



Signals from SARA



WØJH

©2022 The Stillwater Amateur Radio Association

An ARRL Affiliate & Special Service Club

April
2022

www.radioham.org

April Meeting: Preparing for POTA Activation

SARA Parks on the Air (POTA) Challenge Update

POTA activity is picking up as winter gives way to spring weather (I know, I'm an optimist). We have 25 SARA members now participating in the challenge, and March also saw some park action, with VE3MXJ Brad posting a number of VE park activations. Also, WØAXB is working on an activation as I type. Detailed stats will be available at the SARA monthly meeting and on the SARA web site.



Activating a park is a great way to engage in portable operation with a purpose. Whether you have a couple hours or a couple days to operate, activating a park is an easy and fun way to "be the DX". Hunters are out there looking for new parks, and you are likely to find yourself managing a pileup for as long as you'd like to operate. The rules are simple, and submitting an activator log is easy once you understand the process.

The April SARA monthly meeting will feature a presentation on preparing for a POTA activation. We'll be focusing on information geared toward folks planning for their first park activation. Program rules and guidelines, as well as requirements and tips for getting the log

Announcements

The regular monthly meeting returns on April 09, 2022 in person & via Webex. Start time: 9:20 AM, Boutwells Landing.

Meeting: Current Members will receive a meeting invitation via email from Joe, KCØOIO.

SARA's virtual monthly meetings are open to all. Go to

<https://stillwateramateurradioassociation.my.webex.com/meet/w0jh>

to join the meeting.

SARA On the Air

Phone Round Robin Ragchews & Net

(All Times are Local - Central)

> Daily "Lunch Room" Crew: 12:00 - ?

SARA 2m Repeater* ... Weekdays

> Daily Top Band Crew: 20:00; 1.966

MHz LSB or USB +/- QRM (alternates:

21.316 +/- MHz, 50.166 MHz)

> Monday 75m Crew: 08:15; 3.856 MHz

LSB +/- QRM

> Tuesday (TMT): 19:00; SARA 2m

Repeater*

> Sunday Digital Net: 19:00; 3.584.15

MHz USB (500-1000 Hz) on waterfall

(Mode announced via email)

Can't Find Us On the Air?

... Monitor SARA Repeater!

*SARA 2m Repeater: 147.060 MHz;

Positive Offset; DCS/DTCS 026

Normal)

submitted correctly will be covered. We'll also have tips, tricks, and gear recommendations, provided by some of our experienced park activators. Hope to see you there either in-person or virtually.

It's not too late to join in on the fun. The SARA POTA Challenge runs through the end of 2022, and there is plenty of time to make some contacts and get in the running. We'll have prizes in multiple categories for both Hunters and Activators, so there's plenty of opportunity to grab some goodies.

To participate in the POTA Challenge, there are three simple steps required

- Register for an account at parksontheair.com
- Notify Bob - W0GAF, or Brian - KB9TBB that you want to participate
- Go out and work some parks

Watch this space, as well as the SARA website for additional information on the SARA POTA Challenge. Bob - W0GAF and Brian - KB9TBB are the SARA POTA Challenge coordinators. Please contact them with any questions you may have about the SARA POTA Challenge.

Bob - w0gaf@me.com

Brian - kb9tbb@arrl.net

OXB Goes Digital – Again



Yes, it's true, after ~20 years ... I guess it's time! Other than handling traffic on some of the CW nets, I've been in a rut with operating SSB. But I remember the fun many of us in SARA had around Y2K when we assembled the "Warbler" kit as a club project. That little bugger was a QRP, 80m transceiver that motivated me to go digital. Just thinking about it and all the fun we had made me

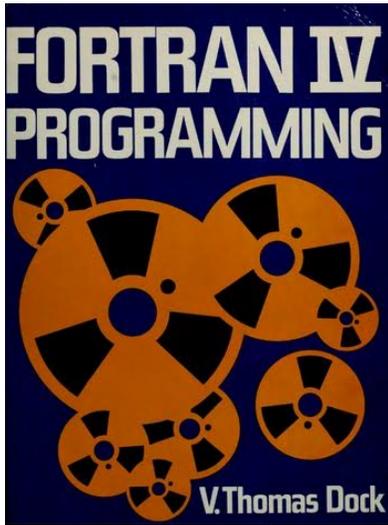
decide to "get back on the horse" (Shetland pony?) and operate those fun modes.

That rig was partnered with a good, robust digital suite called DigiPan. What's not to like about all the impersonal operating opportunities that these new modes offer. Yep, I'm hooked on FT8, WSJT-X, JT-65 along with a few others.

After looking at my IC-7610 Owner's Manual, I learned how to change the rig from SSB; it's not that difficult. And, once you get it setup; you don't even have to be in the shack to make most



of these mode's contacts. But a few times when I tried some Ragchewing, I soon learned I was not making as many Qs. I figure I can always "Chew the Fat" with others on modes like Olivia, Throb, RTTY, MFSK, Heck, Dominoes and others.



So just when I was getting comfortable with the latest release of DigiPan (v36.6), I learned Ham Radio Deluxe purchased the rights to it. (I sure hope they don't screw it up.) In a recent HRD press release, it appears that all of their products are now open source. Wow, what a great opportunity for us digital ops to "roll our own" into whatever we want for rig programming tools. I can hardly wait to try my hand at programming some neat and special functions into my 7610. It's a good thing I saved some of my college textbooks. I know there's a Fortran IV book somewhere in the basement. It's bound to offer some utility. BTW: For those that share my interest in programming, you may like to download a free trial from here:

<https://simplyfortran.com/>.

Well, I've rambled a bit here, please forgive me. I think I heard a noise from the Shack. It could be that the amp overheated on PSK or something. I bet when I go in there, I'll have logged a few dozen contacts. I wonder if I can use this for POTA and DXCC Qs.

73 es CU on the spectrum/waterfall,
Dave (WØOXB)

Heard on the Air

"If the bands are really as bad as folks say they are, how come we can still make contacts with a kilowatt and a 4-element, 20m quad?"

"Why do old-timers refer to QRM and QRN as women (birthing people) for band-related problems?"

"If we go to full battery operation for our rigs, will we use less electrons and conserve energy in their sub-orbitals?"

73 es CUL,
D.B. Zeppernick, W7CFZ/Ø

SARA POTA Challenge

The SARA Parks on the Air (POTA) Challenge is on. Parks on the Air® has been growing in popularity, and the SARA POTA Challenge is a great way to get in on the fun. The POTA Challenge will run from January 1 through December 31, 2022 and all SARA members are eligible to participate. We will have awards for Hunters and Activators, and awards will be presented in January 2023.

To participate in the POTA Challenge, there are three simple steps required

- Register for an account at parksontheair.com
- Notify Bob - W0GAF, or Brian - KB9TBB that you want to participate
- Go out and work some parks

POTA contacts fall into two categories; Hunters and Activators. Hunters are the folks that make contact with people who are operating from parks. Activators are the folks who go out to parks and operate. The SARA POTA Challenge will be tracking stats for both Hunters and Activators. We anticipate a number of parks will be activated by SARA members this year, and we're also discussing some potential park activations as a club activity. Stay tuned for further updates.

POTA relies on submission of logs by Activators for QSO data. So if you are just working some parks from your QTH, there's no other work for you to do. The Activator you contacted will submit the log and your QSO will be in the POTA database. Each month, your POTA QSO count will be pulled from the POTA site and tallied for the SARA challenge. To participate as a Hunter you do not need to submit any logs, but you do need to have a POTA account set up so your park QSOs will be counted. For Activators participating in the SARA POTA Challenge, we simply ask that you copy us when you send your ADIF log to your POTA Coordinator.

You can find much more information about Parks on the Air at their website: parksontheair.com. This is also the place to create your POTA account. When you set up your account, any parks you have worked in the past will magically appear in your log book. You may even find you've already qualified for one of the many POTA awards available.

Watch this space, as well as the SARA website for additional information on the SARA POTA Challenge. We are also planning some Tech Topic discussions on park activation, and park logging. Bob - W0GAF and Brian - KB9TBB are the SARA POTA Challenge coordinators. Please contact them with any questions you may have about the SARA POTA Challenge.

Bob - w0gaf@radioham.org

Brian - kb9tbb@arri.net

Parks on the Air® is a registered service mark by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

SWEEP

Based upon attendance at the March meeting at Boutwells, it was quite apparent that SARA members were glad to be able to attend an in person meeting. While some of us may have been glad to just get out to see our fellow members, I suspect the twice postponed, and ever popular SARA White Elephant Exchange Party (SWEEP), was a major incentive for some of us.

The gift exchange is always a highlight, with the hidden surprises ranging from something the recipient would love to hide to retain and take home; to a clunker the recipient will try to promote as a prime gift, that they hope someone will “steal”, rather than having to take home themselves. Some of the perceived “clunkers”, have been known to return at the next year's event. One such gift that comes to mind is the pink golf balls, that I believe appeared for 3 successive years, but apparently found a loving home, as they have not shown up for quite a while. Suspect the pink ones would be easier to track, if being used for installing wire antennas.

While some members will try to avoid the crown jewel of the gift exchange, and a good deal of effort is usually put into disguising that gift, there is always a high level of anticipation, until the famous Flying Pig has been revealed. This year the “winner” who got to take home the flying little porker, was Scott W2SAD. The accompanying pictures show Scott upon revealing the treasured little guy at the meeting, as well as a photo provided by Scott of the place of honor upon arrival at his new temporary home.



The full story behind the travels of the Flying Pig is not as well defined, as the path of the notorious Release To Listen Award. I do know he first appeared among the batch of “gifts” at one of the very first December holiday parties at the QTH of WAØKKE. While I do not recall the year, I have strong suspicions as to whom the donor and recipient were. The path the treasured little guy has taken is quite murky, and there have been several holiday parties he did not attend. Even after he began to make somewhat annual appearances, there were times that his custodian either forgot he had the little guy, or couldn't find where he had safely stored him. For some of us, the most anxious times were when he went home with someone, who had young children. There was concern that the youngsters would latch onto their new found “toy”, and he would never be the same again.



While the little guy has always traveled in his original cardboard container, he comes with no additional care & feeding instructions. It is suggested that his batteries be removed, so his GI tract does not corrode.

Shel NØDRX

VE Session: April 28



Following an extended hiatus, the SARA VE Team is preparing for an exam session scheduled for April 28th to coincide with conclusion of the free, SARA sponsored amateur radio classes. While the currently offered classes are aimed primarily for the entry level ham license, exams for all ham license levels will be available.

Exams will be in Auditorium-B at Boutwells Landing, 13575 58th St N, Oak Park Heights, MN 55082. We plan to be prepared to check in examinees beginning at 5:30pm, with exams scheduled to begin at 6pm. Pre-registration is required, so no walk-ins for this session. Boutwells is currently requiring that everyone check in at the desk in the lobby upon entering the building. They are also asking that masks be worn when coming in, but after going down the stairs and toward the exam room masks will be optional. I intend to have one member of our VE Team stationed in the lobby prior to starting exams, to assist examinees with getting checked into the building and directed toward the exam room.

Each examinee will need to have a completed form-605, and while blank forms will be available at the exam session, to save time and simplify the process, I ask that examinees bring a completed form to the session. The form can be obtained at: www.arri.org/files/file/VEs/605%20Form_2020_Fully%20Interactive.pdf
An FRN (Federal Registry Number) and an email are needed to complete the form-605.

To register for the exam session, contact:
Shel NØDRX
n0drx@hotmail.com

HAM License Fee Effective April 19th

The cost of being an amateur radio operator will be increasing effective April 19th, and this time it is not due to purchasing a nice piece of new ham gear. Except for a brief period when the FCC was charging fees to receive and renew vanity calls, ham licenses have generally remained fee free. When looking at the \$35 fee covering a license for 10 years, it is still a good deal. Information below was provided by the ARRL VEC, and is current as of March 30, 2022

FCC \$35 Amateur Application Fee Effective Date Will Be April 19, 2022

The FCC released a [Public Notice](#) on March 23, 2022, stating that the amateur radio application fees, including those associated with Form 605 application filings, would become effective on April 19, 2022. The Federal Communications Commission's authority to impose and collect fees is mandated by Congress.

UPDATED INFORMATION: The \$35 application fee, when it becomes effective on April 19, will apply to new, renewal, and modification applications that request a new vanity call sign. The fee will be per application processed by the FCC. If the applicant fails to pay within the 10-day window, the application will be dismissed by the FCC. The application will have to be refiled with the FCC which will restart the 10-day window. For examinees, an application can be refiled to the FCC, by the coordinating VEC, at any time before the CSCE expires.

UPDATED INFORMATION: Administrative updates, such as a change of name, mailing or email address, and modification applications to **upgrade** an amateur radio licensee's operator class*, will be exempt from fees. (*this new information was just confirmed by FCC staff on Tuesday March 29.)

Reminder - NEW Start Time: SARA-Sponsored Monday Morning 75m Round-Robin Ragchew

It's spring and time to alter the start time for our Monday morning gatherings!
(Low frequency propagation is being affected by absorption. If you didn't know this, try having a local QSO on 80/75m after ~9:30 am local time!)

Each Monday (starting March 7):

:: 8:15 am Central Time

:: 3.856 MHz (+/- QRM); LSB

(Please remember to use the "big knob" on your radio to tune around and find us!)

*This is a facilitated, informal gathering; it is not a net!

*All are welcome to join us (SARA membership is not required).

Armed Forces Day Crossband Exercise & Prairie Island Evac Drill Scheduled

Annual Armed Forces Day Cross-Band Exercise is set for May 14 this year. This exercise is open to all licensed amateurs. The purpose is to practice communications between military communicators and radio stations in the Amateur Radio Service. Tentative plans were for amateurs to answer the military net control call by transmitting on channel one of the sixty meter band. More details are expected to be published on the ARRL web site in April, so stay tuned.

Also, any SARA member interested in participating in the annual **Prairie Island Evacuation Drill** is asked to contact John Regan at jeregan3@gmail.com for details and participation. Training provided. The date will be May 25th, 5-8 PM.

Thanks for your consideration!!

John, KAØHYR

Please keep these SARA members and their families in your thoughts:

- Ray Pilgrim (KØZZT): Ray recently had surgery on his lungs.
- Jim Feesl (WØELC): Jim was admitted last week into the hospital with heart-related issues.
- Dick Miller (N9EZC): Dick recently lost the love of his life and XYL, June.
- Keith Miller (AGØH): Keith was in for a new knee. It appears his replacement needed replacing already.

Bandwidth from the President

Greetings from my shack, de Joe KCØOIO.

The Stillwater Amateur Radio Association monthly meeting will be Saturday April 9th in Auditorium A at The Gables at Boutwells Landing, 13575 58th Avenue Oak Park Heights MN 55082. The program will be "Preparing for POTA Activation." Boutwells Landing's COVID protocol requires face masks in the common areas of the facility (you may remove them in the meeting room). You will need to sign in at the reception desk upon entry. The sign in process includes a non-contact temperature check and answering some quick health screening questions on the sign in form. Do not arrive before 9:00 AM as the desk is not staffed until then. The meeting will begin about 9:20 AM to allow all to process through the reception desk. The meeting will also be livestreamed via the SARA Webex Room, beginning as soon as the equipment is operational from the meeting room.



SARA is conducting an 8-week in-person Technician License class on Thursday evenings. Classes are held at the Stillwater Public Library from 6:00 PM to 7:50 PM. The current Technician Class license exam question pool expires June 30, 2022. The textbook is the ARRL Ham Radio License Manual 4th Edition, available online from arrl.org, ham radio retailers, and Amazon. If you know of someone interested in getting the amateur radio license - tell them about our class and have them contact SARA's Training & Education Chair Bob Jensen WØGAF at w0gaf@me.com. This week's session will be at the Lake Elmo Public Library, located at 3537 Lake Elmo Ave N, Lake Elmo, MN 55042

The SARA VE team led by Shel NØDRX will be conducting a VE Testing Session Thursday evening April 28th beginning at 6:00 PM. The session will be at Boutwells Landing in Auditorium B. Pre-registration will be required. For more info, contact Shel NØDRX at n0drx@hotmail.com.

If you are testing for the first time, be sure to register for a FCC Registration Number (FRN) before the test session. Go to <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/regEntityType.do> to register.

The FCC released a Public Notice on March 23, 2022, stating that the amateur radio application fees, including those associated with Form 605 application filings, would become effective on April 19, 2022. The Federal Communications Commission's authority to impose and collect fees is mandated by Congress.

The \$35 application fee, when it becomes effective on April 19, will apply to new, modification (upgrade and sequential call sign change), renewal, and vanity call sign

applications. The fee will be per application. Administrative updates, such as a change of name, mailing or email address, will be exempt from fees. Volunteer Examiner (VE) teams will not have to collect the \$35 fee at exam sessions.

Once the FCC application fee takes effect, new and upgrade applicants will pay the \$15 exam session fee to the ARRL VE team as usual and pay the \$35 application fee directly to the FCC by using the CORES FRN Registration system (CORES - Login). VEC and VE team licensing procedures will not change.

When the FCC receives the examination information from the VEC, it will email a link with payment instructions to each successful candidate. The candidate will have 10 calendar days, from the date of the application file number being issued, to pay. After the fee is paid, and the FCC has processed an application, examinees will receive a second email from the FCC with a link to their official license. The link will be good for 30 days.

The SARA POTA Challenge '22 is underway! Spring is here and warmer weather is ahead. Look for POTA activations by SARA members to increase. Activators: be sure to post planned activations on the POTA Scheduled Activations. Activators can also drop a note to the SARA groups.io page to give members advance notice. If you are not on the groups.io, sign up now at <https://groups.io/g/StillwaterMNA AmateurRadioAssoc>

February stats on the radioham.org website. Be sure to check POTA spots regularly for activations.

The goal of this club activity is to encourage SARA members to get on the air; as a park activator, as a park hunter, or both. Awards are planned for both activators (most parks, activations, qsos & park to park) and hunters (most parks, most qsos). Contacts with all POTA stations count. And it doesn't get any easier for hunter credits as only the activator needs to submit their activation log. Be sure to sign up for an account at parksontheair.com.

Bob WØGAF and Brian KB9TBB are leading the team putting together the SARA POTA Challenge. If you are planning to participate, drop them an email to let them know you are taking the challenge. Bob's email is w0gaf@me.com and Brian's email is kb9tbb@arrl.net.

SARA members have exclusive access to the Technical Topic Thursday playlist on SARA's YouTube Channel. View the playlist here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoaYHzHAObWTib9y95HDRybbRIw-cfiMW>

Coming May 5th: Tim Duffy K3LR of DXEngineering for a Tech Topic Thursday on Coax.

If you have a suggestion for a technical topic, contact Mike KF0CCL via email at kf0ccl@protonmail.com. We are always looking for ideas for technical topics.

Starting May 12, the weekly Eyeball QSO Party moves outdoors for the summer months. We will visit different Stillwater-area parks throughout the summer with Eyeball QSOs, POTA activations, hands-on radio, POTA portable operating tips and tricks, Mobile Station Show-n-tell, and more possibilities plus a picnic or two. Valley View Park in Oak Park Heights will be a regular location, on the schedule for May 12 (New Ham Night), June 2, June 23, July 14, Aug 4, Aug 25 and Sept 15. Other weeks could see us at Lowell Park in downtown Stillwater along the St Croix National Wild & Scenic River, along Brown's Creek State Trail or the Gateway State Trail, or nearby MN & WI State Parks for "Late Shift" POTA activations. Watch the SARA This Week bulletin for details each week.

Get ready for summer! Members can order shirts, hats, and jackets emblazoned with the SARA club design. Order yours at www.hamthreads.com. Orders with the SARA club design qualify for the club discount.

SARA's on-air and virtual activities are a great way to stay connected with others. These activities provide healthy social contact while maintaining personal distancing.

73 es CUL de KC0OIO

Technician Class Continues



March 3 was the start of SARA-sponsored Technician License classes held at the Stillwater Public Library. There are 8 Thursday classes plus a final exam session. Class

is from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The VE testing session will be Thursday, April 28 at Boutwells Landing.

Based on the first session and calls from others planning to attend, it looks like we'll have a good turnout of ~10 students, including 4 XYLs/YLs. TNX to Bob (WØGAF), our Education and Training Coordinator, instructors and the VE testing team for making this happen.

Handiham Program Turns 55 - Special Event

On Friday, April 29th through Sunday, May 1st, the Handiham Program will celebrate its 55th anniversary. This is a pretty special accomplishment for any organization! We will be celebrating with a special event station sponsored by the Handiham Radio Club, and all currently licensed Handiham Program members and volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate. The objective is to work as many stations as possible during the time period. Participants may use all amateur bands and modes to make contacts, including digital and VOIP modes. Participants may contact any licensed amateur radio operator for the event. The event will start at 1900 UTC on April 29th and run through 1900 UTC on May 1st. Please QSL direct to the Handiham Program. Listen out for CQ Handiham 55!



QSL Information:

To receive a special Handiham card, QSL direct to:

Courage Kenny Handiham Program
3915 Golden Valley Road
Mail Route 78446
Golden Valley, MN 55422

Please include the call sign of the station you contacted. Feel free to also QSL direct to the station you worked.

Remote Base Station Update - April 2022

Patrick Tice, wa0tda@arrl.net



Stations **WØZSW** and **WAØTDA** are up and running. **WØEQO** is running in limited mode (receive only on 40 meters, other bands are okay for transmit/receive).

Contact Pat at wa0tda@arrl.net for transmit access or for help.

Information and videos, along with a quick start guide are available here: <http://tice.us/wa0tda/>

As winter's grip loosens, we are turning our attention back to the "up north" station at Park Rapids and the antenna tuning problem that makes the station "receive only" on the popular 40 meter band. I plan to get a discussion going on this issue, perhaps on the club reflector, sometime soon.

During the spring and summer I'll be going over the wa0tda and w0zsw antenna systems as well, doing whatever maintenance is called for after what has been a pretty hard winter. We have had multiple ice events and SO. MUCH. WIND!!! In past spring inspections I've also discovered squirrel damage on the feedlines.

In the event you are looking for DX, I've noticed quite a lot of activity on 17 meters, usually morning and then late afternoon and early evening - Europeans seem to have a pipeline into Minnesota. Meanwhile, activity on the lower frequency bands like 1.8 and 3.5 MHz has lessened considerably as band conditions deteriorate with longer daylight hours and high D layer absorption, coupled with the QRN from thunderstorms down south. It will be a while, but don't forget about the 6 m band, which traditionally comes alive around June.

Just a reminder... We are now in thunderstorm season and the stations in Woodbury will be disconnected when there is a threat of lightning. We have already had a couple of instances this season when the stations were shut down due to thunderstorms, and a couple more when the icing on the antennas was severe. Gotta love Minnesota Spring!

Good luck & good DX in 2022 and have fun with the radios!

73 - Pat wa0tda@arrl.net

Upcoming events

- **April Meeting: Saturday, April 9, 2022.**
- **SARA Lunchroom** - M - F Noon to ?
- **"Sunday Fusion"** SARA's digital voice hangout is every Sunday evening at 7:00 PM. "Sunday Fusion" makes use of the System Fusion C4FM digital voice capabilities of the SARA repeater along with WIRES-X and YSF connectivity, It is an informal "hangout" for those who want to explore the System Fusion capabilities of their radios.
- **May Meeting: Saturday, May 14, 2022 - Last meeting before summer break.**
- **June, July, August - Summer break**
- **2022 ARRL Field Day - June 25-26 - <http://www.arrl.org/field-day>**
- **Discussion** continues anytime at <https://groups.io/g/StillwaterMNA AmateurRadioAssoc>

SARA 2022 Officers

Joe Heitzinger, KCØOIO - President

Bob Jensen, WØGAF - Vice President

Dave Iverson, N9JNQ - Secretary

Rich Smith, ADØSN - Treasurer

Zack Zaccagnini, AAØU - 2021 & 2022 Director

Brad Harris, VE3MXJ - 2022 & 2023 Director

Trustee: Shel Mann, NØDRX

Note: The SARA Trustee officer is an appointed position; chosen by the elected officers

A Note from the Editors

This edition of the 2022 Signals from SARA news is produced on Google Docs using 100% recyclable electrons.

We welcome your article submissions. Don't worry about getting the spelling & grammar perfect - submit it anyway and we'll work it out. Please keep text and pictures separate, as this helps us with layout.

We can take most any format, but plain text is easiest to manage. Word docs are also fine, but we'd prefer to avoid formats like MS Publisher and PDF as submissions. Email wa0tda@arrl.net - Note that the old Comcast.net address is no longer checked.

