County Hunter News

February 1, 2009
Volume 5, Issue 2

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

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

The County Hunter News will attempt to 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.

County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and **7056.5**, with activity nights on 3556.5 on Tuesday evenings around 8-9pm Eastern Time. Also, with low sunspot activity, most of the SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.915.5, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18135 or 18.132.5 for occasional 17M SSB runs.

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

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

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

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

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

The CW net procedure is written up at:
http://www.wd3p.net/ch/netproc/netproc.htm

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

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) **Mobile Activity in January**

Ah – a new year, but not much change in propagation yet noted. Winter continues to pound the northern states. Blizzards, 20 and 30 below zero. Not much is happening mobile wise up north with storm after storm. There have been floods in ID and WA after record snows occurred. Even places like IL had temps down to -25 and highs of -5. You don't find many county hunters out and about in those temps, and for good reasons – no fun being stranded on a rural road in blowing snow and life threatening temps.

Yet, January started out nicely with some mobile activity. Most of it was on 40M – CW and SSB, with a bit on 30M CW, and very flakey 20M CW and SSB conditions.

Cliff, K6JN, and Nelda, W6XJN trekked from CA to FL once again.

Sheila, KI4GKA, and Rick, KG4NNK are a new mobile team, and ran KY for the folks on two weekends.

Butch, WY0A, made a run down to OKLA to get the last county WBOW for Billy, KD5YUK, in Cherokee, OK. Mission accomplished on the friendly 40M SSB net.

Mark, KO1U, ran in MA and NH getting Cheshire for AE3Z, one of the last 5 that Don needed.

Jack, N7ID, was out and about a few times in ID and UT (20M SSB only) Larry, N2OCW was up in PA putting out counties.

Jim, W4HSA,was out and about on CW many days during the month, with a trip south, too. Later, he headed up to DC for the 'big event' on the mall.

Terry, WQ7A, headed over to San Juan, WA, one of the 'most needed'. He made another trip down to Gray's Harbor, Pacific and Wahkiakum, WA, to take that off the KM9X most needed list.

Dan, KM9X, and Judy, KB9MGI, made a trip to KY to run a bunch one Sunday. That made Leo, WY7LL, and others happy. Dan noted on the forum: " 500 MILES, SNOWED about all the way down there and back but no real problems."

N4XML was busy running more counties in GA on SSB and PSK31.

W0GXQ, Jerry, took trip in ND in the winter – more later. It was cold there – but not -40 like before. It was 70 degrees warmer at about 29-30 degrees and wind. Somehow, 30F still sounds cold!

KB0BA and N0XYL headed down through OK into TX working their way south. Jack, WD4OIN was out and about in NC. Jim, K0ARS was active on 20CW.

2) Texas Mini

The Texas Mini is Feb 12 to Feb 15th in Weslaco, TX. You can come early, leave late and enjoy the south TX weather. See the marac.org site for the registration form. Any questions get in touch with WB9NUL, Joyce.

Temperature is typically in the 60s and maybe will be 70s. Bring your short sleeve shirts, shorts, and escape from the wicked winter weather for a break. Fishing in the gulf is a possibility. Bring your passport if you are headed to Mexico. You might even bring your bathing suit – it could be 80 degrees then, although the pool may be chilly or not ready for swimming just yet.

3) New County Hunters – NI7F and KI4GKA

Some new calls on the CHNet – Richard, NI7F from Provo, UT and KI4GKA, Sheila, who runs with KG4NNK, Rick (YL/OM team).

NI7F, active on both CW and SSB, runs a giant 40-10M beam putting out a nice signal.

4) Cumulative Index – at the end of this issue is the cumulative index of pictures and articles in the County Hunter News. Check out your favorite county hunters to see if their pics have made it in the CHNews.

5) New Mexico QSO Party – Feb 7-8

"A fantastic ham radio event has been revived that will provide a weekend of fun and excitement to every ham that participates. The New Mexico QSO Party, an operating event designed for new and experienced hams alike, will take place on the first weekend of February (Feb 7-8, 2009).

The purpose of this HF and 6-meter event (both of which every ham has privileges to operate on) is to get on the airwaves and have a great time with hams from across New Mexico and the nation. Simply put, NM hams contact as many hams (inside and outside NM) as possible. Non-NM hams contact as many NM hams (only) as possible. And what good operating event can't be without awards?

Complete details, rules, and forms are available at the New Mexico QSO Party website:
http://www.swcp.com/~n5zgt/nmqsoparty

6) Awards - Entering the 21st Century?

Within the past few years, electronic on line awards confirmation has begun. The ARRL introduced Logbook of the World (LoTW) where you can now work toward ARRL awards and get credit for electronic confirmations. Most of the contesters now submit their logs to ARRL and CQ via electronic means for scoring.

Indeed, MARAC has accepted electronic copies of logs sent in from Logger or other programs containing the necessary award data for years and years.

This month, eQSL will be accepted for county credit toward the CQ USACA, and folks are able to work toward other CQ Awards and eQSL awards via logs submitted to eQSL.

Some might not be overjoyed at this happening, but for the teenagers growing up today, everything is done on line. They live in a computerized world of email, messaging, texting, and less paper and postal mail than most of the county hunters have done. President Obama would feel helpless without his Blackberry email/computer gadget.

If we want to encourage new blood into county hunting, perhaps it is time to look to getting the existing on line systems from ARRL and eQSL fully compatible with mobile county hunting operations. Ham Radio is already challenged to get new interested folks. Same for county hunting.

The expense of DXCC confirmations, and the several hundred to maybe a thousand dollars required to get USACA mail confirmations may be discouraging many from keeping up the interest in the awards program. The CQ decision has been made. MARAC already accepts electronic logs. The issue now seems to be to make sure that on-line eQSLs are as 'safe' and 'valid' as signed MRCs or QSL cards, and to make data entry/uploading, and the crediting of counties for county hunters as practical as possible.

The ARRL LoTW system is double blind. You will not receive credit unless your uploaded log matches that of the others you claim a QSO with, and you won't be able to see the others log info. Only when both logs match within a tolerance do you get credit.

With eQSL, there is no reciprocal matching of log data. You can manually 'accept' or 'reject' a request for an eQSL sent to you by someone. If you check your log and find it correct, you 'accept it' and a return eQSL is generated. Or you can upload your logs (great for contests) giving everyone an eQSL for the contacts – just like if you sent them out in the mail.

You can actually get eQSLs without having uploaded anything on the eQSL system. IF you are really active, you might already have eQSL awards waiting for you to claim. Or have dozens or more new counties toward your USACA from contest or other operations that you might not have been aware of.

This is likely to be a hot topic of discussion this year! Maybe someone can work up a program for the National Convention to explain it all. eQSL is working on making the system more mobile friendly. More later in the newsletter.

7) Large type size - 14

The County Hunter News is published with large size 14 print by request. Many County Hunters are reaching the 'senior discount age' and we try to make it easy to read without squinting. So that's why we use the big type size.

CQ Magazine – E QSL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 13, 2009
CQ to Accept eQSL Confirmations for Award Credit

(Hicksville, NY and Bedford, TX, January 13, 2009) - CQ magazine will accept contact confirmations made on the eQSL.cc electronic confirmation system for its operating awards effective immediately, CQ Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, and eQSL Founder and Webmaster Dave Morris, N5UP, announced today.

There will be certain limitations and procedural differences for different awards, at least to start. Only confirmations from "Authenticity Guaranteed" members of eQSL will be accepted, and in accordance with existing eQSL policy, a membership level of bronze or higher is required in order to participate in award programs via eQSL.

"This is the first time that CQ has formally accepted anything other than traditional paper QSL cards for its awards," said Moseson. "We have been working with Dave Morris and his team for several months to assure that the integrity of our awards programs will be protected and to create mechanisms to make it easy for both award applicants and award managers to use eQSL credits toward our awards. All of our award managers have been involved in this process and support this action."

"We want to express our great appreciation to Dave and his team for their willingness to do whatever was necessary to make this agreement possible," Moseson added. "It has been a pleasure working with them and we look forward to a long-lasting relationship."

"We are pleased to be adding CQ to the top of our list of amateur organizations that accept electronic QSLs," said Morris. "CQ has some of the most highly sought-after awards, and we have been working behind the scenes for years to create credit submission mechanisms that would ensure the integrity of their programs without introducing any additional labor for the award managers. We believe the electronic QSL can drastically reduce costs, and the award application mechanisms we have developed will provide for more efficient processing at reduced cost for both the applicant and the award manager."

Applicants for the CQ DX and CQ DX Field Awards must print out their eQSLs and submit them along with their traditional QSLs to a CQ checkpoint or to CQ DX Awards Manager Billy Williams, N4UF. eQSL has an automated process in place for applicants for CQ's Worked All Zones, WPX and USA-Counties awards. N5UP explains how that will work for the applicant:

"The applicant goes to the My Awards screen. He clicks on the particular award he wants to apply for. This brings up a list of the

credits our system 'thinks' he is entitled to. There are checkboxes that allow him to check which ones he wants to use, and we automatically pre-fill one credit per category so he doesn't have to do anything if he wants to take the defaults. At the bottom of the screen are two buttons: 'Submit to CQ' and 'Print Paper Application'."

The "submit" button will place all the selected QSOs into a file for the award manager to access, while the "print" button will generate a printed list to be submitted along with the traditional application. PLEASE NOTE that ALL applicants must send the award fee payment to the CQ Award Manager, regardless of how the application is submitted. Some CQ award managers are now accepting PayPal; see individual award web pages for details. All awards will continue to accept traditional QSLs as well as eQSLs. For the USA-Counties Award (USA-CA), applicants must note on their record books (or printouts) whether each county has been confirmed traditionally (with an "X" to the right of the entry) or electronically (with an "E" next to the entry).

For more information on eQSL, visit http://www.eQSL.cc

For more information on CQ awards, visit the awards page on the CQ website at http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com. Please note that the award rules posted on the website have not yet been updated to reflect the acceptance of eQSLs. This will be done as soon as possible, but the policy takes effect immediately.

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Ted, K1BV, posted on the forum:

1. Effective immediately, all CQ awards including USA-CA will accept QSO confirmations made on/through the EQSL system. (http://www.eQSL.cc).

2. What to do: follow the instructions as posted on EQSL. You will be able to create an electronic file of all of the contacts made with you by stations who include county data in their submission.

3. You can either send the file to me [SUBMIT TO CQ] or generate a printed listing for you to attach to a traditional paper application. [PRINT PAPER APPLICATION].

4. Send the appropriate fee and certification statements to me by regular mail. I accept PAYPAL payments made to my e-mail address.

5. If you send in the printed booklet or computer prepared listings with county data, make sure that if you claim any EQSL credits, you mark that line in the booklet "EQSL" or "E". That way, I will know where to check.

6. EQSL is entirely optional. For those of you who choose to use it, there will be a little learning curve. I'm satisfied that what is available there is secure, fairly easy to use, and has the potential to save a goodly sum in postage costs.

Ted Melinosky K1BV

USA-CA Custodian

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So far, E QSL does not have a good system for mobiles to enter their location. Currently, to work 'within' the system, you must establish an account for each location. However, that brings up the problem of each 'call' must be unique and the system will not recognize N4CD is the same as N4CD/m. They are working on it.

To be valid for E QSL awards, your QTH must be on the card as the operating location, and that cannot change on a single day. From their FAQ:

Q:"I operate mobile and need a way to register hundreds of different QTHes.

A: "At present, this is not easy. If you want your eQSLs to be valid for eAwards, you must set up a new account for each QTH. The quickest way of doing this is the My Accounts screen. Simply add a new attached account

and all QTH information will be copied over to the new account. Then modify what is different, and make sure to upload only the correct logs into each new account. We are working on a much better solution, so watch Site News if you are a County Hunter or other highly mobile station."

Currently, the eQSL systems will not track counties for the eQSL awards from mobiles if that data is entered in the comments section. CQ will accept the contacts if the mobile county is given in the comment section but you must track in separately.

Now some other questions come to mind.

What happens with count lines (2 counties)?

Do you get credit for your eAwards from all your different locations within the USA? For USACA, you can operate anywhere in the 50 states, and all contacts count. Same for DXCC, WPX…but not WAS! Will you get credit for counties regardless of your US QTH? If you have to set up different 'accounts' for each county, or the system tracks it this way, will it give you credit when you are out mobile?

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Dennis, KK7X noted:

The ADIF Standard needs to be modified to allow mobile operation. In the specs I find US Counties but nothing to show mobile or portable operations. Then we would need eQSL and the ARRL to update their programs to allow logging of mobile operations. This would not only benefit county hunters but all amateur radio operators who are working towards various awards through the ARRL, CQ and eQSL"

Logbook of the World Comments

Bill, KM1C, offered some insight on LoTW and counties on the K3IMC forum:

“Have read the full set of FAQs from the ARRL for LOTW. From what I could glean, there are provisions for mobiles/rovers to enter various operating locations to include counties and/or grid locators. HOWEVER, this process involves "parsing" the logs so that each location has a different ADIF file name that gets "signed" and submitted to LOTW.

Having run 320 Counties to date, this would mean the creation of 320 different ADIF files for submission. If I don't do this, but simply upload my whole KM1C log, any QSO matches with me would show my location only as Pamlico County, NC. For example, those who worked me in some of the hard Counties, like Nantucket or Dukes in MA, would get credit for a non-existent QSO with Pamlico, NC.

But wait, there's more! If I did parse my log and uploaded all those different files and used my KM1C callsign, those stations who worked me and uploaded their log identifying me as "KM1C/M" would not get a match, because of the "/M" appendage. And vice-versa, i.e., if I used "KM1C/M" and you used KM1C, once again, no match.

My electronic log (N3FJP) has over 23000 QSOs in in. I have noted mobile Counties I have run in the Notes portion of the file. This program allows a string search in the notes field, so I can come up with the operations from specific counties and create a separate ADIF file. If I were to do this, I believe I would use a naming convention of the State abbreviation followed by the county name, i.e., MANantucket, VTBennington, NCDare, NCPamlico.

However, I SERIOUSLY doubt I am up for all of this. I believe I would truly be dazed and confused before it was all over, not to mention that the output from me to LOTW would only be useful to you if you got my call sign correct.

Can I suggest, that if we really are going to try to use LOTW for CH purposes, that we use ONLY the mobile station's basic callsign? i.e., no "/M" appendage. BUT, you might have guessed, I am really struggling with this concept given the huge keyboard workload to make it all happen accurately. I would like to upload my whole log to LOTW, but if I don't parse out the counties, then a whole bunch of stations will get credit for NC and Pamlico, NC when I was really in another County in another State. I don't like an inaccuracy level to be in the thousands (8300 mobile QSOs to date.)

And, to add insult to injury, I have only one log entry per QSO when I run a County Line. Not sure if LOTW could handle a QSO showing a TWO Counties location. Arrrggghhhh. This feels like a nightmare. I'm going for another cup of coffee and out to the mailbox to see if there are any inbound MRCs. I love signing MRCs .... the end product of a successful mobile run, and I am truly happy to do it.

But confirming Counties via LOTW? For an active mobiler, I think it will be a nightmare .... it will take more time massaging the files on the computer than it took to drive "out there" and run the counties. And now we want to add eQSL on top of it? I don't think so .... Aaarrrggghhh, now I'm going to have to take a couple of Vicodin with that coffee, such a pain! (Hi!) And, remember, this angst is coming from that eternal brightness of contented mind and an always happy-go-lucky fellah. How are we going to solve this?

Any and all feedback appreciated, for or against. Does someone want to convince me to parse the log and do the LOTW upload? And, remember, I'm only a part-time mobiler. How about the real mobilers who run Counties in the thousands? How are they expected to handle this?

73 de Bill KM1C”

[Note de N4CD: To use LoTW, you must be a member of ARRL.]

On the Road with N4CD - I

Sunny! Warm! 80 Degrees! That was the forecast for Saturday, January 3, 2009 – and one should not look too hard for an excuse to go mobile and give out some counties in the winter months on a day like that - Even with a broken left wrist. Would you believe 84 degrees? (the previous record is 84 for the day – no Global Warming in effect here – just a tie). My car had sat for about 5 weeks after the last trip, with only a short trip once or twice a week to keep vital components lubricated and moving. 216,000 miles and counting. I'm not sure what I'm counting to, but with all the calamity in Detroit, it might not be the best time to be buying a new car. Maybe I'll set a new goal of 250,000 miles? Scottie, N4AAT, and Gene, W1TEE both had over 350,000 miles on their county hunting cars. Once you get over 200K miles on a car, the value has dropped so much, you might as well just keep driving it – you will have a hard time selling it for a decent price.

"For Sale: County Hunting car with high mileage – no city stop and go driving for the most part. Well maintained. Used only on long trips. Garage kept. Seldom driven in snow or ice. Been in all 48 continental US States. Only 217,000 miles. "

Gas prices were down to $1.34 at the cheapest stations on Saturday morning, so that wasn't a consideration. Heck, you could drive all day for $20. I noticed prices had jumped a dime a gallon by the time I got back Saturday night – as prices started to climb once again. We might as well take advantage of lower cost gas now! One never knows how long it will last.

I need a few in TX, but alas, didn't have a county hunting buddy to go get some of them. Maybe that will happen later in the month. If you take along a buddy (or YL) you can work them in the county for credit. So this would be a trip to give out counties to others. I didn't 'need' to run anything nearby for any award.

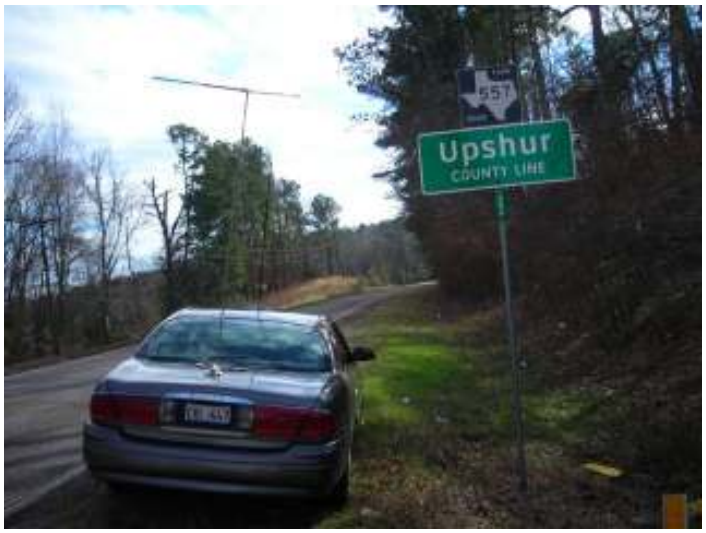
Leo, WY7LL, was down to 4 in TX to finish up TX for his USACA. In the past year, he'd driven miles and miles to give out the last remaining counties for other county hunters.

A few of his needs were ‘reworks’ but they really are the same as working them the first time if you haven’t managed to get a confirmation for one reason or the other, or had a busted contact. Conveniently, they all were within 100 miles of each other, and even more conveniently, an easy one day trip from my QTH. That would leave him with a handful spread all over the country.

After sitting at home for 2 weeks with a broken wrist, from slipping on ice on the sidewalk, and only driving around town a bit and one short weekend trip, I decided to see how it would be county hunting. I could always stop and run rather than trying to drive with the left hand in a cast, send cw and log with right hand, and keep the car on the road safely.

My antennas are on mag mounts – its easy to put them on with one good hand – getting them off is a bit trickier as it takes some pressure to pop them loose. I got the antennas on with no problem, but decided to leave off the 17m which sat on a big 4 magnet mount – and was always a challenge to get off even with two good hands! So it would be 40M SSB and 20/30/40 cw. There hasn’t been much excitement on 17M, unless you get ‘far away’ from the stations you want to work (1500 mile skip), and then only in the middle of the day as the band finally ‘wakes up’.

I headed east from Collin, TX, about sunrise time, over to the interstate, and then zipped down into through Titus into Camp, one of Leo’s needs. I stopped on SSB most of the time to run the county or county line – and did a few cw ‘on the run’. In the past, I’ve a tendency to do cw on the run, and stop for SSB as logging is tougher when you have to either remember 3-5 calls, then quick log ‘em, and pick up the mic again and make more QSOs. On cw, I can quickly move from key to log and back with minimal delay while driving. Turned out OK. There were enough places to stop, and the county lines could be run – lots of room to park and not much traffic on the back roads I selected. I also got to enjoy the nice weather, sitting there with the windows down, and nice breeze blowing through the car! This was going to be a laid back trip with no urgency – so I had time to wait to run.

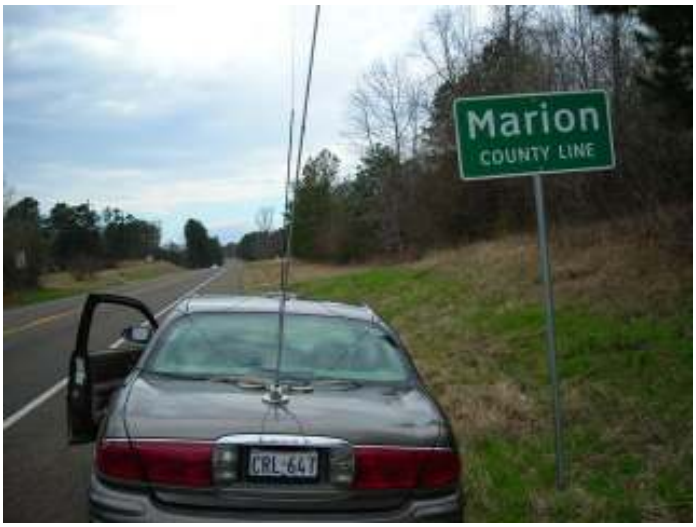


County Line Upshur/Camp TX

40M was open at 7am central time – it took a while for 30m to open and almost 2 hours before anything happened on 20M. KZ2P was apparently around on 20M SSB at 1500Z, but I didn't know he was there until about 9:30 when he got to be above the S "0" noise level. KM1C was good copy long before the SC station. I made two runs on 20M SSB and only worked a few stations – that before James showed up or became audible in Texas – just no SSB propagation other than 1 or 2 QSOs. Bands are just not in great shape. On one SSB run done off frequency, I had only worked 2 stations after 3-4 minutes even though spotted. No one could hear me on 20M.

Wow….an HS8 called me on 30cw!....not something you work everyday from the mobile. Also worked DL3DXX on 30M twice. The log was full of 40M contacts, both CW and SSB.

You can hit 4 counties in the SW corner of Camp area- Camp, then Upshur, and Marion, and Cass. Can also hit Morris in a few miles, too. Leo needed Camp, Upshur and Marion. That was 3 of his last 4. Cass and Marion are located between two main east-west interstates and don't get run that often. Same for Camp and Upshur, and Wood and Rains. Someone is always needing some of those counties for something.

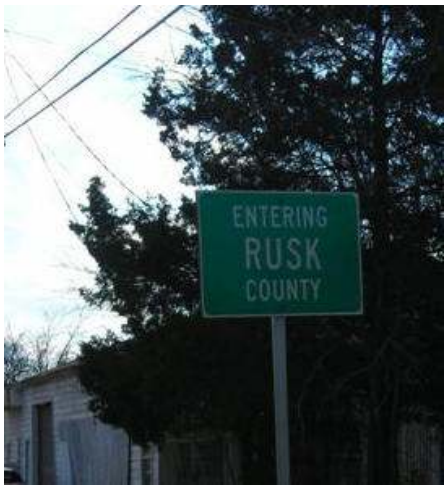


Marion, TX

Kirby, W8DCD, and others were helping out on 40M SSB, and runs were 15-25 QSOs per county – from KO1U in NH/MA to W4HSA/m in VA and NC, to WA7JHQ in NM to NM2L in GA, NX4W/m running in GA, KI4GKA/KG4NNK/m in KY, K8YJ/m in WV, and stations all over from PA to MN to WY, CO, NV, AZ, FL, NY, MI, MN. 40M good – broadcast at times makes it rough at times – it might even been all gone in a few months. Keep your fingers crossed, then hope that everyone else on the bands don't pile in below 7200 KHz.

Later in the day, there was some RTTY QRM from a RTTY contest on 40M. Too many contests, especially RTTY ones where they clobber the cw frequencies! Seems the EU have many RTTY contests for some reason. Our 40M cw frequency is in the middle of the EU 'data band'. Some day we may have to think about moving it down the band to get away from it if more and more folks get on data modes.

After getting Marion, that left only Rusk, TX for Leo, so it was down through Gregg (and lots of traffic jams and construction) to get to Rusk – where we connected for his last in TX. He was working me on 20, 30, and 40M – I guess to be 'really really sure' he was in the log – hi hi – as 3 of the 4 were 'reworks'.



Rusk, TX

There were lots more needed counties just to the south in TX – but I didn't want to make a long day of it. Heading south would add at least several hours by the time I got home – and I didn't want to push things past dark. The sun goes down fairly early this time of year. On Saturday night, the wind was going to swing from the warm south to the frigid north, with a low of 40 by morning, and highs of 40s for the next few days, maybe only 30s, and no temps anywhere near 70 for the next two weeks. Typical TX winter weather – you hold up your thumb. If the wind is blowing from the south – warm. Wind from north – cold. (yes, and Monday it got up to 33 degrees and freezing rain fell for a while - the rest of the day it was raining and drizzling).

Well, what can you say? Good weather and lots of activity on this first Saturday of the year. Butch, WY0A/m gave Billy, KD5YUK his last WBOW in Cherokee, OK on this nice day! KI4GKA, Sheila, and Rick, KG4NNK were out mobiling in KY, and Lloyd, NX4W, was 'putting out counties' in GA on 40M SSB and 30M PSK. Seth, N3MRA and N1SPX were giving them out. It was a good day for 40M. Cliff, K6JN, and Nelda, W6XJN, ran a few on 40M SSB, but they were in west TX and that is pushing good 40M distance to the 'sweet spot' of 40M activity in the Midwest/east US. They are headed east once again to FL.

Larry, W7IN, and Jack, N7ID were the only mobiles heard on 20M and they were out in ID. Karl, K4YT, needed one of the ones I ran on SSB, so I ran

on 14.320 but not many takers even in the middle of the day. Not many sunspots, but with good 40M propagation, the county hunters are doing fine. With 40 and 30, you can usually work a mobile on cw or SSB as long as you are not a county hunter stranded on the west coast or way up in New England. Even there, K1TKL, K6YK, KO1U, and AB7RW are in there on 30M and often 40M working mobiles in the mornings and afternoons on cw. Mark, KM6HB, is often on 20CW, too, and occasionally Dennis, N6PDB, will be in there.

Folks are closing in on awards. There aren't too many needs posted in TX, but maybe I can keep cleaning up what is posted in the next few months. With the mini coming up in Feb, many mobiles will be coming to TX and should clean up a lot of the remaining needs.

Ice, Ice Baby!

Despite dire warnings from global warming alarmists, Daily Tech Online reports global sea ice levels are now equivalent to those seen 29 years ago. Satellite data from the University of Illinois' Arctic Climate Research Center indicates the rate of global sea-ice increase in the last four months of the year was the fastest rate of change on record.

Meanwhile, former nuclear scientist and energy expert Michael Fox writes in the Hawaii Reporter that 2008 was "another grim year for the global warmers."

"2008 marked the tenth consecutive year of no global warming... the earth has been cooling for the last six years

source: FoxNews

W0GXQ trip Report - ND

“All day Saturday I tried to dodge the snow drifts on the highways. The one I couldn't avoid sent me into a side-skid - the only causality was an antenna guy line. Saturday evening on I-94 between Stark and Burleigh, it was a glaze of ice. I counted nine cars in the ditches (three overturned).

Sunday was much nicer because the wind had died down to about 10mph, so the plows were able to stay ahead of the bad drift areas. A lot of county lines were run due to the conditions; but I still managed to stay more or less on sked.

Clearwater MN was just too early in the morning for the folks who needed that one. The NA QSO Party SSB raised cane with the nets. Twenty was not good at all and in one attempt on forty, no one heard me trying to run the C/L of Mercer and Dunn. My signal on 40 SSB is not nearly as good as on 40 CW - I will have to figure that one out before the next trip.

Now to enter the 1,235 Q's into the log (62% were on 40m). Eighty CW was fun (126 Q's). Only eight Q's on 17/15/10 this trip. “

ARRL Nostalgia Issue

Did you see the January 2009 QST? In January, they have the annual Vintage Issue. So what did folks see this year?

How about a 1927 Regenerative Receiver, using the latest state of the art screened grid tube for an RF amp, and a triode regen detector, with vintage

parts? If you've read the CHNews, the circuit will look familiar. Remember the problems of having too much gain at one frequency? Look at how much shielding went into the construction to keep the rf at bay. It sure looks like lots of work went into building this design with original parts from A to Z.

That was followed by an article "When Radio Transmitters Were Machines" about alternators, passive frequency doublers, the SAQ alternator in Sweden that occasionally is activated on 17.2 KHz, etc. Golly, we covered most of that in the CHNews here not too long ago!

That was followed by an article on Resurrecting A Command Set by Jim, W8KGI. Later, in the same issue, Phil, AD5X, also had another article on the Command Sets.

Obama's Dream Postponed

In November, The New York Times asked a number of prominent energy experts to assess president-elect Barack Obama's chances of ending American dependence on imported oil. Vaclav Smil, the prolific environmental thinker at the University of Manitoba - he's written 25 books - was one of these experts. The only way that Mr. Obama could significantly advance this objective, he said, would be with the help "of a deep and lasting recession." Otherwise, he said, "there will be precious little of any rapid change." As for Mr. Obama's promise to enact a cap-and-trade regime to discourage the use of fossil fuels, "it will only further cripple America's industries."

"Energy systems are inherently inertial," Prof. Smil said. "Energy transitions take decades to accomplish. Anyone who expects Mr. Obama to transform the world will be disappointed [and] the degree of disappointment that must follow such naiveté will be phenomenal."

"Looking only at modern primary energies on a global scale," Prof. Smil says, "coal receded from 95 per cent of total energy supply in 1900 to 60 per cent in 1950 and to less than 24 per cent in 2000. But coal's importance

continues to rise in absolute terms and [has begun] to rise again in relative importance.

"Coal is relatively more important in 2008 (29 per cent of primary energy) than it was at the time of the first energy crisis in 1973 (27 per cent). In absolute terms, it now supplies twice as much energy as it did in 1973. The world has been returning to coal. Worldwide, the coal mined in the 20th century contained more energy than any other fuel, edging out oil by 5 per cent.

"The common perception is that the 19th century was dominated by coal, the 20th century by oil. This perception is wrong. In global terms, the 19th century was still part of the millennia-long wooden era and the 20th century was the coal century. And coal still generates 40 per cent of the world's electricity, 70 per cent of China's electricity and 50 per cent of India's electricity."

In anticipating energy transitions, Prof. Smil advises, count in decades, not in years. It took 50 years for the world to move from the advent of commercial oil to the stage where it supplied 10 per cent of global primary energy. It took another 25 years for oil to supply 25 per cent. The comparable periods for natural gas were 50 years and 40 years.

Alternative energies supply less than 5 per cent of their respective global markets. Non-conventional oil - the Alberta and Venezuelan oil sands combined - supplies less than 3 per cent of the world's crude oil and less than 1 per cent of its primary energy. Renewable energies (mostly biofuels and wind-generated electricity) supply 0.5 per cent of primary energy; wind, by itself, supplies only 1 per cent of global electricity.

"And now Al Gore is telling us," Prof. Smil says, "that the United States can completely repower its electricity generation in a single decade ... can produce 100 per cent of its electricity from renewable, carbon-free sources within 10 years." He does the math to show that such a transition would cost more than $4-trillion (U.S.) - and would still fail. It is physically impossible, he says, to do six decades of rebuilding in 10 years. Such romanticism, he says, is delusional**: "None of the promises for greatly accelerated energy transitions will be kept."**

"Our capacity to be eternally stupid is immense," he said in an interview a couple of years ago, "but our capacity to adapt and change and pull ourselves out of deep crisis situations is equally amazing. At any given time, the cards seem stacked this way or that. Right now, globally, the cards are stacked in a catastrophic way. We are now in this deep, deep pessimism. But these things never last forever." He advises patience."

Source: http://investorvillage.com/smbd.asp?mb=4288&mn=23143&pt=msg&mid=6463996

Meet KG4NNK/KI4GKA

Letter From Rick KG4NNK, dated January 11, 2009

Shelia (KI4GKA) obtained her license in December 2008 after sitting on the sidelines, for several years, watching Rick (KG4NNK) chase counties. Rick began the county hunting odyssey with Matt, W0NAC/M on 9-22-01 – Arkansas County, Arkansas. Graduate school pummeled my free time causing only 39 QSO's to be made in 2006 and 2007. My Return to Ham Radio in May 2008 was uplifting yet incomplete until Shelia took her General Class exam and the KI4GKA/KG4NNK county hunting team was formed.

Shelia is the team leader for our county hunting adventures. She plots our routes, decides the counties we'll hit, and takes the lead on the radio. It is her desire to run all of Kentucky's 120 counties in 2009. We ran our first 10 counties on January 3rd: Woodford, Fayette, Franklin, Owen, Gallatin, Carroll, Trimble, Henry, Oldham, and Shelby.

Now for the point of contention – KI4GKA has challenged KG4NNK to race for the USA-CA. As of January 2009, KG4NNK has 2,275 counties confirmed. On the other hand, KI4GKA made her first county QSO with Bill, K2HVN/M on 12-14-08 – Johnston County, NC. She has a mountain to climb but this is truly KG4NNK's race to lose. Case in point, on January 3rd, 2008 the team made 165 contacts and gave out 10 Kentucky counties. KG4NNK did not receive many new counties from that run. On the other hand, Shelia hit the jackpot! She may close the gap at a frightful pace.

Bob, thanks for inquiring about the KI4GKA/KG4NNK team. It has always been a pleasure to hunt you on the Net. If I'm not mistaken, you were involved with the "Whole Ball of Wax" CW contact I made on March 24, 2004. That was a fun QSO!

Attached is a photograph of KI4GKA and KG4NNK – Shelia and Rick - - **Team Schad**.

73's
Rick - KG4NNK

Rick KG4NNK Sheila KE4GKA

From the forum later:

"We will try to run 10 KY counties a month until we complete all 120.

On January 3rd we ran: Woodford, Fayette, Franklin, Owen, Gallatin, Carroll, Trimble, Henry, Oldham, and Shelby.

On January 18th we ran: Bourbon, Nicholas, Fleming, Robertson, Bracken, Mason, Pendleton, Harrison, and Scott. That gives us 19 counties for January. If you look at the county map of KY you will see that we ran the counties directly northwest and northeast of our home county - Fayette.

Shelia will plot our route and identify the next targeted counties at the end of the month. She will post our planned trip on the website several days in advance."

The Truth behind Global Warming

Green Comes Clean

"In a letter addressed to President-elect Obama and his wife, Michelle, James Hansen, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, makes an appeal for a carbon tax, ostensibly as a means for cutting emissions of carbon dioxide, a gas that's allegedly causing a dangerous greenhouse effect and warming trend.

Hansen suggests that the tax be levied "at the well-head or port of entry" from where it "will then appropriately affect all products and activities that use fossil fuels."

This tax will have "near-term, mid-term, and long-term" effects on "lifestyle choices," Hansen acknowledges. But he seems unconcerned about how such coercion will rearrange the lives and manage the behavior of a people who should be free of state coercion.

Acting either out of boldness or desperation, Hansen goes on to reveal the environmentalist left's deeper ambition: a collectivist redistribution of wealth. He recommends that the carbon tax be returned to the public in "equal shares on a per capita basis."

That means wealthier Americans whose activities emit more CO2 will pay more in carbon taxes than they get back, while those who earn less will receive more in refunds than they will lose through taxes.

"A person reducing his carbon footprint more than average makes money," explains Hansen, while "a person with large cars and a big house will pay a tax much higher than the dividend."

Hansen and his ilk never seem to question whether the government should be involved in behavior modification. They believe so zealously in their cause — establishing an egalitarian society where conspicuous consumption is limited to the few who make the rules — that they have no misgivings about using the police power of the federal and state governments to beat society into shape.

Nor do they question their hunch — the idea doesn't even rise to the level of theory — that CO2 emissions are causing climate change even as there are ample reasons to doubt it.

That's what happens, though, when a first-rate mind latches onto a third-rate assumption."

Source: IBD - 1-2-09

W0BH – 50 State Rover and W.A.S.

If you are an ARRL member, and get QST, you likely have seen the article in Feb 2009 issue about W0BH's trek to give one Nelson, N0LRA, contacts from each of the 50 US States. ARRL thinks it is the first issued Worked All States with contacts by one rover station.

Bob, W0BH/m

Nelson, N0RLA, worked Bob, W0BH/r, in all 50 states and got the QSL cards, then filed with ARRL for WAS for this. It all started about 16 years ago, when Bob was WA7KSL. He and his wife both teach, and have the summers off. He started the quest in 1993, and finished in 2004. The first state was AR, and the last was HI. The first trip was in his '69 Ford pickup, using a TS-440S and Hustler antenna. Many of the contacts were made while Bob and wife camped. That allowed them to put up portable dipoles with somewhat better signals. For Alaska, they took the ferry to Ketchikan, and operated portable in the front yard of a B&B. The last QSO for Hawaii was also made with a portable set up at a B&B in Maui.

For those who chase counties and get in QSO parties, W0BH made 4,185 Qs during the 2008 Oklahoma, Missouri, Nebraska and Texas QSO Parties operating as W0BH/m. That's about the only time you'll catch him giving out counties.

Additional pics are in QST and are at the following URL, along with a description of the portable antenna he used.

http://www.arrl.org/files/qst-binaries/HarderWebContent.pdf

Quite possibly, several have worked the same mobile in all 50 states. MARAC has an award for working the same mobile in various numbers of states/counties – it's the King of the Road Award. For states, the requirement is:

"**King of the Road - Multi-State Award**

A certificate is awarded for making **Valid Contacts** with the same mobile operator in fifteen (15) different states. The certificate is upgraded with MARAC Red, Blue, and Gold seals are awarded for making **Valid Contacts** with the same mobile in 25, 35, or 45 different states.

The MARAC Mobile Plaque is awarded for making contacts with the same mobile in 48 or more States."

Not quite the same as ARRL, does not have to be confirmed, , and for MARAC awards, you don't have to be within 75 miles of the same QTH as with ARRL WAS awards. The max number of states for this MARAC award is only 48. I guess they didn't figure on mobiles running in AK and HI! They ought to have a special plaque for all 50 states, no?

MARAC also offers a certificate for working the same mobile in various numbers of counties – up to all 3077. That, if 3077, would automatically qualify for the 48 state award, too.

"**King of the Road - Multi-County Award**

A certificate is issued for making contacts with the same mobile operator in 100 different counties. MARAC Red, Blue, and Gold seals are awarded for making contacts with the same mobile operator in 250, 500, and 1000 different counties respectively.

The MARAC Mobile Plaque is awarded for making contacts with the same mobile operator in 1500, 2000, 2500, or 3000 different counties.

A MARAC Special Plaque is awarded for making contacts with the same mobile in **All USA Counties**."

You've got to be really good to catch the same mobile in every county! Now that would be a challenge. Is anyone even close?

Speedy Transistors

YORKTOWN HEIGHTS, NY—Dec 19, 2008 — IBM (NYSE:IBM - News) Researchers today announced that they demonstrated the operation of graphene field-effect transistors at GHz frequencies, and achieved the highest frequencies reported so far using this novel non-silicon electronic material.

This accomplishment is an important milestone for the Carbon Electronics for RF Applications (CERA) program sponsored by DARPA, as part of the effort to develop the next-generation of communication devices.

Graphene is a special form of graphite, consisting of a single layer of carbon atoms packed in honeycomb lattice, similar to an atomic scale chicken wire. Graphene has attracted immense worldwide attention and activities because its unusual electronic properties may eventually lead to vastly faster transistors than any transistors achieved so far.

The operation speed of a transistor is determined by the size of the device and the speed at which electrons travel. The size dependence was one of the driving forces to pursue ever-shrinking Si transistors in semiconductor industries. A key advantage of graphene lies in the very high electron speed with which electrons propagate in it, essential for achieving high-speed, high-performance transistors.

Now, IBM scientists have fabricated nanoscale graphene field-effect transistors and demonstrated the operation of graphene transistors at the GHz frequency range. More importantly, the scaling behavior, i.e. the size dependence of the performance of the graphene transistors was established for the first time. The team found that the operation frequency increases with diminishing device dimension and achieved a cut-off frequency of 26 GHz for graphene transistors with a gate length of 150 nm, the highest frequency obtained for graphene so far.

IBM researchers expect that by improving the gate dielectric materials, the performance of these graphene transistors could be further enhanced. They

expect that THz graphene transistors could be achieved in an optimized graphene transistor with a gate length of 50 nanometers. In the next phase, the IBM researchers also plan to pursue RF circuits based on these high-performance transistors.

Graphene is a single layer of carbon atoms densely packed in a honeycomb crystalline lattice configuration--like chicken wire on an atomic scale. The advantages of this configuration are its high current-carrying capacity, excellent thermal conductivity and low-voltage operational potential.

The KM9X "Most Needed List"

(From the K3IMC Forum)

MOST WANTED COUNTIES

From research of the K3IMC Special Needs website:

9 people are showing needs: Teton, ID; Pawnee, NE; Wheeler, OR and Wasatch, UT

10 needs listed are Lewis, ID; Franklin, ME; Curry, OR and Wahkiakum, WA

The second most wanted counties with **11** each are: Franklin, ID; Douglas, WA and Jefferson, WA

And the MOST WANTED COUNTIES to start off 2009 are:

12 needs each shown : Boise, ID and San Juan, WA

Here is a breakdown of states that have more than 5 needs for a county. (If your state does not appear, someone is doing some good work to keep those counties ran! Hope it is you!

So, here are target areas for those wanting to run something!

State County Need total

AK: 2nd District - 7

AR: Pike - 6

CA: Sierra - 8

CO: Routt - 8 Rio Blanco - 8

IA: Guthrie - 6

ID: Adams - 6 Boise - 12 Franklin - 11 Gem - 8 Idaho - 6

Lemhi - 7 Lewis - 10 Teton 9 Valley 7

KS: Sheridan - 6

MA: Berkshire - 7 Dukes - 7

ME: Aroostook - 7 Franklin - 10

MI: Oceana - 6

NE: Grant - 6 Johnson - 6 Pawnee - 9

NM: Sierra - 6

NY: Bronx - 7 Columbia - 7 Essex - 6 Hamilton - 6 Oswego - 6

Schoharie - 7 Sullivan - 6

OH: Geauga - 6 Hardin - 6 Meigs - 6 Monroe - 6 Morgan - 8

OR: Crook- 7 Clatsop- 8 Curry- 10 Grant-6 Harney - 7 Jefferson - 7

Linn -7 Polk - 6 Sherman - 6 Wallowa- 6 Wheeler - 9

PA: Potter - 7 Sullivan - 7

TX: Anderson - 6

UT: Toole - 8 Wasatch - 9 Wayne - 6

VA: Charles City - 6 Amelia - 6 Middlesex -8 Northampton - 7

Westmoreland 6

VT: Lamoille -6

WA: Douglas-11 Ferry -6 Island -7 Jefferson - 11 Pend Orielle - 6

San Juan - 12 Stevens - 6 Wahkiakum - 10

Yakima -6

WV: Pendleton - 7

NOTE: W9GUY needs YAKIMA WA for WBOW - MG)

AB4YZ needs TETON, MT for WBOW Bingo 2

GENTLMEN AND LADIES, START YOUR ENGINES!"

de KM9X

Peak Oil Update

Another list of 'top 10 stories' in 2008

The Tom Whipple Top 10 Peak-Oil-Related Stories of 2008

1. The Global Recession

The impact that declining world oil production will have during the coming year, and possibly longer, is now inextricably intertwined with the course of the economic recession that is sweeping the world. During 2008 the world's stock markets lost some $30 trillion in investor equity. Nearly every major government was forced to begin massive bailouts of financial institutions and many have started to support failing businesses. The end is not in sight.

While many peak oil observers long anticipated that faltering world oil production would lead to much higher oil prices and eventually to an associated economic meltdown, the setbacks of the last year have complicated the situation. While it is clear that worldwide demand for oil has stopped growing and has started to decline in the last six months, it is not yet clear just how fast demand is falling. The sudden drop in oil prices has further complicated the situation by setting off a race between falling prices and slowing economic activity.

Nearly all observers are forecasting that the economic situation will get worse for at least the next six months as foreclosures increase, real estate values continue falling, retail downsizes, and unemployment grows. From there on opinions vary. Some believe that the trillions in financial and business bailouts and massive government stimulus spending will stabilize the US and world economy, eventually leading to economic growth. Others believe that spending so much borrowed money will only exacerbate the current situation and that far worse times are ahead.

Some peak oil pragmatists look at the US airlines and auto industries as the canaries in the recession's coal mine. Hit last spring with oil prices too high to work with their business model, plus a recession, the airlines blinked. Virtually all announced major schedule cutbacks. The recession has pushed the Detroit Big Three to near bankruptcy. This year will likely determine their future.

2. Price Volatility: Who Knew?

In a case of extreme dissonance, oil and gas prices first rocketed and then crashed in unprecedented fashion during 2008, setting records and trashing forecasts in all camps. Oil: from $90 to $147 to $34? Natural gas prices doubled, then dove. Some coal tripled, then retreated too.

Why the enormous swings? With hindsight, the drivers to the upside seemed

to be a mix of the fundamentals and speculation. First and foremost, it was obvious but too often overlooked that flat oil supply and increasing demand is a recipe for a price surge. Then too, stockpiles were well below norms during the spring price run-up. A growing mismatch between marginal supply (e.g., Iran's heavy oil) and available refining capacity to process that oil didn't help. Shrinking exports from Russia, Mexico and 13 other leading exporters—down 2.5% from 2006—sent a price signal.

On the investment front, the sinking dollar and hammered equities drove investors towards the full suite of commodities, not just oil. Goldman Sach's report in early May forecast $150-$200 oil within 6-24 months—one of several analyses that probably stimulated some late-cycle gambling. And any geopolitical moves in the oil patch—violence in Nigeria, nuclear chatter from Iran, explosions on the BTC pipeline in Turkey, etc.—were bullish factors pushing up prices and driving fisherman, farmers and truckers to strike and protest the financial pain.

And then came the crash, a 75% price drop over just 5 months that stunned producers. While the crash handed staggering American consumers what is now a billion-dollar-a-day unscheduled bailout, remember that the oil price run-up—a primary trigger in most of the major recessions since 1973—was a leading-edge factor in our deepening recession.

An almost tragic byproduct of 2008's violent oil price swings is that it sends confusing signals about our long-term oil supply constraints to decision makers at all levels. For example, low gasoline prices are helping lure some car-buyers back to near-dead SUV showroom floors…

3. Falling Investment = Building the Big Boomerang

During the first half of 2008, spiraling costs in the oil sector led to the periodic announcement, especially from oil exporting countries, that a few production or refinery projects were being delayed, decisions put on hold. It didn't help that the industry—from fully-booked drilling rigs and tankerage to an over-booked and aging engineering corps—appeared stretched thin. The International Energy Agency sounded warnings of under-investment by the oil industry.

Then came the crash. During the fourth quarter, when demand declined and oil prices dropped to four-year lows that few industry players had

anticipated, a daily drumbeat of project delay and cancellation notices flowed from the industry. Among the earliest casualties were the Alberta tar sands processing projects which require massive amounts of capital for every barrel of production capacity; one company even announced a 50-percent cutback at their existing tar sands operations because $40 oil does not cover current costs to excavate and separate bitumen from sand. Additionally, some proposed deepwater projects don't work with oil prices under $60 a barrel.

Tighter credit is also taking its toll. While major international oil companies may have financing in place or can self-finance projects, smaller companies delayed or cancelled plans due to lack of liquidity. That same liquidity issue also battered prospects for front-loaded renewable energy financing as well as funding for extremely expensive "clean-coal" and coal-to-liquids projects. While national oil companies made massive profits through September, the October-December price drop hammered those producing countries where the bulk of their oil revenues are diverted to run government programs; they will soon be in no position to invest in new production developments.

While worldwide demand for oil is falling, it isn't dropping as fast as investment in new production. Bottom line: the slowdown in new oil production projects will obviously have a major effect on future oil production rates. It may be several years before cancelled or delayed projects fully impact the world's capacity to replace declining production, let alone grow that production again. If the economy should stabilize during the next year or two, and demand for oil snaps back, expect prices to boomerang back above $150. Investment uncertainty guarantees higher price volatility just a few years out.

4. The IEA Changes its Stance (will U.S. EIA, CERA and Exxon-Mobil follow?)

During July 2007, the International Energy Agency announced its intention to conduct a bottom-up study of worldwide oil field production in order to better inform their OECD member about prospects for future supply growth. They more than hinted at accelerating supply and price troubles to come. That warning was echoed again in July 2008 when the IEA cut its supply forecast for the next five years. Realism seemed to be settling in at the Paris-based energy office.

On November 12th, the IEA released its World Energy Outlook 2008, a forecast that broke with their past tradition of projecting demand and then assuming supply would rise up to meet it. The report was a curious mix of unreality (liquid fuel supplies can grow steadily between now and 2030) and unprecedented warning of an energy crisis to come. Breakthrough findings included:

•
"Current global trends in energy supply and consumption are patently unsustainable."

•
Half the world's oil comes from the 110 largest fields; many of those are post-peak and aging.

•
The natural decline rates [all drilling stops] for fields past their peak is 9% and rising.

•
Observed decline rates [drilling/maintenance continues] for fields past their peak production rate is 6.7% today, rising to 8.6% by 2030.

Much of the media coverage of the WEO 2008 focused on the stated need to discover and/or develop 64 million barrels a day—"6 new Saudi Arabias"—of new production by 2030. Digging deeper into the IEA's detailed assumptions uncovered some trends which IEA forecasts that raise major questions:

•
Will the US will only lose 400,000 bpd in production over the next 22 years, compared to 800,000 bpd over the last seven years?

•
Will Mexico only lose 500,000 bpd from its 3.5 million bpd in 2007, despite production at their mainstay producing field (Cantarell) being in a tailspin?

•
By 2030, will China only lose 200,000 bpd, despite China's admission that their production should peak by 2012; etc.?

Yet despite these and other weaknesses, the report's "unsustainable" position statement was one of many that broke new ground.

Finally, in an important post-script to their WEO 2008, Dr. Fatih Birol, the IEA's chief economist, was interviewed by the Guardian newspaper during

mid-December. When asked what the phrase oil production "leveling off towards the end of the projection period" meant, Birol gave the interviewer the date 2020. Yes, peak oil by 2020… While that's still way too optimistic a view for many realists and pragmatists, that statement represents a major turnaround for an agency that has previously supported the "no peak in sight" mantra.

5. The Campaign and the Elections

Until the price crash which started in July, it looked as if this year's US federal elections were going to be about gasoline prices and little else. As prices rose to the $4 - $5 level, politicians running for office became so nervous that proposals to counter high gasoline prices were flying all over the landscape. Some wanted to cut gas taxes; many wanted to scrap environmental restrictions on drilling; and some wanted to ban speculation. That most of these suggestions were of dubious value or would take many years to implement was of little import. It was the appearance of concern that counted.

As gasoline prices fell during the summer and fall, however, and the need for immediate action diminished, the wilder proposals disappeared, but a fundamental disagreement of whether more domestic and offshore drilling would solve the problem continued to November. Yet the hard facts—that offshore drilling won't contribute substantively to supply for a decade, that peak flow from the "new offshore" would perhaps equal 1+ percent of current consumption, etc.—were generally missing from the dialogue.

The election of Barak Obama to the presidency clearly will bring about a major change in the US government's approach to global warming and energy policies. As yet, there has been little discussion of oil depletion by the new administration outside of ritualistic and poorly-informed pronouncements about energy independence. So far statements and appointments made by President-elect Obama show that he will clearly place a major emphasis on reducing fossil fuel emissions, promoting renewable sources and efficient use of energy, goals which are compatible with preparations for peak oil.

6. OPEC Cuts Production

Last spring, OPEC, and most particularly the Saudis, came under heavy

pressure to increase production as oil prices were increasing so rapidly it seemed as if industrial civilization was about to be pushed over the edge. President Bush visited the Saudis and Riyadh even put on a special producer/consumer gathering in June to announce that the Kingdom was increasing production from newly completed wells to help with the crisis.

Within weeks, however, the landscape shifted and oil prices began the unprecedented plunge that brought the average prices that OPEC received for its oil from an all time high of $147 a barrel in early July to $35 last week. As prices fell through $100 in mid-September and then $60 in mid-October, OPEC became increasingly nervous. Not only was oil falling below the cost of exploring and drilling for new production, the producers' national budgets which are heavily dependent on oil revenue were being devastated.

In a series of meetings beginning in September, OPEC announced production cuts that now total on the order of 4 million b/d. As ignoring such cuts is a long tradition within OPEC, the oil markets were rightly skeptical that the cuts would actually be made. Much to OPEC's chagrin, oil prices continued to fall as each production cut was hinted at or announced. In the last week, however, as more details of the cuts have been announced and OPEC's customers have started reporting that they expect to receive less oil in coming weeks, the market's skepticism has been slackening.

7. The Large Exporters: from Boom to Busted

As oil prices rose steeply in recent years, OPEC and the other major oil exporters benefited greatly. In 2001 the average value of OPEC oil exports for the year was $23 a barrel and in 2008 it was on the order of $95. This four-fold increase in oil revenues had varying effects. Some countries such as Norway and the smaller Gulf States quietly stashed the money away in sovereign wealth funds for the benefit of their grandchildren. A few, such as Russia, Iran, and Venezuela, became belligerent, using the new-found wealth to promote their leaders' ideological goals and great power aspirations. Resource nationalism abounded as governments felt they could now do without foreign investment and technical expertise.

In the last six months however, many of these aspirations have been brought up short by the collapse in oil prices. Hardest hit have been those exporters with large populations to support such as Iran (65 million), Venezuela (26 million), Russia (140 million), Mexico (110 million) and Nigeria (146

million). Adding insult to injury, production in all five of these countries is either declining or flat while domestic consumption increases; that means declining net exports—another hit to the bottom line for the exporters, plus a looming pothole for the world's oil importers.

Although 2008 was a banner year for exporters, as prices were above $100 a barrel until September, after the price crash their cash flow is becoming a huge problem. Development projects are being cancelled, stock markets are crashing, budgets are being reworked and political unrest may be in the wind as countries like Iran consider eliminating large gasoline price subsidies. Even some of the more belligerent geopolitical posturing seems to be moderating as governments turn to more pressing domestic issues.

Unless prices rebound soon, major exporters with little other revenue will be hurting.

8. Shale Gas: Game Changer or Rope-a-Dope? [or "a mixed blessing"]

After essentially no net increase from 1994-2006, U.S. natural gas production rose 4% during 2007 and will have increased between 6% and 7% in 2008, despite shut-ins for Gustav and Ike. The biggest single reason for this is increased flows from shale gas. In a world without deep recessions, this success might have continued the current run for several more years. Indeed, shale gas will still play a key role in US natural gas production for decades, but that isn't unqualified good news.

The industry knew about shale gas for many decades. In fact, the nation's second-largest producing field today—Texas' Barnett Shale—was discovered in 1981. But back then, the industry didn't know how to exploit the resource on a large scale. Application of horizontal drilling in the Barnett Shale changed that. Compared to drilling vertical wells for conventional gas, this unconventional resource requires more drilling, more hydraulic fracturing work—more cost and more energy inputs. The breakeven costs (plus 10%) for most of the shale-gas plays falls between $5 and $6.50 per Mcf of natural gas. During the last five months of 2008, natural gas prices dropped 50% from their July peak; the combination of that price crash plus recession-induced destruction of demand for natural gas forced the gas industry to start idling rigs. Of the 1600 rigs drilling for gas as recently as September, as many as 400 will likely be stacked soon.

There's a related nasty catch with shale gas: during the first year after a shale-gas well is drilled, upwards of 2/3 of the ultimately recoverable gas flows from the well; that's a lot faster decline rate than conventional wells experience. So the more reliant we become on shale gas wells, the more susceptible we will become to wider swings in supply. Relying on shale gas is likely to cause much more volatility in prices.

9. Food vs. Fuel Hit Pocketbooks Worldwide

2008 started with a rash of reports by respected organizations about a worrisome if highly predictable phenomenon: increased use of biofuels was helping push up food prices worldwide. Two Purdue University agricultural economists published in late 2007 that two-thirds of food cost increases from 2005-2007 were related to biofuels. During the previous six years, land planted for biofuels increased from 12 to 80 million hectares as subsidies and national policies mandating their use were driving the rush to biofuels. The UN's food price index, based on export prices for internationally traded foodstuffs, climbed 14 percent in 2006, 37 percent in 2007, and continued apace into 2008. Rapidly rising food prices obviously result in hunger and political instability as more people become desperate in their search for affordable food. During 2008 food riots erupted in Mexico, Italy, Morocco, Pakistan, Yemen, Senegal, Mauritania and elsewhere. Press reports popped up about "how the rich are starving the world by making biofuels—dubbed by some as "a crime against humanity."

In the US, the ethanol industry and its reported $25 billion in federal handouts started in 1978, picked up enormous momentum after the August 2005 Energy Security Policy Act, and accelerated even faster after Congress passed the Renewable Fuels Standard in December 2007. Now, thanks to one of the most divisive agricultural policies in the US, there are 178 ethanol distilleries in the US that will likely consume over 30% of the US corn crop and produce just under 600,000 b/d of corn ethanol. (Adjusted for energy equivalency, that offsets roughly 400,000 b/d of US oil consumption—around 2% of our daily oil diet—excluding the large net-energy problem that plagues corn ethanol.) Yet after 30 years of R&D, a $0.51/gal tax credit and tariffs on imported biofuels, the industry still can't compete; large ethanol player VeraSun filed for bankruptcy in late October, and now the industry is asking Congress for bailout dollars.

The year ended with an op-ed from the Investor's Business Daily in which

they made this point: “The heavily subsidized ethanol industry is the latest to seek a federal bailout. If there is any industry that deserves to go bankrupt, it's this one. Time has come to stop putting food in our gas tanks.” In the interests of the food vs. fuel battle, we tend to agree.

10. Global Production Peaks, on the Production Plateau

The EIA reports that since 2005 production of conventional oil has been on a plateau, cycling up and down between 72 and 74 million b/d. In July 2008 production reached a new all-time high of 74.86 million b/d and has been dropping since. As OPEC is currently implementing production cuts totaling 4 million b/d, several major producers such as Mexico and Russia are in decline or do not have much growth potential; and investment in new production is drying up due to economic conditions, the likelihood that the July bump to a new high will stand as the all-time peak of world conventional oil production is increasing.

The IEA reports that “all-liquids” production which includes conventional oil, biofuels, natural gas liquids, and tar sands production, reached 86.5 million b/d in November, but this is subject to revision.

It is ironic that the all-time peak of world oil production seems to be happening in the midst of a global recession of unknown duration. While it is possible that the global economy could rebound in the next few years and markedly increase the demand for oil, it is clear that the industry is no longer able to respond with large increases in production as it did earlier this decade. All things considered, it is inevitable that declining world oil production, which is currently linked to declining demand and OPEC policy, will eventually be governed by production constraints. These constraints, due to a combination of geological factors, lack of adequate investment, geopolitical conflicts, and resource nationalism, make it likely that oil production will never again reach the highs seen in 2008.

Repeating Mistakes Over and Over

"***Dear Editor: (Chicago Tribune)***

President-elect Obama prescribes fiscal stimulus as the cure for America's ailing economy ("Obama urges Congress to approve economic recovery plan quickly, support bold investment," Jan. 3). Well let's see.

With the exception of a few years during the Clinton administration, the U.S. has run annual budget deficits continuously for the past four decades. And from 2002 through 2008, Uncle Sam ran budget deficits each year, totaling $2.13 TRILLION dollars. That's a frightful amount of fiscal stimulus, and yet the economy today is struggling.

Now with the bailout, the budget deficit for 2009 alone is projected to be close to $1 trillion – nearly seven percent of GDP, a figure much higher than at anytime since WWII. If deficit spending were good for the economy, Americans would now be, not on shaky ground, but in Shangri-la.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Boudreaux

I guess the idea of repeating mistakes over and over again has never registered in Washington DC! Their solution to everything? Spend more money they don't have! Bigger and more government.

State QSO Party Tabulation

Roy, N9QS forwarded the following table of state QSO Parties scheduled for 2009.

State	Contest	Date	Times
Vermont	Vermont QSO Party	Feb 07/08	0000Z, Feb 7 to 2400Z Feb 8
Minnesota	Minnesota QSO Party	Feb 07	1400Z-2359Z
Delaware	Delaware QSO Party	Feb 07/09	1700Z, Feb 7 to 0100Z, Feb 9
Louisiana	Louisiana QSO Party	Feb 07/8	1500Z, Feb 7 to 0300Z, Feb 8
New Hampshire	New Hampshire QSO Party	Feb 07/08	0001Z, Feb 7 to 0001Z, Feb 8
North Carolina	North Carolina QSO Party	Feb 21/22	1700Z, Feb 21 to 0300Z, Feb 22
Mississippi	Mississippi QSO Party	Feb 28/Mar 01	1500Z, Feb 28 to 0300Z, Mar 1
Idaho	Idaho QSO Party	Mar 07/08	1900Z, Mar 7 to 1900Z, Mar 8
Oklahoma	Oklahoma QSO Party	Mar 07/08	1400Z, Mar 7 to 0200Z, Mar 8 and 1300Z-1900Z, Ma
Wisconsin	Wisconsin QSO Party	Mar 14/15	1800Z, Mar 14 to 0100Z, Mar 15
Virginia	Virginia QSO Party	Mar 14/15	1800Z, Mar 14 to 0200Z, Mar 15
			April 2009
Missouri	**Missouri QSO Party**	**Apr 04/05**	1800Z, Apr 4 to 0500Z, Apr 5 and 1800Z-2400Z, Ap
Montana	Montana QSO Party	Apr 04/05	0000Z, Apr 4 to 2400Z, Apr 5
Georgia	Georgia QSO Party	Apr 11/12	1800Z, Apr 11 to 0359Z, Apr 11 and 1400Z-2359Z, 12
Michigan	Michigan QSO Party	Apr 18/19	1600Z, Apr 18 to 0400Z, Apr 19
Florida	Florida QSO Party	Apr 25/26	1600Z, Apr 25 to 0159Z, Apr 26 and 1200Z-2159Z, 26
Nebraska	Nebraska QSO Party	Apr 25/26	1700Z, Apr 25 to 1700Z, Apr 26
			May 2009
CT-ME-MA-NH RI-VT	New England QSO Party	May 02/03	2000Z, May 2 to 0500Z, May 3 and 1300Z-2400Z, Ma and 1300Z-2400Z, May 3
AZ-ID-MT-NV-OR-UT-WY	7th Call Area QSO Party	May 02/03	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3
Indiana	Indiana QSO Party	May 02/03	1600Z, May 2 to 0400Z, May 3
Nevada	Nevada Mustang Roundup	May 09/10	2300Z, May 9 to 2300Z, May 10
			June 2009
Alabama	Alabama QSO Party	Jun 06/07	1600Z, Jun 6 to 0400Z, Jun 7
West Virginia	West Virginia QSO Party	Jun 13/14	1600Z, Jun 13 to 0200Z, Jun 14
	ARRL Field Day	**Jun 27/28**	**1800Z, Jun 27 to 2100Z, Jun 28**
Maryland-DC	Maryland-DC QSO Party	Aug 08/09	1600Z, Aug 08 to 0400Z and 1600Z-2359Z Aug 0
New Jersey	New Jersey QSO Party	Aug 15/17	2000Z, Aug 15 to 0700Z, Aug 16 and 1300Z, Aug 16 0200Z, Aug 17
Ohio	Ohio QSO Party	Aug 22/23	1600Z, Aug 22 to 0400Z, Aug 23
Hawaii	Hawaii QSO Party	Aug 22/23	0700Z, Aug 22 to 2200Z, Aug 23
Arkansas	Arkansas QSO Party	Sep 12/13	1400Z, Sep 12 to 0600Z, and 1500Z-2400Z, Sep 1
Tennessee	Tennessee QSO Party	Sep 12/13	1800Z, Sep 12 to 0300Z, Sep 13
Washington	Washington State Salmon Run	Sep 19/20	1600Z, Sep 19 to 0700Z, Sep 20 and 1600Z-2400Z,

			20
Colorado	Colorado QSO Party	Sep 19/20	1000Z, Sep 19 to 0400Z, Sep 20
South Carolina	South Carolina QSO Party	Sep 19/20	1300Z, Sep 19 to 2100Z, Sep 20
Texas	Texas QSO Party	Sep 26/27	1400Z, Sep 26 to 0200Z, Sep 27 and 1400Z-2000Z, 27
California	California QSO Party	Oct 03/04	1600Z, Oct 3 to 2159Z Oct 4
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania QSO Party	Oct 10/11	1600Z, Oct 10 to 0500Z, Oct 11 and 1300Z-2200Z Oc
Illinois	**Illinois QSO Party**	**Oct 17/18**	**1700Z, Oct 17 to 0100Z Oct 18**
Kentucky	Kentucky QSO Party	Nov 07/08	1400Z, Nov 7 to 0200Z Nov 8

Ice Age Coming?

"Ice cores, ocean sediment cores, the geologic record, and studies of ancient plant and animal populations all demonstrate a regular cyclic pattern of Ice Age glacial maximums which each last about 100,000 years, separated by intervening warm interglacials, each lasting about 12,000 years.

Most of the long-term climate data collected from various sources also shows a strong correlation with the three astronomical cycles which are together known as the Milankovich cycles. The three Milankovich cycles include the tilt of the earth, which varies over a 41,000 year period; the shape of the earth's orbit, which changes over a period of 100,000 years; and the Precession of the Equinoxes, also known as the earth's 'wobble', which gradually rotates the direction of the earth's axis over a period of 26,000 years. According to the Milankovich theory of Ice Age causation, these three astronomical cycles, each of which effects the amount of solar radiation which reaches the earth, act together to produce the cycle of cold Ice Age maximums and warm interglacials.

Elements of the astronomical theory of Ice Age causation were first presented by the French mathematician Joseph Adhemar in 1842, it was developed further by the English prodigy Joseph Croll in 1875, and the theory was established in its present form by the Serbian mathematician

Milutin Milankovich in the 1920s and 30s. In 1976 the prestigious journal "Science" published a landmark paper by John Imbrie, James Hays, and Nicholas Shackleton entitled "Variations in the Earth's orbit: Pacemaker of the Ice Ages," which described the correlation which the trio of scientist/authors had found between the climate data obtained from ocean sediment cores and the patterns of the astronomical Milankovich cycles. Since the late 1970s, the Milankovich theory has remained the predominant theory to account for Ice Age causation among climate scientists, and hence the Milankovich theory is always described in textbooks of climatology and in encyclopaedia articles about the Ice Ages. "

http://english.pravda.ru/science/earth/106922-0/

On the Road with N4CD – II

Dan, KM9X, put out his 'most wanted counties list' - about the time that WQ7A ran San Juan and likely took that off the most needed list. There was only one TX County on the list, but many needed counties in East TX. It seems not many folks run the eastern 'tree counties'. You'll recall TX has a million acres of woods – they are all east. You won't find much in the way of trees out in Loving County. Heck, there are sand dunes out that a way!

Two weeks ago, I had many requests for Angelina and Cherokee and the counties in that area. So why not? Gas had gone up to $1.65-$1.70/gal, but that is very reasonable compared to $4. Heck, you could still count hunt all day for $20 or so.

My usual December last week to New Year's trip got messed up by a broken left wrist, so I figured I'd take a few shorter trips to cover some territory in January. MLK holiday was coming up, so that would give me a three day weekend to put out counties when many would likely be around. There is no sense running counties for folks when they have to be at work – although many county hunters are retired and are home all week.

After a week of temps down to 19F, and some highs in the 30s, the weatherman predicted excellent weather with 70+ temps for the east and southeastern part of TX. Hey, you can't complain about January weather like that, especially when MN has been hitting -40 deg F, with highs of -10 F, and snow, and more snow, and even more snow. A county hunter can't leave a good weekend behind without doing something!

The one and only TX county on the KM9X 'most wanted list' was Anderson TX - so the trip started by heading down that way, then down through Cherokee and Angelina which Randy, AJ5ZX needed, then with lots of side trips to Trinity and San Augustine, over to Sabine, down to Newton and Jasper, winding up in Tyler, TX for the night.

On Saturday, the NA QSO Party SSB started after noon, and made it more difficult on 40M SSB, but with the help of N5UZW and others, the county hunters kept 7188 fairly clear. There were lots of loud stations on 20M SSB running high power and big antennas in New England and W2 land.

On R255 at the CL of Newton and Jasper, you can still find all three county line signs – the modern metal ones on a pole near the road, the old 4 inch by 4 inch by 2 foot high concrete markers at the boundary of the highway right of way, and the side by side wood signs – about 8 feet high and a foot wide. The old concrete markers from 50-80 years ago are getting scarcer and scarcer, and naturally the wood signs age quickly in the weather.

The 'dead end' runs take a lot of time, so progress was not as great as I hoped, but the log was full, and the 40M runs were 20-50 QSOs per county for both CW and SSB. I usually started on 40cw, unless a mobile was running, in which case I ran 30 or 20 first, then went back to 40M cw. With the poor propagation, I didn't even take the 17M antenna on this trip. We sure need a few sunspots and a flux above 70 to make 17M work!

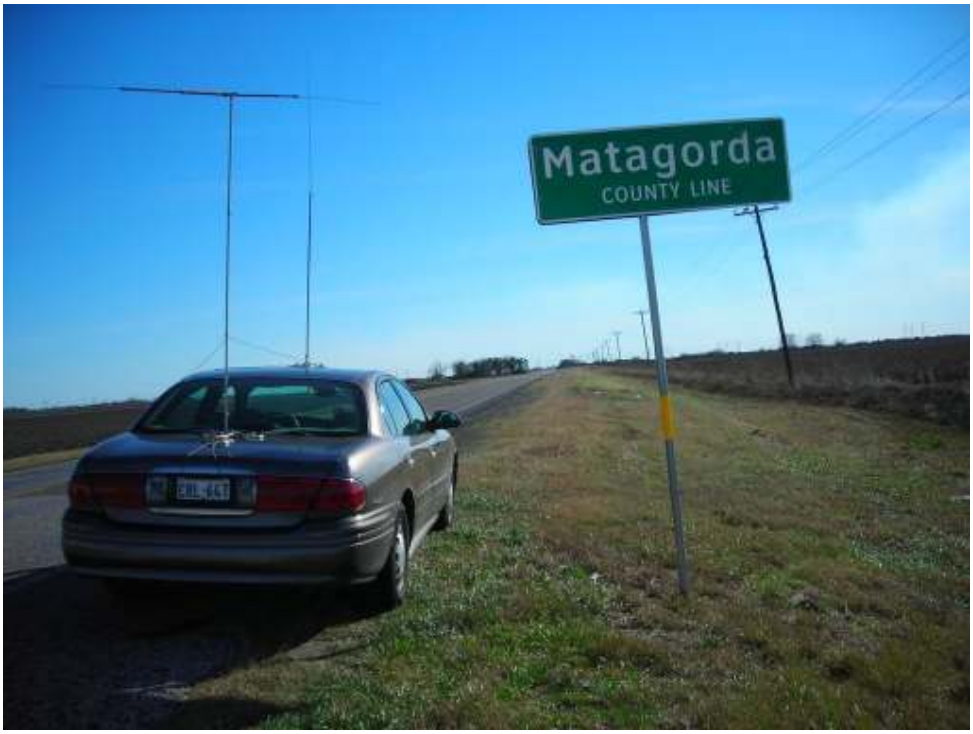
Mark, KO1U was everywhere – 40, 30, 20M CW along with Bill, KM1C. Joe, N5UZW and helpers were running things on 40M SSB with lots of activity for 3 days.

Scottie, N4AAT, needed Tyler TX for a last for MP, and we hooked up. He was out and about mobile, putting them out on 40M SSB. He is down to just a handful now for MP, but the Second AK is on the list, and that won't

get run until N8KIE heads there in the spring. Hollis, KC3X was chasing me all over. He got me from his mobile for his quest for all 'mobile to mobile', too.

The first night was in Woodville, TX(Tyler Co) at the Stage Coach Inn ($$ - no Motel 6 in that town). Dinner next door at a nice family restaurant – the Elijah Café --food good and price good – maybe 100+ people eating there. The next morning, I headed down to Hardin and Liberty, over to Montgomery, then up to Walker, then winding down to Galveston, then west. Traffic, even on a weekend, in Houston area is a nightmare. It's amazing how many cars are out and about at noon on Sunday there! Zillions of them, and they all drive fast, furious, and 'in a hurry'. That's a good place to avoid!

Larry, N2OCW, needed Matagorda, so I wound my way over toward that one, then headed west to Bee.



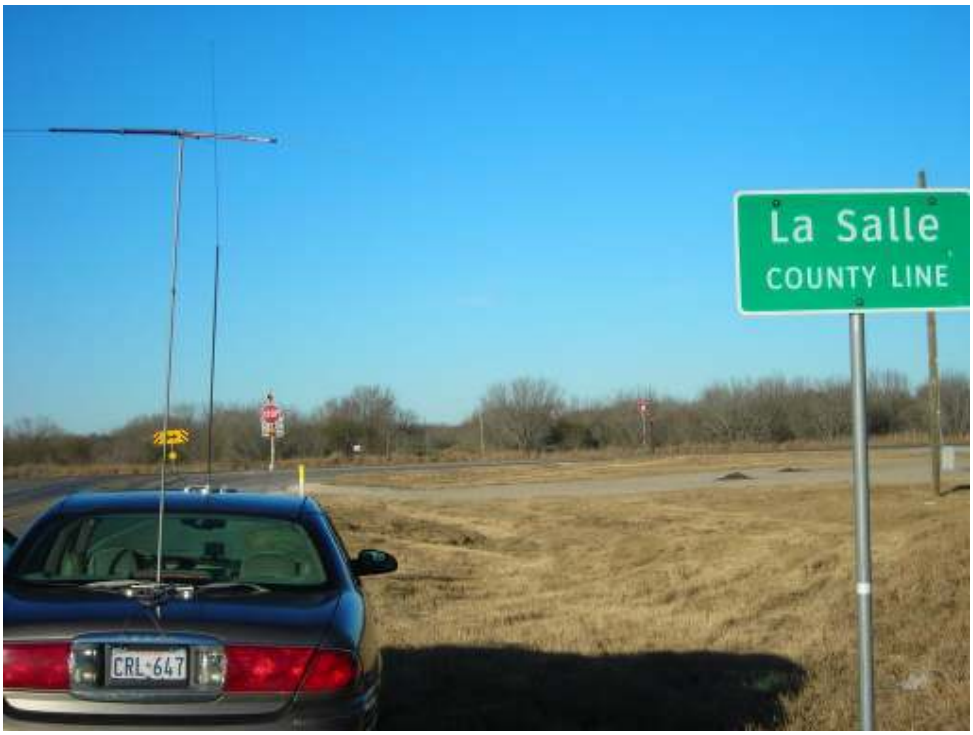
Matagorda TX for N2OCW

Runs took a long time – that's good since so many got in the log, but again I didn't get as far on Sunday as I hoped – winding up in Bee County at the Motel 6 ($60 senior rate). Folks wanted this county and that county – I

couldn't make too many detours off the planned route – another weekend! It was Sunday and that means pizza for dinner – at the Pizza Hut in town.

The original plan was to head west to Maverick, then northwest to Val Verde, but time ran out. I had to shorten the route. So many counties, so little time, and I had to be home by Monday night.

There were many requests for LaSalle County, so Monday morning the route went west to LaSalle/McMullen county line, then north to home. It was frustrating at times – S9 noise on 40M as you zip along – then you usually find a quiet spot after you've worked everyone with difficulty through the noise.



La Salle/McMullen CL, TX (no power line noise – S zero)

Murphy's law for county hunting – the run always starts just before the worst place for noise appears and ends before the power line stops and before the noise is zero again. The other part of this law is that when you finally can begin to hear the mobile in a county you need, the power line starts and continues forever during his/her run. Then, when the run is over, the noise is S "0". (Well, sometimes it seems that way.

There are lots of quiet sections of road for 30 miles in TX. You get some good roads, and some bad roads for noise. Southeast TX along the Gulf coast with all the humidity is not ham friendly)

The log filled up with QSOs. After that, it was north via Frio and Atascosa up the I 35 corridor to home. With it being a work day for many, you either head through the Dallas Metroplex before 4pm, or you might as well wait till 7pm to try to run through it as the traffic will be horrific at rush hour, and you'll sit for 2-3 hours in stop and go traffic getting home no sooner. I elected to get home early, so no detours on the way home.

You can get off I 35 to run Falls County (going north, not south) easily – did that and ran 40/30/20cw and 40M SSB. The GPS came in handy. I punched in the 'home' destination, and it told me I had enough time to stop and run Falls, and still make it home by 4:15 pm before rush hour made downtown Dallas a traffic mess.

There sure is a lot of noise along the interstate in the towns – which often are continuous for miles and miles. Then there are stretches of nice quiet highway. I 35 is built up much of the way between Dallas and San Antonio. When you are making tracks, you just do the best you can with the noise.

You can tell we are at the bottom of the sunspot cycle. On Sat/Sun, the Europeans were in for a while with DL3DXX, LY2ZZ, and one or two others in there. On Monday, 20M was mostly dead, with the west coast barely in there. Over the weekend, I worked KH6G, Clarence, in HI a only few times, and caught KL1V in a few. Even AB7RW was not great copy on 20M. The East coast came in 599 at times on 20M when the band was open to some of them. Often, Florida was barely in there on 20M. Strange days. I listened a few times on 20M SSB and never heard any activity.

I had to cut the trip short, so there is lots of opportunity to run some additional counties during the winter. The temps were up in the mid 70s to near 80 down in southeast TX – I had the a/c on during Sunday with the bright sun! Meanwhile, W0GXQ was battling snow drifts and ice in MN and ND, following behind snow plows, and enjoying 'warm' 30 deg temps.

It was a successful 3 day trip with a few LC for the folks, and hopefully lots of other needs eliminated. It's always nice to hear "you're XX and thanks for the LC!". This trip should have taken Anderson TX off the most wanted

list – other than for prefixes. The tires still have a few thousand more miles on them before they are gone, so more county hunting coming up. Then I'll have to decide whether to buy new tires or replace the car.

I did some checking on runs spotted on the 3 days of the trip. For 20/30/40M CW/SSB. This is all the runs spotted for several mobiles out an about those days.

20M SSB:

Sat 1/17	6 runs spotted all day
Sun 1/18	9 runs spotted all day
Mon 1/19	2 runs spotted all day

20M CW

Sat 1/17	30 runs spotted
Sun 1/18	24 runs spotted
Mon 1/19	4 runs spotted

30M CW

Sat 1/17	30 runs spotted
Sun 1/18	24 runs spotted
Mon 1/19	14 runs spotted

40m CW

Sat 1/17	34 runs spotted
Sun 1/18	33 runs spotted
Mon 1/19	24 runs spotted

40 SSB

Sat 1/17	42 runs spotted
Sun 1/18	41 runs spotted
Mon 1/19	33 runs spotted

And the winner is: 40M SSB!

Disclaimers – approximate count – there were several duplicate spots/corrections, and many mobiles ran at least 2 bands, and some 3 and 4 and 5 bands, so activity occurred on 30/20 despite no 'spots' for some. On 20M, some cw runs not spotted that did happen. Sometimes the mobile on 20 SSB only worked 1 or 2 or 3 stations. Some folks don't spot. Same on 30cw at times. However, the lack of 20M SSB activity and propagation is obvious.

If you were in the right spot and the right time, you may have snagged a county on 20 and 17M. The place to be was 40M, with 30M not far behind. On 20M, the cw runs greatly outnumbered the SSB runs. It must be lonely if you are only on 20M SSB these days.

Yearly CW Stats from Elwood

Every year, Elwood, KA3MMM, compiles the latest set of stats for those working on the USACW award. Here is the tabulation as of the end of 2008.

STATUS OF COUNTIES WORKED ON CW AS OF THE END OF EACH YEAR

CALL	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
KR1B						2499	2421
VE1BES					1930	1796	1342
AD1C	3045	3044	3026	2954	2857	2609	2087
KM1C	2070						
KA1Q				1350 #2	1320 #2	1235 #2	1161 #2
VO1SF	3042				2929	2987	
W1TEE						2583 #2	2282 #2
K1TKL	1820	851					
KO1U			2418 #2	3033	2881	2122	1378
KL1V	1808	1730	1595	1441	1269	612	506
WV2B		505					
WA2AKB		1621	1621	1621	1614	1579	1400
N2CQ						1489	1385

NM2L	35 #2	2952	2677	2213	1695	764	
AB2LS		1600	1250	449			
N2MH		944		634	46		
N2OCW	3000	2992	2687				
K2RP			2275	1730	1410	1000	
NO2W		1589	1589	1589	1589	1566	
N3AHA		2971	2830	2309			2222
DL3DD					3059	3056	3051
W3DYA	474 #3	3072 #2	3057 #2	3056 #2	3051 #2	3046 #2	3036 #2
WA3GNW				1737	1604	1511	
WU3H	785 #4	3073 #3	3057 #3	2946 #3	2445 #3	163 #3	3005 #2
N3HOO					1821	1500	
OH3JF				2973	2922	2903	2869
VE3KZE				3046	3035	3031	3016
KA3MMM	2412 #6	2125 #6	1044 #6	3048 #5	2643 #5	3075 #4	2959 #4
VA3NN	2939	2901	2849	2714	2063	1462	993
WD3P				712 #3	678 #3	297 #3	3075 #2
WA3QNT		2641	2638	2634		2573	2563
KE3VV	3052	2983	2779	2535	2134	1365	
KC3X	1492 #2		222 #2	170 #2	30 #2	2695	1693
N3XX			11 #2	3067	3061	3054	3027
AE3Z	1806	1942	1630	1593	1395	1297	1187
W3ZUH					1645	800	1631
VK4AAR						1058	
N4AAT		2					
N4AKP	2918 #2	2411 #2	869 #2	1489 #2		1264 #2	3072
N4CD	3064 #3	2903 #3	2759 #3	3065 #2	2715 #2	3056	3013
K4EXT	1431	727					
DJ4GJ							2389
W4GNS		1882	1010				
AA4GT	1992						
G4KHG		1436	1434	1374	1182		1033
W4NBS						665	
KR4OE	1614	1555	1461	1313	1216	1177	1135
WD4OIN	2902		2674	2539	2138	1369	660

W4RKV	2793 #2	2775 #2	2761 #2	2788	2682 #2	2588 #2	2482 #2
KA4RRU		658					
N4RS		3035 #3	191 #3	2225 #3	3075 #2	2973 #2	2645 #2
WD4SIG					3030	3030	3030
K4UNF	1278	1835	1556		820		
KW4V	2231 #2			3073			
WB4VFN	3067	3015	2899	2667	2301	500	
AA4VN					1619	1364	1078
W4VQ				947	471 #2	3058	3035
K4XI	1387 #2	3071	3064	3050	3011	2956	2844
KB4XK				2443	2261	2147	1892
KN4XP		2125	1638	1155	108		
W4XT				2184	2167	1931	138
KN4Y	2610 #5		2954 #4	2634 #4	1760 #4	3070 #3	2988 #3
W4YDY	2967	2936	2789	2462	2175	1513	786
K4YFH		3075		2819	2577	1575	
K4YT		1233	1871				
AB4YZ				2685	2214	1900 #2	1380 #2
KS5A				2983	2883	2427	2038
K5AAR	3073 #2	3055 #2	2926 #2	2362 #2	493 #2	3055	2899
W5AL				2805			2174
DL5AWI		2541	2457	2317	2140	2006	
KR5C	326 #2	69 #2	397 #2	3071	3034	2940	2701
WC5D			1904 #2	1456 #2	834 #2	500 #2	3077
N5EBD				1833	1248		
K5OT		3075	3026	2902	2669	1801	
WB5P							1125
N5PR	2882	2634	2412	910			
N5XD	726						
N5XG		3072	3071	3066	3052	3004	3004
K5XY	131	131			343	211	48
KC6AWX				1202	1025	871	881
WD6CKT	250 #2	3077	3071	3063	3035	2871	3003
NA6E						2523	
KM6HB	1049						
NV6I				721	430	2010	LOST

W6IYS							1113 #2
DL6KVA	2439	2398	2267	2140	1937	1525	
W6OUL				1680	1606	1265	
W6RK			2142	1856	993		
NW6S	3004		2870		2556	2278	1235
W6TMD	3056 #2	3002 #2	2949 #2	2742 #2	2286 #2	876 #2	3062
W6TPC	234						
KB6UF		2336	2122	1531		500	
KE6US					1125		
SM6VR	2914	2860	2808	2665	2419	1853	
WG6X	2714	2491					
AD6Z				3030	2890	2777	2484
AA7CP		1246 #2	1034 #2				
K7DM				2777	2622	2312	2028
K7DZE						1727	2514
KL7GN				2607	2543	2521	2483
K7INA	2972			2764	2705	2500	2120
WA7JHQ	2784 #2	2569 #2	2178 #2	1065 #2	3059	2922	2740
W7KQZ	2569						
KG7Q					2887		1897
K7REL	2347 #3	41 #3	2946 #2	1865 #2	2915	1458	
AB7RW	3010 #2	2886 #2	2430 #2	3076	3062	2943	2776
WA7SLD				1660			
W7TSM				2247	2290	1934	1697
K7VAY		QRT	3077	3042	3002	2963	2853
NA7W	2036	2029	1932	1258	660	660	249
KI7WO	2929	2631	1635	1030	802		
N7WO	997	1994	1854	1599	1198		
KK7X	1772				1760	1637	1632
AK8A	3056	2995	2850	2649	2385	2172	0 - fire
N8CBW		1					
W8CE	3075 #2	3060 #2	3022 #2	3003 #2	2951 #2	2845 #2	2611 #2
K8CW	2885 #3		2397 #3	3074 #2			2927 #2
K8GSA						515	12
KD8HB	630 #5			3064 #4	2983 #4	2589 #4	3066 #3
K8IW	2982	2952	2933	2838	2724	2495	1934
W8JJ	1103	940	779	510	391		

W8LSV				2100			
W8MP		327					
K8MW						3006 20/m	2969 20/m
K8OHC	1842	1814	1812	1797	1756	1687	1590
WD8OIN		2795					
KB8OMG		1683 #2	3072	3027	2862	1659	
W8OP				1017	836	788	397
K8OOK	1720						
WD8OWA			3006				
W8PN				2886 #2	2869 #2	2863 #2	2855 #2
W8QOI		2462 #3	2343	2147	1748	1006	
K8QWY		3057					
AA8R	3059	2921	2717	2464	2307	1848	427
KM8U	2885 #2	2885 #2	2885 #2	2870	2825	2796	2739
AD8W	2889	2699	2373	1950	1677	684	
W8WVU				3056		3050	3047
W8YL				3040		3040	3038
K8ZZ	3072	2952	2737	2319	1478		
NF9A				2863	2848		2719
N9AG				2545	2506	2460	
WD9BCG				3003 #2	3003 #2	3001 #2	2974 #2
VE9DH				2425	1954		
AB9E					1947	1564	
W9GBH	2547	2431	2404	2332	2300	2045	1907
W9HR							2932
N9ID	2296	2121	1711	924			
KA9JAC	2950	2819	2511	1747	1158		412
N9JF	2779	2637	2415	1657			<1000
NN9K	865 #3	3064 #2	2625 #2	3072	2748	2101	1368
AA9KH	3064 #2	3069 #2	3053 #2	2631 #2	1731 #2	547 #2	6 #2
ND9M		3066	3064	3044	2923		2811
W9MSE	3061 #4	2955 #4	2052 #4	3041 #3	2913 #3	2277 #3	3074 #2
W9MYY						2834 #2	2831 #2
N9QS	2562 #2	1364 #2	3053	2947	2725	2472	2156
N9STL		2940	2499	1666	49		
W9UX		2883					

K9WA	3057 #2	3025 #2	2988 #2	2815 #2	2525 #2	1390 #2	3069
DL9YC						424	407
AA9ZZ	25 #2			1925			
AC0B	985	897	689				
KY0E	2885	2617	2298	1789	680		
W0EAR			2457 #5				
W0GXQ	502 #4	3049 #3	2648 #3		3077 #2	2726 #2	1201 #2
AA0IP		3060 #3	2980 #3	2720 #3	942 #3	3062 #2	3007 #2
K0LG					1186	888	789
NF0N	2773	2548	2252	1862	1403	820	
K0PY				1079	1190	1042	1008
NU0Q	3061	2976	2718	1440	321		
W0QE	3073 #3	2819 #3	3076 #2	2723 #2	3073	2787	2110
W0RRY				2952	2782	2242	1916
NX0X	1966	1888	1737	1608	1233	488	
N0ZA				3068	3069	3039	2950
K0ZT				3062	3055	3001	2773
Updated	1-20-09	KA3MMM					

On the Road with N4CD – III

There was one weekend left in January and the weather looked to be clear all weekend. So why not go mobile again? There's 254 counties in TX, and someone has to run them at least once a year! The doc took the cast off the left wrist – and said 'exercise it'. OK….that means it's ready to hold the steering wheel while I drive on down the road and operate with the right hand on the key and pen for logging. It's a lot easier now! There were no contests scheduled for the weekend, so it was a 'go'. No sense fighting a major contest like SS, DX, WPX, Field Day, or several QSO parties if you are not in the right states for them.

The car has 217,000 miles, and I just changed the anti-freeze (had a real good coupon for service). Who knows how far I'll drive it? Probably it's time to change the spark plugs again – due every 100,000 miles. It still gets 30 mpg if you keep it under 65. I can't complain, other than they don't make the Buick LeSabre any more! You can't buy a new one. That car was one of the best county hunting cars ever made – super quiet for the radio.

On Saturday, it was chilly 30s as I left Collin County headed south. Someone actually needed Collin as I headed out. The route was going south to fill in some counties I had managed to miss by going all around them on the last trip. There were still needs, and many TX counties, like many areas in the country, have not had much CW activity, or SSB activity for the past six months or year. Some folks need so many in TX they don't list them, and for those new or starting over, there are 254 blanks in the log. So you just run them and hope they show up.

The bottom of the sunspot cycle doesn't inspire lots of activity. Gas was up a bit near $1.78/gal. Still, that is not too bad when you drive conservatively and get 30 mpg. The biggest expense is the motel for a weekend trip.

The 'county putting out' trek started by going down thru Dallas on I45 to Ellis and Navarro. Oh…DX…IK2RMZ worked me there on 20M. Not much in the way of DX on this weekend. 40M was open early, followed by 30cw and quite a bit later 20M CW. N1BY needed Limestone for next to last for Platinum, so I hit that, then headed further south trying to fill in most of the counties that were left undone. If all goes well, N8KIE will get N1BY his last in TX (Val Verde) in about 10 days. Now if I could only talk Bob, N8KIE, into running it on cw…I need that one on cw!

20M was actually fairly decent at times but closed early on Saturday. Only DX worked more than once was DL5MC the whole weekend, along with KH6G in Kauai, HI. Most of the activity was on 40 and 30M.

KB0BA/N0XYL were mobile on their way slowly south, running counties in OK along the eastern side – Craig, Delaware, Latimer – the tough ones to get to. Terry, WQ7A, ran some on WA. W8DCD and WA9DLB were out on Sunday. Tony had a bigger signal from that mobile than from the home station.

I hit I-10, then jogged a bit southwest to Lavaca, which someone had asked for last trip, then over to Gonzales, and up to Bastrop via Caldwell to the Super 8 Motel in Bastrop. Dinner at the China Buffet. I'm not one for waiting for dinner to be custom ordered and cooked if possible. Waffle for breakfast at the motel, along with OJ, a banana, and two cups of coffee to get me going in the morning. Sunrise occurred around 7:30 am. The weather map indicated cold weather up north, but the forecast was still good – temps in the 50s-60s all day.

I had requests for Llano and San Saba, so after getting thoroughly flummoxed in the Austin area (note to self: Avoid Austin), losing a bunch of time, having to go on the toll road there, the car finally got to Burnet, then over to Llano. By juggling the route a bit, I could hit San Saba, Lampasas, Mills, then into Hamilton and north to home.

If you are going to run a lot of TX, buy the Map Book of Texas – it has great detail of the back roads you can use to whack the corners of counties, and gives you a good idea of whether you can run the county lines. It clearly shows the 'wet lines' which is not always easy to determine on the standard state map. If you also have a mapping program on your laptop, you can use that as well.

There are a few unusual county lines in east TX, where the river has shifted several hundred feet in some major flood or hurricane, but the county line remains where it was before. You stop on dry land, and there are the opposing signs.

I used the GPS Nav system to give me an idea of how much time I had to get home on Sunday - (I like to be home by dark) – so I could figure out if there was time for detours. For example, if I was sitting on a county line a few hundred miles away, it might indicate arrival time at home at 4:30 pm – so I had time to stop and run all three bands there – which usually takes 20-25 minutes if you don't have to wait to run. I skipped Coryell County– another trip on another day, or wait for N8KIE in early Feb. Joe, ND3T (good for Platinum contacts) , was mobile on Sunday, putting out a few I had missed on the last 2 trips – going to DeWitt and Karnes among others, but you had to catch him on 20SSB. Conditions actually seemed fairly decent on Sunday.

Now, unlike Eldon, N8STF, who would stay out late and even later getting to counties, I usually head to the barn about sunset. Eldon and navigator would often zig and zag to get needed counties, arriving very late at home when they finally got there. He'd go 100 miles northwest, then 100 miles east, then 100 miles southeast, then maybe back northwest, and eventually get home! It's winter, and it gets grey, dark and gloomy about 6pm here. My goal is to be home by dinner time.

I tried a new route – I usually run the county line of Hamilton and Bosque (pronounced Bos-Key) on Rt 6, a very nice spot to run, but I had run Hamilton before, so I headed up on some back roads to 144, allowing me to do Bosque on the run on cw. At the county line of Bosque and Somervell, I ran SSB and CW on the remaining bands – then up to the next line at Hood/Johnson. This is a nice one, if you realize you can run it at Cresson 200 feet off the road on another road, where it is quiet. The C/L on the main road is horrible! Hi hi. Another 10-15 miles up the road, you can run the next pair – Parker/Tarrant. I then headed home through the 'Metroplex' – 1 ½ hours of traffic and 8 lanes of traffic with everyone in a hurry. Joe was handling the NC duties on SSB for most of the day.

I listened a few times on 20M SSB, but didn't hear much activity. 20M CW was hopping, with K8ZZ in MI, K0ARS in MO, and N4CD on. WD4OIN was running in NC on 40M SSB.

20M was good most of the day on CW. Good runs. Nice signals. Someone must have turned on a sunspot for the day!

40M had short skip – 100-200 mile skip, which is unusual for 40M. Typically it is 300-400-500 miles. K5SF, N5XG, WA5OPO, W3DYA were worked consistently on cw…and N5MLP, KD5YUK on SSB – all with short skip within TX. Maybe the propagation gods are trying to tell us the next sunspot cycle is about to start? Where short skip will be the only thing on 40M much of the day, and 20M will be the primary band? (until 17 and 15, 12 and 10 open for the cw folks).

Conditions were fairly decent on Sunday, with good runs on 40M SSB when the broadcast wasn't wiping everyone out. Judy, KB9MGI needed me in a few, and broke out the key and worked me in several counties on CW. Ernie was in there on 40, 30, and 20M. The trip should have filled in a bunch of 'band counties'.

Karl, K4YT, got to his summer place and found the weather had done in the G5RV antenna. Does that stop a county hunter? He wrote:

"Tnx for Gonzales and Mills in CW. I missed you in Brazos as I couldn't get my G5RV back up in time to catch you. We drove up to our lake home in Garrett County, MD Friday night and found that the wind had snapped the wire, so Saturday AM with 10F temps and a snow storm I pulled the G5RV in and soldered the end to the insulator. Then got my bow and arrow to shoot up the fish line and pull back over the rope. I froze my butt off but got it up and was able to work you at most of your counties. We left to drive back to Fairfax after I worked you in Somervell on 30m. Also you filled in a few band counties as well. Again many tnx."

Wow….well, you know N4CD tries not to hit snow storms and real cold weather…but my nemesis is WV in Nov/December each year. Karl was just a few miles from WV there.

It was 60 degrees on Sunday and pleasant. Tomorrow and the day after it is back to winter (30s all day), but that is Texas weather. I'm glad Karl got his antenna back up. He caught me in a bunch, along with dozens of others. It's been a busy January for my mobiling. N4CD will be off to the mini-convention in south TX via some route through 'new' counties, so stay tuned. There will be a couple mobiles on each mode headed to TX in mid February.

Just some stats to show band activity. Many runs were county lines.

Sunday 1-25-2009, from W6RK

Band	40cw	40S	30cw	20cw	20SSB
Runs	21	31	12	25	30

40M wins by a hair….on SSB.

Awards

Third Time #219, Randy, AA8R, December 31, 2008
USACW #1179, Mike, WA2DWP, January 8, 2009
Fifth Time #93, Dave, KE3VV, January 10, 2009
Fifth Time #94, Larry, N2OCW, January 10, 2009
USACA #1180, Billy, KD5YUK, January 15, 2009
US-PA "N" #3, N4UJK, Ed, January 13, 2009

Events for County Hunters

It looks like Feb 7th is the day to be near a radio to get counties! I hope the DE party has more activity – been limited. Maybe a mobile needs to go run the 3 counties and win the category easily?

Vermont QSO Party RS(T) and VT county or S/P/C www.w1bd.org 30 days
Feb 7 0000Z - Feb 8 2400Z CW band edge+40 kHz; SSB lowest 25 kHz Gen band; VHF SSB 50.200/144.200; FM 146.69, 146.55.

Ten-Ten Winter Phone QSO Pty Call sign, name, QTH, 10-10 number www.ten-ten.org
Feb 7 0001Z - Feb 8 2359Z

Minnesota QSO Party Name and MN county or S/P/C www.w0aa.org Feb 7 1400Z - Feb 7 2359Z in multiple periods
CW 1.850,3.550,7.050,14.050,21.050,28.050;
SSB 1.870,3.850,7.250,14.270,21.350,28.450.

Posted Trips on K3IMC Site:

WØZQ - February 7, 2009 to February 7, 2009 - CW Only

Minnesota QSO Party. 1400 to 2400 UTC Feb 7. . I will be activating the following Minnesota counties in this order: Carver, Sibley, Scott, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele, Rice, Goodhue, and Dodge. 20m, 40m, 80m from each stop. 73, Jon.

KØLD - February 7 to February 7 - CW Only

Traveling KOLD FROZEN northern Minnesota for MN QSO Party. Counties in order: Anoka, Isanti, Sherburne, Mille Lacs, Benton, Morrison, Todd, Stearns, Pope, Douglas, Grant, Ottertail, Wilkin, Clay, Norman, Polk, Red Lake, Mahnomen, Clearwater, Beltrami, Hubbard, Cass, Itasca. 99% CW.

KØPC - 07 FEB 09 to 07 FEB 09 - CW Only

MN QSO Party mobile operation in the following counties with expected start time in each: Le Sueur 1400z -> Sibley 1427z -> Nicollet 1452z -> Brown 1523z -> Redwood 1552z -> Cottonwood 1620z -> Murray 1650z -> Lyon 1716z -> Lincoln 1742z -> Pipestone 1809z -> Rock 1838z -> Nobles 1917z -> Jackson 1945z -> Martin 2013z -> Watonwan 2046z -> Blue Earth 2112z -> Faribault 2147z -> Freeborn 2209z -> Waseca 2239z -> Steele 2303z -> Rice 2330z

Delaware QSO Party RS(T) and DE county or S/P/C www.fsarc.org
Feb 7 1700Z - Feb 9 0100Z CW 1.825,3.55,7.05,14.05,21.05,28.05; SSB 1.86,3.96,7.26,14.26,21.36,28.36; Digital per band plan.

New Mexico QSO Party RS(T) and NM county or S/P/C
www.swcp.com/~n5zgt
Feb 7 1700Z - Feb 8 2359Z CW-1.85,3.55,7.045,14.05,21.05,28.05,50.095; SSB-1.85,3.925,7.26,14.28,21.38,28.38,50.13.

Courtesy ARRL Contest Corral, ARRL, Inc, Newington CT

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