

2023-10-31 Hamlet Net - Special Event Stations

Announcements:

- Test Session Info
 - Next VE session is Saturday, November 11th in the Clover Building at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, and starts at 9 am. For more info, and to pre-register, see the Licensing/Testing page on the club web site, <https://w0eno.org/>, under the Education menu.
- We have some volunteer opportunities available where you can help out LARC:
 - Photographer / videographer - record team activities and upload to web site / YouTube
 - LARC Fest Coordinator -
 - Newsletter Editor - put together the monthly Splatter newsletter
 - Activities Chairperson - member of the Board of Directors
- LARC is running our annual Santa on the Air event again this year, with help from the Northern Colorado Amateur Radio Club. We are planning to have Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Santa's elves operate from Monday, November 27th through Sunday, December 10th.

Our "professional Santa" has retired this year, so we are in need of some help! We currently have one Mrs. Claus and one Elf, so we need some volunteers to round out our team.

The only requirement is that you can get into the LARC repeater or the NCARC 447.700 repeater on Mount Buckhorn - you can also use Echolink to get into the LARC repeater. I suppose you should also like kids as well. 😊

I believe Chuck has some material put together by our old Santa on how to play the part, so if you are available, please help us out!

Contact Chuck, K0ITP, at k0itp@w0eno.org to see how you can assist.

- Rocky Mountain Ham Radio found out they placed first in Colorado, 1st in the ARRL Rocky Mountain Division and 9th overall in their category for this year's ARRL Field Day.

I didn't see a listing of results on the ARRL web page, so I'm not sure how LARC did this year.

- If you are interested in DMR, or Digital Mobile Radio, RMHAM is hosting Mike Lozano, K0NGA, for his "Basic DMR, Theory, Operation, and how it works" presentation on November 11th. It will be live at the Cherry Creek Schools Educational Services Center (, 4700 South Yosemite Street, Greenwood Village, CO) and via zoom, For more information, go to their web site at: <https://www.rmham.org/> and see the RMHAM UNIVERSITY link on the menu.
- This weekend is the ARRL Sweepstakes contest for CW. If you work CW, this is an opportunity to make some contacts, but even if you don't, it is an opportunity to test out a Morse code decoder or experiment with the filtering settings on your radio, as there should be many close (and even overlapping) signals. For more info, see: <http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes>
- Our sister club up in Nederland is looking for some help with events they are running. They have a weekly Monday night net with no predetermined agenda, so you can lead it however you want. They are also planning a Field Day site at Golden Gate State Park and are welcoming anyone who wants to participate. Finally, they are looking for operators for the Ned Gravel run on July 8th. They have signup links for all these events, so head over to their web site <https://w0ned.org/> for more information!
- You can start earning your 2023 membership or future renewal by acting as NCS for at least 5 nets this year. You can run either this Tuesday night net or the Thursday night net (or both). We have scripts available for both, so all you need is a good connection into the repeater, and somewhere to keep track of names and call signs as people check in. If you're going to be on the net anyway, why not save some dough at the same time! There are four free memberships available for 2023, so don't wait to get started!
- Chuck has set a goal for the Club of running at least one activity a month. This can be a hands-on construction activity, an operating activity like Field Day, a fox hunt, or a special event station. The goal is to get people together to have fun with amateur radio! We have multiple locations at our disposal, as well as lots of Club equipment, so if you have an idea for something you think others hams would like to do, please let us know, and if you're willing to run it, even better!
- The Club is also looking for presentation topics for 2023. If you have any ideas, or better yet, would like to present, please let Chuck know and we'll get you on the schedule!
- All club activities are open to anyone - members and non-members. If you have questions, ask them on a net or **send email to elmer@w0eno.org**

Presenter: Bryan, AF0W

Topic: Special Event Stations

- I mentioned the Santa on the Air special event - you may be wondering what this means - what is a special event station, and how is that any different than a regular station or a contest?
- Well if so, you've come to the right place!
- A special event is one or more stations operated in observance or commemoration of a special or historical event, usually having some special significance to the amateur radio community
- These stations generally operate for a short time and may have special QSL cards for those who make contact with them
- The stations may also provide some background on or answer questions about the event being observed to those who contact them
 - a. If there is a pileup, QSOs are usually kept brief
 - b. During slow periods, the station may provide more info to try to generate additional activity

Call Signs

- One major advantage special events have is that they can apply to use a 1x1 call sign - such as LARC's W0T (whiskey-zero-tango) for the invention of the transistor or N0P (november-zero-papa) for Santa on the Air
- Due to their length, these call signs are more likely to stand out on the air, as well as being shorter to send
- The call signs themselves do not authorize any operating privileges - those are handled as they would for any amateur station
- The call signs consist of a prefix (K, N, or W), followed by a region number (0 to 9), and end with a single suffix letter (A through Z excluding X)
 - This results in a possible 750 special event call signs
 - Apparently, the X after the number was issued only for experimental stations until the late 1990's
- The FCC has approved five coordinators to handle these call sign requests, the largest of which is the ARRL
- You may reserve your call sign up to one year in advance. Short notice requests may also be granted, but of course there's no guarantee of availability or turnaround time, so you'll want to get your request in as soon as you have the date nailed down

- One posting I saw mentioned a turnaround time of up to a week, so don't wait until the last minute!
- If your event date changes, you will have to cancel your initial request and submit a new request for the new date - you can't just move your reservation
- They may be requested by any licensed amateur radio operator, regardless of license class
- When you make a request, you can specify up to 10 candidate call signs - you will be assigned the first one available
- They are assigned for the duration of the special event, with a 15-day maximum duration - the assumption is that most events will last from 1-3 days
 - You cannot reserve multiple back-to-back events to circumvent this limitation
 - Reserving more than one 1x1 call sign per year is also discouraged - this is probably so that other stations can get in on the fun
- You must have an actual special event you are commemorating - you can't get a 1x1 callsign just so you can increase your QSO rate in a contest, for example
 - If you do happen to have a legitimate special event, you can use the special event call sign for any contests or other amateur radio operating events during that time
 - If you do abuse the special event call sign system, you may be denied any future requests
- Your special event call sign assignment is complete when it appears in the 1x1 call sign database (note that it will not appear in the FCC call sign database)
- Note that while the operators of a special event station may use the special event call sign to identify transmissions (with the standard "every 10, and at the end" timing), they must still transmit their assigned call signs at least once per hour to provide identification for the transmissions
- You don't need a special event call sign to run a special event station. You can use a club call sign (with the club trustee's permission) or your own call sign if you wish

QRZ

- One other item you may want to look into is getting the QRZ page for your special event updated with your event information
 - I'm not familiar with this process, but hopefully Chuck, can address it

- If you don't have your station information on QRZ, be prepared for some confused operators, as many people use that site for looking up callsigns!

Finding Them

- So how do you find out about upcoming special event stations?
- Since there are 5 licensed coordinators, there had to be some place where a list of all assignments was kept
- These coordinators maintain a consolidated list of assignments that is available on the web at: <http://1x1callsigns.org/> (one-xray-one-callsigns.org)
 - a. You can search for granted 1x1 call signs using the "Search 1x1 Calls" link on the left of that web page
- I ran a search for special event callsigns from today until the end of November - there were 69 call signs returned
 - a. Some events had multiple call signs such as the Air Force MARS 75th anniversary with 10 call signs, and Wyoming Ghost Towns on the Air with 23 special event call signs
 - b. The web page mentioned that there were 21,795 total entries - the database appears to go back to September of 2005, with the first call sign being kilo-9-papa which was granted for the Persimmon Festival - I guess this means the "significance to amateur radio" requirement is pretty loose!
 - c. I looked at the November-zero-papa call sign for LARC's Santa on the Air event
 - The detailed information included the coordinator and requisitioner, including name, call sign, address, email, and phone, so some individuals may have privacy concerns

Running a Special Event Station

- If you are running a special event station, there are a number of tasks you may need to complete in addition to obtaining the call sign, such as:
 - a. Deciding what hours you will be operating
 - b. Deciding which frequencies and modes you will be using, and whether they will change during different dates or times
 - c. Designing a QSL card or certificate for the event (if you are going to send them out)

- d. Putting together a web page to advertise your event
- e. Doing PR work, such as submitting your event to QRZ, posting it on social media, mentioning it during nets, submitting it to clubs for inclusion in their newsletters, etc.
- f. Getting equipment to use during the event
 - This may also include getting digital communication software, such as WSJT-X, and logging software set up for special-event operation
- g. Identifying volunteers to help with station setup, operation, and teardown, as well as handling QSL and certificate requests after the event
- Of course, the main concern here is to have fun commemorating the event!
 - a. I've included a number of web sites in the net notes if you'd like more information

Questions:

- **The question for the week is:** Have you ever contacted or worked at a Special Event station? Do you have any ideas for Special Event stations that LARC could run?
- **In my case,** I've worked the radios at one special event station, which was when LARC commemorated the Boulder County Fair. We operated from a park in Longmont, and the first year I worked the event, we had a special event call sign. Unfortunately, the QRZ entry for that call sign showed the information from the previous event, so we had some operators who were confused about what we were doing.

I've contacted a few special event stations over the years - the ones that stand out are the Museum Ships Weekend Event (held in June) where last year 89 ships participated over voice, CW, and various digital modes such as RTTY and FT8. If you contacted at least 15 different ships, you could request a certificate.

The other is the Indianapolis Motor Speedway special event stations, which are three stations commemorating the Grand Prix, Indianapolis 500, and NASCAR 200 races starting in May. They provide individual station QSL cards as well as a certificate for those who contact all three stations during the week.

Backup Questions:

1. What hobbies do you have other than ham radio? Do you (or could you) use ham radio in these hobbies?
2. Share an "a-ha" moment you had with amateur radio?

More Info:

- ARRL's Special Event Call Sign page: <http://www.arrl.org/special-event-call-signs>
- ARRL Search for Special Events:
https://www.arrl.org/special_events/search/page:2/model:Event
- Planning and Operating a Special Event Station:
<https://forums.qrz.com/index.php?threads/planning-and-operating-a-special-events-station.249795/>
- How to Run a Special Event Station:
<https://w4amc.com/2022/02/19/how-to-run-a-special-event-station/>
- Special Event Operating Procedures:
<https://www.m0mcx.co.uk/special-event-operating-procedures/>
- IMS Special Event Station: <https://www.qrz.com/db/w9ims>
- Museum Ships on the Air: <https://www.nj2bb.org/museum/>
- DX Special Event Stations: https://www.qsl.net/va3rj/spevents_dx.html

- If you have ideas for net topics or general meeting topics / presenters, please let us know! Tell us on a net, or send email to k0itp@w0eno.org

Email to elmer@w0eno.org

1. W0PPC - Steve - Lyons -
2. AE0DO - John - N of Longmont -
3. WA0JJC - Bob - Boulder -
4. NA0A - John - Boulder -
5. KM6SJA - Steve - N of Longmont -
6. W7PGF - Philip - Frederick -
7. W0DRZ - Chris - Lyons -
8. AF0W - Bryan - El Paso -
9. KF0MXH - Art - Longmont -
10. K0ITP - Chuck - Firestone -

End: 7:50