Did you see that 60 foot high antenna towering over the clubhouse recently? The KHYC Radio Fleet teamed up with Sea Scout Ship 618 to set up a special event ham radio station in support of the Scout's Jamboree On The Air. Both Scouts and KHYC members were offered the opportunity to learn more about radio communications, and to even talk on the air to a distant station. Dozens of scouts showed up at the club that weekend, and many of them came by our station to learn and talk on the radio. This was our first chance to use King Harbor Yacht Club’s official new radio call sign: K6HYC.

The Jamboree-on-the-Air, or JOTA, is an annual Scouting event that uses amateur radio to link Scouts around the world, around the nation, and in your own community. Held on the third full weekend of October each year, this worldwide jamboree requires no travel, other than to a nearby radio amateur’s ham shack or radio club.

For this event we were mainly trying to contact other JOTA groups. We made a total of 60 contacts, including 22 states and 5 countries. (Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico and Spain). To demonstrate the use of low power, we turned down the power to 5 watts for many contacts. The farthest we talked with 5 watts was Rhode Island. Members used computer technology send "Text Messages" to other hams using a very efficient protocol called PSK 31 and only about 2 watts of power. We "texted" with 10 stations, the most distant being Whitefish Montana.

Radio Fleet members also made many "Maritime Mobile" contacts across the country from a small antenna on the back of a Sea Scouts sailboat cruising the harbor. That giant antenna was set up in about 3 hours, and was taken down in about 2 hours by fleet members. It all fits on a trailer the size of a boat trailer. We thank the Hughes Amateur Radio Club for the use of their antenna tower, as well as all of the Radio Fleet members who helped make this event a success.

For those of you who missed the event, we plan to do it again next year. Or if you would like to get more involved, please stop by our Radio Fleet meetings downstairs on the first Monday of the month. In February we plan to have a Ham Radio License Training Class at the club, that will be available to all members.