

GOTA (Guides on the Air) is an Opportunity for Girl Guides, from Sparks to Trefoil Guild, to talk to other members of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts all over the world via Amateur radio. Outside Canada, GOTA is known as Thinking Day on the Air - TDOTA. GOTA and TDOTA are held every year on the third full weekend in February. This is a weekend close to Thinking Day ~the day when Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world remember the founders of Guiding and Scouting as well as their sisters in WAGGGS - the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. GOTA/TDOTA is a fun way to reach out to some WAGGGS sisters during Guide-Scout week!

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These pages are supplied by Helen Archibald, VA1YL, ex VE2YAK, ex VE2GGQ - CLARA coordinator for GOTA and former Guider in Cabana Area, Quebec with Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada, now living in Nova Scotia & taking part in Trefoil there.



WHAT IS GOTA AND TDOTA

GOTA - Guides On The Air! TDOTA - Thinking Day on the Air The third full weekend in February each year.

GOTA (Guides on the Air) is an opportunity for Girl Guides, from Sparks to Guiders, to talk to other Girl Guides and Girl Scouts using amateur radio. GOTA is good fun and not difficult to organize. Adult supervision is required. GOTA happens every year during Guide-Scout Week, on the third full weekend in February.

Outside Canada, the event is known as Thinking Day on the Air, or TDOTA for short. It is very popular in the United Kingdom and many British Guides are on the air that weekend. If radio conditions are good, Canadian amateur radio stations can talk to them.

GOTA and TDOTA amateur radio stations, each under control of a licensed radio amateur, will attempt to contact other GOTA/TDOTA stations over short-wave radio. Once contact is made, girls at each station can have the opportunity to speak into the microphone and "make a contact" with a girl in another station. In the past, Canadian Girl Guides have talked to Guides in England, United States, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Jamaica during GOTA. Who you contact depends upon radio conditions, so there are no guarantees.

You can also arrange for your group to meet another Guide group at a near-by "ham" (amateur radio) station in your local area over VHF radio - these contacts will be very clear, and can be more reliably planned than short-wave contacts over longer distances, which depend upon the ionosphere, but are more exciting!

Guides and Scouts of all ages enjoy "meeting" new Guide/Scout friends. The girls are encouraged to describe what they love about Guiding/Scouting: camping, hiking, crafts, activities, adventure. Old friends meet - girls who have camped or traveled together may "get together" over the air. As they speak, the message to listeners is clear Guiding/Scouting is FUN!

Even if the station does not find another GOTA/TDOTA station to talk to, the girls may each get an opportunity to chat with an amateur radio operator (ham) in another station. These contacts can also be fun and international experience for the girls.







Once the stations have communicated, they should confirm the "contact" by snail mail with a QSL card. I like to send a card from each girl to each girl to whom she speaks. Caution should be used in exchanging the girls' addresses or emails over the air. It is safer to communicate via the mailing/emailing address of the amateur operator or the Guider. You don't know who might be listening! Girls should only give their first names.

Be sure to take photos. Participants should be encouraged to wear uniform or at least Guide clothes.



HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ON GOTA?

CLARA (Canadian Ladies Amateur Radio Association) sponsors GOTA (Guides on the Air). The information you will need to run a successful GOTA event is available on this site. This includes:

-  Instructions for Guiders;
-  Instructions for radio operators (Hams);
Template for QSL cards;
-  Phonetic alphabet;
-  Cheat Sheet (suggested questions to get a conversation going), A Certificate template
-  Craft Ideas,
-  and links to other sites.

The best place (besides this site) for information is the UK Guiding Association site: <http://www.guides-on-the-air.co.uk/>

For answers to specific questions: E-mail Helen, VA1YL (see address under her address) After GOTA, please consider sending a report to:

Girl Guides of Canada - Guides
Du Canada 50 Merton Street,
Toronto, Ontario,
M4S 1A3.

as well as to

Helen, VA1YL
25 Canard St., RR # 1 Port
Williams, NS B0P 1T0
va1yl@ns.sympatico.ca

Please include photos of the event
(with your girls in Guide uniform, if
possible)

[Photo Tips: Before taking photos of
members of Girl Guides of Canada -
Guides Du Canada, at Guiding events you will need to have each member (or parent/guardian)
sign a Photo Release Form.] Present registration forms include photo releases for those girls
for whom it is permitted.

Keep a record of who was in each photograph, the photographer, and the date it was taken. If
you send photos to Girl Guides of Canada-Guides Du Canada, please include all this information.
Try to include the call sign of the station in the photo. Go for big smiles if you can.

MORSE CODE

A ● —	J ● — — —	S ● ● ●
B — ● ● ●	K — ● —	T — —
C — ● ● ● ●	L ● ● ● ●	U ● ● —
D — ● ● ●	M — — —	V ● ● ● —
E ●	N — ●	W ● — — —
F ● ● — ●	O — — — —	X — ● ● —
G — ● ● ●	P ● — ● —	Y — ● — — —
H ● ● ● ●	Q — — ● —	Z — — — ●
I ● ●	R ● — ●	

HOW AND WHEN DID GOTA START?

Contributed by Helen
Archibald VA1YL, ex VE2YAK
and VE2GGQ
Modified March 2017

GOTA is ALWAYS the third full weekend in February, close to Guide-Scout week.

GOTA (Guides on the Air) began in 1985 to celebrate 75 years of Guiding in Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

GOTA is sponsored by the Canadian Ladies Amateur Radio Association (CLARA). GOTA, known outside Canada as Thinking Day on the Air (TDOTA) has grown each year with more countries taking part. Some Canadian Call Areas have an operator sponsoring the GGC suffix e.g. VE1GGC, VE3GGC, VA3GGC, VE4GGC. There used to be many Amateur Radio Operators, winter camps, clubs, schools, fire halls, Red Cross, churches and Military bases involved in GOTA. The numbers have decreased since Guides Canada withdrew support from the event in the 1990s. We appreciate your participation in GOTA. GOTA is always held the third full weekend in February, which is close to Thinking Day (February 22nd). GOTA falls during the week when Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada celebrates the birthdays of our founders, Lord and Lady Baden Powell, and when we make a special effort to extend our hands in friendship to as many other members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) as possible. GOTA is a special and exciting way to extend a friendly hand. It is a thrill to be able to communicate with our Guiding sisters around the world and we thank you for your contribution to making this a successful event. We hope that you enjoy working with our Guiders and Girl Members and that you communicate with a number of new friends as well. GOTA is spreading in the USA. Girl Scouts are joining their Guiding sisters on the air each February. Please keep them in mind and use frequencies that are available to American hams. In USA and elsewhere in the world, GOTA is known as Thinking Day on the Air (TDOTA).

For more information on Thinking Day on the Air
please see

<http://www.guides-on-the-air.co.uk/>



HOW TO PREPARE THE GIRLS FOR GOTA:

To get an idea about what happens at a GOTA station, go to U-tube & search VA1YL. Ham operator N1KNO recorded several conversations with GOTA station VA1YL in 2009 and posted them on U-tube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYaxEyWs8r8>

Be sure that you know how many girls you expect, and who, so that answering the door and collecting the girls is not a problem. Ham "shacks" are often far from the front door! The ham will not be able to leave the station to answer the door, so be sure that arrangements are made for this. Make sure that no girls wander off into other parts of the house unsupervised!

It will really help if each girl has a nametag, first name only. This will help the ham operator to introduce her as she comes to the microphone. "I am passing the microphone to"

Learn about Call signs & teach the girls. Every amateur radio operator in the world can be identified by his/her "call sign". Each call sign is unique & tells the listener a great deal about the radio amateur. It identifies the country of the radio station, & possibly the region. Any amateur operator's snail address can be found on the Internet, just from his/her call sign on a page called QRZ.com. Now you need to log in to this page, but the amateur radio operator will be able to do that.

If you have internet access in the radio station, you can look up the ham you are talking to & there will often be a photo.

One helpful idea:

Prepare a list of questions for the girls to ask & topics to discuss when the girls are on the air. Think about things that they would like to share with girls from another unit. They may want to tell about a recent Guiding experience such as camp or an up-coming event such as a District camp-fire or Thinking Day event. Put each question on a flash card, so the girls can look at one question at a time while they are talking. Use a large font, so the girls can read them easily while they are talking. OR make a poster to take with you with suggested topics, so the girls can glance at it when their ideas "dry up". If you can make the poster during a meeting, with input from the girls, it will be more meaningful to the girls, & they will better remember some things to say. This poster is called a "cheat-sheet". You can print out the cheat-sheet page from the website.

In the UK, girls each prepare a text to read when they are on the air. It starts with name, age, unit in Guides, family situation, and interests. It is not necessary to do this, but it might be handy to get the conversation started. I've put a sample form on the Cheat-sheet page. My local Guides do this.

Learn about QSL cards, & teach the girls. You can make QSL cards by photocopying the template on this web-site onto card stock, or printing onto card stock with your printer. You can add the call sign of the station and your return address before printing, to save effort afterwards.

The QSL card is the final courtesy of a QSO (two-way amateur radio exchange), as well as a thrill for the Guides who receive it! You should fill out and send a QSL card for each contact made. Better yet, send a card for each girl to whom you speak. Send a self-addressed stamped

envelope with the card, so that the return card can be sent direct to the Guider for delivery to the girls. Guiders, please bring some envelopes & stamps along to GOTA to help with the postage

If you can, invite the ham operator to visit your meeting & if possible, bring a portable radio to demonstrate how it works. A VHF hand-held radio will be portable enough to bring, & will not need an elaborate antenna. If there are other hams nearby, girls may get an opportunity to speak on the air for practice. Alternatively, you could use FRS radios or walkie-talkies to practice using microphones and speaking clearly.

Show the girls a map of Canada and a world map. Point out some places you might be able to "reach" by ham radio where there are Guides. Make sure there is a map or maps available during GOTA so you can point out the location of the station you are contacting.

If possible, expose the girls to the Phonetic alphabet at a meeting before GOTA. Bring copies to the event so the girls can use them to spell words that the other station does not understand. Girls generally love this aspect of ham radio & enjoy learning their names in phonetics. Exchanging first names is great. The Guides who come to my station each get a page of phonetics & cut out the letters of their names and paste it on the back of the page with their details on it.

Stations frequently send a QSL card to each girl they talk to. For that, they need to know her name. Names often sound alike, so phonetics really helps. Letters sound alike, too. C,D, E, G, J, K, A.. Phonetics sorts out this problem. Some Guiders print out the phonetic alphabet sheets in advance and have each girl cut out the letters of each name and paste it to her cheat sheet.

Show the girls how Morse Code works: Morse code is like another language - a series of dits and dahs which can spell any word. Make sure the girls realize that they will not have to understand Morse code to understand what they hear on the radio. GOTA stations will be using voice communications, not Morse code. But girls love Morse Code and playing with it!

Some ideas to make GOTA easier:

If you can, bring a portable short-wave radio to the meeting and see what countries you can "pick up". If it tunes in the ham bands, listen for a ham radio contact in progress so the girls can hear the etiquette of ham radio.

If possible, the Guider should visit the ham radio station in advance so she will know what to expect. You can print just the cheat-sheet pages. Highlight the page, and print off "selection". The most talkative Guides become "mike-shy" when asked to talk on the radio the first time. It is a good idea to prepare some questions that the girls can ask, and to go over them with the girls before they attend GOTA, or before they get on the air. It might be good to have each girl prepare a short statement for these exchanges.

Very young readers may struggle with the written questions while on the air, so try to suggest the questions before the girls take their turn at the mike. Or coach them from near-by.

The cheat-sheet has some questions, gleaned from GOTA sessions over the years and my imagination. GOTA can be very boring if every girl has the same list of questions, so please edit the list to suit your girls. Ten or twelve well -thought -out questions is enough. I like to ask questions for which the answers will reflect well on Girl Guides. I prefer “Have you been to camp recently?” to “Do you have a boyfriend?”

Okay, all of that sounds good, but I confess, in all the years I have been doing Guides on the air, it has all been much more seat-of-the-pants than that. It does give you an idea of some of what you might want to be sure is learned/noticed by the end of the GOTA session. I have had Guiders come who have done this sort of preparation, and like any preparation, it does pay off!

Prepared statement Outline: Copy this & make the font bigger so it is easy for the girls to read: Hello, my name is (first name only). I am ___ years old. I am in grade _____. My Guide (or Spark or Brownie) unit is _____. I live in _____. I have been in Girl Guides for _____. I have _____ sisters & _____ brothers. My pets are _____. My favourite thing about Girl Guides is _____.



HOW DO I FIND A HAM (AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR) FOR GOTA (GUIDES ON THE AIR)?

Ask the girls if anyone has a parent, other relative or family friend who is a ham.

Check your community listings for an amateur radio club, and contact them well ahead of time so they have time to recruit volunteers.

Check with the local Institute for the Blind. The CNIB has a special program that supports visually handicapped amateur radio operators. They may have a club station.

Look for large antennas on houses in your neighbourhood, and ask around.

Watch for automobile license plates which are amateur radio call signs (example: VE2YAK)

Please remember that amateur radio operators are volunteers, too. Recognize & reward appropriately. Make sure all the girls say thank you to the Amateur Radio Operator before they leave and make sure you send a written note after the event! You might want to ask him/her again next year!



WHAT DOES THE AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR NEED TO KNOW?

Information for Ham operators participating in GOTA/TDOTA (Guides on the Air/Thinking Day on the Air)

GOTA will be the third full weekend in February. GOTA could be an opportunity for you to take your amateur radio hobby out to the community. Your club could set up a station or stations in a public place, advertise for Guides to take part, and use the GOTA event to showcase amateur radio. Possibly recruit some new club members or students for your ham course. If you plan a major event, you will need activities to keep participants amused while they wait their turn at the radio. You will probably also need to give the Guide leaders lots of notice - three months, at least, and to convince the Guide leaders that Guides on the Air will be fun and informative for them, and not too much work!

Some suggested activities: Introduction to Morse Code; Introduction to Phonetic alphabet; GOTA crafts from elsewhere on this site; Preparation of cheat sheets; Demonstrations of other amateur modes; Geography lesson on Call signs; Display of QSL cards and explanation of their use; Display on amateur radio emergency services.

After participants, have finished their turns at the radio they should fill out QSL cards for the stations/persons they talked to. The Guiders could bring printed out simple QSL cards for the girls to use and help them fill them out. This is a good chance to explain International Coordinated Time and why it is useful.

What are QSL cards

The best activity for girls waiting their turns at the microphone, or listening in the background is to decorate QSL (confirmation reply) cards, and to write messages on the cards for the girls to whom they have talked. A QSL card should show the call sign of the station you are operating from, the call sign of the station you talked to, the date, and the time in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) also called Greenwich Mean Time, as well as a return address. The Callsign of the operating station could be printed on each card ahead of time by computer.

QSL cards are the cards used to confirm an amateur radio contact (called a QSO), and to say "Thank you" for the contact. Receiving a QSL card after participating in Guides on the Air (GOTA) can be a real thrill for the participants!

You can make your own QSL card, and here is a template:

You can make your own QSL card. There is a template at bottom of page 11

The card can be modified using a program such as Paint*, so that the call sign of the station and address of the sender are included on your card. This will save you writing it out each time. You can print four to a page & have them printed on card stock and cut them up. Or you can have them printed on Post Card Stock. If you cannot make cards ahead of time, bring index cards to create your own QSL cards.

You could even send them out on plain paper.

Each girl who participates should send a message via QSL card to the people to whom she spoke. It can be a written message or a drawing for girls who don't write/print comfortably. At least one card should be sent per station contacted, or each girl can send a card to each person to whom she speaks. Certainly each station you make contact with should have the courtesy of a QSL card.

Postage and envelopes for sending the QSL cards should be provided by the Girl Guide group. If possible, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) so the return cards can be returned direct to the Guider. If you are mailing to another country, you can pay for postage by sending an International Reply Coupon, available at the Post Office. Older girls or Guiders could help to fill out cards and address envelopes.

"A QSL is the final courtesy of a QSO". A QSO is a radio contact in amateur radio talk.

*Paint is probably so old no one has heard of it. But you should be able to modify this card template. Or you can print one, print on it and then copy it. These days people also use electronic QSLs. I don't, so I don't know as much about them as I should. If the ham gets an electronic QSL I think he/she can forward it to the Contact Guider to print out, or print it out to share.



Guides
Canada



GOTA - Guides on the Air

at GOTA stn.:

Confirming QSO with:

at:

band	day	month	year	time

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL GOTA EVENTS

- ✚ after many years doing GOTA I had a good idea that really helped. I asked each girl to make a name tag (first name only). Then when she stepped up to the mike, I was able to introduce her AND I knew how to spell her name! I can't believe it took me all these years to figure it out! Now the local girls cut out the letters in Phonetic alphabet and paste them on their cheat sheet.
- ✚ Know how many girls and leaders you can comfortably accommodate in your shack at one time.
- ✚ Make sure that guests are well supervised at all times. Stress to chaperones that the equipment is expensive, that meddling can be dangerous, and the rest of your house is private.
- ✚ Have chaperones make sure that no one wanders away from the shack unsupervised.
- ✚ Show the girls 'around' your shack and point out your antennas.
- ✚ Briefly explain how Amateur Radio works and what they can expect.
- ✚ Make sure you explain to the girls and leaders about Call Signs. Teach them the call sign of your station. Explain how it identifies your station anywhere in the world.
- ✚ Have a map of the world to show the girls where the other station they talk to or hear is located. If you don't have one, ask the Guiders bring one.
- ✚ Explain the microphone and that the receiver shuts off when PTT is pushed - "You ain't learning nothin' when you're talkin'!"
- ✚ **Encourage** the girls to say "over" at the end of each transmission and then let go of the PTT.
- ✚ Have a sheet with the Phonetic Alphabet handy, (available elsewhere on this site) and have the guests practice spelling their names in phonetics. Here is an alphabet you can use:
- ✚ Encourage the Guider to bring or make on the spot a "cheat sheet" of suggested questions & topics for the girls. Better yet, have them put each question on a file card, so that one card can be held up at a time. With the younger girls, reading the questions may take all their concentration, so you may do better having the questions ready to prompt with, rather than waiting for the girls to struggle with the reading.
- ✚ British Girl Guides are often only allowed to make one, prepared transmission. They write out what they want to say, & have it ready to read when it is their turn. This works in Canada, too & might help combat mike shyness. (We have tried it and having the notes ready meant the girls had ideas ready when they got to the mike, even though they didn't use the speech).
- ✚ Show them your QSL card, and some you have received.
- ✚ Explain the function of QSL cards and encourage them to fill out & send QSL cards to

each station you talk to during GOTA/TDOTA. Encourage them to include a SASE, so that the contacted stations can "QSL direct". Some stations like to send a card to each girl they speak to.



























- ✚ Briefly explain the sort of information you pass in a usual transmission
- ✚ Tell them how and why you became interested in Amateur Radio, and what form your present ham activity takes. Mention some other things people like to do with ham radio, and some ways ham radio can provide public service.
- ✚ If possible, make sure your set-up allows use of earphones (for you) and a speaker (for the girls) simultaneously. This allows the girls to hear all that is going on, even when it is not their turn, but gives you that extra edge in QRM or QRN. (You can expect lots of "local QRM" in your station! or QRG - local noise caused by giggles!)
- ✚ Make sure that you have a good time. Talk to other GOTA stations if possible. If you can't find any, see if you can contact a station who will have an interesting exchange with your girls. Once the girls are talking on a frequency somewhere near the suggested frequencies, other GOTA stations are more likely to find you. High pitched voices and giggles really stand out on the air waves!
- ✚ There are suggested frequencies for GOTA. Call CQ GOTA on or near these frequencies, or listen for girls talking & join in when they finish a QSO. If you get a QSO going with a non-GOTA station, other GOTA stations will find you by the giggles & pauses, and ask to jump in. Sometimes the girls get a big kick out of working a DX station, even though he/she is not a GOTA participant. Remember that these are only suggested frequencies. All are + or - QRM. There are no policemen to maintain these frequencies as "calling frequencies".
- ✚ If 10 m & 15 m are open, they will be less crowded than 20 m.
- ✚ If you know of other GOTA stations who will be participating, try to set up schedules on appropriate bands and frequencies, but don't make any promises you can't keep. Skeds are especially useful on 2M if you know of a GOTA station within range, or within repeater range. 2M FM through a repeater will be the easiest contacts for the girls to copy, & a few miles away is rare DX when you are a kid!
- ✚ An excellent way to assure good, reliable communication is to arrange a sked on a local repeater with another GOTA group, or some co-operative hams. Be sure to ask permission from the Repeater owner, & allow breaks for normal traffic. Explain about Repeater time-outs and try to avoid them!
- ✚ check UK Guide Association TDOTA website for other stations participating and register your station with them. <http://www.guides-on-the-air.co.uk/>
- ✚ At some stations, it may be possible to have HF and VHF running simultaneously; especially if more than one ham is available to supervise.
- ✚ 1 hour to 2-1/2 hours are good lengths for a session.
- ✚ At a Club Station, or if there is room at a home station, Guiders may want to set up

other activities such as crafts and games for girls before or after their turn.

Encourage them to have "filling out & decorating QSL cards" as one of the activities!

- ✚ Phonetics are not only an asset to communication with inexperienced, excited young people, they are also a lot of fun for kids!
- ✚ Four girls with a leader is a good group, but you may find you can manage a larger group. Girls should be encouraged to be in Guiding clothes, and they could be asked to contribute financially if you plan to send out QSL cards. (I hope you will!) Older girls can help with finding addresses and filling out cards. - Some stations produce special QSL cards and certificates for participants.
- ✚ Remember, kids don't know much geography so a large map where you can point out the QTH of contacts would be an asset.
- ✚ Most Guide leaders have very little idea what is involved in amateur radio, or why it would be interesting to them at a VERY busy time. Don't be hurt if your offer is rebuffed. Please try again, with a different leader or the same one when she is not so frazzled. If you operate with only you and your daughter/granddaughter or neighbour in the shack, there is still a lot of fun to be had, and word may spread so next year (or next day) she might bring one or several friends.
- ✚ If you are interested in GOTA but have no Guides in the station, you can help by having a brief QSO with a GOTA station until someone comes along who does have girls. The sound of girlish voices is the best attraction for other GOTA stations. Please leave pauses so GOTA stations can break in.

PHONETIC ALPHABET

A LFA 	B ravo 
C harlie 	D elta 
E cho 	F oxtrot 
G olf 	H otel 
I ndia 	J uliett 
K ilo 	L ima 
M ike 	N ovetenbar 
O scar 	P apa 
Q uebec 	R omeo 
S ierra 	T ango 
U ni form 	V ictor 
W hiskey 	X -ray 
Y ankee 	Z ulu 



PROV. 0201 7054

Suggested Frequencies for

GOTA/TDOTA Suggested parts of the bands to listen:

10 meters 28,488; 28,588

15 meters 21, 288

20 meters 14,133; 14,188; 14,288

40 meters 7033; 7188; 7288

80 meters 3733; 3788; 3888

Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada and the Canadian Ladies Amateur Radio Association (CLARA) appreciate your participation in helping us make this a fun and memorable experience for members of Guides Canada and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).
Enjoy GOTA!

Please remember that all frequencies are suggestions of parts of the band to listen/call on. Calling frequencies are not effective without "policemen" to man them at all times, so calling frequencies are not used during GOTA/TDOTA. No one owns a frequency, so all suggested frequencies must be considered to be + or - QRM.

If you hear two GOTA/TDOTA stations talking, you might want to break in and ask to talk when they have finished. If you hear two GOTA/TDOTA stations talking, listen up & down a bit for a station calling CQ GOTA, or for an open space where you can call CQ GOTA. Calling "CQ Girl Guides or Girl Scouts" is also good. Stations without Guides can help by answering GOTA CQs & chatting until another GOTA station comes along. Those girlish voices really stand out on the bands, but only if they have someone to talk to! Please be ready to relinquish the frequency if another station with Guides comes along. You can also help by directing GOTA stations to frequencies where you have heard GOTA stations. Remember that no one hears you unless you are transmitting and don't be afraid to call as close to the suggested frequencies as you can, or anywhere there is a clear frequency. If your girls are talking on a frequency their voices will attract an audience that might include GOTA stations, hams with daughters who might talk to your girls or at least hams who would be willing to talk to your girls.

* Check to see what bands are open. Ten meters can be a real treat, compared to the crowded conditions on 20 meters. It is also available to some American hams with lower qualifications who are blocked from using 20 meters. Fifteen meters is also likely to be less crowded than 20, if it is open. If you want to work American Girl Scouts, remember to observe the US band plans. If you only want to work Canadians and UK stations, there will be less crowding in the band portions not available to Americans.

2 m can be great fun. Try to set up a sked with another group participating in Guides on the Air. Otherwise, perhaps the hams in your area will visit with the girls on a local 2M repeater and make the event enjoyable.

Don't forget Echo Link, CQ 100 & IRLP. A club station can have several modes working so girls can go back & forth. Lots of TDOTA stations are using Echolink these days. UK Guide

Association TDOTA group maintains a list of participating stations which can be a real help in finding stations with Girls to talk to. The UK Thinking Day on the Air site publishes a list of stations participating and where to look for them. Please consider registering with them. <http://www.guides-on-the-air.co.uk/>

Note the emphasis on 33s and 88s!

33s are greetings from YL (female operator) to YL. 88s (hugs) are frequently given by OMs to YLs.

HOW DO HAMS HELP WITH EMERGENCIES?

Emergencies and Amateur Radio

Since 1912, when radio signals were important in saving lives at the time of the Titanic disaster, radios have been used to assist in emergency situations. Amateur Radio operators are licensed by Industry Canada. Also known as “hams”, they have a proud history of helping in times of disaster.

In natural and man-made disasters, disruption of communications is often one of the problems contributing to the difficulties. For almost a century, amateur radio operators have stepped up to help with communications.

When the Twin Towers were destroyed in 2001, many cell phone towers and antennas for public service communications were destroyed. Ham radio operators stepped up to help wherever possible. When Swissair flight 111 crashed outside Halifax NS in 1998 cell phones and communications between first responders rapidly became overwhelmed. Local amateur radio operators stepped in and spent days (and nights) helping to pass messages between members of the response team. When Arab Spring disrupted communications in Libya in 2011, amateur radio operators risked their lives to get the word out to the rest of the world.

Hams provided invaluable assistance during the Eastern Canada Ice Storm of 1998. Hams were often the only link with the outside world during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and were identified as one of the few bright spots in the response to those disasters. Today, Amateur Radio operators are providing communications support to aid agencies all over the world.

Tornadoes, ice storms, floods – no matter what the disaster, emergency officials all over North America will be better able to communicate thanks to the efforts of Amateur Radio operators. When hurricanes or earthquakes disrupt power and telephone, ham operators step up to pass messages out to the outside world.

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For yachts, there is a ham radio network of stations listening all day, every day, for boats that may be in difficulty. Since there are not many emergencies, the network also passes along news from the boats to shore, and shore to boat. They also pass weather reports to the boats. Boat positions can be posted on the internet on a site called Ship Trak.

All over the world, ham operators train with their local Emergency Measures Organizations so that their communication skills and equipment can contribute to the coordination of the response of the police, fire and ambulance departments when emergencies occur.

Amateur Radio has been described as the only failsafe communications network in the world. Even if the regular infrastructure has been destroyed, hams can set up portable stations and quickly re-establish communications in a disaster zone.

Amateur Radio operators come from all walks of life, from Nobel Prize winning astrophysicists to your next-door neighbour. Today, almost all astronauts are hams, and famous hams have included King Hussein of Jordan, baseball player Joe Rudi, CBS correspondent Walter Cronkite, and musician Joe Walsh of the rock group the Eagles. Whatever their background, they all share a love for the magic of radio.



Great Videos

Helen has provided us with these great videos please take time to enjoy them. When you do your GOTA, see if you can do a video and send it to us.

<http://www.kingscountynews.ca/Video/12970/Guides-on-the-air>

http://www.google.ca/search?q=YOUtube+VA1YL&hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=aie&rlz=1R1GGLL_en_CA397&prmd=ivns&source=univ&tbs=vid:1&tbo=u&sa=X&ei=vKNyTbndMsP48Aa58uimDw&ved=0CCUQqwQ



GOTA Craft Ideas:

How to make Radio Rita:



You will need;

1 medium pompom, 1 very small pompom, 2 eyes, 3 inch piece of insulated wire Ear phones: cut 4 ovals of fun foam

Feet: cut from fun foam

red chenille / pipe cleaner about 2- 3 inches

black pipe cleaner for Microphone (the kind that is fat, thin, fat, thin, is good) about 1 inch hot melt glue & glue gun

To make: Cut feet out as two feet joined together on one piece of foam. Curve 3 inch piece of pipe cleaner into 2 arms, glue between head & feet. Glue large pompom on to feet. Make microphone by cutting a small piece of black pipe cleaner and curving the end into a microphone shaped lump, with a handle. Wrap "hand" around end of microphone. Glue nose & eyes in place on head. Using insulated wire, form a curve to arc over head. Curl each end around in a small circle. Glue foam earphones to curled ends of wire. Glue headphones on to head.

Now you have a warm fuzzy who is holding a microphone & wearing headphones. Obviously she is all ready to talk on the radio! Credit: Guiding in Australia Magazine September 1995

Phonetic Friend



Another simple little critter is called a "Phonetic Friend". Operators use phonetics (special words) to represent the letters of the alphabet (Oscar, Juliet, Charlie, Romeo, Victor etc.). This aids communication – many letters sounds alike on the air – C,D,E,G, etc.

Supplies:

- ✚ 1 -10-inch pipe cleaner (Chenille stick) 1 pompom – about 1 ½ inches for head 2 tiny pompoms for headphones
- ✚ 1 Q-tip or cotton bud for microphone -or fat pipe-cleaner.
- ✚ 2 google eyes or beads for eyes
- ✚ Felt for facial features Craft Glue or glue gun
- ✚ Friend is made using a long pipe cleaner (you may call them chenille sticks) twisted around the end of a pencil.
- ✚ You may need a little glue to keep the centre coils fixed to the end of the pencil. At the top, part is then opened out to make a loose spiral. Add head lower part is straightened out to become a hand, which holds a microphone (half a cotton bud or Q-tip). Head: A pom-pom (approx. 4 cm 1 1/2 inch diameter) is glued towards the top of the spiral with the last coil wrapped across the head to look

like headphones. A bit of jiggling and twisting is required to get the right angle! Very small pom poms are glued either side of the head to make the "headphones" look more realistic.

- Your Phonetic Friend then only needs googly eyes and maybe some felt facial features to be complete. He/she bounces around on the end of the pencil as you write, and looks quite cute! Use him/her when you fill out those QSL cards!

MORSE CODE CRAFT

MORSE CODE

A ● —	J ● — — —	S ● ● ●
B — ● ● ●	K — ● —	T — —
C — ● ● ● ●	L — ● ● ●	U ● ● —
D — ● ●	M — —	V ● ● ● —
E ●	N — ●	W ● — —
F ● ● — ●	O — — —	X — ● ● —
G — — ●	P ● — — ●	Y — ● — —
H ● ● ● ●	Q — — ● —	Z — — ●
I ● ●	R ● — ●	

(Did you know that pre -World War 2, many Guides in Britain learned Morse code for a badge? When the war broke out, many older Guides joined the armed forces and made use of their code skills.)

The idea of this craft is to teach the girls about Morse code. Give them a chart with the dots and dashes, and then have them make a bracelet with their name on it in Morse code beads.

Materials:

- Wire for stringing beads – each girl needs a length long enough to go around her wrist & then twist together. round beads in one colour for dits tube beads for dahs,
- Small round beads, in a second colour or another shape of beads for spaces Diagram of Morse code characters – [see below](#)
- Using the Morse code character chart, have the girls each write the Morse code symbols for the letters in her name on a piece of paper. Remember that the spaces between letters are as important as the letters. Depending on how long the name is, cut a piece of wire. Knot or loop one end to prevent the beads from falling off.

- ✚ Beginning with the first letter of the name, thread beads onto the wire with the beads corresponding to Morse code. For dots, use the round beads of one colour. For dashes, use the long tube beads. To separate one letter from another, use the round beads of a second colour. Once the letters of your name have been completed, knot or loop the wire to once again prevent the beads falling off, and attach to your camp hat or, join the ends together to make a bracelet or necklace. You should also have a way to mark the beginning and the end, since your code will read differently backwards and forwards!
- ✚ Meantime, note that ham operators don't use Morse code by drawing out the characters. Morse code is all about listening. Some ham operators don't like the idea of doing Morse code visually because it can actually make learning the code by ear more difficult. However, I asked a friend who was a radio instructor during World War II and she told me she learned Morse Code using visual aids, and she keeps a Bristol Board Chart of Morse Code characters in her kitchen.

Idea courtesy of: Doreen Rousseau
(Tiger)

Spacing:

- ✚ 1 dash = 3 dots
- ✚ The space between parts of the same letter = 1 dot
- ✚ The space between letters = 3 dots
- ✚ The space between words = 7 dots

International Morse Code

- 1 dash = 3 dots.
- The space between parts of the same letter = 1 dot.
- The space between letters = 3 dots.
- The space between words = 7 dots.

A	• —	V	• • • —
B	— • • •	W	• — —
C	— • — •	X	— • • —
D	— • •	Y	— • — —
E	•	Z	— — • •
F	• • — •	.	• — • — • —
G	— — •	,	— — • • — —
H	• • • •	?	• • — — • •
I	• •	/	— • • — •
J	• — — —	@	• — — • — •
K	— • —	1	• — — —
L	• — • •	2	• • — — —
M	— —	3	• • • — —
N	— •	4	• • • • —
O	— — —	5	• • • • •
P	• — — •	6	— • • • •
Q	— — • —	7	— — • • •
R	• — •	8	— — — • •
S	• • •	9	— — — — •
T	—	0	— — — — —
U	• • —		

GOTA "cheat-sheet" Questions

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you live? How big is the place where you live?
3. How long have you been in Girl Guides?
4. Were you ever a Spark?
5. What is the weather where you are? (if she is far away)
6. What are your hobbies?
7. When did you last go to camp? Where did you go? How long were you there? Did you sleep in tents or in a building?
8. Will you send us a QSL card?
9. What is your unit doing for Thinking Day?
10. Do you have any brothers or sisters?
11. Do you have any pets? What are their names?
12. What badge or challenge are you working on?
13. What sports do you like?
14. What time is it where you are? (for distant stations)
15. What was the farthest away place you talked to today?
16. How many badges do you have?
17. What is the last badge you earned?
18. Do you play a musical instrument? Which one? How long have you played?
19. What sports do you play? Are you on a team? How long have you played?
20. Where are you going on your summer holiday?
21. Have you ever been to visit____? (insert the place where you live).
22. How many girls in your unit?
23. Where does your unit meet? In a church? In a school? Somewhere else?
24. Are you applying for any International trips? any Inter-provincial trips? Do you know anyone who is going on one of those trips?
25. Have you ever had home-stay? Do you think it would be fun?
26. Can you tell us about a good service project your unit has done?
27. What is the station (ham shack) like where you are?
28. How many Guiders in your unit?
29. How many girls in your unit?
30. Are there other activities for you to do during GOTA besides talking on the radio?
31. Have you ever talked on the radio before?
32. Do you know anyone who lives near__? (insert the name of your location)
33. Do you have a Brownie doll?
34. What is the best outing you ever went on?
35. What outing have you been on recently?

36. What is the farthest you ever hiked?
37. How much snow is there where you live?
38. What is the longest you ever stayed at camp?
39. Have you had a sleepover recently?
40. What is the name of the ham operator at your station?
41. Would you like to get your license and be a ham, too?
42. How many stations have you talked to today?
43. How many girls have you talked to on the radio today?
44. 45. Will you send me a QSL card?
46. How many years have you been in Girl Guides?
47. How old are you?

**ABOVE ALL-----HAVE FUN AND
SMILE WHEN YOU TALK -THEY CAN
HEAR SMILES ON THE OTHER END!**

WHERE CAN I GET GOTA CRESTS?

GOTA crests are available from Alberta Guide shop

