



THE COUNTY LINE **ROADRUNNER**

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Riding the County Lion **Dave – KE3VV**

The County Lion is having a really up and down week. After some wonderful time leading up to an almost balmy Christmas in the Nation's Capital, as well as a chilly but fun road trip through West Virginia to start the New Year, it is now time to hunker down and pack more stuff in the DC house for a return to Florida next week. The trip south cannot come too soon for the mighty scruffy-maned Lion. It has turned cold and breezy here – chills down into the lower twenties and teens. While the news media was all agog over the above-average temperatures hanging around much of the U.S. in December, they failed to take note that much of the world was shuddering under record cold temps. It has now come here with a severe dip in the Polar Vortex, and it is a perfect reminder of the reason that the Big Green Dragon, the County Lion, and I prefer to spend the first three months of the New Year in the Sunshine State. Oh well, only a week away...

The best part of December was a brief trip to NYC to see a Broadway show (*An American in Paris* – stunning and spectacular if you like musicals with dancing a la Fred Astaire) and take in a few exhibits and shows at the local museums. The latest Expanding Universe show at the Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Natural History was engrossing and fun. I remember going to a planetarium show as a kid and there was this humongous two-headed projector in the middle of the theater... not so today. It is all digital and no projector at all, so the images are all sharp and the action is seamless. I stretched out in the front row and remained agog throughout. There is also a great exhibit in the planetarium section that shows the relative size of objects in the Universe, from atomic particles to the endless expanses of space.

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After the star show, we went downstairs to the IMAX theater and saw the Jean-Michel Cousteau movie “Secret Ocean” in 3D – up close and personal with the creatures that inhabit the coral reefs of the world. Having spent a fair amount of time underwater wandering about looking at everything from large sharks to tiny shrimp and tube worms, I was really impressed. Best way to see what’s down there short of actually putting on the SCUBA gear and diving down to the actual reef. In between all of the shows and exhibits and some rather good restaurants, we did a lot of walking – the weather was cool but sunny, so we put about 15 miles on the pedometer over the weekend, including a fair amount of wandering through a bustling Central Park.

We also got up to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the other side of Central Park and wandered through the new exhibit on art from the Congo and a fascinating exhibit hall on the forests of North America. You would not think that tree would be that fascinating, but after reading “The Wild Trees” by Richard Preston – the story of searching through the almost impenetrable rainforests of the Pacific Northwest looking for the tallest redwoods – I am almost as hooked on trees as I was when I was a kid who could not resist climbing any tree in sight. There were days when I would pack a lunch and just stay up in a tree for hours. If I did that today, I would probably be locked up as a loonie. The County Lion is stifling a laugh at that, so I had better wrap this up and get back to thinking about trees as the best place to hang an antenna.

The Big Green Dragon is stoking up his fires for the coming months until the coming of the Equinox signals better weather and longer days, but our next report on life in general and occasionally in the specific will be typed with fingers not so stiff from the chill. Take care and keep the home fires ablaze. 73 and 88 from Dave and the Lion and the Dragon.



Dave’s Call

Just a couple of notes.

Dues notices are going out per KZ2P. If in doubt, check your info in the MARAC database.

Did you notice page 79 in the current QST?

National Parks on the Air is a natural addition to what we are already doing - driving around the country putting out counties. NPOTA is a year long event. We’re already passing, at least nearby, many National Parks. Check it out at www.arrl.org/npota.



Dateline CW

Ed, KN4Y

The New Year, New Awards, New Members, New Routes, New LC's, New Chiefs, New Direction.

It is one of the many wonders of Crawfordville. I wonder why in December I string Christmas lights around the radio shack and one month later I take the Christmas lights down. I put the lights back into a cardboard box labeled Xmas lights and put the box into the closet on the shelf labeled next year. My wonder thought is snapped to reality when I hear Gator's 4X4 turn onto the driveway; I hear a crunch, the first successful kamikaze squirrel in the New Year. Gator's 4X4 slides to a stop at the recycled railroad tie, he gets out carrying a familiar white cardboard container.

I raise my hand as in a salute, "Happy New Year Gator, like the cold weather?" Gator points to the radio shack, "Happy New Year, let us get inside Dude, I did not wear my down filled NASCAR jacket." We enter the shack and Gator hands me a latte. I make a joke, "Sure beats a waffle." Gator did not get the county hunting reference, "I drove by the shack during the CQ world wide CW contest and saw the lights on. How did you do?" I hand Gator a memory stick, "Not bad Gator, check it out." Gator turns on the computer and inserts the memory stick. A few minutes pass as we sip our lattes.

Gator breaks the silence, "Not a bad score for an elderly lazy Dude. You worked 164 Countries, 78 Zones and operated on six bands, you got the ARRL DX award in one weekend. Are you now an authenticated DX'er?" I shake my head, "No Gator a county hunter does not become a DX'er, and however a DX'er can become a county hunter." Gator is not listening. "Dude I am looking for your ARRL 160-meter contest log." I set my latte down. "The contest is the same weekend I went to Clearwater, Florida, for the Florida Senior Games. I missed the 160-meter contest."

Gator is looking at the computer screen, "Dude I am reading the county hunters forum and that South Carolina songster Dude Scottie, N4AAT, is in the hospital." "Yes Gator, I knew that, I lit a candle at church for a quick recovery." Gator is not listening he is in the cyber world.

Gator's eyes light up, "I found it." "What?" "Your ARRL 10-meter contest log." "How did I do? I did not get to spend as much time on the air as I had planned." "Why?" "I got a call to bowl in the Holiday Tournament." Gator is looking at the computer screen. "You worked 24 States, 5 Canada multipliers, 2 Mexican States and 35 DX stations. You did not get one new county on ten meters. A country boy does that much work before lunch." Gator mutters under his breath, and he tells me to prioritize. Gator snaps his finger.

"Dude, did you know the Top List is compiled each month by Jim. ND9M. He works aboard a merchant marine ship and has sent the Top List data from Spain, Singapore, Bahrain and other country names I can't pronounce. Can you imagine TopList/ MM or TopList/DX. That is awesome." I shake my head, "Gator you have been doing too much ethanol quality testing, what are you talking about?" "The Dude Jim sometimes has difficulty getting internet access and is hoping that some landlocked county hunter would tackle this project." "I am sure some county hunter with internet access will volunteer." I slap my head, "Darn Gator, I almost forgot, here check out my Canada Winter contest log." I flip Gator a memory stick.

Gator inserts the memory stick and mouses around, “You worked 57 Canada stations, I also notice that you worked eight non-Canada stations. You usually only work Canada stations, what happened?” “Well I had a project to finish so I went to ten meters and started calling, the band seemed dead so I worked on my project. Every few minutes a non-VE station would reply, catching me off guard. By the time I finished the project I had worked eight non-Canada stations. I, did however, work two Canada stations on a dead band” We have a good laugh.

Gator is scanning the file list ,”Dude where is your World Wide Iron Ham contest log?” I shake my head no, “There was no Iron Ham contest this year.” Gator laughs, “Saying you are a Iron Ham is like saying you can work a wet county line as long as you don’t get wet.” We finish our lattes. I hand Gator a memory stick, “Here Dude I almost forgot, check out my Stew Perry 160-meter contest log.”

Gator asks, “Dude, before I do the Stew Perry log, I am going to try again, have you heard any nasty gossip about the new sideband net” I shake my head yes, “I do not want you to repeat what I tell you or Kerry will not return my RST. It is apparent that...” Gator’s cell phone sounds off, “Damn, there must be some sort of a sideband conspiracy, Sorry Dude, it appears that Santa’s reindeers contaminated the air flow input screen.” He is gone like a vacation in California. I hear him yell: “Why is working counties called hunting?”

The printer stops and I get the list of stations heard during December on the county hunters CW call frequencies. I read: AF5CC, K0FG, K0MAF, K2MF, K8ZZ, K9JWV, KA4RRU, KB6UF, KE3VV, N4CD, N4JT, N4PN, N8II, N9AC, N9JF, NF0N. W0BH, W4SIG, W5QP, W7FEN, W8OP, W9MSE, WA3QNT, WA4PGM, WB0PYF, and WU3H.

January, the first month of the New Year sports a new date for the Montana QSO party with 56 counties up for grabs What could be more exciting than operating mobile in Montana during January? There are 28 contests in January for the CW operator. For example, there is the North American QSO CW party, the LZ Open CW contest a must for hams who like to send numbers, the Hungarian DX contest, the CQ 160-meter CW contest and the ARRL VHF contest. The first month of the New Year ends with the Classic Exchange CW contest where elderly operators use old old Classic commercial and home brew equipment to make new QSO’s. I wonder if they drive new automobiles. Also closing out the month is the Winter Field Day, an event to encourage emergency operating preparedness in the winter. I heard bagels are nothing but a cruel doughnut joke invented by some Yankee. A New Year, A new nap schedule.

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER BY HAPPY COUNY HUNTING!!



Net Chronicles

MARAC sponsored amateur radio nets continuing into 2016

This article is the fourth 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>

Change in Primary Net Control Frequency for 20 meter SSB

After testing several different frequencies for several weeks, it has been decided to designate 14.324 as the primary frequency for 20m SSB. It is difficult to specify one particular frequency as the first alternate, so just assume it will be between 14.320 and 14.328. We can use 14.317 as a possible operating frequency if none of those are available. Usually the spots will indicate where the net is operating.

This information will be published in the Nets section of the website under the "Current Net Operations" section.

Net Control Schedule

New this month: A new schedule format has been introduced with separate links for the current month and the next two months. As a month has been completed, that month will be removed and a new one will be added to keep a three month schedule for the future.

Reminders:

- 1) The current net schedule showing session assignments that need to be filled has been migrated to the main MARAC website at: <http://www.marac.org/nets/schedule/schedule20m.htm>
- 2) The email address to use to volunteer for net control or assistant net control positions for any of the net sessions has been changed to: chnetschedule@marac.org

Advance Notice of Trips Would be Helpful to Net Controls

Since there are limited numbers of net control stations at the current time, it would be appreciated if the mobiles would provide advance notice of planned trips so we can try to ensure net control stations are available to run the net and assist the mobiles with relays. Please notify AA8R or N5MLP if you expect to be mobile one or two days in advance (when possible) and we will try to have net control stations available on the Marac net frequencies. Dates and approximate start times would be appreciated.

Suggestions Welcomed for How to Improve Net Operations!

If you have any input on net operations for the MARAC sponsored nets, please send those suggestions to AA8R or N5MLP. We welcome feedback and will give sincere consideration to including those suggestions in our operation.

Happy New Year to all members and net participants!!

Come join us on the Marac nets! Let's all have more fun in 2016!

MARAC Net Operations Committee



N5MLP – Ron Clift, Chairperson

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 2016 National Memphis, TN

By Kerry W4SIG

Make your reservations now for the MARAC 2016 National convention in Memphis, TN Aug 1-4, 2016. The host hotel is the Hyatt Place Germantown located at 9161 Winchester Rd, Germantown, TN 38138. The group rate is only \$109 for either a King or Double and includes a large warm breakfast each morning. To reserve you can call their Central Reservations Line at 888.492.8847 and request Group Code: G-MARA. When the recording asks for the name of the hotel state "Hyatt Place Germantown". (Note that the group code does not include the "C" in MARAC as they only can only use four letters!). An easier way to reserve is to go the online link http://www.germantown.place.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html?corp_id=G-mara

When you click the link, it will look like the hotel's home page. Select your dates and click "Check Availability." You will see all rooms under our group title "MARAC." While we have the special rates reserved for Aug 1-4 I have arranged for a small number of rooms to be available for Aug 5 at the same rate for anyone that would like to extend their stay an extra night.

I am so looking forward to this event at this beautiful hotel!! Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. It ought to be a lot of fun for all. Right now I am working on the events and excursions and will have more details on that soon. There is so much to do in Memphis the challenge will be how to narrow it down. In addition to being centrally located, Memphis is has a deep and rich history in the Mississippi Delta being the "Home of the Blues" and the "Birthplace of Rock 'n Roll". You can bet there will be some Graceland and Elvis on the agenda, but there's also Sun Studios, Beale Street, Gibson guitar factory, the Peabody Hotel with its duck pond in the lobby, and some of the best Barbecue and soul food your lips will ever taste! Don't plan on sticking to your diet.

The actual registration form is not complete yet as I am trying to nail down some details on the banquet and excursions. But it will be ready soon. Go ahead and get your hotel reservations done now and mark the dates on your calendar! We are going to have a blast!!



New Members

<u>MARAC Number</u>	<u>Callsign</u>	<u>Name</u>
R4617	KA7BVG	Richard Knox



MARAC Silent Keys

<u>Callsign</u>	<u>Silent Key Date</u>
N5UZW	December 24, 2015

Note From Awards Manager

My Dad passed away on Saturday morning, December 26, 2015. I will get to MARAC business after I make funeral arrangements and deal with getting his affairs in order.

73 all

Robert T Devine, KC6AWX
MARAC Awards Manager



**Treasurer's Report (WONAC)
November 2015***

Beginning Account Balances November 5, 2015 **\$39,364.90**

November Income:

Money Market Interest	\$1.38	
Awards Manager Income	\$324.00	(See Note 2)
Membership Income	\$280.00	
Return of Prepaid Award Fees	- \$421.00	(See Note 3)
Logger Distribution	<u>\$20.00</u>	
Total Income:		\$204.38

November 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

November Other Expenses:

Awards Manager Expenses	\$654.33	(See Note 2)
Office Expenses (Postage, Etc.)	<u>\$0.00</u>	
Total Expenses:		\$654.33

November Net Income Less Expenses **(\$449.95)**

New Total Cash Balance ALL Accounts: **\$38,914.95 #**

Checking Account Balance	\$2,824.16	
Money Market Account Balance	<u>\$36,090.79</u>	
Total Cash All Accounts:		\$ 38,914.95 #

Note:

The following monies are not included in the account balances above:

Awards Manager's Funds \$1,500.00

* Includes one November Transaction posted 12/21/2015



From a balance sheet perspective, MARAC Total Funds at the end of November should be discounted by **\$6,201.00**. This amount is a Deferred Liability of award fees pre-paid by members. After discounting, our true (spendable) Cash Assets are **\$32,713.95**.

Note 2 – Amounts are from Award Manager's combined report for September/October/November.

Note 3 – Presumably as a result of paper-less L/C-1 awards now being free, several prepaid award fee accounts (totaling \$421.00) were refunded to various people by the Awards Manager. Since these prepaid fees were originally credited as income, they are reported here as negative income.

Events

- 1/1 STRAIGHT KEY NITE
- 1/2 ARRL RTTY
- 1/3 KIDS DAY
- 1/9 NA CW QP
- 1/16 NA SSB QP
- 1/18 RUN4BACON
- 1/23 MT QP
- 1/30 WINTER FIELD DAY
- 4/23 MI MINI
- 8/1 NATIONAL (WEB SITE NOT UP YET)

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
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Johns Island, SC 29455

“A Road Runner Is A Very Fast Bird”

Monthly Deadline for Articles is the 25th!

Board of Directors

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Dues with an Electronic copy of the Newsletter copy are \$10.00 per year, check or money order.