



THE COUNTY LINE ROADRUNNER

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Riding the County Lion

Dave – KE3VV

Finally got back on the highways and byways for a real road trip – the Big Green Dragon providing the Happy Motoring and the County Lion riding shotgun. I had taken the Amtrak AutoTrain down to Florida for an early 90th birthday dinner with my Mom and to attend the premier fundraising Gala for the Coral Restoration Foundation (www.coralrestoration.org) of which I am the past Chairman of the Board and current Secretary-Treasurer. We raised over \$115,000 at the event, so it was a great success even though it was the first time. I had to wear a suit and tie – which always gets a big roar out of the County Lion. I drove back North through Blacksburg, Virginia, for the Opening Night of a production of Agamemnon, which was directed by my eldest daughter, Amy. A great performance – although the County Lion is not a big fan of Greek drama, so he hung out with the Big Green Dragon and waited for the cast party (he never misses one of those).

The good news on the two-day trip from Key Largo to Blacksburg was the price of petrol. Those of us who live in the Northeast are envious of the (relatively) cheap cost of gas in the Southern realms... mostly due I suspect to lower add-on taxes, with some contribution from lower gas station property rents and transportation costs. One can always keep the price of food when traveling in the South to a minimum (while eating a delicious and filling meal) by frequenting the many Waffle House franchises that dot the landscape with the familiar yellow sign. I am especially fond of their grits with a healthy dollop or two of Tabasco sauce. Of course, I can't save any money on lodging because I am addicted to the comfy mattresses and pillows provided by those wonderful folks at Holiday Inn Express. I am a big advocate of getting a restful night's snooze when on the road and driving long hours. (More)

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The bad news for the trip was the poor timing on the repair of my IC-7000 main mobile rig, which was “ready” two days after I left. I had to make do with the older IC-706MkII, which is not a bad rig, but in this case the microphone (one of those fancy one with lots of buttons to manage frequency changes and other rig functions) decided to become in-op. So I was forced to re-locate the rig and use the band change buttons on the console to move up and down, and was only able to operate CW. I had antennas for 40-30-20-15, but made 99% of my contacts on 20m. A few on 40 and 30 – 15 did not seem to be open.

I was a bit surprised at the lack of activity on 40m CW (because I hear a lot of complaints that “no one runs 40m for the close in contacts). Even for those who were not actively monitoring 40m, my initial 20m runs in every county were posted, and I QSY’d to 40-30-15 afterwards, so the BabyMonitor/Spots Watchers could have figured that out even if no specific spots were made for any other bands. Maybe the conditions (and general lack of activity on CW) had something to do with it. Also, I was not running any particularly rare counties, unless you count Stokes, NC and Grayson, Floyd, Giles, and Craig VA. I still made enough contacts to have to endure the usual logging chore. We need to figure out a neat interface for a voice recognition way to enter contacts into Logger (in my dreams).

On the way North, I had an opportunity to contemplate the proper pronunciation of some of the counties though which the Dragon, Lion, and I traveled. Most of the counties in Florida are pretty simple... starting in Monroe and wandering up the East Coast. I suppose some hard core mis-pronouncers might goof up St. Lucie (Saint Lucy, as in “Lucy, I’m Home!”) or Brevard (Bree –VARD), but even Okeechobee is pretty easy if you just read the letters. There is some dispute over the correct way to pronounce Osceola (with long or short initial “O” and “E” in the diphthong), but the proper way is to shorten the Capital O (“os” as in “boss”) and then the “e” is shortened (sounds like an “a” in “say”) followed by a long “o” - oss-ay-OH-la, but I bet you knew that. Purists (and Texans) know that Duval is pronounced “doo-VAL” with the accent on the second syllable – the same as Duval County in Texas.

Nothing to strain the labials in Georgia, although one of my favorite counties is Effingham, Georgia, for all the obvious 8th grade scatological reasons. When asked to use it in a sentence, I usually say, “Who was that Effingham tuning up on the net frequency.” The County Lion tells me that the literal translation of Effingham is “LID.” Motoring though south and central South Carolina is not much of a challenge for the verbally challenged, with the possible exception of Colleton (Oh, come on, we have all heard that said correctly). In fact, other than Beaufort, there are no really tough counties to pronounce in South Carolina, which I imagine is in deference to the educational system in the Palmetto State. Both the County and the City are pronounced with a long “U” so it is BYEW- furt (and it being South Carolina, the whole word is pronounced at length).

EXTRA CREDIT QUIZ – How is Beaufort County, North Carolina pronounced? If you guessed the same way as the county in South Carolina, you can turn in your Gazetteer. It is pronounced BOW-furt (as in BOW and arrow) or BEAU-furt for the Francophiles amongst us. This is the same pronunciation as the Beaufort Sea north of Alaska and the Beaufort scale, which measures wind velocity.

We are getting close to the national convention in South Dakota, so I hope everyone has made their hotel reservations and registered. I am especially looking forward to Mount Rushmore... I want to compare it to the big heads on the racing presidents at the Washington Nationals baseball games. This will be your

only chance to meet the County Lion in person until the SE Mini, so gather up the chillun' and the XYL or OM and head North. Do not strap your dog to the car roof.

We are also going to need a new Awards Manager. As you all should be aware, this is the most important position in MARAC (it is MUCH more important than President or any other officer or board member and is approached in importance only by the Newsletter Editor and Historian). So if you are interested in discussing this appointment with me, please drop me an email. The transition will not happen until after the National, so there is plenty of time to learn the ropes from Bob. The position comes with a nice computer and printer, as well as the undying gratitude of all the paper chasers and wooden car collectors.

Also, if we are going to have a MARAC mobile contest this year, we will need to find someone who wants to run it. This is not the most popular among the many contests and QSO parties, so we really need to consider whether it is a MARAC priority to continue to run it (unless no one wants to manage it, in which case the decision is made). Let me hear your thoughts via email.

The County Lion and the Dragon are hollering that this column is overdue (and so is dinner), so until next month - 73 and 88 from The Prez, The Lion, and the Fire-Breathin' Dragon. Keep those cards and letters pouring in.



New Members

MARAC Number
R4531

Callsign
AF1HS

Name
Art Fregeau



Dateline CW

Ed, KN4Y

Unwritten rule; enter a county before running it.

I have been sitting by the radio for three hours, tuning up and down the bands looking for a station on CW in the Alaska QSO party. I would like to try out on CW the longer exchange than most QSO parties that includes a grid square. I finally give up and quit for the evening. Later I arrive at my radio shack just as Gator pulls into the driveway. I wave as I open the shack door go in and turn on the radio and lights. Gator enters, "Good morning Dude what have you got in the basket." "These are the Easter eggs not found by the county hunters." "I find that hard to believe, where were the eggs hidden?" "They were on three county lines." We have a good laugh as I start the coffee maker. The unwritten rule prohibits talking before having a cup of coffee. We listen to the radio to see who is running and drink our coffee.

Gator breaks the silence."How did you do in the Alaska QSO party?" "Nil, nada never hear a station on CW. I think the exchange was too long for CW." "What was it?" I smile, "The number of caribou shot last month, the operator's Call, the operator's truck manufacture, and their Grid square." "You got to be kidding." I am laughing so hard I can hardly talk, "I made that up. The exchange is: Serial number, call, name and Grid Square." Gator waves his hands, "That is about the same type exchange used in the 10-10 QSO party. Perhaps it should not be called a QSO party but something dramatic like the Alaska Challenge or Alaska Excursion." I hand Gator another cup of coffee, "Calm down Gator you are getting too excited, drink your coffee."

I point out the window, "I notice you have the sawed off shot gun on the back window of your truck, why?" "Well out on the back forty there are mosquitoes so big, four of them could carry you off. I use the shotgun to cause their demise." "I knew Florida has a new large mosquito, but you are exaggerating." "Remember Dude these mosquitoes fly thought the vacuum jets exhaust on the ethanol unit." "I see your point, by the way what is in the back of your truck?" "Those are 64-ounce growlers; a county hunter in the Florida panhandle wants to buy them." Time for a subject change, "Gator please run my Missouri QSO party log." Gator pushes the go button on the computer.

"No bragging rights, you got 15 no-star and two 2x1 prefix. What is this Texas State Parks? You got 2 CW contacts." "This is the first annual Texas State Parks on the Air contest, with hopefully, an amateur radio station transmitting from each park." "You only made two CW contacts." "They are the only stations I heard on CW, but I am still part of history. I hope maybe next year the CW county hunters will get involved and transmit from one the 99 parks locations." "I see they have a Mustang Island, is it like..." "NO, here have a chocolate bunny." Gator looks at the large envelope on the desk, "Did you get another certificate?" I open the envelope, "Sure did, I came in fourth place in the Florida QSO party with 1153 QSO's and ran in 23 counties. I actually made 1212 QSO's but I made some copy errors and was penalized, but the real reason was the superb competition by mobile operators who are able to pass a rest area." "How did we do in the Georgia QSO party?"

"As you know we operated mobile on a sunny Saturday in 21 counties making 680 QSO's in the following order: Grady(43), Mitchell (37), Dougherty (25), Lee (69), Sumter (35), Schley (26), Taylor (43), Crawford (3), Peach (23), Houston (21), Twiggs (19), Bleckley (16), Dodge (52), Telfair (43), Jeff

Davis (23), Bacon (38), Ware(56), Clinch (29), Lanier (15), Lowndes (51), Brooks (13). We ran out of time and did not run Echols and Thomas County. Sunday I stopped and ran Seminole (31), Early (40) and Decatur (74) before going to a bowling tournament. The weather got stormy and I went home after bowling.” “How were the bands?” “Great we made 313 QSO’s on 40-meters, 476 QSO’s on 20-meters, 33 QSO’s on 15-meters and 3 QSO’s on 10-meters. We also worked 41 states and 5 provinces.” “Which states did you miss?” “The ones I did not work.” Gator ignores me and goes back to the computer. I ask Gator to run my Michigan QSO party log. Gator sips his coffee as he plays with the mouse, he turns around, “You were able to get six new Michigan counties on 80-meters.” “Not bad for the few hours I operated, how about the Florida QSO party? How did we do?” Gators cell phone activates, “Sorry Dude, Florida will have to wait, there seems to be a problem with a steam pump. He is gone like quarters in Reno. I hear Gator yell, “I never said when I retire, I’m moving north.”

The printer stops, it is a list of stations that operated during April on the county hunter’s CW call frequencies. I read; AF3X, AK8A, J75PX, K0ARS, K0FG, K3IMC, K4EXT, K4YT, K5RE, K7TM, K8ZZ, K9JWD, KA4RRU, KB0BA, KC3X, KC7YE, KE3VV, KN4Y, N0AX, N0KV, N4CD, N4JT, N7IV, N9JF, NM2L, TO5P, VA3XOV, VK4AAR, W0NAC, W3DQT, W3DYA, W4HSA, W4SIG, W5QP, W7FEN, W9MSE, W9OP and WA4UNS,

I look at the radio activity list for this month and the CW county hunters will have plenty to do. There is the Ten-Ten Spring CW QSO party; I will be calling on ten meters and hope to work you. There is 7th area QSO party with 258 counties up for grabs, the Indiana QSO party with 92 counties up for grabs, the New England QSO party with 67 counties up for grabs. The Nevada Mustang Roundup and His Majesty King of Spain Contest are fun CW outings. Do not forget the CQ WW WPX CW contest, it is a blast. Dang nap it, I was going to mention the MARAC convention to be held in Deadwood South Dakota July 10th thru the 14th, but a nap over took me. There are more chickens than CW county hunters in the world.



Notes

Ray, WA2CNJ sent along this link to a map showing counties that are larger than some states.

<http://www.howderfamily.com/graphics/blog/counties-larger-than-states.png>

(Ed. Berkeley SC is not shown, however. It’s larger than RI)

County Spotlight

Gary, K4EXT

This month's county spotlight is on Gates County, North Carolina. The county is named after General Horatio Gates, who led colonial American forces to victory at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. The county was organized in 1779 from parts of Chowan, Hertford, and Perquimans Counties.

Gates County is located in far north-east North Carolina and is home to 13 ham radio operators but no Waffle Houses. Gatesville, the county seat, includes 322 residents and is located about an hour south of Chesapeake, Virginia.



Gates County, North Carolina



Gates County Courthouse, 1836

On August 18, 2010 Jim, VA3XOV ran Gates County, North Carolina which was the USA-CA Whole-Ball-of-Wax (WBOW) county for Kerry, W4SIG. The photo below shows Jim physically highlighting that all-important last county for Kerry! Whether Jim hurt (hert?) the county sign with his acrobatics ... I still don't know.



MARAC Voting Information

Remember, if you are a new member or are REJOINING following a lapse in membership, you are NOT Religible to submit nominations or vote in an election until the first day of the month following receipt of the payment of dues and valid membership application by the MARAC Secretary. Those individuals maintaining uninterrupted membership status are not restricted from nominating or voting in the current month.

CW CHOTY N0KV Nominated by Jerry – W0GXQ

Barry Mitchell N0KV

I am nominating Barry Mitchell, N0KV for CW County Hunter of the Year. Barry satisfies all of the requirements as spelled out on page 15 of the current Awards Rules.

First licensed in 1963, Barry remembers operating 75 meter mobile from his VW. He received his present call sign in 1979 following college. An Air Force career and a lot of DX'ing occurred before getting back to county hunting in 2003. Since that time, he has operated Mobile from all of the states in the U.S. including 2,076 different counties. During these trips he has provided 420 "Last Counties" for the county hunters. His CW operating skills are excellent!

Since 2003 Barry has earned US –CA 3rd time, Bingo II, and completed Master Gold in August 2012. He has experience as Net Control/Assistant Net Control on both the CW and SSB nets. In 2007, Barry was a member of the planning committee for the MARAC National Convention. During that same convention, he assisted Larry, W0QE with the "Mobile Bakeoff" which provided many in attendance with the opportunity to receive an accurate test of their mobile installations. In addition to this convention, Barry has attended other National and Mini conventions in support of MARAC and county hunting.

Barry has earned DXCC Honor Roll status and continues as a DXCC card checker for the ARRL. In addition, he is certified as a Volunteer Examiner for the FCC.

Since the seventies Barry has been involved with the State Search and Rescue operation. He is also the primary Communication Unit leader for the Douglas County Incident Management Team (IMT), which is an integral part of FEMA. He designed and built six portable VHF repeaters in support of this effort.

In 2004 Barry set up an ongoing classroom and field training program for members of ARES to become communication technicians to assist the IMT.

Always willing to help others, Barry provided the fabrication tools and assisted W0NAC with construction iterations of the “Flying Saucer” antenna resonators designed by W9UCW.

Barry has held the position of MARAC South Central Director since February 2011.

CW CHOTY K4EXT Nominated by Nominated by Kerry–

W4SIG

**Gary Beam
K4EXT**

I was first licensed back in 1968 at the ripe old age of 16. Indianapolis was my home at the time ... subsequent operating QTH's included Florida, Texas, Alabama, and now Tennessee. I operated CW exclusively for my first 27 years as a ham.

I'm still somewhat of a newbie to County Hunting, having been at it for less than 6 years. 2012 was a very good year for me as I managed to finish up USA-CA, USA-CW, and Bingo! I have operated both fixed and mobile in several MARAC Contests, even grabbing a couple of plaques for just having fun. My son (Justin, KG4VBK) and I like to get out-n-about on occasion in the nearby Appalachian mountains ... passing out counties on both SSB and CW while mobile in Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Western North Carolina.

I volunteered to become MARAC Historian in December 2009 and have since developed and maintained the <http://www.CHarchive.com> County Hunting history website, written a History Happens column for the monthly MARAC Roadrunner newsletter, and most recently created a strange yet somewhat interesting project called the County Sign Picture Database

SSB CHOTY KU4YM Nominated by Kerry–

W4SIG

**Dave Hyatt
KU4YM**

A Ham wanna-be in the 50's, I didn't get my license until I retired (the first time) in 1998. After the usual WAC, WAS and DXCC goals, I discovered County Hunting in 2002; however, I was very limited in what I could do because of a deed-restricted home

and an extremely noisy Prius. As a result, over the years I have only been able to put out about 100 counties, including all of South Carolina. Those totals are minor compared with what our other County Hunters do. And indeed, I felt bad about “taking” counties without the capability of giving many back in return.

Then in 2005, an opportunity presented itself: former president Bill, K2NJ(SK), appealed for a new newsletter editor for RoadRunner. Of course, I did not realize all that a newsletter editor would have to do, but I volunteered to work and welcomed the challenge. I have been fortunate to have the job of gathering informative, entertaining, and meaningful pieces written by our County Hunters. I am grateful for County Hunters’ attention to the specifications required for articles and value suggestions, which continue to improve RoadRunner. In 2005, our newsletter had an eight-page limitation (extremely severe and which, I admit, sometimes found it necessary to ignore). Over time, I was able to expand those limitations. Other changes, too, have been made to the RoadRunner over these seven years. For instance, RoadRunner now is usually over 25 pages.

Some of my radio activities include: serving as a Volunteer Examiner for W4VEC and ARRL and as a member of the Berkeley County ARES. Overall though, editing RoadRunner each month has been my primary focus; the work is certainly a way to give back something for all the good that County Hunters do, and the RoadRunner is my offering to serve a fine group of people

County Hunter of the Year CW

N0KV _____

K4EXT _____

County Hunter of the Year SSB

KU4YM _____

Your call sign: _____ MARAC # or Election Key _____

Kent Reinke KV7N
MARAC Election Coordinator
1826 East 4500 North
Buhl, Idaho 83316



History Happens

Gary, K4EXT

I want to take this opportunity to thank folks that have contributed photos and other goodies to the MARAC Museum ... ie, that ever-growing pile of stuff located in my radio room closet!

In particular, I want to comment that the number of digital pictures sent in for the County Sign Database Project has been phenomenal. There are currently over 1150 county sign photos in the database which are displayed on the CH History website at:

<http://www.CHarchive.com/cntys.asp>

Please dig through your photo archives and Email me any old county sign pictures you find. And please keep me in mind (with regards to CL pics) on your future CH trips too! Photos of 3077 County Line signs sounds like an unattainable goal, but CH'ers have completed some incredible accomplishments over the years, so why not this one too?

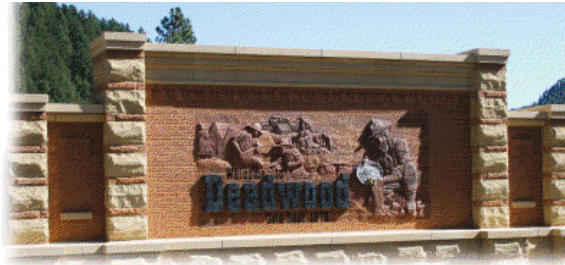
Other items recently received include some 1980's County Hunter Handbooks and County Hunter Award/Coupon Books from Mary, AB7NK and St. Neil, K7SEN ... and reprints of the USA-CA Program column by Ed Hopper in CQ Magazine (1965-67) from Kurt, KC9UNL. Lots of material for future Roadrunner articles for sure!

Bob, N8KIE sent me the picture below which includes the Honolulu name for both city and county. Finding a dedicated county line sign in states like Hawaii and Alaska can be a major challenge!



National

Please join us for the
2013 MARAC
National Convention



in the Beautiful **BLACK HILLS** OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Deadwood, SD



DEADWOOD

DEADWOOD, DAKOTA TERRITORY

WILD BILL HICKOK

DEAD MAN'S HAND

MT. MORIAH CEMETERY

ADAMS HOUSE & MUSEUM

BROKEN BOOT

DEADWOOD, 1890S

DEADWOOD MAIN STREET

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 Cemetery, 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.

45TH ANNUAL MARAC NATIONAL CONVENTION

JULY 10TH THRU JULY 13TH 2013

(Deadline for Early Registration Prize Drawing is May 1, 2013)

Name: (First, Last and Callign) _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip : _____

ADDITIONAL NAME BADGES/TROLLEY PASS \$/.00 EACH

NAME _____ CALL _____ USA-CA _____

NAME: _____ CALL _____ USA-CA _____

NAME _____ CALL _____ USA-CA _____

REGISTRATION INCLUDES 1 BADGE & TROLLEY PASS, 1 PRIZE TICKET

1 CASH TICKET & E-MAILED PHOTOS AND AS MUCH FUN AS WY/LL

AND WY7ML CAN PROVIDE YOU... ALL FOR _____ \$37.00

FRIDAY NIGHT BBQ RIBS*HOTDOGS*BURGERS*SALADS & CHIPS X \$23.00 ea. \$ _____

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET 4 MEAT APPET X \$30.00 ea. \$ _____

PRIZE TICKETS \$1.00 EACH OR BOOK OF TWELVE \$10.00 \$ _____

CASH TICKETS \$1.00 EACH OR BOOK OF TWELVE \$10.00 \$ _____

THURSDAY MORNING TOUR : Historic Deadwood Including Boot Hill Cemetery with Wild

Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane *Flonesta Gold Mine *Roundhouse Living Map X \$20.00 ea. \$ _____

THURSDAY AFTERNOON TOUR: Keystone shopping & buy your own lunch *

1880 Train to Hill City * Prairie Berry Winery X \$35.00 \$ _____

(If you take both tours Thursday... \$50.00 total save \$5.00) Both Tours X \$ 50.00 _____

FRIDAY TOUR OPTION ONE: Mt Rushmore- Crazy Horse buy your own lunch X \$25.00 \$ _____

Leave at 9:00 be at Rushmore about one hour... about 2 1/2 hours at Crazy Horse

for lunch back about 4:00

FRIDAY TOUR OPTION TWO: Mt Rushmore * Iron Mountain Road

Custer State Park * Buy your own lunch at State Game Lodge

Needles Highway * Crazy Horse... Leaves @ 8:00 back @ 6:00 X \$67.00ea. _____

Mail To: Leo Bingham WY7LL

28 Buck Drive

Pine Haven, Wyoming

82721

GRAND TOTAL: _____

make Check Payable To Leo Bingham

Digital Happenings #9

(April 2013)

By W0NAC ("Matt")

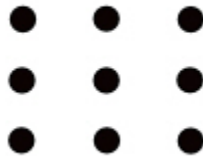
Another month has slipped into oblivion! When one gets to be my age (80), time not only seems to pass more quickly, but the rate appears to accelerate! Oh well, we all know in our hearts that our lives are limited. We should all make our lives count for something while we have the opportunity, but also have some fun (county hunting?) along the way.

By the time you read this, Sharon and I will have completed a loop around Western Colorado. We are planning to put out the rest of the 17 Colorado counties I need to complete the 5-Mode State award. Sharon will hopefully complete most of the counties she needs for the 5-Mode State award also (still needs 3 in Eastern Colorado). Our complete trip plan was published on K3IMC's County Hunter site as well as sent to many of you direct by email. I hope we made a lot of folk happy! Detailed results of the trip will be published next month.

Challenge Department:

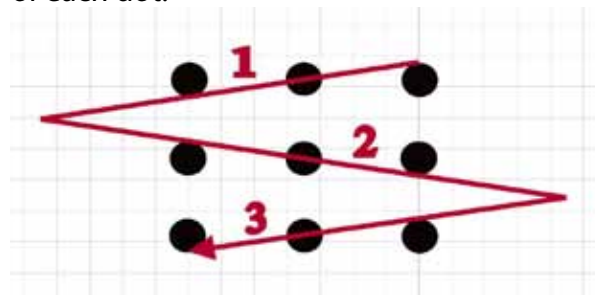
Last month I challenged you to solve a new puzzle as stated below:

Can you connect all 9 dots in the figure below with just 3 straight lines without lifting your pen from the paper and never crossing over any of the lines?



Four people (K4PBX – Jim, W6TPC – Harry, NX0X – Brian, and K1TKL – Paul) sent in correct solutions.

One correct solution is shown below: You will note that you have to really “think outside the box” to solve this latest problem. The key to solving this problem was to abandon the notion that your lines must go through the center of each dot!



Now, I would like to challenge you again with a different problem:

What is the shortest word in the English dictionary that contains all 5 vowels once and only once and in exact alphabetical order?

I will provide a correct solution in next month's article along with a list of who sent in a correct

solution. Send your solutions to w0nac@comcast.net .

Digital Mode Tests:

As anyone who has tried putting out digital counties while mobile can testify, it is absolutely mandatory that you make the process as efficient as possible. Otherwise one can spend literally hours sitting in a county or on a county line and get almost nowhere travel-wise! A part of this optimization is your choice of the digital modes/sub-modes that you use. I have started a series of tests that will hopefully result in a short list of digital modes/sub-modes which are best for use when putting out digital counties while mobile.

Terry (WQ7A) and I ran over-the-air tests of 83 different digital modes/sub-modes to determine their Bandwidth, Time (seconds) to pass 100 characters, Words/Minute, and recorded general comments on delays, copy, etc. The list of 83 modes/sub-modes was developed by listing every "Op Mode" option available in the latest version (3.21.70) of Fldigi. If you would like to review the detailed results of this test, you can download them from: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/26171574/Modes_Submodes%20Test%2002.xlsx .

The Bandwidths observed ranged from a low of ~40 Hz for BPSK-31 to a maximum of 2200 Hz for Feld Hell X9. Time to pass 100 characters ranged from a minimum of ~2 seconds (600 WPM) for BPSK-1000 to a maximum of 290 seconds (4.1 WPM) for Slow Hell. In other words, speeds ranged from blindingly fast to "slower than molasses in January".

Based on these results I selected 18 modes/sub-modes which warrant further testing (shown below)

Mode/Sub-Mode Candidates

Mode	Sub-Mode #1	Sub-Mode #2	Sub-Mode #3
CONTESTIA	8/1000		
DOMINOEX	16	22	44
HELL	80		
MFSK	31	32	64
OLIVIA	8/1000		
PSK	BPSK-63	BPSK-125	BPSK-250
RTTY	45	75N	75W
THOR	22		
THROB	4	X4	

Sharon and I will have used as many of these modes/sub-modes as we can on our Colorado trip. How our "on-the-road" tests turn out will be reported on next month. Hopefully, I can pare this list down some more based on our test results and offer some recommendations at the Digital meeting next July in Deadwood.

Now on to the main topic for this month....

Other Interesting Digital Modes:

I will start with the JT-65 Mode. This mode was originally created by Joe Taylor (K1JT) and a friendly user interface has been created by W6CQZ. A screen shot of this mode in real time operation is shown below:

The screenshot shows the JT65-HF software interface. The title bar indicates 'JT65-HF Version 1.0.9.3 [RB Enabled, logged in. QRG = 14076 KHz] [WONAC QRV]'. The interface includes a menu bar (Setup, Rig Control, Raw Decoder, Transmit Log, About JT65-HF), a frequency display (14076 KHz), and a large waterfall plot. The current operation is 'Receiving'. The QSO log is displayed below the plot, showing a list of exchanges with columns for UTC, Sync, dB, DT, DF, and Exchange. The log entries are as follows:

UTC	Sync	dB	DT	DF	Exchange
02:33	6	-6	-0.1	727	B WA2HIP W3SFG 73
02:33	1	-20	-0.2	533	B WA2HIP KN3A -06
02:33	5	-16	0.4	318	B CQ KF7LF DN17

02:32	4	-17	-0.1	24	B CQ KB7RPE CN87
02:31	3	-3	-0.0	727	B WA2HIP W3SFG 73
02:31	7	-13	-0.2	522	B CQ KN3A FN10
02:31	5	-20	-0.0	92	B LW5DMF KC9NWH R-07
02:30	3	-19	-1.0	24	K CQ KB7RPE CN87

The interface also features a 'Message To TX' section with 'TX OFF' and 'TX Generated' options, and a 'Log QSO' button. The bottom right corner shows 'Sound In: 04-Microphone (USB Audio CODEC)' and 'Sound Out: 08-Speakers (USB Audio CODEC)'.

JT-65 is a very interesting mode! It is growing in popularity almost daily. It uses very "canned" exchange messages which (if free text) are restricted to 13 total characters from a restricted pallet of upper case letters, numbers, and a few other special characters. Each pre-formatted exchange takes exactly 60 seconds to complete. 48 seconds are used for transmitting (or receiving) the data. The other 12 seconds is used for decoding the data sent or received during the previous 48 seconds.

A total of 5 exchanges are normally done to complete a contact. They might go something like this:

- 1) CQ KB7RPE CN87
- 2) KB7RPE W0NAC DM79
- 3) W0NAC KB7RPE -05
- 4) KB7RPE W0NAC -04
- 5) W0NAC KB7RPE RRR
- 6) KB7RPE W0NAC 73

The 6th exchange is not required to complete a valid contact, but is usually sent as a courtesy. One can get a little creative with this 6th exchange also and send some free text like "30W LOOP 73".

JT-65 is an excellent weak signal mode! You can reliably decode signals that are as much as -25 dB below the noise. This makes it very useable when you have small antennas, operate with low power, and live in a high noise area. In other words, if you live in a condo/apartment with CC&Rs that limit you to "stealth" antennas, low power, etc., this is the mode for you as it will work when SSB or even CW won't!

There is an excellent piece of free software called "PSK Reporter" (It works well for JT-65 and other modes also). This software organizes data from a very large number of "reverse beacon" stations which are listening for digital signals on all bands 24/7. A screen shot of this program in operation is given below:



I set this up to display all signals sent by KB7RPE using JT-65 over the last 1 hour that were received by a monitoring station. All 118 stations monitoring JT-65 signals on 20 Meters are shown in pale yellow balloons. Those who received KB7RPE's JT-65 signal are shown with darker yellow flags containing time since last heard. You can see that KB7RPE is being heard all over the USA plus 2 monitors in South America heard him.

You can set up PSK Reporter to report on your own signals after putting out a CQ. You will be amazed at how far away you can be heard and decoded when using only a simple antenna and a few watts!

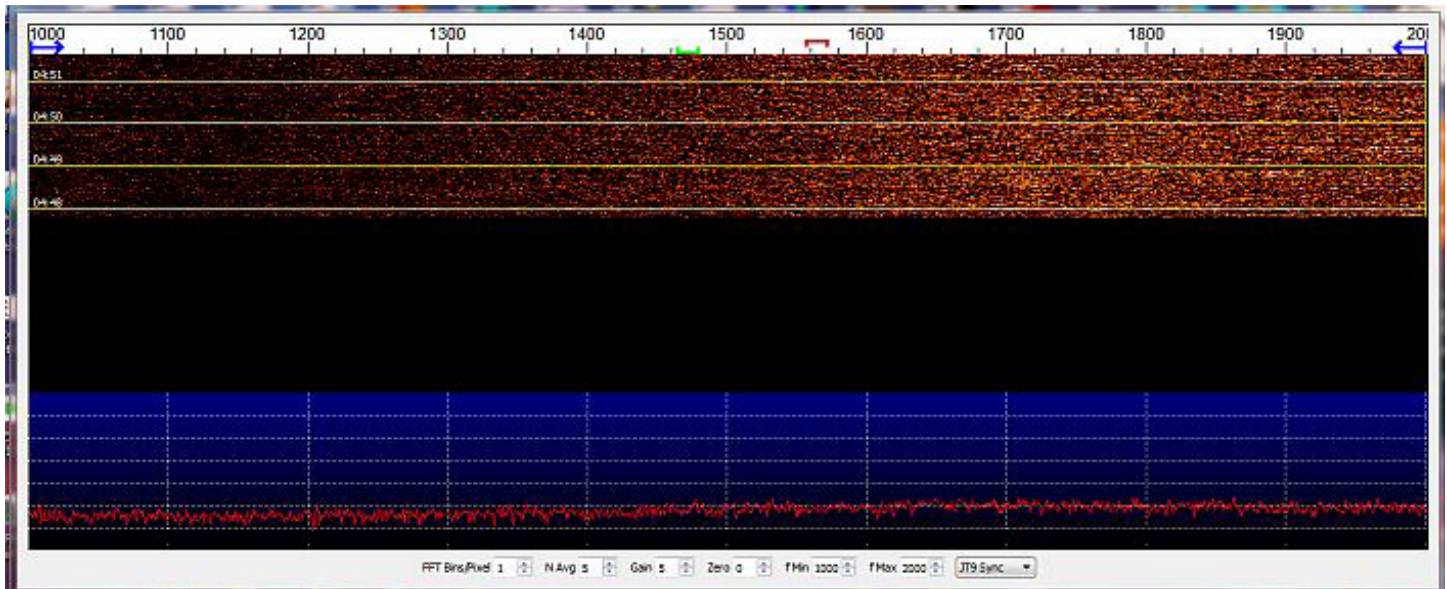
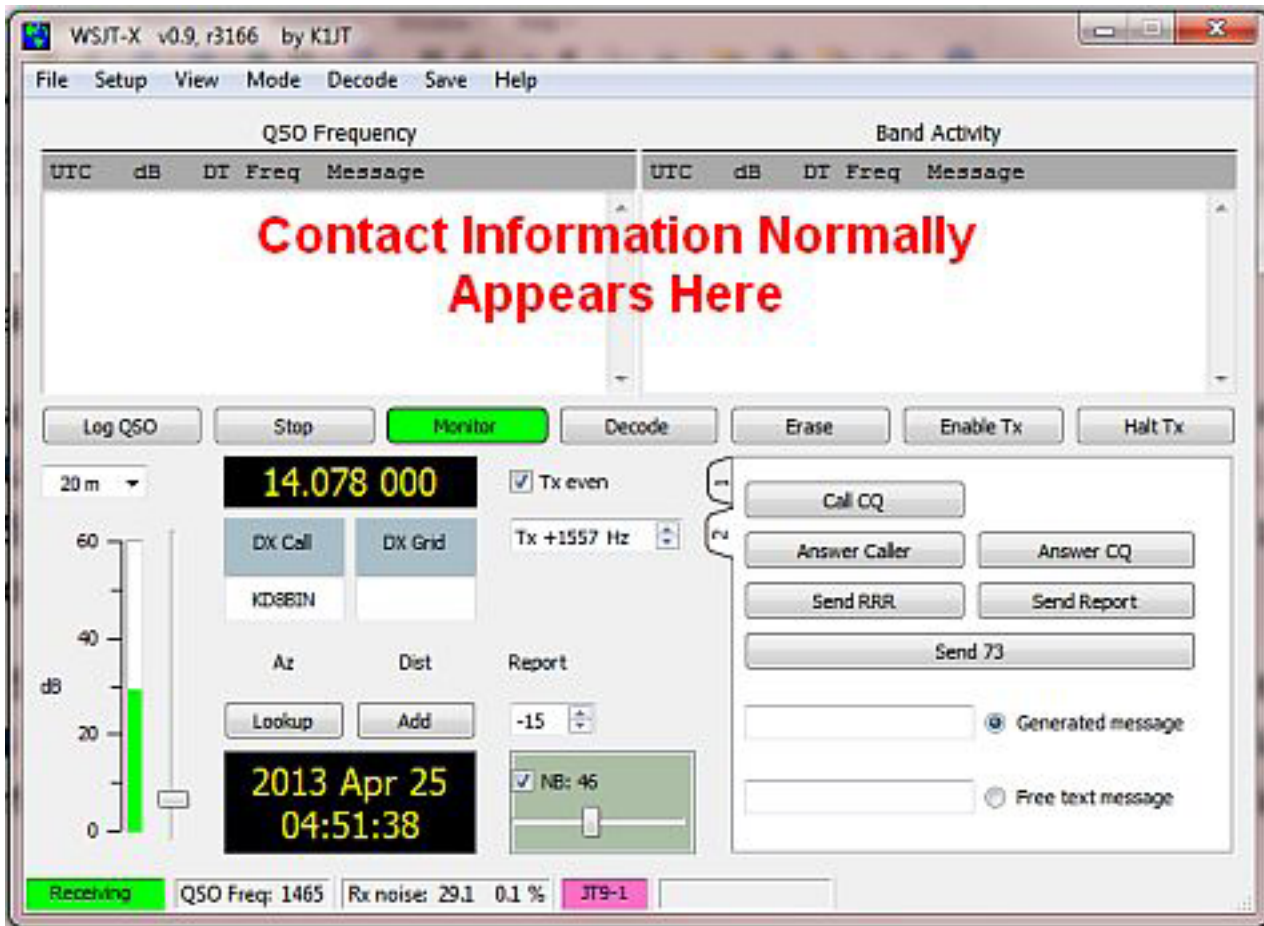
You might ask why I am recommending this mode for use by county hunters. After all, at first glance it appears to be wretchedly slow. My reply is that it is obviously pretty much useless for putting out counties when operating mobile (too slow). However, if you only wish to troll for new counties (when you are fixed or mobile), JT-65 can yield excellent results. If you are a fixed station working mobiles on the County Hunter Net, you might complete 6 to 8 contacts per hour. The exact number depends on how long the runs are. The percentage of these contacts that are "new" counties will vary widely depending on how close you are to finishing any particular award, but the number will generally be low.

By comparison, you can complete as many as 6 – 10 contacts per hour using JT-65. Yes, most of these will be fixed stations or DX, but many of them may be located in counties you need. Also, there seems to be a very large number of stations using JT-65 these days (on all bands from 160M – 10M) and usage is growing. I have been working JT-65 for some months now and seldom encounter a duplicate call sign. If you use it for "trolling" for new counties, I believe you will be pleasantly surprised.

If you are interested in DX, JT-65 is very popular all over the world. There are many DX stations using this mode and signals will usually get through even under the worst of conditions.

Next, I will briefly discuss a brand new digital mode by the name of JT9. JT9, like JT-65 was also created by Joe Taylor (K1JT). Unlike JT-65, JT9 has 5 sub-modes (JT9-1, JT9-2, JT9-5, JT9-10 and JT9-30). These sub-modes use 1, 2, 5, 10 and 30 minutes respectively for one exchange. Of these sub-modes, JT9-1 is the most popular right now and uses only 10% of the bandwidth of JT-65.

To complete a valid 5 exchange contact using JT9-30 would take 2 ½ hours! However, the signal produced by this mode is only 0.4 Hz wide! Also, extremely weak signals can be decoded which are -40 dB below the noise. The user interface consists of a waterfall/signal display and a control panel. They look like this on your screen:



These screens show no signals because it was 0500Z when they were captured and the 20M Band was totally dead at the time.

I don't have as much experience yet with JT9 as I do with JT-65, but I believe it will be another excellent county hunter "trolling" mode similar to JT-65. If the specifications prove out, it should be perhaps the best DX mode you can use! Time will tell...

JT9 is so new that it is not an “approved” mode for purposes of the new 5 – Mode Award. However, a proposed change to the MARAC rules is in process which will add JT9 to the approved list. If all goes well, this change may be on the Board agenda for approval at the next national in Deadwood. In the meantime, you can still make and log (on paper) any JT9 contacts you make. When the change is approved and Logger is changed, you should be able to apply these toward the 5-Mode Award.

Here are some links you may find useful if you wish to experiment with either JT-65 or JT9

- 1) Download JT-65 Setup - <http://hfradio.org.uk/> . This brings up G4UCJ’s welcome page. Scroll down a bit until you see the picture for JT65-HF. Click on picture to download setup file.
- 2) Download JT-65 Manual - <http://openhpsdr.org/wiki/images/0/0c/Jt65-hf-setup.pdf>
- 3) Download JT9 Setup/Manual – <http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/wsjt.html> This link will take you to the WSJT Home Page – Scroll down to “Downloads” where you will need to click on two items:
 - a) “WSJT-X User’s Guide”
 - b) “Windows WSJT-X (v0.9, r195)”

And then scroll down to “User’s Guide and Reference Manual and click on “English”

JT-65 is relatively easy to set up, but JT9 setup can be a little confusing because it is a selectable mode using the WSJT-X interface software. Call me (303-799-3658) if you have any problems you can’t figure out for yourself. I’ll be pleased to try, but results are not guaranteed as I am not an expert, particularly with JT9.

Both JT-65 and JT9 require that your computer clock be accurate to a second or less from true time. You will need a clock synchronization program to do this as computer clocks are notoriously inaccurate if left to their own devices. The program I use and recommend is “Time Sync” at <http://ravib.com/timesync/> .

April Activities:

Activities during April slowed down a bit from March. WA4UNS (Doug) put out a lot of digital counties in VA, NJ, and MD during late April. He used PSK-63, RTTY, and MFSK-16 on his runs. Good Job, Doug! W0NAC and N0LXJ will be putting out digital counties on 26 – 28 April in Western Colorado. We will be using several new modes/sub-modes as part of a test described earlier.

I have helped several people during April including WY8I and VK4AAR. As always, I stand ready to help anyone who has problems or wishes to get started with digital operations. Just email me or call me on the phone. My email is w0nac@comcast.net and my home phone number is 303-799-3658. Call any time.

Table 3 (below) has again been updated from last month. If I have left anyone off the list you have my sincere apology! Just drop me a quick email and include your stats, if you know them, and I will be pleased to add you to the list. Conversely, if you are on the list and feel that you don’t belong, please also drop me an email and I will remove you.

Logger will currently give you your status for the USA – Digital Award (go to “View/Edit/Book/USA-Digital/All”), but for the 5 - Mode Award, Logger only reports those counties which have been worked

using all 5 different modes. You can see your 5 - Mode Award status by going to "View/Edit/Book/5 - Mode/All". A fix is still in the works that will report on the status of 1, 2, 3, and 4 completed counties also, but it may be quite a while before this is released. While waiting, the 1, 2, 3, and 4 completed county columns for the 5 - Mode Award may have to remain blank for most people. If you can ZIP up and send me your call sign database file (mine is named "County Hunter - W0NAC.mdb") I will manually determine how many counties you have completed for 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 modes and place your numbers in Table 3. However, be sure you have recently recalculated both your 5 - Mode book and USA - Digital book before sending your file.

I am still in the early stages of establishing an interactive web site for digital matters. One of the functions I hope to have on the site is an interactive way for digital folk to input their status so I can update the table. I have a server and a domain name, but still need to develop the software for the site. It may be a couple of months before the site is up and fully functional.

Here is the updated Table 3:

Table 3 - Active Digital County Hunters Award Status

#	CALL	NAME	STATUS* (M,F,I)	USA - DIGITAL Counties (of 3077)	(1 MODE)	(2 MODES)	FIVE MODE COUNTIES (3 MODES)	(4 MODES)	(5 MODES)	LAST UPDATED
1	AA8R	Randy	F	1000+	-	-	-	-	-	9/30/2012
2	AC0B	Cliff	F	205	-	-	-	-	-	12/10/2012
3	AD1C	Jim	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4	K0DEO	Bill	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5	K0PVW	Rob	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6	K0WJ	Lou	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
7	K4PBX	Jim	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
8	K5GE	Gene	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
9	K5SF	Dick	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
10	K5WAF	Bill	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
11	K7REL	Tom	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
12	K8QWY	Ed	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
13	K8ZZ	Ed	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
14	KA8IQP	Pamela	M/F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
15	KC3X	Hollis	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
16	KC6AWX	Bob	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
17	KC7YE	Jack	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
18	KD5YUK	Billv	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
19	KD7KST	Bill	M/F	1792	-	-	-	-	-	9/30/2012
20	KG5RJ	Greg	F	486	3048	2059	488	139	31	4/1/2013
21	KM1C	Bill	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
22	KM6HB	Mark	F	714	3077	2913	?	?	?	2/3/2013
23	N0KV	Barrv	M/F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
24	N0LXJ	Sharon	M/F	1334	3077	2230	1159	406	179	4/25/2013
25	N1API	Al	F	313	3077	519	128	22	6	4/10/2013
26	N3HOO	Ed	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
27	N4JT	Jim	F	572	3077	3058	575	99	55	10/30/2012
28	N5MLP	Ron	M/F	373	3077	391	35	26	9	3/27/2013
29	N6PDB	Dennis	M/F	375	3077	2633	413	138	115	3/28/2013
30	N8CIJ	Dick	F	481	3077	2971	393	117	109	1/21/2013
31	N8HAM	Jim	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	
32	N9WNN	Steve	F	0	2180	0	0	0	0	2/24/2013
33	NA8W	Darl	F	535	2993	?	?	?	55	4/6/2013
34	NF0N	Mike	F	785	3077	3077	915	108	50	12/31/2012
35	NN9K	Pete	F	816	3077	859	78	1	0	3/23/2012
36	NT2A	Gene	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
37	NU4C	Paul	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
38	NW6S	Jim	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
39	NX4W	Lloyd	M/F	1070	3077	1098	157	4	0	12/19/2011
40	W0NAC	Matt	M/F	1768	3077	2801	1893	932	327	4/25/2013
41	W3DLM	Don	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
42	W4IHI	Garv	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
43	W4SIG	Kerrv	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
44	W4YDY	Dave	F	752	3077	3077	921	213	46	3/6/2013
45	W5QP	Rick	M/F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
46	W6RK	Risto	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
47	W6RLL	Joe	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
48	W7IN	Larry	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
49	W7QQ	Bill	M/F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
50	W9JR	Rich	F	90	3077	1674	44	0	0	10/31/2012
51	W9SUQ	Larry	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
52	WA4UNS	Doug	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
53	WA6OCV	Susan	M/F	328	3077	328	320	130	10	3/28/2013
54	WA7JHO	Sterling	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
55	WB0M	Jeff	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
56	WB2ABD	Paul	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	
57	WD4OIN	Jack	F	395	3077	3065	410	67	8	3/3/2013
58	WQ7A	Terry	F	50	3077	2971	54	0	0	2/20/2013
59	WY4D	Bennie	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Possible topics for the coming months include –

“How To Log Your Digital Contacts In Logger”

“Macros – Revisited”

“New Digital Awards?”

“Digital Software Installation – Revisited”

“Award Difficulty Index”

“Digital Mode Test Results”

So long again.....Please email me with your comments/suggestions 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 update the Digital County Hunter Status List again next month.

73's and we hope to see you at the National Convention in Deadwood.

Matt – W0NAC



**Treasurer's Report (W0NAC)
March 2013***

Beginning Account Balances Mar 4, 2013		\$33,455.06
March Income:		
Money Market Interest	\$2.07	
Awards Manager Income	\$200.00	
Membership Income	\$545.16	
Logger distribution	\$80.00	
Total Income:		<u>\$827.23</u>
March Expenses:		
Awards Manager Expenses	\$260.88	
Office Expenses	\$0.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$49.90	
Total Expenses:		<u>\$310.78</u>
March Net Income Less Expenses		\$496.45
# Correction To Feb Awards Manager Income		\$82.05
New Total Balance ALL Accounts:		\$34033.56
Checking Account Balance	<u>\$8017.91</u>	
Money Market Account Balance	<u>\$26,015.65</u>	
Total:		\$34033.56

Note:

The following monies are not included in the above:

Awards Chairman's Funds \$1,500.00

* Includes March transactions recorded through 4/4/2013

February report understated Award Manager income by \$82.05 (My error)



Award Manager's Reports

Some unexpected things have come up which preclude Bob's reports for this month.

Calendar

~ May 2013 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ONLY START DATE SHOWN	CLICK ON EVENT TO GO TO WEB SITE		1	2	3	4 10-10 CW 7 TH AREA QP IN QP RCA QP NEW ENG QP
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 NV MUSTANG FISTS SPRT
12	13	14	15	16	17 DAYTON	18
19	20 RUN4BACON	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 MI CW SPRT	28	29	30	31	Notes:



Awards Committee

These MARAC members are serving on the Awards Committee:

Awards Manager - Bob Devine (KC6AWX)

Phil Yasson (AB7RW)

Bob Gedemer (KA9JAC)

Dave Splitt (KE3VV)

Kent Reinke (KL1V)

Ed Palagyi (KN4Y)

Leo Bingham (WY7LL)

“Matt” Matthew (W0NAC)

David Pyle (KW1DX)

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!

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