

NS6T JOTA REPORT 15 OCTOBER 2011, 15:45 – 23:50 UTC

Local council name and number: San Francisco Bay Area Council, California (#028)

Unit number: Troop 924 (with assistance from Troop 900)

Amateur call sign used: NS6T & KF6H

Amateur call signs heard and worked:

K5BSA	N7W
K7MVA	NE1C
K7RDG	NN6EE
KB6TM	VE7DB
KC0ZHF	VE7OM
KC7KWI	W0WWV
KD5RRJ	W6H
KD6LIL	W7QTA
KD7HRJ	WB6WTM
KE7MJT	WB7TNE
N6SMU	WD6CIM
N7QR	ZL1AG

States contacted:

Wyoming, California, Arizona, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Texas, Colorado, Nebraska, Massachusetts

Countries contacted:

Canada (British Columbia), United States, New Zealand (via IRLP)

Number of stations participating in your JOTA event: 3 rigs (HF, 2m, and 440MHz) with 2 stations active at any one time. We also had a fox hunting activity.

Number of participants:

Cub Scouts: 136

Boy Scouts: 5 (approx)

Venturers: 0

Girl Scouts: 0

Radio amateurs: 3

Visitors: 0

These numbers are those who were actually on site. Additional hams provided equipment and gave us access to IRLP and a linked system of repeaters.

JOTA Story

Ever since I got involved in Field Day and learned about JOTA, I've wanted to activate the BSA's Rancho Los Mochos Camp with a JOTA station, and this year I got my chance. Through the auspices of Troop 924, I was invited to run a JOTA station for Webelos Weekend, a council event designed to give Webelos a chance to learn about Bay Area troops and to get a taste of camping Boy Scout style.

Our station was part of the camp rotation, and 136 Webelos scouts came in patrols of about 20 to our

JOTA station. The first rotation showed up at 8:45am, and we ran continuously until 5:00pm except for a lunch break. We started out with a brief introduction to JOTA and ham radio and broke each patrol into three sub groups. One sub group went to try fox hunting. The second sub group went to the VHF/UHF station, and the third group went to the HF station. During the 50 minute session, we rotated the scouts through all three positions. In the early rotations, we had an unofficial fourth station, a wandering tarantula captivated the scouts who weren't operating.

Our scouts enjoyed the hands-on aspect of the activities. For example, the fox hunt involved traipsing around the mountain looking for the transmitter. They also enjoyed operating the radio equipment and talking directly with scouts, scouters, and ham radio operators.

Our station was located a top Observatory Hill, the highest suitable location at Rancho Los Mochos, elevation 2513 feet grid square CM97fn. Our station was a field setup powered completely by generator. We had two tables covered with Easy Ups. One table held a Yaesu FT-450 HF rig, and the other held a Yaesu 2m rig and a Kenwood 2m/70cm rig. We had three antennas: a fan dipole for 10m, 15m, 20m, and 40m; a J-pole for 2m/70cm; and a log periodic for 2m/70cm. We used the log periodic and knife-edge propagation to reach Bay Area repeaters and a simplex IRLP that were blocked by Cedar Mountain.

Bob and Tom Epperly (KF6H & NS6T) contributed as control operators for the VHF/UHF and HF stations, and Mike Allison (KN6ZT) and Ethan Epperly (First Class scout) ran the fox hunt. Adam Bertsch (KG6C) loaned us a rig, a mast, and a log periodic antenna. Alan Ostroff (K6IV) volunteered his simplex IRLP node, and Stephen Wilde (KI6FEO) gave us permission to use his 70cm repeater for JOTA communications. The Weiss family provided some of the equipment used to setup the stations.

One of our contacts, Will (KE7MJT operating as N7W and under his own call), worked our scouts for over 2 hours. He patiently and thoughtfully answered our scouts questions and encouraged them to pursue the Arrow of Light.



Illustration 1: Rancho Los Mochos JOTA station with the HF station in front and the VHF/UHF station in the background. Photo by Ethan Epperly.



Illustration 2: NS6T tries to line up a HF contact for the scouts at Rancho Los Mochos. Photo by Mike Allison (KN6ZT).



Illustration 3: KF6H sets up a QSO on the VHF station for scouts at Rancho Los Mochos. Photo by Mike Allison (KN6ZT).



Illustration 4: Rancho Los Mochos Webelos scouts search for a hidden transmitter using a HT with a yagi antenna in a radio fox hunt. Photo by Mike Allison (KN6ZT).



Illustration 5: Before sunrise at the Rancho Los Mochos JOTA station. Photo by Tom Epperly (NS6T).