

County Hunter News OnLine

December 2025
Volume 21 Issue 12

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

The County Hunter News will provide you with interesting, thought provoking articles, articles of county hunting history, or about county hunters or events, ham radio or electronics history, general ham radio interest, and provide news of upcoming operating events.

We hope you will enjoy the County Hunter News. Feel free to forward, or provide links. Permission is given for copying or quoting in part or all provided credit is given to the CHNews and to the author of article.

CW County Hunter Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. There is .SSB activity now occasionally on 7188, 14336., 18136, 21336, 28336 . The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M .SSB runs usually after the run on 20M .SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.W6RK.com

For information on county hunting, check out the following resources:

The USACA award was sponsored by CQ Magazine, which unfortunately has gone the way of the dinosaurs. However, like other CQ Awards, they are still available. CQ awards require confirmation of all claimed contacts.

Rules and information are here:

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

MARAC sponsors the US Counties Award which can be earned in increments of 500 counties. The rules for this award are at:

<http://marac.org/documents/usa-ca-rules.pdf>

This award requires log data only to earn.

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at:

<http://marac.org/awards.pdf>

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out.

Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

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

Notes from the Editor

1) Sunspots – Still have them by the hundreds. . A few days of horrible K index, but most of month nice and clear with propagation. 10M has been good on some days – be sure to check it occasionally. Upper bands continue to work – especially FT-8. The sunspot cycle is winding down, but slowly, so enjoy the upper bands while you can. In a few years, we'll be back to the doldrums. West Coast and east coast stations having a ball on 10M. Not so much fun for those in center of country – skip to long most of the time. Lots of solar flares – and K indexes up to K-8 levels here and there. If you're out mobile on those days, it could be not so much fun. At the end of the month, the K index shot up for a couple days – over 4 for 3-4 days. Not fun if you're out mobile.

2) QSO Party reports

Not this month. Many contests including ARRL Sweepstakes, DX contests, and a dozen others around the world. Some special event stations on for your enjoyment. Will be a while before the main Spring QSO Party season begins.

3) Flu Season Again

Time to get your annual Flu Shot and COVID booster shots. Too many county hunters have left us in the past few years from COVID and complications of preventable flu effects. Sadly, our 'government has gone off the rails on this. Still recommends for seniors. Maybe they are trying to kill off the idiots who are anti-vax everything?

4) Getting to be more 'senior'

One of the old adages is 'that you'll likely travel more once you retire and reach 65'. Likely true for many. Let's see....I travel to my General Practitioner every 4 months or so. Travel to my eye doc every six months. Dermatologist every 6 months or so – seems I grow bumps here and there for no reason. To my dentist twice a year for cleaning, tooth exam. To my ear doc to get the wax out of my ears every two months.

To my hearing aid center when aids clog up and can't fix myself. Maybe to Costco optical for new glasses every two years.

Once a year to the lung doctor. Once a year to my polio doctor. Haven't seen my heart doc in 2 years – said I'm the least 'sick' of any of his patients he says. – call when needed – hi hi. I make sure I get at least 1000mg of sodium a day. Last episode of 'very low sodium diet' – supposedly good for good heart health – but me in the hospital for a week. Most folks likely get 'too much' sodium in the typical American diet.

My GP says EXERCISE! Exercise. Exercise!!!!!! When to you get late 70s and beyond, exercise is critical. If you don't exercise and sit around all day, you go downhill even faster. OK. I get it but some days, just hard to get motivated to get to gym. Pool during summer great here for 'water aerobic' type exercises, but that ends. It's 55F in pool now. Brrrr...Fortunately my suburb has great rec facilities and not crowded during weekdays. Try to get there twice a week.

Also, he recommends adding protein powder to diet. Protein critical to keep muscles working and you need a good diet of lean protein. OK....I usually add some organic

protein powder (available at Costco, Sames, Walmart etc) to my daily smoothie made in in Vitamix blender. Half banana, some strawberries, carrot pieces, kiwi or half apple, cup of almond milk (or regular milk). Scoop protein powder. (and my daily Miralax). Good.

Well, I'm not going to run any ten mile races or climb mountains but want to collect by Social Security for another 10 years plus. Plus some more money from my IRA. We've had county hunters putting out counties in their 90s.

5) Weather

It's official meteorology winter weather wise. Winter is those 90 days with the center on the December Solstice – from November to February.

Calendar winter is otherwise. Well, either way, it's getting cold and the snow is flying up north. Predictions are all over the map. Some suggest the polar vortex is going to not be clean this year, with fingers sticking down, leading to storm after storm across the country and lots of snow. Maybe a winter like 1968 with lots of snow, snow, snow. And cold. Who knows. So far in TX, it's been nice, but the snow is flying up north. A foot or more in MN/ND.

Naturally, county hunter activity has to be planned around the weather.. Or wait till spring, or be in the south.

Keep watching spots and planned activity. Help out those mobiles that venture out.

6) County Hunter News – via Email only

Due to some webmaster issues, the County Hunter News is distributed only by email. There are several hundred on the email list (only your address is shown on your copy). For 20 years, KK7X has uploaded each issue to the County Hunter NewsOnline site but now has some problems that preclude monthly uploads.

Michigan Mini 2026

2026 Michigan MARAC Mini Convention in Midland, MI will be held April 23-26. Dorie, N8WTQ, will once again be hosting us. Look for more details in the RoadRunner

and on the MARAC.org website. See you there!

Mobile Activity in November

At the end of October

NOKV/W0GXQ running counties in CO.

AB7NK/K7SEN spotted in AZ

N9JF spotted in AZ

In November 2025

There were many days with no county activity. Some days with only a spot or two for fixed counties (FT-8) or a park or two. Here's what happened for county hunter mobiles.

N9JF heads to NM running parks there.

N5MLP ran counties in TX

NF0N headed out in NE to an event.

WY0A busy in NE putting out counties for 2 days

AB7NK/K7SEN put out counties in far west/south TX for several days. Cleaned up a lot of needs.

End date 11/26.....

There were busy ARRL CW and SSB Sweepstakes during the month. Lots of opportunities for counties/prefixes, call combos, etc. The exchange takes a bit of time

but not too difficult, even on paper. Heck, you can work a 100 and not even submit a log if you don't want. (or didn't write down or type in the exchanges – hi hi) .

POTAMAP.US

From K3IMC Forum Post by N9EAT:

potamap.us - County functionality added

Message: Cainan N9FZ has added county boundary functionality to his potamap.us website. You can use this resource to help plan POTA and SOTA activations for 48 of the 50 states (I need to provide him with a shape file for Alaska's Judicial Districts, and Rhode Island.) You can click a pota entity and it will say what county it is located in. Do note that of course, many parks could span multiple counties so keep this in mind. Cainan also makes the Hunterlog POTA/SOTA software and I am working with him to add county logging data into his program for logging POTA, SOTA, and KFF entities that are located in a single county.

On the Road with N4CD

Not much 'travel' this month.

Each year, the Vintage Radio and Phonograph Society (VRPS) holds an annual convention. This year it was in Grapevine TX about 20 miles away from my QTH. It's a two day affair with a few hour presentations, two main auctions, a display of radio/phono equipment competing for 'best of show' awards, and an annual dinner.

I headed over on Friday for the preview of the '\$10 and up' and 'tubes and paper' auctions. Usually there are a couple hundred entries -tables and tables full of things up for bid.



First, there's the tubes and paper auction. You never know what will show up tube wise other than boxes and boxes of tubes – some sorted, some in original boxes, some high power tubes, CRTs, radar tubes, and everything in between. Tens of millions of tubes were made. Occasionally, really rare tubes show up from the 1910-1920 era such as 'audions' – the first vacuum tubes. Even tubes from the 1920s can be 'rare' and run \$50 or more each. Others you can buy box full for \$10.

These days I don't even own a piece of gear with a tube in it. (about the only thing hams own with tubes these days are high power amps, and maybe a CRT in an oscilloscope – or perhaps a 'boat anchor radio' from their younger days just for nostalgia.). There are many 'collectors' of tube gear out there, though.

First auction is the tubes and paper' auction. You can buy lots of early magazines from the 1920s to the current date – there were tons of early radio magazines showing how to build your own radio, for advertising purposes manufacturer's ads/handouts, blank telegrams, advertising signs – from simple to ones with neon. That takes about 90 minutes to complete. Some tubes like ype 47s, the 5w audio output tubes often seen in quality gear of the 1930s and 1940s, can bring \$60 and up for a tested tube. Other radio

tubes from the 1920s – ones with fragile filaments or low production – same thing. Didn't buy a thing.

I did look over the \$10 and up auction gear. Want some Edison wax cylinders for your 1900s-1920 'phonograph' with giant horn speaker? This is the place to be. Boxes full of them. There were maybe a dozen ham rigs for sale – Hallicrafters and National from the 50s and 60s. I did see one not often seen – a Heathkit CB-1 Citizen Band radio. Probably could put on 10M easily.

In the 1950s, Heath put out three different ham versions of the famous Heathkit 'Lunchboxes' – what hams often called the Twoer, Sixer and Tener. Rigs for 2M, 6M and 10M AM with super-regen receivers and a couple watt output AM modulated transmitters. They were often introductory rigs to the VHF bands. You'll recall that the FCC created the Novice and Technician license classes in the 1950s with 5 wpm code tests required. Tens of thousand got licenses. Heathkit sold a lot of these kits.

Well, the radios worked – 2 and 6m were empty. Some folks made their own rigs – often converters in front of an HF receiver, and a couple watt transmitter. Back then – well, there were often problems on 6M in areas where there were TV Channel 2 – not far away frequency wise from the 6m band. That spurred a lot of 2m activity.

The receivers in these radios were super regens – sensitive but wide as a barn door in selectivity. We are talking 50 KHz wide bandwidth. Didn't make much difference as most folks congregated on one or two frequencies in an area. Back then, in metro areas, you could find a few dozen hams within a 30 mile radius. Put up a vertical 30 feet up and join the local 'activity'. The rigs would work on 6/12v, too and 'hilltopping' – going to a mountain top or high area – became popular – you could work out even more. The rig was a crystal controlled transmitter.

There were few Teners sold. Hams already were on 10m with regular gear and when the sunspot cycle was good- it was busy. It was easily overloaded and not useful in a busy band – but there were still many local nets in evenings you could join.

When the Citizen Band was created in the 1950s (and the 11m band snatched away from hams) – Heathkit put the same rig on the CB band. That rig is even rarer – but who wants an 11m Lunchbox? (that receives about 10 channels at once?) ...

Heathkit CB-1 – Citizen Band 27 MHz radio – mid 50s.



Heathkit CB-1

Saw one of theses in use at a Lake George NY boat rental place in the 1950s



Weller Solder Iron – vintage Still useful!

There were tons of consumer radios – tube radios – consoles – table tops, portables, transistor sets, novelty radios – up for grabs. Interesting to see. Some collectors only buy 'wood' consoles. Other only buy the same 'color' radios or a specific make. Some just buy lots of everything. There were about 150 bidders for that auction.

Ham rigs



Didn't buy anything! No need for old boat anchors – got that out of my system. Not even newer transistor rigs – which there were none this day. Skipped the higher price item auction on Saturday. I'm not into fixing old rigs these days – they were fun back

then – but this is not 'back then'. I'm trying to clean out some of my junk. Still, it was great to see the old stuff which brings back lots of memories



Just some of the stuff for sale – 25% of what's up for auction

Ham radio started – well, in the 1910 era. There were experimenters – usually with galena crystal receivers – and a spark gap transmitter. Many just listen to the long wave radio traffic hoping to hear something. If you built a simple transmitter, you might have a 10-20 mile range unless you had lots of money to afford really good gear. Back then it was the 'wild west' with commercial, ham, maritime, sharing the long wave spectrum. Ships at sea often leased Marconi equipment – even very expensive back then – and shore stations had giant antenna system. Most hams had a hard time putting up a wire antenna a hundred feet long. Well, that continued for a few years – until the Titanic sank.....and folks got serious about 'radio interference'. Hams were soon banished to the useless spectrum above 200 meters – about 1.5 MHz.

The best equipment of the day was a Marconi Magnetic Detector and rotary spark gap of 250w or more. Tubes didn't appear for the most part till after WW1 other than a few audion detectors that were finicky and unreliable. Hams were off the air during WW1.

During WW1, tube technology leaped ahead. The VT-1 receiver triode tube and VT-2 transmitter tube were produced in volume. At wars end – the era of the tube receiver had arrived.

After WW1, hams were lucky to be back on the air – but with assigned bands – harmonically related – 160,80,40, 20 and 10m. (15m would arrive till the 1950s).

In the early 50s – the Broadcast Band was created – two frequencies assigned. Suddenly within a year after 1922, there was incredible demand for radio equipment. A dozen tube manufacturers appeared producing tens of thousands of tubes – and manufactures churned out hundreds of thousands of radios. What started as crystal sets – one tube grid leak and regen sets – quickly evolved into multiple tube sets – TRFs, reflex radios- and finally superhets by the end of the 1920s. Early radios were discarded into the trash. Your 1922 earphone only radio was obsolete by a table top or console radio with build in speaker. Well, it took a while.

In 1922, only less 1/3rd of America had wired power! Early sets ran on batteries – but with increased tube count – well, you had better have a/c power. Luckily for the radio industry, there was a tremendous push by the government to 'wire America'. Soon, the percentage of folks without power dropped to under 25% and even further as the 1940s arrived.

Radios were often expensive. Console radios were furniture in the living room. Folks

would gather to listen to specific shows. What started as thousands of individual radio stations with their own programming evolved into networks of stations – with programming brought in by telephone lines. Now you could have National programming – or listen to the Grand Old Opry on Saturday nights. Or a comedy show.

Needless to say, there were tons of radios that soon became obsolete from the 1920s. By the 1930s, most radios were 'all American Five' sets with pentagrid converter/oscillator stage, two IF stages, a detector/AVC tube and audio amp. Higher end sets had more audio tubes for more output power. That design would continue for decades until the transistor age happened.

So what did this mean for hams? Well, regens worked OK for CW and AM. With a super het, to receive CW, you had to add in a 'BFO' – beat frequency oscillator – so you could receive a cw signal. Most transmitters were just 'oscillators'. The amazing new technology in the 1930s was 'crystal controlled transmit'. Yeah – ham signals drifted all over the bands – until crystal controlled transmit. It took another 10 years before transmit VFO's got to be stable enough for every day use! Thus the era of crystal controlled transmit started. The big deal was owning a rig with a crystal!

As you recall....WW2 happened and hams were off the air again. Zip. You had to take down your big antennas. A lot of hams sold their quality commercial gear to the government. The government pushed technology – VHF- UHF – much cheaper production of crystals – magnetos – microwaves.

After the war, the ham bands were released back to hams. Surplus gear was everywhere. One could buy receivers (ARC-5s) to convert to the ham bands – as well as transmitters. VHF gear you could put on 2, 220 and 432 MHz bands. Reasonable. Keys were sold for a buck or less – but then again – minimum wage was about \$.50/hour so it took 2 hours of work to buy one. Let's see....in 2025, the minimum wage was \$7.50 but many places were paying \$15/hr. So that bargain wasn't that great. There are still zillions of J-38 keys around – and they were never used in combat – they were code practice/instructional keys for learning CW! Six manufacturers churned them out.

The era of the superhet receiver continued till the 1990s – a 70 stretch of technology - not a bad run. Then....the DSP era arrived. Suddenly, your receiver had front end filters....and the signal disappeared into giant IC circuits of DSP chips running algorithms to detect, filter, select, reduce noise, and amplify. You could hold a QRP 5 or 10 band radio in your hand, or a 10 or 15 lb radio on your desk with more capabilities than any radio before it. Amazing – but along the way, millions of sets were produced. Thousands of models of ham gear churned out from a couple dozen producers. How

many new hams ever heard of Hallicrafters? Heathkit? National? Eldico? Eico? Knight Kits? Johnson? SBE? Even Collins?

Same for TV sets. Who new to the ham radio hobby know of RCA Zenith, Quasar, Philco, Motorola, Dumont, etc. TV sets? Or even console radios – Atwater Kent - RCA, GE, Emerson, and a dozen others.

Guess that's it for nostalgia. What will the now 20 year olds be thinking in 50 years about the good old days of ICOM, Yaesu, Kenwood, Elecraft radios? What will they be using in year 2075 for ham gear? Or maybe just implanted brain chips where you just think of who you want to contact and you're in instant worldwide communications 24/7?

The era of cable TV and then the internet – then the cell phone – changed the dynamic of 'personal communications'. What will another 50 years bring? It's really hard to imagine.

Not much mobiling other than than weekly trips over the local park to chase activators, put out a few Sweepstakes contacts, participate in the Wednesday CW Test.

Awards Issued

None that I've seen this month. Likely some coming soon with the trips to far southwest TX.

Events for County Hunters

Not much

There are no QSO Parties. There are some contests that might provide 'band counties' including the ARRL 10M contest, the ARRL 160m contest but not much else. Lots of

others of interest to some.

Check out ARRL Contest Corral for December at:

<https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2025/December%202025%20Corral.pdf>

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That's all folks. Happy Holidays.