

County Hunter News

November 1, 2015
Volume 11, Issue 11

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

Contributions of articles, stories, letters, and pictures to the editor are welcomed, and may be included in future issues at the editor's discretion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) N4CD Rumblings - It's been a busy month starting with the Texas QSO Party, then the 3M get together, and a half dozen QSO Parties around the country. Throw in some fall weather, from snow to flooding rain to take us into the fall season. Propagation has gone from not to good to good throughout the month. We are definitely on the downside of the sunspot cycle with not much going on on the 10M band, and less activity on 15 in the various operating events.

Starting after September 15, there are two new MARAC Awards to work on, and many were busy chasing mobiles with 'bingo' for the new Bingo Cinco award which anyone

can work on. Most mobiles out there are good for this award (must have Bingo).

Coming up are just one more QSO Party (KY) and a lot of other contests from DX contests, Sweepstakes, 10M and 160M contests to round out the year. So on to a long newsletter with lots of mobile reports from the QSO Parties to share.

2) N7ID – heard from Jack, N7ID on the phone. Touched base on a few subjects. He's still got his radios but seldom turns them on. Been fighting some serious health issues as many of the 'senior' bunch of county hunters. He mentioned that one of his friends commented on seeing him in the CH News. His pic and that of wife, Willie, W7AXY, appeared in the August 2008 issue (p82). Jack had just finished up his Masters Gold. N4CD was out roaming the country side on the way to/from the National Convention that year. Friend didn't remember if wife's name/call was mentioned. It was. Here's a flashback to 2008



Willie, W7AXY and Jack, N7ID - 2008

He gets around a bit at times but no longer has mobile radio. He was asking about needs for the County Sign database. Kent, KV7N and others finished off ID, MT and most of that area other than a few in NV, UT, CA.

Jack went on to earn Master Platinum in 2010. He's one of a handful that have run all

3077 US counties, which he completed in 2006.

3) Our own K2BUS on cw

Years and years ago, Art, K2BUS, would come on regularly on the 20M SSB and bug the heck out of the NC station (James) asking where are you? What's your call? Then he would call you telling you he was Art in Framingham, MA. Now SK. Or he'd word the mobile with the same spiel. Art was a former editor for CQ Magazine and wrote their mobile operating manual way way back wen.

Well, it seems on CW, we have a fellow suffering from a bit of confusion. He'll call a mobile and go through the same spiel ' NK6X/4 Ur 599 in Dallas, Dallas, GA, Name is Bill.....' etc

or after the mobile is done, call him. He occasionally calls CQ on 14.056.5 or 'checks' if QRL? Usually not. If you ask him to QSY, he will – up or down a half or maybe one, but he returns to 056.5 because that is where he hears things, and leaves the radio on that frequency until the mobile is done, then calls CQ – thinking it is a hot frequency.

Just be kind.....we may be there someday. He generally QSY's after you telling you all the info.

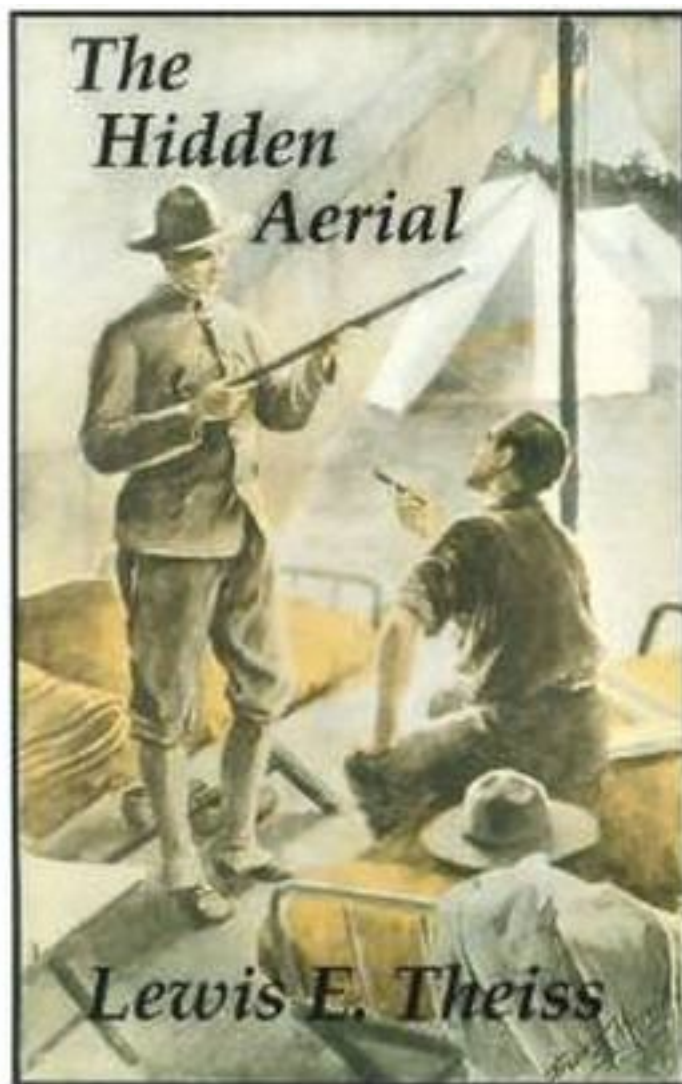
4) ARK QSO PARTY

The folks who sponsor the ARK QSO Party, usually held in the fall at the same time as the Mena hamfest, have decided after several requests to move the AR QSO Party date to the spring. That will leave the hamfest all by itself, and folks can get on for the QSO Party and not miss the ArQP. Doesn't work for me since I usually went to the hamfest, left after an hour, then headed home via AR counties. However maybe it will get more AR mobiles and fixed stations on the air. We'll see next spring. My 'two-fer' is gone.

Book Review of the Month

This month it's another Lewis Theiss book in the series - this the original book that recently made it on line – otherwise, the other only known copy for sale is \$40. Free is a lot better than \$40!

The Hidden Aerial – or The Spy Line on the Mountain – 1919



The Hidden Aerial – by Lewis Theiss 1919

This month it's a story of the other members of the Camp Brady Wireless Patrol. The senior members of the Camp Brady wireless patrol are off in NYC in another adventure already covered a few issues ago – where they caught the German spies. The younger members were still in school so stayed at home. Well, it turns out the war effort is taking a lot of the young men, and there is a shortage of skilled labor to keep industry and farms going. Seven of the younger members of the Camp Brady Wireless Patrol decide to sign up as their patriotic duty to join the Boy's Working Reserves.

Now, I was clueless, as are most of the CHNews readers, as to what the Boy's Working Reserves were. Never heard of it. Well, you learn something new every day. Remember, we're back in the 1910s, and the US has joined the war effort in Europe to defeat Germany. This is the War to End all Wars – WW1. It's trench warfare – brutal and a killing machine. (We had a story on this – the Ocean Wireless Boys on War Swept Seas - a while back). Germany was defeated in this one. Several hundred thousand boys went through this program and it was very successful. The US needed not only to provide food for the US troops, but since most of France was overrun, and most young people in England were already in the military, the US had to send massive food aid overseas to feed tens of millions there. The youths were paid from a \$1/day to \$1.50 a day, depending upon whether they could run farm machinery or not. They were provided with room and board 'free'. It was a military style operation with military type discipline.

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With a bit of Googling:

"The United States Boys' Working Reserve is an enrolled army of patriotic volunteer youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years, organized under the United States Department of Labor, to help the nation on the farm and in the factory to win the war. Every boy who is physically fit, who is of proper age, is eligible for this non-military civilian army."

Every high school superintendent and principal was appointed as High School Director in the Reserve. Boys enrolled in the program could be released from school if an emergency need for his services was required. In recognition of faithful and honorable service in the Reserve, "the United States Department of Labor has issued a war-service metal known as the "Federal Bronze Badge." The boy's ambition should be to earn this

national badge of honor which is of bronze, and bears the Great Seal of the United States and the inscription "Boys' Working Reserve, U.S.A.," together with an individual number for each boy, which number is recorded in Washington opposite the boy's name."

Badges could be earned in one of three units:

Agricultural Unit: "If he works on a farm during the year...and renders satisfactory service, for at least thirty-six days, he will be awarded the bronze badge and will become an active member of the Reserve..." Half days and full days of emergency work count toward the thirty-six days.

Industrial Unit: "...he must have worked faithfully and earnestly in some industry which is considered to be "essential" or productive by the United States Government in helping the nation in the prosecution of the war for a period equivalent to sixty day of eight hours or more each, subsequent to enrollment."

Vocational Unit: "...it is necessary that a boy shall subject himself to training in spare time, or in school hours, under the direction of his teachers, to fill a position where he will work at something which is of real help to his country in the present crisis. When he has so fitted himself and when he has entered upon the actual work for which he has been trained, he is awarded the badge immediately."

Organized in May, 1917, the Reserve proved to be such a valuable service, it was continued in 1918."

source: <http://www.usmilitariaforum.com/forums/index.php?/topic/23473-the-united-states-boys-working-reserve/>

In the 1917 period, there were an estimated 5 million youth between age 16 and 21 that were not gainfully employed or only marginally employed. Over 2 million were suitable candidates for this program, and from what I can tell, over 100,000 participated – some for the summer – some for a year or two. There was a severe shortage of farm workers and most went into the agricultural unit. With a million men overseas, the need for increased food production was critical.

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So now we follow the boys as they leave their home and go off to help in the war effort.

The bunch from Central City head off along with 300 others to 'boot camp' at State College, PA, where they are taught the basics of farming and care of farm animals in two weeks. Then it will be off to camps and individual farms until harvest time, when they'll return to school or their local towns.

There are two rival factions from Central City. One is the likable and skilled Lem, who is appointed a Lieutenant in boot camp due to his prior background with the Camp Brady wireless Patrol under Captain Brady, while the other faction is led by a spoiled, rich kid, Frank, and his cronies. It seems that all the youth from Central City wind up at Camp Liberty. There's a whole lot of chapters on the farming adventures of the youngsters.

About half way through the book, Lem while out scouting finds a hidden aerial. He ran across some 'telephone' people allegedly putting in a telephone line along an abandoned logging road. Later, he and a friend, Johnny, go back up to the source of their water, a spring, and investigate further and discover that 'phone line' is nothing but a long wireless antenna, with disguised feed line inside the bark of the 'poles' and cunningly run underground to an undetermined location. Another evening during the summer, Lem and Johnny track one of what they now feel are spies. There's a large ammunition plant in Central City, and Germans have managed to blow up half of dozen of them around the country, hurting the war effort.

Toward the end of the book, Lem writes the head of the Wireless Patrol, Captain Brady, now up in NYC with the senior members of the Wireless Patrol. They are hunting German spies in the NY harbor area who are reporting shipping information on vessels leaving the area (so they can be sunk by submarines). At this point, it is 'illegal' for people to 'own' wireless, so the youths at Camp Liberty have no access to instruments. Captain Brady sends them a disguised wireless set, and one night Lem spends up on the mountain near the spy camp hoping to intercept a message to find up what is up. He does – gets the message then spends the rest of the time decoding it. It turns out it's the same code used previously by the spies who tried to blow up the dam in Central City before, but weren't all captured.

The plant is to be blown up at 5am the next morning! He scrambles and gets the right people alerted at the plant. The plan is thwarted and the bad guys arrested. As it turns out, after his father's factory is saved, the nasty Frank relents and becomes one of the hardest workers in the Boys Working Reserves for the rest of the summer, and all is well.

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Good adventure but not a whole lot of radio. It's a couple hour read and you learn a lot about the workings of the Boys Working Reserves. Here, never heard of them before!

Lewis Theiss wrote half a dozen books on early wireless

Not on line yet, but available as a reprint. Give it another half year or two and it will probably wind up on line.

Mobile Activity

At the end of September we had the TX QSO Party with 10 mobiles out running including county hunters K5YAA, W3DYA, N4CD.

Barry, N0KV, and Pat, N0DXE, continued their trip east all the way to the coast. . Wandered around a bit and likely just beat the snow storm in Denver getting home around the 20th.

Ron, KB6UF, headed up to Bledsoe TN and back

Dick, W3ZUH continued his trip cross country – at the end of October – headed into UT and on to CA.

The group of W8FNW/W4FNW with W8GEJ were out and about in OH.

Mike, KA4RRU, headed up to PA. Also on in VA counties.

Barry, K2MF, headed from NJ down through WV and VA down to FL.

Bill, K2HVN, was noted in MN and ND trekking west. Then headed to 3M and on to GA. Then up to VA.

Cheryl, KG5PQ and Mike, KG5UZ were out running counties on data modes many weekends.

Eddie, G4KHG, was over in Kauai, HI – spotted on PSK.

Fred, K0FG, was up in WI and MN. Headed to east coast. 20M antenna broke and went QRT.

Jeffrey, AF3X, was spotted in a few in TN. Then headed west through TX

Bill, WG9A, was up in MI

Brian and Shari, NX0X/KB0MMH were out on the east coast running counties.

Mary, AB7NK, and Neil, K7SEN, trekked east from AZ. Big trip including stop at 3M in TN, then after more wandering , noted home by 10/23.

Mike, NF0N, took a trip around NE for 'rare NE counties day'.

Jerry, W0GXQ, headed from MN to IA and wound up in some NE counties. Wound up in TX for a few days, then headed back north.

Jack, N7IV, put out a few in ND on cw. Headed to WIthen back later in the month.

Rick, W5QP , at the end of the month was spotted in OK and west TX. Aimed to get the last two for Vic, SM7ZDI (Hudspeth and Donley TX).

Jim, N4JT, continued to put out NC on data modes.

During the 3M, mobiles headed there. A few put out counties including K8ZZ, N4CD, N8KIE, K5GE, WA3QNT, AA8R/W8TAX, KB0BA/N0XYL, NF0N, K2HVN, KJ8W/KJ8V, W4SIG, AB7NK/K7SEN.

Bob K7TM put out some in WA state.

Kirby, W8DCD, was spotted in IL

Mike, WU3H, was noted in a few in CO.

Ray, WB0PYF, put out some in MO and IL.

K0PFV was busy putting out counties in IA and IL headed east.

Dave, KW1DX, noted in NY and PA counties.

N5KUC was out in WY.

K4PLB noted in a few in VA.

Jim, N9JF was out and about in IL. Participated in IL QP.

Jeff, W9MSE was spotted in many IL counties during the IL QP

Duane, K8AO was putting them out in MI.

WD5JGS was noted in LA running counties headed east.

Late QSO Party Reports

Left over from last month but worth reading

WW7D -mobile – Salmon Run

The 2015 Salmon Run was held on September 19th and 20th. Propagation conditions were tough this year. Saturday started out “down” from recent years. And then on Sunday, a solar flare wiped out much of the HF bands. That lowered participation, making Sunday a particular struggle.

To me, the fun of these contests is making the best out of the conditions that everyone shares. It’s the conditions we don’t share—antennas, equipment, skills, perseverance, routes and strategy—that make this a challenging sport. I had an enjoyable time trying to squeeze every last QSO out of the contest, while minimizing errors, keeping to my schedule, and staying alert.

For the most part, things went very smoothly following the route. Consequently, I stuck closely to my schedule, and hit all 22 counties. In order, they were KING, PIE, KITS, MAS, GRAY, PAC, THU, LEW, COW, WAH, CLAR, and SKAM on Saturday and YAK, KLI, BEN, FRA, ADA, LIN, GRAN, DOU, OKA, and FER on Sunday.

My initial stop was on the King–Pierce (KING/PIE) county line. While testing equipment in the few minutes before the start, I heard a bunch of my VHF pals having a QSO on 144.200. The contest started, and I broke in and they (KE7SW, KE7TS, W7GLF, and K7ND) graciously provided contacts for a quick 8 QSOs right off the bat.

Last year, I was able to hear loud signals on 20m from Scandinavian stations participating in the Scandinavian Activity Contest. This year the signals were weak, and I was only able to work OH8WW. Forty meters was noisy and empty, but I managed to work a couple of KING stations.

Just as I was about to leave the county line, John, N6MU gave me a call on 20m CW. We quickly QSYed to 20m phone for two more QSOs. This is a pattern we would repeat often.

The trip through KITS to the KITS/MAS line was moderately productive. I quickly found “the groove” that makes it easy to work stations in motion. Last year, I pulled into the parking lot for a wrecking company and sat in an awkward spot that straddled KITS and MAS county line. But a antenna-strewn truck sitting in an odd place for 30 minutes was enough to someone to question what I was doing there. While not exactly unfriendly, I didn’t get a warm welcoming feeling from the conversation.

For that reason, this year, I hit the county line on the other side of the highway, on a small dirt road. There were no signs prohibiting use, and the land did not appear to be developed, so I parked where the dirt road started to curve, straddling the county line.

As I was working stations, a person came up to the truck. My first thought was that it was the property owner coming to kick me out. Instead it was Linda, AB7YL, who had been activating the same county line. Her rig was having problems and so she was heading home, but decided to wait a bit and say hello. It was a fun surprise. She went back to her car and worked me on 2m FM from both counties.

Thus far, 20m was the “money band” with a smattering of 40m QSOs. It wasn’t until I hit GRAY that I even heard a signal on 15m. The band was not very productive. The 10th QSO came as I hit the PAC/GRAY line, and that was it for 15m for the rest of the contest.

Both 20m and 40m opened up a bit more while I sat on the THU/LEW county line. This was the most productive county line of the contest, with 43 QSOs (times 2 since I was on a county line) in 90 minutes.

Twenty meters fizzled out by the time I hit WAH, and the rest of the evening was 40m and 80m only. Most of my QSOs had been CW. I simply couldn't get much going on phone. I began to fret a bit about making enough phone QSOs to meet the 5% rule (to claim mixed-mode). In the end, I had about 15% phone QSOs, and that was with much effort to work phone at every opportunity.

The last stop of the evening was on the CLAR/SKAM county line that yielded only 18 QSOs (times 2), mostly on 80m.

From there, I drove for just over an hour to a motel in The Dalles, OR for the night.

I left the motel at 7:00am for the 9:00am re-start of the contest from the YAK/KLI county line.

Making QSOs was painfully difficult from this spot that, in past years, produced solid runs. Forty meters was almost dead, and 20m was quite difficult. I started suspecting that the power lines directly overhead were somehow altering the pattern of radiation. I had planned a 60 minute stay, but left 15 minutes early so that I could make an unplanned stop for a few minutes on the KLI/BEN line.

The KLI/BEN line was not much better. The first two hours of the contest (YAK, KLI, and BEN) resulted in a total of 47 QSOs. The next two hours were all FRA/ADA, including a brief stop on the FRA/ADA line, and produced 30 QSOs.

Things picked up a bit in LIN and GRAN counties for 24 QSOs in the next hour. At 21:25 (ten minutes ahead of schedule), I hit the GRAN/DOU county line, and struggled for 15 (times 2) QSOs in the next 50 minutes.

It was clear that the terrible conditions led many operators to abandon the contest. I still had two new counties to hit!

I made a dash for the OKA/FER county line and found very little activity. Twenty meters was all but dead for the last 45 minutes. I did manage to work K5YAA on 40m CW and we were able to (barely) work on 20m CW as well. When I heard him on 40m CW again, I asked to try 40m phone, and that worked. The last 2 (times 2) QSOs were on 80m. In all, that last hour and a half only produced 27 QSOs.

Results

After eliminating duplicates, 615 QSOs were made. 522 of these were CW and 93 were phone. (I only worked W7DX on CW, for 500 bonus points.)

The daily totals were 448 QSOs on Saturday and 167 QSOs on Sunday. That is about 30 QSOs/hour on Saturday and about 21 QSOs/hour on Sunday.

More text and lots of pictures here:

<https://ww7d.wordpress.com/2015/09/25/ww7dm-does-the-2015-salmon-run/>

Awards Thoughts

From the September Issue of the County Hunter News 2014 – a year ago more or less.

Introduction:

I was perusing though the latest listing of MARAC awards and noted some strange, at least to me, things. Maybe a glitch or two. Nothing too earth shaking....but.....

For example, some awards you can work a 'second time' after you finish the first time. Obviously, that makes sense for things like Second Time, where you can start on the Second Time after you get the First time, and so on and so on up to infinitum, it seems. No limit. I'm not sure why, but it is like shooting fish in a barrel after the 10th time. Even more so if there are "two of you" to shoot the same fish twice every time. Not much of a challenge, but I guess for some folks, that's all they know. Under Awards Level, you see that specifically it says you can earn this multiple times. Many have earned it two, three, four and five times. If you've been a county hunter for 10 or more years and are retired, it's not that hard to do a couple times.

Some, like Paul, WA3TUC (now SK), after the first couple times, decided he would do it differently each time. One time, he requested I go get a KY county for him. It was right near W8GPC who spent a lot of time in KY putting them out. Nope, he said, he needed a "4" call area call – as he was only working mobiles who had the 'right' call sign for the 'district. In other words, for all of New England, he needed a '1' call, for NJ and NY, a '2' call, etc. Probably the first and only one to do it that way, but it was a bit

harder than shooting any fish in the barrel for the 'next' time or so. Some do it 'no relays' or 'all 20M SSB'. I'm just working up to five times on cw, and then, who knows? Maybe I'll concentrate on something else like another award. You sort of get in a rut.

But that option of doing a 'second time' is only true for certain awards. For years and years, you could only get Bingo. Then stop. About 20 years ago, for some reason, they decided they could issue a bunch more paper, one of the missions of MARAC, by allowing folks to work Bingo II, Bingo III, Bingo IV,Bingo 27. All of a sudden, an award had been changed from 'only once' to as many times as your computer spits out as you work the counties. OF course, Bingo was created by others (not MARAC) and was a 'legacy' award taken over by MARAC.

They simply added a line:

“After completing Bingo, each sequential award (Bingo II, etc.) can be worked by Starting Over and working All USA Counties again for the sequential award”

Well, I got Bingo I, and that was enough. Personally I didn't see much of a reason to get 'ad infinitum' of Bingo N, which seems to be relatively easy as folks are now up to 4th and 5th and 6th time Bingo in just a few years. Just about every mobile out there is good for Bingo, unlike the 70s and 80s.

Note – 2015. MARAC has just created the Bingo Cinco Award to give mobiles incentive to get Bingo II, III, etc. Maybe one of these days I'll dig through the logs and get Bingo II, but don't count on it. Otherwise, those who ran up their bingo counts are 'more valuable' but many of them are seldom venturing out these days.

Back to the Sept 2014 issue:

On to Other Awards

Now, for the same reason, ie, “that's the way it started out.”.....you can only get Master Gold once. This award was actually started by others and MARAC took it over. You can't do it a second time. It's harder than Bingo...but what the heck. You can work Bingo N times to your heart's content, but only MG once. Same for Master Platinum

and Mobile Diamond. I don't have a problem with that, but it isn't consistent with Bingo N since Bingo is the first step on the 'awards ladder'. Of course, when you get MD, you have automatically done all the requirements for Master Gold all over again other than points, and likely you ran another "1500 transmitted counties" in that time, so that is sort of trivial if you get the higher award. (every contact for MD is also a valid contact for MP). Those categories would be full of repeats and repeats. Not needed.

Well, that's a good way to make sure folks work on the next higher award, rather than repeat what they already have done if you can't repeat MG, MP, MD, etc.

If you want a new challenge, do the Natural Bingo. So far, no one has got that. But for some strange reason, you can only do it once. That's not consistent with Bingo – but, what the heck, who is ever going to earn it a second time? It's been 60 years of county hunting and no one has done it once yet! But of course, when it was officially created – there was no start date put in the award, even though it is a recent addition to the list of awards. Some folks have been working on this 'informally' for decades as well. No one has finished yet – or at least claimed it. But you can work No-Star over again.....I'm not sure why when you can't do Natural Bingo again.

Now...some other awards like YL Mobile – you can only work once. Why? Same for OM-YL Teams. If MARAC wants to put out more paper and encourage more contacts, it would seem that they'd encourage doing it a second and third time! Of course, if you get your OM-YL Team award, you automatically get the YL Mobile award, too! (assuming you didn't work any 'fixed' teams in there). Now 200 or so have the YL Mobile award, and now 19 or so for the OM-YL Teams. You can only do it once. (Dunno why? You get get Worked All Counties 27 times).....

But...if you check the MARAC database, there is already a category for No Star Nth time. If you check the rules, for some reason, this award you can start working on the second time, if and when you ever finish working it the first time. Seems strange, but I guess that is because the award was dreamed up after about 2010, when they changed a bunch of things.

You can't work on prefixes a second time, YL, Teams, Digital - a second time, but No Star second time? Gimme a break. Only one person has done it once

Well....on to a different area of Awards

Mobile Awards

Now.....for the real reason MARAC exists today – mobile awards.....there some strange goings on there. MARAC was created to issue awards to Mobiles. Along the way, the picked up awards for Nth time, Bingo, Call Combos, Prefixes, MG, All CW, etc. That makes the fixed stations happy as they have something to work on besides N-teenth time Worked All Counties. Or Twenty-Something worked All Counties.

To reward mobiles, there are several categories. The first is “Last Counties Transmitted'. Not much has changed there – you still get the awards, the certificates go by email/internet and the certificates sent as an attachment you can print out, and the LC numbered so you can see how many LC's folks have given out. Go to the Database at MARAC.org and you can check to see that KV7N, ex - KL1V has given out over 1006 last counties (those are the ones recognized by fellow county hunters). Ed, WA0SBR, had over 1,200. At the 1000 level, both earned a giant trophy (the 3-4 foot high one).

There's no recognition beyond 1000 LC's other than the totals maintained in the database of issued LC's, plus of course, the mobile gets 'bars' for each additional 25 Last Counties given out to add to the his/her plaque.

At increments of 25, you get a 'car plaque' in the mail , up to the 100 level where you get wall plaques with bars of every 25 – forever. For the Last County WBOW, folks can reward the mobile with a 'wall plaque' – the 'car plaque'. Of course, the mobile only gets this award by going to 'needed counties' for others.

(Hint: Running a whole state will finish off a lot of people and you'll likely earn more LC awards that just running straight line trips – run SSB and you'll get the most LC's as there are 3 times as many on SSB as on CW).

It takes others to apply for a LC for you to get these awards.

One other main award MOBILE county hunters often work on is the Ran All (State) Counties Award. These are numbered after the first time, ie, W1TEE got Ran All State X, number Y, issued on a certain date.....and when he ran ALL of the counties, received the award Ran All USA – which is the giant Trophy.

You can also run each state multiple times.

However, the 'rules' on this are as clear as mud. Well, worse. If you look at “**Award Levels**”, they don't even list ALL as one of the options! As in 3077 Counties – all 50 states.

The 'rules'....after the change in 2010.

“separate award is available for each State. All counties in a State must be completed for the award for that State. Each State award may be earned multiple times up to a maximum of ten (10) times, but only the first time is a numbered award. An applicant must complete transmitting from all counties in a State before starting over”

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Transmitting from ALL and getting an award for ALL is not an option! Oops! Minor detail. Probably should be fixed.

So far, 16 folks have transmitted from all counties, KB7QO was the first (all SSB), W1TEE was the second – and the first to do it all CW. Rumor has it that he didn't even own a microphone.

Here's the list of who has done it!....All the counties run:

1	KB7QO	7/25/1988
2	W1TEE	6/29/1991
3	WA0SBR	11/22/1998
4	N4CD	7/20/2002
5	K0GO	10/15/2002
6	N4AAT	2/24/2006
7	N7ID	4/19/2006
8	KK0L	6/19/2007
9	N8KIE	10/13/2009
10	N8RLJ	10/26/2009
11	KV7N	8/6/2010
12	AA9JJ	6/3/2011
13	N9QPQ	6/3/2011
14	AI5P	6/21/2012
15	AF3X	7/12/2013
16	AB4YZ	10/16/2013
17	N4JT	3/4/2015

However, now when you run all the counties a second time, the awards are 'unnumbered, which means they don't show up in the database or under your call when it is pulled up in the database. Only first time. Not especially good recognizing the efforts of mobiles, is it?

Folks can earn each state award. Some might only work toward getting the nearby states, not having the time or financial resources to run the thousands and thousands of counties far from their QTH, but still interested in a challenge of running them all in their home state and nearby states. Obviously that's a lot easier back east where you can run all of NH, VT, RI, NJ, CT, or DE in a long day or less for each. Two days if you are a slow driver. Get to TX, and it is at least 5000 miles of driving. However, many folks try to knock off entire states, maybe one or two a year. Dave, KW1DX, has more than 8 states under his belt so far.

Until a few years ago, the rules were the same for the past 30 or 40 years. Then they made a bunch of changes. I'm not sure when this award was officially started for ALL counties transmitted. Sort of murky in there. Then the changes came about 2010

They limited to how many times you could run a state. Apparently, one county hunter decided to run a state like RI, CT or DE over and over and over again. I don't know who or what, but it got the 'powers that be' at MARAC upset. I did see that KO1U ran RI nine times. Quickly, like days apart, then applied for the award. Maybe that was what got the 'powers that be upset'? WA4UNS ran DE nine times and VE9DH ran it six times. But that was years before. So for one case of abuse, they changed everything?

You can now only run a state a maximum of 10 times. Don't know why, since you can work all counties 20 or 30 times, I dunno...after 10 times, it seems pointless, but if you can 'work' all the counties 30 times, why can't you get rewarded for running all of NJ 11 times? Now a days, it goes electronically anyway. The Awards chairman enters it, and out it goes for 'free' over the internet, not like MARAC is losing any money on this. Just takes a line in the database, but so does 23rd time around. Or Bingo IX, which is already set up! Bingo 9! oh well.

Folks could likely use someone who runs it every six months, year after year! Unlike someone earning 25th time, which does nothing to help out **other** county hunters one bit, rewarding someone for actually spending their money and time to get contacts and needed counties for the folks would rather seem to be in the interest of MARC than just collecting another dollar for 25th time award. Ed, WA0SBR, used to run all of SD at

least once a year for the folks. I don't think he was motivated by getting another Ran All SD award. Nor many others. He didn't even file for individual states for the most part.

Someone running NJ every six months is likely to produce even more revenue for MARAC (their main purpose it seems) as more folks finish up, more LC awards are sent out, and the treasury collects more \$\$\$, and more county hunters are happy getting that state finished up! So why stop at 10, not that more than 2 or 3 have even bothered to apply for 4th or 7th time Ran All Delaware? I dunno. Well, it only takes one 'character' to screw it up for the rest of us. Maybe they just should have limited it to 'only earn the award once a calendar year' or similar?

Scottie, N4AAT, after running them all the First Time, now has run South Carolina five times. That was years ago, and he's probably done it a few more times, but just hasn't applied for it. Heck, I've run 220 plus counties in TX since the first of the year.....but I won't start over until I **finish running all of them for second time in the country.**

No reason to work on a 3rd time until second is done done done completely. But each to his/her own. Some never intend to run them all.

It is sort of strange getting '0' numbered awards as MARAC now does after 2010. In fact, as of the last week of August 2014, it seems all of the RAN XX second time just fell out of the database completely. Gone. Vanished. Swallowed up into cyberspace.

About that Awards Integrity

If you talk to the Awards Chairman, he'll tell you that he's got to go 'by the rules'. Strictly by the rules. OK..... it's all about the 'awards integrity'. That's a good goal. However, if he believes in that as 100% gospel, then.....there's a problem. He needs to check the current 'rules'.

Since this was noted a year ago, the rules have been changed to allow giving out awards for CW II and CW III, etc. Finally.

In the case of the Ran All State/Counties, the current award level to 16 people doesn't exist in the 'rules' under Award Level either! Of course, they are listed in the database as having received an award level that doesn't exist – other than they got a trophy.

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Now on to the solution:

It' doesn't do much good to just point out problems. Anyone can do that. What helps is suggesting solutions!

It's really not all that hard. The Awards Committee and BOD needs to get their heads together and provide a few 'tweaks' to the award rules.

Well, that brings us to the logical conclusion. If someone runs all the counties in each state, state after state, and runs all 3077 counties, they now get the Ran All US Award.

It's not listed under **Awards level** in that award. It should be. Minor tweak to add a line under Awards Level for “All Counties Run”.

Now it would make sense that MARAC would also actually be interested in stimulating more mobile activity and rewarding mobiles that run states a second and third time. Maybe just having a statement 'this award can only be earned once every six months or once a calendar year' rather than the limit on the number of times would make more sense?

Having unnumbered awards means they never show up in the database...either under awards level (drop down tab) or under a persons call.

And of course, if you want more mobile activity, you've got to set higher goals and allow repeats of mobile oriented awards. It should be possible to earn Ran **All** States a second time! And get numbered awards for running each state a second time so things show up in the database to give credits to the mobile.

And a line saying that award can be earned multiple times would be nice, too, under the Awards Level. No trophy needed.

It's sort of lumped in with the Ran All State Award now. It's even more like an afterthought, that they put it in this section, even though SIXTEEN people have received the Ran All US Award, and it is listed under the pull down options in the MARAC database. Half of them didn't even apply for state by state awards either for all 50 states. Just the 'all' which, until it is fixed, doesn't exist as an award level.

Here's the rules:

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Ran All XX

“To make contacts with amateur radio operators while transmitting from every county in a State.

SPECIAL RULES:

The applicant must make Valid Contacts while transmitting from every county in a State while the applicant is in a Mobile Operation or Portable Operation

AWARD LEVELS:

A separate award is available for each State. All counties in a State must be completed for the award for that State. Each State award may be earned multiple times up to a maximum of ten (10) times, but only the first time is a numbered award. An applicant must complete transmitting from all counties in a State before starting over.

APPLICATION AND FEES:

Standard application. Logs must indicate the State and county transmitted, the station worked, the date of each contact , and the date of the last contact. Band or Mode is required for endorsements.

*There is no fee for award certificates for MARAC members. members, there is no fee for the first award certificate for each State. The fee for each additional award certificate for a State is \$3 for non - members. The fee for the optional mobile plaque for each State is \$20. **A trophy will be awarded for completing all States.** There is no fee for the trophy”*

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Under award level.....there is nothing for having run them all!

OK...did you catch that last line or so? The only mention of the Ran All USA is sort of like a footnote to the Ran All Counties in a State. They issue a trophy for an award level that doesn't exist?

Seems to be that's a bit more significant an achievement than just nearly a foot note. It should be listed under Award Level, not as a footnote! By the 'rules' you can not earn an award that isn't listed under "Award Level".

Actually, today it doesn't even say you earn an actual award if you work all of them. You just get a trophy. Right?

Now, the question of the day: Why doesn't MARAC issue Second Time Ran All USA Counties? Maybe no one has applied for it, but the current Awards Custodian says 'the rules say nothing about Nth time' and that is 'end of discussion'.. Heck, just one person has earned USA-No-Star yet they've got it all set up for a second time. Same for worked all counties 25 times. As KC6AWX has been quoted "You can't apply for an award that doesn't exist" – which means he won't accept a second time transmit since he can't be bothered.

I'm sure the Awards Chairman never checked, as did anyone else since no one pointed it out before.....so he gets a 'pass' on that one. I just found out about it by digging, and the 'fix' is real easy. Five minutes of BOD time at the most. It will give them something to actually talk about at a board meeting. The emails can fly back and forth on the awards committee first, if they want to chime in on this

Since MARAC is in the business of 'issuing awards' that would seem to be logical.....and the solution to lots of 'problems' is 'why not?' rather than 'NO'.

Well, I guess it will be up to the 'powers that be' to sort this out. I guess I stirred the pot. Simple suggestions

- 1) Add 'All Counties Transmitted' to the Award Level under Ran All (State) Counties
- 2) Add to this award for ALL may be earned multiple times under Ran All USA Counties
- 3) After completing this award for ALL, people can Start Over on this award.

Yeah, that would be nice.

Then go back to issuing numbered awards for running a state second and third time. Which show up in the database when you pull up a callsign.

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That's my 2c this month. Guess I stirred up the pot a bit. But easy fixes if the BOD and the Awards Committee get their heads together. Simple.

They did come up with two new awards – ones that fit into Logger so folks can keep plodding along.

It would be nice if there was recognition (entry in the database) for those taking the effort to run entire states again. It's the mobiles that make county hunting, not the fixed stations sitting on their tailbones at home without ever putting out the 3077 counties. What if everyone sat home?

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de N4CD

That was from a year ago. Has anything changed? Nope.

Maine QSO Party

There was a Maine QSO Party – but cw stations didn't seem to show up in great numbers. I worked one station on cw while out in the TX QP – in Cumberland ME. Didn't hear any others but other folks had better luck. Some worked 20 plus ME stations on SSB – likely calling “CQ Maine” to elicit contacts.

from the 3830 contest reflector

W7KAM – fixed - MO - 17 ssb QSOs - 11 Multipliers

MARAC Sponsored Net!

Saturday, October 17th - is the first day of operation of the MARAC-sponsored scheduled daily nets on 20m SSB. We should have net control coverage from 1300z to 2200z with some earlier/later operation when mobiles are expected to be active. If you are planning to be mobile this weekend, please join us on the nets on one of the following frequencies:

Primary – 14.328

Alternate 1 – 14.322

Alternate 2 – 14.317

We are aware there are established nets at the following times that we will avoid by moving our net to one of the alternate (or other nearby) frequencies during these times:

- 1) approximately 1445z to 1600z every day on 14.328, and
- 2) 1:00pm CDT to 3:00pm CDT (currently 1800z to 2000z) on 14.329 on Sunday only.

All county hunters are welcome on the net. Your participation in and support for the new nets is encouraged and appreciated.

For more information about the MARAC sponsored nets and net operations, see the article “Net Chronicles” in the October, 2015 RoadRunner newsletter or go to the new “Nets” tab on the MARAC website. You can reach the same webpage by going directly to the following links:

Nets page on Marac.org: <http://www.marac.org/nets.htm>

Net control personnel schedule: <http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/net/schedule20m.htm>

On the Road with N4CD I

The time had come to head on out mobile. The last weekend of September is always reserved for the Texas QSO Party – and while I'm not a QSO Party fanatic like W3DYA, K5YAA, NO5W, N5NA, W0BH, and a few other locals, I usually wind up in a couple a year either by plan or by accident such as the OK QP and the AR QP. I arranged a 'double header' for this trip to put out some counties. Why not? A good excuse to go county hunting always works!

There was a big estate sale down in Caldwell County TX (east of San Antonio) for a silent key. During his life, he was a radio/TV repairman and a ham radio operator in Lockhart, TX - a medium size small town. When he retired, they held an auction for his better stuff including lots of table and console radios, TV sets, and radio/TV test equipment. I skipped that one since the auctioneer, Jim Sargent, published a list and put out pictures and it was all '30s to 60s' broadcast sets and test equipment. No ham gear and no regens. No need for more of that 'other stuff' here – and there were other things going on that weekend. This sale was the 'remains' of that – six tractor trailer loads of stuff he moved after the 'big sale' out to a new QTH in the boonies of Texas. It was 8 miles outside of town and it took over 25 minutes to get there on narrow twisty back roads – some places 30 mph. We're talking 'out in the boonies' of Texas with 50 and 100 acre farms.

I packed up the car for a 2 day trip. This time I remembered to bring the sheet with the abbreviations for the TX counties. Most are the first four letters of the county, but maybe 10% are not. Collin is COLN and Dallas is DALS so you don't confuse them with Collinsworth (COLW) and Dallam (DALM). San Saba is SSAB as there are a couple counties that start with San (San Augustine, San Jacinto). Comal is COML and Comanche is COMA. So you got to bring the abbreviations along if you don't want to be sending something wrong – hi hi.

I drove on down there on Friday – via mostly I-35 - 280 miles - putting out the counties. Wow – I think the Double Diamond award has started - Bob N8KIE said it started 9/15 – still not up on the Awards Page at MARAC – and N8KIE and K5GE were working me in just about every county along the entire trip. You can't start on this until you have

your Mobile Diamond. Well, that's an interesting twist – have to make 3 contacts on one band, and 3 more on other bands, plus work a MD holder to get credit for a transmit county – and 500 of them required as the second part of the awards requirements just like MD. Like Mobile Diamond but even harder. There's only a handful of Mobile Diamond award holders at the moment and not all of them active or on the air at any given time. We need to get a few more finished up.

It was the same I-35 route that I wind up going a couple times a year – down to the Bell County hamfest – twice a year in Oct and April. Plus another 100 miles beyond.

It took about 5 hours to get down to Caldwell County – putting them out along the way with a stop at Subway for lunch. I made the mistake of going near Austin TX. You want to stay 25 miles or more away from this horrible traffic mess. Got down to Lockhart, found the sale location, and then I managed to get a 'sneak preview' of what would be up for sale the net day.

Not too much considering – there were two TS-520 Kenwood sets (\$150 each) and half a dozen Heathkit accessories – scope monitor, console, SWR bridge, etc. Two Yaesu HF rigs, a Clegg VHF rig – AM, a box with a rotor controller, lots of ARC-5 type stuff, an ART-13 tx. There were some Hallicrafter S-38 type receivers, a Johnson Matchbox (LP), some JJ-38 keys, coax switches, etc – but all the rigs had 'hamfest' type prices on them. No real screaming bargains but good 'hamfest prices'. All equipment was 'as is, where is'.

The folks selling the stuff were obviously overwhelmed with literally TONS of stuff to sell. (20 ARC 5 rx/tx and 200 or more plastic BC radios - just to start) There were 3 buildings full of 'stuff'. 1000 feet of heavy wood shelves or more with over 100's plastic table radios, old chassis by the dozens from the 30s and 40s for radios for parts, a dozen of more carcasses of Zenith Oceanics, etc. Lots and lots of parts radios. Tubes! 80,000 tubes. Boxes and boxes of marked tubes and tubes in boxes just piled in. I didn't even look at the tubes. I'm getting fairly selective with what I bring home most of the time.

After spending an hour browsing the stuff and making a few mental notes of where to head first and what to think about buying – it was time to head to the motel about 20 miles away in San Marcos.. I had checked TripAdvisor. Good site for trip planning. There were two motels in Lockhard – a Best Western at \$109/night plus another \$10 or more in tax – ouch – or the Lockhard Inn – with a 1.5 star rating and lots of bad comments about why you should NOT stay there. I learned my lesson at the not so Super 8 up in IL – didn't pay close enough attention to TripAdvisor – hi hi. Decided not

to stay in town.

So it was over to San Marcos 20 miles away to a Motel 6 – the upgraded kind – for \$55/night plus tax – just over \$60. A few miles away, I found the Cracker Barrel and had a country ham dinner with green beans and broccoli. Gotta eat right when on the road – or at least try. Maybe the greens compensate for the 'country ham'. Hi hi. Slept well.

County Hunters need a good start in the morning , so I hit the IHOP a half mile away for a delicious spinach and tomato omelet. After a nice repast, it was time to get over to the auction place before things started. About 20 folks showed up for the 9am opening – not a big crowd at all. Half of them were either hamfest goers – or were members of the Antique Wireless clubs I frequent. I'd try to get in and out in not too much time as the TQP would start at the same time and I didn't want to miss any counties if mobiles headed to 40m. I needed about 190 counties in TX for my next time around.

What did I buy? I bought a Knight Kit Space Spanner in 'poor condition' for \$15 - missing a knob and the flakey cover material was coming loose. I bought a Vectronics 102K regen solid state kit. Two run of the mill keys for \$12 along with some other items, A Radio Shack Globe Patrol SS regen kit for \$10, and one box of books for \$2. No real treasures were hidden away. Someone else scooped up all the Heathkit, Johnson, Kenwood and other radios quickly so didn't even have to worry about thinking about buying some to resell at the next hamfest maybe. A hundred or more of the table radios got snapped up. (\$10 to \$50 each – most \$10). Some of the buyers had big piles of stuff they were taking. Me? Only a little pile. Likely there were some treasures buried away in the boxes and boxes of stuff, but likely no more regens or things worth spending half a day hunting for.

I was out of there before 10am. The TX QSO Party was already underway. Most of the time, I'm only a one day state QSO party person – one full day is enough for me. The route would AVOID the city of Austin and swing south of it, and then west a bit then north through some new third time transmitted counties for N4CD – slowly working on third time transmit – unofficially as there is no award for doing it more than once - yet. I

In addition, I'd hit two counties that had no planned activation for the TQP – Blanco and Mason. Someone has to try to get them on the air – 254 counties – but probably we'll fall 10-20 short – no one volunteered for some of the southwestern ones along the Rio Grande. Well, 230 plus counties beats CA and beats GA and likely the 7QP and NEQP combined. Norm, W3DYA was doing the east area. K5YAA was up Northeast.

W5CT and K5GQ were in the east half, and W0BH was doing the panhandle bit. KS5A was down south in the tip. N5NA was doing 20 plus counties out west. Chuck, NO5W was doing the southeast. And that's just on cw. NM5G was out on SSB mobile.

I stopped to run half the counties – slows one down but helps on the logging. The bands weren't too great starting out but got a bit better. 40M provided a hundred plus contacts and 25 contacts with mobiles during the trip for their counties. On 20M at times it was bedlam with the pile ups. Activity seemed good. The DX came rolling in in the afternoon with DL3GA, DL6KVA, PA3ARM, DL3IAC, OK2CF, LY5A, SP9LJD, HA8IB, HA9RE in the log. Most states were heard but no UT, HI, AK, VT, DE, KY, LA, WY, ND, NV in the log. Only VE1 and VE7 showed up.

My route took me on a lot of the 4 digit Texas roads – you'd go miles and miles between houses- or even 10 miles or more – between civilization out by Mason County. The good news is there is zero QRN. Sometimes you wonder if your radio is working as it is so quiet! Zero noise. Until, of course, someone comes back at S9 to your “TQP de N4CD/MASO”.

Lunch at the Subway at 2 PM. Late lunch because there was no Subway for 2 hours on the route.

The planned route was taking too much time so I had to chop off Comanche County – another trip. I don't like driving on strange roads at night and not going to be operating anyway when it is dark! No thanks.

I was getting behind so I ran more on the run. OK...I could take a half hour and put out BOSQue – 8 mile detour plus stop time. Then I got temped and stopped on SOMEvell/Erath on 40M getting further behind. Now it was time to get home. The GPS lady said home at 8pm with no stops – right on through the mess known as the Metroplex and 8 lane highways and traffic. Sun goes down before 7:30 and it's dark by then. Ran through Johnson – put it out and tuned for other mobiles – then it got dark so just shut down radio and concentrated on driving the last 50 miles to home. Made a few contacts in DAL5 but there were tons of others there putting it out. Five contacts to get mobile credit for 'activating' the county ' - hi hi.

Lots and lots of traffic through down town Dallas and going out the north side to home in Collin County. The good news is the last 40 miles has no traffic lights – but your on 8 and 10 and 12 lane highways with a zillion other cars all seemingly in a hurry to get somewhere as fast as they can go – which usually is as far as the bumper in front of them allows. No accidents or delays – lucky- just moved along at 50-60 mph most of

the way. You've got to devote your energy to just driving here.

The good newsarrived home safely after dark. Oh...after 11 plus hours sitting in the car, it was good to get home. I think I had 2 very short stops for gas/pit stop and one 15 minute one for lunch and that was it – busy day – putting out counties and tuning for counties. Norm, W3DYA was scarce on 40M. Missed him nearly all the time. Caught Alan, N5NA, in many. W5CT was near impossible to work on 40M. He'd be S7 to S9 and not be able to hear half the stations calling including N4CD - frustrating Missed him in a dozen counties that way. (Probably had 'inverter' noise from the power supply running his PC- common problem – or else he drove a Ford!). Jerry, K5YAA and I connected a half dozen times, but missed him in another dozen or more. His signal sounded like it was relayed via an alien spacecraft. No mistaking the K5YAA mobile signal.

Toward evening, signals on 40m started getting up to 20 to 60 over S9. My poor little IC-706 was jumping off the seat and the noise blanker was getting overloaded. Some of the AR, MO and south TX stations were pounding in which made it hard to hear the weaker signals. That's about the time I went QRT due to traffic and darkness anyway. The last 50 miles were on congested high density roads – 8 to 10 to 12 lanes.

Hit the Boston Market 1/2 mile from my house for dinner – and in the driveway at 8:30 or so. Actually turned on radio for last 15 minutes of the Sat session of the TQP and worked a few from home. Most mobiles had stopped long before then or the skip had gotten too long for me to hear them.

The 2015 TQP was good. Got Double Diamond contacts in all but one county and only there for a few miles (Falls). I'll be back there first weekend in October for a hamfest down in Bell. Lots of contacts in the log – so got to do some paperwork.

Hope you caught what you needed – the mobiles were out and running! Sunday I stayed home and chased mobiles – and put out Collin County a few times.

Stats: Miles driven – 736 miles round trip (Fri-Sat). ~ 450 miles in the TQP.

MARAC SPONSORED NETS

from the October Road Runner

MARAC is now sponsoring amateur radio nets!

This article is the first in a continuing series of monthly newsletter articles focused on operations and activities on new MARAC sponsored county hunting nets. In each article, you will find featured topics concerning various aspects of net operations including net policy (adopted by the MARAC Board of Directors), net standard operating procedures (created and issued by a new Net Operations Committee), net operating schedules, designated net operating frequencies on many bands for various modes, upcoming special activities (such as one-time scheduled nets on various bands to determine interest level in those bands and times of operation), new documentation, opportunities for net control training or mentoring, special net staffing levels before and after upcoming conventions, and more.

...the new Net Operating Committee has created a new “Nets” section of the MARAC.org website which has all that documentation available for you to read. The first page of the Nets section provides an outline of the content. Clicking on any of the sub-headings will take you to a document which addresses that particular subject.

Please read the Overview document first and then any of the other subjects you are interested in. The complete policy document for net operations which was adopted by the Board of Directors at their September 11, 2015 meeting is available as is a standard operating procedure (SOP) for net operations issued by the Net Operations Committee. Initially, a daily net has been planned to operate from 1300z to 2200z (nine hours) on 20 meter SSB frequencies. This period will be comprised of three separate three-hour sessions with different net control operators. We expect to begin operation of that net on Saturday, October 17th at 1300z. In the interim, ad-hoc nets are underway for both CW and SSB on various bands. The suggested frequencies for a primary, first alternate, and second alternate frequency can be found in the SOP and in a separate specific document which is on the main table of contents page for easy reference. Some frequencies on various bands have not yet been established but will be added after additional research and discussions with various members has been completed.

Another website (hosted by KW1DX) has been created to provide an online schedule of the net control stations which will support the first scheduled net for SSB operation on the 20 meter band. This schedule goes from October 17th through January 3rd, 2016. The functionality of the site does not currently include the capability for members to sign up for net control positions online, but that capability may be added later.

Instructions are provided at the top of the page to submit a signup request via email.

All licensed radio amateurs and MARAC members are welcome to participate in these nets

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Note de N4CD: There are no 'black lists' or 'terror targets' on the MARAC nets. You won't hear the Florida Loudmouth bellow 'Get of the Fweqeuncy, Bitch' on these nets. Or the entire laundry list of sad, sad occurrences on .336 over the last two decades.

Texas QSO Party

Ah, yes – another great TQP with lots of participation. Fun fun fun. Hope you joined in.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

NM5G mobile with WD5GMI driver - 425 SSB QSO

We took a long route Saturday through East TX and ended up in Panola County at 2100. So, had to drive back to Houston. This took over three hours and we got back to Tomball after midnight. This was not the plan, but we worked most counties on our plan.

Sunday we altered the plan to put Blanco County on the air. This put us north of San Antonio at 1500. Again, this was not to plan. We got back to Tomball about 1930.

I have not looked at total miles, but it was likely over 1200 total for the two

days. Brad held up well. We both got cramps and stiff legs and had to stop after about each two hours to walk off this old-age problem. <grin>

Overall, we had a blast. I beat last year's Murphy-filled operation of 280 contacts by 125, for the 425 total in 2015. Next year the plan will be to work more counties with less miles.

Thanks for participation from everyone. Special thanks to NR5M for taking time to operate his elite station this year.

73, Keith NM5G
2015 TQP Co-coordinator with Chuck N05W

KK5LO mobile - SSB - 802 contacts

Activated 34 Texas Counties. Deral, K5WNO, drove me for 1086 miles so I could do this contest

N5NA mobile 1521 CW QSO

As others have noted, band conditions were up and down. Many QSOs were at whisper level, if the line noise at my location at the time was low. W5CT never heard me (and others I heard calling) on 40m so missed out on a few county mults as did they. From reading the other 3830 reports looks like I should have devoted more time to 15m.

Everything in the mobile worked pretty well. At one point on Saturday I thought my GPS had quit but discovered with all the bumps the power plug had slightly slipped out of my power port Y adapter as had my computer power adapter. So, that was a quick fix.

Thanks to the following stations for contributing more than half the QSOs:
N5RZ(39), N6MU(39), WA6KHK(33), WA2VYA(32), K5LH(32), W0GXQ(31), NR5M(31), AE5GT(30), NW0M(28), K5NA(26), N4OX(22), WB5KSD(21), W4UT(20), K4XU(19), WB5BKL(18), K3TW(18), KN4Y(18), SP9LJD(17),

WB0PYF(17), HA9RE(17), NA4K(16), K4ZGB(15), WA8ZBT(15), W0EAR(15), N8II(15), AD4RE(15), KE0G(15), K7TM(14), W1END(13), N4CD(13), KM6HB(13), K0HNC(12), N5OE(11), NU1O(11), K4DJ(11), W5LXS(11), LY5A(11), K2ZR(11), K5SBR(11), and W7OLY(10).

Equipment: Elecraft K3, Scorpion SA-680 antenna, CQ/X logging program, Ford F250 Super Duty antenna support.

Thanks to everyone who called! Check my call on QRZ.com in a few days for a Log On A Map showing my location when we made our QSO.

And of course, a special thank you to my wife, K5AKS, for driving me around West Texas!

73, Alan N5NA

K5YAA mobile 1357 cw 214 ssb

Plenty to write about but I think I will keep it fairly short. First though I want to pass along a suggestion (actually a complaint) to the organizers for their continued insistence that County Line Operations, as per N1MMs method of performance is not valid and results in not actually making a second Q. I yield to the organizers the last word on logs, scoring and final results but want to join others with the objection to that county line rule.

I drove to Texas with the intention to setup N1MM to perform by sending two (2) "nowadays type" signal reports and both county abbreviations plus the ENTER key which results in two log two entries within N1MM, one logged Q for each county.

Being of the old school and not looking to upset any ones apple cart, I changed my mind and decided I would rather have my log scored as I was pretty sure I could whip some of those good old Texas boys at the mobile game. I had made a fairly stout run in Kansas operating solo, recording as I moved along, so I figured I could also do that in the Texas Party. I decided to outsmart N1MM and place the second county abbreviation of a county under the macro key F9. The entry under F9 was AND EC <cnty>. I reasoned when operator A copied the first exchange I would punch F9 and give 'em the second county. It turns out

that roughly 1 out of 5 or fully 20% of the ops didn't seem to hang around for that F9 or maybe they are still scratching their ass 'er I mean head trying to figure out what they just heard.

Regardless, that was only half the problem.

N1MM only knew about the ROVERQTH county. It had no idea there was a second one hidden under F9 which it knows by COUNTYLINE. So, on my very first early morning Q at the GRAYson/FANNin county line I hit <ENTER> and only one log entry for GRAY showed up. After realizing what just happened with that ENTER I quickly, and I do mean quickly, decided a complete second entry for that same station had to be typed in. Call sign and Mult abbreviation then ENTER again. Two entries now existed in the log for GRAY none for FANN but I knew I could do a bit of search and replace on the Cabrillo back home. I got pretty swift at doing that second entry and missed maybe 6 or 7 out of hundreds of entries both days. What a grind and also a shame since N1MM has been coded up so nicely to bang two entries in the log with one swipe of the enter key. I guess minor potatoes, not to me but perhaps to the organizers. My suggestion? Since other logging programs, even the ones that require bucks, never seem to be up to speed on rules that change just go with the flow of N1MM and get rid of that bold typed warning in the rules that says a Q is not a Q unless a Q is made.

What? In one swift move with N1MM more info is exchanged and anyway I bet the fixed station that was just logged didn't change his/her QTH in the 1/2 second it took to send and receive that ENN, 599, 5NN, 5C or EC (my favorite) and their location code. My two cents worth to the organizers. I'm now up to roughly twenty cents worth of suggestions to organizers of these state parties over the years. Now off my soapbox and on to the party happenings of K5YAA/M. A flawless equipment run and near perfect weather for an outing in the piney woods of East Texas.

No AK or VT ever came to my party but 48 other states made it - just one WY however as our good friend Alan, KO7X, left us without his guaranteed WY mult. 14 DX countries called in. They included DL, EA, ES, F, HA, I, LY, OK, ON, PA, PY, UA9, SM and SP. Several of each country except EA, ES, UA9, LY, PA and the PY.

Again, as in the Kansas run, the Canadian provinces were not to be logged except for VE3, VE4 and VE7. Only one VE4 but several VE3s and 7s. I heard VO1DD calling CQ on "my" 20 meter CW frequency but he didn't hear my calling effort to bag a VO1. One other Canadian comment. VA3OSO called in on 20 SSB. I had a bit of trouble but copied him pretty well. He said running 1 watt

here. Geeze, no wonder I had to squint and squeeze the steering wheel.

Thanks to all the DX and Canadians who called in. A thanks to SP9LJD, DL3GA, DK2OY, F5FJ and DK3BN all of which made the log several times each. A special thanks to Les, SP9LJD for his swift moves to and from 15 CW and SSB. His SSB signal was "louder" than his CW signal or maybe it was just his good English.

Many US call signs made the log numerous times. Way too many to list. Having just transcribed 21 out of the 29 counties I ran in from recordings I am a bit worn so I won't tally up the Honor Roll winners this time. The Gator is a master at SO2R as almost every time I went to 40 he found me quickly. Qs with him on 20 and also 15 were an added treat. His West Texas signal was always strong. Thanks Gator for the S&P effort.

Rates are sometimes listed by ops. I saw as I strolled through the log several minutes that had 6 and 7 Qs in the same minute a rate of roughly 360/hour. Of special note was the last county I ran, Hopkins. I had 15 minutes to whack down any pileup so I cranked it up to 40 WPM and moved on along with only one interruption. I had backed the trailer into a dirt drive that meandered over to what looked like some sort of water treatment facility. Fenced in and not a soul in site. Sunday so I figured I would not be in any ones way. Well, 5 minutes into the run up pulls a red pickup to my left on the county road. One of those bigguns that Texas like to drive. I saw his turn signal saying he wanted to come down that dirt drive. I put the van in D and moved a few feet toward the road all the while pounding away. I got a mild wave to come further. I moved 8 or 10 more feet. The wave got more motion then it became a sweep of the arm motioning me to get out of the way. Up on the Hwy I drove. With no traffic in site, except for that red truck with two lawn mowers on a trailer I decided I could sort of sit just to the side of the right lane and continue since I was down to 8 minutes or so left. That worked. As I finished up I looked over and saw those two old boys riding those mowers cutting what I guess was grass in a four acre or so field. Hmmm, I thought busy work as what neighbor cared if that field was mowed or not. There wasn't a house for some miles and they weren't cutting it for hay just tidying up the lawn I guess.

Needless to say there are many ops who are always a guaranteed entry in a mobiles log in one of these things. You folks are appreciated. Just one note. K5ME resides in ANGE and as I was passing through ANGE reading his 599+ signal he asked, "Time to have dinner with me?". I told Bob, "I'm

running quite a ways behind schedule so better keep rolling." Maybe next time through Bob and thanks for the invite. I finished off my pork rinds and washed them down with my grape soda. Those things have to be washed down. I would just wait until after the end of the party on Saturday night to have dinner.

This year the RTTY on 40 did not seem to be as prevalent as it has been in past years. As long as I stayed below .040 a fairly clear frequency could be found. The last hour or so Saturday night I ventured up to 80 and worked quite a few folks but 20 and 40 were again the big producers. 40 even more so in the Texas party than other states. 15 was amazing Sunday morning. By 9AM local it was wide open to Europe. I logged very few US stations on 15 so the band was quite long.

That's my story on this one. I always enjoy going "home" to Texas. Having spent my first 35 years in the Dallas area I consider Texas my real home and my heart resides there. Oklahoma however is far enough away from the hustle and bustle of the large cities in the Lone Star state so I have decided to finish my days here in the country.

73, Jerry K5YAA

Rig: K3, Skymaster solid state amp, 3 HP Hustler resonators for 15, 20 and 40 plus a Tarheel that rests on 10 during the day and 80 at night.

NO5W with K5OT mobile - 1556 cw 69 ssb qso

About 8:30am on Thursday before the party I rolled out of the driveway in New Orleans, reset the trip odometer, and headed for Georgetown, TX -- about a 9.5 hour drive -- to meet my TxQP accomplice Larry-K5OT.

About 7:30pm Monday after the party I rolled back into the driveway, checked the trip odometer and it said 2213. Had it been that many miles? -- they pass fast when you're having fun! About 1140 (Saturday 675 and Sunday 1465) of those miles were in the TxQP and the rest were spent getting back and forth between Georgetown and New Orleans.

Needless to say it has taken a few days for me to get motivated and inspired to sit in front of the computer to write up some comments on our adventure.

Actually it was a pretty mundane adventure, which is the way you like these things to go. Hardware worked well, the software exhibited nary a hiccup, and the ops and driver stayed awake the whole time during their three hour shifts. No back windows of the Pathfinder fell out and we didn't run out of gas, although we came close to experiencing the latter.

First impressions of this TxQP were that participation was down somewhat with some of the usual out of state characters missing including VE3s, that suthern Pappa Novembuh gentleman from GA, the normal DX, and several others. In addition on Sunday 20m decided to sleep in and did not provide it's usual number of Qs leaving 40m to be the money band.

However, when we compare our score to 2014 there is an increase of about 32%. So we must have improved in some areas one of which was SSB. One goal we set before the party was to work more SSB and, although we were not able to get any runs going on SSB, we did get some good mileage out of S&P including 20 additional mults, all of them with Texas fixed stations.

With 20m in the doldrums 40m picked up the slack and we had some good pileups on 40m CW. On Saturday evening the pileups were going so well that K5OT made a driver decision to forgo the final gas stop, about 75 miles from our hotel, and press on, landing us only 5 miles from the hotel at the closing bell. By that time the Pathfinder was breathing fumes but fortunately we were just west of Houston with plenty of gas around and filled up with 18 gallons -- I thought the tank only held about 17! Forgoing that gas stop helped us stay in the pileups and the county lines kept coming just as each county pileup was ending. That was a blast for the operator, absorbed in the pileups and unaware of the need for fuel.

We had QSOs with 313 different stations so participation was actually pretty good, with some new characters taking over for those missing. Thanks to everyone who gave us a QSO but especially these stations who followed us around and provided more than 50% of our QSOs: K5NA(41), N5RZ(39), NR5M(38), K5LH(37), WA2VYA(37), NW0M(35), N6MU(30), W0GXQ(29), WA6KHK(29), WB5KSD(28), AE5GT(26), K5RT(25), K3TW(25), WB5BKL(23), AC5K(21), KN4Y(21), N4CD(20), W5RTA(19), KM4HI(19), NA4K(19), KE0G(19), K4XU(19), K8NYG(18), N4OX(18), N1LN(18), KE5LQ(17), AD4RE(17), K8JQ(17), K5SBR(15), W5MF(15), WA8ZBT(14), W2MN(14), NG7Z(14), W0UY(14), N5OE(14), W9JEF(14), WB0PYF(14).

Time to put away the mobile QSO party stuff for the year and get ready for SS, CQWW, etc. Hope to work you in many of those.

The above score includes 42000 bonus points for activating 42 counties with five or more QSOs and 500 bonus points for working N4CD in 5 different counties.

K3/100, HI-Q 4/80, CQ/X 1.8.0.11, 2002 Pathfinder

73

Chuck-NO5W

Larry-K5OT

W0BH/AD0DX mobile 1197 cw 486 ssb qso worked 59 tx counties

Ron/ad0dx and I teamed up again for a Mobile Multi-Op run through the Texas panhandle. This year, my "new" mocca '05 Chevy Astro (70K miles) replaced my tried and true blue '91 Astro (295K miles) which was becoming more of a gamble each trip. The new Astro ran great during its Kansas QSO Party debut, both engine and radio, so we once again added multi-multi operations at county line stops.

I added switchable filters to both IC7000 radios and moved the second radio to the back seat for more comfortable indoor operating. Last year I had to stand outside in the back with the flies, the sun, and the cockleburrs. With the front radio on 20m, we got the back radio to operate interference free on both 40m and 15m by swapping antennas on the third roof mag mount. With this setup, the mode that tuned on the rear radio depended on the front radio mode. Near the end of the run, we figured out that we could also split the CW and SSB Hustler stacks without interference which will greatly add to our capability next year. The switches have already arrived!

Ron and I headed off to our overnight stop in Liberal KS and arrived early for a change (that might be a first for the TQP!). Once in Liberal, I attached and guyed the antennas, programmed the voice and CW keyers, and taped our Day One schedule to the dash. Ready to go.

Saturday

The morning weather was great as we left early (another first). We decided to drive all the way through our first county and start from the Ochiltree/Hansford line. We got both stations up and running just as the opening bell rang. Ron quickly worked K5LH on 40m in MLEN as I tweaked some settings in the back. When I was ready to go, Ron switched to 20m and worked W4UT for the first of many contacts. My first back seat contact was WA2VYA, then we both settled in for a nice run. The system worked!

Texas was kind to us this year with light winds and cooler temperatures. One highlight was going by Morse Junction while Ron was operating Morse code in Moor(s)e county. I'll have to stop and get that picture sometime! Texas roads are great and fast unless you get behind a Wide Load truck delivering a windmill part to one of the many wind farms found in this part of Texas. It took awhile to get around two of them back to back, but eventually we were back up to speed. The new Astro likes to drive fast compared to the old one!

This year was definitely less productive than last year. I understand 15m was in for lots of Texas, but up in the panhandle, 15m Qs were rare even though we tried 15m from almost every county. 40m was good all day long, but with less mobiles out there to work, it felt slow. The overall result was lots less Qs and the comparison statistics (below) are interesting. We ran almost exactly the same route as last year and operated more time with the second radio, but made almost 600 less contacts. That's significant.

In the later afternoon, we turned on the A/C in the van. I was driving and all was well until Ron went to 40m. Every time he keyed up, the Battery light came on, the voltage gauge on the van would start heading down, and the radio power booster also showed the drop. We switched back to 20m (and 15m) and the problem disappeared. After pondering on it for a few miles, we tried again with the A/C turned off. The problem went away. Not sure if it's RF getting into the van computer or too much load on the alternator with both A/C and front radio transmitting. I'll be swapping my Optima battery from the old van to the new van, so perhaps that will help.

Another time we came off a county line stop and headed out. We'd both been running SSB from the line. Ron was operating and noticed a higher SWR on 20m CW. Right antenna, yes. Filter out, yes. 40m CW worked fine. Hmmmmm. Oh yes, I'd left the 40m SSB resonator on the third mag mount which I knew from testing

would cause a problem on 20m CW. It's an incredible tuning job with 7 antennas on three mag mounts. Lots of possible combinations and LOTS of interactions. A quick stop to remove the resonator solved the problem. I can leave the 40m CW resonator on, but not 40m SSB!

OK, pulling out after removing the resonator, I saw the pickup way back in the distance but I had plenty of space. As I was going through 70 mph he pulled out to pass, but I kept speeding up to reach the 75 mph speed limit. He pulled back behind me as we went up a hill. Over the next few miles in the Texas hill country, he kept trying to pass but always had to pull back. I finally pulled over a bit to let him through. As he went by, he heaved an empty beer can at me. It missed but I could read the brand starting with a "B" as he sped off at way over 80. I'm also making an educated guess that it was empty. Ron commented afterwards that it was probably lucky he didn't have the requisite gun rack in the rear window!

The rest of the day went smoothly. We made our last county with time to spare, even made a few 80m contacts, and pulled into our hotel as time ran out. This year we managed to stay on schedule both days. We found out that most restaurants in Childress close at 9:00pm, but we didn't starve. We ended the day with 1138 contacts.

Sunday

Sunday started off with a good breakfast, a beautiful morning, and the decision to head through our first county to the Hall/Childress line. Once again we arrived early and even had time to take a few pictures. One of the fun side-tasks we have is to try to fill county-hunter requests for specific counties. This year we had two requests, both on Sunday. W5HY/Bob from Texas had six counties to go in Texas and three were ours, including Hall. SM7ZDI/Vic needed Donley as one of his last counties in the US. We do listen extra hard for these calls and it was fun to hear Bob come on with a nice signal on 40m. One down, three to go.

Sunday always goes quickly, so we were soon in Donley working some DX on 20m when we tried 15m and found big signals from Europe. Finally! This was good for Vic and we kept waiting for his call to appear but no luck. Our time ran out at the line and I quickly swapped out the 15m resonator for the 17m resonator as planned and gave Vic another call. There was loud QRN on the the band and nothing heard. Vic later emailed that a few minutes before our scheduled time,

the Russian radar fired up which takes out much of 17m in Europe. It turns out he didn't have 15m transmit, but he heard us there as well. We couldn't wait any longer and so continued on, but Ron and I both remarked how impressive it is to try to work all US counties, particularly from overseas. We did work Bob in his other two counties on Sunday afternoon.

Approaching the four county line, our GPS started cutting in and out. We rebooted the computer several times and it worked for a bit, then it quit again. We knew where the line was, but for the exact spot we needed the GPS. We got it running again, found the spot (now very near a wind farm), and settled in. Runs were good but not crazy like last year and 15m was no longer in, so it was slow and steady. We'd planned a bit more time this year since we ran out of time last year, but when quitting time came, we were ready to move on.

Our last county was Lipscomb, the furthest northeast county in the panhandle. To get there we had to run back through two of our four counties, so dupes were common and contacts were slow. Then we hit Lipscomb. Wow. Ron's ears were smoking as he dug into the pileup. We drove to the Texas/Oklahoma border and parked at a small rest area with about 20 minutes to go. I jumped in the back, fired up the rig on 40m and the receiver immediately started cutting in and out. Transmit and SWR were fine. I kept testing and it kept blanking. Then Ron said the pileup evaporated and he wasn't working anyone either. It felt like forever, but we finally realized the 20m filter wasn't inline on the front radio and Ron's transmitting was desensing my receiver. My transmitting totally overloaded his receiver. Ron thought we'd blown the front end, but he started making contacts again and it turned out to be OK. Everyone was waiting for me on 40m, so a nice run to finish out the party, but the front radio pileup never came back. Live and learn. We did both this year!

Afterward

Just a few comments about the apparently famous logging rule which appears in all capital letters in the TQP rules. It seems to me the intent of the rule should be to have one QSO logged in both logs for each county line contact. Let's assume for the moment that the mobile operator gets to choose what he/she considers to be the most efficient way of doing this.

The mobile operator decides to say "You're 59 Donley and Hall" or send "599 DONL/HALL." The home operator responds and presumably logs

something. The mobile operator logs both contacts. Log checking will look for both counties in the home station's log and reduce the mobile station's score if any aren't found. It's really up to the mobile station to make sure all the counties appear there. Operators will change how they operate if their operating practice results in too many points lost. It's inherently self-regulating. Enough said.

Special thanks to Chuck/no5w and to NARS for sponsoring the event. Thank you all for the Texas-style fun. See you next year!

73, Bob/w0bh and Ron/ad0dx

W5CT Multi Of Mobile 1677 cw 310 ssb qso

Last year, W5MJ and I felt like we really got our TQP mobile installation working well. Best score ever and almost zero technical problems. So do did we leave well enough alone? Nope! We had two other fellas who wanted to get in on the game, so why not! Steve WK5S volunteered as driver and Dale KG5U said he'd like to operate, so we decided to give it a whirl. We added a battery and two additional TS-480 rigs and all associated cabling (whew!). I started working to learn the multi-op functions of the CQ/X software. The plan was basically to have one station each on 15, 20, and 40. We'd use a Hamstick for 15, Hustler for 20, and Tarheel for 40, all mounted at the rear of the vehicle.

We did a couple dry runs and found very little RFI to computers and other devices, and a low-to-moderate amount of interference from 40 to 20. Ready to roll!

We adjusted our route a bit, starting at Brownwood but heading west toward Lubbock to pick up three unclaimed counties. After that, we picked up our last year's route late Saturday afternoon and ended up near Denton. We moved our Sunday start point this year, but generally followed the same route as in previous years. We've struggled to stay on schedule every year so this year, we shortened it by about 15%. That seemed to do the trick. Steve kept us right on schedule all weekend.

We got to our start point Saturday morning early, and the "fun" began. We

did a quick retune of the 15 and 20M antennas, but got them right where we wanted. We plugged in an audio splitter so Steve could listen in and POOF! our 15M radio blinked off. We reset it, but it wouldn't transmit. We did a NASCAR-pit-crew radio swap, but in the rush to get everything going, the splitter was plugged in again and POOF! our spare radio blinked off. Okay, so we're down to two radios. Now to get all the computers running. That took a little while and before we knew it, 45 minutes of the contest had ticked away and we hadn't made any contacts. Finally, we blasted off but got off to a very slow start. Hmmm . no calls on 20 CW. Solar flare? Let's try 20 SSB . okay now we're cooking. Then someone found us and said they'd tried calling us on 20 CW to no avail. Egad! The IF Shift knob was all the way to the left. Aha! Now we're cooking on 20CW.

We continued through Saturday with only a couple more challenges. Our 20M feedline got pinched and had to be swapped out. And one computer crashed and on restart, couldn't load the log. So we started a new log and were back in business. Conditions seemed awfully noisy, but we attributed it to a thunderhead that followed us for a good while. Rate was good, but not great.

Sunday started off great with a nice county line run. We stayed a bit longer than planned and skipped our planned detour to pick up Hopkins County. By the afternoon, however, we had made up the time and decided to take a quick jaunt out to activate Limestone. We had a second feedline failure, but that was quickly remedied. Again, noise was a problem all day, and it may be that we had a noisy device inside the vehicle (laptop power supply?). We received several reports that we weren't hearing well . sorry if we missed your call.

Thanks to all those who followed us, worked us on both modes, and kept calling through our noise. And thanks to KV5V, K6RV, N5TW, K5LN, and W5RQ for help with engineering, equipment, and testing. See you next year!

Robert K5PI

K5LH- -fixed – McLennan, TX - 191 counties worked

Great contest as usual. With poor DX conditions, for instate stations the fun

was primarily on 40 meters. Working 191 counties seems a fair effort with many SW TX counties were not on the air on CW. Thanks to the organizers (Chuck, NO5W, and his friends at NARS). The published mobile routes were a help and inspiration. Top mobiles worked (QSOs): NO5W (37), N5NA (32), W5CT (26), W0BH (25), W3DYA (24), K5YAA (23), N4CD (16), K5GQ (16), KS5A (14), AD5A (2). Mobile contacts accounted for 47 percent of all my QSOs.

WA6KHK - fixed - CA 299 cw 91 ssb - 195 counties

9 good rovers out there this year. Band condx not the best. Could not hear certain rovers most of the time on 15 and sometimes not on 20 meters. Lots of good fixed stations in Texas constantly putting out calls! 3 no show rovers from the web page list.

KN4Y- fixed - FL - 205 cw 137 counties

Ten mobiles in the TXQP on CW running counties at zero speed or 85 mph, no time for ice tea and the ice melted. Also fixed station on CW added to the excitement. There was no napping during this QSO party. This brought back memories of the great Texas armadillo run many years ago. I hope other State QSO parties take notice. Mobiles, mobiles and more mobiles.

KS5A mobile - 906 cw QSO

Once again Texas put on a great party. Before time ran out on Sunday, I ran 22 of the planned 24 counties out of San Antonio and south. N1MM displayed on-the-air as 6.1 hours, but the 757 travel miles took care of the remaining party time, plus some more getting back to SAT.

This was strictly a Run operation (no S&P) due to the solo ops and equipment setup. Only ran two single counties, and the rest were county lines. Considering all the oil field traffic, the roads were in generally good shape.

Only WX problems were severe thunderstorms for the last 4 hours on Sat night in South Texas. It was slow going due to pooling water and limited visibility. I pulled over one time in hopes of a break - to no avail. The 20m resonance went out of whack due to all the water (not enough Rain X?), but the tuner took care of the issue. Heavy rain static and lightening caused receiving issues on the

low bands that evening and limited ops. Sunday was a perfect day, WX wise.

Country power line RFI was minimal considering all the oil field sites. Only in Bee County was it a major issue. I had to go in and out of the county over the same route. RFI was still an issue although I went several miles into the county without a change in the S9 levels. I am sure I left some guys hanging in this one - Sorry!

I had planned for 30 minute runs on Saturday and 20 min runs on Sunday. In a few cases this plan was stretched to an hour. I hate to leave the stop in counties with some still calling. It worked out as I made up the time somehow without blue lights in the rear view. I did get some curiosity questions at each Border Patrol inspection site. I am not sure my explanation of helping out the Texas guys in a contest while driving with Arizona plates fully satisfied the Agents! Think I passed on pure ugliness.

Pileups were generally good and manageable. Saturday was better than Sunday in this regard, probably due to new stations entering the contest. Thanks to those that followed me over the weekend and apologies to those I just could not pull out.

The other good but personal point for this QSO party, was that I finally finished transmitting from all 254 TX counties. It has taken several years going in and out of this huge state. Thanks to those in the logs.

All QSOs will be uploaded with all pertinent data in LoTW before the end of the year. To get a LoTW match, use the mobile call sign I used in the party - KS5A/m. Although most of you will have the same time stamp for the two counties, you will have to have different time stamps for those two counties. Otherwise, one county will replace the other with the same time stamp. One minute difference is sufficient. I will do the same to my LoTW uploads.

Lastly, a lot of atta-boys and atta-gals to the organizers of this event. It takes many volunteers to make this QP so successful. Hopefully, NO5W will be overwhelmed with logs! Thanks, Chuck.

73/Guff
KS5A/m

IC-7000 100w

8 horizontal Hustler array, 12' AGL
LDG AT-7000 tuner
N8XJK Voltage Boost Regulator
N1MM+ software
Logikey K-5 Keyer
Delorme Street Atlas with GPS
F-350 diesel

NR5M Multi Op High Power - 704 cw 2159 ssb 58 digital
Ops: K5GA, KU5B NR5M

Billy, K5GA, chased counties and got 218 of them. Colin, KU5B, got digital fired up on Sunday morning. I ran 15 Eu on Saturday morning and 20 Stateside the rest of Sat and Sunday. We were not really set up to maximize the effort. We had only two ops and two operating positions most of the time. Next year we will be better prepared.

Lots of fun!

George, NR5M

N4CD mobile – 706 cw QSO – 17 counties run

Participated on Saturday only. Had a nice trip on small windy twisty back roads through the TX 'Hill Country' circling around Austin TX – started in Caldwell County after a stop for an estate sale there. . Half of runs were stopped, half were 'on the run'. Just me operating, logging, and driving so if I missed a few dits and dahs here and there, you'll know why. Good weather. 450 miles – 10 1/2 hours on the road. Half of contacts were on 40M and conditions very good there with lots of activity. Was hunting for the other mobiles, but many didn't spend much time on 40M. (NO5W, N5NA, W5CT and NO5W and W0BH did - K5YAA, W3DYA were hard to find).

W3DYA mobile - 767 cw QSO - 28 counties run

Operating frequency range 020 to 040 cw is annoying. why not a center frequency to separate mobile and fixed activity like some other qso parties?

Lots of activity on 40m; mostly TX working TX but very good activity. i did a lot of

calling on 15m while driving in a few counties, and most of the 50 contacts were with many European stations, and some good signals within the USA. Light rain slowed me down from newton to Polk; lousy traffic didn't help then.

Overall, very good weekend. I appreciate the calling stations staying with me, and thanks to those who spotted me. The difference was obvious!

73, Norm

N6MU - fixed - CA - 320 cw QSO 190 counties

Still one of my favorite Parties despite the really up and down band conditions this year. Very frustrating when most of the mobiles disappear for hours at a time. Sure missed a lot of counties because of it. No 15 Saturday but open nicely Sunday.

There were nine mobiles on CW which really kept me hopping when I could hear them, hi. Top mobile for me was N5NA with 38 Qs followed by W0BH(34), W5CT(31), K5YAA/NO5W(29), W3DYA(17) and KS5A/N4CD/K5GQ(15).

SP9LJD - fixed - Poland - 196 cw QSO - 122 counties

Thank you very much again for real good organized party. The propagation was very good from EU to TX especially on 15 m both days but unfortunately only a few mobiles signals on that band, I heard very strong W5CT/m but he can't copy me hi, unfortunately he was the hardest for me also on 20m. Most of the mobiles working perfect CW and therefore even in poor propagation on 20m on Sunday I worked quite a big number of them.

Below please find my statistic QSO/CTY in alphabetic order:

K5GQ 6/ 6
K5YAA 28/17
KS5A 12/10
N4CD 7/ 7
N5NA 18/11
NO5W 7/ 7
W0BH 28/13
W3DYA 14/13

For the coming contest please QRV on 40m CW below 7030 because of RTTY QRM (CQ WW RTTY) and SSB below 7200 for EU. I worked 35 new counties but I still need over 50 to finish the list of TX. Once again tnx fer all QSO's.

Bingo Cinco Award

MARAC announced the Bingo Cinco Award at the last board meeting in September. From the updated Awards rule page:

OBJECTIVE: To make contacts in all USA Counties with amateur radio operators who have earned the Bingo I, Bingo II, or higher level Bingo awards in order to collect a total of five (5) Bingo credits in each county.

SPECIAL RULES: All Valid Contacts for this award must have been made on or after September 15, 2015.

Each Valid Contact with an operator who has earned the Bingo Award (a “Bingo Holder”) counts toward the five Bingo credits needed for each county. If you work five different Bingo holders in the same county, you have 5 Bingo credits and have completed all the needed Bingo contacts for that county.

Valid Contacts with amateur operators who have earned higher level Bingo awards (Bingo II, Bingo III, etc.) count earn multiple Bingo credits, depending on the Bingo award level. If you have a Valid Contact with someone who holds the MARAC Bingo V Award, that contact is worth five credits – all you need to complete the county - you have completed the county with only one contact!

Contacts with one Bingo II holder (2 credits) and one Bingo III holder (3 credits) would also finish the county with a total of 5 Bingo credits. You can only count a contact with each Bingo holder one time per county.

In other words, even if you work a Bingo II holder twice in the same county, you still only have two credits for that county. However, if you have an additional Valid Contact with an operator who has earned a higher level Bingo award after the date of your

original contact, you can add the additional credit (s) to your Bingo Cinco log.

In no case, however, can you claim more Bingo credits for a Bingo holder call sign in your log than the total number of Bingo awards actually held by the operator at the time of your last claimed contact in that county. Also, you cannot claim credit for Bingo credits earned by an operator after the date of your last contact unless you make an additional Valid Contact with that operator in the county .

AWARD LEVELS: Certificate and plaque for earning a total of five Bingo credits in each county for all USA Counties .

On the Road with N4CD II

The twice a year Swapmeet was going to happen again in October down in Bell County TX. It's only a swap meet with maybe 1000 hams showing up to trade stuff, plus interested buyers. Lots of junk changes hands, and there's usually a dealer or two selling new stuff, plus lots of accessories such as antennas, power cords, and doo-dads. I try and make it each time to hunt for regens (seldom found), sell a few books or other misc stuff acquired along the way, and meet up with a few friends. It officially starts on Saturday morning, but you can set up Friday afternoon after 2pm, and the outdoor flea market starts with a dozen or two sellers before that. Anyone can wander inside the building on Friday during setup so lots of things get swapped around. You want to be down there Friday afternoon – or you might miss a goodie or two.

Most of the time the weather is fine, but you can get very hot or very cold weather there, with storms (spring time thunderstorms/tornadoes). Folks go regardless. You can bring your camper or RV and set up – a dozen or so folks do, and Friday night BBQ is everywhere for the local groups.

So it was down I-35 again to Bell County Texas by a bit after 2pm. No problems – and did stop in Falls, TX to put it out for Double Diamond. There's only a few miles on the interstate and if you don't stop, you won't get the required contacts (3 or more on one band, 3 on other bands) done in time. I stopped and that worked out fine. The traffic was light – not rush hour. Don't try this at rush hour time – major delays.

I set up stuff on the table I bought - \$15 which includes a usual \$5 admission ticket. You can drive your car in Friday, unload all the stuff, then take the car out. That's conducive to heavy stuff showing up like lots of boat anchor type rigs. Outside is a flea market with maybe 100 sellers - everything from 200 feet of tower sections to beams to all sorts of old equipment, plus some new goodies for sale. However, you take your chances with the weather – some years the outdoor flea market has been rained out. Some years you'll get a good sunburn without sunscreen.

I had an old Hallicrafters S-108 receiver for sale, along with Hallicrafters TO Keyer, some keys, a dozen books, and some misc stuff on my table. I didn't find any new books from the way back days there to keep things going on reviewing the olde books. Maybe we'll have to head off on a tangent? . Didn't find much of anything I had to have. There were two dozen receivers for sale from S-110s to HQ-140-X, dozens of HF transceivers – TS-520s and Yaesu and Icom and others. This year it seemed to be Johnson rigs in good supply – nice heavy iron!

There aren't too many county hunters that attend this. Bob KK5NA and Larry K5OT were the only two that I ran into. There's no programs or other activities, other than an off site VE testing during the day, so it's strictly 'flea market' if you will with about 2/3rds the stuff in the large Bell county Exposition building, and 1/3rd the stuff outside. Weather was perfect for a hamfest. About 80 on Friday with sun, and same on Saturday, with low Sat morning about 57 deg.

After I set things up, sold some stuff on Friday, I covered things up about 4:30 and headed back to the Super 8 motel to unpack the suitcase and radio gear for the night. Nearby is a new Golden Corral – very convenient. Had the buffet – loaded up on veggies and fruit and salad...and some meat. Then headed back to the room. Lots of traffic in Belton on the interstate.

Slept well at the Super 8.

Saturday

The sun doesn't come up till 7am this time of year, but the hamfest starts early. I got up before 6am and caught the breakfast at the Super 8 – waffles! Yum! Plus a banana and bowl of cereal and cup of OJ. Then over to the Exposition Grounds about 15 minutes away in the dark. I arrived before 6:30 and folks were all over the flea market – using flashlights to see what was up for sale. Nothing new. There were a couple of these for sale. Remember these?



Way back in the 50s and into the 60s, you'd use this mobile converter to downconvert the ham bands to your AM radio. You'd set your radio to an IF frequency – maybe 1600 KHz, and tune the converter. It covered 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10m. You'd borrow power from the AM radio.

I ran into a few of the folks who were in the TX QSO Party – that had happened the week before.



Larry, K5OT – USCA #1168
went mobile with NO5W in TQP



Richard, K5NA
Big signal out of Travis TX
contester and DX'er



AC5K, Wes – Hardin TX
Kept busy in TQP

I sold a few books, sold the TO Keyer and S-108, and a key or two so the load going home was lighter. Things taper off at 10 o'clock. Starts at 6am, doors open to the public to the interior of the building at 7. So I headed out.

The previous TQP weekend I'd run a bunch that I normally do on the trip home, so I just hit a few new ones for Double Diamond – Burnett, Lampasas, Coryell – then headed on toward home via some two lane back roads I'd never been on before. Lots of nothing as you parallel I-35 about 50 miles to the west. It was a nice drive, and the California QSO Party had started so I'd be working a few of them along the way. Well, probably 50 or 60 of them since they were everywhere on cw. They'd also be on the CH frequencies at times so that didn't work out too well. Put out a few on the way home but nothing 'off the beaten path'. Home by 3pm.

446 miles on the weekend trip. Then I kept busy in the CQP for the next day or so. I needed lots in CA!

Double Diamond Award

At the last Board of Directors Meeting, the Double Diamond Award was announced. The rules are currently up on the MARAC Awards page:

OBJECTIVE: To make Valid Contacts in All USA Counties with other mobile operators who have earned the MARAC Mobile Diamond Award, including contacts while in a Mobile Operation transmitting from at least 500 counties as the holder of the Mobile Diamond Award.

SPECIAL RULES: All Valid Contacts for this award must have been made on or after September 15, 2015, and after the applicant has received the Mobile Diamond Award.

After having received the Mobile Diamond Award, the applicant must make contacts with holders of other Mobile Diamond Award holders in All USA Counties (Mobile Diamond contacts). Both Mobile Diamond holder operators involved in each Mobile Diamond contact may count both counties toward the Double Diamond Award. The applicant must make Valid Contacts while transmitting in a Mobile Operation from at least five hundred (500) different counties. In each of the 500 different counties transmitted while in Mobile Operation, the applicant must use at least (2) different Bands and make at least three (3) Valid Contacts with different stations on any one Band and a total of three (3) or more additional Valid Contacts on one or more additional Bands. At least one of these contacts must be with another holder of the Mobile Diamond Award and that contact may be on any Band.

For each Valid Contact , the two Mobile Diamond Award holders must be in separate counties (or countries) at the time the Valid Contact is made.

AWARD LEVELS: The Double Diamond award is awarded for making Mobile Diamond contacts in All USA Counties and making multiple contacts while transmitting in a Mobile Operation from at least 500 different counties on at least two Bands as a Mobile, one of which is with another Mobile Diamond award holder.

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Dang. They did a pretty confusing job of writing the rules. It's full of potential errors. Rumor has it someone sketched out the rules on the back of a 3x5 envelope in crayon and presented it at the last minute to the board of directors. Let's dissect it:

“OBJECTIVE: To make Valid Contacts in All USA Counties with other mobile operators who have earned the MARAC Mobile Diamond Award, including contacts while in a Mobile Operation transmitting from at least 500 counties as the holder of the Mobile Diamond Award. “

This implies that the only valid contacts are made 'to **other** mobile operators'. That would mean you would have to be mobile yourself for the contact to work. It would be a 'mobile' Mobile Diamond holder to another 'mobile' Mobile Diamond holders for all the states. Did they really state you had to be mobile at both ends. ??? If so, forget it. No one is going to sit in their car 24/7 to get this award.

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*“After having received the Mobile Diamond Award, the applicant must make contacts with holders of other Mobile Diamond Award holders in All USA Counties (**Mobile Diamond contacts**). .”*

Hmmmm. It appears someone was using the Mobile Diamond rules as a guide, Unfortunately they didn't do a 'passing grade'.

In the first sentence , if two Mobile Diamond holders work each other, it is not a a Mobile Diamond contact, but a Double Diamond contact.

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*“AWARD LEVELS: The Double Diamond award is awarded for making **Mobile Diamond contacts** in All USA Counties “*

NO NO NO

The award is given out for making DOUBLE DIAMOND contacts with/from all 3077 counties. .

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Passing grade? Nope. More than half of sentences contain errors.

Now, this award has been talked about for over a year. Other than a small tweak to the bands needed for the six contacts, it's a clone of Mobile Diamond. MARAC should have been better prepared with REVIEWED rules before publishing them. Did no one other than 'the author' on the awards committee even see them, no less read them and proof read them first, before submitting to the BOD for a vote?

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As per rules published on the Awards page dated 9-11-2015

Members should really expect well written rules.

On the Road with N4CD III

It was time for another road trip and 30-40-50 people would be heading to rare Rutherford County TN for a 3M reunion. From my QTH it's about 650 miles the 'direct route' of all interstate – and 11 plus hours of steady driving. Way back when, when I was working and only took off one day (Friday) – it would always be a one day marathon trip there, and back home on Sunday. Well, now that I'm retired, and also 20 years older than those days, it's usually a two day trip each way so I can take some detours along the way.

Gene, K5GE, now working on the Double Diamond Award recently announced, headed out a week early and ran through much of LA, lots of MS and into AL finally getting to TN. So far, the Double Diamond doesn't seem to get me going too much – it will take at least 3-4 years based on history and activity level of those mobiles that can give out qualifying contacts. If those mobiles keep running.

It was fall allergy season and I was fighting off a cold. However, not much could keep me from heading that way.

Band conditions the week before the 3M were really rotten – with a major storm one day that made things very tough for folks. I'm still working on Third Time transmit (Award that doesn't exist officially) – so I'd do some of that along the way – just a few hundred done since starting over last September and no award (yet) for Second Time Transmit – other than having 50 certificates for running each of the 50 states again.

For some reason, MARAC isn't doing all it could to 'incentivize' mobiles. Now you run a state for second time, you get a 'number 0 award' and it doesn't show up in the database or under your call. Number zero awards? Just makes it easy for the awards manager who issues them, doesn't have to keep track of them, sends out an email certificate.....and one one has a clue you actually hold that award. Wasn't that way in the past. By checking the database, I found out that GeneW1TEE had received credit for working 37 states the second time. Like many, he just didn't send them in until he had done it the first time. You could see who was working on 2nd time TX. Then last summer all multiple time RAN ALL STATE XYZ vanished in the blink of an eye. Well, all converted to 'zero number' awards that show up nowhere. Fortunately I had copied that info and did a bit more research on that. Rumor had it Gene had 'done it twice'. Further checking said 'nope'.....was trying but car and finances gave out. But who would have ever known one way or the other. He only had a few hundred left to go. Well, it would be nice if they sorta fixed it.

The weather was good. The bands weren't. AB7NK/K7SEN were headed east on a major trip. KB0BA/N0XYL were wandering about. So Wednesday I joined other mobiles on the road – first up to Texarkana (Bowie TX) – then across the bottom row of counties in AR. For this trip, to have hope of working K5GE for his counties, the 40M SSB antenna was installed. I did catch him in a few. Put out a few on SSB but it's not my favorite mode these days.

As the day wore on, soon I found myself in MS and stopped in the town of Greenville. Don't. Keep driving another 30 miles. I stayed at the Econolodge which had a 'mixed bag' of reviews on TripAdvisor. There is not really a decent place to eat – Shoney's

was about the only sit down place and the food was 'marginal'. The fish was good (not on the buffet) but the rest of the veggie/salad/desert bar was pretty bad.

It turned out that AB7NK wound up staying the same night 500 feet away at the Holiday Inn Express. I don't think she'd recommend it either. Slept OK. Cereal and juice for breakfast. Now it was time to head to Murphreesboro, TX up to TN, then across the bottom row a bit then the final leg NE. I put out the counties – bands were 'dead' for a while with lots of noise. Between the lots of noise along the roads, and the high noise bands, it was tough at times. I was looking forward to meet and greet with dozens and dozens of county hunters.

Ed, K8ZZ, was working on his MP – having just finished up Masters's Gold in June. He'd need to put out 500 counties, with at least one contact with a MG holder to get credit for himself. Gene, K5GE was working on finishing up running all 3077 counties the first time, as well as logging those Mobile Diamond counties. Logger won't keep track of it.....but there are work arounds. Keeping the data for at least six contacts takes a separate spread sheet. It might be a year or two, according to rumors, before logger tracks it and Bingo Cinco. Anyone can be working on Bingo Cinco at this point – start date was 9/15/2015. It's a clone of Five Star, except you need five 'bingos' in a county.

A strange thing happened on the way up. Well, on second thought, no so strange. At one point, Tony, WA9DLB was running the net. Most of the time I could work the mobile directly on 40M. There came a time when I needed a relay. Tony was S9 and asking 'Who needs a relay?'. I chime in – N4CD/M. He repeats the question. Same thing. Finally someone, maybe Jim, WY8I, tells Tony N4CD needs a relay. Tony says 'I don't hear him'. Duh! (he's S9, has heard every other mobile closer and further away, but no 'he doesn't hear me). Get relay from Jim, WY8I.

Half an hour later, same thing happens. We have a pattern being registered.

A half hour later, Tony is asking 'any mobile ready to run?'....N4CD chimes in. Tony asks again. Same thing. Then someone else chimes and and says, N4CD is ready to run. Tony again says "I don't hear him". Tony says 'I'll be back in 10 or 15'. We really have a pattern developing. So someone else runs N4CD – WY8I. Good run.

Well, maybe Tony is unhappy about being voted out of office. **For the benefit of all county hunters , that was the EXACT right thing.** He was accused of being a "KZ2P' robot – voting which ever way James told him to vote on the board of directors. It's good he is gone, and **he just really disqualified himself for Net Control of the**

Year award. The New MARAC NET GUIDELINES are out, as outlined in the latest MARAC RoadRunner. There is a MARAC sponsored net on 20M now, and obviously the 7188 net has, up till now, never played games or had a black list. For shame, Tony, to try and bring 'black lists' to the 40M net. Go hide and never come back for the benefit of the rest of us. We've had 15 years of black lists and terror on 14.336, and we don't want it on 40M. It's amazing you would try it with so many mobiles out there. Maybe you were hoping that 2 or 3 mobiles were ready to run and you'd never run N4CD? Back to the trip.

Mary, AB7NK, finished up her MG in August so is real busy starting on those needed 500 run counties for Master Platinum! The bands were hopping. 7188 was busy with an occasional move off frequency.

I arrived about 4pm. From past history, you would wait till late afternoon before the rooms were ready. The hotel was 'full up' with another group – Area 64 – taking over 100 rooms while the county hunters had signed up for 32. Back at the peak, the 3M would get about 250 people each year from all over the country – with '25 on the list ready to run'. With the other group, the parking lot was getting full – and of course, as you drove around, you spied all sorts of county hunter antennas – but not like way back when every car in the lot had antennas – hi hi.

It was time for meet and greet at the Clarion Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn Hollodome).

California QSO Party

Another good one this year. A few of the counties were hard to come by on cw- most who got the sweep were doing both modes or just SSB. One mobile I know was out – K6Q who zipped through lots of counties – ones with few fixed stations it seems despite CA having 20 plus million people!

This year, if you worked enough of the 1x1 special calls to spell out “GOLD RUSH” you would qualify for a commemorative coin if you made at least 150 contacts into CA.

They had the K,N,W prefixes (3 opportunities per letter) on the air with 1x1s.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

N6TRI County Expedition to San Diego - 600 SSB QSO
ops NY7N, KK6ANP

The whole genesis of this operation came from my friend and co-operator Daniel, KK6ANP, who's still fairly new to HF. After having a good time at Field Day this past year, he commented to me that he didn't want to wait another whole year to do a portable operation. I suggested we find somewhere fun in CA to set up for CQP, and it took off from there.

We operated from a cabin at the Butterfield Ranch Resort, south of Julian in San Diego County. Not that San Diego is rare, but more that Daniel knows the manager of the campground, and knew he'd be okay with us stringing some wires through the trees for the weekend.

We put up a fan dipole for 80-10 about 20ft using army surplus fiberglass mast and a custom base Daniel fabricated just for this purpose. Three conveniently located trees provided anchor and guy points for the mast and antenna, which turned out to be fortuitous, as it survived 50mph+ wind gusts on Saturday night.

KK6ANP provided his FT-920 and a laptop for logging, I brought my trusty old SB-201 for a little extra pop on our signal. Never hurts.

This was mainly intended to be a fun, semi-serious yet semi-casual operation. A way for me to scratch my contest itch and be the hunted for a change, and a way to introduce KK6ANP to contesting - and to SSB operation, since he's kind of a digital guy.

>From that standpoint, it was a total success. We definitely had fun, we handed out the SDIE mult to a bunch of people, and some adult beverages may have been consumed along the way as well.

The operation wasn't without its issues. Late in the evening on Saturday, the

T/R relay on the SB-201 started sticking, which was fixed by turning the amp off and letting it cool down for a bit. After a few hours Sunday morning, it hung up again. That, combined with the FT-920 randomly power-cycling itself ever 10 minutes or so if the RF output was much above 50w led to us deciding to hang it up a little after 1800z on Sunday morning.

Still, a good time was had for sure - and I can't complain about running a 96 QSO hour on 40m with nothing but a dipole at 20ft and 500W.

We'll definitely be returning for CQP in 2016, and we'll definitely get the kinks worked out for next time. And maybe add something directional to put up in the air...

See you on the air.

73, Andy NY7N

K6M County Expedition to Modoc 1295 cw 967 ssb

9 guys, 3 gals in a 3tx MM expedition to remote Modoc County. Conditions were puny, weather was beautiful and the food was great. No records broken. It's a fun outing for our Central Oregon DC Club. Out thanks to the Doublehead Ranger District of the Modoc National Forest for the use of their Timber Mountain Fire Lookout, and to Susan the gracious sagacious lookout lady who allows us all manner of liberties hanging antennas from her tower.

Where was NT? We looked everywhere.

Thanks for the QSOs.

73,

Dick k4xu

W6U County Expedition to Colusa 431 cw 506 ssb
ops N6VV, K6XV, W7DR, N6ORB, K6KHB, WA7LZY

Complete Field Day style operation from Colusa-Sacramento River park campgrounds. Funniest comment, from the guy in the next camp site as we were raising the

AB577 tower with the beam - "What's with the oil derrick ?"

Two hour drive from the Bay Area. Lots of work building the station, then operating - Lived on nearby McDonalds food for the entire weekend. Marginal band conditions with marginal antennas. Windy evenings - Took the entire station down and drove 2 hours back to the Bay Area - Total exhaustion !

We had a blast !

W7YAQ/6 County Expedition to Del Norte 490 cw 126 ssb

This was a single operator expedition to Del Norte (really pronounced Del NORT by the locals) county. My wife and I rented a house in Smith River, a few miles south of the Oregon border, sight unseen except for checking the terrain on Google Earth. Del Norte county doesn't have much flat land. I considered the location acceptable since the hills to the east rose only to 500 feet about a mile away. What we didn't notice was the 100-foot high rock outcropping directly across the road, fortunately to the northwest. We also didn't anticipate the occasionally high QRN levels. Not sure if it was salt spray on the power poles or the several nearby commercial establishments, including a 24-hour liquor store. Anyway the ocean view was great, the weather spectacular, and I had a spacious yard in which to plant antennas.

I brought 2 DK9SQ telescoping 10-meter poles. On one pole I taped two wires to load as quarter wave verticals for 40 and 20, with 3/4 wave on 15. I used the other pole to support an inverted L for 80 meters. I spread 8 33-foot radials around each pole. Each antenna weighs about 7 pounds. I operated with the same antennas two weeks ago in the Washington State Salmon Run, from a hilltop.

While the antennas were adequate for CW (and will probably be fine for my next holiday style DXpedition), they lacked the punch to be noticed on SSB on 20 and 15 from this QTH. I would listen to the SSB ops moan that they were missing Del Norte, and then call them to no avail. I only had 2 replies to SSB CQs on 15 and none on 20.

Highlights: Working 2 VY1 stations. Hearing folks say "Thanks for Del

Norte!". 550 QSOs Saturday.

Lowlights: Missing MS, NE, and VT. Regretting that I didn't take up the CODX Club's offer to use their club call NE6LE (3 dashes and 10 dots), rather than W7YAQ/6 (14 dashes and 14 dots)! 66 QSOs Sunday.

73,
Bob W7YAQ/6

W6E County Expedition to Tuolumne, CA 556 cw 219 ssb
ops N6GEO, WQ6X

This weekend was full of surprises from Twain Harte (Tuolumne county). We ran as a Multi-2 using an Elecraft K2 and a SUNSDR2 into a TH3-Jr (10 mh), an OCFD (20 mh) and a Butternut HF-6V with radials on top of the shed. Unfortunately, stray RF plagued the SunSDR2. Aside from that WQ6X made it work quite well for CW, while N6HEO made the K2 sing nicely on SSB. Considering our location, we did reasonably well, managing to work 22 out of the 24 GOLD RUSH stations.

Ron
WQ6X

N6YEU County Expedition - Trinity County 229 cw 127 ssb

My apologies to those who missed TRIN. Due to extremely high winds Saturday night I was forced to qrt for reasons of safety. I was portable "field day style" and felt it was best to leave the area.(Mendocino National Forest just south of the Yolla Bolly Wilderness.)I moved to a location away from the winds until morning,"sleeping" in the back of my pickup camper. Fortunately my portable tower and antennas survived.I have gone portable for CQP for abt 18 years and have never seen winds like these. I hope to return next year to make up for a dismal showing this year.

NW0M - fixed MO - 266 cw 258 ssb 58 counties worked - sweep

Finally got the County Sweep! Last year missed by only one and missed by two the previous two years. So what a great surprise when KE6WC from MEND County called me on 15 SSB at 2007 utc.

Not much low band activity for me but thankfully 15M was in great shape both days.

NO5W- fixed - LA - 160 cw 38 counties

That was a RUSH -- GOLD that is. Having spent all of last weekend and several days on each side as a mobile in the Texas QSO Party I did not plan to get into the CQP, at least not in a serious way. But the idea of the GOLD RUSH intrigued me. Other than the mobile in the driveway I don't have a station at home so late Saturday afternoon I went out to the Pathfinder to see what I could hear and maybe work a few letters. Well after about 45 minutes I had all the letters except L and S. Wow this is easy.

So I thought I would use Sunday morning to finish up the GOLD RUSH at the local club station and within a few minutes of arriving I had the spelling complete. Oops, looks like I have to also work 150 Qs and right now I'm at about 25. So I thought I would give it a try but there weren't that many signals on 20m. Then 15m opened up and things began to look better but by 1800z I had only a little over 100 Qs and it was not looking good. Just as I was about to throw in the towel I checked 10m and worked a station, and then another until I had over 130 in the log. I couldn't stop then and continued to bounce around between 20, 15, and 10 until I had 150 plus a few for insurance.

So I guess I followed the plan of the NCCC. Set the hook on Saturday afternoon with some quick success in the spelling bee and reel them in on Sunday for the required 150 Qs and the GOLD RUSH. At any rate it was fun.

73/Chuck/NO5W

K4BAI - fixed - GA 370 cw 571 ssb Sweep - 58 counties

Higher bands were poorer than last year and the lower bands were much better than last year. Typical, I guess, as we leave the sunspot high. Got the sweep at 0724Z with a QO from the only GLENN

County station heard, K6Q/M. Lot of good operators. Lot of good fun. Thanks for all QSOs. 73, John, K4BAI.

KN4Y - fixed - FL 230 cw 42 counties

Saturday was a CW operators dream, strong signals, good code development and good band signal saturation. Operated on 5 bands with a good ten meter opening Sunday, although Sunday the bands were not as hot.(jargon not temperature)I missed a sweep by a lot, not sure if all counties were run on CW and I could not hear all. The 1x1 calls were neat, not sure why, but neat is good.

N4PN 314 cw 667 ssb 57 counties worked

Great participation as always....missed sweep for first time in many years.

Never heard K6KNS in GLEN, however, know he was on...

Thanks to all who made it a fun QP..

73, Paul, N4PN

N1CC - fixed - Texas 293 cw 470 ssb 57 counties

Conditions were pretty good Saturday, and less so on Sunday for me. I could work a few folks on 10M Saturday, and could not hear any of the folks on Sunday.

The workhorse continued to be 20M with 310 contacts. 15M was second best with 277 contacts. This should have been better, however, ran out of stations on CW and that affects points a lot. 40M produced 124 contacts and was open early on Saturday and late in morning well after sunrise here Sunday morning. Next was 80 Meters, performance very good in pile ups -- I am guessing the propagation made that happen. 160M heard 8 stations, able to work 4 of them. 10 Meters on Saturday not many came to the opening, so not many worked.

I missed MEND for the first time in years, so no sweep. I did work the Gold Rush station, except for the one that was at a disaster preparedness fair, it must have been a "disaster" for ham radio, as they were never heard and I did not see them spotted (K6D).

Also noted that several stations were caught up in the clutter from the TX3X

DXpedition, hard to avoid since they are on near to the "windows" specified by the CQP Sponsors ... unavoidable.

Sunday's solar treat was an whiteout for about 30 minutes 1615-1645 UTC will difficult noise and low signals the rest of Sunday.

Pennsylvania QSO Party

This started during the 3M and N4CD was busy meeting and greeting but did sneak in a few contacts during the day. Tough on 20M and being a mobile. Did get a few but never heard any mobiles. Like past years, much of the activity is on 40m with some never even getting to 20M.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

N2CU mobile 621 cw 309 ssb

That was fun! I decided to try a different strategy this year. Rather than starting near my home base, and finishing the first night several hours away (at 1 AM no less), I drove to the furthest county I was going to activate and backtracked, ending up with a relatively short ride home. After the contest ended the second day, I was driving along the expressway at 65 MPH when two deer appeared in my headlights, one on the fog line and one on the striped line. I split the difference while locking up the brakes and avoided both. That would have been an awful end to a great weekend.

I activated 12 counties this year by selecting locations that minimized travel time between counties. However, some counties are so large that there's no getting around long off times. I knew I was in for a treat when lots of guys were asking if I was going to activate Cameron County. Yes, I was going to in a few hours. When I got there, KB3AGZ was holding a frequency for me and must have

been letting everyone else know I was coming. I worked him first and then he turned the frequency over to me. The pileup was great and guys were well behaved. I was thanked a number of times for providing the last county for their sweep. One hour and 12 minutes produced 144 mixed mode QSOs; 119 SSB in 49 minutes.

I only worked bonus station W3C five times; a far cry from the big W3TDF operation last year where I got 28 bonus station QSOs. 60 out of 67 counties (I missed 3 counties that I activated myself), 47 SPC and 1 DX. The high bands never opened for me; I checked them constantly but no go. The only DX (SM6BZV) was ESP weak. Although my QSO count was up from last year, fewer bonus station points meant a lower score. Bummer. I had hoped to do better and even set a goal of 1000 QSOs. Maybe next year.

K3, KA8KIP Eliminator screwdriver, N1MM+

73,
Tom N2CU

W3CG mobile (AA2AD N3KZI ops 653 cw (all 40M. None on 20M)

Driver/navigator Laurie (N3KZI) set the goal for this year's party: we would operate from as many different counties as possible. She spent as much time mapping our route as I spent installing a TS-480, whip, and antenna tuner into the old Chevy Cobalt. Following her plan as closely as possible, we operated from 31 counties, working ten or more stations from 26 counties. Best of all, we were only 20 minutes from home at the closing bell. What can I say?

In previous years, Laurie (N3KZI) and I (AA2AD) headed east out of Erie County around noon on Saturday, spent Saturday night in a hotel at the far end of the state, then dropped south and headed back west on Sunday. This year, we headed east after work on Friday and spent the night in Clearfield. After a leisurely breakfast, I configured the new K1EL keyer, which had arrived in Friday's mail and which I had assembled Friday afternoon just before we pulled out. It worked perfectly in the hotel room but Murphy struck as he always does when one is in a

careless hurry. When I connected keyer to radio, the computer crashed, seemingly catastrophically. We were prepared with paper logs as backup, but I was not looking forward to that alternative. I convinced the laptop to reboot and reverted to a crude, single 2N2222 transistor serial port keyer that I had slapped together in case the Winkeyer did not arrive in time. The homebrew keyer worked on my (very) old laptop, but timing was horrible at low speeds and even worse at reasonable speeds. If I had realized how irritating the bad fist would become, I would have sacrificed operating time to fix the K1EL before we pulled out of the parking lot. My humble apologies to all who struggled to differentiate Saturday dits from dahs at 20 WPM.

Late Saturday night, as I drifted off to sleep in Wayne County, I flashed on some clip-on RF chokes from WA3A (thanks Steve) that I had tossed into the car trunk, and I made the logical connection between crashing laptops and RF in the USB port. By early Sunday AM, the K1EL keyer was working perfectly. It is an awesome little box. N1MM's recommendation is right on the money!

Thanks to Laurie, and thanks to the many ops who made it a point to work W3CG/m over, and over, and over.

73, Peter (AA2AD, W3CG op)

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As his signature sign off, "It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania." Pete Wombach knew what he was talking about. The weekend of the 2015 PA QSO party was weather and travel perfection. Cool temps and October's bright blue skies and gorgeous fall foliage helped this driver of the W3CG/M station enjoy this year's event to the fullest.

Here are some words of advice to those who are going to attempt the multi-mobile venue in 2016:

1. Asking our mechanic to change the oil, put on new wiper blades, check the tire pressure and install new headlights was a smart move.
2. You need a cave-like interior to a vehicle to be able to see the computer screen in broad daylight. Purchase some window cling to darken the side windows, it will run about \$30 but well worth the effort. Wear dark shirts, for both the driver and operator which will cut down on the sun's reflection.

3. Map out your course well ahead of time. Use both a paper map and MapQuest to calculate the quickest route between counties. Be prepared to adjust your route due to detours and heavy traffic areas. It is surprising how many fall leaf and apple festivals there are on this weekend. Traffic moves slowly on the rural roads this time of year.

Other helpful hints:

1. To help keep the operator, my husband, accurately reporting our QTH, I made flash cards with the three letter abbreviations and full name of each county. When we crossed a county line I would put the appropriate card onto his keyboard.

2. I would set GARMIN to as close to a county line town/village or intersection road as possible and keep my eyes peeled for either homemade or state issue county line signs. County lines are sometimes missing and bridges and pavement changes can be an indicator of a county line demarcation.

3. Finding a place to pull over to make contacts is not as easy as it may seem. There are power lines to avoid and elevation was key (no pun intended) to helping others receive his signal. Sadly, convenience stores in gas stations are the worst QRN generators of all.

4. Once the sun went down and we were in unfamiliar territory, I found it very difficult to find county lines or a places to perch while Peter operated the rig. Sometimes concessions are necessary for safety sake and I-80 offered better visibility and actual lines painted on the road. The Pocono hills and curves offer a scenic drive in the daylight but are treacherous after sunset.

5. After dark, keep a flashlight or two available for map gazing, use highlighters for map marking and keep a tablet with a pen handy for making notes on what to do (or not) next year.

We drove a total of 861.3 miles from our home and back averaging 33.8mpg. We hit 31 counties. Only five of the 31 did not having 10 contacts. Peter made 659 CW contacts. We had our best run ever and I doubt that weather conditions could be better. Maybe we will do something different next year but no doubt we will operate the PA QSO part in 2016.

73, Laurie (N3KZI, W3CG navigator)

WN4AFP 69 cw 78 ssb

Another fun PAQP! Most of my hours were on Saturday. 20m was a bust for SC to PA, so I spent 90% on 40m and little 80m Saturday night. I was able to work PA all day on 40m. Thanks to the mobiles and rovers for their effort... Good mix of activity on cw and phone. Hope I can work it FT next year. 73s Dave WN4AFP

N1CC fixed TX 73 cw 37 ssb 48 mults

Radio conditions were best on Saturday, Sunday had its "high" spots but ran out of gas here in North Texas early Sunday afternoon. Very brief opening on 15 Meters allowed a few contacts, and while 10 Meters was open, skipped over Texas.

Running QRP under these conditions required more calling, more fills, and outright frustration when S9+40 signals on 40 Meters could not hear me calling at all. RBN showed that I was hitting PA with about 25 dB SNR, and that must mean that the RBN locations are much quieter than "real" stations seem to be.

The score above includes W3C X 3 for 600 points, and QRP gets a "double" kick power multipliers - that helps. There is confusion about "county lines". I suggest that PA fully adopt the "one QSO per county" that the other contests have started to mandate, such as AB3AH who would only give me one SN and I think he took my TWO serial numbers I gave him back.

This was one, my first foray into this QSO Party ... will keep it in my yearly plan now.

K3JWI Portable Multi OP 527 cw 221 ssb

Operation again this year was from K3JWI's family cabin near Greenwood Furnace State park in Huntingdon County. We used two stations at 100w each set up field day-style to wire antennas. Conditions were poor at the start but seemed to

improve a bit as the party progressed. Thanks to everyone who gave us a shout. Hope to see you all next year.

73, Ted W4NZ, Ken K3JWI and Howard WB4ZBI

County Sign Database Project

Gary, K4EXT, updated the database as of 10/7 with these new additions.

Jerry added in Union, SD



Union, SD by W0GXQ



Kenton, KY by KB0BA/N0XYL



Rabun GA by KW4M

K2MF added in a few new ones this month



K2MF – Camden NJ

No updates after 10/7/2015 to the database this month. Guess no one caught any coming and going to the 3M? Or K4EXT didn't get to update it?

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

Arizona QSO Party

N4CD was in TN at the 3M for the first half of this event and only got a few hours. Didn't hear a whole lot of activity on cw and signals pretty weak on Saturday on 20M. Many AR stations wait for the 7QP to go on 'expeditions' to rarer counties. I thought there would be more stations on, but it was hard to find even six in the mobiles. Two (possibly more) county expeditions were out. I managed to find about six counties on cw in a few hours listening or on Sunday on the way home.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

KN4Y – fixed – FL - 11 cw

Itr was a busy weekend for contests, worked all the AZ's I heard.

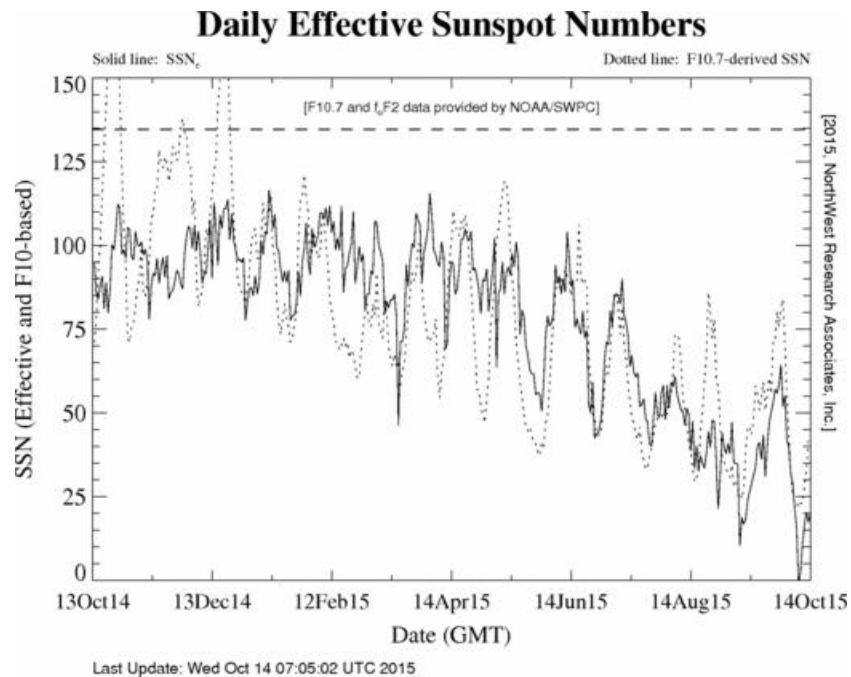
K7L - fixed AZ 155 cw 1553 ssb
K6LL at the K6LL super contest station

Last year I made over 600 Q's on 10 SSB. Conditions were pretty bad this year, but 20 hung in there.

N6MU fixed CA - 24 cw 40 ssb

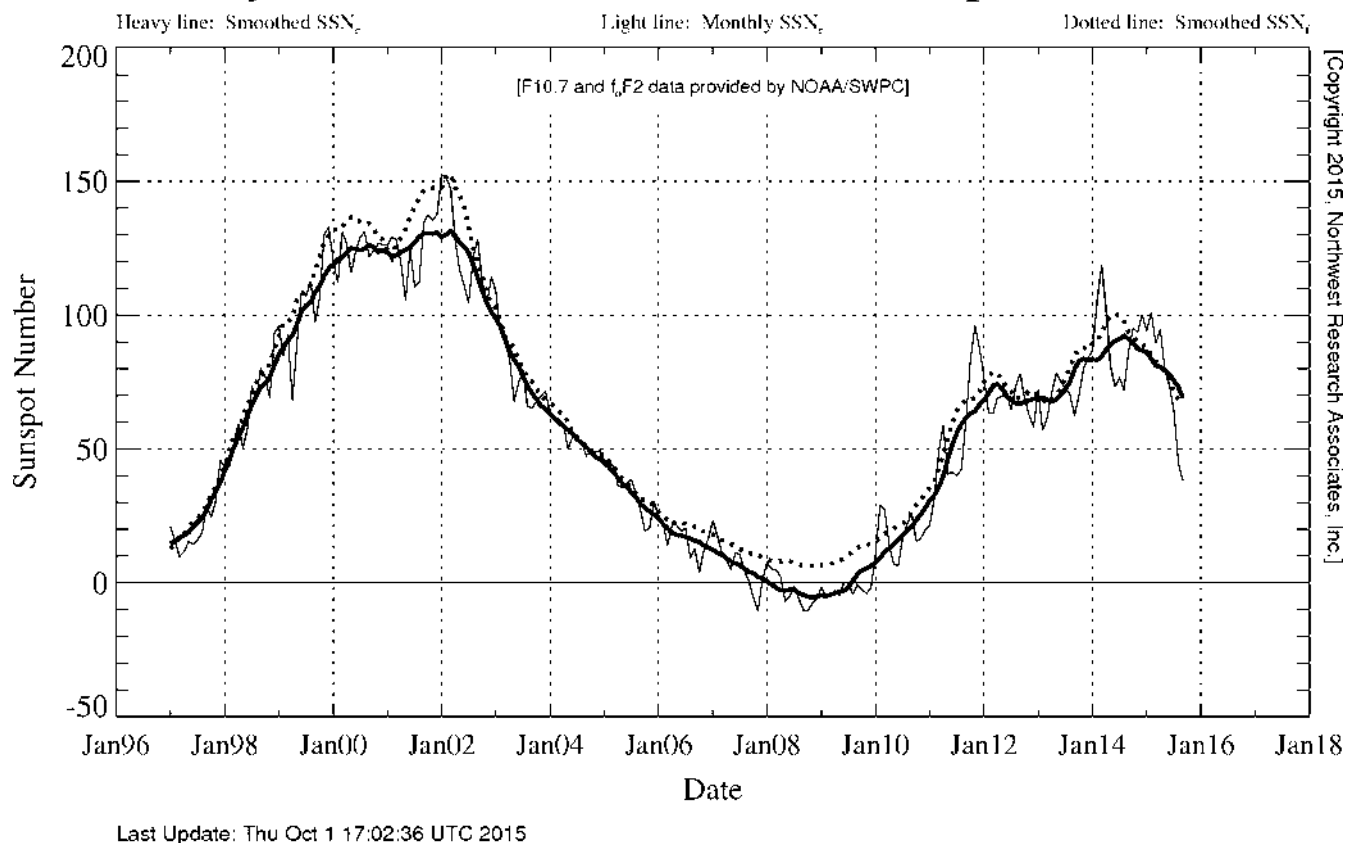
No 15 and limited 20 propagation. Only heard 18 active fixed stations and NO mobiles. Only made 11 Qs all day Sunday. Not nearly enough action for a 24 hour Party. Thanks to those few who did participate. 73...

Sunspot Report



Sunspot numbers are going down, down, down.

Cycle 23/24 Effective Smoothed Sunspot Number



Worse, the A index is kicking up a lot - A of 15 or 20, K up to 4 or 5, propagation 'poor' on 40 and 30, 'fair' on 20M..

At the 3M – TN

Report from Ron, KA3DRO:

The Bill Bell Memorial MMM

People started to gather Wednesday evening at The Clarion at exit 78B in Murfreesboro as the Old Timers reunion started. By Thursday afternoon there were over 15 attendees in place and our final count was 54 people participating . The meetings are consumed by the old game.... “ Remember when (fill in the blank)” and the other famous question....” what was the call of that guy (or gal) that ?????? “ or “do you remember when

As promised, we enjoyed great weather.... in fact... kinda warm for October in Tennessee with temps hitting the mid 80's! Murfreesboro has grown into a traffic snarl loaded with people in cars/trucks who seem to be in a constant swirl of non-movement around the hotels. Guess that's why Cracker Barrel was the busiest place..... and with the added hotels... 4-5 down the street from ours, they were always full and busy. The first day was spent mostly on the atrium level as we jumped into our rag-chews and catching up on all the news gathered since our last gathering in 2012. Friday and Saturday we were relegated to the lower level and seemed to be almost crowded out by a boisterous group from Area 64 AA and other smaller groups . Because of all this noise and activity, we were unable to have our usual competing guitar-fest that was relegated to their private rooms. We were hoping to be able to share some time with Jimmie, the XYL of KM4W Friday evening but unfortunately, learned that she had recently fallen and has a broken pelvis..... hope you can find time to drop her a note and a get well card..... I know she will appreciate the thought .

Early Birds included co-hosts N8EMV and her chauffeur, AK8A.... along with bodyguard Kirby. Also noted were K5KDG & Willa, and Faith, W5FXM who brought Richie, W4CCT, SK along in spirit. Dave and Sandy, KJ8V and KJ8W were noted along with Website author K3IMC and Jean, KJ4NTS.

Other early birds noted our long distance champ, Don K7DM , reportedly the Grand-son of W4RKV who met Don in Memphis and they, along with Mitch guitar, drove in together. K5GE and Mary Ida drove in with their guitar that received a bit of a workout..... along with Scottie, N4AAT and his trained guitar.

Bob, WA3QNT was there as was Bill, K2HVN who stopped off on his trek from the Dakotas to the seashore . Chuck, NM1G and Sandy enjoyed the event as did Kerry W4SIG who introduced his wife and 2 beautiful daughters to the crowd. Bob, W4OWY and Janie participated in a few discussions as did Randy, AA8R and Pattie, W8TAX. Other long distance contenders included Milt and Ellen from Denver, KY0E and N0CWX.

Don, W9GUY was nice enough to bring Joan Morgan who was able to share many memories with all of us in honor of Herb, W9GBH, SK. Bob & Jackie, N8KIE/N8RLJ was there to see us before heading back to the warmth of Hawaii for the winter, and John, N8BGF and Joan KC8WRP enjoyed relating stories from years past when they were making the badges for MMM as well as national conventions. Their bodyguard, Daisy also enjoyed meeting Kirby !

To add levity to all discussions, we all enjoyed the stories of W9OP, Mark while Joan W9PIP assured us she did not know him! We all talked to KB0BA, Lowell and Sandra, N0XYL and finally had opportunity to put a face on each after so many contacts.... and Ed, K8ZZ , NF0N, Mike and N4CD shared some stories of the past as well. It was nice to see Ralph WA4HXG and Bev again as well..... as well as a surprise visit by Doug, WA4UNS and to talk some DX with Paul, N4PN. Other Long distance attendees included Neil , K7SEN and Mary, AB7NK..... great to finally meet them after so many contacts. I was also able to introduce my new wife (3 1/2 yrs) Janice to my many friends . I know I have missed a few.... and appreciate that you were able to enjoy the few days we had together.

As promised, we enjoyed world class rag-chews and eye-ball qso's as well as a sampling of some great homemade Kahlua..... the beer flowed freely.... much to the chagrin of the AA people who also were there in full force for the duration of the event..... and try as we might.... we could not convert any over to County Hunting so their AA sponsors must be breathing a sigh of relief that they are well on their way to sobriety. Of particular importance was that W4SIG, AA8R, and NF0N were able to talk to most everyone there about the plans that MARAC has to rejuvenate the club and return it to a state of respect and civility.

We were able to exchange some ideas as well as discuss and examine some solutions for

the future. There is optimism that the hobby can turn the corner and once again prosper and regain the good reputation once held in the Amateur Radio community.

In a personal opinion, I believe that the next election will tell the story as a few key offices are cleaned out and quality members are installed that have the same goals and commitment displayed by Kerry, Randy, and Mike. It appears from the discussions I participated in this last weekend, that attitude is shared by many others. I prefer to remain optimistic and vowed that I will do whatever possible to see that their goals are achieved. If you value County Hunting as a hobby, I hope you will also add your support to them as they strive to achieve that goal.

73/ Ron.... KA3DRO

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de N4CD – of course, there was the usual trek to Mary Bo-Bos on Friday – with likely 30 attending. I skipped it this year – well, I didn't reserve early enough and it sold out. Hi hi. Had lunch at the Daily China Buffet about five miles away with a friend of a discussion board. We've done that 3 times now in his home town.

The Clarion had promised 'us' back in last December that we would have the atrium and one room right behind it. Unfortunately we were outmaneuvered by the Area 64 folks who outnumbered us about 4 or 5 to 1, and we only had the atrium for part of Friday. There went the ability to have a store of 'cold refreshment' and other beverages of choice. Friday afternoon, Saturday, and likely Sunday, the Area 64 folks had the atrium. For those who enjoyed those 'liquid refreshments' it just didn't work out.

In the past we had an 'awards dinner' where the piles of awards were given out. Usually it would be buffet style served out in the hall where you'd fill your plate, then eat in the big room reserved for the awards dinner.

First came the 'car plaques, the big plaques, envelopes with 'last counties', envelopes with other awards. That could go on for 30-40 minutes. Then there would be the drawing of names to go up and select an item off the 'prize table' which could be anything from Maple Syrup jugs, to wall hangers and decorative dishes, glasses, tools, and lots of miscellaneous stuff. That could take the better part of half an hour. Sometimes there was entertainment at the dinner. Well over 100 people attended and some years double that.

Of course, you've got to have piles of awards to give out, and things seem mighty slow

for the past month or two with folks finishing up.



Bob, N8KIE, Bob, N4CD, Bill, K2HVN, Jacki N8RLJ
pic courtesy of N8KIE

The free breakfast was good – with WAFFLES and eggs and bacon and sausage, hash browns, cereal, fresh bananas and apples, toast, juice, milk, coffee, etc. Very nice. There was lots of yak and greet during breakfast.



K2HVN/Bill and Mary/AB7NK



John, N8BGF and Steve AK8A



Mitch, W4RKV and Grandson Don, K7DM



Scottie, N4AAT



Doug WA4UNS, K5KDG Steve and wife



KA3DRO, Ron, Mary, AB7NK, WA3QNT, Bob



Don W9GUY



Bob N4CD and Mary, AB7NK
N8KIE pic

Unlike get togethers in the past, I don't think there was anyone still working on their USACA there – other than some non-ham XYLs. Most of the folks had many stars, Bingo and higher awards. We used to have dozens still working on first time, or getting Bingo for the first time. This was a 're union' but not many younger enthusiastic folks showed up. Kerry, W4SIG, was one of the few – or the only.

Do you remember the table where folks would leave their 'needs' for others to pick up and help them out? Been a while! Well, that was before the internet. Barry, W9UCW had the whole line of antenna parts and resonators for sale, too. Joyce, WB9NUL, usually ran the 'concession stand' and kept things stocked. The bathtub was full of ice – and cans of Coke and beer and who knows what else. Ah...the good old days.

Then Milt, KY0E, and Ellen were kind enough to share pictures taken at the 3M that follow:



Kerry W4SIG and family



Milt, KY0E and Ellen



Gene K5GE and Mary Ida



Joan W9POP and Joan (wife of W9GBH – SK)



Beverly and Ralph WA4HXG



Martha and Paul N4PN



Mike NF0N



Suzette and Dwight, KM4FO



Randy AA8R and Patti W8TAX



Dave KJ8V and Sandy KJ8W



Connie and Doug WA4UNS



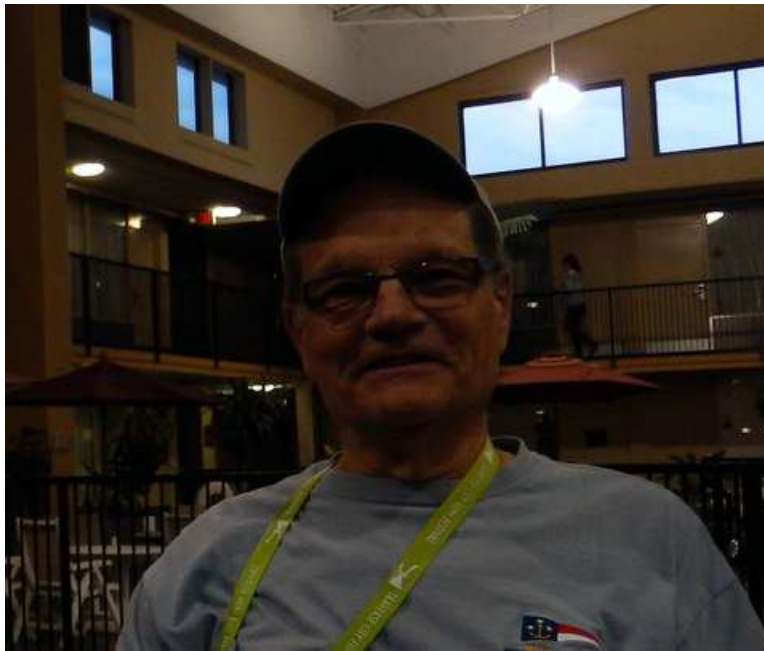
Steve AK8A and Paula



K8ZZ Ed



KB0BA Lowell and Sandra N0XYL



Chuck NM1G

Thanks again to Ellen for the second half of the pictures!

Now, unlike the past conventions, where a good part of the attendees were still working on just the first time, or getting Bingo done.....this crowd was 'seasoned veterans'.....having worked them all – sometimes 10 times. We sure could use some 'new blood' and we didn't attract any enthusiastic newcomers to this one. Maybe if we do it again in the not too far distant future? Who knows? Few were twisting arms for needed counties on the 'way home'. Didn't stop the fun from happening, though!

After the Convention

Some headed out early. Bob WA3QNT was gone on Saturday morning. Same with Scottie N4AAT and a few others headed home. Most left on Sunday after another day of meet and greet. Gene, K5GE was out in the car most the Saturday chasing N8KIE on

his way home to MI. The Cracker Barrel did a lot of business. It's just across the parking lot from the Clarion and a five minute walk for lunch or dinner. A good breakfast buffet was provided by the hotel.

The N4CD mobile headed out Sunday with many others. The weather was good – clear and nice temps. It would be over 90 in TX for the next few days. As usual, I headed directly back toward home. Even the interstate counties would be new Double Diamond Counties. Most of the time, I usually just stay on cw, but with K5GE and N8KIE on the road and good for the DD contacts, I had to spend a lot of time listening to more noise on 7188. CW frequencies are less noisy – narrow bandwidth. Not much to report – half a dozen mobiles on the road – AB7NK/K7SEN, K8ZZ, N8KIE, KB0BA/N0XYL - Joe N5UZW and others were doing the NC on 40M. The new MARAC sponsored net was up and running on 14.328 most of the day. Ron, N5MLP was net control there.

Ed, K8ZZ, had to head to TX for urgent family business in a few days so he headed west rather than north. He mentioned his wife, Kate, had accepted a job in KS, so you may be hearing a lot more of him out that way in the future!

Not much to report. Did about 350 miles of the 650 or so to home, and decided to call it quits in Saline AR in mid afternoon. It's a 'one day trip' if you have to make it in one day – otherwise, now I take 1 1/2 days. There's a convenient Super 8 in Bryant OK - \$55 including tax. Cracker Barrel nearby as well as other chain places.

Next morning the N4CD mobile was on the road by 8am and in the driveway at 1pm where it was 94 degrees. Those cooler days in TN were nice.

It was a good get-together. Ron, KA3DRO mentioned 54 folks in attendance. The Clarion was nice – everything worked – and the lady at the front desk made sure of it. [Well, other than their business computers which were horrendously useless due to malware on them. Useless!] We missed not having the atrium Sat and Sunday but that is the way it happened. Lots of meet and greet and yakking went on regardless.

Who knows when and if they'll be a future 3M get together. The National next year may be just west of here in Memphis, TX.

Trip was 1622 miles.

Iowa QSO Party

The mobiles were out and running. Jon, W0ZQ was in the northern parts. K0PC was also up north. Bill, NU0Q headed across the bottom part of IA. Bob, W0BH, was in the south half. Three QSO Parties were going on at the same time: IA, NY, SD. Lots of IA counties were on the air CW. Spots were flying left and right – but only a few were spotting.

From TX, 40M turned pretty bad at the start with 'poor propagation' on that band. 20M worked well for the top half of IA and occasionally shortened up to work the south half. It was tough at times and around noon, IA just disappeared for a while – the whole state. Still had fun. Propagation could have been better from TX

From the 3830 contest reflector:

W0ZQ mobile 536 cw

It was a beautiful day to be roving in Iowa. The day started with the first hard frost of the year with 28 degrees. However it was sunny all day long with the temperature rebounding into the mid 50's. I did most of my operating in a light sweat shirt.

Regarding operating, I did run 20 and 40m from each county. Around 2:00 pm I called CQ a bit on 15m with a few takers, but 15m just isn't a money band from the Midwest like it is for those further south or on the left coast. Also, I worked very few Iowa stations made more Q's with my fellow out of state mobiles than I did with native Iowa stations, and those were very few. While the ongoing NYQP created some confusion it seemed most Op's handled the dual contests well.

Overall, it was a good dose of RF and a great day to be playing radio. A tip of the hat to the OARC for sponsoring this fun event. 73, Jon

K0PC mobile 642 cw qso

A beautiful fall day in Iowa. I had planned on going to Iowa alone this year but my trusty driver John, W9DND, decided to come along. We activated 19 counties in northwest Iowa and came pretty close to being on schedule all day. I always like to include Webster county where I was born and raised in the route.

This was an all CW operation mostly on 40 & 20 M with jumps to 15M on request. Propagation was good and everything worked well until the last half hour of the contest. Then N1MM froze up twice and I had to reboot the computer to get it going each time. I don't understand what happened but I'll certainly have to look into it.

All in all a very good day. Thanks to all of those who followed us around and thanks to the Ottumwa ARC for sponsoring the IA QSO Party.

73,
Pat KØPC

N6MU - fixed - CA 110cw 42 ssb mults 67

Thank goodness for the four mobiles. I made 93% of my Qs with them. I only had 10 Qs with fixed IA stations!

Top mobile for me was W0BH with 80 Qs followed by K0PC(31), W0ZQ(20) and NU0Q(11).

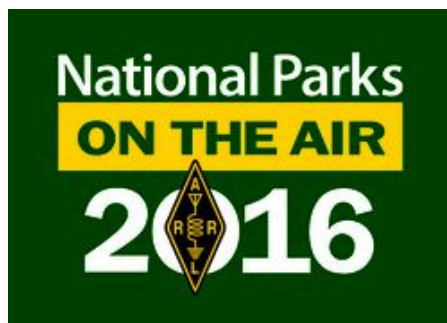
15 was open all day. Lots of Saturday fun. 73...

ARRL – National Parks on the Air

In 2016, the National Park Service ([NPS](#)) will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and radio amateurs will be able to help mark the occasion with the ARRL National Parks on the Air ([NPOTA](#)) event. The event kicks off at 0000 UTC on January 1, 2016.

"As ARRL just celebrated our own Centennial, and Amateur Radio is often enjoyed in the great outdoors, it seemed fitting to devise a program to help NPS celebrate their own 100th birthday," said ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. NPOTA will run throughout 2016, with activity promoted and encouraged from each of the more than 430 official NPS administrative units and affiliated areas across the US. This includes all 59 National Parks as well as National Battlefields, Historic Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and other units.

The program will have two participation tracks -- Chasers and Activators. Chasers will simply attempt to make contact with operators in as many of the NPS units as possible. Activators will attempt to activate as many of the units as possible. NPOTA participants may serve in both roles. Chaser and Activator totals will be tracked via an online [Leader Board](#) based on LoTW data, just as was done during the Centennial QSO Party. Access the NPOTA Leader Board directly at <http://npota.arrl.org>.



Modeled after the Mixed DXCC award, only one contact with any given NPS unit will be required, and no tally will be kept of NPS units based on bands or modes. NPOTA will be administered entirely through Logbook of The World ([LoTW](#)). No paper logs or QSLs will be accepted for NPOTA credit. Each NPS unit will be added to LoTW as a "location."

Chaser Award and Activator Award certificates will be available to any radio amateur who has at least one confirmed contact with an NPS unit or who activates at least one unit, respectively. A station's total number of confirmed or activated units will be printed on the certificate. The National Parks Honor Roll certificate will be available to any station confirming contact with at least 75 percent of the 59 National Parks *activated* in 2016.

While there is no formal partnership between NPS and ARRL for this event, the League has been in discussions with the NPS over the past year, and the National Park Service is aware that increased Amateur Radio activity in their parks is likely during 2016.

The NPOTA will use the official [list](#) of NPS Administrative Units and Affiliated Areas as defined and maintained by NPS. [Complete details](#) on National Parks on the Air are available on the ARRL website.

Looks like folks who like to go mobile, go to national parks, make lots of contacts – might enjoy this. However, to make anyone happy with a contact, you must upload your log to LoTW. Otherwise, it won't count. Same if you work them from home or wherever.

New York QSO Party

There were a few mobiles running around. I occasionally heard WJ2O but he steadfastly didn't hear me. Lots of fixed stations to work, some in rarer counties, including Livingston, Nassau, Suffolk. NT2A, Gene, kept RICHmond off the needs list, and Jerry NG2T,(Fulton) and Charlie, N2JNE(Ulster) were on. Heard N2JJ, Jim, in Saratoga, a few times. Paul, WB2ABD, Erie, was also on for hours. Lots of counties were not heard in TX – half of the state – on cw. More action was focused, as usual, on NY stations working other NY stations on 40 and 80m. One cw mobile ran only on 40M. Dang hard to work them from TX that way!

From the 3830 contest reflector:

KF2MR mobile - (8 QSO on 40M, 1 on 6m, 1 on 10m, 3 on 2m, 2 on 432 - total Q's 25)

My intent was to support Technician Class and VHF/UHF operators. I found two. While this was an interesting experiment, its not one that I will repeat again any time soon. Due to weather and lack of local interest in 10m and above, I decided to skip Ontario Co. It was interesting to work some DX on 10m PSK31. Could have worked lots more, but was looking for NY stations (a stretch on 10m, I know). Thanks to RDXA for sponsoring the NYQP and thanks to all who slowed down on CW for me! Looking forward to a more traditional approach next year.

N2CU mobile - 322 cw 123 ssb

I activated 7 counties; CHE, ONT, SCU, SEN, STE, TIO and TOM. Less than 100 QSOs in each county, which is way less than expected, but it seems quite a few fixed stations NEVER went looking for mobiles. That may change my plans for next year. Going mobile is a big time and money investment and the return should have been better. Oh well.

Worked 44 NY counties and 33 States and Provinces. There was a noticeable lack of high band activity. Conditions were not good but stations I worked on 20 and 15 had good signals. We need to encourage more high band activity to draw in mid-west and left-coast operators. Missed some QP regulars like N4PN and OM2VL, among others.

Thanks to QSO leaders WA3HAE (14), K2SSS (9), WB2ABD, W1DWA, NT2A, K2CYE (8), N2JJ, VA3ATT, W2EG (6), K1KX, K2QO, N2LQ, N3RN, W1WBB, W2GN, W2RDX, W2TZ (5) and several others with multiple QSOs that kept me from throwing in the towel.

Let's hope for better turnout next year.

73,
Tom N2CU

W2PV mobile (operators KX1A and N3IE) - 448 ccw qso

fun contest saw some really nice foliage and drove thru several snow squalls while putting some of the rarer counties on for this one.

K0BAK mobile 5 cw 229 ssb

Had fun as mobile, activated NEW, BRX, WES, PUT, ROC, ORA, SUL, DEL; missed BRM. "High" power was only 400w. Operated rover-style, only at

one stop per county. Wasted lots of time getting to the top of Bear Mtn, there was a traffic jam of leap peepers. Quite a few PA stations, many of whom I contacted in the PA QP. Last operating location was a deep valley in DEL, no lights anywhere, beautiful sky filled with stars. Next year maybe will operate from NYC-area counties only and head home the same night (to Philly burbs) to avoid needing hotel. Hey organizers, how about something for mobiles activating counties with a minimum number of contacts (10), like bonus points or the use of the activated county as a multiplier? (most QPs in the region do this) Thanks to the organizers for all your work, and thanks to all the participants for making a fun day.

W2HRY mobile – SSB 92 contacts

My very first individual contest. My only other HF Operation has been at two Consecutive Field Days. I had lots of fun and learned quite a bit. Operating Mobile was a challenge (obviously not while driving). Didn't visit all the counties I wanted to, (3 out of 5) but the bands were getting pretty tough by 8:30 pm with only Long Range QSO's happening from a mobile- Wanted to get more counties in the state..Probably my lack of experience contributed- Still had fun!! .73's W2HRY

WN4AFP 83 cw 3 ssb 36 mults

WOW! 20m was a pipeline from SC to NY and perfect for my QRP adventure. Conditions were solid on 40m, but it was always an uphill battle. The NYPQ offered solid mobiles and a never ending supply of fixed stations. Special thanks to KV2X/m, N2CU/m, W2PV/m and WJ2O/m for all the Qs and counties. Last night I was dreaming in CW... hearing the endless CQs of K2SSS, K2DB, W2EG, W2XL, K2NPN, W2GR, NT2A, W2RR, K2NV, K2CYE, K4RUM and W2SO. Near the end I ran out of CW Qs, so went to 40m phone to pick up a few more multipliers. Thanks NYQP for putting on a great QP!

73s Dave WN4AFP

WB2ABD fixed NY - 355 cw qso

10ft by 1ft dead oak branch brought down half the 80m inv vee the night before ... high bands seemed stale altho sigs were good for what was worked. In the process of changing vehicles, so no mobiling this year ... sounds like this end of the state was pretty well covered, although 3 of the 15 missing counties in my log (CHA CAT ALL) are all out my back yard.

KN4Y - fixed - FL - 15 cw 7 counties

Bounced from 10-meter CW contest to New York QSO Party, worked who I heard, conditions not the best.

Illinois QSO Party

There was lots of activity this year. IL has some interesting 'rules' that allow you to go on expeditions to 3 and 4 way county lines. As Terry, WQ7A, noted, some of the 4 way 'lines' have counties that don't actually meet at a single point. One, for example, shows the lines being offset slightly.....by hundreds of feet. (In PA, if you are within 3 miles of a county line, you can 'run the line' from a rover station). AR is about the same – some stations ran very wet lines, where the counties meet out in a lake or bayou - hundreds of feet from land. Oh well.....you take what you get.

There was lots of activity. From TX, only the 'top part' of 20M worked from here – and of course, 40M was no good in the day at that distance. Later I got to work mobiles in the south half on 40M. Still need some in IL after this one.

from the 3830 contest reflector:

AD4EB mobile 1152 cw qso

This was our second mobile run in the ILQP, and everything went much better this year until the very end. Last year we drove from southern Illinois northward, much if it on gravel country roads, and I had a hard time keeping in my seat not to mention trying to type. This year we started in central Illinois, and worked our way to the bottom of the state almost entirely on highways and paved roads. This really improved our score, not to mention much more pleasant for both of us.

The QSO count was way up from 891 last year to 1152. I ran just about the entire time, perhaps a little more S&P would have gained me a few more IL multipliers. Best 60 minutes was 199 QSOs, a new QSO party record for me.

A rather unbelievable event happened with our trusty 2000 Montana van (248k miles). As we were about 2 miles from our home in Tennessee, we heard an awful crunching noise in the front of the vehicle as we turned off the interstate. But it still drove fine. Then as we started to make the left turn into our driveway, it happened again and ball bearings fell out from the front left CV transmission. We had to push the van the final 10 feet into the driveway. Why this did not happen during the 350 mile route or the 3 hour journey home is just amazing. We were so fortunate, and the repair cost will only be \$275.

Melody and I both really enjoyed this contest. The weather was perfect, and the participation was great. Thanks to everyone who worked us, and especially to Jim, N9JF, who really helps make this contest such a success. And oh yes, the biggest thanks to my wife and driver/navigator Melody, you were great as always!

73 - Jim (AD4EB) and Melody (KI4HVY)

N4PN - fixed - GA 161 cw 132 ssb 92 counties

What a great job....sure all the counties were on...missed a couple that

I heard...lots of mobiles moving in a hurry....

Special thanks to N9JF, AD4EB, KJ9C, W9MSE, N9FN, K0ATC, K9JX, K9DXA, N9XHU and all the others.

Thanks to the sponsors....Know N9JF keeps the ball rolling..

73, Paul, N4PN

KN4Y - fixed - FL 99 cw qso 51 counties

I did the bouncing key routine, bounced back and forth from ten meter contest to 20,40,80-meter contest. Weather cooling down, warm shack, what can be better?

South Dakota QSO Party

The mobile was K7RE - running through counties. That was it. I'm not even sure there was a fixed station on for this. Without Brian, it would have been a zero.

I picked up some new counties – and the only comments on the 3830 contest reflector noted contacts with K7RE/M.

Thank you Brian for 'being the QSO Party'.

10-10 Fall CW Contest

The 10-10 contests are sponsored by the 10-10 Association but you are free to join in. Awards only go to 10-10 members and no one reports the scores to the 3830 contest

reflector. Last year I worked a few stations. This year I heard not a single station on 10m the whole contest (checked every now and then). Usually Ed, KN4Y and one loud station in SC pop through sometime. Nope.

I contacted our big 10m guy, Ed, KN4Y for a report:

KN4Y: “Nothing to write home about. I made 42 QSO's in the 10-10 Fall CW QSO party. I worked 11 with a ten number. 12 were USA the remainder were DX. Germany was having a contest and some of them worked me. On Sunday I jumped back and forth with the ILQP. The 10-10 Sprint was a bummer, only 7 QSO's and 3 with a ten ten number. Weather cooled down so did not mind being unproductive in the shack. Stateside : CA, AZ and OR.

Ed KN4Y

Awards Issued

USCA #1252	Dwight, KM4FO	Oct 15, 2015
USCA #1253	Gary, W4IHI	Oct 22, 2015
Bingo #367	Jim, WY8I	9.28.15,
Bingo II #98	Gene K5GE	9.19.15,
3rd Time #248	Kerry, W4SIG	10.8.15,
7th Time #24	Dave, W4YDY	10.6.15,
5-Star #75	Lowell, KB0BA	10.19.15,

Events for County Hunters

The QSO Party season is pretty much over for the year with one remaining - KY. Hope you had a good season! Don't forget KY. Let's hope for a mobile or two!

Now we have a few good contests – both on cw and SSB to round out the year. There are a few DX contests to avoid as well. 10M and 160M coming up in December.

Nov 7 2100 z to 0300

1.8-28

ARRL Sweepstakes, CW

Serial, precedence, your call sign, check, section

www.arrl.org/sweepstakes

1Nov 14 1400 to Nov 15 0200

1.8-50

Kentucky QSO Party

CW Ph Dig

RS(T), county or SPC

www.wkdx.com/mainsite

Nov 21 2100 to Nov 23 0300

1.8-28

ARRL Sweepstakes, SSB

Serial, precedence, your call sign, check, section

www.arrl.org/sweepstakes

Keep in mind that MANY operators in Sweepstakes operate from 'guest locations' with their call signs and may or may not be in their 'home' county listed on QRZ or other databases!

That's all folks
10/25/2015