Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

President's Corner

Hello everyone,

I hope all are well. Please be safe and stay well.
Indiana QSO Party starts Saturday. Runs 10am to 10pm CST. We need at least 3 members to submit a log with Northwest Indiana DX Club as their club choice to get credit. Please think about operating in it.
 73
John W3ML

Good DXing!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NWI DX Club Website
http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/

Don't forget Steve is our new QSL Card Checker.

DXCC Card Checking is available by appointment and may be available at meetings. E-Mail kd9hl@arrl.net for an appointment or to make other arrangements.

Reminder, the NWIDX Club has a club call W9NWI.

The call is available to members for use during contests, special events, Field Day, etc. To schedule dates for its use, contact the trustee, Steve Mollman – KD9HL. kd9hl@arrl.net

QSL cards are available.

Notice:

Articles in the Northwest Indiana DX Club Newsletter (except for those separately copyrighted) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given.

NWIDX Club DXCC Challenge Scorecard
A Reminder Get Your Latest Contacts into the ARRL

We plan on publishing the annual listing of our member's standing in the ARRL DX Challenge Award in the July Newsletter. Members are urged to submit to the ARRL's DX Desk any contacts that they may have that have not yet been accepted by the ARRL. This can be done either through the LOTW process or via a formal QSL Card submission.

NOTE: *Just because you have confirmations listed in your LOTW account does not mean that the DX Desk has accepted them for award credit. In the words of the ARRL, those contacts are "pending". You must make formal application for the award credit.*

At the time this is written, the ARRL Headquarters is closed to normal business because of the COVID-19 pandemic and we are unsure of whether any applications will be processed in time for the June 28, 2020 cut-off. Members are urged to have their applications in the ARRL's hands as soon as possible to ensure that there is time to possibly process the application. Our DXCC Card Checker, Steve Mollman-KD9HL, is accepting cards for checking via US Mail or UPS only, however packages will not be opened for at least five days after he receives them. This is on the advice of the ARRL and the Indiana State Department of Health. In any case, we will be using whatever totals that are published by the ARRL as of Midnight June 28, 2020.

If you send QSL cards to a card checker, before doing so it is highly advised that you read the article titled "Card Checking Tips" in the September 2019 issue of the newsletter.

The DXCC Challenge Award is earned by working and confirming at least 1,000 DXCC band-points on any Amateur bands, 160 through 6 meters (except 60 meters). A band point is earned by working and confirming a current DX entity in any mode on a single band. (You only get one point per entity per band. Working a DX entity multiple times via different modes on the same band does not give you more points-you only get one. Deleted entities do not count for this award. Only stations with over 1000 DXCC band-points are listed by the ARRL.

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DXCC Card Check Update

Our DXCC card checker-Steve Mollman-KD9HL passes on the following information from the ARRL.

"To all ARRL card checkers.
I have received some questions about processing DXCC applications so allow me to clarify what is happening at HQ

By orders of the governor of CT, ARRL staff is not permitted inside HQ. Other than the few exceptions permitted under this mandate ARRL is following the letter and spirit of the rules. Almost all staff has been able to work via remote access keeping the business of ARRL functioning. All information regarding ARRL and COVID-19 has been compiled on one page at < http://www.arrl.org/arrl-news-coronavirus-covid-19 *>*

The DXCC staff are processing all award applications submitted through LoTW. Award certificates and plaques will be shipped when we are permitted back inside HQ.

Checking cards is an individual matter. If you are not comfortable checking cards during this COVID-19 pandemic then don't do it. However, if you decide to check cards for an applicant you are urged to follow all local health regulations and social distancing guidelines and use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and a mask when checking cards.

If you check an Online DXCC application you can scan the completed and checked application and send it to DXCCAdmin@arrl.org*. Be sure the application is completed and signed by the applicant and the card checker. If you scan and email an Online DXCC application do not mail the paperwork to HQ. This applies only to Online DXCC applications, not traditional paper applications. Traditional paper applications will continue to be handled in the usual manner, mailed to HQ, and will be processed when we return to HQ.*

You may direct any questions to DXCCAdmin@arrl.org

Stay safe.

Norm Fusaro, W3IZ
ARRL Director of Operations"

Steve is accepting cards for checking via US Mail or one of the parcel services such as UPS or FedEx. He will not be doing "in person" checks for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. You can contact him at KD9HL@ARRL.net

<p align="center">◄Ω►</p>

<u>*Handy Hint*</u>
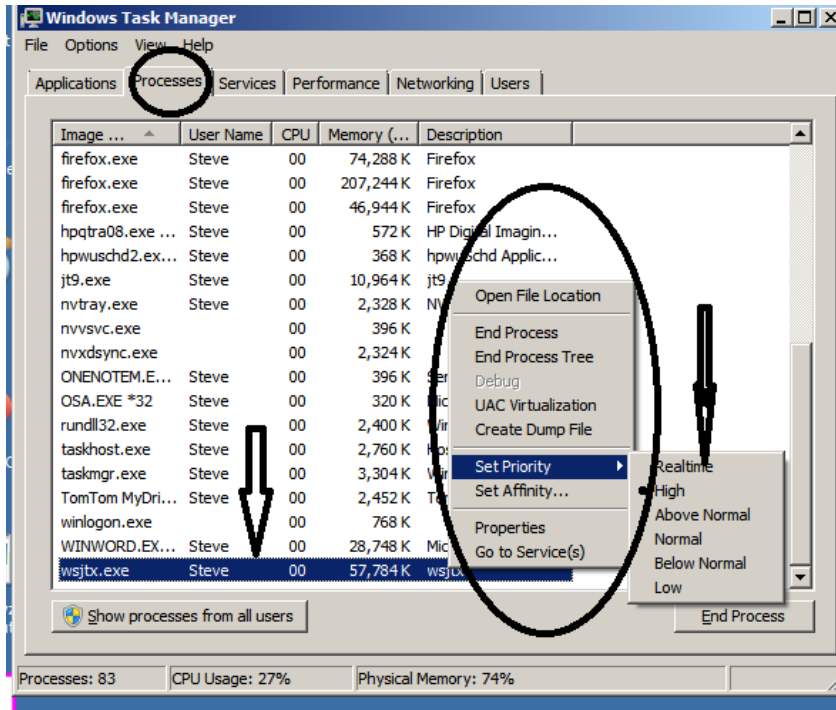## By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

WSJT-X (FT-8) Won't De-Code?

If you are sometimes having trouble with WSJT-X decoding and need multiple repeats of the DX station's reply, you may want to try reducing CPU usage and increasing the priority of the wsjtx.exe task (via task manager), to "high". The increased time slices could grab more of the signal from the sound card.

The bottom line, if you are having issues with WSJT-X not decoding, first reduce background CPU use as much as possible by closing extraneous programs that may be running. Then increase the priority of the **wsjtx.exe** task.

How do you set the priority of a program? For most Windows versions follow the instructions below:

1. Hit the Ctrl-Alt-Del keys simultaneously.

2. Start "Task Manager"

3. Click on the "Processes" tab.

4. Highlight "WSJTX.exe"

5. Right Click on "Processes" and select "Set Priority"

6. You can then select a different priority.

7. Close Task Manager.

It is that easy! As always, individual results may vary.

◄73's and Good DX ►

Do you have a Handy Hint that you would like to share? Contact Steve Mollman at KD9HL@ARRL.net

DXERS
CELL PHONE APP
(MAYBE?)

It's a rare ham who doesn't carry a cell phone today and many use them for reminders of important daily and weekly events as well as "Apps" designed for pharmacy, banking, food deliveries and so forth. For any DXer it is easy to forget when needed countries are on the air. So why not an "App" for that?

Suppose the ARRL sent out a text message when each week's DX schedule was available to interested DXers. By selecting the "ARRL DX App" button on a user's cell phone, a display like the one on the left below appears on his phone. The data shown is from a previous ARRL Weekly DX News with considerable modification (and mangling). The recipient chooses the DX stations he wants to remember by clicking the circles in the left column which turn blue when selected. In this case he chose Cape Verde, Egypt and Vanatu. He then clicks the big yellow circle at the bottom to insert the selected countries into his calendar and then the green button to complete the action and exit. In the right hand display, the users calendar then shows the selected stations available for this example on April 4th. Please note this was not the actual dates, just an example.

ARRL WEEKLY DX FOR APRIL SOMETIME

SELECT	START		END		COUNTRY	CALL	INFORMATION
O	4	4	4	8	TURKEY	TC10	Members of the Turkish Radio Amateur Club are QRV from special event station TC105GL until March 30. Activity is to commemorate the Gallipoli campaign of World War I. Activity will be on various HF bands using CW and SSB. QSL via the info on QRZ.com.
●	4	4	4	6	CAPE VERDE	D4	Max, IZ4DPV is active as D4F from Sao Vicente Island (AF-086) until March 31. Activity has been on the lower bands using SSB. Look for him also in the CQ WW WPX SSB Contest. QSL via home call.
O	4	4	4	19	ALASKA	KL7	Members of the Russian Robinson Club are planning activation of Kiska Island (NA-070) from June 17 to 19 as KL7RRC/p. They will be taking two rigs for CW, SSB and FT8. QSL via N7RO.
●	4	4	4	6	EGYPT	SU	Tom, DL2RMC is QRV as SU9TH on 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters using FT8, FT4, CW and SSB. He will be in the country until the end of April. QSL via DL2RMC, ClubLog or LoTW.
●	4	4	4	6	VANATU	YJ	Chris, VK2NYA/VK2YUS will be active as YJ0CA from Port Vila, Efate Island (OC-035), until April 1. Activity is 40, 20 and 15 meters and possibly 10 meters, using SSB only. He also plans to be in the CQ WW WPX SSB Contest as a Single-Op entry. QSL direct via home call.
O	4	28	4	29	BRAZIL	ZZ4	Members of the Serra Lopo DX Team will be active as ZZ4A during the CQ WW WPX SSB Contest as a Multi-Single entry. QSL via PY2RMZ.

insert into Calendar   DONE

The same process would be possible for contesting. The ARRL "Contest Corral" is already in a table format and that would make it easier to extract contest data.

Wouldn't this be awesome?

73's,

Jerry, W9KTP

How Is Solar Cycle 24 Doing?

Carl Luetzelschwab K9LA   April 2020

Solar Cycle 24 is doing fine – if you don't mind being very near solar minimum between Cycles 24 and 25! If you're a low band enthusiast (160m, 80m and 40m), hopefully you've been taking advantage of the propagation on these bands (which are said to be best around solar minimum). Here's 10.7 cm solar flux data through March 2020 from www.swpc.noaa.gov/.
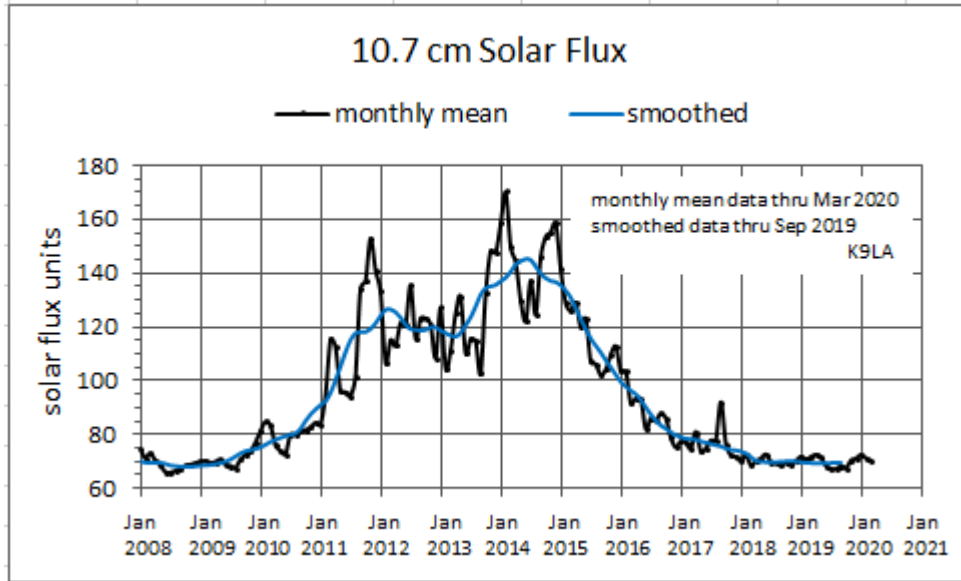
The spiky black curve is the monthly mean 10.7 cm solar flux data, whereas the smoother blue curve is the smoothed 10.7 cm solar flux (it's heavily averaged to 'smooth out' the spiky monthly mean data – as a result, the smoothed data is six months behind the monthly mean data).

How long will this solar minimum last? That's an interesting question. Here's data for the past six solar minimum periods.
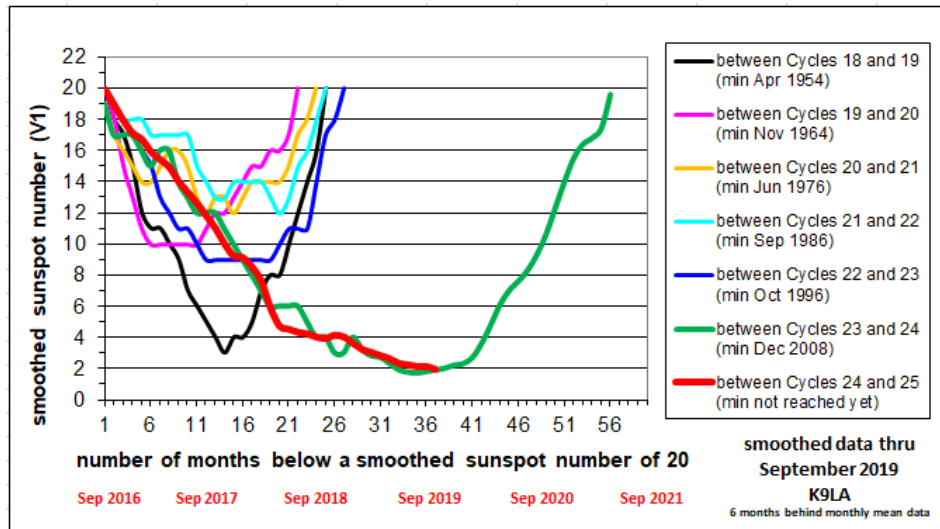
The solar minimum periods between Cycles 18/19 and through Cycles 22/23 only lasted about two years. We became very accustomed to short solar minimum periods. But then the solar minimum period between Cycles 23/24 (the thick green curve) lasted almost five years. And it looks like the current solar minimum period (the thick red curve) will be at least as long as the last solar minimum – in fact, it looks like we're still headed downward per the latest data. The next several months will give us a better picture of what's happening.

The NOAA/NASA Solar Cycle 25 International Panel predicts that we'll reach solar minimum in April 2020 (+/- 6 months) and Cycle 25 will peak in July2025 (+/- 8 months) at a maximum smoothed sunspot number of 115 (similar to Cycle 24). Hopefully this prediction will come true, and we'll be enjoying high band propagation (15m, 12m and 10m) in several years. As a side note, we've already seen Cycle 25 sunspots – so Cycle 25 is alive!

But right now we're still at solar minimum. Here's what we can expect on the bands:

1) The low bands should be open worldwide at night – pay special attention to sunrise and sunset – but we're seeing more QRN from thunderstorms as Spring develops

2) 20m (and 17m to a somewhat lesser extent) should be open worldwide during the day and early evening – watch for Spring-time openings over the North Pole

3) We'll have occasional openings on 15m, 12m and 10m to the south (Caribbean, South America, Central America) and to VK/ZL thanks to the robust equatorial ionosphere

4) Expect 6m (and 10m) sporadic E to increase as we move towards Summer

5) Watch for possible short-term enhancements in propagation on the higher bands when the K index spikes up – these are not predicted by our propagation prediction programs

6) Get on the digital modes (especially FT8) to take advantage of the signal-to-noise ratio improvement – the digital modes will make this solar minimum period the most active in history on the higher bands

In summary, get radio-active! If you have any questions, you can e-mail me at k9la@arrl.net.

DX Tools of the Past
By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

Today's DX'er operates in a different fashion than the DX'er of 20 or more years ago. The computer and the internet have changed the complexion of how we chase DX. DX cluster networks such as DXWatch.com, on-line DX bulletins like KB8NW's OPDX Bulletin, Logbook of the World (LOTW), and the data base of hams in QRZ.com are now the standard for pursuing the hunt.

How was it done in the past? These are some of the tools that were used:

1. W9IOP's Second OP –First introduced in 1963, it was a circular slide-rule type device designed to make DX information available on all the entities recognized by the ARRL. By dialing in the prefix of your DX target, it gave you the beam heading from your location, entity name, time differential, postage rates (air, 1st Class, IRCs) and even the addresses of over 160 QSL Bureaus.

2. The ARRL DXCC Countries List-This publication of the ARRL listed all of the DX entities along with their ITU/CQ Zones and a log for recording the band and mode worked, the DX Century Club Rules and a host of other information. Most modern DX'ers use a computerized logging program or LOTW to keep track of their DX count. This publication is still available today.
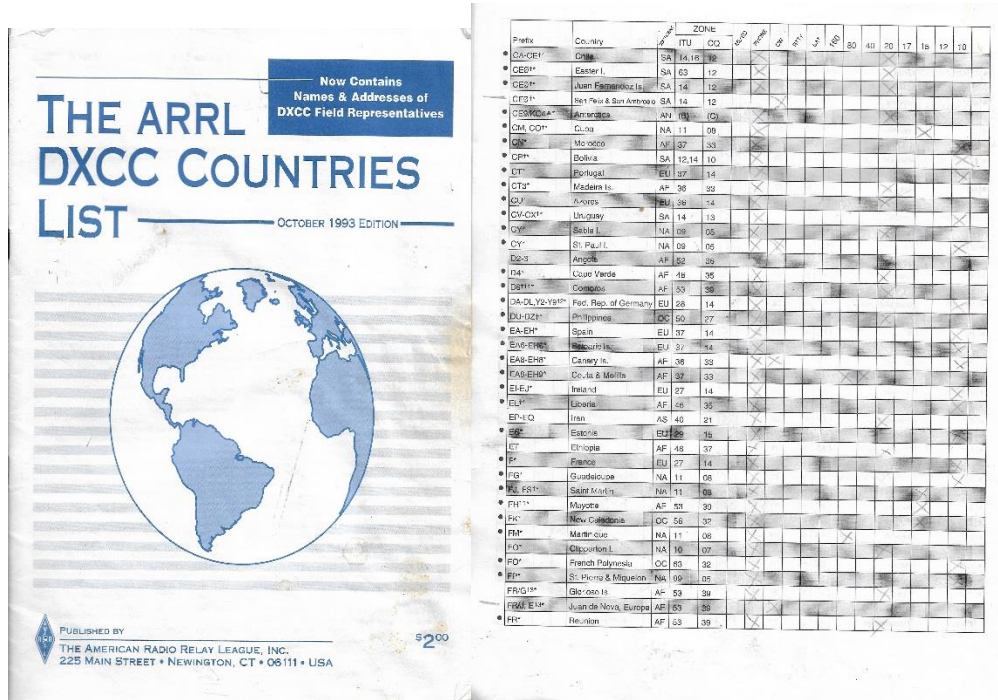
3. Amateur Radio Call Book. The "Flying Horse" Radio Amateur Callbook, published in a telephone book format, had been providing listings of amateur radio call signs since the early 1920s. However, modern technology led to its printed demise in 1997 and then resurrection as a CD-ROM until 2002 when the plug was pulled permanently. The first edition of the callbook appeared sometime around 1920 or 1922 and it continued quarterly until being discontinued.
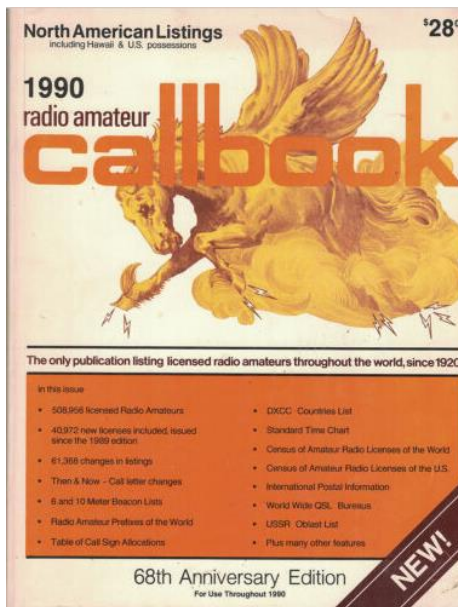
Since LOTW didn't exist, the only way to confirm a contact was to send your QSL card to the other station and hope he would return the courtesy. If you had patience, sending your cards through the bureau was a money saving option. One of the big hiccups in the bureau system was (and still is) the sometimes long delay in getting cards back. This was particularly a problem with contacts with stations in the old Soviet Union. Direct interface with a USSR ham was forbidden by their government and all cards had to go through their QSL bureau (the notorious black hole at Box 88, Moscow, Russia). It wasn't unusual for four years or more to pass before a reply!

4. DX Bulletins. The two standouts of the era's DX bulletins were the Long Island DX Bulletin published by Harvey McCoy-W2IYX (SK) and the West Coast DX Bulletin published by Hugh Cassidy-WA6AUD (SK). These were mailed to subscribers in time for an arrival on a Thursday or Friday, just in time for weekend operating. They were chocked full of DX information similar to what one sees today with the on-line bulletins. The West Coast Bulletin was noted for the editor's remarks and the editorial comments that are considered classics even today. Since computerized DX cluster information was not available then, a nice feature was the publishing of spots showing the time, date, band and mode a DX station was on the air. This made the DX hunt a little easier as DX stations are like most other people and creatures of habit. For example, if a station was spotted frequently on 15 meters every Wednesday at 17:45 UTC, there was a good chance he would be there the next Wednesday.

5. Spotting Nets. Some DX clubs would use a discreet 2 meter frequency to share DX spots with their members. For example, the Metro DX Club of South Suburban Chicago, Illinois was a group that did this. When a member heard and worked some interesting DX he would broadcast a blind spot. An example would be as follows: *W9XYZ with a spot-ZD9YL worked on 28.495 SSB listening 5 up*. Of course this was "work first-share later"! The same type of information is shown to a wider audience on the DX clusters today.

6. Paper Logs. Logging was done on paper with the ARRL Log Book as the standard. Computerized logging programs didn't start appearing until the early 1980's when some very elementary computerized logging programs were published in magazines such as QST, CQ and 73. The PC market hadn't whittled itself down to the two types we have today (Apple and Windows). There were probably a dozen different operating systems on the market such as Commodore VIC20 and 64, Radio Shack TRS-80, Sinclair, Texas Instruments TI-99, Heath, IBM and Apple. All had their followers and none of the programs were compatible (ADIF- Amateur Data Interchange Format wasn't adapted until 1996). To get a logging program, the ham had to type the program into his computer and hope he hadn't made a mistake. Data was saved on an audio cassette tape recorder or a floppy disk. From those crude beginnings the powerful logging programs we have today were developed.

What will DX look like twenty years from now? Already changes are happening with developments like FT-8 and remote stations but one thing will stay the same-an "all time new one" will still be a reason for celebration!

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From the ARRL WEEKLY DX LISTING;
Jerry, W9KTP

SB DX @ ARL $ARLD018
ARLD018 DX news

ZCZC AE18
QST de W1AW
DX Bulletin 18 ARLD018
>From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT April 30, 2020
To all radio amateurs

SB DX ARL ARLD018
ARLD018 DX news

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by The Daily DX, the OPDX Bulletin, 425 DX News, DXNL, Contest Corral from QST and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM web sites. Thanks to all.

BAHRAIN, A9. Operators Fawaz, A92AA, Ahmed, A92AB and Ely, A93LT will be active as A91WTIS from May 10 to 17 for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. Activity will be on various HF bands. QSL via A92AA, direct.

ANTARCTICA, 8J. Members of the Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition team (JARE) will be active as 8J1RL from Showa Research Station, Queen Maud Land (AN-015), until January 2021. Listen for operators Take, JA1AGS and Hiro, JH7JCX. Activity will be on various HF bands using CW and the digital modes. QSL via JG2MLI or the JARL Bureau.

CHILE, 3G2. Stay-At-Home station 3G2HOME is now QRV. Activity has been mainly on 20 meter CW. QSL via LoTW only.

ISRAEL, 4X2. Isaac, 4Z1TL will activate Stay-At-Home station 4X2BESAFE until August 12. Activity will be on various HF bands. QSL via 4Z1TL, direct. No IRCs.

JAMAICA, 6Y6. Nigel, 6Y5HN is supporting the COVID-19 Stay-At-Home event as 6Y6STAYHOME. Activity has been on 40 meters. QSL via EA5GL.

CHINA, B0-9. Members of the Chinese Radio Amateurs Club (CRAC) will activate 10 special event call signs (B0CRA - B9CRA) across their country to make QSOs with hams all over the world. Operations will take place from May 1 to 7. QSL via BA1GG.

CANADA, CH2. Ian, VO2IR is active as CH2IR until June 20 to remind everyone to Stay-At-Home. Activity is on various HF bands. QSL via VO2IR.

LEBANON, OD5/OD50. Members of the Radio Amateurs of Lebanon (RAL) will activate special event call signs OD50SH and OD5STAYHOME to spread awareness and Stay-At-Home as part of social distancing policies during the COVID-19 outbreak. QSL via IZ8CLM.

BELARUS, EU. The following special event stations will take part in the Pobeda-75 commemoration of the end of World War II: EV75B, EV75F, EV75GK, EV75K, EV75M and EV75PG.

ENGLAND, G. Members of the RSGB Contest Club will put GB1945PE, GB1945PJ and GB75PEACE on the air during May and August to mark Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan Days. QSL only via LoTW and eQSL. Also, The Royal Air Force Amateur Radio Society (RAFARS) marks the end of World War II in Europe with the call sign GB75VED from May 1 to 28. QSL via 2E0NDZ.

ITALY, I. The ARI Fidenza Club (IQ4FE) will put a number of special event stations on the air during 2020 to commemorate the life and achievements of Guglielmo Marconi. During May, II4TEA commemorates the first transatlantic transmission in 1903. QSL via IQ4FE.

BULGARIA, LZ. The Bulgarian Federation of Radio Amateurs (BFRA) celebrates its 50th anniversary with the call sign LZ50BFRA until the year's end. QSL via bureau to LZ1BJ.

AUSTRIA, OE. Alex, OE3DMA will be active with the call sign OE60IPA on April 30 and May 1 for the 60th anniversary of the International Police Association. QSL to OE3DMA via bureau.

RUSSIA, RP. A large number of special event call signs with the prefix RP75 will be active from Russia celebrating the end of World War II.

AUSTRALIA, VK. Station VI250COOK commemorates Captain James Cook's voyage on HMS Endeavour along Australia's east coast with activity from May 1 to August 31. For QSL information see qrz.com.

STAY AT HOME. More stations in the stay at home effort: 4U2STAYHOME, 5W19STAYHOME, AT2SHI, IO6STAY, OD50SH, OD5STAYHOME, OE1STAYHOME and OQ1HOME.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The Araucaria World Wide VHF Contest, 10-10 International Spring Contest, CW, RCC Cup, Microwave Spring Sprint, ARI International DX Contest, 7th Call Area QSO Party, Indiana QSO Party, RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint, Delaware QSO Party, FISTS

Spring Slow Speed Sprint and the New England QSO Party are all on tap for this weekend. Please see May 2020 QST, page 69 and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM Contest Web Sites for details.
NNNN
/EX

LINKS

Long-Lost U.S. Military Satellite Found By Amateur Radio Operator

https://tinyurl.com/ybhlsp4m

Contest University 2020 will be held online free via Zoom

Thursday, May 14th 8:45 am EDT/12:45 UTC
CTU 2020 Outline is available on the Course Outline Page
https://www.contestuniversity.com/

If you have ham items for sale, email me a list along with prices and contact information. I will put it in the next newsletter.

I want to thank those that have been sending in articles for the newsletter. All items are appreciated.

Until Next Time,
73
John
W3ML

http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/