



## ARRL Programs and Services Committee Report to the Board of Directors – January 2022

The Programs and Services Committee (PSC) is pleased to present this report to the ARRL Board of Directors covering PSC activities for the second six months of calendar year 2021. The PSC met in-person on July 15<sup>th</sup> in-person in Windsor, CT, and via Zoom video conferences on Sept 29<sup>th</sup>, and November 29<sup>th</sup>. The PSC is scheduled to meet next in Windsor, CT on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM EST, in conjunction with the ARRL Annual Board meeting

**ARRL By-law 39:** The Programs and Services Committee shall:

- Guide development of service delivery mechanisms, evaluate services, and recommend program priorities.
- Advise Chief Executive Officer on services provided to individual members other than publications, including but not limited to contests and awards, information services including Logbook of the World and W1AW, and incoming and outgoing QSL bureau services.
- Advise Chief Executive Officer on volunteer programs, including but not limited to the field organization\*, affiliated clubs\*, volunteer examiners, Volunteer Counsel/Consulting Engineers, and educational initiatives.
- Evaluate and recommend awards recipients to the Board for outstanding volunteer service or outstanding achievement.

\* Field services and affiliated clubs now fall under the purview of the new Emergency Communications and Field Services Committee (EC-FSC), however, are still listed in the website By-Laws as under the PSC jurisdiction.)

**2021 PSC Voting members:**

Director Lippert, AC0W, (CAC Board Liaison)  
Director McIntyre K6WX  
Director Norris K5UZ, (DXAC Board Liaison)  
Director Ritz, W7VO, Chair  
Director Zygielbaum, K0AIZ  
Vice Director Grady, N2SRK  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Vallio, W6RGG, (Officer Liaison)

**2021 PSC Non-Voting members:**

Mr. Jahnke, W9JJ, ARRL Radiosport and Regulatory Information Manager  
Mr. Naumann, W5OV, (Staff Liaison and Secretary)

**The following are highlights from the three PSC meetings held during the period:****Awards:**

During the July 2021 PSC meeting, the following awards were vetted, approved and sent for a full Board vote:

*2020 Doug DeMaw, W1FB, Technical Excellence Award*, awarded to Steve Franke, K9AN, Bill Somerville, G4WJS, and Dr. Joe Taylor, K1JT.

*2021 ARRL Technical Service Award*, awarded to James Baxter, K0UA

*2021 Phil McGan Silver Antenna Award*, awarded to John Levo, W8KIW

*2021 Technical Innovation Award*, awarded to Steve Hynal, KF7O, Wojciech Kaczmariski, SP5WWP, and Roger Clark, VK3KYY

*2021 ARRL Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award*, awarded to Katherine Forson, KT5KMF

*2021 ARRL Herb S. Brier Instructor of the Year Award*, awarded to David Ritter, ND4MR

All awards presented passed full Board vote by acclamation.

**Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) /Contesting:**

The CAC has continued to be very engaged and working well with the PSC under the direction of CAC Chair Craig Thompson, K9CT, and CAC Board Liaison Bill Lippert, AC0W. They have completed most of the tasks they were assigned in 2020 and 2021, and it appears at last their backlog of tasks is dwindling. A status of current CAC Taskings can be found in Document #22, *“Contest Advisory Committee Semi-Annual Report for the American Radio Relay League Board of Director’s Meeting - January 2022”*.

### **ARRL Field Day:**

In January the PSC voted to approve a new ARRL Field Day rule waiver for 2021 due to continuing COVID related issues that carried on from 2020. The waiver changed ARRL Field Day rules so they were the same as rules accepted for 2020, with the exception that Class D (home stations, commercial power), and Class E (home stations on emergency power), were both limited to 150 W PEP output. (i.e.: "Low Power") This change was done to reduce a problem noted with the 2020 waivers, where members complained that Class D stations pretty much dominated the event due to the use of high power and larger antennas than most Field Day stations use.

At its July meeting the PSC requested that ARRL staff prepare and send out an ARRL Field Day rules survey to members to get their feedback as to what they would like to see for their Field Day rules for both 2022, (possibly still under possible COVID restrictions), and for 2023 and beyond, (when the restrictions are expected to be fully removed). Since the July PSC meeting, several other suggestions from members came in, and were also included in the survey:

- Should we limit the Low Power category to 100 W PEP versus the 150 W PEP limit, as was recently done for ARRL contests? (This change is being pushed heavily by the contest community.)
- Should we eliminate the High Power, (1500 W PEP), option for ALL FD stations? (ie: Should FD be QRP and Low Power only?)

The survey was completed by ARRL Radiosport staff working with the PSC Chair Ritz, and a Survey Monkey website link was e-mailed out to about 12,000 previous ARRL Field Day participants in late December, with a cut-off date right before the next PSC meeting on January 20, 2022. Staff also posted the survey link on several social media outlets, including the ARRL Field Day Facebook page. Results of the survey will be discussed at the January 2022 PSC meeting. It is expected that a decision will be made as to exactly what future ARRL Field Day rules will look like during that meeting.

### **DXCC/DX Advisory Committee:**

During 2021 DXAC leadership changed hands when Chris Shalvoy, K2CS was appointed the new Chair by President Roderick, replacing John Yodis, K2VV. Director Norris, K5UZ, the DXAC Board Liaison has kept in close contact with the DXAC throughout the year, as required.

The DXAC held a Zoom call under their new leadership on Nov 14, where they discussed several topics of interest to the PSC:

- Reviewed reports of alleged FT8 "robots" being used in some DX-peditions and DX operators, and decided that the ARRL Awards Committee will have to adjudicate as necessary.

- “Pay-to-Play” discussion: “Want a QSL card or LoTW confirmation for your contact with me? Cough up some dough!”. The consensus was that while ARRL believes this is not ethical, it is not illegal.
- Deciding whether or not a DX-pedition “sitting on the dock of the bay” counts for DXCC credit. It was decided that as long as the dock is a permanent structure connected to dry land, it’s OK to use as an operating base.

#### **LoTW:**

No real activity in the preceding six months related to LoTW, other than Director McIntyre providing the PSC status reports from the LoTW Committee.

#### **ARRL Clean Signal Initiative:**

Due to complaints from amateurs related to poor signal quality noted in ARRL contests and noted during on-the-air operating by several PSC members, during the February PSC meeting it was decided to create a new ad-hoc working group, the *Working Group for Transmitter Cleanliness*, to explore exactly what the ARRL should, and can, do to help with the situation. PSC Chair Ritz volunteered to assemble the new working group.

Within a few months, PSC Chair Ritz assembled the final working group, consisting of well-known “subject matter experts” from both within ARRL walls, and from the amateur radio technical community at large: Those members are:

Director Luetzelschwab, K9LA

Director McIntyre, K6WX

Director Ritz, W7VO, Chair pro-tem

Ed Hare, W1RFI, Manager, ARRL Lab, and Staff Liaison

Ward Silver, NOAX, Lead Editor, ARRL Handbook and Antenna Book

Rob Sherwood, NCOB, Owner, Sherwood Engineering

After a few months of effort and several Zoom meetings by the group, the result was the *ARRL Clean Signal Initiative* white paper, which is attached to PSC Motion #1 for consideration during the January 2022 Board meeting. A short excerpt from the paper abstract:

“The proposed *Clean Signal Initiative* (CSI) is a project to clearly define the signal quality problem and present it to the amateur community, along with mechanisms to address and correct the problem. This presents a unique opportunity for ARRL, “*The National Association for Amateur Radio*”, to be the definitive technical leader in this regard.”.

The working group has now completed its tasking and is expected to be disbanded during January PSC meeting. Should PSC Motion #1 pass, the CSI proposal calls for a new ARRL committee, the *ARRL Technical Standards Committee*, to be assembled and tasked by ARRL staff in support of the initiative.

### **Presidential Volunteer Service Award Program:**

Earlier this year an ARRL member contacted Northwestern Division Director Ritz and suggested ARRL look into participating in the US government sponsored Presidential Service Award program. The PSC agreed that ARRL needed to investigate whether or not it might be practical and worthwhile to do so. (Information on the program from the Presidential Service Award website (<https://presidentialserviceawards.gov/>):

“In 2003, the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President’s Volunteer Service Award to recognize the important role of volunteers in America’s strength and national identity. This award honors individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too.

The PVSA has continued under each administration, honoring the volunteers who are using their time and talents to solve some of the toughest challenges facing our nation.

Led by the AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light, this program allows Certifying Organizations to recognize their most exceptional volunteers.”

The PSC decided this was a viable program for ARRL to be involved with as a certifying organization, with the major benefit of demonstrating to our government and NGO strategic partners (FEMA, Red Cross, etc.), that ARRL fully supports and recognizes the exceptional public service ARRL members provide to served agencies.

Unfortunately, ARRL involvement in the program cannot begin until the new Personify association management system is up and running, so at best will have a mid-2022 launch date.

### **Final thoughts from the PSC Chair:**

It has been my extreme pleasure to work with the rest of the 2021 PSC team this year, and I would like to recognize and thank all the PSC members for their diligence during what has been a banner year for obstacles and challenges placed ahead of us by COVID. This has been a great *team* to work with, with an emphasis on “*team*”.

The PSC has worked hard this year to establish better working relationships with both the CAC, and DXAC, and for that I am proud of what we have accomplished.

The temporary rules waivers proposed and accepted by the PSC for Field Day 2021 were wildly popular with the vast majority of the ARRL general membership, and made Field Day a reality for many amateurs that otherwise would not have been able to participate to a meaningful level with their local club. The Field Day survey currently in the hands of ARRL members will make them feel a part of the decision process affecting their most beloved operating event, and sends a positive message that “their opinions matter”. In my opinion, ARRL needs to do more of these “membership engaging” surveys.

I would also like to send my sincere thanks to our CEO David Minster, NA2AA, and his staff, especially Bart Jahnke, W9JJ and Bob Naumann, W5OV, for the support they have provided the PSC during 2021. Both their insight in discussions and determination to get tasks completed has been invaluable to the team. They both bring a “How can I help you?” attitude, replacing the “That’s not how we’ve always done it” attitude that, it seems, was prevalent in prior years.

Finally, while the make-up of current PSC members for 2022 may change upon the direction of President Roderick, the PSC looks ahead with much anticipation for 2022, and will be ready to serve the needs of the ARRL Board and the ARRL membership as required.

Respectfully submitted:

Mike Ritz, W7VO  
2021 ARRL Programs and Services Committee Chair,  
on behalf of the ARRL Programs and Services Committee