

County Hunter News

August 1, 2005

Volume 1, Issue 8

Welcome to Issue 8 of the County Hunter News, a monthly on-line publication for all county hunters, with an orientation toward CW operation. Thanks to Dennis, KK7X, who has provided us web space to bring you each edition of the CHN. Please visit his site, www.countyhunter.com and explore the many pages and pictures located there.

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 attempt to provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, or provide news of upcoming events. We hope you will enjoy the new County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all (except to MARAC, Inc, or Officers/Directors of MARAC), provided credit is given.

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@prodigy.net)

Notes from the Editor

Another good month. Lots of w mobiles active in last two months. KC0JG, and others on trip to National Convention. W4GNS, KS5A, K3IMC, WG6X putting out the counties. K8QWY is now QRV on 30M from the mobile. N9STL has been chasing counties on cw running up her CW totals as well as closing in on several awards, and catching lots of "Master Platinum" counties.

Did you know that MARAC will let you count a station that is in Washington DC to count for Arlington County VA, as well as Montgomery or Prince Georges, MD? . (ref: Marac award rules, p8,) You can use Washington, DC as a 'wild card' for only 1 of the 3.

The MARAC National Convention was held in Roanoke, VA in July and a great time was had. Lots to do, lots to see. New President for the coming year is WB9NUL. New Vice President for a year term is W9OP. Both will be up for re-election in a year as well as all the other officers.

In this issue, a Brain Teaser II, a pic of the Roanoke Convention, award announcements, editorials, and hopefully 'stuff of interest'.

CW Contest Results

The results of the 2005 CW Contest are available at:

<http://countyhunter.com/CW/CW%20Results%202005.htm>

W9MSE and W3DYA were neck and neck in the points category for mobile operators!

DL5AWI was outstanding in the DX category, and N6MU and WC5D had great showings in the fixed category.

MARAC Announces New Awards

Marac announced two new awards – The Single Band Award to allow you to work for all counties on any band, and the USACA-QRP award for working all counties with less than 5 watts.

A third award, the 'combo' award, was tabled until next meeting for further review by the BOD. In this award, you work toward all counties using 1 by 2 calls, or 2x1, or 2x2 calls, or 1x3 or 2x3 calls. For example you can work all counties using callsigns like KL1V, WG6X. Or a different award for working them with 2x2, such as AB4YX, KB4XK.

There are no start dates on the new awards.

Lack of Integrity with MARAC Board?

If you are a country/western music fan, you likely have heard of the Riders in the Sky - an excellent group that tours occasionally around the country, and good wholesome family entertainment. If you've seen it, you know there are two ways often to do things – and of course, Ranger Doug and the Riders always do it 'the Cowboy way' - the right way. It's always the guys in black hats, who are the trouble makers. However, the good guys win out in the end, and come to the rescue and save the day.

If you are a MARAC member, you'll see in the April Board of Directors meeting there was a motion put forward by the President to change the By-laws to read "No Officer or Director may appoint himself to any committee". You would think that this would sure make sense, as committees like the Awards Committee should be able to do their work

without meddling from those wishing to get their personal biases into the awards process. In the wake of Enron/WCOM scandals, and a whole raft of other industry shenanigans, a higher standard is now expected of those running things.

The awards chairman is appointed, and should be able to do his job without constant meddling from others wishing to impose this or that idea upon the rest of the group. Or being micro-managed. There is often a lot of back and forth discussion and negotiation over some of the details, and having a Director or BOD member looking over your shoulder and making 'suggestions' makes it difficult to have frank discussions and get things resolved.

The Board of Directors always has final approval over the work of the committees, and can accept or reject the work the committee has done. Just about every corporation wants independent folks to avoid the appearance of collusion and skullduggery. So what happened?

The BOD voted the resolution down! Directors and BOD members can 'appoint' themselves to committees. Oh well. The idea came from VE9DH, who worked many long hours trying to get things through the awards committee. As folks can tell, about all that has happened in the entire past year is that the existing awards have been renamed.

After a year, the Awards committee finally got the Single Band award out, and I think it will be quite popular.

Not long ago, to qualify for the Master's Gold, you had to transmit from 1500 'transmitted counties' or get points by net control hours or service to MARAC. In my way of thinking, that is running a county on a day, for 'one transmitted county'. You come back tomorrow and run it again, it is a second transmitted county. Well, some folks whined and complained that was 'too hard to do'. They wanted the 'shortcut' way to qualify for awards. Less effort. Fewer counties given to deserving others. They wanted to go for one of the highest most difficult awards (after they had likely had hundreds of mobiles give them contacts) without paying back some of the effort that was required by others to let them qualify for awards!

Of course, MARAC is always interested in making more money by issuing more awards, so the rules were again 'bent' to re-interpret what a 'transmitted county' is. The rules say if you run it on different bands and different modes, each 'run' is a separate "transmitted county"! Whoa! You didn't change counties! You can sit in the same place and do another county? (or pair of counties if on a county line?)

Now, you can run it on 20 meters, and then run it again on 40 meters to have two 'transmitted counties' while sitting in the same spot at the same time on the same day. (Or if on a CL, multiply everything by 2) If you are a cw operator, you can run it on 20, 40, and 30 meters too. Then you have 'five' transmitted counties from the same location at roughly the same time. Or, if on a county line, you have 10 transmitted counties, while

driving zero miles. Never have to get too far from home to even qualify for the award. Just run the same local counties over and over again until the limit.

And if you have 80m or 15 or 10 meters and make a contact, you got 3 or 4 more transmitted counties just sitting in the same county. Crank up a few more bands, and you got 10 or 20 or 30 transmitted counties, as long as you make a contact on each band and each mode. INCREDIBLE! You only put out the county ONCE!

Yet the rules were conveniently bent and re-interpreted. Where did the awards integrity go? So now you can finish 20 times faster, with 1/20th the effort, by simply having the rules 'interpreted'?????????

You only need to make ONE contact from a county per band to get credit, not even have a 'run' on one of the net frequencies or off frequency. Most folks drive through hundreds of counties while on their way to conventions, family get-togethers, just driving around their local area, going on vacation, etc. Likely, long before you get your Bingo award, you have given out thousands of contacts if you are mobile. Up to half of the transmitted counties can be run before you get your Bingo, and half must be run after. Just make contacts as you go through those hundreds of counties, and you can do it the right way, rather than the 'cheater shortcut'.

In the past, you'd hear mobiles making 'mobile contacts' from every county, or looking to be moved. On the way to the national convention in July, I would occasionally check the SSB net. 15 mobiles on and most never making a contact until they were called. In the past, it seemed a lot of the NC time was spent on mobile contacts and getting folks moved. Now, no one seems to care about 'making contacts' from each county, and most on the 20M never bother to move anyone anywhere anyway (in the Zombie mode?). There is always 40M, and lots of contacts made down there. Then, likely these same folks in a few years will be clamoring that the Master Gold award is 'too hard' to get the 1500 transmitted counties!!!!

If you aren't going mobile, it makes no difference anyway, right?

Today is a weekend day on the radio. Zero activity on 20M SSB for hours it seems. No one can be bothered to get on and put out a county, even their home county! Or the one right next door! Likely dozens out and about, 'waiting for SOMEONE else' to run a county. If everyone sits around 'waiting for someone else' to run, no counties get run. Oh, there's no net control? "I can't be bothered to run". Could be everyone is listening, no one is transmitting??? Dozens of excuses. You need only one contact.

The rules allow you to run the same county multiple times, but somehow I'm sure the initial thoughts were ON 30 DIFFERENT days, not 30 runs in the same day at the same hour but different frequencies. With enough bands/modes, you only have to visit a county once to get 30 tx counties! How much can you cheapen the awards process????

Before you know it, folks will be whining that it is 'too hard' to transmit from 500 'separate counties' for Master Platinum (repeats NOT allowed and you must work a MG holder from those counties!). This was intended to be a challenge for the serious county hunter, not just simply an award you got by sitting on your butt in your operating chair, waiting for your computer logging program to tell you, hey, by golly, you just qualified for this or that award. Platinum is currently the 'most challenging' award and not intended to be earned in six months or 18 months. Part of this award is that you must run the counties so others can get their Platinum award! (or others they are working on!)

Mark my words, before some of the loud stations that you hear on net day in and day out will complain that requirement is 'too hard' and will try and get the Master Platinum rules changed so they can have 'a shortcut way' to do it. Something where they can qualify by NOT running the counties, like sitting on their butts and getting 'alternative credits'.

At least a few county hunters are already more than 1/3rd the way to having worked all the counties with Master Platinum mobiles, and several mobiles are closing in/or have actually transmitting from 500 separate counties already. Since the award has only been available for a short time, that is amazing progress.

If you don't require the counties to be run, you aren't going to have anyone qualifying for the awards! Think about it.

You might think the 'shortcuts' are going to help folks qualify for the awards. However, if no one runs the counties, it doesn't matter how many shortcuts you have for the required points, since the mobiles won't be out running. If you sit at home, while a mobile runs 10 bands and 10 modes, you only get credit for a single county. You are the one being shortchanged. OK, you might get it both cw and SSB, and if you are working on multiple bands, toward a single band or 5B award, but most aren't, and most mobiles will try and run multiple bands and modes, and not think they are running 3 or 5 'different' counties by doing so!

You won't get many counties with Master Platinum mobiles if they, too, can sit at home and get "alternative points" of some kind.

There's at least one station good for the Master Platinum award that hasn't been spotted in a single county in the past year! How are folks going to finish up? (there's only 10 mobiles currently good for Master Platinum contacts). I'll bet that KC4UG and K9DCJ are turning in their graves at the cheapening process of MARAC awards.

The bending of the rules is stupid policy in my book. It might be self-defeating in the end, as well. It's a shame that things keep getting 'dumbed down' to folks can get by with less and less work. Of course, if mobiles do 'less work' then no one wins.

Soon, with this dumbing down trend, you'll be able to buy your 'ham license' at Wal-Mart or the nearest truck stop. Answer a 10 choice multiple choice quiz, honor system,

no cw, and after you 'pass' you can buy your KW amplifier and SSB rig, and go hooting and hollering all over the place.

By reducing the real number of transmitted counties needed by a factor of 2 or 4 or 10 or 20 just strains the entire credibility of the awards committee and Board of Directors. Like telling a new comer, hey, you only have to work half or 1/10th the counties, and MARAC will sell you an award. One wonders what is going on! Is making an extra two bucks on awards worth selling out the integrity of the awards process?

Before long, we'll have 'no code' extras running around. What next?

De N4CD

End of CW Licensing Requirement

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From the ARRL Website:

FCC Proposes to Drop Morse Code Requirement for All License Classes

NEWINGTON, CT, July 20, 2005--The FCC has proposed dropping the 5 WPM Morse code element as a requirement to obtain an Amateur Radio license of any class. The Commission recommended the change to its Part 97 Amateur Service rules in a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)* in WT Docket 05-235. Any rule changes proposed in the *NPRM* would *not* become final until the FCC gathers additional public comments, formally adopts any changes to its rules and concludes the proceeding by issuing a *Report and Order (R&O)* spelling out the changes and specifying an effective date. That's not likely to happen for several months. The FCC declined in its *NPRM* to go forward with any other suggested changes to Amateur Service licensing rules or operating privileges beyond elimination of the Morse requirement.

"Based upon the petitions and comments, we propose to amend our amateur service rules to eliminate the requirement that individuals pass a telegraphy examination in order to qualify for any amateur radio operator license," the FCC said in its *NPRM*, released July 19. This week's *NPRM* consolidated 18 petitions for rule making from the amateur community--including one from the ARRL--that proposed a wide range of additional changes to the amateur rules. The FCC said the various petitions had attracted 6200 comments from the amateur community, which soon will have the opportunity to comment again--this time on the FCC's proposals in response to those petitions.

The Commission said it believes dropping Element 1--the 5 WPM Morse examination--would "encourage individuals who are interested in communications technology, or who are able to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, to become amateur radio operators." The FCC said it also would eliminate a requirement it believes "is now unnecessary and that may discourage" current licensees from advancing their skills, and that it would "promote more efficient use" of current Amateur Radio spectrum.

The FCC cited changes in Article 25 of the international *Radio Regulations* adopted at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 as the primary reason to go forward with eliminating Morse code as an Amateur Radio licensing requirement in the future. Among other changes, WRC-03 deleted the Morse testing requirement for amateur applicants seeking HF privileges, leaving it up to individual countries to determine whether or not they want to mandate Morse testing. Several countries already have dropped their Morse requirements.

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, said he was not surprised that the FCC proposed altogether scrapping the Morse code requirement. The League and others had called for retaining the 5 WPM requirement only for Amateur Extra class applicants. Sumner expressed dismay, however, that the FCC turned away proposals from the League and other petitioners to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class.

"We're disappointed that the Commission prefers to deny an opportunity to give Amateur Radio the restructuring it needs for the 21st century," he said. "It appears that the Commission is taking the easy road, but the easy road is seldom the right road."

Sumner said ARRL officials and the Board of Directors would closely study the 30-page *NPRM* and plan to comment further after they've had the opportunity to consider the Commission's stated rationales for its proposals.

In 2004, the ARRL filed a *Petition for Rule Making* asking the FCC to amend Part 97 to complete the Amateur Service restructuring begun in 1999 but "left unfinished." The League called on the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for Amateur Extra. Among other recommendations, the League asked the FCC to automatically upgrade Technician licensees to General and Advanced licensees to Amateur Extra. In this week's *NPRM*, the FCC said it was not persuaded such automatic upgrades were in the public interest.

The FCC said it did not believe a new entry-level license class was warranted because current Novice and Tech Plus licensees already can easily upgrade to General. "We also note that, if our proposal to eliminate telegraphy testing in the amateur service is adopted," the FCC continued, "a person who is not a licensee will be able to qualify for a General Class operator license by passing two written examinations, and that a person who is a Technician Class licensee will be able to qualify for a General Class operator license by passing one written examination." The FCC said it does not believe either path to be unreasonable.

The FCC also said that it's already addressed some of the other issues petitioners raised in its "Phone Band Expansion" (or "Omnibus") [NPRM](#) in WT Docket 04-140. In that proceeding, the Commission proposed to go along with the ARRL's [Novice refarming](#) proposal aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus subbands to provide additional phone spectrum. Under the plan, Novice/Tech Plus licensees would be granted CW privileges in the current General CW subbands.

A 60-day period for members of the public to comment on the FCC's *NPRM* in WT 05-235 will begin once the *NPRM* appears in the *Federal Register*. Reply comments will be due within 75 days of the *NPRM*'s publication in the *Federal Register*.

Awards Issued

3rd Time #188, WA7JHQ, Sterling, July 19, 2005

2nd Time #356, KN4XP, Mike, July 14, 2005

Bingo #272, KL1V, Kent, July 21, 2005

Bingo 2, #36, N9STL, Joyce, July 20, 2005

USACA #1124, KQ0B, Mike, July 26, 2005

Did you note all of the award recipients this month operate on CW????

Brain Teaser Quiz #2

A new county hunter, who is just starting out, fired up his old HW-101 and started making contacts. His friend gave him two old CQ USACA record books, and told him to log confirmed contacts only in the one book for the USA-CA award, but also immediately start logging counties in the other book, when worked, for the "Bingo" award, if the station was 'good for Bingo'. Well, the new county hunter read the Bingo rules, and read them again, and scratched his head for a few more minutes before he thought he understood the Bingo rules, but wasn't sure.

His county record book is also old, so you have to tell him to add Broomfield, CO, and any other new counties since some have been added and deleted over the past 40 years. Copying the mobile call or county on the SSB net is sometimes hard since no phonetics are used. The CW contacts seem a lot better.

He jumped in some of the state QSO parties and contests as well to get extra contacts. All of these contacts were worked in the last year, except the last 2 which went back to 1986.

You happened to be in his neighborhood, and he twisted your arm to check the following contacts to see if they were good for Bingo. How many of the following are good for Bingo, and why? There are a few trick ones in here. Beware!

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1) N4CD | Breckenridge, KY |
| 2) NA7W | Asotin, WA |
| 3) W0GXQ | Hamlin, SD |
| 4) KA2MKQ | Chemung, NY |

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 5) W0QE | Washington, CO |
| 6) WD8LQB | Defiance, OH |
| 7) K4IRS | Sarasota, FL |
| 8) KA1JPR | Island, ME |
| 9) WA5OPO | Lake of the Woods, MN |
| 10) W4GNS/m | in Independent City of Emporia, VA |
| 11) W4AT | QTH: Bristol, VA |
| 12) KL7ST | mobile near Juneau Alaska |
| 13) N4PG | portable in Nome, AK |
| 14) WA4UNS | Bergen, NJ |
| 15) KA3DRO | Bon Homme, SD |
| 16) N7BKW | Cassia, ID |
| 17) N6HH | Irion, TX |
| 18) K8ZZ | Ashtabula, OH |
| 19) AA4FF/p | Lunenburg, VA |
| 20) K1ER | Hawaii, HI |

Answers to the quiz later in the newsletter!

Some ideas on Getting Counties

If you find yourself desperate for contacts in counties a hundred to two hundred miles away from your QTH, one way to solve that problem is to go there mobile with a ham friend, and work each other while both of you are ‘in the county’. It matters not where you are, but it only matters where the person you work is located. Travelling together is good fun, and you get all the counties to and from the county (and those transmitted counties too, toward your MG award!). You don’t have to be ‘speedy’ or copy fast to work your friend if you want a CW contact - ten WPM is fine for the minute or two it will take to make a contact.

There are many ways to do this – some folks use a pair of two meter FM transceivers.. Some have used converted CB radios moved to 10 meters (using AM). I suspect now with the drop in sunspot activity, those Radio Shack 10m SSB rigs will be dirt cheap at hamfests! Likely you can get one for \$50, as there isn’t anything on 10m other than ‘local stuff’ and the locals wait for the skip to come in.

Those with Tech Plus license can use 10M SSB/AM, or VHF SSB, or 2M FM. Nearly everyone seems to have a handheld, and most of the new mobile rigs also cover 2 meters as well. Thus, you have two ‘self contained’ rigs to work each other – rig, power supply, antenna, etc. You can’t use the same radio to work your buddy/spouse/SO or other by taking turns. .

The picture below shows a few QRP rigs for CW/SSB that will allow you to make cw or SSB contacts. On the left you see a MFJ 9030 5 w CW only rig, sitting on top of a

battery power supply that will run it for hours and hours of intermittent duty. MFJ makes this rig for all the bands, plus has a six meter and 20M SSB version for those only interested in SSB. For an antenna, you can use a 50 ohm dummy load – a few 2 watt resistors paralleled, or a 7.5 watt light bulb, or similar on an HF radio. Some of the converted CB walkie-talkies already have a collapsible antenna. You can add the keyer module to the radios allowing you to use external paddles, or a straight key. I see them for about \$60-70 at hamfests, and they go for \$75-80 on ebay. There are also older versions around.

In the middle of the picture is a Mizuho 6M SSB/CW rig. This one puts out 300 milliwatts on 6m. Mizuho made this for every band from 80m through 6 meters, except 30m. It has self-contained batteries, and this one has a ‘rubber ducky’ antenna. It has a button on top allowing you to send cw, or you can connect a key on the bottom, along with external power (7.5V). Very handy for cw contacts, although there is no cw filter in the rig or available. It is primarily a QRP SSB radio, but for 20 foot distances does fine on CW. Some folks have made thousands of contacts with this rig.

This is the rig that went along on N4CD trips when I had a friend along to work me in the counties. These tend to go for about \$80-100 second hand, except for the 20M version, which seems scarce and goes for \$200 plus. Several dealers sold these under various names: AEA sold a DX-Handi, usually a 10m version, and you’ll see other names on the same radio.

On the right in the following picture is an MFJ Cub, 2 W QRP rig. This is made for all of the HF bands. Very small. This is what the N4CD team now has – a 30M version. The antenna is a 56 ohm resistor, and it runs fine off a 12v Gel-cell type battery.

Be sure that the radios are on...after a while, with two ops working each other in the car, after 50 or 100 counties, sometimes you find your partner forgetting to turn the radio on!...the audio is just as loud with/without the radio on if the volume is not set too high!. But it takes a radio contact to get credit.

Of course, you can play ‘bumper tag’ with another mobile – and work each other from the same or nearby counties on your trip. If you get ‘too close’ you might overload their front end – right Ray? The receiver can totally block at 100 feet, but the IC 706 is good....you can be right next to someone and still copy – other rigs are not as overload resistant.



If you are a builder, you can throw together a little QRP rig, or build one of the kits from Ramsey or others. Some folks have a spare HF radio they can set up to work each other.

A self contained Gel Cell battery (about \$30 at PEP Boys, with charger) will run the system fine, and provide a couple of amps. The PEP boy ones also have an emergency light built in – the larger ones will help jump start your car if you yak too long on a county line! (I've found you can sit and make contacts for well over 30 minutes, and still have more than enough battery power to start the car).

So when you get desperate for those 'close in' counties, consider heading over there with an extra rig – or play 'bumper tag' with another mobile and go run parallel courses putting out the counties out and back! More fun for everyone!

Brain Teaser Answers

The answers to the quiz! By my count, 17 of the 20 are valid Bingo contacts.

KA2MKQ, WD8LQB are still closing in on getting their number. They do not have the correct combinations of letters for that county. Not yet! (and the D is not in the suffix –

and it is not a short call. (It would count if the call was **WD8LB** for the 'short call' rule, 1x2, 2x1, or 2x2 calls)

W0GXQ is good for Bingo everywhere with the X in his call – you don't even need to check if he has a USACA, which he does, or when he got it.

The trickier ones:

W4GNS is good for Bingo in Greensville VA since Independent City of Emporia counts for Greensville.

There is no Island county Maine. That mobile is not good for anything! There are rumors of an Island ME, but it currently is as "good" as Bullfrog County, NV. Unsubstantiated rumors count for nothing.

W4AT is good for Bingo for Washington, VA, since Independent City of Bristol, VA counts for Washington, VA. (short call rule)

AA4FF, now **W4DF**, received his USACA #464 in 1984. He is good for Bingo anywhere. (He got me interested enough to get my USA-500 in the early 1970s, but the county hunting 'bug' didn't bite me back then.) If you entered **AA4FF** in the MARAC database, you would see "now **W4DF**", and if you checked **W4DF**, you would see Fred is a USACA holder! He was also at the Roanoke convention for a while.

KL7ST is good for Bingo since Juneau is in the "Southeast" District (see Rules) an alternative name for First Judicial District.

N4PG portable in Nome, AK is in the "Northwest" District, alternative and acceptable name for Second District AK! (short call rule)

N6HH is good for Bingo with the double HH, which counts for the letter before and after. Same for **K8ZZ**, with the double Z, which counts for A or Y counties.

WA5OPO good in Lake of the Woods, MN, with the "O" in his call.

If you got 'em all correct, you are an addicted county hunter that's been around a while, or carefully checked them out one by one! A few curve balls were thrown to challenge you!

De **N4CD**

How About USACA- QRP??

Larry, WD3P, has an excellent website at <http://www.wd3p.net/> Here's some info about a real challenge....working all counties using QRP – less than 5 watts output CW, less than 10W PEP SSB. With permission, the following from his website:

“CQ Magazine sponsors an award for amateurs that work all the US counties. Over a thousand hams have achieved this coveted award. Only four hams have ever worked all the US counties using five watts or less for every QSO. Each has a unique story and each did it in a different manner.

The USA-CA QRP Honor Roll

Call	Date	Mode
WD7N	1981	Mixed or SSB
WA4PGM	March 11, 2003	Mixed
WD3P	October 3, 2003	CW
K5AAR	November 2, 2004	CW

Art Labahn was the first ham to complete USA-CA all QRP. At the time his call was WB0GRN. Later he changed his call to WD7N. He received USA-CA 349 in 1981. As he worked the counties he traveled most of the time so many of the QSOs were from the mobile. The story is that he did it all mobile to mobile using a Ten-Tec Argonaut. He traveled a lot on business from coast to coast and he traveled with his wife in a mobile home as he worked the counties. Art is now a silent key.

It was twenty two years before another ham repeated the feat of working all the counties QRP. Kyle, WA4PGM began his quest for USA-CA all QRP before he finished working all of the counties for his basic USA-CA award. He started his quest just a year after Art had finished his on August 4, 1982 with a QSO with N9DEH in LaGrange, IN. He received his basic USA-CA award number 470 on March 31, 1984. He then continued to work the counties QRP. The effort came to fruition on March 11, 2003 when he completed a QRP with a QSO with N4QVM in Davie County, NC. After twenty one years his quest for USA-CA quest had come to an end. Kyle worked the counties any way he could get them - SSB, CW, state QSO parties. He even worked them QRP from his motorcycle.

USA-CA all CW was completed just two months later by Larry, WD3P. Larry began his quest with a 10 mile QSO at 7 mWatts with WK3I on March 26, 1997 and completed it six years later on October 2, 2003 by working Bob, N4BP/M, in Eureka, NV. Bob had

spent three days driving around the Northwest to give Larry his final four counties. He traveled all the way from Boundary County, ID on the Canadian boarder down to Eureka, NV for the final QSO. Larry made many of his QSOs on homebrew rigs that he built himself. His primary rigs were a Wilderness Sierra, an Elecraft K2 and an Elecraft K1. He used nothing more than simple dipoles for his most of his contacts. When not using his dipoles he was running QRP from the mobile. He did not stick with the QRP gallon of 5 watts, but rather his favorite a power level was 500 mWatts. By the time he finished the counties he had worked over 2,500 counties at half a watt or less. The average power he used to work a county during his quest was 1.08 watts.

The fourth person to complete working all the counties QRP was Don, K5AAR. He completed the task in October 2004 and received his award from CQ Magazine on November 2, 2004 endorsed all QRP-CW. Don's unique contribution was that he completed the task using nothing more than homebrew rigs. These were not rigs built from kit, but rather rigs the he built himself from scratch.

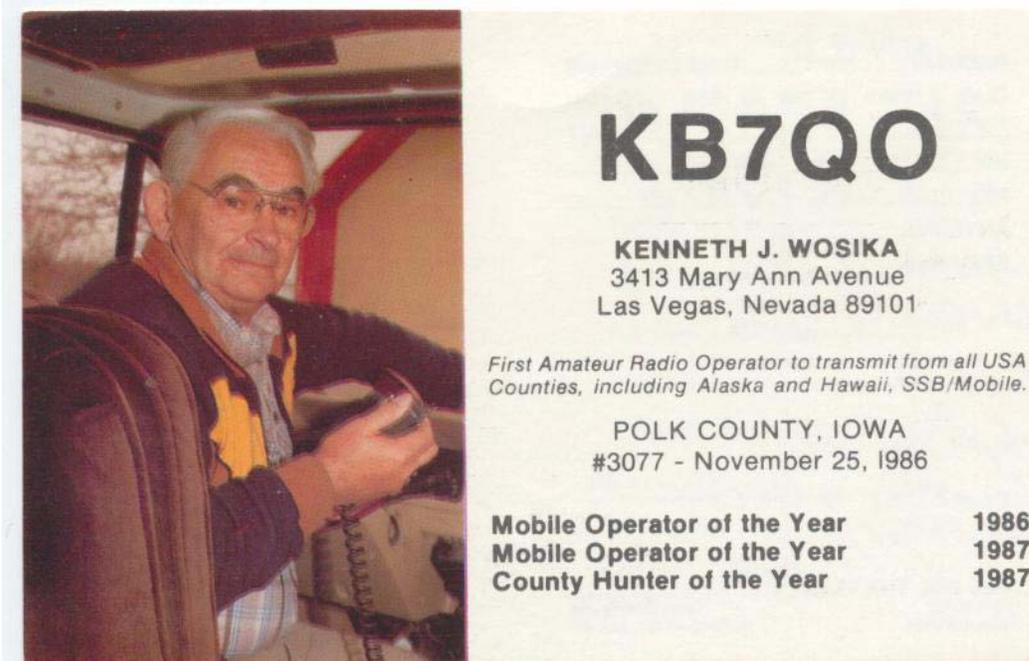
ATTENTION: MARAC announces the USACA-QRP award at convention!. Gene, KD9ZP will coordinate with WD3P to issue numbers for those who have already worked all counties QRP.

Picture of the Month

A question came my way from a county hunter, wondering if anyone had transmitted from all the counties in the USA. The answer is that at least five people have transmitted from all 'all' counties – KB7QO, WA0SBR, W1TEE, N4CD, and K0GO.

Here's the QSL card of KB7QO, who was the first and completed all the counties in 1986.

Additionally, W1TEE has done it twice! All cw.



A trivia question for experienced county hunters.

You will note on the QSL card of KB7QO he transmitted from 3077 counties in 1986 to finish doing them all. But recently, just a few years ago, Broomfield County Colorado was created, and we still have only 3077 counties. How can this be???

Send your callsign to Planet Pluto!

(from QRZ.com posting)

You can send your name/callsign all the way to Pluto -- free of charge.

The New Horizons mission is due to launch January 11th 2006 to perform reconnaissance of Pluto-Charon and the Kuiper Belt.

All the names entered on the website below will be recorded on a CD which will be mounted on the spacecraft before it begins it's historic journey to Pluto and beyond.

Dial Up:

http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/ecard/sendName_ecard_content_low.html

Broadband:

http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/ecard/sendName_ecard_content.html

To get your call sign included just enter it after your last name, eg

John Doe/M0JAD

When you've entered your name there is a very nice certificate available for you to print out.

New Horizons Home Page: <http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/>

73 Trevor M5AKA

Note: Enter your first and last name in the first box, and your callsign in the second box!

Active Mobiles in June

From Risto, W6RK – showing top ten, callsign, and counties run

For the **mixed modes**... the survey says:

1 KD5JSS 107, 2 KC0JG 90, 3 KK0L 90
4 N9JF 85, 5 W0GXQ 58, 6 KA3DRO 54
7 W8UE 48, 8 KB6UF 48, 9 W0QE 46 ,10 NM2L 46

For **CW only**... the survey says:

1 KD5JSS 107, 2 KC0JG 90, 3 N9JF 85
4 W0GXQ 56, 5 KA3DRO 47, 6 W0QE 46
7 NM2L 46, 8 W8UE 46, 9 W4GNS 40, 10 N4CD 39

More stats are available in the stats page

And nobody is claiming that these are 100% accurate and they're only published for giving some estimates. Stats are based on spots in ch.w6rk.com. So, the more you spot, better the stats will also become.

73!

Risto
W6RK

Wow! See the W6RK spotting page and the 'mapping function' – you can track a mobile on his/her route!

MARAC CW CH CONTEST

Info from W9MSE, Jeff

This contest began in 1967 and has been held every year since. Beginning in 1969 it was sponsored by the CW County Hunters Net, and sometime in the 1980's the MARAC took over sponsorship of the contest. For many years it was held in late July, and for the more recent years it has been held the first full weekend in May. The time frame of the contest has ranged from 48 to 54 hours, as in some of the early years it went from 0000Z on Saturday until 0600 Z on Monday, other years until 0200Z Monday, and the recent years it has been until 2400Z on Sunday.

Below are some statistics from the operation of one county hunter, W9MSE (K0WNV) in this particular contest. This may indicate the kind of activity of the contest, some of the active participants, and some old time memories of the old calls.

Of the 39 years the contest has been run, W9MSE(K0WNV) operated in 31 of the contests. That is nowhere near the top, as WC5D(K3ZMI) has operated in 38 of the 39 contests, so his data would be even more interesting to see.

During those 31 years, I operated Fixed in 17 of the contests and Mobile in 18 of the contests, including four years in which I operated both Fixed and Mobile. I made 17806 total contacts of which 2783 were as a Fixed operator and 15023 as a mobile operator. Contacts in a given contest ranged from a low of 44 during 1983, which were my last contacts on the air between 1982 and 1990, to a high of 2044 contacts during the 2002 contest.

During the CW CH Contest W9MSE/K0WNV operated from 14 states from a total of 477 different counties.

CO - 3 Counties operated

IL - 73

IN - 68

IA - 81

KY - 18

MI - 60

MN - 20

MO - 32

NE - 21

ND - 7

SD - 48

TN - 2

WI - 38

WY - 6

During the CW CH Contest I have worked stations in 1957 different counties over those 31 years. Many of them have been worked with mobiles operating in the counties. It would be interesting to see exactly how many counties were worked with mobiles, however I did not check that data. However I checked who was the first station I worked in each county during the contest, and then checked to see who supplied me the greatest number of counties worked for the first time in each state. In a few states no individual was the first in more than one county, and thus no call is given for that state.

STATE	COUNTIES IN STATE	COUNTIES WORKED IN CONTEST	OPERATOR	NUMBER OF COUNTIES THE OP WAS FIRST
AL	67	50	KN4Y	30
AK	4	2		
AZ	15	14	WA7NXL	3
AR	75	47	WA5KQD	33
CA	58	49	WB6CEP	8
CO	64	52	K0QIX/K0MT	9
CT	8	8		
DE	3	3		
FL	67	60	KN4Y	19
GA	159	114	KN4Y	39
HI	5	2		
ID	44	29	N7MPS	11
IL	102	49	K0DEQ & WA9WIF	4 EACH
IN	92	77	K0DEQ	13
IA	99	29	NN9K	6
KS	105	70	NG0T/KB0YU	11
KY	120	31	KM4FO	5
LA	64	37	KN4Y	9
ME	16	16	VE2EM	5
MD	24	22	W8BZY	3
MA	14	14	W1TEE	2
MI	83	46	VE2EM	8
MN	87	56	W0GXQ	37
MS	82	40	KN4Y & N5QLZ	12 EACH
MO	115	41	W0QWS & K0DEQ	5 EACH
MT	56	19	W7JYW	7
NE	93	64	K0DEQ	37
NV	17	5		
NH	10	9	VE2EM	2
NJ	21	20	W1NN	3
NM	33	26	K0QIX/K0MT	6

NY	62	58	VE2EM	11
NC	100	45	W1DPJ	7
ND	53	31	K0DEQ	13
OH	88	47	W8RYP	5
OK	77	42	K0DEQ	13
OR	36	24	WA7GOO	4
PA	67	60	KA3MMM	10
RI	5	5		
SC	46	39	KN4Y	20
SD	66	30	K0DEQ	10
TN	95	44	KN4Y	10
TX	254	243	W3DYA	59
UT	29	29	K0EVE	6
VT	14	14	W1DPJ	4
VA	98	56	K4UK & NI4H	5 EACH
WA	39	21	W7IEU	3
WV	55	19	K3ONW & WA2UJH	2 EACH
WI	72	39	K5OT	8
WY	23	20	N0CKC	8

The data above is no real indication of the great participation by the mobiles in the contest, as they all have been worked in many more counties than indicated, however the data is just for the first time the county was contacted during the 31 years I participated. However really outstanding is the activities of the two mobiles KN4Y and K0DEQ who were the high station in 7 states each. KN4Y during contests in the 1990's and 2000's, and K0DEQ mainly in contests in the 1970's.

During the years I served as the contest coordinator from 1969 to 1981 our major goal of sponsoring this contest was to supply a time when there were a large number of counties available at one time for the county hunter on CW. From looking at this data, it looks like we have been successful in keeping at that goal, and I hope that we can keep it going with that as the main thrust of the contest. The main way to keep those counties available is to encourage the mobiles to operate (and pray for good band conditions and no Murphy troubles). Feel strongly invited to participate in the contest next year and future years, no matter how much of the time you can participate. Even just a few hours of activity will be of great help to the contest and the county hunters on CW

Many thanks to the contest coordinators who have followed, Jerry N6QA, Norm W3DYA, and now Randy AA8R.

De W9MSE, Jeff



Picture of the CW ops at the Roanoke Convention 2005, courtesy K1SO

Time for Ham Vacation?

If you are thinking about taking a 'DX vacation' or break from county hunting, simply go to www.dxholiday.com. This site has lots of interesting 'rent a shack' and good information on operating from various countries and locations around the world! Some are YL friendly, others are more basic and off the beaten path.

ND9M Reports

Hi all,

As you may know, my ship is headed for Thule AFB, Greenland. We left Norfolk, VA on July 5th and are due in to Thule tomorrow afternoon (Friday).

My ship, the USNS Lawrence H. Gianella, is a tanker owned by the Military Sealift Command (MSC) which is a branch of the U.S. Navy. Although this is a full-fledged Navy ship, it's operated by a private corporation in Houston, Ocean Shipholdings, Inc. (OSI). The crew consists of 25 civilians; there's no military personnel aboard. Of the 25 on board, nine are officers licensed by the Coast Guard; the other 16 are unlicensed crewmembers.

The officers consist of the captain, chief mate plus three additional mates, the chief engineer plus two assistant engineers, and the radio electronics officer.

That's me at the end of the list, the REO, or "Sparks". Being a one-man department is both good and bad. It's good in that I report directly to the captain and to nobody else, plus I don't have to worry about subordinates. The bad thing is that whatever runs on electricity of any voltage or current rating, I'm automatically the on-call guy. It made no difference when I walked on board the ship for the first time a few years ago that I'd never worked on a gyro compass system or a radar unit before. I'm immediately the expert, so I've had to learn fast where the power switch is!

The Captain of course runs the whole shebang. The Chief Mate (CM) is in charge of the Deck Department and all Cargo operations. I'll let you figure out which department the Chief Engineer heads up...

The crew includes the Bosun who is in charge of the deck department on the unlicensed side and has four Able Bodied Seamen, or ABs, under him. On the engineering side, the unlicensed equivalent to the ABs are the QMEDs or Qualified Member of the Engineer Department. (Darn, I gave away the CE's ballywick!) There are also two Deck-Engine Utility (DEU) persons who work wherever they're needed, and also currently an unlicensed apprentice who is on his first ship trying out all three departments to see if he even wants to be a sailor.

The last group is the Steward's Department which is responsible for food services and housekeeping. Even though the Steward is a full-fledged department head, he is not a licensed officer, but still reports directly to the captain. Along with the Stew as we call him, there's a Chief Cook and two General Steward's Utility (GSU) persons.

As for the trip, the route has been a pretty basic one: From Norfolk, we headed straight to the Grand Banks off Nova Scotia and turned north toward Greenland. Every other day there's a new name for the water: first it's the Atlantic and the Grand Banks of course, then the Labrador Sea, into the Davis Strait, and now we're in the Baffin Bay.

But the water's all the same: cold! This morning's sea temperature was recorded at 37 degrees, which is pretty close to what the air temperature was.

Our current position as of 8:30 PM ship's local time (same as Eastern plus 1 hour) is 75 degrees 01 minute North, 64 degrees 18 minutes West, or 75-01N 064-18W. If you look at a world map, follow up the main body of Greenland that looks conical in shape to the part of the island that flares out to the west. We're in there somewhere.

We crossed the Arctic Circle (66-33N) on Tuesday afternoon. But I thought it was supposed to be cold in the Arctic. It was 61 degrees! Not bad at all. And that night was the first inside the world of the circumpolar sun, 24/7 daylight. I now have a large piece of corrugated cardboard covering my cabin window because I didn't like being awakened by the sun at 3 AM on Sunday night!

Anyway, we've been staying fairly close to Greenland because much of the Davis Strait

and Baffin Bay are full of ice. The area we've been in is almost completely free of ice. We've been receiving nicely detailed ice charts that show the waterway to the west is solid ice but also indicate that the area where we are now was thinning out. Not only has it thinned out, we've had no problems navigating through the ice that we did have.

We met up with a Canadian ice breaker, the CCGS Henry Larsen, along with our sister ship, the USNS Cobb, yesterday at Disko Island midway down the Greenland coast. Being a breaker, the Larsen's job is to punch a hole through the ice for the Cobb and us. (The Cobb, by the way, is a tanker identical to ours.) As it's turned out, the ice has broken up very nicely, and now that we're down to the last very few miles of ice transit, we know that the breaker wasn't necessary.

But that's this time. Last year when I was on this ship as we went to McMurdo Station in Antarctica, we had two US Coast Guard ice breakers and they really had their hands full. We got lucky this time, and we're very happy to have them leading the way. The lack of pack ice just makes for a more relaxed trip through.

I'm attaching some JPG pictures that you will hopefully like. Sorry, there haven't been any of the huge mountainous icebergs that I was hoping to see, but maybe we'll encounter some on the way out.

Jim





Sister Ship

One shot is of the Gianella approaching the path cut by the breaker as we're entering the ice field itself this afternoon. The ice breaker is less than a mile ahead, but is out of view entirely because of the fog that has come and gone here. At times, the breaker and the Cobb have been in plain sight; other times nothing at all. It's a good thing we've got two radars.

The other shot is of the USNS Cobb which has been following us about a half mile behind. We're both 615-foot long, 90-foot wide, tankers with 14 cargo holds that can carry about 10 million gallons of fuel when we're full. The white part at the back (stern) of the ship is the wheelhouse. In the center at the top of the wheelhouse you'll see a strip of windows; that's the bridge. My office and cabin are directly behind it.

Also check out the tower on top of the wheel house. That's where our two radar antennas are. (For the techno-types out there, the radars are 3-cm and 10-cm systems.) The antenna at the very top is about 120 feet above the water line. Last year in Antarctica, I had to climb that thing and fix the antenna pedestal. I don't mind saying that I thought a career change at that point; actually I didn't think of much until my brain thawed out!

That's about it for now from Greenland (almost). Normally our trips are supposed to be kept quiet, but this time everything's out in the open. I'll try to send more pix soon.

73,



Operating Events for August

Wow! If conditions cooperate, and these folks get some mobile activity, it could be a great month for snagging counties on cw.

August 6 North American QSO Party – good excuse to make lots of contacts – CW (see www.ncjweb.com) 1800Z Aug 6 to 0600Z August 7.

August 6 Ten;-Ten QSO Party – Phone – 0001Z Aug 6 to 2359 Aug 7, 10 meters only. See www.ten-ten.org

August 13 – Maryland, DC QSO Party – CW/Phone 1600Z Aug 13 to 0400Z Aug 14, and 1600Z to 2359Z Aug 14. See www.w3cwc.org/rules.html

August 20 – New Jersey QSO Party – cw/ssb Aug 20 0700Z to 0600Z Aug 21. and 1300Z Aug 21 to 0200Z Aug 22.

August 27-29 Ohio QSO Party - CW/ssb 1600Z Aug 27 to 0400Z Aug 28. see www.oqp.us

August 27 – Hawaii QSO Party – 0700Z Aug 27 to 2300Z Aug 28. See www.karc.us.hi_qso_party.html

August 28 – Kentucky QSO Party 1600Z Aug 28 to 0400Z Apr Aug 29. See www.qsl.net/ky4ky/kyqsopartyrules.html

Tail End

That's it for this month's CHN. Hope that the issue provided some thought provoking material, some challenges for those into 'brain teasers' and some useful info. Sad to see the cw requirement for a ham license going away – the appliance operators seem to be 'winning out'. "10-4 Good Buddy" – even more reason to stay on cw!

Maybe you'll be hearing ND9M from "way up north". I worked him a few times on the last trip in July! Getting to be real DX.

QST reported W6HOR as a Silent Key. He will be missed.

See you next month. Maybe by next month I'll figure out how to 'undo' what the MSFT Windows updates have messed up this time... 'scanner' wizard' not working... half dozen 'shortcuts' no longer working. Hmmm.....

73 de N4CD