

County Hunter News OnLine

December 2023
Volume 19 Issue 12

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. Also, there is SSB activity now occasionally on 7188 KHz. 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 SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (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 is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:

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

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

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – We got them but the numbers decreased toward the mid month and end of October. 20M propagation is 'good' again. High sunspot numbers give 'fair' conditions on 20 and good on 15 and 10m. Now, at end of October, they are 'fair' on upper bands. In November, many days that 15 and up rated 'good'. Toward the end of November, sunspot numbers were 196! Conditions weren't great but once things improve, should be lots of fun on 10m.

2) Ten Meter 10-10 CW contest held in October 15/16 – found some results for this. Looked like the fall in sunspot numbers the weekend it was held doomed this event. Top scorers reporting had 6 contacts! Sunspot numbers were under 50. They had been at 100+ for a while. Dead band! In the CQP just one week s before, thousands and thousands of contacts made on 10M. Part of problem is that ARRL contest corral listed this the following weekend. Duh! Confusion and lack of people 'working' whatever contest there was!

4) Contests – there were several big contests including Sweepstakes – with many county hunters jumping in. Limited to US and possessions, so lots of counties possible. Then there were CW and SSB DX contests.

Late NY QSO Party Results

K2UA Mobile 1373 cw

Thanks to my longtime friend Mark, AG9A, for flying in from Chicago to operate mobile with me!

Once again this year, N2MG, N2ZN, and I planned this operation for almost a year. I recruited Mark a few months back to join us so we could once again do a two-vehicle mobile operation for a fun in-state competition between two high-power CW mobile multi-single entries, reprising the K1RO/K2UA and N2ZN/N2MG effort in 2021. Putting two high-power mobiles on the air makes more than 2500 CW QSOs available, and a lot of county multipliers, which we hope helps drive more activity in NYQP. It is also an embarrassingly large amount of fun for us as operators! One moment I won't forget is the smile on AG9A's face when JH1GEX called him on 20. You know the station is working when JAs call in!

Ken, N2ZN, planned a different route this year, starting and ending at an AirBNB on Oneida Lake near the Syracuse Airport. We chose that location once we knew that AG9A would be flying in and out of Syracuse and that worked out well logistically. The route was sort of a bowtie shape that started off toward the south, down to Broome County and then west along the Southern Tier, north through the central Finger Lakes, back toward Syracuse. From there we traveled up I-81 to the Tug Hill Plateau and exited heading east through the much sought-after Lewis County (where we saw an amazing rainbow), then to the southeast toward Utica, cutting east through Adirondack Park and then south to I-90 in Montgomery County. Finally we headed back to the Syracuse area via I-90.

The N2MG crew continued east from the Montgomery County area, picking up two more counties (for a total of 20)--Schoharie and Schenectady. AG9A and I continued west and then north, wrapping up the contest in Oswego County.

It rained. A lot.

Conditions overall were very good for us, with lots of short skip to the Midwest and

Mid-Atlantic regions on 20. I think this is the first time I've ever turned in a log with more Qs on 20 than 40 in NYQP. It just kept giving and giving and we felt we could go to 40 later in the day, but ultimately I think we didn't hit 40 hard enough and gave up some QSOs as a result. There's always something to tweak for next time. 15 was really good to us also. I don't recall ever coming close to making 100 QSOs on 15 in NYQP in the past.

In spite of rain and wind nearly every hour of the contest (did I mention that it rained a lot?), especially during the darkness hours, Mark and I really enjoyed the operation. Things worked well in general, rates were good, we helped each other with strategy and pulling people out of the insane zero-beat packet pileups (WHY DON'T PEOPLE TURN THE BIG KNOB A LITTLE?), and fist bumps with new mults. We celebrated every time N5OT rang in (40 QSOs--an average of more than two per county!), as well as weak-but-awesome WN4AFP (32), K1RO (30), and crowd favorite OM2VL (27), among many others in the teens and 20s. I can't tell you how much it adds to the experience to have all the serious chasers call in time after time throughout the contest! The anticipation builds with each county line, making the time pass quickly. It is such a blast, almost as if you were there with us--we know you are in a way.

I have a punch list of things to address--I always do--but it's manageable. Overall I was happy with how the station worked and most of what I need to do is small. Mostly doing away with the ac charger for the laptop (the power source for that generates most of the noise in the vehicle) and improving bonding and choking in a few areas. When we ran the amp on 15 meters, for example, it would lock up the keyer and require a restart of N1MM and unplugging/replugging the USB interface. That simply cannot continue. So we ran 100 W on 15 this time out. A gremlin crept in on 80 near the end, triggering the hands-free "Who would you like to call?" virtual lady in the Pilot when we would transmit on 80--a long-solved issue that I think is related to either the 2-meter liaison radio (which we did not use, but has long cables) or the fact that it was raining so much in the last couple of hours of the contest that water got in somewhere where it shouldn't have been. Regardless, I'll chase it down.

I'd like to thank the RDXA for sponsoring the NYQP. It is such a pleasure to have the board's and the club's support, and in particular K2CS, N2BEG, and KM2B, as well as the activity of all the members in this event! Also props to NFR for putting on such a big effort in NYQP. It makes a huge difference to those of us out there mobiling around the state! Out-of-state activity is also strong and growing--we could not do this without you--thank you!

For Ken, N2ZN, and me, administering NYQP is one of the most fun things we do in

ham radio. Honestly. Thank you all for your kind notes and your ongoing support and participation in this great little state QSO party! Be sure to join the NYQP Facebook page (see the link on nyqp.org) and follow the website for updates as they come along. Delighted to report that as of last night, 48 hours after the contest we'd already received 355 logs. Keep 'em coming!

K2S portable 16 cw 878 ssb
Operator(s): KD2RYX KI2D KN2X

Portable operation from the Roosa Gap Fire Tower, POTA K-5279.

FlexRadio 6600 on a DX Commander and a 100Ah LiFePo battery. What I like to call my "Baby RIB".

Only operated for 10:45 because it took us longer than planned to set up in the rain.

Thanks to "neighbor" KE2X for all his help too.

Parks on the Air

Follow up from last month

NA8W: Just to let you know that I am always mobile while operating in parks either in Ohio or Florida where I'll be next week for the winter.

I have activated 140 times in 72 parks, 46 parks in Florida and 24 parks in Ohio. Due to my hearing issues I operate entirely digital, Almost all FT8 and FT4. I received a cochlear implant last week so maybe there's hope for SSB and CW soon. This picture is October 25, 2023 and was posted on the Spotting page for Shelby Ohio.

73

Darl NA8W





MARAC Mini

The 2024 Michigan Mini will be Hosted by Dorie, N8WTQ • April 25 – 27

It will be held at the SpringHill Suites • Midland, Michigan 48642 (989) 837-2700

Room rates of: \$129.00 plus tax per night if reserved by Monday, March 22, 2024

See the link off the web page at MARAC home pages, then events, to reserve on line.

Ed, K8ZZ, Mobile Diamond Award #12

Ed, K8ZZ, after zipping around the country left and right again, achieved the Mobile Diamond Award in October, 2023. Eleven county hunters before him have reached that

level including:

11	AB7NK	1728	8/7/2023	
10	W4SIG	1142	7/29/2023	
9	N5MLP	1252	4/18/2023	
8	KC3X	500	4/12/2021	
7	WQ7A	627	7/21/2015	
6	N9STL	629	6/6/2015	
1	N8KIE	862	6/27/2014	
1	N4AAT	580	6/27/2014	now SK
1	K5GE	560	6/27/2014	
1	N4CD	507	6/27/2014	
1	N5UZW	500	6/27/2014	now SK

A) To get to this level, you've first got to Earn your **Master Gold Award**. You must first have a 'star' (have worked all counties) and have the Bingo Award.

1. In addition , there is a 1500 point requirement in addition to working all the counties with a Bingo Holder. The 1500 points can be accumulated in multiple ways, including net control/Assistance time, putting on a convention, or serving as Officer or other position within MARAC, or running counties. You can get self credit for the county you are in by working another Bingo Holder. You can run the same county 50 times on your way to 1500 'transmitted counties' , but likely will run 100+ counties on your way to this award. Maybe 1000. Maybe 1500+ .One point for county transmitted. There are 376 Bingo Holders, so it is fairly easy to catch another county hunter while working on this award.

It is dedicated to Arnie, K9DCJ, who made many contributions to county hunting. So far, 78 people have earned Master Gold Award.

B) The next step up is the **Master Platinum Award**. Here, an anomaly in the rules allows you to start catching counties for this award from day one – well, after Feb 12, 2003 when the award was created . You can work mobiles good for Master Gold, log them, and they all count. Once you get MG, you can get 'self credit' for the county you are in by working another MG holder elsewhere.

The second half of the requirements is a bit tougher. You've got to go to 500 separate counties and work a MG holder. That MG holder must be in a separate county, so no

working someone within the car on 2M FM. That's roughly 16% of the counties in the US you have to run. Likely, by the time most work this, they have transmitted from well over 500. Sometimes special trips to go TO the county you need or area of counties.

To date, 33 have reached Master Platinum level (with 3 SK's) and many inactive stations.

C) **Then you start over** the next award – **Mobile Diamond**. (start date 2010). You have two parts again. Once you have earned MP, you have to work someone in. or from each county with MP. All 3077 again. You can get self credit from a county you are in by working another MP holder. Likely you'll be on long trips to fill in the gaps of needs. Not many out running these days other than convention time, or mobiles working toward those tough awards.

Part two requires you to run 500 counties again, and in each one, work a MP holder, AND transmit on two or more different bands making 3 or more contacts on each band. For self credit, if you work another MP holder, they must be in a different county from the one you are currently in to avoid 'team contacts'. That's 16% of all the counties in the US again. Likely by the time you are done, it will be way over 500 counties.

Now, with K8ZZ added to the total, there are 12 folks who have reached this level.

Some will note that those not able to run 500 counties time and time again might be upset with rules and awards , but bear in mind this is the MOBILE AMATEUR RADIO AWARDS CLUB rules to encourage and reward active mobiles. There are 100 different MARAC awards for those not able to get out mobile, some very challenging including No STAR, USA-SSB, USA-CW, prefixes, digital, five mode, single band, and call combos, Nth time, etc.

- - - -

So what's next?? Double Diamond. No one has earned it yet but several are well on their way to getting it. You've got to start over and run another 500 or more counties, working a MD holder from each, and making 3 contacts on one band and 3 or more on another band or combination of bands. From each of the 500, you have to work a Mobile Diamond holder. Of the 12 folks who have earned this award , two are SK. Two or 3 inactive, and one spends winters in HI so only around half the year. It's challenging.

- - - -

Now for mobiles, there is another very challenging award – Ran All USA counties. In over 70+ years of county hunting, less than 20 have succeeded in this gargantuan task. The following ops did it:

18	K3IMC	6/10/2016	
17	N4JT	3/5/2015	
16	AB4YZ	10/16/2013	SK
15	AF3X	7/12/2013	
14	AI5P	6/21/2012	
13	N9QPQ	6/3/2011	
12	AA9JJ	6/3/2011	
11	KL1V	8/6/2010	now NV7N
10	N8RLJ	10/26/2009	
9	N8KIE	10/13/2009	
8	KK0L	6/19/2007	
7	N7ID	4/19/2006	SK
6	N7AKT	2/24/2006	- later N4AAT - SK
5	K0GO	10/15/2002	SK
4	N4CD	7/20/2002	
3	WA0SBR	11/22/1998	SK
2	W1TEE	6/29/1991	SK
1	KB7QO	7/25/1988	SK

Of that short list of 18, 7 are now silent keys.

Several active mobiles are closing in. Ed, K8ZZ has run 'most' of the USA. WY0A has to do a bunch in New England area after getting the NW of the USA and Alaska done. KE4UP has been knocking off counties left and right. Ron, N5MLP was closing in having run most of the continental US. Needs to make trips to AK and HI.

If you've earned your MP award, you've probably run 2/3rds the US in the process of getting there. Add in Mobile Diamond and it is likely 80% or more of the US run to finish off the awards. Stay tuned – to see who the next award earner pops up.

+

National Convention 2024

Wednesday October 9 to Saturday Oct. 12, 2024

Best Western Plus- Bridgeport Inn
100 Lodgeville Road
Bridgeport, WV 26330

Convention Rate: \$90.00 plus approximately 13% tax (now) for King, Double, or handicap accessible rooms

Reservations: 304-842-5411- Individual call-in and pay basis, ask for Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club rate.

All reservations must be received by Sept 25, 2024.

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotels-in-bridgeport/best-western-plus-bridgeport-inn/propertyCode.49035.html

Travel: Pittsburgh International Airport 1 hour 45 minute drive south to hotel (110 miles)
North Central WV Regional Airport 10 minute drive to hotel

The hotel has shuttle service - It must be scheduled with your reservation.

See the MARAC Event page for link to hotel and booking on line.

Note de N4CD – Bridgeport is in Harrison County (north central WV) in the Clarksburg Metro area. Population of Bridgeport is 9000. History here goes back to the 1700s. Civil War skirmishes happened here. There are a few historic bridges and houses to visit if so inclined. You've got good interstates and 4 lane roads in this part of WV. Not so true in other parts of the state – hi hi. It's a good excuse to run lots of WV, PA, MD and other nearby counties. Some county lines can be run. Others are in deep cuts through the hills where almost no signals get out.

For the shoppers - Bridgeport is home to Meadowbrook Mall, a super-regional shopping complex. The mall has 109 stores.

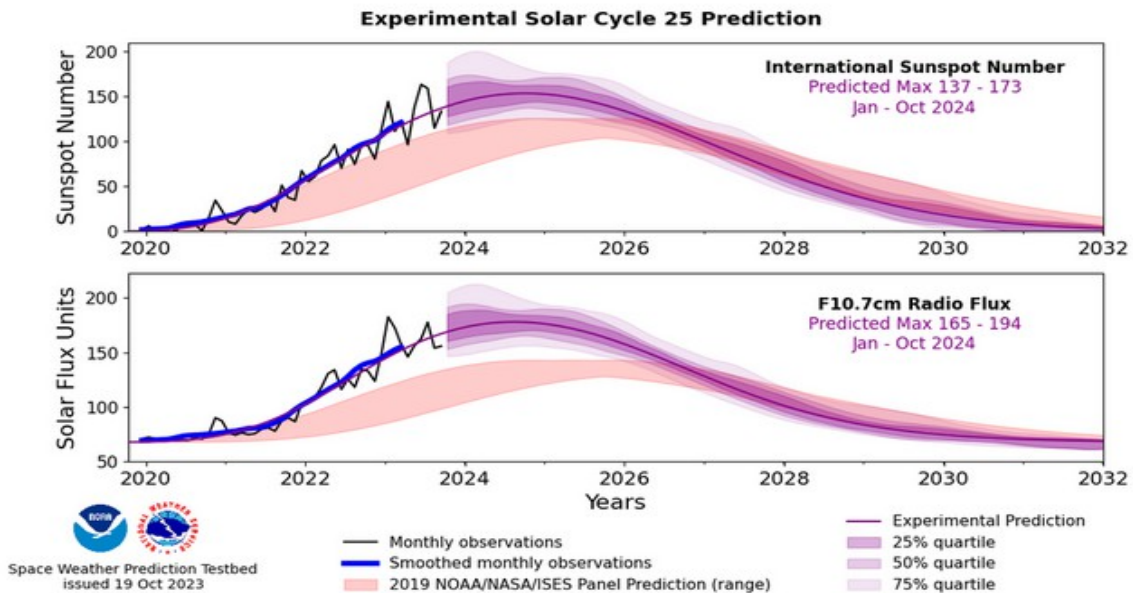
Solar Cycle 25 News

The sun will reach the peak of its current activity cycle in 2024, one year earlier than previous estimates, according to experts at NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC).

The revised prediction now places Solar Cycle 25's peak of activity known as "solar maximum" between January and October 2024 according to a NOAA statement. The peak will be earlier, stronger and last longer than estimates made in 2019.

Predictions on when solar maximum will occur are based on long-term historical records of sunspot numbers, advanced statistics and models of the solar dynamo — the flow of hot, ionized gases within the sun that generate our star's magnetic field which in turn drives the solar cycle.

"We expect that our new experimental forecast will be much more accurate than the 2019 panel prediction and, unlike previous solar cycle predictions, it will be continuously updated on a monthly basis as new sunspot observations become available," solar scientist Mark Miesch said in the NOAA statement. "It's a pretty significant change."



The revised prediction is good news for eclipse chasers as the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024 will occur near the solar maximum. During totality, when the moon completely obscures the sun's disk, the sun's outer atmosphere (known as the corona) is visible to observers. During heightened solar activity, the corona is very active and eagle-eyed observers may be able to see solar prominences — gigantic loops of plasma extending outward from the sun — appear as bright pink spots at the sun's edges.

Accurate predictions of solar activity are crucial as geomagnetic storms triggered by plasma outbursts known as coronal mass ejections can affect electrical grids, GPS signals, drag satellites out of orbit and pose a radiation risk to airline workers and astronauts. Advanced warning of space weather events can help industries implement safeguarding procedures to reduce the risk to both their equipment and workers.

"We can't ignore space weather, but we can take appropriate measures to protect ourselves," NASA says.

We are of course not without our own natural protection — Earth's magnetic field.

https://www.space.com/solar-maximum-expected-2024-new-predictions-suggest?fbclid=IwAR1xiG4l_87tC97Eo9z6_kpLNHLx1vKEeadVWcei82pMNjmnK7bqneWxRhY

The Club Call Situation

In the last RoadRunner, Kerry, W4SIG made a few comments about 'club calls'.

From the N4CD perspective, club calls and 1x1 calls pose special problems for county hunters. Let's examine some of the issues

In state QSO Parties, there is often an abundance of 1x1 calls. Sometimes for special events, you'll run into 1x1 calls, for example, in the Route 66 annual event where some of the stations elect to use 1x1 call signs.

If a county hunter elects to use, one – for example, NU0Q in the KS QSO Party – several things happen. NU0Q has 3 stars and has earned MG. If you work and log NU0Q, you get credit for those stars, and credit for working a Bingo Holder (Polaris Award), and the MG award toward your Bingo, MG and Master Platinum Award.

If he is using, say, N0Q in the KS QSO Party, what do you get? Well, credit for Bingo counties with N or Q, but nothing else. No stars, no MG or credit toward your MP award. What do you also get? Likely credit for 'no star' award as most folks are probably not aware, when they log, it is NU0Q as the 'operator'.

Now for some County Hunting History. Going back about 15+ years, there was a net control operator who fancied having his name as a 'club call'. "JG". Of course, he also had his regular call. But when he worked you, he'd mostly use the club call, but if it was a call the 'operator' also needed, he'd work you with both calls. Both 'calls' had stars and awards. But there was one operator. Before this group and his sidekicks (Just Plain Rotten) and 'UGD' and '3X' were finished, the MARAC rules were changed to link award credit to 'call signs', not the operators actual call. Thus, a newby that happened to visit the 'club station' and operate with the 'club call' and work a mobile, would suddenly be good for 8 or 10 stars, Bingo, MG, etc, despite never had 3 hours of county hunting experience.

Now, if you want to hear a bunch of insanity, at least a while back and still going on today, tune in to the 3905 net. They have awards for working stations with different prefixes in states. In addition, they have awards for working stations, say in NY state, with a "1" call, a '2' call, etc for all ten call areas. Now, there probably aren't too many

'7' calls in NY state but that doesn't stop the insanity. Simply 'borrow' a club call from a 7 lander and use it by a 2 land station. Everyone gets their '7' land prefix probably a a "WB2" station. Maybe the same "WB2" station borrows 9 other call signs, one a week, and puts out contacts with all 10 prefixes. Off net, they can give out as many as they have 'borrowed' that week. You're 59 from 'W1', then 59 for 'W3', Their rules are the 'callsign' of the station you work. Hundreds borrow and exchange 'club calls' , probably from 'clubs' of 4 or 5 members, each a member of each others club. Like the county hunting group back east of ' club calls 2JG', 'W1BQL', etc, who were , with the wives, most of the members of each others clubs! Got to have 4 or more for the FCC to issue you a 'club call'.

As part of this situation, even on more than one occasion, a 'club call' was borrowed by another county hunting to give out a prefix. Someone desperately needed a "K" call in KS, and magically one day, a mobile, not a "K" operator, 'borrowed' the club call from South Carolina, with a K prefix and used it to give out that last county. Hmmm.....Where would we be on prefix awards if most county hunters could give out multiple prefixes? Need a W in Maverick, TX? Have a K operator borrow one and head there. Hmmm.....Not in my book.

So where does that leave us? Probably 98% of 1x1 calls are not county hunters with awards. So they are good for only a few MARAC Awards, including no star, prefix, all sign combo, CW or SSB for the counties they run, and rarely a Bingo County. The two percent that are star holders – well, you miss out when you log it for all the other possible awards had the actual call be used.. (Occasionally a smart mobile with remember to work you with his actual call, but that is very messy in a typical pile up in state QSO Parties).

For regular county hunting, at times county hunters have used both calls when out mobile. What happens then? Well, suppose '2P' and his sidekick 'JG' take a trip. Some county hunters work 'both calls'. Hmmm....get 20 stars, even though the operator only has, say 10, when you worked him and his 'invisible buddy'? Get's messy. If he loans out his call to someone else, say in Kansas for the K prefix, not only does the station that works him get the "K" prefix, but also the stars, Bingo, MG, etc. Fortunately it didn't happen too often.

Now, there's also a special situation with the MARAC 'club call" - K9DCJ . I'm not sure when last it ran but back in the WB9NUL days I think. Now, one issue with the club call sign was it had a star or two. Currently has 3 stars. So if someone used it, along with their own call, you'd get additional starts. Say the operator had 2 starts, the club call 3, - and now anyone one working them has instant credit for 5 star award. I'm not

sure who is custodian for the MARAC club call – NF0N? . IF the total is more, that's credit for the 20 star award. That only counts if you go by 'call signs'. And, of course, it's good for the K prefix, the 1x3 call, etc. Good for Polaris Award.

Well, way back when with the 'club group', the rules were changed for most awards to 'station worked' , ie 'callsign'. (not true for MP, MD, etc). That allowed folks to work and log 'both calls' if they wanted. Some only logged the real call. Not the 'invisible' side kick's call.

Fortunately, there's not much of this nonsense on the county hunter net these days.

Rarely a county hunter will use a 1x1, you'll work state QSO parties with just 1x1s mixed in (maybe missing out on some awards) but few actual club calls will have an operator with starts – for events like Field Day, Special Events, etc.

Some 'clubs' actually go to parks, as an event, but just about all of them are not into county hunting. You'll often here parks with 2 or more operators – each with a call sign. Might get a couple prefixes, but those are calls assigned to real people there at the time. There are quite a few of 'teams' and if you are in a park, they'll both want to work you'.

Well, that's my 2c on club calls again.

Solar Winter

Have you ever heard of the term 'solar winter'? We're right now at the beginning of solar winter which runs from early November to early February each year. The dates change a bit each year depending on the date of Winter Solstice .

Solar Winter is defined as the 90 day period of least sunlight. It's centered around the solar Solstice (usually late December).

At the beginning, you see a constant decrease in number of hours of sunlight per day – till the winter solstice. After that, the hours of sunlight increase. That 90 day period of least hours of sun is know as Solar Winter.

So for now – less sunlight per day. Less time to run counties/parks per day.

Most civilizations have 'holiday celebrations' around the dates of the Winter Solstice. Whether chasing the monster eating the sun (hours) then celebrating defeating that monster and getting more hours of sun, to other celebrations of re-birth. It's an important event for those whose lives depend upon knowing when to plant crops in the Spring, etc. Most religions incorporate this event somehow in their mythology and dogma.

Now, the end of solar winter does not signal 'winter' is over. Indeed, in many parts of the country, winter persists into mid to late March, and higher elevations can get snow up till June.

33 cm Worked All States

On November 4, 2023, Al Ward's, W5LUA, 38-year quest to contact all 50 states on the 33-centimeter band ended when he received the first-ever Worked All States (WAS) certificate for (902 - 928 MHz). Ward started collecting states on the band shortly after it was opened in 1985.

"I am extremely grateful to Peter Van Horne, KA6U, for his EME [Earth-moon-Earth] efforts. I was able to work Wisconsin for my last state [on] the 33-centimeter band on October 21. At the end of September, I was sitting at 32 states confirmed with cards and/or the Logbook of The World (LoTW), when Van Horne went on a 25-state expedition providing my last 18 states," said Ward. In recent expeditions, Brian McCarthy, NX9O, and Jason Baack, N1AV, also provided several states that were needed.

Ward's station consists of a 5-meter dish with 400 W of power obtained from two 300 W Motorola amplifiers in parallel. His feed is a dual polarity patch feed.

ARRL Radiosport and Regulatory Information Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, was one of the first people to congratulate Ward on his accomplishment.

Jahnke stated, "Hearty congratulations! It's my privilege to confirm the ARRL Awards Department has received your WAS application, plus Card Checker document, and we have issued the 33-centimeter (902 - 928 MHz) Worked All States Award number 1 to

you in culmination of your 38-year quest to contact all 50 states on the 33-centimeter band."

Other stations on the hunt for the 33-centimeter WAS certificate that are nearing completion include AC0RA, K0DAS, and N1AV.

In 1985, the Federal Communications Commission allocated the frequency band between 902 and 928 MHz to Part 18 industrial, scientific, and medical (ISM) equipment. In that proceeding, the band was also allocated to the Amateur Radio Service on a secondary basis, meaning amateurs could use the band if they accepted interference from and did not cause interference to primary users.

Mobile Activity in November

At the beginning of the month:

WI5D spotted in several parks in TX. N9MM in park, too. Next couple days nothing but a few parks/counties spotted.

KA3QLF spotted in park in Susquehanna County PA

NN9K noted in park in Rock Island IL

AI5P noted in park in Saline AR. Later in Conway.

11/8 Call N7ID been re-issued. New holder activating a park in ID. N7ID the county hunter is SK. Logger will automatically know.

11/10 WB4JB, big rig mobile, spotted in south TX. One of a few BIG RIGS still running counties.

KA2LHO took a nice trip in FL running over a dozen counties. Hit a few parks along the way, too.

11/14 – K0DEQ noted running counties in MO.

N5MLP headed up to Dallas – rested a few days headed east to run a bunch in east TX –

they headed back south to home.

YL/OM team AB4WL/NN4JM headed out from AL

N9JF noted in Rockbridge VA and Mason WV.

N3MRA was giving out a park in GA.

Activity very light over Thanksgiving – none.

up to 11/22

AI5P Trip Report

I'm getting settled in Hot Springs. Made some POTA activations and a few counties. Here's info on today's trip.

Plantation Agriculture Museum
Scott, Arkansas

This interesting museum actually sits on the Pulaski and Lonoke county line. Since the parking lot is, by my reckoning, is in Lonoke county, I just ran Lonoke. This is a new Arkansas POTA site with the reference number of K-10332. A total of 81 contacts were made - 74 on SSB and 7 on CW.

Info from Wikipedia and the Arkansas State Parks Guide:

Located in Scott, Arkansas, the Plantation Agriculture Museum preserves Arkansas' farming history. Housed in a series of buildings is the main museum in a building originally built as a general store in 1912, the Dortch Gin Exhibit containing a 1919 cotton gin, Seed Warehouse #5 which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and a Historic Tractor Exhibit. Exhibits explain where and how crops were grown in Arkansas from the time of statehood in 1836 through World War II.

An interesting and unique experience! 73 Rick AI5P



Main Museum



Exhibit Building



Cotton Gin



Tractor Exhibit

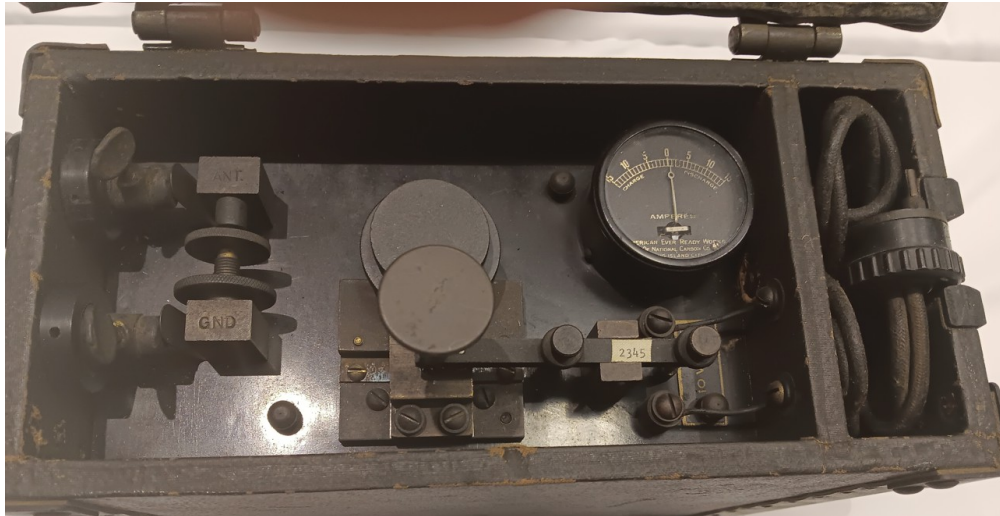
At the Convention

Each year, the local Vintage Radio and Phonograph Society has an annual convention in the Dallas area. I attended this year. The focus is mainly on older radios – from the 1900 era up through the 1970s. Several hundred show up. There are auctions, workshops, displays of older radio, advertising, etc, competing for 'best of show' in 12 categories.

I took a few pics of interesting items that you'll likely not see at your local hamfest – some rather unusual items.

1) Item one – SCR74 WW1 spark gap transmitter

First up is a WW1 short range spark gap transmitter – likely used in trench warfare for very short range. The signal would be received on a crystal radio



This is a SCR-74 transmitter – state of the art – 1917 era. The spark gap is on the left in the picture. there is no tuning. Very broadband signal. The 'frequency' as it is determined by the length of the antenna. The range is probably a mile or two. Power was by 3 Edison wet cell batteries (1.2v each). The key is in the middle – with the mechanism to the right. Likely produced in small quantities as very little information on it.

- - - - -

2) 1950s Remote Control “Radiocom Bus”

This is a toy from the 1950 era – that used 'ancient technology' to operate. It's amazing the FCC didn't shut it down – maybe so low power not to worry about it. Probably the first radio controlled toy after WW2. Maybe it was so low power the FCC probably turned a blind eye to it.



Radicom Bus

The radio technology used in this 1950 toy was straight out of the 1910s! It used a handheld SPARK GAP transmitter in the remote control handheld unit and used a coherer receiver in the bus!



Hand Held transmitter Unit

The transmitter used a 'buzz' coil to generate the spark gap voltage to spark over– ie, took battery voltage and increased it – no tuning provided either receive or transmit. The antenna is about 15 inches tall. Each time you pushed the button, a short spark gap generated signal was sent out. The bus also had a short flexible 12 inch antenna whip.

- - - -

Not much later, you could buy remote control transmitters and receivers for other vehicles – from planes to boats and cars. They used tube transmitters – with filament batteries and B+ ones. Receivers used tubes (a tube or two). First generation usually used escapements so you had limited functions and operation. More complicated ones used 'tuning reeds' for several independent channels such as motor speed, elevator control on planes, ability to go left/right/straight without going through a sequence of events.

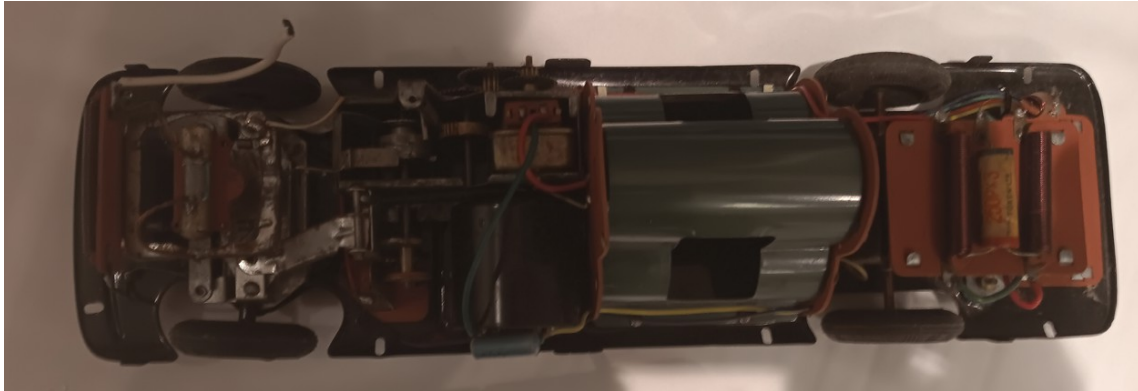
Now, likely the most common use for 'radio remote control' is radio controlled drones – by the tens of thousands ! Still tens of thousands of plane,car and boat remote control folks too. You see some of that at hamfest flea markets.

- - - -

There's actually a video of it – check it out - on Youtube!

<https://youtu.be/IVFsBljFTpU>

The Radicon bus was made in the 1950s by Masudaya, a company founded in Tokyo in about 1923. “Modern Toys” is a tradename used by Masudaya. A Radicon bus with original box and instructions sold for \$270 in 2013.



Radicom Bus interior

You can see the coherer on the left side of the picture below with 'reeds' used. A reset "tapper" is used to reset the coherer after each transmit pulse (otherwise it wouldn't work after that – you have to tap the coherer after each pulse). Range is about 10 feet. The receiver operated on 4.5 volts (3 batteries). When a pulse was detected, a motor would turn the escapement one click. Then reset the coherer. First click was forward. Second click was right turn. Third click was straight. Fourth click was left turn. Fifth click was straight. Sixth click was 'stop'. Then you would start the cycle again.

- - - -

At the auctions, a few pieces of ham radio gear appeared. A Collins 51J4 was sold for \$75 in nice appearance. Supposedly worked. Great bargain. A Hallicrafters S-76 general converge receiver was sold. A Clapp-Eastman straight key on marble base didn't sell at reserve price of \$225. There was a Radio Shack Model 120 short wave receiver up for sale. Didn't stick around that long to see them sell. The \$20 and up auction runs 6 hours on Saturday. Hundreds and hundreds of items from Atwater Kent Cathedrals (\$75 to \$475), Zenith console and table radios, Crosleys and two dozen other make table radios. Edison players that used wax cylinders up for grab as well as boxes of the cylinders. 25 large console radios. Portable sets, early transistor radios, novelty radios, some advertising – all went by. Over 120 people bidding on items. Most items sold but some there was no interest.



Hallicrafters S-76



Clapp Eastman Straight Telegraph Key

This 'transceiver' from the old Class A Citizen Band at UHF (450 MHz) used a super regen receiver and had a watt or two output. This unit was in leather carry case including the wet cell battery to power it. Used a vibrator for the HV. 1950s vintage. Not very popular and you could use them on ham band but very expensive for that use. You see them at hamfests occasionally. When Class D CB at 27 MHz came along, these were instantly scrapped. Range at best was a few miles, probably a mile or less unit to unit.

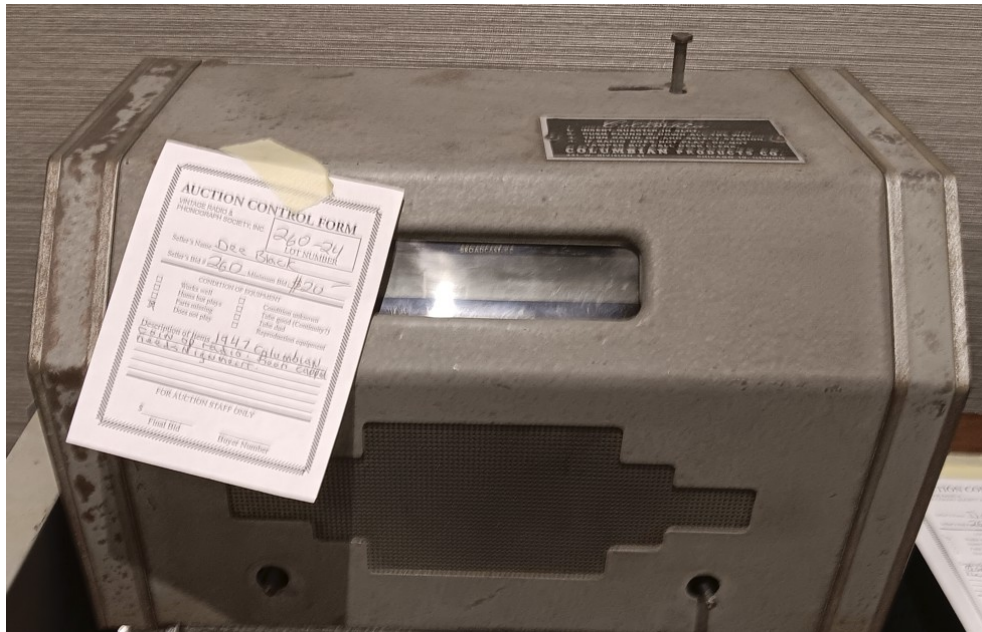


Vocaline UHF Transceiver - Class A CB



Bendix Catalin Radio – Likely \$500 plus

For a while, radio cabinets were made with Catalin – a plastic polymer that retained a bright colorful shine. It didn't take well to sunlight, nor to the heat from the tubes in the radio – often discoloring. The bottom side often cracked with the mounting screws – the thermal expansion coefficient of the plastic not the same as the chassis so cracks appeared between mounting holes. You often see them with cracks above too - so a radio in excellent condition sells for BIG BUCKS upwards of a thousand!



Coin operated Radio

If you stayed at a motel in the 1930-50 era, often there would be a coin operated AM radio for you. You'd put a coin – maybe a quarter, in the slot on top, push the button down, and get a set period of AM reception. Maybe an hour or two. This before TV sets widely appeared. Even some of those first TV sets were coin-operated. Usually the radio was bolted down to headboard or other surface. There was a set of two for one money up for sale.

Stayed a while, checked out the contest section, looked at the items for sale, bought nothing, and enjoyed meet and greet with collector friends.

Awards Issued

Mobile Diamond Award

K8ZZ completed MD and is awarded #12

No Star Award:

K5GE completed 3077 “no stars” and received #3

Single Band Award:

K8ZZ completed all 20 meters and received #38

Combo Award:

K5GE completed all Combo 2X1 and received #2

Roadrunner Awards

KE4UP has 350 last counties for #68

W0GXQ has 1575 last counties for #4

W0GXQ has 1600 last counties for #4

K8ZZ has 1825 last counties for #3

WY0A has 400 last counties for #56

WY0A has 425 last counties for #52

Events for County Hunters

No QSO Parties this month.

Reserve now for Spring Mini in Midland MI at the SpringHills Suites.

Dayton Hamvention in May

Annual Convention in West Virginia this year.