the state site:

“Comprised of nearly 17,000 acres, the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area (SGA) is one of the largest managed wildlife areas in the Lower Peninsula. During its acquisition by the State of Michigan in 1939, much of the land that now makes up the Gratiot-Saginaw

SGA was agricultural fields and cut-over areas. As time passed, plant succession eventually led to much of the area becoming forested. Select portions within the SGA were modified to create wetlands to promote habitat for waterfowl and furbearing species, and these areas continue to be managed to ensure habitat quality and hunter access.

This SGA features game species like wild turkey, ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbit and an abundance of waterfowl and furbearing species. Due to the expanse of the SGA, there are a variety of habitat types to provide foraging material and cover for these species. The DNR continues to restore and enhance different portions of the land to better sustain the wildlife populations found there”

- - - - -

Whew! Lot of parks along the way. Now I arrived at the Springhill Suites in Midland MI. I'm a day early but decide to check in to give MARAC credit for another 'room night' to meet the quota of sold room/nights for the Mini. I'll be there for 4 nights, but out running counties/parks for the next 3 days. There are a lot of parks nearby within 100 miles.

That's the trip up. More in Part II coming next month. I've got to get this issue off the press now. It was 1461 miles getting there with detours to parks along the way. According to Mapquest, without detours it would be 1263 miles. Didn't take too many pictures along the way. Half the state game areas have no signs other than 'public hunting area'.

Thanks for riding along.

Nice turkey dinner at Bob Evans right near the hotel.

Michigan QSO Party

KD8FS mobile 448 cw qso

Together my brother Al, KD8FS, and I operated the MiQP as a driver/operator team. This was our first time entering this event as an in-state mobile team. The plan was to cover 20 counties by driving up Hwy 31 along the western side of the state, looping around Traverse City, up around Elk Lake, and then back down toward Kalamazoo. The first 4.5 hours were flawless in navigating and operating, all the way to Traverse City.

Then it happened! Unknown to either of us, Murphy had jumped into the back seat somewhere early on and he jerked the DC/DC power adapter out of the lighter socket. The laptop had been running on battery power until it gave up and flashed a 6% battery low warning! I thought the charger had "fried" so we aborted the loop up around Elk Lake and started the drive back to Allegan.

I soon discovered the adapter had not stopped working, rather it had come loose from the lighter plug. Reconnecting it allowed the battery to start recharging and the laptop rebooted after about 10 minutes. But we were too far along our return route to double back so we decided to continue the route from that point and append KZOO and VANB to the end of our planned route.

Here is our operating route, QSOs, and times gleaned from our submitted log:

Code	County	Callsign	Begin	End	Seq	QSOs	Op	Time
ALLE	Allegan	KD8FS/m	12:03	12:40	1	29	0:37	
OTTA	Ottawa	KD8FS/m	12:42	13:17	2	21	0:35	
MUSK	Muskegon	KD8FS/m	13:22	13:43	3	20	0:21	
OCEA	Oceana	KD8FS/m	13:45	14:14	4	26	0:29	
MASO	Mason	KD8FS/m	14:17	14:46	5	27	0:29	
MANI	Manistee	KD8FS/m	14:50	15:23	6	29	0:33	
BENZ	Benzie	KD8FS/m	15:27	15:58	7	23	0:31	
LEEL	Leelanau	KD8FS/m	16:09	16:24	8	10	0:15	
GRTR	Grand Tr	KD8FS/m	16:30	16:36	9	8	0:06	
ANTR	Antrim		-	-				
CHAR	Charlevoix		-	-				
KALK	Kalkaska		-	-				

WEXF	Wexford	KD8FS/m	17:51	17:54	10	3	0:03
OSCE	Osceola	KD8FS/m	17:56	18:16	11	12	0:20
LAKE	Lake	KD8FS/m	18:16	18:25	12	13	0:09
NEWA	Newaygo	KD8FS/m	18:30	18:41	13	13	0:11
MECO	Mecosta	KD8FS/m	18:44	19:19	14	36	0:35
MCLM	Montcalm	KD8FS/m	19:20	19:38	15	24	0:18
KENT	Kent	KD8FS/m	19:42	20:24	16	43	0:42
ALLE	Allegan	KD8FS/m	20:25	20:49	17	23	0:24
KZOO	Kalamazoo	KD8FS/m	20:51	21:53	18	59	1:02
VANB	VanBuren	KD8FS/m	22:56	23:29	19	22	0:33
ALLE	Allegan	KD8FS/m	23:35	23:58	20	10	0:23

Band conditions did not seem very good. I had expected a higher QSO rate like my recent experiences in the MN and WI Parties. The majority of the stations I worked were Q5 but there were a few that I just could not pull out of the noise. Talking about noise, there were areas where the noise level wiped out the band. Those were mostly areas when driving through some of the small towns. The European "regulars" were easily worked on 20 and 40 meters.

The logger is N1MM+ running on Windows 10 Pro on a Dell Precision 1575 laptop. The radio is a Kenwood TS-690SAT (bought new at the Dayton Hamvention in 1994! with CW filters), and MFJ Hamstick mobile antenna(s) on a triple mag-mount. Although the radio has a tuner built-in, I decided to add an LDG autotuner to eliminate the need to "fiddle" with the radio. My original WinKeyUSB pounded out all of the CW.

The mobile station is set up in a 2015 Lexus RX350. There was absolutely no ignition noise and the SUV is a comfortable, quiet vehicle to drive. Other than the power plug problem everything worked as expected.

The drive from my QTH in Chisago County, MN to my brother's QTH in Allegan County, MI was a 12-hour journey going there. Driving through Chicago was a nightmare with all the road construction and congestion. Then we add another 12 hours of contesting and a 10-hour trip back home. This made for a lot of driving in a few days. We didn't set any records but we both had a great experience and enjoyed our time together.

K8MM rover/mobile 264 cw 164 ssb qso

I had originally planned to operate from my cabin ROSC but I got the itch to do

a rover operation Friday morning before the contest started. In the past I had done a few rover style operations before it was a category in MIQP, so I had a station already all set up to go.

I started out in MANI and made 143 qsos in 2 1/2 hours. Condx on 40M seemed decent, not great but decent. I had problems with my voice-keyer and my headphones broke while there. I lost an extra hour of operating time stopping to eat and buy a cheap set of headphones in my next county, which happened to be WEXF.

In WEXF condx had seemed to be a bit flat while I was there and I only made 79 qsos. I didn't work WEXF while I was there but worked it in the three other counties I was in, go figure. After two and a half hours I packed up and headed for MISS. I should have left a half hour sooner. The commute from my operating spot in WEXF to my MISS spot is the longest of the trip.

By the time I got setup in MISS it was getting near sunset, 40 was in better shape and people were starting to show up on 80M. I made 163 qsos in about 2 hours while in MISS, the most of my trip. At 10PM I started tearing down to move to ROSC.

In ROSC I got on the air with an hour to go. I was pretty disappointed by how bad the band condx were by then and it seemed like the QRN chased most of the casual operators off. I only made 43 qsos in ROSC before the contest ended.

Rig - Elecraft K2/100 and KAT100 external tuner.

Antenna - G5RV and I was pretty happy with how easy it was to setup and tear down. It seemed to TX/RX well enough for what I was using it for. Software - N1MM setup in ROVER mode.

Random thoughts about the operation:

I need to figure out the issues with my voice-keyer setup, it just never seems to work properly when I do a rover operation. I can only operate about an hour on phone before my voice gives out from calling cq.

I'm still amazed at the number of people think I'm a "dupe" even though I've changed counties and my callsign shows that change. K8MM/MANI, K8MM/WEXF etc on cw and K8MM/ROVER on phone.

The WX was beautiful for an April day in Michigan and it made setup and tear down much easier than it could have been. I saw lots of deer and turkeys during my trip.

I never once had anyone come over and ask what I was doing even though I was set up in public parks. I did get a double take from some guy driving a SUV with a Georgia plate while in MANI but that was about it.

It seemed like participation was down this year and the band condx were kind of "meh" at best. I ended up with 51 Michigan counties and 41 W/VE mults.

See you in MIQP 2024. - K8MM

W8RU mobile 19 cw 24 ssb
Operator(s): KE8WBJ KE8WFH W8RU

Class: Rover LP
QTH: MONR, LENA, HILL

Used the setup in Monroe to introduce two new hams to HF contesting and that was a success. 40m was quite busy early in the contest.

Band conditions seemed to drop off as the day progressed. Unable to make any QSOs on 15m or 10m at any point.

Thanks for the QSOs and 73! -Ron (W8RU).

KA6BIM fixed OR 78 cw 29 ssb 37 counties on cw 16 on ssb

Lots of activity, nice that it went late enough for 40 meters to be open to West Coast. It would be nice to have a better idea of rovers routes and schedules possible posted or linked to planned activity page. Still searching for several counties.
Thanks for the QSO's

Dave ka6bim 778 cw 29 ssb

OM2VL fixed DX 63 on cw 33 on ssb 31 counties on cw 22 on ssb

I was very busy in ONQP and hunting Bob W0BH in Nebraska, so missed so many in MIQP. Activity was so good, I heard and worked 3 mobiles, but I think missed many when I focused to ON + NE. Thanks for the QSOs!

Most QSOs with:

KD8FS 8/8

N8HAM 6/6

K8MM 5/3

K4BAI fixed GA 31 cw 10 ssb

This has been one of my favorite QSO parties that I work from my home outside the target state. This year, time for it was limited due to other commitments. Only thing good about conditions when I could be QRP was that 20M was short enough to work the few stations I heard there. They had pretty good signals. On 40 and 80, the conditions were horrible. No signals audible on 40M during the daytime. High QRN on 40 and 80 after dark. Mi activity seemed down. As usual, some Mich stations were heard calling other Mich stations but never calling CQ, so it was difficult to impossible to work them from out of state. Thanks for all QSOs. Look for me and KU8E as W4AN/M in the FL QSO Party at the end of the month. 73, John, K4BAI.

N8II - fixed - WV - 33cw 43 ssb 20 counties on cw 21 counties on ssb

Absolutely miserable conditions here starting with heavy QRN from PA storms in the afternoon. The few MI SSB stations in first 4 hours who I heard could not hear me or barely so. By the time condx were good to MI on 40 at 22Z most MI stations had "burned out their candle" and gone QRT. I tried 80/75 with only worsening QRN as the band opened and gave up on the hopeless situation at 0031Z. I made many unanswered CQ's on 40M SSB and tried some CQ's on 20/40/80. The activity just was not there and/or bands not open. Thanks for the QSO's. The MI working MI for Q's and mults discourages MI stations from working 20M and above.

FYI MI was open to here on 20 mostly only in first hour except for the UP.

The CQMM test was by far more fun than any QP last weekend (251 QSO's, calls from

YB and UN4); I may just skip the QP's next year.

73, Jeff

WORDLE for CW Hams

OK....you've probably seen the popular WORDLE daily challenge to guess the word of the day. Different than a crossword puzzle or other game puzzle in the daily paper. Lots of fans out there doing the challenge every day. You've got 5 rows (guesses) to figure out the word of the day.

For CW hams....here's the challenge of the day – MORSLE

<https://morsle.fun/help>

There's also a practice mode where you can take on more challenges to copy the correct word.....starting at 40 wpm and coming down at 5 wpm increments if you don't catch the word after a few repetitions at 40 wpm. Then 35, then 30. You get to hear it a few times, catch a few letters each time. Or you can start at a slower speed such as 20 wpm.

If you tune in to the Wednesday weekly CWT sessions, you'll hear a few folks zipping along at 40. Most are 30 wpm or so. Good practice for that for sure!

Take a look and see how you do. Using the practice mode, got a few words at 40, and finished off most at 35 for 'words'. Took listening a few times to get most of the 'calls' in the practice session. Most at 35 wpm after a few repeats. .

Nebraska QSO Party

WE1DER mobile 205 ssb qso

I and my partner would like to say thank you to everyone for helping to make our first HF mobile contest one that was well worth the effort! We were able to cover 13 counties throughout central Nebraska with over 500 miles and we discovered many beautiful Wildlife Management Areas and parks along the way! Thank you to those who followed along with us the whole way, including, but not limited to KE6GFI, KJ8F, and OM2LV! We look forward to NEQP 2024 with possible plans to light up many remote counties in the Nebraska panhandle! We will update QRZ as we get closer to next year with plans! 73's to all from John,

WE1DER, and co-pilot/logger Jonathan!

N8II fixed WV 21 cw 28 ssb

There were only a few NE stations active. W0BH/K0WHY saved the day(s) by being active mobile most all of the QP, many thanks! Saturday conditions were not up to normal and Bob was weak at times on 20. Sunday was okay, but I focused on the MM DX contest which was a lot more fun than waiting for Bob to show up in the next county. Considering the activity level, a one day NEQP would probably increase activity as one can easily work all of the fixed stations in a couple of hours.

73, Jeff

KA6BIM fixed OR 43 cw 51 ssb 31 counties

Bob & Lorna, the rover team of W0BH & K0WHY kept me pretty busy chasing them across the state. I had difficulty finding other home stations. Maybe they were all on 40 and 80 which were not open to West Coast most of the contest. Thank you for the QSO's Dave ka6bim

OM2VL 42 cw 30 ssb 32 counties

My prior QP during the weekend was ON QP, but Bob W0BH was mobile in the Nebraska QP, so of course I work him and Lorna also! Thanks for the QSOs and the nice activity as usually ...

Most QSOs:

W0BH 47/26
K0WHY 11/10
WE1DER 3/3

N6MU 109 cw 93 ssb 34 counties

Only made 12 Qs with NE fixed stations. Thank goodness W0BH/K0WHY mobile ventured up from KS to make it interesting. I worked Bob/Lorna a total of 190 times! That was fun! 73...

John, N6MU

COVID AGAIN

A new Omicron variant, the Arcturus, is making its way around the country. It did a number in India then has been spotted in 27 US states. One of the unusual symptoms seems to be itchy eyes and sore throat. One death in USA reported.

If you are up to date on your vaccinations, you should be in good shape. Otherwise, it's no worse than Omicron itself. More contagious, but not as deadly as previous rounds of COVID.

The latest update to vaccine came out last fall. Expect new one in fall 2023. It's likely to be like the annual flu shot where you get one each year adjusted for the latest strains.

North Dakota QSO Party

Most folks worked from 1 to 5 qsos into ND during the QP as reported on 3830 scores

page. . Big lack of activity. One mobile ran a few counties.

N0SPN mobile 82 ssb

.... three counties I ran as mobile station.

Dan Stroh

KA6BIM fixed OR 5 ssb qso

Tough time with this one, I only found 4 stations for total of 5 qso's Please people, retire and move to ND. They need more operators !! :-)

Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

Ran All USA

It's been seven years since someone has earned this award. Twenty county hunters have done it – been to and transmitted from all 3077 US counties starting with KB7QO back in 1988. W1TEE 3 years later. Ten years went by till WA0SBR earned number 3 in 1998. Thirteen more did it by 2011. K3IMC is the last in 2016.

WY0A and K8ZZ seem to be running entire blocks of counties in states. Both will be out on big trips. Ed headed to New England, including Dukes and Nantucket. WY0A is headed to AK in June. Both have logistic problems and aren't cheap to run.

SO.....who is going to be the next to finish? I don't see past spots for K8ZZ or WY0A in HI.....yet to come? Or K8ZZ in AK.

Way way back when, Wayne Green of 73 Magazine, offered the WAAS award. Worked almost all states (49) if you could never catch that one elusive state. It was sort of a joke award but that was half of 73 Magazines appeal of 'sticking it to the ARRL'....

There is no county hunting award for 'worked almost all counties'. You got to go to Kalawao HI and Second District AK and Nantucket and Dukes and Island WA.

Rumor has it that MARAC is working on different levels of counties run – 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000. Stay tuned on that. It's a progression toward ALL. Right now, you can get each individual state as you complete them, but the database doesn't show that. Other than listing once in the County Hunter News, or the MARAC Road Runner, there is no current way to pull up that info on a county hunter and see who has done how many states or how many counties.

At the Michigan Mini 2023

The Mini was held at the Spring Hill Suites in Midland MI. It was a very nice hotel with nice facilities and a great breakfast in the mornings. The only possible downside for some was there is no on-site restaurant, but there were a dozen restaurants within a few miles and one 1000 feet away. Just about every restaurant type close by including Bob Evans, Lucky's Steakhouse, Olive Garden, Mexican restaurants, Pizza places, Applebys, etc. N4CD visited the Bob Evans a few times for their great turkey/stuffing dinners.

Rooms were nice and the meeting room very nice. You could park close to the entrances, too.

Saturday night we had the dinner with salad, choice of two meats and sides, cherry pie for desert along with rice pudding. 50/50 prize of \$100 with \$100 going to the club, then the table full of prizes with quilts and other goodies as folks were called one by one randomly with the order randomly from calls pulled from the big jar.

2023 MI Mini Attendees:

N8WTQ Dorie, Midland, MI (this year's host)

K3IMC Don, LaGrange, GA
KJ4NIT Jean, LaGrange, GA

N0XYL Sandra, Blue Grass, IA

KB0BA Lowell, Blue Grass, IA

W8OP Alan, Fairmont, WV

N4CD Bob, Plano, TX

WB8III Steve, Fairmont, WV

WA9DLB Tony and Helen, Barrington, IL

N8HAM Jim, South Lyon, MI

NM1G Chuck, North Kingstown, RI

AB7RW Phil, Vancouver, WA

AC7UH Barbara, Vancouver, WA

KA9JAC Bob, Hortonville, WI

KB9YVT Ann, Hortonville, WI

K8OOK Mike, Grand Rapids, MI

N8IPG Nancy, Grand Rapids, MI

NN9K Pete, Colona, IL

N9DQS Nancy, Colona, IL

N8KIE Bob, Clarkston, MI

N8RLJ Jaci, Clarkston, MI

W9OP Mark, Neenah, WI

W9PIP Joan, Neenah, WI

K8MW Dick, Lake, MI

N8OYY Ed, Fairmont, WV



Picture courtesy of N8HAM



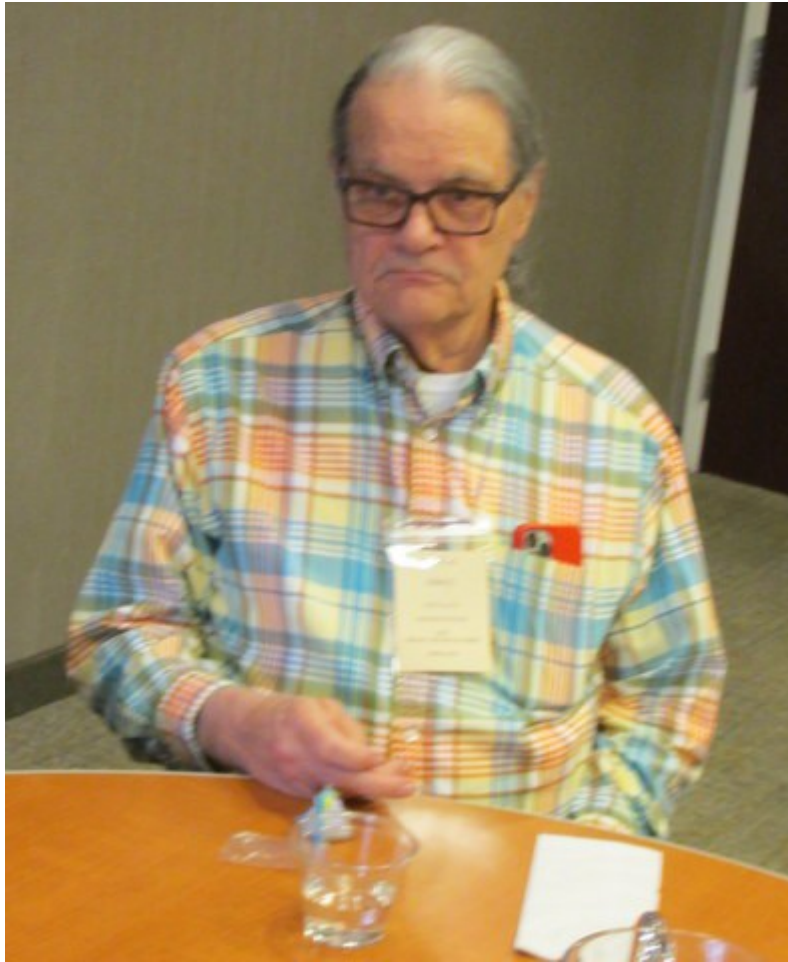
K8MW



KA9JAC and KB9YVT



WB8III



NM1G



N0XYL and KB0BA



N8KIE



AB7RW



Helen and WA9DLB



NN9K



K3IMC and KJ4NIT



N8OYY



W8OP

More pics next month.

Hope y'all enjoyed the great breakfast at the hotel. Scrambled eggs, sausage, hot oatmeal, 4 kinds of cold cereal, yogurt, 3 kinds of milk, bananas, (apples one day), waffles, and more. Regular/decaf coffee – orange and apple juice. Walnuts for topping cereal, along with raisins and cinnamon. Yum! Starts at 6 weekdays and 7 on weekends but out by 6:30 anyway.

On Sunday, I head out to Texas. Two long, long days to get home. 1263 miles the short way via Sikeston, MO. Stopped at Super 8 there. World famous Lambert's Cafe for dinner. 673 miles the first day. 590 miles the second day. Home. No parks on way home – didn't miss much. The second day the K index was 5 with geomagnetic storm wiping out the bands. Home by dinner time the second day.

Awards Issued

Ran All State:

K8ZZ completed all Massachusetts on 18 April 2023. He received #19

Last counties given:

K8ZZ 1525 on 14 April 2023. #4
K8ZZ 1550 on 16 April 2023. #5
K8ZZ 1575 on 18 April 2023. #3
K8ZZ 1600 on 18 April 2023. #3
K8ZZ 1625 on 21 April 2023. #3
N8HAM 175 on 19 April 2023. #151

N8OYY 350 on 20 April 2023. #64

K8ZZ 1625 on 21 April 2023. #3

Events for County Hunters

Last of the QSO parties for a while. QSO Parties start late August with KS and then TX in Sept. Over 250 counties up for grab below. VHF contests and Field Day in June. Maybe we'll get some good openings for the 10-10 contest on 10m this year. It's been a bit anemic so far from the middle of the country.

May 6 0001z to 7 2359z
28 Mhz -

10-10 Int'l Spring Contest, CW CW

Name, member number or "none," SPC

www.ten-ten.org

May 6 1300z to 7 0700z

1.8-28

7th Call Area QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), 5-ltr state/county code or SPC

7qp.org

May 6 1500z to 7 0300z

1.8-28

Indiana QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), IN county or SPC

www.hdxcc.org/inqp

May 6 1700z to 7 2359z

1.8-28, VHF

Delaware QSO Party Ph Dig

RS(T), DE county or SPC

www.fsarc.org

May 6 2000z to 7 2359z

3.5-28

New England QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), New England county/state or SPC

neqp.org/rules

May 20 1400z to 21 0200z

1.8-144

Arkansas QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), AR county or SPC

www.arkqp.com

That's all this month. That's enough!