

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

Oct-Nov-Dec 2022

Photo by Rob-AE7AP of Sheepeater Mountain

Upcoming Events – Fall is upon us and these are some of the loveliest days to be out in the mountains...there are no particular events in the fourth quarter except **YOU** Activating a SOTA Summit or **YOU** Chasing SOTA – Enjoy!

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 crazy mountain/radio adventures? If so, "**Tag-Alongs Welcome!**" is what to watch for on the [SOTAWatch](#) alerts page. If you would be glad to have another activator or two along, please put "**Tag Alongs Welcome!**" in your alert comment with "meet at trailhead" or "rsvp by email" or whatever might work for you and the summit you have in mind. With a bit of cooperation three or even four activators can co-exist on a summit and each make four contacts for points.

SOTAWatch Clock is Client-based

Not sure if that headline is accurate – BUT what it means is that for <https://sotawatch.sota.org.uk/>, the UTC time you see is based on the clock in your own computer!! SO...if your computer clock is off, then UTC time will be off. Mine was wrong by four minutes, even with Windows "Setting the time automatically." Check your clock!

Be Nice to Chasers – by Posting an ALERT! Even for 2m FM. It could mean a Summit-to-Summit for you. There was a weekend a while back when a Pacific Northwest 6-point and 10-point summit were activated – without alerts – and SOTA Chasers would have liked to work them but didn't know. There are now enough SOTA-folks in the region that we usually listen for other Activators – although your fourth 2m FM contact may come from some random ham passing by on the interstate, why not have it be a SOTA Chaser, fellow SOTA Activator, or SOTA Friend? In the region we are leaning towards alerts on 146.58-FM or 146.56-FM to avoid cluttering up the National Calling Frequency of 146.52-FM.

Rob-AE7AP and His Excellent W7I Adventure

Barb-AE7AQ and I recently completed a 14-day backpacking/SOTA trip in the [Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness](#). The prime objective of the trip was to activate W7I/VC-169, which I identified as likely to be the most remote summit in Idaho. The nearest roads are the Salmon River Road (17.2 miles northeast), the Venable Mine Road

(17.5 miles southwest), and the Big Creek Road (17.8 miles west). The summit is the high point of a ridge that includes Vinegar Hill. Vinegar Hill received its name during the 1879 Sheepeater Indian War when Lieutenant Catley and his soldiers retreated to the hill after being surprised at Big Creek. The soldiers abandoned their supplies during the retreat and resorted to drinking vinegar during the brief siege of Vinegar Hill. They eventually retreated further up the ridge and on to Cold Meadows, quite possibly over the summit of W7M/VC-169!

We reached our base camp for this activation after a two-day, 23-mile hike to upper Cave Creek. After a steep hike to the summit the next day, I was able to work 18 stations – all on 20-meters. On the fourth day, it was my intent to relocate our camp several miles north to the East Fork of Crooked Creek as a base for the activation of Cold Mountain Ridge (W7I/IC-082). We had the fortunate circumstance, however, to find a water source only 200 vertical feet below the summit of Blackburn Saddle, thus negating the need to back-climb 600-feet to begin the activation hike. We loaded up on water (13-liters) and carried it up to a dry-camp above the saddle, from where we activated Cold Mountain Ridge the next day and then relocated our camp to the lower reaches of the East Fork of Crooked Creek. The relocation to the East Fork of Crooked Creek was the first step towards moving our camp 40 miles to the northwest for our next activation. We had considered attempting an activation of Bismark Mountain (W7I/IC-084) from a camp in Club Meadows, but we weren't keen on spending two nights in Club Meadows due to a heavy stand of standing dead timber that surrounded the only dry, flat camping spot that I could find. A nearby (200 yards) freshly cached deer kill surrounded by bear scat and some large-animal vocalizations by our tent in the evening also didn't improve the vibe, so we chose to move on and used the extra day to activate Mosquito Mountain later in the trip.



After completing the 40-mile camp relocation to Chamberlain Creek, we enjoyed an activation of Sheepeater Mountain (W7I/IC-042) and some good conversation with the lookout (Logan) – the first person that we had seen in 9-days. [Sheepeater Mountain Lookout is this issues banner photo.] A nearby (200 feet away?) tree fell over at our Chamberlain Creek campsite one evening. This sound is truly terrifying, even though we knew our camp was in 30- to 40-year-old regrowth that was perfectly safe. From Chamberlain Creek, we climbed 1,300 feet to a very nice camp on the South Fork of Chamberlain Creek where we were



entertained each evening by the sounds of an ongoing treetop battle between the gray jays and the squirrels – presumably over pine nuts. From this campsite we activated the misnamed Mosquito Peak (W7I/IC-330), which should have been named “Blazing Hot Swarm of Flying Ants Peak!” This activation was a challenge for me, but I still managed to work 23 stations, including one JA – despite forgetting to connect my external power supply for 20-meters and thus only outputting 2-Watts instead of the usual 4-Watts from the KX1. I realized my mistake before activating on 40-meters and was able to work Vick-K7VK with the full 4-Watts!

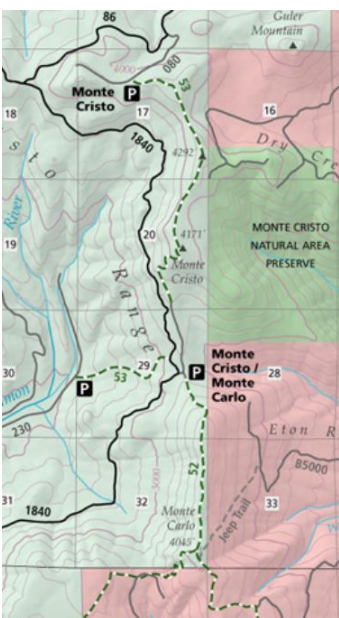


We then activated W7I/IC-064 with full-packs while enroute to our next camp on Hand Creek. This 2-mile off-trail activation turned out to be slow going due to lots of deadfall on a hot day, but I was able to work another 19-stations, including Lance-W7GJ in Frenchtown. Our final activation was Dead Mule Peak (W7I/IC-031), which was a truly enjoyable climb through a rare stand of unburned timber. The activation went very smoothly, and I was able to work Dennis – KR7Q in Stevensville. After a nights' rest, we hiked the final 14 miles to our 4-Runner and car-camped part-way up the Elk Summit Road between Edwardsburg and Warren. We didn't see a lot of wildlife on this trip until the final day when we spooked up two bears and a herd of elk. The trip was a lot of fun and a satisfying physical challenge. We

crossed over 120-miles of wilderness and felt fortunate to experience such a lightly traveled and remote area. The car trip out was also an adventure. After traversing 90-miles of dirt roads on the way in from Stanley to the trailhead, I elected to take a "short-cut" to the west on the way out. The Elk Summit Road was an adventure! The road is very narrow and drops 5,700 feet from Elk Summit to the South Fork of the Salmon River through a series of switchbacks that are carved into the mountainside. It is, perhaps, nearly literal to state that I did not touch the accelerator for a solid two hours. Most of the descent was in 1st gear at 10 mph. It was fortunate that we did not encounter anyone except a motorcyclist on the descent, as the road was quite narrow. It is also fortunate that the road was not blocked by a washout, as my fuel gauge passed through the ½-full mark on the way out.



Thank you all for working me – I really appreciate the QSOs. Our route is at this link: <https://caltopo.com/m/0MVDT73>, Rob-AE7AP



Traverse? Do-Si-Do? Another Way to do Multiple Summits

In W7O and W7W, there have been a few "traverses" between summits that share a trail but when it's too far to do a there and back. Instead, there's a vehicle swap (and in the middle, a key exchange) and two parties start on each end of the trail, work Summit-to-Summit and then to the next peak for more S2S and SOTA Completes, and in the end, finding their car. Maybe they do these sorts of things in the rest of our SOTA world, but these are the ones we know about.

In 2014 there was a very challenging W7W 'triple' traverse from Three Corner Rock, Birkenfeld, to Greenleaf that was done once in a full two-party car swap in 2014 and again as a one-way in 2017 (and not likely ever again). In 2019 a long walk on Rho Ridge connected Hawk Mountain and Mount Lowe in the Clackamas drainage of W7O with a party of six ops. And in September, a team of eight did 7.4 miles and 2700 feet of gain to activate Monte Cristo High Point and Monte Carlo in the W7W/LC region. [Here's a map of the area](#) that shows the summits and the trails taken.

Bill-WJ7WJ has called these sorts of activation and summit trading a "Do-Si-Do" – like the square dance figure. The traverse gives folks to see trails that would otherwise be a challenge to access. Besides an activation, you get S2S points and SOTA Completes, all in one (long) day of hiking. Following are a few photos of the event...

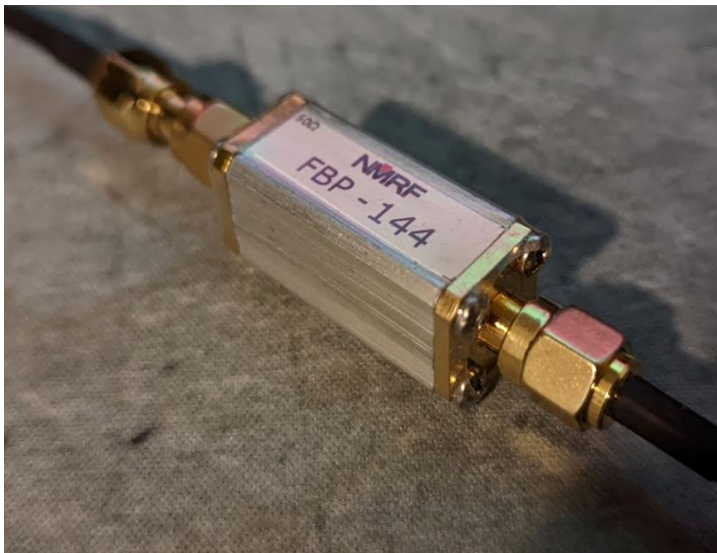


Amateur Radio Operations in National Wildlife Refuges – from the ARRL Northwestern Division Newsletter
<https://arrlnwdiv.org/2022/09/26/arrl-northwestern-division-newsletter-sept-26-2022/>

QCX-mini al fresco on G/NP-008 by Colin-M1BUU – The Ultimate McGyvering? Well beyond the pale...
<https://reflector.sota.org.uk/t/qcx-mini-al-fresco-g-np-008/30100>

Updated Summit Names – by Deb Haaland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Many hundreds of geographical names – names that we use on a regular basis to identify qualified SOTA summits, are derogatory, racist and sexist. The U.S. Department of Interior through the federal Board on Geographic Names has updating 643 place names of streams, lakes, springs, valleys and summits. The next iterations of U.S. SOTA Association Reference Manuals will become aligned with these updated names. Read the full text of Ms. Haaland’s opinion article in the Washington Post here:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/09/28/remove-racial-slur-federal-land-native-american/>

The NMRF 2m Bandpass Filter by Tim Sherry-N7KOM



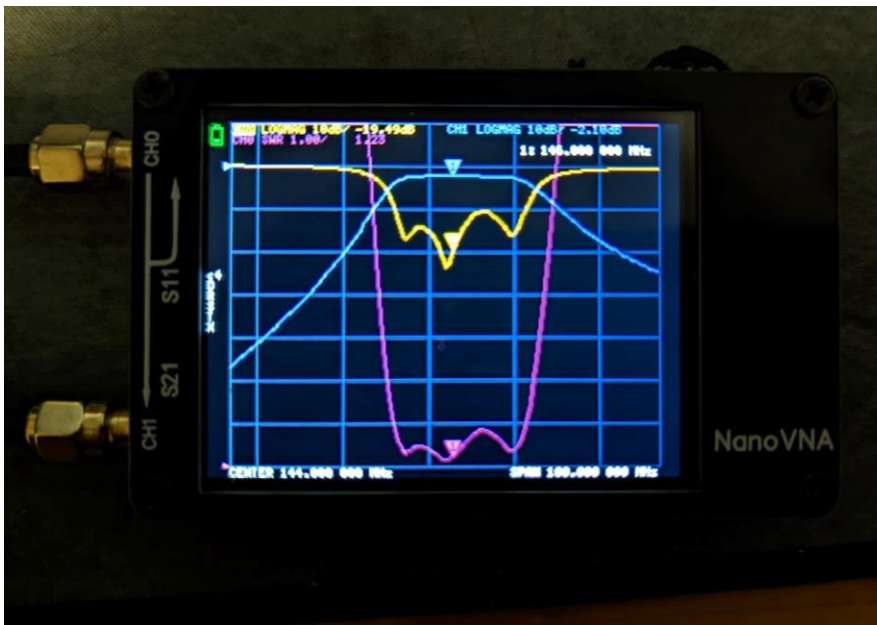
Many summits have high-RF environments from TV or FM radio towers. The front-end filtering on 2m radios can sometimes be overwhelmed by these signals, which completely swamp the receive capabilities of the radio. Chasers may be able to hear an activator transmitting, but the activator won't hear them.

One solution is a bandpass filter. This filter is attached between the radio and the antenna. It passes through signals of a certain frequency range and rejects signals outside of that range.

Most 2m bandpass filters, such as the SOTABEAMS, cost in the \$50-\$60 range. I found a [bandpass filter on AliExpress](#) that was about \$30 and decided to give it a try.

Here I present the results from a NanoVNA chart, compare to the SOTABEAMS band bandpass filter, and present some experiences using the filter in the field.

First, what signals are we interested in rejecting? The 2m ham band spans 144 MHz to 148 MHz, so ideally the filter should reject everything outside of that range. Commercial FM radio is broadcast in the 88.1-108.1 MHz frequency range. Television signals at the low VHF end are 54-88 MHz and 174-216 MHz at the high end. UHF TV signals span 470-806 MHz. These, plus commercial, and public service VHF and UHF two-way radio systems, are all signals we may encounter from a tower on a summit.



To test the filter, I calibrated my NanoVNA and then attached the filter between the transmission (channel 1) and reflection (channel 0) ports on the NanoVNA.

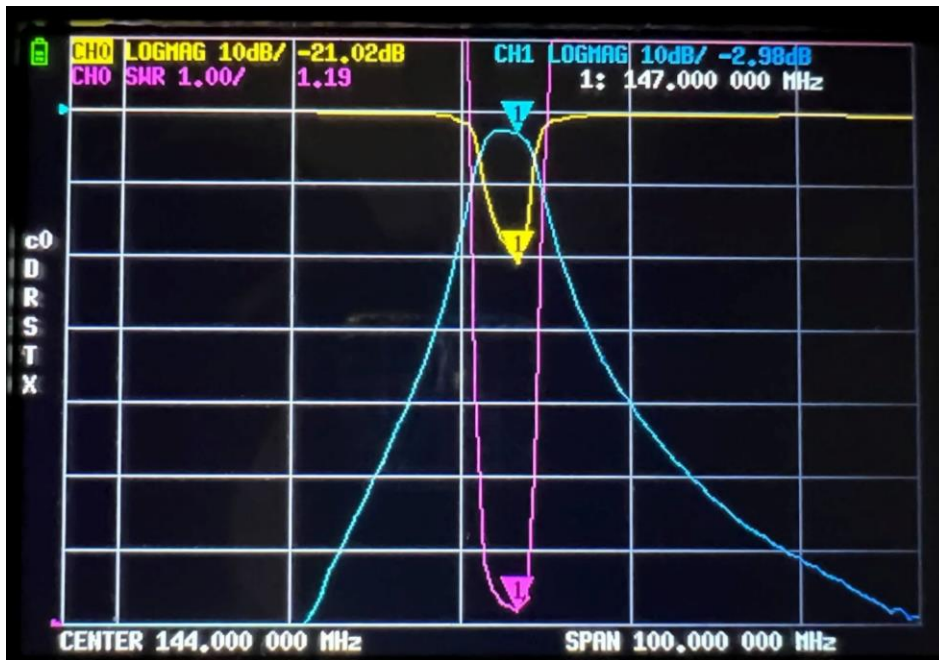
I centered the NanoVNA display on 144MHz and set a span of 100MHz.

The results show that the filter spans approximately 134-160 MHz. Channel 1 gives a -2.1db insertion loss across this span. Channel 0 and SWR shows a couple spikes across this span with steep walls outside of the span.

The filter effectively blocks frequencies outside of the 134-160 MHz span with a minimal drop in performance from the radio within the span.

Let's see how this compares to the SOTABEAMS 2m Bandpass Filter. The SOTABEAMS filter advertises a filter bandwidth of 144-148 MHz with an in-band attenuation of <3dB. Outside of the span it advertises 25dB at 155 MHz and 70dB at 433 MHz as well as the FM broadcast band.

Spec	NMRF/Ali Express	SOTABEAMS
Filter Bandwidth	134-160 MHz	144 - 148 MHz
In-band Attenuation	2.1dB	< 3dB



Mike-K6STR was kind enough to run the same test with his NanoVNA. Centering on 144 MHz, with a 100 MHz span. The filter passes through signals from 144 MHz to 148 MHz.

There is a loss of about 2.9dB within the span. Takeaway: The Ali-Express 2m bandpass filter lets a larger frequency range pass to the radio compared to the SOTABEAMS filter. Although this is outside of the 2-meter ham bands, it still is effective at blocking commercial radio and TV frequencies we might encounter on a summit.

Anecdotally I've tested the AliExpress filter on only a couple of summits. One was W7O/CE-213 aka Awbrey Butte in Bend, Oregon, a well-known RFI location. A previous activation was pretty rough copy on 2m FM using a rubber duck antenna to reduce the RFI from nearby towers. When I used the filter with the MFJ Long Ranger antenna at a later date I was able to copy chasers with ease.

I plan to do further testing on this filter by combining it with a Baofeng with known poor receive capability on high RF summits. A video follow-up to come! - 73 de Tim N7KOM

Lost and Found Headlamp

Anne-K7AHR lost her headlamp on West Onion Peak, and Greg-K7AGL later found it for her. She doesn't know exactly how it ended up in the tree in the first place!

These are some of my favorite stories for the newsletter, and I'd be delighted to hear any others that readers might have. [There are more lost and found stories on the SOTA Reflector.](#)



Central Oregon Summit-to-Summit Party by Chris-KC7UJO

It all started in July at the [W7O SOTA Campout](#) hosted by Amy-AG7GP down at the beautiful Hyatt Lake Recreation Area in Southern Oregon. It was my first gathering of ham-minded folks and I was looking forward to meeting and chatting with other operators, being a relatively new ham myself. I had done a handful of activations around Central Oregon with my wife and dogs and was excited to learn how others get things done. Additionally, my wife Randi, who

had just that previous Wednesday taken and passed the Technician exam and was looking forward to making her first contacts, with her newly issued callsign (received literally hours before we arrived at camp).

Not long after we arrived, Etienne-K7ATN came over to check us in and introduce himself, referring to me as “that new guy from Bend” and gave us a quick rundown of the “plan” for the weekend. We had a lot of fun that weekend. Saturday night as we chatted and drank some of Jeff’s, KJ7VDP, delicious homebrew, Etienne pitched the idea of a Central Oregon Summit-to-Summit Party later in the summer. Tim-N7KOM, had plans to climb a glaciated peak and thought it would be nice to coordinate some operators to chase in case summit conditions were poor. I agreed to help as best I could.

Not very long after we returned home from the campout weekend, I received an email from Etienne describing previous S2S parties hosted in the Willamette valley and I got excited about the prospect. We settled on a date and started sending out communications to the local hams and clubs to raise some awareness and try to gather a few more locals into the fray.

Interest started slowly but we ultimately gathered 14 operators on 10 Summits, with a last-minute entry, bringing the total to 15 Operators on 11 Summits. Operators included, $\frac{2}{3}$ of Oregon’s SOTA Mountain Goat population, a famous Mountain Climbing-YouTuber, 3 YL’s and 2 brand new to SOTA operators with 5 of the total from the Central Oregon Area.

Since we had so many folks and to make the party move along at a reasonable pace, I acted as Net Control on 146.58. Starting at 1800 UTC, I took check in’s and gave my signal report to get myself out of the fray. Once we had everyone checked in, we went down the list, letting each subsequent operator make calls to summits that they could hear but had not yet talked to. The idea being that by the end, there shouldn’t be many other operators the last person on the list need contact. It was a little confusing for newer folks but in the end it worked great. After about 40 minutes, I shut down the net and we all descended our summits to meet up for some cold drinks and food at Worthy Brewing in Bend.



Chris-KC7UJO as Net Control

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Bill-K7WXW on South Sister



At lunch, Tim-N7KOM and Bill-K7WXW decided to summit South Sister the next morning. We coordinated enough folks to get them both S2S and Summit-to-Rooftop contacts early on Sunday. Thanks to all the operators who participated: Ron-W6PZA, Bill-WJ7WJ, Nora-NW7CQ, Bob-W7SCY, Jarod-NE7ET, Jack-KG7JQY, Roland-K7FOP, Bill-K7WXW, Tim-N7KOM, Jeff-KJ7VDP, Kathleen-KK6CN and especially Randi-KK7HJL for supporting me in this strange and nerdy radiosport. A special thanks to Etienne-K7ATN for planting the seed and helping coordinate.



Randi-KK7HJL also writes about Lost and Found

After the Central Oregon Summit-to-Summit party, Etienne-K7ATN said he was looking for Lost and Found stories for the PNW SOTA Newsletter. I thought about what I had just lost or found over the last 72 hours. Here's my story.

Growing up, my best friend and I lived a cornfield apart. How I arrived at her house depended upon the time of year. Winter meant a cross-country ski over the frozen tundra. Summertime travel depended on the height of the corn. The old adage 'knee-high by the 4th of July' and 'sky high by the end of July' rang true. When I couldn't travel through the field, I ambled along the country road. Along the way, I would look at the lost items scattered. As I walked, I found stories about how those items arrived lost on my path. A lifejacket stowed in haste. A pack of Lucky Strikes thrown on impulse from a window as the person decided health over pleasure. A pink flowered flip-flop that dangled on a girl's right foot as it hung out the passenger's window that flew off as the driver shifted down to speed into the straightway, her shrills of excitement still hung in the air.

The lost item that I never found a story for was the car radio antenna that was snapped and laying in the gravel. I scooped up the antenna and telescoped it up and down. I wondered how it arrived. Did a driver snap the antenna in rage? There was no 10-4 Good Buddy to end that transmission.

The antenna quickly changed from an item of question to an item of magic. Skipping down the lane, I would abracadabra the wand over the plants and birds casting spells, never knowing how the wand became my found

possession. Until, my husband, Chris, and I were driving home from McCall, Idaho. We were on the section of US highway 20 through the Malheur County just before Burns where the roadside signs warn of high winds. There an 18-Wheeler blasted by. What followed was a loud clunk over our roof. 40 years later I found the story to that lost radio antenna laying in the gravel. However, this story ends with our lost antenna.

It seems that while on the road, stories are made and on that same trip to McCall, my husband and I planned a drive-up activation on the summit of No Business Mountain. The 14-mile drive-up summit really meant, some people have no business being up there, as we bumped up the mountain slowly, we felt shaken.

A couple days later we were at the beach at Payette Lake when we returned to our truck, we noticed our front license plate missing. We realized that the road to No Business Mountain must have rattled the screws loose and our license plate must be lost along a county road. Yet, I wasn't ready to give up on that license plate. Earlier in the day while downtown McCall, we walked to get ice cream, surely, I would have noticed if it was missing then. After, ice cream we went to the Albertsons. Chris dropped me off at the front so he could park and wait with the dogs in the truck. I asked him if he might have hit anything when he parked. Sheepishly he replied, "Yes, I heard a crunch when I parked. I might have hit the retaining wall." Sure enough, we drove back Albertson's parking lot and just on the other side of the knee-high cement retaining wall we found our Smokey the Bear license plate face down in the grass.



Randi-KK7HJL and Chris-KC7UJO — Rooftop to Summit

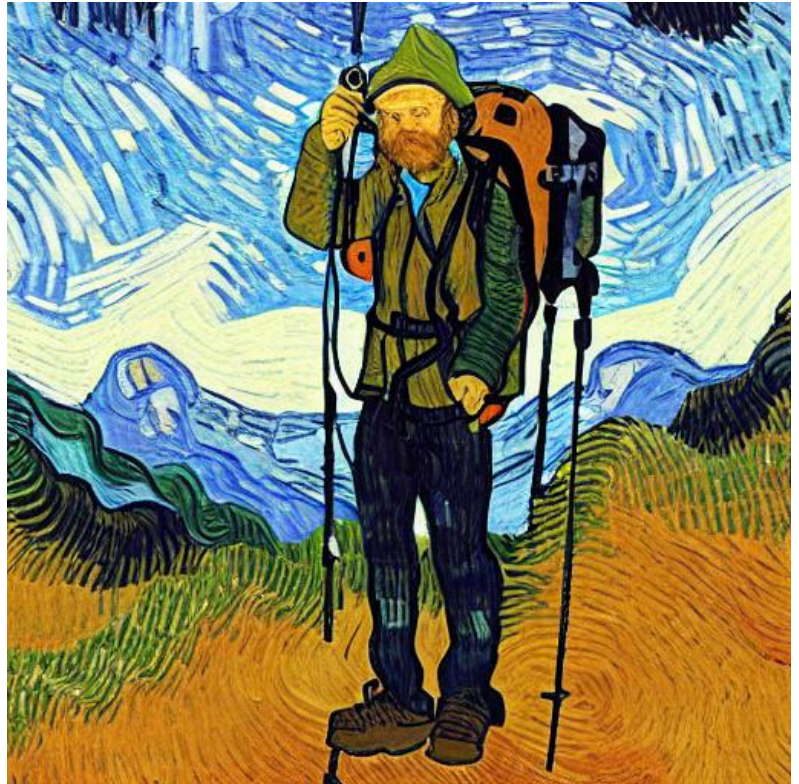
While it's true most stories are made when on an adventure, the last comes from our roof. It happened the morning after the Central Oregon Summit to Summit Party just 36 hours after we returned from McCall. Chris had set his alarm for 6am wake up, brewed his coffee, and climbed the roof to chase K7ATN & K7FOP on Pine Benchmark and N7KOM & K7WXW on South Sister.

I stayed in bed. I sipped my tea. I began to solve the Wordle. I heard a thunderous roll down the roof. Since it wasn't followed by any other noise, I ignored it and solved the Wordle. The word was 'gauze' for those of you that play. When a notification flashed on my screen at 6:21 am from Chris, "Please, bring me another cup of coffee." So, I got out of bed, put the kettle on. I rummaged for a couple of Hydro Flasks for our hot beverages, as I decided to join him on the roof. It might be good to have another operator, so everyone could log their four contacts quickly. Since it was 42 degrees at our house, I figured it was 15-20 degrees cooler on the summits.

ARTS PAGE

Gabriel-AJ6X

was playing with an AI text-to-image generator with the query: hiker with portable amateur radio, microphone and vertical antenna on mountain peak in van Gogh style. Yikes. [Submitted by Tim-N7OM]



“SOTA Poem” set to music by Mike-GW0DSP

Some sit aloft in any weather ----- C ---- Am
Some sit at home in a chair of leather ----- Dm ---- E7
one common goal, one common aim ----- F-- G - Em- Am
to get that report and the summit name ----- Dm7 — G7

Why do we do it we have to ask ----- C ---- Am
sometimes it seems an impossible task ----- Dm ---- E7
was that a signal that I just heard ----- F - G - Em- Am
was that CW or the spoken word ----- Dm7 G7- C - C7

Alas, that station signed stroke P ----- Fmaj7
but it wasn't aimed at you or me ----- Em
He's not on a summit I'm sorry to say ----- Dm ---- Bb9
He's just out in the field and having a play- Em- Eb7 Dm7 Db7

One thousand points is everyone's aim ----- C ---- Am
We must all achieve it to stake our claim — Dm ---- E7
Whether mountain goat or a super sloth ----- F - G - Em- Am
or the chosen few who achieve the both ----- Dm7 — G7- E7

One thing is for certain and that's for sure- D ---- Bm
the more you do, the greater your score ---- Em ---- F#7
and never forget that it's always a thrill — G - A - F#m Bm
whether sat in a shack, or on top of a hill — Em7 — A7- A+
----- Dmaj7

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.