

County Hunter News

June 1, 2015
Volume 11, Issue 6

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.

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 Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 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

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://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

<http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm>

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

<http://pages.suddenlink.net/w4ydy/hamlinks.html#County>

Download the file to a flash card that fits in your GPS unit, turn it on, and the county lines should appear!

De N4CD, Editor (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumbings

Wow....we go from drought to floods in TX. Last year we had 5 inches of rain until now This year we have 21 inches of rain – lakes went from 10 feet below normal levels to overflowing. Rivers came out of their banks, and with the ground saturated there is widespread flooding. There's no fun on the back roads in central Texas this month – all those gauges at the dips in rural areas are likely showing the back roads are closed – flooded out. It's still snowing up in Maine with cool weather but the beginning

summer is set to return soon there.

Meanwhile, propagation isn't the best – some days are OK – other days are quite flakey. There's been some short skip but more days of 'fair' conditions on the lower bands, not much happening on 15 and up, and not a lot of things to write home about condition wise.

The MARAC election is still going on. Hope you cast your vote already. If not there is still time.

Dayton was good this year – other than the afternoon downpours/rain. We had a good county hunting forum and dinner after. Full report this issue along with a couple of great QSO Parties.

2) Interesting tidbit – Off net contacts

A few issues ago I wondered if KZ2P/K2JG were chasing counties off frequency. At the MI mini, someone commented they had heard him several times in QSO parties working fixed and mobile stations in QSO parties off frequency of .336. That answers that question. Previously, he stated he only worked counties 'on the net frequency'. Of course, probably he didn't bother to spot them for the rest of the county hunters as I can't find too many spots not on the frequency 14336.

While likely 3000 counties get run a year on '20M net frequencies', it's not enough to finish up every year.

3) Note from Alan, ex-VK4AAR

I still handle any requests for cards as a long standing QSL manager and keep in touch with a few of the CHer folk (mainly Jerry, W0GXQ) besides some non-CHer types. We had to move to the Big Smoke (Brisbane) 2 years ago and I wasn't (physically) up to the task of rebuilding a station and putting up the 8 ele log periodic again ... even if I could have found and afforded ... a suitable place to live. I will be 82 years old in July.

I do like keeping in touch even though no longer actively participating, I was working on 3rd Time (but CW only) and was about $\frac{3}{4}$ done (from memory). On the DXCC front I had worked AND confirmed 339 current entities (out of the available 340). So Ham Radio kept me busy way into the "wee hours" every day/night.

Bob please extend my best 73 to the gang and tell them I am missing them.

All the best, mate! Thanks for your regular columns ... keep 'em a-comin'.

73

Alan ex-VK4AAR

4) Eyeball QSO's on the Road - Mary AB7NK/Neil K7SEN meet Gary K4EXT and Justin KG4VBK

from the County Hunt Facebook Page – QTH Bristol VA



Mary AB7NK and Justin KG4VBK



Gary, K4EXT, Mary, AB7NK, Neil K7SEN

Don't know about the Facebook **Ham Radio - County Hunting** Web Page? If you are signed up for Facebook – easy to find.

5) Following links off the CHNews page

We include links to referenced places and pictures in the CHNews. If you click on the link, your browser will take you there...but when you return, you'll wind up at the top of the newsletter again. You can simply 'copy' the link, and open in another window in your browser and then paste the link in...then return to the same place in the CHNews at the point you were.

6) Compressed Natural Gas -

Last month I showed a picture of a CNG pump in OK. This pops up in the news:

“Ford is expected to announce today plans to offer the 2016 F-150 full-size pickup with a package that prepares it to be powered by propane or compressed natural gas, an option that appeals to fleet buyers.

The \$315 factory-installed package would allow an F-150 with a 5-liter V8 to run on propane or compressed natural gas, making it the only half-ton pickup with that capability. The customer must then take their factory-prepped truck to a qualified vehicle modifier to install the proper fuel tanks, fuel lines and fuel injectors. The cost of the upfitting ranges from \$7,500 to \$9,500.

To run on the lower-cost gases, the trucks need an upgraded intake and exhaust valves as well as other modifications.

Fleet buyers appreciate the hedge against fluctuating gasoline prices which may be low now but are expected to increase at some point.

Compressed natural gas costs are currently the equivalent of \$2.11 per gallon of gasoline, compared with \$2.58 per gallon on average for gasoline.

The F-150 becomes the eighth commercial vehicle from Ford offered with a factory-installed option to convert to propane and CNG.”

Source: <http://peakoil.com/consumption/ford-f-150-propane-natural-gas-options>

7) Note from Dave KW4M – he added pictures to the County Sign Database as noted last month on p50

Hi Bob,

I saw my call mentioned on page 50 of the May 2015 County Hunter News and thought I'd introduce myself.

I'm not a county hunter (at least yet), but I have been a regular participant in the Georgia QSO Party for several decades. Sandy, WB4EVH, and I usually operate SSB and CW simultaneously as a rover station. For several years now we have had special event call N4I. It's a lot of fun putting counties on the air during the contest for folks needing them.

I believe you spotted us once this year. Contacts were slow in coming and that sure picked up the pace. Thanks!

I like to read the CHN online and really appreciate the effort you put into it.

73,
Dave
KW4M

8) Antique Wireless Association - Quarterly “Gateway Pub”

If you are interested in old radios, you might check out their quarterly news magazine at:

http://www.antiquewireless.org/uploads/1/6/1/2/16129770/gatewayv4no4_may_2015.pdf

Every year they have a convention that a couple hundred folks attend in the Rochester NY area – with seminars, and outdoor flea market, inside book/magazine seller area, auction, annual dinner, etc.

9) Sea Devils – 1937 Movie

Every now and then, I catch a movie (or part of it) on Turner Classics Movie Channel on the FIOS cable system here. This isn't a great movie for 2015 audiences, but was a popular black and white movie back in the 1930s made to 'enhance' the reputation of the Coast Guard as we were still in the Great Depression era. It won several awards and featured many of the stars of the day. The only interesting about the movie is about 2/3rds the way through, a hurricane strikes and you hear an SOS. The film shows maybe 10 seconds of a 1920s receiver (AMRAD long wave regen), and then you hear a minute of “SOS SOS” being sent in code when a ship is in distress and needs rescuing by the Coast Guard. Interesting wireless flashback, but too much fighting and brawling in the movie. However, if you catch it on replays, you've got a minute or two of old timey wireless to watch. The only good thing about this channel is there are no ads on it.

10) A note from Dave, WN4AFP

If you recall, there have been a fair number of comments from Dave, WN4AFP, in the CHHnews about QSO Parties. He got back on the air from home about 2 years ago after a lull of 20 years of family and other activities. Turns out he is an old time county hunter from back in the 80s – ran the net on .336 many days. His call back then was WB4AFP. He dropped me a note about the South Carolina QSO party coming up in September. Seems I dropped him a note almost 2 years ago about their ban on spotting

of mobiles/stations. This year, spotting is allowed, and they are trying to rejuvenate the SC QSO Party. Rumor has it maybe N5NA and one or two other big mobile ops will head to SC for event and put out most/many of the SC counties! That would be a welcome addition.

11) Note from Paul, N7JPF

HOA antenna approval

As many of you are aware, I have changed home QTH and am no longer in Yakima, WA, but now in Wasco County, Oregon. Regretfully I sold my tower and yagi, and knew going into the move, I would be living in an antenna restricted 55+ community that does not allow outdoor TV or radio antennas. Fear not, as the CC&R did not mention flagpoles, so I have ordered a good vertical to be the backbone to my 24 foot flagpole. In the meantime, I have been fairly successful with a hidden G5RV-jr at 17 feet. I am sure you have heard the difference in my signal strength. Then, I got the March issue of CQ magazine, and buried on page 108 was a paragraph about the PRB-1 Law, and how it is now law in 31 states. I did a quick search to find out if Oregon was one of those states, and was thrilled to find out it is. (2013 ORS #221.295).

I decided to appeal the local CC&R instead of just hiding my antenna in a flagpole. I wrote up a letter of appeal, referencing my federally-issued license which allows me to transmit on certain frequencies, within the law, and also mentioning my experiences as ARES/RACES, SAR, Dept, of Emergency Services, and Red Cross Communications Officer, working in many local and national emergencies. I explained how it was important for me to be able to use my home radio station not only in my hobby, but also in public service. I need to have a substantial outdoor antenna to be able to do that.

The gentleman in charge of the local CC&R called me and told me he had a phone message into the city code enforcement office, and would get back to me. The next day brought the great news. The city code enforcement informed him that because of my federally-issued ham license, I was within my rights to an antenna on my property up to 75 feet tall! It only needs to be attached or guyed to my home.

Needless to say, my 24 foot vertical was approved and I am now a happier

person! I don't have to hide my hobby.

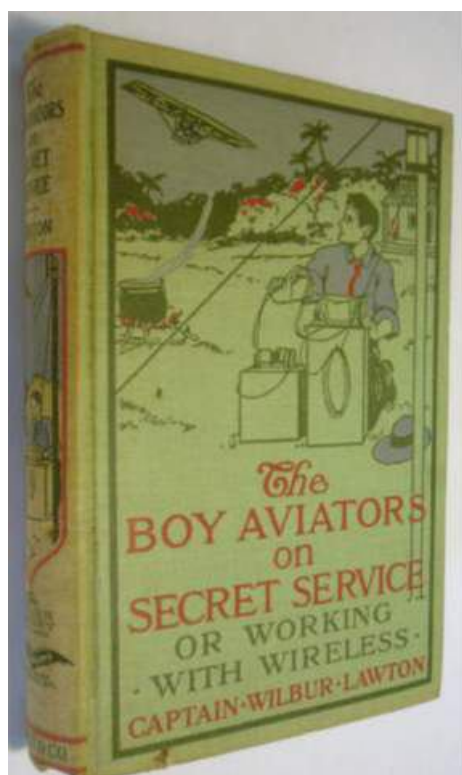
I know my vertical will never come near the performance of my yagi, but at least I have the blessings of the HOA, and also realize now I might put up a multiband rotatable dipole next.

I hope this helps with anyone else who might be in the same situation as me. Google PRB-1 and see if your state is one of the 31 that have adopted it for the ham community!

73, Paul, N7JPF

Book Review of the Month

**The Boy Aviators on Secret Service
Or Working With Wireless
by Wilbur Lawton**



Back in the 1910 era, there were hundreds of books written for kids. There was no TV. No radio. No internet! None of that. Entertainment was by weekly magazines and books. It might be hard for kids today to even imagine living in a world like that! The books sold for 25c and 50c, which was a decent amount of money then – several hours pay at minimum wage.

One of the chief 'entertainment' venues was books – either purchased or borrowed from a library.

This month it's another of John Goldfarb's books, written under the name of 'Wilbur Lawton' - and he did about two dozen using that pen name. He also wrote half a dozen other wireless books – all very similar.

This month's book is from a short series of books – about 7 of the “Boy Aviators”. Only one deals with wireless, just like one of the Motor Boat Boys.

Boy Aviators' Series

By CAPTAIN WILBUR LAWTON
Author of "Dreadnought Boys Series"

- 1 The Boy Aviators in Nicaragua ; or, In League with the Insurgents.
- 2 The Boy Aviators on Secret Service; or, Working with Wireless.
- 3 The Boy Aviators in Africa ; or, An Aerial Ivory Trail.
- 4 The Boy Aviators' Treasure Quest ; or, The Golden Galleon.
- 5 The Boy Aviators in Record Flight ; or, The Rival Aeroplane.
- 6 The Boy Aviators* Polar Dash ; or, Facing Death in the Antarctic.
- 7 The Boy Aviators' Flight for a Fortune.

This adventure starts out with the Boy Aviators being summoned to Washington DC and the Naval Department Office. It seems that there has been a theft of top secret information on a new super high explosive, Chapinite. Not only have the plans been stolen from the top secret safe, but the inventor, Lt Chapin, is missing. All the clues point to a mysterious yacht being purchased by folks with connections to a 'far eastern power', and used to take the plans and Chapin to the Everglades in FL, where the bad guys would manufacture a large quantity of the terrifyingly powerful explosive and ship it back to the home country. The 'home country' could deny ever making it.

The Boy Aviators had just gained fame rescuing the son of a prominent man – but in that adventure had wrecked their airplane. Now they quickly had to build a bigger and better one – the Golden Eagle II. This one, too, would be equipped with wireless (spark gap era stuff). On this trip, the plane would have wireless and the Navy was providing them with a portable set. Here's a description of it:

“The next morning Le Blanc, who had driven into town, returned shortly before noon with a letter from the Secretary of War which contained information of much interest to every member of the projected expedition.

" I have arranged with the Department," it read in part, " to have the torpedo destroyer Tarantula detailed to duty along the Florida coast and you can

keep in touch with her by wireless. For this purpose, besides the apparatus attached to your air-ship, I have ordered a complete field outfit to be forwarded to you, — of the kind with which several western posts have been experimenting of late and which has proved entirely satisfactory.

The instrumental part of the outfit — i. e., the keys, detector, condenser, tuning-coil, etc.. are permanently fastened into or carried in a steel-bound trunk, but little bigger than an ordinary steamer trunk, and weighing about one hundred and fifty pounds. Two storage batteries, both sufficient for ten hours of continuous sending, accompany the outfit, and come in wooden cases which form supports for the trunk when the outfit is in use.

"A mast of ten six-foot sections, which can be jointed together and set up in a few minutes, forms your aerial pole and each section is coppered so as to provide a continuous conductor. In another box are packed the aerial wires, extra rope, wire-pegs, etc., as well as a waterproof tent to protect the outfit from the weather. Of course a charging station is a necessity and another case contains a small, but powerful gasolene motor and generator. Another attachment for use with the appliance is a combination Malay and box kite carrying a cord of phosphor bronze, wire-woven about a hemp center. There are eight hundred feet of this wire wound on a reel. If for any reason the work of setting up and attaching the pole and its aerals is considered to be too lengthy an occupation it is a simple matter to send up the kite, its wire rope-acting as an aerial in itself."

Back in 1910 era, the Everglades were an 'unmapped swamp' and that is where they were headed to catch the bad guys. Aviation back then was a bi-plane made of wood and cloth, and a crude gasoline powered engine giving them a speed of 20-30 mph with no wind. Think Wright Brothers 'flyer' and that's about it. For the 19-teens era, this was 'state of the art' stuff!

If you've read one of these books, you've read just about all of them. There's the usual kidnapping, the bad guys trapping the good guys, folks going 'missing', overcoming the bad guys and winning in the end. There's a formula and just the names of the characters, the location of the episode changes, and not much else. Goldfarb, the author, writing under various pen names, wrote the same story over and over again. It sold books – so – what the heck. Back then, authors only got paid for the initial manuscript and not royalties on total sales. He did a decent job on the details of the location and the dialogue. The authors quickly wrote several books a year. Most of the series are near forgotten in history with few remaining hard copies in existence. The WorldCat shows about six copies in libraries in the US total for this book.

The Boy Aviators head into the Everglades first by ship, then by canoe – to a place where they can launch the airplane. Half of them fly further inland and discover the island where Lt Chapin is being held prisoner, and where the bad guys are busy making Chapinite. There's pirates and Seminole Indians present – and not all of them friendly.

As usual for his era book, there's the usual kidnapping and escape, the usual good guys getting caught by the bad guys, horrific storms, a last minute rescue, the bad guys caught – and all is well at the end. There's 330 pages of adventure, but hardly any use of the wireless for most of the book.

Hoover, in the interest of being thorough in investigating all the early 'wireless' fiction books, I digested the whole thing in about five hours of 'dead band' days. You can skip this one. It was a bit interesting learning about what folks thought of aviation and the Everglades (really unexplored, unmapped territory) back then.

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You can find a cheap copy on line (\$10-12) or better yet, download a free Kindle or other eBook, read it on line in several formats – due to expired copyright. Go to:

<https://archive.org/details/boyaviatorsonsec00lawt>

Mobile Activity

After the Michigan Mini, mobiles headed back home – some of them the county hunter way.

AB7NK/K7SEN were on a long trip east – in KY putting them out – OH, KY, VA, NC, WV, then on to Dayton – then on to home in AZ after Dayton.

Barry, N0KV and Pat, N0DXE wound their way back to CO. Then they made a trip out to UT to get LC's WBOW for N9STL's Mobile Diamond award. Later out in Custer, CO.

Gene, K5GE, headed back to TX. Later in the month, he went mobile with W5PKE to get the LC WBOW for N8KIE 6th time in Willacy, TX.

Phil, AB7RW headed back to WA.

Terry, WQ7A, headed back to WA.

Silver, N9QS, headed back home a day or two later.

W0NAC, Matt, and Sharon, N0LXJ, headed from the mini back to CO via SD – running them for the five mode award.

Gene, WB4KZW headed back east via OH rural counties.

W8GEJ put out southern OH on cw, while W8FNW/W4NFW did the SSB operating in OH.

AA9JJ Frank and Kay, N9QPQ wandered back home from the mini – to AZ.

Jerry, K5YAA, headed to MT to run in the 7th Area QSO Party – ran counties on the way up.

Bill, K2HVN, went off and played DX at 8P6EE.

Bill, NU0Q was mobile in IA and NE

Mike, NF0N, headed over to MO and back home

N1FD was out in New England putting out counties. Later, N1FD, operated by AD1OC, headed to Dayton and back.

Duane, K8AO, was on in WI and MI (SSB).

Ron, KB6UF, put out some in Maine.

Pat, N0DXE, and Barry, N0KV, headed to western CO and UT.

Jack, N7IV headed to WI and back.

Larry, W7FEN headed across KS to CO. Got hit by the bad weather there for a few days. Later headed up into NE.

Randy, AA8R, put out a few in MI.

Dave, KW1DX was on several days – PA, NJ, NY, CT.

Greg, KG5RJ, was on in OK and KS.

Mike, WU3H, was spotted in Sherman KS.

KB0QGT ran a few on SSB.

Richard, W5IL was noted in NE mobile.

W5QP was busy in MO and KS putting out counties on data modes and occasionally on CW.

Around the time of Dayton, many mobiles headed that way.

Jack, K0MAF left FL and showed up at Dayton. After he headed home to MO – on SSB.

Duane, K8AO was out mobile on SSB.

Ryan, KB9OWD, headed to Dayton and back from WI. Kept CW humming.

WD9EJK/WD9EJN team headed down to Dayton and back via NY and other states –

the county hunter way . - SSB.

Jerry, K5YAA, headed to Dayton from OK and back and put out a few along the way.

KA9JAC/KB9YVT team headed to Dayton – SSB.

Dave and Sandy, KJ8V/KJ8W team headed to Dayton and back – SSB.

Doug, WA4UNS, headed to Dayton as well.

Randy, AA8R and Patti, W8TAX, also joined in the crowd headed to Dayton.

Don, W0EAR, was putting them out in MN.

Dave, KW1DX, was putting them out in ME.

KC7YE activated special event station N7P. Didn't have too much luck due to high local noise level and not so great conditions.

Kerry, W4SIG, was running counties in MS and AL.

N2OO, Bob, headed to Dayton and back – put out a few along the way

Don, K3IMC, headed out – ran counties in AR, MO, IA and was headed west.

Larry, W7FEN, left Teller, CO and headed west to CA via WY, UT, NV.

Jerry, W0GXQ took a two day trip to ND. The pile ups were giant!

KO7X, Alan, was out in WY and NE.

WY0A, Butch, headed from MO east.

HexBeams

If you've ever been curious about 'Hex Beams' and similar, visit G3TXQ's site for a great bunch of info on the various designs for HexBeams. It's a popular antenna, smaller in turning radius than a full size beam, and covers 10-12-15-17 and 20M.

<http://www.karinya.net/g3txq/hexbeam/>

If you are interested in making your own, check out

<http://www.hex-beam.com/>

More Florida QSO Party Reports

These were filed after our deadline of the 25th of the month

KN4Y mobile – 1134 cw contacts

When I was 80 I could handle the Florida QSO party county pile ups. Now less hearing and less dexterity coupled with frequent rest area stops and driver feedings the score were below the potential. The fun and challenge is still there and the game goes on, or in this scenario rolls on

NO5W mobile (with KN5O) 2633 cw QSO

Arrived back in New Orleans about midnight Sunday road-weary but flying high after having a total blast and setting a new personal best in the FQP. A big storm passed through the city Monday morning taking out our power and internet

for about 15 hours so I'm running behind on posting this report.

I'll hit the highlights:

Eyeball QSOs -- they don't count in your score but definitely add to the pleasure of the event.

Just after the closing bell on Saturday night we were replacing fumes with actual gas at a service station in Ocala when up walks Wayne-N4FP. Wayne and I work often in the Wednesday CWTs sponsored by CW Ops but had never met so it was nice to meet him and his wife and to see his neat setup. Wayne sends with the paddle with one hand and logs with the other which we found to be an amazing trick since Ted and I are both primarily keyboard pushers with only an occasional use of the paddle when absolutely necessary. We were looking for a place to catch some much needed dinner and understood the place across the street was open until midnight. So we invited our new friends to continue our chat over dinner.

Well it turned out that the place across the street was a karaoke bar and the singers were loud and awful. After the pure pleasure of the CW pileup symphony we had been listening to mixed with massive portions of power line noise it was tough to endure the karaoke. Wayne lives close by so he graciously declined our invitation and left the karaoke to Ted and myself. So while the W4AN crew and the NX4N suburbanites were enjoying that BBQ down near Tampa we were stuck in a karaoke bar in Ocala listening to some really awful and loud singers -- at least the burgers were pretty good.

Just after the closing bell on Sunday we met Escambia Jay-N4OX at a truck stop just across the line in Alabama to pick up about 10,000 feet of radial wire for a friend back in Louisiana. It was good catching up a bit with Jay who I had not seen since he treated my wife and me to dinner in Pensacola prior to the 2009 FQP. I think I still owe you Jay -- maybe next year:>)

Heading back to Louisiana we usually stop in Spanish Fort for dinner. This year we had a nice dinner with long time friend and Texan Alan-N5NA and his wife Kay who had just finished their first FQP after I had raved about it for several years. Sounds like they had fun, hope they will be back.

Meeting the Schedule -- This year we went out on a limb and published an estimated schedule of when we would cross each of the county lines. After

totally busting the published schedule in the 2014 Texas QSO Party it was good to make all of our 39 counties and to do it very close to the published schedule. We got behind about 20 minutes in Wakulla and that schedule slippage carried through the rest of the day. Sunday was a different story as we practically nailed the schedule.

Making the Qs -- Of course eyeball QSOs and being on schedule do not directly generate any score. For that you have to make some QSOs. We were basically "Johnny One-Notes" being practically glued to 20m. We tried 40m and 15m and even gave out a few CQs on 10m but with limited success and the pileups we were experiencing on 20m kept calling us back. Each county was begun on 20m and if the pileup and rate dropped sufficiently we would try the other bands.

Low Lights -- For the most part Murphy stayed away although we did have a few anxious moments at the start on Sunday when the mouse pad on the long-in-the-tooth Dell D610 logging computer would not respond. Not that we use the mouse much but it is useful for launching the logging program and failure to do so would have been a serious show stopper. As a low light we should also mention the power line noise in NAS along that short two mile stretch of Highway 90 in the southern end of the county. It was some of the worst that I have heard. We had to drive the stretch of highway a second time before we found a logging road on the opposite side of the highway that made the noise tolerable but still very bad.

Many thanks to the FCG for sponsoring this premiere QSO party that seems to get better with each year drawing us back. Take a look at the tight competition in the M/S mobile CW category and you can see that FQP is one heck of a contest and a great event to be a part of.

Thanks also to Ted-KN5O for joining in to share the driving and operating with enthusiasm and skill.

Hope to see everyone again in FQP 2016 and at Dayton in a few weeks.

73

Chuck-NO5W
Ted-KN5O

W4AN mobile (K4BAI, KU8E) 2423 cw QSO

We started in Hamilton Co, FL at the FL Welcome Center on I-75 with a good steady rain. In Suwannee County, our cell phones warned us of a tornado warning for the area. We were stopped off the road at an out-of-business gas station location. Fortunately, all we had was a lot of rain with no wind and no tornado. But there were some trees down that we saw on our return trip Sunday. After a few counties, we ran out of the rain and it was generally dry with patches of light rain for the rest of the weekend. Sometimes, it was very clear and sunny on Sunday.

The mobile M/M team headed by NX4N and including K0LUZ, N4BP, and N4KM had invited us to the home of Chris, NX4N and his XYL. Thanks to them for wonderful hospitality, good food, and a very interesting look at the fabulous M/M mobile installation.

Conditions didn't seem bad on Saturday, but activity was a little disappointing. Sunday was much better both in activity and conditions after a slow start for the first county or two. This was our best year on 15M. We had good conditions to Europe on 15 and 20 and also on 40 after dark. Thanks to many who followed us around and gave us a lot of QSOs, many of these being in Europe. Also, NP2X, KP3A, FG8NY, and FG1PP in the Caribbean. And KH6LC, KL7SB, LU1FAM and PP5AX for rare mults. FG8NY gave us many, many QSOs.

We worked only one other FL mobile, N5NA, on 40M Sunday morning when 40M was so slow that we did a bit of S&P. We worked only two of the 1x1 calls needed for the Orange certificate. But, we were called by a lot of FL fixed stations, particularly on 40, but also on 20 from nearby counties.

Thanks to the sponsors and all the participants. We had a great time and hope to be back again in the future.

73, John, K4BAI and Jeff, KU8E for W4AN/M t- he South East Contest Club club call.

SpotMe by KW1DX

Dave KW1DX has come up with a nifty way to self spot yourself while out mobile using your Smartphone. Here is the info:

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Spot Me, a new way to spot yourself when running a county from KW1DX

The purpose of this is to be able to spot yourself with as little typing as possible. Spot Me is a web page not an app but was made to look like an app. Use the web page <http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm>

The Spot Me web page will display a list of all the states, select the state you are running and that state will be displayed for you, when you change states return to <http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm> and select another state.

The form that is displayed has three sections.

- 1) Drop downs to help you fill in the data:
 - a. Mobile: This list all the callsigns of people who have asked me to add them to the list and a few that were taken off of the spot history page to start the list. If you want to be added to the list let me know and he will add your call. indicate if you are a team and would like the team listing as well as individual calls.
 - b. County: This is a list of counties in the state. At the end of the list of counties is a list of the county lines for the state. It is taken from the non-wet county line list so if one is missing let me know and he will add it. The order of the County Line list is alphabetical by the county within the state then the county line and possible the county State Line.
 - c. Frequency: A list of the net frequencies is listed by band and mode then some prominent alternate frequencies. Again the purpose is to not have to type anything. If an odd frequency is being used then you will

have to type it in. Note mode is derived from the frequency selected.

- d. Digital: This dropdown is only needed if you are running digital and it adds the digital information to the county name so select county first.

2) Spot fields. (Fields with no dropdown and white background) The fields are what is actually spotted not the dropdowns. The dropdowns help populate these fields but you can change them manually so make sure that what you want to spot is in the spot fields not the dropdowns. Please leave the Spotter as Spot Me so that I can see that people are using it.

3) The Add Spot button, when you have the Spot fields populated select the Add Spot button. This will add your spot and bring up the W6RK spot page to show you what you have spotted. (note if the W6RK spot page is already in one of your browser tabs it may not change to that tab when you click the Add Spot button.

I only have an iPhone 6+, any smart phone or tablet with a web browser should work but if you are having trouble please let me know and I will try to assist. If you see any bugs please let me know.

Planned changes are to have it remember your callsign so that you do not need to re-select it all the time and any other changes to make it as easily and quick as possible to spot yourself.

Dave – KW1DX

Update:

I have updated Spot Me so that it will remember your callsign. to do this you need to add ?callsign= to the end of the url. So for example the url that I would use is

<http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm?callsign=KW1DX>

if you are a team you can use <http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm?callsign=N0KV/N0DXE> as an example.

Adding the Callsign Parameter presets your Callsign and does not show the Callsign dropdown. If you do not use the Callsign parameter it should work the same as before. If you need help or have any problems let me know. Dave-KW1DX

- - -

Update 2 - Add "&frequency=14.271" to the end of the url and it will pre-populate the frequency

Michigan Mini – More

Last month we had to rush a bit to get things out by the end of the month, so we didn't have time to fully include all the relevant comments. Fingers had to fly at the keyboard to get things done at CHNews HQ. So I'll add in a few more tidbits from the trip and few more comments/pictures on the Mini

On the way there, Phil, AB7RW, woke up to find nine inches of snow on the ground in the northern part of WI! Didn't slow him down too much as he trekked east to the mini in MI. He had antenna coax problems. He uses a mount off the bottom side of the car, and apparently snow and ice and road salt got into the connections and caused them to fail at the bottom feed point of the antenna. Ed, K8ZZ made up a new cable for him before he arrived at the mini so he was all set to go – on the way back home.

A few more pictures from the MI Mini

The MI Mini is hosted by Joe, W8TVT and Ed, K8ZZ. Here's a pic of them at the banquet. (Some folks dress up for the event – others not)



Joe, W8TVT and Ed, K8ZZ
MI Mini Convention Hosts
(picture courtesy of W7FEN)



The Group at the Mini
(W0ULU picture)



Kerry, W4SIG



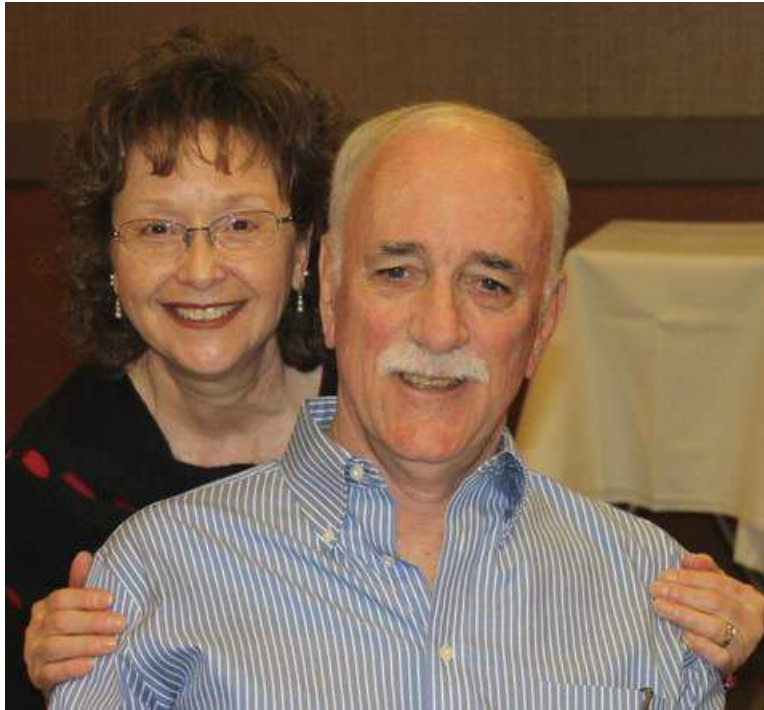
Jackie and Bob, WA3QNT
(W7FEN picture)



Bonnie and N9QS, Silver



Barb, AC7UH and Phil, AB7RW
(Courtesy W7FEN)



Patti, W8TAX and Randy, AA8R
(courtesy of W7FEN)



W8GEJ, AL



Charlie, N2JNE



KD5XCO, Tim and Faith
(Pic Courtesy W7FEN)

Two New Ham Bands!

FCC Proposes to Permit Amateur Access to 2200 and 630 Meters

Amateur Radio is poised to gain access to two new bands! The FCC has allocated a new LF band, 135.7 to 137.8 kHz, to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis. Allocation of the 2.1 kHz segment, known as 2200 meters, was in accordance with the Final Acts of the 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07). The Commission also has proposed a new secondary 630 meter MF allocation at 472 to 479 kHz to Amateur Radio, implementing decisions made at WRC-12. No Amateur Radio operation will be permitted in either band until the FCC determines, on the basis of comments, the specific Part 97 rules it must frame to permit operation in the new bands. Amateur Radio would share both allocations with unlicensed Part 15 power line carrier (PLC) systems operated by utilities to control the power grid, as well as with other users. In addition, the FCC has raised the secondary Amateur Service allocation at 1900 to 2000 kHz to primary, while providing for continued use by currently unlicensed commercial fishing vessels of radio buoys on the "open sea."

The allocation changes, associated proposed rules, and suggested topics for comment are contained in a 257-page FCC Report and Order, Order, and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking addressing three dockets -- ET-12-338, ET-15-99, and IB-06-123 -- which affect various radio services in addition to the Amateur Service. The FCC released the document on April 27.

With respect to the new LF sliver band at 135.7-137.8 kHz, the FCC concluded that Amateur Radio and PLC systems can coexist there. "Since the Commission last considered this issue, amateurs have successfully operated in the band under experimental licenses without reported PLC interference," the FCC said. In 2003, the FCC turned down an ARRL proposal to create a 135.7-137.8 kHz Amateur Radio allocation, after utilities raised fears of a clash between Amateur Radio and PLC systems operating below the AM broadcast band. This time, the FCC said, "It is clear that we will have to establish appropriate requirements for amateur use of the band, if we are to ensure compatibility with PLC systems." WRC-07 set a maximum effective isotropic radiated power (EIRP) limit of 1 W, which is what the FCC is proposing.

The FCC said it "explicitly" rejects the suggestion that it choose one use of the spectrum

over the other. "Our objective is to allocate spectrum on a secondary basis to amateur stations in a manner...compatible with existing PLC systems," the FCC said. "However, we also expect to permit amateur operators to make use of the allocation in a manner that is less burdensome and more productive than they are currently afforded under the experimental authorization process."

The Commission said that if it concludes, after considering the record, that Amateur Radio and PLC systems cannot coexist, it would "defer the adoption of service rules, and amateur users will have to continue to use the experimental licensing process to operate in the band."

With respect to the proposed 630 meter allocation, the FCC has proposed limiting amateur stations in the US to a maximum 5 W EIRP. The ARRL submitted a Petition for Rule Making in 2012, asking the FCC to allocate 472-479 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis and to amend the Part 97 rules to provide for its use. Several countries, including Canada, already have access to the band. The ARRL has pointed out that during its extensive course of experimentation in the spectrum around 500 kHz, no interference reports have been received.

The FCC said that the "cornerstone" of the technical rules it's proposing for both bands is "physical separation between amateur stations and the transmission lines" carrying PLC signals. "Such a separation, in conjunction with limits on the amateur stations' transmitted EIRP and antenna heights, will enable PLC systems and amateur stations to coexist in these bands," the FCC asserted. "In addition, we propose to limit amateur stations to operations at fixed locations only, to ensure that this separation distance can be maintained reliably."

The FCC said it wants to hear from both PLC system users and radio amateurs regarding technical requirements it would have to put into place to permit both users to operate comfortably and without compromising the PLC systems. The Commission suggested that other requirements might include limits on antenna heights, transmitter power limits, and operating privilege limits based on license class or mode. The ARRL will file comments in the proceeding.

The FCC will accept comments for 60 days following publication of the Report and Order, Order, and Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the Federal Register. Reply comments would be due 30 days after the comment deadline.

Source: ARRL Newsletter

County Lines 'on the run'

Wouldn't it be nice....if once again you could run 'county lines' again on the run? You do know that the name of the official publication is “The County Line Road Runner”...go back and view an older issue – it's right at the top.

For 30-40 years, a mobile could be in motion along a county line road and put out both counties at the same time. Then we got a 'fixed station oriented' Board of Directors, who nitpicked away – saying, well, the county line likely goes down the exact middle of the road and you can't be in both counties at once!or some other logic like that to 'decide' that no longer could mobiles run the line on the run.

Out in the midwest there are hundreds and hundreds of county line roads – some of them good paved roads – others just gravel as often the case in KS, SD and a few other states. However, for decades, you'd have mobiles zipping down those county line roads putting them 'both' out for the folks. That was a fun part of county hunting. Then the killjoy nitpickers on the board decided they were going to stop that – for really no good reason.

They'd still run mobiles 'stopped' on a county line. Duh! If you have a county line road – when you park, you are 'less likely' to be 'exactly' on the line since you can't park in the middle of many of these roads. (some you can as there is zero other traffic!).....

I say we should agitate to allow folks to run county line roads on the run once again! Now, if you are mobile in motion along the road, you have to make two contacts from that road...one for 'each' county'...stupid....just wastes time. Of course, Mr Grouchy on . 336, who likely was one of the folks 'banning' running counties on the run, probably wouldn't run you. He'd probably tell you to stop or just run one at a time.

I used to kid about the need to rename the official publication of MARAC – to be called the County Line Road Squatter. You can't run on a county line road no more, no more!.....

de N4CD

Interesting BBC History

The British Broadcasting Company

A good summary of International Broadcasting from the BBC perspective:

In the beginning, amateur radio operators played a significant part in demonstrating the potential of short wave long distance transmission, and by the early nineteen twenties communication had already been made with the USA, the West Indies and Australasia. With much of the theory still to be established, and consequent poor reliability, both the USA and Holland had nevertheless begun regular overseas broadcasts as early as 1924 and 1926 respectively.

Then in 1926, the Post Office gave the BBC permission to carry out experimental transmissions. A transmitter with an output power of 8-10kW was rented from Marconi, and transmissions began from Chelmsford in November 1927 with a call sign of G5SW. These experiments eventually led to the setting up of the Empire Station at Daventry, which came into operation in December 1932. Two ST&C transmitters were installed, each with an output power of 10-15kW. Directional groups of vertically polarised aerials were employed to provide services to Australasia, India, South and West Africa and Canada. Following reception reports and various tests, it became clear that horizontally polarised aerials would give far better results, and accordingly the aerials were eventually replaced.

A third transmitter was deemed necessary, and in 1935, G5SW at Chelmsford was refurbished and transferred to Daventry. It was modified to operate in several wavebands and had a maximum output power of 20kW. Later this was increased to 60kW. On the 26 February 1935 a notable experiment took place at Daventry, when the possibility of detecting aircraft by means of radio transmission was put to the test. Using the 49m BBC Empire Service transmission, Watson Watt's propagation specialist successfully detected a Heyford bomber flying at 10,000 feet. This was to mark the beginning of the development of British radar.

During the early thirties, many countries were increasing their overseas HF broadcasting, and in particular Germany, with Hitler in power, was transmitting

propaganda material to many areas. In response, the BBC obtained approval to extend the facilities at Daventry. In 1937, two ST&C 50-80kW transmitters were commissioned, and the following year a 100kW Marconi transmitter was installed. This was a 'Floating Carrier' design, a form of suppressed carrier during periods of low or no modulation; a power saving technique. In 1940 a fourth transmitter was supplied by ST&C which utilised twin RF channels and a common modulator. A decision taken in 1937 to allow broadcasts to be made in foreign languages. Together with all the necessary masts, aerials and associated feeders, the whole system was in place by June 1940, and Daventry had become one of the world's major HF transmitting stations.

BBC Transmission's early short wave stations needed a large number of staff to keep them going. Just like the early MF transmitters, they used state-of-the-art technology which was rather temperamental, but there was the added complication that they had to be 'wave changed'. This involved adjusting a number of high and low power tuned circuits, having replaced components necessary for the new operating frequency; some of which, such as large coils could be very heavy to handle and quite hot. This is still the case on many transmitters today. The Marconi SWB18 transmitters at Daventry used a clever mechanical design in which all of the high power components that needed to be replaced for wave-changing were mounted on a truck which ran on rails. There was a separate truck for each waveband, up to four on each Sender, and when not in use they were put in 'sidings'. A second truck, rubber wheeled and somewhat smaller, was used for the lower powered circuits. It is a tribute to the Marconi design engineers that these transmitters stayed in service for over 30 years with wave changes being carried out half a dozen times a day. The transmitters were connected to aerials using open wire feeders about 3 metres above the ground. It was necessary to use different aerials according to the time of day, and so there were many places where feeders could be re-routed by hooking them on to a choice of destinations. There were three main positions for feeder routing, selection (to a Sender), bi-furcation and tri-furcation, together providing a pattern of arrays that could be selected at any one time. There was then further switching in the field associated with each curtain array and their driving points.

In the control room, engineers had to make sure that the correct programme feed (or 'chain') was plugged into each transmitter, and it was also necessary to set oscillators (known as "drives") so that the transmitters broadcast on the correct frequencies. Setting the oscillators was quite a tricky process because they were continuously variable and the dials were not accurate enough to be relied upon. The problem was overcome by mixing the output with a comb of frequencies produced from a single, expensive, high stability crystal oscillator and listening to the beat frequency on headphones.

Fifteen minutes was normally allowed between broadcasts for the system to be set up for

broadcasting a new programme, on a different frequency, to a different part of the world. So, at the appointed time:-

- One person would switch off the transmitter, open the doors, pull the high power tuning truck into the siding, change the points, push the new tuning truck in, replace the second truck, do any urgent maintenance, close the door and set half a dozen tuning controls to approximately the right position.
- While this was going on, perhaps at 3am on a cold and wet winter's morning, another person will have dressed up in oilskins and wellington boots (not always issued), grabbed a torch lamp, then disappeared into the night, probably on a bicycle and hoping that the torch lamp battery would hold out (frequently it didn't). This was the 'aerial man' who would proceed through the site, sometimes dodging sheep, to carry out whatever feeder switching was required. One needed to know the layout of the aerial field like the back of one's hand. In thick fog, say, identifying an array switch which for some unknown reason had lost its label (not at all unusual) could be something of a nightmare, or to be disoriented in such conditions was a very lonely feeling indeed. The Daventry site was an encampment in Roman times, and one section was supposed to be haunted by Roman Centurions, (or so all newcomers were gleefully told). Imagine those of a nervous disposition in the dead of night and hearing a sheep cough - it can sound remarkably human; many an 'aerial man' has reappeared back at the transmitter building looking somewhat pale!

Returning to our intrepid cyclist, he would ascertain by field telephone that all power was off before commencing the switching.

- Using a long wooden pole with a special end-fitting, he would unhook the feeder lines from their original destination and hook them onto the new position. The feeders were held in tension by a large spring anchored to the ground, suitably insulated from the lines of course. It was not unusual for him to have to accomplish more than one switch in the allotted time, and when all was ready he would telephone back to give the all-clear. Whilst all this was going on, a further man was attending to the switching at the selector and bi-furcating positions. To be the aerial man on a winter's night shift was without doubt the most unpopular part of the job. However, on a lovely summer's afternoon, things were quite different!
- In the comfort of the control room another engineer would change the programme feed and set up the drive oscillator.
- With all preparations in place, the Sender engineer would begin the process of 'bringing the Sender up'. Several switches and oil circuit breakers would be operated to select the outputs of large rotating machines and energise a mercury arc rectifier

- With the main HT raised to about 5,000 Volts, the tuning of the Sender would be adjusted to optimise the performance. If everything seemed OK the main HT would then be increased to 11,000 Volts, and the tuning trimmed. Occasionally, for one reason or

another, there would be a problem, and on reaching the final HT voltage a 'flash-over' might occur, which visually and aurally could be quite spectacular. The incoming programme at this stage would be line-up tone, and the depth of modulation would be set to the required level. • The Sender engineer would check on his headphones that the correct programme was being radiated, usually preceded by the 'Victory' interval signal (the Morse code letter "V" played continuously on the Timpani). Then an announcer would say "This is London" - which somehow made it all seem worthwhile!

The war years

At the outbreak of war in 1939, the BBC had eight HF transmitters all of which were based at Daventry. Two Marconi high power transmitters were in the process of being installed, and one would not be commissioned until December of the following year. To have all HF transmitters on the same site, was from a security point of view highly undesirable, and there was an urgent need to provide some form of backup in the event that Daventry was put out of action.

At Start Point, the MF transmitter was converted for use on HF by day and MF at night, and a Marconi SWB18 100kW HF transmitter was installed; the latter came into service in January 1940 and was also designated . From September of that year, Sender 22 radiated the European Service, and continued to do so throughout the entire period of the war. Also in September 1940, the Clevedon (Bristol) MF was converted to HF operation (15kW), and radiated the European Service. This brought the total of HF transmitters to 14, operating from 3 separate sites.

During this time, a new station was being planned to provide a more permanent solution. A site at Rampisham in Dorset was to be equipped with four Marconi SWB18 100kW transmitters, Senders 31 to 34, and 15 masts supporting arrays capable of world wide coverage. The station, known as OSE3, featured a remotely controlled switching tower by which any transmitter could be connected to any of the aerial arrays. The station was also equipped with new variable-frequency drives, designed by the Drive Section of Transmitter Department. A standby supply was provided by two 750 bhp diesel alternator sets and the station entered service in February 1941. Later in the same year, a Marconi SWB18 100kW HF transmitter was installed at Lisnagarvey, Northern Ireland; Sender 51 (OSE7). 1941 also saw a new Drive Room installed at Daventry; this was equipped with 15 of the new drives, replacing a variety of earlier drives. In 1942, Sender 7 (STC) at Daventry began operation as a double channel transmitter using a common modulator.

Then in 1943, there was a major expansion of HF broadcasting and a new site at

Skelton, in Cumbria, to be known as OSE8 and OSE9 became the largest short wave transmitting complex in the world, with 18 HF senders. The Skelton site consisted of two independent transmitting stations; OSE8 was equipped with 6 Marconi SWB18 senders (described earlier); OSE9 had 6 ST&C CS8 senders each with two RF channels capable of operating on different bands with a common audio (modulator) channel. These could be operated in single or two channel mode as required, but when in single channel mode, the idle RF unit could be prepared for a new frequency, and the sender changed over from one RF channel to the other in a few seconds - this process, known as 'roll-over', caused many a heart stopping moment for the operator when for one reason or another the new RF channel failed to power up.

Later in 1943 a further six HF senders started broadcasting from a new site at Woofferton in Shropshire (OSE10). These senders were American and they were not designed for rapid wave changing - but this did not deter the transmission staff, who wave changed them nonetheless. These senders were used by the services in 1944 for counter-measure work. Following a crash-landing in Sweden of an experimental German V2 rocket, it was believed that they were fitted with a radio guidance system. The government ordered that the senders at Woofferton be taken out of service and modified in order to jam these devices. The RAF carried out the work and a system was devised to radiate the necessary signals. It was discovered later that the rockets were not fitted with radio guidance and the scheme was discontinued. The senders were restored and returned to normal service.

During the war BBC Transmission engineers played a significant part in providing and operating the master station at Daventry for the eastern chain of the GEE radar system, a navigational aid used by the RAF. These engineers were from the London Television Station at Alexandra Palace which had been closed down at the outbreak of war.

In 1948 Woofferton was closed down for a short period due to economic problems. However later that year it was re-opened, but financed mainly by the Voice of America (VOA) whose programmes were then relayed from that site. Due to the Cold War the Communist Bloc began jamming all broadcasts from the West, starting in 1949. It was apparent that in general only the initial part of a transmission was likely to get through unaffected. A system of 'crash starts' was instigated, which took the form of a random selection of HF senders not applying final HT until the very last seconds. 30 seconds to programme the final HT was run up, and if the correct settings had been selected both on the sender and out in the aerial field, a hurried final tuning could just be completed by the opening announcement.

These were the first post-war designed transmitters and they had features which were to

change the operational routines of H.F. stations. 31 The transmitters had dual H.F. channels, one in operation and the other with access for operational staff to wave-change the channel for the next required frequency. The change-over of the channels took less than thirty seconds for the E.H.T. modulator and the aerial pneumatic operated switches to function. In comparison, the H.F. transmitters currently in operation required an out-of-service time of fifteen minutes for a similar wave-change. They were the first transmitters in the B.B.C. to utilise vapour-cooled valves. This feature caused problems during the initial commissioning of the equipment by the manufacturers, Marconi, as there was little experience of the operating peculiarities of this mode of valve cooling. The need for the vapour from the 'boiling' valve to be separated into steam and water had not been appreciated, and it was necessary to provide separators to accomplish this.

Rampisham was completely re-engineered in the mid 1980's using fully automatic 500kW senders throughout, together with an improved version of the Woofferton/Skelton automatic control system and flexible antenna facilities. It became BBC Transmission's highest power transmitting station and, at 5MW, ranked amongst the highest power transmitting stations in the world. Nevertheless for much of the day it was attended by just two staff, due to the sophisticated automation and good reliability. As part of the BBC World Service audibility improvement programme it was decided in 1988 to replace Skelton 'B' with a new station on the same site, designed to improve coverage in a number of 33 areas, and unsurprisingly called Skelton 'C'. This station initially comprised four 300kW Marconi transmitters and fifteen antenna arrays, and was phased into operation by BBC Transmission from March to December 1991. Six of the new antennas serve southern Europe and north Africa, seven serve eastern Europe and the Middle East, with the final two broadcasting to the Caribbean region. Skelton 'C' was the first high power HF transmitting station not only to be fully automatic in operation, but to be run as a completely unmanned station, 24 hours a day. (

HF efficiency improvement In 1992 tests carried out on an HF sender at Rampisham using the BBC's AMC 2 system, invented by BBC engineers for use on MF transmitters, proved successful. This is a companding technique whereby the carrier power is dynamically reduced at high modulation levels. This reduces the electricity consumed by the sender without affecting the service area, and the effect is enhanced when audio compression is applied to the programme input. Use is made of the receiver AGC to ensure that the listener does not notice the reduction in carrier level. Subsequently, a programme of modifying HF transmitters in the UK and overseas was started. The use of this technique can save up to 30% of the power consumption. The closure of Daventry as an HF station At the end of the Cold War, the requirement for HF transmitters in the UK diminished and this coincided with the time when a great deal of capital would need to have been spent on re-engineering Daventry's masts and antennas.

Therefore, after 67 years of broadcasting from this site, the final transmission was made on 29 March 1992.

<http://bbceng.info/Books/On%20Air/content/ON-AIR-a%20history-of-BBC-Transmission-web%20version-%20Feb-2015-.pdf>

Pictures at <http://www.bbceng.info/Books/On%20Air/content/ON-AIR%20pictures-web-version-Feb-2015.pdf>

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de N4CD

Sadly, nearly all the foreign broadcasts by governments in Europe have now ceased. Folks in rural areas get their news over the internet not by shortwave radio from the VOA and BBC. While a few broadcasts, mostly in foreign languages, still take place, the days are numbered for all shortwave broadcasting.

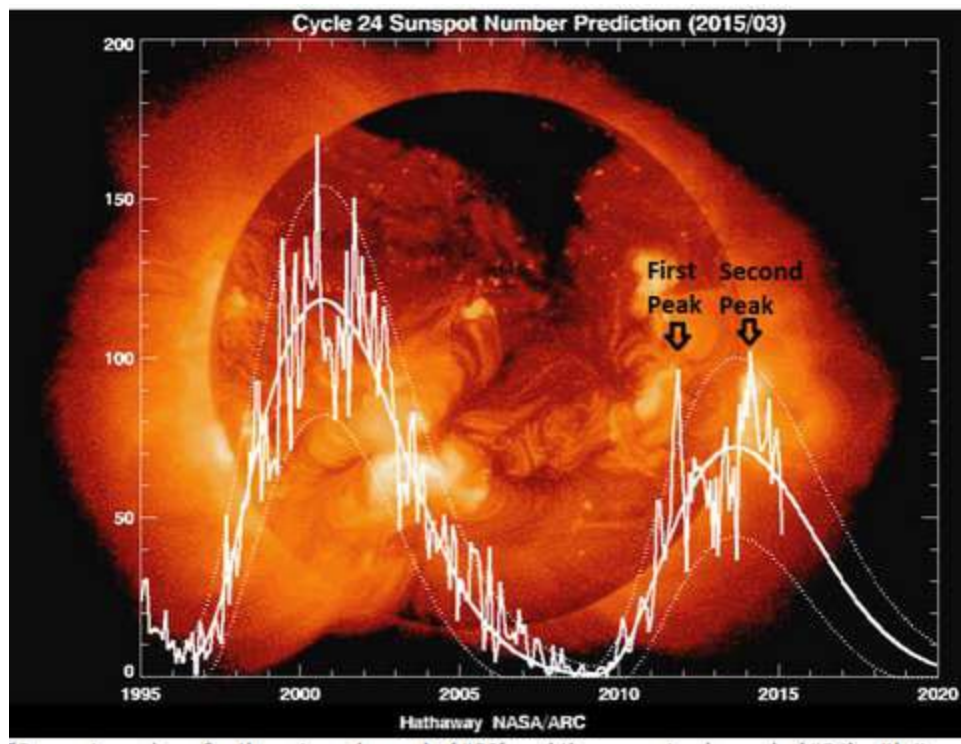
Sunspot News

Overview

The sun is almost completely blank. The main driver of all weather and climate, the entity which occupies 99.86% of all of the mass in our solar system, the great ball of fire in the sky has gone quiet again during what is likely to be the weakest sunspot cycle in more than a century. The sun's X-ray output has flatlined in recent days and NOAA forecasters estimate a scant 1% chance of strong flares in the next 24 hours. Not since cycle 14 peaked in February 1906 has there been a solar cycle with fewer sunspots. We are currently more than six years into Solar Cycle 24 and the current nearly blank sun may signal the end of the solar maximum phase. Solar cycle 24 began after an unusually deep solar minimum that lasted from 2007 to 2009 which included more spotless days on the sun compared to any minimum in almost a century.

Solar maximum

The smoothed sunspot number (plot below) for solar cycle 24 reached a peak of 81.9 in April 2014 and it is looking increasingly likely that this spike will be considered to be the solar maximum for this cycle. This second peak in the cycle surpassed the level of an earlier peak that reached 66.9 in February 2012. Many solar cycles are double peaked; however, this is the first one in which the second peak in sunspot number was larger than the first peak. Going back to 1755, there have been only a few solar cycles in the previous 23 that have had a lower number of sunspots during its maximum phase.



Consequences of a weak solar cycle

First, the weak solar cycle has resulted in rather benign “space weather” in recent times with generally weaker-than-normal geomagnetic storms. By all Earth-based measures of geomagnetic and geoeffective solar activity, this cycle has been extremely quiet. However, while a weak solar cycle does suggest strong solar storms will occur less often

than during stronger and more active cycles, it does not rule them out entirely. In fact, the famous "superstorm" Carrington Event of 1859 occurred during a weak solar cycle (#10) [<http://vencoreweather.com/2014/09/02/300-pm-the-carrington-event-of-1859-a-solar-superstorm-that-took-places-155-years-ago/>]. In addition, there is some evidence that most large events such as strong solar flares and significant geomagnetic storms tend to occur in the declining phase of the solar cycle. In other words, there is still a chance for significant solar activity in the months and years ahead.

Second, it is pretty well understood that solar activity has a direct impact on temperatures at very high altitudes in a part of the Earth's atmosphere called the thermosphere. This is the biggest layer of the Earth's atmosphere which lies directly above the mesosphere and below the exosphere. Thermospheric temperatures increase with altitude due to absorption of highly energetic solar radiation and are highly dependent on solar activity.

Finally, if history is a guide, it is safe to say that weak solar activity for a prolonged period of time can have a cooling impact on global temperatures in the troposphere which is the bottom-most layer of Earth's atmosphere - and where we all live. There have been two notable historical periods with decades-long episodes of low solar activity. The first period is known as the "Maunder Minimum", named after the solar astronomer Edward Maunder, and it lasted from around 1645 to 1715. The second one is referred to as the "Dalton Minimum", named for the English meteorologist John Dalton, and it lasted from about 1790 to 1830. Both of these historical periods coincided with colder-than-normal global temperatures in an era now referred to by many scientists as the "Little Ice Age". In addition, research studies in just the past couple of decades have found a complicated relationship between solar activity, cosmic rays, and clouds on Earth. This research suggests that in times of low solar activity where solar winds are typically weak; more cosmic rays reach the Earth's atmosphere which, in turn, has been found to lead to an increase in certain types of clouds that can act to cool the Earth.

Outlook

The increasingly likely outcome for another historically weak solar cycle continues the recent downward trend in sunspot cycle strength that began over twenty years ago during solar cycle 22. If this trend continues for the next couple of cycles, then there would likely be increasing talk of another "grand minimum" for the sun which is an extended period of low solar activity. Some solar scientists are already predicting that the next solar cycle, #25, will be even weaker than this current one. However, it is just too early for high confidence in those predictions since many solar scientists believe that

the best predictor of future solar cycle strength involves activity at the sun's poles during a solar minimum and the next solar minimum is still likely several years away.

Paul Dorian
Vencore, Inc.

Source: <http://vencoreweather.com/2015/04/30/845-am-the-sun-is-now-virtually-blank-during-the-weakest-solar-cycle-in-more-than-a-century/>

Kalawao News

A remote Hawaiian peninsula that has been the home of leprosy patients since the 19th century could be opened more fully to the public

Now called Kalaupapa National Historical Park, the site is now only open to 100 adults per day

Once the last patient leprosy patient dies, the National Park Service would like to open the park to more visitors, including children

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A remote peninsula that has been the home of leprosy patients since the 19th century could be opened more fully to the public as the last remaining residents near the end of their lives.

Now called Kalaupapa National Historical Park, the site is now only open to 100 adults per day. No children are allowed to visit. The park on the island of Molokai is accessible exclusively by plane or mule.

Once the last patient dies, the National Park Service would like to open the park to more visitors, including children, according to a draft of the agency's long-term management plan. The patients at the site — who chose to continue living at Kalaupapa after the mandatory exile of leprosy patients there was lifted by the state in 1969 — range in age

from 92 to 73.

Open to the public: An aerial view of Kalaupapa Peninsula on Molokai, Hawaii where a handful of people with leprosy are still living full time on the isolated peninsula



Kalaupapa Peninsula – Aerial View

'Visitor regulations would change, including allowing children to visit Kalaupapa with adult supervision, and removing the 100 person per day cap while continuing to limit the number of visitors per day through new mechanisms,' the park service said in a summary of its preferred alternative.

In 2011, when the public process for developing the long-range plan began, the public was given a chance to comment. Most who weighed in supported a limit on daily visitors, saying they didn't want it turned into a tourist trap. Some recommended giving Native Hawaiians less restricted access because most of the 8,000 people who died at Kalaupapa were Hawaiian.

Alika Cullen, general administrator at Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in downtown Honolulu, said he has visited Kalaupapa about 40 times. He has mixed feelings about plans to open up Kalaupapa to more people, he said.

The world should know of the trials these people endured and how they overcame physical and mental roadblocks,' Cullen said in an email.

'On the other hand, I do not wish to see a change so soon after the last patient dies. ... The settlement has kept the peninsula pretty sparse for the welfare of the patients and that is what makes the place special.'

A former leprosy patient who lives at the site said he would like see more visitors now.

'Come when we alive,' Clarence 'Boogie' Kahilihiwa, 74, the second-youngest patient, said in a phone interview with The Associated Press on Monday. 'No come when we all dead.'

He would especially like to see children there, Kahilihiwa said. 'I'd like to see the children and if they like hear our story, I can tell them personally,' he said.

The rest of the residents living there are mostly park service employees who tend to more than 200 historic structures.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3068418/Remote-home-leprosy-patients-open-door-wider.html#ixzz3ZMPET694>

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Note de N4CD- fortunately for the County Hunters, the county line is actually at the top of the 6000 foot high cliffs so you can run the county from the parking lot (or along side part of the road to it). Once every few years, a group of hams from Oahu gets permission for a 'work project' and is able to get on for a few hours, sometimes in the Hawaii QSO Party, from 'down below'. The Oahu group has also given 'remote VE' tests and there are several licensed hams in Kalawao – but their main interest is local VHF communications for emergency preparedness. Hawaii is subject to hurricanes each year although few hit the islands.

Who knows? In 10 or 20 years, Kalawao County may 'cease to exist' as a county when all the residents have passed – or – in 10 or 20 years, there might be a hotel/motel to stay overnight? Meanwhile, Kalawao is one of the 3077 counties you need to work to finish up!

Delaware QSO Party

Not much happened in this one – at least on 20M. I heard New Castle, DE, and heard a station in Kent, MD working everyone else (search and pounce) in NE and 7QP, but

didn't hear him put out the county.

Spotted: N3DXX cw in New Castle
KAHED – 40M SSB New Castle

WN1AFP – fixed – SC - 3 cw - 1 county

I worked 3 DE stations all in the same county! We'll try again next year. One multiplier doesn't really do much for your score. I added 50 points for electronic submission.

73's Dave WN4AFP.

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That's all folks. One mobile could have run the entire state in 2 hours with time to spare!

County Hunter of Year/Mobile of the Year

There are several annual awards given out at the Annual MARAC Meeting in July each year. Two of them are County Hunter of the Year – one for CW and SSB. Two more are for Mobile of the Year. These awards are based upon different criteria.

County Hunter of the Year

You can only receive the County Hunter of the Year Award once in each category in your life. Before 1992, there was only one award issued a year – not two. From the MARAC rules:

One can be awarded each year in each category – CW and SSB. There have been years where none was awarded in a category. You can find the past winners here:

<http://www.charchive.com/award.asp>

IN MEMORIAM: The County Hunter of the Year Award CW is in honor of Ed Sanders (WA6VJP, SK). Ed was a seven time winner of the Net Control of the Year Award CW, as well as a winner of the County Hunter of the Year Award CW. Ed had one of the best "fists" in America and worked all counties on CW five times.

OBJECTIVE: To recognize members of MARAC who have made a significant overall contribution to MARAC and county hunting. A member of MARAC may only receive this award only once (for each category).

SPECIAL RULES: The recipients of this award are determined by an annual ballot of the MARAC membership. The vote is conducted before each annual meeting. The candidates for the award are nominated by MARAC District Directors. Each District Director may select one nominee for each category (SSB/CW) to be placed on the ballot from among the nominees submitted by MARAC members from that Director's district. The District Director must receive nominations not later than the end of the fourth month preceding the annual meeting or by the deadline announced in the MARAC newsletter. The District Director must forward his or her selection and reasons for the nomination to the Awards Manager by the middle of the following month.

If the Awards Manager receives more than three nominations for a category, the Awards Committee will select the three nominees for each category for the ballot. If less than three nominations are received from District Directors, the Awards Committee may select additional nominees to bring the number of nominees for the ballot up to three.

Criteria for nomination for County Hunter of the Year include the following:

1. Quality and quantity of operating to provide Valid Contacts from multiple counties while in Mobile Operation or while assisting mobile county hunters as a Net Control Station (NCS) or assistant NCS.
2. Participation in MARAC activities and service to MARAC and the members of MARAC.
3. Other activities in support of county hunting.
4. Technical proficiency in design or usage or implementation of enhancements to mobile operation or county hunting net operations. Overall amateur radio general support in a manner consistent with good operation and advancement of

the hobby.

AWARD LEVELS: A MARAC special plaque is presented at the MARAC annual convention to the nominee in each category who receives the most votes.

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Note de N4CD. It appears that there was only one nomination received for CW CHOTY and none for SSB CHOTY in 2015. The Awards Committee elected not to add other nominees. There is no membership 'election' required this year.

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The other two awards (Mobile of the Year) you can receive many times in your life. From the rules:

Mobile of the Year Award - one for CW , one for SSB

—

To recognize members of MARAC who have made a significant contribution to county hunting by making contacts from multiple counties while in a Mobile Operation using the SSB Mode or CW mode

IN MEMORIAM: The Mobile of the Year Award CW is in honor of Mike Mutnick (KV0E, SK). Mike, a two time winner of the Mobile of the Year Award CW, was tragically murdered by hitchhikers while on a mobile trip in New Mexico in 1984.

The recipient of each award is determined by a quarterly ballot of the MARAC membership. The annual recipient is the MARAC member who receives the highest total of votes from all quarterly ballots each year. The same person may receive this award more than once. Each voter and recipient must be a member of MARAC in good standing, as evidenced by current payment of dues.

A MARAC special plaque is presented to each recipient at the MARAC annual convention. Certificates are presented in each category to MARAC members who receive the second and third largest total of votes each year.

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Note de N4CD:

Thus, it is the membership who determines who receives the Mobile of the Year award each year by voting each quarter. If you don't vote each quarter, you don't get to have your 2c worth of who is then selected as Mobile of the Year. There is always a 'winner' each year in each category.

Best Team of the Year is determined the same way by a summation of the quarterly votes. So is NC of the Year for both CW and SSB. If you didn't vote quarterly, you didn't get to fully participate.

The awards are usually announced at the annual convention – all 7. This year, five will be announced. (CHOTY CW – already announced; CHOTY SSB – none). Who will get Best Team, Best NC for SSB and CW, Mobile of the Year SSB and CW? Suspense builds! We'll find out in July.

On the Road with N4CD Part I

Headed to Dayton

Each year 20,000 or so head to Dayton OH for the big Hamvention. Likely well over 100 county hunters – maybe twice that- head to Dayton OH for the big event and many show up at the County Hunter forum. Others, who maybe were active County Hunters, or who have multiple interests, are seen wandering around the arena and flea market. I always enjoy heading there.

The weather was supposed to be decent, so I loaded up the car with warm weather clothing and decided to take a leisurely trip up there via Taney County, MO – where Branson, MO is located. At this time of year, you watch the weather closely. The day I left TX, we had just had tornadoes 100 miles west, and 70 miles southeast from the QTH that did damage and killed a few folks. The route to Dayton always tries to avoid where the bad weather is, or will be when I get there! Weather forecast 10 days out for Dayton was good – with no rain. Ha! It wouldn't be Dayton if it didn't rain sometime during the Hamvention!

If you recall, last month on the way back from the MI Mini- I stopped by Branson for a short visit. There were one or two more music shows I wanted to see, so this time I planned on a 2 night stay to catch a few more shows. It's a couple hundred mile detour on the way plus the opportunity to hit a few less run counties along the way.

I headed up through OK to MO – hit just 2 'new' transmitted counties'. I'm getting to the point where I have to head a couple hundred miles now to hit 'new' counties, but I run them all as I pass through them. A few other mobiles were headed there already. Mike, KA4RRU and Ryan, KB9OWD head there a day early for the Contesting Event on Thursday. Others head there for the Four Days in May QRP event which starts on Thursday. The main Dayton event starts on Friday with the outdoor flea market and inside with 300 plus vendors selling things. Mike, KA4RRU, Kyle, WA4PGM and Doug, WA4UNS have flea market spots where you can stop by and say 'howdy' and sit for a while to rest your feet.

The trip up to Taney MO went well. Band conditions weren't great but I ran them all and snagged a few contacts from mobiles headed that way. AB7NK/K7SEN were still wandering all over the east coast and headed there.

I stopped at the Super 8 Motel in Branson and chilled for a day – no radio. Took in two shows in the next day – most shows are at 10am and 2pm, with half a dozen 'dinner shows' and a few evening shows. It's mostly retired folks this time of year. The 'family crowd' starts when kids are out of school for the year – starting Labor Day.

There's no waffle machine at this Super 8 – just the frozen 'Eggo' waffles you stick in the toaster for a cycle or two – not great but edible. Had a bowl of cereal with my own supplied banana. It's hard to keep on a healthy diet when traveling. There's 20-30 shows going on this time of year, and even more during the summer months which starts after Memorial Day (and the crowds increase dramatically, too). You've got choices of country music, cowboy/western, comedy, “Nashville” type shows with multiple performers/acts, Rock and Roll – 50s...or 60s....or 70s.....and yes, Elvis is very much alive in Branson! The only downside is most of the music is 'loud'.....some shows decent, others just 'too much sound'. It seems that 'LOUD’ is the style at many venues.

On Wednesday morning it was time to head toward Dayton “the County Hunter' way. The GPS lady said I could be there in a day, easy, if I hit the Interstate and zipped along. Well, I'd run those counties before just a short time ago, so it was meandering on 'the back roads' of MO headed east along the south border of MO – on the roller coaster roads for a while, then some decent two lane roads. It still takes a while to get anywhere there, but the weather was good, driving conditions good, and radio conditions just so-

so. A few more mobiles were on the road now headed that way. Barry and Pat, N0KV/N0DXE were out in CO putting them out. AD1OC, using N1FD callsign on SSB, was headed to Dayton.

You don't make good time on the MO roads – but you get somewhere eventually. There were a few needs for the MO counties – tried to make sure to hook up with the 'needees'. I wandered over to I-55 and headed up into IL on 57, then headed east to some 'new' counties for me – off the beaten path. I'm working on third time transmit all counties – but so far the count is only up to a couple hundred. By evening I had just reached the IN border and found a Super 8 Motel in Knox, IN for the night in the town of Vincennes. Seems I'd stayed there before. That happens a lot when I get to a town, head to the motel, and dang, I realize that I've stayed there before! As Yogi Bear would say 'It's Deja Vu all over again'.

Thursday morning I was on the road early headed to Dayton via the back roads once again. Well, I had to drag my feet. I was already on 'eastern time' and the west half of the country 'sleeps in' another hour or two. You'd be talking to yourself if you got on the road at sunrise. Too early! K7VAY was up early for 40M. So was W7GVE in AZ. Twiddled my thumbs for a while then headed out. I'd take my time getting to Dayton.

The main event starts on Friday - not much going on Thursday other than flea market set up. A lot of items do change hands, but the flea market is only 5% occupied, so if you are there, it's 100 feet or more – maybe 300 feet, between folks setting up. You can walk miles to get to the sellers scattered about, but some 'bargains' are snapped up quickly. You need a 'flea market' ticket to get in early to the flea market. The inside of the building is limited to vendors only on Thursday. I did a quick round of the flea market and saw nothing of interest. Maybe there were 150 people total in the flea market. Spent an hour there, then headed to Motel to check in.

Final destination once again was the Super 8 in Moraine, OH, just south of Dayton where I've stayed many times before. \$75 – the Dayton Hamvention price. Normally is under \$50. All the motels jack up rates during the event. Most are well over \$100/night. This isn't the best Super 8 but it will do. On a scale from 1 to 5, it's about a 1.5. No hot waffle maker, either. (I can tell you where you can stay for \$50/night, but it is a '0.7' on a scale of 1 to 5 – barely adequate if you are really pinching pennies – hi hi – stayed there for 8 years or so – then it just seemed to keep going downhill – so I moved to Super 8).

Different groups congregate at different motels/hotels – the SSTV folks at one, the DX'ers at the Downtown hotels, Ten Ten type folks at another, VHFers at another, etc.

The QRP folks fill up a big hotel just east of town – and have their Thursday all day event. Many groups have a 'banquet' at the event – DX'ers, QRP folks, etc. There's something for everyone.

Not much to report on the way up. It was 1230 miles there – about 230 more miles than the 'short way' – not too much of a 'detour' but lots of two lane roads getting there! That's the County Hunter Way. Thursday dinner at the Eastern Buffet a few miles from the motel – and picked up a bunch of fruit at the Kroger store next store for the next couple days. I was ready to head to the main event early on Friday. Things start happening at sunrise (or before) as they let folks into the flea market (with a flea market ticket' at 6 am!). Otherwise, you wait till 8am flea market official opening time for general admission tickets.

Continued in Part II

10-10 CW Contest

Yes, there was a 10-10 contest but propagation did not do well here in TX. Ed, KN4Y was on the entire weekend keeping RF going out. I heard him for all of 10 minutes on Sunday – and then quickly he was gone along with the band. On Saturday, KG4RV in Cumberland County NC (must have a big antenna) is the only one coming through for a couple hours. I worked one HP station, and that was it - a big 3 contacts and nothing new as far as counties never worked on 10 before! The sunspot numbers just weren't there. Despite a New England and 7QP going on at the same time, not a peep from either coast on 10M the whole time I checked the band from time to time. Zilch for most of the 48 hours! Sometimes it will pop open to here or there – but it takes two people to make a contact and few were even checking or emitting RF for a few minutes! Everyone hears a dead band and never sends a CQ!

From Ed, KN4Y:

It was call, call, call, work a station, call call call, work a station. Lost a few due to

QSB, overall signals were good that I heard. I ended with 75 QSO's in the log. 50 with 10-10 numbers and 25 without. Worked 10 DX and 3 HI stations.

He added a note:

This morning(5/4) I went to Echols GA for Barry, K2MF his last on 20-meters. I was having problem with my ear phones so did not ruin as much as planned. Also my son drove but we had to stop at a waffle house, a good county hunter. Hi. See you next trip.

Ed KN4Y

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Note de N4CD – **KN4Y was the 'top score' in the 10-10 contest** according to the 10-10 folks at Dayton. A TX station was number 2 for the umpteenth time – always comes in behind KN4Y!.... hi hi ...congrats Ed! Well done!

7th Area QSO Party

Wow- the mobiles were busy in ID and MT! Jerry, K5YAA lit up the bands with his big signal, and WW7D was very busy trying to outdo him. K7TQ was also busy in ID! More MT counties were run in this one than in all the past 10 years combined I think! Lots of ID counties, too. In AZ, KS5A and KK6MC were putting them out. If you were chasing no-star mobiles you had a lots of new no-star counties. There were many 'county line expeditions' where folks take big set ups out I in the field, often on county lines. Those count for 'no star' as well since they are 'portable'.

K0DEQ and KM6HB did a lot of SSB Spots for the folks for 7QP. Others did the CW spots which were flying left and right between the 3 QSO Parties going on at the same time!

15m was good at times. The only station worked on 10m was KC7YE in Pacific WA. I

checked often – many times western WA will come through, but never heard a peep, and the 10-10 contest was going on – and heard all of 3 stations in that contest in the entire 48 hour period. 10M was not to be in this one!

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N7XU Mobile (K4XU oper) 934 cw

753 miles and 17 hours in the seat.

My hat is off to Daniel Brock, WB4RFQ, who drove all the way from Twin Falls ID to Prineville OR. And in doing that, he learned to copy my exchange at 30 WPM on the WinKey's tinny sidetone. Not bad for a ham with less than 2 years experience. He's going to be dangerous some day.

Band	QSOs
3.5	42
7	232
14	481
21	179
Total	934

Rig: TS480s, Hustler 40/20/15 pitchfork on the LR fender, 80m Hamstick on a triple magmount on the rear deck of a VW Jetta diesel. N1MM+ on a Dell laptop and its conventional AC PS powered from a 100W (carefully shielded) inverter.

When you consider that an 80m Hamstick is less than 3% efficient, conditions must have been good. I worked all the way to FL on 80.

My thanks to all of the 7th area sponsoring clubs and the individual state captains for their hard work and generous support of the 7QP.

73,

Dick K4XU
7QP Manager

AE7KU County Expedition 212 SSB QSO

This operator got some sun. QTH for the contest was the Lake/Harney county line, a region known for sage brush, cows, and not much else. Any trees for antenna supports are either 10' tall or you have to bring it yourself.

I got on site around 3pm Friday, took until about 8p to get setup just before the sun was going down. I had a monkeyhut for shade (Basically a 12x15 Quonset hut), my tent, and a card table which allowed for daytime operation, but getting up early at 6am wasn't going to happen for me due to the temperatures. Main antenna support was a 3-piece 30' mast as the center support for a 40/20 dipole, and a switch for making it an 80m vertical. Also a homebrew ghetto 15m Moxon meant that the tuner was only used for 80m, as 40/20 were basically 50 ohm. Rig was a KX3 and an SB200, giving me about 100W of output power on a good day. Conditions were great on 15m, but my ghetto antenna just wasn't high enough, didn't bring enough trees with me.

QSO count was the greatest on 40m, but the fewest multipliers, though I was able to get out pretty far. Late 10pm while most were hunting 40m/80m, 20m opened up to EU for me, and I got most of my DX. However, I was basically open-airing it, and in the high desert after the sun goes down, it gets very cold very fast, and I had to call it quits around 10:30-11pm. It certainly wasn't record breaking, but I had fun. Next year: Better antenna supports that are easier to setup, and dang I need to get on my CW practice... 5wpm just wasn't going to cut it this time.

And some sunscreen.

Pictures will be up soon at <http://dione.net/crud/7qp/>

WA6KHK – CA fixed - 344 0 0 Mults = 127

K7WA County Expedition – Jefferson OR 227cw 87 ssb qso

Operated portable battery power from a state park beach on the west side of Hood

Canal - nice water shot to the east. Watched the clam diggers while I worked the contest.

Thanks for the QSOs!

IC-706MkIIG - 100 watts

Hamstick whips for 40, 20, and 15 meters

My first 7QP. Jerry K5YAA went to Montana to give me new counties, so I MUST take part this year ... :)

I don't like when on the same weekend are more QP's, because I can't ignore any of them :) From IN I still need many counties for my US County Award, so the plan was take part on 7th QP (I thought I made around 100 QSO and will be have time for another QP's) + IN QP and if time permits also on NE & DE QP's.

7th QP began first at 13Z and I was still busy with hunting mobiles on 20/15m CW and try SSB run on 15m. The condx was great on 15m, but sometimes very weak signals from mobiles or BIG QRM from EU contesting stations on ARI Contest on 20m. The condx to the 7th area was great - I must changed my plane: no time for another QP's!

- excellent condx on 15m, several time I try SSB Run and made 51 SSB QSO, last QSO with KT7G/M at 21:50Z!

- first 40m QSO with NN7ZZ at 00:24Z

- last 40m QSO with N9NA at 04:20Z

- 20m was open till 056:31Z!

- at 04:25Z I began SSB CQ on 14.255 and had excellent pileup with nice signals from West Coast. Till 06:31Z I made 58 SSB QSO here

unfortunately no any mobile stations on CW at this time (maybe he was on 40 or 80m ?) I missed his last counties.

- at my sunrise I checked several times 80m and heard Jerry K5YAA, but unfortunately I can't break the pileup.

Thank you very much for organizing this excellent QP!

Thank you very much for all resident stations who called me and gave me many points and multipliers!

MY BIG Thanks for mobiles to gave me so MANY QSO's/multipliers/rare counties!

Most QSO's with mobiles:

K5YAA/M 26/20 (QSO/CTY)

WW7D/M 15/15

N7XU/M 14/10

KK6MC/M 10/6

K7TQ/M 8/8

N7WA/M 8/7

KS5A/M 8/6

AB7RW/M 6/6

KT7G/M 3/2

PLEASE YOUR QSL's for my US County award!!!

73! Laci OM2VL

K7TQ Mobile - 455 cw QSOs - ops K7TQ WA0WWW

Jay and I swapped operating and driving for 460 miles in ID, WA, and OR for 15 hours. The scenery varied from deep forest canyons in IDNEZ, to forested mountains in IDVAL, and finally flat ag lands of the Snake River plain in IDCAN.

Rig: IC706MKIIG at 90 W to a Hustler 40/20/15 pitchfork right behind the driver's side of a GMC pickup. N1MM+ on a netbook with rig control and CW keying which worked fine with no hiccups.

N8II caught us in 14 of our 18 counties with N4CD in 9 and WA2VYA in 8. OM2VL was good for 6 counties. Overall we missed only AK, MS, SC, and DE in the USA.

Thanks to all the operators who worked us and to the organizers of the 7QP.

Catch you in the Salmon Run.

Before the contest:

On my way to meet my running partner Matt, K7BG (Bubba Gump) as he refers to himself as, my spirit was lifted as I saw all the "new" life in the valley and mountain ranches of Montana. Calves with their Mamas by the hundreds. Sheeplings with their Mamas and even young colts all the way to Great Falls where Matt lives. Ranches by the dozens many of which occupied many square miles. It seemed to me the ranchers had the benefit of all that land as they appeared to have the calves and their Moms on several square miles of land, market critters on another and the Dads on yet another all separated by what would be entire housing developments in the "city". You could tell by looking at the ranch houses and roundup pens that Montana folks do not waste anything that still has use in it. Old style looking barns and fences, weathered by the winters up there I am sure but what character. Made me think of days when the settlers made their way across the West in search of the promised land. I crossed the path of Lewis and Clark a dozen times at least and got to see the mouth of the Missouri River, one of the great rivers in this country.

Settlements in Montana are separated by miles but I never felt alone as I have in other parts of the country. Sitting at the County Line of Fergus and Petroleum up comes an old gentleman on his Motocross looking bike. Even though at least my age, 70, he maneuvered that thing with ease. He pulled up next to my van window while I was running a few on 20 meters. We started up a conversation as if he had known me a long time. Wondered what all the trappings were about on my van. I told him my usual line, "I'm an Amateur Radio Operator and I talk to people all over the world with this thing." He said, " That's what I figured. It must be a lot of fun to be able to do that from here." I told him you bet. Montana is rare on the ham frequencies and this county line we sit on is a rare one among those in search of all 3,077 counties in this country. He seemed honestly interested in what I had to say about his area and in what I was doing there next to his ranch. We chatted a while. I asked a few city (somewhat country) slicker questions about his operation and we bid each other a good day. Off he went, I imagine to go check on his herd riding that 2 wheeled roundup vehicle. Good old man and I am sure an example of all the folks in Montana. Far away and oblivious from today's madness in some of our big cities. Good for him and the folks in Montana who keep us from spinning out of control altogether. BEEF is what's for dinner I'm told by Matt.

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Now for a report on the 7QP from an Oklahoma mobile's perspective.

I will begin by first stating my thanks to my operating partner Matt, K7BG. He and his wife Kerrie welcomed me to Montana by taking good care of me for two evenings in their home. Thanks to them both for their generosity and kindness.

Matt had never used a K3 nor N1MM but within ten to fifteen minutes after the start of the party on Saturday morning he was well on his way to mastering what is needed to get Qs in the log. All day long and for the entire 18 hour marathon run both of us stayed focused on the objective, wrestle with the pileups, log the Qs and avoid any navigation problems while keeping an eye on the gas tank.

Before getting to Montana I had been on the air a good deal and hoped I had not used up all the fire power the mobile had. I had some concern with generation of AC to charge the battery bank and keeping the laptop perking. All unnecessary concerns on my part as every piece of equipment and all antennas performed flawlessly for the entire run. Fortunately it has been some time since I have had to replace anything in the mobile with one of my spares.

Matt and I rolled out Saturday morning and headed North. Action started up right away and continued for the entire day only dropping off a bit the last couple of hours. I had suggested to Matt 1,800 QSOs should be our target but as the day progressed it started looking like 2,000 might be possible.

Moving into Judith Basin County, the second to last on our planned route I was operating and started pressing for a final couple of hundred QSOs to reach the 2,000 mark. As I mentioned above activity seemed to diminish the last two hours so rate was no were near as good at the closing bell as it had been all day. Regardless as I closed the log at 1AM local time Sunday morning, in Cascade county, we had 1,959 QSOs in the log. So, as Matt had said, 2,000 was just a goal and sometimes goals are only set as targets. We were both pleased with the result and thank all who "rode" with us all day long.

Round trip mileage during the party was near 1,150 miles. Montana is a BIG state. In the Eastern part of the state cell coverage with my

particular cell phone provider is tower poor so driving duties became a good deal easier on this run compared to other parties I have operated in. Spotting duties were non-existent most of the time. Thanks to all who might have spotted our moves. I am certain some spotting was done for us as the pileups, when we moved into a new county were "deep". It was rare we ventured to SSB and in a county or two we never got to leave 20 meter CW the big producer, at least for us, in this party.

What a pleasure it was for me personally to have Matt, a Montana native, drive, operate and ride with me. In addition to being a great operator of the Morse he knows the roads like the back of his hand referring to my Atlas only when double checking our planned route.

Late Saturday however one of his - we will get around the center of town moves - did cost us the planned time in Big Horn county. We were almost exactly an hour behind our schedule which we discovered in Wibaux county. As we approached Petroleum county all of a sudden we were back on schedule. Both of us wondered how that could be. A look at the route Sunday morning exposed the fact that we did not turn South to run Big Horn. As we were motoring along the interstate in Yellowstone county we heard somebody send "BIG BIG?" We both were puzzled by the statement but again didn't tie it to anything until today when we discovered we "missed" Big Horn county.

Regardless, all worked out well because we had a few more minutes in Petroleum county versus the 4 minutes the plan called for and we were able to complete our run within a few minutes from Matt's home which was the late night target after the party. Both of us stayed so busy we never even referred to our county list which would have exposed our Big Horn bypass.

The bands were in pretty good condition. As I was coming to Montana I worked quite a bit of DX from the mobile especially midday on both 15 and 20 meters. The same occurred for us during the run Saturday. Very large signals from, especially Europe, were present for most of the day. Montana is far enough North to make JA and Asian QSOs a tad easier than from Oklahoma. We worked a number of JAs and had an HS0 call in. Nice from a mobile. Similar to the VU2 that broke through the pile last summer in the Kansas QSO Party.

We visited 10 meters a number of times, looked around and then called a few CQ 7QPs but found no one and had no takers.

Our thanks to all the European callers that stayed with us the entire day. Many call signs too numerous to list.

Rates were really quite good as we maintained well over a hundred an hour all day. I have read here on 3830 where this is the best ever 7QP experienced by the "locals". That is a credit to the organizers and especially Dick N4XU aka N7XU/M the Chief Bottle Washer and Cook for the 7QP.

We managed to work many 7th area counties and even had quite a number of Montana stations give us a call. I do not remember the call sign but one Montana station was in Ravalli County - MTRAV. Matt got a kick out of me calling it Ravioli County, the only Italian County in Montana. I have to think the lack of Montana coverage in past 7QPs got placed way back on the list of needed multipliers in the 7QP this year.

Lastly, even though there is wildlife around every corner in Montana we had no experience having to duck an Elk, deer or antelope and not one pheasant or grouse became a Hustler antenna ornament. Amazing if you could see the amount of wildlife I have seen on my journey through one of the most magnificent states in the union. Montana has a vast landscape of beautiful mountains, valleys and livestock of various kinds grazing the fields.

73, Matt, K7BG and Jerry K5YAA

Our rig: A K3, solid state amplifier loafing along at 6-700 watts, three Hustler antennas, 10/40 15 and 20 meters and a Tarheel for 40 meters daytime and 80 meter night time radiation. N1MM+ logging on a Dell laptop that is one of the ugliest and most damaged laptops in the country but still ticking as long as the Honda generator keeps running to charge it. Fortunately the generator purred without much attention all day long though the high altitudes gave it a tad bit of COPD at times.

After the Contest (via the K3IMC forum/County Hunting Facebook page)



K5YAA mobile – on a previous TX trip

K5YAA: “I am at a Super 8 (Stock owned by N4CD), in Casper, WY. Later this morning (It is 3:30AM) I plan to go on down I-25 then hang a left into Niobrara County. That should put me in the direction of Oklahoma after I stroll through Nebraska and Kansas. Already have one request for a Nebraska County which I will try and handle but have no particular path otherwise except to not stray back North. If I remember Oklahoma is South of Nebraska. End of Plan.

W4SIG needed Sheridan County WY for some obscure CH award, something like all CW. I told him I would be going right through it and would let him know when. I took out of Bozeman, MT this morning and worked most of the counties all the way to Billings, MT. I saw a sign for a Cracker Barrel which brought back memories of the South so I started watching for their not to be missed location which is always right on the freeway. Said 5 miles ahead on the sign. After ten minutes at 80 MPH I figured I had passed it by. I pulled over and looked up the address. Punched it in the GPS. It was some number S. Frontage Road. Since I was so far past that particular frontage road the lady's mileage number was some 28 miles down the road I was on. I thought bologna, the search for the nearest Barrel said 3.74 miles from where I sat. I called the Barrel and they gave me directions sort of because I never got the Barrel lady to figure out where I was actually at. I proceeded back toward Billings. Ah, another sign that gave me an exit number. Took that exit and turned right because that appeared to be where all the action was. Applebees, Outback etc. Figured the Barrel would be along there somewhere. Drove maybe 3 miles no Barrel in sight. Called the Barrel lady back and said I saw an Outback etc. She said you are on the right road just go over the overpass and keep on coming. So, I kept on coming right through three roundabouts (Cayman Island Style Roundabouts) on down King Street until I found myself out in the country with no business structure in sight just homes sprinkled here and there. Dang, another call to the Barrel Lady. Seems they were Left at the freeway exit just a block away from the Outback but yes, over the overpass. OK, some 45 minutes wasted finding the Barrel. I was determined to have me a coffee and one of their Uncle Herschel's breakfast servings

so I stayed persistent all through the search. Yes, it was good.

After the eats I went on and took I-90 South toward Wyoming expecting to make a stop before sundown at the place Custer got filled with arrows. All of a sudden flap flap flap. The trailer started whacking around. Right tire hit something I guess and blew. Over to the shoulder I pulled. Out came the AAA card because I don't have the stamina to change a tricycle tire let alone one with lug nuts on it. Hot dog, gonna get to use the spare tire I have toted all over the country for a couple of years. AAA informed me I had a standard membership which doesn't cover a trailer. What? How about a break then because I have been a loyal user since 1981. No break for loyal users. They did however find me a reputable service outfit and the guy was there in 20 minutes, changed the tire and charged me only \$65.Onward I went toward Sheridan County.

Now, to finish, which most of you hope I get around to sooner than later. I made it to Sheridan County at midnight MDST which is 1AM Tennessee time. Having worked WB4KZW (on 40 and 20) then WB0PYF (on 20) an hour earlier from Big Horn County I was hopeful I would hear W4SIG on at least 40 meters. My spot paid off as Kerry answered me after only my second CHN plea. Good, now since I am on a Big Horn Mountain top at 4,500 feet I will go to 20 to see if anyone is still awake. Well, as it turned out all of Europe is having their coffee about that time and a rather nice pileup of Europeans stared hollering at me. One after another I worked the pile down. It persisted for 45 minutes and I logged some 80 of 'em. Even a couple that are dogged CHers. About 15 countries worth including some LZs which rarely show on CH frequencies. As I started the engine after getting minimal continued response I told myself that Barrel search and tire blow out was the reason I got to have so much fun working Europeans from Wyoming under one of the biggest moons I have ever seen and at midnight to boot!

Finally, part three of day number 5 on the road - a day that will live in infamy in the annals of mobile operation at least my infamy.

I look down at the gas tank of my van and it looks to be in pretty good shape for the 100 plus miles or so to Casper. I take on off. A while later I hear the "low petrol" bong and the little yellow gas tank lights up on my dashboard. 31 miles to Casper, Wyoming the lady notes on my GPS, BUT I know for a fact I get at least 30 miles out of the van after all the warnings have subsided. Paul, N4PN can confirm that fact as we tested the range of the van after a petrol warning in the middle of Okechobee County Florida during the 2014 Florida QSO Party. By the skin of our teeth and with a bit of steering wheel muscling by Paul we confirmed exactly 30 miles to the foot after the little gas tank shows it's head on the dash. Paul is still shaking from that experience, a story all by itself. Suffice it to say Paul and I coasted into a little store that had advertised gas about 5 miles back up the road. We smoothed across a double lane highway right through a yellow warning light, no traffic coming fortunately, and past what looked like a

depression era gas pump in front of that little store. Rusted and no hose on the darn thing. Paul stomped on the non-engine assisted power brakes and said, "So, what now?" I used a gallon of my generator fill up gas, the second gallon going onto the street as the funnel wasn't real cooperative. Paul says, "Here let me get out my lighter so you can see what you are doing." Yeah, sure in broad daylight in the middle of Florida. Funny guy that Newberry.

Onward I go toward Casper with no worries - heck Paul and I made it surely I can do it by myself. 20 miles now down, gonna make it no sweat. Now 5 miles away from Casper - on a roll for sure. At exactly one mile from Casper 31 - 30 or 1 to be exact, the van engine shuts off, steering becomes labored and I have no brakes. I say to myself - 30 miles by golly that is the number for sure. I'm on a mountain top about a mile down into the valley where I see the lights of Casper. I let her roll, scooting along without the need for much muscling of the steering wheel. Straight road right on down the mountain. At the bottom I spy an Exxon station off to the right of the Interstate. Right onto the exit ramp but wait - a red light and it was RED. At 1:30 in the morning the only people out are the police and I have a whale of a story so no problem, right on thru the RED light and I muscle the van to the right taking up a bit of space in the other lane but heading right at that station. Up a little grade Ummmph Ummmph the van stops 8 feet from the gas pump. The van, being too much to push by myself I recall what Paul and I did down in Florida when we discovered that rusty pre-World War 2 gas pump in front of a little store. I calmly walked to the trailer and fetched my 2 gallon tank of generator "spare" gas after retrieving my funnel from the van. In with a few drops of gas in the vans spout. Hardly spilled a drop. Since I had practice in Florida with resupplying petrol to the van no problem here in Wyoming. I jump in and start the van. Crank, chugga chugga engine halts. Hmmm, needs a few more drops I reason. I get back out put the funnel in and add a few more drops That did the trick. I motored that last 8 feet and filled her up. What a plan and what a way to confirm the exact distance my van will go after the little yellow gas tank shows it's head on the dashboard. Finally the END of Day Number 5 on the road.

Off now to the Days Inn just down the street with plenty of gas to get there. It's 2:30AM but I had conquered the wilds of Montana and Wyoming in one day plus stuck a few Europeans in my mobile log. Saw where Custer got his ass whipped and got to use my spare trailer tire. Great day!

End of my ramblings. Kinda glad I have my base station back on the air. I'm getting a little too old for so much fun

N7WA mobile 346 cw qso

It was a tough slog. Nearly 800 miles round trip to activate 14 eastern Washington counties. I sat on the county lines for the most efficiency since I had to do both driving and operating. I gave myself 30 minutes at each line. Fifteen sucked though I managed a few. Forty sucked worse and there didn't seem to be many locals around like the Salmon Run. During my last stop (around 8PM local), I thought I could make it up on 40M but the noise level was S7. I need to find an alternate location for the Yakima/Benton County line. Twenty was OK but propagation could have been better. I did manage to catch the attention of a few Europeans and Atsushi (running JA1YNE) in Japan. The score is way down from last year.

This was a special trip though. I took along my 7 year old grand-daughter. She can't drive or operate so I expect that keeps me a legal Single-Op. In fact, I think it made me a 3/4 op because she couldn't resist asking questions during those 30 minute operations. She was pretty patient when I held up my finger indication "wait!". One doesn't expect a 7 year old to handle driving all day without getting bored so I made short strategic stops at interesting locations (windmills, the Grand Coulee Dam, ice cream, a real tumble-weed, and the like).

I also managed to operate from some kid-friendly locations that sit on county lines. I put her in charge of the camera and the GPS. It's amazing how fast they pick up electronics these days. Unfortunately, Grandpa didn't think to put some games on his tablet. It was a great bonding experience and never once did she say "are we there yet?" We'll see next year if she is interested to try it again. However, the inside of the truck was a disaster when we got home.

I was hoping to use the K3 for this trip. It worked well the week prior in trials but Thursday before going, it kept turning off whenever I transmitted. Not sure if it was power or RFI. With no time to troubleshoot, the IC-706 was the easiest thing to go back too.

Lots of fun, thanks for the Q's.

cheers

dink

K7IA – almost county expedition

The event was a huge disappointment for me--I had once again planned another County Expedition from AZAPH, where the tall trees are just right for 15 and 20 meter wire Moxons and vees & delta loop for other bands. After a couple of days of packing the camper with gear, checking the endless list twice, Erin and I headed out on Tuesday afternoon (to get ahead of the swarms of bike riders peddling the "Tour of the Gila" bike race heat on "our" Highway 180 on Wednesday. We spent a most unrestful Tuesday night in the camper at about halfway to AZAPH. I had been fighting a common cold for the previous two weeks, and I was losing the battle, despite boxes and bottles of remedies. With great sadness, I admitted defeat on Wednesday morning, and we turned the camper around and headed home, passing the bike racers in the opposite direction. After spending most of Wed-Fri in the sack, I rallied for the three events as a NM multiplier but couldn't do much more than 8.5 hours in the saddle.

N7SMI County Expedition 22 cw 1686 ssb

This year I found a location and set up Friday night in the middle of nowhere on the Wyoming/Utah border east of Bear Lake.

Photo at <http://smithplanet.com/radio/7qp/2015-7QP.jpg>

Coyotes howled all night and the winds howled all day. There's a reason there are no trees in sight.

N1MM+ bugs with my Winkeyer killed my CW hopes and I gave up after an hour of debugging (most of the morning 40 meter time) with only 22 CW QSOs, and RTTY was a bust (2 QSOs in 40 minutes of CQing), so I did phone almost exclusively.

I logged 1710 QSOs total in 13 hours operating time. 1500 of them were on 20 meter SSB! I kept wanting to try other bands, but thing never subsided on 20 meters so I stuck with it until 9:30pm when my voice was shot and I called it an operation. LOTS of repeats with the long, complex WYLIN/UTRIC exchange - and loads of dupes, but there was almost always people answering my CQs.

I ran ~400 watts from a KPA500 into a CrankIR vertical. I was very impressed with how well it worked. Quite a bit of DX and 48 states (missed CO and KY), but the low takeoff and little low band time resulted in very few nearby contacts - only 1 WY station, 1 NV station, and 2 UT stations!

I had a great time giving out two states and two counties. Thank you to the 7QP organizers and plaque sponsors!

K7D – County Expedition 1274 ssb QSO

Ops: NA7OM W8WOM WB6FFC KK6AM

Great contest and wonderful weather! Single County Multi/Multi Low Power. Setup a triband yagi on a military mast at 58', a 40meter inverted V hanging down and a killer 5el 20meter monobander on a trailer tower on a spit of land extending into a local lake in Jackson County. Made the most of the low prop numbers by concentrating on the "money" bands of 15, 20 and 40 between two rigs.

The 20 meter monobander was a huge sight, hanging over us and was amazing! Sure was a struggle to get it up the tower but worth the exhausting effort in every respect. At times the Q's poured in like a tsunami and made the op at the bottom of it really sweat, logging fast and furious in working the pileups! Got us clear to Africa and getting into Europe was a breeze even with the low prop numbers.

Got the first Q in the hopper at 2 minutes after starting time and the last on 40 meters at 3 minutes to 12 midnight before closing up shop and grinning ear to ear!

We had planned for mixed...oh well. Our CW guy got lost and couldn't find the place! Made us hustle for Q's for a upside. Thanks for every QSO in the log everybody. We're do it again next year!

Scott, NA7OM

K7VP – County Expedition – Skagit WA 215 cw

I drove to the Thousand Trails campground north of Burlington on Friday and selected a large campsite on the top of the hill hoping to get a low noise location. The campsite was very large and permitted assembly of two vertical antennas. Noise level was in fact very low.

I assembled and tuned the Bravo 7K vertical dipole for 40 meters, minimizing the SWR with the MFJ antenna analyzer. The I assembled the CrankIR with four 6 foot extensions and attached it to the truck in the trailer hitch receiver. Tuned it to 20 meters using the radial assembly and the MFJ antenna analyzer.

Assembled the rig from the go box using the new FT-991. This was the first major effort with the FT-991. Attached to the laptop with two USB cables, one for CAT/Soundcard and one for FSK.

The new rig acted strangely with the internal tuner enabled but worked well without it given the low SWR of the antennas. Both antennas worked well with the CrankIR doing a great job and even logging some European DX.

I worked the entire 18 hour period as an expedition station, low power, multi-band, CW only. I took off a number of rest periods and took the dog for several walks.

The rig was easy to use and very user friendly with the touch screen, Although the spectrum was small it was pretty useful by touching "sweep" and checking the location of the signals. Reception was very good and the receiver is excellent. Interference was easily controlled using the narrow filter and the width control.

All in all it was a good exercise with the new rig and I look forward to using it more in the future.

73

Bill W7VP

K7MK – Valley ID – Portable - 243 SSB QSO

Part time field day style setup at the cabin. 40M was fun.

FT920 + R5 + Dipole@40ft next to 100ft cliff down to the lake.

KS5A mobile – reported 326 cw contacts – 5.5 hours of operating

KK6MC mobile 518 cw qso 12 SSB QSO

Conditions were good, at least compared to the NM QP. It was nice to work the Europeans who did a good job of tracking me from county to county and also the JAs were loud on both 15M and 20M in the afternoon. 10M was open a bit, probably due to sporadic E, but the highlight on 10M was working N7CW Yavapai County from the YAV/NVO county line.

We are usually the only two on from YVP county, so it is nice to work the county you are operating from for a change. There were several who did a good job on tracking us from county to county and band to band. That really improves the score, so thanks! The counties in AZ are large, so we don't get to many, and we try to get back to the NM home QTH at a reasonable hour, which limits operating time a bit. Thanks to Virginia for driving and to N5SJ and Barbara for the lasagna on the way home.

Nothing fancy for a rig, TS-2000x and Alpine Antenna screwdriver.

Kalawao Pictures

Cliff, AC0B, sent in a few more pictures from their adventure at the Kalawao/Maui county line for their recent trip there. (NX0X/AC0B/KB0MHH)

Getting there is half the “fun” – you take a small plane to get there. There is no big runway for giant jets on the island and it has 6000 foot high mountains not far from the airport. There's no room for carry on luggage – it gets checked just before you board the plane in a special compartment, then you retrieve it right after you get off the plane in Molokai at the airport. It's a teeny airport – about 200 foot walk from the plane, into the building and the baggage check. Another 50 feet to the car rental places!



The small Kalawao Plane

He noted: “We had a complete ICOM 703 qrp setup to communicate amongst ourselves. The equipment was all NX0X's, We had Hustler resonators for 15, 17, 20, and 30 meters. “

I note a Kenwood TS-50, an antenna tuner, and a keyer in the pictures. (TS-50 does not have a built in keyer).



AC0B, Cliff , Operating from Kalawao/Maui HI



Brian, NX0X and Cliff AC0B
Setting Up the Mag Mount
C/L Kalawao/Maui HI



The Kalawao/Maui 'overlook'
Early before the crowds show up!
(there's usually a few cars around 9-10 time – more at noon)

de N4CD:

You aren't going to find a county line sign there. Best operating time I've found is 'sunrise' HI time – 7am or so for 20M. Gotta be an early bird to catch the contacts! 15M is better later in the morning – IF it opens.

The folks reported they had horrible conditions (A index 47) and made less than a dozen contacts. Tough going.

On the Road with N4CD – II

The Dayton Hamvention attracts 20,000 or more folks each year. For the past 40 years or more, it's held at the Hara Arena – which has seen better days, but still works. You can park nearby on private lots for \$8-\$10 a day, or park for free and ride the shuttle buses (\$8 for 3 days) from the former Salem Mall. Most of the attendees likely park there. I've done that for many years. Buses start running at/before 7am and run all day.

If you buy something too big to lug around all day, you can take the unit back on the bus, put it in your car, and take the shuttle bus back – maybe 30 minute round trip. I've done that a few times. Or you can 'check it' by the forum room for a few hours.

Several hotels – like the QRP group - run buses to the hamfest, and some groups sponsor long distance bus rides to get their folks to the hamfest at a decent price. Way back when there were shuttle buses running all over town – that ended 10-15 years ago.

I was up early (5:45) and over into the flea market by 7am – and wandering around. Not that many were already set up. The weather in the morning was nice – right at 70 degrees, overcast skies, humid, and a potentially good day in the flea market. There was talk of storms and thunderstorms later in the day. And on Saturday. I wandered around for a few hours – wore out the feet – you can easily walk a couple miles. I'm not used to walking miles a day! It's probably one mile or mile and a half to get around the flea market once and you wind up doing the sweep several times as new folks arrive and new things appear on tables.

Things were 'spread out' with up to 200-300 feet between sellers. Most who would be there were in the flea market by 9am. General admission starts at 8am so the flea market coordinators want every seller in there by 8am if possible to limit problems with traffic and pedestrians. Folks are out bargain hunting.

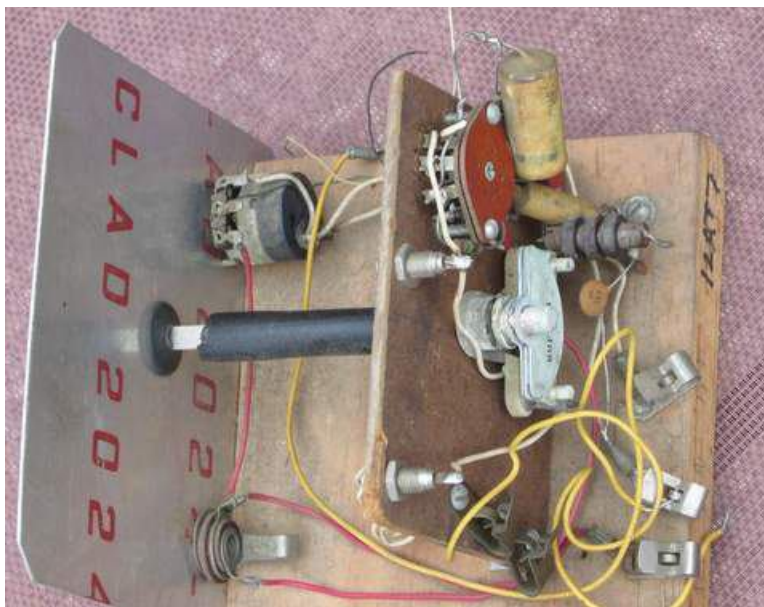
This year – there didn't seem to be a theme. Some years, it's as if someone somewhere whispers 'bring XXXX equipment'. There have been years with 40-50 VHF transceivers/ receivers for sale – Interceptor B receivers, Zeus Transmitters – the top of the line stuff from the 50s-60s, Knight, Heath transceivers, VHF transverters by Hallicrafters and Heathkits, etc. Not this year – just a handful. There were at least a dozen Collins rigs for sale – including a nice KWM-2 in a 'suitcase' arrangement, half a dozen 'S' Lines, a fair number of National receivers like the NC-270. Probably more 'blue' National receivers than I've seen in many years. There were a few 'estate' sales with lots of 'junk' in them. Most of the hardware and assorted parts are just going to wind up in the scrap pile. Few folks look through them these days it seems as there are fewer and fewer builders.

One item offered was the final amp deck for a several KW Collins broadcast transmitter. Had a pair of large tubes plus a pair of modulator tubes, plus power supply down below. Easy KW on 160M AM. It was in a large cabinet probably 5 feet wide by 4 feet deep by 6 foot high.

It wouldn't be Dayton without at least one Heathkit Sixer or Twoer for sale. I didn't see

one until I saw someone putting on in his trunk. He actually bought one. He's a collector and got a 'bargain basement' price on one. He actually uses one (with a 1/4KW amp) for a local net on 50.4 MHz once a week! Amazing. He's got 20-30 of the various models (Twoer, Tener, Sixer, etc). Some folks even put them on 220 MHz.

I looked and looked for regens. Oh, what's this? A homemade one tube regen or super regen in really sad shape, minus tube. About the only thing it was good for were a few parts and a front panel. It had two knobs on the front – a main tuning knob and a regen control knob. The knobs were probably from the 1930s. The guy selling it says “I want a buck a knob – I sell knobs”.....I offered him a buck for the 'piece of junk' and he took it. It was the only home made regen I'd see the entire time there! No luck this year finding new stuff. Possibly it showed up, and someone snapped it up quick, but it wasn't to be this year.



The 'only find' regen \$1 for parts

I took an hour to do a quick tour inside before the crowds really descend. You can spend 4 hours inside and not even see anything if you stop at all the booths. Friday has less people – more show up on Saturday, so it's a good time to hit vendors on Friday morning and less crowded. I stopped by the ARRL booth – they had about 50 folks I'd guesstimate there – just about everyone from ARRL HQ – and of course, exhibits and information on all the services. DXCC card checking, too, for the DX'ers. This is an annual event where the ARRL goes all out.



The ARRL Staff at Dayton

I stopped by the ARRL Diamond table - picked up the 'freebie' for Diamond Club members – a nice reprint of the first issue of QST. Nifty. (Diamond Club is an ARRL 'level' above basic membership level). ARRL has all their books for sale there, plus shirts and other ham radio doo-dads. They've got booths for the VE program, the ARRL outreach to schools programs, education programs, traffic system, ARRL credit card table, and more.

I did buy two shirts from another vendor inside – ham radio oriented. That was about it inside. Bengali keys were there as was Elecraft and Yaesu and Kenwood and Ten Tec and just about everyone else from antennas to hardware to towers, headphones and accessories, 'software defined' radios, computer programs, kits to build, DSP, mounting accessories, etc.

Most organizations have a table inside. Ten Ten, Salvation Army group, Morse Telegraph Club (American Morse and Telegraph Equipment/Operators), G-QRP, SKCC (straight key club) – so you can drop on by and visit with different groups you might be interested in, or to see what they do. Several Battleships had large presentations of their restoration work. Soon, we'll have Ships on the Air weekend – this year over 70 will be activated from Battleships to Submarines – most on SSB, though.

You also had your choice of food from sandwiches and pizza, BBQ sandwiches, Not dogs, brats, hamburgers, ice cream, soft drinks and beer, chips and pretzels and just about everything but salads and vegetables. Hi hi . You won't go hungry at Dayton.

As you wander around in the flea market, you see all the equipment you wish you had as a 'novice' way back in the 50s...and 60s.....well, as least us 'older folks' do. I'm sure if

you started out in the 80s or 90s or 2000s.....you probably wouldn't even know what half the stuff for sale was – or ever hope to own it. Back in the 50s, a lot of the equipment cost the equivalent to a thousand bucks just for a transmitter or receiver! Collins units were equivalent to \$2000-\$2500 apiece! Now, with solid state stuff, you get 10x the capability at the same price (and a transceiver, too). You can buy a really decent radio for \$1000 and a really great radio for \$2000. (or spend \$10,000 on the top of the line stuff).

After lunch (I had a slice of pizza for lunch – off the diet plan, but heck, it's Dayton).....I was doing some ragchewing with Mike, KA4RRU and Kyle, WA4PGM at their flea market spot (#1957) around 2:30pm. Kyle commented “ Hmmm, we just seem to have had a few degree drop in temperature – the rain is on the way”. I was rested up, and decided to make a sweep of a few more rows. I didn't get too far – one row away when a few drops of rain started – then 30 seconds later the skies opened and a deluge descended. Downpour! Raining 'cats and dogs'. It caught many by surprise – lots of equipment got rained on! People were scrambling to get things covered up. Rivers of water were flowing on the ground – flowing through and around anything left on the ground (unfortunately, lots of cardboard boxes, equipment, chassis, etc). The wind was blowing the rain at 45 degrees so even those under a canopy got wet. I huddled with a half dozen others under a canopy avoiding most of it. It likely put down an inch of rain or so. It was a heavy downpour drenching everything and everyone not under shelter or cover.



Diana KB9NPO and Steve, AC9GK

Twenty minutes later, the rain let up and I scrambled to get into the arena – along with

95% of the other people still outside. It gets seriously crowded inside when it rains – and seriously 'hot and humid' with everyone inside.

The county hunter forum would be coming up in an hour or so. I'd wander around and see the various exhibits/displays. There was nothing I had to have. I've got way too much junk.

Around 3:30 I wandered over by the Forum Room where the county hunters would meet at 4pm. Folks gather in the lobby outside the room for eyeball QSOs and general yakking session. I ran into AD1OC, who was putting out the counties on SSB from his home in Hillsborough, NH then mobile to Dayton (and back after).

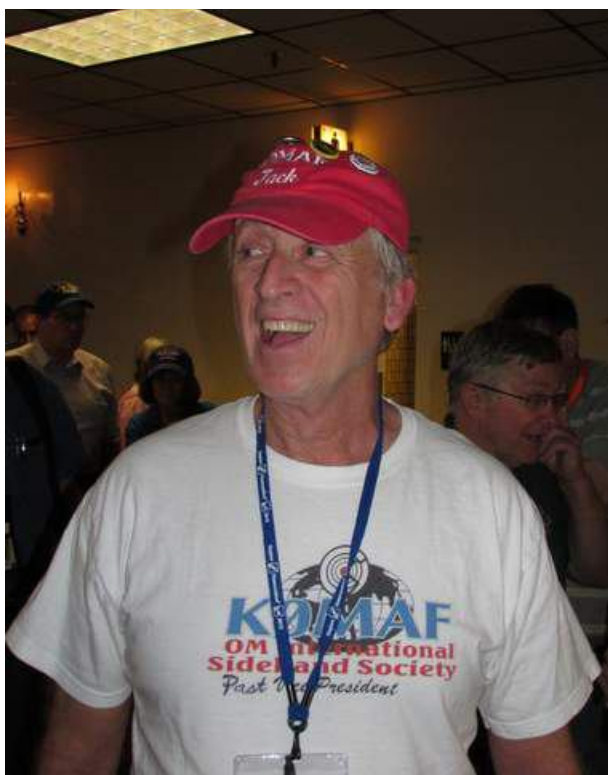


Charles, NF4A USACA 717
was WA4IMC previously

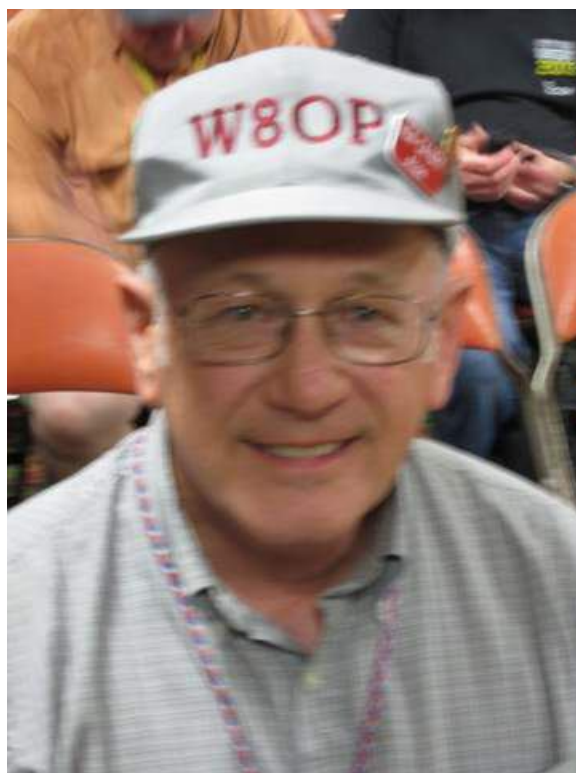


AD1C, Jim
Still working on first time

Jim is very active in QSO parties.



Jack, K0MAF



W8OP Alan USACA 1077



Fred, AB1OC – Operates as N1FD

We had a great forum. Tim, W8JJ is the forum coordinator and started things off covering the 'basics' of county hunting, the basic awards, nets, etc. Then Bob, N4CD presented a 20 minute segment on 'doing things the county hunter way' and covered some points about getting to and operating from First and Second AK and Kalawao Hawaii. 10,000 miles of travel in 20 minutes – 30,000 mph for those who might be concerned but no speeding tickets. Then N4PN, Paul, USACA #15, earned in 1969, and Jerry, K5YAA talked for a bit, followed by a presentation by Tim W8JJ on his recent installation of radio and Scorpion Screwdriver antenna on his new car.



Paul, N4PN, USACA #15 (1969)

We had a few minutes to go around the forum room with introductions. Tim estimated we had 80 folks there, with about 10 'newbies' for the first time! He noted we are already 'confirmed' for forum space next year!

After the forum, about 25 QSYed to the Golden Corral for more talk and yak over a nice buffet dinner. Sharon, KJ8F, manages to get tables set aside each year for our group, even though they don't take reservations. As I got there (early) before the others, I helped shepherd the folks down to the tables set aside for us. It's very busy and crowded. As I got there, there was another bus load of 40-50 people who had just arrived, too! Whew! It took 10-15 minutes in line to get in, but we had a successful dinner get together.

Later, some head to the DX hospitality suites downtown or other events. There's a lot going on with different groups holding dinners, meetings, hospitality rooms, etc. You can 'party half the night' if you are up to it. I was back at the motel and sound asleep at 9:30pm. Hi hi. I'd be up early hunting for bargains in the flea market.

Saturday

On Saturday, it was the same exercise – over to the flea market early before 7am - after a quick breakfast at the Super 8 Motel – (crappy orange drink, Eggo type waffle, bowl of cereal with my own blueberries, decaf coffee) – to see what new goodies would show up. Ah, a regen – maybe the best regen receiver ever made. Did I buy it?



RAL -7 Regen Receiver

This was for sale by N3BJ – a nice boatanchor type regen receiver that saw lots of service during WW2 and after into the 1990s. This was designed to be used on battleships capable of taking 10G hits forever. You could drop a 20 lb weight on the cabinet and it wouldn't shift 10 Hz in frequency. Heavy! Solid construction (not solid state). This one was made in 1944 and may never have been put in service.

He was asking \$350 for it and the matching power supply. Did I buy it? Sadly, no. It weighs 80 lbs and the power supply weighs another 40-60 lbs. This unit tunes from the 300 KHz up to 28 MHz or so and is likely the best regen RX you could buy. Two RF stages (to prevent any radiation from the detector reaching the antenna) plus ultra smooth regen stage. The RAL-7 is a 5 tube TRF design with some neat features that make it very desirable for CW work. It has two stages of tuned pentode RF (6D6), a pentode electron-coupled detector (6D6), a pentode first audio (6D6), a pentode audio output (41) and an audio derived AGC using a pentode (41).

“What makes the RAL-7 so great for CW is its audio filtering; between the detector and first audio tube are a pair of filters. The first is an audio low pass filter with a cutoff at about 1400 Hz. The second is a high-Q peaked filter adjustable from about 300 Hz to 1400 Hz.

There is a fine tuning vernier dial which can be used with the main, un-calibrated logging dial. It has a range of about 2 khz. Audio output is 600 ohms at about 1/2 watt. Power supply requirements are 90 and 180 VDC nominal, at about 40 ma. It will run just fine on a single 90 VDC supply. Also a 6.3 VAC filament supply is required.” (source: <http://www.qsl.net/ab0cw/ral7.htm>)

See one in operation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiFVRhuGhW4>

A real Classic but just too heavy for me to even get onto the work bench! I tend to follow the 'one hand' rule these days – if I can't carry it in one hand, I don't buy it! This far, far exceeds the limits of that rule – even for this super unit. I may never see another one for sale.

About the only users of this radio are for restoration of WW2 type battleships – and several county hunters are involved in that, along with many radio clubs near the Battleship ports (Battleship NJ, Missouri, Texas, etc).

Outside one of the forum rooms, I ran into WW7D. He's a big mobile operator in the state QSO parties and Salmon Run (as well as big VHF contester). You'll see frequent

trip reports in the state QSO party comments from him. Nice to meet him in person. I've probably worked him 200 times over the past 10 years.

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If you own a K3 or KX3, Shel, KF0UR, has a nifty item for you. It can also be used as a stand alone for other rigs. He makes two units.



KF0UR, Shel

Shel is an active QRP'er and has come up with some nifty things for QRP'ers and for those with a KX3-K3. The Key Lo Go can also be used with other rigs although the automatic features are not fully accessed. Here's the scoop from the website:

Side Car – Plugs into the side of KX-3 and gives you longer display of RTTY or CW from the internal cw or RTTY decoder in the KX-3. Instead of less than 20 characters – hard to read you get a two line display.



- Displays decoded text in CW, RTTY, & PSK modes
- Built-in logger for 1,000 QSOs with ADIF export (PC/Mac)
- Uses USB keyboard or paddle for all functions
- Create & edit messages/macros with keyboard or paddle
- Sunlight readable
- Only 5 oz (140g) and attaches to the KX3 in seconds

View decoded PSK, RTTY, and CW in 20-char scrollable window

Use USB keyboard or paddle to send in any mode

Store messages and macros in 20 slots (80 characters each)

QSY instantly from keyboard or paddle

Use "Grab & Go" feature to capture call for messages & log use

Use contest features

Store 1,000 QSO's in non-volatile memory

Auto store the call sign, time, date, frequency, and mode

Enter QSO info via keyboard or paddle

Search log via call sign

Save multiple SOTA locations

Export log as ADIF to PC or Mac

Create and edit messages/macros with paddle or keyboard

View text in any conditions with sunlight viewable screen

Select any one of five back light levels for night ops

Use paddle in lieu of keyboard for light and compact travel

Run SideKar on 9 volt battery or 8 to 15 volts DC

<https://www.qrpworks.com/index.html>

The second unit offered is the Key Lo Go – it can be used with the K3 or KX-3 and uses the internal decoder to provide an 80 character display. You use a small keyboard for the digital modes although you can pre program all the messages – even all the counties you might run during a QSO party or trip!



Key Lo Go

- Full K1EL keyed including standalone mode
- Twenty 80-character message memories
- Iambic A/B, Ultimatic, and Bug modes
- Adjustable weighting and dit/dah ratio
- Autospace and letterspace control
- Sidetone output with adjustable frequency
- Adjustable Speed 5-99 WPM
- Real-time sending via Paddle or Keyboard

- Multiple SOTA locations
- Auto call sign entry; Auto time/date stamp
- Auto frequency/mode (KX3 and FT-817)

Use keyboard or paddle for entries
1200 QSOs in non volatile memory
ADIF export to PC; Search capability

"Grab & Go"

This feature captures a keyed call sign for use in the log and the rest of QSO. The captured call sign is automatically inserted in special Grab & Go messages, simplifying exchanges during contests, SOTA and similar activations, or even in rag chews.

Displays 80 characters of decoded text, CW, PSK, or RTTY; 80-character rig macros to control the KX3; Unique editable 20-character transmit buffer for digital modes. Use your KXPD3 paddle with KLG via KeyWedge.

The KLG displays text that has been decoded by your KX3 and K3 in CW, RTTY, and PSK modes on a 80 character LCD display. The LCD is sunlight readable and has an adjustable backlight for night ops. It will run outdoors for 50 hours on an internal 9 volt battery.

Interfacing

Paddle-only operation (no keyboard)

The KLG can be used without a keyboard to send CW, RTTY, and PSK text by using a CW paddle. The decoded text will still display on the KLG's LCD when a paddle is used, with scrolling enabled using the Mode 1 button. Pre-stored messages can be selected and sent using the Mode 2 button when using a paddle, perfect for CQing and contesting.

Keyboard-less Operations! The paddle can be used in place of the keyboard, using special mode keys on the KLG unit.

Can Use a Standard Keyboard

The KLG uses a standard PC keyboard to enable you to send text in CW, RTTY, and PSK modes as well as to control the KLG.

The keyboard can be used to create, edit, and store up to ten 80 character messages that are accessed via the Function keys on the keyboard for immediate transmission. These messages can be stacked to make even longer messages.

The keyboard can be used to create, edit and store up to ten 80 character rig macros for

controlling the KX3 and K3. For example, a rig macro can instantly change band, frequency, mode, filters, power, etc. without touching any controls on the rig.

(Keyboard not included, must have PS-2 connector).

Logging

The KLG has a logging function with a real time clock to time/date stamp up to 1000 QSOs. The frequency and mode are automatically added by polling the rig. A call sign feature allows you to enter a call sign that not only goes into the log, but will insert itself into a message anywhere you place a "!", similar to popular contest logging programs. Text can be entered to add QSO details. The log data is exported to a PC in the standard ADIF format using an KLG Utility application. The KLG can be used as a stand-alone portable logging device.

Here's a manual for one of the units:

https://www.qrpworks.com/uploads/1/4/2/4/14241082/klg_user_manual_v2.1.pdf

If you own a K3 or KX-3 check it out! Automatic logger, nifty keyer and you can run RTTY or PSK simply without dragging along a big computer.

- - - -

There was one other regen spied in the flea market. This one has an interesting story



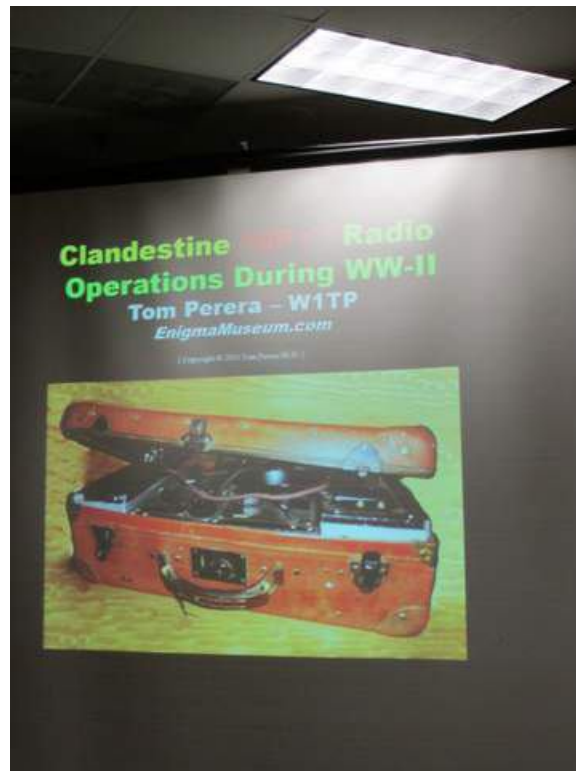
Knight Space Spanner

The ham selling it bought this Knight Kit Space Spanner regen receiver as a kit when he was a kid way back in 1959. It was his first receiver. He was proud of it, and wrote his name in wax pencil on the back. After hauling it around for years, he sold it at the Timonium, MD hamfest for a reasonable price ten years ago. (likely 30-40 bucks).

Then recently, about 10 years later, he saw his very own Space Spanner up for sale on Ebay. The name in wax pencil was very clear on the back. It was HIS radio. In a moment of weakness, he bid on it. The price went up and up! He wasn't about to be outbid and wound up paying \$150 for it on Ebay! (way over priced but some folks get into bidding wars). He 'won it'. After it arrived home, his wife wasn't too happy with the 'excess radio junk' and demanded he get rid of it. So it was out at Dayton with a \$155 price tag on it. Good luck. I've bought them for as little as \$20, but most go for \$40-80 on Ebay. Ebay can be addictive – and costly!!! (I don't think he really wanted to sell it) . At least he could tell his wife that 'I tried to sell it' – hi hi. You hear lots of interesting stories at Dayton if you take the time to talk to some of the folks! Nearly everyone has a tale to tell!

On Saturday morning I attended the great presentation by Tom, W1TP on WW2 Spy Radios. Usually he hauls a ton of keys and telegraph instruments to the flea market, but as he is getting up there in age (guesstimate 75+) he decided not this year. However, he still puts on a great program every year and this year was no exception. The room was

'standing room only' – probably 300 people for the presentation on 'spy radios'



W1TP – Clandestine Spy Radio Equipment

He's got a ton of stuff on his website www.W1TP.com

Then it was back to the flea market for another round. Seems like the 'sellers' were down a bit out in the flea market. Too many just get a spot and never sell – want to be there to buy 'early' and have a place to stash any junk they buy. You have to do a lot of walking between actual sellers on some rows. It doesn't get better year after year that way. I did find a couple more plug in coils for regen type radios for \$2 each and bought all he had (4). Several manufacturers sold individual or groups of coils for homebrew radio enthusiasts or for kit radios sold through the magazines of the day.

After another couple hours, I was pretty well worn out and headed back to the motel to rest up for the trip home on Sunday. Likely I walked a few miles each day. In the afternoon, a few showers erupted and that likely was the end of most of the flea market anyway. At Dayton, there's a good chance of rain – but there was enough time Friday and Saturday before the rain started to have a successful flea market for most.

County Sign Database Project

Work continues on filling in the missing counties to the County Sign Database at:

<http://www.charchive.com/cntys.asp>

WW7D sent in one from ID – here's Adams ID



WW7D mobile - \Adams, ID

Later he was mobile in the 7QP.. and the VHF Sprint..... and likely he'll be on again in the Salmon Run.

Two in NJ were added by WA2NWN



Passaic NJ by WA2NWN

On his QRZ.com page, he noted: “I have taken a recent interest in putting out Counties for County Hunting thanks to my friends AJ2I and K2MF. I am really enjoying mobile HF while sightseeing remote areas and beautiful parts of my state.”



WA2NWN –
SOTA operation West Milford, NJ
Bearfoot Fire Tower
Yaesu FT-857 transceiver

More were sent in by Larry, N2OCW and Barry, K2MF



Sussex, NJ by K2MF
His 'summer home' county

Terry, WQ7A and Bonnie sent in another handful in different states. Here's Grundy, IL



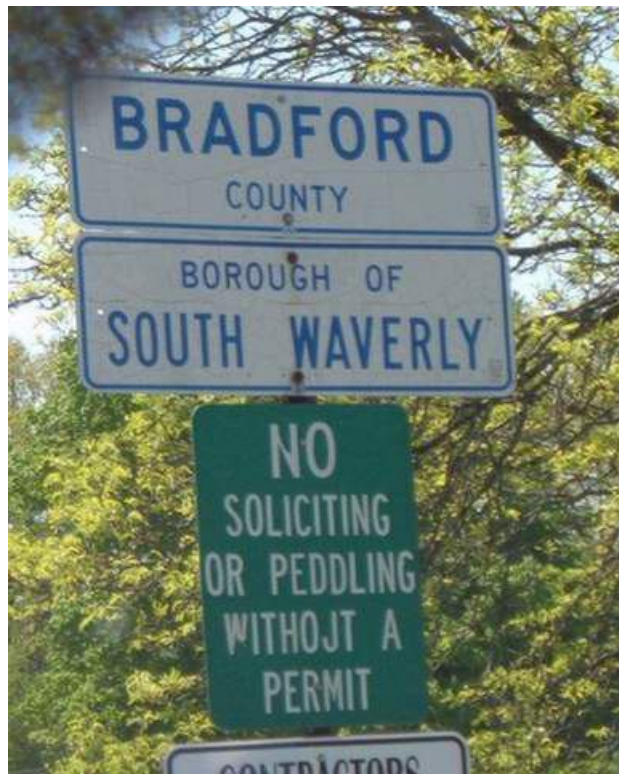
WQ7A Grundy, IL

Paul, WD9EJK joined in the fun and sent in several new additions.



WD9EJK Wells/Adams IN Line

Don, AE3Z, sent in one from PA



AE3Z Bradford, PA

Not to be outdone, Bob KA9JAC snapped this while doing 75 mph. He's got a good camera!



Tippecanoe, IL by KA9JAC

There's a bunch missing in AL (18), PA (19), , CT (8) , GA (27) , IL (16), KY (20), MA (7), MN (7), NC (9), NJ (11), RI (all 5), VA (8). Let's see if we can whittle that down to zero.

A few states like NJ and CT are going to be challenges to find a sign - but you never know! There are usually dozens of crossings – sometimes it just a matter of finding the right place for a sign!

Jim, WY8I, got the 'last sign' in MI - not a 'county line' sign, but Macomb MI must not have too many signs out – or ones you can get a picture of. It was missing for a long time



WY8I – Macomb, MI

Jim, N4JT, added in one from Hawaii County - since there are no 'county lines' there, it's a sign that says Hawaii County.



Hawaii County HI - by N4JT

There's over 2820 signs in the database. We're closing in!

Jerry's Quest to Reach 1000 LC's

Jerry, W0GXQ, is on a quest to reach 1000 transmitted last counties. He's now reached 943 and counting – trying to reach the 1000 number that only a handful of county hunters have ever done. He's got more trips planned.

New England QSO Party

This was another great QSO Party with several mobiles on cw to chase around – including K1M, NZ1U, KM3T, and WA1Z. Never saw a mobile spotted on ssb but I know some went there and some were SSB only. Guess the SSB types just take and never spot! Not good. Just a few SSB spots. I'm sure the bands were filled with SSB stations by the gazillion in NE and if you check the spots, it's pretty barren for SSB spots!

Probably all the counties in New England were on. Nantucket showed up on Sunday with WINQT (didn't have that many takers on 20m). Looks like the W1ACT contest group that run Dukes is no longer excited about running Dukes any longer. N4PN worked 4 Nantucket stations. I didn't realize there were that many there! No one ran -Dukes!

At the N4CD QTH, worked all of New Hampshire, all of CT, missed only Dukes for MA, got 85% of VT, 80% of ME. Didn't see any spots for Hancock, Knox, Washington ME – probably WA1Z ran them late at night (he did). All the others were run!

It was a feast of counties. 15M was good at times, and 20M was in and out. Activity there shifts to 40 and 80m in the evenings. Some stations only operate on 40/80. Zilch on 10m from NE at my QTH.

County Hunters heard in New England: – KO1U was on from Essex, MA. . K1BV kept Tolland off the needs list. We only have a handful of county hunters in New England these days. Lots of folks from ARRL HQ were on in Hartford, CT and nearby.

WA1Z mobile 1442 cw 1 ssb qso

Thanks to everyone who came along for the ride through the radio! I hope everyone found us where they needed to work us.

This is Kurt's W6PH and my fourth year teaming up in the NEQP. It may qualify as a "single-op" by the rules, but this is a team effort. Kurt did the driving and I did the operating. We had a great time as usual.

Route:

This year's route is the very same path we took in 2013. As we do every year, we started at Kurt's QTH in Amherst NH (HILNH). We continued east across southern New Hampshire and picked up RT 95 in Maine up to Lewiston. From there, we turned back towards the sea coast and picked up RT 1 to activate the coastal counties northeast of Portland. Our overnight stop was in Bangor.

Sunday morning, we got about a 30 minute head start, continuing up RT95, towards Aroostook county. We activated AROME from a small corner of the county on RT 157. We then turned west to travel through the large northern counties until we crossed into northern NH (COONH). We then turned south on RT 115 to pick up RT3 and 93 to return home.

Mobile Station:

We added a third antenna mount this year on the roof of the vehicle thanks to Hank W6SX sending out his massive mag mount. Thanks Hank!

2008 Honda CRV

Elecraft K3, 100 watts, powered from car battery
Logging with two newer laptops with sufficient internal battery power for the duration of the contest (recharged Saturday night)

Two Hustler MO-2 54-inch masts mounted on hatchback door secured by a homebrew roof rack harness

One Hustler MO-4 22-inch mast mounted on W6SX mag mount, guyed to roof rack just to add a little more security Hustler RM-model resonators and DX Engineering

Capacity Hats for 80 through 15 Meters.

We made the mag mount the "primary" antenna mount, so we planned to have the 20 meter antenna on that mount during the day and switched in the 40 Meter antenna during the evening hours (including the last 90 minutes of the day Sunday). We then used the rear antenna masts to support immediate band changes to "secondary" bands. I considered not using the rear masts at all and splitting the resonators off the mag mount mast, but I was concerned about securing a top-heavy assembly properly for highway speeds as I didn't have much time to test the week before the contest. I elected to keep it simple and use one resonator per mast.

Contest:

Contest activity on Saturday started off better than it has in recent years. Having three antenna mounts meant I could keep a 20 Meter antenna connected the whole evening, so I was able to take advantage of going back to 20 in each county. I ended up making QSOs on 20 in every hour of the contest.

We had one issue on Sunday morning just as we crossed the county line into AROME. A 12V ERR message appeared on the K3 display and suddenly the 100-watt amplifier either failed or went into BYPASS, so we were only putting out 10 watts off the main RF board. As a rule, I bring a backup piece of equipment for everything we use in the operation and fortunately, I have a second K3, so I just swapped in the second K3 and kept going. There was an immediate pileup when we crossed the county line - sorry to everyone in there for disappearing on you! The pileup never quite came back when I got back on the air. I'll investigate what's wrong with the first K3 later this week – the unit is an early model and there are a couple possibilities I know of.

Every time we went to 15 to check propagation we had a pipeline to TX, some FL and later in the mid-afternoon Sunday to CA. As usual, 20 and 40 were the money bands. In past years, I would make an effort to go to 40 throughout the day to get some closer-in guys in the northeast, but there was very little activity this year. Several moves to 40 resulted in very little rate.

It's always fun during the last few hours of the contest on Sunday as activity picks up. The county change pileups become a lot of fun.

Thanks again to everyone who gets on for this one, especially the dedicated

group of DX stations that followed us around!

454 distinct callsigns were worked this weekend.

The weather was nice aside from a couple minor rain showers. No interesting wildlife seen. Still a some snow in north-central Maine south of Baxter State Park, but just small patches in the woods here and there.

73,
Bob and Kurt

KM3T mobile - 473 cw 19 ssb

Operated Sunday only...maybe more ambitious drive next year. Hats off to all the dedicated ops in this one, and to the amazing mobiles that go out almost every year!

W1XX – Washington RI 544 cw 1277 ssb

I call it band compression. Ten meters was non-existent, 15 not much better. 80 meters lacked sustained activity, leaving the bulk of activity to 40 and 20. Even with the best of intentions to push for more CW operating (2X points), the disparity from phone grew even more as the CW rate dropped. Hence over 900 Qs on 20 SSB -- a well that never stops giving.

It was great (as usual) to team up with Bob, K1XA, who was fresh from operating the previous weekend in the Florida QSO Party with K1TO as K4N (Manatee).

N4PN – fixed – GA 283 cw 230 ssb 66 counties

What a great job from WA1Z (27 Q's); NZ1U (25 Q's); K1M (20 Q's) and KM3T (14 Q's) - a big percentage of my total Q's...

Biggest Surprise!! NO DUKES, MA - W1ACT never made it to the party...If anyone was on from there, I never heard them....In years past, the worry was someone being on from NANTUCKET, MA...NANMA was well represented...think I worked at least four....my very last contact was W1NQT/NanMa...

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de N4CD: K1VSJ was spotted from "Dukes" on W6RK – only on the air a short short time – but according to his entry on 3830 contest reflector, he was in Providence, RI – not Dukes. Bad spot. Apparently no one ran Dukes. 4+ were on from Nantucket. Amazing.

It's a shame some folks don't spot all the rare ones! 4 Nantucket stations on, and only one spot.... W1NQT was spotted on 40M by N2JNE and on 20cw by DL6KVA and N4CD. Never heard the others (probably 40/80m?)....or QRP?

Most Needed Counties

Don, N5XG, sorted through the K3IMC needs page and came up with the following 'most needed' counties list

de N5XG:

Here are the counties I could identify in the 1-5 spots as of the current special needs list.

1 OR Benton

2 CA Butte

2 OR Lincoln

2 OR Tillamook

3 VT Addison

3 VT Orleans

3 MD Somerset

3 MT Glacier

3 WV Boone
3 WV Logan

4 ND Sioux
4 VT Caledonia
4 VT Orange
4 NH Sullivan
4 CA Sierra

5 NE Knox
5 VT Grand Isle
5 VT Rutland
5 NY Hamilton
5 VA Russell 5
WA Douglas
5 ID Franklin
5 WV Lincoln

- - - - -

Ron, KB6UF is scheduled to put out all of NH and VT shortly – early June so that should help. The Salmon Run is coming up and that should take some WA off the list perhaps.

Indiana QSO Party

Mobiles were out and running – maybe half a dozen mobiles plus a dozen or more fixed stations.

AE8M Mobile 465 cw 72 ssb 2 counties run

This was my first experience operating while the vehicle was moving and I am grateful to N9SF for serving as my driver, navigator, tactician and all around sage for making this adventure possible.

Thanks to all who called. The most frequently worked stations were WA3HAE (20), NU0Q (10), W9RE (9), KT9L and W9I (8), VE3NBJ and WA2VYA (7); at 6 each K9FO, AC5O, K9GDF, K9NW, N8BJQ, WB0PYF.

Rig was KX3 with KXPA100 amp, hamsticks on 40 and 20, Hustlers on 80 and 75.

One lesson learned on my first mobile contest in motion is that weak stations are much harder to dig out of the noise than when parked. My apologies to those that I gave up on and resumed CQing. Another lesson is that Hustler RM80 and RM75 resonators will become loose at the mast connection. If we had not checked them frequently, they would have fallen off. Also, the RM80 resonator and mast mounted on a standard SUV will not make it under some Indiana bridges without damage.

73, John, AE8M

K9WX Mobile - Operator(s): K9ELF K9WX - 324 cw 94 ssb

Mobile from 21 counties

W8CAR mobile – ran 12 counties and had 670 CW 99 ssb QSO

On the Road with N4CD III

The big event was over and it was time to head home for me. Others had already departed – Mary, AB7NK and K7SEN left Saturday headed home. There's DX banquets and more hospitality rooms Saturday night, but I hit the hay early and was up and on the road at 6:30am. The only contacts I had for a while were with Mike, KA4RRU, also headed out early – going east. Then 40M folks showed up.

With the spring weather, I checked a couple routes for developing storms. The best choice was the shortest route down through KY to the corner of TN and into AR across the interstate- nothing 'rare' but I'd put them out. For the first 8 hours they'd all be 'new transmits'. The weather was good – just a few sprinkles here and there – and I zipped along. You hit the corner of Trimble, KY – 1000 feet on the divided highway – not supposed to stop, but I did for five minutes to put it out. Same for Butler, KY – maybe 1/2 mile of it and if you don't stop, you won't get more than 2 or 3 contacts before you are “OOC” - out of the county. Stopped again, and fortunately no police around to hand out tickets. Otherwise, it was just head toward home. Once I got to AR, I decided to avoid the construction (think it is still going on - on I-40) so I headed across going east through Crittenden and Cross. Who comes up behind me, with his big county hunting antenna? K3IMC passes me by, honks the horn.....we wind up yakking for a few minutes on 7188 and continue on. He's headed to Cross County AR for the night to visit relatives. I'm headed through Cross then back to the interstate.

For me, it's a 1000+ mile trip so I take two days. As the day wore on, I looked ahead and decided to stop at a Super 8 in Saline County AR – been there half a dozen times before. Reasonable prices (\$52 incl tax) and a few places nearby to eat including the Cracker Barrel. Stopped at dinner time. There were a few showers around in the evening. At the Cracker Barrel – a 'country HAM' dinner was the order of the day – hi hi. With green beans and broccoli. If I had to be home to get to work, it would have been another 5 hours of driving, but these days I'm not a fan of night time driving nor doing more than 12 hours of driving a day. Those long hours on the road are for the younger folks or where there are two or more drivers in the car!

The DX is a lot louder up in OH and IN – 559s compared to mostly 339s from Texas. Quite a few DX stations were in the log in many counties.

Half a dozen mobiles were on – K8ZZ headed back north, slowly, putting out extra counties in OH. KB9OWD zipped on home. N2OO was going east to NJ. There were more on SSB. Hit the hay early.

In the morning it was up early and on the road by 7am for the five hour trip the rest of the way home. OJ, cereal, Eggo waffle.... had to make decaf coffee in the room in the coffee maker.

Several mobiles were still out on the road but most had reached home in one day. Quite a few have to be back at work so they drive right on through to late evening.

I decided to take a longer way home once I reached Texas. The interstate I-30 is boring. 75 mph and through the same counties every time, so I left I-30 and ran through the northern counties of Red River, Lamar, then was going to head on in to home through Delta and Hunt. K6JN runs through Red River – on SSB. There were some needs for SSB and stars so I'd run it and a few more.

I put out Delta and go to 20m SSB for the heck of it. Oops, there's Chuck, W3CR, who has been needing Fannin on SSB for a long long time. He's only 339 on 20M and I don't have the 40M SSB antenna along. OK.....30 mile detour back north to get that for him. No internet connection there in the boonies but fortunately I've stored his number in my cellphone so a quick call and we hook up on 14272 for one of his needed Mobile Diamond counties. Then back toward home. Up to 441 transmitted counties for Third Time Transmit- heh heh...who knows? I'm still keeping track.

It was a great trip! I didn't find any super bargains in the flea market, but meeting up with 100 county hunters is always something to look forward to each year. You get to check out the latest equipment and accessories, have lots of nostalgia of rigs you've owned or wished you owned, and get a good workout walking around the flea market.

I'm planning on next year and the year after and the year after. Hope you had a good one! Or at least fun chasing the mobiles driving to and from the event.

Close – Let's Get 'em Done

Time to get these folks finished up. All under 12 to go or First Timers!

N1API - 4TH using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/19/2015

No relays

KY: Jackson

NY: Essex, Washington

VA: Charles City

WA1ZIC - USACA using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/12/2015

OR: Benton
TX: Loving

WV2B - BINGO using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/07/2015

CA: Glenn
IA: O'brien, Tama
MT: Wheatland
NE: Logan
NY: Rockland
OK: Cleveland
TX: Jasper, Morris, Randall, Schleicher
VT: Addison

K3IMC - MASTER'S GOLD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 09/19/2014

KS: Graham
MO: Knox
NC: Martin
NY: Queens
OH: Brown, Highland
VA: Franklin

AE3Z - USACA using CW - Updated: 05/14/2015

AL: Perry
KY: Franklin, Larue.
MT: Lincoln.
ND: Golden Valley.
OR: Curry.
UT: Sanpete.

K4AMC - 2ND using CW - Updated: 05/08/2015

AL: Cleburne, Jackson
GA: Calhoun
IL: Boone
KY: McLean, Meniffee, Taylor
NE: Antelope, Loup

KS4BO - USACA using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/12/2015

IL: Perry

NJ: Somerset
NY: Erie, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Wayne
PA: Berks, Bradford, Cambria
RI: Newport
VA: Alleghany, Botetourt, Tazewell

*** de N4CD....I've told him several times how to get Wayne NY easy with LOUD willing fixed station, but I guess he doesn't read his email, or get off 14.336. (has been heard on cw, though) – oh well.

KM4FO - USACA using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/04/2015

GA: Gilmer, Twiggs
NC: Caldwell
WY: Hot Springs

AA4GT - 4TH using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 04/30/2015

ID: Shoshone
KS: Graham, Stanton
KY: Fleming, Jackson, Oldham
MT: Blaine
OR: Tillamook

AA4GT - USACA using CW - Updated: 04/30/2015

FL: Hernando, Lake, Sumter
GA: Lincoln, Madison, Terrell
IA: Lucas
IN: Fulton, Randolph
KY: Bracken, Fleming, Harlan, Johnson, Marion
LA: Desoto
MT: Glacier
NV: Mineral

W4SIG - FIVESTAR using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 04/25/2015

AL: Colbert, Lauderdale, Winston
MS: Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Quitman
NC: Mitchell
NH: Coos, Grafton, Sullivan
TN: Hawkins, Perry

W4SIG - MASTER'S GOLD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated:

05/18/2015

MD: Charles

OR: Morrow

PA: Bucks

VA: Dickenson, King William

VT: Bennington, Windham

W4SIG - 3RD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/07/2015

ID: Caribou, Power

IN: Fayette

NC: Alexander, Anson

TN: Clay, De Kalb, Hardin, Henry, Macon, Perry

VA: King And Queen, King William

VT: Orange

N5PR - 3RD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/22/2015

AL: Clark

CO: Freemont

GA: Stewart, Wheeler

KS: Clark

NM: Lee, Mora

PA: Potter

WV: Jefferson

*** OK Paul, wake up. N8II lives in Jefferson, WV

DL6KVA - USACA using CW - Updated: 05/08/2015

ID: Clearwater

KY: Estill

LA: Evangeline

NM: Sierra

TX: Caldwell, Gonzales, Jackson

WV: Mingo

WE7G - USACA using CW - Updated: 05/04/2015

KY: Lawrence, Menifee

KA7ICF - USACA using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/10/2015

AL: Monroe

KY: Owen, Perry

N7LFX - BINGO using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/07/2015

GA: Wayne

IA: Ida

IN: Montgomery

KY: Larue

NY: Sullivan

OH: Madison

VA: Page

SM7ZDI - USACA using CW - Updated: 05/13/2015

KY: Clay, Magoffin

MT: Fallon, Toole

ND: Sioux

SD: Bennett, Lake, Miner, Sanborn

TX: Donley, Hudspeth, Irion, Mason, Menard

WY8I - BINGO using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/16/2015

AK: First District

AL: Madison

CA: Tehama

ND: Kidder

NY: Yates

SD: Aurora

K8QWY - 3RD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/22/2015

IN: Greene, Union

MI: Iosco

SC: Marlboro

NA8W - BINGO using SSB - Updated: 05/13/2015

AR: Cross, Van Buren

GA: Calhoun, Chattooga, Haralson, Harris

MD: Harford

NJ: Bergen

PA: Potter, Wyoming

Email to na8w@arrl.net

K8ZZ - MASTER'S GOLD using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated:

05/18/2015

AL: Russell, Geneva

GA: Hancock, Henry, Pulaski, Putnam, Screven, Effingham

MT: Flathead

TX: Menard

KB9AIT - USACA using All Modes (SSB, CW or Digital) - Updated: 05/07/2015

AR: Ouachita, Montgomery

CA: Sierra

IA: Hardin, Shelby

KS: Linn, Cheyenne

MI: Tuscola

MN: Morrison, Waseca, Wabasha

MO: Audrain, Howard

MT: Musselshell

ND: Rolette

NY: Cayuga, Genesee, Schuyler

OH: Noble, Ottawa

SD: Moody

WI: Door

WV: Wayne, Wirt

Let's get these folks finished up – a couple for first time and first time Bingo! It's summer time and time for trips!

See the K3IMC needs page for latest updates on needs at:

<http://www.cquest.com/cgi-bin/flynn/needs.pl>

Still Time to Vote!

There's still time to vote in the important MARAC elections this year. You have until the end of May to vote – a couple days left.

The following people are running for office: (per the MARAC webpage)
2015 MARAC Election -

Candidates Vice President - Terry (WQ7A) (unopposed)

Great Lakes District Director - Dan (KM9X) and **Timothy (W8JJ)**

South Central District Director - Dick (K5VYT) and **Barry (N0KV)**

North East District Director - **David (KW1DX)** and Al (N1API)

North Central District Director - **Mike (NF0N)** and Tony (WA9DLB)

South East District Director - Jim (N4JT) and **Kerry (W4SIG)**

You can vote for your candidate of choice in your 'District'. For too long, most of the directors and officers simply 'rubber stamped' whatever was proposed by 'the leaders' (KZ2P, KE3VV and crew) and didn't do good for the county hunting community. It's time for a major shift.

In Great Lakes, Dr. **Tim, W8JJ** has done a great job of doing good for county hunting. He leads the County Hunting Forum each year at Dayton, no easy task and is an active mobiler. He's anxious to get things moving again in MARAC. He's on both SSB and CW.

In the North East, **Dave, KW1DX** has once again thrown his hat back in the ring, anxious to get MARAC straightened out again. If elected, he'll likely re engage on the Logger upgrade. He's constantly mobile. He's on both SSB and CW. Are you using the nifty KW1DX SPOTME handy dandy spotting tool for mobiles?

In North Central, **Mike, NF0N**, is anxious to get some 'change' in MARAC. He operates both SSB and CW.

In South Central, **Barry, N0KV**, is anxious for getting MARAC changed for the better. He operates both SSB and CW.

In South Central, **Kerry, W4SIG**, has great ideas for getting things moving. He's the spark plug now behind the MARAC booth at the Dayton hamfest. He's on mobile both SSB and CW.

When you go to vote, you'll only have a choice of candidates in your 'district'.

Do it now! If you haven't voted lately, you may need to get your 'voting key' from KV7N.

Start here, <http://www.marac.org/index.php> then select elections from the options at the top.

As of part way through the month, the emails out of SC, sent out by Percy, urging you to vote for the folks who rubber stamp the KZ2P 'agenda', were still flowing. Even funnier, an email from one KZ2P sponsored candidate had to have Percy send out 'his' email requesting support. We really don't need folks who in the 21st century need to have Percy send out their emails...Oh, right – the 'secret mailing list' of folks in each district – got it? I guess even some Directors aren't allowed to have it!.....

Time to vote!

Awards

USA-CA 6th Time #52	Jerry, W0GXQ	4.16.15
USA-CA 6 th Time #53	Bob, N8KIE	5.21.15

USA-CA CW #140	Paul, N5PR	4.30.15,
USA-CA CW #141	Mark KM6HB	5.1.15,
USA-CA CW #142	Jack WD4OIN	4.12.15,
USA-CA CW 3rd Time #15	Scottie, N4AAT	5.17.15
USA-CA CW 4th Time #12	Pete, NN9K	5.5.15,
USA-CA CW 6th Time #2	Jerry, W0GXQ	4.16.15,

Mobile to Mobile #23	Gene, WB4KZW	5.11.15,
YL-OM Team Award #2	Gene, K5GE	5.4.15,
USA Call Combo 1x3 #18	Don, W0EAR	5.3.15,
USA-CA QRP #1	Pete, NN9K	5.13.15
- - - -		
Bingo III #33	Ray, AB4YZ	5.20.15
Bingo VII #1	Scottie, N4AAT	5.17.15
- - -		
USA-CA “A” Prefix #7	Chuck, W3CR	5.20.15
USA-CA All Prefixes #6	Chuck, W3CR	5.20.15

Events for County Hunters

There are two QSO Parties this month – plus a weekend to avoid running counties while FD is in operation. Join your local club for FD and have fun. A good percentage of the county hunters will be out for FD and not available for net contacts.

June 7

Alabama QSO Party

Ph CW RS(T) and AL county or S/P/C

www.alabamagsoparty.org

June 14

West Virginia QSO Party

14 - 1600Z to 15 0200Z 3.5-28 / -

Ph CW Dig RS(T), WV county, or S/P/C

www.qsl.net/wvsarc

June 28-29

ARRL Field Day

28 1800Z to 29 2100Z

1.8-28 / 50+

Ph CW Dig Category, ARRL/RAC section, or DX

www.arrl.org/contests

but wait....there's more.....

3M – Mini in Murphreesboro

The MMM will be held in Murfreesboro, TN October 8-11. Hotel will be the Clarion (previously Holidome) at 2227 Old Fort Parkway. Cracker Barrel next door plus other places for meals. Pets are free... remind them so you get an outside room. Reservations at: 615-896-2420 . Friday lunch group at Mary BoBos being planned as well. You do not have to be an Old Timer to attend..... just be a friendly face wanting to meet other kindred spirits and honor Bill Bell... KM4W.... who initiated this meeting and ran it for 25 years.

The Old Timers Meeting will gather in Murfreesboro, Tn. October 8-9-10-11 for several days of world class rag-chewing and eye-ball qso's. We have reserved outside rooms so you can unload direct from your cars to your rooms.... or you may request a second floor and/or interior room if you prefer... all at our same \$80/night rate that includes a super hot buffet breakfast. Note also, they have waived their pet fees... but you MUST have an outside room with a pet. I have also just learned they have a few special rooms dedicated for smokers if you still enjoy that weed.

The Cracker Barrel is located just a 100 yards away as are several other fast food spots.... other restaurants are within a mile or so and the hotel, The CLARION is located just off I-24 in Central Murfreesboro. There is a large interior atrium area with a pool for our social activities and we have the deck and a social room for our pleasure as well. Perhaps we can entice a few of the musically inclined to entertain us once again with their renditions of some songs???? Or how about some full-contact Backgammon???

K5KDG, Steve, is taking the reservations for Mary BoBos which at your choice can include a free visit to the one and only Jack Daniels Distillery and if you golf... bring those sticks along..... maybe we can get Gene, N4ANV to lead us around the course once again???? and the shoppers best save some room for some world class shopping as well...Info available from KA3DRO, N8EMV.

This event is NOT sponsored by MARAC.

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from KA3DRO

note: reservations must mention "HAM RADIO 3M Reunion "..... that's the way the group is in their computer and appears the only way their reservations clerk can give the \$80 room rate and outside rooms in our block.... also note... Pet Fee waived for our group.... and to have anyone who prefers a second floor or inside room to mention this to the reservations clerk.... they get our rate, which includes the hot breakfast buffet.. I also just found out that there are a few special smokers rooms available... if there is anyone who still smokes??? This is open to ALL (OK... almost all !) COUNTY HUNTERS....

Thanks/ 73/Ron

NOTE: Use the term " HAM RADIO 3M REUNION" and this will get you right in to our reservation block. The computer they use is kinda specific ! phone: 615-896-2420

Note2: For those interested in attending the 3m mini this year and want to go to Mary Bobo's on Friday October 9, 2015 this is the telephone number. Area 931-759-7394. Tell the person that answers the phone you are with the Ham Radio 3M Reunion Group. We have reservations for 1 P.M. They suggest we arrive before 12:30 P.M. Everyone has always enjoyed Mary Bobo's in the past so should be fun time with lots of great food. Hope to see a lot of you there. STEVE AND WILLA K 5 K D G

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National Convention – Florida – in July - see the MARAC site for info.

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Annual CW Contest

Norm, W3DYA, has announced he'll sponsor the annual CW county hunter contest for this year. From the forum:

“I will be managing the County Hunters CW Contest again - 07/25 and 07/26/2015. “

Details in July issue of the CHNews. Or you can get it at:

<http://www.countyhunter.com>

That's all folks!