

# County Hunter News

June 2018

Volume 14 Issue 6

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](http://ch.W6RK.com)

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

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](mailto:telegraphy@verizon.net) )

## Notes from the Editor

### **N4CD Rumblings**

Wow! Lots to report on this month! Many QSO Parties with mobiles reporting – trip reports to MI for the MINI in Traverse City and lots of pics from there. Other interesting news showing up!

Band conditions – well – not much to write home about. Days of high A index and aurora – then days with no sunspots for long streaks – but folks are working counties

and the QSO Parties spur activity.

Start up the coffee pot, prepare some iced tea or other beverage of your choice and continue on. Might take a day or two to read it all!

## On the Road with N4CD I

The Michigan Mini in Traverse City, MI was coming up. It was time to hit the road with a week long trip to wander through some state parks and recreation areas. Many other mobiles would be headed there – and WQ7A and K5GE were already on the way with a long trip from WA and TX to MI. Most of the attendees come from a distance of 500 miles or less, but some come from NJ, some from FL, three from TX, two from WA, two from NJ, and some from PA and other states. The last few days before the convention and the day or two after are very busy. AB7RW would drive cross country to get there. Some from PA/NJ would also drive and put out the counties. 40M SSB would be quite busy.

I loaded up the 2016 Malibu Ltd for the trip. It has 71,970 miles on it so far in two and a quarter years. So far to good. I packed the cold weather gear – often you need it up in MI at the Mini. It was in the 70s in Dallas before I left and even had one day in the swimming pool before heading out. Shorts and tee-shirt weather at home, but I knew it would be colder up north. The past few years have had 40 degree temps up there and I saw snow coming down there 2 years ago as I ran some counties during the mini. The long term weather forecast was for highs in the low 40s. Spring arrives late there. Earlier in April, there were record snows for the month of April up that way in WI and MI.

### **April 20 - Friday**

I left Plano TX early in the morning trying to miss rush hour traffic. I beat most of it by using the George W Bush Tollroad Bypass out to I-30 then heading northeast into AR to Little Rock (Pulaski County), across the state on I-40 to Crittenden County then up I-55 northbound. I had to wave at a few parks along the way – just no time and I'd visited

them before. By late afternoon I was up in New Madrid County MO and stopped by the first site to run on this trip.

Terry, WQ7A was in ND at this time headed east. Later in MN this day. Gene, K5GE was up in NE. AB7NK/K7SEN were in IN putting them out, and Phil, AB7RW was it UT headed east.

Turns out a sudden solar storm hit and the A index soared to the mid 40s this weekend. Groan! Well, you take what you can get.

### **Hunter Dawson State Historic Site – KFF 3352**

from the state web site:

“Hunter-Dawson State Historic Site preserves a now-vanished part of Missouri: the stately Bootheel mansion. Filled with original pieces purchased by the house's first owner and furnished in the style it was in during its heydays of the 1860s-1880s, the ornate mansion provides a history lesson in every corner. In fact, most of the original furnishing purchased by Amanda Hunter, the house's first owner (with her husband William), are still in the house.” Over 80% of the original furnishings are there!

He was a very successful merchant who accumulated 15,000 acres of land prior to the civil war. New Madrid and its residents fought for the Confederacy. Later in the war, the mansion and town were occupied by union forces, but fortunately the house and town survived relatively unscathed by the war.



There is a visitor center and parking lot across the street – a bit noisy with a power line

100 feet away but I still had a nice run from there late in the afternoon. Did not bother with a tour of the house. It typically takes an hour and a half to 'run a park'. If there is cell service, I spot on ch.w6rk.com, on the WWFF-KFF Facebook Page, and on DXsummit.fi for the county/park. About half the people you work are county hunters, the other half park chasers. Late in the day but got to 44+ QSO s so I was happy even with the horrible conditions. Even if YOU don't need the county, work me! I need the contacts to reach the level where I get credit for activation of the park. Folks can work me on every band/mode combination – 40/30/20 CW and 40/20 SSB. Each is a 'contact' toward that magic 44 number. I usually won't hit the road for more counties till I try to get to that 44 number.

After the operation there, I headed on to the Super 8 Motel in Sikeston, MO. Deja Vue all over again – I've stayed at this one before. You recognize them after you get there – this is a bit odd shaped. I had reserved ahead of time. Most of the time on this trip, I'd wait till after noon or 2pm to see where I would be, then go on line to reserve a room for the night. This time of year, there aren't too many traveling and during the week it's usually not a problem. Later in the year, or tourist spots, you probably want to plan a bit more ahead. I was flexible.

Down the street from the Super 8 is the Lambert Cafe. This is a HUGE place about three times the size of a typical Cracker Barrel, decorated about the same and loaded with original memorabilia from the way back days of the 1940s, 50s, 60s. No reproduction stuff. A wall of old original license plates on one side. All sorts of metal signs and other stuff to inspect.

from their website:

“People who visit Lambert’s Cafe for the first time are invariably amazed at the generous portions served on each order. These generous servings along with our “THROWED ROLLS” have inspired many questions. We cannot describe our activity in great detail, but we’ve endeavored to point out some of the highlights of our “Threwed Rolls” cafe.” The place was mobbed on a Friday evening but things moved quickly

They aren't kidding about 'generous portions' . I had a country ham steak and must have been one pound of meat! Overload. \$15. You won't leave hungry! Most folks leave with a 'take out' box with half their meal. That doesn't do much for us motel stay folks and no refrig in the car to keep leftovers cold.

I made a lot of miles toward the 1335 miles to Traverse City the first day – that being the short way – but I was going the county hunter way. How many more miles would it be?

We'll see.

I was including grids in my log. You can easily get them from the WWFF site for each park – or use something like HamGrid on your Android phone or iPhone. That 'app' takes about five seconds using GPS satellites to give you your grid location to 8 digits. When I get home, I'll upload the logs to the WWFF database (via KA9JAC, my area coordinator), and to ARRL LotW for the grids. This is the year of the ARRL International Grid Chase. I'm not really big on it, but at least I'll upload my QSO s from the grids. As of a few weeks ago, I was the only one ever in one grid down in the southeast corner of TX. Most grids have hundreds or thousands of contacts by now since the program started Jan 1 2018.

You can check here:

<https://igc.arrrl.org/leader-board.php>

For example, in Grid EM56, where New Madrid is, the count is 7300 QSO s from this grid! Not 'rare' in the least bit. Probably includes Memphis TN. Hi hi.

## Saturday May 21

Up early and on the radio. Hey, there is VK4SN and KH7M on 40M CW. Work both of them as I enter **Horseshoe Lake Alexander FWA**, KFF-4130 in Alexander County, IL.

“ Horseshoe Lake is an oxbow lake in Alexander County, Illinois. It is the site of Illinois's Horseshoe Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, a state park 10,645 acres in size. A remnant of a large meander of the Mississippi River, it is today a shallow, isolated patch of water located near Cairo and the southern tip of Illinois. “ (from Wiki)

Pulled in and ran the Fish and Wildlife area (FWA) successfully. Not much there for the casual visitor but great if you are a bird watcher or love fishing. Some have controlled hunts, too, for game birds.

After a good successful run – 47Q in the log, even though early, I headed back out. Normally, I gas up the car each evening. I forgot to do it yesterday, so I plan to stop in Cairo (Kay-Row) IL. That used to be a thriving roaring place. Not any more. No gas at the interstate exit, so I head a few miles into town. The gas gauge is less than ¼ full. Hmm. Go a few miles THROUGH the town. Not a convenience store with gas pump in place. Turn around and head back out. This town has really gone downhill! I finally ask a local resident, out working on a lawn, about a gas station. Sorry – no gas in town

– it's up the interstate to the nearest station! This town is the lowest elevation in IL and is surrounded by levees. In 2011, the entire town was evacuated facing 15 feet of water that could inundate the town. Fortunately, the Corps of Engineers breached levees elsewhere to save the more populated areas. It's history goes back to prior to the civil war. 1818 or so. At one time, it was a thriving city with ferries across the rivers – but the railroads and new bridges started an economic decline, and now – well, there just isn't much there or much reason to be there it seems! They made fortunes with the ferry business and river port – but not now. “Depressed” is a good word for this place. Seriously depressed.

25 miles later, I found gas as I headed north on the Interstate. Usually I stop for gas when the tank is ½ full.

Next up was **Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge KFF -0283**. From the state site:

“Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge is located in southernmost Illinois, covering parts of Alexander, Johnson, Pulaski and Union Counties. The Refuge was established in 1990 under the Emergency Wetland Reserve Act of 1986; this act was put into place to protect, restore and manage wetlands and bottomland forests. This area is managed for, and provides sanctuary to waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory birds.”

Pulled in to the closest to the interstate part – many of the NWR and FWAs are like Swiss cheese with bits and pieces here and there – and had a successful run of over 44Q. That's the magic number – 44 – to get credit for 'activating' the park. If you are going to 'activate' NWRs and FWAs, visit the website first, look at the map of the site, and plan ahead. Many are not well marked on road signs or interstate exits and you're on your own to get to them. Others are well marked. Some have 'centers' to visit – while others are run out of other locations, or have an office in town, which doesn't count – but the 'address' might be for this location. Definitely plan ahead! The map usually includes parking locations – so you don't have to drive to the 'visitor center' which may not even be in the NWR/FWA!

Next up was **Ferne Clyffe State Park** in Johnson County, IL. KFF 0992. This is a 2000+ acre park – and yes, there are ferns there to see! You've got over 700 types of trees and plants there. Rock climbing, metal detecting, horse trails, camping, fishing, picnicking, etc. I just pulled in- did my radio bit – and left after an hour and a half. I took pictures of all the entrance signs, but I'll skip most of them along the way. If you see one, you've seen most of them. Did catch Kerri, KB3WAV (YL) in one park for a 'park to park' contact. Those are 'bonus contacts' – you get one more toward your count

of 'park to park' QSO s. Also caught N8Q in a park – special event of some sort. W4JL in park KFF-2740 and N2CX in park KFF-1619 were also in the log! Work so many park to park QSO s and you get an award. (25 to start with follow on levels)



Next up is **Crab Orchard NWR - KFF-0282** which spans three counties. All of the 4500 or so park entities have their own unique number. Those in the US start with “K”. In Australia, they start with VK, and in Finland with OH. Ran the part in Williamson County IL.

From Wiki:

“Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge is a 43,890 acre National Wildlife Refuge primarily in southwestern Williamson County, but with small extensions into adjacent eastern Jackson and northeastern Union counties of southern Illinois, in the United States. Its land and water contain a wide diversity of flora and fauna. It centers on Crab Orchard Lake. Major habitat types on the refuge include hardwood forest, agricultural land, grazing units, brushland, wetlands, and lakes.

The refuge provides significant resting areas for migratory birds utilizing the Mississippi Flyway. Wintering numbers of Canada geese can peak at 200,000. A total of 700 plant



species, 245 bird species, 33 mammal species, 63 fish species, and 44 reptile and amphibian species have been documented on the refuge.

Annual visitation is approximately 1,000,000 visitors. Industrial activities on the refuge range from manufacturing and storage facilities to administrative offices. “

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OK...I added one more to the count of a million visitors a year. Wow! That's a bunch. Caught KC1AEO in a park KFF-0453. Caught Kerri KB3WAV in Park KFF-3855.

On to the next park **Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area (SRA)** – in Franklin County IL. KFF-1029

from Wiki:

The Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area is a 3,300-acre state park bordering Rend Lake near Benton, Illinois. The state park is managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to concentrate on shoreline recreation, including boating, fishing, and picnicking.

After Rend Lake was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1970, much of the land acquired by the Army Corps for dam and reservoir construction was available for open-space use. Starting in 1975, the Army Corps leased the Wayne Fitzgerald parcel of land to the state of Illinois. The state park is named for Wayne Fitzgerald, a member of the Illinois House of Representatives from nearby Wayne County in the 70th through 74th General Assemblies. Fitzgerald had been one of the local leaders who had called for the damming of the Big Muddy River and creation of Rend Lake.

Wayne Fitzgerald was originally dedicated as a state park but changed its name in the 1990s to reflect its identity as a space managed for sportsmen. 1,000 acres of the park is consciously managed for the hunting of deer, upland birds such as pheasants, and small game.

The park is a focus of public access to Rend Lake, which is managed for the fishing of largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and crappie.

Wayne Fitzgerald is one of the few state parks in Illinois which is bisected by a limited-access highway, Interstate 57”

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Pulled in and started operating. K5GE was now in IA. Hey, looks like the MI QSO Party is underway – which is both good and bad. Good in that maybe I can get a bunch of contacts toward the 44. Bad in that probably 20m SSB is filled with CQ MI QP with loud stations – that I won't hear- covering up many frequencies that park activators would like to use – hi hi. Not only that, but the Ontario QP is going on – so there are even more stations to work. Of course, for the fixed stations, you can only work them once per band/mode. Mobiles in the state QSO Party you can work when they change counties so later in the day from another park I could work mobiles again. Only heard one mobile - I'm too far away for 40M and too close for 20M. Only a handful of fixed stations make it to my neck of the woods. Put 8 ON and MI stations in the log on 40m then run the bands. The plan - Get to 44+ and leave. Got to keep moving. The NE QP was also underway – contacts would be scarce from there.

Time for a motel – Super 8 in Mt Vernon, IL. Nearby dinner at the China Buffet.

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## Sunday April 22

Now I'll head east on the interstate toward IN. First up is **Ten Mile Creek Fish and Wildlife Area** in Jefferson County IL, Grid EM58. This is not a rare grid with over 9,000 QSO s from here! I pull in at 1220Z early in the morning. Have a good run with 50+. It's still the 'weekend' with lots of folks around, plus lots of interest from county hunters working the mobiles on the way to the MI Mini. Good place for hunting and fishing. Just a few go in the log on 20m – half DX, with the early morning operation as the band is barely open. The FQP will resume a bit later in the day.

**Next up Beall Woods State Park** KFF-0980 in Wabash County, IL, Grid EM68. Only 7,300 QSO s from this grid – another 'not rare' one. Maybe I'll find one along the way that isn't so overworked! This park is 630 acres – with a 'primitive' campground but mostly hiking trails through the old-growth hardwood forest. Pulled in, did the radio bit, and left with 50+ Qs. 20M was now open and some DX and US stations went into the log on 20cw. Left at 1610z. Called ahead and reserved a room in Jasper IN in Dubois County.

Next up was **Sugar Ridge FWA**, same grid, in Pike County IN. From the state site:

“Sugar Ridge Fish & Wildlife Area is unique in that much of the land has been strip-mined. Sugar Ridge is made up of six separate areas, totaling approximately 8,100 acres.

The strip-mined land now features about 100 pits and lakes, along with rows of overburden from the mining operation. The land that has not been mined is mostly rough and rolling.

A large part of the land which is now Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area (Areas I, II and III) was once leased from Amax Coal Company. The leasing began in 1964 and continued until 1980 when most of the land was donated to the Division of Fish and Wildlife.”

Pulled in at 1732Z and out at 1830 z with 60Qs in the log, including FJ/AI5P. Rick was on a DX-pedition – along with N0KV who I would work later. “FJ” land is the French part of Saint Martin Island/St Bartholomew in the Caribbean. The other side St Martin is Dutch. Not sure exactly where they were.

40M worked well here – lots of county hunters and park hunters. Also caught Kraig, KA2LHO, in a park down in FL for a 'park to park' QSO .

Not far away was **Pike State Forest** – KFF-4219 . Zipped in at 1850z and did well Left at 1950z with 44+ in the log. Worked Dave, W4JL, one of the 'always there' park hunters from a park down his way at KFF-2739, and Gary, N5PHT – who goes with his motor home and spends 3-5 days at a park putting it out with his G5RV antenna up in the trees, at a park in IA – KFF-2295. He's been there a while. Since this was 'the same county' as the previous park – not many county hunters worked me. (I often NEED the contacts so please work me again – if it is a different park in the SAME county). Nothing here to see – lots of trees!

OK...motel time – Super 8 in Jasper, IN in Dubois County. Dinner at Shoneys right next door. Long days at the radio and driving....it's a bit tiring but still fun....

## **Monday April 23**

Turn on the radio early – 1200Z – there's FJ/N0KV, Barry, down in the Caribbean. Work him. Also work an OU5A. Where's that? Some digging shows it's Denmark. OK..... I'm on my way to the next park.

First up is **Goose Pond FWA**. KFF-4200. Same Grid. Greene County IN. From the state site:

“Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area in Greene County provides quality hunting, wildlife viewing and trapping opportunities on 9,018 acres of prairie and marsh habitat. About

12,000 wildlife watchers visit each year, and the property records about 3,500 annual hunting efforts (one hunter visit for one day)”

OK....I added one to the total of 12,000 'watchers' but just looked out the windshield as I operated the radio – hi hi. In at 1300z, out at 1400z with over 50 in the log. Success! Time to get to the next one.

Well, another not so exciting one follows – **Greene Sullivan State Forest**. KFF-4201. Trees. Sullivan County - a new one. Grid EM69 - 14.400 QSO s from this grid – my gosh. Squeak by at 45Q and leave. Conditions are not great – in fact, they are BAD.

Next up is **Redbird State Recreation Area** – KFF-4176. I won't forget this one soon. Still in Greene County IN. No data service on either Verizon or ATT. Not far from the town of Linton but far enough out that cell service stops . Not much reason to cover this area that is barely attended most of the year – just hiking trails and bird watching here. It's cold and drizzly and not a great day for bird watching or hiking. Since I pulled it – I'm the only one there.

I start operating, then the car starts beeping at me. “Tire Pressure Warning”. That is usually bad news. It was. Flip over to the tire pressure monitor and right rear tire is ZERO PSI. Hmmm...not good. Pick up cellphone. Zero service. Well, I've still got OnStar from when I bought the car and had a year trial. Kept it. It has better antenna on the outside of a car. Get through barely ...and it takes them half an hour to find someone to come and change the tire. I'm waiting on the phone for the time, not operating..... My 2016 Malibu might be the only one in the country with a spare tire. Normally they stick you with a 'fix a flat' deal that works sometimes and not all the time. I paid extra for the donut spare. Takes better part of an hour for the tow truck service to arrive – Linton Towing – and they change the tire quickly. I follow him back to his place and arrange to get tired looked at and fixed. Also I have the fix a flat deal. That makes a mess inside the tire and will stop small leaks. Sometimes. Didn't have to use it.

Turns out there is part of a razor blade in the tire. Maybe an Exacto knife blade or something. Well, there are a few ways that can happen. Pulling in the parking areas for the FWAs and SRAs – you sometimes find broken bottles and discards thrown out windows while people 'enjoy nature' before they head home. A 'beer break' or party. Or maybe someone didn't like my car at the motel and stuck it in? Who knows? Or somewhere along the road my tire found it. Took a patch on the inside of the tire to fix it. Lost about 2 hours. I figure I get about one flat every 50,000 miles of county hunting/park activation.

Well, dang. Leave there with only 24Q and not going back. That was an ATNO, too – all time 'new one' that had never been on the air before. Someone will have to finish it. I was too frustrated to go back.

Next up – headed north quickly and stop by **Shakamak SP** a few hours later in Clay County IN. KFF-2268. There are three man made lakes, lots of camp sites and good fishing here. Good for swimming in the summer time. Pull in, put out the county/park and leave in an hour with 44+ QSO s. Catch N0UR in a park out his way. It's been a miserable day – rained all day. Radio conditions not great either. Oh well, I'm still having fun in between the not so fun flat tires.

One more to go today. I zip through counties and put them out. WQ7A is headed across northern WI. I can still catch him on 40m SSB. I'm getting too close to hear K5GE. He's going to 75M SSB to work N8KIE and WQ7A for Double Diamond. I didn't bring 3901...so I'm out of luck after this point for catching K5GE's counties. I'm not sure anyone will ever get Double Diamond.....it surely won't be me first or second – hi hi.

One more today – I can squeeze in **Shades State Park KFF 2267**. Montgomery County. Grid EM69

from the state site

“ Located about 17 miles southwest of Crawfordsville (off S.R. 47), it is a favorite for hikers and canoeists. The beautiful sandstone cliffs overlooking Sugar Creek and numerous shady ravines provide the backdrop for your journey through this nature lover's paradise. Also on the property is Pine Hills Nature Preserve, which affords spectacular topography for those willing to take a fairly long hike. There is no camping available. “

Luck out – conditions reasonable – lots of county hunters/park hunters around so 59Q go in the log. Late in the day.

Head on in to Crawfordsville to the Super 8 Motel there. Dinner at the Cracker Barrel nearby.

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**Tuesday – May 24.** Time to be making some tracks toward Traverse City still hundreds and hundreds of miles away.

First up – **Prophetstown State Park KFF-2266.**



Just a little sign on the entrance station as you pulled in. It was early in the season and many entrance stations were shut – there were some 'self registration' points.

This park in Tippecanoe County IN. Got my 44+ contacts – I run 20/30/40 CW and often 40M SSB- easy during convention time with one or two fixed stations picking up mobiles and running them. Occasionally I'll go to 20M SSB. Got to 44+ and left happy. Grid EN61 – 20,000 Q already from here!

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Zipped through a few more counties heading north to **Indiana Dunes State Park**. Yep there are lots of sand dunes on Lake Michigan....all along the IN, MI lake border. This is just the first of many parks on the shore with 'dune' in the name. In at 1515Z, out at 1645Z with 50+ in log. Caught K5GE – he was 'close by' in IN, and WQ7A up in MI.

There are also some NWRs there - along the shore – but you can't drive to them! Have to walk in to those. I skipped those! Someone who likes portable hike-in operating can get those.

There's also a National Park along here - National Lakeshore – ran that in 2016 – and no time for revisit. I'm trying to hit 'new ones' for me. There's also a National Lakeshore just west of Traverse City with giant sand dunes. A bunch of folks headed there from the mini in 2016 to put it out.

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Time to make some miles along the interstates – and later wind up at **Warren Sand Dunes State Park** in Berrien County MI. Still EN-61 grid. The MI parks aren't really open for the season. No one at the entrance stations but a sign saying 'self register'. Hmm....don't have any dollar bills or small change. Skip it and figure they aren't likely to be checking for stickers. You can buy a Michigan Park Passport for \$32 good for the calendar year. Resident or out of state – very reasonable. But you have to find someone to buy it from! At the moment I don't worry about that. In at 1550z, out at 1800z.

I actually was headed for Warren Woods state park but wound up here instead. Gave out the wrong park number for a bit until I realized I turned 'too soon' and wound up here. Oh well. It was entered into database correctly. The two parks are a few miles apart. Senior brain-fade.

From the state site:

“Warren Dunes has three miles of shoreline, six miles of hiking trails and is open year-round. It also has a dune formation that rises 260 feet above the lake with spectacular views and 1,952 acres of recreational opportunity. We have 221 modern & rustic campsites and three modern mini cabins.”

pic from their site:



I could have run Warren Woods, too..but it was the same county – and half the county hunters won't show up - so skipped it headed for the next park in the next county! Best way to plan a trip is one park per county - then the county hunters will 'need it' and show up when the spot appears!

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Time for one more today – **Grand Mere State Park** – KFF-1500 Still in Berrien County – Grid EN62 – 8, 360Q from this grid so far this year. Not rare!

From Wiki:

“Protected from Lake Michigan by the dunes to the west, the park has many natural features not found throughout the rest of the state.

The 985-acre park is mostly wooded and has three geologically ancient inland lakes, left behind as the glaciers receded during the last ice age.

The dunes protecting the park also create a relatively cool environment that supports plants not normally seen in southern Michigan, some of which are classified as rare, threatened or endangered.

The park has almost two miles of sandy beach, which can be reached only on foot by climbing over steep sand dunes.”

Pulled in. 1850Z ..did the radio bit with 44+ Q to 1950z and headed to the Baymont Inn and Suites in Grand Haven, MI. Dinner at the nearby China Buffet.

Two more days of parks – then I will be at the Mini. Getting 'parked out'.

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## **Wednesday April 25**

**Van Buren State Park** – KFF-1549. Van Buren County. Grid EN62 still with over 8,000 Qs made from this grid. I'm not having much success finding lightly activated grids on this trip!

From the state site:

“Situated on the shores of Lake Michigan, Van Buren State Park has one mile of sandy beach and high dune formations. It’s the perfect place to lounge on the beach, walk through woodland trails and enjoy a picnic lunch. Located three miles south of South Haven, the 220 large modern campground is only minutes away from local shops and



restaurants. Metal detecting area.”

I finally find someone to buy a MI State Park Passport from – and get a sticker for my windshield. If you are 'in state' you can get a 'tab' on your front license plate when you renew. OK.....no more slight 'guilt feelings' about zipping into MI parks and not paying. I'm contributing. No one at the gate here either – no one collecting \$\$ yet. Will I find a park anywhere where they are collecting entrance fees? (other than 'self registration' places that likely few use? )

In at 1121z – early in the morning. Hey, I work VK4FW/P in Australian Park VKFF-1179. Cool! 20M CW. 40M yields most of the US contacts – CW and SSB. Finish with over 55Q so I'm a happy camper.

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Up to Allegan County and **Saugatuck State Park**. Still Grid EN62 so these park runs aren't doing anything for the big flop ARRL International Grid Challenge. That IGC is good for the big stations who enter every contest – US and DX – and operate a lot of FT-8 where 80% of the grids are being run.

From the state site:

“A day-use park along a secluded strip of Lake Michigan shoreline, Saugatuck Dunes State Park offers 2.5 miles of shore line. The park has fresh water coastal dunes that are over 200 feet tall. The park's terrain varies from steep slopes to rolling hills.”

I pull in 1420z.....leave at 1545z with 50Q. KB6UF is out on Nantucket. Yesterday he was on Dukes. Unfortunately, only 20SSB. I still need it on CW... hi hi.....KC4JNW was in a park for a P2P contact. It's getting cooler. Well, colder. It's not good weather for the beach goers. In fact, in some of these parks, they are still plowing out the snow in campground areas and other roads! I'll see a bunch of snow before I arrive in Traverse City.

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**Holland State Park** is in Ottawa County – KFF-1508. You really don't have to keep track of the SP numbers. When I upload my logs, you'll get credit for them if you worked me! Some of the county hunters are in the top 100 park chasers whether they know it or not! If you've been working N4CD, KA2LHO, and KA9JAC, N9JF, and others for the past 3 years.....you've got lots of park credits. (And likely grid credits but

for those, you have to upload your logs to ARRL LoTW for a match. )

from their website:

“There are four modern campgrounds. The Lake Macatawa campground is a traditional campground offering 211 campsites, the Beach Campground is nestled between sand dunes with 98 paved campsites and 31 full hook-up sites. Both campgrounds are within 50’ of swimming beaches and Lake Macatawa Campground is only ½ mile from Lake Michigan. Metal detecting area”

Left with 56Q in the log. Headed north – got to get to Traverse City one of these days – soon!

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Next up **Muskegon State Park** in Muskegon County MI. KFF-1525 and Grid EN63. 7100 QSO s from this grid. Down a bit but sure not 'rare' – hi hi. Why bother even thinking about spotting your grid when there have been so many Qs so far from there?

No entrance person – just drive in – but now I have the MI Park Pass sticker.

From the state site:

“Over 1,165 acres on Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake. 247 modern and semi-modern campsites, two mini-cabins. Sun bathing, swimming, picnicking, fishing, boat launch, ice fishing. Twelve miles of marked and groomed hiking trails, with five miles (8 kilometers) lighted for all levels of cross-country skiers. Trail maps. Replica of an historic fort blockhouse overlooking Lake Michigan and sand dunes. Metal detecting area. “

Good run here and over 100Q go in the log! Bands cooperated! Not many on 20M SSB though. Late in the day. In at 1850z . Left at 2050Z. Hey, that's fun working 100 stations in an hour.

Headed to the Baymont Inn and Suites in Muskegon. Dinner at the Golden Corral down the street.

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## Thursday April 26.

Time to get to the Mini when things start this evening but first a nearby park in the same county – **Hoffmaster SP KFF 1507**. Still in Grid EN69 and Muskegon County. I pull in early at 1150Z. The sun comes up fairly early this far north and stays up till near 9 PM. I love those long evenings. In June, it stays light till 10pm in this part of the country – up north. Of course, they pay for those long summer days with very short winter days. The further 'north' you are, the longer the summer daylight hours and the shorter the winter daylight hours. It was cold outside – 32 degrees. Meanwhile in my home town in TX, it would be headed toward the 80s!

The run went well but didn't reach 44. Too early and not enough time to stick around. Oh well. Maybe next year if I come this same way to do a repeat here. Left with 35 even though I hunted around and changed bands. A-index up there and not many around at this hour. In at 1150Z and out at 1300z. Couldn't stick around - time to get up to Mini-land. This was one of two parks on the entire trip I failed to reach 44 QSOs.

“P. J. Hoffmaster State Park features over three miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, a 293 site modern campground, towering Lake Michigan dunes, and the Gillette Sand Dune Visitor Center. Miles of hiking and skiing trails offer stunning views of Lake Michigan and subtle beauty at every turn.”

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On to **Silver Lake SP KFF 1538** in Oceana County. Same grid – not that I expect any grid hunters to stop by. Heck, with over 7000 contacts in this grid, this grid isn't the least bit rare. Will I ever find a rarer grid in this neck of the woods?

I pull in at 1400z, start on 40M cw(28Q) and SSB(10Q) , , hit 30m(13Q) and 20m CW(20Q) for a great run.

“Silver Lake State Park is almost 3,000-acres along the Lake Michigan shoreline. This area includes both dune country and acres of mature forest. One of the park's biggest draws is the 450-acre off-road vehicle area. Silver Lake State Park contains more than four miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and boasts a large sandy beach. 200 site campground with electrical service and modern restrooms.”

Some of these campgrounds are still snowed in yet at this time of year – they had record

snows in April this year and they are still plowing them out and waiting for warmer temps for the snow to melt under the tree cover.

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Time for **Ludington SP**. Lots of nice MI Parks along the shore.

“The park has 5,300 acres, frontage on Lake Michigan and Hamlin Lake, 347 campsites, 18 miles of hiking and biking trails including the Skyline trail and 16 miles of cross country ski trails, interpretive center, swimming, fishing, hunting and boating. The park also offers wildlife viewing from its extensive trail system. An official Michigan Viewing Area. Metal detecting area. Visitors can learn about the sand dunes, the Great Lakes, the history of Big Sable Point Lighthouse, lumber town, and the Civilian Conservation Corps camp.”

In at 1600z. This is in Grid Square EN64. Hey, only 1200 contacts from this grid. Maybe someone will get a new grid! Out at 1720z. Had some of the European park hunters – DL1EJA, EA7TG, IW2BNA, ON4VT, ON4BB in the log along with FJ/N0KV. Got my 44+ here.

- - -

I’m headed north toward Traverse City – I’ll get there by dinner time and the evening get together.

**Orchard Beach State Park KFF-1530** is in Manistee County. Pull in at 1750z. Run the bands for the county hunters/park hunters and leave happy with 50Q. At 1900z.

“Orchard Beach State Park is situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. A stairway leads from the campground to the beach and self-guided hiking trails are adjacent to the park. We have 166 campsites, one mini cabin, two paved handicap sites and two rest room and shower buildings. We also have a large shelter building sitting atop the bluff which is available for rent for reunions, meeting, etc. Metal detecting area.”

Nice place to run the park at the parking lot. No one at the entrance gate here or any one of the previous MI parks. They are still working like crazy trying to get these in shape for later in the month when the temps are out of the low 40s and 30s! Not many campers and beach goers are turning out at 39 deg F and wind.

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One more to go and it's **Interlochen State Park, KFF-1570** in Grand Traverse County. That county is likely to be as rare as "Rutherford" used to be when we had the 3M in Murphreesboro TN with 250 people attending. We kidded about 'rare Rutherford'. Don't know how many put out Grand Traverse County – didn't hear too many. Of the attendees, at least 15 cars in the parking lot at the Holiday Inn had HF antennas all set to go.

This park is NOT on the shore of Lake MI, but on the shore of an inland lake.

"Has 490 Campsites (59 rustic - remaining are modern). Situated between Duck and Green Lake, adjacent to National Music Camp. Three cabins for rent. Traverse City is 15 miles North East and Lake Michigan shoreline is 25 miles West of the Park Via US 31."

Arrive at 2000z late in the day. 50Q go in the log and leave at 2115z headed to the Mini not far away

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Seems I sent in my registration for the Mini months ago.....and thought I reserved at the Holiday Inn. Before I left I hunted for the paperwork and didn't find it. Called the Holiday Inn – and , gulp, they had no record of a reservation. Well, dang. I could stay there Thursday and Friday for a bit more money, but Saturday was sold out. On the web, I could stay there Saturday night for \$189 plus tax. No thanks. So I hunted around on the web. Down the street a few miles is now the Days Inn. Two years ago it was the Boarder Motel and five years before that it was a Super 8. Same place, different names over time. Good all the time. I've stayed there before when I arrive early. \$65/night instead of the \$89, and they have a good breakfast in the morning. So I'd be hanging out there for the 3 nights I spent in Traverse City. The guy at the front desk welcomed me – remembered me from last time.

Checked in, had dinner at the walking distance nearby Bob Evans restaurant, then headed over to the Holiday Inn for the evening yak session. Now I had finally arrived at the convention. It was 40F outside and a howling wind off the lake. Brrrrr!

To be continued later.

## The “Original” Parks on the Air

Kraig, KA2LHO, discovered this on the internet. Apparently it got no attention at the time from the ham community. A few years later in 2016, the ARRL initiated the one year long National Parks on the Air program that was a tremendous success.

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Parks on the Air (POTA) was founded Sept. 15, 2010, to encourage amateur-radio operators who enjoy the outdoors -- but who may not be interested in or able to take long hikes or make steep climbs -- to blend their interests by operating from municipal, county, state, provincial, and national parks around the world.

Hike in if you like. Drive in if you don't. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that you find ways to tickle the ionosphere from the Great Outdoors.

Hundreds of parks await their initial activation, which entitles them to a designation number for later exchanges as the group's awards program takes shape.

The rules for activating are simple:

A minimum of five contacts on any amateur-radio band, using any mode (if using FM on VHF or UHF, simplex only), made since Sept. 15, 2010.

Use any power level allowed within the terms of your license.

Contacts can be made over several visits to a park, although experience shows that you often can make enough contacts between lunch and dinner to meet the five-contact minimum.

To stay up to date on upcoming activations or to read accounts of past activations, feel free to join our Yahoo group. You can sign up [here](#).

Come join the fun! We look forward to your activations!

73,

Fred, VE3FAL  
Kyle, N4NSS  
Pete, W1PNS”

source: <http://www.hamparks.org/>

This program didn't get traction. The European version, started early in 2008 or so, is now spreading to the US with the WWFF-KFF program, but now 44 contacts are required for an 'activation'. Oh, how easy that would have been with only 5 needed. NPOTA was a minimum of 10, and if you had good conditions and a rare park, you could easily put 100-200Q in the log quickly. The N4CD record was 390Q at Chimney Rock, NE! I averaged about 100Q per park in 2016! That was really fun. Unfortunately, most of the NPOTA folks have gone on to other things.

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## MI QSO Party

Mobiles were out running – but band conditions were not great where I was. A index was up at 47 which didn't help. I could hear some fixed stations – mobiles were really hard to find, but caught 'north MI' on 20M for a few. I was too close for 20m and too far for 40M for the contest – and half of it is run in the evening/night when I'm hunkered down.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

## **K8IR MOBILE 644 CW 27 SSB QSO**

It was a nice day for a drive through Michigan. Still plenty of snow to be seen from last weekend's April storm in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula.

It's amazing to me how conditions are always so different between the March Wisconsin QSO Party and the April Michigan contest. The common factor was 20 played poorly in both. Last month 40 was poor as well, and 80 was the place to be. I was pleasantly surprised to see 40 was once again the money band, although 80 did very well after sunset. At this point of the cycle, it was no surprise that 40 was too long for much in-state activity. It was fairly slow at the beginning, but things really picked up at sunset, with some incredible rates on both 40 and 80 at times. I haven't heard pileups like these for a few years and the activity seemed to have recovered nicely from last year's Easter weekend contest. It's good to hear some old friends on the band every year. There was a good group of stations that followed us through the day, but no one was there nearly as often as K8RYU who appeared 27 times in the log.

As usual, a big thank you to Eric, KG9GH who provides the vehicle and expert navigation and driving. He also kept on me to pick up the microphone once in a while. Eric got us into the final county with 20 minutes to go, right on schedule.

Thanks to all who called in.

73

Jim K8IR

--

## **K8MQP MULTI-OP MI 267 CW 507 SSB**

Activity seemed to recover nicely from the Easter Weekend QSO drought last year, I noticed that several of the very active out-of-state stations were giving out numbers \*much\* higher than last year.

Very surprised that 40 went long so early in the contest, making it impossible to hear/work in-state stations (particularly the mobiles). We sensed that this was happening and cut back on our usual high rate 40 PH running to search for in-state mults (and mobiles) on 40CW & 40PH.



In recent years, 80/75 has not been very productive for us, however, this year 80/75 were terrific. We saw the rate indicator hit 180 in bursts on 75 PH while 80CW be near 80 until the band started to get worked out.

The biggest disappointment was the number of stations who turned down our request for a quick QSY to CW for a mult. Perhaps It's not surprising when the station has a new 2x3, but even familiar 1 x 2s turned us down.

Thanks to everyone who got on in MiQP and thanks for our QSO s.

73, K8CC, KE8OC, W8MJ, WR8W  
K8MQP Operating Team

- - -

**NA8V FIXED MI** 367 CW 429 SSB

Another FB MiQp. Conditions were surprisingly good considering the A index at 47 in the morning. 40 was never very good for MI but was quite good for stations 200-250+ miles away. Unfortunately, this pretty much eliminated contacts with the mobiles until late afternoon or on 80m.

My mobile/rover tally was K8IR 5, KK9K 6, NE9U 6, W8RU 2, W8UE 3. Thanks much guys! A few times I could hear them weakly but no luck with the QSO .

Fixed stations worked a lot were KU8E and W0BH 5 times each and 17 stns 4 times. Again, thanks!

Ended up with 60 counties total (39 on cw, 53 on fone) and 51 states/province total (45 CW and 44 fone). If the skip would have been a bit shorter on 40, it could have been much better but all things considered I'm pleased.

The first couple hours weren't as fast as one would hope, but it was steady throughout. I think a few people in-state might have given up too early as condx improved as time went on.

Thanks again for all the contacts!

Greg/NA8V

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#### **WN4AFP - FIXED - SC 65 CW 26 SSB**

I've participated in the last 3-4 contests, and this was my best showing so far. My goal this year was to at least double my 2016 score and it looks like I reached that goal. During the first three hours I was getting concerned because I hadn't worked any mobiles stations. Finally I worked W8UE, K8IR and NE9U. 40m and 80m were the only bands for SC to MI. Thanks to all the MI stations and especially to the mobile ops for responding to my calls. I rode along with K8IR and W8UE for the last 6 hours of the contest. K8IR provided 16 counties and W8UE with 8. Let's do it again next year.

73s Dave WN4AFP

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#### **K0AP FIXED - KS 46 CW**

If the MIQP rules were set with a goal to slow down QSO rates and frustrate people, then, good job, mission accomplished. Serial number exchange in QSO Parties is such a bad idea. I hope the MIQP organizers rethink this for MIQP 2019.

The mobiles have done a nice job, (K8IR, NE9U, W8UE and few others). Band conditions were very poor. Thanks for the Qso's and new MI counties.

73 Dragan K0AP

## **630 Meter News**

Radio Amateurs in Canada are poised to join those in several other nations around the world who have access to a new 60-meter band, 5351.5 - 5366.5 kHz, as agreed upon at World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC-15), but with a maximum power of 100 W effective radiated power (ERP). The updated Canadian Table of Frequency Allocations includes the new allocation, although radio amateurs have not yet been

authorized to use it. Canada's radio amateurs will also retain the four Amateur Radio channels that do not fall within the new allocation. These spot frequencies have been authorized under a footnote to the Table since 2014, on a secondary, non-interference basis.

In January 2017, ARRL 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 ERP limit. The federal government is the primary user of the 5 MHz spectrum in the US. The FCC has yet to act on ARRL's petition.

Last August, Canada's regulatory agency, the Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) proposed to adopt WRC-15 decisions that included the 15 kHz Amateur Radio allocation. The proposed revisions to the Table would retain the original five 5 MHz spot frequencies with a maximum of 100 W ERP, but restrict the new 15 kHz allocation to just 15 W EIRP, accommodating the concerns of a few countries over possible interference to their domestic communications.

"Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) noted in its response to the proposed changes that there had been no reports of interference from Amateur Radio operations on the existing five 60-meter spot frequencies following their use in Canada since 2014 and in the USA for even longer," RAC President Glenn MacDonell, VE3XRA, said. "Further, the rationale for allocating the spot frequencies had been based on the value of 60 meters for emergency communication, and the low power limit adopted at WRC-15 would seriously limit this use."

MacDonell said comments from the Radio Advisory Board of Canada (of which RAC is a member organization), the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club, the Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland, and several individual radio amateurs also recommended 100 W. "Radio Amateurs of Canada will be urging ISED to authorize the new 15 kHz segment as soon as possible," MacDonell said.

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Amateur Radio got two new bands last year, and amateurs are beginning to use them. Ralph Wallio, W0RPK, of Greenville, North Carolina, and others who took part in ARRL's WD2XSH Part 5 Experimental operation or have a deep interest in what now is

the 630-meter band (472 - 479 kHz), say activity is picking up.

Wallio maintains an informal database that tracks the activity of stations on a state-by-state basis, as well as how many states each station has worked. Topping the list is Eric Tichansky, NO3M, in Pennsylvania, with 36 states worked on 630 meters, and 35 confirmed, including Hawaii and Alaska. NO3M, who also operates as W3CDX, reports eight DXCC entities worked on the new band.

"During the past 6 months, our list of stations in the US participating in QSO s on 630 meters has steadily increased to 108 stations across 39 states," Wallio told ARRL. "As of mid-April 2018, we have 6 months of operating experience over the past winter. Our 630-meter band has been very busy."

Wallio said modes frequently used for 630-meter contacts include CW, JT9, WSQ (weak-signal QSO ), and FT8, with occasional additional digital mode experiments and SSB. Numerous US stations are also participating in WSPR beacon transmission, reception, and reporting on 472 kHz. "An analysis of the past 30 days finds 59 stations occasionally transmitting 630-meter WSPR beacons in the US," Wallio added.

Eric Tichansky, NO3M, has modified a Heathkit SB-1000 linear for 630 meters, so he can generate sufficient power to obtain 1 W ERP.

Transatlantic and transpacific contacts on the new band also have been reported. John Langridge, KB5NJD, posts a daily discussion of 630-meter operations and conditions. He advises stations operating on 630 meters to upload their logs to Logbook of The World, so 630-meter operators participating in the 2018 ARRL International Grid Chase (IGC) can receive credit.

Another WD2XSH participant, Rudy Severns, N6LF, discusses LF-MF antenna design on his website, with notes. An archive of 600MRG discussions also is available.

## New Mexico QSO Party - More

The QSO Party was in April, but this report from a county hunter came in after pub date that month. So here it is!

## **K8TE mobile 310 CW 59 SSB QSO**

While Judy drove, I called CQ many, many times! Conditions could be worse, and probably will be next year. Still, I managed to make a few contacts without any major SNAFU's this year. In this "small" event, it would really be nice for mobiles to self-spot! Thanks to the very few who spotted me--what a difference that makes! I wonder if APRS helped those chasing to follow us?

Something helped John, N6MU! He worked me in every county I activated, even Torrance when we were located for a brief time, not long enough to make the required 15 QSO 's for the 5,000 bonus points. Thanks for those 17 QSO 's John! That is persistence!

My new 20m MFJ-1620T antenna broke at the mount, destroying the antenna and making the mount useless, the day before the contest! I had to use my High Sierra for 20m and 80m/75m. I did make a few contacts on 75m/80m, at the beginning and one at the end. So, it was not a disaster.

40m was surprisingly useful for in-State contacts and those counties for multipliers, despite relatively long propagation. I checked the RBN and noted I was getting out satisfactorily. Unfortunately, very few contacts spotted me. For those of you who operate mobile, you know that spots are our lifeblood, especially in "smaller" events like this!

Smaller has nothing to do with the size of NM counties! We had to travel over an hour five times to get from one county line to another! Judy drove over 600 miles, including the 90 it took to arrive at our first county line for the contest start. Our total trip distance was exactly 800 miles! I think next time we will start and finish closer to home.

Often, local RFI was well over S9, and in one instance S9+40 in oil country! So, I must apologize to those who called me and whom I didn't answer and thank those who were persistent in getting my attention. I did not nod off until we arrived home, 15:40 after we left!

We activated 12 counties this year, one more than last year. Due too construction, slightly longer than expected pit stops, and one long dirt road,

we missed the final county (Torrance) multiplier by four QSO 's! However, we weren't slowed down by a heard of antelope on the road like last year!

I exchanged e-mail messages with my friend John, K4BAI. He and KU8E were in the GAQP, but I never heard either call. I only made five GA QSO 's, although I heard plenty on or below the NMQP frequencies. Apparently, they had too many callers to copy my weak mobile signals.

As usual, N1MM+ Logger performed flawlessly as did the K3 and antennas. Winds were unusually quiet until we came through Tijeras Canyon on I-40 approaching Albuquerque and the last 30 miles from home, unusual for this time of year in NM. I'm looking forward to hearing from my fellow ADXA'ers who participated. We should have activated the most counties again this year, even though my compadres KKM6M and KG5IDN could only operate from county lines since they also drove. 73, Bill, K8TE

## 630 Meter Band Busy

Amateur Radio got two new bands last year, and amateurs are beginning to use them. Ralph Wallio, W0RPK, of Greenville, North Carolina, and others who took part in ARRL's WD2XSH Part 5 Experimental operation or have a deep interest in what now is the 630-meter band (472 - 479 kHz), say activity is picking up.

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Another WD2XSH participant, Rudy Severns, N6LF, discusses LF-MF antenna design on his website, with notes. An archive of 600MRG discussions also is available.

## NE QSO Party – More

This took place in mid-April, but here are late reports. The CHnews had to go to press early due to Dayton trip and these came in later.

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**WB9QAF rover 362 CW 157 SSB**

Great experience. First time HF roving. Learned A Lot. Thanks Fred KB0LF for making it happen.

- - -

**KB0LF -**

Got to operate from a rare grid, DN82. Was a blast.

- -

**N6MU 72 CW 40 SSB**

Poor conditions with wild QSB swings made this one challenging. Only worked four CW stations - the three mobiles (NE0QP, WB9QAF, W0BH) and W0DB. Very little NE activity, especially Sunday. The three mobiles gave me 99 of my 114 total Qs.

I must congratulate Paul, WB9QAF. He gave me 54 Qs, almost half my total. Awesome effort, Paul! He was the Party to me.

Glad to see Bob, W0BH, show up Sunday to help ease the doldrums. Those 22 Qs were a welcome addition.

Of course Fred, piloting NE0QP, was a county line workhorse who I worked 23 times.

Thanks to those few fixed stations that did participate. 73...

John, N6MU

- -

**KN4Y - fixed FL - 11 cw**

Not much CW activity, then alone came Chuck.

- ---

**W0BH mobile 185 CW 75 SSB**

Lorna/K0WHY and I were looking forward to running the NEQP this year after a fun Sunday run last year. Unfortunately, one of my teeth decided it needed a root canal and I thought we couldn't go. The antibiotics kicked in, so we decided to take advantage of a beautiful Sunday forecast and head up for some radio and bird watching fun anyway.

Since we weren't really trying to keep a schedule, we made it to 12 out of 13 possible counties in a little over 4 hours. Band conditions were really dismal this year. We made about half the number of contacts as last year in about the same amount of time and had to work hard for the contacts we did make. Fortunately, it was still fun and an absolutely beautiful drive. Nebraska has nice wildlife areas in almost all their counties, so our dog, Roxxy, also enjoyed some run time while Lorna checked out the birds.

About 40 miles from home heading back to Kansas, our van blew a right rear tire at



speed on the interstate. I was sound asleep, but woke up from the bang. Luckily, the tire didn't shred and Lorna was able to stop the van with no problems. We had a full size spare along and even got an assist from the Kansas State Patrol. One of the officers took the chance to try out his portable impact driver. It worked great for the lug nuts! The last 40 miles went smoothly on the spare, and we now have four new tires on the Astro for the next run.

Congratulations to my top chasers and thanks to all who put me in their logs!

#### W0BH Award Winners

----- First Place - Very Honorable Mention -----

Most overall Qs - N6MU/22 ----- AC5O/13 -- K5KPE/11

Most CW Qs ----- N6MU/12 ----- K5KPE/11 - AC5O/9

Most PH Qs ----- N6MU/10 ----- KC0ZVN/6 - AC5O/4

Most counties --- N6MU/12 ----- K5KPE/11 - AC5O/10

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Special thanks to Fred/KB0LF for taking charge of this QSO Party and thanks to the Nebraska QSO Party Contest Committee and QCWA Nebraska for sponsoring the event. Next year we hope to run both days.

73, Bob, W0BH

PS A special invite to the Nebraska mobiles to come down and run our Tenth Anniversary Kansas QSO Party the last weekend in August!

## Ham Makes Contacts – 29 Bands

#### Virginia Radio Amateur Completes Contacts on All 29 Ham Bands

Brian Justin, WA1ZMS, in Virginia, saved the lowest band for last. On April 11, he completed a CW contact on the new 2200-meter band with K3MF in Pennsylvania, wrapping up a sweep of completed contacts on all 29 Amateur Radio bands. Justin is a bit of an old school guy -- he worked K3MF on CW, and now he's awaiting a QSL card.

A paper QSL card.

"Wow!" Justin told ARRL. "Not an easy QSO . Had to use TMO reporting, but we did it as if it was an Earth-Moon-Earth QSO ." In TMO reporting, T = Signal just detectable; M = Portions of call copied, and O = Complete call set has been received. Justin used his Icom IC-7300 for his receiver. "I needed the AGC on to keep the static crashes from blowing my ears off," he recounted. His antenna for both receiving and transmitting was a 160-meter dipole fed as a Marconi T antenna against ground. "A 2.5 mH variometer built on a 5-gallon bucket is used to tune the antenna to resonance," he explained. "Ground impedance at 136 kHz is around 40 ohms, so most of the RF is lost as heat in the Earth." Justin said it took several hundred dollars' worth of ground rods and copper wire to attain the 40-ohm ground impedance, given soil conditions at his location. "I started with 100 W," Justin said. "K3MF had trouble hearing me -- his QRM was 20 dB over S-9. So we set up a new sked. I added the kW amp on my end, and as soon as I hit 600 W, all of the smoke detectors in the house went off from the RF." He said he had to stay at 500 W for the contact. Reception was a challenge as well. "All light dimmers need to be off, so I can hear anything," he said. Input to the antenna system is one thing on 136 kHz. Effective radiated power (ERP) is another. Justin's ERP was 500 mW, just 3 dB below the FCC limit for the band.

The variometer at WA1ZMS for 2200 meters is built from readily available components. Justin said he started working his way through the bands at the high end of the spectrum, those allocations above 24 GHz. "By the time 2002 came around, I had managed to have built enough millimeter-wave gear to complete formal QSO s, with QSL cards, on all the bands at the time," he told ARRL. "On the bands above 24 GHz, I had to build two stations and pass one off to K2AD, W4WWQ, or WA4RTS to be on the other ends of these VUCCs and QSO s."

To consider it a valid contact, Justin said he used the New England Weak Signal Group (NEWS) guideline of at least a 1-kilometer distance on each band. "While at first this seems very easy, very few hams have even had a QSO across a bench top on bands like 134 GHz, much less over 1 kilometer," he said.

By 2003, Justin had confirmed contacts (and paper QSLs) on each band from 1.8 MHz to 300 GHz. He submitted his cards to NEWS, which presented him with a framed award and plaque -- the very first "Worked All Bands Award."

Since then, a few ham bands have changed. For example, the 2.5-millimeter band shifted from 120 GHz to 122 GHz, and the 2-millimeter band moved down from 145 GHz to 134 GHz. "In order to stay current with the award, I built gear for those new allocations

as well and made QSO s, VUCCs, and more DX," he said. Throughout this process, he earned the first-ever ARRL VUCC Awards for 47 GHz, 76 GHz, 122 GHz, 134 GHz, and 241 GHz, and even went so far as to make the first contact on a less-than-1-millimeter band, 322 GHz. "Many world DX records were made as well along the way," he said. "The most rewarding one for me was 114 kilometers on 241 GHz."

When 630 and 2200 meters became official last year, Justin had his work cut out for him. As one of the ARRL WD2XSH Experimental stations, he made quick work of 630 meters, contacting NO3M on SSB the day after the band opened for Amateur Radio work. His CW QSO on 2200 meters came last week -- about 250 kilometers (155 miles). He's hoping to see the QSL card this week.

## On the Road with N4CD II At the Convention

The MI Mini was held at the Holiday Inn West Bay in cold Traverse City MI. Spring had not reached this part of the 'northern' world as attendees were treated to high temperatures of 41 degrees on the days of the convention. It had snowed 8 days before and there were still remnants of snow around – the piles where they plow banks high – still there in places, and further north – where they had 39 inches of snow in Antrim County – lots more snow banks in parking lots. It was nasty cold and very windy outside in the hotel parking lot. Last week it was a 'bit' warmer. Fortunately, most folks who have been here before dressed warmly for the icebox like temps.

The following were in attendance.

K2MF Barry, Lutz, FL  
N4CD Bob, Plano, TX  
AB7NK Mary, Cordes Lakes, AZ  
K7SEN Neil, Cordes Lakes, AZ  
WQ7A Terry and Bonnie, Yelm, WA

K8EMS Mike and Sherry, Gladstone, MI  
NA8W Darl, Findlay, OH  
KA8JQP Pam, Findlay, OH  
N9EEN David and Barb , Silvis, IL  
WB0PYF Ray and Debbie, St Louis, MO  
N8KIE Bob, Clarkston, MI  
N8RLJ Jaci, Clarkston, MI  
AB7RW Phil, Vancouver, WA  
AC7UH Barb, Vancouver, WA  
NN9K Pete, Colona, IL  
N9DQS Nancy, Colona, IL  
N8WTQ Dori, Midland, MI  
K3IMC Don, LaGrange, GA  
KJ4NIT Jean, LaGrange, GA  
K8OOK Mike, Grand Rapids, MI  
N8IPG Nancy, Grand Rapids, MI  
WG9A Bill and Sandy, Batavia, IL  
W9OP Mark, Neenah, WI  
W9PIP Joan, Neenah, WI  
N2MH Mark, Essex, NJ  
KD2KHJ Karen, Essex, NJ  
WA3QNT Bob and Jackie, Franklin, PA  
K8AO Duane and Judy, Gladstone, MI  
W9GUY Don, Walton, IN  
W8TZA Bill, Kalamazoo, MI  
W8WKD Sharon, Kalamazoo, MI  
NF0N Mike and Dianne, South Sioux City, NE  
K9IA Charles, The Villages, FL  
W9XYL Fran, The Villages, FL  
K5GE Gene and Mary Ida, Seguin, TX  
KA9JAC Bob, Hortonville, WI  
KB9YVT Ann, Hortonville, WI  
K8ZZ Ed, Topeka, KS  
Rev Kate, Kansas City, KS  
W8TVT Joe, Traverse City, MI  
N8RRR Janet, Traverse City, MI  
KB0BA Lowell, Blue Grass, IA  
N0XYL Sandra, Blue Grass, IA  
NM1G Chuck and Sandy, North Kingstown, RI  
N8HAM Jim, South Lyon, MI

Special thanks to Jim, N8HAM for most of the pictures.



Most of the Attendees 2018 MI Mini

Ed, K8ZZ, and Joe, W8TVT hosted it yet again. Next year will be their final year – the hotel has already been reserved for it. Likely same weather conditions - cold. Then it will be up to others to pick it up, move it, or make other arrangements.

Or else – it will die along with all the other minis that used to be held around the country – Las Vegas –Harlingen, TX. Murphreesboro, TN, Kansas City – Lake Texoma, OK....Austin TX – and others around the country. So...you folks up that way – IL, OH.....get set for hosting in 2020 please.

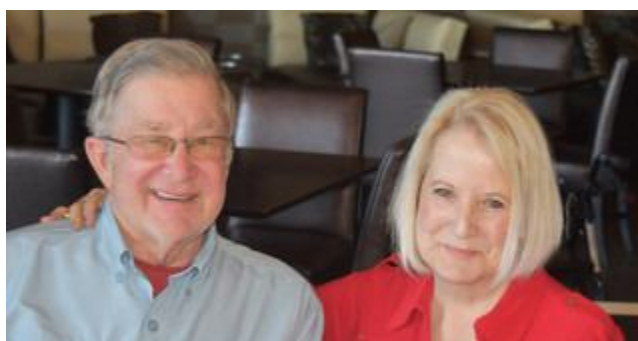
The usual hospitality room was open Thursday evening when I showed up. Picked up my name badge and yakked with the folks there for a bit. After a while, headed back to the Days Inn – it had been a long day.



K3IMC, Don and Jean



Bob N8KIE and Jaci N8RLJ



Ed, K8ZZ and Rev. Kate





Janet and Joe, W8TVT



Bill, WG9A and Sandy



Joan, W9PIP and Mark, W9OP



Judy and K8AO, Duane



N2MH Mark and KA2KHJ Karen

## **Friday, April 27**

The hospitality room opens early and folks were doing cross word puzzles and just yakking a bit. I elected to go out and run a few parks to the northeast. Not much goes on during the day on Friday. It was bitter cold in the morning. 30s. Howling north wind. Brrrr. I think those counties had been run, but not likely on CW. Maybe AB7RW hit some. Terry, WQ7A came down from the Upper Peninsula and you hit most of those on the way in to Traverse City. Not much goes on during Friday during the day – no meetings. The wind was howling out of the north off the lake. Not a great day for summer activities. In July and August, the beaches and motels are full up- you can go sailing on a wind powered 110 foot long schooner from the way back days and just



enjoy 'summer'. Now it wasn't even “Spring” here. Next week it was forecast to be in the 70s.

So it was off to a few parks to the northeast of Traverse City. Through Antrim County where they had 39 inches of snow just over a week ago! Piles of snow everywhere! First up was **Fishermans Island State Park** at 1240Z in Charlevoix County MI. A good part of this was snowed in and a snow plow was working hard to get it open shortly. Pulled it – ran it with over 60 contacts and left at 1350Z. No one at the entrance gate to collect money – then again with 40 degrees, howling wind, and most of the part snowed in – there weren't many visitors! Or even reason to collect 'day use fees'.

From the state site:

“Fisherman’s Island State Park boasts over six miles of unspoiled Lake Michigan shoreline. The island in which the park was named no longer exists. Due to years of lower water levels in Lake Michigan the island has become a peninsula now lush with native wildflowers. There are 80 rustic campsites with 15 of those nestled in the dune area along the Lake Michigan shoreline.”

OK....on to the next – **Petosky State Park**. We had a National Convention up this way back a few years. I remember the town! The park is KFF-1533 in Emmet County.

From the state site:

“**Petoskey State Park**, located on the north end of Little Traverse Bay, is situated on 304 scenic acres and offers a beautiful sandy beach on the bay. The park has two separate modern campgrounds. Tannery Creek offers 98 campsites, and Dunes offers 70 campsites. Metal detecting area.”

In many MI state parks, you can metal detect along the beach and other specific areas for rings, watches, coins, etc.

Grid EN75 Only 850 QSO s from this grid! Well, at least it could be considered 'rare'. I could likely give a few folks the grid. When the count is up at 10,000.....well....not likely anyone needs it on any band/mode.

Had a good run and left with over 44Q. A local ham stopped by – I was sitting in the ranger station parking area – the rest of the park wasn't open – snowed in – later, the beach road was plowed and opened and I wandered down that way – for less noise.

The ranger volunteered the use of his 2 space parking lot to use as there wasn't any other place at the time to run the park!

One more to go today before heading back – and that would be **Young State Park** – back in Charlevoix County. Managed to get 44+Q despite it being the 'same county' as before. Mostly park hunters – few county hunters worked me – even though I need their contacts. Some days you don't make it to 44 and lose out.

Snow everywhere!



That's a wall of snow in front of the park sign. Piles of snow all over – and 37 deg and drizzles at times. I was wondering whether I would see snow flurries again this year – last time I was here (2016) it did snow in Antrim County.

Back to Traverse County after a big loop but not done! There's a park right there in Traverse City – yes, right there in town – not more than 3 miles from the Holiday Inn - a State Park right along the shore with a campground across the street. How many CH have driven right past it and ignored it? Last time I was here I did. Now there is a reason to pull and in and stop. I've been past it before for dozens of times it seems.



Pulled in late in the day a 1915z. Had a good run with some DX, a good run on 30m, and some on 30m and 40m both CW and SSB. Laurie, WZ8C, another park hunter and activator who lives in the area, stopped by for an eyeball. Tried to get her interested in County Hunting but I don't think she's going to do it. She's activated a bunch of parks including this one. Cold and windy – with the 30-40 mph wind off the lake. Brrr.

Back to the Days Inn for a bit, unloaded the radio, ate at Ruby Tuesday, then back to the Holiday Inn for more yak and tall tales after dinner.

Many folks went off to the annual Elk's Club Catfish Fry on Friday night. Didn't know when I'd be back so didn't sign up for it. .

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## **Saturday April 28**

On the way to the Holiday Inn, I stopped at the State Park again right along the shore. Maybe I'd catch some new folks on the weekend for this park. Added in a bunch on 40m cw, some on 30m, and a few DX stations. 25Q then out the door over to the Holiday Inn West Bay. Temp in the 30s and howling wind out of the north. At least the sun was out.

On Saturday we had a 10am presentation of "Parks on the Air" by Bob KA9JAC and Bob N4CD. Most folks were in attendance.

After, I noted I had lots of hours until the picture taking at 5pm for the whole group and the dinner at 6pm. Yeah, one more park – Leelanau State Park about an hour away was calling my name. Laurie WZ8C, mentioned there was no cell service there. OK...I'd

see what I could do.

Up the scenic route 22 north to get to the tip of peninsula in Leelanau till the end. This is KFF-1515. There's a campground area and the 'lighthouse' area. I headed to the lighthouse area.

From the web site:

“Welcome to Leelanau State Park, located at the tip of the little finger on the beautiful Leelanau Peninsula, where over 1,300 acres are waiting for visitors to enjoy. The word "Leelanau" is the Native American word for "A Land of Delight" and could not better describe the area. The park has the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum, a rustic campground, two mini cabins, 8.5 miles of hiking/skiing trails and a picnic area. Petoskey stones can be found along the shoreline”

This lighthouse marks the end of the Leelanau Peninsula and has guided ships in the Manitou Passage of Lake Michigan for nearly 150 years making it one of the oldest on the Great Lakes. This lighthouse is sponsored by the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Foundation and features a historic and educational museum resembling a lighthouse keeper's home of the 1920s and 30s with a variety of exhibits depicting a broad spectrum of maritime and local history.



From Wiki: A Petoskey stone is a rock and a fossil, often pebble-shaped, that is composed of a fossilized rugose coral. Such stones were formed as a result of glaciation,

in which sheets of ice plucked stones from the bedrock, grinding off their rough edges and depositing them in the northwestern (and some in the northeastern) portion of Michigan's lower peninsula.

They are fragments of a coral reef that was originally deposited during the Devonian period. When dry, the stone resembles ordinary limestone but when wet or polished using lapidary techniques, the distinctive mottled pattern of the six-sided coral fossils emerges. It is sometimes made into decorative objects.



In 1965, it was named the state stone of Michigan.”

Just had a wisp of internet there that was mostly gone, but succeeded in reaching 50Q. The FL QSO Party helped – could only hear and work the louder stations, and the mobiles just three times despite trying many, many times (N4CW, NO5W, and K1XX). . Of course, the mobiles had tremendous pile ups – were only S1-S2 way way up in MI (too far for good skip to FL). That added 21Q to the total, nearly all on CW. It would have be tough without them to reach 44. Only got a spot through once for the county hunters – and most were at the convention! Wandered over to the lighthouse (¼ mile walk) – and around it. Warmed up – now 40 degrees but still 30 mph brutal wind coming off the lake. Despite the bright sun, it was still COLD! There were lots of folks up here and this was the first place out of 33 MI parks where there was someone actually at the entrance gate! I got to use my MI Park Passport for the first time – Hi Hi. Maybe it was just the weekend they planned on manning the gates? Anyway I was set! If you are going to run MI parks in the summer, the MI Parks pass at \$32 is a steal. For most states, you can't get it as a non-resident, and in the others it is \$70 or \$80 like TX. This was the last park to be run on the trip. I was 'parked out'.

Now it was time to get back to Traverse City for the picture taking and the dinner. Just about everyone showed up at the banquet – 55 I think it was. There were 57 registered and attending this event.

At 5PM the usual picture of everyone was taken (see above) then we had an hour for yakking, greeting, etc before dinner at 6 pm. Here are a few more pics from dinner time.

First and foremost, your two hosts K8ZZ and W8TVT – who have put on the MI Mini for 10 years. Next year will be the last for them. Hopefully someone else will pick it up, move to somewhere else - to keep it going. (Pics from N8HAM, Bonnie, Barb, N4CD)



Ed, K8ZZ – Convention Co-host



Joe, W8TVT – Convention Co-host



Jackie and WA3QNT Bob





Darl NA8W and Pam



Don, W9GUY

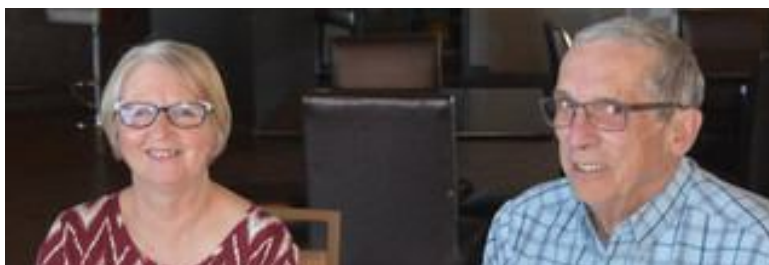




Neil K7SEN and Mary AB7NK



Gene, K5GE and Mary Ida



Sherry and K8EMS Mike



Lowell, KB0BA and Sandra N0XYL



Barry, K2MF



Bonnie and Terry WQ7A



Ray, WB0PYF and Debbie



Dianne and Mike NF0N



Bill W8TZA and Nancy W8WKD



K8OOK Mike and Nancy N8IPG



Bob KA9JAC and Ann, KB9YVT



Pete, NN9K and N9DQS Nancy



Barb and David N9EEN

more later.....

## Florida QSO Party

Wow – lots of mobiles and lots of interesting reports. Ten thousand miles driven in the FQP weekend by the mobiles. Look at the number of QSO s by the mobiles – fantastic!

**KN4Y mobile 1287 CW QSO**

Operated from 27 counties, great weather, cannot get 15 meters to work, so was a two

bander party. A new record as neither driver got lost. Traveled 868 miles.

## **NO5W mobile - 2600 CW QSO**

With the big-70 receding in the rear view mirror and the next milestone becoming visible down the road, each year I have to ask myself is it time to hang up the mobile operating gear. But then along comes the FQP and the realization that there is just no other ham radio activity that is such a highlight of my year and it becomes clear that we will keep at it as long as physically able.

This was the 5th year that Ted-KN5O and I have driven over from the Covington - New Orleans area to play mobile radio in the FQP. It was one of our best efforts as far as QSO s are concerned but not as good as past results in terms of the all important multipliers. Participation seemed up as did butt in the chair time for the callers as we had many who followed us through most of our counties.

We drove over to Tallahassee on Friday afternoon to enable a good start in Franklin County near the Wakulla border on Saturday noon and Saturday night just a little after the closing bell found us sitting down to some welcome pizza at the NX4N QTH in the Tampa area sharing tales of day one with the K4OJ and AD4ES crews before turning in for the night in Wesley Chapel to prepare for that early start on Sunday morning. Back up I75 on Sunday with a little detour into Putnam, Clay, Bradford, Union, Baker, and Hamilton before landing on I-10 for the westward trip through the panhandle and eventual drive back over to SELA after dinner in Spanish Fort. All in all we covered 43 counties with the following results where the second column is the total QSO s in the county, the third column the initial ten-minute rate on entering the county, and the last column the first station in the log.

We always look forward to the trip through Holmes and Washington and others in the western panhandle since they tend to generate our biggest pileups. However, this year Holmes and Washington were somewhat disappointing and the big pileup honors went to Santa Rosa and Okaloosa. Perhaps Saturday activity satisfied the need for QSO s with Holmes and Washington.

During the FQP we worked nearly 500 different stations and appreciate each QSO that they provided but a special thanks goes to the following stations who contributed more than half of our QSO s and spent many hours in the chair: K9CT(54), K9NW(49), K8IR(41), VE3DZ(41), VE3UTT(38), K9OM(36), AA7V(35), WI9WI(35), N2CQ(34),



WN4AFP(33), N8II(32), WB2ABD(31), VA3DF(31), W2RR(30), WJ9B(29), K0RC(29), K0HC(28), W8MJ(27), NA8V(27), K0AP(26), W8WVU(26), K9CW(26), N2CU(25), K7SV(25), VE3KZ(25), K3WJV(24), W1WEF(24), NN3W(24), VE3NNT(23), WA4GQG(23), LY5W(22), VE1OP(21), N9CK(21), W7RN(20), K6MR(19), K0PC(19), N5NA(19), W8UE(18), WA3HAE(18), N2AN(18), K0OO(18), W5TM(18), WA1Z(17), W9OA(17), W1TO(16), N7IR(16), HC2AO(16), NW0M(15), I4VEQ(15), W1QK(15), K1GQ(14), K4AMC(14), VE3TW(14).

The FQP is certainly deserving of its popular status as it is a well-organized party and generates a lot of essential activity from inside the state. Thanks to the cheer leading efforts of Chris-NX4N the Florida stations were in good attendance and active. The last update of the Activity Maps on the FQP webpage showed 19 mobiles and 48 fixed stations -- now that makes for a very successful party.

With the party ending at 10pm local on Saturday there's always the question of where to get some dinner. For the past three years that question has had an easy answer for us -- head straight to NX4N for pizza. Thank you Chris and Lilli for the hospitality.

We hope to be in the fray again next year. In the meantime look for NO5W/m in the Texas Party in late September.

73

Chuck-NO5W  
Ted-KN5O

- - -

### **K1XX multi-op mobile 2270 CW QSO**

After last year's antenna debacle early in the contest, Marty and I were really looking forward to this year. Unfortunately, Murphy partially struck again and I owe an apology to many folks in the first 4-5 hours of the contest. For some reason, our often-used laptop was failing at random intervals. Right in the middle of a QSO, it would die. It easily took 5-7 minutes to get back on the air, sometimes longer as we tried to figure out the problem and some kind of fix. This was essentially the same setup that's been successfully used in previous years. Eventually I found a DC power configuration that the laptop liked and we were off to the races.

Our early route through the Panhandle was trashed (sorry guys) and we had to leave out

several counties. At one point we considered just stopping, but after last year I didn't want to drive all the way home after such a short time on the air.

Forty meters was very active and, I think, more productive than in the past. We spent time listening during our drive to Pensacola on Friday. Lots of signals. We decided to check & CQ on 40 at almost any time. It seemed to pay off at times we wouldn't have normally considered. And, we even had a few Qs on 15. I think it was open more often than folks gave it credit for.

We plan to be back next year, with maybe a different route for the second day. Lots of line noise and non-productive driving to reach Monroe have us thinking about something different.

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#### **K4KG mobile 2330 CW 344 SSB**

This was the 15th year George and I entered in the M/S low powered mobile category and as you would expect (or hope), it gets a little easier each time from the perspective of operating the station and mastering an effective route through the back woods of the Florida counties.

Geo's operating position in the back seat of his 2012 Highlander is equipped with a K3 with antenna positions for 4 Ham Sticks. The 10 M antenna was not used this time but with easily switchable antennas on 40SSB and 40CW, our 40M SSB score was improved over previous efforts. First QSO on Sunday morning was with VK2SR on 40 phone. This was only the 2nd VK we have worked mobile in the FQP contest, both on phone. We have converted to N1MM+ for the FQP as there is a FQP contest specific module for mobiles that makes scoring and moving multipliers from CW to phone without manual check logging. N1MM+ also has the ROVERQTH feature that makes changing counties so simple a couple of cave men can do it!

Many out of state competitors find getting a sweep on SSB more difficult so we accommodate by switching routinely to a phone frequency. Also, to improve our multiplier count we request CW stations to move to SSB and thanks to the many stations who were kind enough to dig out a microphone to give us a one time new state or country. Some competitors think that this will change the category of their CW-only log submission but if entered as CW-only, then the SSB QSO becomes a check log. WJ9B and WA1Z were two examples of operators who had to search for a mike to help out the



deserving.

Our county activation route maximizes the number of counties during the contest period but in doing so, we end up spending a looonnng time in some counties and only brief time in others. For example, a road closure in OSC county added 30 minutes to our route resulting in only 5 minutes or so in NAS and DUV at the end of Saturday. Otherwise, weather was great, roads were generally in good shape and not too busy. We made it to 51 of the schedule 52 counties, coming in late on Sunday we missed SAR, our home base on Siesta Key.

Conditions were relatively good on 20M into NA but generally went long with New England and the West Coast being workable easily on both days. Very few W4's were worked, especially on Sunday. VE3's were booming, thanks again to CCO for making the effort to have such a good representation. Conditions to EU were not good and only thanks to the ongoing efforts of LY5W and I4VEQ were we aware the band was open at all. We did not work any stations on 15M or 10M for the first time ever.

Stations that were in log many times on CW and phone include K0RC, K0HC, W8MJ, NN3W, K9NW, W7RN, W7SE, I4VEQ, WA3HAE, N8II, VE3KZ, VA3DF, HC2AO and others. Other notable CW only were LY5W, K9CT, VE3DZ, K9CW.

Even though conditions were not the best, activity levels made this one of the best FQP's and our second highest score. Congratulations to NX4N and the FQP contest committee for publicizing the contest and to our fellow mobilers for making this a fun event for out-of-staters.

CU next year,

Jim VE7ZO,

Team K4KG/m

- --

**N4CW mobile** 2069 w 89 SSB

This year's FQP setup: W4TMO (Jim) was the driver/navigator...he's really good at both, having planned the routes carefully. The op (myself, N4CW) was in the back seat of the RAV-4. Jim had built an "operating table", modeled somewhat after K4KG's FQP photos. Our 40M antenna was a center-loaded (new Texas Bug Catcher loading coil)

with home-made mast (the Bug Catcher is really BIG -- equating to quite a bit of surface area/wind load)...I couldn't find a commercially-made mast (5 feet long) that didn't flex terribly! Atop the coil was a 4-foot mast topped with a 12-inch disk! The idea was to have the most efficient trailer hitch antenna possible...still a work in progress. We had a dedicated short Outback antenna on a mag mount on the roof...we'll have to revisit that in the future. Again, K4KG has tremendous success with heliwhips mounted on his roof; we may try and emulate that setup for next year. The rig was a K3 and WinKeyer USB II. We logged with NO5W "CQ-X".

Saturday we started early to get to OSC to start. We thought we had ironed-out all the bugs in the mobile setup...HAH!!!!...we hadn't! The nastiest problem that Murphy developed for us was r.f. getting into the car's computer! We thought we'd "bought the farm" AT THE FURTHEST POINT FROM OUR HOME BASE...we stopped at the nearest Advanced Auto Parts store and had them read the code: it indicated a problem with the "Limited Slip Differential" and the car was misfiring as a result. After that reading, we headed "home" pronto using the shortest route we could devise! Oddly, we found that if we kept the speed under 60 mph, we had no engine misfiring. The error code, though, was still there and the indicator for "AUTO LSD" stayed lit, blinking, with the "Check Engine" light on solid. Jim figured if it was a false indication caused by r.f. getting into the computer, that we could erase me computer memory by lifting the battery ground. We did that on Sunday morning, before heading out and the problem never surfaced again. To assist in that regard I kept the power output at 50 Watts for the duration! The RF problem also crashed the laptop a few times, prompting a complete shutdown. So we did lose some operating time to Murphy's whims...something to correct in the future.

Other pertinent statistics:

Total of 36 Florida counties were activated

Top Ten in total number of Q's:

K9CT(54)  
K9NW(45)  
K1GQ(38)  
N8II(35)  
VE3DZ(34)  
K9OM(29)  
VA3DF(28)  
K8IR(28)  
VE3UTT(27)

W2RR(26)

This was our second FQP as a driver/operator team and our best performance. We really enjoyed ourselves "traipsing" through Florida, viewing the sights, as well as operating from one pileup to another! Many thanks to the many that pulled us out of the noise, despite conditions; also, thanks to the VERY patient participants who stood by while we re-booted several times! Then there were the sections of noisy power lines that we couldn't possibly hear anything through!!!

The folks that I worked were polite, friendly, and super ops! Thanks. And a special thank you to the Florida Contest Group for sponsoring this great (and fun) operating event. 73 from Bert & Jim (N4CW & W4TMO)

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**KU8E mobile** 855 CW 245 SSB

Single-Op Rover Mixed - No Driver

Wow that was different! First time doing a SO Rover in the FQP. Unfortunately I wasn't setup to be able to operate and drive at the same time. So I planned a route where I drove near where county lines met and stopped. Lots of gaps in my operating time. I probably operated maybe 7 out of the 10 hours each day. The other 3 hours each day spent driving between stops. I totally changed up my route on Sunday. I had so many people ask about GULF. It was out of the way to get there and gave up a bunch of other counties to get there so hopefully some people got me for a sweep. I was trying to make it back to WAG and HOL at the end but ran out of time. We normally do CW only when K4BAI and I go on a trip so I was totally amazed how well I was getting out on SSB. I had an amazing pileup from LIB on 40 CW and SSB on Saturday night and spent more time that I planned in that county. Thanks for all the QSO 's It was really fun and already looking forward to next year.

Checkout some pictures of my mobile setup at  
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/YptUu98GgEpnKsnWA>

Jeff KU8E

- - -

## **KT4Q mobile 84 SSB**

Well the weekend started out to be a stellar one. Nice camp site. All radio station including my Amp all working great. Low band antenna perfect. Getting ready to throw up the G5RV for 40M and making one last test on radio station. Then I get the knock at the camper door I didn't want to hear. My neighbor said a screeching sound kept on coming over her trailer speaker system and it was driving her insane. Her husband invited me into their camper and said, hey you can unhook my speakers and we should be okay. Well once I looked at what he was talking about, it would take me taking several screws out to pull the stereo system out of the wall, then unhook the speakers for this 15 plus year old trailer. Then my luck when putting it back together that something would not work right and I am blamed on messing it up. Yes I have messed with hundreds of radios like this in the past but who knows if the stereo system was working properly to begin with, only to be blamed for something afterward.

Then I told them to let me try one more thing. I went in and turned off my amp and see if only 75 watts eliminated the issue. Result was no. In the mean time the wife of the neighbor was talking to one of the camping resort personnel that was passing by. I quickly gave up and told them I would cease my operation.

To try to salvage the weekend, I went out in my vehicle to attempt to operate the contest at various locations near the camp site. I actually went clear out to a site right on the gulf hoping to take advantage of some salt water propagation. Regardless of several operating locations, I had a miserable time making contacts. Very little contacts back to back. Certainly no runs. Several 20 minute stents of calling CQ with no reply. Many reports of 5/5 or less.

I gave up. Never will I attempt to duplicate this effort. Glad others seemed to have a successful week for Florida.

Rig: Yaesu FT100 (80w)  
Ant: Tarheel Model 400  
SW: WriteLog

73 de Steve, KT4Q

- - - -

## **KC4HW mobile - 300 CW Q**

Saturday started out with the Wiregrass ARC Tailgate so did not get started in the FQP until after 2PM. Sunday was another late start around 10AM. Was able to get all the counties that I spoke for except GULF on Sunday. Just ran out of time. Beautiful ride along the Gulf Coast.

Limited my operating to 30 minutes or less in all the counties.

Equipment was a FT-891 and Hustler Resonator. Computer was an old HP XP laptop, it is getting kind of old, but still worked pretty good.

The truck AC quit working, so that was a bit uncomfortable, but I was able to find shade in most of the counties I operated.

About 3 hrs 41 minutes operating time. I don't know exactly but about 6+ hours driving.

OK, thanks again for the QSO s! Not sure what's next, but perhaps we can make some more QSO s whatever it is.

Jim/KC4HW

- - -

## **K8MR mobile 1836 CW 118 SSB QSO**

An excellent way to end the snowbird season in Florida. The operation was very much as described in my article in the Sept/Oct 2017 NCJ. The only difference is having three HamSticks so I could easily go between 40 and 15, and using headphones for the entire time when driving. I stopped to operate in many of the same spots, and on much the same schedule as last year. Only minor problem was missing the exit off I-75 in Lee county, and then getting in a traffic jam while getting back to the road to Collier. I also screwed up on the 40 meter mobile window on for a while of Saturday, spending a lot of time up in the big boy band wondering why all those fixed stations were in the mobile window :-)

Double digit SSB numbers in CLR, HEN (county line), PAS, and PIN. For the most part, it was quickly run 50 or so QSO s parked after entering the county, and then working gentle runs while driving. DES and SAR were 20 meters at the start of the day on Saturday, and 40 meters at the end of the day. In the interest of safety I did not do any

phone operating while driving, which would have involved the distraction of reaching down to the radio, etc.

Thanks to all who followed me around. It definitely was a lot of fun!

73 - Jim K8MR

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### **K4OJ multi-op mobile 3854 CW QSO**

The adventure continues! The K4OJ/m mobile team had a terrific time taking advantage of what Ole' Sol gave us this year and we had terrific fun doing it. Much to tell about the the Suburbanites travels but first here are the numbers:

#### **K4OJ/m 2018 FQP Results:**

Band	QSO s	Pts	Mul	Pt/Q
7	1473	5892	10	4.0
14	2326	9304	56	4.0
21	55	220	2	4.0
Total	3854	15416	68	4.0

#### **Positives/Highlights:**

As the sunspot cycle continues its slog, we were hoping we could take advantage of increased 40m activity while maintaining our 20m totals - and Kevin N4KM and Red K0LUZ delivered in spades!

Kevin made 900 Q's on 40m last year and I challenged him to 1000 this year. We were both simply STUNNED to see him rip off a whopping 1473 40m QSO 's this year. \* To all of our out-of-state and in-state mobile hunters - \*you\* were the reason (and Kevin took terrific advantage) and we thank you! Kudos Kevin - next year 1500Q? Always pushing... :-)

20m was FB too given the conditions. Red was Red Hot at the key to increase our QSO 's by 15% to 2326 20m QSO 's - like Kevin, he crushed my challenge to him. Great job Red.

My, oh My - you Mobile Quail Hunters sure know how to track! Like birds, our mobiles don't make much noise but if you listen you can bag us while we're on the fly - and that's just what you did.

We had 117 Stations work us at least 10 times - wow, thank you guys! We \*really, really\* appreciate your dedication and perseverance in those pileups. Nearly 30 ops hit 30 Q's with us from near and far:

My Rusty Trusty Going Busty?

The 2002 Suburban hit a major milestone - just 5 miles before the CLR/MON/DAD county line, my Ol' Reliable hit 400,000 miles! I just had to pull over for a second to take a photo. At that moment Red said, "Well, I guess it's time for the thing to throw a rod". I scowled at him in jest and then looked back down to see a big warning light - LOW COOLANT (yikes!).

My heart sank - how could my baby fail us in our most remote location with bus-sized biting flies, hot tropical weather and no cell service?

We went on to the MON County Line with fingers-crossed and shut off the engine to let it cool while we worked the Roaring Pileups for about 30 minutes. There was no way we could get out there to look at the engine or fill it with bottled water; with the biting flies we wouldn't last 2 minutes.

So after a very nice run of stations we started the "Sub" up again - no warning light, engine temp normal and it stayed that way all the way home!

If a Man and his Machine were ever in a Bromance, it would be me and my Sub...dare I think 500K miles??? :-)

The stations performed flawlessly and the antennas just rock solid - we feel loud on all bands and the RFI between stations is minimal. Of course, Red and Kevin are beast operators which helps!

We again had very little in the way of road traffic - with one exception described in another section below. Smooth easy driving and very pleasant for this driver to enjoy the beauty throughout our Sunshine State.

During our visit through CLM we found "RED's TAVERN" - sorry Red, no ditching the

pileups to sneak a beer on the house!

Once again, we had a Super-enjoyable dinner with teams AD4ES and NO5W, hosted by my wife Lili and I at home Sat night. Thanks to Lili our usual fare of Pizza and sodas was ready and consumed by the tired ops while trading midway scores, tales from the road, A1 ops and lids we heard, who's going to Dayton, etc. A little knoshing and kibbitzing...

It's always so nice to see everyone and decompress a bit with friends, new and old alike. Let's do it again next year guys! Other fixed/mobile ops most welcome if you're near NW HIL at half-time.

I need to mention the Terrific stations/antennas/setup that both AD4ES and NO5W have in their vehicles - super duper impressive guys! These guys really have professional setups - well done gents!

Cows and Flowers - Florida is just a beautiful state and one of the advantages this FQP Driver enjoys. But this ain't no Joy Ride - each leg is timed and I have written directions, a map and a GPS all working real-time to ensure we don't miss turn-offs or county lines. We did have one closed road for construction - CR419 going from OSC to ORA; the GPS once again saved my Bacon and we hardly missed a beat.

Lowlights:

10m = didn't even set up an antenna; 'nuff said.

15m = 55 QSO 's although Kevin noted the band was open but no one listened there.

Power Line Mania - it seems every year like more and more high power lines are going up along both major and minor roads; hard to get away from those rascals and they do make for copy rough! The K3 NB's work well though and they helped significantly.

This one is a both a positive and negative. Same as last year, building 'only' 2 stations is getting very routine as opposed to cramming the Sub with 3 or 4 stations; huge difference in complexity. The downside is I sure do miss teammates N4BP, W4LT and KR4X being part of the MM/m madness. Band conditions make the rules though, so for now two transmitters only.

Pain in the Caboose:



So we're tooling along nicely ahead of schedule heading west on CR90 in DUV toward NAS with less than 5 miles to the county line when we see flashing red lights in the distance - Rats! Turns out a 100++ car freight train was slowing from 35 to 30 to 15 to 5mph and then STOPPED on the tracks. After 5 minutes it backed up slowwwwwly as our DUV Q-rate is drying up. ARGGGG - why does this have to happen just before we get to rare NAS where we have to stop anyway on a short one mile stretch of the county! After 15 minutes of gnashing teeth and many cars turning around, Mr. Choo Choo started at a painfully slow acceleration getting up to an anemic 5MPH (!@#\$%^&\*!!!) until FINALLY the last car crossed our path and the crossing guards lifted. That was 20 minutes of life we'll never get back...sigh.

In summary, our team made the most of our opportunities and enjoyed each other's company - Red and Kevin are awesome ops and great friends and we have great fun. If you have never done a mobile FQP you really owe it to yourself to grab a rig and antenna and throw it in the car and hit the road. It's like being on a rare dx-pedition - you will LOVE the pileups! - and even better sharing the ride/operating with a buddy or two (or three or four like AD4ES!). Trust me, you will have a blast! You out-of-state folks, come visit and give it a try too - we've had mobile from TX, LA, GA, AL, SC, NC, VA, TN, OH and more over the years. So start those mobile plans today; if I can help or advise please let me know. We have other very experienced mobile ops in FCG who can help you with all sorts of issues and solutions - just ask!

Thanks to our FQP organizers including K1TO who is the key driver of this Outstanding contest with endless (seriously!!!) hours of leadership, hard work and support each year - thank you so much Dan. Our FCG Prez Chris WF3C is also a mover-shaker in making our FQP a big-time experience for all- thanks Chris!

In addition, sincere thanks to webmaster Sebastian W4AS who spent hours of work getting our FQP website ready for the contest. Also want to mention that Floyd KK3Q offered me wise experienced guidance for tasks I was doing - thanks Floyd! Please forgive me if I forgot someone.

Great appreciation goes to all of you FB Gents who hosted our Spelling Bee 1x1 stations and created beacons on both modes - great job guys!

Also have to give huge kudos to our fixed stations - you are the foundation of our way-cool QSO Party - thank you for standing strong on all our bands representing our State.

Sincere appreciation to Bob K0RC and Chuck NO5W for their super-duper county tracking tools - these are indispensable for working the sweeps, planning routes and

more. Bob/Chuck - you guys are the best! Thanks for your major support.

Hats off to our fellow road warriors both mobile and portable, each of who do an amazing job of getting cobwebs of antennas, rigs, pc's power plants and vehicle and routing set up to make the first contact. I sincerely am in awe of your enthusiasm for hitting the road and am proud to call you fellow FQP mobiler/rover.

Finally - our biggest, loudest applause is for all of you out-of-state operators who are the real heroes. Whether you make a dozen or several hundred QSO 's, your enthusiastic participation and support help make the FQP fun for all. We can throw the party, but it is you that keep coming back every year - thank you, thank you, thank you!

See you in FQP 2019!

vy 73/OJ/AHZ,  
Chris, NX4N - K4OJ MM/m Team Lead

- - - -

#### **AD4ES - mobile 2563 CW QSO**

Our foursome had 2 new ops. Great fun for all. No hardware and no vehicle issues. Yay! Last year we wiped out a deer. This year we came back in 1 piece. This year is about the best we have ever done. Equipment was IC-7100 and ham stick antennas.

- ----

#### **N4FP mobile 2005 CW QSO**

Pete, K2PS, and I had a blast. Covered 31 counties, over 800 miles. Worked 46 states, 4 provinces, and 14 dx countries. Biggest problem was power line noise, particularly on 40 meters. 40 and 20 in fairly good condition. Flex 6400, 100 watts to horizontally mounted 20 and 40 meter Hustler resonators atop a 3 ft mast with mag mount.

- --

#### **N4TO mobile 1884 CW QSO**

This year was dedicated to the memory of Ron WD4AHZ who was a founding father of the FQP and who contributed in many ways to its success since being reborn in 1998.

We will know shortly how many hundreds of stations were able to contact all nine K4 stations whose suffixes spelled WD FOUR AHZ.

Thanks to Blake N4GI for hosting me for a mobile effort -- my first time on the roads since 2011. Despite getting out reasonably well on tx, we had much difficulty on rx hearing through some noise -- source yet to be determined. Thanks to those who stuck with us and apologies to those who we just couldn't pull through. 40M seemed to be a lot better than 20. A QSY of just 6 kHz on Sunday AM made about a 4 S-unit reduction in our noise level on 20, but didn't eliminate it.

We used the same 51-county route that I had used with K8NZ numerous times. We hit heavy traffic in HIL, encountered a key road closure in OSC and a construction traffic jam in LEE, but still managed to reach all 51.

The N4TO callsign belonged to good friend Vic Dubois who passed away in the summer of 2008, almost ten years ago already. Vic and I made a bunch of memorable trips around FL in the FQP as well. This is the first time it has been on the air since 2011 if I recall correctly.

73, Dan K1TO

- - -

**K4FCG/m (K1KNQ opr)** 168 SSB QSO

covered 21 counties.  
gave up at 1700Z on Sunday

73  
Jack K1KNQ  
"aka" K4FCG/M

- - -

**N8II - fixed WV** 415 CW 219 SSB

I had to combat some major demons, poor prop on 20 with very long skip and some line noise loud enough to wipe out 40 and make 20 difficult on Saturday mid afternoon to 22Z. By 19Z Saturday 20 was "going long" to FL making it the SOUTH Florida QP.

Saturday north Florida down to past Orlando was basically gone on 20 by 20Z and it was almost as bad on Sunday with very weak signals down to Orlando in the 19 and 20Z hours, slightly better last hour, but still some north FL unreadable and BRE very weak. The poor prop cost me the sweep, only had about 5 tries at NO5W/HOL and I was too weak to be heard. I endured a lot of waiting in line and made a lot of nearly mental telepathy Q's especially on 40 (still some noise Sunday). From the time 15 opened Sunday morning to south FL 40 was nearly dead to FL until 20Z.

Despite all of the above, activity was so good that it seldom got boring. I struck a better balance between running stations on 20 phone vs. pouncing on CW mobiles and fixed stations than I had before. There were some good runs Sunday due in part to not being able to run much Saturday after 19Z and having some fresh meat left to call. A few times I must have been spotted with a burst of callers. It was more satisfying finding all of the Q's on my own vs. spots.

A special thanks to all of the mobiles active. Even though I could not work them at times, it appeared that N4CW, K4KG, KN4Y, K4OJ (multi 2!), AD4ES (M2), N4TO, K1XX, K8MR, and N4FP mobiles all operated full time. When I found the M2's in a new one on one band, I tried the other. A special thanks to George and Jim at K4KG for a lot of quick QSY's for many phone mults (some CW too). Also, many thanks to ever active despite senior years, Ed, KN4Y for several rare NFL counties. Also, thanks to all that answered my CQ's and all that put in that extra effort to dig out my weak signal. It helped to keep a chart of the mobiles operating frequency, they pretty much stuck to their spot, very organized!

The results were surprisingly good thanks mostly to a very large turnout and many miles on the road. This is my best FQP score.

73, Jeff

- - -

**WB2ABD** 276 cw

Thanks to the many mobile stations that made it a fun event- you guyz are good ! Gulf and Walton were last two for the sweep - worried I might miss them waiting in a pileup somewhere else. Always nice to work OT friends.

**WB2ABD**

# Solar News I

The silent sun: Remarkable image shows a barren solar surface as our star heads towards a quiet period of activity faster than predicted

NASA Solar Dynamics Observatory satellite captured an image of the still surface  
This is linked to a decrease in activity in the magnetic field surrounding the star  
Solar activity tends to come and go in cycles lasting around 11 years, experts say  
The sun was predicted to reach its 'solar minimum' low point in 2019 or 2020  
Now, researchers say sunspots are vanishing faster than they had expected  
The current solar cycle may come to an end sooner than previously thought

An eerily still surface of the sun has been captured by cameras aboard Nasa's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) satellite.

Showing a barren orange globe, the remarkable image it produced is the result of a lack of sunspot activity in the star's magnetic field.

Solar activity tends to come and go in cycles lasting around 11 years, experts say, and the star is currently experiencing a continuing period of inactivity.

The sun was predicted to reach its 'solar minimum' low point in 2019 or 2020, according to NASA's calculations.

Now, researchers say sunspots are vanishing faster than expected and the current solar cycle may come to an end sooner than previously thought.

Solar minimum may enhance the effects of space weather, disrupt communications and navigation, and even cause space junk to 'hang around', Nasa says.

Insert Solar I

The image was captured yesterday by the space craft's helioseismic and magnetic image device, one of three instruments on the SDO.

This is designed to study oscillations in the magnetic field at the solar surface, or photosphere.

Readings have revealed that sunspot activity in this region is unusually low, even for an expected quiet period.

Writing on the Watts Up With That climate change blog Dr Tony Philips, space weather expert at Nasa, said: 'Sunspots are becoming scarce. Very scarce.

'So far in 2018, the sun has been blank almost 60 per cent of the time, with whole weeks going by without sunspots. Today's sun is typical of the featureless solar disk.

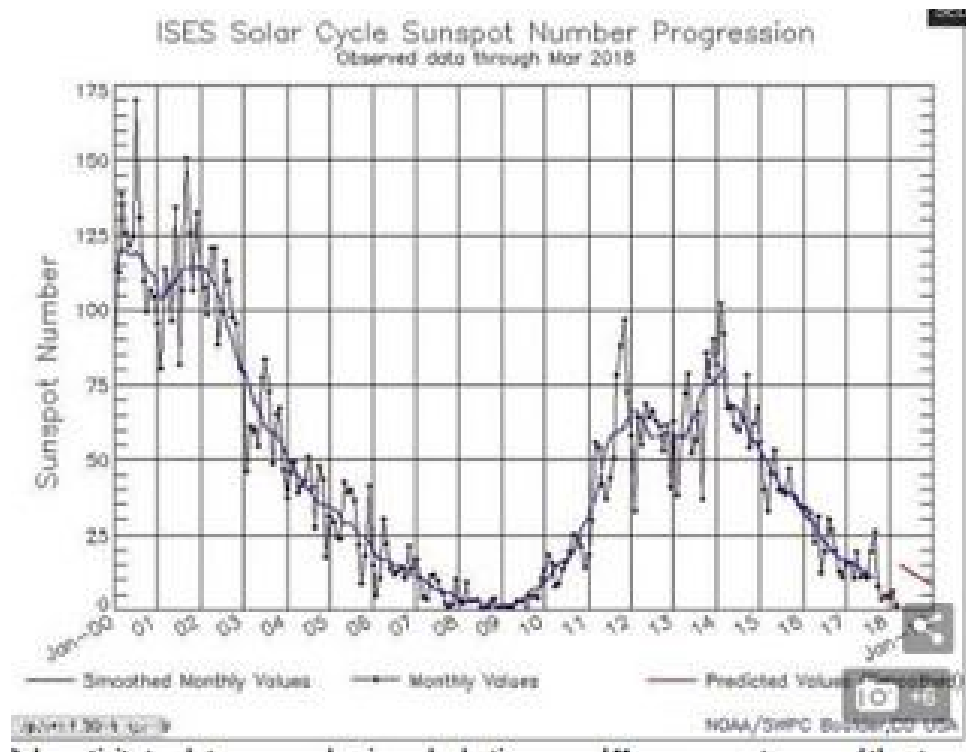
'The fact that sunspots are vanishing comes as no surprise. Forecasters have been saying for years that this would happen as the current solar cycle, solar cycle 24, comes to an end. The surprise is how fast.'

The effects of solar minimum include Earth's upper atmosphere cooling and shrinking slightly. This can allow space junk to accumulate in low Earth orbit.

An increase in solar winds can also alter the chemistry of Earth's upper atmosphere, which may trigger more lightning and aid in cloud formation.

This can also affect air travel, as an uptick means more radiation is able to penetrate planes.

This means passengers on long-haul flights may receive doses of radiation similar to dental X-rays during a single trip, and this puts flight crews in additional danger.



Scientists from the space weather prediction centre at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported on April 26 that the current solar cycle 24 is declining more quickly than forecast.

The predicted sunspot number for April to May was about 15, but the actual value was much lower.

They questioned whether the solar minimum will be longer than usual as a result or whether solar cycle 25 might begin earlier than predicted.

Leading solar and space science experts will convene a meeting in the coming years in an attempt to predict solar cycle 25.

An NOAA spokesman added: 'The consensus forecast is the result of collaboration by a solar cycle prediction panel of solar and space scientists from around the world.

'Typically, the panel considers all new, relevant research results, observation trends, and model predictions available when the panel is convened.

'Just like hurricane season forecasts, solar cycle predictions have improved - however, there are still notable deviations in prediction versus actual activity.'

Scientists studying SDO's data last month found that the sun had been without sunspot activity for ten days, according to a report published on science writer and historian Robert Zimmerman's Back To Black blog on April 9.

The last time activity was a low as over the past few months was ten years ago, in 2007 and 2008, when the last solar minimum began.

As the sun moves through its 11-year cycle, it experiences active and quiet periods known as the solar maximum and solar minimum.

In this time, certain types of activity, such as sunspots and solar flares will drop – but, it's also expected to bring the development of long-lived phenomena including coronal holes.

Solar minimum can also enhance the effects of space weather, potentially disrupting communications and navigation systems, and even causing space junk to 'hang around,' Nasa says.

While sunspots were relatively high back in 2014, they're now heading toward a low point.

'This is called solar minimum,' said Dean Pesnell of the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD, speaking in 2017. 'And it's a regular part of the sunspot cycle.'

Source: UK Daily Mail

## More Pictures from the MI Mini

Even more pictures from the MI Mini! Thanks to WQ7A/Bonnie and AB7RW/AC7UH Barb and others for contributions.





View out the dining room window for the Mini banquet. Note the flag straight out with the wind and white caps on the bay! It was cold and windy the whole time.



At the Banquet Saturday Night

Some pictures of the mobiles in the parking lot and more inside



NA8W mobile



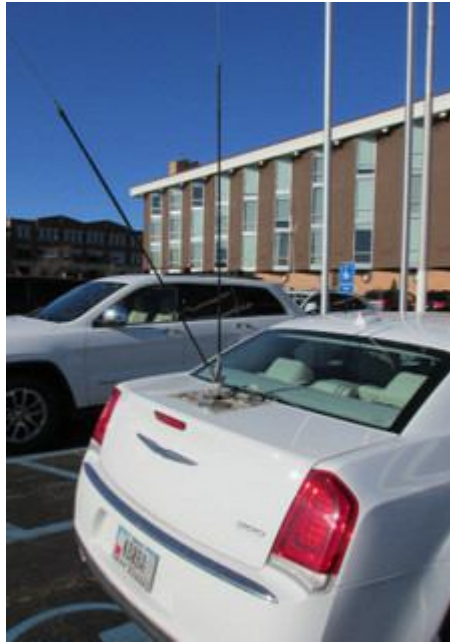
N2MH mobile



N8KIE mobile



NN9K mobile



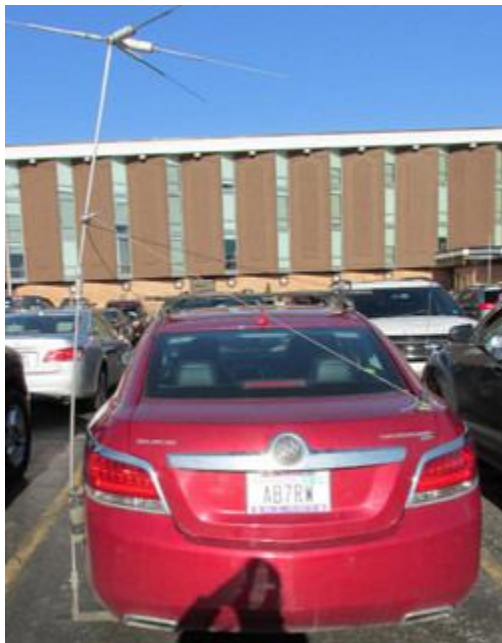
KB0BA/N0XYL mobile



WB0PYF mobile



K8ZZ mobile



AB7RW mobile



YL's working on the jig-saw puzzle



The Prize Table





KA9JAC mobile



Gene, K5GE, Bonnie, and Jaci N8RLJ  
Music Entertainment

## On the Road with N4CD III

I left Traverse City early on the Sunday after the Mini. Outside it was a cold 28 degrees with a stiff north wind. Headed south the fastest way home via the GPS lady—mostly interstate from 50 miles south of Traverse City all the way down through MI, across IN to IL and down the interstates to St Louis, across I-44 to Lebanon, MO for the night after 12 hours on the road. Super 8 motel there. Next morning on the road early and home by 2:30pm after 1,335 miles. Total trip 3,101 miles. 33 parks run. Lots of logging to do. See you next trip – coming up - Dayton! 81 degrees at home! I can defrost, warm up, put on the shorts and tee-shirts!

Gas prices – lowest in TX and OK at \$2.50 to \$2.55/gal. Head to MO they go up and when you hit IL and IN, they are \$2.80 on the trip. In rural MI, saw one place with \$3.01 gas. Most of MI around \$2.80-\$2.85/gal.

## MARAC Convention Info

Holiday Inn Country Club Plaza  
One East 45th St.  
Kansas City, MO. 64111  
October 3 – 6, 2018

Tel # 816-753-7400

Book your room online at: <http://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI&GPC=MAR&hotelCode=MKCOE&PMID=99801505>  
or call the hotel directly and use code MAR

Rooms are \$119.00 per night (1 king or 2 queen beds) plus tax.  
Hotel is pet friendly – restaurant on site  
Cut off date is September 3, 2018 for group rate



Hotel parking garage size restriction (6.0 x 7.0 x 12.0 ft)  
Limited outside parking for larger vehicles and antenna's.  
FREE hotel shuttle available 7am – 11pm within a 3 mile radius.  
Kansas City International Airport (MCI) is only 23 miles from the hotel. Super Shuttle picks up at all terminals. 1-800-258-3826

Register here

<https://chspots.org/wp/registration/>

You can print off the form, or fill it in on line – and send in your check to AB7NK.

Registration \$40 for one, \$10 each additional  
Thursday night BBQ poolsize \$18  
Sat night Banquet \$35

Please register early! We need to get a good head count of attendees soon

See you there!

## Solar Cycle Life Span

Could the Sun be your lucky—or unlucky—star? In an unusual study published Wednesday, Norwegian scientists said people born during periods of solar calm may live longer, as much as five years on average, than those who enter the world when the Sun is feisty.

The team overlaid demographic data of Norwegians born between 1676 and 1878 with observations of the Sun.

The lifespan of those born in periods of solar maximum—interludes marked by powerful

flares and geomagnetic storms—was "5.2 years shorter" on average than those born during a solar minimum, they found.

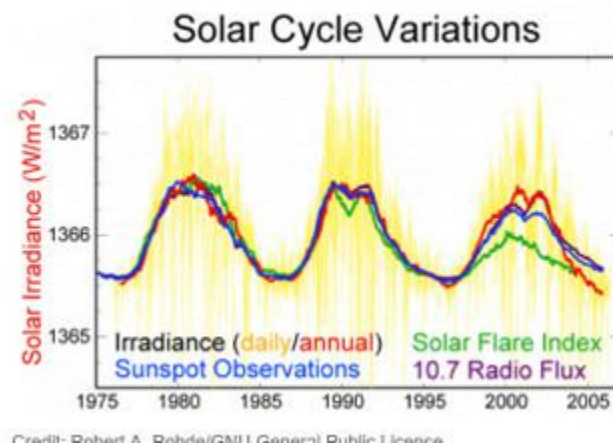
"Solar activity at birth decreased the probability of survival to adulthood," thus truncating average lifespan, according to the paper published in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

There was a stronger effect on girls than boys, it said.

The Sun has cycles that last 11 years, give or take, from one period of greatest activity or solar maximum, to the next.

Solar maxima are marked by an increase in sunspots, solar flares and coronal mass ejections that can disrupt radio communications and electrical power on Earth, damage satellites and disturb navigational equipment.

Solar activity is also linked to levels of ultraviolet radiation— an environmental stressor known to affect survival and reproductive performance, possibly by causing cell and DNA damage, according to the study authors.



Fertility reduced

The team, from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, based their study on demographic data from church records of some 8,600 individuals from two different mid-Norwegian populations, one poor and one wealthy.

This was matched to maps of historical solar cycles.

On top of lifespan, being born in a solar maximum period also "significantly reduced" fertility for women born into the poor category, but not for wealthier women or for men, said the authors.

"We show for the first time that not only infant survival and thus lifespan but also fertility is statistically associated with solar activity at birth," they wrote.

It was not clear whether the same would necessarily hold true for people born in the modern era.

One explanation could be ultraviolet-induced degradation of the B vitamin folate, a shortage of which before birth has been linked to higher rates of illness and death, the team theorised.

"Our findings suggest that maternal exposure to solar activity during gestation can affect the fitness of female children," the authors wrote.

"The effect of socio-economic status on the relationship between solar activity and fertility suggests that high-status pregnant women were better able to avoid the adverse effects of high solar activity"—possibly by staying out of the Sun or because a healthier diet curbed the harm.

The team did not have data about how early or late into a solar maximum event the children were born—a limitation of the study.

And they could not fully distinguish between pre- or post-natal exposure to ultraviolet light.

Further investigation is needed, they said, to test whether the results were repeated in people of different skin colors, and those living at different latitudes.

"This study is the first to emphasize the importance of UVR (ultraviolet radiation) in early life," the authors said.

"UVR is a global stressor with potential ecological impacts and the future levels of UVR are expected to increase due to climate change and variation in atmospheric ozone."

Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2015-01-sun-lifespan-birth.html#jCp>

## On the Road with N4CD IV

The logs were done and the weather was great on Sunday, May 6. On Saturday I spent the day at the NRA Convention/Exhibition downtown Dallas – WOW! Bigger than Dayton Hamvention with over 70,000 in attendance. Over 20 acres of displays – everything to do with guns, hunting, sports equipment. Took a while to see most of it – and got in my exercise. Good preparation for Dayton with all the walking. Looking forward to the fun at Dayton, but not the walking. Hi hi.

Meanwhile, the mobile/radio had been quiet. The NE and DE QP's were going on – so I headed up an hour up to the northeast to Bonham State Park to activate it again on Sunday. They keep track of how many parks a year you activate as well as a grand total over the years. It's KFF-2991 – a fairly small park with lots of campsites (all taken), a beach area and boating in the small lake. Arrived about 9:30. Maybe I should have checked the propagation forecast first? Bummer – A index 20, K index 3, 'poor' on all bands during the day with a geomagnetic storm underway.

Well, let's see what I could do. The NE fixed stations were weak but I could work them. So they went in the log one by one after a few calls each if they pointed their beams toward TX. Most were just a few S units – I'd expect under good conditions to have most of the fixed stations running S7 to 40 over S9 here. Put a bunch in the log, then caught K5GE up in KS. He's still on the way home from MI via another 100 counties. AB7NK/K7SEN were also still out – and running counties in AR. Terry, WQ7A was up in WA getting close to home.

Ran on 20M SSB and caught a handful. Not much luck on CW 20 or 30M – and 40m was dead end to end. Caught up with half a dozen park hunters – even there – signals not great and not many around – guess they found other things to do on a bad propagation day. It was back to 20M CW to chase a few more of the normally louder (but not today) fixed stations. I heard WA1Z/M in ME very weakly but he never did hear me after many calls. Finished with 50 in the log. One from DE. If it hadn't been for the QSO Parties, I'd never have reached 44Qs today.

# New England QSO Party

The big fixed stations in New England racked up 1000 QSO s during the event. Conditions Saturday were OK.....Sunday there was a solar storm that messed things up pretty bad.

**WA1Z mobile - 1260 CW 42 SSB**

KM3T and K1GQ came along this year to do a Multi-Single. Kurt, W6PH, who has come out to do the driving for the last 5 years, couldn't do it this year, unfortunately. These three guys are not only good friends, but have also been contesting mentors to me for many years. It is always a pleasure when we have a chance to do a multi-op together - even when packed into a car for 20 hours!

We managed to get to all 32 counties on our route plan. We modified the schedule a little on Sunday to accommodate some extra time in counties we heard were still in demand, such as ANDME.

We had visible aurora in northern New England on Saturday night. While we didn't stop to look up at the sky, we definitely "heard" it. 40 Meters went long quickly and we had some surprising west coast QSO s on 80 Meters due to the good ears of W6SX, W6PH and NA6O. Thanks for pulling us out, guys!

The bands ended up not being as bad as we feared going into Sunday. Twenty had some strange simultaneous openings with long and short skip. In all, it could've been a lot worse!

Not a single deer or moose seen. :-(

Station:  
2008 Honda CRV  
Elecraft K3, 100 watts, powered from car battery  
SkookumLogger for logging

Two Hustler MO-2 54-inch masts mounted on hatchback door secured by a homebrew roof rack harness

One Hustler MO-4 22-inch mast mounted on mag mount, used for 15 Meters during the day and 20 in evenings

Hustler RM-model resonators and DX Engineering Capacity Hats for 80 through 15 Meters.

We set up a radio on a small makeshift desk in the middle of the back seat. Two guys sat the in the back on each side of the radio while the third man drive. We had two MacBooks available in the backseat, one for each operator. We set up some basic switching for toggling radio control and keyers so the two guys in the back could take turns operating without having to change positions or pass any equipment. For the most part, we did operator changes at county lines. As one guy finished up working stations, the other would prepare for the county change and pick up the operating once we crossed the line. Worked well.

We had the ability to switch to 40 and 20 for the entire contest, but 20 closed down pretty quickly on Saturday night and even earlier on Sunday. That left 80 as the third option.

We tried to make sure we were toggling between the two best bands available to us at the time in each county.

Our best 60 minute rate was shared by Bill and Dave who had a combined 132/hour in the last hour of the contest between BELNH and MERNH.

## **K1EP mobile 202 CW**

I was too tired on Saturday to head out, but I got a good start Sun day morning. I had purchased some single band sticks for 20M and 40M to use in addition to the one I had for 80M. Antennas and radio worked great, no alternator noise, no RF in the car, no computer crashes! Hardware worked great. Conditions weren't that great but one expects that from mobile operation. I only activated six counties in MA, NH, and ME as I was operating solo (no driver) and it was raining all day. Hardly any DX, but I did work out to the west coast. Thanks to all who pulled me out of the noise, I know that mobile signals are quite weak!

## **NZ1U mobile 784 CW QSO**

What a weekend! The LMR (Last-Minute-Rover) rides again! Although that may be said every time that we do this, driving and riding more than 1300 miles through one of the most amazing regions in the world... participating in an amazing race home whilst gathering QSO 's along the way.

N1WK did an incredible job safely getting us there, this passenger notes that passenger brake pedal was not accessed during the trip.

Initial plans were to cover the southern counties of RI MA and CT on Saturday, and heading to GRAVT on Sunday. When there was indication there was no coverage for AROME, we decided to head that way. The trek started early to the North East to catch the first county as PENME with AROME next, so to drive from Southern New England, get to AROME and back for the end we would be hustling.... That we did, and made it within 20 minutes from W1UJ for the end.

Sunday we had similar hustle, forfeit both GRAVT and SUFMA to make it home before the end. We took some new, challenging roads that made the trip worth it (for this passenger, anyway!) The lookout on top of 'Mad River Glen' ski area was amazing, for example.

Conditions seemed poor and we were begging for QSO s most of the time, it felt.. Coupled with some RFI issues on money bands slowed things below their potential, but we learn things with each attempt- just don't remember them by 'the next time'... sometimes...

Great meals including a 'New England-esque' seafood meal with 'steamahs' and a Mrs UJ 'Dayton Grinder' that had to be consumed on a deserted highway when the YL at the only gas station we found in many miles turned the lock while mouthing 'CLOSED' to WK as he approached the door. We were able to fuel up, thankfully.

Vehicle stats;

Day 1/Sat 814 miles 10:30a - 1:10a

Day 2/Sun 506 miles 8:12a - 20:03p

Fill-ups

1- 27.449 mpg  
2- 26.715  
3- 24.941 sun  
4- 26.929

The 'Blue Ox' (2017 Chevy Equinox SUV) Did ok, as WK and I discussed, it is not the 'Contest Caddy' but the Ox has on-board internet and a few other modern amenities that help with long trips.

Used an Elecraft Kx3 on the dashboard with the matching Elecraft KPA 100watt amplifier under the passenger seat and a deep-cycle battery charging through a PowerGate fed by the Ox charging system.

Antenna- 40m Hustler HP resonator on the roof via a magnetic mount and a High-Sierra motorized screwdriver type antenna mounted in the 2" receiver hitch.

Thanks to all of those who followed us around, that is why we do this for sure.

<https://youtu.be/Fx7wG9CGuPc>

Team NZ1U

**N4PN- fixed - GA - 260 CW 293 SSB - clean sweep 67 Mults**

Another Great NEQP...it is at the top of the Favorite Contest page...  
A few mobiles out this year, but hat's off to NZ1U/m for 15 Q's and  
to Bob and crew WA1Z/m for 48 Q's....

Only worked K2LE/1 on 10m....band open nobody came home...  
15m turned out to be a nice surprise with all I worked had good signals.  
At 2018 UTC this afternoon still needed MIDCT, when KA1LLX called in on  
20 SSB - five contacts later KE1GV called for another MIDCT!! Left only  
ANDME and Bob, WA1Z/m, took care of that at 2037 UTC..  
Thanks to Tom, K1KI, for heading up this great QP!

73, Paul, N4PN



**WN1GIV at N4BP - fixed - FL - 298 CW**

CW only, even if not a category. Mobiles: WA1Z - 27, NZ1U - 8, K1EP - 3 QSO s

## On the Trail of Regens

Here's a very unusual broadcast set from Japan by Nanaola. Uses a two ganged capacitor (both same value) in a regenerative receiver design.



Seller's description on Ebay:

“I'm back with another load of the exotic and rare. This is a 4 tube regen. radio built I

am guessing in the late 1930s in Japan. I am selling radios for a friend who lived there in the 1990s and brought it home and did some work on it long ago. It does work, but it is a regenerative and is hard to tune. Included are a couple spare tubes, a translation of the basics ( well a re-write of the Japanese from the internal stickers) It operates on 120V now . Tube line up is unique using Japanese and US tube numbers: GZP1, KX12F, 6C6, 6D6.

Regular A M tuning band, transformer operated, and generally a very unique item. Lots of squealing and noises, but a quick check found nothing wrong, so it is what it is. I Guarantee you won't find another!"

--

Sold for \$77 plus \$40 shipping.

## Delaware QSO Party

As usual, this is mostly a 40m contest – with a few loud stations making several hundred contacts and putting DE on the air. With the current conditions, most of the activity was 40/80m. I caught one DE station for the few hours I was on the air.

- - - - -

Peter, K0BAK headed to DE to activate parks and participate in the DE QP. Here's his report:

### **K0BAK rove report for May 5, 2018**

On May 5, I activated 8 parks in northern Delaware. I also participated in 4 QSO Parties as a Delaware station; this weekend's contests included 15 states altogether, making it the biggest multi-state QSO Party each year. The contests had staggered starts, so during the day there would be surges of new stations calling as each contest started.

In four previous years, I operated from parks in Kent County DE because there was less

completion in that county; note DE QP is one of the few that do not have a mobile category so I can only operate portable from one DE county. This year I decided to make park activations the primary activity with QSO Party contacts secondary. I did take some time to S&P at the start of each park operation, including finding P2P contacts and QSO Parties

The parks were picked because I had activated 7 of them during Field Day last year mostly by making 10 FD S&P contacts and moving on to the next park. One more park (4366) was added since then so that one was new to me. I picked better (more open) operating locations than last year for 3 of the parks, especially in the sprawling White Clay Creek state park.

Unlike my CT rove two weekends ago, I have no stories of harrowing and frustrating van driving experiences. The drive and radio operations were happily boring; my only frustration was my iPhone power connection disconnecting a lot, risking losing power for my navigation and hotspot device. In contrast, my 2x 200Ah batteries kept me on the air for almost 5 hours @400w without dropping below 12v and without recharging – I look forward to installing my charging and switching system so I don't have to bolt-on cables while trying to avoid unplanned welding.

Most of my other long roves had been strictly scheduled, but this one was looser because I didn't have a long drive back home (< 1 hour), and the Wilmington area parks are quite close. I squeezed almost all the time out of the last park, leaving only minutes before the posted sunset closing time, watched over by a park ranger.

I had my best park-to-park outing by far, making P2P contacts from all of my 8 parks, for a total of 14 including one to a French park. Thanks fellow activators!

20m seemed pretty limited, especially later in the day; I didn't even try 20m in the last two parks. In other years I enjoyed making 20m contacts in the morning with "7QP" stations in relatively rare western states; only had a handful this year and did not sweep all those 7 states as I usually do. 40m though gave me a few real pileups later in the day, mostly from Indiana and New England QP contesters looking for a rare DE multiplier.

Logs were submitted to both the POTA and WWFF programs.

Thank you to everyone who contacted me or tried to, spotting me here and on the Cluster, and the other activators to make this a big P2P day.

Summary:

174 miles driven  
13 road + park hours  
\$40 gas estimate (cheap!); \$8 entrance fee  
8 parks: 1741, 1743, 4366, 1732, 1744, 1730, 1731, 1738  
284 QSO s  
337 minutes on-air  
51 Qs per hour average (less than normal due to more S&Ping)

#### Park-to-park:

As mentioned, this was my biggest park-to-park rove. It helped to have a looser schedule to enable an S&P session at the start of each park, where I looked first for spotted activators. About half were activators calling me, sometimes braving a pileup of stronger stations – “park to park, park to park” cuts through the rabble pretty well. Thanks to those other activators, and thanks to those who pointed out other parks to me either here on FB or on the air (K8VOX and KO4SB come to mind, but there were others).

K7CAR, 4 from K4428, along with 2 AZ counties for 7QP

K0ATZ, 2 from K1077, 1 from K1112

F4GYG, 1 from FFF-0041 (4 years of French, and all could say was “Merci”)

KD2DLY, 1 from brand new WWFF park KFF-4564 (the huge NJ Pinelands)

1 each from W8DF, WT5NA, W8TAM, K8VOX, K4WP

#### Top chasers:

VE2GT was the only chaser to get me in all 8 parks; he was my only contact to Canada too. Thanks for following me Pierre! The following four fine chasers almost did it, getting 7 contacts: K8VOX, KO4SB, W8ZST, KC8YRK. Thanks Julie, Chuck, Mike, and Steve. There were 5 chasers with 6 contacts each.

#### International:

It was a big day for overseas callers. Got 24 contacts with EU stations in 7 different countries. Special mention for EA7TG, who got five contacts. I don't remember getting a park contact before from Greece or Estonia.

- Spain, 8 Qs from 3 stations.
- Italy and France, 5 Qs each, all but 2 unique
- Netherlands, 2 Qs to one station
- 1 each Estonia, Greece, Germany

#### States:

Got contacts in 38 states. As mentioned before, I was surprised I missed some states in the 7QP. Got all in New England, barely with one each from RI, VT, ME. Again, MI lead the states with 43 Qs driven by the super POTA chasers there, followed by IN with

33 driven by their QSO Party. TX and NC were a distant 3rd and 4th place.

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**K4BAI – fixed - GA - 6Q – all 3 counties**

Glad to find stations active from all three counties. Thanks for the QSO s. 73, John, K4BAI.

## 7 Land QSO Party

**KK6MC Mobile 704 CW QSO**

With no driver, I spent more time driving than operating! I only operated when stopped, always on a county line. I managed to put 11 out of 15 of AZ counties on the air for 7QP. It might be possible to add one more without a driver, but it would be tight. Conditions were fair to good. 20M was short early, with many southern CA stations worked on both 40M and 20M. My new antenna system seems to be working well. Score was better than last year, but multipliers were down. I always enjoy this contest as there is lots of activity and lots to work.

**WS7L - fixed - WA Pacific – County Expedition - 578 CW 15 SSB**

Operated from the historic Lamberson Cottage in Ocean Park and it didn't rain on us while erecting antennas!

Rates were pretty good considering the antennas and the small town noise environment. Rates were hitting well over 150 for short bursts and best hour was 83 Q's on 80 m. I'm always amazed at what happens when I go down to 80 in the evening in this one. All of a sudden I'm running rates of 120+ for a half hour or so. Not bad for a wire flung over a branch and 4 random radials.

The sub receiver was essential for doing SO2V once the rates started tapering off. Turns a 40 Q/hr rate into 70 or 80 Q/hr.

I'm afraid I shocked some of my friends by getting on SSB for a few QSO s when I ran out of people to work on CW. I was shooting for 600 Q's and desperate times call for desperate measures.

Equipment: 500 Watt K-Line. 80 m inv-L, 40 m dipole, TH3JRS tribander up 24 feet.

73 and thanks for the Q's; also thanks to XYL Kathy KC7USE for work on antenna setup.

Carl WS7L

### **WY7AA County Expedition 551 SSB**

Long day of driving from Keyhole State Park near Moorcraft, WY to some state land on Rt. 450 outside of Newcastle, WY and lastly right outside of Guernsey, WY. The counties of Crook, Weston, Platte, and Goshen; as well as DN74, DN73, and DN72 for the ARRL Grid Chase. DN73 had never been activated to date yet. Great contest, see you next year.

### **NS5J County Expedition 412 CW (404 on 20m, 8 on 40M )**

Apologies to those we called and missed. RFI in the "Cool Bus" messed with us, especially on 40. We would call, get a response then before finalizing the QSO find the rig was moved 20 KHZ down the band. FUN, but definitely a learning experience.

### **K7IA County Expedition 714 CW 99 SSB**

I missed the past three years of operating the 7QP from a nice little spot in Arizona's tall pines in Apache County as an expedition station. Three years ago, I fell ill en route, two years ago, the pickup truck fell ill en route, and last year Erin I made it to the campsite, had supper with KK7AC and his Bride and fell victim to a tight travel schedule conflict without ever closing the key. This year, we avoided schedule conflicts, took plenty of Vitamin C, and gave the truck a complete check-up beforehand. And this year, we made it!

I've had great success with an "Air Boss" compressed air launcher for lobbing a 2 oz. fishing weight over or through the tall trees, pulling a monofilament fishing line along for subsequent attachment to a Dacron haul line.

This year I selected somewhat taller and "friendlier" Ponderosa Pines to position homebrew Moxon Rectangles for 20 and 15m higher AGL than in previous years. Ditto for vees for 40 and 80m.

Sadly, the Forest Service has placed some signage and has marked some beautiful trees, presumably for cutting, and it appears that the unimproved forest area we have been using for 7QP will be turned into a forest campground. This might be our last 7QP outing in Apache County, recalling the considerable destruction of the County's forested areas from the massive "Wallow Fire" a half dozen years ago.

Weather forecast predicted some snow and rain possibility for our elevation of 8000 feet, but every morning began with beautiful cloudless skies and temps rising into the low 70's (nighttime lows in mid 20's). All of the equipment worked perfectly, but the operator had BIC troubles and needed frequent breaks to stretch the muscles and joints. RV dinette seating is adequate for a quick meal but not for extended hunkering over the keyboard!

20m was wall-to-wall CW activity, especially after the NEQP and INQP warmed up. Conditions were pretty good with low levels of QRN in our forest location. QRN worsened in mid afternoon, however. I was delighted to hear signals on 15m. Had more operators checked 15 for activity, perhaps more Qs could have been made. I heard no SSB signals on 15, however. Still, it was worth the effort to raise the 15m Moxon...

10 non-VE DX stations called--all to the east. Best DX was 9L/KW4XJ, an ATNO for me. Thanks, Mark! As a former QRPer, I make it a point to try to work weak signals--Mark was just above the noise on 20m, and I'm grateful for his patience with me as I pulled out his call. I wasn't so lucky with some other caller's signals--my apologies.

It was great to be back into the 7QP saddle again! I anticipate some travels to Arizona in the coming year, looking for another pristine operating site for next May...

Thank y'all for the fun!

73, Dan

### **K6WSC/7 County expedition 596 cw**

This was my third County Expedition, and the second to Cochise County, AZ for the 7QP.

Previously I had used a 40-10 fan dipole, but chose the Alpha Delta DX-CC for the addition of 80m. I made that decision Thursday morning, and spent most of the day tuning the antenna in the operating configuration hung over my mini-van at 20 feet. That was time I had not planned for. However, that choice paid off handsomely with 113 QSO s and some nice runs on 80m from an antenna with the ends only 5 feet off the ground (and 2 feet over a large prickly pear cactus).

Shear panic set in just before the start of the contest when my notebook computer would not boot. All I got was the clicking sound of a crashed hard disk. It had worked fine the night before during station checkout. The temperature had dropped considerably to where I had on three layers, so I thought it might be the temperature. Fortunately, after a half a dozen attempts I got a successful boot.

The temperature would warm to the mid-90s latter in the day. My new mini-van cooling system worked great.

The longest run was 82 QSO s on 40m lasting 70 minutes. Lots of fun. Just missed the 600 Q mark.

The rig was a TS-590S.

At the 7QP last year, I put a sign on my van telling people to stop by, say hi, and see the sport of ham radio in action. No one did. This year, I dispensed with the sign and had 4 or 5 parties stop by with great interest and learn something about ham radio.

Thanks to all the people who make the 7QP happen. It's a great contest.

73, Bill K6WSC

### **K7Q (K6XV) County Expedition 314 CW 128 SSB**



First time operating this contest in 7 Land. Set-up in a picnic area few miles north of Topaz Lake, NV off of hwy 395. TS480 100 watts into a mobile screwdriver antenna, using all battery power. Had a great time and looking forward to next year!  
Bob K6XV

### **N7XU mobile 757 CW QSO**

The plan was to do a 500 mile route, 11 hours of driving and 7 hours of sitting, operate while moving, use a recorder to copy the audio, and transcribe it later. Use the computer to log when sitting. I'm okay with paddling while driving.

Things went pretty well. 20m seemed noisy and not very productive. The noise turned out to be from the inverter that powered the computer. But when evening came and I switched to the homebrew low band antennas, it all worked very well and no noise. I found myself doing 85 mph on the open highways to shorten the driving time.

During the day I used a 40/20/15m 'pitchfork' of Hustler coils. After 20 m started to die, I went to home brew single band antennas. The top of the big 40m antenna is at 12 feet, the 80m antenna is 13'6" and guyed. Oregon legal max height is 14 ft. Both played way better than the Hustler HF coils on the 'pitchfork' mount. I could call CQ on 80 and get answers from the New Englanders. The rig is a 100W TS480SAT.

The bad news was trying to put the log back together on Sunday. It took 12 hours of tedious listening to endless CQ's and noise broken occasionally by a QSO . This made Sunday in Sweepstakes seem easy.

Final tally was 757 QSO s and 50 mults. Missed ND, MS and NM plus all the VE's except BC and ON. I made about 70 QSO s in each of the 11 counties (and some rare grids). I put all 11 county logs into LOTW.

Participation seemed good this year despite the lack of good high propagation, I only worked just one European but got HC2AO on three bands. I hope everyone remembers to send in their logs to [7qplogs@codxc.org](mailto:7qplogs@codxc.org) by May 16th.

73, Dick K4XU

### **K7TQ mobile 377 cw**

A solo operation this year with my wife, Meg, driving. N6MU caught me in 15 of the 16 counties followed by K9OM with nine counties. Conditions on 20 seemed pretty good to me with no long droughts between contacts. Thanks to everyone who worked me and to the organizers of the party. Full story and pictures at

<http://sites.google.com/site/randyk7tq/home/2018-7th-call-area-qso-party>

**K7N - Fixed Esmeralda NV** - K6ZH and N6KIM operators 638 CW 514 SSB

Our third year using K7N which makes the whole contest go a lot faster! Seems that some people don't know about 1x1 calls, since they are generally not listed on QRZ.COM

Condx not bad considering, except that 15 was pretty much a no-show. Made a total of 14 CW Qs, all but one was backscatter with other 7s!

Fun as always, 73 - Jim K6ZH and Joan N6KIM

**N6MU - fixed - CA** 341 CW 106 mults

Qs were up but mults were way down from last year, 106 vs 137. Several major mobiles were missing this year which, I'm sure, contributed to the decline.

Top mobile for me was K7TQ with 15 Qs followed by N7XU(13), N7WA(12) and KK6MC(11).

Having 15 open to all 7th call areas with good signals was a real treat for a good part of the day.

Still one of my favorites. Thanks to all the fixed stations and county line expeditions for being there and providing lots of four banders. 73...

John, N6MU

## **AE7EU County Expedition 26 CW 223 SSB**

The non-contesting team headed back out to the Lake-kalamath OR county line for another year of enjoying the outdoors, away from civilization and the noise it brings. Setup went very well this year, the switch to 4lb test fishing line and a bow and arrow made hole in one shots over the trees we wanted very easy. This year we used the same 80/40 dipole as years past, but because none of us had the ability to haul an 11ft long bundle of TH3Jr and fence top rail, we built a 20m rope moxon. Initially it caused lots of RFI and was off-tune, but we got it fixed up after moving it under the dipole and away from the shack a bit. Performed nicely, 1.5 or less across the entire 20m band. Primary rig was K4XU's TS590SG on loan for evaluation (I won't be buying one), and an SB200. Total operating time wasn't really 12.5 hours, that's just stop-start. There were a good number of hours where we just said "Eh, lets enjoy the sun."

Everyone in the group got to have fun. We all ate well, had some beers in the evening, stuck true to our lazy contesting nature, and everyone got to do what they wanted to do. We even worked one contact on 80m just to say we did.

I (AE7EU) got to work a pileup for a little over an hour on 40m.

I (AE7EU) got to work a little CW. I even called CQ a few times, a first for me.

Brian (KU7F) got to operate in noise-free environment and have some fun finding a hole to call CQ, and camp in the woods.

Jim (W7JHR) got to play around with digital modes on his KX3+KXPA100. We gave him the antennas for a couple hours while we sat in the camp chairs and BS'ed.

Sterling (WN7K) got to take a lot of naps, because you know how rough retirement is.

## **N8II- fixed - WV 262 CW 261 SSB**

Wow, a 25% score increase over 2017 and all bands seemed to be better except for 20M mid day. A beginning moderate solar storm actually seemed to enhance conditions on 80 (especially), 40, and 20 after sunset. Some of the 40 and 80 meter signals were amazing, N7XU/M was decent copy as was W7POE near Seattle who is never loud anywhere. I was still S&P'ing at about 60-70 Q's/hr at 04Z when I stopped, left some Q's on the table. In 2017 my 80 CW total was only 7 Q's, 40 CW 48, and 40 SSB 12, and 15 CW was 11. 15M was very underutilized with some booming signals at times with WA, ID, AZ, and NV coming through over S9 at times. So, a lot of you missed a chance to

increase your score. 15 phone dropped below critical mass; I called a few CQ's around 21300 and 21351 KHz several times when there were loud signals on CW.

The running on 20 phone went very well which cost a few CW mults, but overall increased the mults. From 2220Z until 01Z, I was mostly running on 20 phone and most of the time had no QRM. The ops in western WA and southern AZ were really out in numbers, but as usual Clark, NV was very rare. Around 0020Z, I got precip static on the 20M yagi which hampered copy and at 01Z it was bad enough to stop the run. K7RE/M was missed as were some others, mobile activity seemed down. Mid day all of the mobiles except K7TQ in WA/ID were unreadable/unfindable to very weak. Many thanks to K7TQ and N7XU for running routes many hours and for many Q's. Thanks also to KK6MC and KC0W mobiles worked several times. Also, think I worked N7N in NV at all of their stops; they seemed to be everywhere at first stop at White Pine/Eureka, NV with Q's on 40 through 15 CW and 20 phone!

Many thanks to all for a fun event as usual and for all of the rare counties and QSO 's. The casual ops on 20 were out in big numbers, thanks! It will be interesting to see how this years scores compare to poor 2017 conditions.

73, Jeff

## Indiana QSO Party

At least one mobile was out running – but no reports from any of them.

**WN4AFP - fixed- SC - 72 CW 45 SSB**

I decided to give the INQP most of my attention during the 4QP weekend. Thanks to all the mobiles that kept the QP moving... KJ9C, K9IZ, NF9N, W9WX and AE8M.

73s Dave WN4AFP

## On the Road with N4CD IV

The Dayton Hamvention was coming up. I usually try to make it each year and this would be about the 49<sup>th</sup> year for me – although I haven't made all of them in between. Gosh – my first time was back around 1969 when I lived in IL for a few years. Hey, what am I doing? I just got back from a 3100 mile trip to the MI Mini! It took a week to get all the logs done, the laundry cleaned, the house chores done, and before you know it it was time to pack the suitcases and car and head to Dayton. Sadly there would be no county hunter forum this year – but MARAC would have a booth to help recruit county hunters.

So on **Friday May 11**, it was off the 'county hunter/park activator' way to AR to run parks there and in TN, KY and OH. Half a dozen mobiles would hit the road some time in the next week to get there.

First up was **Conway Cemetery State Park**. AR has some unusual 'parks' and state historic sites – a good variation from many states that are just campgrounds, beaches, and hiking trails. From the state website:

“James Sevier Conway (1796-1855), surveyor, planter, prominent and influential citizen of pioneer Arkansas, took office as Arkansas's first governor when Arkansas was admitted to the Union as the 25th state on June 15, 1836. Dedicated to his memory, this 11.5-acre state historic site preserves Governor Conway's final resting place, the one-half acre family plot at what was once his cotton plantation, Walnut Hill. The cemetery lies just south of the former site of the Conway plantation home.”

Pulled in at 1530z – Lafayette County in the southwest corner of the state – and worked at it to get to 44 QSO s. Finished with 48. The magic number is 44. There is not much here to see. I was the only visitor for the entire time I was there. You've got the cemetery and surrounding land, a parking lot for a dozen cars.....and that's it.

Next up was **Logoly State Park** in Columbia County. Mike, NF0N was on the road headed Dayton. N9JF was up in IA. Worked 'em both.

From the state web site:

“Here at Arkansas's first environmental education state park in McNeil (SW Arkansas), helpful and knowledgeable interpreters present workshops on ecological/environmental topics. The park's natural resources provide a living laboratory for students and visitors to learn more about the Arkansas outdoors. Most of Logoly's 368 acres comprise a State Natural Area — a popular attraction — that includes the discovery of a unique collection of local plant species and mineral springs not found at other parks in Arkansas.”

Headed to the park – still a Friday and tough conditions but squeaked by with 46Q – half county hunters, half park hunters. Two down. Well, still time today for more. I was headed to El Dorado AR for the night. The A index was 12. K=4. Not great – and the tail end of a geo-magnetic storm, too.

Next up – **The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources**. Arkansas makes 'state parks' out of museums and the surrounding area – often historically significant - or with fossils or ancient 'primitive habitation sites'. Fine with me! After a while, you burn out on regular 'state parks' of nothing but lakes, campgrounds, beaches, and hiking trails – hi hi. A mix is nice. KFF-1070 a museum dedicated to oil and brine. From the state web site:

“In the 1920s, nationwide attention focused on south Arkansas when the Smackover field was ranked first among the nation's oil fields. For five months in 1925, the 40-square-mile Smackover field was the focal point of one of the wildest mineral booms in North America. Today, south Arkansas's oil fields produce petroleum throughout a 10-county area.

Columbia and Union counties also stretch over one of the largest brine reserves in the world. Bromine is derived from brine, or saltwater, and local companies play an international role in the commercialization of bromine and its many applications. The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources in Smackover, featuring state-of-the-art indoor exhibits as well as working equipment on display outside in its adjacent Oil Field Park, shares the fascinating stories of this region's natural resources, with emphasis on petroleum and brine recovered for bromine extraction. The museum features a 25,000-square-foot main exhibition/research building that includes a 10,500-square-foot exhibit hall, orientation theater, exhibit work area, research center, and museum store/gift shop.”

Ran the site –Union AR - and had 51Q from there. Betcha didn't know that AR was a big oil producer!

Time for one more today – same county – so it gets tougher. It's the **South Arkansas Arboretum, KFF-1115** in Union County. From the state website:

“This 12-acre wooded site adjacent to the former El Dorado High School site features plants native to Arkansas’s West Gulf Coastal Plain and exotic species including flowering camellias and azaleas. Managed by the South Arkansas Community College, the arboretum offers marked paved walking trails, a rental pavilion, rental gazebo, restrooms, and parking.

The South Arkansas Arboretum is dedicated to preserving the native, rare, and economically important flora of the West Gulf Coastal Plain region of the United States.”

Squeaked by with 45 s including a few DX like DL/EU6DX, FM5FJ, and F5MUX found by 'search and pounce' to get to 44Q. It was late in the day.

Headed on in to the Super 8 in that town. Tomorrow would be more parks and the AR QSO Party.

## **Saturday May 12**

In the morning I head to **Moro Bay State Park** in Bradley county – get there long before the AR QSO Party gets going. From the state site:

“You'll find one of the most popular fishing and water sport areas in south central Arkansas where Moro Bay and Raymond Lake join the Ouachita River at Moro Bay State Park. Park facilities include 23 Class AAA campsites, picnic sites, a store, marina with boat rentals and gas pump, standard pavilion (screened), playground, trails, and the Moro Bay Ferry exhibit featuring a historic tugboat and barge.”

I'm putting out the county/park and along comes K5DB. Hmmm.....he's going to run a 3 way county line from the park. A few years ago, he ran a '4 way'. He noted that in the AR QSO Party, you can run a county as part of a county line from a mile away!.....he's set up somewhere else in the park.....I don't hear him but then again, the QP hasn't started. He'll be using the call KE5XX which is the club call of the organization that sponsors the QP. Having been there an hour already, I run 20 minutes in the QP from a single county and leave the rest to him. 75 Qs. After I'm done, I wander over to where he is set up – about 300 feet from the Bradley/Union C/L which is in the park and marked with signs! To get to the third county he is 'running' you have to cross the river. It's 500 feet away. No bridge. I think he was running QRP and his antenna is a 7 foot whip or so on the back bumper of a pickup truck. Don't know how he did since he didn't file a report on the 3830 contest reflector. Suspect he was running QRP and

using a tuner to tune the short whip – not great for signal strength – hi hi.

Worked him separately from both counties to give him points, then headed to the next. I'd hit a few counties that weren't covered by other stations today in the QP. This one was.

I put out Dallas County in the QP then on to **Marks Mill State Park** KFF – 1100. You've got to look close to find this. It's a fenced in area, a very small parking area, and a small stone monument. Power line overhead. No facilities there. You can wander around the park on hiking trails with interpretive signs. That's about it.

From the state site:

“In the spring of 1864, three Civil War battles took place in south central Arkansas that were part of the Union Army's Red River Campaign. The three state historic parks commemorating these battles--Poison Springs Battleground State Park, Marks' Mills Battleground State Park, and Jenkins Ferry Battleground State Park--and the 1836 Courthouse at Historic Washington State Park, which served as Arkansas's Confederate capitol--comprise the Red River Campaign National Historic Landmark.

In 1834, John H. Marks established a saw and flour mill in what is now Cleveland County in south Arkansas. The homesite, located east of Cemetery Park on the Old Camden-Pine Bluff Road, was where the Battle of Marks' Mills took place on April 25, 1864. The skirmish was the second portion of the Red River Campaign, the purpose of which was to take Texas away from the Confederate troops.

On April 20, 1864, a 150-wagon supply train from Pine Bluff reached the Union soldiers. Upon learning that Confederate forces, now joined by General Edmund Kirby Smith's army from Louisiana, had crossed the Ouachita River downstream (to the south), Steele felt it safe to send the train, plus 60 additional wagons, in a northward direction back to Pine Bluff for more supplies. This time, though, he sent an escort force of more than 1,200 men, including 240 cavalry and six artillery pieces.

As the Union wagon train slowly made its way to Pine Bluff through virtually impassible mud on April 25, General Smith assembled an attack force of several thousand men, who intercepted the train at Marks' Mills. The overwhelmed Northerners were once again surrounded on all sides, but managed to fight back for several hours. This time, there was no escape. Nearly all Union survivors were captured. After this devastating blow, General Steele abandoned all intentions of marching to Shreveport on his way to capture Texas, and began to plan his retreat from Camden back



to Little Rock. The only escape route he knew was Military Road that ran north through Princeton and Jenkins Ferry, the final section of the Red River Campaign.”

OK...Civil War history. All for naught, though, as the Confederacy lost in the end. I'd visit Jenkins Ferry SP later.

Now – the AR QP was going on, so 54Qs quickly went in the log. Left after an hour and headed to the next.

**Cane Creek State Park – KFF – 1073** in Lincoln County – went in the book with 89Q. From the state web site:

“Located where the rolling terrain of the West Gulf Coastal Plain and the alluvial lands of east Arkansas's Mississippi Delta regions meet, this park offers you the opportunity to explore two of Arkansas's distinct natural settings in one visit. Hike, run or bike the park's 2,171 acres of woodland areas in the Coastal Plain. Paddle or fish on 1,675-acre Cane Creek Lake, a timbered Delta lake, and experience the natural beauty and abundant wildlife that inhabit Arkansas's Mississippi Delta. Just across the timber-filled lake, anglers and paddlers can also explore Bayou Bartholomew, the world's longest bayou. Park staff offer guided walking, biking, kayaking, and birding tours, and other interpretive programs throughout the year.”

Skipped the nature stuff – and zipped to the next one for the day. Last up – **Jenkin's Ferry** – Grant County - another battlefield site – April 30, 1864 - although in this case, not tens of thousands but thousand of soldiers facing off against each other. Monument here to the Confederate dead.

From the state site:

“Here at Jenkins Ferry on April 29 and 30, 1864, Union troops fought off an attack by the Confederates and, using an inflatable pontoon bridge, crossed the flooded Saline River and retreated to Little Rock.

The land where this Civil War battle took place was settled by Thomas Jenkins, who started the ferry in 1815. It was run by his sons, William and John DeKalb, until the Civil War circa 1861.

On April 26, 1864, the day after the battle at Marks' Mills, and under the cover of darkness, General Steele and his men, with what equipment they had left, crossed the Ouachita River at Camden on a pontoon bridge. Steele had gone to great lengths to

convince Confederate scouts his troops had spent the night inside the safety of the town. By early morning on April 27 the Rebels realized they had been tricked. Upon learning that Steele had left Camden, the Confederate Army, under Generals E. Kirby Smith and Sterling Price, occupied the city and headed north after the Union column.

Steele and his men followed the Camden Trail which crossed the Saline River at Jenkins Ferry. The road was built before 1836 and served as one of the five main, or "trunk roads," in Arkansas. The Confederates' only hope of catching the fast-fleeing Federal troops was at the rain-swollen Saline River there at Jenkins Ferry, some 50 miles to the north. A torrential rain pounded Steele's troops on April 29. As wagons, horses, and mules bogged down in the quagmire, Steele and his men reluctantly made camp at Jenkins Ferry. Steele spent the night plotting ways to hold off advancing enemy troops while crossing the river at the same time. The first Rebels arriving at Jenkins Ferry on April 30 found themselves facing the full force of Steele's army. Steele's men were backed up to the Saline River, but entrenched and protected from flanked attacks by an overflowing creek and a flooded swamp.

The Battle of Jenkins Ferry, the third leg of the Red River Campaign, began after the first light of the foggy day. Despite their disadvantaged position, the Confederates launched one unorganized attack after another. Rebel commanders knew that letting up the pressure would allow Steele's army to cross the Saline and escape.

By the end of the bloody day, the South had lost nearly 1,000 soldiers and the North nearly 700. But Steele's army managed to cross the river and continue retreating to Little Rock.

Jenkins Ferry Battleground State Park features interpretive exhibits, picnic sites, a pavilion swimming area, and a launch ramp on the Saline River. “

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1700 dead in two days of battle. The Civil War was brutal. Back east, you'll find many battlefields where thousands were killed in battles – Antietam, Gettysburg, .....

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After Jenkins Ferry visit – with 66Q in the log....I headed in to the Super 8 in White Hall, AR. Dinner at the China Garden. While the AR QP kept going till after midnight GMT, I packed it in. I'm just not a QSO Party person driving hundreds of miles – other than maybe TX and others where I'm doing 'two-fers' parks and QP's. Hi hi.

## Sunday May 13

The AR QP was over, so it was back to normal park/county hunting again. Today is Mother's Day. Likely many will not be on the radio. Could be tough getting 44 but still a weekend. Off to **Toltec Mounds State Park**.

A National Historic Landmark, the Toltec Mounds site comprises one of the largest and most impressive archeological sites in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. Preserved here are Arkansas's tallest American Indian mounds. Three mounds remain where 18 once stood surrounded by an earthen embankment eight to ten feet in height, a portion of which is still visible today. These ancient earthworks are the remains of the late-Woodland thru early-Mississippian Period ceremonial and governmental complex which was inhabited here from A.D. 650 to 1050. The park visitor center features exhibits including artifacts from the site, an A/V theater, and archeological research laboratory. Unfortunately, it was Sunday morning and the building wasn't open yet. Ran the park for 60Qs and headed to the next.

**The Louisiana Purchase SP** – you see signs for 50 miles around to this park. Must be pretty spectacular. Well.....not.....

from the state website:

“This National Historic Landmark at the junction of Lee, Monroe and Phillips counties preserves the initial point from which all surveys of the property acquired from the French through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 initiated. That year, United States President Thomas Jefferson purchased the vast territory of Louisiana from France for \$15 million. The unmapped wilderness of approximately 900,000 square miles doubled the size of the fledgling nation and helped shape the destiny of the United States. Twelve years later, President James Madison ordered an official survey of the purchase area, a survey that began in what is now Arkansas and led to the settlement of the American West. The initial point was the first surveyor mark in the monumental task of surveying the entire Louisiana Territory, the vast territory including the present Arkansas and 12 other states, an area stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. On October 27, 1815, a survey party headed north from the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers to establish a north-south line to be known as the Fifth Principal Meridian. The same day, a party of explorers departed westward from the junction of the St. Francis River and the Mississippi to establish an east-west line, known as a baseline. The crossing of the two lines would be this initial point from which future surveys would originate.

Both meridian and the baseline would later be extended, and land surveys for all or parts of the Louisiana Purchase states west of the Mississippi would subsequently be measured from this initial point in eastern Arkansas. From this point emanated the surveys for Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and part of South Dakota.

To see the granite monument that marks the site of the initial point, you'll walk along an elevated boardwalk above the headwater swamp in which the monument is located. The L'Anguille Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution in Marianna placed the marker at the initial point in 1926 following the discovery by two surveyors, in 1921, of the gum trees that were marked by the initial surveyors back in 1815. That discovery focused attention on the site located at the junction of Lee, Monroe and Phillips counties in a headwater swamp in the Little Cypress Creek watershed that had gone unheralded for more than a century. The Arkansas General Assembly passed legislation in 1961 designating the area an Arkansas state park.

As you walk along the boardwalk, you'll experience the captivating beauty and natural sounds of the surrounding swamp. Along the boardwalk, interpretive wayside exhibits tell about the Louisiana Purchase and describe the wild flora and fauna of the swamp. This headwater swamp is representative of the swamplands that were common in eastern Arkansas before the vast bottomlands were drained and cleared for farming and commercial purposes.”



Marker in the Swamp

Got it? The marker is in the middle of a swamp. You come to the end of the road and there is a 'small' parking lot – not much more than a turn around at the end of a road.....and from there, you take the 'boardwalk' across the swamp to see the monument. And that's all there is! OK....parked in the “visitor lot” along with 2 other cars....ran the park.....and left! It is 'significant' so I can say 'I've been there'. AR

definitely has some interesting state parks and historic sites! ( I can just see modern teens.....we came 30 miles out of our way to see THIS!?) ..... hi hi - no internet at the parking lot.....had to go back a mile to find a wisp of internet, spot, then head back to the parking lot. Not exactly sure where the 'park started' – gate a mile from the parking lot. Did OK.

**Next up is the Delta Heritage Trail SP.** You can stop at several trail heads or the visitor center. KFF 1081. This is a nice hiking trail along a raised abandoned railroad bed – now runs 20 miles and will run over 35 when done.

From the state web site:

Delta Heritage Trail State Park in southeast Arkansas is being developed under the national "rails to trails" initiative, whereby former railroad lines are converted to pedestrian and bicycle routes. It will total 84.5 miles when finished, making this one of the longest bike and pedestrian trails in the state. The compacted, crushed rock trail leads through a shaded canopy of native hardwoods, alongside agricultural fields, and across streams. Wildlife viewing and birdwatching opportunities abound along the route here in the heart of the Delta and the famed Mississippi Flyway.

Union Pacific Corporation donated its 73-mile right-of-way in 1992. This was the historic route of the Delta Eagle, Missouri Pacific's passenger train that steamed along The Route of the Eagles. This donation created a rail-to-trail conversion of national significance. The trail agreement for this long distance hiking/biking trail was made possible by the railbanking provisions of the National Trails System Act. Railbanking allows railroads to transfer all rights inherent in a rail corridor to a public agency sponsor in order to establish a condition of public use.

The corridor passes through some of the most remote and scenic areas remaining in the Delta region of eastern Arkansas. This region was once covered by a vast bottomland hardwood forest extending from Cairo, Illinois to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Today, only fragments of this great forest remain, separated and surrounded by agricultural development. The middle portion of the Delta Heritage Trail passes through some of the finest examples of the remaining wetland forest.”

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Nifty if you are into long hikes! Sat in the visitor center parking lot and whipped off enough Qs to 'activate' the park – then left. Visitor center closed on Sundays.

I've got to get to Dayton one of these days but I'm doing it slowly. Last in AR – is the **Mississippi River State Park**. From the state web site:

“Through a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas State Parks is developing Mississippi River State Park within the St. Francis National Forest in eastern Arkansas. To explore the park and national forest, travel two national scenic byways: The Great River Road and the Crowley's Ridge Parkway. Near Marianna on the north edge of the forest, the park visitor center is jointly staffed by Arkansas State Parks and U.S. Forest Service staff. It features exhibits interpreting the Mississippi River, Crowley's Ridge, and the Delta. “

I zip into the visitor center lot – run the park – Lee County – and head on out with 48Q.

Motel – Super 8 West Memphis, AR. I've stayed at this one half a dozen times. Low price and decent. \$60. Dinner at the Iron Skillet next door (part of truck stop) – buffet OK.....

## **Monday May 14.**

Still got a few days to get to Dayton so it will be a full day of parks and not getting very far – in fact, only about 130 miles of driving total this day! Lots of sitting putting out the park/county.

First up today is Meeman-Shelby State Park just northwest of Memphis TN. KFF – 2957 in Shelby County. From the TN website:

“**Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park** is a 12,539-acre hardwood bottomland area bordering the mighty Mississippi River 13 miles north of Memphis featuring mature Bald Cypress and Tupelo swamp. Most of the facilities are on top of the majestic Chickasaw Bluffs that rise from the bottomlands and are covered with large oaks, American beech, hickory and sweet gum. There are 10 state Champion Trees and two National Champion Trees as well as endangered and protected plants.”

Ran the park – county and logged 70Qs. Happy. Headed to the next one – **Lower Hatchie NWR KFF-0537** in Lauderdale County. This is one of 550 National Wildlife Refuges around the country.

“The refuge currently encompasses 9,107 acres and is located approximately 3 miles southwest of Henning, Tennessee. It was established in 1980 to benefit migratory birds

with an emphasis on wintering waterfowl management. . The area is home to hundreds of wildlife species including bald eagles, Mississippi kites, wild turkey, neotropical songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, as well as numerous species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds, and insects. “

Logged 65 QSO s and moved on.

**Fort Pillow State Park** is nearby – few miles – KFF-2947. Same county so that makes it tougher as fewer county hunters bother to show up. Conditions weren't great either. This park had never been run before. We're back in the Civil War history again.

From the TN state website:

“Fort Pillow State Historic Park is rich in historic and archaeological significance. Steep bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River made this area a strategic location during the Civil War. The fort was originally built by Confederate troops in 1861 and named after General Gideon J. Pillow of Maury County. It was abandoned in 1862 due to the Union Navy’s advancement along the Mississippi River. The area became a state park in 1971.

The 1,642 acre Fort Pillow is known for its well-preserved breastworks and reconstructed inner fort. The park’s museum offers Civil War artifacts including a canon and interpretive displays relating to the history of Fort Pillow. There is a 12 minute video on the 1864 Battle shown by request as well as tours of the museum and restored fortifications. “

Wiki adds some additional insight

“Because of its strategic location controlling traffic on the Mississippi River, the fort was attacked and captured by the Union Army, which controlled it during most of the war. On June 4, 1862, Confederate troops evacuated Fort Pillow, enabling Union troops to take Memphis, Tennessee. An exception to Union control of this site took place for less than one day immediately after the Confederate victory in the Battle of Fort Pillow in 1864.

The Confederate States Army defeated the Union troops at the Battle of Fort Pillow (April 1864), resulting in the massacre of 229 of the 262 black Union soldiers engaged in the battle.

A Confederate wrote in a letter home that "Forrest ordered them [negroes] shot down like dogs, and the carnage continued." In addition to regimental records, contemporary

accounts by troops on both sides, as well as journalists, describe it as appalling slaughter. This slaughter by the Confederate troops under Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest has been classified by historians as a massacre.

"Remember Fort Pillow!" became a battle cry among black Union soldiers for the remainder of the Civil War. While the Union casualty count for the battle does not indicate that the Confederate forces took many prisoners, Confederate records show about 200 prisoners were shipped south.

In 1866, the Union Army created a cemetery for both Confederate and Union soldiers south of the battle site. In 1867, they moved about 250 bodies of Confederate and Union soldiers from that cemetery to the Memphis National Cemetery.”

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Well, all that history, and I squeaked by with exactly 44 QSO s, not one extra to spare. Worked at it till it hit 44. Bands dying late in the day. Whew! Just got enough. I appreciate the county hunters who show up even if it is same county. Saved the day.

So...there you have it...a bit of 'infamy' at this location. The Civil War raged all over TN with many battles and many historic sites you can visit today.

Well, still time so up next was the John Tully WMA. Would I have a chance at getting 44Qs? Not much here, including internet! The friendly ranger at the state park told me how to get here – only a few miles away. Head up a road until it drops down to the river, cross the bridge, and there you are - big sign. KFF-3948. The internet stops 300 feet before the bridge.

So.....once again Lauderdale County – third time today – would any county hunters show up other than K7SEN and N8KIE? No internet....hmm.....I went up the hill 300 feet, where there was a weak weak trickle of internet just barely there – and got a spot through. Then it was back and forth up the hill to spot, down the hill and over the bridge – to run the park – every band/mode change! This was another ATNO – all time new one – never run before. Didn't observe much wildlife there – lots of forests and several places to put your boat into the river. Caught a few 'passer by' stations to reach the 44 level. When I get desperate I call and call on 20 SSB and try to work anyone, anywhere for the needed Q's.

Should I push my luck? Nearby is the **Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge**. Why not try it late afternoon. KFF-0533 – same county! Lauderdale TN. More wildlife. Will I get to 44? I work at it – scan 20m CW band first – put in a special event OT70 station.



Find another one later to work.....There's F5MUX and KM4FOC....into the log....then it's doing the bands hoping enough show up. 25,000 acres of wilderness here. Slowly slowly inch up the QSO numbers.....and thanks to both CW and SSB contacts from AB7NK, K7SEN, and NF0N...the magic number is reached – left with 45Qs. Whew! Close one!

That night was spent at the Days Inn in Ripley TN. Dinner at Los Portales Mexican restaurant.

Tomorrow I'd have to make some miles to get to OH.....

**Tuesday 5/15** – I hit the road early and drove, drove drove....till late afternoon when I reached just south of Cincinnati OH. Ran the counties as I went through them – Dyer, Obion TN. Fulton, Hickman, Graves, Marshall, Livingston, Lyon, Caldwellll, Hopkins...KY...etc....lot of counties and moving fast.

Wait – there's still a bit of time for one park this day!

Head off to Big Bone Lick SP in Boone County KY in the late afternoon. You've never heard of it? Me either...but.....

“The name of the park comes from the Pleistocene megafauna fossils found there. Mammoths are believed to have been drawn to this location by a salt lick deposited around sulphur springs. Other animals including forms of bison, caribou, deer, elk, horse, mastodon, moose, musk ox, peccary, sloth, and possibly tapir also grazed the vegetation and salty earth around the springs that the animals relied on for their diet. The area near the springs was very soft and marshy causing many animals to become stuck with no way to escape. It bills itself as "the birthplace of American paleontology", a term which dates from the 1807 expedition by William Clark undertaken at the direction of President Thomas Jefferson. In Nicholas Cresswell's journal, dated 1774 to 1777, he records a visit in 1775 to what was then called "Elephant Bone Lick." In this account, Cresswell describes finding several bones of "prodigious size", as well as tusk fragments, and teeth—one weighing approximately 10 pounds.

In 2002, the National Park Service designated Big Bone Lick State Park as an official Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Site. The park was also listed in 1972 on the National Register of Historic Places and was further listed as a National Natural Landmark in February 2009.”

OK....interesting history...birthplace of American Paleontology. Got on the radio and

put 50Qs in the log – even though late in the day. Head to the motel.....Super 8 in Florence KY. Dinner at Sirloin Steakhouse – excellent – good salad bar.

## **Wednesday May 16**

On to Dayton – I've been on the road too long, I'm tired of sitting in the car, but there are a few parks along the way. It's only 2 hours to Dayton from here.....but I'll go to park/county hunter way and take more than half a day.

I run through a few KY and OH counties on the way to **Stonelick State Park**. What's with the 'lick' in all the park names? It's a nice state park with a lake, hiking trails, etc.

I never did find out why it was named Stonelick other than a nearby creek had that name.

From wiki:

“By studying the bedrock layers in Ohio, we can find clues that reveal ancient seas, marshes or swamps covered all or portions of the state at various times in the past. Remains of plants and animals that lived in those waters littered the sea's floor and became entombed as lime precipitated to the bottom. Eventually, the lime and other sediments solidified into stone and uplifted forming dry land.

An arch formed in Ohio, during the time the Appalachian Mountains were formed, known as the Cincinnati Arch. This dome-like feature of uplifted bedrock passes through Stonelick. Several areas of the arch have been exposed from erosion uncovering some of the oldest rocks (about 450 million years old) in Ohio. The once entombed fossils are now exposed giving Stonelick one of the richest fossil records in the state. The rocks of the arch contain so many fossils of such diverse species that they have become very famous and have attracted people from all over the world since the early 1800s. Trilobite, brachiopods and cephalopods provide excellent finds for fossil hunters.”

I didn't worry about fossils. It was a Wednesday so many easy CW contacts went in the log for the 1300Z-1400Z weekly CWT test. Ran the bands for the county hunters and park hunters before and after the test. Clermont County.

Then off to Cowan Lake SP KFF-1943 in Clinton County. Nice lake, camping, boating, fishing, hiking. Ran the park and left. However, while there....the worst of the worst showed up.

KC6AWX went mobile to get 'someone' the LC WBOW. As usual, KZ2P, using his Club of One call K2JG, showed up. He only shows up these days for 'inner circle' cohorts it seems. Anyway, a perfect example of the worst of the worst behavior by the cohorts of '2P'. or to '2P' as the case may be. KC6AWX is in Lake, OR running on 14.336. He's about 20 over in the mobile. Perfect propagation. Give him a call. Silence. He goes QRZ again. I call again. Obviously he is hearing me because he is not hearing anyone else under me. This goes on five or six times....and then he asks for relays since he can't work anyone through N4CD. Ho ho. Five people work him on relays....all with 55 or better reports. Hmmm....Seems KC6AWX is doing the worst of the worst by 'not hearing mobiles or stations'. OK...that's his game. You've got to wonder when he fried his brains.....or got to be like Nancy Pelosi. Likely 10 years ago when MARAC headed downhill fast.

Good thing he left MARAC as an officer a half dozen years ago. He and the rest of the 2P ilk. Yep, they play games. Worst, why anyone would even ask him to get a WBOW for a K prefix in OR is beyond me when there is a very active mobile there who would have scooted over **exactly one county** to get the K for the station needing it – Harney OR. Just gotta know who. Just check any 7QP record for the last 10 years. I'm sure glad that 336 is clear most of the time. Only time James seems to show up is for KB6UF, KC6AWX, AF3X, KA1JPR, or one or two other mobiles out there on his approved list. A good part of the lack of county hunter activity is DIRECTLY tied to these type antics. Remember the good ole days with weekends with 20 people waiting to run on SSB? A good part of why they left is.....this sort of crap. And...people still remember.....you run into them at Dayton, mention you're a county hunter elsewhere, and the first thing out of their mouths is that nasty net control still around?

Yep, jamming, playing games.....all tracked to the co-horts of 2P and 2P himself. See previous issues on this.

Harney was the next county over that was the WBOW for the K. One county away from a very active mobile K prefix – just not on the CH freqs.

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Had time to hit **Ceasar Creek State Park** in Warren County, OH. Ran it successfully -

The best situation is to run one park per county! You can't always do that as state folks don't always spread out the parks one to a county – hi hi. When I plot a route through one park per county – that seems to work best. The second and third parks in the same

county result in fewer QSOs usually.

Arrived in Dayton – finally – and checked into the Knights Inn (formerly a Super 8 but downgraded a few years back) in Moraine OH. I've been staying at this place for 10+ years. It's OK – but they, like every other motel, jack up rates for the Hamvention. But wait...the second session of the CW Test at 1900Z is coming up in half an hour. I can head to one of the local parks from the NPOTA days and put it out!

Off to **Dayton Aviation Heritage** site in downtown Dayton - get there 20 minutes late and get into the fray. I set the keyer at 29 wpm and I'm one of the slow ones – hi hi – most folks are using keyboards, Computers, or memory keyers and just pushing buttons. I'm using my paddles and logging by hand. Put 40 in the log in 40 minutes doing search and pounce, then add in another 20 from county hunters (Montgomery County) and park chasers. While there it pours for 20 minutes – real cats and dogs type downpour - frog strangler – gully washer. Ah, yes....spring time in Dayton. When you come, bring cold weather gear. Bring hot weather gear and suntan lotion. And bring a raincoat! You'll need at least one of them, maybe two, or maybe all!

Well, I've arrived..... more to the story later! The short way is 980 miles.....I did an extra 500.

## Arkansas QSO Party

There were many mobiles – N4CD, KN4Y, W3DYA , including KE5XX, the sponsoring organizations club call, that was out mobile. One on SSB. While on the way to Dayton I put out a half dozen counties while heading to Dayton.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

**K5CM mobile with N5KW 1060 CW 499 SSB**

Conditions were OK considering we are near the bottom of the Sun Spot Cycle. The K index was a little high causing some signal to be weaker than normal. Very little DX was worked. The Es helped make up for the below average conditions. Although some say Es does not happen on 20 meters, it was very obvious Sporadic E was making very short

skip on 20 meters. Again because of the Es 15 was often open, but few noticed it. Conditions improved the last couple hours of the party, making 40 meters nice for Pam to finish up there on SSB.

All Q's are important but here are a few of the most worked:

26 N4UC

25 K3WJV

24 K2DSW

23 K9CW, WA3HAE

21 K4BAI, W4UT

20 K4KKL, KI0I

19 K0HNC

18 K4AMC, K5IB, N2CQ, NW8U, W0BH

17 AD0RW, WX4G

15 N6MU, W8TM

14 K9NW, N4VV, N8NA, W5TM

13 K3DMG, N1SOH, ND9E, W7OM

12 NJ9Q, WN4AFP

11 AG6V, K2HVN, W4XK

10 AB9CA, NW7E, VE3AQ, W2CVW, WB9HFK

9 K0AP, K4AKK, KE5XX/M, N6HC

8 K4VBM, K8DOC, KJ4IWZ, N0AC, N0PP, NS2N, NU0Q, WI0WA

73,

Connie/k5cm and Pam/n5kw

### **KN4Y mobile 377 CW qso**

Drove to Ozark Arkansas to attend my stepson's Great Granddaughter's graduation. Operated in the Arkansas QSO party on the way back home. Had a great time in Arkansas.

### **K3WJV fixed - 67 CW - 67 mults**

Some of the mobiles seemed to only be on CW in the beginning few hours so I suspect they were on phone most of the other time. I hope they didn't have any serious mishaps. Nice little QSO Party and thanks to the mob

**W0BH - fixed - SK - 72 CW 27 SSB**

That was fun! I turned on the radio in the morning just after the start and kept coming back most of the day (with three hours off for our aviation graduates reception at Hesston College in the afternoon). Usually I have a hard time working AR from Kansas as the day goes on, but this year one band was open to AR every time I checked. I was really surprised at the great short skip on 20m at first, and I was able to sometimes make 20m contacts later as well.

Top QSO s for me:

18: K5CM

09: W3DYA

07: N4CD KE5XX

05: KN4Y

04: KD5J WA5BDU WA5SOG

Thanks to the mobiles and portables for running around the state and the the rest of the AR crew for making themselves easy to find. Also thanks to the Razorback CC for sponsoring the event.

We'll join the fun mobile in AR again one of these years! And mobiles, please considering joining us in Kansas for our Tenth Anniversary Kansas QSO Party on August 25-26, 2018!

73, Bob, W0BH

**K4BAI - fixed - GA - 61 CW 36 SSB**

Probably the best supported AR QP ever. But signals were skipping over GA on 20M much of the time. 40 and 80 had good skip. Could only find WA5SOG on 75 phone. Thanks for all QSO s. 73 John, K4BAI.

**KI0I fixed - KS - 65 CW 23 SSB**

20M shocked me this morning with AR sigs at 30-40db over 9. And that was on a horizontal loop 25' high for 75m ! After lunch time things were normal and I cud only

hear faint sigs and cudn't work em. Only 40m and that was tuff at times. The curse of being too close.

I thank the folks who ran mobile, for they keep things going. A great job by all. Many fixed stations stayed hard at it too , and thanks to the Razorback CC for sponsoring the contest.

73 Mark KI0I

**N6MU – fixed CA - 53 CW 7 SSB**

Poor conditions. The mobiles were at my noise level most of the day. Never heard either bonus station. Not much fun! 73...

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from the County Hunter Web Forum

**KN4Y:** Conditions were funny, but I did work you (KC3X) a couple of times. I was in the mountains, when on top had a pile up, at bottom nothing. Once I got on flat land it was continuous pile up. Did not do last 2 hours, ran out of Arkansas on the way home. Did not hear Norm, W3DYA, nor Bob, N4CD.

**K4AMC:** 20 Meters Open Short Skip

20 meter was much better Sat. short skip. Big sigs from W3DYA, KN4Y, and N4CD. It's rare to work AR from TN on 20 meters. Got new counties from all three mobiles. All CW from here ended up with 82 QSO s and 34 counties. For score of 5,776 points. Great fun working mobiles.

**N7JPF**

Interesting weekend. Signals from AR were. Strong out here yesterday, especially in the late afternoon. Not nearly as strong today, in and out, mostly out. I had a few with KN4Y, and several with K5CM and N4CD. Really fun to hear some signals again. I put the antenna up 5 feet higher, and I think that might have made some difference. Dare I say that I think things are improving! After a great weekend during the 7-party, and this weekend, I am encouraged!

**W3DYA** Hollis: Glad you mentioned it. Because...if I spend more than ten minutes calling on a band, I usually QSY. In AR, 20 and 40M were the only bands and stopping to run a county doesn't allow much time to spot myself and call a long time without any response.

I did cut my time short in a few counties, and I'm sure my spot wasn't right a few times. Missed by a couple of KHZ. Still incompetent with my wife's old tablet!  
I only operate mobile for two reasons: I enjoy it and CW, and making needed contacts for awards adds to the fun.

**N8KIE** 21 8th timers and 6 Dbl Diamonds FANTASTIC

## On the Road with N4CD V - Dayton

Events start on Thursday for the Hamvention. For the QRP folks, there is the Four Days in May (FDIM) event – an all day set of sessions on QRP stuff.....and they have their 'buildathon'. They also have a banquet on Friday, awards, a QRP oriented sales session, etc. A few county hunters have participated in that. I skipped it this year. The presentations are getting 'too technical' – like how to easily build your 9 band SSB transceiver using only 10 40-pin ICs, two 4 layer PC boards and 1700 discrete parts.

On Thursday, the flea market folks and inside vendors can set up – I wander into the flea market in the afternoon to see what's going on. A few people are setting up tents and tables. Usually Kyle, WA4PGM and Mike, KA4RRU, are setting up their 'tent' and tables getting set for the big day. A few things are 'swapped' on Thursday but only 5% of the spots are occupied. It's a long walk between sellers on Thursday.

I luck out – at the first table I go by, maybe 300 feet from where I parked my car, someone has a complete set of Knight Kit Ocean Hopper Regen plug in coils. Usually you find a radio and it has one coil in it – usually the 'low' shortwave band. Hmm....decent price, so I snap it up. That's one of the few goodies I find the whole hamfest. Then, a stroke of luck hits. At the second table I pass, there's a Knight Kit Span Master. I pause to look at it. (I've got a few of them – don't need more). Behind it just being set up is a Silver Marshall Model 737 Bearcat short wave regen from the



1930s. Oh, wow! This is one of the ultra rare things you never expect to see other than in a museum.

This is a 1930 era radio - sold for \$119 in 1930 – a small fortune – well, a good size fortune considering that the country was in the Great Depression which started in 1929, You also needed to buy an external speaker as the unit had none. Other sources indicate it was for sale from 1925-1935.

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Let's put this in perspective. In 1930, the average car cost \$640. The average income was \$1970. Gasoline cost 10c a gallon. Within 2 years, prices dropped even more as more people became unemployed and the Great Depression worsened, hitting bottom in 1932/33. 10 years later, folks were making only \$1730/yr. House prices were half of what they were in 1930.

So, would you buy a short wave receiver that costs 20% of a new car? Just a receiver? With cars going for, average, \$30,000 or more.....that would be \$6000 bucks!

The unit had a built in A/C power supply – but you needed an external high impedance speaker. The set had 3 watts of audio power output.

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So – with bad timing in the market – not a whole lot of these were sold. The seller indicated that this came out of an estate from 10 years ago. Everything else was sold off, but somehow this radio got lost under a shelf and was never sold. So 10 years later it appeared in Dayton. Wasn't cheap.....but.....I'll likely never see one again in my life. You don't have many chances to buy a neat 'treasure' like this. This unit used plug in coils – two per band – and the full set was inside. Oh, the trip to Dayton was 'worthwhile' right off the bat with goodies. Many years I come and find nothing in the flea market. Zip, other than some misc hardware for antennas, or coax connectors, etc., or the run of the mill Knight Kits (made by the tens of thousands). There are lots of unusual radios that appear there – orphans from the 50s and 60s like weird make 6 or 2m am transmitters – but few 'collect them'.

This radio covered 19.5 to 183 meters..... from 2 to 15 MHz. Tubes were 24, 27, 45, and a type 80 rectifier. The '27' was a screen grid tube – a game changer. Before that, everything was triodes – lower gain, unstable and tended to oscillate. The RadioMuseum site says this was sold 1925-1935 but most ads show up near 1930. Oh, happy days!

I wandered around the rest of the flea market, which was really sparse on Thursday. This year they paved the 'roads' in the race track part of the flea market – about 80% of the flea market. It's inside a half mile circumference horse race track – and in the evenings they race sulkies after the flea market ends at 6pm. You know it because there are fresh hoof prints in the sand each morning! There are about five or six 'rows' in the flea market each a quarter mile long with spots off both sides. No slip sliding away this year – in this part of the flea market – and things were wet. Temp was in the high 70s, intense sun, and humid on Thursday. Showers were forecast for late afternoon/evening.

After a while, I headed back to the motel to get ready for the dinner get together. Headed over to the American Packard Museum – the skies opened up and the rain came down – from medium to mostly light drizzle.

Thursday evening there is an ARRL Donor Recognition Dinner – held this year at the American Packard Museum in downtown. It's an interesting place if you've never been there. Dozens of 20s-30s-40s-50s cars in absolute pristine shape. ( Same with the Dayton Aviation Heritage site in downtown Dayton – folks should check that out if they have some extra time while here – or winding down from a long trip.) Rained Thursday evening on and off.

K5UR, Rick, ARRL President, gave a talk on the state of 'amateur radio'. While the good news is that 33,000 new hams got licenses in 2017, the bad news is that 25,000 disappeared off the roll of licensees – either SK, or inactive. The net gain of about 7,000 also has a short life span – about 70% of new licenses never get involved in public service activities like joining ARES, or do not join/renew ARRL.

As we've mentioned previously, the Millennials are a different breed – plus other things have changed. In 1960, the study guide (License Manual) for the Novice license, that allowed HF privileges on 80, 40 and 15 meters was all of 3 pages long! Now – the License Manual for the 'entry level' Technician is nearly 300 pages – with 400 questions to study in the question pool! How many 'kids' – today – are willing to take a 'simple test' that is 100 times more complex than the Novice license to 'get on the air'? You see the problem? Or, rather than 3 pages of license manual, have to dig through, learn, understand the 400 question pool of problems?

So the ARRL recently proposed giving Technicians slivers of HF spectrum. New hams are going to be digital oriented. A kid today can be playing games with kids in China and India and Germany, texting friends in France and Slovenia on their smartphone..... so you've got to give them something they can bite into. Otherwise, the trend of losing more hams than gaining new ones will get worse as time goes on. They are

working with the FCC to make it happen. We've got to get more youth into ham radio.

Friday arrives and I'm off early (6:20am) to the flea market to beat all the traffic. It's about a 30 minute drive to the Greene County Fairgrounds. By 9am, there will be lines of traffic but at this time of the day, just a steady stream headed in. I park in the flea market area and hunt around for goodies – most not set up yet. Cloudy – looks like rain – but not raining – yet. It did off and on all day – no deluges like last year – but enough to play 'peek-a-boo' with flea market sellers. No rain for 10-15 minutes, then drizzle for 5-10 minutes. Wandered the flea market till near 9 am hoping to find some goodies. None found. Temp barely 70 and very humid – 100% likely.

At 9am, wandered over to the main part of the Hamvention with the buildings and headed for Forum Room 5 – where K8VOX, Julie, and Tom, W8TAM, would be giving a Parks on the Air presentation. The room was full – maybe 50-60 folks. This was a 'tent' room but had a PA system and a lot of seats. The 'new building' did not get completed in time – but this year there were 4 buildings housing exhibits compared to 3 last year. Next year the fifth building will get done. A lot of the park hunters (going back to the NPOTA days) showed up for a re-union. The drizzle started on and off all day.

One nice thing about the 'new' Hamvention is the food. In the past, you had a choice of skimpy ham/cheese sandwiches, hot dogs, or pizza and that was about it. Now you had all sorts of food from Asian noodles to Mexican to Grilled Chops to Ice Cream/Slurpies, Breakfast sandwiches, one pizza place, gourmet coffee, kettle corn, and more. One didn't starve at Dayton for sure!

There was one part of the flea market around the exhibits – section FF – and the roads were not paved and turned to slippery, sliding 'trails' as the Hamvention went on. Nothing found in the flea market today and feet got worn out from the walking. You can easily walk a couple miles here.

Out in the main flea market, one fellow has a table full of keys. One that catches my eye is a Mecrograph Bug. Asking price \$350. Didn't buy it but reasonable price. This has the mechanism 90 degrees away from the axis of the paddle assembly.



I eventually found the MARAC booth – manned by Kerry, W4SIG, Lowell, KB0BA, and Sandra N0XYL for most of the time. It was under a white tent – but had pavement underfoot so no mud disaster like last year. No leaky roof, either – much, much, better.



MARAC Booth

There was good foot traffic and we seem to have added a few more to the county hunter rolls. Many 'old timers' – folks who finished up years and years ago – came by and said hello.

Jerry, K1SO, showed up a bit at the booth as did Morris, KS4BO. Spent a while there then headed out to the car for a bit. Later that day, there would be a NPOTA Reunion get together (National Parks on the Air – ARRL program in 2016) at the Buck and Ear in

downtown Xenia at 6pm. Well, that wasn't in my GPS.....but Willy's Sports Bar at the same address was. OK...headed that way. Seems the place had changed names 3 weeks ago but didn't change the signs yet. Must have confused a whole bunch of people including me but 30-40 managed to find it and yak for a couple hours retelling stories from that great ARRL program. Afterwards, headed back to the motel and crashed. Whew! It was a lot easier 50 years ago cruising the flea market end to end for hours at a time.

Gary, KB9AIT, was inside selling the 'wolf river coils' (adjustable screwdriver type manual coils) and we yakked a bit. He's been chasing me in the counties and parks.

I met mark, N2MH and YL Karen KA2KHJ. They work each other on 6M FM in every county on their trips for credit. She's got a general license but is mike shy and won't get on the HF SSB frequencies yet.

CQ Magazine had a nice booth and display this year.

Saturday arrives – and the on and off drizzle starts. I head over there early – getting there by 7am. Time to cruise the flea market but the drizzle is keeping much of the stuff under cover. Half the folks have 'tents' but the other half don't.

Laurie, WZ8C, who lives in Grand Traverse, MI, is scheduled to give a talk at 9:15 at the YASME 'booth' in the Viola building. There's about 15 chairs....and POTA folks wander by and sit in. She recounts her adventures in 2016 and her activations of all the MI parks and trips to DC to put out the tougher ones – including 7 miles of walking to get to those on the mall. She wrote an article for QST and that winning article for the May 2018 QST received the Cover Plaque award for “Portable Operations - First Steps on the Road” by Laura Steinberger, WZ8C. The QST Cover Plaque Award -- given to the author or authors of the most popular article in each issue -- is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the QST Cover Plaque Poll web page.



WZ8C, Laurie, NPOTA Review

Later that day, KR7RK, Keith, gives a talk on SOTA – Summits on the Air. This is another popular program – of working 'mountain tops' or 'hill tops' around the world.



SOTA has it's own database where both sides of the contact upload information – like LoTW – and if they match, you get credit. Various summits have 'points' from 1 to 10 depending upon the height and difficulty to access. When I'm in a park, I often tune up to the 14.060 to 14.064 area where the SOTA folks are calling CQ or working folks. I give them a contact (and it counts toward my 44, too) if I can hear them. There are half a dozen very active mountain climbers. Most are QRP with portable set ups and antennas but are often decent copy if you are in a quiet space.

I did buy two paperback books at the RSGB booth – Radio Society of Great Britain – their equivalent to the ARRL.

I wandered around the exhibits and flea market more on Saturday, stopped by the MARAC booth for an hour or two, hit the ARRL Member Forum for a while, then headed out. The skies cleared after 1pm or so and the sun came it. It got toasty warm and the flea market was in full swing finally. Only thing I found on Saturday were a few tubes – some type 80 rectifiers from the 30s and 40 set – NOS in box for \$1 each – a real bargain and some 50C5 and 35W4 tubes for the Knight Kits at a buck apiece.

I was 'burned out' from walking, walking and more walking. You definitely get your exercise at the Hamvention!

Rested up at the motel – and planned an early get away on Sunday morning for the 980 mile trip to home.

## On the Road with N4CD VI – On the Way Home

Not too much to add. Got up early on Sunday and was on the road at 6:20am headed to Texas. Turned the radio on a few hours later as I cruised along. Several mobiles, Kerry, W4SIG, and Bob, N2OO were putting them out left and right. Collided a few times – not hearing them and vice versa – so let them run most of the counties as I cruised along through 'green stamp' counties on the interstate that I ran on the way up. I was zipping along at 70-75 mph most of Sunday. After 12 hours on the road, stopped in southwest AR at Hope at the Super 8 there. Good price and good hot breakfast the next day. Dinner at the Dos Loco Gringos – excellent.

Next day got up early and drove the 4 hours home – at 75-80 mph and just listened to the radio occasionally. Worn out and ready to rest once I hit home. Oh, and I've got a ton of logging to do – upload to WWFF database and to LoTW with the grid info this year.

Good trip. Found some 'goodies' which was nice. Met lots of county hunters/park

hunters although I missed not having the County Hunter Forum. Maybe next year.

Gas – from \$2.60-\$2.70/gal in TX, AR to near \$3 or even over it in IL, IN, OH.....

## Mobile Activity in May

At the beginning of May, WQ7A, K5GE, AB7NK/K7SEN, and AB7RW were still on the road after the MI Mini headed home the county hunter way. Mary and Neil took the 'long way' home via WV before heading to AZ.

KM6HB, Mark, was noted in a CA Park KFF-1141 on digital modes

KB3WAV, Kerri, was spotted in many MD, WV and PA Parks

Fred, K0FG, spotted on trip to NE and back.

Then we had a busy weekend with several QP's.

Ed, K8ZZ, took the long way home from the MI Mini via PA, WV to get to KS.

Ed, KN4Y, headed to AR. While there he participated in AR QP. Then back to FL.

Dennis, N6PDB headed out on on a trip east. Had motorhome problems and had to head back home to get them fixed.

AB4WL/KF4INA were out and about in AL. Finished running the entire state.

Kraig, KA2LHO, spotted out in FL parks.

Mike, NF0N, headed east toward Dayton from NE. He's always at the Bicycle Mobile Forum there on Sunday mornings.

N2MH/KA2KHJ spotted on 50.3 FM from NJ to OH via WV. No HF this trip. Zipped back on home very active on 6M FM. They are working on HF radio setup.

Peter, N4UP was in TN putting them out



Kerry, W4SIG, headed to Dayton and ran them along the way.

KB6UF ran a few in ME – SSB only

Gene, WB4KZW, ran a few in NC

Bob, N2OO, hit the road headed to Dayton from NJ – ran on cw.

Doug, WA4UNS headed to Dayton. Ran Noble IN for self credit to finish up.....then later spotted out in NC.

Jack, N7IV, spotted out in ND headed east.

## County Hunting Electronic Confirmations

Ted, K1BV, had a short article in the latest CQ about electronic confirmation for CQ Awards. After FIVE YEARS of working with ARRL, you can now earn WAZ (Worked all Zones) through LoTW. LoTW requires 'secure' certificates for each station to prevent bogus contacts or uploading false info or 'gaming the system'. It's a simple registration process to get onboard.

Many other popular award programs already have electronic confirmation. The Summits on the Air program, with hundreds of active people and probably a thousand or more worldwide chasing summits – has it's own database system. All QSO s are entered by both sides of the QSO – like LoTW - and you receive awards based upon the 'points' you earn, the number of summits, the points you get for your activations, etc. Makes it easy to earn awards. No QSLs or confirmation by mail needed.

The very popular WWFF program in Europe, spreading to the US, with over 100,000 QSO s made a year or more, has it's own database system, although only the 'activator' has to upload the file of QSO s. You receive awards based upon that. No QSL cards or equivalent needed. It's now being duplicated by the US Parks on the Air Program.

That gets us back to county hunting. For the first time to qualify for the CQ USA-CA, , you need all 3077 counties confirmed. CQ will take E-QSLs but very few use it, and it, too, is county hunter hostile. You've got to print off each E-QSL you will use, too. Not simple and most go the mail route. Even worse for newcomers, the ' Mobile QSL buro' seems to be defunct and a relic of the past. I'm not sure what is going on with that. With so few new county hunters, there isn't a lot of sense 'bunching' cards via a buro these days. The cost effectiveness of a buro depends upon lots of participants and being able to send 3-4-5-or 8 MRCs in an envelope for for checking, signing, and returning.

Most award seekers are using LoTW – for DXCC, Triple Play, Per band WAS/WAZ, counts of countries worked per band/mode, etc, or SOTA, or WWFF. That sort of leaves MARAC and county hunting out in the cold for getting newcomers into the fun of the hunt. The ARRL International Grid Chase is all through LoTW and the wildly popular NPOTA was all LoTW.

Setting up a massive database is not something that MARAC is likely to do – as well as meet CQ requirements for 'hack proof 'contacts. Most county hunters at this point are not set up upload counties run to any database although that could certainly change. I never touched LoTW until NPOTA in 2016. Now I've uploaded over 60,000 Qs in just 2 ½ years. (and that is only park contacts! Don't upload counties not in parks).

That leaves LoTW for county hunting– hopefully someday – but LoTW has some major issues the way it is set up.

Some of the things that would have to be addressed:

1 ) LoTW thinks that N4CD, N4CD/m, N4CD/p are all different call signs and won't match unless both parties put in the same call. Now, when I run parks, I'm just N4CD but when I'm running counties, it's N4CD/m. WWFF database doesn't care. N4CD=N4CD/M=N4CD/P=N4CD/7. It only goes by the call. Of course, WWFF awards count no matter where you are in the country!

2 ) Now, for each county, you have to set up a separate 'station location' and upload the info for a county as a separate log. Maybe 50-80 counties on a trip – meaning 80 separate logs uploaded. Some way of uploading just one file, with 'county' as a parameter for each contact, would be very helpful.

3 ) Currently, LoTW issues awards based upon 'station location' other than the current

International Grid Chase that gives you credit for a grid no matter where you are in the US – if you enter yourself as, say, N4CD. N4CD/m would be earning separate awards. Things like WAS, Triple Play, only count from your 'home location'. Grids this year are the exception and NPOTA was also an exception where your location didn't count to get credit for grids or parks. There you got credit for parks worked no matter where you were. For county hunters, maybe half my counties come while I am out mobile! So if were working on first time as an active mobile, I would want all that credit for them. You do get credit for WAZ, DXCC no matter what your 'station location' as long as it is in the lower 48.

For ARRL, HI and AK are DX, but they would be part of the USA-CA so somehow that would have to be addressed to work those AK and HI USA counties.

4 ) LoTW doesn't understand 'county lines'. While with Grid Chase, you can enter a multiple grid line – up to 4, and for NPOTA there were combinations of 'two-fers' and up to 'five-fers' at one location. Credit for 5 entities with just one contact. That would have to be addressed. County hunters love those 'lines'.

I don't know if ARRL will ever get around to getting USCA into LoTW. It sure would be nice and likely attract thousands of new county chasers! Likely 10,000 out there already have 500 counties confirmed in LoTW – and NOT A ONE of them count for the CQ award.

Maybe there would be some way of 'scanning' the LotW database and printing a file of confirmed counties – but LotW would have to get smart about the 3077 counties in the US, understand 'independent cities', the 4 Judicial Districts of AK, new additions/deletions, etc, to do that. But who knows?

Maybe ARRL's next big event next year will be working counties? (Well, we can dream, can't we).....

## Dayton Report – ARRL Newsletter

From the ARRL Newsletter:

Xenia Enjoys a Second, More Successful Year Playing Host to "Dayton"

Hamvention® 2018 returned to the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio, for a second year, earning high marks for attendance, the debut of many new Amateur Radio transceivers, and tasty food.

"Other than the rain showers Friday and Saturday, the event seemed to go very smoothly," said QST Editor Steve Ford, WB8IMY, who has been on hand for many past Hamventions. "Many attendees, great food, and a spacious layout that made it easy to get around. It is a much better venue than Hara," he added. Others who commented on the Hamvention Facebook page agreed, although some complained that the flea market area was too small, still muddy, and not as well attended as in past years, when the flea market was Dayton Hamvention. Many credited the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA) for putting on a great show while still addressing needed improvements. Ford said the rain, which included a Saturday thundershower, did not deter the crowds, although indoor exhibit areas were packed at times, reminiscent of the steamy traffic jams of the past at Hara Arena during wet weather.

ARRL EXPO, the focus of ARRL's Hamvention presence, saw considerable traffic, and visitors kept those tending the ARRL Store quite busy. Ford said attendees seemed to appreciate the ARRL Stage, where talks on various topics were presented throughout the show. ARRL Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, said the ARRL team included nearly 100 people -- from Field Organization volunteers, Section Managers, Officers, Directors, Vice Directors, partners, served agency representatives, ARRL staff, and members who helped out.

Ford postulated that Hamvention 2018 may have witnessed a record number of new Amateur Radio products. New transceivers included Icom's IC-7610, Kenwood's TS-890S, Yaesu's FTDX-101D, and FlexRadio's FLEX-6400M and FLEX-6600M. CommRadio introduced its CTX-10, a compact SDR-based QRP transceiver. Other new products ranged from CW keys, to digital mode interfaces, to audio processors and amplifiers. The August issue of QST will provide a roundup.

Showers persisted into Saturday. "Hamvention's attempts to mitigate last year's mud issues in the flea market area seemed to help, although the relentless rain proved to be a challenge," Ford observed. "As a result, the indoor exhibits appeared to receive the lion's share of the traffic."

Perhaps as a result of the wet weather, Hamvention forums proved popular. For example, a nearly standing-room-only crowd to the RTTY Contesting forum heard ARRL Southwestern Division Vice Director Ned Stearns, AA7A, discuss FT8 as a possible replacement for RTTY in contest applications. Stearns has been involved in

proving out FT8 DXpedition Mode. The ARRL membership forum also drew a substantial crowd. After comments by President Rick Roderick, K5UR, Great Lakes Division Director Dale Williams, WA8EFK, addressed potential changes to the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) program.

The skies cleared on Sunday, and bargain hunters flocked to the Fairgrounds. A number of exhibitors commented that it was the largest Hamvention Sunday attendance they'd seen in a long time.

Young attendees seemed to be in greater evidence this year, including teams of students interested in combining Amateur Radio with robotics. For example, the First Robotics competition teams were on hand to demonstrate their creations.

The Yasmie Foundation-sponsored "Ham Radio 2.0 -- Innovation and Discovery" area was a big hit, Yasmie Foundation President Ward Silver, N0AX, said. "Subjects ranged from high-bandwidth satellite designs to Summits on the Air (SOTA), HamSCI's 2017 Solar Eclipse QSO Party (SEQP) research, and QSLs." Silver said the goal was to help diverse groups meet and interact. Researcher Nathaniel Frissell, W2NAF, who staffed the HamSCI booth, reported "a tremendous response."

Florian Zwingl, OE3FTA, of Austria, and Koos Fick, ZR6KF, of South Africa represented the IARU Region 1 group Youngsters on the Air (YOTA), promoting YOTA in IARU Region 2 (the Americas). The YOTA "Summer Camp" will be held in August in South Africa -- when it's winter in the Southern Hemisphere.

"The weather notwithstanding, the mood was clearly upbeat. The open layout of the Xenia Fairgrounds drew compliments as attendees found it much easier to navigate than Hara Arena," Ford said. "The Dayton Amateur Radio Association also received kudos for their smooth management of the event. The food vendors drew rave reviews with delights ranging from standard carnival fare to ethnic cuisine."

# MARAC Convention Info

Holiday Inn Country Club Plaza  
One East 45th St.  
Kansas City, MO. 64111  
October 3 – 6, 2018

Tel # 816-753-7400

[Book your room online at: http://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI&GPC=MAR&hotelCode=MKCOE&PMID=99801505](http://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI&GPC=MAR&hotelCode=MKCOE&PMID=99801505)  
or call the hotel directly and use code MAR

Rooms are \$119.00 per night (1 king or 2 queen beds) plus tax.  
Hotel is pet friendly – restaurant on site  
Cut off date is September 3, 2018 for group rate  
Hotel parking garage size restriction (6.0 x 7.0 x 12.0 ft)  
Limited outside parking for larger vehicles and antenna's.  
FREE hotel shuttle available 7am – 11pm within a 3 mile radius.  
Kansas City International Airport (MCI) is only 23 miles from the hotel. Super Shuttle picks up at all terminals. 1-800-258-3826

Register here

<https://chspots.org/wp/registration/>

You can print off the form, or fill it in on line – and send in your check to AB7NK.

Registration \$40 for one, \$10 each additional  
Thursday night BBQ poolside \$18  
Sat night Banquet \$35

Please register early! We need to get a good head count of attendees soon

See you there!

## Awards Issued

USCA #1265	KC7OD, George	April 17, 2018
Ran all Montana #28	K8ZZ, Ed	10/13/2017
2675 last counties #1	N4CD, Bob	
2nd time, #441	K7DM, Don	4/6/2018
7th Time #27	W0GXQ, Jerry	11/6/2017
RAS Alabama #22	AB4WL	5/11/2018
Combo 1X3 #23	K4YT, Karl	5/2/2018
RAS South Dakota #35	K2HVN, Bill	10/2/2017
RAS Ohio #31	K2HVN, Bill	4/25/2018
RAS Louisiana #27	KB0BA, Lowell	2/28/2018
RAS Louisiana #26	N0XYL, Sandra	2/28/2018
RAS Iowa #31	WQ7A, Terry	5/1/2018

# Upcoming Events for County Hunters

We are winding down state QSO parties for the first half of the year. Just two to go. In addition, there is the VHF contest and Field Day held in June.

June 2 1400z to 3 0200z

1.8-144

**Kentucky QSO Party**

CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

[www.kyqsoparty.org](http://www.kyqsoparty.org)

June 16 1600z to 17 0200z

3.5-28

**West Virginia QSO Party**

CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

[www.qsl.net/wvsarc](http://www.qsl.net/wvsarc)

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