Participated in SKYWARN recognition day

I am trying to get my web site and blog to work. In the meantime I am writing articles about my experience.

I received my Technician Amateur License, often called a “Ticket” by Ham radio operators, in October. I took the test Flagstaff in mid-October and less than a week later I was on the air with my Baofeng UV-82.

I actually obtained a call sign for GMRS first—WQWI485. It cost me $90. The Ham radio license cost me $15. Of course you have to take a test for this license and Morse code (called CW by Ham’s) is no longer required. I will get into this later, but suffice it is to say that there is an economic lesson here. $15 (it could be up to about $25 in your area) versus $90. I’ll let you do the math.

I was in the Village of Oak Creek when I received word of my license and call sign KG7YDJ. I still stumble over it when I say it even though it is easy to remember. I received my first QSO (meaning contact) with KGYOH in Munds Park. A few days later I received a QSL card. QSL means acknowledge contact and Ham operators send cards to each other for events and so forth. I’m still working on mine.

I have worked several repeaters around Arizona. I have participated in several nets. I have heard about contesting and upcoming events such as the National Parks on the Air sponsored by the Amateur Radio Relay League. You can participate and get special awards, cards and certificates.

There was a good example today. I was unaware of the SKYWARN Recognition day. I happened to be monitoring the local repeater and heard WX7FGZ calling to make as many QSOs as possible. The call sight WX7FGZ is a special call sign assigned by the FCC just for this special event. The NOAA, who runs the SKYWARN system, out of Bellemont, Arizona was part of the event.

I responded and was informed I earned a certificate. The problem is that I cannot find the link to print it. But I'm still looking.

It is worth noting that the SKYWARN organization is an amateur radio organization which reports unusual weather phenomena in the area. NOAA even provides free training for those amateurs who just happen to be weather buffs. It is one of the many amateur organizations that provide community service.

Of course you won't be asked to run into the middle of a tornado or hold a metal rod in a lightning storm. This service, however, can save lives. In a rural area, for example, you might be the first one to spot a tornado. Imagine calling it in and saving lives. In fact a few years ago Bellemont was the center of just such an event. If I had my ham license then, I could have tuned in to find out exactly what was going on.

There are many more service organization that you can participate in. You can find out more, and how to get your license, at the American Radio Relay League.