

County Hunter News

February 1, 2017
Volume 13 Issue 2

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

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

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

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

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

<http://pages.suddenlink.net/w4ydy/hamlinks.html#County>

Download the file to a flash card that fits in your GPS unit, turn it on, and the county lines should appear!

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

It's still winter in TX – but we've had some nice days along the way to get out for a day or two of putting out some counties while sitting in nearby state parks. Activity has been fairly light with most days having one or two mobiles average. There haven't been a whole lot of State QSO Parties yet- just MT at the end of the month and we'll report on that next month.

The sunspot cycle continues on its way down with not much happening on 17 meters

and up. However, on contest weekends, you will still find stations on 15 and maybe a few heard on 10m. It's going to get worse, likely, as we head to the minimum for another year or two.

The ARRL has increased yearly dues – first change in 15 years or so. Still a decent deal as the only representative of ham radio in Congress, the major regulatory WARC bodies, and everything else that affects your enjoyment of the ham radio hobby. CQ keeps increasing it's rates as well to meet increasing costs.

The US Postal Service jacked up the price of a 'forever stamp' by a penny – 48c now.

ARRL has changed the pricing for the outgoing QSL bureau including a 'handling fee' to try and recover the actual costs of running the bureau.

On the Road with N4CD

The year long National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) was winding down. For 30 or 40 county hunters , it was a fun filled activity and a good excuse to go mobile. Others joined in the chase from home. Frequent callers working parks included N9JF, W5IL, KC3X, K5GE, KA4RRU, KM6HB, N8KIE, K1TKL, AI5P, AD1C, W0MU, KA9JAC, K5GE, W5IL, N0KV, and dozens of others Many also went out and ran parks from KA9JAC/KB9YVT, AI5P, N0KV, KA4RRU, W5IL, K8TE, W0BH, N8KIE, and dozens and dozens of others. It was a real blast.

After putting the articles about NPOTA in the last few issues of the 2015 County Hunter News, I decided to get involved. First up was getting set up on Logbook of the World, which took a few days of working through a few problems here. Got on...and then decided I'd try 'activating'. The first park run was the Waco Mammoth site – which I had never visited before. Over 25 years, I'd driven by it at least 25 or 30 times going down I-35 right through Waco. Wow! What a reception on the air by the park hunters. Over 300 people were worked in a few hours. Excitement. It sure was nice to be 'wanted'. That trip wound up going down through the LBJ Home and eventually down to Big Bend Park, then circling around through Fort Davis and home. I got hooked on activating!

Well....as of December 31, the NPOTA program was coming to a close. Folks had made

a big push first to reach one million total QSOs for the program – uploaded to LoTW. That happened mid-December. Then folks took up another challenge to go from 18,500 activations up to over 20,000 in just a few weeks. As the year came to a close, just about everyone was going out and activating most of the sites around the country – filling in many missing ones for the park chasers. Indeed, you could have worked over 200 parks in the last month alone. In mid January, 1.1 million QSOs have been uploaded with 21,000 activations. Whew! Fantastic! The final end of the upload is Jan 31st – then the top spots and honor roll listings will be 'officially' determined and cast in concrete – never to be changed.

There are nice certificates available for both chasers and activators if you'd like some nice wall paper for the shack. You can order yours on line if you are ARRL member. Everything went through the ARRL Logbook of the World program as far as earning awards.

Hundreds of folks decided to 'activate' on the last day – December 31st. Groups went out to at least 50 sites for the ending and the last QSOs of the event. Some went out for the first time – to be a part of this monumental program – even at the last minute.

Since I started at the Waco Mammoth site, I figured it would be a good one to activate to end it. The car was gassed up and at 6:30 I headed to the MacD for a quick breakfast and decaf coffee then hit the road down to Waco – 2 hours away. Just about everyone was on the radio on Saturday, Dec 31. 393 contacts went into the log in five hours. As the afternoon wore on, rather than wait to the very end or close to it (the park closed an hour before the 'end'), I headed on home just before 3pm local time to beat the sunset. Home by 5pm.

It's hard to describe the excitement this program generated and the success of it – witnessed by all the activity, publicity, good feedback, and happy journeys by intrepid travelers. Many got to see the less visited and less well known monuments, historic sites, trails, memorials – for the first time in their lives.

On the 'activator' side, W0BH finished with 157 activations – not sure how many different parks as that stat wasn't tracked. You could get credit for an activation as a repeat as long as it was at least 24 hours away from the last one. Mike, KA4RRU, finished up with 136. AD0DX had 59, W5IL had 41, and AI5P was at 33. N4CD clocked in at 336 activations in 262 different park units.

Now that it is over, many park chasers are suffering 'withdrawal' symptoms. Some are doing SOTA (summits on the air). The Europeans are big on Flora and Fauna – and a

few here and getting into that program. Others are doing Islands on the Air(Iota) or American Islands. Maybe we'll recruit a few into county hunting or State QSO parties. Who knows at this point.

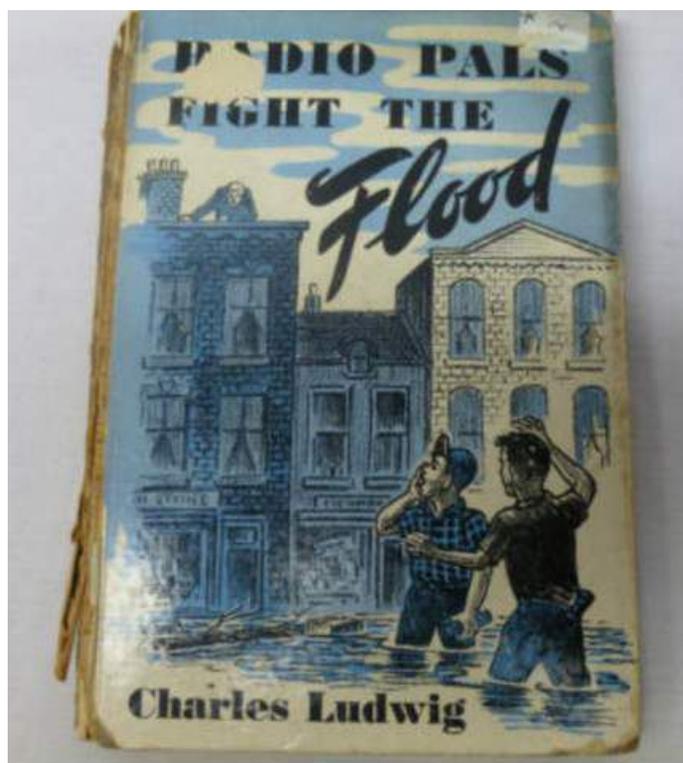
Meanwhile, the crowded bands will be less crowded. At times 10 or 15 parks were looking for spots to run, and many were on/near 14.336. Just about every day someone would be on .337 or .335 since there wasn't anything going on on .336, and even if someone was 'occupying' .336, they'd still show up because they were on the east coast and didn't hear anything going on on .336. 40M was filled up back east too.....

It was fun. Even if you didn't chase parks, you could have worked them for the counties.....and there were at 300 or more counties run by the park activators. Some of the trails ran through 40 or 50 counties each and there were a slew of them.

What next? We'll see. Maybe there will be a new ARRL program in 2018.

Book Review of the Month

Radio Pals Fight the Flood by Charles Ludwig



This month's book is a 1953 youth oriented book – the third in the series of six. We start out with the 'radio pals' – Porky, Tom and Jim listening to their 10m radio and working a VK4 on sked. Later they crank up an 80m rig for a local contact. Soon, their dad, a preacher, has them join them in Logan – presumably not far from Seattle but an hour plane ride away. He's giving revival meetings and needs the boys to join him on a mission he can't talk about over the air.

So – the three radio pals hop a plane and wind up in Logan , wherever, which is experiencing flooding conditions. They bring along their portable 80m rig that runs 90w input, and two 2m battery powered rigs.

The story progresses. We learn that one of the folks they are trying to 'save', Jack Slade, has been involved in a shady partnership with Larry Steele at a gambling joint they co-own. When Larry Steele happens to overhear the plan of Jack to 'convert' and then tell the IRS he has been cheating on taxes, Larry kidnaps Jack. The radio pals go looking for him. The big dam that supplies electric power to the town is breaking up and the floodwaters are rising. Tom goes to find batteries to power their 80m rig at low power just using the oscillator but he is caught and held captive by the dastardly Larry Steele.

Now the rest of the radio pals start to look for the missing two. No luck. They come back to the hotel where they are staying and hope they can use their 2m radios to get a message out somehow to let their parents know their whereabouts. Widespread flooding has been reported all over the area.

They stumble upon mysterious transmissions on 2m – and quickly conclude it is likely the 'looters' that have been plaguing the police department. Using triangulation, they home in on the location of the gang leader – capture him on top of a building – and find out their two kidnap victims are down below.

In the end, it all ends well. The gang of looters is rounded up, Jack 'fesses up to the feds and pays his back taxes and is spared jail, the bad guys go to the Big House – and that's the story.

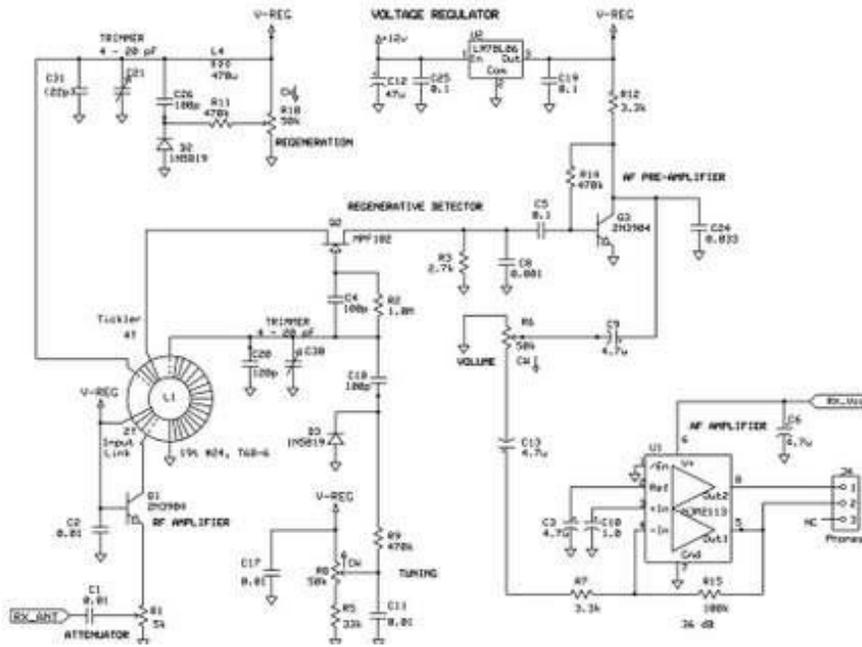
On the Amazon web page, this is the #13,990,276 most popular in Books - not exactly a 'best seller'.

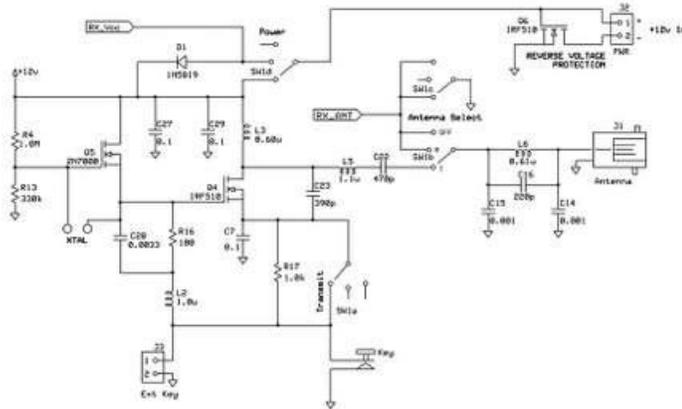
\$10 on Amazon and it will be up for sale at the next hamfest or wireless club event.

On the Trail of Regens

Whoa...I goofed off for a month or two and missed out on the first run of the 4States QRP group new kit – a regen rx and solid state TX to resemble the famous WW2 'Paraset' unit for spy and clandestine operations. They call it the Bayou Jumper.

The 4States group designed a similar – built in a small wood box – unit to externally resemble the Paraset. Here are a few pics and the schematics of the receiver.





The unit is built on a PC board – which goes into a wood box you can buy from Hobby Lobby! Nifty. 40M coverage – 5w output TX.

By the time I found this, they were out of stock! Dang. This group produces a new kit every year or two.

Park Chasing and Counties

I perused the final year end tallies. Just some tidbits. Checked the top 100 chasers against the MARAC database to see who had worked all the counties previously.

Carl, W9OO – USCA #609, , came in tied for second place of the chasers with 459 parks worked. (Carl has second and third time and maybe slowly working on fourth?) Only K5RK eeked out one more to finish first.

Down the list a bit, with 452 parks worked, Garry, VE3XN received USCA #358 back in 1982.

Michael, WA2VQW, with 447 parks worked, received his USCA #591 back in 1988.

Richard, N6PE, earned his USCA 1035 in 2001. He had 446 parks worked – tied for 28th place.

Barry, WA5DTK, earned USCA #330 back in 1981. He had 445 parks worked – and

was in 33rd place overall.

KM6HB, Mark, USCA many times around, finished in 37th place with 444 parks worked.

Keith, W0KEU, finished with 435 parks, 66th spot, and holds USCA #629 received in 1989. Did second time, too.

AA4QE, Merle, finished USCA in year 2000 with #1003. For parks, he worked 433 to come in #72.

That's the top 100 finishers. You had to work 425 parks to be in the top 100 chasers. Hundreds had over 300 worked.....and I suspect many of them had their USCA.....dozens. If you worked 300 parks....you were in 425th place on the list. There was lots of competition to see who could work the most, or the most with their limited antennas. Some of the big guns really had BIG antennas and stations. It helped if you could work the east coast on 40M, too, as many operations occurred only on 40M.

Well, those stats and a buck will get you a cup of senior coffee at McD. Hi hi.

CW Stats to Dennis, KK7X

Once again, it is time to get your CW year end stats in to Dennis. You can follow this link for a handy dandy on line form to fill out:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeiXji-sjA1aEDjIWOBn6qVXIi07TrMgGiF8XklVhaOQDj3iw/viewform>

Or you can email them to him at Dennis@KK7X.us

Count up your totals for the Nth time worked and send them in. When Dennis is done correlating things, we'll print the results here!

Get your results in by end of month – PRONTO!

Parks on the Air -POTA

For the past 30 years, mainly in Europe, folks have been chasing parks as part of the World Wide Flora and Fauna award program. Jason, W3AAX, is the US coordinator. There are hundreds and hundreds of entities – more than there were 'parks' for the recently ended National Parks on the Air. Thousands, really!

Most of the NPOTA units also qualified for WWFF, which uses designators starting with KFF followed by four numbers.

To get started on this, if you'd like to continue on a similar program, although not through LoTW, check out:

<https://wwff-kff.com/>

Here's a map showing the parks of WWFF and their designators. There are many more than there were NPOTA units with many states – that had few NP units – having dozens. Most of the 'state parks' are part of WWFF.

<https://fusiontables.googleusercontent.com/embedviz?q=select+col3+from+1iSZTwk7jnlvhAfSQUquLNNqPsjm8A4M30Xskw-Mb&viz=MAP&h=false&lat=42.82294739512123&lng=-97.94813695703124&t=1&z=4&l=col3&y=2&tmplt=2&hml=KML>

Logging is done through a web site – using ADIF files – and you get confirmations in the WWFF database. You do not have to upload your 'chasing log'. Only activators upload.

Some of the former park hunters and activators are joining in.

You spot yourself through Dxsummit.fi using the KFF-XXXX identifier as your location. And – those state parks are in counties, too! This could be a good excuse to go out mobile or portable.

On the Road with N4CD I

There's a new game in town! This was the first time out activating WWFF so tried it for a weekend to see how many would show up and whether it would be worthwhile to take over after NPOTA. That program ended officially on Dec 31 with a great send off of a fantastic amount of activations on the last day. Just about everyone who could get on the air did – from the parks and from home. Ole Sol didn't cooperate with high A index both days on this weekend, but still had good time and gave the car some exercise to keep it in good county running shape. Plus, of course, the POTA parks are in counties – many of them not represented by National Park units. There are probably near 100 POTA in TX – scattered all over the state. There's a heavy concentration down in south TX for the snowbirds to activate if they wish to get into it.

You can find all the information about WWFF- World Wide Flora and Fauna at www.wwff-kff.com and there is also a Facebook page for Parks on the Air (POTA) aimed at the US parks. WWFF is huge in Europe with thousands participating. It's as big as IOTA there (Islands on the Air). It will take you a bit to figure out navigation on the web page. Several of the park activators and chasers are getting busy working POTA now – including Mike, W0MU, and Jim, N9JF.

Unlike NPOTA and LoTW, WWFF uses a database where contacts are uploaded only from the activator. There is no need for chasers to update – they log in and see what parks they have credit for. Simpler than NPOTA.

First up today was Lake Ray Roberts State Park - 25 air miles from home but 45 road miles to get there. NW from the QTH up in Denton County. It is a big lake in TX - one of the ones made by the Corps of Engineers for flood control. Good size state park. Ranger on duty. So the options to get in were:

a) \$7 park fee for the day

- b) \$70 annual park pass - good for 1 or 2 people in car.
- c) \$65 senior pass that gets you in for half price (plus your car load of people), rounded up to the next dollar.

Of course, those passes good only for TX parks. Every state has own system and fees. Most states do not recognize the National Parks pass, so you'll have to figure it out. I think most of OK is free entry but I'll let you know as I wander through them up there. Texas parks go from 'free' to a couple bucks up to about \$7, plus, if you are camping, a fee for the campsite, and if you are launching a boat, maybe a fee for that, too.



So got into the park....not too many there - cold day - in 20s and 30s and windy. Drove around most of the park seeing what was there – miles and miles of road. Camping, picnic areas, beach area, boat launch, etc. At beach area - sign on beach- beware - wear foot protection - zebra mussels! I'm sure in the summer this place is packed.

I did about 75Q on 20, 30, 40m ssb/cw. Typically for the NPOTA sites, I averaged well over 100 QSOs per park. This is just starting in the US, but is extremely popular in Europe. This park is in Denton County TX. I was able to spot myself on the web. If you do so on Dxsummit.fi then you need to remember to put a dash in the park designator otherwise some of the DX clusters don't recognize it - it's KFF-3051

Afterwards, I headed home. That was the first activation. Uploaded logs - sent to W3AAX who uploads them... Only the activator needs to upload the logs. Likely, if you have been chasing the parks, and those park hunters sent logs for the NP units to W3AAX, YOU already have activation credit for dozens or hundreds of parks in the WWFF system! How about that? And others have credit for working you there. All the NP's and preserves and monuments have a corresponding KFF number.

70 contacts isn't great, especially when 20 of them were people working me on 2 or 3 band/modes, but it's a start and got me out of the house on a cold January day. Denton is not rare, but there is always someone starting over, or just completing an award and moving on to the next 'level'. Heck, you run a county these days and you're lucky to get a half dozen contacts if you aren't spotted, and maybe not many more even if you are spotted! I've run through counties, hollered on 14336 for five minutes and had no takers.

So Sunday I decided to try 3 parks. First up was Eisenhower State Park - about 55 miles north in Grayson County. \$5 entry fee if you don't have pass here. Lady ranger was at the gate taking money. Not many people around. It's right on the south shore of Lake Texoma - a very big man made lake between Texas and Oklahoma. Seems like I was the only one there but saw a few parked cars. Dozens of shelters/small buildings are available for picnic use, many enclosed. Campgrounds. Marina. Lady ranger at the gate said be careful - icy hill down to lake ahead...and it was. 75Q average from the parks today. A index up at 20. K=3 in the morning, 4 in the afternoon.



After 2 hours of radio and sightseeing, I left and headed to the next park.

President Eisenhower was born in Dennison, TX in 1890s— and his birth home is there as a tourist attraction. His parents moved to TX in then for work on the railroad there. When Ike was 18 months old, the family moved back to KS for railroad work. Later, Ike would be stationed in TX in the army, where he met his wife. He ran for President

after WW2 and became the 34th President.

Then I headed north to OKLA to Texoma State Park on the north side of the lake. Deja Vu.....this is where the Texoma Hamfest was held for years and years in the 'lodge' at the park. The County Hunters had a mini there back in the 1980s- 1990s several times at the lodge and folks came from all over the country. I recall meeting Dave, N7BKW and many others there for the first time. I think it was in spring or fall of the year – you could get some bad weather. Old timers will likely recall the 'mini' convention there. Did you attend?

It's isolated – not much to do in the way of activities – one of the main ones was going over to the Choctaw Bingo place 20 miles away. There's no shopping nearby. Been there many times in the past - but that was more than a decade ago and hamfest was moved and is now in big convention center building 30 miles away in Ardmore, OK, two counties away.



I pulled in and drove down to the deserted beach area. 75Q or so from there. Probably 'activated' this 20 years ago but not sure I can easily dig out logs - hi hi. or be sure of exact location of the run - I was putting out the county. Marshall County OK.....one of the less run ones. Spent about 2 hours there then headed back to TX - over to Fannin County and Bonham State Park.



No one at gate at entrance – said pay at ranger station. Did not see any other visitors. . Half the park closed due to ice covered roads – which were blocked off. Only the main road was open - all side roads closed. I headed over by park HQ where you are supposed to pay your admission fee and sat in a lot there. Ran the park by the small lake for 2 hours. 70Q. - conditions were so so. A index was down to 15 but K up to 4 so that doesn't help. Too late in day for DX for the European park hunters. The sun came out so it was 'nice' but darn chilly with a good breeze still blowing. Just a few remnants of the couple inches of snow there, but slippery on the roads if you weren't careful in the shady spots – and there are lots of them. Wasn't a major problem. DX stations would love to catch the parks, but only a few have stations that regularly make it through, including ON4VT and IK1GPG.

Well, that's the close in ones going NW, NE, N in an easy drive under 70 miles. More to SW and west and loads within a few hundred miles. It could be a good excuse to go out on weekends to run the various counties around here to at least keep something going on for the county hunters.

Someone was happy about getting 30m QSO in OK.....for his WAS on LoTW...so uploaded that file to LoTW with the 'location' of OK but no grid square or anything else. I'm not going to create hundreds of 'station locations' for each county/park. Just 'Oklahoma' which I use for contacts when mobile in the state for chasing parks when I need credit – but that ended. He will get OK confirmed in LotW on 30m. Since LotW doesn't do anything or allow the KFF's to be sent or recognize them, no need to send those files up anyway other than if there are some new prefixes.....or DX countries worked. Or someone wants a band/mode confirmed in LoTW.

So that was the first weekend out doing the KFF's..... 325 miles of driving all together and 13 gallons of gas used. 4 parks activated. (4 counties too). Sat for a couple hours with engine idling burning gas. Was sunny today but only in the 30s. Gas \$2.19/gal in TX. A bit cheaper up in OK.

I have no idea whether this will catch on as time goes on. About 20 of the park chasers were in there chasing KFFs – KA9CFD, KA9JAC, VE6UX, VE2GT, ON4VT, W6LEN, KM6G, W0MU, KO4SB, and two dozen other calls I recognized as park chasers from NPOTA. Or maybe they just wanted the county? Works for me!

de N4CD

Mobile Activity in January

The year started out with:

KB6UF, Ron, returning from California to LA.

Fred, K0FG and Bill, NU0Q were in FL running counties there. Bill returned home via LA.

KZ2P/N2FPM were out mobile in SC.

Seth, N3MRA, was noted in IN, NM and many other states during the month.

Jim, N9JF, was running counties in KS, NM

Dave, KJ8V and Sandy, KJ8W, were spotted in MI

Bill, K2HVN was out in FL

W8FNW/W4FNW were spotted way out west in OR

N4UP was quite busy, starting with NC counties, then into MD

K0DEQ, Bill, was mobile in KS

K7TM was noted running counties in OR and CA.

Mary, AB7NK and Neil, K7SEN made a long trip through LA to MS and back, and Mary completed running 500 counties for her Master Platinum Award transmits.

Kerry, W4SIG, was spotted in TN.

Scott, KA3QLF, noted in PA and NY

Steve, AK8A, noted in IL

KC7YE ran counties in WA

Bob, WA3QNT, noted out in PA

N4CD was out locally – in some of the state parks.

end date of reporting 1/25

On the Air with N4CD II

Another weekend rolled around and N4CD waited for the days of rain to end. Finally, on Monday, MLK holiday, the weather improved so I could head on out to Cedar Creek State Park about 50 miles SSW of the QTH. I've lived in TX for 26 years and don't think I've ever visited a single state park other than Palo Duro Canyon in the panhandle – and there about 100 of them! It was the same for the National Parks last year – had only hit 2 out of the 10 park units in TX before.



Traffic was moderate for the MLK holiday. Not everyone gets it off and I have to head right through the guts of downtown Dallas to get there. Luckily there were no accidents or backups and I did the trip in an hour. \$7 to get in without a pass of some kind – per person. Weather was in the 50's headed for the mid 60s – but very, very few people there. Parts of the park were shut off – some due to the rains, some due to construction. This park has multiple camp sites (50), beaches, boat launch areas – it's right on Joe Pool Lake – another Corps of Engineering flood control lake in the Metroplex. Dallas County. It turned out to be a nice day, but almost no one around, and of course, the water temp was in the 50s, so it wasn't swimming season for sure.

Two hours later, the log recorded 90 contacts. I sat a while and called CQ and worked a bunch of folks passing by, and a few more park hunters showed up from NPOTA after their taking a break for a couple weeks, and of course, the regular county hunters. It was a good excuse to get out.

Mary, AB7NK and Neil, K7SEN, were over in MS putting them out, but didn't hear any other mobiles out there. I did work a few parks – 'park to park'. KB3WAV was out in Washington County MD (good for NB there too!) - and park KFF 1604. AB4WL was in KFF-1049 in AL. KC3RW was at KFF-1575.

I headed on home and did the logs – sent the ADIF file to Jason, W3AAX to upload...and uploaded file to LoTW as well with just 'TX' as the location. If people are working on their WAS in LoTW, they'll get credit for TX.

There will probably be a bunch of state parks this year – it's a good excuse to get out of the house, fire up the mobile, and enjoy the weekend weather (if decent). Can't complain. I'll save the big trips for the months with no snow, ice, and longer daylight times.

If you feel like investigating some of your state parks, it might be a good excuse for weekend trips to see what's there. For county hunters, not much is going on till the Mini in MI in April, the Dayton Hamvention, and the National Convention. There are hamfests around – Orlando, FL is a big one, and most areas of the country have some decent ones – for a good excuse to get out and run mobile on the way there and back. Many states have annual passes if you plan to visit lots of them during the year. And for you winter sports enthusiasts, I think there's some around with winter activities like Bear Mountain State Park in NY with ice skating rink and ski jump areas. At least it was that way 60 years ago when I lived in that neck of the woods! Pack a lunch and go enjoy the scenery. (just check ahead to see if your intended visited park is open for the season – some close for the winter).....

If you can spot when you go out, spot yourself on the CH.W6RK.com page, on the POTA Facebook page, and on DXsummit.fi with the 'info' as the park designator – with a dash in it, like KFF-2996. Use the county on the CH web site with the park in parenthesis.

New Amateur Radio Parity Act

New "Amateur Radio Parity Act" Bill Introduced in US House of Representatives
H.R. 555 -- a new "Amateur Radio Parity Act" bill -- has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill's language is identical to that of the 2015 measure, H.R. 1301, which passed in the House late last summer but failed to gain the necessary support in the waning days of the US Senate.

As with H.R. 1301, the new measure introduced on January 13 in the 115th Congress was sponsored by Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), with initial co-sponsorship by Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT) and Rep. Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR). Walden now chairs the House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, to which the new bill has been referred. H.R. 555 will get an initial airing in the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. When H.R. 1301 came up in committee, Walden spoke forcefully in favor of the measure, which ultimately attracted 126 House cosponsors. US Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL).

"Rep. Kinzinger has again stepped forward to introduce this important legislation," said ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF. "His commitment stems from exposure to what the Amateur Radio community brings to the service of all communities. ARRL and radio amateurs nationwide owe Rep. Kinzinger a resounding 'Thank You!' for his efforts on their behalf."

H.R. 555 calls on the FCC to establish rules prohibiting the application of deed restrictions that preclude Amateur Radio communications on their face or as applied. Deed restrictions would have to impose the minimum practicable restriction on Amateur Radio communications to accomplish the lawful purposes of homeowners associations seeking to enforce the restriction

—
info from ARRL Newsletter

Five MHz News

ARRL Asks FCC to Allocate New 5 MHz Band, Retain Channels and Current Power Limit

ARRL has asked the FCC to allocate a new, secondary contiguous band at 5 MHz to the Amateur Service, while also retaining four of the current five 60-meter channels and current operating rules, including the 100 W PEP effective radiated power (ERP) limit. The federal government is the primary user of the 5 MHz spectrum. The proposed action would implement a portion of the Final Acts of World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC-15) that provided for a secondary international allocation of 5,351.5 to 5,366.5 kHz to the Amateur Service; that band includes 5,358.5 kHz, one of the existing 5 MHz channels in the US.

"Such implementation will allow radio amateurs engaged in emergency and disaster

relief communications, and especially those between the United States and the Caribbean basin, to more reliably, more flexibly, and more capably conduct those communications [and preparedness exercises], before the next hurricane season in the summer of 2017," ARRL said in a January 12 Petition for Rule Making. The FCC has not yet acted to implement other portions of the WRC-15 Final Acts.

The League said that 14 years of Amateur Radio experience using the five discrete 5 MHz channels have shown that hams can get along well with primary users at 5 MHz, while complying with the regulations established for their use. In recent years, Amateur Radio has cooperated with federal users such as FEMA in conducting communication interoperability exercises.

"While the Amateur Radio community is grateful to the Commission and to NTIA for the accommodation over the past 14 years of some access to the 5-MHz band, the five channels are, simply stated, completely inadequate to accommodate the emergency preparedness needs of the Amateur Service in this HF frequency range," ARRL said, adding that the five 2.8-kHz wide channels "have not provided sufficient capacity to enable competent emergency preparedness and disaster relief capability."

Access even to the tiny 15-kHz wide band adopted at WRC-15 would "radically improve the current, very limited capacity of the Amateur Service in the United States to address emergencies and disaster relief," ARRL said.

In its Petition, ARRL also called upon the FCC to retain the same service rules now governing the five channels for the new band. The WRC-15 Final Acts stipulated a power limit of 15 W effective isotropic radiated power (EIRP), which the League said "completely defeats the entire premise for the allocation in the first place."

"For precisely the same reasons that the Commission consented to a power increase on the five channels as recently as 2011 [from 50 W PEP ERP to 100 W PEP ERP], the Commission should permit a power level of 100 W PEP ERP, assuming use of a 0 dBd gain antenna, in the contiguous 60-meter band," ARRL said.

ARRL pointed out that the ITU Radio Regulations permit assignments that are at variance with the International Table of Allocations, provided a non-interference condition is attached.

The FCC will not invite comments on the League's Petition until it puts it on public notice and assigns a Rule Making (RM) number.

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Courtesy of ARRL Newsletter

On the Road with N4CD III

Another weekend rolled around at the N4CD QTH. Over in Ft Worth, the Cowtown Hamfest would start at 3pm on Friday and again in the morning on Saturday. It's a fairly small one but not too far away and a good excuse to go mobile at the same time. The weather was good for county/park putting out. Not much was happening on the CH Net – just AB7NK/K7SEN off on their long trip and now into LA and east TX. On Saturday the NA QSO Party on SSB would start in the afternoon.

So I packed the car for a two day trip – headed out west two hours to Jack County -and activated Ft Richardson State Park there. Fort Richardson was a frontier fort which helped the migration west in TX. Built in 1867 and used till 1878, and named after a Union general who died at the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War, it became an anchor fort on the military road to Ft Sill in OK. This was one of a half dozen forts in TX active at this time, another being Ft Stockton, now a National Park Historic Site. There's not much to see here in the way of ruins or restored buildings, but it and the area along the river are now a TX State Park.



This was a very active fort, with continual raids against tribes raiding settlements along the Red River, the northern counties on TX – all the way out to the panhandle. It was only in the Battle of Palo Duro and aftermath, in which all the winter provisions of the Comanches and Kiowas were destroyed, and they were forced back to their reservations in OK, and the frontier settled down. After this, there was no need for this fort any longer and it was abandoned in 1878 as the frontier now moved further west.

You've got a \$7 entry fee, but an annual pass gets you in free. I found a nice spot and put 75Qs in the log. Worked a few EU park chasers – still morning with the EU window open, a bunch of county hunters, and the park regulars in the US. It's not yet as popular as NPOTA was...but we'll see if it catches on. This program won't end in a year, either.

I could spot on the internet so it made it easy to get contacts. Otherwise, if you call on 14056.5, you might not even get one contact. Ran through some other counties, and no one was listening. Not a one. Called for five minutes with no answers.

After looking around the park, it was then off to the next site – Lake Mineral Wells State Park – about one hour south in Parker County. There's a natural place for rock climbing enthusiasts, 30 miles of bike, horseback, and hiking trails, beaches, fishing and boating. No Jet skis or water skiing though. This site was built by the CCC back in the 1930s. \$7 to get in, or an annual pass.



Found a nice spot to operate and sat for over an hour. I didn't get as many contacts as before – put 45 in the log at mid day. It's nice to be out in the woods surrounded by TX trees on the prairie, with a good view of the lake while operating. OK...did my thing – ran the bands – 20/30/40 cw and 20/40 ssb. AB7NK/K7SEN were too close. Did catch AK8A headed south through IL on cw. Time to get going – the hamfest would start in a few hours.

After a quick stop at a Subway, I headed in Ft Worth heading toward a Comfort in for the night. This location is about 50 miles from home – but I'd have to be fighting rush hour traffic to get home, then drive back again in the dark very early in the morning. Between gas and tolls, I could stay in Ft Worth for a few bucks more and avoid the traffic hassles. I checked in just before 3pm, then it was a mile drive to the hamfest which was just opening 'to the public'. \$10 entry fee. Hmm...checked everything inside- maybe 50 tables with folks selling things, plus two dealers selling new stuff. Took an hour to scour the bargains carefully...then looked around again, but nothing found in the way of interesting items. So it was back to the motel. I ate dinner at the Denny's right next door enjoying one of their 'chicken and broccoli' skillet – which arrive steaming hot. Good. I hit the hay early – the hamfest starts again at 7am.

Morning arrives and there's a good breakfast at the Choice Hotel - eggs, sausage links, bananas, cereal, waffles, coffee, juice. Then off to the hamfest. Hmm....not a whole lot of new sellers – most had arrived on Friday. Some tables stayed unoccupied. Some years there are more, some less. After an hour, I figured it wasn't worth sticking around any longer. More buyers would be coming, but likely no big sellers. There's an outdoor flea market, but only one participant on Friday – and none on Saturday.

Next up was Cleburne State Park about an hour south in Johnson County. I was feeling a bit under the weather. This is a small park with a small lake (114 acres) that was generated by the construction of a dam by the CCC folks back in the 1930s. It's a great

fishing spot – small boats (no wake) are allowed but no personal watercraft. There are some mountain bike trails and at least two geocaches there. I sat on a small hill and several other folks were there fishing off the bank nearby. Didn't see them catch anything, though. Ran through the bands for an hour and put 70+Qs into the log.



The weather was supposed to get to be rainy with some t-storms later in the day, so I just headed home. Called for 10 minutes in Ellis County as I drove along on cw frequencies but 'no body home'. Oh well. Didn't stop to spot on the 4 lane limited access highway. Traffic was light, so home in 90 minutes and hunkered down for a while. AB7NK/K7SEN were 'too close' for 40M to work....so didn't get to catch any mobiles out either, plus they'd wind up on different frequencies on 40m SSB every time it seems and I don't watch the spots while moving. Not to worry. It was a good two day trip out and back.

Who knows what's up next? It's still winter weather here at times – lots of overcast – short days – so likely I'll just be around TX for a while – but you never know! There's always hamfests here and there.

Awards Issued

USA 20M SSB #30	N2JNE, Charlie	December 26, 2016
Bingo III #38	N6PDB, Dennis	November 22, 2016

Not much happening it seems. If there were more awards issued, none was listed on the MARAC web page or got noted on the K3IMC forum. There hasn't been a lot of mobile activity throughout most of the country with the winter weather.

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

4 Feb 0000 to 5 Feb 2359
Vermont QSO Party
CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC
www.ranv.org/vtqso.htm

4 Feb 1400 2359
Minnesota QSO Party
CW Ph
Name, country or SPC
www.w0aa.org

25 Feb 1500 to 26 Feb 0159
South Carolina QSO Party
CW Ph Dig
RS(T), county or SPC

scqso.com/rules

26 Feb 1500 to 27 Feb 0059

North Carolina QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

County or SPC

<http://rars.org/ncqsoparty>

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2017/February%202017%20Corral.pdf>

There's the MI Mini in April – time to sign up – and the National Convention in Colorado Springs in Sept – registration is open for that now.

Dayton Hamfest – coming up in May.

That's all folks!