

# The Oscillator

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## Up-Coming Events

**January** - Friday, January 20, 2017, A general meeting will be held at the Hazel Crest Village Hall starting at 7:30 PM. The program for the evening will be a wrap up of the National Parks On The Air operating event by three Club members who participated as Chasers and Activators. Refreshments and raffle will be available. Plan to attend and bring a friend.

**February** - Friday, February 17, 2017, A general meeting will be held at the Hazel Crest Village Hall starting at 7:30 PM. The program for the evening is to be determined. Refreshments and raffle will be available. Plan to attend and bring a friend.

## Dan Gunderson, WB9ACN, SK

Daniel W. Gunderson, age 69, of Homewood, passed away on Thursday, December 29, 2016 at Advocate South Suburban Hospital in Hazel Crest. He was born on December 21, 1947 in Chicago, the son of the late Waldo and Vernetta (Rosenbrock) Gunderson. Daniel was a retired electrical engineer. He was a 20-year member of the Hazel Crest Fire Department retiring as a Captain. He was a Ham Radio Operator (WB9ACN), a member of TTRAC, and a model railroad enthusiast.

Daniel is survived by his wife, Sharon (McComis) Gunderson who he married on December 5, 1970 in Homewood. He is also survived by two children, Tricia (Robert) Jaggard of Homewood and Tom (Cindy) Gunderson of Grant Park; six grandchildren, Riley, Laura, Carter, Westin, Ashley, and Emily; and his beloved dog, Watson.

Funeral services were held at the Fedde-Helfrich-Cross Funeral Home on Tuesday, January 3 at 11:00 a.m., Pastor Tod Vertz officiated. Burial was at Peotone Cemetery. Memorials to the Paralyzed Veterans of America would be appreciated.

Dan was a Life Member of Tri-Town and served as past President. He was very instrumental in the establishment of the Club Station W9VT at the Bunker. Dan and Brian Bedoe are responsible for the Club having a repeater which not only serves the Club but a very large area Chicago and the south suburbs. Dan's love of ham radio and service to Tri-Town rubbed off on his wife Sharon, KA9IIT, and his two children, Trish N9WDG and Tom W9SRV. They all have served as Club officers and they are very active in Club events.

A memorial Last Call Net in honor of Dan was held on January 10th. The net was conducted on the cross linked Waldo Far and Tri-Town Repeaters. Lee, KB9SUY and Ken, KC9BXA served as net control operators. There was about 30 check ins.

Dan, 73 from all your friends at Tri-Town.

## **Officers, Board Members, & Committee Heads for 2017:**

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## **Club Meetings & Nets**

Club meetings are the 3rd Friday of each month at the Village of Hazel Crest Village Hall, 170th and Holmes. All are welcome and refreshments will serve. Don't forget to bring a Friend.

## **Club Hangouts:**

The Club's Repeater 146.805 WD9HSY/R & 146.49 Simplex  
442.375 Homewood, 441.300 Grant Park WA9WLN/R, "Waldofar"  
443.325 Frankfort WD9HSY/R & 147.165 Kankakee Co. WD9HSY/R  
All UHF's use a 114.8 PL & All VHF's use a 107.2 PL

## **Club Nets**

2 Mtr FM 49'ers Net	Wednesday, 8:00 PM Local,	The Club's Repeater 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL
2 Mtr FM Preparedness Net	Sundays, 8:00 PM local,	The Club's Repeater 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL
10 Mtr SSB Net	Thursdays, 8:00 PM Local,	28.490 SSB USB.
40 Mtr Tri-Town Alumni Net	Weekdays, 2200 UTC	7.285 SSB LSB
80 Mtr SSB Net	Saturdays, 9am local	3.860 SSB LSB

## **Hamfests in the Area**

**WCRA Mid-Winter Hamfest**      22 January 2017, 8AM to 1PM

Kane County Fairgrounds Expo Center  
525 S. Randall Road, St Charles, IL

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/tritownrac>  
**Check out the Club Website:** [WWW.W9VT.ORG](http://WWW.W9VT.ORG)

## **From The President's Shack**

Todd, KA9IUC.

2016 is behind us and we have 2017 to look forward to. There is a lot to do in the new year. We need to increase membership, come up with good programs for the meetings, increase meeting attendance, have better participation in events such as Field Day, Driving the Dixie and the Folks on Spokes Ride. Tri-Town has been in existence for 85 years and I want it keep going and growing in 2017. Only the membership can help us reach our goals.

## **Election of Officers for 2017**

The election for 2017 officers was held during the December meeting / Christmas on December 10, 2016. Elected were Todd Schumann KA9IUC President, Matt Schumann N90TL Vice-President, Trish Jaggard N9WDG Treasurer and Jim Everard Secretary. There was no nominee for the Director position. This position will be filled by action of the Board of Directors in accordance with the Club's Constitution.

## **Field Day 2016 Results**

Again this past year, Tri-Town ran a 4F operation and accumulated a total of 1792 points. ARRL published field day results in the December 2016 issue of QST. In the 4F category, Tri-Town finished 16th out of 23 in the category. Thanks again to all who participated. It's not too early to be thinking about Field Day 2017.

## **Refreshment Chairman Needed**

The Club is in need of a new Refreshment Chairman for 2017 and hopefully beyond. Mark Thompson, KA9MDJ has retired from the position due to health concerns. Anyone who comes to Club meetings knows what the position entails. Drinks and snacks must be purchased along with paper goods such as napkins and paper towels, for which you are reimbursed. The counter and floor must be cleaned and it is believed Mark has the Club's vacuum to help with that chore. Feel like helping out? Please contact any Club officer.

## **Christmas Meeting/Party Report**

The Club's Christmas Party/Meeting was held on December 19th at Aurelio's Pizzeria in Frankfort. Over twenty members and guests attended. The menu consisted of salad, various kinds pizza, cake, soft drinks and the ever popular soft serve ice cream machine. The business portion of the gathering included voted for 2017 officers (reported elsewhere) and the presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to several Club members. They were as follows: John Krueger N9DWE for his work on the annual picnic, Martian Monahan for the Driving the Dixie event, Trish Jaggard N9WDG for her work on the Driving the Dixie and Christmas Party events, Jim Everard WD9GXU for his field Day activities and Brian Bedoe WD9HSY for publishing The Oscillator and being Repeater Chairman. A good time was had by all!

## **Tri-Town Net Controllers**

At present, the Club has three net controllers: Peter KE9YX, Bruce WD9GHK and Todd KA9IUC. August was a vacation month for two of the controllers and it was believed that a plan was in place to cover nets during away times. Murphy stepped in and caused a scramble to cover one of the nets. Thanks to Jim, KB9VR for filling in. It would be great to have a permanent sub who could fill in when needed or a fourth controller to share the load. If you would be interested in becoming a net controller, please see any officer or board member.

## **For Sale Astron 35A Regulated Power Supply**

25A Continuous, 35A Peak (NEW \$179) \$ 90 Call Ron WB9JYZ, 708.957.3625

# The ARRL National Parks On The Air program is over.

## What do we do now?

From Ed Stroh - K9EGS

The ARRL National Parks On The Air (NPOTA) program is now officially over. It seems to have been very successful. During that year long event, from January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016, QSOs were made from 461 of the 489 National Park sites throughout the United States that were listed on the ARRL NPOTA website. There were over 1 million QSOs made and over 20,800 activations made from those 461 parks. There were over 16,500 people who participated as "Chasers" and over 1400 people who participated as "Activators." I was fortunate enough to make contact with and confirm 187 National Park sites so far as a "Chaser", with 3 more pending verification in Logbook of the World. I also activated 2 nearby National Park sites, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore which is just northwest of Porter, IN and Pullman National Monument located in the Pullman neighborhood of Chicago. When I say that I "activated" these 2 sites, I mean that I set up a portable station at each of those 2 sites and made contacts with people all over the USA and even a few foreign stations. There were 2 fellow hams, Ron WB9JYZ and Steve K9SGB, who traveled with me to those 2 locations and they also activated those same sites. I believe that the ARRL NPOTA program was a very good thing for amateur radio because it encouraged radio activity during a period of somewhat lackluster propagation conditions. Those propagation conditions that we have experienced lately are not going to improve any time soon either. They will be on the decline for the next several years as we head toward the 11 year solar cycle minimum. So that probably means fewer DX contacts over the next several years and more challenging radio operating conditions in general even within the continental United States.

So now that the NPOTA program is over, what can we do to keep active on the air? Well, we can participate in some of the usual annual contests that occur throughout the year and maybe do some occasional rag-chewing. But I would like to suggest another activity.

Recently I discovered a program called **Parks On The Air** (POTA). It is also known as **World Wide Flora and Fauna** (WWFF) which has been in existence since 1983. If you are wondering about the words "Flora" and "Fauna", they are scientific terms given by biologists to describe the collective whole of plant and animal life. So in other words, this program is referring to getting out into nature and doing some portable operating. Just as it states on the main website for World Wide Flora and Fauna, *"Make nature your shack!"* The POTA program is the USA portion of the WWFF. Surprisingly I have never heard of it until about 2 months ago. It is quite similar to NPOTA but includes State Parks as well as National Parks and even Nature Preserves, National Wildlife Refuges, State Recreation Areas, etc. There are over 3000 entities/sites included in the USA program, of which 65 are located right here in Illinois and 31 in Indiana. That is a big difference in the number of sites compared to the NPOTA program that had only 6 National Park sites in Illinois and 3 in Indiana. There are about 30 POTA sites in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan that are within about a 100 mile radius from the southern suburbs of Chicago where I live. That gives us a lot of great opportunities to activate many more sites/parks without having to travel such long distances. When you look at the map on the POTA website, <http://wwff-kff.com>, you can zoom in to our northeast Illinois area and see how many places there are that are not very far away.

All of the National Parks, State Parks and other entities in the USA that are on this list, have reference numbers (designators) for the POTA program, just as the National Park sites did for the ARRL NPOTA program. There are even sites outside of the continental United States scattered throughout the world, which include Alaska and Hawaii. These are sites that are connected with territories or areas controlled by the United States, such as islands in the Pacific and Caribbean and even Antarctica. There are hundreds of other international entities/sites scattered throughout the rest of the world in many countries.

There is an award program connected with the POTA program. Each country has its own sub-group in the program so there are awards and scoring both in the USA group as well as internationally. The POTA award program gives out award certificates for various levels of activity as an "Activator" or as a "Hunter." The "Activators" are those amateurs who operate portable from within Parks on the Air (POTA/KFF) designated parks, and "Hunters" are those amateurs who make contact with the Activators who are operating portable from within Parks on the Air (POTA/KFF) designated parks. Most of the time the Hunters are sitting in the

## Cont.... NPOTA ... What do we do now? From Ed Stroh - K9EGS

comfort of their home shack when they contact the portable park Activators. In order for an Activator or a Hunter to qualify for an award the Activators must send their logs in .adif format via email to Jason, W3AAX, who is the North America KFF Coordinator for the World Wide Flora and Fauna program. His email address is w3aax@outlook.com. This procedure of sending logs is somewhat similar to the ARRL NPOTA program where Activators uploaded their loggings to LOTW, (Logbook of the World), but in the POTA program the Hunters do not send in their loggings. The Hunters only register in the program with their call sign and a "LogSearch" program on the WWFF website matches up their call sign with logs uploaded by the Activators and then keeps a count of how many parks that they have contacted. The LogSearch program also keeps track of how many parks the Activators have activated so that award credits can be accumulated there too. There is a bonus if you participated in NPOTA last year. You can apply most of your NPOTA contacts toward the POTA program, as long as the NPOTA activator sends in his/her loggings to Jason, the POTA North America KFF Coordinator mentioned above. I figured that many of the NPOTA activators that I had QSOs with throughout the year probably were not aware of the POTA program. So I sent a bunch of emails out to many of them informing them about POTA and asked them nicely if they would consider sending in their NPOTA activation loggings to the POTA program. Fortunately the POTA website contains a cross reference list for NPOTA sites to POTA sites. That was a big help in identifying those sites.

If you go to their website at <http://wwff-kff.com> you can find out about the rules, see a map of all the entities that are within the program and read about the awards program. By the way, the awards are free. Once you apply for an award, the certificate is emailed to you so that you can print it out on your printer. The award certificates look quite nice. The WWFF runs a DX Cluster that lists current activations in real time. You can also list your upcoming planned activation on their website as well as look up other scheduled upcoming activations. Up until recently it appeared that the majority of the participation in this program was by foreign amateurs, although I am now starting to see more POTA activations in the USA showing up on DXWatch ever since January 1<sup>st</sup>. So it appears that the POTA program is definitely catching on. I suspect now that NPOTA is over, and once the word spreads more about this POTA program, that it may become even more popular.

Once the weather gets nice in the Spring I plan to participate in this program and activate some of our not too distant state parks. I had never operated portable until I participated in the ARRL NPOTA program last year with 3 activations at 2 different National Parks. Last year was also the first time that I operated portable during Field Day. If you have never operated portable you should try it sometime. It can be somewhat of a challenge sometimes but it is also fun and is something to do to keep active in this wonderful hobby of ours. It is nice to get outside and enjoy the fresh air while emitting some RF into the atmosphere.

## Radio Australia Shortwave Broadcasts to End on January 31

Another prominent shortwave broadcaster is going dark, "The SWLing Post" blog [reports](#). [Radio Australia](#) has announced that it will cease its shortwave transmissions on January 31. The station, popular with SWLs, broadcasts in the 31-, 25-, 19-, and 16-meter bands.

"The move is in line with the national broadcaster's commitment to dispense with outdated technology and to expand its digital content offerings, including DAB+ digital radio, online and mobile services, together with FM services for international audiences," the Australian Broadcast Corporation (ABC) said in a news release. The ABC said it would put the money saved from ending shortwave broadcasting into other program distribution technology.

Radio Australia programming will remain available via streaming, satellite, and other media

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/tritownrac>  
**Check out the Club Website:** [WWW.W9VT.ORG](http://WWW.W9VT.ORG)

# National Parks on the Air Contact Tally Tops 1 Million!

Participants in the ARRL's National Parks on the Air ([NPOTA](#)) program have completed more than 1 million contacts! Activators operating from National Park Service units across the US and Chasers around the world pushed the contact tally over its goal this week. ARRL sponsored NPOTA to help the [National Park Service](#) celebrate its centennial.

"National Parks on the Air has become one of the most popular events in the history of the League," NPOTA Administrator Sean Kutzko, KX9X, said. "It's been fun seeing so many hams take part."

Kutzko said the [NPOTA Facebook group](#) really helped drive participation, especially in the last 3 months, when it became clear that the 1 million-QSO goal was within reach. "Some 25,000 NPOTA contacts were uploaded to Logbook of The World ([LoTW](#)) every week since October," he noted. "The entire group came together and simply willed the 1 million-contact mark to be broken. It was incredible to watch!" He said some real friendships developed among those who frequented the NPOTA Facebook page.

Those taking part in NPOTA made nearly 20,000 visits to 460 of the 489 NPS units eligible for NPOTA credit, including portions of the [National Trails System](#) and the [National Wild and Scenic Rivers System](#). Nearly 150 Chasers completed contacts with more than 400 of the 489 NPOTA units this year, while one Activator transmitted from more than 250 different NPS units in 2016. Kutzko said the activations effectively transported those National Park Service units via radio to all 50 states and more than 100 countries during 2016.

Kutzko said NPOTA garnered interest from hams at all proficiency levels, but he was especially gratified to see how it encouraged less-experienced hams to acquire new skills, such as operating a portable station on battery power, learning CW, or discovering digital modes. "Pileups from some activations rivaled those during a major DXpedition — if only for a few hours at a time," he added.

Jim Clark Jr., an NPS Ranger at [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park](#) in Vermont, said NPOTA helped to generate greater awareness of his unit. "National Parks on the Air has afforded us the opportunity to connect with a much larger and more diverse audience than we could have ever imagined," he told ARRL. "We are pleased and proud that the world of Amateur Radio helped us to celebrate 100 years of service to the nation."

Kutzko said being able to blend Amateur Radio with the history and scenery offered by the National Park Service was a wonderful gift. "We heard from countless amateurs who learned something about our country while operating from an NPS unit and experiencing 'the other side' of a pileup. There will be other on-air events from ARRL, but National Parks on the Air was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I don't think there will ever be anything quite like it in Amateur Radio again. I will miss it."

## Canada's Sesquicentennial and Special Call Prefixes

Radio Amateurs of Canada ([RAC](#)) has secured permission for all Canadian radio amateurs to use special call sign prefixes to celebrate the [150th anniversary](#) of Canada's Confederation during 2017.

Starting on January 1, radio amateurs and clubs with VA-prefix call signs may use CF instead, and those with VE-prefix call signs may use CG instead. Amateurs and clubs with VO-prefix call signs may substitute CH instead, while those holding VY-prefix call signs may substitute CI. Use of the special prefixes is optional, and Canadian radio amateurs may choose if and when to use the special prefix at any time during the year.

VY1AAA, the Yukon Canam Contest Club, will mark the sesquicentennial with special call sign XK150YUKON from January 1 until March 1. The rest of 2017, VY1AAA will operate using either CI1AAA or VY1AAA.

# ARRL Vows Continued Pursuit of the Amateur Radio Parity Act in the 115th Congress

The Amateur Radio Parity Act, H.R. 1301, died an unbecoming death as the 114th Congress of the United States drew to a close today. After having passed the House of Representatives on a unanimous vote, the bill stalled in the Senate due to the intervention of only one member, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL).

Over the course of the past year, Sen. Nelson has received thousands of e-mails, letters, and phone calls from concerned constituents asking for his support of H.R. 1301. Numerous meetings were held with his senior staff in an effort to move the legislation forward. Negotiations, which led to an agreement with the national association of homeowner's associations and publicly supported by CAI and ARRL, were brushed aside by Sen. Nelson as irrelevant.

In a final meeting with the Senator's staff earlier this week, it became clear that no matter what was said or done, the Senator opposed the bill and refused to allow it to move forward. Unfortunately, as the bill did not receive floor time, the only manner in which it could get passed in the Senate would be through a process that required unanimous consent, which means no one opposes the bill.

The legislation will be reintroduced in both houses of Congress after the 115th Session begins in January. We have already been in contact with the sponsors of the bill to allow for an early introduction, which will give us more time to obtain success. We believe that we can get his bill adopted given the fact that we were inches away from crossing the goal line. We will continue to need the support of the membership, particularly in Florida, as we go forward through the next year.

## ISS Packet Digipeater is Now on 70 Centimeters

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARRISS](#)) packet digipeater aboard the ISS has been active for several days now on 437.550 MHz. The UHF frequency means users will have to make adjustments for Doppler on both uplink and downlink.

The change to 70 centimeters comes in the wake of a problem that has sidelined the Ericsson VHF transceiver, so the UHF model has been put into service. The digipeater operates just as it did when it was on its former 145.825 MHz frequency.

AMSAT suggests that users program a group of five memory pairs to permit an operating range that will compensate for Doppler, with transmit frequencies from 437.560 to 437.540 MHz, and receive frequencies from 437.540 to 437.560 MHz, in 5 kHz increments (i.e., the transceiver would be in simplex for 437.555 MHz). Thanks to AMSAT News Service

## New Amateur Radio FM Transponder CubeSat Now in Space

The BY70-1 CubeSat launched on December 28 from the Taiyuan Space Launch Center in China, but in a lower orbit than intended. The satellite carries an Amateur Radio FM transponder.

BY70-1 was intended to go into a 530-kilometer (approximately 329-mile) circular Sun-synchronous orbit, but it appears the orbit is 524 × 212 kilometers, which will give the spacecraft an orbital lifetime of just a month or two. BY70-1 is a 2U CubeSat project for education and Amateur Radio. It features 3-axis stabilization and deployable solar panels. In addition to the FM transponder, BY70-1 has a camera, and plans call for downloading images and telemetry via a 9600 bps BPSK downlink. The IARU Amateur Satellite Frequency Coordination pages list an uplink of 145.920 MHz, and a downlink of 436.200 MHz.

## FCC Denies Expert Linears' Request for Waiver of 15 dB Rule, (Because of other) Petition Pending

The FCC has denied a request by [Expert Linears America LLC](#) to waive §97.317(a)(2) of the Amateur Service rules limiting amplifier gain. Expert, of Magnolia, Texas, distributes linears manufactured by SPE in Italy. Its waiver request, filed in June, would have allowed Expert to import an amplifier capable of exceeding the current 15 dB gain limitation as it awaits FCC action on its April petition ([RM-11767](#)) to revise the same Amateur Service rules. That petition remains pending. Expert has asserted that there should be no gain limitation on amplifiers sold or used in the Amateur Service. Most commenters supported Expert's waiver request, but a couple of commenters — including FlexRadio — demurred.

“In light of the conflicting comments regarding the desirability of eliminating the 15 dB limitation, we conclude that waiving the limitation at this stage of the rulemaking proceeding would prejudice the rulemaking proceeding and prematurely dispose of commenters' concerns,” the FCC said in denying the waiver. “Moreover, we agree with FlexRadio that granting Expert's waiver request while the rulemaking petition remains pending would provide an unfair market advantage for one equipment model over other manufacturers' RF power amplifiers that would still be limited by [the existing rules].”

***The FCC said it would rather give full consideration to “the pending issues” and apply the result of the rulemaking proceeding to all Amateur Radio Service equipment. The Commission said rule waivers “generally” are not warranted “merely to accommodate technical parameters that are based solely on harmonization with the manufacturer's products available abroad.”***

The FCC said a minority of those commenting on the waiver request expressed concern that eliminating the 15 dB limitation would lead to an overall increase in power levels, “including transmissions that intentionally or unintentionally exceed the maximum power limit.”

In its April rulemaking petition, Expert maintained that the 15 dB gain limitation is an unneeded holdover from the days when amplifiers were less efficient and the FCC was attempting to rein in the use of Amateur Service amplifiers by Citizens Band operators.

Although the FCC had proposed in 2004 to delete the requirement that amplifiers be designed to use a *minimum* of 50 W of drive power — and subsequently did so — it did not further discuss the 15 dB limit in the subsequent [Report and Order](#) in that proceeding.

Expert has pointed to its Model 1.3K FA amplifier as an example of a linear “inherently capable of considerably more than 15 dB of amplification,” which would make it a suitable match for low-power transceivers now on the market.

## Santa Turns to Remote Operating to Boost North America Coverage

The word from Santa Claus World near the North Pole in Finland is that the elves at OF9X will try remote operating to generate more contacts in North America. So far, OF9X has logged more than 20,000 contacts, but only 1,200 of them have been with US radio amateurs.

“Efforts are continuing toward doubling that number, and more firepower is being added to the OF9X US script,” a statement said this week. “Santa will arrive on American soil, activating W1/OF9X from New Hampshire. When finally boarding his sleigh, he will say goodbye to America as W7/OF9X from Tacoma, Washington. Working Santa from these two sites adds 25 points each to the Santa Award program, to compensate for Mother Nature's poor propagation.” [More information](#) is on the OF9X QRZ.com profile.

## Astronaut Radio Amateurs Set for Spacewalks

Radio amateurs on the International Space Station ([ISS](#)) crew will conduct two extra-vehicular activities — EVAs, or spacewalks — in January to upgrade the orbiting outpost's electrical power system. Expedition 50 Commander Shane Kimbrough, KE5HOD, and Flight Engineer Peggy Whitson, KC5ZTD, of NASA will perform the first spacewalk on January 6, with the work continuing a week later with Kimbrough and Flight Engineer Thomas Pesquet, KG5FYG, of ESA.

During the spacewalks, the astronauts will perform a complex upgrade to the ISS power system. Crew members will install adapter plates and hook up six new lithium-ion batteries delivered to the station in December. Prior to each spacewalk, the new batteries will be robotically extracted from a pallet to replace 12 older nickel-hydrogen batteries.

For anyone keeping track, these will be the 196th and 197th spacewalks in support of space station assembly and maintenance. This will be Kimbrough's third and fourth EVAs of his career, while Whitson's will be her seventh, matching the record of Suni Williams, KD5PLB, for the most spacewalks by a female crew member. Pesquet will be making the first spacewalk of his career. [NASA TV](#) will stream the activities.

## FEMA Interoperability Exercise Deemed a Success

Laura Goudreau, KG7BQR, Regional Emergency Communications Coordinator for FEMA Region X, said the December 21 Region X interoperability communications exercise on 60 meters went well. "We had 48 check-ins, of which 42 were amateurs," she said. "It was very successful and also included our first digital test."

The "COMMEX" consisted of check-ins from authorized state, tribal, federal, and Amateur Radio stations to test HF interoperability in case of an emergency or disaster response. FEMA Region X is made up of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

The interoperability aspect between federal stations and Amateur Radio licensees was coordinated and authorized by the [NTIA](#) and the [FCC](#). The net included a digital component, intended as a one-way broadcast to test FEMA's ability to send messages and for remote stations to receive them.

Goudreau said that while there's still room for improvement in the digital area, overall, she was happy with how the exercise played out. She said FEMA would continue these exercises in 2017

## German Radio Amateurs Gain Access to 60 Meter Band

On December 21, Amateur Radio operators in Germany gained access to the band 5.351.5 to 5.366.5 MHz with 15 W EIRP, and a maximum bandwidth of 2.7 kHz. Access applies to Class A licensees. Amateur Radio is secondary on 60 meters in all countries where it is available to Amateur Radio.

The Deutscher Amateur Radio Club ([DARC](#)) called users' attention to the IARU Region 1 band plan for 60 meters, which recommends CW and digital modes, maximum bandwidth of 200 Hz, from 5.351.5 to 5.354.0 MHz; all modes, maximum bandwidth of 2.7 kHz (use USB for SSB), from 5.354.0 to 5.366.0 MHz, and all modes, maximum bandwidth of 20 Hz "with the least power," from 5.366.0 to 5.366.5 MHz.

Other countries are expected to grant access to the new, 15 kHz 60-meter band when the [Final Acts](#) of World Radiocommunication Conference 2015, which made the allocation available to Amateur Radio, go into effect on January 1, but the US will not be among them; the FCC has yet to allow Amateur Radio access to 60 meters beyond the five discrete channels already available.

## Hawaii Amateur Radio Volunteers Assist Honolulu Marathon

Nearly 3 dozen Amateur Radio volunteers in Hawaii were up bright and early on Sunday, December 11, to support the 44th running of the [Honolulu Marathon](#). The event is the fourth largest marathon in the US and attracts around 30,000 participants each year. The ham volunteers communicate vital information among race organizers, aid stations, transportation vehicles, and law enforcement, as well as at the finish line.

"I participated in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 Honolulu Marathons as a ham radio operator," said volunteer Clem Jung, KH7HO. "I thought this year was the best run, and we had the most hams participating." This year 35 Amateur Radio operators supported communication on 2 meters and 70 centimeters, and some served as operators for non-amateur digital systems.

Radio amateurs provided vital communication from vans and aid stations to the medical tent, where concerns ranged from a head injury to cramps and stomach pains. Some Amateur Radio volunteers put in an 18-hour day for the marathon, remaining on duty until the last participant completed the 26.2-mile run. — *Thanks to ARRL PIO Stacy Holbrook, KH6OWL*

## Chinese Over-the-Horizon Radar QR Ming Low End of 40 Mtrs

China's HF Over-the-Horizon radars (OTH-R) has been transmitting on 6.999 MHz, impinging on the very low end of the 40-meter band. As the newsletter reported: "A jumping Chinese OTH radar covered the CW DX-edge of our exclusive 7 MHz band on November 17 at about 1500 UTC and later (long lasting)." The signal was 67 sweeps per second with a 10 kHz bandwidth.

Elsewhere on 40 meters, military ALE transmissions have been heard from Kyrgyzstan on 7050.0 kHz. IARUMS also reports that the Australian Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN) has been heard on 10.131 MHz in the amateur 30-meter band; Amateur Radio is secondary on 30 meters.

Radio Eritrea appeared in November on 7180 kHz together with white noise from Ethiopia. The frequencies 7146.5, 7175, and 7185 kHz were reported to be still in use as well. Reports of Amateur Radio band intruders may be [logged](#) on the IARU Region 1 Monitoring System logger.

## FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler to Step Down in January

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler has announced that he will step down in January, when President Barack Obama's term ends. An Obama appointee, Wheeler has headed the Commission for 3 years. Wheeler was a staunch proponent of the FCC's net neutrality policy, which has been opposed by Republicans as government overreach.

"Sitting in this chair has been the greatest privilege of my professional career," Wheeler said on December 15, during his final FCC monthly open meeting. "I'm grateful to President Obama for the opportunity to serve and for the confidence he placed in me. I am especially thankful to the talented Commission staff for their service and sacrifice during my tenure."

When Wheeler departs on January 20, the FCC will be left with two Republicans — Ajit Pai and Michael O'Rielly — and one Democrat — Mignon Clyburn, whose term ends in mid-2017. Democratic commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel failed to gain confirmation for another term before Congress adjourned and is expected to depart by year's end. The FCC can have up to five commissioners, which are appointed by the president, the political balance favoring the party holding the White House.

## Winter Field Day is Just Ahead --- January 28-29

Field Day is not just for summertime anymore. Winter Field Day, sponsored by the Winter Field Day Association ([WFDA](#)), will take place over the January 28-29 weekend, and it can be a terrific time to prep for ARRL Field Day in June. The annual event's stated purpose is to encourage emergency operating preparedness in the winter, but it's also an excuse to get out of the house and enjoy the great outdoors. According to the WFDA, getting ready for emergency communication in a winter environment is just as important as the preparations and practice that take place each June during ARRL Field Day, and — let's face it — it's not cold and snowy everywhere during the winter months. Your local climate could be quite the opposite.

"Don't let those winter doldrums keep you locked up in the house," the WFDA says. "Get out and play some radio!" The WFDA said it believes that maintaining operating skills should not be limited to fair-weather scenarios.

The event, which got its start in 2007, is not restricted to North America. All Amateur Radio operators around the world are invited to participate, and there are three entry categories — indoor, outdoor, and home. The [rules](#) are similar to those for ARRL Field Day. Operation will take place on all HF bands except 12, 17, 30, and 60 meters, as well as on VHF, UHF, and satellite. The event runs 24 hours. US and Canadian stations exchange call sign, operating category, and ARRL or RAC section.

The WFDA encourages both group and solo operation, and if you're not up for an outdoor winter adventure involving Amateur Radio, you can operate from the comfort of your shack. As the WFDA says on its [Facebook page](#), "The object is winter fun!"

## Warm Up with the January VHF Contest, January 21-23

If you're feeling a chill in the air, it must be time for the January VHF Contest! Those in the northern tier of the US (or in a good part of the US this winter) are experiencing brisk winds, temperatures dipping southward, piles of snow or ice, or heavy rain. This means the [ARRL January VHF Contest](#) is near. What a great way to *warm up* for the 2017 VHF+ contest season, even if it's already warm where you live. This annual event begins at 1900 UTC on Saturday, January 21, and it wraps up at 0359 UTC on Monday, January 23.

The objective for amateurs in the US and Canada (and territories) to work as many stations in as many different Maidenhead grid squares as possible, using frequencies above 50 MHz — often while trying to stay warm. Contest contacts may be made using SSB, CW, digital modes, and even FM simplex.

The January VHF Contest offers Single-Operator and Multioperator categories. What's *really* cool about this contest are these three Single-Operator categories, inviting to newcomers and seasoned VHFers alike: FM-only, 3-Band (50 MHz, 144 MHz, and 440 MHz), and Portable. The rules spell out the details for these as well as for other Single-Operator, Rover, and Multioperator entry categories.

Propagation can be a surprise in January, with winter E-skip, aurora, tropo, and temperature inversions. Jahnke said, "Even diehard meteor scatter and EME (moonbounce) folks will be trying some of the latest in digital processing software, including *MSK441* (meteor scatter) and *WSJT-X* (EME), looking for newcomers as well as the seasoned crowd to get them in their logs."

All contest entries must be [uploaded via the web app](#) or [e-mailed](#) to the contest Robot. Logs must be submitted or postmarked no later than 0359 UTC on Wednesday, February 22, 2017. Mail paper logs to ARRL January VHF Contest, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111.

[Contact](#) the ARRL Contest Branch for more information.

## Theme Hamvention 2017, “Same Friends, New Home”

When Hamvention opens May 19 at the Greene County Fairgrounds and Exposition Center in Xenia, Ohio, its theme, "Hamvention - Same Friends, New Home" says it all, according to Ron Cramer, KD8ENJ, General Chairman for the event. "Hamvention gives amateurs from all over a chance to get together with old friends. We welcome them to our new home," Cramer said.

Cramer, who served as assistant general chairman last year, noted that many hams return each year to Hamvention to meet other attendees that they have talked to on the radio. That comradery will remain the same, only the location has changed.

The committee, of all volunteers, has been dealing with the monumental task of defining new inside exhibits and flea market spaces and all the other aspects of the Hamvention move. Cramer noted that website updates are being made almost daily, mail order ticket sales are underway and that ticket, flea market, and inside exhibit purchases will be available online as soon as possible.

Some important changes this year include free on-site parking for attendees, a greater variety of food choices, and the availability of overnight camping on the fairgrounds. Camping arrangements are available from the Greene County Fair Board at 937-372-8621 or email [esther@greencountyfairgrounds.com](mailto:esther@greencountyfairgrounds.com).

Cramer said he and Assistant General Chairman Jack Gerbs, WB8SCT, wanted to thank the committee chairmen and their assistants for the tremendous effort they have put forth. "We couldn't do it without them and their volunteers," he said.

Hamvention®, the world's largest amateur radio gathering, brings about 25,000 people to the greater Dayton area. The three-day event includes exhibits, a flea market, forums, education sessions, and license exams. For more information about Hamvention 2017 (scheduled for May 19-21), visit the website at <http://www.hamvention.org/> or e-mail [info@hamvention.org](mailto:info@hamvention.org)

## Broadcasting Mode Switching Rankling Listeners

Norway is going forward with plans to replace its national FM broadcasting network with digital-mode outlets by the end of 2017 — the first nation to do so across the board. Norway's Ministry of Culture first proposed the switch more than 5 years ago. The first official switchover to digital audio broadcasting is set for January 11 (at 11:11:11 AM) in Nordland, and the change will take place state by state. Norway already offers 25 national digital channels and only five on analog FM. Local radio stations outside of major cities in Norway will continue to broadcast on FM.

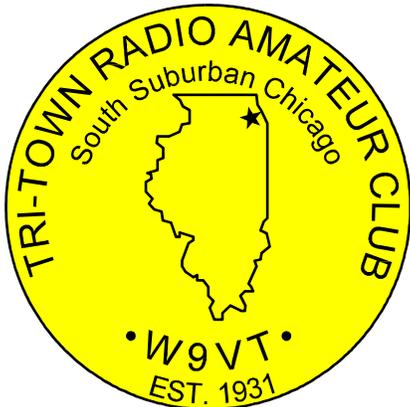
A typical DAB signal occupies approximately 1.5 MHz of spectrum wide and is comprised of 1500 individual carriers. The signal then can be subdivided into multiple digital program streams. DAB employs a Coded Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplex (COFDM) modulation scheme, a form of spread spectrum. Transmitted data are shared among the individual carriers to minimize selective fading due to multipath effects.

The plan is not without risk or rancor. The shift has caused a furor among radio listeners in Norway, who don't feel they will have the time — or money — to keep atop the technological wave and may miss important information once the shift takes place. The situation is somewhat akin to the situation when digital television broadcasting became the standard in the US. Millions of homes and vehicles in Norway are not yet equipped to receive digital broadcasts without a converter, which can cost upward of \$200. Surveys show that a wide majority of Norwegians oppose the shift, which proponents contend will mean better signal propagation and the option for multiple programming streams for each channel.

A last-ditch effort to stall Norway's switch to digital failed in Parliament. Switzerland, Denmark, and the UK are also said to be considering a switch to digital broadcasting from conventional FM. — *Thanks to Southgate Amateur Radio News; Radio Today, and Electronics-Notes*

**Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Inc.**  
**PO Box 1296**  
**Homewood, IL 60430-0296**

## First Class Mail



## Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ License Class \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member Y / N

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular Membership \$ 25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ SWL Membership \$ 25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Extra Family Membership \$ 6.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Paid by Club Member

For Example: Regular Member, with Family (25+6) = \$ 31.00

## Dues are Due!

Club dues expire the first of the year so 2017 dues are now due. Your dues pay for the continued expenses for insurance, repeater operation. Your continued support of the raffles and the refreshment jar also helps. Dues can be paid at any meeting or sent to the clubs mailing address. Please include a membership form so we can keep the Club's roster up to date.

**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tritownrac>**

**Check out the Club Website: [WWW.W9VT.ORG](http://WWW.W9VT.ORG)**