

County Hunter News OnLine

February 2024
Volume 20 Issue 2

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

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

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

CW County Hunter Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now occasionally on 7188 KHz. The CW folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB . (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

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

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – Wow! Sunspots up near 200 at times – but lots of solar activity with high K index. Loads of opportunities for counties using Parks on the Air stations – dozens of them every weekend and a dozen or more every day.

High sunspot numbers give 'fair' conditions on 20 and good on 15 and 10m. In November, many days that 15 and up rated 'good'. Toward the end of November, sunspot numbers were 196! Conditions weren't great but once things improve, should be lots of fun on 10m. Folks working skip on 10M, too. Now, days of 100+ sunspot numbers.

In December, lots of activity on 10M. Some days good, some not so good. Most days there is skip to somewhere. It continued into January. 10M FT-8 always busy – you can check band conditions just tuning across the FT-8 frequency – often S9.

January had good days and poor days on 10M. Lots of FT-8 there all the time. Newcomers can work DXCC in a weekend if they try.

2) Parks on the Air

On any weekend, 20m is filled end to end with Parks on the Air (POTA) stations. Every 3 KHz from 14.225 to 14.337 and sometimes on top of each other. Some even below 14.225 down to 14.150 (extra band). They are in counties – but sometimes you have to do a bit of sleuthing to figure out what county. Some 'parks' like trails go through a couple dozen counties, too, so the only way to get that info is from the activator him/herself

You can check the list at countyhunter.com for a cross reference list. It goes by KFF number for the WWFF program, but the second column is the K number. It lists the county.

Many upload to QRZ and LotW quite often do not include the correct county – having default to their home county.

3) Dayton Hamvention

Once again, the good ham volunteers (by the hundreds) in the Dayton Area will be putting on the annual Hamvention in Xenia and the Greene County Fairgrounds. If you plan on going, get your reservations in. Usually quite crowded everywhere. Sadly there's no County Hunter Forum any longer (hasn't been one in , what, 10 years?) and no county hunter get together after. Half the restaurants we used are shut down. Many do partake of various other get togethers including the QRP folks at the Four Days in May annual event, the CWT folks /dinner, various DX clubs, ARRL Donor Dinner, ARRL DX Dinner, Parks on the Air meet up and usual QSY to a restaurant for more yakking, etc. N4CD is set to go this year. Mike, KA4RRU and Kyle, WA4PGM will have a flea market table. Who else is going? MARAC has had a booth inside for the past couple years with Lowell and Sandra spending a lot of time there.

4) Orlando Hamfest – a Big hamfest is scheduled in February for Orlando. One of largest in country. Lots will be going

5) Michigan MINI - time to sign up

The 2024 Michigan Mini will be Hosted by Dorie, N8WTQ • April 25 – 27

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

Room rates of: \$129.00 plus tax per night if reserved by Monday, March 22, 2024

6) National Convention

Wednesday October 9 to Saturday Oct. 12, 2024

Best Western Plus- Bridgeport Inn
100 Lodgeville Road
Bridgeport, WV 26330

Convention Rate: \$90.00 plus approximately 13% tax (now) for King, Double, or handicap accessible rooms

Reservations: 304-842-5411- Individual call-in and pay basis, ask for Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club rate.

All reservations must be received by Sept 25, 2024.

Mobile Diamond #13 - W0GXQ

On December 28, 2023, AB7RW, the MARAC Awards Chairman, announced that Jerry, W0GXQ had earned the MOBILE DIAMOND AWARD.

As of this date, it is the top award ever issued for mobile operators. Over 50 years of county hunting, only 12 others have accomplished this award. It's not easy to get and you won't get it sitting in your easy chair at home.

Let's review what it takes to get to this level. First, you've got to earn your USACA from CQ Magazine (all contacts confirmed). Then on to Bingo (Maser County Hunter Award). Then earn Master Gold Award – which requires 1500 points along with working someone with Bingo in each county or from each county yourself.

Once you've reached that level, it's on to Master Platinum – where you have to run at least 500 counties (and work someone with MG from each of those 500 counties). That includes Kalawao and Second District, too! That, plus working someone with MG in each of the counties. You can actually start this part of the requirement from day 1 of your county hunting log. (an anomaly in the awards rules).

If you're still eager to go, for Mobile Diamond, you've got to run 500 counties again,

working someone with MP from each of those counties, plus work someone in each of the 3077 counties with MP (or from counties). Including, of course, Kalawao and Second AK, along with Nantucket, Dukes, Island WA, etc).

Jerry got his USACA #1006 in year 2000.

Bingo earned in 2004

Master Gold in 2008

Master Platinum 2011

Mobile Diamond 2023

There is one more challenge out there for mobile ops– Double Diamond. So far, no one has earned it. Once again, you've got to run 500 counties again, working someone with Mobile Diamond from each of those counties, plus work someone in each of the 3077 counties with MD. (or from a county).

USACA Award

some comments from the County Hunter Forum:

W5VS: With the rumors swirling of CQ's demise, I was curious, if CQ ceases operation, how that may affect the USA-CA award. As someone who hasn't completed my first award, I would be interested in any thoughts the 'veteran' CH'ers may have.

KC3X: If CQ no longer offers the award then it is a moot point.

W4SIG: !!! VERY IMPORTANT topic which the MARAC Board has been discussing for months. Could our club assume the USACA award program if CQ Magazine ceases to exist? How would we advertise and promote it (very key!)? Would we still require written confirmations? The USACA award for many years was the direct line to bringing new members to the club with all our follow-on awards. However the USACA award has had virtually zero mention in CQ magazine for almost a decade. As discussed at the last MARAC National, 99% of the most recent applications for USACA have been from Japanese stations, all digital contacts, all at the 500 county level. Without some ability to

advertise and promote the award other than word of mouth and RoadRunner newsletter (which only goes to current members that already know about it), how can it be successful? Should we approach ARRL about a partnership in promoting the USACA award with a tie-in to their POTA? Sure would be nice if POTA spotting page included a field for the county. Fortunately, we have Logger already written that allows a member to track and apply for our awards which is a very valuable tool to offer. There IS a cost to an award program even if it is online. Someone has to write and maintain the software and pay a website provider to host the software. (Thanks K3IMC for your service!!) Bottom line is we need to brainstorm ideas in order to salvage the USACA program any way we can.

K2MF: I am really glad the MARAC BOD is discussing this... I had a lengthy conversation with Brian NXØX recently, and I have already produced a workbook that is designed to assist the next custodian with record keeping if it is wanted. In order to populate it fully, I would have have JPGs of all of the pages in the current records to do that. What you say?

Unfortunately, ALL of the USA-CA Custodian records PRIOR to 12/3/1997 that were ENTIRELY on paper were lost and never recovered. The Custodian at the time DID (however), have a record of the serial numbers for all of the levels (500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500 and 3000) so new paper records were simply started on that date, picking up with whatever the next serial number was at the time, so that has never been broken. The records continued to be kept on paper ever since! It was scary to me that I personally have what is probably the most comprehensive USA-CA-3077 award list in Excel format in existence.

Brian made clear to me that the most time consuming part of the job was issuing the USA-CA-500 certificates to DX stations, because that is mostly what they want, and as you pointed out, the Japan hams seem to have the most interest in obtaining the certificate. Once that is obtained, DX activity decreases substantially. It appears to all be about the certificate.

So perhaps we could combine the best parts of the talent that we have in the club and with a group effort the MARAC could take on the USA-CA award if CQ Magazine lets it go.

N4CD: POTA Awards are unnumbered. No one cares when you work all 50 states with a park - you got that checked off on your 'status page' along with a listing of parks

activated and parks worked. YOU can call up your worked park list, or activated park list on line. So about the only thing that matters is a certificate when you reach a certain level. There is a short list of top activators and top park chasers but that's about it. No one really cares if you have worked 800 parks or 1123 parks other than the individual. No one will 'work all parks'. I've got like 60 park chasing/activating awards. They start at 10 parks.

Japanese do the digital (and verify on eQSL which is accepted by CQ Mag). Do 500 and are happy to get the nice certificate to hang on the wall. Some stick around for 1000 counties but as you know, probably not even 1000 active counties these days for the JAs to work during short skip time (2 hours morn/2 hours evening). Even in US, hard to work 1000 counties without state QSO Parties these days.

Unless someone dies and leaves ARRL a million dollars to develop LoTW for counties, it's not going to happen. (and that would only be after CQ vaporizes and disappears)

KM6HB: COTA, Counties on the air would be a nice parallel program to POTA. I know little if anything about software programming, website hosting etc. so a simple idea probably isn't so simple. One thing is for sure county hunting isn't growing. New easy to use formats for award hunting are needed that appeal to the masses. It should also be considered using a long term historical view if MARAC has the clout to host USA CA. This includes motivated individuals that would administer the program and its potential volume if a COTA program was started. I have found POTA and WWFF administrators very responsive to a few issues I have had. ARRL hasn't shown much if any interest in county hunting. It is a bit surprising that they haven't hosted an on the air event for county hunting along the lines of the original POTA or grid chasing etc. Probably LoTW and award tracking related.

K8OOK: written confirmations is always a turn-off when I try to sell county hunting, but..... how else do we maintain integrity? I believe someone contacted ARRL about adding the county hunting program to the LoTW many years ago but nothing happened.

W9OO: Obviously simplified digital confirmations are the way to go--many options there. POTA does superbly with their system, with the activator uploading contacts--no need for LoTW/eQSL "paperwork," but that's a closed system. (i.e. we allow QSOs outside our system). Not requiring some sort of confirmation will simply open the door for integrity issues--which have been significant at times in CHing.

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Comments de N4CD

For quite a few years, CQ Magazine has been trying to get an 'interface' to LoTW for county hunting awards, but ARRL is looking for upfront money to pay developers to create that interface

CQ Magazine does have an interface to LoTW for the basic WPX award (500 prefixes) but CQ Magazine has to pay LoTW a fee each time a database search is made for an award verification. Not sure about WAZ.

Obviously with CQ Magazine facing continuing financing problems, an interface to LoTW for county hunting is not going to happen unless some county hunter dies and leaves them \$30,000 or so for the interface – assuming CQ Magazine continues on with no financial issues. That development would also require LoTW to track counties, which it doesn't do these days. You can dig out each individual QSO and the county (if uploaded). Even if you, CQ Magazine won't accept them today unless you get written confirmation. It will accept eQSLs, but just about zero county hunters upload there.

Then the real issues are:

1) If CQ Magazine continues – but still requires written confirmation/eQSLs, it will soon be near impossible to attract new blood to county hunting. With POTA, SOTA, eQSL, QRZ awards, and LoTW for ARRL awards – all electronic, the computer literate folks want electronic databases, electronic confirmations, electronic awards. There are at least a dozen major 'activities' in ham radio from chasing DX, from 'contesting', to public safety work (Storm watch – SKYWARN, , local patrols, repeaters and 2m, VHF/UHF challenges, SOTA, IOTA, State QSO Parties, Rag chewing, Nets of 40 varieties, Award chasing, etc. County hunting is a small subset.

Only if some database program acceptable to CQ were to be developed, then you might have a chance to continue with CQ Magazine. Since CQ is like ARRL in requiring both parties to sign off on QSO (both upload data or get QSL card, written MRC, or equivalent), I don't think a POTA like system with only uploaders providing the QSO data would fly. However, this isn't much different than the current MRC situation now. If a station 'thinks' he worked the mobile, it's probably 99% likely he did. (I find very few 'errors' and NIL for county hunting these days). Of course, if I uploaded my log

like POTA, if he weren't in the log....he wouldn't get credit. Simple.

Now, some county hunters were very very meticulous. If you didn't have matching signal reports.....like a 4x2, then you're not in the log. There were a few who gave out such signal reports and if you weren't 100% right, the MRC would come back. Most didn't worry about that. Every electronic database doesn't even track signal reports. LoTW, POTA, likely SOTA, IOTA....so that becomes irrelevant.

That single ended QSO data would be different from all the other award programs CQ Magazine have like WPX and WAZ. Then again, you have to wait, sometimes YEARS for that confirmation to come back.

2) IF CQ Magazine no longer supports the USACA Awards, or no longer has the resources to 'continue', then it's a whole new ball game.

The ARRL likely would not want to get involved. It's a whole mess for them with 3077 counties (think of the poor ARRL card checkers), with 'county lines', with definition of a 'county line', etc. They can't handle a county line even if you are on one.

For example, some state QSO parties play loose with the definition of a county line. In AR, it's probably half a mile. In TX, it's 'where you can see the county line marker' if you can't park on it. In IL and AR and TX , you can run 3 and 4 way lines.

You might be able to create a system like POTA, but it will not be a simple issue. POTA allows 'two fers' and up, but has no cross checking – some activators likely run non-fers but claim it. There are many new folks to POTA and a bunch of screw ups requiring constant help from the 'help desk'. There are THOUSANDS of activators now- Maybe 10,000. Uploading a half million QSOs a month it seems.

For POTA, you upload an ADI file. You can create one from the common logging programs like N3FJP, AC Log, etc. Name it N4CD@K-4423 2023-01-01 and away it goes via the on line uploader. Usually with 3 minutes you see whether you log was accepted.

You get credit within 24 hours for parks worked by others uploading their logs for their parks if you work them. Awards are automatically issued (as printable PDFs) within a few days. You can track your progress on line.

POTA is volunteers and some funding by POTA folks to pay for the servers/database, etc.

On the Road with N4CD

Not too many trips lately. Winter hit in Texas with 10 degree temps for a couple days, with 370 hours below freezing, and a bit of icy roads. Up north 10 and 20 below temps with 50 below wind chills. Slowed the Parks on the Air folks a little bit but still dozens of 'activations' each weekend day. Not many county hunter mobiles out but a few.

On Friday, Jan 19, headed over to FT Worth for the Cowtown Hamfest. Stayed overnight at the LaQuinta Inn there. The hamfest is a small one - 3 to 7pm Friday night and 7 to 4pm on Saturday. Maybe 500 people show up. If you're looking to buy things, lots of decent prices on older rigs from TS-520s, IC-734, some Heathkit SB300/400s, SB200 amp, a bunch of Yaesu stuff and tons of VHF/UHF handhelds. A few old 2M mobiles including some crystal control ones from the 1970s era (now 50 years old) were there. No outside flea market as only 35F this year. A few newer rigs up for sale but no bargains there.

Checked it out Friday afternoon, then grabbed dinner at a Mexican restaurant five miles away. . Not many around there now – only 12 fast food places within 2 miles but no sit down restaurants. Denny's disappeared recently. You could grab an inexpensive dinner there at Denny's.

Had nice breakfast at the LaQuinta then over to the nearby convention center (small). Maybe 60 tables of stuff for sale.

Saw a half dozen rigs I wish I owned back in the 1960s- could afford a KWM – 1 transceiver – and some Johnson and Hallicrafters stuff. I guess I was strictly Knight Kits and Heathkits for a long time. First real rig was a Drake TR-7 after the many Heathkits – SB100- SB200 – and some VHF type Kenwoods.

One thing real older timers might remember is Conelrad Monitors. Who remembers them? Back in the 50s and early 60s, you had to monitor a local broadcast station. If they went 'off the air' you had to do so immediately too. This was the 'cold war' era and some thought that missiles and bombers might home in on broadcast stations and others. No GPS way back when – that didn't arrive to the late 90s.

Don'tt think I've ever seen one of these before:



Heathkit Conelrad CA-1Monitor

If the big red light came on – that means the BC station it was tuned to – had disappeared. You had to go QRT as well. Duck and Cover!

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from the web:

It was manufactured from 1957 through 1960, and made the task of adhering to the FCC Part 12 rules of the time automatic.

CONELRAD:

Conelrad stands for CONtrol of ELectromagnetic RADiation. In the fifties and early sixties the United States was at war with the Soviet Union. It was not a shooting war, but one of technology and nuclear threats. In order to prevent Soviet bombers from homing in on US cities President Harry Truman established the Conelrad system in 1951. In the event of an attack, or pending attack, the Conelrad system would be put into effect. All normal radio and TV transmissions would broadcast a special short message and then go off the air. Only two frequencies would remain on the air - 640 KHz and 1240 KHz.

The stations transmitting on these frequencies would operate only in short increments and then switch to a different station in a different location. This, of course, was to confuse any bomber navigation using radio direction-finding. The two Conelrad frequencies, by law, had to be marked on the dial of all radios sold between 1953 and

1963. The mark was the Civil Defense symbol – the letters CD inside a triangle inside a circle. You would find them at 640 and 1240 'KC' on the dial of radios of that era.

Originally only broadcast stations were required to comply with Conelrad monitoring; hams weren't required to comply until Jan 2, 1957. Many hams did this by having an AM broadcast radio running in the background that they could monitor to be sure the station was on the air. Of course one wouldn't monitor a station that was broadcasting on either of the Conelrad frequencies.

Since notifying all the radio stations would be too time-consuming, the FCC designated certain broadcast stations as key stations. Other stations were required to monitor these key stations. Should an alert occur the broadcast station was to drop its carrier twice at five second intervals and then transmit a 1 KHz tone for fifteen seconds and then either leave the air or switch to one of the Conelrad frequencies.

The Heath CA-1:

To automate monitoring for a Conelrad alert Heathkit produced the CA-1 Conelrad Monitor. It was a simple device and fit into the popular small accessory cabinet (7-3/8 W x 4-11/16 H x 4-1/8 D) that Heathkit used for numerous other products including the AM-1 SWR bridge and the QF-1 "Q" Multiplier. Cost: \$14

The CA-1 first appeared in the March 1958 catalog and was produced through 1960. The CA-1 was self-powered using a transformer and selenium rectifier. The circuit had a single 2D21 Thyatron tube.

The signal input for the CA-1 came from the AVC (Automatic Volume Control) circuit of a standard AC/DC AM radio of the time. Since AC/DC radios ran directly off the 120-volt AC line without a transformer, there was always a 50-50 chance the chassis was hot (connected to the hot AC line). That was why the AC/DC radios chassis were insulated to the outside.

Heathkit used a large resistor (220K ohms) in the ground lead from the broadcast radio to prevent shock from touching the CA-1 metal cabinet. Still, it was a good idea to "polarize" the plug to the AC/DC radio to make prevent the hot side of the power from being on the radio chassis.

The 2D21 thyatron tube is a gas-filled tetrode (four elements – excluding the filament). Like a standard vacuum tube, the grid voltage controls the plate current, but only to a

certain extent. Once the grid loses control, the gas ‘fires’ and the tube turns on. The tube continues to conduct until the plate voltage is lowered below the firing point of the tube’s gas.

In the CA-1 the AVC from an external radio was DC coupled to the grid of the 2D21 tube. The cathode of the tube was biased positive by the sensitivity adjustment to allow for different ranges of AVC.

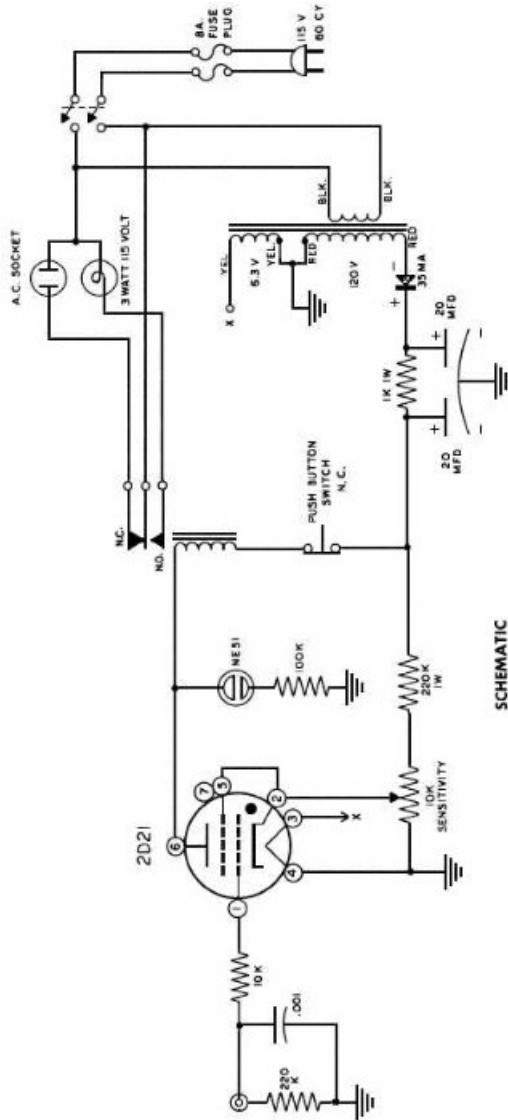
As long as the key radio station was on the air, the negative AVC voltage kept the tube cutoff. If the broadcast station went off the air the thyatron tube would fire, operating a relay. The relay lit a large three-watt pilot lamp on the CA-1 and also removed power from an auxiliary AC power socket on the front panel.

If your transmitter was plugged in it would unceremoniously take you off the air. Once the thyatron tube fired it would continue to conduct until the plate voltage was momentarily removed. This was done via a reset button on the unit. The CA-1 also had a neon pilot light on the front panel to show the unit was powered.

False Alarms:

The CA-1 was prone to false alarms. A false alarm would occur if the AM station being monitored went off the air momentarily – and they did frequently – or if the station was distant and prone to fading. With the transmitter connected the AC outlet on the CA-1 your QSO would be interrupted. Many hams modified their CA-1 as suggested in the manual to instead turn on a bright warning light or sound a buzzer or bell when the Conelrad Monitor was triggered. This modification involved a simple rewiring of the relay contacts and the addition of an indicator device.

In August of 1963, with intercontinental ballistic missiles becoming more of a threat than bombers, Conelrad was replaced by the Emergency Broadcast System, which was itself replaced in 1997 with the Emergency Alert System



SCHMATIC
HEATHKIT CONELRAD ALARM
MODEL CA-1

Full manual here: https://www.rsp-italy.it/Electronics/Kits/_contents/Heathkit/Kits/Heathkit%20CA-1%20Conelrad%20alarm.pdf

Hams no longer had to comply with Conelrad Monitoring. Missiles were good enough to find their targets without radio direction finding. These were made for a short period and apparently not too many bought them. I don't ever remember seeing one at any hamfest although I'd bet some show up at Dayton now and then.

If your a real Heathkit collector, you' d probably want one of these in your collection – but for \$50? Not here!

However, Heathkit wasn't the only one - Morrow (early ham radio supplier) made the CM-1. It was a simple receiver – that would operate a relay if the BC station you were tuned to – disappeared.



Morrow CM-1

It had a speaker on top and a relay you could hook to a red light or other alarm indicator.

Kaar also made a monitor but probably for BC station use as expensive.

Most hams either listened to AM radio in background, or added a few parts to a regular AM radio to operate a relay for Conelrad monitoring. That only lasted for a short time and was gone in the 1960s for most new hams.

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Stuck around the hamfest to 9:30 on Saturday – saw everything 3 times over, then headed over to Cedar Hill State Park sort of on the way home with a short detour. This is a 'well run' park with hundreds of activations. It's the only one centrally located in the Metroplex.

Chased a bunch of activators, then got on 20M CW, then to 17, 15, 12 and 10m for 145 cw contacts. Only 2 on 12M and a couple on 10M. Did catch KL7AC booming in on 10m from a park in AK. He's very active there and had an article last month about his trip north to a park near Fairbanks at 17 below. His home is around Anchorage. He enjoys cold weather camping. He was a good S7 in Texas. Maybe later he'll get up to Second AK. I made a total of 169 contacts in a few hours.

Headed home. I get over to the local park here most Wednesdays for the CW Test from 1900-2000z but that's about it from here. You might catch me on for Winter Field Day (mobile category) end of January.

Mobile Activity in January

Some park tidbits Jan 1

WB3GCK – Delaware PA
WD4AWD – Sullivan TN
WI0S Roosevelt NM

Jan 2 - KB6UF was on in MS counties

Jan 3 - NA8W was on from Highlands FL

Jan 6 - KL7AC on from 4th AK on RTTY and FT-8

Jan 7 - K0DEQ putting out the counties in MO

Jan 9, 10 K8II putting out counties in WV

Jan 13 KU5B in Rio Arriba NM

Jan 14 - NAQP (North American QSO Party) – many counties on the air – including spotted counties Flagler FL, Tom Greene TX, Lancaster SC, Weld CO, Bryan GA, etc.

Jan 15 KL7AC noted in 4th AK on CW. In a park.

Jan 16th – parks spotted - dozens others not spotted

WI5D – Ray MO

WC1N – Plymouth MA

W0NY – Crow Wing MN

Jan 17th – W4SIG checking out the mobile in Washington UT

Parks noted WK4WC Lee FL

KF0KDI Monoma IA

K4FT Beaufort SC

W4JM Lee SC

KR8P Oceana MI

W1JBD Manatee FL

Jan 18 -19 -20 N8HAM running counties in east TX –then headed over to NM putting out TX counties.

Jan 20 – lots of park activity

W7BDJ Washington OK

KC0MYW Big Stone MN

KB5EBR Chambers TX

N8BB Livingston MI

K3SLH Bucks PA

N5RLH Dona Ana NM

Jan 21-25 N8HAM mobile in NM counties.

NA8W running some parks in FL

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Many days of no county hunter mobile out – but dozens and dozens of park activators – you can see the spots on Parks on the Air by park number (and state). Use the KFF/K number to county conversion at CountyHunter.com.

A few good folks (AB4WL, etc) spot the county and park number.

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N8KIE is planning on HI counties late Feb. See planned trips page. K4YT will be flying out to WA to run San Juan and Island WA among others. Those are his last few for Mobile Diamond.

North American CW QSO Party

It was a good one this year with loads of activity on the upper HF bands. You can operate 10 out of the 12 hour contest period that starts at 1800z. 100W max power limit.

A few tidbits from the 3830 contest reflector:

K4BAI – 1033 QSO

What fun! 10M was a little of a disappointment. Otherwise, the bands were hot, activity was great, and I enjoyed working old friends and a few new ones. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John K4BAI

TS590SG, 100W, 88' center fed zepp used on all five bands 80M inverted vee dipole, 40M dipole, 20M dipole. Begali Sculpture Janus paddle with WinKeyer USB and N1MM+. All single element wire antennas.

K8MR - 856 QSO

A good contest! Nothing short on the high bands, nothing worked on 10M in the 2-3-4-5-8 call areas except for K5KG/W1YL three miles away. But good runs on the other bands, including a few on 80M.

If there is a limited antenna category, I belong. 80M OCF up about 45 feet at the center, and a similar height inverted J for 160.

73 - Jim K8MR

KM4FO - 640 QSO no comments

AD4EB 1245 Q

Struggled on 15m and 10m to get a decent run going, made me jealous of the East and West coast stations. But that was not the case on the other bands. 160m and 80m had excellent propagation and surprisingly quiet.

Did not do as well as last year, but sure had a blast.

73 - Jim - AD4EB

WN4AFP 480 Q

The January NAQP CW seems to always lend itself to high rates, high scores and 10 hours worth of CW fun! I got started at 1800z and really couldn't get a run going, so I did the S&P thing for while. After jumping around the high bands, I remained on 20m for a majority of my first two hours. I had to QRT at 2000z to help my nephew move into his apartment...this was close to a 5 hour break. I missed a ton of 10-15-20m multipliers, so when came back to the shack a little before 0100z, I had to make up those lost mults on 80-40m. I checked 20m and picked up a few distant mults, but not much on, so I moved to 40m and ran 'mults' for a while, then set-up shop for a while in "RUN" mode. 40m was a great shape and before going to 40m, I still needed some mults including SC, WA, AL and VE's. I moved to 80m and did a quick S&P gig for about an hour, then decided to find a freq and grow my QSO points. I was able to run for about

two hours. I was jumping between 80m and 40m during the last hour, but I did pick up SC (NU4E) and I finally worked WA (N7DX) with a minute to go in the contest. I tried to do my best with my 7 hours and my overall rate was almost 70/hr. I was BIC for the last 5 hours.

KA4RRU - 200 Q no comments

The following weekend was the NA QP SSB. Again, lots of activity.

Is POTA the new County Hunting

Jay posted on FB : “Is POTA the new County Hunting? “

comments followed

Barry: The question is did POTA save Amateur Radio? Which leads to the other question, di Amateur Radio need saved?

Travis: It definitely sparked my interest, which was pre judged as an Old Person’s Hobby. I mean the average licensed operator I think is 73ish. Been a ham 15 years and have been more involved in last couple years due to POTA

Travis: My wife upgraded to General so she could activate. It really got her into it.

Craig: "Before I found POTA, I chased DX because everything else was boring nets or rag chews, that involved a few arrogant people who were either bragging about their set up to everyone or a few guys complaining about medical issues, the weather, or politics. Then I found POTA. People who actually want to get out there and play radio, while experimenting with new ideas, away from their 100' towers and 1.25 gigawatt set ups. From this, a few years later, a new club has been formed and we have new to radio ops, as well as several who have pushed themselves to upgrade and expand out into learning new facets of the hobby. Did POTA save amateur radio? Don't know about that but it has

definitely grown the hobby and grown the people in the hobby."

Craig: Yes, I'm not a net or rag chew guy either. Love going out and making contacts from a picnic table and working pile ups.

Cathy:"it also got family's out of the house and doing things together. Kids interested in something other than computer games."

Charles: well said. By doing POTA I was able to combine my favorite hobbies of ham radio, hiking and photography. I'm much more "radio active" now thanks to POTA.

Kirby: I would say it has definitely invigorated it. Not sure if it needs saving or not. It will never be the same as it was "back in the day." Some say it's better than ever. POTA I think is a big part of that.

Russell: I would have very little interest in this hobby if not for POTA, TBH. I have grown interested in other facets of ham operations, but POTA was the spark

John: It can be. Some people (like me) just contact everyone we can and watch all the little award dials randomly fill up. It's simply a great way to enjoy radio.

Neil: It must be like County Hunting if N4CD is out there running parks. When I was into county hunting, he was in every county.

Robert: for me, it is just an excuse to do radio in a park lol I don't care about awards, I just enjoy radio.

Bruce: I gave up on county hunting, when I realized OHIO had over 80 of them! And TEXAS! Don't get me started!

John: I gave up on county hunting, when I realized OHIO had over 80 of them! And TEXAS! Don't get me started

Bruce: Ohio has 273 POTA sites. Counties might be easier

Charles: Does the County Hunter program have an award system that rewards for many different accomplishments? That is a big draw to POTA. Being able to achieve many different types of goals. Whereas county, seems you get one. Great. Move on to the next. I don't know much about the county stuff though. W7RTA

from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1813859255571600/user/702598640/>

There are over 11,500 POTA parks in the USA and they keep adding them. No one will ever work all parks. Some folks were within a handful in their states – activated – until they added another 50 or 100 to the same state. Some states have over 500 parks!

POTA Awards start at trivial levels. Activate 10 parks and you get an award. Increments of 10. Work parks? Don't have to work too many to get the first level award.

POTA awards are not confirmed by both parties. Only the activator uploads the log. If you make it in the log, you get credit for it.

Awards Issued

Mobile Diamond

W0GXQ Received Mobile Diamond #13 - 12/28/23

USA-CA and Nth Time Awards

KB6UF completed his 7th time #28

Road Runner Awards

AB7NK attained 1425 last counties #5

NM1G has attained 50 last counties and received #365

Single Band Award

K0DEQ attained Level 2000 on 15 meters and received #3

W4SIG attained level 3000 on 17 meters. He received #2

W4SIG attained level 1000 on 15 meters. He received #12

W4SIG attained level 2000 on 15 meters. He received #4

K3IMC attained level 2000 on 17 meters. He received #10

K3IMC attained level 1000 on 30 meters. He received #4

W4YDY attained level 1000 on 10 meters. He received #5>BR>

Ran All State Awards

K3IMC completed AZ for the 2nd time. He received #3

K3IMC completed GA for the 2nd time, He received #5

County Challenge Award

K0DEQ attained level 20,000. He received #4

Digital Award

N7LFX attained digital level 2000. He received #9

US Presidents Award

W4SIG completed the award and received #64

Native American Award

W4SIG completed the award and received #67

Upcoming Activities for County Hunters

Back into QSO Party Season

from the ARRL Contest Calendar:

Feb 3 0000z to 4 2359z

1.8-28, VHF/UHF

Vermont QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), VT county or SPC

<http://www.ranv.org/vtqso.html>

Feb 3 0001z to 4 2359z

28

10-10 Int'l Winter Contest, SSB Ph

Name, mbr or "0," SPC

www.ten-ten.org

Feb 3 1400z to 3 2359z

1.8-28

Minnesota QSO Party CW Ph Dig

Name, MN county or SPC

www.w0aa.org/mnqp-rules

Feb 3 1600z to 4 2359z

1.8-28

British Columbia QSO Party CW Ph

RS(T), BC district or SPC

www.orcadxcc.org

Feb 24 1500z to 25 0159z

1.8-28,50

South Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

RS(T), SC county or SPC

scqso.com

Feb 25 1500z to 26 0100z

3.5-28,50,144

North Carolina QSO Party CW Ph Dig

NC county or SPC

<http://ncqsoparty.org/rules>