County Hunter News

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Volume 6, Issue 11

Welcome to the On-Line County Hunter News, a monthly publication for those interested in 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, with low sunspot activity, most of the SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18135 or 18.132.5 for occasional 17M SSB runs.

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

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Bob USACA #883

1) N4CD Rumblings

Summer continues in much of the country. The bands have been productive with lots of contacts made. A good number of people finished off awards.

The bonanza of state QSO Parties is coming to an end for a while, with only one or two more this year. Instead we have a lot of upcoming contests like Sweepstakes, 10M, 160M, etc, to fill in band counties. Activity on the higher bands is sparse. 15M was good for the CA and PA contests, but ten has been disappointing.

In this issue we finish off the regen radio article, chock full of pictures, and have extensive coverage of the state QSO parties with many trip reports. There is quite a contrast between the TX QSO Party (mostly mobiles) to the CA QSO Party - mostly 'county expeditions' to the PA QSO Party (40/80M) where most of the activity is trying to work other PA stations. NY QSO Party was good this year, too, for a change. Full coverage of all in this issue.

2) Page Load Error

Last month a dozen people seemed to have problems with loading the current issue of the County Hunter News. It was a fairly long issue (over 1000K) so that may have confused a few browsers. The solution that worked for most was to go to the main page of CHNews at www.chnewsonline.com and then load the October issue. Next month, we'll try to give both ways to get to it in case the shortcut doesn't work for you.

3) Updated Email List

N4CD wound up with a new computer, and in transferring the mailing list info from the old to the new, I tried to update the mailing list using the MARAC database information. If you want ON the mailing list, let N4CD know. If your address changes please let me know so I can update it, and please check to be sure your email adr is up to date on MARAC database. If you want OFF the mailing list, let me know. I try to send out emails and post on the K3IMC forum when new issues are published.

4) Mobile Activity in Late Sept/October

Toward the end of September, Jack, N7ID returned from HI and ran some counties on the way home. Likely he was the first to put out some Master Diamond counties.

Frank and Kay, AA9JJ and N9QPQ, headed east toward South Carolina via Nebraska and WV – ran on SSB. Then headed slowly back home via IL.

Gene, K5GE, took a trip up to Arkansas. He's good for the Master Diamond award.

Cliff, K6JN, and Nelda, W6XJN, headed cross country once again.

Stan, AC8W, made a trip down KY way and back.

The team of W8FNW/W4FNW/W8GEJ made a trip to KY.

Joyce, N9STL, made a shake down trip in the new motor home and headed east, giving out counties for the Mobile Diamond award. Out to OH and back. Soon N9STL/K9HUH will be off to FL for the winter.

Jimmy, K4YFH, was busy giving out counties in the central part of the country.

Jeff, W9MSE continued his 'around the border of the US' trip – having headed south along the WA, OR, and CA coast, then along the southern border to east TX, into LA, then home. He completed his Master Gold award by transmitting from the needed counties.

Mark, KM6HB, gave out his home county in the CA QSO party, fixed, but didn't see any other

CA county hunters on. N6MU – a state QSO party regular – who ran with N9JF in the TQP, was on giving out his county. There were many multi-op county expeditions in CA (portable) .

On SSB, WG9A headed east to NY, then south then back home.

K8ZZ left MI and headed through NY down to SC. Then took the county hunter way back to MI, visiting with a few county hunters along the way home.

Barry, N0KV, and Pat, N0DXE, were in NM and AZ.

Dick, W3ZUH, headed back west across the country.

Scottie, N4AAT, gave out some Mobile Diamond counties in SC and GA.

Jerry, W0GXQ, made a two day trip to eastern MN. Later he was off in IA with NF0N running counties.

Art, N4PJ, and Marsha, N4BU, made a trip up to NC and back home to FL.

Jim, ND9M, was out in MT and headed back home putting out a few. He zipped all over North Dakota and gave out grids on satellite contacts.

Mike, NF0N, was out in NE.

W4FNW/W8FNW/W8GEJ were zipping around in KY.

Mark, KO1U, made several trips – down to SC and around in New England.

ON SSB, K8AO was out giving out counties. Also N4JR, N3MRA, WA9DLB, K5VYT, KA9JAC/KB9YVT, KV4DT, N7JPF, N4XML, K0PFV, KF5AT, K6JN/W6XJN

KB0BA/N0XYL were back east giving them out on SSB.

WA1IEE surfaced in ME for a few on cw.

Bill, K2HVN wandered about in the northern central part giving them out.

Mark, W9OP was out on cw.

Gene, K5GE ran over to Aransas, TX and back home – Mobile Diamond counties. Then another short trip in TX to the northwest.

Jack, WD4OIN, ran a bunch in VA.

W3DQT was out in WV on cw.

Silver, N9QS, headed back home from the east coast.

Terry, WQ7A, took a trip in WA and OR giving out MD contacts.

N8KIE headed to the Ocean NJ area, running counties the entire way. He gave WQ7A the last for WBOW for MP. Bob is good for the MD award.

On the Road with N4CD I

It was the Texas QSO Party weekend, and naturally it was time to be active in the annual event. I checked the routes page to see what counties were not committed to be run to see what was needed, but just before the event, Chuck, NO5W sent me an email telling me all 254 TX counties would be on the air. Plan "A" then was no good as there was no sense to head to the west out I-20 to get counties others would run. Plan B was just stick around the home area and put out some counties. Some of the mobiles might only be on SSB, but in most QSO Parties, 80 to 90% of the mobile activity is CW.

On the Saturday of the TQP, the weather front moved in at 4:30 AM. Lightning was flashing and thunder crashing. Hmmm....4:30 in the morning. I didn't need an alarm clock. It rained for a good hour. I was still awake at 6:30 AM so I got up and decided to head to Denny's for a breakfast. It was drizzling as I put the antennas on the car in the dark. 70 degrees – cooler for a change but 100% humidity.

Denny's have their $2, $4, $6, $8 value menu, and if you are an AARP member, you get coffee for a buck. I got the $4 Value Slam. Good. It was still dark, but it was trying to get light. It was drizling still. Over in the Ft Worth area, the showers were stronger with flash flood warnings. N5XG decided to wait till Sunday to run his counties.

I headed up north about 45 miles to get to Grayson and sat for about 30 minutes waiting for the contest to start at 9 am local time. No sun. At 9am, the fun started. I spent about 40 minutes in Grayson – lots of stations calling, but you still had to work at it. Then it was off to Fannin 5 miles away, and then east. I stopped to run the counties most of the time. There were good piles on both 20 and 40M once a spot was made. Next came Hunt, and over to Delta. A bit further east got me to Lamar, and then south to Hopkins. I worked other mobiles in the same

county at times , so they were really covered. W3DYA was in the same neck of the woods.

When I wasn't putting out the county, I was tuning across 40M hunting for counties I needed in TX – about 30 on the needs list. In some cases, I just heard the pile ups, not the mobiles. I did get about 6 of the ones I needed. There were mobiles in all parts of the state. N9JF with N6MU was out in west TX. There were at least 20 mobiles including N5NA, K5NA, K5UN, AD4EB, W3DYA, NO5W, W5RZ, W5TM, W0BH, K5END, and more.

The DX was in with OE5KE, DL3DXX, LZ5R, LY5A, DL3GA, OK2EC, DL3IAC, JH8???, G3WPF, F5IN and more chasing mobiles.

As I got to Rains...well, this white car with big antennas was right in front of me. I was on 40M and didn't hear a peep, but as I switched to 20M cw, there was W3DYA running Rains 300 feet in front of me. About half a mile later he turned east and I headed south.

It took a long time to run the counties – about 45 minutes in each to run he pile down to where no one was still calling. I was way behind and cut my planned route by 30%. It was then back east through Van Zandt and Kaufman. It was still 70 degrees and 100% humidity and drizzling on and off.

At one point in the middle of nowhere, I need to, let's say, inspect the bushes at the side of the road. I pulled off on a dirt road, and got out of the car...and promptly sank about 2 inches into the soggy, wet Texas black gumbo. Big mistake. My shoes gained about five lbs of the black goo. It took me five minutes of scraping after I got back to the paved road to pull over and get the goo off the shoes using the grass at the side of the road. Note to self....stop more often at gas stations. Or stick to paved roads. Fortunately, no problem with the car getting stuck.

It was already late, but I took a short detour to run Rockwall mobile. There were at least two fixed stations in Rockwall on the air. The run took nearly an hour! Folks just kept calling and calling and calling. Wow. It was getting late, so I just worked what I heard in Dallas - didn't stop to work – just worked mobiles and fixed stations in TX calling CQ TQP. The car arrived in the driveway about 7:30 – long day – 12 hours on the road and only two quick stops all day for food. I didn't go all that far – 270 miles, but the stops lasted a long time.

So what does a county hunter do when he gets home? Right, turn on the radio since the contest goes to 9pm local time. I threw something in the oven for dinner, and had dinner at the radio bench chasing a few more counties until the band got too long. The pileups were still going strong but the mobiles had faded into the noise. 20M had died, and the pileups on 40M were unreal. Everyone was LOUD and it was darn near impossible to pick out a single call. The mobiles were slowed down. F5IN was S9 on 40M. Well, soon the skip got long, so I turned off the radio and watched the news and weather.

So that was day one of the TQP from the N4CD perspective. The second day I stayed at home

and chased mobiles giving out the home county of COLN. I successfully whacked off about 70% of what I needed between the two days. Sunday afternoon, the skip shortened up to 150 miles or so on 40M, and that was real nice to add in multipliers!

WQ7A Master Platinum #11

Terry, WQ7A, has earned the Master Platinum Award. He is now good for the new Mobile Diamond award. Bob, N8KIE, took a special trip to clean up his last few counties and give him the WBOW with Ocean, NJ.

KB6UF Master Platinum #12

Ron, KB6UF, has earned the Master Platinum Award. He is now good for the new Mobile Diamond award.

Regens Part I Follow Up

After the last month's coverage, there isn't a whole lot to add but we found a few more interesting items and additional information. The marine services around the world continued using regens as commercial shipboard radios until the 1990s era!

Here's a Mackay Radio and Telegraph 128AW. This first came out in the 1930s. Many of the Liberty Ships (thousands) built for WW2 had these as their main receiver. Hundreds of these radios if not thousands were in use up to about 1990.

Mackay Radio and Telegraph 128 AW

Manufactured by Federal Telephone and Radio Corp., the VLF regenerative receiver was used in the merchant marine and the U.S. Coastguard vintage WWII. Coverage is 15 to 620 KHz in four bands. It can be operated from 120 volts AC or DC or directly from 6 volts DC and a 90 volt "B" battery.. Like most marine receivers of the period, the AC-DC design was not to save money but stemmed from the use of 120 volts DC on many ships and the ability to use the batteries for backup power source

The above regenerative receiver and its close relatives were standard equipment on many, many U.S. flag merchant ships right up until the final implementation of GMDSS in early 1999. There was a mini-panic in 1990 as Burgess announced it would stop making the “B” high voltage batteries to run these on DC in emergency situations.

By the end of the 1980s, satellite services had started to take an increasingly large share of the market for ship-to-shore communications. Here's a bit of history on GMDSS - the replacement for constant watch on 500 KHz CW. From Wiki:

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), a United Nations agency specializing in safety of shipping and preventing ships from polluting the seas, began looking at ways of improving maritime distress and safety communications. In 1979, a group of experts drafted the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, which called for development of a global search and rescue plan. This group also passed a resolution calling for development by IMO of a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) to provide the communication support needed to implement the search and rescue plan. This new system, which the world's maritime nations are implementing, is based upon a combination of satellite and terrestrial radio services, and has changed international distress communications from

being primarily ship-to-ship based to ship-to-shore (Rescue Coordination Center) based. It spelled the end of Morse code communications for all but a few users, such as amateur radio operators. The GMDSS provides for automatic distress alerting and locating in cases where a radio operator doesn't have time to send an SOS or MAYDAY call, and, for the first time, requires ships to receive broadcasts of maritime safety information which could prevent a distress from happening in the first place. In 1988, IMO amended the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, requiring ships subject to it fit GMDSS equipment. Such ships were required to carry NAVTEX and satellite EPIRBs by 1 August 1993, and had to fit all other GMDSS equipment by 1 February 1999. US ships were allowed to fit GMDSS in lieu of Morse telegraphy equipment by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. “

For a long time, if you were in the navy in the 1930s to well after WW2, , you might have used a RAK/RAL receiver. The RAK was a regen that covered 14 to 530 KHz in five bands. The RAL covered from 0.3 to 23 MHz in nine bands. They were installed on submarines in WW2, too. Both were built to military standards, weighed over 70 lbs each, could take tremendous shock and abuse (like 16 inch guns going off, depth charges, etc), and still keep working.

More info here:

http://www.qsl.net/ab0cw/ral7.htm

Here's a list of Long Wave Receivers from the Western Wireless Museum (note Rick, AI5P said this is worth a stop if you are in the neighborhood!) Definitely worth a few minutes of your time to visit this site and see the dozen Long Wave regen sets with pictures and descriptions! The first half are all regens.

http://www.radioblvd.com/LW%20RCVRS.html

Here's a kit that you may have built if you lived in the British empire!

Eddystone All Wave AW2

“The AW2, a regenerative detector and single audio stage two valve set (the popular ‘0-V- 1’ configuration5) was introduced in 1936 and remained in the Eddystone catalogue through to 1939. The *QuickReference Guide* (QRG) notes that this set was probably the ‘Cinderella’ of Stratton in the late-1930’s (due to it using receiver techniques from the early-1930’s and being firmly in the ‘bargain basement’ price bracket. However, it was a popular set and it continued to be sold in shops until the outbreak of WWII and was then used by ‘Voluntary Interceptors’ (V.I.s)7 during the early part of WWII before superlative National

HRO’s and the mighty AR88’s were brought in from North America.

Excellent article/detailed pics here

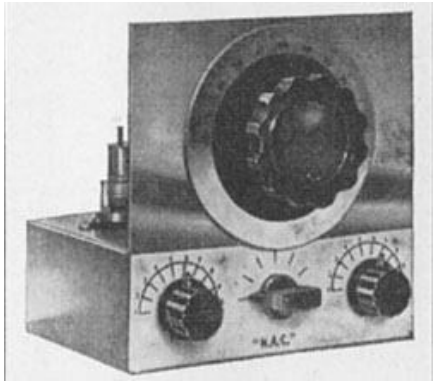
http://eddystoneusergroup.org.uk/Restoration%20projects/AW2%20Restoration%20Article%20-%20Final.pdf

Eddystone All Wave Kit Receiver

Here's more info from 'over the pond' in the UK

In most of the leading British radio magazines, notably Practical Wireless, **'HAC' Short-Wave Products** ('HAC' = Hear All Continents) advertised up to the late 1970s with simple short wave receiver kits.

This is the H.A.C. Model “DX”



HAC Model DX Kit

Practical Wireless was the equivalent of our Popular Electronics and CQ Magazines in the 50s and 60s. There were also kits by several other UK manufacturers for 1, 2 and 3 tube sets similar to the one above.

Now, here's a blast from the past I overlooked! 1962 era Official Boy Scouts of America Short Wave Kit! I've never seen one before!

I don't know of any US manufacturers who offered a tube/transistor hybrid, but here is one from the UK

http://vintageradio.me.uk/kits/codar_miniclip.htm

It used a single tube regen detector followed by a 2 transistor amplifier. Nifty!

While at a hamfest in Bell County, TX, I picked up a treasure trove of some **Short Wave Craft** Magazines. These were the 'Popular Electronics' of the 1930s. These were full of ads of regen kits by the dozens from distributors and small companies. Most were one and two tube type kits. Some came with the tube holes drilled in the chassis, but you had to drill the other holes, then mount the parts! If you wanted all the holes, it was another $2 for that on top of your $7 kit price! Oh, and tubes were extra, too! I've never seen one of those radios for sale at hamfest – maybe you need to go to a vintage radio convention to see one of the, but you'd be hard pressed to tell a kit from a built from scratch homebrew one.

Here's a nice YouTube video of a National SW-3 regen receiver and homebrew TNT transmitter in use in a QSO on 80M!

http://www.youtube.com/user/w0vlz#p/a/u/1/IrmGccM_YDg

One other variant that caught my eye was an article which featured two RF front ends. In order to reduce QRM (remember your regen received on two frequencies at once), it had two separate front ends, with a 'balancing audio transformer circuit' that took the output from each.

If you wanted to receive on 7056.5, you would tune one to just below, or 7055.5 KHz and then tune the other front end to 7057.5 KHz. You would combine the two audio signals. That would help to reduce the QRM from other signals. The two desired signals would add and combine to one, while the others would not – giving you a few dB advantage. Addition, since you had to use separate antennas, you got some 'diversity reception' thrown in to fight selective fading that is common on the HF bands.

More complexity – and I've never seen a regen receiver built to do that. Folks were more interested in superhets at that point, but there were many who kept the regen circuit alive.

If you want to see a regen design with separate BFO - check out QST Archives – Feb 1936, where Robert Talbot, W9SHC, describes his design He ran the beat oscillator at half the receive

frequency, using the second harmonic (weaker) to provide the beat note. He claimed significant improvement in performance. The Simple Regenerative Receiver with Separate Beat Oscillator.

Last month we showed a Radio Shack One Tube Kit – it turns out this was a diode detector (1N34 type diode detector) followed by a 1T4 dual triode used as two stages of audio amplification – not a regen receiver.

It's almost time to move to solid state and get out of the 30s and 40s. But first, another peek back into history.

Regen Receivers – Patent Wars

Lee de Forest was the inventor of the Audion in 1906. Even that 'fact' was taken to court, and giant legal battles were pursued between him and Fleming – the inventor of the Fleming Valve. DeForest produced wireless equipment – spark gap transmitters and early receivers with electrolytic detectors and similar - mostly for the marine and shipping industry. De Forest sought to invent a device that would help him automatically record wireless messages. The equipment of the day could not respond to the very weak wireless signals.

At one point in 1912, de Forest accidentally connected the output of a two stage amplifier back to its input, which resulted in a 'musical note' being heard. He recorded this in his lab notebook. He noted the pitch of the note could be changed by varing the capacitance or inductance in the circuit. Further experiments on another day showed that the effect could be obtained with a single tube. De Forest did nothing else with the phenomena that he had observed. Years later, this notebook would play a pivotal role in court battles.

De Forest went on to sell the rights to use his audion to 'the telephone company' in 1912,and later sold the rights to use it in 'wireless cases'. De Forest was sued by Marconi in 1914 who alleged that the 'audion' infringed upon Fleming's valve patents, which Marconi had bought. In a strange twist of fate, BOTH patents were upheld, and both were barred from making their own devices! That lasted until the Fleming valve patent expired in 1922! Both wound up buying audions from 3rd party makers and reselling them!

Now, Armstrong, working independently, first demonstrated the use of feedback (regeneration) in 1913, and patented it in 1914 for use in a practical circuit. De Forest had no idea of what to use his audion circuit for. Armstrong also realized that by increasing the feedback, you could make a stable oscillator that would replace the inefficient spark gear of the era. He filed a separate patent for that circuit.

DeForest was able to win an interference suit in 1924, which resulted in a patent being awarded to him for the regenerative feedback circuit, and rejection of Armstrong's patent for the oscillator. As late as 1934, the Supreme Court upheld de Forests patents as the inventor of the regenerative circuit and oscillator although the entire engineering world and scientific world, the Institute of Electrical Engineers, the Franklin Institute all continued to acknowledge Armstrong as the inventor of both. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on legal battles and challenges that spanned many decades.

That little entry in a lab notebook turned out to be the deciding factor. While de Forest didn't have a clue, didn't file a timely patent, and didn't turn his 'invention' into anything practical, just the observation finally won him the 'patents'. Of course, by the time he won, radio technology had left the regen receiver in the dust for consumer products, and his patent on the oscillator was near expiring.

Armstrong went on to have three other major inventions – the superheterodyne receiver or superhet, which we all use, the super-regenerative set, and FM radio. He wound up battling with RCA over the FM patents till his death – a bitter man out to defend what he had invented, and spent years getting on the air though the government bureaucracy.

Now, it's time for the solid state era.

State QSO Party – TX

Wow...what can you say? Better and better every year with over 25 mobiles out and over 215 counties on the air or more!

N5XG/M

Saturday started out with flash floods in the planned mobile travel area so swapped Saturday schedule with Sunday. Could not get out of Parker into Palo Pinto and Young due to high water across country roads and barricades. Had to cut 3 or 4 counties off the planned schedule. Did not have 20M resonator on Saturday, not a good day to be mobile. Sunday started out OK but got delayed in Mills County for over 2 hours due to problems with wheels and tires as a

result of problems the week before in W TX counties. After getting back on the road I had to stop each half hour to keep tires maintained. As a result could not get into Somervell before the activity ended at 2000. The TQP is as well organized as the best of them. There are many fine state QSO parties and a large mobile participation is the key. This one is a example to go by.

WD5IYT/M – Covered 16 counties with 897 contacts on CW – likely all on 20M, too.

W5CT (TX) – Multi Op

We got 217 of the 254 Texas counties this year. It was fun but it was a lot of work as well.
Participation from around the country seemed better than last year.

We had a limited crew most of the time. N5XJ, KU5B and NX5M were the full-time guys again as usual. NT5TU was able to spend 9 hours operating Saturday. K5ZY was a first time operator and spent a good 7 or so hours operating 15ssb. NE5B had limited time both days but was able to spend some time Saturday on 15ssb and a couple of hours Sunday milking 10ssb for what it was worth. W5JDG was only able to be here Sunday so he got the 15m ssb chair for the 6 hours on Sunday. We ran reduced power the whole weekend with some stations only at 100-200 watts. This year, we used the club call of the CTDXCC (W5CT). That took a little getting used to as we are all so used to NX5M. I caught myself several times saying "Novem.....nope, Whiskey Five Charlie Tango". At least when on cw I could not make the same mistake.

N5NA/m – 1500 CW QSO

The activity level was just amazing. I ran the same 25 WTX counties as last year but increased my QSO total by over 300 QSO's and the mults by 35.

The weather on Saturday was raining which is always a welcome sight in WTX. I think the rain greatly reduced the power line noise along the roads. I don't think the noise levels have ever been so low for me.

We pulled into our Saturday night stop in Alpine around 8 pm. I still had a pileup going on 40m from Brewster but after 11 hours on the road by brain was fried and I pulled the plug. I apologize to those still calling.

It was good to work some other WTX mobiles. The last few years it's been pretty lonely in the large WTX counties. This year I picked up several WTX counties from N5DO/M, N5RZ/M, and N9JF/M. N5RZ and I met in Crockett county as he was heading south and I was heading north to Irion. That was the first ever intra-county QSO for me!

Just like last year I made it to our last county, Ector, with just minutes to spare before the end of the party. I thought I had allowed plenty of time to make it to Ector but I guess I need to eat and gas up faster!

Equipment was a K3/100, HS-1500 antenna, Inspiron computer running CQ/X, and a Chevy C2500 antenna support.

Thanks to everyone who called and, as always, a big thanks to my wife and driver, K5AKS!

Thanks to the following stations for contributing more than half the QSO's:
N4JF(27), K0DEQ(20), KB9OWD(20), WB2ABD(20), NT2A(20), K4AMC(19), DL3DXX(17), N5LZ(17), K8QWY(16), KI2G(16), KN4Y(16), W0GXQ(16), N4CD(16), , K4YT(13), N4JT(13), , K9EN(12), , KD5JWC(11),
K2RP(11), K8MFO(10), N8II(10), WI5ID(9), AA4GT(9), W5SL(9), W5ESE(9), , W7GVE(9), N9FC(9),"

AD4EB/M

Man, what a weekend! This being our 4th mobile event, was by far the most intense contesting I've ever experienced. Best hour was 191 QSOs, which I never thought possible for me.

First need to thank three people. Most importantly, thanks to my wonderful wife Melody, KI4HVY, for expertly driving and navigating us around TX for 2 days (750 miles). Chuck NO5W for welcoming me to the TXQP, helping me post my route, and his work to make this such a great QSO party. And my contesting mentor, Don N4ZZ, for getting me started and hooked in mobile CW contesting last fall.

Setup : 2000 Pontiac Montana van (199K miles), Icom ProIII, N1MM software, 2 Hustler verticals roof rack mounted (Top hats for 40m and 80m).

We drove to Gainesville TX Friday night, and awoke to rain Saturday morning. Was cloudy and wet all day Saturday, with light rain at times throughout the Northeast counties of TX. Stayed overnight in Ft. Worth, and Melody enjoyed

nice sunny skies Sunday for driving as we headed to Amarillo. Seemed like better participation on Sunday, or perhaps it was better propagation with more open country.

These QSO Parties sure do attract some excellent CW operators. New counties produced pileups which were bigger than I've ever experienced, and was only able to pick up partial calls much of the time. Everyone waited their turn, which made it so quick and easy to work down the pile; greatly appreciated. Cranked my TX speed up to 40 WPM at times Sunday afternoon, which may have been too fast for some, for which I apologize.

Diet DL3DXX and LZ5R must have had ESP or some new tracking technology. Whenever I switched bands, or entered a new county, they were immediately right there. You guys were amazing.

To all, thanks for making this such a fun adventure by taking the time to find us and work us. Hope to do the TXQP again, perhaps next year. For those of you thinking about getting into mobile contesting, you'll be so glad if you take the plunge.

73 - Jim AD4EB and Melody KI4HVY

N5DO/mobile

My first time to operate mobile in a contest, so I was a little apprehensive about how well it would work. I convinced K5FD to drive while I operated (I sold him an FT-897D and said that in return for selling him the rig he had to drive me around in the TX QSO Party). One concern was that maybe I would get carsick -- I remember as a child riding around southern Arizona in the back seat of the car and getting sick; as an adult I have never been able to read in a moving car without feeling nauseous. But that concern was unfounded.

I did decide on some things to do better next year:

1. Use NO5W's OS/X program. I had communicated with Chuck and decided I was starting too late to get everything together for this year. I used TRLog and probably spent an 1.5 hours of the 16 hours I operated changing the log and logcfg files as we came in to a new county.

2. Arrange meal times a little better. I told K5FD we would eat lunch in a little cafe in Quemado, a small town in Maverick County. I had eaten there

before and it was a neat, classic restaurant specializing in such Texas treats as Chicken Fried Steak (a friend told me that when he was 9 years old he went with his father and some other men to a steak house in a small west Texas town. The waitress asked him how he wanted his steak cooked and he said "chicken fried" -- he thought that was the only way steaks were cooked!) The only other place I knew was in Eagle Pass (the county seat, and right on the border). So we went to the Charcoal Grill in the Mall de las Aguilas. It was fine, but slow. An hour and a half later we hit the road. At 8:20 p.m. we stopped for the night in Sonora, county seat of Sutton County. All the restaurants closed at 9:00 p.m. (ending time for the first day of the TQP) so we went right over to the Sutton County Steakhouse (it seemed like the only place for a mobile station in the TQP going from county to county to eat). It was good.

3. Worry more about the itinerary. I wanted to leave my home in Alpine (county seat of Brewster County) on Saturday morning and head east to pick up, in particular, Val Verde, Kinney and Maverick counties. In order to do that we drove for an hour to get to a little bit of Pecos County and saved my home county for the next day. I had planned to end up on Sunday in Presidio County after driving through Brewster County, but we ran out of time before we got to Presidio County. Fortunately, N5NA activated Presidio County. The counties in west Texas are big, so it takes planning to make it all work out. (To show how big, my home county, Brewster, is the largest county in Texas. It has an area of 6193 square miles. In comparison Connecticut has 5543 square miles, and has 8 counties in it. But the total population in Brewster County is a little less than 10,000). Next year I am thinking of driving on Friday over to central Texas and work our way back to west Texas. We could pick up some extra counties and see some different country .

4. Check and double check everything before we leave. K5FD put an Alpine screwdriver antenna on his Chevy 2500 pickup truck the night before we left. We drove around Alpine and it seemed to work fine with my K3, but when we got on the road it locked up the computer so it would not send CW. I sent by hand, and often used the second antenna, an Outbacker. The Outbacker did not work as well as the screwdriver antenna did. When I look at the totals from other mobiles, it seems like they did much better on 20 than I did.

All-in-all it was a great time and a real adventure. James (K5FD) and I are looking forward to doing it again next year. We ended up operating from 17 counties and driving 721 miles. In addition to thanking K5FD for the use of his truck, antennas, and driving, I would be remiss if I did not thank Chuck, NO5W, for his tireless efforts to promote the TQP and make it one of the best state QSO parties around."

NO5W/Mobile

After a rather slow first start in HARR and LIBE counties the rate picked up in hour 1500 when we hit JEFF, ORAN, NEWT, and JASP. Putting 134 Qs in the log during that hour provided a boost to the operator that lasted all of Saturday and well into Sunday. Except for a few rain showers the weather Saturday and Sunday was almost perfect and Keith (NM5G) did a great job of moving us around the track. In fact we got to our Saturday night stop about 1.5 hour before the end of the Saturday session. And it was here that we probably made a tactical error which cost us 2-3 additional counties and maybe 150-175 Qs. As we came out of FALL county we could have gone west from Waco and picked up two, or maybe three additional counties but we continued on to the final county BELL and went on into CORY and LAMP which we were scheduled to work on Sunday. So next year I need to remember that NM5G moves us around faster than the model in Streets & Trips! and to develop contingency plans in case we run out of track before we run out of time.

This was our first trip using the Shuttle Pro as a multi-function remote control knob for the K3 and although we still need some practice with that device it worked well. The only scare that we had equipment wise was while working down a big pileup on 20m in one of the Sunday counties (I think BAST or LEE). In mid QSO with N4JF I heard a click from the back and all of a sudden N4JF and the pileup were gone. Several CQs went unanswered and a check of the SWR showed a whopping 4:1. Fortunately we were already stopped so it was easy to make a quick check of the antenna which revealed nothing out of the ordinary. Checking the radio I noticed that it was on 40m. Not sure what caused that, probably pilot error, but changing the band back to 20m put us back in business, minus the pileup of course, as they had gone on to the next mobile probably wondering what had happened to old NO5W. Fortunately they returned to resume where we left off a short time and a few CQs later.

I was really pleased at the level of activity during both days. At least half of the 18 hours had hourly QSO totals in the 100-140 range and quite a few of the county crossings saw 10-minute rates in the 160-190 range. The overall result was a personal best for us in the TxQP.

It would, of course, be impossible to have these great scores without the participation from both inside and outside the state and we had great response on both sides. Thirty or so mobiles on the road and I counted 336 unique calls in my log.

In our log multipliers were pretty well balanced between Texas Counties (52)

and non-Texas S/P/C (58).

Many of the pileups were so intense that I had to resort to partial call? and it was very refreshing to have the pileup standby during most of those times. It sure helps get everyone in the log and on to the next QSO when that happens.

Hope to work many of you in the CW SS.

73/Chuck/NO5W

And now a few observations from NM5G, the driver:

I drove the 900 miles during the NO5W CW mobile operation and learned a lot from this experience.

First, the driver must ensure that the planned route is followed precisely and with adequate speed to cover all counties.

Second, stops in safe locations must be made for counties with minimum travel distance, to allow working all stations on multiple bands.

Third, the driver should monitor operating conditions to help avoid things such as power line noise, bumpy roads and bad weather.

We completed the Saturday plan more than an hour ahead of schedule, so were able to add an extra county with extra driving. We ended the day making the last few Qs in the parking lot of the restaurant where we had dinner. Parking the vehicle pointing north seemed to yield the best signal. The Sunday experience was similar, and we drove extra miles to add another county (Brazos).

I am an avid phone operator. CW is rusty after many years of inactivity. I think my speed picked up considerably while listening to Chuck operating. Toward the end I could often copy the whole Q. Maybe Chuck will let me operate a bit next year. <grin>

Keith NM5G

N5RZ/mobile

I didn't have a lot of time to plan for this one, and had planned to run the

Panhandle Counties with my YL Friend, Deborah, KF5HHD at the wheel. A couple of weeks before I noticed a big swath of counties to the East of me that weren't "spoken" for so I signed up for and planned my route around them. Lashed together my FT857D & Little Tarheel on my 2001 Mazda 626. Put an ANC4 noise canceller in the line and that dropped the engine noise quite well. However, the air conditioner added about 5 S-units of crud. Decided I could "suffer" and only run the A/C when necessary.

Friday night before the contest, tried hooking up the laptop with CQ/X. Uggh - my inverter was crapped out. Go to plan B: Spiral Notebook, pencil, and sending by hand. I'd done this many times, and knew the big pain would be entering the log into the N3FJP software (just got finished tonite). Also, decided to put a 102" CB whip on the little Tarheel to hopefully provide a little more ooomph then the stock 36" whip. Tuned up great on 20m & 40m, but still had RF problems on 15M (which never opened anyway).

On the road Saturday Morning. Low rate to start, and hit rain about 10 miles east of Midland. The rain would increase, and for the first 3 hours (7 counties) we experienced very heavy rain, lightning, and road flooding. Had a few places where we wondered if the Mazda would make it, but luckily no problems getting through. Just lots of noise from the rain and static discharge. Things finally cleared up a bit in Fisher county and at 1700Z made a 20 minute Dairy Queen stop to de-stress a bit. Only 221 Q's in the log so far, and we were about 45 minutes behind schedule.

Back on the road at 1720Z. Rates still not what I thought they should be, and we still were hitting some heavy rain off and on thru the next 3 or 4 counties.

By the time we got to Stonewall County at 1938Z, was only up to 393 Q's after 5 1/2 hours, and about an hour behind on our route. By then, we were out of the rain and the roads were clear. One positive: it was cool enough to leave the A/C off. Continued on uneventfully through the end of the first night. The rate finally picked up and 40M was pretty good. Ended the first night with 1056 Q's in the log. When 0200Z arrived we were about 80 miles from home. Got home and then had to plan a Sunday route!! Got to bed about midnight, and was able to sleep in a bit, since the first county we put on would be from my driveway!! And I am about 2 minutes from the next county, Upton.

Rates were much better, and ended up with 734 Q's on Sunday, averaging over 120/hr - that's more like it. Was cool meeting N5NA/m in Crockett County!

Put 30 counties on, so score includes 30,000 bonus points for that. I did

activate all counties I signed up for, so that goal was reached. Had a hard time breaking the pileups to the other TX mobiles, and K5NA/m was the only mobile I worked 5 times for an extra 500 points. As a result, my mult was low with only 59 TX counties worked. Worked all states except SD & ME. DX mults: OE LZ HK OK G F DL SP OM. Didn't even think about trying 80M Saturday night - looks like some of the guys did well there.

What a great time. Chuck, NO5W, is doing a great job beating the drum and getting the mobiles on. Still would like to see the contest moved a week earlier to avoid conflict with the RTTY contest (which I would love to be able to participate in as well!).

Thanks to all for the contacts and your patience with my noise & hand sending. Hope to have multiple antennas for quicker band changes next year - may even consider SO2R, and get the laptop going!! And many thanks to my driver, Deborah, KF5HHD, who will be taking her General the second weekend of November.

N8II (WV) - 192 counties

MOBILES ON STEROIDS is about the only way to describe the level of mobile activity and 200 more mults than FQP, a S&P nirvana! It was like our stink bug invasion, too many in too many locations to possibly collect them all, Hi! It's a wonder there wasn't a mobile to mobile collision at times. I took too much time running on 20 SSB Saturday to the detriment of mobile mults. The first 3 hours rate was over 60/hr despite a slow 20M the first 40 minutes. AD4EB was the loudest mobile here at times sounding like a KW with a beam, and a very good op(s?). Very honorable mention goes to NO5W, W3DYA, and NO5W for good signals. The mobiles out in west TX sounded like they were out in Hawaii much of the time.

N5LZ (UT) - 213 counties worked!

The mobile rovers, of course, were the stars. Kudos to each of them. I logged 287 qsos with 29 mobile stations. K5NA was the winner in my log with 31 qsos (and thanks to Richard and several others who sent their call after every qso, which a few consistently failed to do). I don't know how many of my 213 county mults were provided by the mobiles, but a good number of them were.

K5LH (MLEN)

Wow! What a party! After the snail-paced Salmon Run last weekend, this was the real thing. Texas sure knows how to activate its counties. Worked 199 out of 254 and heard several more. Am not a professional county hunter, but this was impressive!

Hard to begin with cudos. Guess Chuck (NO5W) and his NARS gang take the top honors, but he and the mobiles did all the work. Thanks for all the Qs (counties worked in (): K5NA (35), N9JF (28) AD4EB (26), W0BH (25), N5RZ (23), W5TM (21), K5UN (21), N5DO (18), N5NA (17), NO5W (13), N4CD (10), W3DYA (9), K5END (8), W5GAI/R (!) (8), N5XG (8), N5TM (6), N3BB (3), NS5J (2). Glad to hear John (N6MU)from the W0BH mobile.

VE3KZ – 214 Multipliers

" Had a lot of fun doing virtually full time CW. "

KB9OWD (WI) CW 355 SSB 229 **Mults = 217**

"I had absolutely no plans to do this one until Friday during the day. My plan was to try and get things going on RTTY and do CQWW RTTY and give out only a few QSO's in this one. Well, Friday evening I was having RTTY issues, couldn't get things to "talk" like I wanted and ended up only handing out 58 QSO's in the RTTY contest.

With that taking back burner, it left my more time to play in this one and I ended up staying in the chair all but 1/2 hour. The only off time was 2 short bathroom breaks and 15 min Saturday afternoon to run to the grocery store down the street to grab some lunch.

My wife was out of town at a gathering until Saturday evening. At the end of the first 12, I was too hooked to stop then and made my reservations with her to put in 6 hours on Sunday. It was non stop action with the mobiles always seeming to be somewhere new which kept it hopping on CW. I felt loud all weekend and signals on 20 were great at all times! 40 was too short alot of the time and other than the first hour or so each day and Saturday evening, not

a lot there. W5CT was 30 over on 15 mid day Saturday but nothing else to be had there.

N5XTR ran mobile and made 1779 contacts on SSB!

NR5M mult-op ran from south Texas. 625 on cw 2058 on SSB, with over 250 on 15 meters. It helps to have a contest type station! Six Qs on 10m.

George, **AA4GT**, worked 121 CW contacts with 93 counties.

K5END/M

"We had a lot of fun this year, and I learned a lot. No damage to anything and we stayed safe, so it fits my definition of success. For the first time in my mobile contesting career the equipment was actually ready and working in time to start the contest and we had only some minor equipment problems during the contest.

The biggest technical and operating problem I had during the contest was power line noise. Much later it dawned on me, duh, I have not installed Elecraft's noise blanker or audio DSP filter in my new K2. So those are two upcoming projects for the mobile effort, along with some more vehicle bonding and better wiring harnesses for a more permanent, radio-ready vehicle. And I think I need to write some letters about that power line noise. Bee County was especially bad, with a constant BUZZ-Z-Z-Z over most of our path through that county...no kidding. I think someone in Bee County may have a very cruel and sick sense of humor. It ain't funny.

At this stage of my experience what I can "bring to the party" is to fill in here and there and make sure I activate my Singleton ("Singleton" is a term--coined by N05W I believe--to indicate a county for which only one mobile has in his published route, with no other stations planning to activate) and low activity counties. Last year I had 3 or so Singletons, which I made, and this year only one...all the way down in Starr County. I stopped at the McMullen county line to activate it for CW and at Jim Hogg as well because it was a bit rare and along the way for a short piece of our route. I only activated one other mobile in 5 of his counties, but a few other stations worked me in 5 or more counties. So it was a day for me to hand out some bonus

points for a few others. We had some other circumstances arise later Saturday and I was able to work but about 7 hours during the whole event, with zero time on Sunday. However we did cover 844 miles in one day to activate our Singleton.

Several folks had admonished us to exercise caution near the border. So I sent some emails and made some phone calls to Austin and to the Valley to get the real story. The truth is there are some dangerous areas, but with common sense, paved roads and daylight, we didn't have much to worry about. Still, I looked up the 2 meter repeaters and simplex calling frequencies for the valley and printed a list. We got APRS working, but 2 m 1200 BAUD FM APRS stations were few between Alice, TX and the Rio Grande Valley (now I'm looking into what it takes to do 30 meter 300 BAUD LSB APRS for the next QSOP in sparse areas.) I'd also made an antenna for 120 MHz in case all else failed in a true emergency and I needed to call for help on the Aviation distress channels in AM mode. I never even had to turn that radio on. Never even thought about it really. The drive through Hidalgo and Starr counties was beautiful, peaceful and uneventful.

We did have a mildly interesting encounter when we met the Border Patrol in Brooks County on our northbound leg. Because of my nearly dozen trips to Big Bend National Park to feed my addiction for the Chisos and that beautiful, enchanted area, plus past visits to family in Weslaco, Premont and Harlingen--and even to the Mercado across the border when things were safer in the old days--it was not my first Border Patrol encounter. I'm glad they're out there, frankly. Even after having seen them apprehend people in a not so gentle way on the roadside, I've never felt uncomfortable around them. So, we waited in line at the "All Vehicles Must Stop" roadside station and watched the German Shepherds with their handlers, sniffing the cars mostly (the dogs, not the handlers.) There were quite a few agents and a lot of activity. When it was our turn we pulled up and rolled the windows down. The young man asked if we were U. S. Citizens. I resisted the urge to respond with "Si." He seemed like a nice enough fella, but I didn't want to test his sense of humor.

He and 3 other agents were looking over the HiQ-with its odd looking capacity hat reminiscent of a low-budget 1950's-era sci-fi movie, the two 2 meter antennas mag mounted to the roof, the 120 MHz antenna, laptop, 3 radios, antenna controller, MFJ-269, APRS TT4 TNC with LEDs a-blinking like a Christmas tree, GPS wires to the hockey puck antennas on the sunroof...oh, and my headphones I had obtusely forgotten to take off, and then he asked straight out, "what are y'all looking for?"

I answered, "we are participating in an Amateur Radio event."
He nodded in an ostensibly knowing manner, as if he didn't want to admit he had no idea what I was talking about. But he didn't even get a chance to pause and

draw a breath for his next question. My wife, possessing that invaluable woman's intuition and therefore anticipating a series of more in-depth questions, said with tactical, perfectly-timed precision, abruptly, emphatically and with a hint of feigned contempt, "HE...is participating in an Amateur Radio event. I'M just DRIVING."
The agent laughed and said, "you don't seem too enthusiastic about it." We all laughed and he said, "y'all have a nice evening." The entire interview lasted less than half a minute.

My wife has a 10th degree black belt in verbal judo.

As we drove away I heard 2 other agents ask him, "what WAS that?"
All I could hear of his response before we were out of earshot was, "Amateur radio..."

KD5TIO/m was on the County Line of Chambers/Galveston 'marine mobile' on SSB – made 279 QSOs on SSB.

K5NA/mobile multi-op

The Driving Burrito Brothers (minus the usual Sister) once again went forth and multiplied in this year's Texas QSO Party, passing out nearly 3,000 Q's in 40 Texas counties. Down to a mere TWO stations for the first time (as opposed to the usual multi-three), the K5NA BurritoMobile was captained by Richard K5NA who masterfully guided the BM through miles and miles of Texas (991, to be exact) under some iffy driving conditions. Larry K5OT deftly manned the 40/15 meter station (a K3) from the middle seat, and Gary W5ZL literally brought up the rear of the Tahoe with another K3 on 20 (80 after dark Saturday night).

Susan K5DU, our driver in past Burritospeditions, opted to stay home and post a big score in the CQWW RTTY contest, hence Richard's taking the wheel. While it would have been nice to have had full-time coverage on 15, the band opened only infrequently and was once again largely unproductive. As you can appreciate, there's a lot of RF floating around with three 100 watt stations and closely spaced mobile whips in a single SUV, and interstation interference can be fearsome. With just two radios and Richard's superb engineering - multiple bandpass filters and coaxial stubs - the situation was much more manageable this year.

As noted by many others, conditions this year were dramatically improved, and thanks to Chuck NO5W's tireless efforts to recruit Texas players - especially mobiles - the 2010 TQP was one for the record books. Other state QSO parties (ahem, CA, take note) would do well to take a page out of Chuck's playbook.

Boys, it's all about the mobiles. At last count, we had 30 of them criss-crossing the state. Several even came from as far away as California to be rovers in the TQP. How cool is that?! At an average dwell time of 30 minutes per county that's a lot going on for one state, and lots of radio candy for the out-of-state and DX players.

Pileups this year were simply overwhelming with almost zero white space. Though we stuck primarily to CW, whenever rates sagged (especially in larger counties), we hit SSB for a few Q's.

Dietmar, DL3DXX ran away with DX honors, working K5NA/M an amazing 30 times. Richard K5NA and Gary W5ZL met Dietmar in person at WRTC Moscow in July - really nice to finally meet this incredible operator!

A lot of folks have asked about the BurritoMobile radio/antenna complement. As noted, we used K3's this year, and they provided a soft ride through the crush of signals. We had a mix of W3NQN, ICE and Dunestar bandpass filters, sometimes two in series to combat interstation interference, which was largely non-existent on 40 and tolerable on 20. As usual, we used a full-sized Tarheel screwdriver antenna on 40 (rear left-mounted), a 20 meter Ham Stick on a mag mount on the hood, a 15 meter Ham Stick on another mag mount on the top of the vehicle, and a Little Tarheel on a Diamond lip mount (passenger side front door) for 80 meters. All antennas performed flawlessly throughout the trip.

This year we adopted NO5W's phenomenal CQ/X GPS-assisted logging software. Uncharacteristically for most software support these days, Chuck made a day trip to Austin from Houston several days before TQP to help us get the program set up and debugged. I guess he can afford to do that with the hefty licensing fees he charges (it's F-R-E-E!!!). Chuck says he figures he'll lose a little on every installation but make it up in volume. Proving once again that Murphy is our constant companion with logging computers, everything worked perfectly before the contest, but we were barely out the door Saturday morning when Larry's GPS failed to send positioning data to his computer, defeating many of the benefits of the CQ/X software. Undaunted, Richard provided clear cues to Larry for upcoming count changes and with a couple of keystrokes to manually change counties nobody at the other end was the wiser. Post-contest failure analysis revealed a broken cigarette lighter plug that didn't provide power to the GPS, apparently not covered under the CQ/X warranty! Gary's 20 meter station, GPS and all, worked quite nicely, aside from a few operator-induced errors.

CQ/X also provides for remote operation of the K3 if the mobile installation calls for it. This is a slick GUI, optionally a full-up visual simulation of

the K3's front panel, or a reduced sized version with just the key buttons visible. Both stations also used a ShuttlePro II, a third party programmable USB Human Interface Device (overgrown mouse) which worked very nicely to provide remote control for RIT, bandwidth, CW speeds, etc. without having to touch the radio. We've got more work to do to perfect the integration of the ShuttlePro and the K3-CQ/X combination, but it's quite promising.

So another Texas QSO Party is in the history books. Though we missed being stopped by the Texas Highway Patrol again this year, we made up for it with TWO separate border patrol stops as we skirted the Texas-Mexico border Sunday morning. The Customs/Immigration agents were friendly and each time let us pass after a brief explanation of why we had all those antennas on the car. (I guess three old nerds doesn't garner much suspicion even WITH all those antennas). For the Burritos, we again enjoyed watching Texas go by out the window as we re-encountered so many of our old friends and picked up a few new ones along the way. Pretty hard to have this much fun with your clothes on, but we did! Huge thanks to Chuck without whom this would be just another ho-hum state QSO party, to all the mobiles for doing their thing, and everybody else who showed up to play."

W5RQ/portable in Loving, TX

I drove the RV out to Loving County, which is still the least populous county in the country. According to the sheriff, they've actually lost a few folks since I last operated there in 2007 -- very few move in -- and the residents just pass on... Only about 65 people live there now!

The set-up was the TS-850 barefoot into a G5RV, erected behind the abandoned schoolhouse in "downtown" Mentone. I spent quite some time with Loving's only ham, Harlan Hopper, KE5UAD, who watched my TxQP operation for about two hours. He's a Tech; and I was hoping 10 would open up so he could operate in the Tech SSB segment -- but no luck.

Again, thanks to Chuck's efforts, there were some serious mobile operations across the state, and 40 CW was continually buzzing with pileups as new counties were activated. Some teams made special efforts to operate on county lines, passing out two, three -- and in a few cases, four counties!

I had to shut down for the last four hours Saturday evening while a thunderstorm front passed close by. When you're in an RV parked in a large, open playground and your metal pole is the tallest thing around, you don't take

chances. I'm sure I missed several mults, but that's life."

W0BH/M (with N6MU)

For the past number of years during mobile QSO party runs in TX, OK, NE, MO, WV and KS, I've enjoyed the company of John, N6MU .. not in person, but in my headset and in my log. Many, many times in my log. This year, my favorite driver/XYL Lorna, knew she would be unavailable the weekend of the TQP, so when I saw plane fares plummet between Los Angeles and Wichita, I gave John a call to see if he might be interested in running a multi-op with me. Apparently he was .. he had a ticket in hand that same day! Besides previous TQP mobiling experience, John also does mobile VHF contesting, so I looked forward to meeting him in person and adding new ideas to w0bh/m. John arrived in Wichita along with a big thunderstorm on Thursday evening, but
the storm cleared out and beautiful weather was forecast for the weekend. Texas Panhandle roads are in excellent shape and we put them to good use as you'll see shortly.

Friday was a teaching day for me at Hesston College. John relaxed on our farm and did some more practicing until I was able to get away at 3:00. Once I got home, we put the antennas on the van, loaded up, and headed off at 5:00 .. right on schedule.

A great way to test out the setup before QSO parties is to run counties enroute to our destination. Many of the same ops who are regulars in my QSO party logs are avid county hunters, so it's fun to give them some counties while checking everything out. While John got used to the Astro van, the miles flew by as I put out a number of relatively rare southwestern Kansas counties and let everyone know what we were up to that weekend. We rolled into Guymon, Oklahoma on schedule at 10:15pm, about 20 miles from the Texas border and 60 miles from kick-off.

Saturday

Saturday did NOT dawn sunny and clear. Texas received a fair amount of rain from the storms that hit Kansas, so we woke up to a warm fog. We started out on schedule with what we thought was plenty of time to get to the first two-county line, but the fog really slowed us down at first. About the time we crossed into Texas, the fog lifted just a bit and huge wind generators appeared out of the mist. We arrived at the Hansford / Hutchinson county line with 10 minutes to spare, but found power lines, so we spent 5 minutes finding a better

spot. At 1400Z we were on the air with our first CQ on 40m, and K5KS found us one CQ later.

The first number of counties, I ran the radios and John drove and listened to get a feel for the operation. It stayed overcast for awhile which made seeing the computers easy, but we eventually drove out of the clouds into a beautiful Texas morning. Rates started out good and got better as more folks turned on their rigs and found the airways alive with Texas counties. It was great to have John yelling out calls in pileups (he does yell!), and it's interesting which calls we each pick out. Often we got the same call because the op had enough experience to go slightly high or low from the masses, but sometimes we got two completely different calls and put both to good use.

Two hours in, we pulled into our first and only 4-county line and John was ready to go on SSB. I stayed on the logging computer and watched the rate climb 300 .. 400 .. 500 .. 600 and higher. At one point I showed John the rate because it broke my all-time rate record, but he was too busy to look so I won't report it because I still can hardly believe it! Somewhere in there I switched to CW and we overstayed our time of course, hoping the good Texas roads would let us make up time. They did. Smooth roads, almost no traffic and light winds got us back on schedule after another couple of counties.

By now John was busy on CW and enjoying his first county line pileup. CW rates were so good and we were traveling through most counties so fast, that we sometimes had no time left over for CQing on SSB. Extra time was often spent searching for TX multipliers. We still didn't do enough of that, although we found many more than I did in 2008. We did keep checking 15m as promised and the band was open on Saturday afternoon, but we never got an answer to our CQs. Even with the GPS, we missed a couple of turns, and I bounced the van through a dip which flopped both laptop lids closed and made a noise I'd never heard the Astro make before. Luckily everything stayed running including the Astro and we were able to get back on course and schedule by the time we got close to our last county for the day. As we headed north, we were treated to a huge thunderstorm cloud off in the distance, reflecting the last rays of the sun.
We almost didn't try 80m thinking it would be noisy, and it was .. but not with QRN! Signals everywhere from everywhere.

What a day! We finished up Saturday with 1475 Qs in the log and it felt good to unwind as we drove 60 more miles to Plainview for our overnight stop. Earlier, we found out that Jim, N9JF would also be running TQP mobile, so with luck he planned to stay at the same place John and I were staying. We got in shortly after 10:00 and found N9JF/m just two doors down from us and still awake. We weren't hungry enough to go out to eat, so we arranged for breakfast

the next morning.

Sunday

Sunday morning came all too quickly, but a big breakfast with Jim got us going. Both John and I really enjoyed meeting another excellent op we've both worked many times. We headed out to our first 3-county line on schedule, arriving there about 10 minutes ahead of time only to find that the line shown on the GPS was on someone's farm. Harvest was in full swing, too, with one truck after another driving by. Without time to get to know the farmer, we settled on a 2-county line start about 4 minutes late after some unsuccessful detours.

Six hour Sundays in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas go way too fast, and this Sunday was no exception. Lots of action again and we were actually ahead of schedule at times which helped when we missed another turn by 5 miles! "How does that happen with GPS?" you might ask, but it's just too much fun to listen to pileups!

Driving was actually mostly uneventful which is what we hope for, but we did have our moments. I'd been suggesting to John to slow down a bit after dark because of deer. Seeing the huge buck flash by within touching distance of our window made a believer out of him! I also looked up from the logging computer after a sudden swerve to find that John had either narrowly missed or squashed a tarantula. We didn't go back to check. We also were lucky to not get behind too many slow vehicles, but the horse trailer with a strange substance pouring out the back bumper made up for it. Note to self: leave the windshield wipers off next time and add a clothes pin to the equipment bag!

We were once again right on schedule as we rolled into our final 2-county line stop. I saved CW for last, and everyone needed both counties so the action was fast and furious. I found myself forgetting to send the second county sometimes and know I missed sending it to N4CD. Sorry, Bob! John caught several others but we both missed that one. When the bell struck 3:00, we stopped to take a few pictures, then headed back to Guymon for a late lunch. The pizza and the great memories kept us going for the five hour drive back home to Kansas."

WB0TEV/m

Mark (KK5MR, ex-N4CMB) and I have hit the road for the TxQP in the WB0TEV-mobile 3 of the past 4 years (in what was surely a fluke, we even took 2nd place in the TXM MO category in 2007), but it's always been pretty much a

Saturday only affair for us.

After largely sitting it out in 2009 I was encouraged by Chuck NO5W to re-enter the fray again this year and for the first time we over-nighted out of town and put in a full day on Sunday.

Boy was 2010 a blast! 40m finally acted as it should instead of going way too long all day long. We turned in our best score ever running around NE Texas on SSB.

Since my son is now in college at LeTourneau University in Longivew, TX (Gregg county) we decided we'd overnight there and thus turned the typical 2 hour 5 county drive from Greenville (Hunt County) into a 6 hour 15 county journey.

Like so many, we started off the morning in the rain, but thankfully the rain showers were intermittent and we were in the clear when we had to change out a flaky 40m coil. (Thankfully I had a spare).

We've never been in it to necessarily rack up a huge score, but to have fun and give out some of the scarcer NE Texas counties to the deserving. I'm sure I made NR5M happy when after working me in Delta county and expressing regret that he'd missed me during my brief foray into Lamar, I turned around and drove about a mile back to re-enter Lamar, work him from there and then head back into Delta.

Next year I think I'll do more county line operations despite having a hard time coming to terms with the idea that I can really be two places at once. (If I could only work that trick in real life!)

Upon arriving in Longview mid afternoon Saturday we picked up a couple of fledgling college hams (come on boys, we'z gonna take ya fer a ride, BWAHAHAH!), stuffed them in the back seat and gave them a taste of mobile contesting. One of the high points of the trip was working Fernando, Z21BB in Harare, Zimbabwe on 15m SSB whilst motoring down I-20 headed for Smith county. VERY COOL! After an hour long jaunt thru Smith, Gregg, Harrison, Rusk and Panola counties we swung back to campus and took about 3 hours off to visit my son and have dinner.

The planned 80m operation from 0000-0200Z that evening conducted from a back corner of the college campus was a bust with only 1 QSO produced on that band, so the 80m coil came off and the 40m/20m/15m/10m 4 coil appendage went back on to the Hustler fold-over mobile mast mounted to the right rear fender of my trusty 1986 Pontiac Parisienne.

The Pontiac had taken the place of the old 1977 Chevy Impala of 2007 and previous. The rig remained an FT-757 of similar vintage which I'd bought from KK5MR some years ago. In keeping with our mid-1980s technology model we also log using pencil and paper, although post contest the data is entered into a spread sheet and also converted to a Cabrillo file to make life a little easier on NO5W, but I digress.

After breakfast Sunday AM we hit the road again, and as it turned out we made even more QSOs in the 6 hours on Sunday than we had all day Saturday. I guess we were getting smarter.

In order to just barely get into Trinity county we ended up going down a narrow gravel/dirt road from Houston County into the Davy Crockett National Forest. It was a gorgeous sunny Sunday morning and we even saw a couple of deer cross the road in front of us. Once the GPS assured us that we were comfortably across the county line we went to town on 20m and had a great run before heading back to the main road. While in Trinity we worked Carlos, TI8II for the 5th time having also QSO'ed with him from Panola, Shelby, Nacogdoches and Angelina counties.

Looking back at the log afterwards I saw that we only made 1 QSO on 40m from Trinity (an out of state QSO no less) so sorry to my fellow Texans if you needed that one on SSB and couldn't get us.

Not surprisingly, a check of the log shows that with one exception ALL of the Texas QSOs were on 40m. Usually we'll work something way out in far west Texas on 20m but the one 20m TX QSO was essentially line of sight with W5NAC while we rolled past Nacogdoches on Sunday.

In a fitting climax, as we were in our last county (RAINS) in the waning minutes of the contest we heard N5XTR/m running another 4 county intersection that would get us some new mults. Joel had quite a pile-up going (as he did most of the weekend). We kept trying,.... and he kept working somebody else, until in the last minute of the contest he called WB0TEV/m and we managed to grab those 4 QSOs shortly before the 2010 TxQP went QRT as did we.

All told we activated 29 counties in East Texas and worked several mobiles in multiple counties including N5XTR(12), W2IK(8), W5TM(6), KK5LO(6), N5DO(5),and K5NA (5, no 4....drat!). This year was all SSB with a band QSO breakdown of 80M:1 4 0m:204 20m:237 & 15m:1. 443 total.

Special mention goes to Jeff, N8II in WV who is a regular in the TxQP. He

graciously gave me his run freq on 20m once on Saturday allowing me a clear spot to get in a great run through Franklin county while he went off to work CW. All told we worked him from 17 of the 29 counties we activated.

Regens Part II

The transition from tube to solid state in ham radio took place over about a 10 year period. Just like the beginnings of the vacuum tube era, it took a decade for the first solid state devices to morph into something both useful and affordable. The first tubes were used by the military, who put up the money to fund the development of new technologies, manufacturing, production, quality control and everything else to bring the new technology to where it could be used for consumer products. The urgency of WW1 didn't hurt either, as there was critical need to coordinate ships at sea.

The same happened with 'solid state', taking 15 years or so from 1948 to the early sixties before reliable, useful to 30 MHz, and affordable devices became available. There were many 'dead ends' of manufacturing, and some weird transistors appeared and disappeared just as quickly, or were used in a few applications, but rapidly replaced by new technologies.

In QST, June 1953, we note"

"What is believed to be the first all-transistor amateur station was demonstrated at the April meeting of he Morris Radio Club. Operating on ten-meter phone, the station consisted of a two transistor a.m. Crystal controlled transmitter and a two transistor super regenerative receiver. Contacts were established between this station and mobile units of the club within a ½ mile radius. Credit for the receiver goes to W2ZKE: oher participants were K2AQM, W2GFE, W2GNE, W2OII, W2YCX, W2YTH, and W2ZKE. "

Note this is right in Bell Lab's and RCA's back yard – hi hi

It was once again a time of war – in this case, the Korean war and the Cold War with the Russians. The Sputnik satellite launch (the first satellite) sent the electronics/defense industry

into super high gear. Sputnik had a tube transmitter.

OF course, you could make your own tubes – we linked to a video of a European ham who today makes his own tubes! But no one did back then.
But what about transistors? The first ones were danged expensive. Was there an alternative? You bet that enterprising hams 'rolled their own'! No kidding. From Nov 1954 QST:

“W0EDB builds his own point-contact transistors and uses such units to QSO W0LBB and others on the 80 meter band. Nine volts at one ma. (one milliwatt) does the trick. He writes: “My transitors are made from the germanium elements of broken 1N55-B Hughes diodes, and No. 36 phospor bronze wire.. Values of alpha from 2 to 3 are easily obtained....In addition to the knowledge gained from bilding one's own transistors, another benefit is the greater daring with which one tries out new transistor circuits. Previously, a mistake costs $15 but now it means merely rotating the germanium to a new spot and reforming.” W0EDB recommends the article “Homemade Transistors” by P.B> Helsdon, in he British publication Wireless World, Jan 1954”

Dang, those hams were smart back then! You needed to get two contacts to the Germanium about 1/1000th of an inch apart! Then again, at $15 for a single fragile transistor, you had to be!

Now, we move into the era of 'solid state'.

In a 3 tube regen set, you might need 0.75 amps for an early version with '01A tubes at 5v (3.75w) , plus a 22.5v supply, and a 45 to 180v supply for the audio stages. That was a lot of power from batteries to get out maybe 6 milliwatts of audio which would drive a horn speaker to room filling volume.

Later sets using 7 and 9 pin miniature tubes still required filament power – maybe 12v and 60ma each – or perhaps run off the A/C line taking a few watts of power, plus HV of 140 to 250v.

Now, in the era of solid state – no filaments to gobble up battery or A/C power and dissipate lots of waste heat, no high voltage, and more possibilities for low voltage use of solid state. One one hundredth of the power of a tube set for solid state.

Solid state regens/kits/history

Bell Labs announced to the world in 1948 the invention of the 'transistor'. There are some who will argue that other prototype devices had been experimented with earlier in the 1930s, but nothing ever came of those experiments and research. Like the rest of the world acknowledges, it was Bell Labs folks that 'invented' the modern transistor and commercialized it – the point-contact device. It took several years before there was a commercially available transistor one could buy. Most first went into specific applications such as hearing aids and computers and into the first military needs.

The transistor arrived in the mid 1950s for the hobbyists and general business. At first, they were expensive and most didn't work over a few hundred kHz. One of the first uses was for hearing aids – the CK718 in 1952. Later, the solid state devices improved. Also, at the same time IBM was developing transistors for computers, and Western Electric for telephone applications. Industry was trying dozens of ways to make the transistors which pushed the state of the art in manufacturing micro-miniature structures.

The first known use of transistors in a radio was documented in Radio Electronics in January of 1950. The transistors cost $20 each (1950 dollars – think of maybe $200 each in 2010 dollars)

Here's a diagram of that radio – note is not a regen, but a crystal detector followed by several stages of audio amplification.

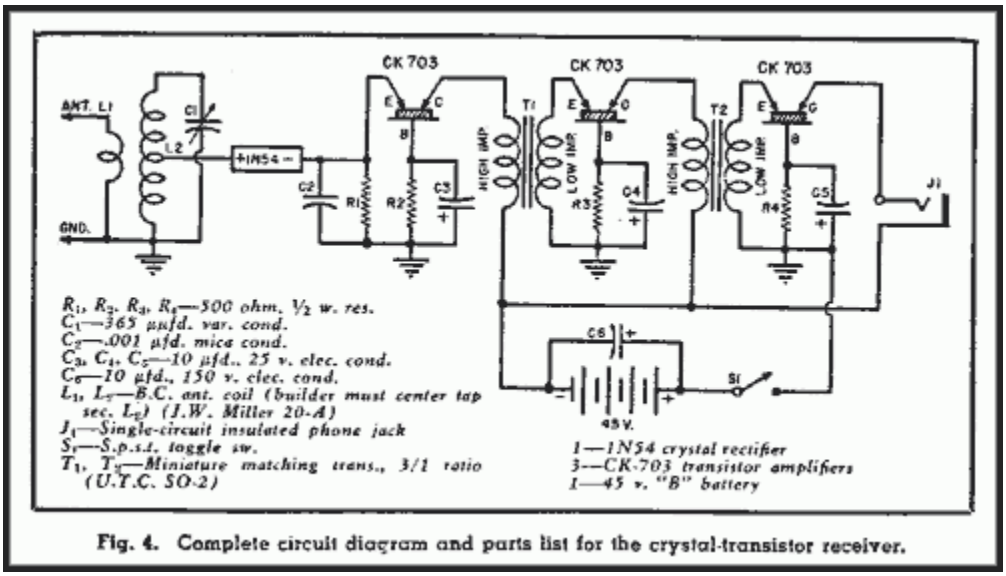


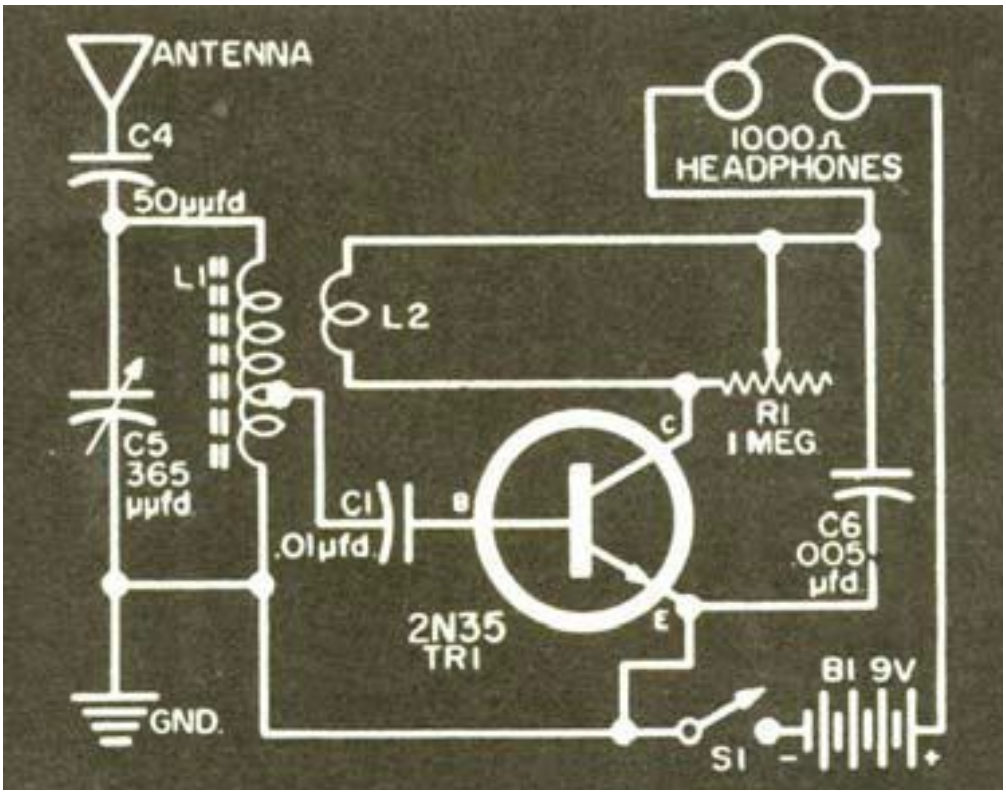
Fig. 4. Complete circuit diagram and parts list for the crystal-transistor receiver.

The first transistor for experimenters was the Raytheon CK722 and it was mainly used for

audio amps. You would find articles for 'hybrid' radios with a hearing aid type tube followed by 2 stages of amplification with new fangled transistors, or code practice oscillators or other audio projects. Raytheon provided transistors that could not meet its standard for hearing aid transistors to experimenters at lower prices.

The first widely published CK722 project appeared in the February 1953 issue of the Radio and TV News magazine - The radio was designed and constructed by Mr. Robert Dixon, who was an employee of the Raytheon Receiving Tube Division at the time. A sidebar in the article noted that CK722 transistors were recently available from Raytheon for $7.60 each.

(In 1953, that was a lot of money as minimum wage was probably 30c/hour.)



Lafayette Kit Regen Receiver with 2N35 transistor

Lafayette had the KT-68 CK722 radio kit, which was sold in the 1956 T4-56 Lafayette Radio catalog for $11.80, including two CK722 transistors, in a high performing regenerative circuit. The Lafayette Radio company was a well known supplier of electronics to hobbyists in the 1950s and 1960s.

By 1956, the CK722 was down to $1 each. By 1964, they were 10 for a buck surplus and out of favor.

Knight had a Trans-Midge 'transistor' radio kit – had a 1N34 Germanium diode detector and one stage of amplification.

http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix/TranMidg.htm

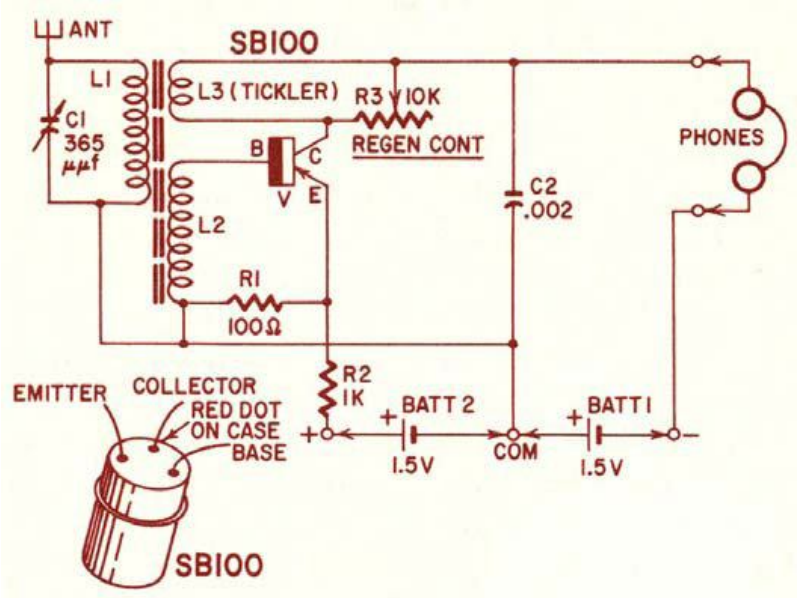
Others made toy radio kits. Here's one from Remco. Same deal – germanium diode detedtor and one transistor audio amp.

http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix/Remco.htm

Wow....I stumbled across this link on the history of the first transistors. You can check it out at:

http://www.semiconductormuseum.com/MuseumLibrary/HistoryOfTransistorsVolume1.pdf

Here's a regen receiver using a SB-100 transistor, one of the first that would work at higher RF frequencies.



The Philco Surface Barrier Transistor (SBT) was the “hottest” transistor around until the late 1950s. This device performed very well at high frequencies and was used extensively in radio and computer circuits. Hobbyists were delighted to find such an inexpensive high frequency device.

This circuit was developed by Edwin Bohr and first published in the Radio Electronics magazine. Mr. Bohr authored many well-remembered transistor construction projects in the 1950s/60s. This one transistor receiver is an extremely impressive performer, primarily due to the unique characteristics of the SBT technology. The $3.90 price for a SB-100 was likely several weeks allowance for a hobbyist.

There were a dozen different technologies of making transistors that manufacturers tried. It was a time of amazing progress, but the new devices were often quite expensive and meant for the military who could afford $10 and $20 or $200 and more a transistor type prices for top secret projects and the beginning space program.

In the September 1956 issue of Popular Electronics, they announced the first 'short wave converter' ATC-1 built by Regency. We showed a pic in a previous issue. It converted shortwave bands down to the broadcast band so you could go 'mobile' with a solid state converter in front of your tube type AM receiver in the car! Hi hi

The first AM pocket transistor radio was the Regency TR-1 in 1954. It moved the stakes for everyone else in the industry. Not a regen but a simple superhet with just 4 transistors that ran off a 22.5v battery.

You can get lost on this site- which actually has short videos of the first radios every being

built (Courtesy of YouTube).

http://people.msoe.edu/~reyer/regency/

Great article here on actually designing and getting the TR-1 to market – everything had to be miniaturized – the parts simply didn't exist to make it – from capacitors to volume controls and tuning capacitors, to speakers.

http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/2004/2/2004_2_12.shtml

The Regency TR-1 was the first consumer electronic device to use a printed circuit board, too! If you find one at a flea market, they sell for $150 or more now on Ebay!

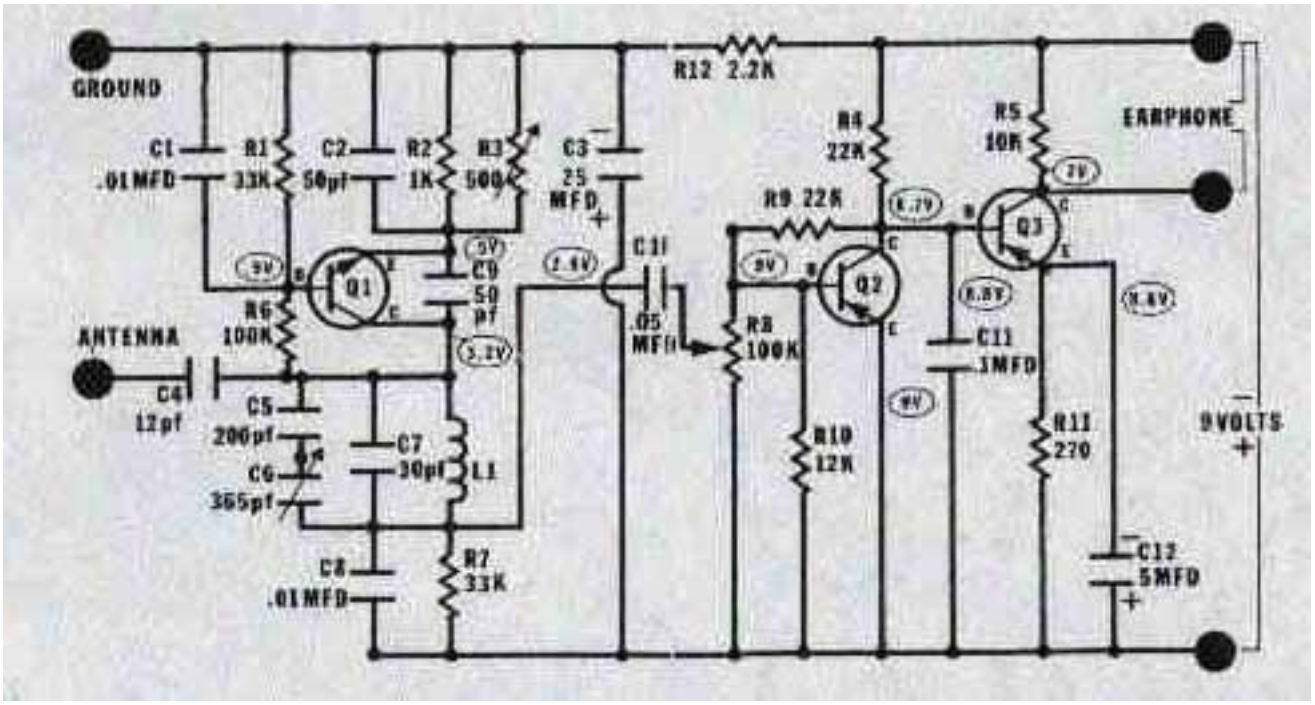
One must note that the first transistors were all 'bi-polar' NPN or PNP devices. To use them, you had to redesign circuits from scratch as these transistors have fairly low input impedance , and low output impedance requiring different matching networks. You could not take a tube circuit and stick in a PNP or NPN bipolar transistor. You also didn't have 'integrated circuits' as they only started to appear in the 1960s, and didn't hit the mass market until the end of the 60s – then mainly 'digital' ones appeared.

Note the antenna connecting directly to the detector in the circuits above – a big factor in regen design and why they often don't work as well as wanted.

So now on to some of the 'bi-polar' transistor kits.

Radio Shack Science Fair 3 transistor short wave 28-110 kit (1950s?)

Here's the schematic



More info at:

http://www.sparktron.com/pbox.html

Here's the box in came in – one of the “P” kits – this may be a bit later design but still in the 60-s and 70s.

Revell Two Transistor Kit

1962 era Revell Regen Kit

<u>Radio Shack Globe Patrol</u>

This one by Radio Shack goes back to the 1970s or earlier. It uses 3 Germanium transistors. Incredibly, an unbuilt one sold for over $150 on Ebay. You might find one at a flea market for $10 to 50 bucks. (Never built Heathkit rigs can sell for two or three times the price of a working unit – sometimes $400 plus!)

Radio Shack “Science Fair” Globe Patrol

More pics and schematic here

http://www.qsl.net/kc6vdx/gear/globe.html

The Field Effect Transistor changed everything again in circuit design.

An FET was similar to a tube, with high input impedance, and usual high output impedance. You could almost take a tube circuit, and stick in a FET. A N-channel FET functioned much like a triode tube. The Drain was like the plate of a tube.

In both cases, you biased the grid or gate negative. A voltage variation on the grid/gate controlled current flow from Source to Drain. You could make any type detector (oscillator basically) you wished – Hartley, Colpitts, etc.

Add in an extra gate in a Dual Gate Mosfet, and you could vary the Gate 2 voltage just like on a tetrode or pentode detector where you varied the screen voltage to control regeneration.

Add in audio amplifier integrated circuits, where you can get 40-60 dB gain in a single package, and now you can make short wave regen receivers of decent quality with 30-40 parts that can match the simple 2-3 tube type sets of the 1950s. You'll probably have a whole lot

less A/C hum and heat generation as well!

An observant reader might note the 'sweet spot' for regen receiver design is from about 3 MHz to 12 Mhz or so which cover the main international shortwave bands, plus 80 and 40M ham bands, and WWV on 5 and 10 MHz. It's the easiest frequency area to get regens working. Most of the kits these days (and yea, kits like the Knight Space Spanner) just covered up to about 12 or 15 MHz. Above 15 MHz without addition front end gain, the performance suffers, and it is hard to easily tune in stations as the tuning is 'too fast'. It comes down to 'octaves' of coverage – from 4 to 8 is one 'octave'. From 8 to 1 is another. If you want a receiver that goes from 100 KHz to 30 MHz, that is a lot of octaves and getting one detector to work over that range with selectable L/C networks is a challenge. So most just focused on the 'fun bands' that contained most of the international broadcasters(6, 9, 11 MHz) , plus covered 2 of the most popular ham bands.

The first ham rig mostly solid state was the SBE-33 HF transceiver – it had 3 tubes in it in the driver and power amp states. (1960s)

Heathkit came out with the all solid state SB-303 Receiver in 1970, and it was fairly decent. Made up till about 1976. The Heathkit SB-104 was a total solid state 100w class transceiver about the same time period. Atlas produced the 210 series of solid state radios in the same time period. We've covered a lot of that in previous issues.

Now, on to currently available solid state regen kits in a bit. Time for a break.

"North to Alaska"
By N0DXE and N0KV

Five years ago we made a quick trip to Alaska and vowed to return. This was that year. So, June 2, armed with our copy of Trailer Life, The Milepost (Alaska Travel Planner) tons of maps, 2 spare tires for the truck (which we thankfully didn't need), we left Colorado with fifth wheel in tow. Since we were pulling the fifth wheel, the antennas were two ham sticks mounted in the front stake holes of the truck bed, with separate antennas for 20M and 40M with an automatic tuner. (Portable ops and statistics listed below).

Our trip took us via Michigan for nephew's graduation and family visit. From MI it was back across the northern mid-west states to MT, where we started up the East Access Route to Alaska through Alberta, Canada. Near the British Columbia border (Dawson Creek), we picked up the Alaska Highway, which 1390 miles later, officially terminates at Delta Junction, Alaska. The highway is generally a 2-lane paved road with areas of construction typical of summer construction in the northern US. It was in one of the gravel construction patches that we got a small broken window in the side of the 5th wheel along with a large golf ball sized chip in the front truck window.

N0KV SUV and fifth wheel

Our travels took us through valleys and mountains, along beautiful lakes and streams, to Liard Hot Springs, where we took a dip in the pool, past the Sign Forest at Watson Lake (started by a homesick GI helping build the Alaska Hwy during WWII), to Whitehorse, Yukon, where we restocked the 5th wheel, took in the vaudeville show, Frantic Follies, and had the broken window repaired on the 5th wheel. From Whitehorse, we drove along Kluane Lake (so blue) where we lunched before bumping along (lots of frost heaves) to Tok, the first major town in Alaska (Fourth Judicial Dist). In Tok, we were entertained by local favorite, Dave Stancliff, who sings original Last Frontier songs and other favorites like Johnny Horton's North to Alaska. Then on to Delta Junction, the official terminus of the Alaska Highway.

First big stop was Fairbanks (also Fourth Dist), where we spent about 10 days site seeing and operating both mobile and portable. From there, the real adventure began. Leaving our 5th wheel at the campground in Fairbanks for several days, we headed to the Second District. Eleven miles north of Fairbanks we started up the Elliott Highway, connecting to the Dalton Highway or "Haul Road" 73 miles later. The Dalton Highway (total length 415 mi), is mostly gravel with the exception of 85 miles of pavement and potholes!! Barry enjoyed the challenge of the drive, with the exception of a few shouts by Pat to "Slow Down!! The big 18 wheelers were courteous and few and far between. After a long day of driving, with several stops, most notably to have our pictures taken at the Arctic Circle sign, we hi-tailed it to the Second District, 237 miles up the Dalton. Since it was getting late, we operated just past the North Borough sign, which was essentially in a valley. Boy, when Johnny Horton sang: "North to Alaska, going north the rush is on," he hadn't encountered the rush of county hunters anxiously waiting to work the Second District. After operating for several hours Sunday evening, we backtracked 45 miles south to Wiseman, population 14, where we had B&B reservations (thanks to a tip from Bob/N8KIE). The "Arctic Getaway" was quaint, the breakfast of sourdough pancakes and eggs filling, and the 4 sled dogs friendly.

After a good night's rest, we headed north to the Second District again and spent the day operating portable from a high spot known as Chandalar Shelf (spectacular location with a large valley to one side with mountains in the backdrop.) The portable antenna was a 33 ft base fed vertical antenna (on our class 3 trailer hitch) fed with a 4-1 balun and an automatic antenna tuner. (Antenna similar to one marketed by S9antennas.com).

N0KV and N0DXE

Then back to the B&B for another night's rest before heading to Fairbanks again.

In Fairbanks we picked up the fifth wheel and headed to the Third District – via Denali NP to Anchorage. In Anchorage, we had breakfast with Kent, KL1V and Bruce, KL7D. Kent was returning from a stateside trip.

From Anchorage we spent several days on the Kenai Peninsula site seeing and fishing. Pat was determined to catch "just one salmon" and finally, after several hours, managed to reel one in. Those are some mighty big fish and after 3 nights of salmon and salmon patties, we were ready for something else!!

After operating from the Second, Third and Fourth Districts, we headed to Haines, Alaska, and the First District (via Valdez for dinner w/KL1V and visit his QTH)). Again, "the rush was on." We were able to set up the portable antenna at the campground so we operated both mobile and portable. We also took the opportunity to go to Juneau for the day via a high speed catamaran (high-lighted by whale, porpoise and seal watching). And we were fortunate to attend the SE Alaska State Fair and according to Pat, a trip would not be complete without heading out to the local grizzly watching area – it proved fruitful on the second day!!

N0KV portable setup

After having way too much fun, it was time to hit the road and head home. I think we worked everyone who needed Alaska counties, with the exception of one or two folks (sorry we weren't able to give out MP). Will there be another trip to Alaska in the future – who knows – maybe in another 5 years!!!!

Here are the stats from the trip:

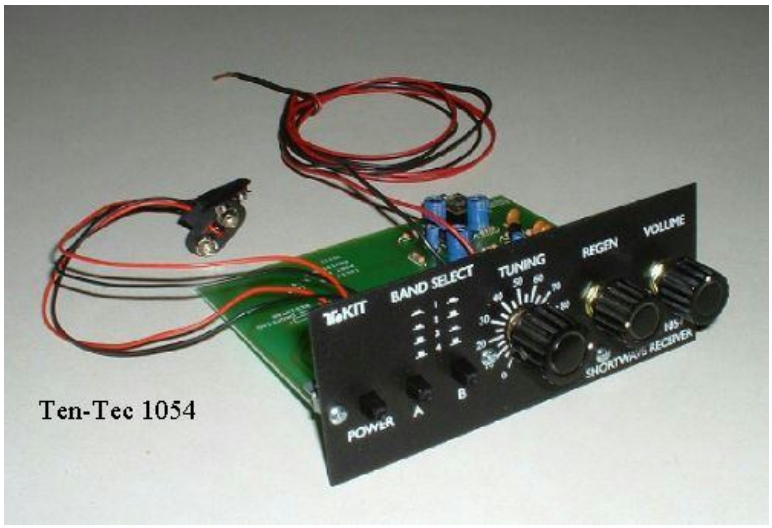
Total number of miles driven: 13,975

Total SSB QSOs in Alaska: 385
Total CW QSOs in Alaska : 257
Other: 4 (Pat & Barry working on 2M)

QSOs from First District: 174
QSOs from Second District: 206
QSOs from Third District: 114
QSOs from Fourth District: 152

Currently Available Regen Solid State Kits

Ten Tec 1054 $42



Ten Tec Model 1054

Here is how to built the unit, step by step

http://www.prismnet.com/~nielw/tentec1054/tentec1054.htm

QRP Kits Scout Regen $40

The Scout Regen is a simple 2 band regenerative radio receiver that is capable of receiving signals from 3.5 to 11 MHz. This covers the 75/80 Meter, 60 Meter, 40 Meter, and 30 Meter ham bands plus the SWL bands around 6 and 9 MHz. WWV on 5 and 10 MHz. are also a bonus. The kit is complete with L shaped aluminum chassis, quality doublesided silkscreened soldermasked board, all parts, hookup wire, board mounted battery holder, it even has a 2.1mm power connector in case you want to use it with a wall wart type of power supply.

QRP Kits Scout Regen

http://www.qrpkits.com/scoutregen.html

There's a great article in the February 2010 issue of CQ Magazine in the kit building column about building both the Scout Regen and Ten Tec Model 1054! If you are a CQ Magazine subscriber, go back and check that issue for a comprehensive article on building each one.

MTM Kits

http://www.mtmscientific.com/swradio.html

The schematic and other pics at the site. It's a 3 transistor kit for about $80.


MTM Broadcast Band regen Kit

Vectronics VEC-102K (sold by MFJ these days)

Here's a YouTube Video showing this $80 kit.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8t9xj-iycCU

MFJ 8100 Kit $80 price range

Covers all or parts of 75/80, 49, 40, 30, 31, 20, 25, 22, 19, 17, 16, 15, 13 Meters in five bands. Range A covers: 3.51 - 4.31 MHz, Range B: 5.95 - 7.40 MHz, Range C: 9.56 - 12.05 MHz, Range D: 13.21 - 16.4 MHz, and Range E: 17.6-22 MHz.
Has vernier reduction drive, bandswitch, volume/RF gain controls, uses 9V battery and built into a rugged aluminum cabinet.

MFJ 8100 Kit

References:

http://transistorhistory.50webs.com/xstrhist.html

We're not done yet....to be continued later this issue!

Cost of Mobiling – K3IMC Forum

N4PJ: I saw numerous comments in other threads about the cost of being the mobile while pursuing various awards. Thought I'd throw in my two cents.

I didn't keep terrific records on all my trips. Decided before the last trip I would start paying more attention to mileage, counties, cost and contacts. We have an old (1995) Dodge RAM pickup. If I didn't still own a travel trailer, I would have purchased a more economical car. As it is, our truck only gets about 17 MPG on the road, but that's all we have.

The Nebraska trip resulted in 5,600 miles total, with 2,800 of that in Nebraska. Amazingly, lodging totaled about $750 and gasoline costs also totaled about $750. Who knows what wear and tear on the truck was (which just passed 215,000 miles!).

When traveling we're not real fussy about hotels. We generally won't stay at a Motel 6 (or equivalent), but we don't need the Ritz either! At the moment $50 - $70 suits us. We got skinned a couple of times in Nebraska. The hoteliers apparently feel they have a captive audience anywhere near the interstate. We paid $81 for a Motel 6 (hey, it was brand new!) in Sidney. Days Inn wanted $95 plus all the taxes.

Gas was pretty reasonable during the trip - saw a couple of price gougers, but not much.
We never include the cost of food - we eat whether we're at home or on the road! Truthfully, it does cost more on the road because we're always eating out. As long as I can afford it, it's fun and my wife will keep doing the driving, we'll be mobiling!

KM9X: Our 17 day trip to CAL to finish Judys Bingo.. I spent $2800 and she spent about $1000. $3800 ..that's everything, gas, food, hotels, etc. New GMC terrain averaged 31 mpg for the 8166 miles and 215 counties I think. Lots of mountains out there I didn't expect, first trip to the coast. About $15 bucks a county to put them put. We got some counties too though. we are all crazy!

2200 Meters

"Kunikazu Togashi, JA7NI, in Daisen, Akita, Japan, and Scott Tilley, VE7TIL, of Vancouver, British Columbia, completed a transpacific QSO on 2200 m (137 kHz) on September 28, a first between Canada and Japan. The distance between CN89dk (TIL) to QM09fl (NI) is 7162 km. While not the DX record for 2200 m, it comes in second to the distance achieved by ZM2E and UA0LE in 2004.

Things started off with a surprise as NI copied TIL's beacon signal 30 minutes before his sunset, something that had never happened during previous tests. What followed was a "quick" exchange of calls and NI's report was received by TIL. Then a very long and deep fade occurred. This happened before to us and we lost each other and an entire night's sleep!

But that taught us a lesson and we adapted to the deep fading on this path by creating new QSO procedures to deal with the long times it takes to send information and the deep QSB. NI waited patiently, not knowing TIL had copied the calls and his report.

Our procedure was for him to simply wait until he copied something and respond accordingly... Three hours later RO appeared on NI's screen and during one of my crawls out of the operator's bunk to check the waterfall I saw a dot during a pause in transmission and stopped the transmitter. A few minutes later there was an R and TU but not in DFCW but rather QRSS, as a malfunction at NI's end had him scrambling to send QRSS30 by hand, a true test of a CW operator's skill! He recovered with grace and the QSO was in the bag!

The mode used was dual frequency CW, a form of very slow frequency shift keying that offers a significant time advantage over standard slow Morse code (QRSS). DFCW is read directly off a computer display using software such ARGO by Alberto, I2PHD. The dot lengths used ranged from 30 to 60 seconds.

This QSO caps off months of work by both operators in improving their stations and beacon testing on the path to learn its characteristics.

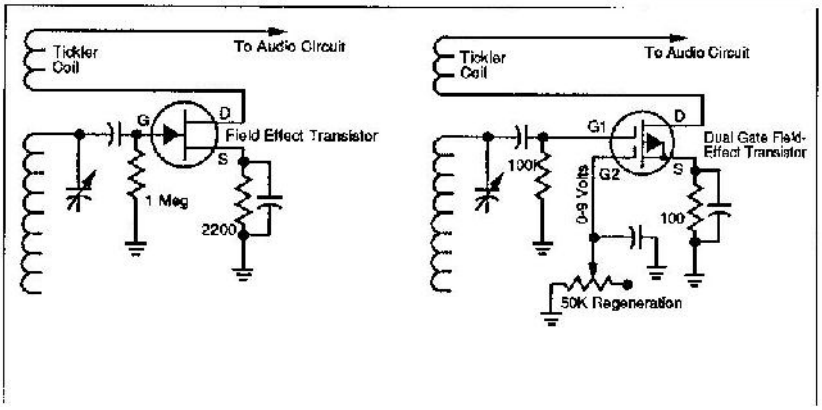
What is clear to me is the transpacific path on 2200 m is a very viable communication path for amateur experimentation. I'm sure time will demonstrate this further as procedures and equipment improve on both sides of the ocean and the QSO count starts to rise and the time to complete drops."

Source: ARRL "This Week", ARRL, Newington CT 06111

Regen Technology - 21st century

Let's cover a few basics with regens with FETs. You'll note the FET circuit looks very similar to a tube circuit.

Here's a basic FET, like an MPF-102 and a Dual Gate Circuit. The additional audio circuitry has been left off.



It looks almost identical as far as the way you interconnect the parts – you have a grid biasing resistor of several megohms for a single FET, and maybe 100K for a dual gate. You vary the positive voltage on gate 2, just like you would on the screen of a tetrode or pentode tube.

With extra audio amplification, now possible with maybe one more transistor, then a self contained audio amp chip like an LM386, you can get a ½ watt or more output from a fairly simple set. Throw in some more modern inventions, like varactor tuning (electronic variable capacitors), and you can make some nifty circuits in a small volume.

The first regen article with a FET I found was in QST in March 1968 – A Three Transistor Receiver by Walter Lange, W1YDS. It used a MPF-104 FET, followed by a simple two stage audio amp. It did feature a broadcast band filter in the front end to keep strong AM signals from overloading the front end. The ARRL handbook that year also had a solid state regen design in it. (I'm sure some of the other magazines of the day likely had regen RX articles, but I can't search them and print from them on-line like QST!)

But is there anything new under the sun as far as regen design, other than substituting solid state for vacuum tubes?

Hams are industrious and curious folks. Can the regen be improved?

On to the 21st century. One of the biggest problems in regens is control over regeneration. You are trying to control a circuit with again of thousands – 3000, 4000 or more gain in a single device. In N1TEV's latest design, you can get a gain of 20,000 in the regen detector alone!

At or near the point where the detector goes into regen, you want the detector to slide as smoothly as possible from the state of no oscillation to into oscillation with no shift in frequency and no change in gain suddenly. You also want no hysteresis – ie, it works the same way in both directions of the regen control. That's often a tall order as at that point, the current goes up and you now have a different operating environment – going from an 'amplifier' to an 'oscillator'. Designing the feedback circuit has always been a critical part of getting things to 'work right' and work right over an extended frequency range. What works at 1 MHz might be horrible at 10 MHz for example. Any load in the plate circuit might also change – anything that reacts to changing current might give unintended negative or positive feedback making things less stable.

Regens are also known for having 'dead spots' in frequency coverage due to the effect of the antenna. It's a different impedance – a long wire might be resonant at one frequency, and be a bad match at another.

You want the tuned circuit to run at the highest Q. Most simple regens hook the long wire antenna, with hopefully fairly high impedance (IK ohms plus) through a small (several picofarads) capacitor into the tank circuit for minimum loading. The higher the operating Q, the more selective the set. At some frequencies, the antenna might provide a low impedance, and the detector might not even operate. Adding an RF amp stage in front solved that problem, but naturally at additional complexity and component count. So isolating the antenna was another concern. (doing that also minimized unwanted radiation out the antenna as well).

If your antenna moves at all, it can affect the frequency of a simple regen detector. So listening to cw on a windy night might prove interesting.

In the past, you often had to tinker with the number of turns on the 'tickler coil', with the spacing, and other mechanical things, as well as electrical things, to have the set go into smooth controlled transition to oscillation. Triode circuits were famous for 'fringe howl' – finally determined to be caused by the sudden jump in current as cw signals were copied and varied the current through the audio frequency transformer used.

Coming up with a new way to provide the feedback was an idea which caused several interesting articles in QST to propose interesting solutions.

So if we do a search in QST for interesting articles, what do we find?

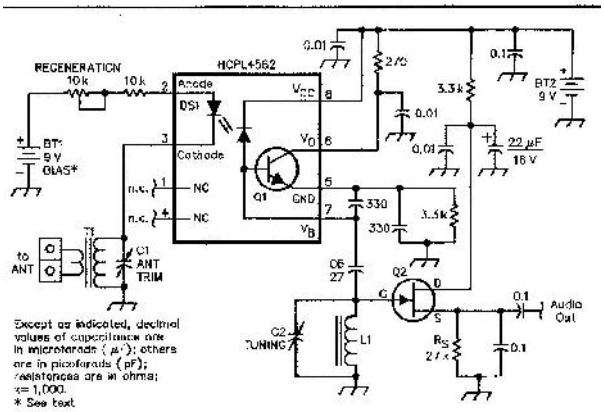
Folks looked for ways around having the antenna coupled to the regen detector. Folks looked for better solutions for regen, and signal overload shifting the operating frequency. For other ways to provide feedback to isolate output and input.

The Optically Coupled Regen

In the July 1990 issue of QST, we find an interesting article by Dan, N1BYT, who has written dozens of articles on regens for the ARRL, titled The OCR Receiver. In this design, both the control for regen and the antenna are isolated by an Hewlett Packard Optocoupler that has high

frequency response. It totally decouples the antenna effects from the detector.

Here's the circuit diagram. You'll note the detector is totally isolated – no physical connection to the antenna or regen control.



The antenna is connected via the Opto-coupler which is biased in the 'on' condition by the 9v bias battery. The opto-coupler provides three functions.

1) The antenna RF modulates the DC signal. There is no physical connection between the detector and antenna other than 0.6pF of internal capacity.
2) The current for bias is supplied by varying the DC current through the opto-coupler LED
3) The photo detector turns the photonic signal back to DC, which is modulated by the RF signal. It connects to the base of Q1, a Colpitts oscillator.
4) The circuit also uses an 'infinite impedance detector' – Q2. Q1 is left as a regenerative RF stage. Q2 is a very high input impedance circuit that does not load down Q1. Q1 acts like a Q multiplier.

That solves two of the major problems of regen design! It is a nifty circuit if you can lay your hands on the HP part. It also gives you a very selective detector (high Q).

More details in the June 1998 issue of QST in the QST Archives (free for members).

So what is the next step?

OCR II Receiver

In the September 2000 issue of QST, once again Dan, N1BYT comes up with a all mode shortwave receiver based upon previous designs of his. In this article, titled the OCR II

Receiver, he combines parts of the Shielded Loop Receiver and the OCR designs.

The receiver consists of an RF pre-amp stage, then a direct conversion receiver to a 455 KHz IF which then goes to a optically coupled regen detector at 455 KHz. (Shades of the 1940s era 'regenerode'). Nifty. Check it out if you are an ARRL member in the QST Archives, or borrow a back issue from a QST packrat.

In the past, this was called a 'regenerode' design, where you had a 'converter' in front of a regenerative IF amp and detector.

So what is the next step?

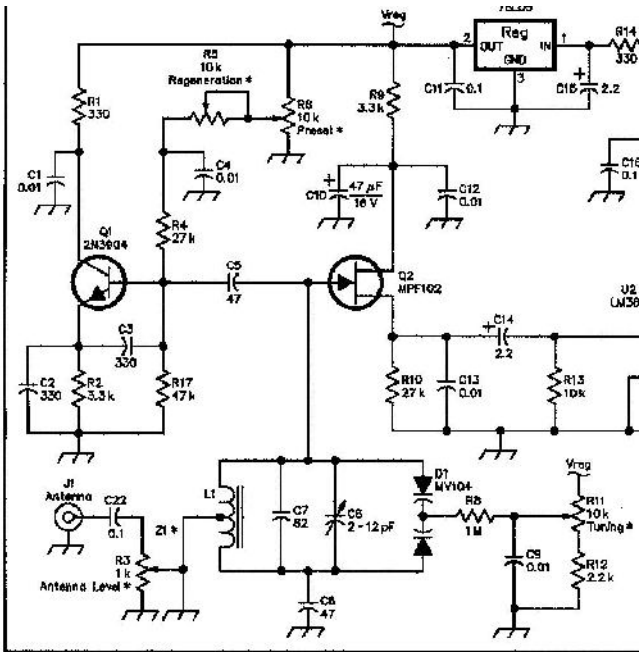
The Wheatstone Bridge Receiver

One of the big hangups of regens is the direct connection of the antenna into the detector circuit – and the 'dead spots' that arise, the effects of physical antenna movements on frequency, and radiation from the oscillator back out the antenna. Wouldn't it be nice to have another alternative beside the OCR receiver?

Once again, Dan, N1BYT comes up with a new regen design in the August 2001 issue of QST. (those New England winters must be cold and long!). The OCR receiver solved many of the problems, but the part is expensive and hard to find.

Dan is always looking for a 'simple' solution to problems and the WBR is one more way to improve regen performance. He notes the “WBR may well be the ultimate simple, high-performance regenerative receiver. “

Here's part of the schematic:



While many might think of a Wheatstone Bridge only for resistive legs, it works fine with inductors and capacitors in the bridge legs. You'll recall the qualities of a bridge and balance.

In the above design, the Colpitts Oscillator and Infinite Impedance Detector of the OCR are retained. The tuned circuit resembles the Wheatstone Bridge, where two points can be grounded with no effect on the other two points. In the ideal case, there is no oscillator voltage at the tap of L1 above, so the antenna is connected to his very low impedance point. The antenna is isolated by over 40 dB – which means very little radiation, and very little effect of the antenna on the detector circuit (variations). In this design, varicaps are used for the tuning along with a 10 turn pot.

Check out the whole article in QST August 2001. If you build one, be sure to also check out the Feedback in September 2001 issue fixing the typos and errors.

Note to those interested: You can still get the printed circuit boards to build these receivers from FAR Cicuits www.cl.ais.net/farcir/

Conclusion

So that brings us up to date technology wise on the latest in regens. You thought the regen was dead after 90 years? Nope, it's still alive and kicking! Folks will be building and using regens 100 years after Armstrong invented them!

Want a Boy Scout type real simple regen to build? Check out QST – September 2000. This is as simple as it gets.

Still hungry for more info?

Check out QEX, Nov/Dec 1999 where N1TEV wrote a nice long article describing regens and direct conversion receivers. Available to ARRL Members in the QST Archive, or borrow from your QST/QEX packrat friends.

If you are a CQ Magazine subscriber, check out the article "A High Performance Regenerative Receiver by N1TEV in the February 2010 issue, page 32-39. Corrections in the next issue, too!

So we have gone from the 1912-1914 era of the audion, to the 1920s with the 201A tube, then rapidly advancing into the 1930s. The single signal superhet with crystal filter was a superior but much more complex receiver – and still dominates today. Of course, now your latest state of the art receiver has all sorts of digital IF filtering as well, but it's roughly the same.

Still, you can have a lot of fun with simple to build or resurrect tube or transistor regen receivers today!

That's the end of our regen story.

Peak Oil News

"John Hofmeister is the former president of Shell Oil (RDS.A) and now CEO of the public-policy group Citizens for Affordable Energy. He paints a very stark (even bleak, as he gets further into the speech) picture of the future of energy production in the US, unless we change our current policies. First, because of the aftereffects of the moratorium. It is his belief that the drilling moratorium will effectively still be in place until at least the middle of 2012. There won't even be new rules until the end of 2011, and then the lawsuits start.

Gulf oil production will be down by up to 1 million barrels a day. Imported oil is now 67% of oil usage but will go to 75% by 2012. He thinks crude oil will be up to $125 and gasoline between $4-$5 at the pump. And it will only get worse."

He argues that the fight between the right and the left has given us 37 years without a realistic energy policy, as policy gets driven by two-year political cycles but good energy planning takes decades. There are 13 government agencies that regulate the energy industry, with conflicting mandates that change very two years. There are 22 congressional committees that have some level of involvement and oversight of the energy industry.

Source: http://seekingalpha.com/article/228111-best-ideas-of-the-week-energy-economy-and-the-morality-of-chinese-growth?source=hp_latest_articles

On the Road with N4CD II

Twice each year, the Temple Amateur Radio Club holds a a large swap meet in Belton, TX at the fair grounds. I decided to mobile on down that way for the flea market on Friday – it's about 150 miles south down the interstate. I loaded up the car for a two day trip.

The weather was nice fall weather for TX- 80 degrees and sun. The last spring flea market had been rained out on Saturday outside. This year's weather was going to be sun and nice. I stay at the Motel 6 in Temple ($35 including tax). Things start after noon on Friday as folks come in and set up inside, and start selling outside.

Now that the Mobile Diamond award had been improved, I figure I'd try to get some transmit counties. There isn't a whole lot of excitement, but may as well track things. Gene, K5GE had run these same counties a few days before (and he is good for Diamond). I made enough contacts to get most on the way down.

Things were selling but I didn't find too many things to buy on Friday. The best find was about 12 Short Wave Craft magazines from the early 1930s (full of articles on regens!) plus another dozen Radio Television magazines from the same era ($20 for the box). I bought a few miscellaneous parts including a '122' screen grid tube and type 19 tube – one of the first that had two tube sections in it (dual triode). It had a six pin base. Tubes started out with 4 pins (the 201A), and only when they needed to add a grid or more elements did they go to more pins. You'll also find tubes with caps on top (usually the grid) in the early tubes so they didn't have to move to five pins (and then six, seven, and then the long lived 8 pin (or octal) tubes.

There were some weird ideas back then in the magazines, including 'octode' tubes with six grids. One of the most common tube types in the 1930s was the 'pentagrid' with five grids used for the front end of nearly every consumer set – it was a good combination oscillator and mixer in the front end. The octode never went anywhere.

There were a few shortwave receivers, some decent entry level healthkit newer stuff, some nice boatanchors including Collins gear at high prices. There were a few surplus items but they didn't seem to be selling – some ARC-5s, a R-390 receiver, etc. There were lots of parts to fix or build things if that is your thing.

I headed back to the motel around 5 pm, stopping at the Cracker Barrel for a county ham dinner. On Satuday I got up early at 6 am and hit the Denny's next door for their $4 breakfast 'value slam', with $1 AARP coffee, then it was over to the hamfest to see if new goodies showed up. It starts at 7am for the public. I wandered around for 2 hours and bought a few parts, but nothing big. About 9:30, it was time to go county hunting, and I headed west over to Lampasas/Burnet, then north on the usual route home from this hamfest. The California QSO Party was in full swing on Saturday and the 20M CW net was a bit messed up with loud contest stations, and with many of the county hunters off chasing counties there – including me at times.

I needed five counties in CA, and caught 3) of them on the way home(TUOL, SBAR, DELN,) Some of the rarer ones were on the air with big signals, and folks did work all of them by the dozens. I only heard one mobile out on CW – K6AQL.

Gene, K5GE was giving out MD contacts as he headed back from ARK, and of course, I was looking for him in between chasing CA counties and putting out the ones I passed through. I ran mostly county lines on the way home in my favorite spots as I've done this route at least 20 times before.

I did manage a Master Diamond contact and at least 3 contacts on two bands to get most of the counties for credit on the way home. In two of the nearby ones, I only ran it on one band. Now comes an interesting situation – for MD credit, you need to work another station good for MD, plus make at least 3 contacts on 2 different bands. The rules are silent as to whether you can run, say, 40M on one day, then go back another day and run 20M and get at least 3 contacts there, then claim that county. That's the way most of the MP holders have figured it – you just need to have run it on 2 bands with at least 3 contacts, not necessarily the same day.

I arrived home, unloaded the car, and turned on the radio to hunt for the missing counties in CA – finally catching up with K6AQL/m in Yolo for a last. I had missed KB6UF there a week before. That finishes off CA. Now the big black hole is KY – no big QSO party there either – need over 25 there.

It was 400 miles or so, and the weather was great. Fall has arrived in TX. The power line noise hasn't gone away though with some new power lines near my favorite spots. The radio

didn't like all the nearby LOUD CA contesters overloading the noise blanker but if you turned it off, the power line noise went up a few S units. I still had fun.

Global Warming

http://www.thegwpf.org/ipcc-news/1617-royal-society-bows-to-...

Royal Society Bows To Climate Change Sceptics
Wednesday, 29 September 2010 22:09 Ben Webster, The Times

Britain's leading scientific institution has been forced to rewrite its guide to climate change and admit that there is greater uncertainty about future temperature increases than it had previously suggested.

The Royal Society is publishing a new document today after a rebellion by more than 40 of its fellows who questioned mankind's contribution to rising temperatures.

Climate change: a summary of the science states that "some uncertainties are unlikely ever to be significantly reduced". Unlike Climate change controversies, a simple guide — the document it replaces — it avoids making predictions about the impact of climate change and refrains from advising governments about how they should respond.

The new guide says: "The size of future temperature increases and other aspects of climate change, especially at the regional scale, are still subject to uncertainty."

The Royal Society even appears to criticise scientists who have made predictions about heatwaves and rising sea levels. It now says: "There is little confidence in specific projections of future regional climate change, except at continental scales."

It adds: "It is not possible to determine exactly how much the Earth will warm or exactly how the climate will change in the future."

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Yet, Al Gore and the George Soros led 'progressives' (ultra left liberals) will tell you that you must act immediately to save the planet from frying itself, from 200 foot high sea rise that will drown the entire east coast – by doubling your electricity rates, adding 50% to your gas bills,

and limiting what you can and cannot do with any form of energy.

Peak Oil Update/Review

The Impending World Energy Mess, by Robert L. HIRSCH, Roger H. BEZDEK & Robert M. WENDLING. The three authors are associates in a small company dealing with energy information, MISI, Inc., based in Alexandria, VA. Foreword by Dr. James R. Schlesinger, first U.S Secretary of Energy. Publication scheduled on October the 1st. Apogee Prime. 256 pages, $29.95.

oil man: In the book that you are about to publish, your case is that 'peak oil' may happen very soon indeed. According to you, when might we be getting into trouble ? In ten years, in less than ten years ?

Let me begin with this : the background is the production. World oil production had been rising and then it's been flat, fluctuating, since the middle of 2004 : it's been on a 'plateau'. The economic recession led to a decline in demand, but not much.

The world demand is going up again. It's back to where it was before the beginning of the crisis in 2008.

Correct. And the oil production fluctuates in a band of 4 or 5 %. It's not very big. I think that the world oil production cannot go higher than that.

What is your hypothesis ?

We will stay in this band, and within 2 to 5 years, world oil production will go into decline.

. . .

According to you, what would be the pace of decline, once that decline starts ?

That's a crucial question, because the decline rate is going to determine how much trouble we're in. In the book we look at two decline rates : 2 % and 4 % a year. Clearly the smaller the decline rate is, the less difficult it will be to deal with. 4 % is really catastrophic. 2 % is going to be less difficult but still very difficult.

How difficult ?

In our 2005 report, we worked on a world wide "crash program", which is the best that you can possibly do. You can't go faster than that, so it's a limiting case. With a worldwide crash program, it's going to take you more than ten years to catch up, because the problem is running away from you ! If you're in a race with another person, and that other person gets a head start, even if you manage to run faster than him, it may take a very long time to catch up.

What should we expect, before the world is able to catch up with the 'peak oil' issue ?

From a world standpoint, Growth Domestic Product will decline every year for over a decade, and could easily be down 20 or 30 % over this period of time. That's what I mean when I say « catastrophic ».

Wherever you live, somebody has to get food to you. And modern farming is run by oil, because the tractors that plow the ground and plant the seeds, and do the harvesting, run on oil. And then you have to transport the food to some kind of processor, and from there to the consumer.

In 2008, when the price of the barrel of oil was above 130 dollars, there's been hunger demonstrations in more that 20 countries all over the Third World. Do you believe that it is the kind of things that we have to expect a much larger scale and for many years ?

Yes. My background is physics. There's a term that I love. It's called "non-linear". Linear is like this *(Dr Hirsch draws a straight line in the air)*.

Non-linear is this, or that, or this, that, that *(he draws many lines and curves going into very different directions),* and so many things feed back on other things, and so forth.

Getting in and trying to understand the problem in some kind of detail is impossible because it's very non-linear : that will impact this, and that will impact that, and that will impact people.

And people may behave rationally, or they may strike and go out in the streets. There may be political chaos ! When that happens, the police have to get out and then, you know, wars may happen. It gets very messy.

. . .

Peak oil : "A conspiracy to keep it quiet" in Washington, says Robert Hirsch

Interview with Robert L. Hirsch (2/2) -

. . .

oil man: - What happened after you published your 2005 report on 'peak oil' for the US Department of Energy (DoE) ?

The people that I was dealing with said : « No more work on peak oil, no more talk about it. »

People that were high in the administration hierarchy ?

The people that I was dealing with were high in the laboratory level. They were getting their instructions from people on the political side of the DoE, at high levels.

After the work we did on the 2005 study and the follow-up of 2006, the Department of Energy headquarters completely cut off all support for oil peaking and decline analysis. The people that I was working with at the National Energy Technology Laboratory were good people, they saw the problem, they saw how difficult the consequences would be – you know, the potential for huge damage – yet they were told : « No more work, no more discussion. »

That was in 2006, under Bush administration. Has anything changed with the Obama administration ?

It has not changed. I have friends who simply won't talk about it now. So I have to assume that they are receiving the same kind of instructions.

Yet it seems like Steven Chu, Obama's Secretary of Energy, is aware of the 'peak oil' issue.

Oh yes he is !

But ?…

Clearly Secretary Chu is a very good physicist. But I think he does not have a broad view of energy. He's also an ideologue : he is academic in his approach of those matters. And that's a big difference with people who have spent time in the industry, who had to make things happen, who are aware of the underlying reality.

Still, Steven Chu and Barack Obama are pushing renewable energy, aren't they ?

Well… In the book that we are about to publish, we spend 60 % on oil, and then we look at the other sources of energy : coal, nuclear, renewables. We make very strong arguments that wind, solar cells and biomass will never amount to hardly anything. A lot of people are misguided because they think : let's just go to wind and everything will be fine.

What about the Department of Defense (DoD) ? Two recent reports show that some people in the US army are willing to give very bold warnings.

You're right. Things may be different there. The DoD is headed by Robert Gates, a brilliant guy and a good friend of James Schlesinger, the first US Secretary of Energy, who wrote the foreword of our book. Schlesinger has continuously served as an adviser to the DoD.

In 2005, Robert Gates took part in a war game named Oil Shockwaves, with a number of other very high senior people involved in the administration, both Democrats and Republicans. What they did is they looked at a severe cut off of world oil production, something like five percent.

Like in 1973 ?

Something even worse than that. So they looked at the impact, and they saw severe problems for the economy. And they looked at the options that existed, and of course there are no options. There are no valves to turn on someplace.

They even considered military interventions in the Middle East as a means to change things. And they basically concluded that this was an impossible situation.

What about James Schlesinger : for how long has he been concerned about a possible decline of world oil supplies ?

He has been concerned about peak oil since he read the seminal paper by King Hubbert in the 60's. That was before he became the Secretary of Defense under Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

And then, there were those famous talks that Jimmy Carter gave about the US dependence on foreign oil…

Yes, James Schlesinger was behind this, as Carter's Energy Secretary. And Admiral Rickover, the father of the US nuclear navy, was involved in those talks too.

Source: http://www.energybulletin.net/stories/2010-09-16/exclusive-interview-robert-hirsch

On the Road with N4CD III

There was another weekend and another hamfest – this time in Paris, TX (Lamar County). I considered heading out that way - about 100 miles – but decided I would leave early and arrive at starting time to snag any goodies that caught my eye.

I woke up at 4:30 am. It's pitch black outside, but the temp is a nice 65 degrees. After a quick breakfast, I loaded up the car with antennas and was on the road at 5:20 am headed northeast. I didn't even bother to turn the radio on so early. Fortunately the roads are good, so there was no problem. Along the way, the temps dipped down to 43 degrees. I was wearing shorts, so I hoped it would be warmer in Paris. It was 55 degrees there when I arrived.

When I reached Lamar County , I turned on the radio. There was VK4AAR on 40M CW, and a few others showed up on 40, 30, and 20 cw. I brought along the 40M SSB antenna, too, as I had not run on SSB in the TX QSO party two weeks earlier.

This is a small hamfest – this year it was even smaller than last year with maybe 10 cars outside selling things, and maybe 20 tables inside, plus the Wireman selling all sorts of cables and wire. It took maybe 45 minutes to check it all out, then another 30 minutes to yak with some folks, then leave. From there, it's about 15 miles to get to Choctaw, OK. First, I stopped at the Subway and got a second breakfast. (Egg and Cheese muffin, with double bacon, lettuce and tomato for $2.15!).

Now that the Mobile Diamond Award had started, I was hoping to make at least 3 contacts on two different bands, plus work a Master Platinum holder to get 'transmit credit' for the county. Joe, N5UZW, is now around quite a bit on 40M SSB running the net, and Gene, K5GE is chasing counties for it. Scottie, N4AAT, is there at times and Bob, N8KIE has been logging a few. N9STL was out mobile on this day, and she's also logging those MD counties. Of course, for everyone else, if they work a mobile with MP in a county, it counts for their MD award.

I hit Choctaw, and N5UZW, K5GE and N9STL were there. 20M CW was fine now, but later in the day would be filled up with AZ QSO Party stations, FIST stations in some sort of event, the PA QSO Party, and K7RE out for a South Dakota Event. In addition, there was at least one European contest going on. I did make more than the needed number of contacts, so that was one in the log.

Since that went well, why not run some more? I heading up through the nice scenic hills of eastern OK on highway 2 – to Pushmataha, Latimer, Haskell, then circling around through Pittsburg, Atoka, Coal, Johnston, Marshall and Bryan on the way home. Luckily I caught an MP holder, and made enough contacts to get credit. 20M CW net seems 'busy' all the time with other mobiles running. Jim, K0ARS was out, but I never heard him on 20M, running county after county. I tried to move myself, but no one followed. Jeff, W9MSE was on, too. At times, with the contests, when the net freq was busy, I went off and worked 4 or 5 stations in the contests on 20M to fill in that requirement when the net was busy for 20 minutes at a time. Time after time the net was always busy and a “CHN?” resulted in “AS” or wait. At 1 pm I grabbed a sandwich and a Diet Coke. No one was listening on 30M cw, so if you didn't run on 20m CW, not even one showed up.

Jim, KB6TAL/m was out in AZ putting them out for the AZ QP. I didn't hear any other mobiles out for that event, but stations were out portable again this year. More in the state QSO Party write-ups.

Usually I stopped to run – lots of noisy power lines along the main roads, so you had to pick

your spots. That slowed down things, but gave me lots of opportunity to put out the counties on 3 or 4 bands. Not many takers on 30M, and almost no one on 17M – dead band.

The DX was in – and provided half the contacts. OK2PAY, DL6KVA, G3WPF, OK2EC, HA8IB, UT5UIA, LY1CX and others made it in the log. Some of the DX stations were chasing the PA QSO Party folks, too. I think a lot of county hunters were busy chasing mobiles on 40M - full net all day long with activity – and in the various QSO Parties. I had also ran these counties a few weeks ago before MD started and folks might not realize a contact now counts for that new award. Not to worry, enough were around, and occasionally Bob, N8KIE would show up on 20M CW. K0DEQ shows up on every band (17, 20, 30, 40M).

Joyce, N9STL, was headed back from OH in the motor home shakedown cruise. We caught each other a few times for MD contacts. There were mobiles headed to South Carolina – Bill, WG9A, Bob, KA9JAC/Ann, KB9YVT, Frank and Kay, AA9JJ/N9QPQ were among them. WB2ABD was out mobile for the PA QSO Party. I heard two other PA mobiles, but no one in Sullivan, PA – my last county there.

Around 4pm, I had an attack of the hungries, so I stopped at Braums (Ice cream chain store) and had a small cone. It was 86 out – real nice. The weather was not brutally hot, and fall has arrived. It was a good day for driving.

I did 450 miles, and made it home by 6pm. With help from friends, I added 10 more 'transmitted counties' to the Mobile Diamond log. Only 465 more to go! Hi hi I set up a spreadsheet in my XCEL clone in OpenOffice. I have columns for the state-county, then a column for MP Credit (Y/N), the a column for the MP operator I worked. Then date for band 1(freq) plus room for 3 station calls – those I worked, and then date and band for the second band. That leaves room to run the county on one band one day, and run it on another band a different day, meeting your requirement for transmitting from the county on 2 bands with at least 3 contacts. If I didn't work an MP holder, I still put in entries, because I can do that on a different day, too – even on a different band from the other two. I've already got the other contacts in the log. Now, for those counties you are only going through once, well, you just don't get credit if you can't garner 3 on two different bands. If you work a MP holder after you have MP, then you get credit toward MD for the county – just no xmit credit toward the 500 or more needed. The main MD log is in a N4UJK Coloring Book.

My scheme is simple. If I work someone there, I put the call and date, and a minus sign next to the county – meaning I worked someone there. If I worked a MD holder from the county and did not get xmit credit (not enough contacts), I put a little circle next to the county, the call of the MP holder I worked and the date. (the contacts are in the main log with sig reports and time). If I get transmit credit, I put a + sign after the county. For those I get, then later transmit from, I just convert to the +. In the coloring book, red means I got transmit credit. I just put dots in counties I've worked. That lets me plan where I can easily get more xmit credits. Right now, my coloring book is 98% empty, but who knows how fast it will fill up. Just one in MI (N8KIE, 4 in SC, two dozen in TX, some in AR, 7 in LA, and 10 in OK so far, and a handful in IL, IN, and OH). It's going to be five years or more before folks are 'closing in' on this one.

There's another hamfest in Lufkin, but that is supposed to be even smaller. Who knows? And the weekend after is one in OKLA in a new county for MD, so another excuse to go mobile!

The nearby QSO Parties are winding down for the year, so that will not be an excuse to be out and about. Then again, soon it will be time for the annual trek back east, and that's all new MD territory again for another 100 counties or so!

State QSO Parties – CA

As usual, this is one of the best each year with all CA counties on the air. One of the big features of this contest is 'county expeditions' where groups go and set up Field Day style in some of the less populated counties with BIG multi-op stations, beams, KW amps, and generators. It sure puts some of the harder to catch counties in the log, and many folks worked all the counties during the contest, some in less than 4 hours.

There were a handful of mobiles out there, too, to chase and catch in new ones as well. Some of the CH regulars were on – K2RP was one, and KM6HB went out mobile in a few counties. Dan, N6MJ (USACA #911) operated from W6YI.

From the N4CD QTH, I needed 5 counties in CA, and caught up with all five before the contest ended, so it was good from that perspective.

From the logs submitted on 3830 contest reflector, many CA stations had over 1500 contacts – from 160m to 15M. Not much happened on 10M. Out of state stations had up to 1200 contacts with CA stations (many of them the same station on multiple bands).
There were dozens of opportunities for Natural Bingo with lots 1x2 or 2x1 calls with the county name in them, like K6A in Alpine. There were few mobiles to chase for the no-star award (you can't count fixed stations), and figuring out who was 'portable' would be hard unless you sorted through all the comments on he 3830 reflector to see who really set up 'portable' rather than drop it at an established station as a guest operator. The CQP is mostly high power CA stations – often multi-op with multiple stations.

This is one of the few state QSO parties where there is much more SSB activity than CW activity – by a factor or 2 or 3 to one! That is likely due to mostly fixed stations and 'county expeditions' often running high power, and multi-op stations on 2 or 3 bands simultaneously, plus all night hours allowing lots of QSOs to be made on 40 and 80M SSB around the country and world.

Some comments from the 3830 Contest reflector:

K3FIV/6 Mendocino

“Running, especially on 20 SSB, with 100 watts and a dipole is "challenging". I managed to squeeze in and stay put as a mouse among the elephants for at least a little while, especially at the fringes of the band and out of the busiest time. Sorry for any frustration from people looking for MEND - I was there, but not usually in the crowd. Thanks to everybody who pulled me out.

Most interesting experience was on 20 and 15, where the bands seemed very long. Trying to get the Northeast states/provinces for the CA-station multipliers, it seemed like I was more likely to get a call back from Europe than NA. That *never* happens - calling CQ with my 100w/dipole and getting EUs back. On CW and SSB as well. Thanks! Did miss a few mults though - I don't think anyone lives in DE...and I used to live 20 miles from it. Couldn't find QC, KY, or ME either. Hmmm, maybe some of you guys in PA, MD, VA could run some mobiles into DE during next year's CQP?

For people wondering about mobiles in CA, one thing I had to learn when moving from the Northeast to CA was that CA is *big*. MENDocino county alone is larger than several states combined. I live in the SW corner of the county, and it is a five hour drive to the opposite corner. Those pesky mountains make it difficult driving too. In much of CA, running lots of counties in a mobile is a week's work, not hours.

QTH is in sight of the ocean about 100 miles north of San Francisco. CQP is interesting because all of the CA stations are pointing their beams away from me. So on 20 and 15, I usually can't hear any other CA stations - sorry if I landed on top of you, and for those of you who "stole" my frequency, I understand... There may be some QSOs logged by more than one station! Several times as I was working stations, the band changed and I could faintly hear another CA station running on the same frequency. Hope everybody actually worked the station they thought they were working...”

N6YEU/county expedition in Del Norte

Another fun County Expedition! I went north to Del Norte on Thursday not knowing for sure where I would be operating. I ended up coming by kind of a back way to where I thought I would set up. This caused me to arrive in the dark. I popped up my camper and slept on it. In the morning I discovered the route to the top

of the mountain is now closed. I drove 15 miles to another mountain only to find the gate locked. Murphy was showing his ugly face! I headed back to the wide spot in the road I had spent a the previous evening at and decided it wasn't a bad QTH at all.

I spent about half of Friday putting up the army surplus tower and 2 el Steppir(best thing since sliced bread!). I hung inverted vees off the tower plus put up a Butternut HF 2V. The wire antennas were not tuning well to I put up an 80m dipole fed with ladder line and tuned it with an LDG tuner with a 4 to 1 balun. This did the job on 75/80 and 40 ssb. The HF2V was great on 40(both modes) but never got it to work on 80.

I never heard Idaho which was the only mult I missed. Lots of DX on Saturday which was fun. The WX was fantastic. Warm during day and just a little cool at night. My Honda EU2000i purred along as usual. Before log checking my claimed score should be a new county record. Someday I might try an amp. I was kind of hoping to go to Siskiyou this year but N6TV wanted to make sure DELN was covered. I'm glad I went there. Single op county expeditions are a lot of work but it is the most fun I have all year.

73,Fred

K6QK county expedition multi op in Imperial

At our QTH in the desert, rain is the last problem we expect. This year, we had major thunderstorms roll through at roughly 4 AM both Saturday and Sunday. Of course, they knocked out the power. So we ran on backup generator, with no amplifier, for the first 6 hours on Saturday and 2 hours on Sunday. We had fun anyway. Thanks to all the great ops who hung with us through the thunderstorm QRN. Special thanks to all the folks that get on to give us the normally rare multipliers “

K6ST – county expedition multi-op Sierra

“Fun contest, got rained out on hill top in SIER county so we were limited to hours of operation.”

K6XN/Nevada County

This was a casual operating effort by our team this year but a serious effort and a lot of time was spent putting together our first multi-multi attempt

using four rebuilt old generators, five rebuilt laptops, a new WriteLog TCP/IP WiFi linked logging and dupe checking system and familiarizing the operators with the nuances of using WriteLog. Murphy visited several times but we were able to handle all of the problems and solve them. (Yes it did rain at 5000 feet during CQP as usual on CQP weekends at our location).

We were primarily interested this CQP in having fun working people on SSB in the CQP and also demonstrating to K6ON's grandson William how much fun ham radio can be. William is studying for his ham license and he actually operated K6XN (under his Grandpa's supervision) this CQP and William did well. We all expect that William will be operating in more contests and that he will soon earn his license and become an NCCC member like his Grandpa K6ON :-).

We were primarily using antique radio equipment ranging from 20 to 40 years old this CQP that we had restored: an antique homebrew 3-1000Z amplifier for 40M, an antique homebrew dual 3-500Z amplifier for 80M, a beautiful old Alpha 76PA for 20M, 15M and 10M, and oldies but goodies: two Icom IC-751A transceivers, an Icom IC-745 transceiver and an old beloved Kenwood TS-820S transceiver. The three main generators were also old Generac 4000 4KW+ generators that we rebuilt over the summer (we even replaced the intake and exhaust valves in one).

We are still celebrating that everything actually worked and also the great meals (e.g K6ON prepared an outstanding lamb chop dinner for us using pineapple juice and almost an entire bottle of Dewars Scotch plus "secret sauce" Wow!!!! And K6YN's contester morning burritos with "mystery meat" are always a pleasant surprise. This is the first time I have ever had spinach and garlic in a burrito though but it went well with the "mystery meat". The meals although outstanding are not necessarily advised for high QSO rates immediately following ingestion particularly after Merlot :-). We were still able to make a number of SSB contacts for CQP from Nevada County though and neither bears (nor vampires) visited us this CQP. Thanks for all the QSOs team and 73, Ted, K6XN”

W6ML/ County Expedition Mono

This was my 19th CQP county expedition to Mammoth Lakes in Mono County. I arrived on Tuesday night, an extra day earlier than usual, with my pickup truck fully loaded with several hundred pounds of radios, computers, antennas, coax, etc. Single op expeditions are a lot of work and it was nice to have an extra day to set up.

Having launched my antenna guy lines in the pine trees with a sling shot for

about 20 years, I have decided to award myself expert marksman status. This year I hit my mark at the top of each tree on virtually every shot. My 3 element wire beams for 15M & 20M and three dipoles for the other bands were as high as they have ever been. Unfortunately, my AL-80b amp picked this weekend to start failing...if I tried to get more than 400w out (200w max on 20 SSB), it would arc and drop to zero. So I ran with medium high power.

All the antennas seemed to perform well, it would have been nice to see how things would have worked with the full KW, particularly on 20M SSB. I did make the most CW QSOs that I ever have and it was cool working 128 EU stations. I got my sweep when KO7P called me on 75M SSB at 0741 UTC and gave his NR 11 in ID. That was good timing for going to bed a few minutes later...you always sleep better after a sweep.

After CQP ended at 3pm local time, I spent the next 3 1/2 hours taking down all of the antennas, finishing just as it was getting dark. Since I had spent almost 3 days setting them up, that was pretty fast. The weather forecast of heavy rain on Monday (which turned out to be accurate) gave me the incentive to keep working so I wouldn't need to deal with an extra dose of Mother Nature.

Even with all the work, it was still great fun!...Thanks for all the QSOs!"

K6Z county expedition – INYO (W6PH, KI6VC, K6VR, W1MD, K6ZZ**)**

For this year's CQP, our crew returned to W6PH's cabin QTH just outside of Lone Pine in the Owens Valley. It's a great location with the Owens Valley in the foreground and Mt Whitney staring down on you from behind. Last year we dang near froze to death, but this year the WX was a bit better. Temperatures were decent but we had some thunderstorms, wind, and lot's of bugs to contend with this time out.

We set up Field Day style with two AB-577 military surplus masts and a homebrew 35' tower trailer. Antennas were a homebrew 3 element 20M beam, Cushcraft 402-CD and Cushcraft A3S for 10M and 15M. We also put up an 80M sloper, Hygain Hytower and 160M Inverted-L to work the low bands with. Kurt's homebrew 20M beam worked great. It's a keeper for sure.

We set up one station in the cabin, one on the porch and a third in KI6VC's RV. Rigs were an Elecraft K3, an ICOM IC-7000 and an ICOM PRO-III each with an amplifier. We switched logging software this year to N1MM Logger in a three PC wireless network.

I'm beginning to think there's no such thing as being 100 percent prepared for a radio contest. If you think you're ready, check again! Something WILL happen. By late Friday afternoon all the stations and antennas were set up, checked out, and ready to go. Some quick checks for inter-station interference, and then it was time for a BBQ and a few cold 807's.

After a tasty Saturday morning breakfast, it was time to man battle stations and get ready to roll. At T-15 minutes, Murphy finally showed up. We discovered a high SWR on the 40M beam. Are PL-259's supposed to spin freely on the end of your feedline? After a fast connector replacement, we were once again ready to roll. The bell rang and we were off and running. Wait a minute, how come our PC's say we're operating in the 7QP not the CQP? Duh, what's up Doc? Ok, we restarted and now were ready to go.....again. After a few minutes we noticed the serial numbers started incrementing by 3 or 4 on two of the three PC's. What gives? Perhaps RF in the network? We stopped and restarted 3 times, but the problem continued. We certainly can't operate like this. After about 75 minutes of false starts, we were about to dump N1MM and try something else when we noticed that one of the PC's had a newer version of N1MM loaded on it. Bingo. We reloaded an older version of N1MM and the logging problems were finally under control. Certainly the worst was now behind us. We were CQing on 40M CW but the band seemed very dead. After some testing we found the receiver in the K3 had gone deaf. Turned out to be a bad PIN diode on the KXV3 board. We had to tear everything down and set up another ICOM IC-7000. After doing so, we operated pretty much problem free until Sunday morning at which point we discovered the A3 SWR was now sky high. After some troubleshooting we found the balun had crapped out. We took the antenna down and jumpered around the balun and put it back up again. That got us through to the end.

Overall, we had a great time. We wanted to improve on last year's score which we managed to do. For the past two years we ended with 57 multipliers missing NT each time. This time we had all 58 mults in the log before sundown Saturday with NT worked several times. Can we bank a few of those Q's and use them next year?

N6DE – County Expedition – Sierra - 5300 ft elevation

The goals of this expedition were to have fun and kick butt.

I think I have found a great M/M CQP expedition location. There are two

clearings at this site that are 1000 feet apart and 80 feet different in elevation. I was really interested to see if we could have CW and SSB stations on the same band at high power without interference. We tested 15m and 20m at a time when the bands were dead so that we could hear any noise from the other station. The result was amazing. With the K3 and the antenna separation, we could coexist without any perceptible increase in the noise floor! We did hear our 20m CW station at S1 on a couple of discrete frequencies in the 20m Phone band, but that was easily avoided. We didn't test 40m, but during the contest, we found that we could also operate CW and SSB simultaneously without a problem. Even though the CQP rules don't require it, we set up all our radios and antennas within a 500m diameter circle, which is the definition set by ARRL and CQ contests for transmitters and receivers.

I wanted to participate in the Friday practice, but we were putting up the CW tent at the time, with a lot of setup work still left. We had S5-S6 line noise on 20m and S2 noise on 15m from Dick's Honda EU2000i generator. After installing a line filter, it went down to S2 on 20m and was gone on 15m. I added a few ferrites and clamp-ons to attenuate the noise a little further on 20m. I put line filters on all 3 of our generators.

Conditions on 15m this year were really good. The 4-el 15m yagi performed well.

There was great representation from all the mults this year. We had at least 2 contacts with every multiplier.

We had our share of problems: pounding heat during setup, flies, mosquitoes, rain on Sunday and Monday teardown, exhaustion, too tired to operate, not enough prep work on antennas before the expedition, putting up low band antennas during the contest Saturday, no time to put up an 80m CW antenna, loaded the 75m antenna with 100W on 80m CW, spent time during the contest setting up a CW interface on a Phone station for 80CW, I was a VHF lid and wasted time trying to hit 2m repeaters for talk-in, the CW station ran low power for several hours, also unknowingly duped some stations on Sunday due to accidentally changing our operating county in Writelog, etc.

But we still had a great time, enjoyed each others company, and had a memorable expedition! What a gorgeous area of California this is, with a stunning view of the stars at night. “

Mobile Diamond Award

The new Mobile Diamond award was approved (then modified) at the last board meeting. Trying to decipher the rules takes a PhD in 'confusiology'.

Worse, it's a case of horribly, horrendously badly written rules that took over two years to write.

Ray, WG6X, had this to say on the K3IMC forum about the new Mobile Diamond Award after trying to figure out what the rules said:

“Diamond Award seems impossible to earn from reading the RoadRunner?”??

Message: I as understand from the October RoadRunner that the MP mobile most make contacts with MP holders on at least two different bands and at least three different MP holders on at least two different bands. If this is true this is the darn right most stupid and asinine thing I have ever heard of in county hunting and the chance that this award being earned under these rules would seemly be quite slim at best and I personally think for someone to try to earn this award has a better chance of stopping the Mississippi River from flowing to New Orleans.

So if these are the requirements for the Diamond Award you can for sure count me out and I would assume quite a few others because of the cost and effort to run the 500 counties with required contacts. Heck being able to finding three MP holders would surely be hard every time, but then having to do it on two bands just about screws the mobile of getting the requirement for the county credit. I see no way presently with the band conditions we have and even with some improvements that a mobile would get the required contacts without running and running and running These requirements just about kills running counts at night, well maybe not if you can find three MP holders on each of the two bands at night which I would think less then slim. Could this be the nail in the coffin for county hunting for a follow on awards.

In my opinion who in the hell ever dreamed up the two band and three contacts per band requirement in my has lost reality of county hunting.....”

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Let's try to figure out what MARAC and the Awards Committee probably meant, but didn't seem to express in any language even a lawyer could appreciate. No, wait. We shouldn't have to 'interpret' what they might have meant! The rules should be clear. Well, they are clear as a

class of Top Grade Mud.

1) *"**OBJECTIVE:** To make **Valid Contacts** in **All USA Counties** with mobile operators who have earned the MARAC Master Platinum Award, including contacts while transmitting from at least 500 counties on at least two different bands after the applicant has earned the Master Platinum Award."*

What that says is no one can start to work on their Mobile Diamond award UNTIL they have received their Master Platinum Award. OR does it? Plain and Simple? The 'applicant' must have earned the Master Platinum award before making those contacts with others who have earned their Master Platinum award. Or not? Bad grammar, but that is what the above seems to state.

If you add a comma, and the word 'and' it gets less confusing.

Maybe be need to take a course in sentence diagramming to decipher it. Is the 'after the applicant has earned the MP award' part of the previous clause 'while transmitting from at least 500 counties on at least two different bands' or not?

OK...let us go from there. But that 'including contacts' from at least 500 counties is sort of accurate but not exactly.....since they also have to make a MD contact from those 500, too.

Let's assume the summary is too summarized to accurately reflect what was meant. Poor grammar and mass confusiium, but let's try the rest of the requirements as outlined.

2) *"An applicant must make contacts with holders of the Master Platinum Award in **All USA Counties** (Master Platinum contacts) after having earned the Master Platinum Award and both operators may count both counties."*

Wow..talk about confusing. OK.....so is it "*An applicant must make contacts with holders of the Master Platinum Award in **All USA Counties** (Master Platinum contacts) after having earned the Master Platinum Award "?....*

Which would mean you could not start on it until YOU earned the MP award....

or is it

*"An applicant must make contacts with holders of the Master Platinum Award in **All USA Counties** (Master Platinum contacts)"*

and then

"after having earned the Master Platinum Award and both operators may count both

counties."

In that case, it should best have been two sentences. Or if they added the word 'and' between the two parts and delete the 'and' later on. It seems that the second interpretation is likely what was meant, but it sure is confusing as written. Trying to save a 'period' or a extra word results in mass **confusium**. But no one is sure what it really means. Did it mean you can't work on Mobile Diamond until you get your MP? Like with Master Gold where you can't start until you have your Bngo award? Or is it like MP, where everyone can start from day one?

Who knows which is the right interpretation? The Awards Chairman is apparently equally clueless as folks asking him about this have gotten no response. Some editing of the rules should be forthcoming

3) *"After the date of the applicant's Master Platinum Award, the applicant must make additional* ***Valid Contacts*** *while transmitting from at least five hundred (500) different counties. In each of the 500 transmitted counties, the applicant must use at least (2) different* ***Bands*** *and make at least three (3)* ***Valid Contacts*** *with different stations on each* ***Band****."*

That is good...sort of.....but if you only make 3 contacts on 40M one day, can you go back the next and make 3 more on 20M and then claim the county? It would seem that would be allowed, or at least not prohibited. The idea is to get the county put out on at least two different bands. Most of the MP holders have figured out it might take doing it that way in some of the counties that they go through. I'd hate to do the coding for the Logger program that tracks transmitted counties. That will be a challenge.

If folks can't work you for Mobile Diamond, since they can't start until they get their Master Platinum, it will be hard to get those 3 contacts per band in counties you have already run recently – or are 'green stampers'.

If I work 3 different stations on 40M, do I need to work 3 more "different" stations on 20M, or can I work the same 3 different stations on 40M and then on 20M? Hmmmm?
Is that six unique calls? Can folks cheat and use ride along club calls, or work, say KZ2P and his mini-me invisible sidekick K2 "Junior" Grandinetti as well? And count that as 'two' contacts?

Usually not a problem, but the rules are clear as muddy water. Personally, I'd rule out one person giving credit for more than 'one' contact of the six required – ie, no 'double contacts' with the same op but with multiple calls – maybe even 3.

4) *"While transmitting from at least five hundred (500) different counties, at least one (1) of the* ***Valid Contracts*** *must be with another holder of the Master Platinum Award. The contact*

may be on either of the two bands."

Well, dang. What happens if I work 10 people on 20cw and 10 on 30cw, but only work N5UZW on 40M SSB for the MD contact? Does that mean it doesn't count since it wasn't one of the TWO bands I had at least 3? The last sentence seems to really not be needed. They can delete that one, or change it to read 'on any band'. They also need to fix the typo of '**Contracts**" to Contacts. They can use the spare sentence left over to fix the first item on the list.

"*and make at least three (3)* ***Valid Contacts*** *with different stations on each* ***Band****.""*

If I have more than 3 contacts on 2 bands, but try 15M and only get one, does that now mean it doesn't count any more since I didn't have 3 contacts on EACH band? That is what it says. So why would anyone try bands where they might only get one? I'm sure that wasn't intended, but...that's the way it turned out.

It looks like a few of the Master Platinum holders are out and about giving out a few counties for the new award, but half of them have lost interest in county hunting. It's going to take a while. So far, N7ID, N4AAT, N9STL, N8KIE, WQ7A, N4CD, and K5GE have put out a few. N5UZW likely will be out running a few after he rests up from having run so many to get his MP. WG6X and W6TMD haven't been active, other than Darrel working KB6UF on one trip.

What's even stranger is that no one has a clue as to who can actually count contacts toward the Mobile Diamond award. The rules were written so poorly that all there is is **confusium.**

Folks were pre-occupied with the 'start date' issue and didn't look at the other details of the award until they actually tried to start working on it, according to the 'rules'. Then the confusium set in.

State QSO Parties

Pennsylvania

This one generated lots of activity. Unfortunately for most of the US, most of the activity is on 40 and 80M! All counties were on the air. Signals weren't too great from TX, and Saturday I

was out mobile. I strained to find Sullivan, PA – KA3QLF was scheduled to go there, WV2B was spotted on SSB there, and one other station ran it – but NIL copy from TX. Signals weak other than the loud contest stations who racked up over 1300 Qs during the event!

Many of the stations reporting on the 3830 contest reflector had a few dozen contacts on 20M and hundreds on 40 and 80M. It seems the PA folks delight in trying hard to work each other, and after getting a bunch of multipliers on 20M, simply stay on 40 and 80m (and 160) for the rest of the contest.

Mobiles out included KA3QLF, W3DYA, N2CU, WB2ABD, K3ONW, W3USA, K3AIR, and N3LI.

From the 3830 reflector:

N2CU/m

This is the first contest I've operated mobile, and the first time I've really operated mobile. Three counties activated - McKean, Warren and Erie.

Via email:

“First Time Mobile by Tom Williams N2CU

I've been a ham for 38 years and never had a mobile setup other than a 2m rig for a few months. Since I love contesting, and QSO parties in particular, I thought it was time to get in on the fun that mobiles have putting numerous counties on the air. A little over a year ago I got a new Elecraft K3 which could be run off of 12V and was small enough to place on the passenger seat.

The wheels began turning very slowly and I started putting together a plan how I could accomplish my first mobile setup. A fellow club member had a collection of various hamsticks he was giving away for free (that caught my attention) so I grabbed 75, 40, 20 and 17m sticks and whips. I would later find out that the fiberglass on some of them was cracked at the end where it goes into the stud mount and the solder connections were cold. I cut off the shrink wrap, epoxied the fiberglass back into shape, re-soldered the connections to both ends of the stick and put some new heatshrink over the ends. Oh yes, since I'm primarily interested in contesting, I cut open the shrink wrap over the loading coil on the 17m stick, scraped the varnish off a number of consecutive turns, and jumpered them with solder. All I had to do was add or remove solder or until I found the correct number of turns for resonance on 15m and then remove the excess wire.

Last year I put a Class 3 hitch on my 2008 Pontiac Torrent for other purposes but thought that

would make a good mounting point for the sticks. At first I wanted to mount the sticks on the roof but the overall height would be too great. I purchased a 6" drop draw bar for cheap on eBay and inserted it upside down in the receiver. This gave me a 6" higher mounting point. Then my boss had a bunch of 6' long aluminum 2x2 fence posts he was going to recycle. I obtained one and bolted it horizontally to the draw bar and parallel to the bumper. A 3/8" antenna mount was put on each end of the post so I now had a place to mount two hamsticks at once. I figured I could run a single RG-58 feedline to one mount and then run another piece of coax from that to the other mount. My friend Paul, WB2ABD has his doubts but when I put two sticks on and got resonance on both bands I was happy. I then ran a 3/4" wide tined braid strap from each end of the post to compression lugs bolted to the underside of the car body. I added straps for the muffler to the body too.

This year at a hamfest I picked up a Motorola power cord kit for $5 brand new. It is #8 AWG super flexible wire with a in-line 30A blade fuse. Perfect. The red wire was about 20' long and the black about 5', but I knew it would do. I made the connections with spade lugs directly to the battery, ran the wires through a firewall grommet, and terminated them under the dash to a large barrier strip. I added a 0.01uF cap across the terminals, attached #12AWG red and black wires and terminated them in a Powerpole to fit the K3. I'm starting to see light at the end of the tunnel.

I had a Lind DC-to-DC converter that I bought on eBay for use with another laptop I thought would be my mobile computer. The Lind came on a hint from Bob, W0BH, when I visited him a couple years ago. The Lind supplies are very low noise. That laptop proved to be a little under-powered for what I wanted to do so I gave it to Paul and borrowed my work laptop. Loaded all the software I would be using (N1MM logger, MMTTY, MMVARI, VSPE serial port emulator) and configured it all to work with my Green Heron Engineering Radio Boss USB (RB) interface. Jeff will be in production with this little gem shortly. In a nutshell, it uses a single USB connection to your computer. The RB has RS-232 and CI-V ports for interfacing to your radio, TXD, DTR and RTS programmable outputs for FSK, PTT and CW keying, and isolated audio in and out connections, each with their own level control. The K3 can communicate, as well as key CW and PTT through the single RS-232 cable, so it is an easy hookup. I ran a RCA phono cable from the TXD port to the ACC on the K3 for true FSK, and the audio I/O cable from the laptop went directly to the K3.

I made a promise to myself to operate mobile this year for the NYQP after winning it last year from home. I felt it would be wise to do a shakedown cruise and the PA QSO Party just happened to be a week prior to the NYQP. I set my modest goal at activating three counties, 150 QSOs and operating all modes (CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK31). OK, so the mode thing was a little ambitious. I left home about 1-1/2 hours before the contest started, figuring that would be plenty of time to take the route to PA. Not! It just so happens that the road goes through Ellicottville, which has a really big Fall Festival each year. Took me an hour to get through the village. I reached the PA line about a half hour after the contest started but wanted to find a hilltop location to operate from. Drove another half hour until I reached a great spot and pulled

far off the road. I found out that my car was not overly noisy, at least not so bad that the K3's noise blanker couldn't handle, but I operated with the engine off. I hoped there would be plenty of reserve to start the car when I was ready.

Here goes nothing. I started on 20 CW calling CQ and worked a few stateside and some DX with excellent signals. Continued along until things slowed and then went to SSB. Made a few QSOs and then decided to try digital. Called CQ a number of times on RTTY with no answers. Maybe that big RTTY contest had something to do with it. Well, lets try PSK31. Darn! No RF even though MMVARI was showing signal and audio was heard in the monitor. Aw, forget about it. Drop down to 40 CW and work some more, then to SSB for a few. It was nice to be called by Paul, N4PN, down in Georgia and tell me I had a great signal. I was in McKean county for a little over an hour.

I wanted to move on to Warren county so off I went. What looks like a short hop on the map turned out to be much longer. After driving a long time through deep valleys I finally found a seasonal use road going up the mountain and took it. Pretty much repeated the results of the previous county except I didn't try digital. At one point I worked a home station also in Warren county and gave him a new multiplier. We talked a bit and he asked me where I was. My reply, "I have no idea. Some seasonal use road on the mountaintop". There was a pause on the other end and then he congratulated me on my faith on getting back to civilization. I do have a TomTom GPS in the car so it really wasn't that bad. The only touchy part was when I drove by a guy shooting his rifle across the road from his driveway. I hoped he would see me coming on my way back, or better yet be gone.

My wife called to ask if I was headed home yet. Nope. I need to activate one more county, which was just a couple miles away and on the way home. I entered Erie county, pulled over on a hilltop but found the bands not quite as good. I did get a call from DL3DXX on 40 CW but as he was giving his information some other 3-lander started calling CQ right on top. Now, I was in the designated mobile window when this happened, but I guess not everyone observes the rules. Things slowed so I decided to call it a day.

I had a great time on my first outing and am looking forward to the NYQP this weekend. I will have a driver for most of the contest so there shouldn't be any one hour lapses in operating. My results from PA were 152 QSOs and 67 multipliers in 3.5 hours of operating. 84 QSOs on 40 CW, 30 on 40 SSB and 38 on 20 CW. I worked almost an identical number of QSOs in each county and also had 8 DX call in.

Rig: Elecraft K3/100
Antennas: Transel Technologies 40 and 20m hamsticks
Computer: Sony VAIO
Interface: GHE Radio Boss USB
Paddles: Bengali Simplex
Headset: Plantronics multi-media with electret mic

Software: N1MM logger
GPS: TomTom One”

WB2ABD/M

Ran WAR MCK FOR ELK CRN POT

Single Op - No Driver , so half the time was spent watching out for elk and motorcycles. Beautiful weather and scenery.

Didn't spend as much time in each county as I would have liked. Wanted to run the six I did and be home before XYL left for work.

Computer frazzled me again ... this time - wrong power cord (N2CU has the one I needed, long story). So it was, yet again, the Pencil-vania QSO Party. I'll make one up before NYQP next week. Had fun.

Thanks to all stations for stopping by, especially my CH buddies chipping in with mults.

K3 Tarheel-2 N1MM ... ohh, ummm, wait... scratch that ...6 sheets of paper and a pencil.”

W3USA/K8MR mobile

My 11th consecutive fall leaf tour and mobile contest operation in the PAQP. With the early date and warm summer the leaves were just starting to turn, but the weather was beautiful so the sightseeing part was a success. We did Saturday only, and to get us back to Cleveland at a reasonable hour we set a target of hitting the Ohio line by 0400z. We did that with a minute to spare.

I had hoped to start in ARM, but we left a bit later and was just entering BUT when the clock turned over. You guys in PA should rest assured that your government is not wasting tax dollars on county line signs. We missed the ARM sign, and operated a few extra minutes as BUT until we realized a cross road was not in BUT. I think we got the rest pretty well, but off the Interstates it is a challenge!

It was great to finally have a contest with in state propagation on 40 meters

during the day. As a result, the rates were good during the daytime, though I thought activity, at least on CW, was less than usual after dark. Nobody must have needed NUM, as I called and called from there with no responses (around 00z). In the 18 or so minutes we didn't even get the 10 qsos needed for the mobile bonus.

Great turnout from NHA and way more RI activity than usual. But I only worked two California sections. Everyone out there burned out after last weekend? The good guy award goes to AA3LX who offered me his 40 meter SSB frequency when in INN, which led to my best SSB run of the contest. He also offered me his frequency on 75 later on, but it was too crowded to expect anything good to come of it, so I declined.

All in all, another very pleasant day. Until the Michigan QSO Party next April, so long from the K8MR mobile crew."

W3VJB – Snyder County (AA4GT and K3MD, operators)

We did well in the PA QSO Party. There was two of us for a multi single. We took turns. K3MD and AA4GT did the Party. We had 431 on CW and 623 on SSB.

Our score was 204,245 which was 4 thousand points short of the record for Snyder County. I did not know John Thompson K3MD and he found out that I wanted to come north and get in the Party. John invited Mary and me up. John K3MD is a retired doctor.

Friday night six club members of the Susquehanna Valley ARC went out to dinner with us. John did the CW and I did the SSB contacts. Next year John is hoping to come south and do the Florida QSO Party. So Maybe we have something started. The main thing is we had a good time. I did have a bad fall Saturday night. It was dark and I tripped over a radial. I went down on my left shoulder. Sunday was a rough day, but I made it. The last two hours I did real well on 40 meters. We did work a lot of County Hunters. Our call was W3VPJ.

KA3QLF /mobile

20M during the PQP as a mobile this year was not so well. Other than 8 or 9 people who were there most anytime I went, there were few other calls. the perennial DX powerhouses were there, but only a few stations in WWA, and 2 in California. Hardly good propagation. I guess I could have tried more often, but the runs on 40 and 80 were WAY above expectation, plus an "impatient" driver forced me to leave counties early. This should be fixed for next year.

W3DYA mobile

" the contest when well but it still is more an intra-state contest than others I operate in as a mobile. But I was glad to see there was no longer an advantage in CW points for operating on 80M and 160M. Thanks to all those who took the time to call me; it's what makes operating mobile fun."

ARIZONA

Wow..another good one with every county on the air including the tough ones Santa Cruz and La Paz. Conditions from TX to AZ were good, and I worked everything with dozens of contacts. County Hunter KB7TAL was out mobile hitting some of the rarer ones, and there were many portable operations again. Some 'county expeditions' on county lines to give out even more.

K7L (K6LL operator)

"What a blast!

2165 QSO's in 24 hours, for an average of over 90 per hour."

K7IA County Expedition

"Unlike last May's 7QP, weather at our 8100 foot elevation was perfect--not a cloud in the sky for the entire event. Arizona's Elk season doesn't begin until next weekend, so the only traffic Erin and I saw was a couple of hunters scouting the countryside from ATVs. Perfect.

As always, 20m was the money band with good propagation into EU in the early hours of both Sat and Sun. The broad beamwidth covered FL/Gitmo through VE4 with loud signals and to the Pacific NW with weaker sigs. There must be a lobe towards KH6 as well. I'll add a simple vee for 20 next time for some omnidirectional help. An ancient Heathkit coax switch made antenna changes simple this time out, and there's one more position available...

40m just wasn't as active this year as it was in 2009. 15m had plenty of

activity, especially DX activity, but the simple vee just wasn't up to it. There weren't enough tall trees properly aligned to erect the homebrew Moxon for 15m. 80m was a disappointment. I had hoped to work some AZ stations, but I heard none. Many thanks to the PA QP ops who handed out the few Q's I made on 80.

The PA QP ops were out in force again, and they added significantly to my log. They seemed to accept my lengthy exchange (AZAPH/GLE) even though what they really wanted was my state and s/n. I kept track of outgoing PA s/n's with pencil and paper and logged everything into a single log. I tried two logs last year, but it was a real administrative workout. I got the impression that the average operator was just as interested in working AZ as PA, so good fodder for all!

I'm principally a CW op, so it took some time for my ears to become accustomed to the din of 20m SSB. Finding a "clear" spot was difficult, so I got a lot of practice, because I was moved off of the spots I found by encroaching QRM and by frequency cops who were guarding rather large bandwidths surrounding various nets. Interestingly, the territory above 14300 was nearly devoid of QSO Party ops (either PA or AZ), or very many other ops for that matter. By mid afternoon on Sunday, it looked like my single county QSO tally would fall short of last year's single county total QSO count. But thanks to many ops who just "turned on the rig to work a few before supper," I enjoyed the best SSB rates ever, exceeding my 2009 single county Q tally by nearly 100 Q's. Perhaps SSB can become an enjoyable mode after all! Many thanks to Sunday afternoon contesters!

Unlike full-bore contests, this effort afforded many pleasant chats on SSB along the way, especially when the rates were low, and no one was waiting. That made the event a real "party." Thanks to the ops who took a few moments to chat--especially those in MN, WI, and MI who could have been on the golf links instead of on the radio. They reported warmer temps than Erin and I had...

80m: vee at 60 feet
40m: vee at 70 feet
20m: homebrew Moxon Rectangle pointed NE at 65 feet
15m: vee at 60 feet

73, Dan k7ia

KF7A County Expedition

First AZ County Expedition for me and my XYL.

Easy ride in 4X4 vehicle. Not so easy in 32-foot motorhome plus trailer.
Set-up Friday afternoon on county line; but at sunset was advised no overnight camping. Broke camp and drove additional five hours in dark to new location (very remote) on county line. At daybreak (Saturday) began set-up (again) of portable Inverted VEE with apex at 48 feet.

Convoy of 4x4 Off-Road Members en-route to Prescott, together with a series of other 4x4 vehicles carrying deer hunters greatly delayed placement of one leg of the Inverted VEE across the jeep trail. Began contest nearly 5-hours late (2041Z) on 20-m SSB, but a barefoot K3 and make-shift antenna were no match for the many well-equipped PA Party SSB participants. Plenty of room (good news) on the 20-m CW band for me.

I began a 20-m CW run with first contact by fellow AZ Outlaw, Bud - N7CW. The bad news was that not many CW operators were interested in the AZQP. Perhaps some CW Operators were confused and did not respond. So (with some success), I began alternating between a simple CQ and the more-lengthy Two-County CQ: CQ AZ AZ DE K7FA/AZMHV/AZLPZ

LOGGING/EXCHANGE: Because the AZQP and PAQP both occur on the same weekend, it appears helpful to have AZ in your CW exchange. Also, an N1MM-Logger function key was set to issue a number (NR #) to reciprocate with PA. Although QSO numbers may not be sequential, I did not care because I plan to submit a Check Log to PAQP. Last year during the concurrent AZQP & PAQP, I used two computers to make separate logging entries for the two respective contests.

Our return trip to our home QTH from the country line was un-eventful, except that a truck with cattle-trailer blocked our exit on the jeep trail for hours (so we arrived home late Monday).

Thanks for the fun! 73, Tom

KE7DX County Expedition to Navajo (SSB and CW)

“Great fun operating portable from Fools Hollow Lake State Park near Show Low (Navajo County). I worked all 15 Arizona counties, so I'll bet there will be plenty of others who did so! Enjoyed working DX from the other contests: Scandinavia, Britain, South America, Oceania, and the EU Sprint. Oh yeah,

plenty of PA stations too! A highlight was talking Jim KB6TAL/7 into a short visit while he was mobile in the county. We showed off our setups & told a few tales. Thanks to Jim and all the other mobiles for their activity! It really paid off! Thanks to Owen, AK7AR, for hosting the W7SA operation in Pima County. They did a great job, with over 1000 Qs."

Peak Oil News II

Chinese crude imports hit high --- The world's second largest oil consumer China imported a record amount of crude in September as refineries produced more fuel to meet growing domestic demand.

News wires 13 October 2010 08:32 GMT

The 35% year-on-year increase in monthly imports contributed to gains that took US crude above $82 today. China is the world's fastest growing oil market and Beijing's rising fuel needs to meet robust economic expansion are driving global demand growth.

China alone was expected to provide 760,000 barrels per day of the 1.88 million bpd increase in 2010 world oil consumption, the Paris-based International Energy Agency forecast in its report last month.

China imported 23.29 million tonnes of crude last month, or 5.67 million barrels per day, the General Administration of Customs said on its web site, up from 4.19 million bpd in the same month in 2009 and 15% higher than August.

Imports in the first nine months gained 24.1% on the year at 181.16 million tonnes, or 4.84 million bpd, the data showed.

"Domestic consumption is running strong, if you look at the continuous draws in refined fuel stocks and the car sales number," said a fuel market official with top Asian refiner Sinopec Corporation.

The high import amount came in line with a Reuters monthly poll that showed China's top oil plants raised crude throughput last month by nearly 3% from August with an average utilisation of 92%.

In addition to increased runs from polled plants, number two refiner PetroChina last month started test runs at its new 200,000-bpd Qinzhou plant in southern Guangxi region, as well as a

smaller 60,000-bpd Qingyang refinery in northern Gansu province, further driving up crude demand.

Apart from strong domestic fuel sales spurred by a robust economic growth, China's quiet, ongoing campaign to boost both crude and refined fuel stockpiles is another factor behind the record imports, industry officials said.

The possibility of a fuel price hike after recent crude price rises was adding momentum to domestic sales as independent retailers rush to build stocks, industry officials said.

"Our supplies are getting tighter, as there is this renewed expectation of a price hike," said the Sinopec official.

China, which has linked its domestic pump fuel prices with international crude prices since 2009, last cut prices on June 1 by 3% from record highs.

Strong demand growth has led to six consecutive monthly declines in inventories of gasoline, diesel and kerosene held by the country's two top oil firms.

Refineries may have increased runs in an effort to top up those stocks, the industry officials said.

The customs data also showed that China maintained its position as a net importer of refined oil products last month, with imports at 2.8 million tonnes and exports at 2.09 million tonnes, with net fuel imports up 45% over August, reported Reuters.

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<< **China imported 23.29 million tonnes of crude last month, or *5.67 million barrels per day*, the General Administration of Customs said on its web site, up from *4.19 million bpd in the same month in 2009* and 15% higher than August.**>>

Oops, that increase just burnt every drop of US deepwater GOM production, developed over 20 years **in one year**. Just the increase.

So what happens in five years when China needs a lot more oil?

More State QSO Parties

Wowie! This was a good weekend for county hunting. First, we had the NY state QSO Party with a handful of mobiles and dozens of fixed stations getting on and giving out contacts. At the same time, we had a handful of active mobiles running around in Iowa in that QSO Party. There was always something to chase and work all day long. On Sunday, the IL QSO Party provided hours and hours of mobiles zipping around the state with tens of thousands of contacts.

New York State QSO Party

Wow..a good one. **WA3HAE caught all but three counties in the entire state!** Lots of mobiles including W2PV, WB2ABD, AK2D, NT2A, K2ZR, WJ2O, N2CU, KA3QLF, W2LE. For years, this has been a real sleeper, but the Rochester DX group has reactivated it with great success! Maybe all the counties were on the air? If not, darn close to it!

N2CU/mobile

My second mobile operation (first was last week in the PAQP). This time I had a driver (my XYL) for part of the operation. We were driving out to SUNY Oswego to visit my son and the XYL wanted to leave at 1300 UTC. This meant not being able to activate my home county (ERI). So I started the contest in GEN with high hopes. As I worked my way along I-90 I realized the value of having a screwdriver type antenna. Several times I was asked to QSY to 15m and I had the 40m and 20m hamsticks mounted. Changing sticks at 70 MPH is tough to do.

I operated from the back seat with my K3 on the folded down front seat. This was a pretty good setup and with N1MM being able to control the radio tuning and RIT, I seldom had to touch the radio. SSB while in motion was impossible with road noise and the stereo keeping the XYL happy.

After arriving in Oswego, I went solo for a couple hours activating three counties. I tried digital modes but heard no activity. Then it was several hours off as I watched my son play lacrosse in a charity event and then visit for a while. I did another solo run, activating ONO.

We left for home around 7:30PM local and my driver wasn't keen on driving at night on the I-90 so we decided to take a different route. The drive turned out to be very nerve wracking and after an hour or so we pulled over and I shut down the rig and took over driving. I missed the last hour of the contest which was probably just as well. My planned route never came to pass as the delays and

socializing didn't leave enough time.

Congrats to the W2PV team on a great mobile score and to WA3HAE who worked all but three counties.

I was amazed at how well the antennas worked on CW but SSB was another story. I would call and call loud stations on 75 and 40m and they would continue to CQ in my face. Working stations on CW was no problem as evidenced by the number of DX that called including Europe on 40m. One thing I would like to have in the rules is a mobile window. We have it hard enough as it is without home KW stations taking over our frequency. A number of CQs on PSK31 produced nothing and RTTY was congested with JARTS. I think the 80m stick needs repair. The SWR was changing wildly as we were in motion, causing the power output to fluctuate between 50-100W. When still, it was fine.

Rig: K3/100, off-brand hamsticks, GHE Radio Boss USB, N1MM logger, 2008 Pontiac Torrent, Pepsi and sandwiches."

NT2A/Mobile

I used Hustler antennas with quick release and operated from car in parking position only. I lost more than 4 hours running between the boroughs in NYC. There was big traffic in Bronx,Queens, Kings, and even - Richmond. It was my first time running mobile in QP, and I got good experience.

AK2D/m (AK2D, AK2X opr) – SSB only

" Murphy was thankfully absent this year. No major issues. Got off to a bit of a late start, but we had a good time operating and the drive was great!"

N2BEG/M - SSB only

Great fun. Managed to work from 4 counties. Would have liked to get more Qs on 15 when the band was open. (thanks to all of the DLs we worked!) Wished I had an 80m hamstick! All 4 80m Q's were made with a G5RV lying in the driveway. Thanks to my loggers: Ben KC2JXP & Jack, truly a team (family) effort.

W2CCC Multi-OP - 860 Qs on SSB (AF2K, K2CS, N2TWI, N2ZN, WB2HJV)

"Sorry-don't have breakdown handy, but had most Q's on 20 meters (around 450).
Missed 10 counties including our own! A nice day running pileups and relaxing with friends.

Note de N4CD: their county, Herkimer, run 3 times on CW. They needed a key!

W2M – Multi-Op Yates

For the second year in a row, AD8J and W3NO drove up to the Finger Lakes from Pittsburgh to a summer cottage on Keuka Lake to operate the NYQP. Our set-up this year was essentially identical to last year, with the addition of an inverted vee for 160. We arrived in Yates County late Thursday afternoon and spent the evening setting up the actual station on the screened porch, overlooking the lake. The average high in mid-October for Penn Yan is 59 and the average low is 42, but unfortunately for the second straight year, we didn't even come close to seeing 59 degrees. The cottage is not insulated nor is there a fire place, so the temperature inside the cottage is basically the same as outside. We hung plastic over the porch screens to keep the cold out and whatever heat we could generate in. We had several space heaters and with the PCs and rigs going 24 hours, we actually were able to maintain the temperature on the porch in the low 70s during the contest.

We spent five hours Friday hanging inverted vees in the trees for 160, 80, 75, 40, and 20 at heights ranging from ~40-50 feet. Not less than an hour after we finished the antenna work, the rains came and continued well into the night Friday. The skies cleared up nicely on Saturday, but then the winds picked up. Fortunately, the plastic we had hung held up nicely, and we were quite comfortable in our "shack" on the porch. The most uncomfortable part of the weekend was when we shaved and showered, or fixed meals in the kitchen. AB2HG from Rochester, who owns the cottage next door, once again joined us for the contest, and operated on RTTY, while AD8J and W3NO alternated between CW and SSB.

We were initially concerned that the activity of the new Dutch DXCC countries in the Caribbean would create QRM from the resultant pile-ups, but we didn't experience any real issues from the many PJ stations which spread out their listening frequencies up the band. Activity this year seemed to be roughly the same as 2009. The only disappointment was the lack of good runs on 75 phone Saturday evening. We compensated for the lack of activity on 75 phone by

working more 80 CW.”

W2LC/mobile

The earlier start time made for better conditions and more QSO's, but there was a DX contesting on 20m that didn't help. Went from Onondaga County to Cayuga back to Onondaga, Oswego, Jefferson, Lewis, back to Jefferson and finished in St. Lawrence County, stopped in Potsdam NY for the Clarkson hockey at 7PM. I didn't operate after that. Overall it went pretty well.

Equipment: FT-817 running about 4.5W to 40m and 20m ham sticks with a few radials taped to the top of my van. So if I was weak now you know why.”

Iowa State QSO Party

Mobiles out included K0PC, K0DAS, NU0Q, W0ZQ, KN0R (ssb), KE0G(/p) and N9BIL. At least 52 counties were on the air.

W0ZQ/mobile

Some of the best country and best weather for mobile contesting you can find anywhere. Blue sky's, 65 degrees, and nothing but corn and counties for miles around ! 20m CW started a bit slow but pick up through the day. 20m SSB was active with the Boy Scounts event, so wall to wall QRM around 14285. 40m SSB from the mobile is very tough and I did not find too much IA activity there through the day. Of course 40m CW was the money band/mode with 80m CW only coming into play during the last 45 minutes of the contest. All in all, a very fun event. 73, Jon

K0PC mobile

The IA QSO Party occurred on a beautiful fall day. Harvest activities were in full swing across the state and we shared the road with many tractors and combines. The harvest of QSOs went pretty well too with an overall rate of over 75 QSOs/hr for the nine hour contest. Short term rates topped at at 150/hr

Most of the equipment worked well. I am still having issues with the screwdriver antenna

controller but I had a manual control as a back up this trip. It was a good addition.

My driver John, W9DND, kept us on schedule to within 10 minutes all day in spite of a few unexpected road closures for construction. We also abandoned our route in Humboldt county in favor of a gravel road. The power line noise was so high I couldn't copy anyone. I will drop that road from my future trips.

I ended up bouncing back and forth between 40M & 20M all day. Both bands were in great shape. I was particularly impressed by 40M. Even mobile to mobile contacts within Iowa were possible on 40M. I was going to try 80M at the end of the day but never got a break.

My list of big hitters contains many familiar calls:
34- N5NA (I think Alan was sitting in the back seat)
26- K5LH
24- N5XG
19- N4CD, NN9K, NT5O, W4AWF
17- NU0Q
16- N0BUI, W4UCZ, W7GVE
13- K4AMC
12- AD1C, K7TM
11- K8NYG, K9EN, W0BH
10- K0HNC, W9MSE, W9OO
and many more in single digits

I had 167 unique calls in the log but these 21 stations accounted for half the QSOs.

Equipment:
IC-7000 Xcvr, HiQ 4-80 antenna, WriteLog, old (but trusty) IBM ThinkPad laptop, 08 Honda Accord

Thanks to the Ottumwa ARC for sponsoring this event and providing the great weather!

73, Pat K0PC”

Illinois QSO Party

Another great one. Mobiles and rovers out included W9MSE N9BIL , K99JG, N9CDX, K9IUA, KF9D, N9JF and W9WI. Some folks worked over 80 counties

K9IUA/Rover

Operated stationary mobile (rover) from six stops in five counties -- WBGO, STEP (twice due to route, 20 m the first time, 40 m the second time), OGLE, CARR, and JODA). All QRP to mobile Hamstick antennas, which is a fun challenge to say the least. Thought I had done really terrible (which in the big picture I did compared to most operators in this QSO Party), but looking at the log today shows I nearly doubled last year's score (which had nearly doubled the year before that). Twenty meters was definitely the money band for me, although 40 meters (my lowest band possible) certainly was good. Had trouble on 40 meters both with the tuner giving me trouble on that band at two of my stops, which lost me lots of time on that band, and generally having trouble holding a frequency later in my operation when things got really crowded. And had keyer problems for part of the contest as well, which didn't help. Thanks to all who worked me.

KK9N Rover - SSB

Solo Op. Six counties in three stops. K3, loaded 14' Vertical mounted on roof w/tuned radials. Delighted to receive all the 59+ reports. Helping friends with antenna projects the day before cut into prep time. Did not have time to plan the best routes and getting CW interface to work with the laptop. Then forgot to grab the keyer. Enjoyed the contest as always. Be back next year. Hopefully better prepared. Counties included Bond, Clinton, Montgomery, Macoupin, Madison, and St. Clair.

Global Warming

Part I

This is from the resignation letter of Hal Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, from The American Physical Society(APS):

"...It is of course, the global warming scam, with the (literally) trillions of dollars driving it, that has corrupted so many scientists, and has carried APS before it like a rogue wave. It is the greatest and most successful pseudoscientific fraud I have seen in my long life as a physicist. Anyone who has the faintest doubt that this is so should force himself to read the ClimateGate documents, which lay it bare. (Montford's book organizes the facts very well.) I don't believe that any real physicist, nay scientist, can read that stuff without revulsion. I would almost make that revulsion a definition of the word scientist...

3. In the interim the ClimateGate scandal broke into the news, and the machinations of the principal alarmists were revealed to the world. It was a fraud on a scale I have never seen, and I lack the words to describe its enormity. Effect on the APS position: none. None at all. This is not science; other forces are at work....

Part II

Scaffetta has a new paper out looking at 60-year cycles and climate. One interesting graph is Figure 10B, where the de-trended temperature record is shifted 60 years and compared to itself. There is a high correlation and similar amplitude.

He writes "anthropogenic emissions do not show any symmetric 60-year cycle before and after the 1940s (see the figures reporting the climate forcings in Hansen et al., 2007). Thus, it is very likely that at least 0.3°C warming from 1970 to 2000 was induced by a 60-year natural cycle during its warming phase."

Empirical evidence for a celestial origin of the climate oscillations and its implications
www.fel.duke.edu/%7Escafetta/pdf/scafetta-JSTP2.pdf

Part III

"The strategists at RWE, Germany's biggest power company, estimate in an internal study that Europe will require a staggering €3 trillion ($5 trillion) of investment just to convert its power generation to green energy. That doesn't include the necessary spending on networks and storage. The price of electricity production would increase rapidly in the coming 25 years to up to 23.5 cents per kilowatt hour in a worst-case scenario, if Germany were to switch to complete self-sufficiency in energy production, from 6.5 cents now, RWE estimates. "

Let's see..with a population of less than a billion(about 830 million) , that 4 trillion works out to more than $6,000 per person (man, women, child, retiree) in Europe. You think they have enough money stashed in their mattresses to pay for it? And to pay for electricity at 4 times the current rate? And give up their gas cars..no wait..we were just talking about electricity!..... That includes Greece, Portugal, and other countries that are already bankrupt. Add in those gigantic gasoline prices. Giant Value Added Taxes (20%) on everything you buy.

Part IV

“The guy who "turned Wikipedia into the missionary wing of the global warming movement" has been banned for six months - Not fired, but banned for six months - which explains very nicely why the Wikipedia concept is a failure. A failure because it is proving to be an open forum for zealots.

Through his position, Connolley for years kept dissenting views on global warming out of Wikipedia, allowing only those that promoted the view that global warming represented a threat to mankind. As a result, Wikipedia became a leading source of global warming propaganda, with Connolley its chief propagandist.

.... In the decision, a slap-down for the once-powerful Connolley by his peers, he has been barred from participating in any article, discussion or forum dealing with global warming. [1]

...Connolley set to work on the Wikipedia site. He rewrote Wikipedia’s articles on global warming, on the greenhouse effect, on the instrumental temperature record, on the urban heat island, on climate models, on global cooling.... he began to erase the Little Ice Age... the Medieval Warm Period...

...When Connolley didn’t like the subject of a certain article, he removed it — more than 500 articles of various descriptions disappeared at his hand. When he disapproved of the arguments that others were making, he often had them barred — over 2,000 Wikipedia contributors who ran afoul of him found themselves blocked from making further contributions. Acolytes whose writing conformed to Connolley’s global warming views, in contrast, were rewarded with Wikipedia’s blessings. In these ways, Connolley turned Wikipedia into the missionary wing of the global warming movement. [2]

17 Meters and Up

There hasn't been a lot of activity, but enough to keep it interesting. Terry, WQ7A, needing at least 3 contacts on each of two bands for Mobile Diamond, used 17 and 15M to great success on his first trip out after earning the Master Platinum Award. It helps if you are far enough away as the skip is long on these bands. Likely more runs occurred but were not spotted.

In the month of October, the following **mobiles have been spotted on 17M**

SSB – WQ7A

CW – W0GXQ, K8ZZ, KO1U, W9MSE, K0ARS, N4JT, N0KV, NF0N,

on 15M, we note:

SSB – WQ7A

CW – W0GXQ, WB2ABD(NYQP), and many stations in the NY and CA QSO parties.

On 12M we note:

CW - W0GXQ, NT2A, W9MSE.

There were a few spots for the 10-10 contest – but I never heard a peep the entire contest.

On the Road with N4CD IV

There was a hamfest 2 hours north in Oklahoma. I decided to head up there, but the weather was expected to be stormy on Saturday. I ran up there quick on Friday afternoon to get there for the 5pm opening time (5-8pm on Friday). I ran into Ted,WA5VRE, long time county hunter who lives in Canadian County, Oklahoma. We yakked for a while. He was selling a whole table full of parts for homebrewing stuff.

He's getting back into county hunting with about 185 left to finish off. About 10 years ago, he had a flood in his basement that wiped out all his MRC files and log books, so he had to start over. After an hour or so, I had seen everything, and grabbed a quick dinner at the Sirloin Stockade, then hit the sack at the Motel 6 in Ardmore (Carter County). Saturday morning was gloomy and the weather forecast was for nasty weather. After a quick breakfast at Denny's, I headed over to the convention center and checked out the new sellers on Saturday.

Troy, K5OH, was also there and we yakked for a few minutes. He was also selling a few items. It was a good hamfest, but I didn't find any major goodie item to buy. I bought a few small things, then headed home at 9am. I went outside and the sky was VERY dark and gray – ominous sign of imminent bad weather – severe thunderstorms, hail, and possible tornadoes coming from the west. The car was pointed toward home quickly down the interstate. Along

the way there were some big showers, high winds, but nothing too bad. I got home by 11am and hunkered down for the day – trying to work WQ7A and N8KIE, both out on trips, for the MD award. A few times I had to shut down due to thunderstorms overhead. Once the tornado sirens in the neighboring town went off. The static on 40M was 40 over – that band was out.

No radio this trip – with the forecast for nasty weather it wasn't worth planning on being right in the middle of severe weather for a county putting out trip. Those counties are right on the interstate and I'll likely head through them a few times a year getting from here to there. Sunday the tornado sirens went off in the next town, and tornadoes touched down in Navarro and Hunt Counties – not that far away. It made a mess of Interstate 45 for over 4 hours. It was a good weekend to be home.

There were a handful of old Hallicrafters and Radio Shack receivers, a few Heathkit receivers and transceivers for sale , but not much in the way of old tube stuff, or even solid state transceivers for sale other than some really out of date 2M stuff. There were a half dozen dealers – the Wireman, WB0W, etc, selling new stuff for those wishing to stock up.

I'll be on the road on a 3000-4000 mile trip in a few weeks back to MD, so we'll see you then.

Awards

CQ Magazine, with Ted, K1BV Awards Custodian, has issued the following awards:

USACA #1202	Ken, K9EN	9/07/2010
USACA #1203	Tim, W8JJ	9/20/2010
USACA #1204	Jim, VA3XOV	9/29/2010
USACA #1205	Kerry, W4SIG	10/11/2010
USACA #1206	Paul, NU4C	10/22/2010

MARAC has issued the following awards:

Bingo #322	Ed, N3HOO	9/21/2010

Bingo II #72	Jim, N4JT	9/24/2010
Bingo II #73	Tom, N4RS	10/10/2010
Bingo II #74(all cw)	Joyce, KD8HB	10/16/2010
USACW #115	Alan, KI7WO	9/25/2010
USACW #116	Gene, K5GE	10/05/2010
USACW #117	Kerry, W4SIG	10/10/2010
Master Gold #45(all cw)	Jeff, W9MSE	10/07/2010
Third Time #226	Mike, NF0N	10/16/2010
Master Platinum #11	Terry, WQ7A	10/22/2010
Master Platinum #12	Ron, KB6UF	10/26/2010

Operating Events for County Hunters

The feast of state QSO Parties is over till January 2010 other than KY. Plan for that one, then a spell until January. Now we enter contest season with CQ Worldwide, ARRL Sweepstakes, 10M and 160M contests, and other ones you might get in to get some natural bingos, prefixes, or counties you need.

Keep in mind that ARRL Sweepstakes occur in November and WILL impact the bands – one weekend on CW, one on SSB. CQ WW also generates lots of QRM.

November 6-8 ARRL Sweepstakes - CW http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes

Kentucky QSO Party
November 13 1400Z to November 14 0200Z
RST and KY or S/P/C
up 50 KHz on cw

www.wkdxa.com

November 20-22 **ARRL Sweepstakes SSB** http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes

Nov 27-29 **CQ CW worldwide Contest** (messes up CW bands big time)

That's it for this month. CU next month.

73 de N4CD