



ARRL Programs and Services Committee (PSC) Report to the Board of Directors – January 2024

The Programs and Services Committee is pleased to present this report to the ARRL Board of Directors covering PSC activities for the last six months of calendar year 2023. The PSC met live in Windsor, CT on July 20, 2023 in conjunction with the ARRL Board meeting. Unfortunately, there were no subsequent PSC meetings, one scheduled for October had to be canceled due to a scheduling conflict, and the inherent difficulty in finding a substitute day and time that satisfied all committee members.

ARRL By-law 39:

The Programs and Services Committee shall:

- Create and modify services and programs, and advise the Chief Executive Officer re same, that address and support DX awards, contests, radio sport, W1AW, W1AW services, Logbook of The World and the incoming and outgoing QSL bureau services;
- Create and modify services and programs, and advise the Chief Executive Officer re same, that address and support, volunteer examiners, Volunteer Counsel, Volunteer Consulting Engineers, and educational initiatives;
- Evaluate and recommend awards recipients to the Board for outstanding volunteer service or outstanding achievement;
- Recommend the creation or modification of Board policy that relates to or affects matters for which the Programs and Services Committee has responsibility.

(Not contained within the By-Law, but a PSC practice): Other than ARRL contests and operating events, the PSC brings newly created or modified services and programs to the full Board for a vote, as recommended by the President.

Voting PSC members for 2023:

Director Lippert, AC0W (also Board CAC Liaison)

Director Luetzelschwab, K9LA (also Board DXAC Liaison)

Director McIntyre K6WX

Director Ritz, W7VO, (Committee Chair, and Liaison for the CSI Committee)

Director Zygielbaum, K0AIZ

Vice Director Nelson, W0ND

Vice Director Temples, N9HI

Vice Director Propper, K2DP (PSC Secretary)

2nd Vice President Vallio, W6RGG, (PSC Officer Liaison)

Non-Voting PSC members for 2023:

Mr. Jahnke, W9JJ, Radiosport Manager

Mr. Naumann, W5OV, (Staff Liaison)

The following are highlights from the last six months of 2023:

Awards:

There were five ARRL awards vetted during the July 2023 PSC meeting:

Herb Briar Instructor of the Year – One candidate nominated, and was awarded to Albert Moreschi, AG4BV

Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award – One candidate nominated, and was awarded to Samuel J. Lovett, KI5RSV

ARRL Technical Service Award – Awarded to both nominees, Jeffrey K. DeLucenay, KB9QG and Carlos R. Toledo, WP4AOH

George Hart Distinguished Service Award- One candidate nominated, and was awarded to Jo Ann Keith, KA5AZK

ARRL Technical Innovation Award- All three nominations were awarded, the team of Rene N. Carrillo, KK4HEJ and Tadd C. Torborg, KA2DEW, and James C. Ahlstrom, N2ADR

It was decided that it would be valuable to review and improve the process of announcing, soliciting and standardizing forms for awards. It was decided that there needed to be the following done:

- Learn how the cash awards are budgeted at the ARRL level

- Learn how we advertise the awards and notify Division Directors, Vice Directors and Section Managers

An ad-hoc PSC subcommittee on Awards was established to review all award criteria, (TOR's), timing, award levels (\$'s), etc. Recommendations and /or status is expected to be presented at the January 2024 PSC meeting.

The members of the sub-committee are:

Vice Director Propper, K2DP - chair

Vice Director Nelson, W0ND

Director Lippert, AC0W

Vice Director Temples, K9HI

Steve Ewald

Director Zygielbaum (on retainer)

In addition to the sub-committee, Director Ritz volunteered to work with Becky Shoenfeld, W1BXY to write an article for QST magazine promoting the ARRL "non-operating" awards program. That has been accomplished and the article will be published in the February 2024 issue. (The article is attached to this report as APPENDIX 1)

Contest Advisory Committee (CAC)/Contesting:

The CAC continues to be under the steady direction of Craig Thompson, K9CT, with Director Lippert, AC0W capably serving as the ARRL Board Liaison.

Major topics the CAC has discussed:

1. Adding DX to DX contacts to the ARRL 160m contest
2. Expediency of contest results and publication in QST
3. Differences between the 10 and 160 contests
4. Why are the multipliers different between the contests? States/territories
5. Operating time in RTTY RU

VHF Subcommittee/CAC: Online discussions and a Zoom meeting considered:

1. 222 MHz activity
2. EME contest exchange
3. Weather considerations for Rovers
4. Changing contest dates

It is recommended for further information on CAC current activities, please reference July Board meeting Document #22, "*Contest Advisory Committee Semi-Annual Report*"

DXCC/DXAC:

The 2022 DX Advisory Committee Chair is Chris Shalvoy, K2CS, and the Board DXAC Liaison is Director Luetzelschwab, K9LA. Director Luetzelschwab provided the following report:

A request to review the petition for Jarvis to be a separate DXCC entity was received and forwarded to the DXAC for consideration on 14 July, 2023.

The committee met on Sunday 13 August, Sunday 20 August and Wednesday 30 August 2023 to consider the validity of the request.

A review and discussion revolved around current rules and historical information on the island group. Background information was gathered (at the league) by Saul Abrams, K2XA and he noted the following:

- 1) January 1938 QST DX country list has Jarvis Island K6 (no mention of Palmyra).
- 2) January 1939 QST list has Jarvis Island, Palmyra Group KG6 (listed under Jarvis, not Palmyra).
- 3) February 1947 QST list has Jarvis Island, Palmyra Group (Christmas Island) KP6 (again listed under Jarvis).
- 4) A 1950 QST article discussing DXCC "criteria" basically said there were no hard and fast criteria, but the League would discuss country requests with "experts" regarding location and governmental control.
- 5) A 1955 QST article listed DXCC criteria as: 1) Political independence; 2) Geographic separation from a "parent" and 3) Any foreign lands in between parent and proposed child.
- 6) A 1960 QST article regarding "separation" said this criterion "Shall not apply to islands in a natural island grouping".

No specific League document found specifying admission criteria for Palmyra & Jarvis. This information was requested to see if the origin and original criteria could be uncovered regarding the parent child relationship to Jarvis.

John Scott, VE1JS even reached out to former DXAC member VE3HO to see if such information could be found or explained - it could not.

An excellent job of current rules and their explanation was forwarded to the group after Saul's visit to the league. Other members did their own investigatory work on the island's history.

A vote was taken at the end of the 30 August Zoom session (and subsequently by those unable to attend) and a vote of 14 for, 1 not reporting and an abstention was made. The recommendation was to disallow the petition.

It is recommended for further information on DXAC activities please reference Board Document #23, “DX Advisory Committee Semi-Annual Report”

Field Day:

Field Day 2024 found more members “in the field”, and less at home as the country continued to come out of pandemic mode. Below are the statistics from this year’s event, compared to 2022. Note that the total number of participants is up, and the total log entries are down. This indicates that more ops are opting for being with their clubs outdoors, rather than staying home. (Data supplied by Bart, W9JJ)

| 2023 Field Day Overall Stats | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Year | 2023 | Change from 2022 | %Change |
| Number of Participants | 31,300 | +1,641 | +5.2% |
| Total Entries | 4,445 | -484 | -10.9% |
| Checklogs | 113 | -13 | -11.5% |
| QSOs - CW | 478,463 | -46,437 | -9.7% |
| QSOs - Phone | 481,710 | +16,622 | +1.7% |
| QSOs - Digital | 289,513 | +4,984 | +8.5% |
| Total QSOs | 1,249,686 | -24,831 | -2.0% |
| Bonus points earned | 1,745,325 | 163,615 | |

It’s interesting to note that overall CW contacts were over 9% down compared to last year, but digital, (most likely FT-x modes) contacts, are up by almost 9%. Phone contacts were up a relatively flat 1.7% up as well. Is it possible that those fervent CW ops are switching to FT-x mode? Probably not, based on a well-known CW contester who posted the burning of his recent issue of QST with FT-8 in bold on the cover, but the statistic is interesting!

Very few complaints were received regarding rule changes for 2023, and at this time only one major rule change is under consideration for 2024: Removing the “aggregate score” option, where a club member at home is allowed to aggregate their FD score with their club operating “in the field”. This was put into place as a temporary COVID pandemic allowance, and ARRL staff is recommending removing the allowance.

The return of a “high power” category, but limited to 500W maximum power, seems to have been well received by participants, as was increasing QSO and point incentives to encourage club operating Field Day to put more focus on the “beginner” GOTA stations.

Field Day items for consideration in the January 2024 PSC Meeting:

- Bonus points for an appointed Safety official for Class “F” stations (EOC’s).
- Putting together a more concise definition of exactly what qualifies as an “inactive” amateur for use at the GOTA station.
- Whether or not ARRL should encourage a practice that there be a slice (10 kHz) of the CW bands reserved for slow speed CW contacts during FD to encourage new CW ops to participate.

Also under consideration will be several thoughts submitted by Vice Director on how to make the event more welcoming to all participants:

- Provide name and call sign badges for all club members
- Maintain monitoring of the designated repeater “talk-in” frequency to assist visitors in finding the club Field Day location

Bart Jahnke suggested adding “bonus points’ to Field Day Scoring for having a club member designated as being responsible for the above listed items and showing proof that the club followed through on them.

It was also suggested that these proposals be incorporated into the Field Day Guidelines published by ARRL.

Logbook of the World (LoTW):

There has been no PSC activity the preceding six months with LoTW, other than sending member recommendations to the LoTW committee though Director McIntyre, who serves on both committees.

LoTW is currently under the direction of the separate LoTW Committee under Chair Widin, KOGW, and ARRL Board Liaison Baker, N4MB. With the hiring of the new ARRL IT Director it is hoped there may be some movement in a positive direction in relation to future LoTW upgrades.

The ARRL Clean Signal Initiative:

The ARRL Clean Signal Initiative continued to pick up steam as 2023 rolled along. The CSI Committee, with representatives from most of the major amateur radio manufacturers in both the USA and Japan, several industry subject-matter experts, and a few select ARRL volunteers and staff has continued to meet monthly via Zoom. The committee has gotten to the point where they are now putting “pen to paper” and are preparing an actual IEEE formatted technical standard outlining both transmitted signal test metrics and providing recommended

testing methodologies for each metric. The standard currently includes transmitted CW waveform template metrics, SSB Intermodulation Distortion (IMD) template metrics, and Composite Noise, (comprised of phase and amplitude modulated noise) metrics.

Attributed to work by the CSI, at least one major amateur radio manufacturer has announced a software change to one of its leading products to further enhance signal purity, specifically SSB IMD. That is certainly a great sign, and we are sure that other manufacturers will follow suit once the standard is released for general publication.

To promote the CSI program to the general ham public, Director Ritz wrote a technical article describing and promoting the CSI program, which ARRL published in the June 2023 issue of QST magazine. In addition, staff heavily promoted the CSI program at the ARRL National Convention at Dayton, with a large informational poster display in the ARRL Lab booth, sheet handouts, staff and volunteers on hand to discuss the CSI program with members, and commemorative pins that were handed out to members.

Many thanks to the ARRL staff for their exemplary assistance in promoting CSI this year!

ARRL participation in the *President's Volunteer Service Award* program:

In January 2022 the PSC approved ARRL staff looking into whether or not it would be feasible for ARRL to become a certifying organization in the *President's Volunteer Service Award* program.

For the uninitiated, a program description from their website:

<https://presidentalserviceawards.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."

It was determined by staff the program was both worthwhile and feasible, as it gives ARRL gravitas with our legislative, governmental, and strategic NGO partners. However, without implementation of the Personify association management software by HQ, and available IT resources it could not be accomplished successfully. As a result, ARRL involvement in the program has been lagging, and is still awaiting.

It is expected that Bob Naumann, W5OV will be providing an update on where we are with implementation in the January 2024 PSC meeting. That said, it may require the support of a full Board vote to get this important program off the ground, and ensure it gets the resources it needs to be successful.

ARRL Operating Event- Volunteers On The Air:



The Volunteers on the Air (VOTA) event began with a request to the PSC from several ARRL Directors to consider another year-long event, similar to the Grid Chase, ARRL Centennial, and National Parks on the Air ARRL events of years past.

ARRL Staff came up with the concept for VOTA, it was quickly approved by the PSC, then ran this year from Jan 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. To spur the event along, ARRL marketing staff put together a stellar marketing campaign, including an informational booth as part of the large Dayton Hamfest, and handing out VOTA buttons at other events. To help with advertising and promotion of the event, Director Ritz authored an article for "On the Air" magazine entitled "*Maximizing your VOTA Experience*", which was published in the July/August issue.

While it started off fairly slowly with a few hiccups, to call VOTA anything less than a success is an understatement. According to ARRL Radiosport Manager Bart, W9JJ:

"We have a total of 71,943 participants in the leaderboard table. 29,259 of those are listed as in the USA, leaving 42,684 international or unknown. There is a total of 96,761,223 QSOs in the table that were used to calculate the results for the year."

Almost seventy-two thousand participants, ninety-six million QSOs. Those numbers speak for themselves.

While most of the ARRL ODV members participated in VOTA, major kudos to Director Lippert, AC0W, who was by far the "VOTA Leaderboard Leader" among all ODV members. Congratulations, Bill!

Looking ahead to the first half of 2024:

- Continue to vet staff recommended awards in preparation for the July 2024 Board meeting.
- Continue to work closely with ARRL staff and support the CAC and DXAC in their activities related to the PSC.
- Work with ARRL staff to develop a new major 2025 ARRL operating event to invigorate members and get them more “radioactive” in supporting ARRL. It is thought that perhaps the new event can be focused on youth. The younger the participant, the higher the point worth. Think about it!
- Continue to push to get ARRL involved as a certifying organization to support the President’s Volunteer Service Award program.
- Continue to monitor progress on the Clean Signal Initiative as approved in the January 2021 Board meeting.
- Continue to monitor the pulse of ARRL members through various social media platforms

Respectfully submitted:

Mike Ritz, W7VO

PSC Chair, on behalf of the ARRL Programs and Services Committee