



The Listening Post



Dedicated to Community Service and All Central Florida Hams

APRIL 2021

President's Message

**** Important Please Read Entire Message ****

Greetings! March last year the global pandemic started, and I do not think any of us really thought or at least believed it would still be an issue today!

(Continued on Next Page)

OARC MEETING

April 7th, 7:00pm
YouTube Live and Zoom
 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, KC9GNO
 Tony Darnell, KK4VRP
 Dean Groe, KD4TWJ
 Frank Tagliani, KD4EZW
 James Deuel, NOXIA

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

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

Please keep those who have been affected by COVID-19 in your thoughts and prayers. We have been lucky to have minimal impacts within our immediate amateur radio family.

Our next meeting is coming up on Wednesday April 7th. The meeting will be on Zoom and begin at 7pm. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Bob Heil, K9EID of Heil Sound. It will be an interesting presentation. So please plan to join the meeting and have a large turnout for Bob.

Be sure to read about the upcoming elections in this issue. Everything you need to know to vote will be in that article (page 3).

Many thanks to all those that participated in the 1845 Florida Statehood Special Event. This event was hosted by the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society and assisted by OARC and DEARS. Over 800 contacts were made for this first-time special event. Also thank you to LMARS for allowing us to assist with their project. Next year's event is being planned already. Watch www.1845florida.org for further information and details on the 2022 event. This year we did not get this website updated as the information was very fluid, and we were running out of time planning the event. The committee plans on starting the planning much earlier for next year. Everyone that participated had a great time and is looking forward to next year.

73

John Knott, N4JTK

HamCation[®] Chairman News

(by Michael Cauley, W4MCA)

Greetings Everyone

I hope everyone is still staying safe.

This month I do not have much to report.

First let me thank Joe Cordeiro, WW4JC for serving many years on the HamCation[®] Committee. He has stepped down from the committee but will still be part of HamCation[®] as a volunteer at the show.

So, if you talk to Joe please thank him, for the many years he has volunteered on the HamCation® Committee.

The next thing I would like to talk about is the Donation Checks to the local Clubs. We mentioned we did not know how much we would be able to donate this year to the local clubs. After calculating all the donations from the prize tickets and lanyard sales. It is my great pleasure to announce that The Orlando Amateur Radio Club and Orlando HamCation® will be donating the same amount we did in 2020 to each of the following 12 local Clubs.

Orange County ARES	CERT Ham Radio Group	Radio Scouting
LMARS	CERT Unit 62	FWSS
Seminole County ARES	QCWA	LARA
DEARS	Bahia Radio Unit	CFRA

The Grand total of the donations are \$12,709.32

Club Leaders, please keep an eye on your mailboxes in the next few weeks for your donation checks.

73
Michael Cauley, W4MCA
2022 HamCation® General Chair

2021 OARC Elections

(by John Knott, N4JTK)

Because of our current situation with the pandemic and OARC only able to hold virtual meetings, the board has again decided to hold our elections electronically. By doing this, we are keeping up with the requirements of our bylaws and the state to hold our annual meeting in April and hold elections.

At the close of last month's meeting, the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer ran unopposed. The incumbents will be voted in by the Secretary at the April meeting.

Per our bylaws, we are to have six director positions on the Board of Directors. All six incumbent directors have chosen to run again for another term. They are being challenged by Ed Thralls, NE4H and Andy Anderson, KJ4VQN. I have asked each incumbent and challenger to write something about themselves for this issue of the Listening Post. This way you get to know each one a little better and make an informed decision. You will find those Bios in this issue (starting on page 7) for those

who chose to do so. (pictures of all Officers, Board of Director Members and Challengers start on page 5)

I have been saying this every month since I became the President and I will say it again now, it is important to let our Membership Chairman know if any of your contact information has changed, especially your e-mail address. If you have NOT been receiving e-mails from us, I highly suggest you check to see what address we have on file for you. You can contact Rick at membership@oarc.org.

So why is this important? Since we will be doing electronic elections again this year, you can only vote if we have your correct e-mail address, and you receive the ballot. The ballots will be coming from a website called **adoodle.org** into your registered e-mail address. If you use spam filters, I suggest you whitelist that domain now. Once the ballots have been emailed out by **adoodle.org**, they cannot be resent. Hence, make sure we have your correct e-mail address and if you use spam filters, whitelist **adoodle.org**.

The e-mail will contain a link to a webpage on **adoodle.org**. The link is specific to you. If you share the link, and the person that you shared it with votes, you will not be able to vote. You can only vote once. If you attempt to click the link again, the website will let you know that the link is no longer valid. Sorry, but there is nothing we can do.

The emails will go out sometime between March 28, 2021 and March 30, 2021. Voting will start at 7pm EDT on March 31, 2021 and end at 7pm EDT April 7, 2021. If you attempt to vote early or late, the website will not allow the vote.

At the end of the voting on April 7, 2021 the results will be known and announced at the end of the meeting. Voting is confidential. No one will know if you voted or who you voted for. We will only know how many ballots were emailed and how many voted. Please, we are one of the largest clubs in the southeast. Please exercise your right to vote. For many of you, attending an OARC meeting, in person or virtually is difficult because of family life, work, or numerous other reasons, so participating in a vote may be rare for you. Now you will have an entire week to vote. Read about the nominees in the newsletter and cast your vote.

When you do vote, you will need to select **SIX** directors who you wish to serve on the board. The **SIX** directors with the **most** votes will serve on the Board of Directors beginning at the end of the April meeting. Remember, vote for **SIX** directors.

Elections: Officers, Board of Directors and Challengers for 2021

Orlando Amateur Radio Club Officers



John Knott, President, N4JTK



Michael Cauley, Vice President, W4MCA



Bob Nocera, Secretary, W4KBW



Anna Groe, Treasurer, KM4JVE

Orlando Amateur Radio Club Board of Directors



Bob Cumming, Board Member,
W2BZY



Tony Darnell, Board Member,
KK4VRP



James Deuel, Board Member,
N0XIA



Frank Gergits, Board Member,
KC9GNQ



Dean Groe, Board Member,
KD4TWJ



Frank Tagliani, Board Member,
KD4EZW

Challengers for OARC Board of Directors



Andy Anderson, KJ4VQN



Ed Thralls, NE4H

James Deuel, NOXIA

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors position.

From 1960 to 1974 I grew up in Orlando before moving to Los Angeles where I got my Technician license (WB6DGK) in 1976. This was also the time I went to trade school in electronics. From California I moved to New Mexico and then Colorado where I changed my call to NOXIA. Colorado is where I finally became a General and then Extra due to a high interest in HF digital modes that lot of the local hams were playing with (Pactor at the time). I moved back to Florida in 2005 and joined the Orlando Amateur Radio Club. Why did I join the OARC? I did not know what clubs were here. My step-father's brother, Herbert Ford, KF4WW (SK), was a member so I joined. Can I call that a family tradition?



Orlando is where I got to experience my first ham convention (HamCation). It is something I had never experienced before and I have been volunteering ever since. With my electronic background in communications, I have also been volunteering to support the club repeaters. Eventually, I have ended up being on the OARC Board of Directors as part of my effort to support the OARC.

I am running again to be on the Board of Directors of the OARC. Six positions are available on the board where there are eight individuals running and you need to decide which six will serve for 2021. Pick the six you would like to see serve the club. The eight that are running have been helping the club in different ways and you cannot go wrong on your choices. No matter what the outcome, I will be here to support the OARC. Thanks for reading.

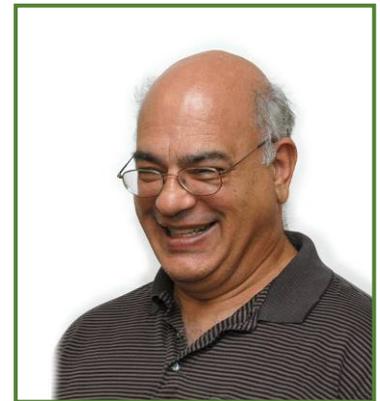
73,
James, NOXIA

Robert (Bob) Cumming, W2BZY

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors positions

Extra Class – first licensed (Novice) 1956 Tech same year.
General and Commercial Telegraph in 1962.

Moved from New York to Orlando (Longwood) in 1993 and joined OARC. Became active on All amateur bands from 160M-2M + 70 and 23CM. Soon thereafter started adding bands (222, 902 2304) after becoming involved with the Florida Weak Signal Society. With their prodding added



3456, 5760 and 10368 MHz, so now active all amateur bands from 160M-3CM (mostly SSB and CW).

Avid CW operator and Active contester HF and above becoming High Scorer (Winner) for the North Florida Section and Southeast Division January, June and September ARRL VHF Contests and leading the Southeast Division UHF (222Mhz and up) many times. Always active during Field Day.

DXCC = over 230 countries worked - Four Band DXCC (Still need 13 countries on 80M for that 5 band Plaque from the ARRL) – Missing 12 Countries for DXCC on 6M. 6 Meter VUCC – over 500 grid squares worked worldwide and just lacking Hawaii for WAS on 6M.

Served OARC as a Board member, Vice President becoming President with the passing of Wayne Nelson, KB4UT, and remained President for many years, dropping the presidency to Peter Meijers and remaining on the board of the OARC until present.

Commercial Chairman of the Orlando HamCation® for over 10 years

As part of the OARC repeater committee Brought DSTAR to the OARC and helped Hal, KK1B to install the K1XC DSTAR system in Orlando – Later adding W4PLB in Sanford.

ARRL appointments:

Award Checker VHF, HF (DXCC, VUCC, WAC and WAS along with Hal, etc).

Extra Class Volunteer Examiner serving as VE Liaison for OARC and LMARS (Also W5YI and Laurel)

OO (Official Observer) Twice certified but dropped id due to time constraints (Mainly HamCation®)

Dean Groe, KD4TWJ

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors positions

Here are some of the things that I think make me a good fit to serve as a Director for your Orlando Amateur Radio Club. I have included some information on my employment because I think that the experience that I have there compliments the decision making tasks that are part of the OARC Director position.

I have lived in the Orlando area for the last 35 years and I have been employed in IT during that whole



time. This has included private sector and government organizations and has involved technology support and large project work.

I have been a HAM for 28 years and have been involved in various repeater, digipeater, Analog VoIP, and Mesh Networking projects here locally.

I have been very active with Orange County ARES for 16 years. I currently serve as the IT Chairman for Orlando HamCation and I have held that position since it was created.

I tend to be a fiscal conservative and take a pragmatic approach to projects and implementation of new Amateur Radio Technologies. While it is great that we see continuous ingenuity and development within the Amateur Radio Service, we also must be judicious in how we use our limited resources and consider the local Amateur Radio community's needs in our decision making.

Frank Tagliani, KD4EZW

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors position

- Ham operator since 1991
- ARRL and LAUREL VE
- AT&T – Principal Network Radio Engineer/FirstNet/Cellular – Greater Florida – 30 years
- NYNEX Mobile Communications – Senior Radio Engineer – 3 years
- Member of LMARS - Board of Director – Past; Equipment/Repeater maintenance and design.
- Member of OARC – Board of Director – Current
- Member of DEARS
- Member of Seminole County ARES/RACES – Board of Director – Current
- Member of Orange County ARES/RACES
- Security Chairman – HamCation®
- All Souls Catholic Church – Knights of Columbus – Council Trustee – Current; Deputy Grand Knight – Past



Would like to continue to serve the club as Director, while offering members and staff assistance in programming radios, hotspots, repeaters, etc.

Tony Darnell, KK4VRP

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors positions

I have been with OARC for 7 years, and on the Board as a Director for the last few.

I am also Security Co-Chair for HamCation® and while it may be a lot of work - it is one of the most fun things I've had the pleasure of doing - so much so, my wife Julie also became licensed and volunteers as a Chair for HamCation® as Transportation Chair.

I am also a member of Orange County ARES and LMARS and certainly miss our in-person meetings.



I've always had a love for two-way radios, it started back when i was a teenager but I did not become licensed until 2013, when I met a man who is a HAM operator (Shawn G) and it sparked my interest back up and the spark has been back with me ever since. I just really enjoy the hobby. I loved it so much that after obtaining my Technician license I upgraded every year until I got my Extra and also obtained Volunteer Examiner certification in order to assist with exams.

I thoroughly enjoy being on the Board of Directors and a part of such a great organization such as OARC. Regardless, if I am elected again I will be available to the Board and Club for anything that is needed.

I can't wait to see everyone in person again once we can resume in-person meetings.

Frank Gergits, KC9GNO

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors positions

I am running for a Board of Directors position with the Orlando Amateur Radio Club. I have been a member of the club for about five years, and have held a director's position for two years.

I have been the on-site ticket chairman for Orlando Hamcation® for the last three years and I am also on the Silent Key Committee for the club. In 2019 I received the Outstanding Ham Award in appreciation of service and dedication to the Orlando Amateur Radio Club.



I hold a General class license and enjoy HF as well as the many digital voice modes. You can usually find me sitting at the back table during our monthly meetings programming a radio for another ham, or discussing hotspots or some other aspect of amateur radio. I have enjoyed being one of the directors and I hope you will allow me to continue to serve the club.

Ed Thralls, NE4H

Running for 1 of 6 Board of Directors positions

Extra Class – first licensed in 1977 as WD6CKU and received my current call in 1980. Other calls held include KB6KV, KB4ZK and HP2XYE. Also a Navy MARS Operator (NNN00WU) during the Vietnam War.

As a hobby for over 44 years, I am most interested in HF CW, SSB and DIY antenna construction. Sometimes you can hear me locally on UFH/VHF.



After retiring from the US Navy in 1989, I became a member of OARC. I worked several Field Days with the club when the Field Days were held at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, FL. The food cooked outdoors was great and the camaraderie was even better. My membership lapsed until 2015 when I once more joined OARC.

I do keep a paper log of my amateur radio activities and record that information to LOTW. I try my best to make at least one contact each evening when I get home. For the last three years, the only days I have missed were due to hospital stays for minor surgeries. Morse code has become my mainstay and now that it is not mandatory, it is more fun than it ever was. My operating conditions include a 100 watt transceiver, a 5-band trapped vertical antenna and a homebrewed inverted Vee for 40 meters. Earned WAS and DXCC (239 countries). I hope to complete 5-band WAS this year and 5-Band DXCC next year.

This is my second attempt to become an OARC Board Member. My activities in the club and amateur radio hobby include:

- Received the OARC President's Award in 2016 for "Jumping In" as Co-Editor and now Editor of the club newsletter, *The Listening Post*.
- RV Co-Chairman for HamCation® for four years.
- Helped with set up at Field Days for several years.
- ARRL Registered Licensing Instructor
- ARRL and Laurel Volunteer Examiner

- o Assisted with administering exams prior to club meetings (when we met at Beardall Senior Center) for several years.
- o Assisted with grading exams at the Central Florida Fairgrounds during HamCation® Special Event 2021.
- Moderator for two virtual presentations made during HamCation Special Event 2021.
- Committee member for selecting the Carole Perry Educator of the Year Award that was also presented during HamCation® Special Event 2021.
- Member of the Citrus 45 Chapter of the Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA).

I enjoy seeing our club being active in the community. I want to be part of the planning and support that goes into those events. I would like to see younger people and more youth at our club meetings, both in person and virtually. With my upcoming retirement this year, I will have more time to work for the club and you, the club members. I hope it will be as an OARC Board Member.

Please vote for me.

YOTA Region 1 Taking Cautious Approach to COVID-19 and YOTA Camps

(The ARRL Letter of March 18, 2021)

The IARU Region 1 ([IARU-R1](#)) Youth Working Group has said no youth events will take place before mid-June, and that it will review those scheduled for later in the year as the pandemic situation evolves. The group said these events make social distancing difficult, and it doesn't believe it would be possible for them to take place safely. Other 2021 events will remain on the calendar for the time being.

"The position on the [COVID-19] pandemic remains serious and unpredictable," the group said. "Governments everywhere struggle with balancing the health of their economies with the health of their populations. The vaccine rollout seems likely to take most of this year and even then, the impact of mutant strains of the virus and national quarantine requirements are difficult to predict."

IARU Region 1 has planned several in-person events for 2021 in the Youth, amateur radio direction finding (ARDF), and high-speed telegraphy competition (HST) areas. A workshop for member-societies is also on the calendar. Whether these will take place as scheduled remains up in the air.



IARU-R1 has said it will review the forecast evolution of the pandemic sufficiently before each event to decide whether it will take place. "Generally, this will be 4 months prior to the scheduled date," IARU-R1 said. "[That way,] those planning to attend should have sufficient time to make the necessary travel arrangements."

IARU Region 1 said it wants to make sure that any events taking place do so in an environment that respects national requirements for pandemic control and does not place the health and well-being of participants at risk.

ARRL Interview Explains Background of Ham Radio in Space Film Short

(The ARRL Letter for February 25, 2021)

Josh Tanner, the Australian filmmaker who produced the thriller [Decommissioned](#) by Perception Pictures, has explained how he came up with the idea to develop the movie short. In the approximately 6-minute film, SuitSat returns in the future to haunt International Space Station commander "Diaz," played by Joey Vieira, who spots SuitSat, the surplus

Russian *Orlan* spacesuit that Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARRL](#)) turned into an amateur radio satellite several years ago .

An exclusive ARRL [video interview](#) premiering on Saturday, February 27, brings together Tanner, who directed the sci-fi horror film about an eerie ham-radio-in-space reencounter, and ARISS-International



Chair Frank Bauer, KA3HDO. In the interview, conducted by ARRL volunteer Josh Nass, KI6NAZ, of the popular YouTube channel [Ham Radio Crash Course](#), Tanner described the uniquely creative and technical aspects of the filmmaking involved in *Decommissioned* and its connection with the real-life *SuitSat-1*.

"My wife, Jade, who is also a co-writer of this short film, and I are both really obsessed with space, and we discovered SuitSat on Wikipedia," Tanner said in the interview. "It was an initial sort of two-pronged reaction. One, this is genius. It's amazing that they did this; I'd never heard this before. And the second one was, this is



kinda creepy...that they had what looks like a stranded, dead astronaut floating around the Earth...and there were voices of children being transmitted from it."

SuitSat-1 transmitted a voice message, "This is SuitSat-1 RSORS!", in several languages, plus telemetry and a slow-scan TV image on an 8-minute cycle as it orbited Earth.

Tanner said a lot of the films he produces involve "pieces of history that are rather quite odd or interesting that maybe a lot of people don't know about."



Bauer described the background of the 2006 *SuitSat* project, which involved ARISS's relationship with Sergey Samburov, RV3DR. Samburov was "the initial brainchild" behind the *SuitSat-1* concept, and ARISS ran with it, Bauer recounted.

"We had 3 weeks to pull it all together and get it ready for launch," Bauer said, and that included getting safety approvals. *SuitSat-1* operated for about 2 weeks, and a contest of sorts evolved to guess when it would burn up in the atmosphere, which wasn't until about 6 months

later. A *SuitSat-2* was launched from the ISS several years later.

Tanner said the *Decommissioned* script was written about 3 years ago, but creating the realistic atmosphere and sets involved a number of complexities, which was "very expensive," he revealed. A big push toward using video game engine technology in feature-film development made it possible. *Decommissioned* was produced using a game engine called *Unreal Engine*, which was also used to produce the TV show *The Mandalorian*.

Grab your popcorn and avoid a spoiler. ARRL recommends viewing the [short film](#) before watching the 45-minute interview. The interview premieres on ARRL's [YouTube channel](#), Saturday, February 27, at 1600 UTC.

ARRL reminds interested schools and educational organizations in the US that the latest [window](#) to submit proposals to host scheduled ham radio contacts with an ISS crew member opened on February 15. Contacts would be scheduled January 1 - June 30, 2022. Proposals are due to ARISS by 0759 UTC on April 1.



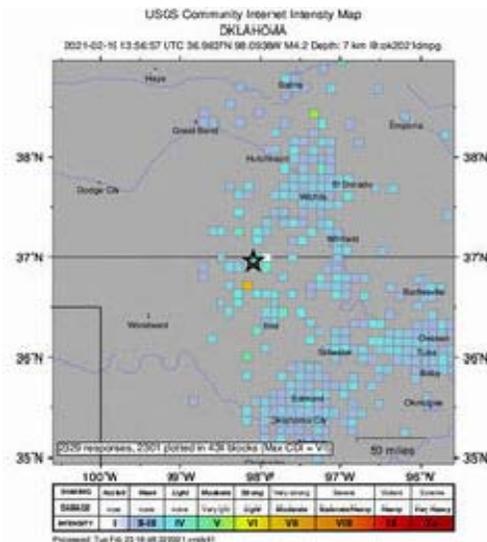
In the US, ARRL is a partner in the ARISS program, along with AMSAT, NASA, and the ISS National Lab, which has kept amateur radio on the air from the International Space Station for 20 years.

Did Someone say "Donuts"?: Amateur Radio Helping to Fill Earthquake Report "Donut Holes"

(The ARRL Letter for February 25, 2021)

An [article](#) describing how radio amateurs can help fill the information "donut hole" by providing post-earthquake "Did You Feel It" ([DYFI](#)) reports via [Winlink](#) HF radio email appeared on February 22 in the American Geophysical Union (AGU) magazine *Eos*. As the article points out, "Ham radio networks gear up to provide real-time, on-the-ground information about earthquake shaking and damage when other communication pathways are knocked out of commission." Authors of the article were David J. Wald of the US Geological Survey (USGS), Vincent Quitoriano, and Oliver Dully, K6OLI.

As the article explains, DYFI uses a questionnaire to gather individuals' experiences and observations, and USGS uses the information to evaluate the shaking intensity at that person's location. DYFI has been in operation since 1999 in the US and 15 years around the world, during which the USGS has gathered more than 5 million individual DYFI intensity reports.



The article notes that a potential problem is that "public access to it may be compromised as a result of strong earthquake shaking," with affected individuals experiencing power and communication outages or may be distracted by more immediate priorities.

"USGS and other global seismic network operators have witnessed felt report 'donut holes' in areas of strong shaking due to loss of internet communication," the article said, "most recently during the magnitude-5.7 earthquake that hit near Salt Lake City in March 2020." The article suggested that "alternative pathways" of communication are needed to "gather important ground-truth shaking

data with minimal delay." And this is where amateur radio groups come into play.

"We now expect to sample the donut hole with the help of amateur radio groups worldwide," the article's authors said. "These groups can mobilize a significant number of licensed radio operators after a strong earthquake, especially near large population centers, ensuring a baseline level of macroseismic intensity reporting even in heavily affected areas."



As the article explains, USGS has partnered with [Winlink](#), a radio email platform with more than 28,000 users worldwide, and with ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service

(ARES®) members. Winlink adapted the USGS DYFI questionnaire to its platform, and this version is now available to all radio amateurs, the article said.

ARISS Ham Station in Columbus Module Is Once Again Operational (The ARRL Letter for March 18, 2021)

Some 6 weeks after going silent following a spacewalk that installed new antenna cabling, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) ham station in the Columbus module is once again operational. The Columbus station, which typically uses the call sign NA1SS, is the primary ARISS amateur radio station used for school contacts and other activities. The problem arose after a January 27 spacewalk replaced a coax feed line installed 11 years ago with another built by the European Space Agency (ESA) and Airbus.



While the specific cause of the problem has not yet been determined, a March 13 spacewalk that restored the antenna cabling to its original configuration provided the cure. The plan to return the ARISS cabling to its original configuration had been a "contingency task" for a March 5 spacewalk, but the astronauts ran out of time. The ARISS work was appended to the to-do list for astronauts Mike Hopkins, KF5LJG, and Victor Glover, KI5BKC, to complete a week later.

During the weekend spacewalk, Hopkins swapped out a cable for the [Bartolomeo](#) commercial payload-handling platform that had been installed in series with the ARISS VHF-UHF antenna feed line, returning the ARISS system to its pre-January 27 configuration. Hopkins raised a question concerning a sharp bend in the cable near a connector, but no further adjustments were possible.

On March 14, ARISS was able to confirm the operation's success when Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) signals on 145.825 MHz were heard in California, Utah, and Idaho as the ISS passed overhead. ARISS team member Christy Hunter, KB6LTY, was able to digipeat through NA1SS during the pass. With additional confirmation from stations in South America and the Middle East, ARISS declared the radio system operational again.

Work during the March 13 spacewalk also made Bartolomeo operational. "Yesterday was a great day for all!" Bauer said. "Ad astra!"



North Carolina Radio Amateurs Adapt Tailgating Hamfest to the COVID-19 Pandemic

(The ARRL Letter for March 4, 2021)

With many in-person hamfests canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some radio amateurs in Raleigh, North Carolina, have come up with a way to adapt with a tailgate hamfest in an unused shopping center parking area. The event grew out of the so-called [Ham Radio Taco Thursdays](#), begun many years ago by ARRL Life Member Alan Pitegoff, AB4OZ.

Pitegoff had to put his event on hold when the pandemic erupted. It was suggested that hams could gather and socialize at a safe distance by having a Taco Thursday with the taco truck outside in an adjacent empty parking lot. That event was a success, with participants remaining at their vehicles and bringing their own chairs. That success inspired holding a tailgate hamfest in the same spot, and it's now turned into a monthly event, called the [AB4OZ Hamfest](#).



Pitegoff said Taco Thursday started collecting more people -- up to 15 or so -- and when Taco Bell closed due to the pandemic, the event moved to a Thursday on-the-air net, with one requirement -- that participants could not talk about COVID-19.

The tailgate hamfest was established at the new location and held once a month on Saturday at 10 AM.

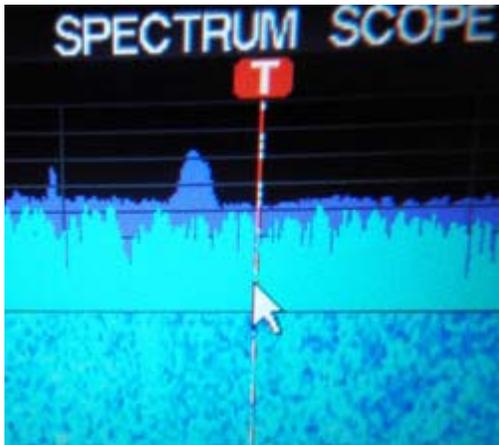
"I think this is a great, uplifting, and positive experience for all of us hams to get out and socialize," participant Charles Murray, KI4DCR, said. "We might not be able to have a big hamfest, but these micro tailgate hamfests might be the future for a good while. I've met a lot of good people. There's a lot of cool stuff out here. The weather's great, you know, and there's plenty of space for everybody to be socially distanced. I think it's fantastic." -- *Thanks to Martin Brossman, KI4CFS*

Approaches to Tackle Noise Problems Vary, Remedies Elusive

(The ARRL Letter for March 4, 2021)

RF noise is a frequent discussion topic among radio amateurs. A proliferation of electronics has cluttered and complicated the noise environment; it's not just power lines anymore. Unless isolated from civilization, most hams experience RF interference (RFI) and spectrum scopes on modern transceivers can make it much

more apparent. Various approaches to address the apparently worsening noise floor have been taken around the world, some addressing lax regulation.



"We all want to enhance our ability to copy the weak ones by increasing our signal-to-noise ratio," Alan Higbie, KOAV, said in his March/April *NCJ* article, "Tracking RFI with an SDR One Source at a Time." He suggests practical methods for individual radio amateurs to improve their own noise environment. "We can do that by reducing the noise on each band that we operate. Lowering the noise floor increases the relative strength of weak signals. Those who live in typical residential environments find that locating and eliminating RFI sources is a never-ending process. It is much like weeding a garden."

The International Amateur Radio Union ([IARU](#)) warns against complacency. "Radio amateurs cannot sit back, because even if the desired noise limits are agreed, there are many rogue manufacturers

and dealers who will happily sell noise-generating devices, leaving out filter circuits to cut costs," IARU said. The IARU has urged member-societies to get involved.

The FCC Technological Advisory Council ([TAC](#)) -- a Commission advisory group -- [initiated an inquiry](#) in 2016 looking into changes and trends to the radio spectrum noise floor to determine whether noise is increasing and, if so, by how much. The TAC had encouraged the FCC to undertake a comprehensive noise study in 1998, and cautioned the FCC against implementing new spectrum management techniques or initiatives without first concluding one. In 2017, the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) invited comments on a series of (TAC) spectrum-management questions. ARRL, in its comments, took the opportunity to strongly urge the FCC to reinstate the 2016 TAC noise floor study, which, ARRL asserted, was terminated before it even got started. ARRL urged the FCC to "depart from the traditional regulatory model" that placed limits only on transmitters and called for "a 'holistic' approach to transmitter and receiver performance." Greg Lapin, N9GL, represents ARRL on the TAC and chairs the ARRL RF Safety Committee. "Perhaps the best result that we obtained was an indication that illegal



Small household "wall warts" are typically noisy switching power supplies.

Greg Lapin, N9GL, represents ARRL on the TAC and chairs the ARRL RF Safety Committee. "Perhaps the best result that we obtained was an indication that illegal devices, mainly LED lights, were in circulation, and the Enforcement Bureau agreed to

look into it," he told ARRL. "We never heard what they found out, but recently, I was buying some LED bulbs over the internet from a site in Texas, and they were selling non-FCC approved lights -- and didn't seem to care." Lapin said his complaint went nowhere, and the TAC's focus has been nudged in the direction of addressing 5G issues.



The Deutscher Amateur Radio Club ([DARC](#)) has been working on developing a noise-measurement system that approximates methods used by the International Telecommunications Union Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R). DARC reported that 35 of these electrical noise area monitoring systems ([ENAMS](#)) have been delivered, and it's seeking another 20 locations as part of the effort to monitor noise interference on the HF bands. DARC said the ENAMS can help to make scientifically reliable statements about interference levels.

IARU sees wireless power transmission (WPT) as an impending major noise threat, especially from WPT electric vehicle (WPT-EV) charging systems. "For the amateur service, given the planned density of WPT-EV systems, it is calculated that there will be a widespread and serious impact in the vicinity of WPT systems" from spurious emissions, said a 2019 *EE Publishers* [article](#), written by "Amateur radio societies concerned about the HF noise floor." The article also said, "To ensure a low probability of harmful interference to radiocommunication services, further study is required."



Plans Proceeding for Fall 2021 Willis Island DXpedition

(The ARRL Letter of March 11, 2021)

The team from the Hellenic Amateur Radio Association of Australia ([HARAOA](#)) that's planning a November 3 - 13 DXpedition to Willis Island (VK9HR) has expanded by one, and the DXpedition planning is on schedule. A vessel to take the team to Willis Island has been chartered to leave Australia on November 3, returning on November 13. Willis ranks #38 on Club Log's [DXCC Most Wanted List](#). The group announced earlier that it had put off plans to include a stint from Mellish Reef, last activated in 2017. The ham radio team will be just in time to celebrate the centennial of the island's meteorological facility.



"With time away from jobs a consideration for the operators, Mellish is being put off to 2022," said team leader John Chalkiarakis, VK3YP.

While the call sign VK9HR is expected to be renewed in August, Chalkiarakis is trying to get VK9W. "VK9IR will be an additional call sign to be allocated," he said. VK9IR and VK9HR were used for HARAOA's 2011 DXpedition to Lord Howe Island.

Team members for this fall's DXpedition will hail from Australia and New Zealand. They're in the process of obtaining a permit from Parks Australia, which is "required to 'camp' at these Australian Coral Sea marine parks." Chalkiarakis said the most important document is the landing permit, also from Parks Australia. No permit is required to visit these coral sea islands for non-commercial purposes, but a permit application is needed to set up a campsite and to stay overnight on the island.



The now eight-operator team plans to use verticals on 160, 80, 40, and 30 meters, while VDAs (vertical dipole arrays) will be used on 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 meters. Operation on 6 meters is under consideration. Activity is expected on SSB, CW, and FT8 on 160 through 10 meters. The equipment complement is expected to be Kenwood TS-590S and Icom IC-7300 transceivers with amplifiers on all.

A DXpedition website and logo are in the works. Home to a meteorological station, Willis Island is in the Coral Sea, off the northeast coast of Australia.

Chalkiarakis also said that he and some friends have been trying to obtain a landing permit for Macquarie Island (VKOM), which is #12 on Club Log's DXCC Most Wanted List, but he conceded that it's nearly impossible to get permission from the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service because Macquarie is a protected nature reserve. -- *Thanks to [The Daily DX](#)*

Monster Dipole Can Deliver Monster Signal

(The ARRL Letter for March 11, 2021)



A [video](#) shows how Gary Watson, ZL3SV, in Nelson, New Zealand, installed an enormous all-band dipole with each leg extending 320 meters (about 1,050 feet). The antenna is multiple wavelengths on HF, and on 20 meters it has a gain of more than 16 dB, Watson says. It hears quite well, too.

A huge 12:1 balun resembling a utility pole power step-down transformer converts the impedance from 50 W unbalanced to 600 W balanced. The wire he uses

for each leg is aluminum-wrapped, power-line cable (10-millimeter cable with wrap), and he uses power-line fittings, because they're designed to handle the wire. The line has a 60-ton breaking strength.

Watson said he made the 600 W ladder line himself and he uses the antenna on all bands, typically running only 200 W. The coaxial feed line goes to his house down a slope from the antenna via a conduit. His home is entirely off the grid, powered by solar power. The noise level is very low at his location, with power lines some distance away, although his solar power system's inverter is nearby.

Watson says he can copy stations with the "monster" antenna that remain undetectable with a half-wave dipole.

Ham Bootcamp Program to be Offered in April

(The ARRL Letter of March 11, 2021)

The Nashua Area Radio Society ([NARS](#)) will again offer its popular Ham Bootcamp program on Saturday, April 14. Bootcamp is free and included demonstrations and tutorials designed to help newly licensed Technician-, General-, and Amateur Extra-class hams get on the air. It is also a great opportunity for prospective radio amateurs to learn what the hobby has to offer. Bootcamp additions include "Learning Morse Code." Registration and more information is on the Ham Bootcamp [web page](#). – *Thanks to NARS President Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC*

Comm Academy 2021 Set for Next Month, Online (and Free)

(The ARES Letter for March 17, 2021)

The 2021 Comm Academy is 2 days of training, talks, and information on emergency communications. This year's theme is *Disasters Here, There, and Everywhere - Are We Ready?* Comm Academy is an emergency communications and amateur radio conference to be held April 11-12. [Registration](#) is completely free, and you must register to gain access to the complete schedule and academy materials. It is entirely virtual and hosted online.

Headquartered in Seattle, Washington, Comm Academy is attended and supported by organizations including ARES; Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS); EOC Support Teams; RACES; Civil Air Patrol; Coast Guard Auxiliary; REACT; and CERT, among

others. All interested in emergency and amateur radio communications are welcome. Learn, network, and share your experiences with others.

The Comm Academy steering committee says that the annual event has continued to evolve by presenting keynotes and seminar tracks that engage beginner, intermediate, and advanced users in technologies, served agency support, volunteer management, self-preparedness, and how volunteer and professional communications are used, adapted and improved. The leadership has reviewed how it can preserve the direction and focus of the event while restricted by the pandemic. The event is always focused on education for communications leaders, volunteers, and professionals.

QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo Experiences Technical Issues, On-Demand Access Opens

(The ARRL Letter for March 18, 2021)



The [QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo](#) attracted thousands of participants over the March 13 - 14 weekend. Taking a different tack than it did for its inaugural event last August, the expo leveraged the capabilities of two virtual event platforms to increase interaction among attendees, speakers, and exhibitors. All did not go smoothly, however.

"Unfortunately, we had many technical issues with the Airmeet presentations and the integration of the vFairs and Airmeet platforms," expo chairman Eric Guth, 4Z1UG/WA6IGR, explained afterward in a message to participants. All recorded presentations are available for attendees during the expo's 30-day on-demand access period, which ends April 16.

ARRL, a QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo partner, enjoyed virtual visits from attendees to its two exhibits. One included staff representatives for Member Services, Radiosport, ARRL Field Day, and Field Services. The other exhibit highlighted the expertise of ARRL Laboratory personnel, who offered technical and practical advice to those stopping by.



On the team were Senior Test Engineer Bob Allison, WB1GCM, who streamed from inside the Lab's screen room where *QST* "Product Review" testing is conducted, and RFI Engineer Paul Cianciolo, W1VLF, who helped participants deal with pesky noise and interference issues. W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, conducted virtual tours of the Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Station all weekend.



All told, [16 staff members](#) worked in rotating shifts at ARRL Headquarters, greeting visitors through livestreaming video and audio. Several members of the ARRL Board of Directors were on the platform too.

CEO David Minster, NA2AA, delivered the event's keynote address. Minster, who arrived in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, said ARRL would become a bigger player in the digital age.

"A major part of the digital transformation at ARRL has to do with taking our excellence in content development and editing, and bringing it to video," Minster said. "You are seeing more activity from us on YouTube, the Learning Network (webinar series), and then later this year the launch of our Learning Center." Video, Minster pointed out, is always available and easy to pause and refer back to.



Amateur radio manufacturers and vendors including FlexRadio, Elecraft, Connect Systems, and Quicksilver Radio Products welcomed visitors and answered their questions on a one-to-one basis.

Guth apologized for the poor experience many participants had in accessing and navigating the event.



"I attempted to integrate a number of systems together in order to make a better user experience," he explained. "It was a noble idea, because I wanted the convention like last August, with the lounge tables of Airmeet to make it more interactive. We failed on this platform for many of you. I am very sorry."

"One of the things that we've stressed in all of our communications is that the QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo team is committed to constantly learning and improving what we do," Guth said in a statement. "Virtual conventions of this magnitude are new territory. We believe that there's a place for a virtual ham expo to serve the needs of the very large amateur radio community, especially those that don't attend in-person national or regional events (or even local events). We are committed to making that happen."

The expo announced on Wednesday, March 17, that 80 presentations had already been added to the platform [for on-demand viewing](#).

WORD TO THE WISE

(The ARRL Contest Update for March 3 and 17, 2021)

BIC, B-I-C.

"Butt In Chair" radio contests have a defined start time and end time. If an operator is not at the radio and making contacts, they're losing points. "I didn't do as well in the contest as last year - too many weekend distractions, not enough B-I-C."

Debounce

When pressing a button, or stomping on a footswitch, it may seem like the circuit will go from open to closed (or vice versa). But what *really* happens is the switch contacts make (or break) many times a second before settling into the new state. The transition period is called contact *bounce*, and it's the bane of digital circuits everywhere. To take a noisy, bouncy switch and have it emit a single, clean transition from one state to another is to *debounce* the switch.

OPERATING TIP

(The ARRL Contest Update for March 3 and 17, 2021)

Grounding and Bonding

According to Ward, NOAX, the "best time to do grounding and bonding work is before any equipment is installed." Starting with a clean slate, it's easier to define your protective zones and ensure all of your gear is within them.

Know DX Frequency Allocations

Not all countries have the same [frequency allocations as the U.S.](#) For example, calling CQ on 7.205 MHz in a 40-meter phone contest won't yield any Japanese contacts, since the JA 40-meter band ends at 7.200 MHz. Similarly, be aware that [IARU Region 1 stations have phone privileges below 7.100 MHz](#) and may be calling CQ there in some contests, but U.S. phone privileges start at 7.125 MHz. Sometimes a Region 1 station will announce a listening frequency that **is** legal for U.S. stations.

CONVERSATION

(The ARRL Contest Update for March 3, 2021)

Demographics and Dormancy

Frank's, K4FMH blog post "[Lemmings Over A Demographic Cliff?](#)" is a follow-up to his two-part series in the July/August and September/October 2020 National Contest

Journal (NCJ) entitled "The Demographics of Contesting." Frank's observations include that the data show radio contesters are older than the average ARRL member. Taking into account [information from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics on Leisure Time Use](#), he opines that this should be expected: "Leisure pursuits are highest during youth and young adulthood but dramatically taper off about ages 25-34 until age 55 and over. This hollowing out of leisure and sport time is a predictable outcome of competing and more important activities."

We should just expect during the course of someone's life they will not have a consistent level of involvement with the amateur radio hobby. Such an expectation makes it even more important that the early impression of the hobby one may get through a school activity, social organization, radio club, and so on be relevant, memorable, favorable, and pave the way for a return after a period of dormancy.

Frank argues that the format of the major radio contests may serve the leisure interests of established contesters -- those on the other end of the demographic spectrum from the beginners. They may not provide the best experience for radio contesting beginners. He might have something there: To be able to compete at a high level in a major contest as a single operator requires time, equipment, and skill that are probably beyond many in the "caterpillar" stage. Most school-age operators don't have the time for the all-important B-I-C on weekends. Those fortunate to be able to join seasoned teams of multi-operators at well-equipped stations have a different contesting experience than those plugging away solo. With the opportunity for mentorship, camaraderie of a group effort, and a chance to be part of something bigger, they'll be more likely to emerge from their expected dormancy period as a contest butterfly.

73, Brian N9ADG



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 2021 - 2022

April 7, Wednesday	Virtual Meeting, 7:00pm YouTube Live! and Zoom
May 5, Wednesday	Virtual Meeting, 7:00pm YouTube Live! and Zoom
June 2, Wednesday	Virtual Meeting, 7:00pm YouTube Live! and Zoom
June 26-27	ARRL Field Day
July 7, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
August 4, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
September 8, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
October 6, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
November 3, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
December 1, Wednesday	No Club Meeting
December 4, Saturday	Christmas Party

January 5, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
February 2, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
February 11 - 13	HamCation® 2022
March 2, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
April 6, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
May 4, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
June 1, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
June 25-26	ARRL Field Day
July 6, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
August 3, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
September 7, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
October 5, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
November 2, Wednesday	Meeting, 7:30pm at the Beardall Center
December 3, Saturday	Christmas Party
December 7, Wednesday	No Club Meeting



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Make checks payable to:
Orlando Amateur Radio Club

Mail to:
Orlando Amateur Radio Club
Post Office Box 574962
Orlando FL 32857

To have your membership card mailed to you, please include a SASE with your check.

Date: ___/___/20___ [] Regular Member [] Family Member [] Associate Member
[] New Membership [] Renewal [] CMP

Name: _____ Call _____ Class _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address (print) _____

(Home) Phone: _____ (Cell) Phone _____ Birth Month _____

Rates: Regular [] 1 year \$15.00 [] 3 years \$40.00 [] 6 years \$75.00

Rates: Family [] 1 year \$5.00 per family member Husband, Wife or Child under 18

Rates: Associate [] 1 year \$15.00 Dues Total: _____

All Membership(s) will expire ONE, THREE or SIX year(s) from date paid.

Other Club Affiliations: _____

Are you an ARRL Member: [] Yes [] No

Name Badges: White letters on Black background with Gold embossed OARC logo.

[] Regular 3" x 1.5" @ \$10.00 each

Name: _____ Call _____

All badges are to be picked up at the General meeting or add \$3.00 for shipping & handling.

Shipping & Handling: [] Yes [] No

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