

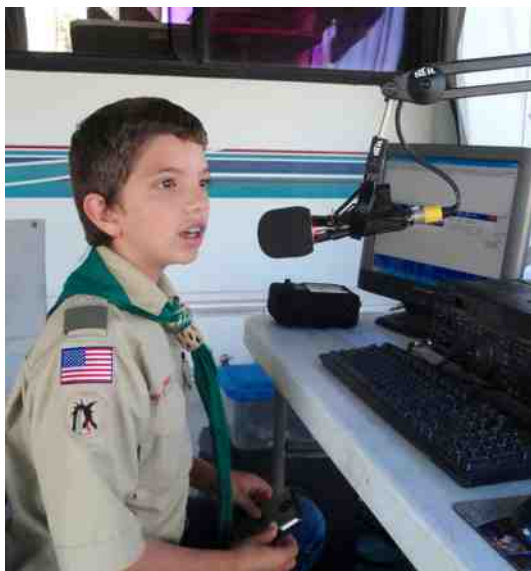


JOTA 2013 Report

Increased Station Participation
New Radio Scouting Elements

Significant Year Round Activity and Interest Through the
Amateur Radio Operator Rating Strip and the Morse Code Interpreter Strip





“My thanks for hosting JOTA. It was so much fun for my son that he spent most of dinner talking about it. In fact, he now wants to become a licensed operator... This is exactly the sort of thing I want him to learn through Scouting.”

Parent email to WE6BSA
Western Los Angeles County Council

Station Report Summary				
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Stations	31	68	204	271
Growth		119%	200%	33%
Scouts	454	3,185	18,537	13,866
Growth		602%	482%	-25%

JOTA 2013 Executive Summary

Numbers

Jamboree on the Air is the largest gathering of Scouts in the World. In 2012, nearly 700,000 Scouts participated from over 6,000 amateur radio stations in 150 countries around the world.

In 2013, the USA entered its third year in a row of growth in JOTA participation by number of stations, up 33%, but declined in reported Scouts on the air, down by 25%. See the table below for details.

The number of Scout councils participating grew from 136 the previous year to 147 in 2013.

The number of stations that registered prior to JOTA hit 419, up from 375 the previous year. Anticipated Scout participation from those registrations remained level at 32,500.

The number of amateur radio operators involved grew from 1,000 in 2012 to nearly 1,300 in 2013.

Promotion

A great deal of promotion happened with the amateur radio community due in part to BSA partners Icom America and the ARRL, the USA amateur radio association. Icom America promoted the event heavily in their advertising in magazines, websites, and the weekly web-based television show Ham Nation. ARRL ran an article in their monthly magazine, QST, that reported on Radio Scouting activities and JOTA. They also promoted the event on their website and e-newsletters.

More challenging was reaching local Scout councils. A webinar was held for International Representatives and the recording posted on the web. Bryan's Blog reported on JOTA as did ScoutWire. But ham radio operators continued to report that they encountered a complete lack of knowledge of Jamboree on the Air when they try to activate the event in their council or district.

Support Materials

To help with this effort, the National Radio Scouting Committee provided a set of “talking points” for use by amateur radio operators in meeting with their council, district, unit, and ham radio club.

JOTA Jump Start

This year the committee suggested an unofficial JOTA Jump Start on Friday night, before the official start at midnight local time. At registration 146 stations said they would participate. Report comments said it went well. LDS units particularly appreciated this as they do not camp out on Saturday evening or Sunday.

Radio Scouting

In the broader world of Radio Scouting, K2BSA at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree was very successful with 2,600 Scouts getting on the air and 340 earning the Radio Merit Badge. In addition, Icom America installed three amateur radio repeaters on a permanent basis at the Summit under the call sign WV8BSA.

The Amateur Radio Operator Rating Strip was introduced in February 2013 for uniform wear by all licensed amateur radio operators. By the end of October, just 8 months later, nearly 6,500 had been sold. The Morse Code Interpreter Strip, introduced in 2012, sold 1,200 over the past 12 months.

The Icom Amateur Radio Loan Stations saw use in 15 councils in support of JOTA, Radio Merit Badge workshops, and summer camp.

Overall, JOTA and Radio Scouting activities have generated a great deal of interest and participation in the fun, technology, and magic of amateur radio — getting Scouts on the air talking to other Scouts across the country and around the world.



“I’ll never forget the smile on one Scout’s face when he just finished talking to another Scout at the K2BSA/o station saying ‘WOW! This is COOL!’”

WW2BSA
Patriot’s Path Council

JOTA 2013 Numbers

After two years of triple digit percentage growth in the number of Scouts participating, this year’s decline in the number of Scouts was disappointing. While the number of stations filing reports after the event grew by 33% to 271, this too is somewhat disappointing in that 419 stations registered for the event. Even so, we can take heart in some strides.

In 2013 65% of registered stations filed reports, up from 54% in 2012. The number of amateur radio operators involved grew to 1,294 from 1,011 the previous year. The number of councils involved grew to 147 from 136. The number of registered councils declined from 180 the previous year to 173 this year. You can see the list of the top 10 councils in terms of Scout participants in the nearby table.

The number of radios on the air jumped from 434 to 614. The number of two-way contacts hit 8,822 surpassing the previous year’s total of 6,433 by 37%. I will also note that many stations reported very long

contacts with amateur radio operators on the other end of the conversation that lasted hours in order to get every Scout in front of the microphone. That’s the real goal of JOTA — conversations not necessarily contacts. Having said that, however, I will note that some made very creative use of the two contests that were on the air during the weekend — Worked All Germany and the New York QSO Party. They essentially entered the contest, set up the exchange information, and allowed the Scouts to work rapid-fire contacts in full contest style. This is a wonderful example of “if you can’t beat them, join them!”

I will also note that the states contacted again reached 50 while the number of countries reached 88 from 66 the previous year. The amount of Echolink use grew from 36 to 60. D-Star and IRLP remained relatively constant at 15 and 25 respectively.

Top 10 Councils

	Scouts	Stations
Water and Woods	2500	4
Gulf Ridge	827	7
National Capital Area	536	18
Circle Ten	413	9
Heart of America	357	8
Greater Niagara Frontier	344	2
Crater Lake	290	5
Annawon	288	1
Los Angeles Area	271	8
Hawkeye Area	257	6



JOTA 2013 Promotion & Support

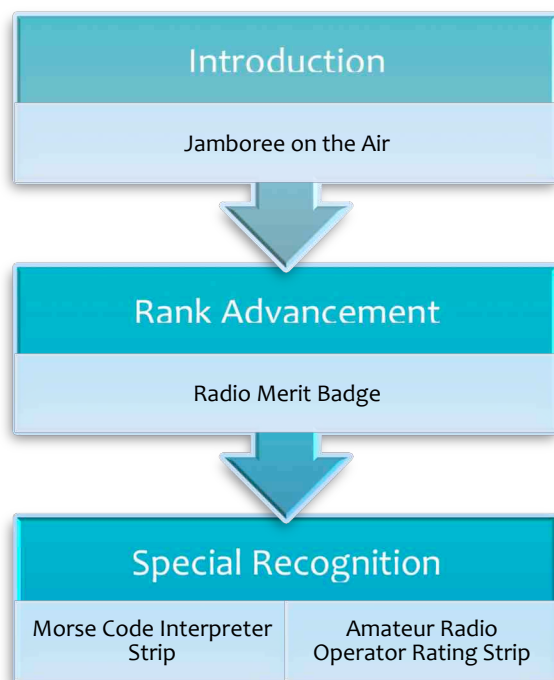
Promotion in 2013 began with the introduction of the 2013 Patch Design with messages sent to all those email addresses collected during 2012, to councils via ScoutWire, and to Scouting volunteers via Bryan's Blog and *Scouting Magazine*. Icom America provided a great deal of promotion leading up to the K2BSA Jamboree amateur radio operation and followed that with JOTA promotion. In June, ARRL's *QST Magazine* ran a two-page article on all Radio Scouting activities including JOTA. ARRL also updated their JOTA and Radio Scouting webpages with the new information.

Email carried a great deal of the direct promotion to the 2012 JOTA list and then to the list of 2013 registrations. Sixteen emails were sent highlighting the JOTA path, the Amateur Radio Operator Rating Strip, new website, and

registration updates. Email open rates ran from a low of 55% (seeking report submissions after the event) to 84% (around certificates for completing the report).

A webinar was held for all International Representatives to bring them up to speed on the event, it was found that their overall awareness was limited. Talking points were developed, published online, and promoted for use by amateur radio operators in talking to councils, districts, and units. A slide deck and video were also provided to support amateur radio operators and Scouters in their promotion of the full range of Radio Scouting activities.

A JOTA-JOTI council resource package was proposed for mailing to all councils. Unfortunately, the International Department could not allocate funding to this effort. It is thought by the Radio Scouting Committee that getting paper into the council can help better promote the event.



Three-Tier approach to Radio Scouting
with increasing involvement and
engagement



Nearby you can see the three-tier approach for Radio Scouting that has emerged over the past few years. Jamboree on the Air is a superb introduction to the sweep of amateur radio activities from getting on the air to ARDF fox-hunting. It often is held during a council camporee at one activity among many, but serves in this way of reaching a high number of Scouts and providing that all important first look at not only the hobby of amateur radio but a career in technology.

Radio Merit Badge

The next step is the Radio Merit Badge, with between 6,000 and 7,000 Scouts earning this badge each year. It serves as a deeper introduction and helps with the Scout's overall rank advancement activities.

Morse Code Interpreter Strip

The third-tier has been introduced over the past two years beginning first with the Morse Code Interpreter Strip requiring 5 words per minute. It is currently the second highest selling interpreter strip at 1,200 per year, right after Spanish.

Amateur Radio Operator Rating Strip

The Amateur Radio Operator Rating Strip was introduced in March 2013 and has already sold 6,425. Any licensed amateur radio operator can wear this patch on the left sleeve of their uniform. This motivates Scouts and Scouters alike to take the extra effort to study for the license exam.

All this has brought a great deal of attention to the overall Radio Scouting program.

Icom Council Loan Stations

Icom America as part of their sponsorship agreement with the BSA provided 10 complete amateur radio stations for loan to councils. The value

Radio Scouting Activities

of the equipment exceeds \$30,000. Over the past 18 months these stations have been in place for 15 councils.

K2BSA Jamboree

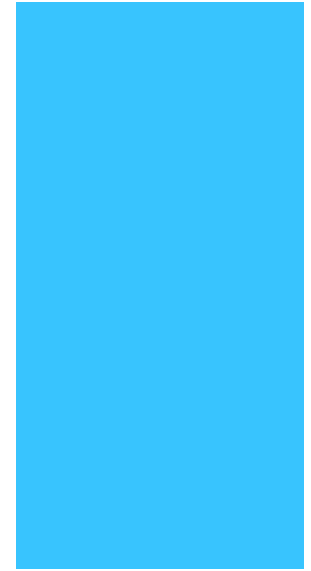
The National Scout Jamboree was held at The Summit in West Virginia in July 2013. Leading up to the Jamboree several sponsors and supporters stepped forward to provide equipment and promotional support. Icom America provided all the transceivers and installed three amateur radio repeaters on a permanent basis at the Summit. They supported not only the Jamboree but future events at the Summit and the local community.

The Jamboree K2BSA Operation involved 48 staff members in delivering a superb program to 2,600+ Scouts, over 10% of Scouts attending the Jamboree, along with 340 who earned the Radio Merit Badge. Other activities included a contact with the International Space Station, high altitude balloon launches, and fox-hunting using amateur radio direction finding gear. The promotion leading up to and during the Jamboree really raised awareness in Scouting and the amateur radio community.

K2BSA Amateur Radio Association

The K2BSA Amateur Radio Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization organized for the purpose of supporting Radio Scouting efforts. The call sign has been associated with the BSA National Office since 1971. The organization continues to support the Jamboree as noted above. It also provides an extensive website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed supporting all Radio Scouting activities. It further provides its call sign for use at Scouting events.

In summary, the association provides a great deal of support to all Radio Scouting activities and has done so for the last several decades.



JOTA Jump Start

Based on feedback received after the 2012 event, the National Radio Scouting Committee introduced an unofficial early start called JOTA Jump Start. This effort encouraged stations to get on the air Friday evening, prior to the official midnight start. Of the 419 stations that registered their operation, 146 or 35% stated that they would be operational Friday evening. In feedback after the event, many stated that this was a great new activity. In particular LDS units noted that they are not allowed to camp on Saturday evenings and that this early start was very helpful for their efforts. We also noticed several other countries on the air at this time.

Registration and Reporting

The overall system for station registration and reporting has worked well over the last two years. Thanks to the BSA Research Service for providing this system and the support to modify it as necessary and to forward the results periodically. None-the-less, we recommend that investigation be conducted in 2014 to determine if alternate systems would offer any advantages. This should include any work by the World Bureau and their new JOTA-JOTI organization. It should also include online low or no cost services such as Google Forms. More work is also needed to move the needle in getting stations to file their reports. The current effort yielded a 65% rate. The goal should be 80% for 2014.

Council Needs Survey

In early 2013 the BSA Research Service agreed to include questions about JOTA-JOTI in their Council Needs Survey sent to all Council Scout Executives. Those who did not participate in JOTA said that they don't have local amateur radio operators to set up the event (54%), they don't know the dates (37%), and they don't know the requirements (35%). Those who did participate said to provide support materials for council staff members (66%), provide support materials for amateur radio operators (57%), and provide promotional materials to generate greater participation (57%). While all of this is available online, perhaps a paper mailer could be used to increase awareness.



“Try to help improve awareness at council level. JOTA is our best kept secret”

K6SON Station Report

Recommendations for Improvement

Each year we ask that stations provide feedback on improvements for 2014 along with their station reports. Here's a summary of that feedback.

- Provide resources to local councils that they can pass on to local amateur radio operators. There is limited support or knowledge from local councils.
- Encourage councils to do more promotion of scheduled events.
- Make it a truly international event with signup and patches through a single international site.
- Limited support or knowledge from local amateur radio clubs. Old timers who used to support the event are now gone.
- Scouts would like to submit designs for the next patch.
- Provide t-shirts and banners to help promote the event.
- Encourage more participation on Friday evenings.
- Keep the JOTA Jump Start and promote it more.
- Provide more contact information for each station such as email and phone.
- Councils should hold their fall camporees on JOTA weekend.
- Publish more success stories and how-to information from JOTA stations.
- More how-to information on foxhunting.
- Provide promotional support such as flyers, email templates, event coordination plan for getting multiple troops involved.
- Information for unit leaders on how to seek out local amateur radio operators for support.
- Eliminate contests.
- Information on frequency etiquette.
- Videos for downloading that can be used at council meetings without Internet connections.
- Recommended volume discount on patches.
- General PR promotion to amateur radio operators to support the event on the air --- by both engaging in contacts and clearing frequencies when needed.

The National Radio Scouting Committee will be meeting in early 2014 to assess these recommendations and pull together their improvement plan for the year. It will also be interesting to review what the World Organization of the Scouting Movement does around their new organization structure for JOTA-JOTI.

Summary



Great effort in 2013

What can we do improve in 2014?

Overall, we conducted an exceptional Jamboree on the Air. It would have been delightful to show continued growth in the number of Scout participants, but that decline may well have had more to do with reporting than to actual Scouts on the air.

At this point we have a good feel for the expected participation and we should, therefore, set some goals for 2014. I'll propose here for the National Radio Scouting Committee's consideration that we set the following goals for 2014 ---

- Register 400+ stations.
- Receive reports from 80% of stations.
- Increase Scout participation to 20,000+ for the first time.
- Increase Council participation to 200.

We also look forward to the impact of the new WOSM JOTA-JOTI organization at the world level and hope that our coordination can generate still more activity around the world.

We further look forward to the ARRL Amateur Radio Service to Scouting Award introduction in 2014. This award was approved by the ARRL Board in early 2013 and we merely await finalization of the details. This may well serve to heighten awareness of JOTA and Radio Scouting activities in general among the amateur radio population.

We also give a big thank you to Icom America for their support of all Radio Scouting activities, including JOTA and Jamboree.

Jim Wilson, K5ND

Chairman, National Radio Scouting Committee

Photo Credits

All photos in this report were provided by the stations that submitted their reports for JOTA 2013.

AB9SX, Blackhawk Area Council, Page 1

W6TOI, Long Beach Area Council, Page 2

WZ6BSA, San Francisco Bay Area Council, Page 3

N2IVW/WB2JWD, Baden-Powell Council, Page 4

KT4BSA, Tuscarora Council, Page 4

W7PX, Montana Council, Page 4

KH6BB, Aloha Council, Page 4

K4MN, Occoneechee Council, Page 6

K2BSA/6, Mount Diablo Silverado Council, Page 6

KD5MAM, Sam Houston Area Council, Page 6

K5LBJ, Capitol Area Council, Page 7

N2JFD, Suffolk County Council, Page 8

KK4OAL, Gulf Stream Council, Page 9



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