

County Hunter News

March, 2014
Volume 10, 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.

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

CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18132-18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumblings

February brought a lot of real winter weather to the east half of the US with storm after storm and weather front after weather front. Temps were often 20-30 degrees below normal with snow cover in 49 states at one time. That put a damper on the 'mobile' activity which is usually low in the winter months, yet mobiles were out on trips and mobiles in the southern states were active.

Propagation went from good to absolutely miserable, yet when mobiles were out, they had lots of contacts. The west coast was especially challenging to work from way back east.

There were a few contests in February and we report on them later in the newsletter. March has several good state QSO Parties coming up to provide lots of counties. N4CD was on the road for a pair of trips and we have reports later.

Quite a few new counties were added to the County Sign Database project (by K4EXT) this month and some states were 'completed' and others are very close.

We've got the usual book report and a newsletter full of articles this month. Enjoy!

2) Reader Feedback. I heard from several county hunters on the article on W4CA – the “Mee Too Cheatum Club Call”

from one:

“In particular, I want to thank you for clarifying something I have been stewing about...AB4YZ/W4CA.

I wasn't sure what was going on, when I would not hear another different operator voice giving back the report for W4CA...and since I consider myself a newbie still, just went along with what I heard, figuring that what what I was supposed to do.

Now I understand it, and am in the process of eliminating contacts with W4CA from my Logger--”

from another:

“just finished deleting 141 contacts with W4CA. And I only lost 1 contact, because I had other people worked in there place, so all turned out well.”

3) W6RK Route Map Function

Several readers commented on the failure of the W6RK to display the 'route map' function that allowed you to see what the route of the mobile was, or his/her path and trajectory. It was a very useful function.

Some feedback from Risto, W6RK, indicated that Google Maps, that provided the function, changed their software/API, and the application that Risto had no longer works. One of these days when he has some spare time, he might be able to get in there and fix it. Meanwhile, you are out luck.

4) USACA Plaque Price Change

Due primarily to recent and steep increases in postal rates, my plaque vendor in Michigan is raising the price for the USA-CA All Counties plaque to \$50. Quality is the same; a solid walnut base and gold brass plate with the information engraved. The price continues to include shipping.

This price extends to all DX requests, since I agree to pick up the difference in price.

Ted Melinosky K1BV
USA-CA Custodian

5) Orlando Hamfest Report

Several county hunters went to the Orlando Hamcation this year. N4CD opted out – looked like solid rain going down and back and that's no fun for 1100 miles of driving each way.

On Friday K2MF reported meeting up with K0LG and K0FG. Outdoor flea market pretty well rained out.

On Saturday, Joyce, N9STL, and Ron, KA3DRO reported the buildings were packed inside, the flea market outside was rained out for Friday and Saturday. They saw Don, W9GUY, and K0MAF, but there was no large gathering of county hunters arranged.

6) Boston Area Radio Museum

In Hanson, the Museum of Antiquated Technology is home to a vast collection of rare

antique radios that are being displayed to the public for the first time, according to Mark Vess, the museum's 63-year-old founder and owner. They were previously owned by Bruce D. Hayden of Raynham, who bequeathed his collection to Vess at his death in October.

"You're capturing 60 years of radio development here," said Vess, pointing to the shelves full of radio sets in his museum, located on the second floor of his circa-1840 farmhouse in Hanson. The place is packed with vintage telegraph keys, television sets, cameras, hearing aids, phonographs, radios, movie projectors, and computers, many of which still work. This riveting cornucopia of outdated machinery provides a hands-on experience of the evolution of technology from the 1800s up to the 1960s.

"This is a teaching museum," Vess said."

tinyurl.com/vintage-radio-museum

Info courtesy of Amateur Radio Newsline

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Someone check it out and report back for the rest of the folks

Vermont QSO Party

At the beginning of February, the Vermont QSO Party was held. This year was typical in that there were only a handful of stations spotted and most of it on 40/80M. Most of these stations seem to wait for the New England QSO Party later in the year to get active. I saw two VT counties spotted on W6RK. However, folks worked over 20 stations and at least 10 counties. The county hunters did a rotten job at spotting stations. There were few spots.

From the 3830 reflector:

WA1ZAM – fixed – Bennington VT 2 CW 199 SSB contacts

“just played around a little this weekend”

W7KAM – fixed – MO 25 QSO (SSB) and 10 multipliers

“This is my best score in the 7 years I have done the QSO party. 100 watts into a G5RV up 20 foot Would have liked to hear more counties on as I still need 3 from this QTH to complete Vermont. Windsor however, was a new one for me which please d me. “

W0PAN (AZ) found 4 stations in VT on SSB and worked 3 counties on SSB

WN4AFP 4 cw 8 ssb 4 cw mults 2 ssb mults

“My first VTQP! Love to have heard more CW stations... Were there any VT mobiles running? I didn't hear any. Hope to see more VT activity next year. Dave”

Book Review of the Month

This month a double header with two of the Ocean Wireless Boys books reviewed at the same time.

These are two of six in the series of Ocean Wireless Boys written back in the pre-1920 era for youth as adventure stories – entertainment - because there was no internet, no TV and just the very beginning of broadcast radio while these were still being sold. The only thing for kids was pulp magazines and books to provide their mystery/fiction stories. This whole series was written before 1918. There wasn't a 'peep' of

commercial radio. It was spark gap radio and a rare set up had an 'audion detector'.

We've reviewed two books – The Ocean Wireless Boys and the Lost Liner (book #2) in April of 2013, and the 4th book – The Ocean Wireless Boys and the Naval Code in August 2013.

The Whole Series is:

The Ocean Wireless Boys on the Atlantic – free ebook

The Ocean Wireless Boys and the Lost Liner – free ebook

The Ocean Wireless Boys of the Iceberg Patrol – real book only

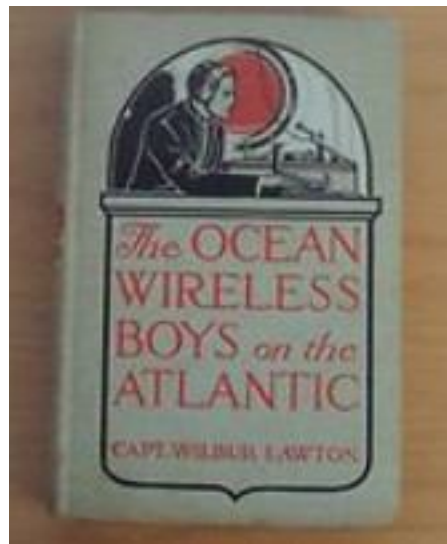
The Ocean Wireless Boys and the Naval Code – free ebook

The Ocean Wireless Boys on the Pacific –free ebook

The Ocean Wireless Boys on War Swept Seas - unobtainium any way so far

The last book is only listed in 4 libraries in the entire country – and finding a copy of it is going to be a challenge. The others in the series are either on line (4 of them) or cheap copy found on the internet for under \$10. Even better, I can usually sell them for what I paid for them, netting out at zero! Such a deal. I'll take a paper book for reading. I'm old fashioned.

The Ocean Wireless Boys on the Atlantic – by Wilbur Lawton



This is the first in the series. The main character, Jack, is 16 years old. He has taught himself 'wireless telegraphy' and is hunting for his first job on a ship. He has no luck – he's too young and has no experience. Wireless is still very new but ships are being retrofitted with it. One day he is on the docks after a fruitless search for employment. A young girl falls off a pier, and the folks nearby stand around helpless. Jack dives into the water and rescues the young girl. It turns out she is the daughter of a very prominent ship line owner. Not long after, Jack finds himself the wireless operator on a oil tanker headed from the US to Antwerp and back.

Along the way, he runs into Billy Raynor – a machinist on the ship who also has an interest in the wireless. They'll be together in all the stories throughout the series.

You learn a bit about routine ship traffic, weather reports, position reports being sent. The range of the ship is at least 200 miles or so with their setup. There's all sorts of adventures once they reach Antwerp, the usual get in trouble situations, and so on. You learn a bit about the history of the area and the sightseeing sights. Then it's headed back to NY city and more adventures on shore. Jack helps catch a tobacco smuggling ring, but later has a run in with the friends of those convicted of the crime.

So it's off on a second trip to Europe. Not much happens on the way over. On the way back, the ship, the Ajax, hits an iceberg but can be patched up. Not long after, they pick up an SOS from the yacht Halcyon. This happens to be the private yacht of the owner of the ship company. The yacht caught fire and is slowly sinking, and the crew must abandon her. Jack picks up the message and the Ajax is close enough to implement a rescue.

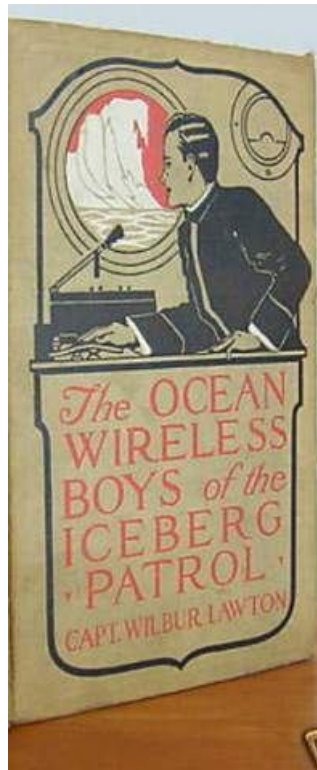
There's 300 pages of adventure and it's probably the best book in the entire series. The first ones usually are – then they tend to be repetitive and go downhill, although there's enough left over for a couple more books.

Jack and Billy Raynor go on to five more adventures in the books of the day. 50 cents for a hardcover book back in the 1915 era.

You can read this one on line at:

<http://archive.org/details/oceanwirelessboy00lawt>

The Ocean Wireless Boys of the Iceberg Patrol – by Wilbur Lawton



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The story starts out with the two main characters, Jack and Billy Raynor, from the previous two stories. Both are wireless operators – Jack the senior one with now a year's experience as being the ship's head wireless operator, and Raynor, a novice learning the ropes. Jack is waiting for a good assignment, but takes a short duration trip to Europe and back on a newly commission ship – the Columbian. Raynor winds up in the mechanical department. The assigned captain is ill, and a substitute found for the first voyage. That's where the adventure starts.

One of the main duties of the wireless officer was to copy down the alerts of iceberg sightings and get them to the captain. (In 1915, this was a real big deal since the Titanic had sunk only a year before). Every ship with passengers or of any size needed a wireless operator. We're talking spark gap transmitters and crystal detector receivers, too!

The trip across the ocean starts and the wireless messages flow back and forth between ships.

Captain Briggs of the Columbian is drunk one night and the ship heads into a field of ice, hitting a good size 'growler'. . Billy Raynor, sitting on the side railing, is knocked over into the water. As you learn a bit later, he manages to crawl up on an iceberg and survive. Jack urges the captain to turn around and search for him, to no result. Not too long later, Raynor is rescued from a polar bear attack by a 'pirate ship' – an illegal sealer – the Polly Ann with Terror Carson at the helm. They are headed to the arctic to hunt seals. Terror Carson is wanted by authorities on both sides of the ocean.

Jack is injured in an accident in Rotterdam, and travels as a passenger on ship headed home. He winds up taking a short job as chief wireless operator on a US government revenue cutter, the Thespis, – that is going to patrol the ice fields and report all the activity.

The Polly Ann stops at Skull Island – a deserted whaling station – to get fresh water. While there overnight off shore, a violent storm comes up and destroys the ship. It seems Billy Raynor was sleeping in while the crew took off in whaling boats. He and 2 others from the kitchen wind up marooned on Skull Island. He's resourceful. He even saves a never used wireless set up on the Polly Ann and gets it going on Skull Island.

During this time, a dastardly treasure seeking dirty dealing 'financier – Terrill - ' backs a treasure hunt after buried pirate treasure. Seems Captain Toby – a mentor to Jack, has been hired to go to Cedar Island to find the treasure. They set off in The Venus.

Well, to cut to the chase....Raynor manages to set up a wireless station and call for help. Jack, on the revenue cutter, hears the distress call – and is sent off on a motor launch to Skull Island to return the safety. Unfortunately, in a big fog, the motor launch is hit by Captain Toby's Venus..and sinks...but the 3 on the motor launch are rescued. They head to Cedar Island with the crew consisting of the dirty dealing Terrill, Captain Toby and the rest of his rag tag men. There's lots of substitutes on the ship for some reason. Something is afoot. .

Jack is part of the six man party that goes on to Cedar Island – marked by a lone cedar tree on top of a high plateau, but there is double dealing going on. They soon find their ship has sailed off. Captain Toby and the rest are stranded. They just have a few days supply in the boat they used to get ashore.

Terrill has managed to take over the ship and is sailing to the other side of island, hoping to quickly get to the treasure and keep it all himself and leave the others behind. . Jack manages the impossible, scaling vertical walls to get up to the top of plateau, up by the lone cedar tree where the treasure should be and find the treasure horde. Terrill finds he can't get to the top from the other side. He's out of luck.

Jack and friends bring the treasure down below. One of the things he brought ashore was a portable wireless setup. He calls for help and his friend on the revenue cutter Thespis hears him. They trap the criminal Terrill, who commandeered the ship – and Jack and the others are rescued, taking home a very big treasure lode. So goes the story.

It's a good couple hour read but not on line yet. Give it a few months/years and you'll see in on Project Gutenberg as a free ebook. Just a bit of wireless appear in this story at critical moments to save the day.

There are two more to go in this series and they'll be coming up. I know W3DLM has been reading a lot of the old E-books on his E-reader and enjoying them. Anyone else into 100 year old fiction?

Mobile Activity this Period

At the end of January

Rick, **W5QP** was busy putting them out in MO

Mike, **KA4RRU**, put out a few in VA

WC5B, Big Rig, was on in OK and KS

Fred, **K0FG**, was putting out counties in ARK. Then headed on down to FL for a extended stay.

In February

Kerry, **W4SIG** ran a bunch in those hard to get to eastern KY counties.

Frank, **AA9JJ**, and Kay, **N9QPQ**, made an extended trip to TX to put out 50 counties in the Lone Star state.

N9AC, Gerry, was noted on in FL. So was Fred, **K0FG**.

Bob, **N8KIE**, was on from Honolulu. He didn't have much luck working the mainland on 10m during the 10-10 SSB party the first weekend of February.

Dave, **KW1DX**, was on in NH and into ME. Later in the month he headed over to northern VT including Franklin and Lamoille up in ski country.

N4XML, Bob, was spotted in SC on SSB

Ray, **AB4YZ** was noted out in VA, TN, and GA down to FL giving out bogus contacts with the scammer ride along call W4CA. Hope you didn't cheat and work W4CA for false contacts. Not many did.

Bill, **K2HVN**, headed on down from DE to FL via VA, NC, SC, GA

Greg, **NM2L**, put the radio back in the truck and made trips to some northern GA counties.

Ed, **KN4Y**, put out some in FL on his way to and from a bowling tournament.

Pete, **NN9K** was spotted in FL, MS, and LA on 30M.

Bob, **KC1NA**, spotted out in ME on SSB.

WA5POK was running in FL.

N8MD, Mike, ran a few in WI for the folks on SSB.

Alex, **K5XY**, ran some in NM.

Matt, **W0NAC**, and Sharon, **N0LXJ**, headed to southeast CO and into OK, TX, and NM running them for the five mode award. SSB and digital. Had antenna problems and headed home.

KB0BA, Lowell, and Sandra, **N0XYL**, headed to southern MO putting them out on SSB. Then down into AR.

Terry, **WQ7A**, spotted out in OR.

KB6HWD was mobile out in TX.

Joe, **N5UZW** ran some in AR for the folks

Gene, **WB4KZW**, ran a few in FL. Later he headed north to NC.

Hollis, **KC3X**, made a trip to Northeast NC putting them out on cw, and with W4YDY on SSB.

Joyce, **N9STL**, headed north from FL to IL via GA, AL, MS, TN..

Alan, **KO7X**, was on the road again from UT back to WY.

Steve, **AK8A**, headed to south TX.

Rick, **AI5P**, headed from NM to TX.

KJ8V/KJ8W, Dave and Sandy, were on the road in IN, KY, TN.

K1TKL, Paul, headed to south CA and ran a few for the folks.

Rick, **W5QP** was busy putting them out in MO

KC7QOP headed up the coast in OR putting them out on SSB and CW. First time he has been on cw in a long time. He noted on the K3IMC forum:

“I feel it’s appropriate to take a moment to recognize my fellow County Hunters who helped me on my trip Saturday and Sunday, February 22 and 23. Looking at my notes, I

see that about half my contacts were via relays. Conditions were poor, and the patience and persistence of those who provided relays was invaluable. In fact, a quick count from my notes shows 37 SSB contacts direct and 37 relays, so that's about as close to 50/50 as you could ask. Without the help, my trip would have been very disappointing, not just for me, but for many others who wanted those counties..... I know I'm forgetting a couple people who provided relays, so I apologize the list is incomplete, but I want to thank: K1TKL Paul, K2JG Jim, N5MLP Ron, N5UZW Joe, AB7NK Mary, and WA9DLB Tony. Special thanks to K2MF Barry, who helped me out on CW. Those of you who heard me on the key know it was not a thing of beauty, and Barry's encouragement was essential.Thanks to all and happy hunting. 73 de KC7QOP “

Karl, **K4YT**, headed out on a multi-day trip to southern VA, into NC.

Jack, **N7IV**, headed east from ND to WI

Fred, **K0FG**, headed back from FL to home.

Good Economy Requires Cheap Energy

Good Economy = Cheap Energy

First off, a thank you to Bob Moriarty of 321gold for tipping me off to Morgan's work in this well-written article. Morgan's book is worth getting but if you want the skinny version, you can find it here.

Morgan begins his book outlining four key challenges facing economies today:

- The biggest debt bubble in history

- A disastrous experiment with globalization

- The massaging of data to the point where economic trends are obscured

- The approach of an energy-returns cliff edge

The first three points aren't telling us much new so we're going to focus on the final one.

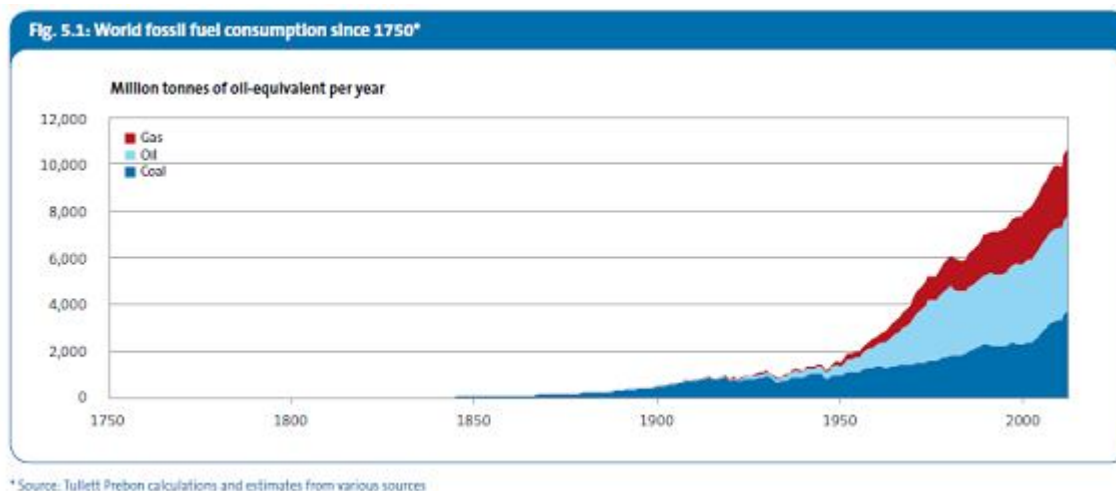
Here, Morgan makes a key distinction between what he terms the money economy and the real economy. He suggests economists around the world have got it all wrong by focusing on money as the key driver of economies.

Instead, money is the language rather than the substance of the real economy. The real economy is a surplus energy equation, not a monetary one, and economic growth as well as the increase in population since 1750 has resulted from the harnessing of ever-greater quantities of energy.

In fact, society and economies began when agriculture created surplus energy. Before agriculture, in the hunter-gatherer era, there was an energy balance where the energy which people derived from food was largely equivalent to the energy that they expended in finding the food.

Agriculture changed that equation. It allowed for the creation of surplus energy. In essence, three people could be supported by the labor of two people, allowing one person to engage in non-subsistence activities. This person could make better agricultural tools, build bridges for better infrastructure and so on. In economic parlance, this person didn't have to concentrate on products for immediate consumption but rather the creation of capital goods. The surplus energy equation allowed for that.

The second key development was the invention of the heat engine by Scottish engineer James Watts in 1769, although a more efficient version was produced later in 1799. This invention allowed society to access vast energy resources contained in oil, natural gas, coal and so forth. In other words, the industrial revolution allowed the harnessing of more energy to apply vast leverage to the economy.



In sum, the modern economy is the story of how society overcame the limitations of the energy equation. Or as Morgan puts it: “...all goods and services on which money can be spent are the products of energy inputs, either past, present or future.”

The creation of surplus energy during the Industrial Revolution and subsequent explosion in economic and population growth isn't an accident. They're tied at the hip.

Understanding the distinction between the money economy and the real economy can also help us better understand debt. Debt is a claim on future energy. The ability of indebted governments to meet their debt commitments will partially depend on whether the real (energy) economy is large enough to make this possible.

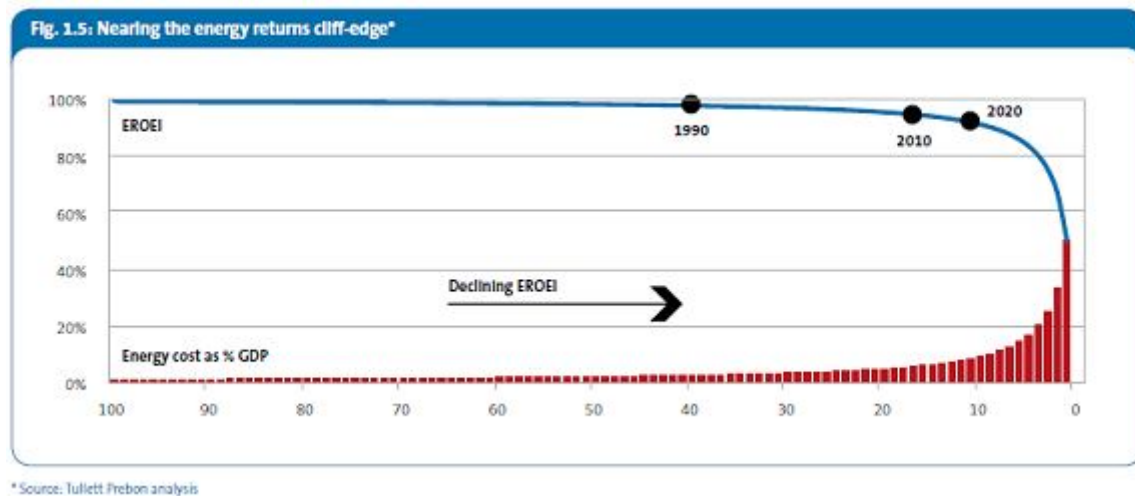
Era of cheap energy is over

Morgan goes on to say that the era of surplus energy, which has driven economic growth since 1750, is over. The key isn't to be found in the theories of “peak oil” proponents and the potential for absolute declines in oil reserves. Instead, it's to be found in the relationship between the energy extracted versus the energy consumed in the extraction process, also known as the Energy Return on Energy Invested (EROEI) equation.

The equation maths aren't difficult to understand. If the EROEI is 10:1, it means that 10 units are extracted for every 1 unit invested in the extraction process.

From 1750-1950, the EROEI of oil discoveries was very high. For instance, discoveries in the 1930s had 100:1 EROEIs. That ratio declined to 30:1 by the 1970s. Today, that ratio is at about 17:1 with few recent discoveries above 10:1.

Morgan's research suggests that going from EROEIs of 80:1 to 20:1 isn't disruptive. But once the ratio gets below 15:1, energy becomes a lot more expensive. He suggests the ratio will decline to 11:1 by 2020 and the cost of energy will increase by 50% as a consequence.



Non-conventional sources of oil will provide little respite. Shale oil and gas have EROEIs of 5:1 while tar sands and biofuels are even lower at 3:1. In other words, policymakers who pin their hopes on shale oil reducing energy prices are seriously deluded.

And further technological breakthroughs to better locate and extract oil are unlikely to help either. That's because technology uses energy rather than creates it. It won't change the energy equation.

While some unconventional sources offer hope, such as concentrated solar power, they won't be enough to offset surplus energy turning to a more balanced equation.

Oeuvre to growth tool

If the real economy is energy and the days of surplus energy are coming to an end, then

so too is economic growth, according to Morgan. In his own words:

“...the economy, as we have known it for more than two centuries, will cease to be viable at some point within the next ten or so years unless, of course, some way is found to reverse the trend.”

This terribly pessimistic conclusion requires some further explanation. Morgan explains the link between energy and the economy thus. If your EROEI sharply declines, it means more energy is needed for extraction purposes and less energy is available to the economy. Ultimately, this results in the cost of energy rising as a proportion of GDP, leaving less value for other things. Put another way, with the leverage from surplus energy diminished, there's less energy available for discretionary uses.

Implications

Now I don't have total buy-in to Morgan's thesis. It certainly solidifies my thinking that the era of cheap energy is indeed over. It provides a unique and compelling way to think about this. And the proof is seemingly all around us. It explains the high oil prices and the surge in agriculture prices (agriculture relies on energy inputs).

You can't help but being more bullish on energy and agriculture plays in the long-term. Oil drillers for one as they're more reliant on increased work than the price of oil. Also, the likes of fertilizer companies given agriculture land is tapped out, making an increase in output essential and thereby requiring greater quantities of fertilizer.

Morgan thinks inflation is on the way given a squeezed energy base with still escalating monetary bases. Regular readers will know that I am a deflationist over the next few years. But nothing is certain in this world and Morgan's arguments on this front have some credibility.

As for whether this spells the end of a glorious 250 year period of economic growth, well, I'm not so sure. The link between energy and economies is compelling. But whether we're at a tipping point where surplus energy disappears is a guess. I'm convinced that we're coming up against resource constraints that will inhibit economic growth. To say that we're imminently coming to the end of economic growth requires further evidence, in humble opinion.

Impact on Asia

Asia has been the largest demand driver for energy over the past decade. The region's net oil imports total 17 million barrels of oil a day. China is now the largest net oil importer, having recently overtaken the U.S.. Other large net oil importers in Asia include India and Indonesia. Obviously, higher oil prices would be detrimental to these net importing countries.

It may be somewhat offset by agricultural prices staying higher for longer. China and India are agricultural powerhouses. And the impact of agriculture on their economies is still profound (agriculture accounts for 14% of Indian GDP and 10% of China).

On the other hand, higher agricultural prices mean higher food prices. And given lower incomes in Asia, the proportion of household budgets dedicated to purchasing food is much higher than the developed world. Therefore higher food prices has a larger impact on many Asian countries. Witness periodic recent protests on this issue in Indonesia, Thailand and India. So net-net, higher energy prices would still be a large negative for Asia.

Turning to resource constraints potentially inhibiting future economic growth: given Asia has the world's strongest GDP growth, it would be disproportionately hit if this scenario is right. The past decade may represent a peak in the region's economic output. Whether there's sharp drop or gradual fade is impossible to forecast.

These are but a few of the potential implications for Asia.

Conclusion

- The real economy is a surplus energy equation, or the harnessing of ever-greater quantities of energy.
- That equation has deteriorated to such an extent that one can now declare the era of cheap energy over.
- If the economy is energy and cheap energy is gone, future economic growth will be inhibited.
- Consequently, higher energy and agricultural prices can be expected in the long-term.

- The impact on Asian growth may be disproportionately large.

Source: <http://asiaconf.com/2014/01/25/shale-oil-charlatans/>

Here's another excellent article on this subject

<http://surplusenergyeconomics.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/brief-guide.pdf>

Delaware QSO Party

This was another sleeper. If it weren't for KD3V in Sussex County, there would not have been a single DE station spotted for the event. The good news is I needed Sussex, so I could say it was a 'success', but even our resident county hunter there, heard chasing MN stations, didn't seem to put out the county or at least wasn't spotting giving out 1/3rd more of the state for the folks. Well, one contact on SSB, one on CW is better than none! Maybe there were some stations on PSK or RTTY, and some on not spotted, but it's shame with only 3 counties you can't get ALL of them on the air – hi hi.

W7KAM– fixed – MO - 8 qso - 2 mults cw one ssb

Missed Kent County for the second year in a row. Still my best score in the last 7 years. 100 watts into a G5RV up 20 foot.

Latest Global Warming “Alarm” Debunked

Scientists at the British Antarctic Survey say that the melting of the Pine Island Glacier ice shelf in Antarctica has suddenly slowed right down in the last few years, confirming earlier research which suggested that the shelf’s melt does not result from human-driven global warming.

The Pine Island Glacier in West Antarctica and its associated sea ice shelf is closely watched: this is because unlike most of the sea ice around the austral continent, its melt rate has seemed to be accelerating quickly since scientists first began seriously studying it in the 1990s.

Many researchers had suggested that this was due to human-driven global warming, which appeared to be taking place rapidly at that time (though it has since gone on hold for 15 years or so, a circumstance which science is still assimilating).

However back in 2009 the British Antarctic Survey sent its Autosub robot probe under the shelf (famously powered by some 5,000 ordinary alkaline D-cell batteries on each trip beneath the ice, getting through no less than four tonnes of them during the research). The Autosub survey revealed that a previously unknown marine ridge lay below the shelf, over which the icepack had for millennia been forced to grind its way en route to the ocean. However in relatively recent times the ice had finally so ground down the ridge that the sea could flow in between shelf and ridge, freeing the ice to move much faster and warming it too.

<http://www.globalclimatescam.com/2014/01/antarctic-ice-shelf-melt-lowest-ever-recorded-global-warming-is-not-eroding-it/>

County Sign Database Project

This month saw additions from W5QP with many in MO, KB0BA with a few, and Ron, N5MLP sent in a couple from his last trip to KS. The count is now over 2300 counties

represented. N4CD added two more in TX – it's now down to 9. MO is getting in good shape with folks adding to it. Scottie N4AAT added one more in SC. Rick, W5QP added a few more in MO. Jim, N4JT contributed a few more.

Bill, K2HVN headed south from DE to FL. He was busy putting out the counties until he got to Wilkes/Yadkin, NC – and stopped to run the county line. He got stuck in the mud.



K2HVN, Bill, Wilkes/Yadkin, NC

A tow truck was required to pull him out of the mud at this point – and took an hour to get freed from the slime.

He added more in NC and points south on his trip to FL.

Frank and Kay, AA9JJ and N9QPQ, got 3 new ones for the database. Here's the 3 of them.



AA9JJ/N9QPQ Gila AZ

They got a new car in the past year or two!

Here's Frank and Kay in the Lone Star State at Travis TX



AA9JJ/N9QPQ Travis TX

They stopped by the biggest tourist attraction in TX – the Alamo. Here's N9QPQ in front of the historic site.



N9QPQ at the Alamo

They also added in Washington, TX



Washington, TX by AA9JJ/N9QPQ

That leaves just a handful in TX, including the HOME COUNTY of N5MLP and K5GE!
Harris and Guadalupe! 8 more lf if those folks get a pic of their home counties.

WD9HAW added in a dozen in WI. Here he is standing by the Rock, WI line



WD9HAW Rock, WI

Thanks to WD9HAW, the entire state of WI is now done! Just one of a handful completely done – including AK, HI, DE, OK and AR. GA is a disaster area along with CT and PA.

Here's one of the missing ones in North Carolina – sent in by KA4TLC



Transylvania, NC – KA4TLC/m

K0MAF sent in pics from GA and MO



Cook, GA by K0MAF

The spring/summer/fall travel season will soon be here. Why not plan to get the elusive county signs missing from the database so we can get it to 3077?

Hollis, KC3X, added some on his trip to Northeast NC. Here's one of them.



Chowan, NC by KC3X

Darl, NA8W, sent in more from OH



Holmes/Coshocton Line, OH by NA8W

N4CD added in a few more on the southeast TX trip leaving just a handful in TX. We're slowly getting to the 2500 mark....then we'll aim for 3000 next. The end is in sight.

30 Meter Report

Time for an update on 30M activity. 30M can be good (early or late in the day) and sometimes OK in the middle of the day. With high A index, it is often 'poor' for propagation but you never know. Some days it works well. Other days you can't seem to work much at all.

In the last month or so, we find that the following have been spotted on 30M CW:

KW1DX, K5YAA, N4CD, K4YT, N9QS, W5QP, WB4KZW, KC3X, K2HVN, NN9K, KN4Y, NM2L, KG4VBK, W4SIG, N9AC, KA4RRU, N4AAT

When the sunspot cycle declines over the next five to seven years, we'll likely make a lot more use of this band.

If you head out early in the morning on your trips, it's often the only band open to the US at 7:30 am other than 40M cw.

New Scientific Dark Age?

Will the overselling of climate change lead to a new scientific dark age? That's the question being posed in the latest issue of an Australian literary journal, Quadrant, by Garth Paltridge, one of the world's most respected atmospheric scientists.

Paltridge was a Chief Research Scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Australia's equivalent of the National Science Foundation, our massive Federal Laboratory network, and all the governmental agency science branches rolled into one.

Paltridge lays out the well-known uncertainties in climate forecasting. These include our inability to properly simulate clouds that are anything like what we see in the real world, the embarrassing lack of average surface warming now in its 17th year, and the fumbling

(and contradictory) attempts to explain it away.

While the politically correct name for the last 17 years is “the pause,” it’s much more like the P-wave, which reflects the crustal slippage that occurs before the shaking (and tsunami, if beneath the sea) of a catastrophic earthquake. Humans can’t feel them, but many animals can, which is why birds alight shortly before all hell breaks loose.

Climate scientists have been profoundly defensive about the known problems. Paltridge elegantly explains that this has to be the case, and describes the likely horrific consequences when the day of reckoning finally arrives.

That day is coming closer, because, as Paltridge notes, people are catching on:

“...the average man in the street, a sensible chap who by now can smell the signs of an oversold environmental campaign from miles away, is beginning to suspect that it is politics rather than science which is driving the issue.”

The scientific establishment has painted itself into a corner over global warming. Paltridge’s explanations for this are depressingly familiar to those who read these columns.

Science changed dramatically in the 1970s, when the reward structure in the profession began to revolve around the acquisition of massive amounts of taxpayer funding that was external to the normal budgets of the universities and federal laboratories. In climate science, this meant portraying the issue in dire terms, often in alliance with environmental advocacy organizations. Predictably, scientists (and their institutions) became addicted to the wealth, fame, and travel in the front of the airplane:

“A new and rewarding research lifestyle emerged which involved the giving of advice to all types and levels of government, the broadcasting of unchallengeable opinion to the general public, and easy justification for attendance at international conferences—this last in some luxury by normal scientific experience, and at a frequency previously unheard of.”

Every incentive reinforced this behavior, as the self-selected community of climate boffins now began to speak for both science and in the service of drastic regulatory policies.

“The trap was fully sprung when many of the world’s major national academies of

science (such as the Royal Society in the UK, the National Academy of Sciences in the USA and the Australian Academy of Science) persuaded themselves to issue reports giving support to the conclusions of the IPCC [the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. The reports were touted as national assessments that were supposedly independent of the IPCC and of each other, but of necessity were compiled with the assistance of, and in some cases at the behest of, many of the scientists involved in the IPCC international machinations. In effect, the academies, which are the most prestigious of the institutions of science, formally nailed their colors to the mast of the politically correct.

Since that time three or four years ago, there has been no comfortable way for the scientific community to raise the specter of serious uncertainty about the forecasts of climatic disaster.”

Every year that elapses without a significant warming trend more and more erodes the credibility of not just climate science, but science in general:

“In the light of all this, we have at least to consider the possibility that the scientific establishment behind the global warming issue has been drawn into the trap of seriously overstating the climate problem—or, what is much the same thing, of seriously understating the uncertainties associated with the climate problem—in its effort to promote the cause. It is a particularly nasty trap in the context of science, because it risks destroying, perhaps for centuries to come, the unique and hard-won reputation for honesty **which is the basis of society's respect for scientific endeavor.**”

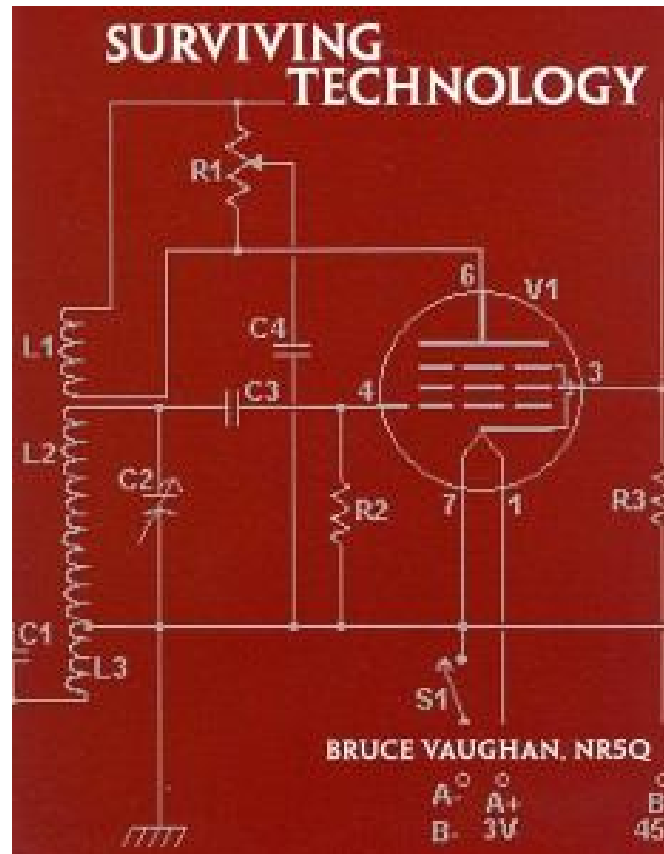
This is the scariest part, and it is apparent that this unraveling has already begun. Serious scholars of science, like University of Montreal's Daniele Fanelli, and Stanford's John Ioannadis are publishing quantitative analyses of the proliferation of scientific errors that is malignantly invading the profession because of, in part, the funding and reward model. When this “third rail” is actively being researched by people of such quality, it is apparent that the sickness of climate science is not just confined to climate science

source: Forbes Magazine

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It's sort of scary when, according to the latest polls, 1 in 4 people doesn't even know that the Earth revolves around the sun!

Book Review II – Surviving Technology



Surviving Technology

Long-Time Electric Radio readers may be familiar with Bruce Vaughan's (NR5Q) many popular articles in Electric Radio over the years. Quoting from the introduction to his new book "Surviving Technology,"

"This Book is Respectfully Dedicated to the Memory of Major Edwin Howard Armstrong. Major Armstrong's inventions moved radio from a limited method of communication into a practical science that enriched the lives of people world-wide. We

cannot turn on a TV, pick up a cell phone, or listen to the radio without using his inventions. His entire life was spent fighting those who attempted, quite successfully for years, to steal his life's work. ..."

At 223 pages, plus a 14-page prologue, "Surviving Technology" is a chronicle of Bruce Vaughan's lifetime of experience in radio and is a gorgeous, finely produced presentation with excellent illustrations and schematics. The book is in large-format 8-1/2 x 11 inches. The text is arranged so that it's not crowded and is very easy to read, and all of the photos follow the text nicely. Bruce has divided his book into four sections with 31 chapters.

Part 1: The World Goes to War - From Clarence's (W5BQI) help in getting Bruce his ham license, W5HTX, to enlisting in the Army Reserve and through his experiences in WWII, to coming home, Bruce describes this era very well.

Part 2: The Radio and Television Repair Years - The longest section covers 1946 – 1975 in sixteen chapters and is an expanded version of Bruce's series of articles in Electric Radio, "Radio's Golden Age" when Bruce ran a radio and television service business.

Part 3: Five Fiction Stories - All are well written fictional stories from Bruce's early years.

Part 4: Building the "Ultimate" Receiver - In 7 detailed chapters, Bruce gives you a blow-by-blow descriptions, including schematics, of all the secrets needed to build a successful regenerative receiver. The "Ultimate" is amazingly straight-forward, stoutly built, and Bruce provides the details to successfully build your own, based on his 60 years experience.

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It starts out with him growing up in rural Arkansas – really back woods with not a nickel to spare. He teaches himself electronics and gets on the air with his ham license. As a young kid, he's hired by a radio repair shop – this back in the days when radios were really really expensive. Eventually he sets up his own shop. TV is just starting, and it is nowhere near arriving in Springdale, AR. The nearest station is 200 miles

away. He finally buys a TV set and puts up a big tower, but barely gets a picture from one station – snowy most of the time. Eventually, TV stations move closer and he now does a good business repairing TV sets. He's got a great way of describing life as a TV repairman with all sorts of episodes of customers units, customers, and homey stories.

Then he goes on it detail about his long time continual 'upgrading' of his 'Ultimate Regen

Receiver' – which he tinkers with for years, rebuilding it and upgrading it. Lots of detail and work went into it.

It's a great read if you run across a copy. It's \$29 new from ER.

http://www.ermag.com/index.cfm?v_link=product_detail&v_key=611

Minnesota QSO Party

There were quite a few mobile operations scheduled – and one or two that didn't happen this year. A lot of the mobiles were NOT spotted by the county hunters. Not good! Come on folks, help out the others.

Here's some pics of operators/mobiles not seen before in the CH News courtesy of the W0AA website for the 2014 MN QSO Party. It's sure nice of them to put in the time to promote this, show the pictures, get the planned routes posted. (Pictures from previous trips)



Dan, KE0G

He was 'QRP portable' – stopped to run counties on 80 through 15. Spotted by NF0N in a few counties – he was to run about 8 counties

Here's N0EO, Neo, and his mobile set up. He was spotted in those northeastern MN counties



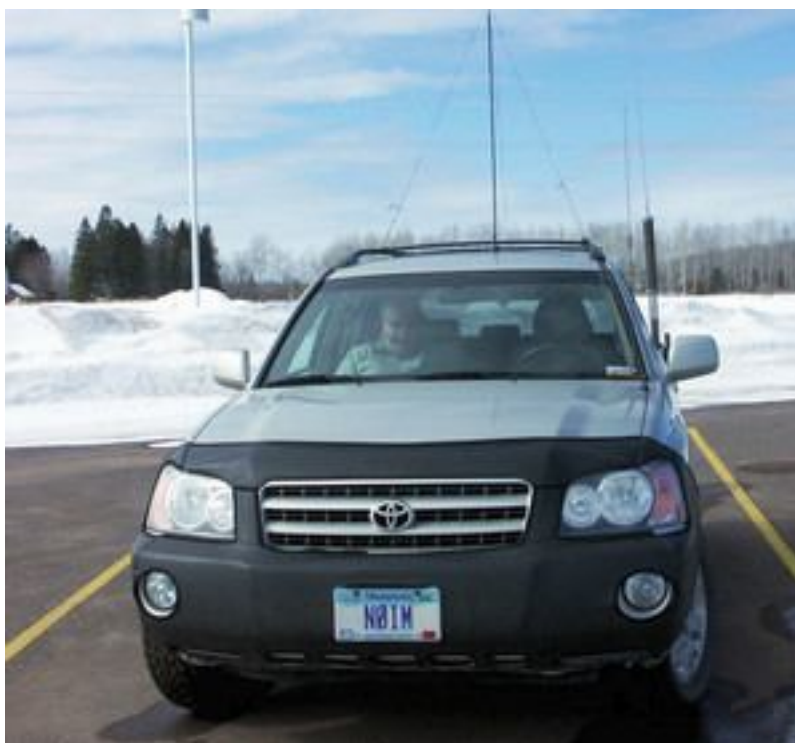
N0EO - Neo

K0MPH was spotted in many counties on his planned route



K0MPH, Roger

N0IM went with Roger, AF9T on a route to snag some of the rare northeastern MN counties



NØIM mobile

KC0DMF, Craig went mobile with Frank NØSFF and Kevin NØXWJ



Part of the crew of the KC0DMF mobile team

Here's NR0T and OA4ABC who were out in at least one county mobile.



NR0T/OA4ABC



W9FZ mobile



N0HJZ Mobile – Kandiyohi County Line

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Mark, WA0MHJ, ran with the club call W0AA this year.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

K0PC mobile (with W9DND driver)

2014 is year eleven of the K0PC/W9DND team in the MN QSO Party. Weather is always a concern in early February in these parts but we had a good day Saturday. Highs about 15F and just a little snow in the morning.

We changed our route up a bit this year to improve the county coverage. This meant we operated in just 19 counties instead of the 22 we hit last year. But the route was reasonable and we stayed pretty close to schedule.

Some statistics:

1040 QSOs (including dupes) for an overall rate of 104/hr

20M 369 QSOs

40M 649 QSOs

80M 4 QSOs

230 Unique calls in log

Top Ten List

N2CU 31

N2WN 27

NY4N 25

KQ3F 22

KB9S 19

N8II 19

N0UR 17

W0BH 16

W7GKF 16

K0HNC 15

W0GXQ 15

W8IQ 15

Thanks to everybody who participated in MNQP 2014. We are looking forward to Feb 7th, 2015.

73,

Pat K0PC & John W9DND

W0ZQ mobile - 813 cw 151 ssb contacts

The Polar Vortex took a short break from hanging out over MN on Feb 1. The car thermometer showed 5 (above!) leaving the house at 1230 utc and it actually rose to 24 degrees (above!) at one point. I had a little light snow around 1500 utc but it did not amount to more than a dusting and all the roads that I drove on were in good shape.

Just before the contest started at 1400 utc I had a successful sked with SM7ZDI from KNB to give him one of four remaining MN counties he needed; that was fun.

After that I got out of the car to change bands and hence my antenna and I found out my antenna's quick disconnect was frozen solid. It seems that when I mounted the antenna onto the quick disconnect that I had laid the bayonet part of the quick disconnect on the ground where it ingested some snow. Having been inside the car the antenna had been warm and unknowing to me melted some of this snow and when I mounted the antenna it refroze to the antenna mount. My quick disconnect was no longer a) quick or b) a disconnect. So, a few minutes before 1400utc and the start of the contest found me disassembling my antenna mount and placing it in the car under the car heater to thaw. Note to self: throw in a small torch in my MnQP Go Bag. After a few minutes I was able to take the antenna mount apart, dry it, reassembly it, and we were off and running again. For the rest of the contest I was careful to make sure that I never put the bayonet part of the hamsticks on the ground in order to keep them snow free.

I started the contest at the KNB/PIN/CHS/ISA boundary with hopes of makes some Q's from all four counties on 80m before 1430 utc. As you can see in my summary above it was not a good strategy netting me only 22 80m Q's combined. In past MnQPs I have been able to work into OH and out west into WA, etc, during this time period on 80m but not this year. Only N2CU was "DX" and Tom was my last 80m Q before going to 40m. I may need to change my strategy for next year in regards to starting out on 80m.

20m phone was a nice surprise. I think the N0HJZ/m SSB run along with the addition of the Phone Only mode has made this more and more popular. I had a

"long" drive down 35W through CHS where I ran on 20m phone, and then again moving from HEN/RAM down 35w to the DAK/SCO/RIC line. When I was driving my plan was to nest up next to Rich who was hanging out on 14.255. I could hear guys working Rich on that freq but just above him and just below him it was a mess, so I ended up higher up the band around 14.270 or so. 20m phone in the mid to later afternoon hours always seems pretty good and I had a small pile up from SCO county netting me 48 Q's in 20 minutes ... not bad for 100 watts into a 8' hamstick.

Over the full contest I had 48 DX contacts as follows: DK2CF(2), DK3BN(1), DL3GA(6), DL4CW(3), DL4FN(2), DL5ME(5), DL8MLD(1), HA8IB(5), OK2EC(6), OM2VL(10, 3 of these on 80m), SP5SA(5), UA3AGW(1) and YV5OIE(3). I did try 15m mid day from WSH county netting me two lonely contacts ... I called CQ MNP on 21.050 for ten minutes. The band did not sound very active and I did not go back any more after that.

Thanks everyone for all the Q's. Weather permitting, see you from the WiQP next month.

73, Jon
W0ZQ/m

KE0G - mobile/portable 355 cw - QRP - See Pic Above

K3/10 at 5 watts to three different variations of portable antennas. Started the day at zero degrees F, and since I respect the power of carbon monoxide, I don't run the engine of the SUV while operating. Temp dropped to 36 F at the operating position, and I found out the used Vibroplex I bought recently binds up at these temperatures, so stopped and re-adjusted the bearings, springs, and contacts several times. Sorry about all those extra dits and dahs! By late morning, the sun was high enough, the clouds cleared out enough it was 16 degrees F outside, but a toasty 60 F inside the SUV. Enjoyed giving out the last county in MN for N2JNE... glad I could help! Thanks for your great copy of my QRP out there. 73, Dan ke0g

N0HJZ mobile 44 cw 1197 ssb – See Pic Above

403 miles, 25 counties, some snow, lots of wind, lots of great QSO's, LOTS of fun! Thanks to everyone that followed me around. I've got an idea for next year to improve my score!!

K0FVF – fixed – Washington County , MN 293 cw 334 ssb

Well another MNQP in the books. Not quite the same score as last year. The number of qso's landed right at the same point as last year, seems that 630 something is my magic number, but the multipliers were down.

For most of the contest I was well ahead of last year's rates, at the end of the 6th hour I was 61 q's ahead (almost an hour's worth). But things slowed down (and I ran out of gas somewhat) near the end and the last 4 hours were only 53/hr hours.

The big difference was the multipliers. Same number of states (47) but only 4 RAC Sections as opposed to 7 last year, and the big hit, only 64 counties as opposed to 72 last year. I worked way more DX this year, 23 against 2 in 2013.

I worked Laci OM2VL on 15,20 and 40 CW. On 40 at 2213z he was stronger than most of the other callers at the time. I remember sending him 'Big Sig'

The other change this year was the CW/Phone ratio. Last year it was 400/200, this year it's very close to 50/50 with PH edging out CW by a small margin. It's been many years since I have made more Phone contacts in this contest. Not sure what was going on, but I just never got any really big CW runs going, and it seemed always better on Phone. Maybe all the W1AW activity skewed the activity some, plus missing a bunch of mobiles on 40 CW cut into that number.

I went to 160 at 2330 but only made one contact. I guess everybody was in the FT5 pileup down the band. I could not believe I was able to hear them on 160, but that's another story.

According to K0RC log analyzer I worked 48 MWA stations, for 114 qso's, but I know that is not fully up to-date so the number is a bit higher. Best hour was 93 in the 6th hour, which beats any hours last year.

One thing that is nice is the number of MN fixed stations that are active all

day has sure increased over the last few years. I'm talking about the casual contest guys, not the MWA folks. Years ago, it wasn't until late in the contest that the guys would start showing up 75M to hand out a few contacts, now there's a pretty good representation all day on 40 (and I assume 20). I am sure the phone only category has helped out in that regard.

Thanks everyone for a fun 10 hours. It's always a honor to be able to put K0FVF on the air.

Dan K0TI @ K0FVF

W0BH – fixed – KS 107 CW 60 SSB 72 Mults

With a new grandson on the way (in AZ) hopefully sometime on February 1, a full-time effort wasn't in the cards, but chasing mobiles around a brisk Minnesota was just the ticket in between updates from the hospital! I was up there last year with Ron/ad0dx and we learned first hand what MN/m means, so it was a pleasure to work and chat with these intrepid characters:

16 K0PC/m
14 N0PI/m
13 W0ZQ/m
12 N0EO/m Loudest CW/m signal into KS this year!
10 KC0DMF/m What a consistently booming SSB/m signal!
10 K0MPH/m
09 W0AA/m
05 W0IM/m
04 KE0G/m
01 NR0T/m

Missing from the list is N0HJZ/m who I checked for constantly but at best heard faintly on 20m although I heard others working him. Did I just miss you (and many of those counties) on 40m? The fixed stations were out there, too, with K0FVF seemingly everywhere. It was fun to work W1AW/0 three times from MN on CW.

Thanks to the MWA gang for putting another good one in the books.

N6MU – CA – worked 75 cw 40 ssb and had 63 multipliers

W1END (NH) worked 80 cw and had 41 multipliers

N2WN (TN) worked 153 cw 93 ssb 84 mults

“Thanks to all the mobiles. Missed N0IJ and hope he had fun. Score was down from last year, 20 or more less QSOs, mostly on 40, band seemed either long or short too often. 20 was decent the entire period here. Although QSO count was down, multipliers were up by 1 to 84 counties, the sweep eluded me again as I missed BIG, CRL and LES, not difficult counties either hihi.

It was an unusual tie this year for the most mobile QSO between CW & SSB. K0PC and N0HJZ both provided 27 contacts, Rich provided more multipliers and was doing well to hold a run freq on 20 as long as he did. W0ZQ came in second with 22 followed by N0PI (20), N0EO (16), KC0DMF (15), W0AA (11), K0MPH (7), KE0G (6), W9FZ (3) and AE0DB (1). There may have been others, Looks like I swept both N0HJZ and KE0G. Good to work known QRPers ND0C and KE0G.

Running was not very productive this year, think the bands were a bit busy with several contests and major DXpeditions. Everyone seemed like they were having fun and that was the most important task”

N8II- fixed – WV 151 cw 115 ssb qso 82 mults

It was triumph of the human spirit to drive around handing out counties with snow wind and sub 10 degree temps! Many thanks to all of the mobiles for activating all or almost all of the counties! I could tell fairly early on that it was going to be a little tougher this year for me and I was not planning to glue myself to the chair. Congrats to Tom, N2CU for a great effort.

The good: Mobile activity on 20 meter phone was up with N0EO himself operating

20 phone while Al was on 40 CW. Also on 20 SSB, Craig KC0DMF/M apparently a newbie did a good job of running stations from quite a few counties. W9FZ/M also ran several counties on 20 and W0ZQ showed up when CW slowed down. Thanks to Rich, N0HJZ for the most mobile Q's and counties, working just 20 phone until he returned home. 15 was open but not well to SE MN from here and very underutilized. Conditions on 20 were good up until some time in the last hour.

80 was wide open to MN the last hour and provided my best QSO rate of the party when I found a group of MN phone ops at about 2355Z!

The bad and the ugly: Lots of 20 M users on both modes made for reduced CW mobile activity and some tough times on phone. It is very rude and selfish for a DXpedition to listen from 2 to 22 KHz above their CW frequency! There was more of the same on phone from two groups. Having three other QP's (the BC guys were loud on 20) along with the inevitable RTTY test on 40 CW didn't help either. MN was weak on 40 all day until about 21Z and I could tell some of the mobiles were sticking to 40 almost all of the time. This is not that bad of a strategy since that is where the mobiles can work MN counties for a boatload of mults. I will have to say that almost every in the noise mobile I heard was able to hear me, good ears! I should have struggled a bit more down there. I found almost no 40 phone activity. I hit the wall about 21Z until 23Z really struggling to stay on the radio (took off for 15 minute break and then 20 minute meal) after a poor night's sleep the night before; the rest of the time I felt OK. Power ran was only 200 W, the amp is down.

Minnesotan hams are a very polite nice bunch of people and are obviously very dedicated to making the MNQP successful. I guess you have to be in order to survive the winter. We had a taste here of what they endure for months with the coldest WX in 20 years starting Jan 20th when it also snowed 7 very powdery inches. Temps stayed subfreezing until the afternoon of Jan 31st. The snow finally more or less melted away Sunday with 53 F temp just in time for about 4 very wet heavy inches worth today, Monday. Ice comes tomorrow night.

Thanks to all who have endured so much and still got on the air and thanks, of course, for the QSO's from all over MN.

N2CU fixed NY 226 cw 107 SSB

My best score ever in this contest, and a new LP record, even though I fell two counties short of the sweep. Lots of fun but those W1AW/0 stations were confusing. Some were rovers (or mobile), some were not. Never sure what the county was until someone else worked them as I waited to hear the county. Missed some regulars, made some new friends.

On the Road with N4CD I

Thursday

The winter wasn't too much fun around the country, other than the southwest US and southern CA, which seemed to have warmer than normal temps. Mid month in TX, the ice/sleet hit just north of Collin County, causing fatal traffic accidents and a lot of slick roads. Same to the south a bit. Finally the freezing 20s and 30s moved out – well, we sent it northeast where a lot more snow (feet in places) hit, Atlanta was a disaster area, and the northeast got socked once again.

The weather here was scheduled to be great county hunting weather with temps in the 60s and even 70s on the weekend in mid February, and in the 80s out in west TX. The only fly in the ointment, so to speak, was the big ARRL CW DX contest scheduled for the weekend. I was getting tired of highs in the 20s and 30s, which is way below normal for TX in Feb. We should be having 50s.....but the weather doesn't listen to complaints.

I tell folks we get six weeks of 'winter' in TX. We just don't know which days will be those 'winter days'. This year, it seems like it is up to 8 or 9 weeks of 'winter'. Cold, nasty, dreary winter days where you get tired of heavy jackets, windy conditions and not all that much sun. Every now and then we were getting a short break, but it seemed to go on and and and on. Of course, up north....well, Jerry up in MN was seeing days of temps below zero.....and 30 below at night. Same in Chicago with lots of really cold weather this winter – no easy one for them this year with more than twice the average snowfall and still continuing. Same for the northeast which is putting those snow

blowers and snow shovels to work. More than nine snow storms in the Boston area. Really bad storms that we see on the weather channel. Our bad weather here was going to 'be gone' for at least a week so it was time to get mobile again! Sun! Warm! Open roads headed west! Those counties were calling my name.

There weren't any County Line Signs needed along the way...dang....just a few remaining in TX now.....and they are really scattered around the state. We're slowly filling them in. Frank, AA9JJ, sent in two of the missing ones from his trip. I'd have to detour 200 miles to get a new sign....and that wasn't in the plan. Randall is up in the panhandle and Ector is down by Midland – they would have to wait as would El Paso – as far as you can get from my house and still be in TX – and half way to California for me.

I headed out on Thursday at o'dark thirty – well, before sunrise at 6:30 am in the morning with the route headed west out of Denton County to some desperately needed counties out west that aren't run too often. There would be just a bit of 'rush hour' traffic but I was skirting most of it to the north. It wasn't a problem. One traffic light at the exit off I-35N to get to 380, then it was real clear sailing for a long long time.

It seems that is lots of needed counties these days with not too many mobiles in TX any longer – other than the TX QSO Party ones that show up for the big event. Hollis, KC3X, needed a slug of counties for MD. He's catching up after a year rebuilding after the tornado. Greg, NM2L, needed Yoakum for a LC for Bingo (now down to 8 to go), and there were needs scattered all over the place. I'd zip to as many as I could in a couple day trip. Silver, N9QS, needed Foard for a LC, too. Well, I put all of Hollis's counties on the copy of the map out of the map book and it was a block of counties about five wide, 4 high, plus a string getting out to west TX. That would whack a bunch off his list, and of course, run a bunch that other folks likely needed. Most folks just starting or starting over need so many they can't even list them on K3IMC's special needs page. Others need 15 or 20 and don't list them yet.

Not much to report traffic wise....you leave on 380 going west in Denton County – the next traffic light is 170 miles further west in Archer County – one or two stop signs along the way but that's about it. The speed limit is 65 or 70 most of the way so you make pretty good time out that way. There is no good reason to go to Archer County. The famed used book store there is out of business. There is nothing there but a small town that is the county seat for Archer County. 9000 people live in Archer County – and it's about 900 sq miles. Most of these counties I'd be in are about 30x30 miles.

What's this white stuff occasionally along the road? Looks like the remains of the last snow event 2 days ago – just patches lying in the low spots in the shade! They'd be gone real soon as the temps would get up to 60 today. I saw a snowman that someone made so there had to be a couple inches of snow! Hi hi. It was already in the 50s and climbing.

Baylor was on the needs list, so it was through Baylor, then up a good road – but totally empty of civilization, headed up to Foard. Dry as a bone. Not much rain yearly here, but when it rains, it rains cats and dogs – in thunderstorms. They get 23 inches of rain a year, but can get years of much less than that. Most of the land is planted in irrigated cotton and veggie crops or pasture land, but there are some really deserted acres of land. The population density is 3 people per square mile.



N4CD Foard, TX LC for N9QS

It's 'canyon land' with red dirt and 50-100 foot deep gullies everywhere for a while. This the the 'rolling plains' of TX – before you get to the 'lower plains' and 'high plains' further out west. . You can't walk in a straight line anywhere off the road – it's crumbly red 'dirt' and it is up and down in every direction for a while. Then it flattens out to pasture and farm land. . You can't find a 100 x 100 foot flat space anywhere for miles and miles on the road I'm on. . 70-75 mph speeds there and nothing to slow you down.

There is only one incorporated town in the entire county and the population of the county is 1300 or so. The population drops year after year. There were over 6000 people there in 1930. Folks moved off the farms as they got gobbled up with larger and larger ones, and the kids moved to the cities and never came back. They had decades with year after year of drought which killed the farm income. That back in the 30s, and 40s and 50s, so it wasn't 'global warming' , just varying weather patterns.

A short five mile trip to the south will get you to Knox, which some folks requested, so I took the 'dead end' trip to the south, sat for about 25 minutes over the bridge into Knox (wet line – a bridge you can't park on, but usually next to zero water in the 'river'. Not a problem. Knox county has 3700 people in roughly 30x30 miles – or 5 people per square mile. Most live in a 'town' or two.

I was running on SSB most of the counties on the trip later on– off frequency since James was busy running mobiles off the net frequency. He also had to get into the '18 year old blonde comments' again – duh! No wonder folks just watch the spots rather than actually have the volume turned up to hear his silly juvenile comments.

Most of the time, I'd announce on 14.0565 that I was going to QSY to SSB....first I found a clear frequency – most of the time down around 14322 plus or minus – sometimes 319 worked. Sometimes it was too busy in that area so I'd wind up on 339 or 343 or 347 but my radio/antenna likes the lower frequencies more – puts out more power since the antenna is set for 14.130 or so for most power out on cw yet some out on 20 SSB. That method worked out well, especially if I ran 20 SSB before I ran on cw!... hi hi...Folks would be listening on 056.5 and usually Greg,NM2L, or another would spot the SSB run. . Later, after a cw run, a lot of them disappear until they hear another run later. Hi Hi. Then I'd come back and run 20/17/30/40 cw after SSB.

The trip then went west on highway 180 – 70-75 mph - through Cottle (population 1500), Motley (pop 1200), Floyd (pop 6400) and the route got a bit more complicated having to zig north then south while basically headed west. Some counties have more than a few roads so that helps, but others have one or two east west roads, one or two north south roads and that's about it for getting from A to B. The closer you get to Lubbock County and the big city there, the more populated the counties seem to be.

Now it was on to 3 digit and 4 digit roads from Floyd. Down on highway 207 to the town of Cone (almost nothing there) in Crosby County(pop 6000), then west on 193. The pavement end soon 193, but there is a decent gravel road that goes into

Lubbock....and you can save 12-15 miles of driving using it. You'll need the large Texas Map Book to see that road – or maybe Street Atlas will have it. The Garmin GPS is clueless about that road. Lubbock is the BIG city out that way with 280,000 people. Likely 3 or 4 times more people than all the surrounding counties for 100 miles in every direction combined!

It's about 8 miles of 25-30 mph gravel road over to 798 headed north into Hale County (36,000 folks) to get back on a northerly course. It's back to highway 70 at Plainview – a good size town then headed northwest on 194 to the town of Hart – that whacks the corner of Swisher and you can run Swisher/Castro line there. They have about 8000 folks each in those counties.

Head west on 145 to Parmer (pop 10,000), to 214 south - then its southeast on 70/84 – a nice 'super highway' going south for a while. Hollis needed everything within 150 miles of Lubbock and that's a lot of counties! That highway crosses the Bailey/Lamb(7000/14000 people) line and you can put them both out there. Did that. It was getting time to think about a motel, but the sun stays up almost an hour later than in Dallas – you're another 400 miles west and almost in the mountain time zone with the counties along the TX/NM border. Other than Lubbock, only a few towns have motels...most folks stay in Lubbock, or just over the border in NM on the major highways. I'd see what happened..... (which turned out to be an expensive choice). Oh well....Sometimes towns over 5000 have a motel or two. Or 3 or 4 if there's a reason to stay there – like a college, county seat, or on a travel route from A to B.

I headed south 303 out of Sudan, TX....headed to see if I could get to the Hockley/Cochran line before it got too late. Hmm...getting late. Ran Hockley but it was at least 8 miles over to the line from there(and it would take up to 30m to run all the bands/modes) – I'd better head into a town that the GPS said had motels which was 10 miles east. Cochran could wait until morning. The GPS said at least 2 motels there – but it's got a 10 year old database in it. No data connectivity in the boonies of TX.....phone OK.....but no data. Hockley has 23,000 people and a good size town of Levelland.

I headed into town.....The Levelland Motel looked decent...but I was 10 minutes late to get a room....just gave it out..dang...6:00 at night and getting dark. The only other motel was the Budget Inn and the man at the Levelland Motel said he'd never stay there or send anyone there. Hmm...it was 30 miles into Lubbock (the wrong way) and 30 plus miles down to Brownfield.....The only other choices were a Holiday Inn Express and Best Western. Well.....I paid up and enjoyed a night at the Best Western. (breakfast

included).....it had been a long long long day.....over 650 miles.....more than 12 hours on the road and lots of 'putting out' counties. I dickered for a while with the lady at the desk....Finally she 'found' an 'internet rate' that was a bit lower. Still Ouch!

Nearby was nice Italian restaurant.....I pigged out on “Nick's Chicken” – stuffed with spinach and mushrooms, with a nice salad, bread, and big plate of pasta, wine sauce, loads of sauteed mushrooms. Hmmm...2000 calories but I ate just half of the pasta.... I'm on a diet.....too much bulging from indulging in pizza, waffles and other things which aren't too great for you. \$12 plus tip. Excellent – great place to eat.

The Best Western has 4 pillows on the King size plus mattress – they are about 2/3rds normal size. The room is nice, but I'm awake there for maybe 2 hours total – the rest is spent sound asleep. It's the type of place I'd stay at while traveling on business trips (not that there were that many) and someone else was paying the tab for it! Really nice.....but I'll take a Super 8 if I could and save a few bucks.

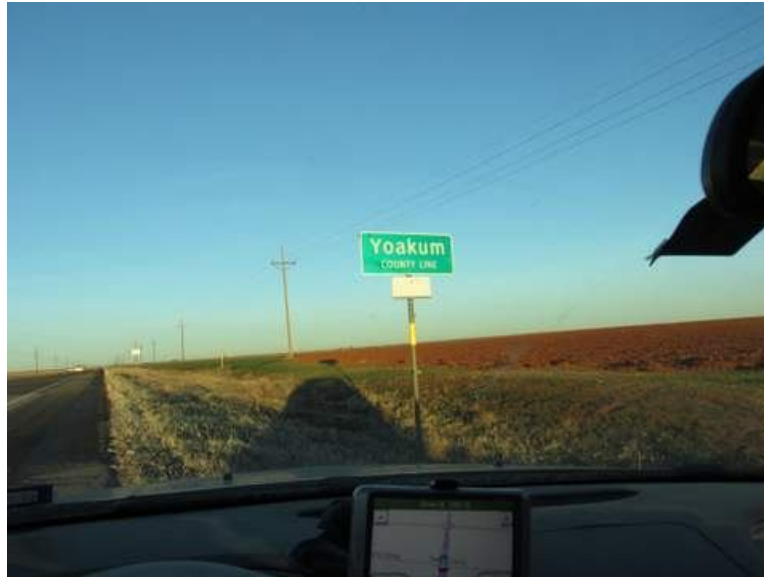
I hit the hay early at 9:30 and before you know it, it was 5am and I was wide awake.

Friday

I got up, took a shower, went down to their exercise room and got in some exercise, then hit the big breakfast just after 6am. Waffles – I indulged but only ate half of it! First I cut it in half.....and drizzled just a bit of syrup on the half I was going to eat. I'm cutting back and waffles, unfortunately, are '100% junk food'. Good, but lacking in just about everything other than calories, sugar, nutrient stripped white flour, and sodium. Also had an egg patty, small bowl of raisin bran cereal with a cut up banana, a small orange (skipped the juice which is often sugar water orange colored high fructose junk food), and two cups of coffee. It was very dark outside at this time.

There was no reason to go mobile early – the sun didn't show up till 7:30 am out that way. So I dragged my feet then was on the road at 7:30. KC3X, Holllis had a doc appointment early in the morning – I'd have to wait until after 7:30 central time for him to get back into the mobile for Cochran.....and by the time I got there, he was ready...it was west from Levelland to the County Line – 20 miles or so -...then south from there on 1780 – getting to use smaller and smaller roads – good paved road....but usually no shoulders on four digit road numbered roads. 60-65-70 mph limits usually.....You can fly through there if you want – you can see a mile down the road. Or slow down to 60 while running cw - hi hi - like I usually do., The roads are near the county line, so you run 15 miles in Yoakum, then hit a county line (with terry/Yoakum) on a major road like

82, (small roads at the C/L often have horrendous power lines along them - main roads are often a lot better for noise)....then continue on 1789 down to Gaines, TX.....I was running most of the C/L on SSB.....only cw when it was a 'dead end' or that was the best way to put it out. The path to get to Hollis's MD needs got more twisted at that point.....more 4 digit roads...



Yoakum, TX LC for NM2L for his Bingo

On the trip, I hit 44 counties and got Percy Pics of most of them – document the trip with Percy Pics. Always. As K5YAA notes: “N4CD continues to amaze me with his ability to cover ground - and lot's of it in an 8 to 10 hour period!”. Well, it is often 12 hour days the first day, and lots of 10 hour days putting them out, with 15 minutes for lunch and a few 10 minute gas/pit stops along the way for morning break and afternoon break.

First a few miles on 83 over into Dawson, then on some really 'rural' roads with no civilization on them...not much of anything but barbed wire fences – on 2053 headed east, which hits the C/L of Dawson/Lynn. Temps are in the 60s and nice and sunny! Great county hunting weather. The wind is blowing 20-30 mph as it often does out this way. Occasionally a tumble weed would zip across the road and you'd try to avoid crunching it.

Here's a sign you don't see too often. First time I've seen it. For the next couple miles, every couple hundred feet there were a couple 2 inch diamter cables crossing the road.

Apparently they are for large seismic arrays – where you have a gigantic million pound 'thumper' vehicle that whacks the ground with near explosive force to create shockwaves that travel thousands of feet down, bounce off geographic layers and are picked up by arrays of seismic sensors spread over miles. You get a detailed map of the terrain underground – where they are hoping to find pockets of oil and natural gas. Then they'll use hydraulic fracking to open up the seams underground. There's lots of oil activity in west TX. Lots of redoing the old fields to get even more oil out using newer technology and finding small pockets not found before.



Seismic Cable Crossing

It's not a bad line on that road, but you are in a small 'gully' with 10 foot high banks on both sides there. Blocks the signal I'm sure – but still had a good run. That's why sometimes you might hear me great, other times I'm 'weaker' – Most of Texas you are surrounded by lots of 'flat land' with nothing blocking signals (can't say that about WV!). On some occasions, you find you are blocked a bit in some directions. Oh, well...worked out OK....the antenna had to 'peek over' the small banks. That makes it rougher for the DX as you want a low, low angle of radiation for those low paths.

Road 2053 then heads east in Lynn. To highway 87 north up to 380 east to get over the Garza (pop 6400)a 'dead end' county – but Hollis needed that one.....so I went. Others needed it too – been a while since I've been there. A long time. You head back

west after the line (sat for 30 minutes)....then down highway 1054 south to get to Borden.....to just whack the corner. Did that.....then skeddaddled down highway 1210 to the west over to 87. Hollis needed Andrews.....first, you go through Martin,....then over on 176 off route 348...Nice line to run there....

I was basically done with getting the needs done.....at least for Hollis...now I could figure out how to get home. I was too far west to make it home that night unless I wanted to drive drive drive and get home late late late. That wasn't the plan and the weather was great! 60's all day...sun.....lots of wind spinning all those windmills in west TX..... I'd stop on the way home somewhere..the question is where, then head on home on Saturday.....

Hmmm....well...I headed east which gets you over to Howard County and Big Spring.....there's a nice Motel 6 there right at the Interstate 20 – but it was way way too early to stop for the day and that is still a long way from home. OK...plan B – head on down to Glascock – usually needed by somebody....then further southeast to Sterling – east to Coke – Not much in Sterling or Coke Counties, but did pass by Fort Chadbourn in the NE corner of Coke. It's yet another TX frontier fort – now being restored by a private foundation. Here's a bit of it's history:

“On October 28, 1852, Fort Chadbourne was established by Companys A & K of the 8th U.S. Infantry. The Fort was named in honor of 2nd Lt. Theodore Lincoln Chadbourne who was killed at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma during the Mexican War. Chadbourne’s sash, and saber are on display in the Visitor Center. As many as 450 or as few as 50 men were stationed at Fort Chadbourne during its years of operation. Men such as Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, George Pickett, Albert Sidney Johnston, and John Bell Hood passed through its doors.

At the outbreak of the Civil War the fort was relinquished to the Texas Regimental Forces, some of whom were mustered into the Confederacy at the post. Following the Civil War, Fort Chadbourne was reoccupied in 1867 by Commander Eugene Beaumont and the 4th U.S. Cavalry. Due to lack of water and supplies, along with deterioration of the buildings, the troops were moved to an area along the Concho River and established Fort Concho. Fort Chadbourne was decommissioned and used as a picket post until 1873.”



Fort Chadbourn, TX – Coke County

More pics and history here:

<http://www.fortchadbourne.org/index.html>

They are rebuilding the buildings and preserving the site. There's still lots of work to do but if you're in that neck of the woods, stop by and see what is going on.

There's a visitor center there. I didn't take the time to stop by. It was time to head into Abilene before the sun set.

The route was then northeast up to Runnels winding up in Taylor County in the city of Abilene. Lots of Motels there including a Motel 6, Super 8 and at least a dozen others. Lots of places to eat, too!

Things went well.....until I got to Taylor. Hmmm.. I was zipping along at about 75 mph.....thought the speed limit was 70. Been doing 70-75 plus on roads with 70-75 mph limits. I come over a hill.....oops....there's a cop on the other side of the road.....I go by...and the flashing lights come on.....and he's on my tail. Not good.....Hmmm....I haven't gotten a speeding ticket anywhere in TX since I've lived here....almost 24 years now.....this doesn't look good, folks....I pull over. N4CD is in hot water.

I dig out the insurance card....out of the glove box...and hand it to him with the driver's license. In TX, the registration is on the window in a sticker. He says I was doing 76 in a 65 zone. He asked where I came from.....not San Angelo...that's 65 the whole way.....I told him Bronte..... He asked 'didn't you see the sign by the cafe when you left town there – 65 mph? That was 35 miles back....I said no, I haven't seen a speed limit sign since leaving the town.....and it's been nice open highway.....there was a 'construction zone' where you slowed down to 65 – it was posted 65 mph for the zone. When it ended, I figured it was back up to 70.

He heads back to his car.....he comes back with a 'official warning'.....off the

hook.....dunno why.....11 over according to him....Didn't complain one bit.....thanked my lucky stars. Who knows? Maybe his kid is a ham....while I'm about to pull out and get over, he's busy pulling over a 'one eye car'...one headlight working. Whew! Close call!

I head on into Amarillo...getting late...punch in the Super 8 and give them a call. \$62 for the room and with tax it is \$64. Not bad...and of course, you get breakfast....I can do that. A lot cheaper than a Best Western...for sure for sure....It's an older one...probably 60 years old...maybe a Ho-Jo or Holiday Inn 50-60 years ago. Now a Super 8. The lady at the desk said only rooms available are on the second floor. They are likely less used and in better shape – hi hi – used less days per year! They give out the ground floor rooms first. Big place with lots of rooms. Right off the interstate and it filled up – well, at least all the first floor rooms, that night. If you can handle a few steps take the second floor rooms.

It was getting to be late. Abilene is about four to five hours from home if you head there directly – a good spot to stop. It's just about 'rush hour' in the city. Traffic is backed up at a few places and you sit at the lights for a while. I'd get to dinner and back before the sun went down.

Nearby is the Harvest Moon Chinese Buffet. I'd rate it a B- on the N4CD Buffet scale. Good broccoli and great sauteed mushrooms. Limited selection of fruit...all canned....but it was only \$8.67 so one can't complain too much. Loaded up the plate with broccoli, a few shrimp in the seafood delight, mushrooms, and some small bits of meat.....had a pile of green beans....skipped all the other stuff....diet....desert was pineapple and peaches. Even fortune cookies have 35 calories of sugar in them!

It had been a long day.....over 950 miles in two days..... I hit the hay at 9:30....next thing you know it was 6am and the 'wake up call' got me up. The sun wouldn't be up till way after 7am....but breakfast was waiting.

Saturday

I had a half a waffle...only half....cut it in half, and ate just half of it. Small bowl of raisin bran....with a banana.....and two cups coffee.....Skipped the O.J. I had some oranges in the car I'd snack on later.

I checked the web (K3IMC forum and email and some news).....then headed out going on down to Coleman and Brown. It was 43 degrees in the morning headed for the high 60s. No need to hurry home. I could slowly work my way home. The CW contest

was raging but I could use 14.113 for cw, and of course, 17 and 30 have no contests. I'd also head to 7056.5 where K5TIA, W3DYA, K5KDG, and K5YAA would show up occasionally. Sometimes K5GE. Otherwise, 40m was pretty dead. I did work W4YDY, KA4RRU, and KC3X a few times on 40 – especially early/late in the day.

So it was southeast down to Coleman – taking 2228 off the I-20 down to the town of Cross Plains. From there a short jog gets you down to Brown/Coleman and I spent a leisurely half hour putting it out on 20 and 17SSB, and the cw frequencies. The DX was in with LY5A, OH3JF, KL7D, ON4AAC, DL3IAC, DL6KVA, SM7ZDI, OH6NVC, DL5ME, DL6KVA in the log during the morning hours. James was running mobiles off .336 once again, so I'd use 322 plus or minus with no problems. The SSB crowd included KA9JAC, KB9VYT, AC0CU, AC9GK, W7GQK, NF0N, K1TKL, K4YT, K5VYT, N1API, NW6S, WB9STT, N8HAM, KC8RQH, NX4C, WG9A, WA9LKF, WB4UHI, K8GI, N7JPF, WA4UNS, NM1G, VE5EGK, KM9X, AJ5ZX, N0KV, LY5A, KL7D, W9ROG, N9QS, N5MLP, WA4WKL, KC7YE, N6PDB, WA4RNN, AB7NKVE5EGK, W3CR, and a pile of other regulars. WA4WKL is a newcomer – worked him on SSB and CW. He's trying to figure out the '336 thing'. Many of the SSB folks are also now on CW. Looks like about 80% of them now.

Here's one of the 'bushes' you see along the road. Probably some prickly type almost cactus type plant. You see them along the fence line, and in some mostly abandoned fields or one which is hard scrabble type pasture



- Opuntia - Prickly Pear or Paddle Cactus

You don't want to mess with these. They have sharp needles sticking out – two sets. They are edible but you need to carefully remove the inner set of spikes – you can do that by roasting them in a campfire. Otherwise, those inner spikes will kill your insides if you accidentally eat them. They are fruit like. Mexicans have made alcoholic beverages out of them. Back 50-60 years ago, Australia had massive invasion of these that would pile up to 20 feet high in places and literally overwhelm farm land. It took them 20 years of intensive control, including introducing pest bugs to eat them, to knock down the noxious weed. Some folks actually grow these for food. You see them all over south TX. Opuntia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opuntia>

So if you are ever stranded on a lonesome road with a broken down car, and need something to eat....built a campfire, and roast all the spike off these and you can eat them. That's if you can find enough wood for a campfire – hi hi – and have a match or lighter.

After leaving the line....I just ran the counties headed home for a while....sat with the windows down at the lines or stops while enjoying the warm weather....Palo Pinto/Erath, then Parker – stopped....then it was into the Metroplex and lots of traffic so I just headed on home with no more operation. Spent an hour in Parker just stopped – running the county, then eating an orange, some walnuts, and some blackberries for lunch. No sense to rush home.

Why is it that you can ride along a road for a mile or two, and no power line in sight but one shows up at the county line?. You come up over a rise, and there is the county line.....and you can almost bet there will be a power line crossing the road there! No other power line in sight.

Here's Palo Pinto on highway 16 headed to Strawn off the interstate



Palo Pinto/Eastland and the Power Line

Fortunately it is not too bad – but S2 noise you could do without . Nothing 300 feet away but as you pull up on the line...the noise rises. Less on the other side of the street as the line crosses at an angle...and no power line along the road for miles and miles. Murphy always seems to be out to get you – hi hi. Did OK on the line. Next up was Parker and I found a nice spot off the access road of the interstate to run. No power line in sight.

After Parker - the journey had been a busy trip and now it's about 75 miles of heavy traffic on six and 8 lane roads with construction for half the way to get home... best yet to drive and listen to the radio....Made it home by 4pm.

1202 miles on the trip.....44 counties transmittedabout 30 mpg...too many stops with engine running and too much driving at 75 mph which hurts the mileage. It was fun. The weather was fabulous....we've been freezing with more freezing, ice, sleet, lots of cold north wind.....and days of total gloomy clouds. Now we get a week of near 70s! Hurrah! Of course, in 10 days there could be another cold blast.....and ice storm. You never know in TX. We are 'averaging out' to a 'normal temp 'winter now.

Thanks for riding along.....hope I hit counties you needed. One or two more trips in Feb...then March will bring more adventures but also some non-county hunting activities like Accordion Convention, Vintage Radio Auctions, and a few other interests.

Banners – Propagation - More

These banners are prepared by Paul Herman, N0NBH. He accumulates the information from various scientific sources and consolidates the radio-related data in his banners. There are 20 different types of banners on his website www.hamqsl.com/solar.html. You are free to use any of them on other web pages. Most folks are interested in the HF parameters.

The solar parameters on the banner display the levels of various types of electromagnetic and particle energies generated by the sun that are striking the Earth. The emissions from the sun form a continuous torrent of noise and ionizing radiation which affects propagation. Also, the occasional blob of energy spewed out of the sun, a CME or Coronal Mass Ejection, can have major impact on how well HF works.

If you head to the MARAC dot Org web page, at the top you will see the current propagation banner – well, one of the many variations of it. The one on QRZ.com home page has an extra line. Let's look at exactly what is displayed on this one:



Starting at the left top, you've got the date and the GMT time. Hit your browser refresh if you have been letting it sit while you were away for hours.

Under the date, you see SFI 170 and SN 186.

The Solar Flux Index (SFI) is a measure of the 2800 MHz radiation (at 10.7 Ghz) generated by the sun. This value, 170 in our case above, is measured each day at 1200 PST and varies from 60 to 300 normally. The noise doesn't affect propagation directly, but gives a good idea of the level of UV and X-ray radiation coming from the Sun and is more easy to measure. Higher is better!

Next to that is our friend, the sun spot number (SN) or often seen as SSN. The SN takes into account the size, number and groupings of sunspots. More is better! The number can vary from zero to 250. The higher the SN, the higher the level of UV and X-ray radiation that is striking our atmosphere and producing ionization of the D, E and F layers. As ionization increases, the MUF goes up. The higher bands (15, 12, 10 and 6 meters) become active with good propagation with high SN. Here, we have a SN of 186, which is very good and close to the record for this sunspot cycle.

In the next line, we see the A and K index – here A=23, K=1

The K index (1) is derived by averaging values of the geomagnetic disturbance taken every 3 hours at eight magnetic observatories around the globe. These 8 values represent the average level of disturbance in the Earth's magnetic field.. The K index values are converted to a logarithmic integer value between 0 and 9. A rising K index indicates increased instability. If $K > 4$, that indicates a geomagnetic storm is underway.

The A index value A=23, comes from the K index. The value of the K index is scaled mathematically at the 3 hour measurement periods, then converted to a linear value that varies from – to 400. The A value is the global value of geomagnetic disturbance during the previous UTC day, where the K index is happening now. (A above 5 indicates messed up propagation. Above 20 the bands are likely crappy with not much long distance (cross country) propagation or international signals on 20M, and horrible propagation on 30 and down.)

Next we have the **XRY value** – which is a measure of the intensity of high frequency X-rays hitting the Earth. Here we have C1.3. The letter represents the class – V, C, M or X. The number is the multiplier of the value of the class.

For the letter value

B =	< 10 E -06	No Radio Blackout
C	10E-06 to 10E-05	No Radio Blackout

M	10E-05 to 10E-04	R1-R2 blackout
X	>10E-04	Re-R5 Radio blackout

These X-rays penetrate the F layer and ionize the D layer (and a bit of the E layer). The D layer absorbs signals from 1.8 to 5 MHz and attenuates them from 7-10 MHz. When the X-rays reach the M or X class levels, the D layer is greatly enhanced, it can absorb radio signals throughout the entire HF spectrum. In extreme conditions, all HF signals get absorbed for a total radio blackout that can last a few hours. When someone on net says, Oh No! Giant flare....that means propagation could head to zero – and it is time to stop for lunch or a snack since you won't be hearing much for a while. Been there a few times out county hunting – like most!

Next up is the 304A number (above it is 175.8). It indicates solar radiation at a wavelength of 304 angstroms which is in the ultraviolet spectrum. Half the ionization of the F level comes from this. Higher 304 indicates improved F layer propagation (good 10M and worldwide DX).

You'll see Proton Flux (Ptn Flux) and Electron Flux (Elc Flux). Ptn Flux is a measure of the density of protons within the Earth's magnetic field. The normal level is below 10. As the level increases, the polar paths and regions have degraded/no propagation. At a PF level of 10,000 will be degraded. At 100,000 or above - a S4 event – Extreme Solar Radiation Storm, polar paths experience partial to complete radio blackouts. Zip. Nada. If you live up in AK or work signals over the poles (DX0 this is an important number.

The Electron Flux (EF) is the intensity of electrons within the Earth's magnetic field. It's similar to the proton flux number and degraded conditions occur when RF levels reach or exceed 1000.

The AUR – Aurora is a value from 1 to 10 that comes from the number of gigawatts of energy striking the polar regions. AS the level increases, the level of ionization of the F layer at the poles also increases. A rising value of AUR indicates that the auroral oval is shifting to lower latitudes and the possibility of Northern/souther lights increase. You may have improved propagation fro signals from 10m to 450 MHz but can also mean that polar path blackouts for HF can occur. If you are a VHF'er you watch this number. It can mean contacts off the aurora on 6M and up.

Last, on the left hand column, we have the MUF – which is a measure ot Boulder, CO

at the time indicated. It tells you what they measure as the highest frequency bouncing off the ionosphere. Higher is better if you like the upper bands (15, 12, 10).

On the right, below the table listing HF propagation conditions, you will see **Geomagnetic Field**. This value indicates the quiet or active the Earth's magnetic field is based upon the K index value. The scale has nine levels from Inactive to Extreme Storm. When Major, Severe, or Extreme Storm levels are reached, the HF bands can go dead with blackouts and auroral events will occur.

After that is **Sig Level** - S1 to S5, indicates how much noise in S units is being generated by solar wind as it interacts with the Earth's magnetic field. Obviously, lower is usually better.

You can just watch the right hand side. If conditions for 20M are listed as POOR – well, that's a good day for keeping the volume on the radio up, then reading a good book, watching TV...and waiting for a mobile to venture out. It won't mean you won't have good propagation – could be great – but likely no short skip, tough tu-tu relays, and tough cross country paths. However, don't give up.

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Other banners by N0NBH will list other parameters – such as EME Deg or CME

Hope that helps explain a bit about the banners. Many DX spotting sites and home pages also feature them. They are useful.

We're in maybe the second peak of this sunspot cycle...high numbers.....and lots of solar activity giving days of great propagation, then days not so great. In five years, we'll be moaning about no sunspots and no propagation on 15 and 12 and 10m most of the time.

Enjoy the high solar activity while it lasts! You may never see this many sunspots again in your life!

New Hampshire QSO Party

Yes, there was a NH QSO Party this year. Looks like a dozen or more stations made it on the air, and some were spotted on W6RK.

W1MR was spotted on SSB in Merrimack - that would be good for the Natural Bingo Award where you need the right letter in the suffix of the call. No wildcards. No credit for an X call. No credit for a star.

On cw, W1FZ – Strafford, W1PID Belknap: K1TU, AE1N, K1HI in Hillsborough; K1BKE Merrimack; NM1JY Rockingham, AD1T Cheshire;

The most multipliers I saw on the contest reflector score was 7. A couple folks had 6. Some of the counties apparently never made it on the air.

from the 3830 contest reflector

W3DYA – TX – 5 CW QSO

Just wanted to announce that I felt the QSO Party was a success: I got my last NH County (3rd time)

NM1JY – NH – fixed - 190 cw 1020 SSB QSO

Ran kind of a mini multi with 2 Transmitters and was assisted for a few hours by N1AA. Otherwise, ran both radios by myself! Got a late start by missing the first 3 hours doing errands around the area. Arrived just in time to greet my second op at 2 PM. Could not do any thing past 9:30 AM Sunday morning as I had to attend to other things but it was fun to put one of the bonus stations on the air for others. Had some fun moving some of the more competitive out-of-state/country stations to other bands to help their totals. Our sister

station, W1WQM (another bonus station) had a larger crew of ops and did a nice job introducing a number of newer hams to this side of the hobby.

Thanks to the many that called in - hope you were able to work all the counties this time!

73, Mark, K1RX

AD1T – fixed – NH – Multi-Op 168 CW and 865 SSB QSO's

Since adding a second tower and Bandpass filters, I've wanted to try a Multi Op from my station. The NH QSO Party was the perfect opportunity and gave us a chance to put the local Club call on the air. Plus we were a Bonus station.

The station performed flawlessly. Participation seemed to be down from previous years but overall it was a huge success. Nice to see 10 meters continue to provide good propagation.

Thanks to Neil, AE1P and Randy, N1KWF for making this an enjoyable weekend.

Also a big Thank You to Lee, my better half, for taking such great care of us.

Doug - K1ZO

N4JF – fixed – AL - 55 CW/digital and 56 SSB QSO's. He must have been calling CQ NH a lot to find that many!

DL4CW - had 31 cw/digital QSO's 10 SSB QSO giving 6 Mults

Super Immunity – by Dr Joel Fuhrman

By now, you've probably figured out that N4CD has turned over a new leaf on the eating habits.....and saw the writing on the wall. The number one health issue in the country is the rising rates of obesity, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other avoidable situations.

Every month, we lose a few old timer county hunters – some quite young, and if you keep up on what's happening to others – they're fighting all sorts of things that really weren't a problem for folks world wide just 100 years ago. Leo, WY7LL, became a silent key last year from a heart attack. Ed, N3HOO, lost a long battle with cancer. I know other county hunters getting treatment for cancers and a lot of county hunters are on high blood pressure medicine. The more stuff you take, the more you are affecting your system and possibly triggering other things to happen in the future. My brother in law, two weeks older than I, just went in for major surgery for pancreatic cancer. Didn't know he had it until 2 weeks ago. They cut out half his pancreas, one kidney, six inches of colon, gall bladder.....and he is recovering OK now. Reality is hitting home. I'm getting the message. I'd like to be around to 90 or 100. And be healthy.

The best health is not having to take ANY medicine to keep you going. Right? Every drug has side effects and we still really don't know the long term effects of many. Of course, if you have high blood pressure, take the meds.....because the alternative is worse. Better yet would be to get yourself to a point you don't even need the BP meds any longer, right? Wouldn't that be nice? You see all these 300-350 pounders wandering around at the all you can eat buffet places and think – my gosh, by age 50, they'll be seriously diabetic, maybe losing limbs, on half a dozen medicines with nasty side effects.....and they don't see or care about the looming disaster ahead. That, and heart attacks. You're never the same after the first one.

My family history ain't too great....all my dad's family of brothers died before age 75...except for the "runt" of the family. He'd tell stories of how his three bigger brothers could grab all the food off the table quickly and he barely could reach the food and didn't get the lions share – hi hi. Well....he turned out fine. Went off to war in WW2 as

a B-26 bombardier and got shot down over the Ploesti oil fields in Romania, and spent two years in a prisoner of war camp. Came home and married a southern gal and settled down in Rowan County, NC. Got his ham license along the way (WD4LMK) but wasn't very active. He made it to age 94 and just passed away. His wife died at 92. What was his 'secret'? When I would mention I could stop by and visit...he'd say – there's always more beans in the pot. He'd warm up some collard greens, too. Yep, he ate the healthy foods, ate nothing 'processed', cooked from scratch, kept his weight about the same all his life and was in great shape, active and alert, until a few weeks before he died. The rest of his brothers ate lots of meat, white potatoes, white bread/flour, pasta by the pound, etc. So.....it's not only family history...but a lot to do with diet. In fact, likely 90% diet....and 10% genetics.

It all comes down to diets..... and I'm as guilty as the rest. What's killing a lot of us, a lot early that should happen, is the 'processed foods' and junk food diet we have become addicted to and sodium/protein overload. I'm guilty – I love my pizza and eggs and bacon and piles of chicken, stuffing, turkey, a piece of beef every now and then. I've consumed my share of steaks and hot dogs and hamburgers. Well,.....that's exactly what's wrong with our diets.

If you go to the WalMart – you have to dig hard to find 'no salt added' foods. Oh, the frozen broccoli is fine (10 mg)...but if you buy the Tuscan flavored broccoli, it is 200 more calories and 300 mg of sodium! You can buy 'no salt added' beans if you look really hard – they have them – but 99% of the cans are 250 or 300 mg a serving of sodium added! Yuk! The no sodium added beans have like 10 mg of sodium naturally. Same for soup! You'll dig hard to find a 'no salt added' soup. Otherwise, things like Progressive Veggie soup are 680 mg of sodium a serving! Yikes! Horrible. We're being overloaded by the food industry. Well, that's what people 'buy' since they like 'flavor' of salt in everything. Their taste buds are desensitized since they eat so much salt you need to add ever more salt just to be noticed. If you have high blood pressure....it's probably from salt overload. It's not too hard to get down to well under 1000 mg a day.....and some get down to 300 mg a day average. You won't be eating packaged food, though.

“White bread” using white flour that has been stripped of so many nutrients in the processing and milling that they actually have to add back in some 'vitamins/minerals' to be able to foist it off on us and be able to call it 'food'. 98% of the good stuff is still missing. That 'white flour' is in everything from pancakes and waffles, bread, rolls, stuffing, pasta, 'whole wheat' and just about everything else. It's enriched with a few things after they take out 300 of the natural chemicals in it that protect you and give you

nutrients.

Dairy....pushed by the farm lobby.....is great stuff for 2 year old kids....but not for adults. It's cow milk that nature designed for cows. It's devoid of most of the 'good' things that are lurking in vegetables and beans and 'green things'. Even 1% (skim) or 2% isn't much better. Piles of cheese? Horrible..it's concentrated cow milk. Switch to almond milk.

Meat...the killer of more Americans....that all the wars combined....pushed onto the American consumer as 'good for you'. Well, likely it will get you heart disease and obesity. Meat is about 100 calories an ounce. That 8 oz steak is 800 calories or more before you ladle it full of other fattening stuff on top, or eat it with 'white potatoes', also essentially garbage food devoid of most redeeming value. Oh, it does have calories and worse, most folks load it up with a ton of butter (100 or more calories a pat) and sour cream (sending the calorie meter off the scale at the high end)..... Add a 300 calorie bun to the already 600 calorie hamburger...and wowie! Plus the salt overload! More than a day's sodium in one meal.

Four months ago...the heart doc said I should start taking statins.....the cholesterol was only 170....but the ratio was not good. Well.....the statins gave me other problems. I finally saw another doc at the medical office for another problem...and he said I should check out Dr Joel Fuhrman's web site and buy his book Super Immunity – it would solve a lot of my problems maybe.

So I bought a copy of the book off Amazon dot com for under \$10 and digested it.

I won't bore you with the details. Most of the 'processed foods' and dairy have disappeared from my diet, along with most meat. Just 2 oz a day average of meat/fish, and lots of natural food cooked fresh or from frozen. Try to keep total sodium every day below 1000 mg.....and less is even better. You can probably do under 500 if you work at it. Remember, until 1800 or so, most folks didn't have salt to use.....and they survived fine, didn't have high blood pressure or die of heart attacks. Or cancers, other than from smoking for the few that could afford it- usually 'the rich'.

You'd be amazed at how much sodium there is in stuff. An Egg White McMuffin, billed as the 'healthy one'...has 600 milligrams of sodium! Only 280 calories but a ton of salt! That's more than a third of what most doctors consider to be the daily limit of 1500! Look at what's in white bread....and gosh...look at Burger King Whopper – not only well over 1000 calories but LOADED with salt. Add in fries and you are reaching for

1800 calories and have exceeded the daily salt limit. People then salt them even more and pour on ketchup which is loaded with salt. You'd had all the calories you need for an entire day in one 'fat burger' that is 100% junk food meal. If you add in a regular Coke – supersized...add in another 600 calories! Now you realize why 30% of the population is , well, FAT – Obese. Those pizzas....well, five or six slices is1500 calories ormore than the daily salt allowance. Didn't realize that?

Olive Garden? Put that on serious avoid. Some of the pasta dishes have 2800 calories each! Before you load up on breadsticks! Check out the calories/salt on line before you go if you have to go there.

These are the 'super foods' that should be in your diet - .

G Greens – lettuce kale broccoli etc

B Beans - every kind of beans – pinto, black, cannellini, kidney, etc. A 1/2 cup a day

O Onions – all sorts of onions, shallots and similar garlic

M Mushrooms – cooked! Not uncooked.

B Berries – blue, raspberries, blackberries, acai, etc

S Seeds.....flax, walnuts, chia, etc. 1-2 oz a day

3 to 4 'fruits' a day - have one or two or a fruit salad medley for breakfast instead of the fat laden, sugar laden junk food American diet.

My goal is to lose about 15 lbs in the next few months.. That means, if I eat any at all, 1/2 waffles, and home made veggie pizza night. Those will be rare 'treat' nights.

A pound of raw greens a day. A pound of cooked greens a day. 1/2 cup of beans a day. An oz of seeds a day. Three or four fruits a day. Well, not there yet but working at it! That's a lot of stuff to eat. 80% of your calories should come from beans/greens/fruit. Well, that's the goal.

I bought a Vitamix blender – nifty.....you load it up with berries....half a bundle of kale...a couple carrots....and a cups of Almond milk (more calcium than cow milk and 40 calories a cup and full of nut goodness)....and blend away at 36,000 rpm! I really don't like eating carrots and you never know the carrots are in the drink! Nifty. It's an expensive blender....maybe you can find one at a garage sale. It beats the pants off anything else. You can make all the green healthy 'smoothies' you want. Add in some ice cubes and it's chilled.

Here's the web page to start.

<http://www.drfuhrman.com/default.aspx>

Get your hands on a copy of **Super Immunity**....a NY Times best seller. Dr Fuhrman has been on some of the PBS Specials as well. We got a lot of county hunters that could benefit from this.

Some data for you to chew on:

1) Onions – in a multi-country study – the highest consumers of onions had:

- 56% reduction in colon cancers
- 73% reduction in ovarian cancers
- 88% reduction in esophageal cancer
- 71% reduction in prostate cancer
- 80% reduction in stomach cancer

2) Cruciferous Greens (broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, kale, collard greens, etc) in a multi-country study:

A 20% increase in plant intake corresponds to a 20% decrease in cancer rates, but a 20% increase in cruciferous vegetable intake corresponds to a 40% decrease in cancer rates.

3) Combine those foods with beans, mushroom, seeds and berries combined and you're off to an excellent start in fighting diseases. You are getting the 300 phyto-chemicals in the raw/steamed veggies that the American food industry strips out in 'processed food' without the overload of salt, sugar and calories.

4) Heart patients with severe carotid artery blockages were given a daily dose of less than one ounce of pomegranate juice for a year. Not only did their blood pressure decrease by over 20% but there was a 30% reduction in atherosclerotic plaque.

You might enjoy reading the book. \$10 on Amazon.com Super Immunity by Dr Joel Furhman.

He also analyzers the other fad diets. You'll note that Dr Atkins of the 'famed' Atkins diet.....had a heart attack 3 years before he died. He was never the same after the heart

attack. It's not a heart healthy diet and he'll tell you why. Same for the 'paleolithic' or 'caveman' diet of meat, fat, even more animal fat, more meat and even more meat. Hint: Protein overload. Cavemen died at age 35.

I'll let you know in a couple months how it is going. I'm actually now learning how to cook a lot of things I've never cooked before. Everything from water sauteing mushrooms to steaming broccoli and green beans. It's an adventure.

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Travel Note de N4CD: if the hours of sitting in the car get to you – remember....if you want to POOP on the road, have some CRAP - that's cranberries, raisins, apricots and prunes. Good to keep the 'senior' digestion working when you sit for 12 hours a day for days in a row without enough 'roughage' in your diet and enough exercise. CRAP= POOP. Simple.

On the Road with N4CD II

Wednesday – Murphy Strikes the County Hunting Car – Dead, Dead, Dead....

Murphy hit the county hunting car.....My cars talk to each other in the garage. If one gets a new part, like battery or alternator or water pump, the other seems to need the same thing very soon. Don't ask me why. It just seems to happen time and time again. The one car had it's little 30 amp Gel-Cell type 12v battery die a few months ago after 7 years. That's a special battery only available from Toyota. Got fixed.

I went to check the usually trusty 2009 Malibu to see if I needed to fill up the gas tank before the planned trip tomorrow. Also clean the windshield and make sure all the trash from the last trip is cleared out before starting, too.

Uh-Oh! Dead battery. Not slightly dead, but deader than dead. Zero volts. Hmmm? Did I leave something on? This is a smart car that turns everything off, even if you leave lights on - or a door open. Did I leave the ham radio on? It's connected directly to the battery. Don't think so. Think it even shuts itself off at low voltage. There was zero volts, No courtesy lights. Put in key and turned key. Nada. Zip. Not good. It was 5pm. I wasn't going anywhere. The small jump starter battery was in the trunk. You

can't get the trunk open – it's got an electrical release! No key lock on the trunk.

I was planning on leaving tomorrow, Thursday for a trip to south TX. Oh, dear. What to do?

Well, I put it on the 10 amp battery charger - rescued 10 years ago from the TI9M DXpedition- about the only piece of hardware that came home with me 'free' after we all had paid for it all - hi hi - and put in on the battery. Most of the stuff, other than the two quads, and the radios and amps themselves, was donated to the TI hams. The generators were sold to the captain of the boat crew who likely flipped them for a lot more. A lot of stuff from the DX pedition costs more to ship home that it is worth. Cut coax and rope and buckets and gas cans, push up masts, oil, tents, tarps, big tools, lamps, etc, and things like that were donated. Maybe a future expedition will use them. Enough nostalgia.

The car lights came on.....but it wouldn't start.. The battery was serious degraded.

I came back an hour and 15 minutes later. Car started barely. Hmmm....I know that once a battery dies to zero volts, it is toast. Even if you jump start it and get the car running, the battery will soon die, and who knows where you are. Even if it is 2-3 years old, and you run it down to zero accidentally – it's toast. It will never be the same and soon fail. You have to replace it. Once the 'chemistry' has been ruined, it's never the same.

There aren't too many places open at 6:30pm to put a new battery in your car at that time in the evening. Most 'service centers' are closed including Walmart. We have a chain, NTW - National Tire Warehouse. Usually it is not the least expensive option. I wanted to be on the road and a 100 miles south before the other places open in the morning. NTW was open till 8pm. So I bit the bullet and drove over there.....ouch...the Malibu battery, according to them, is a 'special size/battery'. That translates into \$\$\$\$\$. Well, I checked later on line. It's been a while since I've bought a battery. Ouch. They are all up there these days. Inflation! EPA rules.

The good news is that Murphy was defeated. The battery was five years old, and that's a decent life for an 'original equipment' battery. They usually last five years or less with the intense summer heat here and with the battery in the engine compartment. This is not the 'daily driver' but the road trip car. Well, 136,000 miles and five years so I can't complain and Murphy was overcome. Trip is on for tomorrow....now all I have to do is plan to escape most of the rush hour as I have to head straight through that mess of

downtown Dallas tomorrow!

Thursday

I had checked the K3IMC needs page for southeast TX. There were lots of needs including a bunch for Hollis, KC3X, for MD, some for Jerry, W0GXQ, some for Joyce, N9STL, and loads of misc needs for two dozen others. Hollis, KC3X, just finished up so he needs everything again. Barry, K2MF, needed tons in TX still. I hadn't been down that way in a long time....same for any CW mobile it seems. I plotted out the route and posted the trip. Sometimes I just go, but I wanted folks to know which way the route would go and when to expect their county to be run. I missed the email addresses on the needs page – they disappeared a month or two ago – made it easier to click on the links by the needs and send folks an email. Some aren't listed in the MARAC county hunter database or in my mail address book. Don't know if Don got hacked, or someone was harvesting the links for spam mail.

It was a weekday – which meant rush hour...which meant I'd have to leave EARLY EARLY EARLY...or late in the morning. You don't want to drive directly south from my QTH at rush hour, It's at least 2 hours to go the first 30 miles if you do. I opted to get up wee early in the morning at be on the road at 6am headed down highway 75 (4 lanes each direction, plus HOV lane) – with a car every 200 feet in every lane moving 60 mph. I had a cup of coffee, a sliced up navel orange, and some left over green smoothie (broccoli, carrots, strawberries, blackberries, banana, papaya, almond milk, cucumber). Then headed out.

There were no hiccups or accidents and the weather was good – so I made it through to downtown Dallas then scooted out I-45 (also 4 lanes each way) with all the traffic coming in after 30 miles. Whew! Got through with no real hassles. I'm sure glad I reached the 'retired point'. The traffic gets heavier and heavier each year with more folks moving to the Dallas Metroplex. One accident and the drive can go to double or triple the time. Or just sit for 2 hours and go nowhere. At 7am the speed on the road is 10-20 mph , stop and go, stop and go for 30 miles.

I turned on the radio when I reached Ellis County – then Navarro. I was headed toward Jasper and Newton – right over by Louisiana. You hit Anderson, Houston, Trinity, Polk and Tyler getting down there. I was taking lots of Percy Pictures (county line signs) to document the trip and have them for LC's to send out to CH for their last. Got just about all of them but didn't get Orange County (Still missing from the database – no sign that I could see on the interstate 10 and all construction. Missed two others.)

14.336 was open to all county hunters on Thursday and everyone got to enjoy runs on .336. No hassles and no one run off the frequency or choosing not to run. N4AAT, Scottie, was doing most of the relays with help from W3CR, WA9DLB and others. Harry, W6TPC, is now once again joining the folks on cw as well.

Down that way, there are LOTS of trees. TX has a million acres of woodlands and most of them lie in the southeast corner of the state. There are small rolling hills but its mostly flat and you can zip along at 60-65 and occasionally 70 or 75 mph making some tracks to the next county or county line.

The weather was supposed to be great for the trip with temps in the 70s! We've had our share of COLD COLD COLD with days of highs in the 30s (some only in the 20s). Then a few days of 65 or 70 to average out. When the weather is 70 and sunny, I get inspired to go mobile. Had a few sprinkles in SE TX but nothing serious. There's lots of humidity down that way and you get some occasional afternoon/evening sprinkles.

The trip went well. Band conditions were not great on Thursday. Barely a DX station made it through and very muffled/echo-ey when one made it despite the conditions. CW worked fairly well. I ran just about all the counties on SSB since some of the needs were for the SSB types, and Chuck, W3CR seemed to want to work me on SSB in just about everyone. Why not? I could also head up to 17M SSB and put it out there for a new band/mode county.

I didn't make any plans for stopping for the night. I'd go until 5pm more or less and try to figure out where I would be at 5pm to call ahead.

I stopped for lunch at a Subway. Then now have 'chopped salads'. You can get a 'Veggie Salad' (\$5) which is a good size plate of all the veggies you can load on a base of lettuce/spinach. Load on the onions, cukes, tomatoes, black olives and whatever else you like. A teeny bit (less than two TEASPOONS) of the dressing of your choice. That's 100 calories right there. No croutons (fat soaked bread). It will take you 10-15 minutes to eat, be healthy for you and be under 150 calories. You can also add in turkey (\$1 more) or double chicken (\$2 more) at most places. The sandwiches aren't too fattening IF you avoid cheese and getting more than just a TEENY Bit of dressing on it. Maybe 250-300 calories and load on the veggies. Skip the cheese!

Add cheese and that's another 150-200 calories. Don't. Get the normal application of 'dressing' and you've added 300-500 more calories. Skip the chips and cola. Or Iced

Tea. Water works fine and is free.

It's 100% better than a hamburger/cheeseburger and fries and Coke (800-1500 calories, five times your fat quota, your entire sodium limit for the day or maybe more, and maybe even more calories you need in an entire day. If your tummy hangs over your belt....you indulged too much in crappy calorie laded, bad nutrition food.)

It was filling. Had a ripe banana a bit later in the car ,too. Don't eat them until they have 'freckles' on them – otherwise they can cause constipation. Water to drink. Works fine and the price is right. No hassles with refills either. The water spigot is usually right on the soda machine.

Ran Newton/Jasper and discovered my TX map was ancient. My GPS database is 10 years old now....and my map was 1997! Heck, that's 17 years old! Most of the roads haven't changed, but highway 82 isn't in either of them and it's a major road. Well, I saw it and ran Newton/Jasper on Highway 82 – good spot to run it. Pretty quiet and you can get off the road well. After running the counties, had a navel orange for a snack. Just peeled it and ate it. I try to eat 3 or 4 fruits a day. It's hard to get the pound of greens in a day, though, while on the road. Then over to Hardin.

From Hardin - highway 69 was great to decided to run the county on the run while headed south into Jefferson, then head east on the I-10 for a few miles over the bridge to run Orange. Ran Jefferson– hit the I-10 and had to stop for a dead end county in Orange. Never saw a sign for the county to snap. It's over a bridge and there's massive construction going on. About 3 miles in off the access road was a convenient construction area that was relatively quiet. Along I-10 was horrible for noise. Sat there for a half hour running SSB (20/17) and the 4 cw bands (20/17/30/40). Amazingly, K5GE was in there on 17m in just about all the counties I hit....339 time and time again. He lives in TX about 200 miles west of Orange. Orange is the last county before you go into LA on I-10. It's busy busy busy with trucks on I-10.

Heading back west again on I-10 gets you into Chambers. You're not far from the Gulf of Mexico at this point. Texas has 375 miles of coast line. You see a few palm trees and there are 'bayous' down in this neck of the woods. Lots of swampy area and everything else is sandy ground. At points you could probably throw a rock and hit the Gulf a few miles to the south. It is flat. You can see for miles and miles.

With a short jog you can get up to the county line of Liberty – needed by a bunch – and run it. To get there I punched in the town of Hanaker into the GPS. A strange thing

happened. Normally, you can skip the 'street number' part and go the street name. Don't enter a street and hit done, and it usually shows you page after page of streets – and most of the time I pick 10th Street or 1st Street – something that is likely in the center of town. Well...whaddaya know. There is only ONE street in the entire town and that is - the highway. NO side streets – nada. That's the first time I've seen that happen on the GPS. Made a note. Hi hi

The next problem of navigation was to get around Houston without getting to pay ten or fifteen dollars in tolls. There are toll roads everywhere and they are EXPENSIVE. I opted to head along the coast down to Seaside, which is just before you cross the bridge into Galveston County. You go through a bit of Harris. It takes a while to get down there – good roads for a while, then congestion as you hit the ports and resort type area. After zipping over the bridge and getting a pic for the county line database (one of the few missing TX ones) – I found a Home Depot lot that was the 'least noisy spot' to run and did my runs there, stopped. Otherwise along the street it was QRM city with S9 noise from the power lines, and also too much traffic/congestion to run.



Galveston County TX – a LC for W3DLM
A genuine Percy Picture

Y
ou can see all the power lines making it QRN Central – hi hi

It was getting late. I punched 'motels' in the database. Hmm...a Motel 6 not to far away.

I dug out the new Motel 6 book – sure enough – Motel 6 Houston/NASA about 10 miles away just off I-45. The GPS database is 10 years old – out of date. Some of its motels don't exist or have changed names.

I called Motel 6 and this time...got the last room! Ah...just in time. Made the reservation. Just gave them my cellphone number and they pulled up all the info. Wow! They are on the ball! That's the way Super 8 worked years ago with their Super 8 ZIP card – just give them the number and they pulled it up. Then they lost that formula and if you call them, you have to regurgitate all the details every single time you make a reservation, or do it on line and still fill in all the data. Who would have thought Motel 6 was ahead of Super 8 on reservations? \$47 including tax for the room. Big screen TV (limited channel selection), faux wood floors, new style sink/counter and bed. Worked fine. Clean. No breakfast provided. Got there at about 5:30pm. It had been a long day. Nearly 12 hours on the road.

You actually hit Harris County again going west. . Seems that Harris County 'extends' down I-45 toward Galveston island, like a tongue along the interstate, vacuuming up all the businesses and motels 3 miles either side of the interstate. Hmmm.

Well, since I am on the diet kick now, I opted for a Chinese Buffet – where you could load up on broccoli, green beans, carrots, tomatoes, some 'salad', cooked mushrooms, other strange Chinese oriented veggies, some fruit, and not too much of meat/fish. They had sushi and crab legs. Was \$13 including tax. Got my fill of green veggies and fruit. Plus some shrimp and meat tidbits. Back to the motel 2 miles away. Took a long walk around the motel lot – just to get in 'some' exercise. Maybe 1500 feet. Better than nothing. Cool outside with my shorts and tee-shirt – now down in the 60s and a few sprinkles of 'southern sunshine'. Watched a bit of TV.

I hit the hay at 9:30. I'd been up since 5:30 am. 463 miles of driving.

Friday

I woke up early - 5am. There's no breakfast at the Motel 6 other than coffee. Right in front of the motel is a Waffle House. I'm not a fan of that chain like N4UJK and KC4UG were – they couldn't pass up one on their trips. They'd stop every 3 hours at one. Well.....I checked the menu.....not much in the way of 'healthy food'. They had calories listed for everything and they went from 380 to 1200 calories (plus likely a load of salt). I opted for a single 380 calorie waffle (\$3.80) and ate just half of it. Drizzled

some 'no sugar' syrup on it..just a bit. OK....maybe 250 calories. Had two cups of coffee, but with half and half (15 cal each container)....and Splenda. I went back to the room and ate a navel orange. I was set for the morning. Maybe 400 calories so far. Wearing my shorts and tee shirt. A bit chilly at 60 degrees but headed to 70 plus today.

The plan today was to head southeast along the gulf coast all the way to Aransas, including detours to Wharton and Calhoun along the way. You get way down there on highway 35 for the most part. I'd usually stop to run on SSB – makes it easier for me – listening to SSB on the recorder is a pain so I'd rather hand log while I'm doing it...and of course, if it is a 'dead end' county, log the cw runs while doing them. Otherwise you get to listen to them a second time when you log them.

Somewhere along the line, I hit a Subway for another chopped salad. This time had the 'turkey breast' chopped salad...they add in a few slices of turkey to the rest of the salad. Not bad and only \$5.64 including tax. Had a banana in the car, too, and ate that.

Silver, N9QS, was putting out counties in IL. Caught up with him in some I needed. Good. It's harder to connect when you both are mobile and changing bands/modes all the time.

James was busy running mobiles off 14.336 Jerry, K5YAA won't run on 336 and was out on a trip in LA for the next two days. Rather than run SSB, he was running CW and some data modes in the counties. Skipped SSB totally. Maybe he made a few by special request but didn't see any spots. Last trip he was down around 272 or so – where he runs in the state QSO Parties. He was debugging the mobile in anticipation of heading out for the QSO Parties he likes. He's got a big signal with the KW amps and generators on his trailer behind his vehicle. Got him in 2 I need and missed him in one. When you are mobile, running counties - it's easy to miss each, and he doesn't listen or run while moving. He has a screwdriver antenna so he'll start on 40m and work his way up – so not to wear out the motor from constantly shifting frequency.

Well, it seemed that Jerry, W0GXQ, desperately needed Goliad, and it was a LC for WA4EEZ, Leslie. She had missed it a few weeks ago when I ran it early in the morning on one of the other trips this year. OK...I could do that – a 10 mile detour off the route – and the speed limit was 75 mph! Heh heh- flying along the road to the county line.....with lots of folks waiting – and of course, rather than 7:30am when 17 was not open, like the last time, it would be in the middle of the day and 17 would be wide open – along with 20 SSB.

Along the way, you see signs like this:



Speed limit on this road is 75 mph



75 mph speed limits – getting from A to B

You can make tracks getting to the line, then sit for 30 minutes putting it out.

All the roads leading away from the Gulf Coast have 'evacuation route' signs on them. When a hurricane is aimed at the gulf coast, smart folks pack up and leave – otherwise, a 20 foot storm surge could put them 10 feet underwater ...maybe 15 feet. Or their house fly apart in 130 mph winds or the next house fly apart and send shrapnel through theirs making it a death trap. Here's another sign at the county line:



Goliad TX – LC for WA4EEZ
Genuine Percy Picture - guaranteed

Those LC's in TX are hard to come by – you got a 1 in 254 chance of giving one out in a given county. It helps if you run 100 others along the way and fill in needs. Eventually folks will get finished up if you run a lot of them!

I sat with the windows open. In the 70s and sunny. Jerry reported his temp actually made it above zero – was 4 or 5 degrees there after a morning of 17 below! Yuk! Well, we get to pay for it in the summer time with 4 months of 'hot' and where the temp doesn't get below 90 for weeks/months at a time. It's a good time to be gone to the mountains of CO – a good excuse to go traveling far and wide! Meanwhile, there's 8 months of not too bad weather usually with just 'six weeks' of winter to get through. Soon, I'll be out in west TX with the a/c running full tilt while it is 90 plus outside with the sun really 'hot'. No windows rolled down at the C/L while stopped in June, July or

August. It was 'delightful' outside. I was enjoying myself at one of my favorite activities. Why not?

It was now time to head north and think about where to stop for the night. If I headed north for 100 miles I'd hit the interstate and maybe find a motel. Meanwhile, before I got there, Jerry , W0GXQ, asked for Colorado. OK.....7-8 mile detour off the route to get the corner of COLO.....which I did and got that. Took a Percy Pic. Ran the CW bands and SSB. Getting late and time to find a motel. Headed back on the route.

You hit Fayette County and the town of Schulenberg. There are two or 3 motels there. Saw the Executive Inn. Called them from the parking lot while I finished up the 20/17cw runs. SSB would wait till the next day. Yep, had a room - \$69 including tax. Looked like a nice place, built like the Super 8 motels up north – but exterior doors on one side for the first floor. Got a first floor room. Nice. Big TV, double beds. Well, actually, I got a room then came back to the car for 30m and 40M runs. By 9pm they had the “no vacancy sign” out.

Went down the street to Frank Miller's Restaurant. Looked at the menu. No veggies other than 'potatoes'. Hmm. Well, got the Salmon and had a baked potato. Ate the salmon – good – and half the baked potato. Had a small salad – not even enough to feed a small rabbit. Better than nothing. Went to pay \$14.50 and mentioned to the lady at the desk that I missed having any veggies for dinner. She mentioned she might have some left over broccoli in the back – I should have said something. Hmmm...then she said – if you want some, I'll warm 'em up for you right now! Hey, such a deal. She went back to the kitchen and got them to warm up a small bowl of broccoli. Serendipity. All the meals were basically 'meat and potatoes' and I guess once and a while they put broccoli or green beans in there somewhere. It's hamburger or steak or 'chicken fried steak' or fried shrimp or fried chicken fingers for the menu. That's about your choices. French fries, baked potato or potato salad. No veggies on any the dinners that night and most people likely don't say a word about them. Most folks only get 'potatoes' as vegetables all week long! That's bad - those fries are full of sodium and grease. Potato salad is full of high calorie mayonnaise or salad dressing of some sort. Folks load up baked potatoes with 500 calories of butter and sour cream. Yuk! Heart attack city.

I enjoyed the special treat.....and then was on the way back to the motel. Took a short walk around the motel perimeter.....Slept well...been a busy day. 800 miles driven in two days. Lots of 'dead end' stops, too. That takes a lot of time. I was having fun and working the pile ups down to the last caller. Chuck, W3CR often did relays on SSB

along with Hollis, KC3X and Scottie, N4AAT. Some times Tony, WA9DLB would pitch in.

Saturday

Breakfast at the motel. Sticky buns, and cereal was all they had. Had some corn flakes, the least worst option. That's processed corn, at high temperature, which removes all the nourishment from the corn. It's squeezed like toothpaste at several hundred degrees, sliced and instantly 'fried' and dried in a big tower....they have to add in some 'nutrients' like niacin to even be able to call it 'food' but it is not. The cereal industry is a big con to get folks to eat crappy food with 99% of the real nutrients gone. 5 cents worth of corn and cardboard, 5 cents worth of sugar or high fructose corn sweetener, a penny of salt (NaCl), 25 cents of advertising....and \$2 in profit on a box. They have bowls of faux fruit on the counter. I had two cups of coffee. Mentioned the fruit to the manager when I checked out. He mentioned he had real fruit, but some customers had literally emptied the bowl, taking it with them. He got tired of that after a while, and no more fruit. A few rotten apples spoil it for everyone. Now just junk food for breakfast. Had an orange in my car. Ate it. (skipped their mostly sugar water OJ at the motel). 100% nutritious and you get pulp (dietary fiber). Now only 50c each in season.

It was then on the road headed north to home with a few zigs and zags to get some other counties. Brazos was high on the list of needed ones.



Brazos TX – NA8W, W0GXQ , N8CIJ- LC
Genuine Percy Pic

Then it was up to Robertson, which turned out to be a LC for K8QWY. We worked on 30M.



Robertson, TX – LC for K8QWY

Jerry, W0GXQ, needed Falls on 17M. I'd hit that. Made a detour over to Milam. Sat there for 30 minutes in a parking area for a 'historic marker' for the town of Nashville, TX – named after Nashville TN. Founded 1835 – way back to the Republic Days of TX. The memorial notes that the colonists here were from Nashville, TN. One of the residents, George Childress, was one of the drafters of the Texas Declaration of Independence. (Six flags over TX – remember your history? TX was a Republic before it joined the United States). Childress has a county named after him – where he lived later on. The marker was put there in 1936. At one point, Nashville (on the Brazos) was considered as the capital of the Republic of Texas but was not selected. After a devastating Indian attack, a fort was built nearby – Fort Milam, later renamed Fort Burleson, to defend against more Indian attacks. It wasn't used long and fell into private hands in the 1840s. Nothing there now. Enough history. Got in some exercise wandering around.

Read in the paper where Sunday, Feb 25, was the 178th anniversary of the beginning of the siege at the Alamo. Santa Anna and his 1000 plus men trapped about 200 Texas folks and fighters in the mission (including some from KY like Daniel Boone).. They lasted until March 2 when all the defenders at the Alamo were killed. Frank, AA9JJ, and N9QPQ stopped by at the Alamo on their recent trip to TX(see the pic way up above). Not long after, the TX folks defeated Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto and Mexico surrendered. That conflict would flare up again time and time again until about 1848 when it was finally settled and Mexico 'lost' all of TX, AZ, NM, and

southern CA. Back to the trip and 2014.

James was busy running mobiles off 336 today again. No K5YAA or N4CD on net. I ran off frequency - 322 or 323 or 319 or 339. Whatever worked. And 18132 plus or minus on 17M SSB. James was being civil. No jamming. I commend him for that. And I expect decent county hunters to NOT jam him, even if they don't especially 'like' him. Common courtesy. If you don't like what is going on, don't participate. If you join in, be civil.

Dave KW1DX was on in VT and later in the day heard KC7QOP out in OR on cw. Stopped to spot him. No one else picked him up on 20cw. Missed him later – wasn't listening on 17 when he ran it there on cw in another county off net frequency. It's his first attempt at running cw mobile. WB4KZW, Gene, was on in NC in a few. KA4TLC was on in NC on SSB.

Well, every now and then, there are grade level crossings for the train. Got to watch 100 cars go by at 5 mph for 15 minutes at this crossing Arrgh! Already had run the county, too! I had a snack – a banana.



Union Pacific Train....Robertson County

Some times you just spin your wheels instead of zipping down the road at 75 mph. This on highway 50.

Made it to Falls and hooked up with Jerry, W0GXQ. He should be getting down with his needs on 17M.

At almost 2pm my stomach was growling. Hmmm.. I forgot to get lunch, then there was no Subway for a long long ways. Finally hooked up with Subway in Mexia, TX near 2pm just before I hit the interstate to zip on home. You guessed it – chopped salad. Took a while to eat it. Not too many calories and good for you. Two cups of water and I was off again headed toward home.

On the way home, caught up with Gene, K5GE, on 17m cw in Ellis.....you can hear him anywhere you are....he must have a cloud burner for an antenna pointed up, or low down to the ground with high angle radiation. He hears me, I hear him.....weak....but we work each other most of the time without a relay at 100, 200, 300 miles apart. JH7VHZ was in on 17M and worked him on SSB once too. Took me a while to recognize the call on SSB.

Seems like our once decent county hunter, now gone a bit deranged, in FL must have had a bit too much to consume. Either that, or is just reaching near total senility. A one time decent county county hunter, a former good guy gone, bad reverts back to his CB days as a jammer. Pretty easy to tell by who heard him, who had him off the side of their beams.....and who didn't hear him. Doesn't take much detective work to figure it out. You really wonder if he has any brains left and certainly lacks decency and respect for the county hunter community. Why any one would condone his activities defies logic.

While he was doing his best to ruin contacts for YOU and others, I worked 20 stations with not too much trouble. He sat up on 18130 showing up just after the spot appeared—half the time I was down 2 KHz and he was so busy jamming he wasn't even listening. Hee hee. Worked JH7VHZ right through him. As the saying goes, 'if it quacks like a duck, waddles like a duck, and leaves a trail of crap behind it like a duck, it's a duck'.

Now who showed up on 14.336 a few minutes later for the first time that day? Made a stupid comment to James about 'his friend out mobile' which just reinforces what he “likely” was doing, Hmmm...It's W1BQL, the mini-mee of KA 1 **Just Plain Rotten** in FL You can connect the dots. Peace and quiet all day. Percival Ford shows up on net frequency on .336 ten minutes after the jamming session. Coincidence? You be the judge. I won't be 'accusing' any one or naming names specifically. But you know the answer. It's easy to connect the dots. If it quacks like a duck, waddles like a duck, and leaves a trail of crap behind it, it's a duck.

Didn't ruin my day. Actually, I have pity on the guy. If that is his idea of being a 'countie hunter' (sic) (per his QRZ.com page), it's just pathetic. Hope he didn't ruin yours by a missed contact. Can you imagine anyone less we could sure do without? Half the folks turn the radio off when he is around making stupid comments. Drives the YL's nuts. Why anyone would even head to a convention where he is going to show up is beyond me. He was a shining example of a former officer of MARAC and a black eye for the organization. Still is.

Did he think he was 'getting baddie points' for his actions? Please, just go away and leave. The county hunter world will be a better place without you.

Oh well, **Just remember the duck and the trail of crap where ever it goes.** You got the picture.

I had a fun trip. Got lots of counties for folks and collected a few LC's too. The DX was doing better on Friday and Saturday with DL3GA, PA3ARM, SM7ZDI, DK6KVA, DL5ME, JH7VHZ, ON4AAC, DL8MLD, LY5A, DL6KVA, OH3JF, YV5OIE in the log a few times. Sometimes LY5A sounded like 3 people calling at once with all the echoes on his signal. The A and K have been up there. Probably 15 and 10 meters might have been good to EU as well, but I'm not equipped for that. I'm busy enough with 4 bands and you have to go to 40m to catch the close in ones like KK5NA, W5QP, and sometimes K5KDG and K5GE with good signals. Folks are still working on 30M single band. Terry WQ7A got a LC on 30M for Washington TX. Most folks are busy chasing 17m counties while conditions are good at the sunspot peak. It's a lot of fun on 17 and often signals are even better than on 20m – as long as you are far enough away. South TX is good for that – It's a long ways from anything. Same for west TX – hihi. In a few years as we head down off the sunspot peak, 30M will have a good comeback for use.

38 counties transmitted on the route of 1096 miles. 72 degrees when I got home.

Decided it was getting late and I was tired out and didn't feel like shopping first then making dinner. I stopped at the Golden Corral on the way home. First plate was all salad.....loaded it up with lettuce, arugula, onions, tomatoes, cukes, ...skipped the raw mushrooms – bad for you – added shredded carrots, black olives...and added two teaspoon full of honey mustard dressing...along with spoon full of pine nuts and spoon full of sesame seeds. (those are 100 calories each spoon but you need some nuts/ seeds each day). Use a real teaspoon to measure out your dressing, too! No 'guessing'. Took

15 minutes to eat. Then went back for the 'greens'. Collard greens, broccoli, green beans, 1/2 cup of pinto beans, a bit of sweet potato, corn. Added tomato again. Full plate of 'color'. Ate that.

There are too many folks carrying 100 lb extra at the all you can eat buffet. Watch what they eat and it is self explanatory. Meat and potatoes and salt and lots of each. No veggies or seldom one. Fruit? Ha! Oh...and tons of processed foods and white bread lacking most nutrients. . No significant salads. The guaranteed American Diet that will likely get you high blood pressure, heart attacks, obesity, diabetes and cancer. Throw in lots of pizza and you've hit the nail on the head. Will they change? Probably not until after the first heart attack. Then they are already headed downhill health wise. It's an eye opener. It never dawned on me before. Killer levels of sodium in the average diet. Folks don't care. Or want to know. No one tells them or educates them. The food industry wants to sell you food that 'tastes good' , not that is healthy for you. Loads and loads of sodium – in everything. Restaurants cook everything in loads of salt laden water and shake it on like there is no tomorrow as they prepare things. Then they'll take 10-20% of the calories out, add in double the salt, and sell you 'heart healthy' lower calorie or 'no fat' goods. Yuk! Read the food labels or go on line for typical restaurant meals at chain restaurants. It's an eye opener.

A couple hundred calories total for dinner at the GC.... Skipped the meat other than a tiny slice of ham. Last plate was fruit. Other than probably way too much sodium in their cooked veggies, at least it was in the right direction'. I was stuffed. Headed on home.

So...that's likely the county hunting trips for a while. March is full of other activities on the weekends but I'm glad it worked out well weather wise, traffic wise, and county wise in Feb for all the trips so far this year. It's back to the freezer and rain storms in the weather wise next week – some 'average' weather for February. Not as bad as MN but the 70s are gone for a while. Then the end of March it's hamfest time again and more excuses to head on out here and there.

Home at 6:30 pm to rest up. I had a lot of fun, got to visit parts of TX I only get to every couple years, and give out lots of county contacts.

On the Trail of Regens

There wasn't much new showing up on Ebay this month, and there weren't any hamfests or antique wireless auctions during the month. One interesting item showed up on Ebay. It's a two triode 'shortwave receiver' by Harrison Radio Fultone – probably a kit radio from about the 1930 era.



Looks like a very simple receiver using triode regen detector, audio choke to couple it to single stage of triode amp. You'd need headphones, naturally, to use it and a good outside antenna and a good ground.

Not much else new showed up! Either that, or I've seen most of it before – hi hi

North Carolina QSO Party

Yes, mobiles were out and running. Fixed stations showed up. Even an A index of 51 and K index of 2 didn't slow things down. Stations made it up on 15M but most of the action was on 40 and 20 during the daylight hours. A couple CME's were headed our way, which didn't help prorogation. Later in the day activity shifted to 40 and 80m.

There were half a dozen spots on SSB and dozens on cw. Didn't hear the 4 counties I needed in NC so it was a 'bust' that way. It was a pretty good QSO Party. Heard NY4N, AD8J, AA4XX out mobile. NC4QP and W4DW were bonus stations. Several 'expeditions' headed out and there were some 1x1 calls to be had. N4CW was mobile, mostly 40m. N4E was mobile.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

AD8J/mobile 511 cw 167 SSB QSO

It was a beautiful day to be driving around the western part of NC. Operated solo in the new "lone Ranger" category and operated parked in 5 counties. I had about the same number of contacts as last year but 13 less mults. Last year was with wire antennas and this year was with just Hamsticks on the roof of the Honda Accord.. The first four locations were cemeteries on the tops of hills. The last location, after dark was a Walmart parking lot. The rig was a Kenwood TS-480 barefoot. Thanks to everyone that followed me around.

K4PQL portable – Pender NC 312 cw 146 ssb

Plan B was to activate Pender County from our beach cottage on Topsail Island. Got antennas put up on Saturday and the contest was a blast. Great participation in state, out of state and DX. Thanks to the NCQP organizers for really getting the word out. There were a LOT of counties activated by mobiles, expeditions and locals. The pileups on 20M SSB gave this mostly CW op a workout. Especially trying to type with one hand and holding a hand mic in the other with peak rates over 200! Thanks to all for their patience and apologies to a number of DX stations I just couldn't pull out although I did get a DL, EA and I in the log.

Equipment: TS-480SAT, 80-40 trap dipole; 20M dipole, both at about 25' (8M) and about 20' (6M) from the water. Hustler 4BTV vertical mounted on boat dock. Fortunately the winds weren't strong and didn't have to use the mobile hamsticks clamped to the boat lift.

See you next year!

73,

Jim, K4QPL

N8II – fixed WV 181 cw 166 ssb qso

Two years ago, the NCQP seemed to be dying on the vine, I only made 197 QSO's, and only one was above 40 meters! This year, there were lots of causal ops making it possible to break 100 Q's on 40 phone and 20 even opened well for about 3-1/2 hours, what great luck (after the disturbances from Wed-Sat.) and what a Renaissance!

Late morning, it seemed like it might be a very long day, I could tell the majority of the activity was on 20 and everyone was skipping over here near DC. And running on 40 phone proved unproductive. Then just after noon stations on the far edges of NC started coming thru on 20 and I had a good run on 40 phone just before then also. After a 15 minute lunch break, I heard KM1C in Pamlico loud on 20 phone and eventually for a brief 20 minutes or so the whole state was loud on 20. Despite trying to run up there. results were poor, but I kept adding CW and phone Q's on 20 and even a few on 15 backscatter. Thanks to a move by me, W4DW was the only station worked on 10 M and the only one on all 5 bands. So, I went to 40 not expecting much and had a great phone run of 25 stations and another good one not long after. Numbers on 75 and 80 were not quite up to 2 years ago despite good conditions, but even the mobiles were good copy.

Many thanks to all of the mobiles for really putting on a show especially compared to 2 years ago when W4MY was nearly a lone mobile wolf. I worked Bert, N4CW, Paul, AA4XX, Jeff, NY4N, N4E, and John, AD8J many times, "well played!" as the golf commentators say. Also worked was KB4QQJ. There were some desperate begs for N4CW to work 20. Guys, he would have if he could have; he had SWR problems with the 20M whip. I only occasionally checked for spots, and tried when I could to spot the mobiles. I probably missed 3-5 counties that were workable from here. Breaking the mobile pile ups seemed pretty easy, thankfully.

My hardest struggle was a fixed station on 20 phone in Watauga despite being S9 here.

Both 150 point bonuses were earned and all were pretty easy except for Hyde county. If a county has the privilege of being a bonus, it ought to be on for most of the party.

Many thanks for all of the QSO's; working 3-5 QSO's with the same station was pretty common thanks to the good conditions. Thanks to RARS for organizing a gear fun party!

KE0G – fixed MN - 70 cw QSO

Lots of mobile activity, enjoyed the party. Also connected with ni4bk and w4dw for bonus points. Thanks for your copy of my QRP, and hope to C all of U next time. 73, Dan, ke0g

W1END – fixed NH – 112 CW

Score includes bonus for W4DW qso. Great activity again this year. NC is ideally situated to give me good propagation on all bands. Nice to hear the prolific mobiles. It's fun to chase them around. Thanks to all. FTdx5000 and Butternut HF6V vertical.
Eldon - W1END

Last County Awards

Some newcomers might not be familiar with the 'last county' awards. MARAC has two types of “Last Counties” - the last county in a state – the LC-1, and the last county for 'the whole ball of wax' – that is your last county for working all of 3077.

When you work the last county in a state, usually by a county hunter mobile spending the time and gas money to get there, it is common courtesy to 'reward' the mobile with a 'last county award'. If you are working on the first time, wait until you have your confirmation back in hand to just be sure you had a 'good contact'. Then it is time to send in for the last county award for the mobile.

You can find the 'application' which is on line at:

<http://marac.org/lastcounty/>

Just fill in the boxes. I think the LC-1 awards are now down to \$1 each. You can also fill out a paper application if you don't have access to the web, but if you're reading this newsletter you have web access – hi hi

Most county hunters get their 'last county for the whole ball of wax' or LC WBOW when a county hunter makes a special trip to go to that county and work them. That's the LC-2 award. It's a bit more expensive because it's a 'wall hanger'. But then again, when mobiles go out on trips, they are likely spending \$100 a day on gas or motels – maybe even more, getting that county for you. It's a 'big deal' usually.

Most of the regulars are very familiar with the LC awards. Some wait until they have a backlog then send them all in at once. That works as long as you keep track of which one was the 'last county' in the state you worked – hi hi. I usually 'do the paperwork' as soon as I work the mobile now since after the first time, you don't need confirmations. Just work 'em and log them.

Some county hunters seem to be very good at rewarding mobiles for their efforts. Others – well, maybe they didn't get the message before. It's a nice 'pat on the back' to get those LC awards issued.

You can track who gave out which LC awards. Go to this page

<http://marac.org/database/default.asp>

It's a good page (just click on county hunter database off the main page and it will get you there too) to find out the address of a mobile or other infor.

On the right hand side is a column with heading 'last county awards'. Type in a county hunter, like W0GXQ and hit the “GO” button. Then you'll see that Jerry, W0GXQ, has

received 755 last county awards, the last from W3DLM (as of 2/24/14).

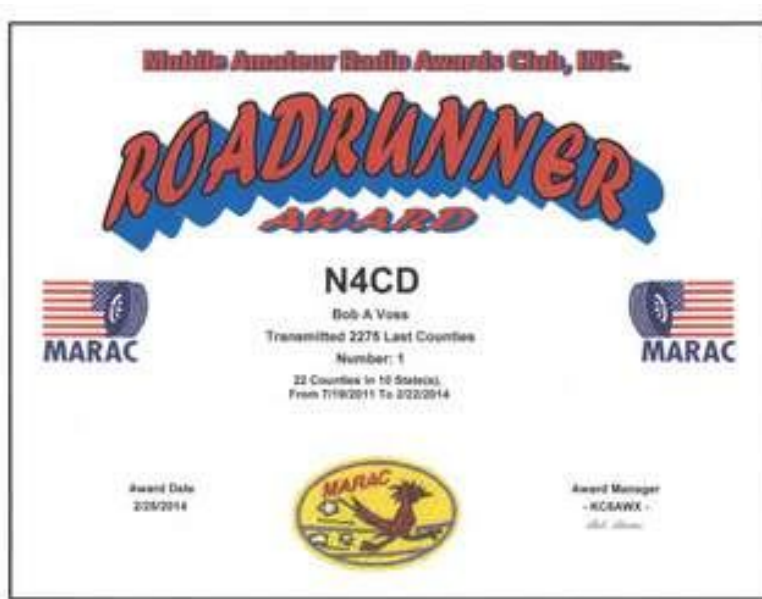
If it weren't for the mobiles, most folks would never finish awards.

When you give out your first couple last counties, you'll get a paper award for each (or should I say an electronic copy of it you can print out if you want).

When a mobile reaches a level of 25 last counties, the mobile gets an 'wood' award. It's a plaque for the first 25, 50, 75 up to the 100 level where you get a wall plaque with separate bars added for each additional 25.

Depending upon the state you live in, those last counties might be relatively easy to give out (small states) or not so easy – places like GA and CA where it can take you a week to run all of them. Sometimes you'll get one for an interstate county, or because you have the right prefix, or call combo, or are good for the Bingo or Mobile Diamond Award. Or someone just started over and they needed that one to finish up. There's at least a dozen ways for a 'last county' to be given out, including 'teams' and 'YL mobile'.

Here's the last RoadRunner Award (for a multiple of 25) that came into the N4CD QTH just before press time. This is the 'electronic copy' of the award sent as a PDF. Soon in the mail I'll be getting a bar for the 2275 last counties given out to put on the wall plaque. At the 1000 level, you get a big trophy (the giant MARAC trophy).



MARAC has lots of awards you can work on, but this one only comes when OTHERS send in for the LC award as a reward for giving them the last one in the state.

ARRL 100 Year Video

There's a new ARRL Video out – 20 minutes – It's a short history of ham radio. This year the ARRL is celebrating it's 100th anniversary. Pretty basic stuff.

Watch it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JerSTUDqI7s>

Activity – 17M and Up

Who has been on 17M and up in the past month or so? Sunspot activity remains fairly high giving county hunters some fun on the 'upper bands'.

On 17 cw – we have spotted: K4YT, K0FG, N4CD, K5YAA, KC7QOP, N9AC, KW1DX, AI5P, KA4RRU, N9QS, W5QP, KC3X, K2HVN, KN4Y, NM2L, KC7YE, W4SIG, N4AAT, KB9OWD, W0EAR, W0GXQ, KB6UF, K1TKL

On 17 ssb – WD9EJK, KC7QOP, N4CD, N9STL, WQ7A, AB4YZ, KW1DX, N4AAT, WA4UNS, W0EAR, KC7YE

A few made it up to 15M (21056.5) including W0GXQ, KA4RRU, KN4Y, KA4RRU, K1TKL, K2HVN, W4SIG, KC7YE, KB9OWD, and K5YAA

On 24915.5 (12 meters) cw we see K5YAA, NM2L, K1TKL, KB9OWD, W0GXQ, W5QP, W4SIG, but activity has been sparse.

On 10m cw – we see K5YAA, K1TKL, K2HVN, KN4Y, W0GXQ, W4SIG, W7FEN have put out counties in the past two months on 10cw. Going back a bit further, N4JT and KS5A were also noted with 10M spots. There were a few 'self spots' for 10M SSB activity but I'm not sure how many others heard/worked them.

In the state QSO parties, there's been some activity on 15m cw and SSB but most of the stations quickly moved back to 20M after a short time on 15m. There was activity on 10M but the skip was too long for most of the US to work the state QSO folks. The DX liked it, though. Hi hi

Awards Issued

USACA #1243	Ron, N1QY	Jan 27, 2014
USACA #1244	Larry, N7LFX	Feb 21, 2014
Ninth Time #8	Silver, N9QS	Feb 10, 2014
Ninth Time #9	Hollis, KC3X	Feb 17, 2014

Operating Events for County Hunters

March 1-2

ARRL SSB DX contest – good time to not be mobile unless you like QRM on SSB. Probably OK during day but come afternoon the DX will be swarming all around the band. Even CW on 40M with the 'foreign phone band' might be impacted – maybe even 20cw. 17M should do fine – no contesting there!

March 8 and 9th

Idaho QSO Party

RS(T) and ID county or S/P/C

www.idahoarrrl.info/qsoparty

Mar 8, 1900Z - Mar 9, 1900Z

CW 35 kHz above band edge; Phone 7.260, 14.260, 21.335, 28.470 MHz, plus 50, 144, 440 MH

Wisconsin QSO Party

WI county or S/P/C

www.warac.org

Mar 9, 1800Z - Mar 10, 0100Z

CW 3.550, 7.050, 14.050; Phone 3.890, 7.230, 14.290, 21.350, 28.400 MH

March 15

Virginia QSO Party

Serial and VA county/city or S/P or "DX"

www.qsl.net/sterling

Mar 15, 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 MH

March 22

Oklahoma QSO Party

RS(T) and OK county or S/P/"DX"

www.k5cm.com/okqp.htm

Mar 22, 1300Z - See website

CW 40 kHz above band edge; Phone 3.860, 7.195, 14.260, 21.335, 28.470, 50.130 MHz

Louisiana QSO Party

Call sign, RS(T), LA parish or S/P/C

laqp.org

Mar 22, 1400Z - Mar 23, 0200Z

CW 1.84, 3.54, 7.04, 14.04, 21.04, 28.04; Phone 1.865, 3.865, 7.255, 14.255, 21.365, 28.465;

VHF 50.095, 50.135, 144.05, 144.21 MHz

1.8-28

50+

Info courtesy of ARRL contest corral, ARRL, Inc, Newington CT 06111

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/Contest%20Corral%201403%281%29.pdf>

Events for County Hunters

April 24-26th

Michigan Mini – hosted by K8ZZ and W8TVT -

<http://michiganmini.superhosts.net/>

May 16-May 18

Dayton Hamvention

<http://www.hamvention.org/>

July 9-12

MARAC National Convention, Visalia, CA, hosted by KC6AWX

See the MARAC web site for more information.

That's all folks! 73