

Local Scouts talk to the world.



The 56th annual JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) sponsored by Millersburg Troop 151 and BMARC (Berry Mountain Amateur Radio Club) was held at The Erdman Sportsman Club was a great success.

JOTA, a partnership between Scouting and Amateur Radio is an international event to promote communications. An estimated 700,000 Scouts around the world participate and took place locally for Scouts of the New Birth of Freedom Council October 18th, 19th, 20th during a Fall camporee at the Sportsman Club. Forty-eight Scouts from seven Troops from as far as 2 ½ hours away came for the opportunity to talk with Scouts and Amateur Radio Operators (HAMs) around the world and talk they did. They made 43 different contacts not including multiples to individuals, totaling an estimated 50,000 miles. JOTA has been around the world for 56 years

Contacts were made into 3 continents- South America, North America, Europe, 7 countries- Canada, France, Ireland, Italy, Azores Portugal, South America, USA and 9 states- California, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota. All contacts were made using 100 watts of power, equivalent to the power of a 100 watt light bulb.

Our 10 onsite Amateurs brought their own gear and what a selection we had. They erected 5 antennas and operated four stations on multiple bands and modes Friday evening and all day Saturday and into early morning (0300) Sunday. Thanks to all of our participating Amateurs who were on-site or loaned equipment, without you this event would have not been possible.

In addition our Amateurs as Staff taught sessions on Morse Code (CW) by key, flashlight and signal mirror. Each Scout soldered together a 2M ladder-line J-pole antenna and lashed together an antenna tower from bamboo. The Scouts also learned about RDF

(Radio Direction Finding) and electronic fox hunting. In between sessions the Radio Merit Badge was taught using the 2013 National Jamboree format. All the Scouts completed all the requirements and earned their Radio Merit Badge.

Troop Patrols were renamed Alpha through Foxtrot to represent the phonetic alphabet. Of course we had the normal Scouting activities of flag raising, campfires, cracker barrels and a Sunday service. We added to those activities with plotting contacts and weather on a map, phonetic conversations, Q-codes. We had contests for the most, farthest, longest distance, most continents, most countries, most states and most courteous. Prizes were given for each category. We have 10 Scouts in the hunt to win a Baofeng HT (hand held radio) for the first Scout to earn their FCC Technician license after the event. We also had a HT donated that was won by one of our Amateurs to take home.

There was a ShelterBox disaster relief shelter tent on display. ShelterBox USA, a disaster relief charity that provides shelter and equipment to disaster survivors around the world has partnered with the BSA. They will work together to promote the importance of shelter and humanitarian action following disasters, as well as how critical traditional Scout skills, including leadership, emergency preparedness, camping, safety, communications, and citizenship in the community, nation, and world, become during a disaster. It can also be part of an Eagle Scout project.

All of our activities work toward our big event Saturday evening of a simulated SAR (Search and Rescue) for a downed plane in the area. The Scouts need to find the “plane’s” radio beacon, treat the 4 patients, build stretchers and carry the 150 pound mannequins back to the landing zone, all in the dark with headlamps. Everyone had a great time and no one got lost and all the “patients” survived.

We had many prizes, food and tools donated for the event including our great site at the Erdman Sportsman Club. Our sponsors, both locally and from Amateur Radio manufactures, help to make this event happen behind the curtain.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this event possible through man-hours, donations or equipment and those on the other end of the contacts around the world and locally.

We still have the limited edition JOTA patches available at cost to anyone who is interested.

If you are interested in participating next year, or in the Berry Mountain Amateur Radio Club, or ShelterBox, please contact Don Kunst at W3LNE@arrl.net

73s, W3LNE Don Kunst, Secretary BMARC, ASM Troop 151.