County Hunter News

March 1, 2013
Volume 9, Issue 3

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in ham radio county hunting, with an orientation toward CW operation**.**

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.

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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) The Blizzards were raging across the center of the country. OK and KS got clobbered 3 times in 2 weeks and the interstate in the panhandle of TX was closed for a day or two at a time as the winds kicked up to 40-50 mph and the snow drifted six feet high. Winter is still here. Eastern MA has had to dig out from several snow storms, and it's still real cold up north. California has been getting its share of winter storms as they roll in one after another. Yet, mobiles are out and running - mostly in the south. Or folks headed to the south from up north and then back home.

Propagation cycles up and down a bit. 10M has been nothing to write home about most days, but 15m has provided county hunter contacts and was useful in some of the QSO parties for long rang contacts. No one knows if the sunspot peak is ahead, if we get a double peak sunspot cycle, or what happens at this point.

The QSO Party season has started – so there are lots of stations to work on the weekends.

Most have had excellent mobile activity which have made for lots of counties worked.

2) Wet Lines

Once again, a lively discussion on 'wet lines' appeared on the K3IMC forum. Terry posted the statement:

Wet County Lines
"A County Line boundary may be a river, lake, water reservoir, creek, brook, stream, or other watercourse, including a dry riverbed or arroyo. This type of county boundary is called a Wet County Line. As long as a Wet County Line can be run safely, it may be run using the same requirements as any other County Line."

So sayeth the MARAC rules. So some discussion is in order to help explain some of this grey area of "Wet County Lines".

Let us take two recent examples of these lines and dissect them. How about the county line in Montana of Fergus and Phillips? These two counties are separated by the Missouri River. The river is wide at this point and is only crossed by one bridge on US-191. This is an example of a true wet line. The adjoining counties have no boundary in common that is not the river. Of course if you were stopped in the center of the river where the GPS declared it the dividing line and can run it safely then have at it. It would be up to the mobile and the contact station to know that it is a safe operation and log it as a contact for both counties. The MARAC Logger program will not allow you to select this as a county line contact. This is by design to give you some warning that the contact is in question. If you believe this is a legal and safe operation, Logger will force you to log both counties separately.

Another example where an apparent wet line MAY be legal and safe. Let's look at the line of Phelps and Buffalo in Nebraska. The problem here is that this is MOSTLY a wet county line separated by the Platte River. However over a period of time the river has changed its course slightly. There are portions of this "Wet County Line" that are now on dry land. It would be possible for the mobile to move off the road and run this line quite safely. There are several roads that cross this river and the adjoining county lines. There are a lot of examples along the Platte, Mississippi, Missouri and other rivers where this has taken place. MARAC Logger will allow this to be entered as a county line contact.

One last example where this grey area still exists. Take the example of Tazewell, Virginia and McDowell, West Virginia. Some of this county line is 'wet' and some is dry west of highway 16. There are dozens of this type of separation. It is a judgment call on the parties involved as well as the Logger team as to whether the contacts are legal and safely being run. Presently it is

up to this author to pass judgment on whether an individual county line should be included in the MARAC Logger acceptable table of county lines. I use mostly DeLorme Street Atlas USA to do the research to aid in my decision.
Presently there are nearly 15,000 county lines in the county line table that MARAC Logger uses. I have, on rare occasion, added new ones to this table and even deleted one recently. However there is always room for improvement. I am collecting a list of county lines that are not presently included in MARAC Logger that are often run safely. Someday these may be in Logger as an alternate to the "Legal" county lines. If you have any candidates for this new collection, please send them to me and include the road(s) or sites that make your suggestions qualify for consideration.

I hope this sheds some light on a controversial subject. "It ain't always easy"."

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Scottie N4AAT noted: "In my 36 years of running counties, I have run across a few county lines ---- more that were supposed to be wet, but were not. There was no sign of a river, creek, stream, dry river bed, or anything else. I did let Terry know of one such line I ran a year or so back. Next time I will take a picture of such a line if I run across one again. I even ran one in the middle of a bridge, but don't recommend this. I think it was in Idaho.

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Dave, KE3VV noted: "The line is where the line is....

Some lines are in the middle of the river and some lines are not. For example, the Potomac River, which divides Virginia and Maryland, is a wet line, but the line is the high tide line on the Virginia side of the river (because Maryland has jurisdiction over the whole width of the river), so you could run that wet line safely if you could get part of your vehicle over the high tide line on the Virginia side.

MARAC adopted the current wet line rule to leave the decision whether to run a "wet" line up to the mobile. Of course, a mobile that come to a river or other watercourse should probably inquire or determine where the actual line is if they are going to run a wet line to determine whether they can actually sit on the line safely. My experience has been that NCS stations do not act as wet line "police" because the rule leaves it up to the mobile."

"Only MARAC rules mention Wet county lines - CQ Rules do not...

There is nothing in the CQ Magazine rules for USA-CA that even mentions so-called wet county lines or even county lines for that matter. One reason for this is that there is no sense

having a rule that can't be enforced or a violation detected. CQ just checks the counties run and confirmed. “

Mobile Activity Reports

Mike, **KA4RRU** headed to FL. Then ran around in FL a few days, and headed back north.

Jack, **KC7YE**, headed back north again from AZ. Then headed south once again along the coast of CA. He will be there until March.

N0KV, Barry, and **N0DXE,** put out some in CO, then headed up to WY putting out some there. The trip had to be curtailed due to bad weather, snow and black ice conditions. Later in the month, they put out a few around the home county.

AC0HW and **N0ZDZ** were busy many days putting them out on SSB

N9AC was spotted out on cw in TX and other states. He operates on 30M as well as 20M cw.

Jim, **ND9M**, started in IL, ran into IN and was there a day or two, then headed to IL again putting them out. Then headed to IA and wound on down through AL to home.

Terry, **WQ7A**, did a nice trip in WA state.

Jerry, **K1SO,** spotted in FL

AA9JJ, Frank, and Kay, **N9QPQ,** headed from AZ to IL putting them out along the way.

Bill, **K2HVN** headed from VA south through NC and GA slowly headed to FL. Then back north later.

Silver, **N9QS,** headed from home down to Christian, MO and back.

Kerry, **W4SIG,** spotted in AR, TN, MS

Paul, **WD9EJK,** was spotted in a few in IL

Scottie, **N4AAT,** was spotted in a few in SC.

K4PLB was spotted in many western VA counties on SSB

N9CJH was noted on SSB in AL, LA and other states – on SSB

Mike, **NF0N,** ran some in NE

Jim, **N4JT**, ran some in VA for the folks

Bob, **K0PVW,** ran a few in OK.

Rick, **W5QP** was running counties in AR and southern MO

Rick, W5QP (K5KDG pic)

W5QP mobile set up

Fred, **K0FG,** headed on down to FL and ran around a few days while there. Later he headed back through AL and MS to TX.

N4XML was noted mobile on SSB in SC.

Frank, **AA9JJ**, and Kay, **N9QPQ** headed back home from IL to AZ.

John, **K4BAI,** headed from GA down to FL.

Jeffrey, **AF3X,** was noted in a few on cw in TN.

Kerry, **W4SIG,** headed from TN to Montgomery TX and back.

Lowell, **KB0BA** and Sandra **N0XYL** ran from IA down to Taney, MO...and back. They commented:

"Our trip to Missouri started on the 12th of February. Ultimate goal was to celebrate our 27th anniversary on Valentine's Day by enjoying lunch at Lambert's in Ozark. By the time we arrived home Monday night (the 18th), we had traveled 2620 miles, transmitted from 5 counties in Iowa, 71 in Missouri and 7 in Arkansas. Even transmitted CW from a few of the

counties. We had a great trip! A big thank you to everyone who "rode" with us along the way. Next trip will be to northern Wisconsin in mid-March. Lowell and Sandra (N0XYL)”

Jim, **N8HAM,** was out in MI in a few counties.

Barry **N0KV** and Matt, **W0NAC,** took a couple day trip to KS to finish up needs – theirs and others. Both are working on their MG. Not much was heard out of them on cw,though. Matt ran them all on five modes at the stops they made. Radio died before the trip ended.

Steve, **AK8A**, headed on down to TX through MS, LA and TX.

The team of **W4FNW/W8FNW** were out and about in FL on SSB.

Dave, **KW1DX,** took a ski vacation to VT, and put out lots of counties on the way there and around northern VT and NY.

Larry, **W7FEN**, headed across AZ to Phoenix and back.

Team **KA9JAC/KB9YVT** headed from up north down to FL way putting them out on SSB.

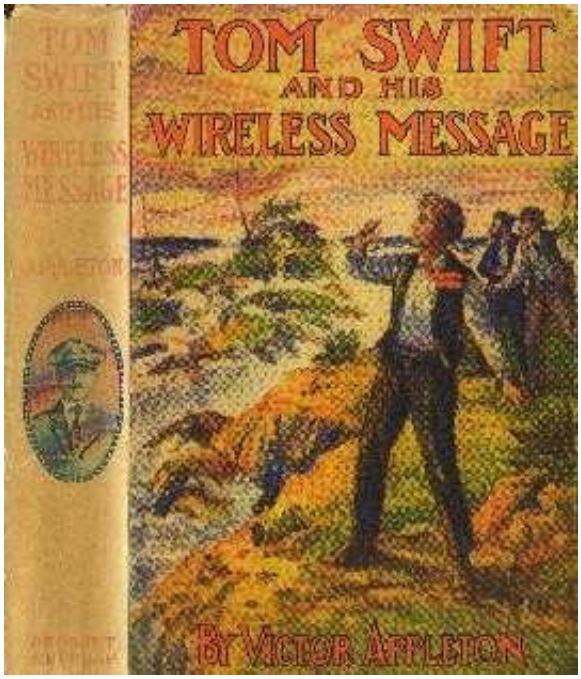
Greg, **NM2L**, got the mobile running and headed north up through TN and KY.

Tom Swift and His Wireless Message

or

The Castaways of Earthquake Island

by Victor Appleton



Another old book from way back when caught my attention. Sounded like a good tale and it was from the pre-1920 days – spark gap type wireless. When the band is dead, you can sit at the computer, read a story and wait for a mobile to appear.

So it was into the on line version of Tom Swift. The story starts out with inventor Tom designing airplanes and flying them. He gets talked into assisting another inventor who is working on an 'electric airship' with a gasoline motor/dynamo combination driving electric motors that run the propellers on the airship. They go up one day debugging some problems that are present.

They get caught in a big storm during a trial run and get swept out over the ocean – and are up in the air for 24 hours. Wind speed is nearly 100 mph blowing them out to sea. The storm eventually tears the craft apart, but fortunately there is an uncharted island down below. The

crew of the airship successfully land on the island and they just happen to have enough food for a week with them. The island is wracked constantly by earthquakes.

After they do some exploring, the find some other castaways wrecked in the storm. They were on a million dollar yacht cruising around the Caribbean. One is a quasi scientist who predicts the whole island is going to sink in just a few days. One is the captain of the yacht, and he has rough location information. Turns out Tom know the castaways. They are related to a near by neighbor back home.

The island is falling into the sea chunk by chunk. Some folks are building a raft just in case. The food supply is running low.

So.....Tom manages to kluge together a wireless, string up an antenna, make a receiver, and eventually gets heard, and saves the day. Just as a steamer hears his message and comes their way, the island starts to break apart. The steamer sends out lifeboats and everyone is safely rescued.

Then the island disappears beneath the sea forever. No more 'earthquake island'.

It's a couple hour read and on line at:

http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4227

Tom Swift appeared in a dozen adventure books, but this one is only the one related to wireless and you won't find any detail in this one either. He throws a few parts together...and presto...it works.

Here's more Tom Swift

http://manybooks.net/series/14.html

County Line Database Project

This month, lots of new counties were added. Dennis, N6PDB, sent in a bunch while Gary worked off a backlog from WQ7A, and Rick, W5QP sent in some, as did N9STL, Joyce,

Here's one Dennis, N6PDB, sent in to be included

Big Horn, MT – N6PDB mobile

Here's another one

Cache, UT – N6PDB – that's snow!

Here's another one that hard to stop and get a picture of:

City and County of San Francisco, CA - N6PDB

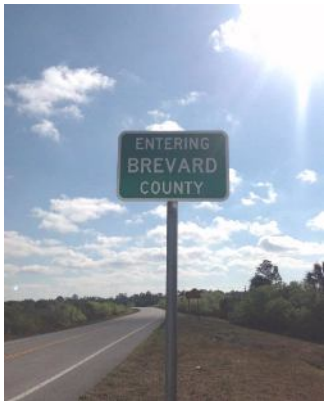
This month, Gary, K4EXT, added more from WQ7A. Here's a pic of the WQ7A mobile on the county line at Walla Walla , WA

WQ7A Walla Walla, WA

Here's one from a recent submission of counties from Jerry, W0GXQ – his home county

Hubbard, MN – by W0GXQ
Loads of snow in Feb!

Joyce, N9STL sent in some from FL. Here's one she took of the Brevard FL County Line Sign



Brevard FL by N9STL

Norm, W3DYA, sent in a bunch from MS and GA. Here's the flying saucer antenna setup in Jones, MS

W3DYA mobile Jones, MS

There's getting close to 1000 counties in the County Hunter Database. Can you add a few to get us to 1000?

http://www.charchive.com/cntys.asp

Obama's Green Energy Inanities

By Peter C Glover

President Obama, as his Inauguration Address confirms, is in denial about both the climate and energy realities. Repeating the most alarmist rhetoric of ideologue-turned-salesman to oil interests Al Gore, Obama appeared ignorant of the fact that data shows global warming isn't happening. The president has re-stated his desire for yet more backing to a green energy industry that is collapsing being wholly reliant on the lifeline of public subsidy. And that can only mean dumping further on the oil, gas and coal industries that made the US the powerhouse it still is.

Obama will be in good company in his ideological crusade in support of the doomed renewable revolution. Not with private investors who have been deserting green energy investments in their droves, but with other bureaucrats in denial – and who have little compunction in squandering someone else's money.

In a Washington Times article in November Steve Goreham asked whether the green energy "fad" had run its course. His analysis was based on the RENIXX World index, the renewable energy industrial index of the world's top green energy companies. Goreham further pointed out how the RENIXX index revealed green energy companies had been "on a roll…during the heydays of 2007 and 2008" through massive government funding but had lately hit an all-time low, down 90 percent against its December 2007 peak.. Across the Atlantic, investment flooded in as a result of guaranteed profits via the EU's Climate Action and Renewable Energy policies. But, as Goreham pointed out, the wave of subsidy-driven green energy suddenly "hit a brick wall of fiscal reality".

In Europe, hard-hit economies began slashing their subsidy regimes. Spain realized that paying solar producers up to ten times the rate for conventional electricity with a 20-year guaranteed return was not good business. As German's were told they were paying eight times above the market rate via feed-in tariffs on bills to subsidize a ludicrously generous solar installation program, even bureaucrats were forced to admit the $140 billion over 20 years was unsustainable. In the UK, the split between Conservatives and Lib Dems over the government's expensive rush to decarbonisation has also contributed to a steep drop in green investment. Between 2009 and 2011 funding for large scale green energy projects in the UK declined by 53 percent to just over $5 billion.

In the United States solar company after solar company has gone belly up even after receiving massive government bailout funding. Over half a billion dollars was wasted attempting to make

Solyndra a viable operation. Last year Obama's administration bailed out BrightSource Energy despite it being $1.8 billion in debt. In recent months two solar companies, Himin Solar and IPO, were in such financial straits that they were suspended from the Stock Exchange.

Thousands of 'permanent' green jobs were axed at companies like First Solar. Equally the scandal of green company executives making millions of dollars through hiked pay levels and 'bonuses' does tend to put investors off. As the Washington Post reported, Al Gore is today "50 times richer than when he left the vice-presidency in 2001" having made "$100 million partly through investing in alternative energy firms subsidized by the Obama administration."

According to the investment boys at Energy and Capital, a scandalous "80 percent of all the green subsidies and loans went to generous donors of President Obama." And what has all this US taxpayer investment wrought? The whole heavily-subsidized kit and caboodle, from wind, to thermal, still only provides a paltry 9 percent of America's energy needs.

In November, just over half of the Americans who voted may have re-elected Barack Obama but, according to a survey published at the time of the election, half of Americans can't even name any renewable energy source into which the president is pouring their money.

But the burgeoning bad news for the renewable industry hasn't stopped the bureaucrats at the European Investment Bank backing yet more astronomically expensive green energy projects. In 2012 the EIB handed over a cool $2.16 billion in public funds to the renewable energy industry outstripping the total amount dished out by the U.S. Government for wind, solar and other green energy projects. A devastating report in Die Welt in October also revealed how predictions about the expansion and cost for German wind turbines and solar panels have all been catastrophically wrong by "at least a factor of two, sometimes by a factor of five."

Chancellor Merkel had promised consumers that green energy subsidies would be no more than 3.6 cents per KW hour. But when Germany's power grid operator recently announced the exact figure would raise the cost burden by 50 percent to 5.3 cents per KW hour widespread outrage followed. A spokesman for Germany's business groups warned that the cost was so high it threatened "the de-industrialization of Germany".

Earlier in the year, Spiegel Online ran an article showing how the massive subsidization of the German photovoltaics industry together with the cost incurred in upgrading the national grid to cope with variable loading had saddled consumers with a $377 billion bill and was proving "the costliest mistake in the history of German energy policy". According to a report in Welt am Sonntag that left Germans facing the biggest electricity price increase in decades with 800,000 unable to pay their energy bills.

Just as President Obama re-commits his administration to a renewed assault – code for more massive subsidies – in favor of green energy, the US and European wind and solar industries

are in obvious turmoil. Around 30 percent of the green jobs President Obama promised in his first-term have already been lost through bankruptcies. Other green jobs were lost to the Chinese market. Not that there is a shortage of energy investors. It's just that they prefer to invest their money sensibly in the soaring success of much cheaper forms of energy, including low-cost natural, especially shale, gas and new sources of oil. Only bureaucrats are still fueling the investment bonfires of green energy inanities.

It seems the naiveté of politicians who believe they can buck the market knows no bounds. By the time President Obama leaves office in 2016 we'll all be wondering how we could possibly have been so gullible as to allow bureaucrats to sell us a lame duck renewable energy policy that fritters away so much of our money. How could we, for instance, have bought into claims that wind power really is a viable economic alternative to hydrocarbon power? How could we allow ourselves to have our pockets picked by bureaucrats with a vision to reverse the industrial revolution by proving that sailing ships really could be a serious commercial competitor to 'new-fangled' steam ships?

But then, if you are raking in the kind of money government bureaucrats make, or the windfall profits guaranteed to green energy entrepreneurs, you can afford to invest your own money in wind power – and buy yourself a yacht. Why should they care that those forced into fuel poverty are paying for it?

MN QSO Party

Wow...the mobiles were running. The pile ups were huge at times, and likely every MN county (87) was on the air – maybe only for a few minutes , or only in one mode. From TX, 20M was good for most of the day, and 40M was in for at least half the day, but difficult other than morning and evening times due to distance. Propagation seemed fairly good, but zip on 15m from here although I did see W0GXQ spotted on 15M. Later folks went down to 80M for a bit just before the end of the test which runs from 8am to 6pm Central time There was not much DX coming in, but did hear OM2VL, OK5KE, and DL8USA making contacts.

Some of the MN county hunters were on the air, including W0EAR, Don in Ramsey, Jerry, W0GXQ in Hubbard, and Brian, NX0X who was out mobile on cw.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

K0PC mobile with W9DND

This was the tenth year John W9DND and I have run the MN QSO Party in the mobile. John is a great driver and we've only been stuck once in all those miles. Not a bad record considering the February road conditions. This year the roads were a little bit dicey after a couple of inches of snow on Friday. We ran behind schedule and had to drop the last two counties.

John, W9DND and K0PC, Pat

This was a CW only operation on 80/40/20M. 40M was the star band with over twice as many QSOs as 20M. We tried 80M late but only netted 12 QSOs. The 1286 QSOs was a personal best and I had hopes of cracking 1300 but needed a few more minutes. Rates started out high at the beginning and stayed high most of the day. There were several times I noticed the 10 minute rate in the 190s and the 60 minute rate was over 150 much of the time.

Those great rates were generated by 255 unique calls with some very obvious heavy hitters. The Top-Ten list this year:

28 - K1ZZI, N2WN
24 - W0BV
23 - KB9S, NY4N, W8WVU, WB2ABD
20 - W9MSE
19 - N0AT
18 - N2CU, WA2VYA

We only hit 22 of our planned 24 counties and nobody had a clean sweep but some came close.

I thought the excitement for the day was over when the contest ended but I found out different on the way home. It was snowing and the roads were slick. I was on the freeway about 10 mile from home when the semi in front of me lost a wheel off the trailer. It rolled across four lanes of traffic, bounced off the center wall and came back to end up in the middle of the traffic lanes. Then second of the dual wheels came off and ended up on the exit ramp. The truck finally stopped but I did not. It was one of those nights when you're glad to see the driveway.

Thanks to everyone who came out to play in MNQP 2013.

73, Pat K0PC & John W9DND

N0IJ mobile 1198 CW 7 SSB QSO

What a blast! Temp was a chilly minus 20 F at the start and screwdriver really didn't want to go down to 80, but did, with some smell! Took one 8 minute break and made our 526 mile route through much of northern MN and 24 counties. With to the start and home from finish, day total was 712 miles. Pretty tough on this 72 yr old body! First hour very difficult condx, but last 9 were terrific.

Really appreciate the folks who followed me around led by WB2ABD-26, N2WN, N2CU, K1ZZI-24 , W0BV & W8WVU-21, W7GKF-20, K7LFY, N8II, NY4N-19, KB9S, N6MU, NT2A, N4CD-18, W2RR & WA2VYA-17.

A host of others at over 10! Special note to OM2VL, Laci, who made it thru 10 times! including 3 times on 40--amazing. Ran one of my K3's and it was a treat. The new Subaru Outback has zero ignition noise! Still log with NA, which seems to be made for mobile contesting. Only problem is each county is a new log file, but with bat files, its a 10 second changeover. Don't get the auto populate, however, so if you thought I was nuts not to remember your name, that's why.

My great driver, Terry, W0TVD, kept us within 2-5 minutes of every county ETA.

John, N0IJ Mobile

N0HJZ mobile – 1515 SSB QSO

the video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8Lf7zYrIQc&feature=youtu.be

THANK YOU to everyone that worked me! What a blast! 31 counties in ten hours and I averaged 151 Q's per hour.

Special mention to W1KMA who worked me in all 31 counties! N5XG, NT2A and YV5OIE worked me in 30 counties! Great job guys!

Rich, N0HJZ mobile

NX0X multi op Rover (NX0X, N0RA, KB0MHH) 510 cw 68 SSB QSO

NX0X Brian

"My first attempt to try a multi HF transmitter setup from the car. After I get my radio fixed from blowing out the front end receiver on one of the radios, I may try it again next year but with a different game plan."

KE0G/rover 422 QSOs

Elecraft K3 at 5 watts to a 34' vertical with three 25' radials, on 80 M added a 66' "tail" sloping down from the tip of the vertical. Fed via a 10' long balanced line, using a Johnson Matchbox tuner. I set up in six counties, and enjoyed lots of activity, including some big pileups, and many stations with multiple QSO's on different bands and different counties. OM2VL and DL8USA made it into the log, and I could hear SM7ZDI calling, but he couldn't hear my QRP. I picked hilltops in the clear at each stop, maybe that helped me reach a new high # of Q's for me. Thanks for the Q's, and for your great copy out there, everyone. C U next time. 73, Dan ke0g

KE0G Rover

W0ZQ mobile 920 cw 103 SSB QSO

The weather in southern MN was not too bad, low winds, not much snow, and a high temperature of around 14 degrees. This year I operated as a solo-op from 11 different counties. Going back to 2005, I have now operated from 48 of Minnesota's 87 counties with only 39 left to go! Thanks for all the Q's and thanks to the MWA for sponsoring this fun event.

W0ZQ John – 2011 picture

AC0W mobile 304 CW 82 SSB

Thanks for the contacts, unfortunately some challenges early put me way behind schedule so we dropped 2 counties.

W0BH mobile with AD0DX 728 cw 312 ssb qso

I'm on leave from Hesston College this semester and the weather forecast in Minnesota seemed to be cooperating, so Ron/AD0DX and I decided to team up for a run in the MNQP. I've always enjoyed chasing the intrepid mobiles through Minnesota from home, so we were looking forward to being on the other end of the pileups.

Since most of the mobiles in the MNQP run APRS, Ron spent his time waiting for me to drive from Hesston to Kansas City by putting together an APRS setup. We spent an hour at his house, then started off to Minnesota about 4:30pm (only 4 hours late!). My XYL, Lorna enjoyed tracking us on the way up. Great roads all the way, but we arrived around midnight, and it was COLD filling the gas tank and putting the antennas on before it was time to rest up for Saturday.

W0BH Bob and AD0DX Ron
The Astro Van
Warm weather picture!

Saturday

Saturday morning was a brisk 9 degrees when we fired up the Astro van, now 281,000 miles young. At the last minute, I did a quick tire check and found our left rear tire at 15 pounds, so we lost 10 minutes to the schedule filling up the tire before we got on the road. Our first hour was slow, but we had high hopes and the signals seemed to be strong. When Ron took over the radio and I started to drive, I noticed that the van didn't seem to have the power it had on the way down. Max speed was about 65 (downhill), and it got worse as we continued along.

Our proposed 24 county run started in Rock county, the most southwestern county, then continued north not quite half way up Minnesota before turning east then back south to (try to) finish where we started. Roads were in excellent shape and the weather was cloudy with occasional sun, perfect for reading the logging and GPS computers as we drove along. While we got good rates when we crossed into a new county, it seemed like rates were down from what I would have expected. Ops would call us and then not respond when we called back, and it happened many more times than I what I'm used to. Finally, N8II gave me a clue. He said my 20m antenna seemed to be "loose" and my signal

would lose 20db or more almost instantly. I was really puzzled because the SWR was normal and power output on the meter was max. I use a triple Hustler array for CW with 20/40/15 on one mast, and nothing bad seemed to be happening on 40, so perhaps my coil wire in the 20m resonator was opening from time to time. I had another coil along, but I kept seeing the good SWR and we kept making contacts, so we continued. Probably a bad decision.

There was lots more snow on the ground as we headed through Otter Tail county and turned southeast on I-94. The van still wouldn't run much over 60 mph, but it wasn't running rough and there were no strange noises, so we continued. Off the freeway and heading south once again, the van continued to slow .. 55, 50, 45. By now we were picking up snow showers, then snow, then freezing drizzle. Hello, Minnesota! When the van dropped to 40 and then 35, I remember thinking, "It's only two miles to the next county, let's at least see if we can make that." We did, and on to a gas station.

Best guess was that we had a fuel system issue. We'd filled up with 89 octane gas before we started, so perhaps we got some bad gas. The fuel tank was now down over half, so we filled up with premium and now could go 50. That was fast enough anyway because of the road conditions! We were three counties behind on the schedule and losing ground on Qs by staying in counties too long, but at least we were heading in the right direction. When the QSO party ended, the wind also came up, so we decided to stay in Minnesota one more night before heading home in the morning. The van got up to 60 the next day while we ran the gas tank almost dry. We filled up with premium once again and we were back to normal cruise for the drive home. I made it back to Hesston in time to see the lights go out at the SuperBowl!

N6MU (fixed CA) 149 CW 61 SSB 70 Mults

“Strange condx this year. Top mobile for me was W0BH with 28 Qs followed by N0HJZ(22), N0IJ(18), N0PI & W0ZQ(14), N0EO(11), K0PC(10)and AC0W(9). Thanks for all the Qs. 73...

John, N6MU”

W1END (fixed NH) 121 cw 62 mults

“Amazing activity by the mobiles in such cold weather.
Minnesota seems to be an ideal distance for skip from NH except for the usual mid afternoon slump on 20 meters. Checked 10 meters a few times but heard

nothing.:

K8MR – fixed OH - 109 cw 52 mults

I enjoyed opening day of the 2013 QSO Party season as the MN guys once again headed out in the famous Minnesota winter weather to prove they aren't wimps. (Stupid maybe, but not wimps :-)).

Good activity, and this year 20 was open from NE Ohio, which makes a huge difference for me. In previous years I often saw great CW activity but not much on SSB. Not a problem this year. I extend a special commendation to N0HJZ whose SSB mobile operation was probably the best SSB mobile effort I've ever encountered in a QSO party. The CW mobiles (including mixed mode guys like W0BH) also did great.

N5XG (fixed TX) 57 cw 28 mults

"Great state QSO Party with many outstanding and talented mobile operators.
I did not operate for a big score but to contact the 8 MN counties I needed to complete worked all MN counties. I had 2 contacts in almost each one of those 8. On 14MHz I could copy MN the full 10 hours of the contest period with good signals.:

K1ZZI 217 cw 83 mults GA

K0PC – 27
N0IJ - 24
N0PI - 22
K0PC - 19
W0BH - 18
N0EO - 15
NX0X - 15
W0ZQ - 12
KE0G - 8
WA0MN - 7
AC0W - 4
NR0T – 3

WB2ABD – NY fixed 214 CW 83 mults

40m great all day long

Thanks to all who made it a fun 10 hrs ... in a warm shack!

N8II – fixed WV – 218 cw 118 SSB 86 mults

What a turnout by the mobiles! Temps started out sub zero and "warmed" into the single digits in most areas with snow squalls! Rich, N0HJZ/M said once he was going to be in a new county soon, I asked how soon and he answered, "It's snowing pretty hard; I have to get my bearings and find a road", what dedication!

Without all of the mobile activity, I would never have stuck with it all day as I started out feeling tired. I tried to watch the clock and go no longer than 10 minutes without checking 20 and 40 for new mobile Q's. I could have done better with the mobiles, but was able to run some guys too. Rich, N0HJZ was very easy to find as he ran his route sitting on the same 20M phone frequency nearly all day. Here are my mobile QSO totals:

	QSO'S	COUNTIES
W0BH, BOB	27	16
N0HJZ, RICH	24	24!
N0PI, DAN	23	17
N0IJ, JOHN	20	16
K0PC, PAT	17	12 (MOSTLY ON 40)
NX0X, BRIAN	15	15
W0ZQ, JON	15	9 (WORKED ON 20,40,AND 80 IN HIS LAST COUNTY)
N0EO, NEO	13	12 (GOOD NAME IDEA FOR CLUB!)
ACOW, BILL	9	8
WA0MN	7	3 (BACK HOME FIXED IN AFTERNOON)
KE0G, DAN	5	5

My next to last Q running on 40 phone in the last half hour was Koochiching for a new one! With 4 hours to go, I didn't think I would even come close to a sweep only missing Benton Co which was surrounded by counties where mobiles were worked, so I would guess it was covered. Again, thanks for the mobile efforts in miserable weather.

Many thanks to all for the Q's and the oh so close sweep. My score was 13K better than my personal best in 2011 with 7 more mults. Thanks to MWA for a fine well organized event including covering all counties and getting ARES stations involved in some rare counties

WB0TEV – fixed Texas 146 SSB 58 Mults

After quite unexpectedly taking 1st place for the out of state SSB only category in last years MNQP, I figured I'd try and defend my title so to speak. The MNQP is great fun to work from here in North Texas, (where it was about 50-60Â° warmer!) It seems to be at an ideal range for 20m and 40m was at least fair all day as well. Had to take 1.5 hours off to go to a funeral in mid-afternoon.

Kudos to N0HJZ with a unique and successful strategy, pick a freq on 20 SSB and STAY THERE ALL DAY NON-STOP. Clever, and it seemed to work well, although there were probably some of his MN brethren who wished he would have gotten on 40/80 some so they could harvest the plethora of counties he put on the air, including a couple extra ones he was able to tack on before the closing bell. I worked Rich in 28 counties! It wasn't long into the contest before I simply programmed 14256 kHz USB into one of my radio's memories and punched it every so often to see where Rich was.

It was also good to work Bob W0BH 8 times from 7 counties (got him from Kandiyohi on both 20 and 40m). Had I not been an SSB only entry I'm sure he'd be in my log more than that. Bob does a great job promoting his home state of Kansas QSO party and is a regular mobile entry in the Texas QSO party usually covering many of the panhandle and northern tier counties.

Other mobiles worked include: K0SV(3), KD0CVO (3), N0PI(2), W0ZQ(2), & W9FZ (2).

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Thanks to the MN State QSO Party web site and the pics used with permission from

http://www.w0aa.org/index.php/mobiles

When you Buy and Old Kit

When you buy a kit you don't know what you are going to get. Did it ever work? Was the person who wired it up know what they were doing or follow instructions? Or know how to solder? Interesting story here about a Graymark Regenerative Receiver kit that this fellow acquired:

Part 1

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62wVKboUNaI

Part II
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN9tdAaJyIU

He found wrong value parts – a 4.7K where the 47K should be and vice versa.....and lots of bad solder connections. He wound up rebuilding the entire set.

Solar News

The upper reaches of Earth's atmosphere are unexpectedly shrinking and cooling due to lower ultraviolet radiation from the Sun, U.S. scientists said. The Sun's energy output dropped to unusually low levels from 2007 to 2009, a significantly long spell with virtually no sunspots or solar storms, according to scientists from the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado.

During that period, the thermosphere, whose altitude ranges from about 90 to 500 kilometers, shrank and contracted from the sharp drop in ultraviolet radiation, said the study published in *Geophysical Research Letters.*

The thermosphere cooled by 41 degrees Celsius in 2008 compared to 1996, and shrank by 30%, "more than at any time in the 43-year era of space exploration" the researchers said.

"Our work demonstrates that the solar cycle not only varies on the typical 11-year time scale, but also can vary from one solar minimum to another," said study lead author Stanley Solomon. A narrower, less dense thermosphere is good news for satellites orbiting Earth, including the International Space Station, since reduced friction means they can remain aloft longer, said University of Colorado professor and study co-author Thomas Woods.
Sun mimicking 19th century activity

"This is good news for those satellites that are actually operating, but it is also bad because of the thousands of non-operating objects (debris) remaining in space that could potentially have collisions with our working satellites," he added.

Woods said the research shows the Sun could be going through a period of relatively low activity, as it did in the early 19th and 20th centuries. "If it is indeed similar to certain patterns in the past, then we expect to have low solar cycles for the next 10 to 30 years," he added.

Source:"http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/news/3679/quiet-sun-leads-upper-atmosphere-collapse

From Ebay This Month

Wow...this is a rare item. It's a Gilbert Wireless set for Boys – model 4004, circa 1917

Here's a close up. There are two 'wireless' units in the box, with two headphones

It seems to consist of two units, each with a 'buzzer' that is used as a spark transmitter. You connect the buzzer to the antenna via the send/receive switch to transmit. You need a good antenna and a ground. At some distance away (300 -500 feet maybe) your buddy can be listening in. He'll need a good antenna and ground system. There's a galena detector that drives the earphone. There's a key that runs the buzzer when key down.

You'll recall that in the early days, you'd adjust your galena detector using an external buzzer. Every wireless station had one nearby – so that if you weren't receiving anything – you'd hook up the buzzer and try to get the catwhisker on a 'hot spot' on the galena crystal.

There are two adjustments on the buzzer set up – one for 'spark' (probably the gap adjustment) and the other for tone. You need a battery – not obviously what voltage needed. Wow – wireless for the kids and a range of a few hundred feet likely. Maybe 1000 feet on a good day with big antennas. It's just a much smaller version of a regular spark station, and this being 1917, there's no broadcast stations on the air to worry about!

Nifty. Now, all you'd probably hear on receive would be strong broadcast stations, and – spark transmission was outlawed back in the 20s, so you'd be out of luck on that part, too! Note there is NO TUNING whatsoever on this unit! You'd be broadcasting likely in the hundreds of KHz range.....but a lot would depend upon your antenna and ground system.

How rare is this? It sold for over $1800 on Ebay – for a toy!

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Here's another item from the 60s...many novices starting out would have loved to have one of these. It's a Mosley CM-1 receiver. Mosley was mostly known for making beam antennas – some of the best at the time. They tried to get into the receiver market with this

Mosley CM-1 receiver

The receiver covered 80-10m (No WARC at the time) in seven bands 650 KHz wide. You had about 12 inches of 'dial'. It was rated at 0.5 microvolt sensitivity and had both AM and product detectors in it. What is unusual is that it used five tubes – all 6AW8A triode/pentode tubes.

It was an 80M single conversion receiver with a 455 KHz IF...the upper bands used a crystal controlled converter in front of the 80M receiver. There was no CW filter option. It was an 'economy' design. It did not sell well and quickly disappeared from the market and Mosley went back to making antennas. It sold for $169.95 in 1961 and 62, and the speaker was another 20 bucks.

The Drake 2B radio with variable selectivity and other radios coming on the market became more popular. This is a fairly rare radio you seldom see.

Vermont QSO Party

It started off slow, but from past years, I didn't expect too much activity and too many stations. Most seem to wait till the New England QP (NEQP) and then you might get a mobile or two.

This year, I heard and spotted two stations on cw.

Here's who was spotted – maybe if you need these you can arrange a sked?

KD1BL spotted in Franklin and KB1FRW in Chittenden on 40M SSB by WB3AAL

N1SP in Bennington spotted by Joe, N5UZW on 20M SSB.. Had a YL operator at one point and giant pile up.

K4TT in Essex spotted by N5MLP non 20M SSB – and by KM6HB

N1SP spotted on 20CW by N5XG

W2HDI spotted in Lamoille by K4XI on 20M SSB

W1NVT in Chittenden and N1DXR in Franklin spotted by N8CIJ non 40M SSB

N1DXR – Franklin VT spotted on 20M by K7INA on SSB.

\K1VMT Lamoille spotted on 20M SSB by KM6HB

W1SFR in Rutland spotted by K7INA on 40cw

KB1NHV spotted in Washington by N8CIJ on 40m SSB

from the 3830 reflector:

W0PAN from AZ worked 4 stations on SSB, 3 multipliers

KC0DEB (KS) made 6 contacts and 5 mults on 20M and 1 on 15M SSB, 1on 40 and 1 on 80M SSB. Also had one digital contact on 20M.

KC0W (ND) worked all 14 counties in VT on 20CW. Wow...he must have a secret. No one even spotted half that many stations or reported working them!

W4UT (TN) had 12 contacts and 5 multipliers, all on SSB – on 3 bands – likely only 7 or 8 stations worked, but different bands

From the 3830 reflector

WA1ZAM (VT - Bennington) 221 digital contacts

this was the best I could do without any real antenna low power 100 watts and
just a wire in a tree at 20 ft it's like taking a beach ball to a gun fight.
I'm new at this rtty stuff so just had some fun

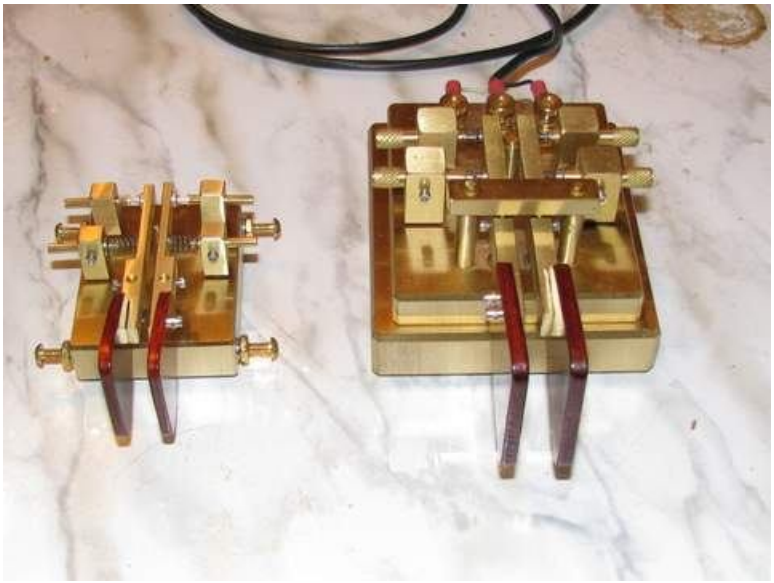
K8RA Keys

K8RA Keys

Ed, K8QWY sent along a note last month. He noted that Santa Claus dropped off some new keys at his QTH and sent pictures along

“My little Palm Key was acting up on the Kentucky trip.

I had to use the Bencher on most of the runs and I just don't Like it.



The Pictures are Left is the 1 Pound P2jr the 4 screws on the edges are my idea for either a metal clip to my wooden board or just plain old bungee cords for tie downs. There are actually Five rubber feet on the bottom two in the very front one in the Middle Larger and Two more at the Rear. Guess I don't see how small the Key really is by pictures its 2ins by 2 1/2 on 3/4 in Brass weighs 1 pound total...
My home key is the P4 its 3in by 3 5/8 1/2 in thick mount on top of a 4in by 3 1/2in by 3/4 in Base weighs 5 Pounds!!! It don't walk the desk.. He even makes a 7 Pounder.....

73

Ed K8QWY

http://www.k8ra.com/index_003.htm

Heathkit Lunchboxes

Remember those Benton Harbor “Lunchboxes”? You see them at almost every hamfest...and if you really want to own one, probably can get one for $5 or $10 these days. Here's a bit of nostalgia with the specs for some of the first radios that triggered lots of activity on VHF

Here's the specs on the Six meter version. The Twoer and Tener were similar.

The Heathkit Model HW-29A Transceiver is a combination transmitter and receiver for use on six meters for AM operation. It was 'inexpensively priced'.

Specifications:

Transmitter Section

Power Input to Final Approximately 5 watts

RF Amplifier:	
Frequency Control:	8.33 mc to 9.000 mc crystal Pin spacing .500" Pin diameter .093" FT-241 or FT-243 crystal holder
Modulation:	AM plate modulation, automatically limited to not more than 100%
Output Impedance:	50 or 72 ohm

Receiver Section

Receiver Type:	Superregenerative detector preceded by RF preamplifier stage
Sensitivity:	Usable with signals as low as 1 microvolt at the antenna terminals
Speaker Size:	3-½" round
Tuning Range:	50 mc to 54 mc

Power Supply

Power Rectifier:	Two silicon diodes in full-wave voltage doubler cicuit
Power Requirements:	With built-in supply: 105-125 volts 50/60 cycle AC 45 watts With external supply: 6 volt operation -- 6 volts at 2.35 amps, 260 volts DC at 90 ma. 12 volt operation -- 12 volts at 1.2 amps, 260 volts DC at 90 ma

Accessories

Microphone:	Ceramic element type, plastic case. Suitable for either hand or desk operation
Connecting Cables:	Two supplied, one for 105-125 volt AC operation and one for 6 or 12 volt external DC power supply use. Power circuits are automatically switched for internal or external power supply use when cable is plugged in

General

Tube Complement:	1 - 6BA8: Oscillator/Tripler (Pentode Section) Doubler (Triode Section) 1 - 6CL6: Final RF Amplifier 1 - 6AN8: Receiver Preamplifier and Detector 1 - 12AX7: Speech Amplifier and First Audio Amplifier 1 - 6AQ5: Audio Output and Modulator
Cabinet Dimensions:	8" high (including handle) 6" deep (including knobs) 9-¾" wide (including license holder)
Net Weight:	6-½" lbs
Shipping Weight:	10 lbs

The HW-29/HW-29A "Sixer" 6 meter AM transceiver was offered by Heathkit in the early to late 1960s. The transceiver features a tunable superregenerative receiver and crystal-controlled transmit. Transmit output is about 2 watts. The price for the basic transceiver appears to have remained $44.95 over the entire period the transceiver was available.

The Benton Harbor Lunch-boxes were designed to be portable rigs, but operation away from commercial mains required the use of a power supply capable of providing 260vdc. Heathkit's solution was the GP-11 vibrator power supply. Nowadays, however, we have other options such have a 75-watt DC-to-AC inverter by APC that nicely powers the Sixer from a 12vdc battery.

Video presentation on the rigs here

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwdBbWJ1WEk

Heathkit made a similar looking radio for the Citizens Band – way back long before it got popular. I remember seeing one in use in the mid 50s.....as a curious early teenager – anything related to radio was interesting – and that before I got hooked on ham radio. You seldom see them around – model CB -1. It was a super regenerative receiver – no squelch – and a single channel. Needless to say, when activity increased – the unit wasn't much good as the receiver was wide as a barn door with no selectivity.

For early VHF rigs, they were sold by the tens of thousands. In the early days on six and two, everyone was on the same frequency with local nets. You didn't have to worry about a selective receiver. It was actually an advantage as most folks were crystal controlled...and often kilohertz or more apart on transmit. When you multiplied the 8 Mhz crystals up by six, a small error at 8 Mhz gave you a much larger one at 50 Mhz...and really large at two meters. Folks could be 10 KHz apart or more.....but the super regen receiver didn't care!..... hi hi.

Delaware QSO Party

Apparently there were DE stations on the air to be had....but the county hunters did a miserable job of spotting them. I'd venture there were half a dozen on 'data' modes, and likely a bunch on 40M SSB or 40cw – but no spots. Maybe too many were busy chasing MN mobiles?

On W6RK, the only spots were by as follows:

K8QWY spotted WA3I in New Castle, DE on 80 cw
KM6HB spotted K3JD (Sussex) and NY3C (New Castle) on 20M SSB
K4XI spotted KB3YBB in Sussex on 20M SSB

from the 3830 reflector:

W0PAN had 3 contacts into DEL. On each on 20, 15 and 10M – likely the same station on SSB.

K4SX TN worked all 3 counties on SSB with 6 contacts on 20M and 1 on 40M.

On the Road with N4CD – I

The county hunting car hat sat in the garage for nearly two months with nary a trip over 10 miles once a week to keep it in shape. There was a Houston Vintage Radio Association convention/auction scheduled for the weekend, so I decided to check it out. I had never been to his one before and it was supposed to be a good auction with lots of equipment each year from estates and from a closed down radio museum. There would be the normal TX style 2 days of auctions with the first auction being 'tubes and paper', the second being plastic radios/parts/junkers and misc. On Saturday the 'high value' items such as consoles, tombstone radios, catalin radios and similar come up for sale.

I thought about heading to the Orlando, FL , Hamcation, but didn't get up the energy for that long trip. As it turned out, the weather along the route on the way home would have been absolutely miserable with tornadoes, continuous thunderstorms, and worse. It looks like I made the right decision on that one. Maybe next year for Orlando. Why do major events always happen on the same weekend so you can only get to one? Hmm.....

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It was an uneventful trip down the Houston from Collin County other than two big traffic jams. I left after 8am hoping that 'rush hour' was mostly open. That would get me to downtown about 8:30am – usually OK to get through the downtown area and headed down the interstate. Well, that was not to be as there had been an accident and it took an extra hour just to clear the mess in Dallas. Frustration! After the delay, it was full speed ahead...with a stop to take a pic of the county line side on the interstate for Ellis – one that needed to be added to the database.

N4CD at Dallas/Ellis TX County Line

Then it was clear sailing down I-45 through Ellis, Navarro, Freestone, Leon...down to Madison and then Montgomery where another traffic accident slow down took another 30 minutes to go 3 or 4 miles.

Oh well. There's a lot to be said about back roads! The convention was on the north side of Houston so I didn't have to fight the usual horrible traffic of that city! It's as bad or worse than Dallas and I'm a stranger there.

There were some counties needed in the County Hunter Database for TX – I'd see if I could get a picture or two – but the route was all interstate so that's often a problem. Got the sign for Ellis but missed Walker – it was in the middle of the interstate and there was no way to stop and snag it without a dangerous move – at least headed south. That location caught me by surprise.

There weren't too many needs listed on K3IMC site for 'needed counties' in TX that I could easily get to – either down or back. I did note a few.

The HVRA convention held at a nice 12 story Marriott Hotel. It had everything from health club to swimming pools for use of guests..but the internet was $12.99 a day for wi-fi! From my guesstimate, there were likely 200 or so in attendance. With so much going on, you don't even have time to check out the health club, use the pool, or anything else unless you come early or stay late. At $100/night after taxes.....I decided to just stay one night.

They have a very small 'flea market' selling misc stuff like knobs for radios and similar but not much that goes on during the day. You can see all that in 10 minutes. You've got a few hours to peruse the radios being entered for the auction in the afternoon and the first sale starts at 4pm. You need to check all the boxes under the table and look inside the boxes for buried treasure. I didn't see much I 'had to have'. Like most hams, I've got too much 'junque' at home already!

There were 380 lots of stuff sold on Friday – from boxes of 'transmitting tubes' (lots of weird ones from the museum) to boxes of old magazines – QST, Radio Craft from the '40s', Radio/Television from the 20s and 30s, old text/repair books, SAMS Fotofacts servicing guides, advertising - at the 'tubes and paper' auction. You can't give away old QSTs these days. At most hamfests, there are boxes of 'free' ones – haul them away, or a few bucks for each year – and they don't seel.

After a 30 minute break for dinner, it was back to the first auction of 'equipment' – everything from boxes of misc (300 toroids, variables, tube sockets, magnet wire, stereo equipment, tons of plastic table radios, clock radios, etc). The auction ran to 10pm and didn't get to sell even 2/3rds of the stuff entered for Friday. They had major estates, plus loads of stuff left over from the 'museum'. Sales on Friday totaled $4400.

You could buy a Laser Disc player with a box of 200 laser discs for $70, or nice Sansui or Marantz Stereo receivers for $20-80. There were Sony professional TV cameras, boxes of speakers, major professional music thousand watt speaker cabinets, Cassette decks, reel to reel equipment that sold for $1000 new, an old Admiral 17 inch set from the early 50s, loads of novelty transistor radios, and one or two really beat up ham radio items in major state of 'rustification'.

There were boxes of tubes – 200 or 300 miniature tubes – going for $5 or $10/box. In boxes. There were boxes of 'pulls' – sitting in boxes of 50-200 plus loose in the large box. In some boxes there were tubes I”ve never seen before with weird shapes. If you were so inclined, you could probably put them on Ebay and who knows what they would bring? Or haul them to the dump? I didn't know enough about them, nor want to haul hundreds of pounds of 'stuff' to the house for sorting.

It was a long day by the time you 'checked out' and could retrieve what you had bought. I bought 3 items including a big box of toroids and two boxes of magazines. I bid on a few other things, but others wanted them more than I did.

I checked the Weather Channel - both for local weather and to watch the blizzard unfolding in New England. Way way back when , I grew up in NJ and went to college in NY – and still remember and really don't miss those 18 and 24 inch snow storms and shoveling the snow! Hey, all that snow should keep those NH folks at home and on the air in the NH QSO party, right! (well, that was a joke!).....maybe they didn't have power to get on...but there were a good lack of stations on the air in NH on Saturday after the first few hours. Maybe they were all outside shoveling snow, unburying their cars, etc?

After a short night of sleep it was up and early to see what was showing up for the Saturday auction that was going to start an hour early since they had 200 items left to sell from Friday, plus the expected couple hundred more items. The auctioneer zipped along both days.

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Here's the poop on Catalin Radios

Although radios were already popular in the 1920's, the popularity really boomed during the 30's. In 1930, about 12 million US households had a radio, but by 1939, that number had increased to 28 million. Radios were the chief form of free entertainment

As the 1930's progressed and more and more households purchased radios, the styling and design of the radio became more important. Not only did Americans want something to hear, they also wanted something that was visually pleasing.

Most Bakelite radios were black or brown. Those were the colors that were possible to make using Bakelite.

During the 30's, the automobile and airplane industry as well as the Art Deco movement heavily influenced radio designers. The result was streamlined cabinets, distinctly automotive grills and architecturally influenced designs. A material that became very popular for radio cabinets was called "Catalin".

In 1926, several chemists embarked on experiments with phenol-formaldehyde compounds and by 1928 had refined the resin to a clear mixture. The material still had some minor problems, so chemists around the world tried for many years to find dyes that would keep their color during the process needed to set the material. Eventually, a group of German chemists found a way to make dyes directly from coal tar. Combined with varying amounts of water, the dyes could be added to the clear resin to create a wide variety of colors. Although one problem was solved, the new resin still could not hold up to the molding process, so they did more experimenting and found they could use a technique called casting. In casting, the molten material is poured into a lead mold that is then put into an oven to cure for three to eight days. Each mold is then flipped onto its side and air hammers are used to tap the molded item out of its lead mold. Because this great new material could now be more easily utilized, the American Catalin Corporation bought the rights to import the new German dyes to the United States in 1928. Their company name is where we get the word "Catalin".

A few years later, Catalin began to be used in larger items such as radio cabinets. The candy-like colors of these catalin cabinets were an expensive addition to any home, but were very popular nonetheless. Prices ranged from $9.95 to $49.95 which was a significant investment in the years surrounding the Great Depression. Companies such as Emerson, Fada and Sentinel provided breathtaking sets that emulated the art-deco movement.

Emerson Catalin Radio

Catalin cabinets stand out from their Bakelite and plaskon cousins because of their thickness and polished feel. Catalin cabinets are usually brightly colored, which was made possible by the relative transparency of the basic phenolic casting resin. This characteristic, in addition to the fact that no added fillers were used, made the cabinet appear translucent as well as brightly colored. The unfortunate downside of these beautiful Catalin cabinets is that because they had no fibrous fillers to give them strength, they often cracked and chipped.

Plaskon radios were typically made in white or alabaster but a few were made in color.

Many times the engineering of the cabinet was inferior to the design and weight of the heavy steel and glass tube chassis', therefore cracks were inevitable. Another problem that has occurred is contraction of the material causing "shrinkage" of the cabinets. This shrinkage, unfortunately, was not taken into account during the manufacturing process. Chassis were made to fit snugly inside their catalin cabinets. Often, the three to four bolts that held the chassis to the cabinet, combined with the shrinkage over the years would be a recipe for disaster. Cracks between knob holes, screw holes and slots in the grill were likely, and that is mostly why the value of these treasures has risen so much.

These once bright and cheerfully colored cabinets over the years have transformed into much darker, duller colors once affected by years of smoke, dirt, dust and sunlight. This was due in part to the fact that the plastics had no UV (ultra-violet) light protection.

Source:
http://catalinradio.com/p-2817-history.htmlhttp://catalinradio.com/p-2817-history.html

Lots of pics of Catalin radios here. Some of these sell for THOUSANDS of dollars in 'brand new' condition.

http://www.sarsradio.com/Radio_Fest.htm

Arvin model 532

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On Saturday, I only saw one or two things of interest – there was a nice Heathkit SB-310 – that's a 'shortwave' version receiver of the Heathkit line. It covered the shortwave bands at 3.7 and 3.9 Mhz, 5, 7 Mhz, 9.5, 11.5, 14-14.5, 15 and 17 MHz plus another band or two higher up. Never seen one of them before.

Picture and tube line up here

http://www.radiomuseum.org/r/heath_sb_310sb31.html

There were no nifty shortwave regen receivers there for sale. I really didn't expect any but you never know. The two RACO regen receivers from the 1930s had shown up at the last two conventions – one in Houston (my friend picked it up for me) and in Dallas. These are about the only place, other than Ebay, you'll likely see the old radios.

After two hours of watching stuff go buy, I decided to bail out and head home. The weather was not going to be great later in the day and really bad overnight - and not great in the morning on Sunday. I didn't want to wait till 6pm for the auction to be over if I bought anything. That's a great incentive not to buy anything at a 'bargain price'. I've got more than enough 'miscellaneous' in the house already! I didn't need VOR antennas from a B-17, nor full size mannikins dressed in combat gear, nor 1000w rated speaker systems, nor console or tombstone radios, nor plastic or wood radios by the hundreds.

There were a dozen Crosley sets, half a dozen Atwater Kents, RCA Radiolas of many vintages.....nearly all the stuff was broadcast radios – the older stuff for AM, and the plastic radios sometimes covering the FM bands. There were the metal box radios that were popular it the 20s up for sale. There were dozens of 'hi fi' units – stereo systems, FM/AM tuners, power amps. Wow – the old tube type power amps went for big money. Even just the chassis with transformers brought in big bucks. There were two juke box amps – big bucks.

The Zenith radios seemed to sell for big bucks. A lot of things sold for $5 or $10. If you had a van or truck, you could have hauled away several tons of stuff. The heavier it was, the cheaper it sold. Since I didn't buy anything, I didn't have to stick around to 'check out' and pay. With all the stuff they had to sell, it was going to be a long, long day for the auctioneer and those waiting to check out.

So it was on the road at roughly noon headed on back up the interstate. The LA QSO party was going on – so between running counties on the way home.....I was tuning 40M hunting for the mobiles. I found W3DYA and N5NA, both around 7040. It took me another hour to find NO5W who was running down around 7025, and that was when I stopped in a rest area to check the spots. Aha! I still didn't catch him in too many on the way home. It's hard to be driving at 75 mph plus (speed limit is 75 on 150 miles of the interstate) and tuning around on the radio and do both reasonably well. Looks like I missed him in the first few that I could have used.

Don, W0EAR, had Grimes TX listed for a need for Master Platinum. I gave him a quick call on the cellphone to see if he would be around for the 15 mile detour at exit 142 and the answer was yes. So 15 minutes later it was off I-45 on 190 west and then down route 90 to get to the county line of Madison/Grimes, TX. Jack, WD4OIN, also had it listed as a need.

N4CD at C/L Grimes/Madison, TX
Genuine Percy Pic

There's plenty of room to park there. Quiet, too! I caught up with Don for his 'next to last ' in TX. There was a good pile on 20M. 17M was nearly dead with just a few contacts, and 40m yielded a bunch of QSOs. Almost no one home on 30M other than N0KV. At the county line, it was overcast and gray – a dreary winter day – temp was 63 degrees and I could roll the window down while operating at the line. I took a Percy Pic.

Likely some of the FL county hunting crowd was over at the Orlando 'Hamcation' hamfest. That's a good one but I had to choose between the 250 mile drive or the 1000 mile drive and stuck close to home. I was just getting over a winter cold.

Then it was back to the interstate and heading on home. It started to drizzle a bit later and the drizzle stuck around the rest of the way home. The temp dropped to 50 deg and it was a gray dreary winter day. No sun. Gloomy looking. We don't get too many of them around here, unlike up north where winter seems to go on for 4 months. Or six months really 'up north'.

I grabbed some gas and a snack for lunch then continued on home. Traffic was heavy but moving the rest of the way home with a few showers. Between running the counties and hunting for the LA QP mobiles, the trip went by quickly. Getting through downtown Dallas was good for Saturday, but you really have to wonder why there are 100,000 cars on the highway all the times going places in the Dallas-Ft Worth metroplex. It was six and eight lanes of traffic, a car every 200 feet in every lane, moving 60 mph for 30 miles.

The car and driver arrived home about 4pm and I quickly took off the antenna, put the car in the garage and headed inside to snag a few more contacts with the LA QSO Party folks.

Mileage was 530 miles for the 2 day trip down and back – about 31.5 mpg.

Hope I hit something you needed.

LA QSO Party

laissez les bons temps rouler

That's French for 'let the good times roll!'.....and it was a heck of a QSO party with three super mobiles out there putting out counties all day long on multiple bands. This year, the scoring made each county on each band a separate multiplier, so mobiles had lots of incentives to be active on as many bands as possible. In the past, some mobiles sat primarily on 20M CW....never getting to 40M as they could keep up the rate on 20M. That made a lot of closer in folks unhappy. This year, there was lots of activity on 20 and 40, with lots of spots also on 15M and activity on 80M. Something for everything was the theme of the weekend.

N4CD was down in Houston TX at the start of the QSO party so I missed a few of the counties until I got mobile around noon time headed back home. It took me a while to realize that Chuck, NO5W, was running down around 7025 KHz while Norm, W3DYA and N5NA were around 7040. Had to stop once and check the spots as I wondered where NO5W was for the first two hours. Hmm.... well, after that I caught him a few more times as I was zipping along the interstate on the way home. When I got home, there was still a few hours to chase mobiles before the skip on 40M got 'too long' and there was nothing more to hear but stations calling them. Activity moved down to 7025-7039 to get away from the infestation of RTTY signals above those frequencies.

It looks like most of the counties were on the air.....didn't check but nearly all, if not all were on. Not much seen in the way of any fixed stations getting on for the event – the spots were all from the 3 mobiles fr the most part. Just three fixed stations spotted.

Spotted by the County Hunters – mobiles W3DYA, N05W, N5NA

fixed - K5ER , KE5IAK/KC5JZY, W5YL

From the 3830 contest reflector:

NO5W mobile 843 CW QSO

“Perhaps the reason for low LAQP activity from Louisiana stations is the fact that the event takes place on the same weekend as the CQWW WPX RTTY contest and, maybe more importantly, in the middle of Mardi Gras season when radio takes a backseat to parades and parties, and CQ's are replaced by "throw me something mister".

Fortunately four mobiles (W3DYA, N5NA, NO5W, and K5ZZR) broke away from both of those activities to create their own version of "laissez les bon temps rouler" and in the process created enough noise and excitement to make the LAQP fun for both themselves and many stations outside of LA. A Mardi Gras float load of thanks to the other mobiles and to all the out of state stations who spent a good part of their Saturday chasing the mobiles around the state. Top responders in the NO5W log, contributing more than half of the QSOs were:

N6MU(42), NT2A(41), W0GXQ(34), W9MSE(32), WB2ABD(32), K8MFO(31), WA6KHK(31), KC3X(31), NU0Q(26), K4YT(25), W7GKF(21), K5WAF(20), K0HNC(18), DL3DXX(17), KC7YE(17), and W8WVU(16).

Needless to say that without your participation it would hardly have been worth the 400+ mile trip that K1DW and I made, not to mention the trips made by the other mobiles. Your participation also resulted in a personal LAQP best for this operator.

Shortly after moving to New Orleans I had the opportunity to do some multi-ops as W5RU(@KN5O) and during one of our breaks Dallas-K1DW expressed interest in doing a mobile operation in the LAQP. The plan was for me to stay at K1DW's QTH near Folsom about 60 miles north of my New Orleans location on Friday evening, and from there the two of us would head out on our route.

Living in Uptown New Orleans, where many of the parades start about half a block from the house, required that I make an early getaway to avoid getting caught in the congestion and street closures surrounding the Friday evening parades. So I left the house early and arrived at K1DW about 6pm just in time for Dallas, Lynda, and I to join Ted-KN5O and Lorraine for dinner at a nice Italian restaurant. A bottle of wine and some pasta finished off with king cake bread pudding and we were well on our way to a fine weekend. Also a big thank you to K1DW for driving what turned out to be a fairly aggressive route.

Everything went according to plan Saturday morning as we left Folsom around 8:15am heading back to the New Orleans area to activate St. Tammany, Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson and St. Charles before noon. No parade delays were encountered and the number of callers was an indication that our 400+ miles would include very few unanswered CQs.

At most every instance the first CQ following the crossover from one parish to the next brought the thundering herd back en masse .

Saturday afternoon and evening were a little problematic for staying on schedule as we encountered some delays due to roadway resurfacing, a few missed turns, and one road that we traveled down for about five miles only to find it closed with no way to bail out except to backtrack. The other delays were good news delays: the greater than anticipated activity required making quite a few longer than scheduled stops in some of the shorter parishes in order to not leave any Qs on the table.

With one more mobile on the road we could have activated all 64 parishes but as it was we fell three short -- maybe next year. If you're interested in where we were when we worked you and what the scenery looked like check out our Logs On A Map on the web site www.no5w.com. Also keep an eye on the website for announcements of future road trips, hopefully to include FQP, KSQP, TXQP and perhaps several others.

73

Chuck-NO5W
Dallas-K1DW

N5NA mobile 872 CW QSOs

There was lots of activity considering there is no promotion of this QSO party by the sponsor. Some parishes I had to find a stopping place to work the callers and have time to work both 20m and 40m. N6MU kept me hopping moving to 15m and 10m but it was well worth it.

Top callers with the indicated number of QSO's were: N6MU(51), NT2A(45), W0GXQ(38), K8MFO(32), W9MSE(30), WB2ABD(30), KC3X(29), K5WAF(25), WA6KHK(25), NU0Q(24), K0HNC(22), K4YT(22), N4UF(19), KN4Y(19), W5QP(17), and

K4YFH(16).

Equipment: K3, Scorpion SA-680, Dell D630, CQ/X Logging Software, and Chevrolet C2500.

Thanks to everyone who called and thanks to my wife, K5AKS, for driving!

N6MU fixed CA 130 cw 129 mults

Now that was fun. Band mults really spice things up. Every Q with the Three Musketeers (W3DYA/NO5W/N5NA) was a mult. I had 50 Qs with N5NA, 42 with NO5W and 37 with W3DYA. They WERE the Party! The only other Q was with N5II who I heard once. Thanks for all the QSYs. 73...

NT2A – fixed – NY 115 cw 15 SSB QSO

Bonus Points for QSO with club station W5YL.
Activity LA stations almost 0. Extra Class licensees in LA almost 1300. Thanks to Mobiles ops N5NA, NO5W, W3DYA K5ZZR, N5II for great job and saving the party and keeping it alive. Still need one county Cameron, LA for 3rd time USA-CA.

KN4Y - fixed FL – 52 cw QSO

Louisiana has no QSO party CW operators so 3 Texas mobile were imported to keep the CW operators happy. They did just that working many counties on many bands. At 0030z I heard no more so I shut down. I did not hear the bonus station on CW. All my contacts were with the mobiles.

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Note de N4CD – Chuck, NO5W has moved to LA now, so he is the resident 'mobile' operator.

WB2ABD – fixed NY – 88 CW QSO

finished LA all-40m with Plaquemines and Iberville.

K5ER – fixed – Ouachita - 597 SSB QSO

Usually, I do most contests as a single op, two radio. However, Bobby, WM5H and I have had good success working together, so the thought was to just do a multi. I have a recent new-found interest in RTTY and the 2nd most popular rtty contest was happening the same weekend. What to do?

With a fully functional IC-761 in the left operator position, I simply split the rig control and input for the six-pack antenna switcher, and Bobby had full rig control and access to all antenna for the LAQP. Mean while, I used one of the Pro-II's on the other six-pack input and ran the CQ WPX RTTY. Bobby had use of the auto-band switching 600 watt solid state amp, which was great since it was out of his reach. Mean-while I had his KW 922, running about 1KW. Thanks to ICE-419 band pass filters and mono-band antenna, we never had any inter-station interference, even though sometimes we selected antenna that were less than 5 feet apart.

This was the first time I had ever run two totally separate contests simultaneously from my station, and we had a blast.

CW Stats from Dennis, KK7X

CW Stats for 2012

CALL	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
AA4GT					1992		
AA8R	2274 #2	2194 #2	1930 #2	751 #2	3059	2721	2717
AA9KH		2999 #2			3064 #2	3069 #2	3053 #2
AB4YZ	3073	3063	3054				
AB7RW	2656 #3	2040 #3	3073 #2	3062 #2	3010 #2	2886 #2	2430 #2
AC0B	1124	1117		1101	985	897	689
AD1C	3069	3067	3064	3057	3045	3044	3026
AD8W		2985			2889	2699	2373
AE3Z	2411	1886	1854	1818	1806	1942	1630
DL3IAC	2060						
DL5AWI	2756	2744		2670		2541	2457
DL6KVA	2919	2810	2636		2439	2398	2267
K0DEQ	2739	2637					
K0LG		2708		1968			
K0PY		1679					
K1TKI	1463 #2	3065	2967	2705	1820	851	
K2RP	2605	2520					2275

K4AMC	2978 #2	2717 #2	1594 #2				
K4EXT	3077	3049	2782	1814	1431	727	
K4XI	3074 #2	3062 #2	2962 #2	2462 #2	1387 #2	3071	3064
K4YFH	2987 #2				3077	3075	
K4YT	1743 #2		2959			1233	1871
K5GF	2996 #2	2721 #2	627 #2				
K5JF	1470 #2	1718 #2	1608 #2	1047 #2	326 #2	69 #2	397 #2
K5XY	131			131	131	131	
K7DM	2821						
K7REL	2971 #4	2551 #4	433 #4	2949 #3	2347 #3	41 #3	2946 #2
K7TM	1436 #2	3077	2602				
K8IW	3012	3010		2997	2982	2952	2933
K8OOK	2182	2115		1900	1720		
K8QWY	2992 #2	2927 #2		2570 #2		3057	
K8ZZ	1726 #2	1512 #2	1064 #2	605 #2	3072	2952	2717
K9AAA	3067	3040	2402				
KA3MMM		3077 #6	3032 #6	2872 #6	2412 #6	2125 #6	1044 #6
KA4RRU	2890	2794	2162	1636		658	
KA9JAC	255 #2	108 #2	3049	3014	2950	2819	2511
KB6UF	3071	3059	3023	2957		2336	2122
KC3X	359 #3	3060 #2	3035 #2	2786 #2	1492 #2		222 #2
KC6AWX		1380					
KC7YE	1693	1286					
KE3VV	3013 #2	2638 #2	3074	3074	3052	2983	2779
KK7X	2123	2069	1965	1814	1772		
KL1V	2111	2101	2078	1943	1808	1730	1595
KM1C		2771			2070		
KM6HB	2901	2680	2305	1561	1049		
KM8U		3062			2885 #2	2885 #2	2885 #2
KN4XP	2349					2125	1638
KN4Y	3060 #5	3041 #5	3008 #5	2868 #5	2610 #5		2954 #4
KR4OE	1881	1879	1842	1678	1614	1555	1461
KW4V	2236	241 #3	3062 #2	2874 #2	2231 #2		
KY0E	482 #2	188 #2	3068	3018	2885	2617	2298
N1BY		2300					
N2MH		1078				944	
N2OCW	2487 #2	2238 #2	940 #2	649 #2	3000	2992	2687
N3HOO		3061					
N3TG		1440					
N4AAT	1311 #3	3057 #2	2524 #2	1050 #2		2	
N4AKP		1731 #3	263 #3	3037 #2	2918 #2	2411 #2	869 #2
N4CD	1781 #5	3052 #4	2977 #4	2394 #4	3064 #3	2903 #3	2759 #3
N4JT			2926				
N4PJ		3073	2921				
N4RS	2971 #4	2871 #4	2629 #4	1924 #4		3035 #3	191 #3
N5PR	3065	3056	3023	2968	2882	2634	2412
N5XG	1827 #2	3077 #1	2950	1984			
N6PDB		2162					
N7JPF	974	378	18				
N7WO		2504	2449		1997	1994	1854
N8CBW		5	2				
N8CIJ	2950	2750	2445	1132			
N9ID			2748	2554	2296	2121	1711
N9JF	2962	2937	2896	2851	2779	2637	2415
N9QS	2011 #3	3077 #2	3039 #2	2908 #2	2562 #2	1364 #2	3053
N9STL	2694					2940	2499

NA8W	143						
ND9M	3072			3070		3066	3064
NF0N	1178 #2	3067	3046		2773	2548	2252
NM2L		1958 #2	1686 #2	1125 #2	35 # 2	2952	2677
NN9K	1985 #4	919 #4	1470 #3	1555 #3	865 #3	3064 #2	2625 #2
NU0Q	2415 #2	1811 #2	542 #2	3072	3061	2976	2718
NU4C	2455	2321	1766				
NW6S		2131 #2	121 #2	3050	3004		2870
NX0X	2323	2077		2009	1966	1888	1737
OH3JF	3077						
PA3ARM		2740					
SM6VR	3073	3060	3029	2998	2914	2860	2808
W4YDY	2207 #2				2939	2901	2849
VA3XOV	3002 #2	2376 #2	668 #2	3073	3042		
VK4AAR	2212	2005					
W0EAR	2466 #2	3075					
W0GXQ	3077 #5	2987 #5	1207 #5	2912 #4	502 #4	3049 #3	2648 #3
W0QE		2905 #4		2102 #4	3073 #3	2819 #3	3076 #2
W0ULU		1301					
W0UM		2159					
W3DLM	2051	1552	1300	984			
W3DYA	2962 #3	2870 #3	2311 #3	1489 #3	474 #3	3072 #2	3057 #2
W4RKV	2957 #2	2929 #2	2844 #2	2810 #2	2793 #2	2775 #2	2761 #2
W4SIG	2745 #2	2478 #2	794 #2				
W4XT		2479	2447				
W4YDY	2207 #2	1715 #2	986 #2	3053	2967	2936	2789
W5AI		3017					
W5QP	2295						
W6EG		2639					
W6TPC		280		276	234		
W7FFN	2832	2641	2316	2252	2036	2029	1932
W7KQZ	3056				2569		
W8ENW		2922					
W8JJ	1838	1788	1599	1356	1103	940	779
W8PN		2905 #2					
W9GBH	2731	2540	2182		2547	2413	2404
W9MSE	922 #6	3054 #5	2835 #5	1401 #5	3061 #4	2955 #4	2052 #4
W9UX		3077				2883	
W9WOC	1318	805					
WA3QNT	2943	2890				2614	2638
WA4UNS	2947	2840	2093	835			
WA7JHQ	3036 #2	3014 #2	2965 #2	2897 #2	2784 #2	2569 #2	2178 #2
WB2ABD	2314 #3	1572 #3	3070 #2	2964 #2			
WB4KZW	2555 #2	3077	3052	2937			
WD4QIN	3064	3040	3011		2902		2674
WD6CKT	1300 #3	1200 #3	700 #2	500 #2	250 #2	3077	3071
WD8QWA	3072						3006
WE5EE	499						
WE7G	3025	2978					
WQ7A	2961						
WU3H	2150 #4	2019 #4		1150 #4	785 #4	3073 #3	3057 #3
WV2B		808	808	773		505	
WY7LL		1994					

New Hampshire QSO Party

From the spots, it appeared at least 8 NH counties made it on the air. Spotted were:

AC1Z in Belknap
K1EEE and K1BX N1QC in Hillsborough
NM1JY and K1ZR K1HRO KB1YJ in Rockingham
AD1T N1KWF K1ZO in Cheshire
AF1T Merrimack
W1FZ Strafford

from the 3830 reflector:

K1HI – fixed Hillsborough 85 cw 418 ssb

"LY5A marched me up and down the bands to work me phone an cw on 20, 15, and 10. Lots of fun! Thanks to all the "I'll give 'em a point" guys on the band today. "
Several people had multipliers of 8, which would lead one to believe there were 8 of the NH counties on the air, probably mostly on SSB.

K1ZO – fixed Cheshire – 327 SSB QSOs

K1QO – QRP – Fixed NH – 46 QSOs

Lots of fun even with a bad leg of my OCF dipole that was hit during NEMO...it's amazing...not sure how, but it worked!!! About 2/3'ds of the big leg is on the ground, in the snow... the part that's attached to the tree is at about a 75 degree angle. The short leg portion is ok but lower than before the storm.

N1IX, as always, thanks so much for all you support and help, I'm very lucky to have you as my elmer!!!

N9NE you are incredible, I wouldn't have been on the air this

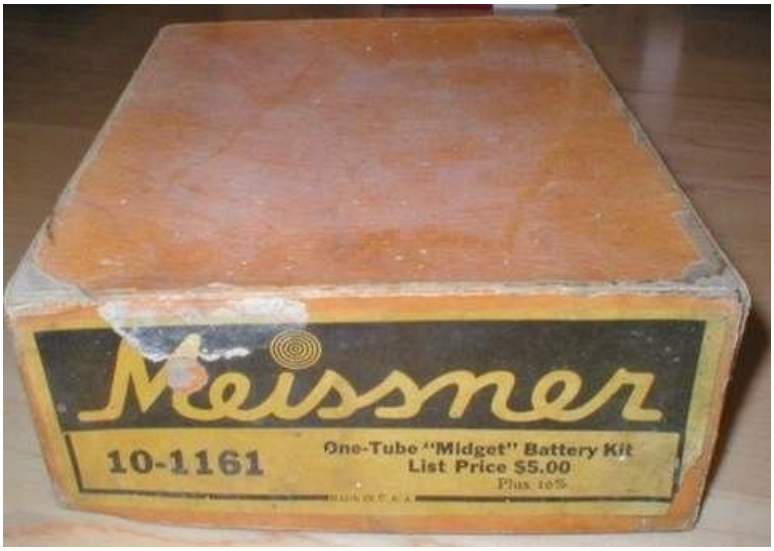
weekend if it wasn't for you, what a great friend and mentor!!!
It was so neat to have you first in the log....

Major thanks the best radio group in the world: QRP FOX HUNT
Group..so cool for K4BAI, K9CW, KI0I, NN4K, AA1SB and KE0G to
stop by for q's(besides N9NE and N1IX as mentioned above)
Thanks for all who put up with me...it was a
bad start the first night...I messed up setting up N1MM and my
sending exchange was messed up, but wanted to
operate...by Sunday later in the day I finally squared
things away. It's incredible what half an antenna can do!!!
DK2CF was a major surprise as was LY5A
on two bands...cool!! Thanks everyone....72/88 de Ann

W7KAM – fixed MO – 17 Q, 9 multipliers

On the Trail of Regens

This month on Ebay a nice unbuilt Meissner Midget kit # 10-1161 showed up for sale – new, original in the box, all parts present and accounted for, with instructions. Likely from the 40s. The design was carried in the Radio Amateur Handbook (not the ARRL one) for at least 10 years. They usually showed the 1, 2 and 3 tube versions you could build, the added tubes providing some audio amplification.



This was the one tube version. It came in 1, 2 and 3 tube models. Here's the parts you'd get as part of the kit.

There is not much to it – One plug in coil, one socket for the plug in coil, one tube socket, one variable capacitor, one regen control pot, one terminal strip marked for the battery, antenna

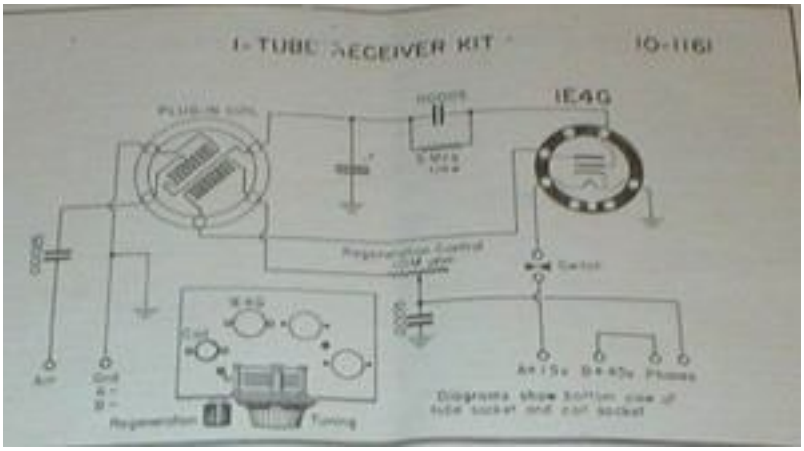
and ground wires. Two pin jacks for headphones. Two knobs. One piece of solder and misc wires. Three capacitors and one resistor and one bag of hardware to mount the stuff, plus a front panel and pre-drilled chassis. 39 parts/pieces in all.

It used a 1E4G tube (not supplied) and 1.5v and 45v battery (not supplied) and 2000 ohm type headphones (not supplied). The kit sold for $5 way back when. By the time you bought the battery and headphones and tube, you'd double the price.

Here's a picture of the Meissner coil and socket. They are essentially 'unobtainium' - Meissner used this in several kits.....but overall they were not sold in other kits – and the coils have been lost over time. You could get them to cover long wave up to 30 Mhz but finding them is darn near 'mission impossible' today . If you ever see any of them, let N4CD know immediately! Or buy them first, they call me and I'll send you off a check pronto!

This is a special socket....that takes the coil on the right that plugs in. The contacts are on the outside of the coil form. There are no 'pins' as in a normal 'plug in coil' form. It has a key way to orient the coil.

Here's the schematic – nothing special.



This kit , which sold for $5 way back when, sold for $255 on Ebay this month!...ouch! There are some serious collectors of unbuilt radios out there.

I've got a built one of these....but...dang.....no coil for it. Well, someday I'll find one.

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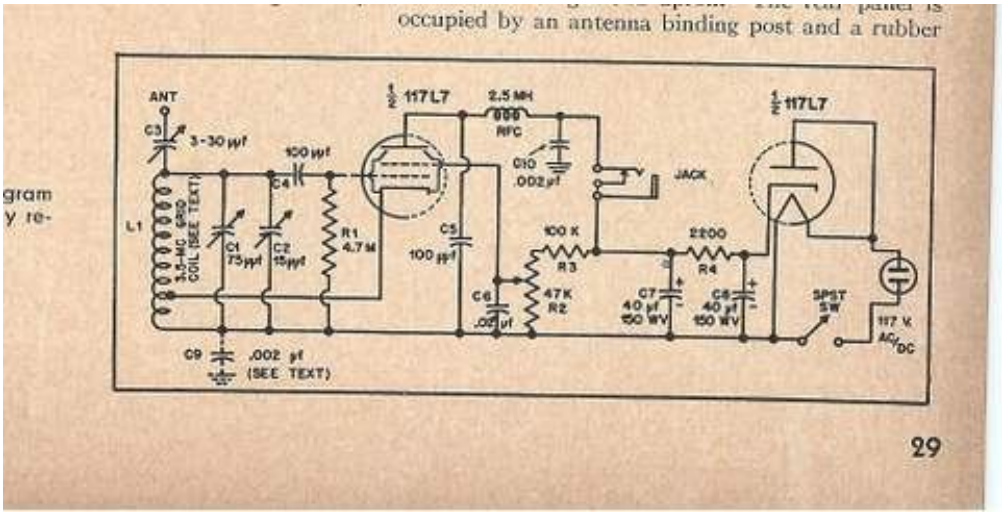
While at the HVRA convention, I didn't get my hand down fast enough and wound up with a 20 lb box of old CQ and QST Magazines. The QST and 73 Magazines are on line, but the QST archives don't have the interesting ads included. The print versions do.

The CQ Magazines were from the 1948 and 1953 time frame. So what turned up as I browsed through the issues in the 20lb box? Well, some interesting regens I'd never seen before. So far, CQ hasn't put their back issues on line to search, not that I'm aware of. Probably it will happen one of these days. Other than a few folks like me, there's not a whole lot of 'monetization' that will occur with half a dozen hams a year searching back issues for content – hi hi.

There were several build your own mobile transmitter articles – 10M and 6M were popular – and no mobile operation was allowed below 10 meters. There were antenna articles and building your own receivers. Keeping up with the WAZ scores was in each issue. There were articles about 'mobile clubs' – springing up around the country. Surplus gear was available but it wasn't cheap in 1948. A BC-348 receiver would set you back $130, and that is 1948 bucks when the minimum wage was well under a dollar an hour. You'd have to work a month just to buy one, then you had to convert it from 24VDC to be useful. From what I can

gather, surplus stuff got a lot cheaper in the 50s when more of it flooded the market and manufacturers brought out dozens of new models that would compete against the surplus gear effectively.

This is from the October 1948 issue. It's a project titled the 117L7 Utility Reviver by Lloyd, W6CLV. It's a one tube regen – with details to build it for either 80, 40, or 20M with the coil winding detail.



It uses a 117L7 tube – the diode part is used as a half wave rectifier, and the other section is used as a Hartley regen detector. IT had a 117vac filament. No need for a transformer.

You'll notice the tap on the coil for the cathode, as opposed to having a 'tickler winding' on the coil off the plate for feedback. . Some feel the Hartley circuit gave better performance with smoother regen, but nearly all the regen circuits you see have a tickler winding on the coil. The antenna is coupled in through a small cap. As normal for the times, the full plate voltage shows up across the headphones! There is a floating ground, with the 'rf' ground provided by a single capacitor to chassis. Regen control is via controlling the voltage on the screen. Who knows? I might run across one of these in a junk box under a table at a hamfest and now I might be able to recognize it!

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In the same issue was an ad for a Mitey-Mite transmitter receiver kit from United Surplus Materials of Chicago. It was advertised as “It's Terrific! It's Tiny! It's Thrilling!”

So what was the Mitey-Mite kit? It was a 3 tube transceiver using a 12BA6 for a tapped coil regen detector using screen grid voltage for control, a 50B5 audio amp/crystal oscillator, and 35W4 rectifier tube. It would run 4.5 w input – probably 2.5 watts or so output. The front panel had a tuning control, a regen control and a transmit receive switch. OH, and a jack to plug in your headphones. The 50B5 tube was switched from use in the receiver to use in the transmitter. I suspect somewhere in there is a crystal for the transmitter but it isn't shown.

I'm sure it left a LOT to be desired! I suspect it ran on 110V AC but it didn't even say! That would be doing QRP the hard way.

I suspect it was more 'It's terrible'!

What we would do before the web showed up? Need more info on the Mitey Mite Transceiver? What are the odds that someone actually has one of these and posted info on the internet about it? Probably not to great...but exactly ONE hit comes back using Google search.....and here's what I found:

Here's from W0VLZ webpage about the unit

“This is a great example of a minimal design making use of available WWII surplus parts. The

first steps in the instruction manual explain how the disassemble the included BC-745 pogo stick transceiver tuning unit to get the crystal, two sockets, a tuning coil and the bandset capacitor. The design itself would not make it off of today's drawing boards. First it is an AC-DC set with one side of the AC line connected directly to the metal chassis/cabinet...what a shocker! A safer (and more expensive) AC-DC design has circuit ground isolated from the chassis but not this one. A quick look at the operating instructions shows a note about not connecting an antenna ground but nothing about the shock hazard. Next there is no tuned circuit in the transmitter output. Any harmonics generated by the crystal oscillator are passed unattenuated to the antenna. Again not a good design but it works, though on several bands at the same time.

More pics here: http://w0vlz.blogspot.com/2010/06/mitey-mite-beginner-transceiver.html

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That year, folks were getting excited about the FCC maybe would allow mobile operation on bands below 10 meters! Folks were experimenting with NBFM. You didn't need big modulators to run NBFM – you could adapt your cw rig/VFO or buy adapters for the transmitters being sold on the market (usually the VFO). There was some talk of SSB but not much. The new novice and tech licenses were being talked about , but hadn't been created yet. It was definitely a different ham world back then, with only DXCC and WAZ the only awards that folks worked on.

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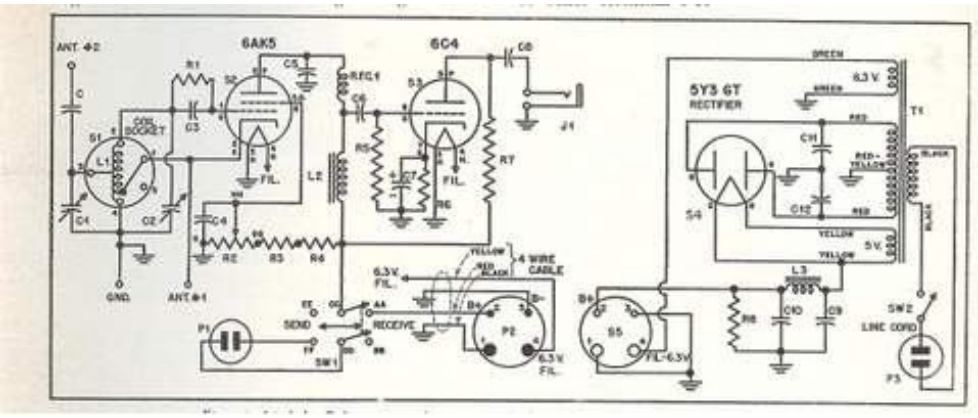
In the same year, another article titled the Modern Receiver for the Beginner, by Dave W1CA appeared in the CQ Feb '48 issue



It, too, used plug in coils, and it, too, was a Hartley oscillator design. Nothing unusual in that regard. The 6AK5 was a good RF tube. The 6C4 was a good audio amp but probably left a bit of gain on the table. Note the cathode is not grounded, but is tapped onto the coil near the bottom end. (for feedback). Regen was controlled by varying the screen voltage on the detector.

It used 'bandspread' coils – plug in – that allowed a cap to be placed across part of the tuning coil – thus giving you good bandspread, perhaps for the entire ham band or just a portion of it.

Now, you see the design above just used a smaller cap across the larger cap to provide bandspread in the Utility receiver. That works....but...as you go up in frequency, the bandspread capacitor on the higher frequencies has a much higher rate of tuning – what might have been 200 KHz coverage on 80m is likely 4 times that on 20M and there is no easy way to fix that.

With the bandspread cap tapped across part of the coil, as you go up in frequency with different plug in coils, you can tap upon less of the coil, so each band will have the bandspread cap providing 200 KHz of tuning range. That was what was done in the National SW-3 and SW-5 type receivers.

Rather than using the 1.5 inch type plug in coils that you have to wind, this article used the plug in transmitter coils that were readily available. The 'link' was removed and the coil tapped at two points and brought down to the five pin connector that plugged into a five pin tube socket. Saved having to wind coils for the different bands. I'd never seen that done before.

This design used 6v tubes and a power supply on a different chassis – much like the design of the Novice Special in the ARRL Handbooks that went on for 10 years or so with little change. This design used a 500 Henry audio choke. Those are hard to find these days. The Novice Special from ARRL used a 3:1 audio interstage transformer, also hard to come by these days too! Tubes are easy.

In this design, the headphones are capacitively coupled – no HV on the headphones. Whenw!

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I guess I got my $5 out of that box of old mags. I'll pass them on to someone else to enjoy at the next hamfest if I can find a sucker to take them for a few bucks! Hi hi

Getting Folks Finished Up

OK, county hunters. It's time to figure out how to get the following people finished up. They're working on the first time – and you know how that is – there is nothing more exciting than finishing the first time. They're getting close.

Can you help out? Some are down to half a dozen to go!

N1QY - USACA using both SSB and CW - Updated: 02/10/2013

IA: Jackson
ID: Lemhi
IN: Adams
MT: Blaine
TN: Franklin

WA4EEZ - USACA using SSB - Updated: 02/02/2013
These are for USA-CA first time
CA: Plumas, Sutter, Trinity
MN: Kanabec, Traverse
MT: Chouteau, Garfield, Lake, Petroleum, Powder River
OR: Benton, Crook, Gilliam, Harney, Morrow, Wheeler
SD: Mellette
WI: Price

KD4ZAT - USACA using SSB - Updated: 02/02/2013
IA: Buchanan
MT: Blane, Carbon, Chouteau, Sheridan
NC: Currituck
SD: Beadle, Butte
TN: Stewart

OE5KE - USACA using both SSB and CW - Updated: 01/20/2013
Hi, I am Adolf and have been active in county hunting 20 years ago. I had about 2900 counties at that time. Now I am retired and will finish USACA. At the moment abt 20 missing.
ID: Bear Lake

KY: Elliott, Graves, Green, Monroe
LA: Union
MO: Howard
MS: Montgomery, Panola
NE: Logan, Merrick, Nance
OH: Seneca
OK: Garfield, Grant, Woods
TX: Duval, Irion

N7JPF - USACA using both SSB and CW - Updated: 02/11/2013
Some opportunities for LC-1 as I near completion of USA-CA (First time). As you can see, I need lots of help with GA and KY! Everything is listed, nothing held back.
AL: Blount, Choctaw, Colbert, Hale, Lawrence, Winston
GA: Bullock, Charlton, Clay, Clayton, Fannin, Fayette, Flloyd, Gilmer, Gwinnett, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Mitchell, Murray, Pickens, Pulaski, Quitman, Stewart, Towns, Webster
IL: Christian, Edwards, Jasper
IN: Brown, Delaware, Madison
KY: Carlisle, Daviess, Estill, Grayson, Jackson, Jessamine, Knox, Letcher, Pendelton, Robertson, Rockcastle
MI: Eaton, Otsego
MO: Carter, Schuyler
OH: Ashtabula, Geauga, Ottawa
PA: Bradford, Elk
SC: Marlboro
TN: Dekalb, Pickett
TX: Crane, Karnes, Marion
WV: McDowell

N7LFX - USACA using SSB - Updated: 01/21/2013
GA: Douglas, Terrell
IL: Schuyler
IN: Randolph, Vemillion
KY: Edmonson, Fulton, Larue, McCreary
MA: Franklin, Hampshire
ME: Oxford
MI: Gratiot, Luce
MN: Cass, Chippewa, Cook, Goodhue, Lake, Stevens, Swift
ND: Pierce
NE: Cuming
NY: Cayuga, Greene, Hamilton, Onondaga
OH: Mahoning
PA: Armstrong
VA: Scott

KC7OD - USACA using SSB - Updated: 02/03/2013
everything listed for wbow. please call before going 406-452-0870 73's george
GA: Murray
KY: Jessamine, Johnson

OK....we need a plan to get these folks finished up. Some need those northern counties in WI and MT....that might have to wait for mobiles to go out this spring/summer, but some need counties likely not too far from YOUR QTH. Let's get these folks finished up!

Mississippi QSO Party

The mobiles were out running. On CW – K4ZGB, NO5W, W4OQG, and W3DYA filled in many counties. The A index was way up there but the crowd seemed to find them and keep them busy. There were half a dozen stations fixed on cw, too, from W5UE, WQ5L, W5UMS and a few others on SSB. The pickings were slim on SSB in this one.

There were lots of regular county hunters on. N1API was on CW chasing the counties, and the usual county hunter crowd of KN4Y, N4AAT, W0GXQ, K8IW, K0HNC, K4AMC, W5IL, OE5KE, K5KDG, N8II, W7KQZ, W7IN, K4YT, W2CVW, W6QP, WB2ABD, KG5RJ, W9AEM, N0SM, K0FG, NN9K, and others were in there calling. There were spots on 15m cw. The regular crowd that shows up in state QSO parties was on as well, from N6MU, WA6KHK, W7GKF, K0PC, W0ZQ, KQ3F, NT5O, NA4F, and dozens and dozens more. The mobiles were kept busy for 10 or 15 minutes after hitting a county.

I manged to catch some of my needs, but 20M from TX is only to the east half....so I missed a few that were run and 'no copy' at the QTH. So it goes – some you get, some you miss. 40M worked – but that's getting out to the limit of daytime 40M propagation too.

Jim, ND9M, stumbled into the MS QSO Party – ran a few on the CH net on SSB, and just one or two on CW - didn't catch him but some others did for new counties.

Just one county hunter – fixed – made it on – K7VYZ in Jackson. There were another half dozen fixed stations that were on for a few hours or the whole contest.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

NO5W Mobile

You may recall seeing on the nightly news early last week that the CDC has determined that this season's flu vaccine was effective in only 9% of the over 65 group. Being five years into that population group and having been diligent this season in getting the shot, the news item caught my eye and I thought, "well I must have made it into the 9%, there's something to be said for diligence". Later in the week on Friday evening before the MSQP I found out that I hadn't made the 9%.

But I was loathe to cancel my announced trip so Saturday morning about 7:30am I left New Orleans for a 95 mile run on I-10/I-55 up to the starting point near Osyka, just inside the MS state line, knowing that the total 400 miles was going to make for a long day and hoping that the MSQP radio traffic would justify my commitment. You can do the math and note that I was on a tight schedule to reach the starting point, but it was all interstate so I figured I could make good time. Well right off the bat my schedule encountered a problem with a multi-vehicle accident on I-10 on the way out of New Orleans -- fortunately I wasn't in that pileup but did have to wait for it to clear. That delay plus a bio stop put me at the starting point about 40 minutes late.

Finally reaching Osyka I was pleasantly surprised when the first CQ on 40m quickly put K4BAI in the log followed almost immediately by K1DW and then the masses descended and followed me to 20m. NO5W/M was open for bizness and would remain that way for the entire day. It was going to be a fun trip. No more thoughts of 400 miles, just one stop at a time.

This was my first mobile contesting operation without a driver and I had planned to make Qs only when stopped so I had used Google Maps Street View to map out planned stopping points in each county and had included a couple of county line operations where it looked like I could safely straddle the line and give out two counties back-to-back.

The LAM-FOR stop turned out to be on a road with essentially no shoulders. It was a small road with minimal traffic to only a few houses so I stopped in the middle of the road and elected to make that a quick stop and only worked 40m. As it turned out only one vehicle passed by while I was there.

The ADA-FRA stop was not in Googles's Street View but it was definitely the most interesting. Usually I avoid roads where "Google fears to tread" but I could see from Streets & Trips that the county line was only about 200 yards off of US84 down Old Hwy 84 so even though the old highway had seen some better days and the foliage was pretty overgrow I ventured in. There was no county line

marker as such but there was an abandoned two-story cinder block "juke joint" with big letters "THE LINE" on the front. According to the Mississippi Brew Blogger site ADA is wet and FRA is dry so in its heyday this must have been where Franklin County folks would come to get their adult beverages. Next to the joint was an old double-wide with a fairly new (less than 15 yrs old) truck parked outside but no sign of life. I was hoping there wasn't any and fortunately none showed.

Easing the Pathfinder around facing East and watching the counties change on the CQ/X GPS panel I could see that with a small move forward I was in FRA and a small move back I was in ADA so indeed "THE LINE" was where the joint said it was. It was time to CQ. The county line operation produced some good rate during the 33 minutes I was there. It went very well with everyone tuned into the process and only two stations failed to stay around to receive their second Q. I said goodbye to the joint and headed on back out to the new US84 and daylight, bound for JEF.

All the hardware and software worked well. I was particularly pleased with the county line operation which I had never actually used except in testing when it was developed several years ago. And the addition of the external wireless keyboard/mouse on a lapdesk was a good choice as I could type directly into the keyboard in my lap while giving an occasional glance to the laptop monitor in the passenger seat, making for a very comfortable operating position in the driver's seat. I also added a little wireless remote relay that I got off of ebay for about $10.00. It allowed me to turn on the K3, which is in the rear of the Pathfinder, from the driver's seat without having to get out of the vehicle. This came in handy at stops and once when I needed to cycle power on the radio. Actually there are four relays on the board so I'm looking around for roles for the other three. How they can sell these things for $10.00 is beyond me.

I had two other stops planned at the end of the route but the schedule delay put those stops after dark and I had indicated I would only do them in the daylight. Everyone took me at my word because when I got to the PEA and HAN stops about 0100Z a few CQs on 40m and 20m netted only a handful of callers. I decided to pack it in for the 50 mile trip back into New Orleans. I was toast but all in all it was a great trip. MSQP 2013 was well attended, especially from the outside. Maybe next year some more mobiles will hit the road in order to fill out the counties.

Thanks to the following frequent callers who accounted for 50% of my QSOs:
K8MFO(20), KC3X(15), K0PC(15), KN4Y(14), NT2A(14), W7GKF(11), W0GXQ(11), WA6KHK(11), K4BAI(11), KQ3F(11), WB2ABD(11), W8WVU(10), W5QP(10), N9QS(10), K0HNC(10), NT5O(10), WA2VYA(9), N8II(9), K1TKL(9), W9MSE(9), K5GE(9),

W9AEM(9), K7TM/M(8), and K4YT(8).

KN4Y – FL – 72 QSO 32 Mults

"There seems to be no CW stations in Mississippi so three mobiles from Texas/LA rode in to provide the CW fix. It was a success, plenty of CW activity to keep a fist warm. The RTTY contest started and when 80-meters got noisy I shut down early. It was fun on a rainy day."

K4BAI- fixed – GA 78 CW 48 SSB QSO - 42 Mults

Very good QSO party. Thanks especially to the mobiles. I worked seven of the ten MS counties that I had needed all time. I still need: Claiborne, Issaquena, and Montgmery. Please e-mail me if you know of someone I could sked in one of those counties.
Thanks for all QSOs.

WQ5L – fixed – MS – 196 cw 404 SSB

"Friday night in these parts was one long parade of thunderstorms, which put the kibosh on plans to play in CQ 160. So, I was able to operate this full time (almost) instead of sleep.

Started out using my four-letter county abbreviation like last year, then 20 minutes in I figured out that we're supposed to use the three-letter ones now. Whoops. Sorry for confusion.

Wasted time trying to get something going on 10 and 15, as they seemed to be open, but takers were few and far between. Should have worked more 40 CW during the day, since once darkness fell the RTTY ops took over.

Mults were 45 states (missed ND WY AK HI), 5 provinces, 34 counties, and the rest DX. I guess the mobiles were mostly on 20 skipping over me since I didn't find them very often, except for NO5W five times on 40 CW

Kit Radios from China

Got the urge to build a kit? In addition to half a dozen US suppliers of kits – mostly in the QRP area, but also up to the K3 class – the Chinese are now getting into the act.

Here's a link to a nifty site. They have small 40M SSB transceiver kits - 10W ($120) and a small cw transceiver kit with keyer built in ($55) – a couple watts.. You an also buy them wired.

http://www.crkits.com/

From what I've read on the web, they work nicely are are reasonably easy to build. There is soon to be a 20M version. Maybe good for those teams who want to work each other on 20M SSB?

Global Warming Consensus – NOT!

The global warming alarmists repeat the line endlessly. They claim that there is a consensus among scientists that man is causing climate change. Fact is, they're not even close.

Yes, many climate scientists believe that emissions of greenhouse gases are heating the earth. Of course there are some who don't.

But when confining the question to geoscientists and engineers, it turns out that only 36% believe that human activities are causing Earth's climate to warm.

This is the finding of the peer-reviewed paper "Science or Science Fiction? Professionals' Discursive Construction of Climate Change" and this group is categorized as the "Comply with Kyoto" cohort.

Members of this group, not unexpectedly, "express the strong belief that climate change is happening, that it is not a normal cycle of nature, and humans are the main or central cause."

Academics Lianne M. Lefsrud of the University of Alberta and Renate E. Meyer of Vienna University of Economics and Business, and the Copenhagen Business School, came upon that number through a survey of 1,077 professional engineers and geoscientists.

Their work also revealed that 24% "believe that changes to the climate are natural, normal cycles of the earth" while another 10% consider the "'real' cause of climate change" to be "unknown" and acknowledge that "nature is forever changing and uncontrollable."

The 10% group, known as the "Economic Responsibility" cohort, expresses "much stronger and more negative emotions than any other group, especially that climate science is a fraud and hoax and that regulation is futile, useless, and impossible."

The 24% group, tagged as the "Nature is Overwhelming" faction, is the "most likely to speak against climate science as being science fiction, 'manipulated and fraudulent'" and is "least likely to believe that the scientific debate is settled, that IPCC modeling is accurate."

The researchers also found a group they call the "Fatalists" — the 17% who "diagnose climate change as both human- and naturally caused," "consider climate change to be a smaller public risk with little impact on their personal life" and "are skeptical that the scientific debate is settled regarding the IPCC modeling."

Lefsrud and Meyer also note that "skepticism regarding anthropogenic climate change remains" among climate scientists. They mention, as well, that "the proportion of papers found in the ISI Web of Science database that explicitly endorsed anthropogenic climate change has fallen from 75% (for the period between 1993 and 2003) as of 2004 to 45% from 2004 to 2008.

If the alarmists are getting only limited cooperation from man, they are getting even less from nature itself. Arctic sea ice, which sent the green shirts into a lather when it hit a record low in the summer of 2012, has "with a few weeks of growth still to occur ... blown away the previous record for ice gain this winter."

"This is only the third winter in history," when more than 10 million square kilometers of new ice has formed in the Arctic, Real Science reported on Tuesday, using data from Arctic Climate Research at the University of Illinois.

At the same time, the Antarctic "is now approaching 450 days of uninterrupted above normal ice area," says the skeptical website Watts Up With That, which, also using University of Illinois Arctic Climate Research data, notes that "the last time the Antarctic sea ice was below normal" was Nov. 22, 2011.

This is all illuminating information. But it won't get the same media attention given to Al Gore and the usual assortment of eco-radicals, because it violates the narrative that our selfish

activities are warming this planet.

Source: http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/021513-644725-geoscientists-engineers-dont-believe-in-climate-change.htm#ixzz2LAd7bkSS

SuperCapacitor News

Mazda is making some waves at the 2012 LA Auto Show by announcing the 2014 Mazda6 sedan will bow with a 2.2-liter clean-diesel engine under its hood in North America. The Skyactiv-D engine will show up on the option sheet after the Mazda6 sedan goes on sale in January with its 2.5-liter gasoline four-cylinder engine. The move makes Mazda the first Japanese manufacturer to offer a diesel engine in the mid-sized segment in the US (the Volkswagen Passat also offers one), and the company says the Skyactiv-D-powered Mazda6 will also benefit from the manufacturer's brake energy regeneration system, i-Eloop.

The Mazda6 is the first new Mazda car to be equipped with i-ELOOP - short for 'Intelligent Energy Loop'. This is Mazda's first regenerative braking system and uses a unique solution that converts kinetic energy to electricity during deceleration and stores it in an electric double-layer capacitor. It's in the new diesel design which will meet US standards for pollutants with no need for exhaust fluid.

The power is used to run the vehicle's electric components, thereby reducing the load on the engine and increasing fuel economy by up to 10 per cent.

Know as i-ELOOP, the set-up is based around a series of capacitors, mounted behind the nearside headlamp, which can store electricity in the same way as a battery. The system also uses a variable charge (12v-25v) alternator and a DC/DC convertor.

When the driver of the 6 Sky Activ lifts off the accelerator, energy from the car’s momentum is turned into electricity by the alternator and stored by the capacitors. It is then run through the DC convertor and stored in the car’s battery. This ‘free’ energy can then the used to power the vehicle systems such as the headlamps and air-con when the car’s engine is in ‘stop’ mode.

The alternator is de-clutched, so the engine is not using energy to generate electricity. Instead, the power needed to drive the car’s systems is again taken from the capacitor pack.

Mazda engineering sources told Autocar that, further into the future, larger capacitor packs will

be fitted to the company's vehicle to 'aid acceleration'.

Source: http://www.autocar.co.uk/car-news/new-cars/mazda-6-gets-advanced-stop-start

North Carolina QSO Party

Good mobiles were out, and two dozen fixed stations were on the air for the North Carolina QSO Party. After the Saturday for the MS QSO Party – where about 80% of the NC counties were activated, the county hunters were ready for a day to chase NC counties. Well, it looks like about 85 of the NC counties made it on the air, with at least 70% on 20M. Maybe 80% of the counties were on 40M/80M if you could hear them from your QTH. Of course, you'd have to be on both SSB and CW to get some of them. This year was a LOT BETTER than previous years where you wondered where the stations were!

Those western counties in the mountains like Transylvania are tough...and the ones in the Northeast like Currituck and Pasqotank are full of bad QRN! Maybe two dozen fixed loud stations were on, and a few contacts made on 15m, but 15 and 10m didn't seem to cooperate and not many spotted there.

So where were the NC folks? I heard Jim, N4JT working people – and same for Hollis KC3X.....but never hear them even put out their county for even an hour. Seems a shame not to even activate your home county in YOUR STATE QSO PARTY!!!!!!!

I know Jack, WD4OIN was busy putting NI4BK – the Battleship North Carolina – on the air and keeping the contacts coming. The ship was on SSB with one station and CW with another. It was also a 'bonus' station. Bill, KM1C, kept PAMLICO on the map with all day operation on multiple bands.

There were 3 categories – fixed stations , mobiles and 'expeditions' for the NC folks – and a few county expeditions were noted.

K5CM, NY4N, K5EK, K4QPL, N4CW, were mobile AD8J was 'portable'.

Here's AD8J's portable set up for most QSO parties. The generator powers a Heathkit SB-220 kilowatt amp in the back seat. He stops and runs stopped in each county he runs

AD8J portable set up

With the power limitations in the NC QSO Party – he left the amp at home.

Here's his comments from the 3830 reflector:

“This was probably one of my most fun contests ever. The weather was perfect and there were no visits from Murphy. I operated from 5 counties using inverted Vee antennas with the top usually about 20' above the ground. There was no helper as I was by myself. I use a fishing pole to get a line over a branch, pull up a pull rope and follow with a combination 20/40 meter antenna. My total off time was 2:32 as I changed locations four times. The plan was to spend about 90 minutes operating from each county. This worked out well. I was able to stay on schedule and the rates were good until the scheduled time to move on. I really liked the 8PM EST end time as there was only one hour of darkness which makes antenna work a lot easier. Thanks to all that kept working me in each new county.”

He noted 432 cw and 238 SSB QSOs

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KJ4ADN was mobile on SSB.

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On SSB a station ran a county line in west NC. (Cherokee/Macon) That was the only set of counties spotted as a 'line'. They also appeared on cw briefly. Naturally, not all counties were spotted. N4CW put out aquite few, but was tough copy here and was spotted only in 2. Where were the 40M spotters? He worked hundreds there. Hmmm....and he was using a bumper mount antenna (yuk) on 20M and it didn't work well, so he didn't run there much.

There was a NC QSO party spotting site, but it had just a few spots on it compared to W6RK.

There were spots on 20M SSB and 15M SSB as well, and some on 40M SSB. If you hopped around, you could get extra multipliers or needed counties.

The regular bunch of county hunters were heard from AB7RW to NN9K working the NC stations.

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Here's Connie, K5CM – he was a busy mobile

Connie, K5CM

He commented on the 3830 reflector:

Thanks to all the stations that followed us around the state.

My Daughter (N5KK) did the driving this year.
Great fun and some great runs. I saw the meter hit 240 a couple of times.
Rig: K3 and hamsticks.

He had 648 CW and 54 SSB QSO while zipping through 18 counties

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more from 3830 reflector

VE9AA - fixed – 59 mults

Yeeha! Anytime someone can break 100 Q's in a State QSO party, you can be guaranteed they had a good time. This was no exception.
I wasn't able to put in a full time effort, but I was around long enough at times to catch a few of the mobiles going from county to county.
N4CW was a machine ! As were NY4N, AD8J , K5CM, W1AJT, and others.

N4CW/Mobile 571 QSO

WOW! That was fun!!! Jim, W4TMO, and I left his house at 8 AM to arrive in Greenville (Pitt County) to begin the QSO party at 10 AM. Jim had carefully planned the route. Our only constraint was that we had to be home for dinner between 5:30 and 6:00 PM -- we were five minutes late! Of all the counties we had planned to activate, we had to miss two (Pender and Wayne) to make it home on time. We did take time out for lunch, approximately one hour. "Pit stops" along the way were quick!

Early on, Jim operated then decided to do all the driving; the CW pileups were too hard for him to handle (we'll work on that!!!). He really did a great job alerting me to county changes along our route and we never got lost!!! We used the official NC DOT Highway Map and our trusty GPS along with Jim's plan for the route.

40 meters was our primary band, but we did try 20 and I was disappointed in the number of contacts we were making...e.g. our rate wasn't as good as I had expected, but in all fairness, it was a big surprise to work such a bunch of DX!

Great fun!!! So we went back to 40 and stayed. Rates were very slow the first hour and a half then started to pick up just before lunch. After lunch, it was great fun handling the massive pileups and the calling stations were on their best behavior...they would QRX for county changes, wouldn't call out of turn, and respected the frequency...you can't ask for more good clean fun!

Max rate after analysis was 240, max 10-minute rate was 180, and best 1-hour rate was 135...a contester's dream! That's roughly an 82 per hour average for seven hours' operating. Not bad for 25 to 50 watts (I ran 25 Watts for the first 3 hours to prolong (the external sealed AGM) battery life.

When I started the contest, the K3 indicated a voltage of 12.5 VDC (key up). Key down it showed around 11.5 VDC. When we were finishing up, supply voltage was down to 11.9 and 11.0 respectively. I had a spare battery, just in case I depleted the original. I never needed to replace it.

Antennas used: Outbacker "Outreach" for 40M and a "Hamstick" helical mobile antenna on a bumper-type mount on the back of my 2001 Explorer (SUV).

We put on a lot of miles and "gassed-up" only once. What a day!
Many thanks to all the fine CW ops out there who worked me over and over again!

73, Bert, N4CW

Here's a pic of N4CW at his home station operating a 160M contest:

W1END – fixed – NH - 107 Q 52 Mults

"Great conditions - at least for me. I think this is my best total in many of the NC parties. Got all the bonus points except for CHE county. Usually I miss DAR but not this year. Took a lot of short breaks to watch the snow fall - again. Antenna was coated with wet snow. Helped?

K4BAI – fixed – GA 72 Mults

" Special
thanks to the mobiles, including my college roommate, K4QPL. Limitation on power meant that it was nearly impossible to work NC stations on bands above 40M due to the long skip. Power limitations result in fewer QSOs and less fun for all.

Note de N4CD: If you were going for awards, the power limit for the contest was 150W output or less. No high power category. (that's fine with me – no need for 40 over fixed stations clobbering folks either side or hogging the frequency all day long on SSB). On cw you

can do fine with 100W and some operating skills.

K8MR – fixed – OH

“too bad I didn't notice it was happening until five hours in
when I noticed a question relating to it on the N1MM reflector. You Tarheels
need to get out some publicity on CQ-Contest and the like.

Note de N4CD: Along with the WA7BNM weekly contest calendar, the ARRL Contest Corral each month....and the County Hunter News....it's hard not be be informed – and you can always check the planned trip page of the K3IMC County Hunter Web, too!

K4WES – fixed – Chatham NC 201 SSB QSO

“This was my first time working the NC QSO Party and it was a lot of fun. I wish
I tried it sooner. :-) I first tried 15m before 2 PM and it sounded really
dead, so I went to 20m to 14.260 and W4DW was calling CQ! :-)

My best runs were on 40m between 4 and 6 PM. I made 113 Qs in 82 minutes.

I did work W4DW and Cherokee County for the bonus points.”

WK4P/QRP – Ashe NC 70 cw 131 SSB

“Thanks to everyone for copying my little signal from the NW corner of NC.

Spent Friday and Saturday sick as a dog and had decided not to work the NCQP
this year and try to recover. Didn't get up until 9:59 on Sunday morning and
after talking to my wife decided to make a few contacts while she fixed
breakfast. That turned into an hour. After quickly eating b'fast I got back
into the fray and just couldn't tear myself away.

Ran 5 watts into a bent Mosley TA34 with 40 meter kit and a 360 ft long dipole
which I found out today had one side of the ladder line broken. So let's see;
a sick, blind hillbilly, who admittedly is not a good CW op, running 5 watts
into 2 damaged antennas, it's a wonder anyone heard me. But I had fun and made
a few contacts. “

Your Tax Money at Waste

By Tori Richards and Earl Glynn | Colorado Watchdog

GOLDEN, Colo. – The federal government's dream of a renewable energy empire hinges on a scrubby outpost here, where scientists and executives doggedly explore a new frontier.

If you live outside Colorado, you probably haven't heard of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory – NREL for short. It's the place where solar panels, windmills and corn are deemed the energy source of the future and companies who support such endeavors are courted.

It's also the place where highly paid staff decide how to spend hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars.

And the public pays those decision-makers well: NREL's top executive, Dr. Dan Arvizu, makes close to a million dollars per year. His two top lieutenants rake in more than half a million each and nine others make more than $350,000 a year.

But what is really going on there? Energy expert Amy Oliver Cooke drove out to the site, which looks something like Nevada's Area 51 with its remote location and forbidding concrete buildings. NREL had started a construction project and Cooke wanted to see for herself. She didn't get far: a man in an SUV seemingly appeared out of nowhere, stopped her car, and told her to leave.

"A beefy looking fellow told me, 'It's top secret,' said Cooke, director of the Energy Policy Center at the Independence Institute think tank. "I said, 'I'm a taxpayer and I want to see what you're building' and he said it was it was 'top secret so we can bring Americans a better future.'"

With its bloated budget and overseen by a $533 million a year government-funded management company, Cooke isn't buying it.

“NREL has given us two of the most significant boondoggles, one of them being ethanol and the other being (bankrupt) Abound Solar,” she said. “They were part of the team that pushed Abound Solar along. In fact, they wrote in March 2011 on their website how proud they were of their role in abound solar.

“Am I impressed with NREL? No, not really,” she said.

NREL’s taxpayer-funded management company has seen its budget more than double since 2006. That’s when one of its most ardent supporters, Rep. Ed Perlmutter , was first elected to Congress. The lab sits in the middle of his district.

But Perlmutter’s ties go beyond merely promoting green legislation and lobbying his colleagues for NREL funds. He has received position: absolute;2,670 in campaign contributions from executives of NREL and its management company, MRIGlobal, a company that describes itself as “an independent, not-for-profit organization that performs contract research for government and industry.” Perlmuter’s father has served as a trustee for MRI and MRIGlobal during the past decade. Between 2003 and 2005, Perlmutter was also a trustee. These positions were unpaid.

Perlmutter did not respond to phone calls seeking comment for this story.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, NREL started in 1977 as the Solar Energy Research Institute, a response to the 1973 Mideast oil crisis. Its budget, was slashed during the 1980's.

By the time Perlmutter was elected, NREL’s budget was $209.6 million. It increased steadily before ballooning to $536.5, a beneficiary of the stimulus plan and a position: absolute;35 million contract spread out over five years to construct a new science center. Its current $352 million budget is down from last year’s $388.6 million.

From its inception, NREL has been managed by MRIGlobal, back then called the Midwest Research Institute.

To handle lab management, MRIGlobal partnered with Ohio-based Battelle Memorial Institute, which describes itself as “the world’s largest nonprofit research and development organization.” The pair formed Alliance for Sustainable Energy, a separate non-profit in 2008, for the sole purpose of managing NREL and installed NREL’s top executives as its directors.

Despite record federal debt, municipal bankruptcies and a nagging global recession, those executives enjoy pay packages that are out of reach of most Americans who pay their salaries.

MRIGlobal and Alliance tax documents obtained by Watchdog show most earned well into six-figures:

Dan Arvizu, Alliance president and NREL director

2010: $928,069

2009: $691,570

2008: $652,159

Bobi Garrett, NREL senior vice president of Outreach, Planning and Analysis

2010: $524,226.

2009: $398,022

William Glover, NREL deputy lab director and CEO (retired)

2010: $557,571

2009: $407,361

2008: $315,465

Catherine Porto, NREL senior vice president

2010: $406,339

2009: $223,553

The budget to manage Alliance is mind-boggling — and rising. For 2010, tax documents show, Alliance received $532.9 million from the Department of Energy, a whopping position: absolute;89 million more than they were paid in 2008.

In 2010, MRIGlobal's tax return shows DOE funding of position: absolute;04.8 million, while

Battelle's tax return reported $4.55 billion in government grants. Its activities included management of five national laboratories (including NREL) and operating as subcontractor at a sixth.

However, at least one expert who has studied NREL doesn't see any problem with the fact that the agency is overseen by a management company.

"I have no problems with the contractors operating the lab. They would do a much more efficient job than the government," said Nick Loris, an energy policy analyst with the Heritage Foundation. "It should lower the cost of these projects."

But what Loris doesn't like is the entire concept of placing the government in a role of making energy affordable. That should be a job for the private sector.

"It's not the government's role to make energy cheaper. There is no reason the taxpayer should subsidize this," he said. "We've seen the failures when the government gets involved in these projects. If they are going to be successful in the marketplace, they wouldn't need help from the government"

UNSUSTAINABLE LEVELS

In fact, the billions that have been siphoned into renewable energy have yet to produce a fraction of the promised return, Cooke claims.

Solar and wind still remain prohibitively expensive and not viable for general use as are corn and wood chips to fuel cars. Yet NREL labs continue to work to this end. Cooke predicts that numerous taxpayer-subsidized companies will go bankrupt in the coming years just as the overinflated housing market came crashing down.

And it's not just the money, she said. It's the environmental threat.

Solar companies have been fraught with bankruptcy

"I'll tell you what's pollution," Cooke said. "It's solar panels and wind turbines abandoned — things with toxic chemicals in them," she said. "We don't know what's going to happen to these things. What do you do with a farm of abandoned wind turbines that are 500 feet tall?"

Despite its bloated stimulus funding, there are signs of financial trouble at NREL. The company offered to buy out 100 jobs when its budget dropped between 2011 and 2012.

Perlmutter spokeswoman Leslie Oliver expressed concern about the buyouts, calling NREL the nation's green energy "crown jewel" and a driving economic force, the Denver Post reported.

“What about next year?” Oliver said. “Where does this stop?”

On his website, Perlmutter blamed Republicans for the cuts and claimed NREL generates 5,500 jobs. Its direct workforce is listed at 1,700.

By all accounts, Perlmutter’s relationship with NREL will continue. He spent two years trying to pass legislation to give solar companies a break with bankers before successfully adding the language to the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.

He is co-chairman of the New Democrat Coalition Energy Task Force, part of the Financial Services Committee. Perlmutter has leveraged that role to keep alive a 20-year-old energy tax credit to producers of wind technology.

That credit would have expired at the end of the year. But the Financial Services Committee produced a bill to extend the credit for another year, which carries a cost of position: absolute;2 billion over the next decade, The Hill reported. It faces stiff opposition.

Meanwhile, as energy expert Cooke predicts, the green business is still shaking out unsustainable ventures. The Danish wind company Vestas, which has several Colorado production sites, announced on Nov. 7 that it will shed 6,700 jobs through the end of next year.

Who’s to blame for the industry’s troubles? Government subsidies? Poorly run companies? Insufficient demand? Foreign competition?

Perlmutter blamed the Tea Party.

“It is clean and it is the future of energy production,” Perlmutter wrote on his website. “Until the Tea Party took over this has always been a simple, noncontroversial tax credit.

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de N4CD.....hmmm..always blame the Tea Party when they call for living within your means and not wasting money....duh! No one asked questions? The budget just went up 50% a year and salaries by the same amount? Gimme a break!...We're toast if we can't control spending and this is nothing but porkulus waste of the worst type.

Yeah..and a 16 trillion dollar debt.....$136,000 per person in the USA of debt.. Obama borrowed an extra $820 from each of you, including your kids, just last year to be able to spend, spend, spend like there is no tomorrow and pay those fantastic salaries to the 'elites'. Maybe someone should be worrying about the impeding financial doom we are headed to by borrowing ourselves to financial Armageddon.

Awards Issued

These awards were issued in the last month:

Bingo #347	Mary, AB7NK	Feb 9, 2013
Third Time #237	Al, N1API	Feb 15, 2013
Five Star Award #63	Matt, W0NAC	Feb 15, 2013

Upcoming Events for County Hunters

March 2-3 ARRL SSB DX Contest – bad weekend for SSB mobiles – QRM Likely

March 9-11

Idaho QSO Party
RS(T) and ID county or S/P/C
www.idahoarrl.info/qsoparty
Mar 9, 1900Z - Mar 10, 1900Z
CW 35 kHz above band edge;

Phone 7.260, 14.260, 21.335, 28.470 MHz, plus 50, 144, 440 .

Wisconsin QSO Party
WI county or S/P/C
www.warac.org
Mar 10, 1800Z - Mar 11, 0100Z
CW 3.550, 7.050, 14.050;
Phone 3.890, 7.230, 14.290, 21.350, 28.400.

March 16

Oklahoma QSO Party
RS(T) and OK county or S/P/"DX"
www.k5cm.com/okqp.htm
Mar 16, 1300Z - See website
Multiple operating periods;
CW 35 kHz above band edge;
Phone 3.860, 7.195, 14260, 21.335, 28.470, 50.130 MHz.

Virginia QSO Party
Serial and VA county/city or S/P or "DX"
www.qsl.net/sterling
Mar 16, 1400Z - See website
CW 1.805, 50 kHz+ band edge;
Phone 1.845,3.86,7.26,14.27,21.37,28.37; 50.130,
clg freq 144/220/440.

Minis and Conventions

Michigan Mini – April 25 to Apr 27

The 2012 Michigan Mini was hosted by Ed, K8ZZ and Joe, W8TVT and was held at the Holiday Inn West Bay in Traverse City, Michigan. It will be held at the **Holiday Day Inn West Bay** again in 2013 with room rates of: ***$81.95*** plus tax per night.

Date for 2013 MICHIGAN MINI is April 25 26 & 27th..

On Saturday at 10:00am, Pete, NN9K, will present a demonstration of Software Defined Radio (SDR) technology using one of the FlexRadio System products.

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http://michiganmini.superhosts.net/

Dayton Hamvention – May 17-19 County hunting Forum Friday Afternoon

http://www.hamvention.org/

County Hunter National Convention

July 10-13th Deadwood, SD

http://marac.org/events.htm

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