

County Hunter News OnLine

February 2025
Volume 21 Issue 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

The USACA award 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://marac.org/awards.pdf>

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) Sunspots – Lots of them. Solar activity continues at a high level. 10M working fine. 6M still alive with FT-8, Ft-4.

2) MICHIGAN MINI dates announced April 24-26. Details to follow on MARAC page and RoadRunner MARAC Newsletter.

3) WAY BACK WHEN.....This month we go back in history. CQ Magazine/Cowan Publishing seem to be extinct Joining the long list of ham radio publications that have come and gone. CQ goes way back more than 60 years and has covered contesting, DXing, County Hunting, scores of other awards, DX-peditions. They sponsored the WPX Award, The WAC, and of course, the USACA. So back to the beginning – and then up to date with MARAC taking over the awards for county hunting. I'm not sure what will happen with WPX (which sort of got real bloated with vanity calls and contest calls here in the USA and then overseas with all sorts of counties using up all their prefixes possible.)

Mobile Activity in January

Winter hit.....temps down to 30 below way north, and a massive Siberian outflow bringing temps down. Snow fell...as far as New Orleans LA and the panhandle of FL!

Yet, mobiles and parks on the air stations were out.

At the beginning of the month:

KB6UF was in Plaquemines, LA

AI5P ran a few in AR along with a couple parks.

NU0Q headed out from home to 'warmer territory' – down to Dallam TX, across NM, to AZ. Into CA and NV. Back to AZ. Then home via NM, TX, OK, MO to IA

NA8W put out Highland, FL (POTA)

K5GE ran counties in south Texas for a couple days

KB6UF ran counties in LA several days Later repeated same route again.

W8MP ran counties in NC, SC, GA to FL

K4YT ran counties in VA

Then the 'deep freeze' and southern snow hit and it was real quiet for a few days.

1/23

On the Road with N4CD

Each year there is a small hamfest in Fort Worth Texas – the 'Cowtown' hamfest – with

maybe 1000+ people showing up. Helps to break up the winter doldrums in between the bigger hamfests such as Orlando (Feb) and Dayton (May).

I decided to take a small trip to get one new park on Friday, stay overnight near the hamfest, hit it Friday afternoon, then again on Saturday morning. So I packed the overnight bag and headed out.

Acton State Historic Site is in Granbury TX (Hood County). It's the smallest 'state park' in TX and consists of the grave site of Davy Crockett's wife Elizabeth, who died in 1860. Located in a cemetery, about the only way you can run it is portable. So that was the plan.

“The Park is the burial site of Elizabeth Crockett, second wife of Davy Crockett, who married him in Tennessee in 1815. Since Crockett fought for Texas and died at the Alamo, his heirs were eligible for a land grant. The Monument was erected at Acton Cemetery by Legislative appropriation in 1911. In 1949, legislation moved control of the site to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department”



Within the cemetery, there are many confederate soldiers graves. There's a tablet outside the cemetery



It reads:

“Resting here in Acton Cemetery is a large group of Confederate Soldiers. They were common men with an uncommon valor in a war they fought for their homes, family, and constitutional government. Some had been the earliest settlers here but most came from the South that was devastated in a war and the horrors of reconstruction.”

Later ran the county mobile for the county hunters.

Departed and checked into the Comfort Inn in Forest Hills. Then went over to hamfest at 3pm when it opened. No new dealers for ham stuff but lots of new misc – too small for new equipment dealers for them to show up. A fair amount of old boatanchors and

mobile rigs from the 70s, 80s. If you needed a tube, Jim Sargent was there with his tables of NOS tubes from the 1920s on. Likely to have what you need.

Some of the equipment you might have used if you had money back then. Here's a sampling. Had no urge to bring any boatanchors home even though there was a Heathkit Ocean Hopper regen for sale.



Surplus ARC 5 receiver -

If you were on a tight budget, many Novices grabbed a surplus ARC5 receiver, modified it for ham use.....or used the lower frequency ones as a IF with better filtering for CW use. (Q5'er) They were designed for 24V aircraft systems and used a dynamotor for HV. So you had to build a small power supply to run one.



Atlas Solid State Transceiver

In the 1970s, if you had a wad of cash, you could buy the Atlas SSB transceiver. All solid state. Above unit is mounted in base station cabinet with power supply and speaker. There were two for sale here. Didn't do CW well – no narrow band CW filter option. Great rig if you could afford it!



Drake 2B Receiver

Drake put out the 1A, 2A and 2B receivers, One of the 'affordable' receivers if you had some spare cash. Was considered one of the best at the time. Still a good receiver if you like separate TX and RX. Most new hams want DSP, spectrum display, etc, built in. Sad that Drake went out of the ham business in the late 70s. They made some great transceivers, transmitters, receivers, accessories, etc. The Japanese invasion of

Kenwood, Tempo, Yaesu did them in. Along with Heahtkit.



Drake TR-7 Transceiver

The Drake TR-7 transceiver was an 80 to M meter SSB/CW unit – all solid state. Worked well. I owned one and it was very nice. You could open it up and later do the new WARC bands. Good on SSB and CW. Had a separate compressor unit. You could get it with or without digital readout. Later they would come out with a junior TR-5 with less features. 100W power level. Took a separate power supply – and could be run mobile if you had room.

There were quite a few old Heathkits from the 50s and 60s.....DX-100, etc, nothing newer. Some old Hammurlund and Hallicrafters 50s type radios. Not much else for tube collector folks.

After grabbed a dinner at a nearby Mexican place. Not a whole lot of places nearby. Spent the chilly eve/night at the hotel. Decent breakfast there. Well, for \$130 you should get something!

Went back Saturday morning but just a few new things added.

Left after 2 hours, headed to Cedar Lake State Park - US-2996/KFF-2996. Spent a while there giving out contacts on 20 to 10m, then headed home. 200 miles round trip. The 2016 Malibu has 172,000 miles on it now.

New Cars

I've been checking out the new cars. Not much good to report for the 2025 models.

Trying to rein in costs, and the incessant need to meet every increasing 'mileage standards' is forcing manufacturers to use turbo engines or go hybrid.

Toyota has gone 'hybrid' offering only hybrids for Camry, RAV4 and others. If you buy one, they'll probably go 150,000 miles with no major issues. Toyota has been doing hybrids well now for over 20 years.

Unfortunately, they no longer make V8 engines for their trucks and are sticking in turbo 6 cylinder engines....that are having major issues already. They just don't hack it for hauling trailers and heavy loads it seems. Smaller trucks get turbo 4s. Sales are declining. Folks don't want them. They don't 'work' for hauling.

On the other hand, GM only has SUVs and trucks. Don't make 'sedans' (cars) any longer. Nearly all have small engines with turbos.....and.....will likely die long before 100,000 miles...maybe 30,000 to 60,000 miles. There have been major issues with turbos..... with one of the problems being they create higher pressures in the combustion chamber which lead to higher wear and then excessive oil use. They spin at 100,000 RPM plus, On top of that, of course, the turbo dying itself is a forgone conclusion long before 100,000 miles. Oh, and SUVs like the Equinox have 3 cylinder engines with the turbo.

Hyundai and Kia – no way. Seems they can't build engines that don't crap out. Less expensive cars – but don't plan on keeping them beyond 60,000 miles.....

Honda – used to make excellent cars.....reputation has been tarnished by lower quality and recalls. Still better than most of the alternatives.

Stellantis.....ie, Jeep, Chrysler, Fiat, Alpha Romeo....you got to be a pain glutton to buy one. Most recalls of any manufacturer. (Ford is next worst on recalls). Once upon a time, Jeeps were legendary for reliabilitynow....and the bottom of the list. Electrical issues. Quality control issues. Cars dying on road for now apparent reason.

Volkswagen? Well, they are going EV and no one wants their crappy EV's. They came out with a new 'microbus' ID Buzz. \$100,000! Goes less than 200 miles on a charge, and really only 140 or so usually.

One of the problems all manufacturers have is that cars are full of electronics. Some have 50+ computers or microcomputers for this or that. ABS, rear view camera on backup, active collision alert and emergency braking, blind spot indicators, auto

dimming highbeams, lane following, active cruise control systems, Infotainment systems, wi-fi, wireless charging, etc. Engine control/pollution control systems to eek out the last mpg and meet emissions.

Lots of things to go wrong with 'software' or wiring and coding.

Others have have one central computer – same deal – lots of possible software issues and engine control. Some cars have 'high pressure' direct injection. Talking hundreds of PSI.

Another problem is that engines now have lots of plastic parts. What used to be metal is now plastic connectors, hoses, etc. Things that probably won't last 10 years

And if you are thinking of an EV.....well, good luck. Cybertrucks have lost half their value in 2 years. Most EV's drop 50% in five years. Think of an EV as a throw away car. Drive it 8 years, give it away for peanuts. Buy another. If you don't mind stopping 4 times to recharge on a 500 mile trip.....well, maybe buy one and be 'green'. Tax credits under President Trump likely to disappear.

Good luck if you are thinking of a new car. They are getting very expensive.

GM Malibu model now extinct...but last 2024 Model had a CVT transmission – dead by 100,000 and maybe just 50,000 miles..... only decent 'cars' not an SUV are Honda Accord, Toyota Camry.....and they are going to by hybrids.

GM drank the 'EV Kool-Aid' along with VW, Ford, Stellantis..... and are suffering.

Who wants a EV Mustang? Folks want a roaring V8 engine, not whisper quiet electric motor. A muscle car with EV....is a joke.....Get real Detroit.....

If you get car with turbo, CHANGE THE OIL every 5000 miles. Your turbo will last a lot longer.

If you got web access, you might enjoy Scotty Kilmer videos on cars.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/scottykilmer>

Posts new videos daily. Tells you what to avoid and why. And what to buy. How to take care of car. He's a mechanic for 50 years.

County Hunting Award Notes

Some history – current and wayback.....from the wayback machine.

I got an email from a fellow W2SZ club member alumnus. He seemed to recall seeing a USACA certificate for the RPI club station W2SZ in Troy NY back in the 1960s. . Hmmm.....checked the MARAC database....but no listing for W2SZ. Nope. Seems to never have earned any awards, or given out a LC for someone, or other reason to be entered into the database.....but it's been around since 1921.

Barry, K2MF, is trying to reconstruct the database going to back to the beginning by finding out the various levels, when earned, etc. Most of the old records of levels less than 'all' were lost along the way. CQ Magazine had a monthly column for county hunting which listed the current awards at all levels. With lots of work, Barry has gone through the on-line copies of CQ (might be a few issues are missing) - most are there. He's recreating a complete database as possible. Of course, calls have changed. Many early county hunters were SK years ago – may have changed calls along the way – old calls reassigned. Back then, if you moved from one call area to another, you had to change callsigns. For example, my first license was in NJ. I got WN2KQL, then WB2KQL. Moved to IL and got WB9ABT. Moved to Virginia and got WB4WVC. Later I snagged N4CD. My DXCC used cards from all calls. Same for my USA-CA

To complicate the situation, the awards custodian changed. It was K6BX to start running the program. He 'resigned' over an argument with the new editor at CQ, and Ed Hopper K2GT took over. Since then there have been a half dozen custodians. Unfortunately, in several 'handoffs' the data wasn't transferred, or parts lost. All the records for the initial awards for USACA-500, 1000, etc vanished. So Barry has been working diligently. CQ Magazine only had the month issued (no date) for the previous month (or two). Records for the first 15-20 years for anything less than 'all' simply didn't exist and had to be recreated.

To complicate the situation, Norm, WA3RTY would issue dupe numbers. For example, N4CD earned USA-500 in the 1979 time frame. I didn't go on then. Fortunately saved all the QSL cards, but no other record. When I finished all counties in the 1990s, Norm issued all new numbers for all the levels. So I have a number in 1979 that is not the same as when I got all 3077 in the 1990s. Happened to lots of folks.

Anyway, it turns out that W2SZ did earn USACA-500 in December of 1965, #545. Date unknown. The current folks at W2SZ hunting for that certificate in the archives of records for the club at the college library.....maybe the date can be found.

Barry has asked all those who have records of early numbers to contact him (If not already listed in the MARAC database) with their date of award....he's trying to fill in the missing pieces that will be part of the MARAC database. Well, here...when the new certificate arrived, the old one hit the trash. The date will never be known.

That led to my hunting down some early stories about the creation of the USA-CA Award..... in the Feb 2007 County Hunter News.....

<https://chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20-%20January%202007.pdf>

Below are a copy of what was in that early edition of the CHNews for your winter reading on a cold, snowy day.....

Creation of the USA-CA Award Program

Certificate Hunter/County Awards go back to the 1950s, with the Certificate Hunters program –created by Clif Evans, K6BX. In 1960, Certificate Hunters Clubs had chapters in many states which encouraged county hunting in each particular state to earn state awards. Clif Evans purchased the rights to the Directory of Awards and Certificates in 1960, giving him a larger platform to disseminate information on his awards.

Dozens of states had “Worked All this state” – and some state groups still offer certificates today. (See CountyHunter Dot Com for a listing of currently available state awards.) Many award chasers were delighted just to finish off a single state with ‘worked all counties’ and get that award. Most of the certificate hunters were interesting in obtaining ‘paper’ and accumulating points in the CHC by winning state QSO parties, getting endorsements for bands/modes on existing awards, etc. The thought of working all counties was thought to be ‘near impossible’ at the time. Most contacts were with fixed stations for all the awards. The main goal was accumulating points for CHC status.

After WW2, hams could pursue the IARU “WAC” award, or the ARRL “WAS” or CQ Magazine WPX or WAZ certificates. That, and ARRL DXCC were about it for ‘major awards’, although hundreds and hundreds of other awards were available domestically and internationally.

Various groups sponsored the State QSO parties, and often operators went ‘portable’ to give out counties during the contests. Fixed stations were recruited to come up to ‘net ‘frequency’ and give out their counties. Award chasers asked traffic handlers to come to the CH frequency, or waited until after the traffic nets had finished to call one of the regulars to get a new county.

Now we have a ‘gray area’....which came first, the chicken or the egg? According to the County Hunting History written by Don, W7OK, and distributed at the 1972 MARAC Convention:

“Sensing the need for more awards of various types to be available to any worthy ham operator was the father of an extensive Awards Program, Clif Evans, K6BX. During the 1950s K6BX created and developed the “Certificate Hunters Club”. One of the most popular awards created by K6BX was the USA-CHA or ‘County Hunters Award”. In 1960, county hunting activity was well underway....K6BX had become associated with CQ Magazine which provided a widespread media for collecting and disseminating information and news of county hunting activity. The USA-CA Awards were created by classes USA-500, USA-1000.....”

This is where it gets confusing, as the CHC USA-CHA, if it ever got started in or before 1960, seems to have literally disappeared for 4 years, then resurfaced. More later. It likely is that the US-CHA did not really start until after 1964. Thus, the work with CQ Magazine was first.

Dick, K2MGA, Publisher of CQ Magazine, which sponsors of the USA-CA, sent me the following information:

“I was party to the origination of the Award, having joined CQ in September 1960. I lay no claim to the conception of USA-CA, but through that early time I was witness to the development of the program and sat in on numerous meetings where it was discussed.

The USA-CA was, indeed, the brainchild of Clif Evans, K6BX. Not having the platform from which to launch such an ambitious project, he approached

CQ Editor Arne Trossman, W2DTJ, seeking a good home for the award. Arne immediately saw the potential of the program, and sold the idea to CQ ownership, the Cowan family. The award program became, right from the beginning, the property of Cowan Publishing Corp., owner of CQ.” In the October 1965 Zero Bias Column, looking back from 4 years in the future,

Dick wrote:

Looking back in 1961, when CQ first got the notion to sponsor a new award program, it was agreed among the staff and award experts that to be worthy of its following, the award would have to be a real challenge.” Several considerations went into its creation.

First, since there were so many counties, it was unlikely that any one amateur would have a great numerical advantage over all others – It didn’t give old-timers the upper-hand before the hunt began. Second, one could work several hundred counties toward the award on any band from 160-6 meters, and also from DX locations. Again, no one had a particular advantage.

Third, it would take years for folks to get the awards, and there wouldn’t be the problem with DXCC and WPX of what is a new country or prefix and what isn’t.

He wrote in 1965: “Back in 1961, the likelihood of anyone ever working all three thousand odd counties was seemed so remote as to be almost unthinkable. “ CQ offered an extra special plaque to anyone achieving all counties as incentive, and thought it would be ‘forever’ before they had to come up with it.

Continuing with his history in his email: “ With considerable investment of time, money and resources, the award was launched, and was supported by what we jokingly called “the black plague,” the USA-CA Record Book, which was originally an 8-1/2” X 11” book with a black and white cover, and contained not only the state-by-state county listings and spaces for QSO data, but also full page maps of each state, showing every county boundary with county names.

What made it “the black plague” was the enormous cost associated with the

production of the book which was compounded by the fact that we had to purchase the rights to the maps from one of the large map makers in NY. It sounds like a simple thing, and today that sort of stuff is probably free on the internet, but back then it was a really big deal. In addition, designing the certificate art and printing the oversized certificates on parchment paper in four colors was a staggering investment for our small company at the time.

Almost a decade passed before Cowan had recovered most of its investment. From the beginning, it was agreed that Clif Evans would write a column about award hunting for CQ, and that he would manage the award. Clif was a bundle of energy and enthusiasm. He was a retired Navy Captain who had served eminently in WW II. He did a wonderful job of promoting the award not only through his column in CQ, but through his own publications and organization (CHC) devoted to certificate hunting. He was nearly blind, but typed almost a hundred pages a month in microscopic type for his publications using a high intensity light and special magnifying lenses.

In June 1964, Arne Trossman left CQ because the company's offices were moved out of New York City, while Arne had just recently moved out of the city in the opposite direction. The three-hour commute each way was impossible for a family man, so he left. At the age of 24 I was named the new editor of CQ.

One of the early things I did after assuming the title of Editor was to correct what I saw as a very bad editing policy of using all caps in Clif's column in CQ. Clif didn't see it that way, and he quit.

We were in need of someone to pick up the responsibilities of managing the USA-CA program and writing the awards column for CQ. Our Contest Manager at the time was Frank Anzalone, W1WY. Frank suggested that I contact Ed Hopper, W2GT, a transmitter engineer at WHN, where Frank worked. Ed was an active ham and also a certificate chaser. W2GT was thrilled to take on the job, and handled it beautifully until he retired from the position due to failing health many years later. So that's the early story of the USA-CA program".

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CQ continues to sponsor the very successful USACA 46 years after its start! The early CQ articles in the 1960s tracked people's progress toward the

various levels – 500, 1000, and 1500. Slowly, people reached 1500. Then on to 2500. Only a handful were even above 1500. People received awards for 500 counties on 6M (AM), 500 on 28 MHz, 500 on 21 MHz.

Incidentally, it was that colorful, large award the CQ created that got me, N4CD, interested in that first level – to have that certificate on the wall. Miss Ida – she just ‘had to have that large, colorful certificate with all the state flags’ as well. Likely, in retrospect, that was a wise decision that the founders of the award at CQ made back then

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Well, the era of CQ Magazine keeping the light burning on County Hunter has been extinguished. Brian, NX0X will continue to issue CQ Magazine confirmed USACA for 'all 3077' but no levels.

MARAC now offers unconfirmed USACA – including levels of 500, 1000, etc to all counties.

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Some additional info from the wayback machine.

The USA-CHA Award

It seems there are a few others in County Hunter History who have some interesting ‘history’ and ‘oversized egos’ associated with them. As described above, Clif Evans, K6BX, started the USA-CA program at CQ Magazine. Prior to this, for about 5 years, Clif was very active in promoting this Certificate Hunter Club, which at its peak had over 4000 members seeking hundreds of different awards, and nearly 180 chapters worldwide. Clif Evans retired after 33 years of service in the Navy, as a Commander and Naval Aviator, on disability. (likely from detached retina suffered in plane crash).

There is uncertainty over the ‘start’ of USA-CHA – It could have started prior to his work with CQ Magazine, then vanished while the CQ version took over, or not. However, if it ever was created, and then was forgotten

about for 4 years, it reappeared after K6BX left CQ, or as most speculate, only got started after he left CQ Magazine. If anyone has solid evidence one way or the other, let me know!

The goal of the CHC was to accumulate points – you did this by qualifying for awards, by working the same awards with different mobiles or band or mode endorsements, by winning state QSO parties in your category, and by achieving different levels on awards. Often, awards had levels, so if you qualified for the first level, you got say 1 point. Another point for the next level. Or you could get to level one on 40M, then do it again on 20 meters for another point. There was a listing of who had how many points published regularly. One popular way was to get the “Worked All XX State’ award (or qualify for levels of it – since often you only had to work ½ or so to get to the ‘first level’). You got more points for the next level, and so on.

It seems suspicious that in his 1966 copyright date Directory of Awards and Certificates that he talks about a “17x22 inch US-CHA certificateThe parchment paper permits each holder to color in counties worked’. Most awards CHC offered were printed on standard paper, and the expensive large certificate at CQ caused massive headaches. It isn’t likely that anyone would start with this, but only had to come up with it to ‘compete’ with the CQ award large certificate on parchment. He takes full credit for ‘starting’ the USA-CA program at CQ Magazine, but is silent on when US-CHA started. There is nothing about ‘start dates’ on any listed award in his Directory, and it appears to be a never ending addition of materials with no idea of what was included when. No one has come forward with anything about US-CHA prior to 1965 or so.

Ted, K1BV, indicates that in his 1970 Directory of Awards and Certificates, there is one given to those who had ‘Worked All Counties in Five States”, with subsequent endorsements of additional five states completed. K6BX and the various CHC chapters also sponsored many of the “Worked All This State” awards. Many of these were available in levels as well, for working 2/3rds or 80% of the counties in the state. That award is not in the 1966 Directory owned by W9MSE.

As Dick, K2MGA described Clif: “He was a retired Navy Captain who had served eminently in WW II, and was as hard boiled and egotistical a character as you could imagine. His ego demanded that he refer to himself relentlessly throughout his CQ column and his publications as THE OLD MAN, all caps. You couldn’t look at a piece of Clif’s writing without your

eye being drawn immediately and repeatedly to THE OLD MAN, which is exactly what Clif wanted! He was determined that no one could ever forget that he was the main man! “

Dick tells of how after assuming the title of Editor, he corrected what he saw as a very bad editing policy of using all caps in Clif’s column in CQ.... he changed “THE OLD MAN” to “The Old Man”. Clif exploded.

Dick writes: “He wrote me a steaming letter ripping me from stem to stern..... he quit when I refused to back down”...” Thus began at least a decade of verbal attacks on CQ, Cowan Publishing, and me personally.”...”What a shame he chose to waste so much of his remaining time and energy over such a trivial thing, but ego was paramount to Clif.” After leaving CQ, it appears Clif began to seriously promote a competing award, the US-CHA, in levels of 300 counties. A note on the K3IMC forum from Jeff, W9MSE reads:

“I have hanging above my radio my certificate for the USCHA award from the Certificate Hunters Club-K6BX. It is a really nice (black and white) map, about 18 X 24 inches of all the counties which I colored in each 300 counties a different color. I have each level endorsed from 300 up to 2400 with seals for each level. Level k, 300 counties #242 ALL CW 9-6-68 up to 2400 counties Level d, 2400 counties #112 ALL CW 2-3-75 with each 300 county level in between dated with seals. After that the combination of my decrease in radio activity and also the eventual ending of the USCHA program resulted in my not getting the total counties of 3077 counties for Level A.”

Jeff continues: “the US-CHA was a competing award by K6BX, which the Certificate Hunters Club issued, in competition with the USA-CA that CQ Magazine had. There was a Record Booklet of about 14 pages which included 2 pages of Rule, and then about 12 pages of the listing of all the counties, and with just a space to mark call of the station in each county worked. On the last page was the application and certification form which required 2 hams to certify with name and call. The award did NOT require QSLs for the contacts. I have no idea if anyone ever got the award for level A (3077 counties). “

Others have the level “A” award, having finished the CQ Magazine award, then simply sending their CQ number to Clif, who then issued a US-CHA certificate for level “A”, or all counties.

One of the unusual features of this award was you also got credit for the county by working someone from it. Also, no two finished awards would look alike, but would be very individual since folks would color in their counties worked in differing patterns, one color for each 300 worked. K6BX went on a 15 year campaign of 'trashing, bashing, and maligning' CQ Magazine, the USA-CA program, the owners, and the editor at CQ Magazine. Temper tantrums, and issuing of directly competing awards, and lots of vitriol in his CHC publications. He put out a monthly subscription newsletter.

The county hunters started serious county hunting in the early 60s on 40M. A CHC/ISSB net ran on 14.333, and in March of 1963, the ISSB net moved to 14332 and the CHC/FHC Service Net to 14340, per W7OK's 1972 history.

By 1966, the 40M had foreign broadcast problems made 40M operation tough and the county hunters decided to leave the 'CHC/FHC Service Net' on 14.340 and form the Independent County Hunters net on 14.336 since NC had to run his net 'HIS WAY' or else, and he likely was upset at the high percentage of county hunters seeking the CQ award, and lower percentage of hams pursuing HIS awards. There were tons of new mobiles as well. It was also the time of the sunspot max as well with activity shifting to higher bands. There were normally 3 net control stations on at one time on 20M, to insure everyone in the country 'got heard'.

After K6BX death in the late 70s, his award program died shortly after. County Hunters formed MARAC around 1970, and other county hunting organizations started awards as well. Likely long before its final demise, the CHC county awards were fading fast, as few have even heard of them now. Few have ever heard of US-CHA. Those who were part way through toward getting all were 'out of luck'. All confirmed contacts, naturally, did count toward the CQ USA-CA. So all you had to do was apply.

People still chase the prestigious DXCC, WAZ, WAS, WPX, and USCA awards which require confirmations. Others still chase 'paper' certificates from all over the world. County Hunters pursue additional non-confirmed awards via MARAC.

That's the history of US-CHA which came and went in about 15 years.

A few county hunters got the USA-CHA award. W9MSE was one.

County Hunter CW Status

Compiled by Mike, NF0N, for the benefit of all:

CW County Hunter Stats – 2024

| CALL | 2024 | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| AA8R | | | 3043 #2 | 3041 #2 |
| AB4WL | 1426 | 1403 | 1275 | 1220 |
| AB7RW | 3032 #4 | | 3019 #4 | 2977 #4 |
| DL3IAC | | 2830 | | |
| K0DEQ | 3050 #2 | | 3035 #2 | 2995 #2 |
| K0FG2775 | #2 | 2742 #2 | 2634 #2 | 2484 #2 |
| K2MF | | | 3077 #2 | 3076 #2 |
| K4AMC | 3032 | | | |
| K4YT | 2499 #3 | | 1988 #3 | 139 #3 |
| K5GE | | 3073 #3 | 3042 #3 | 2992 #3 |
| K7REL | | 3070 #6 | 2972 #6 | |
| K8II 2959 | 2912 | 2802 | 2445 | |
| K8MW | 3065 #2 | | 3058 #2 | 3041 #2 |
| K8OOK | 2974 | 2959 | 2917 | |
| K8ZZ | 3058 #3 | | | |
| KA4RRU | | | 3072 | |
| KA9JAC | 2664 #2 | | 2519 #2 | 2306 #2 |
| KC3X | 3073 #6 | | 3055 #6 | 2914 #6 |
| KC7YE | | 2618 | 2618 | |
| KE3VV | 3026 #3 | | 2962 #3 | 2791 #3 |
| KX1W | 649 | 569 | 476 | 423 |
| N1API | 3071 | 3066 | 3065 | 3052 |
| N4CD | | | 2821 #6 | |
| N4RS3021 | #6 | 2950 #6 | 2747 #6 | 2385 #6 |
| N5MLP | 2972 | 2879 | 2615 | 2408 |
| N8CIJ | | 1858 #2 | 1602 #2 | 1163 #2 |
| NF0N2785 | #3 | 2550 #3 | 1912 #3 | 1008 #3 |

| | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| NS2N | 3076 #3 | 3066 #3 | 3053 #3 | |
| NU0Q | 3072 #3 | 3062 #3 | 3014 #3 | 2937 #3 |
| W0GXQ | 1770 #9 | 3077 #8 | 3059 #8 | 3031 #8 |
| W4SIG | 2891 #4 | 2401 #4 | 266 #4 | |
| W4YDY | 1412 #3 | 786 #3 | 185 #3 | 3076 #2 |
| W6OUL | 3044 3037 | 3021 2985 | | |
| W7EEC | 2126 #2 | 1687 #1 | | |
| W8BZY | | 3077 #1 | 3063 | |
| WA1ZIC | 2930 | | | |
| WA3QNT | 2464 2292 | 2068 1874 | | |
| WA3QNT | 2284 #2 | | | |
| WD4OIN | 3023 #2 | 3002 #2 | 2946 #2 | |

Getting to Kalawao County

“It’s hard to fathom just how vital air service is to some of the more remote communities in the US, and possibly none have suffered quite as much as Molokai and Lāna‘i in the Hawaiian Islands. Last week, the islands were cut off from the rest of the world for the second time in a year when flights operated by Mokulele (actually Southern Airways Express under the Mokulele name) 9-seat Cessna Grand Caravans were suspended due to maintenance concerns. This is no mere inconvenience in an place like this.

While those of you who have been to the rest of the Hawaiian islands that are open to the public know that there are plentiful flights on multiple airlines both to other airlines and to the mainland, it is a completely different world on Molokai and Lāna‘i which lie between O‘ahu and Maui. Despite being in a similar predicament, the islands couldn’t be more different from each other.

Lāna‘i is a rich person's island. Literally. Nearly all of it is owned by Oracle founder Larry Ellison. It is also the home of two very fancy Four Seasons resorts. A little more than 3,000 people live on the island, and it's those resorts that have powered the island's small economy ever since pineapple dried up and went to cheaper countries.

Molokai is the opposite with almost no reliance on tourism. As you’ve seen in my

various trip reports here, Molokai is remote. It has one independent hotel, some condos, and that's about it. This is an island that's meant for the locals, and it's one of the only places that really supports a more traditional way of life for those who want it. It's also much bigger than Lānaʻi with about 8,000 people.

When it comes to transport, neither place has many options. Lānaʻi has three daily flights to Kahului with another 7 to 8 over to Honolulu, all flown by Mokulele. This is Essential Air Service (EAS), but no subsidy had been required... until last year. Now the feds have agreed to provide Mokulele with about \$4 million a year to keep it going. Lānaʻi also has service from Lānaʻi Air on Pilatus PC-12s and Cessna SkyCouriers, but those are meant to transport resort guests in style from Honolulu. They aren't there for serving the local community.

On Molokai, there are actually two airports. The primary airport in Hoʻolehua has 10 or 11 daily to Kahului and 19 or 20 a day to Honolulu, all unsubsidized. Mokulele is the only game in town at this airport, and no other airline has flown in since Hawaiian shut down its regional operation during the pandemic. There are another 12x weekly down to Kalaupapa which is an isolated area on the northern side of the island where those with Hansen's Disease (leprosy) were forced to relocate for decades before there was a cure. That's a whole different issue down in Kalaupapa, so I'll ignore that for today.

Back in August and then again last week, Mokulele suspended service due to some vague maintenance inspection concern, putting the islands out of reach despite being easily visible from Oʻahu and Maui, less than 50 miles away. The people who live there rely on Mokulele to get to doctor appointments, go shopping, get to high school sporting events, you name it. Even while other neighbor islands have received more resources directly, Molokai and Lānaʻi remain just as dependent if not more on connections with the other islands.

So what happens when Mokulele shuts down? Not much. There is a twice weekly Young Brothers barge which brings in materials to Molokai from Honolulu. (Lānaʻi has one weekly barge.) There's also Kamaka Air which does run air cargo to the islands. Looks like you can ship 45 pounds for \$33.28 right now. And yes, Lānaʻi still does have a ferry that goes over to Māʻalaea on Maui. Molokai lost its ferry link to Maui in 2016. That is really the extent of things.

Cancellations aren't the only problem here. There are also big delay issues, but it's hard to get exact numbers on that for such a small carrier. All you need to do is search online and you'll find stories like this one talking about how grave a threat it is to the residents for service to be so unreliable.

How bad is this situation? The state of Hawaii says that it will issue a “tender” for a never-ending charter contract to act as backup if Mokulele can't get its act together. Yes, it has such little trust that it is willing to pay a charter carrier to be a backup. Just let that sink in.

In the meantime, the people of Molokai and Lāna‘i just continue to try to live their lives the best they can despite all the disruptions. It's not easy, and they deserve better than what they're getting today.”

Source: <https://crankyflier.com/2025/01/23/molokai-and-lana%CA%BBi-deserve-better-as-air-service-trouble-leaves-them-stranded-again/>

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Thanks to K4YT, Karl, for alerting folks to this. Getting to Molokai, where Kalawao County is.....is a challenge. Always. Never been easy. Other than chartering your own plane.....you're out of luck at the present time. Might be a while before this is sorted out. Molokai has next to none tourist activity. A few condos there for folks, but no decent beaches, no tourist activities left, and a population that is more concerned about Hawaiian Native Rights than just about anything else. Drug use is rampant.

The pandemic ended the famous Kalawao Mule Ride...which went from 'topside' to down below to the Kaluappa National Historic site down below. You got a mule ride down the steep cliff, a 2 hour visit there, then back up on the mule to topside. Or you could fly in for the 2 hour visit. (No chance to set up and operate – you are part of a tour – well, you could work a partner on 2m FM but not for MP, MD or DD....you've got to be in separate counties for those awards. - The flight leaves from Oahu if still running). Very small plane.

If you get there to Molokai, in the parking lot at the overlook, you could run the National Historic Site for POTA/WWFF if you park only in Kalawao county, not the county line.....more or less...hi hiIt is relatively rare, obviously! Of the 20 or so county hunters who have run it....only one have uploaded logs to POTA/WWFF. POTA requires that you and your equipment be 'in the park'. I guess if you, the radio, the antenna are in Kalawao county, with the rear bumper extending into Maui county over the 'county line', you're good for both Hi Hi. No one is likely to check. For POTA, you, your rig, antenna must in 'in the park'.

Folks gotta get there to finish up awards and give out contacts.....for others to finish. Stay tuned.

It's been over a few years since it was last run in Nov 2022. The pandemic shut down visitations to HI (requiring a 14 day stay at your 'destination' – no island hopping allowed). Those restrictions have ended, but Molokai is still isolated with near zero tourism. Only folks using the airlines were those going to Oahu for family visits, doctor appointments, getting eyeglasses, medical treatments, etc.

Even then, Kalawao, before the pandemic gone run about once every 18 months.

Master Platinum #34 NU0Q

NU0Q is the latest to earn the Master Platinum Award. This is not a simple award to get sitting on your butt at home but is aimed at active mobile operators. . You've got to work all the counties with a Master Gold holder, or work one from a county for self credit. You could do that sitting on your butt at home. In addition, you have to transmit from 500 different counties, making contacts on multiple bands, with at least one with a Master Gold holder. That's probably 25,000 miles of trips to get those 500 counties, plus. You'll probably make other trips to 'fill in' missing MP counties, too.

Congrats to NU0Q.

Who Got Their License When?

From comments on the County Hunter Forum:

W0GXQ started the thread:

Seventy three years ago today I received WN0GXQ any other OT's out there?

- --

W4SIG: 48 years, WD4SIG in 1976

NA8W: 1976 WD8MRF then in I think 1989 NA8W

W0MU: 1978 - I was 13 at the time. You have a few years on me! I hope I can radio active for as long as you and others!

KC3X: I just a novice. 1979

N9JF: 60 years for me next month

K0DEQ: ONLY 69 YEARS FOR ME

K2MF: or me it will be 61 years licensed in June 2025.

KA3DRO: First novice license in 1976.....

K8MW: Licensed as KN8MWB November 6, 1958 - 66 plus years

K4AMC: Received KN4AMC IN 1954 70+ years

K4XI: I won't have 73 years until March!! W4VJH You beat me!

W8BZY: WN8BZY issued in May 1955....

WA4UNS: Celebrated sixty years continuous licensing last July. I guess I'm an OT.

WY0A: 1989 I received KB0DZJ, later that year WY0A.. Almost 36 years..

K8OOK: It will be 66 years in March

WA3QNT: : 54 years

N1API: Here only 46 years

NU0Q: WN0CSG in 1970, WB0CSG in 1972. 54 years.

NF0N: 1961 - WN0KGD 61 Years ago

N4CD: 61 years

LY5A: 58 years ago as UP2KAG

K7REL: 64+ years

W4YDY: Soon be 73 years.

N0KV: 61.5 yrs

AD1C: 50 years

- ---

AG6V: OK the thread about 70+ years of being licensed was impressive. Now let's go the other way... My number is 16 - licensed in 2009. :-)

Awards Issued

Master Platinum Award:

NU0Q completed requirements for MP and was awarded #34

Roadrunner Award:

KB6UF attained 2345 last counties. He received #2

USA-SSB II Award:

WA9DLB is awarded SSB II

USA-Digital:

NF0N attained level 2000. He received #12

Ran all State:

K8II ran all Delaware and received #84

K8II ran all New Jersey and received #32

W8OP ran all New Jersey and received #33

WY0A ran all Iowa and received #38

Single Band Award:

K3IMC attained level 2000 and was assigned #8

USA-SSB Award:

KV7N completed all SSB counties and was awarded #3

Events for County Hunters

Several state QSO Parties this month – VT, MN, NC, SC. Over 250 counties up for grabs. Usually many mobiles in MN, NC, SC and lots of activity. Maybe some mobiles/portables in VT – look for POTA stations there doing both.

From the ARRL Contest Corral for Feb 2025

Feb 1 0000z to 2 2359z

1.8-28,VHF/UHF

Vermont QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), VT county or SPC
www.ranv.org/vtqso.html

Feb 1 1400z to 2 235z
1.8-28

Minnesota QSO Party CW Ph Dig

Name, MN county or SPC
www.w0aa.org/mnqp-rule

Feb 1 1600z to 2 2359z 1.8-28

British Columbia QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), BC district or SPC
www.orcadxcc.org

Feb 2 0000z 2 0359z 3.5-14

North American Sprint, CW CW

Other's call, your call, serial, name, SPC
ncjweb.com/Sprint-Rules.pdf

Feb 8 1500z to 9 1500z
1.8-28

OMISS QSO Party Ph

RS, SPC, mbr (if any)
www.omiss.net

Feb 22 1500z to 23 0159z
1.8-28,50

South Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), SC county or SPC
scqso.com

Feb 23 1500z to 24 0100z
3.5-28,50,144

North Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

NC county or SPC
ncqsoparty.org/rule

That's all folks! See you next month.