



THE COUNTY LINE ROADRUNNER

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September 2008

Number 9

From My Point of View

Joyce, WB9NUL

I hope everyone enjoyed their Labor Day holiday. For those of you who are enduring Gustav I hope you are safe and that your damage was minimal. I see that Hannah will probably be headed for the east coast. Please stay safe and know that you all are in our prayers. Barry and I are still in the clean-up mode from Dolly. The car is still at the dealers with no real date for return. Seems that we had to replace the engine and when they got it running the catalytic converter needed to be replaced. After that they discovered that the turbo needed replacement. I still don't know when it will be fixed. Oh well. Now we wait for the roofs to be replaced. That should happen sometime in the next two weeks.

I'm sorry to report that we have lost two more County Hunters. Larry, W4GGU a long time county hunter passed away. W8QOI, Raleigh died of a heart attack last week. Please send sympathy notes to Raleigh's wife.

As most of you know, K3IMC, Don has suspended his web site. Don, I would like to thank you for the time you spent so that county hunters could have a place to announce planned trips, list what their needs and views could be posted. THANK YOU for your years of support of county hunting.

There are several sites that are now available for county hunting. John, W5UGD has a site, KK7X has a site and I understand that N4CD has a site. On a side note, Janet has been working on getting the awards program up and running with help from Gene, KD9ZP and Terry WQ7A. The hard drive we sent to a company to see if they could get any of the data was a complete bust!

Once again, thanks for the notes and phone calls checking up on Barry and I. There are still flooded areas less than a mile from our home. It has rained everyday but three since Dolly came through. The drought is finally over in south Texas!

Have a great September! 73, Joyce

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Dave's Call: My apologies to Gene, K5GE; his photos got lost in the transition from his document to this newsletter. Hope to see you at the SE Mini. You'll love this town! On a personal note, I'll miss the Forum but not the vitriol.

Dateline CW

Ed, KN4Y

Claret is the liquor for the boys using sideband, port for the digital boys: but he who aspires to be a CW county hunter must drink Lager.

The year approaches the last quarter and I still do not have Master Gold, I did however get a good blow from tropical storm Fay. I lowered the Yagi and listened to the ARES net discussing the storm's location. There is Lot of tree debris and pine straw on the ground, with little actual structural damage. I have added yard clean-up to the job jar. I missed the Hawaii and Ohio QSO parties because my antenna was down. Power was off for six hours and I got some nap time credits.

Prior to the storm Fay I am in the shack when I see the squirrels grasping nuts and scurrying up the trees, Gator is approaching from downwind. I check the cooler just as Gator walks in, "Hey Dude why all the water running off the Yagi?" "I just worked Bill, KM1C, from his boat anchored in Nantucket Bay. Guess his CW signal trapped some water." We both have a good laugh.

"I notice on the MARAC logger you indicate KM1C as a contact with a portable station; why not a mobile?" I point to the shack wall, "Gator, look at the wall what do you see?" "A bunch of little wooden cars." "Yes Gator, the majority of mobiles used in county hunting are four wheel vehicles. The MARAC definition lists various mobile vehicles and a boat is not on the list. So you show portable or fixed." Gator has lost interest, goes to the cooler, he hands me a Lager and seats himself at the computer. We enjoy the product of nature's spontaneous fermentation.

"Hey Dude, did you know you need one contact in Illinois to have Bingo II." "I noticed that when I was checking my needs." "How long has it taken?" "Eight Years." "You speedy devil you." Gator is laughing hilariously, stopping only to take a swig of Lager. "Dude has you done anything exciting on the CW frequencies lately?" "Yes, I worked Jeff, W9MSE, on five bands in the same county. I got two ten meter contacts, sure wish he would get a ten-ten number."

Gator brings up the calendar creator, "I see the Texas QSO Party is this month, will that Norm Dude, W3DYA, be running a three in five land?" "Does the Pope like wine? Norm will be mobile running on any band that is open." Gator takes another swig or two and turns on the HF radio, he has lost interest again. He picks up a note from Barry, "What is this all about?" Well if you must know, Barry went to a wedding of two CW county hunter antennas and enjoyed the great reception." Gator gives me the evil eye, "How did you do in the Maryland-DC QSO Party?"

I pick up the Lager and take a long cool swig, talking is dehydrating. "I worked the Maryland-DC QSO party on CW and the contacts were far and few between. I was able to make 25 contacts. I had to have 50 contacts to send in a log. I would not have had that many if Bob, K4MUT and Jim W4HSA had not been mobile on CW." It is rumored most of the Maryland CW operators have retired to Florida." "How did you do in New Jersey QSO party?" "That was a disaster, I never heard one CW station." Gator is listening to the radio, "Hey listen, this guy is running counties in his pajamas." "How can you know that from a CW signal?" "He keeps sending N4PJ." I slap Gator across the head, he is laughing hilariously interrupted by his Cell phone. "Got to go Dude, being an ACE is time demanding. Like a flash blub he is seen and gone.

There are many counties ready to be logged this month. Work the Tennessee, Arkansas, South Carolina, Washington and Texas State QSO parties. Down load the rules and have more fun than the law allows. Be sure to reserve your room at the South East Mini prior to September 16. Farewell K3IMC Forum, another chapter in county hunting history. Now it is nap time.

2008 SE Mini

Location: Quality Inn & Suites; Mount Pleasant, SC
Dates: October 23-25, 2008
Directions: Follow I-26 East until it ends and take exit 220. Follow signs to Mt. Pleasant/Hwy 17 North. Cross Cooper River Bridge and take Coleman Blvd./Hwy 703 exit. On Coleman Blvd/Hwy 703 turn right at first traffic light. Hotel is on the right.
Room Rate: More details will be posted at <http://semini.superhosts.net/> \$89.99 Thurs, \$127.99 Fri/Sat night plus tax. Call the hotel directly for reservations and mention "amateur radio". The phone number is 800-704-4480. The rate is valid only through September 16- Make your reservations early!
Hotel Notes: There is a 2 night minimum stay, and a one night deposit is required. Cancellations must be done 2 weeks in advance, and all but 25\$ of your deposit will be refunded. Cancellations within 2 weeks will be charged for 2 nights.
Parking: Ample FREE parking, with no overhangs to eat antennas!
Activities: No group activities are planned, but area attractions include Historic Charleston tours, shopping, dining, golfing, plantations, Patriot's Point, The Hunley & Fort Sumter.
Dinner: Buffet Style Dinner- 20\$/person.
Registration: 15\$ for first person, 5\$ each additional person.
Website: More information, including online registration is available at: <http://semini.superhosts.net/>

Send registration and fees to:

John M. Hoyt – W5UGD
118 Halifax Rd
Easley, SC 29642

2008 SE Mini Registration

Callsign: _____

Name (to be put on badge):

Address:

USA-CA#: _____

Additional Names/Calls/USA-CA Numbers:

Basic Registration: 15.00

Additional Registrations _____ x 5.00 _____

Banquet Tickets _____ x 20.00 _____

Total _____

K5GE**From East to West or how to complete Master Platinum from coast to coast**

This story actually started in the early 90's. I had been through many of the amateur phases which included almost all bands from 160 thru 1296Mhz. I had completed many awards including #1 DXCC. What is a guy to do?

One of my friends in our local DX club suggested County Hunting. Wow! What a thought. That should be easy since I had boxes full of QSL cards. There must be one in there from most of the counties. After checking, I found about 500 that I could use. I remember thinking, at that rate it would take forever to complete all counties.

I then discovered the nets and started working all counties for my first time. Was I in for a surprise when I learned that after you finished you were expected to start all over again just to earn stars. Not only stars, but other awards too, like bingo and all YL.

My first thought was to quit after completing USACA, but then I learned about Master's Gold. You mean to tell me that I can get credit for a county if I run it. I was told yes, as long as I work someone else who is qualified.

Now this changed everything. I was now on my way to wearing out 4 vehicles and having the time of my life. You probably know that I have finished Bingo, 5 times, Master's Gold and all YL.

Well, back to my story. In 2003 thru the efforts of W3CR and others, the Master Platinum Award was born. I was officially back in the mobile business.

It was quite a challenge to make a qualified contact back then because there were so few that had completed Master's Gold. We were blessed with good conditions, however, sometimes they were too good. We were on our way to Maine after the 3M convention in 2003 where I missed making a qualified contact in some counties. It was early in the morning and the VK's had great signals, but no Master's Gold holders.

That first year W3CR, KI0JD, N8STF, KC3X and I ran a lot of counties. We were all taking a lot of trips trying to help each other along the way. I must point out that we were also helping others to work counties that they needed for whatever award they were chasing.

The next few years brought more Master's Gold holders which surely lessened the burden on us. I need to take the time now to thank all those who helped in any way. None of these awards would be possible without the help of others.

As time went by I was sure that some of us were getting close to finishing. I make it a practice not to keep a running count, but I knew for sure that I had transmitted from many more than 500 counties. When I did check and learned that most of the counties I needed were either east or west, I realized that it was up to me to go get them.

Fortunately for me there were places in the north west that my wife wanted to see. She is an avid Lewis and Clark fan. I had managed to run many counties from TX to MO & MT because of our Lewis and Clark quest. I must admit I got caught up in their adventure also.

Now some of the eastern counties had been previously run by other Master's Gold holders, but unfortunately, I missed them. N8KIE had planned to run Dukes and Nantucket, but time was running out before the large crowds would visit the islands. I knew what I had to do.

My plan was to go east for the first trip and then west. Since the national was to be held in California, we could get some sightseeing in and attend also. The plan sounded good so off we went.

The first trip was going as planned making my way to Massachusetts. If all went well, I would take the car over by ferry to both islands. We got a motel on Cape Cod early one afternoon and I immediately called to make reservations for us to Dukes the next day. I also made reservations to

Nantucket for the day after Dukes. The lady on the phone was amazed that I would spend so much money to take a car to both islands for such a short time.

We had the rest of the day to see Cape Cod. I must say we were not disappointed. The cape is full of history, if you have never been there you might consider it a place to visit.

I managed to run both islands about 5 times each on 20 and 40 meters. I apologize to those who did not get through, but I did the best I could with the conditions and short time that we had. The best location I found on Dukes was at the bus park & ride lot. It was not far from the ferry landing. I found several good spots on Nantucket, but the best was at the lighthouse.

We had a flat which caused us to replace a tire on the way back home. Then it was on to the second part of the plan. Who was it that said go west young man go west?

After a new set of tires we were on our way north west. Things were going good and by the afternoon of July 3rd I was finally in Clearwater, ID. W6TMD had warned me that I might have trouble transmitting from the canyon, but I found a nice park beside the river and signals were very good.

WOW! I had just finished Master Platinum. We took some pictures, did some sight seeing and found our way to the motel in Lewiston, ID. Lucky for me they had Hi Speed internet, so I sent my application and data to KC5QCB. I had learned earlier that the awards computer was down which would slow the process.

As we followed the Lewis & Clark trail west I didn't think things could get any better. We were enjoying the sights and I was running Wasco, OR when all of a sudden W8FNW said thanks for my last county. I thought at first it was the last for the state, but Jim assured me that it was the last for the WBOW. Now that was as exciting as it gets in county hunting. Later that evening we had a nice visit with Jim K9JF and his wife. He filled me in that W8FNW had also worked me in his next to last which was Morrow, OR. The next day I got all the information together and mailed QSL's to W8FNW for both contacts since it would be sometime before I would be getting home.

From then on we were sight seeing and running counties on the way to the convention. At the convention we were pleased to meet some new and old friends. We had a great time during all the activities. I was quite surprised when KC6AWX announced that I had completed Mater Platinum #1 at the banquet. Thanks to those behind the scenes that must have made this happen as I know the awards computer was still down.

Well there you have it, from east to west, and now my Master Platinum is complete. Again thanks to all for the help and good wishes.

In my humble opinion the Master's Gold & Master Platinum awards have done a huge amount, if not the most, to encourage mobiles to run counties. More of us are pursuing these awards and many are close to finishing (N4CD has #2) which has put a lot of mobiles on the road. Now I realize that everybody can not go mobile to qualify for these awards. On the other hand, everybody has an opportunity to work those that do go mobile. In other words not as many mobiles would be on the road if not for these 2 awards.

In closing, I hope that I have helped someone get closer to some award whatever it may be.

73,
Gene K5GE

**Treasurer's Report
August 31, 2008**

Funds Balance July 31, 2008 **\$25,829.40**

Income:

Dues	\$656.34	
Money Market Interest	\$17.24	
Logger Distribution	\$140.00	
Awards Manager Income (No report)		
		<u>\$813.58</u>

Expenses:

Secretary Expense	\$95.13	
Bank Fee	\$3.50	
Fairmont Awards – Plaques	\$481.21	
Print Right – Road Runner	\$389.70	
Awards Manager Expenses (No report)		
Software	\$145.00	
		<u>\$724.84</u>

\$88.74

Account Balances **\$25,918.14**

Checking Account \$5,447.18

Money Market Account \$20,470.96

\$25,918.14

Note:

The following monies are not included in the above:

Awards Chairman's Funds \$1,200.00

Convention Chairman's Funds - 2008 \$2,500.00

The County Line Roadrunner
MARAC Secretary
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“A Road Runner Is A Very Fast Bird”

Monthly Deadline for Articles is the 25th!

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