

County Hunter News

December 1, 2006

Volume 2, Issue 12

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, or provide news of upcoming events.

We hope you will enjoy the new 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 7038.5, 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 7238/7243, and moving soon to a new home around 7188 KHz.

You can see live spots of county hunter activity at ch.w6rk.com

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) Carol Ann, AB2LS, posted a note on the County Hunter forum from AD6Z. It read:

“AD6Z does not have Internet service so he asked that I write on his behalf to send his grateful thanks to all the CW operators who made his award

possible. He also wishes to thank all those who acted as net control or helped with relays.” Bill recently received his USA-CW award.

2) Getting the Master Platinum award became tremendously easier as several very active **OPERATORS** received the Master’s Gold award. The County Hunter community welcomes new additions to the Master’s Gold ranks with Carol Ann, AB2LS, Bob, N8KIE, Kay, N9QPQ, and Ray, WG6X. Also, since Nov 1, 2005, **operators** AA9JJ, Frank, N7AKT, Scottie, and N9STL, Joyce have joined the MG ranks. As time goes on, more and more will receive this award, making it possible to really advance toward the first Master Platinum Award. Everyone, even newcomers, can be collecting Master Platinum contacts. You don’t have to hold any other award to be filling in the counties with MP contacts. Then what challenging award next?

Several are at 2400 counties worked toward the Master Platinum award. With the many ‘multi-mode’ operators now chasing mobiles on both SSB and CW, the record books are filling up quickly with counties. Many of the new MG holders also run both CW and SSB, so when 20M conditions are rotten, you have 40MSSB or 40/30/20M CW to work that county as well.

3) Joyce, N9STL, took a nice trip to Southern Indiana and gave out 34 Master Platinum contacts, while Ray, WG6X, was running around in FL and AL, and W6TMD was making a couple thousand mile trip to TX, AR, AZ, OK, KS, NM, and other states, running on SSB and all 3 cw bands. Joyce and Ray ran on cw on the 40M SSB frequency after the run on SSB. Runs on the 40M SSB net often hit 10 minutes these days, as conditions continue to improve on the lower frequencies at the sunspot minimum, and during the winter months. People are now chasing ‘band counties’ and ‘all cw award’. Ron, KA3DRO, and Don, K3IMC took several trips in FL and GA to get counties they needed, and others needed. Trip report later in this month’s CHNews.

4) Last month the “Word” file for the November issue of the County Hunter News was 815k. When converted to PDF for the web, it expanded to 2.7 megs, so those on dial up likely saw it load very slow, perhaps taking 20 minutes to download, and when you moved through page 19 on the document, your computer likely sagged a bit processing that “GIF” of the county map. Normally, converting to PDF makes the file size half as big.

We'll try to keep things down in size to permit reasonable loading times via dial up. No more large 'GIF' format pictures!

5) Potential big news for CW ops – would you believe CW privileges on the 60 meter band? Maybe! The ARRL is always busy working in the best interest of ham radio operators – first the phone band expansion, and now the request for cw and digital operation on 60 meters. Maybe someday a 50 or 100 or 150 KHz wide band at 5 MHz? The USA is trying to put forward a proposal at the next WARC to give amateurs an exclusive 150 KHz allocation at 5.2 MHz. The only one working diligently to expand ham bands for USA interests is the ARRL. More later.

That is something to dream about for the next sunspot minimum. Maybe something we'll get this sunspot minimum for at least a few channels of cw, or a 'sliver' to operate in. Wouldn't that be nice?

6) Conditions on 40M have been good going into the winter. Lots of activity on 40SSB with N5UZW, KA0SHC, KM9X, W0FP, N2OCW, AE3Z, K2NJ, AB2LS, K8QWY, KD4HXM, WG6X, N9STL, NC4MO, and others helping out a lot with running the net on SSB. Good mobile activity on 40cw as well, and some mobiles also run 40cw on 7238 after the run on SSB. 30M still going strong with lots of runs. For many, twenty meters has been tough. And when things are rough on 40M with broadcast, Dan, KM9X, KB0BA, KV4DT, W0NAC, N3ISH, and Rufus, KD4HXM, break out the cw key and work mobiles on 7038.5 or 10.1225. (and on 20M, N6PDB, WY7LL, and WQ7A join in on the fun on CW).

7) There have been some new calls heard on 40M, both on SSB and CW, and some returning Old Timers like AD4IA and W9HA. More folks come to 40SSB and 40CW these days to get the counties they need as 20M conditions are often not that great, especially for folks in the middle of the country. Miserable might be a better word for current conditions. We'll likely have these poor 20M conditions next winter and beyond, but excellent times for 40M operation.

8) At my QTH, I've been busy going through old QSLs looking for 'band counties'. About the only contacts I have on 80 and 160 were from 'way back' in VA – 20-30-40 years ago, and those logs got tossed, but I saved all the QSL cards. I did play around a little bit in the 160 contest 15 years ago before I had neighbors all around. At first, I could string radials into the

vacant lots behind me. Now it is bumper to bumper house. Plus I get into their alarm and intercom systems. Ah, for a country farm QTH with no neighbors around for miles, and lots of 'quiet'.

Sweepstakes provided a few new band-counties on 15, a few new ones on 40M cw, but there were lots of repeats with skip to the same areas of the country. Nothing heard on 10M here during SS. Not a peep. I guess I have lots of work to do in the next sunspot max years to snag lots of counties. Lots of opportunity. The ARRL 10M contest is coming up in December for those living on the coasts. In TX, all I hear is WA, HI, Maine, and DX, if the band even opens.

The KY QSO party was good with two active mobiles on CW, one on SSB giving out counties. There was lots of 40M cw activity, plus those mobiles were spotted on 20M as well, but didn't have skip here on 20M.

9) I'm still amazed at folks working 'club' calls. According to the MARAC rules, they don't count for prefixes. To count for, example, a "W" prefix, the **OPERATOR** must have that as part of HIS/HER callsign. A 'club' call can never be an 'operator' by FCC rules and regs, as it has no 'operator' license. Why then do folks work the one club call running, W4CA? If they log it, and it shows up in the prefix book, it is a **BOGUS CONTACT**. What more can you say? Are people that 'anxious' to get the prefix award that they will **cheat** their way to it? If you work AB4YZ, you get the stars, the county, Bingo, and the "A" prefix. . You don't get a "W" prefix since he, the operator, does not have a "w" in **his** prefix. Plain and simple. What part of 'cheat' don't the folks understand?

You hear a NC operator asking "Is there a mobile station who would like to run a county". All the readers of the CHNews know a 'station' can't run a county. It is an 'it'. A 'who' is a person. Despite the best efforts of KZ2P, or his alter ego K2JG, 'stations' don't count for MARAC awards (other than Bingo) – you must work an **operator**, not a 'station' for every other MARAC award, including prefixes. The **operator** must have the correct prefix in his/her call. (not in the call in use at the moment). I'm sure he'd like to 'change' to rules to 'station' as he tried once before in his 'entity' bid attempt for NC rules change, which was thrown out by the MARAC BOD. "Its" don't hack it for MARAC. Awards go to operators only. When you 'mobile station' can go out by itself and run counties, then MARAC should consider changing the rules, not before!

10) Lots of folks getting close for awards – check the K3IMC needs page – see if you can help out. The ‘multi-moders’ seem to be closing in faster than those restricted to one mode – especially now that 20M is poor for much of the time. N0ZA has one to go for MG, and K8KIE is headed to Kalawao this month to run his needed county! KB6UF and several others closing in on MG. Some getting real close for USACA – N6HH, Pete, down to a handful! See if you can help out the folks.

11) Elwood, KA3MMM, bought himself a new Hyundai Azera - and is temporarily puzzled about how to get a radio and antenna installed. Maybe just a bit leery of poking holes in it? Maybe after a few months of withdrawal from mobiling and he’ll get it figured out for spring time when the weather in PA improves! Meanwhile, he is QRT mobile. Seems like he has lots of company with not much activity on 20M – too many ‘run off’ and too many just upset about what goes on there, and just staying at home. The action is pretty good on 40M though! Be sure you have 40M if you go mobile east of the Rockies!

12) Lots of activity on 40M with folks working on “band counties”. It’s also getting time to think about counting up your CW totals – as of December 31, 206, send in your CW totals to Elwood, KA3MMM. We’ll try to get the totals in the first issue after he releases the totals. It’s a good way to see how you are doing in your quest for USA-CW, or nth time USACW. Send in your ‘band counties’ to Risto, W6RK for listing.

The Trip – KA3DRO/K3IMC Through GA – by Ron KA3DRO

The dog woke me up at 5:15 on Tuesday morning.... about 15 minutes ahead of the alarm. I was all packed and after a quick breakfast and getting

some ice for the cooler, I was in the car and headed north on back roads at 6:10 AM. Daylight started to break about the time I hit I-75 near Gainesville.

On 7238, the classroom net was taking check-ins..... I checked in and was surprised to hear that they had a record of my first check-in in 1988 and the time was 1158 Z.... the exact same time! Later, from Hamilton, FL, I made just two 30M contacts @1258Z, with K5SF & KA3MMM. The bands seemed quiet...but it was still early.

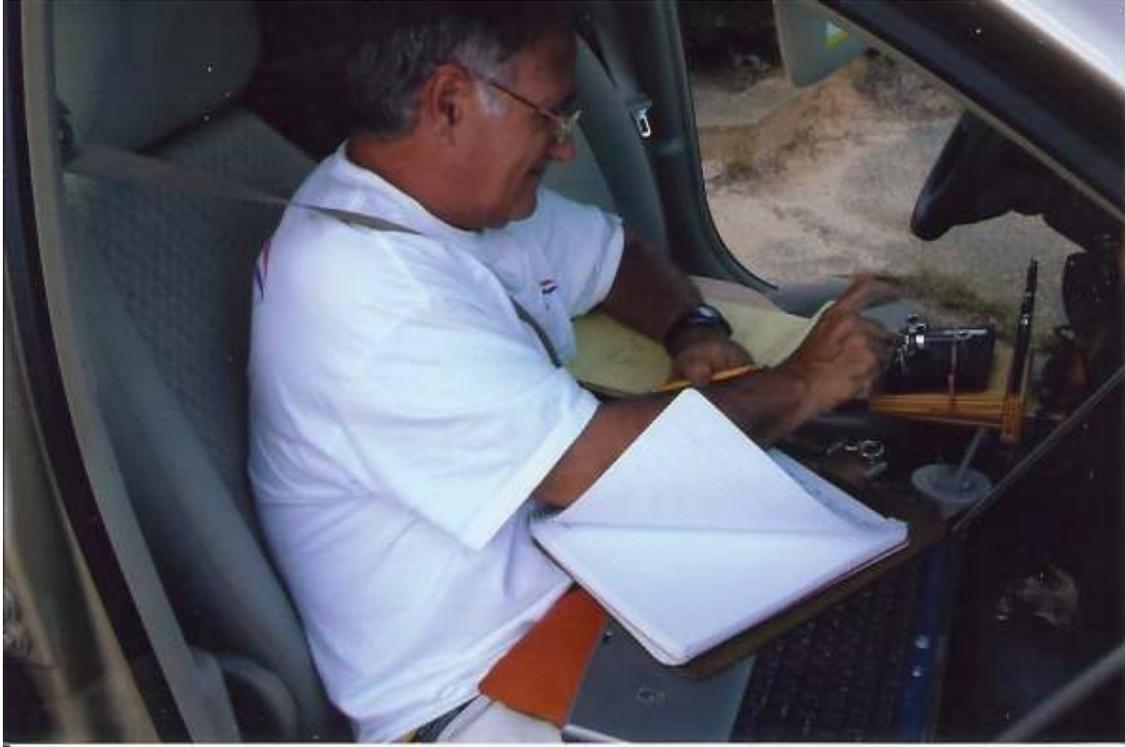
There were a few other contacts on the way up I-75 but the bands were still not great. As I approached Macon, I headed east to go to Jones County for a LC for KQ0B. Wouldn't you know, at the I-75 "T" in the road, I turned north instead of south and had to retrace my steps a bit..... but found the correct route and headed off to Jones.... Thru town and up a hill.

(note from N4CD – Ed, N4UJK, earned the title of Magellan with all the confusing roads in GA – very easy to take a wrong turn!).

It was just a few miles and I found a place, pulled in and we were able to make a nice, solid, clean contact despite all the wires all around me!

Then I headed across country to La Grange to meet K3IMC.... Don was right! You can't get there from here! A couple of hours later and some directions via 2 meter repeater using my brand new Yaesu VX-170, I was pulling into Don's home QTH. We left within a few minutes for Paulding, GA, as we each needed that county and it was out of the way of our planned run the next day. We arrived, ran it for each other, and then tried to give it to the net on CW. After a few contacts, we blew the circuit fuse in the car....and found that fuse panel in the trunk. Sure enough, the fuse was "shot" and we had to locate an auto parts store to replace it. That night Don put a direct line from the rig to my battery and there were no further problems!

We departed at 6 AM the next morning and headed to Columbus and then east to our 1st county, Taylor. There was no propagation when we arrived so we provided the needed contacts to each other and went on down the road.



K3IMC operating CW

At 1337Z we were finally able to hear low band signals and put out Houston County, and soon thereafter, Twiggs, where I had a good CW run on 30 M. We continued on to give out Laurens, Treutlen and Bleckley and then headed north across I-16 to get the Emmanuel/Johnson CL. This is located right at an intersection at a long ago deserted bank. We parked at the sign and proceeded to put it out having good runs on 30 & 40 SSB.

After that, we then headed south and finally arrived at Montgomery & Toombs CL. It was already 1900Z and the program Don had in his computer with the GPS told us we were running a bit late. I might point out that the computer also talked to us constantly letting me know just how far ahead each turn was and exactly how many minutes and seconds it would take to get there! A very efficient, if eerie, navigator! We went on to run Montgomery, Jeff Davis, Wheeler, Wilcox, and Ben Hill in quick succession as the band deteriorated and a few times almost had to beg for a contact.

Towards the end though, conditions seemed to improve a bit and we ended up in Tifton about 6:30 PM locating a Motel 6 and having dinner in the Cracker Barrel. We spent some hours catching up on the logs and tapes up

to date and fell asleep knowing we did not need a 6 AM wakeup for a change.

At 8:15, we had breakfast at the Cracker barrel and Don was very unfair about it! As I was recently diagnosed with Diabetes Type 2, I was restricted to Eggbeaters, Turkey sausage, 1 pc of whole wheat toast & black coffee. Don had the “special” - three REAL eggs, 2 pancakes, smothered in gobs of fried apples & covered over with a huge mound of whipped cream.... PLUS bacon! And he ate it all right in front of me! Well, we were well fueled and headed out and hit Colquitt County and started the day’s runs..... On to Worth, Calhoun, Early, & Clay, running County Lines wherever possible. It was evident that propagation was not as good as the previous day.

We have photos available from almost every county line we ran and if you worked us there, we will be happy to send you a CL photo copy at your request. I should point out that I still don’t know how Don was able to send CW on my Bencher..... and operate it with his right hand from the passenger seat. He had to lean across the seat and it was about as awkward as it possibly could be for him But he mastered it and gave a lot of CW contacts out!

The highlight of the trip came up for me at the end as Don was able to provide my last in Georgia for Bingo at Webster, and a few minutes later, the last for 2nd time at Stewart! This trip knocked out 26 needed contacts and with the couple of contacts I was able to make with AA9JJ in Florida, cut my needs to single digits for both 2nd time (5 left) and for Bingo (9 left) .



KA3DRO operating on SSB at C.L.

Happy as a clam, I drove Don back to LaGrange and then turned the car around and headed home.... Arriving at 12:40 AM ! The total trip was 605 miles from my house to Don's, via Jones County and included the trip to Paulding County. The first days run was 417 Miles, The second days run back to LaGrange was 264 Miles, and it was a fast 386 miles back to my home for a grand total of 1,672 miles. After filling the car, I found that the Malibu delivered 35.96 MPG on the trip home and overall was a very nice 33.54 MPG..... not bad considering we never turned the engine off from the time we started to finish each day! Also nice was fuel that actually cost just \$1.95/gal in Georgia!

If any of you are looking for a nice day or two of County Hunting, I highly recommend that you team up with a fellow CH'er and run some counties together!

De KA3DRO

N4CD note: from Ron - In the picture above, note the 'old' type county line sign for Clay. There aren't too many around like this.

MFJ – 1446 “Super Battery Booster”

Larry, W0QE, posted on the K3IMC forum a quick note about the new MFJ unit that might solve some of the county hunters problems with 'low battery voltage' and radios shutting off prematurely. If you have long power cables, or operate in cold environments, when the battery voltage begins to drop, some rigs will either stop working, or you'll get distortion on SSB transmissions, or on cw you'll have a chirpy note.

Larry, W4RRY, in Arizona has sold a battery booster unit for years, which took the battery voltage, and would provide regulated 13.2V. It was mainly advertised in World Radio Magazine. This unit ran all the time, and while it had filtering, there was no guarantee the unit would not cause receive interference at a low level. All these units use switching regulators, which can generate RF hash. Some users complained of poor customer service as well. His main customers were sailboat operators, who ran off batteries without the engine running.

Now, MFJ has taken this one step further. If you have a 'low voltage problem' in your mobile, you might consider this! To avoid any possibility of receiver interference, MFJ only uses the booster circuitry in transmit mode. Not only that, but the MFJ unit uses – the magic word – ultra capacitors. There are six of them (each 25F at 2.7v) on the output. (Naturally wired in series to get the voltage rating you need).

From the MJF web site at:

<http://www.mfjenterprises.com/products.php?prodid=MFJ-4416>

“Today's compact 100-watt HF transceivers are designed to operate from about 12-16 volts, with output signal distortion, output power problems, and transceiver reset often occurring when voltage drops below 12 volts. In the mobile environment, low voltage is caused in two ways: First - even low

resistance DC wiring can result in a noticeable voltage drop. For a 100-watt transceiver with a 20-amp typical current requirement, just 1/10th of an ohm resistance in your DC cable and connectors results in a 2-volt drop! And second - when you turn your car off, the battery voltage drops from around 13.8 volts to close to 12 volts after a short period of time. Couple this with any voltage drop in the cables, and you have a problem.

The MFJ-4416 Super Battery Booster eliminates low voltage problems by boosting input voltages as low as 9 volts up to the desired 13.8 volts at up to 25 amps peak with a typical efficiency of close to 90%. It is compact at just 7 3/4Wx4Hx2 1/8D” and lightweight at 1.3 lbs. And the MFJ- 4416 Super Battery Booster is designed to be rugged, reliable, and easy to use. MFJ-4416 includes Anderson PowerPole™ connectors and high-current 5-way binding posts for both the DC input and regulated output.

An internal 30-amp input fuse protects the unit from excess output current demands. There are also selectable limits on the minimum voltage that the unit will accept: 9-volts, 10- volts (default), and 11-volts. This protects you from over-discharging a battery and possibly damaging it. MFJ-4416 also includes output over-voltage crow-bar protection should regulation be lost.

Two additional features offer ways to increase efficiency even more! First, there is an RF sampling port which can be connected to your transceiver's transmission line with a UHF-T connector. When this feature is enabled, the MFJ- 4416 is bypassed unless RF is sensed so no regulator switching efficiency penalties are incurred during receive.

The second efficiency enhancement feature is a user-adjustable output voltage control which lets you set the output voltage anywhere between 12- and 13.8-volts. When setting the output at 12-volts, input voltages greater than 12V will pass through, but the efficiency of the regulator is higher. And lower input voltage means your transceiver will run cooler! Typically save over 30 watts in heat dissipation during transmit, and even 3-4 watts during receive. So it can actually be good to let the voltage sag to 12 volts, then let the MFJ-4116 protect you from lower voltages.”

The price is about \$140, although some dealers may offer it for less.

For a review of this unit by Phil, AD5X, go to <http://www.ad5x.com/> and look under product reviews for this unit.

MARC - Awards Integrity

Just when you thought the ‘club nonsense’ had died down, it seems MARAC again clearly violated its own rules. If you look at the rules for Master’s Gold, and the requirements to receive a MARAC award, you will note:

Under Eligibility: “All MARAC Awards are available to any **licensed** amateur radio **operator** anywhere in the world.” Note it says ‘operator’. Not club. Not ‘its’. Not ‘entities’. Not ‘callsign’. Readers of the CHNews know that ‘club calls’ have no **operating** privileges. . “Atlantic Radio Club” cannot be an operator, any more than “Microsoft” can be a pilot and fly an airplane. And in fact, at a normal club, there are usually multiple operators, each individually licensed, like the Motorola club - K9MOT, active in FD and other contests. Now how does anyone figure out how to give an award to a ‘bunch of operators’? Certainly, MARAC has no provision to do it. It issues awards to a **single operator**, not bunches of ops. By FCC definition, a ‘club’ is at least 4 operators. A few years ago, “K2JG”, the Atlantic Radio Club, had 17 members.

Readers of the CHNews also know that ‘callsign’ K2JG, aka Atlantic Radio Club, was not eligible to receive the Net Control of the Year award. The **operator** who made the contacts and ran the net was KZ2P, who had license privileges allowing him (a person) to operate. “Callsign” K2JG of the Atlantic Radio Club does not make radio contacts, anymore than a corporate plane owned by Microsoft is flown by pilot “Microsoft” and where “Microsoft” accumulates pilot flight hours.

A ‘callsign’ cannot run the net. Only a ‘licensed operator’ can. Any net control hours are earned by the **operator**, not the callsign being used. The NC of the Year plaque had to be redone to issue it to an **operator** not a ‘callsign’. A ‘callsign’ cannot **accumulate points** for Net Control Hours. Or for the Master’s Gold Award. Those go only to the ‘operator’. If Smitty

operated at ‘the club’, he would get the credit for the hours, but ONLY if he used his own callsign! MARAC requires that in your award submission, all contacts were made with a call **ISSUED TO YOU**. Not to a group! If Smitty flew the plane, he would get ‘flight hour credit’. Not the “name” on the plane. Even though the plane is ‘registered’ with the FAA and has a ‘license’ like your registered car has a ‘license’. But your car can’t drive itself.

If you submit contacts made using a ‘callsign’ not assigned to you by the FCC, you are submitting a fraudulent application.

This is no different that if you were driving the car of a friend, and got a ticket for speeding. You were the ‘**operator**’ of the vehicle. You get the ticket for speeding, not the ‘owner’ of the car. If, just as an example, the Atlantic Radio club owned the car, you, not the ‘club’ would get ticketed as the operator. Plain and simple!

Under the Master’s Gold requirements, it states “Each contact must be made with **another operator** who has also earned at least one **Star** and the Bingo Award.” Note it does not say with ‘another station’. A ‘station’ or an ‘entity’ cannot contact another operator. An **operator** must contact **another** operator. The wording is clear and precise. Master Gold awards are given to **operators** for working other **operators** – not working other ‘stations’ or working ‘**from**’ a station. Only the **people** involved can count the contact. Not the **entity**. Of all the awards, MG is the most specific on this point.

It would be absurd to think that the court appearance for speeding would be for anyone other than the operator of the vehicle in a court of law. The ‘owner’ of the car (even though the car is ‘licensed’) does not appear – only the operator at the time the offense was committed.

This demonstrates clearly the separation of the ‘operator’ from a licensed ‘thing’. In one case, a car, or airplane. In the other case, a radio **station** license. In both cases, the person operating the device had an ‘operators’ license, and only that **person** was a party in the proceeding.

The MARAC legal council, KE3VV, Dave, pointed out last time, that someone using ‘callsign’ K2JG mobile in MT was not good for a contact for those working on MG, unless you worked an ‘operator’ at that ‘station’ who had a star and Bingo him/herself. You had to work an ‘**operator**’, not a

‘callsign’. Thus, all contacts with club ‘callsign’ K2JG when it went mobile with an unqualified operator in Montana did not count for MG, even though logging programs logged it incorrectly to the MG book. Dave, KE3VV, posted on the K3IMC forum that this was the case. The fact your logging program logged it is simply a programming error in them.

So you would think this very precedent would apply, right? Only ‘**operators**’ can be part of the MG contact, and only operators get the credit for working the county. Not a ‘callsign’ or an ‘entity’. Only an ‘operator’ gets the award. All the contacts made using ‘callsign’ K2JG were made by James G, and any award earned **MUST BE** given to him, personally. Not to an ‘it’.

They are clearly nowhere included in the sections on eligibility any mention of ‘clubs’, or the requirements (Part I and Part II) for the MG award, does not have anything but requirements for ‘operators’. Only people – operators. Now, to qualify for MG, an **operator** must contact another operator in all 3077 counties. Can a ‘callsign’ do so? Clearly, by the precedent set on the previous ‘mobile club with unqualified op’, where the OPERATOR must make the contact, the answer is no. If the operator wants to get MG, he does what it takes, and MG is awarded to that person, who is an operator. Not to a ‘name’ of the entity that owned the equipment. (Well, in the case of the Atlantic Radio club, as far as anyone can tell me, it doesn’t even own any equipment or antennas. It only owns a FCC ‘station license’ with no operator privileges).

So you would think, that after the Net Control of the Year fiasco, when good MARAC money was thrown down the drain because the ‘callsign’ was ineligible, that the awards chairperson would **not** issue a Master’s Gold award to a ‘callsign’. Right? Don’t bet your lunch money on it. Apparently, the on-line computer system bypasses all checks and balances and sanity.

More amazingly, this is the ‘operator’ who has ranted and raved about made up malicious and false accusations about ‘he’s not even mobile in MN, she’s not even mobile in MT, etc,” for years and years, and he is the one submitting false applications, using contacts made by an ‘operator’ and requesting MARAC violate all its rules and issue an award for bogus contacts? Maybe he should be disqualified from ALL future awards because his application clearly showed he lied – all the contacts were NOT

made with a 'call' issued to him personally, and his application was bogus in all parts – 'the it' cannot meet either part I or part II of MG requirements.

Perhaps the system just did its thing. The application was submitted electronically, and paperwork processed without proper review. Is that 'correct'? Was it valid? Should it be overturned?

The precedent is right here.

From the FCC database:

- 1) James Grandinetti, Custodian of the Atlantic Radio Club, applied for renewal of K2JG on 9/12/2006
- 2) The authorization was printed on 9/13/2006
- 3) The Grant application was **REVERSED** on 10/5/2006
- 4) The application was OFFLINED for Enforcement Bureau Action on 10/6/2006

The precedent is there. The renewal of "K2JG" was **reversed**. Denied pending enforcement bureau action. It made it through the 'electronic' system, but was over ridden manually.

Was a mistake made? You be the judge! Was the application defective?

The Master's Gold award has two parts – one is working all the counties by the requirements (not possible with an 'entity'), and the other is 1500 points – via 'service to MARAC' – either being on the board/official position (not possible with a 'club callsign' that is not even a member), transmitting from counties (not possible with a 'club callsign – only operators), or getting net control hours (not possible – only the operator gets the NC hours, not the 'callsign').

The 'club callsign' cannot meet the first part, In addition, there is no way for a 'callsign' to meet the second part as well! Totally defective application.

And, of course, a 'club callsign' cannot be an officer or do service for MARAC. Only an individual who is a member can. Nor can an "entity" be an officer of MARAC. So there is no way a 'callsign' can meet the second part of the award requirements.

It seems, that despite the fact that a 'club callsign' cannot accumulate net control hours (only the **operator** at a station can), that despite the fact that a 'callsign' is not able to contact "another" operator, (only one operator can contact **another** operator, otherwise the word 'another' means nothing) for Part I, and despite the fact a 'club callsign' is not eligible to receive an award under the Bylaws and various other rules, the awards chairperson accepted and issued a Master's Gold award #18 to a "club callsign". It seems multiple parts of the Awards Rules were violated, and of course, the all important BYLAWS were simply thrown into the trash.

Does not one person read the rules at MARAC HQ? It seems in the past that was the problem. One would hope for improvement over time, no?

Perhaps it was the 'electronic processing system' that allowed this to sneak through without anyone looking at it. It doesn't make a difference. The application did not meet the award requirements. It should be overturned and revoked. It was not earned correctly, or issued to the right "operator". It either must be reversed, or re-issued to 'James Grandinetti' who was the operator. It could be endorsed "while using callsign K2JG of the Atlantic Radio Club" but the records should clearly show it was issued to an **operator**, KZ2P. "K2JG" cannot hold the award.

Every part of the "K2JG" application for this award by the 'club' is bogus and invalid and was not met. Otherwise, it seems there are just a bunch of folks so afraid of 'getting run off 14.336' if they should stop the club nonsense.

While the one in South Carolina rants and raves about "XYZ not meeting the MG awards, this YL not even mobile in MT so there is no way she could get her LC WBOW', etc,(while she is having an eyeball QSO with W0MU in Montana – hi hi), it seems the one doing the ranting and raving person clearly did not meet ANY of the award requirements for MG for the Atlantic Radio Club, and as 'custodian' of the club', submitted a bogus application

that clearly did not meet either part of the two parts of requirements for the Master's Gold award. What can you say?

The "Cloaking Device"

Hey, Scottie, Beam me aboard!

Scientists have created a cloaking device that can reroute certain wavelengths of light, forcing them around objects like water flowing around boulders in a stream. To creatures or machines that see only in microwave light, the cloaked object would appear nearly invisible.

"The microwaves come in and are swept around the cloak and reconstructed on the other side while avoiding the interior region," said study team member David Smith at Duke University's Pratt School of Engineering. "So it looks as if they just passed through free space."

The device only works in the microwave range of light, so cloaked objects are still visible to humans. Also, it only works in two dimensions and only for microwaves moving in a plane. A three-dimensional invisibility cloak would hide an object completely. The microwave cloak is also slightly reflective and casts a partial shadow.

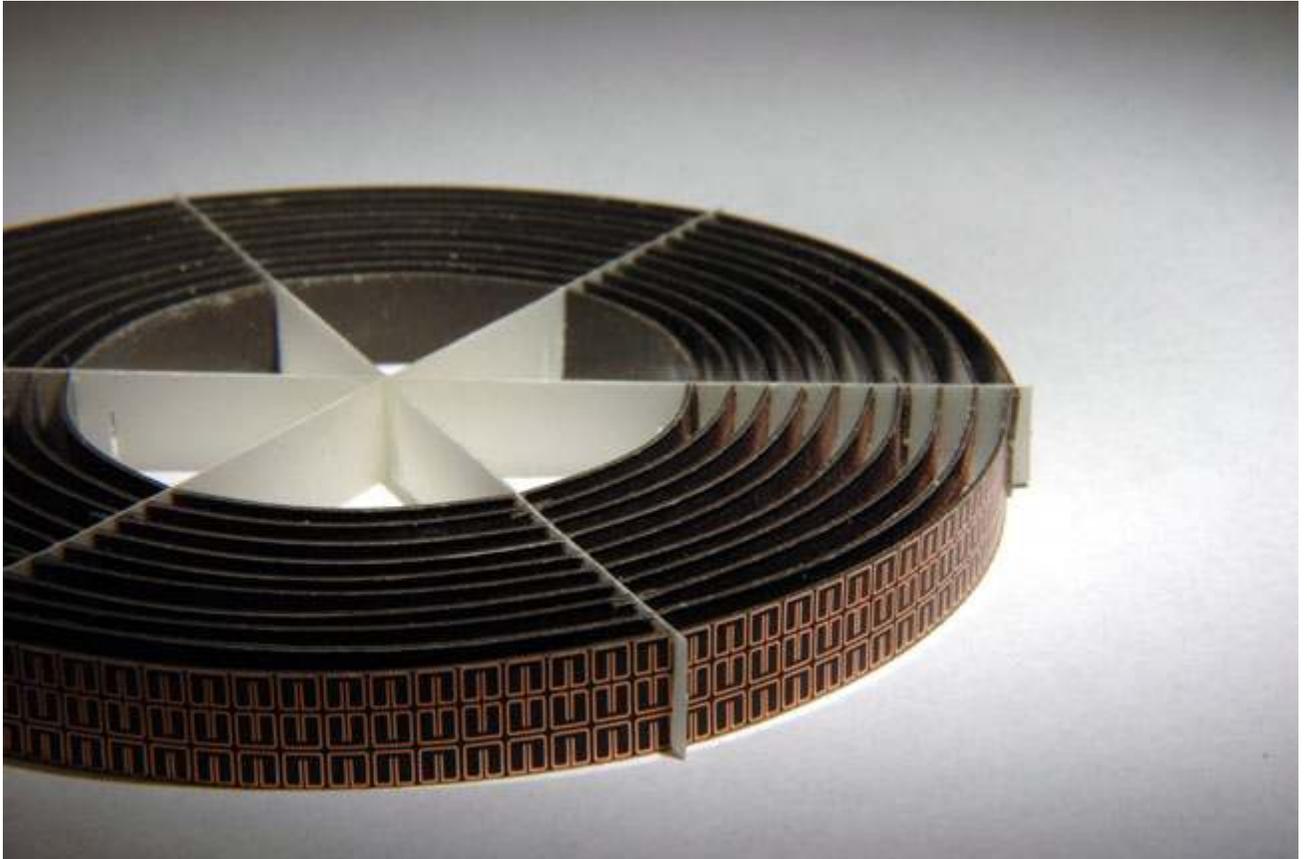
The achievement, reported online today by the journal, comes five months after the same team published a study detailing the precise mathematical specifications a needed to build such a cloaking device.

Metamaterials

The apparatus was made using "metamaterials," artificial materials engineered to have precisely patterned surfaces that interact with and manipulate light in novel ways.

It consists of a series of concentric circles, made of copper rings and wires patterned onto sheets of fiberglass, and resembles a loosely coiled reel of film.

The patterns enable the manipulation of light, and the size of the patterns determines which wavelengths of light can be manipulated. Smaller patterns affect shorter the wavelengths. Microwaves have relatively long wavelengths and can be affected with metamaterials having relatively large patterns. Manipulating visible light, which has much shorter wavelengths, will require metamaterials with much finer patterns.



First Generation Cloaking Device – Microwave Only

While making those finer patterns is possible with current **nanomanufacturing** technologies, the metals used to make the microwave cloak would behave differently with visible light.

But even imperfect cloaking devices might be useful, the researchers say. Cloaks that deflect radio waves could render an object invisible to radar or improve cell phone receptions by rerouting signals around obstructions. They might also be used to protect people from penetrating and harmful radiation.

If you knew that you had radiation of a certain bandwidth frequency, you could have it skirt around some region that you wanted shielded

The team says the next step is to create a cloak that works in three dimensions and to perfect the cloaking effect.

60M Upgrade Requested

The ARRL has requested an upgrade to the privileges that Amateur Radio operators have in the 60M band (5MHz). From the October 27, 2006 ARRL Letter, published by ARRL, Inc, Newington, CT 06111

“The ARRL is asking the FCC to expand 60-meter operating privileges and substitute a new channel for one that's often occupied by a federal government user. The League filed a Petition for Rule Making.

These minor rule changes will substantially increase the flexibility in the use of the channels in the 5250-5450 kHz band and will as well facilitate Amateur Radio emergency communications in this important segment of the HF spectrum," the ARRL said in its petition.

The League wants the FCC to authorize General class and higher licensees to run 100 W effective radiated power (ERP) instead of the present 50 W ERP and **to allow CW and narrow-band digital modes**, including PSK31 and PACTOR 3. It also asks the Commission to replace the 5368.0 kHz center-frequency channel with 5358.5 kHz, so amateurs can avoid federal government digital traffic on the current channel. Operation on 60 meters would remain on a secondary, non-interference basis.

When the ARRL first petitioned the FCC for a 150 kHz-wide 60-meter band, the primary objection to granting the allocation came not from the Commission -- which initially proposed granting the request -- but from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) which administers federal spectrum. The five channels, upper sideband only, 50 W ERP and maximum 2.8 kHz bandwidth that radio amateurs got represented a compromise between the two agencies.

The NTIA is far more favorably disposed to the ARRL's latest request, however. The NTIA's Office of Spectrum Management told ARRL earlier this year that the Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC) had considered the League's requests and "would look favorably" on the channel change, use of additional modes and power increase proposals.

The IRAC would not support a request for a 50 kHz-wide domestic secondary allocation. The petition expressed the hope that the FCC eventually consider allocating a domestic amateur band in the vicinity of the existing 60-meter channels."

One more for Students to Learn!

From the LA Times – October 17, 2006

“A U.S. and Russian team said Monday that it had created element 118, the heaviest known to date. It is the fifth ultra-heavy element produced by the team at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna, Russia, which has come to dominate the creation of short-lived elements.

The discovery has no immediate application, but brings researchers closer to discovering what theoretical physicists have described as an "island of stability" — a group of ultra-heavy elements that may survive minutes, or

even hours, compared to the fractions of a second now seen with the heaviest creations. .

Element 118 would fall directly below radon in the periodic table of the elements and is thus expected to be a so-called noble gas. The Livermore-Dubna team has also created elements 113, 114, 115 and 116, but none of those has yet been officially recognized, named and placed in the periodic table because the work has not been replicated by other researchers.”

GM's Hydrogen Car

GM has announced it plans to have ‘production’ Hydrogen powered fuel cell cars available in 2010. The ‘Sequel’ prototype has been shown recently at car shows. The Sequel is the latest milestone in G.M.’s fuel-cell-development program.



As envisioned, the first cars will be able to reach 90 mph, and have a range of 300 miles between refueling. To do that will require the car carry 8 kilograms of Hydrogen - which it will do with tanks under 10,000 psi pressure.

Next year G.M. will demonstrate the real-world capabilities of the Sequel's fuel cell technology when it begins to deploy a fleet of more than 100 fuel-cell-powered vehicles in the United States. Vehicles for this program, called Project Driveway, will be powered by the same fourth-generation fuel cell.

Though large-scale production of fuel cell cars faces many hurdles — high costs and the ready availability of hydrogen, to name just two — their environmental friendliness makes them attractive. Combining hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity, fuel cells are typically made up of many small units, clustered in stacks. The car emits only trace amounts of water vapor.

Sequel trades its 300-mile envelope for a curb weight of 4,700 pounds for a rather small 197-inch-long sport wagon that seats four comfortably. That's despite its weight-saving aluminum body shell and carbon-fiber front fenders.

The primary culprits in the car's extra mass are three large cylindrical tanks, made of a tough carbon fiber composite and nestled tightly underneath the specially designed center tunnel. Also adding pounds is the rectangular pack of lithium-ion batteries under the rear seat area, and a backup steering column in case the steer-by-wire system fails.

Club Liability/FCC Actions

We live in a society with over 1,000,000 lawyers, many of whom seem to make a living suing everyone and every corporation for 'coffee too hot', the bad outcome of a risky, marginal medical procedure, 'wetlands violations' for 3 sq feet of a puddle that only appears in a heavy rainstorm, and similar. No one expects to be in a car accident. But millions are each year.

Now, let us take a scenario. Someone has 'borrowed' a club call and taken it mobile. Let us say that this particular day, the operator of the vehicle happens to be involved in an accident. Maybe some idiot drives right into them, or actually stages an accident for phony insurance scams. Someone claims they have been severely injured (whether actual or not) and retains one of the lawyers that advertise all day long on TV. This particular lawyer happens to note the ham antennas on the vehicle, and happens to find out that the person driving was operating at/near the time of the accident – and

perhaps learns that two calls were in use – the personal call assigned to the person and a ‘borrowed’ club call. It’s all on the recorder found in the vehicle.

Naturally, the lawyer claims that by operating, and having the permission of the ‘club’ to use its call, the ‘club’ was equally responsible for contributing to ‘negligence’ on the part of the user of that call, and is liable for damages.

Naturally, looking for the deepest pockets and the most amount of people to sue, he sues both the operator/owner of the vehicle and the ‘club’ – represented by its Officers and the corporation. He sues the individual “Officers” of the club as well, as they made the decision to let the ‘club call’ be used by an allegedly ‘negligent’ driver, with their permission. The ‘club’ had to file paperwork with the FCC and Club License Coordinator to qualify for a club license, listing the Officers. So he sues all the Officers of the Club as well. For negligence. And damages.

What happens if YOU are one of those Officers? If you agreed to ‘be in that club’ as an officer so someone there could help your club? Or if it is a real club, and the membership sees the club being sued for a million bucks because someone is ‘injured for life’ by someone using the callsign with ‘permission’? Do the members of the clubs (well, the two or three ‘clubs’ still out there scamming folks with contacts that don’t count for anything) know the liability they may be subject to? Or those who are an officer of one of the ‘club calls’ going mobile?

Another interesting point. It seems that when this ‘club nonsense’ started, the ‘chat room’ bunch was commenting “ I’m in his club, he’s in my club” and that way we get enough ‘members’ to meet the FCC requirements. Maybe you even volunteered to be an ‘officer’? Did you ever think that ‘joining’ multiple clubs with the sole purpose of giving other ‘clubs’ of one might be considered blatant and intentional ‘collusion’ to apply for a bogus club license. If your members aren’t ‘participating’ in the club, don’t attend club meetings, if you don’t have sponsored ‘club activities’, then maybe your ‘membership’ in some of the ‘questionable’ clubs of one might not earn you ‘bonus points’. Let’s see. Percy and wife in K2JG, likely. And James and family part of W1BQL, Percy’s club. And the chat room crowd listed a bunch of others that each was ‘in’. Now who is in ‘this club’ and ‘that club’ with the same folks reciprocating and ‘joining’ this club of one, and that club of one? Seems the FCC might be looking into some suspicious ‘club

of one' type membership lists. Hmmm??? NA7XX? W1BQL? K2JG?
Who next?

A 330 MPG CAR?

““Three San-Diego Engineers form company to build and sell revolutionary
330 MPG Hybrid Car”

<http://www.acceleratedcomposites.com/aptera.php>

Accelerated Composites, LLC, has designed a two-seat passenger car that will achieve up to 330 MPG and sell for under \$20,000. The lightweight composite, hybrid car will post this fuel efficiency in normal city and highway driving and demonstrate acceleration and handling similar to that of a Honda Insight. Dubbed the *Aptera*©, the vehicle achieves these remarkable numbers through the use of cutting-edge materials, manufacturing methods, and a maverick design mantra.

Unique, optimized aerodynamics gives the *Aptera*© a drag form factor that will be lower than any mass produced car in the world. “It looks like nothing you’ve ever seen because it performs like nothing you’ve ever seen,” says Accelerated Composites founder and CEO Steve Fambro. “What we’ve done is changed the way cars are thought of and designed. Rather than designing to a styling aesthetic, like the big auto makers do, we hew to an efficiency and safety aesthetic. When you do that, math and physics mostly dictate the shape of the car, and in this case, math and physics look awesome.”

But aerodynamics is only half of the equation. The other half is weight. The *Aptera*© is made almost entirely of lightweight composites, making it one of the lightest cars on the road. Yet this savings does not come at the cost of safety. In fact, the construction of the car is based on the driver-protection “crash box” found in Formula One race cars. “Composites are enormously strong and lightweight,” says Fambro. “That’s why all the aircraft manufacturers are switching to them.”

AC's patent-pending hybrid technology allows off the shelf engines and electric motors to be seamlessly integrated for a very low cost. “

The car uses a 12 HP clean burn diesel engine, a 25 HP electric motor, and a supercapacitor bank to store energy.

Thinking Big in Capacitors

If you should be cruising the net, and do a ‘Google’ search for “Farad Capacitors”, you’d run across some LARGE capacitors. A while back I saw an ad in PEP Boys for a 2F capacitor used in auto stereo systems. Nowadays, you can buy car amplifiers that will put out 200w, or 400w, and up to 800w **per amplifier**, and some cars have 4 separate amps! OK. So what do you do for power, and what is going to supply all those peak amps when the bass notes sound, or you have loud instruments?

It seems, other than maybe putting in a 200A alternator, which appears to be standard for anyone with this much audio equipment, not much is going to help you with peak demands other than some BIG capacitors. The market has responded. Lanzar, among others, offer gigantic capacitors. Last issue, the CHNews talked about capacitors with several FARADS of capacitance.

If you visit Lanzer online, you’ll find they have capacitors rated up to 100 Farads! Here’s one of them from their website:



The specs on this unit are:

Working voltage: 16vdc

Surge voltage 18vdc

Rated: 100,000,000,000 mf, or 100 F

Of course, for the car audio market, they have flashing blue LEDs (gotta be blue, not red), digital meters reading volts and amps. Some have blue neon tubes in them (apparently the light show is just as important as the DC filtering).

If you run a mobile amp, and the voltage sags 'too much', you might consider getting a large capacitor. Several Farads would likely be enough. There are some factory re-conditioned units at ¼ the original cost listed on ebay. This particular unit 'lists' for over a thousand bucks, likely available 'reconditioned' for 1/10th of that on ebay, but smaller several Farad capacitors are under \$100. Maybe PEP Boys was selling out of that item. Haven't seen it advertised since.

They supply a light bulb which you use to initially charge up the capacitor before wiring it in line. Otherwise the 'surge' could cause problems. (Hmmm..think thousand amp surges). Just the thing you need to keep your battery voltage from sagging on peaks, or key down.

The Journey – Part I of III

Alan, KI7WO, has finished working all counties after 4 years of effort. He says the story starts out:

““It is all Bob’s fault that I got into this aspect of the hobby.....”

About five years ago, N4CD decided to play DX and went down to a rent-a-shack in Costa Rica run by Henry, TI2HMG. The room was \$25/day, included a free breakfast each morning, and had full use of the antennas at the rent-a-shack. I brought the IC706 and switching power supply down, and had a fun time operating there (near the sunspot max) for two weeks.

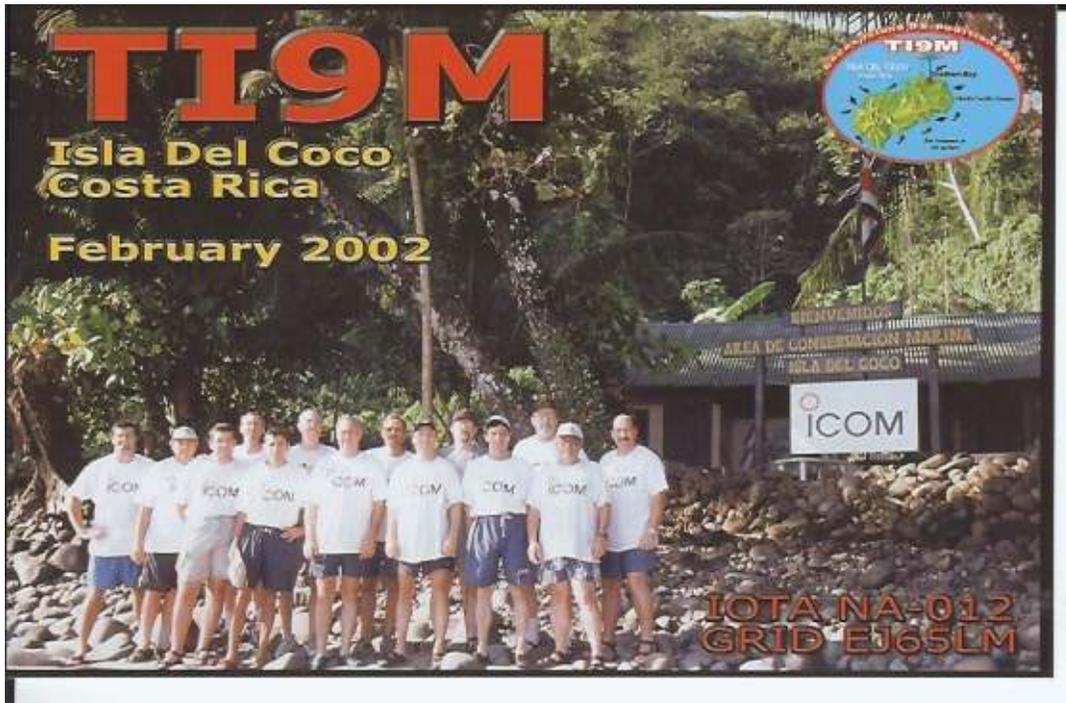
I posted my comments on the “DX Holiday” site (www.dxholiday.com), where I had learned about this rent-a-shack in the first place. Not too long after that, Alan, KI7WO contacted me and asked about the facilities and locations. I filled him in, and he and a friend, AK0A, a long time DXer, decided to go down there and operate RTTY for a vacation. They had a good time. Both were DXers. Neither one was a county hunter. Alan operated SSB and RTTY.

While I was in Costa Rica, I had talked with Henry, TI2HMG, the ‘host’, who was fascinated by the tales of ‘riches’ on Cocos Island, which is a part of Costa Rica, but very hard to get to, and even harder to operate from the island which is a rare DX country often high on the list of most needed countries. Henry was a casual DXer, and had been to Cocos once before. He wasn’t too optimistic about anyone being able to get there soon, and especially operators from outside the country. It would also be expensive, as you had to charter an ocean going ship to cross 350 miles of Pacific Ocean. There were many licensing ‘difficulties’. Cocos is one of the largest uninhabited islands in the world – it gets 360 inches of rain a year, is a very steep volcanic island covered by dense tropical forest, and now a Marine Preservation area. There are about 10 guards on the island, whose main purpose is to keep everyone else OFF the island, plus a few researchers working on various projects. In the past 200 years, more money has been spent (hundreds of millions) trying to find the supposed buried treasure on Cocos than likely ever existed there. (Treasure Island – the book- was inspired by the Cocos stories). Now, the guards are there to prevent you from even bringing a shovel or ‘digging tool’ to the island.

In many countries, the ham ops there fight tooth and nail to keep ‘outsiders’ away from their DX territories. (they can make some \$\$\$ off QSL cards if they should ever get around to getting to the island themselves). So going to Cocos Island was a dream, but Henry wasn’t too optimistic. I know Alan, KI7WO, also talked to him about it. Wouldn’t it be nice to be ‘really rare’ with 5000 people piling up to work you on any band? For weeks at a time? Cocos Island was 25th on the most needed country list.

About six months later, Henry decided that he would put together a DXpedition to Cocos. He invited many of the people who had stayed at his B&B to join in, including me, and Alan, KI7WO, and Bill, AK0A. Not long after, well, like six months of planning later, 15 of us headed out on a

chartered ship to Cocos Island after months of work, gathering the needed supplies and getting them shipped down to Henry, and lots of coordination all around. Of the 15 people, only 3 had ever met any of the other members! Alan, was the 'designated electrician' and ran the Cocos Island Electric Company which supplied all the power and did all the wiring for the operating positions. (5 KW generators).



The ops at TI9M, including KI7WO and N4CD

Alan was also one of 2 digital ops who would focus on putting out RTTY contacts. Later they came up on PSK31 for a new one for anyone working them! A 'first'.

There was lots of spare time to chat while we made last minute preparations in mainland Costa Rica before sailing, while on the ship, at 'off times' in between various activities, at meal times, while on the ship headed to and from the island, to talk about other activities we were all involved in. I talked to Alan about county hunting several times, indicating what a challenge it is to 'work them all'. It must have rubbed off a little bit on him. Not long after we returned, I heard him work a few mobiles on the nets.

Later, he got on cw, allowing him to finish up even faster.

We also worked many county hunters from Cocos, who hunting for new DX band counties and new modes from the island, and at the end, when pileups had thinned out, TI9M came up on 14.336 and 14.0565 to give the country to county hunters.

Bill, AK0A, became the QSL manager for TI9M, sending out 25,000 plus QSL cards. Bob, N4CD, went on to a few more mini-DXpeditions. Alan got hooked on County Hunting!

Part II later in CQ Magazine likely as Alan just got USACA from CQ Magazine.

Master's Platinum Award

The MP award has two parts. Anyone anywhere can be 'collecting' the counties for the Master Platinum award by working someone in the county who has their MG award. There are now 22* issued Master's Gold award with several others closing in very fast. However, two are SK, and one hasn't run mobile in years, and one is 'ineligible' to give you counties since it isn't an 'operator'. There are lots of counties being run that will help you fill in the counties by the others, though.

At this time, the most anyone seems to have worked is about 2400 counties toward the MP award. Several over 2000, and lots more counties run all time. Any contacts with someone who has the MG award, after the start date of February 12, 2003, and after they received their MG counts.

Folks can only work on the second part after they get their own MG award. This requires transmitting from 500 separate counties, and working someone with MG from that county. This is to encourage those with MG to get out and run the counties. Don't be surprised if some of the 'sit at home' and 'never go mobile' **stations** try to get this part overturned....so they can qualify without giving back to the county hunters the ability to get this award. You only get this award by working the mobile stations in the 3077 counties. (if you had to work fixed stations, you'd be up to about 20 now!). I'm all in favor of requiring that counties be RUN! Chuck, W3CR, Bob, N4CD, and likely Darrel, W6TMD at or beyond 500 transmitted counties

now toward the MP requirement, so it isn't all that hard for active county hunters! KC0JG and N9STL now actively 'putting them out' as well. And of course, N8KIE, AA9JJ, N9QPQ, WG6X are getting cranked up to put out MP counties by the hundreds.

This is currently the 'top award' issued by MARAC. It is not supposed to be 'easy' or something that you earn by sitting on your butt at home. Then again, Bingo when it came out was difficult as there weren't too many people with a star, and very rare calls with an 'X'. (that was before vanity callsigns).

Who is going to be first to MP? Or right behind? After that, what do we work on?

On the Road with N4CD

November came around, and it was time for the yearly trip to visit the family in MD for the holidays. I got smarter 2 years ago, after having several trips at the end of December through West Virginia and Kentucky, where I had gotten some nasty snow storm surprises, had to shut down early a few days, and had miserable county hunting weather. 10 degree temps, 12 inches of snow, 20mph on the interstate, are not 'fun' days. Now I go a month earlier – and while I don't get the snow, it seems I'm in for 2 days of solid rain no matter where I go on the trip.

I checked my 'counties run book' for second time transmitted counties, and the platinum book, and the K3IMC needs list, and plotted a trip going east from Collin County TX through LA, across MS, AL, into GA and then curving north through SC, into NC, up to VA, and finally to MD. A few detours, but generally headed in a somewhat straight path.

The first day just gets me to the far side of LA, and I stayed at a Best Western in Delhi, AR, where Miss Ida and I used to stay frequently on the annual trip to FL. Next day it was off to some 'new' counties in MS, and across AL, getting me half way across the second day. I usually stop at sunset, and get on the road at sunrise when in strange areas and most of my travel this trip would not be on interstates after the first day. One night I wound up in a small town...one motel...it was the Motel 7. At first there was no one around. Finally, someone poked a head out of a door, and said

the 'renting person is over at the car wash'. Seems he runs the car wash, and rents you a room if you know where to look for him. An 'older style' motel, but was decent....\$34/night, no checks, no credit cards. Cash only.

The TV had cable and worked fine...bed was OK....door had double locks with deadbolt.....Not a problem. The place to eat in town was the "Country Folks" Restaurant....nothing to write home about, but it filled me up. It was the 'only' restaurant other than gas station quick food cuisine.

Nothing unusual in MS, AL, GA – I ran across the back roads...got turned around once or twice in GA – easy to do, and N4UJK, Ed, earned the nickname "Magellan" from his ability to wind up in a unplanned for county while out driving in GA. That is very easy to do. Same in KY.

I wound up getting to NC, and had 'spare time'. No sense to get to sister's house in MD early– everyone there working till the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, so might as well spend another two days running around in NC. Not only that, nephew is big computer geek, and the house is full of computer gear, most without any shields, and the noise is S9 plus within 300 feet of his house. So I can't even set up temp antenna and county hunt from there.

I plotted a route around the edge of NC, along the southeast coast, out to Dare, NC, and then back along the northern border to the interstate. That would fill in 2 days. That's when it decided to get rainy and WINDY. As I got near the coast, the wind was blowing 35-45 mph, with gusts over 50 officially. As I crossed over some of the very tall, long bridges out near the barrier islands, where you are 150 or 200 feet up in the air, the wind was howling – fortunately at a right angle, and steady at high velocity. It was unnerving to see some motor home coming from the other direction – with narrow 8 foot wide lanes on the bridge (only one lane each way), hoping that the driver would keep it under control. At one point, a motor home lost its awing about 300 feet in front of me as it was approaching....pieces of canvas ripping lose, and support pieces hitting the bridge and bouncing over the rail and gone forever. I was hoping that none would break lose as it passed me...didn't want to lose a windshield or antenna or have an accident.

Fortunately I made it over all the bridges OK. My impression of "Kitty Hawk" and the barrier islands was shattered. Nothing but 20 miles of condos, development, strip shopping centers, and tourist attractions for 20

miles as you head north in Dare county, getting set to head over through Currituck, Pasquotank, Camden, and the other northern border counties. I had envisioned open sand dunes, where the Wright Brothers flew their first airplane. Perhaps if you head south away from the 'strip', it is open. All I can think of now is the next Category V hurricane hitting Dare County, and wiping out a billion dollars worth of development there.

I drove through the home county of WB4KZW, Pasquotank. Now it was just raining lightly at the time. The next day, the sky opened, and the large town was flooded out. I made it through 'just in time'. There aren't too many motels further east. I actually took a detour through a small town – it had a very grungy motel...passed it up, and had to drive another 75 miles to get to the interstate (95) to find a Best Western. (only motel there at the junction, and I was very tired, it was raining, and it was very dark). There was a pancake house next door. The wind was still howling and it was cold. No sense looking for a 'bargain motel'. And \$45 wasn't too bad.

I didn't stay at any Super 8 Motels this trip. They are pricing themselves out of the market – I check the Super 8 book – and often they are \$60 and up, while you see signs for Days Inn at \$39.95 and other chains similar priced in same town. Sorry, Super 8 – you lost a good customer. When Best Western is less expensive, you are 'too high'.

I got to MD safe and sound. I had to park on the street, and this year, a lady from across the street backed out a driveway into driver's side door of car...now have to get it fixed – minor, but pain in the neck. Better than last year with deer wiping out windshield and front fender. Hmmm....I hope this is not the start of the "November trend" with car getting dinged each year? Two for Two so far. Maybe I better head north in October?

The trip home is usually a lot faster – I'm ready to get back home. Ron, KB6UF, had decided to run his MG needs himself in KY, so I revised my route – no sense for me to run the same hard ones he had just run the week earlier, and I had run them within the past 3 years anyway and didn't need to put them out! Ron didn't need them any longer, and most folks got the counties from him.

Well, I actually got cabin fever in MD. The WX in MD was in the 70s, sunny, so on Friday after Thanksgiving, I decided to hit the two in eastern WV I needed to run for 2nd time, and 3 of the 4 in VA in the north. So a one

day trip got me Loudon, Clark, and Frederick, VA, and Berkeley and Jefferson, WV. Ran the counties I ran through, on 40/30/20cw and 40 SSB.

The 40M net is planning on moving in frequency after the new allocations go into effect on December 15, 2006. At times, 7238 and 7243 were all 'jammed up' (early in the morning) with the classroom net, and the yakkers who stay on after the classroom net). Actually, once or twice, I was on before the classroom net started, while the 'Rotten Apples' were there. So I tried 7188, and 7185 a few times. Only higher class licensees can go down there now— if you are a General, wait until December 15 to call on SSB there! However, some of the Extras were there waiting to get the county on SSB.

On Monday after the big CW contest, I headed out early to beat the Washington DC rush hour. I needed to run Warren, VA, and got that on the way home. I could skip the others run previously, so zipped on down I81, to I64, with a short detour off to get Bath, VA, another 'not run' county for 2nd time TX. A nice county line – most of the county lines on the way home were impossible to run – narrow roads in KY – no shoulders, or on the KY Bluegrass Parkway with limited ability to park. Lots of noise too along the roads on 40m - either quiet, or noisy – not much in between.



N4CD Bath/Alleghany, VA County Line – Nice! No noise

Conditions on 40m were great most of the time. I worked W6TMD from all over the eastern half of the country, and regularly worked N0ZA, K7REL, W0GXQ, WG6X, W9GBH, N9STL, KA3DRO, KC0JG, N8KIE, K5GE, N3ISH, KA3MMM, and dozens of others all over! 40M SSB excellent most of the time, working KA4TYG mobile in FL, while also getting N0ZA, KA9JAC (cw/ssb), N8KIE, KD4HXM, AE3Z, NC4MO, NUZW, W9GUY, N9STL, KD5CXO, K0TVY, WB0CQO, W0DFK, WW0G, AC0B, KQ0B, AJ5ZX, KC5QCB, AD4IA, and dozens of others regularly in the log from 100-1500 miles away. Nice good runs on 40M, and always 2 or 3 to help with relays. One or two days I ran up on 20M, but in the middle/eastern part of the country, it is often 'slim pickings' on 20M – just not much propagation! Sorry west coast folks, but on the other days, NC was more interesting in 'running off mobiles' than running mobiles.

It's sad when AA9JJ/N9QPQ, ND3T, and others hunting for platinum counties don't have a chance, but NC isn't looking out for YOUR interests,

just his own agenda. With all the new MG holders, I got a MP contact in every county. W3CR very active, along with N9STL, N8KIE, WG6X, KC0JG, W6TMD, K5GE, AB2LS all helping out and getting MP QSOs. Occasionally, KC3X worked me too.

I took another detour to Mason WV- that finished up transmitting WV the second time. I still need some MPs in WV, though. Just north of the county line, there is gigantic mansion on the west side of the road. Good place to stop in the driveway and run the county. Then back to the interstate and into KY. No hope for the CL, especially since it was very wet and slippery.

Most of the cw activity was on 40M with few problems there. In the late afternoons, the EU RTTY can be a problem. Wish they would stay up higher in the band – they seem to at times fill up the band, especially when there is a contest. In the late afternoons, there were one or two ‘helper’ stations with loud carriers helping keep all the other stations off 7238, just to allow the county hunters to run. I guess they’ll miss us when we move to 7188 in two weeks? They didn’t really stop anything, as mobiles had good runs.

I listened occasionally on 20M SSB when there was time to kill, but most of the time, it was hours and hours of ‘Is there a mobile station who would like to run a county’. Well, other than ‘running off’ KA3DRO, N4CD, and N9STL, who did put out counties on all the other bands while he was ‘occupying the frequency’ in the past month, and looking for ‘any’ mobile (joke) to run a county, not much was happening for hours and hours and hours and hours.

And, true to his style, if I did work a mobile to give that mobile my county, there was always some ‘idiot’ with a signal at the same signal strength as NC mumbling and interfering. Oh, and it only happened when “K2JG” was around. I guess someone wants to be sure that if N4CD or others try to move themselves off frequency, no one will hear them doing it because of intentional interference. More amazingly, some of the ‘club fan’s even ‘justify’ this activity. AD1C also posted a comment on the K3IMC forum about this happening to him, and of course, folks have noted it all around the country. Is someone trying to be a junior member of SPECTRE (the James Bond movie – **S**pecial **E**xecutive for **C**ounter-Intelligence, **T**errorism,

Revenge and Extortion)? Wonder what happens on December when “K2JG” expires and hasn’t been renewed?

I chuckled each time at the fractured English. Is there a mobile station who.....An ‘it’ is not a ‘who’ or person. Leave out the ‘station’ BS.....the rest of the folks know the ‘game’. He wants MARAC to recognize ‘stations’. Sorry – MARAC only issues awards to people, not to ‘its’. Only to ‘operators’. The NC at the Club of One ‘station’ can talk about ‘stations’ all day long, but that isn’t what the rules say. When your ‘station’ is parked in the driveway, with you in the house, I darn well hope your ‘station’ doesn’t get up and go run a county without a licensed driver and licensed operator present! Or if you are parked at the motel for the night, is your ”station” going to put out the county while you are eating or sleeping? Hi Hi..... not likely!

The new frequency of 10.1225 seems to work well most of the time. Every now and then, there is a ‘CQer’, or a DX SSB station there, or rarely a digital station. Some folks must use ancient rigs or homebrew, and ‘drift’ up the band, and wind up split a half or one KHz apart – sometimes drifting through the 40m or 30M net frequency.

Most contacts seem to be on 40M though, with fewer on 30m, and only a handful on 20M. Some days the DX was coming in on 20M (DL6KVA, G0CUZ, G4KHB, OH3JF, OK1ACF, PA3ARM, etc). The few regulars on 20M cw showed up in the afternoons – K7ESN, K7VAY. It was uneventful back through KY into AR and home to TX. Filled up lots of log pages, about 3000 miles – time to buy new tires again – 75,000 miles goes fast when you are having fun! The WX was scheduled to be nasty in TX, so I hustled home, and now hunkered down waiting for the ‘ice and sleet mix’. There’s lots of paperwork to do!

It was a good trip...now to take care of bills, tires, dents in the car, MRCs, ...and get this issue out before long!.....

Operating Events for County Hunters Courtesy ARRL Contest Calendar

ARRL 160 Meter Contest -- CW, from 2200Z Dec 1-1600Z Dec 3 (see Nov *QST*, p 105, or www.arrl.org/contests).

New Mexico QSO Party -- CW/SSB, sponsored by the ARRL New Mexico Section, from 0000Z-2359Z Dec 3. Frequencies: 160-10 meters. Categories: SOAB (QRP, LP, HP). Exchange: RST and NM county or S/P/C. QSO points: SSB -- 1 pt, CW -- 2 pts. Score: QSO points × NM counties (NM stations use states) counted once only. Contacts with N5M add 25 points and one multiplier. Logs due Jan 15, 2007 to n5kev@msn.com or Kevin Carr, N5KEV, 5319 Ridge Rock Ave NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114-4130.

Dec 9-18

ARRL 10 Meter Contest -- 0000Z Dec 9-2400Z Dec 10 (see Nov *QST*).

Dec 16-Jan 1

Many of the lighthouse stations active in this low-key, extended event have beautiful picture QSLs, treasured by collectors. Take a "watch" and log some "lights."

Lighthouse Christmas Lights QSO Party -- all modes, sponsored by the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society, 0001Z Dec 16-2359Z Jan 1, 2007. Frequencies (MHz): CW -- 1.830, 3.530, 7.030, 14.030, 21.030, 28.030; SSB -- 1.970, 3.970, 7.270, 14.270, 21.370, 28.370, plus VHF and repeaters. Exchange: sequential serial number or ARLHS member number or ARLHS Lighthouse number + name + S/P/C. QSO points: 1 point per QSO, add 2 points for ARLHS member, add 3 points for lighthouse. Score is total QSO points. Stations activating light beacons multiply total points by 2. Special logging requirements apply. For more information: arlhs.com or send self-addressed, stamped envelope to ARLHS, 114 Woodbine Ave, Merchantville, NJ 08109. Logs due Jan 31, 2007 to Dave Ruch, NF0J, PO Box 20696, Bloomington, MN 55420-0696.

Dec 30-Jan 1

ARRL Straight Key Night -- from 0000Z-2359Z Jan 1, 2007 (see page 98 of this issue *fact, there is a plaque awarded for the top combined RAC-Stew Perry score!*)

Other stuff.....

The Texas MINI is coming up in February! Plan on heading to San Angelo TX for another good one. There should be lots of cw counties put out on the way there and back by the mobiles! Fill in those 'band counties' while 40M is going gangbusters!

N8KIE heads to Kalawao around December 9th. He will run SSB and CW.

Awards

Master's Gold #20, WG6X, Ray, 10/26/06
Master's Gold #21, N8KIE, Bob, 11/6/2006
Third Time #200, KD4HXM, Rufus, 11/5/2006
Five Star #26, W6TPC, Harry, 11/06/2006
Bingo #286, KA4TYG, Carol, 11/7/2006
Master Gold #22, N9QPQ, Kay, 11/10/2006
Bingo II #44, N9QPQ, Kay, 11/10/2006
USACA #1146, N4UZW, Joe, 11/14/2006
USACA # 1147, KA7OAI, Alan, November 27, 2006
Fourth Time, #129, WB0CQO, Joe, November 27, 2006
Bingo #288, KA3DRO, Ron, November 22, 2006
USACW #88, K7VAY, Pat, November 21, 2006
Second Time #368, Ron, KA3DRO, November 18, 2006

Picture Gallery



N7AKT/m, Scottie, County Hunting Pictures
He's been 'everywhere'! Sagadahoc, ME, Santa Cruz



N5PR sent in this Picture – Highway shut down - Grass Fire
Gray County , TX - one of the hazards
Spring 2006

That's it for this month's County Hunter News...see you next month!