

Volume XLV November 2015 Number 11

Riding the County Lion Dave – KE3VV

The County Lion has been outside rummaging around in the leaves that are now covering the ground in the back yard. Although the weather in DC has been pretty nice – no massive deluge of rain like Mexico, Texas, and the Gulf Coast, it is definitely sweater weather here in the Middle Atlantic States. It is time to pack up the pick-em-up-truck and get on the AutoTrain and head to Florida. We are going to spend about six weeks in the sunny clime and then wander back to DC for the holidays after a brief trip to Key Largo for my Coral Restoration Foundation board meeting in early December (and some scuba diving if the weather cooperates).

This will be the first Florida-based Thanksgiving away from the chilluns for Laurene and I, and we will also spend my 70th birthday down South... good thing because I have never been that interested in big celebrations (and, as the Big Green Dragon points out, at this point the candles on the birthday cake would rival his fiery breath, so it is definitely time to retire that tradition). I think my wish would be for a nice quiet dinner of lionfish at a local seafood restaurant with an accompanying bottle of cheap (OK – modestly priced) wine. If the weather is really nice, I wouldn't mind indulging in a celebratory walk on the beach (Cocoa Beach is just a few minutes away as the seagull flies) and if I am really lucky, maybe they will launch something from Cape Canaveral while we are there.

Setting up a fixed station at the Florida QTH has proved to be more time-consuming than I had thought it would be – too many competing activities (like getting the place furnished – still no art work mounted on the walls or rugs on the new wood floor, but at least most of the rooms are furnished). The community is gated, but there are no antenna restrictions, so I am hoping to get something going – if not on this abbreviated trip, after we return in early January after the holidays for a nice winter away

Contents	
An Editorial	13
Birthdays and Awards	9
Dateline CW	3
Events	16
History Happens	6
Looking For Digital Happenings?	7
MARAC Silent Keys	7
Net Chronicles	10
New Members	5
Northeast Mini	14

Riding the County Lion	1	
The Ugly Award	12	
Treasurer's Report (W0NAC)	15	
What's With Membership Dues?	8	

Page 2 ROADRUNNER

from the snow and chill. The bands are still holding up pretty well on most days, despite the lingering but steady descent into the long solar minimum. The County Lion reminds me that daily solar reports and a lot more about the influence of our local star on everything from climate change to earthquakes are available on a really superb and science-based web site - www.suspiciousobservers.org - lots of interesting stuff for free and the even the premium content is cheap.

I also think I will finally be able to get the mobile rig back into the truck. When we went to visit my eldest daughter in Blacksburg last month, we took the long scenic route through parts of rural Virginia along US 15 and the colorful fall colors along US 220 through eastern West Virginia. I wish I had been able to put out some of those counties (although I had done so many times before over the years). Anyway, if anyone needs anything in Florida or the nearby states later this winter, please send me an email and let me know and it may provide a good incentive for a Jan-Feb-March road trip. I am pretty much over collecting awards (except maybe last counties and transmits) for the near future. Anyway... time to get back to packing more stuff in the truck for the trip... I also need to remind the County Lion that just because Halloween is over he is jumping the gun on practicing his Christmas Carols. Enjoy the fall season...take care and a Happy Thanksgiving to all – 73 and 88 from the Dragon, the Lion, and me.



Dateline CW

Ed, KN4Y

Dyspepsia is the ruination of a well planned county hunting expedition.

Thad just finished vacuuming the space heater coils, the winter season is coming and a frigid county hunter is inefficient. I hear Gator's 4x4 glide to a stop at the recycled railroad tie. He enters the shack carrying a container of lattes, a forerunner of the holiday season. He hands me a latte, "What's up?" I sip my latte, "Got some QSO parties to be checked out." Gator gets a latte and sits at the computer

I hand Gator a memory stick, "Check out the Texas QSO party, a mobile humdinger. Many mobiles running counties at zero speed to 85 MPH. No napping during this party." Gator motions for me to shut up, "If you will be quiet I will give you the statistics that you county hunters yearn for. You made 205 CW QSOs, worked 137 Texas counties. Not bad for a hearing impaired county hunter." I give Gator the finger. He laughs, "All the QSOs you worked and you only logged three new counties on 80-meters, seven No-Stars, and three 2x1 calls. I am beginning to worry about you." I smile, "We live not for the results. It is the thrill of chasing the mobiles hither and you and busting the pile ups. By the way, who were the mobiles?"

Gator gooses the mouse, "Your log indicates you worked a total of ten mobiles. There are six Texas mobiles: Mark, K5GQ, Alan, N5NA, Hal, K5HA, the county hunter road traveler Bob, N4CD and cuddly Norm, W3DYA plus W5CT, the Texas DX Club mobile. There is also the high power Dude Jerry, K5YAA, from Oklahoma, Charles, NO5W, from Louisiana, Bob, W0BH from Kansas, and Guff, KS5A, from Arizona. You should be glad you were in the shack and not mobile in Texas." I am not sure what Gator is implying, sometimes it is best to change the subject.

I hand Gator a burger green memory stick, "Check out my California QSO party log." Gator removes a memory stick from the computer and replaces it with the burger green stick. He runs the logging program and in a few minutes he turns around, "Not bad for an old CW operator, "You made 230 QSO's and worked 42 counties. You worked a bunch of 1X1 calls." I wave my hand to get Gators attention, "Did I work the calls that spell GOLD RUSH?" Gator checks the log, "Sure did Dude, you also spelled Bed pole, Queer, Hush, Golden and..."

I interrupt Gator, "That is enough already, I have worked all the California counties on 10, 15, 20 and 40-meters check my 80-meter QSO's." Gator smiles, "You did okay, you worked seven new counties on 80-meters, you must have stayed up past your usual bedtime." I shake my head yes, "I worked stations until two in the morning and then entered the sleep mode." Gator gives me the zip your lip gesture, "Did you know this was the Golden 50th year of the California QSO party?" I sip my latte, "Yes and I worked 34 of the QSO parties.

I hope next year the Northern California Contest Club eliminates the serial number in the exchange and move the California QSO party into the new century, a serial number is an obsolete exchange for State QSO parties. I see no reason to add an element of torture to a fun event. The argument is this QSO party trains contesters for the ARRL Sweepstakes is like saying you can run a wet county line as long as you don't get wet." Gator holds his two hands up. "Settle down Dude your eyes are bugling out." I close my eyes and lean back in the chair and sip my latte.

Gator yells out, "Dude, have you heard any juicy gossip from the Southeast Mini and who was the Southeast ugliest?" I point my free thumb down, "The Southeast Mini was cancelled after the shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal church in Charleston." Gator smiles, "I can see the headline, Southeast Mini canceled for baptism under fire." Many times it is best to ignore Gator, "Here check out my Pennsylvania QSO party log." Gator gently moves the mouse.

Gator turns around in the chair, "You worked 83 keystone state amateurs on CW with only three No-Star, one 2x1 call and 1 new county on 80-meters. I see the problem. You worked only one mobile." "I think the majority of mobiles operated on sideband. Who was the mobile on CW?" "It was Tom, N2CU, that New York Dude." Gator does the mouse thing, "Dude you only worked 11 amateurs on CW in the Grand Canyon State." I shake my head. "I know, I listened and did not hear many Arizona stations calling. Remember Gator I was working CW in the 10-10 International Sprint and ten meters was not cooperating." Gator checks my 10-10 log, "Well Dude you made seven contacts and three had a ten-ten number. You may get first place." I smile and sip my latte.

Gator is looking at the computer, "Dude, you also worked the 10-10 Fall CW QSO party, I see you had more ten meter activity, you made 42 contacts, that is six times more QSO's than you worked in the Sprint." I smile, "Yes and I also went down the band and worked the New York QSO party." Gator raises his hand, "Yes I just located it, you made 15 QSO's, and you call that working?" I shake my head yes, "I also worked both the Illinois QSO party and the 10-10 QSO party on Sunday." Gator sips his latte as he brings up the Illinois QSO party log.

Gator give me a thumb up, You made 99 QSO's and worked 12 No-Star, 4 new 80-meter county and one 'A' prefix. I see why, there were only eight mobiles going from county to county at breakneck speeds." I laugh, "I would not say breakneck speeds but definitely above the signage. Who were the mobiles and were any county hunters?" Gator reads the computer screen, "Yes there are four county hunters, Mel, KJ9C, Dave, N9FN, Jim. N9JF, who is the QSO party Dude and of course the one and only Jeff, W9MSE. Also slapping asphalt are Jim, AD4EB, Harry, K9DXA, the Calumet Radio Club, K9IX and the Egyptian Radio Club, W9AIU. No bad for also working the 10-10 CW QSO party." I finish my latte, "Yes ten meters was not in the best operating mood allowing me to move from band to band."

"Gator I have some juicy gossip, you know the sideband county hunters now have a MARAC sponsored net and I cannot believe what happened." Gator's eyes light up in anticipation of the latest gossip when his cell phone sounds off, CQ, CQ, "Sorry Dude, my sales manager said some Dude wants to order some county line propagation Elixir for some happening to be in Memphis, Tennessee next year." He is gone like a shorted fuse as I hear him yell; "Why do XYL county hunters wear evening gowns to a MARAC convention in a nightclub? Shouldn't they be wearing night gowns?"

The printer stops and I get the smaller than usual list of mobile stations heard during October on the county hunters CW call frequencies. I read: AA8R, AF3X, K0FG, K0MAF, K2HVN, K4YFH, K7TM, K8ZZ, KA4RRU, KB0LF, N0KV, N4CD, N4JT, N7IV, N9JF, NE0QP, NF0N, W0GXQ, W3ZUH, W4SIG, W5QP, W7FEN, W8GEJ, WA3QNT, WB0PYF, and WU3H.

Can you believe November already, Thanksgiving, the great American smokeout and black Friday, how

fast times flies when working counties. Kentucky the blue grass State with 120 counties up for grabs is the only QSO party this month. But have no fear contests are here with the ARRL CW (and SSB) Sweepstakes, the OK/OM CW DX contest, the LZ DX contest and ending the month with the CQ Worldwide CW DX contest. There are 21 CW contests to keep the key from rust rot.

By the time you read this you already know that daylight savings time ended on all saints day .Dang it! I forgot to show Gator the certificates I received from the Michigan and Arkansas QSO parties and the plaque from the Alabama QSO party for top Alabama mobile single operator (with driver) score..I will make a post-it, but first nap time. I wonder if my gut is too big?

New Members

MARAC Number	Callsign	<u>Name</u>	
R4605	NT4F	Linwood Todd	
R4606	KM4RTR	Steve Corrigall	
R4607	K0HW	R. James Wennblom	
R4608	KI8CL	Roger Beauchamp	
R4609	KC8NNZ	Karen Beauchamp	
R4610	N7TCO	Rich Warren	9
R4611	KM4NGV	William Meier >>>>>>	9
R4612	K9TA	Steve Farrington	
R4613	K1ILR	Fran Walsh	



ROADRUNNER

History Happens

Gary, K4EXT

September was a little bit better for County Sign pictures. Submissions came in from Barry, K2MF in North Carolina and Georgia ... Lowell, KBØBA and Sandra, NØXYL in Kentucky ... Brian, NXØX and Shari, KBØMHH in New York ... Jim, W8FNW and Dee, W4FNW in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia ... and Bob, WA3QNT in Kentucky.

Jerry, WØGXQ finished the state of South Dakota with Union County. So he gets the imaginary LCP (Last County Picture) award!

Many thanks to everyone that contributed! Please feel free to check out all pictures and information by visiting the CH History/Archive website at the following Internet address:

http://www.CHarchive.com

I have been patiently (more or less) waiting for Fall colors to appear here in North Eastern Tennessee. Local experts say we are late this year because of too much rain and not enough clear/cool days. But these same experts say I need to cut back on eggs and peanut butter ... so, whatever.

As of the writing of this article (October 21st), some color is occurring in surrounding mountain areas (above 3,500 feet) but not much at our elevation (2,000 feet). I'm convinced that even when the trees turn, colors will not be very bright or spectacular.

Mary, AB7NK sent me the picture below on October 16th after running Benzie County, Michigan. She was most definitely in my kind of color kaleidoscope. Wow!





Looking For Digital Happenings?

By W0NAC ("Matt")

Digital Happenings #36 (published in July 2015) was the last article published. It has been replaced with a new web site "All Things Digital" which you can find at http://www.w0nac.com. A link to this new site is also provided on the MARAC web site (http://marac.org) under the "Digital by W0NAC" tab on the home page.

The new site continues the popular "Active Digital County Hunters Award Status" table. It also provides a means of downloading any or all of the past 36 Digital Happenings articles plus several utility programs you may find useful. The Award Status table (displayed on the new site's home page) will be updated frequently. Please continue using the Digital Report Utility (which sends an email to me) as you have done in the past, except there is no longer any deadline to meet.

In case you are doing your digital award updates for the first time, here is a link to a Word document which explains the process in detail: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/26171574/ Happenings/5-Mode-Update.doc .

Matt - W0NAC

MARAC Silent Keys

<u>Callsign</u> <u>Silent Key Date</u> N8RYD Jim Maxwell

What's With Membership Dues?

By W0NAC ("Matt") MARAC Treasurer

In this short article I will try to explain my involvement in a flurry of recent changes in MARAC membership dues and award fees, but first I need to review a bit of history for you --

Prior to July 2015 MARAC membership dues had been stable at \$14.00/year for some time and "Paper-less" LC-1 Award fees were set at \$1.00. Over the last several years MARAC spendable cash assets had gradually grown until they reached \$30,851.31 at the end of the Club's last fiscal year (March 31st, 2015). It was evident to many (including myself) that our reserve funds exceeded what was needed and that:

- 1) The excess should be spent on a worthy project.
- 2) Income should be reduced by lowering dues and/or fees (in effect, returning excess funds to current and new members).
- 3) Or perhaps a combination of 1 and 2 above.

At the annual MARAC Board of Directors meeting in July 2015, a motion was made and passed to make MARAC membership dues free for five years. This was done with the purpose of returning what was perceived as excess cash reserves to MARAC members (both existing and new). While, as your treasurer, I agreed (and still do) with the overall goal, I felt that offering free dues for 5 years was too draconian and not fiscally wise. Other reasons for opposing this change were that "free" dues would reduce the perceived value of MARAC membership to essentially zero and also that such a move was probably illegal in accordance with the Bylaws. Over these objections the motion was passed.

I have never questioned the motivations of those who wanted to offer free dues for five years, only the advisability of taking such a drastic approach, so at the September 11, 2015 special board meeting I proposed the following motion:

Motion by W0NAC that MARAC annual membership dues be set at ten dollars (\$10) for all members, new members, and renewals with the following exceptions:

- (a) The dues of any new members who joined MARAC for free between the dates of July 16th 2015 and
 - October 1, 2015 shall remain at \$0.00 until their first annual renewal (1 year).
- (b) Other regular members who had a renewal date during this same time frame (July 16th October 1st) and
 - paid no dues, shall have their renewal date extended to November 1st, 2015.
- (c) Members who have prepaid dues for more than one year shall have their renewal date extended by applying
 - any such excess funds at a rate of \$10.00/year.

and further that the fee for LC-1 awards be reduced to \$0.00 effective October 1, 2015.

In making this motion I had no hidden agenda. I only wanted what I felt was in the Club's best fiscal interests over the long haul.

Following normal parliamentary procedures, the motion was passed by a vote of 8 to 4 and is in the process of being implemented by the MARAC Secretary. Please note that the approved motion became effective when it was published in the October 2015 Roadrunner (distributed 3 October) and provides advance notice on the new dues and fee structure to all in a timely fashion.

I make no apologies for advocating that membership dues be re-instated at the nominal level of \$10.00/year. Where else can one reap all the many benefits of MARAC membership for so little? Besides, the new dues/fees structure (LC-1 paper-less awards are now free) will still meet the goal of returning surplus cash reserves to current and new members albeit at a somewhat slower pace.

Matt - W0NAC

Birthdays and Awards

No reports until next month

Awards program acting up and KD9ZP is working on it

Thanks

MARAC AWARDS Robert T. Devine, KC6AWX 407 Alameda Del Prado Novato CA 94949-6302



Net Chronicles

Net Chronicles

MARAC sponsored amateur radio nets are underway

This article is the second in a continuing series of monthly newsletter articles focused on operations and activities on new MARAC sponsored county hunting nets. If you didn't see the first article which gives an overview of the nets and their purpose, please look for it in the October issue of the Road Runner newsletter. All of the current documentation on the new nets is also available on the MARAC website at the following link: http://www.marac.org/nets.htm

Net Activity on 20 meter SSB during October

Although the official start of scheduled net activity did not begin until October 17th, nets with net controls and some assistant net controls were held both weekends prior to that date with some net activity during the weekdays as well. Nine hours of net control coverage was available for three of the four weekend days October 3, 4, 10, and 11. Activity was brisk due to the number of mobiles traveling to/from the 3M convention in TN at that time as well as a number of mobiles operating a rare county event in NE. Significant activity was also present on the 40 meter SSB and CW frequencies during these times.

Official scheduled net activity on 20 meter SSB designated frequencies did begin as planned on October 17th. Nine hours of coverage was provided on both October 17 and 18 due to participation of various net control and assistant net control stations. Net operations on the weekend on October 24 and 25 was attempted but discontinued on some sessions due to lack of mobile activity and interference from contesters participating in the CQ Worldwide SSB DX Contest that weekend. Scheduled nets have been held for some but not all sessions on weekdays since October 17th. Thanks to the following scheduled net control stations who participated during October: AA8R, W0NAC, WD9EJK, W3CR, N5MLP, NF0N, KW1DX, W8TAX, N0KV, and K0FG.

Quite a few newcomers participated in the nets and actively sought information about our operation and the club. This is encouraging and a positive sign that the nets are a good opportunity to recruit new members/participants to our shared hobby.

Possible Change in Primary Net Control Frequency

A change in the primary frequency is being considered due to the number of previously established nets which claim to have been in operation around 14.328. We are using 14.317 more frequently and evaluating availability of that frequency as the primary frequency for the future. If a change is made, we will publish that information in the Nets section of the website under the "Current Net Operations" section.

More Net Control Volunteers are Needed

In order to establish the 20 meter SSB net and provide dependable coverage for mobiles, we need more individuals to volunteer to be a net control or assistant net control on the various 3 hour sessions we have scheduled. The current net schedule showing session assignments that need to be filled can be found at: http://www.kw1dx.com/ch/net/schedule20m.htm

Documentation is available regarding net procedures and training/mentoring options are available for interested parties. Please let N5MLP or AA8R know if you are interested in those options.

Member Support of the Nets is Encouraged

A majority of the MARAC Board of Directors voted to establish MARAC sponsored nets on September 11, 2015 at a special board meeting. Following approval by the Board, the Net Operations Committee finalized the operating procedures, website documentation, and schedule for net operations. As noted above, scheduled net operations began on October 17th. The nets have had quite a few participants thus far, but some may not be aware of the new MARAC 20 meter SSB net. This net is <u>your MARAC</u> net. All radio amateurs are welcome on this net and all net services are available to all participants. Please support the net by running counties on this net and working the mobiles, fixed, or portable stations that run their counties.

Let's all have some fun on the nets together!

MARAC Net Operations Committee



N5MLP - Ron Clift, Chairperson

ROADRUNNER

The Ugly Award

A fter processing 4 gazillion applications, the Ugly Award Select Committee has chosen our 2015 recipient. He is none other that Gary Beam (K4EXT) – aka "The Snuggle Bunny". If anybody has any doubt that Gary is not truly worthy of this award, just look at his picture below.



Gary - Congratulations and thanks for all of your hard work as MARAC's Historian.



Our "winners" so far are:

KJ8V	WG6X	AB2LS	N8KIE
KZ2P	AA9JJ	W9OP	N9QS
KA1JPR	KB6UF	W4OWY	K1DFO
KC4UG	N9QPQ	N4AAT	K4EXT
N4HIK	KM9X	KE3VV	

An Editorial

MARAC 20 Meter Net: By N0KV

The official MARAC 20 meter County Hunting net was approved by 8 of the 10 members of the Board of Directors at the Special Board Meeting on September 11th, and the net started operation on Saturday, October 17th.

Some of you have asked why the MARAC Board voted to establish MARAC sponsored nets and specifically to start a 20 meter MARAC-sponsored net. This became necessary for two reasons: (1) to protect and restore the reputation of county hunting in the overall amateur radio community, and (2) to provide a 20 meter net where all radio amateurs are welcomed, all are treated fairly and equally, and all are allowed to run and work counties.

You may be aware that the 14.336 net is a <u>private net</u>. Requests to modify the behaviour of the net control have been answered with comments that it is not MARAC's net and MARAC has no say in how it is administered. Thus it became necessary to establish MARAC sponsored nets where MARAC members and their Board of Directors can establish guidelines for net operation.

If you operate on 20 meter SSB regularly, you are undoubtedly aware that all radio amateurs (especially some board members and occasionally potential new county hunters) are not always treated well on 14.336. Some are chastised for using phonetics. Numerous individuals (including some MARAC board members and several very prominent county hunters) are not allowed to run counties on 14.336 when a certain NCS is present, and some will not be relayed.

So, if you believe as I do, that this type of behaviour is against the amateur radio code of conduct and NOT in the best interest of MARAC (or the amateur radio community) and that <u>all amateurs</u> need a place to run and work counties on 20 meters, then <u>please support the new MARAC 20 meter net</u>. We need more net controls, more mobiles to run, and people to work them! You will recall that starting MARAC sponsored nets was a major element of our election platform, and we have fulfilled that promise. Now we need your help to make it a success! This problem cannot be solved overnight, but with your help, we can make a difference!

The statements made in this article are solely the opinion of the author.

Hope to see you on MARAC nets! 73, de N0KV

Northeast Mini

This is K1TW, Tom and N1API Al.

This is from the "Northeast Mini" held 10/18/2015, also attending but not pictured cause he left was N1BV Ted, the CQ USACA Awards Manager.

Actually this was taken at the Nutmeg Hamfest. Ted came by the club table earlier and we visited for a while and then later Tom came by and spent quite a lot of time with me chatting about all things ham radio. I asked one of the guys to take our picture and said that I was going to send it in and call it the Northeast Mini, which we both got a good laugh out of.

Hope you can use it.

-73- Al N1API



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Page 15

Treasurer's Report (W0NAC) September 2015*

Beginning Account Balances September 3, 2015

\$40,721.39

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Cantar	~ h ~ w	Income	
Senier	nner	Incom	۸.

Money Market Interest	\$1.63	
Awards Manager Income	\$0.00	(See Note 2)
Membership Income	\$0.00	(See Note 3)
Logger Distribution	<u>\$0.00</u>	
Total Income:		\$1.63

September New Spotting Site/Logger II Expenses:

Spotting Site Fixed Expenses (CHSpots.org)	\$0.00
Spotting Site Recurring Expenses (CHSpots.org)	\$0.00
Logger II Fixed Expenses	\$0.00
Logger II Recurring Expenses	\$0.00

September Other Expenses:

Awards Manager Expenses	\$0.00	(See Note 2)
EasyGCI (MARAC Server) Security Software	\$84.20	
New Software For Updating Logger Help Files	\$122.40	
Office Expenses (Postage, Etc.)	\$0.00	
Total Expenses:		\$206.60

September Net Income Less Expenses

(\$204.97)

New Total Cash Balance ALL Accounts:

\$40,516.42 #

Checking Account Balance	\$4,428.49
Money Market Account Balance	<u>\$36,087.93</u>
Total Cash All Accounts:	

\$40,516.42 #

Note:

The following monies are not included in the account balances above: Awards Manager's Funds \$1,500.00



- * Includes September Transactions through 9/30/2015
- # From a balance sheet perspective, MARAC Total Funds at the end of September should be discounted by \$7,917.00. This amount is a Deferred Liability of award fees pre-paid by members. After discounting, our true (spendable) Cash Assets are \$32,599.42.
- Note 2 The Award Managers Report for September is delayed and is expected to be reported next month as a combined September/October report.
- Note 3 Free membership dues were still in effect during the month of September.

Page 16		ROADRUNNER	
		Events	
11/7	ARRL CW SWEEPS		
11/14	10-10 DIGI		
11/14	KY QP		
11/16	RUN4BACON		
11/21	ARRL SSB SWEEPS		
11/28	CQ WW CW		

ONLY START DATE SHOWN

CLICK ON EVENT TO GO TO THAT WEB SITE



Awards Committee

These MARAC members are serving on the Awards Committee:

Awards Manager - Bob Devine (KC6AWX)

Phil Yasson (AB7RW)

Dave Splitt (KE3VV)

Kent Reinke (KV7N)

Ed Palagyi (KN4Y)

"Matt" Matthew (W0NAC)

Ron Clift (N5MLP)

Percy Ford (KA1JPR)

Lloyd Smith (NX4W)

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

arrl.net

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