



The Listening Post



Dedicated to Community Service and All Central Florida Hams

June 2020

President's Message

Greetings – 2020 has brought much change in OARC.
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OARC MEETING

June 3, 7:00pm
YouTube Live!

Beardall Senior Center - **CLOSED**
800 Delaney Ave, Orlando, FL 32801
ARRL Testing: **CANCELED**
For information & Updates
See www.oarc.org

OARC Board of Directors

President: John Knott, N4JTK
Vice President: Michael Cauley, W4MCA
Treasurer: Ana Groe, KM4JVE
Secretary: Bob Nocero, W4KBW
Directors:
Bob Cumming, W2BZY
Frank Gergits, KC9GNQ
Tony Darnell, KK4VRP
Dean Groe, KD4TWW
Frank Tagliani, KD4EZW
James Deuel, N0XIA

The Listening Post is the OARC newsletter for OARC members. The LP will be distributed electronically via E-mail and the OARC web site (www.oarc.org).

Editor: Ed Thralls NE4H.

Comments, suggestions and articles are welcome. Send to editors@oarc.org.

Contributing to this edition: John Knott N4JTK, Michael Cauley W4MCA

OARC REPEATERS

Call	Freq	Shift	PL
KB4UT	146.760*	-600	103.5
N4UMB	147.015	-600	103.5

* Fusion Repeater

D-Star

K1XC C	146.820	-600	
K1XC B	443.275	+5MHz	
K1XC A	1275.00	-12 MHz	Voice
K1XC A	1255.00	-12MHz	Digital
W4PLB C	145.160	+600	
W4PLB B	442.300	+5MHz	

All D-star repeaters are connected

From the President's Desk *(Continued from Previous Page)*

The first ever OARC virtual meeting; the first ever OARC virtual election; canceled monthly meetings and test sessions and cancelation of Field Day as a group event.

I do hope that each of you continues to do well. Stay home as much as you can. Please do not let your guard down. We are not out of the woods yet.

Our June 3rd meeting will be held virtually. The meeting will begin at 7pm. You will be able to view and interact by tuning into the Orlando Amateur Radio Club You Tube Channel. Here is a link to the OARC YouTube Channel.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz05_otvnMgfmL2v2Dx8Pkw

Our program this month will be ARRL Southeastern Vice Director James Schilling KG4JSZ. James is going to give us an update on what is happening in the Southeastern Division, ARRL HQ, plus he will provide what info he can on the search for an ARRL CEO and ARRL EM. You will be able to ask questions for James by posting them in the chat forum on the OARC You Tube channel. Also invited is ARRL Southeastern Division Director Mickey Baker, N4MB. Mickey will be with family for a family function and not sure if he can make it.

Please remember that the position of Division Director and Vice Director are unpaid positions. If Mickey cannot make it, we wish him all the best and hope he has a wonderful time with family. Make sure you tune in Wednesday night.

John Knott N4JTK
President
Orlando Amateur Radio Club
www.oarc.org
73

John Knott

N4JTK

OARC Elections 2020

(by John Knott, N4JTK)

First, I want to say thank you to Bob Pollock, KF4IMF for agreeing back at the March OARC meeting to chair the Nominating Committee for this year's election. Bob once again this year did an outstanding job on creating a slate of nominees.

Bob compiled the list of nominees that consisted of:

President: John Knott N4JTK
Vice President: Michael Cauley W4MCA
Secretary: Bob Nocero W4KBW
Treasurer: Ana Groe KM4JVE

Directors: Bob Cumming W2BZY
James Deuel N0XIA
Tony Darnell KK4VRP
Frank Gergits KC9GNQ
Dean Groe KD4TWJ
Frank Tagliani KD4EZW
Ed Thralls NE4H
Andy Anderson KJ4VQN

No one ran against the officers. For the first time in a couple of years we had someone running against the Director incumbents and will have an election.

About a week after the March meeting, COVID-19 shut down everything in Orlando. The Board voted to postpone the elections until June, thinking that we would be able to have regular meetings again. In mid-April, Michael and I were asked to attend the Disney DEARS Virtual Meeting about an unrelated subject. During that meeting, DEARS held their election using a virtual ballot method. DEARS was generous to provide us with the information on the virtual ballot system that they used. We took the information to the OARC Board Meeting and after some testing, it was decided to use this system for our virtual election.

It was arranged to have the first OARC virtual meeting and election on May 13. The ballots were e-mailed to everyone that was a member of good standing and a member for at least 90 days, per our by-laws. Out of 171 members that the ballot was emailed to, only 41 members voted. It's really sad that only 41 members voted.

The results of the elections were announced and emailed to the membership on May 20th:

Choice	Votes	Fraction of 41 cast vote forms	Fraction of 171 voters
Bob Cumming W2BZY	38	92.68%	22.22%
James Deuel N0XIA	38	92.68%	22.22%
Dean Groe KD4TWJ	35	85.37%	20.47%
Tony Darnell KK4VRP	37	90.24%	21.64%
Frank Gergits KC9GNQ	36	87.8%	21.05%
Frank Tagliani KD4EZW	31	75.61%	18.13%
Ed Thralls NE4H	21	51.22%	12.28%
Andy Anderson KJ4VQN	10	24.39%	5.85%

Congratulations to Bob, James, Dean, Tony, Frank, and Frank on their re-election to the Board of Directors and a huge thank you to Ed and Andy for taking the initiative and running for a director position.

OARC Field Day 2020 as a Club Event

--- Canceled ---

(by John Knott, N4JTK)

At the start of this year, we learned the Central Florida Fairgrounds would be tearing down the lakeside pavilion right after the Fair was over in late February. It was unlikely that the new pavilion would be completed in June for Field Day.

Members of the Lake Mary Amateur Radio Society (LMARS) and Orlando Amateur Radio Club (OARC) started talking about how OARC could assist LMARS with their Field Day. It was agreed that OARC would see if we could provide operators to assist with filling time slots that need covered.

LMARS received word that the park that they hold Field Day would not be available to them. LMARS was not able to find a suitable park to hold Field Day, plus CDC restrictions still don't allow groups larger than 10 to be together.

Both LMARS and OARC has decided to cancel Field Day as a group but promoting its members to participate from home. Posted in this edition is additional information on Field Day and some recent temporary changes the ARRL has made to the rules for this year.

Temporary Rule Waivers for

ARRL Field Day 2020

(ARRL: 5/28/2020)

With one month to go before 2020 [ARRL Field Day](#), June 27-28, the ARRL Programs and Services Committee (PSC) has adopted two temporary rule waivers for the event:

1) For Field Day 2020 only, Class D stations may work all other Field Day stations, including other Class D stations, for points.

[Field Day rule 4.6](#) defines Class D stations as "Home stations," including stations

operating from permanent or licensed station locations using commercial power. Class D stations ordinarily may only count contacts made with Class A, B, C, E, and F Field Day stations, but the temporary rule waiver for 2020 allows Class D stations to count contacts with other Class D stations for QSO credit.

2) In addition, for 2020 only, an aggregate club score will be published, which will be the sum of all individual entries indicating a specific club (similar to the aggregate score totals used in ARRL affiliated club competitions).

Ordinarily, club names are only published in the results for Class A and Class F entries, but the temporary rule waiver for 2020 allows participants from [any Class](#) to optionally include a single club name with their submitted results following Field Day.

For example, if Podunk Hollow Radio Club members Becky, W1BXY, and Hiram, W1AW, both participate in 2020 Field Day — Hiram from his Class D home station, and Becky from her Class C mobile station — both can include the radio club's name when reporting their individual results. The published results listing will include individual scores for Hiram and Becky, plus a combined score for all entries identified as Podunk Hollow Radio Club.

The temporary rule waivers were adopted by the PSC on May 27, 2020.

ARRL Field Day is one of the biggest events on the amateur radio calendar, with over 36,000 participants in 2019, including entries from 3,113 radio clubs and emergency operations centers. In most years, Field Day is also the largest annual demonstration of ham radio, because many radio clubs organize their participation in public places such as parks and schools.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many radio clubs have made decisions to cancel their group participation in ARRL Field Day this year due to public health recommendations and/or requirements, or to significantly modify their participation for safe social distancing practices. The temporary rule waivers allow greater flexibility in recognizing the value of individual and club participation regardless of entry class.

ARRL is contacting logging program developers about the temporary rule waivers so developers can release updated versions of their software prior to Field Day weekend. Participants are reminded that the preferred method of submitting entries after Field Day is via the [web applet](#). The ARRL Field Day rules include instructions for [submitting entries](#) after the event. Entries must be submitted or postmarked by Tuesday, July 28, 2020.

The ARRL Field Day [web page](#) includes a series of articles with ideas and advice for adapting participation this year.

ARRL Suggests Taking a Creative Approach to Field Day 2020

(The ARRL Letter for April 23, 2020)

This year, ARRL [Field Day](#) promises to be a unique iteration of this annual event, with many individuals and groups coming up with new and interesting ways to adjust their approach. As an event, Field Day is structured to be versatile and can be adapted for any situation.

Many groups have asked how they can adjust their Field Day planning to address social-distancing guidelines that may be in effect in many areas of the country, as gathering at their traditional Field Day site may not be feasible or safe. Instead of participating in a group event this year, consider operating as a Class B, C, D, or E station, utilizing your own call sign.

ARRL will include club names for all participating stations in the published results, so the efforts of your club's members can be acknowledged. While we will not publish an aggregate club score, seeing the name of your club associated with various individual member's results is certainly a way to highlight your club's activity.

Myriad opportunities are possible in this year's Field Day setting. A few options are as follows:

- Consider having an intra-club competition among members, seeing who can make the most contacts during the event. You can award prizes or distribute certificates at a club meeting. This can be a fun way to bolster the activities of individual club members, even though they cannot all gather together at the same location this year.
- Set up a Field Day Challenge with rival clubs in neighboring communities. See how many members of each club get on the air from their own stations and participate in the event. In addition to "bragging rights," perhaps certificates to the top-scoring individual entries in each category can be presented as part of this inter-club camaraderie.

One club is planning to conduct its Field Day as a 4A club group, with participants spaced to comply with social distancing guidelines within the required 1,000-foot-diameter circle and operating individual stations. This club also plans to set up a "Get on the Air" (GOTA) station. The club's plan is to have the GOTA coach at the Field Day site, while GOTA operators participate via remote link.

Another club is planning to set up a remote-controlled station at its usual Field Day site, with club members taking turns controlling the station from their homes. The



club is developing a schedule that outlines when each member of the club will be at the helm via the remote link.

Whatever approach you take to this year's Field Day, keep up to date with the current guidelines issued by local and state health agencies that may impact your proposed operation.

For the latest news and updates, visit the [Field Day webpage](#)

HamCationSM Chairman News

(by Michael Cauley, W4MCA)

Greetings Everyone

I hope everyone is still doing good and staying healthy.

HamCationSM 2021 is starting to get back to business.

We have added 2 new hotels this year. They are both in the Hilton Family of hotels. The first one is Home2 Suites Orlando International Drive South and the second one is Holiday Inn and Suites Orlando International Drive South.

We have also had a Zoom meeting with ARRL about the 2021 ARRL National Convention. Things are coming together for it and you will see a joint press release by mid-June.

We had a slight increase this year in attendance of about 500 people. The attendance was 24,200. Let me thank my committee and all the volunteers again. Without all of you HamCationSM would not be what it is.



I have been sharing the latest on the new pavilion the last couple months. Here is the latest photo of the new pavilion.

Scouting Ham Trailer Upgrades – WB4SA

(by Ken Lyons, KN4MDJ)

Just an update for everyone.

Our scout ham trailer with 60ft mast got a free upgrade during the spring. A 5ft x 6ft x 8ft enclosed storage area with two large workstation windows was added. Once youth programs restart, I'd like to get some young helpers to sand & repaint the metal frame. My goal is to have the windows by the pull-out equipment bay desks so we can work right off the trailer without setup. We could use some Elmers for station/shack desk design. (Think county/sheriff command center setup, but as a walkup window, on each side.) Special thanks to DJ Welding & Fabrication for providing the construction/labor and Secure4U.net for covering the \$1k material costs.

A Florida based solar panel company is offering us a 6 KW foldout system like a shade awning system (~\$10k value) to mount on the trailer at-cost. I'm trying to raise about \$3k to cover the materials, 48v batteries and shipping. This will add another level of STEM education for our scouts and expand our trailers usefulness at events and after disasters.

Due to COVID-19 our Spring and Summer calendars were canceled so we are now getting ready for every weekend in October, including JOTA/ Jamboree-on-the-air. We'll need many more hams to help fill stations and display various setups. This JOTA year POTA will be our center piece led by Justin, KN4MQR and mobile rigs led by Larry KN4LSY. I'm hoping we will get many more helpers this year so that we can cross the 2,000 participant mark, all in one-day.

In an effort to get more funding and grants we need to get our free membership up to 1,000 members, www.radioscouting.us/J (Its a monthly newsletter).

I'm pleased to announce that my workplace is continuing their offer of a \$100 college scholarship for scouts that get their FCC Amateur Radio License. I'm still working to get a corporate sponsor to cover a free HT radio (i.e. BTech UV-82) for scouts that get their Tech License. Also, I'm still collecting mobile radios both ham and GMRS for our Scout Camp Repeater project.

Our Scout HamBox project is nearly completed, a mobile HF/50/VHF/UHF/SDR 0-2GHz all in a box with a wifi tablet GUI (currently being tested) and mic. (Special thanks to Orlando Amateur Radio Club for donating an FT-891 for the HF/50) My goal was to present it at Hamvention.

73 & YIS (*yours in scouting*),
Ken Lyons, KN4MDJ

20 Youth on the Air in the Americas Camp is Canceled

(The ARRL Letter for April 23, 2020)

The inaugural camp for radio amateurs in the Americas aged 15 through 25 has been put off until next year. It was set to take place June 21 - 26 at the National Voice of America Museum of Broadcasting in West Chester Township (North Cincinnati, Ohio).



It has been rescheduled for July 2021. Campers accepted to the 2020 camp will have the first chance to register for next year's camp. The daily schedule and plan for the 2020 camp will be the same for the 2021 camp as much as possible. The committee found that July was a more accessible date for the widest range of campers to attend.

Youth on the Air

The committee is also looking at ideas for a shortened, virtual camp this summer, so that campers can participate in limited activities from home. The camp was meant to focus on building peer and mentor relationships and taking amateur radio to the next level.

While many sponsors and donors have already expressed support for holding over funds received for 2020 to use in 2021, refunds of donations made to the camp are being offered. Groups or individuals wishing to receive a refund should [contact](#) director Neil Rapp, WB9VPG. Less than \$350 of the money spent thus far went to items that may not be usable in 2021, Rapp said.

The ARRL 2020 Teachers Institute sessions have been canceled

(The ARRL Letter for April 23, 2020)



The landscape of education in the US has been greatly affected by the current pandemic. As K - 12 school systems and universities have been forced to move entirely to remote learning, teachers and students have had to make dramatic adjustments to their teaching and learning methods. After considering these educational challenges, along with travel restrictions and restraints on the ability to gather in groups, ARRL leadership feels it is appropriate and necessary to cancel the 2020 Teachers Institute. We look forward to bringing back this important program in 2021, so that we can continue promoting amateur radio in the classroom through our Education and Technology Program ([ETP](#)). ARRL will communicate directly with those who have already applied, and they will receive a full refund. Please direct questions to EAD@arrl.org.

Contest University (CTU) 2020 was Online and Free

(The ARRL Letter for May 7, 2020)



Tim Duffy, K3LR, has announced that CTU USA 2020 will be held online via Zoom on Thursday, May 14, starting at 1245 UTC. CTU 2020 is free. The CTU [course outline](#) has been posted online. Connection details to the CTU Zoom bridge will be posted on the Contest University site 1 week prior to CTU. Sessions will be recorded for viewing any time after May 14. Slide decks will be posted on the CTU website as well. At the end of CTU 2020, Dave Siddall, K3ZJ, will present the 2020 CQ Contest Hall of Fame awards.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEEUpsWUtAA>

For those who "attended", they were treated to an all-day smörgåsbord of contest information with a livestreamed 2020 Contest University. The professors and staff worked hard to adapt to pandemic restrictions, and over 2,000 people were registered for the event via the [Contest University website](#). "At the conclusion of the CQ Contest Hall of Fame induction, CTU gave away an Icom IC-7610 transceiver courtesy of Icom America to a licensed amateur in the United States who was online with Zoom at the end of the Hall of Fame Inductions." You can find slides for the presentations on the [Contest University website](#), and the video is being recorded for later upload.

WORD TO THE WISE

(The ARRL Contest Update for April 29, May 13, 2020)

kcmil

An abbreviation of "thousands of circular mils" which is a measurement of wire gauge. A "circular mil" is equal to the area of a circle with a diameter of one mil, or 0.0005067 square millimeters. Kcmil is used for larger diameter wires, while AWG (American Wire Gauge) is used for smaller diameter wires.

Zero-beat

As a verb, changing one frequency to match another. In the old days, this was done by ear for carrier frequencies, and any frequency difference could be heard as a third tone, the difference between the two. For frequencies that are very close, the difference sounds like a thump or a beat. Eliminating the beat means the frequencies are the same. As an adjective, it describes a frequency that is the same as another.

Nowadays, zero-beating a CW signal can be done by some radios with the press of a button - for example, the [Auto-SPOT function in the Elecraft K3](#).

OPERATING TIP

(The ARRL Contest Update for April 29, May 13, 2020)

VOACAP (Voice of America Coverage Analysis Program) is a modeling tool for radio propagation to predict path losses and probability of successful communication between two points on the globe. *VOACAP* models can be used different forms, including stand-alone program and derivate works for your computer, as well as at least one online version. You can look for overall path predictions using the [VOACAP.com website](#), and predict paths to various parts of the globe during contest periods. If you're targeting a specific location, you can use the [steps outlined by the VOACAP.com site's owner OH6BG in a recent tweet](#) to find the date and times of common gray line between two locations.

In Some Contests, Stick to Whole Numbers for Runs

If you'd like to work as many non-contesters and new contesters as possible, set up your run on integral frequencies. For example, for CW, you might want to pick 14035 kHz - not 14035.5 kHz. The skill of tuning a radio is just that - a skill. Some people may have their knob tuning rate set to a larger increment than you might expect, and you might be between frequency jumps as they tune.

CONVERSATION

(Source: The ARRL Contest Update for April 29, 2020)

Bright Sides

There are plenty of places to find pandemic-related bad news. I don't want to minimize the problems that are being faced the world over, or the existing and upcoming challenges that will have to be overcome to return to something resembling normalcy. But it seems that small accomplishments and victories at any level can help inspire and motivate.

The average age of our hobby's demographic, 67 years old, is certainly in the ["High Risk for Severe Illness" group](#). So while in-person activities are curtailed, there's been a forced uptake of alternative communication methods, like video conferencing. Some clubs have jumped right in, adapting by modifying meeting agendas and lining up speakers for video meetings. In this online world, it may actually be easier to line up club speakers when they don't have to travel to get to your meeting! Present conditions are an opportunity to re-engage with those club members whose attendance has dropped off - with everything online, club members that have been

avoiding club meetings because of the need to drive (or any other reason) may be able to be involved in the club again. The "rising tide" of computer and video conference skills may encourage new radio interests.

Updates to various ham software packages are seemingly more frequent and meaningful over the last few weeks. Maybe those authors are spending less time commuting, and are putting more time into their work. Some teams are adding functionality necessitated by the pandemic: Big kudos to the *N1MM Logger+* team for rapidly adding functionality to enable and ease a transition to VPN use and distributed multi-multi operation.

The cancellation of the May Dayton Hamvention rituals disappointed everyone. Hot on the heels of its cancellation, Tim, K3LR, announced that 2020 Contest University was moving online, and furthermore that it would be free for all attendees. A potential bright side of this news is that this year's "graduating class" could be larger than ever before. *This is also an incredible opportunity to get those that are interested in radio contesting to attend, without having to commit to an entire weekend.*

Extra time some have right now is being put towards tackling radio to-do lists. Even small fixes such as improving an internet connection can pay off during contest season. Some are taking the opportunity to completely rebuild their shacks, adding station automation capabilities that will also enable remote operation.

When we're able to meet in person again, it'd be nice to think that we've gained some new skills to help us get even more out of our hobby, and that we were not only just able to adapt but to thrive.



Mike, K7IR, recently rebuilt his shack during the social distancing to incorporate his interests in vintage gear, homebrew construction, and prototyping. [Mike Mertel, K7IR, photo]

Emergency Ventilator Designed and Constructed by Hams Going to FDA

(The ARRL Letter for April 30, 2020)

Radio amateurs have succeeded in providing a complete, working ventilator system to University of Florida researchers who are in the process of applying to the Food and Drug Administration for an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). A successful submission would blaze the way for volunteers and manufacturers around the world to create low-cost, highly functional Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or anesthesia-care ventilators that offer many of the features of modern ventilators at a fraction of the typical cost. Dr. Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, who is associated with the project, said efforts to further improve the device are ongoing.

"We made a stunning improvement in accuracy of the system and measuring volumes last night at about 1 AM," he told ARRL. "Accuracy of that particular alarm measurement went from about 300%, down to about 10%. The FDA submission

is being readied, but we keep making engineering improvements."

Gibby credited some of the primary volunteers. "Bob Benedict, KD8CGH, has provided incredible volunteer testing, now exceeding 1.6 million cycles on one crucial valve and 300,000 on another. Jack Purdum, W8TEE, is the main 'code-cleaner' for one of multiple teams building software, following the initial lead of Marcelo Varanda, VA3MVB. Ashhar Farhan, VU2ESE, not only created the ventilator controller schematic but the printed circuit board layout that will be part of an expected University of Florida submission." Farhan was among the founding code writers of what we now know as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Other hams worked on mechanical designs for flow measurements and retooled potential manufacturing capabilities otherwise used to produce transceivers. In another example of ham radio ingenuity, Marc Winzenried, WA9ZCO, modified a readily available lawn sprinkler to serve as a durable expiratory valve. This development enabled the ventilator to go more than 1 million breaths before significant valve issues developed, and the part can be replaced for less than \$15.

The completed prototype in Florida was built using typical tools by a radio amateur, and assembled boards provided by LifeMech, a manufacturer working with the project. Farhan crafted an extendable menu structure for the Arduino Nano-based controller, and gas-flow measurements are made every few milliseconds by an I2C-based differential pressure transducer that can measure down to tiny PSI fractions,



Airway components of the emergency ventilator. [Photo courtesy of Gordon Gibby, KX4Z]

allowing the design to accurately track patient-induced variations in the volume of delivered gasses.

"Using Wenzelried's expiratory valve, electronic on-off control at the rate of 30 Hz allows modulation of the valve to set the continuous airway pressure used to keep the patient's lung alveoli open against virus-induced water-logging of the connective tissue," Gibby explained.



The ventilator controller circuit board, designed by Michael Stapleton, WD4LHT. [Courtesy of Gordon Gibby, KX4Z]

"Perhaps the most surprising development was the addition of the ability to sense patient effort to take a breath and immediately switch to assisting the patient with that breath, known as 'assist-control' ventilation," Gibby said. "This is expected to allow for lighter sedation of patients -- potentially even no sedation."

FCC Providing Flexibility to Volunteer Examiners in Developing Remote Testing Methods

(The ARRL Letter for May 7, 2020)

In response to questions from the amateur radio community, the FCC has clarified that nothing in its rules prohibits remote amateur radio testing, and no prior approval is needed to conduct remote exam sessions.

"The Commission provides flexibility to volunteer examiners and coordinators who wish to develop remote testing methods or to increase remote testing programs already in place," the FCC said in an April 30 [news release](#). "We recognize that some volunteer examiner coordinators may not have the immediate capacity for widespread remote testing. We expect those volunteer examiner coordinators with limited remote testing capacity to work closely with those requesting such testing to prioritize any available remote testing slots."

In a [tweet](#) the next day, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai called the announcement "Good news for aspiring amateur radio operators."



The FCC opened the door to remotely administered examinations in a June 5, 2014, FCC [Report and Order](#), noting that, since the VE system was established, "remote testing methods have been developed, including audio and video links, either hard-wired to a site or available through internet or satellite technologies, which would allow a VE team to observe an examinee from afar." The FCC ruled that allowing VEs and VECs the option of administering examinations remotely was warranted. The FCC declined to incorporate any specific requirements or conditions for remote testing into the rules, and made it clear that VECs and VEs were not required to offer remote testing.

ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, said she's gratified to see that the FCC appreciates the need for remote testing. "Many of our VEs and VE teams have been employing remotely proctored exam sessions with both video and in-person components, and following social-distancing protocols, where necessary," she said. "Some ARRL VE teams have [shown great promise](#) in administering exams remotely." Somma also said that as states begin to lift restrictions, the possibility exists to restart in-person amateur radio exam opportunities.

"We urge our VE teams to keep up to date so they can make informed decisions based on local community guidelines, as each community is unique," she said. "Our volunteers should use their best judgement when deciding whether or not to begin conducting in-person exam sessions. It is important to us that you feel confident when choosing your course of action, because the health and safety of our VEs and the examinees is the top priority. VE teams that choose to conduct in-person sessions should restart consistent with local restrictions and guidelines."

Socially Distanced In-Person Exam Sessions Held in US and Norway

(The ARRL Letter for May 7, 2020)

With some states starting to relax restrictions on events and activities, the Grant County, Oregon, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) held an in-person exam session on April 26 in the town of John Day that adhered to social distancing recommendations.

Exam organizers held the gathering to within Oregon's 10-person limit for gatherings, keeping everyone 6 feet apart and requiring all participants to wear face masks. The exam session was held outdoors under a car port.

"We had an exceptionally successful test session with candidates passing exams at every amateur radio level," said Ed Elleson, AF7YX, the ARRL Volunteer Examiner

Liaison for the Grant County Amateur Radio Club. Grant County Emergency Coordinator Steve Fletcher, K7AA, noted that many clubs had canceled their planned sessions due to the coronavirus pandemic. "Grant County decided to approach the problem by obeying all the restrictions but still holding the exam," he said. "As a result, we had people come here from all over the state."



The open-air exam session in Grant County, Oregon. [Courtesy of Steve Fletcher, K7AA]

In Oklahoma, the Mid-Del Amateur Radio Club, W5MWC, administered an open-air exam session on April 25 that held to social distancing guidelines. Over the course of the 3-hour session, 16 candidates tested, and all were successful. One candidate passed all three exam elements to come away with his Amateur Extra-class license.

Norway began shutting down activities and gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Another open-air amateur exam session took place recently in Norway. The LA3F radio amateur club, south of Oslo, had just completed its annual course for prospective radio amateurs, and three candidates were ready to take their exam when

Not to be deterred, International Amateur Radio Union Vice President Ole Garpestad, LA2RR, arranged with Norwegian regulatory authorities to hold an outdoor exam session compatible with social distancing and other safety guidelines in place. Garpestad met with the three candidates in the forest outside a local scout cottage, and, with candidates seated at tables at least 5 meters (about 16 feet) apart, he administered the exam. With the temperature at around 10 °C (about 50 °F), everyone dressed warmly. Garpestad reported that all three candidates passed, and LA5EUA, LB8QI, and LB8RI were welcomed to the world of amateur radio.



Three candidates sit for their amateur radio exams in chilly spring weather in Norway.

The FCC has Adopted a new Official Seal

(The ARRL Letter for May 7, 2020)

The redesigned seal is the product of an agency-wide contest that solicited proposals from employees and contractors. The winning design was selected by a vote of the agency's employees and contractors. The revised design incorporates several elements:

communications technologies currently transforming our world; four stars on the outer seal border, drawing from the legacy of the predecessor Federal Radio Commission seal; 18 stars on the shield, recognizing the current number of bureaus and offices, and the eagle and shield, identifying the FCC as a federal government agency. The FCC will incorporate the new seal on official stationery, business cards, publications, and other materials, including on its website and throughout its new Headquarters. Official use of the new seal will begin following completion of the agency's move to its new Headquarters. The date of the move is up in the air, delayed due to COVID-19.



ARRL Announces New Life 70+ Membership

(The ARRL Letter for May 14, 2020)

The ARRL Board of Directors recently voted to create a special Life Membership opportunity for individuals who are at least 70 years old. Starting on June 1, the Life 70+ Membership will be available to individuals who have turned 70 and have a combined 25 years of paid annual ARRL membership.

Life 70+ Members receive all benefits of an annual membership, including their choice of print magazine delivery (*QST* or *On the Air*), and digital access to these publications, plus the digital versions of *QEX* and *National Contest Journal (NCJ)*. In addition, each Life 70+ Member will receive a Life Member pin and a window decal and may purchase an exclusive Life Member plaque.

Qualifying members selecting this level of membership will enjoy the convenience of having to make a single payment for their entire tenure as an ARRL Member and not be subject to any future ARRL dues increase.

To apply for Life 70+ membership, individuals must complete the special Life 70+ Member application -- available on June 1 -- and submit proof of date of birth, if this information is not already on file with ARRL. The Life 70+ membership



fee must be made in a single payment. Past membership dues payments will not apply toward Life 70+ Membership, but a credit will be applied for applicants who paid their dues in full between April 1 and May 31, 2020.

Life 70+ Membership Dues Rates

- \$750 US Life 70+ Membership
- \$750 International Digital Life 70+ Membership
- \$1,515 International Life 70+ Membership with a Print Subscription
- \$250 Family Life 70+ Membership as an add-on to a paid Life 70+ membership

ARRL reserves the right to change or substitute the benefits, products, or services associated with a member's original Life 70+ Member package at any time during the membership. Dues are non-refundable.

Life 70+ [membership applications](#) will be available for download beginning on June 1.

Choosing FTx Transmit and Receive Frequencies in Crowded Contest Bands

(The ARRL Letter for May 14, 2020)

Here's how to pick FT-mode transmit and receive frequencies in crowded contest bands. First, pick an audio offset frequency greater than 500 Hz, but less than the suggested frequency intervals (e.g., 2 kHz). In crowded band conditions, the "base" transmit frequencies for FT4 or FT8 are suggested to be at 2 kHz intervals. For



example, some stations may set their radio's frequency to 14.130 MHz, while others are at 14.132 or 14.134 MHz. Under these conditions, it makes sense to choose a transmit frequency offset *greater* than 500 Hz, but *less* than 2 kHz.

Here's the reasoning: If the CQing station chooses 14.130.0 with an offset of 2.4 kHz, then a listening station's radio tuned to 14.132.0 will "see" that station at 400 Hz. Many radios have audio passbands of between 500 Hz and 3,000 Hz. Frequencies outside that range are not received as well. A reduced sensitivity at 400 Hz can make the difference in decoding successfully.

The station *answering* the CQ (radio at 14.132.0 MHz) should likely pick a frequency at or near the CQ frequency, since the operator doesn't know whether the CQing station's frequency is at 14.130 or 14.132. If the receiving station chooses, say, 1.5 kHz, this would be at 14.133.5. A CQing station set to 14.130 may not be decoding all the way to 3.5 kHz from the radio's offset frequency. -- *Thanks to The ARRL Contest Update*

Weekly Radio Network Meetings

Mon @ 20:00	147.090	Seminole ARES Net – Except – First Monday of the month (146.460 Simplex)
Tues @ 19:00	145.350	Osceola ARES Net
Tues @ 19:30	147.195	Quarter Century Wireless Association
Tues @ 20:00	146.760	Wayne Nelson Trader’s Net
Wed @ 19:00	147.300	Disney Emergency Amateur Radio Service
Wed @ 21:00	432.090	Florida Weak Signal Group
Thur @ 19:00	443.050	Orange County ARES Net
Thur @ 20:30	432.090	Florida Weak Signal Group

OARC Meetings and Events 2020

June 3, Wednesday	Virtual Meeting, 7:00pm YouTube Live!
June 27-28, Saturday and Sunday	 ARRL Field Day OARC FIELD DAY - Canceled
July 1, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
August 5, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
September 2, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
October 7, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
November 4, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
December 2, Wednesday	No Club Meeting
December 5, Saturday	Christmas Party

