

Fellow 4SQRPer

OSH is the airport identifier for Oshkosh, WI., and Oshkosh is the home of the Experimental Aircraft Assoc. and their annual BIG fly in and convention. I've attended since 1985 and recently began to include ham radio as part of the experience. The last few years I've lugged along a qrp station, and have had a great time with it. The aviation highlight this year was seeing the Burt Rutan designed White Knight and Spaceship One arrive and taxi to the static display area. Pictures cannot do this combo justice. They are truly extraordinary, in appearance and performance. Also Steve Fosset's Rutan designed Global Flyer arrived on Wednesday and was placed next to the White Knight/Spaceship One symbiots., what a sight! This was an historic display.

In 2004 year I made about 10 contacts with a low dipole and a borrowed K2! Who'd loan out a K2 to a fellow QRPr, but a total stranger? Todd Fonstad N9NE, that's who...Todd lives in Oshkosh about a half mile or so from the airport. My AT52 temporarily lost it's mind and my pal and fellow club member WA0MWW, Ron White sent a note out on the QRP-L reflector that I couldn't keep the skeds I had promised. Todd picked up on that, called Ron and gave him his phone number to give to me..and the rest is history.

This past year I had a very nice eyeball with Todd again, and visited his FB contesting shack (he cooks a mean lunch too).. Using his station I worked the guys back home, N0SM and WA0MWW, on 20M. Many thanks to Todd for his hospitality and generosity. Are QRPer's great or what!

2005's camp out started out mighty hot and humid. On Friday July 22 I pitched the tent under the only big tree in the campground. Visions of a loonnnggg wire danced in y head.. The tent was 9 X 13, big, strong, and secure (yeah, right). The first night out was pretty good sleeping although a little warm.. Saturday afternoon a large thunderstorm hammered the campground and I returned from the flight line to about an inch of water on the floor of the tent. After bailing it out I hit the sack about 9:30 or so. Later in the wee hours of the morning the wind picked up and proceeded to blow the tent out from under the rain fly. Remember I'm still inside the tent, only now I'm looking up at the sky through the mesh ceiling. Into the truck I go, at least I'll stay dry if it rains..

In the morning I discovered that the tent is covered with about a thousand (really!) spiders, little ones, bigger ones, and some with outside diameters as big as a quarter. That's it! Off to Wally World I go to get another tent.

This one was much smaller, supposed to sleep 4 people but is almost too small for me alone...I pitched it far away from the spider tree, added a few extra guy ropes and observed that it handled a 30 knot wind just fine. Good thing too because a mean line of boomers blew through the campground, funnels were sighted in Fond Du Lac to the South and near Appleton to the North. Did I ride out the storms in that little dinky tent? Heck no, I was in the truck! After the squall line passed, I went into the tent and managed a pretty good night's sleep. The next day I discovered that Oshkosh had reported a 75 mph gust during one of the storms.

Airplane watching, photographing and attending forums occupied most of the early part of the week. On Wednesday afternoon I visited with Todd, N9NE. Todd is very well known as a contester and Fox Hunt organizer. He has several K2's and a nice antenna farm including a 40/20 meter beam. Todd is an accomplished QRP contest operator and the walls of the shack prove it. Virtually every square inch is covered with certificates, and there's more in the drawers. He can make more QSO's in 3 or 4 hours than I can in a month. This guy is good!

When Thursday came around I put up the Black Widow Vertical. Since I had moved away from the "spider tree" I had to use the crappie pole for a support. I use a homebrew "spade" mount and have added a couple of feet to the base so the top is at 22'. Why 22 feet?, I don't know, I guess because it's half of 44....This is QRP stuff, a guy can do what he wants, right? Actually I seem to remember that some one said that 22' models better than a quarter wave on 20M. I added some radials and I listened on 20M and heard nothing, zip, nada... So I hoisted the 44 foot doublet hooked it up to the BLT and heard a few signals on 40. It

looked like I was in business, at least for a few Q's....Over the next 2 days the ATS3 and I managed 13 contacts, including my long time pals back home WOMWW and NOSM..

On Friday and Saturday I spent a few hours operating at the Special event station, W9ZL, at the 30's style Pioneer Airport on the EAA grounds. Bernie, N9YMC had set up a nice station in the office area, and many folks, both hams and non hams, stopped by to say hello and get an eyeball QSL card. As hams everywhere seem to be, a very nice group of operators manned the set up.

Back in the camp, I tried to call CQ on the hour in the afternoons and early evenings on 40 mostly. The band and/or my antenna set up was poor and not many signals were heard. I used the ATS3, Norcal Doublet, and a BLT. The tuner sat on the dash of the truck, and the rig and ScQRPion mini paddle in my right leg... Many thanks to those who listened for me. I wish we could have made more contacts, maybe next year...

All in all I had a great time checking out airplanes, eating brats, operating a some QRP, eating brats, taking pictures, eating brats, renewing old acquaintances and, of course, eating more brats...

72 73 Terry, WA0ITP.