

# Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter



Peak 4235 W7W/CW-083 by Corrinne-KK7ULL

January-February-March 2026

## Upcoming Events –

**ARRL January VHF Contest**, January 17-18, 2026. Two-meter FM can work of course (146.52 & 146.58) and be prepared to give out contacts on 70cm as well (446.00). The exchange is grid square. If you have a SSB rig and a horizontal antenna on 6m and up, you'll be popular, especially from a summit. <https://www.arrl.org/january-vhf>

**SOTA Bonus Season** has started for PNW Associations – look to the Association Reference Manual to see where and when bonus points will apply – and then get out in the mountains!



**2026 CHALLENGE**  
**2m/70cm SSB/CW**

E17GL

Points will be awarded based on distance, number of summits activated and unique callsigns logged in an activation.

<https://www.sota.org.uk/>

Summits On The Air

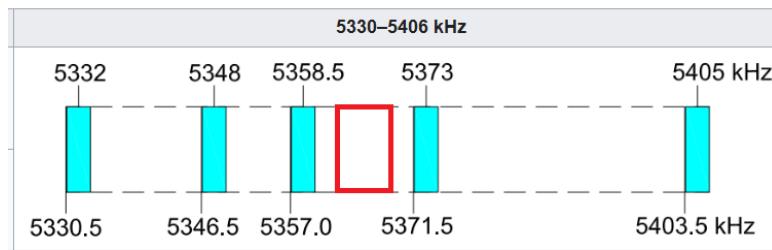
## 2026 SOTA Challenge: 2m/70cm SSB/CW

The SOTA Management Team believes this challenge presents a great opportunity for interesting QSOs in the coming year. Many activators and chasers will have access to equipment already for these bands and modes. The Challenge requires additional logging details for locations – six-digit grid square obtained from chasers appears to be one way to meet that requirement. The January VHF Contest would be a good opportunity to make some 2m and 70cm CW or SSB contacts.

Support SOTA! (Financially) <https://sota-shop.co.uk/donations.php>

## A Holiday Gift for 2025 from the FCC – by Josh-WU7H

If you have not been using the 60-meter band on your SOTA expeditions, you should try it. It is a great band for connecting with other PNW folk, and can sometimes be the ONLY band that works for those close-in S2S contacts. And here is some more incentive – the FCC just gave us another chunk of the band! The FCC is harmonizing the ITU WRC-15 Notice by granting 5351.5 to 5366.5 kHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis, limited to General class licensees or higher, 15W EIRP (9.15W ERP), and 2.8 kHz emission bandwidth. This is in addition to the existing 'channelized' 60-meter allocation we already have. This new allocation is between Channel 3 and 4 (red box below) and should be used like any other band, keeping clear of the edges. The existing five channels should use the upper dial frequencies for CW, and the lower for USB. I recommend printing out the 60-meter band plan and putting it with your SOTA gear, or go ahead and program in a few of the 60-meter channels so you are ready to rock some 60-meters on your next summit. The tuners in KX2/KX3 or other radios should get your antenna going on the 60-meter band.



**A Look Back – CB Number Codes.** Most everyone is familiar with at least one of the CB-10 Codes; "10-04" actually means QSL – or "Ok, message received." But what about the 11-Codes? Or the 12 and 13-Codes? Here is a link to over 200 pages of short-form message codes, akin to our Q-Codes: <https://www.wd8das.net/RadioCodes.pdf>.

10-11 (Talking too rapidly) is common among the ham radio community, and who hasn't wanted to use an 11-30 code? (Does not conform to operating rules and regulations.). 12-37 would sure be handy (You're jiving me), and 13-2 (Yes, I copy you, but I'm ignoring you) is probably on the tip of your tongue right now...

## SOTA Clickbait – Videos Worth a Look

New book "[Summit of Dreams](#)" by Ben Lloyd, GW4BML >>  
(video summary starts about 0:40)

Hans-G0UPL on Polar SSB and the QMX transceiver:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21uE341GtGU>

Development History of Li-ion Batteries:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGglJehON5g>

The Latest Technology – The "SOTA Phone:"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pERdo3uUos&t=13s>



<< Recognizing Chasing Legend Jon-NT6E

[Video](#)

[Story](#)

**Things to do this Winter...** We don't get out in the mountains and on the air so much in the wintertime – here are some ideas to keep you sharp, build for success, and keep having radio fun.

Things to do this Winter – If you can and don't have one already, set up a chasing station at home, perhaps with a focus on "local" Activators with 2m and 40m.

Things to do this Winter – Read the ARM for your Association (SOTA Association Reference Manual).

Things to do this Winter – Get a license upgrade – Extra Class makes international operating easy (CEPT).

Things to do this Winter – Try a new mode (aka, learn CW).

Things to do this Winter – Document ***and practice*** a new spotting approach.

Things to do this Winter – Try a new logging approach like FLE or PoLo.

Things to do this Winter – Review your activations for any updates/additions to trip reports.

Things to do this Winter – Review your activations and upload GPS tracks and photos.

Things to do this Winter – Do pre-research for the season ahead – it's fun!

Things to do this Winter – Try a new mapping program like Gaia, OnX, Caltopo...etc.

Things to do this Winter – Operate in a contest (January VHF is coming up).

Things to do this Winter – Practice the "[SOTA Anthem](#)" to prepare for the sing-along at the next SOTA Campout!

Things to do this Winter – Inspect and repair antenna wires and feedlines.

Things to do this Winter – Renew your first aid kit: <https://mazamas.org/media/doc/BildABetterKit.pdf>.

Things to do this Winter – Check your entire pack and radio kit and update as needed.

Things to do this Winter – Try a snowshoe activation. Activating in the winter by snowshoe is both a treat and a challenge – here are some summits to consider (on page 5):

<http://www.pnwsota.org/sites/pnwsota.org/files/downloads/K7ATN/PNW%20SOTA%20Newsletter%20Jan-Mar%202024.pdf>

### **Mountain Goat Journey by Corrinne-KK7ULL**

Never in a million years did I think I'd become a ham. While my husband Jason-KC7EPG had been a ham since he was a teenager, I thought the hobby was only for nerdy male engineers. Yet in the summer of 2024, I realized how useful amateur radio could be when we were traveling in Yellowstone – an area notorious for poor cell coverage – and wanted to communicate with family driving separate vehicles behind us. Jason convinced me that being a ham would be helpful when we were hiking or cross-country skiing in areas with poor cell service, too. Our boys, then 12 and 15, were also game to get their licenses, and the three of us got our tickets that July.

In August, Jason's coworker Brian-KB2S invited us to join the Lake Washington Ham Club, and we attended a summer hangout. Two wonderful Elmers helped me get on the air for the first time and check in to the club's social net. Soon, I was checking in to the club's nets regularly and even became a net control operator so I could host nets myself. I've always been an extrovert, and now that I'm into ham radio, I've discovered that I really love meeting new people and connecting on the air. And I truly felt like these were some of the nicest people I'd ever met. I remember telling Jason,

"I've found my people, and they are hams!" As someone who was bullied a lot growing up, I was amazed at just how kind and helpful everyone was. I had truly stumbled into an amazing community.

It was through these connections that I first heard about SOTA. When people found out that I was doing the [52 Hike Challenge](#) for the second year in a row and had recently acquired my ham license, they suggested that I give SOTA a try. We were hiking as a family nearly every Saturday and I started finding hikes to SOTA summits that would also help me finish the 52 Hike Challenge by the end of the year. I really was hooked right away. I love being in nature with my family, traveling to new places, hiking, talking to nice people, setting goals, and earning points and badges. SOTA checked all of my boxes.



16 on Christmas Day. He had a wonderful activation on the top of snowy summit near Twisp, WA. Niels-N1ELS will likely break Soren's record for youngest Mountain Goat soon, since he's only 12 points away. Jason-KC7EPG has just over 100 points to go, and then we'll be our own little SOTA Mountain Goat herd.

73, Corrinne KK7ULL

#### Winter 2025 Road Tripping by Josh-WU7H



On the 6th of December, DJ (WW7D) and I (WU7H) were sitting in a pub enjoying a post-SOTA activation pint when I casually mentioned that I wanted to go down to the Bay Area this spring to pick something up and hit a couple of summits. It turns out he had been looking at a milling machine that was for sale down near Fresno, and wanted to go and pick it up. Also, the university we both work for was about to go on Winter break, so taking off work for a few days wouldn't be a problem. A rough plan emerged: leave on Friday the 12th and return on Monday the 15th. In order for me to go on an overnight SOTA trip I have to consider the '3 Ws': Wife, Work, and Weather (in that order). The weather was looking amazingly good for mid-December – the mountain passes that we would need to cross were all snow-free. Over the next week we were both very busy trying to wrap things up at work. My wife gave me the OK to go on this crazy adventure (there may have been some bribes involved), and so at 6am on Friday DJ pulled up in front of my house in his Prius. Towing a trailer. Those of you who have been to the W7O Campout will be familiar with this trailer, as we have used it to tow our motorcycles down a few times. The plan was to use the trailer to haul the milling machine behind the Prius. We also decided to take highway 97 through Oregon rather

When 2025 began, I decided not to sign up for the 52 Hike Challenge for a third year. I wanted to continue hiking but be able to focus on activating summits. I thought I might be able to make Mountain Goat by the end of the year if I activated every weekend and took a few SOTA-focused trips. I didn't anticipate the boys wanting to hike several times a week in the summer, but that really helped me activate a lot of higher point summits. I wound up reaching my goal in October instead of December, becoming the fastest person to make Mountain Goat in W7W in 13 months.

A lot of people have asked me what my new goal is, now that I've achieved this one. I tell them I want to help the rest of my family become mountain goats. Soren-KK7UKE just became the youngest mountain goat at age

than I-5, as it is a nicer drive with better SOTA opportunities. Thanks to the W7O Slack crew for the summit recommendations! We hit zero traffic on our way south, and a little after noon we were parking along the highway next to Lave Butte (W7O/CE-188). It was sunny and warm as we spiraled our way up to the summit. Soon we were on the air and the bands were in good shape! We worked the east coast and Japan on 20 and 15, and got a few S2S. After more than an hour on the summit, it was time to pack it up and continue the drive to Redding, CA where we planned to stay that night.

**Day 2:** We left Redding around 5:30am in heavy fog. The plan was to meet up with Peter-WB6POT and Elliot-K6EL on the famous Mt. Davidson (W6/NC-423). If you didn't hear K6EL's voice in your head when reading that REF, you need to get out more! NC-423 has by far the most activations of any summit in North America (852 as of this writing), and I have chased it 90 times – almost all S2S contacts with K6EL. It took a little more than 3 hours to get to San Francisco, and just as we hit the Oakland Bay Bridge we drove out of the fog into brilliant sunshine. Peter and Elliot were already QRV when we pulled in, and we chased them on 2m while walking up to the summit.

The views from Davidson were great, and Elliot pointed out all the other SOTA summits and landmarks that were visible. After a bit of visiting, it was time to get down to business! It was prime time Saturday morning, and we had the SOTA chaser dream team together on NC-423. We quickly had the HF antenna up, the KX3 connected, and the S2S Train was rolling out of the station. We had a great time passing the key/mic around, annoying the other chasers who had to wait through 4 x S2S contacts. It was a glorious couple of hours playing radio with friends.



<< From Left:  
WW7D, WU7H, K6EL, WB6POT

We walked back down the hill and said our goodbyes. I received a very generous gift from Peter: an Altair 8800 computer, built in the mid-70's by his father. I am an avid collector of vintage computers, and I have a small computer museum on the UW Seattle Campus. The Altair will soon be the crown jewel in the museum, and I invite anyone who is interested to contact me for a tour. A VERY big thanks to Peter for the Altair!

Our next mission was to get to Fresno to pick up the milling machine, and then all the way back up to Redding. The traffic gods smiled upon us, and we had minimal traffic. I should take a second to mention that during most of this road trip, we were chasing SOTA from the car via DJ's remote station back in WA. This probably confused more than a few people as we chased them from WA, and then had an S2S with them from CA a short while later. We arrived in Fresno, got the milling machine secured to the trailer, and were off for Redding with an ETA of midnight. Despite heavy fog for most of the drive, we made it safely back to Redding around 12:30am.

**Day 3:** We planned to drive to Bend, and so we were in no great hurry. We were looking for summits to do



Clockwise from top: WU7H, N7OLE, W7MTB, Devon (taking the pic). N7KOM. WW7D.

along the way that were accessible to a Prius pulling a trailer. Tim-N7KOM and Amy-AG7GP came through with some great recommendations: Miller Mountain (W6/NE-074) and Horsethief Butte (W6/NE-312). Both summits turned out to be great, and the Prius had no trouble with the roads. The weather was sunny and warm, and the views of Shasta were amazing. It felt like cheating to get a couple of six-point summits (with winter bonus on Miller!) in December with no suffering whatsoever. Our next stop was Bend where we met up with the Bend crew at a pub for food and drinks.

**Day 4:** We were hoping to get in one last activation on the way home, and the Bend crew suggested Round Butte (W7O/CN-074). This one was a drive-up on a paved road and perfect for the Prius plus trailer. The weather was starting to turn, and we had some sprinkles on the drive up to Round Butte. It was VERY windy on this summit, but luckily the rain held off. While DJ was doing a run on 40m I decided to break out the new hardware for a photo shoot.



<< An elegant weapon for a more civilized age. RTTY anyone?

The rest of the trip back home was uneventful and surprisingly traffic-free. We clocked just about 2,000 miles, four days, five summits, and a whole lot of fun!



### Summary of World-wide SOTA Activity in 2025

The Pacific Northwest consists of five of the 158 SOTA Associations and Andy-GM4LLD has gathered some info on 2025 activity – our little corner of the SOTA world is shown in the table below. PNW totals are 5% of all activations and 7% of total points. The most active Association is Honshu – Japan's main island, with 5,419 activations and 30,116 total points. The PNW totals are 4,408 activations and 18,728 total points – we are busy too!

SOTA Association	Activations	Total Points
British Columbia	220	804
Idaho	345	1,467
Montana	177	728
Oregon	1,447	5,946
Washington	2,217	9,784

## Survey of New Ham Club Members

Based on subjects of possible interest to hams joining a club, “Portable Operating, SOTA, POTA” is the second largest area of interest, with “Emergency Preparedness, ARES” slightly ahead as number one.

Interest Area	
Emergency Preparedness, ARES	15%
Portable Operating, SOTA, POTA	13%
Propagation and antennas	12%
Technical theory & construction	11%
Digital Modes: FT8 etc.	11%
DX, DXpeditions	9%
Beginner operating	7%

What I Always Wanted for Christmas...Lego! Click on the pictures for more nonsense...



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