

County Hunter News

August 1, 2015
Volume 11, Issue 8

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

<http://pages.suddenlink.net/w4ydy/hamlinks.html#County>

Download the file to a flash card that fits in your GPS unit, turn it on, and the county lines should appear!

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

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumblings – The month of July has been interesting. N8KIE 'cleaned up' in New England putting out all of NH, VT and a good chunk of NY state while he was at it. He collected over 120 last counties so far for that trip. Others were off on vacation but many days activity was sparse. A few mobiles headed to FL – but there wasn't a whole lot of extra activity this year with mobiles headed to and from the convention.

The summer sun is still hot, but coming up later and disappearing earlier. When I get up at 6am, it's now dark till 6:20 here in TX and we lose a minute or so a day of sunlight in the morning. The temps are bouncing against the 100 degree mark and we're doing the usual summer roast in TX. There have been a few hamfests around the country –

and some county hunters on the road to get to them. At the end of the month we had the CW County Hunter Contest, sponsored by Norm, W3DYA. Full report on it next month.

Several folks finished up on awards – some for Master Gold and one for Master Platinum – so they'll be busy now working on getting those 500 needed transmit counties for the next higher level award. That's the only way you get to MP and Mobile Diamond. (Yeah – AB7NK, WD4OIN, and K8ZZ – Master Gold status now!)

It looks like Bob, N8KIE, made it to the 1000th Last County Transmitted with his run to New England – got over 120 last counties done! That likely set a new record for LC's earned in a 10 day trip. Jerry, W0GXQ is right behind with his trips to ND.

Conditions have been – well, everywhere from good to rotten. What can you say? We're on the downhill side of the sunspot curve and it probably isn't going to get to much better as far as skip. In a few years, the 'disturbances' should ease off.

10M actually popped open during the CW County Hunter contest – probably some E-type skp – and a few took advantage of it.

2) Self Spotting Made Easy - app for self spotting by KW1DX – if you still need info,

Dave KW1DX has come up with a nifty way to self spot yourself while out mobile using your Smartphone. Here is the info:

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Spot Me, a new way to spot yourself when running a county from KW1DX
The purpose of this is to be able to spot yourself with as little typing as possible.
Spot Me is a web page not an app but was made to look like an app. Use the web page

<http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm>

The Spot Me web page will display a list of all the states, select the state you are running and that state will be displayed for you, when you change states return to

<http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm>

and select another state.

The form that is displayed has three sections.

1) Drop downs to help you fill in the data:

a. Mobile: This list all the callsigns of people who have asked me to add them to the list and a few that were taken off of the spot history page to start the list.

If you want to be added to the list let me know and he will add your call. indicate if you are a team and would like the team listing as well as individual calls.

b. County: This is a list of counties in the state.

At the end of the list of counties is a list of the county lines for the state.

It is taken from the non-wet county line list so if one is missing let me know and he will add it.

The order of the County Line list is alphabetical by the county within the state then the county line and possible the county State Line.

c. Frequency: A list of the net frequencies is listed by band and mode then some prominent alternate frequencies. Again the purpose is to not have to type anything. If an odd frequency is being used then you will have to type it in.

Note mode is derived from the frequency selected.

d. Digital: This dropdown is only needed if you are running digital and it adds the digital information to the county name so select county first.

2) Spot fields. (Fields with no dropdown and white background) The fields are what is actually spotted not the dropdowns. The dropdowns help populate these fields but you can change them manually so make sure that what you want to spot is in the spot fields not the dropdowns. Please leave the Spotter as Spot Me so that I can see that people are using it.

3) The Add Spot button, when you have the Spot fields populated select the Add Spot button. This will add your spot and bring up the W6RK spot page to show you what you have spotted. (note if the W6RK spot page is already in one of your browser

tabs it may not change to that tab when you click the Add Spot button.

I only have an iPhone 6+, any smart phone or tablet with a web browser should work but if you are having trouble please let me know and I will try to assist. If you see any bugs please let me know.

Planned changes are to have it remember your callsign so that you do not need to re-select it all the time and any other changes to make it as easily and quick as possible to spot yourself.

Update:

I have updated Spot Me so that it will remember your callsign. to do this you need to add ?callsign= to the end of the url. So for example the url that I would use is <http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm?callsign=KW1DX>

if you are a team you can use [http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm?](http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/spotme.htm?callsign=N0KV/N0DXE)

callsign=N0KV/N0DXE as an example.

Adding the Callsign Parameter presets your Callsign and does not show the Callsign dropdown. If you do not use the Callsign parameter it should work the same as before. If you need help or have any problems let me know. Dave-KW1DX

Update 2 - Add "&frequency=14.271" to the end of the url and it will pre-populate the frequency

Dave KW1DX

3) MARAC Awards Listings

Sometimes you go to look up in the 'database' part of the MARAC web page and check under awards. Just for fun, go to the database page and pull down the YL-OM Awards. As far as I can tell, about 21 people have received this award, but there are multiple entries for Arnie, K9DCJ*, and the first to get the award, KI0JD, VE9DH, AC2J, and the numbers apparently bear no relationship to when the award was issued, and multiple

people have the same award number. For example, award number 2 went to Arnie, K9DCJ*, in 1995 or 1996 (multiple dates entered) and issued again to Gene, K5GE, in 2015. How can two people hold the same award number? Two people hold number 3! One was issued back in 1995, another issued in 2015. What's up?

Well, YL-OM is one of the MARAC awards issued in levels.

From the rules:

Basic Certificate for 250 counties

New Certificates for 500, 750, and 1000 counties

Mobile Plaque for 2000 and 3000 counties

Special Plaque for All USA Counties

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When someone receives an award, you have no idea if it is for 250 counties or 2000 counties or all. I'm not sure what the solution is, other than list the awards as YL-OM 250, or YL-OM 1000 when they are awarded or in the database. Well, at least the folks getting them have it printed on the certificate – what it was for. Otherwise, the rest of us are clueless. So one person with number 3 might be for 250 counties and another at 1000 counties. That's the current problem with 'level awards' and the computer system.

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4) Dayton Hamvention Attendance Report

Dayton Hamvention Reports 2015 Attendance Up Slightly Over 2014:

The official attendance at the 2015 Dayton Hamvention® was 25,621. That's an increase from the official count of 24,873 visitors last year -- or an additional 748 attendees. The 2013 attendance was 24,542. Hamvention attendance peaked in 1993 at 33,669, before the 1996 change in date from April to May. While attendance has fluctuated over the years, Dayton Hamvention has grown to international proportions, attracting members of the worldwide Amateur Radio community each spring. The sponsoring Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA) already has begun counting down the days to the next Hamvention, which will take place May 20-22, 2016.

source: ARRL News Letter July 16, 2015

5) Note from Willis (via the K3IMC forum)

“Hi folks. 59 to you all. Just a note to say hello to my many friends in MARAC. I have remarried since I lost my wife ten years ago and now live in a lovely retirement home in LARGO FLORIDA (Pinellas County) but unfortunately no longer have an amateur radio station. Very pleased to see the great improvements in your Logger program and happy that I had a part in it's creation years ago.

My brother KC3YT passed away a few years ago and I miss our daily QSO's and the daily competition in county hunting. Remember we gave each other our last county for the whole ball of wax USACA numbers 599 and 600. I see the number of amateur radio operators is falling off - darn cell phones and other technologies are reducing our numbers. Will never forget my working Barry Goldwater. Have fun! Clarence Willis formerly (KJ4EJ) “

6) Note from Bob, NA2X

Bob, NA2X, sent me a note along with some MRCs to return. He noted:

“ I've been a casual county hunter since the late 60s. Still have a ways to go for all my first 3077. Most left are west of the Mississippi. “

He noted on his QSL card that he runs a Kenwood TS-480HX and a dipole. From his QRZ bio, he was first licensed in 1962 as WN2ZOW, then WB2ZOW, and later held the call W2HG. He made ARRL DXCC Honor Roll #1 SSB in 2014, so I guess it's off to new challenges and back to county hunting.

7) Note from Jim, KN6ZB - MRCS QSL Buro

“As of the month of September, Jeff, AF3X, will be taking over MRCS QSL Buro. I have to drop out because of health reasons.

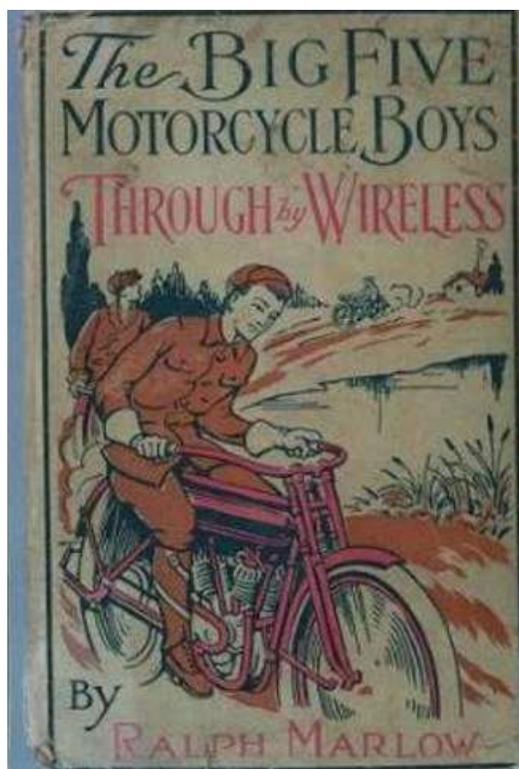
I want ot thank everyone of the last thirteen years for the help and understanding and I am glad that I was able to hel so many reach that coveted goal. I also hope to get back

on the air again.

Jim, KN6ZB”

Book Review of the Month

Big Five Motorcycle Boys – Through with Wireless by Ralph Marlow - 1914



We're back in the 1914 era with another obscure juvenile fiction book with adventures

galore from the very early days of wireless. The Big Five motorcycle boys is a group from central OH – the mythical town is Garland. They each have a motorcycle – rather 'new' at the time in the early era of gas engines. Most of the time they stick close to home as the roads aren't very good and the reliability of their machines is not great.

One day while out riding close to home, they stop for a while to rest – the machines are tough to ride (no suspensions to speak of back then) and road speeds are 15 to 30 mph. While off the road, hidden by bushes, they see a suspicious character leaving a message in a hollow tree. This peaks their curiosity and they investigate a bit later. They read the note and they wait to observe if anyone will come and retrieve it. Eventually, that leads them to spoiling an attempted burglary on a farmer's house, but unfortunately the bad guys manage to get away in the confusion, but without any loot. The police are unable to follow and find the suspects.

One of the motorcycle boys is a wireless operator. He has built a nice home station but hasn't had any luck talking to anyone else. So he convinces the others, which doesn't take much, to head out for a couple day trip to go 60 miles north to some hills where they will set up a second station and talk back to the home station. They go out 'camping'. As it turns out, while at their mostly hidden camp site, they spy the same car that was involved in the 'tree note' incident, and that subsequent robbery, is now using a small side road they can see. They get the wireless going and find out that one of the boys uncles has been kidnapped and is being held for ransom.

They put two and two together. With the help of a local farmer, they find out there is an old abandoned mill down that road. They used the wireless to get a message to the local police department about the two wanted men and the hostage and the likely hiding place.

Soon, the local police show up, capture the wanted men, rescue the kidnapped uncle, and all is well.

Not a lot of radio but what there is they put to good use. Just imagine now going out on a camping trip, finding some 60-80 foot high trees on a steep hilltop, cutting the top half of the tree branches off, leaving two 'wireless masts'...then stringing a big antenna between them. Then you hook your battery powered spark gap transmitter, and 'coherer' receiver to them to work any station within range of less than 50 miles normally. (maybe at 500 KHz?). Over 100 lbs of equipment.

Not a bad read, but really obscure to find a copy. Not on line yet.

There are four books in the series of Big Five Motorcycle Boys but only one deals with radio.

There's still a few more books on the N4CD bookshelf to review before we run out. It's getting mighty hard to find anything else! The well is running dry.

Mobile Activity

K8ZZ mini-trip report

K8ZZ noted: "Home safe.. great trip under poor conditions. Always nice to travel and see new areas. Radio conditions were bad but that's life in the hobby. Made hundreds of contacts on 5 bands, and thanks to all for being considerate under adverse propagation.

Used Elecraft KX3 with Hustler resonators on a 60 inch mast on center of SUV roof. My CW was rusty and signals would go from 339 to 559 and then even disappear completely. A lot of moving parts when traveling alone running CW on the fly. GPS-mapping computer-iPad for Spotme logging and of course phone texts or phone ringing. Gone 7 days-3300 miles-transmitted from 170 counties in 10 states-gas was \$2.24 to \$2.89. Motels had clean sheets-food was good-weather was hot but air conditioner worked fine.

Stopped in Ohio and had dinner and great visit with my Finnish friend Don, K8MFO. Don is a Top Op CW DX'er, contester and has done all counties twice on CW. Tried to get together with Greg, NM2L while in GA, but just didn't work out. Maybe next trip! A special thanks to my son Tim, W8JJ for equipment issues fixed, Jerry, W0GXQ for his help - also Bill, K0DEQ for his help with that big signal on relays. See you all on my next trip. Where???

73 Ed K8ZZ

Later, Ed got together with Henry, OH3JF



OH3JF and K8ZZ

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N2JNE headed to VA to put out a good part of the state.

Larry, W7FEN, was active in WA state putting out a few a day as he headed around the state.

Karl, K4YT, headed from VA to Isanti MN and back.

Jerry, W0GXQ, headed from MN to CO for a re-union, then back a week later. Mostly cw – up to 10m.

AA9JJ, Frank, and Kay, N9QPQ, left AZ and headed to FL for a convention. (SSB only).

Fred, K0FG, put out a few in MO (SSB and CW) and IA.

Jim, N4JT, wandered down to FL putting out counties on data modes. Stayed a while and ran the state,, then up to GA putting out lots there too.

WA9DLB was spotted on SSB headed south to FL.

W0GXQ, Jerry, ran a few around the Denver area while out there for about a week.

K0RU popped up in a few in MO.

Steve, N0SM, ran a few in IA on cw.

KC7QOP headed east from WA – SSB.

Mike, NF0N, headed west across NE for a dozen counties.

Troy, K5OH, was spotted in OK headed east to FL. Then back home.

K5TVC was spotted in a few in MS and AL.

Fred, K0FG, was up in KS and MO on several days putting them out.

Ron, KB6UF, headed to FL for a convention then back. Then he took a trip around in LA.

Rick, W5QP, was putting out lots of LA on data modes.

N8KIE, Bob, headed east through PA to NJ, NY, up to NH and VT to run all of them. SSB. Looks like he finished up a bunch of people, WBOW, including WQ7A for MD, AB7NK and WD4OIN for MG, Bill, WG9A for Five Star plus lots of LC's.

Dave, KW1DX made several trips to PA and back.

Kerry, W4SIG was down in MS and AL.

Many mobiles were out in the CW County Hunter contest including N4CD, W0GXQ, K5CM, NF0N, NU0Q, K7TM, KI0I, W3DYA, WC5D, and perhaps others. Report next month.

Ed, K8ZZ, Master Gold #65

Ed, K8ZZ, has received the Master Gold Award #65. Since Ed retired a few months ago, he set his goals on finishing up Master Gold, then running the 800 or so counties to finish running all USA Counties. During June, he took a big trip from MI down to GA running well over 130 counties round trip to get to the half dozen he needed to run in GA to finish up the MG award.

The Masters Gold Award has two parts. The first part can start after you have completed your Bingo Award (or Master County Hunter Award). This one goes way back in time and if you can explain to someone all the 'rules' to get your Bingo award, you are an old hand at county hunting. Once you do have your Bingo award and at least one star, then you can start on MG.

To earn MG, you must first either work every county with a Bingo holder, or transmit from a county and work someone who holds the Bingo Award. That is fairly easy these days as over 365 people have the Bingo award so any operating on the county hunter frequency from a county usually gets you a good contact for MG. However, if you get in state QSO Parties, only a few of the mobiles – usually county hunters or ex-county hunters- have their Bingo. It can take a while to finish up.

The second part is to earn 1500 'service points'. You can do this by several means. You don't have to go mobile. In fact, for the MG mobile, you can stay at home and earn it from your easy chair. Service points are 'service to MARAC' or the county hunting community – by either accumulating points for hours of net control or assistant NC, points for being an officer, Director, or other appointed office such as newsletter editor, Awards Chairman, etc, or by hosting a convention. If you go mobile, you can accumulate your points by transmitting from counties – 1 point per county, repeats allowed up to 50 times, no more than once a day. (That is why N4CD bugs folks to make at least one contact from EVERY county they go through on trips – even if to grandma's house for the sixth time this year – to accumulate those points which you can do from the first day you ever went mobile).

You can use any combination of points as well to reach the 1500 total.

Many active mobiles elect to 'clean up' the missing ones by getting them on a trip to get the elusive missing counties. That's worked for many and is a fun part of the county hunting tradition. All of the awards above MG you can do the same – go to the county and get credit for it by working the a person at the other end with needed qualifications.

County Sign Database Project I

New additions were made this month. Ron, KB6UF, sent in one from Maine



Aroostook, ME by KB6UF

Bob, N4CD, added in the last county in NM – San Juan. Picture below in the On the

Road Column.

On the Road with N4CD

Tuesday – headed west – end of June

It was time for a change. The temperatures were getting up in TX and the hot sun was getting to me! The mountains of Colorado were calling. Time for a road trip! There had been no road trips since Dayton. Heck, N4CD is supposed to get mobile every month or two. I finally decided to let someone else take care of the swimming pool because every other time I went away for 2 weeks it would look like a swamp when I came back, so now I'd let someone else keep it looking nice and swimmable year round. Good move – it's looking better than ever.

I loaded up the car for a 10 day or so trip out 'west' from north central Texas and planned to go through some 'new' transmits on the way there, and around the state of Colorado while there. It's about 1000 miles out to the southwest corner of Colorado around the Durango/Silverton area in the San Juan mountains. There were some needs posted but nothing seemed 'too rare'. Pat, N0DXE, and Barry, N0KV, had just run parts of the southwest corner just a few weeks ago, so that took many off the 'needs list'.

The route went straight west out highway 380 for 500 miles over into Lea and Chaves Counties in New Mexico. You 'gain' an hour but after 500 miles it was time to stop and there aren't too many large towns with a selection of motels around the state. The Days Inn in Roswell was reasonably priced – and I've stayed there before – so that was it for the night. Didn't see any UFOs or extra terrestrial 'aliens' in Roswell– but they are a whole bunch of UFO museums and tourist traps around. This is the site where the UFO allegedly crashed with the bodies of aliens inside.

There are many motels and restaurants along the main highway.

Dinner was nearby at a Golden Corral. Good. The city has 50,000 people and is the 5th largest city in NM. Elevation is 3500 feet or so. It's the 'high plains' and semi-arid. The only real water is from an aquifer that lies beneath the area.

The temps were warm – well, actually hot. They don't have much rain out that way and things were dusty and dirty from lack of rain. Slept well.

Wednesday -

Nice breakfast at the Days Inn including a nice hot waffle. Yum! Karl, K4YT, sent me an email saying that Catron, not on the original route, was a 'last county for Master Platinum' for him. Same for KC3X – a LC for Mobile Diamond for him. I waffled a bit – it was a 2 1/2 to 3 hour detour to get there but finally I decided I'd go there as I had enough time and it needed to get run for 3rd time anyway. Counties here – counties there – 2700 to run again for third time transmit all counties since starting over in September 2014! Catron isn't easy to get to from the north – not bad if you head across the only decent highway which runs east/west – but that gets you into UT and I had no plans to go there either! Hi hi. So I'd add in Catron. Route planners said head NW up to the interstate....then SW into Catron.

The skies were clear and I made good time angling NW from Roswell. You hit the corners of several counties on the main road with decent spots to stop on the lines if you wish. Hit the interstate and zipped across to exit 89.....then down twisty two lane roads for 60 miles to the southwest to get to Catron. Lots of rural (deserted) area along the way. In some ten mile stretches, I didn't see another car. At least the road into Catron had a nice parking lot just beyond the county line sign and no power line noise! It was a garbage pick up spot with large dumpster. Hooked up with Karl, K4YT, and Hollis, KC3X, and a pile of others.



Catron, NM – LC WBOW for K4YT

Karl, K4YT, was planning on getting to Catron and running it. He hopped on a plane out of DC and got to Denver.....then his plane trip south was canceled and he was left stranded with no options that day to get there. He wound up flying back home and didn't get to run the county. As it turns out, it was the LC WBOW for his Master Platinum. Wow. I'm glad I went. Didn't realize that – just thought it was a regular LC. He now has to finish running those 500 separate counties – one reason he's now on his way to MN putting out those counties along the way – out and back. Had 85 to go and should be reducing that by a large amount. That was a nice surprise. Weather was good with just a few sprinkles here and there. Lots of windy roads getting there and hardly anyone on them. You'd go for ten miles and not see another car.

After 30 minutes in Catron – big pile ups – especially on cw - it was time to head back north to get to the motel in Durango. Distances are big out west and you go 50 miles or more between towns. Most of the smaller 'towns' you hit are population 50 or 100 with no motel, or one you probably don't want to stay at. Along the way was San Juan County NM – missing from the county sign database – and the last one in NM, too. A 'last county' – hi hi but no award for that.



San Juan NM – LC for the Database!

The route was north to Montezuma County, Colorado, , then east over the pass into LaPlata. It was a long day but I eventually got to the Days End Motel – in Durango for a late dinner time.(La Plata County). I've stayed at this motel 3 or 4 times now – it's reasonably priced and good value. Durango has loads of motels, B&Bs, 'resorts' and everything else – mostly higher price. If you stay 'downtown' it can be \$125-\$175 a night. Or more. I planned to chill for two days here. It nicely cools off at night (6500 ft elevation). Most of the tourists stay or eat downtown at one of the dozens of trendy restaurants, pubs, bars, pizza joints, etc.

For dinner I headed to a local grocery store – bought a 4 piece chicken dinner, a couple boxes of strawberries and blackberries, some pre packaged salad stuff, tomatoes, banana. Had a nice thrown together dinner that night. Didn't see any restaurants to stop at nearby. There's every kind of junk food place – MacD, Burger King, Dennys – but I didn't know where the 'family restaurants' - if any – were. Got my fill of fruit/veggies and had a few days worth stashed away with the improvised dinner. You can get a 'kitchenette' room at this motel for more bucks if you want. .

Slept well.

Thursday

The Days End motel has no breakfast – just coffee – so I had a bunch of fruit, then headed on down to Denny's about 1.5 miles south to fill up on some nice blueberry

pancakes, eggs, and bacon - \$7 after 15% AARP discount. Then it was north to San Juan County – ran it at Coal Bank Pass (up around 10,000 plus feet) – then through Molas Pass and down into the town of Silverton at 9200 ft AMSL. This is one of the higher elevation towns in Colorado. You can stay overnight in Leadville – up at 10,000 feet, if you want to be in the highest occupied city in the country! It can easily be freezing in the mornings during the summer there!

I've stayed there at the Triangle Motel a few times. I sleep better at lower altitudes in Durango. The air is getting 'thin' up this high – hi hi. One night is OK but I get 'worn out' after several days up this high. I'm a flat-lander. Elevation in Dallas is 600 feet AMSL.

Durango is a tourist spot. Population is about 17,000 and in the summer and winter, likely there are 5000 tourists there! You've got the mountains, ski areas, all sorts of recreation from river rafting to mountain climbing, 4 wheeling, ATVs, zip lines, etc. Plus you have the famous narrow gauge railroad running from here to Silverton 50 miles north. In the winter, you've got a nice ski area, and around Silverton is extreme downhill skiing and snow mobiling up into the hills.

If it weren't for tourists and skiers Durango and Silverton would vanish. Silverton is only a couple hundred residents plus about 200 tourists in the summer time. The last mine in Silverton/San Juans shut down years ago, and with it most of the younger folks who filled the schools and the miner families that kept the economy going. One of the main activities is 4 wheel touring (and now ATVs and mountain bikes) up on the dirt trails up to the mountain passes and old mining areas. The hills are dotted with old mines, ventilation shafts, old original mule trails to haul in/out the mine equipment, old buildings and ore refineries and mills.....there were thousands and thousands of miners going after the silver and gold way up high in the hills – usually 11,000 feet and higher – in what were the 'vents' for the volcanic activity. When this region was volcanically active a million years ago, you had 'vents' where steam heated way down below brought up minerals and deposited them in 'veins' – the cracks of the vents – after thousands of years. The secret to mining was finding the 'rich' veins that were thick – and then following them deep into and down into the Earth. The mountains here go up 13,000 with some reaching 14,000 feet.

Some of the old roads are 'preserved' - plowed of snow during the summer tourist season, graded where possible, and repaired from weather damage. It's definitely 4 wheel drive – in Jeeps and similar – with transfer cases, low low gears, and oil/skid plate protection. It doesn't hurt to have a bit of extra clearance, too! You are not going to take your family sedan up into the hills – well, it would be a one way trip until you hung

it up on a rock somewhere. Same for 4 wheel drive pickups and Suburbans and the like. You need high clearance, low low gears, short wheelbase, and narrow is better than 'wide' vehicles. You won't be going much more than 5-15 mph the whole route, and the speed limit is 15 mph on these roads!

Likely there are a hundred motel/hotel rooms in Silverton – just maybe 100 economy rooms plus the hotel and some \$\$\$ B&Bs. Others come in from Durango. Several hundred ride the train up from Durango – a great narrow gauge train ride....and then take a short tour up to the hills, have a picnic lunch, and get back to catch a return train or bus back to Durango a few hours later. That's a popular tour but you don't really get too far up into the hills or up to the mountain passes. Or you can up one day and go back the following day, spending the night there.

Once you leave Silverton, you've got about five miles of normal gravel road, then it starts on 4 wheel only – low gear – 15 mph speed limit to really get 'up' in the hills.

Two years ago I did part of the 'Alpine Loop' up over Hurricane Pass, Cinnamon pass back around to Silverton. I missed getting up to Engineer Pass and that was on my 'to do' list. You can rent a Jeep in Silverton – for a day at several places – or in Ouray. If you've done this type of thing before, that's great. To get up to Engineer Pass, it's about 2 1/2 hours up some fairly steep inclines and a few tricky places. It's rated a '3' on the scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most challenging. Any Jeep wrangler with decent tires can do it. Be sure to have a spare. AAA is a long way away and they don't go up on these roads and there is no cellphone coverage. (ham repeaters, yes).

If you want to rent a Jeep, here's the place. Some nice pics, too

<http://sanjuanbackcountry.com/>

You can also get a guided tour for \$80/person for a 4 hour trip (or you can get an all day trip.) Your choice. I decided to let someone else do the driving as it's easy to ding or dent a car if you aren't careful. The trail gets rocky, there are some hairy climbing/descending turns, and at times someone comes from the other direction and you have to squeeze on by with barely a foot or less to spare – or sometimes the Jeep going uphill has to back down to a wider spot to let the other Jeep pass, then continue on!

Most of the route is not too bad, but you don't want to take your eyes off the road for a second. Mistakes here can easily be fatal with 1000 foot drops off the edge in places. You go maybe an average of 5-8 mph on many stretches of road over the rocks and

rubble. Then there are stretches of just plain 'gravel' type surface that's easy. This trail is rated 'moderate'. Dozens of vehicles do it each day.

Well, I wanted to go up to Engineer Pass....and it was arranged. They called in one of their regular drivers for trips – his name was 'Crazy Bob' – a character for sure. He's 83 years young and been doing this for 10 years. So off we went. The weather was a bit cloudy but good visibility. You really need sunglasses here! It's very bright. Up we went ...and up and upto Engineer Pass at 12800 feet.



“Crazy Bob” - the Jeep – Engineer Pass Summit
12,800 feet AMSL

Some pages on it - copy the link and paste in another browser window....then you can return here after watching/reading info

good pics at

<http://www.dangerousroads.org/north-america/usa/673-engineer-pass-usa.html>

<https://www.durangoutdoors.com/4x4/engineer-pass.htm>

“The Russian born engineer Otto Mears famous for his construction of the million dollar highway connecting Silverton to Ouray is also credited for building the road known as Engineer Pass. Completed after 1877 this toll road was a major route connecting Silverton, Animas Forks, Ouray and Lake City together. During the mining boom of the 1800's it provided a way for miners, supplies and materials to be transported over the San Juan Mountains. The road was critical for the economy and livelihood of hundreds of people and ironically it still does to this day. Gone are the days of the mule trains and wagons and now the adventurous can take the same roads with a good 4x4 or even a trail rated motorcycle! 4x4ing in the San Juan's attracts thousands of people from all over the world and provides a good economic boost for the local communities. It is also an incredible way to enjoy the scenic beauty and history that these mountains have to offer.”

The “Million Dollar Highway' is route 550 from Silverton to Ouray up over Red Bank pass.



N4CD – Engineer Pass – 12800 feet AMSL
Lots of snow around
Great Views!

We made it up to the top....along the way back down a 14 Jeep group headed the opposite way. It was coming up on the 4th of July weekend – it would be a mad house on the trails with hundreds of Jeeps and folks. Clubs make excursions out this way to do the 'high mountain trails'. Do this during the week and not near a holiday – hi hi. Otherwise, there wasn't too much traffic to get by. In places, you just have a foot or two clearance for both vehicles – after one has found a 'wide spot'. - hi hi. One had tires about 4 inches from a 500-2000 foot drop off the side. The other was 4 inches from side scraping rocks at times as you squeezed on by carefully.

If you continue on down the 'east' side of the pass you wind up in Lake City – Hinsdale County. I'm not sure where the county line is, but it is one that gets run VERY seldom by mobiles. If you put a radio in a Jeep, you could do it but that radio would be shaken and vibrated to pieces unless really well shock mounted. The road is a teeth rattling trip, hi hi. Your average install isn't going to hack it. Or your normal antenna. This is a place for an Outbacker on a very strong mount or similar, not an antenna that screws together in multiple pieces! Or a single hamstick on a very strong mount.

The rental folks won't let you take their Jeep on a side trip to Poughkeepsie Gulch. Rated 5 on a scale of 5 – one really bad place. Here's why:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPyhE2Z69G0>

I think I'll skip that one. You need a real 'rock crawler' set up – specialty mods to a Jeep to do it, or you have to use a winch to get yourself up 'the shelf'. They have marked winch points with heavy pipes to use for your winch point.

I had my yearly 'mountain fix' up in the Colorado mountains, zipping up and down the high passes, getting out into the countryside a bit, and enjoying the cooler temps. I'm not an 'outdoors' person and don't go on hikes deep into 'the wilderness' but just enjoy getting away from flat, boring (geography wise) Texas for a while every now and then. At the summits, there's still snow on the sides of the road, and up at 12,500 – there's still plenty of snow on the ground! Up at Engineer Pass there were walls of snow 6 to 8 feet high where they had recently plowed the mid June snowfall that closed the road for a week. We were back in town by 2:30pm. I looked around a bit – this town is mostly centered on 4 wheeling, ATVs, hiking in the hills, and activities for the train passengers.

The Narrow Gauge railroad hauls a couple hundred folks a day up to the town, and they

disembark and go souvenir hunting and have time for a leisurely lunch. There are a dozen restaurants with high price 'lunch specials' with western mining themes. When the last train leaves about 3:30, half the town shuts down till the next day! The places are open for 6 hours a day – from first train arrival to last departure!

So it was back to the motel in Durango for the night – ran San Juan on the way back at Molas Pass – one of the good spots to run the county.

Dinner at an Italian restaurant with a name chef downtown. The Four Cheese Deep Dish lasagna with sausage was great – Mutu's Italian Kitchen. \$16

<http://mutusitaliankitchen.com/>

Slept well at the Days End Motel.

Now, if you want to go higher, you can drive up Pikes Peak – easy road – and be up at 13,000 feet. Top part of road is all gravel. Mount Evans is 14,130 feet AMSL and there's a paved road up to the top. I went up it 55 years ago. The road was closed in early July 2015 – due to a major road repair project – and might open in late July for the 2015 season. Now you can hike or bike up it, but not drive the last five miles. I tried to get up it but the 49 mile road to the top – was not open past the half way point up the mountain. There's a sign indicating if the road is open as you turn off the interstate. It's over by Clear Creek County just west of Denver. Stopped at the sign and turned around. Maybe next trip to CO.

Friday

After a good night sleep, I woke up early, had some more of the fruit, then headed to Denny's once again for some pancakes, eggs, bacon. After a quick breakfast I was on the road at 7am headed north once again over Coal Bank and Molas Pass (over 10,000 feet) down into Silverton, then over Red Mountain Pass on the 'Million Dollar Highway' at 11,018 feet AMSL and 8% grades. At the top is the county line for San Juan/Ouray with good parking area but it is very poor to operate there – you've got a mineral laden mountain to the east that blocks and sucks out the signals. The road down into the town of Ouray is steep with no guard rails on most of the road into town. Just take it real easy. In the winter time, the road is closed several times a season due to avalanches blocking the path.

With a short detour of 15 miles out of Ridgeway, you can get over to San Miguel County – and run that. Can't stop at the county line as they put up no parking signs at the top of the pass – but go another mile and park in a driveway to put it out. Then backtrack and head north on the road to Grand Junction in Mesa County.

Once you get down off Red Mountain Pass it's smooth sailing on real good roads that run through valleys.

The route headed north up to the top corner of CO through Rio Blanco,, which seemed to be needed by many – then up to Moffat and Routt – and over through Jackson (just a corner of it) and down into Grand – and the down of Steamboat Springs, then on to Kremmling. My car didn't like going up Rabbit Ears Pass at 9400 feet AMSL. It had been over 11,000 foot passes with no grief. . It acted almost as if it had fuel starvation. I'd suspect a blocked fuel filter, except modern cars don't even have one! I checked the manual – nope. Checked on line later that evening. Nope. You have a fuel strainer to keep rocks out of the gas line in the fuel tank and that is it! The car manufacturers figure that the gas you get at the fuel pump, usually with good filters in them, is dirt and contamination free.



The Malibu doesn't have any filter. Maybe it was some bad gas (too much ethanol) or some dirt in the line. It just didn't want to go up. You step on the gas and it slowed down. Almost like old time 'vapor lock' or something. It was only 85 degrees outside but hot sun. Eventually made it up to the top...found the Jackson County line (there's a mile or two of Jackson on the road and a nice place to stop and run the line! I was wondering if my car, getting up to 164,000 miles at that point, was going to crap out on

me or leave me stranded somewhere.

I ran Jackson (way high up) – enjoy the view! Then on down the opposite side to Steamboat Springs and beyond. No problems getting to the Super 8 Motel in Kremmling. I've stayed there a few times before. Nice. Dinner was at the nearby Chinese restaurant. No buffet for dinner (one for lunch) and a ton of food. You'll be chomping for 30 minutes on whatever you order. Kremmling has 3 places to eat – a Steak/Burger place, a Mexican/Seafood place, and the Chinese place along with a fast food place. That's it.

Slept well.

Saturday

Kremmling is a small town of 1400 people. It lies on the main route from Denver to Steamboat Springs (a large resort town) at 7300 feet AMSL. It cools off nicely in the summer time in the evenings. I filled the tank with 'new' gas and added a can of fuel injector cleaner stuff. Maybe that would solve the problem.

Slept well. Quiet motel – and not much going on in this little town! You don't need a/c.

Waffles for breakfast! Had one, plus a bowl of cereal, some juice! The on the road headed for a few more counties before heading over to the N0KV/N0DXE QTH in Parker, CO. Hit Summit County – over to the interstate – and up to 11,000 feet at the Eisenhower tunnel. Car ran fine. Who knows what the problem was yesterday?

Headed over to Central City – to get to Gilpin County – and zipped through Jefferson up to Adams to Broomfield – then back south on the interstate to run Denver, Arapahoe and into Douglas CO. When you get near the N0KV QTH, you are on the 'county line' road with Elbert – stopped to run Elbert – then headed in to visit Barry and Pat for a day or two – and avoid the July 4 traffic mess!

I had a nice 2 day visit with Barry and Pat. One day we headed out to the local farmer's market. Lots of trinkets for sale plus some folks selling nice farm fresh veggies. Most of the stuff I had no use for there – from special jams and jellies, candles, bags and purses, services, and the like. Got some exercise then back home. Not much happening on the radio with few mobiles out over the holidays. Barry's nice SteppIR beam antenna took a lightning hit – zapped the controller and he's waiting for repair parts. Six meters

opened and we worked a few 6s and 7s. One mobile was out in ID putting out some rare grids for the folks.

Slept well with windows wide open. Nice. You can't do that in TX during the summer months, for sure.

Monday July 6

The time had come to head on.

Next morning I headed out after a nice breakfast prepared by Pat,N0DXE. It would be two days of travel to home – around 900 miles but no need to rush. The plan was to head on down in Colorado – across the OK panhandle, then down the west side of OK to Harmon (needed by many) then across the lower part of OK to I-35 and then to home.

The weather was great – crisp 58 deg in the morning leaving CO with clear skies. Eastern Colorado is sparsely populated – once you leave the Denver area, you are into ranches and farms for the rest of the way to south and not much traffic. Passed by the sign to the town of Calhan, CO. I remember that well – it was one of my 'DX' contacts as a novice on 40m way back when, and the guy was using an Ocean Hopper (regen) receiver and homebrew TX. Still have that QSL around here somewhere. I'd looked up all the QTH's of the hams I managed to work as a novice – he lived on a ranch out in the boonies. Never did make it to Calhan – just saw the sign. Calhan has 800 people these days- and was a water stop on one of the first railroads headed west. It's in El Paso County. I guess someday I'll pass through it. No hurry!

I headed south to Cimarron County OK, then east through Texas and Beaver into Woodward to the town of Woodward – and a Days Inn Motel. I've stayed there a few times before. There are a dozen motels but this one seems to be one of the lower price ones. It was full up with contractors (oil fields around) and got one of the last rooms. It's not as good as the normal Super 8, but the one there in that town is \$25/night more.

Monday night dinner was at Big Dans Steak and Salad Bar. The lady at the desk recommended it – that and K-Bobs were the two places she mentioned. Big Dans has a large salad bar. For \$4 more than your basic steak dinner (\$10-16) you add in the large salad bar with 100 items or so. I loaded up with veggies and fruit there and enjoyed a small rib eye steak. When I was done.....headed outside to see a downpour and my car about 150 feet away. The place was busy with locals – coming and going. It probably seats 300. Great place for dinner.

It was raining cats and dogs. It was a 'frog strangler'. I stood under the overhang for 30 minutes waiting for the torrential downpour to cease. After a long long wait, as it slackened off a bit, I ran to the car only getting 'partly soaked'. Next it was off to fill up the tank and be ready for the next day. Got more soaked even under the roof over the gas pumps as the wind was howling as well as rain coming down by the bucket load. An inch of water flowed through the gas station on the ground. Oh well.....the joys of travel!

Got back to the motel, slowly, in the continuing downpour and slept well.

Tuesday July 7

Monday night it rained! I stopped at a good time since the weather map indicated massive storms headed south – that would dump a few inches of rain all the way from Childress TX up to Oklahoma City up to MO and IL. It likely rained 4-5 inches in Woodward County overnight – so said the weatherman the next day . If I had continued south before stopping , it would have followed me and made driving miserable. As it was the next day, everything was soaked and the ditches along the roads were full of water. Stay on the roads! The shoulders of the were soggy - if you pulled over off the pavement, you might not get back onto the pavement. At least the temps were in the 70s so it wasn't too bad. Cloudy and drizzly to start out.

The Days Inn breakfast started at 5:30 am. WOW. They have lots of construction/oil workers staying there and they get an early start. For me, no sense to get up too early as it's likely to be drizzling rain and gloom and there's no radio propagation too early. No waffles – just sugar laden cereal, sugar laden 'orange flavored drink', coffee, biscuits and gravy. No fruit. On a scale from 1 to 10, about a 2. Not good. I might have to find a better place here to stop next trip.

Off to breakfast about 6:30am – and on the road by 7am. For the next 200 miles it would be drizzling with the wipers going about 90% of the time. The course today was south of out Woodward, down through Roger Mills, Custer, Beckham on the way to Greer and Harmon at the bottom corner. The roads were wet with puddles in places. Water was everywhere. Farm ponds were overflowing and fields had giant puddles (lakes in places). The bands opened early. It drizzled on and off most of the morning.

Travel went well – in places the power lines were a pain – you'd have stretches of ten miles with S9 noise, then noise free for 10 miles. You'd never know. I ran the usual

14/17/30/40 rotation and popped up on 14271 at times. N2JNE was out in VA, and Karl, K4YT was now in IN, IL, WI, headed to MN. He's working on his 85 last transmits to reach 500 for his Master Platinum. AA9JJ/N9QPQ were running on 14336 and were listening on 14271 as well as they headed across TX, LA and into MS.

Around noon time, I got the hungries and was tired of driving in the gloom and light rain. It was only 72 deg so far all along the route. I headed east through Kiowa, Tillman, Cotton, Comanche. I stopped in Lawton at the Asian Buffet. Good selection and lots of fruit and veggies, some salmon, mushrooms, tomatoes, etc. \$8 senior rate. Then quickly back on the road. The car wandered to Stephens, down to Jefferson, Love, and home. The heavy rain started right after lunch. Real heavy at times and now the temps were into the 80s.

Along the route you can find 'ethanol free' gas – a bit more expensive, but my car gets 33-35 mpg on pure gas...vs only 30-31 mpg on ethanol contaminated gasoline. We're being played for suckers by the ethanol industry and power brokers in Washington DC. Crappy ethanol laden gas – gives you lower gas mileage. Putting in the ethanol means you pay for it, and it does nothing. It's wasted. It's as if it is isn't there. It's 10% of what you put in your tank, volume wise, and it reduces your gas mileage by 10%.

The rain really came down at times – and I had to proceed at 10-20 mph under the speed limit. Yuk. It really didn't make much difference which way I went – it was raining from west TX to IL all along the now stalled weather front. West TX probably could use the rain. OK had enough already! It stopped raining south of the Red River – the TX/OK border.

Home by 5:30.....after the two day trip from Colorado. 92 degrees, hot and humid at home. Yuk. Definitely summer and headed to triple digits by the weekend! I need to move my house north in the summer time!

Hope you caught me in some you need. There were needs posted for Harmon and many others – so hopefully we connected in the ones you needed. Not much activity on SSB but loads on cw in the 'rarer' counties! Most of the SSB folks also come over to CW – including now KS4BO, Dave.

Computer News

IBM Announces Computer Chips More Powerful Than Any in Existence

IBM said on Thursday that it had made working versions of ultradense computer chips, with roughly four times the capacity of today's most powerful chips.

The announcement, made on behalf of an international consortium led by IBM, the giant computer company, is part of an effort to manufacture the most advanced computer chips in New York's Hudson Valley, where IBM is investing \$3 billion in a private-public partnership with New York State, GlobalFoundries, Samsung and equipment vendors.

The development lifts a bit of the cloud that has fallen over the semiconductor industry, which has struggled to maintain its legendary pace of doubling transistor density every two years.

Intel, which for decades has been the industry leader, has faced technical challenges in recent years. Moreover, technologists have begun to question whether the longstanding pace of chip improvement, known as Moore's Law, would continue past the current 14-nanometer generation of chips.

Each generation of chip technology is defined by the minimum size of fundamental components that switch current at nanosecond intervals. Today the industry is making the commercial transition from what the industry generally describes as 14-nanometer manufacturing to 10-nanometer manufacturing.

Each generation brings roughly a 50 percent reduction in the area required by a given amount of circuitry. IBM's new chips, though still in a research phase, suggest that semiconductor technology will continue to shrink at least through 2018.

The company said on Thursday that it had working samples of chips with seven-nanometer transistors. It made the research advance by using silicon-germanium instead of pure silicon in key regions of the molecular-size switches.

The new material makes possible faster transistor switching and lower power requirements. The tiny size of these transistors suggests that further advances will require new materials and new manufacturing techniques.

As points of comparison to the size of the seven-nanometer transistors, a strand of DNA

is about 2.5 nanometers in diameter and a red blood cell is roughly 7,500 nanometers in diameter. IBM said that would make it possible to build microprocessors with more than 20 billion transistors.

“I’m not surprised, because this is exactly what the road map predicted, but this is fantastic,” said Subhashish Mitra, director of the Robust Systems Group in the Electrical Engineering Department at Stanford University.

Even though IBM has shed much of its computer and semiconductor manufacturing capacity, the announcement indicates that the company remains interested in supporting the nation’s high technology manufacturing base.

“This puts IBM in the position of being a gentleman gambler as opposed to being a horse owner,” said Richard Doherty, president of Envisioneering, a Seaford, N.Y., consulting firm, referring to the fact that IBM’s chip manufacturing facility was acquired by GlobalFoundries effective last week.

“They still want to be in the race,” he added.

IBM now licenses the technology it is developing to a number of manufacturers and GlobalFoundries, owned by the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, to make chips for companies including Broadcom, Qualcomm and Advanced Micro Devices.

The semiconductor industry must now decide if IBM’s bet on silicon-germanium is the best way forward.

It must also grapple with the shift to using extreme ultraviolet, or EUV, light to etch patterns on chips at a resolution that approaches the diameter of individual atoms. In the past, Intel said it could see its way toward seven-nanometer manufacturing. But it has not said when that generation of chip making might arrive.

IBM also declined to speculate on when it might begin commercial manufacturing of this technology generation. This year, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company said that it planned to begin pilot product of seven-nanometer chips in 2017. Unlike IBM, however, it has not demonstrated working chips to meet that goal.

It is uncertain whether the longer exposure times required by the new generation of EUV photolithographic stepper machines would make high-speed manufacturing operations impossible. Even the slightest vibration can undermine the precision of the optics

necessary to etch lines of molecular thicknesses, and the semiconductor industry has been forced to build specialized stabilized buildings to try to isolate equipment from vibration.

An IBM official said that the consortium now sees a way to use EUV light in commercial manufacturing operations.

“EUV is another game changer,” said Mukesh Khare, vice president for semiconductor research at IBM. To date, he noted, the demonstration has taken place in a research lab, not in a manufacturing plant. Ultimately the goal is to create circuits that have been reduced in area by another 50 percent over the industry’s 10-nanometer technology generation scheduled to be introduced next year.

Source: NY Times, July 9

Solar News

A new model of the Sun's solar cycle is producing unprecedentedly accurate predictions of irregularities within the Sun's 11-year heartbeat. The model draws on dynamo effects in two layers of the Sun, one close to the surface and one deep within its convection zone. Predictions from the model suggest that solar activity will fall by 60 per cent during the 2030s to conditions last seen during the 'mini ice age' that began in 1645.

Results will be presented today by Prof Valentina Zharkova at the National Astronomy Meeting in Llandudno.

It is 172 years since a scientist first spotted that the Sun's activity varies over a cycle lasting around 10 to 12 years. But every cycle is a little different and none of the models of causes to date have fully explained fluctuations. Many solar physicists have put the cause of the solar cycle down to a dynamo caused by convecting fluid deep within the Sun. Now, Zharkova and her colleagues have found that adding a second dynamo, close to the surface, completes the picture with surprising accuracy.

"We found magnetic wave components appearing in pairs, originating in two different

layers in the Sun's interior. They both have a frequency of approximately 11 years, although this frequency is slightly different, and they are offset in time. Over the cycle, the waves fluctuate between the northern and southern hemispheres of the Sun. Combining both waves together and comparing to real data for the current solar cycle, we found that our predictions showed an accuracy of 97%," said Zharkova.

Zharkova and her colleagues derived their model using a technique called 'principal component analysis' of the magnetic field observations from the Wilcox Solar Observatory in California. They examined three solar cycles-worth of magnetic field activity, covering the period from 1976-2008. In addition, they compared their predictions to average sunspot numbers, another strong marker of solar activity. All the predictions and observations were closely matched.

Looking ahead to the next solar cycles, the model predicts that the pair of waves become increasingly offset during Cycle 25, which peaks in 2022. During Cycle 26, which covers the decade from 2030-2040, the two waves will become exactly out of synch and this will cause a significant reduction in solar activity.

"In cycle 26, the two waves exactly mirror each other -- peaking at the same time but in opposite hemispheres of the Sun. Their interaction will be disruptive, or they will nearly cancel each other. We predict that this will lead to the properties of a 'Maunder minimum'," said Zharkova. "Effectively, when the waves are approximately in phase, they can show strong interaction, or resonance, and we have strong solar activity. When they are out of phase, we have solar minimums. When there is full phase separation, we have the conditions last seen during the Maunder minimum, 370 years ago."

ScienceDaily, 9 July 2015.

<www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/07/150709092955.htm>.

Jerry's Quest for the 1000th LC

Only a few county hunters have reached the 'official' 1000 transmitted last county level. Not all county hunters 'reward' the mobiles with a 'last county' award when they get a last county in a state for their next award. So likely folks have really put out – 20-30-40-50% more? Who knows? With LC's now down to a buck each, there's not too much

reason to reward those mobiles out on trips burning gas to get your counties needed. As of the beginning of the year, Rick, AI5P, has 1011. Kent, KV7N, has 1013 as of May 26, 2015. Scottie, N4AAT has 1060. Ed, WA0SBR, has 1230 listed in the database. N9QPQ, Kay, has 1262 now with Frank, AA9JJ at 989 – close to the 1000 level. Ron, KB6UF, has 1288 listed. KB7QO, the first person to run all US Counties, has 1363 LC listed in the database. N4CD is over 1000.

It was going to be a close race between N8KIE and W0GXQ to see who gets to 1000 first! Well, it turns out after his trip to New England, Bob, N8KIE garnered over 120 more last counties! They are still coming in! He's over 1000. Jerry is at 991 as of 7/26 and maybe a few more will be coming in from his last excursion in ND. Close! Frank, AA9JJ surged ahead to 989, just 11 away from the threshold of 1000. The Awards Chairman better get ready to send out some really heavy 'wood' – hi hi – the big trophies!

With more awards created in the past five or so years, there are more ways to earn LC's. Those who got to 1000 way back when really achieved a tough award. It's a bit easier now with prefixes and call combos and Mobile Diamond and Master Platinum than before those existed – more ways to earn an LC. It's still not easy by any means to get to 1000. You've got to be in the 'super mobile' category to get there and nearly all of the folks there have run all the US counties along the way. Of the 17 who who have reached that goal of RAN ALL USA, we have N9QPQ, WA0SBR, KB7QO, KV7N, N4CD, N4AAT, N8KIE, and AI5P with over 1000 transmitted last counties.

I don't know of an 'easy way' to check the awards ever issued – there's not a record listed anywhere - other than digging it out call by call in the database under last county awards. There may be others who have reached 1000. Who is going to be next to reach 1000? N4JT with 852? KC1NA with 815? N9QS with 816? AA9JJ?

Several mobiles, now inactive like W1TEE, had over 800 and that from the time where there were only half as many awards to seek. No Bingo N or anything above MG, and no 'cw only' award as a MARAC Award.

Other active mobiles might get there in a couple years if they keep putting out the counties. At least half a dozen are over 500, and in many cases, those LC's will be coming in for months/years even after mobile operation is done. Some folks wait till they are 'all done' before sending them in.

W0GXQ, Jerry, is now at 989 with a goal of reaching 1000 by October. Stay tuned!

For those starting out, you get a nice 'car plaque' at 25 last transmitted counties, another at 50, another at 75, then a big plaque at the 100 LC level with 'bars' after that. The big 'trophy' comes at the 1000 level.

Items from Ebay

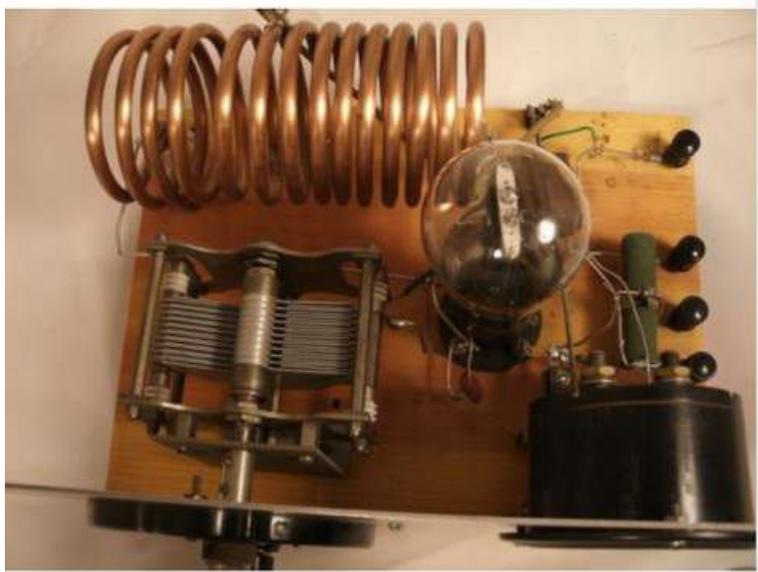
An interesting pair of items showed up on Ebay – all for 'one money'. It was a reproduction of a 1929 set of radios – a regen receiver and a Hartley transmitter. Here's a few pics and the description:



Regen RX, Hartley TX
Coils for 160/80/40m – plug in
Ant tuner is front right



Receiver – rear view



Hartley Transmitter

from the ad:

“AWA 1929 style regenerative receive and Hartley transmitter. I picked up this combo several years ago. Only had it on the air once. There are many actual period components in both sets and some modern components.

The vacuum tubes in both sets appear to be period originals. -The receiver grid leak resistor is encased in glass. the audio tube is mounted on a shock absorbing socket to minimize micro phonics. The interstage coupling audio transformer appears to be period also. It has a wire wound pot to control filament voltage and regeneration. It has bandset, vernier bandspread and and antenna trim controls. comes with coils that appears to be for 160,80,40 meter ham band. -

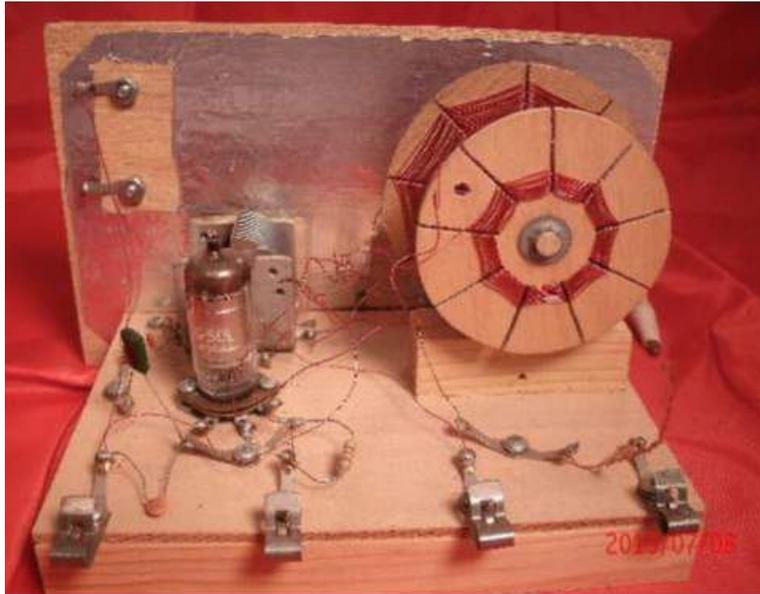
The transmitter is a classic Hartley power oscillator. The copper tubing appears to be configured for 80 meters. As the photos show, output coupling is by swinging link assembly with series tuned capacitor. Very unique. The transmitter is capable of a couple of watts, but best tone is obtained when lightly loaded at around 1 watt or less. And positioning the coil tap is crucial. Remember anything and everything on the antenna affects how the transmitter sounds. Good solid installed antenna work best, not swaying around in the wind. Tight and secure wire and feed line works best. I used an end fed antenna that the top portions was tensioned very tight and the down lead was secured by insulated brackets into the house also with tension. Sold as is , where is. Happy to answer questions for you..

- - - - -

Another item which showed up in July was a reproduction kit radio sold by Peebles 20 years ago. This was a modern version of a 1922 type receiver (like a Crosley) using a spider web set of coils. Regen was controlled by moving one coil in and out, closer to the other – increasing feedback. This set covered the broadcast band.



Peebles 1 Tube Set (modern)



Rear View – Peebles 1 Tube Regen

Annual MARAC Awards

Each year, MARAC gives out awards - as noted in the last issue – and here are the results of the 2015 selection of deserving folks. (These winners were determined by the quarterly ballot of MARAC members). I dug out the info from the MARAC database as no MARAC official or spokesperson, or even anyone attending the event in FL bothered to spread the word.

Mobile of the Year CW 2015 - W0GXQ Jerry

Mobile of the Year SSB 2015 - W4SIG, Kerry

CW Net Control of the Year 2015 - Jerry, W0GXQ

Team of the Year 2015 - KB0BA, Lowell, and N0XYL, Sandra

If there are multiple choices for County Hunter of the Year, CW and SSB, this award is also announced at the convention after membership vote. This year there were no candidates for SSB Mobile of the Year (and none was awarded) and one for County Hunter of the Year CW – so no membership vote required – and this was previously announced.

Solar News II

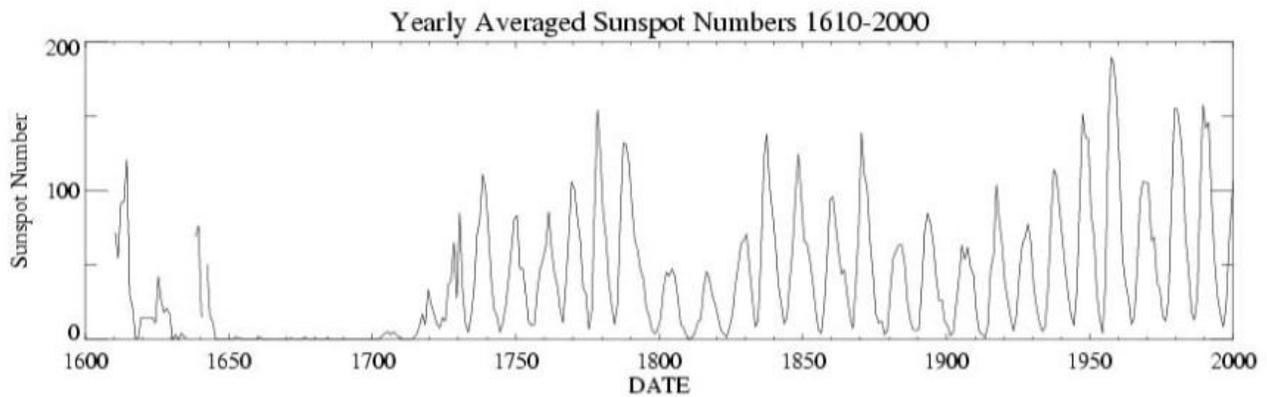
Whether you are a DXer, contester or just a casual operator, what our Sun is doing will impact how we spend our time, money and resources in this hobby. Awareness is growing that this will be one of the lowest sunspot cycles of many Amateurs' careers in radio. Here is a summary of where we are now, where we are headed in this cycle, and what we can expect in the future.

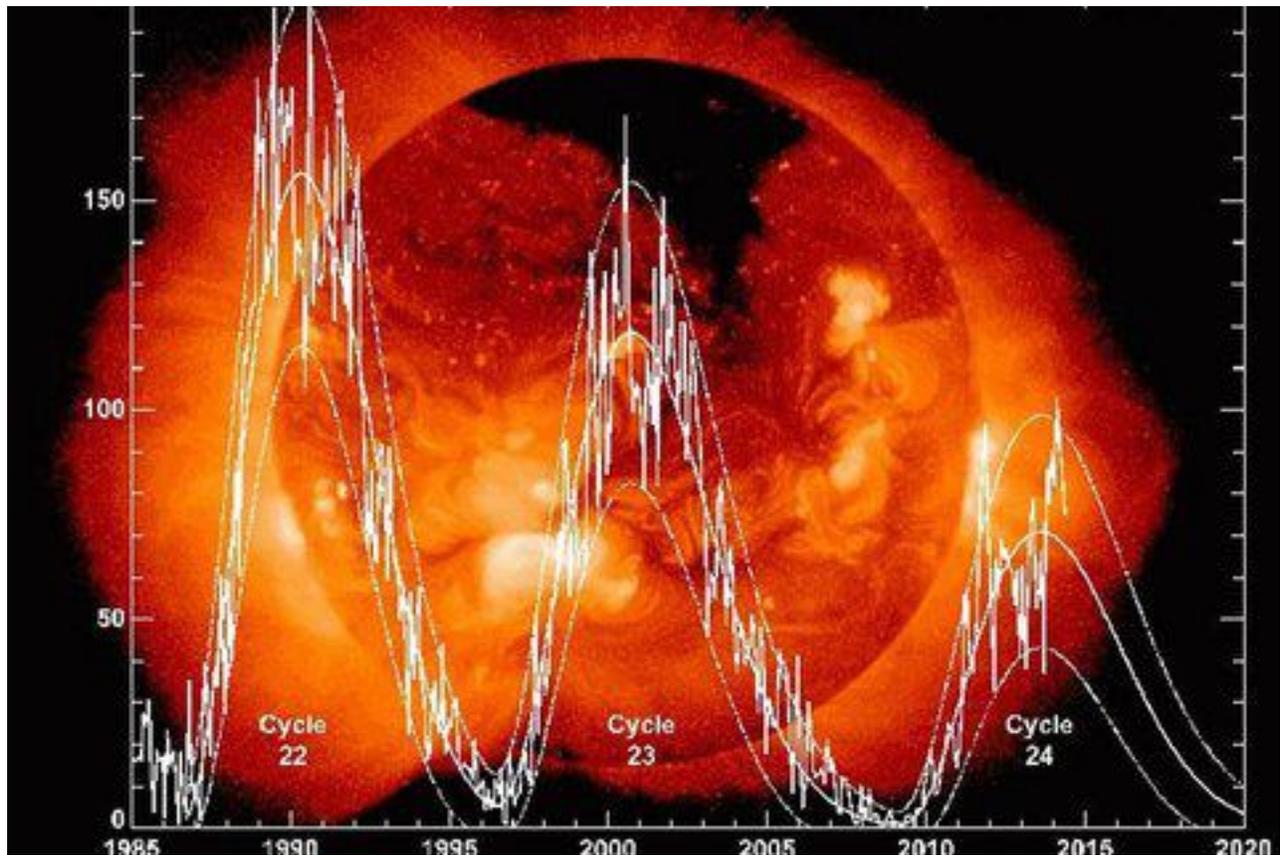
All of us today have had the fortunate experience of being in Ham Radio during one of the most benign periods of solar activity, from 1950 to 2009. We are all familiar with the typical sunspot cycle duration of 11 years, plus or minus. However, there is a much larger cycle with the sun -- spanning decades of high and low solar activity over 75 to 100 years and encompassing several sunspot cycles. The graph accessible through this link, courtesy of K9LA, shows all solar cycles (with the exception of cycle 24), which will fall well below the top of cycle 23.

http://k9la.us/A_Look_at_All_Twenty_Three_Solar_Cycles.pdf

Clearly, there are decades of high solar activity, followed by decades of low solar activity. A rough interpretation would be 4 up cycles and 3 down. This large "Macro Cycle" of the sun is basically 75 to 100 years.

Now, here is a recent graph, showing the past two solar cycles, plus cycle 24 to date.





Clearly the trend is down.

It seemed to take "forever" for cycle 24 to get off the ground. Normally, we see solar flux values climbing above 100 (on average) 18 months after a cycle's bottom. But, it took cycle 24 two-and-one-half years to accomplish that (Feb. of 2011).

One of the key indicators of a cycle's strength and intensity is how it starts. [Slow starts will usher in a weak, low cycle; strong, fast starts produce robust, high cycles... there are no exceptions]. We had a faint peak in November 2011, and a micro peak this year. The peak being defined as the highest average monthly solar flux of 170, set February 2014. (This has been the first sunspot cycle where the second peak was higher than the first).

Subsequently, average solar flux has declined month after month, with a slight rise in July. Average monthly solar flux is what we Radio Amateurs should keep our eye on. The so-called smoothed sunspot number is really a "lagging indicator" that averages what happened six months ago.

The driving force behind all of this is not so much the number of sunspots, but the magnetic size and complexity of the sunspot groups. Astronomers Livingston and Penn have measured the strength of sunspots. The recent data clearly shows a decline in complexity and strength.

Looking at the graph, magnetic strength needs to be at least 1,500 Gauss to form sunspots. The strength of these is falling. The conclusion is that with the present trend, sunspots will disappear by late 2015 or 2016.

Drawing from recent activity in cycle 24, the main driver of our peak in 2014 was not the number of sunspots, but the increase in size and magnetic complexity-vs-what it has been from the beginning of cycle 24. (Basically we had a pause in the downtrend of declining sunspot strength)

Cycle 24's downward trend is ratified by other factors: 1. Clustering of sunspots toward the center of the sun; 2. wide swings in monthly highs and lows; 3. slow continuous month-to-month declines in solar flux values; and 4. the average number and size of sunspots is on the decline.

So, what does this all mean and what can we expect? Our last good Fall season of HF propagation will soon be upon us, take advantage of it. 2015 will probably be the last year for good high band propagation on 17,15,12, and 10 Meters. We will quickly "ratchet down" and the low period of the cycle (solar flux values of 70-80) will be reached much sooner, as we will have much lower highs from which to fall.

See the graph below:

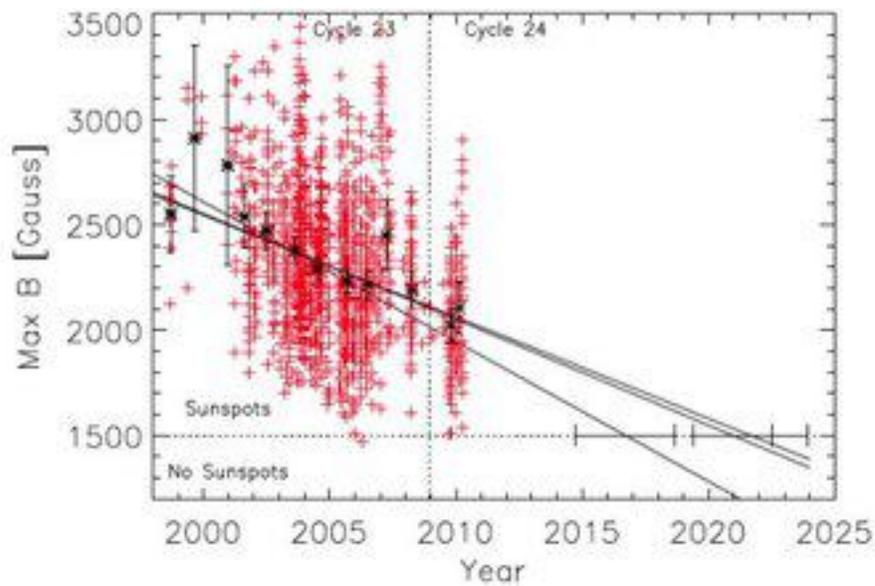
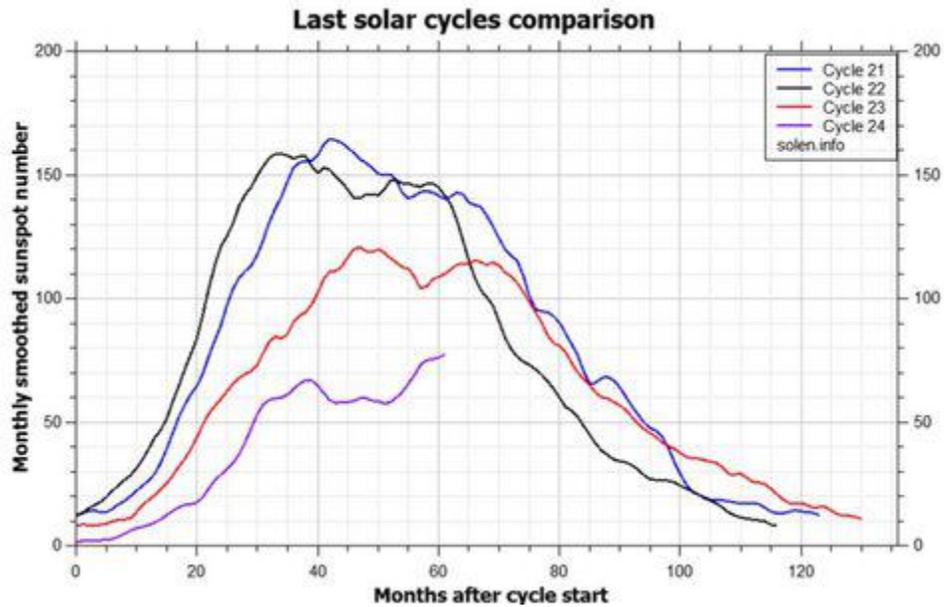


Fig. 1.— Measurements of the total magnetic field strength at the darkest location in umbrae and pores as a function of time. The crosses show the individual measurements, the asterisks show annual bins. Three linear fits are shown: the bottom fit line fits data from 1998-2006 as done in our 2006 paper. The top line fits all the data from Cycle 23, and the middle line fits all of the data.

Keep in mind Cycle 23 (a low, but normal cycle) took 5 years to fall from it's high in late 2001 to it's low period in 2006. Cycle 24 may not be in a free fall, but it's decline will occupy a much shorter time span.

Looking our even further, unless the trend in lower macro solar activity is shorter, or the decline in the magnetic strength and complexity of sunspots reverses itself, cycle 25 will even be lower.... graph below:



I personally wish it were not so. However, the data is telling us we are heading toward a much, much lower sunspot period, not only for this cycle, but for cycle 25, and possibly, cycle 26.

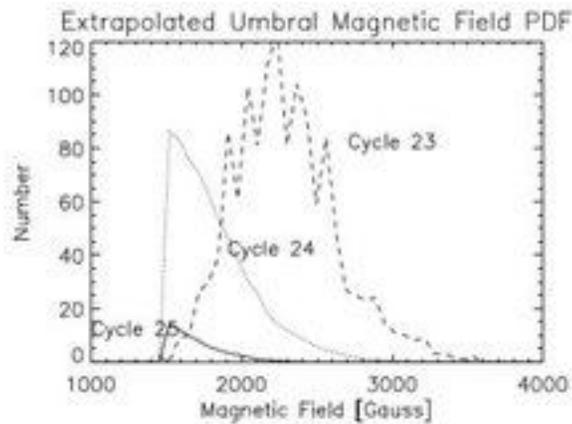


Fig. 2.— The magnetic probability distribution function (PDF) is shown for the IR measurements of sunspots during Cycle 23. With the assumption discussed in the text, we can produce PDFs for Cycles 24 and 25. A simple scaling using the total number of spots suggests Cycle 24 will peak with a SSN of 66, and Cycle 25 will peak with a SSN of 7.

This phenomenon has happened before. It's just that none of us today were alive to experience it. But this is coming like a Tsunami after a mid-ocean earthquake.

Remember the "low propagation years" of 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010? They will seem like a walk in the park compared to what is coming.

Randy W7TJ

W0GXQ Trip Report

Denver trip – W0GXQ

The plans for this trip included four days of mobile travel time, a week visit with my daughter in Evergreen, and another four days attending an Air Force career field reunion in the Denver area.

On the first of July I hit the road at 0945z and my first contact was with K4AMC at 1157z when I got to Pope MN. By the time I got to Deuel SD around 1330z, activity was picking up nicely on all bands. Looking back through the log, it appeared that the best window for 10 and 12 meters was between 1300 and 1700z.

Of the 1,829 contacts entered into the log, only 308 were made on 30 and 40 meters; very few contacts during the day. Thirty one percent of my contacts were made on 17 thru 10m. The best band as always was 20m with 956 contacts. I am getting closer to my goal of giving out 1,000 last counties, as there were around 25 this trip. Some were missed, but there were surprise additions, so it was a lot of fun.

Band conditions were generally poor, and especially so the first day of my return trip (July 13th) when we were feeling the effects of the previous solar flare. Only 271 Qs that day versus 620 on the 14th! Not a single DX station was worked on the 13th.

No needed county signs on my route, so nothing to forward to K4EXT. I hope to get five pictures in ND at the end of July during the CH CW contest (or QSO Party). There are a few counties in ND where I've never been able to locate a sign!

All of the states I traveled through this trip were very green! It's nice not to see everything burned up this time of year. And, I missed hitting another deer but sent one pheasant to bird heaven. Almost 200k miles on the Blazer, but it has a new hood, right fender, grille and headlamps courtesy of our four legged friends from previous trips.

I met Larry W0QE in Broomfield for a nice visit on July 7th. He keeps busy with his design work for various companies. The next evening, Bill K0DEQ and his wife Sharlene stopped in Evergreen on their way to Dillon. This was the first time I had met Bill since meeting on the air over forty years ago. He was a very active mobile back in the seventies.



W0GXQ and K0DEQ

On July 9th, on my way to the AF reunion, I met Matt W0NAC and Barry N0KV for lunch at a Golden Corral in Arapahoe county . . . a great visit, but ate way too much food! While I was in the Denver area, I also managed to transmit from Jefferson, Broomfield, Boulder, and Arapahoe counties. As always, I enjoy the company of so many county hunters who ride along on these trips.

Computer News II

The Weyl fermion is finally discovered

The discovery of a massless particle could pave the way to more stable quantum computers many times more powerful than today's gadgets. The new particle, called the Weyl fermion, can move electrical charge more quickly than an electron because it has no mass. But that's where it gets weird, because the Weyl fermion can act as matter and anti-matter simultaneously.

The discovery is significant because it is thought Weyl fermions can carry charge twice as fast as the wonder material graphene. The Weyl fermion was first theorised in 1929 by mathematician and physicist Hermann Weyl. Since then, scientists have been eager to find evidence of the elusive particle, as it is a basic building block of matter, even more fundamental than the electron. But unlike electrons, Weyl fermions are massless and possess a high degree of mobility.

'The physics of the Weyl fermion are so strange, there could be many things that arise from this particle that we're just not capable of imagining now,' said M. Zahid Hasan, a Princeton professor of physics who led the research team. 'It's like they have their own GPS and steer themselves without scattering,' Hasan said. The most startling find is that Weyl fermions can behave as matter and antimatter inside a crystal.

What's more, Weyl fermions can be used to make massless electrons that move very quickly with no backscattering. In electronics, backscattering hinders efficiency and generates heat, but Weyl electrons simply move through and around roadblocks, according to the researchers. 'These are very fast electrons that behave like unidirectional light beams and can be used for new types of quantum computing.'

Modern day computers run on a model designed by Alan Turing in the 1930s. They are digital and use bits to transfer information and perform tasks. They use binary code and can only ever be in an active, or an inactive state - running at one or zero. This means that a single bit is either on or off at any one time.

Qubits work differently and can be on, off, or in a mixed state in between. As a result, qubits are able to be in multiple places at the same time. Whereas the original Turing

computer can only make one calculation at a time, quantum computers are capable of performing single tasks faster, and performing multiple tasks more effectively. Tasks that would take normal computers years to complete can be processed in seconds using quantum computers like Google's D-Wave.

The hunt for the Weyl fermion began in the earliest days of quantum theory when physicists first realized that their equations implied the existence of antimatter counterparts to commonly known particles such as electrons, according to Hasan.

After more than 80 years, we found that this fermion was already there, waiting. It is the most basic building block of all electrons,' he said. 'It is exciting that we could finally make it come out following Weyl's 1929 theoretical recipe. 'Weyl fermions are the basic building blocks; you can combine two Weyl fermions to make an electron,' said Hasan.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3172007/Weyl-fermion-finally-discovered-Massless-particle-theorised-1929-pave-way-generation-quantum-computing.html#ixzz3giwzaWEU>

WQ7A – Mobile Diamond #7

Terry, WQ7A, has been awarded Mobile Diamond – the highest level award currently for county hunters. Bob, N8KIE made a trip out to NH to snag the last one – Belknap. You can only start to work on this award after you have your Master Platinum Award which he earned in 2010. Living on the west coast, it's even more of a challenge to run the counties and get the ones you need back east.

There are two requirements – working all the counties with a Master Platinum holder - either by the other MP holder being in the county, or by working someone with Master Platinum from the county if you head there.

There's only a handful of people who have completed Master Platinum – now up to 24 – and some of them inactive these days. The time window from the west coast is also

shorter for working all those KY and GA counties as 20M doesn't open as early, and while it stays open a bit later, most mobiles have stopped for the day. Getting those 3077 counties is tough.

That's enough of a challenge, but there is an even more difficult part II.

Part II requires you make at least 3 contacts on each of two bands from 500 separate counties, with one of the contacts being a Master Platinum holder. For an SSB only mobile operator, this is often hard since early in the mornings and late in the evenings, 20M SSB might not be good, and of course, finding a frequency on 40M SSB is challenging now that we don't have much of a net there. Out west, with some CA 'nets' using just about every frequency, and the lack of activity on the east coast with other folks occupying the frequency, it's a real challenge for those SSB oriented. 40M SSB out west is very problematic, and of course, 17m opens later and closes early. Not only that, those 'western counties' are huge – some covering areas where you would have 20 or 30 KY size counties!

Occasionally in the middle of the day, you can get your 3 contacts on 17M like WQ7A has done successfully to get his 500 from out west. Likely, he had more than a few counties traversed without the necessary 3 contacts, which means you just have to run more. For a cw operator, you have more choices with 30M - often a good band – and you can squeeze in on 40M, work some contest stations on a contest weekend, etc. Terry put out a few on cw mobile.

So far only a handful have finished this (K5GE, N5UZW, N8KIE, N4CD, N4AAT, N9STL) with a few closing in like KC3X. You have to be a very active mobile to qualify for this one – thus the name MOBILE Diamond Award.

Congrats Terry on finishing up a very challenging award.

MARAC and Annual Awards

In the June issue of the RR, James, KZ2P noted about annual awards:

“During the past couple of years I have submitted suggestions to the Awards Committee concerning the County Hunter, Net Control and Mobile of the Year awards. I believe that all three of the awards should be combined into just one County Hunter of the Year award and that the voting be done on a quarterly basis.”

“MARAC could continue to honor mobile operators by presenting them with a plaque (similar to the Last County plaque) with plates for each “x” number of counties run.”

“That way several of the deserving mobile operators would be honored instead of just one. “

“As far as the Net Control, MARAC could do something similar based on hours of actual net operating service. Bob(KC6AWX) has faithfully and meticulously presented my suggestions to the Awards Committee, but they have not been inclined to vote for them.”

- - - -

More comments de N4CD

1) As far as net control hours were concerned, there WAS an award you could apply for – the Karl Adkins Net Control Award. You earned it by operating so many hours as NC – I think the first level was 250 hours, with 250 hour increments. At 1000 hours, you got a nice plaque (bigger than the 'car' award), with space for bars in increments of 250 hours. I got one hanging on the wall for 1000 hours (Large square Plaque) with the 2000 hour bar on it - ;like the award for 100 LC given out. I lost interest in counting net control hours after that. The 1000 hour level was award number 34, but few applied for it at any level. It wasn't in the automated computer system where you send in your log electronically, and out spit an award. Well, back then, I don't think anything was!

It was 'deleted' a few years ago as few applied for it. I dunno, maybe with the new interest in a net not on 14.336 for SSB, it might be worth considering again.

Folks might also like the annual award based upon hours as net or assistant net control, but I'm not sure how well that would work out if some try to 'hog' prime hours. Then again, not everyone uses Logger or something to log 'net control hours', but just show up. As far as I can tell, in all the thousands of hours James spent as NC using his 'club'

call sign, not his own, , he never once applied for the Atkins Net Control Award – but there is no on line record still around. Then again, it would be the 'club' that would get the award. No different than if you or I went to operate at W1AW, made DXCC on the 60m band, and it was issued. It would go to W1AW, not you or me! They would hang it on the wall, not you. It wouldn't even mention your call or name! Hi hi. No “W1AW DXCC CW 60M Nr 1 – You, operator”

Of course, this would have to be 'coded' into Logger and into the awards system, like all 'new' awards. The reason why the Atkins award and recently deleted Roadmaster Award was eliminated was – it wasn't in the automated computer award system! Too much work for the award custodian!

Only a handful ever applied for it! Of course, you have to carefully 'track' your hours as NC, and many don't. Just get on for a few hours, not like one a few years ago that gave the 'statistics' at the end of the day – how many mobiles run, time spent, how many counties put out, etc.

2) The other idea of rewarding mobiles for 'counties run' still has problems to be resolved. Total counties? Repeats? Will Logger track in the future? Are the same 50 counties run over and over better than 300 counties by someone else just once? Or is there a threshold and everyone gets an award for, say, 500 different counties transmitted a year? Hmmm.... does anyone over the 500 or whatever number get an award?

3) Usually there are several contenders for County Hunter of the Year – which you can only get once. For the past five or 7 years, many deserving county hunters were just 'thrown out' of the eligibility status because they 'lacked service to MARAC' which is just one of several possible ways to be nominated for the award. You can only receive this award once in your life, so it is mainly enthusiastic newcomers who qualify for this award. Hopefully we'll inspire a couple new county hunters to go 'above and beyond' each year to qualify for this. As in the past several years, either nominees were rejected for 'lack of service to MARAC' or no one simply nominated anyone to their director (who then forwards it) – so no award for a category (or both) was issued. Maybe that will change. There are several ways to qualify for nomination for this award and none of them require 'service to MARAC' directly.

I'm not sure I'd back eliminating County Hunter of the Year just yet. What we need are directors who seek input from members at the appropriate time to get the nominations in from folks in their districts. If directors don't do that, they are just being negligent. It

should be on their calendar 'to do list' when required each spring! Some might not have anyone in their district – others might have two. It varies. In 2015, not a single person was nominated for SSB County Hunter of the Year – and none was issued.

On the Road with N4CD II

Friday

There was time for another road trip. Several 'good reasons' came up. First, there is a small, I repeat small, hamfest in OKLA city – called the Ham Holiday – this time each year. Second, it was the weekend of the MARAC CW contest. Third, I still had a few counties in OK left to run for the third time. I'd manage to do some of all of them with a short trip up, overnight, then back the next day. The weather would be typical TX/OK summer with highs in the 90s and a 'heat index' of 100 or more. Yuk!

Friday morning I packed up the car for a short trip up to OK City – which is about 200 miles north the county hunter way. I headed out up I-35 north then diverted a bit to the east to hit Pottawatomie and Lincoln Counties on the way up, two needed for second time xmit. It was hot and sunny with clear roads. No problems zipping up to the counties – then headed back a bit to get to the Super 8 in Midwest City, OK – a few miles from the hamfest site. You can stay at the hamfest hotel – for about \$109/night – in a hotel under renovations. How the justify that room rate is beyond me – but – that's the way it is. The Super 8 is \$54. It's a old one that probably was a Holiday Inn back in the 1950s and 60s – a two story affair with a courtyard, a swimming pool, and parking a bit away from the rooms. The a/c worked and the bed was fine. I don't spend a lot of time in the room usually. The TV worked. Not too far away I found a Golden Corral for dinner.

Saturday

The hamfest has a small indoor flea market that opens at 8am. A couple hundred people come to this hamfest but the flea market is not the reason. During the day they

have the usual ARRL Forums, the Scouts work on merit badges, and several state nets meet. There's a dinner that many attend. The only 'county hunter' I saw there was Ron, AF5Q, who goes mobile in the OK QSO party and occasionally one or two others. A couple folks from my local area head up there. If you don't have other reasons to be there, you can easily skip this and not miss much – hihi!

On Saturday morning, I enjoyed a nice waffle for breakfast, a bowl of cereal, and had some of their crappy orange drink at the Super 8. I wish they had real OJ instead but they save a few pennies and give you sugar laden crap. Oh well. They had small oranges – Fuji type I think. 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Ate one. I checked out, and headed over to the convention a few miles away – where things get going around 8am. There wasn't much in the way of a flea market – maybe 100 tables with 1/3rd of them for commercial vendors. There were a few 'antiques' for sale including some old Gonset mobile twins (Tx and Rx) in great shape, a Heathkit Mobile KW Amp less the 572B tubes but with the HP-24 AC power supply for \$350 asking price, a few nice Collins transmitters and receivers, one or two mobile radios and not much else. A dozen computers of the early Pentium variety sold for 25c each. Yes, a quarter each. Just haul them away – as is.

After looking at everything twice, I left about 8:40am and got ready to put out some counties in the annual CW County Hunter Contest. The first county line would be OKLA/LOGA when the contest began. You can get off the interstate on a 'county line' road and find a place to operate.

For this contest where you need to do a bit more logging, I'd planned to stop on county lines when possible, and then hunt for mobiles while driving between lines. Well, that was the plan. Plans always seem to change. It's no fun to listen to lots of recordings with the background noise in there later on. Some places it was very quiet – other stretches of highway had S7 to S9 noise for miles.

The conditions were not great on the radio. High A index. Stations would go from S5 to S0 and back in 30 seconds. Some areas of the county were good copy, the east coast was mostly 'way down', and shorter skip went from zip to good to zip in nothing flat. It would be an interesting day. It was getting hot. Already over 90 and climbing.

The first line went well, and I could spot so lots of folks showed up. I was there longer than planned. Just about all the contacts were on 20m with very few on 40M the entire day. There were mobiles out – W0GXQ up in ND, NU0Q in IA and NE, NF0N in NE, WB0PYF/m in MO, WC5D in TX, K7TM out in ID and WA, and W3DYA in TX. Never heard Norm. Jeff, W9MSE had to cancel at the last moment. Ed, KN4Y was

busy in GA putting them out. Later, I heard KI0I in MO. The regular county hunters were on – and when the spots hit – the SSB oriented folks showed up as well. No spot – they didn't show up. Most of OK does not have data coverage.

The top rows of OK to the northwest of I-35 are designed the 'Red Carpet Counties' by the tourism industry – 16 counties including some of the ones I'd go through. There are some nice lakes built by the Corps of Engineers for flood control up that way – with fishing contests and boating. Blaine County has one of them. Kingfisher is known as the birthplace of Sam Walton – founder of the Wal-Mart enterprise. It's also where Adaline Dalton – mother of the famous Dalton gang, was born and lived. A lot of land here was settled by the Oklahoma Sooners – in the big land rush when the part of the state were opened for homesteading. The Chisholm Trail passed through Kingfisher County – it was the main cattle drive route from TX up to KS and the railroad loading points. If you watch the 'cowboy' westerns, a lot of them are on the Chisholm Trail. Lots of history for the history buffs if you want to play tourist for a while.

Then I headed up to Payne, needed by a few folks. I stopped to run it at a convenient exit off I -35. Was there for 25 minutes putting it out. I had a choice. I could go another five miles north then zip west on a two lane road over to Kingfisher, then south to get to the town of Kingfisher – adding in 10 miles, or head back about 8 miles south on I-35, then west on a 4 lane highway all the way to the town of Kingfisher. That seemed like a faster route. Wrong! Well, it was down the interstate for 15 miles then west on the big highway. Just before you hit the county, there's a detour. Road closed – bridge/road washed out by recent floods. OK.....detour is north.....maybe a few miles. Nope! The detour is back north 20 miles to the road I didn't take. Then across and then 20 miles south to Kingfisher, OK. Dang. 40 miles extra and 40 minutes wasted and all of it in Logan County – which I had run thoroughly before. Well, at least I had time to hunt for mobiles while I putted along at 65 on the two lane roads. You don't need 40 mile detours and 40 minute delays when you have a full schedule.

Eventually I was back on course and headed west through Blaine, hit the corner of Dewey, Custer, then south for a while down to Kiowa, then east. I ran Blaine on the run. Hard to do the hand logging with all the state/county info. Well, if I worked you once, I just log the call – I can fill in WI Burn and IL Iroq later from the stations that work me every county. I moved along. Lunch at a Subway quick. Lots of miles to cover. You can buy 100% gas in lots of stations. The car is a lot happier getting 33 mpg on 'real gas'. No ethanol contamination.

It was already getting late. I got to the C/L of Grady/Comanche – ran it – then punched in 'home' on the GPS and it said if I didn't stop I'd be home by 8:10 pm. Two hundred miles. Ouch – and that the direct way with no detours through Marshall. Oh well. I was having 'too much fun'. Too many stops to run. It was time to zip home. So it was over to the interstate, then south into TX. I had to cut out several counties. Shut down the radio the last hour. After 7pm local, 20m shut down and 40m was noisy as heck along the built up interstate.

Conditions were pretty bad most of the contest period, but I worked from 12 to 30 people a county – depending if the spot showed up! No spot – few people. The contest is mainly 20M, but I worked W0GXQ up in ND on 40m in a few. Not usually that many on 40M, though. Few came to 40m if no spot – and no coverage in most of OK out west except on the interstates and in the larger cities.

I'll have a full report on the CW Contest next month. Time to get this off to press. Didn't take any pictures at the hamfest or along the way – nothing interesting to see. If you went mobile, send me a report for next month's newsletter!

County Sign Database II

Work continues with more and more added to the database each month. Several added pics this month including WY0A, N2JNE, W0ZQ and KN4Y.



WY0A – Wilcox AL



W0ZQ – Dakota MN



Lackawanna PA – by N2JNE



KN4Y – Walton, FL

The count is now up to 2867 and still room for additions! There's a little over 200 now missing and needed to get us to 'all' of them!

Awards Issued

4 th Time #165	Barry, N0KV	7/3/2015
CW II #143	Gene, K5GE	7.16.15
Bingo II #96	Kerry, W4SIG	7.12.15,
Bingo II #97	Mary, AB7NK	7.19.15,
Master Gold #65	Ed, K8ZZ	6/26/2015
Master Gold #66	Mary, AB7NK	7.20.15
Master Gold #67	Jack, WD4OIN	7.22.15
Five Star #70	Bill, WG9A	7.20.15
Five Star #71	Bob, KA9JAC	7.25.15
Mobile Diamond #7	Terry, WQ7A	7.21.15

Events for County Hunters

Now it is time for the late summer/fall QSO Party season and some good ones to start out. It would be nice if we could get a mobile or two or three out for the MDC QSO Party this year. KS is always good, and maybe all of HI will be on the air, plus a few more of their 'multipliers' such as Ford Island (KH6BB). Maybe Kalawao again? OH has lots of fixed station activity plus mobiles down on 40/80m. KS has been good the past few years.

Aug 8 1600z- aug 9 2359z

Maryland-DC QSO Party

CW, Dig

MD: class, county. Non-MD: class, SPC

mdcqsoparty.w3vpr.org

Aug 22 0400z to 24 0400z

Hawaii QSO Party

CW, Dig

RS(T), QTH ID

www.hiqsoparty.org

Aug 22 1600z aug 23 0400z

Ohio QSO Party

CW, Ph

RS(T), county, or SPC

www.ohqp.org/adminRules.htm

Aug 29 1400z Aug 30 2000z

Kansas QSO Party

CW, Ph, Dig

RS(T), county, or SPC

www.ksqsoparty.org

It helps to check out the web pages and get the abbreviations for the counties – seems they are all a bit different with some 3 letters, some four letters, and of course, bonus stations to chase in some of them!

County Hunter 3M - October

3M – Mini in Murfreesboro The MMM will be held in Murfreesboro, TN October 8-11. Hotel will be the Clarion (previously Holidome) at 2227 Old Fort Parkway.

Cracker Barrel next door plus other places for meals. Pets are free... remind them so you get an outside room. Everyone invited.

Reservations at: 615-896-2420 . Friday lunch group at Mary BoBos being planned as well. You do not have to be an Old Timer to attend..... just be a friendly face wanting to meet other kindred spirits and honor Bill Bell... KM4W.... who initiated this meeting and ran it for 25 years.

The 3M folks will gather in Murfreesboro, TN October 8-9-10-11 for several days of world class rag-chewing and eye-ball qso's. We have reserved outside rooms so you can unload direct from your cars to your rooms.... or you may request a second floor and/or interior room if you prefer... all at our same \$80/night rate that includes a super hot buffet breakfast. Note also, they have waived their pet fees... but you MUST have an outside room with a pet.

I have also just learned they have a few special rooms dedicated for smokers if you still enjoy that weed. The Cracker Barrel is located just a 100 yards away as are several other fast food spots.... other restaurants are within a mile or so and the hotel, The CLARION is located just off I-24 in Central Murfreesboro. There is a large interior atrium area with a pool for our social activities and we have the deck and a social room for our pleasure as well. Perhaps we can entice a few of the musically inclined to entertain us once again with their renditions of some songs????

Or how about some full-contact Backgammon???

K5KDG, Steve, is taking the reservations for Mary BoBos which at your choice can include a free visit to the one and only Jack Daniels Distillery and if you golf... bring those sticks along..... maybe we can get Gene, N4ANV to lead us around the course once again???? and the shoppers best save some room for some world class shopping as well...

Info available from KA3DRO, N8EMV. This event is NOT sponsored by MARAC.

Reservations must mention "HAM RADIO 3M Reunion "..... that's the way the group is in their computer and appears the only way their reservations clerk can give the \$80 room rate and outside rooms in our block.... also note... Pet Fee waived for our group.... and to have anyone who prefers a second floor or inside room to mention this to the reservations clerk.... they get our rate, which includes the hot breakfast buffet..

This is open to ALL (OK... almost all !) COUNTY HUNTERS.... Thanks/ 73/Ron

NOTE: Use the term " HAM RADIO 3M REUNION" and this will get you right in to our reservation block. The computer they use is kinda specific ! phone: 615-896-2420

Note2: For those interested in attending the 3m mini this year and want to go to Mary Bobo's on Friday October 9, 2015 this is the telephone number. Area 931-759-7394. Tell the person that answers the phone you are with the Ham Radio Group. We have reservations for 1 P.M. They suggest we arrive before 12:30 P.M. Everyone has always enjoyed Mary Bobo's in the past so should be fun time with lots of great food. Price will be, as of this time, \$20.81 each and the meal is, for our group, set for the 1 PM serving time. Remind them you will be with the Old Time Radio Operators group to be seated with fellow County Hunters.

Hope to see a lot of you there. STEVE AND WILLA K 5 K D G - - -

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Time to sign up! Let's see if we can reach 100 people there!