

# County Hunter News

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Volume 4, Issue 6

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](http://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](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](http://www.countyhunter.com) . Back issues of the County Hunter News are available at [www.CHNewsOnline.com](http://www.CHNewsOnline.com)

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## Notes from the Editor

### 1) Monthly Activity

Despite horrid conditions, people were out giving out counties. Barry, N0KV, and W0NAC, headed to ND, SD, MT, WY and NE putting 'em out on SSB, PSK, and CW. Kent, KL1V, made a 3 week trip from FL to AL, AR, MS, LA, MO, IA and GA on CW and SSB.

George, AA4GT, reported that the FL QSO party went well for him. He worked 1256 QSOs in 13 hours with 79 multipliers, 49 states (missed SC), and had the best score ever! There were quite a few mobiles out, and hundreds and hundreds of spots for the FQP. George has over 1500 counties on CW now and is a regular on the cw frequencies.

KN4Y reported on his activity in FQP:

“Thanks to all of you who worked me in the Florida QSO party. I made 548 QSO's on 40-meters and 630 on 20-meters. I ran 27 Florida counties, worked 44 states, 4 Canada and 7 DX. Saturday was the best day, the bands got flaky on Sunday. I covered 913 miles, I paid cash and cannot remember what I spent, and the activity was priceless. I actually was on the air 16 hours (out of 20). Made several food stops and could pass a rest area. See you next year same month.”

Lloyd, NX4W, was running for 10 days putting out most of MS and some in LA during the first week of May. Good signal this way for most of the time and lots of activity. He and Kent were both in MS at the same time almost crossing paths.

N0KV and N0LFV were out running in CO and WY for a few days.

Leo, WY7LL, and Chris, WY7ML, were in WY and MT for a trip.

Rufus, KD4HXM, headed to MT putting out the counties on the way there. After arriving there, he had a medical emergency and had to head home immediately.

On of the long time cw county hunters, KA4IFF, Esther, became a silent key this month. She will be missed.

There were quite a few awards issued this month. Mobiles are venturing out with the better weather on trips, and to Dayton and back.

## **2) May 3-4 – Contest Weekend**

This weekend had the MARAC CW and SSB County Parties, the 7<sup>th</sup> Area QSO Party, the IN party and the NEQP. Wow. On Friday night (0000z), W9MSE was already out and running in KY until 0500Z. Lots of contacts on 40M which remained good until late, and many spots on 80M for him. On Saturday morning, 40M CW was really hopping with sigs from the east and west coast strong. The 7<sup>th</sup> Area Party started early, and the west coast sigs were good, with much of the country working ID, MT, OR, WA, AZ from the middle and east of the country on 40M for a few hours. Then things got fairly quiet on 40M as the day progressed, and the A index once again climbed toward double digits.

There were quite a few 7<sup>th</sup> area stations on 20M for the folks to catch, mostly on cw. Late Saturday night, there were some strong 40M SSB sigs from 7 land with some rarer counties with big signals. KM9X and KB9MGI were in there working them along with many others. I caught some new band counties on SSB as well. Great fun! There were also some loud SSB sigs out of New England Saturday night! The contests went till 0500Z but I

crashed before then! K7SE ran some WY counties mobile – good sigs on 40M later in the day.

For those hunting 1x1 calls, there were dozens on like N7D, N9A, N9Q, and K7K – special contest calls.

K4YT reported he did well in KY with W9MSE, and got his next to last in WA State. He is hunting for Adams, WA now as he closes in on USACA.

On 20M SSB net, there were just 2-4 contacts per county for KL1V out mobile in AL and GA – conditions not that great for most – you had propagation in some directions but not others on 20M, and not much ‘short skip’ less than 1200-1500 miles or more. Ed, KN4Y, was busy in AL, FL, and GA putting out counties for the MARAC test. KY1T put out a few in IA for the folks.

Many fixed stations also got on to give out their counties, including W0EAR, N8II, AA4GT, WA7JHQ, KA1LMR, KG5RJ, K4BAI, W4HSA, and many others. Norm, W3DYA, was out running east TX. I needed a dozen he ran, but zip copy on 40M in any of them! He got loud when he was within 75 miles of the house. Dang! Oh well. Many others got him, though. I wonder where he hid the dollar when he ran my home county.

Later on Saturday, the NEQP got going with dozens and dozens of spots. Meanwhile, K5GE was headed up through WV and PA on 20 and 40M SSB, and KL1V was putting out counties on SSB and CW in AL. There was a fair amount of activity in the IN QSO Party with AE8M, WT9U and other mobiles out there. WC5D ran some counties in TX, and W8UE was out in NM for the MARAC test. The DX was in there chasing NE QSO and others they could hear on 20M, and working them at night on 40M!

Sunday, Paul, WA2ABD ran some counties in PA. There were a few mobiles (K1KI, W1EP) in the NEQP, but not many heard or spotted.

So many stations! It was feast time for those just starting out, or filling in band-counties, or finishing up the last few in a state. Or hunting for prefixes or stars from KN4Y, W3DYA, KL1V, or W9MSE! The majority of spots were on 40M, but lots of activity on 20CW for those far enough away to hear them.

### 3) Net Shenanigans

Seems very little changes. Every time I or N9STL or KA3DRO make a contact on 20M SSB, one particular NC 'club station' with "James" as the operator is so happy to hear N4CD or Joyce or Ron that he talks over the reports or give false reports while the mobile is giving a report. Guess he figures no one at MARAC is ever going to disqualify him from the awards program. And it happens to half a dozen others who 'dare' to venture on 20M SSB and work the mobiles. Is he back to being delusional about 'owning the frequency'? Riley set him straight on that – he doesn't own the frequency.

Once NC turns it over to the mobile to run, the mobile is in charge of the frequency. One NC does not 'own' any frequency, nor have a right to decide who the mobile can and cannot work. Plain and simple. Even worse, he disrespects the mobiles. There aren't a whole lot of them these days with bad conditions and high gas prices, so you would think that any NC wouldn't be screaming over K5GE trying to prevent contacts and showing him how little he thinks of mobile operators. The 'club' ego transcends common decency! His motto is 'jam away'....and do it while the mobile is transmitting, so the mobile won't realize what is going on, but it will be a busted contact if James can succeed. I'm really surprised he still has any mobiles running on 14.336

Does the dimwit in South Carolina understand that? Apparently not, but more surprising is that ANY MOBILE puts up with his run being interfered with by NC. As the 'club' has found to his dismay, many mobiles simply choose to operate only on 40M SSB now (the friendly net) or on CW, and make rare appearances on 20M SSB when 'conditions allow' (like someone really needs their county on 20M).

K0IYA posted on the K3IMC forum on 4/28/08:

"Today on 14.336 KZ2P, or whatever his call is, attacked me during a relay. I asked for a relay during my relay the mobile came back reporting he had lost net control. I stated he had lost net control. Jim came back to me and said "stop giving me crap". I waited to the end of relays and was able to work the mobile. At the end Jim called me and asked "what's your problem". Again I stated the mobile had lost net control. I was told "go back to 40 meters where you belong".

Other stations heard this and I receive some phone calls and emails telling me of their own experiences with this "person". Why does Marac support this conduct?

Marac bylaw: (8)

Conduct: Evidence of disruptive operating practices or inappropriate conduct in any aspect of MARAC PARTICIPATION may lead to disqualification from all participation in the program. Actions that may lead to disqualification include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) The submission of forged or altered confirmations or applications.

(b) Transmitting from a location other than the one specified during the operation.

**(c) Participating in activities that create an unfavorable impression of amateur radio, such activities include malicious attempts to cause disruption or discreditation of an operation. “**

It seems to me this creates an unfavorable impression of amateur radio and is disruptive operating practice. This conduct from what I have been told has been going on for years. Does Marac bylaws have any teeth or that it "just sounds good". I am fairly new to MARAC and I can see Hams hearing his conduct thinking this group is not for me. Why is this allowed? Can any officers that read this offer a reason? For now I guess I will have to work stations only on 40 meters since I have been "banned" from the 20 net (along with several others). As one phone caller told me "welcome to the club". This is crazy. Rob”

It's not just 'several others'. It is several dozen! And this 'MARAC member is STILL eligible for MARAC awards. You bet it is crazy, but apparently the officers are so afraid that they will get banned themselves if they take action that they are simply powerless wimps.

While K5GE was on Nantucket, the 'club station' was in there – and heard by dozens, trying to screw up contacts with certain MARAC members trying to work Gene. Heard in CA, IL, MO, and up and down the country, east to west. Does he think people don't realize what is going on?

Members are resigning in protest. Likely the convention this year will be sparsely attended as few want to be associated with MARAC and the 14.336 situation where it takes absolutely no action to rid itself of association with KZ2P (like award eligibility for Nth time, NC, and other awards). Few mobiles out there bother to go to 20M SSB even these days. There is even poorer attendance at the “KZ2P Love Fest” in South Carolina. Last year they barely had enough to even call it an event.

The ones that are new quickly learn of the ‘idiot’ that screams over the top of them when they get called by certain stations. They quickly realize there is more than a ‘screw loose’ at the club facility in SC, and at the annex in FL. Yet another year with the same situation (or worse). More mobiles and fixed stations fed up with the antics of ‘the club’ (K2JG) and leaving county hunting. W9JR posted on the K3IMC forum that he needs 15 to finish, and then is going off to digital or something else. Anything but 20M SSB.

If you check the needs for Larry, N2OCW, you’ll see he posts that he is now ‘on the black list’. Or maybe not. Oh, I guess his sin is that he doesn’t run on 20M, even though he can’t hear the NC when he is usually on late in the evenings. Another very active county hunter shafted by the ego of the club station. What’s more amazing is that anyone still lifts a finger to help them, and is willing to give up all their morals to enforce the ‘K2JG’ agenda, or themselves getting banished. Relay in an already banished station, and you’ll hear about it immediately with a blistering phone call or email. Pathetic but true. The phonetics phobia continues with new stations constantly being ‘reminded’ and threatened ‘last warning, I won’t tell you again!’ type second grade silliness.

#### **4) K5GE heads East –**

K5GE took a big trip from TX back to the east coast, and wound up on Dukes and Nantucket, MA. No one good for MG had ever run from Nantucket so there were BIG runs. Conditions were horrible but many got through, despite jamming from KZ2P on some calling. Gene is cleaning up a lot of needs for MP. Some are down to needing less than 150 now for MP! He had good runs despite the occasional QRM from NC trying to prevent contacts. Gee – I thought NC was supposed to facilitate contacts, not try to prevent them. Gene put up with the disrespect, and continued working folks.

## On the Road with N4CD I

On the last trip to central TX with W0RRY, we didn't have enough time to run up to OKLA. On April 29, I picked up Charlie for another trip up to OK to run the SW corner. Quite a few folks had needs for them – including Jack, N7ID, closing in on his Master Gold Award, AE3Z, closing in on his, and others who had needs posted on the K3IMC web site. Conditions weren't expected to be too great, but we thought we'd try it anyway. Somebody has to keep putting out the counties. The weather was predicted to be decent – an important consideration in 'tornado season' when going up to 'tornado alley'.

Kent, KL1V was running in MS on his long trip, and Barry, N0KV, and Matt, W0NAC, were up in SD, WY, and into NE on this day. Frank, AA9JJ, and Kay, N9QPQ were headed from IL to MO to OK. Lloyd, NX4W was in MS. It was very active on 40M SSB with K0IYA, WT0A, N5UZW, N9STL, WA9DLB, KM9X, AA1VA and others helping out run mobiles and do relays.

So it was up to Wichita, TX, which we had skipped last time, then on to Cotton, OK, through Comanche, and over to Kiowa, Tillman, Jackson, then Harmon, OK. I also needed some of them for my 3<sup>rd</sup> time, so W0RRY/QRP appeared to give me on contact with the 30M QRP rig. It sure helps when you can get some counties each other needs when you travel with a friend – and you don't have to sweat the propagation. Charlie would run up on 20M SSB for only the OK counties. Talk about 'bad conditions these days and the lonely folks with only 20M SSB to use from the 'left coast' or New England. After Charlie's run on 20M, I moved off frequency to work the others looking for the MP contact. We then headed back into TX (Hardeman) back down through Wilbarger to Wichita then home.

In the past, when out with another county hunter, I've used handhelds on 2M FM and on 223.50 (remember when novices only had the 220 FM band for VHF voice privileges? – 1994 or so? – Not on 2M). Well, that's all changed



now. I've also used a Mizuho 6m handheld (SSB/CW) on 6M to get a cw contact before, but now the rig is a MFJ Cub QRP rig on 30cw. When we get back to serious 17M work, maybe I'll have to figure out something there?

Listening occasionally on 20M SSB, most runs by others had 2-3 contacts. I good run might be 5 or 6 contacts on 20M with current conditions (MUF basically below 10 MHz). That's if you could even hear the mobiles. Then maybe one relay, but often no one able to hear the mobile or NC to even ask for a relay!

Charlie worked an average of 2.5 stations per county on 20M SSB. Jackson, OK, was a last county for one of the other 'club' members residing in the FL 'club annex'—he just showed up for that county then vanished, not even helping out with relays. Probably 'taking care of the paperwork', I'm sure. Conditions were a lot better on cw and SSB. Even on 20M there were more cw contacts per county, and of course on 40M, there were usually a dozen or more contacts from each county, and a dozen or more on 40CW. The A index was up a bit which didn't help.

When it came time to buy gas – ouch! About \$35 at a time after 280 miles or so.....\$71 for the one day trip. Of course, I usually drive further on a one day trip than the daily average for a 'county putting out trip'. On those, usually the first day is a long day, then you are down to 300-400 miles a day as you stop and run county lines, or run a 'dead end' county where you got into it over a bridge or just past the sign, run it, then head back the way you came. When I am 'putting out counties' I usually start later and get to the motel earlier than a one day trip, where I was on the road at 6am, and got back home at 7pm. The first 3-4 counties are 'too frequently run' to worry about, and you just want to get through them to more interesting stuff. It's still going to be expensive to be out on 7 and 10 day trips these days! I used to plan on \$80/day for gas and motels and meals. Then it got up to \$100. Then \$120 and even more back east with more expensive motels. Now, I'm looking at \$130-\$145 or more a day to be out on the road. Ouch! My car gets about 28-29 mph typically after you correct for odometer error on the 5-10% ethanol fuel. It's a lot better than 12 mpg SUVs but still taking lots of gas for trips.

I guess with ever rising gas prices, we'll be facing the need for 40-50 mpg cars just to have a lot of mobiles out there. Gas is \$3.50 in OK, and \$3.55

here, and likely headed for \$4+ here and \$4.50 or more in CA and out west. Well, maybe I shouldn't be that surprised after reading and writing all the 'peak oil news', but it still is painful even knowing the reasons why! Hi Hi.

On the radio this morning was a comment that in the past five years, folks went from spending 10c of every dollar for food and energy to now spending 17c of every dollar on food/energy. Of course, the gov't will tell you the 'cost of living' hasn't gone up all that much, but the retired folks sure know the gov't is full of baloney on this. With CD rates dropping all the time, it's getting harder and harder to 'afford things'. I'm saving up some \$\$ for summer travel, so hopefully the gas won't get out of hand for another few years. The Buick has another 20-30K miles left in it, I hope. Who knows what after that? We'll have to get a bit more 'efficient' at using expensive gas.

Do you remember Ed, WA0SBR, and his trip planning? He'd spend months carefully planning a route for an entire state – with dates and times for each county – then go put them out. Lots of planning ahead – with shortest distances between them and minimum mileage to get them all. He was the third one to run all 3077 counties. We might have to start being very smart and spend lots of time cutting all the waste out of trips now that gas is getting up there in price.

## Antenna Mount by WG6X

Ray, WG6X, sent in the following pics and description of his mount on the smaller, more gas efficient car. His car gets in the high 30s if he takes it easy. Now that gas is getting up there in price, he is using the smaller car more for trips. Not as comfy, but less pain at the pumps.

He wrote:

“Antenna mount attached to frame at tow assembly area. Made up of a T plate with two holes drilled for car's tow assembly mount and a steel pipe that has been bent up after clearing the bumper to add height with a plate drilled with a 1/2 inch hole and a 1/4 inch hole for mounting antenna and ground.”

He removed the hooks that come on many cars for tie down, and used those bolt holes. He had a steel fabricator make up a plate and steel pipe assembly, welded together. He plans to add a small plate on top to mount the base for the antenna.



Antenna Mount on Car



Bracket underneath using 'tow hook' holes

On many cars, the bolt holes are tapped and ready to use for ham mounts.

One other option that many county hunters and HF operators use on cars is to mount a trailer hitch. Many of these also use the existing holes, and provide a 'receiver' that takes a tow bar on which you can mount a tall antenna or screwdriver system. While not the 'ideal spot' being low down, if you run a tall antenna it likely evens out. And any antenna is better than no antenna!

## Electric Cars

[http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10601407](http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10601407)

“PUT the pedal to the metal in the XH-150—a souped-up Saturn Vue—and watch the instruments. Sure enough, the speedometer shoots up in a satisfactory way. But an adjacent dial shows something else: the amount of charge in the car's capacitors is decreasing. Ease off the accelerator and as the speedo winds down the capacitors charge up again.

Such a capacitor gauge could become a common sight on the dashboards of the future. A capacitor can discharge and recharge far faster than a battery,

making it ideal both for generating bursts of speed and for soaking up the energy collected by regenerative braking. AFS Trinity, a company based in Washington State, has turned that insight into a piece of equipment that it has fitted into an otherwise standard production model as an experiment. The result—the XH-150—was unveiled at this year's Detroit motor show.

In fact the XH-150 is a three-way hybrid, employing a petrol engine and conventional lithium-ion batteries as well as its special capacitors. An overnight charge gives it an all-electric range of 40 miles (60km), after which the petrol engine needs to come into play. AFS Trinity says the vehicle is capable of more than 80mph and returns the equivalent of 150 miles per gallon (more than 60km/litre) in normal use. Edward Furia, the firm's chief executive, reckons the extra kit would add around \$8,700 to the price of a petrol-only vehicle were it put into mass production.

This, however, may be only the start. Eventually, the so-called ultracapacitors on which the XH-150 is based may supplant rather than merely supplement a car's batteries.”

Remember SuperCapacitors (and the nanotechnology that goes into them)? Not much news in the past year. Everyone is ‘still working on it’.

“Whether ultracapacitors really will take over the market now dominated by batteries, rather than merely supplementing them in it, remains to be seen—for batteries themselves are also getting better. They do have a chance, though, of being one of the 21st century's disruptive technologies. And even if they do not replace batteries entirely, the world will surely be seeing more of them in applications which need that little bit of extra oomph from time to time. After all, as Dr Schindall points out, animals use two types of muscle fibre: one for endurance and one for rapid movements. So it could make sense for machines to do the same.”

### **Low Speed Electric Vehicles (LSVs)**

[http://www.economist.com/world/la/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=11294453](http://www.economist.com/world/la/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11294453)

“IN THESE times of high petrol prices and worries about climate change, you might think that any country would be proud to enjoy a lead in manufacturing electric cars. Not Canada, it seems. Two Canadian companies, ZENN Motor Company and Dynasty Electric Car, make small electric cars designed for city use; a third, which will use new battery

technology developed by Exxon Mobil, plans to launch a model later this year.

But almost all these “low-speed vehicles” (or LSVs) are exported to the United States because Canada refuses to allow their use on public roads.

to reverse the agency's decision. “It's a ludicrous regulatory situation. All you can point to is oil and the big guys and think there's a conspiracy somewhere,” says Danny Epp of Dynasty.

Mr. Epp reckons that his car should be allowed on urban streets with speed limits of around 50kph (30mph) or less. But Dynasty recently gave up the battle. In March it announced that it is being bought by a Pakistani firm, which will move production to Karachi and export to the United States from there.

ZENN—that stands for zero emission, no noise—promises to fight on. Ian Clifford, its boss, points out that there has not been a single death related to LSVs in the United States, where 44 states allow them and some 45,000 such cars are in use. And gas-guzzlers imperil public safety by polluting the air, he notes. But Mr. Clifford is not expecting change soon. He claims that his campaign against Transport Canada has made him enemies. “Two senior, entrenched bureaucrats have told me personally that if it is the last thing they do, they'll keep LSVs off the road in Canada,” he says.”

## Peak Oil News

### 1) From Goldman Sachs

“May 6 (Bloomberg) -- Crude oil may rise to between \$150 and \$200 a barrel within two years as growth in supply fails to keep pace with increased demand from developing nations, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. analysts led by Arjun N. Murti said in a report.

New York-based Murti first wrote of a “super spike” in March 2005, when he said oil prices could range between \$50 and \$105 a barrel through 2009. The price of crude traded in New York averaged \$56.71 in 2005, \$66.23 in

2006 and \$72.36 in 2007. Oil rose to an intraday record \$120.93 today on speculation demand will rise during the peak U.S. summer driving season.

“The possibility of \$150-\$200 per barrel seems increasingly likely over the next six-24 months, though predicting the ultimate peak in oil prices as well as the remaining duration of the up cycle remains a major uncertainty,” the Goldman analysts wrote in the report dated May 5. ?

## **2) Ford F-150 Hybrid**

Ford announced that it will be providing a hydraulic hybrid model F-150 in 2009 that will have a 60 mpg city EPA rating. It uses a hydraulic system to capture braking energy, and then use it to help accelerate the vehicle. There is quite a bit of weight and space needed, but on a 4800 lb vehicle like the truck, there is lots of room. That could be interesting – it will have better city mileage than a Toyota Prius!

## **3) Looming Diesel/Heating oil crisis**

This fall may be real interesting. Over 70% of all vehicles made for Europe are now diesels. With critical shortages of hydropower in many parts of the world, and tens of thousands of diesel generators at work, the demand worldwide for diesel fuel is skyrocketing. Even Juneau, Alaska, is on emergency diesel generators since an avalanche took out their hydropower, and half of Chile is on emergency diesel power. “Distillates” are made from oil. You get about 10 gallons of gasoline and ten gallons of distillates (diesel and heating oil) from a barrel of oil. With diesel demand up, heating oil is up 70c already and will be through the roof maybe come fall when it is time to fill those tanks for winter. Worldwide there is a diesel crunch.

## **4) Federal Gas Rationing Program?**

It could be coming in the not too distant future

## **5) Pemex News**

Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company, said April crude production fell the most in more than 12 years as output at its largest field declined faster than the company forecast. Crude oil production fell 13 percent to 2.767 million barrels a day in April, Mexico City-based Pemex, as the company is known, said today on its Web site. Output a year earlier was

3.182 million barrels a day. The decline was the largest since October 1995, when output fell 29 percent.

Output has been on a decline since reaching a peak in December 2003. Since 1999, proved reserves have been more than halved to 14.7 billion barrels of crude oil equivalent.

Cantarell

Output at Cantarell, Pemex's biggest field, fell 33 percent to 1.07 million barrels a day, according to the Energy Ministry. That was the lowest output since March 1996 at the field, which peaked at 2.192 million barrels a day in December 2003 and once accounted for about 60 percent of the company's output.

The company forecast output at Cantarell would fall 15 percent annually until 2012.

Exports fell 14 percent to 1.439 million barrels a day. Pemex, the third-largest supplier of crude to the U.S., has said it will cut exports as output falls so that it can refine more of its own oil.

## **6) SUV Sales**

You think you want to be a car salesman trying to unload a lot full of SUVs these days? From a CA salesman:

““The cars are literally just sitting, and it doesn't matter how much you sell them for,” Fernandez says of the SUVs and trucks nobody wants anymore.

"It's amazing. I've never seen it this bad -- ever."

Fernandez, a wholesale auto dealer who has been in the business for more than 20 years, says SUV owners are hit especially hard. The really large ones with V-8 engines that can get as little as 12 miles per gallon in the city - like the Cadillac Escalade, Ford Expedition and Chevy Suburban -- are dropping in value by the thousands. Watch the sinking value of guzzlers!

For the first four months of this year, truck and SUV sales are down a collective 24.8 percent. SUV sales plummeted 32.8 percent while pickups dipped 19.9 percent, he says.



"If gas prices stay where they are at or continue to rise, the body-on frame SUV is an endangered species and the pickup truck as a personal car is an endangered species," Brown says.

How do owners react when they're told their once-\$40,000-plus vehicles are now worth less than half that?

"When they find out what you think their truck is worth, they think you're trying to rip them off or something," says Fernandez. "Small cars are gone within a week; SUVs are sitting here since last summer."

According to AAA, gas prices reached another all-time high Friday, with the national average price for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline at \$3.87. Seven states are now over \$4 a gallon, AAA says. How much do you need to work to pay for your gas?

Some recently shared their stories of buying used Geo Metros --the oft-maligned, snail-sized car from the 1990s that gets gas mileage similar to a hybrid of today for a fraction of the sticker price.

"I used to be a car snob, and I used to be too vain to drive anything that doesn't shine," said Marci Solomon, an electrician who has a 100-mile commute to and from work. "But now it's about, do I want to eat, or do I want to make it to work? I want to do both."

## **7) IEA Speaks**

The premier Energy Monitor finally changed its tune. Now:

"The world's premier energy monitor is preparing a sharp downward revision of its oil-supply forecast, a shift that reflects deepening pessimism over whether oil companies can keep abreast of booming demand.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency is in the middle of its first attempt to comprehensively assess the condition of the world's top 400 oil fields. Its findings won't be released until November, but the bottom line is already clear: Future crude supplies could be far tighter than previously.

A pessimistic supply outlook from the IEA could further rattle an oil market that already has seen crude prices rocket over \$130 a barrel, double what they were a year ago. U.S. benchmark crude broke a record for the fourth day in a row, rising 3.3% Wednesday to close at \$133.17 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

For several years, the IEA has predicted that supplies of crude and other liquid fuels will arc gently upward to keep pace with rising demand, topping 116 million barrels a day by 2030, up from around 87 million barrels a day currently. Now, the agency is worried that aging oil fields and diminished investment mean that companies could struggle to surpass 100 million barrels a day over the next two decades.

The decision to rigorously survey supply -- instead of just demand, as in the past -- reflects an increasing fear within the agency and elsewhere that oil-producing regions aren't on track to meet future needs.

"The oil investments required may be much, much higher than what people assume," said Fatih Birol, the IEA's chief economist and the leader of the study, in an interview with The Wall Street Journal. "This is a dangerous situation."

The agency's forecasts are widely followed by the industry, Wall Street and the big oil-consuming countries that fund its work.

The IEA monitors energy markets for the world's 26 most-advanced economies, including the U.S., Japan and all of Europe. It acts as a counterweight in the market to the views of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The IEA's endorsement of a crimped supply scenario likely will be interpreted by the cartel as yet another call to pump more oil -- a call it will have a difficult time answering. Last week, the Saudis gave President Bush a lukewarm response to his plea for more oil, saying they were already adding 300,000 barrels a day to the market, an announcement that did nothing to cool prices.

At the same time, the IEA's conclusions likely will be seized on by advocates of expanded drilling in prohibited areas like the U.S. outer continental shelf or the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge.

The IEA, employing a team of 25 analysts, is trying to shed light on some of the industry's best-kept secrets by assessing the health of major fields scattered from Venezuela and Mexico to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. The fields supply over two-thirds of daily world production.

The findings won't be definitive. Big producers including Venezuela, Iran and China aren't cooperating, and others like Saudi Arabia typically treat the detailed production data of individual fields as closely guarded state secrets, so it's not clear how specific their contributions will be. To try to compensate, the IEA will use computer modeling to make estimates. It will also collect information gathered by IHS Inc., a major data and analysis provider based in Colorado, as well as the U.S. Geologic Survey, a smattering of oil and oil-service companies, and national petroleum councils.

### **Supply-Side Gloom**

But the direction of the IEA's work echoes the gathering supply-side gloom articulated by some Big Oil executives in recent months. A growing number of people in the industry are endorsing a version of the "peak-oil" theory: that oil production will plateau in coming years, as suppliers fail to replace depleted fields with enough fresh ones to boost overall output. All of that has prompted numerous upward revisions to long-term oil-price forecasts on Wall Street.

## **On the Road with N4CD II**

On the road to Dayton – the annual trek - This year I planned a trip for about six days on the way to Dayton. Charlie, W0RRY. was not available this year to head to the big hamfest. He and his XYL, Mary, are now campground hosts at the large park area where they now live, and they just started that, so he couldn't take off for 10 days. So it was solo N4CD going the county hunter way to Dayton from TX via OKLA, KS, MO, IA, IL and IN. I had about 8 to run in KS for MP, and there were many needs for others to finish up. Jack, N7ID, needed Pawnee, OK, so we arranged a sked

on 20M SSB for that. Mike, KQ0B needed Cowley, KS, so I adjusted the route on the fly to head through that up to Lyon, picked up two more, then stopped for the night in Marion, KS. The motel was inexpensive, but there were limited choices for dinner- so it was the Pizza Inn with the senior salad bar and a personal pizza. It was that or the Subway or a BBQ drive through.

The second day it was then west to Rice, then North to others, and across through Riley and Pottawatomie, needed for some for LC. Cliff, K6JN, and Nelda, W6XJN, were headed from FL to CA, putting out the counties on 40M. The first day I made it up through Gentry and Worth, MO, usually in demand. There are no motels up that way, so I had to make it to Mt. Airy, IA for a motel.

This year I added a new toy to the mobile. I have seen the prices of the GPS units drop and drop, and finally got temped with a good sale at the local electronics superstore Frey's. Some units are now under \$100! So I acquired a Garmin Nuvi 200W, and put it to use on the trip. It seems pretty good, but sometimes you are driving along, and it suddenly thinks you are driving across fields – no road shown (like Rt. 7 in Doniphan, KS). Usually it is pretty good, and it would be very good if they would add in county lines! If you run a lot of back roads, it can come in handy. More than once or twice in the past few years, I've gotten completely lost for a while – on a road that suddenly comes to a fork with no clue – or comes to a T with no signs. When it is cloudy, sometimes you don't even know which way you are going. So I figured it would help out, and with gas at near \$4, I don't want to be exploring unnecessarily taking detours. A few saved miles and it might pay for itself quickly.

Of course, if you run a PC in the car for trip planning, you can buy the GPS add on to Street Atlas and follow the route on an even better planning tool. That requires having a full laptop PC running – one more thing to mount, one more to distract you. Great if there is a co-pilot or navigator on board. There is an add on overlay you can add to Street Atlas that has the county lines in it. I usually carry a laptop for email, but haven't progressed to using it along the route. I chose the simpler self contained GSP nav system.

The first night, I decided to try it to find a motel. I asked it for motels and it said there was one about 10 miles away. OK – I headed for it, and there it was right where the GPS said it would be. \$34 including tax, and was OK.

If it weren't for that, I might not have known there was small motel in Marion, KS and headed further west till I found one on the main highway.

The second night, the GPS said there was one in Mt Airy, IA. I headed for it...but when I got to where it was supposed to be (right downtown) there was nothing there! Fortunately, I stopped at gas station on the main highway and there was new motel nearby – not listed in the GPS unit. Hmmmm? Most of the time I just had it on the map position watching the highway ahead for 2 miles. So the second night, it struck out! It does also list the telephone number, so I could have called ahead.

**GPS RULE #1 – Always call the motel to see if it exists, has the same name, and if they have availability.**

I was in Gentry and Worth, MO when it was time to stop, but there are no motels there. I had to go another 40 miles up to IA to find a motel. This was a go to dinner time or later, then find a motel trip. Since it is getting to be summer, the sun went down around 8pm, so there was lots of spare time to find one before dark.

In IA, the sun comes up at 6am and goes down about 8pm. There is lots of daylight, but 40m gets real long by 6pm and not many still on at 7pm central time. However, that's a lot better than 20M SSB. Every now and then I listen up there to see who is running and where. Most runs are 3 minutes and the mobiles work 3 stations or so. Not much fun on 20M. On cw, usually there are a handful there, and sometimes two or 3 DX stations (DL3DXX, OH3JF). In the mornings on 30M, I sometimes work a JA or two – nice DX there. Probably could work the VKs at that time too. 40M has been excellent most days with coast to coast propagation for part of the day, and 1000 mile range most of the time. The sunspots are very slow in returning, so 40M is still very good.

The third day I headed up through IA, and around lunch got a call on the radio from Ralph, WB4FFV as I ran Buena Vista. He invited me to stop by for lunch at a local café. We had a nice eyeball for an hour. Tnx for the lunch, Ralph! Ralph's towers came down from ice – bent by ice coming off the roof in a big chunk, hitting the guy wires, and bending the towers. He isn't back on yet at home. Ralph has worked all the counties, but was very busy with his job(s), and didn't have time to get all the confirmations. Now

unfortunately, he may have some reworks as some of his contacts are with silent keys. He's still trying to get all the others confirmed.

If you are working on USACA – don't wait for years and years to send out MRCs if you can help it– some might be SK by then. You might find someone who got the logs, but in many cases, you are just plain 'out of luck'.

When he gets back on the air, we need to help him fill in any blanks. For the newcomers, Ralph was a Big Rig driver, headed all over the country running counties for years. His last truck was so noisy with all the electronic systems that it was next to impossible to hear much. He did run some CW, but only when he stopped could he work much on SSB. He retired now, so he is no longer putting out the counties like in the past.

The third night I again used the GPS for the help in seeking a motel. In one town there was a Super 8, but it was full up. The other motel in town was pretty cruddy looking, so I decided to look for more options (it will give you pages and pages going further away). I found one 25 mile along the route, and called ahead – they had a room.

The name of the motel had changed. I asked at check in when, and the lady said the name changed about three years ago, but all the phone books and directories still had the old name. Same motel, same phone number, different name. So on the 3<sup>rd</sup> night, the GPS was 'mostly right!' That was also the only motel in that town. Dinner at a local Chinese restaurant. (\$8) The car was getting 28-30 mpg on the trip so far, and gas was around \$3.60-\$3.70.

The next day I headed east- I was ahead of schedule, so I could run some back roads and add in some other counties by running counties two by two headed east across IL and IN. In many cases, just 2-3 mile detour to get them!

WB9NUL, Joyce, and Barry, W9UCW were headed from TX to IL. Monday they spent a lot of time on 20M working 2 or 3 people per county. Not much logging to worry about, and at least you get a transmitted county credit toward Master's Gold requirements of 1500 points. On Tuesday, she and Barry came down to 40M, and they worked about 20-30 people in most counties. It's mighty lonesome on 20M these days. It's sad when K5XY is hollering time and time again for a relay on 20M and no one hears him, and

those who do are ‘not allowed’ to mention he is there. Sad. Actually pathetic.

Others were calling for relays, but NC didn’t hear them and if there was a helper, didn’t either. Oh well, it’s a wonder anyone is still there with all the frustration of not getting in when ready to run or not getting a relay. Gene, WB4KZW, was headed east, Ed, K8ZZ and W8JJ, Tim, headed south on their way to Dayton. Chuck, AD8W, was headed down through IA, and Paul, WD9EJK ran a lot in WI, and the Upper Peninsula in MI, then back south again. Pete, N6HH, ran some for the folks in SD both 40M SSB and CW. It was very busy on 40M! Lots helped out with N5UZW, N9KNJ, KE9OI, NN8L, KA0SHC, KM9X, N9KNJ, AD4IA, and many others helping out to get everyone heard on relays. That’s the ‘county hunter way’ with folks pitching in, and doing relays themselves when they have the best propagation. No need to ‘ask permission’ to do things!

Jeff, W9MSE, desperately needed Jones, IA, so I headed there. I headed up to the county line. Off X40 there is a county line road. You turn onto Cedar-Jones road, which is a dirt road - barely. There is a sign that says: “Class B road – enter at your own risk – minimal maintenance”. It was rutted, one car wide, and had big puddles on both sides – definitely a 4 wheel drive or pickup truck road. However, right at the main road there was S7 noise from the power line – so I had to venture about 500 feet down the road to get the noise down! That was good since I could hear W9MSE faintly for his LC in IA without the power line noise. I ran all the bands. . That was a good run. I carefully backed out the 500 feet. Very carefully.

I then headed east for a few more, then stopped for the day. I was way ahead of schedule so far. No sense to get to Dayton and sit around waiting for the hamfest to start.

The fourth night, I was headed south out of Clinton county, IA into Scott. I again asked the GPS for a motel. Just ahead was a Super 8, and I gave them a phone call. Good rate and right on the route, so that’s where I wound up, and as a bonus, the Cracker Barrel was right there, too! So the GPS unit got it right that day. In the morning, I headed east to Illinois.

Gene, WB4KZW, was running up through KY headed to Dayton. Ed, K8ZZ, and Tim, W8JJ, started down from Genesee, MI, while AD8W, Chuck, was running in IA and IL headed to IN, and Paul, WD9EJK was

coming down through MI. Lots of mobiles headed Dayton way. Jeffrey, AF3X, ran a few counties but was in rain so didn't run many due to bad weather. Stan, AC8W, ran to and from Dayton. He runs counties about once or twice a year – on the way to and from Dayton or HamCom in Dallas! He hangs out at the QRP booth. Jim, K4DI, headed up that way.

For the day, I ran some county lines adding in a few more counties, and wound up in Hancock, IN at a Super 8. There was a Chinese buffet place next door, and that's where I ate dinner. Gas was up to \$3.85 in Illinois – ouch! There were lots of counties put out on 40M with excellent runs. 40CW was good, too, often with 1500 mile skip and some nice short skip as well. I ran on 30cw (usually 3-6 contacts) and on 20M cw (4-8 contacts). That gave folks further out a chance to catch the counties as well – KM6HB, W7GVE, AA4GT, W7KQZ, K4XI, VE1WT and others when they were not able to use 30 or 40M, but often many of them got through on the lower bands. Activity should continue on Thursday, then be quiet for a day or two as everyone enjoys the hamfest!

Ralph, WA4HXG, just finished up Bingo, so he is very active now hunting for contacts good for the Master's Gold Award. That is one of the few awards that you cannot begin work on from Day 1 (the day you got your ham license) – you have to wait until you have your Bingo before starting on MG. For USACA, USACW, prefixes, etc, you can use contacts going back to the day you got your ham license! (if you are lucky enough to have those logs still around!).

I ran Champaign, OH, then headed down to my motel for the hamfest.

## Dayton Hamfest Report

Friday started out cold (46 deg) and rainy. I had left Texas wearing shorts. It wouldn't be Dayton if it wasn't chilly, raining, snowing, or doing something else for at least part of the 3 days. Now it was long pants and a warm jacket type weather and some protection from light drizzle Friday morning. There was highway construction everywhere in Dayton, but if you took the 'alternate routes' you could avoid most of it.



I headed off to the Salem Mall to park and ride the shuttle bus to the Hara Arena. Luckily, I caught the first bus run and got to the gate about 7am. There was no one at the flea market gate, so I could just walk in despite a normal opening time of 8am. It was raining a bit, so not many were set up, but I wandered around to the tables that were open for business. There were lots of goodies changing hands early, but also lots not open yet waiting for 8am and a stop to the light rain showers. Things picked up quickly.

After a few hours, I headed in to the Hara Pub for their breakfast special, then back out to the flea market. I found some goodies myself so the back pack filled up. I resisted buying any of the boat anchors.

You could find old mobile rigs – Multi-Elmac AF67, Heathkit Single Banders, SBE33 and 34, a KWM-2, plus many fixed station rigs from the 40s to the 90s. There were Drakes, Knight Kits, Heathkits, Eico, Gonset, a “Twoer”, quite a few old six meter AM rigs, and lots of misc. Old receivers from Heathkits to Hallicrafters and Nationals, and a lot of parts. The past issues of the CHN have had pics of what you typically see. I didn’t see anything unusual this year in the way of old mobile gear. Mark, W9OP, was out selling stuff in the flea market. Stan, AC8W, was at a QRP table inside.

The county hunters had an informal get together – about 35 showed up, including N8KIE, KJ8F, N8HAM, N8CBW, N0ZA, AF3X, KI7WO, K4DI, KJ8F, W8MP, K8CW, W9GUY, W8OP, KB7QLH, N9JF, N4CD, WD9EJK, N8KIE, AA8R, N9QS, NF0N, W9UX, K8ZZ, W8JJ, W9GUY, AA9ZZ, N9QEI, and quite a few others. We met up behind the prize booth in the stands and yakked and yakked for as long as folks wanted.

After the day’s activities, about 20 headed over to the Golden Corral for dinner. Sharon, KJ8F, talked the manager into clearing tables for 25, so we all could sit together. Folks yakked for 2 hours. Here are some of the folks at the gabfest!



W9UX, Terry (formerly WU9F) USACA #1036



Paul, WD9EJK USACA #812



Silver, N9QS USACA #439 and Sharon, KJ8F #1043



Alan, W8OP, USACA 1077



Mike, NF0N, USACA #53





Don, W9GUY, USACA #176

More pics in future issues!

Mark, W8MP, is an airline pilot. He is thinking about trying to run some counties while on layovers – usually about 20 hours. He has a unique situation. As an airline pilot, he carries on his luggage. As you might recall, you cannot carry ‘tools’ on board in your carry on luggage. No pliers, no screwdrivers – nothing to help with a mobile temporary setup. No magnets, either! Anything he uses has to go together with no tools! We did some brainstorming and perhaps you will hear him on the air from some far distant locations!

Some of the nifty things seen were some new paddles for CW. Bengali has the ‘Traveler’ but it is literally ‘gold plated’ (the contacts) and it sells for \$290! Ouch. W4GNS, Gary, uses one in the Big Rig. That’s about half a new radio. The MI QRP club had some nifty small paddles for QRP- \$35 as

a kit that takes 20 minutes to put together. There aren't too many options for mobile keys that I like.

My requirements for a 'mobile key' is one with no springs that can come out during the car bouncing, the key hitting the floor, accidentally bumping the key. If you have an MFJ paddle or Bencher, you'll find it doesn't take much to make it inoperable. Worse, some have little screws or other parts that can come lose and the wrong time and get lost. Not good when you are 1000 miles from home! So another requirement – nothing that fall off, come lose with the key in the car for 100,000 miles over any type of road and one that will stay 'in adjustment' for 100,000 miles or more. No projections to snag things, or get bent or damaged. I currently use a Schur 'mobile paddle' I bought long time ago when the Euro was at 95 cents, so it only cost \$130. Now, with the Euro taking \$1.55 to purchase, the key has gone from a reasonable \$130 or so to \$270 or more. So that isn't a good option for new county hunters.

Third, I don't need or want a 2 lb key. At home, you need a heavy key to keep it from walking across the operating table. In the car, most county hunters have the key held down one way or another. I like a small thin base, that I can easily attach to a narrow wood board (you could use a piece of plastic or PC board or similar) that I can stick under my leg and operate the key. Some want to strap it to a leg, so a 2 lb weight is not helping. Few paddles fit the bill.

I decided I had enough fun on Friday, so it was back on the road on Saturday with a few fewer dollars in the wallet. You can go through a lot of money buying small goodies! I spent what I figured I'd spend. I stay at a little funky motel at \$45/night including taxes, so that leaves some \$\$\$ for the flea market. No internet at this little motel that's off the beaten path. The gentlemen at the check in counter said 'Welcome back' – seems he recalled I had been staying here since 1984! I've made it to Dayton about 30 times in the past 40 years – the first time being in 1968 or 1969. It's still the best in the country, but we'll see what happens with higher gas prices.

The flea market gets less full each year. I suspect the attendance was down by 15% and we'll get the official figures later. The outside wasn't all that full and the inside wasn't packed either. Some of the regulars didn't show, but most did. No auto makers this year – times are tough for them right now. (They usually had some RFI experts present to help out). I don't



recall Yaesu either – maybe I missed it. It's just been bought by Motorola, and Motorola is hurting right now.

I ran into Ron, W2CUI – he stays at the same motel as I. He is the curator for the Antique Wireless Association Museum in western NY. They are moving into much bigger quarters and in a few months or a year at most, should have about 10 times the space to show the collections. They have five working spark gap transmitters (set up now), plus literally thousands of old BC radios, TVs, a fantastic library for research. The AWA sponsors a convention each fall that attracts thousands. We yakked for 4 hours on Thursday before the hamfest started. So we'll update you on the new museum. You might wish to check it out. So much for another year at Dayton. I left a few bucks behind, as usual.

## On the Road with N4CD – After Dayton

Everything was working fine, but the body was a bit tired from 10 hours of walking and being on my feet in the flea market. No interesting forums for me to attend this year. Other than a few aching bones and muscles, I was ready for more county hunting, so I headed east. It was over through the rural parts of OH- Holmes and Coshocton and the others. Darrel, W6TMD, needed a few there as did others. Then it was into PA to grab a bunch of needs headed across the state. I made it to Cambria, PA, and saw a sign for a Comfort Inn, so I splurged a bit that night. The only non-smoking room was a handicap room, and it had no tub (just a walk in shower) to soak in! It was the last room so I didn't complain and it was late and dark and rainy. Dinner at a nice restaurant that was mobbed (Saturday night). I ate about \$10 worth of 'free' breakfast in the morning waffles, eggs, sausage, cereal, fruit, OJ, coffee...pigged out. It was then eastbound.

Tom, K7REL, needed Mifflin, PA, LC WBOW, so I added it to the route. It's about a 2 hour detour out of State College, PA. The roads aren't bad – but it rained all day – no fun. You head up a mountain to the county line – right at the top.



Mifflin County PA, LC WBOW for K7REL for Five Star

It's nice when they put up BIG signs for the county. You can be flying along and spot it easily. Rainy day. Regular sign is along the highway, too – the official sign on the line just ahead of car. Stopped quickly on side of the highway to take the pic.

You can easily run C/L northbound, but I was headed south. I ran on 20cw right after the county line and snagged Tom for his last WBOW. In order to turn around, you have to go down a 5 mile or more steep grade to the first exit...down and down and down and down forever. At the next exit you can finally get turned around. At that point, I think about 10 or 15 miles of extra gas at \$4 a gallon. They need turn arounds at county lines for the county hunters not to waste gas! (Hi hi )

Nice and quiet there too to run it at the exit! So I did, running the bands ( 30,40cw and 40ssb) then headed up the mountain pass again. Nice rest area right at the county line northbound. I had already run the bands, so kept on driving. The car was getting about 30 mpg since I was driving most of the day 55-60 in the rain on the highways. Gas at \$3.80-\$3.90 now. I was waiting to see when it would reach \$4. In the not too distant future, we

might look back on 'only \$4 for gas' and wish it was that again. Meanwhile, it was \$40 or more for fill ups depending how far down I ran the tank.

Ron, KB6UF, was running up in ME, and I managed to snag him in 2 I needed for MP. Ron ran 20/40cw and ssb. Ed, K8ZZ, and W8JJ, Tim, were headed home along with many of the other mobiles, but their path took them to WV. N8KIE went through IL on the way home to MI from OH, Paul, WD9EJK ran, Stan, AC8W, ran some, N9QS, Silver put out a few. 40M SSB was hopping with runs in dozens of states, with K6JN in TX, KB6UF in ME, and a dozen mobiles in OH, IN, IL, TN, KY. K4DI, Jim, was running on his way back home. WB4KZW was on. WG9A put out some on his way to MI. K8JF ran a few. It was busy. 40M cw was active too. Every time I QSYed, there was a good chance someone was running there! So often it was 'down 2' to run. As long as someone spotted the run, there were lots calling.

W6TMD, Darrel, needed Tioga, NY, so I took a detour to get that one. I guess I was a few miles from WV2B's house, but we didn't connect for an eyeball. KA2MKQ also resides in Broome, which I ran, but alas, we didn't connect either. The second night out of Dayton I hit a motel I had stayed at before in Madison County, NY. It's right next to a nice Italian restaurant, and they give you discount too boot. Second night of wireless internet. Motel \$67 including tax, and that was after putting \$45 in gas into the car after 360 miles of driving. So each night, I add a few lines to the story here as I head across the county.

It's good to hear Randy, AD4IA, working them on cw. He said all he wanted to do was work all states on cw, but he must be up to a few hundred counties by now. That is how N9STL and KI7WO, and KA0SHC started and now they are up to thousands. Joyce only needs under 100 to finish all cw. She was a cw novice 3 years ago, and now she is in there all the time. Of course, sometimes its easier to get through on cw. AB2LS often needs a relay close in on 40M SSB, with the broadcast and other crud on the band. On cw, we often work direct - no relay needed at 339 both ways. Same for many others. If I'm in a real quiet place, you can hear very very faint cw sigs. Often on SSB, the splatter and BC interference make it darn tough to pick out those 22s and 33s even in a quiet location. Harry, W6TPC and Mark, KM6HB, also chasing cw counties now. The USACW is turning out

to be a popular award, and of course, cw contacts count for all the other awards such as USACA, Nth time, Bingo, MG, MP, etc.

If you are stopped, sometimes you can turn off your noise blander and it helps reduce the crud and splatter. Noise blankers can cause cross mod and make it rougher to copy sigs when a real strong one is on the band. In most cars, you can't run with the blander off and the car running.

You can sure hear the Generation 1 Prius cars go by! Noisy as all heck especially going uphill! The newer ones are quiet going by. Too bad they aren't quiet if you put the radio in the car- horrendous problems according to everything on the web – but they get 50mpg! It may come to that as gas prices climb. The Geo Metro car built in the 1990s got 50+ miles on a 3 cylinder engine. Duane, WV2B, ran his to over 200K miles and it finally died. My sister had one, and wishes she had kept it a few years longer. Now, they sell for 3 times 'book value' as people are desperate to have inexpensive high mileage cars if they commute long distances.

The third day out from Dayton was the third day of rain. Now it was down around 40 degrees in VT...raw.....and the forecast for the night was "35-40" with snow in the higher elevations, and rain with a few snow flurries overnight possible. Brrrr...this TX county hunter doesn't do cold that well. I've been swimming for a month in TX and wearing shorts for 2 months. Oh well...these are the needed counties! I did pack my ski jacket, but hoped I would not need it! If I see snow, I might turn around! However, many needed those northern VT counties, and New Hampshire counties.

On Monday, I ran east from Madison, NY, up through Herkimer and Hamilton- right through the million acres of Adirondack State Park – very wilderness and awfully cold in winter – often the coldest spot in the county with temps down to minus 40 and 50. Snow mobiles outnumber cars in the winter time, and of course, a few ski areas like Lake Placid, NY.

Great summer location for the two month long season (maybe July and August). It was then to the old summer stomping grounds in Warren, Essex and Washington, NY, (where my parents spent many summers) and over into VT to run up from Rutland to Chittenden, then over to Essex via Lamoille, Orleans, Washington and Caledonia. The bands were flakey – sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Lots got through and a few last counties in there, too. KM9X needed Lamoille for MG. I missed a few

folks as well – just not good timing or conditions. So its motel time in St. Johnsbury, VT, and over into NH tomorrow.

Motels more expensive up north (\$87 with tax), and many still closed ‘for the season’ waiting for summer tourist time! Half the motels in this town are hunkered down, and the one I am at has big sign out front – “ Access to vast snowmobile trails’. Hmmmm.....I’m not sure I want to be here in winter if you can snowmobile right out the back door. Yuk. Snow! Summer starts here on July 4, and is mostly over by half way through August, and definitely by Labor Day. I ran over to Essex, VT, 10-15 miles away and put it out, then went QRT back at the motel. Dinner at a pizza restaurant 1000 feet away that I could walk to. Too miserable to drive far tonight.

I ran a few times on 14.342 today. That seems to get someone at the ‘club’ annoyed at people trying to work counties, and that someone did the same ole thing...random cw on top of folks calling. No respect for the hundreds of county hunters. .the cw “CQ CQ CQ CQ” bit...no ID...programmed into his memory.....on cw....and false signal reports....didn’t bother 99% of the county hunters, but it shows INCREDIBLE contempt for all the county hunters out there when someone tries to run THEIR contacts, doesn’t it? On SSB, random cw on top of calls, numbling, noise. Sure makes you wonder if he really expects any respect if he can’t give any to others?

Amazing how one person is willing to try and ruin contacts with dozens and dozens of county hunters – your contacts...and he could care less about you. It is only ‘him, him and more him’ .....sort of rhymes with “jim, jim, and more jim” ....It’s hard to believe someone could have the arrogance to put ‘his’ interests ahead of all the other county hunters. **I guess that shows the true measure of the man.** What else can you say? Just ignore him and work through or around him. Nearly all do successfully. I don’t let him ruin my day. Apparently he gets upset that anyone ‘dare’ to even venture anywhere on 20M SSB. We just report his antics. If he didn’t do anything stupid, there wouldn’t be anything to write about!

On Tuesday, the rain stopped and temps actually got up to 70 deg. I headed out early into NH..and hit Grafton, then Coos. Went right by K2HVN’s town, but he was sound asleep. It’s a long road down through Carroll, NH to Strafford, NH – and lots of small towns, delays, and road construction. So it was slow going. Eventually got to Strafford, ran it, and then headed

over into ME on highway 109 to 111 to the Tollroad exit/entrance 32, then north. (my old map showed exit/entrance 4). Oh well, I should get new map if I go back!)

I had missed Kennebec for MP, so it was a speed run up the Maine toll road. \$.60 to get on the tollroad. \$1.25 at New Gloucester Plaza. \$1 at Gardiner Toll Plaza. Off at Exit 102 inside Kennebec. Well, at least that is new exit saving you from having to drive to the next further one! Not even on my old map. Tolls again going south...\$1.00 here. \$1.25 there. All the toll roads up there have E-Z-Pass or some other charge a thing, but I had to keep paying real cash at the tollbooths. A couple bucks in tolls each way up and back. \$1.25 here. \$1 there. I'm tired of paying tolls!

They are very nice to county hunters on the Maine toll road – many don't have county signs along them – they put the name of the county on every little town sign you enter along the tollroad – every few miles – so you start with York, then Cumberland, Androscoggin, and into Kennebec. You have to run up another couple of miles to get to exit, so I ran the cw freqs, reached the exit, ran SSB on 40M while stopped, then got back on and headed south finishing up the cw freqs. Dang...they need to have exits right inside a county! No making us drive up 5-15 miles to find an exit to get off, run, and then head back south. That's a \$4 gallon of gas wasted!

It was then a speed run back down...same counties, no need to run again. IF I could have figured out how to get on 95, I could have hit Sagadahoc, but it wasn't obvious, so I ran back down the toll road. After I got home, I see if I went another mile or two, I would have gotten to I95. Oh well! (Oh Percy – they give RECEIPTS for tolls along the tollway –hi hi – I didn't need it for any reason, but why not get one at the last toll booth just to have it. Seems Percy gets upset when any mobile runs Maine Counties and starts having nightmares and fumbling with math. ) Stopped at service area going south. Only choice was Burger King or Hershey's Ice Cream or similar so grabbed burger, ate in 5 minutes and headed back south. 100 miles back to NH, then on to Essex MA.

There used to be a real active county hunter up there – I think it was W1VXV – now NT1V – USCA 939 – ran the counties with a great mobile signal and ran the net many days with big signal from his home. Think he got tired of 20M SSB after he got his number. Lives in Kennebunkport area.

Some of the old timers likely remember him. He kept ME off the ‘most wanted list’. No one to replace him lately.

It was something like 100 miles back to the Maine border. Put on the CD player and just kicked back, paying the tolls every 20-25 miles or so. Worked a mobile every now and then when I could hear them. Might need the band-county. Who knows? On Tuesday, I put \$70 in gas, and it took more than that – tank 2/3rds full at end of day. Ouch! 200 miles to get Kennebec, ME, out of the way. Those MP needs are getting expensive – hi hi. But lots of others got the counties in the process, too., and racked up a few more transmitted counties. Now I need to run the rest of ME, MA, Dukes and Nantucket, and RI, plus NY NY to finish off New England. Oh, and Belknap, NH (only one not done in NH).

I ran straight through the small section of NH, then hit Essex, MA (home of KO1U). A quick trip along 495 beltway, then on 213 to the interstates north in NH again to get back into Rockingham, Merrimack, Sullivan and Grafton again, winding up in Windsor, VT that night. So far on the trip, I got a Platinum everywhere I needed thanks to the support from W6TMD, N0ZA, WG6X, K5GE, N9STL, N4AAT, N8KIE, N9QS, K5GE, W3CR, AB4YZ, WQ7A, N4UJK, who work me when they hear me and when needed. Closer to IL, I also worked W3CR a few times, but it’s a long haul from there to ME on 40M SSB! Joe, N5UZW, is heard just about everywhere on 40M SSB! Chuck, W3CR, said someday he’ll be on cw.....The big majority of all the other MG holders on are cw. That’s got to be an amazing statistic....all but one of the mobile MG holders operate on cw! Some not too frequently, but most of them very active on cw from the home station. It’s tougher being a mobile cw op, but many will give a county on special advance request.

The Super 8 in White River Junction is \$55 – not bad for this neck of the woods. Dinner was at the Chinese buffet place nearby and good. Conditions on 40M were ‘tough’ from ME, and even worse than normal because the A index was 11 when I checked in the evening. Yuk! 20M was OK most of day with many calling. 20M was fairly good for part of the day and was the best band – but Maine is a ‘long haul’. Not too many mobiles these days in ME or New England. Well, come to think of it, not too many mobiles. Too many discouraged by the antics on 14.336 and high gas prices. That doesn’t bode well for those trying to finish up. What’s going to happen when gas hits \$6 and \$8 and \$10?

I worked K5GE in quite a few. He has a beam on 20M, so I see how tough it is to work ME from TX. I just have an R5 vertical, so I'm glad I got Kennebec out of the way. Likely no hope of hearing KB6UF mobile there on my station at home.

I hear people complaining about gas...but if you look at the stats, the price of gas has nearly doubled...and people overall are using 1% less gas! Some cut back, but there are new drivers, new cars— all burning gas and consumption hasn't been dented. It is likely going to take another doubling to finally get people to change! You hear all about 'people cutting back'. The facts are, people are using only 1% less gas. Or 99 in 100 are using the same, and one has stopped using gas. Same thing. No real effect yet. Or instead of driving 100 miles a week, they cut out one 1 mile trip to the 7-11 to buy something. As my sister commented, likely to save that 1 mile a week, they ordered delivered pizza instead of picking it up. Someone else drove the mile.

Same for Memorial Day travel. The news is making a 'big deal' out of the fact that people will travel 1% less this year. Duh! The price of gas is up 70%, and people cut back by 1%? Gas is an 'essential', or in the lingo of the economists, is 'inelastic'. People will pay whatever it takes to get it because 'they need it' to continue their lifestyle. (get to work, get to fun, get to stores, visit family, go on vacation, etc). That does not bode well, when the world starts being short by a few percent more each year.

Today it was down the interstate from White River (Windsor, VT) to Windham, then over to Cheshire, NH, for a dead end run across the bridge at exit 3. Then south down through MA (Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden)

N4AKP, Pete had asked me about Hartford, CT...so I ran down the interstate another 13 miles to the first exit in CT...ran the county then went to breakfast at the MacDonald's. Then back up to the tollroad west to Berkshire, MA and over into NY state (Columbia and Rensselaer). I had to stop for that one—short one for all the bands, and that is the ole stomping grounds from the RPI college days so had to do a good job on it. Then into Albany (another stop—short) then south on the Thruway (tollroad) through Greene, Ulster, short distance in Orange(stopped for a while to put it out). Then back to the east. Getting on and off tollroads cost even more \$\$\$.

Dang. I'm supporting someone/something with all those tolls.



W0GXQ, Jerry had called about a rework in Putnam NY. I wasn't planning on going there, but if I went across I84, I could get to the others..so over the bridge to Dutchess (toll naturally)...and I84 goes into Putnam....success! Then south into Westchester(home of KF2O) on the interstate 684 to 95. I hit a mile of Fairfield CT, then down more toward the city. Darrel needed 'da Bronx' and so did I for MP.

Down I95 now to exit 14..nice sign welcoming folks to 'the Bronx'..success with W6TMD who had been mostly 339 copy all day. Lots of city noise of course – ran the bands, then over the Throgs Neck Bridge (\$5 toll!) on 295 to Queens to I495 to Nassau to Suffolk. Ed, KN4Y, needed stars in the Bronx or Queens and Suffolk, and got all excited. He was 599 copy most of afternoon. He said Gator got all excited about LC WBOW Five Staror something after those two counties.

Well, driving in NYC is definitely not fun. Everyone is in a hurry. The pavement is not always good. Folks cut in front, behind, and drive like there is no tomorrow in a big hurry to get to the next traffic jam or get one car ahead of everyone else. Going out I495, the 'Long Island Expressway' – also often known as "the world's largest parking lot" or the 'Long Island Distressway', is not fun. But not much worse than the beltway in Dallas (which I try to avoid like the plague). It was just a bit before rush hour, so that helped. Some creeping along and stop and go, but it could have been a lot worse – and likely was an hour later.

Since it was getting about time for rush hour and I had run both Nassau and Suffolk, I found a motel, and hunkered down for the night. Ran Suffolk at the first exit in a giant parking lot for some business. No need to go further out in Suffolk that needed! I'll head back through the city tomorrow AFTER rush hour! (like after 9:00 or 10am). There were a few rain showers that didn't help the city driving. You can sure use a navigator here. I really wasn't sure I was coming here ...but the counties need to get run, and I needed them. So many counties – so little time.

After running Nassau and Suffolk(nice of them to put signs on I495) I asked the GPS for nearby motels. It came up with a list, and I checked with an Econo Lodge in Hicksville - \$89 – so I headed there after calling to see what the rate was and that they had a room. That GPS really came in handy as the motel was a few miles off the interstate. City streets and maybe 15 turns to get there. I slept in to avoid the worst of rush hour the next morning.

After dragging my feet for as long as I could, I headed back east into ‘the city’. (The GPS is not happy about letting you search for things while moving. You can ‘over ride’ the safe mode if you have a co-pilot, but it is hard to punch in something with the little buttons when driving, so you best be stopped to do it.)

I programmed in Surf Ave, Brooklyn into the Nuvi GPS...to take the ‘shore parkway’ into Queens then Kings County, and then right over to the Bridge to Richmond. That sure helped to be sure I took the right turns at the right places, and was in the right lanes so I didn’t get merged into something else, or wind up 3 lanes over from where I needed to be. I had written down what I wanted to do, but it was good to have a backup.

I waved at Coney Island. It was sure reassuring as you had to go from this expressway to that one, exit on this one, bear right onto that one, etc. It gives audible directions of which lane to be in at which time so you don’t get stranded in a left lane when the road branches off right, or vice versa, or you don’t know which exit (eastbound or westbound) since you think you want to be going either north or south at that point.

I turned it back to just the map display after I was on the right road to get to the bridge. Everything there has a name – Van Wyck, Shore Parkway, etc, as well as route numbers, but most folks navigate by the names which are more prominent. Ask most people about ‘I 285’ or I495 and they’ll just stare at you.

I thought about how to get to Kent, RI...that will be one needed MP county remaining in New England. Everything else is cleaned up. Hmmm....should I go there...or not....who else will if I don’t? and can I hear them? Ron, KB6UF, might run it, but with my R5 vertical in TX, it might be a ‘no go’. hmmm....you never know....decisions, decisions....I decided to go there to be sure of getting that one done!

Activity is slower now that only 2 mobiles are out running. KL1V in IA and MO running on 20 and 40. 40M good in the morning, blah at noontime, then good again. Bands not great shape either, but counties getting worked and some very good runs. All are home from Dayton. Not all that much action on 30M, but every now and then it got good and had quite a few takers. Otherwise, propagation there was blah.

I managed to find spots along the highway to stop and run on SSB and some of the cw in NYC – lots of ‘break down lanes’ and no one bothered me. Traffic was heavy (it never goes away) in NYC, but the noise surprisingly wasn’t too bad along that route most of the way along the south expressway. I got off in Richmond at the first exit and ran from a Home Depot lot ½ mile from the exit. After putting in some gas at \$4.09/gal, I headed over the NJ over the Goethals Bridge (more \$\$ of course), and ran Union, Essex, and Hudson. I had to pull off to run Union and Hudson (short distances) so not to ‘run out’ of the county before I ran it on multiple bands. Breakdown lanes come in handy. No one hassled me even though you aren’t supposed to ‘park’ there. There is always some noise – you can’t escape it. I had some good runs, so I can’t complain. Worse on SSB with the wider bandwidth.

Tolls! Tolls! Everytime you turn around you get hit with more tolls. \$5 over Throgs Neck Bridge \$5. . \$2 here. Northway, NY Thruway, Maine Turnpike, Mass Turnpike, Garden State Parkway, this bridge, that bridge, \$1 there. \$3 here. \$.80 here, \$1.25 here....and the big daddy of them - \$10 for the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. I think I’ve spent \$50-\$60 easy on tolls in NJ, NY and New England. (I’ve been across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge (\$\$\$\$) but that is one heck of a bridge). I finally made it over the Delaware Memorial Bridge, so maybe the tolls will be gone for a while as I head down I95 to I66 to I81 to I40 to I30 and head home...forgot about the Baltimore Tunnel. More tolls! And the Del Tollroad. You need to get down to Washington DC to be ‘toll free’ the rest of the way home on the interstates. Then you set the cruise control at 75 or so, and just drive for 1350 miles.

However, first I had to do CT and get some RI. It was up around through NJ on interstates(287) to get to Passaic(stop) and Bergen(stop), then over to Rockland and Orange again up the Thruway, across the bridge on 84 (didn’t I just did that on the way down? ) to get to CT and RI.

I discovered after I ran Bergen in Marriott lot in Mahwah that the county line for Rockland, NY/Bergen was possible to run just ½ mile ahead off the interstate. Oh well. Had to stop again for a while to get Rockland out before leaving it – just a few miles on the interstate.. Then miles of Orange again to 84. Then it was peddle to the metal for the rest of the day.

I ran the counties in CT, taking detour to Litchfield(stop), then across southern counties to nearly RI before I stopped after a long, tiring day. NYC

wears me out with all the attention required! . The GPS found the motel in CT and for Thursday night. In this case, it listed the motels and I called a nearby one to be sure they had a room before heading there. Then I followed GPS directions to get there. Nifty. \$50 cash, no tax...otherwise, if credit card they would add in \$6 tax. Didn't complain. Paid cash.

The next morning it was up early to run 3 of the 5 counties in RI, (someone run the other 2 – lots of LCs there) then back east into CT to finish all the counties there. Broadcast is really a problem on 40M – there in the mornings – there in the early afternoons sometimes at 2pm and evenings. When it is in, it makes copying everything hard. You are trying to decipher calls and reports behind music or talking with lots of distortion. Of course, most of the country gets the BC interference – it just starts early on the east coast and the desired signals are weaker. In TX, often the band is near useless for me till 8:30am with the Chinese broadcast pounding in.

Joyce, WB9NUL and Barry, W9UCW, were headed south from IL to south TX. In a few counties Barry ran it on 30cw, but most of the trip Joyce was on 20M. The VW Passat Diesel must have lots of noise since many were calling and not heard on 20, 40 and 30m. Bill, K2HVN was over in Jefferson NY. He headed back on the weekend putting out St. Lawrence, Franklin, NY and Grand Isle, VT and more headed back home – some really 'rare ones' these days.

In the evening, I watched some of the news. It is amusing to hear folks come up with 'reasons' why gas prices are high, and what silly actions to take. Congress is 'holding hearings' on useless things, calling in the oil execs to 'explain', threatening to sue OPEC, withhold military purchase agreements if Saudi doesn't produce more, etc!. Everyone 'wants' Saudi to 'turn on the taps and produce more' or ELSE! The Saudis are thinking – when the USA starts drilling in ANWR and offshore, then they will know the US is really is 'short of oil'. Otherwise, you got to be an idiot to be demanding someone else produce more so you don't need to use 100 acres out of several million up in ANWR to drill oil wells, or drill offshore in CA, FL, LA, and TX. (not that any of those would have any short term or long term impacts, but it at least sends a message that Washington DC is doing something itself!)

Well, I finished off my MP New England needs, got some others for the folks, gave out a few LCs, then decided it was time to head toward Texas by

heading back down through the eastern part of NJ. Got the last two for W6TMD up that way in NY, too, and for many others. I now needed to finish off NJ. Doing both MP and transmitted counties. With 3077 counties to run, and my total at about 2500 run the second time, who knows if I'll finish them all again? Might be too expensive to worry about that, but you never know. Most are out west, with maybe 10 back in New England, plus NY, NY. It takes tens of thousands of miles of driving to run all of MT, ID, CA, WA, OR, MN, ND, SD. Kent, KL1V is working on it the first time, along with AB4YZ. Not sure how many others are still serious about finishing up 'all transmitted' at this point.

My timing could not have been worse – it was Friday the day before Memorial Day and everyone took off early to 'beat the rush' and instead created it. I sat for hours at 10 mph stop and go on the Garden State Parkway trying to get to Ocean, Atlantic, and Cape May! Stop and go, stop and go for hours. No accidents. No construction. Just heavy traffic. You see a few interesting vehicles – a 50s Cadillac with humongous fins! How out of place they look today. (Probably 12-13mpg). Another was a 50s or 60s VW Bus...still running. Otherwise, lots of small and big cars loaded to the gills for the 3 day holiday weekend, with car top carriers to hold even more on many.

However, I finally got there, over the bridge into Cape May – stopped at the rest area. Visited by highway patrolman wondering what the big antenna was for! Ran county then headed east through Cumberland and Salem back to I95 where I found a motel at one of the first exists in DE. There were a slew of motels there, so I used the GPS to list them and then to call 3 of them to find the best rate- varied over \$30 for similar things, so took the less expensive one. Motels not especially packed as everyone is 'at the beach' in this neck of the woods (or the mountains).

Now that I am leaving New England/NJ/NY,, the rain is stopping and they should finally have a nice weekend! Good for them. I barely saw the sun the entire time I was in NY, VT, CT, NH, RI and NJ. Most days rain or cloudy and 'below normal temps'.

Friday got real busy with activity. W8FNW was headed down to NC, Ray, AB4YZ and his imaginary friend with a club call was headed down to GA from VA, putting out counties. Kent, KL1V, was still on the road in MO. N4AAT, Scottie ran a few in SC. Joyce, WB9NUL and Barry were trekking

toward home. W4HSA, a new cw man, was out mobile in NC. K8YJ ran some for the folks. Rick, AI5P, ran some down in FL. CW was hopping. Dennis, KD5JSS ran some in KS. 20M sounded rather poor, and 40M was 'OK' but not spectacular. I think the A index was up again in the teens – no fun!

It was 1436 miles from DE to TX, and I decided it was time to get home. Saturday I started out early, and made it to middle TN on Sat night (750 miles or so) then made it the 700+ miles home from there, arriving 6:30pm in TX. You can cruise along at 75-77 much of the way, so it goes quickly. No hassles on the bypass around Knoxville either, and no construction anywhere along the interstates to slow one down over the holiday weekend! Even though getting tired, I ran the counties home on at least 2 bands. They went by quick at 75 mph. Someone always needs them! Someone is always starting over, or collecting CW counties now, or filling in band counties for the County Challenge Award. So many counties, so little time.

Only detour on the way home was to snag Johnson, TN. Left I81 in Washington VA. Ran down to the county, made a quick contact, but had to drive five miles up the valley to get to good spot to run. Not much propagation out of a deep valley! Stopped in Laurel Bloomery (what a town name) and ran from the parking lot of a body shop. Turned around and went back down the hill, across 58 back to the interstate. Put the pedal to the metal again.

Trip: 6976 miles in 17 days of driving...whew...time to get the oil changed, tires rotated, haircut, and take care of the mail for the next week. County hunter mobiles must be crazy! That's the most miles I've driven going to and from Dayton Hamvention! See you on the next trip!

## Master Platinum and CW

It dawned on me that most who had qualified for the Masters Gold award were active on CW. Here's a list of the award holders, and whether they are active on cw from home, or on cw mobile.

<u>Call</u>	<u>Active on cw from home</u>	<u>Active cw mobile</u>
<b>K5GE*</b>	Yes	No
<b>KZ2P</b>	no	no
<b>N7BKW*</b>	Silent Key - Yes	
<b>KC4UG*</b>	SK – Yes	Yes
<b>W3CR</b>	No	No
<b>K9DCJ</b>	Silent Key	
<b>N8STF</b>	No	NO*
<b>KI0JD</b>	No	NO*
<b>KC3X*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>ND3T</b>	No	No
<b>N4CD*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>N9QS*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>KC6AWX*</b>	Yes	No
<b>AA9JJ</b>	No	No
<b>W6TMD*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>N9STL*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>N4AAT</b>	No	YES*
<b>AB2LS*</b>	Yes	No*
<b>WG6X*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>N8KIE*</b>	Yes	No*
<b>N9QPQ</b>	No	No
<b>N0ZA*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>N4UJK</b>	No	No
<b>KB6UF*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>AB4YZ*</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>WQ7A*</b>	Yes	No*

\*Does cw on special request -(N8STF ran all AK cw). KI0JD on special request. N4AAT on request. N8KIE/m on request. WQ7A/m on request.

17 of the 26 MG people used cw (and ssb) to get the awards, or will give a cw mobile contact – and many of them lately with the poor conditions and need to use multiple modes to finish up awards. Of the last 16 to finish, all but 3 are ‘cw people’. All but 2 of the cw people are active on 30M. Isn’t that interesting? **13 or the 16 operators to finish recently chased counties on cw!**

In the quest for Master Platinum, it will be interesting to see how many of the contacts are on cw. Since several of the MG holders are 'run off' the 20M SSB net, that deprives the SSB only folks from getting literally hundreds and hundreds of counties that are put out only on 40M SSB and the cw bands. (I guess they can keep saying a 'thank you jim' for that.) Darrel, W6TMD, is down to under 130 to finish the Master Platinum award! Many others are down under 300. Who will get there first? And who will be in the first few? I'll be happy to get finished within a year or two or three!

## Getting Folks Finished Up

It's all about getting folks finished up and having fun. About running counties, not 'running them off'. We published the KM9X listing of 'Most Wanted', and you can check the K3IMC website for 'most wanted' counties in the different states. But first check, because some needs are for MP, or YL, or CW, so be sure you can give a valid contact for that.

Here are some of those closing in.

N1BY needs about 90 to finish Five Star. N1QY is stuck at 9 for USACA first time.

Jerry, K1SO is under 50 to finish first time!

AA1VA is down to about 60, and we must have missed each other because I ran five of his needs on the last trip.

WV2B needs under 100 for Bing and that will make him good for MG when he gets the Bingo.

Greg, NM2L, down to 50 or so for USACW. KF2O needs about 50 for first time.

Larry, N2OCW, needs 31 for USACW.

N3AHA, Ace, needs 25 or so to finish USACA on CW.



KE3VV needs 5 to finish MP! And 50 for USACW.

AE3Z down to 25 for MG!

Many needs are out in MT and ID, and this is the time for travel there! So keep the needs in mind and watch the planned trips.

KW4V just needs Burke, ND to finish up.

WB4VFN closing in – cw only please.....

K4XI only needs THREE to finish USACW.

K4YFH needs about 30 to finish USACA using CW.

Lots of others closing in – check the K3IMC needs page. Use the select a state needs to see what you might be able to put out on a weekend to help out the folks, or when you go off to visit family or vacation!

It seems that USACW is a very popular award with many working towards it! Nice to see so much CW activity. Back 20-30 years ago, I think the cw ops were 20% of the county hunters. Now, it is more like 50% since the ‘situation’ on 14.336 developed. Great for cw county hunting, and with 30 meters added to 40m and 3556.5 and 20M, there are lots more possibilities. In addition, most of the state QSO parties are 95% cw operation, so your chances get even better!

Charlie, W0RRY, back on 40 and 30M now, so see if you can help finish im off for MG. Not many to go!

On the challenge for MP, at least half a dozen are under 300, and now you see needs listed for Master Platinum. How long until someone finishes? It could be less than a year IF the counties get run, and IF there is propagation to be able to hear them. Otherwise, it might still take a year or two. Most of those working seriously on it already have their 500 transmitted counties, so it is just a matter of working all the counties with a MG holder (either one in the county, or working one from the county if you go there after you get your MG). This summer, several of the active MG holders will be running out west in those desperately needed MT and ID ones!

Watch the posted trips. When you go out, if you can, post your trip, or give general possibilities. Let's knock off those needs!

## USA-CW

With the poor conditions on many bands, many people are seriously working now on USA-CW. Originally started years ago informally, MARAC started to offer the award a few years ago. About 100 people have qualified for it. It's a bit tougher than USACA, but all of your contacts from day one count toward this award, and many, while waiting for those counties up in the frozen north country to get run this summer appear, are off filling in CW counties and chasing 'band counties' on 20/30/40/80M and 17M.

Most of the activity in state QSO parties is CW. I think MARAC had an SSB contest the same weekend as CW, but I don't recall a lot of spots. There were hundreds and hundreds of cw spots for the mobiles out putting out the counties that weekend (also NE QSO party, 7 land and a few others at the same time – 97% cw).

Of course, counties on cw also count toward MG, Bingo, next time around, first time around, unless you are set on 'all SSB'. Most just want to finish up now with the poor conditions.

So if you have been toying around with getting on cw, now is a great time to start. We have lots of new folks in the past two years on cw.

## Awards

Second Time #377, Carol KA4TYG, 4/28/2008

Third Time #277, San, N7PIB, 4/28/2008

Bingo #289, Ralph, WA4HXG, 5/12/2008

Third Time #212, Dave, W4YDY, 5/13/2008

Ninth Time #4, Percy, KA1JPR, 5/8/2008

Five Star #32, Tom, K7REL, 5/18/2008

Fifth Time #88, Ernie, W7KQZ, 5/24/2008

Five Star #33, Ed, KN4Y, 5/18/2008

USA-CW #93, KQ0B, Mike, 5/26/2008

## Upcoming Events for County Hunters

AA4GT, George, reports he will be operating Field Day at W4F. Give a listen for him and the many others joining groups for FD. No sense trying to fight the QRM on trips this weekend. Kick back, join your local club group, and have some fun. SSB will be a mess and cw too, other than 30M. Most CH will not be out running that weekend!

Courtesy ARRL contest corral:

Alabama QSO Party RS(T), county or S/P/C [www.AlabamaQSOParty.org](http://www.AlabamaQSOParty.org)  
7 Jun 1600Z to 8 Jun 0400Z

West Virginia QSO Party RS(T), WV county or S/P/C [www.qsl.net/wvsarc](http://www.qsl.net/wvsarc)  
14 Jun 1600Z to 15 Jun 0200Z CW--35 kHz from band edge, Phone--  
General segments

Field Day – June 28 and 29 – go out and have some fun.  
[www.arrl.org/contests](http://www.arrl.org/contests)

A few mobiles (looks like AB4YZ and N8KIE) will be headed to CA on big trips in July. Check the planned trips page on K3IMC.

That's it for this month. CU Next month!