

County Hunter News

February 1, 2008

Volume 4, Issue 2

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

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

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

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County Hunter Nets run on 14.0565, 10.122.5, and **7056.5**, with activity nights on 3556.5 on Tuesday evenings around 8-9pm Eastern Time. Also, with low sunspot activity, most of the SSB activity now is on 'friendly net' 7188/7185 KHz. The cw folks are now pioneering 17M operation on 18.0915. (21.0565, 24.915.5, and 28.0565 when sunspots better). Look around 18135 or 18.132.5 for occasional 17M SSB runs.

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

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

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

De N4CD (email: telegraphy@verizon.net)

Notes from the Editor

1) January Happenings – This has been a fairly slow month with several days with no mobile activity. We are at the very bottom of the sunspot cycle and naturally into winter weather with snow, ice, and cold temps across much of the country. There were quite a few counties put out on cw during the month – hundreds of counties for those needing them. Most on weekends and quite busy on cw on many days. Activity on 20M SSB seems to be way down. Having 80 and 30M seems to make quite a difference to logging the mobiles with the difficult propagation at times. Needless to say, propagation didn't cooperate with many days of high A index activity (geomagnetic disturbances), yet there were big pileups on the more needed counties!

Jim, N9JF, has got the rig installed in the newer car, so should be more active in the coming months. He had to replace the vehicle. During January, many mobiles went out on weekends or on trips. W0QE headed from CO to the east coast and back, running most counties on 3,4, or 5 bands. W0GXQ made a two day trip around MN running them on 20/30/40/80M, and earlier in Jan hit ND and others for the folks. Both spotted a few times on 17M. KM1C ran around in South Carolina.

Gary, W4GNS put out counties from NJ to TX on cw. Jim, N9JF made a couple trips to IA and WI before going QRX for the new install, and now complete in the new car and back on the road. K0RCJ got a new truck and is on 40M SSB only at the time.

Jeff, W9MSE, headed across WI to MN and back running the counties on CW. KS7S, Jim, ran across NM and CO, and Ed, KN4Y, headed off to a bowling tournament and ran the counties to and from it. Arden, AA0IP, made a day trip to the southeast corner of CO to put those out for everyone. Mark, N2MH, made a few trips over to NY running the tough NY City area counties. KA4RRU ran in VA, Bill, K2HVN, ran a few in NH, Charlie, W0RRY, ran counties in South Texas, Silver, N9QS ran on a trip to the TN/FL area, WA7JHQ, Sterling, was out on a trip from NM to OK and back. N8KIE is out in HI.

WV2B made a trip to PA to put out the counties for the folks on cw. He has upgraded from a 35amp alternator to a 55 amp alternator in the Geo Metro, hoping to solve the electrical problems that have been plaguing him. Ed, K8ZZ, ran up in MI, Tim, and W8JJ, flew to TX and ran counties there on multiple bands CW in a temporary set up. Several other county hunters ran their home counties and ones nearby to help out during January. The NAQP contest also saw many spots in W6RK for counties.

Overall, many counties run on cw. W0GXQ ran in MN with temps down at minus 28 degrees starting out, and never getting above zero all day! Brrr!

2) In this issue – trip reports from AI5P, N4AAT, W0QE and N4CD. Coverage of peak oil/global warming, sunspot cycle, a proposal for Natural Bingo Award, Elwood's CW update, and the latest MARAC non-happenings. Also a look back at 2007, and a look forward to 2008.

3) New Callsigns - Terry, WU9F, is now W9UX after Jan 1, 2008

4) General Motors and Peak Oil Reality: "General Motors Corp. canceled a \$300-million program to build an advanced V8 engine for luxury vehicles, citing rising oil prices and tighter U.S. fuel economy restrictions.

"We have seen a declining demand for V8 engines as fuel prices have risen," GM spokeswoman Sharon Basel said Thursday. New requirements for carmakers to boost average mileage 40% by 2020 also figured in the

decision, she said.

GM is trying to shed its reputation for gas-guzzling vehicles as it loses sales to Toyota Motor Corp. and its fuel-sipping Prius, a gasoline-electric hybrid. Eight-cylinder engines, used mainly for high-performance sedans, large pickup trucks and SUVs, get lower mileage than conventional four- and six-cylinder engines.” (GM Press Release)

5) CW Year End Totals – by KA3MMM. Each year, Elwood gathers the latest data on folks progress toward their ‘all CW’ award and Nth time around. Wow! We have a few folks closing in – let’s help them finish up!

6) Mini in Weslaco – Reminder – the South Central Mini is being held in Weslaco TX this month. Attending so far as of 1/19/2008 will be:

W4OWY & Barbara, NW1O, WG9A & Sandy, W0FP & Cheri, W9SUQ & KA9QKN, N5AWE & Jean, KG5UZ & KJ6PQ, KD5CXO & Faith, WD5JGS & Jean, W0RRY & Mary, W0NAC & N0LXJ, WA3ZTY & WB3JDC, KI0JD & KB0DDJ, KB0BA & N0XYL, KY0E & Ellen, AA9JJ & N9QPQ, AB2LS, N4CD, WQ7A & Boni, K1DFO, W3DYA & Karen, K0GO & W5VD, K9GTQ & N9MBL, WB9NUL & W9UCW

Come join the fun in the warmer temps of South Texas.

Getting Folks Finished Up

County Hunting is about the only part of ham radio where your friends will volunteer to go get ‘something’ you need. Try that on the DX frequencies, asking someone to get you a P5 (North Korea) that you need for DXCC, and you’ll get laughed at, but in county hunting, the tradition is helping others finish off needs. At the same time, it’s also a productive way to use your mobile installation to help out others, and it is a lot of fun. Here are some special needs to examine and see if you can help out these folks.

This month, from the K3IMC Special Needs page – we see that many are getting fairly close to finishing up! Some will be able to look for fixed

stations in these counties to help out, but others counties are likely to be worked only by working mobiles in the county. These are just some of the folks closing in.

N1QY down to about 17 – most of them ‘up north’ so it might be spring before most of them are run. See if you can’t help him out for USACA.

K5OT desperately needs McDowell, WV on cw to finish up on cw for first time, plus one more. N5XG needs a handful on CW to finish up first time! !

Jerry, K1SO, is down to about 30 – and some of them in warmer areas. See if you can’t help him out get done for USACA!

WB2ABD is down to 37 for 4th time. WA2DWP has only 12 to go for USACA. AB2LS, Carol -Ann has only a dozen or so for Bingo III, and only 3 to go for the Five Star Award! She has 36 or so for the 4th time, many back east. N4RS needs only Cowley, KS for LC WBOW for MG.

Hank, KF2O, has under 40 for USACA. Larry, N2OCW under 20 and closing in on Master’s Gold. Ross, N0ZA, has 21 to go, some in TX which someone might run on the way to the mini. NU0Q down to under 25 for all. W0GXQ needs only 25 or so. KQ0B needs only 8 or so to finish! **Many others are just as close, or need only a few in several states.**

Conditions are good on 20M for a few hours a day, and usually decent for under 1000 mile contacts on 40M, and good on 30M out to 1500 miles. Some mobiles are now running on 80M CW. The bands aren’t dead – but mobile activity seems at a low spot now.

If you are headed out on a trip, see if you can’t plan to hit some of the needed counties and help out the folks – whether going to the mini, going to a wedding or visiting family 100 miles away or 300 miles away, headed south on vacation or to the mountains skiing, you might pass through the counties that some need. It helps to coordinate ahead of time, and if needed, plan on a frequency off 14.336 if you need 20M SSB.

Check out the needs on K3IMC and the ‘most wanted’ county listing.

From the latest CW tabulation by Elwood for ‘all cw’, we find:

AD1C at 3071 – only 6 to go!
W3DYA at 3072 – only 5 to go!
WU3H at 3073 – only 4 to go!
K4YFH at 3075 – only 2 to go!
K5AAR at 3055 – 22 to go!
K5OT at 3075 – 2 to go!
W8CE at 3060 – only 17 to go!
K8QWY at 3057 – only 20 to go!
NN9K at 3064 – 13 to go!
AA9KH at 3068 – only 9 to go!
W0GXQ at 3049 – only 27 to go!
AA0IP at 3060 – only 17 to go!

On cw, some within 50, and quite a few have worked over 2900 – let's get the cw folks finished up! Many are making excellent progress toward USA-CW – and USA-CW-Nth time.

On the Road with N4CD – 1

The weather was predicted to be good for the last weekend in December, so I checked the K3IMC web page ‘Most wanted’ and needed counties in OKLA and planned a one day trip to the SE corner of the state. Folks always need Choctaw, McCurtain, then maybe I’d hit Leflore, Latimer and Pushmataha - there is no interstate highway there and not much reason for wandering through unless you are a county hunter. There’s no sense staying home on a good weather weekend in the winter with normal propagation forecast and no scheduled contest to make it rough to operate. It’s about getting folks finished up!

Before sunrise I loaded up the car and headed north to Choctaw. Several needed that. On this Saturday, Scottie, N4AAT was out running in NC/VA, Ron, KB6UF, was out in MS/LA, and Cliff and Nelda/K6JN/W6XJN were headed across the country in NM and TX. For most, it was a good day to snag counties on 40M SSB, and as a special bonus, 3 mobiles were out running counties good for Master Platinum for the rest of the county hunter family to fill in those MP books. The race is on to see how first the dozen

MP awards are issued. KB6UF, Ron, also ran on CW. (14.0565 and 7.190 usually).

The weather was clear and chilly – in the 20s to start in OK, barely getting over 40, but it was a nice winter sunny day and road conditions were great. The bands cooperated with great runs on 40M, both CW and SSB. Scottie had good pileups on 40M as did Ron. The 20M SSB “Club of One” decided for this one day to stay on 14.336, so the folks looking for N4CD on 20M on 14.342 had no ‘issues’ to contend with on this trip and the other nets up in that part of the band ran undisturbed.

(Maybe it was the realization that everyone now knew for sure who the source of the interference was? Now that it was quite clear to all where the interference originated from, everyone became ‘more sensitive’ to the problem. As you recall, from the MARAC Bylaws:

5.1 AWARDS

(8) Conduct:

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

- (a) The submission of forged or altered confirmations or applications.
- (b) Transmitting from a location other than the one specified during the operation.
- (c) Participating in activities that create an unfavorable impression of amateur radio, **such activities include malicious attempts to cause disruption** or disaccreditation of an operation.

What else can you call ten days worth of malicious intentional ‘jamming’ both on SSB and CW? OR wiping out 20+ KHz of the top end of the band?

In any event, it was nice to see the occupants of 20M no longer bothered by malicious intentional interference, at least for the day. **Let’s hope it is the ‘norm’ from now on.** Same on cw – none of the “CQ CQ CQ CQ de HI

HI” which originated from same source on John’s Island, SC. The ones who should be ‘run off’ from MARAC eligibility, per by Bylaws, are the jammers. Let’s hope the jamming and interference has all ended permanently. By everyone that ever did it.

After McCurtain, which Leo, WY7LL needed as a LC, I decided to continue up on to Leflore and Latimer, one of the ‘most wanted’ in OK. That worked out well, and then it was down through Pushmataha and Pittsburg and home by dinner time. A loop of about 400 miles or so for the day was run, with pages and pages of contacts in the log. And by habit, it was dinner at the Cracker Barrel on the way home.

Now for the stats: The car took \$34 in gas. (at \$2.90/gal). I ran 12 counties in the 400 miles and had an average of 41 contacts per county, with a high of 56 in Choctaw, 68 in McCurtain, and 71 in Leflore. There were 20Q or so in the close in ones to home that I have run many times in the past year. About 1.25 contacts per mile of driving on the trip. Most of the contacts were on 40cw and 40ssb.

Scottie, N4AAT, was making contacts left and right in NC, and Ron, KB6UF, did a great job of pulling the sigs out on 40M. With ‘winter conditions’ it is challenging at times with the foreign broadcast on 40M, but it tends to come and go, and hopefully will be gone at some point before the end of the mobile’s run so you can manage to make a contact.

30M was great with sigs from all over the country. Only DL6KVA was on 20M for the ‘DX group’ – conditions still really challenging for the Europeans! It’s no fun being ‘DX’ at the bottom of the sunspot cycle!

Mark, N2MH ran a few in NJ on CW this day for the folks. It’s good to hear folks get out for a day trip in various parts of the country – hitting some needed counties –whether it be for prefixes, USA-CA, Bingo, Nth time or other awards. If folks can run counties while they head off to visit parents/kids, relatives or friends and just put out a few counties, that helps keep interest up. If folks can run over 30-40-75 miles to get a needed county for someone, that, too, helps to keep others interested as they are making progress toward their awards.

2007/2008

Looking back on 2007, at the end of the year as this is being written – it's been a reasonable year for most county hunters, giving the ‘bottom of the sunspot cycle propagation. Thousands of counties were put out – many by a dozen mobiles like N8KIE, W6TMD, AA9JJ/N9QPQ, N9JF, N4AAT, AB4YZ, and a half dozen others who ran all over the country, each putting out many hundreds of counties. Many others put out hundreds of counties in 2007 individually. Quite a few finished up various awards in 2007. Scottie, N4AAT, was the first to finish all four prefixes.

Many others helped to keep their home states off the ‘most wanted list’ – by repeated trips to the counties in their part of the state, or the entire state: W0NAC/N0LXJ(CO), KB0BA/N0XYL(IA, WI), KM9X/KB9MGI(IN, KY), N9JF(IL, IA, MO), W0GXQ(MN, SD, ND), W9MSE(WI), KB6TAL(NM), AA9JJ/N9QPQ(AZ), K2HVN(NH, VT), KO1U(MA, RI), KG5J(AR), N5UZW(AR), W6TMD(CA), WB4VFN(KY), N2OCW(WV), N2MH(NJ), KB6UF(LA), NM2L(GA), N4AAT(SC), K8ZZ(MI), K0RU(KS), KQ0B(MO), N9STL(IL), NA7W(WA), NF0N(NE), and I’m sure I missed a lot in here to who ran locally trying to help out folks finish up for various awards.

Not all county hunters run both modes, so while some states had active SSB mobiles, there was little CW activity, and vice versa. Many states, though, were challenging, like MT, ID, UT, AK, ME, AL, TN, KY, RI, DE, MD, NC, AL, ND, SD, NE, HI with only visitors passing by and putting out the counties in part or all of the state. Some were easy to get on one mode, and difficult on the other – those who took counties either SSB or CW got more of them naturally in a year. Counties were run on 20M SSB, but with current conditions, more people just could not hear the mobiles run on 20M, so that didn’t help much for those in the middle of the country. There, 40M was quite successful.

TopList Award (County Challenge Award)

Year 2007 saw lots of enthusiasm build for the TopList Award. Folks now have a place to track their progress on multiple bands. MARAC is still

working on its version of TopList Award which they will call the County Challenge Award.

When you get 1000 counties on a band, you qualify for the first level of the MARAC Single Band Award – issued for 1000 counties on a band, with levels of 2000, 3000, and all counties. You can get a plaque for all counties on a single band. Perhaps after the awards committee sorts all the possibilities out for TopList, you may qualify for awards based upon cumulative counties on all bands 160 thru 6M (you add them all up together to get a big number). Proposed levels start at 1000 counties and go up to over 30,000.

The Year for 40M Operation (and 80)

Forty meters has been fantastic this year. Thirty meters has been good for much of the day, and as in the past cycles, 20M good only for a few hours a day for most, with many mobiles just not in your skip zone at all – no copy.

The county hunters starting running on 80M successfully – putting out well over 200 counties. We tried 17M, but it was marginal – depending upon the flux number, which barely got up high enough most days to make it fun. In one or two years, it should really be a fun band to work on, when 40M starts to have ‘short skip’ much of the time. Folks are ready for it! E-skip openings brought in band counties on 10 and six meters for many.

Conventions

The Denver convention was a success, with many mobiles taking ‘the long way’ to get there, putting out hundreds of counties in the ‘county hunter tradition’. The TX mini in Feb was a success with lots of folks running counties on the way there and home. The better part of 100 attended the Dayton County Hunter Forum and an enjoyable dinner followed at the Ryan’s Steak House.

Awards Issued

Despite the poor conditions, by using CW, 30 and 40M, lots of folks finished up for different awards in the past year, and many others closed in quite a bit on their next awards. Many are updating their totals every month

or two for the TopList Award, and now are working toward ‘band county totals’ which also seems to have spurred a lot of interest in multiple band operation. It sure seems like a nice change from just trying to get the ‘umpteenth’ time completed like a robot only on one band.

The USACW has turned out to be a popular award, with many new folks coming to CW. Some came over to cw because of the many mobiles who run only on cw, mainly on cw, or because propagation is good on 40cw before 40M SSB, or where they can use 30M to snag a county. Interest continues in 30M – more are closing in on working all counties on 30M.

Many state QSO parties in 2007 were excellent, from PA to CA to TX to IL, IN, OH, WI, New England, GA, FL, CO (really good for the ‘first ever’ since it occurred the day many mobiles were leaving the national convention in CO!). Other operating events such as 160M contest, WPX, 10M contest and Sweepstakes brought in more ‘band counties’ for those counting them.

Sunspot Cycle

We start 2008 at the very bottom of the sunspot cycle, with hopes of climbing well out of the bottom by the end of 2008. There appears to be hope for the sunspot cycle being about to bottom with a reversed polarity sunspot appearing - therefore it should be shortly headed up now. The ‘bottom’ is when the number of ‘new’ sunspots is equal to or greater than the number of ‘old’ sunspots.

40M should continue to be good for another two years. 80M should continue to be good this winter and next. We’ll see where 2008 brings us. Gas prices are at \$3 and predicted to be higher in 2008, so mobile trips will become more expensive. County hunters may have to plan more cost effective trips or ‘downsize’ to more efficient mobiles, or go out together on county hunting ‘putting out’ trips.

Coming Up in 2008

This year, the TX mini will be in South Texas in Feb, The Michigan mini in April, the National Convention in Visalia, CA, in July, and there should be a County Hunter Forum at the Dayton Hamfest in May. If we get out the sunspot doldrums, all the bands should pick up as 2008 progresses. Maybe 17 and 15 meters will be in use shortly!

There've been some enthusiastic new county hunters joining the group in 2007 – many on 40M SSB and on cw. The MRCs from the newcomers keep streaming in, and that is a good sign. As better weather appears and better propagation, there should be lots of mobile activity and trips, so it should be a good year.

Spotting has worked well, with many cw net helpers spotting and doing relays for the folks. Spotting has brought many others to cw to get counties.

N4AAT Trip Report Dec 28, 2007

Data/Analysis from North Carolina run Saturday ----

“Weather was lousy - Band conditions were lousy - Gas prices were bad. Ran 20 counties in 14 1/2 hours - Had 361 contacts - An average of 18 contacts per county - Put on 620 miles at 21.5 miles per gallon at \$3.30 per gallon – That's \$95.00 for gas. That's about 3.8 contacts per \$1.00 of gas. - Can't afford to run many counties at that price. But, I loved doing it and glad to help out others who needed some contacts in the counties I ran. –

73 Scottie

(Note: Scottie has a diesel truck. Diesel fuel is about 30-40% more per gallon but gives 30% better fuel mileage in a vehicle compared to a gas engine.)

Two Hundred Meters and Down

The Story of Amateur Radio – by Clinton B. DeSoto

As you'll recall from the last issue, Marconi had successfully demonstrated wireless communications at the turn of the 20th century. He then proceeded to build a major communications empire using 'spark' technology and simple detectors. Everything was initially 'broadband'. Slowly, the advantages of 'tuned circuits' and 'impedance matching' became obvious, but in most cases, tuning was more a matter of getting the most power (various parts of the antenna system/transmitter changed to get the most power). Before long, Marconi started to 'standardize' on certain wavelengths for ship operation, and for long distance communications links. Tuning, or 'syntony' as they called it, had begun and expanded in the 1910-1920 era.

Hobbyist Experimenters

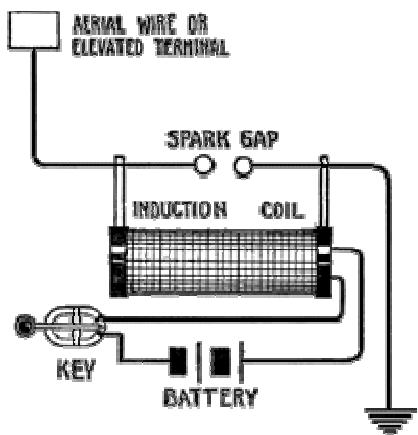
There were thousands of 'electrical experimenters' at the time building electric motors and devices and similar. It wasn't long before the experimenters started to hear about, then want to build their own 'wireless' sets. One of the interesting books about early ham radio history is "Two Hundred Meters and Down" written by Clinton B. DeSoto published by the ARRL. The initial publication date is 1936 with a reprint in 1981.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the electrical experimenters tried to find out how wireless worked – it was in the news all the time, but the information was closely guarded – company secrets. The first publication that revealed how things worked, Modern Electrics, had articles starting in 1908. Within two years, circulation went from 2000 to 30,000 copies per month and it became the first magazine devoted to the wireless enthusiast. It was similar to the computer boom when individuals could buy a microprocessor chip from Intel for a few hundred dollars and build their own home computer – ala the Altair 8000 kit in the late 1970s.

A simple 'ham station' of that era consisted of a 'induction coil' and spark gap. A 6v battery (or two or three) was connected in series with the primary of an induction coil. The secondary had a spark gap across it. One side of

the secondary was grounded. The other side connected to the antenna through a tapped matching coil. That was the ‘transmitter’. The receiver consisted of iron filings between two contacts – a simple coherer. Range was from 500 feet for a simple system to up to 100 miles for a kilowatt design. Folks had up to 25,000 volts on the secondary of the induction coil. An ignition coil from a Model T Ford would work for very short distances.

For \$6 you could buy a Rhumkorff coil, add the spark gap itself, and be ‘on the air’. That sounds cheap, but remember back in the 1910s, \$6 was likely a week’s pay for many!



Simple Spark Transmitter

If you added the equivalent of a buzzer in the primary circuit, or an ‘interrupter’ that would interrupt the primary coil current, you’d get a more continuous spark across the gap, rather than sharp pulses. A Rhumkorff coil combines the spark coil, interrupter, and spark gap all into one unit. The coil essentially operates like a huge buzzer. The interrupter’s contacts are wired in series between the battery and the coil and are closed in its resting state. When power is applied, the coil is activated which produces a magnetic field at the metal core of the coil. This pulls the interrupter contacts open, breaking the circuit. The falling magnetic field relaxes its hold, the contacts close, and the entire cycle repeats.

The rising and falling magnetic field of the primary coil induces a high voltage across the secondary. When the voltage is high enough it jumps the gap creating a spark. During the time the spark is present there is a high frequency alternating current field radiated from one pole of the spark gap. The other side is tied to ground. The ideal antenna was a 3 or 4 wire flattop,

which consisted of 3 or 4 parallel wires as high as you could get them, with the feed point of each top wire in the center, and brought down to the feed point. Naturally, you needed a good ground.

Most ‘hams’ of the day aimed for a wavelength of 400 meters, but the ‘rigs’ put out a broadband signal from 300 Khz to 1.2 Mhz. The main determining frequency components were the antenna type and length of wires! You built a standard antenna to be on the same frequency as other stations.

“Mineral detectors” including galena crystals were discovered in 1906. Hams started using them in the ‘teens’. Here’s a pic of one – most hams made their own – this is 1912 vintage:



1912 Commercial Crystal Receiver
Hunt and McCree
(<http://www.sparkmuseum.com/Highlights.htm>)

Want to learn how to build a wireless set, circa 1910? Here’s the exact plans:

<http://ia340934.us.archive.org/3/items/howtomakewireles00more/howtomakewireles00more.pdf>

Early Vacuum Tube Use

Fleming in 1904 had invented the vacuum diode, but it was expensive and unreliable. In 1906, De Forest put a third element inside it – a grid- to form what he called ‘the Audion’. It could amplify signals by five times! It was horrendously expensive – out of reach of the experimenter. Even a decade later, didn’t see much use as it was too expensive and too unreliable, and it did not detect ‘continuous waves’ from an arc transmitter.

DeForest would only sell you a complete receiver assembly (detector), not just the tube. It was aimed at the commercial market where high dollar price tags were not a problem.

Growth of Ham Radio

Most of the ‘hams’ then were dedicated experimenters, trying to extend range and make things work better. Before 1910, there were 600 or so stations that could talk up to 12 miles, and 3000 or so that could reach out two or three miles. Very few could afford the stations necessary to communicate further! If you were rich, you might be able to build a station to talk one hundred miles.

By 1910, there were 10,000 plus hams, and more commercial stations. Interference between all became rampant. Marconi quickly adopted ‘tuning’ units on both transmitters and receivers, but those spark gap units without tuning still produced broadband noise across the bands making reception difficult for everyone. For more than five years, the commercial folks had been trying to eliminate ham radio – do away with it completely! Finally, they thought they had done it!

The Radio Act of 1912 banished ham radio to wavelengths shorter than 250 meters (1.5 MHz and above) which were then considered useless, and at power levels less than 1 KW. Not many hams could afford the equipment for 100w, no less 1 KW. At the time, it was a ‘known fact’ that short waves were useless – very short range and equipment that was not very capable of working well. Most thought amateur radio would simply vanish as interest waned and folks could barely talk out of their backyards. In addition, stations now had to ‘register’ with the government.

Before 1912 there were over 10,000 ham stations. After the Radio Act of 1912, only 1200 people got the required licenses to continue to operate. If you asked for a license, the government had to give you one. Amateurs discovered their range, which was previously 25-40 miles for well equipped stations, was less than 10% of that now on ‘short waves! Needless to say, many were discouraged. The equipment of the day did not perform well on those short waves.

Starting in 1913, the government issued callsigns. In the US, hams were given callsigns starting with “1” and two letters after, like 1SZ.

Technology Development

Armstrong had tinkered with the expensive audion. He discovered he could use feedback, and now instead of a gain of 5, he could get a gain of 100 times out of a tube. Not only that, it could oscillate on just a single frequency. Fortunately, he patented the idea in 1913. Some hams would pick up on the audion for their own use, and it did work slightly better than other detectors. (Unfortunately, it was very expensive to buy a tube – maybe half a year's salary for the average person! The filaments didn't last long, and each tube had two filaments – the second one used after the first one burned out! Commercial competitors in commercial radio quickly seized on the ‘audion’ detector as a way around some of the Marconi patents. Initially, it was only used as a ‘simple detector’! (a diode detector).

It took Armstrong another 10 years to develop the tube transmitting system (as well as 10 years of Audion development by AT&T using it primarily for long distance amplification for the telephone network) before it saw much use in ham service as a “cw” transmitter. By adding a second grid (tetrodes) then a third grid (pentodes) the amplification could go to 600 and 1500 in a single tube! WW1 boosted radio technology tremendously.

The “teens” was the era of spark and rotary spark gap transmitters. A few commercial and military uses were moving to arc transmitters (continuous wave) but most hams could not afford that – it was very expensive. In addition, a ‘diode detector’ or crystal detector would not detect cw sent with ‘continuous waves’. (try copying cw in the “AM” position on your ham receiver – nothing but ‘thunks’). If you were a ham back then, you would have had a spark transmitter and simple detector. With the interrupter, or rotary spark gap, the RF signal was modulated (actually interrupted) at a rate of about 500-600 times a second, giving you the equivalent of ‘modulated cw’ which could be copied on an AM detector such as a galena crystal or vacuum tube diode detector.

There were many radio clubs (like initially there were thousands of local computer clubs to help folks build their own home PC). One of the things to do back then was relay messages – traffic handling – but range was very limited. To pass a message 100 or 500 miles took many relays. It wasn’t long before a national organization was put together by an inspired ham –

which was the start of the ARRL – Amateur Radio **Relay** League – to ‘relay’ messages from one city to another city via many stations in between.

In an upcoming issue, we’ll look at the ‘arc transmitter’ – the first ‘continuous wave’ (CW) transmitter – which also required now a continuous wave receiver. If you have ever tried to listen to a cw signal on an AM receiver, all you hear is ‘thump thumpity thump thump’ – there is no way to copy it without having some form of cw receiver. Now imagine how you build a receiver for continuous waves (CW) without the use of vacuum tubes. Challenging! For hams, that would take to the 1920s for tubes to become available and affordable, and for the era of continuous waves, as opposed to spark, to take over!

The Great War (WW1) started in Europe in 1914. The US didn’t enter the war until 1917, and then all ham licenses here were suspended. No more ham radio! The war ended in 1918, but the Navy didn’t want hams back on the air. It wasn’t until a year later in 1919 that the government relented, and hams were once again given the ‘useless short waves’. Later in the 20s, they would be assigned the 80/40/20 and 5 meter bands.

In Bucher’s Wireless Books of the early 1920s, he states:

“Spark systems of transmission are mostly used among amateurs and will first be considered. The apparatus in this method is not so complicated as that of other systems and the material for construction is more readily obtained by the amateur. The spark transmitter requires neither the elaborate machinery nor the technical skill demanded by other systems.”

“We may now center our attention on apparatus for generating high frequency currents. The lowest frequency so far employed for practical electric wave transmission, to the author’s knowledge, is 15,000 cycles, the highest a little less than 3,000,000 cycles. Theoretically, electric wave radiation occurs at all frequencies from the lowest to the highest, but aerials of enormous length would be required to radiate at frequencies below 10,000 per second. On the other hand the wave radiator for very short wave lengths must be exceedingly small. During the European war very successful communications were carried on over short distances at the wave length of 3 meters. The frequency of the antenna current was 100,000,000 cycles!

Frequencies up to 200,000 cycles may be generated by dynamos. An example of such machines is the 2 kw. Alexander son radio frequency alternator, the armature of which rotates 20,000 r.p.m.! The design of such a dynamo introduces many difficult mechanical problems and the construction is very expensive. Besides this, a current of 200,000 cycles would radiate at the wave length of 1500 meters, which is more than seven times the wave length allotted to amateurs, i.e., 200 meters.

The Poulsen arc generator works well at frequencies up to 200,000 but is unsuitable at 1,500,000 cycles required for amateur transmission.

The vacuum tube generator works well at all frequencies from cycles to 20,000,000 per second. There is every reason to believe that it will be used by amateurs in increasing numbers.”

Source:

<http://www.archive.org/details/wirelessexperime00buchrich>

Armstrong invented the ‘superhet’ receiver in 1918, and the ‘super regen’ in 1922. Tubes were still very expensive – nearly out of the reach of most hams for a complete set’s worth. Think of the equivalent today of \$50 a tube type prices for an unreliable receiving tube! In 1923, hams using tube equipment spanned the ocean on 2.72 MHz – on those ‘short waves’. Suddenly there was great interest. Hams built simple one tube receivers – regens – to exploit the new short waves.

Broadcasting on AM started in the early 20s, and the government assigned 3 and 4 letter callsigns to stations. Quickly after, hams were told to put a W or K in front the callsigns, giving us the type of callsigns we have today, W1XYZ and so on. Millions of crystal radio sets were sold - it was the latest thing – people would save up and buy one – whole families would listen in with headphones – sometimes put in a bowl so everyone could crowd around and hear! (My dad told me tales of the first magical radio that his family got (he was about 8 at the time) – 1924 or so)).

Later, my dad’s family bought a 3 tube radio – a regen detector and two stages of audio amplification with a big horn type speaker. It took an expensive “B” battery which you didn’t work too hard by turning up the

volume, and a rechargeable lead acid battery for the filaments. Each week or two they would exchange the discharged lead acid battery at the local radio shop – for a fully charged one – you ‘rented’ the “A” battery that provided power for the filaments for 25c/week. A fully charged battery gave you 15-20 hours of listening time. Every six months to a year, you had to buy an expensive ‘B’ high voltage battery (45v or 90v). Later, the family would get an A and B battery eliminator (Power supply)! That was ‘entertainment’ back then. Now, folks think nothing of paying \$50/month for cable or satellite TV ‘entertainment’.

If you lived on a farm, you might put up a windmill with a small generator to charge your radio batteries! Those were quite popular, and many ‘farm radios’ using 24 or 36v circuits were made. Farmers didn’t need electric lights, but wanted the radios to provide entertainment in the rural areas of the farm belt.

With the advent of mass production of tubes for AM radios, hams had access to better and less expensive tubes. Now, cw transmitters could be built – a tube or two would get you ‘on the air’ at 5 or 20w. Tubes still cost the better part of a week’s worth of salary for many. High power for hams might be 30-50w.

The birth of portable operation started in the mid 1920s, with the five meter band (65-75 MHz). The super regen allowed simple receivers to be used (1 or 2 tubes). By the end of the 20s, hams had frequency bands from 160 through 10, 5 meters and 75 cm.

And that is how it all started. The ARRL started in the teens – range was short – so to get a message to a point 200 miles away or across the county took dozens of relays. Rapid advances in radio technology moved things forward quickly. QST was published in the 1920s, spreading knowledge and operating skills throughout the country. Networks were set up all over to pass emergency traffic. Very few outside the cities of the time had telephone. Almost no rural areas had either electricity or telephone service, so when disasters occurred, ham radio often provided the only communications from rural America.

The book is a good read – you often find it at hamfests for a buck or two. It’s a good follow on to the early history of Marconi.

If you want to read an adventure from the early days of Wireless, there are several Radio Boy books online – Some of the is full length novels are here

<http://ia331311.us.archive.org/2/items/theradioboysinth12878gut/12878.txt>

<http://ia331303.us.archive.org/3/items/theradioboysonth14278gut/14278.txt>

<http://ia331329.us.archive.org/1/items/theradioboysfirs07899gut/7rboy10.txt>

The Radio Boys used spark era technology to go on an adventures. The above are full length adventure books for ‘dead band’ or ‘no mobile days’!

European Trip Report by AI5P

Meeting European County Hunters

From the 28th of August to the 16th of October, 2007, I had the opportunity to travel in Europe. The primary purpose of the trip was to visit old friends, see new places in Europe, and attend the RSGB HF Convention. Although I didn't take any radio equipment with me, I did manage to operate in ten countries using friends' equipment or through pre-arranged local contacts with individual or club stations. I managed to make over 3600 contacts from the various locales and several of the county hunting fraternity made contact.

My first stop was with a well-known county hunter and DXer - Rudi, HB9RG. Many of you have met Rudy and Rosmy at the various national MARAC conventions and/or mini-conventions over the years. I had the pleasure of staying with them in 1998 on another trip to Europe. Rudi has a fantastic location for radio about 15 miles south of Zurich. He has earned many awards to include DXCC Honor Roll # 1, 5BWAZ, 5BWAS, 9BDXCC, etc. He has also been quite active county hunting in Switzerland, Canada, and mobile in the United States. He was awarded USA-CA # 791 on December 22, 1992. He is currently working on his 7th time around!

Here is a picture of Rudi with some of his awards:



HB9RG - Rudi

My second stop was in Broni, Italy, to visit my good friend Tony, I2PJA. I first visited Tony along with Angelo, I2PHN, in 1986. Some of the older county hunters should recognize both calls. Angelo was awarded USA-CA #659 on April 24, 1990. Sadly, he is now a Silent Key. Tony continues to chase DX (Honor Roll #1) and has about 50 counties to finish. I hope that we will be seeing him on the nets once conditions improve. Here is a picture of Tony at his station:



I2PJA – Tony

After stops in Monaco; Nice, France; and Dresden, Germany, I met one of the CW county hunters for the first time - Gerd, DL5AWI. He lives near Eisenach and is quite active chasing counties. He does not have a station at home at this time and has to drive about 20 miles to a station location that he and some friends have set up in the countryside - primarily for contesting. He has 2541 counties confirmed on CW and 2814 confirmed mixed mode. Here is Gerd with some of his awards:



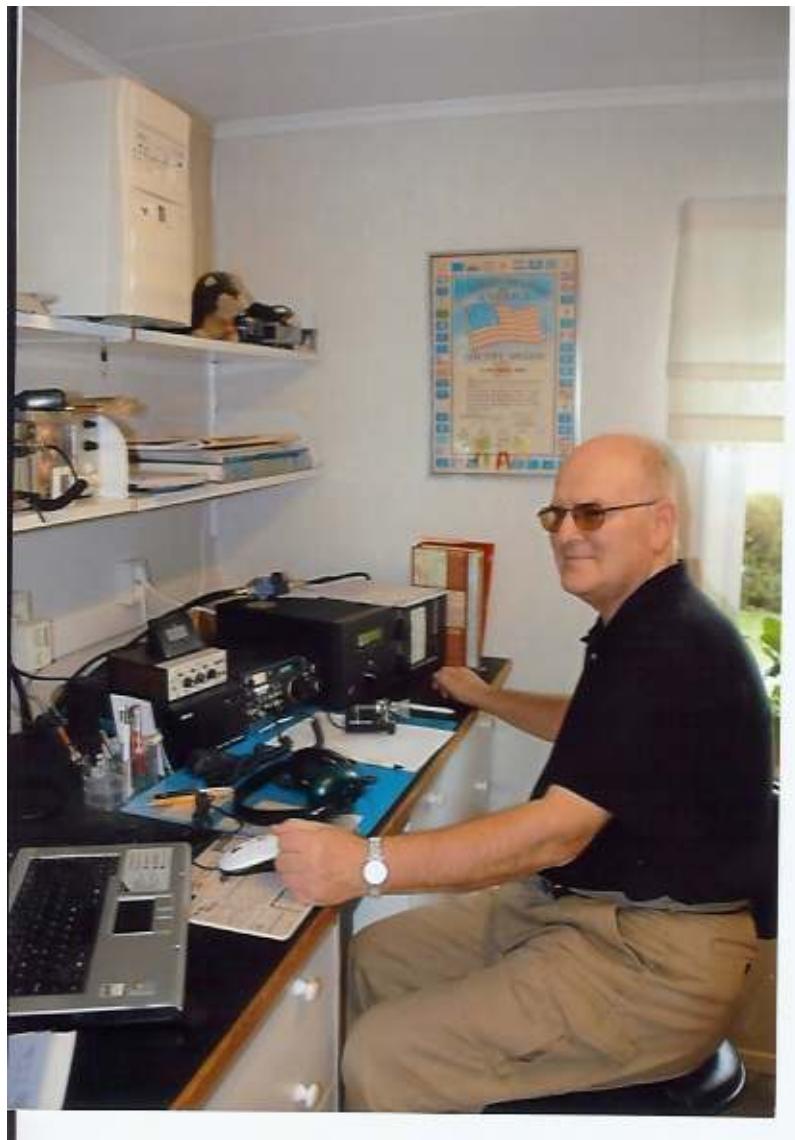
DL5AWI - Gerd

I continued on my trip through Denmark and Norway before seeing some other old county hunting friends in Sweden - Lars, SM5CAK, and Rolf, SM4BNZ. I had visited both in 1985. Rolf chased counties for many years and was awarded USA-CA # 777 on August 11, 1992. He is still very active on the bands chasing other interests. Here is his picture:



SM4BNZ - Rolf

Lars continues to chase only fixed stations for USA-CA! I was amazed to learn that he has confirmed 2918 counties with only fixed stations! He has worked two more (Ohio, KY and Jerome, ID) but has been unable to get a confirmation. Again, some of the older county hunters will remember Lars operating mobile in the United States back in 1982 and 1992. Here is a picture of Lars at his station:



SM5CAK, Lars

On to Stockholm, the Aaland Islands, and Helsinki - and my first meeting with another CW county hunter - Henry, OH3JF, in Riihimaki. He is getting very close to finishing USA-CA with 3032 confirmed (2998 from mobiles and 34 from fixed stations). He is also an avid DXer with all countries worked along with many DX awards. Here is a picture of Henry at his station:



OH3JF, Henry

From Finland I flew to London and attended the RSGB HF Convention near Cambridge. Unfortunately, I didn't see any county hunters there. I had the great opportunity to visit and meet many amateurs on my 2007 trip through

Europe. Traveling via airplane, train, automobile and ferry led me to many exciting places and adventures! I hope that many of you will also be able to meet and/or visit some of our overseas county hunters! For those that might want one of my QSLs from this trip - here is what it looks like:



73, Rick AI5P

WGXQ TRIP REPORT

Minnesota Trip report: 19/20 January 2008

My trip went well, but I was disappointed with the conditions on 17 thru 10m. I went to those bands in nearly every county on Saturday but backed off on Sunday because of the lack of activity. Thirty, forty, and eighty were the hot bands as expected. I've had a lot of practice driving, operating and hand logging; and during the day it's okay, but it gives me a "pain in the neck" at night because of the obvious safety factor. I may have to go back to the dreaded recorder for operations after dark.

It was 28 below zero here at the house when I left and the highest temp I witnessed all weekend was one degree above zero! But the vehicle and equipment both performed great. The HS-1500 screwdriver did pretty well on 80m. The other bands (resonators) were mounted up six feet over the vehicle.

I ran 34 counties (all on CW) with a total of 1,265 contacts and managed to give a dozen last counties. As W0QE mentioned, he missed his because he could not be near a radio. Several folks who I had emailed didn't/couldn't answer my mail - and did not show up (maybe next time). I had fun and I hope you snagged lots of goodies for the awards you are working on.

NOTE: If you yearn for the "hill country", try route 60 which runs East/West in Wabasha County

MARAC Asleep at the Switch Again

MARAC once again appears 'hibernating' with officers that never seem check to see that things get done. Things sent off for reconsideration with no follow up. Things 'lost in space' for half a year or more. At the Dec 5 BOD/Officers meeting (minutes on line), the President noted that the Bylaws

had yet to be changed even though the membership voted to change them back in July 2007. (in regard to ‘clubs of one’ being eligible to apply for and receive awards).

The BOD/Officers voted to change the rules for several awards as well back in July at the National Convention Annual Meeting, yet the official MARAC web site still has 7 month old outdated information. The ‘approved’ rule change was published in the January 2008 Road Runner which contained the minutes of the BOD meeting held at the National Convention seven months before – very timely, of course. Six months late. Six previous issues were silent on this

The BOD/Officers at the July 2007 annual meeting accepted the recommendation of the awards committee to do away with award levels for USA-CW, having the ONLY level for USA-CW as ‘all’ (currently 3077). Well, sort of...they never bothered to change the rules as listed on the MARAC web page which as of 1/20/08 still calls for levels of 1000, 2000, 3000, and ‘all’. So who knows which set of rules is really in effect?

The BOD/Officers also changed the rules for Five Band Award. Where previously, you could qualify for each band with 1500 counties on either 80/40/30/20/ or 10, and get the award for particular band, now you must submit for all five bands at the same time (2000 or more per band) - 10,000 contacts - logs or computer file- to qualify for the 5 band award.

The exact words are:

"Basic Certificate for 2000 counties on all 5 bands"

Most people would interpret that to the basic award is issued only when you have 2000 on **all** Five Bands. Before, you could get the award for 1500 counties on any one band. Now, you have to wait until you have 2000 counties for each of five bands. They also let you choose any five bands between 160-6 meters other than 60M, a change. But the official rules are unchanged. Actually, it says ‘any five bands’ so that might even allow 60M and 2M?

This change is part due to the creation a while back of the Single Band award, which allows you to get a basic certificate at 1000, 2000, 3000, and all levels. It was a duplicate award, and apparently no one had recently applied for the levels on five band award apparently. A reasonable change,

if they would get the official rules ‘up to date’. I wonder if the MARAC Logger tracks 5 band award?

Then the web page as of 1/20/08 says only 80/40/20/15/10 meters are good for the Five Band Award, but at the July annual meeting, the BOD voted to allow any Five Bands. So who knows what the current rules are seven months later?

Who is in charge? Hellooooooo?

You can apply to CQ Magazine for levels of 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, and 3000 before reaching all. You can get it with any endorsement, including for example, 1000 counties worked on CW - but CQ Magazine does require confirmations for all levels of its awards. Thus, you could have 1000 counties confirmed on cw....and get other endorsements as you head toward all counties worked.

Some even get confirmations as they work on other bands and modes after the basic USACA, like Alan, K8CW, with all 40M confirmed and an endorsement for 'all 40m' on his USACA from CQ Magazine. Now he is working and confirming all counties on 17M.

So the answer to the question posed on the K3IMC forum is, yes, they voted to change the USA-CW rules, but didn't change the rules on the web site, so I guess you get to pick, and send in to the Awards Chairlady who is also likely just as confused as to which rules are really in effect at the current time.

The BOD went to vote on the County Challenge award but referred it back to the awards committee for clarification. Wonder if they have gotten around to 'clarifying' whatever minor detail they had to work on? Anybody ever follow up? Action items? Hello?

You can submit for the Single Band Award. It allows you to submit for 1000 counties on any band - and Marac awards let you get endorsements for any particular mode...and of course, if you do it on 30M, it is not SSB....cw or digital only there.

W0QE Trip Report – CO to NC Jan 13-15, 2008

“59 unique counties - 1703 miles
2956 contacts 6 bands on CW and 2 bands on SSB

I promised my wife/navigator/logger that if the radio went with us we would not stop to put out counties on county lines. This put me in a predicament so I needed to adjust my operating. I did not look for relays on CW and instead operated on 6 bands. I hoped that operating on 6 bands on CW would give everyone the best chance at a contact. I took the big ugly antenna and made more contacts per mile than I ever have done before. The band conditions seemed pretty good and all bands except 20m SSB and 15m CW experienced big pileups. I was busy nearly 100% of the time but unfortunately was unable to operate on all 8 band/modes in 9 of the counties.

The only way I could operate on so many bands/modes without stopping was to eliminate the relays. “

De N4CD – that’s about 1.74 contacts per mile of the trip. Wow!

Iowa City, CA to finally get a telephone!

If you lived in Iowa City, CA, long with the other 150 residents, you might have been asking for phone service for the last 100 years – and never got it. Verizon finally agreed, with a grant from the State of California, to put in phone lines to this small town which is about 10 miles northeast of Yuba City, in Yuba County, CA. You need to go down a one lane road to get to it and an 18% grade (steep).

In 1985, the residents decided to all get on CB as their local intercom, but had no communications with the ‘outside world’. Now, they use cellphones, but there is no coverage in the homes, and folks have to drive up the road for 2 or 3 miles to find a hot spot to get coverage to make their calls. The mail is delivered only 3 times a week by the post office. Talk about ‘out in the

boonies'. Shortly, they'll be connected to the world and be surfing the web with ease.

More MARAC Phony “Club” Craziness

The BOD/Officers at the annual meeting in July also voted to allow sham contacts with borrowed club calls for MARAC awards, and to allow clubs to apply for MARAC awards. Supposedly now borrowed “club calls” can give out contacts for prefixes even though the other rules require, for marac, that all awards be earned with callsigns issued to the individual, and the prefix award requires the **operator** have the prefix, not just be using a call with a prefix not his own. Someone is going to have to considerably rewrite the rules to finagle ‘club calls’ into many of the awards by taking out ‘operator’ and putting in ‘or entity’, and changing lots of other requirements.

So more stuff that will have to be overturned to accomplish letting K2JG, W1BQL, W4CA, NA7XX continue to scam folks with what I call bogus contacts when mobile. (all the other club calls that proliferated a few years ago went away when their ‘owners’ realized the use of the calls was nothing but a scam. Only these four seem to persist).

If one looks under New Awards – one of the MARAC criteria is:

“(a) How will your proposed award or **modification** promote effective and efficient **Mobile Operation**?”

OK...please explain to me how allowing borrowed calls and one operator, maybe 3 or 4 borrowed calls in a ‘car’, is promoting effective and efficient **MOBILE** operation? Or even more than ONE CALL PER PERSON? It is slowing things down by a factor of 2 or 3 or 4. So why even allow multiple calls be used by ONE operator? Soon we’ll be back to good conditions with runs exceeding the 10 minute limit (or 9 or 8 depending upon activity).

Seems 100% contrary to what MARAC is looking for – which is **EFFICIENT** and **EFFECTIVE** mobile operations. Yes, I suppose some ‘fixed stations’ who will benefit from filling in with cheap sham contacts the

prefixes or Bingo or combo awards thinking they are benefiting, but MARAC intent for awards is EFFICIENT and **EFFECTIVE MOBILE** operation, not getting sham contacts for **fixed** stations. It's not making awards 'cheap and easy to get'.

Right now, I'd bet you a donut that the MARAC Logger program will give you Five Stars if you work K2JG. K2JG is not an operator and cannot give out 'stars'. It's an 'entity'. When K2JG went 'mobile' in MT, Kwiklog and MARAC Logger gave everyone 5 bogus stars and credit for Master Gold, even though the operator did not have either a star or Bingo and the MARAC legal advisor said "NO" to those being valid contacts.

MARAC cannot be peddling programs for Logging that do not comply with its own rules. The voted change acknowledges that Club Calls cannot count toward Five Star and Master's Gold, that require the operator to have either the stars or Bingo. Certain MARAC awards require that the OPERATOR have the credentials. The easiest solution to this problem is to not allow **MOBILE CLUB CONTACTS** in addition to the operators own call. Plain and simple.

If club stations want to apply for awards, great. Seems useless, but let them apply – all of them are clubs of one applying for MARAC awards these days at the same time they complete an award for their own real call. Seems sort of stupid to have 'invisible friends' also getting the exact same award on the exact same date. Who else at real club stations care 3 years later than club XYZ got USACA? Usually it is the efforts of just one person, making duplicate contacts with his own call, then the club call, that 'earns' the club that award, which is irrelevant to normal club functions.

But there is NO reason why MARAC should let 'club calls' with stars go mobiling and give out sham contacts. Until MARAC gets its house in order (revise ALL the rules and the Logging Programs) to correctly credit awards listing club calls, MARAC should not credit club calls except for in it's home county, or when it is the ONLY call used by an operator/operators for an entire calendar day – such as Field Day, a state QSO Party with multiple operators in a vehicle, an activated "Light House" or other special event station that is using ONE call all day long. (and 99.99% of those calls have no stars, Bingo, MG or other things that will cause erroneous logging).

The prefix award requires making contact with an OPERATOR who has the correct prefix, not a ‘callsign’.

The specific rule is:

“To make **Valid Contacts** with amateur radio operators who have as the first letter of their call sign one of four letters assigned to USA stations.”

It doesn’t say make contact with operators who have ‘borrowed’ callsigns with the prefix. It must be THEIR callsign.

In addition, it gets more specific:

SPECIAL RULES: Each prefix has a separate award and there is an additional award for working all prefixes.

K Prefix Award – Make **Valid Contacts** with operators that have the letter "K" as the first letter of their call signs.

W Prefix Award – Make **Valid Contacts** with operators that have the letter "W" as the first letter of their call signs.

N Prefix Award – Make **Valid Contacts** with operators that have the letter "N" as the first letter of their call signs.

A Prefix Award – Make **Valid Contacts** with operators that have the letter "A" as the first letter of their call signs. The following "wild cards" may be substituted for "A" call sign contacts: (a) the call sign of a DX station and (b) the call sign of any station that contains the letter “X.”

Note that the Awards Committee did not recommend that sham club stations CALLSIGNS count for the prefix award, and specifically noted that ‘some awards require the operator to hold the credentials’, one must really scratch their head!

Now, a simple question. If club calls do not count for prefixes, if they do not count for stars, if they do not count for Master's Gold...then why the heck is anyone out there running mobile with a club call?

Did the Board ever think of how many rules and how many awards would be re-written to 'allow' club calls to qualify for anything other than Nth time, and if you work the regular call of the op, no need to make duplicate contacts with 'ride along calls'????. And then fix all the logging programs to log them right? Wow! It will take thousands of man hours to fix it all and then check it, and keep debugging it over the next five years. "K2JG" or "W4CA" is not an 'operator' and can't give you a prefix by the rules. So you enter it as a club, and it does not count for stars or prefixes or Master's Gold.

That 'club call' bit sounds like a sick idea hatched in John's Island, SC, along with sidekicks "W1BQL" and W4CA. That also, a result of one of the officers wishing to use the Marac club call for sham contacts and having it 'count' for bogus prefixes and a bogus couple extra stars as "it" goes mobile . Well, it neither counts for the prefix, nor for stars. If K9DCJ has Bingo, it will be giving out bogus MG contacts as well. (if it can give out bogus stars now, that an operator doesn't have, what is going to prevent it from giving out bogus MG contacts since 'it' has bingo?). What logging program is going to log it correctly? Or give you right number of stars? Hmm???) Maybe the best thing is put the brakes on all mobile club calls?

The BOD/Officers should have squelched the club call business. No 'club calls' running counties mobile except when it is THE ONLY call used by an operator(s) for a state QSO party, Field Day, Contest, or Special Event. Period. No one operator using more than one call sign in a 24 hour period. Period. Just like ARRL rules on contests and events.

The two main promoters of 'club call mania' have done the most to damage marac, not help it. It got passed by an apathetic board apparently unwilling to 'offend' the one who routinely runs anyone off who disagrees with him and his invisible playmate, "K2JG". Most of the other county hunters have long ago abandoned using sham club calls. Why drag this up again and try

to ‘approve it’ when it clearly doesn’t count by the rules for most of the awards?

The MARAC Awards Page indicates it hasn’t been updated since October of 2006. The rules have changed, sort of, maybe.....at least they were voted to be changed. But if the BOD/Officers want to start rewriting award rules all over the place, they’ll have to vote again on any proposed changes. What a nightmare! It would be a lot easier to just say NO to one operator using more than one callsign in a given calendar day, and continuing no credit for club calls for prefixes, stars, and Master’s Gold/Platinum.

On the Road with N4CD – II

The New Year had started – the date was Jan. 1, 2008 - the weather in TX was clear, and folks still needed some of close in counties to my QTH, so on New Year’s Day, I decided to take a one day trip to the east to get some of them. It was off through Dallas to Kaufman, TX which several needed, followed by run up to Van Zandt, then over to Henderson and Anderson – wow, some pretty good pileups on CW and 40M SSB. Runs kept me busy for 30 minutes in each county, and there were great runs on 30M as well. I ran up to 14.336 and made about a dozen contacts there – that band didn’t seem so good most of the day but of course, I still had lots of fun giving out counties – then over to 20CW in most counties – about a dozen of the regulars showed up on 20 cw. On 40 and 30cw, there were 25-30 Qs in most counties, and 25-30Qs on 40M SSB.

It was good to hear some of the old net regulars get on for the holiday season and wish each other well in the New Year. Dennis, KK7X, and several others were on the band today for the holiday season. With the day off for most, it was a busy time on the nets with contacts. Jim, K9JF handled the relays on 20M SSB a several times with his big signal.

I headed over to Cherokee County, one I had driven around a few times on various trips (not intentionally) then back home through Smith, Wood, and Rains – 315 miles on a clear sunny day to start out the New Year on a good

county hunting trip. Larry, W0QE was looking for Rains, and we caught up with him on CW. Greg, NM2L, and Jim, KB6TAL, did the relays on 40/30 cw. Not much in the way of DX on 20M today. Zilch.

W8FNW was running up in SC, K6JN was just about to his trip end in FL after a cross country jaunt from CA, and N1SPX ran in KS. K8ZZ was caught up in snow storm in MI, and ran a few in the morning, then had to stop running counties and make tracks quickly toward home as the snow came down in copious amounts in MI. Activity was good for a winter day!

GM's Early On-Star Mobiles Obsolete

It seems that early GM cars with On-Stars may suddenly have many consumers that are unhappy. On-Star is an emergency system that allows you to call for help or directions, and automatically notifies On-Star and local authorities if your vehicle air-bags deploy (indicating an accident has occurred). For those absent minded who lock themselves out occasionally, On-Star can also remotely unlock a vehicle for authorized users

As of Feb. 18, cellular telephone companies will no longer be required to provide analog service - according to the U.S. Federal Communications Commission. Most carriers will shut down operation quickly afterward – a single digital channel carries many times more simultaneous conversations than an analog channel which carries only one. Some users of OnStar in-vehicle communications service will be affected as the company has indicated it won't support analog systems after Dec. 31.

OnStar-equipped vehicles have one of three types of equipment: analog-only, analog/digital-ready and dual-mode (analog and digital). OnStar advises that analog-only equipped vehicles (generally, cars older than 2003 models) can't be upgraded and that OnStar service in such vehicles won't work after Dec. 31. Analog/digital-ready equipped vehicles will need to be upgraded in order to work. (Dual-mode equipped vehicles will continue to work after Dec. 31.)

If you were unlucky enough to buy an early vehicle with On-Star, you may simply be out of luck. It will stop working when your local carrier turns down the last of the analog channels. (and those ancient packsets and

handsets from the 1980s will now be totally useless in nearly every part of the country). A few areas in really remote places may continue to have some analog channels (like Oklahoma!).

To determine the type of equipment in your vehicle and whether your service will work, contact the company by pressing the blue OnStar button in your vehicle, calling it, toll-free, at 866-579-7726 (have your OnStar account number or your vehicle identification number available), or visit it online at <https://myonstar.com/adt.os>

On the Road with N4CD – Part III

You just don't turn down a fantastic weather weekend – the weatherman promised warm, sunny January days for the first weekend in January. What can you say when it has been in the 20s overnight, and now it is going to be 75-80 degrees for a few days, with lows in the 60s? Wow! County Hunting weather for sure! It doesn't get any better in January! The CW county hunters turned out - both mobiles and fixed stations and helpers. 40M SSB wasn't bad either! (on the other hand, it was pouring rain in CA/OR/WA, NV, blizzards were ranging in the Sierra Nevadas near Truckee/Donner Pass of I80, the Interstates were closed – other roads required chains or were also shut in CA and over the coastal mountain passes). The weather gods smiled on TX, so it was time to take advantage of that!

There were still counties I could run over a weekend that I had missed and folks needed for various awards, so it was out the door early on Saturday morning headed west. I forgot to even pack my winter coat – didn't pack a coat at all! It was so warm in the morning as I got the antennas on the car I simply forgot. It was west through Denton and Wise, up to Montague, Clay and Wichita, with a detour there to Archer for KO1U who needed it. Then up to Wilbarger for AE3Z for his MG. Dick, K5VYT told me on the air he needed just two to finish Five Star in TX – and one was a detour off the route(Foard) and the other was on the planned route (Cottle). I added Foard in – it always seems in demand. It's about getting folks finished up!



Cottle, TX – LC Five Star for K5VYT

Saturday was a busy day on CW – W0GXQ ran in MN, AA0IP, Arden ran some in southeast corner of Colorado. W7KQZ/m ran in Arizona – nice to hear Ernie out mobile on cw and also SSB. Mark, N2MH ran in NJ, and Ed, KN4Y would be running in FL to and from a bowling tournament. Jeff, W9MSE was over in MN for a wedding and ran to and from it. Jim, KS7S, was out in CO, NM and AZ putting out the counties. N9JF was in IA/IL, and Kyle, WA4PGM ran one in VA.

This weekend was the ARRL RTTY contest. Late on Saturday, the regular 40M CW frequency was buried under RTTY signals. For that time on Saturday afternoon late, and again on Sunday for an hour in the morning and later in the day, I went up to 7122.5 or 7123 KHz and ran there instead of 7056.5. Likely I was getting about 15-20W out of the rig – antennas not resonant, but anything is better than nothing, and worked quite a few there who found me on that freq. (7122 is a QRP calling frequency so I try to stay off it).

Conditions were fairly good on all bands – the foreign broadcast was a challenge on 40M at times, but with persistence we worked most calling, 20M SSB had no problems this trip with ‘interference’. That was sure a nice change from the December trips. Same on CW- the source of the “CQ CQ CQ CQ de HI HI” had been identified originating at the same QTH – no

problems this trip. Let's hope it stays that way for the sake of all county hunters and occupants of the bands.

After Childress, Cottle, Motley, Lubbock, I wound up in Lynn County for the night in small bump in the road – Tehoka, TX. After inquiring at a gas station at the exit, they told me the only motel was the Tehokia Motel - \$35 plus tax cash – no credit cards, no checks taken. It was a '60s style 10 unit motel. Not many choices in town for dinner either – the Hot Dog Drive In or the Subway. Not to worry – thinks worked out OK. The lady at the motel said "We have 250 channels of satellite TV!".... I still didn't find too much worth watching despite every regular movie channel imaginable – hi hi. I slept well – nice and quiet. Zero traffic. Zero noise.

It was about 60 deg in the morning at 6:30 am – didn't need a jacket – I headed out south to Dawson TX – one listed as 'most wanted' – and then headed east to home via Glasscock, Coke, Coleman, Runnels, Brown, Comanche, and Erath.

I ran Hood on cw, planning on running the county line of Hood/Johnson just off the main road 377 in Cresson, TX at one of my favorite spots. I make the right hand turn, and what's sitting at the county line? A highway patrol car sitting on the side of the road, 2 feet inside Johnson County. No place to park there, and obviously he doesn't want company – he is trying to catch someone doing something – I'm not sure what at the moment. It's only 300 feet from a traffic light that no one ever runs in his direction.

The other side of the road is too narrow at the moment to sit and run the county – all torn up - , so I head on down about 500 feet and park way off to the side to not obstruct his view to run Johnson only on SSB and CW. About 20 minutes later, the patrolman takes off with lights and siren after a large truck pulling a small trailer and pulls him over. Likely something to do with the big truck and small trailer – probably without lights or other required equipment or licensing. By then I am just about done, so I head back into Hood and run it on SSB. I had already done it on CW.

I was running a C/L on SSB, then running single counties on cw for most of the trip. That way, I only had to stop for SSB, and was moving on CW to make some progress on the trip. I don't have enough hands to log SSB, hold the mic and drive at the same time, so rarely do it...have to put something down to log, or log in spurts. That slows down the SSB speed.

On cw, I log and send cw with the same hand. Not as fast as having a logger, but the pile usually disappears pretty quickly on cw as I work through those calling.

The trip was about 950 miles in 2 days with great weather. I averaged 6 to 12 contacts per county on 20M SSB (14.342-14.343), and usually 15-20 or more on 40M SSB, and 40-50 CW contacts per county. Gas was running \$2.92-\$3.02/gallon, and was getting about 28 mph. I listened on 14.336 a bit, but didn't hear more than one mobile run all weekend that I could copy. I'm sure glad 40M is hopping at the moment, and the folks there did a great job helping out (N5UZW, KA0SHC, KM9X, K0ERE, K0EH, K5VYT, WA7JHQ). On CW, KM1C, WA7JHQ, KB6TAL, K4AMC, KB8OMG, W0QE, N8II, and others helping out on the various bands. On Sunday, there seemed to always be a mobile running on some frequency, sometimes three at once! When good weather appears, no sense staying home!

Ham Videos on YouTube

A recent issue of World Radio had some links to videos on YouTube. If you are snowed under or have some time to kill, take a look at:

1922 Crystal Radio

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=GkdYBIS-NSI>

Now, if you think you're a real homebrewer, he's a guy who not only makes his own radio from scratch, but makes the vacuum tubes himself!

http://dailymotion.alice.it/video/x3wrzo_fabrication-dune-lampe-triode_tech

Landline telegraphy demonstration

http://youtube.com/watch?v=K_yUv1PFLqQ&feature=user

Building a Vintage 1920s Japanese Kit Radio (3 tubes – all plastic construction)

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=fmVC6HqEWYY&feature=user>

And if you have never seen it...the Ham Band Video (and song)

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=5V9Qkd3dElw>

IF you are interested in old tyme telegraphy, the Morse Telegraph Club publishes a current newsletter (back issues available on line free), a dial up and internet hub for talking to others in American Morse, and other information at:

<http://www.morsetelegraphclub.org/>

The Global Warming Scam

A recent article in Scientific American reveals a “Convenient Truth” that Al Gore would love to bury so it doesn’t affect his ability to make billions of dollars trading scam ‘carbon credits’ while controlling every phase of your life.

Slight changes in the Earth’s axis can affect temperatures world wide. These are known as Milankovitch Cycles. New evidence gathered from sediments in the waters around Antarctica point in this direction. Ice cores from both there and Greenland confirm that CO₂ levels began to rise at the same time the ice sheets began to decline.

However, until recently, no one could accurately determine which came first – warmer waters (which can hold less CO₂) or increased levels of atmospheric CO₂. Now, ice core samples point to the fact that deep sea temperatures rose at least 2 degrees C (3.6F) 1000 years before CO₂ levels increased, and this took a while to then be seen in the upper ocean levels. Because of the circulation of the deep ocean, the evidence points to increased deep sea temperatures as driving the last climate cycle (ice age).

Periodic warming caused by the wobble of the Earth's axis (Milankovitch Cycles) – which allowed more sunlight to hit the southern oceans.

This year, the ice around Antarctica grew to record levels since satellite photography started in 1979. At the same time, ice in the Arctic declined to low levels – exactly that predicted by Milankovitch Cycles. However, studying the data further, the world would be in Global Cooling if it were not for the northern hemisphere now receiving more sunlight.

The exact sensitivity to CO₂ remains to be determined, but much of the hype of ‘Global Warming’ scare is just that – selectively taking ‘factoids’ and making mountains out of molehills. Al Gore won’t tell you about the record ice in Antarctica this past season – just show you a few icebergs calving (normal) and claim the world is coming to a quick demise if we all don’t follow his lead and drive hybrids to the airport, then fly a million miles a year on carbon spewing airplanes and then screaming ‘Global Warming’ for \$50,000 per each appearance in major cities of the world.

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=48F687F3-E7F2-99DF-3E042E20A4B66A99&chanID=sa003>

Logger/Kwiklog Backup – External Hard Drive

Many county hunters have found out the hard way that eventually hard drives fail – and often catastrophically. In the real old days, folks would back up Kwiklog and other logging programs to floppy discs – from the 350K variety to the 1.4M variety. Much later, the CD drives became available, and folks started backing up to CD, or in some cases, tape drives.

Within the past few years, external hard drives have become very affordable and an excellent means to back up all program files, and to store pictures and other things that take up lots of space. At the CHNews HQ, a Maxtor One External Hard Drive was added to the computer system – 280 GB – that just plugs in to the USB port. It appears as another drive.

Included with it is software that daily backs up selected files – from email to logging files to word/picture files – automatically. Should your main hard drive crash, all the information is right there on the external hard drive.

Some programs you can buy will also completely ‘shadow’ your operating system, so you can boot from the external drive even if the main drive in the computer gets fried one day.

Global Warming Scam II

Remember that alleged “Global Warming” consensus? Seems it is falling apart quickly.

US Senate Report over 400 prominent scientists dispute man made global warming

http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.Blogs&ContentRecord_id=f80a6386-802a-23ad-40c8-3c63dc2d02cb

December 20, 2007

Over 400 prominent scientists from more than two dozen countries recently voiced significant objections to major aspects of the so-called "consensus" on man-made global warming. These scientists, many of whom are current and former participants in the UN IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), criticized the climate claims made by the UN IPCC and former Vice President Al Gore.

The new report issued by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee’s office of the GOP Ranking Member details the views of the scientists, the overwhelming majority of whom spoke out in 2007.

Even some in the establishment media now appear to be taking notice of the growing number of skeptical scientists. In October, the Washington Post Staff Writer Juliet Eilperin conceded the obvious, writing that climate skeptics "appear to be expanding rather than shrinking." Many scientists from around the world have dubbed 2007 as the year man-made global

warming fears “bite the dust.” (LINK) In addition, many scientists who are also progressive environmentalists believe climate fear promotion has "co-opted" the green movement. (LINK)

This blockbuster Senate report lists the scientists by name, country of residence, and academic/institutional affiliation. It also features their own words, biographies, and weblinks to their peer reviewed studies and original source materials as gathered from public statements, various news outlets, and websites in 2007. This new “consensus busters” report is poised to redefine the debate.

Many of the scientists featured in this report consistently stated that numerous colleagues shared their views, but they will not speak out publicly for fear of retribution. Atmospheric scientist Dr. Nathan Paldor, Professor of Dynamical Meteorology and Physical Oceanography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, author of almost 70 peer-reviewed studies, explains how many of his fellow scientists have been intimidated.

“Many of my colleagues with whom I spoke share these views and report on their inability to publish their skepticism in the scientific or public media,” Paldor wrote. [Note: See also July 2007 Senate report detailing how skeptical scientists have faced threats and intimidation -]

This new report details how teams of international scientists are dissenting from the UN IPCC’s view of climate science. In such nations as Germany, Brazil, the Netherlands, Russia, New Zealand and France, nations, scientists banded together in 2007 to oppose climate alarmism. In addition, over 100 prominent international scientists sent an open letter in December 2007 to the UN stating attempts to control climate were “futile.”

Paleoclimatologist Dr. Tim Patterson, professor in the department of Earth Sciences at Carleton University in Ottawa, recently converted from a believer in man-made climate change to a skeptic. Patterson noted that the notion of a “consensus” of scientists aligned with the UN IPCC or former Vice President Al Gore is false. “I was at the Geological Society of America meeting in Philadelphia in the fall and I would say that people with my opinion were probably in the majority.”

This new committee report, a first of its kind, comes after the UN IPCC chairman Rajendra Pachauri implied that there were only “about half a

dozen” skeptical scientists left in the world. Former Vice President Gore has claimed that scientists skeptical of climate change are akin to “flat Earth society members” and similar in number to those who “believe the moon landing was actually staged in a movie lot in Arizona.”

The voices of many of these hundreds of scientists serve as a direct challenge to the often media-hyped “consensus” that the debate is “settled.”

The over 400 skeptical scientists featured in this new report outnumber by nearly eight times the number of scientists who participated in the 2007 UN IPCC Summary for Policymakers.

Essentially, only two dozen or so members on the governing boards of these institutions produced the "consensus" statements. This report gives a voice to the rank-and-file scientists who were shut out of the process.

The most recent attempt to imply there was an overwhelming scientific “consensus” in favor of man-made global warming fears came in December 2007 during the UN climate conference in Bali. A letter signed by only 215 scientists urged the UN to mandate deep cuts in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. But absent from the letter were the signatures of these alleged “thousands” of scientists.

Peak Oil – the Pessimist Viewpoint

Old Field Decline: A New Data Point from

(<http://p088.ezboard.com/fdownstreamventurespetroleummarkets.showMessage?topicID=21702.topic>)

“Then there is the never-reported and always-critical matter of the decline in production from old fields. An interesting nugget of news was contained in the Wall St. Journal story referenced above. Buried in the middle is a report that the rate of decline in Saudi oil production from existing fields is 6.6% a year. That is a large number. Chris Skrebowski estimates that global decline is running 3.3% per year. A 6.6% KSA decline rate would mean that the Saudi’s need to add about 600,000 barrels a year in new production just to produce at the same rate as the prior year. That does not bode well for the basic assumption embodied in the projections of all Wall Street analysts that

KSA is the global swing producer that can (and, they believe, will) save the world from higher prices.”

What Fundamental Trends Are Saying About Future Oil Prices

“While anything can happen in the short term, we should be able to make reasonable predictions of long term oil prices because, by definition, trends tend to last a long time. Here are the trends in oil that I believe to be sustainable:

1. The natural rate of decline in old fields will grow slowly every year.
2. Enhanced Oil Recovery [EOR] methods for improving the recovery of oil from old fields will continue to improve, thus tending to reduce the actual rate of declining production from the old fields to which EOR is applied. But the impact of EOR is already part of the existing 3.3% global decline rate. Improved EOR technologies will not reduce the global decline rate but will keep the rate from rising faster than it would otherwise.
3. Once a given field to which EOR has been applied begins to decline, its rate of decline will be much faster than that of a field to which EOR was not applied since EOR leaves less oil in the ground to be recovered during the extended final life of the field. Cantarell’s 15% decline rate is a paradigm example. At any point in time, this phenomenon could have a substantial impact on global oil supply. If Ghawar were to start to resemble Cantarell, for example, one could see a doubling of the oil price in short order.
4. Rapid growth in oil demand from countries that have high exports of oil or other goods will continue for decades to come. Therefore, global demand growth of roughly 1.5 – 2 mb/d from developing economies will continue for the foreseeable future.
5. Most future new production will come from either deep offshore or from alternative sources such as oil sands. Such resources require long time frames to develop and very high costs to recover. Therefore, new source oil is inherently limited in the rate at which it can be brought on stream and will require increasing marginal oil prices to be feasible.

The logical conclusion from these trends, I think, is that oil production beyond 2009 is likely to fall well short of the sum of growing demand and

increasing declines in old fields. They lend credibility to the statistical analysis done by Chris Skrebowski that indicates we will see the benefits of numerous new, primarily land-based projects scheduled to come on stream in 2008 and 2009, after which supplies will become significantly tighter, falling off a cliff by 2014.

This is not to say that there are not potential bright spots such as Libya, Iraq, Nigeria, and Angola. It is possible that oil supply could surprise on the upside. But what I think is distinctly not a bright spot during the next five years are hopes for significant production increases from Canadian oil sands, Venezuelan oil sands, Colorado oil shale, the Gulf of Mexico Jack discovery, or the recent Brazilian find. The latter two are potentially gigantic finds, but the time needed to recover the oil and the costs for recovering it are similarly gigantic.

Fearless Prediction

Considering all of the above, my five year forecast for the oil price range is:

2008: \$80 - \$140

2009: \$105 - \$195

2010: \$150 - \$250

2011: \$175 - \$325

2012: \$275 - \$500”

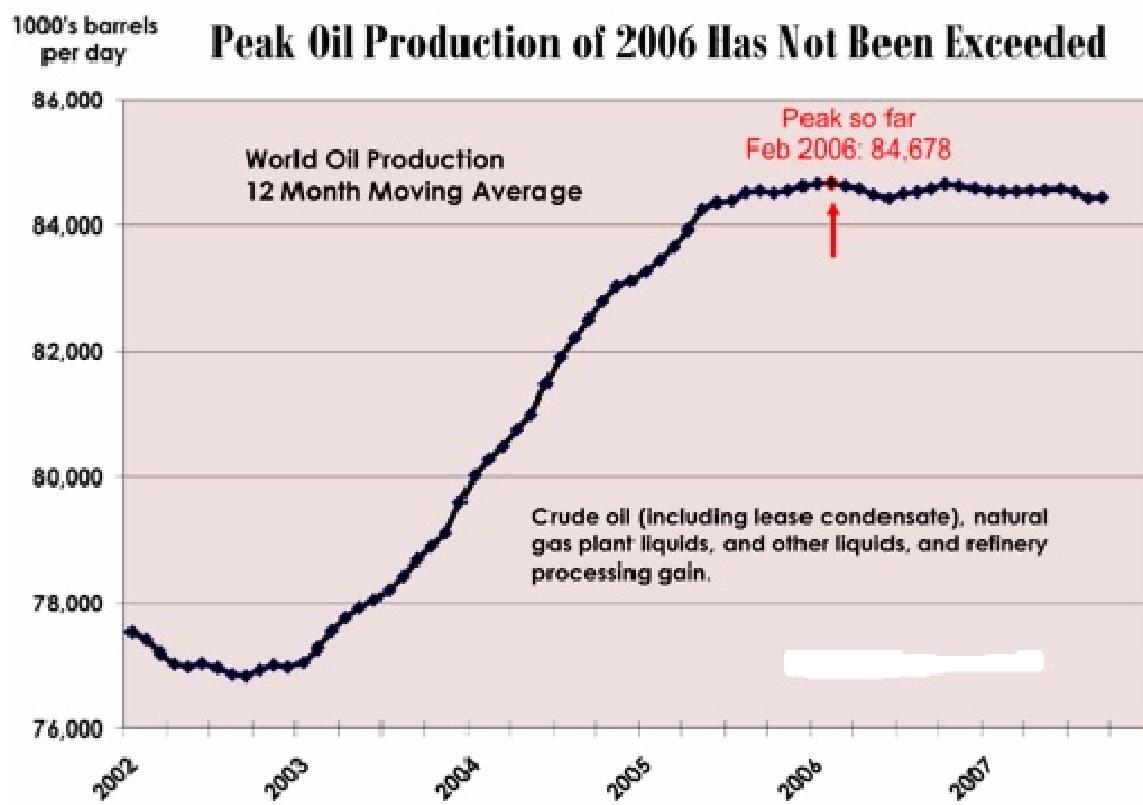
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And that is the pessimist viewpoint of oil prices. Naturally, gasoline and home heating oil will rise in step.

De N4CD: Wow – my grocery bill keeps climbing. Bread is up big-time over 2 years ago. Milk, eggs, OJ, and just about everything I buy is climbing 10-30% per year. Those higher costs to raise, haul, process, deliver, and sell the groceries is causing higher than the supposed ‘3%’ inflation that the government would have you believe. Same for my gas bill (gas up 65c/gal in a year) and natural gas bill. Those filling up tanks with

heating oil are feeling the pain this winter. Now imagine in gasoline triples or quadruples in the next five years, and home heating oil is \$10 or \$14/gallon?

Oil inventories in the US plummeting – Oil prices staying in the \$90s range and India now introducing a \$2500 car – their ‘Model T’ equivalent that spurred a massive increase in cars in the USA (and oil consumption). There isn’t much positive news in the oil world.



Chinese Auto Production

“Auto production and sales in China both surged more than 20 percent to a record 8.8 million units in 2007, despite slackening sales in global markets, an industry group said Sunday.

China's automakers rolled out 8.88 million motor vehicles last year, up 22.02 percent from a year earlier, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Total vehicle sales jumped 21.84 percent year-on-year to 8.79 million units in the world's second largest car market after

the United States, twice the figure in 2003. Both the output and sales beat the prediction of 8.5 million made at the beginning of last year.”

<http://www1.investorvillage.com/smbd.asp?mb=2234&mn=89446&pt=msg&mid=3859793>

So where is all the oil going to come from for the growing Chinese and Indian markets?

Did you catch the introduction of the \$2500 car in India by Tata Motors? Just like the Ford Model “T” brought on the car revolution in the USA, and the VW Bug (the people’s car) brought on the car revolution in Europe, the 35 HP Tata ‘Nano’ is an ‘affordable’ car for the Indian population.

Just where are the hundreds of millions of gallons of fuel going to come from? (millions of barrels of new oil a year)

Right now, oil is very demand sensitive. Talk of recession (and thus oil demand) sends prices down five or ten bucks a barrel. Talk of ‘lower inventories’ (indicating more demand) sends it surging five or 10 bucks a barrel. Depending upon what the economy here and worldwide does, the price of oil will be very volatile. If things pick up and there is growth worldwide, oil is going to climb and climb in price. On the other hand, if the world goes into recession, there will be adequate oil and prices will drop.

Proposal for Natural Bingo

I sent in for a proposed new award – this is not my idea, but was one of the things that Bill, K2NJ, felt strongly about. (Submitted to the Awards Committee via my Director).

This is a proposed award that every county hunter can work on. It is designed to **ENCOURAGE current** mobile operation. (not reward those who already have 100,000 or more contacts entered into their logging programs). Everyone should start working on this award after it is proposed using no old contacts. The first award would likely take 2-5 years to complete depending upon mobile activity, which should be stimulated and which will increase as the weather and sunspots improve. Within 5-7 years, likely dozens would qualify.

The unique thing about this proposed award is that it will require contacts with many county hunters. No one is ‘good’ for Natural Bingo in every county. County hunters will be required to work at least 100 different mobiles or more, which will encourage new comers to get on, and both old timers and newcomers to go out and run counties.

1) Name of Award: **Natural Bingo**

OBJECTIVE: To make **Valid Contacts** with stations that match the first letter of the county in which they are operating with one of the letters in the suffix of the amateur’s FCC assigned **Call Sign after (start date here)**.

SPECIAL RULES: In addition to matching the first letter of the county name (Cobb, IL) with one of the letters in the call sign suffix (W9ABC, KA2CBA), there are several special rules that apply to dual letter call signs and short call signs, club calls and calls with the letter “X” in them.

:

• **Short Call Signs:** Any letter that matches the first letter of the county name may be used from 2x1, 1x2, or 2x2 call signs. For example, **W1AB** is good for Bingo in counties that begin with **W** or **A** or **B**.

• **Repeated Letter Call Signs:** If a letter is repeated in a call sign (**W1MMM**, **W2MMA**, **W3MAM**, or **KM4M**), the letters preceding or following that letter alphabetically may be used. For example, the **MMM**, **MM**, or **M-M** counts for Bingo in counties that begin with the letters L, M, or N (as well as any other letter in the suffix). Note: Calls with **WW** or **YY** may be used for counties that begin with **V** or **W** or **Z**, but do not count as the “X” wild card. The **ZZ** double letter can be used for **Y**, **Z**, or **A**, and the **AA** double letter can be used for **A**, **B**, or **Z**.

• **Letter “X”:** Call signs with an **X** in the call (such as **KX1AB** or **W1ABX**) may be used in any county which contains and “X” in the county name, such as Fairfax, Essex, Middlesex, Box Elder, Bexar, or Wexford.)There is no ‘wild card’ for ‘all counties.)

* **Multiple Word Counties** - For counties with two or more words in the name, the first letter of any word may be used to coincide with the call

(West Baton Rouge or Jim Hogg). For Alaskan judicial districts use **First Judicial District – South East, Second Judicial District – North West, Third Judicial District - South Central, and Fourth Judicial District - Central.**

***Club Calls** – Club calls are not assigned by the FCC to individual county hunters and thus are not normally valid for Natural Bingo. Contacts must be made with the operator’s FCC assigned callsign. Club callsigns (as listed in the FCC database, QRZ.com, or Hamcall, may only be used for Natural Bingo in the county listed as the address of the club station or on the QSL card of the fixed club station when operated as a special event station as the only call used during the entire event at that location, such as a convention, Lighthouse, or Field Day. Club calls run mobile are never valid for Natural Bingo.

AWARD LEVELS: No intermediate levels. Natural Bingo is awarded for working **All USA Counties**. After completing Bingo, each sequential award (Natural Bingo II, Natural Bingo III, etc.) can be worked by **Starting Over** and working **All USA Counties** again for the sequential award.

APPLICATION AND FEES: Standard application, logs, and fees.

Discussion

- 1) The ‘wild card’ for the X is to not disadvantage folks with an X in their call. No county starts with X. There are only a few counties with “X” in the entire word(s) for the county. More than the letter Z, but much less than “W” or “Y”. Some calls are short with an X, making these individuals not able to give out credit otherwise – many calls start with the common letters A, K, N, W. It’s an interesting twist. They would be good for Natural Bingo in some counties.
- 2) The requirement that INDIVIDUAL calls be used is two fold. MARAC is an organization was founded to issue awards to amateurs, not entities. It is an organization of amateurs, not entities. It is about ‘mobile operations’ and encouraging EFFECTIVE mobile operation, not sham ‘borrowed call’ operation. Thus the emphasis on individuals.

The requirement is also there to discourage ‘borrowing calls’ or obtaining second and third ‘club calls’ merely to be able to give out more contacts good for more awards from more counties, even though there is just one individual with one FCC license in the county giving it out during a run. That leads to ‘EFFECTIVE’ operations which is one of the requirements for proposed awards (and hopefully older awards). Contacts like I give you a 59 and my imaginary club friend gives you a 59 is nothing but duplicate contacts from one individual meant only to cheat the system.

To not disadvantage random contacts with ‘club stations’, they will count only in the county they are licensed in, or otherwise identified for FIXED operation during a contest or special event (they cannot move or change location during the day). Contacts with borrowed ‘mobile club calls’ are not permitted.

3) Start date – this is to be sure that the field is level and to encourage CURRENT mobile operation. Many long time county hunters have 100,000 or more contacts in the logs, with 5 times around, plus Bingo and other awards, having worked each county at least 5 or 10 times. Some would have nearly all worked by Natural Bingo rules merely by combing back through tens of thousands of contacts or log books, or getting the latest update of the rules. In order to make this a challenge, which awards should be, not merely using past contacts, the award REQUIRES a start date when everyone starts from scratch making contacts. This should be after the award is formally announced, should it be accepted to be included by MARAC.

This also does not disadvantage those folks who did not contribute to pileups working ‘everyone’ ‘everywhere’ whether they needed the contact or not – hoping that someday someone would create an award for which it might count. By being courteous and not adding to pileups, they would be disadvantaged. No need to reward previous poor judgment.

This start date has several advantages. Now, everyone (newcomers and long timers) are ‘valuable’ as mobiles for this award. There are no ‘freebies’ with stars or someone being good for Natural Bingo in every county. There are no ‘wild card’ mobiles good for Natural Bingo everywhere. It would encourage more mobile activity. You will have to work perhaps a hundred different county hunters or 300 different county hunters to qualify for this award. Those who complain of ‘not being valuable’ would be very valuable

instantly in the Natural Bingo counties for which they are good (including ‘green stamp’ ones now. It gives everyone an even footing based upon the letters in their callsign.

Now that gas is scrimping some county hunting budgets, you can get 3 or 4 buddy county hunters with different letters and have a trip giving out lots of NB counties – no one in the group is ‘good for NB’ anywhere so ALL the letters of all the calls will come in handy in many of the counties! It matters not if any have stars or not – just goes by the letters in the calls.

What do you think? Good idea? Bad idea? Big yawn? Let’s talk it up and see where it goes.

Helpful Search Hints from Bill, KD7KST

Filters and Wild Characters on the W6RK site

Risto has set up his spotting site with a lot of filters already defined such as the SSB or CW buttons that you can click on to show only the SSB spots or CW spots. You can also filter by frequency such as entering 14336 into the Frequency box. Or you can use the min and max frequencies to display the spots on the 40 meter SSB CH net such as Min 7184 Max 7189 to display both the spots on 7.185 and 7.188 (Note: You have to use a smaller number than 7185 to get spots to display when using this min max frequency feature). Filtering by frequency should filter out the spots should filter out the contest spots if you are only interested in the spots on the County Hunter Nets.

The second item I would like to mention is the use of wildcharacters. Remember the days of the DOS operating system, DIR *.* meant the Directory of all files where * represented any string of characters. Now the % seems to be the wild character to represent any strings of characters. Using this wild character adds a lot of filtering capability.

In the Mobile Call Box type %/% and press Search. You'll get a list of all the Mobile Teams such as K0GEN/KI4WHK. What you are doing by using the % wild characters is to search for all mobiles that have a / somewhere in the callsign.

Can't remember the callsign of the 2nd member of the team? Type W0NAC/% and press search, the spots for W0NAC/N0LXJ will appear.

The same techniques can be used for the COMMENTS (Counties, State) Box. For unique county names type %Klickitat% and all the spots for the Klickitat, WA will show along with the County Lines such as "Klickitat/Yakima, WA" or "Benton/Klickitat, WA" will show.

For non unique counties names such as Lincoln, type Lincoln in the COMMENTS box and you'll see spots from Lincoln, CO; Lincoln, NM; Lincoln, KS etc. Try again with %Lincoln%, WA and you'll get all the spots from Lincoln, WA along with all the County Line spots.

Now adding all this up, if we want to know when the a callsign starting with A was last spotted in Lincoln, WA:

In the Mobile Box type A%

In the Comment Box type %Lincoln%, WA and press search.

You should see AB7RW was spotted on 14047.5 kHz 127 days ago.

One more hint: Lots of spots fill up the W6RK site, and if you remember from trip plans that someone was supposed to be running some counties in Washington state but don't remember who? What was that callsign??

In the Comments (County, State) box, just type %, WA and hit search. All the spots from Washington will be displayed. and as I'm writing this Terry, W7QA is displayed as having been spotted in Pierce, WA 8 days ago. This shortcut is handy because it filters all spots to a particular state.

Like with the use of any database, using a few simple tricks will extract a lot of useful information.

Awards Issued

USA-CW II #18, K7REL, Tom, December 27, 2007
Second time #375, WD6CKT, Gary, December 28, 2007

Year-End CW Totals from Elwood, KA3MMM

STATUS OF COUNTIES WORKED ON CW AS OF THE END OF EACH YEAR

CAL L	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
KR1B					2499	2421	
VE1BES				1930	1796	1342	925
AD1C	3071	3026	2954	2857	2609	2087	1141
KA1Q			1350 #2	1320 #2	1235 #2	1161 #2	901 #2
VO1SF				2929	2987		
W1TEE					2583 #2	2282 #2	1864 #2
K1TKL	851						
KO1U		2418 #2	3033	2881	2122	1378	
KL1V	1730	1595	1441	1269	612	506	313
WV2B	505						
WA2AKB	1621	1621	1621	1614	1579	1400	526
N2CQ					1489	1385	923
N2CWG							2315 #3
WA2EYA						2810	2798
W2EZ					3075 #2	3065 #2	2997 #2
K2HVN							3037
NM2L	2952	2677	2213	1695	764		
AB2LS	1600	1250	449				
N2MH	944		634	46			
N2OCW	2992	2687					
K2RP		2275	1730	1410	1000		
NO2W	1589	1589	1589	1589	1566		1310
N3AHA	2971	2830	2309			2222	
W3BBO							1586

DL3DD				3059	3056	3051	3039
W3DYA	3072 #2	3057 #2	3056 #2	3051 #2	3046 #2	3036 #2	3030 #2
WA3GNW			1737	1604	1511		
WU3H	3073 #3	3057 #3	2946 #3	2445 #3	163 #3	3005 #2	1126 #2
N3HOO				1821	1500		
OH3JF			2973	2922	2903	2869	2823
VE3KZE			3046	3035	3031	3016	2987
KA3MMM	2125 #6	1044 #6	3048 #5	2643 #5	3075 #4	2959 #4	2128 #4
VA3NN	2901	2849	2714	2063	1462	993	938
WD3P			712 #3	678 #3	297 #3	3075 #2	3041 #2
WA3QNT	2641	2638	2634		2573	2563	2542
KE3VV	2983	2779	2535	2134	1365		
KC3X	2795 #2	222 #2	170 #2	30 #2	2695	1693	1449
N3XX		11 #2	3067	3061	3054	3027	2966
AE3Z	1942	1630	1593	1395	1297	1187	850
W3ZUH				1645	800	1631	
VK4AAR					1058		
N4AAT	2						
N4AKP	2411 #2	869 #2	1489 #2		1264 #2	3072	3024
N4CD	2983 #3	2759 #3	3065 #2	2715 #2	3056	3013	2769
K4EXT	727						
DJ4GJ						2389	2143
W4GNS	1882	1010					
N4HIM							2268
KA4IFF						2812 #2	2769 #2
G4KHG	1436	1434	1374	1182		1033	916
W4NBS					665		
KR4OE	1555	1461	1313	1216	1177	1135	1082
WD4OIN		2674	2539	2138	1369	660	
W4RKV	2775 #2	2761 #2	2788	2682 #2	2588 #2	2482 #2	2386 #2
KA4RRU	658						
N4RS	3035 #3	191 #3	2225 #3	3075 #2	2973 #2	2645 #2	2004 #2
WD4SIG				3030	3030	3030	3030
K4UNF	1835	1556		820			
KW4V			3073				
WB4VFN	3015	2899	2667	2301	500		
AA4VN				1619	1364	1078	853
W4VQ			947	471 #2	3058	3035	2939
KM4W							1674
K4XI	3071	3064	3050	3011	2956	2844	2620
KB4XK			2443	2261	2147	1892	1698
KN4XP	2125	1638	1155	108			
W4XT			2184	2167	1931	138	
KN4Y		2954 #4	2634 #4	1760 #4	3070 #3	2988 #3	2789 #3
W4YDY	2936	2789	2462	2175	1513	786	

K4YFH	3075		2819	2577	1575		
K4YT	1233	1871					
AB4YZ			2685	2214	1900 #2	1380 #2	2489
KS5A			2983	2883	2427	2038	833
K5AAR	3055 #2	2926 #2	2362 #2	493 #2	3055	2899	2074
W5AL			2805			2174	2001
DL5AWI	2541	2457	2317	2140	2006		
NN5B							2676
KR5C	69 #2	397 #2	3071	3034	2940	2701	2282
WC5D		1904 #2	1456 #2	834 #2	500 #2	3077	3071
N5EBD			1833	1248			
KG5J							3063 #2
K5OT	3075	3026	2902	2669	1801		
WB5P						1125	569
N5PR	2634	2412	910				
N5XG	3072	3071	3066	3052	3004	3004	2878
K5XY	131			343	211	48	
KC6AWX			1202	1025	871	881	770
WD6CKT	3077	3071	3063	3035	2871	3003	2983
NA6E					2523		
NV6I			721	430	2010	LOST	BUNCH
W6IYS						1113 #2	823 #2
DL6KVA	2398	2267	2140	1937	1525		
W6OUL			1680	1606	1265		
W6RK		2142	1856	993			
NW6S		2870		2556	2278	1235	
SM6TEU							1829
W6TMD	3002 #2	2949 #2	2742 #2	2286 #2	876 #2	3062	
KB6UF	2336	2122	1531		500		
KE6US				1125			
SM6VR	2860	2808	2665	2419	1853		
WG6X	2491						
AD6Z			3030	2890	2777	2484	2180
AA7CP	1246 #2	1034 #2					
K7DM			2777	2622	2312	2028	1230
K7DZE					1727	2514	1448
KL7GN			2607	2543	2521	2483	2483
K7INA			2764	2705	2500	2120	1528
WA7JHQ	2569 #2	2178 #2	1065 #2	3059	2922	2740	2297
KG7Q				2887		1897	
K7REL	41 #3	2946 #2	1865 #2	2915	1458		
AB7RW	2886 #2	2430 #2	3076	3062	2943	2776	2144
KS7S			1660				
W7SSM							1978
W7TSM			2247	2290	1934	1697	1388

K7VAY	QRT	3077	3042	3002	2963	2853	2356
NA7W	2029	1932	1258	660	660	249	
KI7WO	2631	1635	1030	802			
N7WO	1994	1854	1599	1198			
KK7X				1760	1637	1632	1558
AK8A	2995	2850	2649	2385	2172	0 - fire	1927
N8CBW	1						
W8CE	3060 #2	3022 #2	3003 #2	2951 #2	2845 #2	2611 #2	2257 #2
K8CW		2397	3074 #2			2927 #2	
K8GSA					515	12	
KD8HB			3064 #4	2983 #4	2589 #4	3066 #3	2672 #3
K8IW	2952	2933	2838	2724	2495	1934	1340
W8JJ	940	779	510	391			
W8LSV			2100				
W8MP	327						
K8MW					3006 20/m	2969 20/m	2914 20/m
K8OHC	1814	1812	1797	1756	1687	1590	1429
WD8OIN	2795						
KB8OMG	1683 #2	3072	3027	2862	1659		
W8OP			1017	836	788	397	
WD8OWA		3006					
W8PN			2886 #2	2869 #2	2863 #2	2855 #2	2852 #2
W8QOI	2462 #3	2343	2147	1748	1006		
K8QWY	3057						
AA8R	2921	2717	2464	2307	1848	427	285
KM8U	2885 #2	2885 #2	2870	2825	2796	2739	2775
AD8W	2699	2373	1950	1677	684		
W8WVU			3056		3050	3047	3038
W8YL			3040		3040	3038	3028
K8ZZ	2952	2737	2319	1478			
NF9A			2863	2848		2719	2222
N9AG			2545	2506	2460		
WD9BCG			3003 #2	3003 #2	3001 #2	2974 #2	
VE9DH			2425	1954			
AB9E				1947	1564		
W9GBH	2431	2404	2332	2300	2045	1907	1513
W9HR						2932	2682
N9ID	2121	1711	924				
KA9JAC	2819	2511	1747	1158		412	
N9JF	2637	2415	1657			<1000	>1000
NN9K	3064 #2	2625 #2	3072	2748	2101	1368	1070
AA9KH	3069 #2	3053 #2	2631 #2	1731 #2	547 #2	6 #2	2970
ND9M	3066	3064	3044	2923		2811	
W9MSE	2955 #4	2052 #4	3041 #3	2913 #3	2277 #3	3074 #2	2982 #2

W9MYY					2834 #2	2831 #2	2741 #2
N9QS	1364 #2	3053	2947	2725	2472	2156	1711
N9STL	2940	2499	1666	49			
W9UX	2883						
K9WA	3025 #2	2988 #2	2815 #2	2525 #2	1390 #2	3069	
DL9YC					424	407	325
AA9ZZ			1925				
AC0B	897	689					
K0CO							7
KY0E	2617	2298	1789	680			
W0EAR		2457 #5					
W0GXQ	3049 #3	2648 #3		3077 #2	2726 #2	1201 #2	
KB0GZR							1082
AA0IP	3060 #3	2980 #3	2720 #3	942 #3	3062 #2	3007 #2	2785 #2
KC0JG		3053	2947	2725	2472	2156	1711
K0LG				1186	888	789	
NF0N	2548	2252	1862	1403	820		
K0PY			1079	1190	1042	1008	785
NU0Q	2976	2718	1440	321			
W0QE	2819 #3	3076 #2	2723 #2	3073	2787	2110	
W0RRY			2952	2782	2242	1916	1677
NX0X	1888	1737	1608	1233	488		
N0ZA			3068	3069	3039	2950	2711
K0ZT			3062	3055	3001	2773	2541

Updated 2-10-08 KA3MMM

Operating Events for County Hunters

Feb 2-3

Minn QSO Party Saturday February 2nd from 1400UTC to 2400UTC – more info at: <http://www.w0aa.org/>

Ten-Ten Phone QSO Party 0000Z Feb 2 to 2359Z on Feb 3.

Delaware QSO Party - 1700Z Feb 2 - 0500Z Feb 3 and 1300Z Feb 3 - 0100Z Feb 4 more info at: <http://www.fsarc.org/>
CW 1.825,3.55,7.05,14.05,21.05,28.05;
SSB 1.86,3.96,7.26,14.26,21.36,28.36;

Vermont QSO Party 0000Z Feb 2 - 2400Z Feb 3 CW band edge+40 kHz;
SSB lowest 25 kHz more info at: <http://www.qsl.net/w1bd/>

Feb 9-10

New Hampshire QSO Party more info at: www.w1fz.org -Mar 0001Z Feb 9 - 0001Z Feb 10
CW 1.810,3.535,7.035,14.035,21.035,28.035;
Phone 1.875,3.935,3.95,7.235,14.28,21.38 28.39;

Louisiana QSO Party 1500Z Feb 9 - 0300Z Feb 10
CW 1.840,3.540,7.040,14.040,21.040,28.040;
Phone 1.865,3.865,7.255,14.255,21.365,28.465;
<http://laqso.w5yl.org/>

Feb 16-17

ARRL CW DX Contest – good time to use alternate frequencies on CW for the weekend – lots of “CQ CONTEST” – mobiles beware

Feb 23-24

Mississippi QSO Party - 1500Z Feb 23 - 0300Z Feb 24
CW 3.545,7.045,14.045,21.045, 28.045;

Phone 3.857,3.862,3.867,7.238,14.275,21.375,28.375;
This should be a good one, with several county hunter mobiles planning on
putting out most of the state!

North Carolina QSO Party

www.w4nc.com

1700Z Feb 24 – 0300Z Feb 25

CW 3.54,3.74,7.04,7.14,14.04,21.04,21.14,28.04,28.14,
Phone 3.86,7.26,14.26,21.36,28.36

CQ WW SSB 160M Contest

CQ WW 160 Meter SSB

www.cq-amateur-radio.com

0000Z Feb 23 - 2400Z Feb 24

Courtesy ARRL Contest Corral, ARRL, Newington, CT 06111

And that is all for this month's County Hunter News – CU Next month!