

County Hunter News

January 2022
Volume 18 Issue 1

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. We also cover some park chasing activities these days. 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 Frequencies are 14.0565, 10.124.5, and 7056.5, with activity occasionally on 3556.5 KHz. Also, there is SSB activity now occasionally on 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://marac.org/awards.pdf>

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

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

Notes from the Editor

N4CD Rumblings

1) Sunspots – We got them. Wow to we have them. Flux over 130 and sunspots over 100. Bands on 20M 'good' and on 17 and 15m 'fair'. Lots of contacts being made on the upper bands. Happy times are here again!

2) Alaska Districts - from Terry WQ7A

“There are two files on MARAC.ORG/CHdownloads to give guidance on what areas the Judicial Districts contain. These superseded some of the older maps we have been using for a long time. Pay particular attention to the SW corner of Dist 2. This change is now over 5 years old. For those that use Google Earth use the overlay by OH2ECG for Grids if you like. It will show that grid AP83FA containing the town of Fotlik is in the FOURTH district.”

KL7DG is active and has been spotted in 2nd AK . W9OO contacted KL7DG. This is the following information he received:

“I just saw the map produced by KL7J in November 2021 and it has erroneously shown Kusilvak as a small region to the SW of Wade Hampton. To clarify here is the info from the US Census bureau website showing that Kusilvak is the entire old Wade Hampton

Census area. Wade Hampton Census Area, Alaska, was renamed as Kusilvak Census Area and the county code changed from 270 to 158 Here is the background information on the name change. The census area was originally named for Wade Hampton III, a South Carolina politician whose son-in-law, John Randolph Tucker, a territorial judge in Nome, posthumously named a mining district in western Alaska for him in 1913. The district eventually became the census area, retaining its name. Over the next century, the name became increasingly controversial, with Native residents and others arguing Hampton's name did not represent Alaska and that his personal history as a slave-holding Civil War general was a blemish on the region.[6] In July 2015, Alaska Governor Bill Walker formally notified the U.S. Census Bureau that the census area was being renamed after the Kusilvak Mountains, its highest range.[7] As for my location I am in the village of Kotlik which is the northernmost village in the Kusilvak census district thus I am and always have been in the 2nd district. If you look at a map of Alaska I am at the top of the bump extending into Norton Sound on the Yukon river delta. Thank you for alerting me to this. It is confusing as Kusilvak is lumped in with 2nd district as far as Ham radio goes. 2nd district does not have a large population so I am glad to be active and representing in that respect. Logistically our legal issues are handled out of Bethel due to geography. We are separated from Nome (where the 2nd district has its major courts) by 80 miles of open water which is dangerous for local transportation methods (small open boats and snow machines in winter) to get to safely. Bethel is a straight overland route around the same distance. I hope that clears things up.

73 de Donn “

Actually, it doesn't. The maps clearly show he is NOT in the Second District. While he imagines he is there – he isn't. If you worked him, it's NOT 2nd AK.

3) Natural Bingo Followup -

A few folks chimed in on their progress toward NB. Here are there reports

KC3X – 86 to go

KE3VV - 219 needed

W0GXQ – 428

WQ7A - 210 to go

NF0N - 460 to go

4) December! My gosh, it's already late December – and by the time you are reading this, it will be close to 2022! CHNews usually goes out about the 26/27th of the month.

In TX, November was a bit above normal, temp wise, and the outlook for December was 'above normal'. Not complaining . Tee shirts for the first week of December here with temps in 70s! Normal is about 62. However, up north it's the usually 30s and the park activators are out in the winter weather. One op complaining his LCD clock froze up outside on the picnic table as he was operating. His iPhone shut down – too cold for it.

Here - tee -shirts and shorts for xmas with 80 degree temps – pushing the all time high record. Then back to 'winter' coming up.

The Winter Solstice occurred late Dec (around the 22nd) giving us the 'shortest daylight day'. From here on out, days get longer. More time for daylight county hunting! Bands stay open longer too – often peaking in spring.

If you think it is bad here weather wise, one Alaskan park activator tried to activate a park there up at Denali National Park. Was headed from Anchorage to Fairbanks. Unfortunately his 'screwdriver' antenna wouldn't tune at 30 below zero so he'll have to try another time. Frozen. Others are putting out AK parts , many on FT-8, but most in the 3rd District – many with full size verticals and decent set of radials.

Here's another story:

“My "attempt" to activate Harding Lake State Recreation Site K-7234 today taught this new general class that operating at -32 F has some challenges. My MFJ 17' whip would NOT extend. Frozen in place. No problem, just attach my 8' whip and tune my screwdriver to use that antenna. Nope! Screwdriver doesn't move in those Temps so no tune. Lessons learned for operating in sub zero Temps. Will try next weekend and see if I can get out to the lower 48 from this valley surrounded by hills. Driving through Denali National Park tomorrow and Tuesday so who knows. 73. KL1PJ.”

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It's been 20 or more degrees below zero in that part of AK for weeks now.

5) A challenging way to USACA

from Sandy, WB4EVH

“Tom KD0IEL is trying to help Roberto I2VRN complete USACA. Roberto is trying to do it on 40m SSB. Tom is visually impaired and Roberto's English is not the best. Tom co-ordinates the contacts with Roberto and when Roberto emails him his log Tom handles the QSL chores. Robert runs an L4B amp to a 4 element beam at 100 feet on 40m. He stays below 7.200. Usually around 7.197 +- QRM. He has a good signal here once the gray line starts. He is on Thursday through Sunday.

I gave Tom your call as someone who could possibly help out west. They currently are trying to finish up east of the Mississippi leaving only the west. But. will work any station they need. I do not know what is needed out west. Any help you could provide , they would appreciate.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Sandy”

6) 2.4 and 5 GHz bands

According to a tweet from Icom Japan, the company is developing amateur radio equipment for the 2.4 and 5 GHz bands, under the theme of "Icom SHF Project-Challenge."

source ARRL Newsletter 12 17 2021

Tiny Ham Radio Satellite

World's Smallest Moon Lander from Japan will Put Ham Radio Transmitter on the

Moon

Japan's OMOTENASHI, the world's smallest moon lander, will have an X-band and UHF communication system, although it will not carry an amateur band transponder. OMOTENASHI is a 6U CubeSat set for launch via a NASA SLS rocket as early as February 2022. It will have a mission period of from 4 to 5 days. The name is an acronym for Outstanding Moon Exploration Technologies demonstrated by Nano Semi-Hard Impactor. Wataru Torii of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Ham Radio Club, JQ1ZVI, said radio amateurs can play a role in gathering data from the spacecraft.

The spacecraft is made up of two separable components, both having independent communication systems -- an orbiting module and a surface probe. The orbiting module will take the surface probe to the moon. It will transmit beacon or digital telemetry data on UHF (437.31 MHz). The surface probe -- the moon lander -- will transmit digital telemetry or three-axis acceleration analog-wave with FM modulation on UHF (437.41 MHz). Transmitter power will be 1 W in both cases.

"If we succeed in receiving the UHF signal from the surface probe, we could know the acceleration data on the impact on the moon and the success of the landing sequence," Torii explained.

"We already have a station for uplink and downlink at Wakayama in Japan -- used as an EME [moonbounce] station. However, if the satellite is invisible from Japan, we cannot receive the downlink signal. So, we need a lot of help from ham radio stations worldwide."

The orbiting module beacon will transmit on 437.31 MHz using PSK31. The surface probe beacon will transmit on 437.41 MHz using FM, PSK31, and PCM-PSK/PM.

ARRL 10M Contest

ARRL 10M Contest Results

This was an interesting contest – better than last year according to the reported scores. It

all depended where the in the country you were. The southeast did well and some chunks of the country were in good skip areas. There was some E-skip as well in the middle of the country.

N4CD: On Sunday 12/12/2021 I headed north an hour and ten to Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge to put out a few contacts. After I ran 20m SSB and CW, just for the heck of it, I put on the 10M antenna (resonator on top of Hustler 54 inch mast) on the top mag mount. Maybe, just maybe, I could work a local station or maybe two or three others. Amazingly, 10M open with signals coming in. Worked 3 LU's, and a dozen US stations from CO, UT, MN, SD, ND, WY, WA, AZ, and the Canadian VE7 and VE5 land. Heard stations working county hunters NS2N and NU0Q so I know they were on in the contest. Skip only north to MN, SD, ND area, north west to CO/UT/NV area and to Argentina. Added a few more at the next park. Only CW – and signals went from zero to S5 and back quickly. Probably more E-skip than anything else other than Argentina on trans-equatorial. Nice to hear 10M open. Saturday was reported as better for others as well as Friday eve. Missed those.

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It seemed the best place to be for this contest was FL/GA area where stations racked up 500 QSOs. The far west was mostly left out but there was some good cross country skip. Some of the Argentine stations worked 700 QSOs. Saturday seemed best with less available on Sunday.

Many of the state QSO contest folks were on from K4BAI to K4XU - and there were some county hunters in there, too. The big contest stations did well with hundreds of Qs. Hundreds of scores reported. Not much from HI with the big stations there just doing a bit over 200 Qs. Hope you caught a few 'band counties'.

COVID – December 2021

Dang. We were all hoping this would be over. There's good news and bad news

The bad news – over 800,000 people in the US have died from COVID with 70% of the deaths in people over 65.

The bad news – the new OMICRON variant is spreading like wildfire. Cornell

University reported that in one week, 900 of its 25,000 students came down with it – and they moved back to virtual on-line classes and final exams.

The bad news – we are into another 'winter surge' with cases rising by the millions and deaths increasing.

The bad news – you can catch both variants (Delta and Omicron) at the same time!

The good news – the OMICRON variant seems to be milder than the Delta – now the most prevalent now. You might even get an asymptomatic case of it. Most infections are asymptomatic. Some suggest that up to 60% of the population might get COVID in 2022.

The good news – if you are double vaxxed and got the booster shot – you're in a good position to avoid a bad case of it and maybe any case of it. Pfizer or Moderna.

The bad news - If you got J&J, well, that's not good. Initial results show almost no effectiveness against the new variant.

The good news – the Pfizer pill seems to be effective to reduce problems IF you catch it.

The bad news – the Pfizer pill will not be available for home use for months and months. Going to hospitals and doctors first. You can take it at home to ward off the effects of COVID if you test positive.

The good news – there likely be a 4th shot specifically designed to increase effectiveness against variants.

The good news – the Army has developed a vaccine that prevents attacks all forms of COVID - stay tuned. Not a MRNa based one.

The good news – Omicron seems to have peaked in South Africa and nearby counties giving hope that after a peak, it's going to drop dramatically and quickly.

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So.....that's sort of put the damper on lots of travel for lots of folks. We did have a radio convention here in Nov – so far no discouraging news. There's a planned radio club holiday party here....might go – spaced out – and I'm sure other clubs are doing things.

All the radio clubs here are still virtual and I suspect with the new one around, they'll stay virtual for at least a couple months more.

It's going to be interesting this xmas with tens of millions traveling and getting together at family gatherings. Millions packing airports and planes. Many self testing before family gatherings, too, and not going if tested positive.

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Dec 16 "CDC issues grim forecast warning that weekly COVID cases will jump by 55% to 1.3 MILLION by Christmas Day and that deaths will surge by 73% to 15,600 a week as Omicron becomes dominant strain"

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My niece's family axed the xmas trip to the parents. Too many of the relatives not fully vaxxed and several only got the single J&J shot because they'd lose their job otherwise. They work in retail, too, with lots of customer contact. That single J&J shot is NOT effective against Delta and Omicron. So.....they canceled the trip. Sad – but Smart. My sister, age 73, also very covid conscious. Me? I eat out but usually very early dinners with few in the place. Don't go crowded places at all, avoid 'sports games' and the like, big events, bars, nightclubs, etc. Radio club meetings have been virtual for a year.

Hopefully all this will be over by Spring and we'll have the MI Mini , the Dayton Hamvention, etc. Stay tuned.....

On the Road with N4CD

Not a lot of trips this month other than local parks nearby. Lots of trips to the local park on weekends and Wednesdays (CWT Test Day) to rack up some QSOs for the park.

However, toward the end of the month, headed to OK just north of the border to one park I'd been at just once before. Two hours up the road is Historic Fort Washita, park K-8142 in Bryan County Oklahoma. The 'sunspots' were up so I'd see what propagation was like at the current time.

Headed out a 9am here to get there. The fort has been closed for months for covid protocol reasons but is now open again to the public.



From their website:

“Fort Washita was built in 1842 as the southwestern-most military post of the United States. The mission of Fort Washita was to maintain peace for the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations within their new lands, pursuant to treaty obligations. There were many outside threats to the new home of the Chickasaw people, including attacks by Republic of Texas militia, interference by unscrupulous intruders, constant raids by Plains tribes, the presence of traders and trappers, and unsettled scores with some of the Plains tribes due to disputes concerning hunting grounds in the Homeland. Fort Washita operated as a United States military post until the start of the Civil War in 1861. It was then occupied by Confederate forces through 1865. The fort was almost entirely destroyed by the Confederates as they fled at the end of the Civil War.

After the war, the fort was granted to the Chickasaw Nation and later the Dawes Commission allotted the fort and surrounding land to the Charles and Abbie Davis Colbert family.

The Oklahoma Historical Society acquired Fort Washita in 1962 and restored it as a historic site and museum. In 2016, the Chickasaw Nation partnered with the Oklahoma Historical Society to assume responsibility and management of Fort Washita. The site is

listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designed as a National Historic Landmark.

Visitors to Fort Washita can tour restored structures, witness Civil War reenactments and take part in the yearly Fur Trade Era Rendezvous to experience what life was like before and during the Civil War. Other events throughout the year include storytelling, outdoor movies and special seasonal and holiday events that the whole family can enjoy.

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Up to 2,000 soldiers were housed here during the Mexican American War circa 1846. There's a visitor center, cemetery and slowly things are being restored. There are a couple good spots for running the park and fairly low noise floor.

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I started on 20M and had a nice run on 20M CW. Added in a dozen on 20M SSB, then went to 17M CW where another good bunch showed up. Headed to 15 CW and put a dozen in log there, then caught half dozen on 12M – mostly county hunters. It got to be 1900z so I headed back to 20M CW for the Wednesday CWT (an hour long, 3 times a day on Wednesday CW event – at 25 wpm or faster). Caught 48 there in 45 minutes doing search and pounce. Lots of real LOUD signals. After 3 hours in the park, decided that 172 QSOs for the day was good and left. Running hamsticks on the top 4 mag mount and Hustler 54 inch mast with 15 and 12M resonators. Didn't have time to get to 10M. K0DEQ worked me on 17, 15 and 12M. Half of other contacts were county hunters on the higher bands and skip was 'long' for the most part – 1500 miles or more. Had fun. It took two hours for the trip back home – stopped by Discount Tires to get some air in tires – mine lose a pound or two a month – then an early turkey dinner at the Red Truck Cafe at 4pm – then home. Weather great – 65F at the park. 70F back home. Nice December weather and 'above average' by 12 deg F. Soon it will be 10F below daily average for a few days to get back to normal average temp for the month I'm sure. Last year it got to 10 below zero for a spell in Feb.

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This is one of a handful of parks in the system not run by a 'state' or 'national entity' in the normal sense. Its a partnership with the OKLA Historic Society. Well, it is run by a nationally and state recognized 'sovereign nation' – the Chickasaw Tribe. Equal in status to the State of Okla so it was added to the POTA system. One other park comes to min – Boggy Depot 'state park' which was a state park 10 years ago but turned over to an

Indian Nation so now is in the system. This one needs some attention as only 90 QSOs from here to date. It's over 2 hours driving (at 70 mph) to get there.

At Fort Washita – 284 previous contacts been made, with many of them Dec 14 by KK5CW (90 on cw) and N5LDO (105 contacts SSB). Some times it doesn't pay to go back so quickly to a 'highly activated' park – everyone 'just got it'.

I had 25 QSOs previously from here – the first activation by anyone - probably mostly county hunters in January 2021. So I'd add some Qs. Bryan County. There have been six activations – most with 15 to 25 contacts except the last two.

Most of the OK parks have now been activated but there are a couple not run yet. Who knows where the N4CD mobile will wind up? (They're about as far away as you can get in OK. Hi hi. 8 hours out- 8 hours back minimum and almost no one needs most of OK counties for awards)

Mobile Activity in December

Ed, K8ZZ hit the road in the middle of December for a multi-week trip to AL, GA and FL. There over the holidays. At least 100 counties run with more to come in Jan. Ran cw bands up to 15M. Day after day.

At the beginning of the month:

AB7NK/K7SEN over in AL, GA putting out counties. Then headed back home via MS, TX, NM

KE4UP putting out more counties in CA. He ran a bunch in Nov.

N4RKK spotted many parks and their counties for the county hunters. Thank you

N8OYY spotted in OH and WV counties.

K0DEQ noted in MO counties

K1YAG spotted in south south TX counties Then headed north through Kerr, Real and

others.

W4SIG spotted running counties in IL then back home via MO, AR, to TN

AI5P spotted in parks in CO

NA8W noted in a few parks/counties in FL

WB0YPF started in IL headed south through TN, AL, to FL.

WB8III ran a quite few in PA and WV

WA9DLB headed out in north IL going south , through MS to AL

NF0N headed out on a mutli-day trip in NE zipping all over the state

AB4WL/NN4JM were running counties in AL - (and parks)

12/25 end date

COVID 2022

By now, you've probably heard someone say it, or maybe you've said it yourself: We're all getting Covid.

“Yes, you'll get the virus,” Dr. James Hamblin wrote in his newsletter. “I think we all have a date with Covid at some point,” Helen Branswell, a health reporter at Stat News, said. “People are starting to give up,” my colleague Tara Parker-Pope told me.

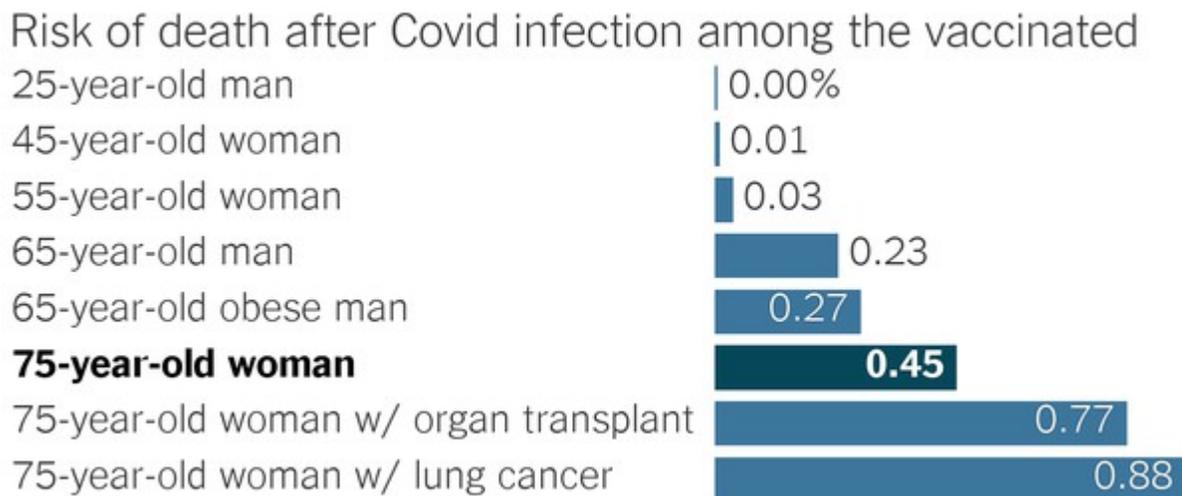
It's an understandable feeling given Omicron's intense contagiousness, even among the vaccinated. A surge that began in the Northeast is now spreading to the Midwest, South and beyond:

But I do want to raise one major point of caution. Covid in recent months has continued to present a meaningful amount of risk to older people, despite vaccination. It's too soon to know whether Omicron will change the situation, but the safest assumption — absent more data — is that Covid will remain dangerous for the elderly.

“There is good reason for older adults to continue to try to avoid becoming infected, because the risk for hospitalization in that age group is still significant,” Dr. Shelli Farhadian of Yale University told me.

A team of British researchers, led by Dr. Julia Hippisley-Cox at the University of Oxford, has conducted some of the most detailed research on Covid risks for different groups of people. The BMJ, a peer-reviewed journal, published the work, and it is available in an online calculator. The research was done before Omicron emerged and covers only residents of Britain, but it is still instructive.

Here are estimated post-infection death rates for several hypothetical people, all vaccinated.



The risks here for older people are frightening: A rate of 0.45 percent, for instance, translates into roughly a 1 in 220 chance of death for a vaccinated 75-year-old woman who contracts Covid. If the risks remain near these levels with Omicron, they could lead to tens of thousands of U.S. deaths, and many more hospitalizations.

Encouragingly, there are reasons to believe that Omicron’s death rate may be lower. Three new studies released yesterday suggested that Omicron causes milder illness on average than earlier versions of the virus. “I would guess that the mortality risk with

Omicron is much smaller” than with earlier variants, Dr. George Rutherford of the University of California, San Francisco, told me yesterday.

One reassuring comparison is to a normal seasonal flu. The average death rate among Americans over age 65 who contract the flu has ranged between 1 in 75 and 1 in 160 in recent years, according to the C.D.C. Pre-Omicron versions of Covid, in other words, seem to present risks of a similar order of magnitude to vaccinated people as a typical flu. Some years, a flu infection may be more dangerous.

With Omicron, “I think the risk is not super high for relatively healthy and boosted people in their 70s,” Janet Baseman, an epidemiologist at the University of Washington, told me. “I think it’s moderate at most.”

With Omicron, “I think the risk is not super high for relatively healthy and boosted people in their 70s,” Janet Baseman, an epidemiologist at the University of Washington, told me. “I think it’s moderate at most.”

Still, Baseman and other experts recommend vigilance, for several reasons. First, the flu kills tens of thousands of Americans a year, and we should probably pay more attention to it. (After declining last year during social distancing, flu infections are rising again now, as these Times charts show.)

Second, Omicron is so contagious that it has the potential to swamp hospitals and cause many otherwise preventable deaths even if only a small share of infections are severe. “We’re not at a place to treat this as a cold,” Azra Ghani of Imperial College London said.

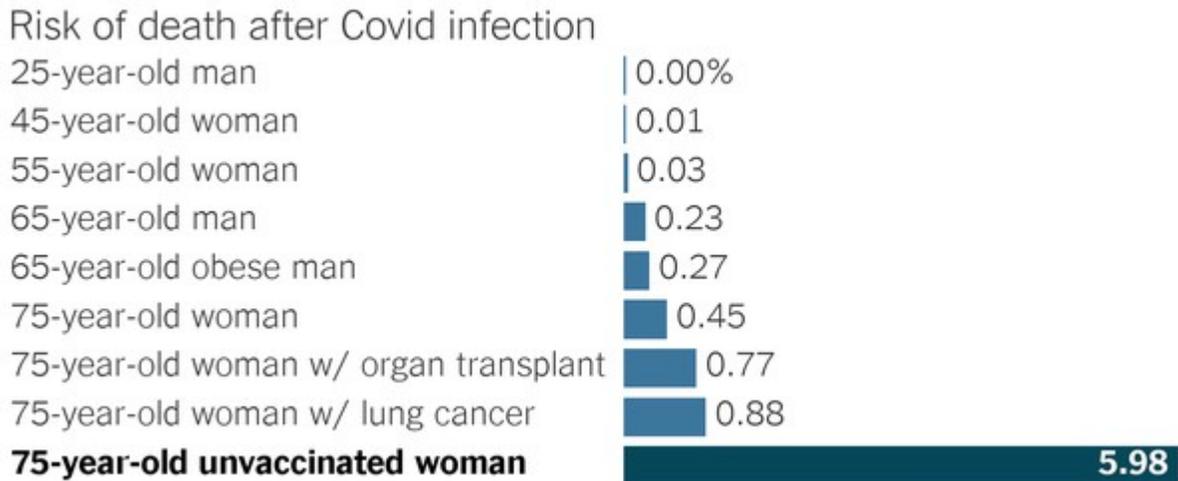
Baseman said that if she were in her 70s, her primary worry would be getting moderately ill, needing standard medical care and not being able to get it at an overwhelmed hospital. Dr. Aaron Richterman of the University of Pennsylvania told me, “There is a strong rationale for reasonable efforts to mitigate transmission, particularly over the next four weeks.”

In the meantime, it makes sense for many people — not just those over 65 — to think about which risky activities are easy to cut out. It also makes sense to wear N95 or KN95 masks, which are more effective than most. Above all, scientists say, get boosted now if you are eligible.

There are also some steps that individuals cannot take but that society could: Requiring people to be vaccinated to enter restaurants (as New York City has and Washington,

D.C., soon will) and fly on airplanes; expanding access to walk-in vaccine clinics, rapid tests and post-infection treatments (as the Biden administration has begun doing); and improving ventilation in public indoor spaces.

I have focused on vaccinated people today's, because they are already trying to protect themselves and their communities. Here is a different version of the chart above, this time adding the death risk for an unvaccinated, otherwise healthy 75-year-old woman who contracts Covid:



If you are not vaccinated, you're in a completely different category of danger

source: NY Times Dec 22 2021

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So get your regular flu shot as well! Flu shots covered by most insurance plans and Medicare; the government funds all COVID shots and boosters. My doc also recommended getting new pneumonia shot (Pneumovax 23) for protection. If you get COVID, it first seems to attack the lungs - which can lead to pneumonia if you get a bad case of it, wind up on a ventilator, etc. Or you stay at home, hacking away, and get pneumonia after. Covered by Medicare and most plans.

Sadly, heard from a 45 year old friend whose father (age 62) caught COVID last November. He's still very sick from it, never fully recovering, and stuck at home unable to work. What's called 'long COVID' which at least 10% of all hospitalized patients seem to suffer from.

So.....try to stay safe. You never know how you'll react to a COVID infection. Over 65 is especially dangerous for us 'older county hunters'.

N4CD's Car Problem

Seems every now and then the 'check engine' light comes on. That's also known as the '\$300 repair light'. So I haul the 2016 Malibu LTD with 136,000 miles into the dealer to find out what is going on. Hmmmm

This car and many other GM cars have a 'start/stop' function. When you're at a traffic light and stop – keeping your foot on the brake, the engine will shut off – usually for up to about 30 seconds. If you take your foot off the brake, the engine quickly restarts. There's a separate little battery in the left rear sidewall of the car.

This battery died after 2 ½ years and was replaced. Now the replacement failed again at another 2 ½ years. Not good. Maybe running with the lights on - which keeps the voltage up to 13.4 - 13-8v or so, probably doesn't help this battery. If you turn the lights off, the voltage goes to 12.3v if it is warm outside – over 50F or so. GM must have a crappy or no charge circuit for this battery.

Well, I tell them to leave the old 'dead' battery in the car. I get home and what do I see? On top of the battery - '3 year free replacement'. Call the Chevy dealer and tell them the battery is warranted and gets a free replacement. It's a \$140 battery – 335 CCA lead acid and weights about 10 lbs. So I get a rebate but not on the 'labor' and diagnostic charge. Better than nothing. So if you have GM car and that battery dies before 3 years – it's no charge for a new one. Wish I knew this the first time. Too late to be complaining but a nasty gram was sent to GM design HQ in Detroit.

Helping out OM2VL

Laci, OM2VL, is down to just a handful of counties to finish up USACA. Some of them are going to be tough in the winter time, but you never know.

I see NF0N is headed to the ones in NE this last week of December. (Garden and Sioux).

OM2VL - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/10/2021

If you can help, please send email or call/text +421 905 975 274. Thank you for looking! 73, Laci OM2VL

CO: San Juan

KY: Clay, Elliott, Magoffin, Trimble, Wolfe

MT: Beaverhead, Big Horn

NE: Garden, Sioux

OH: Hardin

TX: Falls*, Goliad, Mitchell, Willacy*

VA: Russell

* Awaiting QSL or sked set up

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There's a couple in eastern KY(Magoffin, Clay, Elliot, Wolfe) and one up north (Trimble) part – which I think has a mile along the parkway.

One in southern OH-Hardin One in CO in the southwest corner – great skiing this time of year in San Juan county – but you only have to go about 25 miles north of Durango to get to it on fairly decent roads. Still watch the winter weather there.

Russell VA is in the far southwest corner of the state – not that far off the interstate.

The ones in MT – are going to take a dedicated winter county hunter to get. Maybe those hardy folks in ID can zip over to Beaverhead, and Big Horn is in the eastern half at the southern border – also not too far off the interstate.

Texas – well, Goliad not too far from a couple county hunters in south TX. Willacy is way way south in the tip of TX but he's working on a sked for it. We used to have a few county hunters who 'wintered' over down that way, and had a mini 10 years ago not far away from there. Seems none these days. Or they are radio silent. Mitchell is along I-20 going west from Dallas about five hours. Falls is 170 miles south of Dallas. A mile or so on I-35 but take the exit to be able to work more than one or two! I used to have a reason to go there twice a year, but the bi-annual Bell County Hamfest/Swapmeet has been – well, not happening due to Covid. He thinks he's got a

confirmation coming on this one. So that leaves just a handful to go!

Laci keeps his QRZ page up to date so check it before working with him to get the handful of counties remaining. Can you help him out? He's got a big signal on 20M. There's only a few hour window in the mornings (Up to about noon time) for 20M propagation. Later in the day maybe 40M. He works five days a week and heads to the big station on weekends.

COVID 2022 – II

Omicron wave will crash on US with 60% of people infected by March and 140 MILLION new infections - but 90% will never show symptoms, University of Washington says

Researchers at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation said Omicron could cause about 140 million new COVID infections from January to March

Infections were expected to peak at 2.8 million new daily cases on January 28

Omicron would eventually infect about 60 percent of all Americans

But the majority will show no symptoms and have fewer hospitalizations and deaths compared to previous surges as Omicron is believed to be milder

Daily deaths were predicted to peak at about 2,800 in mid-February

As COVID cases soar across the U.S., health experts have predicted things will get worse in 2022 as the Omicron variant is expected to cause 140 million new infections from January to March, infecting 60 percent of all Americans, the majority of which will be asymptomatic cases.

Researchers from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington updated their COVID-19 model and expect the virus to hit the US hard come January, peaking at 2.8 million new cases a day by January 28.

'We are expecting an enormous surge in infections ... so, an enormous spread of Omicron,' IHME director Dr. Chris Murray said told USA Today.

'Total infections in the U.S. we forecast are going from about 40 percent of the U.S. having been infected so far, to having in the next two to three months, 60 percent of the U.S. getting infected with Omicron.'

Despite the surge, experts believe the new infections will ultimately lead to fewer deaths and hospitalizations than the deadly Delta variant, as Omicron is believed to be a more infectious but less severe variant.

The projections showed deaths increasing from the current 1,500 a day throughout January before peaking at around 2,800 deaths a day in mid February.

It's less than the more than 3,000 daily deaths recorded in January 2021.

Because the majority of those infected won't feel sick or get tested, the researchers warned that the total infections will be underreported, predicting that only about 400,000 new cases will be reported every day as opposed to the more than a million.

Murray said that while the forecast may be pessimistic, it is within the area of possibility based on the current information scientists have on the Omicron variant, which now accounts for 73 percent of new cases in the US.

The good news, however, is that Omicron's hospitalization rate is about 90 to 96 percent lower than Delta, which rampaged through much of the US in August.

'In the past, we roughly thought that COVID was 10 times worse than flu and now we have a variant that is probably at least 10 times less severe,' Murray said. 'So, omicron will probably ... be less severe than flu but much more transmissible.'

But other experts said it was too soon to make a judgment on Omicron and feared the variant might end up causing the biggest surge the U.S. has ever scene.

'With omicron, we are seeing lots of infections, we are already seeing hospitalizations and – even though it takes time to die – we are already seeing deaths,' Dr. Daniel Griffin, chief of infectious diseases at ProHealth Care and a clinical instructor of medicine at Columbia University, told USA Today.

'It will take a little more time to know for certain about any relative severity as well as

cross protection for reinfection with other variants after omicron infections.'

The nation is currently averaging 148,384 new cases daily over the past week, a 23 percent increase from two weeks ago.

Deaths have stabilized, with America averaging around 1,300 deaths per day - a steady figure for the past week and down slightly from two weeks ago. Encouraging new data from a leaked British study suggests that Omicron infections are less severe than prior variants.

Since the start of the pandemic, the US has recorded 51.2 million COVID-19 cases and 810,045 deaths.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10337845/Enormous-spread-Omicron-cause-140-MILLION-new-infections-January-1-March-1.html>

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Latest data is showing the booster shots lose effectiveness quickly. For Pfizer, it was down to 45% after 10 weeks. For Moderna, it was down to 70% after 10 weeks.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/23/health/booster-protection-omicron.html>

We might be entering a 'soft covid mandate'. Places like NYC require vax cards to enter restaurants. Most Broadway shows canceled due to performers/staff coming down with COVID. Most colleges likely going back to virtual after winter break.

Bands Alive!

On December 24 2021, this was the propagation banner:

Solar-Terrestrial Data - click to add to web site						
24 Dec 2021 1826 GMT	Condition	K-In	A-In	Calculated	Conditions	
SFI: 126 SN: 143	Quiet	0-2	0-7	Band	Day	Night
A-Index: 4	Unsettled	3	8-15	80n-40n:	Fair	Good
K-Index: 1 / PIntry	Active	4	16-29	30n-20n:	Good	Good
X-Ray: B8.0	Minor storm	5	30-49	17n-15n:	Good	Good
304A: 146 @ EVE	Major storm	6	50-99	12n-10n:	Fair	Poor
	Severe storm	7-9	>100	Sig Noise Lvl:	S0-S1	
SFI>180 A<8 K<3=E-W open SFI>180 A<8 K>3=N-S open SFI>250 A>30 K>3=Aurora						
http://www.n0nbh.com - Copyright Paul L Herrman 2021						

First time in ages I've seen 17 and 15M good and 12-10M rated 'fair'. Sunspots at 143, flux well over 100 and low A and K index. Time to check those upper bands and get the mobile antennas set up to take advantage of it! (Note than 40M is not that great during the day as before and they trend will get worse as the upper bands take over.).

Special Needs – Closing In

Some selected needs from the K3IMC special needs page for those getting close

K1RO - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/11/2021

This is what I need for USA-CA initial award.

LA: Avoyelles

MS: Tippah

N2IGW - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/21/2021

This is what I need for the initial USA-CA award

HI: Kalawao

K2MF - 2nd Time Award using CW Only - Updated:12/9/2021

This is for USA-CW-II using CW only on any band. 1 [1 LC-1•] county remains to finish 1 state and 49 states are completed. If you can help, please send email or call/text 973-558-0099. Thank you for looking.

VT: Windham•

NS2N - 6th Time Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/4/2021

5 to go any mode/band NS2N WB2ABD

GA: Crawford

MT: Lincoln

TN: Warren
TX: Houston
VA: Wise

OM2VL - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/10/2021

If you can help, please send email or call/text +421 905 975 274. Thank you for looking! 73, Laci OM2VL

CO: San Juan
KY: Clay, Elliott, Magoffin, Trimble, Wolfe
MT: Beaverhead, Big Horn
NE: Garden, Sioux
OH: Hardin
TX: Falls*, Goliad, Mitchell, Willacy*
VA: Russell

PA3ARM - USACA Award using CW Only - Updated:12/12/2021

AL: Covington
AZ: Santa Cruz
CO: Clear Creek, Grant, Jackson, Mineral, Pitkin, Routt, Summit
HI: Kalawao
ID: Clearwater
KS: Grant, Jefferson, Pottawatomie, Stanton
KY: Green, Hancock, Knox
LA: Beauregard, East Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, West Feliciana
MT: Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Treasure
NE: Box Butte, Johnson, Scotts Bluff, Sioux
OR: Benton, Columbia, Crook, Grant, Josephine, Lake, Lincoln, Tillamook,
Wheeler
TX: Calhoun, Comanche, Ector, Hutchinson, Jeff Davis, Kimble, Lamb,
Lampasas, Nolan, Upton
UT: Tooele
WA: Wahkiakum

DL3DXX - 2nd Time Award using CW Only - Updated:12/7/2021

CO: Costilla Dolores Gunnison Hinsdale Mineral Montezuma Pitkin Rio Blanco
Rio Grande San Juan San Miguel
IL: Putnam
KY: Ballard Bath Carlisle Carter Crittenden Elliott Floyd Fulton Hickman
Johnson Martin Menifee Morgan Rowan Wolfe
LA: Red River Union

MI: Alger Isabella Otsego St. Joseph
MN: Koochiching Lincoln Marshall Pipestone Roseau
MS: Calhoun Copiah Covington George Issaquena Jefferson Davis Lawrence

Marion

MT: Park Sanders
ND: Barnes Eddy Foster Stutsman
NM: Otero
NV: Nye
NY: Essex Lewis Warren
OR: Gilliam Hood River Lake
TX: Aransas Bailey Briscoe Crosby Dimmit Hemphill Jeff Davis Jim Hogg Jim

Wells Roberts San Jacinto Starr Webb Zapata Zavala

UT: Juab
VA: Botetourt
WI: Columbia Florence Juneau Marinette Menominee
WY: Lincoln Sublette

N3RM - 5th Time Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/20/2021
available most days any time. n3rm@verizon.net

IA: Keokuck, Marion
IN: Jasper, Miami, Putnam, Randolph
KY: Carter, Lewis
MI: Otsego
MT: Lincoln, Meagher, Mineral, Sheridan
ND: Golden Valley
NE: Cherry, Dawes, Souix
SD: Buffalo
TN: Roane, Sevier
VA: Powhatten
WA: Chelan
WV: Brooke, Doodridge, Hardy, Marshall, Ohio, Summers
WY: Johnson, Platte

WD4OIN - 4th Time Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/3/2021

CA: Alpine
HI: Kalawo
KY: Rockcastle
MI: Keweenaw

W4YDY - 2nd Time Award using CW Only - Updated:12/22/2021

ONE left for WBOW!

OR: Crook

K4YT - USACA Award using CW Only - Updated:12/15/2021

PA: Montour

K4YT - Mobile/Mobile Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/15/2021

CA: Marin, Nevada, San Jaoquin, Yolo

MD: Calvert

OR: Benton

K5WAF - 1st Time Award using SSB Only - Updated:12/3/2021

GA: Rabun

LA: Assumption

TX: Calhoun

WV: Morgan

K5ZE - USACA Award using SSB and CW - Updated:12/17/2021

HI: Kalawao

NC: Alexander, Camden, Hyde, Madison, Perquimans, Rutherford, Vance

PA: Cameron, Indiana

TN: Van Buren, Weakley

W6OAT - USACA Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/4/2021

AR: Clark

KY: Hickman

LA: Avoyelles

MI: Alcona

NY: Hamilton, Lewis

W8BZY - USACA Award using CW Only - Updated:12/16/2021

IN: Vermillion

KY: Boyd, Lewis, Owen

LA: Caldwell, Richland

MN: Rock

MT: Broadwater

NV: Pershing

SC: Marion

TX: Bee, La Salle, Presidio, Tyler

VA: Nottoway

KØPFV - 4th Time Award using Any Mode - Updated:12/2/2021

Last for WBOW 4th time

KY: Elliot

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Lots of folks need Kalawao! I skipped listing a few who need AK counties and Kalawao – hopefully N8KIE will get most those needs there in HI. Other HI counties have shown up on FT-8 if that's your thing.

Dang, I note that almost nobody needs a whole lot in OK. Guess the QSO parties do a great job of cleaning up those needs. Same in FL and KS where all those counties get put out by at least two mobiles, sometimes three or four and also fixed stations in 2/3rds of them, too. For TX, it's either feast or famine, with some needing 64 of the 254 counties and others needing ones mostly 500-800 miles from my QTH. Please check the K3IMC needs page. Many need just a handful for prefixes or other awards and maybe some are close to you and you can help out.

Keep in mind that for DX, they have a short window – in the mornings before the band closes. Some have 30 and 40M capability but propagation there is not guaranteed. Doesn't take much to make that impossible. If the K=2 or above, won't be much coming through from EU either. Conditions are getting better and maybe 17 and 15 is where you'll find the DX. Give a listen. See if you can help finish up some folks. It's always been a county hunter tradition to really work hard to get first timers DONE.

Lately N4RKK has been spotting parks and counties. If you need Tyler, TX – keep a watch out for Tyler State Park – run many times – in, of course, Tyler County TX.

AI5P Park Visits

On December 2, Rick AI5P headed to Ramah State Wildlife Area, K-0184, in El Paso County, Colorado. This is a 400 acre site mainly for hunting for deer, small wildlife and waterfowl or observing same. You need either a CO hunting license or SWA pass to enter these areas.



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On December 8, he was in Duck Creek SWA K9646 in Logan County CO. This is a 1.7 square mile area. There's hunting season for rabbit, pheasant, waterfowl, and deer, or you can just go watch wildlife the rest of the year.

Looks like these runs didn't get spotted on ch.w6rk.com or slack.

Info above from Rick's Facebook posts in Parks on the Air.

Awards Issued

Roadrunner Award: N8OYY attained 275 last counties on 11/27/21. He received #85

Roadrunner Award: AB7NK attained 1100 last counties on 12/2/21. She received #9

Ran All State Award: N8OYY completed West Virginia for the 4th time on 11/27/21. He received #1

USA-Digital Award: WQ7A attained level 2000 on 1/19/21. He received 7

Events for County Hunters

On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, break out your straight key or bug to join in the fun of ARRL Straight Key Night (SKN). Straight Key Night is held every January 1, 0000 - 2359 UTC. Technician licensees have CW privileges on parts of 80, 40, and 15 meters. (straight keys or bugs)

No State QSO Parties in January. Several coming in February including VT, MN and NC.

In January, there's the North American QSO Parties – both CW and SSB on different weekends. You've also got Winter Field Day for those going portable in the field. There's a 160M contest and a bunch of smaller contests.

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Contest%20Corral/2022/January%202022%20Corral.pdf>

In Feb – there's the big Orlando Hamfest. Stay tuned for news on this one. Registration is open. I guess if you're 20 or 30 years old, your risk is fairly small. If you're in the senior category – well – you're much much higher risk. Is it worth your life to attend with 10,000+ folks in crowded indoor spaces?

There's the planned Mini in Michigan in April. Details on the MARAC web page. You can sign up now. Let's hope this all peaks and is way down on the scale by late April.

Dayton Hamvention in late May 2022.

Future future planning – MARAC Convention in October 2022.

That's all folks!