

Operating the Pennsylvania QSO Party

The “Friendly QSO Party”

By: Glenn Kurzenknabe, K3SWZ

What is the PA QSO Party?

Stations outside PA try to contact PA stations and stations in PA try to contact stations outside PA, plus stations inside PA. Logs are scored and awards presented in various categories.

Who sponsors this event?

The PA QSO Party is sponsored by the PA QSO Party Association in State College.

History: The event was actually started by Hal, W3IMN and the Harrisburg Radio Amateurs Club in 1957. Sponsorship was transferred to the Nittany Amateur Radio Club in 1966. The NARC turned over management of the event to the PA QSO Party Association in June 2018.

The PA QSO Party has become one of the most popular state QSO Parties in the country!

Florida and California being the other major state QSO Parties. There are also “1 land” and “7 land” QSO parties, that are quite popular.

Why would I want to work the PA QSO Party?

- Improve operator skill
- Test my station
- Contact new PA counties
- Contact new states
- Have fun -- everyone wants to talk to **you** for that weekend!

When is it held?

It is held each year on the second full weekend in October.

Time?

1600Z Saturday to 0500Z Sunday
and
1300Z to 2200Z Sunday

What bands and modes?

160 thru 10 Meters (No WARC Bands)

There is some activity on 6 and 2 meters, but very little.

Obviously, SSB and CW are most popular, but there is a bit of operation on the digital modes recently. This is an HF contest!!

Rules

Go to the PA QSO Party Association web site and review the rules, ***before*** you venture into the contest.

Note: There have been some small changes in the rules from year to year! Check the web site for details.

Winners from the previous year are listed and a lot of other good information.

Logging

You must log all QSO's to submit your log.

Paper logs are no longer acceptable!

Several computer logging programs are available. Writelog, N1MM, N3FJP and GENLOG. Maybe a few others? All have web sites. Check them out. Some have a modest cost, others are FREE!

Logs **MUST** be submitted online and in CABRILLO format!

What the heck is CABRILLO?

Carbrillo is the universal format used by major contests for log cross checking and scoring.

Don't worry, your logging program will convert your files before submission. Follow the "post contest" submission procedure of your logging program.

Exchange – what do I say?

You would say/send your QSO number and county. Start your log with 001.

Example: “Number 123 – CUMBERLAND”

NEVER say “Please Copy”

“CUM” is the accepted abbreviation for Cumberland County. Each county has an abbreviation. On Phone, it would be OK to say Cumberland. Use abbreviations on CW.

NEVER say; “I am not in the contest, but I will give you some points!” You ARE in the contest, if you are on the air, regardless if you submit a log or not! Such a statement makes you look foolish and wastes time!



What does the other guy say to me?

His QSO number and his ARRL Section or County

Example: 058 – OHIO

or

145 – LAN (Lancaster County)

A list of PA Counties and ARRL Sections can be found QSO Party web site. Print copies of each and keep them handy.

Remember this!

You can work the same station on different bands and modes! As a result, you might have 7 or 8 contacts with the same station! That is OK! You should avoid working the same station on the same band and mode again. That is a DUPE! If someone tries to Dupe you, simply say “Sorry, We’ve Worked Before” or something similar and move on. Don’t make a big deal out of it. Use CORRECT abbreviations for counties and sections.

On CW it is “B4”

Multipliers

Cumberland County is semi-rare! Yes, it is!

Perry, Juniata, Dauphin and Union Counties can be very rare!

This is your chance to be “DX” for the weekend!

Out of state/VE multipliers are their ARRL/RAC Section.

You may get some QSL cards in the mail depending on your county! Be sure to answer them!

What is a County Line?

This is where a mobile or portable station sets up on a county line or lines. The specific county lines are credited as a multiplier for the counties. (2 or 3) There are numerous places in PA where two or three county lines meet, and physical access is possible.

For example, CUM/PER is credited for Cumberland and Perry counties.

What about DX QSO's?

You get credit for one DX multiplier, but you can work as many DX stations as you can for points.

There are DX stations that are “county hunters” and they will be looking for new PA counties!

Common mistake!

Don't forget your own county and
Eastern PA (EPA) !

They are multipliers and you get
credit for working them!

Running vs Search and Pounce

Running is when you call CQ and work one station after another as they call you.

Search and Pounce is when you tune up and down the bands calling the stations you wish to.

Running

Running works best if you have a good signal, are familiar with your logging software and are comfortable in this situation. This is **not** the time to learn how to use your logging software!

ID after each QSO; ie “Thanks, K3SWZ QRZ”

NEVER repeat the exchange back to the station!

NEVER say “Please Copy”

Search and Pounce

Allows you to take it slow.

NEVER give the call of the station you are calling! He knows his call!

After you have completed the QSO, move up or down the band and look for another new station. This is NOT your frequency!

NEVER repeat the exchange back to the person.

NEVER say “Please Copy”

What you should keep handy?

Copy of the rules

List of PA County abbreviations

List of ARRL Section abbreviations

Scratch paper and pencils

Bottle of water

Any notes you feel necessary, taped to the rig.

Then you won't forget!

What about Mobiles??

Stations go out to put rarer PA counties on the air. This can be great fun, if you have the equipment. A Mobile might sign W3XYZ/CUM to indicate that he is in Cumberland County, which is different than W3XYZ/DAU, if he was previously in Dauphin County. You can work him from both places!

You have to pay attention and use correct county and section abbreviations.

What is a Rover?

A Rover is sort of like a Mobile. They will show up in different counties like a Mobile. They will be operating from a more “fixed” type operation than a mobile. They all count and need to be logged correctly, by county abbreviation. This another opportunity to work rarer counties or maybe put one on the air yourself!

*Kind of a blurry line between Rovers and
Mobiles.*

Bonus Stations

Each year a club or group in PA is selected by the sponsor to be the “Bonus Station”. They will be super active on all bands and modes. Working them will provide “bonus points”. Know who that station is and work them when ever you hear them! Read the details **BEFORE** the contest! You will likely need to adjust your logging program **BEFORE** the contest.

Each year a designated station is selected for this honor. Usually a club. They are worth bonus points! Follow the QSO Party web site for the station selected.

Be sure to work them every time you hear them!

Rules

Read the rules carefully before, so you know what you are doing. Again, read the rules, **BEFORE** the contest!

Make a “Game Plan”

40 Meters is your “money” band!

20 Meters is good for longer distances. DX stations will appreciate the QSO's.

80 Meters is best after dark.

160 Meters has activity after dark.

With the current propagation, it is hard to say about 15 and 10 Meters?

Classes

There are a number of classes to level the playing field. QRP, Low Power, High Power, Mobile, Multi-Op, etc. You have to take a look at the rules to see where your operating skill and station capabilities fit.

Previous years results are on the web site. It doesn't hurt to look them over while becoming familiar with the contest, especially the activity in your county.

Awards

Awards are given in all classes. There are plaques for “class wins” and certificates for “county wins” in each class.

Certificates are awarded for county high scores. Sometimes second and third places are recognized, based on participation.

The certificate shown is a York County record at that time. I wasn't able to break the 700 QSO mark! More time in the seat, would have done it!

The Pennsylvania QSO Party

THE NITTANY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

State College, PA

This Certificate is Awarded to

Glenn Kurzenknabe

Operator of Amateur Radio Station

K3SWZ

in Recognition

of Placing **First** in

York County

for the **1999, The Forty Second Annual**

Pennsylvania QSO Party

with **691 QSOs for a total score of 213,046 points.**



Jeff Nucciarone, N2BSS

President NARC

Douglas R. Maddox, W3HDH

Contest Chairman

Additional endorsements:

Worked all PA Counties

There is a nice award available if you work all 67 PA counties in this one weekend (Clean Sweep) from the sponsor or you can simply add to your overall PA county count. There is also a nice award for working all PA counties, with no time limit, offered by the Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club.

PENNSYLVANIA CLEAN SWEEP AWARD

Presented to:

K3SWZ

Glenn Kurzenknabe

In recognition of contacting all

67 Pennsylvania counties during the

1999 PENNSYLVANIA QSO PARTY

Sponsored by the Nittany Amateur Radio Club



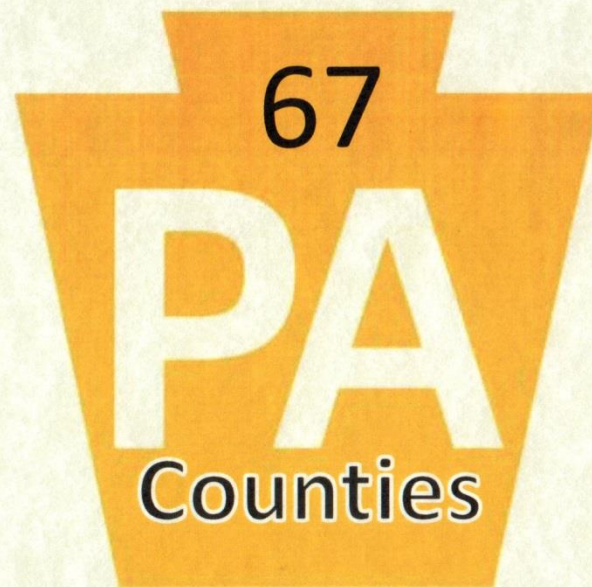
Pennsylvania 67 Challenge

**Congratulations for
making a confirmed contact with
amateur radio operators in:**

Scott Walker, N3SW

*Presented by the Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club, WM3PEN,
Philadelphia, PA*

May 1, 2016



Keystone Award

If you work 100 different PA stations, you can apply for this award offered by the Harrisburg Radio Amateurs Club.

This is fairly easy, if you spend anytime at all in the PA QSO Party.

KEYSTONE AWARD

HARRISBURG RADIO AMATEURS CLUB

PRESENTED TO

GLEN KURZENWABE

OPERATOR OF AMATEUR

RADIO STATION

KSSWZ

HONORING HIS ACHIEVEMENT

IN HAVING COMMUNICATED WITH ONE HUNDRED
AMATEUR RADIO STATIONS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF
PENNSYLVANIA

given at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania this 1st day of August 1936

Charles J. Bogelsong
W3BQA Secretary H.R.A.C.

No. -225-

Charles J. Bogelsong
President H.R.A.C. W3BQA

Frankford Radio Club Award

The FRC is a large DX contest oriented club, based in the Philadelphia area with the membership “circle” extending to our area. They offer a nice award for working 25 or more members of the club. This is very easy to accomplish during the PA QSO Party. Look at their web site to find a list of members and application information. If you are interested in Contesting and DX'ing, see me!

AWARDED TO

GLENN R. KURZENKNABE *K3SWZ*

WHO HAS CONTACTED VIA AMATEUR RADIO *28* MEMBERS OF THE

WFRC

WORKED
FRANKFORD
RADIO CLUB

WFRC

ARRL

FRANKFORD

IARU

RADIO

U.S.A.

CLUB

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

"DEVOTED TO EXCELLENCE IN CONTEST OPERATING"

Jock Heiser K2FL
AWARDS MANAGER

3 APR. 06
DATE
• MIXED •

John Landwehr - K3ZV
PRESIDENT

Overall winners in each class are awarded a very nice plaque. The one shown is for the QRP Class (5 watts output power). I was fortunate to win this plaque in the 1995, 1997 and 1999 PA QSO Parties. The overall QRP record that I once held, has fallen. What about 1996 and 1998, you ask? Well.....

The Nittany Amateur Radio Club
State College, Pa.

1995 PENNSYLVANIA QSO PARTY
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

K3SWZ
GLENN KURZENKNABE

Winner
QRP Division

Award Sponsored by
PENN WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

The PA QSO Party has a very extensive web site that will answer lots of questions about the rules and give scores from the most recent party.

www.paqso.org

Check it out!

Summary

The goal of the PA QSO Party is to get people on the air, have lots of fun, make new friends and improve your operating skill. You will have a wonderful time! Make sure you submit your score, regardless of how big or small!

CQ PAQP de K3SWZ

QUESTIONS.....