

County Hunter News

December 1, 2016
Volume 12 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

N4CD Rumblings

Band conditions go from good to so so with lots of just 'fair days' on the propagation banner. At times, we get some disturbed conditions, but if you are out mobile, the contacts seem to keep coming. With winter descending upon us, there aren't too many mobiles out. Some have headed to warmer weather, with N8KIE off in HI, and NA8W and others headed to FL.

We note this month the passing of one of the 'great' county hunters – Scottie – N4AAT – after a long battle with cancer. He was one of the few to 'Run all USA' and achieve the highest award given to date - the Mobile Diamond Award.

Not long ago, we also lost WA0SBR – another who completed running all USA – and who was well known for his detailed itineraries on his trips to each of the 50 states –

locations and times down to the minute.

At the N4CD QTH, some traveling has gotten in the way of getting the County Hunter News out to press – but eventually we 'git 'er done'. Too much NPOTA fever and end of the month traveling to get to the 'rare' parks once again. The National Parks program comes to a end on Dec 31. Thousands will suffer from withdrawal symptoms and maybe we can lure a few into county hunting.

On the Road with N4CD I

The National Parks on the Air program continues to the end of the year. In the remaining time, Chasers and Activators are on a quest to break one million NPOTA QSOs uploaded to Log Book of the World (LoTW). As of the end of November, it was just about 900,000. It would take a big push to get to the ONE MILLION mark.

To help out, N4CD headed up to Chickasaw National Recreation Area, RC05, for a Saturday. I took the back road route up there through Marshall and Johnston counties, often needed, avoiding the interstate.

This particular park has been well run, but the chasers are piling on, trying to rack up the QSOs, so I'd have a bunch of activity from Murray County. It's about a 2 1/2 hour drive there. Got there – got on the air and made another 240 contacts. There are some new chasers getting in late in the game, but most were repeat contacts. They all count. Not a bad day for park activation. There's a nice boat launch area and big parking area - that was nearly deserted in the cooler weather – where you can sit for hours. After a couple hours, left the park, hit the Subway for late lunch then headed on home. Ran the counties on the way up, a few on the way home.

There are some new chasers just getting on board, and you've still got a month to work the parks. Likely over 100 will be on the air again before the end of the year!

Kentucky QSO Party

Activity was light. There were at least 15 counties on the air – between SSB and CW. It would be great if we could get a half dozen mobiles out giving out the contacts each year.

From the 3830 contest reflector:

KM4FO rover put out 95 QSO for the folks.

- ----

fixed stations

KE0TT reported six cw QSO from MN running QRP

WB9HFK in IL reported 10cw and 13 ssb QSO with 12 multipliers

K4BAI in GA reported 6 cw and 1 SSB QSO

K9GDF in WI had 2 cw and 2 ssb QSO

VA2CZ had 4 cw and 14 ssb QSO with 9 multipliers

W5TM in OK had 5 cw QSO

N4UL in Jefferson County gave out 102 cw QSOs

VA3AYR had 8 cw and 4 ssb QSO

KA4EKY gave out 95 CW QSO from KY

W7KAM worked 14 on SSB. He noted : "Four all time new counties made the effort worth while."

WN4AFP in SC did 18 cw and 14 ssb. He noted:

"Lighter activity than last year... I only had one Q KY4DXA, but heard him in several counties. My 40m band went long too early and it was too early for Qs on 80m, so took a break to watch the not so good Clemson va Pitt game. Only worked this one part-time. We'll do better next year. K4KG, George, thanks for

your help getting me together with N4JDG. I didn't hear many of the 'regulars' in this QP. K4FT played the QSY game with me for 4 Qs.. thanks... 73s Dave WN4AFP"

N4DY in KY gave out 502 SSB contacts

K4WW in KY gave out 76 cw and 320 ssb contacts

Book Report of the Month

Radio Pals in the Flaming Forest by Charles Ludwig. Sounds like it should be a good story with a title like that, right? This is one of 5 or 6 books in the Radio Pals series. It's probably number 5 as far as I can figure.

We start out with Porky on his ham radio trying to reach his friends on 40m CW who have gone camping up by the lake in the big forest at the crater. It starts out great as Porky can send 35 wpm in Morse - but fails to get an answer from the friends on a pre arranged schedule. As he looks out the window, heavy spirals of black smoke are headed higher up in the forest mountain area with a quick traveling major blaze, and likely his friends are not aware of the inferno headed their way. They've taken a portable set up with them but for some reason don't show up on sked.

And that...is about the extent of ham radio involvement for the next 99% of the book – one for youngsters written in the early fifties.

Well.....Tom and Jim, the other two Radio Pals, suddenly find themselves engulfed in a raging forest fire. They built a raft using their antenna rope and wire to get away from the shore out into the lake. Unfortunately, this book is written by a overly devout Christian and in every other paragraph someone is on their knees praying and reading bible verses.

The two eventually get 'rescued' by two escaped convicts – ones they sent to the Big House a year ago...who are out for revenge. In fact, they were the ones who started the massive forest fire to trap; the boys. Turns out Porky and a helicopter pilot, who are out to rescue the two, also get taken prisoner. Now there are four of them in the hidden cave secure 'hide out ' where the bad guys intend to leave them forever shortly with no way out.

Eventually they find a way to escape and all is well. Good guys capture the bad guys. Everyone prays every time you turn around and spout bible verses. No radio after the first chapter. Sad.. well, you can skip this one for sure.

It's not a wonder why no one has heard of this or ever will.

On the Amazon scale of popular books, it's number 1,190,764 . If you read 10 books a day, it would take you over a 500 years to get to it starting with the most popular. Cost me \$6 and I'll flip it for about the same! In one or two of the books in the series, supposedly they did use the radio to help catch the bad guys. Stay tuned.

Mobile Activity in November

At the beginning of the month:

N4UP was up in OH and IN – and eventually headed home after a few days

KC6AWX was noted out in CA and OR. Busy many days. Got over in NV, too.

K3IMC was busy in GA putting them out

WB5TMW was active in west TX

K0FG ran counties in MO on a few days in Nov.

AE4KI was out and about in TN and KY

K8ZZ was out and about in MO – then into CO...and around through NM.

Ed, KN4Y, was spotted in AL

N9QS was busy in SC running the counties then into NC

KA4TLC put them out in VA

KA2LHO headed from up north down to FL and back north and back south. Was in OH as well.

KB6UF headed from Dallas back east – spotted in MS then back out in TX then all the way to CA.

KB0BA was active in IN – eventually heading home

K0DEQ was putting out counties in MO

KZ2P/N2FPM noted out mobile in SC and GA

In the KY QSO party we had spots for: KE4FRM, WB4KLI, N4JIL, WB4DKQ, AJ4A, ND4Y, N5JVG, KY4DXA, N4UL, KF4T, K4FXN, KJ4AOM, KM4RO, KF4KY, W4IOD, KY4KY, N4PF, K4TXJ, W4CDA, AND MORE

WD4OIN was noted in FL after traveling – then headed back north.

KB9AIT/N9AOT noted out in IN

KA4RRU was active in VA

N4JT busy in VA putting them out multi-mode.

KJ8V/KJ8W active in KY then down into FL and AL

K9MIX out in WI putting them out.

K8ZZ headed to CO and did lots of counties in KS. Later noted in AZ via CO and NM.

W9MSE noted in IL

N0KV/N0DXE headed to southeast TX

KW1DX ran counties in CT and NY

N4UP was noted active in MD

N2MH noted in NC.

W4SIG was out in TN toward the end of the month

N9JF showed up in KS and into CO.

--

Most active mobile of the month – hands down....KA2LHO – very busy running over 100 counties.

MARAC Information

MARAC has a new webmaster. Dave, KW1DX has volunteered and is now in charge of the MARAC website.

MARAC has a new Awards Secretary. Patti, W8TAX as volunteered and has been appointed.

The 2017 MARAC convention will be held in Colorado Springs in September. See the MARAC webpage for the latest information. Barry, N0KV and Pat, N0DXE are the hosts.

Science Tidbit

Research Triangle Park, NC: On 28 November 2016, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) approved the name and symbols for four elements: nihonium (Nh), moscovium (Mc), tennessine (Ts), and oganesson (Og), respectively for element 113, 115, 117, and 118.

Following a 5-month period of public review, the names earlier proposed by the discoverers have been approved by the IUPAC Bureau. The following names and symbols are officially assigned:

Nihonium and symbol Nh, for the element 113,
Moscovium and symbol Mc, for the element 115,

Tennessine and symbol Ts, for the element 117, and Oganesson and symbol Og, for the element 118.

In concordance with and following the earlier reports that the claims for discovery of these elements have been fulfilled [1,2], the discoverers have been invited to propose names. Keeping with tradition, the newly discovered elements have been named after a place or geographical region, or a scientist. The ending of the names also reflects and maintains historical and chemical consistency: “-ium” for elements 113 and 115 and as for all new elements of groups 1 to 16, “-ine” for element 117 and belonging to group 17 and “-on” for element 118 element belonging to group 18.[3] The recommendations will be published in the IUPAC journal Pure and Applied Chemistry* (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/pac-2016-0501>).

The name nihonium with the symbol Nh for element 113 was proposed by the discoverers at RIKEN Nishina Center for Accelerator-Based Science (Japan); the name came from Nihon which is one of the two ways to say “Japan” in Japanese, and literally mean “the Land of Rising Sun”.

Moscovium with the symbol Mc for element 115 and tennessine with the symbol Ts for element 117 were proposed by the discoverers at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna (Russia), Oak Ridge National Laboratory (USA), Vanderbilt University (USA) and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (USA). Both are in line with tradition honoring a place or geographical region. Moscovium is in recognition of the Moscow region and honors the ancient Russian land that is the home of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, where the discovery experiments were conducted using the Dubna Gas-Filled Recoil Separator in combination with the heavy ion accelerator capabilities of the Flerov Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions. Tennessine is in recognition of the contribution of the Tennessee region of the United States, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, to superheavy element research.

Lastly, and in line with the tradition of honoring a scientist, the name oganesson and symbol Og for element 118 was proposed by the collaborating teams of discoverers at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna (Russia) and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (USA) and recognizes Professor Yuri Oganessian (born 1933) for his pioneering contributions to transactinoid elements research. His many achievements include the discovery of superheavy elements and significant advances in the nuclear physics of superheavy nuclei including experimental evidence for the “island of stability”.

<https://iupac.org/iupac-announces-the-names-of-the-elements-113-115-117-and-118/>

On the Road with N4CD II

There was a need for several 'park units' in Texas among the park hunters – so N4CD picked up the challenge to head to some of the less run parks. Just like counties, some are rare. Others have had several thousand contacts made – so not much in demand, although new 'chasers' are still joining in the fun, even at the last moment. One new chaser commented he had worked over 200 parks in just the last two months!

Sunday Nov 27

I headed out early on a Sunday morning down I-35 through the Dallas Metroplex. No problems with 'rush hour' – hi hi. A few hours down the interstate you get to Waco Mammoth National Monument – MN81. The gates open at 9am but you can be 'in the park' just in front of the gates. I arrive just a few minutes before the opening time. About 1000 feet inside the gate is a nice parking spot away from the main activity and parking lot. I fire up and start logging. Half an hour later, AE5X comes by – he's ready to set up and operate, also, from the park. We co-exist on different bands. He's running a KX2 to a vertical on his truck bed – 10W. I've been there at least 3 times before and this is not a 'rare' one. You can spend a few hours here touring the current excavation of the thousands of year old mammoths.



After two hours I head out with 148 contacts.

Next up is the LBJ home site/ranch down in Blanco/Gillespie Counties. This park consists of two separated units. I run the one in Johnson City – put out 149 QSOs in less than 2 hours. This, too, is not rare, with many having been there before.



I head past the other, but it's getting late, it closes at 5pm, and is more of a hassle to get into the part of the park that is NPS property. The part closest to the road is 'state park property'. Destination for the evening is Fredericksburg, TX – at a Super 8 motel that is decent for \$45 including tax. Next door is a K-Bob Steakhouse you can walk to – nice after a busy day on the road. Had smothered chicken and a giant plate of salad at the salad bar.

Monday Nov 28

Today is a long drive down to Big Bend National Park – through some of the rarer TX counties like Terrell, Pecos, Brewster. Mostly I do CW while on the run. By late afternoon I'm down that way – headed to the Chisos Mountain Lodge. Located in a remote area of the park, this lodge has about 100 rooms you can reserve on-line through the park service reservation number. There are 'in park' hotels/motels in many of the larger parks. They are not 'cheap' by any means, but I thought I'd splurge on this one for two nights. (\$150/night). Before I get there, I stop and put out Big Bend park again – which is not rare – and N4CD has been there before, too. 184 quick QSO's go into the log, then I head on in to the lodge located 'up in a mountain basin'. It's remote – way way at the end of a power line that is probably connected to a power generator a couple hundred miles away. There are signs in the room saying there are frequent power outages (ask your check in folks for a free flashlight if needed during power outages) and warnings about 'power surges' at times. OK....I'm not plugging anything other than the charger for the spotting tablet in. The rooms come with fridge and microwave. There's a little store there you can buy food and supplies. There's a restaurant open for breakfast, lunch and dinner with fair prices – for being out in the

boonies. Right now the park is under severe water rationing – still.

OK...check in- a few minutes later, wander uphill to the restaurant and have a nice dinner with salad bar, then back to the room. No TVs in the rooms. You've got great hiking paths all around, and you're surrounded by mountains. Not far away is 'bear territory' and you are warned not to leave food in your car – or your room windows open when you leave if you have food in the room. All the garbage containers outside are 'bear proof'.

Tuesday Nov 29

Today I'm headed for the 'rare' Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River – WR08. So far only less than 700 QSOs have been made from here and many, many folks need it. It's about 50 miles but it takes 2 hours to get there. First you wind out of the 'basin' over 10-15 mph stretches of road, then you hit the 'main roads' with maximum 45 mph limit, but also sections of 25 and 35 mph parts. I'm headed to the St. Elena boat launch ramp so I get within 100 feet of the river with my car. To count for NPOTA, you've got to be within 100 feet or 'on the river' itself. You can hike to the river in many spots, but only drive nearby in this one. I arrive at a nice parking lot, and right at the top of the ramp you are 80 feet from the river. Great. No one else around so I can sit right there for hours – and I do. 564 contacts go into the log in 4 hours! Woo-hoo! That ran the total up over 1,000 for the park – the intended goal.





N4CD at the Rio Grande River WR08

On the way back, I stop at the nearby visitor center that goes way back. They've got a 'visible' gas pump out in front from the 1920s or so! Cool! Of course, it's not working. This is the type of pump where you could see how many gallons of gas were in the a large cylinder at the top – you or the attendant would hand crank as many gallons as you wanted up into the cylinder – and then it would drain out into your vehicle or container. In another 10 years, most of the pumps went to automatic counters that measured the gallons as they went by. Of course, it took electricity to run them, and many rural areas didn't have power in the '20s and even into the mid '30s.

This visitor center here is CLOSED in the summer time – it gets too hot! You really don't want to visit this park in the summer time as the temps are brutal over the lower elevations of the park.



Visible Gas Pump

I goof off the rest of the day, getting back to the lodge at dinner time. During that time, I catch a few more parks on the air. I'm not at the top by any means, but if luck holds, I'll get to 200 parks worked – most of them while out mobile! Big Bend NP is all in Brewster County – and it's a big one. Larger than the whole state of MA. Well, MA and RI. Or larger than CT.

I enjoy another nice dinner at the restaurant. In the evenings, there is zero 'light pollution' and the sky is spectacular - full of bright stars by the zillions. You're really out in the boonies here. You've got internet at the restaurant, gift shop and convenience store – and sometimes in the room – although it tends to disappear in the evenings – too many folks trying to log on probably. I wonder what the kids go through here – total withdrawal from their internet, games and everything else! Hi hi. And no TV. You can rent a DVD player for \$10 a night, and the lodge will loan you board games to entertain the kids.

Wednesday Nov 30

OMG – it's already the end of the month and the County Hunter News isn't done yet. Guess it will be a little late this month – not until I get home!

It's off to Fort Davis early in the morning. You leave the park and it's almost 100 miles up to civilization up in Alpine, TX at 75 mph the whole way. Another 30-40 miles and you arrive at this former Cavalry Post in Jeff Davis County. I was there for about 3-4 hours and 378 contacts. I've been here twice before – but there seem to be another 100 chasers joining in the game, so I'm happy to give them the park unit. NS-19. Now it's time to head west for 200 miles to get to El Paso before dark.

As you head west into Hudspeth, at 80 mph on the interstate, you find yourself in the Mountain Time Zone. Good, I'll have an extra hour – but it won't make too much difference in sunset time as it's the east edge of the time zone. On the last trip, I stayed at the Super 8 Airport. I reserve ahead – and got a great \$36 rate (plus tax) using AARP and going through the Wyndam Rewards website. It's often 10-20 bucks less than you can get on any of the travel sites including Priceline, Trip Advisor, Expedia, etc. At check in, the lady at the desk mentions 'you've got a real low rate – most folks are paying at least 10-20 dollars more'. I'm not complaining. It's \$43 with tax. Sort of makes up for the \$150/night at the lodge in Big Bend – hi hi. I check in, then immediately head 5 miles further west at 4pm to get to the Chamizal Memorial.

Way back in the spring, N4CD was the first to 'activate' this park. There was a big deal about 'permits' and 'coordination with border patrol' that all stemmed from 'someone' asking for a permit to set up 'portable'. It escalated to high levels. Luckily, N4CD was able to break the bottleneck and get the first Special Use Permit (SUP) to activate it in the Spring. Since then, only one other operation has taken place. This time I just went 'stealth mode'. There's a off the beaten path auxiliary parking lot, used only for big events at the amphitheater or gigantic celebrations once or twice a year that I found. It's away from the main building and parking lot – where employees and security stays. There's no reason to come this way. I sit for 2 hours that night and put a couple hundred in the log. It's horribly noisy here – right in downtown El Paso TX – with S3-5 noise on 20cw, S7-8 noise on SSB, and worse on 40m. You've really got to work to dig the calls out.

This location celebrates the 'peaceful' resolution of a 100 year long border dispute between Mexico and the USA. Back in the 1800s, the Rio Grande River flooded.....and changed course by over a mile – shifting to the south. With the river officially designated as the border between the US and Mexico, there was now a couple square miles of 'Mexican territory' and thousands and thousands of people who suddenly found themselves in the US. Mexico was NOT happy about this, and lodged protests and contributed to bad relations between the two countries. We'd been at war with them in the 1800s (Mexican American War), chased down renegade Indians with frequent raids into Mexico to try and stop them, and did not co-exist well.

Come the 1960s, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba. Mexico was starting to side with him and Cuba and the US was freaking out about having 'commies' right across the border from the US. So President Johnson finally agreed that this border dispute needed to be resolved. The outcome was that the US spent 20 million, Mexico spent 10 million, and the river was 're-channeled' close to the original path – in a giant concrete made 'canal' so it wouldn't shift again. Chamizal was then created to celebrate the peaceful resolution of this dispute and eventually became a 'park unit' of the NPS.

The day was gone and it was dark. I hate driving in 'dark' in a strange city – and dang, missed the multi-pronged ramp and wound on going 10 miles on back roads to get back to the motel. Parked the car. Walked next door to the restaurant – Village Inn – had a nice salad then hit the hay.

Thursday, Dec 1

Next day I'm up early – breakfast at 6:30 – a half waffle, bowl of cereal with cut up apple, juice, decaf coffee...and I'm on my way back to Chamizal. Another couple hundred go in for a total of 408 QSO from there. Then it's time to head to more parks and eventually home.

I zip along a few hours to the east to get to Guadalupe Mountains National Park - Culberson County - mostly at 75 mph through the middle of nowhere. No services for 160 miles says the signs. Be sure to fill your tank at night or on the way out of town in the morning in this part of TX. I get there mid day – and park in the visitor lot. It's good east, north, south...but not northwest. You take what you can get. 210 QSO go into the log. When the pile up drops, I change from SSB to CW, then hit 30 and 40cw. Some newcomers still need it and others help out trying to reach the 1 million QSOs from the national parks.

There's still time so I can hit Carlsbad Caverns another 50 miles up the road in New Mexico (Eddy County) before closing time and darkness. After arriving, I get set and put out 156Q from National Park NP10. There have been lots of activation and contacts from here. No need to push it. Next up is a Super 8 motel in Carsbad at \$48 inducing tax. Dinner at a very nice Chinese Buffet just up the road. Back to the motel in darkness. Dang.

The weather is going to turn rotten – rain and gloom and cold coming this way – so it is time to head home and skip the two in the panhandle of TX. It might be snowing up that way! No thanks. In another day, most of TX will be under rain and more rain and even more rain for 3 days.

Friday, Dec 2

Free breakfast at the Super 8. Half a waffle, bowl of cereal, juice, coffee.

The whole day is spent getting from Eddy, NM back to the Dallas area – 475 miles – going through the counties on route 180 – first Lea NM...then straight east on a fairly good road with towns about every 10-15 miles for short breaks in the routine. Still make good time. Home at 4pm before the big rush hour starts – and you really want to try to avoid that if you can. It drizzled most of the way home. Yuk. Worse to come.

It was a good trip of 1801 miles in six days around TX with 2,179 park QSO's given out, another 8 parks worked while mobile in counties, and over 200 county hunter contacts while driving along.

Hope I ran through something you needed! If you've been working me in the parks, and not on LoTW, still time to get set up on Log Book of the World and enter the previous contacts to get credit for being a 'chaser'!

Only one more month to go in the program. I'll be one suffering 'withdrawal' symptoms. Fortunately I've got county hunting to fall back on.....but so far NPOTA has been a real fun ride!

Awards

USCA #1258	Elemer HA9RE	Nov 3, 2016
USCA #1259	Jim K4PBX	Nov 9, 2016
Bingo II #99	K0FG, Fred	Nov 2, 2016
Bingo III #38	N6PDB, Dennis	Nov 22, 2016

Activities for County Hunters

No state QSO parties. You've got a 10m contest, 160m contest and other activities

including NPOTA till the end of the year. Straight Key Night on New Year's Eve.

Otherwise, just keep an ear out for mobiles, spot them and help them out. There are still loads of mobiles out there running counties. Well, a few a day!

That's all....this month....see you next month and next year!

73 de N4CD