



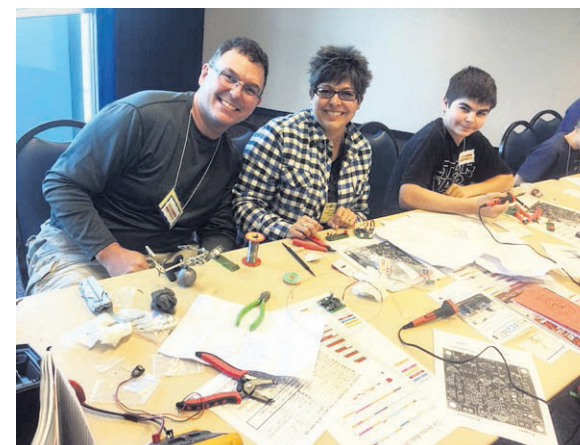
DANNY MILLER PHOTO

John Foley from Hood River takes a look at a late 1930s Morse Code Keyer on sale at the SEA-PAC Ham Radio Convention in 2016.



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Al Nightingale, center, and Earl Richardet, left, both from Vancouver, Canada, take a look at a power meter used to measure Ham radios at a previous SEA-PAC Ham Radio Convention at the Seaside Convention Center in Seaside.



COURTESY SEA-PAC

SEA-PAC, the Pacific Northwest's largest HAM radio convention, is an event for all ages and skill levels.

al and amateur extra. More than half of current operators hold the technician level, according to Bunton. "The higher your license, the more privileges you hold," he said.

The test is relatively easy: "I've seen 8-year-olds pass it," Bunton said.

From there, each operator is issued a unique, internationally recognized call sign and they are able to roam the air waves.

When the convention hits Seaside, a lot of the focus will be on education — something Bunton feels is necessary regardless of your skill level.

"I'm a strong proponent of continuing education," he said, pointing to a Friday workshop as an example: emergency communications and preparedness.

"Our premise there is taking care of yourself first so you are capable of helping your community," Bunton said.

There are a few ham radio operator clubs locally, including Sunset Empire Amateur Radio Club in Astoria. Bunton said visiting those are another great way to start.

The convention continues to grow as more people gain interest in the field. Bunton said this year's attendance should be around 2,500 from around the Pacific Northwest: Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Northern California.

Novices are encouraged to attend, and Bunton hopes a new generation will become involved.

"It's magic, there's no way around it," he said.

To view details on the convention, visit seapac.org. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a ham radio operator, visit the National Association for Amateur Radio at aarl.org. 



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Hundreds of Ham radio enthusiasts check out booths at the SEA-PAC Ham Radio Convention flea market in 2016.