

# County Hunter News

February 2018  
Volume 14 Issue 2

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

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

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

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

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

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at [ch.W6RK.com](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://countyhunter.com/marac\\_information\\_package.htm](http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm)

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

There is a lot more information at [www.countyhunter.com](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

### 1 ) N4CD Rumblings

Year 2017 came to a close and now we are into Year 2018 with new challenges in the reduced sunspot count during the sunspot minimum. Looking back, 2017 was an interesting year. After an exciting year in 2016 with the National Parks on the Air program that spurred tons of activity (and we had some better sunspot numbers then), the transition into 2017 was bumpy. No longer were there excited chasers and activators filling up the bands day in and day out, and chasers trying to work all the parks that were activated. Many drove thousands and thousands of miles trying to be near the top in the

activator class - N4CD did 45,000 miles through over 44 states – or on the air all the time chasing – with some accumulating over 450 park entities worked....like K5RK, Larry down by Houston TX. Now...the bands were a lot more quiet. Some days is very quiet with just a handful of nets on 20M SSB, a special event station or two, and a few rag chews and lonely people calling CQ with few answers.

In 2017, there was no ARRL special year long event. Yes, some were pursuing the ARRL Triple Play. Digital modes picked up a bit and with the wide scale use of FT-8 – a faster way to make QSOs than PSK31 or PSK63 – the digital bands were quite busy at times. Almost crowded to where it was challenging to find an open spot. Now folks are talking about adding a 'second frequency' on 20M for FT-8.

With the poorer sunspots, county hunting activity seemed to decline – other than convention time (MI Mini, National, Dayton Hamvention) – to low levels with many days of maybe a handful of counties being 'put out'. A few intrepid souls were working on finishing up transmitting from all US counties – and made folks happy with long trips through many states – running hundreds of counties on their trips. But not too many. County Hunting would benefit a lot if we could keep recruiting new blood. I get fewer and fewer MRCs from my trips to check and return.

One bright point during the year was the arrival of Parks on the Air. It's not a full substitute for NPOTA – National Parks on the Air – but provides both activators and chasers a means of keeping active, watching their scores grow – and of course, putting out counties while doing so. On many days, spots for Parks on the Air spots on W6RK exceeded those for mobiles in counties. N4CD added 20,000 miles to the N4CD mobile hitting over 135 new parks in Year 2017 in 15 different states. Unlike NPOTA, only the activators have to upload logs. Chasers automatically receive credit. Many of those runs were spotted on W6RK – along with the county.

County Hunters Kraig, KA2LHO, and Jim, N9JF were really into POTA. Other activators like Kerri, KB3WAV and Ray, KC3RW (YL/OM team – sometimes mobile, N2CX, often portable with bigger antenna) activated parks all over MD, DE, PA. Lots of counties! Parks on the Air will continue as an on-going program. A half dozen of the 'motor home' variety operators spent days to weeks in parks and put them out – like N9MM, N5PHT, and K7CAR with larger fixed antennas at each location.

In 2017, many county hunters finished up awards – a few new USACA numbers were issued – but the backup of award issuing continued into December so we'll have to wait for MARAC to issue the awards officially. . Folks can start over after their last contact date as the award will be backdated to the date of the last QSO to earn it.

In 2017 we had a good County Hunter forum at Dayton. That looks like it might have been the last one – no one volunteered to keep it going. Will MARAC keep the information booth going at Dayton?

Looking at the stats on the WWFF web page for N4CD in 2017 – at the end of the year N4CD had run 184 park units – state parks, natural wildlife areas, state natural areas wildlife management areas with 152 of them achieving the magic 44 number of QSOs. Uploaded to the WWFF database were 11,407 QSOs – and that didn't include contacts made between parks on the county hunter nets/frequencies. N9JF put out 67 with 32 of them reaching the 44 threshold – and 3081 QSOs uploaded to the WWFF database. N9MM, not a county chaser but park activator, made over 10,000 Q as likely did Gary N5PHT from various parks.

In the chaser department, KG8P in MI worked 852 new park units in 2017. KA9JAC had 580 and led the 'county hunter group' in snagging new parks( and counties).

So we enter 2018. Sunspots way way down – barely one group at a time. Now we have the ARRL Grid Challenge – which seems to be mostly a digital event due to band conditions. There's a fair amount of cw and SSB activity as well for contests, and random contacts count toward your totals. Unlike other ARRL awards like WAS and Triple Play and others, contacts from any 'station location' count toward your grid total. (They always count toward your DXCC and Prefix Account). So will you be doing the Grid Chase?

To be a part of the activity, you really need to be on the ARRL Logbook of the world. Fairly simple process to get on – and YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ARRL Member to use it – but it takes a week or two to get it done. Register – and they'll send you a post card in the mail to your 'address of record' on your FCC license – and you'll use the code on it to complete your registration and get your station 'certificate' that allows you to upload QSOs. Maybe you can be working on ARRL Triple Play as well?

## **2 ) Note received from Bob K2DSW**

“I was first licensed in 1953 in New Jersey and was very active working DX and contesting until 1968. Then family obligations kept me off the air for the next 45 years until the bug hit me again in 2013. I've been trying to make up for all those Off-the-Air years ever since.

Now at age of 81, one of the items on my bucket list is to finally work and confirm all 3077 counties. I'll be working hard in all the QSO Parties in 2018 as well as the RRL's year long Grid Chase.

73

Bob K2DSQ

### **3 ) Dayton/Xenia Hamvention**

Dayton/Xenia Hamfest tickets available. You can now order, on-line, tickets for the Dayton/Xenia hamfest. Reserve your motel room, too.

### **4 ) Sunspots**

We are headed into the sunspot minimum for Cycle 24. Predictions are the next cycle won't start until 2019, and maybe 2020 with a peak in the mid 20's. Depending upon which expert you believe and which theory of sunspot formation, predictions are 'the same as cycle 24 more or less' to not as many sunspots – to almost no sunspots at all. We are still on the downward trajectory and this should continue all through 2018. The lower bands (30 and 40M) should be good for county hunting with 20M being late to open, early to shut – and 'long skip' many days. Expect brief openings on 17M and very little activity on 15, 12 and 10 – although E-skip happens and sometimes you'll get openings on those bands – especially during the summer months. The new digital modes made weak signal contacts possible.

Watch the SFI. If it pops up much more than 70, the upper bands should be active.

## **CW Stats to Dennis, KK7X**

from Dennis, KK7X:

It is that time of year again when I collect the CW Stats for the end of the year. I will accept your numbers between now and the end of March, 2018

If you are using MARAC Logger select View/Edit Book Summary and from the USA - CW row the number in the Worked column is what I need.

Please visit [http://countyhunter.com/county\\_hunter\\_cw\\_stats.html](http://countyhunter.com/county_hunter_cw_stats.html) and see if you have submitted entries in the last year or two. If any of those entries are blank please send those totals as well if you know what they are.

Also if you are working on a multiple award such as #2, #3 etc please indicate that information. If you are collecting CW counties and have never submitted your information please do so.

If you no longer wish to participate please advise so and I will delete your information from the list.

Please email your information to:

[dennis@kk7x.us](mailto:dennis@kk7x.us)

subject: CW states

## Grid Challenge I

### **Thousands Getting Their Grids On!**

And they're off! New Year's Day January 1 (UTC) marked the opening day for the ARRL International Grid Chase 2018 (IGC). Among those hitting their grids running was newly minted General-class operator Katie Thompsen, KI7HCX, of Mt. Vernon, Washington, who used the occasion to embark on the Chase and to get on HF for the first time using her own call sign. The 11-year-old comes from a ham radio family. Her dad, Todd, is W7TAO, while her older brothers are Mason, K7MWT, 15 -- who upgraded to Amateur Extra at the examination session where his sister upgraded to General -- and Tanner, K7TMT, 13.



Katie Thompsen, KI7HCX. [Todd Thompsen, W7TAO, photo]

"She called CQ Grid Square Chase on 20 meters and very quickly made 44 contacts," her dad told ARRL. "She was very excited to work her first pileup and even had two Japanese stations QSO with her. She's anxious to continue participating in the grid square chase." Todd Thompsen said all three young radio amateurs are looking forward to participating in Rookie Roundup in April.

The IGC is off to a rousing start, with some 6,400 participants from around the globe already showing up on the Leader Board as of the morning of January 4. Point totals for the International Grid Chase are shown for confirmed contacts only, and, while the leader boards are not based on real-time data, they are updated several times a day. All contacts on all bands except 60 meters are valid for Grid Chase credit, provided both stations upload their logs to Logbook of The World (LoTW) and get a match.

The objective of the year-long event is to work stations in as many different Maidenhead grid squares as possible, and then upload your logs to LoTW. Each new grid square contact confirmed through LoTW will count toward your monthly total. Stations do not have to exchange grid squares for a valid contact, although it's anticipated that many operators will do so. Some rare grid squares will be in demand. How about yours? Get on the air, and get behind your grid! If you can, get out there, and activate the scarce ones.

Complete details of the ARRL International Grid Chase 2018 appeared in the December

2017 issue of QST. For more information, contact the ARRL Contest Branch.

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Courtesy ARRL Weekly Newsletter

## Next Solar Cycle

**Plummeting temperatures could send the world into a 'mini ice age' in 2030 and could OVERRIDE global warming, claim mathematicians**

In a little over a decade the world could be plunged into a 'mini ice age', scientists have warned.

Temperatures will start dropping in 2021, according to a mathematical model of the Sun's magnetic energy.

This, they say, will lead to a phenomenon known as the 'Maunder minimum' - which has previously been known as a mini ice age when it hit between 1646 and 1715, even causing London's River Thames to freeze over.

The study says that between 2020 and 2030 solar cycles will cancel each other out.

The model of the Sun's solar cycle is producing unprecedentedly accurate predictions of irregularities within the Sun's 11-year heartbeat.

It draws on dynamo effects in two layers of the Sun, one close to the surface and one deep within its convection zone.

Researchers, led by maths professor Valentina Zharkova at Northumbria University, built up on previous research that predicts magnetic waves produced by the sun.

However, she has warned her model could not be used as proof of a mini ice age - in part because of global warming.



'I hope global warming will be overridden by this effect, giving humankind and the Earth 30 years to sort out our pollution', she told Sky News.

The model predicts that the pair of waves become increasingly offset during Cycle 25, which peaks in 2022.

During Cycle 26, which covers the decade from 2030-2040, the two waves will become exactly out of sync and this will cause a significant reduction in solar activity.

Predictions from the model suggest that solar activity will fall by 60 per cent during the 2030s to conditions last seen during the 'mini ice age' that began in 1645, according to the results.

Dr Zharkova published previous research on this phenomenon in 2015, and the new paper, published this year in *Astronomy & Geophysics* has reinforced earlier findings.

It is 172 years since a scientist first spotted that the Sun's activity varies over a cycle lasting around 10 to 12 years.

But every cycle is a little different and none of the models of causes to date have fully explained fluctuations.

Many solar physicists have put the cause of the solar cycle down to a dynamo caused by convecting fluid deep within the Sun.

'In cycle 26, the two waves exactly mirror each other – peaking at the same time but in opposite hemispheres of the Sun,' said Dr Zharkova in 2015.

'Their interaction will be disruptive, or they will nearly cancel each other.

'We predict that this will lead to the properties of a 'Maunder minimum.'

Dr Zharkova and her colleagues found that adding a second dynamo, close to the surface, completes the picture with surprising accuracy.

Dr Zharkova and her colleagues derived their model using a technique called 'principal component analysis' of the magnetic field observations from the Wilcox Solar Observatory in California.

They examined three solar cycles-worth of magnetic field activity, covering the period

from 1976-2008.

In addition, they compared their predictions to average sunspot numbers, another strong marker of solar activity.

All the predictions and observations were closely matched.

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Thanks to: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-5215575/Plummeting-temperatures-cause-mini-ice-age-2030.html#ixzz52YwXG8tM>

## Book Review of the Month

### **G-Man and the Radio Bank Robberies**

by Alan Dale

This month's story is set back in the late 1930s. Dave Doyle, G-Man, is set out from Washington to help solve a string of bank robberies that seem to be connected with radio broadcasts from shortwave station 2XY located in the NY City area. On occasions, bank robberies tend to follow the script of a radio broadcast – the Public Enemy Hour – as it's being presented – on the air – as if it's the blue print for the robbery. It's known that the group doing the robberies, and killing bank tellers in the process, is known as the Manetti Gang – but no one knows who the mastermind and head guy is.

This is another of the Big Little Book series – with a Dick Tracey cartoon on one side of a page and text on the other. I do mean little – pages are a few inches by a few inches.

So.....the G-Man gets to the broadcast studio and starts observing. There's a whole cast of potential people involved, from the script writers to the actors, to the management at the station.

Of course, there's lots of adventure with kidnapping of various people, who go missing. Even the G-Man is taken captive by the bad guys as he seems to be closing in. One witness is shot right at the studio, and other broadcast engineer in a remote truck was

hijacked.

Sadly, there's not a whole lot of 'radio' in the story. At one point in one of the robberies, the bank robbers used the shortwave station's remote truck to block the police communications for miles around, preventing quick response to a previous bank robbery. That truck went 'missing' as did the driver.

So page by page the story unfolds. At the finish, all the ends are tied up, the bad guys are caught in a planned high dollar heist right under the new shortwave studio, and all ends well. Some good twists and turns.

However, don't rush out to buy it for it's radio content.

## Parks on the Air - POTA

Things chug along with Parks on the Air with many new parks (and counties) on the air each day. Now that ARRL Grid Challenge is upon us, many operators are also uploading files to the ARRL LotW (you don't have to be a member to be on Logbook of the World) as well. Once you have an ADIF file for the WWFF database, it's the same to upload to LotW.

N4CD hasn't hit a new one in a while – they are all 250 miles or more from home and the short days and absolutely rotten propagation many days don't give you too much incentive. In mid Jan, I did get out to 10 new parks.

Last year was good with N4CD hitting over 130 different references and thousands of QSOs from parks from NY, Vt, MD, IL, TX, OK, AR, TN, etc, on my various trips around the country, to the National Convention and other trips.

One of the cool things you can do is 'win' various awards for what you do. Here are two of the awards N4CD received from WWFF for calendar year 2017 for recognition of activity.

The first is for number of references (Parks) activated. Hmm...not bad – Number 6 in the entire world! SP5UUD activated 505 references – that's more than 1 a day – year in year out – with a total of 51,000 QSOs during the year. Keep in mind the Europeans

are much more into this. N4CD put out 152 references – and 11,505 QSOs.



### **N4CD #6 rank Worldwide**

The second is for total number of QSOs made during 2017 from parks and uploaded to the WWFF database. Came out in the top 44 world wide as number 15. Only US station ahead of me was Norm, N9MM – who goes RV camping for days and days in a park and operates different times around the clock.



You can print off the certificates and hang them on the wall. Like the latest MARAC electronic awards.

Awards can be claimed in three categories:

1. Activators (references, DXCC, continents)
2. Hunters (references, DXCC per continent, continents)
3. SWL hunters (references)

**Some of the awards you can earn:**

**For Activators**

1) Activate different WWFF nature reserves

For this certificate you need to have confirmed a minimum of 11 different WWFF reference numbers in the WWFF global database (WWFF LogSearch), with a minimum of 44 QSOs logged per activity. For the active activators we offer upgrades for every 11 extra confirmed references.

## 2 ) Make QSO with other PARKS

For this certificate you need to have as Activator QSO with other Activators in other WWFF references. These activities need to be logged in the WWFF global database (WWFF LogSearch), levels start at 10, going up to 44, 88, etc

### **For Hunters**

#### 1 ) Work activators from different WWFF locations all over the world

For this certificate you need to have confirmed a minimum of 44 different WWFF reference numbers in the WWFF global database (WWFF LogSearch). For the active chasers we offer upgrades for each 44 confirmed extra references up to 444 and upgrades of 100 after that. We offer a special “novice” award for the first 10 references worked.

#### 2 ) Work WWFF activators in different DXCCs

This award is actually a series of continent awards. We are offering continent awards for Europe EUCFF, Oceania OCCFF, Africa AFCFF, Asia ASCFF and North America NACFF. For this certificate you need to have confirmed contacts with WWFF activities in at least 7 different DXCCs per continent in the WWFF global database (WWFF LogSearch). For the OCCFF awards also the VK areas are counting (only need at least 3 DXCC + 4 VK areas)) as point, for the NACFF award the USA states and Canadian provinces are counting too as DXCC (only need at least 3 DXCC + 4 states/provinces).

#### 3 ) Work WWFF activators on all continents

For this certificate you need to have confirmed contacts with WWFF activities on all 7 continents in the WWFF global database (WWFF LogSearch).

Note that Antarctica counts as a separate continent.

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The Awards are free. More into at:

<http://wwff.co/awards/global-awards/>

## On the Trail of Regens

Last month an interesting item showed up on Ebay. It was a complete circa 1957 Aurora Products 'Short Wave Kit 1809. This is a very rare item – this is the first time I've seen a complete kit show up in original box. There isn't much information on the box either – I guess you had to have faith to buy it. At near \$20 with the required headphones – it wasn't cheap. As a teenager I'd get 35c for mowing the neighbor's lawn or maybe 50c for a heavy snowstorm to clean the driveway and sidewalk. Minimum wage was way under a dollar.

Aurora made a series of kits – from crystal sets to one and two tube kits – in plastic boxes – and then transitioned into 1, 2 and 3 transistor sets – for the broadcast band. Shortly thereafter they went bankrupt. Back then, they also made millions of plastic models of airplanes, boats and other large machines like tractors. I'd venture most 'boomer generation' kids probably had something made by Aurora Plastics.

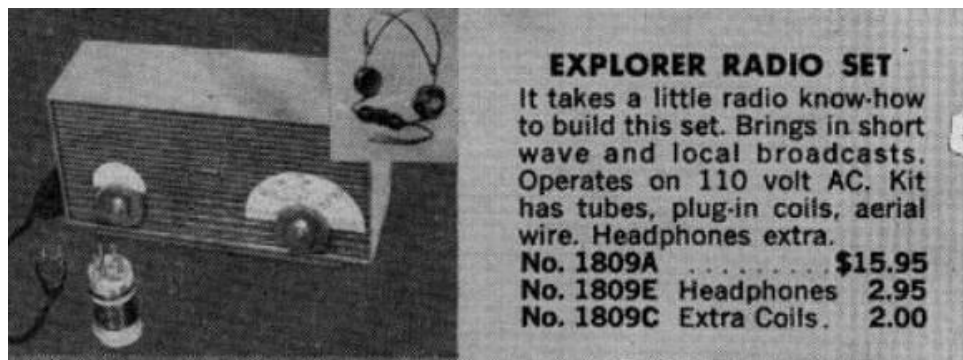


Along the way of my collecting 'regens', I'd run across some partial pieces for this kit. It's like Ebay when you see radios minus cabinets all the time – as someone had it out of the cabinet – maybe for repair – and the two were never re-united again – and 30-40-50 years later – the unit shows up minus cabinet. And/or knobs or other important parts.



One time I picked up the plastic box in the sales box – minus everything else – just a bare cabinet – that might be for this radio. Not having any documentation, it was a guess. No decals either. That wasn't too expensive. Another time, I wound up with just the electrical chassis – with no information – no knobs – no cabinet – no documentation. Nor could I find any on-line or find any collector who had a complete unit or documentation! A true orphan and rare bird. I did run across ads for it in Boys Life Magazine and even had a blurb on it back in a 2012 issue of the County Hunter News. Often, what collectors want is what they owned back in those times – and apparently almost no one ever owned or came across one of these!

This was the ad:

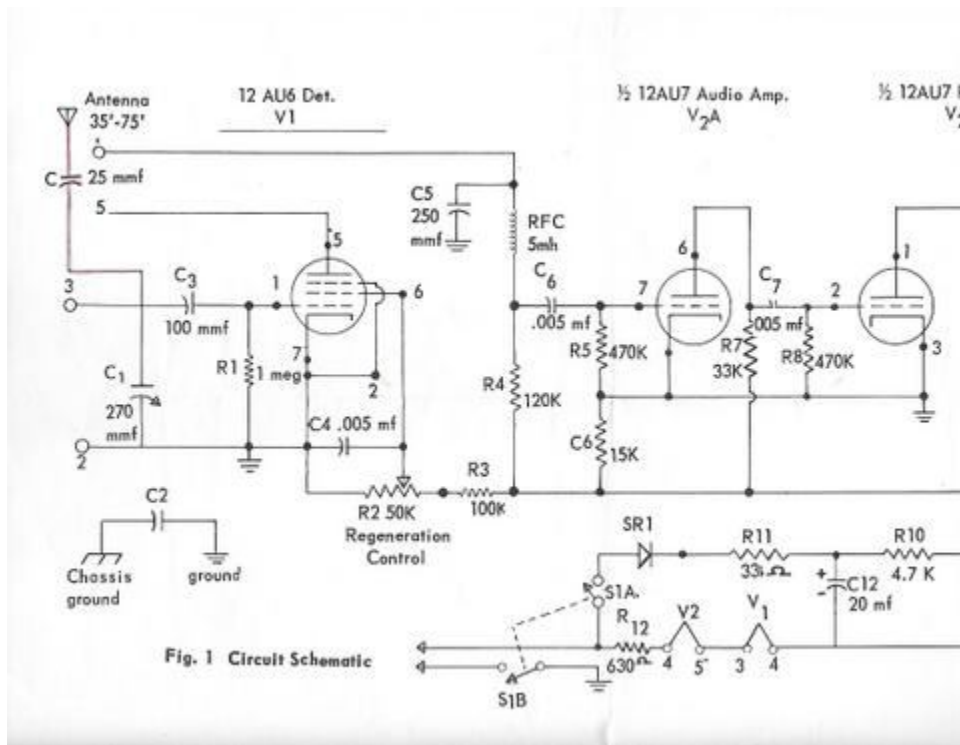


Of course, that peaked my interest in actually finding one of these! There had to be one out there. Well – maybe – there have been 'vapor ware' ads for things advertised and never sold. Apparently this model was only advertised in a few issues (2?) before being discontinued. It's the ONLY Aurora kit that ran off 110v AC.

From the ad – and from looking at the set – you wonder what type of circuit it is....there's a tuning knob and a single other control. On all the other Aurora radio kits – that other single control is an audio volume control. Could it be a regen?

Then just before xmas – one shows up on Ebay – complete – knobs and all – decals on the cabinet – AND – assembly instructions, schematic, parts lists – everything you need to get it going again! Serendipity. Now it was just a matter of 'wanting' it more than any other Ebay bidder. Fortunately, due to the holiday season and folks likely pre-occupied with other things – I managed to snag it for a good price. Woo-hoo. That fills in the collection of known Aurora radios. One other supplier of Boy Scout radios – sold through Boy's Life was Air Champ – who made crystal to 2 tube radios on a wood chassis – which you then put in the original shipping box for a complete radio.





The set uses a 12AU6 pentode detector – with feedback via voltage control on the screen grid. The plug in coil connects to terminals 1-4 – standard feedback arrangement. The audio section is two stages of triode amps in a 12AU7 dual tube. The set uses a selenium rectifier for the DC – right off the line. A large dropping resistor drops the 117v down to 24v for the two tubes connected in series. Off to the right hand side (scanner wouldn't give me the whole pic) is simply connections for headphones – not enough oomph for a speaker.

## Sunspot Cycle 25

Forecasters are already starting to make predictions for what might be in store as our sun winds down its current sunspot cycle in a few years. Are we in for a very intense cycle

of solar activity, or the beginning of a century-long absence of sunspots and a rise in colder climates?

Forecasters are already starting to make predictions for what might be in store as our sun winds down its current sunspot cycle in a few years. Are we in for a very intense cycle of solar activity, or the beginning of a century-long absence of sunspots and a rise in colder climates?

Statistically speaking, the current Cycle 24 is scheduled to draw to a close about 11 years after the previous sunspot minimum in January 2008, which means sometime in 2019. We entered the Cycle 24 sunspot minimum period in 2016 because in February and June, we already had two spot-free days. As the number of spot-free days continues to increase in 2017-2018, we will start seeing the new sunspots of Cycle 25 appear sometime in late-2019. Sunspot maximum is likely to occur in 2024, with most forecasts predicting about half as many sunspots as in Cycle 24.

The bad news is that some studies show sunspot magnetic field strengths have been declining since 2000 and are already close to the minimum needed to sustain sunspots on the solar surface. This is also supported by independent work in 2015 published in the journal Nature. By Cycle 25 or 26, magnetic fields may be too weak to punch through the solar surface and form recognizable sunspots at all, spelling the end of the sunspot cycle phenomenon, and the start of another Maunder Minimum cooling period perhaps lasting until 2100.

But the good news seems to be that none of the current forecasts suggest Cycle 25 will be entirely absent. A few forecasts even hold out some hope that a sunspot maximum equal to or greater than Cycle 24 is possible.

If you are an aurora watcher, 2022-2027 would be the best years to go hunting for them. If you are a satellite operator or astronaut, this next cycle may be even less hostile than Cycle 24 was! In any event, solar cycle prediction will be a rising challenge in the next few years as scientists pursue the Holy Grail of creating a reliable theory of why the sun even has such cycles in the first place!

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-sten-odenwald/waiting-for-the-next-suns\\_b\\_11812282.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-sten-odenwald/waiting-for-the-next-suns_b_11812282.html)

## Mobile Activity this Period

At the end of December:

KB6UF, Ron, headed from CA to LA running counties along the way on SSB.

Bill, NU0Q headed from KS to the TX panhandle – then further west to NM and AZ and CA on a multi-week trip.

Bill, K2HVN, noted out mobile in SC headed south

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Parks on the Air – were activated by:

Kerri, KB3WAV in PA, MD, and Washington DC

Norm, N9MM, in Texas and New Mexico

K9HMX in IN

N5PHT in TX – many different parks

K0ATZ in MO – many different parks

W1TEF – in SC

AI5P in NM - several different parks

W5MIG in TX



AI5P Activated this park – Sierra NM

N2CX in NY and MD

- - -

Mobiles

John, AF5CC, headed from OK up to MO and back

Jack, K0MAF was active in FL

AB4WL was active in AL. Later in Jan, active with KF4INA for OM/YL contacts in AL counties. Active on many days in January all over the state.

W0NAC/W0LXJ busy in eastern CO – including data modes.

Kerry, W4SIG took a trip to AR. MS, LA and back

Ed, K8ZZ headed out from KS through OK into west TX. Then down to Presideo at the bottom of TX then back NW again. Put out a few in KS

Mike, NF0N, ran counties in NE and IA.

Peter, N4UP, noted in FL, headed to GA, and then ran a lot of counties there. Out on several trips and was one of most active mobiles during month.

W4SIG : “Arkansas mobile trip comments...I had a blast!! As we all know condx were and are pretty challenging. Although I know some people just couldn't hear me well on the bands I was able to pull in quite a few contacts (more than I expected). Thanks to N4RS, K0DEQ, and WD5CSK I was able to make at least one contact on 80 meters in all 50 counties I ran over the two day trip. After dark 80 CW was really hopping with about 20-30 contacts per county. I even got at least one contact on 75SSB in 90% of the counties. 40 meters was up and down with surprisingly low activity on 40 SSB. 30 was the best and most consistent band. 20 meters CW results were weak at best and SSB contacts almost nonexistent. 17 meters resulted in a couple of contacts in about 50% of the counties. Even 15 meters opened up for a handful of counties in the early afternoon. Thanks for everyone who rode along and especially for those who spotted me when my self spots just weren't going thru in the mountains. 73!

## GPS and Einstein

### Real-World Relativity: The GPS Navigation System

"What good is Relativity?" It is a commonplace to think of Einstein's Theory of Relativity as an abstract and highly arcane mathematical theory that has no consequences for everyday life. This is in fact far from the truth.

Consider for a moment that when you are traveling in a commercial airliner, the pilot and crew are navigating to your destination with the aid of data from the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), of which the United States NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS for short) is the most familiar component.

GPS was developed by the United States Department of Defense to provide a satellite-based navigation system for the U.S. military. It was later put under joint DoD and Department of Transportation control to provide for both military and civilian navigation uses, and has become a part of daily life. Most recent-model cars are equipped with built-in GPS navigation systems (increasingly as standard equipment), you can purchase

hand-held GPS navigation units that will give you your position on the Earth (latitude, longitude, and altitude) to an accuracy of 5 to 10 meters that weigh only a few ounces and cost around \$100, and GPS technology is increasingly found in smartphones (though not all smartphones derive location information from GPS satellites).

The nominal GPS configuration consists of a network of 24 satellites in high orbits around the Earth, but up to 30 or so satellites may be on station at any given time. Each satellite in the GPS constellation orbits at an altitude of about 20,000 km from the ground, and has an orbital speed of about 14,000 km/hour (the orbital period is roughly 12 hours. The satellite orbits are distributed so that at least 4 satellites are always visible from any point on the Earth at any given instant (with up to 12 visible at one time). Each satellite carries with it an atomic clock that "ticks" with a nominal accuracy of 1 nanosecond (1 billionth of a second). A GPS receiver in an airplane determines its current position by comparing the time signals it receives from the currently visible GPS satellites (usually 6 to 12) and trilaterating on the known positions of each satellite. The precision achieved is remarkable: even a simple hand-held GPS receiver can determine your absolute position on the surface of the Earth to within 5 to 10 meters in only a few seconds. A GPS receiver in a car can give accurate readings of position, speed, and course in real-time!

More sophisticated techniques, like Differential GPS (DGPS) and Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) methods, deliver centimeter-level positions with a few minutes of measurement. Such methods allow use of GPS and related satellite navigation system data to be used for high-precision surveying, autonomous driving, and other applications requiring greater real-time position accuracy than can be achieved with standard GPS receivers.

To achieve this level of precision, the clock ticks from the GPS satellites must be known to an accuracy of 20-30 nanoseconds. However, because the satellites are constantly moving relative to observers on the Earth, effects predicted by the Special and General theories of Relativity must be taken into account to achieve the desired 20-30 nanosecond accuracy.

Because an observer on the ground sees the satellites in motion relative to them, Special Relativity predicts that we should see their clocks ticking more slowly. Special Relativity predicts that the on-board atomic clocks on the satellites should fall behind clocks on the ground by about 7 microseconds per day because of the slower ticking rate due to the time dilation effect of their relative motion.

Further, the satellites are in orbits high above the Earth, where the curvature of spacetime due to the Earth's mass is less than it is at the Earth's surface. A prediction of

General Relativity is that clocks closer to a massive object will seem to tick more slowly than those located further away. As such, when viewed from the surface of the Earth, the clocks on the satellites appear to be ticking faster than identical clocks on the ground. A calculation using General Relativity predicts that the clocks in each GPS satellite should get ahead of ground-based clocks by 45 microseconds per day.

The combination of these two relativistic effects means that the clocks on-board each satellite should tick faster than identical clocks on the ground by about 38 microseconds per day ( $45-7=38$ )! This sounds small, but the high-precision required of the GPS system requires nanosecond accuracy, and 38 microseconds is 38,000 nanoseconds. If these effects were not properly taken into account, a navigational fix based on the GPS constellation would be false after only 2 minutes, and errors in global positions would continue to accumulate at a rate of about 10 kilometers each day! The whole system would be utterly worthless for navigation in a very short time.

The engineers who designed the GPS system included these relativistic effects when they designed and deployed the system. For example, to counteract the General Relativistic effect once on orbit, the onboard clocks were designed to "tick" at a slower frequency than ground reference clocks, so that once they were in their proper orbit stations their clocks would appear to tick at about the correct rate as compared to the reference atomic clocks at the GPS ground stations. Further, each GPS receiver has built into it a microcomputer that, in addition to performing the calculation of position using 3D trilateration, will also compute any additional special relativistic timing calculations required, using data provided by the satellites.

Relativity is not just some abstract mathematical theory: understanding it is absolutely essential for our global navigation system to work properly!

## On the Road with N4CD I

Day 1 of New Year report - 1 1 18 de N4CD. Other than the weekly trip to KFF-4423 – about a 20 minute trip from the house to the nearby park – the N4CD mobile hasn't gone too far in the winter weather – short days – dreary days – and waiting for the Grid Challenge in 2018. So the first day of the new year I had to get out mobile to see what would be happening in the Grid Chase. This was also a holiday so most folks probably

had time to be on the radio.

I went over to POTA Park KFF-4423 in EM12 (Dallas County) to add a few more contacts for this park. Cold. 16 deg in driveway as I put the antennas on the car and drove over to the park in the next grid to mine. 19 deg when I got there. Fortunately the sun was shining and it was a 'nice' day that way. Still very cold for here- 30 degrees below normal for highs. The forecast for the day was that temps would be going to get to 27 or so today for the high. .

Started 20m cw and worked a few DX stations and a few others. Tuned bands - no one calling CQ grids I could hear. Few Qs going on and usually SKCC stuff, rag chews or SKN- Straight Key Night/Day going on but not many. Put two dozen in log on 20cw – mostly park hunters and county hunters. Disappointing. No pile ups. The DX seemed to be going full bore but hard to work and busy with loud stations overseas and only S1-S3 on my mobile radio in TX. No way for me to get through. US? Not much of anything ....yet. Now was 11 am local time. Maybe they partied too much for New Years Eve?

Moved to 30m cw - a bit better with two dozen in log - usual park/county chasers, a few county hunters and few others. No big crowds. Disappointed.

Went to 40m. A dozen in the log including P2P with N5PHT. No big pileups but none expected.

Then went to 20m SSB about 12:30pm local CST. Hmm...found out where the grid folks are - just like NPOTA. 20m SSB. Added 100 in the log in quickly. Lot of NPOTA types resurfaced and the usual park hunters. Guess I worked 50 grids but likely only get half confirmed in LoTW. We'll see. Some Qs were same station on different frequencies.

Every time I work VE5XU, we exchange weather reports. Fifteen below zero up there in Canada. Not much more in a few others places like northern NY either or WI and MN! It was about 25 at the time in TX but he was 40 degrees colder up north . Brrrr.

A few clueless people were on - 'what's with the grids'....and I took some time to clue them in. A few were giving six digit grids. You only need the first 4 – like EM12.

EM12 has 2 million people - and over 1000 hams.....maybe I'll be the first in folks logs? My home grid EM13 likely has a million people and 1000 hams. I'm planning on the scarcer grids in TX if the activity justify the miles later in the month. I need to finish running all the parks in TX and OK. Probably I'll run most of the grids in TX, but one



down in the corner of Big Bend National Park is high clearance 4 wheel drive only, with special 'backwoods permit' on 'the worst road in the park' with security concerns along the Rio Grande River in sparsely populated areas (mainly wild critters) with drug trafficking worries. I'll probably skip that one!

County Hunters in the log included W8TZA, NF0N, KA7ICF, WE7G/m, K4XI, K7SEN,

Thanks for the Qs. Good first day with 187Q uploaded to LoTW. Not as active so far as NPOTA but maybe we will get there. Maybe after the hangovers finish? hi hi

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On Wednesday Jan 3, I headed over to the local park in my home grid for the weekly CW Open Test at 1900Z. . No POTA there. Put 100Q in the log for my home grid EM13, including 52 in the CW test, with the rest county hunters and grid hunters. It wasn't a weekend or holiday so limited number of hams on the air.

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A weekend was coming up. Jan 6/7. Looked at the map and the weather forecast and figured I could do a 2 day trip before the heavy rain and storms moved in. Early Saturday headed up to the Caddo LBJ National Grasslands, KFF-4370, Fannin County, Grid EM23, about 75 miles from the house - to give out Grid EM23. There was only one existing contact ever made from EM25 so far. That sounded like a good plan and a healthy pileup was expected on a weekend day. Then I would head on up to EM24 at Hugo State Park to the northeast another hour for a bit. After that, further west for 90 minutes over to Lake Murray State Park in EM14 then home. Overnight along the route.

I got up to the Grasslands at 10:00 AM local time. There is no internet there – at least on Verizon. No phone service either. I call and call. On 20M CW, get Bob VE6UX and Jess W6LEN. They'll spot me. I struggle to get a dozen in the log. Work hard at it, work some special event stations, then hunt on 20M. Not much going on. Band sounds weak, east coast is barely there, and only decent direction is a few CA and ID stations. Go to 30M for another handful. Band pretty quiet – one or two QSOs and not much else across entire band. No one, nada, zip on 40M CW. Tune across 40cw. Spent five minutes calling CQ. No answers. Hmmm. What's going on?

I go to 20M SSB. Sit on 14336 since 'the frequency is not in use' for 10 minutes calling CQ. Work six stations – ID, CA.....that's it. The usual nets are running on 20M on Saturday morning – there are a few QSOs, but not much else. Give up after 90 minutes

as it's going nowhere fast. I finish with 27 QSOs. I expected 127 for a new grid activation.

I decide to NOT make the trip to OK. Why bother?

15 minutes later, I'm back south at the main highway where there is internet access. I check the propagation banners.. SFI 68. Low. A=5. Not too bad. K=0. Very good. Things should be working. But.....for the bands.....80M POOR, 40M-30M POOR, 20M POOR, 17M UP – POOR. No wonder now that I couldn't make contacts. That confirmed my decision to head back home. The ionosphere was messed up big time. Grabbed a slice of comfort pizza at the store there....and drove the 90 minutes back to home .

Bummer.

Entered 27Q to the POTA database and LotW database. Didn't see a single county hunter call in the log for Fannin County even though I put out calls on the county hunter net frequencies. Where is everyone?

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Wed, Jan 10

Head over to the local park KFF-4423 which is half hour ride from home for the Wednesday session of the CW test at 1900Z. Figure I'll add a few more Qs to the total for the park, I'm working on making 1000 QSOs there for the “Kilo” award, plus it is decent place to participate in the hour long CWT. Arrived an hour before and worked a few county hunters – mostly on 30M. 20M was 'long skip' and not much of it. No contacts on 40m cw for county hunters. Then hit 14336 and put a few in the log – mostly ID and CA. Made 53Q in the CWT, and finished with an even 100Q. Headed on home. Same grid as before – EM12 – probably the most populous grid in TX people and ham wise! Hi hi Maybe Houston is about the same – could be a toss up. Lots of hams down that way.

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Wed. Jan 17

Headed over to the local park KFF-4423 in Dallas County (Grid EM12) for the Wednesday session of the CW Open test. Arrived about 1800 on a very chilly day with

temp at 28 degrees but sunny. Gave out the park, county and grid on 17, 20,30,40 cw and 20m SSB. Only a handful of contacts on 17m – most in CA, however they were new 'grid bands' if the folks QSL to LoTW. Between county hunters , park chasers, and the CW Open, put 100 QSOs into the log – and aiming for 1,000 total QSOs to earn the 'Kilo' award – which is – 1,000 QSOs or more from the same park. Thanks for your calling in – they all count for POTA. Caught a few more grids for the 'grid challenge' as well. I set the keyer up to 28 wpm but I was still one of the 'slow ones' for the CWT. It goes fast! Hi hi. The exchange is Name and CWT Number or State if you have none. Spent 2 ½ hours there. Did catch a CM2MM there on 20cw. Hope he QSLs to LotW – need that one . Also worked the special event station K4C – at Cowpens National Battlefield - one of the NPOTA units with a Park to Park contact. Oh, and NI6BB gave me a call on CW – that's the Battleship Iowa out in the LA area in CA Had a fun day.

## Atwater Kent Radios

If you are a fan of early broadcast radios, you'll know the name Atwater Kent. This firm made radios from the early 1920s up through the 1930s with a hundred models. Nearly all were TRF sets – tuned radio frequency sets – RF amps then a detector then audio stages. Later he built superhets starting about 1927.

There's a nice museum about 80 miles east of Houston if you are ever down that way – it features just about every radio that was ever made, plus lots of literature on the radios

Give a look

<http://www.atwaterkentsrus.com/>

Some of the early sets like the Breadboard Model 10 and 12 can now sell for over \$1000 in pristine condition. Many of the cathedral sets go for hundreds and hundreds of dollars. The very common AK-20 and AK-30 can be bought for \$20-\$50.

The Edington Family Museum of Atwater Kent Radios” is now open by reservation.

Jimmy Edington is a long time antique radio collector specializing in the history of A. Atwater Kent and the history of the Atwater Kent Manufacturing Company. The Museum, located in Silsbee, Texas, about 80 miles east of Houston, is in a beautifully restored hotel where Jimmy has repurposed the hallways and the individual rooms to house his collection in a well thought out chronological order of the development of AK radios, speakers and advertisements. Please contact Jimmy at: 337-476-4328 or [atwaterkentsrus@gmail.com](mailto:atwaterkentsrus@gmail.com) and make arrangements to visit “The Edington Family Museum”.....you will not be disappointed

## USCA – County Hunter Stats de K2MF

Here are some USA-CA award statistics for the end of 2017.

There were 1262 USA-CA awards issued between 8/15/65 and 11/3/17 resulting in an average of 24.27 USA-CA awards issued per year over a period of 52.25 years, or 2.01 USA-CA awards issued per month over a period of 627 months.

5 USA-CA awards were issued to SWLs, so this leaves 1257 USA-CA awards that were issued to amateur radio operators.

These 1257 USA-CA awards issued to amateur radio operators are divided geographically as follows: 1174 (USA), 49 (DX) and 34 (Canada).

503 USA-CA award holders are confirmed silent keys and an additional 123 USA-CA award holders have expired licenses with no other explanation given and are no longer listed on QRZ.

This results in 626 "retired" USA-CA awards, leaving 631 currently licensed USA-CA awards remaining.

The currently licensed 631 USA-CA awards are divided geographically as follows: 575 (USA), 36 (DX) and 20 (Canada).

What pops out of all of this is that there is nearly an exact 50-50% ratio of currently

licensed (631) to "retired" (626) USA-CA award holders.

To active county hunters I think that these are really amazing statistics.

**De K2MF 1/4/2018**

## Hara Arena – Spooky Adventure

"Creepy and Surreal" Urban Explorers' Video Reveals Largely Unseen Side of Hara Arena

Reminiscent of underwater footage from a TV documentary about the discovery of a long-lost vessel, a recently posted YouTube video that takes a deep dive into the innards of former Hamvention® venue Hara Arena has been attracting notice within the Amateur Radio community. The narrated video probe was posted on December 22 by Once Occupied, an urban exploration group that originated in Dayton, Ohio. It's not the first video of the derelict Hara Arena since it closed -- and since anything thought to be of value inside was auctioned off. The IRS put the Hara Arena complex itself on the auction block last August to satisfy a tax lien, but there were no successful bidders.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBPVB\\_xnJnU&sns=em](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBPVB_xnJnU&sns=em)

It's not clear whether the three-person Once Occupied expedition had permission to be inside Hara Arena nor how the individuals, who do not identify themselves, gained entry to the building complex. Among the more fascinating revelations was how much equipment, event paraphernalia, and just plain debris remain inside the 165,000-square foot Hara complex, which included an apartment.

"This is creepy and surreal, but I couldn't turn it off and had to watch the whole thing," allowed Pete Varounis, NL7XM, the QCWA's official call sign historian, who shared the video with his colleagues on the QCWA board of directors. "You will recognize entire areas that teemed with activity during every Hamvention," he continued. "It looks like raw footage from Chernobyl after the Russian nuclear disaster."

The urban explorers were a bit more mundane. "The facilities include a bar pub,

ballroom, conference center, ice rink, and four exhibition halls. This place is huge!" the narrative posted with the more than 20-minute video clip related. As the Once Occupied team noted, Hara Arena over the years played host to sports teams and top entertainers -- including Elton John and the Rolling Stones -- as well as to Hamvention, which relocated to the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia last year after Hara closed in 2016.

Much of this particular video covers parts of Hara Arena never seen by Hamventioners -- including catwalks, tunnels, and behind-the-scenes rooms and facilities such as offices, kitchen areas, and storerooms, some of which still contained unopened goods and supplies. File cabinets still store paper files, and abandoned computer and other equipment is scattered about. At least one box the group encountered contained new T shirts for a sports team that once made its home at Hara Arena. Some areas of the building's interior seem to have been hit by a tornado. The explorers do not appear to take anything from Hara Arena or disturb what remained behind.

"Our passion is exploring abandoned places. We explore because we love adventure and the thrill of the hunt," Once Occupied says on its Facebook page. "Documenting our journeys through digital media allows us to share the stories of the past." The group warns that such urban exploration is not without risk and "not for everyone."

Hara Arena's future remains in limbo. An IRS staff member who was involved in the 2017 auction told ARRL that the agency will not put Hara Arena up for auction again but said there is "a lot of interest in the property." She said other lien holders, including a mortgage holder and the Town of Trotwood, eventually could get the opportunity to put the building on auction in an effort to satisfy their liens on the property.

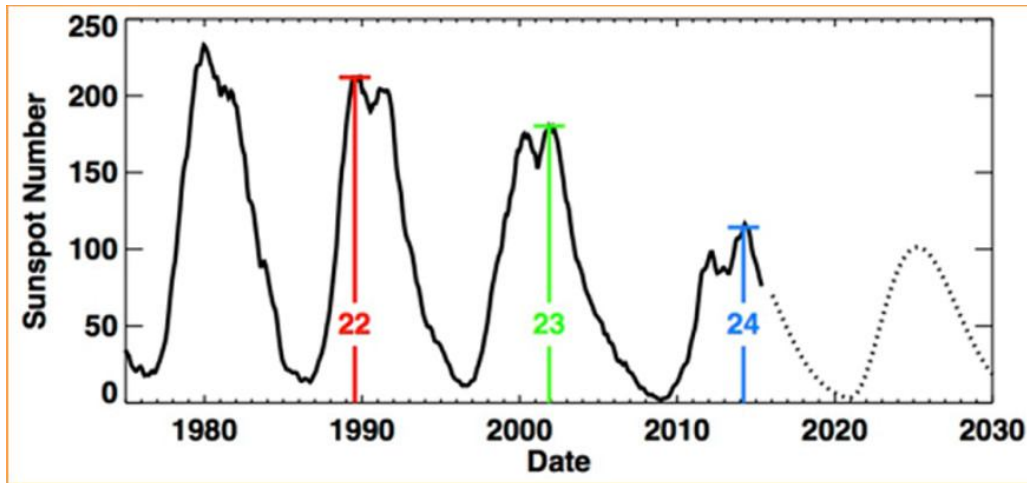
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Courtesy ARRL Weekly Newsletter

## Solar Cycle 25 III

We find that the average strength of the polar fields near the end of Cycle 24 will be similar to (or slightly weaker) that measured near the end of Cycle 23, indicating that Cycle 25 will be similar in strength (or slightly weaker) to the current cycle. After four years of simulation the variability across our ensemble indicates that the accumulated

uncertainty is on the order of about 15%. This uncertainty arises from stochastic variations in the convective motion details, the active region tilt, and changes in the meridional flow. In addition, small cycles (like cycle 24) are typically preceded by long extended minima, and so we expect a similar long extended minimum before Cycle 25.



<http://solarcyclescience.com/forecasts.html>

## CQ Magazine

Info posted from the QRZ forum, post dated 12/28/17

If you were waiting for your Nov and Dec print issues of CQ Magazine to arrive, you'll wait a long time. Nov and Dec are 'electronic only' and available to anyone on line at

Dec 2017 <http://ca.zinio.com/reader.jsp?issue=416437244&o=ext>

Nov 2017 <http://ca.zinio.com/reader.jsp?issue=416437244&o=ext>

Note: the above links crashed my browser on both Internet Explorer and Firefox. It worked OK in Google Chrome. You have to download Adobe Flash to read the

magazine issues.

Regular print issues should resume in January 2018. Subscribers will be credited with 2 more print issues by extending their expiration date

In the Dec 2017 issue, Jesse, KA7ICF, talks about Parks on the Air in his Awards Column. Lots of articles on digital.

## QRZ Awards

If you want to play the 'awards game', there are several alternative 'electronic confirmation' options available to you. One is QRZ, which has it's own database and where you can earn awards based upon confirmations from other stations in the electronic log.

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### **Here's the US Counties Award Rules**

The United States Counties Award is available to any QRZ member whose Logbook on QRZ.com contains at least one confirmed contact from each of 100 US Counties. Endorsements are also available for 250, 500 and 1000 counties.

Each parish in Louisiana and each borough in Alaska shall be considered one “county” for the purposes of the United States Counties Award

All contacts must originate within a 50 mile radius of a given geographic point

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Comment de N4CD

Well, that last requirement of all contacts from basically 'home' shoots that award in the butt. Any active county hunter is going to want credit for counties worked on the road – often half of the final count. Scratch that award for general county hunter interest.



Most of the ARRL awards are the same way, other than prefixes by CQ Magazine and DXCC. WAS, triple Play, Centennial, etc, are all based upon 'home location'. Grid Challenge, which is a seriously flawed program in my view, and NPOTA didn't care where you were as long as you were in the same DXCC country. It's good that way – the only thing LotW is good for – but Grid Challenge ends at the end of the year so it's good for a year then it turns into a turkey.

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QRZ also has a 'grid award' but the same requirement that you need to make all contacts from the 'home location'. Duh! No interest for mobiles like county hunters.

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### **QRZ Grid Squared Award**

This award is based on 2-letter/2-number Maidenhead grid squares, such as DM43, FN31, etc.. This award is available to any QRZ member whose Logbook on QRZ.com contains at least one confirmed contact from each of 100 unique Maidenhead grid squares.

All contacts must be made from within a single grid square and originate within a 50 mile radius of a given geographic point.

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comment de N4CD

That's even more of a uninteresting award as you might have moved 10 miles across a grid square boundary and have to start over. Again, mobiles are not eligible for this award unless you sit within 50 miles of home in the same grid. Useless! Like most ARRL awards for WAS and Triple Play.

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## **Parks on the Air Awards**

The Parks on the Air program has a whole series of awards you can work on – both as a 'chaser' working people in the parks and also as a 'activator' putting out the parks.

The minimum number of QSOs required is 10 from a park to get credit for an activation. There are awards for catching 10 or more parks, with endorsements for each additional 10. If you've been working N4CD, you've probably worked dozens of parks by now!

The same is true for an 'activator'. You can get awards for putting out 10 parks and multiples thereof – from the USA KFF program. You can also work on awards for the International WWFF program, but they are harder to earn. First you need to make at least 44 QSOs for each of those awards – as a hunter or activator. They seem to go in multiples of 44. The US awards are easy – sometimes just going out on 'activity' weekends and making 10Qs to get more parks on the air.

Well, I received a nice award from the KFF group – the US entity and separate from the world wide WWFF. . It's hard to be 'competitive' against the EU folks as the Europeans are fanatical – often getting 200 more more QSOs from the chasers, and with some folks putting out 400-500 parks a year – that's more than one a day. However, in the US, N4CD came out 'top dog'



**Number #1 US – Activations**

I ran a lot of parks in 2017 – over 130 of them and it turned out that was more than anyone else in the USA. Number One!

Woo-hoo!

The Awards are free – sent electronically – and you can print them off – hang them on the wall – keep them in a notebook - .....nice..... the awards are given out to the top 44 people in the world. I didn't have to apply for these – they just showed up in my in-box.

There are also US awards for activating or working all parks in a STATE, or activating parks in all 50 states. Both of those are challenges for the bigger states or ones with 150 or more park units but the challenges are there. So are I've run 2/3rds of OK, and about 50% of TX but the un-run ones are further and further away – hi hi. Just like running counties – you have to travel a lot more to finish up a state! Hi hi.

## N2CX Activation Report

Recap: N2CX POTA heat wave activation Jan 11

Gosh, the temp was so pleasant Saturday (but rainy) that I spent time enjoying the outdoors and forgot the recap!

Yesterday at Neshaminy SP, K/KFF-1390 was a pleasure as well - almost nice enough to set up a chair and operate al fresco, though 50 damp degrees and a slight wind prevented that.

Though it's at the edge of the urban Phila area, it is a pleasant site along the Delaware River where folks like to hangout and walk the trails when the weather cooperates. On driving into the park I noticed several deer grazing in grassy areas of the park. Even they enjoyed the ambiance. Though not full, the lot had a good number of cars for a winter

day and dozens of walkers, joggers and folks out with their four-legged friends - next week it will be empty as the temp dips into the 20's once more. I love the place, too, since it's relatively convenient, very quiet radio-wise and has ample space in the lot to ham it up.

The primary goal was to log another 20 Q's to reach the 44 needed for a valid activation. 40m started slowly with about half "regulars" and half new calls. A switch to 20m and things really picked up. Though QSB was rapid and deep my indicators of reasonable prop - W6LEN and VE6UX came through quite well, as did a number of western stations. 30m served to round things out with yet more logged, again about half new calls and even a couple QRP'ers who showed up. Unfortunately no EU stations were heard at all. Until 2018, there were often a half dozen or so worked in every activation. Is the schism between the US POTA and WWFF making the folks across the pond shy away?

After 30 good Q's it was time to take a good half hour walk to take advantage of the seasonal anomaly. Yikes! Signs prominently advertised that parts of the premises were open for deer hunting! Maybe that's why they were grazing in the parking lot! Fortunately the only hunters I encountered used Elecrafts and Kenwoods, not Remingtons.

## On the Road with N4CD II

The big chill had let up for a bit. Time for another N4CD road trip to east TX over the MLK 3 day holiday weekend – and many folks would be home. It was frigid across most of the middle and east parts of the country – from 10 below to 30 above – and wind and snow. Winter was striking hard, but we'd have some decent weather with temps in the 40s and above. So a plan was hatched. There was just 3 days of decent weather before 'winter' returned.

I could run some 'all time new ones' (ATNOs) in east Texas – some had just recently be added to the list – the 'state forests' – several hundred around the country – and a handful in TX. I could do about 3 parks a day for 3 days then make it home by Monday night.

At the same time, I checked my needs for 3<sup>rd</sup> time transmit and for 10<sup>th</sup> time/6<sup>th</sup> CW to

see if I could hit a few along the route. I'm slowly making progress but the burning desire to finish up isn't there. I just take them as I get them. There weren't too many needs posted on the K3IMC [countyhunterweb.org](http://countyhunterweb.org) – but with 254 counties – many can't post needs as they need too many to list.

### **Saturday Jan 13**

First on the agenda was Atlanta State Park in Cass County in northeast TX. The website for the park noted it was 'closed' for hunting on that Saturday but I was optimistic that I could still get on park property and stay for 2 hours or so. Left home at 6:30am before the sun was up. Sunrise was going to be around 7:30. Over through Hunt, Hopkins, Franklin Morris to Cass and Park KFF-2984. It was 180 miles over to 'there' so it took a few hours. Fortunately, the 'blockade' for the park was ¼ mile inside the park – so I could sit and run the park with no hassles at the entrance. A nice lady ranger stopped by for a few minutes. Each year they have a controlled hunt – all the campers and day use folks are gone for the few days – and they give out permits for a controlled number of people to hunt on the state park grounds. It's on the shore of a fairly decent size lake – 20,000 acres – that features catfish weighing up to 75 lbs.



I ran the county, park, and grid – got to 44 quickly then moved on. So many parks- so few days! Off to Caddo Lakes State Park in Harrison County. Almost forgot to run Marion County on the way there but did at the last moment – but not many around for a quick run. Didn't have time to spot.



From the state web site:

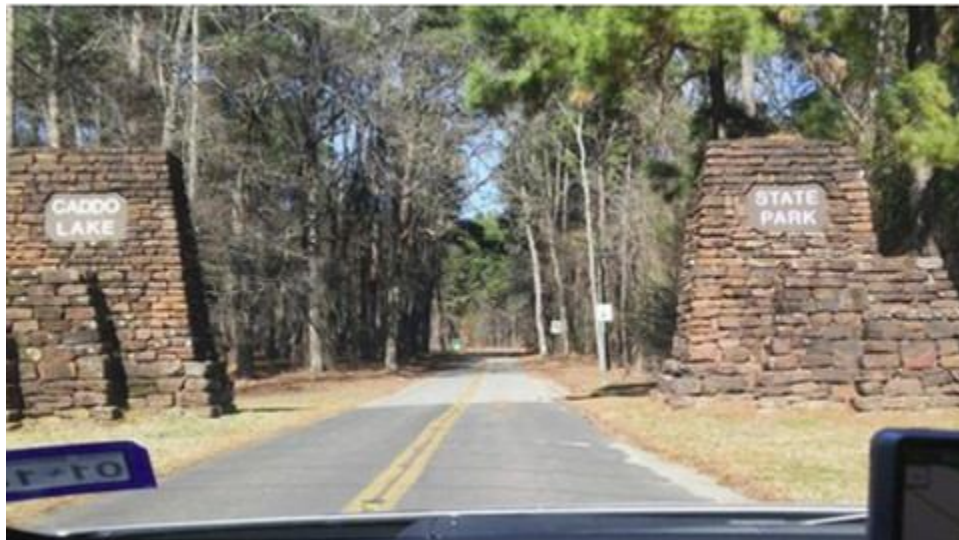
“Bald cypress trees draped with Spanish moss tower over the maze of bayous, sloughs and ponds of Caddo Lake. Paddle these waterways, stay in a historic cabin, or try your luck fishing. Discover an East Texas treasure!

Alligators live in the park; read our alligator safety tips before your visit.

Access the 26,810-acre Caddo Lake, which harbors more than 70 species of fish. We have a fishing pier and a boat ramp. You do not need a fishing license to fish from shore in a state park. Ask about borrowing fishing equipment to use in the park.

Explore Caddo Lake’s twists and turns. Rent a canoe in the park or bring your own canoe or kayak. You can also venture onto more than 50 miles of paddling trails in the Caddo Lake area;”

You can bet I'm not jumping in for a swim in swampy waters. It might be the end of N4CD.



Caddo Lake State Park Entrance

I'm still in the “Percy Picture” phase and post the pics to the Parks on the Air Facebook page when I have sufficient connectivity. You can spot with just a smidgen of signal on

DX Summit – Facebook takes a little bit more as does W6RK. Uploading a picture can take minutes at weak signals so sometimes the picture is added later when I hit better coverage areas. You can see loads of pics there of others activations at various parks around the country, too.

OK...that was two down – ran the park, county (Harrison) and the grid. Got to 44 and moved on. Whoa.... this was a contest day with the North American QSO Party now underway and filling up the CW bands. As Jess, W6LEN, commented on the FB page - 'the bands are full of music' for a CW enthusiasts. It's nice to hear lots of activity – often lately there's only a very few signals on the entire band during the day!

The North American QSO Party is run on two separate weekends – one for CW – one for SSB – for a 12 hour period starting around noon TX time. It's a good way this year to work grids – and of course, folks are in counties for the county hunters. If you are working on Triple Play for ARRL, it's one way to get confirmed LotW contacts – most of the folks do QSL there.

So I wind up in the next park – which isn't far away – it's the Caddo Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) – KFF-0633 – still in Harrison County. I know some of the county hunters won't work me again – they got their county. Some will (thank you – I need the contacts to get to 44) – and with the contest raging – it will be interesting. I head to 14114 – way above the normal CW bands but where county county hunters often go when 'down below' is QRM Central. This is a large wildlife preserve – open sunrise to sunset – for nature lovers and bird watchers.



## Caddo Lakes NWR

The Parks on the Air program not only contains 'state parks' but also NWRs and Preserves and State Forests now. There are over 4450 'entities' you can activate and chase.

From Wiki:

“The Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge is a 8,493-acre (3,437 ha) protected area of Texas managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It is located along Caddo Lake in East Texas.

The area that currently encompasses the refuge was highly valued in the 19th Century because its loamy soil supported rich cotton plantations. During World War II, Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant was established on the site. In 1993, the importance of the wetlands surrounding Caddo Lake was recognized at the Ramsar Convention, as the area was one of thirteen in the US that were deemed to be of "international significance". The NWR was authorized in 2000 to protect the bottomlands of the Harrison Bayou.”

Well, to be honest with y'all, I never heard of it before the Parks on the Air – WWFF – World Wide Flora and Fauna – started up last year for the US. If you keep your ears and eyes open, you learn something new every day. With the NAQP raging, I just worked a whole bunch of folks in the contest (exchange: name and state) to quickly get more than 44 in the log. Totaled up to 100 contest contacts by the time I was done, with some contacts made from the motel not too far away after dinner. Over 45 in the park so it was 'activated'. So far this year I've managed to get 44 in all but one park – and that was on a day with horrible propagation where I struggled to get 27 after 90 minutes. Murphy can throw a wrench in the works at any time. Actually, I've been in TX for over 25 years and never had reason to visit any of the state parks before this event!

That night spent in a Days Inn in Marshall, TX. \$63. On the way there I passed a Golden Corral Buffet restaurant so that was where I had a nice dinner (\$12.50 plus tip). I like the places with a salad bar and fruit selection. Slept well – drove 250 miles on the first day.

The days are still short this time of year. Sunset in east TX before 6pm. Yuck. I like the long days with sunset after 8pm!

**Sunday Jan 14**



Today I had to wait for the sun to get up. I was up at 6:15, had breakfast, then had to kill another 45 minutes before daylight showed. I'm no fan of going down dark highways, or even at 'sunrise' through the wilds of TX with all the wildlife roaming around (deer). You see enough of the carcasses of ones killed the previous night before the road crews haul them off.

First up today was a park already 'activated' but new to me – Martin Creek Lake State Park – KFF 3036 in Rusk County. Just after 1400z (9am) the contacts started on 40m cw, then up the bands. You can work some Europeans in the morning on 20cw and half a dozen went in the log (DL1EBR, IW2BNA, IP1J, IW2NXI, SP1C, OE6BMG, F6EOC, and on SSB – F1BLL, OJ4YT, OZ5HP - all park chasers. Ran across NF7E, Bob, out in AZ giving out grids in the Grid Challenge. We met two years ago at Montezuma's Castle National Monument in AZ – during NPOTA – as we both activated the park on the same day! He was busy trying to give out his grid.



Martin Creek Lake State Park

It's the usual thing – camping, a pavilion for groups, fishing, hiking – and during the winter – many 'fishing contests' to see who can catch the most/biggest fish! I just used my state pass to get in, found a nice spot to operate, made radio contacts for 90 minutes, then zipped on out again. I did enjoy the view of the lake. Hi hi. The sun was out – warm in the car with the sun beating down even though only in the 50s.

Next up – back east to the Sabine National Forest – KFF-4416. The last time I was out

this way a year ago, it wasn't on the list of parks. It was just added in late 2017. So...gotta run it. The forest is a bunch of Swiss Cheese – with lots of private property still 'within' the park boundaries - and finding a sign for it was a challenge till I spotted the ranger station! That will work for the 'park picture'. This park spreads over half a dozen counties, too! I ran it from San Augustine County, TX. Later I'd pass back through Sabine county in a few hours.



Sabine National Forest - KFF-4416

Had success with an activation – so headed on to see if I could get one more in the log today. Over into Sabine Parish, LA – to get to North Toledo Bend SP there. That would be my first park activation in LA – other than NPOTA sites two years ago in 2016. The GPS lady said it was only 10 miles away from the ranger station in TX. Yeah, don't always believe the GPS lady – that was air miles. It took 30 road miles of driving to get there as there are no shortcuts across bayous or the giant reservoir and its many arms and inlets. You go around them – in this case, 270 degrees - first going east 10 miles, then north 15 miles, then east a bit, then south again to get to this park. Whew. It was going to be a late evening and it gets dark real early in the forests with the road shadowed from the trees – not much sun gets through at low angles – and I'd have to head back to TX for a motel.

Finally arrived at the park at 1925Z – and ran through the bands on the CH net frequencies– had spotting so the county hunter contacts came quickly. I don't spot for POTA on CH freqs on CW other than 40M. First 20m with 11Q. Then put 4 more on 30cw, and spotted myself on the POTA and DX Summit on 40m (7041) and got 6 there. Then spotted myself on DX Summit on 30M and 13Q more went in the log. Then back

to 20m for the park hunters – 10 showed up – I usually run 14041 or 14042 plus or minus QRM. Tried 20M SSB and use 14336 if no one has been running on it all day. Nothing was noted on W6RK for the day so far – so why not use it? 15Q went in the log with only one SSB county hunter showing up despite spots on W6RK. Guess no one needed Sabine Parish – or had propagation to there.



**Toledo Bend State Park, LA**

from their website:

“Located on Toledo Bend Reservoir, one of the country's largest man-made reservoirs, North Toledo Bend State Park provides a venue for a wide variety of water-related activities in a pleasant environment. And for land-based activities, more than 900 acres are available for camping, picnicking, hiking, and relaxing in the heart of nature.”

Left park around 2045Z (3:45pm) and it took 30-40 minutes to get out of LA and head back across TX. There aren't too many motels out this way – other than some mom and pop type places scattered one here and one there - and of uncertain quality. I had

an hour or so to head east – and make it to Nacogdoches to a Super 8 by dark – around 5:30pm.

I'm driving along the former 'El Camino del Real' route – going back to Spanish times in the US – and this was a road from San Antonio over to Nachitoches in LA. In 2016, it was a NPOTA unit you could activate – even on the run. Hi hi

Well, most of the roads were pretty dark late in the day – you're running through forest lands – with over one million acres of trees in TX. The roads are bordered by 30-40-50 foot high trees and the sun flickers through occasionally making it a pain to drive at times. Before 'oil', forestry was the biggest industry in the state – and it still is a giant industry with thousands and thousands doing logging. You see giant log hauling trucks on the roads all over, too. You can zip along at 70-75 mph on many roads between 'towns' in TX. I run the new county when I get to it on the route to the motel or next destination.

There's a nice Super 8 in Nacogdoches- \$66 including tax. Been there before. Headed over to the Ocean Buffet - Chinese Buffet – good – about \$11 including tip. Nice place for dinner – and not very expensive. Back to the motel as it was getting 'real dark'.

Tomorrow I would head home, trying to avoid the nasty winter weather forecast to arrive Monday evening. The forecast was ominous with freezing rain, snow, icy roads, and not great driving conditions.

Meanwhile, NF0N, Mike, was running up in NE, and Bill, NU0Q, , was headed from AZ back through NM to KS after a long trip. They were the only mobiles out on the road.

## **Monday Jan 15**

Another day and more parks on the agenda. The car windshield is solid frost in the morning – been humid and now cold – takes five minutes to defrost things to be able to see – and get underway.

First up is the Davy Crockett National Forest. This forest sprawls across Houston and Trinity Counties. I hit the Houston County part and run it.



After a nice run, I hear from Kerry, W4SIG via text message. He could sure use Trinity County. Hmmmm.....check my map. No roads shown on the TX state map. Get out my giant MapBook of Texas – with 100 plus pages of detailed maps of TX. Yes! I remember that 'forest service road' that heads a few miles south into Trinity. You can go for miles and miles and not see a power line on that road – and when you approach the county line, a power line appears and makes some QRN at the county line! Hi hi. So it's a half dozen miles on a not too great 1 ½ lane dirt road – dry fortunately – but with some hard ruts in the bottoms to avoid – but I get there – thanks to the GPS display of the C/L. No C/L signs in the forest! Run Trinity, then skedaddle back out of there. Once you get on this road there aren't too many places to turn around. At the beginning of the road is a sign for a campground. That must be a 'wilderness type' and you'd have a real adventure taking a motor home on this not so great road! I'm getting behind schedule – well, trying to get home before the rain, drizzle, freezing rain and SNOW! It's coming whether I'm home or not!

I make tracks to the next destination – KFF 4419 – another forest...but along the way I see a sign – Mission Tejas State Park 3 miles. Hmmmm...I've run that before, but I could do a quickie activation. Right along the route – the temptation is too much – even though it will put me further into 'just enough time to get home before the storm arrives'. OK..no more than an hour.





Get there, get to work real fast, log 46Q and get the heck out. No waiting for stragglers. In 1819Z, out 1845Z. Head to next. It's up to 64 degrees and sun. It's not going to stay that way long! Snow is headed this way in a few hours. It can get really bad when 65 deg warm humid air hits 20 degree dry air – and you get instant precipitation – where ever that line is. The overpasses and bridges ice up quickly. People don't slow down – keep driving 70 till they hit the bridge or overpass and lose it. Their windshields can be icing up from the freezing rain, but that doesn't stop most TX drivers. You don't want to be on the road with them!

This Mission Tejas site is also a place where you could run one of the trails for NPOTA – and did 2 years ago. There's not much left to see there. You have to use your imagination as the ruins from 300-400 years ago – Spanish Mission – all rotted away to nothing. However there's a nice interpretive display there. Also a campground.

From the state park site:

“The park was built in 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a commemorative representation of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, the first Spanish mission in the province of Texas, which was established in 1690. Also in the park is the restored Rice Family Log Home, built in 1828 and restored in 1974. The home is one of the oldest structures in the area. The home served as a stopover for immigrants, adventurers and

local residents traveling the Old San Antonio Road across pioneer Texas.”

On to I D Fairchild State Park – the last one for the day. Oops....I thought this park was east of Rusk, TX. Went the wrong way – on back roads – only to not find it there. OOPS. Wandered around and didn't find it. Hmm.....checked and read the description again. Hmm...Brain Fade. It was 15 miles WEST of the town of Rusk. Wasted 30 miles of driving. Dang...I'm already behind schedule and now lose time. Zip on 30 miles the other way to get to it on the west side of Rusk, TX . It's in Cherokee County but I'm frazzled and think I announce it as Rusk County. Got the city of Rusk on my mind. Getting late. There are 2 parking areas there. Pile up the Qs quickly. Time is getting short. In at 2000z, out at 2045z. Enough Qs – ran 20,30,40cw and 20SSB. Got over 44Q. Sorry if I missed you but had to run to get home.

Now to get on home and the forecast on the AM radio is 'watch out! It's coming'. For me, I might be getting already getting too late. The pedal is to the metal – going 70-75 mph headed home.....and the sun has disappeared under a very heavy very low layer of clouds. Then the drizzle starts and it's on and off the rest of the way home. The temp has gone from 64 down to the 40s in 20 miles of driving. Then into the 30s in another 10 miles. Fortunately the road is warm from 3 days of sunlight and way above freezing temps. It won't stay that way long. I'm beginning to think my luck has run out – ran too many parks and added in that extra bonus one- and wasted 40 minutes hunting for the forest on the wrong side of the city. Well, it's all forest land there so it's hard to tell - that and private forest land scattered about. Will I make it home before it really gets bad?

I'm chugging along – fortunately so far traffic is light so far on this 'holiday' (MLK) although not everyone gets it off. I'm coming in the bottom side of the Dallas Beltway – I- 635. So far traffic is light and it keeps moving at the speed limit – now down to 60 mph. The wind is howling out of the north. Temps keep dropping. Make good time till I hit US 75 north to home – just 10 miles – and the creep and crawl starts for the next 10 miles at 10-20 mph. Nothing slowing it down I can see but endless backup. Grrr.....it's that way normally during rush hour – but this is a 'holiday'. Well guess not for all these folks. Must be an accident ahead. Or someone mentioned 'ice and snow' on the radio and a few panicked drivers are only driving along at 25 mph on the 4 lane highway. Dunno. Maybe there is ice ahead? Eventually get home. The bad weather has held off for me! Luckily.

Hit the local Boston Market for a quick dinner. I'm pooped. 852 miles in 3 days, 10 parks, over 900 Qs for the parks and another 100 at least for the counties in between.

Later that evening, well, an hour later, snow and freezing rain hit where I had just been – along the same route. Dozens of accidents – ice – folks sliding off roads or into each other. Hitting trees. Stuck. A couple inches of snow – black ice – nasty stuff – mostly just south of Dallas – right where I'd been. Iced up bridges and overpasses. Here at the QTH just a dusting of snow – but temps in the teens for 3 days barely getting up to the 20s for 'highs'. The storm moved east across the south part of the country then up the coast. It was a real mess. There was snow in all 50 states.

Winter is back for 3 days, then it clears up.

Hope you caught something you needed. Fun trip but had to push it and rush it a bit hard to get home before the nasty weather. Lots more parks to come.

## Letter to ARRL Membership - K5UR

A Message to Members from ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR

In the last few weeks, the ARRL's Board of Directors has been the subject of an organized misinformation campaign. It is being orchestrated by a group of hams, some of whom are well-intentioned but have been misled. This effort, which consists of a series of mis-characterizations, initially dealt with (1) the ARRL Board's censure of an ARRL Director, and (2) some proposed revisions to ARRL's Articles of Association and Bylaws that are likely to be considered at the upcoming ARRL Board meeting and which were circulated by a member of the Board. None of the proposed Article and Bylaw changes has yet been addressed by the Board of Directors. More recently, other equally erroneous and false statements have been made with respect to completely unrelated issues, in an effort to draw into question ARRL's decision-making processes. The principal suggestion is that ARRL operates under some "cloak of secrecy." The criticism is unfair and undeserved.

ARRL's representative system of governance, which has worked exceptionally well in the advocacy and promotion of Amateur Radio and the interests of ARRL members for more than 100 years, is unchanged. And the legislative and other advocacy positions currently being pursued are critical to the long-term survivability of the Amateur Radio



Service.

The ARRL Board does seek thoughtful, informed input on policy issues concerning Amateur Radio from its roughly 150,000 members. ARRL's governance structure provides that regionally elected, volunteer Directors will represent the interests of the members in their respective Divisions, working collectively and collegially within our Board to make policy and to advocate their constituents' interests. ARRL's Board members hold cabinet meetings and forums at hamfests and conventions, and they staff ARRL booths at hamfests and conventions in order to find out what interests and concerns you have as ARRL members. They take this feedback from you, and they come to Board meetings twice a year to make policy for the organization. They work together collegially to develop the best policy decisions. This structure presumes that the Board's collective wisdom is far greater than that of any one Board member, and each Board member is obligated by our Articles and Bylaws to come to meetings with a good idea of what the members need and what is best for Amateur Radio as a whole.

As is the case with most large, national nonprofit associations, ARRL Board meetings are not open to the public. It has always been that way, as a matter of necessity. That is because, at all such meetings, confidential issues such as spectrum protection, employee compensation, financial information, and FCC submissions are candidly discussed, and the members' interests at those meetings are advocated by the Directors on a representative basis.

Unfortunately, it was necessary for the Board to take the highly unusual action of publicly censuring one of its members recently. The Board heard the allegations made by an ARRL member of what transpired at an Amateur Radio event; it heard reports from other amateurs who were there, and it heard all the information that the Director involved chose to present. Everyone had a chance to speak and to evaluate the presentations. The Board, in an 11 to 3 vote with one abstention, took action to protect the organization's integrity based on the information presented. This process and procedure are what nonprofit associations have to be prepared to employ, and do employ, to maintain order within their organizations and to ensure that the interests of the affected Director are protected as well. This is not a procedure that any nonprofit organization would conduct publicly.

ARRL Directors are volunteers. They are smart, dedicated radio amateurs who each devote thousands of hours per year of their own time to representing you as best they can. -- ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR

The ARRL Policy on Board Governance and Conduct of Members of the Board of

Directors and Vice Directors has been drawn into question, probably as the result of the fact that the Board's censure decision was based upon a violation of that policy by the Director involved. The Policy is intended to protect the democratic decision-making processes by which ARRL has operated effectively for so long, and to set forth principles to guide an organization's decision making and the behavior of individual board members when acting on behalf of ARRL. When it was adopted by the Board a year ago, it was posted for ARRL members to read. The policy calls for honesty, integrity, transparency, confidentiality, and equity. The purpose of adopting such a statement formally is to provide employees, volunteers, and board members with guidelines for making ethical choices and to ensure that there is accountability for those choices.

When board members of a nonprofit adopt a code of ethics, they are expressing their commitment to ethical behavior. It is intended to protect the Board's deliberations and to protect the staff from inappropriate actions by Board members. It seeks to preclude precisely the type of selective disclosures and unilateral and subjective characterizations of proposed Board actions that have happened recently. There is nothing at all insidious about the policy, which is subject to regular review and modification, as are all other ARRL organizational documents.

As to the criticism of the proposed Articles and Bylaws changes, the Board has not yet considered them. It may or may not adopt some or all of the changes recommended by its Executive Committee or by an individual Director. Any responsible Board of Directors regularly reviews, amends and updates its Articles and Bylaws. And ARRL member input is welcome on all such subjects. Indeed, the recommended Article and Bylaws changes were not considered to be Board confidential. The problem, however, is that it is not fair to members, or to the representative Directors who have yet to evaluate them collectively, to have the proposals mis-characterized or misrepresented. ARRL Directors are volunteers. They are smart, dedicated radio amateurs who each devote thousands of hours per year of their own time to representing you as best they can.

To those who try to suggest that the Board has abandoned its obligation to the members in favor of the organization -- you draw a distinction that doesn't exist. The Board absolutely understands that the members are the organization. The members of ARRL are always best served by an informed Board that works together to make policy that is in the best interests of the organization. The divisive tactics that are being used now, commenced through disinformation and a lack of candor, are harmful not only to the organization, but to Amateur Radio operators everywhere, the good work of the ARRL staff, and the Service that we love so much.

# N2CX Activation Report

Recap: N2CX POTA Slip-Slidin' Away Jan 17

Fortunately the weather kinda fizzled for this one - only an inch or so of white stuff.

The chosen locale was Princeton Battlefield, K/KFF-1628. It was the site of a successful battle between Washington's Revolutionary Forces and the British shortly after the famous Christmas Crossing of the Delaware. There still remains a farmhouse on site, the Clarke House dating back to that period.



With the light dusting of wintry cover, the park was very attractive in spite of its bloody past. In addition to battle monuments I saw a number of folks who brought their four-legged family members for a stroll in the woodland paths. Ever see a dog who refused to go for a walk? Out of curiosity I followed their tracks around the paths after the activation. The serenity is a great counterpoint to the historical significance of the

battlefield.

On past occasions the electrical noise has been S7+ on 40 meters, making it challenging to use. This time out it was only (?) S6. In anticipation of CWT, 40 was well-populated as was 20 with the best dx being British Columbia and perennial hunter VE6UX. As CWT time approached, activity wound down even on 30 m though a half dozen refugees, once again including VE6UX graced the log. He must have good skywires and great ears. Fortunately enough Q's were made to finally achieve 44+ at the site so the challenge of the CW OPS was avoided.

Even with the goal reached I'll be back in the future to soak up more Revolutionary history along with the academic and scholarly folk prowling the grounds for a respite from their intellectual pursuits.

## On the Road with N4CD

The annual Cowtown Hamfest is held near Ft. Worth each January. It's a fairly small one but probably near 1,000 folks show up for it- it's the only thing happening for many months. It starts Friday afternoon at 3pm – to 9pm, then resumes on Saturday from 7-6 pm. Most of the stuff in the indoor flea market is out by Friday – so you need to plan to be there early to snap up any bargains or goodies.

Friday Jan 19

I headed out early – and stopped at Cedar Hill State Park on the way there. It was only a few miles out of the way and I'd get credit for another 'activation' in 2018.

I spent 2 hours there – weather was great in the mid 50s. The parking lot for the north boat launch ramp was essentially empty. One or two cars wandered there, spent a few minutes looking at the beach or eating lunch- then left. The lot holds about 100 cars with trailers and is busy in the warmer weather. Got my 44 QSOs plus so headed on out. There are not as many around on a weekday so getting to 44 can be a challenge – especially if it is not a rare county to bring out the county hunters. Getting the contacts can be difficult during the week – folks are working. I appreciate all the CH contacts – even if you don't need the county – I need the contacts.

I decided to stay overnight in Forest Hills where the hamfest is. Ouch, the prices for the Comfort Inn were jacked up this year. Might be the last year I do that. It's convenient

to the location of the hamfest, though and not many other motels around at all without a five or 10 mile drive through city traffic and rush hour likely and you go quite a ways before better prices. Paid my \$10 to get in to the hamfest and wandered around. You can see everything easily in an hour. Probably go around twice, then spend another 20-30 minutes checking under tables for any hidden stuff. Yakked a bit with vendors.

Ran into county hunter Joe, KK5NA and KK5QA Barbarba. They recently downsized their living quarters from a 3 bedroom house (with tower) to a 2 bedroom apartment in a retirement community. Joe noted that management is receptive to ham radio and will assist him in putting a vertical on top of the 4 story building. He's be QRT on the bands for the past year. He noted he had a 2 car garage plus house full of 'stuff' he had to downsize before the move – literally tons of stuff he had to sell, give away, donate, or throw away. He was a definite 'pack rat' with old ham gear and lots of misc there was no room in the garage for the car for years. Hopefully he'll be back on the air with a good signal soon.

I did buy a MFJ 3 Magnet mount , new in box, from him for \$20. I'm not a fan of MJF ones – you can't repair them and they go intermittent at high speed, but....for \$20, it will find a use for something.

Didn't find too many bargains. I did pick up an early Bunnell straight key, circa 1881 or so. It was the early design and didn't even have his company name on the key – just the patent date and 'steel lever key'. That was the only real goodie I saw. Not a regen in sight.

I then headed back to the motel. Did a run for Tarrant County for the CH who might need it. Grabbed dinner at the Denny's right next store – had the salmon Sizzling Grill with broccoli, cherry tomatoes, potatoes.

Saturday Jan 20

Next morning it was up early - had a good breakfast at the Comfort Inn- eggs and sausage and cereal and banana, coffee, juice.....then over to the hamfest five minutes away. Not much new stuff showed up - no new bargains to buy. If you were an old 'mobile radio' or portable fan, you could buy an Atlas solid state rig for \$140 – the 160-15M one, or a Swan MX-100 (\$140) from the way back days. No mike or cables for either one, thought. How about a Knight T-60 Novice crystal controlled 60w input, 30w output transmitter – restored – for \$100 or so? There were several IC-7000 for sale at \$700 each. I didn't see to many other mobile rigs. One guy had a handful of Hustler resonators – 80,75,40,20,17, 15, 10 plus the old style long pin at the top fold over mast

for \$100. I'm not sure he ever sold it. Too much money. He wanted 20 bucks apiece for the resonators.

After a few circuits round inside – I wound up buying an unbuilt Healthkit SWR meter from the 1960s. I'm sure I can wind up trading it or selling it for a bit more than \$10 I paid for it. Nostalgia..

Nothing new showed up so it was back to Cedar Creek State Park 20 miles away to catch some of the weekenders. Many aren't on during the week – so I'd give them a chance at park KFF-2996. Ran Tarrant County again for those only showing up on weekends on the way there. Cedar Creek State Park is in Dallas County.

Got to Cedar Creek State Park and used my Annual TX Park pass to get in – same parking lot – nearly totally empty again.

In Europe the HA DX contest was going full tilt on cw . I tried to work some of them at the park – not so easy from this far south and west in TX into Europe, but did manage to snag six of them. Likely they are in new 'grids' for me – hi hi – IF they are on LotW. A few were sitting on 14.056.5 or close by so when I ran the park, I moved up to 14061 to get away from the QRM which was solid from 14010 up to 14060 at weak levels. If the big contest stations there were S7 to S9, I could work them. Otherwise, I couldn't make it through the QRM wall with the mobile. You had to wait for them to turn their beams to pick up North America.

Watched the spots and caught KM1CC on 20cw – special event in 'rare grid' out on the arm of Cape Cod in MA and also in a park unit. Also checked for other parks on the air – a few were on.

Ran 20M and 17m SSB, 20/30/40 CW – and easily got to 44. Caught a few other parks on the air, too, which is nice for the 'park to park' contacts.

After two hours, it was time to leave and head to the local park KFF-4423 – Spring Creek Forest Preserve – up in Garland, TX on the way home. I'd stop there for the North American QSO Party. Got there 15 minutes early so put it out on the SSB frequencies before the big shebang started on SSB – then tried to work the NAQP. Fighting the stations with beams was a challenge but succeeded in working many. Those in the 'contest' were limited to 100w output although I suspect many others ran a lot more than that – and never sent in logs. Likely just interested in working grids. Maybe I'd work a few new grids? Not much was happening on 40m SSB - those are extra 'grid band mode points' – but with the mobile antenna – hard to catch many on

40M SSB. You are running 25w ERP at best. Maybe 10w ERP. Still caught a few of the louder stations. Lots of QRN at the park – and in many places in TX!

It seemed most the stations I worked on 20m were in MA, PA, MD, NY, FL, SC, and CA. That's where the skip seemed to go, but did catch UT, NV, ID, OR, VT, NH, RI, 8P5, NP2, XE2, and a few others.

After 2 ½ hours I caught close to 100 total Qs, so time to head on home and take care of the logging. I'd run this park five or six times already in 2018- every Wednesday – and probably will more times in the CWT.

Today was also Parks on the Air 2018 Activity Weekend – trying to get folks out up in the frozen north country for some activity – about 10 parks were on the air in MO, MD, NM, TX, OH, NJ, WI, and other states around the country. Over in EU, a dozen parks were active.

I 'earned' an award for being on during the event – hi hi – one for activating at least one park and one for 'chasing' and working at least one park. Nice high res 8 ½ by 11 certificates – but only low resolution here due to bit limitations.



N4CD Activator Award



N4CD Hunter Award

Good short weekend trip. The weather was great – on Saturday it hit 65 degrees – some sun but lots of clouds. What's not to like about nice weekends in January?

Hope you caught something new in the NAQP if you participated. That's a good way to snag new counties and some of the stations are in rare grids. Several were on from NV and UT plus zillions in CA. With few mobiles out, you need to look to other means to fill in those missing counties – and chase the prefixes and call combos, Bingo and everything else.

## N2CX Jan 20 & 24 Activations

### N2CX Saturday NJ POTA Jan 20

Well this was a very educational day.

The first goal was to activate Allamuchy Mountain SP, K/KFF-1608. The exact location was Waterloo Village within the park. My son found a very revealing map of the area



that tied into a secondary goal, showing Allamuchy, Stephens and their relationship to the Musconetcong River. In short, the parks are all along the Musconetcong and tied together by the Morris Canal which also ran along the river. It's interesting how many parks I've visited who have historic canals in their past - it's almost a theme in itself.

Waterloo Village owed much to the canal as a support settlement with housing a store for supplies, a mill (water-driven, of course) and the necessary church. Today it is a popular recreation area even in winter with numerous folks and their canine companions. Quite often folks will walk or bike with dogs but here was saw a cross-country skier being pulled by a pooch in sled-dog fashion!

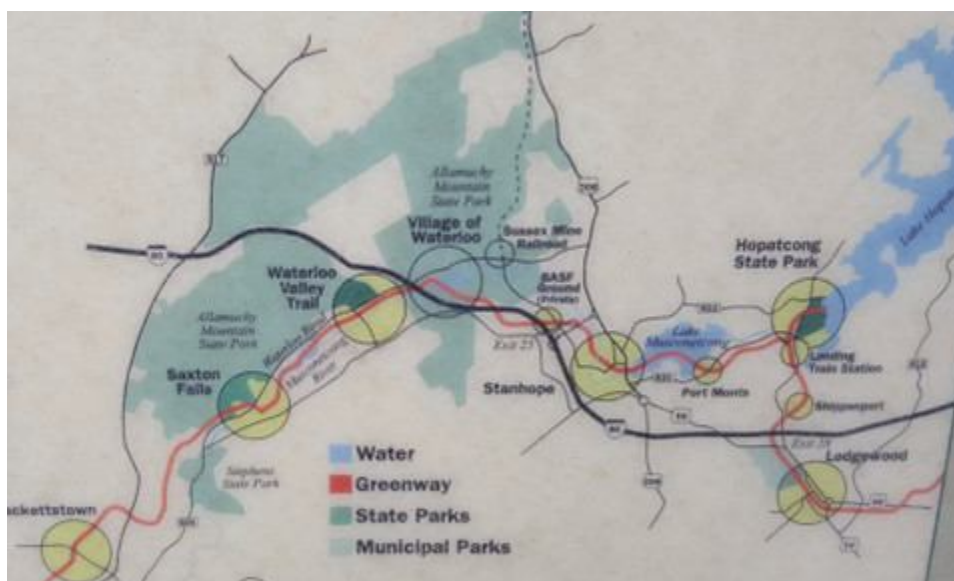
The site was fairly low noise and not too bad on the air. 40 was weak so 20 was needed to fill the log. It was worth the effort with both Europe and Africa chiming in. As has been the case lately, 30 has done well though sparsely populated, however the ever present VE6UX made the grade there better than on 20! A steady wind pushed the auto-mounted vertical to a nearly 45 degree angle though that seemed to have little effect on its performance.

Down river, Stephens SP, K/KFF-1631 was the next site. Once again showing signs of the Morris Canal at its banks, it is now a superb location for picnicking (in Summer) and for enjoying the peaceful scenery. Radio-wise it is somewhat compromised by high terrain blocking the horizons around the river valley.

Getting contacts was a struggle. 40 meters was going long and full of some contest or other. 20 had faded almost completely though 30 allowed VE6UX and several others to make the grade. Adding to the difficulties was an auto in the parking lot that generated wideband noise on all bands, making hearing all but the strongest signals difficult. A meager 13 Q's were logged.

The original intention was to do a third activation in situ, since the site was only yards from the Musconetcong Wild and Scenic River K/KFF-0888. However with conditions as they were, it seemed prudent to simply declare success and head home.

However with three valid locations spaced close together, a future return visit in warmer weather is planned.



Parks along the Canal

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 Note de N4CD- N2CX runs QRP with a decent antenna most times— and often has a good signal into TX on 20M. Workable. Good for Bingo everywhere.

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**N2CX Mid-week POTA Jan 24**

As promised I set out today to activate Delaware Canal SP, K/KFF-1347 in Bristol, PA, Bucks County. Sheesh there's lots of old canals around!

The site chosen is at the southern end of the canal, some 60 miles from the northern terminus in Easton, PA - think Crayola crayons! My son found this superb spot a stone's throw from home. Where I activated was right by a sign for old Canal Office, where the final connection to the Delaware River was made. It is also the end of the Delaware River Water Trail, a multiuse trail that snakes up along the canal and river. Even with the cool, windy conditions today, folks were out stretching their legs in the pleasant park.

There is a separate, better-signed Canal park a half-mile or so away but it's not obvious that the adjacent parking lot in the the SP proper. One kind of irony about that spot is

that it is 100 yards or so from local railroad tracks, a reminder of what sealed the canal's fate.

Local noise was surprisingly low considering a nearby shopping and restaurant area and several factories. Propagation on 40 was forecast to be poor but that proved as true as Mark Twain's rumors of his death. Things hopped along well. 20 was kinda flat though usable. The real surprise was 30, with a couple European contacts as well as the ever-present VE6UX who came in better on 30 than 20! The best part is I now have the needed 44 + contacts. I will return, however on a weekend to hand out this lightly activated reference to those poor souls who still have to work for a living.

## The ARRL Grid Challenge II

This has sort of turned out worst case for those who like to run counties and parks. There are no 'chasers' like in the National Parks on the Air – everyone is busy on digital – maybe some even have robots set up – working grids on the digital mode, and getting in every contest – to run up their scores. Fortunately we have 'park hunters' with a couple dozen active stations and many activators – all of whom seem to care less about doing 'grids' after they tried it for a weekend or two.

Looking at the top 100 folks, which changed recently went they went to ranking by the total 'grid-band-mode' points rather than just 'unique grids worked', the leader in number one spot is – drum roll – a DX-pedition to Somalia – 6O6O.

In second place at the moment is NF3R with 1776 'grid band mode' points. You get one point for each grid worked on a different band or on a different mode. He has worked 686 unique grids. Rumor has it he lives on the air but he actually has a job.

In the top couple hundred, I find at the moment

KA4RRU in 66<sup>th</sup> place

W0MU in 86<sup>th</sup> place with 328 grids and 728 grid band mode points

N4UP is in 105<sup>th</sup> place with 365 unique grids and 642 grid band mode points

K8SIA is #157

KM4FO is #167

K0DEQ is #212

KG5RJ - #244

and way down the list is N4CD in 786<sup>th</sup> place at the moment with 153 grids and 276 grid band mode points - all done while mobile in parks.

You can view the leader board here:

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

Parts of it reset to zero come Feb 1, and the yearly score is the addition of all the points each month to determine the winners for the year. So it all starts over each month. Well, I'm not sure if the unique grids column does, nor total upload of QSOs. It's a work in progress. They, ARRL, started the program before they thought out what to display on a leader board. Sort of a last minute program on a shoe string budget without a lot of thought.

I wonder if the interest will fade after a month or two. NR3F is on the air 20 hours a day working folks staying at the top. Will the others keep at it, or just do the contests they normally do and submit logs? Will folks work the same stations over and over again each month?

There have been a few 'grid expeditions' but very few chasing them. Listen on 20M to a rare DX station – hundreds calling on a weekend. Even a not so rare DX station like a ZF2 shows up in a contest – pile ups that never end. Calling for new grids? No one answers - it's going to be a digital and contest event all year long I think, and I think the digital folks will burn out trying to work the same stations in the same grids month in and month out. We'll see. How many times are you going to work the same station – maybe a few bands – each and every month for the grid band mode points – other than contests where every contact counts?

For me, I realized as soon as there was no 'activator' part – it was going to be a bust. To be at the top, you've got to sit at the computer day in and out working FT-8, RTTY contests, DX contests, US contests, and everything else contests. Watch the waterfall, look for new people/grids and only work those you need.....day in and day out. Most of

the casual contacts you do manage to scrounge up on 20M SSB – aren't on LotW and don't count anyway!

## Solar Flux and Propagation

I've been watching the propagation lately – and noticed that when the flux (SFI) drops below 70, conditions on 20 and 30M seems to go to heck. Bands were OK over the Jan 20-21 weekend – SFI was 70. Come Monday and the SFI sank to 68. The listings on the propagation banner (QRZ.com for one, DX Summit.fi for another) showed SFI 68 and 20 and 30m bands 'poor'. 80-40m was 'fair'. Above 20M – Poor. We could have the coronal solar hole affecting things – but I look for SFI at 70 and above to have decent conditions on 20M. There is no fun being out mobile with rotten band conditions and we'll likely have a lot more before things pick up.

## WB9OWN Activation

Summary of Saturdays 1/20/2018 activations for wb9own.

The object of this operation was two fold. To finish off the Sheboygan Marsh Wildlife Area KFF-4329 and begin Kiel Marsh Wildlife Area before the 1800Z start of NAQP. I was tardy on leaving the house, took the scenic route and now I'm 2 hours late and getting a blinding headache.

I arrived at Sheboygan Marsh, same spot as last week, and started a 20 meter run @ 17:10Z. (I'm under the gun and need to get to Kiel Marsh before 1800Z.) I still blab at the mike but I'm slowly getting better. ;-) I left @ 17:54Z with 48 in the log. I tossed the antenna in the car, closed the doors on the radials, left the radio sitting on the back seat then and took off.



Arrived at Kiel Marsh but couldn't find the southern parking area. The northern parking area was a sure thing but it was close to the city of Kiel. Started operation @ 19:01 and 20 is insane. Found a clear frequency, made 15 Q's then an argument ensued as to who had the frequency first. Reading my log trumped his opinion but my drained 12 volt battery took precedent. I gave up the frequency but then he didn't want it anymore!! (Next week I'll be back to finish off Kiel Marsh and will catch those I missed.)

73's & 44 to all that chased de wb9own

## ARRL News from BOD Meeting

Kosovo has been listed as DXCC country - immediately and retroactive. If you have worked Kosovo, in the past, it will count as new country (maybe). Barry Shelley, (former CFO) the new interim CEO, will draft the rules and the issue of how far back the retroactive Contacts will be counted..

A Search committee has been formed to find a new CEO. Shelly is on it and David Woolweaver, West Gulf Director, has also been appointed to that Committee.

Hope you are sitting down for this:

All Norris motions have been stopped and withdrawn. Handwriting was on the wall that they would have been defeated. So no By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation changes will take place.

All Lisenco motions have been withdrawn by Lisenco himself. None of his nonsense will go forward.

There is always the possibility that those motions or like ones could be brought up again, but, with the present climate, probably not.

If you haven't fallen on the floor yet, read on with this:

Part of Code of Conduct dealing with Director speaking to his constituents has been repealed! Part dealing with Director talking about votes - his or other Directors, has been repealed.

Remainder of Code of Conduct is subject to review and complete re-write in July.

Censure of Dick Norton - Motion to repeal put off, because those for it felt it was not the right time. But censure will be addressed and reviewed sometime this year. Mr. Norton indicated that "he really doesn't care, because he is now a Folk Hero!". My source thinks that there is no passion among the remaining Cabal members anymore to do anything to cause any more pressure to come down on them. They apparently want to do everything they can to make this all go away. (We know it won't go away).

Tom Frenaye, K1KI, New England Division Director, has been elected to the Executive Committee. This is a good thing because Mr. Frenaye is known as a straight shooter and not one of the Cabal.

## For the High End Stereo Nerd

While over in the gym resting up from some exercises, I ran across a magazine called the Absolute Sound for the stereo buffs into tube pre-amps and amplifiers who have lots of spendable cash. Here's one of the ads/web sites for one of the top end vendors – if you have a few tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands sitting around in petty cash!



You can spend several thousand on a pre-amp - up to \$110,000 or more on a 'pair of power amplifiers' -\$500 to \$30,000 for a cartridge for your \$1000 to \$80,000 turntable and so on. One turntable weighs an incredible 80 lbs!

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PrimaLuna is run by passionate music lovers. When we founded PrimaLuna in 2003, we looked back to audio's "Golden Age" and saw something. Products from the 1960's like the Marantz 9 power amps, 7C preamp, and all the others that have skyrocketed in value and collectability have something in common: Point to point wiring.

Today big high end audio companies are run by businessmen and accountants. They want profit margin, so most manufacturers cut costs by using contract factories who stuff tube sockets, capacitors, and resistors directly on to PCBs (printed circuit boards). These parts are then wave soldered by machine in a matter of seconds. Customers rarely look inside to see why it's such a huge compromise.

First, there's the music's signal. You spend a lot of money on interconnects. So why have the signal go right from the RCA jacks or speaker terminals into circuit boards with copper traces so thin you can hardly see them? What's high-end about that?

Then there is longevity. Every time you take tubes in and out of sockets, you flex the PCB. PCB's deteriorate over time due to the intense heat of tube sockets mounted to them. They crack, require surgery to create "jumpers" over damaged copper traces, and finally suffer an undignified death on Craigslist.

PrimaLuna uses ceramic tube sockets secured to ventilated steel plates that are bolted to the chassis. The entire signal path, including resistors and capacitors, is painstakingly hand-wired with heavy gauge cable by craftsmen. In our DiaLogue Premium models, we even use Swiss-made silver-plated oxygen free copper cable with a Teflon dielectric in the entire signal path. The result is a product that sounds amazing and lasts for decades.

What you are about to read is critically important. If you own, or are considering buying a tube amplifier, you need to know the facts about tube life. Your tubes can last many many years armed with this information.

Think of biasing like adjusting the engine idle speed on your car. It's very much the same. Most cars idle around 900 RPM. If the idle is too low, the car can sputter or stall.



If the idle is too high, you will waste gas, cause premature engine wear, and early failure.

Until now, there have been two ways to bias tubes

"Cathode Bias" is commonly used, cheap to make, and often found in guitar amps. But also found in \$20,00 high end audio amps. This is what most companies call "Auto Bias", which they CAN, but they don't tell you the whole story. In fact, they won't even tell you it's cathode bias unless you ask specifically. Then they get uncomfortable.

Cathode Bias works - but at a big cost.

This is the truth. An amp that has 70 watts when you use "Adjustable Bias" will typically give you 40 watts cathode bias. Most of the power goes up in heat through a huge resistor.

Most cathode bias amps run the tubes very hard. Real hard. They need to so they can squeeze out the power. That means short life and failures via "shorts". They will say to you that they run the tubes "Within the maximum ratings" for that tube. This is like saying your car usually idles at 900 RPM, the redline is 6500 RPM, so it's okay to set the idle at 5500 RPM. It's below redline, but would you do it? What would happen to fuel costs (tube life) and engine failure (tube shorts) if someone did that?

And they won't tell you how hard they run the tubes. Ask them for the plate and screen voltages, and how the tubes idle. They don't want you to know. And they will tell you it's "proprietary" which is silly. But PrimaLuna will because we run our tubes so easy you may never change them.

"Adjustable Bias" is a manual bias adjustment for each tube or each set of tubes. If the amplifier has a bias adjustment for each tube, then a matched set is not required (though still desirable). If there is one bias adjustment for each pair, you buy two so you have a matched pair. One adjustment for four tubes, you need a matched quad. This is expensive and a hassle.

But even if you buy matched sets, a new set of problems arise:

Tubes age: You must use a meter, or a built in LED, to check bias every six months.

Tubes are not linear: As you raise volume, they do not stay "matched". Distortion

increases and performance suffers in every way.

There had to be a better way, and our engineers in Holland solved the problem.

Real Auto Bias requires a level of engineering that is very advanced. The costs to develop and build are very high. As far as we know, there are only three companies that have a real “Auto Bias”. The first was PrimaLuna, which introduced it in 2003. The other is Mystere, a sister company to PrimaLuna. The third is VAC (Valve Amplification Company), who offers it only on their Statement 450 IQ model, selling for \$112,000 a pair.

### PrimaLuna Adaptive AutoBias

How We Did It: There are sensors that constantly monitor the performance of each individual power tube in real-time. That data is supplied to active circuitry that adapts instantly and continuously to keep the tube in its linear operating position, regardless of the age or condition of the tube.

This means the tubes always perform where they are most effective, resulting in the lowest possible distortion, and dramatically improving sound. It also means that you get every last minute of usable life from the tubes, and that saves you money for years to come. That’s why people never sell their PrimaLuna systems. They use them every day without fear of the clock ticking. After all, you don't buy components just to look at them, right?

Our newest Adaptive AutoBias systems in ProLogue Premium and DiaLogue Premium have a new feature. We figured, since we are monitoring the tubes, we will let you know when a tube needs replacing with a red LED in front of each power tube. No guessing what has happened. When a tube fails on some amps, you will blow a fuse or even have to solder in a new resistor. Our latest offerings are fully self protecting. The amp goes into protection until you change the faulty tube. **NOBODY ELSE HAS THIS.**

Adaptive AutoBias is passive: It is NOT in the signal path. Period. There are only benefits in tube life and improved sound.

Adaptive AutoBias lowers distortion and improves sound

The audible advantages of the Adaptive AutoBias were far greater than we had anticipated. We foresaw a slight improvement in power efficiency and distortion levels, but the gains exceeded our expectations. Transparency over the entire frequency spectrum improved significantly, even in the bass region where qualities such as power, authority and control surpassed what we heard in amplifiers of much greater power. The amplifier sounds quicker and more responsive but with unexpected power reserves far beyond its rating.

Distortion levels plummeted fifty percent, adding incredible authenticity to vocals and instruments and eliminating harshness when the amp was pushed hard. Tube aging and tube replacing are no longer factors requiring tweaks and adjustments; overall, tube life is increased and the number of tube failures dropped significantly.

Is it really possible that your tubes may outlast you?

To get more power from an amp, you must run the tubes harder. It's simple math. Put your hand over a PrimaLuna amp and it's not nearly as hot as you might expect. We've told customers that this will equate to longer life from wearing out (loss of emissions) and shorts. But we didn't know how much.

In May of 2014, something interesting happened. . .

A customer named Les S. from Southern California bought a whole PrimaLuna system, including a preamp and monoblock power amps. A friend told him equipment sounds better if left on 24 hours a day. Les left his system on continuously for six months, and then called us to see if it was okay. We told him it was not. Six months with the amps on 24 hours a day is over 4600 hours. Our manual states that power tubes are typically good for 2500-3000 hours.

We shipped Les a new set of power tubes, since his tubes were either worn out or near it, and told him that we would test his old tubes to see if there was anything left to salvage.

When we got back his old tubes we were shocked. We had the original measurements, and after over 4600 hours, the tubes all tested at 90% of new! This is conclusive proof of our advanced engineering working to make PrimaLuna a product you can use every day.

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Well, for hams, we don't necessarily need silver wire bi-filar wound power transformers and toroidal output transformers, nor oxygen free copper wire. It's hard to find a 'point to point' wired rig other than parts of a KW RF power amplifier. Modern RF amplifiers do use adaptive bias to keep tube dissipation down. Otherwise, unless you are a stereo high end nerd, it's interesting to see this stuff and read about it – but who has a quarter million to put into a 'high end stereo system'? Hi hi.

## W4JL Activation

Today I ventured out to KFF-2740 Lake Norman State Park in Troutman, NC. This park was formed in September of 1962 when Duke Power donated 1328 acres of land on the northeastern shore of Lake Norman. The park offers camping, mountain biking trails, hiking trails, boating, fishing, swimming and several picnic tables and a community building. I made 34 CW contacts on 20, 30 & 40 meters. I logged another 41 SSB contacts on 20 & 40 meters. Grand total of 75 contacts with one busted call of WA9FZ on 10.122.50 at 2011 UTC, if you think you can help with that call, it would help with getting the logs uploaded! The park is located in Grid EM95 and in Iredell county. Enjoy the few pictures I took as I was by myself today. Thanks for all the contacts, the patience on CW and the spotting!

W4JL Dave



note de N4CD – Dave, W4JL is very active in the Parks on the Air Program - usually at

home.

## Awards Issued

Bingo III #39	Dick, N8CIJ	10/20/2017
US Prefix A #10	Silver, N9QS	11/24/2017
Second time #437	Charlie, N2JNE	9/29/2017
Second Time #438	Paul, N7JPF	10/31/2017
Fourth Time #169	Bob, KA9JAC	9/30/2017
Fifth Time #117	Doug, WA4UNS	11/26/2017
Eighth time #26	Bob, N8KIE	9/10/2017

The log jam at MARAC has eased and new awards are being issued.

## Upcoming Events for County Hunters

**Vermont QSO Party** 0000Z, Feb 3 to 2400Z, Feb 4

RS(T) and State

<http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html>

**10-10 Int. Winter Contest, SSB** 0001Z, Feb 3 to 2359Z, Feb 4

<http://www.ten-ten.org>

**Minnesota QSO Party** 1400Z-2400Z, Feb 3

Name and State

<http://www.w0aa.org/docs/mnqp/MNQP%20Contest%20Rules.pdf>

**British Columbia QSO Party** 1600Z, Feb 3 to 0400Z, Feb 4 and  
RS(T) and Province/State

[http://www.orcadxcc.org/bcqp\\_rules.html](http://www.orcadxcc.org/bcqp_rules.html)

**OMISS QSO Party** 1500Z, Feb 10 to 1500Z, Feb 11

RS and State and OMISS number if you have one

<http://www.omiss.net/Facelift/qsoparty.php>

**ARRL School Club Roundup** 1300Z, Feb 12 to 2359Z, Feb 16

<http://www.arrl.org/school-club-roundup>

**ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW** 0000Z, Feb 17 to 2400Z, Feb 18

RST and State

<http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

**South Carolina QSO Party** 1500Z, Feb 24 to 0159Z, Feb 25

RS(T) and State

<http://scqso.com/rules/>

**North American QSO Party, RTTY** 1800Z, Feb 24 to 0559Z, Feb 25

RST and State

<http://www.ncjweb.com/NAQP-Rules.pdf>

**North Carolina QSO Party** 1500Z, Feb 25 to 0059Z, Feb 26

State

<http://rars.org/ncqsoparty/index.php?id=rules>

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## **Hamcation – Orlando**

Feb 9-11

A few County Hunters show up for the big event – one of the top hamfest in the country.

## **Date for 2018 MICHIGAN MINI is April 26 – 27 & 28th..**

It will be held at the Holiday Day Inn West Bay Beach Resort again in 2018 with room rates of \$93.96 plus tax per night if reserved by March 25th, 2018.

West Bay Beach – Holiday Inn Resort 615 East Front Street • Traverse City, Michigan 49686 Phone: (231) 947-3700 • Fax: (231) 947-0361 Toll Free: (800) 888-8020)

You can reserve on line right now...info on the marac.org web page. Ed, K8ZZ and W8TVT, Joe, would appreciate folks reserving early to help defray the necessary expenses involved in putting this event on each year.

## **Dayton Hamvention – at Greene County Fairgrounds – Xenia OH**

May 18-20 You can now buy your tickets on line.

## **Hamcom Dallas Hamfest**

June 8 –9

Tickets available on line

## **National Convention – Kansas City Area – October 3-6**

That's all folks - 73 de N4CD

