

# CCARC News

## Capital City Amateur Radio Club

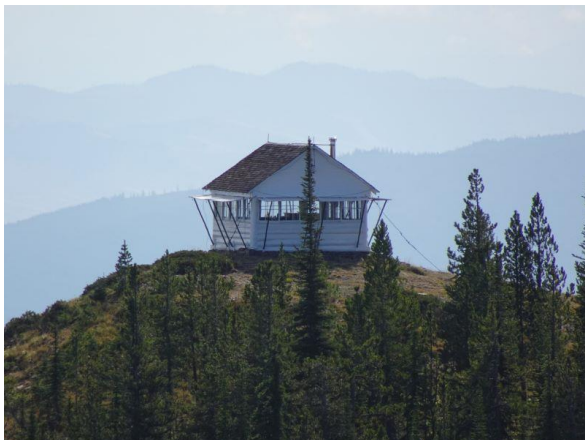
### October 2024 – Helena, MT

## The World Above

CCARC’s incredible SOTA climbers, Rob AE7AP and Barb AE7AQ Kingery got in one more hike before fall set in. Note the gear they took along.

Rob says:

We began by driving to Henry Peak (W7M/LO-090,) which was an easy climb of about 300 vertical feet from the trailhead to the summit. This was the site of an old L-4 type lookout from 1930 that was destroyed in 1965. There was little remaining evidence of the old lookout. The activation went well; I was able to make 23 QSOs, including Dennis KR7Q (Stevensville), and S57S in Slovenia!



Big Hole Lookout

We then drove to the trailhead for the Big Hole Lookout and began our hike in. I was thinking it would be nice to have some “lookout luxury”, and was not certain what to expect regarding

## Coming Events 2024

**October 7 - CCARC monthly meeting**  
7 pm at the Salvation Army, 1330 Hudson St. or on Google Meet,  
<https://meet.google.com/zfs-ctwp-bax>

**October 20 – Just for the Helena of it Run.**  
[Jo Lee Hawkins. joleehawkins@gmail.com](mailto:joleehawkins@gmail.com)

Need volunteers for the race!

**Trivia Net - every Sunday, 7:30 pm on 147.22.** John Monson AJ7MT

amenities at the lookout, so we packed in two days of water, two bottles of wine, bread, cheese, olive oil, butter, bacon, eggs, steaks, potatoes, a cast iron skillet, propane canister, axe, two saws, sleeping bags, ham radio gear, etc. The weight of this gear made the 2.7 miles and 1,400 vertical foot hike a challenge! The lookout is an unusual log lookout that was built in 1930, abandoned in the 1970’s, and recently restored. We had a fine time at the lookout. The first night was rainy, and both nights were windy – but we had a warm stove and great food! The next



Dinner – the iron skillet was worth it!

day, we hiked over to the nearby Big Hole Peak (W7M/LO-040), where I managed to make 24-QSOs. After the activation, we hiked down 700 vertical feet to a spring that was barely flowing and were able to filter some extra water after making some minor improvements to the collection point. We spent the rest of the day relaxing, reading, playing cards, splitting wood,

and finally enjoying some more fine dining with a beautiful sunset!



Patrick's Knob activation

On Thursday, we packed out and drove up to Patrick's Knob (W7M/LO-046) for an activation on the drive home. This lookout is an R-6 type lookout that was built in 1976 (replacing the previous lookout). I was able to make 3 much-appreciated 2-meter QSOs with KF7NBR mobile in Ravalli, KI7APZ in Bigfork, and K7MTD in Missoula. The HF activation was rough – I was only able to make 5 QSOs (3 on 40 SSB and 2 on 20 CW). I am not sure if this was due to poor ionospheric conditions, a radio/antenna malfunction, or RF from the nearby communication facilities. The noise floor was high on 40 meters, so I turned on the attenuator – which seemed to help. The radio would receive clearly (and quietly) for about 1 or 2 seconds after I ceased transmitting, and then the noise level instantly rose to a high level that obscured the other station's signal. For instance, I had a hard time copying W6TDX's call because the "TDX" part of his return was repeatedly obscured by the transition from quiet to noisy. Perhaps it was some combination of local RF and a non-optimal AGC setting??? 20 meters, conversely, had very little noise. The background noise level was only about S0-S1, even with the pre-amp on. I had the

audio gain maxed out and still could barely hear any background noise. When WB6POT called me, his signal nearly knocked me off the mountain! I had to turn the audio gain down substantially and ask for a repeat due to the earbud distortion on his first call.



Patrick's Knob RF sources

In summary, we had a great time, and it was super enjoyable getting out during some of this fall weather. The undergrowth is beginning to turn, and there were one or two larches that were also showing signs of fall. I'll bet this area is eye-poppingly beautiful in two or three weeks when the larches really get going!

--73, Rob AE7AP

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## New Webmaster

By Bob Morrow N7PTM

Starting mid-September 2024, I took over as webmaster of the club's web site. Working with Al Simons WA1TYB and Lynn Wagner K7WGR, we did some changes on that first Zoom meeting, and I've done some myself since then. Mostly, the really outdated and/or obviously wrong information was updated or removed. The appearance hasn't changed, but some content has.

The web site's address is [n7rb.org](http://n7rb.org). (CCARC.org is not currently working.) If you go there, you may want to press F5 or Refresh in your browser, to force it to get the latest version of that page you're on.

I've been a club member since about 2005 and currently hold a General class license.

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## Recovering CCARC.ORG

By Al Simons WA1TYB

For quite a while, we have been unable to use [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) for our web site. However, we still use [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) as our non-profit workspace (storage area) at Google. Because we can't have a website at [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org), we built our new site at [n7rb.org](http://n7rb.org). However, many search engines still show [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org), and people have trouble finding us. Some have been quite vocal about getting our [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) presence back.

We think that we have found a way to do that. We can free the [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) domain from Google, while maintaining our non-profit workspace. To do that, we need to obtain another domain name for the workspace. I suggest we get the domain [ccarc-info.org](http://ccarc-info.org) (since storing various club information is what we use the workspace for). Once we change the workspace name, we can once again use [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) for our website. (Sorry that was so long!)

Once we're done, both [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) and [n7rb.org](http://n7rb.org) will bring up our website. We will need to decide whether the website calls itself [ccarc.org](http://ccarc.org) or [n7rb.org](http://n7rb.org), but that's a minor point!

At the October meeting, I will be making a motion to buy the [ccarc-info.org](http://ccarc-info.org) domain name to start this process.

## Question from New Ham

By Brandon Blank KK7SBS

Hello, I'm looking to get my first radio. I see DMR is mostly used locally. Is there much activity with DMR on the repeaters? The Yaesu radios do System Fusion, Icom does D-star, and Alinco radios use DMR. I want to get a radio that does UHF/VHF for local use and emergency contacts. I haven't worked on a radio yet and want to get the right radio for our area.

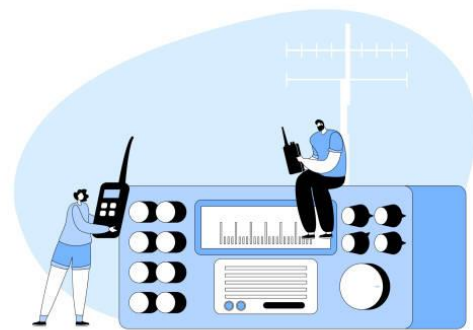
Currently I'm looking at:

- Yaesu FTM500DR
- Alinco DR500T
- Icom 5100A

If DMR isn't used much, then I would lean toward the Yaesu. If it is, then the Alinco would be the best fit.

Let me know your thoughts.

--Brandon Blank KK7SBS  
[brandonblankdc@gmail.com](mailto:brandonblankdc@gmail.com)



iStock images

## Hams Contribute to Community

The Zinns, Ray K7ZIN and DeLona K7YMZ, were honored September 24 for their financial support of the new Pete's Place Child Care center in Helena. The new childcare facility is part of St. Peter's Hospital and provides easily accessible care for the children of employees. Governor Greg Gianforte made the presentation.



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## Camp Chef Recognized

By Stacy Webb KK7CJV

During a POTA camping trip at Duck Creek Campground, we presented to Clayton (AI6XL), a custom designed apron. He has been smoking, cooking, and preparing delicious meals during the POTA camping trips all summer long for all to enjoy. From staying up half the night tending to a smoking pork butt that was used in breakfast burritos and chili to an Italian meal while camping, Clayton has shown he has killer culinary skills! As a THANK YOU for all the delectable and mouth-watering meals we all have enjoyed on the POTA camping trips we made him an apron. Thanks to John (AJ7MT) for the embroidery work and Clayton for the full belly while camping.



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## Picnic!

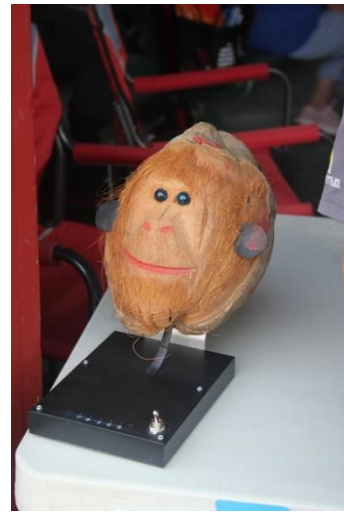
Picnic 2024 is in the record books, but more photos have arrived, most of them taken by Joleigh Mandera.



Back: Dave Mitton W7MIT chats with Chris Thompson KD7URE; at the window Evonne Mitton KD7BIF and Eric Webb KE7NLU; at table Marla Unruh KM7LIB, Amy Gondeiro KK7QAH, and Chuck Gondeiro.



Jo Lee Hawkins explains the *Just for the Helena of It Race*. At table Lynn Wagner K7WGR, Don Heide W7MRI, Annie Thola.



Coco

**About Coco, Stacy Webb KK7CJV, says:**

At the conclusion of the 2024 CCARC BBQ, we pulled one last ticket to find a new home for Coco, the Shack Monkey. Congratulations to Bob (N9IB) and Annie for holding the winning ticket! (below) Coco has settled into his new home and has brought a noticeable change to Sunday night's Trivia games. Signal reports from the household of N9IB have been crystal clear. Coco's addition to the N9IB team has been a winning combination on Trivia night! ---Stacy KK7CJV



President Tom Mander KE7VUX pulls tickets for door prizes.



Matt Carlson AA7VG, one of 5 winners of exciting door prizes.



# The Great *SHAKEOUT* 2024!

By Al Simons WA1TYB

October 17, 2024 is the annual worldwide Shakeout exercise, a time to prepare for earthquakes. We are in the most geologically active area of Montana; they can happen here!

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, we will be running a Shakeout net on the Belmont repeater, 147.22+ 100Hz from 10:00 to 10:30. **Please check into the net if you are able!**

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) also uses Shakeout to stress test some of their systems. They request hams everywhere (yes, worldwide) to send in “Did You Feel It” forms via Winlink. In the event of an actual earthquake, they can use the DYFI input to help determine the strength and surface effect of an earthquake. Last year, well over 2000 DYFI reports were submitted on Shakeout day.

If you use Winlink, please take a moment to submit a DYFI form to USGS. If you don’t use Winlink yet, this is a great opportunity to learn. If you would like any help getting going, please contact me.

Thanks!

## Special Event Station N7F

By Al Simons WA1TYB

National Fire Prevention Week is October 6 through October 12. From 0001 October 6 through 2359 October 12, **all Montana stations are welcome to operate N7F**—all bands, all modes. **There is no sign-up**; find a clear frequency and call CQ! The theme is fire alarms. There is a “tips” sheet, and if operating SSB, you are encouraged to occasionally pass along a tip. I’ll ask Bob to put the sheet up on our website. Send all logs in ADIF format to Lee Barret, K7NM.

## Capital City Amateur Radio Club Helena, Montana



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Club website: [n7rb.org](http://n7rb.org)

[CCARC Shack Tour](http://CCARC Shack Tour) – website

with member profiles

**JOIN US!**

Membership \$25 per year. Contact Al  
Simons for application info.

[al@simonshome.org](mailto:al@simonshome.org)