

County Hunter News

December 2020
Volume 16 Issue12

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

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

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

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.124.5, 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://marac.org/awards.pdf>

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – We got sunspots! The sun has finally come alive and the sunspot number was in the 30s toward the end of the month, with the SFI near 100 also. There were a few days of no sunspots, but most days during the month had them. Things were really peaking up at month's end.

The bands have come alive! 17M and 15 have perked up. 10M should be not far off. Who knows where this will wind up?

2) County Hunter Frequency – the county hunters have, in the past, held on to certain frequencies as 'net frequencies'. Without a couple loud stations on 20M SSB, it's going to be tough to claim 14.336 unless we get a whole lot of mobile activity. The amount of Parks on the Air activity is skyrocketing often with 15 or 20 'activations' a day, and these folks squeeze in wherever they can, and often sit for several hours on an 'empty' frequency. To date, 14.336 plus or minus is one of those usually 'empty' frequencies. Same for CW – 14056.5 is often occupied by 'someone' whether it be a SKCC (Straight Key Club), park activator, rag chewer, etc. So far, not a problem on 30M, but same on 7.0565. It's use it or lose it I guess. Some of those park activators set up decent antennas (dipoles, inverted vees, full length verticals, etc) , and run with 100w. They might work 100-150 stations in several hours before moving on.

3) **COVID** – several county hunters have died from it, and several others are facing months of 'recovery' from it. Often, especially for seniors, you can wind up with debilitating after effects that last MONTHS. You really don't want to catch this. Fortunately, several vaccines are about to hit the streets, so think carefully of being near the front of the line to get your shots if possible after medical folks, first responders, teachers, etc.

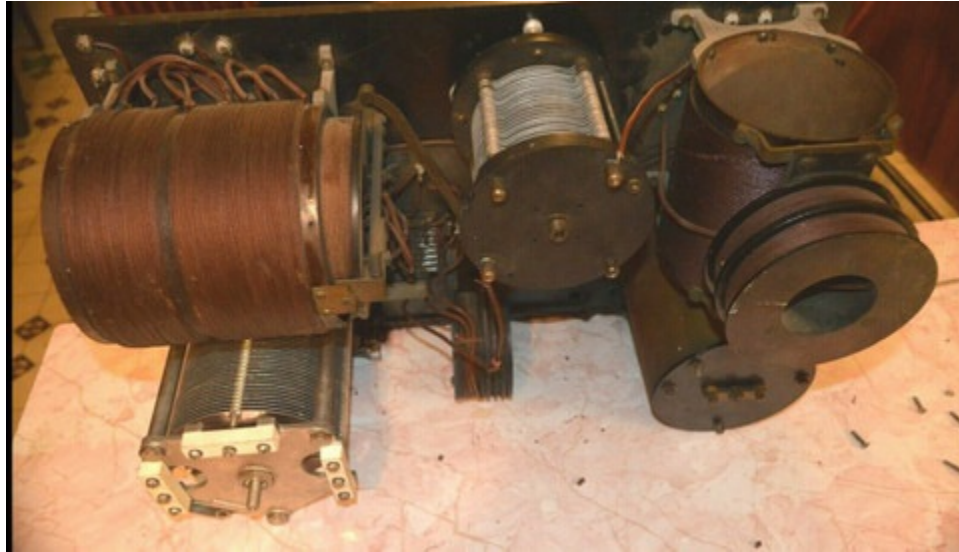
For those who are anti-vaxxers – well, you're entitled to be a candidate for the annual Darwin Award.

[Darwin Awards: Evolution In Action](#)

On the Trail of Regens

This is not a regen – but still an interesting radio. Made for the US Navy – Department of Steam Engineering, it's a very early wireless set that tunes from 30 KHz to 300 KHz – long wave – used at the time for sea going communications – and spark gap transmission and reception. Big antennas! Before 1922 or so. WW1.





This is just the 'tuner' part of the receiving setup. You'd need a separate detector, which could be a crystal (catwhisker type) or primitive tube detector. It's long wave – like 30 KHz to 300 KHz.

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from the Ebay Description:

Here up for bid is this circa 1918 NESCO CN-240 radio receiver from WW1. This was built for WW1 by National Electric Supply Co.(NESCO). The mahogany 1/2 inch thick wood case is solid, and has the latching front lid. The front panel is clean and has no damage. The chassis looks mostly complete. The Crystal/Tube selector switch is missing behind the middle of the front panel, the knob is there on the front so it's hard to tell unless you look inside. These radios used either an external tube detector, or external crystal detector to receive stations. The radio receives from 1000-10,000 meters. Look at my photos to see what you are bidding on. This is from my personal collection. It has a very cool etched front panel to show how connections are made. This radio displays quite well and looks amazing for 103 years

old. The radio is very heavy, and measures 23.5 inches long, 15 inches high, and 12 inches deep. Low \$899 starting bid, (considerably less than I paid of course:). You can also use the \$1795 "Buy It Now" if it is still there, it disappears with a bid. This radio is not perfect, but displays like a \$6000 one. At one time these brought over \$5000 in auction. Buyer pays \$85 shipping to 48 states

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Value of many early sets is dropping off after a peak 10-20 years ago. Many collectors are selling out their collections and fewer and fewer new folks jumping into collecting the old sets. Still, this is a rare radio!

AI5P Trip Report

Today's activation was at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (K-2206) in Colorado. The refuge is a 15,988-acre area located about 8 miles NE of downtown Denver. The refuge is on the grounds of the former Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a U.S. Army chemical manufacturing facility. The site was designated a NWR in 1992 and underwent a costly environmental cleanup to remove pollutants. It is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and more than 330 species of wildlife inhabit the refuge. A total of 41 Q' s made it into the log.

73 de Rick AI5P



On the Road with N4CD

Once again, the road didn't go to far. With several county hunters dead from COVID, and several in the hospital for over a month each – this is not the time to be out on long trips anywhere. Indeed, I just read a report where a cluster of cases was traced back to a hotel cleaner – who cleaned the common areas and individual rooms in a large well known hotel chain. Ouch! - Cases are escalating to all time records. The majority of county hunters are 'seniors' in the most vulnerable categories for risk.

So....with that in mind, there were a lot of trips to Spring Creek State Forest preserve for the ARRL Sweepstakes weekend, the weekly CWT on Wednesdays, and some other weekends just to get out of the house. Over 90% of the parks in TX are either a 8-10 hour round trip to get to and from, or are even further away requiring overnight stay somewhere.

So....some recap – the ARRL CW Sweepstakes occurs the first full weekend in Nov. Headed over to Spring Creek State Forest Preserve and put 110Qs in the log in a few hours. Many CH and Park Hunters were participating. Caught a few Park to Park

contacts on 30m and SSB. CW was real busy with folks making over 1,000 contacts during the contest. For this, it's a long exchange of serial number, power level, date first licensed, and section. Most are going along at 25 wpm or faster.

Got tired of my local park on Nov 21, so headed to Bonham State Park – KFF-2991 – about 60 miles NE of my QTH. Spent 2 hours there putting it out from Fannin County, then shifted over to the Sam Rayburn House nearby K-6601 for another couple dozen. Bonham SP has had over 3,000 contacts already. Probably the second or third most activated park after Spring Creek (and that thanks to N4CD- and it now has over 11,000 QSOs from there). The parks around Dallas are run by half a dozen activators who can't get much further without overnight stays – or very long drives - hi hi.

I'm usually at KFF-4423 Spring Creek every Wednesday for the CWT working on getting 100,000 QSOs logged for Parks on the Air. Now at near 96,000 QSOs uploaded. Each week I work about 45-55 stations in the CWT in an hour – all search and pounce. You can work 30-35 states easily – and maybe some DX. If you're up northeast, you can log a dozen or two EU stations who participate. Don't have to be a member to join in the fun – just send name and state. Once a month is 'slow day' where speeds are no more than 20 wpm. Otherwise, folks zip along at 25+ wpm but it's all short contacts.

Two weeks after CW SS is the ARRL SS SSB contest – which is a lot more crowded and tougher for a mobile to get heard. Spent 2 hours over in the park on Sunday and put 55 in the log. Chased some parks and worked one on 17M SSB back in the MDC area, and a few on CW including KA3QLF down in LA. Recognized a bunch of calls as active CH (N8OYY and several others in there at contest stations). Lots of QRM. Caught just a few on 15M SSB. Tried calling CQ SS but no takers. Signals not great other than one or two loud stations on 15 at this point.

Spent another Wednesday at Spring Creek and put over 150 in the log. Worked 15 stations on 15M CW, about the same on 17M cw, and a whole bunch on 20M CW. Caught 50 stations in the CWT from 1-2pm local time. Tried 10M but only worked two there – one in CA and one in Chile (CE2) on CW. Skip still long and flaky on 10M but the 10M contest should be interesting in December for the first time in years! 20M was very good with shorter skip.

I'll be putting out local parks for a while. Maybe, just maybe, an overnight trip somewhere. It's hard not to get 'cabin fever' as an active mobile – hi hi. Then again, when I read the paper or watch TV, with ever increasing numbers of cases, hospitals straining to keep up, that urge to travel just disappears quickly. Worst hit are rural

hospitals, too.

Mobile Activity in November

Activity sparse but still interesting as several mobiles hit the road on trips. It wasn't like a normal November with long trips to grandma's house!

At the beginning of the month, Rick, AI5P, was spotted in Douglas County, CO

Kerri, KB3WAV, was busy putting out parks in MD, WV, and PA – sometimes spotted herself on CH.W6RK.COM

FT-8 stations were spotted a couple times a week – some in AK districts, too. (KL7DG in Second, AK)

Scott, KA3QLF, put out several parks in several parishes in LA on several days.

Ron, KB6UF, put out counties in LA.

Alan, W8OP, was busy running counties in NC. Then headed back to WV.

Bill, K0DEQ, ran counties in MO

Bob, N8KIE, activated Honolulu, HI. (no island hopping planned this year. BTW- Kalawao County HI is now the ONLY county in the USA with no COVID cases!).

Seth, N3MRA, was spotted in OK, AR, and TX counties.

Kerry, W4SIG, spotted in many MS counties.

End date 11 /25/2020

Bands Picking Up

Headed over the my local park (not a POTA park) to play with some mobile antennas and tuned up the 12m resonator on Turkey Day. Yay! Made 3 cw contacts on 12 cw mid afternoon – 2 in CA, one in Brazil. Heard a few 12M SSB rag chews - PA and CA. Band is picking up. The CW frequency there is 24.915.5 and on 10M it's 28056.5. I'll be putting out parks/counties on those freqs if things continue. The sunspot number was over 30 and SFI up to 100! Lots of DX spotted on 17 and 12 just before the DX CW contest but I was not hearing most of them at the times I'm on.

Worked a park on 15M back in PA on SSB. Heard a half dozen PY's and ZF2 coming in strong on CW.

If you got those 15, 12 and 10M resonators squirreled away, you might think about dusting them off and using them once again. Watch the spots and turn the bandswitch to those bands. If you don't have a 12M antenna, often a 10M one will work using an antenna tuner – not much gain, but usable.

12M FT-8 frequency was a loud buzz saw....folks are jumping on the band.

Solar-Terrestrial Data - click to add to web site						
26 Nov 2020 2100 GMT	Condition	K-In	A-In	Calculated Conditions		
SFI: 105 SN: 40	Quiet	0-2	0-7	Band	Day	Night
A-Index: 7	Unsettled	3	8-15	80n-40n:	Fair	Good
K-Index: 2 / Plntry	Active	4	16-29	30n-20n:	Good	Good
X-Ray: B4.1	Minor storm	5	30-49	17n-15n:	Fair	Fair
304A: 114.7 @ SEM	Major storm	6	50-99	12n-10n:	Poor	Poor
	Severe storm	7-9	>100	Sig Noise Lvl:	S1-S2	
SFI>180 A<8 K<3=E-W open SFI>180 A<8 K>3=N-S open SFI>250 A>30 K>3=Aurora						
http://www.n0nbh.com - Copyright Paul L Herrman 2010						

Keep in mind we had a year of SFI between 64 and 70 – and zero sunspots!

On the Road with N4CD II

Got bored sitting at home, so jumped in the N4CD mobile and headed on down to two parks 125 miles south of the QTH. I thought traffic would be light on this sort of holiday day (day after Thanksgiving) and it was. I left at just before 7am (1300z) – the sun wasn't up yet but was trying. 64F and clear skies. Hmm...noted that right front headlight wasn't working. Oh well, something else to fix. Lots of hours on those headlights since I have them on all the time to keep the voltage up on the Malibu. If you turn them off, the car voltage drops to 12.7v which does not keep the radio happy.

Headed on down the 8 lane US75 to the Beltway – and it's six lanes wide from there to downtown Dallas. Zipped along at 65-75 mph (speed limit mostly 70) and scooted out the south side of Dallas on I-45 (six lanes) for the next 75 miles down to the turn off for Mexia, TX. Zipped along at 75 mph with light traffic and almost no trucks on the road. Maybe one truck for every 30 cars. Bands were pretty dead early in the morning – tuned across them and heard very little.

Got to the first park at 1442z. I've been there once before since it became a POTA park at the early part of the year. Only one activator has been there beside me.

Confederate Reunion Grounds Historic Site K-6549

You'll recall Texas fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War sending regiments to fight at battles in Tennessee and elsewhere.



From the state web site:

On the edge of the Navasota River, Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site commemorates a place where Confederate Civil War veterans and families reunited from 1889–1946. Today, it remains a gathering place for living history events and family reunions, and features an 1902 dance pavilion, Civil War-era cannon, and ruins of structures from the “Roaring ‘20s” and Mexia Oil Boom.

Historically, the area was a point of transition and crossroads for several Native American groups including the Caddo, Tonkawa, Tehuacana (Wichita) and Comanche. Bison herds roamed the grasses of the Blackland Prairie, the edge of their southern and eastern range.

Beginning in the 1880s, Civil War veterans, Union and Confederate alike, wished to celebrate the camaraderie and memory of their war experiences and sacrifices. In spite of the strife and hardships of post-war Reconstruction, a strong sense of brotherhood persisted. Small groups of Limestone County Confederate veterans met informally to socialize and reminisce, and in 1888 they began meeting annually in the spot where Jack's Creek enters the Navasota River, known then as the “Pen Campmeeting Grounds.”

— From the 1889 Constitution of Camp 94 UCV

People attending the annual reunions, held in late July or early August under a full moon, arrived by horse, buggy and special trains from Dallas and Houston. The camp financed the purchase of the reunion grounds by selling camping lots to the veterans and their families. Families built summer cottages or camped in tents or brush arbors and planted crepe myrtle and irises, some of which still bloom at the site each spring. Each day at dawn and dusk, veterans proudly fired Old Val Verde, one of two Union cannons (both of them Ordnance Rifles) captured by Confederates at the battle of Mansfield, Louisiana in 1864. These guns saw action for the Confederates in the Louisiana campaigns with the Valverde Battery. At the end of the war, Captain T.D. Nettles buried the two cannons under a buggy house in nearby Fairfield rather than surrender them to Union troops. Today, the one known as Old Val Verde is on display beneath the flagpoles at the center of the site.

During the reunions, veterans eulogized those soldiers who, in the words of General Stonewall Jackson, had “cross[ed] over the river and [now] rest under the trees.” The gatherings also included parades, brass band concerts, patriotic speeches, games and traditional southern foods. Attendees danced the nights away on the wooden floor of the

pavilion, which is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its unusual architecture.

In 1892, veterans and families began purchasing lots at \$5 each to pay for the first 20 acres of land purchased by Camp 94 UCV for a sum of \$200 from the Mexia family. Each purchaser received a deed for camping privileges at the reunions. Added to the 20 acres purchased in 1892, were tracts purchased from several individuals including African American families who had worked the fields as former slaves or who had migrated to the area after Emancipation.

By the end of World War I, the gatherings continued but on a smaller scale. In 1946, the charter of Camp 94 expired and the grounds fell into disuse. In 1965, the Joseph E. Johnston Camp No. 94, C.S.A. was permanently chartered as a nonprofit corporation; and in September 1983, the corporation donated the Confederate Reunion Grounds to the state of Texas. The Confederate Reunion Grounds continues to serve as a gathering place today.

Did You Know?

As many as 7,000 people attended the annual reunions held at the Confederate Reunion Grounds.

Although no Civil War battles were fought in Central Texas, three out of every four free men in the county served in the Confederate Army. One in two Confederate soldiers became casualties of the war: killed, wounded, missing or by developing chronic conditions that led to eventual death.

In November 1920, wildcatter Albert E. Humphreys struck oil in Limestone County and Mexia became a boomtown at the center of one of the largest oil fields in the world. Affectionately known as "The Colonel," Humphreys was a devotee of Confederate history. While other Texas reunion grounds faded away with the demise of older veterans, Humphreys brought improvements and a surge of renewed activity to the Confederate Reunion Grounds, including the Pure Oil Company clubhouse and a large bathhouse on the creek.

The 1920s pump house was equipped with a 55,000 barrel standpipe, water tank and water system that supplied water to the oil drilling rigs of the Pure Oil Company. Current equipment in the pump house includes a Cooper-Bessemer gas engine and a Goulds (or Buda) pump."

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Due to the fortuitous Texas Oil boom, the property was preserved and donated to the State of Texas. I had a good run here – only needed 10 QSOs for a POTA activation but put 50 in the log.

Nearby is **Fort Parker KFF-3010/K-3010**



from the web:

Parker's Fort - The John Parker family established Parker's Fort in 1833. The fort was the site of a well-known Comanche Indian raid in May 1836, in which the Comanche captured 12-year old Cynthia Ann Parker. She was the mother of the last great Comanche chief, Quanah Parker.

The Civilian Conservation Corps built a replica of the fort, now known as Old Fort Parker, as a 1936 centennial project.

The park encompasses the historic town of Springfield, established in 1838. When Limestone County was created in 1847, Springfield was its first county seat. At its peak, Springfield's population was greater than either Dallas or Houston. [A large number of men went off to fight in the Civil War and businesses shut down. Many did

not return.] Springfield began to fade away in the early 1870s after the railroad bypassed the town and the courthouse burned. Springfield soon became a ghost town. Only the cemetery remains. It is the final resting place of many East Texas pioneers, including an American Revolutionary War veteran and two veterans of the Battle of San Jacinto.

Fort Parker State Park came to be in 1935. The city of Mexia and three local landowners donated about 1,500 acres of land for the park. African-American men with the Civilian Conservation Corps built the park from 1935 to 1942. They completed a dam across the Navasota River in 1939, creating Fort Parker Lake.”

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Texas has a dozen or more 'frontier forts' for the Indian Wars as settlers moved in and 'conflicted' with existing roaming tribes. Several more have been added as new historic sites in the POTA system so I'd have to get to them one of these days – all out west.

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Left the park at 1831Z and headed on home. A bit more traffic and moderate traffic headed into Dallas and to the north but still made good time. Not many trucks on the road – and six lanes (3 each way). The speed limit is 70 and 75 mph but traffic was moving 80-85 mph. Had to keep eyes on road at those speeds but did try to put out Navarro after W8OP/m finished – but everyone disappeared. Sorry, folks, I'm not going to be spotting myself while zipping along at 83 mph on the highway! No one came back in 3 or 4 minutes of calling on 14056.5 despite having heard a dozen work W8OP.

Worked 107Qs at K-6549 and 72Qs at K/KFF-3010.

Likely a few more day trips a bit further out to relieve the boredom here – hi hi. Staying home is not all that fun – but what is necessary these days.

Thanks for the Qs. See you next trip.

Awards Issued

Bingo, #374	WA4EEZ, Leslie	9/10/2020
Cliff Corne {Polaris) Level #250 #484	KA2LHO, Kraig	10/14 20
Jack Scroggins (Gemini) Level 100 #179	KA2LHO, Kraig	10/14/2020.
Single Band Level 2000 #1	KA2LHO, Kraig	10/14 20
USA-CA third time #260	K2MF, Barry	10/19/2020
Ran All State FL #42	KC6AWX, Bob	9/23/2000
Ran All State FL #41	K4YT, Karl	4/10/2019
Ran All State DE #75	K4YT, Karl	2/28/2011
Ran All State ME #38	K4YT, Karl	9/2/2015
Ran All State NH #40	K4YT, Karl	9/2/2015
Ran All State NJ #29	K4YT, Karl	10/24/2020
Ran All State TN #27	K4YT, Karl	8/4/2016
County Challenge Level 21 #1	K5GE, Gene	6/13/2020

Events for County Hunters

December is the month for contests – but not state QSO Parties.

Dec 4 - 160M ARRL contest

Dec 12 ARRL 10M contest

There's a half dozen EU contests – and lots of QRP Sprint type events.

See the whole list at:

[December 2020 Corral.pdf \(arri.org\)](#)

Jan 1, 2021 is Straight Key Night (bugs allowed).

That's all folks – short one this month. Happy Holidays