



# THE COUNTY LINE ROADRUNNER

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



Volume XLX

May 2020

Number 5

## Thoughts from the VP

Kraig-KA2LHO

Welcome to a May unlike anything most people have ever experienced.

I am writing this as we approach Easter with a continuing concern about COVID-19 along with thoughts and prayers for all who we know (and those we don't know) that have lost family members, friends, neighbors due to this global virus. Additionally, those who are struggling financially as a result of job loss, furloughs or other impacts are in our thoughts as well.

COVID-19 has impacted us as County Hunters as well but only as a hobby. We lost the Michigan Mini for this year. It has been a challenge to get out and run counties and parks due to closures or stay at home orders put in place for most states in the country.

On the bright side, we are part of the *ultimate social distancing hobby*. We can still chase DX, counties (fixed stations) and parks in areas where stay at home orders are not in effect. We can still tinker with our equipment and experiment with new modes (for me anything beyond CW and SSB is a new mode).

Let's embrace the positive aspect of our hobby and come out of this situation as better operators and more excited about the chase and activation of counties (yes still working on my first time around since starting in the early 80's) and parks. Let's strive to check in on each other regularly both now and moving forward.

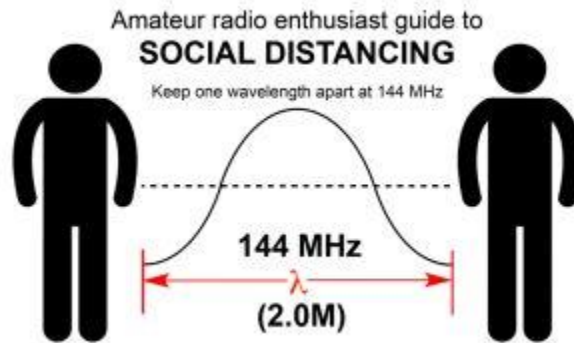
And above all stay safe and well.

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Kraig-KA2LHO



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# MARAC National Convention

October 25-26-27, 2020

Portland, OR

## Be Conventional – Come to the Convention!

### BREAKING NEWS:

Another speaker has been added to the schedule: Jeff Reinhardt AA6JR will speak on “Maximizing Your Mobile Rig”. He is a contributor to CQ Magazine. There are another two considering presenting. *Would one of YOU like to speak? Let me know.*

A new page has been added to the website - <http://ag6v.com/MARAC/activations.html>. This, along with the CountyHunterWeb.org trips page – will facilitate county activations and “getting” counties in the days around the National Convention. And maybe get some of you excited about a LC or two ??

The lockdown is not impacting people’s desire to travel – registrations are coming in, in spite of the virus and the convention still being six months away. NOTE: There is an early bird prize for the first 20 paid registrations by licensed operators and we are currently at 17. There is a separate early bird prize for the unlicensed XYs, wives, and spouses of those first 20 licensed registrants.

And guess what! The average max temperature in Portland OR in October is 63 degrees, and the average min is 48. The hotel is right on the Columbia River, so we’ll be sitting outside at social distances of less than 6 feet by then!

### Standard Details:

- Last month the details of the Banquet meal choices were provided. The three entrees’ specifics are on the website on the Banquet Page (<http://ag6v.com/MARAC/banquet.html>)
- The convention will be at the Red Lion Inn at Jantzen Beach, Portland Oregon.
- Website: <http://ag6v.com/MARAC/index.html> RV hookups are available nearby for those so inclined.
- Registrations – You can see who is registered at <http://ag6v.com/MARAC/register.html>
- The GRAND PRIZE is an Elecraft KX3 Pack, assembled. (key not included) *Thank you Elecraft for the discount.*

**DEADLINES:**

- Hotel Discount ends Oct. 2nd, 2020.
- Banquet choices must be final by Oct. 19th, 2020.
- Early Bird Prizes - first 20 paid registrations received from licensed operators will be entered to a special drawing-*up to 17 now – late April!*
- Early Bird XYL Prize - all non-licensed people who enter along with the first 20 paid licensed operators will be entered to a special, separate drawing
- Room reservations must be made no later than Friday October 2nd, 2020 to get the MARAC discounted rate. Phone (503) 283-4466 or reserve a room via the link on the website at <http://ag6v.com/MARAC/hotel.html>. Be sure to get a room for Wednesday the 27th, for after the banquet!

This event is being organized by Donna Hinshaw, AG6V, Pacific Region Director. Please direct all questions to her at ag6v at arrl dot net And, check out the website <http://ag6v.com/MARAC>.



**Donna-AG6V**

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## DATELINE CW

**Ed-KN4Y**

Due to crazy-busy participation in the Florida QSO Party, Ed and Gator are taking a nap this month



**Ed, KN4Y (Gator took the picture)**



# FT8-An Introduction

**Phil-AB7RW**

With everyone shut in because of the virus, there are not many mobiles out on the road. This is a good time to get into working stations on FT-8. As a beginner, I do not know all there is to know about the program, but I am learning. On my second day of playing the program, I picked up six counties that I had needed in my Logger program. I have also worked several county hunters, K4YT, K5KUC, and missed WQ7A, and N0KV. If you are interested in trying the FT-8 (Most of it is automatic). Here are some instructions to get you started:

1. Download WSJT-X ver. 2 or latter. This is the program that does the magic.
2. JT-ALERT-X. This interfaces between your logging program and WSJT-X. It will log your contact into your Logging program, LOTW, ESQL, QRZ logbook and Club Log after being set up.
3. Dimension 4. Keeps your computer clock accurate. FT-8 operates on a 15 second time schedule. If your computer is one or two seconds different than the actual time, it will not work well resulting in no contacts.

After you have WSJT-X loaded, click on the HELP program and download the instructions. This is an excellent guide to operating the program.

The next item is to set up your transmitter. I found the best way to get this information is to open your browser and enter "SET UP FOR (RADIO MODEL) FOR FT-8". You want the specific instructions for your radio. You will find more than one set up on "You Tube". Not all are very good. Some guys speak very fast and it is easy to miss info. I found that when clicking to stop the program after each instruction, then putting that instruction into the radio, then restart the program.

Several items to keep track of from the radio are Serial Port Number, Baud Rate, Parity and Stop bits. These are needed in the WSJT-X set up. If there is a start up problem, it will usually be in the radio set up. You may have clicked on an instruction to STOP instead of clicking it to ON.

I turned my antenna towards Asia to work a Russian, and then I was bombarded with Japanese stations. I ran seven of them in a very short amount of time. If you have questions, I may be able to give you assistance.



**Phil, AB7RW**

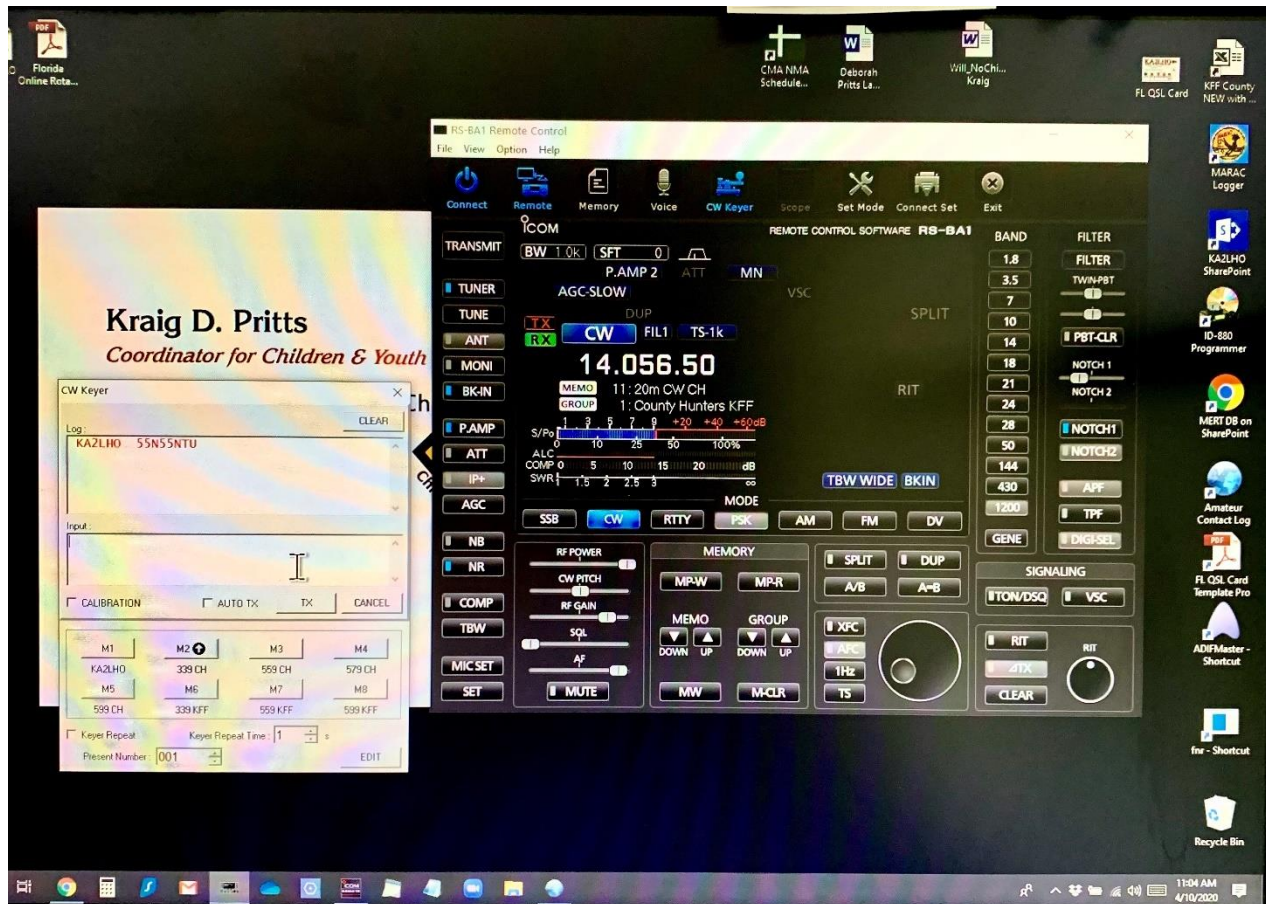
# Home and Mobile Shacks

This month featuring KA2LHO (Part II)

## My "Other" Shack Kraig-KA2LHO

In a past issue of Roadrunner, I shared details about my mobile and home shacks. In the description of my home shack, I mentioned the remote capabilities. Those capabilities make up my "other" shack!

I have remote access to 99% of the functions found in my home shack using the Windows based Icom RS-BA1 Vsn. 2 software. It gives me full capabilities for 160m through 70cm include D-Star functionality from any of my laptops anywhere I have internet (including cell phone) access.



RS-BA1 Vsn 2 software connected to my Icom 7100

This also allows me to turn on/off the transceiver remotely. Due to the power linkage to my LDG AT1000ProII auto tuner, turning the radio on/off does the same to the tuner and disconnects my antenna from the radio. This is handy when thunderstorms come up quickly (as they do in Florida) and I am not at the house.

Icom also makes a great, but overly expensive, physical remote controller (Icom RC-28 shown to the right) with programmable multi-purpose buttons and a weighted tuning knob that has the same feel as the knob on the 7100. This is programmed through the Icom RS-BA1 Vsn 2 software above. With this controller and a mouse, I can access every control on the screen



Icom RC-28 controller

without using the computer keyboard. It works with Ham Radio Deluxe, and possibly other software, but has limited functionality when used outside of the RS-BA1 package.

I also have a small Surface GO computer configured for remote operations while at work, at an eatery, hotel, a relative's home or other locations where I can monitor with my AirPods. My "other" shack is primarily for convenience and the accessibility to my base station in other areas of my home and when I travel.

While running parks and counties from the bus I simply turn on my Yaesu 857D.

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## Election Information

Mary-AB7NK  
Election Coordinator

### RESULTS FOR 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER VOTING

- The following individuals have been recognized by their peers for the categories listed below for the period of January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2020.
- Only those individuals receiving a minimum of 3 points are listed.
- Calls are listed in no particular order

**SSB - Mobile of the Year** - KC6AWX, W4SIG, AB7NK, KB6UF, K7SEN, N8OYY, N4CD

**CW - Mobile of the Year** - W5UGD, N4CD, W4SIG, AB7NK, NF0N, NU0Q, K8ZZ

**Team of the Year** - AB7NK/K7SEN, KB0BA/N0XYL

**SSB - Mobile Assist of the Year** - KZ2P, WY0A, K0DEQ, KC3X, K8EMS, N0KV

**CW - Mobile Assist of the Year** - KA1JPR, K0DEQ, KC3X, W0GXQ, W4SIG

Congratulations to all.



Mary-AB7NK  
Election Coordinator

***Voting for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, April 1 - May 31, 2020  
will be held in June 2020.***

# Awards Committee

Ron-N5MLP  
Awards Manager

## Awards Issued from March 24 through April 24, 2020

Awards Issued:				Roadrunner Awards Issued:			
Call	Date of Last Contact	Award	Number	Call	Date of Last Contact	Last County Count:	Number
AB7RW	8/1/2018	RAS* - CO - 1st Time	32	WA9DLB	10/3/2018	150	175
KC3X	1/13/2020	Bingo VII	2				
* Ran All State							



Ron-N5MLP  
Awards Manager

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## Deep Thought of the Month

AI-N1API

"To write with a broken pencil is pointless."

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## County Trivia-Alaska!

Jack-WD4OIN

The largest county in the 50 states is The Fourth District of Alaska, 238,630.71 square miles. It is larger than the Ukraine, the world's 45 largest country! Now we are talking about a big county.

# Running Alaska's 4 Districts

Kent-KV7N (ex KL1V)

*(This article is a reprint of one Kent put together about 10 years ago. The facts remain the same...)*

## Running the Alaska Judicial Districts

Running the Alaska districts is a little different than running the counties in the "Lower 48" as we up here call the continental USA. The size and distance of the districts surprises most people because they look at a map of the USA and Alaska is usually shown off the coast of California and not with much detail. Alaska is 2 and ½ times the size of Texas and if it was placed over the lower 48 it would cover the east coast to the west coast. The largest district up here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> judicial district and it is 1,800 miles east to west and almost 500 miles north to south this is home to the largest city (Anchorage).

Because of the distances between districts the most that can be run in a single day is 2 of the 4 districts with very long distances to the next district. More often than not the districts in Alaska are put out on the county hunters net in the summer tourist season when the roads are free of ice and snow and it is not a concern for bad weather if a person should encounter vehicle trouble.

The weather up here can be very bad in the winter months with the temperatures dropping as low as minus 70 degrees with only a few hours of twilight (the sun does not rise for several weeks in the northern most district (second). The summer temperatures are usually between 70 and 80 deg and the sun is up 24 hours a day so lots of time to go fishing and transmit from the district.

The third and fourth districts are by far the easiest to run, just pick a nice spot away from one of the many mountain ranges and hope the band is open.



This photo is taken near the third and fourth district line looking at a 16,000 foot plus mountain range.



The hardest district to transmit from is the First district because of all the coastal mountains between it and the lower 48 states the few roads in this southeast district are along the coast right along the ocean edge. The best place I have found to run this district is from Juneau in a rental car. Juneau does not have any road connecting it to the rest of the world so unless you know someone there the rental is about the only option. The next best place would be from Haines Alaska it is south of White Horse, Yukon Territory and is connected to the road system. The worst place to try to run it from is from Skagway also south of White Horse but it is located in a hole and very difficult to get a signal into and out of.

The most difficult and most expensive district to get to is the second district. There is only 1 road into and out of this district known as the "Haul road" and is mostly used by truckers (18 wheelers) hauling equipment to the oil fields on the North Slope.



This is the haul road and as you can see from the photo it can get very slick and greasy when it rains.

As you travel up this road you will see several signs like this one below:



This is the furthest north spruce tree I am not sure if it is still there this was taken a few years ago.

As you go north you will see a sign the size of a billboard that you are entering the "north slope borough" this is where the second district begins, of all the counties I have ran (all 3077) this is the largest county sign I have ever seen. This is not a good place to put out the district because it is at the bottom of Atigan Pass and

surrounded by mountains. Also notice the Trans Alaska Pipeline in the distance it is a 48 inch pipeline.



Just a few miles up the road on top of Atigan pass there is a good flat spot with openings to the southeast (USA) and north into Europe.



Notice the very muddy truck running the second district. The antennas are an outbacker and a CB antenna both magnet mounted.

A few things to remember when going to and from the haul road you should take a CB radio to listen to the truckers; they are constantly telling each other what the road conditions are like and if any troubles are to be expected. It is very helpful to let them know you are either going to pull over and let them pass or you are going to pass them always remember to slow down when approaching them because with 18 or more wheels the

gravel can and does destroy your windows and paint job. (All the major rental car companies forbid you taking their cars on the gravel roads in Alaska)

When I go on a trip to the second I carry 2 extra spare tires and 10 gal of extra fuel. I have had several flat tires on this road and the last time the gas station at Cold Foot had been out of gas for 3 days and the parking lot was full of stuck people wanting to buy any gas if it was for sale.

I have run the 4 districts in both the summer and winter months I find it is cheapest to run them in the winter (except for the second which I flew into Nome for 3 days at a cost of over \$1,000 for 100 contacts) It was much cheaper going to the first district by air it was only \$500 for 80 contacts.

The price of hotels in the winter is around \$65 a night but in the May the prices go to around \$145 and up. I hope everyone can make the trip up here at least once in their lifetimes and don't forget to bring a camera and a fishing pole the scenery is awesome in any of the 4 districts.

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## MARAC Silent Keys

*(If you have information that should be included here, please contact W4SIG)*

This month it is with sadness and fond memories that we remember the following Silent Keys:

**N3DRO**-Barb Ayara- A frequent attender of both the MMM in Murfreesboro and the Michigan Mini. She was a 80M net regular, gave out 700 LCS, Ran all Counties mobile in State in 29 states, held BINGO, and WAC 5 times

**W8ILC**-Ron Moorefield- USACA #398. Ron was instrumental in securing a County Hunter seminar at the Dayton Hamvention for decades

**KE0AY**- Frank Tissot- USACA #848

**AA4GT**-George Tomlinson-An active CW county hunter, USACA#1053, Worked all CW, ran all counties in several states, USACA 4 times



# MARAC Treasurer's Report

Bill-KODEQ  
MARAC Treasurer

MAR 20, 2020 THROUGH APRIL 19, 2020

Beginning Account Balance		\$21,192.17
Income:		
Savings Account Interest	\$	
Awards Income		
Misc Income NOTE 1	600.00	
Membership Income	109.41	
Logger Distribution Income		
Total Income		<u>\$709.41</u>
Expenses:		
Awards Expenses	\$ 110.30	
Misc. Expenses NOTE 2	100.00	
Office Expenses (Postage, etc.)		
Total expenses		<u>\$ 210.30</u>
Net Income Less Expenses		499.11
Cash Balance		\$21,691.28
Checking Account Balance	\$ 4,743.98	
Savings Account Balance	<u>_16,947.30</u>	
Total all accounts		\$21,691.28

NOTE 1: \$600 refund from MI Mini

NOTE 2: \$100 paid to Dorchester Paws in memory of KU4YM-special memorial approved by BOD

From a balance sheet perspective, MARAC cash balance shown above should be discounted by \$6122.00, which is the amount of award fees pre-paid by members. After subtracting this amount, the true (spendable) Cash Balance is \$15,569.28

Bill, KODEQ  
MARAC Treasurer



# 2020 State QSO Parties

Courtesy of WA7BNM

\*Date of previous year's contest. Date of current year's contest not yet confirmed.

## State

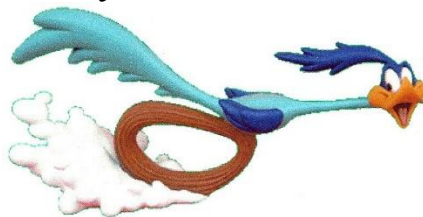
Alabama	± Alabama QSO Party	*1500Z, Sep 14 to 0300Z, Sep 15, 2019
Arizona	± 7th Call Area QSO Party	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
	± Arizona QSO Party	*1600Z, Oct 12 to 0600Z, Oct 13, 2019 and *1400Z to 2400Z, Oct 13, 2019
Arkansas	± Arkansas QSO Party	*1400Z, May 11 to 0200Z, May 12, 2019
California	± California QSO Party	*1600Z, Oct 5 to 2200Z, Oct 6, 2019
Colorado	± Colorado QSO Party	*1300Z, Aug 31 to 0400Z, Sep 1, 2019
Connecticut	± New England QSO Party	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
Delaware	± Delaware QSO Party	*1700Z, May 4 to 2359Z, May 5, 2019
Florida	± Florida QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 25 to 0159Z, Apr 26, 2020 and 1200Z-2159Z, Apr 26, 2020
Georgia	± Georgia QSO Party	1800Z, Apr 11 to 0359Z, Apr 12, 2020 and 1400Z-2359Z, Apr 12, 2020
Hawaii	± Hawaii QSO Party	*0400Z, Aug 24 to 0400Z, Aug 26, 2019
Idaho	± Idaho QSO Party	1900Z, Mar 14 to 1900Z, Mar 15, 2020
	± 7th Call Area QSO Party	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
Illinois	± Illinois QSO Party	*1700Z, Oct 20 to 0100Z, Oct 21, 2019
Indiana	± Indiana QSO Party	1500Z, May 2 to 0300Z, May 3, 2020
Iowa	± Iowa QSO Party	*1400Z, Sep 21 to 0200Z, Sep 22, 2019
Kansas	± Kansas QSO Party	*1400Z, Aug 24 to 0200Z, Aug 25, 2019 and *1400Z-2000Z, Aug 25, 2019
Kentucky	± Kentucky QSO Party	1400Z, June 6 to 0200Z, Jun 7, 2020
Louisiana	± Louisiana QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0200Z, Apr 5, 2020
Maine	± New England QSO Party	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
	± Maine QSO Party	*1200Z, Sep 28 to 1200Z, Sep 29, 2019
Maryland	± Maryland-DC QSO Party	*1400Z, Aug 10 to 0400Z, Aug 11, 2019
Massachusetts	± New England QSO Party	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
Michigan	± Michigan QSO Party	1600Z, Apr 18 to 0400Z, Apr 19, 2020
Minnesota	± Minnesota QSO Party	1400Z-2400Z, Feb 1, 2020
Mississippi	± Mississippi QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0200Z, Apr 5, 2020
Missouri	± Missouri QSO Party	1400Z, Apr 4 to 0400Z, Apr 5, 2020 and 1400Z-2000Z, Apr 5, 2020
Montana	± 7th Call Area QSO Party	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
Nebraska	± Nebraska QSO Party	*1300Z, Sep 7 to 0100Z, Sep 8, 2019
Nevada	± Nevada QSO Party	*0300Z, Oct 12 to 2100Z, Oct 13, 2019

	<a href="#">± 7th Call Area QSO Party</a>	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
New Hampshire	<a href="#">± New England QSO Party</a>	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
	<a href="#">± New Hampshire QSO Party</a>	*1600Z, Sep 21 to 0400Z, Sep 22, 2019 and *1600Z-2200Z, Sep 22, 2019
New Jersey	<a href="#">± New Jersey QSO Party</a>	*1600Z, Sep 21 to 0359Z, Sep 22, 2019
New Mexico	<a href="#">± New Mexico QSO Party</a>	1400Z, Apr 11 to 0200Z, Apr 12, 2020
New York	<a href="#">± New York QSO Party</a>	*1400Z, Oct 19 to 0200Z, Oct 20, 2019
North Carolina	<a href="#">± North Carolina QSO Party</a>	1500Z, Mar 1 to 0059Z, Mar 2, 2020
North Dakota	<a href="#">± North Dakota QSO Party</a>	1800Z, Apr 11 to 1800Z, Apr 12, 2020
Ohio	<a href="#">± Ohio QSO Party</a>	*1600Z, Aug 24 to 0400Z, Aug 25, 2019
Oklahoma	<a href="#">± Oklahoma QSO Party</a>	1500Z, Mar 14 to 0200Z, Mar 15, 2020 and 1400Z-2100Z, Mar 15, 2020
Oregon	<a href="#">± 7th Call Area QSO Party</a>	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
Pennsylvania	<a href="#">± Pennsylvania QSO Party</a>	*1600Z, Oct 12 to 0500Z, Oct 13, 2019 and *1300Z-2200Z, Oct 13, 2019
Rhode Island	<a href="#">± New England QSO Party</a>	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
South Carolina	<a href="#">± South Carolina QSO Party</a>	1500Z, Feb 29 to 0159Z, Mar 1, 2020
South Dakota	<a href="#">± South Dakota QSO Party</a>	*1800Z, Oct 12 to 1800Z, Oct 13, 2019
Tennessee	<a href="#">± Tennessee QSO Party</a>	1800Z, Sep 6 to 0300Z, Sep 7, 2020
Texas	<a href="#">± Texas QSO Party</a>	*1400Z, Sep 14 to 0200Z, Sep 15, 2019 and *1400Z-2000Z, Sep 15, 2019
Utah	<a href="#">± 7th Call Area QSO Party</a>	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
Vermont	<a href="#">± New England QSO Party</a>	*2000Z, May 4 to 0500Z, May 5, 2019 and *1300Z-2400Z, May 5, 2019
	<a href="#">± Vermont QSO Party</a>	0000Z, Feb 1 to 2400Z, Feb 2, 2020
Virginia	<a href="#">± Virginia QSO Party</a>	1400Z, Mar 21 to 0400Z, Mar 22, 2020 and 1200Z-2400Z, Mar 22, 2020
Washington	<a href="#">± Washington State Salmon Run</a>	*1600Z, Sep 21 to 0700Z, Sep 22, 2019 and *1600Z-2400Z, Sep 22, 2019
	<a href="#">± 7th Call Area QSO Party</a>	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020
West Virginia	<a href="#">± West Virginia QSO Party</a>	*1600Z, Jun 15 to 0400Z, Jun 16, 2019
Wisconsin	<a href="#">± Wisconsin QSO Party</a>	1800Z, Mar 15 to 0100Z, Mar 16, 2020
Wyoming	<a href="#">± 7th Call Area QSO Party</a>	1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2020

Send comments and corrections about this page to [Bruce Horn, WA7BNM](mailto:Bruce.Horn@WA7BNM)



## The County Line ROADRUNNER



*“A Roadrunner Is A Very Fast Bird”*

Monthly Deadline for Articles is the 25th!

### Mobile Amateur Radio Awards Club Leadership Team

#### Board of Directors

**President:** Ed Eklin, K8ZZ  
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**Treasurer:** Bill Morgan, K0DEQ  
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573-465-5405, [billmorgan1@centurylink.net](mailto:billmorgan1@centurylink.net)

**Dues with an Electronic copy of the Newsletter copy are \$10.00 per year, check or money order. Dues may also be paid via Pay-Pal and directed to [treasurer@marac.org](mailto:treasurer@marac.org)**

**Great Lakes Director:** Darl Deeds, NA8W  
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**Immediate Past President:** Vacant

#### Appointed Positions

**Awards Manager:** Ron Clift, N5MLP  
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**Awards Secretary:** Phil Yasson, AB7RW  
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**MARAC General Counsel:** Bill Morgan, K0DEQ  
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