

The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter

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Gene KB7Q adding Another Two Grid Squares to his Activity List

From October 15th to 20th Gene KB7Q conducted a DXpedition both on 2 m and 70 cm from very much wanted grid squares and also US states. The 144 MHz activity took place on the 17th from Hot Springs in DN83, South Dakota, on the 18th from Toadstool Geologic Site (DN82), Nebraska and on the 19th from Fort Robinson State Park (DN82), Nebraska.



The setup at Hot Springs (DN83GH) where Gene stayed October 16th (70 cm) and 17th (2 m)

Gene was using his standard gear: 2 x 9 ele yagis, vertically polarised, 800 watts out from a sspa, IC-9700 w/Leo Bodnar GPSDO, WD5AGO pre-amps and of course the reliable Honda 2 kW generator. After moonrise on the 17th from DN83GH it couldn't have gone better – so he writes. 54 stations were logged and conditions seemed great. RU3GX was happy to catch South Dakota for his WAS state #49. At quiet locations such as that one it is a big difference how much one can copy compared to densely populated areas with all their man-made noise, Gene says. At times he felt like he was

stripping off layers of callers on top of each other. Sadly not everybody followed his instruction to call between -600 Hz and +800 Hz from his frequency.



It comes as no surprise that this location in DN82GP Nebraska was really quiet...

Working from a camper makes changing locations very easy: Only the outside part of the station needs to be dismantled when moving to another place. And the weather was very supportive: When arriving at Toadstool Geologic Site, Nebraska (DN82GP) on the 17th it was an unbelievable, bright sunny day of 26° C. Setting up the array in the warm weather was completed quickly so Gene and xyl used the day for hiking through the sandstone hills. A big weather change was forecast for the next days so it was wise to make use of the warm temperatures.

However, this moon pass the sspa showed some issues: It would key but not generate power a few times when Gene started operating, then it was fine for several hours. Towards the end of the EU window it again showed that effect and even some arcing could be heard, a very strange noise for a SSPA.

After a good night's sleep Gene looked inside and it appeared that after five years of hard use the power relay that controls the 48 VDC VDD to the LDMOS device had developed bad contacts. He cleaned some carbon off and burnished the contacts as best as he I could: The amp then got him through his last 2 m operating session in the ARRL EME Contest on this trip. Conditions on the 18th were superb: from this ultra-quiet location out on the grasslands of Nebraska (yes, that is where Penny from Big Bang Theory is from) KB7Q worked 58 stations.

After QRT from that place Gene and xyl moved about 15 miles to a nice campground (still in DN82 and Nebraska state) with mains power (!) and operated a few hours in the ARRL EME contest. The SSPA amplifier was back to running like the solid state "brick" it is. And RU3GX was worked easily for his State #50. When the need for sleep finally won out Gene had completed yet another 23 QSOs. The following day the system was changed to 70 cm operation for some more QSOs on that band. Bernie, ZS4TX even worked him via remote from his cell-phone while running north at 120 km/h in

a car to join the A21EME DXpedition. And then came the return trip home...right in time for the weather change: Some 160 km down the road Gene and xyl grabbed a motel room in Douglas, Wyoming to wait out the storm as the Interstate Highway north was closed: Just too many wrecks when the blizzard hit with a sudden heavy drop of temperatures and even snow.



What a luxury: mains power (see cable at the right corner) (Photos KB7Q)

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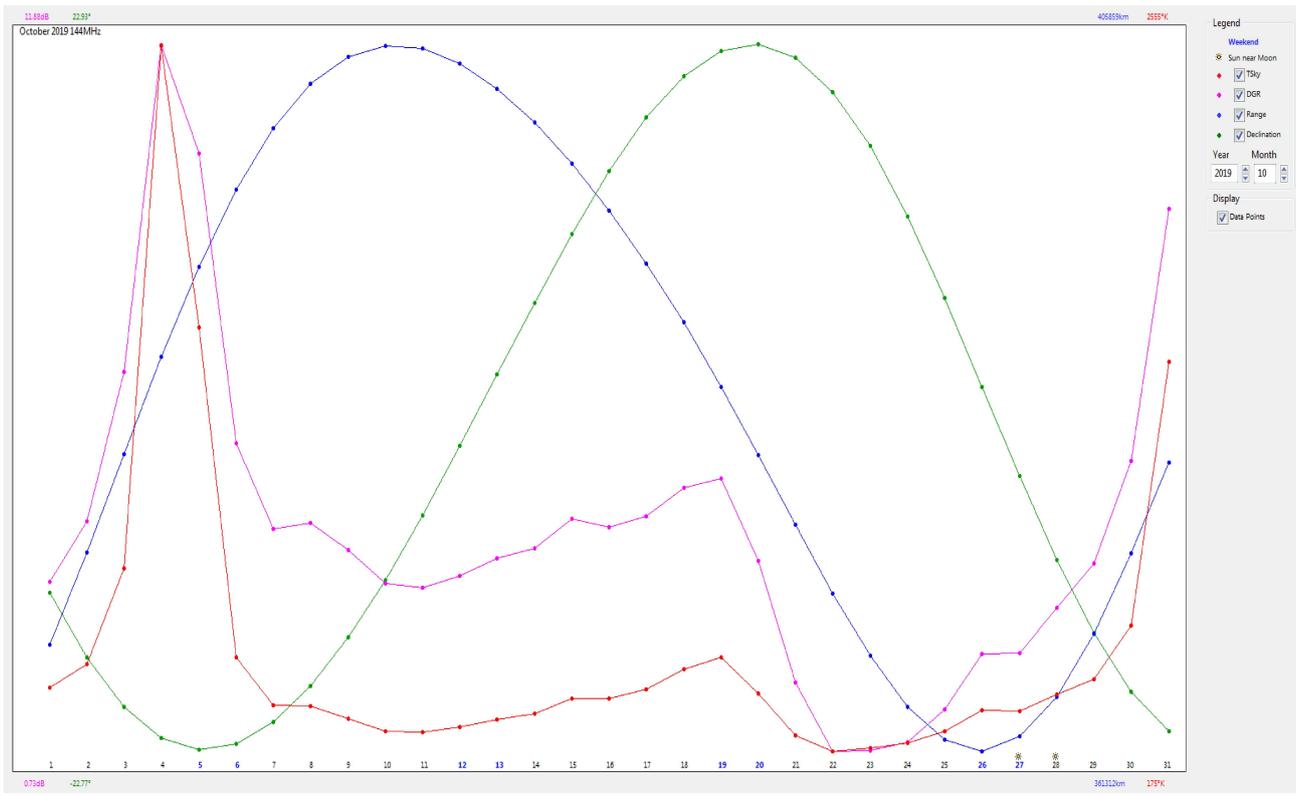
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Time Table

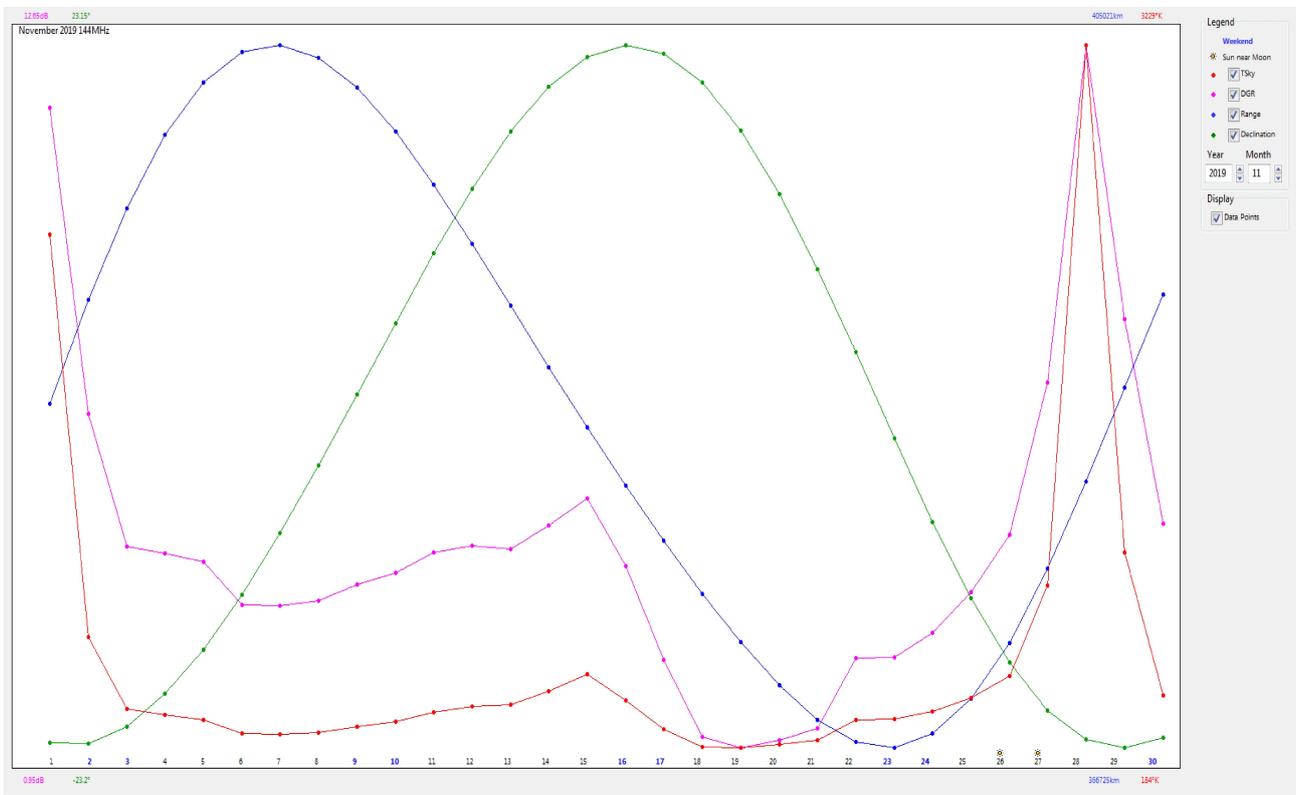
16/17 November ARRL EME Contest Second Leg

16 November November issue of the 144 MHz EME News-letter ready for download

Moon Conditions



Moon Graph October 2019



Moon Graph November 2019

(Courtesy of David GM4JJJ (sk) www.gm4jjj.co.uk/MoonSked/moonsked.htm)