

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

July-August-September 2023

W7O/CE-303 by Jeff-KK7DAK

EVERY DAY IS FIELD DAY WHEN YOU ACTIVATE SOTA

Upcoming Events for Your Summer Planning:

July 8-9: SalmonCon XVIII Campout + SOTA Event, North Bend, Washington – <https://www.pnwgrp.org/salmoncon>

July 15-16: CQ WW VHF Contest – <https://cqww-vhf.com/>

July 22-23 Glacier Hamfest, East Essex, Montana – <https://www.gwhamfest.org/>

July 21-24 W7O Campout, Diamond Lake, OR <https://reflector.sota.org.uk/t/2nd-annual-w7o-campout-2023/31376>

August 5: Idaho W7I SOTA Activity Day (Saturday) Contact [Amos-KT7WW](#)

August 6: BC VE7 SOTA Activity Day (Sunday) – contact [Gabor-VE7JH](#)

August 6: Puget Sound W7W SOTA Activity Day (Sunday) – contact [James-WA7JNJ](#)

August 5-6: NA SOTA Rocky Mtn Rendezvous + Colorado 14er Event <https://ham14er.groups.io/g/ham14er/wiki/>

August 5-6: W6 SOTA Activity Weekend – [2023 SOTAFest](#)

August 5-6: PNW Not Quite Fourteener S2S Party – <https://qrpx.org/>

August 5-6: ARRL UHF (222MHz+) Contest – <https://www.arrl.org/222-mhz-and-up-distance-contest>

August 26: Central Oregon SOTA Activity Party – <http://www.pnwsota.org/content/august-26-2023-central-oregon-do-si-do-pines>

September 9-10: ARRL September VHF Contest – <https://www.arrl.org/september-vhf>

September 8-11: W7W Summer Campout & S2S Party – <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=w7w%20campout> at [Guler Mt. Adams County Park](#) near Trout Lake, Washington, contact [Jeff-KJ7VDP](#) if you might join.

October 14: Oregon Eclipse Campout – <http://www.pnwsota.org/content/october-14th-2023-oregon-eclipse-campout-tbd>

SOTA WeatherBot by Dave-N7LKL

Weather can make or break an activation and there are many sources of weather information for planning an outing. How many of us have mapped a summit, zoomed out, and then checked the forecast for the nearest town? That works, but the resulting forecast is unlikely to reflect true weather conditions at the summit. Some services may be able generate a forecast for the GPS coordinates of your planned summit, but copying coordinates from one site to another and navigating web interfaces can be tedious.

Enter the SOTA WeatherBot. It is a free service which scans posted alerts and emails you a summit-specific forecast 24 hours before activation time. The email also includes a link which you can use at any time to bring up the current National Weather Service (NWS) forecast for your summit. Plan your outing with the synopsis in the email. Fine tune your kit before heading out the door with the current forecast link.

This all works thanks to free APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) provided by SOTA and NWS. Nice to know, but how is a summit-specific forecast produced? It turns out that NWS provides forecasts on a 2.5 x 2.5 km square granularity. Summit GPS coordinates are mapped to the corresponding NWS grid element, and a forecast is generated. Of course, conditions can vary greatly within a 2.5 x 2.5 km area, especially when elevation is considered. And NWS doesn't have actual measuring devices in every grid - they extrapolate data from multiple sources and locations. So yes, the forecast is still an approximation. But it's much more accurate than the "nearest town" approach and empirically, has been reliable.

You can subscribe to the SOTA WeatherBot (did I mention it's free?) by sending an email to sotawxbot@gmail.com with SUBSCRIBE CALLSIGN in the subject line. Remember to substitute your actual call sign for CALLSIGN and to originate the email from the same account where you would like to receive forecasts. All hams can subscribe but forecasts are only generated for CONUS, AK, HI, and PR associations.

Even if you don't subscribe as described, you may receive a single, unsolicited SOTA WeatherBot forecast email if you post an activation alert and have a valid email listed in QRZ. This one-time email will contain a subscription link if you wish to receive forecasts for future activations.

I hope you find the SOTA WeatherBot useful in planning activations. However, remember that you are responsible for your own safety. Be prepared for all possible weather conditions - regardless of what any forecast may indicate.

The Care and Feeding of Chasers – Darryl-WW7D

[This article from a past Newsletter is worth revisiting](#) – how to make the Activator/Chaser codependency even better.

Report on the SeaPac Convention

SOTA folks had not gathered at SeaPac for the Northwest ham convention in several years – in 2023 we had a fun turnout of about two dozen SOTA friends on Friday evening at Pizza Harbor in Seaside. Saturday there was standing room only for an excellent presentation on SOTA, POTA and portable operating by Jeff-KJ7VDP and Josef-KD7QOW.

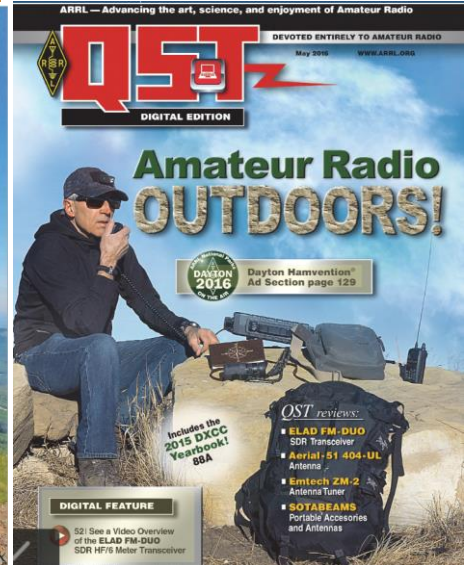
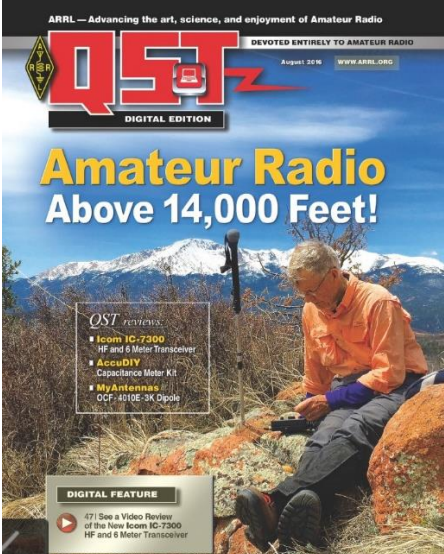
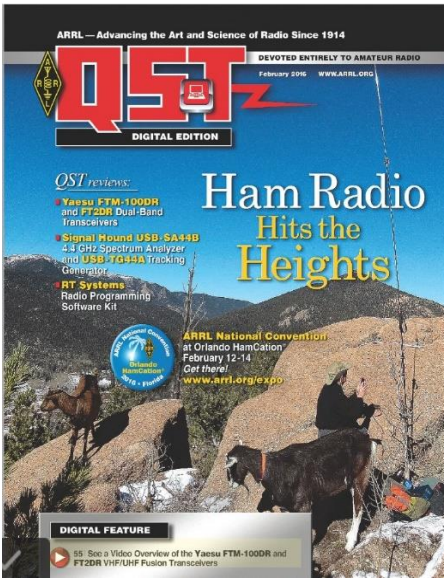
Saturday afternoon we headed out to nearby Double Peak (W7O/NC-062) for our traditional SeaPac activation. Below Steve-W7ETF being happy with working his first JA, and we all were pleased to have permits for using the Lewis & Clark private timberland – not because they check (which they have twice), but that having permission is part of SOTA.



NanoHertz? That's Real Low...[New York Times Article on Very, Very, VERY Low Frequency Gravitational Waves](#)

QST Covers and SOTA –

Since about 2012, the cover of QST has featured SOTA activations five times and some kind of Portable operation nine times. Steve-WGØAT was on the QST cover twice in 2016. Here are some of those covers:



Getting Started with Ham Radio – with Ham Bootcamp! By Kat-KF7KAT

Dawn of Saturday, May 14th rose sunny, clear and warm – the first real taste of spring in my area after another extended winter. What a beautiful day to attend online Ham Bootcamp! <https://www.n1fd.org/ham-bootcamp/>



Ham Bootcamp is offered by Nashua Area Radio Society (New Hampshire and Massachusetts) twice a year, in spring and fall. Hams from near there and far gather remotely over Zoom for an intensive series of presentations and demonstrations on a colorful variety of ham radio topics. It's as close to being hands-on as a ham could probably get without being hands on. I quickly could see why this event continues to grow in its sixth year.

According to the organization, this semiannual instructional event is “designed to help newly licensed Technician, General, and Extra class license holders get on the air and use their amateur radio license. Bootcamp is also a great opportunity for prospective hams who are interested in seeing what the hobby has to offer.”

That Saturday, we started with approximately 188 attendees, and over the course of the eight-hour day, this ebbed to around 70 at conclusion. This made sense, as some hams probably signed up for a particular presentation, while others like me, took it all in. I found it to be an efficient, educational, and even charming event. Topics included joining repeater nets, building a repeater station, antenna building, Fox Hunting, HF, FT8, POTA and SOTA, DX and QSL'ing, and more. I honestly was prepared for this to be a dry day that I might wander in and out of, but from the very

beginning, I was hooked. Something as exotic as getting started with amateur radio satellites unfolded before me even though I hadn't yet finished my morning matcha. The Zoom Chat stayed busy the whole time, and the team did an admirable job of staying on top of comments and questions in real time.

It was very well organized and well run. These folks know their subjects, and they clearly put a lot of preparation into how to deliver a lot of information in short periods of time. As such, it lived up to the momentum and intensive concept of “bootcamp.” They even kept programming going with bonus demonstrations on the breaks. I was delighted that during the first break of the day, they did a live, on-the-air satellite demonstration. The itinerary truly seemed to have something for every ham, from VHF/UHF to HF. The pace was brisk. The afternoon divided into break-out sessions, which allowed everyone to hone in on our particular areas of interest.

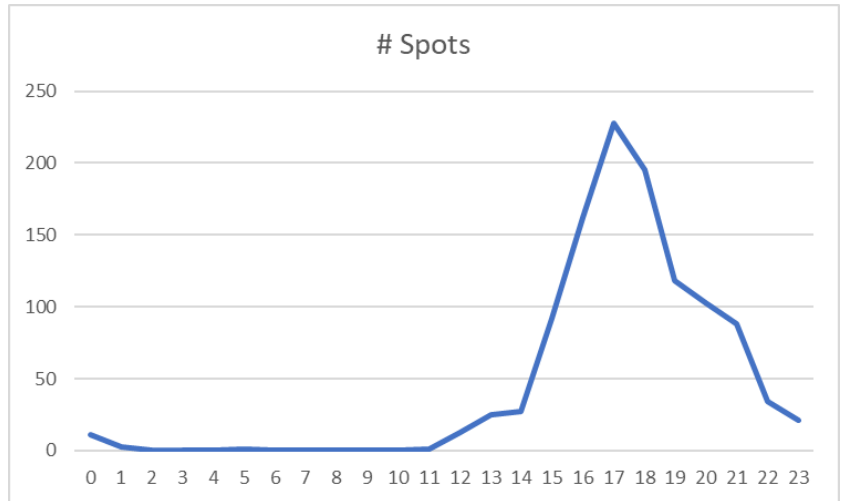
The team which put the event on is well accomplished. After the event, the presentations were made available online. There was a pitch to join the society and an open invitation to participate in their tech nets. N1FD and the bootcamp series were new to me. I was very impressed with the event and found a lot of value in it. While the sun poured through the windows and tugged at my sleeve, I knew my kayak would be waiting for me another day, and was content that Ham Bootcamp had been a day well spent.

You can also read a recent QST article on Ham Bootcamp here:

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/QST/This%20Month%20in%20QST/October2020/Kemmerer.pdf>

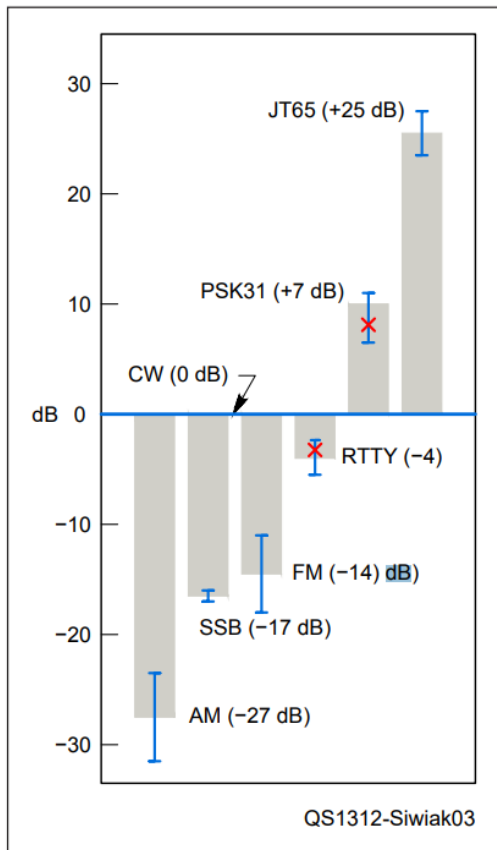
Where are all the Afternoon SOTA Chasers?

Are you activating in the afternoon? Especially here on the left coast and on weekdays, there are fewer spots and fewer SOTA chasers (graphed is the number of North American spots by UTC hour over a week in May). East Coast SOTA chasers are eating dinner or watching Netflix when you are getting on the air – they have put their station to bed because they don't expect many SOTA summits to be activated. We usually consider any activation starting after 3pm marginal because of this. Try looking at chasing [POTA spots](#), or, if your summit is in a POTA entity, spot yourself there.



How Much Better is CW compared to SSB?

<https://sfdxa.com/wp-content/uploads/Presentations/Mode-sensitivity-2013-Dec-QST-Siwiak-Pontius-1.pdf>



Tag-Alongs Welcome! – Have you wanted to try Summits on the Air but don't know where to go? Does your S.O. tell you that you need to have someone go with you on your mountain/radio adventures? If so, watch for **“Tag-Alongs Welcome!”** on the [SOTAWatch](#) alerts page. If you would welcome another activator, please put **“Tag Alongs Welcome!”** in your alert comment with **“Meet at trailhead”** or **“RSVP by email”** to activate the summit together.

! There is a New Oregon Association Reference Manual ! – It is essential that everyone activating in Oregon update their Google Earth, GPS, and other summit information to the new Summit References and coordinates. Some summits have been deleted, some have been added and some have moved!

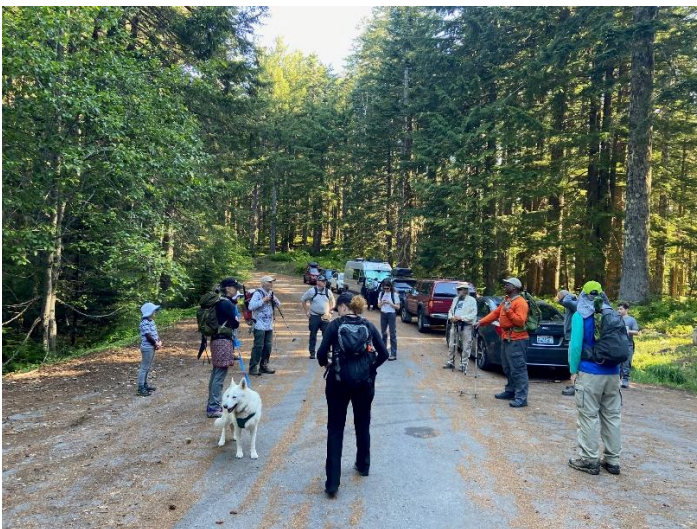
W7O Do-Si-Do Activations

Here in Oregon we've enough new (and experienced) Activators, and a good number of accessible summits nearby, that we've been able to do group activations that allow the social aspect of hiking together plus also getting Activation points, Chaser points, Summit-to-Summit points, and SOTA Completes. Described as a Do-Si-Do by Bill-WJ7WJ, as each of two teams of two to five operators swap summits, this presents a fun opportunity for those that want company hiking or an immersive introduction to SOTA.

The newer folks may not have HF gear while others bring equipment to share. Everyone can learn something about on-air practices, VHF antenna options, the best HT to use, logging approaches, how to put up an EFHW, and if a "standing desk" operating position is better than that stump over there.

We've had three of these Do-Si-Do in 2023 and have a good list for more to come. Sometimes there's a short drive between trailheads, sometimes a staggered start time works best, and occasionally there's a shared trailhead that serves both summits. Do-Si-Do is all about the fun of SOTA, sharing and ultimately being successful at our Radiosport!

There's also the possibility of gathering afterwards for food and drink with the ongoing "discovery" afterwards of conveniently located brew pubs and restaurants on the way home.



ARTS PAGE

Global Steepening by Bill-WJ7WJ

Mountains and hills made of rocks

Some walkable some needing ropes and chocks

Can they change slope?

Common sense says: Nope

But it seems more effort is needed on walks.

Rising oceans mean the seas are deepening

So follow me on this reasoning

In youth it was breezy

But now not so easy

Could there be global steepening?

QSL card drawn by Don-KG5ISG on W5N/CO-011, Cerro Lobo



Your ideas for this newsletter are welcome. Share the newsletter with others and subscribe or unsubscribe using the checkbox at PNWSOTA.org – “My Account”, “Edit”, “SOTA”. This newsletter is brought to you by the W7O Association Manager, Etienne-K7ATN. Find back issues here: www.pnwsota.org/content/pacific-northwest-sota-newsletters.