

County Hunter News

December 1, 2015
Volume 11, Issue 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For general information FAQ on County Hunting, check out:

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

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

find information on these awards and the rules at:

http://countyhunter.com/marac_information_package.htm

The CW net procedure is written up at:

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

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

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

Want county lines on your Garmin GPS?

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

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

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

Notes from the Editor

1) Mobiles were out and running – propagation was good some days and horrible on other days. Winter weather hit the midwest with a foot and a half of snow in places and temps dropping way below freezing. It made it down to the 20s around my home town of Dallas and the trip east at Thanksgiving saw lots of clear but very cold weather into the low 20s. A few awards were earned this month. Those far west rare counties aren't run too often in the winter time. The newsletters is a bit late due to Thanksgiving travel. Some days were pretty quiet on the bands with just a mobile or two – typical of winter – until someone takes a trip to somewhere and puts out a lot for the folks. Days are getting shorter and it's still prime holiday season with folks scurrying about getting

set for their holiday celebrations and family get togethers once again.

2) Oops...last month we showed a picture that Barry, K2MF sent in of Camden County. It was Camden County GA and correctly shown in the database of signs. I moved Barry's pic to NJ. The Little Satilla River is in GA. Frank, WA2VYA pointed this out.

3) Marac Last County Awards

AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2015, MARAC LC-1 PAPERLESS AWARDS ARE NOW FREE

Book Review of the Month

This month's book is *The Wireless Telegraph Boy* by John Trowbridge published in 1908. Wow! That is 'early' wireless – a decade or so before most of the books we've covered so far and perhaps the earliest 'wireless book' to date. It's really obscure – you have to search real real hard to even find a reference to it, no less the actual book. I've only seen one copy for sale in five years or more and bought it from a dealer in England. This is getting to the 'bottom of the pile'. Remember, Marconi only started the wireless revolution in 1900 – and it was confined mostly to shipboard radio. (of course, land line telegraphy had been around for 60 years at this time, including undersea cables hooking continents together).

Our story starts out in Russia. Alex has had a rough life. His father was sent off to work camps in Siberia, and he was sent to study with Professor Valdov who lives in a city on the Volga River. The Professor is a science man at the local university and teaches Alex well over many years. Alex is proficient in five languages and does well in science and math. One of the things the professor is into is 'wireless telegraphy'. He is one of the currently 'hated elites' in the beginning of the Russian revolution. Unfortunately, the witch hunt of the socialists is about to ensnare both the professor and Alex, and Alex must flee to America via a a devious route to escape spies sent to capture him and return him to Russia. His father has also escaped and gone into hiding, and is being hunted by the socialists.

Alex takes trains and winds up in Paris waiting to catch a steamer across the channel. He runs into another man who befriends him in the steamer terminal – Bill Brown. He's doing wireless experiments back at his house in NYC. They have a lot in common. The conversation gets around to a local professor – and his friend has some newspaper articles about that friend and digs into the pile. A short time later it is time for Alex is aboard the steamer and he finds his letter of introduction to several Americans has vanished along with his money he had in his pocket. He arrives in England penniless. He has a few Francs but that is it. He suspects that Bill Brown took his ticket and money.

He must improvise and winds up in a 'sailor house' (very low income housing) – and manages to befriend another person – and with his talents as an artist, raises a few bucks for somewhat better digs by sketching people and doing some 'portraits' for a shilling or two. He winds up as a crew member on steamer headed to NYC.

One day into the voyage a storm hits. The wireless operator on board falls overboard during the storm trying to repair the antenna wire which was broken loose. He's the only one. The ship has no other people capable of using the wireless. Alex volunteers his service and winds up as ship operator for the rest of the journey.

The spies out to kidnap and bring him back to Russia, to flush out his father, have intercepted the route of Alex and are on board the steamer. He spots them but they don't know exactly what he looks like. The spies make all sorts of inquiries, check and recheck the passenger lists, but never find him. Alex keeps a low profile and manages to keep out of their grip – they don't suspect the ship's wireless operator. He gets off the ship late after all the passengers and makes toward another professor's house in NYC. It turns out the professor is not there - but off on vacation to Europe. Now, once again, Alex is without any funds to keep him going.

He looks for the local wireless telegraph office. He finds a job at a small regular telegraph office – it seems the regular operators are on strike and they need operators to send messages - a strike buster, if you will. He goes to work and is threatened by a few union goons but continues to work. One night after his regular shift, he is on his way home when he is attacked by several ruffians – likely union goons – and roughed up. One hefty man comes to his rescue and drives off the hoodlums just before the police arrive. It's Bill Brown, the man he talked at length with in Europe at the steamer terminal. Bill Brown takes him home where he recuperates from his heavy injuries. Turns out that Bill Brown had found Alex's ticket/wallet in his bag of clippings and tried to send messages to Alex about having it. He returns it to Alex, who now has sufficient funds. The two become good friends.

Bill Brown has a vacation cottage out on the ocean with a second wireless, and the two proceed to do wireless experiments between them at a few dozen miles apart. The two spies eventually track Alex to the second home but the town folks rally to his side and drive them off.

Not long after there is a raging storm. Alex intercepts an SOS from a floundering steamer breaking up on a sandbar not far from his location. He alerts the 'sea rescue' folks down the beach and they set off in a lifeboat in the raging storm to save the crew and any passengers on the steamer. They arrive back after two trips and who do you think is one of the few passengers?

Why it's Alex father – they are re-united 5000 miles later and lots of adventure! End of story.

- - - - -

Decent 200 page read – typically of the day. Not much detail on 'wireless' other than it always seems to work, the messages always seem to get through to the right people who are always listening at the right time, etc.

Not on line and rather rare. Wait a few years and it will be on line. Found a paper copy here and passed it on.

Mobile Activity

Fred, K0FG, sent in a trip report:

“Recently we went on a long trip and thought I would tell you about it in case you wanted to include it in your newsletter sometime. Feel free to edit and use anything that might fit your needs. I noticed in the last newsletter you said my 20 meter antenna broke. Not so, it was the whole antenna mount so I could not use any part of the antenna. I carry lots of tools and repair parts, but not a whole mount that bolts onto the

car.

Left home (central Missouri) on Sept. 8, the day after Labor day. My plan was to run 20 and 40 meters on both ssb and cw. I usually run ssb on the go recording everything on a solid state hand-held recorder. For cw I try to stop on county lines, if I have time, otherwise I run cw also on the go. If I'm running 14-15 wpm and making lots of mistakes I'm probably driving. If I'm running 16-18 wpm and making somewhat fewer mistakes I'm probably parked. My wife does not like to drive, especially with me in the car, something about driving her way, not mine.

We planned on being gone about one month, and we almost accomplished that. Across Missouri and Tennessee with no problems. Then in North Carolina we hit our first problem, KC3X. Hollis was giving us road directions since we were close to where he lives and he knows how to avoid the big city traffic. Then he suggested that we should come stay overnight with them, they were only maybe 20 miles south of our route so that sounded good. They were great hosts and they have a wonderful home. Thank you so much we really enjoyed visiting with both of you. The problem is: when I left I was envious of the nice home, wonderful antenna farm and of all the goodies on the bench in the ham shack.

On to the coast and Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. My wife is a lighthouse nut. We have lighthouses in every room in the house, except for the ham shack. Her favorite is Hatteras. She has seen lots of lighthouses but never Hatteras. The last time we were in the area it was 4th of July weekend and we wanted to stay far away rather than get caught up in that traffic. The time before that when we were close they were moving it. "moving a lighthouse." You gotta be kidding! Nope. They did move it about 1500 feet inland. The beach had gradually been washed away and they were afraid the foundation would not be stable much longer.

We drove to Swanquarter, NC and took the 3 1/2 hour ferry boat ride to Ocracoke Island to spend the night so we could take the shorter ferry the next morning to Hatteras Island. It was the first time we had ever seen a thunderstorm from aboard a ship. It was a clear, afternoon when we boarded, the thunder, lightning and some wind made it seem like a 10 hour boat ride. But then it cleared off again and was a beautiful afternoon and evening.

The week after Labor Day there is nothing going on and there should have been nobody there. But every motel, hotel and B & B was filled, we could find no place to stay on Ocracoke Island, and we are too old to sleep in the car. So we took the half-hour ferry ride to Hatteras to find lodging. And we did, after driving the island twice. But the

next day was sunny and warm and my wife was able to take hundreds of pictures of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. The trip is a success!!!

Then we headed north to see our younger daughter and her family, they live in Collingswood, NJ which is just across the river from downtown Philadelphia. We spent a week there and did some tourist things we had not done before on our visits. We did go to Freedom Square because the last time we were there it was raining, but this time it was very nice. The Franklin Institute is amazing, we were there for about 4 hours and maybe saw 10 percent of it. The 8 year old grandson would have stayed longer but the grandparents were tired. One of the tourist things was to visit HRO in New Castle, DE. I didn't need anything but I always visit a ham radio store given the opportunity, we don't have one in central Missouri where I live, the closest is Kansas City.

When we left our daughter we went north to Burlington, VT. I don't know why? Yes I do, because the wife said she wanted to go back, that's why. We drove over into New York and then diagonally down through the Adirondack Mountains. The trees were just beginning to turn, we got just a glimpse of what they might look like in another week or two.

We turned west at Utica, through Erie, PA and on to Cleveland, OH. Through Ohio and Indiana and we were going good until we arrived in Chicago about 3:30PM. I didn't know traveling through construction at 10-30 mph could be so scary. Being a small town boy from Omaha, NE I had never seen so many cars, well not going that slowly anyway.

We finally managed to find a motel on the western edge of the Chicago area. I found that Tony, WA9DLB, lived only a few miles away. I called him and he came over the next morning and had breakfast with us. Thanks Tony, it was great to meet you.

Across Illinois and Wisconsin and on to our destination, Stillwater, MN. From the Omaha area we used to trailer our boat to Lake City, MN where we launched and the spent a week traveling up and down the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, staying on our boat on sandbars and river banks, visiting all the river towns and living a Tom Sawyer life. Since we had never seen any of those towns, other than the 2 blocks closest to the rivers, we decided that we would take the river roads from Stillwater, MN to Hannibal, MO. And we did. And it was fun.

It was fun except the part at LaCrosse, WI when we drove up to Grandpa's Bluff, a beautiful vista some hundreds of feet above the city and the Mississippi river valley. We took the walk, snapped the pictures and went back to the parking lot where I noticed the

antenna looked strange. I always admire the antenna when approaching the car. It was kinda leaning over maybe 20 degrees. A 4 foot Hustler mast with 20 and 40 meter coils will catch your eye at that angle. Upon inspection I found the antenna mount had broken and the raw end put a few minor scratches in the 1 year old van. It was metal fatigue from the flexing of the mount, even though it has a brace about 15 inches above the mount. There was no repairing it so I took everything apart, stowed the radio and pouted the next 4 days until we got home.

We got to Hannibal and it is a fun town to visit. One amazing thing, down on the waterfront, in the historic district, there are no parking meters. And there are several off street parking lots that are free. A tourist trap, with no trap! From Hannibal it's only about 150 miles home so we headed that way.

We arrived home on Saturday Oct. 3. After 26 days and almost 4,900 miles we were safely back home. I made several hundred contacts, so I assume I made some people happy. I ran a bunch of new counties, and even some new states. It was fun and if I ever get the credit cards paid off I might consider doing it again.

73s
Fred, K0FG

- - -

Other mobile activity

Jim, N9JF was spotted out in IN and KY.

Kerry, W4SIG, was noted in TN and MS. Many days.

Jack, K0MAF noted on SSB on the new MARAC Net. Headed on down through KY and points south to FL.

Fred, K0FG, ran some in MO.

Barry, N0KV, and Pat, N0DXE, headed down to southeast CO (Baca County) then back home in a long one day trip.

Bob, WA3QNT, was out and about in PA.

Jerry, W0GXQ, made a run to Northwest MN putting out the counties.

Matt, W0NAC, and Sharon, N0LXJ, were busy for a week putting out counties in OK and KS and CO.

Mike, KA4RRU, put out counties in VA and WV several times during the month.

\
K5GE/W5PKE headed out to run some in east TX.

Randy, AA8R, and Patti, W8TAX headed over to WI for a few days then back home.

Karl, K4YT, was mobile up in NJ and then later in central VA.

KB0BA/N0XYL were out putting out counties in WI.

Jim, N4JT, was busy putting out NC on cw and data modes.

Kyle, WA4PGM, made a trip and ran cw over to TN and back

Chuck, W3CR, was busy in IA and NE putting them out on SSB

WB5TMW was out and about in TX. SSB

KA2LHO noted out and about in NY on SSB

Doug, WA4UNS was running counties in VA.

On the Road with N4CD I

The annual trek back east for turkey day began after the weekend at the Vintage Radio Convention held at the Hampshire Inn in Mesquite Texas. About 250 people attend each year. Friday afternoon has the 'tubes and paper' auction where you can buy just about any tube ever made. There were 'audions', tons of receiving and TV type tubes, old transmitting tubes, picture and CRT tubes, boxes and boxes of tubes, tube caddies full of tubes, and tubes that sold for \$250 apiece. Something for everyone. Audions are the

very first 'vacuum tube' and really weren't that good, but did demonstrate the principle and quickly led to much better tubes. They were used for detectors and for primitive audio amps. Bell Labs worked quickly to improve them to provide amplification for long distance service. WW1 saw major advances with tens of thousands of tubes made for the military services.

In addition, all sorts of paper, from 'advertising' to complete Riders service manuals (17 volumes) for every tube radio ever made, to old magazines including some ham radio ones. Later on Friday there was the \$10 and up sale of electronics – everything from 80-90 year old radios to TV sets to laser disc players, 8 track tapes, Cassettes, novelty radios like Mickey Mouse with radio inside, a few pieces of ham gear such as SW-54 receivers and a few Hallicrafter type sets, and 300 lots of 'things'. There were dozens of plastic tube radios, some wood radios with/without tubes going back 80 years, parts of all kinds, and just about anything an old radio collector could want. A few microphones, headphones, one broken vibroplex in sad shape, and just about everything else with a tube in it was there for sale. That lasted till 10pm. Slept well.

After a hardy breakfast including a waffle, I joined the crowds for the Saturday auction of \$20 and up stuff. Some items went for over \$1000! Most went for anywhere from \$20 to \$250. No new regens - the only regens for sale, other than some 1920 BC type sets, were a Knight Kit Space Spanner with no cabinet, and a one tube AC-100 kit radio of the Boy Scout era (have 2 of them). I sold a few items, and didn't buy anything this year! Got enough junk for a while! Sold some of the early radio books at the 'silent auction'.

There was a nice awards dinner then it was off to bed for an early start on Sunday.

After another hardy breakfast at the Hampton Inn, I headed out at 6:30am. Brrrr! It was 28 degrees outside. The great 'chill' had hit Dallas. I scooted on home – 45 min trip - in the around town car, parked it in the garage, moved the suitcase over the the Malibu for the road trip, put the antennas on the car, and was on the road by 7:30 am headed to Maryland

continued in Part II

County Sign Database Project I

Gary made a few additions (10/26) to the big file this month. Bob, WA3QNT contributed 2 in KY and one in IN. . Here's one of them:



Crawford, IN by WA3QNT

Shari, KB0MMH, sent in one from NY.



Schenectady NY by KB0MMH, Shari

MARAC Awards

It seems to me that maybe MARAC should consider some annual awards for mobiles. After all, MARAC was founded as the “**MOBILE AWARDS**” club, not the sit at home and work counties club.

First, let's talk a bit about the RAN all State Awards. There seems to be some confusion. If you run all the counties in a state, you can apply for the RAN-state award. The best part is it is 'free' to MARAC members. Put out all the counties in a state, with at least one contact per county – and you've completed the award requirements.

From page 28 of the MARAC Awards page:

“ Logs must indicate the State and county transmitted, the station worked, the date of each contact, and the date of the last contact.

There is no fee for award certificates for MARAC members. “

-- ----

So when you finish transmitting from each county within a state, send your info to the Awards person, and request an award. The first time you run a state, it gets listed in the database under you call.

Not all county hunters send in for the individual state awards. Likely K5GE has run dozens of states end to end, but hasn't sent in for any awards. Others, like K8ZZ, are working to finish them up and listing them as he does. If you look up K8ZZ in the database, you'll find:

RAS - 1st Time - AR	4/26/2010	16
RAS - 1st Time - DE	10/5/2010	56
RAS - 1st Time - HI	10/2/2012	16
RAS - 1st Time - IA	7/9/2012	23

RAS - 1st Time - IL	9/19/2011	22
RAS - 1st Time - IN	9/20/2011	22
RAS - 1st Time - KY	6/13/2011	16
RAS - 1st Time - MD	10/5/2010	23
RAS - 1st Time - ME	4/26/2010	20
RAS - 1st Time - MI	4/26/2010	21
RAS - 1st Time - MI	6/2/2010	25
RAS - 1st Time - MN	7/4/2011	18
RAS - 1st Time - NC	10/31/2011	19
RAS - 1st Time - ND	8/9/2011	22
RAS - 1st Time - NE	7/14/2012	21
RAS - 1st Time - NH	4/26/2010	25
RAS - 1st Time - NJ	10/5/2010	19
RAS - 1st Time - NY	10/5/2010	13
RAS - 1st Time - OH	7/2/2010	17
RAS - 1st Time - PA	8/22/2012	20
RAS - 1st Time - SC	11/1/2011	25
RAS - 1st Time - SD	8/6/2011	20
RAS - 1st Time - VA	10/30/2011	17
RAS - 1st Time - VT	4/26/2010	27
RAS - 1st Time - WA	2/3/2015	29
RAS - 1st Time - WI	8/15/2010	21
RAS - 1st Time - WV	7/2/2010	15

He's well on his way to his goal of joining the group that has run them all (19 now). There may be a few others in there filling in the blanks and getting to working lots of complete states. Terry, WQ7A, has more than a dozen under his belt so far...and continuing. KB0BA/N0XYL have 20 states done so far. Mary, AB7NK has five states complete at this point – but she has run hundreds of counties – if not thousands. Kerry , W4SIG, has a half dozen states done – states where you normally hear him. Barry , N0KV, with N0DXE, have finished 33 states so far on their way to all of them.

In many cases, folks have run lots of the counties in a state, but never quite got to all – on various trips through the state. Then it's necessary to 'clean up that state' by getting the ones a bit further off the beaten path.

So far, 17 folks have run all the counties. It looks like K8ZZ has a goal of getting to all of them, now that he is retired and can roam the country end to end.

Don, K3IMC, before his big trip to the midwest in November, only had 289 counties to

go to finish running all of them. This trip should cut that number way down! He'll be finishing up before you know it.

Who else is serious about getting to all of them? AB7NK/K7SEN? A few other mobiles that have roamed far and wide seemed to have lost interest in doing it. They've put out a thousand counties or more.

However, just about every county hunter can work on getting their home state and nearby states done – maybe on just weekend and 3 day holiday type trips. Or a one week vacation trip. Who else is in the race to 'run them all'?

It seems the best time for mobiles getting to them all is their 50s and 60s. By the time they hit their 70s, mobiles tend to slow down a bit. Well, many a whole lot. Or health issues keep them close to home. Or for some, they just lose interest and go on to other things. Or get tired of the shenanigans on .336. So if you are going to do this, start young!...or just start! The fun is in running the counties.

Sadly, there's not much incentives for mobiles to keep active after they've done it once. If you look at the list of who has done it all, there are just of handful of the 17 that still are out running counties.

Way back , Risto on his site had a feature and you could tell how many counties each mobile had run in the past couple months. That feature is no longer working along with many others. You could easily tell who the active mobiles were. Now? No clue other than dig it out detail by detail on the spotting sites – painfully – and no one does it. He had stats for counties run on cw, run on SSB. Now? Nothing. We're in the age of computers and stats....and there's zip out there. Sort of sad, isn't it? Maybe someone can come up with a way to do this by searching the database.

Well, I'll keep an eye on whose run how many states – and see who is likely to be next to finish them all off. Stay tuned.

For folks who have run all the counties in a state once, you can apply for second time – but it doesn't show up in the database – you get an electronic certificate you can print off and hang on the wall or put in your notebook of awards....but that is it. It is no longer listed under your awards under your call. Or third time. All numbered number Zero.

County Sign Database Project II

A few new pictures were added to the database this month but progress is slow.

Here's a new one or two:



Anderson TN by W8FNW



Meade, KY by WA3QNT

Kentucky QSO Party

Kentucky has the honor of being the last QSO Party of the year. The weather seems to have held for this one. I noted 3 mobiles out there. On CW – we had KM4FO in the western part of KY, and AE8M in the northern part. On SSB, the bonus station KY4KYA was on in 3 or more counties. Never heard or saw a spot for the bonus station to be on CW. Dang. In addition, there were a few fixed stations on cw, and a dozen or so on SSB.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

KM4FO Rover - 304 cw

I was a lot more rusty on working on the move than I thought I would be. Did manage to get 14 counties on the air. I was surprised that I didn't pick up more contacts on forty meters than I did. I went there every county till Calloway, by then the RTTY was drowning out everything else. I got to the Highway 68 bridge over Kentucky Lake, trying to get to Trigg County from Calloway and found the road was closed. They are building a new bridge. I had to back track all the way back up to the top of the lakes through counties that I had already run, so we called it a day and stopped at the state lodge at Kentucky Dam Village where I fed my driver (KJ4SYZ, also known as my wife) a nice supper and we headed home.

K4WW - Fixed - KY 186 cw 320 ssb

Many thanks for the contacts, especially the mobile stations that activated several counties. With the very popular WAE RTTY contest being on the same weekend, 40 CW was relatively useless after 2200UTC. I really, really should have not operated SSB, as it may have adversely effected my anticipation of a "relatively" serious effort, in Sweepstakes, next weekend. After 30+ years of doing this, I remain amazed that no matter how many time I ask "is this frequency in use", with no response, but immediately after calling CQ, I am inundated with "you're interfering with a net 5KHz up/down"? Why nets, and "casual" QSO's require a 5KHz window, on either side, is beyond me. Overall it was fun.

WN4AFP: 22 cw 24 ssb

Since this was the last QP of the year, I had to give it my best shot. QRP worked pretty well from SC to KY on my favorite band, but on 80m it was CW only and extremely challenging. Activity was light in the CW segment, good thing this was a mixed mode QP. I "ran" a few times and even received a call from KY4DXA/m. I'd like to thank all of you for the QSOs and especially the mobile stations AE8M, KY4DXA and KM4FO for all the multipliers. Special thanks goes to my fellow QPer KM4QO, Dwight for his willingness to go mobile for the first time

in many years to give us some much needed counties. Thanks again to the KYDXA for making it happen again this year. 73s Dave WN4AFP

K4BAI - fixed GA 6cw 10 ssb

Very little activity from KY. Skip was generally too long for 20 and 15, but sometimes heard loud KY stations from the far North of the state. 40 and 80M were good, but very little activity. Thanks for all QSOs. Still need five KY counties all time, Allen, Elliott, Lawrence, Lewis, and Trimble. 73, John, K4BAI.

TI8/AA8HH - fixed - Costa Rica - 12 cw 13 ssb

Enjoyed the contest but found the conditions to be very difficult from Costa Rica. I had to lower the antenna at the beginning of the contest due to spiders causing very high SWR. Cleaned antenna then had a rain delay due to nearby lightning strikes. Had a very tough time trying to work the few mobiles - they couldn't hear my pipsqueak signal and/or had a difficult time figuring out my long callsign!

W1WBB fixed - RI - 15 cw 30 ssb

Very good signals from The Bluegrass State into W1-land on 20m, and later 40m/80m. But somewhat sparse activity from KY really put the emphasis on *Search* in my S and P mode. Chasing Spotting Network spots of KY stns as well as some QSY requests late in event helped the score ... TNX to those who moved for new bands/modes! Joined the party 4 hrs late so missed all early activity, incl. much of AE8M as mobile.

Heavy 40m WAE DX RTTY QRM from 7.035 and up throughout event rendered KyQP 40m CW suggested QRG of 7.050+/- just useless. Very unfortunate as 40m CW is such a 'go-to' band/mode during QSO parties -- but NOT in this one! Highly suggest use of 7.025 thru 7.035 as improved QRGs for future KyQP events in case of overlap with WAE DX RTTY contest.

Worked 21 unique calls and 20 (of 120!) unique KY county mults. Mobiles worked (and QSOs) were: KM4FO/m (4), AE8M (2), KC4S/m (1). TNX for your activity!

Still had fun despite lack of Ky stations found -- certainly the most Ky QSOs I've had in any one event!

N6MU - fixed - CA 26 cw 15 ssb

Limited KY participation. Thanks to mobiles AE8M and especially KM4FO for keeping it interesting. 15 was open all day. Thanks to those few who QSYed for me when asked. 73...

John, N6MU

KN4Y - fixed - FL - 18 cw

Same number of QSO's as last year, need more Kentucky stations on CW. Worked only one mobile. Did not hear the bonus station on CW. Bands went sour last few hours.

On the Road with N4CD II

By leaving on Sunday , I'd have up to 4 days to get to Maryland in time for the family get together on Thursday. This year, I'd again temp Mother Nature by heading through West Virginia. Every year that I do that, it either snows on me or the snow is imminent and I have to high tail it out of WV before the blizzard happens. I checked the needs page, my third time transmitted counties, the Double Diamond log, and came up with a route that started out up the same boring Interstate Counties till Nashville (Davidson, TN), then shortly after head north into KY, run across the bottom part of KY into WV, and zig a bit to catch some 'new' counties along the way. I'd wind up heading up through Bath and Highland VA into WV once again, then zip across to the sister's house in Montgomery, MD. There were no needs for county line signs other than Montgomery MD, and that is a tough one on the interstates. Didn't get it – there might be one on the beltway but it's 14 lanes wide when it crosses into VA and you are too busy fighting traffic to even look for the sign, no less stop and get a picture.

Things started out well – chilly – but clear weather. With the later start, and heading east in the time zone, after 8 hours on the road, I found one of my favorite Super 8 motels in West Memphis, AR. It was only 4pm, but the sun sets fairly early so I'd call it a day. This Super 8 is \$39.95 a night plus tax. Under \$50. Added in two new Double Diamond contacts that I had missed on a previous trip along the interstate. Kept busy putting out the counties on cw. The motel is busy – call ahead. Behind it is a large truck parking lot and it's a favorite for truckers. There were only six cars in the front passenger car lot, but the motel was 'full up' that night.

Dinner at the Iron Skillet next door (\$13 buffet all you can eat – decent). Slept well.

Morning came, and this Super 8 has waffles, cereal, apples, and the usual crappy Orange Drink(sugar water). Had a small apple with the cereal. Didn't complain and was on the road headed east by 7pm. Same boring interstate counties on I-40 till just after Nashville in Davidson County, when I headed north through Pickett and Overton into KY. Made it across to London, KY for the night at a Red Roof Inn \$64 - stopped early – getting dark and still in Central Time Zone. Super 8 wanted too much money. Lots of motels are in this town right off the interstate (north south). Dinner at a nice Italian restaurant nearby. Not too many choices for 'sit down' dinners in London. Maybe could have run over to Hazard another hour east but didn't. No need to push it on this trip. Still had plenty of time and no snow was predicted although it was certainly cold enough to snow! It gets dark early this time of year and I'm not a fan of driving in strange places at night these days.

The Red Roof Inn also has a waffle maker, and nice breakfast. Indulged. On the road at 7am headed east through some of the less run KY counties including Perry and Pike. Along here, you can often 'see' other counties but it is tough to get to them. The roads just don't go that-a-way, or you can't get across the river – no bridge – even though you see roads on the other side. Dang. Wanted to get to Martin – tried a road for 8 miles but just wasn't going to cross the river into Martin and no bridge. Turned around and headed back on the twisty road. Win some/lose some.

I had the 40m SSB antenna, but every time I went to listen there, there was a QSO on 7188 and 7155. Never heard activity other than once, and didn't hear that mobile, just heard someone calling the mobile. In most cases, by the time I was done with 40,30,20 and 17m cw, I was about out of the county – especially on the interstates or good highways. Called half a dozen times on 40M SSB and no one came back – so didn't go there after a bit. I lost an hour – zipped into Eastern Time zone. Listened on 20M and never heard a net on any of the expected frequencies so didn't put out anything on 20 SSB. Most counties only had data service in the main cities, if that.

Things went well – no snow – but chilly with morning temps in the low 20s and highs in the 30s and 40s. Brrrr. I zipped across to WV, then up to the interstate, down the interstate from Charleston area to Beckley, then across the interstate 64 to VA. There I headed up through route 220 – very scenic and a decent highway once you climb up into the mountain valley (lots of switchbacks). Then you reach Bath county (not much in the way of motels but lots of high price B&Bs), into Highland (not much of anything other than scenery) and into WV. Highland County VA is the one of the least populated counties east of the Mississippi – population 2300 and declining. It's known as the Switzerland of VA – scenic but not much going on other than scenery and that doesn't attract the young folks any longer. Biggest industry is farming.

I would have stopped there but there wasn't any motels listed! Just high price B&Bs at \$100 and up. So it was on through Pendleton WV (not much there) into Grant County where I found two motels listed. Stayed at the Park Motel (actually a 100 year old historic hotel).

The hotel was interesting – small 'single' rooms – but good price of \$40 plus tax – about \$45 for the night. New heating individual room systems, but room fairly small – about 9 feet wide. Double size bed but not a lot of space for anything. I didn't worry about it. Slept well after a dinner at the Family Traditions cafe about a half mile away. Had a giant country ham dinner for \$6.50 with two sides, rolls, and water. Very good. Likely not updated in 50 years, but it was crowded. They had seats for about 100 folks. Petersburg is a town of about 2500 people – the largest in Grant County. Chilly – down to 22 in the morning. Brrr. Frost on the windshield.

Next morning after breakfast at the same cafe (omelet - \$4.75) it was east to the Interstate – 20 miles of excellent road, then 30 miles of two lane typical WV highway into VA over to I-81 then I-66 to Washington DC area. Arrived at my sister's house at noon and shut down for a few days to enjoy a big turkey dinner with the family.

Continued in Part III

On the Trail of Regens

This month a very rare Hallicrafters receiver was up for bid on Ebay. You rarely see the model S-1 – the first and only regenerative receiver sold by Hallicrafters. When Bill Halligan wanted to get into the ham radio business, he did not have a license to build a superhet receiver and could not afford the royalties he would have had to pay. So – he and fellow engineers came up with a design for a regenerate 4 band bandswitched unit, and contracted it out to Silver Marshall for a total order of 300. That's how many were built and sold. Shortly thereafter, Halligan managed to obtain a license to build superhet designs and that was it. Probably most of these units quickly wound up on the scrap heap. In the last five or six years, two have come up for bid on Ebay. I've seen 3 others at the AWA display last year when one of the categories was radios built by Hallicrafters. That's it.



Hallicrafters S-1 Regen Radio

Well, it started at \$500. I would love to have one to add to the collection...but it ended up at \$1400. Ouch. Too much. You can buy a brand new mobile with all the bells and whistles for that money.

On the Road with N4CD III

The time had come to head back to Texas. I was stuffed with turkey and dressing and desserts and everything else. The DX contest was raging on CW but the cw folks can use 14.113 as a backup frequency for 20M when that happens. Most of the time it is relatively clear of contest clutter – even though some data types seem to try to muck it up at times.

I left on Sunday – rainy – and it was raining for the first two days – continuously. No fun. Well....I headed off through some 'not run' for third time counties – no DD contacts – too early – so folks missed Rappahannock and Page – then back on to the Interstate 81 after a very scenic ride – and up and down hills to the Skyline Drive – didn't make very good time. The first traffic jam happened not long after – seems there were lots of trucks and lots and lots of cars traveling – and someone collided. 45 minute delay and creep and crawl at 5 mph. Ugggh! Then there was another accident five miles later – and another 30 minute delay! Uggh! This was not to be a 'speedy' trip. The rain likely didn't help – just continuous drizzle and wet roads. No sun. Oh well. I was still making progress. These were all new Double Diamond contact counties – got a contact in most after the first 4 missed. Of course, I was busy putting them out on all bands with propagation – 40M to start, then 30 and later 20 and 17 opened.

Heard Scottie , N4AAT, in the afternoon. Good to hear him on the radio. He's been in and out of hospital fighting a major problem with cancer.

That day I made it down into TN.....about 50 miles from Knoxville the backup started. Been there and done that before. For some reason, on holiday weekends, traffic is a mess getting into Knoxville. I shut down just as the traffic on the interstate was coming to a halt. Saw a sign for a Super 8 and took the exit. Oh, wow! Deja Vue all over again, as Yogi Bear would say. I've stayed at that Super 8. \$50. Across the street is a Shoney's – and had the buffet for \$9.99. Got a senior discount, bringing it down to \$8 and change. Slept well. Rain continued.

Next morning – Monday – still raining. Headed out about 6:30 am headed west through Knoxville – no problems with traffic – zipped on through. Not too many on radio early in the morning. Just west of Knoxville you head into the Central Time Zone (Cumberland County) and 'gain an hour'. Today could be an hour longer and of course, headed west, the sunset is later. After Davidson, I decided to head off the interstate and get Crockett, Lauderdale and Tipton – new ones for me. Lauderdale turned out to be a LC for W4SIG in TN. Yippee! Had the time. Needed it.....getting back to the interstate was time consuming.

Over into AR. At exit 221, you can get to Lee with a 2.5 mile detour. Of course, I sat in Lee for nearly 30 minutes running the counties on just cw. Whew! Then back on the interstate to make some tracks toward home. I zipped on over to Pulaski (Little Rock) where I change from I-40 to I-30. Twenty miles later in Saline County is the Super 8 at Bryant, AR. Stayed here many times. \$50. Lots of restaurants nearby including the Cracker Barrel. Slept well. No waffles at this Super 8 – well, they had the kind you pop in a toaster oven – yuk.

Up at 6am, cereal and apple for breakfast, on the road by 6:45am headed home – about five hours. Arrived safely – rain had stopped. 2500+ miles. Loads of contacts and counties – doing logs will keep me busy for a week with the DD logging requirements.

Most of the time, 17m was working. Worked a few DX stations – and half a dozen or so in many of the counties. Lots of contacts on 40cw – seemed to be best band back east. 20M worked for the western stations and a few DX.

Hope I hit some you needed. Many on the interstate but two dozen off the interstate. See you next trip!

Awards Issued

USA-CW #146	Doyle, K5KDG	11.19.15
USA-CW #147	Gene , NT2A	11.24.15,
Bingo #368	Barry, K2MF	11.15.15,
Bingo III #35	Jim, N4JT	10.28.15,
Bingo IV #10	Bob, N8KIE	11.20.15

USA-PA "A" Prefix #9
USA-PA All Prefixes #8

Gene, K5GE
Gene, K5GE

11.9.15,
11.9.15,

Events for County Hunters

The end of the year provides for a few 'contest' opportunities with the ARRL 160M contest and the ARRL 10M contest. Other than that, it's pretty quiet through the winter months.

That's all this month. Short one.