



RCA Amateur Radio Club Indianapolis, IN

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AUGUST 2021

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE RCA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB WILL BE TUESDAY,
AUGUST 10th at 6:30 PM AT NORTH SIDE EVENTS, FORMERLY THE
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, IN THE GAME ROOM, 2100 EAST 71st, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

RCA ARC NEWS

The August 10th meeting will be an in-person meeting, our first since the Pandemic started. We'll be at our previous location, the venue which was previously The Knights of Columbus, 2100 East 71st Street. Meeting will be in the Game Room, 6:30 pm.

SUMMARY OF JULY MEETING SUMMARY – Thanks to all who attended the July Zoom meeting. Our August meeting will be held at the Knights of Columbus, the same location as before the pandemic. The management as well as possibly the menu has changed. The meeting room (game room) is given to us at no cost provided those attending buy some food. Other possible locations for meetings were discussed. It's next to impossible to find a place which doesn't charge for a meeting room. Our Club did very well at the Indy Hamfest. Thanks to those who helped out. Echolink on '88 the repeater was off for awhile as a power supply for an internet switch failed. A new network switch with power supply was purchased. Field Day turned out well despite a multitude of relatively minor problems (read computer problems). Will there be an Indy Hamfest next year? No one has stepped up and volunteered to organize it. It appears a new venue would have to be found because of the price increases at the Marion County Fairgrounds.

AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE TEST SESSION

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2021
Time: Starting at 12:00 pm **by appointment only.**
Location: Salvation Army EDS Training Facility, 4020 Georgetown Rd
Indianapolis, IN 46254-2407
Required: FRN and completed form NCVFC 605.
Contact: Jim Rinehart, k9ru@arrl.net, 317 721-1458

HAMFESTS, OPERATING EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Aug. 07 Elkhart East Hamfest, Northern Indiana Event Center,
<https://elkharteasthamfest.com/>
- Aug. 7-8 ARRL 222 MHZ and Up distance contest <http://www.arrl.org/222-mhz-and-up-distance-contest>
- Aug. 14 Hendricks County Tailgate Fest, Avon UMC, Avon, IN
kc9sqd425@gmail.com
- Aug. 20 Ft Wayne Radio Club Tailgate Hamfest, On the campus of Purdue Fort Wayne (PFW) <https://fwrc.info/.../new-venue-for-annual-tailgate-hamfest/>
- Aug 21-22 ARRL 10 GHz Contest <http://www.arrl.org/10-ghz-up>
- Sept. 11 Tippecanoe County Hamfest, Tippecanoe Co. 4H Fairgrounds,
chell1470@gmail.com
- Oct. 02 60th Annual Hoosier Hills Hamfest, Lawrence County 4-H Fairgrounds,
<http://www.w9qyq.org>
- Oct. 16 Shelbyville 2021 Tailgate, Shelby County Fairgrounds,
<http://www.brvars.com>

INDY HAMFEST – The hamfest was a big success! Thanks to everyone who helped load and haul stuff to the hamfest and setup and man the tables.

We ended up taking seven car loads and three pickup truck loads of stuff to the fairgrounds. Thanks to thank Ken Bandy, KJ9B for volunteering to haul a load Thursday as well as Jim, AF9A.

Ken Bandy and K9RU also set up the Indianapolis Radio Club display with the W9JP amateur radio HF FT8 demonstration stations which proved popular. Goodforums: Volunteer Monitor Program Administrator by Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, ARRL by Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, Central Division Vice Director and WD8DSB, Don Kirk on locating interference.

At the RCA ARC tables we had a chance to see and talk with a lot of RCA former and retired employees and club members. The predicted rain held off Friday and Saturday and had a great time at the 50th Indy Hamfest.

The RCA ARC has been funded by selling junk at the Indy Hamfest since 1976 and thanks to the Indy Hamfest Committee to providing such a great event over the years.

The Indy Hamfest sponsors an ARRL scholarship and has provided funding for area repeaters including the old ATV repeater. - K9RU

ARRL ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN THE CENTRAL DIVISION – ARRL Central Division Director Kermit Carlson, W9XA, has stepped down as Central Division Director, making the announcement at the July 2021 Board of Directors meeting this past weekend. Vice Director Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, has acceded to the Director's chair, and ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, has appointed Brent Walls, N9BA, to succeed Luetzelschwab as the Central Division Vice Director.

An ARRL Life Member, Walls served as Indiana Section Manager from 2016 until 2018. Active in ARES, he is a former ARRL Indiana Section Emergency Coordinator and also served as Marion County, Indiana, Emergency Coordinator. He is an ARRL VEC Volunteer Examiner.

Carlson served both as Vice Director and then Director of the Central Division for a total of 12 years. He said his resignation stemmed from "an intractable conflict" between Board and family obligations that would impinge upon his travel on behalf of ARRL. "It would be impossible to maintain the level of in-person engagement with the Members that I believe is essential," Carlson said.

Carlson said his "most challenging and rewarding experiences" include 11 years as Chair of the Electromagnetic Compatibility Committee (EMC) and his recently concluded term as the chair of the ARRL CEO Search Committee. He will continue to chair the EMC. --ARRL Letter

INDIANAPOLIS BROADCASTING – **WFNI** former **WIBC** on 1070 will go silent. Now, in a sign of the times, **Emmis Communications** is preparing to transition the remaining listeners of a Class B AM with 50kw during daylight hours and 10kw after dark to a pair of 250-watt FM translators fed from the HD2 signal of a 13,500-watt FM sibling.

Originally WIBC-AM, WFNI-AM 1070 has used this tower site in Indianapolis for its Sports Talk programming. The site has been sold, the towers are coming down; WFNI will be silenced.

WIBC went on the air on October 30, 1938. In April 1994, it was spun to the Indianapolis-based company founded by Jeff Smulyan.

WTTK will host **WXIN** ATSC3 (NextGen) commencing 10th August. WRTV is mentioned too, but not seen the application yet.

FIRST X-CLASS MAJOR SOLAR FLARE OF SOLAR CYCLE 25 BLACKS OUT HF ON JULY 3

For a brief time on July 3, a lot of radio amateurs were wondering, "Where did the bands go?" as the first X-class solar flare in 4 years blacked out HF propagation for a time.

"I was on 20-meter FT8, and my waterfall display went from solid red signals to solid nothing in the blink of an eye," Scott Craig, WA4TTK, told "K7RA Solar Update" Editor Tad Cook, K7RA. "It lasted about 10 minutes." Craig was not alone.

"Many American radio amateurs reported sudden HF propagation blackouts on Saturday morning, July 3, when solar active region 12838 produced an X1.5 major solar flare that reached maximum intensity at 1429 UTC, the first X-class solar flare of Solar Cycle 25 and the first since

2017," said Frank Donovan, W3LPL. "HF propagation blackouts are caused when x-ray and extreme ultraviolet radiation from X-class solar flares strongly ionizes the absorbing D-region in the Earth's sun-facing dense lower ionosphere," he explained.

In this instance, it caused what NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center ([SWPC](#)) calls an R3-level or "strong" radio blackout (on a [scale](#) of R1 - R5). An R3 incident can cause a "wide-area blackout of HF radio communication [and] loss of radio contact for about an hour on [the] sunlit side of Earth. Low-frequency navigation signals degraded for about an hour."

Donovan said that X-class major solar flares are necessary consequences of steadily increasing Solar Cycle 25 activity. "95% of all X-class solar flares occur when the solar flux index is 90 or greater. The remaining 5% can occur any time during the solar cycle," he points out. "X1-class major solar flares typically degrade HF propagation for only an hour or two at mid and high latitudes, only on Earth's sunlit side."

X-class major flares are measured on an open-ended scale. The strongest one ever recorded was an X28 flare in 2003, hundreds of times more powerful than the July 3 X1.5 solar flare. X10-class and stronger solar flares typically have effects that last for most of a day and affect the entire sunlit side of the Earth. Fortunately, X10-class solar flares occur only about once every 20 years or more.

"Much more severe and long-lasting HF propagation degradations are often caused by the coronal mass ejections (CMEs) often associated with -- but not caused by -- major solar flares," Donovan explained. "HF propagation degradation caused by CMEs typically begins about 2 days after the effects of the associated solar flare, the duration of the delay depending on interactions between the CME and the solar wind."

The CME associated with the July 3 X1.5 solar flare is likely to have little to no effect on HF propagation going forward, because the active region was very close to the western edge of the visible solar disk when the CME erupted. Region 12838 rotated off the visible disk on Sunday, July 4.

Solar flares have no significant effect on VHF ionospheric propagation, but can degrade satellite communications passing through the ionosphere. More frequent, less powerful M-class medium solar flares produce short-duration degradation at high latitudes. Very frequent, much weaker A-, B-, and C-class solar flares do not degrade HF propagation. -- *Thanks to Frank Donovan, W3LPL*

JUNE 2021 VOLUNTEER MONITOR PROGRAM REPORT RELEASED

The June 2021 activity report of the Volunteer Monitoring (VM) Program has been released. The VM Program is a joint initiative between ARRL and the FCC to enhance compliance in the Amateur Radio Service.

- The FCC was requested to review a vanity call sign application filed by a Georgia licensee because of an apparently false answer to the question regarding a felony conviction.

- A licensee in Massachusetts received an *Advisory Notice* concerning obscenity and harassment on 160 meters. The FCC will hold for review any renewal application filed by this licensee.

- A General-class licensee in San Antonio, Texas, received an *Advisory Notice* for operation in the Amateur Extra-class portion of the 20-meter band.
- Licensees in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia received *Advisory Notices* concerning failure to identify and other possible violations as part of a general audit of complaints about licensee conduct on 1.938, 3.860, 3.895, and 3.927 MHz.
- In May, Volunteer Monitors logged 1,514 hours on HF frequencies and 2,072 hours on VHF frequencies and above.

The Volunteer Monitor Program Administrator had one meeting with the FCC, and two cases were referred to the FCC for further action. One case involves a taxi company in Alaska operating on 2 meters. -- *Thanks to Volunteer Monitor Program Administrator Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH*

REGISTRATIONS STRONG FOR 24TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE LIGHTSHIP WEEKEND

Set for August 21 - 22, the 24th annual International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend ([ILLW](#)) will be back, despite the disruption of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Each year, typically on the third weekend of August, [participants](#) set up portable stations at or near lighthouses and lightships around the world. Last year, prospects for the event were looking dim, but "regular supporters wanted the event to be a beacon of hope," the event's sponsor said. More than 360 registrations from 43 countries backed up their belief. As of July 8, this year's [registration tally](#) had already topped 200, with 25 participants signed up to activate lighthouses or lightships in the US. The ILLW typically attracts entries for some 500 lighthouses in more than 40 countries. The event has few rules and is not a typical contest-type event. The ILLW will begin at 0001 UTC on August 21 and continue through 2400 UTC on August 22.

Each station's operators decide how they will operate their station with respect to modes and bands. There are no power restrictions or entry classes and no scores.

"We wish operators to enjoy themselves and have fun while making contact with as many amateur radio stations as possible," ILLW said in the event announcement. "We request that stations take time to work other lighthouses or lightships, as well as the slow operators or newly licensed or QRP stations." Participants contact the relevant authorities to obtain permission to operate. It is within the guidelines of the event to move operations from a lighthouse to a museum for historic reasons. In any case, the lighthouse should be visible to, and visited by, the public wherever possible. Visit the ILLW website for more detailed information.

MOST 2021 FIELD DAY PARTICIPANTS ENTERED IN CLASS D

In the second ARRL Field Day (FD) with rule waivers in place, some 4,815 entries were received at ARRL Headquarters by July 13 -- the majority in Class D (Home Stations). Last year saw more than 10,213 entries and 18,886 participants. Before the pandemic, in 2019, 3,113 entries were submitted, with 36,420 total participants.

"It appears that larger groups were more the norm in pre-pandemic times, as expected," ARRL Contest Program Manager Paul Bourque, N1SFE, observed. "From the discussions I've been having with participants, even though some groups gathered in larger numbers this year, many participants chose either to gather in smaller groups or to operate solo from home as Class D or Class E stations. Although I don't think we'll see the number of entries that we did last year, we're close in terms of the number of participants."

With about 2 weeks to go until the entry submission deadline, the tally of participants reported is 16,166. They made just north of 1 million total contacts.

"FD was already a success on Saturday, with the stations working smoothly, and lots of local visitors dropping by," said Andy Goss, AA5JF, at Augusta University Amateur Radio Club's WA4AUG. "An hour after sunrise on Sunday, we were counting our points, when Darby, KK4PEQ, announced he had just worked a station on 6-meter phone -- just playing around on 50 MHz using the 20/15/10 tribander," Goss said. "He stayed on 6 [meters] for five QSOs, but we quickly [moved] to 10 and 15, finding those bands were open to just about everywhere, and we doubled our score in just 3 hours. What a rush!"

FD Entries as of July 13th The breakdown of Field Day entries by class, as of July 13, showed 4,815 total entries, with 613 in Class A, 582 in Class B, 57 in Class C (Mobile), 2,619 in Class D, 858 in Class E, and 86 in Class F.

40TH ANNUAL ARRL-TAPR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE SET

The 40th annual ARRL-TAPR Digital Communications Conference ([DCC](#)) will be held online September 17 - 18. Registered DCC attendees participating via Zoom will be able to interact with presenters and other attendees via a chat room and have the option to "raise a virtual hand" to ask questions. You may register to attend, but non-registered participants can view the livestream on YouTube at no cost, as well as chat and ask questions via the moderator monitoring the channel.

[Registration](#) is free for TAPR members and \$30 for non-members. (Members receive a 100% discount at checkout.) Non-members who would like to join TAPR and receive the free DCC pass can add TAPR membership and DCC registration to their shopping carts. After checkout, they will receive the free DCC pass when their membership is processed.

The DCC is soliciting technical papers for presentation and for publication in the *Conference Proceedings*. Authors do not need to participate in the conference to have their papers included in the *Proceedings*. The submission deadline for papers is August 15. [Submit](#) papers via email to Maty Weinberg, KB1EIB. Papers will be published exactly as submitted, and authors will retain all rights.

Conference papers will be distributed as PDFs to participants. Printed copies of the papers will be available for sale at Lulu (URL to be determined).

Speakers are invited to deliver presentations on topics of interest without submitting papers for the *Conference Proceedings*.

All speakers and presenters should [contact](#) Steve Bible, N7HPR, to reserve a slot for a presentation. Indicate whether you need a 15- or 30-minute slot, and whether you need to present

on a specific day. A pre-recorded presentation may be submitted in lieu of a live virtual presentation.

Paper and presentation topic areas include, but are not limited to, software-defined radio (SDR), digital voice, digital satellite communication, digital signal processing (DSP), HF digital modes, adapting IEEE 802.11 systems for amateur radio, Global Positioning System (GPS), Automatic Position Reporting System (APRS), Linux in amateur radio, AX.25 updates, internet operability with amateur radio networks, TCP/IP networking over amateur radio, mesh and peer-to-peer wireless networking, emergency and homeland defense, and backup digital communications using amateur radio.

Ad hoc "lightning talks" on various topics of interest will be announced throughout the conference, and registered attendees will be able to participate in any lightning talk that interests them. Hardware and software demonstrations will be conducted during the DCC by means of Zoom's breakout room feature. -- *Thanks to Stan Horzempa, WA1LOU*

MURPHY LOVES 6 METER PROPAGATION

In the days leading up to the CQ WW VHF Contest last weekend, six meters was hot! Watching the FT8 spots roll by from my station in grid CN88, it was nice to see nearly every part of the US showing up in the decode window, and I marveled at the DX stations on the other end of the messages. Local stations were working into the Pacific, Japan, China, and beyond. Six was open across the U.S.: I was able to hear the US-side of QSOs between all of the call areas gorging on some great openings to the EU. In the evening hours on a few of the days the DX paths subsided but six was still open across the continent. It was fun to call CQ and work all across the U.S. After a few days of that it was easy to be convinced it was "normal." As recently as July 15, various parts of the Pacific Northwest had a localized yet strong opening to Asia. I had great hopes that the conditions would continue as we headed into the weekend.

Guess who showed up on Friday? Our pal Murphy. Checking conditions on Saturday at contest start, and then periodically through the weekend confirmed that the bands had lost their previous luster. Paul, K7CW has a well-equipped 6 meter station, summed it up: "It was tough going this time for me. I definitely wasn't in the sweet spot. This contest can be great or dismal. This time it was much better than dismal, but far from great. It'll be better next time, eh?"

Murphy does seem to have a sense of humor. After the contest ended at 2100 UTC on Sunday, 3 hours later at a bit past 0000 UTC, six meters opened wide from the PNW to Asia, yet again! – N9ADG - ARRL Contest Letter

FCC INVESTIGATING ALLEGED JAMMING ON 40 METERS

Reports suggest that jamming stations have been deployed on the lower portion of 40 meters. The jamming appears to be coming from Cuba. The signals, spaced at regular intervals, exhibit a squishy, popping noise. The apparent jamming showed up after anti-government protesters took to the streets in Cuba, followed by a government crackdown. So far, there's no proven connection between the jamming and the protests, as evidence has been circumstantial. DX spots suggest that Cuban hams are on the air on SSB but do appear rare on 40 meters. A lot of Cuban spots

point to FT8 activity. The jamming issue has drawn the attention of the FCC, which is looking into the matter, according to one tech publication.

"Too many people around the world are fighting uphill battles to be able to use technology to expand economic opportunity, express themselves, and organize without fear of reprisal," an FCC spokesperson told [Motherboard](#). "The FCC is committed to supporting the free flow of information and ensuring that the internet remains open for everyone. We are assessing these reports in conjunction with our field agents and communicating with the Department of State as this issue develops."

FCC TO RE-ESTABLISH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, SOLICITS MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS

The FCC is seeking nominations for a chairperson and members of the Technological Advisory Council (TAC). In a July 21 [Public Notice](#), the Commission [announced](#) that it intends to re-establish the TAC for 2 years by August 20, 2021. It's anticipated that the renewed panel could hold its first meeting in October.

The TAC provides technical advice to the FCC and makes recommendations on the issues and questions presented to it. The panel typically has several radio amateurs among its members. Greg Lapin, N9GL, has represented ARRL on the TAC.

Among other issues, FCC Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel will ask the TAC to start looking beyond 5G and conceptualize 6G. In addition, she'll ask the TAC to study advanced spectrum-sharing techniques, implementation of artificial intelligence, and machine learning to improve the utilization and administration of spectrum and other emerging technologies.

All organizational or individual members appointed to the Council or its working groups are subject to an ethics review by the Commission's Office of General Counsel. Council members receive no compensation for their service. Nominations for membership must be submitted to the FCC by August 20.

Procedures for submitting nominations are spelled out in the *Public Notice*, which includes details on membership qualifications and obligations.

The FCC said it's particularly interested in receiving nominations and expressions of interest from individuals and organizations in these sectors:

- Communications service providers and organizations representing communications service providers.
- Manufacturers of communications equipment and organizations representing manufacturers of communications equipment.
- Providers of internet applications or cloud-based services.
- Scientists and engineers from academia or independent consultants who are recognized experts in their field.

- Qualified representatives of other stakeholders and interested parties with relevant expertise.

"Members will be selected to balance the expertise and viewpoints that are necessary to effectively address the issues to be considered by the Council," the FCC said.

8-METER EXPERIMENTAL STATION ON THE AIR FROM THE US

[WL2XUP](#) is an FCC Part 5 Experimental station operated by Lin Holcomb, NI4Y, in Georgia. It's licensed to operate with up to 400 W effective radiated power (ERP) between 40.660 MHz to 40.700 MHz.

John Desmond, EI7GL, reports that as of mid-July, WL2XUP was intermittently transmitting on Weak-Signal Propagation Reporter (WSPR) on 40.662 MHz (1500 Hz) for 2 minutes out of every 10, with an output power of 20 W ERP into an omnidirectional antenna. For FT8 check-ins and tests, an ERP of 100 W may be used. The band is affected by several propagation modes, including tropospheric ducting, sporadic E, transequatorial propagation (TEP), and F2 propagation. As Desmond notes, the 40 MHz band will open a lot earlier than 50 MHz and could be a useful resource for stations monitoring the transatlantic path.

A 2019 *Petition for Rulemaking* ([RM-11843](#)) asked the FCC to create a new 8-meter amateur radio allocation on a secondary basis. The *Petition* suggests the new band could be centered on an industrial-scientific-medical (ISM) segment somewhere between 40.51 and 40.70 MHz. The spectrum between 40 and 41 MHz is currently allocated to the federal government and, as such, within the purview of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ([NTIA](#)).

ARRL member Michelle Bradley, KU3N, of Maryland, filed the petition on behalf of REC Networks, which she founded and described in the *Petition* as "a leading advocate for a citizen's access to spectrum," including amateur radio spectrum.

SHORTS

The QSO Recorder Indexing Service lets you hear your contacts. Developed by Vasiliy Gokoyev, K3IT, the QSO Recorder Indexing Service ([QSORDEX](#)) allows radio amateurs to share their contest and DXpedition contact audio recordings. Users then can search the site to retrieve them by call sign. Audio files are in .mp3 format, saved according to the system's naming convention, and then uploaded to the Dropbox.com file-hosting service. The site itself does not store any files; it only indexes them. To add your own contacts, register at [Dropbox.com](#) and download and install the [Dropbox PC client](#). A free 2 GB Dropbox account can store approximately 12,000 contacts, although users may purchase additional space above what is provided with a free account. See the QSOrder website for additional details.

Starting on January 1, 2022, EZNEC Pro/2 will be free, and may be copied and distributed. Roy Lewallen, W7EL, says that after 31 years of "developing, selling, and supporting EZNEC and its predecessor, ELNEC," he is [retiring](#). He will no longer support the software.

DX Engineering has acquired Top Ten Devices. The new owner will manufacture and distribute three of Top Ten Devices' signature products under the Top Ten Devices brand -- the A/B Station Selector, the Op Swapper, and the Band Aide Band Decoder. Formed by Dave Hawes, N3RD, and George Cutsogeorge, W2VJN, in 1991, Top Ten Devices built a strong reputation for producing high-performance and affordable equipment for the amateur radio community. "DX Engineering is excited for the opportunity to carry on the legacy that the innovators at Top Ten Devices have built over the past 3 decades," said DX Engineering CEO Tim Duffy, K3LR.

The Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) has posted a complete copy of [Where Do We Go Next](#) by Martti Laine, OH2BH.

On July 15, at 10 AM EDT, ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Connecticut, hosted a rededication ceremony, recognizing ARRL's commitment to all radio amateurs who enhance the communications capability and security of the nation. The event coincided with the attendance of ARRL's all-volunteer Board of Directors, who had traveled in from across the country for in-person committee and Board meetings this week.

"Associations advance America," ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, said in his remarks. "Associations bring people together around a common purpose. For ARRL and our members, that purpose is amateur radio... Over the last year, I have witnessed the extraordinary dedication of ARRL members, our staff, and our Board of Directors. Without skipping a beat, we have worked together to equip our members with the opportunities they need to serve an active and vibrant Amateur Radio Service for our country." Roderick also recognized members of ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) for serving their communities with essential communications When All Else Fails®.

A [video](#) of the rededication ceremony is posted on ARRL's YouTube channel.

Over-the-horizon radars are operating with impunity in ham radio allocations. In its [June newsletter](#), the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region 1 Monitoring System (IARUMS) said over-the-horizon radars (OTHRs) have not yielded their dominance as ham band intruders. "The number of observations varies slightly but is always within a similar range," the newsletter said. "The same is true for other radio systems (such as CIS-12, etc). With summer propagation (including sporadic E), numerous driftnet radio buoys and other fishing gear were again being heard on 10 meters, illegally serving to mark fishing nets at sea, the newsletter said. These typically operate in the 28.000 - 28.450 MHz segment. Transmissions are short but frequent throughout the day. These often identify in CW, transmitting from one to three letters, although buoys with a constant carrier are also observed. GPS buoys transmit short bursts in FSK (F1B) with their positions scrambled. Monitors regularly encounter "pirates" operating without any identifier.

Many stations will take to the airwaves August 2 - 15 to celebrate the 4th anniversary of FT8. All stations will use call signs with "FTDMC" or "FTDM" in the suffix. The activity also celebrates the 2nd anniversary of the FT8 Digital Mode Club. Logs will be uploaded to LoTW and eQSL. QSL cards will be available. Stations planning to participate include: 4J8FTDM, OZ8FTDMC, RO3FTDM, 9K8FTDMC, A60FTDMC, DQ8FTDMC, GB0DMC, HZ8FTDMC, and many others. A certificate will be available with bronze, silver, gold, and platinum levels for working them. -- Thanks to [The Daily DX](#)

AO-109 (RadFxSat-2/AMSAT Fox-1E) is now open for amateur use. AMSAT's Engineering and Operations Teams advise operators to use efficient modes for making contacts, such as CW

or FT4, because issues with the satellite make SSB voice contacts "challenging at best." An article in the May/June 2021 issue (Vol. 44, No. 3) of *The AMSAT Journal* details the various attempts to characterize AO-109 and its apparent problems. -- *Thanks to Jerry Buxton, NØJY, and Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA*

The third annual [World Wide Digi DX Contest](#) is set for August 28 - 29. See the website for details. -- *Thanks to Ed Muns, W0YK*

The Daily DX Editor Bernie McClenny, W3UR, has offered a suggestion for calling DX while using FT8. He advises that FT8 users avoid the "Generated Std Msgs (TX 1)" field when attempting to call DX on FT8. "You can turn it off by double clicking on it," he said. "When the band opens up, serious DXers want to get in and get out as quickly as possible. We don't know how long an opening will last, [and] the DX station does not care about your grid locator. You want to get your call sign and report to the DX station as quickly as possible, so you don't miss the opening. When you are calling a DX station, set the FT8 software to go to message 2 (e.g., TZ4AM KZ3ZZZ -14). Then you want to get the "RR73." That is all you need for a valid contact. During contests where the grid locator is needed, by all means, send it."

Swiss radio amateurs are facing a fee to use the QO-100 Satellite. In what might be a first, Switzerland's telecommunications regulator OFCOM is charging the equivalent of \$76.25 to issue special permits to radio amateurs to use the QO-100 (Es'hail-2) amateur satellite transponders. According to a post on the website for the [USKA](#) -- Switzerland's IARU member-society -- the regulator wishes to protect license-exempt users in the 2.4 GHz industrial, scientific, and medical (ISM) band, and OFCOM reserves the right to withdraw the special permit if problems arise. The special permit entitles the holder to use a transmitter with a maximum output of 100 W PEP for a satellite uplink in the 2400 - 2410 MHz band. As part of their application, radio amateurs must provide coordinates, antenna gain in dBi, antenna height above ground, antenna direction, and a telephone number where the radio amateur can be reached while operating, in addition to the usual name and call sign information.

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