



JOTA / JOTI

NEWS FLASH

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It starts with Scouts.

To: **National JOTA/JOTI Team**
Council JOTA/JOTI Representatives
JOTA/JOTI Enthusiasts throughout Scouts Canada

From: *Andy Dunn*, **National JOTA/JOTI Co-ordinator**

Here we go again!

Believe it or not, folks, it's only about three months to the next JOTA-JOTI Event.

The **64th annual Jamboree on the Air** (and the **25th Jamboree on the Internet**) will take place **October 15th - 17th 2021**. Yes, that's right... *JOTI turns 25 this year!*

We've come through 18 months of great uncertainty and massive change, and we've proven how resilient and adaptable Scouts are. I wish I could say the uncertainty was over, but of course it's not, and we still have to plan for an uncertain future.

As I write this, all councils across Canada are allowed at least limited in-person outdoor Scouting, and in some places, indoor meetings are now permitted as well (and the list of places is growing).

Nevertheless, if the last 18 months have taught us anything, it's that we need to stay flexible and be prepared to adapt as circumstances change.

So the time to start planning is now.

I realize many groups are still very much in limbo... not knowing how many people they'll have (or even if their group will have *any* youth or Scouters... yes, sadly that's a very real problem in many parts of the country) and many groups have not really started their fall planning yet as local circumstances continue to evolve and meetings are just resuming.

But since JOTA-JOTI is one of those events that happen all around us, and we just have to make plans to join in, I think it's deserving of a spot on everyone's calendar. No matter what restrictions are in effect come October, at a minimum there are ways that every Scouting family can participate, from their home if need be (we've done it before, twice now) and it can be that great Fall event that everybody looks forward to.

It also might be the only "firm" date on your Fall calendar that you can use to promote a return-to-Scouting and also to build some buzz and excitement as you work to encourage those who didn't renew because they were not interested in endless virtual online meetings to join back up and look forward to some good outdoor adventures again!

Things to Consider - Pandemic JOTA-JOTI plans

Here are a number of points to consider in planning for your Fall 2021 JOTA-JOTI activities, since no matter what happens, this year will likely be – *again* – unlike any other we have planned:

- are there activities we can do either outdoors or indoors if the need arises?
- even if indoors is permitted, are there some people who will be more comfortable attending an outdoor function?
- is there a potential local or area event we can visit (if conditions, numbers and local health restrictions allow)?
- is there a local resource, like an Amateur Radio club or a library, who can help us with equipment (radio, computers, Internet, etc.)?
- if we wind up doing JOTI at home because of health restrictions, what should we do as advance preparation for our families so they have a successful and safe at-home activity
- do we have volunteers available who are comfortable doing an in-person activity, whether it is an indoor one or an outdoor one (including technical resources)?
- will our local meeting place (school, community center) be open and allow us to run an event, and if not, is there somewhere else (service club, library, local business) that can help give our event a home, especially if we need Internet access?
- will we have access to materials we have stored at our group's storage location or usual meeting place, and if not, what can we get as substitutes?
- are there any special approvals or permissions we will need to put on an event this Fall, or things to consider if we have to change our event at the last minute?
- if we can successfully put on an event, can we use this to gain some local publicity to help tell our community Scouting is back, vibrant and a great thing to join?

Jamboree On the Air this year

JOTA does require, to an extent, some physical presence in the form of access to radio equipment and operators. The way we've done it in the past may not work this year.

There are two main ways to approach this:

(1) run an activity (which depending on health restrictions in place in October might have to be outdoors) with a physical radio station set up, and control the flow of participants to ensure the appropriate Scouts Canada rules for maximum youth, maximum people and distancing are followed (very much as usual but with time and flow controls and sanitizing in place)

or

(2) run an activity with a physical radio station but no Scouting members visiting, and then provide virtual access to that using whatever collaborative tools you have been using for your virtual meetings

Take some time now to think about how that might work, and talk to your Amateur Radio resource people to see how they think it could work technically.

Jamboree On the Internet this year

JOTI can be run very successfully with participants accessing the Internet solely from home (this is how last year's spring **Special Edition of JOTI** worked – *and it worked well!*) and this is likely easier to set up than dealing with shared resources (computers that might need to be sanitized between users) in addition to maintaining distancing and maximum numbers.

Depending on local health restrictions, it may also be very possible to do it in person. One thing to keep in mind is that JOTI can be particularly challenging to do in an outdoor setting in inclement weather (water and electricity not mixing so well) so this is one area where you may plan an event and have to change at virtually the last minute.

So consider a fallback plan of doing JOTI from individual's homes with parental supervision and support.

Crests?

Yes, there will be a crest. *We can't celebrate JOTI's 25th birthday without a crest!*

We're still working out the logistics of whether it will be pre-ordered, like last year's crest was, or whether some will be available in advance of JOTA-JOTI weekend to allow you to hand them out to your participants. Stay tuned for details... it's just another part of the "everybody is restarting after months or more of fully virtual Scouting" and we'll get there!

Plan before you Do; and always Be Prepared

Each group's local rules, requirements and preferences may vary, based on what you have decided to do in person, what you are doing virtually, and what you are doing differently. Keep in mind also that rules vary from province to province and council to council, and be prepared to adapt if (or perhaps when) the rules governing Scouting in your area change. A Scout is **wise in the use of all resources!**

Ensure JOTA and JOTI are in your return-to-Scouting plans ... **and JOIN THE JAMBOREE!**

Yours in Scouting,



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