

# Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

January-February 2018

Mount Seymour – VE7/GV-006 by John-VA7 JBE

**ARRL January VHF Contest – January 20 & 21** – A SOTA pile-up on 20m is not too surprising – but how about more than a few folks clamoring to work you on 2m SSB? It can happen if you are on a summit during this contest and give 6m or 2m SSB a try – you may be very surprised (FT-817 is the rig to take). 2m FM can work also be sure to prepare QSY to other bands. Note your grid square for the exchange – hand out a few QSOs to some grateful folks on 50MHz and up. <http://www.arrl.org/january-vhf>.

**Keep Those CW Skills Sharp!** – Dan-N7CQR has these two ideas to keep one busy with the Charlie Whiskey over the winter – and even a way to get ‘bonus’ credit for operating outside or on a summit this winter.

As winter sets in and perhaps you don’t venture out on as many SOTA adventures as in summertime, there’s a fun activity to keep those CW skills sharp. The QRP Foxhunt is an activity that occurs every Tuesday (40 meters) and Thursday (80 meters) through 3/27/18 from 6 PM to 7:30 local time (0200 to 0330 UTC). It’s a national event and every Tuesday and Thursday two stations, usually from different geographical regions are the ‘foxes’, and everyone else are the ‘hounds’ who try to work the foxes. The fun part is that it’s all QRP (5W or less) and the foxes only announce the general frequency range (on 80m 3550-3570 KHz and on 40m 7030-7050 KHz.)

Typically one fox will ‘go high’ and the other ‘low’ in this range. The skill comes in first locating the foxes, and then working them. Usually they start out ‘split’ where they transmit on one frequency and listen up anywhere from 1 to 2 KHz for callers. Often towards the end of the hunt as the herd thins out they will shift to ‘simplex’-working the hounds on the frequency they call on.

After the hunt, logs are posted on the QRP Foxhound list ([qfox@yahoogroups.com](mailto:qfox@yahoogroups.com)) and you can check to see if you made it. If you get into it, you can keep track of points and actually win some prizes. I find that this is a nice way to keep my listening/sending skills sharp when it’s cold and dark outside. CW speeds are not fast – typically 10 to 20 WPM at the most, and the fox will slow down to your speed. The hunts continue through the spring/summer shifting to 20 Meters as the weather warms.

I, Dan-N7CQR, will be one of the foxes on two dates this year (Jan 9 and Feb 6) on 40 Meters. For more information check out the QRP fox webpage at <http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org/>. There’s a great primer to explain this in more detail.

Give it a try and you may be surprised at how much fun it is, and if you want a real challenge you can sign up to be a fox! I hope to work you!

Another event is the [‘FYBO’ or Freeze Your Buns Off Contest](#) on February 3. They are specifically trying to include SOTA operations with this event. You get credit for whatever the temperature is at your location – the lower the better! See a fun video of FYBO [here](#).

Dan-N7CQR

**The Great W4G Campout** – Poetry by Elizabeth Burns, K1LIZ. In late October 2017 Ryan-WG4I (the activator formerly known as KK4OSG) had the great idea of putting together a SOTA camping weekend in the northeast corner of W4G (Georgia) in the midst of a number of accessible and seldom activated summits. Liz-K1LIZ took part and wrote this little ditty about the fun of it all – enjoy!

The SOTA Summits Campout, this is going to be fun,  
Backpacks, radios, and antennas are ready, everything is done.  
The campout begins, ready to activate we start,  
At the campground, from our SOTA friends we do part.

We drove down a rocky road with a really deep rut.  
Prayed a tire would not rupture, and we would get stuck.  
Mile after mile, we bounced so much it made my teeth ache,  
Only to find in the middle of nowhere a locked gate.

With an activators determination, we never accept defeat,  
For this mountain was going to become a SOTA complete.  
Approaching the mountain from the other side did cause a two-hour delay,  
Then a mile and one-half hike, it's just another SOTA activators day.

We bushwhacked through briars, and crawled under a fallen tree,  
Crawled through rhododendron so thick you could not see.  
Stepped over bear poo, and other things, what they were I don't know,  
To ascend to the summit, thankful there wasn't any snow.

Sit on a rock, or a log, or anything you can find,  
For calling CQ and hoping for chasers is the only thing on your mind.  
That magic fourth chaser I always want to hug,  
But then I realize crawling up my leg is a big nasty bug.

Another successful activation, as we get ready to hike down,  
With a final check we make sure we leave nothing on the ground.  
One final pause to just enjoy the mountain for the air is so clear,  
And to the chasers we send a silent thank you and little cheer.

And off the mountain hike we know will be slow,  
For the next summit awaits and to it we know we will go.  
Up the next mountain another summit is near,  
Back on with the boots for a two-mile hike is here.

Up it seems like a million uneven rock steps, that make my muscles scream,  
Up sloping rocks, and a dirt bank, and even across a stream.  
At the ridge crest there is a sign that tells us which path to take,  
Only .6 to go, this will be a piece of cake.

Another summit to activate, up here the trees are not tall,  
CQ, CQ SOTA, wait an S2S is answering my call.  
Activating three summits, what a great day it has been,  
But tomorrow we have two more scheduled, so we will do it all over again.

The camping event comes to a close with Dean's chili and cornbread,  
We all sit around the campfire and laugh, even though we feel half-dead.  
As the sunset brings to an end the day's light,  
Ron's campfire peach cobbler finishes the night.

A check of the map shows many summits are left behind,  
So many summits to activate and so little time.  
Sore, bruised, and scratched, but smiling from ear to ear,  
I can't wait for the SOTA campout next year.

**“Classic” Northwest SOTA Summits in each Association that we’d want others to enjoy** – These may set you to day dreaming for next summer, but daydreams are not a problem for most of us. These were selected for scenic beauty, great views, nice hikes of up to six miles or so, and fairly easy access. Can you say, “Field trip!?”

**W7W, Washington “Classics”** – Here are four good hikes around Puget Sound, assembled by Darryl-WW7D. The last one is six miles, but it is pretty close to Seattle.

Mt Fremont, W7W/RS-005 →

4.6 miles RT, 900' elevation gain (Mt. Rainier NP permit required).

<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/649>  
<http://kf7pxt.blogspot.com/2016/08/>

Mt. Catherine, W7W/CW-066. 3.5 miles RT, 1,500' elevation gain (USFS permit required).

<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/458>  
<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/645>  
<http://kf7pxt.blogspot.com/2016/08/mount-catherine-w7wcw-066-denny-creek.html>



← Winchester Mountain W7W/WH-122 3.4 miles RT, 1,300' elevation gain (USFS permit required).

<http://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/winchester-mountain>  
<http://www.summitpost.org/winchester-mountain/154144>



Mt. Sawyer W7W/KG-052 →

6 miles RT 1,200' elevation gain (USFS permit required).

<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/610>  
<http://www.summitpost.org/mount-sawyer/443298>





**W7M, Montana "Classics"** – Here are five amazing sounding hikes recommended by Montana Association Manager, Rob-AE7AP.

W7M/CL-047, Red Mountain →  
With some on-trail and some sort-of trail hiking, this one has long been featured in Montana guidebooks. It's not crowded and passes a small stream and an old mining camp. The SOTA summit page has link to write-up. This is one of the best hikes in the Helena area. It is a "solid" mountain, but easy enough that our 4-year old did it.

<http://www.sota.org.uk/Summit/W7M/CL-047>



W7M/CL-041, Fairview Mountain – Again some on trail, some off-trail hiking to this classic front-range summit. I may have a non-objective bias towards this one as it features a waterfall. Yes, some off-trail but super nice with no difficulties. <http://www.sota.org.uk/Summit/W7M/CL-041>

W7M/BR-023, Hollowtop Mountain – This is a classic summit with some hiking on an ATV road and some off-trail scrambling. Reminds me of what a Colorado summit must have been like before the crowds came. Has a mountain lake (reservoir). This is the high point of the Tobacco Roots, a 10-pointer & a bona-fide "mountain." It is a great hike. <http://www.sota.org.uk/Summit/W7M/BR-023>



←W7M/CL-059, Patrol Mountain – This is an all on-trail hike to a manned fire lookout at the edge of the Scapegoat Wilderness. This may be a better choice than Fairview – hard to say. This one is all on-trail at 4.5 miles and 2800 feet of gain, but it does have a stream crossing. <http://www.sota.org.uk/Summit/W7M/CL-059>

W7M/FN-110, Elk Mountain – On trail hike in Glacier NP. This is a 3.4 mile, 3,400 foot gain (gulp!) on-trail hike and is the most activated summit in W7M. There are write-ups & even a video. Photos from it have been in two issues

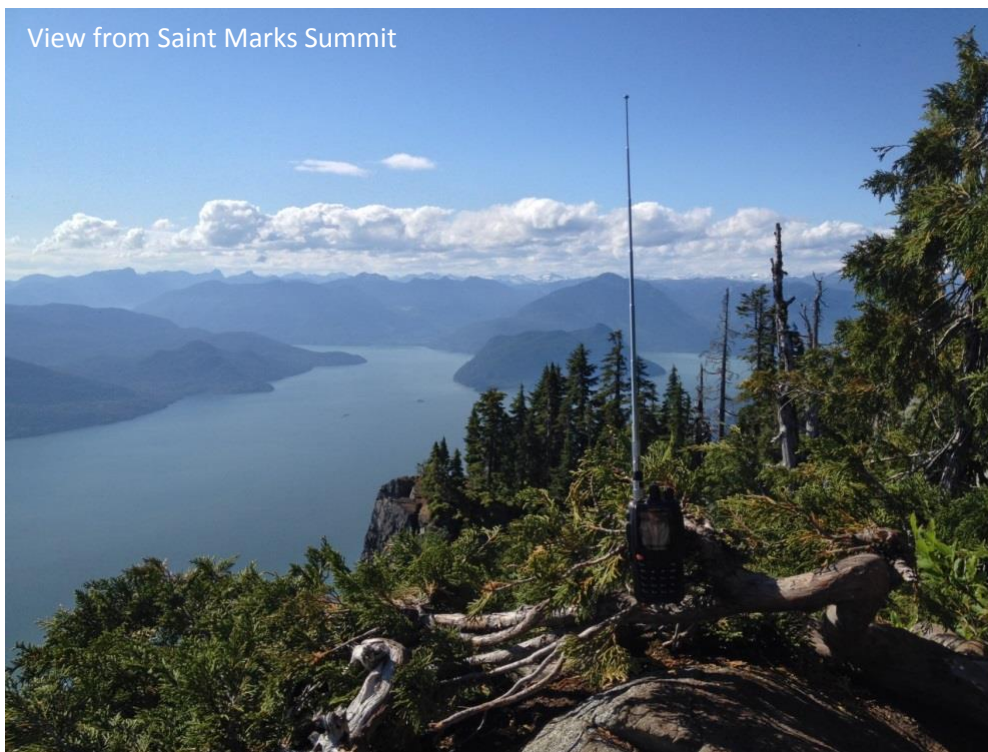
of QST (Nov. 2017, P.90 & Aug. 2015, P. 66). <http://www.sota.org.uk/Summit/W7M/FN-110>

**VE7, British Columbia “Classics”** – Here are a few of the (subjectively) easier summits with outstanding views in VE7/GV. John-VA7JBE has put together a few pictures and some notes on access. All these summits have reasonable-to-good VHF/UHF coverage of Metro Vancouver and parts of Washington. For more details on the hikes there's plenty of info available on [vancouvertrails.com](http://vancouvertrails.com) and [trailpeak.com](http://trailpeak.com).

VE7/GV-009, Burnaby Mountain – Arguably the easiest summit to activate in all of VE7, Burnaby Mountain is the location of Simon Fraser University and can be accessed by bus, as VK3CAT demonstrated during a visit a few years ago.

VE7/GV-006, Mount Seymour – A stiff hike over two smaller peaks leads to the summit of Mt. Seymour. This is arguably a Vancouver classic and there are fantastic views from the summit. The trail can be rugged in places, but is well maintained and heavily traveled. Unlike some other North Shore Vancouver hikes, the route to Mt. Seymour has plenty of spots to check out Howe Sound. A photo of the trail to Mount Seymour is the newsletter banner this month.

VE7/GV-013, Black Mountain – These next three summits are all accessed from the Cypress Bowl parking lot, and a (very) fit party can knock them off in a day. The shortest approach of any summit accessible from Cypress Bowl parking, the trail up Black Mountain runs alongside the site of the 2010 Winter Olympic snowboarding events. The summit has several trees to hang antennas and a great view into Howe Sound.



VE7/GV-017, Saint Marks Summit. A wandering trail through the woods takes about three hours to reach the summit of Saint Marks. This trail is probably the easiest and lowest impact route to any summit in the North Shore mountains of Vancouver. This summit is heavily forested and the only views are due West towards Bowen Island. A great spot to watch the sun go down, provided you have a headlamp to find your way back along the well-marked trail.

VE7/GV-011, Hollyburn Mountain – Another classic hike, Vancouverites have been hiking this trail since the 19th century. There are two ways to access the summit trail, one from the Cypress Bowl parking lot and the other from the Hollyburn ski area parking lot. The Cypress Bowl trail provides more shelter from the sun and slightly less elevation gain, but is a bit more overgrown with roots. The final route to the summit is a bit rugged, but not exposed and the view from the top is worth the effort.



**W70, Oregon “Classics”** – Here are a few easy and rewarding summits you can find in Oregon. Of course there’s a lot more to W70 than just these four hikes in the Northwest corner of the state, but if you are around the Valley these are good to get you started.

W70/NC-004, Saddle Mountain – At 5 miles round trip and 1600 feet gain, this coastal summit with great views all the way to the Pacific Ocean can be a busy place to hike, but certainly a classic.

<http://www.pnwsota.org/blog/k7atn/2017-october-15/saddle-mountain-or-october-2017>

W70/WV-009, Bull of the Woods →  
Offering a pleasant hike with a neat lookout destination, this 6.5-mile round trip hike with 1300 feet of gain is defiantly worth your time.

<http://www.pnwsota.org/blog/k7atn/2016-october-29/bull-woods-or-august-2014>



← W70/CN-008, Lookout Mountain  
An amazingly short and easy hike, considering the views of Mount Hood that you’ll get from the top.

<http://www.pnwsota.org/blog/kk7ds/2012-august-12/lookout-mountain-or>

W70/WV-050, Huckleberry Mountain is on the long side at 11 miles round trip, but a lovely graded trail and a rewarding and quiet spot for the Activation Zone (just past where all the ‘regular’ hikers stop for lunch).

<http://www.pnwsota.org/blog/k7atn/2013-november-27/huckleberry-mountain-or-nov-2013>

**W7I, Idaho “Classics”** – This list of three peaks was pulled together by Jim-K7MK and Scott-K7ZO, representing the best of what Idaho has to offer. (I am sure that there are more...but these will get you started!)

Mores Mountain, W7I/BC-070 →  
<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/564>



← Teapot Dome, W7I/SR-163  
<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/685>

Granite Mountain, W7I/SR-038  
<http://www.pnwsota.org/node/633>

**OPERATING TIP: Just the Exchange, Please** – from the ARRL Contest Update for November 15, 2017. A reminder for clarity when conditions are difficult. This could also be applied to local Summit-to-Summit events when there are more than about five activators – it takes time to work through every S2S possible, and efficiency could help shorten up that time – a lot!

*It pays to mention it every contest season: During a contest or at any other time when contact rate is important, only provide the exchange - nothing more. If a running station has responded to your call, they only need your report. Don't repeat their call. If they didn't get your call right, provide your call again then the report. If your call was correct, just provide the exchange.*

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