

County Hunter News OnLine

February 2026
Volume 22 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 CW 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 CW runs usually after the run on 20M CW . (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

Rules and information are here:

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

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

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

This award requires log data only to earn.

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) Sunspots – Still have them by the hundreds. We're on the down slope but bands are still good. Some days 10M is great, some days not. Even 15M has been 'fair' some of the time. We had some horrible days for propagation with the K index up at 6 or 8! Several days in a row with A index over 60, K over 5. Not the best time to even try to run counties.

2) Winter

The first part of January went by with normal January weather – then it changed. The

Polar Vortex spilled over and the storms hit. Oh, did they hit. Cold – 20 below up north, 50 below wind chill. Freezing down the the southern parts of TX.. Ice storms. Snow storms. The second half of January was really 'winter'. Zero in Chicago. Brrr. Teens in Dallas TX. Yuck.

Then the ice storm hit. Here, two to three inches of ICE. Frozen rain. Dallas shut down as well as 1/3rd of Texas. My rear driveway had waves of ice up to 12 inches thick due to wind whipping around behind house. Fortunately had stocked up a bit. Didn't get out of house for six days – cars iced in – and chopping the ice was futile Maybe a few inches with heavy shovel and lots of pounding in 10 minutes. Not going to work – 220 feet of solid ice from 3 to 12 inches deep. Did get a chance to use up those frozen dinners in freezer that had been there a long time. Now to restock. The power stayed on – but data centers were forced to go to backup power to spare the grid.

It was a lot worse elsewhere. At peak storm, nearly 1 million without power in Tennessee – clustered around Nashville (Davidson County). Lots of trees that had not been trimmed – suddenly found nearby power-lines to fall upon. Tens of thousands of them broke under inches of ice.

Winter is not over yet.

3) 60M Rules

The new rules for 60m go into effect February 13. Now we have a 10 KHz wide band – low power. Plus 4 high power (limited ERP). However, if you run mobile – with the losses in a normal mobile antenna set up, you likely can run 50 to 100w and meet the EIRP standard. While it's not likely to be a barn burner band during the day, in evenings and nights it should be very good. It's below 40M – which is limited now at sunspot peak – with most activity on higher bands other than 'back east'. Wait 5 years at sunspot minima and it will be rocking!

There are few mobiles out at night -but many POTA folks camp out and could be on the air from rarer counties.

Texas Trivia

If you're driving in TX, beware increased penalties for school zones. State has now

authorized license picture cameras/radar to be allowed. Too many violate the usual 20 mph school zones. When you hit some of the small towns on your trips, beware - those school zones pop up quickly in some locations while your trying to navigate.

Higher penalties for passing school bus while stopped and red light/stop signal out. . Some now equipped with cameras to catch violators.

In larger urban areas, often there is blinking yellow light when school zone is active and you need to get down to 20 mph quickly. Even worse is using cellphone in school zone - \$500 fine if caught.

In rural areas, just a 20 mph school zone sign – easy to miss.

Not to be outdone – CA ramps up penalties. And enforcement.

California also has created a whole set of new laws out there. Cameras in school zones. Cameras at lights. Instant violations – sent by mail to you. \$500 fines for 'being in the intersection as light is red'. \$500 fine for exceeding speed limit in school zone, even by 1 mph. \$500 for failing to come to complete stop at stop sign, or for 'right on red'. Ouch. Worse, even if you look at your phone when stopped at intersection -\$500 violation. Points on your license. It's under the guise of 'driver safety' but CA desperately needs the money. They will get it. You will pay..

California Tales

It seems like California is having 'some problems'. Duh. Remember that 85% of all vehicles in CA run on GASOLINE or Diesel in 2026.

Once upon a time, CA had 40 oil refineries. Beside Texas, it was one of the first places that started the US oil bonanza. Chevron, one of the biggest oil companies, started there over 100 years ago.. However, Chevron left CA in 2025 and moved to TX. It also decided to shut down it's Los Angeles refinery. Gone. Now there are less than a ten refineries in CA.

Another major refiner is shutting down the Beneca site near San Francisco. With every increasing legislation, penalties, carbon senescence filings, it just doesn't pay to do business there. Going....going....going by spring 2026. . Oh well. Now, CA can only refine less than 85% of the gas it needs.

To share in the misery, more than half of all oil and gas in Nevada and 85% of Arizona come from CA. Those states are now desperately seeking options.

There are no pipelines from the east to CA. They are an energy island.

To add to the misery, one 70 year old pipeline suddenly shut down in late December. It carried the oil from Kern County to the SF area refineries. Once upon a time, it carried 100,000 barrels a day. That diminished over time as wells depleted and almost no new ones could be added due to CA regulations and the economics of doing business there. At 30,000 bbl/day, it didn't pay the bills. After two years of losing 2 million a month, it just soddenly just down Dec 15. Now, the producers in Kern have to haul the oil by truck at a \$10/bbl cost. The pipeline was a \$1 a barrel cost. You can guess what the economics of future oil extraction there is. None.

CA gas is a special blend- CARBOB. Only three refineries outside the US can make it and they charge premium prices. Expect CA gas to just keep going up, up, up. CA will be importing more than 30% of it's needs from overseas shortly.

Now to add to the jolly news, keep in mind the US Jones Act. It requires that shipments between US ports must use US owned and operated ships, with union crews onboard. It makes for interesting results. And expensive ones. Even though US refineries in TX and elsewhere along the Gulf could make CA blend gas, the cost of using US ships make it prohibitive to haul it from TX, via the Panama Canal, to CA. It's cheaper to hire a foreign ship, haul the gas from South Korea or India, to get to CA despite twice to 5 times the distance. The same goes for New England. Some comes via pipelines. They don't get their oil/gas from US refineries...no...no....is cheaper to buy from middle east, South American, etc. New England imports Natural Gas while TX and LA export NG to foreign markets. There is inadequate pipeline capacity in New England due to lots of NIBMY, lots of eco-whacks against fossil fuels there (blue states), etc. So New England electric consumers get to pay 50% or more for electricity. WV has the Natural Gas. There is a lack of pipeline northeast. Oh well. Those New England heating bills are going to be humongous this year.

Same for Puerto Rico. Costs for US food/goods high – has to be hauled by US ships and

premium prices. Or gotten from outside the US. Strange but true.

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More CA Follies. Seems that CA is trying to do itself in. In 2023, CA passed a law requiring all 'warehouses' over 30,000 sq feet must generate 40% of their energy needs **on site** by renewable means. That means solar. Hmmm...

Amazon ran a 1.4 million square foot mega distribution center near LA. Hundreds of trucks a day came and went. It took 114 megawatt hours a month to run the facility. Most of that power was contracted from off site green suppliers. That didn't count. Amazon had until August 2025 to comply with the law or face \$50,000/day penalty. 1.5 million a month. 18 million a year.

Now, Amazon looked at the facility. To generate that much power on the 23 acre site, it would take more solar power that could be generated on site. It would take 30 million in solar power panels, and require 36 million in structural improvements to the building to allow the tons of solar panels to be roof mounted. Still, that would fall short by 15%. It would take permits from 17 different CA boards/zoning permitting agencies, and local authorizes – with a time frame of , at best, 18 months, and likely years. Amazon applied for a waiver to allow longer construction time. Nope, CA air quality board said there is no waiver procedure. Comply or else. After all the economic considerations, the near impossible schedules, the \$50,000/day penalties..... Amazon did what most sane companies would do.

In a shock move to CA, Amazon shut down the facility. 4,000 high paid jobs gone. 3000+ indirect jobs gone. Independent trucking companies – that served the warehouse, gone. Contracted security, cleaning services – gone. HVAC jobs – gone. No surprise. Site closed down. Average pay was \$19.50/hr per employee.

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Companies are fleeing CA and others scaling back. Tesla, Oracle, Microsoft, Disney, Chevron, and dozens others moving parts or all to other states. Over 20,000 direct jobs. Likely the same indirect number of jobs. Major finance companies just accounted they are 'scaling back' plans in CA – ie- closing offices, laying off folks, moving divisions and HQ – out of the state.

Wanna Buy an EV?

The EV follies continue. The most sold cars in US are now Hybrids. Yep. Getting 35 to 45 mph. Some models get even more.

At the same time, gas prices are approaching two bucks a gallon in many places.

Toyota never drank the EV Kool-Aid. Now, it's hybrids are flying out the door.. Honda not far behind. Subaru trying to catch up.

Pickup trucks? Folks want power to haul – gas engines, not batteries. Ford giving up on Lightning pickup truck. No one wants.

EV sales have fallen off cliff other than CA and a few other greenie states. The loss of the \$7500 'credit' but a big dent in sales after October 2025. Also, the big penalties on 'fleet mileage standards', now essentially eliminated, changed the market. Tesla collected 2.7 billion in 'fees' it sold to other manufacturers for 'carbon credit'. No longer. Now it has to make profit only by actually selling EV's.

Ford spend 20 billion on EV development. Now? Canceled new Ford Lightning Truck Still making the Mach 1 EV. Pickup - Gone....closed battery plants. Still making Evs, but big pivot to hybrids. Or big engine Pickup trucks for hauling stuff.

GM? Digging in....shutting joint ventures on battery plants or pivoting. New EV models – delayed.

The average price of a new car in 2025 was \$50,000. Ouch. Payments of \$1000/month are not all that rare. Ouch. If you want a big SUV, it's going to cost you a bundle. Settle for less? Maybe 30-35K. EV insurance also 30% or more higher. Buy a Cybertruck and it's \$4500 to \$5000 a year insurance. Ouch!

Ford wrote off 10 billion in EV costs. GM wrote off 6 billion.

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Meanwhile, in CA, it's getting interesting. Let's see...they raised the minimum wage to \$16/hr. Headed to 20/hr. In less than a year, 18,000 low wage jobs eliminated as business owners no longer could afford to keep on low income folks in fast food and

other industries. Others still employed saw their hours cut. Many businesses failing.

In and Out Burger, which started there – moved HQ out of the state.

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On the Greenie side, years ago – 10 year or so, CA passed a law requiring all service stations to dig up single wall underground gas tanks and replace them with double wall tanks. They set up a program to help small business owners with loans and grants of up to 2 million each for that purpose. Of course they did.....and hundreds and hundreds applied. In 10 years, not a single grant application was processed. Not a single dime dispersed. The due date to convert was Jan 1, 2026. For a small gas station with two underground tanks – one for regular, one for premium and maybe a tank for diesel, it could easily cost over a million and likely close to two million to do the job, plus dozens of necessary permits – from local officials, to half dozen CA boards, agencies overseeing greeie regulations, to hazardous material disposal (old gas tanks), etc.

What happened. Over 450 small gas stations shut down rather than face \$500/day penalties for failing to convert. Many in small towns and rural locations. Just shut down. Now many small communities have no stations. Local police, fire trucks, ambulances now have to drive 30 miles or more to find gas or diesel fuel. Oh well!

Not only did those stations shut down....those tanks are still there and no one is left to dig them up other than taxpayers – some day – permitting allowing – years in the future likely.

If you're out county hunting in rural CA, keep your tank at least half full. It might be a long way to find an open gas station.

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More CA follies. CA is a 'fuel island'. While it was at the heart of the oil industry for over 100 years, with some of the first developed oil fields in the country, inducing Chevron which started there – and became a giant player there. Well, Chevron moved to Teas last year.

Now, two of the 11 refineries in CA are shutting down. Over 300,000 barrels of refining shutting down. That leaves 9 remaining, and at full tilt, they can't even make enough gas for CA. And jet fuel. And diesel. CA now imports more than 15% of it's fuel needs from one of three counties that are capable of making the special CARBOB fuel

required by the CA Greenies – ultra low carbon emitting gas. It takes 30-40 days for that fuel to be delivered.

Meanwhile, one refinery was converted to make 'renewable clean diesel' fuel. Can make more money that way, pay less in carbon taxes and cap and trade fees that way.

That leaves a real situation by any single failing, port strike, major Pacific storm sequence, can interrupt fuel availability. One refinery fire or event.

Oh, did I mention one pipeline – from the oil producers in Kern County back to the refiners in the Bay area – suddenly shut down. Done. Gone. Now the only way to haul that 100,000 bbl/day of oil is 460 daily truck trips over not so great roads – every day – 7 days a week.....or not. There aren't enough trucks to haul it. Add that loss to the equation. For 30,000 bbl/day, it takes 100 truck trips That's what is happening now in Jan 2026. I wonder how much 100 diesel power trucks are adding the CA air quality these days.

A good part of the problem was oil companies in CA held off drilling new oil wells in CA. There are 200 billion barrels of untapped oil there, but with likely 20 permits from 20 different CA boards, all out to stop fossil fuel use, no company is willing to spend money there drilling. The millions and millions CA used to receive in oil taxes is fading away. Now, CA will import oil/fuel from overseas. Hopefully.

It won't be long before gas reaches 7 to 8 bucks a gallon.

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If you think that's unique, you might think twice about Oregon. Oregon has no refineries. Or fuel mports - no fuel at any port. No facilities. It depends totally on one pipeline from refineries in Washington for 90% of its fuel needs. One pipeline. If that pipeline fails – or goes out of service for repairs – Oregon quickly runs out of fuel. Single point of failure. OR stores about 14 days of fuel. Well, trucks could haul some fuel, but not enough. If those WA refineries go down for service, or decide to shut down.....good luck to those in OR.

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If you live in Hawaii, don't get too smug. HI gets all it's gas/diesel from California. If CA hurts for fuel – HI will too. Gas is already expensive there – but you won't be doing 300 or 500 mile trips there. You can drive around most islands there in less than 100

miles. Most county hunters with rental cars will probably do 50 miles or less. If CA gas goes to \$7/gal, HI gas likely hits \$8 to \$10/gal.

So you buy an EV in HI. Good luck in getting there or getting back out if the jet fuel doesn't arrive from CA. Planes won't fly.

So if you live in CA.....you can buy an EV. Makes sense if you can charge at home. Otherwise, you pay \$\$\$ to charge at public sites – often 50c/KWH to 70c/KWH. But remember you'll pay 30-50% more insurance per year – negating a lot of the 'energy savings'. So buy a hybrid getting 50 MPG. Now, gas under \$5, so that's less than 10c per mile for gas. Your insurance is likely \$100/month or more. Your depreciation is likely \$3000/yr after the first year and 40% the first year for a new car. If you drive 200 miles a week – the gas cost is lost in the noise.

Keep that older car going – even if 30 mpg.....you save big. CA cars last - no harsh winters in southern CA. No soaring 120F as in AZ or NV for most of the state. Cars don't rust out. Cars keep going and going.

85% of cars in CA are still gas operated. And likely will be for years to come.

ARRL 2026 Special Event

Join ARRL in Celebrating America's 250th – On the Air!

In 2026, ARRL is commemorating America's 250th birthday with a yearlong on-the-air celebration: the America250 Worked All States (WAS) Award. Running from January 1 through December 31, this special operating event challenges amateurs of all license classes to contact all 50 US states and confirm those QSOs via ARRL's Logbook of The World (LoTW). Modeled after the classic WAS Award, America250 WAS encourages activity across nearly every band — from LF through microwaves — and on CW, phone, and digital, culminating in a commemorative, frame-worthy WAS certificate.

Participants can pursue America250 WAS in many ways, with endorsements recognizing

achievements by band, by mode, Triple Play (all three modes), by satellite, by contacting ARRL Affiliated Club Stations in all 50 states, and by contacting W1AW/portable in all 50 states. Throughout 2026, the iconic W1AW call sign will be “loaned” to stations nationwide, activating each state twice during the year. All confirmations are handled through LoTW, making it easy to track progress and apply for awards and endorsements.

Source: ARRL Weekly Newsletter

MARAC DATABASE/Link Changes

MARAC.ORG had to change web site server a couple of months ago so most links had to be changed and because it would not meet the needs required for the logging program, it required some major rewrites of the web site and the logging program. All awards have been on hold since August and they hope to be back to normal by the end of the year along with the logging program automatically updating almost every week with the latest awards.

The database link is now <http://marac.org/database/database.php> replacing https://new.marac.org/database/database_AwardLookup.php

Award rules is now at <http://marac.org/documents/award-rules.pdf> replacing <http://marac.org/awards/Award-rules.pdf>

The County Hunter Web by Don, K3IMC, the lead MARAC.ORG and logging program writer assisted by Bob, KA9JAC is

<http://www.countyhunterweb.org/index.php>

Source: W4YDY

Parks on the Air (POTA) in Washington DC

Interesting article in the Raleigh Radio Club newsletter:

Parks On The Air (POTA) in Washington, D.C.

How to Earn the Cheetah Rover Award

By: Carl Davis, W8WZ

Some friends of mine recently move to Washington, D.C. and invited me to visit them just before Christmas. Knowing that a visit to the nation's capital is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy POTA due to the high density of national parks and monuments, I added a day to my visit dedicated totally to doing POTA.

On 22 December 2025, the shortest day of the year, I spent 5 hours completing 15 activations using an Elecraft KX2 transceiver and two different telescopic whip antennas. Below is the plan I used. It is hoped that this article will help others interested in planning their own POTA rove to DC.

The big jackpot of doing POTA in D.C. is doing one activation that is a 7-fer. That means when the operator does an activation in that spot, he or she is actually activating 7 different POTA parks at the same time. This is possible because in this exact location several trails combine in proximity to other monuments in a park. So, if you set up in the exact right spot, your activation will be from 7 POTA parks at once. This spot can be a bit hard to find. I was fortunate that my friend John, K4EB had activated this location a few months before my visit, so he was able to give me exact guidance to set up in the correct location. This spot can be found by viewing the webpage for each of the 7 parks to find their legal boundaries then using google earth to overlay the information from each of those webpages and find the spot where the overlap hap-pens. Here are the best instructions I can offer. First, get to The Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac National Memorial. This is POTA Park number US-0784 and is labeled as park 1 on the graphic above.

This can be easier said than done as this park does not have an address. If you type "Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac National Memorial" into the Uber app, it will insert the address of the park's administrative office in Virginia, not the

address of the park itself. I learned this the hard way. To get around that, enter the name of a marina that is located in the park when ordering an Uber. Set your destination as “Colombia Island Marina George Washington Mem Pkwy, Arlington, VA 22202”.

Please note that even though that address says Arlington, VA the actual location of the Marina is on Colombia, Island in DC. Uber will drop you off in the parking lot. Apple Maps will also take you to this parking lot if you are driving yourself and ask it to take you to the marina. If you are driving your own car and want to activate from the parking lot, you can do so but you will “only” be activating 4 parks at once instead of 7. Also, if you get out of the car and operate from one of the picnic tables near the parking lot you will be doing a 4-fer.

This is certainly not bad! It is very pleasant to operate from one of those picnic tables and doesn't require much walking at all. If you have mobility issues or just want to be as comfortable as possible, or your pota gear is not super portable and you don't want to schlep it very far, then this is the best option. Operate from one of the picnic tables here, or from your car and do a 4-fer. However, if you want to activate 7 parks at once, then from the parking lot walk away from the marina towards the stone monument to LBJ. When you get to that stone monument walk towards the Washington Monument, which you will see across the river, walk across the parkway and setup under a tree that stands between the parkway and the Potomac. In that spot you will be in 7 parks at once. You will need to bring your own chair. I use a great little chair made by a company called Helinox that is very light weight.

The 7 parks that are activated from this location are: US-4581, US-9901, US-4567, US-0670, US -0784, US-9898, US-4564. Here I used my 16-foot telescopic whip vertical antenna with ground radials and held the radio on my knee using a kneeboard while sitting in the chair. In very short order, I had made 14 contacts on 20-meter CW and was ready to move to the next park.

I walked back to the parking lot and called an uber to take me to the FDR Memorial which is located on the tidal basin and is park US-0776. It is labeled as park 2 on the graphic above. Here, after viewing the monument, which is very nice, I walked down to the tidal basin part of the monument and set up my station on a park bench. I put the antenna directly behind the bench where I sat and did not lay down ground radials. I sat on the bench with the radio on my knee using a knee board. I quickly made 18 contacts on 20 CW. This park (and every other park that I activated afterwards) is located on the national mall meaning that it counted as a 2-fer as I was activating both it and US-0655. From this operating position, looking to my left, I could see the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial (US-0785). So, I walked over to it and set up on a

bench there in the same way. This is labeled park 3 on the graphic. I quickly had another 11 QSOs in the log and had already got 10 new parks activated. This park had more foot traffic than the FDR memorial had, but I was able to find an unused bench.

Next, I walked across Independence Ave. SW and into the area around the reflecting pool. Here there are several more parks, labeled parks 4,5,6,7,8 on the graphic. They are very easy to get to. They are, Constitution Garden (US-0653), Korean War Memorial (US0780), Vietnam War Memorial (US-0793), WW2 Memorial (US-0796) and the Washington Monument (US-0794). Also in this area is the Lincoln Memorial. However, the Lincoln memorial was very crowded and had no bench near it that I could sit on, so I did not activate it.

The monuments I activated all had park benches that I could sit on. Due to crowds in this area, I did not use my 16-foot vertical antenna. Instead, I used the Elecraft AX1 whip antenna connected directly to the BNC jack on the side of my radio with the radio on my knee board for those activations.

I used headphones so I did not disturb anyone with sound as I sent and received CW. This was as low impact/low profile operation as I could manage, and it worked very well. I did not seem to bother anyone or raise any attention from anyone else in the park, including the police and National Guard troops who frequently passed by, and I was able to make plenty of contacts at each park. My final activation of the day was at 4:30 PM at the Washington Monument. The sun was starting to go down and it was getting cold when I had activation at park 15 finished. I took an uber back to the hotel and entered my logs into the POTA webpage that evening.

Activating 15 parks in one day earns the Cheetah Rover award, which was my goal. Thanks to the 7-fer and 2-fer I only had to do 8 individual activations to activate 15 parks. The temperatures that day were in the low 30's. The tidal basin froze as I was activating the FDR monument and I could hear the sounds of the ice forming in the water, but it did not rain, and the wind was not bad. Even though less pleasant than being out on a nice day, being out when the weather was not perfect may have meant fewer other park users which made it easy to find empty park benches. To activate all of the parks the way I did requires low impact radio equipment.

There are no places for wires in trees along the Reflecting Pool and because there are many other people around, even vertical antenna systems need to be compact and close to the operator. The Elecraft KX2 and AX1 combo along with a knee board and plug in KXPD2 paddle really made this easy. At one of the parks there was a picnic table, and I was able to operate from that which felt like a luxury after having been using the knee board until then. There was a food truck near there so I got a pretzel so that as I sat at the

table using the radio I would look more natural to the passer by if seen eating a pretzel (or that is my excuse at least). I also took advantage of that tabletop operation to plug in an external battery to preserve the built-in battery as much as possible. At that activation, I ran 10W. When using the internal battery, I limited output to 5W to conserve battery.

When I got back to the hotel, I had an e-mail from Chaise KQ4WJP saying that his contact with me when I was activating the Korean War memorial was his first CW contact! I put a paper QSL card in the mail to him as soon as I got home. Also, while activating that memorial I made a Park to Park contact with AC5XK who was activating the Washington Monument just across the reflecting pool from me! Some DX! I also worked N4FFF who worked me with a prototype QRP rig he is building. He was powering it with a 9 Volt battery. So, not only was I in interesting locations, but I also made interesting contacts too.

Here are links to the gear I used:

Chair:

<https://tinyurl.com/whr6d936>

Kneeboard:

<https://tufteln.com/products/knee-board-field-desk>

Radio:

<https://elecraft.com/products/kx2-ssb-cw-data-80-10-m-transceiver>

Key:

<https://elecraft.com/collections/keyer-paddle/products/kxpd2-attached-precision-keyer-paddle>

Antennas:

Elecraft : <https://elecraft.com/collections/ax-line-antennas-1/products/ax1-antenna>

16-foot whip Ground Mount: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/146597144123>

16-foot whip: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/226768708847>

Battery:

<https://www.bioennopower.com/products/12v-4-5ah-lfp-battery-pvc-pack>

While in Washington, DC I also took time to visit the Spy Museum <https://www.spymuseum.org/> This is an especially fun museum for radio nerds because it has

several World War Two era spy radios on display including a paraset. It also has a display about the enigma and the work done at Bletchley Park during the war. Adding that to a POTA rove makes for a great radio vacation in the nation's capital. Using the little Elecraft KX2 after looking at the display of field spy radios from the 1940's certainly makes one appreciate the advances in technology

Source: <https://www.rars.org/excitors/2026/RARSExciter01-2026.pdf>

thanks to W4YDY for forwarding this to the editor.

Winter Field Day

For much of the country, it was really winter. In FL, CA and the northwest, things were somewhat normal. For the middle of the country, well.....snow, ice storms, below zero temps. Not too many ventured out compared to previous years.

Here, the ice storm moved in Friday. By Winter Field Day, there was 3 inches of ice in the Dallas area and below freezing temps for days. Nothing moved. The storm moved to LA, MS, TN, KY, VA. Even if you wanted to get out, you were iced in. Nothing moving for days. You can't plow ice.

I usually go out and run class 1-M. Mobile. Not this year. Three inches of ice on everything. You could ice skate easily on the roads. The interstates, which had been treated – were deserted – and many exits blocked with accidents or 18 wheelers stuck or in accidents on ramps. Live traffic cams showed nothing – no cars – for 2 days. The weekend likely had next to zero road traffic.

Around here – and south TX, OK, LA, AR, into TN, KY.....nothing moved other than emergency vehicles (with lots of trouble) and essential workers – and often they were stranded.

Up north it was below zero. The hardy ventured out -

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From the 3830 contest reflector:

AC6ZM - mobile LP 442 CW 117 CW

There was plenty of activity although most of the contacts were folks operating from home. The winter storm keeping people on lock down probably contributed to ops working from home.

N9TD - low power outdoor 100 CW 500 CW

Not the WFD that I planned for with the main club station. Regardless, I have to thank KD9UYC and AC9XK for the encouragement to get on the air as a 1-O anyway.

Worked out of a ice fishing hut with an 80m doublet inverted vee at 40ft and a 40m vertical.

Conditions were OK but participation was down due to the storm. Majority of the stations I worked were 1H, still glad to work anyone regardless. Sunday was slow and almost didn't justify putting the station back on the air. I can say that the objectives come in handy to give something to do in between hitting F1... Winlink was a fun few minutes. Although I have an arrow dual band yagi I didn't muster up the energy to leave the warmth of the tent to make the satellite qsos.

My only other comment would be the new 12 band mult for the contest seems difficult to achieve in areas where there is little to no microwave community. Maybe the addition of 1.2GHz and a "portable" 630m setup would make things possible. Not saying that we shouldn't encourage more use of all the bands but for the select few that live in an area where 12 bands are feasible a 6x mult really skews the final results.

Hope that next year the weather is more in our favor and we can get back to the normal 2O operation.

Derek N9TD

K4JC - LP outdoor 306 CW

Operated with K5LD from Crooked Lake Wildlife Area in Frostproof, FL (what an appropriate place for Winter Field Day!) First time I've operated in WFD and had a great

time. We may have to go back next year!

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95+% of reports on 3830 Contest Reflector were from “Home” stations. Over a hundred of them. Many just sent in scores directly to the WFD site as well. Only 4 mobiles were seen in the mobile category -FL/out northwest. . Half dozen 'outdoor' entries noted on 3830 scores.

Michigan Mini

The 2026 Michigan Mini will be Hosted by Dorie, N8WTQ • April 23 – 25

It will be held at the SpringHill Suites • Midland, Michigan 48642 (989) 837-2700

Room rates of: \$134.00 plus tax per night if reserved by Monday, March 23, 2026

Book your group rate for MARAC

<https://www.marriott.com/reservation/rateListMenu.mi>

N4CD will be headed that way. I'll triple check the dates. Doesn't pay to be a week early as was in 2025!

Dayton Hamvention 2026

Save the dates

Friday	May 15th, 2026 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Saturday	May 16th, 2026 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Sunday	May 17th, 2026 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Greene County Fair and Expo Center
210 Fairground Road, Xenia 45385
Coordinates are 39.702 N – 83.9420 W

Mobile Operations in January

At the beginning of the month:

AB4WL/NN4JM ran counties in AL. (parks)

KB6UF ran a dozen counties in LA. Central and northern parts

K4YT hopped a plane to AZ. Started there – ran east to NM putting out many there – then back to AZ after 2 day pause.....then more NM.....into TX for dozens there.....western and southern counties.....and later home by plane.

N9JF spotted in parks in IL on several days.

N8OYY spotted in park in WV

N8HAM spotted in GA – headed to FL where he ran more counties.

End date 1/28

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Other than KB6UF and K4YT, it was a quiet month for county hunter trips. There were probably a 100 spots for counties involving POTA activations, thanks to N4RKK. Many rarer counties where the POTA folks go to activate parks. Some try to run all the parks in a state – which could total over 600 in PA, over 250 in DE, hundreds in NC and FL. I wonder how many US counties could be run just by working POTA folks? 1000? 1500? Even HI has dozens of parks – including Kalawao. Second AK has at least one

but it's going to be tough to get those. You can fill in a lot of counties.

In Texas, well....not so many – probably 110 counties out of 254 but that's a pretty good start. Never really checked but the panhandle is not well covered as is west TX. Some counties have 2 or 3 parks, many have none. It all depends. In TX, a good percentage of state parks were created by the CCC back in the depression era. If towns/counties would provide land, and there was a suitable site for a lake, parks got created. CCC workers built headquarters – often of stone - and roads – dams- cabins. Camp sites. Beach areas and facilities. Rest rooms. It wasn't only Texas but many other states as well participated. We probably have two dozen parks created that way.

Texas has a few trails – that go through dozens of counties – from the wayback Spanish days and the Butterfield Overland Coach stagecoach 'roads'. If you work them, you need to either note the county in QRZ or LoTW if the activator uploads them with county info, or contact the activator directly themselves.

Many other states have trails – from the Cherokee Trail of Tears though a half dozen states and 40+ counties to the Appalachian Trail from GA to ME – to Lewis and Clark – California, Oregon, Pony Express, etc, trails across the country. While Route 66 is not a POTA trail, there are many sites along it that are – several Museums – along the way. Probably 300+ counties for just those trails and many are 'two-fers' with other sites.

PA probably has a park in nearly every county. Have you checked your state? If you are a digital hunter, there are many FT-8 parks on, too.

White most POTA folks are not going to give you 'stars' or other awards other than prefixes, an occasional Bingo, call combos, the county, OM/YL teams, you can at least get the county. There are some YL's there too – but most are portable and won't county for YL mobile – some will. You need to check.

Nearly every weekend there are 100 counties up for grabs.

Awards Issued

USA CA Awards:

USA-CA: IK2QEB Awarded #3901 for Level 500
USA-CA: IK2SGB Awarded #3902 for Level 500

USA-CA: AF5CC Awarded #1990 for Level 1000
USA-CA: AF5CC Awarded #1631 for Level 1500

Bingo III Awards

Bingo III: W9DC #50

CW 6th Time Awards

CW VI: KC3X Awarded #4

USA-CA Nth Time Awards

All Counties: 3rd Time: W8OP Awarded #266

Events for County Hunters

QSO Party season starts in February – Yeah!

First up

February 7

Vermont QSO Party

0000-2359z

All bands – FT-8 allowed – except WARC

RST, VT County or SPC

Minnesota QSO Party

1400-2359z

1.8 to 29 MHz bands no WARC
Name, MN County or SPC

Also BC QSO Party
1600 to 2359z
RST, BC designation or SPC

February 21

South Carolina QSO Party
1500-0159z cw, ssb, digi
1.8 to 28, 50 MHz
RST, SC County or SPC

That's all folks