

# County Hunter News

December 1, 2005

Volume 1, Issue 12

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation. This month we are at our new URL, [www.chnewsonline.com](http://www.chnewsonline.com)

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](mailto:telegraphy@prodigy.net))

## Notes from the Editor

The MARAC awards page now has the requirements for the new Single Band Award. (finally!) You can get the basic certificate at 1000 counties, with levels of 2000, 3000 and all counties. Quite a few folks have 'worked 'em all' on 20M. For the 10,15,20,40 and 80M bands, you can be working on the 5Band Award, with the first level for any band at 1500 counties. Who is going to first to get 5B Worked All Counties?

A few county hunters have worked all counties on other bands. Alan, K8CW, worked all on 40M (confirmed, too), and he is coming along great on 30M as well. I've read that one county hunter did it all on 10 meters. I probably have well over 1000 on 2M FM working Miss Ida, N2TPH (now SK), as we ran counties together. (We first started on 222 Mhz with a pair of FM handhelds when she was a Novice (KB2PDC) – she only had 10M, CW, and 220 operating privileges- then switched to 2M when she got General license a year later). I don't expect to get many more on either band, although I've gotten many on 6m, some from working Charlie, W0RRY, on CW when we used a Mizuho handheld to make CW contacts before recently switching to 30M. In the 'old days' many county hunters made thousands of contacts on 75M with the late night nets.

I recall several folks at the 3M going out each day with several mobiles playing 'bumper tag' working each other on all 5 bands for county credit. They'd make big expeditions to get all the counties around the TN area. Maybe we don't have as many band-county chasers around these days?

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Part II - Some reader feedback:

“Hi Bob,

I enjoyed reading your October Newsletter. You are right on the money with both Jim and JPR.....

Jim did it again to a new mobile last Friday(10/28) by telling him his audio was distorted but I could hear that mobile fine and clear without distortion. He told the guy to get it fixed and come back later. That jerk only wants his friends to run counties on the net. That is if he really has friends.... I noticed on Friday that he gave many QRZ for mobiles and check-ins but had no responses. 30m was hot with one mobile after the other. If I was restricted to 14336 only I would never finish up. I wish that 40m was more active as I need many of the close in counties...

It's great to use CW in working the counties. There should be more CW activity.

Keep up the good work giving out new ones and of course keep the great monthly news letters coming.”

De Anon (identity protected so he doesn't now get 'run off' – hi hi).

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It seems some days the propagation with high “A” index makes you think signals are distorted when it is only propagation. It is 'selective fading' across the narrow bandwidth. If you've ever operated 'aurora' mode on 6m and up, or worked on HF via a northern path (or even worked DX over the poles) you are familiar with the distortion that occurs. The 'roller coaster' effect on 20M means propagation conditions are rapidly changing over wide areas. Signals can get distorted simply by the quickly changing paths. You will also hear it on CW some days as signals sound 'weak' or strange, even though they start out fine.

This has been a great month for CW, with many new folks joining the ranks of the CW group. Activity included WB7A, KD4HXM and others. Joyce, N9STL advises she has now worked more than half the counties on cw since March of this year! George, N3ISH has been snagging many counties on cw, too!

### Part III

If you attended the National Convention at the Windham Hotel in Roanoke, you may find you have been double or triple billed by the hotel. Seems they got some new billing software or something, and it placed double charges many folks bill.

Dan, KM9X posted on the K3IMC forum:

“As of Sat afternoon, I talked to Judy. She has gotten no resolution at all on her multiple billings for the National CH Convention stay at the Windham Hotel in Roanoke. She has spoke to several women, and the mysterious "Jason Green" who is supposed to be in charge of this mess, will not call her back and gets no help at all from the

accounting dept. She has been told various times to call and other hoaxes. To recap, she paid the \$269 bill for the nationals on a debit card, so they got their money instantly in July. Also there was another breakfast buffet charge put on it at the hotel(\$34) and they got their money again, instantly.

Almost two weeks ago the nightmare began, as at 930pm they charged her again for both. Not having that much in her account, it went under, causing a fee for overdraft and a penalty each day. Not to stop there, they did it all again on Thurs night (11:30pm), at least two more times. Her paycheck was direct deposited Thursday, and they took all of it and left more overdrafts... After AF3X posted the information about his screwing by Wyndham, she called the bank and found out she was deeply overdrafter by Wyndham. The bank "suspended" her account.

That didn't matter, the overdraft fees continue, \$35 a day, with no money to pay them. On Sat after 4 hrs of run-a-round at the Wyndham and nothing done, the bank reported numerous more attempts to take those charges out of her account, but they were denied. The \$35 a day keeps adding up. All weekend last week no money for even the simplest things...Mon, Tue, Wed. on the phone every day with the bank promising to get that money back into her account.. more lies! Thursday- Thanksgiving. Wyndham employees are off eating turkey. Charges continue to pile up, with the real turkeys being at WYNDHAM HOTEL corporate, as the Roanoke office has put all the blame on them. Roanoke refuses to do anything, the corporate is "still working on it". A holiday weekend, and another paycheck deposited.....guess where it went???? To the bank for the overdrafts, still paying those multiple charges balance and the daily fees continue. Judy still has no money, and not one person at Wyndham has done a dam thing. As she said, she is sick of it all. Countless hours spent on the phone, no money, huge overdrafts and penalties and nothing resolved. She is borrowwing money to get by... most of us live paycheck to paycheck. Now the problem comes when the bills that are backing up can't be paid because a paycheck deposited will be gobbled up by the bank for these illegal charges from WYNDHAM. Now she is thinking about going to another bank, trying to get her paycheck deposited there, so she can have some money until this gets resolved, if ever. Doing nothing more than

attending a convention, and now this criminal act by the Windham Hotel(an accident would be rectified by now!) will cause numerous financial problems and possibly an attorney now to sue the hotel into paying the damages they caused! (more money) It's a sad situation. And it is still snowballing into a disaster.” de Dan KM9X

In the old days, the folks who put on the convention would have been “Men of Action” and it would have been taken care of immediately, instead of everyone individually fighting with the hotel to get the charges reversed, and not having any single person to contact to resolve the issue. Seems the good attendees are getting the run around, and some folks who arranged and put on the convention are making excuses for ‘updated software’, ‘new bank’ rather than taking the situation in hand, DEMANDING that they fix it, and saving all the others from long distance attempts to resolve the problem. Just look at the K3IMC site for the lack of resolution. What a shame!

KC3X, WG6X, N8CIJ, WQ7A, and AA9JJ and others had the charges re-appear as new charges a few months later. Check your credit card statements carefully!

## County Hunter Rumblings – N4CD Editorial

To qualify for the USACA award, you are required to get verification of all the contacts, just like for most other prestigious awards in the ham radio award, such as WAS, DXCC, WAZ, 5BWAS, and mode/band endorsements on those awards. Sometimes in the process, some of the Mobile Reply Cards (MRCs) get sent back with “Not in Log” or “Not me!” (I wasn’t there – likely someone else was –). We have automated the ‘spotting function’ - now you don’t even have to listen to a radio during the day – just set up your computer alarms and wait for a page to show up.

So what will county hunting be like in five or ten years? Can we 'extend' the reach of the internet to change the "Not in Log" situation?

When I first started county hunting in the early 90s, N4EED was very active. Both of us were fairly active on weekends, working many of the mobiles on the net. Conditions were headed into a sunspot minimum like this one. On occasions, when the mobile was weak, I couldn't tell if the mobile was coming back to N4CD or N4EED, or whether it was me or Cooter he was coming back to or exchanging reports. (usually Cooter since he had a beam and bigger signal, hi). It didn't take much at 33 signal levels to confuse N4(noise)D with N4(noise)D. On occasion, I thought I had worked the mobile. One or two MRCs came back saying "not in log – worked N4EED at that time – maybe a double?" So I had to work another station in the county later and get it confirmed that way. When you are starting out, keep working mobiles in unconfirmed counties just for 'backup', just 'in case'.

In the early 1990s, you had to confirm both first time and second time, so you had lots of MRCs to send out. If you listen on net today, you will hear occasional doubles. Sometimes they get straightened out right then, sometimes not. It's even rougher when you are mobile and trying to work another mobile, or where the net control is also weak. Sometimes the mobile will try to straighten things out by making sure he gives the call again clearly of the station that he is working.

If you listen to DX pileups, you sometimes hear doubling or tripling, or aren't even sure who the DX station is working as it seems to be a combination of calls he is coming back to. If you've ever been on the DX end of some of these pileups, you find you have stations each insisting you are working them, perhaps a DJ1XY and a DK1XY, or DJ1XYZ and DJ1XY both exchanging reports. Now, the 'state of the art' in DXpeditions is real time logging and access to who got worked on what bands at what time.

Even worse for the DX station, many stations if they aren't sure worked the DX station, work them again on the same band/mode

‘just to be sure’ they got in the log. That means less contacts for others and more ‘dupes’. In some cases, maybe a 10-15% dupe rate. For DX stations with only short propagation windows to different areas of the world, that can mean the ‘little guys’ don’t have much of a chance to work the DXpedition.

Now, the ‘state of the art’ in DXpeditions is near real time logging and access to who got worked on what bands at what time. You can log in to see if ‘you are in the log’.

K8IW sent in the following screen shot after he had worked K7C on Kure Island. Several years before, he thought he ‘had’ worked another DXpedition, but it turned out his QSL card came back ‘Not in Log’. This time, he could check quickly to see if he made it, so he didn’t have to make an ‘insurance’ contact or two, or try on different bands or modes, just to be sure he had worked that country.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "DXA by KK6EK - Opera". The page content includes:

- Header: **=DXA=** by KK6EK
- Expedition Name: **KURE ATOLL** THE 2005 CORDELL EXPEDITION
- Expedition Callsign: **K7C**
- User Callsign: **K8IW**
- Time: Tue 4 Oct 05 10:53:53 UTC
- ICOM logo and a small map of Kure Island.
- Section: **LAST LOGGED** with **KK6EK** and **Not Found**.
- Table of logging statistics:

CALLSIGN	CONFIRM	LOGGED	CURRENTLY	WORK	TIME ELAPSED	TIME REMAININ	TOTAL QSO					
K8IW	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	1	9d3h37r	2d9h10r	43503
K7C	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	1				

Additional details from the table:

- Mode: CW (indicated by a green square), SSB, RTTY
- Time Elapsed: 9d3h37r
- Time Remainin: 2d9h10r
- Total QSO: 43503

## County Hunting in 2025?

No one knows what the future will bring, but it appears that at some point, if ham radio is still alive and used as it is today, that we are likely to see some big changes coming.

### On the Road with N4CD -

Recently, Don, N5XG took a trip out to west Texas to put out the counties. The following was received from him:

“Bob, thanks for you assistance during my county run, and the spots.

Here are a few photos that were interesting (to me) in the event you need any filler for the CH newsletter. I wish others would send you photos. I would love to see things from their trips.

73/ Don”



N5XG/M with the W9UCW/K8CW antenna system installed

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Some words sent in by K5OT:

"In days of old, when ops were bold, and sidebands not invented,  
The word would pass, by pounding brass, and all were well contented."

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Hello? Anybody home? Earth calling! N5XG visited “Earth”

(Earth, TX – Lamb county)

You can also visit Venus, TX



N5XG/M in Old Glory, TX - Got to fly the flag there – Stonewall,  
TX

## Awards Issued

Bingo #277, KQ0B, Mike, 10/20/05

Bingo, #278, KR4ZH, Jim, 11/13/05

USACA #1128, Dennis, N6PDB, 11/04/05

2<sup>nd</sup> Time #357, N2OCW, Larry, 10/28/05

Masters Gold #14, AA9JJ, Frank, 11/9/05

Five Star #21, W6TMD, Darrel, 11/0/05

Masters Gold #15, W6TMD, Darrel, 11/16/05

## Helpful Hints from Ray, WG6X

### An Unusual Antenna Problem

I noted during my run over to a few counties to finish off the Bingo needs for KQ0B that my 20 meter HamStick started to act up. I thought at first it was that my mike adapter cabling for my Icom 706 was causing some kind of problem as every once in a while I would see the Shift Shape display and the SWR was jumping up higher than normal.

Then I made a short run up to Elmore County in AL. When I went to use the 20 meter HamStick, which has a M-04 22 inch mast added so I can cover both the CW & the SSB with very low SWR, the SWR was really high in the 20 to 1 range. After I noticed this, I shifted the antenna over to my other mount on the tool box on back of the truck and SWR was back to almost flat.

When I got home, I took the multi-meter out and started checking the coax and mount out for a problem. I found that the heavy duty brass plumber type quick disconnect was the cause of the problem as it showed as open. After using steel wool on both the antenna end of the brass quick disconnect and the base of the brass quick disconnect the problem was fixed.

This type of a problem never entered my mind

73,

Ray



KJ8F, Sharon and WG6X, Ray – at the Mini



KA4TYG, Carol and N4UJK, Ed (aka Magellan)

## Picture Gallery – December 2005



You can go to Telegraph Texas (south Texas) and visit 'the store' – general store, gas station, and post office all in one building. About the 'whole town' right there!

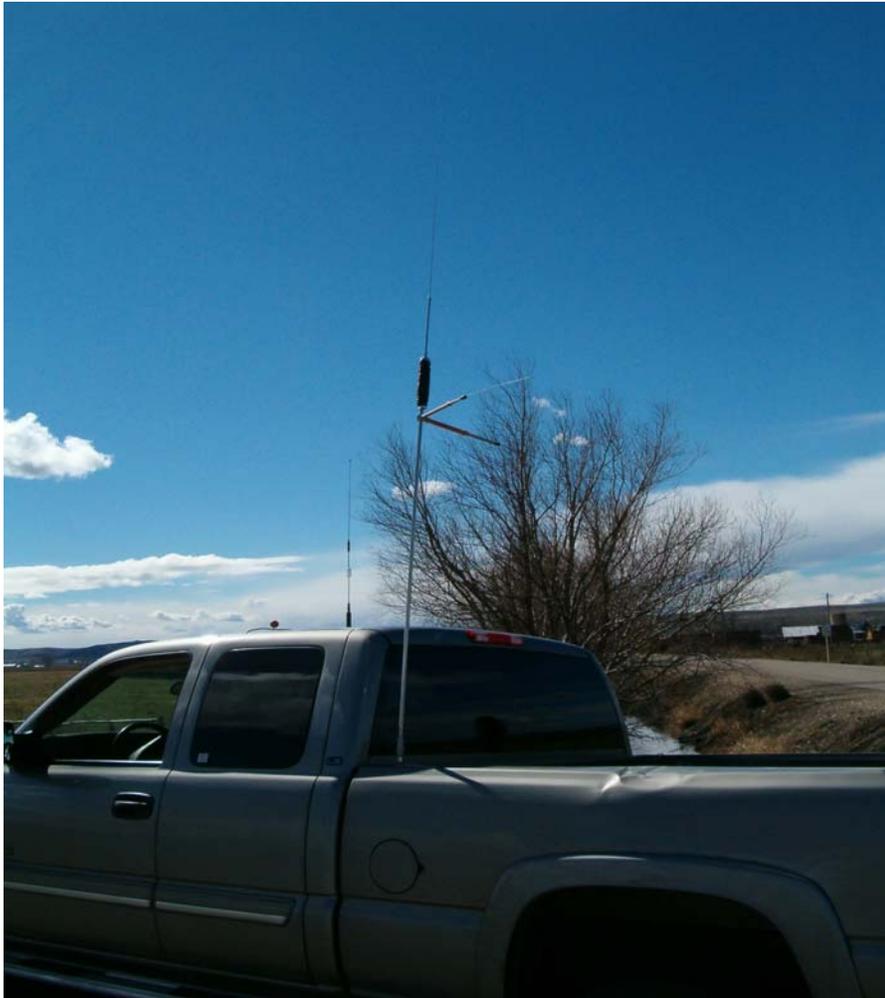


Or you can go to Telephone Texas – up near the OKLA border – not much there either!

NO 'cellphone' Texas yet! (But there is now a Dish, TX as in satellite TV!)

## 20-Meter Resonator - by NA7W, Larry

There are a lot more CW operators out there today that are also operating on 20 Meter SSB. With the resonator I've gotten from K8CW and also the hustler resonator I find one problem. The problem is getting them to put out full power with them tuned mid-way for 14.336 and 14.0565. I solved this problem very easily. No I'm not running two 20-meter resonators. I still have the one that I rebuilt over 20 years ago. In the early 80's a county hunter by the name of John from the Colorado area submitted an article to the RoadRunner and making a 20-meter  $\frac{1}{2}$  wave resonator. The cost is minimal and the knowledge to do such is within the realm of most county-hunters. Take a 75-meter hustler resonator. Remove the cover and all of the winding on the coil form. Then you take #12 automotive hook-up wire and up 22 turns on the coil form. If you can find shrink tubing large enough you can use it for the new coil covering. I just used electrical tape made to with stand cold temperatures and heat. I picked mine up at Ace Hardware and it's not much more than the normal electrical tape. I've had mine now for over 20 years and haven't had to rewrap it yet. Pick up a 5/8-wave whip for a 2-meter antenna and use it in place of the one that came with the 75-meter hustler resonator. You can tune it by several different methods. At first I tuned for full output at 14.336 and 14.0565. Which isn't hard to accomplish. I now have an antenna analyzer and have returned the antenna.



### The NA7W in the Toyota Tundra

I've always had excellent performance out of the rebuilt resonator. At the time I made it I wasn't interested in mobile CW but did like to go down to the lower end of the general band for DX and County-hunters SSB contest.

The following picture shows it mounted on my truck, but I also run it on my car. In fact I used it when Sally and I made our trip back east and went to Chattanooga for the Mini.

I used a screwdriver antenna for several years, having to make a small adjustment to go from SSB to CW.



## On the Road with N4CD

It was off again in early November to do some visiting and county hunting. I headed out early on the 7<sup>th</sup> to avoid the rush hour traffic of the Dallas-Ft Worth Metroplex (approaching 4 million people, all with cars it seems) on the way to Denver, CO. The route was taking me through some OK counties still needed for Master Platinum, and

then into the corner of KS, which I had not run a second time, plus a few in CO that were 'new' the second time for transmitted counties. Plus there were many needed counties along the way. The trip to Denver was uneventful with good weather. Usually, I ran on 30m first, then 40m cw then 20m cw, and then if there was any activity go to 40M SSB on 7238. I was on the road at 7am local time, and there wasn't anything going on on 20M SSB most days until much later – net control on 20m SSB was barely audible much of the trip until late morning – and when on the east coast in VA, NC, GA, AL, MS, Net Control was not over a 22 most of the time. So I didn't worry about 20M SSB most of the trip.

KL1V was in Idaho, N9JF was in IN. , and AI5P in Illinois, WG6X running in SC/GA, so it was busy during my trip at times. Later, NA7W headed south to TX.

I stayed just outside Denver in a small motel off I 70 – one of the ones from the 50s and 60s. The lady at the desk commented she had to raise rates since the heating bills were shooting through the roof! I can imagine – many of the older motels did not have good insulation, were built of concrete blocks with single pane windows. Energy hogs. It makes one wonder how long there will be inexpensive motels around as the price of winter heating climbs and climbs? With temps in the teens, and 8-9 months of winters, many of these motels may not survive. All along the interstates in the CO/NE/WY/SD area, you find many small motels at exits – and they often get used when blizzards shut down the interstate. As one drives along, there are signs on the interstate that say "Exit here when flashing" – meaning the interstate is closed ahead! Same at the entrances – there are gates that are shut when the interstate is shut due to blizzard conditions/drifted snow. Over Thanksgiving weekend, parts of I70, I94, I80 were shut down for a couple of days!

The 'box' construction of Super 8 and similar chains is much more energy efficient with interior doors, double/triple pane windows and good exterior wall insulation. I've even seen motels with outlets by every parking spot so you can plug in your car at night (engine heater) to insure it starts in the morning in places with -20 to -40 temps! It may not be as convenient with exterior doors right by your car, but may turn out to be less expensive as energy prices rise.

While in Denver, I attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Convention of the Association for Study of Peak Oil (ASPO-USA). You can review some of the presentations here at [www.ASPO-USA.com](http://www.ASPO-USA.com) Over 430 people, including US members of Congress, oil company executives, investment bankers, oil service industry representatives, and other interested parties attended. In an early issue, the CHN discussed the phenomena of peak oil production, and you'll recall the USA peaked on oil production in 1971, requiring us to import oil after that – and leading to the energy shocks/depressions of the 1970s (including those alternate day rationing and shortages). As you can tell from your natural gas bills, the USA peaked in natural gas production in the 1980 era, and despite that, we have added several hundred natural gas power plants. During that time, much of the USA industry and manufacturing has moved offshore to where there is cheaper natural gas available. Every day you read about smelters moving 'overseas, fertilizer and chemical industries 'relocating' to lower energy cost areas. Until there is a large scale importation of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), prices are likely to stay high. Even after that, they aren't going back to \$2/mcf like just a few years ago.

There's lots to read on the subject – just "Google" on peak oil and you can find a gazillion hits.

Since the Katrina 'spike' in prices has gone away, gas was running \$2 or so most of the trip, still up 40% from the beginning of the year. My prediction is \$2.50 and higher gas by next summer. It's cheaper to fly places, but then you lose out on the county hunting along the way! The Buick gets around 30mpg and now has 120, 000 miles on it.

While in Denver, I had the pleasure of meeting up with Larry, W0QE in the Broomfield, CO area. I needed to run that county, plus Boulder (which AB2LS needed). We talked for a good while before I had to get on with other things. Larry has been very busy with helping on the CW net, and putting out those tough CO/NE counties. We had a great 'brunch' and caught up on the latest happenings.

Many folks are closing in on Master's Gold, with less than 100 counties to go. I try to hit as many for the folks as I can on trips

while still headed in a direction without too many zigs and zags too far out of line.

If you get to Denver, drop in at Packrat Antiques – a place stuffed with old scientific instruments – telescopes, microscopes, old ‘quack’ medical things, telegraph items, and you name it – a virtual museum of ‘technology’ – but don’t wait too long – he has been thinking about ‘going out of business’ for years – but still there. Thousands and thousands of things – the store name says it all!

After the convention, it was headed east to Maryland to visit with sister’s family in Montgomery County. The weather was OK, and I slowly made my way east, running the lower two counties in NE, plus an occasional one in KS. Then into IA, and into northern MO.

Missouri has lots of hills and winding roads. The roads never go straight for more than 500 feet, and it is up and down and round and round. As I was going along on rural road AA at about 35 mph at about 4pm on a cloudy overcast sometimes rainy day, a deer decided it would attempt to go over my car. I never saw it coming or going. Suddenly, the windshield went splat – and there was a 2 inch deep indentation right in front of me, and the rest of the driver side of the windshield was cracked to smithereens. Little bits of glass fell inside. Fortunately, I didn’t lose control, the windshield was strong enough not to break completely, and I could stop the car. I got out and didn’t see anything. The steering seems OK. I was planning on going another 15 miles to the Super 8 motel in Kirksville. By scrunching down and looking through the bottom few inches in the middle of the windshield, I could see enough to drive. I headed into Kirksville and found the Super8 Motel.

When I got there, I discovered that the right front fender above the wheel also had a big, crunched in dent... apparently one hoof hit there, and the next one hit the windshield as the deer went over the car. No damage to grill, lights or other vital things.

After talking with the insurance folks, the next day I arranged to get the windshield fixed. None available locally, so it took two days to get back on the road headed east – being extra careful to watch for them deer. The damage to the car could wait until I got back to TX

to fix. I skipped a few counties in MO – I'll get them another time. After the 'deer' incident, I didn't want to hang around there, with it still being hunting season, and my previously planned route on some double letter back roads.

I headed further east – making a special detour to wind up going through Tyler WV, a desperately needed county for AB7RW. Along the way, I wound through most of the KY counties which I had not managed to get to a second time, leaving only one to go there, and into OH, then to WV.

Unfortunately, with the delay in MO, the timing didn't work out for a contact in Tyler. AB7RW got on from his mobile, but no one heard him calling, or heard him asking for relay, so we missed on the contact for Tyler, WV. That's a tough one to find a good spot to operate – many of the roads in deep gullies and hard to find someplace that has a good shot out of the 'hollers'. After running all three bands, and dragging my feet, hoping Phil would show up, it was on to more WV counties and over to the east side of VA.

Just about all the runs were 'on the move' – driving, operating, logging, navigating. Where there are small counties, I try to work the initial pile up quickly. Then I slow down and send QRZ and listen for those not as quick as the initial group. N3ISH, AB2LS, KA0SHC, N9STL, often in the pileups.

As I got to eastern VA, the floodgates opened, and it rained several inches as I zipped through counties – I hate running out of counties while folks are still calling. In most cases, I stopped short of the the CL sign and finished the run, going to the other bands. Sometimes, I would hit the CL as I finished, and run the CL on 40M or 20M or both, then start driving again and run the next county on 30M. Not too many motels around Lancaster, VA – but found one and hunkered down in the deluge. (tail end of tropical storm).

I stopped for a few days and ate Turkey around Thanksgiving time – also got to hear the Seldom Scene/Dry Branch Fire Squad at the Birchmere in Alexandria, VA – the best place to listen to music in the entire country. Everything from Bluegrass to folk music to country music to popular groups. ([www.birchmere.com](http://www.birchmere.com)). It's been

about 15 years since I managed to be back there at the right time for that.

Sunday after Thanksgiving it was back on the road headed to TX to get the car fixed, the bills paid – a pretty quick 4 day trip through NC, GA, AL, MS, LA. On the road by 7-7:30am, stop by sundown most days. Nothing on 20M SSB but “any mobile station ready to run a county’ for the first two hours most days at barely barely an audible 2x1 signal level. I’d venture most mobiles wouldn’t even hear that super weak signal – 20m must not doing much until much later – but I’d be working dozens on 30m, and probably worked W6TMD in at least half on 40M cw! Even when a mobile ran on 20M SSB, 90% of the time, the mobile was 33 or less, and no way to work without a relay, and no audible NC. No wonder folks don’t go run on 20M SSB unless they are on a trip for other reasons!

If N5UZW or K1LH or KA0SHC or KM9X were listening on 40M SSB, then there was reason to go to 40M SSB, but while in NC, and GA, there was ‘just no one there’ much of the time. Without running first on 20M and then QSY to 40M, folks seldom just ‘listen’ on 40M for weak mobiles. Then again, most days there are only a few mobiles that can QSY easily to 40M anyway around. When a 40M run is spotted, a half dozen or more quickly show up for the county.

W0GXQ mentioned he needed ST. Clair, AL, so as I left the Etowah county motel in the morning, I managed to get that one with a 15 mile detour. Some zigs, some zags, but so many counties and so little time! Hope I got some you needed!

I’ll be off again in 2-3 weeks headed to FL via southern LA, AL, MS and down to the Ft Lauderdale area for 10 days.

While I was ‘on the road’ at the end of the trip, NA7W was making a big trip from WA, OR down to TX, putting out the counties along the way. Lots of good cw counties. KO1U ran many in New England. W8YRB runs round in KS, MO.

One of the awards I’m working on (and I expect many others) is the Masters Platinum Award. You need to work mobiles that have their MG (mobiles like KI0JD, W3CR, N4CD, K5GE, AA9JJ, W6TMD,

KC0JG, KC3X, N8STF, ND3T, etc) to get credit for the county. Anyone can be working on that award from day one, but the contacts only count after the mobile gets the Master Gold award. Some folks have well over 1000 counties now worked toward Master Platinum. For those who have their MG, they can also get credit by working someone **from** the county who has Master's Gold. So I was looking for K5GE, KC0JG, and now W6TMD on cw so I would get credit – worked out well with many counties for me, as well as for everyone else.

The new MARAC Logger program will automatically track MP, so any contacts you make now and enter will eventually show up as giving you credit for MP award for that county.

More pictures next month.

## Intermittent Antenna Problem

More info from Ray, WG6X, on his antenna problems!

“I thought at one time the quick disconnect was the problem. It might have been part of the problem.....they are problematic

This was not the only problem, but was maybe small a part of the problem I guess.

After many tries to test the truck antenna and radio problem which some times

tested fine and the next time or two would act up again. At one time I thought I had two bad hamsticks since the problem only was on 20 SSB

intermittently and not other bands or CW. It didn't matter which mount I used

the problem kept showing up off and on. Since it did the same on two

different mounts on the truck I more or less figured it wasn't the coax after

I removed the coax switch and changed the coax between the radio

and the  
coax switch.

I finally got the antenna setup installed on my car and SWR'ed  
Wednesday  
and gave somewhat up trying to figure how to install the radio after  
spend  
all most all day Thursday that would make me happy I took off  
Friday to test  
the new antenna setup and the radio. I took along my backup 706 and  
used  
both 706's with no radio problems.

Today I again gave it another shot to find out what was wrong that  
was  
causing the 706 to display intermit some kind of filter display on the  
706 and  
the SWR to jump, plus on my last trip over to SC/NC/GA K2JG  
reported once I  
had bad audio on my transmission. I am not sure I have solved the  
problem  
still, but I found that the bolts holding the tool box on my truck bed  
had  
came loose. Since I had some antenna problems with my screwdriver  
coming  
home from Roanoke I had changed over to two antenna setups on the  
truck with  
one being the 20 meter hamstick and the a MO-3 with a 30 and 40  
meter  
hustler coil mounted off the tool box. I will have to make another run  
and  
heat up the radio to check to see if the loose bolts inside the tool box  
holding it to the truck bed was the main problem. This has really  
been one  
bear of a problem to solve and if it turns out to be the loose bolts  
inside  
the tool box it shows you can't assume anything.

So to sum it up I think I found the problem, bit then again several  
times

testing around town it seemly was fixed only to come back and bite me again.

I have been having a nasty intermittent problem on my truck which was only on 20 meter SSB. The problem was what appears to be a filter type display on the Icom 706 display and sometimes I notice the SWR would jump up on the Icom 706 display. This problem showed up intermittently no matter which of the two antenna mounts I used and even on the backup 20 meter hamstick.

Well after several times thinking I found the problem from quick disconnects to thinking I had two bad 20 meter hamsticks along with replacing coax switch, coax jumper cable, Icom 706, 20 meter antenna, and antenna mounts. I made a run last Friday checking out my car newly installed antenna setup and the Icom 706 checked out fine, so I knew it wasn't the radio. I again broke out the old multi-meter Monday and started checking grounds all the again. I still couldn't find a problem with the grounds as everything checked fine. I open the tool box mounted on the bed of the truck and removed items out of the way and found that the four self taping bolts the installers used had back out some. I tighten the bolts again and then took the truck for a run around town with no indicated problems but since this has happen after I thought I had fixed the problem I took the truck out for a run and everything checked out fine.”

De WG6X

