STILL Unnamed President's Column
Dave KE3VV

I still haven't decided what to call this column yet… I have been thinking about more possibilities, including "From the Dragon's Mouth," "Morse the Pity," "Musings on the Reign of Terror," and "Sitting Side-Saddle on the County Lion," but nothing seems to stick. Unless I get some good ideas from the silent MARAC masses, I may end up with something really awful, so let's hear from you. Please (begging here).

I want to thank all of my good MARAC friends who sent cards or called me or said a prayer for me about Marty's passing. I want to say again that your thoughts and prayers have meant a great deal to me in these not easy past few weeks. Also having lots of mobiles out there to work has been a really good thing, and I hope to be able to join the road-trippers soon.

We did have a good MARAC Board meeting at the end of August to handle some changes in the Award Rules, including modifying the Big Rig rule to accommodate wide base tires and ratifying a correction to the County Challenge Award to include 12 meters (yes it is retroactive and has always been included in Logger, as intended). The Board also voted to change the voting schedule for the annual awards that are presented at the convention. The change, which essentially moves the voting process back a month, will allow the Awards Manager to order plaques for the awardees in time for the convention.

The big change is converting the LC-1 "Last County in a State" award to paperless… well not totally paperless because you can still order a paper certificate for $3.00 if you want to send one. That will be nice for the first one for a new county hunter or a non-county hunter who gives you an LC. The last counties reported to the Awards Manager will be posted on the MARAC website in the database and the recipient will be notified by email. The fee for the paperless award has been reduced to $1.50. We may consider reducing this fee a bit more (at least for MARAC members) in the future. I am a bit sad to see the end of those happy little blue-red-gold stickers. It was fun seeing if I could get them stuck on the certificate without covering up some of the wording. Ah, Progress! Reminds me of the days when folks were saying that no REAL hams would use the "easy way" single sideband when AM was the real challenge. Nowadays, AM is where I listen to the ballgame.

I hope more of you will submit trip reports and comments and articles and other materials and pictures to the Roadrunner. Adding content and pictures would make it more fun to read (and you could skip over this column to the good stuff). As usual, the ramblings and rumblings of Gator are my favorite part, as well as the hysterical (er… historical meanderings from GaryB). Maybe I can get the County Lion to contribute some wise sayings or just add to the general up"roar."

Once again, thanks for your support in these past difficult weeks and I am already enjoying serving as your President. My door is always open, so drop in to the MARAC office anytime.

73, Dave
KE3VV

(Editor's note: Let's help Dave out with some title suggestions.)

New Members

MARAC Number	Callsign	Name
R4518	WA2CG	William Pointon

Did You Know?

South Dakota has nine Native American tribes

South Dakota has The Flaming Fountain on Soth Dakota State Capitol Lake that is fed by ant artesian well with natural gas content so high it can be lit. The fountain burns perpetually as a memorial to all veterans.

Dateline CW
Ed, KN4Y

I's wicked, I is. I's mighty wicked, anyhow I cannot stop operating CW mobile.

Gator and I just got back from putting the antenna back up after it was lowered when tropical storm Isaac came onto the gulf. We are now having a latte to ward off Parkinson's disease, and I am explaining how all great amateur radio organizations have over the air contests to involve their members. The ARRL Field Day is the choice of the smaller amateur radio clubs. MARAC had two contests, all band and ten meters. When ten meters became quiescent the contest went into hibernation. The MARAC sideband and CW all band contests are very successful and introduced many amateurs to county hunting. Last year MARAC discontinued sponsoring the twenty-four hour contest format for the more fun and less stressful QSO party format. The time period is during daylight hours, more in line with county hunting. The last weekend in July should be etched on all county hunters' calendars. MARAC ranks high on the QSO party list if there is such a list.

Gator swings around in the chair, "If you are through beating your gums, I will tell you how we did in this years MARAC CW QSO party. That Texan Dude Norm, W3DYA, king of the recliner sect did a great job of getting the QSO party up and running." I make the universal zip lip maneuver. "Good, we worked the mobiles: AB7RW, K7TM, N5NA, NU0Q, W0GXQ, W3DYA, W9OO and WC5D. You logged six counties for MP, ten for Bingo III, eight mobile to mobile contacts and a 2x3 call." I give Gator the high sign, "That is one reason MARAC sponsors this QSO party, it gives the members an opportunity to work other fixed and mobile stations." Gator hands me another latte, "Next year have your IF shift set at the center." I take the lid off my latte and keep quiet; I can't fight fact with logic.

I ask Gator to bring up Writelog and load my North American CW QSO Party log. I tune around the bands trying to find ZF2GG that is our Southeast director W4SIG on a DX-expedition, but no luck. Gator takes a sip of his latte, "I see you almost made it to midnight, you made 230 QSO's, worked stations on all six bands, and got 112 Multipliers. You did not do well as a county hunter only one "W' prefix and one new county on ten meters. Were you on a team?" "Yes, I am on the Florida Contest Group team." "Hope your team members stayed up later".

"What is this WAE contest? That is DX not county hunting." "Yes Gator that is the Worked All Europe CW contest. A lot of county hunters work the contest for fun and the excitement of doing QTC's." "You only made 150 QSO's, you fell asleep again." I change the subject, "Look at my Maryland-DC QSO party results." I sip my latte as Gator brings up the log."Wow, you made four contacts." I am laughing hilariously and giggle, "That is all the stations I heard." Gator is looking at the computer screen, "Hey Dude, "The FCC Released the Congressionally Mandated Study on Amateur Radio. Did you read it?" "No, it will probably be a red hot topic at the Southeast Mini." "Really?" "No."

Gator is looking at the computer, "I notice you made 80 QSO's in the Ohio QSO party logging 45 counties. I see you used the GenLog logging program to record the 137 QSO's in the Kansas QSO party logging 71 counties. You made 6 QSO's in the Hawaii QSO party." "I really tried in the Hawaii QSO party, I took naps until midnight, turned on the rig leaned back and it was morning. Gator, will you run the logs to see if I got any new counties."

Gator's picks up his cell phone, "Sorry Dude, got to run, one of the corn trucks is down. I will run the logs next visit." He walks on top of the railroad tie, I give him a 8. He is gone fast like a shark, I notice two kamikaze squirrels have fulfilled their destiny. The printer starts and stops. The printout is a list of stations heard on the county hunters CW frequencies in August. I read: AF3X, K0ARS, K0FG, K2HVN, K2ZR, K4YFH, K4YT, K7TM, K8ZZ, K9JWV, KA4RRU, KB6UF, KC7YE, KW1DX, N3AHA, N4CD, N4JT, N5XG, N8KIE, N8OYY, N9STL, NM2L, NT2A, NT7R, NU0Q, W0GXQ, W2BEE, W4HSA, W7IN, W9MSE, WA1IIE, WA3QNT, WB2ABD, WD4ION, and WG9A,

September the bowling leagues start so I check out the contest list to see what other activities are available for radio active CW county hunters on weekends in addition to working mobiles. Looks like an interesting month. There are six State QSO parties starting with Colorado with 64 counties and Tennessee with 95 counties. Then Arkansas with 75 counties (Norm, W3DYA will be mobile) followed by South Carolina with 46 counties and the Washington State Salmon Run with 39 counties. Finishing out the month is the State of Texas with 254 counties. There is rumor that Norm, W3DYA, with again be mobile, check it out. Nap time.

Did You Know?

South Dakota has Jewel Cave National Monument ... the 2nd longest cave system in the world

Digital Happenings
By W0NAC ("Matt")

This is the first of what will be a series of articles on digital county hunting. My goal is to inform/ help both those currently involved and others who may be interested in exploring this new and exciting facet of Ham Radio.

First, I understand that operating digital is not everyone's "cup of tea". Our late MARAC president (Bill Inkrote) once said (I am paraphrasing here) that there are a multitude of different ways to gain personal satisfaction in the hobby of Ham Radio. Just a few examples are Emergency Service (ARES), DX, EME, County Hunting, Contesting, Hardware Design/Building/Testing, etc. The list is practically endless! We county hunters have carved out our own "nitches". Some do only CW. Some only work SSB. Some like to do Net Control. Some like to operate as a mobile OM/YL team. Others, like Sharon and I (maybe you also?) enjoy exploring the new world of digital operations. There are more than enough ways that each of us can get our "jollies" and I wish everyone the best of success in their choices.

First, we need to define "Digital" and "Digital Modes". Here are my definitions:

"Digital" - Electronic technology that generates, stores, and processes data in terms of two discreet states: positive and non-positive.

"Digital Mode" - A modulation scheme that uses discreet signal characteristics, while an "Analog Mode" is a modulation scheme that uses continuously varying signal characteristics. Note that the signal characteristics might be amplitude, frequency, phase, etc.

It is interesting to note that from the very beginning of County Hunting and Ham Radio, folks have been using one of the digital modes. It is called "CW"!

DIGITAL AWARDS

There are two MARAC awards that require the use of digital modes to complete. These are the USA – Digital Award and the new Five Mode Award. Complete rules for each of these awards are given on the MARAC Web Site (www.marac.org). Just select the "Awards" tab then the "Award Rules" tab to read them. Tracking of both awards is fully supported by the "Logger" software issued by MARAC.

The USA – Digital Award has been around for several years now and basically requires that you log a contact with all 3077 counties using any of many digital Modes. Even though CW is technically a digital mode, CW is specifically excluded from this award so as to not conflict with the existing USA – CW Award. Four or five people have completed the first level (1000 Counties) for this award.

The Five Mode Award was approved by the MARAC Board at its annual meeting in July 2011. It basically requires that you make 5 contacts with each of the 3077 counties using any mode from an approved list of 33 modes. This list includes both analog modes like SSB and FM as well as many digital modes like PSK, RTTY, HELL, etc. It also includes CW! If someone has finished USACA (SSB or CW) they are at least 20% of the way toward finishing the Five Mode Award since the award does not specify a start date. Also, to make this award a little easier to attain, if at least one end of any contact

is mobile, operators on <u>both</u> ends get to count the counties on <u>both</u> ends of the QSO. Again, for complete rules, go to (<u>www.marac.org</u>).

Incidentally, the new 5-Mode Award has numbered awards for working all counties in a state on 5 different modes. Sharon and I have made significant progress toward finishing Colorado. W0NAC has finished 42 of the 64 counties in CO and N0LXJ has finished 38. Since people felt that working all 3077 with 5 modes is so difficult, these state awards were provided to prevent people from getting discouraged while working toward the WBOW. In my opinion, the 5-Band Award is perhaps harder to achieve than the 5-Mode Award, but this remains to be seen. What's important is that each of us pursues the awards that are personally interesting and challenging.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

There is a lot of on-going activity in digital county hunting, but much of it is not very visible. Hopefully, this article will help in this regard. I have given Forums and live on-the-air demonstrations at several conventions. The most recent was at the Michigan Mini. People often ask: "How many people are pursuing either of these digital awards and how far along are they?" "How many mobiles are out there who put out counties using digital modes?" I will attempt to give partial answers to these questions a little later.

Sharon and I have made numerous trips in the last few years where we have "put out" (as a team) many counties using various digital Modes. Early on we used almost exclusively PSK. After the 5-Mode Award was approved, we started putting out counties (while mobile) on 4 different digital modes including PSK, RTTY, MFSK, and THROB.

Here are 2 summaries of our total activity on the trip to Vancouver, WA and back to Colorado last July:

TOTAL CONTACTS MADE ALL MODES *

MODE	W0NAC	N0LXJ
CW	25	0
FM	105	105
MFSK	100	100
PSK	236	232
RTTY	106	106
SSB	1114	1050
THROB	74	74
TOTALS:	1760	1667

* Numbers Reflect Contacts On County Lines (2 Counties) With Both of Our Calls

W0NAC/N0LXJ TEAM DIGITAL CONTACTS (BY CALL SIGN) *

#	CALL SIGN	PSK	RTTY	MFSK	THROB	(TOTAL)
1	AD1C	0	4	0	0	4
2	K8QW	4	0	0	0	4
3	KC6AWX	4	0	0	0	4
4	KD5YUK	8	8	0	0	16
5	KE4ETY	28	24	0	0	52
6	N4JT	44	44	52	40	180
7	N8CIJ	56	60	76	56	248
8	NA8W	20	20	24	12	76
9	NT2A	28	4	0	0	32
10	NX4W	28	12	16	12	68
11	VA3XOV	8	0	0	0	8
12	W5QP	0	4	0	0	4
13	WA4EEZ	8	0	0	0	8
14	WA4UNS	24	28	28	20	100
15	WB2ABD	0	4	4	8	16
16	WD4OIN	4	0	0	0	4
TOTALS:		264	212	200	148	824

 Numbers Reflect Contacts On County Line (2 Counties) With Both of Our Calls

Many have asked about who is currently involved in digital county hunting. Table 1 below contains my first try at creating a list of active digital county hunters. There are 46 call signs on this list (arranged alphabetically). I know of 7 people who have "put out" a significant number of counties operating mobile (some of these may not be currently active). Calls on the list range from very active to those who have made only a few digital contacts from their fixed stations. Also, there are a few folks (like AB7NK and KD5CXO and others) who have expressed an interest in operating digital, but are still in the process of setting up their stations. If I have left any one off the list you have my sincere apology!

 I really need everyone's help in completing this table and correcting errors (of which there are many right now). Please email me at w0nac@comcast.net with your corrections/additions. I plan on publishing updates to this list each month.

Click to add header

#	CALL	NAME	STATUS - (M,F,I)	USA - DIGITAL Counties (af 3077)	(1 MODE)	(2 MODE)	5 MODE COUNTY (3 MODE)	(4 MODE)	(5 MODE)
1	AA4R	Randy	F	1000+	?	?	?	?	?
2	AC0B	Cliff	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
3	AD1C	Jim	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
4	K0DEQ	Bill	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
5	K0WJ	Lou	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
6	K4PBX	Jim	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
7	K5GE	Gene	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
8	K5SF	Dick	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
9	K7REL	Tom	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
10	K8QWT	Ed	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
11	K8ZZ	Ed	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
12	KC3X	Hollis	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
13	KC6AWX	Bob	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
14	KD5TUK	Billy	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
15	KD7KST	Bill	M/F	1792	?	?	?	?	?
16	KG5RJ	Gregory	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
17	KM1C	Bill	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
18	N0KV	Barry	M/F	?	?	?	?	?	?
19	N0LZJ	Sharon	M/F	1296	3077	2188	1095	344	137
20	N1API	Al	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
21	N3HOO	Ed	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
22	N4JT	Jim	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
23	N5MLP	Ron	M/F	?	?	?	?	?	?
24	N6PDB	Dennis	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
25	N8CIJ	Dick	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
26	NA8W	Darl	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
27	NF0N	Mike	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
28	NM9K	Pete	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
29	NT2A	Gene	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
30	NU4C	Paul	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
31	NW6S	Jim	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
32	NZ4W	Lloyd	M/F	?	?	?	?	?	?
33	W0MAC	Matt	M/F	1683	3077	2752	1799	805	200
34	W0QE	Larry	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
35	W4IHI	Gary	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
36	W4TDT	Dave	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
37	W6RK	Ricto	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
38	W6RLL	Joe	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
39	W7QQ	Bill	M/F	?	?	?	?	?	?
40	WA4EEZ	Leslie	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
41	WA4UNS	Doug	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
42	WA7JHQ	Sterling	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
43	WB2ABD	Paul	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
44	WD4OIN	Jack	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
45	WQ7A	Terry	F	?	?	?	?	?	?
46	WT4D	Bonnie	F	?	?	?	?	?	?

Table 1 - Active Digital County Hunters Award Status

HOW DO I GET STARTED ?

Getting started with digital operation may be easier than you think. Besides a transceiver and antenna (which you presumably already have!) all you need is a computer, an interface connection, and some software for the mode(s) you wish to run.

The computer can be just about any kind and doesn't need to be new or especially fast. Older XP machines up to the newest Windows 7 64-Bit machines will all work. Since you may be doing some multi-tasking, I do recommend that you have at least 1 GB RAM on XP computers and 4 GB on Windows 7 computers. You will need a modest amount of free space on your hard drive also.

There are many commercial interfaces available out there or if you are so inclined, you can "roll your own". The trend in commercial gear seems to be toward devices that plug into a USB port on your computer. Newer computers don't even have the older serial ports anymore! Also, some of the newer interfaces contain their own dedicated sound card which leaves the sound card in your computer free to serve other functions. These newer USB devices don't require a separate power supply either (they get their power from the USB port), are easier to set up, and typically only use 2 cables. The interface I recommend is one I currently use. This is the "SignaLink USB" device by Tigertronics (http://www.tigertronics.com/slusbmain.htm). This great little box costs something over $100, but is worth every penny!

If you wish to go a different direction, MFJ (http://www.mfjenterprises.com/productsearch.php) and West Mountain Radio (http://www.westmountainradio.com/content.php?page=rigblaster) also offer USB interfaces.

To just listen and decode digital signals, the only interface you need is to place your computer microphone in front of your radio speaker! One can't get much simpler than that.

There is so much software available these days that it can be confusing to the newcomer. Most of it is freeware or shareware, but some is licensed (for a fee).   Also, when you buy a commercial interface, most manufacturers provide a CD with a large number of digital software programs that you can experiment with. Probably the best commercial software I have run across is MixW written by UT2UZ in the Ukraine. You can find out all about it at their web site which is: http://mixw.net . I believe their latest version is 3.1.1. MixW is extremely competent software, but can be very intimidating for the beginner because it is complex and has many features not needed initially.

Fldigi is an excellent free software program that I personally like a lot. You can download the latest version (3.21.50) setup files for your computer at the following site: http://w1hkj.com/download.html . If you wish to learn more about it first, a Beginners Guide is available at: http://www.w1hkj.com/beginners.html .

Other freeware includes the old standby DigiPan (available at: http://www.digipan.net/ and Ham Radio Deluxe – Version 5.0 which you can download from: http://www.hrdsoftwarellc.com/downloads/default.html .

If you wish to explore other software that is available, go to the following site http://www.qsl.net/rv3apm/ which lists a multitude of software programs, modes they are good for, price/free, and latest version. Links to download sites are also provided.

I recommend that you start with Fldigi, but plan on spending a fair amount of time reading the manual and getting it working properly.

After you have your interface and software on hand, install your software and do an initial configuration. Then, connect your interface to your radio and your computer as the manufacturer recommends and configure it so you can receive and decode signals on your waterfall. Next, you will want to get your PTT (Push To Talk) configured so that your software automatically puts your radio into the transmit mode when you command the software to transmit. Lastly, you will want to select and adjust your audio devices and levels to get a distortion free signal going out to your antenna.

All this can be confusing at first, but if you read your instructions carefully and just dive in and experiment, you will eventually wonder what you thought was so difficult! Also, I can help you if you get stuck. Just email me at w0nac@comcast.net or call me at 303-799-3658.

WHICH MODES ARE USED ?

By far and away, the single most popular digital mode (excluding CW) used by the amateur community at large is PSK-31 with PSK-63 growing in popularity because it is twice as fast. RTTY has been popular for years and many DXpeditions use RTTY, but more seem to be shifting toward PSK because it is a better weak signal mode than RTTY. When county Hunters first started using digital modes, PSK was the mode used most often. Over the last year or so, other digital modes have come into play including RTTY, MFSK, THROB, and occasionally CONTESTIA. Choosing modes for putting out counties is still very much in the experimental phase, but I am sure that a more consistent approach will evolve over time as more people get involved. When Sharon and I have been putting out county lines the last few months, we have pretty much settled on PSK-63, RTTY, MFSK-16, and THROB-4 in that order.

All these new modes appear strange and different to new folk. G4UCJ has an excellent site you can visit that explains what most of the modes authorized for county hunting are and even what they sound like. You can find his site at http://hfradio.org.uk/html/digital_modes.html .

What frequencies to use for digital county hunting is also a frequently asked question. Mobiles putting out counties seem to have settled on 14.074 MHz or 14.075 MHz true frequency as a good choice. Non-County Hunter PSKers seem to operate between 14.070 and 14.0725 MHz. JT-65 People generally operate on 14.077 plus or minus 1 KHz or so. This leaves a small window around 14.074-14.076 that is generally open for County Hunter use. 20M seems to be the best overall band to use with 30M and 40M being 2nd and 3rd choices using 10.136 MHz and 7.071 MHz true frequency respectively. All of these frequencies are subject to slight adjustment up or down depending on QRM. All frequencies mentioned above are "true" frequencies which are your transceiver dial setting (USB) plus the offset on your waterfall. I will explain this in more detail in a future article.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED RIGHT NOW ?

As in all county hunting operations, award success ultimately depends heavily on those who go out mobile and put out the counties. Digital county hunting is no different! But, it has been said that one

must learn to walk before you can run. Even though more mobiles operating digital are desperately needed, it is extremely difficult for anyone to jump directly into operating digital while mobile. To "eat this elephant one bite at a time", let me suggest an easy way to sample what digital operation is like with a minimal investment in time and zero cost.

First, download the free file "fldigi-3.21.50 setup" to your desktop (or other convenient folder). This file can be found on the Fldigi download page at http://w1hkj.com/download.html . If you wish, you can also download the files "Fldigi-Help" and "fldigi manual" for reference. Once downloaded, go ahead and install "fldigi-3.21.50 setup" by running it. Just select the default options during install. You will then be presented with the Fldigi configuration wizard where you will enter your operator information and set your audio devices. The Rig control section can be mostly ignored for now as you won't be transmitting. When configuring your Sound card, all you need do is check PortAudio and set Capture: to your normal microphone device (naturally, you will need to have a microphone plugged into the MIC jack on your computer). After saving your configuration, click on Close and you should be ready to go.

Place your computer microphone in front of or near to your transceiver speaker. Then adjust your computer microphone gain and your transceiver audio output until you get a waterfall with just a little noise showing. Set your transceiver dial to 14.070 (USB) and you should start to see signal traces moving down the waterfall. Then click on the "OpMode" option at the top of the Fldigi window and select the BPSK-31 Sub Mode to the right of PSK on the drop down menu. You can then tune to any trace you see by clicking on top of it. This should move your tuning indicator over the trace and the signal should start decoding in the upper window.

For decoding any mobile County Hunters you might find spotted out there, just set your OpMode to the sub-Mode they are using and adjust your dial setting plus waterfall offset to their spotted frequency.

If you find the digital modes interesting, you can then obtain an interface which will allow you to transmit from your fixed station. Then, after you become comfortable operating digital from your fixed station, you will be ready to go mobile where you will be welcomed with open arms!

Topics for Future Articles

Here are a few topics I am considering for future articles. Feel free to suggest others if you wish. I want these articles to be as useful to you as possible, expecially new people.

"How to tune digital signals"

"How to adjust your rig for a clean signal"

"How to 'put out' counties mobile"

"How to operate as a mobile OM/YL team"

"How to fine tune your interface"

"How to use macros with specific examples"

"Other interesting modes (JT-65)"

So long for this time..... Please email me with comments/suggestion at w0nac@comcast.net and don't forget to send me your counties worked status on the USA-DIGITAL and 5 MOde Awards so I can publish an updated list in future articles.

73's
Matt - W0NAC

History Happens
Gary, K4EXT

Last month, you were warned. So here we go ... a few ramblings from Alan, VK4AAR:

"As is obvious, I have never had the privilege of giving anyone a new county … a bit difficult from this range! But I've had a load of fun getting new ones and becoming active, in varying degrees, on the nets over time. Back in the mid-'noughties' I was able to help N/C as a back up because I was hearing most of the USA as he was limited when mobiles (and callers) were too close to him.

"But how did this all start? I was first licenced (English spelling) in 1978 when living in VK5-land. I went mad and got the major DX awards in my first year … DXCC, WAZ, WAS, WAC, et al … staying up all night till 3:00 or 4:00 am and going to work at 6:30 am. It nearly killed me, but I was having fun. My body got accustomed to these hours eventually and I'm still here to tell the tale. Nuff sed!

"I got into County Hunting by accident after noting all the counties listed on the many QSL's I had received so I started making rudimentary charts and using whatever 'official' lists I could lay my hands on to help. In the late 80's, I stumbled upon the net on 14.336 and got started calling when I got a chance and Mac, KJ5? … I forget, but seem to think it was KJ5W … offered to manage my confirmations (I didn't know what an MRC was even!). He had a 2x1 call and he was under pressure of other matters to continue … so I don't know if he had that call or not. Someone might remember him … he lived in Denton county, TX at least around 1988 to 1992. QRZ.COM puts that call in Louisiana now.

"In 1993, Mee Wah (my XYL) and I moved to S.E. Queensland and I got interested again, without a manager, and, along with a bunch of VK's and ZL's, we formed an ad hoc net of our own in the Stateside evenings. We did OK and had fun but needed to speed things up so we gradually gravitated to the established net on 14.336 … most of us anyway. Jay, K6RLS, volunteered to act as manager for all the VK/ZL boys (and gals) but eventually went SK due to ill health. So, Bob, KC6AWX assumed the responsibility of looking after most (if not, all) the VK's and ZL's. What a mighty job he has done and continues to do for Bernie, VK4EJ. Thank you, Bob … and Jay … and Mac. Your blood is worth bottling!

"All of us got the WBOW (Bernie, VK4EJ is almost there) and everyone disappeared into the sunset as far as I can tell … but I still soldier on. I got my first star in January 2001 in a dramatic fashion (read CQ Magazine of June and July 2001 for my bio and that of the incredible CH'er, Eldon, N8STF who FLEW to NE to get my last 4 … all in the one state). How it worked out, and the resulting skull-duggery involved by other parties to spice it up, are worth reading about. I was honoured by a visit from Eldon (part of the skull-duggery) in January of that year. I had worked the WBOW in the previous November but was kept waiting by those rascals K1BV and N8STF for two whole months on the pretext that Xmas mail was holding up the processing and delivery of the certificate (more of that skull-duggery).

"Oh, Bob, KC6AWX, also made the trip Down Under in 2001 for a visit … great to have high profile County Hunters (and County Putter-Outers) as house guests in our humble hacienda. I must warn them I want to return the compliment but expect they will move overseas to forestall our invasion. My lack of funds will probably save them from having to emigrate, though.

"I later got my second Star and also Bingo. But I did, without realising it, work my last for 'All-20m' and 'All-SSB' (separately) in the same week. I don't think there is an award for those so I didn't submit a claim. I am currently chasing All-CW … but under severe duress these days. And have increased my 'armoury' of County Hunting tools by adding MARAC Logger to the operating desk. What a fantastic piece of software ably supported by WQ7A, KD5CXO, W0NAC and KD9ZP. Thanks to Terry and Tim in particular for their unwavering patience with this dumb Limey ex-pat in Oz.

"That's enough from me … if I don't stop here, I never will!

"73, Alan, VK4AAR"

2012 SE Mini

Location: Quality Inn & Suites; Mount Pleasant, SC
Dates: October 8-10, 2012
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.
More details will be posted at http://semini.superhosts.net/
Room Rate: $99.99 per 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 7th - 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: A "Brews Cruise", dinner at the "Fat Hen" and walking the bridge
are planned. Other area attractions include Historic Charleston
tours, shopping, dining, golfing, plantations, Patriot's Point, The
Hunley & Fort Sumter.
Dinner: Buffet Style Dinner- $25/person.
Registration $15 for first person, $5 each additional person.
Website: More information, including online registration is available at:
http://www.semini.org

Send registration and fees to:

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

Email: w5ugd@homelandsecureit.com for additional information

2012 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 25.00	_____

Total _____

National

Please join us for the
2013 MARAC
National Convention
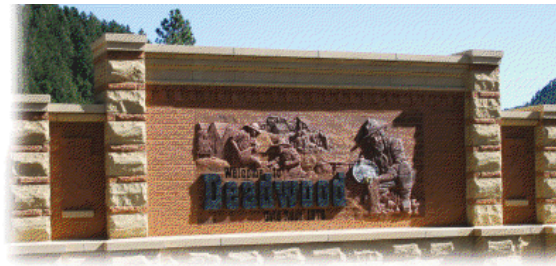
in the Beautiful BLACK HILLS OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Deadwood, SD

The entire city of Deadwood is a national historic landmark.

In Deadwood you can ponder the truth at the foot of Wild Bill's grave in Mount Moriah Cemetary, tour the Adams House, pan for gold in the Broken Boot Mine, or take a self-guided walking tour into the past that puts the Wild West into perspective.

MARAC Board of Directors Meeting
(Not yet approved)
August 30, 2012

The MARAC Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 0006Z by the President (Dave -KE3VV).

Board Members Present
President - Dave Splitt - KE3VV
Past President - Joyce Boothe - WB9NUL
Vice President - Leo Bingham - WY7LL
Secretary - James Grandinetti - KZ2P
Treasurer - Matt Matthew - W0NAC
North Central Director - Tony Mazzocco - WA9DLB
Northeast Director - Carol-Ann Reitman - AB2LS
Pacific Director - Robert Devine - KC6AWX
South Central Director - Barry Mitchell - N0KV

A motion was made by Leo (WY7LL) and seconded by Bob (KC6AWX) to accept the minutes of the July 7, 2012 meeting. The minutes were accepted by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

A motion was made by Joyce (WB9NUL) and seconded by Bob (KC6AWX) to approve the Treasurer's Report for June 2012. The Treasurer's Report was approved by a vote of 7 in favor, 1 abstention and none opposed.

A motion was made by Jim (KZ2P) and seconded by Leo (WY7LL) to approve the Awards Manager's Financial Reports for June 2012 and July 2012. The Awards Manager's Financial Reports were approved by a vote of 6 in favor, 2 abstentions and none opposed.

New Business

A motion was made by Joyce (WB9NUL) and seconded by Jim (KZ2P) to expend a $100.00 for a memorial to Marty Splitt. Email roll call vote indicated all in favor and none opposed.

Proposed Changes to MARAC Award Rules
(Recommendation of the Awards Committee)
To allow for paperless certificates (LC-1/LC-2 in MARAC database and email only) the Award Rule for Last County in a State Award and the general rule on Fees for Last County certificates are modified as follows:

A motion was made by Bob (KC6AWX) and seconded by Jim (KZ2P) to approve the below changes for the Last County in the State Award. The changes were approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

Last County in a State Award

AWARD LEVELS: **Last County in a State awards are recorded in the MARAC database and posted on the MARAC web site. MARAC members are also notified by email. A paper certificate can be ordered from the Awards Manager. After transmitting twenty-five (25) last counties, a MARAC member receives a Roadrunner Award.**

APPLICATION AND FEES: **The fee for both members and non-members applying for this award is $1.50 for the award. After the first award certificate, the fee for a certificate by mail is $3.00.** The Last County award application is available on the MARAC web site.

A motion was made by Bob (KC6AWX) and seconded by Leo (WY7LL) to approve the below changes in the awards fee schedule. The changes were approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

Fees

Unless otherwise specified in the rules for a specific MARAC award, the **Fees** for each MARAC award are as follows:

Certificate:	MARAC Members - $2.00	Non-Members - $7.00
Upgrades:	MARAC Members - $2.00	Non-Members - $7.00
Plaque:	MARAC Members - $40.00	Non-Members - $55.00
Last County Certificate (Database and email)	**Members and Non-Members - $1.50**	
Last County Certificate (Paper):	**Members and Non-Members - $3.00**	
Last County Plaque:	Members and Non-Members - $20.00	

All fees are subject to change by the MARAC Board of Directors.

The Big Rig Award be modified to allow for the substitution of wide-base tires.

A motion was made by Barry (N0KV) and seconded by Carol-Ann (AB2LS) and Matt (W0NAC) to approve the below change for the Big Rig Award. The change was approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

Big Rig

A large truck consisting of a tractor unit that is capable of pulling a cargo trailer and is being driven by an operator holding a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) rated for the rig being operated (for a rig rated at 26001 GWD or more).

A **Big Rig** is also sometimes referred to as a "Semi" or "18- wheeler." To qualify as a **Big Rig** for MARAC Awards, the tractor must have at least 10 wheels with tires touching the ground **(or the equivalent using wide-base tires).** If a trailer is attached, the trailer may be either loaded or unloaded.

Note: The definition of **Big Rig** does not include RV's, dump trucks, 5th-wheels, tow trucks, buses, or panel/delivery trucks.

The Board ratify the correction of the County Challenge Award to include 12 meters.

A motion was made by Joyce (WB9NUL) and seconded by Barry (N0KV) to approve the below change for the County Challenge Award. The change was approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

County Challenge Award

OBJECTIVE: To encourage county hunters to work and activate counties on as many bands as possible and to work as many counties as possible on the following bands: 160m, 75-80m, 40m, 30m, 20m, 17m, 15m, **12m,** 10m, and 6m.

NOTE - this change is retroactive to the start date of the County Challenge Award.

Proposed Changes to Balloting for MARAC Annual Awards

(Based on the recommendations of the Election Coordinator and Awards Manager)
This change will allow the Election Coordinator to tally all of the ballots and submit the results to the Awards Manager, allowing sufficient time to order the award plaques for the National Convention. The voting schedules for Officers, Directors will remain unchanged.

A motion was made by Barry (N0KV) and seconded by Leo (WY7LL) to approve the below change for the County Hunter of the Year Award. The change was approved by a vote of 8 in favor and none opposed.

County Hunter of the Year

The Award Rule: "The recipients of this award are determined by an annual ballot of the MARAC membership. The vote is conducted before each annual meeting."
The deadline for the Awards Manager to submit additional nominations to the Elections Coordinator for County Hunter of the Year (CHOTY) will be April 30th. Voting for the CHOTY awards will commence on May 1st and end on May 31st.

A motion was made by Jim (KZ2P) and seconded by Carol-Ann (AB2LS) to approve the below changes for the Mobile of the Year, Net Control of the Year and OM-YL Team of the Year Awards. The changes were approved by a vote of 7 in favor and none opposed.

Mobile of the Year
Net Control of the Year
OM-YL Team of the Year

The Award Rule: The recipient of each award is determined by a quarterly ballot of the MARAC membership. No change to this rule is proposed. The change is to the schedule for voting, as follows:
Quarterly voting for the months of April, May, and June will commence on July 1st and end on July 31st.

Quarterly voting for the months of July, August, and September will commence on October 1st and end on October 31st.

Quarterly voting for the months of October, November, and December will commence on January 1st and end on January 31st.

Quarterly voting for the months of January, February, and March will commence April 1st and

end April 30th.

For the awards to be presented at the 2013 Convention, the quarterly balloting conducted in October 2012 will be a combined ballot for the first two quarters (one vote for the months of April through June and a second vote for the months of July through September).

Old Business
The Board voted to table a discussion of the report from the Contest Coordinator (which has not yet been received) until the next meeting.

Matt (W0NAC) will look into different venues for holding Board of Directors meetings and will report to the Board at the next meeting.

The being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Carol-Ann (AB2LS) and seconded by Bob (KC6AWX) to adjourn the meeting at 0051Z. The meeting was adjourned by a vote of 6 in favor and none opposed.

Respectfully submitted
James Grandinetti - KZ2P

Awards

Awards Issued For August			
Call	**Date**	**Award**	**Number**
N0KV	8/26/2012	Master's Gold	# 55
N8CIJ	7/29/2012	Master's Gold	# 54
W5IL	8/14/2012	USA-CA WAC 1st Time	# 1231
W5QP	8/15/2012	USA-CA WAC 1st Time	# 1232
W3CR	8/24/2012	USA-PA N Prefix	# 17
W0GXQ	8/11/2012	USA-CW V	# 4
W0MU	7/29/2012	BINGO	# 343
N0KV	8/18/2012	BINGO II	# 89
N9STL	7/29/2012	Worked all Counties - 7th Time	# 19
N4AAT	7/29/2012	Worked all Counties - 10th Time	# 3

Roadrunner Issued For August			
Call	**Date**	**Award**	**Number**
W4SIG	8/17/2012	Last County Count 150	# 157
KA9JAC	8/4/2012	Last County Count 150	# 156
KW1DX	8/17/2012	Last County Count 125	# 174
K8ZZ	8/25/2012	Last County Count 425	# 37
N4CD	8/25/2012	Last County Count 2100	# 1
WB2ABD	8/25/2012	Last County Count 100	# 234
AB4YZ	8/25/2012	Last County Count 725	# 16
N9QPQ	8/25/2012	Last County Count 1125	# 4
W0GXQ	8/17/2012	Last County Count 650	# 22

Birthdays

Roadrunner - Birthdays	
Call	**Birthday Date**
LA9SN	Sep - 01
W1VA	Sep - 01
KK5LC	Sep - 01
WE8D	Sep - 01
W3GQJ	Sep - 01
W1QK	Sep - 01
KQ4KI	Sep - 01
AD4IA	Sep - 01
KJ9P	Sep - 01
K1BS	Sep - 02
K6CRA	Sep - 02
AC4GO	Sep - 02
K4XI	Sep - 03
WB2GFE	Sep - 03
WA6GQY	Sep - 03
N5ZF	Sep - 03
W6ZQ	Sep - 04
W9GUY	Sep - 04
W6RK	Sep - 04
KB7RE	Sep - 04
N9PM	Sep - 04
NN9K	Sep - 04
N3RM	Sep - 04
WD9HAW	Sep - 05
WA3LVH	Sep - 05
W3UJT	Sep - 05
KU4MP	Sep - 05
KA0W	Sep - 05
W9OO	Sep - 06
KE5JA	Sep - 06
KN4S	Sep - 06
N7MPS	Sep - 06
W9LMT	Sep - 07
WA2BEG	Sep - 07
W5DAM	Sep - 07
N5NAA	Sep - 07
N9AC	Sep - 08

Roadrunner - Birthdays	
Call	**Birthday Date**
W1ATV	Sep - 08
WX7E	Sep - 08
N8AAE	Sep - 08
N7WL	Sep - 09
KG9HC	Sep - 09
K4SL	Sep - 09
N8STF	Sep - 09
KN5H	Sep - 09
KJ7PO	Sep - 09
W5XFM	Sep - 09
KG7Q	Sep - 09
NW1O	Sep - 10
K8XF	Sep - 10
W3RWJ	Sep - 10
KB5FU	Sep - 10
NX0V	Sep - 10
KB7ZTI	Sep - 11
W0OWY	Sep - 11
K9WA	Sep - 11
W0MU	Sep - 12
N9PC	Sep - 12
WG9A	Sep - 12
N8MBW	Sep - 12
N9STL	Sep - 12
N5DUQ	Sep - 12
W5SM	Sep - 12
KD6WW	Sep - 13
WU7R	Sep - 13
N8RYD	Sep - 13
K4NK	Sep - 14
WA9QNI	Sep - 14
WA5OPO	Sep - 14
NE5Y	Sep - 15
N7CYQ	Sep - 15
KJ4KX	Sep - 15
KF4PHW	Sep - 15
KG5IZ	Sep - 15

Roadrunner - Birthdays	
Call	**Birthday Date**
KF2GP	Sep - 16
VK7BA	Sep - 16
W3IQ	Sep - 16
K8NI	Sep - 16
W9CTA	Sep - 16
WA0LRQ	Sep - 16
WM3T	Sep - 17
AD7QN	Sep - 17
KG5RJ	Sep - 17
WA4CUU	Sep - 17
AK6H	Sep - 17
W0IM	Sep - 17
K0XT	Sep - 17
WJ9S	Sep - 17
N4PJ	Sep - 18
W6QE	Sep - 18
KE3NR	Sep - 18
N8MYC	Sep - 18
NX4P	Sep - 18
K5KDG	Sep - 19
K0HNC	Sep - 19
N5QQ	Sep - 19
NB7B	Sep - 20
KC7OD	Sep - 20
WB3JDC	Sep - 20
KA1OCL	Sep - 21
AC4SW	Sep - 21
WB7PMZ	Sep - 21
KN4CQ	Sep - 21
NN6AA	Sep - 21
W9NS	Sep - 21
VE2MAM	Sep - 21
N9BAE	Sep - 22
WT6P	Sep - 22
K0PVW	Sep - 22
K1CGI	Sep - 22
KL7IFP	Sep - 22

Roadrunner - Birthdays	
Call	Birthday Date
N9IHZ	Sep - 22
N0GUR	Sep - 23
W3CR	Sep - 23
KA6RAT	Sep - 23
KR4ZH	Sep - 23
K2UF	Sep - 23
K7SEN	Sep - 24
AD8W	Sep - 24
N4MIC	Sep - 24
KG4FJC	Sep - 24
KA1SF	Sep - 25
N7WO	Sep - 25
N0XYL	Sep - 25
KR4OE	Sep - 25
K3VQO	Sep - 25
KD5YN	Sep - 25
KB5WY	Sep - 26
AJ0C	Sep - 26
W5HV	Sep - 26
N0UF	Sep - 26
KO4EA	Sep - 27
WB0JYB	Sep - 27
AE2Z	Sep - 27
W7KFA	Sep - 27
W8EB	Sep - 27
W7FGD	Sep - 28
K9FP	Sep - 28
NK8P	Sep - 28
K7GA	Sep - 28
KD4RKJ	Sep - 29
WA6OTV	Sep - 29
WA2CNJ	Sep - 29
W1IBS	Sep - 29
N5KB	Sep - 29
N4RNR	Sep - 29
N5VT	Sep - 29
K0BXF	Sep - 29

Roadrunner - Birthdays	
Call	Birthday Date
KC3X	Sep - 29
N4NX	Sep - 29
WA1ZIC	Sep - 30

Treasurer's Report (W0NAC)
July 2012*

Beginning Account Balances Apr 16, 2012   **$0.00**

Income:
Money Market Interest	$0.13	
Awards Manager Income	$888.00	
Membership Income	$409.87	
Logger distribution	$80.00	
Excess Seed Money Return From 2012 Natl	$263.43	
Total Income:		$1,641.43

Expenses:
Awards Manager Expenses	$629.64	
Office Expenses	$161.53	
One Time Register Of MARAC With CO	$100.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	$156.11	
Total Expenses:		$1,047.28

Net Income Less Expenses   **$594.15**

Seed Money Returned From 2012 National   **$3,000.00**

Transfer Of Funds From Outgoing Treasurer   **$27,470.60**

Net Fund Transactions: **$31,064.75**

Checking Account Balance	$5064.62	
Money Market Account Balance	$26,000.13	
Total:		**$31,064.75**

Note:
The following monies are not included in the above:
    Awards Chairman's Funds $1,500.00

* Includes Some Transactions Recorded Through 14 August

Awards Manager's Report
August 31, 2012

Funds Balance July 31, 2012   **$1,500.00**

Income $ 1361.00
                                                              $ 1361.00

Expenses:
   Office supplies $ 00.00
   Plaque Suppliers $ 319.00
   Postage $ 145.58
                                                              $ 464.58

Sent to Treasurer $ 1361.00
Reimbursement received from Treasurer $ 464.58

Funds Balance August 31, 2012   **$1500.00**

Calendar

~ September 2012 ~						▶
Sun	**Mon**	**Tue**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sa**
ONLY START DATE SHOWN	CLICK ON EVENT TO GO TO THAT WEB SITE					1 CW OPEN CO QP STRT KEY QP
2 TN QP	3	4	5	6	7	8 AR QP
9 NA CW SPRINT	10	11	12	13	14	15 SC QP
16 NA SSB SPRINT	17 RUN 4 BACON	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 CQ RTTY TX QP	27	28	29
30	Notes:					

Dave's Call
Dave, KU4YM

The last couple of months have not looked good in the RoadRunner.

First, we had the missing half of Gary's (K4EXT) History Happens article. I have yet to figure out what happened there. It even happened again the next month when we tried to rerun the article. A work-around was finally found so the whole article showed up.

Then in that issue, Gary's tribute to Rev. Art lost a lot of it's formatting making it more difficult to discern the various tributes. Gary was, rightfully, not happy. I probably could have fixed that had I been paying proper attention.

In that same issue (August) Dave's (KE3VV) tribute to Marty lost some of it's formatting also. The article should have wrapped around her picture like his original article was given to me. Try as I might, I could not restore the word-wrap around the picture.

The only thing I have determined is that the more the Word document is formatted, the more likely some of that formatting is going to get lost when I import it into the page layout program I use for the RoadRunner (Adobe's InDesign - which used to be Pagemaker).

In some cases, I can solve the problem by converting the Word document to a ".pdf" file; but that didn't work with Dave's article. Sometimes upgrading the article from a ".doc" to a ".docx" file works; sometimes not.

For the record, converting something into a '.pdf' file does NOT change the formatting. In fact it preserves it.

Some of you are far more computer literate than I; if you have some ideas to solve these occasional problems, please let me know.

Lastly, I want to thank ALL the contributors to the RoadRunner. Without you, there would be no RoadRunner.

Thanks and
73   Dave/KU4YM

The County Line Roadrunner
MARAC Secretary
2690 Bohicket Rd
Johns Island, SC 29455

"A Road Runner Is A Very Fast Bird"

Monthly Deadline for Articles is the 25th!

Board of Directors
President: David Splitt, KE3VV, 6111 Utah Ave NW, Washington DC 20015, 301-300-2818, davidsplitt@erols.com
Vice-President: Leo Bingham, WY7LL, 28 Buck Dr, Pine Haven, WY 82721, 307-686-8230, wy7ll.lightningleo@gmail.com
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Computer Data Manager: Gene A Olig Sr, KD9ZP, W 4325 4th St Rd, Fond du Lac, WI 54937, 920-923-0130, kd9zp@att.net
Dues with an Electronic copy of the Newsletter copy are $14.00 per year, check or money order; $14.75 via PayPal.