

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

September-October 2017

Dragontail Peak – W7W/RS-035 – Chelan County

Summer is here and New Activators are OUT! – In Oregon we've noticed 2017 activations by new activators like Dan-KG7VAK, Dave-K7TVA, Matt-KC7OY, Howard-AD5IJ, Scott-KI7EMX, Kim-KI7NQN, Yuuki-K7SAK, Dan-N7CQR and Earl-KD7HXN. In Washington, it appears that new Activators for 2017 are Andrew-K7ASQ, Chuck-KE7JWP, John-K7JRO, and Dennis-KI7KUW. There are a good number of folks trying SOTA in British Columbia with Randy-VE7FAA, Jack-VE7GDE, Paul-VA7CDB, Gerald-VE7BGP, Devan-VE7LSE, Gabor-VE7JH and Mike-VE7KPM. In Idaho, Chris-KG7VLX has been on the air for SOTA and David-K7MTD, Bill-N7MSI and Vick-K7VK are newly active in Montana. This is who we've noticed - there may be even more new folks in the PNW – sorry if we missed you.

Upcoming Pacific Northwest SOTA Events – Here are some events that we encourage folks to consider.

- **NA SOTA Fall Activity Weekend + [ARRL September VHF Contest](#) on September 9-10.**
From a summit try 144.200-ssb, 146.52-fm or 50.125-ssb – you may be surprised.
- **[Puget Sound and Willamette Valley Summit-to-Summit Parties](#)** – Sept. 23 at 11am, use 146.58-fm.
- **Washington State QSO Party [“The Salmon Run”](#)** – Sept. 16&17 – see article by Darryl-WW7D below.

For the local S2S events, consider “enhanced” antenna options. A three-element Yagi is easy to build with materials you may have around the house, and improved vertical antennas are an easy way to go as you don't have to point them – one example is the MFJ-1714 “Long Ranger.” Here's an article with [SOTA 2m antenna ideas from December 2015](#) and also a few designs to try for a small Yagi:

<http://www.wa5vjb.com/yagi-pdf/cheapagi.pdf>

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Technology/tis/info/pdf/9304054.pdf>

<https://sites.google.com/site/ae5phradionotebook/home/homebrew-projects/collapsible-3-element-2-meter-yagi>.

SOTA HF Antenna Comparison – Manuel-HB9DQM has posted results from antenna testing using WSPR for 40, 30, 20 and 60m. The antennas tested were a linked EFHW inverted vee, G5RV, trapped EFHW inverted vee, EARC End-Fed (9:1 UNUN), G8JNJ (modified for SOTA), vertical with one radial, and a Fuchs antenna. Their detailed results can be seen here: <http://reflector.sota.org.uk/t/seven-sota-antennas-compared-using-wspr-on-a-summit/15635>

The Salmon Run 2017 – The Salmon Run, otherwise known as the Washington State QSO party, can add an interesting and fun contest challenge to your Pacific Northwest SOTA activity. This year's Salmon Run happens on Saturday, Sept. 16th and Sunday, Sept. 17th. In this article, Darryl-WW7D describes the Salmon Run and offers some ideas on how to combine SOTA with the Salmon Run for an outside-the-box activation experience.

First some basics. The contest runs from 9am to midnight on Saturday and 9am to 5pm on Sunday. The point is for Washington stations to work anyone and for other stations to work stations in Washington counties. All "contest" bands from 160m to 2m can be used. And you can be phone only, CW only, digital only or use mixed modes. The exchange is a signal report and either your county (Washington stations) or your U.S. state or Canadian province. Complete rules are at www.wwdxc.org.

If you are activating that weekend and want to totally escape the contest, stick to 60m, 30m, 17m, and 12m. But why not join the fun? If you are activating a summit outside of Washington, the fun comes from working as many of Washington's 39 counties as you can. It is not unusual for fixed stations to make a clean sweep of it. This challenge is much greater for a QRP portable station.

An excellent SOTA/Salmon adventure would be activating a summit in one or more Washington counties – the "rarer" the county the better. What counties are rare? Generally, counties with smaller populations are rare, and this includes most counties east of the Cascade Mountains. There are some "wet-side" counties that can be rare, as well, including Clallam, Wahkiakum, Pacific, and Skamania. A couple of years ago, for some reason, there was almost no activity from Jefferson County. A SOTA activation from one of the many summits in Jefferson County would have made a hero of the activator for the many, many stations that only managed to work 38 counties that weekend.

For a more interesting challenge, consider activating a county line—that is, activating two counties simultaneously. An activator on a county line reports two counties and gets credit for two QSOs each contact. As it happens, many of Washington's counties are defined as following mountain divides (see descriptions at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.04>). Thus, many SOTA summits straddle two counties. For example, just off Chinook Pass, on Hwy 410, Naches Peak (W7W/RS-022), Deadwood Peak (RS-026), and Chinook Peak (RS-013) are simultaneously in Pierce and Yakima counties. And just off Snoqualmie pass on I-90, Ski Acres Hill (CW-084), Silver Peak (CW-052) and Tinkham Peak West (CW-063) fall along the shared King and Kittitas County line.

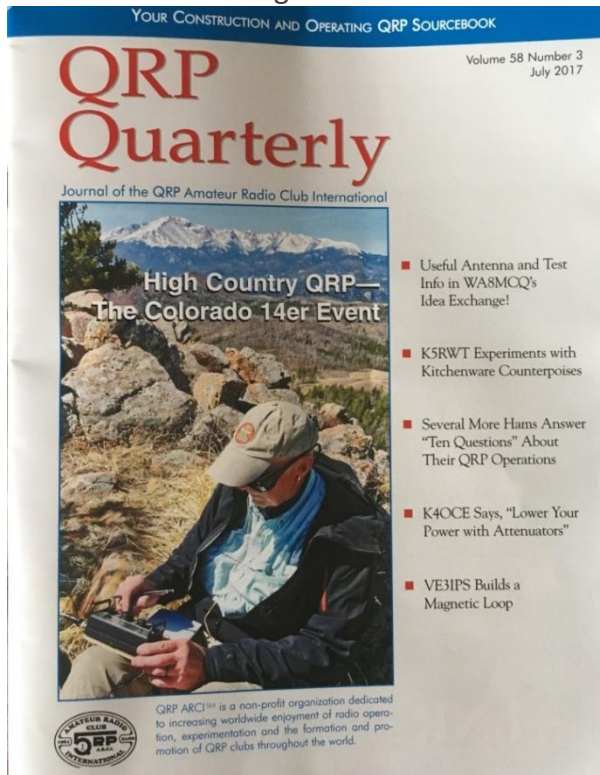
You can quickly identify potential areas where SOTA summits straddle two counties by looking at counties with jagged boundaries. That is a sign that the county line either follows a river or traverses across a series of summits. Use the USGS map on sotamaps.org (CT map option) to find county lines and summits. Note that OpenStreet-based maps use very approximate county lines, so don't rely on them for county line information. Use USGS or USFS maps instead.

Perhaps the ultimate joint SOTA/Salmon Run event would involve activating multiple counties under the Washington County Expedition class in which participants can move to multiple locations (i.e. multiple summits) to activate new counties. In each new county, you are, essentially a new station, so that everyone wants to work you again. The trick is planning a series of SOTA summits that maximizes the number of Washington counties and the number of QSOs made. Clearly, county line summits could be a big help.

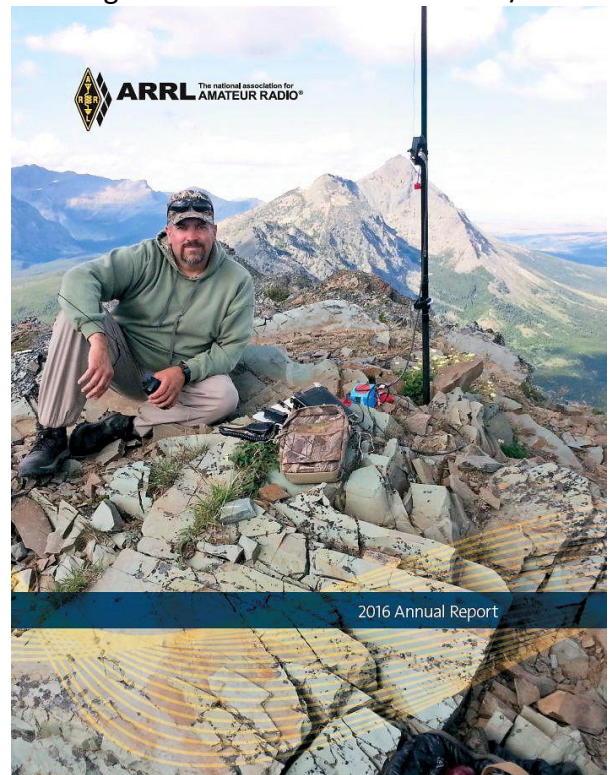
If you do activate Washington counties from a SOTA summit during the Salmon Run, be sure to mention that you are on a SOTA summit. Some of us will simultaneously chase SOTA summits and Washington counties during the Salmon Run.

SOTA “In the News” – We may be small in number, but SOTA activity gets good attention in the ham radio press. Our “shacks” have got to be the most photogenic anywhere. Here are a few covers that I found...

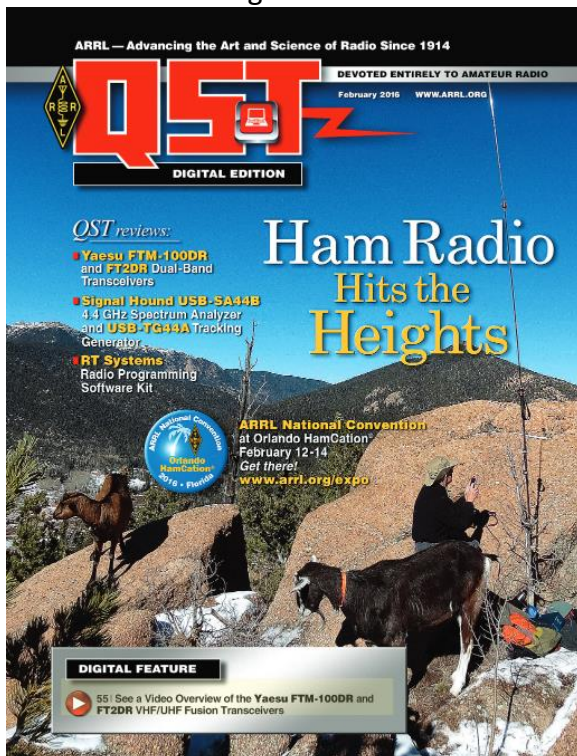
QRP Quarterly July 2017
featuring Steve-K7PX



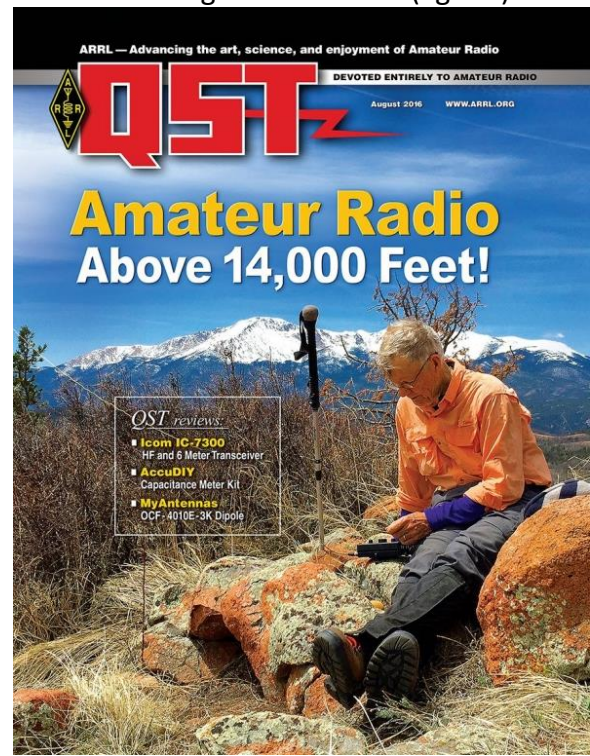
ARRL Annual Report 2016
Featuring Todd-KH2TJ on Elk Mtn-W7M/EM-110



QST Magazine February 2016
Featuring Steve-WG0AT



QST Magazine August 2016
Featuring Steve-WG0AT (again!)



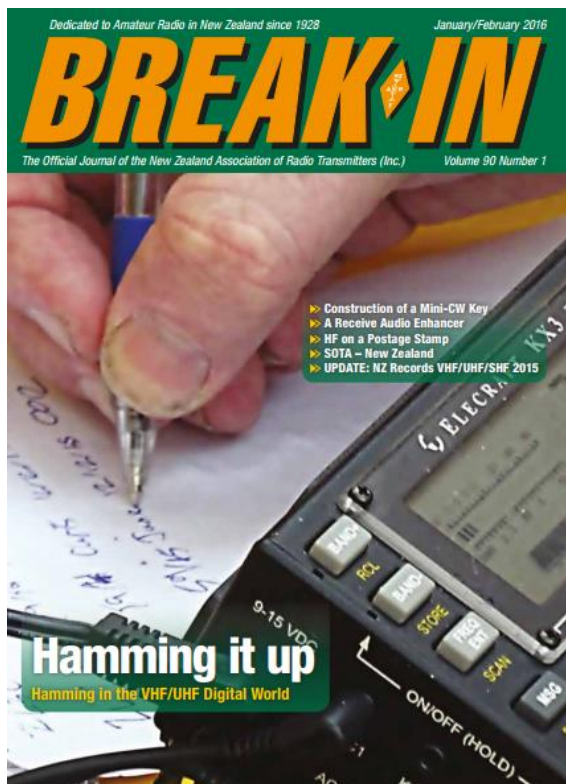
Practical Wireless (UK) January 2010
featuring Jimmy-M3EYP



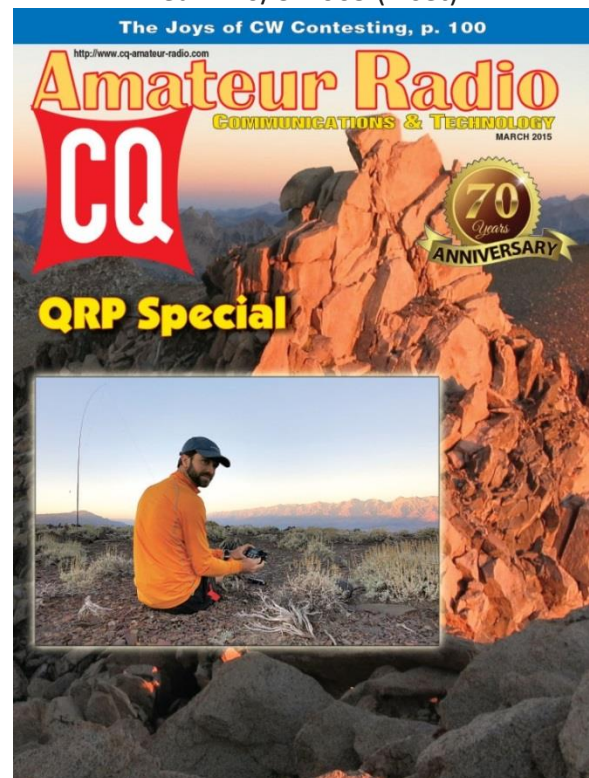
Amateur Radio (Australia) featuring Nick-VK3ANL on
Mt Beckworth-VK3/VC-024



Break-in (New Zealand) January/February 2016
featuring Warren-ZL2AJ on Hakarimata- ZL1/WK-157



CQ Magazine March 2015 featuring Adam-KJ6HOT on
Mt. Rixford-W6/SS-087 (background) and Mazourka
Peak-W6/CD-005 (inset)



Tim-KG7EJT – First W7W “Native” Mountain Goat, contributed by Chris-WX7EMT



Tim Nair-KG7EJT reached Mountain Goat status during his July 16, 2017 activation of Tiffany Mountain (W7W/OK-029).

Dennis-WA2USA, in Indiana, was the fourth contact on Tim's activation that got him to 1,000 points. This particular activation was mostly on 20 meters, with one contact on 40 meters.

In a Facebook Post, moments after his activation, Tim stated, "Just reached Mountain Goat level!!! Thanks for the contacts!!!"

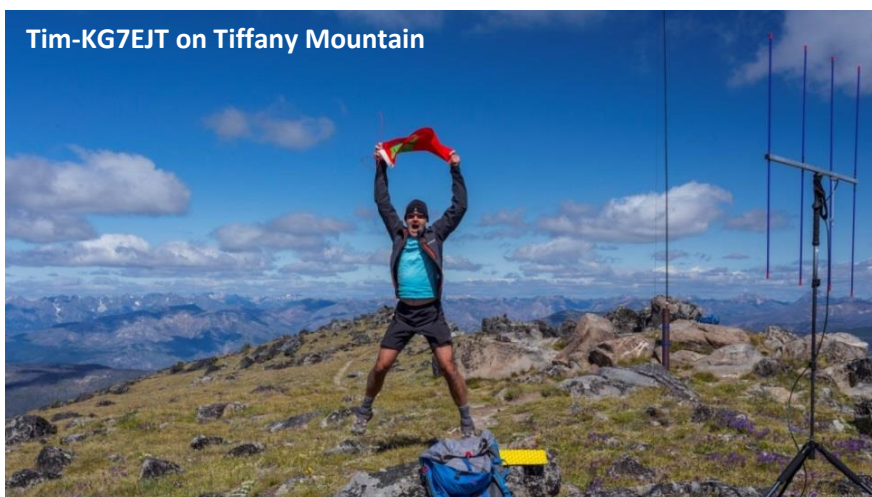
"This is truly an amazing accomplishment," stated Todd-W7TAO. "You are really the first "native" Washington SOTA Mountain Goat, earning most of your points in our great state. This is an exceptionally difficult task with most six point or higher peaks being rugged and accessible for only a very short season. Well done sir. This is a big deal and to boot you are a first class operator!"

Tim's first SOTA activation was in January 2015 and it took him 182 summits in order to reach 1,000 points.

When Tim started doing SOTA, all contacts were made using 2 meter FM for the first 1½ years. About 90% of all his activations have been 2m FM. The Tiffany Mountain activation was an exception as it was strictly HF.

Reminiscing on one of his earlier activations Nair stated, "On Tamarack Peak I only made three contacts." Missing out on those eight points was a bummer for him, and that was when he realized that Mark-K7MAS had a point about using HF SSB, and so Nair added HF to his radio toolbox.

"There are some locations where 2 meters does not work because of their remoteness. Some locations are out of range [of 2 meters]," Nair said.



Nair likes HF because it is more interesting. He can get contacts all over the country. But it is not always easy. It took him some time to build up an audience. Being able to spot was important for Nair when he first started as otherwise it was difficult for people to know what he was doing. Also, "if band conditions are bad, it is very hard to make contacts," Nair said. "For me, HF is not as reliable as 2 meters."

Please let me know what you'd like to see in the newsletter – because, like, sometimes I'm short of ideas. Share it with others or subscribe or unsubscribe by email to climb2ski@gmail.com. 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.