

# County Hunter News

July 2022  
Volume 18 Issue 7

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 when sunspots better). 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](http://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](http://www.countyhunter.com) . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at [www.CHNewsonline.com](http://www.CHNewsonline.com)

De N4CD, Bob Voss, Editor (email: [telegraphy@verizon.net](mailto:telegraphy@verizon.net) )

## Notes from the Editor

### **N4CD Rumblings**

**1 ) Sunspots** – We got them. Many days 15M listed as 'good' and 10M as fair. Some good E skip openings and apparently some F layer skip too. Lots working JA's on 6m FT-8 from the US. Some days with 'short skip' on 20M. On the other hand, 40M is often in the dumper and not good during the day other than short local communications.

With more solar activity come more flares and disturbed conditions. Field Day weekend saw the K index spike to 3 and the A index in the 20s. Two days later back to more normal.

K8ZZ and W0GXQ were spotted regularly on the upper bands as they zipped around the western states.

**2 ) Dayton COVID** - Seems a bunch of folks came down with COVID after the Hamvention. KX9X, Sean, got it and he knows about 50 others who got it – probably all attending the satellite forums or hospitality rooms. Maybe DX forums? New variants are super infectious. Getting second booster reduces your symptoms if you should get a mild case of it. Taking long airline flights seems very risky these days as folks aren't taking any precautions for the most part (no mask requirements).

There are now 100,000+ new cases of COVID a day – mostly the Omicron variant.

So far, no county hunter reports of COVID again, but some got it last year and some wound up in hospital and some SK.

By fall, a new vaccine should be more effective against the variants.

**3 ) Gas prices** - well, up to nearly \$5/gal in TX then backed off a bit to \$4.50 at the end of the month. Still hurts and limits those long trips. Hope y'all appreciate those mobiles out on long trips burning lots of gas to put out the counties. In CA, gas over \$6 and \$8 in places.

The N4CD mobile has tended to stay close to home this month, but I'm getting travel fever.. Time to be gone for a while. How about you?

## **MARAC Annual Convention**

**Sunday October 2nd, 2022 to Thursday October 6th, 2022**

Best Western Gran Tree Inn, Bozeman, MT  
1325 North 7th Ave. Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 587-5261

**BOOK BEFORE AUG. 1 2022 to guarantee the rates**

**DO IT NOW - no fee cancellations!**

We have 40 rooms reserved, by contract.

details on hotel page

**Confirmed Speaker: Brian Bird, NX0X who will speak on the Past, Present and Future of the CQ USA-Counties Award**

**Banquet Wednesday evening**

Hospitality Room from 3 pm to 11 pm Sunday, 9 am to 11 pm Monday-Wednesday

- special prizes for early registrants - before July 4th (form and payment received) (prize TBD)

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We're BAAACK !

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I'm planning to go! Haven't been out west lately and need to run parks in WA, ND, and MT to finish up that area of the country! Over a dozen have signed up. Early bird registration (and the prize) ends July 4!

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From AG6V:

The National Convention is Oct 2-6 in Bozeman, MT. Already 13 people are signed up: see who at the Registration Page. Early Bird Registration prizes to people who have their registration form and check in my hands by July 4th.

Grand Prize and major secondary prize already obtained - no supply chain worries now!

Get your discounted hotel room, plan your travel, and come one, come all.

De AG6V 6/16/2022

## CQ and Electronic Confirmations

CQ Announces eQSL Electronic Confirmation Acceptance

Source: [CQ - On-Line Confirmations \(cq-amateur-radio.com\)](http://cq-amateur-radio.com)

CQ magazine will accept contact confirmations made on the eQSL.cc electronic confirmation system for its operating awards effective immediately, CQ Editor Rich

Moseson, W2VU, and eQSL Founder and Webmaster Dave Morris, N5UP, announced in January.

There will be certain limitations and procedural differences for different awards, at least to start. Only confirmations from "Authenticity Guaranteed" members of eQSL will be accepted, and in accordance with existing eQSL policy, a membership level of bronze or higher is required in order to participate in award programs via eQSL. "This is the first time that CQ has formally accepted anything other than traditional paper QSL cards for its awards," said Moseson. "We have been working with Dave Morris and his team for several months to assure that the integrity of our awards programs will be protected and to create mechanisms to make it easy for both award applicants and award managers to use eQSL credits toward our awards. All of our award managers have been involved in this process and support this action." "We want to express our great appreciation to Dave and his team for their willingness to do whatever was necessary to make this agreement possible," Moseson added. "It has been a pleasure working with them and we look forward to a long-lasting relationship." "We are pleased to be adding CQ to the top of our list of amateur organizations that accept electronic QSLs," said Morris. "CQ has some of the most highly sought-after awards, and we have been working behind the scenes for years to create credit submission mechanisms that would ensure the integrity of their programs without introducing any additional labor for the award managers.

We believe the electronic QSL can drastically reduce costs, and the award application mechanisms we have developed will provide for more efficient processing at reduced cost for both the applicant and the award manager." Specific Requirements and Procedures Applicants for the CQ DX and CQ DX Field Awards must print out their eQSLs and submit them along with their traditional QSLs to a CQ checkpoint or to CQ DX Awards Manager Billy Williams, N4UF. eQSL has an automated process in place for applicants or CQ's Worked All Zones, WPX, and USA Counties awards.

N5UP explains how that will work for the applicant: "The applicant goes to the My Awards screen. He clicks on the particular award he wants to apply for. This brings up a list of the credits our system 'thinks' he is entitled to. There are checkboxes that allow him to check which ones he wants to use, and we automatically pre-fill one credit per category so he doesn't have to do anything if he wants to take the defaults. At the bottom of the screen are two buttons: 'Submit to CQ' and 'Print Paper Application'." The "submit" button will place all the selected QSOs into a file for the award manager to access, while the "print" button will generate a printed list to be submitted along with the traditional application.

PLEASE NOTE that ALL applicants must send the award fee payment to the CQ Award

Manager, regardless of how the application is submitted. Some CQ award managers are now accepting PayPal; see individual award web pages for details. All awards will continue to accept traditional QSLs as well as eQSLs. For the USA-Counties Award (USACA), applicants must note on their record books (or printouts) whether each county has been confirmed traditionally (with an "X" to the right of the entry) or electronically (with an "E" next to the entry).

For more information on eQSL, visit <https://www.eQSL.cc>.

A PDF version of this can be downloaded here: [https://cq-amateur-radio.com/cq\\_awards/cq\\_on\\_line\\_confirmation/cq\\_on\\_line\\_confirmation.pdf](https://cq-amateur-radio.com/cq_awards/cq_on_line_confirmation/cq_on_line_confirmation.pdf)

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Notes de N4CD: CQ will accept award credits from LoTW for WAZ and WPX awards, but LoTW charges 17c/confirmation in the process for WAZ and WPX. 500 counties for the basic USACA award would cost you \$85 ! Plus the fee to CQ Magazine for the Award. There is a yearly fee to belong to eQSL at the higher levels but it is a bargain compared to LoTW.

I've never used eQSL. If you use a program that automatically includes the county in uploads, eQSL isn't too bad. The system puts in information like grid and county and you don't need to set up different 'station locations'. To manually upload a log for a county, you need to set up separate 'station locations'. LoTW will work the same way for uploads. Programs such as N3FJP and other contest software will handle it.

## Star XX Award

There are 100 different MARAC Awards you can work on. Even before you get your USACA number, you can be tracking Bingo Counties (for the Bingo Award), for Five Star Award, for Prefixes, Call Combos. Logger will track them, or you can do it yourself in a spread sheet, or if you find a copy, of one of the B&B log books for tracking Five Star and other awards. They are rather scarce these days and non-filled in ones even scarcer.

Way back when, the B&B Shop would put out periodic updates on who had how many stars so you could track it before the computer era (and before Logger). Now it's all done in Logger so when you work someone, the program knows how many stars (how many times they have worked all counties) and computes your five star and Star XX statistics automatically. Otherwise, it would be a hassle to keep having to look up how many stars a mobile has, then enter it into some form of logging program other than Logger.

## **FIVE STAR AWARD**

This award has no start date, so you can count all contacts going back to 1916 if you had a ham license then. Of course, no had a star until the first USCA award was issued in 1965! The goal is to work a total of five stars in each county – which can be done by working five people each with one star, or one with two and one with three or more, or one mobile with five stars or more. ( a star is earned by a county hunter by working all the counties and receiving an award for it either from CQ or MARAC or the now defunct B&B Shop) . A second star is awarded if that person works all counties a second time, and on and on. Senior county hunters often have a couple stars – some 8 or 10. You can also work them at home for their home county.

Starting 2/15/2017, a county hunter could claim 'self credit' for stars in a county. If a mobile with 3 stars went to Big Horn, MT, he would be able to count 3 stars for that county for the five star award.

So far , 83 people have earned this award. In the beginning, the B&B Shop in AZ issued this award and you tracked it with a Five Star book where you would enter the stars for each county. Periodic lists showed who had how many stars. Way back when, most mobiles had one or two or three stars so you'd have to work a couple people in a county. Then some mobiles later had 4 or 5 stars and it became a bit easier. However, many finished up – with the latest being Randy, AJ5ZX in 2021.

The first Five Star Award was issued to an SWL - WDX9DCJ –in 6/19/1996 - and the second to N7BKW out in ID. 5/2/ 1999 (It's almost scary to look at the first 30 folks who earned it – only a few are still active and many are silent keys now).

People needed new awards to work on - So a bigger challenge was created!

## **STAR XX AWARD**

I don't think anyone has earned it yet. The race to be #1 is on! Who will it be?

The goal is to work a total of 20 stars in each US county. Whew!

The start date for this award is July 9, 2011.

If you had your Five Star Award before this date (50 did) you could start then. If not, you can only count contacts after you receive your Five Star Award. Thus, Randy, AJ5ZX, who got Five Star Award dated 10-25-2021 can start after that date counting stars for Star XX. You can't count anything previously worked.

( Note: Logger had a glitch that counted contacts going back a long way. It has been corrected but many people 'lost' a lot of contacts – that didn't meet the rules. Be sure you recalculate after latest updates )

So who will be first? In order to urge mobiles out there and run, you can now claim self credit for your stars in a county. Thus, N8KIE can claim 7 stars for a county by running it – since he has worked all counties 7 times – after 2/15/2017 self credit start date. He'll still need 13 more....unless he works N8RLJ on 2m FM for another star while in the county. Then he'll need only 12 more – hi hi . Still a long way to go!

Unlike Five Star – where a dozen mobiles , or mobile teams, can fgve you five stars at once, no one mobile these days has 20 stars. Nor does any YL/OM team. Even if you worked both W0GXQ (7 stars) and K8ZZ (3 stars) as they zipped through a lot of rare SD/ND counties few months ago – that's only half way there.

So – the race is on! Like a few other awards (Double Diamond) it might be a while before someone gets it! Not all awards are easy!

## Kentucky QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running. Many fixed stations on to add in the counties.

**AE8M mobile 250 CW 153 SSB**

The 8 hours operating time does not include driving time. I had 33 Q's with KY stations



and 15 Q's with DX (all Europe). I averaged 53 Q's per hour. My QSO rate was good mid-morning (74/hour), but dropped to poor (39/hour) in the late morning, and then remained decent but not spectacular through the afternoon and evening. I usually do not work many stations when mobile on 75 SSB, so 27 was a pleasant surprise. Thanks to the KYCG for sponsoring a fun QSO party.

**KM4FO mobile 515 CW**

no comments.....

**N4TY mobile 339 CW 15 SSB**

no comments....

**OM2VL - fixed 81 CW 25 SSB 2 digi**

"15m was open here with FB signals, but unfortunately only few KY stations was here. I try so long SSB on this band and missed maybe some 20m CW stations, but unfortunately only few answers from KY.

20m was so noisy, but I can work with mobiles and also resident stations.

On 10m I hrd and worked only N4SS.

Thanks for the nice activity of K4KCG bonus station - 9 QSO! Missed only 80m SSB because he was only under 3800, where EU can't transmitt

My BIG mistake was that I don't know, that KY4L is also mobile ... I worked him on 20m CW and dont care of him after that ... Late night on 40m I recognize, that he is on another county ... :( missed I think 4-5 multipliers + QSOs

My BIG thanks to Tyler N4TY, who changed his route and gave me my 2 last missed KY counties!!!

Thanks for the QSOs!

KM4FO 16/13

N4TY 11/10

AE8M 5/5

KY4L 4/4

(5): N4JRG, N4SS, (4): KB8UEY

K4KCG bonus station: SSB: 40,20,15m - CW: 80,40,20,15m - RTTY: 20,15m

73, Laci OM2VL"

### **DL3DXX - fixed Germany 69 CW**

Especially QRV to increase my KY county totals. Before the party I needed 15 KY counties for USCA 2nd time CW - after the party still 3 are remaining thanks to N4TY and KM4FO. From the European view 15m propagation was better as 20m but not many stations found their way to 15. The only 10m QSO happened with N4SS (my only 5 band QSO). My attempt to convince K4KCG to move to 10m failed.

At the end the party became some boring, when most was worked on 20m, no more live on 15m and too early for 40 and 80m. In the last hour I was able to work a few KY stations on 40 but most of the folk has left for 80 already. In the last 10 minutes however 3 QSOs were possible on 80m before Kentucky sunset.

Thanks to organizers and attendees, especially the mobiles N4TY, KM4FO and AE8M.

Dietmar

### **KA6BIM fixed - CA 51 CW 9 SSB**

Seemed like poor conditions overall from here on West Coast. Down @30 qso's from last year but did find 14 new counties. Thanks for the qso's Dave ka6bim

### **K4KCG fixed - bonus station 570 CW 883 SSB**

ops for the K4KCG Bonus station were: ND4Y, K4WW, KE4KY.

## **Mobile Activity in June**

Starting off on June 1- no mobiles but a portable POTA station listed on W6RK but

probably 20 parks/counties on the air if you could hear them. Some run only FT-8. Some run only 40m SSB back east.

K6YEK was headed across ND towards MT – Planning on giving OM2VL Big Horn MT – later Beaverhead MT.

N4RKK spotted many parks/counties during the month

The KY QSO Party got lots of activity done and OM2VL picked up his last two there. He's closing in

Ed. K8ZZ, was busy putting out northern MN counties. Later headed across ND into MT.

WB8III was noted in WV putting out counties. Later he ran in the WV QSO Party along with W8OP – another mobile active in the QSO Party.

Don, K3IMC, ran some counties around the home QTH in GA

There were a couple days with no mobiles out – but parks spotted/counties.

WY0A hit the road – first spotted in TN, into a couple dozen in GA, then some in AL, (where he ran some counties with W9XLI), SC and kept on going.

Ed, N8OYY, hit the road in NY, into VT, NH, into a dozen in ME around the state

W5VS went mobile in VA.

The WV QSO Party brought forth a decent amount of activity and mobiles on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

W0GXQ and K8ZZ were zipping all over the western states

N8MD was active in MN and other counties.

Kraig, KA2LHO, made another trip in FL.

End date 6/27

# West Virginia QSO Party

Lots of activity this year with a couple mobiles: WB8III, W8OP, W4GO. Propagation decent on 20m from TX and some short skip back east.

Only one mobile reported score on 3830 Score page with comments. Guess the other mobiles did OK. It's nice to have trip reports for the rest of the folks to read.

## **W4GO mobile - 92 CW 691 SSB QSO**

This was an all-remote, autonomous-vehicle mobile operation. I was lounging comfortably on a beach, tablet in one hand, cold drink in the other, operating the radio remotely through the cellular hot spot in my Tesla which was driving my contest route on auto-pilot. The vehicle was simultaneously generating income by carrying Uber passengers for part of the route. Welcome to QSO parties in the year 2022!

Just kidding. This was my first time mobiling in the WV QSO Party and it was good, very good, to be there. Thanks for the QSOs and the friendly encouragement to press onward over hill, and hill, and yet another hill. (And I was not driving a six-figure golf cart!)

The weather was great, the mountain scenery out of a post card, and the HF conditions were decent too. Being walled in by close mountains does indeed impair low-angle radiation. 40 m NVIS was the solution to this problem. Fortunately, 20 m worked well early in the contest when I was traversing the somewhat more open valleys of the eastern region of the state. Perhaps it helped that 20 m was exhibiting short skip during this period, with strong signals from as close as PA, NJ, and OH.

My regular chasers know that I'm no stranger to cranking through large SSB pile-ups on the road. In six years of mobile QP operation, this was the first time the pile reached such a size that I consistently could not make out a distinguishing letter or number (without letting people call endlessly, which is a total rate killer). So I tried something different and worked callers by the numbers for a while.

It worked well. My highest-rate hour, with 139 QSOs, included most of the spell that I was running by the numbers. That's a respectable one-hour sustained rate for a single-op mobile station in a state QSO party and happens to be my best ever as a mobile.

Better still, during this time, I pulled in four WV county mults not otherwise worked during the contest. They were from weaker stations that likely would not have gotten through if I wasn't working by the numbers. In future mobile QP runs, I will likely continue the practice when the size of the pile-up justifies it.

The more skillful callers will gain experience at using their dual VFO to keep tabs on which number I am working while they bag other Qs and mults.

Miscellaneous stats:

Total QSOs: 783

Mobile-to-mobile QSOs: 7

Stations worked: 409

Stations worked five or more times: 34

WV counties activated: 13

WV counties worked: 19

States & provinces worked: 43

DX entities worked: 4

Contest miles: 337

**N8II - fixed - WV 281 CW 540 SSB**

I have to start off thanking those in the state QP community for many QSO's over the years. Thanks to some excellent sporadic E until around 20Z to many areas it was possible to work many ops on 4 or 5 bands. The "excessive QSO tax" winners this year with a sweep of CW and SSB on all 5 bands were Con, K5CM (we actually made non-counter Q's on 6M also) and Steve, AA4TI with 10 QSO's each. Mark WB9HFK came oh so close with 9, and Jim W4EE found me for 8. Those with 7 Q's: John K4BAI (we have worked many hundreds of times over the years!), Bill KV0I. 6 Q's: AA3R in DE. 5 Q's: ND4Y, NS2N, WA2JQK. 4 Q's: N4II, N6AR, N4RA, W3US, Bill W1WBB (RI was rare), W0JYT, VE9ML, W4SSF, and WN4AFP. Your "tax bills" will be emailed out soon and the levy can be reduced with future band/mode QSY's and any other contest QSO's.

Conditions could not have been much better the first 2 hours with very short skip on 20M in virtually all directions. By about 1720Z however my SSB run was drying up (started first 36 minutes on 20 CW with good rate). Following lunch I made the most band/mode moves while the Es was still very good. My rate dropped off to the 70's at 19 and 20Z mostly operating 20 and 40 with a few time wasting tries at running on 10M

SSB. My best hours were after dinner at 23Z with with 71 Q's on 20 followed by 46 Q's on 40 for 117. At 00Z 98 Q's on 40 followed by 20 on 80 CW for 118. The best overall was on 40 phone from 0000Z until 0033Z with a nice pile up for about 25 minutes. All evening long I had to frequently switch bands and modes to keep the rate up with some notable lulls. Most baffling of all was almost no luck running on 20M after dark which has never been the case in recent years. I was afraid I wouldn't make 100K until a switch to 40 CW 0244Z with a run of 25 new Q's.

I worked all of the continental USA states missing AK (poor condx) and HI. I missed VE1, VE5, VO2, and all of the territories up north in Canada.

**WN4AFP - fixed - SC 26 CW 32 SSB 26 mults**

Activity this year was very good! The short skip from SCt to WV was a welcomed surprise. This morning I was hearing Japan and WV at the same time. The mobile ops were very active... thank you W4GO, W8OP and WB8III. 73 Dave

**NS2N - fixed - NY 33 CW 34 SSB 29 mults**

thanks to all WV, especially the mobiles who did a great job.

**AA4TI - fixed - FL 28 CW 36 SSB 25 mults**

Good turnout overall but wish I had propagation on 40M earlier. WVQP is a tough QSO party for mobiles. I ran mobile last year, and it was quite a challenge. Kudos to W4GO and W8OP. Special thanks go out to N8II who I worked on 5 bands SSB and CW. I was glad to see the bonus station very active on CW and SSB as well. Had fun again this year.

**Awards Issued**

Roadrunner Awards:

N8OYY has attained 325 last counties on 16 June 2022. He received #71

KA9JAC has attained 225 last counties on 22 May 2022. He received #111

KB6UF has attained 1900 last counties on 14 May 2022. He received #2

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Native American Award: W8OP completed the award on 10 November 2021. He received #65

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**Ran All State Awards:**

W8OP Completed Pennsylvania on 13 May 2022. He received #29

WY0A Completed New Mexico on 11 March 2022. He received #34

WY0A Completed Texas on 12 March 2022. He received #35

WY0A Completed Oklahoma on 12 March 2022. He received #31

KE3VV Completed Delaware on 13 January 1998. He received #79

KE3VV Completed Maryland on 12 February 1998. He received #36

KE3VV Completed New Hampshire on 13 May 2000. He received #42

KE3VV Completed New Jersey on 5 August 2000. He received #30

KE3VV Completed South Carolina on 13 April 2010. He received #37

KE3VV Completed Virginia on 14 April, 2010. He received #24

## Events for County Hunters

There are no QSO parties or big events in July. Activity resumes in August – with the KS QP at the end of the month. Some smaller contests happening around the world.

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The National Convention is Oct 2-6 in Bozeman, MT. Already over a dozen people are signed up: see who at the Registration Page. Early Bird Registration prizes to people who have their registration form and check in my hands by July 4th.

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Get your discounted hotel room, plan your travel, and come one, come all.

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