**ARRL Northwestern Division Report – 2020**

Submitted by: Mike Ritz, W7VO, Director, Northwestern Division  
 Mark Tharp, KB7HDX, Vice Director, Northwestern Division

**OVERVIEW:**

This document contains highlights from administrative activities and associated accomplishments within the ARRL Northwestern (NW) Division for the year 2020. Included also within in this document are additional reports from Vice Director Mark Tharp, KB7HDX, the six NW Division Section Managers (SM), and the NW Division Tribal Liaison, Steve Aberle, WA7PTM.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Geographically, the NW Division contains almost a million square miles of territory, with well over 12,000 ARRL members among over 70,000 amateur licensees. ARRL membership numbers, year-over-year, for the Division are among the best in the ARRL, and can most likely be attributed to amateur emigrant migrations to our Division from the Pacific and Southwestern Divisions. (Number specifics are contained in Tharp’s report below.)

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

* To continue in our effort to improve member communications and promote transparency, Vice Director Tharp and I jointly publish a regular monthly NW Division Newsletter e-mail, sent to approximately 8,500 Division members that have opted-in via the ARRL website to receive them. These newsletters are sent out near the middle of each month, and are usually several pages long. The focus is to not to just duplicate what the ARRL publishes in its bulletins, but provide insight and background on the what we are doing within the Board, and provide the latest information on other ARRL actions. Feedback received from members regarding our newsletter and its format has been overwhelmingly positive.
* As I’m sure it is in every other Division in the ARRL, most of the hamfests and events, including the annual ARRL Northwestern Division Convention, (held as a part of the  
  SEA-PAC hamfest), were canceled. Here is complete list:   
  + **Took place:**
    - Salem Hamfair, Rickreall, OR
    - Mike & Key Swapmeet, Puyallup, Washington
    - Matanuska Amateur Radio Association Hamfest, Wasilla, Alaska
    - Glacier Waterton Hamfair, Essex, Montana
    - Hell's Gate Amateur Radio Club Swapmeet, Clarkston, WA.
    - No Host Amateur Radio Tail Gate Style Swap Meet, Winston, OR.
  + **Canceled:**
    - Comm Academy
    - Kennewick Tailgate Swap meet
    - MicroHams Digital Conference.
    - Spring DMR Gathering.  Valley Camp, North Bend WA
    - Stanwood Camano Amateur Radio Club Flea Market and Hamfest.
    - Apple City ARC Hamfest.  (Wenatchee Hamfair)
    - Port Ludlow ARC Annual Tail-gater.
    - Chehalis Valley ARC Tailgate Swapmeet.
    - Kennewick Tailgate Swap meet
    - Pacific Northwest DX Convention. Portland, Oregon.
    - Digital Radio Summer Gathering. Valley Camp, North Bend, WA.
    - Washington State Convention (Spokane Hamfest)
    - Kitsap County Amateur Radio Club Swapmeet
    - PNWVHF  Society Conference
    - Swaptoberfest (Rickreall, OR)
* Last March, when it became obvious that COVID 19 pandemic was becoming a real issue, the NW Division obtained a 100 seat Zoom virtual meeting license to allow our amateur radio groups to put together virtual meetings for their members. To say it’s been a success would be an understatement. So successful, in fact, that later in the year Vice Director Tharp, KB7HDX, set up a second Division Zoom account to handle meeting overflow. The ARRL Idaho, Montana, and the Oregon Sections also set up their own Zoom accounts; however, it is unknown how much activity they have. The total number of virtual club meetings held via just the two NW Division accounts was close to 150 for the year. That’s a lot of meetings, and a lot of clubs able to engage virtually with their members. These are in addition to the many clubs that set up their own virtual meeting platforms.
* The Northwestern Division website, [www.arrlnwdiv.org](http://www.arrlnwdiv.org) has continued to attract registered members; we are approaching 300 that have joined to website to participate in the forums. Our Facebook page, *Northwestern Division, ARRL*, and our Twitter feed *@NWDIVARRL* are used to re-post our newsletters, and re-distribute select ARRL posts.

**NORTHWESTERN DIVISON ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LIST:**(Note) There were no new NW Division Assistant Directors appointed in 2020. Here is the current list for 2021, and their focus area:

* + **Daniel Stevens, KL7WM** 
    - Education/Training, Seattle, WA Area
  + **Delvin Bunton, NS7U** 
    - Education/Training, Vancouver, WA / Portland, OR Area
  + **Lynn Burlingame, N7CFO** 
    - Division Event Calendar Coordinator
  + **Phil Kane, K2ASP** 
    - FCC Matters
  + **Dave Cole, NK7Z** 
    - RFI/EMI Technical Resource
  + **Steve Aberle, WA7PTM**
    - Tribal Liaison
  + **Michael Sterba, KG7HQ**
    - Webmaster / Social Media Admin
  + **Bill Balzarini, KL7BB** 
    - STEM Outreach, Seattle, WA area

**Northwestern Division Director Report**

Due to COVID restraints that became increasing demanding as the year progressed, I reduced my travel to the absolute minimum. The only Division hamfests or events physically attended were the Salem Hamfair in Rickreall, OR, in February, and the Mike and Key event in Puyallup, Washington, in March. After March everything switched to strictly virtual settings.

Other highlights:

* I was honored to have been interviewed for the popular *QSO Today* podcast in January. (As a result I was interviewed by NCJ to be part of their two part series on contest mentoring that ran in the September/October, and November/December issues of NCJ.)
* In place of “in person” meetings, I was an invited throughout the year to be a guest attendee and speaker at many virtual Zoom club meetings throughout the Division, (several each month), where I either presented on technical subjects, or on ARRL Board activities.
* In August I flew to Denver, CO to take part in meetings related to the final phase of the CEO Selection process, my only plane flight of the year.
* I had the opportunity and it was my pleasure to serve on several ARRL Board committees:  
  + *Programs and Services, and served as DX Advisory Committee Liaison*
  + *Emergency Manager Job Requirements Committee*
  + *HF Band Planning Committee*
  + *Ethics and Elections Committee*
* I also had the opportunity to continue to serve on the *ARRL Foundation* Board of Directors, and was a member of the Foundation’s *Scholarship Comm*i*ttee*.

**Northwestern Division Vice Director Report**

Below is a summary of events I attended, events canceled I had planned to attend, committee activity, and division statistics for the period January through December, 2020.

It continues to be my honor to serve as Vice Director in the Northwestern Division.

**Attended events:**Mike and Key in Puyallup, WA  
Salem Hamfair in Rickreall, OR  
N7YRC group swap, Union Gap, WA

**Cancelled events I planned to attend however were canceled due to COVID:**River Radio Campout /Swap in Pateros WA. Digital Summer Gathering, Valley Camp, WA  
Yakima Hamfest, Yakima, WA Wenatchee Hamfest, Dryden, WA  
SEA-PAC, Seaside, OR Tri-cities Swapmeet, Richland, WA  
PNW DX Convention, Portland, OR PNWVHF convention, Bend, OR  
Washington State Convention and Hamfest, Spokane, WA  
 **Committee activity**:   
I serve on the following committees  
EMDSC-member LDaC-member  
PSEWG-member ARISS- Chair

*Emergency Management Director search committee*: I was appointed to serve on this committee in April as a voting member by President Rodrick. The committee met almost weekly via ZOOM with each other as well as conducting interviews. After much appreciated work by all the committee members, Mr. Paul Gilbert was hired and the committee continues to operate as an advisory body for his position.

*Public service enhancement working group (PSEWG*): The board members on this committee were also serving on the Emcom Director search committee and as that took priority over other activities, the PSEWG was not very active during the year and it is my understanding it will be sunset at the January BOD meeting, replaced by a new standing committee yet to be named.

*Legal defense and assistance committee*: This committee worked on a motion to change to its charter to allow a broader range of involvement in the amateur community. We also were involved in financial assistance for on ongoing case in Pennsylvania.

*ARISS committee*: The ARISS committee continues to provide assistance with support in news reports and coordinating staff assistance with various items. The committee worked on revising banner ads for use in QST and other publications as printing space allows.

*Board of director meeting*: I attended the January annual meeting in Connecticut as well as the first ever “virtual meeting” in July.

With Covid closing down just about everything you can think of during the year remote meetings were very much needed and about the only way for clubs to continue operating. Director Ritz and myself both obtained a licensed account for ZOOM and have been assisting clubs and groups to hold virtual meetings, participating when time allows. On the upside of this pandemic, the forced move to web-based meetings has provided the opportunity to join in on meetings that we would have otherwise not been able to attend. I have also assisted non-Amateur groups for ZOOM meetings and used that opportunity to talk with them about Amateur radio. (win win)

**Division stats:**The Northwestern Division continues to show a positive number of new members each month however the number of new members in relation to total number of licensees is down slightly from prior years. In discussing this with a few VE teams, the consensus is that people are getting licensed strictly for personal emergency communications and are not interested in joining the league, or clubs.   
  
For the period ending December 31st 2020, the Northwestern Division had 72,837 licensed Amateur radio operators, that number is up 1,356 from 2019. Of that number, 12,690 are ARRL members, approximately 17.4%. We showed an increase in members of 1.6% since December 2019.

ARRL total membership ending December 2020 was 158,494 and the total number of US licensees was approximately 771,938. The Northwestern division is below the national average of licensee to member by roughly 3%

**New licenses issued within the Northwestern Division in 2020:**   
January 110 April 49 July 196 October 302  
February 343 May 128 August 290 November 186  
March 234 June 273 September 244 December 244

**Alaska Section Manager Report-  
David Stevens, KL7EB**

The year sure had it surprises and changes. Most of the clubs are having Zoom meetings. Arctic Amateur Radio Club in Fairbanks canceled their ham fest, while MaySu Amateur Radio Club moved their ham fest from May to September. Anchorage Amateur Radio Club expanded their remote VE testing to nationwide. Juneau Amateur Radio Club is still looking forward to Scouts Jamboree on the air. With any good fortune we will again be licensing more Hams this year

**Eastern Washington Section Manager Report-  
Jack Tiley, AD7FO**

2020 was a quiet year since there were no Hamfest’s and no in person club meetings. Many clubs have been doing virtual meetings online using Zoom. License testing was suspended for the early part of the year and some groups were able to figure out how to do the testing safely by mid-year. In person license classes have been suspended and may start up again in early summer. I am looking forward to in person events this year as a chance to do more face to face communication with members.

**Idaho Section Manager Report-  
Dan Marler, K7REX**

To better serve the Idaho ARRL section members, I have appointed ten (10) different Assistant Section Managers (ASM), to represent me in various geographical Idaho locations. Typically, we would be meeting once a month on-line and communicating through email the various member and club activities. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and concerns, many areas, especially in northern Idaho, had no reporting activities.

Clubs:

During the pandemic, most of the clubs had not been able to meet in person, although a few were able to meet in places that had enough space to accommodate social distancing, even then the turnout was low due to COVID-19 concerns. Some have been having success using video teleconferencing, but others have resorted to conducting club meetings using their repeaters with limited success. For many, maintaining club activity interest has been a challenge. Previously planned activities such as Christmas parties had to be canceled or postponed into the 2021 year.

There has been some on-site VE testing, but most have been postponed due to coronavirus restrictions. To my knowledge, none of the Idaho clubs have been utilizing remote VE Testing.

The MVARC (Magic Valley ARC) reports that they have been working with students to build a high-altitude balloon to be launch in Spring. COVID-19 restrictions and the recent holidays have slowed their progress; they will be continuing again soon.

MVARC has installed new antennas on their club station located in the Boy Scout office in Twin Falls, and new hams have shown interest in activating the club station. Very encouraging.

Ed Stuckey, AI7H, previous Idaho Section Manager, was elected president of the Kootenai Amateur Radio Society (KARS) club. As with many Idaho ham clubs, KARS had to cancel club meetings and traditional holiday celebrations due to COVID restrictions. However, Ed has since starting having their meetings on-line with good success and may do hybrid club meetings (Zoom + Live) once they can begin having in-person club meetings again.

Repeaters: MVARC reports about 16 permanent Fusion repeater nodes now covering most southern Idaho and plans to add two more Fusion repeaters soon. They are also attempting to make it possible for analog radios to use their Fusion network.

The Boise County ARES club has added a low-level DMR UHF repeater that may move to a mountaintop in Spring.

Field Day: Several clubs participated in the 2020 remote Field Day operation, although the turnout was low. They are planning to try again with the upcoming 2021 Winter Field Day event.

ARES: Many of the Idaho ARES groups have been active on their HF and VHF/UHF nets, but most all in-person group events have been canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions and limitations.

The following are new County Emergency Coordinators for 2020. Jeremy Brown, KA7BIF (Twin Falls); Kelvin Murphy, W1KMM (Nez Perce); Mark Earls, K7MEE (Bonner) and Bill Steele, KD7GJY, (Kootenai).

Side note: As this pandemic continues into 2021, many of the hold-out clubs not wanting to do anything on-line are starting to come around. Going forward, many ham clubs and organizations will be reinventing themselves out of necessity. I believe this will result in positive changes that would otherwise be slow in coming, if at all.

**Montana Section Manager Report-  
Paul Stiles, KF7SOJ**

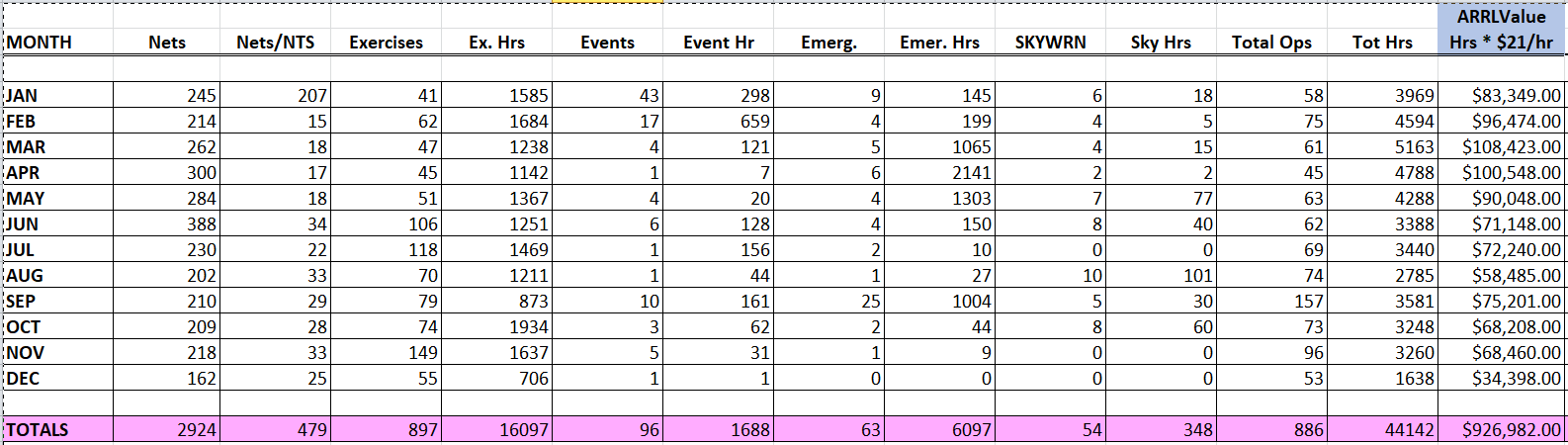
The Montana Section held the Section Convention, Glacier Waterton Ham-fest in Essex Montana in July. It was lightly attended due to Covid-19 and the fact the Canadian border was closed. This convention did however keep the world’s oldest continuously run ham-fest alive for another year. Improvements were made to get the HAM clubs reactivated on the big club list and new clubs into the fold. We now have 13 active. The number does seem small for such a large section, but you know the population.

We are working on getting new HAMs onboard and holding test sessions around the state. The VEs we had would not give tests during Covid Pandemic, so I recruited some HAM VEs from Wyoming to give tests until local HAMs were recruited. We now have enough for this area. BTW, I am now an Extra and a VE. Also in the works are Virtual classes and testing. We have held 2 classes over Zoom but prefer on site classes, However for people in rural areas this will be perfect.

**Oregon Section Manager Report-   
David Kidd, KA7OZO**

Even though the virus has caused major issues in the state, I can report that the OR Section continues to train via various media platforms and over the air exercises in order to maintain the highest level of readiness possible. This will continue into 2021 until we can start having proper meeting and training sessions.  
  
I have done away with DECs due to the lack of personnel wishing to do the job. However, I have I have established three A/SM geographic positions that cover two of the old District system counties each. This allows for better command and control, has been very effective in getting in the monthly EC/DEC reports, and allows for a more personal line of communications with the ECs and other state support staff.

I have attached a spreadsheet that shows the status of the monthly EC reports for the year 2020. I am happy to report that the OR Section has a 100% reporting for 2020.



**Western Washington Section Manager Report-   
Monte Simpson, W7FF**

The WWA Section ended CY2020 with 5,182 members which is an increase of 1.7%. WWA Section is number three in size within the ARRL for membership.

The only in person event we had was the Mike and Key Club’s 39th Annual Mike AND Key ARC Electronics Show & Swap Meet held at the Washington State Fair Events Center - Puyallup, WA, March 7, 2020. This annual event is usually well attended by amateur radio operators from over the Pacific Northwest. In 2020 attendance was down by at least 66 percent by both attendees and vendors. All other events we cancelled. As of January 10, 2021, most of the major events have been cancelled for CY2021. COMM Academy 2021 will be held virtually April 10/11, 2021. Affiliated clubs within the Western Washington Section conducted meetings via Zoom sessions.

September 15, 2020, WWA Section and NW Division worked with ARRL HQ staff worked to obtain a STA from the FCC to allow Pactor 4 to be used for response/recovery to hurricanes in southeast United States and wildland fires in western United States. The STA was granted for a 90 day period. WINLINK reporting systems doesn’t allow us to see if and how much Pactor 4 was actually used.

**NW Division Tribal Liaison Report-  
Steve Aberle, WA7PTM**

Bullet points related to the National Tribal Emergency Management Council:

* The NTEMC hasn't yet attempted a virtual conference since COVID restrictions began.
* Approximately 50 pilots are supporting air delivery of PPE and food to various tribes. Radio amateurs are stationed at the drop sites and at a base station located at the aviation hub in Arlington, Washington. A few of the pilots have ham licenses as well.
* The NTEMC is moving forward with organizing ham radio license classes for tribes via Zoom.