

Editorial – X on the Air

During **Field Day** (and any day, for that matter), a ham radio club can set up a special station known as **GOTA**, which stands for *Get On The Air*. It's special because it's meant for unlicensed or under-licensed folks to operate on amateur radio bands by virtue of **an elmer** who accompanies and mentors them. And if set up during Field Day, can bring the sponsoring club a ton of extra points.

This GOTA idea has prompted a number of amateurs to creatively devise ways to help people quickly and easily get on the air, the operative “quickly” leading to the necessity of portability. One of the first of these portable offshoots is SOTA (Summits on the Air), in which a participant climbs a pre-designated mountain peak or other high elevation, sets up a station, and collects contacts for the event.



Those who participate in a SOTA event will first **register for the summit** they intend to operate, announce (on social media, etc.) their intentions to operate this way (to attract contact attention), and state on which bands (no repeaters permitted) they plan to operate. They then drive to the nearest trailhead, hike their gear to the top, set up, and start calling CQ on their bands.

Other popular on-the-air (“radiosport”) events have recently emerged and helped numerous people get involved with amateur radio in a portable way, especially **POTA** (Parks on the Air), which has gained explosive popularity in recent years because it's quick (not nearly as formal as SOTA), it's easy (no hiking necessary), and it's fun (almost any park qualifies).

JOTA (Jamboree on the Air) is an event that helps Boy Scouts operate annually in October.

YOTA (Youth on the Air) is a year-round activity that



specifically helps young folks become interested in amateur radio. Another **YOTA** (Youngsters on the Air) is intended to do the same, but is based in Europe and Africa.

Following these, a number of other “XOTA” ideas have appeared, such as **IOTA** (Islands on the Air), **LOTA** (Lighthouses on the Air), and **COTA** (Castles on the Air). Hams being who they are, a few have set up some fun (actual and tongue-in-cheek) events, such as **MOTA** (Museums on the Air), PPOTA (Porta Potties on the Air), and **WMPLOTA** (Walmart Parking Lots on the Air). What creative ones can you come up with?

Anything to add? Email editor@utaharc.org

