

2024-10-29 Hamlet Net - Special Event Stations

Announcements:

- Test Session Info
 - Next VE session is Saturday, November 9th in the Clover Building at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, and starts at 9 am. It is a PVET session, so there is no fee to test. For more info, and to pre-register, see the Licensing/Testing page on the club web site, <https://w0eno.org/>, under the Education menu.
- Christmas Party Dec 10 - sign-up link on web page. \$13/person. BBQ at the Grange in Niwot.
- Looking for volunteers for LARCFest - sign up on net or contact Chuck.
- We are still looking for volunteers for Santa on the Air - we can use elves who act as net control, as well as Santas. We've got a script for the elf, and a list of questions for Santa to keep the net going when Santa doesn't have anyone to talk to. No experience is necessary. You can even participate over Echolink as well.
- The 285 TechConnect Radio Club is putting on their yearly TechFest on November 2nd down in Lakewood. The event will have 5 hours of presentations on technical topics related to amateur radio, plus a "demo corner" where club members show off some of their operating technology.

Presentations are: The RMHAM Network, Choosing an HF Radio and Recommendations by Rob Sherwood NCØB, Ham radio in an HOA, Introduction to SDRs, and Radio Astronomy and Ham Radio Activities at Star Haven Observatory.

There is a \$15 fee to participate in person. Looks like they also provide a Zoom link for remote participation. For more information, and to see presentations from previous years go to <https://na0tc.org> and click on "TechFests" on the left side of the page.

- We have a new net on the LARC repeaters. It's run by Timothy Moss, KFØLAR, on the 22nd of every month at 6pm. The 22nd was chosen to highlight the average of 22 vets who commit suicide each day. While the purpose of the net is to connect veterans, non-vets are welcome to participate as most all of us have friends or family who are or have served.
- Looking for people to help out with LARCFest and Winter Field Day.
- We have some volunteer opportunities available where you can help out LARC:

- Photographer / videographer - record team activities and upload to web site / YouTube
 - Newsletter Editor - put together the monthly Splatter newsletter
 - Event Coordinator
- You can start earning your 2024 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 2024. 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

- We 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
- Some interesting recent special events include:
 - a. The special event stations celebrating National Sasquatch Day, where you can seek out the elusive "bigfoot" represented by 6 special event callsigns, which would nab you the coveted BIG STOMP on the BIGFOOT Certificate!
 - b. The Night of the Living Dead Halloween Special Event Stations K2V and K2Q to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the movie. Station K2V will operate from the actual cemetery.

Call Signs

- One major advantage special events have is that they can apply to use a 1x1 call sign - such as LARC's WØT (whiskey-zero-tango) for the invention of the transistor or NØP (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 (Ø 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 call sign 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 call signs!

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 the year - there were 156 call signs returned
 - a. Some events had multiple call signs such as the Air Force MARS annual special event 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
- I believe the special event station WØT to commemorate the invention of the transistor was run using the club's GoBox, so lack of equipment is no excuse!

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

Notes:

- 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. AF0W - Bryan - Raleigh, NC via Echolink
2. KC0NZW - Rick - Longmont
3. W7PGF - Philip - Frederick
4. K0ITP - Chuck - Mobile
5. KF0QMP - Aki - Longmont
6. WA0JJC - Bob - Boulder
7. KF0OVL - Ken - Longmont
8. KF0OKA - Ben - Pinewood Springs
9. AE0DO - John - N of Longmont

End: 7:52pm