County Hunter News

November 1, 2011
Volume 7, 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.

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CW County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.9155, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18136 or for occasional 17M SSB runs usually after the run on 20M SSB. (21.336 and 28.336)

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

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

The USACA award is sponsored by CQ Magazine. Rules and information are here:
http://countyhunter.com/cq.htm

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:
http://countyhunter.com/whatis.htm

MARAC sponsors an award program for many other county hunting awards. You can find information on these awards and the rules at:
http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

There is a lot more information at www.countyhunter.com . Please check it out. Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at www.CHNewsonline.com

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

Notes from the Editor

1) We're almost into November and some real fall weather up north and in the higher elevations. It's not far from snow and worse up north. Hopefully all your antenna work is done for the season. The QSO Party season is about over with many major ones just completed. Look forward to the 10M contests, the 160 meter contests, a few other major ones like Sweepstakes in the next two months. Just the KY QSO Party to go this month.

The mobiles have been out and running. Conditions most days have been good on 20 and 17M, and the DX is rolling in on 15, 12, and 10 meters. KL8DX (Fourth District) was in on several weekends S9 plus on 10 meters for hour after hour. He will be in all the contests, SSB and CW. Rick, AI5P, popped up in HR9 land with a barefoot IC706 and dipole antenna doing a nice job on 10 and 12 meters – plus other bands. W0GXQ was out in northern MN and making contacts up through 12 and 10m from many that he ran.

This month was a good month for people finishing up awards – quite a few are in in the Awards Section at the end of the newsletter. There seems to be renewed interest in the Five Star Award now that there is a follow on Star XX award.

Soon, folks will be off on holiday trips for Thanksgiving and the end of the year. The snow birds will fly (or drive) to warmer climates for the winter.

We cover lots of the QSO Parties – some are mostly mobile affairs like IA – with lots of 20 and 40m activity. Others are 'county Dxpeditions' like CA and AZ. In NY, much of the activity takes place on 40 and 80 meters so if you aren't close by, you miss out on a lot of it. Each has its own flavor.

2) Let's see....N9AC mobile asks K2JG what the frequency is on 40M SSB. Do you want to guess what the answer is? Jimbo says 'I can't help you'! Amazing. I wonder what he thinks? That mobiles will go to 40m and never return? Do you really think that KZ2P

doesn't see the spots for 7188? (Wednesday, Oct 5, 2011 1905z) . How's that for helping out the mobiles? Or the county hunters who can't hear the mobile on 20M?

Mobile Activity

There was plenty of mobile activity between the QSO parties and several mobiles out on long trips. Quite a few mobiles headed to South Carolina and back in mid October.

For Mobile Diamond hunters – it was a good time with N9STL, N4CD, N7ID, KM9X, W0GXQ, AB4YZ, KB6UF, and N8KIE putting out counties – and all of them good for a bunch of stars. They also give out lots of qualifying contacts for everything from USA-CA, Bingo, MG and MP, too. Ray seems to have not fixed his key as he is heard only on SSB.

We also have a half dozen mobiles putting out counties for the 'no star' award. You can count 'portable stations' as in County Expeditions as well for this award, but not fixed stations.

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Here's the highlights of the mobile activity starting the end of September (around the 24th) up to the last week of October.

First a few mini-trip reports:

W0QE: Trip from Colorado to Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.
4330 miles, 5097 contacts, 161 counties

Operated 8 bands on CW and 2 on SSB
Most counties were activated on at least 6 band/modes.

Crossed paths with Kerry, W4SIG in Washington County, OH and we had a nice eyeball QSO which was quite enjoyable. Almost had an eyeball with N2OCW but I was about 30 minutes too late and he was headed to the dentist and then work.

I was disappointed with the number of 15/12/10 meter contacts I made. The bands were wide open but only a few followed me up after the 20m run. It is REALLY hard to run all the bands on the fly and it it not always easy or safe to stop. This trip was mainly to visit a bunch of relatives and my wife was keeping me to the promise to not stop "much" and stay on schedule. In return she did a great job logging the contacts and I owe her. On the last evening home I operated 80m until everyone went to bed and hope I gave out a bunch of new 80m counties. Propagation was coast to coast with S9 signals.

Note de N4CD - I followed him up! But most of the time I didn't hear him, plain and simple!

K7TM "3 days of fun 31 counties activated (2 Idaho, 29 Montana) 1163 contacts 1488 miles driven 1 bend antenna mast and broken ball mount 1 chipped/cracked windshield (love Montana roads) "

"I got home this morning after the week long trip to Oregon, Idaho,some Wyoming and Montana. Total 2007 miles,761 contacts, operated from 34 counties."

KM1C: The VA KY OH KY WV TN NC trip was a ton of fun. The IC7000 / LDG Tuner / New Tarheel 200 / New, bigger, better cap hat / Choice of whips above the cap hat (Long for the lower bands, but a 3' shorty for the higher bands) / KT1 Firestick Quick Disconnects on the whips, cap hat, and top of the Tarheel 200 / New and much better grounding scheme (Square SS plate from Tarheel bolted in three places directly on top of the rear bumper, but off set so the right hand rear door can be opened without tilting the antenna over .... all made for the best system I have had to date. I swear that with the new grounding system I am hearing another, lower level of weak signals and making more 22 or 229 QSOs without the need of relays/QSP. (However, I still ask for QSP on CW if I think there is someone in there but can not decode the call.)

In any event, if it works well now, I wonder what will happen if I install a KX3 or a K3 with diversity receive? I understand they offer yet another whole level of "hearability" with much better noise reduction and adjacent signal suppression. Fun stuff to think about.

KD6HWD: Thanks for the great help along the way on our trip. Vicki and I want to thank EVERYONE who in some way helped us while we were on vacation for 2 weeks. We had a great time running the counties we did. I hope we were able to help with the needs you had. I won't even try to name names because everyone was so helpful! The real work was done by my wife, Vicki, as she logged every contact by hand as we were on the road or stopped on county lines. One of these days she will upgrade her license and we can run as a team. She missed a lot of nice scenery but we both met new cousins we haven't met before. Thanks to all.

NU4C: "thanks to all who I contacted and special thanks to net controls and spotters. This was a spur of the moment trip (XYL's idea, visited 5 of 6 kids and saw 10 of 12 g'kids) I jury rigged a radio and hamstick in her car. Sorry, 20m only. 1486 contacts in 14 states/122 counties and over 4000 miles "

KN4Y: on the return trip from SC: I planned to run Baker and Jefferson Counties, when I turned into the Baker County rest area the DOT had not trimmed the trees and I could not stop in time and the limbs took off my antenna. The shaft is bent but I think the resonators are okay.

W0GXQ: "Seventeen and Up was humming today! . . . I hope you were able to pick up some new band/county needs. The tally was 108 on 17m, 92 on 15m, 61 on 12m, and 33 on 10m. Thanks to the MP gang for the contacts and I picked up five new ones for MD "run".

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Back to who - was - where

Paul, **NU4C** was out on a major trip putting out over a hundred counties on SSB.

Ron, **K2RP** was in CO and headed back to CA via NM and AZ

Mike, **NF0N** was up in MN running some there

Bill, **K2HVN**, put out counties for weeks in ND, SD, down to MO, across into KY, then VA as he slowly headed east.

Pete, **NN9K** was over in WV and headed back home to IL

Jack, **N7ID** left ID and headed east to MI and then back.

Jim, **N9JF** was all over – from TX to you name it – running them on CW. Up in IA and NE, too.

Randy, **AJ5ZX, and KC5QCB**, Janet, headed up to OK running them both ways

Ron, **KB6UF**, was out and about in LA and some in MS.

Joe, **N5UZW** ran quite a few in LA.

KB6HWD was spotted in MO and TN and other states.

W8RCW spotted in WV and OH

Kerry, **W4SIG,** ran through KY up to OH and PA and back.

Cliff, **K6JN**, and Nelda**, W6XJN,** made another cross country trip putting out counties along the way.

Paul, **WB2ABD**, went to some of the tougher to get NY counties for the folks.

WA3QNT was out for a day in VA, WV.

Bill, **KM1C**, headed out on a week long trip to WV and KY then back home.

Joyce, **N9STL**, ran the southwest corner of IL. Later she ran some to the northeast from her QTH in St. Clair, IL.

Bill, **WG9A**, made a nice trip from IL to MA and back.

Leo, **WY7LL, and WY7ML** headed east from WY headed to MN.

Bob, **N8KIE** left MI , ran down through OH, and put out half of KY, then into TN, VA and lots of NC then to SC. Back through NC to WV and KY to OH and home.

W9MSE , Jeff, was out in WI on cw. Ran up to 17M in many counties.

AA9JJ/N9QPQ left AZ, headed north to IL then through IN and OH and to South Carolina. And back.

Dan, **KM9X**, headed down to KY – he wanted to be close by N8KIE for his last county WBOW for Five Star. KY is at a tough distance from his home in IN. Propagation always works at a few miles!

Dan, **AA0TT,** was out running counties here and there. Colorado, Nevada and lots of other states, too.

KB0BA, Lowell, and Sandra, **N0XYL** headed to SC going through KY. After they headed back home.

KB9VYT, Ann, and **KA9JAC**, Bob, were out through KY to SC.

Jerry, **W0GXQ**, and Don, **W0EAR**, took a trip over to ND to run a half dozen counties – chasing each other through the counties.

Ed, **KN4Y** headed north to SC, while **AF3X** spotted from MS over to SC and back.

N8II, Jeff was out and about in WV.

Larry, **W7FEN,** took a trip to west TX. Later he headed across CO to four corners.

Matt and Sharon, **W0NAC, N0LXJ**, took a tour around the northern part of CO running many for the Five Mode Award.

K7TM took a major trip in OR running many of them. Then into ID and MT.

Joyce**, N9STL**, made a nice trip up through IL to WI, across the state then down the east side of IL and across back to home base. They had the motorhome with the dogs and the bird. It eats $100/day in gas.

Mark, **W9OP,** spotted out and about in NC. Then headed back home.

Mike, **KA4RRU**, headed over to the eastern part of VA and put them out.

Don**, W0EAR**, was out and about in WI – up on 17M too,

KC2ZDC was spotted out in VT on SSB

Kerry**, W4SIG**, was down in AL. Then over to MS and home.

NX4C, Wes, made several trips in TN, then up to KY to run them on SSB and CW.

Dan, **KM9X**, headed up to Marion IN and back running them up and back.

Silver **N9QS** headed back from North Carolina through much of eastern VA, then following the interstates back to IL.

K5TER, WB5TMW, AA0TT, and N9AC were busy putting them out on 20M SSB. N9AC also ran on CW.

Ray, **AB4YZ**, headed on over from VA, up through WV, across KY, IN and IL on the interstates over to Johnson County KS.

Jerry, **W0GXQ**, took a nice day trip around northern MN – propagation was great. (Unfortunately, mostly heard people working him on 15, 12 and 10 meters, but not him!)

Bill, **KM1C**, headed back from NC running a few in GA. Then he was up in NY state.

End date 10/6/11

On the Road with N4CD I

Each year, the last weekend September, it's time for the annual Texas QSO Party. Chuck, NO5W, tries to get every county on the air – arranging for mobiles to head to 'unclaimed' counties. The QSO Party is from 9am to 9pm central time on Saturday, and then another 9am to 3 pm time on Sunday. Quite a few mobiles plan on being out both days. Chuck is at every hamfest in TX promoting the TQP trying to get stations interested. He's also the main log checker. If you run with computer logging, he's also got the best 'free' program for state QSO parties – GPS enabled – for mobile use. We've covered that before, but if you want to check it out visit his website.

http://www.no5w.com/

There was an antique radio auction scheduled for Saturday – with about 300 radios up for auction – from early Crosley 2 and 3 tube broadcast band sets, to several hundred 1920s and 1930s vintage radios from table radios to small 'tombstone' to large consoles. Zenith TransOceanics and a Hallicrafters that looked line a clone to them. Old Edison wax cylinder players and giant consoles. A 1940s TV set, boxes and boxes of tubes, piles of old radio magazines from the 1920s and 30s. It consisted of 3 estates worth of radios. Fortunately there was a preview for the auction on Friday – so I checked it out. There were just a few things I might bid on – but nothing I 'had to have' so I decided at the last minute to skip it and go mobile on Saturday. No nifty SW regens.

The Chevy Malibu was just back from the shop where they had replaced the 'Transmission Control Module' for the six speed automatic transmission, so I would check the car out on a couple hundred mile trip. (done under the 100K mile/5year 'drive train warranty')

Chuck, NO5W, had indicated that no one planned to run Cooke, Archer, and a few from Haskell going west. So I told him I'd get that. As of Thursday before the big event, he had commitments from all the mobiles that all 254 counties in TX would be on the air! Someone else was headed to Stonewall and Kent, too, so I could skip those if time got run short.

After a nice early breakfast, I put the radio in the car, put the antennas on the car, and headed

out. I'd head toward Cooke, but could run some Denton and Wise first. It was over to I-35 and north to route 455 headed west. I'd start in Denton County, and you run into Wise, then whack the corner of Cooke.

When the contest started, I ran on 40M CW.....and things had changed! No S7 computer type wide spur on 7058. No spur at all. All quiet on 7056.5. Zero car noise! Replacing the module had eliminated ALL the noise. That was great. Well, at least I haven't found the spur in the lower 60 Khz of the band. Didn't look elsewhere. Residual noise is also down to essentially zero too. Good! That noise has been there since day one.

I switched over to 20M CW.....whoa...the dashboard lit up, the gauges went wild.....something there had changed. It was the same setup I used two weeks ago in the AR QSO Party. Things had gotten a lot more sensitive to RF. NO problem if stopped, but when moving things went nuts. I ran the first three counties stopped on 20M. Then I decided maybe I could fix things. So I moved the coax from the from the driver side rear door – from the mag mount. I moved it to the passenger side – the radio sits on the passenger front seat. I put a small couple turn coil right by the antenna with the coax (about 4 inches in diameter – four turns) and brought the coax into the passenger rear door, and then with a short lead inside to the antenna switch which sits on the front seat, too. That seems to have fixed the problem. Next I'll have to figure out a way to ground the radio inside the car – never needed it before. Probably time to take the mag mount base apart and check the coax shield ground – it tends to corrode and not be good. Radio was happy , though with low SWR. RFI problem appeared to be fixed for the moment.

County Lines on the Garmin

Oh....I finally got around to putting county lines on my Garmin 200W GPS. After reading W4YDY's comment on K3IMC (we covered it last month) ...I went to his site. Well, first I went to the store and bought a 'SD card'. That fits into the side of the Garmin 200W. Then it took me a while to figure out exactly how to do it. I put the SD card into one of the slots in my computer that accepts them. My printer also will take an SD card. Then I looked in 'My Computer' to see which drive I had just plugged in. In my case, it was the "E" drive.

Then I went to W4WDY site.

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

There you will see 'Garmin **GARMIN NUVI GPS County lines - Download**

Click on that and 'save' the file. Your computer will download it.

Then you get a dialog box. Up near the left hand corner, you will see an option to 'extract'

click on that...and when it asks where to send it, click on your drive for the SD card. I merely put in E drive. It unzipped the files to the SD card.

Then I took it out of the computer and put it in the Garmin. Viola! When I plugged it back in and turned it on - County lines now appear! Thanks Dave for making it real simple.

Just be sure your Garmin takes an SD card. I'm not sure the newer ones do. Otherwise, you'll have to download the MapSource program from Garvin and merge the county line map overlay onto the map program.

Wow..I checked the price for the Garmin upgrade – mine is 4 or 5 years old. It's $60 bucks for an upgrade- you can often buy a new Garmin for not much more than that!.....I'll stick with the old one. My floppy mount that sits on the dash is loosing it's 'stickiness'. Used to sit there with no problem, but now slides around at times. Anyone know a cure for that? The rubber has dried out a bit and is no longer 'sticky' like it used to be.

Back to the TQP trip

The weather was good for county hunting – sunny and clear. After Cooke, I headed west on 174 toward Archer City, but zigged south on 79 down to Throckmorton. I made a beeline more or less to Haskell, the other county that no one else was scheduled to go to. I was running a big behind schedule having had to stop to run on 20M for the first couple of counties.

Runs were good in the morning – I got spotted a few times and the county hunter bunch showed up. Scotty, N4AAT, just finished up and 'needs everything'. Bob, N8KIE needed 70 in TX for MP. He's off during the winter when it's nice to run the counties (not too hot). I didn't have time to go to SSB – cw kept me fairly busy. I grabbed a quick lunch in Archer and kept moving. The route went through Throckmorton – fortunately in the contest, you only send four letters for the count designator – otherwise, it's a pain to send long counties like Throckmorton, Shackelford, etc, on cw over and over. Throckmorton is simply THRO. Shackelford is SHAC. Nice. So you ID as N4CD/THRO when there.

Nothing much to report..the band really went 'flat' in the middle part of the day – contacts plummeted and don't think I got spotted in a few since no county hunters showed up! Either that, or they didn't hear me or vice versa. They seem to live or die by the spots. I realized I wasn't going to get to Kent...but the NO5W map showed W5LCC was scheduled to run that one. An hour later, I worked him in King, so hopefully he went there to Kent.

At Haskell, I dropped down into Jones and headed east on 180 The temp was expected to be in the mid 90s.....as I ran through Stephens County, it was 100 degrees in Mineral Wells. Yuk..more hot weather, but it should only last for 2 days then back to 90 or so..or lower. The band improved and the DX showed up – OK2EC, PA3ARM, DK2OY, DL8USA, and DL3IAC

were in the log. He sun is not quite as 'hot' either while sitting in the car – it's already fall!

I ran all the counties I ran though – there were about 15 TX counties in my log – only worked mobiles a handful of times – W3DYA, N5XG N5NA, W5LCC, N5TM, W0BH – but most of the time I suspect they were on 20M (or higher) as that is where all the action was during the day other than maybe 9-12 contacts per county on 40M. I got Don, N5XG in one I need (down to 2 in TX now) and missed him in another.

I heard him work a fixed station, and he disappeared - probably back to 20M – in Limestone, TX. Another day! It's hard to be a mobile in state and get too many counties, but the multipliers worked out well. Got MT, RI, DE, NH..missed ME, SD, NV, UT, AK, HI, LA, ID and almost all the VE's. Not to worry, I was just out for fun and the check out the car.

As I was close to home, the RTTY started to fill up 40M – another RTTY contest and they infest the band after 5pm or so local time. For a while, you can slide down to below 7033 and escape the racket...but soon they are everywhere and by 7pm it's hard to find a 0.01KHz without RTTY to use. I managed to run Tarrant - on the six and 8 lane roads filled with cars – then hit DALS – you have to stop to run that off the 121 – just a few miles but an exit to use. Long run there – then back to the house at 95 deg. 12 hours on the road and 9 hours of contesting – long day.

The contest goes to 9pm local time – some mobiles were on 80M CW, and the 20M band was still open to a few places. I made it home long before then – I don't like driving at night and the RTTY makes mobile operation not worthwhile much after 7pm.

So what did I do when I got home? Yup, turned on the home station and gave out COLN (Collin TX) for 30 minutes before making some dinner. Once a county hunter, always a county hunter. It's addictive.

Summary; Car worked fine transmission wise. Now up to 70K miles. Mileage was about 31 mpg poking along on 2 lane roads for most of the trip. Lunch $4.50. Car seems more 'RF sensitive' – got to work on that.

Thanks for the contacts – had many county hunter contacts in the log. Got a LC by stumbling through Stephens....unexpectedly – hadn't planned on going there – it was just the way home! Serendipity!

Sunday I stayed home and chased the mobiles – and put out my home county – Collin a few times.

More TQP coverage later.

Retro QRP – From YouTube

Some interesting YouTube Videos

Retro QRP http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB2RrzIRVes

Simple “Morgan Receiver”

Part 1

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFzxi-9S998&feature=related

Part II

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDPZQcU_jms&feature=related

Salmon Run – A few more

We covered this last month, but here's a 'late comer!'. - hi hi

WA7KVC – county expedition

Rookie: first HF contest, first Salmon Run, first time using N1MM, first CW contact in 30 years, first HF expedition, first battery portable, first solar panel, first visit to Umatilla Nat Forest, first solo camping trip, first time I locked my keys in the car with the engine running.

It was great fun handing out points for Garfield county, it's like giving away free candy for two days straight. Lots of friendly, grateful, efficient, helpful operators on 80 and 40. I didn't enjoy the elbowing crowds on 20m so I went back to the fun bands even though some extra multipliers would have helped. It's just so enjoyable to keep a run going on one frequency for an hour or two at a time.

It took much longer than expected for set-up and tear-down while camping solo. Has anyone ever noticed how much walking is involved in hoisting both ends and the middle of a dipole between trees 180' apart. And how much fun it can be for a single person to fold and unfold a big tent in windy conditions. Next year I must bring a buddy. And a spare car key in case I lock myself out again with the engine running in a remote national park.

Cost in gas: 26 cents per QSO. Activating a rare county: Priceless.

W4SIG TRIP PICTURES

On Kerry's last trip up to Canada, he took a few pictures and sent in the following to share with fellow county hunters

W4SIG VA3XOV
VA3XOV mobile in background

W0QE W4SIG
W0QE mobile left – W4SIG van right
Belmont, OH

Nice super highway in KY

A.C. Gilbert Toys

Here's some nostalgia.....interesting stuff I've dug up surfing the net. Many 'senior' county hunters will remember the A.C.Gilbert Erector Sets of the 1940s-50s-60s. It seemed every kid had to have one of these. They were sets of small mechanical parts, screws, pulleys, and everything else you needed to build small bridges, cars, Ferris wheel type toys – from simple sets to sets with 500 parts and an electric motor to run things.

One of his inventions, which we'll cover at the end, is still highly sought after today and tens of millions (if not more) are still being sold. Can you guess what it is? (I doubt it!)

What else did Gilbert produce through the decades?

Way way back when, in your grandfather's or great grandfather's toys, what did kids who had an interest in 'radio' and 'electronics' wish for at Christmas time? Or for their birthday or other holidays?

Some History

Gilbert began his connection with the Toy industry by pursuing his favorite vocation -- as a Magician. Although he was a Yale-trained doctor, he began pursuing a career in Magic. he was so good at it that he was asked to join the "Mysto" Company that made and distributed "Magic Sets" to kids, teaching them elementary illusions. Gilbert lived in New Haven, but commuted regularly to New York to fulfill his duties to Mysto. As he rode on the train, he observed the steel structures being created to hold the wires for the new electric locomotives. These structures, made of a latticework of girders, were the inspiration for the Erector set.

When the government tried to prevent him from making Erector Sets during World War One (October of 1917), he went to Washington and made the case that boys with Erector experience made better soldiers. For this reason, he is known as The Man Who Saved Christmas. There was a made-for-TV movie with that name, but Jason Alexander (the Seinfeld's sidekick) was cast as Gilbert.

Indeed, the Erector Set was the ideal Christmas gift for the Boy, adding parental approval to the Boy's dream of adulthood.

While he was saving Christmas with Erector Sets, Gilbert also manufactured wind-up toys

Here's a fascinating page (with embedded YouTube video) on the various Gilbert Kits sold to kids.

http://www.jitterbuzz.com/the_man.html#who

Here's a few of the radio oriented toys that Gilbert sold

This a a Gilbert 4005 Wireless Outfit advertised in 1918. Spark gap – two complete units you could build, with a range of approximately 500 feet! It sold for $10 in 1918, which was a LOT of money.

If you had a real rich uncle, maybe he would buy you the 4008 delux receiving kit, that had an audion tube detector!

It supposedly wold allow you to hear up to 1000 miles – and sold for $45 in 1918.

Here's a link to the advertisement page in 1918 so you can see what other communications oriented kits he sold.

http://www.jitterbuzz.com/erector/wireless_catalogue.jpg

Gilbert had a whole series of kits – chemistry kits, microscope kits, hydraulics, mechanical kits.....

Here's a 1922 version of a 'wireless set'. It's up for sale on Ebay if you have $2100.

AC Gilbert Breadboard Experimental Radio 1922

Here's one more of the electronic kits through the ages. Most of them are EXTREMELY rare today. It uses a Western Electric 203B tube, and comes with a Gilbert earphone. The unit had Fahnestock clips under the board, so you could hook it up in whatever configuration you wanted. (on old radios even, all the wiring was done point to point under the wood board. This one just has the Fahnestock clips – no permanent wires.). If you recall, broadcast radio started about this time – before that, it was only ship to shore and similar type communications on the airwaves.

This was a kit in 1959 that wold allow you to build 9 different radio sets – with an electron tube- wow! . Very few have survived. Did you have something like this as a kid?

If you go to Ebay....you can buy hundreds of the 'Erector Sets' from the 1930s to the 1960s. Remember the kits? Ferris wheels, rotating radar dishes, cranes, and all sorts of other mechanical items you could build from girders and pieces of steel, wheels, gears, plates and angles. If you were born after about 1950, you probably don't!

From the link below:

“In addition to earning a medical degree from Yale, an Olympic Gold medal, the worlds championship in chin-ups, and building a multi-million dollar company, ***Mr. Gilbert also***

invented the sex toy.

Whether it be fan, mixer, or blender Gilbert's appliances were just an electric motor hooked to something. Note that one of the key points of Erhardt's blender patent (above) is that the motor can be used for "other purposes". Below, you will find Mr. Gilbert's patent No 1,668,364 (May 1, 1928) for **The Vibrator**, indicating that by 1927 or so, he had discovered yet one more "other" purposes.

Your first reaction (as was mine) was probably something like "This is a thing for sore muscles." Certainly, the box for the Eskimo vibrator would lead you to that conclusion...

Au contraire, records from the Gilbert company indicate that this thing was intended for another part of the body. According to Bruce Watson (*op. Cit*), there is a nine-page document in the Gilbert archives that describes this appliance and its purpose:

"... One object of the invention is to provide a means by which married people can enhance sexual excitement with each other so as to enjoy completion of normal sexual intercourse with the least expenditure of time and energy..."

The document goes on to describe the function of body organs and glands (Gilbert was a Yale M.D.), ending with:

"... without proper stimulation... sex can become a chore. and every excuse is used to avoid this obligation ... the vibrator is the quick and simple solution..."

A little bit of Internet research has revealed that the first vibrator could have been made in the 1850s and was steam powered (perhaps it came with a notation on the crate "Coal not included.") From my limited experience with steam engines, this was not something that a lady might use for a quiet interlude. Most Internet sources credit a British physician with inventing a wind-up version of the vibrator in 1880. I can imagine a moment of Victorian ardor in which the thing runs down and has to be rewound at a critical moment (possibly accompanied with fumbling for the key...) So, Mr. Gilbert is, more properly, the inventor of the *electric* vibrator. “

Lots more stuff on the Gilbert company and its products here

http://www.jitterbuzz.com/the_man.html#who

http://www.jitterbuzz.com/scikits.html

You never know where your internet surfing will go.

Some things off Ebay

1961 LIONEL ENGINEERING SERIES ELECTRONICS-LAB NO.3202 MARK III is an unusual find! Students and adults are able to learn about and build electronic devices through the use of a Control Panel and Program Board. Parts included are used to build and experiment with rheostats, relays, rain alarms, photocells, thermostats, electrolysis of water, and even burglar alarms to name a few.

An easy to understand Electronics Manual is included as well as a pamphlet on all Lionel Engineering Sets, a 1961 Registration Card and the original Lionel Science Sets Parts Order Form from Hillside, NJ.

I knew Lionel was into trains but never had seen an 'electronic kit' from them. During the WW2, Lionel also made the now famous J-38 keys for the military. Millions and millions of J-38 hand keys were made and you can still buy them at any flea market. If you see the Lionel "L" on the bottom, they were made by Lionel, one of at least six makers of the keys.

Book Review

A few months ago at the Dallas Hamcom, I picked up a copy of "**Amateur Radio on the Move"** - from your car, boat, airplane, Motorcycle or Backpack" published by the ARRL , copyright date 2005. The price was right – the seller had won it as a door prize so we came up with a real 'bargain price'. It lists for $19.95.

It starts out with a chapter of Mobile in your Automobile,then has a section on Maritime Mobile (with a comprehensive list of MM nets worldwide), A chapter on Aero mobile, Info on Motorcycle Mobile, RV Mobile and more. It's got some good stuff on installations and might be worth a look. Usually available at most hamfests where ARRL pubs are sold, or always on line at the ARRL On Line store.

http://www.arrl.org/shop/Amateur-Radio-on-the-Move/

AA9JJ/N9QPQ YouTube Video

Check out Frank and Kay 'mobile' on YouTube

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJIcXr8si1Y

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWExpB2l1xg&feature=related

Posted on YouTube by KM1C, Bill

Texas QSO Party

Comment of the day

K8MFO – 187 counties:

“First of all, the true stars of this event were the mobiles. Here's a list of those that I worked. Each did a great job. KU5B, N3BB, K5JX, K5END, N5TM, N5DO, N4CD, WD5IYT, N5NA, NO5W, W0BH, and W3DYA. There was some magical CW operating coming out of those vehicles. Who was the loudest mobile? Well, it all depends on WHEN you listened. Each had their moments, depending on where they were at the time. This group of 11 mobiles accounted for 206 of my 318 QSOs. Thanks Guys! It was fun riding along with you."

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From the 3830 contest reflector

N5TM mobile

Wow..... Another great TQP... Thanks to everyone who followed us around!!!

Saturday started out slow with poor condx on 20m. Finally about 3pm, 20 opened to EU. Never heard any SA stations. The evening was better with good sigs on 20, 40 and 80.

Sunday was much better with non-stop pile ups all day on both 20 and 40m. The pileups were incredible. Thanks to everyone for being patient and courteous. The last hour on Sundays insane!!!. Sorry we could not get to everyone.

Our best Q rate was 240/hr, with many sustained rates of 120/hr or more.

This contest would not happen if it weren't for all the out of state stations.

WD5IYT mobile 823 contacts

My single-op CW solo effort netted a decent score and lots of fun! I activated 18 counties. Thanks to everyone who worked me through the S7-S9 noise on 40. Also thanks to Chuck, NO5W not only for the excellent contest, but for the great CQ/X logging software. That made this year much easier on my right arm!

Can't wait for next year, but I think I'm going to find a driver. Too much wasted time driving and not operating!

N5NA Mobile

I found conditions to generally be poor. Many strong signals but many very weak signals too. Rapid QSB brought signals up and down. In addition to the conditions I think I may have an antenna problem. If you were calling and I couldn't copy I apologize.

This year I used a new feature in CQ/X where the distance to the next county is calculated along the planned drive path. Last year the distance was a radial distance which may or may not be very accurate. This year I knew EXACTLY how far to the next county as well as an estimate of the arrival time based on current speed. The same applies to any waypoints as well. A great help for staying on schedule!

My route this year was a bit more ambitious than in the past. Saturday was just under 600 miles covering 23 counties with Sunday planned to be about 300 miles covering 9 counties. Early Sunday morning I decided to add Yoakum and Terry which added about 100 miles.

Equipment: K3, HS-1500 antenna, 2000 Chev C2500 antenna support.

W3DYA mobile

I used the Flying Saucer antenna setup and 40 through 10M were very good. The auto-tuner seemed to have a problem getting resonance on the 80M resonator, but I have longer hat wires on it and I think moving at high speed caused them to move around and confuse the tuner. Sitting still it seemed to be OK. Not much activity on 80M anyway. Plan to use shorter or stiffer wire to see what works.

Stations with 20 or more contacts: N6MU (51), VE3KZ (27), K8MFO (26), WA3HAE (23), WB9CIF (22), N0TA (21), and W4UCZ (20). Of course one contact or 51, they're all good! I had 35 contacts on 15M, mostly with N6MU, but others in DL, PA, MD, NH, NJ, WV, PA, DC, and GA. All mostly very loud.

On some narrow roads with lots of curves I couldn't operate while moving. Same for busy roads in some areas, so I was silent for long periods in several counties.

It was hot! When parked I had to look around for a shady spot which made a big difference. I even had to use the air conditioner a few times, ugh!

As for county hunting, it was pretty much a non-event. I got one one new from Bob, WA3QNT! But I could have emailed him and got that one any time!

I had 161 Texas contacts, which is very unusual since I seldom hear the TX stations in this contest. I only need 17 TX counties, so I guess it wasn't a surprise.

Had a couple of times when my GPS didn't have the road in memory... but the county line showed up where it should be. Guess I should download a new map, but that's no fun!

W2AJW (AZ)

Huge huge thanks to all the mobile ops who made chasing them (and getting the bonus points for working them) fun! As a guy who used to do VHF roving, I know how much work (and gas money!) that is.

K5LH (Gillespie, TX)

What a difference a year makes! Down 25-35 percent in every category, with the same set-up and same operating strategy! Being located in the center of TX can be either a blessing or a curse with. Last year it was a blessing, this year a curse. Ground wave too short to pick up even nearby mobiles, sky wave too long to work most mobiles on 40 or 20. May have to reconfigure my inverted V 40-meter dipole for better results. No problem on 80 meters with a horizontal dipole. Under these circumstances the guys with the big guns win.

But what a turnout on CW! It was a sheer delight to hear the bands light up with TX stations both fixed and mobile. Seems as if Gill County decided to make this its TXQP weekend. Hope you do well in the standings.

Cudos to the mobiles for fishing my signals out of the QRM and QRN. Best ears go to W3DYA, then N5TM, NO5W, N4CD, N5NA, W0BH, KU5B, WD5IYT, N3BB, N5DO, and
W5LCC.

Working N6MU is always a special pleasure and we went all the way to 10 meters with solid signals between TX and CA in the first hour of the contest. Another delight and surprise was hearing and working my old classmate and friend DK2OY (Manfred, Manny, Ed) on 15. We went to school together in Germany in the 1960s, he ending up with the call DK2OY and I with DK5LH. Just this past June we had a wonderful lunch together in a restaurant in northern Germany overlooking the Baltic Sea. As a surprise, he and my other friends in DL had organized for me a tour of DL0CS, the well-equipped club station nearby that Manfred often uses for his activities. Hope you gave him plenty of points from TX.

Lastly, thanks to Chuck, NO5W, and his gang at NARS in Houston. While I did

not work him as often as I usually do in the TQP, just posting the mobile routes is a definite benefit for anyone in the contest.

K4BAI (GA) 123 counties worked

Missed the first 6 1/2 hours due to having been out of town. Final score includes 5500 bonus points for working mobiles. Thanks for all QSOs, but particularly the mobiles. I worked three all time new counties. Need only 8 counties now: BAIL, BAYL, DALM, GLAS, MARI, REAG, SHMN, STER. 15 was too long for any but far west TX for most of the contest. No TX stations heard on 10M. Very little activity on 80M CW and none heard on 75 phone. 40M CW activity was low, probably because of the RTTY QRM from the CQ WW RTTY Contest. Stations in TX on CW need to move low in the band (or perhaps an alternate frequency for 40M on say 7110 CW might work better?).

Note de N4CD – most if not all his 'missed counties' were on the air – and cw activity on Sunday started from 7025 to 7030 to avoid the RTTY QRM. Sat evening the skip got long and folks ran 20m and some on 80M cw. 40M died about 7pm – filled up with RTTY crap.

KJ5T – QRP – TX – from his blog at KJ5T.net

This was my first Texas QSO Party since 2005 that I decided to do the single op thing. In August I won a Flex 1500 as a door prize at the Summerfest DX Forums hosted by Central Texas DX and Contest Club. My home station antenna situation is less than desirable and I haven't figured out a way to do things that will work for both optimal performance and the owner of the home. Regardless I likely will never have a contest station here in town and who would want to do QRP contesting and deal with the line noise?

Since winning the Flex I have been wanting to seriously get it on the air for a work our, I have had an interest in Software Defined Radios long before I won this one. As computer geek the concept of having a radio that is fully controlled by my computer has always been very intriguing to me. Needless to say I was very surprised by the performance of the radio, and will touch more upon that later in this story.

Let's take a step back, or many steps back. In August 2008 I was hired to work on a goat farm, here I met a collection of wonderful people and many of us were involved with a non-profit organization that at one time was interested in using Amateur Radio for disaster response. In October of 2008 we built an amateur radio station that consisted of a 40ft tour with a Cushcraft A3S and a G5RV also at about 40ft. At the time there was also some Icom gear. The radio was used during Haiti but after some changes in the organization their presence left "The Farm" and with that presence went the radio gear. What stayed was the antennas which hadn't been used

in over a year.

After asking nicely if I could come out and use those antennas and make myself at home for the Texas QSO party I was invited out. I arrived on Friday afternoon and had a lovely dinner that night with the owner's of "The Farm" you can visit their website at

http://old.mustangtexas.com/

(they are currently rebuilding the site) as well as a couple of other good friends. We went to the Horny Toad Bar & Grill. Horny Toad is great for cheap beer, the burgers aren't wonderful but they certainly give the place the character that it has. I was mostly bummed since the Juke Box was out of order.

Friday night I crashed rather earlier and got up for the contest Saturday. I was hoping that I could finish working the kinks out of getting my logging software integrated with the Flex Radio and getting my FlexControl working within the first hour of the contest. That turned out to not be the case and it ended up taking me the first 3 hours of the contest to get things going. I am very appreciative of Dudley, WA5QPZ as well as the developers of the Flex Control K6TD and K6TU for contacting me back on a Saturday. We were able to discover the issue was that the FlexControl was in boot state and a re-install of the latest version of the PowerSDR software fixed that.

The only thing not fully resolved was trying to get MMTTY working so that I could have tried to do some RTTY for the contest. I will have to work on that some other time though as I do hope that I will be able to do some RTTY contesting in the future and I was hoping to get some mults on RTTY from the RTTY contest that was happening this weekend.

Another thing I did not know but discovered was that the Flex 1500 doesn't do VOX, fortunately the Wallace family are musicians and so there was a Piano foot switch available to borrow that did the trick. I will likely eventually get foot switch. Another thing I would like to figure out is how to auto voice keying with the Flex and the log software.

Once the contest was on track it was great. Started out trying to chase Texas stations on 40 for the multipliers and ended up going to 15 when I started seeing that the band seemed opened. Was surprised to work Europe with 5 watts though I spent way too much time trying to get this Russian station who never did hear me. I had a fairly decent run on 15 and many guys told me that I sounded great for running 5 watts. Another thing I really found very nice about the Flex 1500 was the built in EQ and I had guys commenting the entire contest about my good audio. After 15 I tried 20 for a bit but it was just doing much so back to 40 for the remainder of the contest. Things were slow the last 2 hours and broadcast was starting to get annoying. All the guys calling CQ that I could hear I had already worked and I wasn't getting much back to my CQ's. I was able to work WA6KHK who had emailed me prior to the contest and was hoping to get Bosque county so I am glad that we were able to meet up. We also got lucky and met up

Sunday as well on 20 meters.

I shut down about 10 minutes prior to the contest ending as I was tired and wanted my rest. I ended up sleeping in Sunday morning and not getting on the radio till about 10AM. things were slow for me on the second day and while I was hoping I could break 200 Q's I ended with 164.

K5IID – QRP – TX - 325 CW 75 SSB QSOs 150 multipliers

Wow! What a kick that was! I think this is the first time I have tried QRP in this contest from here in TX. Anyway, I was amazed when Eu stations were answering my CQs on 40 with me running 5 watts to a droopy dipole at 35 feet! Next year I have to have a better 40 meter antenna!

I really could not believe some of the stations that could pull me out of the muck! Thanks to everyone!

I had a real blast!

W5ESE QRP Portable (San Saba)

I had fun participating in the Texas QSO Party from the Windmill Backpack campsite in Colorado Bend State Park, in San Saba County. This is the same location I operated from last year.

Here's my backpack:

I walked a mile into the park:

Here's my campsite and operating position

I used my KD1JV ATS-3 QRP rig, and a CF Zepp.

It was hot this year; and I had some trouble with heat exhaustion. I pulled the plug at about 12:30 Sunday. Maybe Scott is getting too old for this? Hope not!

The antenna was a doublet; 67' on 40m and shorter, and 134' on 80m, supported by a Jackite kite pole. The doublet was fed with 300 ohm twinlead, and matched with an Emtech ZM-2 tuner."

N3BB mobile

Worked two hours from home on Saturday, HP.

Worked 5.5 hours Sunday mobile with usual Lid manual setup and a FT857/100W with the basic Yaesu ATAS-120A screwdriver antenna on the trunk. Did all logging on paper with a ballpoint pen, sent everything with the small Padlett paddle, did all driving, was alone. It's a big rush to enter a new county and hit the fresh pileup. Worked the new pileup from the side of the road, then drove through the county and worked/sent/logged while driving until the next county line. I don't recommend this. Will try to automate with PC and driver next year. Great fun, though, but tiring. Operated from TRAV, HAYS, BLAN, GILL, KERR, KEND, and COML counties as a mobile. Tnx to NO5W for great organizing, and to quite a few stations outside Texas for super activity. Also, thanks to K8MFO for consoling me when I got lost once, telling me "You're not lost, you're in Texas." That got me set straight again, once I stopped laughing. Ain't CW fun?

73, Jim N3BB

NO5W Mobile

As others have commented 2011 was a very different year from 2010 with 2011 numbers down in all but one category -- we activated four more counties (40) in 2011. Of course most of the credit for that increase goes to my excellent driver Keith NM5G who moved us around the course to reach the destination with minutes to spare. And it was Keith's suggestion on Sunday morning to add four counties to our route -- more about that later.

Our Qs and Mults numbers were down this year: 1402 Qs vs 1699, and 84 mults vs 110 with most of the missing mults being Texas counties. It's interesting to note that our 1028 Qs on 20M is about 82% of our 1255 Qs on 20M in 2010 and that our 346 Qs on 40M is about 79% of our 439 Qs on 40M in 2010. So percentage-wise both bands were down by about the same amount. That's what the numbers say but it sure seemed, especially Sunday, that 40M was in a lot worse

shape than 20M. Of course some of that is dependent on who was listening where. The only band where we did better this year was 15M. Requests to QSY to 15M were almost always successful and when we stayed around to send some CQs we often got several additional 15M Qs in the log but not a steady run -- if the listeners had been there we could have had a steady run.

We didn't have any major excitement from Murphy like serpentine belts breaking -- and it's a good thing too since we had spares for most everything on the radio and computer end of things but the only spare we had for the vehicle was a tire. We did get off to a rough start, though. Right off the bat the line at the first Starbucks fueling station was really long for 7:30am on a Saturday morning.

Once we got the coffee and were underway and tried to make a few QSOs the new Sony Vaio machine got cantankerous - I think it must be more RF-susceptible than the old Dell D400 which we promptly put in service. Well, the D400 was cantankerous too. Why in the heck was that? The only thing we could think of that was different from when it was used a few weeks ago in the ARQP was the foot switch cable that we had added that morning for Keith to use to make some SSB contacts.

We removed that cable and things were back to normal with the D400. We probably lost about an hour fooling around with the computers and then lost some more time just after lunch when we had to stop to wash the Pathfinder of love bugs that had met their demise on the front of the vehicle and were creating a visibility problem for the driver.

Fortunately that was the last of the love bugs and Saturday after we got moving up I-45 the rate started picking up with the best results occurring in the counties up near Ft. Worth where initial ten minute rates on crossing the county lines were good enough to keep things exciting. Parker also treated us to a beautiful sunset as we came over a hill and headed into Hood county, our stopping point for the night. Prior to going to the hotel we had time to make a quick trip down to Somervell county and then returned back to Granbury and the hotel right at the close of the Saturday session.

Granbury is a bustling place and has quite a selection of restaurants open after 9:00pm, an important criterion for a mobile operator in the TxQP. So we were able to have a nice dinner, meeting up, as planned, with John, David, and Scott who were spending the weekend in nearby Glen Rose to activate Somervell county field day style as K5PBA. They are part of a Baptist men's emergency communications team and were using the QSO party as a means of testing their ability to deploy in the field. Great idea and one of three known teams who

were operating the QSO party field day style.

When we got up early Sunday morning Keith remarked that we needed more counties on Sunday because he estimated we were going to be back at the house with at least an hour, maybe more to spare. So the hunt was on for a new Sunday starting point that we could reach in time and that would yield some more counties. Streets and Trips revealed that if we left the hotel in 30 minutes we could reach a starting point on a ranch road just inside Stephens county, come back through Palo Pinto, down through Eastland and Comanche and then rejoin our original route. And it looked as if that would add the necessary hour or so to the route. One of the cool parts about this exercise was that we then got on the internet, tweaked our Google map of the route plan, downloaded a new KML file containing the lat/lon of the new route and then imported that file into CQ/X which then determined our new county line crossing points and gave us our new navigation coordinates for keeping on track.

After checking out and a quick stop at Starbucks away we went to find some breakfast and to activate four additional counties. We found the counties but we didn't find any breakfast in the out of the way counties that we had added so we ended up snacking on some nut bread in the vehicle later in the morning during a long stretch of Hamilton county. Adding those counties turned out to be a good decision as it gave us 4000 bonus points and almost 200 QSOs. We managed to make all of our original counties except the last one so our net gain was 3000 bonus points and probably 150 Qs.

Even though our total numbers were down the pileups were intense and were a lot of fun made possible by frequent callers: K8MFO(42), W4UCZ(40), N6MU(38), VE3KZ(37), N0TA(36), WB9CIF(35), NC4KW(32), and many others with twenty or more Qs. When I would change bands to 20M and give out a single CQ K8MFO was almost always there, and then the pileup would start. Thanks to all who called. Our goal was to sweep the table clean of any QSOs in each county, stopping if necessary to work down the pile. However, at times the QRN was very bad, signals were weak, and a complete QSO was just not possible. Our apologies if we left a county before you had a chance to get in the log.

So that's the story on NO5W/M in the 2011 Texas QSO Party. Many thanks to Keith-NM5G for some great driving and to all who called us.

K5KG (FL) - 179 counties

What a great contest. We did not intend to work this one seriously, but once I got started, I got hooked. There seemed to be an endless stream of TX

stations, especially on SSB, and the mobile activity was spectacular.

NO5W was consistently the loudest mobile, but certainly each of the other mobiles ran close seconds or thirds depending on the band condx at any moment.

W0BH mobile, although maybe not the loudest mobile, was an interesting one to work. He signed a quick dit-dit at the end of each Q, and did not append /CTY or /M to his call. It seemed as though these things really helped his rate. Also, he was giving out up to four counties at a time which was a nice surprise!

20m was the money band. 40m CW was ok except for the many RTTY stations that were quite low in the band, thereby forcing the CW stations down even further. 15m was spotty with some European DX, but few TX stations to work. However, on Sunday afternoon, both N5DO and W0BH were incredibly loud on 15 when there were no other TX stations to be heard. Go figure! Also, on Sunday afternoon, 10m was crawling with European stations, but the skip was just too long for TX. I tried moving several stations to 10m, but no joy. On Saturday night, I tried to go to 80m, only to find that my antenna was inop. I later discovered that one end had fallen down...(hmmm, why didn't I check that before the contest?)

KU5D – multi op mobile

Interesting weekend. We got a late start Saturday because my Little Tarheel II decided to act up on 20m. So, we cut out quite a few of the counties we had planned to do in order to get to Austin before the 3:30pm showing of "Tornado Alley" at the Bob Bullock Texas State History museum. After that was over, we drove over to Holland, TX and stayed with AB5K for the night playing a little bit of CQWW RTTY while there. Sunday we got up early and played a little more RTTY. We then investigated my antenna problem and found that the insulation had been worn off the 20m segment coils and also that the coils were pretty loose there. So, we spent VERY minimal time on 20m. We operated on the way back down to Austin Sunday morning and I worked one OE5 station on 10m; a first for KU5B/m. We arrived at the museum to see the TIV2 (Tornado Intercept Vehicle) around 11am. Got some really good pics and met the driver, Marcus. We left Austin around 2pm but I'd already taken everything apart so we just listened to W5CT on 40SSB on the way back to Somerville.

This was NX5M's first real TQP mobile experience but I think he had fun when everything worked.

At the end of the weekend, we'd accomplished seeing the IMAX, the TIV2, and done a little bit of TQP.

NA5DV (Battleship TX)

This was the first year (as far as we know) that the Battleship Texas has participated in the Texas QSO party. It was also historic for us, as after some repairs and TLC, this was the first time that one of the ship's original vertical antennas was used to transmit in about 60 years. Thankfully for us, the vertical is right at a 1/4 wave vertical on 40m, and that's tied into a 25,000 ton RF ground floating in brackish water. Hard to think of a better install! It's a real kick to work with a blowtorch like that. That antenna was supplemented with a 80m OCF dipole strung about 40' above the deck, which is around 40' above the water. We also utilized a "cobweb" antenna on 20m, which was composed of two double extended zepps phased for broadside fire. Worked really well up into the northeast. We all had a really good time talking to everyone out there, and the antenna setup really helped pull them in. Video and pics of our operation are up on our website at:

http://www.na5dv.org/

WB0TEV mobile

2011 was to have been the year we turned in our best score ever. After all I'd put together an ambitious route to cover more counties than ever before (36), and the sunspots had come back. Whereas in the past all our logging had been done with pencil and paper, usually with me driving and operating SSB while Mark (KK5MR) logged, this year I'd use a computerized logging program for the first time and so for the most part I'd be riding shotgun operating and logging while Mark drove the 700+ miles our route would take us through much of Northeast Texas. I was even going to bring my modest CW ability to the fray, although we would be primarily an SSB operation.

Murphy made his first appearance early when it was discovered that the computer program I was to use to key the rig for CW wasn't working right. As a result, all the CW from WB0TEV was sent with a pair of Bencher paddles, not an easy trick sometimes while bouncing along a twisting east Texas Farm-to-Market Road.

In order to put a lot of counties on the air, you have to make a route plan and time line and stick to it. Thus my apologies for no SSB from Rains county.

Looking back at the log I saw that I did nothing but 40m CW from there but had to keep rolling down the road into Van Zandt to try and stay on schedule.

One thing that became apparent early on was that I wasn't picking up Texas county multipliers at the rate I had last year. Part of reason I'm sure was that you need 40m for that, and most of the time I had my 40m antenna set for the CW end of the band, where I wasn't having that much luck. On Sunday I spent more 40m time on SSB, but even then the mults just weren't there to be found, at least from my perspective.

I thought it may have been just me, but in reading the comments of others, I've seen that I'm not alone in not getting near the number of Texas counties from an in-state position. Some of this I think may be attributable to the absence of one of the primary multi-op mobile teams this year. Team K5NA and the 'Traveling Burrito Brothers & Little Sister' who usually are good for 40 or so counties mobile, had to stay at home this year and their absence was felt. Bob, W0BH who usually makes the trek down from Kansas to light up a few dozen counties in the panhandle wasn't able to join the fray until late Saturday and his presence too was sorely missed.

Propagation on 40 for those of us trying for in-state contacts may not have been up to par either.

On the plus side, 15m had some appreciable activity for the first time in a LONG time. I was even able to get a pretty decent run going on 15m SSB around sundown while rolling through Panola county.

In the final 3 hours Saturday, after a supper stop in Longview we made a loop down south from Gregg county through Harrison, Panola, Shelby, the extreme NW corner of St. Augustine and barely into Nacogdoches before turning around and heading back to Longview to our hotel from which we'd begin anew Sunday morning. We didn't get back to the motel until about 10pm. I didn't sleep that well and was pretty weary when the alarm went off the next morning. I may be getting too old for this! Next year I think I'm going to aim for fewer counties with more time in each and be close to a bed when Saturday's session ends at 9pm. Maybe too, go mobile only on Saturday. We'll see.

Once the gun went off at 1400Z Sunday AM my spirits were refreshed when the QSO count started climbing. Had a number of stations following us as we knocked off several counties in rapid succession that morning. We actually got ahead of schedule and arrived at our final destination (a 3 county intersection) for the grand finale. While there we were able to give out 3 counties in succession (to those who hadn't already worked us in one of them earlier) and in so doing

pushed a couple of folks like N5JB & K8JQ over the 5 QSO threshold for bonus points.

Looking over our log when it was all done I saw that our biggest 'customer' by far was KK7AC who worked us in 18 counties. His QSL request and those from several others in the county hunting community have started to show up in the mail box, so am happy we could fill in a few squares for those folks. I'm not a county hunter myself (I think they must all be a little nuts, but that may be the pot calling the kettle black), but am happy to indulge the obsessions of others, especially if it caters to my own. WB8LBZ in El Paso worked us 14 times. About 2 dozen stations worked us 5 times or more.

Equipment rundown was a follows:
Rig: 1985'ish Yaesu FT-757
Rolling Shack, power supply and antenna ground plane : WB0TEV's 1986 Pontiac Parisienne

Antennas: Hustler vertical on the right fender with 20m/15m/10m coils/whips on a 3 way mount all held down by a 40m coil/whip. 80m & 7m coils in the trunk, but not used this year.

Computer: A little Acer Netbook running N1MM logger.
Operators: WB0TEV & KK5MR, both of which are more than twice as old as the radio and vehicle used.

When it was all over with, the score and especially the multiplier count were down from 2010. Score was only about 105k versus 125k last year. Made slightly more Q's (487 vs. 443) but the multiplier count was way down, only 68 versus 105 last year. The number of Texas counties really took a hit. This year we only worked 24 versus 71 last year. Part of the reason was that 20m was where the rate was, so didn't spend as much time on 40m. Considering that NO5W reported his numbers were also down from last year, I don't feel so bad. Did make 5 or more QSOs from all 36 of our covered counties so made 36k in bonus points.

Hope to see you next year.
Victor (WB0TEV)& Mark (KK5MR)

W0BH mobile

TQP weekend is always Homecoming weekend at Hesston College. This year, our

Aviation department sponsored homecoming, so my presence was strongly "requested." I was able to attend festivities on Friday and Saturday morning, but I couldn't stay away from Texas! It was my pleasure to have Ron/ad0dx accompany me this year as a multi-op. Ron did a great job running mobile in the Kansas QSO Party, his first ever attempt at mobile contesting. Ron drove down from the Kansas City area on Saturday morning, and we both arrived at W0BH about the same time. After a quick pack, we headed out at 11:00am for the five hour trip to Texas.

We used the five hours to get Ron up to speed on w0bh/m .. logging, radios, GPS, strategies, and driving. Ron made some CW Qs with Texas stations using his own call, but we quickly noticed that the bands seemed to be exceptionally quiet with very unusual propagation. Later we found out that a major solar flare had occurred which explained a lot. By the time we hit Texas, things had settled back down, but as others have already said, conditions just weren't what they were a year ago.

We had two "bugs" on the way which cost us some travel time. The logging computer appeared to crash again as it had in the Kansas QSO Party. That time it was RF in a different van and some ferrites solved that problem. I'd never had this problem in the Astro, so I was really puzzled. Switching computers seemed to solve the problem and I've since corrected what turned out to be a programming "bug." The second problem occurred after we switched computers - the radio locked on transmit. That turned out to be a stuck footswitch and had nothing to do with the new computer. I unplugged the footswitch and we used the PTT switch on the headphones to key SSB. During our stop overnight in Amarillo, I took the footswitch apart and resoldered the connections to solve the problem. Note to self .. order a backup footswitch!

Our plan called for a Texas border crossing at 4:00pm. We arrived at 4:40pm which has traditionally been a really slow propagation time in most "summer" QSO parties. I ran the first county to give Ron a chance to see and hear everything working, but signals were really weak. Our highway had powerlines on each side for most of the county, so it was really a struggle to hear anyone. John/n6mu told us we were 59+ in CA and lots of ops were calling us, but we could barely hear anyone. We lost one set of powerlines which helped, but it was several counties before signals came back up to "normal" levels. Ron jumped in with both feet in our second county and away he went!

It's always fun to try out new equipment. My setup in the Astro hasn't changed much for the last couple of years, so just check out last year's TQP post to see the equipment. This year, I added an N8XJK 12V Boost Regulator for use at county line stops. I bought the new "Super Booster" which includes a fan, and I

added the remote meter/switch so I could watch battery voltages and remotely turn it on and off. The Super Booster lets you set the output voltage with an external trim pot, so I set it to 13.8V. I've gone to extremes to limit noise, so without trying the booster "barefoot", I went ahead and added big toroids (also sold on the tgelectronics.org web site) to the input and output power leads. The end result was impressive. Absolutely no noise from the booster that I could detect on all my mobile bands, and full output on the radio with the engine off. The remote on/off worked fine, but the meters were analog and didn't seem to be very accurate. Digital meters would be better and the remote box could presumably be made smaller. I did notice a "hot" smell from somewhere after I used the booster for about 20 minutes at my first county line. I think it happened when the fan first came on and the "new" electronics warmed up. I noticed it one other time at another line, but this time I left boost on with no further problems, and the smell went away.

Ron did a great job and seemed to particularly enjoy CW (as do I!). He quickly picked up the art of changing counties, but one time I saw him start to change when the GPS said we still had a number of miles to go. We'd passed a sign that looked like a county line, so Texas (and Chuck/no5w) almost had a 255th county called Hedley to add to the list! I did convince Ron to try SSB from time to time as well. Ron is Canadian, so calling CQ, he says "mob-Ile" instead of "mobeel" (yes, we do identify as mobile, just not always in pileups!). A voice came on that said, "Must be a Canadian." When we asked who the station was, it was VE4ZZ, which turned out to be our only VE4 multiplier! Ron also tried his first two-county line on CW .. another art to practice!

Saturday went way too fast. Since we arrived later than planned, we skipped Randall county on Saturday and arrived in Potter county with about 5 minutes to go. Even so, top ops like K4ZGB and N6MU found us anyway. Someday, I'll have to find out how they do that! We ended the day with 355 Qs in the log.

Sunday

After an overnight in Amarillo (right near the scene of my famous 2007 tow-truck mobile episode), we headed out to the Randall/Potter county line and a nice pileup before joining the planned route. Sunday was much better than Saturday for propagation, and there were some really loud signals. The pileup at our four-county line stop was amazing. Great job to all who worked us .. very FB manners by all! We arrived at our last county on schedule, then drove through and sat near the Texas/Oklahoma border to finish out the route. Special thanks to John/n6mu and Don/K8MFO who rode along with us in all 21 counties!

Ron's Comments

Many thanks to Bob for taking me along for my first entry in the Texas QSO Party. Bob is very generous to share his knowledge of mobile contesting, and I really learned a lot. This was only my second mobile contesting experience, my first being the Kansas QSO Party. Working those county lines is really exciting, and I'm still learning to pick out those callsigns. Sitting with Bob at the 4 county line, I was amazed at the pileup .. it was literally a wall of CW. I feel like I've got a taste of what it's like to be a rare DX station - right from the Texas panhandle! Another highlight was working my friend Michael, KD0OJN, back in Kansas City. Michael is 10 years old and already enjoys contesting. Watch out for him in the years to come.

Afterwards

Ron and I drove a total of 1022 miles round trip, including a drive by Morse Junction, Texas. We'll have to stop there next time.

480 KHz Band

In preparation for the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-12), the CEPT Project Team C approved a draft European Common Proposal (ECP) for an 8 kHz-wide band between 472 and 480 kHz at its September meeting. The draft ECP will now go to CEPT's Conference Preparatory Group for formal ratification in November. This breakthrough -- at the 11th and final meeting of the project team -- occurred with the submission by the UK's Ofcom of an RSGB-drafted compromise ECP proposal that is also supported by France and Sweden.

Agenda Item 1.23 calls for WRC-12 delegations to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415-526.5 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services. "While an 8 kHz allocation does not fully meet our objective of 15 kHz, having a European Common Proposal for an amateur allocation is a major step toward possibly achieving one at WRC-12," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ.

According to Colin Thomas, G3PSM, the prospect of an agreed CEPT position is good

progress, representing a 48 country block vote going into next year's WRC-12. "It needs to be noted that the draft ECP comes with significant caveats to avoid interference to the primary user, as well as the existing secondary user services," he explained. "These are the maritime and aeronautical radionavigation services, respectively. As secondary users, we would also not be afforded any protection. It should be acknowledged that we have had support from a number of Region 1 IARU Member-Societies in getting to this position." Thomas is the CEPT Coordinator for this agenda item.

SuperComputer News

Oak Ridge National Laboratory is teaming up with chip makers Nividia Corp. and Advanced Micro Devices Inc. to develop a supercomputer, hoping to restore American leadership in the technology while also making more energy-efficient devices.

The system, expected to be more powerful than the world's current top supercomputers from Japan and China, is being designed by a U.S. Department of Energy computing facility in Oak Ridge, Tenn. It is part of a new breed that exploits graphics chips, or GPUs, more commonly used in videogames, as well as standard microprocessors. Nvidia will supply the former, and AMD the latter.

"Because we're increasingly power constrained, the only path forward for increasing performance is GPUs," said Steve Scott, the chief technology officer of Nvidia's Tesla high-performance computing chip business. "This is by far the biggest endorsement or validation of that path yet."

Supercomputers are massive machines that help tackle the toughest scientific problems, including simulating commercial products like new drugs as well as defense-related applications such as weapons design and code breaking. The field has long been led by U.S. technology companies and national laboratories, which operate systems that have consistently topped lists of the fastest machines in the world.

But a Chinese supercomputer took the performance lead a year ago in a twice-yearly ranking of the 500 fastest supercomputers, setting off alarms about U.S. competitiveness and national security. Then, in June, a Japanese machine became the fastest machine for the first time since November 2004.

The recent strong performance by the Asian countries has galvanized efforts by U.S. government agencies and companies to boost the performance of American machines.

GPUs are increasingly being paired with traditional computer processors in supercomputers to help boost performance while also lowering power consumption. The graphics chips are used to

accelerate the number-crunching functions most often carried out by so-called x86 chips, which evolved from personal computing and have long dominated supercomputing.

On the June list of top supercomputers, three of the top five products—all from Asia—used GPUs, bringing the total on the list using graphics chips to 19.

Nvidia on Tuesday said the new machine, dubbed "Titan" and slated for completion in 2012, has the potential to deliver more than 20 petaflops, or a thousand trillion operations per second. That would make it two times faster and three times more energy-efficient than today's fastest supercomputer, the K computer in Japan.

The supercomputer will first be developed using Nvidia's current discrete graphics processor, called Fermi, Mr. Scott said. Those will be replaced in 2012 by up to 18,000 of its Kepler chips, which are 28 nanometers, or billionths of a meter, he added.

The previous top American machine was the "Jaguar," a Cray supercomputer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. It ranked as the third-fastest supercomputer in June, with speeds of 1.75 petaflops per second.

"This really starts to move the ball in a significant fashion to the next stage of super computing," said Enderle Group analyst Rob Enderle. "They'll be able to accomplish tasks—that once took weeks—in days, if not hours. That means we're closer to solving some of the big questions of the world."

Buddy Bland, project director for the Oak Ridge Leadership Computing Facility at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, said the new machine will be about four to eight times more powerful than Jaguar, allowing the lab to do things like find new materials to make ethanol, develop technology to build the next generation of nuclear reactors and make more green energy technologies.

"Some of these things we're working on today with Jaguar, but as we move to higher-resolution models, we need more computing power to be able to solve equations and be able to work on these problems," he said.

Mr. Bland added that Titan will be among the most powerful computers in the world, though how powerful it will be depends on the budget allotted the project. He declined to specific how much funding the lab is seeking.

"Anybody who reads the newspaper knows we're in a challenging budget environment," he said. "But we're certainly optimistic the budget will be able to support Titan at as big a scale as possible."

Source: Wall Street Journal

Things from Ebay

Here's **a very rare** QRP type goodie from 1961. It's a Jelectro QRP -60 20W transmitter. AC powered and crystal controlled. CW and AM. I've never seen one. Might have been made by 'Christy'. You can't even find any information or manuals on it on the web. It's as if it really never existed, but here is one up for sale. It went for $317 on Ebay! (rare)

Jelectro QRP-60 transmitter

Here' s another unit I've never seen in person – An Elenco Model 77 100W sideband transmitter. Not to many were sold – they were $600 in 1955! Sideband was just starting to be used by hams.

This one sold for $227 on Ebay.

Elenco Model 77 SSB Transmitter

Another goodie from the 1950s below – this is an Eldico TR -75TV, one of the first 'TVI" proof transmitters made for novice use – but it covered 160 through 10M including the 11M amateur band. It ran 60W input with a 1625 output tube. The oscillator was a 6AG7, and it had a 5U4B rectifier. You changed bands by changing plug in coils in this unit! The first unit produced was the TR-75. Later they came out with the TR-75-TV which had a lot of TVI protection including a built in low pass filter. You could buy an outboard modulator, the Eldico AM-40, to get on AM.

It came as a kit. I don't know if there was a 'wired' version available.

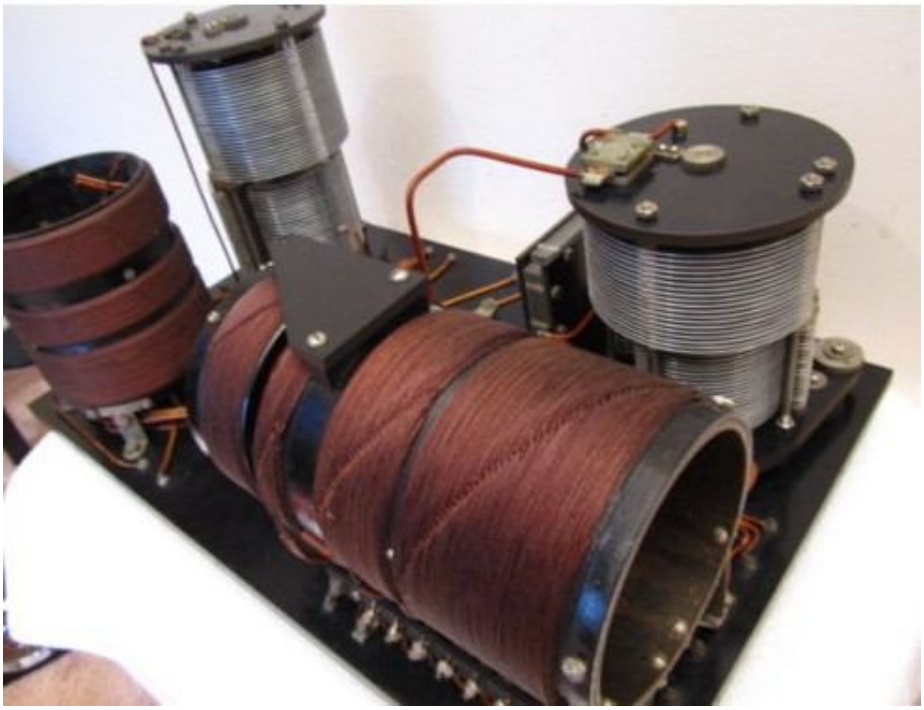
Eldico TR 75 TV Novice Transmitter

Here's a copy of the manual on line in case you are interested in pursuing it further!

http://www.k7jrl.com/pub/manuals/eldico/tr75tv5/tr75tv5.pdf

Now, going back even further in ham radio history -

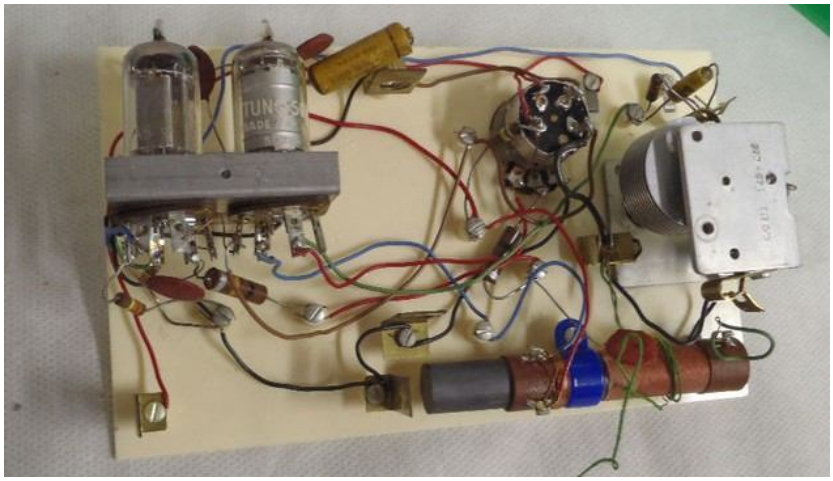
For those wireless collectors who want to drool - here is a Nesco receiver made for Marconi. It tunes 1000 to 25000 meters. Made after 1899 and now in 'mint shape'. Made for the US government.



Above is in 'insides' of the Nesco Model SE receiver. See any tubes? (weren't invented yet!). It's just the 'tuner' part of the radio. You would use a 'magnetic detector', electrolytic detector or coherer mounted in a separate unit! The starting price for this on Ebay is $3000. Later you could hook this to your 'audion' detector. These were 'state of the art' until WW1 was over.

Now did you check the 'wavelength range? It covers from 13 Khz up to 300 Khz! Really long wave, and that is what Marconi favored. He never understood 'those short waves'. The early days of 'wireless' were always 'Long Wave'. It took ham radio operators, who were banished to those 'useless' wavelengths shorter than 200 meters after WW1, to discover how useful HF was.

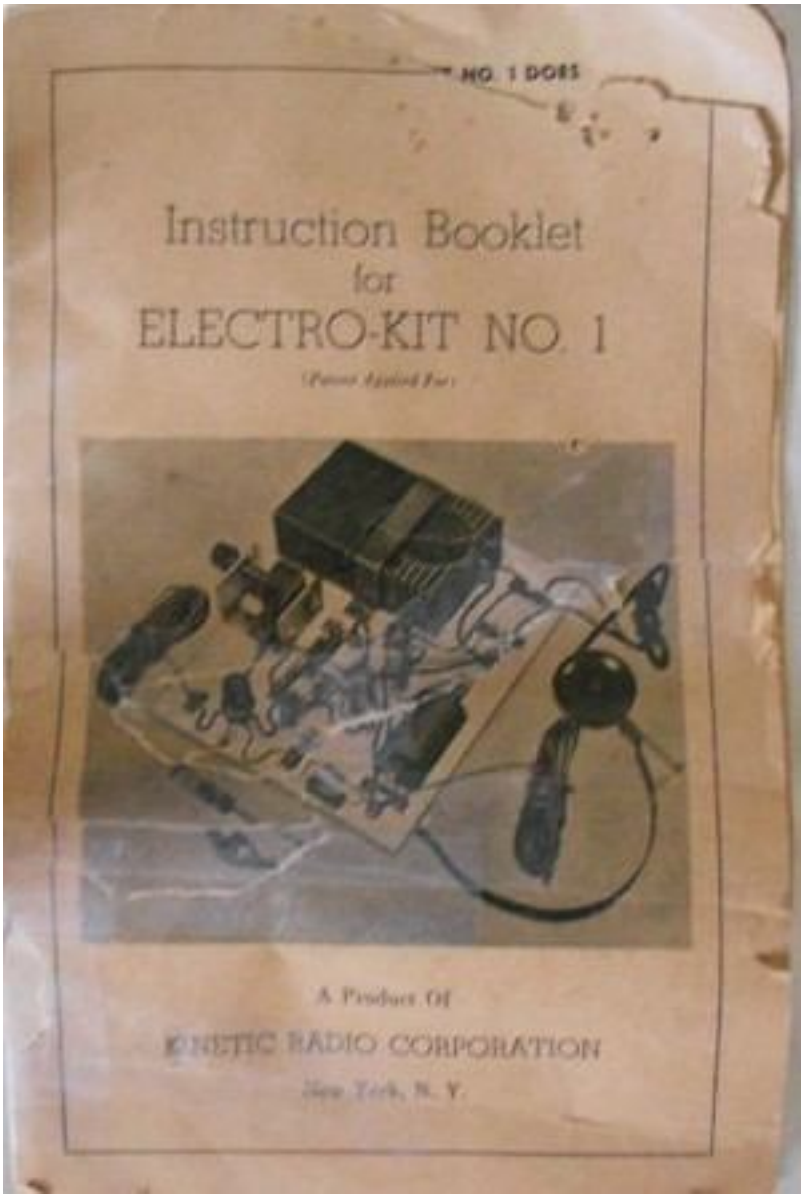
A few other interesting goodies showed up on Ebay. If you recall, I collect the early 'Boy Scout' radios that were advertised in Boy's Life Magazine. I managed to snag a Aurora plastic two tube radio off Ebay – model 1805. Been hunting for that for a long time. It sold for $13 back in the late 50s (the crystal one was $6.95) so likely not many tube ones were sold. (the minimum wage in 1965 was $0.85c/hour if I remember right!). The one tube version was $11. I stumbled across it accidentally and the seller was advertising it as a 'plastic radio' – it is- but its 45 years old. It used a 1.5v D cell and a 22.5v battery. You can still buy the 22.5 volt batteries but they are over 20 bucks each now! It's just a bit bigger than the 9v alkaline units of today. (Can you imagine spending about 20 times the minimum wage on a 2 tube plastic radio kit? Like $150 today?)



I covered those Boy Scout radios in this issue of the CHNews

http://www.chnewsonline.com/County%20Hunter%20News%20February%202011%20I.pdf

Another goodie that came floating in was an “Electro Kit Kinetic Radio” - a breadboard type radio from the 50s. Came complete with the original instruction booklet. It's built on a board – and very 'aged'. It will be a good winter project to even figure out what someone did to it (it has two extra tubes).



Note to hamfest goers....If you spy one of these type radios....give N4CD a jingle or if 'really cheap' (10 or 20 bucks) buy it and I'll send you money to ship it down here to CHN HQ. There's probably some of these at the smaller hamfests around the country. Going to a hamfest is a good excuse to get out and run some counties, too! Fill up the car with a couple other hams, introduce them to county hunting, share the gas expense – and have fun.

OOPS, Greenies Wrong Once Again

Scientists might be able to predict climate change with more accuracy after discovering that plants consume carbon dioxide 25 percent faster than previously thought.

Lisa Welp-Smith of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, California, and her team came up with a new method for measuring how much CO2 is absorbed and released by plants.

The team used oxygen isotope markers in CO2 and more than 30 years of data from a global network that analyses air samples to measure changes in greenhouse gases, pollution and other factors.

"What this (finding) means is that plants are working faster than we thought they did," said Colin Allison, an atmospheric chemist and one of the study's authors, told Reuters from Australia.

The study was published on Thursday in the journal Nature.

Plants form a major part of the global carbon cycle in which carbon is continuously recycled and reused by plants and animals, the oceans and land. Carbon pollution from burning fossil fuels and burning forests adds to the CO2 in the air, disrupting the balance that keeps the planet warm.

The team's finding suggests plants absorb 16 to 19 times mankind's total CO2 emissions, underscoring the powerful role they can play in regulating the climate.

Welp-Smith and Allison said it was too early to say how the new finding would affect climate change projections, in which supercomputer programs model how the climate will change.

"If we are right, and GPP needs to be revised upward by about 25 percent, it means that our fundamental understanding of how land plants function on the global scale is still a bit fluid," Welp-Smith told Reuters in an email, referring to gross primary production, a measure of photosynthesis.

Source: http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/28/us-carbon-plants-idUSTRE78R43E20110928

CA QSO Party

Spectacular – that was how to describe propagation this weekend!

K6QK – multi op Imperial CA

Wow..look at the band totals! Number of QSOs per band/mode

Band	cw	SSB
80:	116	106
40:	183	225
20:	260	412
15:	155	300
10:	84	509

Almost 600 contacts on TEN METERS!

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That sums it up! Many stations had over 2000 contacts from CA for the weekend, with some up in the 4000 and 5000 range! The propagation was great – 10M was open for hours and hours, and 15 meters did well too. The CW activity was good with many multi-op stations putting in effort to work 50/50 between SSB and CW. All the CA counties were on the air, but finding them all was still a challenge.

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more comments from the 3830 contest reflector:

N6M Multi-Op County Expedition

ops: NX1P, K2DI, K4XU, AE7IK, KE7UCE, KF7PLP, WN7K, W7YAQ, K7YLO, W7YOW

we had three stations, each with an SB200
amp. Antennas: TH3 at 50', TH3jr at 30', 2el 40m inV @ 40', 80m inV @ 45', 40 and 20m dipoles @ 30'. The site is a NFS fire lookout on Timber Mountain in the Modoc National Forest. Elevation 5300'.

Murphy was well represented. The TH3 on the tower trailer did not pass initial testing - infinite SWR on all bands. With considerable effort "shaking down" the tower, we lowered it and found a bad solder joint on the feed line center conductor attachment lug. This was easily resoldered and it performed perfectly for the rest of the test. Dick's K3 blew smoke Friday evening after receiving

too much RF the other station on 40m. The K3 was returned to service after the extraordinary efforts of Paula, Martin, Ron's i-pad, and Dick. The 40m dipole was moved to the south side of the lookout tower. Mid Saturday morning, Bob's K3 went dead. After some dis assembly, tapping and fiddling, Paula and Bob chased the intermittent joint away and it stayed in service through the rest of the test. The TH3jr had several bouts of fainting but remained serviceable until 45 minutes to go when it died, again with intermittent performance. This needs to be doctored before 7QP. While Murphy caused frustration and some down time, he was met and overcome with the best combination of skill and ingenuity. This is what ham radio is all about.

We ate very well because we had Diann as chef and "mother". Her clam chowder and apple crisp on Friday night was as good a way to start the weekend as there can be. Then there was eggs and bacon, cheese biscuits, OJ and coffee on Saturday morning. And because the food guy (me) forgot to bring any coffee, she borrowed Ed's truck (thanks Ed!) and drove 67 miles back to TuleLake to buy some. She made the lasagna dinner Saturday night and then topped it off with OJ, coffee, pancakes, biscuits and bacon on Sunday morning. Throughout there was always hot coffee. We made just under 3000 contacts. Diann made it enjoyable. And she is also an ace logger.

KF7PLP, our newest member and new Extra, was the designated trainee. He was always there when something needed to be done. He had the right coax adapter to make the radio tests. He had his FT450 ready to go if either of the K3s went off. He logged for the SSB guys for a while and then made about 50 QSOs. And he brought his i-pad. It provided the internet platform to get critical information needed to fix the radios. He has now demonstrated all the requirements to become a full-fledged member of the Modoc team. He's going to be a contester!

The contest ended at 3PM local. We got home about 8:15 PM after breaking down the site and driving 231 miles back to Bend. We dropped off the tower trailer and unloaded stuff from the van.

K6Z multi op county expedition

Building on our efforts from last year, we set up Field Day style again at W6PH's cabin outside of Lone Pine under the shadow of Mount Whitney. Thankfully God put Mount Whitney on the west side of Lone Pine. We moved to this location from our customary location at Fossil Falls three years ago. When W6PH heard about our BBQ and homebrew, it was more than he could handle so he invited us to join him!

With 10 Meters expected to be viable this year, we felt a fourth station would be worth a shot. We needed more operators and were fortunate to have Tim, N6WIN join us as well as Marty, W1MD and Bob, WA1Z. Tim, Marty and Bob are all excellent Ops and all around good dudes and made great additions to the Team. W1MD and WA1Z flew all the way from the East Coast just to participate in the CQP. K6VR drove from Colorado and N6KZ from Arizona. Now that's dedication. It really shows how much fun a CQP County Expedition can be (or could it be the homebrew? Hmmm).

We had several goals this year the first of which was to have fun. Everyone got along great and chipped in when needed to set things up, troubleshoot problems, cook, clean, take things down, etc. We were shooting for a win and figured we had a good shot of beating the old 1999 MM County Expedition record if 10 Meters opened. Even without 10 Meters our claimed score beats the old record, so we were happy to see that.

Murphy did show up this year. No getting around that. We had an amplifier failure on 10 Meters followed by a radio failure on 10 Meters so we had to do a lot of switching things around to keep things going. W

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Note: They had 930 contacts on 10 meters! Nearly 1100 on 15 meters!

K6VVA County Expedition – San Benito and Monterrey

See the pics at http://www.k6vva.com/cqp2011/

K6MM – San Francisco Multi OP County Expedition

"A few unexpected political problems at our chosen location near Candlestick Park forced us into a shorter operating schedule as M/S class rather than M/M as originally planned, but we were able to put San Francisco County into many logs this year. We managed 1,100 QSOs in 13.5 hours on just 3 bands. The final count showed an exact 50:50 split between CW and Phone.

K6NV county expedition Sierra County

At one of the Friday, coffee-gatherings in Truckee, NCCC emissary Jack, KF6T visited from Auburn to state that the bean counters in CQP Headquarters were worried about the lack of station signups for Sierra County this year. "Nobody has signed the CQP web county-list for Sierra.", said Jack as he stuffed a muffin into his mouth. "It may mean only 57 counties will show up this year for CQP."

K6NV, Bob, stepped up, set his bowl of granola and Geritol down and said he'd be glad to lead a Sierra county expedition to our favorite Stampede Reservoir campsite. The same one we used for Field Day this year. "Low-tech", he said. After much gnashing, flogging and pleading, Bob was able to gather up enough warm bodies and gear to stage a fun, Fall event. Using his RV, a borrowed K3 and P3 from N6XI (thanks Rick!), a borrowed MP from K6ST (thanks Barry) and a C3 from KU6J (thanks Eric), a 2el 40M wire yagi from WX6V (thanks Jim), a 80m receive loop from N7OM (thanks John), the Sierra Chapter of the NCCC was able to mount a successful, 'low-tech' effort. And a big thanks to K6NV YL, Lois for the great, hot, delivered enchilada dinner with all the trimmings Saturday night! She did the same for Field Day. YL of the Year, up here, for sure. Our score reflects that our tribander was too low (the deer and dogs kept running into it!)...but the 2EL 40M wire yagi screamed on 40M and 15M and the high, 80M dipole was good also, a Sunday addition was a 20m dipole up 60' + a little that performed very well.

The Sierra County Expedition Team consisted of a handful of experienced ops and a handful of rookies. The less experienced ops had a good time getting their feet wet behind the mic. And we had plenty of dogs! In fact, there were more dogs than CW ops!

Got to train those hounds to copy the code.

OPS:

K6NV + Lois
K6ST (+ dog)
K7MS (+ dog)
KU6J
WB6CZG
AE6WT (+2 dogs)
N6MED
KI6PKT
W6EU + KB6LMA (+ dog)

We'll be back next year for another try, maybe this time with some firepower and higher antennas.

Jim W6EU
Sierra Chapter, NCCC scribe "

W6ML County Expedition – Mono County

This was my 20th anniversary CQP Trip...20 consecutive county expeditions to Mammoth Lakes in Mono County...I tried to make an extra push for a competitive score because I am not sure how many of these very physical trips are going to be possible as the years are starting to add up. I made the 300 mile drive to Mammoth on Sunday night, the weekend before CQP so I could have some extra days to setup. In addition to the usual wire beams for 15m & 20m and 40/80M dipoles, I brought a 3 el 10m mono band beam. I spent most of the next 4 days setting up my 5 antennas. The wire antennas were spread though the pine trees and the 3 element 10M mono band beam was mounted on a 30ft mast on my deck. During the week as I installed and tested each antenna I was getting great signal reports and working lots of DX too. I was very optimistic about the upcoming CQP weekend.

At the beginning of CQP I spent the 1st hour on 15M and then went to 10M. I soon realized that 10M SSB was fine, but on 10M CW I was getting too much RFI and the transmitter was locking up. As a result I only had 3 QSOs on 10M CW on Saturday. On Sunday morning, I put a bunch of toroids on all the lines and solved the RF problem, but I never quite caught up on my total CW QSO goal.

All of the mults came pretty easy until all I needed was UT & SK. I was excited when VE5KJS called and gave me his #2...I never heard another VE5 for the rest of the weekend. I worked K7UT a bunch of times and others to cover the UT section and get the sweep. I worked so many Canadian stations, that I started "awarding" some of them by using my special phonetics "W6 Maple Leaf" at the end of each Canadian SSB QSO...nice, eh?

This was my first time using my new K3 for a CQP. I particularly enjoyed it on CW...once I setup on a run frequency, I almost never heard anything but the station replying to my CQ. And to go with the "state or the art" K3, my logging software was still CT running in DOS under a Windows 98 PC. I know that it's pretty obsolete, but using it with the DVP voice card that I have had since 1992, it still provides a sweet interface for SSB QSOs. Maybe next year I'll make the jump to the N1MM bandwagon.

Even the weather cooperated...on Monday through Thursday while I was working outside putting up antennas, the weather was perfect...On Friday when I was working inside setting up my station, it rained heavy off and on all day. Then when I had to take down all the antennas on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning the weather was clear, but it started raining again just as I was leaving to drive home...the forecast was for snow beginning on Tuesday/Wednesday."

60 Meter C O D A R Again

In an unexpected and unfortunate proposal to the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-12), the United States has proposed to allocate 5250-5450 kHz to the radiolocation service to accommodate HF oceanographic radars to partially satisfy Agenda Item 1.15. This Agenda Item "consider[s] possible allocations in the range 3-50 MHz to the radiolocation service for oceanographic radar applications...."

The proposal was made despite earlier contributions to the preparatory process acknowledging that frequency sharing with Amateur Radio "seems to be difficult." Domestically, the United States has allocated five discreet channels in this range to the Amateur Radio Service on a secondary basis. Similar domestic allocations to Amateur Radio have been made by other countries in the frequency range.

Uses of HF Oceanographic Radar

HF Oceanographic Radar is utilized to map ocean surfaces and currents and to detect anomalies that may be indicative of or consequential to disasters or tsunamis. Development of oceanographic radar began in the 1970s with one dominant manufacturer, CODAR (an acronym for Coastal Ocean Dynamics Applications Radar). To an extent, the brand CODAR has become a synonym for the technology.

According to the United States proposal, "The potential benefits to society for improved measurement of coastal currents and sea state include a better understanding of issues like coastal pollution, fisheries management, search and rescue, beach erosion,

maritime navigation and sediment transport. Oceanographic radar measurements of the sea surface provide support to meteorological operations through the collection of sea state and dominant ocean wave data."

Recent Interference Cases

Historically, interference between HF oceanographic radar has been rare. However, ARRL volunteers and staff have collaborated this year with oceanographic researchers to resolve two cases of interference from HF oceanographic radar to Amateur Radio – one in the 5250-5450 kHz range. ARRL Orange Section Official Observer Coordinator Dan Welch, W6DFW, and ARRL Field and Regulatory Correspondent Chuck Skolaut, K0BOG, were among a number of amateurs involved in the effort to resolve the interference on 60 meters. "After comparing reception reports of these signals that we had been hearing on the East Coast and reports [Welch] had received from amateurs on the West Coast, [Welch] followed up on them and began doing some research," explained Skolaut. "We alerted Official Observers – especially along the coast – to monitor and forward reports." Welch enlisted the assistance of a number of these Official Observers and other stations to monitor the frequencies after he had received more observations. Through good cooperation with the FCC, he was able to ascertain that CODAR was being used by Rutgers University on channels 3 and 4 in the 60 meter amateur band.

Good Cooperation from the CODAR Group

According to Skolaut, much of the followup included good cooperation from the CODAR group at Rutgers, including Josh Kohut and Ethan Handel. Rutgers is part of a regional partnership working on ocean observing. Kohut told the ARRL that information they gather is used by the Coast Guard, fisheries, off shore energy facilities, storm

forecasters and pollution studies. He explained that the transmitters are capable of 40 W and provide information from up to 100 miles. Welch and Handel coordinated testing, and amateurs were contacted to help monitor the frequencies as Handel shut down the various transmitters in their network to determine which ones amateurs were hearing. "They conducted two tests a week apart and it was definitely determined that the pulses being heard on the two channels were being transmitted from one or more of their sites," Skolaut said. "It is interesting to note that the West Coast stations were able to hear the East Coast CODAR much of the time, depending on propagation."

Mutually Beneficial

Skolaut reported that the Rutgers team moved their transmitter frequencies outside of the amateur band to 4.9 MHz to continue their research. According to Skolaut, “Both Handel and Kohut said that they were glad we were able to resolve this issue in a mutually beneficial way. Now once again, 60 meters is quiet with regard to CODAR signals.”

Source: ARRL Spectrum Defense Matters Newsletter, Sept 2011, ARRL, Newington, CT 06111

More info on CODAR here

http://www.codar.com/

More 60M News

GREECE'S NATIONAL SOCIETY GETS 5 MHZ PERMIT

The Greek Ministry of Communication has given authorization to the headquarters club station of the Greek national amateur radio society for use a single frequency in the 60 meter band. SZ1SV is being permitted to operate on 5398.5 kHz using SSB, CW and Digital with a maximum power of 100W PEP. The national society says that it hopes to have a beacon on this frequency soon.

The latest 60 meter amateur radio information world-wide can be found on-line in the 5 MHz Newsletters. Its in cyberspace at tinyurl.com/6fkhcmf (G4MWO, Southgate)

Source: Amateur Radio Newsline

PA QSO Party

This was good. Lots of activity was on 40 meters so if you weren't close in, you lost out. No propagation on 15 and 10 to TX. What a difference a week makes. Maybe those further away had better luck.

N2CU: I activated eight counties, single-op, CW only, no driver. Driving winding roads between counties really cuts in on operating time. Not much worked on 15m and my 80m hamstick was practically useless as I couldn't run there and calling stations was frustrating. I felt activity was low, but that's just me.

K3/100, 80-15m hamsticks, N1MM Logger (worked flawlessly), BK Double Stackers and McD's Chicken.

K5LH: Wish more PA stations had switched to 15 and 10 meters. Those bands were open most of the time and appeared to favor West Coast stations. Heroic efforts by mobiles. Worked W3USA (21), K8MR (19), W3NO (16), N2CU (6) K8RYU (5), N8II (3) WU3U (2).

N4PN(GA) : Jim, K8MR, led the way with contacts..combining for 33 (W3USA on Sat and K8MR on Sunday)
Also W3NO - 13, K8RYU - 10, K3YTL - 9 and N2CU - 5.

W4UCZ: (GA- fixed) Tremendous fun and my best showing yet in the Keystoner shindig. Ran my usual K3 into a (snicker-snicker) low random wire (it's all I got!).

Big chalk-up from the Buckeye mobile W3USA (27) / K8MR (17) with the big-sig W3NO at 16 and both Ohio'an K8RYU and New Yawker N2CU at 6. Thank you, gents.

Also, I worked my very last PA county : Tioga. Sure hope Erik, KI4BXU isn't too fatigued from his wilderness adventure to QSL (hi).

NO3M- fixed PA I did things a bit different this year and had three audio streams running in the headphones so I could run on two bands while still tracking all the mobiles and rovers, which I didn't do last year and missed several counties. The first day is basically a brute-force effort, run as much as possible and keep the

rate up, especially on 80/160 during dark hours. Sunday slows down enough that the only way to keep a QSO total up is to QSY everybody around. I probably ended up with nearly 50-60 extra QSOs by moving people all over the place and moving the rounds w/ K8MR in nearby counties. Nearly all moves to 15M worked, about half to 10M.

80/160 numbers ended up much lower than I had hoped. On 160, I had half the QSOs there compared to last year. Wish more folks got down to 160, my favorite place to be. Noise was tolerable, even with the temporary short beverages (large arrays are down at the moment).

AA4GT – Multi -Op - SFL

George, AA4GT, got a couple of friends and went a hunting for PA stations from FL. He had K1UQE WB8VQU K8YMN help him out in the effort from Collier FL.

K8MR: I ended up going out on Saturday with K8BL as W3USA/M, and then doing Sunday with AF8A as K8MR/M.

It was certainly a beautiful weekend to be out touring Pennsylvania, and the radio conditions pretty much matched the weather conditions. I did notice the bands going somewhat dead around 1800z Sunday, and indeed looking at the Spaceweather Now web site afterward, the Bz magnetic field took a dip negative (bad) right about then. But short skip on 40, and 15 and even 10 being open was a treat after all these low sunspot years.

Overall for the weekend, the combined total was 1511 qsos, 58 unique sections, and 59 unique counties, which would come out to 332,170 points, which would have been a new record. This is of course something of and apples/oranges comparison, not knowing if the K8MR route could have been moved to cover counties not done by W3USA, but in any case it was a good year!

W3USA mobile (With K8BL, K8MR)

My regular driver of recent years, AC8E, was not able to make the trip (though he did make 100+ qsos from back home in Ohio). I had put out a message to the Mad River Radio Club and the North Coast Contesters looking for a PaQP

driver/operator. Nothing heard form for over a week, and then last Sunday I got two responses within half an hour. I decided to accept both, so headed out on Saturday with Bob, K8BL, as W3USA/M, returned to spend the night in Hermitage in Mercer county, and then went back out for Sunday with Gary, AF8A, as K8MR/M.

This was BL's first mobile contesting trip, and he had a FB time, even though he deferred much of the operating to me. (He also enjoys driving, and with the beautiful weather and changing fall leaves, he seemed pretty happy with the driving duty).

We got behind the intended schedule before the contest started, as US422 in New Castle was closed down for construction, with no seen detour posted. We followed the Delorme Road Atlas maps around the town, getting back to 422 after 20+ minutes.

It was great having in state propagation on 40 meters after all the low sunspot years. I was also surprised at a number of QSOs on 20 with people close in people, but not local. AA3B in particular had a number of such contacts. Not sure if it was backscatter, tropo, or what, but it was cool. Good rates during the day, but after dark they dropped noticeably.

The interesting driving event was having a horse drawn trailer almost pull out in front of us, I believe in Perry county. But the Amish driver applied full reverse thrusters, and got the animal back with plenty of space to spare.

As always, it was an enjoyable trip around my home state. The K8MR mobile contest station has been packed away for the winter, next appearance likely the Michigan QSO Party in April.

73 - Jim K8MR

N3WO Multi Op Mobile (W3NO, AD8J)

We operated from 19 counties. We were running a KW from the mobile. I drove up from NC to operate in this contest.

On the Road with N4CD II

The Belton hamfest down in Bell County, TX is 3 hours down the Interstate – the short way. There are two each year – one in the spring, one in the fall and it starts on Friday afternoon, and then again early on Saturday with folks out in the flea market at 6 am where you need a flashlight to see what goodies they have. Sunrise is about 7:30 this time of year ! The temps were supposed to be good with highs in the mid 80s and lows in the 50s, and a nice breeze to cool things off. The inside flea market , which consists of the County Fair Grounds and a giant indoor arena, opens at 7am. You can drive in, unload all your stuff, then park outside. It makes it easy for folks hauling heavy boat anchors. You can park inside but ONLY if you have less than 1/4 tank of gas and disconnect your battery! Those are the 'rules' to stay inside. There's usually 30-50 people selling outside, too, but that depends upon the weather.

I headed down via a circular route heading down I-45 to get Ellis, TX for Tony, WA9DLB. He's been hunting for that one for a while, then into Navarro. I then headed across 31 at Corsicana down to Waco in McLennan County and hit I-35 for the rest of the way down to Bell County. I got off at Old Blevins road to run Falls – you normally would run out of it as there is only a few miles on the interstate. I checked into the Temple Motel 6 ($40) then headed over to the fair grounds about 12 miles away to the south.

Outside there were about 30 people already selling stuff. I didn't buy anything. Inside another 20-30 folks had set up, and I found a few magazines (Electric Radio from the 1990s) and some 73 Mags and a 3 CQ Mags from the 60s. The 73 Magazines had two interesting articles on regen receivers.

After a few hours of looking around it was back to Temple and the Cracker Barrel Restaurant for a country ham dinner, green beans and fried apples. Then to the motel where I hit the hay early after reading through the magazines I bought. When the alarm went off, I headed over to the Denny's next door for their Value Slam ($4) and the AARP senior coffee ($1). It was a lovely 55 degrees – we've been roasting most of the summer, and a week ago it was 100 degrees and sizzling. Then it was over to the hamfest again getting there at 6:30 am – still dark. Folks were wandering around with flashlights and the sellers also had some LED lights lighting up things! Hi hi

I found a 1930s one tube regen set with a type 19 tube – the unit was built on a small metal chassis – the guy had built it himself 'a long long time ago'. Type 19 tubes have a 2v filament and are one of the first ” dual” tubes – a dual triode. It had a plug in coil and looked to be complete, but obviously 1930 capacitors aren't any good any more, so it will take some replacing things to get it to work, if I decide to fix it. It had one plug in coil with it. That was good luck – you just don't see too many of these and it's been a long long time since I've

run across these in a flea market. It was $3. It takes likely about 30v on the detector stage and 45 to 67v on the audio side of the radio.

I wandered around a lot. The same heavy Heathkit Apache, Mohawk, and Warrior Linear, plus SSB adapter that was at the Mena, AR hamfest was there – I guess no one wanted 400 lbs of radio! Nice condition – mint looking – but who has an operating bench that will hold 400 lbs and is 8 feet wide? There were lots of Hallicrafters and Nationals, an Atlas RX-110 Receiver, Atlas 210X transceivers, Swans of 3 or 4 varieties, a few of the Heath SB series, some nice Collins radios. Maybe 100 folks inside selling things. There were a few TS-520/530 type radios, some newer stuff, but no screaming bargains.

Wow....I spied another regen – it had an octal based 1H5 single tube in it – plug in coil – build on a wood chassis with a flakey front wood panel.....missing the 'regen' control – will have to decode the circuit to see what it did and what the value might be. Tube there, and other parts there including plug in coil. The price was right! Take it away! I did!

The same seller also had a chassis with two '70.7v line transformers – these are used in intercom systems for tapping off the 70.7v main audio line (distribution line) to the speakers located through the building. By selecting which tap you use, you can select how much power you want to go to the speaker. Now, if you need a transformer to hook a speaker to your 600 ohm output on a military boat anchor, or want to use 2000 ohm headphones on your radio with low impedance out, or use the new mini stereo headphones (maybe 15 ohms) on your 4 ohm radio output, you can use this. It won't handle any DC in the windings so it is not a good output transformer. The price was right ($5 for 2).

Well, the bargains were not done. I spied a home built 1920s radio in great shape- inside and out. Cheap. It used a single tube – 4 pin job. I wasn't sure what. My friend Jim Sargent, WA5QBR was there selling lots of wireless books, old magazines, tube guides and tubes. He thought it took a 01A tube – we tried one – it didn't fit. Then we concluded it took a UX-199 tube – which is slightly smaller spacing of the pins. He didn't have one with him. (not too many hams need those tubes! Mainly old old radio collectors). I'll get one from him one of these weekends.

With the car full of goodies, it was time to go county hunting again. I ran Bell again and headed west on 190 over to Coryell and Lampasas. At Lampasas, you head south on 281 for a few miles to the C/L of Burnet/Lampasas – good spot to run. I was still fascinated with the county lines on the Garmin. Nifty. They usually agree with the signs (and changes in the pavement, but not always). I suspect that the coding for the C/L is close but not necessarily 100% to the foot. Then it was north up through Hamilton over to C/L of Hamilton/Bosque on Route 6, then north up to Erath/Somervell, then up 114 to Hood – across 370 at Granbury up to Cresson (Hood/Johnson line) and into the Ft Worth area and then home on the interstates, 4-6 lane roads and Toll road.

The CA QSO Party started – only a handful of stations on 20M – didn't seem like much. I got

home about 4pm....crashed for an hour – then turned on the computer and radio – wow. CA was blasting in on 10M! 40 over! I logged about 50 stations in an hour – between SSB and CW, then things died down. The spots were zipping by, and folks were giving out numbers in the 800 and 900 range left and right! Looks like I missed out on many hours of fantastic 10 M opening to CA – and I could use a lot of band counties there!

Temps were great on the trip, the car ran fine, and we got some counties for the folks. Larry W0QE headed from IL into MO. Bill, KM1C was in OH putting them out. Don, W0EAR ran Washburn, MN, Jim N9JF put out some in IL, but it was relatively quiet on CW. It took a while to get spotted – only then did the CH show up – just a few actually listen on the cw frequencies these days it seems. Well, that and the CQP was going at full blast with 10M full of band counties for the grabbing! Can't blame folks for snagging them!

There are one or two more hamfests this season, then it's a long stretch till the next one in January, and who knows – maybe even to Orlando in Feb?

Arizona QSO Party

Wow..10M was hot for some of the AZ stations – over 400 contacts on 10M SSB for some entrants Zero propagation on 15 or 10 here in TX and I really didn't hear a lot of activity compared to previous years on 20M. Still, there were counties to be snagged, and the east coast had a good time on 15M and on 10M if you were 'far enough' away. I missed most of the first day as I was away at a radio boatanchor auction for most of Saturday, but the AZ QP lasted till late evening and started again on Sunday. I think the 'county expeditions' were down this year. Some AZ stations had over 1000 QSOs.

From the 3830 reflector:

K7FA – County Expedition

Propagation was great, QRN was very low, Bands were hot.
88 percent contacts made on Phone.

Observations/Comments

Began on CW, and had planned to use mostly that mode . . .
twice as many points for CW, Right? Answer: Nope, Guess again!
After two hours on 20m and 15m at very-low rates (38 per hour),
sequential QSO numbers being issued to me illustrated that even casual
S&P PAQP CW Contesters were doing far better than me (and I was Running).

Most stations had no idea what the Arizona exchange was about.
As an Arizona County Line Station, my sent exchange was especially long,
and several CW operators simply sent a question mark, gave up, and QSY'ed.
Clearly, a course correction was needed.

I remembered an old motto: Tell them what you're going to tell them,
then tell them. Finally, tell them what you told them! I switched to
Phone because a CW Op. would never stick around for that nonsense.

Did it work? Yep! Each time my rate began to fall, I explained that
Arizona was celebrating it's 100-year Centennial, and that working
a station on an Arizona County Line was a pretty big deal. Just be
patient, and we could get through my painfully-long exchange.
Whenever that approach lost appeal, the County Hunter Pitch, or
other another approach was used.

Donkey Serenade:

Lack of sleep began to impair my efficiency, especially by the
second day of the contest. Donkeys have developed loud vocalizations,
("bray") which help keep them in contact with other donkeys over
wide spaces of the desert. Unfortunately, my sleep was minimal
because of the nearby donkey vocalizations (enhanced by a full moon
during donkey mating season).

DX:
Since the AZQP is a Domestic Contest, I was surprised that 79 DX
stations in 22 different countries contacted me. (Mostly
Asia, Oceania, South America, and a few Europe).

Following an explanation, some DX appeared to understand some of
the Arizona Exchange (either the date or my the County location).
Actually, few stations (DX or Domestic) cared about the exchange.
Interest was more about a signal report, or to tell me about an
antenna, a trip, or that a relative once lived in Arizona!

Thanks for your patience, and your contacts. 73, Tom

K7IA County Line Expedition

Single op county line (Coconino-Navajo Counties), low power, grid DM44.

Preparation for this event began in late August, when wife, Erin, and I took a day trip over to last year's AZQP and 7QP county line site to survey the damage from the HUGH man-caused forest fire in Arizona late last spring. Reports indicated that although the forest damage was very widespread, it was patchy in nature, with many islands of normal timber surviving in a wasteland of complete destruction. We wondered if our productive county line site was an "island" or worse. Alas, while last events' trees remained standing, they were so scorched that they were no longer green, representing a real danger of personal injury from falling as they slowly rotted away. Besides, the area was closed by the Forest Service.

On to Plan B: find another county line and activate a couple of different Arizona counties. I poured over Forest Service charts, topographical maps, and Google Earth for hours and found a number of possibilities. I picked off coordinates of a half dozen in Arizona's Mogollon Rim country (pronounced "moggie-own"). The Rim is tens of miles in length and runs generally east-west. It is a sharp edge where terrain drops suddenly to elevations 2-3000 feet lower. While not as spectacular as Arizona's Grand Canyon (what is?), the vistas are magnificent. At Rim level, the elevation is about 7500 feet, and the vegetation is mostly Ponderosa Pine, Juniper (up to 30 feet tall), Aspen, and scrub Oak. It is home to the largest stand of Ponderosa Pines in the world. Hence my interest: tall trees for wire antennas and favorable terrain for propagation.

NOAA Weather predictions were not favorable, but we were committed to going. Predicted were strong winds, rain, and 10% chance of snow flurries on Wednesday--Friday before the event weekend and warm sunshine on Sat-Sunday of the event. Well, we've had bad portable ops wx before, so what could be worse than the past? Ha!

We left home on Tuesday afternoon and arrived at the closest of the Google Earth sites I surveyed at noon on Wednesday. Except for a lone horse grazing among the pines, we had the place to ourselves. That was the friendliest horse we have ever encountered anywhere! He followed us around as we surveyed the various sites to set up camp and surveyed the available trees for wire antennas. We even wondered if he would allow us to put up antennas, but once

he determined that unlike the others who have camped in the area, we had nothing tasty to offer him, he wandered off not to be seen again. We attempted shooting fishing line into treetops with the trusty slingshot, but it was far too windy (and too cold) to put the line anywhere near the desired spots, so Wednesday was a bust.

The torrential rains began sometime on Wednesday night and continued through Thursday. Wished we had a rain gauge. At daybreak, the entire area was a loblolly of mud, but we were on rocky soil with a good bottom and on a high point where drainage was good. Late on Thursday afternoon, we got a 40m vee up at about 50 feet between rain squalls.

Friday morning broke with cold temps (mid 30's). gusty winds, and without a cloud in the sky so we got the other antennas up after about five hours of work. I've never had so many failed attempts at getting a fishing line into acceptable positions for subsequent hauls of dacron rope. Until that day, I had thought that cold slingshot elastic tubing would have more zip than when warm. Not so! The best I could do in those temps/winds was 50 feet, compared to the usual 65 feet.

Ten to 15 minutes after the antennas were up (but not tested) it began snowing. Fortunately, the total accumulation was only about 0.5 to 0.75 inches, and even before sundown, warmer temps melted it off.

Saturday and Sunday were beautiful--cloudless, windless, and warm days (in the 50's). But we no longer had the place to ourselves, for swarms of people in RVs arrived with their noise-making generators, ATV's, and "quads." Where did they come from?? "Fall Break." What's that?? Some youngsters came over to inspect the antenna farm, but they didn't hang around for an invitation to ham radio.

Antennas:
homebrew Moxon Rectangles for 20 and 15m
vees for 40 & 80m
vertical wire plus Smarttuner for 10m and backup

This was my third AZQP, and it was by far the slowest. As usual, I had my hour-by-hour rate sheet from last year handy, but from the first hour I was behind last year's tally. Of course, I wondered why: antennas lower than usual? steady S5 noise level on 20 & 15, peaking to S9 and occasionally to 10 over? generally weak signals on Rx despite dozens of reports from others claiming I was "20 over" had the K3's Rx gone sour? tricky and awkward QSO exchange this year--did it scare folks off? heavy penetration by and extended

hours of the PAQP?

I've been suspicious about the K3 Rx for the past six months and have talked to Rene at Elecraft about it, so I'm going to accept his invitation to send it to him for a tune up and for any hardware mods I haven't yet made. After all, it's s/n 388, and it will come back like brand new.

QSO Parties can benefit each other by providing additional activity--witness the weekend of the 7th Call Area QP, New England QP, and Indiana QP all on the same weekend. In fact, to accommodate how busy that weekend in May is for all operators, N1MM Logger can log all three QPs in a single datafile for those "out of state" ops. Unfortunately, such wasn't the case this past weekend. Most of the PAQP ops were unaware that there was another QP on the air. While all of the PA SSB ops were happy to give their names (when asked) for the AZQP exchange, a few CW ops refused to do so, stating that it wasn't required for the PAQP. I created a second log for PAQP CW contacts, but after working only eleven running ops, most with no names for the "Note" field, I gave up--a real blow to this CW op! I manually kept track of my outgoing serial numbers (pencil & paper) for all PAQP ops that I worked either in Run or S&P mode. For PAQP ops who answered my CQ, I gave them both their needed exchange followed by the AZ exchange--but I nearly always had to ask for a name, which was not a great problem. The PAQP has been on the air for far longer than the AZQP, so I understand all of the above. It appears that Arizona and Pennsylvania will be sharing the same QP weekend for many years to come, so I think it is time for the sponsors of the AZQP and the PAQP to get together, alert their operators through their respective rules to the presence of the other QP, explain the advantages of a second QP sharing the spectrum, and even point out each other's QSO exchanges.

Regarding the AZQP exchange this year, it was certainly different. Some posts said "awkward" and "confusing," but this AZQP is getting the jump on 2012, the 100th anniversary of Arizona statehood (the Valentine state, Feb 14, 1912). Perhaps it was my memories of 8th grade Arizona civics class at dear old Mansfeld Junior High in Tucson, because I really enjoyed reviewing the list of important dates (years) of important events in Arizona history and picking one that I thought to be important (1848). Now that the dust has settled, I'll be taking a look at the years the other AZ ops have picked--not all were 1912. Naturally, a lot of non-AZ, non-PA were mystified by the AZ exchange--especially in the last couple of hours on Sunday. Most offered serial numbers, etc. At times I wished I had programmed a macro key .wav file to say "name and state for the AZQP," but that would have been far too mechanical and impersonal for ops who just wanted to operate a dozen or so AZ ops. A few ops were amazed by my serial number of 1848 so early in the

contest, so that began a chat and a little history lesson about what happened that year and why I thought it important. After all, it was supposed to be a "party," no?

So I say Bravo Zulu and hat's off to Catalina Radio Club for this year's exchange!

NI7R – fixed – Pinal AZ

What a bust. Poor participation from Arizona stations. An exchange that was ridiculous, not to mention being totally incompatible with the PA QSO Party. Apparently, the organizers were more concerned with Arizona's centennial than having a good contest. It is really sad when Arizona stations can't even participate in their own QSO party, but, then again, I can't blame them because of the stupid rules. The exchange should be the same for both in-state and out-of-state stations. There should be separate categories for at least CW, SSB and Mixed. The exchange should be compatible with any other QSO parties going the same weekend. Our Arizona QSO Party could be at least as popular as the Washington State Salmon Run (a state of similar size) with proper organization and support. In the spirit of a bad Outlaw, I say we hang the organizers from the highest tree. The Arizona QSO Party should be organized by true contesters. I would like to see the AZ QSO Party sponsored by the Arizona Outlaws Contest Club (AOCC) with the full support of AOCC members perhaps by 2013. I am willing to help.

W0BH (KS) I was camping this weekend without a radio, so just got on for a short time on Sunday afternoon while also working the PAQP. The unusual AZQP exchange actually matched up with the PAQP because both were "numbers" so I could use the same logging program, but had to remember to send my name instead of a number.

WT6P at NA6E (AZ) Well, it seems the format of the exchange was not popular with anyone since all but 3 Qs didn't know about the contest. With the other 'tests going on, the exchange was a real mess.

K7DPS QRP County Expedition: Never having done any QRP operations as a group, we decided to do a Multi-Multi QRP Expedition at a temporary location using temporary antennas. Didn't know exactly what to expect but are happy with end result for this first effort - lot's to learn and improve on.

KK7AC – fixed AZ : 20 on the first day was pretty soft, but picked up on Sunday. 10 was the only real highlight. DX stations seemed better this year, but are always light during stateside QSO parties.

Maybe the cumbersome exchange scared some off? It's hard to get the "normal" amateur radio community to participate even in search and pounce mode, but the "weird" exchange caused some people to think that they could not work me or needed to exchange some type of serial number? Nearly every single person sent me their name and some sort of serial. I had to pry a signal report out of most which slowed the rhythm for good runs. Got W7SA for 100 pt. bounus, bagged 10 counties and I think I got all 50 states.

Small Chevy Coming

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- General Motors, maker of the Chevy Volt plug-in hybrid, will sell a small totally electric car beginning in 2013, the automaker announced Wednesday.

The Chevy Spark EV will be sold in limited markets in the U.S. and other countries, GM said.

Smaller than a typical subcompact, the Spark is a so-called minicar. It's a couple of inches shorter than a Mini Cooper.

A gasoline-powered version of the Spark is expected to go on sale here early next year.

In the past, GM (GM, Fortune 500) executives have expressed doubts about the market for purely electric cars because of their limited driving range. The automaker attempted to market a two-seat all-electric car, the EV1, in some states in the 1990s. GM stopped making the car when laws requiring the sale of electric cars ended in 2003.

GM began selling the Chevrolet Volt, a plug-in car that can drive about 35 miles on a fully charged battery before turning on a gasoline engine to generate electricity for further driving, at the end of 2010.

While GM had expected to sell 10,000 Volts by the end of 2011, only about 4,000 have been sold so far. Still, GM spokesman Rob Peterson said sales will pick up now that the Volt is being sold nationwide. Until recently it was only available in a few states.

Nissan has sold over 7,000 of its all-electric car, the Leaf, in about the same period.

When it goes on sale, the Spark EV will join an increasingly crowded market of plug-in cars as almost every major automaker plans to offer at least one by the end of 2012.

GM has been testing an electric version of the Chevrolet Cruze -- a larger car similar to the Chevrolet Volt -- in several countries around the world. Feedback from those tests in China, Korea and India has been taken into account in creating the Spark EV.

"The Spark EV offers customers living in urban areas who have predictable driving patterns or short commutes an all-electric option," said Jim Federico, global vehicle chief engineer for electric vehicles at Chevrolet.

GM has not yet announced details such as the car's driving range, price or in what markets it might be sold."

Source: CNNMoney

New York QSO Party

Wow..the re-constituted NY QSO Party was another good one this year with dozens of fixed stations and half a dozen mobiles to chase all over the state. There were quite a few spots on 15M and some on 10M. During that Saturday, 10M was full with dozens of Europeans in the WAG contest – both on SSB and CW. Weak but workable with a vertical from TX. It was also the 10-10 CW weekend, with only one lonely station heard here.

Probably all of the NY counties were on the air

from the 3830 contest reflector:

N2CU with WB2ABD/mobile "I had planned to do a solo operation (no driver) but late in the week I found out that my good friend and master county hunter Paul, WB2ABD was not set up for doing a mobile effort of his own. He volunteered to be the driver and I could operate SO CW only. Better yet, we used his scooter with a roof-mounted screwdriver.

We activated 20 counties, which was well beyond what I planned alone. CHA, CAT, ERI, WYO, ALL, LIV, STE, CHE, SCU, TIO, TOM, COR, ONO, CAY, SEN, ONT, MON,

GEN, ORL and NIA were all quite well represented by us. Well, we did make a wrong turn in TIO and only operated there for 9 minutes. Congrats to the lucky few who got us there! Late in the contest (1/2 hour left) I was asked to go to WYO county when I was in GEN. Although they are neighboring counties I was at the northern border of GEN and never would have made WYO in time. Sorry if you missed the county sweep because of that Keith but we did activate WYO earlier in the day.

Conditions the first several hours were crappy but in the late afternoon they seemed to get better. 40m was especially noisy through most of the contest. We did have rain and high winds the whole time.

One county in particular was a hoot. When I entered Cortland I had a massive pileup. I apologize for being a lid handling the pileup, but realized too late I had the noise blanker and noise reduction on and it was causing some distortion on receive. However, I eventually worked every station that needed it.

Many thanks to constant companions NT2A (24), LY5A (21), K1ZZI (18), N4PN and N6MA (15), W4UCZ (13), WA3HAE, WA6KHK, K5KDG and W3DYA (12), N4VV and W5WJN (11), HA8IB (10) and many others with multiple QSOs. Special thanks to LY5A who worked us in all but the last four counties. I guess he has to go to bed sometime!

Rig: Elecraft K3/100
Ant: Roof mounted Little Tarheel screwdriver.
Driver: WB2ABD

73,
Tom N2CU

N2ZN/mobile

Time constraints due to family activities limited operation to 5 hours. This was a single op mobile entry, so I drove to a location, operated, then drove to the next location, operated, etc. I'm sure I spent more time driving and finding a spot to operate than actually operating!

Locations in Allegeny and Wyoming counties were quite good (~2000' ASL hilltops, no power lines, highest point in area), but the spot I found in Cattaraugus county was noisy and in a valley. Sorry to anyone I couldn't copy

there (or anywhere else). The FT-857 I use in the car is very sensitive to local noise, so there were some signals that got covered up at times. 40 was quite noisy and my SWR was high there, so my apologies for being weak on both TX and RX. I also had some RFI problems which may have killed my CAT interface for the rig while in Cattaraugus. Guess that is not a lucky county.

20 seemed to work well-signals were loud. Probably should have worked that band more.

I tried 10 SSB once, thinking I might work some southern USA or west coast. Very surprised when two Europeans and a ZS5 answered me there, instead of any stateside!

Very glad to see some of the rarer counties activated, including Clinton, Chautauqua, Orange, Warren, and Sullivan. I guess everybody missed Rockland this year?

K2QO mobile multi-op

K2ZR and I planned a 12 county rove starting in Herkimer Co. at the QTH of the Cold Brook Contest Club. After a great dinner on Friday night with K2CS and AF2K, some Heineken's a the club house, and some prodding, ZR decided on Saturday morning that another four counties would be a good idea especially since one county, Montgomery, has been quite rare. The mobile was fitted with Hamsticks front and rear and we were ready to go at the stroke of 2PM local time. Running two stations was a challenge but the borrowed bandpass filters from my normal VHF rover partner did the job.

The whole contest went by very fast because we had a had good rates going from start to finish. At one point we made an effort at trying 15M but Murphy was on board and no Qs were made. Investigation in the driveway on Sunday confirmed that the stick was wonky on the front antenna mount. Odd.

We had great food for the road, radio conditions were good and activity seemed high. The real surprise was the number of stations that followed us from county to county. The top dog was K1ZZI with 23 QSOs! NT2A came in at 18. Many other stations were in the near one dozen QSO range.

This contest was a blast and we'll be back for another run in 2012.

73,
K2QO/Mark

K2ZR/Dick

NA2X rover

Operated single op rover from 3 counties - CGO, BRM, SCU
Ended up only using 40 meters.

W6XR: Fixed NY : Too Bad we had a solar event during the afternoon that effectively really slowed the rate. The conditions during the preceding weeks were just phenomenal and using the bands as they were, I made a plan to take advantage of the superior propagation. Having a plan at hand, the sun decided to change its behavior, rendering my plans pretty useless!

Did CW only this time to get me in the mood for my upcoming expedition during the CQWW-CW and hopefully that will help. Thanks to everyone who worked me as W6XR/2 which sure is a fist full on CW. Just imagine doing this contest without a memory keyer -- no thanks. Great operators stateside as well as the many DX stations who called in. The DX guys sure kept things rolling along. Hopefully I'll work everyone in the NY gang from Eluthra (C6AXR) or whatever call is used from the Bahamas. Once again, thanks for the Q's and kudos to the organizers, particularly having a 12 hour contest as some of us are really getting older.

N4PN (GA) : Again, hats off to the mobiles...led by Tom, N2CU with 17 Q's. Followed by - K2QO-11, WJ2O-6, W2LC-5, W2PV-4 and many with 2 Q's...

W2EG (fixed – Albany NY) 472 CW contacts - "Not enough activity, at least for CW only, to justify 12 hours. Guess NY is just too common!

K2DB (fixed St Lawrence NY) 500 cw QSO - "Not bad except for the upper band taking a healthy poop at around 2000z to 2300z, I heard absolutely nothing on 20 or above for the three hours, at least they did in NNY. Had a great time with cw only."

N2JDQ (Fixed Monroe NY): 1St time doing a real effort for NYQP.. lack of activity made it hard to stay focused. I spent WAYY to much time on 10 & 15m with minimal results. 20m was

a disappointment not to condx.. but to my antennas. My station is not well equipped antenna wise on 20-10m. Was very happy with 40 & 80m performance

N2WLS - Portable Allegany, NY

“Despite cold weather, constant rain, and high wind warnings in WNY, Steve (KC2QZF) and I were able to pull off another successful contest. In response to relatively low turnout in previous NYQP years for Allegany County, we opted to hitch up the RVs and head to a campground outside of Angelica, NY. We actually scoped out the campground about a month prior to the contest and got the "OK" from the owners to setup antennas, etc. It's difficult enough to explain ham radio to non-hams, but it's even harder to explain contesting. Luckily the campground owner was somewhat familiar because one of their seasonals is a ham operator (who incidentally we worked during the contest while he was at a different QTH!).

Steve spent most of the contest on 80M and 20M via his IC-7000 and an 80M dipole at a NVIS-friendly height. I spent most of my time on 40M via my TS-2000 and a 40M dipole. Steve was able to find enough room to somehow string up the two dipoles as cross-polarized within the bounds of "a campsite" (or two) (maybe three) (and a campground roadway).

Despite our best efforts, some of the 80M RF was making its way back into the camper. We tried both chokes and line isolators to no avail. At least this time our router didn't keep rebooting every time we keyed up (as in our past roving exploits during a certain January VHF contest)... Just don't ask us how our computer mice worked while 80M was in use. 80M was a bit dry early on in the contest thanks to those friendly sunspots. We did both note an abnormally high number of stations calling us that were dupes. Otherwise there were no significant oddities. We even worked a couple of 5W QRP's from across the state -- that may be my next category to try and tackle!”

N4WN (VA -fixed) “Out of eight operating events to choose from, three being state QSO parties and the Worked All Germany contest I chose to the NYQP to exercise the station for the coming contest season.

Of the signals heard and worked from New York, the majority were strong and easy to contact. However, there did not appear to be very many stations from New York operating the QSO party. Although I worked every county heard I only managed 54 of the 62 counties.

For as many hams as there are in New York, participation in the state QSO party was disappointing. Sometimes called CQ for up to five minutes before New York station would answer. Very few NY stations were heard calling CQ NYQP and only a couple of others outside NY were heard looking for contacts in NY.

N2FMS (Fixed NY) : "Been a ham since 1965 and this was my first try at a contest. Worked only seven hours with a few bathroom breaks and lunch. Had a lot of fun and next year will give it a better try. I found it's really easy to participate.

My only problem is electronic logging. I have a Mac and can't find any software for it. Maybe I need to get a PC."

Silicon Carbide

The first solid state diodes and transistors were made out of Germanium. Then along came silicon for diodes and transistors. Now- for power applications, the new kid on the block is silicon carbide.

Did you know that in your hybrid car the radiator has two loops. One to keep the engine cool as in a normal car, and another loop to keep the 'power inverter' cool. The engine is kept at 105C or lower. The electronics loop keeps the electronics at 65 to 70 degrees C. Otherwise, your hybrid would not run but self destruct on a warm day.

The power converter/inverter is the device with lots of silicon power switching devices – that change the battery voltage to control the three phase AC motor, and take the alternator output and that from dynamic braking and put it back in the battery. High voltage and high currents – 200-300v and tens of amps or more. Now the power industry is looking at silicon carbide to reduce the heat produced – and maybe even eliminate the need to water cool the inverter. Currently, the auto folks use three phase converters with six diodes and six transistors. In the lab, simply switching the Si diodes to SiC diodes can save 33% in energy! You can save another 33% by using SiC transistors! It's also more heat resistant. For silicon, thermal failure starts to occur at 150 deg C. SiC can go to double that.

The first silicon carbide transistors are coming off the assembly line. Within five years, this market should bloom and the devices work their way into cars. They'll become very useful in solar and wind power generation, and maybe even eliminate large power transformers in many applications.

The main feature of silicon carbide is the 'band gap' energy, which is the energy to get get

electronics from the valence band into the conduction band, is about 3 times as much as silicon. That lets SiC based devices withstand far higher voltages and temperatures than silicon devices. Because electrons in a SiC requires more energy to be pushed into the conduction band, the material can withstand much stronger electric fields, up to about 10 times the maximum for silicon. Thus, a SiC device the same size can withstand 10 times the voltage, or can be $1/10^{th}$ the size for the same voltage rating. Thinner devices are faster and boast less resistance, which means less energy is lost to heat when a silicon carbide diode or transistor is conducting electricity.

To meet current requirements of 200v plus operation , manufacturers have to use bi-polar silicon. These can be replaced with uni-polar SiC devices like MOS FETS. The transistors can be switched faster – thus more efficiently. While the SiC devices work up to 300 deg, the rest of the control circuitry now can only work up to 70 deg C – so more work needs to be done for the integrated package.

Today, electric cars are about 85% efficient in using power from the battery to the motor. With ever increasing targets for 'mileage', it seems SiC could get it up to 93% efficient. In other words, reduce the losses in the power circuitry by 50%. (you get more range!)

For solar and wind applications, the current inverters are already about 97% efficient. However, in giant solar farms, SiC could cut the losses in half – so that would be hundreds of thousands a year in savings in the future.

There's always something new coming along.

Source: IEEE Spectrum, October 2011.

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Note de N4CD – if you have a good memory, you'll recall that way way back when (like 1900s) some folks use a 'carbordum detector' with naturally occurring but fairly rare silicon carbide. It was useful under very strong signal conditions like when you were in a harbor right next to a wireless high power station.

Silicon carbide (SiC), also known as carborundum, is a compound of silicon and carbon with chemical formula SiC. It occurs in nature as the extremely rare mineral moissanite. Usually made for most applications from manufactured material, carborundum is used for grinding and polishing. To make semiconductors, you need extremely pure SiC with no internal faults in the crystal lattice. That has been the main problem in making devices that work up to this point. Now, that hurdle is being conquered.

Iowa QSO Party

This was a good QSO party with spots flowing all day long as the mobiles headed through the counties. 40M from TX to IA was miserable most of the day with high noise and no signals at all. 40M was essentially 'dead'. Of course, 10M was humming at the same time, but not to IA from TX. From TX, I could hear the top half and east half of IA, so I snagged what I could and didn't hear the others that were spotted 'too close' for me. It looks like much of the state was put out by the mobiles!

From the 3830 contest reflector:

W0ZQ mobile : "Nine fewer multipliers compared to last year equates to a smaller score. I deliberately had decided to focus on CW this year, but found myself at the end of my run with time left on the clock, so did some 20m SSB at the end. It was a beautiful day to be out and about in Iowa and playing radio ... I waved to a lot of farmers with the harvest coming in. Thanks to the Ottumwa ARC for sponsoring this fun event and to all the op's who participated.

K0PC mobile: "A beautiful day for a drive around Iowa, 55 degrees and sunny. We moved to northeast IA this year with a new route and planned on 20 counties. We managed to squeeze in eight hectic minutes in a 21st county (KOS) at the end. Absolutely no equipment issues so we must be living right.

The score this year is about 4% better than last year. We had 45 fewer QSOs but 8 more mults this year. There are 154 unique calls in the log, a nice turnout. The heavy hitters include:

20 - N6MU, W4UCZ
19 - W0EAR
18 - NN9K
17 - KV1E, W4IHI
14 - K0HNC, W9LHG
13 - K9EN
12 - K0MPH, KI0I, W0ZQ, WA9LT
11 - KC7YE, LY5A, N9YPN, W0EAR, W0GXQ

I have been asked by the Iowa State Patrol to turn over my log as evidence in a speeding case against Jon W0ZQ. He called me four times in four minutes

from four different counties. I think Jon set a new land speed record for a gravel road. Jon was a big reason my mults were up this year.

We have used APRS every year in Iowa but the coverage has been pretty sparse. This year I didn't use a 2M radio for APRS, I used a program on the laptop that fed our position to an APRS internet server through a cell phone connection. It worked fantastic and covered every mile of our route. I wasn't sure how my cell phone data connection would hold up out in the rural areas but it was fine. This will be a feature of all my future QSO Party runs.

W0BH mobile with AD0DX

It was Fall Break weekend at Hesston College which just happened to coincide with the Iowa QSO Party .. too convenient to pass up! Ron/AD0DX had just gotten his mobile contesting feet wet with me in the Texas QSO Party a few weekends before, so he jumped at another chance to work those county line pileups. We quickly put together a 22 county route covering the southwest corner of the state. Iowa was heavily hit by flooding a few months ago, so checking road closures was really important. One Interstate was still closed for a stretch, but we found a route that worked.

The Iowa border appeared just a few minutes late and then we were off. Conditions were good all day on 40/20, and 15/10 opened up nicely in the afternoon which gave us some other band options. After a few counties, we had a nice group waiting for us at lines. John/N6MU quickly figured out that we weren't too busy to QSY, so we started moving around the bands. Practice makes perfect, and we certainly got practice! In a number of counties we could make 6 Qs in just over a minute, switching between CW and SSB on 20/15/10. I was hoping the rest of the gang would catch on, too .. maybe next time, because it was really fun.

As John's and our Q total climbed, we both noticed that if 10 meters held out, we might have a change to break a hundred Qs. That would be a personal best for John, and my previous personal record was 97 over 18 hours with N8II in the 2009 KSQP. We decided to go for it.

All the equipment problems this time happened before the IAQP started. On the way up, I like to run counties for the county hunters as a way of testing out the setup in the van. I still hadn't made it out of Kansas when my GPS computer suddenly went dark. This time a fuse had blown because my car radio and overhead lights were also off. I normally take GPS computer power off the car battery, but I rerouted it to the logging computer battery and finished out the run to

Ron's house in Kansas City. He had the right fuse so I didn't even have to break into my supply, and we had navigation restored. I took a power splitter off line, and no further problems developed the rest of the weekend.

We had too much fun at county lines, and so found ourselves wondering if we could still make our last county. With 5 miles to go and 8 minutes left, we were cutting it pretty close. Ron was driving. I heard him say something, then the van suddenly decelerated and reversed course. Ron had blown by our last turn, but the GPS caught it. I'd already done the same thing a few counties back, so I knew how he felt. Back on track, we arrived in Wayne county with two minutes left. John had found me on 15 a few minutes previously. He knew when and where, so we quickly put 5 Qs in the log with 30 seconds to spare. 10m was going out so we didn't try 10SSB, which left "plenty" of time to work K8QWy, who did a nice job of finding us in other counties as well. When the dust settled, 112 Qs and all of our 22 counties were in John's log (and ours, too). Great job, John! And I'll also say great job, Ron. You know you're getting it when you can work a CW pileup from a four county line!

Stats

We operated 8.9 hours, 754 Qs, 159 unique calls, 9 dupes

Special thanks to the following ops for 5 or (way) more contacts:

112 N6MU
24 KO1U
21 W4UCZ
19 LY5A N4CD W4IHI
17 WA6KHK
16 KC7YE W3DYA
15 K8QWY
14 K0HNC NT5O
11 KI0I W0EAR
10 DL3IAC K0MPH NN9K
09 W4YDY
08 AA5JG KV1E N4AAT ND3R W1END W9MSE WA2VYA
07 K2HT K4YFH NF0N W0GXQ WI0WA
06 K1TKL K4YT N5HMH
05 N3XL N7VS W7KQZ WA9LT WU3H YV5OIE

Iowa mobiles worked (5): K0PC/m NU0Q/m W0ZQ/m AC0HB/m N9YP/m

Ron's Comments
Iowa is very beautiful this time of year with lots of farmers out harvesting their crops. The bands cooperated as did the weather, and we had a great run. Thanks again to Bob for showing me the ins and outs of mobile contesting .. there is really a lot to learn. Running my first four-county line was a lot of fun.

At one point we passed 4 or 5 state troopers within a one mile stretch of road. That always makes you nervous, even when you aren't speeding! We also had a farmer stop and ask us if we were ok or needed any help. It's nice to be out in the country where people are extra friendly.

Afterwards

The round trip total from Kansas was 1057 miles.

N6MU (CA) Great having 10 and 15 open virtually all day. This allowed me to have a personal best for Qs with one mobile in a Party by working W0BH/M 112 times!! Not bad for a nine hour Party. Other notable mobiles were K0PC(20), W0GXA(15), W0ZQ(14) and NU0Q(12). The mobiles made up 84% of my Qs once again emphasizing the importance of mobiles in any state Party. Thanks to those fixed stations that were willing to run the bands when asked. 73...

NU0Q mobile

It was a beautiful day in southeast Iowa. We actually ran ahead of schedule, so we worked in an extra county (15 total) and also stopped to get our picture taken at the American Gothic house. We didn't see as much harvesting as I expected, but we did see a few horse-and-buggies on the road in Davis County. I hope people got some mutlipliers or new counties for USA-CA. My XYL wanted to be in Johnson county in time for the "Iowa card stunt" (Google it!), so we quit early. In total, I was on the air just under 6 hours, averaging about 1 QSO per minute. Thanks to all who worked me, spotted me, etc., and thanks to the out-of-state mobiles who came to Iowa to make the party worthwhile for everyone. 73, Bill.

W3DYA (TX) : Mobiles did a nice job: W0BH (16), NU0Q (10), W0ZQ (6), and K0PC (5).

Postal Rate Increases

Effective January 22, 2012, the price of a first class stamp will increase to $0.45, up a penny. A post card will go up to $0.32.

For mail overseas, it will go from the current $0.98 to $1.05...up 7 cents.

More info at:

http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2011/pr11_factsht_pricechng_1018.pdf

On the Road with N4CD III

Another weekend – another hamfest. This time it was the Texoma Hamfest held in Ardmore, OK – Carter County. My plans had gotten a bit messed up. On Thursday, I caugh NX4C in Clay, KY for a next to last. It was still early in the day, the weather was great in the low 70s and sun, so I decided to head on over to the Texas State Fair as it would be the last free senior day on Thursdays this year before it closed. Not much to report on other than eating too much food, and test driving – on a short 1/2 mile track at no more than 15 mph, the new Chevy Sonic and Chevy Volt. If you are tall, you won't fit into a Sonic – period. The Volt had lots of room inside. Rode nicely like a mid size car.

For you foodies – they have fried beer, friend watermelon, BBQ, hot dogs, corny dogs (a State Fair staple), pizza, pizza on a stick, cotton candy, funnel cakes, fried cheese cake, salt water taffy, chicken ten different ways, ice cream in ten different ways, fried bubble gum, chocolate covered strawberries, chocolate covered this and that, Cajun this and that, and 50 other foods dreamed up each year to entice dollars out of your wallet.

Anyway, that threw off my planning. (and my diet). I didn't get the mail canceled or the paper, so Friday comes and it's off to the hamfest about noon or so. It would be up and back in

two days. Otherwise, the mail and papers would pile up. I was thinking 2 or 3 day trip, but it was just going to be all day Saturday after the hamfest was done at 9am. (It opened at 8 am for the public, but it was so small you could see everything twice by 8:30 with time to spare).

It's just up the Interstate Highway I-35 about 2 1/2 hours to Carter County – so I'd run the counties and be there early. Weather was a nice 75 degrees and sunny. Gas was about $3.30/gal, up a bit since September. The Super 8 in Ardmore had a good rate of $45 plus tax ($54 total – big tax there). It was too late to get over to Jefferson and Stephens, so I would hit them in the morning. After checking in – it was over to the Convention Center to see what was going on. I managed to get in early and start looking around. Officially it doesn't start till five pm on Friday, but there are often ways to get in before that. Not much to report.

Troy, K5OH, was there and we yakked for a good hour or two after we had both inspected everything on the tables. He was selling a few items. Troy,tarted out in the truck with the radio to the hamfest. He got a mile from home and had brake problems, so had to return home, and drive the other car without radio to the hamfest. He didn't get to put out any counties. The 1994 truck appears to need a wheel cylinder replaced. Murphy always seems to strike when you don't expect him!

It's a small hamfest – maybe 50 tables with folks selling things. I bought one thing and that was it. Then dinner was at the Stockade – a nice buffet style place - $8.45 senior rate.

Morning came and it was once again hamfest time. It opened at 8 officially but I was in by 7:30 looking around. Burl, N5DUQ, was there selling a bunch of stuff. We talked for a few minutes. He is moving to an assisted living place – and the noise level is 'horrible' so he will be QRT on the radio from there. He's a big QRP fan. He was selling out a lot of stuff that wasn't going to make the move. I bought a bunch of coax jumpers from him.

It didn't take much to see everything twice, and there were counties to run. I headed west on 70 over to Jefferson County, then north to hit Stephens. Alan, VK4AAR was around on 20M CW. I wound north a bit, then headed east over to the far side of Garvin, hitting part of Murray. Band conditions were great. The goal was to hit Pawnee and Creek – the last two I needed in OK for Mobile Diamond. Then head south and be home by dark. I was running a bit behind time, and got up to Pawnee about 1:30pm local time. Then it was pedal to the metal go get home before dark eventually hitting 75, then onto 69/75 to home. Speed limits were 60-65 in most places in OK, 70 at times, but you run into small towns that slow you down to 25 mph for a few blocks.

There's lots of farm country – and maybe 20 major casinos along the route. One of my ham buddies from town takes his wife to the casino just over the TX border in OK while he goes to the hamfest 30 miles north, goes back down there to spend the night, heads back to the hamfest, then picks her up after the hamfest on the way home. I wonder who 'spends' more money? At least the XYL can't complain if you 'spend' money at the hamfest and bring home a 'goodie'.

Better than throwing it down a rat hole at a casino.

Jerry, W0GXQ was out on a 'county putting out' trip in northern MN. I needed those so I'd be listening carefully for him. 17M was very good, with the DX coming in. OK1VD, OK2EC, YV5OIE, plus about 20 regulars were on 17m. 40M was pretty dead, but 30 worked well most of the time. I hit some of the less run counties – Pottawatomie, Lincoln, Pawnee, Creek, then south down 48 through Okfuskee, Hughes, and Coal. Things went well. Dan, KM9X, was in there chasing me on cw, along with all the other MD holders – K5GE, N4AAT, WQ7A, N9STL, N9KIE, W0GXQ, I suspect a few are also working on the new Star XX award (those who have earned five star award). The regulars were all in the log. WE7G, W8GEJ, W4YDY, KG5J (good to hear Al on), W5AL, W4SIG, KA4RRU, WA3QNT, N2MH/m (good to hear him on, too), N9QS, KA1NX, N4AKP, G3WPF, OK1ACF, OE5KE, DL6KVA, DL8MLD, N7JPF, WD6CKT, K7TM, W7FEN, N5PR, W0EAR, N2JJ, WA7JHQ, and a lot more. Had JH7VSZ call me on 17M in two counties. YV5OIE is a new county hunter- fast- 30wpm and sends his call 3 or 4 times fast rather than slow down to net speed of about 27.

There's been a definite uptick in interest in the Five Star award with many being earned this month. Now that there is a follow on award, folks are working hard to finish Five Star.

Jerry, W0GXQ, was doing great on 17M. The pileups were as big as 20M and signals just as loud or louder. He also ran on 15, 12 and 10m.

The good news is I made it home by 6:15 – didn't stop for 4 hours and beat the bad weather. It was beginning to look ominous up in Coal County. Sure enough on the evening news at 6:30pm– severe thunderstorms hitting right where I was this afternoon- 60 mph winds – up to baseball size hail! The storms were covering most of the counties I had been in, too! And suspected tornadoes. Oklahoma can be a bad place to be when weather fronts move through. I was awakened to thunderstorms at 1 am at home in TX, 50 miles south of the OK/TX border. Lots of continuous flashing lightning was occurring, one or two hits were within a 1/2 mile, and a bunch of rain fell in torrents – 1.5 inches at the house with high winds in 10-15 minutes. Nearby towns had lots of trees down. Glad I wasn't out mobile in it.

Well, that was the trip – mission accomplished to get the two I needed. . Only a handful of goodies at the hamfest, but still had fun yakking with the two county hunters there.

The N4CD Chevy Malibu returned home with the 'check engine' light on – for the emissions control system, so it looks like another visit to the Chevy dealer. Car up to 71,000 miles. Ah, the 'joys' of mobile operation. (Note: the emissions control light went out the next day I drove it. I had checked the gas cap, and it could have been some bad gas in OK).

Hope I ran through something you need.

There's some digital crap on 18091.5. Seems that someone has picked that in EU to be for a

certain data mode as the 'calling frequency'. Dang. The digital mailbox station in CA on 10.1228 still makes a racket at certain times during the day. Loud in TX and OK, and worse on trips out west. Clobbers 10.1225 pretty well with S3 crud.

Illinois QSO Party

This is an interesting QSO party. The rules allow one contact to count for 2, 3 or 4 counties all at the same time. Each year, someone usually sets up on a 3 or 4 way line. A large number of IL counties were on the air – maybe all of them.

AE8M Mobile

This was a fun contest with perfect weather and decent propagation. I am not sure it could get much better. Thanks to all who called with special thanks to NS9I 7 Qs, N8II 7, W8TM 6, KV8Q 6, K9CT 6, and a host of others with 5 or less. And of course, thanks to the sponsors who made all this fun possible and also to the poor souls who now have to compile all the results.

As the results show, 20M was good for me. The DX stations gave my score a good boost. I also had some surprisingly good runs on 40M SSB. I tried 20M SSB several times but always got run off the frequency. I stayed on 40 and 20 until dark (basically the first 4 counties) without trying 80/75 because the rates were good and it takes time to switch antennas.

I park to operate and the actual operating time was 5 hours, 2 minutes with approximately 3 hours off the air while driving. The round-trip, home to home, covered 531 miles. The mobile setup was a K3 and hamsticks.

KV8Q (Ohio) : This is an active state QSO party with lots of opportunities to chase mobiles/rovers around with a nice touch of fixed stations to keep things moving. It was nice to have a bit of short skip into Illinois on 20 meters. Heard a few folks on 15 but they didn't hear me. Still have yet to hear an ILstation on 160 meters in this event. Thanks to the mobiles/rovers for the following QSO's/Counties:

N9JF 16/14
W9WI 15/14
K9WM 10/7
NN9K 9/3
N9FN 8/4
AE8M 6/5
WI9X 4/4
W9WE 4/2
K9GXU 3/3
WN9E 3/3
K9IUA 2/2

Ham Population Hits All Time High

As the third quarter of 2011 came to a close, ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, began calculating the number of licensed Amateur Radio operators in the US, as well as the number of new licensees. “At the end of September, I saw that the number of hams in the US was high,” she said. “When I started comparing that number with other years, I found that it was an all-time high.” For the first time, there are more than 700,000 radio amateurs in the US.

“When looking at the three current license classes -- Technician, General and Amateur Extra -- these numbers are impressive,” Somma explained. “The number of Technicians peaked in March 2011 at 342,572, while in September 2011, we saw both Generals and Extras peak at 159,861 and 125,661, respectively. As new Technicians earn their Amateur Radio licenses, and current Technician licensees move on to General and Generals upgrade to Extra, this can cause up-and-down fluctuations for these totals.”

Somma said these high numbers mean that hams are upgrading and renewing in larger numbers and staying interested in hobby: “These are compelling statistics and I am thrilled to see the highest number of amateur radio licensees ever! When I began working at the ARRL back in the mid 1980s, there were approximately 450,000 amateurs in the US. Our VEC program conducted an average of 55 sessions a week. Today, we administer approximately 150 exam sessions each week, and our total number of licensees across all three license classes continues to grow each year.”

In the past 40 years, the number of Amateur Radio operators in the US has grown at a remarkable rate:

December 1971: 285,000
December 1981: 433,000
December 1991: 494,000
December 2001: 683,000
September 2011: 700,221

Source: 1971, 1981, 1991: print editions of Radio Amateur Callbook. 2001, 2011:

www.ah0a.org/FCC/Graphs.html

Please note: While the number of licensees has grown considerably over the years, we realize that these numbers include some who are no longer active in Amateur Radio. A recent survey of ARRL members, however, indicates that more than 80 percent of those responding are active.

“As technology changes and advances, it is especially vital to keep up or be at the forefront,” Somma said. “I believe that Amateur Radio has done just that! The measurable results are our indisputable license numbers. It amazes me after all these years how important and relevant Amateur Radio remains. I am proud to be one of the 700,221 licensees and to see this historic and important milestone.”

Source: ARRL Letter, by ARRL, Newington, CT 06111

World Radio Magazine Goes “Pay” Again

World Radio Magazine, which was 'free' on line for the last couple years, will be 'paid subscribers only" with the October 25th issue.

They will offer the Magazine through Apps for a monthly subscription fee. The rationale is that more people are reading more stuff on their tablets and less in print form. They figure they can charge a monthly fee and folks will sign up for it.

I don't know about you, but I don't subscribe to any Apps I have to pay money for. My phone/internet/cable bill is already too high!

Activity on 17M and Up

The sunspot numbers are over 100 and the flux is up at 150 or so. The upper bands are filled with DX. Ten meters is full of world wide DX. When you are 'far enough' away, the counties come rolling in – for the CA QSO Party, there were stations who made over 600 contacts on 10 meters in just the weekend event. 12 meters is full of some rare DX (and big pileups). A few mobiles run on 12, a few on 15, and quite a few on 17M now.

Spotted on 10 meters

N9JF, W0GXQ, HR9/AI5P, KL1V (3rd), KL8DX(4th),

In the QSO Parties, hundreds of stations were on from CA, NY, IA, TX, AZ. Skip still mostly 'long'.

On 12 meters -

KL2R (4th), W0GXQ, N4JT, KN4Y, N9JF, W9MSE, W0QE, N0KV/N0DXE, W0NAC/N0LXJ

On 15 meters

W0GXQ, N9JF, KN4Y, W0BH, K2HVN, plus many in the PA, IA , NY and CA QSO Parties!

On 17m – spotted on W6RK

KN4Y, N4CD, W0GXQ, N9JF, K8ZZ, N4JT, W0EAR, N6PDB, WA6OCV, W9MSE, K6KLL, N7PIB, NX4W (digital), W7FEN, K9CS, N5MLP, KM1C, W0QE, W9MSE, KB6UF, W0MU

Naturally, more counties were run by other mobiles who may not have been spotted! So keep listening – there are likely to be lots of surprises.

Tracking Star XX

If you have finished your Five Star Award, you can now be working on your Star XX award with contacts July 9th or later in 2011. Logger with the latest update now tracks it.

To get Star XX, you must work 20 'stars' in each of the counties. That should take folks a few years to get! Who will be the first?

Additional HI QSO Party Pics

Last month we covered the HI QSO Party. The lead story was the Kalawao Expedition. Here are some more pics from several of the stations participating with additional pictures

Kalawao http://hawaiiqsoparty.org/SoapBox2011/KH7Q.html

Battleship Missouri http://hawaiiqsoparty.org/SoapBox2011/KH6BB.html

Big Island - Volcano National Park (a separate multiplier)
http://hawaiiqsoparty.org/SoapBox2011/NH6YK.html

Awards

USA-CA #1219	KM1C, Bill	October 1, 2011
USA-CA #1220	Bill, K0DEQ	October 11, 2011
USA-CW #121	Bob, KA9JAC	October 17, 2011
USA-CW #122	Don, N5XG	Oct 20, 2011
Second Time #408	N5XG, DON	Oct 20, 2011
Fifth #102	K4XI, Ken	Sept 30, 2011
Fifth #103	W4YDY, Dave	October 1, 2011
Eight Time #10	KD8HB, Joyce	Sept 19, 2011
USA CW V #3	KD8HB, Joyce	Sept 19, 2011
USA-PA-N #12	K5GE, Gene	Sept 22, 2011
Masters Gold #49	N5MLP, Ron	Sept 25, 2011
Bingo II #81	N5MLP, Ron	Sept 24, 2011
Bingo II #82	N8CIJ, Dick	Sept 29, 2011
Bingo II #83	W0EAR, Don	Oct 14, 2011
Five Star #52	KM9X, Dan	Oct 3, 2011
Five Star #53	W0GXQ, Jerry	Oct 7, 2011
Five Star #54	N4JT, Jim	Oct 8, 2011
Five Star #55	NG9L, Dick	Oct 12, 2011
Five Star #56	WD9HAW, Roy	Oct 18, 2011

Operating Events for County Hunters

There's only one State QSO Party this month. Beware, there are several major contests which can mess up your plans for trips if you operate one mode only!

Nov 5, 2100Z - Nov 7, 0300Z 1.8-28 ARRL CW November Sweepstakes Serial, category, call, check, ARRL sec
www.arrl.org/contests

Nov 12, 1400Z - Nov 13, 0200Z 1.8-28 50 Kentucky QSO Party RST and KY county or S/P/C www.wkdxa.com

Nov 19, 2100Z - Nov 21, 0300Z 1.8-28 ARRL November SSB Sweepstakes Serial, category, call, check, ARRL sec
www.arrl.org/contests

Nov 26, 0000Z - Nov 27, 2400Z 1.8-28 CQ World Wide CW Contest RST and CQ zone
cq-amateur-radio.com

There are also many smaller contests. Check it out at

http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2011-11.pdf

Source: ARRL Contest Corral for November