

County Hunter News OnLine

July 2026
Volume 22 Issue 7

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. Peak was 270 back two years ago, but still over 100 most days. The tail end of a sunspot cycle slowly drops. In a few years, we'll be back in the doldrums with 20, 30, and 40M the prime bands again. It's time for 6M e-skip season if that's your thing. Possibilities of band-counties there, and many mobile rigs now cover 6M.

2) E Skip Season - Wow- while the sunspot season is winding down, each year you get to experience E-skip – mainly on 10 and 6M, rarely on 2M. During FD, the digital folks were going nuts working 6M FT-8 with over 100 QSOs from TX to 15 states.

Don't ignore the upper bands in E-skip season – centered around June/July each year – possibly into August.

CHU – Time Station

From ARRL Weekly Digest – June 4, 2025

CHU Canada's Official Shortwave Time Signal to Go Silent

The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) has announced that the shortwave broadcasts of Canada's official time signal station, CHU, will be discontinued on June 22, 2026.

Including experimental time broadcasts in 1923 under the call sign 9CC, and then VE9OB, CHU began regular broadcasts in 1938...for now 103 years. The station broadcasts on three frequencies, 3330, 7850, and 14670 kHz.

CHU is equivalent to the WWV and WWVH time stations operated by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the United States, which began operating with experimental broadcasts in 1919 and regular broadcasts in 2026...106 years. WWVH broadcasts time and frequency information 24 hours per day from the Island of Kauai, Hawaii.

In Canada, there has been widespread unofficial speculation as to why CHU is being shut down. The ARRL Letter reached out and received this statement from Deval Patel, Technical Officer, Metrology, National Research Council Canada / Government of Canada:

The National Research Council of Canada (NRC), through its Metrology Research Centre, is responsible for maintaining and disseminating Canada's Official Time Signal, the SI second, and Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

Since 1970, the CHU shortwave radio service has been one of several methods used by the NRC to distribute accurate time information.

On June 22, 2026, the NRC discontinued the CHU broadcast to focus resources on its core mandate of maintaining the accuracy, reliability, and continuity of Canada's official

time scale and time dissemination services. This includes supporting Canada's contribution to Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and providing time services relied upon by millions of users and government departments for network time synchronization.

While the CHU broadcast has been retired, Canadians continue to have access to the NRC Official Time Signal through:

The NRC Web Clock

The Telephone Talking Clock

Network Time Protocol (NTP) services

Radio Amateurs of Canada President Allan Boyd, VE3AJB / VE3EM, said the decision to shut down the CHU is of concern.

“The decision to discontinue the CHU time signal service is both concerning and disappointing for the amateur radio community and many other users across Canada. For decades, CHU has provided a reliable national standard for time and frequency calibration, serving not only radio amateurs but also educational, scientific, and technical users. As Canada's national amateur radio association, Radio Amateurs of Canada recognizes the historical and practical importance of this service and regrets the loss of a unique Canadian resource that has been a trusted part of our communications infrastructure for generations.”

CHU is the latest Canadian station to be shutdown. On March 16, 2026, Environment Canada permanently shut down the VHF Weatheradio Canada transmitter network and the “Hello Weather” telephone service after exactly 50 years of continuous service.

Thanks to the National Research Council of Canada and the Radio Amateurs of Canada for their contributions to this story.

End article

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de N4CD.....

Long, long ago.....in a different era.....before N4CD even thought of getting a ham license, there was Bob the shortwave listener. Some old radio consoles from the 30s and 40s had shortwave bands, but my family didn't. Not sure what actually sparked my getting into SW monitoring...maybe it was because I was reading the scout Boy's Life Magazine and a relative had a radio with SW bands. Anyway, I built a one tube radio for the broadcast band from a kit – from those sold on Boy's Life. Worked well. Did some AM radio DX'ing but that a bit hard as had lots of very loud BC transmitters within miles – and most were 50 KW. Most went silent late Sunday evening – good for BC DX.

Somewhere along the line, built a Knight Kit Span Master with 4 bands including SW. Put up a 40 ft longwire antenna. Back in the early 60s, the US was in a cold war with Russia. There were dozens of SW broadcasters - every county seemed to have one from Sweden to Switzerland, Norway Spain, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy, etc, and all beamed English language programs to the US.

In addition, there were dozens of Russian sponsored outlets – from Radio Budapest to Radio Poland, Russian Radio – and most were very loud. You had broadcasters in the 40M ham band, at 9.8 MHz area, at 11.9 MHz and other frequencies. There were two ways to try and calibrate your radio dial – on a regen you have coarse and fine tune knob. For 9.8 MHz, you had a few beacon stations. Radio Quito – a religious broadcaster and loud – set one point. WWV at 10 MHz set another frequency. You could sort of mark things. Each time to shifted areas, you'd need to start over.

CHU on 7335 was a nice beacon – loud and at the top end of 40M band. Plus it gave the time – GMT. For a year or so, I was a rabid DX'er. Sent off 'reception reports and got back a wall full of QSL card. Fun. Later, I upgraded to a Hallicrafters S-107 shortwave receiver. Popular Electronics had a big column on SWL'ing. You could get your official monitor station certificate – I was WPE-2-BLV.

Well, my neighbor, a year or two older, got his ham license. That sparked my ham interest, plus I was a scout and someone in there I got my radio merit badge. Had to learn Morse Code for that. Later got the 'signaling' merit badge –Morse code light reception from flashlights, messages via signal flags. Fun stuff in Cub and Boy Scouts.

I got my license in 1963 – near the bottom of the sunspot cycle. 40M was the main band. 15M opened at times. Got a Knight Kit T-60 crystal control transmitter and a few 'crystals'. The S-107 just had a band spread dial. Nothing calibrated.

CHU as always a reference point. Nostalgia.....Just up beyond the 7300 top end of 40m

and with the correct GMT time for the log.

Sorry to see it go. 90% of the broadcasters of that era are also long gone. Qutio still broadcasts religious programs. Moscow still spews propaganda but all the dozen other clones have vanished. Now China is a heavy weight. There are dozens of foreign regional stations on the air but difficult to year in the US – and none in English.

The SWL habit quickly vanished after I got my ham license. Took down the SWL QSO cards and filled the holders up with ham QSL cards.

CHU and WWV were always there. Now there's still WWV and WWVH – but who knows how long?

There are still dozens of regional SW stations – mainly below 7 MHz for extended local populations in Africa and Asia – and usually in their national languages. Hard to hear from the USA. Still a few SW stations on the air including Radio China. Some still DX on the AM BC band, or the FM band. It's not the same as the 1960s.

You can still find many countries' radio stations on the web. While they have gone radio dark, many still use the web. Not quite the same, but then again – what is the same since the internet was created?

Kentucky QSO Party

There are 120 counties in KY

This year saw loads of activity. A half dozen mobiles put out over 100 counties, and there were a half dozen portable and POTA stations busy, too.

From the 3830 contest reflector.

W4WLU County Expedition 199 cw 252 ssb

Portable from Lake Barkley State Park. Bands were rough, but it was still a fun contest. Many more stations searching for KY than I remember from previous KY QSO Parties.

AD4EB mobile 1611 CW QSO

Operator(s): AC4NK AD4EB

This was my first time doing the KYQP as a mobile, and I invited Ryan, AC4NK, along to make it a multi-op mobile effort (first time as a KYQP category). Ryan has been doing POTA, and I thought he might like a taste of mobile contesting for the first time. Melody was not able to be our driver, so Ryan and I split the driving and operating 50/50.

The route was supposed to be 444 miles thru 27 counties, but I made a driving error by not following the GPS carefully which cost us 1 county. For anybody who was tracking us live, and comparing it to the planned route available on my QRZ page, you would wonder what in the heck we were doing. Well, we encountered 3 road closures for construction and 2 railroad trestles that were too low, some of which required significant deviations from our plans. It was very frustrating, but we managed to carry on.

So, who is this Ryan AC4NK guy you may wonder? I can tell you first hand that he is truly a remarkable, talented, and a real stand-up guy. He got interested in ham radio last year, and decided to make CW his thing. I worked him in his first CWT in December 2025 after which he sent me an email, and introduced himself and asked for suggestions. I recommended he join the TCG, send his scores to 3830, join CWops, try the SST and MSTs. So here we are 6 months later and he is running KYQP pileups at 38 WPM like there is no tomorrow. Just an amazing CW contester, I know for sure that we haven't seen anything yet from AC4NK.

Our best hourly rates were 213 during the first hour, and 186 for the last hour, both of which had some county line time included. Conditions were not that great, with the A index in the 30s. But good enough to rack up 1,611 QSOs in 12 hours for an average of 134/hour because of those that stuck it out and worked us.

Here are the operators that worked us 25 or more times:

K1ZZI (43) - Congratulations Ralph

W5TM (35) - Well done Ed

DL3DXX (34) - Nice Dieter, and great to see in Dayton
K1RO (34)
VE3CT (32)
OM2VL (30)
N8II (28)
AA3R (27)
NS0R (27)
NK4O (26)
W0PI (26)
K8MR (25)
KD8FS (25)
NW0M (25)

Thanks to everyone that worked us, and to the KYQP folks who put on this contest. And thanks to Ryan for teaming up with me on this one. I'm certain that very soon, in future QSO parties, you will be working AC4NK mobile with his supportive wife Laykon at the wheel.

73 – Jim – Ad4eb

K1RO fixed NH 185 ve 57 SSB Mults 96

Great fun chasing mobiles AD4EB, AC6ZM, KM4CH, KM4FO, KK6MC, N4TY, and K4Y (N0HJZ) as they drove around Kentucky. Thanks also to the KY home stations and portables who got on for all the QSOs. Having the mobile and portable routes laid out on the KYQP website makes it a lot easier to keep track.

I started an hour late after taking care of household chores and expected to go low power as I have in most events this year. Conditions were rough with lots of weak signals and QSB and I had a hard time getting through so on went the amp. Conditions improved as time went on, and as usual 40 was decent the last hour. Bands were noisy with a passing front and thunderstorms to the south of me.

OM2VL fixed DX 129 CW 36 ssb Mults81

When I seen first time the mobile activity in KYQP I was very happy - many well know mobiles from so many counties.

After few days I got invitation from my very good friend to go with our friends to the mountains for few days family holiday. I said OK, but I must go home before start the QP.

We back home on Saturday and immediately I went to the QTH. Before the QP with my team mate in WRTC2026 we tested our setup, so I missed first 3:36 hours with a so many counties/QSO's.

20m was so light and it was problem to break the USA wall sometimes. Rich N0HJZ as usually, had excellent ears. He back to my 1st or few calls. Thanks to Juan, AC6ZM and Jim, AD4EB for QSY's on 15m!

15/20m was open till the end! (at 00:41Z I had QSO with AC6ZM and AD4EB. Of course my big thanks to other mobiles for the so many QSO's!

I missed about 5+ counties when I called, but can't break the USA wall.

Most QSO's:

AD4EB 31/17
AC6ZM 28/26
K4Y 20/20
KK6MC 11/10
KM4CH 11/10
N4TY 9/9
K4KCG 5/2
KM4FO 4/4
K8UY 3/3

(4): N4SS

73, Laci

DL3DXX fixed DX 139 CW Mults 79

Radio club decided to take down main 20m 5 element yagi (48 ft boom) for maintenance. So I remained with an old 4 element cushcraft with less gain. Propagation at the beginning worse, magnetic storm the day before. 10m and 15m almost dead. Weak signals on 20m. Most time I was unable to break the

US pileups or to even hear the Kentucky stations. Only 13 Qs in the first 3 hours. Propagation increased after sun down. 20m improved and most of the counties could be worked. Suddenly 15m opened after sunset and stayed open up to the end of the contest - what a surprise. AD4EB showed up at a local birdy on 21.043 but was most of the time loud enough to get worked.

Most QSOs were made with AC6ZM, followed by AD4EB, KK6MC, KM4CH, N4TY and KM4FO. What a fun to work these stations I recently have met personally at Dayton Ham Hamvention!!

It really was worth not to quit the QSO party after lazy beginning. Highlight was working last new county MCY in the 00:59 minute served by AC6ZM on 40m! Big thanks to all organizers and participants of the party. The mobile activity (7 CW mobiles) and several POTA stations were overwhelming.

Hope to be back next year.

73 Dietmar

N8II fixed WV 99 CW 65 SSB Mults75

I had several factors working against me but still managed a 2nd place to AA3R so far and just behind high HP op K1RO. I was tired all day, woke up early. I also squeezed in watching the French Open final in short segments. Then there was the huge wind thunderstorm at 2130Z (good timing during dinner break). My base QRN level was fairly high. At 21Z both 20 and 40 were a sea of heavy QRN but no close strikes. A 25 foot long branch along with many smaller ones broke away from my mature oak tree and also had much poplar tree debris. Propagation also did not favor here until after the storm. It was impossible to work any mobiles east of central KY and all day until 22Z and central KY was skipping as well at times. Many spotted mobiles were not even a whisper here. 40M signals were weak until 22Z; weak enough that I missed many mobiles there as well.

Things improved at 22Z with sporadic E filling in all of KY most of the time on 20. I even worked mobiles AD4EB and KM4CH once each on 15M. Juan, AC6ZM/M was very aware of the improved 20M conditions and spent most of his evening there with a booming signal at times.

It was great to have a large mobile turnout especially with visits from Rich, K4Y (N0HJZ) from MN and Jim AD4EB. Jim disappeared for a while, hopefully no serious issue. Then add in KM4CH, KM4FO, AC6ZM, and Duffy, KK6MC all the way from NM and it was a chasers dream. Duffy was too far east to be heard on 20; I only worked him and the YL on SSB a total of 9 times. AC6ZM, K4Y, and AD4EB provided the bulk of my mobile QSO's. KY4KY activated a few counties from his portable. Many thanks to all!

Congrats to the winners and thanks for a nice party despite propagation putting me in a tough spot during the day. Many thanks for the QSO's.

73, Jeff

73, Jeff

K4Y single op LP mobile 1625 SSB QSO
N0HJZ operator

Thanks to everyone who followed me around in Kentucky! A great day of mobiling through a beautiful state! I got lost twice, took a wrong turn (which changed my mobile plan!), got stuck behind two funeral processions and one Amish convoy.....and had a LOT of fun! I also got to visit my son at Fort Knox!

My rates:

1300 - 182 Q's
1400 - 119
1500 - 177
1600 - 131
1700 - 144
1800 - 138
1900 - 140
2000 - 106
2100 - 123
2200 - 122
2300 - 143
0000 - 100
TOTAL - 1,625

Thanks for all the QSO's!

AC6ZM mobile 1097 CW

KYQP Rover Narrative - AC6ZM (Single-Op w/ Driver)

This was my second run at the Kentucky QSO Party as a Rover. My goal for this year was a lofty 1,000 QSOs. Because the KYQP ends earlier than most state QSO parties (1300Z to 0100Z), my strategy was to focus strictly on three bands: 15, 20, and 40 meters. I decided early on that a late-day transition to 80 meters—which required a physical antenna change—was not worth the lost time on the road.

Propagation & The "Bacon Frying" Mystery

In practice, radio conditions were not at all what I expected. Signals faded rapidly and audio was heavily distorted. At times, the S-meter showed little to no received signal strength, yet CW signals were pushing an S5–S7 audio level. During the first 3 to 4 hours, the bands would randomly go dead while the noise floor jumped, sounding exactly like bacon frying.

Regardless of the brutal conditions, we pressed on, frequently changing bands to keep the run rate alive. The high bands (20m and 15m) appeared to be short most of the day. Surprisingly, I managed to work Europe on several occasions throughout the 12 hours, logging ****OM2VL, DL3DXX, DL5AXX, LY5A, and F8PDR****. I was amazed that 15 meters stayed open to Europe well past 2300 UTC. The EU chasers took full advantage of this, quickly QSY'ing up to 15m in between our county line runs.

I want to extend a massive thank you to all the dedicated chasers who stayed glued to their radios to follow us from county to county. Navigating tough mobile conditions is a team effort, and without the chasers actively tracking the rovers across the state, this QSO party simply wouldn't be the premier event that it is.

The Science Behind the Static

To make sense of what I experienced on the air, I went back and reviewed the solar data for the KYQP window. The bizarre propagation perfectly correlated with real-time space

weather events.

The M1.8 Solar Flare & SID (1340 – 1500 UTC):

- At approximately 1340 UTC, Active Region 4461 unleashed an M1.8 solar flare, peaking near 1401 UTC.

The Impact:

- The sudden influx of X-ray radiation caused an immediate R1 (Minor) Radio Blackout due to intense ionization in the D-layer on the sunlit side of Earth. This D-region absorption was most severe on frequencies below 10 MHz (like 40m), making signals vanish entirely into the noise floor for 30 to 60 minutes before gradually recovering.
* **Solar Noise Bursts:** Concurrently, SWPC triggered alerts for a Type II Radio Emission (1347 UTC) and a 10cm Radio Burst peaking at 190 sfu. This manifested as that brief, intense roar of solar RF noise ("bacon frying") across the HF bands, masking weaker signals.

Log Analysis & Statistics

Over the course of the event, we put on some serious miles and activated 36 different counties. The final log yielded 249 unique callsigns, reflecting a fantastic mix of local, domestic, and international talent who stuck with us through the solar static.

First QSO: WB9HFK @ Whitley County (WHI)

Last QSO: K2AL @ McCreary County (MCY)

Top Chasers (Operators with 10+ QSOs:

W5TM	39	KC3X	13
K1RO	39	K8MR	12
AA3R	38	K9CW	12
DL3DXX	38	W0UC	12
OM2VL	36	K2YG	11
VE3CT	30	KD2KW	11
NS0R	28	KD8FS	11
KA6BIM	20	K9G9X	11
K0AP	19	NW0M	11
W0PI	17	WA8ZBT	10
WA5SOG	16	AA0AW	10
W8PI	15	K5CM	10

N8II | 15 | K5KG | 10 |
WA2JQK | 14 | N5KW | 10 |
N5RZ | 14 | WN4AFP | 10 |
WB2FKO | 13 |

Final Thoughts & Tech Comments

The APRS tracker stopped transmitting for a few hours despite the APRS TX app running on a stable internet connection. I can't quite explain what caused the outage, but once it came back online, it worked flawlessly for the rest of the day. For those chasers who aren't using APRS tracking to monitor mobiles in real-time, you are truly missing out on a great QSO party tool!

I also posted to the online live scoreboard throughout the event. This is another great tool for contesters that I encourage everyone to try.

Many thanks to my driver, the KYQP organizers, and N4TY for making this a successful event. A special shoutout to all the chasers who keep the mobile operators motivated—you guys are the backbone of the contest. Finally, my hat is off to my fellow Tennessee Contest Group (TCG) members, AD4EB (Jim) and AC4NK (Ryan), who teamed up for a mobile run in Western Kentucky while I traversed the Eastern part of the state. Excellent work, gentlemen!

73 & Semper Fidelis,

KM4CH mobile - with driver 393 CW 42 SSB

MIXED MODE KM4CH OPERATING KJ6SVE DRIVER

KM4FO mobile 425 CW

no comments

N4tY mobile 551 CW

Deb and I stopped at 4pm EDT because of computer and GPS failures. Luckily the

Apple Store in Fort Worth was able to recover our N1MM log file and other files, so we could finish our submission on a new laptop.

MANY THANKS to the awesome rover ops visiting KY to make this year's KYQP a huge success: Jim AD4EB + Ryan AC4NK, Juan AC6ZM, Rich K4Y (N0HJZ), and James KK6MC + W0AEN. You all made this the best KYQP ever, and we sincerely hope you will return next year!

Also thanks to our yearly stalwart KY rovers: John KM4CH + Chandler KJ6SVE, Dwight KM4FO + Suzette KJ4SYZ. Also thanks to Buddy KY4KY and his team for his 4-park and county activation, and Ray N4NP + Steve KC3SJ for their twin-park and county activation.

Finally, thanks to everyone who participated from KY, USA, Canada, and DX countries, despite the worst Band condo ever experienced. Next year has to be better!

Tyler N4TY + Deb N4TY/2

KA6BIM fixed OR 103 cw 52 SSB Mults87

Score includes 300 bonus points great contest. lots of activity. conditions varied thru the day. I managed to work the last 5 counties I needed for KY, thanks to the rovers! Thanks for all the QSO's

Dave ka6bim

Mobile Trip Planning

There were several excellent articles about mobile trip planning in the last issue of the MARAC RoadRunner. I hope you read and enjoyed them. AB7NK//K7SEN with comprehensive article on trip planning, resources, how they log, spare parts taken, etc. Kerry, W4SIG, wrote about his trips, trip planning, routes, etc in another long description of his many trips. Jerry, W0GXQ, commented extensively on his trips

Well, guess I'd better add my 2c. Way, way back when, in the 1970s, I ran across Fred,

AA4FF, who was an avid county hunter in Lynchburg, VA., probably at the local ham club meeting I guess that got me to work a bunch of counties in various contests and I got my first 500 certificate. That was it for the next 15 years.

Somewhere along the line, I ran into WB9OOG. The first time we headed out a few miles to operate a few counties and county lines in his Ford Bronco in VA. Nothing special – a few counties and a half day. Early 1990s

Well, things change, My Dad, WB2MHR passed in 1991. My mom, later known as “Miss Ida”, had my dad's radio equipment at Lake George (TS-520 and Tri-band beam), plus the station in FL (TS-440 and R-5 vertical). Plus of course, my station in TX. After a short time...she decided to get her Novice license and was on the air as KB2PDC. 10M was good. She chased DX and US stations. From NY and FL, you had good propagation to much of the US. She spent summers in NY, winters in FL and hopped airplanes back and forth – with the car being ferried by hired driver.

As you know....the sunspot cycle peaks.....then declines. 10M started thinning out...then was mostly dead. Miss Ida had to upgrade. 13 WPM code back then to get General. Took 3 months of listening to computer tapes to get her up to 13.0000 wpm. She passed code test on second try.....barely....at age 76. Now she was N2TPH.. She chased DX on 20M. There were several friendly nets for laid back DX types, and YL's were especially welcome. She had loads of fun.

One year while in FL, we ran across the county hunter net on 14.336. She got addicted. So did I. Not long after, I bought a Kenwood TS-50 transceiver. Put it in my 1990 Honda in TX – and had a hamstick type whip on a bracket off rear bumper. Did NOT work well but ran some counties in TX.

Then things changed. Miss Ida would spend 3 months in NY. I would fly up there, and drive her back to TX in the Buick LeSabre. I put the TS-50 in the car and used a 3 mag mount on top for 20m. We'd put out counties from NY to TX. Then 3 month later, she would head to FL for 3 months, and I'd drive her there and fly back to TX. That continued for several years.

Now.....I guess this is the part were the trip planning actually occurs....

It was ancient time long before internet tools were available. So...I used what I had. The coloring book, one for me and one for Miss Ida, became the trip planning manual. I had a spare blank one and used it to copy the maps for the quarterly trips from NY to TX to FL and back. On a spare blank copy, I'd put the needed counties with an X – and

used state maps to see how many we could get without going too far off the route. I used my vacation days to do this, and hopped a plane back to TX from FL to NY. We'd have a day or two to go off route to get the needed ones.

We managed to include a few county hunter conventions....let's see...TX to FL via Arizona.....yeah....not too much of a detour....

Well, that worked for 5 or 6 years till Miss Ida became a SK. Then it was just N4CD going out on trips. I was working on eventually completing transmitted all counties. I had a coloring book set up for that so I could easily see what was needed.

Now, trip planning used the coloring book maps....and state maps (bought a complete set of Rand McNally maps) to plan trips. You could also get state maps at 'welcome centers. I found that AAA (American Auto Association) had free maps and wasn't far from my house to get them in person. Great – I had boxes of maps.

I looked a multiple ways of getting counties – on the maps.....Part of the problem was winding up in someplace that likely had motels. There are lots of places you travel and have no listed motels in the AAA Manuals. While you can get gas just about any 'town' in the US, you may not find a motel. So part of the plan had to be winding up somewhere with a motel. Typically I'd do 300-400 miles depending upon the state and route. Leave 20 min for operation.

You could also buy software for maps...DeLoreme Maps....and load on your computer. OK but paper maps were better.

Along the way I ran into W0RRY, Charlie. We did about 10 trips together – using the coloring book maps to plot our needs. My then I was working on Bingo, Master's Gold, all cw....so I used colored pencils. One color for transmitted county credit. One for need MG contact. Another for 'all cw'. We had 2m handhelds, and later a QRP 30M radio off separate battery to get 30M QSOs. That way we could work each other.

I also put LC for others on the coloring book maps.

The Garmin Navigation system proved helpful

I had a separate sheet to track the trip. One listed all the counties we intended to hit, plus the needs under it. VERY IMPORTANT. It's no fun discovering you didn't take that 3 mile detour to get a county off route.....300 miles later! So mandatory check list of every county, and always checking it for next county. When you are tired, or excited

about the next one and don't take the short detour.....realizing it hours later....you kick yourself many times.....things happen. If you're running all ND, and miss one....well....that means another trip and miles out of the way.

Well, by year 2000, other than the supposed computer crash which didn't happen, you could find loads of info on the web. You had the ability to find motels in most cases...along with phone numbers to make reservations. You could use MapQuest or Google Maps to check distances or times between A and B.

You could also use Expedia or other booking sites.....I almost never did, but it would tell you if a town had a motel worthy of their listing it....or give the nearest town with one.

You could also do a search on a town name and motels.....finding smaller ones not associated with the booking sites. Early on, the AAA manuals were good....now they are not worth looking at other than 'attractions'. Still, AAA maps good but often state maps even better. Over the years, I probably have 40 states maps Two boxes full state maps. Some older than some county hunters kids/grandkids – hi hi.

When I started out, I stayed at a lot of Motel 6's. Save money, put in gas tank.. Hi hi. It took about 10 years of lots of trips to finish up transmitting all counties. For me, airplane trips/rental cars to AK and HI. Here, there, everywhere. Last county was in Idaho.

So how do I do planning now? Starting in 2016, ARRL started the National Parks on the Air program. I got hooked and was zipping all over the country from CA, OR, WY to VT, NH, FL, ND, and points in between. Add in Dayton Hamvention, County Hunter gathering, Michigan Mini, and I was traveling 1/3rd of the year. Used coloring book and maps..maps....maps.... to hit the parks. Google maps for distances and times. I'd type in city by city to get miles and times.

Had run sheets of route and counties along it.....and of course, the county for the parks. Checked the needs page, too.. Did 40,000 plus miles that year. Back then, I'd run counties while moving. Now I was mainly CW while moving.....had digital recorder, but often just some shorthand logging....3X, GX, 7N, NF, ...the regulars..Full call for new ones. Still had every state coloring book map with route and county. And needs for me (in colored pencil) and others. Bingo, Nth Time, MG, Mobile Diamond.....Double Diamond....who needs what.

2026....The trips are shorter now as I grow more gray hair....what's left....So not too many detours as I venture to Dayton or a few other places. Finished up Second Time

Ran All USA. Got my Mobile Diamond and not seeking more.....that too took lots of trips to finish off.....including getting to HI and AK a second time.

My advice to anyone planning a trip. **MAKE A CHECK LIST OF THE COUNTIES YOU WILL BE RUNNING.** Use it. It's horrible feeling when you realize that yesterday you forget to take that 3 mile detour.... or forget to transmit from that county on the route for 30 miles– and then kick yourself a half dozen times. Or maybe just 3 miles on the interstate. Check list of counties. **Use it...obsessively.** Check off once run..... then check for next.

There's also Map Books of just about every state in the US from publishers. Some are good like OK and TX. They show roads not on the state maps.....but use caution....some you don't want to be on....! Some cross private property and have locked gates. In some cases you can find county line roads not listed on state maps.....or even Google Maps. They are now about 25 bucks each but handy for nearby states or if you run state QSO parties.

Now, I'm not so aggressive as before. Heck, I've driven 700 miles a day at times....the first or second days of trips to 'way out there'. Go...go...go....Putting 200K miles on car in 8 years. Several times.

Now...a couple hundred miles, motel stop planned.....and upgraded to Super 8, Days Inn, LaQuinta, etc. Some QSO Parties, some destination trips. I'm not the fanatic I once was....times fly by.. even though I'm up to 1300 counties transmitted the 3rd time...

That's the N4CD story.

West Virginia QSO Party

There are 58 counties in WV. Looks like less than half made it on the air as top scores from out of state reporting on the 3830 contest reflector had 26 worked.

I saw no mobile reports – and there was no category listed for 'portable' or expeditions. K8II was out mobile, though.

Naturally, WV is a tough state to run mobile in a contest. WV roads are not conducive to quick county to county operation other than on the interstates and the northern part.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N8II fixed WV 282 cw 772 SSB

Nice to be in the drivers seat rather than the chaser for a change. I needed an infusion of some running which I did about 97% of the time. F2 propagation was about as expected, skip zone on 40 out to around 200 miles when no Es. In the late afternoon Es nearly disappeared and so did most stations east of the MS River on 20. The good news is that there was intense sporadic E both from 1700-1830Z and in the evening from 2300-0025Z. The afternoon opening was in all directions at once, pretty rare. I worked stations as close as NJ, NY, VA, KY, OH, and WV on Es! It was pretty well over after 1830Z. I tried 15M and self spotted, very few takers despite the band being open. I worked John, N6MU with his ground mounted vertical on 15 CW and both modes 40 and 20, the 40M Q's were a surprise. The evening opening was to the NW around to SW with skip as short as WPA, OH, and KY. Even with no Es there were plenty of casual ops calling in on 20 SSB, can't thank you enough! I was trying for maximum QSO's for the State QSO Party Challenge so didn't stick around on CW if the callers stopped. At 2130-2150Z I did try beaming EU on 20 SSB with very good results working a steady stream of only DX callers (heard no NA) working as far as 4X and adding 13 mults.

Considering that a lot of callers were not in the QP just making a QSO and not knowing their state was needed I had some very good rates. Shifting to a different band or mode when things slowed down worked well.

I worked all of the lower 48 states, VO1, VE1-7, VE9. VE9VIC called in on 80-40-20 both modes. Rarest states were VT and WY besides HI/AK.

Thanks to all of you for calling in. I broke 1000 QSO's at 0224Z with NB4M on 40M SSB. Final of 1054 is likely 2nd best ever but think best was well over 1100 when QP ended at 02Z. After 03Z now activity drops to near nothing. Thanks to all of the WV portable/mobile ops who made it much better for the chasers. I tried to work the spotted WV stations when things were not really busy, many were in the noise from here on 20 and quite a few on 40. It was really fun from here.

73, Jeff

K8II was out mobile in Counties. No report seen

Mobile Activity in June

At the beginning of the month:

WY0A was in WV running counties there. Then into KY. IL

K4YT spotted in KY putting them out.

NU0Q noted in MN running counties there. Then into ND for many days. Then SD.
.Into WY. Into UT. To CO. To NE....then back to home in IA.

AI5P noted running parks in OK More in AR followed.

K3IMC noted mobile in GA

N9JF ran dozens and dozens of parks in VE land.....then some in ME.

KB6UF headed from ME to LA at end of month.

Field Day 2026

Every year for the last weekend of June, the ARRL holds the Field Day Event. This is not a contest but an event to get people out to field locations as they would in a real emergency situation. Many clubs participate with outings, and others go off as singles or doubles, in mobile homes, tents, temporary locations. After the COVID situation a few years ago with social restraint, home stations were also allowed to join in.

Likely this a thousand calls would be on the air – some for a few hours, some for the entire time of the 24 hour time period.

I belong to two clubs. The Richardson TX club,, K5RWK, sets up in the Emergency Operations Center in town. Large facility that would hold well over 100 folks from all the services in an actual city emergency, from fire, police, sanitation, administrators, rescue folks, etc. They hold drills several times a year. There's stored food, diesel for the generators, full kitchen, etc. It makes for nice Field Day site as it is INDOORS while the outside temp was in the high 90s.

Headed over there at 1pm – the start of FD in TX. Put in some time on 20M CW. Wow....they were making just as many contacts on 6M FT-8 as we were on CW. 10M FT-8 also logging dozens of QSOs. Later they'd get on SSB.

The band was up and down like a yo-yo on 20M. Signals would go from S1 to S9 in 10 seconds and back again. We had five or six CW Ops.

At 5:30 the Pizza arrived and folks appeared out of nowhere. Probably two dozen pizzas disappeared along with gallons of soft drinks. ,

Now a good bunch come and help set up in the morning. Also help take own stuff at 8pm when the club ends it's participation. Few folks want to stay overnight - so the last few years have been just Saturday. We were 3F. Three stations on air, (plus a satellite station and a GOTA station) at the EOC(class F).

Headed home in evening. 99F outside with feels like temp of 107F. Yuck.

The Plano Club operates outside. Whew. I'm too old for that!

Hope you managed to participate.

Often I've gone out on early Sunday to operate class 1C for a few hours but the N4CD mobile is in the shop to get a small dent on driver side repaired. Not done by FD, darn.

10 and 12 Meter County Awards

From the County Hunter Forum:

MARAC Single Band awards for 12m and 10m

The single band awards for 12m and 10m are scarce. No WBOW awards have been issued for 12m or 10m.

Only six people have been awarded 12m certificates at the 1000 county level.

On 10m, only 1 certificate has been awarded at the 2000 county level, while 5 have been awarded at the 1000 county level.

Details can be seen on the MARAC site under the County Hunter DB menu item. Examine the Awards Database for single band awards

K3IMC 6/4/2026

Events for County Hunters

Events are few this month. QSO Party season starts late July. More in August.

July 25 1500z tto 26 0300z
3.5-28

Alabama QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), AL county or SPC

alabamacontestgroup.org

Annual County Hunter Convention

Extra! Extra! All County Hunters !
News....News... News.....Read all About it!

- - - -

Welcome to Utah where we will be having the MARAC National Convention!!!! Ogden, Utah to be exact.

Here is a preliminary outline of the convention. I hope to have everything finalized by the end of February with bios, presentation summaries, websites, etc.. There may be some changes as I work through everything. The convention will be the weekend of September Friday 18th and Saturday 19th, 2026.

Friday:

Breakfast- everyone on their own.

Presentation 9:30-10:30 by Don K3IMC

Presentation 11:00-12:00 by Ron KF7ZN. A Visit to the Sun and the Ionosphere

Lunch 12:30-1:30

Field Trip to Hill Air Museum 2:00-4:00PM They have guided tours. Hill Aerospace Museum is a military aviation museum located at Hill Air Force Base, one of our nation's biggest and best aviation museums.

Dinner 6:00 pm

Slide show with slides of members and their activities during the year. Along with dinner we will have a historical club present that has some very interesting presentations on history of the West.

Saturday:

Breakfast everyone on their own

Presentation 9:30 to 10:30 Bob Carter WR7Q History of CW and how to improve your skills

Presentation 11-12:00 Jed Petrovich AD7KG Mobile and Portable antennas

Lunch 12:30 to 1:30

MARAC Board meeting 1:30-2:30

Harvest Moon Celebration In the afternoon people can attend the Harvest Moon celebration- Live music, fall-themed photo stations, and sometimes rock climbing and axe throwing., etc.

Dinner 6:30 pm, speaker from Rio Grande Railroad club on History of Railroads in the West

Prizes

see the MARAC.ORG site or the Road Runner for lots more detail now!

Awards Issued

Ran all State:

K4YT completed all Arizona. He received #48
K4YT completed all New Mexico. He received #38>BR>
K4YT completed all Virginia. He received #25

Single Band Award:

DL3DXX attained level 1000 on 17 meters. He received #9

USA-CA Award:

KW7MJA attained level 500. He received #3928
KW7MJA attained level 1000. He received #2004

UT3KW attained level 500. He was assigned #3926
JA8NSF attained level 500. He was assigned #3927

3rd Time Award:

KJ8F completed all counties for the 3rd time. She received #267

That's all folks

73 de N4CD