

## OPERATORS NEEDED FOR W1AW/3 PENNSYLVANIA

Greetings to all Pennsylvania amateur radio operators. As you are probably aware, the America Radio Relay League, in conjunction with its Centennial QSO party celebrating 100 years of existence as an organization of, by and for U.S. amateur radio operators, has authorized each state and territory to operate using the famous callsign W1AW. Each state has been given two weeks of operation. Pennsylvania's first week of W1AW/3 operation was earlier this year. The following Q&A will tell you more about this opportunity and how you might participate.

**What are the actual starting and ending times for this operation?** Operations begin at **7:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> EST** and run continuously until the following **Tuesday, December 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:59 p.m. EST.**

**I haven't had a chance to listen much – is this operation similar to a special event operation?** Actually, as these operations have developed over the course of this year, it is more like a **contest** than a special event. The W1AW/s find a frequency, call CQ, get posted on the DX clusters and then the huge pileups begin. If you have ever participated in a DX contest or tried to work a DXpedition in a rare country – that is more like the W1AW/x experience as it has evolved. The pileups have been huge and amazing. Pulling callsigns out quickly has become difficult. Exchanges are typically short – signal report, state and on to the next one.

**If I participate, can I operate from my home QTH or some other station?** Yes, provided that your home QTH (or the location of your operation if not your home QTH) is within Pennsylvania; also, if you are operating from your home QTH **you must be an ARRL member (per ARRL). If you are not an ARRL member, you can operate from the QTH of someone else, as long as the control operator is an ARRL member.** Those are the only mandatory rules, but there are some guidelines that are “strongly advised” as to station hardware.

**OK, what are those station hardware guidelines?** In making contacts in a pileup environment, you need a **big signal** so that callers can hear you through the uproar and determine who you are responding to – otherwise they just keep calling and calling on top of each other, making it difficult for you to pull out anyone's callsign. So, you need power and a good antenna. Obviously, a stellar antenna might not require high-power on some bands, and high-power might partially compensate for a compromise antenna...but both are best! Also, your radio should have a modern selective receiver with appropriate filtering to allow you to isolate stations calling, and it should be capable of operating “split” ie you transmit on one frequency and listen “up”, which moves the pack off your transmit frequency so that the callers can hear your responses.

**What are the guidelines for logging – paper or computer?** Computer logging, and here's why: thousands of stations will be trying to work W1AW/3 PA for various awards, each relying on their QSO's to find “matches” in Logbook of the World during Pennsylvania's second and final week of operation. It is very important that participants be comfortable with both computer logging of QSOs (in UTC time) and exporting the finished operation into an .adi file, which needs to be sent promptly to the W3CDG via email file attachment for forwarding to ARRL. Paper logs would have to be manually entered into a logging program after the fact, which introduces high risk of mistakes and inaccuracies (as well as a lot of trouble for someone), so they just won't work for this particular activity. Many people use N1MM – available through a free download – WinTest and many others will work. The exchange and logging information is very simple – you will only need to log: **date, time in UTC, band, mode and callsign of the other station**

**What operating skills and/or experience should I have to do this activity?** The ideal background would be that of a contester or DXer familiar with operating under high band-loading conditions in a competitive environment. That said, even if you do not have this background or skillset, you can try operations if you will commit yourself to listening to the upcoming W1AW/x operations around the country over the period of time between now and December 23<sup>rd</sup> – it is helpful to imagine yourself as the W1AW operator and practice picking up callsigns and mastering the response and pileup management in the mode of your choice. If you still are not comfortable with trying an operation on your own, you can get in with a club station, where there will be experienced operators around to help you try (note, however, that space will be limited with priority given to the club members typically – get on the list as early as possible).

**What do you mean by “high band-loading conditions”?** Give a listen to W1AW/x operation any week on Tuesday and Wednesday nights and you will get the idea. Plus, there are a couple of other factors that make our second week a challenge – 1) there will be TONS of guys at home on vacation during the holidays and 2) there will be contests going on which will cause huge QRM. Also, and this is one we will really have to be careful with – our week may have emergency and net operations going on and we certainly want to give wide clearance to any emergency nets.

**How can I tell if I am ready to do this, since my contest or DX experience is limited?** As mentioned before, listen, listen, listen and observe W1AW operations over the coming weeks – you should have some idea whether you can handle it from studying how it all plays out. Take a look at your station with a critical and realistic eye – will you be strong enough to rule the pileups? Bottom line, we want you to succeed and have fun, so if you don’t think you are comfortable on your own you need to partner with someone who is. We want to give the world as many Pennsylvania contacts as possible and really need to be efficient and effective with our operations – using this callsign brings with it a responsibility to the ARRL, its members, and our fellow amateurs and reflects on our great state, our clubs and our fellow PA operators.

**How am I supposed to operate?** To each of the states, ARRL says “Operate as much as you want and make as many QSOs as you can while still having fun”. Our goal in the second Pennsylvania operation is to cover as many modes, bands and open-band times as possible with as many stations as possible. There is an on-line operating schedule accessible through the W3LIF website that is set up in increments. In order to give as many qualified operators an opportunity to work during optimum band times, we request that each operator limit his/her commitment to 4 hours (with a maximum of 2 sequential time slots for the same band/mode) until everyone has had an opportunity to sign up. There may be more slots for you available closer to the start day.

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OK, I want to get some times – how do I sign up?

Send an email to [W3CDG@w3lif.org](mailto:W3CDG@w3lif.org) with the following information:

Name, Callsign, License Class, description of your station and power capability, description of your HF operating background, your preferred times of operation, whether you want to operate from your home QTH or another station (and the callsign of the other station, if known) and your telephone contact information including a cell phone where you can best be reached.

Someone from MCRAC will give you a call or send you and email to discuss your participation and to explain how to use the sign-up web site.

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Stay Tuned! 73 from Tim K3LR Coordinator W1AW/3 PA second week. [K3LR@K3LR.com](mailto:K3LR@K3LR.com) Let’s go for it!