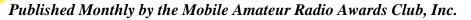
## ROADRUNNER





Volume XXXIV January 2003 Number 1

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT BILL K2NJ



HAPPY NEW YEAR

It is always nice to see a new year roll in – always full of hope and promise. It also gets you to thinking of what you have done in the past year. Personally, I had a pretty good 2002, got one daughter married off... Have not killed the teenagers still at home... Hell, I think it's going pretty good...

Last month I opened the door and a few people wrote to me about their start in county hunting – and award chasing in general. This is a good thing (something I admit that it is nice to get positive E-mails lately) because it got me thinking of how I got interested in the paper chase...

Several of us started ham radio together while in high-school. We have kept in touch throughout the years, and its funny because out of the group of about a half dozen of us I am the only one who chases paper (other than DXCC). Two of us are DX-ers and the other 4 are what I call B.S. hams. You all know the type... get on 14.338 and listen to the Donald Duck net (Jim's name for em) who get on daily to say that everything is the same as it was yesterday and that they are boring and their life is boring and they will never ever do anything that is not boring except boringly complain that other activities are boring... *ya get the picture?* 

What was different in me that got me chasing after awards? Is it something in my personality, I doubt it, because in my career I didn't go out of my way for glory or recognition (but it is nice, when it comes) any more than anyone else. I contest for the sake of contesting, knowing very well going into the event that I will NEVER win – and if I come in a very distant 243<sup>rd</sup> place I would be pleased. Why do I do it???? I can tell you straight up "Cuz it's the fastest way to get lots of QSO's and that means QSL cards. Ah-Ha... is this the clue I have been searching for???

(Continued on Page 2)

# MINUTES MARAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBER MEETING December 11, 2002

The Meeting of the MARAC Board of Directors was called to order at 0800 PM EST (0100Z) by Bill (K2NJ).

#### **THE OFFICERS PRESENT WERE:**

President Bill Inkrote – K2NJ
Secretary Norm Ellison — W2LSH
Treasurer Jim Grandinetti – KZ2P
Great Lakes Director Randy Davis – N8ELQ
Northeast Director Stanley Heinsma – VE1BES
Southeast Director Percy Ford – KA1JPR
South Central Director Joyce Boothe – WB9NUL
Pacific Director Robert t. Devine – KC6AWX

#### **THE MEMBERS PRESENT WERE:**

Hugh (K8GPC) Dave (KE3VV)

Upon a motion by Percy (KA1JPR) and seconded by Bob (KC6AWX) the minutes of the November 13, 2002 meeting were approved. Roll call indicated 7 in favor, none opposed.

Upon a motion by Percy (KA1JPR) and seconded by Bob (KC6AWX) the Treasurer's report of November 30, 2002 was accepted. Roll call indicated 6 in favor,1 abstention and none opposed.

OLD BUSINESS A: Nothing Tonight

NEW BUSINESS A: Roger (W2NWL) requested some clarification on the size of the RoadRunner. We felt that the BOD should not tie his hands in this matter but ask him to try to keep it to eight pages. This was agreed to by an informal vote.

#### **OPEN MEETING** Nothing at this time.

Being no further Business to come before the Board, Percy (KA1JPR) moved that we adjourn. The motion was seconded by Bob (KC6AWX). Roll call indicated 7 in favor, none opposed.

We adjourned at 8:08 pm EDT.

Respectfully Submitted,

Norm Ellison W2LSH

Secretary, MARAC

(President Continued from page 1)

When I was in high-school I took print shop (well, to print my QSL cards of course) and I worked part time in a print shop after school... why? To print my own QSL cards of course... and I had three paper routes... why? Well, to support the stamps that I had to put on these QSL cards that I worked so hard to print and to send to people I had contact with...

I turn around and see two filing cabinets filled with – yep... QSL cards (these are industrial – 5 foot tall with drawers (I am looking for more if anyone knows where I can get them, and not the IBM card type). I have boxes of cards (2x4 foot type) filled and sitting on the shelves here waiting to be filed once I find the time and more room in these QSL cabinets. I look over my left shoulder and see a pigeon hole sorting tray (3'-4') on top of my other desk in the shack. I use this for sorting (YEP) QSL cards for the W2 incoming QSL bureau (I am the N manager there, for all calls with 2N in them).

Could this be as simple as having a QSL fetish? Or are these cards a means to get what is plastered all over the paneled walls in my shack – certificates/plaques/trophy's? I don't know either! But whatever it was, it started out early in my life.

I remember working YL's from Ohio and getting cards from them and they all looked the same. Buckeye Bell's was all over em... I wrote to them and got the information that if you work XX number of them and sent in a buck (a lot of money for a paperboy) you get a certificate telling the world that your worked XX number of them and sent in a buck... Something clicked and off I was working these gal's... Hell I was 16 and should have been chasing girls for another reason... but that is another story! I also got some cards from guys with a big Q and small RP on them with a dial on it pointing just under the 100 mark... I instantly joined (Number 1513, who could forget that?) and started to work towards working other members. That was a natural because – as a paperboy I couldn't afford anything over 100 watts at the time (at that time, 100w was considered QRP). This led to finding about a bible being published by some guy out in California. I believe it cost me \$5 and it had a listing of every award published in the entire world. Could I have gone to heaven the day it came in the mail... Wow, more reasons to lock myself up in my little hole in the basement of my parents home... (about this time my dad was wondering if something was wrong, all my buddies

I grew up with had police records and most had a girl in trouble)..

This was about 1964 or so and my best buddy Bob WB2GLI had a SSB rig. I would go over to his place and we found some guys on 40 SSB chasing counties... Could life get much better than this? I had to get on SSB... no doubt about it... but, how could this be done and support my QSL habit at the same time? Nope, I stayed on CW until long after I was in the USAF (a year later).

I tell this story because I am not just a county hunter, but a recovering award hunter and QSL freak. I feel like standing up and saying "Hello, my name is Bill and I have a problem" and I feel at home here in MARAC (gee, look at the second A in that name). How many others have similar backgrounds and county hunting is just a phase (gee, 40 year long phase) that we are going through? Do any of you still chase other awards – not from MARAC or connected in any way with county hunting (like Chuck W6YLJ who is into Ten-X (and sometimes 2-2's). If so, I would love to hear from you and maybe have you write up something about your pursuit and maybe get some interest going amongst our readers. (Continued on page 3)

## Major Awards Issued For The Month Of **December**

### **KD9ZP - Awards Manager**

		<del></del>		<del>-</del>	
Award			N	Number	
	LC-1			249	
	LC-2			7	
	LC-3			7	
	All Othe	rs		6	
	Call	Date	Award	Number	
	WG6X	12/8/02	Last County Count 22	5 59	
	WA7SLD	12/8/02	Last County Count 25	391	
	W5UGD	12/8/02	Last County Count 25	392	
	KG5J	12/12/02	Last County Count 25	0 49	
	KC0JG	12/8/02	Last County Count 35	0 25	
	G4KHG	12/12/02	Last County Count 75	193	
	AB2LS	12/31/02	Last County Count 75	194	
	KC4UG	12/3/02	USA-CW	62	
	AI5P	12/13/02	USA-CW	63	
	WA9DLB	12/3/02 V	Vorked all Counties - 2	nd Time 309	
	KI0JD	12/12/02	Worked all Counties -	6thTime 15	
	W1TEE	12/16/02	Mobile Achievement -	Cat 2 - GA	
	839				

WB4FFV 12/16/02 Merit Cat 2 - Grand Ole Opry At 3M

#### Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club

## Treasurer's Report December 31, 2002

Funds Balance	11/30/02	\$28,241.60
Income:		
Awards	\$1,548.0	0
Dues	\$953.0	0
Interest	\$ <u>15.2</u>	<u> </u>
	\$2,516.2	29
Expenses:		
Gene Olig – expenses	\$315.2	22
Fairmont Awards - av	vards \$523.0	00
Stafford Engraving - a	awards \$142.0	00
Print Rite, Inc - news	letter <u>\$646.</u>	<u>14</u>
	\$ <u>1,626.</u>	<u>36</u>
		\$889.93

 Account Balances:
 \$29,131.53

 Money Market Account:
 \$26,212.09

 Checking Account:
 \$2,919.44

 \$29,131.53

#### Note:

The following monies are not included in the above:

Awards Chairman's Funds \$1,200.00

Convention Chairman's Funds \$2,500.00



Don, AE3Z sends us this message he recived from Charlie W0RRY

"Glad to get your county in the Texas Panhandle. I decided to take a picture of the truck next to the County Line sign. I moved back and started to take the picture, but needed to move back a couple more steps, to get it all in the picture. That is when I almost stepped on this little varmit!!! Congrats on finishing up Texas!"

### DATELINE CW "CONTINUED FROM DECEMBER"

Jerry WOGXQ, Arden AAOIP, Mike WU3H, Mac WN3C, Norm W3DYA, Tom VE3KZE, Elwood KA3MMM, Ed KN4Y, Tom N4RS, Jim KB4XK, Jim W4HSA, Ken KC4UG, Dave KS5A, Allan K8CW, Jeff W9MSE, Bob K9DAF, Jay AA9KH, Jim N9JF and AL KG5J.

"I listed AL my hero last, he be from Arkansas like Bill Clinton." At the sound of Al's name Gator's eyes glaze over just like a senior citizen as the Viagra kicks in. "Snap out of it Gator, Al puts his pants on one leg at a time just like us." "How do you know that?" "I get two more Fosters, pop the tops, and give one to Gator. "The mobiles also run forty meters and some have ten meters. And do not forget Bob, N4CD who will run 40 meters but at 7238 KHz. Bob ran 15 meters when in Hawaii and Alaska but not stateside when mobile." Gator grabs his side, and looks down at his pager. "Got some customers waiting and addiction is a barbaric master, so see you later." Gator grabs a couple chocolate potato chips and is out the door. Before the barking of his engine fades into the evening I hear" "Can fat people go skinnydipping?" The squirrels cautiously return to the bird feeder.

I wonder if Gator missed listing any mobiles that run fifteen meters, if so, I hope they will let me know. Lets check the contest book. In January there is the NA CW QSO party, the ARRL VHF and the CQ 160 meters contest. Might try and remember the Straight Key night on the first. The chocolate covered potato chips are making me drowsy and it is past my designated naptime.

#### President (Continued from page 2)

Or are there others like me who chase almost anything? You know the type, you get a QSL from Spain (or Italy, or Poland or Japan or) and it lists all of their Provinces on this card. You go through your Spanish (or Italian or) and gee, I have 6 of the two hundred of them... you start to look for EA stations...

It's a vast world out there, full of very interesting things to chase. But we all keep coming back to the ICHN and exchanging reports with old friends don't we? Some of us never seem to leave and others just drift in and out... but it sure feels like home once we get back. And look Dad, I did finally chase girls (now what do I do? And I thought QSLing was expensive...)...

#### Nell Devitt-Freiberger, K0GO

Nell Devitt-Freiberger, K0GO, has transmitted from all 3077 counties in the United States for the County Hunters finishing with her last county, Russell, KY on October 15, 2002. Nell Devitt received her first amateur radio license, WN6ERF, in May, 1968.

She soon became WB6ERF and in January, 1970 began giving out counties after she exchanged reports with such old-time county hunters as Ella, W0AYL; Willie, WA7IRD; and John, WB6ABW. In 1978, she became the first person to give out 50 states mobile.

In 1981, Devitt earned the extra class license and became NB6A. While teaching at MiraCosta College in Oceanside from 1970-1984, she enjoyed running a station there, handling traffic and phone patches from Okinawa and other Pacific stations. She enjoyed traffic handling and was a MARS (Military Amateur Radio Station), NOQFL. In 1995, she became K0GO, much easier to identify on CW.

Devitt is originally from Milnor, North Dakota, married to Donald Devitt for over 54 years. Although he was not a ham, he was very supportive of Nell's hobby. They traveled from California to Minnesota/North Dakota each summer finding new routes in order to give out different counties. In 1982, he urged her to fly to Kauai, Hawaii to give their friend Earl, W7KOI, his last county, YL Mobile.

After Nell and Donald retired to Minnesota in 1984, they wintered in Florida, Texas, or California, giving out different counties.

After Donald died, she made many trips across country attending YL and MARAC Conventions. She had given out approximately 2700 counties before she married Hank Freiberger, W5VD, also an avid county hunter. He, too, has given out 50 states mobile. Hank has done the planning necessary for Nell to finish the rest of the counties with the least number of miles. They both enjoy traveling and will continue to give out counties when they are not on a cruise or going to Europe

## New members Please welcome Them And Add Them To Your Database

Marac # Call Name Address Cnty E Mail
R-3065 K0CO Jack F Doughery 1865 So. Oswego St
Aurora, CO 80012 Arapahoe k0co@arrl.net
R-3066 N7HJ 'Scotty' J Scott 5 77th PL SW
Everett, WA 98203 Snohomish rick.scott@verizon.net

#### On the Road with N4CD

Again, those vast expanses and rural counties of western Texas were in demand, so N4CD/m hit the road for a five day trip. Collin county is 'urban area' – my home town a suburb of 250,000 people. West Texas is just the opposite. In many places, it's 1 person per square mile, or less – and no resident county hunters within 300 miles.

Departing early on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, I headed out to get some last counties for the folks. This was a casual trip, so I'd worry about finding motels when it started to get dark. I sort of knew which counties I wanted to get, but the 'in between' could change depending upon weather and other factors. Usually at this time of year, and on the holidays, not too many folks are staying in motels. It seems that I'm usually somewhere on the road for Thanksgiving (DXing or county hunting).

Route 287 is the main road up to the northwest, and I quickly zipped up to Childress county, the start of my normal 'panhandle run' which I try do about twice a year. Tony, WA9DLB, needed Roberts for the last for the WBOW. Others needed a county here and there. I got a few LCs and headed over toward Dallam TX for the night after running the pairs of counties going west. Not much changes here – decent roads, noisy power lines, and little habitation. This is where you make sure your gas tank is at least half full, because you can go 150-250 miles without a gas station or store.

At daybreak, it was down the west side of the panhandle, giving out the pairs of counties. I headed to Loving county, the least populated county in Texas (110 folks). Lots of pump jacks working away bringing up 'texas crude', but no water under the ground. No real reason to live there! On this route, you get to see everything from farmland to cotton fields to cattle ranches to oil fields to sand dunes to desert and mountains. Going through Andrews and Winkler, you will see signs 'Danger, Deep Sand – Stay on pavement!' or 'Danger – Blowing Sand'. Some of the panhandle 'stinks'. Either seeping gas/oil fumes, or cattle feed lots. It's worse in the summer time!

This was Thanksgiving day, and not too many mobiles out running – everyone was home/visiting and eating turkey. However, there were lots of county hunters with the radio turned on! I was busy. On busy days, I usually 'take a list'. (Continued on page 6)

## Letters to the Editor AN OPEN LETTER TO MARAC MEMBERS

By Bill Herbert WA2ZYM

Over the past six to eight months it has become evident to me that many members have had some things to complain about or, at least, they think they do. Now I have no beef with anyone's right to complain. It is how it is done that I have a problem with. Hopefully the complainers will read this and have some second thoughts.

The most vocal of the complaints concerns the NCS situation on 14.336. MARAC has consistently said that this is not a club net rather it is run independently to help ALL hams acquire county contacts or WAS or whatever. As such the club has no control over how the VOLUNTEER NCS runs the net. Most of the complaints revolve around Jim, KZ2P, who runs the net in a brisk, no nonsense manner. I can readily identify with those who want phonetics. I am somewhat hard of hearing lately and I would appreciate them. However, there is no doubt that excessive use of phonetics slows things down. Personally, I have never had a problem. I simply wait for Jim, or whoever, to ask for calls, comments or queries and I get things straightened out. Perhaps those who are complaining should try volunteering to run the net! For sure they would find out it ain't easy, dad! We should be thankful that someone has the time and desire to spend as much time at it as our VOLUNTEER NCS's do. One thing we do not need is to have this complaining go on, especially in the general ham press. Let us sort out our own problems in our own way in OUR OWN FORUM - the Roadrunner.

Another of the things I hear often concerns signal reports. As I have said in previous articles, if you can't hear them then don't try to work them. Are there phony 2x2 reports going around out there? Sure there are. Any time you get something running that even smells of competition someone is going to try and fudge the rules or outright cheat. Once again we come down to something I said before. This is a hobby. It is done for fun. It would be great if we could make sure that every contact is legitimate but that is impossible to do. I have received a couple of MRCs that have two or three counties listed on the card, something that most of us do all the time. However, I have found that these have sandwiched in the middle a county that I never ran!

Maybe the sender thinks that I will sign the card without checking it. I don't know why people do this but I have a question for all of us – WHO SUFFERS? Certainly not me. I try to be honest about the whole thing. Those who aren't are only fooling themselves. The awards they win are tainted by the knowledge that they did not honestly earn them.

The other concern I have heard voiced recently centers around where the mobile actually is when he puts out the county. Is he actually in the county, or perhaps a mile outside of it? The county line he is on – is he really on it or just close? Those of us lucky enough to have a directional beam can sometimes tell by the beam direction that the mobile is not where he says he is. Obviously, if the two counties are separated by a lake or river, the mobile cannot run both at once. But, isn't a boat mobile? Can't the mobile possibly be parked on a bridge? Not likely, but it can happen. But most of the time we can't tell for sure where the mobile is actually located. What should we do about this? I personally think we need to realize that the mobiles are doing all of us a favor by being there. To try and pass rules to make certain that no single mobile will stretch things a little is counterproductive. When the rules for mobile operation are too strict, then we will find ourselves with no mobiles to work. Why should someone go driving all over the country if the rules are so strict they almost have to swear on a bible that they are honest? My own feeling is that if you do not trust me to be where I say I am, then tough. I'll just go to some other net, club, frequency or whatever to operate to satisfy my own needs. We just have to TRUST THE MOBILES and there is nothing else we can do. Again it is just a hobby - most of us (about 99% in my estimation) are honest – and the rest should be.

To sum up – most of us are honest – those who aren't are hurting only themselves – the NCS is a volunteer who should be thanked for doing the job – mobiles are doing us a favor – it is just a hobby. We should be thankful that we are able to be where we can practice our hobby without all the hassle others often have. We really have to remember that we can't complain about things we are not willing to work to change. If you want the net to run differently, volunteer to run it. Then you can do it your way. If you want to be sure people are contacting a mobile who is actually in the county then YOU BE THE MOBILE.

#### On the Road (continued from page 4)

Trying to pick out calls when 50 are calling is tough. With a list, everyone has a fair shot at getting through. At the end of the second day, I stopped in Pecos(Reeves CO) in a small motel. Luckily I had great turkey dinner at the Flying J truck stop right on the interstate.

Alan, K8CW, needed Reeves on 40m for a last county, so being there early in the morning allowed good 40m propagation over that distance. Also surprising, Ed, KN4Y, worked me in many counties on 40m cw, even during the middle of the day. Great antennas (beams) help on 40m. In the next few years, 40m will become a more used county hunting band as we head toward a sunspot minimum.

I've added an LDG automatic antenna tuner in the car. It allows me to match the 40m SSB resonator, which has a 10:1 SWR at 7039, and operate on CW. It has good points and weak points, but overall allows wider operating range. It has incredible SWR matching range, compared to most tuners that will only match into a 3:1 SWR.

On the third day, Friday, leaving early (I enjoy the sunrises) I headed down toward the seldom run Presideo and Val Verde counties. In west Texas, you can often see the horizon 20-30-40 miles away. It was strange to see the lights of Pecos in the rear view mirror for at least 20 miles as I headed south. At night, often you can clearly see city lights 30 miles away, and getting there seems to take forever!

There are not many reason to go to Presideo and other counties nearby, unless you are 'passing through'. Lots of miles to get there, and even more miles to get through them. Brewster Co TX is bigger than the state of Conn! It takes a couple hours to get through Val Verde and to anywhere else. The good news is that the speed limit on most roads in west TX is 70 or 75mph, and traffic moves 5-10 over that speed, so you are usually moving along quite well. However, it still takes a lot of time out west to get anywhere!

At the end of the day, I made it through Real/Edwards and headed into Junction Texas. Hmmm... It was deer hunting season, and after trying at six motels, I discovered that the deer hunters were in town in force, and rooms were hard to come by. So I had to spring for big bucks in the fancy motel that night. I'd rather spend \$25-40/night than \$75.

At 6 am in the morning, the previously crowded parking lot was already deserted! I headed up to

Mason county, and sure enough, I saw dozens of does and half dozen bucks! Lots of 'road kill' as well. That's one of the main reasons I stop at sunset – too many collisions with animals during the night. It was 400 miles to home, but instead I turned west and went another 300 miles west out to Irion, Reagan, Glasscock and Sterling counties. Wow! Saturday was a busy day, with 20 or more mobiles running counties. Both CW and SSB nets going full tilt, with people moving off frequency all the time to run counties.

At sunset, I wound up in Runnels Co. I'd been working 50 people or more in many counties, trying hard to get everyone in during the run....same on CW where it seemed that nearly everyone was chasing counties during the holiday break. It took 20 minutes to make SSB and CW run just about everywhere.

Sunday was a another full day headed toward the home county, but I still ran all the counties along the way, including Hood and Somervell. Arriving at sunset, I'd put 3100 miles on the car, transmitted from 89 counties, and hit a few 'last counties' for the folks. I suspect it will be a while before I head that way again! Besides, folks need other counties Texas as much too. With 254 counties in Texas, you can never seem to get to all the ones that the people need!

Bob N4CD

#### **Transmitted from All Counties**

After I happened to work Nell, K0GO, in the last county (# 3077) in which she transmitted, I got curious if I had worked any of the others who have completed this unbelievable feat. Checking around, I believe the following info (strictly unofficial) is correct:

These stations have transmitted from all counties:

- 1. KB7QO, 25 July 1988, Polk, Iowa (#3076)
- 2. W1TEE, 29 June 1991, Kalawao, Hawaii (#3076)
- 3. WAOSBR, 22 November 1998, Monroe, Michigan (#3076)
- 4. N4CD, 20 July 2002, Bear Lake, Idaho (#3077)
- 5. K0GO, 15 October 2002, Russell, Kentucky (#3077)

Checking my logs, I found I had worked three of these last counties - KB7QO, N4CD, and K0GO.

Anyone work all five?

Congratulations to these five operators on achieving this outstanding feat!

73, Rick AI5P

### 35<sup>th</sup> Annual MARAC Convention 16 July – 19 July, 2003 South Bend, Indiana

## **Holiday Inn University – 1/574-272-6600**

NAME (First, MI, Last)					
ADDRESS					
CITY	ST/PRO	OV POS	TAL CODE		
NAME ON					
		_CALL	USACA#		
<u>ADDITIONAL BADGES NE</u>	EEDED TOTAL#	OF ADDITIONAL BADGI	REGISTRATION ES@ \$5.00 eac		
Name	Call	USACA#	Relatio	n	
Name	Call	USACA#	Relatio	n	
ENTER NUMBER OF PERS	ONS ATTENDING EVENT	тот	ΓAL#		
Wednesday July 16					
		#Adult	tsx \$20	0.00= \$	
Thursday July 17 NOTRE DAME CAMPUS	TOUR	#Adul	ltsx \$ 4	1.00 = \$	
COLLEGE FOOTBALL HA	ALL OF FAME TAILGATE P	ARTY#Ac	dultsx \$2	25.00 =\$	
	(2 ½ hr. performance) AVAILABLE AT FESTIVAL BO		ultsx \$	12.00= \$	
Saturday July 19					
	ARMESAN				
BANQUET—PRIME RIB-		#Adu	ultsx \$2	0.00= \$	
	MERCH				
	x \$10.00 = \$				
YL Dozen #	x \$10.00 = \$	YL Photo #			
		USACA Photo #	x \$ 6.00= \$		
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			Merchandise \$		
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PRE-REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE: 04/15/2003

Mail early for the PRE-REGISTRATION PRIZE:

The County Line Roadrunner MARAC Secretary 21140 Golden Pond Road Long Beach, MS 39560-9012

"A Road Runner Is A Very Fast Bird"

#### **Board of Directors**

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