# County Hunter News OnLine

March 2025
Volume 21 Issue 3

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

# Winter Field Day

" Thanks to all who hunted Alaska, KL7ADV! Winter field day and POTA (Denali State Park US-1641) is a wrap with so many challenges over the weekend! We had 50" of snow over 48 hours at the cabin and lost the buddihex. Not to mention poor band conditions. We survived and had a great time! Thanks again! 73 KL7EC, KL5NE, KL7DUG"

Hundreds of stations were out for Winter Field Day. This year it incorporated a 'mobile' category' but any 'vehicle' or 'trailer' counted. Others set up tents and operated inside, while home stations, emergency centers, and 'portables' of all sorts were on the air.

Quite a good bit of activity.  Weather other than FL was COLD, COLD, COLD with inus temps up north, snow, wind many places.  N4CD operated a few hours from local POTA park.

- - - -

Stations go out 'field day' style for this event, but mobiles are allowed in a separate category.  Their definition of mobile includes anything with wheels.  Trailers, mobile home on wheels, cars, SUVs, pickup trucks, etc.  Sometimes you'll catch POTA folks in parks/counties during the event.

# Michigan Mini 2025

Hosted by Dorrie, N8WTQ

The 2025 MARAC Michigan Mini Convention will be held April 24-26, 2025 at the SpringHill Suites in Midland, Michigan. Mark your calendars. The registration for this event is now available on the marac.org website. Please go ahead and make your reservations online and secure your MARAC group rate at the host hotel 989-837-2700. Room rate is $134. Registration is $30 with each additional person $15. Banquet is $40 each. See you there

# Dayton Hamvention 2025

MARAC will once again have a booth at the Dayton Hamvention in 2025. Thanks to Mike, NF0N, for spearheading this effort. He has several other club members who will help him run the booth. Make sure you drop in for a visit if you are at this annual ham extravaganza!

KA4RRU and crew will be out in the flea market again this year.  Many county hunters and former county hunters will be about.

You might catch me at the MARAC booth or POTA table this year. Renting a scooter to get around this year. My legs just aren't up to hours of walking. See you there!

# Minnesota QSO Party

The weather wasn't great but typical winter in MN. Both climate and solar. Major flares hurt propagation on the Friday before with some nasty propagation that extended into Saturday. Just 'fair' conditions but nothing stops a QSO Party from happening . Things improved later for propagation but snow storms started. Winter in MN!

There are 87 counties in MN. Top scorers had in the mid 60s worked from out of state.

Weather was in the 20s and 30s for MN but that is 'normal' for them. However, nasty snow storms and icy conditions up north precluded lots of counties getting mobile attention and slowed down others.

Lots of fixed stations on, plus a few dedicated mobiles putting out dozens and dozens of counties to make it interesting.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

**W0ZQ Rover 676 CW 31 ssb**


My 21st consecutive running as a mobile/rover in the MnQP. I never got a good handle on propagation as at times it seemed pretty good and at other times not so good. 20m was a bit of disappointment. We did have a weather front drop through mid day that increased the winds to 35+ mph with about 2" of snow. The temperatures held at around 25 degrees which is fine, but the wind and blowing snow was an issue for a bit. Due to weather there was a delay in my route as I stopped and just hunkered down for a while. While waiting for the snow to (hopefully) stop (which it did) I played on 15m phone which was fun. Glad that I got new tires on the Subaru just before the contest! The score is down this year compared to previous years but the fun factor was still there. Thanks for all the Qs and, weather permitting, hope to work you again in the WiQP. 73, Jon

**AC0W mobile 980 CW 1 SSB**


Thanks for following me around in the mobile and for the Q's. Looks like my decision to stay south this year was wise as those in the northern part pulled the plug early due to the weather. Safety first. We did manage to find the snow on the NW corner of the route, but it was light and didn't impact our travels.

Interesting to have 3 or 4 bands open, which band to operate. As you can see, I moved around. 15 was good in the mobile for DX, they were strong and solid. Band was also quiet. I also managed to work several MN stations on 15, helping my mult totals.

20 was noisy plus depending on where I was there was a fair about of power noise.

Seems some utilities do better at maintaining their lines than others. DX was weaker on 20 but managed to get many in the log.

Yes, I did make one phone contact. Things were slowing down in one county so thought I'd give phone a try. Switch to phone and here was at VT station, so worked him. Then noticed the logging program showed I was split and on a different mode. Didn't find the fix easily so back to CW. Things never slowed down enough after that to think about trying phone again.

It was interesting was I travel the eastern part of the trip near the Mississippi River between the valleys and bluffs. Some areas good signals when I was on top above the valleys with everyone disappearing as I went down in the valley. Other areas great signals while in the valley with everyone disappearing as we travel to the top.

Of course, being mobile has its challenges. I tried 80 near the end and the radio would have nothing to do with it. It would try and turn of the transmitter immediately. Today I checked it and appears fine. Will have to double check next time I do a mobile. Also need to figure out power for the laptop. Had it quit a few times. Fortunately, the battery held up between the times when the power supply didn't work. New laptop and power supply and first time in the mobile with them. Something to work on before the mobile outing.

Then operating in a moving vehicle has its own challenges. Between bumps in the road and sudden direction changes by the driver, I would need to make fixes to remove those characters that suddenly got entered. Keeps things interesting.

Thanks for participating in the Minnesota QSO Party and for working me. Hope to see/work you next year.

73
Bill AC0W

**K0PC mobile 303 CW**

A disappointing outing for me. All of the equipment worked flawlessly but the weather got me. Snow was forecast but I thought I could avoid it, not to be.
By 1600Z I was dealing with blowing snow in very high winds and increasingly icy roads. My route was about to turn off the interstate onto two-lane roads down the western edge of the state. Very open prairie with nothing to break the wind and snow

drifts.
I decided to cut my losses and head back home on the interstate. Even then I say at least a dozen vehicles in the ditch so it was a long ride home.
Thanks to everyone who rode along and I hope to be back next year.

73, Pat KØPC

**KE0TT mobile 266 cw**

50 to 100 watts, Hamsticks while roving, wires at home. Thanks for the Q's, had a good time. One EU DX Q this time. C U down the log, 73, Dan ke0tt

**N0SPN rover 106 SSB QSO**

no comments

**KC0DMF rover 41 SSB QSO (2 hours)**

Working as a rover for the MNQP. I really enjoy doing this contest for those outside of MN!

**K0BBC mobile 694 SSB QSO**

no comments

**K0KMV mobile 105 SSB**

no comments

**K0RC mobile 635 CW QSO**

Our planned CCW circular route worked out well again this year. We did activate Itasca this year. We missed that county last year due to a premature turn. We had APRS running for the very first time too. The activity ran hot and cold. There were instant piles of callers, even without crossing into a new county. And then there were a few doldrums too. We did run out of contest time before getting into Kanabec (KNB) so we listened to the NAQP contesters as we continued the drive back home.

The WX was 50% cooperative, the temperatures were in the upper 20s with clear roads for the first five hours. Then the snow began falling as predicted. It started slowly at first and built up in intensity during the next hour. We stopped in Park Rapids, MN for food and to clear the snow that had accumulated on the SUV.

The second half of the contest we were heading south. We traveled down a couple of two-lane county roads to pick up Becker and Otter Tail counties. Those roads had not been plowed so our speed was greatly reduced. Due to the winter driving conditions we fell behind schedule and did not make the last two planned activations. Those were Isanti and Chisago counties. Chisago is my home QTH and that was activated at the start so only one county was missing from our plan.

The K0RC mobile setup is basic MFJ Ham Sticks on a tri-magnet mount. It requires a brief stop to change bands. An older Kenwood TS-690s/at generates 100 Watts of RF while a K1EL WinKeyer USB sends CW via N1MM+ logger running on a Dell Win10 laptop. There were no equipment problems, only "operator deficiencies" while entering QSO data and traveling down the road.

One problem I did experience was not realizing the RIT was enabled via turning the mouse wheel. A few times I discovered I was listening "up the band" instead of on my TX frequency! I abandoned the mouse and started using the "scratch pad" on the laptop for program cursor control. I set the CW speed at 28 wpm and that seemed to work well for the entire contest. If a fill was needed, I had the WinKeyer set to 24 wpm when manually sending information.

Our score was down about 25% from last year. Others reported depressed scores due to band conditions at various times through the 10-hour party. Reviewing our log shows we were making contacts in all areas around the country, even 4 contacts into Europe (the usual suspects)! It still amazes me that 100 Watts and compromised antennas only 5 feet off the ground can communicate around the world!

Next up for me is the Wisconsin QSO Party. I will most likely be operating as a Rover as I have not lined up a driver yet.

73 de Bob - K0RC and Al - KD8FS

- - -

**N8II fixed WV 151 CW 111 ssb Mults63**

Another QP season starts, nice to have enough solar activity for 15M to be wide open from 1550-2150Z. 20 was much more popular with strong signals here all day long until about 2320Z. I was able to get some answers to SSB CQ's on 40 in last half hour, and on 20 and 15. 40 was closed for about 4 mid day hours, lots of digital QRM in CW band.

I had hoped for a few more on 20, down a bit from last year. A couple of ops who usually go mobile were on from home instead. Total mobile activity was down but still enough to keep it interesting. Thanks to Jan,W9FZ and Matt,K0BBC(13 Q's) phone mobiles for quite a few QSO's and new mults on 20. Bill, AC0W/M operated mostly CW and was very active on 15; he always was loud on 20 and 15; thanks for 21 QSO's! Jon, W0ZQ was worked 19 times, loud as well! Bob, K0RC/P was worked 12 times in some rare spots. Thanks also to Pat, K0PC and Dan,KE0TT for going mobile. I didn't check your WX, but assume it was cold. I worked Rich,N0HJZ 7 times from his home QTH.

I relied on spots more than in the past trying to keep up with mults and QSO's. I probably spent 20 minutes during MNQP working the BC and VT QP's in small increments. Both suffered from poor activity Sunday and BC from poor prop (10M especially) as well. Chasing mults the old fashioned way tuning around is more fun.

My best QSO rate hours were 15Z with 40 QSO's and 23Z with 38. Thanks to all of the MN ops for the QSO's and calls. Congrats to Dave, WN4AFP for getting 1 more mult than me and for 100 QSO's in the VTQP. This may be my last big MNQP effort.

73, Jeff

**WN4AFP fixed SC 143 cw 52 ssb Mults 64**

Thanks for all the Qs and thanks to the great mobile operators that keep my BIC for the entire contest. Trying to keep up with Jeff N8II was difficult in this one. I did manage to pick up 64 multipliers.

73 Dave WN4AFP

**K0TG Fixed MN 393 CW QSO**

Pretty lousy bands this morning. I'd say it started getting better around 2000Z. At least I noticed an uptick in activity. I was about to take a break and work on something else for a bit and come back.

Hats off to K0RC for pulling me out of the mud. Good ears and a quiet ride? I could barely hear him as he was a few counties away from CRO. He kept peaking a little here and there. Finally a lull in people calling him. Gave it a shot, and there ya were! Did that a few more times since I knew he could hear good.

Not much mobile action on 40. The Q's for them must have been on 20 and up. So missed a lot of mobile action.

Another one in the books.

73, John K0TG/CRO

**N6MU fixed CA 113 CW 50 counties worked**

20 was tough today. 10 and 15 were excellent. 73...

John, N6MU TS-570 & 5BTV

**NE8P fixed FL 165 cw 77 SSB Mults57**

Nice turnout; including the mobile and rovers. Still, I missed a lot of counties. We'll get 'em next year! Thanks to all who participated!

TS-590SG, SB-221, 20/15/10 rotatable dipole @32 feet, 80/40 vertical

**WA6KHK fixed CA 88 cw 24 ssb Mults 50**

Mobiles did a great job in horrible weather! K0PC had to go QRT half way through the contest because of a snow storm! Still using a vertical and trying to sell my QTH.

**LY5W fixed DX  55 cw  9 ssb  Mults29**

Mrs. Aurora visits and after 3 hours everything is gone.
Lucky - got 3 new counties from last 17 what I need from MN.
PIP-K0BBC
MRT-AC0W
WAT-AC0W
Guys please paper QSL to me.
73, Sam LY5W

**KB9VBR – portable – MN** -  161 CW 799 SSB QSO

Set out to do 1000 QSOs from a POTA park in Washita  county.  Posted video of his adventure here:

Can we Kilo this park? The 2025 Minnesota QSO Party has us set up at POTA US-4236 on the banks of the Mississippi River for a multi transmitter Parks on the Air activation

as we compete to bring in over 1000 contacts during the contest. ~KB9VBR

[https://youtu.be/s9GsAP-32bQ]

They came close..... 958 QSOs in the contest period!

**W9FZ and KA9VVQ  mobile  as K0M**

“Janice (KA9VVQ) and I now live in Wisconsin but to make progress towards the quest of operating from all 87 counties, this year, we will knock out 8 in far southwest Minnesota.

We will use the name “Jan”. We appreciate being spotted. We intend to self-spot exclusively on: http://qsopartyhub.com/mnqp-spots.php . We will be chirping APRS as W9FZ-4 . The MNQP mobile tracker should have us.

SSB only for us. Mostly 20M. We hope to have a little 40m. Sure, we will check 15m and 80m. We sometimes have trouble finding an open freq on 20m because we do NOT operate on the fly. We take a break during travel times. We don't mind hints towards an open freq."

No report filed but spotted on W6RK multiple times.

# Vermont QSO Party

The weather was in the 20s and 30s in VT day time but sub zero in places. Colder up north. . A good number of counties on from fixed stations with decent signals on 20m. Activity shifts to 40 and 80 early so folks can work each other in-state.

Several mobiles out and about – including super mobile KI1P. Maybe all but one county on the air for this QP. Most top ops out of state snagged 15 or so counties.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

**WA1J Multi Op mobile (Ops K1NZ N1TA) 230 CW 1 SSB QSO**

7 counties activated, FT-100D with 100W into an ATAS-120 and Diamond HF80CL.

**KI1P rover 2385 SSB QSO**

Had a fun weekend. Operated from my mobile ham shack (TV news van) in 10 counties. Huge pile ups! Delt with snow covered roads and temps as low as 15 below zero. Hope to produce a video of my experience soon.

**NE8P fixed OH 41 40 0 CW Mults 9 Ph Mults 11**

The VT folks brought it this year with way more activity than last year! Good job!

Great way to start off the 2025 State QSO Party season.

Mike, NE8P

TS-590SG, SB-221, 20/15/10 rotatable dipole @32 feet, 80/40 vertical

Note that the rules changed this year with CW QSOs counting three points instead of two. N1MM+ does not score per this new rule.

**KK1L Fixed VT 464 CW 400 ssb 462 digital**

First off thanks to the great participation from non-Vermont operators. I had quite a few multiple repeat visitors. It was great to hear.

Very little trouble with the station or logging this year...other than the PitA of having to split the log by CW/PH and Digital submissions. Some day in these split mode contests N1MM+ will log the grid from FTx contacts. Still a bit of a niche though. Happy to have WSJT-X behaving well with N1MM+.

I operated from Friday start at 7PM ET until just before midnight. Then all day Saturday...7:15AM until just after midnight. No Sunday operation...same as last year. I did my best to spread my operating across modes. Much more focus on CW this year. #1 because I really want the practice, and #2 the points per Q were boosted to 3 pts this year. In this case unless phone can sustain 150ish rates gotta run CW once you've collected the mults. There were other VT stations focusing on phone, so I did not feel too bad leaving some SSB on the table. No special strategy here other than find the band with the best rate and run CW and Digital, fill in mults with phone. I only checked the WARC bands for digital and it was not worthwhile to be there.

Seemed to me that Vermont participation was up this year. A most notable uptick was KI1P and his converted TV truck mobile QSO Gatling gun/bazooka/drone/flame thrower showering RF from upwards of 10 counties! Of course he was not alone spreading the QSO love...W1NVT & W1XIV specials, AA1SU, K1BIF, NQ1B (really boosting her QSOs!), KE1VT, K1VMT, etc, etc.

**NX3A fixed VA 35 CW 43 SSB 35 digi / CW Mults 10 Ph Mults 15 Dig**

Mults 6

Too close to work all the Vermont stations of 10 & 15. Sigh! Kudos to KI1P for all the mobile multipliers. Only missed Grand Isle and Grid 35....again!

**WN4AFP fixed VA 34 CW 33 SSB 23 digi CW Mults 11 Ph Mults 13 Dig Mults5**

I had a blast in the VTQP this year. Good propagation on the high bands helped me work many VT stations on multiple bands. I also added FT8/4 to my station, so that mode helped with mults and the digital bands were very active with VT stations. KI1P/p had some huge piles on 20m when he was in CAL/ESS. I broke through it pretty easily. This was my all time best score in the VTQP. Well see how things turn out. Thanks to Mitch and the VTQP team and ops for putting on a great QSO Party #1 in the SQP Challenge. I also worked the MNQP and BCQP during the weekend. 73 Dave WN4AFP

# Morse Code is Back

Article from Smithsonian Magazine

- - - ----

“Looking to Ditch X? Morse Code Is Back

Reviving a 200-year-old system, enthusiasts are putting the digit back in digital communication.
Smithsonian Magazine

Larry Kahaner

For almost 20 years, Steve Galchutt, a retired graphic designer, has trekked up Colorado mountains accompanied by his pack of goats to contact strangers around the world using a language that is almost two centuries old, and that many people have given up for dead. On his climbs, Galchutt and his herd have scared away a bear grazing on raspberries, escaped from fast-moving forest fires, camped in subfreezing temperatures

and teetered across a rickety cable bridge over a swift-moving river where one of his goats, Peanut, fell into the drink and then swam ashore and shook himself dry like a dog. “I know it sounds crazy, risking my life and my goats’ lives, but it gets in your blood,” he tells me by phone from his home in the town of Monument, Colorado. Sending Morse code from a mountaintop—altitude offers ham radios greater range—“is like being a clandestine spy and having your own secret language.”

Worldwide, Galchutt is one of fewer than three million amateur radio operators, called “hams,” who have government-issued licenses allowing them to transmit radio signals on specifically allocated frequencies. While most hams have moved on to more advanced communications modes, like digital messages, a hard-core group is sticking with Morse code, a telecommunications language that dates back to the early 1800s—and that offers a distinct pleasure and even relief to modern devotees.

Strangely enough, while the number of ham operators is declining globally, it’s growing in the United States, as is Morse code, by all accounts. ARRL (formerly the American Radio Relay League), based in Newington, Connecticut, the largest membership association of amateur radio enthusiasts in the world, reports that a recent worldwide ham radio contest—wherein hams garner points based on how many conversations they complete over the airwaves within a tight time frame—showed Morse code participants up 10 percent in 2021 over the year before.

This jump is remarkable, given that in the early 1990s, the Federal Communications Commission, which licenses all U.S. hams, dropped its requirement that beginner operators be proficient in Morse code; it’s also no longer regularly employed by military and maritime users, who had relied on Morse code as their main communications method since the very beginning of radio. Equipment sellers have noticed this trend, too. “The majority of our sales are [equipment for] Morse code,” says Scott Robbins, owner of ham radio equipment maker Vibroplex, founded in 1905, which touts itself as the oldest continuously operating business in amateur radio. “In 2021, we had the best year we’ve ever had … and I can’t see how the interest in Morse code tails off.”

Practitioners say they’re attracted by the simplicity of Morse code—it’s just dots and dashes, and it recalls a low-tech era when conversations moved more slowly. For hams like Thomas Witherspoon of North Carolina, using Morse code transmissions—sometimes abbreviated as CW, for “continuous wave”—offers a rare opportunity to accomplish tasks without high-tech help, like learning a foreign language instead of using a smartphone translator. “A lot of people now look only to tools. They want to purchase their way out of a situation.”

Morse code, on the other hand, requires you to use “the filter between your ears,” Witherspoon says. “I think a lot of people these days value that.” Indeed, some hams say that sending and receiving Morse code builds up neural connections that may not have existed before, much in the way that math or music exercises do. A 2017 study led by researchers from Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany, and from University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands supports the notion that studying Morse code and languages alike boosts neuroplasticity in similar ways.

Morse code emerged during a time of tinkering, at the start of the electrical age. In the 1830s, Samuel F.B. Morse, who had made a national name for himself as a painter with portraits of such luminaries as John Adams and the Marquis de Lafayette, began working with colleagues, including the inventor Alfred Vail, to experiment with how an electrical impulse initiated in one place and transmitted over a distance through wires could activate an electromagnet somewhere else. Operators would push down on a button attached to a small slab of brass that made an electrical connection between two wires. The connection sent electricity through these wires to a remote electromagnet, which then attracted a metal strip that made a clicking sound.

Though British inventors William Cooke and Charles Wheatstone had used an electromagnet to create the first telegraph receiver, patented in 1837, Morse’s chief innovation was the simplicity of his code: A short press made a short click, or a dot, and a longer press, three times the length of a dot, made a dash; various combinations form the 26 letters of the alphabet. Within a few years, the utility of Morse’s new language became clear to governments and businesses around the globe. Morse formalized this language as American Morse code in 1838, and in 1851 countries standardized it into international Morse code, which has remained largely unchanged since.

After Guglielmo Marconi sent the first intercontinental Morse message by radio in 1901 —a simple “S,” from England to Newfoundland—Morse code became the de facto method for critical telecommunications and maintained that standing for nearly a century, despite the emergence of voice communication, because it offered clearer and more reliable communication for the military and maritime users.

That dominance broke in the mid-20th century, when digital data sent over satellites and fiber-optic cables took hold. Most historians agree that the death knell for Morse came in 1999 when the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, which generates an automated digital emergency signal for ships in danger, replaced Morse code’s SOS—the familiar dot-dot-dot / dash-dash-dash / dot-dot-dot. Military use disappeared except in extremely rare instances, other ship use became almost nonexistent and the last holdout users were hams who were still required to learn code for their licenses. That

changed in the early to mid-2000s, when most countries no longer required hams to be proficient in Morse.

Although Morse remains the purview of hams, its presence still seeps into wider culture. The Apple Watch can silently buzz out the time in Morse when you put two fingers on the face. Since its opening in 1956, the Capitol Records building in Los Angeles, shaped like a stack of vinyl records, has sported a light on the roof blinking the word "Hollywood" in Morse code.

One of the main shortcomings of Morse code identified nowadays is its slow pace in an age of instant messaging. The average English speaker talks at about 150 words per minute, while most experienced hams send and receive at only 12 to 25 words per minute (although some high-speed operators can hit 35 or 55 words), says Howard Bernstein, who teaches Morse code at the Long Island CW Club. Another drawback is the difficulty in learning the code—tantamount to learning a foreign language. It can take months or years of hard work to become proficient in a skill that offers diminishing returns for anyone but an avid hobbyist.

Part of Morse code's enduring appeal for hams isn't going away soon: Its simplicity and easy detection on airwaves make it more reliable than voice communication—and allow a ham to break through atmospheric noise and other weather conditions, even at extremely low transmitting power. "When you can't get through with your own voice, Morse code gets you through," says Bob Inderbitzen, director of marketing and innovation at ARRL.

Radios that send and receive Morse code are lightweight and technically simple, and they need only small batteries. These advantages have spurred several sub-hobbies within the ham community. Thousands of hams worldwide participate in programs such as Parks on the Air and Summits on the Air, in which operators take their rigs into parks or mountaintops to see how many contacts they can make and how far they can reach.

Adam Kimmerly of Ramona, California, is a regular at these events. "This is an ideal combination of my favorite hobbies: rock climbing, mountaineering, hiking and amateur radio." And while some might imagine Morse code to be less intimate than actually hearing someone's voice, veteran hams can often recognize one another based on their "fist," or the rhythm and pacing of a strip of code. "You may think of dots and dashes as not having the same personality or character as voice communication, but they actually do," Kimmerly says. "One of the really cool things I never expected is that people have their own inflections." One Morse code enthusiast, Anne Fanelli, even saved a fellow ham's life when she noticed his "fist" was off; after he stopped responding entirely, she

called 911, and he was taken to the hospital, where he spent three days recuperating from an adverse drug reaction.

Doug Tombaugh, a history re-enactor from Kansas City, Missouri (he plays a mid-19th-century woodcutter), is president of the Straight Key Century Club, whose thousands of members use simple up-and-down keys like those used by the first Morse code operators, instead of modern keys that form dots and dashes electromechanically, or those that employ computer software.

“I just like the mechanicalness of using a brass key,” Tombaugh says. “It’s real. It’s authentic. It’s tactile.”

Source: https://getpocket.com/explore/item/looking-to-ditch-twitter-morse-code-is-back?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us

- - - ---

Comment de N4CD - - POTA has caused many SSB type only ops to get around to learning CW. Lots of new calls on CW these days!

CW Open runs a good school for decent speed cw. You need to put in some effort but hundreds go through the course each year.

# BC QSO Party

While not a state QSO Party, there's plenty of activity for this one in Canada. Dozens of stations on in their equivalent of counties. Signals booming in to TX on 20 and one or two on 15M in TX. Likely 10M at further distances although bands only 'fair'.

Hope you found some and gave them contacts. Doesn't take much time and they might need your state multiplier.

# Potential Legislation

## Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act Re-Introduced

Legislation Will Increase Communication Options During Natural Disasters

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Representatives August Pfluger, R-Tex., and Joe Courtney, D-Conn. announced their joint re-introduction of legislation in the Senate and House to restore the right to Amateur Radio operators to install the antennas necessary to serve their communities.

Homeowner association rules often prevent Amateur Radio operators from installing antennas at their homes even though Amateur Radio has proven to be essential in emergencies and natural disasters such as hurricanes when other means of communication fail.

“Mississippians should have access to every possible means of warning for natural disasters, including amateur radio operators. In an emergency, those warnings can mean the difference between life and death,” Senator Wicker said. “The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act would remove unnecessary roadblocks that could help keep communities safe during emergencies like tornadoes, hurricanes, and fires.”

“When disaster strikes, amateur radio operators provide vital, often life-saving information, which shouldn’t be hindered by prohibitive rules or confusing approval processes. The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act eliminates obstacles for ham radio enthusiasts, allowing them to continue their communications and serve their communities in the face of emergencies,” said Senator Blumenthal.

“Natural disasters and other emergency situations that hinder our regular lines of communication are unfortunately unavoidable, which is why we must bolster our emergency preparedness by removing the barriers amateur radio operators often run into when installing antennas. Amateur radio plays a vital role in public safety by delivering critical information to people at all times. My district is home to dozens of amateur radio operators ready to volunteer in the event of an emergency, and I am proud to lead this legislation,” said Congressman August Pfluger.

“As we know from recent natural disasters, amateur radio operators in Connecticut can be a critical component of disaster response and emergency management. It is in our communities’ best interest that we give them the capabilities to operate at the highest level, and with the re-introduction of this bill, we’ve taken a strong step in that direction,” said Congressman Courtney.

Background:

The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act of 2025 (H.R. 1094 and S. 459) would require homeowner associations to accommodate the needs of FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators by prohibiting the enforcement of private land use restrictions that ban, prevent, or require the approval of the installation or use of Amateur Radio station antennas. Homeowner associations have often prevented installation and use of such antennas through private land use restrictions. This has hindered voluntary training for emergency situations and blocked access to necessary communications when disaster strikes.

Among other provisions, this legislation would:

Prohibit homeowner association rules that would prevent or ban Amateur Radio antennas;
Specify an approval process for installing Amateur Radio antennas;
Provide a Federal private right of action to Amateur Radio operators in disputed cases.
On behalf of America’s Amateur Radio licensees, Rick Roderick, the President of The American Radio Relay League, re-confirmed the ARRL’s full support for the passage of the Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act of 2025 and extended his thanks and appreciation to Senators Wicker and Blumenthal and Congressmen Pfluger and Courtney for their unflagging leadership of the bi-partisan effort to support and protect the rights of all Amateur Radio Operators.

The text of the House version can be found at this link.

Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act Re-Introduced

# Mobile Activity in March

At the beginning of the month – we had the VT and MN QSO Parties. Lots of stations to work including mobiles and portables. Some park stations, too. Later NC and SC QP.

N8HAM was in TN putting out counties. Continued for days after the contests running GA.

N3MRA spotted in NM

N0KV made a day trip county run in southeast CO

NF0N made a day trip county run in NE

K5GE made a day trip county run in south Texas

Around the 9th, W4SIG made a day trip county run in UT Later, more UT

N8HAM continued into FL running a few counties every day.

There was the ARRL DX CW contest. Some HI counties to be snagged in there, too.

After a while in FL, N8HAM headed north again. Hitting new ones. There are 158 counties in GA to run.

K4YT made a county hunting day trip in VA.

N9JF popped up in a few parks in IL and MO during the month.

Toward the end of the month, K4YT was in NJ and MD putting out counties.

End date 2/26

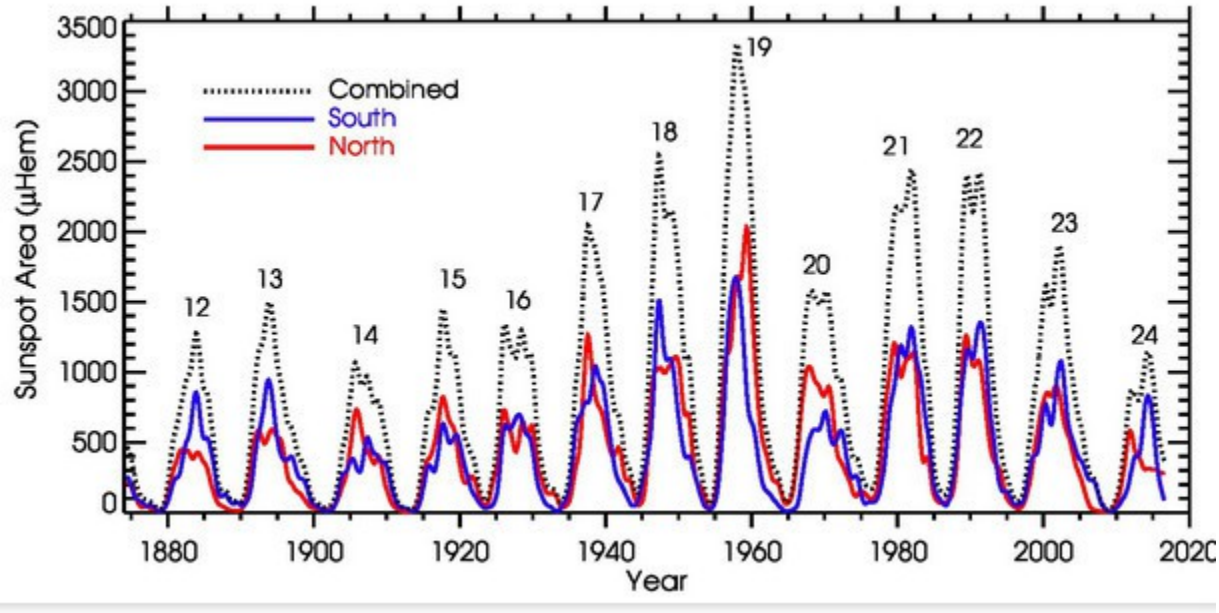
# Double Peak Sunspot Cycle

The last 3 sunspot cycles have had a 'double peak'. That's great news for ham radio operators – the current 'peak' might be followed by a even higher peak in 2 years or so after a small 'dip' in activity. Folks have been working hard to explain this. Here's an article about the solar cycle.

- - - - –

One of the puzzling features of the solar cycle is that most of the cycles (particularly, last three consecutive cycles) have double peaks around their maxima. These peaks are also popularly known as Gnevyshev peaks, and the gap between these two peaks is known as the Gnevyshev gap.S

One of the puzzling features of the solar cycle is that most of the cycles (particularly, last three consecutive cycles) have double peaks around their maxima. These peaks are also popularly known as Gnevyshev peaks, and the gap between these two peaks is known as the Gnevyshev gap. Gnevyshev peaks are not an artifact of observational defects, but real features of the solar cycle. Also, outside the maximum, the solar cycle show occasional spikes and dips. These features are not correlated in hemispheres as clearly seen in the northern and southern hemisphere sunspot area data




n our publication[5], we have modelled these double peaks and spikes using a kinematic Babcock-Leighton dynamo model. We show that inherent fluctuations in the Babcock-Leighton process (mainly due to the scatters in the sunspot tilts around Joy's law) can momentarily reduce the polar field. If the decrease of the polar field near the solar minimum is abrupt, then this promotes a double peak in the next cycle. However, if the fluctuations in the polar field occur outside the solar minimum, then these produce spike or dip in the next solar cycle.

By including stochastic fluctuations in the Babcock-Leighton alpha (poloidal source) in our axisymmetric kinematic dynamo model, we successfully reproduce double peaks and spikes similar to those observed in the solar cycle (see Figure 2). These results are robust in a wide range of parameters of the model. However, if the turbulent diffusivity of the magnetic field is increased to a very high value (>5×1012 cm2 s-1 for the parameters used in the model for Figure 2), then the efficient diffusion tries to smooth out the fluctuations acquired in the polar field and we tend to see infrequent and less prominent double peaks.

Finally, we provide an observational support for our theoretical idea by identifying the fluctuations in the Babcock-Leighton process in the observed magnetic field. We show that these abrupt fluctuations in the polar field as seen in the magnetic field data (Figure 3) are the direct cause of the double peaks and spikes in the next cycle. In Figure 3, polar surges as marked by C1 (the southern hemisphere) and C2 (northern hemisphere) in cycle 21 possibly caused the double-peaked in cycle 22 around 1990 (Figure 1).

Similarly, the fluctuations marked by C3 and C4 in the southern and northern hemispheres are the cause of the double peaks in cycle 23. Also a little dip in the polar field of cycle 23 as marked by C5 in the southern hemisphere produces a halt in the rising phase of sunspot cycle 24 of the same hemisphere.

Based on our understanding, we predict that in the northern hemisphere of the forthcoming solar cycle 25 will have a dip in the rising phase because we already see a prominent opposite polarity surge in the northern hemisphere polar field of cycle 24 (see the label C10 in Figure 3).

In conclusion, we show that double peaks (Gnevyshev peaks), spikes and dips all are caused by the abrupt fluctuations in the Babcock-Leighton process of generating poloidal field as seen in the observations.

Source: http://hmi.stanford.edu/hminuggets/?p=2685

# South Carolina QSO Party

There are 46 counties in SC. Due to the way the scoring counts, with multipliers for bands, there is no way to figure out how many people worked how many of the counties from the scores submitted to 3830 contest reflector. You count per band, add them up to get the score. So if you work 20 on 20cw and 15 on 15m CW and 30 on 40m CW , you get 65 multipliers. Whew. Only 46 counties in SC.

There were two or three mobiles, a couple county expeditions with parks on the air, quite a bit of fixed station activity, but no way of determining how many of the 46 counties made it on the air. Two mobiles ran 10 and 25 counties. Good chance nearly all were active on some band, some mode during the contest.

Digi was allowed but few reported many contacts this mode.

**AA5JF County Expedition 243 CW 345 SSB**

Great time operating from three parks in three adjacent counties: Aiken, Edgefield and

McCormick. Great conditions and nice activity.

N4CW mobile  1099 CW
ops N4CW, W4TMO

Off to a rocky start with antenna problems...it was "probably" the coax...
This year's antenna situation relied on helical whips mounted atop the car, using the mounting holes for the roof rack. Once properly adjusted ("stinger" length), the antennas performed very well! No problems at all with the K3. Jim drove the whole trip, operating when we were stopped for "pit stops"! It was a very enjoyable contest!

Statistics:
25 counties enabled
DL3DXX - most worked with 34 Q's
OM2VL - next, with 33 Q's
K5CM - 28 Q's
N5KW - 27 Q's

**N2CU mobile  978 CW  340 SSB**

Fun! Thank you to all for making this a great time. I ran 5 county lines this year, once again as single-op, no driver. Double digit sluggers: OM2VL (56), DL3DXX (26), K5CM (20), N5KW, WB9HFK (18), K9CW, W0BH, WA5SOG (16), K0XF, K2QO, K9WA (14), KI5GTR, N0HJZ, N1CGP, W5TM, WA2JQK (12), AC0W, F4EUG, KA6BIM, KY4GS, N5AU, N6AR, NU4N, VE3RGO, W0GXQ, W0ZQ, W1FM, W4TJM, WB2PJH (10). I worked 38 states, 3 provinces and 22 SC counties. Several states really came out to play: FL (104), MN (90) and special mention to my home state NY (72).

I was exhausted when I got home but didn't get much sleep. That didn't bode well for the NC QSO Party the next day, but I marched on.

FTdx10
Tarheel 75A on roof of Chevy Equinox
100 Ah LiFePO4 battery
N1MM+

73, Tom N2CU /M

**WW4SF fixed (bonus station)  563 cw  382 ssb  14 digi**

What a fun 11 hours of SCQP fun! Thanks to everyone who operated in this year's SCQP, especially the mobile and expeditions, including some who traveled from other states. Bill N4IQ and Dave WN4AFP ran the WW4SF/GVIL Bonus Station representing the Swamp Fox Contest Group using our club callsign

. We operated 160m-10m and made a total of 959 Qs with 382 Multipliers.
QSO Totals:
N4IQ - 545 (CW 338 SSB 207)
WN4AFP - 414 (CW 225 SSB 175 DIG 14)

# CallBooks on Line

Back in the day, if you wanted to find the address of a ham to send a QSL card and get a confirmation for 'worked all states' or similar, you had to buy a copy for a lot of money for the average ham.  More if you wanted the supplements that came out 3 times a year with the latest call additions.  Postage wasn't too much back then, (like 3 and 4c for a letter in the 1950s, 60s).  There was no online LoTW , QRZ, eQSL, etc.  DX cards often went 'via the bureau' and could take a year or two round trip.

Now, you've got QRZ.com and can search back in all the callbooks on line

See

https://archive.org/details/callbook

# North Carolina QSO Party

There are 100 counties in North Carolina. Top entries on 3830 reflector from out of state worked in the 60s, most 50 or less counties. There are a lot of hams in NC. Somewhat disappointing but terrain is an obstacle for quick mobile runs if you've ever been there.

Two mobiles – N4CW and N2CU, and a handful of portable ops/roamers in POTA parks around the state helped, with fixed stations on at times. Lots of 80m activity as NC stations tried to work other NC counties. .

From the 3830 contest reflector:

**K4SBZ county expedition 115 SSB QSO**

Enjoyed mixing the NCQP with POTA.

**N2CU mobile 927 CW 272 ssb**

Thank you to all for making the Carolina Weekend a success. It seemed a slog compared to yesterday's SCQP but things picked up later in the day. I only did 4 out of 5 of my planned county lines, once again as single-op, no driver. Too much time driving between county lines. Biggest sluggers: OM2VL (42), W8PI (20), DL3DXX, KA6BIM (14), AA0AW, AC0W, N1CGP, VE3AQ, W0BH, WA5DTK (12), AF5J, K2QO, K5CM, K9CW, N4OX, VE3RGO, VE3SIF, W5TM, WA2JQK, WB2PJH, WB9HFK (10). I worked 40 states, 4 provinces and 28 NC counties.

FTdx10
Tarheel (appropriate) 75A on roof of Chevy Equinox
100 Ah LiFePO4 battery
N1MM+

73, Tom N2CU /M

**N4CW - Operator, W4TMO - Driver/Navigator 1178 CW**

Great fun despite a few mysterious occasions where CQ wasn't yielding any or

very few contacts Sunday morning...suspect either sunspot activity or antenna problems! We activated 28 different counties, and made a special effort to put on TYRell county among those. We were really surprised to see snow banks along the road...apparently the last snow storm really dumped on that county!

Many stations were worked multiple times, but several were notable in their pursuit of N4CW. Of note: OM2VL(48), DL3DX45), K5CM & N5KW(28), N1CGP(27), K9CW(26), W8PI(25), VP5M and F4EUG(24).

Because we had only two active antennas at any one time (due to how we configured them), we didn't do much band-hopping with each county. I don't know yet what we could do differently that would allow us access to 5 bands of instant/tuned band switching...any suggestions will be welcome!

Again, many thanks to the many many stations that tolerated the pileups and my occasional "deafness"...usually, if I heard you, I'd work you! Oh, before I forget, thanks for the discipline of giving your call once and waiting before sending it again; not all callers did that, and each time it wasn't done, it took me a lot longer to work anybody. I delighted in hearing part of a call, putting what I heard out there, and being answered ONLY by those whose call matched what I thought I heard. That's good operating in my book, and there were so many examples throughout the QP weekend. Thank you!!!

**NC4KW multi op 590 cw 396 SSB**

The NC QSO Party is the one time each year that my wife Laurie (N1YXU) and I enter as a Multi-Single team. She works SSB and I work CW. We really have a fun day and yesterday was no exception. A BIG THANKS to Marty (W4MY) and his team for organizing another fun event.

We tried to get something going on 15 but it was just not there. 10 was worse. I moved to 80cw for the final hour and was sure we would break the 1000 Q mark based on the outstanding rate. However, that great rate only lasted for about 20 minutes. Then....crickets! So, I bounced from band to band trying to make those last few Qs, but it was not to be. Overall this year both our Q count and Mult count were down. We did work 7 of the 10 Bonus stations, which are already reflected in our score.

Thanks for the Qs and fun day!

NC4KW team
Laurie - N1YXU
Bruce - N1LN

**WA4PSC fixed NC 429 CW**

Fun as always, although I didn't hear many NC counties this year. Thanks to the N2CU crew for the mobile counties!

**K9CW fixed IL 166 CW 56 mults**

Big thanks to N4CW and N2CU for their travels this past weekend!
N4CW: 26 QSOs
N2CU: 10 QSOs

**N4YDU fixed NC Franklin County 686 cw 679 ssb**

A fun day of contesting - propagation was solid from here. 74 NC counties worked - that's probably a new high for me. The pace is fast with lots of decisions to make.

Thanks to the organizers and all of the mobiles and county expeditions.

73,
Nate/N4YDU

**KA6BIM fixed OR 104 cw 36 SSB Mults55**

Conditions were BRUTAL! Deep rolling QSB, Heavy QRN, Rain static that blanked out the waterfall. I had hard time copying rover N4CW who is normally very workable, and I struggled to contact him, and missed him in multiple counties.
Thanks everyone for the qso's

Dave ka6bim

**K4BAI fixed GA 78 cw 30 ssb Mults42**

Missed first part due to church. When got to the rig, 20M was faiarly short and the farthest north and east stations were pretty loud. Had a lot of rig and set up problems. Think I may have a bad jumper from the antenna tuner to the amp or maybe the connection is loose inside the antenna tuner. Can't get the jumper to unscrew. Will get some help from KU8E and maybe we can get this intermittency solved. Thanks for all QSOs. Activity seemed good as were band conditions for North America, at least. 73, John, K4BAI

**WN4AFP fixed SC 51 cw 23 ssb Mults 41**

I only had a small amount of time, but I did my best with what I was given. Thanks to the mobiles who kept the party rolling. Thanks to Marty and the gang for putting on another excellent contest. There was one more BIG moment in this contest... I worked WB4AJL in JACKSON county NC. I've been trying to work that one for 49 years! Now I can say that I've finally worked all the counties in NC!

PS: Thanks to all of our NC friends for working the SCQP on Saturday!

73 Dave WN4AFP

**W4KAZ portable 5 CW 293 SSB**

Enjoyed 2025 QP more than last years' contest. Operated portable in WAK, LEE, and CHA, activating three different Pota entities in each. All contacts made were inside the Pota entities.

No equipment failures this year, only a few minor preparation issues. Initially expected to spend more time on CW but for the most part SSB was sufficiently interesting. Spent some time in transit and with set up and take down of the antenna between the three sites.
Station was an FT-891 on a dedicated battery. Antenna used in first two counties was a 58 foot long doublet fed with 300 ohm ladder line into an external tuner. At the last county legs were added to make total length 92 feet to allow tuner to find a match on 80m.....which I never used.

Very much enjoyed all of the friendly ops having fun. tnx fer qsos.

# Awards Issued

**Worked All Counties Second Time**

HA9RE Completed all counties for second time. He received #448

**USA-CA CW-VI Award:**

K7REL completed his 6th time with all CW. He was awarded #3

**Ran All State:**

NU0Q ran all Arizona. He received #47
NU0Q ran all Colorado. He received #36
NU0Q ran all Idaho. He received #41
NU0Q ran all Montana. He received #33
NU0Q ran all Nebraska. He received #32
NU0Q ran all New Mexico. He received #36
NU0Q ran all Oklahoma. He received #33
NU0Q ran all Utah. He received #34
NU0Q ran all Wyoming. He received #32

N8HAM Completed Kentucky counties. He received #29

**USA-SSB Awards**

W4SIG Completed all SSB for the second time, He received #31

AB7NK completed all SSB counties for the second time and received #32

**Roadrunner Award:**

K4YT attained 1000 last counties. He received #18

**USA-CA Award:**

KA1PPV attained the 500 level and received #3882

# Events for County Hunters

Don't forget to sign up for the MI Mini, and make plans for Dayton Hamvention

A couple state QSO Parties and other events this month. OK always good with many mobiles, ID has one or two, VA sometimes has mobile activity. WI usually good if weather cooperates.

March 8 1500x to 9 2100z
3.5-28,50
Oklahoma QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), OK county or SPC
k5cm.com/okqp.htm

Mar 8 1800z to 9 0559z
3.5,7
Tesla Memorial HF CW Contest CW
RST, serial, 4-char grid www.radiosport.yu1srs.org.rs

Mar 8 1900z to 9 1900z
1.8-28
Idaho QSO Party CW Ph Dig
RS(T), ID county or SPC
www.idahoqsoparty.org

Mar 9 1800z to 10 0100z
No WARC
Wisconsin QSO Party CW Ph Dig

WI county or SPC
www.warac.org

Mar 15 1400z to  16 2359z
No WARC
Virginia QSO Party CW Ph Dig
Serial, VA county or SPC
www.qsl.net/sterling

Mar 29 0000to  30 2359z
1.8-28 CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB Ph
 RS, serial
www.cqwpx.com

More contests listed at:

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

That's all folks!  See you next month.  73 de N4CD