

County Hunter News OnLine

June 2026
Volume 22 Issue 6

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

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

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

CW County Hunter Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. There is CW activity now occasionally on 7188, 14336., 18136, 21336, 28336 . The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M CW runs usually after the run on 20M CW . (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

The USACA award was sponsored by CQ Magazine, which unfortunately has gone the way of the dinosaurs. However, like other CQ Awards, they are still available. CQ awards require confirmation of all claimed contacts.

Rules and information are here:

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

MARAC sponsors the US Counties Award which can be earned in increments of 500 counties. The rules for this award are at:

<http://marac.org/documents/usa-ca-rules.pdf>

This award requires log data only to earn.

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) Sunspots – Still have them by the hundreds. Peak was 270 back two years ago, but still over 100 most days. The tail end of a sunspot cycle slowly drops. In a few years, we'll be back in the doldrums with 20, 30, and 40M the prime bands again. It's time for 6M e-skip season if that's your thing. Possibilities of band-counties there, and many mobile rigs now cover 6M.

2) Ethanol again – Well, it seems the agriculture lobby has once again succeeded in foisting upon the US consumer another horrendous financial penalty. Since Trump put tariffs on most imports from Asian countries, they reacted by putting tariffs on US

agriculture products. Most affected were corn and soybeans. Worse, many growing areas started off with near drought conditions. Even worse was that Trump's war with Canada with 50% tariffs on many import categories, ran up the cost of phosphate fertilizer by.....you guessed it – 50% meaning the cost to grow corn increased, or farmers used less and got lower yields. Well, those Asian countries cut back on purchases. Sometimes to ZERO, buying products from South America instead. So farmers were hurting (due to Trump's tariffs and 'war' on Canada).

So what did the government do to appease the farm lobby. Yep, raised gasoline contamination from 10% ethanol to 15% , and have the refiners pay big penalties because that blend produced MORE pollution, especially in the summer and especially in already highly sensitive to pollution areas. Usually, the gov't limits even E10 in those cities/areas subject to smog. Not this year. Or next. Just issue government mandate, come up with more 'penalties' on refiners for producing 'polluting' fuel, and of course, that additional cost passed on to consumers. Worse, in all of this, your 'fuel mileage' will go DOWN. Well, there are 8 corn growing states (now mostly 'red') but many are in jeopardy, after years of Trump, and need to be bought off. You pay. They grow under all sorts of subsidies, guaranteed markets, etc. . The 'best government that money can buy'. Anything to stay in power.

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On the recent trip to Dayton, noted that many stations, including Pilot Truck Stops, now selling E15. That's real gas contaminated with 15% useless, mile wasting ethanol.

3) Gas Prices - Not much to say here. Gas is up to near \$4/gal in TX and diesel at \$5.60. A few months ago, it was \$3/gal gas. It's \$6 in CA and \$4.50 to \$5 around the country. On recent trip to Dayton – varied from just under \$4 to \$4.50 up north. Toward end of month, came down to \$3.65 here with possibility of end of hostilities. Likely will drop further. Fortunately, newer cars get much better gas mileage. .

7th Area QSO Party

W7EEE county expedition 216 cw 113 ssb
Operator(s): W6IA W7EEE

We had a great time this year as always! We tried M/S this year. We started in WAWAH

and moved to WACOW -- both beautiful spots in southwestern WA. The move was a lot of work but we had great runs in the evening in WACOW. Our thanks to all for the QSOs!

W7TR County Expedition 500 cw 290 ssb
Operator(s): K6ST KH2TJ

Fun county line expedition NVCAR/DOU with ops: KH2TJ & K6ST
The for the q's

WS7L County Expedition 694 cw WAPAC

Good session. Much better than last year, but not as good as 2024. Band condx were pretty good even with my compromised antennas. A dipole up 15=20 feet performed remarkably well on 40, even netting a few Euros.

K3 + KPA500 + BuddiHEX + low dipole for 40 + inv-L for 80.

73 & thanks for the Q's
Carl WS7L

K7M County Expedition 66 cw 113 ssb
W6NEA operator

Operated from a county line in Nevada (Mineral and Lyon County) in a remote area 8,000ft up. Used a Elecraft K4D running off of batteries. Deployed a single SpiderBeam 10m aluminum mast to support an OCF 80/40/20/10 and a now defunct YP3 portable Yagi configured for 15m.

Lots of fun and a nice welcome back after a 2 year hiatus from amateur radio.

A first for me was CW S/P that yielded 66 contacts. Not skilled enough yet to run a frequency in CW and the couple of times I tried were less than rewarding.

15m seemed quite noisy at times and while I nabbed mults on it out east it didn't quite seem the game changer I had hoped.

Perched on the edge of a steep drop off certain helps with RF bending but the downside was wicked gusts in the PM that tore my awning off the Jeep after which it decided to rain.

I must have enjoyed it all as I have reserved K7M for 2027. I enjoy these types of outings as it affords an opportunity to refine the station, refine the tactics and set new goals for 2027.

Check out my blog (mainly radio but some photography) at www.nomadic.blog

K7BDB County Expedition 185 ssb qso

Open expedition station doing various POTA parks from 6 different counties. 20m was real busy and I didn't take enough time to find an open spot to call from, my qso rate would probably be much better if I did. It was a long day but plenty of fun!

N7XU mobile 655 cw qso

Opr K4XU, W7AM

LONG day in the saddle. 13 Counties in the outback of Oregon. W7AM did the driving, I just went along for the ride. It is a 526 mile first leg for Richard. I try to get him home for dinner by six. Then I go out and park in a few places where it's high and dry -- not like the interminable deep canyons along our route. Lots of gnarly secondary roads across wildly undulating terrain then down another canyon with ancient trees on each side. Mostly great locations for moon bounce.

Anyway conditions were good, weather mild and dry except of a heavy shower as we were leaving Harney county, which cleaned all the bugs off the wind screen. Lots of activity but we need to find someone to raise the county count in ID MT and WY. Lots of open space out there and few intelligent life forms.

We aim to have scores posted by May 15.

73,
DICK K4XU ...N7XU/M in this one.

RIG:
TS-480, DELL LT W/ N1MM

STARTING ANTENNAS: Hustler 10/15/20 pitchfork on fender. 40m Hamstick
magmount

Evening run: 40m homebrew 11ft tall center loaded
80m homebrew 14ft tall center loaded w/ top hat.

K7TQ mobile 334 cw qso
opr K7TQ, N7LL

The 7QP was the first mobile CW QSO Party for David and he did well. Rather than the full 18 hours, we did 10 hours in Washington and Idaho. We never did find 15 m productive and because we only operated in the daylight hours, 40 m wasn't productive either. Regardless, we had a great time.

More details and some pictures from along the route are at

<https://sites.google.com/site/randyk7tq/home/2026-7th-call-area-qso-party>

AD7N mobile 157 cw qso

Finally got a chance to jump into the fun the last two hours and decided to play rover. Hit two POTA parks. One in Davis US-4566 and one in Weber (US-5967) County. Then drove up for the last 30 minutes for Morgan county. Kinda fun being some fresh meat at the end. :) Too bad I had to work through most of the contest today.

73!
-Ben

FT-710 @100w to 40/80m hamsticks on the ole F-150.

KK6MC mobile 594 cw 58 ssb qso

The day started out as an early spring day in northern AZ - 38F and clear skies. When I finished near Tucson 0200Z it was still clear, but 94. Spring-to-summer in one day.

Propagation was good most of the day with 40M being productive early and late, 20M open all of the day and 15m opening enough to keep it interesting, but could have

supported more QSOs. The bands were busy with the four QSO parties going on, which made it hard at times to find an open spot to call CQ, particularly on SSB.

I operated from county lines as I was operating alone and driving, operating and logging is overwhelming and probably unsafe. AZ counties are big so it takes a lot of time to get from one to another. I spent a bit more time driving than I did operating. I used the MobileTracker web page by beaconing on APRS. I seemed to be the only 7P mobile doing that so I hoped it helped some of the chasers. It is really a fine tool, the only limitation being it doesn't call out both counties on county lines, but I suspect that would be hard to implement, particularly given the latitude some QSO Parties give in location near the county line (7QP is 500 ft)

There seems to be an asymmetry in the rules governing self spotting with respect to an app like MobileTracker; while the rules specifically allow for self spotting with no restrictions, the information that a mobile station can beacon on APRS is limited to call and location only, which reduces the effectiveness of MobileTracker in particular and other APRS tools in general.

One of my county line spots that I have used in the past did not have cell coverage, which limited my APRS availability. I may have to hunt around that area to see if I can find a spot that has better coverage, but still meets the criteria for a county line.

It is always nice to hear and work familiar calls during the contest: N5TJ, N6MU, K6KM, AA5JF, WV4P, K9CW, VE5MX, WN4AFP, N3RD, NR4L, and K9CT.

With the four QSO parties going on activity must have been spread pretty evenly and the "pileups" were pretty manageable.

Rig is a Yaesu FTd101DX to a 12 ft mast with 40M and 20M resonators horizontally laid on the top. Power is supplied by a 12V LiFePO 100 AH battery, which has proven to be largely trouble free over several mobile/rover sessions. The MacBook is charged with a USB C connection to the power outlet.

N8II Fixed WV 175 cw 198 ssb 0 Mults113

First, I have to congratulate John, N6MU for another apparent win in the CW LP category. John has a health issue and reported to me he stayed in the chair basically all of the 18 hours! John has won this category every time since 2008 except for 2 years when he could not enter, a dynasty that might not have ever

been accomplished in any QP OOS! He said he stuck with it "because the 7QP is special to me", and I can say the same. I fondly remember the first couple of 7QP's when I wasn't into QP's in any big way. The number of 7 land ops and rarity of counties was amazing to me! I had an imposed time off this year from 2044-2325Z for a family dinner that others refused to bend on scheduling. I had done well enough that I ditched any effort to seriously compete in the other QP's to keep pushing the 7QP effort.

Conditions were a world of difference from the very disturbed condx of the 2025 7QP. The SFI was not that high but high enough to support good 15M conditions for many hours to the southern half of the area and maybe 3 hours to the more northern areas. Signals on 20 were good except a drop off of about 3 hours mid day when the louder signals were very workable but the wire in a tree and mobiles were often buried in my moderate local noise level. The noise was lower on 15M and I seldom struggled to copy a call. Many more Q's could have been made on 15M but I was able to run over 35 Q's. I had a nice run on 20 in the morning once the band was fully open around 14Z. Mobiles were mostly easy copy at that time. The expeditions were out in force as the border area right around Carson City, NV was occupied by 3 different portables! I worked each of them more than once. W6ECK and KN6VTC (40/20/15M Q's) were on the NVSTO/LYO/WAS and I believe W7ONO hiked in to add NVCAR to the other 3 for a 4-fer! KI7IOC was on a 3 county line in OR. K7N was on a 3 county line in NV also EUR/NYE/WHI (3x3 Q's) all very rare.

When I returned running on 20 SSB was very slow. S&P on SSB/CW which was productive with a few CW CQ's thrown in. Finally at 0023Z I had a good run rate going on 20 SSB which lasted to about 0045Z, a couple of shorter good runs spaced out followed. About 15 new counties called during the runs. 40M at 01Z was wide open to W1 and started opening to 7 land with 6 Q's on first pass. I cut off the 20M SSB running at 0230Z with last 2 Q's good for 2 new mults, WYCAM and ORJOS. The next 40M CW pass was pretty amazing with many ops easily workable with 1-2 calls and even the little pistols were workable. I finished up trying 80M CW, NR7DX in western MT was S9+.

Many thanks for all of the QSO's and spots and to the expeditions and mobiles (N7XU, K7TQ, and KK6MC I recall). It seemed towards the end of the 20M SSB running about half of my callers I had to ask for their county, so I was getting a good number of Q's/mults others did not. The 7QP is indeed special. Unfortunately despite several checks of 10M, it never seemed to open. Friday evening K7L said I was S9+ on 10 SSB, so it goes. As our rapidly

declining cycle proceeds it will get more difficult.

73, Jeff

On the Road with N4CD

May is the month for the annual Dayton Hamvention – held at the Greene County Fairgrounds just outside Xenia, OH. They moved the event about 6 or 7 years ago from the old facility NW of Dayton to about 20 miles east of Dayton. It's grown year after year, now with over 30,000 attending. Official figures put the 2026 attendance at 37,924 plus 600 volunteers.

The first time I went to Dayton was around 1971 while I was living in the Chicago area. That was a five hour drive to get there. If I recall, about 5000 hams made it there that year, and you could park on grass fields just beyond the flea market. Five minute walk, no charge for parking. The flea market was the main attraction then, but the arena was filled with new gear and dealers from giant to small vendors. Originally it was held in April – typically much colder weather, even snow flurries a few years, often near 40F. Now it is held in mid May.

I moved after the first time there - to Lynchburg, VA. Now it was 11 hours of driving to get there. I was busy working, but managed to get off a few hours early on a Thursday. Drove half way there and stayed overnight in a rest area, sleeping the back of my Ford Econoline Van. Before sunrise, I was headed north the rest of the way. Back then, the flea market opened at noon Friday. I stayed at some dumpy motel places for one night or two....then head home Sunday the 11 hours or so. The van got 13 mpg but gas was reasonably cheap. Well, that ended after some years – moved to Arlington VA – missed a few hamfest years as was real busy working on Masters Degree, working 40+ hours a week, and didn't have time for too much ham radio. My small condo had horrific noise so no ham radio operation..

In the 70s and 80s, there was still a lot of WW2 surplus stuff around, plus loads of land mobile radios that were made 'obsolete' by newer FCC 'narrowbanding' that could be picked up at reasonable prices. Many got on 10M, 6M and 2M FM that way – until the invasion of the low cost rigs build for ham use. If you were a builder, there were tons of parts, surplus units, older rigs for sale. One of the largest sellers of surplus things

was Fair Radio.

My employer in 1990 decided my job was moving to TX. So I would up in Plano, TX.

One year I ran into WB9OOG there in VA on a trip for work.. I went mobile with him for quick county hunting trip. . That was the start of my county hunting. We went on a two trips together – one a 24 hour trip to get the last WBOW. Didn't go mobile myself yet. Not long after, I put a radio in my Honda Accord and had a hamstick on a small bracket off the rear bumper. I was learning. That set up didn't work well. Soon I put mag mounts on the truck deck with 6 foot mast and horizontal resonators. . Much better.

Between my mom, N2TPH and myself, a few years later we ran across the county hunter net.....and that really got me into going mobile.

Anyhow, this year probably was the 45th time or so out of the last 55 years that have gone by since the first trip.....so I was off to Dayton. It's a thousand miles from TX. You can hop a plane and rent a car...or if you stay at the right expensive places, take a shuttle bus – no need rental car. Probably the cost of driving (at 35c/mile, or the government figure of \$65/mile) plus motels, the cost is about the same, but you can't county hunt from a commercial plane! I think way back when, when I was working, I actually took 2 trips by plane – didn't have the time to spend a week on the road and there. Work, work, work.....but sometimes I'd wind up somewhere with a weekend and a rental car – and went county activating.....

This year I left on a Tuesday – leaving 3 days to get there. It's all interstate unless you choose back roads. I checked the park database for new parks. Over 40 new ones in AR but most are everywhere but along major highways or the interstates. Hmm.....I've got the rest on a dozen previous trips to here and there. So the first day started out hitting I-30 going east to Texarkana. Didn't get far before a one hour total backup on the interstate. Moved 3 miles in an hour due to traffic accident. Groan. No way to start a trip. There was one new park near Hope I planned to run. Nope, that hour backlog messed that up. It would take 2 hours to get there, run it, and leave. Didn't have the time in the schedule.

There's a few one in Little Rock but you have to run it portable. No way to run mobile as it's just a building site. Well, maybe I'll do that on a AR trip later. Have portable rig but didn't bring it this trip.. So it was I-30 to Little Rock.....then I-40.

So I just drove toward West Memphis AR – Days Inn. Been there a few times. Decent.

Near that city, you can run a new park - which is actually an old trail system that runs from MN to the Gulf of Mexico.....

Great River Road National Scenic Byway National Historic Trail US-12096

The Federal Highway Omission has declared it a National Scenic Byway. OK....It runs over 100 miles in AR – and the north portion crosses I-50 and runs along it for a few miles. You can exit easily and find a nice spot to run. It was getting late in the day - posted on W6RK – Crittenden County AR 15 contacts in log. 20 minutes.

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From Co-Pilot

“The Great River Road National Scenic Byway in Arkansas is a 362-mile route that follows the Mississippi River, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of the region.

It begins at Lake Itasca in Minnesota and ends at the Gulf of Mexico, passing through 10 states along the way. 2340 miles in length

1 The byway highlights the Delta region, known for its agricultural lands and historical significance, particularly in cotton production.

2 Visitors can explore historic sites, such as the Lakeport Plantation and the WWII Japanese American Internment Museum, and enjoy recreational activities like boating and wildlife viewing.

3 The byway is marked by green and white steamboat pilot’s wheel signs, making it a scenic and informative journey for travelers

Then Days Inn motel around dinner time. Mexican restaurant adjacent to motel. Gas station 500 feet away. If you like gambling, casino 500 feet away. Skipped the casino.

Wednesday, after bowl raisin bran and coffee....headed along I-40 to Nashville. At Jackson TN, there's a new park – Lake Graham state fishing lake. Madison County

Lake Graham can be found approximately 9 miles east of Jackson Tennessee,

The lake is approximately 500 acres and has public restrooms, a picnic area, a boat launching ramp, fish attractors, and a fishing pier. Watch for Belted Kingfishers, Great Blue Herons, and other water birds. Pine stands and deciduous woods will yield a nice variety of woodland birds year-round.

The lake is owned and managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA).

Made 15Q, moved on. Bands not especially great. No more new parks along the way to Nashville, then north toward Louisville. Stopped at Shepardsville, KY – just south of Louisville, KY. Super 8 motel.

Thursday

Bowl raisin bran cereal – apple – then on the road to get to Dayton around noon time. There's a new park added – in Xenia - so I headed there.

Great Council State Park US-11673

This is a 'small' state park. It consists mainly of a single large building and a parking lot for 14 cars. That's it.

Great Council State Park is Ohio's 76th state park, established to honor and preserve the rich history and culture of the Shawnee people and their enduring connection to the land. It is located in western Ohio, near the Little Miami River, a region central to Shawnee history and pivotal events that shaped Native and American narratives. The park takes its name from "Great Council," referencing the important role of councils and decision-making in Shawnee governance and community life.

The park celebrates thousands of years of Shawnee history, beginning with their ancestors, the Hopewell and Adena cultures. Artifacts and monumental structures, such as earthworks and burial mounds, reveal a sophisticated understanding of astronomy, ecology, and community planning. During the 18th century, the Shawnee people played significant roles in the regional dynamics of trade, diplomacy, and conflict. The park focuses on this continuum, emphasizing both ancient traditions and the impact of European colonization, including displacement and resilience.

The highlight of this park is a 12,000-square-foot interpretive center modeled after a

historic Shawnee longhouse. It features:

Historic Displays — Engage with hands-on displays, bridging past and present and igniting your curiosity.

Gallery Space — Discover awe-inspiring exhibits showcasing the artistry and heritage of the region's vibrant cultures and modern Shawnee life.

Theater Space — Immerse yourself in a short film where modern Shawnee voices illuminate the history of Great Council from their unique perspectives.

Living Stream — Get your hands wet and learn about how Shawnee people made use of Ohio's waterways.

Gift Shop — Take home a piece of history with unique keepsakes and print materials, such as historical books and aps, connecting you to the park's enduring legacy.

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I arrived there to find K8MST putting out the park on SSB on 20M. Oh well, went to 30M cw, spotted myself W6RK....a few showed up for Greene County OH....went 17M. Not too many there. Looked up and K8MST gone. Went to 20M cw and made more Qs. 22 in log. Needless to say, with a couple hundred park chasers/activators headed to the Hamvention, likely a hundred ran this in the week around the event!

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Headed to the Microtel Inn.....half way between Dayton and Xenia. Been staying there for the past 10 years since the Super 8 on Dryden Road went downhill, and further downhill until it wasn't a Super 8 any longer. 3 nights at Microtel – reasonable prices. They don't actually raise prices like many other places during Hamvention week.

Not far away is a Bob Evans Restaurant. Turkey Dinner! Yeah. There's also one in Midland MI near the annual MI Mini!

Friday

Bowl Raisin Bran cereal, apple sliced on top, cup decaf. Headed out about 8am. Hamfest opens 9am. Drove to handicap parking at Gate 4. This year, I rented Scooter again from Scoot-Around. Not cheap but my legs don't work too well these days. No way I'm going to do the miles of walking and standing for the two days. They opened early this year – got Scooter and for some reason – they let us in to the hamfest at

8:30am. OK.....

Lots of food places to eat at Dayton Hamvention. You won't starve as long as you have money. You can start out with \$4 coffee (more for special brews/orders), \$2 donuts. No egg biscuits this year found. Around noon, you have 30 choices – from Grilled Pork Chops, Mexican Quesadillas, Tacos, etc, Pizza, BBQ, Steak sandwiches, etc. \$10 to \$18. Frozen cheese cake on a stick, ice cream. Wasn't warm enough for ice cream – about 70 and overcast. Lemonade. Sweet Tea. Pop Corn. Snacks of all kinds.

Zipped around – buildings open early. You've got 3 LARGE buildings filled with vendors from ICOM/Yaesu/Kenwood/Elecraft, every KW amp maker, antennas, and every ham accessory. No MFJ this year. As usual, mob scene. Half dozen key makers. Towers, ham radio programs, hardware, coax,and on and on.

There were a half dozen forum rooms with full schedule.

In addition, there were several smaller buildings with smaller spaces. MARAC had a booth in the Volta Building. Same location as last year. Mike, NF0N, Sharon, KJ8F, Alan, W8OP taking care of things and others came by, helped out a bit. Other county hunters there were AA8R, DL3DXX, KA4RRU, AI5P, and likely dozens of others where we didn't cross paths.

DL3DXX came from Germany. It was his second trip to Dayton. Spent a bit of time at CH booth meeting others coming by.

As usual, the booth had to big USA map where folks could put a pin for there county in it. Over 100 did.....most were clustered around OH, MI, IL, PA, MD, NY, VA.....with only a few in TX, CA, AZ.....

POTA – Parks on the Air – had their usual outdoor booth, and had a second space with 20 chairs where you could sit and yak. Lots of folks came and went. Spent an hour or two there over the two days of Dayton.

Did the inside area flea market. Took two hours to check out rows and rows of stuff. Didn't need anything, but if you were building, tons of parts for sale.

Mike, KA4RRU and the Lynchburg group had a space in the larger flea market area. Didn't make out out there this year. Not looking for much. About the only thing on the wanted list is a spare 54 inch Hustler mast. Didn't see any for sale. POTA folks might be buying them up.

Around 4 pm, I had enough. The eyes glaze over after a while. Turned in Scooter – caught shuttle cart to parking lot. Headed back to motel – the Microtel. Dinner at Bob Evans. Turkey.

Rested up.

Saturday

Up early – breakfast – raisin bran – sliced apple, cup coffee. Headed out. Got to parking lot 8:20am. Got Scooter at 8:30. Had to wait to 9am to get in with the rest of the crowd.

Attended an interesting forum presentation on the MFJ founder/family.

Spent some time County Hunter booth. Spend some time POTA area. Did the POTA forum. Wish we had a county hunting forum, but it's been more than 10 years since we've had one. Same for county hunter dinners – used to get 20-30 folks. Oh well, past life. Most forums get over 100 folks showing up. POTA fills the room – 300 plus.

Went through big buildings again in areas not seen before. Overload!

Kept busy – ate too much food.....worn out by 4pm so headed out. Back to Motel and Bob Evans dinner.

Sunday

The hamfest continues another 4 hours – skipped that. Had more than enough.

Time to head home. Started early after Raisin Bran/sliced apple, coffee. All interstate, no detours. To Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, Memphis, Little Rock. You gain an hour going west with EDST to CDST. Stopped in Brinkley AR at a Super 8 – that I've stayed at half dozen times before. Mexican restaurant nearby and Cracker Barrel 3 miles away if that's your thing.

Monday

Five hours to home. Home by noon. Trip was 2100 miles. Car got 37 mpg. Traffic busy along interstates so didn't run any counties. Usually stop these days to put out county, or stop at park. Only 3 parks run on trip. Wow...I'm slowing down. Used o

run 15 or 20 on the way there – but there aren't many new ones along the route! Or routes.....

Am I going to keep doing this? Dunno.....turn age 80 in June. I'll try to make UT for the County Hunter Convention – lots of new parks out that way!

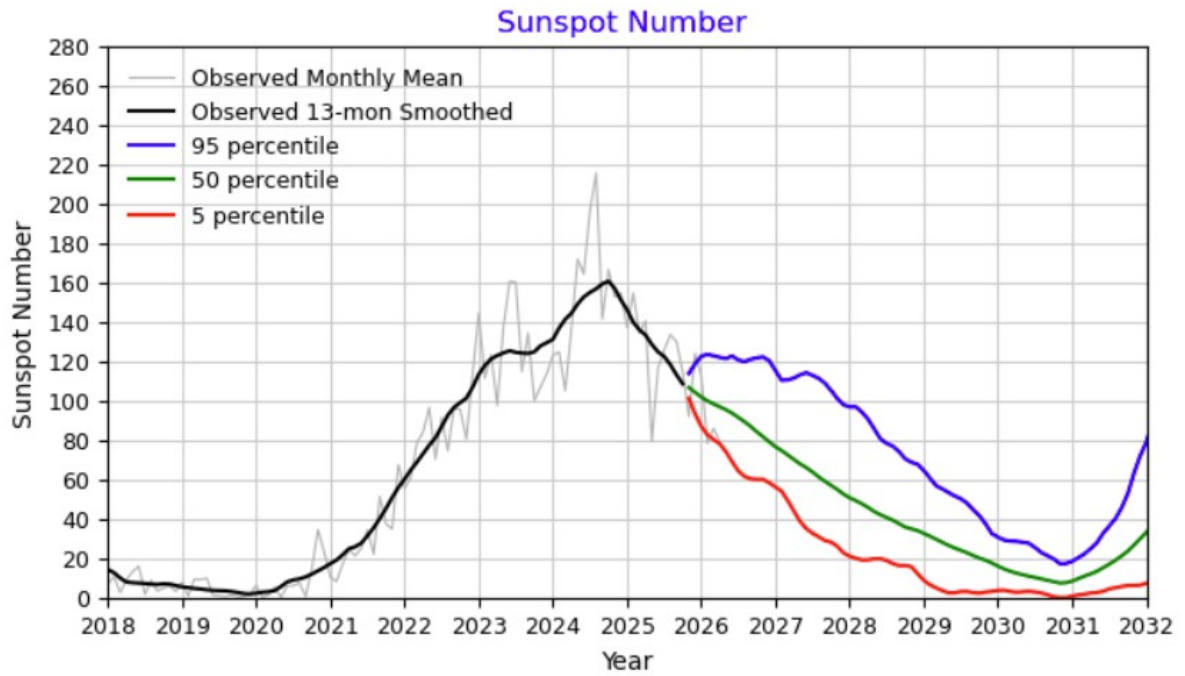
Nearly 38,000 attended Dayton this year – no wonder it was so busy!

Sunspot Cycle News

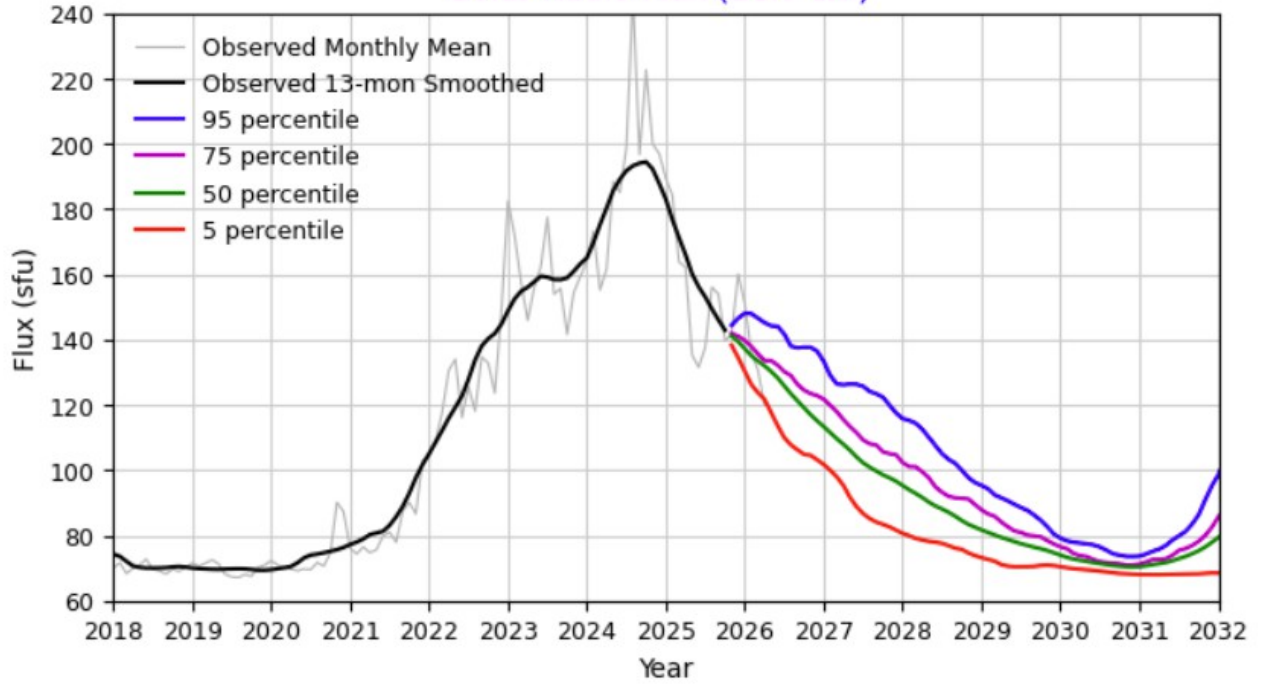
from NASA

Updated May 4th, 2026

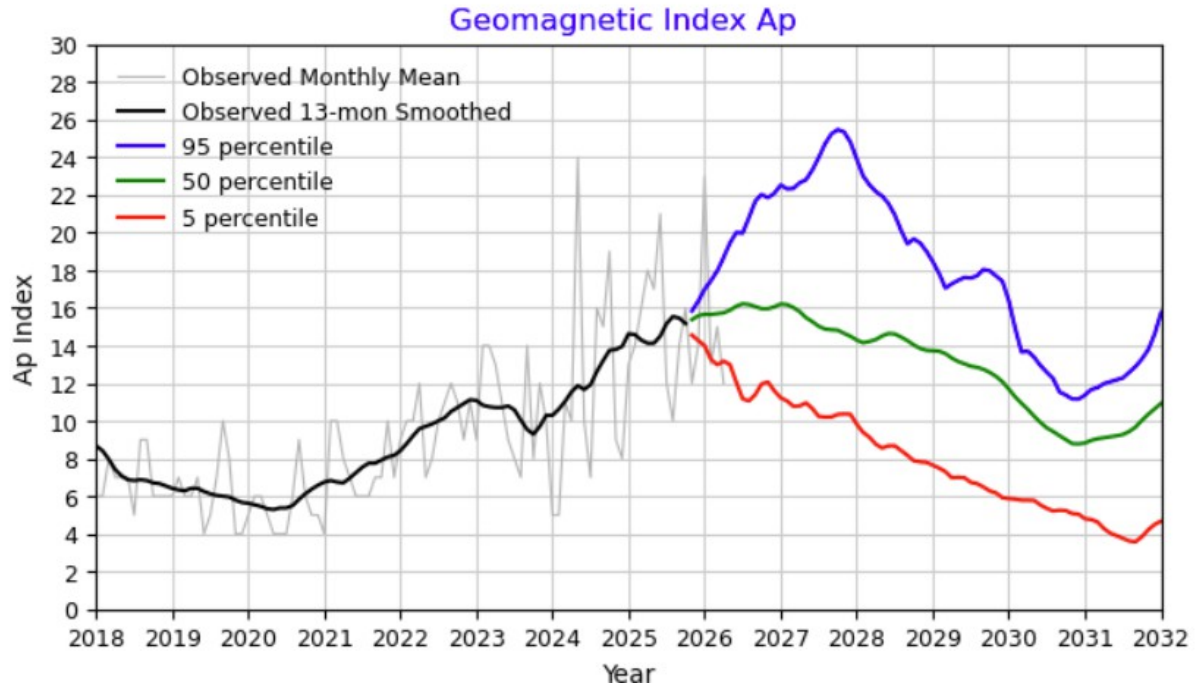
Sunspot Number



Solar Radio Flux (10.7 cm)



Geomagnetic Index Ap



We are on the tail end of the solar cycle. Peak was back around October 2024. So far propagation has been 'decent'. There's still openings on 10M with lots of digital there. Otherwise, SSB and CW there falling off quickly and many days no openings. Same on 12M, even 15M at times. Looks like 2031 will be the 'dip'.....with nary a sunspot....

Bet 30M, 40M and 60M going to be popular then. That's five years from now – but the slope goes down each year likely. We've got another two years with sunspots...then they keep getting fewer and fewer till there's almost none. It won't make any difference if you run a KW on 10M or 11M.....it will be dead, dead, dead....other than E-skip.

N2TPH found out the hard way. She got her Tech license near the tail end of sunspot peak. 10M was wide open – she chased DX, and had a ball working stations all over the US from FL, NY, and TX QTH. Then 10M faded away.....and she heard lots of activity on 20M.....back then to get a General license you had to master 13 wpm for the code test.

After months of code practice, she passed.....and got her General.....20M held up nicely for the next 5 years. At sunspot dip, 20M will open later, close earlier – but still be the

main county hunting SSB band. 40M will be rocking.

So.....make use of the higher bands before they vanish for 6 years or more....20M will be more US centered.....not so much DX.

- - - -

On the graphs...

The 'green line' above is the 50% confidence level – probably likely the most likely to happen.....but you never know.....

10 Years Ago

In 2016, the ARRL created the National Parks on the Air Program – probably the most significant addition to ham radio activity in decades...It took off like wildfire with ten thousand or more participating. It featured on line dashboards with current scores.

There were about 700 parks – they added a few during the year - and most consisted of National Parks, National Monuments and Historic Sites, National Wildlife Areas. Not a whole lot. Only a handful in TX to get/run.

Folks went crazy. N4CD put 30,000 miles on the car headed to FL, to CA, OR, WY, SD, NH.....45 states in a year..... Ran over 250 parks that year.

It was a great year.....

Now 10 years later, POTA is even bigger. There are 300,000 registered users worldwide in the POTA database. Things have almost gotten out of hand with 17,4000 US park entities.....with PA and DE having 600 and 300 parks respectively. Only 200 in Texas. Worldwide there are over 35,000 parks.

Some US folks (mainly in northeast) have worked over 14,000 different parks! Wow.....

well, it's not too difficult to run up thousands of parks worked.....there are 20-30 every day – and hundreds on the air during weekends. Folks go to parks for state QSO Parties

– maybe camping out a few days there.

I don't think ARRL realized they were creating a program that would get tens of thousands of new hams busily 'on the air'. Manufacturers are smiling all the way to the bank.

New ICOM X-026 Radio

This is real.....

ICOM showed a prototype new radio at Dayton – a set with a separate head unit like the IC-7100 but provided no information on it. The push buttons are gone with touch screen buttons. It had the usual 2 antenna connectors. All that was said was it would be a 100w HF, 50W VHF/UHF radio with D-Star. Maybe DV mode for HF?

Speculation is that more details would be available following the Tokyo big event coming up in June. Japanese manufacturers often announce new products there first.

The IC-7100 is 10 years old. About time for a refresh. Yaesu follows a similar 10 year or so pattern.

Is it just an IC-7100 replacement? IC-7300 radio replacement?

(well....I don't expect to see an IC-7100-IQ....but who knows?).....Stranger things have happened.....Wonder if they read my April issue article? Hi Hi

New England QSO Party

A few mobiles were out. There was no 'rover' category so folks who operated rover or portable appear under 'mobile' category. Lots of counties on the air, but as usual, a few counties were scarce. Still, many did very well this year.

W1AW fixed CT 770 cw 746 ssb

Operator(s): AA1N KB1ZAC N4ML W1JGM W1NSK W1QH W1ZL

W1NSK originally approached HQ for a Sunday only NEQP effort with some guys from CARA, as they had done in the past. After talking with him some, we got some YCCers (AA1N and W1ZL) to show up with me for Saturday to make it a casual 2 day effort. Overall, the station performed well and everyone had fun! 1411 qs at the end saturday, and much slower Sunday. If we had pointed towards EU/JA a bit more, the mult count would be higher. Best hour according to N1MM was 288.

-Max N4ML

K1C mobile 1804 cw qso

Operator(s): K2UA N5OT

Another great mobile adventure in NEQP! Thanks to my frequent mobile partner Mark, N5OT, for flying in from Oklahoma for the contest just two weeks after having his second hip replaced in just over 6 weeks--what a trooper! This radio thing is great healing mojo. Just a week after chasing K1TO and me around Florida in FQP (as N4TO) and working us 60 times, Mark was still game for the trip for NEQP and we had an outstanding time.

N2MG and I have done NEQP twice before as a mobile (2021 and 2023). This year was by far the best finish, with 250 more QSOs, 9 more mults, and a 64k higher score than our previous best. We had some pretty good hours, with nine hours over 100 Qs, but nothing spectacular. We averaged 103 QSOs/hour in the 17.5 hours we were on the air. (We hung it up around 10:30 PM Saturday because were were both shot from traveling.)

The station is my 2016 Honda Pilot with a Kenwood TS-480HX driving an SGC SG-500, switched to three Tarheel antennas: 40A-HP up front on a brush guard (dedicated to 40 meters), a Tarheel Designs Little Pro HP on the roof (dedicated to 20), and a Tarheel Designs 1000 Pro HP on a receiver mount set to 80 at night and 15 during the day. This year I set up antenna switching using a Top Ten 6-way relay box driven by a Green Heron GH Everywhere base, which listens to N1MM radio control USB data to select the antenna automatically. It was so nice to be able to just change bands and not have to worry about whether the right antenna was selected.

Since my first NEQP in 2021, I had not forgotten how bad the noise is along essentially the entire length of Rte 7 from north of Rutland all the way down into Connecticut--but I had hoped that it had gotten better. It has not. In the entirety of the FQP the previous weekend, through 41 counties, I didn't encounter noise anything like this. Mark wondered aloud whether Vermont, in particular, didn't get the memo about BPL being shut down. It was so bad that N2MG and I chose a different route in 2023, but that didn't work out because conditions were so bad that year. If I do mobile again in NEQP, it probably won't include Rte 7. The Interstate highways are by far the quietest roads in New England but also not the most enjoyable. There's nothing like the picture-postcard panorama of Northern Vermont in early May--it is reason alone to do NEQP mobile. Stunning! We even saw some wet snow and graupel for about 30 minutes on Sunday morning.

At the end we were running way ahead so we extended our trip from our planned ending point in CTNOW down into CTNAU and then to CTWES, taking a big risk by vectoring to Newtown, home of the most dangerous weather on earth, and pivoting north again along Rte 7 and finishing just south of Sharon, CT. The last half hour on 80 rewarded us nicely. Overall--a grand adventure in 25 New England counties!

Thanks especially to AD4EB, king of mobile excellence, for his help with Garmin BaseCamp and GPS mastery and over-the-air support at a couple of key points.

Sure would like to see this event move to a one-day, Sunday-only event. The late Saturday night thing just has to go as it is hostile to mobiles, IMO.

Hope to see many of you at Dayton in a few days!

--73, Rus, K2UA

N1NY mobile 694 cw 529 ssb

Operator(s): KI2D NK2Y

We had an excellent NE QP!

We operated from four locations. MABER/MAHMD on Saturday afternoon, then CTNOW from our campsite, where despite a visit from a curious black bear, we operated until 1am. On Sunday we first stopped at CTNOW/CTCAP before moving onto RIPRO/RIBRI. We had plans for a few more county lines, but Rhode Island was

productive enough, and we were tired from having had only 4 hours of sleep, that we decided to stay put there until the end of the contest at 8pm.

Jay NK2Y did CW on his ICOM IC-7100, a Begali expedition key, a Winkeyer, and an inverted V with 60 feet of wire on an ICOM tuner.

Sebastian KI2D did SSB with his Yaesu FT-DX10, using a SOTABeams linked dipole for 20m, 40m and 80m on an HRD Industries Lil Dude 6 mast, and a Tarheel Designs Little PRO-HP Portable kit on its tripod for 20m, 15m and 10m.

DL3DXX fixed DX 372 cw 67 counties

Had guests to show around on Saturday so had to skip INQP and 7QP but New England party starts 22:00 local so I was able to attend. 15m was almost closed but 20m was easy going to W1 and also 40m and 80m later. The New England states are not so affected by propagation like more western or southern states.

Operated until Sunrise on Sunday around 03:30z. Time for the bed after 80m was dead and 40m closed even the party was still going 90 minutes more.

Not much traffic on Sunday. Just to follow the mobiles and a few POTA and county expeditions and a few new stations who were not active on Saturday.

Missed a ten meter QSO. In the evening greyline band suddenly opened and I heard NE1QP with good copy calling CQ but not hearing me. He may had antenna not pointed to Europe or was sleeping just letting the CQ keyer running in a loop.

Told the parallel station NE1QP on 15m and back to ten but now the band had closed. Lesson: WATCH EUROPA ON A DEAD 10M BAND AT EUROPE SUNSET. A dead band may open for a few minutes!! Maybe next time...

Missed only MAHMP. I saw that K1C went through for some minutes but seems that he only worked 40m or I did not found him on 20m in time.

Never finished all counties but was very close this year, even Dukes Clubstation and Nantucket was worked on Saturday in CW.

Thank you to all for the QSOs.

Another lesson: Few weak stations answered my call after the first try but some loud stations never heard me. Have to extend 2xVertical into 4-Square :-)

73 Dietmar DL3DXX

KA6BIM fixed OR 18935 Mults59

Fixed stations were fairly strong, but the mobiles were often difficult to copy or work. I called a couple of them, only to have them leave the county without making a contact. Lots of noise and QSB. Thanks for the QSO's

Dave ka6bim

K1IB mobile 792 cw

I set out to surpass my all-time best performance in last year's NEQP, but didn't quite make it. Though I had a few more QSOs than last year I was short by 6 multipliers. Had 15m been as active as it was last year I might have had a better chance of picking up a few more mults.

Equipment: Yaesu FT-897 & Hustler mobile antenna.

N1QY mobile 433 cw qso

I sought to maximize QSOs I could make available, aka band-counties. I got 19 total band-counties in the 6 counties I put out. I tried to give 15 and 80 as much emphasis as possible. Just one of me, driving, operating, and changing antennas for each band change.

N1RWJ mobile 110 cw qso

QRP (5 W max) CW portable. Saturday was a rainy hike-in to Bear Brook State Park after NEAR-Fest; Sunday was from Haines Memorial State Park. Great CW practice, and fun meeting KI2D and NK2Y while they were roving.

Equipment:

CFT-1

Spooltenna 40m EFHW
K8CES "Zippy" paddle
Ham2K PoLo

Indiana QSO Party

There are 92 counties in IN. Due to both CW and SSB multipliers, there is no way to determine how many counties were on the air this year. It looks like 31 or so were on CW and about the same on SSB according reported scores on the 3830 contest board.

From the 3830 scores page :

K9T mobile 368 cw 68 ssb
Operator(s): K2KAR N4HAI

K9T/m in 7 counties using K3 and Screwdriver:
Randolph County - Cardinal Greenway Losantville Trailhead
Delaware County - Cardinal Greenway Prairie Creek Trailhead
Henry County - Summit Lake State Park, US-2270
Rush County - Waggener Community Pool Parking Lot
Fayette - Meridian Health Services Parking Lot
Union County - Town Hall
Wayne County - Ivy Tech Community College

K9JK mobile 24 cw 122 ssb

Operation was while parked, first at the Benton/Newton County Line and second at the Lake/Porter County Line.

Thanks to all participants and to the sponsors.

73, JK

W9TC one county portable 210 cw 166 ssb

no comments

K9ABR one county portable 408 cw 294 ssb

no comments

KJ9B one county portable 0 42 ssb

no comments

N9BCN rover 543 CW 300 SSB QSO

First year for N9BCN going as a rover. We covered 9 counties.

Hamilton
Tipton
Howard
Cass
Carrol
White
Tippecanoe
Clinton
Boone

We had a great time throughout; much fun was had and many things learned. Fortunately, technical issues were limited and for the most part we were able to operate without difficulty.

All in all, we had a great time using an ATAS-120a mobile and a 17ft vertical with elevated radials on both 20m and 40m (with capacity hat on 40m).

Hope to work everyone again next year!

OM2VL fixed DX 59 cw 48 ssb CW Mults 29 Ph Mults 32

Till 20Z (when started NEng QP) I focused to IN stations. Activity was good, but unfortunately when started NEng QP especially during first few hours I was very busy and missed IN stations.

My big thanks to K9T for giving me so many points and multipliers (especially to be QRV from every county also on SSB). Thanks Karen and Tom!!!

Also BIG THANKS to Jim N9JF to go Vermillion county and of course for the other QSOs.

Most QSOs:

K9T 15/7

N9BCN 11/7

N9JF 6/5

K9KJ 4/4

W9C 4/2

(4): K9ABR, K9WX, N9UWX, W9VW

73, Laci

N8II fixed WV 24 cw 10 ssb CW Mults 14 Ph Mults 10

I was on 40M at 15Z, made about 14 QSO's and decided that 40 was not open well enough to compete during the next 5 hours or so. 20 never opened well, maybe 4 QSO's. Family dinner put me QRT for nearly 3 hours so then it was a mad dash to do well in the 7QP which ended in good results. The IN to IN traffic was high, not too encouraging for those not really close to IN.

Sorry IN ops for the lack of effort this year.

73, Jeff N8II

Mobile Activity in May

At the beginning of the month:

K8ZZ spotted in OH

Then very busy weekend with QSO parties.

After, N9JF spotted in IN

K4YT headed to OH and KY to run many there..Many days

AI5P spotted in AR – doing POTA's and into MO.

N9JF noted in TN.

KB6UF spotted in TX counties.

N8OYY noted in KY into OH...

KA9JAC/KB9YVT spotted in IN. Later noted in MI to WI.

AI5P in MO...on way to Dayton. After more POTAs in MO.

Many county hunters converged at Dayton Hamvention

after Hamfest...WY0A spotted in AR

Quiet for a few days

NF0N noted in NE

WY0A busy with more in KY – then OH....then WV for many counties. Still going at press time – 5 29 2026

Arkansas QSO Party

There are 75 counties in Arkansas. This contest held the same weekend as the Dayton Hamvention – where half the contesters in the country/world are at Dayton, not on the radio. Same for mobiles.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

K9OZ mobile 190 cw qso

Mobile county line operations

AA5Z Portable 331 cw 92 ssb

Operator(s): K5TD KI5ZAW N5SPY

Team AA5Z from Louisiana had a blast even with the absolutely horrible band conditions. We arrived at US-1090 in Chicot county friday evening and setup 6 portable antennas. We tent camped in 70-80 degree weather and woke up saturday morning ready to roll. Three operators, K5TD, N5SPY, and KI5ZAW worked together and shifted bands every two hours. It was a grind all day with mid day being the worst, sometime echoing CQ for 30-40 minutes to only be met with the groaning of the geomagnetic storm that was taking place. Misquotes, gnats, flies, 88+ degree temps, KP index of 6, solar flux plummeted down around 100, and 30,000 of the most active hams away from the radio at the Dayton Hamvention forced us to really grind each contact out. Thanks for all the calls and patience! DE K5TD

K5CCW Portable 178 cw 57 ssb

Drove in from Denton, TX Friday evening, stayed with my parents in Bastrop, LA, and headed up to Ashley County Saturday morning.

I really wish I had been smarter with my antenna setup — it cost me some time and

contacts — but it still turned into a nice relaxing day sitting out in the woods. Didn't see a soul all day.

I was born and raised in Lake Village, Arkansas, so it was nice being back close to home. My 18-year-old son drove most of the trip, and we had a great father-and-son road trip together.

Thanks to all of my Denton County ham friends and the Lake Area Amateur Radio Klub (LAARK) for hunting me and helping make it such a fun event. Sharing the fun with the guys back home makes it even more enjoyable.

Hoping to be back next year, and next time I'll try to find at least a two-county line.

73,
Randall Patrick, K5CCW

K5CM rover 1074 cw 826 ssb

As others have said "Conditions were terrible". The timing could not have been worse with the K-index hitting 7 Friday night, and staying high through most of Saturday. But as they say "it is what it is" and we still managed 1900 QSO's. By chance we started on the same 4 county line as N5A. Good and bad, we had some interference, but each band mode exchange with them gave us 16 contacts! Normally Pam, N5KW would have been with me, but she had a commitment Saturday afternoon so she operated from home this time. All Q's are important but here are some of the most worked:

96 N5A/P
54 N5KW
48 KI5GTR
32 K5DB
27 N8II
25 KA6BIM
21 NE8P
20 K1RO OM2VL W4ANT
18 W0UC
17 K8MV N6AR WA5DTK WB9HFK
15 W0PI
14 K1ZZI K4DR K4FT K9JK KY7M N6MU W7LG
13 AA5JF KD2KW KW4EE N7EPD

12 N1SOH W5RZ WA5SOG
11 K2YG K7TM W1SSN WA8KAN
10 AJ4LN K1CPJ K4AMA K4BAI K7ZYV KM8L KN6VTC N4UF N5RZ N6DE
W3US W5XG WA9LEY WO4O
9 KZ3P N2CU WA2JQK
73,
Connie / K5CM

KI5GTR rover 624 cw 277 ssb

no comments

KA6BIM fixed OR 58 cw 44 ssb Mults30

Conditions were terrible. 10 & 15 were unusable 40 was only usable at the very beginning and end. 20 was only marginally usable, with only a few strong signals. I was hoping to find the 3 counties I still need: Searcy, Fulton & Clay, but never found them. Portable operators K5CM, KI5GTR, N5A on 3 & 4 county intersections, and Rover K9OZ/R provided about @70% of my contacts. 1st hour was the best with 34 Q's. Thanks for the Qso's and your patience thru the QRN & QSB

Dave ka6bim

K1RO fixed NH 50 cw 36 ssb Mults26

Just checked the radio here and there while working outside on this beautiful weekend. Conditions were terrible until later in the day, and thanks to the Arkansas operators who persevered.

Special thanks to WC5T for going to CW for a contact with Craighead, my last needed Arkansas county on CW.

OM2VL fixed DX 41 cw 19 ssb Mults25

I was QRV in KOS CW contest on 160m so I had limited time for Arkansas stations.
Thanks for the QSOs, especially:

K5CM 20/6
KI5TGR 16/10
N5A 8/4
K9OZ 6/6

Unfortunately Bradley county was not QRV - my last missed county from AR for my US County Award only 20m.

73, Laci

N8II fixed WV 48 cw 51 ssb Mults29

Considering I wasn't really seriously competing, the outcome was very good, 2nd highest score on 3830 to KA6BIM who was HP. I operated from the 1439-1538Z (granddaughter visit = late start) with a decent start and then went out to burn many sticks and branches most of which fell from healthy mature trees over the winter bearing in mind that a heat wave was coming starting Sunday. I had to largely tend the fire and feed it slowly to be safe, off and on breeze until it was burned down. This definitely cost some Q's and mults and was exhausting as well. I made lots of trip to the basement shack and back throughout the day.

I actually had over a dozen AR ops answer CQ's on 20 SSB worth a few mults as well. Everyone was complaining about conditions. 15 was dead. Today I worked AR on 10 SSB with S9 signals on Es, if only during the QP! From here 20M was good enough to make Q's until 2230Z when skip went long. Mid-afternoon for an hour signals were weak. 40 was noisy and signal level were down from the QP's 2 weeks prior. On noisier 80, I worked KM5G and K5CM on CW and AA5Z on SSB; only KM5G was easy copy.

Many thanks to K5CM/M (only 2 stops this year, but many QSO's!), N5A, KI5GTR, AA5Z, WC5T, and K9OZ for going out to boost everyone's score. Not a real exciting QP, but it could have been worse. Congrats to WB9HFK for a high score on basically on 40M due to no prop on 20; I have been there several times this year. Many thanks to all of the AR ops for the QSO's. Hope to see you all in the WVQP on

West Virginia Statehood Day, June 20th.

73, Jeff

Events for County Hunters

Last of the spring QSO parties - quiet until late August after these

June 6 1300z to 7 0100

1.8-28,50,144

Kentucky QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), KY county or SPC

<http://www.kyqsoparty.org/>

June 20 1600z to 21 0400z

3.5-28

West Virginia QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), WV county or SPC

<http://www.qsl.net/wvqp>

Annual County Hunter Convention

Extra! Extra! All County Hunters !

News....News... News.....Read all About it!

- - - -

Welcome to Utah where we will be having the MARAC National Convention!!!! Ogden, Utah to be exact.

Here is a preliminary outline of the convention. I hope to have everything finalized by

the end of February with bios, presentation summaries, websites, etc.. There may be some changes as I work through everything. The convention will be the weekend of September Friday 18th and Saturday 19th, 2026.

Friday:

Breakfast- everyone on their own.

Presentation 9:30-10:30 by Don K3IMC

Presentation 11:00-12:00 by Ron KF7ZN. A Visit to the Sun and the Ionosphere

Lunch 12:30-1:30

Field Trip to Hill Air Museum 2:00-4:00PM They have guided tours. Hill Aerospace Museum is a military aviation museum located at Hill Air Force Base, one of our nation's biggest and best aviation museums.

Dinner 6:00 pm

Slide show with slides of members and their activities during the year.

Along with dinner we will have a historical club present that has some very interesting presentations on history of the West.

Saturday:

Breakfast everyone on their own

Presentation 9:30 to 10:30 Bob Carter WR7Q History of CW and how to improve your skills

Presentation 11-12:00 Jed Petrovich AD7KG Mobile and Portable antennas

Lunch 12:30 to 1:30

MARAC Board meeting 1:30-2:30

Harvest Moon Celebration In the afternoon people can attend the Harvest Moon celebration- Live music, fall-themed photo stations, and sometimes rock climbing and axe throwing., etc.

Dinner 6:30 pm, speaker from Rio Grande Railroad club on History of Railroads in the West

Prizes

Awards Issued

Roadrunner Award:

W0GXQ attained 1825 last counties, He was awarded #4

K7SEN attained 475 last counties, he was awarded #47

All CW Award:

N4RS completed all cw for the sixth time. He received #5

That's all folks