



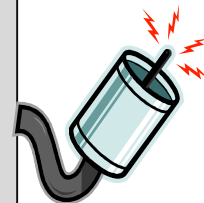
The Feedline

Oakland County Amateur Radio Society

Organized 1937, ARRL affiliation 1962

Monthly Newsletter

September 2016



President's Message, by Joe Miller KJ8O

Summer, what summer? As I am writing this message on Labor Day, it seems that Memorial Day was just yesterday. Field Day gave us an example of life in the lower half of the sunspot cycle, but as a club, we hung tough and ended up with 6,730 points. Not our best, but far from our worst showing while working as 3A. Our logs were successfully submitted and will be included in the final results, hopefully to be announced within a month or so. Again, my thanks to everyone who helped this year. Let's see what 2017 will bring.

Larry KB8POD has been doing a fantastic job with the siren tests this year, even though he has been overwhelmed with other events. There are still two more months left for this year, and any assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please stay tuned, the next test is Saturday, October 1 and let's hope that we are nearing the finish line.

Last Monday night during the regular OCARS net, which has been operated for about 5 years, first on Tuesday nights at 7:00, then on Monday nights at 8:00, will be undergoing a minor change to the operating schedule. Beginning with the September 19th net, check-ins will commence at 7:30 pm. Our nets have been averaging 20 per week, and sometimes there just isn't enough time for the Trader's Net. As always, my thanks goes to Dan KB8TXZ and Chris KD4LJT who covered the nets when I wasn't available during the summer. Both gentlemen are doing a great job, and are to be commended.

This month will focus on the National Parks on the Air Centennial Event, which runs for all of 2016, and as of Labor Day, there are just under four months left to the year. There two classes of standings, the activators, who operate radio from the National Parks, and the chasers, who contact the National Parks stations.

Some special mentions are in order...

The following OCARS members are acknowledged for their role in activating National Parks, some in Michigan, some in Hawaii. All states count, but that's where OCARS has been worked.

<u>Name/Call</u>	<u>Activations</u>
Jim KH6/KB8TXZ	6 (Hawaii)
Greg KH6/N8GAS	4 (Hawaii)
Joe KJ8O	4 (Michigan and Ohio)
Doug KH6N8VY	3 (Hawaii)

And the following OCARS members are acknowledged in their role contacting NPOTA stations (approximately 480 in total):

<u>Name/call</u>	<u>Score</u>
Ron W8RWL	400
Tim K8NWD	285
Joe KJ8O	104
Doug N8VY	6
Greg N8GAS	2 (included Hawaii)
Ken W8KRS	4
Bob K8RGM	1

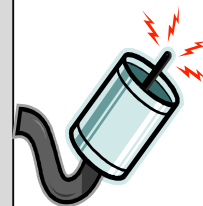
Please remember, it's not too late to start or to add to your score. The only thing is to upload your logs to Logbook of the World, and the ARRL does everything else. More importantly, thanks goes to Greg N8GAS for his excellent write-up of the Hawaii activation.

That's it for this month. Hope to see you at the meeting tomorrow.

VY 73 de Joe KJ8O



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Siren Testing: Saturday, October 1, 2016, at 1:00 pm. Please check into the Clarkston Repeater to volunteer.

Upcoming OCARS Meetings

Tuesday, September 6, monthly meeting at 7:30, nothing special, just a good time

Tuesday, October 4, monthly meeting at 7:30, to be determined

Tuesday, November 1, monthly meeting at 7:30, to be determined

Tuesday, December 6, monthly meeting at 7:30, club elections

Meeting location: Bethany Baptist Church, 1375 Hiller Rd., Waterford
doors open at 7:00, meeting begins at 7:30

Social Gathering: Wednesday 10:15 – 11:30 am, Village Place restaurant
S.W. corner of Dixie Highway and Andersonville Rd., Waterford

Officers and Directors:	President:	Joe Miller KJ8O	Directors:	Tim Pepper K8NWD
	Secretary:	Scott Craig N2OPQ		Al Bailey K8SIX
	Treasurer:	John Eldred N8FNN		Fred Holmes W1SKU
	Trustee:	Brad Nowak N8SNM		Jim Vigne KB8TXZ

OCARS Net: 8:00 pm (local time) on the Clarkston Repeater, 146.840 MHz, p.l. tone 100 Hz,
Joe KJ8O is net control, Dan KD8TXZ and Chris KD4LJT are both alternate net
control operators, and welcomes participation from all area hams.

Checkins: Dates are local time, Monday evenings, with number of check-ins, time, and NCS:

8/23/16	23	00:45	Joe
8/30/16	21	00:45	Joe

Website: www.gsl.net/w8tno maintained by webmaster Scott Craig N2OPQ

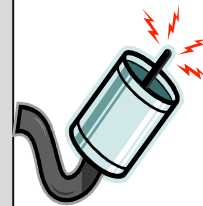
Contact information: w8tno.ocars@gmail.com or kj8o.ham@gmail.com (for an immediate response)

Great Lakes Division: <http://www.arrl-greatlakes.org/>

Michigan Section ARES: <http://ares-mi.org/>



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Upcoming Hamfests

- Sept. 18 Adrian Hamfest, Adrian, MI (note: new location!!!)
<http://www.adrianhamfest.com/>
- Sept. 24 GRAhamfest, Wyoming, MI
http://www.w8dc.org/attachments/2016GRAHamFestFlyer_wo_checking.pdf

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 9 – 12 WA2NYC 15th Anniversary of the Attack on the World Trade Center
(details per QST p. 94 or QRZ.com)
- Sept. 10 – 18 Route 66 On The Air Special Event <http://w6jbt.org/>

Contests

- Sept. 10 – 11 Worked All Europe DX (Phone)
- Sept. 10 – 12 ARRL September VHF Contest (Phone, CW, Digital)
- Sept. 24 – 25 CQ Worldwide DX Contest (RTTY)

Also, see Page 92 of QST for a full listing of amateur radio contests for September.

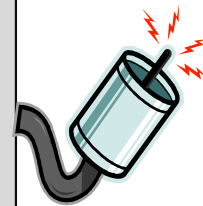
Traders Net

Yaesu FT897D - Asking \$750
Kenwood TS520S - Asking \$300
MFJ versa tuner 2 model 949C Asking \$60
Taking all offers that are reasonable.

Thanks,
Jason W8ZZU



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OCARS Meeting Minutes for June 7, 2016 recorded by Scott A. Craig N2OPQ, Secretary

Members socialized inside and outside from 7:00 to 7:30pm

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm by Joe KJ8O, president.

Business Meeting:

Prior meeting minutes accepted by Doug, N8VY. Ken, W8KRS seconded. Carried Unanimously.

The Treasurer's report was given by Tim, K8NWD. Motion to accept by Dan, KD8TXZ. Seconded by Greg, W8VIJ. Carried Unanimously.

Old business:

Polo Shirts \$23. If interested see Jim Vigne, KB8TXZ.

Reminder to renew memberships and pay annual dues. Annual membership is \$20. We accept cash or checks.

New Business:

Due to field day coming up and the amount of material we had to cover, the break began early. The focus during the meeting is on this year's field day event.

Upon return from break, the floor was handed over to Jim, KB8TXZ.

Field Day - June 25th thru June 26th, 2016 - <http://www.arrl.org/field-day>

We'll be setting up within 24 hours before the 2pm Saturday start time. Tear down is right after 2pm Sunday. We conduct our field day event at the same park the Oakland County Fairgrounds is located at. Springfield Oaks County Park, 12451 Andersonville Road, Davisburg, MI 48350. Follow the road to the back, it's the fields used for parking during the fair.

Please review all sections of the rules :

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2016/2016%20Rules.pdf>

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2016/2016FD_packet.pdf

Exchange: 3A MI

Slideshow ended at 8:45pm

Jim, KB8TXZ drew the ticket. The 50/50 winner was Dan, KD8TXZ.

Meeting adjourned about 9:00pm.

DXpedition to Big Island of Hawaii

National Parks On the Air

Gregory Stobbs N8GAS

The mighty volcano known as Kilauea belched sulfurous vapors high into the prevailing winds. The vapors would quickly combine with the moist Hawaii air to form tiny droplets of sulfuric acid bound for Honolulu, hundreds of miles away. Oblivious to the chemical reactions aloft, three radio operators perched a few hundred yards from the Kilauea caldera and launched their own signals far beyond the prevailing winds to awaiting QSO chasers on the Mainland and across the Pacific Rim.



The three radio operators were Jim Vigne KB8TXZ, Doug Basberg N8VY and Greg Stobbs N8GAS who had traveled from Michigan to the Big Island of Hawaii to activate five sites there, as participants in the year-long National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) campaign designed by the ARRL to commemorate the U.S. National Parks Centennial celebration. This is their story.

Preparations

Preparation for the trip involved considerably more than a casual *Lark in the Park*. The team had to secure local delivery of tables, chairs, feed lines, sun protection tent, backup generator and four 100 amp-hour deep-cycle marine batteries—things which could not be shipped as luggage. Radios, and antennas traveled as checked or carry-on luggage. Uncertain about possible antenna deployment, the team carried both wire and vertical antennas, comprising two MFJ Big Stick and one CrankIR multi-band verticals, one G5RV, one Alpha Delta DX-EE, one EW8010 end fed long wire and several mono-band dipoles. The electronics included two Elecraft K3s, one Icom 7100, a Signalink digital mode module, three laptops and a RigExpert antenna analyzer.

Traveling over four thousand miles to the Big Island without pre approval of the National Park Service seemed unwise, so the team secured written permission from Volcano National Park prior to leaving. This involved submitting a multi-page written application for a special use permit and payment of \$150 fee. Many verbal questions needed answers, like “No we are not going to be broadcasting on peoples’ car radios within the park.” When the permit finally issued, ten days prior to departure, the team was surprised by a plenitude of imposed restrictions, including a prohibition against using ropes or stakes in the ground. Erecting wire antennas without ropes or stakes was going to be difficult. The permit also specified, no generators, no banners, no nudity, and required that antennas carry flagging every five feet to prevent bird collision.

Accommodations on the Big Island

The team settled into Greg’s Japanese style Hale (Hale means house in Hawaiian), located in Kona on the west side of the island. The Kona Hale served as the team’s base of operations and provided a Pacific-facing QTH at a 280 foot elevation from which to operate when not in the parks. Except for Volcano, all sites were within easy driving distance of the Kona Hale. While at Volcano, the group rented a cottage nestled in a lush fern covered rainforest.

Kaloko-Honokokau

On day one, the team spent the morning unpacking, organizing gear and constructing two 65 pound cement-filled buckets embedding metal conduit to which the Big Stick verticals would be secured. As soon as the cement was dry, the team eagerly set off for the first park, Kaloko-Honokokau, located about ten minutes from the Kona Hale. Kaloko-Honokokau is the site of an ancient Hawaiian fish pond featuring a hand-built lava rock wall that separates the Kaloko fishpond from the ocean.

Given the rigors in obtaining the Volcano permit, the team approached the ranger in charge with trepidation. Indeed, chances were fifty-fifty this ranger might take one look at the three curious visitors with their truck full of threatening equipment and just say, no. Fortunately, this



ranger seemed intrigued by the proposed mission to *actually use radios* to talk back to the Mainland.

Running through his mental checklist of regulations the ranger said, "I can think of no regulations that you are violating, so you may proceed with my blessing. If anyone questions you, I'll take responsibility." He then suggested where the team might set up, handed out his business card and even offered to call ahead to some of the other parks to pave the way. Let the QSOs begin.

Most of the shoreline national parks close at dusk, and much of that first day had been spent waiting for cement to dry. The radios did not go operational until nearly 2 pm and the team had to vacate the park by 4:30. Nevertheless, thanks largely to Jim, the team managed to eke out 14 QSOs, thus qualifying as a NPOTA park activation. For NPOTA chasers, Kaloko-Honokokau came with a bonus. The Ala Khaki National Historic Trail just happens to pass right through the park, so each NPOTA chaser got credit for that site as well.

Pu'ukohola Heiau

At Pu'ukohola Heiau proudly stands the great lava stone temple of Kamehameha I, the historic Hawaiian king who unified the Hawaiian islands and formed the Kingdom of Hawaii. Much of the park, including the temple, bakes under intense sun, but the local park ranger quite graciously unlocked an access gate to their private quarters and allowed the team to operate in a grassy field under cover of shade trees. As the team lugged the concrete buckets and deep-cycle batteries into position, a pair of wild dogs that had been romping in that field took a high position on a bluff to the North, where they remained on guard for the duration.

On that day, Greg had his first real taste of action. Operating on 17 meters, the first QSO came at 1:30 UTC. A few QSO's later at 1:50 one of the chasers spotted Greg's frequency on the DXCluster net and within seconds Greg had his first pileup to contend with. The pileup spread to Doug on 20 meters a few minutes later. After the first pileup cleared the QSO's continued to flow in until it was time to strike operations and vacate the park.

Hawaii Gremlins



As would become a dubious trend, each day some unanticipated gremlin would attack at least one of the stations. On this second day, under the watchful eye of the two wild dogs, both Jim's and

Doug's stations befell gremlin attack. While working fine the day before, on this day Jim's vertical antenna was a dud. His SWR was off the charts. Something had changed. He tried several different feed lines, but the SWR remained beyond the limits of his antenna tuner. As Jim tried everything to no avail, the gremlin devilry spread to Doug. At the beginning of a promising run, Doug's radio mysteriously erupted into spasms of autonomous frequency hopping, as if the unseen hand of Kamehameha himself had been twiddling with the VFO knob. Doug and his NPOTA chasers were robbed of potentially dozens of QSOs.

The next morning, back at Kona Hale, the team compared Doug's identical antenna with Jim's and discovered that somewhere—perhaps beside that rugged lava road exiting the Kayoko fishpond—lies a critical nylon shouldered bushing that had once isolated the feed point of Jim's antenna from its grounded metal base. The bushing was gone. Without it, this 18-foot long telescoping metal whip was not a resonant antenna, but a dead short.

Undaunted, the resourceful team headed straight for Lowes and began combing the aisles for something that might function as the lost bushing. Eventually the team settled upon a nylon pipe tee with barbed ends designed to join plastic tubing. Using a pocketknife and grinder, Doug fashioned a small end piece of the tee into a remarkable replica of the original part. Jim's antenna was back in operation.

The cause of Doug's radio's frequency hopping spasm never scientifically revealed itself, although perhaps the behavior could be explained as RF emanating from Greg's nearby radio, coupling through the battery power leads and infecting Doug's radio or perhaps his computer to which the radio was attached—either being theoretically capable of changing the VFO frequency.

Lest you think them ill prepared, know that the had team staged two pre-trip practice sessions to test antennas and compatibility of radios. The tests were performed operating all three radios from a common DC power source and in close proximity. The radios were operated simultaneously on different bands to test the team's bandpass filters. Another test involved sequentially operating the radios into dummy loads while listening for direct radio-to-radio intermodulation interference. Although all equipment passed these pre-trip tests, the only way to truly test for those very special Hawaiian gremlins, as the team learned, is to go there and operate.

Regarding those bandpass filters, experienced field day operators know that bandpass filters are used to ensure that strong signals from radio A will not enter via the antenna of radio B. Thus the team carried bandpass filters for every band from 80 meters through 10 meters, and used them. However, the pesky Hawaiian gremlins found ways to gnaw at even those bandpass filters. After detecting intermittent jumps in SWR, the team determined that some of the connectors on some bandpass filters were not making solid contact, despite being securely tightened. This rendered those filters essentially useless. Close inspection revealed that a few mating thread tolerances were slightly out of spec. Go figure.

Seeking Solitude and Refuge

Sixty-five pound cement buckets and a truck-full of fifty pound deep-cycle marine batteries extract a physical toll. There is no doubt about that. In measure, however, equipment gremlins extract a far greater toll because they can sap the will to push on.

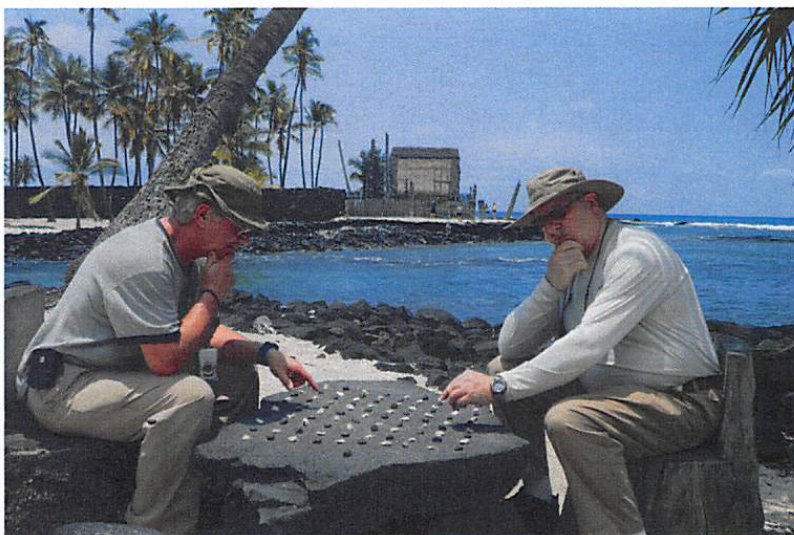
Thus after a slow start on day one, and the debilitating gremlin attacks on day two, the team needed respite. Therefore on the third day, instead of operating as planned, the team diverted to the Painted Church for a bit of peaceful solitude, and then to the Place of Refuge to seek forgiveness. The tiny, Painted Church, was assembled in 1899 from church parts lugged up the



hillside from an older structure miles below. It sports an ornate interior paint job, the work of self-taught artist Father John Berchmans Verge. The paint job mimics the European cathedrals of his youth.

Just down the hillside from the church sits Pu'uhonau o Honaunau, the Place of Refuge, with an even earlier history and mystical powers. According to ancient Hawaiian lore any criminal who could make his way to this place before being killed, would be absolved of his crimes.

While the plan had been to transmit from this Place of Refuge, the radios stayed in Kona. Instead the team put its full spiritual energy into making peace with the gremlins that had been chasing them, and playing a few games of Hawaiian *papamu*.





Trek to the Volcano

In the morning of day four, the team packed the truck and departed for the Volcano, some 98 miles away. The Big Island lacks modern freeways, so this 98 mile trek took most of the day, leaving only about an hour of daylight for scouting possible operating sites within the Volcanoes National Park. The radios traveled in the cab of the truck, leaving the bed to contain: four deep-cycle marine batteries, three foldable tables, three chairs, one sun canopy, Doug's suitcase, one go bag containing antennas and cables, one go bag containing battery chargers and power cables, a supply of bottled water, and two cement buckets.



Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Of the three possible sites scouted the day before, the team chose a primitive campsite featuring a sturdy aluminum picnic table and a few flat areas on which to place the vertical antennas. Aside from the few scrubby trees and sparse vegetation scattered across the landscape, the site was a barren lava field offering little protection from the sun. The team deployed it's popup sun canopy over the picnic table and operated for about an hour in shade.

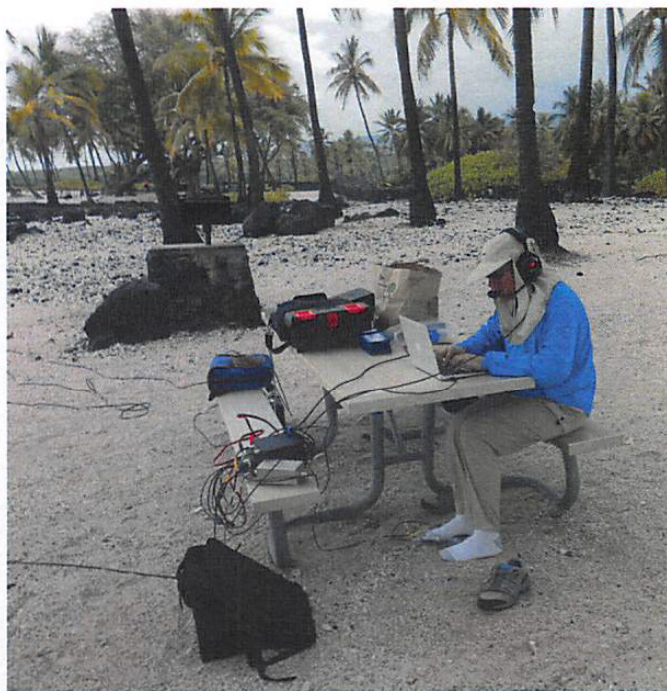
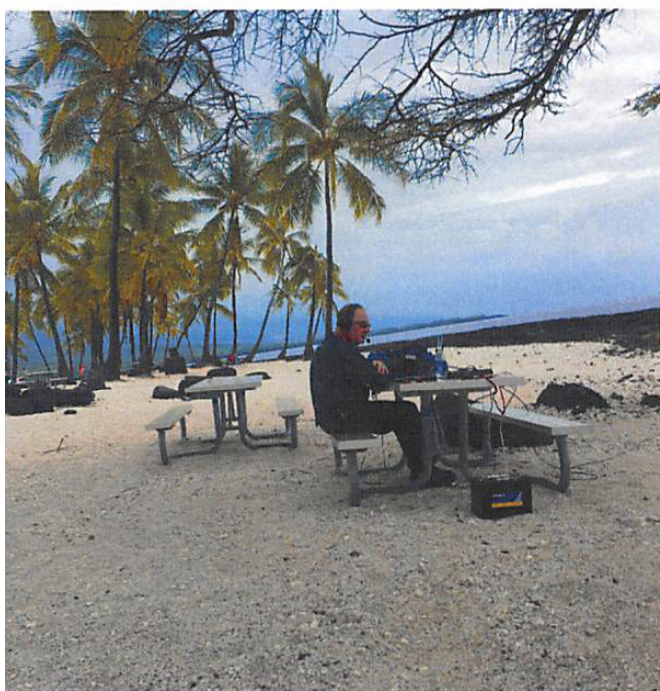
Then the winds picked up, bringing at first a few drops and then a constant splatter of horizontal rain. The team lashed a make shift rain fly to the side of the canopy to protect the radios and continued to successfully operate until it was time to dismantle the site before sundown. The wind never abated.

In hindsight one questions the wisdom of placing three 100 watt RF sources on an aluminum picnic table—it practically invites gremlins. But on that day, the gremlins stayed away.

On day six the team moved to a more sturdy picnic shelter located a few hundred yards from the still active Kilauea crater. Both Jim and Doug were triumphant that day, logging many QSOs. This time it was Greg's turn to be harassed by gremlins. Despite the bandpass filters, it seemed that RF from Jim's radio was grabbing control of Greg's radio. Every-single-word Jim announced produced an immediate squelching response in the AGC circuits of Greg's radio. For a while Greg was able to work around this annoyance, but Jim tied into an extended pileup shortly after 00:00 zulu and Greg's radio had to be sidelined.

Pu'uhonau o Honaunau

While operating at Volcano the team had numerous requests to activate Pu'uhonau o Honaunau, the Place of Refuge where the team had been absolved three days before. Thus the team decided to forego its planned morning of tourism at Volcano, and drove directly to the Place of Refuge. As a bonus, the Ala Khaki trail also passes through this site. Being familiar with the site, and having been warmly greeted by rangers of other parks, the team quickly got permission and set up with vertical antennas as close to the shore's edge as the tides would permit. Propagation was good—with occasional deep fading—and the team made 179 QSOs.



Results and Noteworthy QSOs.

Despite occasionally marginal band conditions and pesky gremlins, the team managed to log 685 QSOs comprising 882 site activations. While all bands between 40 meters and 10 meters had been explored, the 20, 17 and 15 meter bands proved to be the workhorse bands. Approximately 42% of the QSOs occurred on 20 meters. The 17 and 15 meter bands accounted for the remaining 34% and 16% respectively.

In the final tally, the team was just *two states shy* of a Worked-All-States award, lacking only Delaware and Nebraska. The team also logged contacts with NPOTA chasers from Canada, Japan, Australia, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Thailand, Asiatic Russia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Ogasawara Islands, Mexico, Chile, Puerto Rico, and the Cayman Islands. Perhaps most unique was a slow scan TV QSO that Doug made with an operator in Japan on the final day, just hours before it was time to pack the radios in luggage and scour the Hale to ensure nothing got left behind.

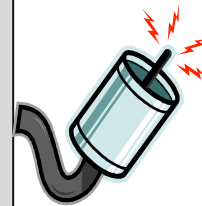
As the team's plane at last ascended into the evening sky, the mighty volcano known as Kilauea belched sulfurous vapors high into the prevailing winds. It was time to leave this Island, unique in all the Pacific. Logbooks filled with memories and the gear tucked safely away, the three radio operators from Michigan fell fast asleep, heartened in knowing that two cement buckets await their return.

Aloha and 73





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My experiences operating from the National Park sites during 2016 include two operations from the River Raisin Battlefield Park in Monroe Michigan, as well as operating from the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in Dayton Ohio.

Although other operators have worked from the River Raisin Battlefield Park earlier in the year, I arrived at about 9:00 on Saturday, April 16 with the thought of making special event contacts prior to the start of the Michigan QSO Party which began at noon local time. One my earliest challenges, when I began talk with park staff last November, they seemed acceptable to the use of wire antennas hung from trees. Yet, about two-three weeks before the day of the event, I was informed they would not allow any attachments to the trees, nor any rods or stakes in the ground. Jim KB8TXZ had told me about a similar experience he had with their trip to Hawaii, and mentioned that he would be using an MFJ-2286 "Big Stick" antenna, which is basically a whip antenna that can extend to about 20 feet, and includes 4 radials. Thinking that I would very likely use it several times, I went ahead and ordered one, and found that it was relatively easy to assemble and use.

During the special event part of my day, I met with Paul Trouten W8PI and he made about 20-25 contacts using my call sign. He had to leave as he was working from the Red Cross Building for the Michigan QSO Party. Between us, we made 120 contacts, all on 40 meters sideband. Then at noon, the Michigan QSO Party began and finding an open frequency, I went to work. Noise levels were very high that day, in the S7 to S8 range, and was very likely due to the location. I found myself calling for what seemed long periods of time between contacts, and did some searching and pouncing in between. The weather was quite tricky also, the sun was out and temps were at about 60. In the shade and with the breeze coming in from Lake Erie, it felt like it was 30. At about 4:00 thinking the propagation would improve, I moved to 7250 kHz for a while, and picked up my pace a little. At 5:00, the international broadcasting station began their transmissions, and with the wind chill, I then threw in the towel with 90 QSOs completed, including one on 20 meters.

Sunday, June 19 was the day of the Monroe swap meet and the county fairgrounds are only about 4 miles from the Battlefield Park, and thinking a number of the attendees would like to add to their NPOTA score, I ended up there a second time, this time all contacts were made by 2 meter FM simplex. Thanks to Larry Camp WB8R and Dale Williams WA8EFK for publicizing my activation, there plenty of publicity regarding this operation. About 10 minutes into the event, I made contact with Roger W9RDF in Fort Wayne Indiana, a distance of about 120 miles. I have not heard of other contacts like this being made, ours may have been the only NPOTA contact completed by tropospheric ducting. The total QSOs for the day was less than 20. But sometimes, it's about quality rather than quantity. A boy scout troop from Waterford had travelled to the park for the day, and the troop leader asked me to spend a few minutes talking to the boys about ham radio.

All in all, it was a good learning experience, in many ways like working Field Day, but it was also fun. And I wished there was a way that I could go back and do some before the end of the year.

Respectfully submitted, Joe Miller KJ8O