



# **THE COUNTY LINE** **ROADRUNNER**

*Published Monthly by the Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club, Inc.*



**Volume XLVII**

**November 2017**

**Number 11**

## **MUsings from W0MU**

**A**wards Awards Awards!

We should be opening the floodgates for awards submissions in the next week or so. When the floodgates are opened please expect some delays. Please submit your Worked All Counties awards first and hold off on the Last Counties if you can. I would like to thank KD9ZP and W8TAX for helping AB7RW get a handle on the job and getting him trained up. Thanks again to AB7RW-Phil for accepting the position!

Great Lakes Director-Dayton Hamvention

W8JJ-Tim submitted his resignation to the board on October 13, 2017 for personal reasons. Thanks for your service and dedication to MARAC! If you would be interested in replacing Tim until the next elections please contact me or K8ZZ. You must live in the following locations to be considered: PA, WV, OH, IN, MI, VE3.

Tim also noted that he will not be able to run the County Hunter Forum at Dayton and that no volunteers have stepped up. Should anyone wish to take over for Tim at the Hamvention the email to request forum space is [forums@hamevntion.org](mailto:forums@hamevntion.org). If you would like to do this please let me know.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Convention-Kansas City October 3-6 2018

The board approved the contract with the hotel at our last board meeting. The dates are now set and K8ZZ-Ed the chairman will be getting us more information soon. You can't ask for a more central location so I hope that we can fill up the hotel with county hunters from all over.

The Michigan Mini 2018 will be April 26-28<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to Ed and Joe for continue to host this popular event. More information can be found on the MARAC website.

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**WSJT-X FT8**

What the heck is that ? The newest craze in ham radio. It is the new digital mode that everyone is trying. Why? It is allowing people with very limited or marginal stations and antennas to make contacts that they would not be able to make normally. FT8 is much faster than other weak signal modes which required minutes to make contacts. FT8 contacts can be completed within a minute. Clublog.org is reporting that FT8 log submissions have equaled that of SSB and CW contacts combined! That is saying something!

I have made around 500 FT8 contact since the middle of October. I have knocked off a few Last Counties in the process which were great surprises. I believe that N1API might be close to 2000 counties worked on FT8! I see many county hunters working this mode every day and more county hunters are getting on daily. What is great about this mode is that you can see every station that is on that you can decode. WQ7A, NF0N, NA8W, N1API, KA9JAC, K8QWY, KH6/G4KHG, N6PBD, K5GE, KC3X, N0KV, AJ5ZV and many others are making contacts daily.

If you have been thinking about trying it, do! It is fairly simple to setup. You need a digital interface like a Signalink or Microham keyer, the WSJT-X software, A time sync program and JTAlert if you want to be able to send messages and setup alerts for DX, States, etc. You can send what you decode to <http://hamspots.net> which is another spotting site that many FT8 users watch.

To download the WSJT-X software go to: <https://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/wsjsx.html>  
For a time sync program you can use:  
<http://www.satsignal.eu/ntp/setup.html> or <http://www.thinkman.com/dimension4/>.  
You can download JTAlert from here: <http://hamapps.com/>.

If you have having issues decoding signals chances are you are overloading your interface. Reduce the level coming from your rig to your interface. You can see the amount of signal coming in on the left side of the WSJT program. The bar should go up to around the 30 or 40 mark and you are good. DX may not follow the entire qso sequence so be aware. Some may not send 73. When calling others you do not have transmit where they do. The program decodes everything across the spectrum. What happens when many people call the same station on their frequency most times those signals cancel out. If you call on a clear frequency your chances of a contact are greater. This is more for DX but works in all cases. I generally Xmit on one place all night and work people all over the spectrum.

If you have any questions ask away! Most of us that are on will be happy to help. I hope to work more of you soon.

**Parks on the Air**

Parks on the air continues to be a great crossover activity for county hunters. N4CD, KA2LHO, KA9JAC/KB9YVT and N9JF are some of our more active park activators. Many parks cross into multiple counties so be sure to ask the activator what county they are in. KA2LHO and K2MF and others have worked hard to create a document that cross references parks to counties. You can find that here: <http://countyhunter.com/Toplist/KFF-County.htm> More information on the POTA program can be found at <http://wwff.co> and <https://wwff-kff.com/>.

**Spotting**

Please help the mobiles by spotting them. Don't wait or hope someone else will do it. It really helps the mobiles out especially in these poor conditions. We are still working on getting spotting going from within logger directly which should help. I hope we can get this done by the end of the year. Don't forget to cross post the POTA activation's on the County Hunters spotting network too! They appreciate the extra contacts.

New chasers/hunters and activators.

If you work or hear a new person working counties or stopping by confused, think about sending them a brief email letting them know about county hunting, MARAC, and where to find help. We are going to start sending out the County Hunting handout to LC stations that are not know county hunters. I plan to contact many of my FT8 contacts to let them know that in addition to DX and WAS there is other things to chase on that mode.

I hope everyone survived Halloween and I would like to wish everyone Happy Thanksgiving.

W0MU  
Mike Fatchett  
President



**Dateline CW**

Ed, KN4Y

Mobile CW County Hunter's lament: I've taken my fun where I've parked it.

I finally agree with the saying, "the older a person the faster the days pass," it is November already, the last 30 day month of the year. Why is this year of 2017 so anxious to become history? Perhaps it is because the MARAC Convention is over. My incomplete analytical thought process is interrupted by the exhaust roar of Gator's 4X4 as he down shifts and slides to a stop at the recycled railroad tie. I hear the thud of a successful Kamikaze squirrel. I look out of the window to see Gator go to the postbox and retrieve the snail mail. He is carrying the legendary white cardboard container, my lips begin smacking involuntarily. Gator comes in the door and hands me the mail, "Greetings Dude I had a little extra time and stopped and got some éclairs just entering the world." I think to myself a redneck Santa has arrived early. Gator opens the container and hands me a latte and an éclair, "Thanks Gator." I sit down wishing all CW county hunters could experience this experience. There is time to think and a time to enjoy the moment.

Gator goes to the computer and checks the county hunter's forum. "Wow Dude MARAC has a new awards secretary." I interrupt Gator, "Yes It is Phil, AB7RW (A Best 7Reward Worker) and XYL Barbara, AC7UH (All Considered7U Hear). What the heck are you jabbering about and what is a XYL." I laugh, "I was saying the calls using phonetics. The letters XYL are used on CW to describe the boss." Gator shakes his head, "You do CW. What do you know about phonetics and you just proved my theory." Gator is laughing hysterically as he sips his latte. We are quiet for the moment as we enjoy our lattes.

I hand Gator a fallow colored memory stick, "Gator please check out my Texas QSO party log." Gator sips his latte as he mouses around, suddenly he giggles and says, "Your QSO count is 129, you worked six mobiles and logged a measly 84 Texas counties. You worked one 2X2 call, one 'A' call and two no-star mobiles. What is your excuse this time for the low number of QSO's?" I sip my latte, smile and explain, "The band conditions were not the best from here to Texas, I could not always hear the mobiles, it seemed like a listen and hope endeavor. How many of the Texas mobiles operators were MARAC members?" Gator grins, "Would you believe fifty percent. There was Larry, K5OT, Bob, N4CD and Norm, W3DYA." I wave my hand to change the subject, "Gator please check out my California QSO party log, the bands from here to California seemed more cooperative.

Gator turns around, he takes a sip of his latte, "Yes Dude you did an itsy bitsy tiny yellow

improvement and I notice there was also a mobile station.” “Yes Gator that was a pleasant surprise and I worked the mobile stations whenever heard.” “Dude, please don’t interrupt, you worked 125 stations on CW and logged 35 California counties. I notice the over the air exchange still included a serial number.” I shake my head, “Yes Gator, there was some talk about making this a friendly QSO party. The argument is a serial number has been used for so many years that such a major change would confuse too many California operators and result in pandemonium.” Gator is not paying attention. I hand Gator a zebra colored memory stick, “While you are on a roll check out my Pennsylvania QSO party log and you will notice a serial number is required in the exchange.”

Gator swaps out memory sticks, a minute later he laughs, “You made 81 CW QSOs in the Pennsylvania QSO party and you did work eight No-Stars and two new counties on 80-meters. I notice there were four bonus mobiles that were operated by members of the Frankford Radio Club.” “Yes Gator, I had fun. Please check out the Arizona QSO party which also requires a serial number in the exchange.” Gator sips his latte and finishes his éclair.

Gator sets his latte down, “Dude you actually worked 19 CW QSOs in the Arizona QSO party.” “Yes Gator I worked all the Arizona stations I heard, but I did not hear the bonus station on CW. You will notice the Arizona QSO party exchange includes both the State abbreviation (AZ) and the county abbreviation.” Gator laughs, “Perhaps that is to constantly remind the CW operator what State he is in.” We have a good laugh and finish our lattes. Gator gets two more lattes and asks, “Have you heard if there was a CW meeting at the MARAC convention?”

I take a sip of a now not so hot latte, “Yes, Norm told me they had a CW meeting but not like the old days when Al ran the meeting, they talked about running State Parks.” Gator slaps the table, “Hate to interrupt Dude but I just read that county hunter Tom, K5IID, is a silent key did you know him?” I shake my head in sadness, “Yes Gator I first worked Tom on CW in 1982 and if I remember correctly the last time I worked Tom was in 2013.” We give a latte salute as Gator recites the Irish Blessing.

Gator asks, “Dude I drove by the radio shack late Saturday night and the shack lights were on, what contest was in progress?” I laugh, “It was the 10-10 International Fall CW QSO party. The ten meter band was below dead. See for yourself.” Gator brings up the log and laughs, “You got that right Dude, five contacts is not indicative of an active band.” We have a short laugh, “Gator please also check out my CQ DX CW Contest,

Suddenly from inside the right front pocket on Gator’s shirt his cell phone emits CQ, CQ, CQ, Gator checks his phone, sorry Dude I have to get to unit 3 pronto. The vacuum

condenser started leaking and the vacuum level is increasing.” Gator is gone like cell phone use in Puerto Rico, I hear him yell, “Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.” The printer starts and stops, I get the printout and it is list of mobile stations heard during October on the county hunters CW call frequencies:

I read: AF5CC K0DEQ, K0MAF, K2HVN, K3IMC, K7TM, K8ZZ, KA2LHO, KB0LF, KC5P, N0KV, N1QY, N4CD, N4UP, N9AC, N9JF, N9QS, NM2L, W0GXQ, W3DQT, W3KWH, WA2CNJ, WA3QNT, WA2UNS, WB0PYF, WB4KZW, and WJ8Y.

November is a great month for the CW operators having at least 25 world-wide amateur radio activities using the CW mode. The State QSO party enthusiasts are limited to one QSO party and that is the Kentucky QSO party with 120 counties up for grabs. Some of the contests this month are: The Ukrainian DX contest, and for the CW message passing amateurs the ARRL Sweepstakes CW contest. Want to have a ten meter experience try the 10-10 International Fall Digital contest, sort of like CW except using a computer instead of a paddle. Another favorite is the OK/OM CW DX contest, the LZ DX contest, the ARRL Sweepstakes SSB contest and ending the month is the CW World-wide CW DX contest. And lastly remember that daylight saving time ends on the fifth and stuff yourself on Thanksgiving because a full county hunter is a happy county hunter. Now it is time for a world renowned precursor activity nap.



**Board of Directors Meeting**

Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club (MARAC)

Friday October 13, 2017

**P**resident Mike Fatchett (W0MU) welcomed everyone to the BOD meeting and called the meeting to order at 2359z October 13, 2017

**Board Members present in person or via Uberconference:**

Vice President – Ed Eklin (K8ZZ)  
Secretary – Terry Dummler (WQ7A)  
Treasurer – Aubrey Mansfield(W7OLY )  
Northeast Director – Al Kaiser (N1API)  
South Central Director – Barry Mitchell (N0KV)  
North Central Director – Mike Nickolas (NF0N)  
Pacific Director – Paul Nelson (N7JPF)

**Members not present:**

Past President – Randy Hatt (AA8R)  
Great Lakes Director – Tim Eklin (W8JJ)  
Southeast Director – Kerry Long (W4SIG)

Motion by Aubrey (W7OLY )to accept the minutes of the previous BOD meeting as published. Second by Al (N1API). Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

Motion by Al (N1API) to accept the Treasurer’s Report as published. Second by Terry (WQ7A). Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

Motion by Aubrey (W7OLY) to accept the Awards Secretary’s Report as published. Second by Mike (NF0N). Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

**New Business**

**Discussion with K8ZZ the convener of the 2018 National Convention. Since it will be the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of MARAC extra effort will be made to have a really big convention. The contact was approved. The normal \$4000 seed money was approved. A larger than normal prize money was allocated. Prize money was approved at \$4000.**

Motion by Al (N1API) to adjourn. The President held an open mic session for questions from the attendees. It was noted that there were no members, other than the BOD, at the meeting.

Respectively  
Terry, WQ7A  
Secretary



**After Action Report**  
– 2017 MARAC National Convention

By Pat, N0DXE and Barry, N0KV

The 2017 National MARAC Convention was held September 25-27 with checkout Sept 28, 2017 at the Hotel Elegante in Colorado Springs, CO. Although initially 83 were registered, 10 folks had to cancel for various reasons, mostly due to health issues, so we had a total of 73 attend the convention. The county hunters were able to enjoy the camaraderie of old friends and make new ones, relax, etc. There was the usual rag chewing, puzzle building, guitar and ukulele music, forums/programs, banquet, and tour. With stricter beverage and food laws, it was difficult to find a hotel that would accommodate bringing in outside food and beverages, but with perseverance, we were able to do so. So with a slight increase in registration from \$40 to \$45, we were able to provide complimentary snacks and non-alcoholic beverages to those in attendance (no counting dollars and cents for beverages!!!). Of course, for those who wanted an adult beverage, there was a great bar/lounge in the hotel, where guests could buy drinks and also bring them to the hospitality room. In addition, a pay-as-go bar was set up at the banquet.

All in all, there was no cost to MARAC for the convention.

We had a great tour of the U.S. Olympic Training Center, where we were given a fabulous tour of athlete training facilities and even got to meet and chat with members of the Volleyball Team. Our tour guide was fabulous. We then continued on to the Garden of the Gods Visitor Center for lunch, etc., and then took a picturesque drive through the Garden of the Gods, providing great photo ops for shutterbugs.

There were forums and programs hosted by N4CD, N5MLP, W0MU and W0QE, who spent most of the first day mobile transmitter/antenna testing and presenting the results a few days later. The annual board meeting was conducted on Wed, Sep 27, using Uberconference phone in where individuals could call and listen live on their phones or PC's. Later that evening, we had a wonderful banquet meal, to include several special meals, and held drawings for the main prizes, ladies prizes, and the gift exchange. Congratulations to Frank, AA9JJ, who won the Early Bird prize of a Yaesu FT-857D and to NF0N for winning the Grand Prize of a Yaesu FT-991A. We look forward to working you on the air with your new toys.

A special thank you not only to those who provided a Forum or Program, but to Sandra, N0XYL, Boni Dummmler and Vonnie Hallock, for helping with the registration table, and to our new President, Mike, W0MU, for all his support before, during, and after the convention.

We hope everyone had a good time during their stay in Colorado Springs, and a great visit with friends, old and new. We look forward to next year's 50<sup>th</sup> Convention in Kansas City, where it all began. Hope to see you there.





Gene, K5GE and Mary Ida bobsledding to the next county line. Courtesy of Kerry Long, W4SIG



Jim, N8HAM, attempting to sneak up and light the Olympic Torch. Courtesy of Kerry Long, W4SIG

**Treasurer's Report (W7OLY)  
September 2017\***

**Beginning Account Balances August 18, 2017** **\$26,981.89**

**Income:**

Money Market Interest	\$0.91	
Awards Secretary Income	\$0.00	
Misc. Income	\$0.00	
Membership Income	\$375.62	
Logger Distribution	<u>\$20.00</u>	
Total Income:		\$396.53

**Other Expenses:**

Awards Secretary Expenses	\$0.00	
Misc. Expenses (2)	\$8,000.00	
Office Expenses (Postage, Etc.)	<u>\$0.00</u>	

Total Expenses: \$8,000.00

**Net Income Less Expenses** **(\$7,603.47)**

**New Total Cash Balance ALL Accounts:** **\$19,378.42**

Checking Account Balance		\$4,256.92
Money Market Account Balance		<u>\$15,121.50</u>
<b>Total Cash All Accounts:</b>		<b>\$19,378.42</b>

\* Includes Transactions posted through 10/14//2017

\* The \$1,500.00 Awards Secretary Funds are not included in the above balance.

Notes:

- (1) \$8,000 transferred from Money Market Acct. to checking acct. for 2018 Convention Seed+Prize monies.
- (2) 2018 Convention Seed+Prize monies to K8ZZ.
- (3) Awards Expenses for September (\$637.02) are not shown above awaiting closure of the W8TAX Awards Bank Account.

# From a balance sheet perspective, MARAC Total Funds at the end of August should be discounted by **\$6,290.15**. This amount is a Deferred Liability of award fees pre-paid by members. After discounting, our true (spendable) Cash Assets are **\$13,088.27**.



Awards

# Awards Committee

## Status of Awards Operations

As noted in the October newsletter, the awards processing operations were suspended at the end of August when the previous Awards Secretary went out of office. Phil Yasson, AB7RW, was appointed Awards Secretary at the September board meeting. He received the equipment and records a few weeks ago and is learning the processes, contacts, duties, and requirements of the position. He recently started accepting a few awards submittals and is working through the processes to complete and finalize those awards applications. He has a few more orientation sessions planned/scheduled for the first part of November. He will announce on the website or in the K3IMC forum when he is ready to start accepting additional applications more types of awards.

Changes were made to some pages on the website to reflect the new mailing address information for Phil. Additional changes are expected the first week of November to ensure the drop-down list of awards for the Worked All Counties form covers all the necessary entries for applications which may be submitted. Phil is working to get the financial accounts created to receive and disburse funds associated with the Awards Secretary function.

## Status of Self-credit Tracking Spreadsheet

If you didn't see comments in the October article about the status of implementing the self-credit award changes within Logger, refer to that article for more information. Since only a few of the 13 award changes have been implemented in logger, I have promised changes to my spreadsheet which can be used to record self-credits for all 13 of the affected awards, report summary data necessary to document the self-credits in a standard way, and produce a condensed version of that data to submit to the Awards Secretary when ready to apply for one of the 13 awards.

The first spreadsheet intended for individual users who may record data for any state/county across the nation is ready and will be posted to the county hunter downloads page on the Marac website late in the day on October 31, 2017. Also available is a 10-page PDF document which is a help file explaining the spreadsheet and provides step by step instructions for how to set it up for your callsign, record data, and prepare a condensed summary of information to support an award application. The location of the download page as well as names of both files are as follows:

Download page: [www.marac.org/chdownloads](http://www.marac.org/chdownloads)

Spreadsheet filename: **Self-Credit\_Indiv3077\_CALLSIGN\_Data.xlsx**

Help filename: **Self-Credit – Individual User for 3077 – HELP File.pdf**

Two other versions of the spreadsheet will be completed and posted in the next few weeks.

These will consist of:

1. A less complicated version which does not have pre-populated state/county names for all 3,077 counties. It will be designed for individual users who may run counties occasionally in one or just a few states. The user can add the state/county information on an ad-hoc basis as needed.
2. A team version for OM/YL teams which allow logging data for both team members separately but on the same line in the spreadsheet without having to duplicate the contact info in two separate spreadsheets.

## Vacancy on Awards Committee

As noted in the October newsletter article, the position for representative of the Northeast District is vacant. Any members in good standing who reside in the Northeast District and would like to be a member of the committee should contact the Northeast Director and/or the Awards Manager. We would like to fill that position as soon as possible.

**MARAC Awards Committee**



**N5MLP – Ron Clift, Marac Awards Manager**

**Events**

- 11/4        ARRL CW SWEEPSTAKES
- 11/11      10-10 INT'L DIGI
- 11/11      KY QP
- 11/18      ARRL SSB SWEEPSTAKES
- 11/20      RUN4BACON
- 11/23      TURKEY DAY!
- 11/25      CQ CW DX WORLDWIDE
- 10/3/18    50<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL (NO LINK)
- 4/26/18    MI MINI (NO LINK)

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 - Ron Clift (N5MLP)**

**Robert Woody - N8KIE**

**Tony Mazzocco -WA9DLB**

**Robert Hallock - K7TM**

**Bob Voss - N4CD**

**Jack Jacobs - WD4OIN**

**NE District Representative – VACANT**

*The County Line Roadrunner*  
*MARAC Secretary*  
*PO Box 500*  
*Yelm, WA 98597*

*“A Road Runner Is A Very Fast Bird”*

**Monthly Deadline for Articles is the 25<sup>th</sup>!**

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**Board of Directors**

**President:** Mike Fatchett, W0MU, PO Box 3500, Parker, CO 80134, 303-548-7222, w0mu@w0mu.com

**Vice-President:** Ed Eklin, K8ZZ, 1426 SW Summit Woods Dr Apt 3, Topeka, KS 66615, 231-649-4747, ed.eklin@gmail.com

**Secretary:** Terry Dummler, WQ7A, PO Box 500, Yelm, WA 98597, 360-894-3715, wq7a@comcast.net

Dues with an Electronic copy of the Newsletter copy are \$10.00 per year, check or money order. Dues are also available via PayPal to WQ7A@ARRL.NET

**Treasurer:** Aubrey Mansfield, W7OLY, 7717 Forest Park Dr, Olympia, WA 98502, 703-286-9987, w7oly@comcast.net

**Great Lakes Director:** Timothy Eklin, W8JJ, 7398 Waterfall Dr, Grand Blanc, MI 48439, 810-603-2801, w8jj@comcast.net

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**Pacific Director:** Paul Nelson, N7JPF, 3013 W. 10th St, The Dalles, OR 97058, 509-698-6227, n7jpf-paul@charter.net

**Southeast Director:** Kerry Long, W4SIG, 1854 Newton Nook, Collierville, TN 38017, 901-331-1881, kerrylong@comcast.net

**Immediate Past President:** Randy Hatt, AA8R, PO Box 427, Grant MI 49327, 517-812-9468, aa8r@aol.com

**Appointees**

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