County Hunter News

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Volume 8, Issue 4

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation**.**

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

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

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

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:
http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:
http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at:
http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out. Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

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

Notes from the Editor

1) March has proven to be a good month. Quite a few folks have finished up for USACA and other awards as the weather allows mobiles to head out to some of the last needed counties.

2) The price of gas is soaring. (that should not be news to the CHNews readers). Between the constrained supply worldwide, the loss of oil from war ravaged or insurgent ravaged countries like Libya, Nigeria, Egypt, and others, plus the threatened sanctions on Iran, prices are now up to where gasoline is near $4 and climbing, with $4.50 and more along the coasts. Refinery shortages in the PNW and east coast, brought on by the shut down of uneconomic refinery business in general, had driven those prices higher.

The Obama administration is currently 'dragging' its feet on implementation of the EPA Tier 3 gasoline requirements, that would demand that the current low sulfur content of gasoline be reduced another 50%. It's scheduled to go into effect soon, and will increase gas prices by 25 cents per gallon, minimum, as more steps are required at the refinery. It looks like this will be delayed 'until after the election'. Plan on another 25c a gallon increase then.

From the WSJ

“The Obama administration, facing political heat over high gasoline prices, may delay new rules that would cut pollution from cars but also could bring higher prices at the pump, environmental and industry leaders said.

The rules would require refiners to make cleaner-burning gasoline and auto makers to build cars that emit fewer smog-forming pollutants. The Environmental Protection Agency was scheduled to roll out the rules before April, but it hasn't yet submitted them for White House review.

"We expect that timing will begin to slip, perhaps for political considerations" said American Petroleum Institute President Jack Gerard."

Refiners say the new EPA standards would force them to strip more sulfur from gasoline, raising prices. The American Petroleum Institute had said an earlier version of the proposed rules could raise gas prices by as much as 25 cents a gallon."

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So do you think these will be delayed until.....after the election this fall? Is the Pope Catholic?

Get set for the price hike AFTER the fall election. Obama can't afford any more increases in gas prices.

Here, the price of gas is up by 40c per gallon in six weeks and climbing. 3/21/12 the price was $3.79 and 'skyrocketing' to the levels Obama said we needed back in 2008 during his election campaign. His 'Energy Czar' Chu said we should be paying "European Prices" - which then were $11/gal in Norway and more than $8/gal over most of Europe. After all, what is going to pay for ObamaCare other than new crushing high "carbon and consumption' taxes?

3) Solar fireworks. Some days have great propagation. Other days you can barely hear loud stations that are usually 40 over S9. With the increased solar activity, it also brings on increasing flares and CMEs (coronal mass ejections) that cause HF blackouts or HF degradation.

4) Lots of QSO Parties to report on this month, plus a few LC WBOW trips. It was a busy month on weekends – with some days with almost no mobile activity. Feast and famine.

5) It looks like another month full of QSO parties coming up, from MO to MT to ND, NE, MI, FL, GA....hundreds of counties, and hopefully some good mobiles. MI, GA and FL usually full of mobiles. Others can be a toss up. Lots of MI should be also coming up with the mini there in April as mobiles head to Traverse City.

Mobile Activity this month

At the end of Feb:

Dave, **KW1DX** was running up in VT – he headed that way on a ski trip. Later he returned back home putting out a few more.

Bill, **K2HVN** left DE and headed on down to FL, putting them out along the way

KB0BA , Lowell, and Sandra, **N0XYL** were spotted out in many MO, IL, counties.

KD6HWD was spotted out and about in TX.

Dave, **KE3VV,**was spotted down in FL.

Dan, **AA0TT,** was spotted in KS, OK, KS, WY, MO,

Jack, **WD4OIN,** was spotted down in SC.

N9AC was spotted in AL, GA and FL Then in IL, KY,

WB5TMW spotted out in west TX.

Greg, **NM2L**, made a quick trip up to ME. Only had a 40M hamstick on the vehicle, but used a tuner with some success to tune to 15M. He stopped a few times to string up wire antenna and get on 20M in certain counties.

Jim, **N9JF,s**potted out in IA, NE, IL, WI, Later in March out in IL, OH, MI

Don, **AE3Z**, spotted out in a few in NY state.

Dick, **N8CIJ** spotted in GA and SC

Jack, **KC7YE** headed down to the San Diego area, then up through a few in NV, then up through OR to home.

Paul, **WD9EJK,** was out and about in IL counties. Was up on 17M SSB in many of them too.

Don, **K3IMC,** put out a few in FL and AL.

Steve, **AK8A,** left south TX and headed north, running them along the way.

Scottie**, N4AAT,** headed over to GA on a long one day trip.

Bob, **N5KUC** was spotted out in NM

The team of **W8FNW/W4FNW** were spotted in many counties in FL

Skip, **AD0H** was noted out in IA.

Jim, **KB6TAL**, noted out in AZ

Ron, **K2RP** was noted mobile in CA.

The team of Mary, **AB7NK** and Neil, **K7SEN** spotted in AZ.

Bob, **K7TM** ran a bunch in the ID QSO Party, then continued around in ID putting them out.

KB0BA, Lowell, and Sandra**, N0XYL**, made a long trip across IA and NE, getting the last counties for Ralph, WB4FFV.

Don, **N5XG,** headed on down through Limestone TX to run a few for the folks.

Mike, **NF0N,** headed across northern NE to get some there and in SD for Ralph, WB4FFV.

Jim, **N8HAM,** put out a few in OH.

Kyle, **WA4PGM**, headed to Lunenburg, VA, to get the LC WBOW for Scottie.

Stan, **AC8W,** spotted out in a few in MI

Darl, **NA8W,** spotted in PA and OH on multiple trips. Made it into WV, too.

Paul, **N7JPF,** headed down to Wheeler OR for a LC WBOW for NC4MO.

Jack, **WD4OIN**, was spotted in NC, SC, GA and FL.

Terry**, WQ7A,** spotted out in OR on a big trip around the state.

Ron**, KB6UF,** fired up the mobile to get to Limestone, AL – the last WBOW for Ralph, WB4FFV.

Kerry, **W4SIG,** was out in MS and TN, then headed on over to ARK to run a bunch there. He's traveling with his job now.

Alex**, K5XY,** noted mobile in NM.

Kerry, **W4SIG,** was over in AR giving out counties.

Jack, **WD4OIN**, spotted running counties in FL around the state then headed north.

Ed, **K8ZZ**, put out counties in Northern MI and into WI.

K0PVW – Major County, OK

This part of OKLA is rattlesnake territory

Sign at Gloss Mountain State Park

Kerry**, W4SIG** headed to TX and ran them to and fro.

Ed, **KN4Y**, was on for a trip down to mid FL and back. Kept 17 and 21 MHz hopping when it was open.

Silver **N9QS** ran a bunch in MO.

Don, **N5XG** was putting them out west/SW of his QTH including the rarer ones like Hood and Somervill, TX.

End date 3/24

Anniversary of Titanic Sinking

The majestic ship Titanic sank 100 years ago in April 1912. This is one of the first occasions where wireless at sea was brought to the attention of the public in a big way.

Steaming along at 21 plus knots, in known iceberg known hazard area, the Titanic hit the iceberg and sank in less than 3 hours. With lifeboats for only half the passengers (planned to take passengers to a nearby ship in the event of a ship problem), and only loaded to 1/3rd capacity, the fast sinking Titanic disappeared from view with most of its passengers.

Radio played a big role in the catastrophe. The Marconi spark gap transmitter and magnetic detector receivers of the era sent out the first messages and alerted the world to the impending disaster. The Marconi wireless operators, not a part of the Titanic 'crew', stayed at their stations until there was no more power and no more standby power to continue.

Ships were not required to have radio – and nearly all that did only had a single operator who would work a 16 hour shift.

Unfortunately, at that time, there was no requirement for ships to monitor an emergency frequency. (well, with 'spark' everyone was sort of on the same frequency). The radio was there to handle to messages to and from the well-to-do passengers who paid dearly to send wireless messages. That was the first priority – making money and paying the salary of the

wireless operator and all the VERY expensive equipment. Iceberg warnings came in at lower priority than paying passenger message traffic.

One radio operators managed to make it into a lifeboat, the other clung to the bottom side of an upside down collapsible lifeboat but died of exposure. The other continued to help on the rescue vessel, coordinating the information on the status of passengers even though having seriously frost bitten feet once he made it to the Carpathia.

Recreated Titanic Radio Room
for the Blockbuster movie "Titanic"

The Titanic radio installation consisted of a 5 KW synchronous rotary spark gap feeding a 4 wire flat top type antenna up 250 feet above the sea.

This may have been the first use of "SOS" which had just been agreed upon as the International Emergency signal. Up until then, CQD - CQ Distress or DOE had been used as emergency signals. Now, just about any kid or scout can tell you how to send 'S O S' in Morse code!

Shortly thereafter, the Radio Act of 1912 required all passenger ships to have two qualified radio operators that could man the radio 24 hours a day. (Had the nearby ship (10 miles away) had a radio on, rather than turning it off after Titanic sent message after message for hours, the outcome would have been totally different. As it was, they merrily steamed away until morning when the radio was fired up again.

Adding to the creation of the situation – the wireless on the Titanic had been down for seven hours that day as the Marconi men worked to fix the transmitter. A burned out transformer kept the transmitter off the air, and consequently, once fixed, meant they had a massive backlog of outgoing messages. That slowed down incoming messages with warnings of ice fields, and meant that some of the incoming messages about the ice dead ahead never made it to the

bridge. The Melba had sent a message indicating large ice field dead ahead of Titanic, but the message sat under a paperweight waiting for the outgoing messages to all be sent first before the operator planned to ran it up to the bridge. That never happened...the ship hit the iceberg first!

In the next month, you'll see dozens of specials on TV, no doubt. In addition, they'll be some ham radio special event stations celebrating the role of 'wireless' in the rescue of the Titanic passengers.

The best, by far, movie that will be on TV – is the film "A Night to Remember" - real old but the most accurate of all the films.

The following 10 minute clip, an early newsreel, about 10 minutes long, is about the Titanic but was filmed on her sister ship, the Olympic.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93bf8ITtiVI&feature=related

Special event station W0S will be on a the Titanic Museum in Branson MO the 13th, 14, and 15th of April

http://www.wzeros.com/Square1net/Titanic_Special_Event.html

Other special event stations

http://coastradio.intco.biz/maritime/ships/titanic/Titanic-2012.htm

and more.

Here's a good site showing the Titanic Radio Rooms and good commentary

http://www.hf.ro/

and another site:

http://jproc.ca/radiostor/titanic.html

You'll probably be 'burned out' after the month long series of specials and articles. It's an

important milestone, though, in wireless/radio history. This event brought the importance and significance of 'wireless' to the public's attention like nothing else. It became a 'necessity' to protect life and property after this.

On the Road with N4CD – 1

The Boles Children's home received a donation of several hundred 'vintage' table, console and other radios over in Quinlan, Texas, and there was a big two day auction planned, so I headed over that way. Everything was 'as is, as found' and there was a lot of stuff that needed fixing or was in sad shape, but a lot of good bargains to be fixed up. Some of the stuff likely worked or would with a little TLC, and replacing capacitors. Most of the things had been acquired in the 80s and 90s by a collector, and nothing fixed.

The sale was all broadcast band (AM, some FM) sets – from the 50s and 60s and 70s, with a few older things thrown in. The only ham goodies were a rack mount in nice shape Collins 51J4, which wound up selling for $325 and an early Ecophone receiver for 35 or $40. . There were lots of radios for sale at reasonable prices if you like plastic and wood radios from the 50s and 60s mainly.

Crosley Table Top

There was a pinball machine, a juke box, a few Victrola era players, quite a few novelty radios,

Victrola

Horn Speaker

A horn speaker was a 'earphone' on steroids. It would take a few milliwatts of power and make it audible. Most of the early battery radio sets might put out 10 milliwatts on a good day, but a good horn speaker would give you good volume at a ten milliwatts audio input.

Rick, AI5P, also stopped by for the auction. He wound up filling up his car to the brim with some of the bargains and then headed back home to New Mexico.

Rick, AI5P – Quinlan TX at the Vintage Radio Sale

All told the sale raised $4,000 for the Children's home. I did my part and bought a few things, but not too much. Hi hi Rick had a car loaded up to the top with radios.

Mississippi QSO Party

from the 3830 reflector:

N5NA/mobile

It took longer to reach MS from my location in S. AR than I thought it would so we were about an hour late getting started.

This was my first time operating the MSQP and it was a blast! Seems there were non-stop callers all day. 40m was my big band with 20m a close second. I made about 50% more QSO's than I thought I would when I started. The 8 phone QSO's and 4 10m CW QSO's were all with N6MU. Thanks John!

A highlight of the day was meeting Kerry, W4SIG, in Tallahatchie about 0.7 mile from Coahoma. Kerry was parked on the side of the road studying the map when we drove past. We quickly pulled over for an nice eyeball QSO and pictures.

I had 13 MS county mults and 48 non-county mults. Thanks to all the DX stations calling: DL3DXX, YV5OIE, LY5A, OE5KE, SP5SA, DL3GA, DL3IAC, G3WPF, DL8MLD, G3XVR, and PA3ARM.

I operated from 16 counties. County totals are: Washington(91), Holmes(85), Issaquena(75), Yazoo(73), Tallahatchie(72), Sunflower(69) Carroll(68), Humphreys(60), Attala(60), Grenada(54), Bolivar(52), Yalobusha(49), Leflore(47), Sharkey(42), Coahoma(41), and Montgomery(26).

Thanks to the following stations for contributing more than half the QSO's: N6MU(37), KV8Q(28), WB2ABD(27), K9WA(26), K8MFO(25), NT2A(25), W0GXQ(24), W8WVU(24), W4UCZ(20), W4IHI(19), K9EN(18), NO5W(17), N9QS(16), AD5WI(16), K8QWY(16), NN9K(15), K7TM(15), K0PC(15), K0MPH(14), K9FMX(13), WA6KHK(13), W5QP(12), K5GE(12), W0ZQ(11), W0EAR(11), W9MSE(11), and N4JF(11).

My equipment was a K3/100, Scorpion SA-680, Dell Inspiron 2200 running CQ/X, and a 2000 Chevrolet C2500 truck. The Scorpion is a new addition replacing a High Sierra HS-1500.

W3DYA/mobile

Great Event - Thanks to everyone who followed me around; there were many. High QSO count (trivia): N6MU-35, WB2ABD-29, K8MFO-26, KV8Q-25, K9WA-24, NT2A-22, and W0GXQ-21.

Best band openings I've seen in years - hope it continues to improve for OKQP next month.

I had 839 contacts in the contest, but the unusual thing was before and after the contest.

Usually I don't operate on CHN to and from a QSO party. On the way, I'm trying to go as fast as possible without stopping; same coming back home. But I had a couple of requests in LA and detoured off I20 to run Winn and Caldwell. Unfortunately, I missed a turn onto a little road and wasted about an hour getting back to Caldwell, LA.

It was worth it, because I had 97 contacts on 20, 30, and 40M.

The big surprise was band openings on 10, 12, and 15M during the MS contest.

So after ending the contest in Wayne, I operated on CHN Sunday from Wayne to Claiborne, MS. I had 427 contacts in ten counties with 13 on 10M, 16 on 12M, and 57 on 15M, 71 on 17M, and 39 on 30M; and over 200 on 20M, 40M12), and 80M(2).

W3DYA/m in Wayne MS

I can't blame Murphy for a couple of interruptions to an otherwise smooth operation; entirely an operator problem:

I use the Logikey K5 keyer and had a couple of bad moments when I pressed two-keys to stop the beacon and confused the keyer. Finally figured out my timing was off and paid more attention but left a couple of long silences before I could reset and respond.

Everyone knows the flying saucer antenna is flawless... but when I started in Wayne, MS, on Sunday morning, the MFJ-925 didn't seem to find SWR anywhere. Same result even when I turned the tuner off. So I disconnected the tuner and worked all CHN bands with nearly full

power in Wayne.

Before running the next county, I checked connections and things looked OK. I even took the cover off the tuner (ten #$%*&@!! screws!) but it looked perfect. Then I removed my ground connection on the IC-706. I'll never know whether it was a bad connection or the ground connection causing a problem, but everything worked as it was supposed to the rest of the day. Although I don't expect the FS setup to work in rain (or snow or sleet), it certainly does the job when dry; and it rides so nice on my flexible mounting arrangement compared to the heavier Hustler set up.

Again, thanks to everyone who joined up - lots of fun!

NO5W (TX) 54 cw 40 mults

MSQP-2012 was a very fine QSO party with a number of good mobiles and several fixed stations. Being in Texas I could only work MS on 40m and 80m although I did have one QSO with WQ5L on 20m. From the sound of people calling MS stations on 20m and 15m it sounded like the party was well-attended on all bands 80-15. Most QSOs were with N5NA(17), W3DYA(8), K4ZGB(7), and W4SIG(6). Excellent signals from the mobiles. Thanks for spending time and resources to help put on the party.

N6MU (CA) 134 cw 34 SSB 56 Mults

10 and 15 open most of the day. Thanks for all the QSYs. No propagation on 40 until the last two hours. Top mobile for me was N5NA with 37 Qs followed closely by W3DYA with 35 and W4SIG with 34 and K4ZGB with 10
K

V8Q (OH) 135 cw 59 mults

Another real fun QSO Party. Glad that I had the time this year. I usually have an annual commitment this weekend but not this year.
Lots of mobiles to chase around all day, such as:
W4SIG 31 (21),
N5NA 27 (15),
W3DYA 25 (15),
K4ZGB 19 (12),
W4OQG 5 (4).

K0PC (MN) 67 cw 44 mults

Thanks to the mobile operators for their excellent operations. N5NA's APRS map even let me know when they had finished lunch and I worked them as they were pulling out of the parking lot.
I enjoy following mobiles around almost as much as doing the mobile operation myself.

Interesting Regenerode Kit

Sold by Kit Radio Company in the UK, this is a solid state regenrode receiver. It features a regenerative receiver built at 10.7 MHz, which is the IF. It is a up/down converter type design that covers 80/40/20M. The bands are converted up/down to the 10.7 MHz IF.

Kit Radio Company KRC-2 Regenerode

It sells for 59 British Pounds (about $100),

http://www.kitradio.co.uk/page10.htm

Here's a nice review and inside pics during assembly by EI5DD

http://ei5dd.com/KRC-2

The advantage of a regenerode is that you can optimize the regenerative receiver – and you don't have to keep adjusting the gain as you change bands. You can optimize the crtitical components for highest "Q" only at one frequency as opposed to trying to do it over five or 8 octaves from 500 KHz to 30 MHz (an octave is a doubling of frequency – ie, from 500 KHz to 1000 Khz to 2000 KHz to 4000 Khz, etc). For a traditional 1-30 MHz regenerative receiver, the regen detector has to cover a 30 to 1 range, and the optimum values for 1 MHz are a lot different than at 30 MHz. It is difficult to make the regenerative receiver work well over that wide a frequency range, and not require constant shifting of the regen control as you go from one of the band to the other. Thus, for a regen that covers the entire range you have to compromise on the detector components.

Maximum sensitivity only occurs near the exact point where the set goes into oscillation.

This design allows you to have a typical "superhet" front end, that converts signals down to roughly 10.7 MHz. You would have band pass filters for the bands you use plus image rejection filters in the converter section. The IF only has to work at one frequency – so you aren't fiddling with the regen control constantly.

Nifty.

Back in the 1930s, hams were doing lots of experiments with regenerode receivers. As technology improved and hams wanted to use higher frequencies, they built 'converters' for the higher HF bands to put in front of their 160M or 80M regenerative receiver, using them as IF s. You could get the highest gain at lower frequencies with the tubes of the day. Back in the 1930s, anything much above 22 MHz was 'way up there' and 'Ultra high frequencies' started at 30 MHz and up and included the 10 and 5 meter band. Most basic receivers were 'deaf' on 10M. It took new tube designs to work well at those frequencies and they slowly developed.

The era of the 'regenerode' lasted to the end of the 1930s, when conventional superhets dropped in price and most hams could move to home built and commercial superhet receivers with the common IF's of 455 – 457 KHz. (in simple terms, standard IF transformers, variable capacitors that had two parts that worked in sync – one for the RF tuned circuit and one for the local oscilator, along with the coils that matched them – appeared for every day use). The prices of tubes dropped. However, there were no crystal filters that folks could afford back then – so you didn't have selectivity better than 'AM bandwidth' for CW. You could put a filter in the audio, but of course, that doesn't help with nearby strong signals that pump the IF gain. A 'regenerative IF with a Q multiplier was sometimes used to get better narrow bandwidth. Radios with crystal filters were twice the price or more!

(Note – readers will recall that 'regeneration' was used in 1940s and 1950s and even 60s 'low cost' beginner receivers – and as adapters for improving the “Q” of receivers without good crystal filters. Yes, the Q multiplier. Built into some radios (The Lafayette HE-30/80 of the early 60s come to mind) or added on like the Healthkit Q Multiplier, it provided either improved selectivity or 'notch' rejection.

Some other receivers used them to provide the BFO function with an IF stage that went into regeneration to decode CW/SSB signals cheaply (National NC-60). That was also done at the IF of the receiver.)

The above kit is all solid state. Well, back to county hunting.

On the Road with N4CD – 2

The bands were hopping with other activity. The ARRL DX contest saw hundreds of thousands of contacts on 10 meters as conditions were good, and the folks had a great time using the higher bands. The solar activity had been up and down. It was time for another

trip.

Mike, NC4MO, was down to 4 for the WBOW for his USA-CA. With the high gas prices, and somewhat uncertain band conditions, mobiles had not been running like in the past. He needed Caldwell, LA, two in NE(Howard and Gosper) , and Wheeler OR. There aren't as many county hunters in the Midwest and west as before – other than Dan, AA0TT who wanders through NE, usually on the interstate and as a big rig who can't make detours, and Mike, NF0N, it's usually visiting hams that put out NE counties. Ralph, WB4FFV, also needed a handful in NE. He was getting close to finishing up as well.

There were a good handful of Mobile Diamond counties needed by the folks (including me) and I could get some of those, and there were lots of needs posted on K3IMC. To get to NE, I'd have to head up through KS, and as far as I can tell, about 2/3rds of KS has not been run for Mobile Diamond by anyone. Plus folks had needs posted for KS on K3IMC. I connected as many 'dots' as possible on the copy of the N4UJK Map Book pages (aka Coloring book). I use the state maps, plus the coloring book pages to plan the trip. I start by putting in the counties I have to hit – the two for NC4MO. Then I put in MD counties needed, and counties listed on K3IMC. Those closing in on USA-CA for the first time have a higher priority for me – so if it is a choice of 'zig' or 'zag' I'll try to get those. Other than spending a week just driving around, you have to make some choices that won't make everyone happy.

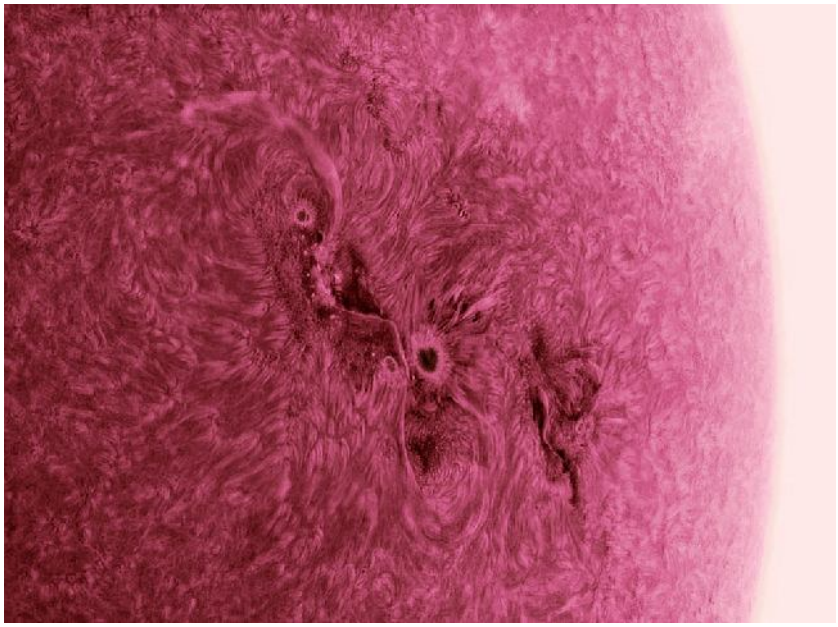
There's a hamfest up in Claremore, OK (Rogers County) – that is called the largest hamfest in the state of Oklahoma. So why not check out the Green Country hamfest up there? I'm always looking for bargains and for interesting 'goodies' – and seeing things from the 'wayback' era of early mobiling and home use. You never know what will show up. It's a good excuse for a trip, too. I like hamfests and this was far enough away that I wouldn't see the same stuff that shows up all the time at hamfests within 100 miles of Dallas. I could break up the trip into two parts.

The weatherman was calling for 3 days of rain and gloom in the Dallas area. We sure need the rain as we are still way below the yearly average, so not too many were complaining. When the weather is bad, no reason to stay in town if it will be better elsewhere! The trick is getting out of down without having to drive in rain for hours. That was the plan. In Dallas, they were calling for 2 to 4 inches of rain over the weekend. Yuk!

There weren't too many needs for any particular county in Oklahoma posted on the K3IMC website. That either meant that folks needed so many they couldn't list them all, or they had caught them from others recently. I did see needs for Rogers, Osage, Washington and Nowata, and a bunch scattered here and there. With a few extra miles I could hit those.

Dang....Murphy decided to cast some not so good solar news for the weekend. With higher solar activity, higher flux, more sunspots, you also get more solar storms, HF blackouts and challenging propagation. The CME was detected and headed toward Earth on Thursday and

Friday. That can drive the “A” index way high – which means spotty propagation, likely no DX being heard, and weak signal levels from most areas. In some cases, your radio just goes 'hiss' for hours and hours with NO signals. Dead. No signals from anywhere. Fortunately, I didn't need anything for Mobile Diamond in OK, and I had finished off N4AAT and others on previous trips this spring. However, there are still dozens of county hunters needing counties, or 'stars' or Bingo or for other awards, so I'd put them out as I went through them all.



The sunspot region of the sun after the giant flare erupted

Friday came and it was off to northern OKLA. The bands were pretty miserable, with only about 10 contacts per county as the car headed up highway 75 out of TX, which continues as route 60, then up the Turnpike through McIntosh, and up to the Tulsa area. There was nothing heard on 17M....other than once or twice the whole day.

A short detour to Skiatook, OK on Route 20 got me into Osage. There was nothing but noise on 40M SSB. 20M SSB wasn't any better. Signals were for the most part weak on CW. Not much on 20M but 30 and 40 produced a handful of contacts. After Osage, I headed east on 20 to Rogers County for the hamfest that runs 5-9pm on Friday and 8-5 on Saturday. The weather was cloudy all day, but the rain stayed south and east. Driving was easy. In between the short runs, I had plenty of time to listen to the broadcast radio. No one else was out and about that I could hear.

Friday night I saw that the A index was up around 75 or 80 – more than 'sky high'. It doesn't get much worse! It was still up around 30 on Saturday.

The motel for the night was a Microtel. That's the first time I’ve stayed at one of those. Not bad, but pricey($70 including tax). There is no Motel 6 in Claremore and the less expensive

places had been booked for months. Seems the same crowds head there each year. After checking in, I headed over to the hamfest at the Expo grounds in the early afternoon. Some hamfests you can get in early. Others, you wait till the official 'start time'. Well, there was no one at the door stopping folks, so I wandered in there way early. At least a few hundred were there setting up or browsing the flea market. It took a good hour to wander around inside the giant building and spot some interesting 'relics' from days gone by. It's nice to reminisce about the old stuff with the sellers. Maybe it was their personal rig at one time.

One seller had a Johnson Mobile Transmitter, but without case. Not having the cabinet probably drops the value by 80% unless you find a buyer with a case and not much inside it. There was a Multi-Eimacs receiver with A/C power supply for an asking price of way over $100. Forget that.

Another 'rare' item you seldom see, and probably for good reason, was a 1940s vintage Howard Receiver. How many current hams have even heard of Howard? They made receivers for a few years before and post WW2. Nearly all their radios had a 100% copper chassis (imagine doing that today with the price of copper!)

Howard 435 Receiver

"Howard was a major player in both broadcast receivers and communications receivers prior to W.W.II. The Howard Radio Company was located at 1731-35 Belmont Avenue in Chicago. They also built communications receivers for Sears under the Silvertone name. Howard also built receivers for Hallicrafters for a time in the early 1930's. They made their last broadcast

receivers around 1948 and were out of business by 1949."

It did have a BFO for CW/SSB reception.

"Despite the copper chassis and really neat art deco styling, these are really low end receivers.

During a W.W.II under a 1942 military contract, Howard manufactured the BC-779 version of the Super Pro SP-200 series for Hammarlund. The "made for Hammarlund by Howard" wording suggests that Hammarlund subcontracted manufacturing to keep up with the high wartime demand. From photos, it appears that the Howard built Super Pro's are all in military gray, while some Hammarlund-built models were in the civilian black crackle finish, with a military name tag added."

Most Howards suffer from corrosion and other problems making them hard to restore. Even when restored, you don't have much!

There was the usual collection of Hallicrafters units (not too many), and lots of Swan transceivers – maybe 15 or 20 of them for sale. I have no idea why, but at least six people had a Swan for sale. There were a half dozen Collins radios – from complete S lines, to receivers and accessories. There were National Transceivers, a few Heathkits, and some newer solid state transceivers – but not all that many.

I did spot a Drake Marker Luxury 2 meter radio – one of the first offered to hams for two meters that was 'mostly solid state'.

Drake ML-2 Marker Luxury 2m Transceiver

This was an early 12 channel crystal controlled 10 watt radio. It used a tube in the transmitter – vintage 1971. It was imported by Drake from Japan. It ran off A/C or D/C with an internal converter for the HV. You had to buy crystals for each channel. Back then, most hams were using a repeater or two and everyone was on "52 simplex" or "94 simplex" . It would be a few years before the first synthesized radios appeared. Regency introduced the HR-2 and HR-6 radios at a low price and Drake vanished from the VHF area. They did offer a TR-33

transceiver for 2M for a while.

Manual and schematic for the ML-2 here:

http://www.wb4hfn.com/DRAKE/DrakeManuals/ML2/Manual_ML2.htm

The TR-33 was a small 'shoulder carry' type solid state radio. It was 1.5 watt output and had an internal rechargeable battery, a collapsible whip, and used one crystal per channel. It had room for 12 crystals. Manual here

http://www.wb4hfn.com/DRAKE/DrakeManuals/PDFDOCS/TR-33C-Manual.pdf

Drake made the UV-3 UHF synthesized transceiver – which covered multiple bands with plug in modules. It came with 2 bands and you could add in a 3rd band. It covered 144, 220, and 432. I think at one time there was a 1296 module as well.

Manual here

http://www.wb4hfn.com/DRAKE/DrakeManuals/PDFDOCS/UV-3-Manual.pdf

Not bad for it's time, but now a real kluge of a radio.

Before the above rigs, Drake made a nice line of tube equipment – going back to the 1A receiver, and the TR-3, and separate transmitter receiver units – all very collectible. Many still use the Drake Twins. They did make a great tube type six meter transceiver as well - the TR-6, which is still sought after. They had some nice HF transcievers, too- tube and SS.

In the mid 70s, they came out with the solid state TR-7 transceiver (very nice for its time – I had one), and later a cost reduced version the TR-5. There are thousands of Drake collectors. If you are into Drake, visit the Drake collectors session at Dayton Hamfest! The TR-7 was a ham spin off of a military type radio Drake was making.

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Wow....one of the MARS 40/75 meter mobile tube transmitters described in the last issue of the CHNews showed up. Nice little radio. I didn't need another boat anchor. That's the first time I recall seeing one in person, but you never know. Way back when I wasn't looking for one!

I did see a Knight Kit Space Spanner regen radio for sale for $60. He started at $75 and I

suggested he was way too high. They might sell for that on Ebay, but not at hamfests. It was still there on Saturday at 9am when I left. I've got one that works fine so I didn't need a spare unless it was for $20 – hi hi. There were some antique Heathkit Sixers and Twoers – basic VHF AM rigs from the early 50s. One could find a few Hustler type resonators for sale. The usual dealers were there – the Wireman and others – if you needed some coax, wire, or ham gear new. You could by SWR meters, power meters, DVMs, and lots of test equipment if you wanted it.

The only county hunter I saw at the hamfest for either day was Troy, K5OH. He indicated that he had the radio on 20M SSB on his way up there from Comanche County on Friday and had not heard a single thing as he went through all the counties. The A index was likely up there at 60 or 80, with a K of 5 or 8. I was hoping to see some of the other county hunters from KS or MO there - it appears quite a few hams come down from Springfield, MO area for the event. Troy is a big Collins fan and meets with the Collins Collector folks who have their own get together in the evening after the fest closes for the day. He also likes Drake Radios (tube types).

After a few hours checking and double checking things for sale in the flea market, it was time for dinner, and that was at the Aseana- a Chinese Buffet place – good – about $10 including tax. The place was very full, but the buffet was kept full and folks were enjoying themselves. After a good dinner, it was just a short distance back to the Microtel Motel.

Saturday arrived and the weather was still good. Breakfast is included at the Microtel. They have waffles plus cereal and donuts and muffins. Yummy. The car had frosted windows so it took five minutes to get the car ready to go.

The hamfest officially opens at 8, but I was there before 7:15 and just waltzed in. Most of the tables were still covered. By 8, things were going full tilt and a few more sellers had arrived. I checked out the arriving goodies.

The Howard receiver was still there – asking price $40, and it weighed a good 15 lbs. Maybe for $20 I'd think about it, but I really didn't need boat anchor receivers! Plus I'd have to lug it out 500 feet to the car. If you collect boatanchors, you need one of those wheelie carts to haul things around!

For the most part, my 'rule' at hamfests and auctions is that if I can't hold it comfortably with one hand, I don't buy it. That eliminates a lot of boatachors that tug at my heart to buy them, things I couldn't afford when I was a teenager with a new ham license and just drooled over. Hi hi.

I spent a few bucks at the hamfest on:

3 TenTec 1054 regen receiver kits – wired and working – for $25 for all three. They had been

project radios for a school. Heck, for 8 bucks apiece, I could play with them, modify them and have some fun. This is the one I wrote about building at the ARRL Kit Building session at the Dallas Hamcom hamfest – July issue 2011.

1 Vectronics 20m QRP transmitter (1W or so) with VXO control on 14.060 and a Direct Conversion Receiver (VXO control) same frequency for $10 for the pair. Maybe the TX will make it down to 056.5

An old Heathkit crystal radio. These usually sell for big bucks on Ebay. Not much to them but relatively rare. Cheap - $20. Also a MFJ 106 antenna current probe for $10 with manual.

A box of variable caps – 15 to 140 pF – excellent for making regen receivers for the needed variables. $15. A handful of ferrite chokes was thrown in the box, too. I bought some small speakers – cheap, new, in plastic bags.

It looked like there were about 10 folks selling the remains of 'estates' of hams. The big gear was gone, and now it was down to station accessories, junk boxes and small items.

Other than that stuff above, no big purchases. It was one of the better hamfests I've been to in a while. While higher gas prices are impacting some, this seemed to be a beehive of activity. Maybe I should have been going for years? I'll put it on the calendar for next year. Maybe some KS and MO county hunters will wander on down there.

It was time to head out on Part II on the trip!

IBM's Q-Bit Computer

A computer faster than any supercomputer on Earth could become a reality after IBM scientists achieved a breakthrough in ‘quantum computing’ – described as the ‘new frontier’ in computing.

IBM has created working components using the technology - its scientists say the next step is 'creating systems'.

A working quantum computer would be capable of millions of calculations at once – and able to crack any computer code on Earth.

The machines could also solve mathematical problems that have remained impossible for humanity - until now.

The quest to create a 'quantum computer' has been a Holy Grail of computing ever since physicist Richard Feynman challenged scientists to create a computer based on quantum physics in 1981.

For decades, the work has been theoretical.

'In the past, people have said, maybe it's 50 years away, it's a dream, maybe it'll happen sometime,' said Mark Ketchen of IBM's Watson Research Centre.

'I used to think it was 50. Now I'm thinking like it's 15 or a little more. It's within reach. It's within our lifetime. It's going to happen.'

The 'qubits' created by IBM scientists exploit a bizarre property of quantum physics that mean that a quantum computer 'bit', or unit of information - a 'qubit' - can be both 1 and 0 at once.

A 250-qubit array would contain more 'bits' of information than there are atoms in the entire universe.

IBM says that the next step 'creating systems' that exploit this power.

The scientists say that their experiments have moved forward by a factor of '100 to 1000' times since they started in 2009.

The quantum computing work we are doing shows it is no longer just a brute force physics experiment. It's time to start creating systems based on this science that will take computing to a new frontier,' says IBM scientist Matthias Steffen.

'These properties will have wide-spread implications foremost for the field of data encryption where quantum computers could factor very large numbers like those used to decode and encode sensitive information,' says IBM.

The scientists are experimenting with several different quantum computing techniques.

Among the results, the IBM team extended the amount of time that the qubits retain their quantum states up to 100 microseconds – an improvement of 2 to 4 times upon previously reported records.

This value reaches just past the minimum threshold to 'control' errors in the data – and suggests scientists can now move on to engineering other aspects of a quantum computer.

IBM describes itself as being, 'Very close to the minimum requirements for a full-scale quantum computing system as determined by the world-wide research community.'

'The superconducting qubit research led by the IBM team has been progressing in a very focused way on the road to a reliable, scalable quantum computer. The device performance that they have now reported brings them nearly to the tipping point,' says David DiVincenzo, professor at the Institute of Quantum Information, Aachen University and Forschungszentrum Juelich.

Read more: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2108160/Quantum-computers-IBM-verge-creating-machine-faster-supercomputer.html#ixzz1npTED1Ze

The most basic piece of information that a typical computer understands is a bit.
Much like a light that can be switched on or off, a bit can have only one of two values: '1' or '0'.

Qubits – or quantum bits – can hold a value of '1' or '0' as well as both values at the same time.
This is what allows quantum computers to perform millions of calculations at once.
While current computers can calculate very rapidly, they can only perform a limited number of calculations at the same time.

A fully functioning quantum computer could perform millions at the same time. It would instantly be the most powerful computing device ever created by mankind

Early Police Radio

Way, way back when - when broadcasting first started, the police decided they could make use

of radio to dispatch mobile units. Before that time, police were only dispatched from the local offices. In the 1923-1924 time frame, the Federal Radio Commission issued a handful of 'broadcast' licenses for the AM band for police use. In between 'programming', the call would go out to a handful of units to go to such and such an address – it was a one way system. Later it would expand to over 100 cities using the AM broadcast band, or slightly above it for police dispatching. In 1922, there were only 2 channels for AM. Stations shared one of the two channels, broadcasting a few hours a day each, or were far enough (sometimes 10 miles) to be able to share the frequency. Think low power.

Naturally, there wasn't much in the way of 'mobile radio' back then. Most of the very early police radios were mounted in saddle bags on motorcycles and were battery operated. It helped if the motorcycle was turned off because of ignition interference. The call would come in, and the motorcycle policeman would take off after the bad guy.

Those first systems didn't last long – as there wasn't enough 'activity' to justify the cost of running the systems, and competitors wanted access to the frequencies. Remember, in the early early days, there were only two frequencies for the entire broadcast band. Slowly it expanded, but the top end was 1350, then 1550.

Around 1930, police systems wound up in the 1550 KHz to 2.4 MHz band, with most of the activity on a few channels around 1712-1714 KHz. Most hams will realize that on the broadcast band evening conditions allow for 'distant' stations to come rolling in – you can easily listen to 'clear channel stations ' now from a thousand miles away. During the day, there was no skip problem. Motorola and several others produced thousands of AM receivers for installation in police cars. In rare cases, the mobiles would be equipped with transmitters to allow talk-back. That was sometimes on the same channel (simplex) or on a higher channel up in the 2.3 to 2.4 MHz range, but they were fairly rare.

It didn't take long before home radio manufacturers would include the 'police band' on upper end consoles and table radios. You might find a 1930s-40s radio that has 'police' up around 1.7 MHz on the dial. The use of that police band continued up until 1949, when the FCC declared that all police systems must operate at VHF (30 MHz and above). Most police forces starting migrating to VHF after the first systems at 'low band' (30-40 MHz) were trialed and found much better than the AM performance. I ran across an old 1930s vintage Motorola police receiver at Dayton a few years ago – interesting but not much use – basically a fixed tuned BC set. In the early 30s, police were moving up to 33 and 39 Mhz.

Every now and then you'll run across some interesting stuff on Ebay. Here is one of the first 'police type scanners' to allow you to listen in to police calls. It was made by the Fluewelling Division of A.C. Dayton – a major manufacturer of broadcast sets way back when. It's called a Police Ear – and it is a one tube regenerative receiver for about 1.7 to 12.4 MHz.

Fluewelling Police-Ear

You'll note it has the coil wound on the outside – 3 windings – one for antenna, one for the tuning, and one for regenerative feedback. The knob adjusted a 'flap' of the variable capacitor. You hooked an antenna to one terminal and ground to the other. It took a filament battery and a B+ and would drive headphones. Very simple. Or you could plug it into your TRF type set by removing the detector tube and use the audio amp stages of your TRF, and the same power supply to run the Police-Ear. You controlled the regen by an external rheostat in the filament lead (in your existing radio)

The tube was a Type 27 – indirectly heated cathode – five pins – and the took 2.5v at 1.7 amps to light it up.

FLEUWELLING did work for A-C DAYTON and the electrical schematic is similar to the schematic for the FLEUWELLING SHORTWAVE ADAPTOR UX made by A-C. Designed to take a #27 tube. three coils are wrapped around the outside of the 2 3/4 inch base that is 1 1/4 tall. One coil is antenna, tuning, and regenerative. The knob compresses a brass plate that forms a tuning capacitor. Bottom is aluminum foil glued to the case separated by an insulator. A rather ingenious compact design. It has two .0001 Aerovox mica capacitors and two nominal 150K resistors. One is in parallel with a capacitor the other is a plate resistor with capacitor feeding the output wire.

Here's a link to the 1922 article on the Flewelling super regen sets -

http://theradioboard.com/files/HowFlewelling.pdf

Here's some early Motorola radio history – mostly the VHF radios starting about 1940 when

police started to migrate to 33 Mhz, then later up at 39 MHz.

http://www.wb6nvh.com/Motadata.htm

Then a lot more (with lots of pics) at

http://www.wb6nvh.com/Moto42/Moto42.htm

Not to be playing favorites, here's the early GE mobile history page (with loads of pictures)

http://www.wb6nvh.com/GE/GEhist1.htm

Back in the 1922 era, there were circuits by Flewelling in almost every issue of Radio Craft Magazine. The first ones were super regenerative – using a tickler winding that was 50% more turns than the tuning coil in a "Eaton Oscillator". That worked well when every station was on the same frequency. You'll recall the 'bandwidth' of a super regen is 4 times the quench oscillator frequency. So if you had a 20 Khz quench frequency, your bandwidth would be 80 KHz at the 6dB points – or about 1/2 of the current broadcast band for 20 dB down! Later, the Flewelling design went to straight regen circuits. When the 5 meter ham band became popular, the inexpensive receiver of choice again was the super regen. The same was true when the two meter band was opened up after WW2 in the 1950s. They work fine as long as everyone is on the same frequency! (but not so great when there are multiple people using multiple frequencies on the band).

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Well, a few weeks later at the Spring Vintage Radio Auction, what comes u for sale? A large wall mount type 'Police Station Monitor' made by RCA back in the 1930s or 40s – an AR 2025 tube type set. It was about 30 inches high with a big 12 inch speaker, and had a fixed tuned radio (for the 1700 KHz band) inside, with only a volume control on the outside. (Dang, I forgot my camera so I can't show you a picture). Just imagine a large wood box with a large speaker grille at the top of the enclosure - 30 inches high,18 inches wide, and a foot deep. It appeared to have a five or six tube set inside. Sold for $25 at the auction, and likely needed a lot of TLC. You could probably get it down to the 1600-1700 AM band and tune it to your favorite station. Then put a hefty shelf on the wall and have a nice full volume AM radio to listen to talk shows or sports.

North Carolina QSO Party

from the 3830 contest reflector:

N4YDU (Franklin NC)

I wasn't expecting to be able to spend six hours in the chair but surprises are nice. Conditions were good. It was neat to work NI4BK on the Battleship NC.

W4MPS – County Expedition – Martin NC

"Operated Expedition Class from an old family owned tobacco farm in Martin County converted to a B&B. PAC-12 vertical and segmented dipole (Inv Vee). Had a great time and picked up all 4 bonus stations"

W0BH (KS)

Just checked in from time to time on Sunday. Didn't hear many mobiles, but lots of enthusiasm from the fixed stations. Good conditions from Kansas .. sorry I couldn't be on more.

EA5FDV

W4NC Bonus : 50 pts
NI4BK Bonus : 50 pts
W4NC+W4WS Bonus : 150 pts
Cherokee Bonus : 0 pts
Dare Bonus : 50 pts
Both CTY Bonus : 0 pts

The conditions on 15m better that 20m but not many people on the band. I can ear east coast stations calling on 10m, but nobody from the NCQP.

W1END (NH)

Didn't hear much mobile activity but all in all it was pretty well attended.
Listened on 15M and 10M but heard nothing. Skip to NC from NH seemed pretty good on the bands that I worked. Score includes bonus points.
Thanks to all who showed up.

WA2VYA (FL)

This is always a fun contest. There is enough activity to keep it interesting.

Started out as CW only and switched to Mixed in fifth hour of the contest to work some new counties and make more QSOs.

A rough weekend with CQ WW 160m Phone, Mississippi QSO Party and North Carolina QSO Party in a row. Did not even attempt NAQP RTTY.

ICOM IC-756PROIII 100 Watts to 80m dipole up 50 feet; 40m dipole up 50 feet; DX-77 ground mounted vertical dipole on 20m.

Worked 7 new counties, so now up to 84 North Carolina counties worked toward USA-CA.

On the Road with N4CD – 3

By 8:30 am on Saturday morning, I'd seen everything twice or three times at the Arena – so it was time to be mobile putting out the counties. I trekked north on highway 88 up to Nowata County (bonus county) then west to Washington OK, then north to Montgomery KS. The plan was to make mostly a 'beeline' up to NE running a single column of counties (all new for MD) with minimal detours.

The A index was way up there – 40 – 80 ….and the K index was 5 or 7 or more. Propagation on Saturday was absolutely miserable. In two counties, I could only manage half a dozen contacts on all bands/modes. 40M SSB was mostly noise for a good part of the day. CW worked a little bit better but signals were weak overall.

I did take a jog up at Pottawatomie over to Riley, then back north again up through Gage NE up to Lancaster County NE where I stopped at the Motel 6 Airport in Lincoln, NE . $43 including tax was the bill. I just arrived as the sun was setting.

There's a convenient Perkins restaurant across the street. They have nice low cost senior dinners on the menu, and I enjoyed a turkey and dressing dinner with green beans and buttered corn. If you stay at the Motel 6, they give you an addition 10% off, so it was a bargain at $7.50 plus tip. It had been a long day so I hit the hay at 9:30 pm.

This was the weekend for the 'time change' to Daylight Saving Time. Sunrise would be late at about 7:40 in the morning, but I still woke early and was over a the Perkins for breakfast at 6am new time.(5am old time) The temp was 38 degrees and there was just a bit of frost on the

windshield.

I had to kill some time as with the time change, there wouldn't be anyone around 'early'. Today, This Sunday, I'd wind my way a bit north, then head mostly west hitting as many as possible before it started to get dark. I had posted my route, so I'd have to stick by it otherwise a lot of folks would get upset! Hi hi Sometimes you run things out of order – as you discover maybe a shortcut to get to a county and run it before another county – or find you 'can't get there from here' for any reason (construction, bridge out, etc) and run them not in posted order. I imagine a few folks panic thinking they missed their last county.

The rain started early. It drizzled on an off the whole day and the temp never got over 44 degrees and most of the time at 40-42, with a strong south wind. If you got out of the car, the rain blew in your face. The driving conditions were OK and there's not much traffic on the backroads of NE. At times, the rain looked more like sleet coming down, but the ground temps were warm enough not to worry me. It had been a warm winter there – and it's not uncommon this time of year to have snow cover there and further north. That is not the case this year with only snow cover in very northern ND, MN and some of northern New England. Oh, the west coast is a different story with lots of snow along the coast and in the mountains, in CO, UT, WY, MT, ID, etc. You can blame the COLD water in the Pacific for causing the La Nina weather pattern which is keeping the jet stream mostly north this year east of the Rockies.

Mike, NC4MO, needed Howard and Gosper. From Lancaster, it a jog west to Seward, then was north to Colfax, then southwest over to Howard. That was a LC for K4EXT, and Ralph, WB4FFV needed it and of course, many others. Seems to be a 'rare one'. By then, the 20M net was in 'friendly session' so contacts could be made on SSB as well as the CW bands. 40M SSB was barely working with N5UZW not too strong and apparently with lots of noise at his end. I had good runs considering the conditions. CW always seems to work a bit better.

After that, it was south the the county line of Adams and Clay, which also seemed to be needed by many. You wind up getting delayed in Hastings – first coming south and getting out to the east....then going back through it to head west. The county line was OK to run – a bit of noise but not bad. Then it was west over to Phelps, down into Harlan and Furnas, and up to catch Gosper. Mike, NC4MO, and I hooked up on 20M SSB, so he is now down to two to go for whole ball of wax (WBOW). Maybe by the time you read this, he will be done? (hint: Wheeler OR and Caldwell, LA).

It was still early in the day – with lots of daylight left. I checked the coloring book page. With about 20 miles of driving, I could get over to Frontier County for Ralph, WB4FFV. He is slowly closing in after 30 years of collecting counties. As of 3/12, he needs just four to go.

It was west a bit, then up a little road into Frontier. (Harry Strunk Lake Road). The GPS really came in handy as there was no county line sign. I sure like to find them, just to be sure I hit the right county. You can get surprised and maps are not always 100% accurate. Or you

can have brain fade. The GPS said I was there...and you go to the 'alternative' ways of establishing secondary confirmation of where you are. The following sign says it just fine:

The 4-H welcomes you to Frontier County!

Not quite as good as a true C/L sign, but if you need a picture, it will do. It was several hundred feet into the county according to the GPS. Sometimes all you can find is a sign for the county garbage dump, or a highway sign that has the county name on it. Out in the boonies on very small roads, often there is little indication of the county borders. It was a good run from the C/L of Frontier and Red Willow, NE. It appeared there was a 'county line road' to one side and I sat in the middle of the road.

After that, I backtracked 20 miles then headed on south into Norton, KS. It was still daylight. (DST). The sun actually peaked out for a few minutes as I hit KS. The run in NE had gone well – and most of the CH had shown up for their counties. The DX was disappointed as NOTHING came through from Europe the entire day. The A index was still up there.

I had enough time to head a bit south to Hill City in Graham County. Not much to report – it's a town of 1000 people. The Western Hills Motel was right out of the 1950s.....the price was $43 including tax. The room was good.....the bathroom still likely had 1950s fixtures, but there was a nice 48 inch flat screen TV to watch. What sealed the deal is that there was a Pizza Inn across the road, and you know.....Sunday …..pizza night! We had just moved to DST, so it was still light at 7 pm as I headed over for dinner. After dinner, I gassed up the car ready for an early start although the sun wasn't coming up till about 7:30 am.

I enjoyed a nice individual size 'make your own' chicken, bacon and mushroom pizza. The bill was $7.50. (nice to have low prices in rural areas – it would likely be $10 in urban areas). Then it was off to sleep early after an hour of TV – it had been a busy day. It would be a cool night, but the temps all over KS and NE were headed toward the 70 degree area.

All over most of NE and KS, you find the convenience store chain of Casey - like the 7-11s

elsewhere. They have decent food (from breakfast items to hot lunch items). There in lots of small towns and they sell gas reasonably, too. In Texas we have AllSups – not as good but just about in every little town that needs one.

On Monday it was south one county to Trego, then east to hit Russell and Lincoln for Scottie. Oops...the interstate goes into Ellsworth first....maybe zips into Lincoln 20 miles later. Fortunately. I stopped at the first exit in Ellsworth to figure out where I was and why I wasn't where I thought I would be. Hmm....head 3 miles north to Lincoln and run the county line!.....done.....Nice and quiet, too.

Then, I could head south on a road that was right along the county line border and hit two more counties on the way south – Barton and Stafford. As I headed south, the GPS said I was actually in Barton....but there was no sign as I passed a county line. Ah.....on to 'secondary methods' and KS provided the needed sign!

Barton KS – Highway sign
"Barton County Highway'

With a few zigs and zags, I caught Rice, Stafford and Reno (for N2OCW), then Kingman (K2HVN was waiting for that) and Harper and down into OK.

Wow...Grant OK was horribly noisy just about the whole way south. It only got better once I got to Garfield. At that point, checking the GPS time and distance to home, I figured I could make it home if I put the petal to the metal. No detours or stops once I got out of the mess of Enid, OK...I needed gas and there wasn't much else around. It's a big town with big town traffic slowdowns and 20 or 30 traffic lights to get out of it. Then it was over to the interstate and zipping home down I-35 running them on CW the entire way south. I arrived home at 8pm just as the sun was down and it was getting dark.

1800 miles in 4 days. The car got 31-32 mpg up in KS and NE - they have good gas up there – for about 10 cents more a gallon you get 100% gas, no ethanol, and it gives you at 10 % better gas mileage. You can also buy the ethanol contaminated blend as well (10% ethanol)

will lower gas mileage. It was down to 29-30 mpg on the interstate at 70-75 mph coming home still using the mostly 'good gas'. I had been getting 31-33 with the 55 to 60 mph speeds on most of the NE and KS secondary roads. Gas prices – from $3.55 to $3.80 along the way, and my local stations in TX had jacked up the price to near $3.80 in just the time I was gone! Oh well, plan on $4 plus gas. Fortunately, the Malibu has decent mileage. I'd sure hate to be driving a 17 mph pickup truck! Or Suburban or large vehicle.

It was a quick trip, but the mission was accomplished to get NC4MO half of his last counties to finish, leaving him with just two to go. Along the way we tried to get a bunch of LC for the folks as well and run 'em all on cw, and quite a few in NE on SSB. (like nearly all).

More Epic Greenie Fail

DETROIT—Plug-in hybrid delivery van start-up Bright Automotive Inc. is winding down its operations after withdrawing its application for around $400 million from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Bright's application withdrawal follows those of Chrysler Group LLC and General Motors Co.

"We understand that this is a difficult day for Bright Automotive and their workers. Over the last three years, the Department has worked with the company to try to negotiate a deal that supported their business while protecting the taxpayers," said Damien LaVera, an Energy Department spokesman in a statement. "In the end, we weren't able to come to an agreement on terms that would protect the taxpayers."

Bright had planned to assemble the vans at a former AM General LLC plant in Indiana and do engineering in Michigan.

Some Goodies from Ebay

Here's a 'retro kit' made in Australia in the 1970s. It's designed to work like a 1920s

regenerative receiver.

Model 1A Unidyne Receiver

“At first sight, this intriguing little one- valve radio looks like pre war vintage (breadboard style radio). It has a wooden box board base about 12" x 8" and about 3" high. It has one four pin pre war Marconi valve tube (no markings), it has one fixed basket weave coil and 2 moving ones- one for tuning and one for reaction(regeneration) ,which can be swung to and fro with levers across the fixed one.

There's a flying lead that can be plugged into one socket or another to introduce an additional fixed capacitor to expand the tuning range of the coils. It has one grid leak resistor mounted above the breadboard, and has a small modern transformer. There's a single 4 pin tube.

This radio looks to run on batteries 2- D cell and 5- 9 volt batteries, . From what I have read these were made in the mid 70s in Australia and I am not sure they made it to the U.S. You can not find anything on the net.” Sold for $60 on Ebay.

This little kit set that made it's appearance in Australia in 1983 and was initially produced by a company in Queensland. Later it seems to have been taken over by Richard Wilson who ran a small electronics manufacturing company in Ballarat, Victoria. Attached to his factory was the small 'Orpheus Radio Museum' that contained a number of interesting old receivers. Unfortunately the museum was closed a number of years ago and the contents sold off’.

There was an article on the Unidyne that was published in 'Electronics Australia' in 1983 (now defunct) .It was advertised by Orpheus until 1992 after which time the kits seemed to disappear from the market.

Here's an interesting key for the CW folks. It's a 'Piano Key' from Kitano CO. They made a

limited edition of 200 of them.

Kitano Piano Key

You send code by 'up down' motion of two fingers. One for 'dits' and one for 'dahs'. There are a few keys out there like this one, or you can get real cheap and use two push buttons or something else. On some ICOM rigs, you can use the 'up down' buttons on the microphone the same way for CW keying This one sold for $110 on Ebay.

Kuhn 353B Super Regen VHF Receiver

Kuhn manufactured radios, car converters for FM, ham and aviation band, and other accessories. They were located in Cincinnati, OH. This set covered from 26 MHz up to about 174 MHz – across the CB band, high SW bands, CB bands, six meters, the FM band, aviation AM band, public service and commercial VHF FM 144-174 bands. Four tubes were used. It appears to have been made in the 1960s. It's a super regen set with internal power supply. There was a later model - the 357B. Info on these is scarce! There's nothing on the web. Covered 10, 6 and 2m – but a super regen does not tune in cw or SSB. Only AM or FM.

It used a 5965 regen detector tube, several 6BH6s. Later models used one more tube. It sold for 50 bucks on Ebay.

What's funny is someone on the Yahoo RegenReceiver Discussion board bought it, then wondered exactly what he had bought by posting on the board thathe had bought it, and was asking about it –and what it did..... after he bought it! (those amazing Ebay buyers!). Buy first, then investigate what you have just spent your money on!

Wisconsin QSO Party

from the 3830 reflector

NE9U mobile

well, that was fun (NOT!)

Horribly weak watery signals into the North-Woods of Wisconsin for the first 2/3rds of contest before we got far enough south that the signals seemed to get stronger (either that or just condx got better later in the day). Heard a few signals on 80 but they couldn't hear us and we could never get a run going (1 contact!!!!) Our overall rate by hour was : 68, 98, 85, 102, 97, 103, 112.

Also, I think we found the worst roads in Wisconsin to drive on in our quest to hit all the Counties in the Northern Tier. Besides being bad, I think they were doubly bad due to the early spring thaw. Good thing both me and Art's radio had seatbelts on!

Saturday night we found the best Rib Eye steak I've had in a long time at a little place in Iron River, Michigan called Zippity DuDahs. If we decide to do the Michigan QSO party in April, we will have to visit again.

Thanks to everyone for calling in.

KE0G rover

K-3/10 at 5 watts. 34' vertical with 3 radials for PEP, BUF. 100' wire, up 34', over and down 66' with 3 radials for LAC. 3 counties total. Wonderful wx, sunny and breezy, 60 deg F. Warmest WIQP I can recall. 80M was very weak, 40M OK, but 20M was really hopping. I heard DX activity on 10M, but no replies to my CQ's.

N5NA – Texas

This was a very active QSO party. The limited time frame really helps to focus the activity. Smaller QSO parties lasting 24 hours (or more) should take note!

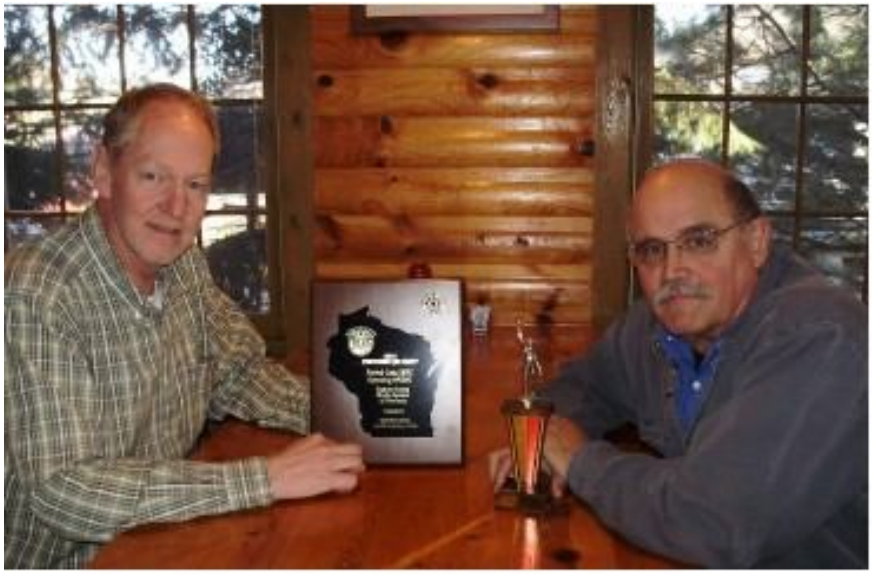
I enjoyed chasing the mobiles around. Mobiles make a state QSO party for us out of state participants! Mobiles worked: W9DND(17), W9MSE(10), W9HB(8), NG9T(7), NE9U(6), W0ZQ(6), WI9WI(4), KE0G(3), and N9NE(3). The APRS map W9DND posted on aprs.fi with the county overlay made it fun and easy to keep up with him. All the mobiles need to learn how to do that!

40m was just noise most of the day here in WTX so 20m was the band. Finally worked my first WI station on 40m at 2236. I was hearing K5CM in OK on 40m

earlier working WI but nothing here.

W9DND (K0PC opr) mobile

The WIQP Organizing Committee sure has learned how to control the weather. Another beautiful day in Wisconsin, 68F and sunny. Now We would like them to work on the space weather. The solar flares made propagation challenging. It seemed all the bands were more noisy than usual. 80M was non-existent for us, only 5 QSOs. We tried several times from 21z on and had nothing to show for it.



K0PC and driver W9DND

Our score was down by 8.5% from last year. We are blaming it on conditions, couldn't have been the operator ;)

We had many ops riding with us all day long. The All-Star Team includes:

N5NA-17 QSOs, K5LH-15, KX0A-14, WA1UJU-13, WA0MHJ-13, WA6KHK-12, AF9T-12, W1END-12

The Most Valuable Player Award goes to Alan, N5NA for working us in all 15 counties. Congratulations and thanks Alan.

W0ZQ mobile – 519 CW 113 SSB

"Beautiful weather in Wisconsin with 70 degrees, sunshine, and no snow. What a difference a year makes ! The bands were another story. Only 11 Q's made on 80m, a band that is usually a key part of this fun event. 40m was OK, but at times noisy. 20m started out a little down, but improved throughout the day. I did call CQ on 15m CW from a few stops, but it netted just one Q. Also, no DX worked this year, a first for me"

WI9WI Mobile - 385 CW QSO

As Roseann Rosannadanna said: "It's always something"

This was my 19th consecutive year as a mobile in WiQP. In my never ending quest to operate from all 72 counties in WiQP, I put 5 more new ones in the books: Vernon, Crawford, Richland, Grant, and Iowa. I also operated from Sauk which I had done before.

There have been problems both minor and major the past 4 years. In 2009 the contest went fine, but I hit a deer on my way back to our cabin in Sawyer Co. after finishing the contest in Burnett Co. and had heavy damage to my Outback. The next day I had a thermostat failure unrelated to the deer while driving back to Madison and lost 4 hours getting it replaced in Ladysmith. In 2010 everything was fine until with 20 minutes left my computer had a battery failure. Last year when I started, I hit F1 at 1800Z and had an infinite SWR. That was easily fixed with a coax swap, but then about 2 hours into the contest I had my RV battery fail and had to hook up the power to the vehicle battery which took about 30 minutes due to lack of suitable tools.

Things started out on the wrong foot this year before I even got out of the house. I left about 15 minutes later than planned and then when I was about halfway between Middleton and Cross Plains on my way to Vernon Co I realized I had left my headset on my operating desk. This meant no phone, and using the speaker in the radio, no tragedy. When I got to Richland Center I saw a Wal-Mart, popped in and bought a $10 stereo headset. It worked great, but cost me another 15 minutes, so I arrived in Vernon Co. about 5 minutes late. I found a great location just inside the Co line on a hill on Drake Road and hooked up the coax and power.

I hit the power switch on the K-3 and..... nothing. I had bought a new AGM battery and a

battery booster last fall. I had run a mock up on Thursday and everything was fine. I figured the problem was the booster so I took it out of line and everything worked fine, though I was now limited to about 60 watts output to avoid pulling the supply voltage to the K-3 below 11 volts.

My first QSO was at 1819 with K9KR, WiQP Contest Director Lynn. After about 40 minutes in Vernon I drove down Drake Rd about a mile and was in Crawford a couple of minutes later. I then went back into Richland on top of the hill just off Hwy 14. The first station I heard was W0ZQ/JAC, a rare county. I hit F4 and ...nothing. I hit F4 again.... and nothing. The paddle didn't key the radio either. I spent the next almost 40 minutes trying to figure out the problem. I rebooted the radio, MicroHam keyer and computer about 3 times each. I swapped in my spare W9XT keyer. After tearing my hair out, I checked the keying line from the keyer to the radio with a VOM and discovered the ground was fine but the center conductor was broken. I'm not sure how this happened, but I didn't have a spare, and I had no way of fixing it, so I hooked up the paddles to the K-3, programmed a CQ into the K-3 memory and ran the rest of the afternoon hand keying everything but the CQ.

I was in a slightly awkward position sitting sideways in the back seat due to the short length of the keying line from the paddles to the radio. I apologize for the occasionally sloppy CW and not signing as often as I usually do. Then it was on to Muscoda and Grant Co. from the DNR boat landing on the Wisconsin River and then onward to Iowa Co. just down the road a couple of miles at another boat landing. I then was going to go to the Green-Lafayette county line area about an hour away, but due to time lost I bagged that idea and went to Sauk on the way back to Madison.

Actual operating tome was 4 hrs 3 min. Rate was 96/hr while operating.

Last week I put everything back together, battery, radio, battery booster, etc, and found the problem with the battery booster was a poorly installed Anderson Power pole on the radio side. It wouldn't lock into the Rig-Runner and would loosen up after a few minutes. I replaced it, and now it is fine. This was a manufacturing defect. Whoever put the power pole on did it improperly.

W9OP (WI) 228 cw 360 SSB QSO

Mark was on from his home county.

K2KW (Ohio)

I went down to K4ZLE's station as I was going to do a full SO2R effort. But I got there late and I didnt get my equipment wiggling until 18:23(I bring a complete SO2R station with me). But nothing worked right: software wasn't reading the radio frequency, SO2R box wasn't switching audio, SSB didn't work. I started to make some CW QSOs in earnest around 18:50, so losing the first hour was big. Finally got SSB working at 19:50, never got the SO2R audio working, and quit at 0000z to return a movie before 9 local. So much for a full effort!

As people have commented, 40m was THE band for many of us. There were a few 20m scatter QSOs on 20, but I needed to use the 80m sloper for 20m RX as the S/N ratio was much better than the TH-11 at 70' !! 80/75m was completely void of signals until very late, and even then they were a struggle. Last year I had 120 80/75m QSOs, so 80m was really bad this year.

N5XG (TX)

"The rovers and mobiles define the enjoyment of a state QSO party, and it is surely true for the WQP participants who made this one fun. They stayed the course and were FB operators. Thanks to those who gave their time. The low bands were difficult from Texas.

W9FZ (WI) 18 cw 299 SSB

The poor conditions actually helped keep the bands emptier and let me hold a freq on 40 and 20. As a result, this is my best WIQP ever.

W4UCW (GA) 114 cw Q

Another very enjoyable afternoon chasing the nine (count 'em nine) CW mobiles.

Thanks to : W9HB (13), W9MSE (12), NE9U and W9DND (11), N9NE (10), NG9T (7), W0ZQ (6), WI9WI (5) and KE0G (3). In addition there were 29 unique fixed stations in the log for a very nice balance.

Five Stages of "Warmism"

The political scientist Anthony Downs offered up his theory of the "issue-attention cycle" in a classic 1972 article in The Public Interest, explaining the five stages that virtually all issues go through in the course of their public life. Downs specifically said that the environmental issue cycle would be longer than most.

The issue-attention cycle begins with a group of experts and interest groups promoting a problem or crisis, which is soon followed by the alarmed discovery of the news media and broader political class. This second stage, significantly, typically includes a large amount of euphoric enthusiasm—you might call this the "dopamine" stage—as activists conceive the issue in terms of global salvation and redemption. One of the largest debilitations of environmentalism from the beginning was to conceive it not as a practical problem of public health or nuisance, but as an expression, in Al Gore's view, of deeper spiritual and even metaphysical problems arising from our "dysfunctional civilization." These people don't just want to fix our tailpipes; they want to fix our souls.

The third stage is the hinge. As Downs explains, there comes "a gradually spreading realization that the cost of 'solving' the problem is very high indeed." This is where we have been since the Kyoto process proposed completely implausible near-term reductions in fossil fuel energy as the sole solution to climate change—a fanatical monomania the climate campaign has been unable to shake and which has eaten the environmental movement, hastening its death. In retrospect it is now possible to grasp the irony that President George W. Bush's open refusal to embrace the Kyoto framework kept the climate campaign alive by providing the all-purpose excuse for the lack of "progress." With Bush gone, the intrinsic weakness of the carbon-cutting charade is impossible to hide.

"The previous stage," Downs continued, "becomes almost imperceptibly transformed into the fourth stage: a gradual decline in the intensity of public interest in the problem. In the final [post-problem] stage," Downs concluded, "an issue that has been replaced at the center of public concern moves into a prolonged limbo—a twilight realm of lesser attention or spasmodic recurrences of interest."

The death rattle of environmentalism will be deafening. It has too much political momentum and fanatical devotion to go quietly. The environmental establishment is a billion-dollar a year business, and there are plenty of stupid guilty rich people, idiot Hollywood celebrities, and direct-mail dupes to keep the agitation machine going for many years to come. The architecture of environmental law and regulation, and the administrative momentum of the

EPA, assures that this zombie movement will continue to do great damage to the economy for a long time to come. But make no mistake—it is a bunch of brain-dead zombies that we face in the environmental movement today.

As for cause of death on the official death certificate, mark it down as "suicide, brought on by hubris."

Oklahoma QSO Party

The mobiles were out and running. Band conditions were so so with solar flux at 101 (it had been up there at 150), and an A index of 20 (not good). It was another weekend with disturbed conditions. Seems we've had a lot of them lately. WI QP got clobbered by conditions with little DX making it through. Northern Latitudes suffer worse than southern ones, but it can be bad all over.

Here, I had two other things going on this weekend, but managed to spend a few hours chasing mobiles Saturday afternoon for a few hours and some on Sunday. I needed two there – W3DYA/m started in McCurtain – one of the two – and AF5Q wound up in Harmon but I wasn't able to catch him there. That seems to be one tough county to work for me. (noise conditions there on 40M on many roads are impossible, too!). Been there – had troubles.

It looks like lots of county hunters caught the mobiles and fixed stations. Some had over 1000Q so radio propagation was working to some places.

From the 3830 contest reflector

N5UM Mobile 549 cw 344 SSB QSO

What a ride! Was planning to stay down south and southwest, but due to popular demand, I took a big detour on Saturday afternoon to the north. Got an e-mail from Connie K5CM about no CW coverage in Woods, Alfalfa, Major, and Blaine, and we could not let that happen :-0 -- Only downside was that I didn't have time to go into Harmon in the far SW, but it looks like that got covered at the end.

I didn't have my son driving this time, so I decided to focus almost exclusively on finding county lines to park on to double up on QSOs. I can't operate and drive, so there was a lot of drive (and gas, and rest room, and eating) time between stops. The weather was pretty good - overcast and in the 60s and 70s, but a bit windy. Fortunately, no rain or storms.

Had some problems running full power on 40M - RF was getting into the control module of my car (2008 Pontiac G6), so had to cut power back to 50W. I made the check engine light come on and killed the tachometer. A battery disconnect and reconnect reset everything so it was working again.

Many thanks to the stations listed below that followed me around and worked me in 10 or more counties (call, followed by number of counties):

N4PN (16)
N6MU (16)
W4UCZ (16)
WA6KHK (16)
K3TW (14)
N5XG (13)
W4UT (13)
N4JF (12)
W8WVU (11)
K4AMC (10)
K4ZGB (10)
KI0I (10)
W6USN (10)

and also thanks to YV5OIE (9) the only DX I worked all weekend

Rig: Icom IC756 (classic - blue screen). 50 - 100W
Antennas: Hamsticks on trunk lid - 2 mounts
MicroHam USB Interface II for rig control and keying
Gateway laptop running N3FJP OK QSO party software version 2.0, charging on inverter between stops.

Thanks to everyone for all the QSOs, and hope to see you again in next year's OKQP, if not sooner in another contest.

AF5Q mobile 240 cw 209 SSB QSO

Well, the Badlands experience is done! Thanks to all the hams that followed me around and gave me contacts.

Saturday started out with beautiful weather. I had to get a flat fixed which cost me around 30 mins of contact time, but that happens. I spanned from Cimarron/Texas line and finished up on the Kiowa/Tillman line. There were no condx from when I entered Woodward county all the way to Dewey county south side. I tried 40, 20, and 15. No answer lol. Found some road changes, met some interesting people that were definitely unfriendly, but had a safe trip. As of Saturday evening, I only had 266 contacts and 29,000 points.

Sunday went smoother, and opened up with a triple county line. Ended up with 449 total contacts and 54,624, but was a lot smoother than Saturday. I made a special effort driving allll the way from Hulen to give John, N6MU Harmon for the sweep, but it was worth it. It was close, as I only had 7 minutes left in the contest to complete it. “

N4PN (GA) 179 cw 121 SSB QSO

WOW!

I feel like I need a rest from all the driving around - with all the mobiles out there this year....great activity!

Most Q's - fixed station - W5CW with 6. Even a CW contact on 10m.

Mobiles: Led by Bob, W0BH-34 counties; Lorna, K0WHY-25; Connie, K5CM-24; Ron, AF5Q-20; Alan, N5UM-16; Norm, W3DYA-8 Hud, K5ZG-3...

Sorry I missed Norm on Saturday as he started in the only two counties I missed this year...McCurtain and LeFlore...missed the sweep by one county-line...

K5CM Mobile 1060 cw 370 SSB

It was great to see we had all 77 counties on the air, with at least one sweep going to N6MU! Thanks to all the Oklahoma mobiles - W0BH/K0WHY, W3DYA, N5WX, K5ZG/DIANE, K5CM/N5KW, K0PVW, and AF5Q.

My F-150 had problems at the last minute, so I had to make a quick switch to the car. Ignition noise was so bad that operating while driving was difficult at best. So we did alot of operating setting on county lines with the engine turned off. Was still great fun as usual."

N5XG (TX) 106 CW 2 SSB

"A great roster of mobile stations and good support from the fixed stations this year. Could only work OKLA on 40/80 and sparse activity on 80. 40M skip was not favorable early morning each day or late in the day Saturday. Thanks again for the those buying the gasoline to make it fun for us. Rough guess: AF5Q (10), K5CM (20) N5UM (13) W3DYA (18)W0BH (25).

W0PAN (AZ) – 53 SSB

Great time! Special thanks to W0BH/m - Bob and Lorna did a super job and lead to 16 counties and a 1500 bonus for me. K5CM/M was also in my log for 11 counties and 1000 bonus points. AF5Q/m was at 6 and K0PVW for 5. I didn't do this good when I was living in Oklahoma City. 20 meters was the only band I was successful on - W5CW and AF5Q/M made it on 40 but no one else made it through the QRN out west. Looking forward to next year - thanks for keeping the QSO Party going strong. 73, Larry, W0PAN out in the SW desert of Mesa Arizona with an MFJ 1795 vertical sitting on the ground between fruit trees.

N6MU (CA) 218 CW 83 SSB

Thanks to all the great mobiles who helped me achieve an all mobile, all CW Sweep. I had 39 one Q counties provided by these mobiles: K5CM-12, N5UM and W0BH-8, AF5Q-6, W3DYA-3 and K5ZG-2. Overall, top mobile for me was W0BH with 108 Qs followed by W3DYA(42), N5UM(38), AF5Q(35) and K5CM(34). K5ZG only activated three counties but

they were the all important rare Panhandle counties. A special thanks to AF5Q who changed his route to give me my last county(HAR) just minutes before the Party ended.

W3DYA/mobile – 539 CW QSOs

Didn't comment anything else.

N7JFP Goes for the WBOW

Mike, NC4MO, was closing in on his first time for the USACA. It was 20 to go, then down to ten to go, then it was down to four. Well, with so few left to go, it was time to try and help him reach the end. If you don't twist an arm here and there, it can take six months to get the last few it seems with so few mobiles out running counties.

As you'll note in the N4CD trip report, when Mike was down to 4, I headed off to Nebraska to get the two he needed there – and we had success. A day or two later, he worked a fixed station in Caldwell, LA, leaving him just Wheeler OR. While the rest of the country has been enjoying a warm spring, the snow was still flying out that way in OR, and Wheeler county was in 'snow territory' often with roads hard to travel during the winter (It's still winter up there as it's been snowing in Portland OR and southern WA state!). Portland had high of 39 and a few inches of snow – both the days before and the days after Paul's trip!

Unfortunately, Mike has had to do most of his working the counties for the past year being denied relays by the guy on 14336 more concerned with running mobiles off some days than running mobiles. I guess one day Mike came back too fast one too many times or missed the tu-tu and wound up on one of the 'lists' of the twin-twins. He'd have to work stations direct or have some help from his friends. It seems there are lots of real county hunter friends to help out when they know the situation.

Anyway.....I posted a note on K3IMC saying that Mike was down to just ONE to go for the WBOW. There's not a whole lot of county hunters out there, but Phil AB7RW indicated he might be able to get there in a few weeks, and wondered about the roads -there usually difficult this time of year. It was still snowing at his QTH. Worse, it takes half a day to get there and maybe you are not not even heard by anyone when propagation is not great – signals back east

are weak, and few have their beams pointed at OR.

Paul wrote:

“Once again, thank you for the posting that Mike needed Wheeler.
My wife and I had a great drive down into Oregon today, and the weather turned out to be fantastic. The one day between storms I guess.
Also, 20m was really good, and I didn't even have to drive up out of the river canyon to get the LC for Mike. Also able to help a few West Coasters on 40.”

N7JPF – Wheeler County Line, OR
LC WBOW for Mike, NC4MO

I was using a new Outbacker Perth, and it seems to be working great.

When I was in Wheeler last October, no-one picked me up, so I turned off the radio and drove out of the county. I was not happy then!

KJ8F Winner OH QSO Party

Sharon, KJ8F, was top score in the YL class for the 2011 Ohio QSO Party. That's the 4th time in 4 years for her. Congrats!

Idaho QSO Party

Conditions were very challenging for the ID QSO Party with the flares and spotty band conditions. Some managed to work as many as 27 ID stations (mostly SSB) in the QSO Party. The only mobile I am aware of was K7TM. I was out mobile and caught him a few times.

Fixed stations spotted include: AI7H N7PI K0TO N7VJ AB9CB KK7X . Obviously with some out of state folks making 27 contacts, there were many more on that weren't spotted (or heard back east). The big guns in ID managed to rack up hundreds of QSOs, though.

With the high "A" index, the northern paths were closed – DX to EU and JA.

K7TM, Bob, was out mobile trying to run as many county lines as possible. He noted conditions we 'soooooo poor'.

K7TM Clearwater/Lewis, ID

Here's his summary of the QSO Party

Idaho QSO Party 2012

K7TM /M SUMMARY

COUNTY	# CW	#SSB	CW mults	PH mults
Nez Perce	21	0	16	0
Latah	21	0	16	0
Lewis	57	13	26	8
Clearwater	30	10	21	7
Lewis	57	13	26	8
Idaho	38	10	22	9
Adams	32	15	18	7
Valley	55	12	25	11
Boise	40	22	24	13
Gem	34	13	22	11
Ada	9	15	5	10
TOTALS	**394**	**123**	**221**	**84**

BAND CONDITIONS= POOR

COUNTIES ACTIVATED = 11

MILES DRIVEN DURING QP= 494

POWER LEVEL = 100 W

RIG= K2

ANTENNA= HUSTLER

Dennis KK7X reported:

“I operated in the Idaho QSO Party this year for the first time in years. The first time I participated was back in the 80's and it was put together by none other than W7LQT. I took first place on CW and won a very nice belt buckle which sadly I later lost on a trip.

This year band conditions were not in my favor. The contest followed right on the heels of two major solar storms so I did not anticipate good band conditions. The first station I worked was another Idaho Ham who was right here in my home county of Kootenai.

I spend quite a bit of time calling CQ and my best run was when someone spotted me on the County Hunters spot page. I worked a good number of my fellow county hunters and I really appreciate those contacts.

Later in the day I was expecting the normal rush of contacts from the Pacific. Strangely enough I didn't work one JA. All in all I had a great time and made around 100 contacts. I was busy off and on doing other things so I did not dedicate the entire 24 hours to ham radio.

73, Dennis - KK7X”

from the 3830 reflector:

K4BAI (BA) - 17 QSOs

There seemed to be more activity in ID QSO Party this year than in past years.

K0TO (fixed Bonneville, ID) 96 w 350 SSB QSO

The first 1.5 hours were total RF blackout due to the M-class solar flare. Conditions on Saturday were slightly better than poor. Conditions on Sunday were simply poor. Too bad because I had hoped for openings into EU on 10, 15 and 20. Not a single EU station was heard on any of those bands.

N6MU (CA) 13 cw 18 SSB QSO

Poor propagation. No new stations heard Sunday at all.

KN4Y – FL – 7 cw QSO

Listened on CW, had a drink, listened on CW,. had a hot dog, listed on CW, worked a few stations, heard no more, the six pack is empty.

Virginia QSO Party

Murphy killed propagation on the higher bands, but this is mainly a 40/80 meter party anyway. I was hoping for some 15 m counties, but it was not to be. A good number of counties showed up, but I didn't see any mobiles. This is primary fixed stations trying to work each other in state – and it's a bit rough as much of the activity never makes it to 20M at all. It looks like the most contacts by far were made on SSB.

I caught only a handful of stations on cw as the A index was high, and signals on 20m were sparse. It looks like from the comments on the 3830 reflector that many stations had 50-100 contacts into VA on 40 and 80M.

from the3830 reflector

VA3GKO – 100 SSB QSO

Great time as usual. Congrats to the great state of Virginia for a super state qso party.

(he had most of his QSO on 40 and 80M)

K2DBK (NJ) 26 cw 154 SSB

“The VaQP is one of my favorite state QSO parties,and I'm glad that I had time to participate this year after missing the last couple of years. Given my location in northern NJ, the only bands that are usable are 40 & 80 (I've made a couple of contacts in the past on 160, but I don't really have an antenna and it's usually not worth the effort). This year, I had plans that kept me out Saturday evening so I didn't get on to 75/80 at all. Late Sunday afternoon I tuned around for a bit on 80m but decided that instead of trying to work just the couple of stations that I could hear, I'd stick with 40 and submit as SOSB/40 (mixed mode).

I like this contest for a few different reasons: First, there's enough activity to keep things going, but not so much that it's a fight for a little-pistol station like me to have to work to make contacts. I could work everyone I could hear, and I appreciate the nice signal reports that I got from many stations. (Just 100w into a G5RV at about 35' here.) Second, this is one of the few contests where I can get on and actually hold a run frequency for pretty much as long as I'd like. That's not something that I get in the big DX contests! Third, this has got to be one of the friendliest bunch of of folks in any contest. When I had a small pileup going (for "rare" NJ!) I would move pretty quickly, but most times I had plenty of time to just throw in a quick word or two, and it was nice hearing when I was a new mult, or just having someone thank me for getting on to help give out points. It's things like that the remind me why I like this contest so much.

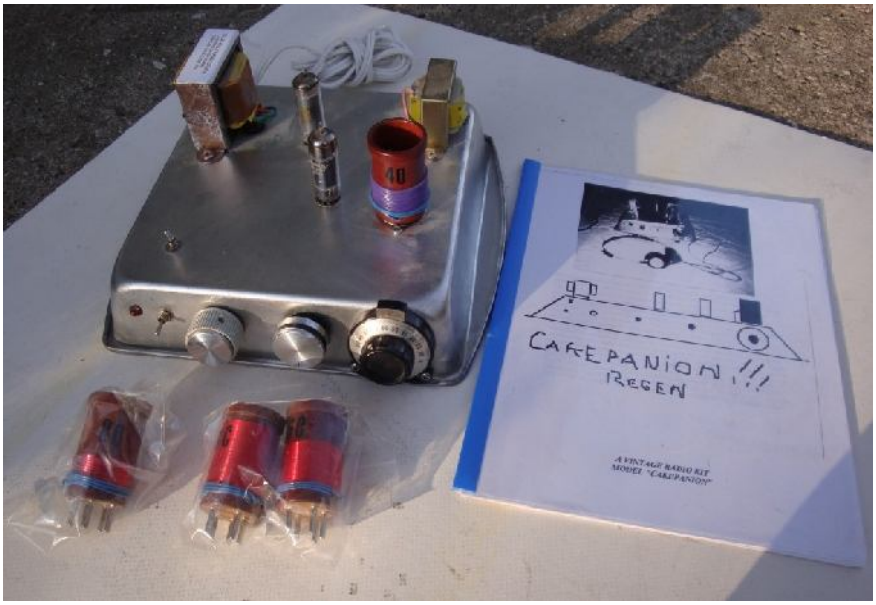
On the Regen Receiver Trail

You never know what will show up on Ebay!...last month we showed an ad for the Weskit Scout receiver. So what shows up on Ebay this month? You bet – a genuine Weskit Scout two tube regen receiver for sale! It looks identical to the Space Rambler mentioned last month.

Weskit 50s vintage Space Scout

It's a two tube set that covers from the BC band up through 30 MHz, with a vernier tuning dial but no bandspread beyond that. It runs off a 1.5v flashlight battery and a B+ battery of likely 45v or so. Plug in coils – unobtainium. Looks identical but maybe a different tube or two? Who knows. Front panel is identical other than the name. Sold for $100 on Ebay!

During the 80s and 90s, some 'retro kits' were made by various kit manufacturers. Here's one I've never seen before.



“Cakepanion” 2 Tube regen by Vintage Radio Kits Company

This was made by an outfit in Sharon, MA and sold in the 1990s for $119 in kit form and possibly into the early 2000s. It was a kit, and there was a companion transmitter –model CPCW-5 five watt QRP – as well. There was a 4 tube QRP transceiver offered. - the CP5TR either CW or 1.5w AM output.

Their old catalog archived here:

http://www.oocities.org/capecanaveral/hall/8701/vintage/vintcat3.htm

This receiver used plug in coils. You built it on a cake pan – inverted. It featured a FET front end, two 61Q5s like the Novice Special out of the ARRL Handbooks, an audio clipper to clip static and key click bursts. Solid state power supply built in. Well built with a/c line fused, something you didn't find on the 50s and 60s era regen sets.

You never know what will show up on Ebay!

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Here's a good research (technical) paper on frequency compensated regeneration control in regenerative receivers. A bit technical but interesting. We showed his one circuit last month.

http://www.kearman.com/vladn/hybrid_feedback.pdf

Here is all the math behind it (warning – full of equations!)

http://www.kearman.com/vladn/hybrid_theory.pdf

North Dakota QSO Party

The weather was great in ND, but as usual, there weren't any mobiles out. It looks like 7 counties were available – that's about the largest number anyone reporting on the 3830 contest reflector noted. It looks like nearly all the activity was on SSB.

W0ND (Fixed) was on from Stark County - he's the ND ARRL Section Manager.

W0ND Ward, ND

Also spotted on the W6RK site were W0OSP (Burleigh) , KC0W(Stark) , W0TF(Benson).

from the 3830 contest reflector:

W7KAM (MO) had 7 SSB contacts.

Here's an interesting site if you are looking desperately for counties in ND. It lists the operators active on the ND nets – and their cities. You might have to do some detective work to figure out which counties they are in.

http://www.k0ln.com/ndham12.pdf

Boy Scout Radios – Continued

It seems there are at least a dozen variations of Boy Scout Radios. Another one surfaced on Ebay this month – the plastic radio by Aurora but with a built in speaker.

Two-Tube Radio Kit

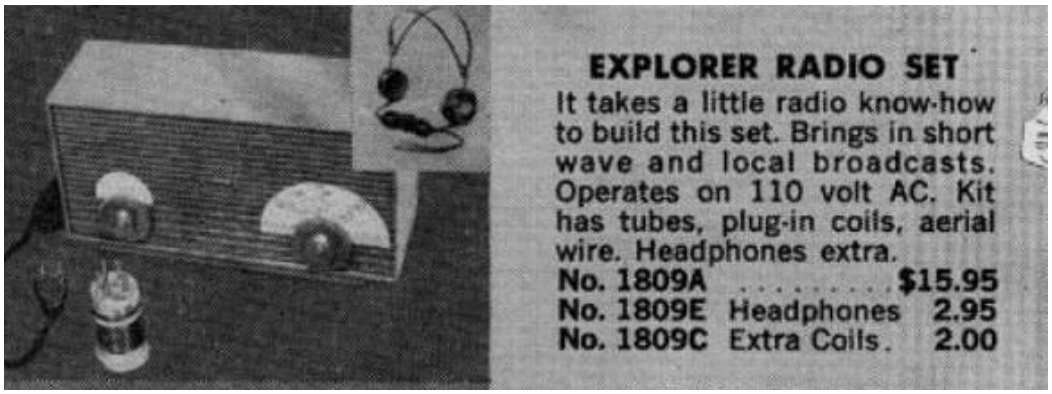
Assemble powerful, 2-tube radio set with this kit. All parts, instructions, built-in speaker, modern cabinet, included. 1½V "A", 90V "B" cells.

1805 ..... **$11.95**

1805B 90V "B" battery.... **3.75**

It went for a good price on Ebay - $224, new, in the box, mostly assembled. Wow. Another showed up – already built – It went for $124!

I also found an ad for another radio which I've never seen. Some of these must have been offered only for a few months, or maybe only in one issue!



EXPLORER RADIO SET

It takes a little radio know-how to build this set. Brings in short wave and local broadcasts. Operates on 110 volt AC. Kit has tubes, plug-in coils, aerial wire. Headphones extra.

No. 1809A **$15.95**

No. 1809E Headphones **2.95**

No. 1809C Extra Coils. **2.00**

Both these ads show up in an issue of Boy's Life Magazine in 1959. The first is battery operated and this one for shortwave is A/C powered.

WB4FFV, Ralph, Finishes up USACA

With a little help from his friends, Ralph, WB4FFV finishes up USACA in March.
- - -

Ralph posted on the forum:

“My 1st county hunting contact was WB9YCO/M-OUTAGAMIE, WS on 10-25-1982 and my goal was all mobile to mobile on 20 meters with no relays. I did not make my goal but I only lack 475 to reach that goal, I'll get there.

These are preliminary stats.

The mobiles that gave me the most counties: N8STF-90,KB6UF-62,KC1NA-54,N4CD-49,K0ARS-48,KI0JD-42,W7GVF-35,K4QFK-35,AI5P-35.

MOST NOTEABLE TRIPS TO GET NEEDED COUNTIES:

N4AAT - LAST 3 in NC and last 5 in GA.

N4CD - last 4 in TX and 2 of last 3 in NE.

the 'BIG TRIP" goes to KB0BA/N0XYL-last 4 in KY, last in IA, Last in KS, last in MN, last 2 in MO, last in NE, last in SD.

KB6UF-last in AL for WBOW on 3-19-2012.

It took almost 30 years but the best part was getting to meet many of the county hunters on their home turf or at the MI mini or the 3M. It has been fun.”

KB6UF mobile – LC WBOW for Ralph, WB4FFV

Limestone, AL

New ARRL Membership Benefits

We are excited to announce two new ARRL membership benefits that will be introduced in June 2012.

In addition to the print copy of *QST*, all members will have access to an online, digital edition of *QST* at no extra cost. You will be able to access *QST* from anywhere--on nearly any computer, laptop, mobile device, smartphone and tablet (including Apple iPad, iPhone, and devices using the Android operating system).

Also in June, members will gain access to archived issues of *QST* from December 1915 to the

present (previously, only issues through 2007 were available to members). If you are familiar with the current periodicals archive (which serves images of pages), that platform will be expanded to include all of *QST* from December 1915 through December 2011. A second, new archive will be introduced for issues beginning January 2012, featuring enhanced functionality including full-text search.

On the Road with N4CD IV

There was another hamfest! Seems there's one about every two weeks if you are willing to drive 250 miles in any direction to get to them. This one is a small one in Weatherford TX put on by the Parker Amateur Radio Club. I"ve never found a lot of stuff to buy there, but it's a good excuse to go county hunting! Parker county is about a 75 mile drive to the west.

Dave, KE3VV, needed Foard for a LC in TX for Master Platinum. Scottie N4AAT needed Wilbarger for one of the five in TX he needed. Others needed that and others I would hit. I sent out some emails and posted the trip on the K3IMC web page.

Dang....I set the LOUD alarm clock for 5:30. I was wide awake at 3:30 but that was too early so I turned on the AM radio and listened to Red Eye network (seems to be carried around the country) for a while. Sometime in there I dozed off and slept right through the loud alarm clock and before you know it , it was 6am and I was behind. Oh well.... I need to get an even louder alarm clock or get better hearing! After a quick breakfast McMuffin nuked in the microwave, a small glass of OJ, and a cup of coffee, I was ready to go. It took about 15 minutes to put the antennas on the car (40/30/40/17/15 on one six foot mast on a mag mount, a 4 foot mast with 20M SSB resonator on mag mt, and 40M SSB hamstick). Then it was heading west at about 6:20am.

Not much to report. Not too many around that early in the morning but a few showed up for Tarrant and Parker. The hamfest is held in a 'gym' for a church there. It's about 200 feet by 200 feet with maybe 50 tables. It took all of 30 minutes to see everything twice, say hi to 4 or 5 locals I knew, then decide there was nothing of interest to buy or even yak about. So it was back to the car to head out county hunting.

Alan, VK4AAR was in there. For his enjoyment, I'll toss in some route numbers so he can vicariously trek along. For this trip, I wrote down the towns in sequence that I'd program into the GPS to keep me going the right way – a list that went like:

Mineral Wells
Graham

Throckmorton
Munday
Lockett
etc

That would indicate the next city- then the one after. It would also be where I changed routes. It worked well on this trip

It was west on 180 to Mineral Wells In Palo Pinto, then NW on 337 to Graham(Young) , then 380 to Throckmorton. Then I went 222 to Munday – but after getting into Haskell, zipped up 266 a mile to the County Line of Knox and Haskell- ran that. Then another five miles from there, turning on 1208 for the C/L of Knox and Baylor. Ran that. Even popped in on SSB, but the CQ WPX SSB contest was raging, and QRM was everywhere. Frank, AA9JJ, and Kay, N9QPQ, seemed to be the ones listening and picking up mobiles. I showed up a few times on 20M SSB. Once or twice I made it to 40M SSB but it was filled with QRM too. That really wasn't a surprise.

Then it was a long haul up 227 to Foard. You can zip along at 80 on the 70 mph road. I didn't see a another moving car for 25 miles. The weather was great. Clear skies. It started at 57 in the driveway but was 48 deg over in Weatherford. Soon it warmed up to the 60s, then 70s and it hit the 80s by late afternoon. Delightful. I finally broke down and turned on the a/c. (takes a mile or two off the gas mileage – hi hi).

Dave KE3VV showed up for Foard. In the rarer counties, it was about 30-40 contacts per county. The DX was in with SP5SA, YV5OIE, PA3ARM, G3XVR DL6KVA, DL3IAC, LY5A in the log. Jonas was strong but big echoes on signal.

This is an unual Texas County Sign. It actually says “Foard County Line”. I don't recall any other sign in Texas that has 'County Line' on it at the county line!

Usually, it will just say Foard County or similar. It's at a river – dunno if the C/L is the south border of the river. Maybe someone can dig up the story on why this sign has 'County Line' on it! A mystery!

From Lockett to 287 to 25 down into Archer. It looks like the big bookstores in Archer might be open again. They used to have 250,000 books for sale there. Haven't stopped by in years but never found anything I had to have. 95% fiction. Run by McMurtry of Lonesome Dove fame for you bookies.

http://www.bookedupac.com/

If you want some 'scholarly' and rarer edition books, you probably want to go through Archer City. They don't have much in the way of technical books. There you plan on going to Powells out in Portland OR when you attend the National Convention – worth the trip – or shop that store on line.

It was 1:30 before I stopped for lunch and filled up the tank. Ouch. $3.72 out in rural TX on the main road at a 'cheapie'. Not much to report – zipped on home down 281 after 1 mile jog east to run Clay, TX. That gets you to Jack – then on to 114 to 380 to Denton and another 45 minutes to home. I stopped at the Cracker Barrel in Lewisville, TX for dinner (Country **Ham** dinner) then headed on home.

It was 75 miles to the hamfest and 410 miles to get back home from the hamfest.

Trip stats:

487 miles
$63 in gas total
About 31 mpg

Latest Awards Issued

USACA #1221	Henry, OH3JF	Feb 23, 2012
USACA #1222	Gary, K4EXT	Mar 14, 2012
USACA #1223	Bennie, WY4D	March 17, 2012
USA-CW #131	Henry, OH3JF	Feb 23, 2012
Bingo II #86	Bill, WG9A	March 18, 2012
Bingo V #3	Scottie, N4AAT	March 15, 2012

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

March 31

MO QSO Party RS(T), serial, MO county or S/P/C www.w0ma.org
Mar 31, 1800Z - See website Multiple operating periods;
CW 1.820 and 40 kHz from band edge;
Phone--1.880,3.825,7.220,14.250,21.380,28.350.

April 7 – 8

Montana QSO Party RS(T), S/P/C or MT county www.fvarc.org
Apr 7, 0000Z - Apr 8, 0000Z
CW-1.81, 3.54, 7.035, 14,04, 21.05, 28.05
SSB – 1.845, 3.810, 7.244, 14.262, 21.365, 28.325

April 14 -15

New Mexico Centennial QSO Party Call sign, name, and NM county or S/P/C
www.swcp.com/~n5zgt
Apr 14, 1400Z - Apr 15, 0200Z
CW-1.85,3.55,7.045,14.05,21.05,28.05,50.095;
SSB-1.85,3.815,7.26,14.28,21.38,28.38,50.13.

Georgia QSO Party RS(T), S/P/C or GA county gqp.contesting.com

April 21 – 22

Michigan QSO Party Serial and MI county or S/P/C www.miqp.org
Apr 21, 1600Z - Apr 22, 0400Z

South Dakota QSO Party RS(T) and SD county or S/P/C www.w0blk.org
Apr 21, 1700Z - Apr 22, 1700Z
CW - 3.58, 7.035, 14.07;
Phone - 1.845, 3.855, 7.180, 14.255, 21.355, 28.455 on
SSB; RTTY - 3.585, 7.038, 14.075, 21.075;
PSK - Clg Freq.

April 28

Florida QSO Party RS(T), FL county or S/P/C www.floridaqsoparty.org
Apr 28, 1600Z - See website

Nebraska QSO Party RS(T), NE county or S/P/C www.hdxa.net
Apr 28, 1100Z - Apr 29, 1700Z CW: 1.805 and 35 kHz above band edge,Nov/Tech--10 kHz above band edge; Phone—1.915,3.865,7.

Michigan mini – April 26 and 27

Info here:

http://marac.org/events.htm

The 2012 Michigan Mini will be hosted by K8ZZ and W8TVT and will be held at the Holiday Inn
in Traverse City, MI.
Thee hotel has granted us an extension, so the cutoff for the special room rate is now April 13th!
April 26, 27 & 28, 2012
Hotel contact info here:
http://www.tcwestbay.com/

Dayton Hamvention – May 18-20th

The County Hunters will meet in room 2 on Friday from 4 to 5pm. Dinner afterward.

National Convention - July 4 to July 7 Vancouver Washington

info here:

http://marac.org/events.htm