

2011 JOTA 54 — Welcome Gals and Guys!

The next Scouts Jamboree On The Air will be October 15 and 16.

Debra Johnson, K1DMJ

Though JOTA is primarily promoted by Boy Scouts in the US, it is a worldwide scouting event that includes Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Guides. Last year Amateur Radio clubs in North Carolina and Montana made special efforts to include Girl Scouts in their JOTA activities. Though the Girl Scouts do not have a program like the Boy Scouts Radio Merit Badge that focuses on radio education, it's clear that the lucky girls who had the opportunity to participate in JOTA were given a great introduction to the activity that so many Boy Scouts and today's hams enjoy. Here are some of those stories as told by hams who were onsite at two 2010 JOTA activities hosted for Girl Scouts.

2010 JOTA

➤ As the sun crept higher and higher into the central Montana sky, so did a triband beam aided by the 7 AM set-up crew from the Great Falls Area Amateur Radio Club. With overnight temps at the freezing mark, metal tower and beam parts were... well...*freezing!* By 10 AM, however, when our guests started arriving, the outdoor temperatures were cool but comfortable, and thanks to a very efficient furnace, the interior of the communications van was toasty warm. With that, the 2010 JOTA operations were under way. Our club played host to the area Girl Scouts, while the Boy Scouts attended a separate JOTA encampment elsewhere in the city, hosted by another club. Westgate Mall was kind enough not only to let us set up outside in their parking lot but also provided a large meeting room where several equipment and publications displays, as well as an EchoLink computer, had been set up.

Brief explanations about Amateur Radio as a hobby and as an emergency service were the first order of business for the girls. Following their introduction to what Amateur Radio is all about, some went to the EchoLink station and others visited the Communications Van, where HF propagation conditions cooperated to allow each young lady the opportunity to visit with other Scout groups across the nation. Some of the girls went "off script" and asked some very intriguing questions, some of which were directed to the adult hosts of the distant sta-

2011 JOTA: Peace, Environment and Natural Disasters

JOTA is an international scouting event organized by the World Scouting Bureau. While JOTA officially starts at 12 midnight Friday night/Saturday morning and goes until midnight Sunday local times, there will be plenty of stations on the air Friday evening. The official Scouting frequencies will be the center of operations. A listing of those frequencies, information about third party traffic restrictions and other details can be found on the

ARRL website at www.arrl.org/jamboree-on-the-air-jota, or the Boy Scouts of America JOTA site at www.scouting.org/jota.aspx. For more information on the 2011 World Scouting Bureau's theme for this

year's event, *Peace, Environment and Natural Disasters*, visit scout.org/en/information_events/events/jota/the_54th_jota_2011.



tions. Although the attendance was thin and sporadic, the day's experience was rewarding for the Girl Scouts and the adults involved in providing it. — *as reported by Cameron Smith, N7NBB*

➤ On October 16, 2010 during the Jamboree On The Air (JOTA), Shelby Amateur Radio Club (SARC) members demonstrated Amateur Radio to the Union County Girl Scouts at Camp Occoneechee, Lake Lure, North Carolina. Ben Melvin, KM4C, Emergency Coordinator for Cleveland County, did a great job organizing the event. The girls, all from Union County, and the Hornets' Nest Council Girl Scouts, enjoyed a day of talking to Boy Scouts and Amateur Radio operators all over the country. Daisies, Brownies, Juniors and Seniors were on hand to talk on the ham radio, an activity they had a

CAMERON SMITH, N7NBB



Kira Nader (left) and Madisyn Smith hold the coiled section of a 20 meter dipole they built themselves at the Girl Scout JOTA Workshop. Moments later, others in the troop hoisted the antenna up the tower, and the girls made many contacts. As a group, the Girl Scouts did the math to figure out the length, then measured and cut the wire, soldered and installed connectors.

TODD VICKERY, WA4TV



Danielle Reich talking to Susan Melvin, K4ZXN, on the Shelby Amateur Radio Club's D-STAR repeater during Camporee At Occoneechee, Lake Lure, North Carolina.

choice to sign up for at their Camporee.

One Senior Girl Scout, Christa Shirlen of Troop 91, even opted to miss her "Challenge" for an opportunity to talk on the radio. She said she could do her Challenge anytime but when would she get a chance to talk on a ham radio again! Christa and a few other older girls seemed very interested in obtaining their license. Said volunteer June Melvin, WA4JNJ: "I thought it was going to be hard to get the girls interested in ham radio but boy was I wrong. When they came up, all you had to do was ask who wanted to talk on the radio and hands would go in the air. They were so excited to grab hold of the microphone and talk to some other Scouts or just anyone who would talk with them. They would exchange names and QTH and then the questions from the other end of the radio would begin. They loved telling the people about themselves and what they were doing." — *as reported by Susan Melvin, K4ZXN*

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