

## **ARRL Delaware Section Manager**

### **Special New Years Edition**

#### **Newsletter – January 2026**

### **Greetings from Sussex County**

As we turn the dial into a fresh year, the amateur radio community is buzzing with excitement and possibility. Whether you're chasing DX across icy bands or setting up portable ops doing POTA in crisp winter air, 2026 invites us to explore new modes, new friendships, and new horizons. This is the perfect time to refresh your shack, try a new digital mode, or finally tackle that antenna project you've been dreaming about.

From satellite contacts to Parks on the Air activations, the airwaves are wide open for adventure—and the best part is, you're never alone when you're on the bands.

Last year brought remarkable accomplishments across our region. Operators earned new awards, broke contest records, and expanded their reach with innovative setups and community outreach.

We saw growth in youth participation, increase in licensed amateur radio operators, successful emergency preparedness drills, and creative club events that brought fresh energy to the Amateur Radio Service.

As we celebrate these milestones, let's carry that momentum forward—mentoring new hams, sharing our stories, and continuing to build a resilient, welcoming radio community. Here's to a year of strong signals, clear QSOs, and unforgettable moments on the mic.

### **Delaware Section Staff for 2026-2027 Term**

As many of you know, I ran for ARRL Delaware Section Manager again and ran unopposed. I was declared reelected for the 2026-2027 term. Emergency Communications has always been a top concern for me when moving the Delaware Section forward. We have made great strides in leadership, projects, youth licensing and many other items. I want to thank my last term staff members and wanted to post the list of Delaware Section Staff. There is one change to the list, Joe Grib, KI3B, has decided to step down as Assistant Section Manager. As always, feel free to contact anyone on staff with questions you may have.

- Wendy Horn, W3NRN - Section Emergency Coordinator
- Marty Brett, AD3J - DEMA Radio Officer/DVOAD Coordinator

- Dave Scott, KC3BEJ - NCC Emergency Coordinator
- Jim Moore, KC3BTV - Kent Emergency Coordinator
- Steven Keller, KC3DSO - Sussex County Emergency Coordinator
- Pat Ryan, KW3Z - State Government Liaison
- John Low, K3JL - Section Traffic Manager
- Chris Cote, KE5NJ - Section Youth Coordinator
- Keith Hertzog, WU3X - ARRL Technical Coordinator
- Eric Hudson, WG3J - Sussex Co. Technical Specialist

Delaware Section Staff has openings! The Section Manager is looking for a Section Assistant Section Manager, Public Information Coordinator and an Affiliated Club Coordinator. Search the position title on the ARRL.org website for a detailed position description.

Contact Steven, KC3DSO, for more info.

### **ARRL Semiquincentennial America250 Worked All States (WAS) Award for 2026**

As announced in the January 2026 issue of QST (see announcement link above), ARRL is celebrating a year-long Worked-All-States operating event celebrating America's 250th Anniversary.

This is in conjunction with ARRL's 2026 **Year of The Club** celebration (be sure to check out all of the club-oriented activities planned in 2026!).

In similar fashion to the 2014 ARRL Centennial Celebration, and the 2018 International Grid Chase, and 2023 Volunteer's On The Air events, this event will be exclusively driven only by QSOs uploaded to Logbook of The World (LoTW).

Highlights of the event include:

- Work State toward achieving your America250 WAS by contacting W1AW/Portable Stations: There will be week-long activations of portable W1AW/portable stations in all 50 states, and in several US Possessions/Territories, that will generate on-air activity to achieve this unique WAS Award. For this operating event, ARRL will provide a listing of all W1AW/portable stations, who will each operate for 7 days (from a Wednesday through the following Tuesday) for 2 separate weeks in the year (an early week between January and July, and a late week between July and December). A few weeks will be listed as non-W1AW/portable weeks due to contests and ARRL Field Day.

There will be three (3) specialty Endorsements, including:

- Earn WAS by contacting W1AW/portable stations in all 50 states (applying for this endorsement will become possible sometime into July or thereafter when the first wave of 50-state activations is completed and the second wave of state activations is underway).
- Earn WAS by contacting ARRL Affiliated Club stations in all 50 states (see our Club Search web page to determine the locations and call signs of ARRL Affiliated Clubs).
- Earn WAS Triple Play by contacting all 50 states on all three modes (CW/Phone/Digital)

While the object of the America250 WAS event is to make as many contacts with W1AW/portable states as possible, on as many bands and modes as possible (except 60 Meters), all operators are encouraged to explain celebrating America's 250th anniversary with the ARRL America250 WAS Award to the degree that your operating time allows.

Activity is encouraged on all US FCC authorized bands (including WARC bands) from 2200 meters LF through all of HF, through all of VHF/UHF/SHF, and up through all of the microwave bands including via light (but excluding 60 Meters) via peer-to-peer (eg, FM simplex) RF contacts (contacts made through Linking Systems or Repeaters will not count).

There are no planned QSL cards for any of the W1AW/portable America250 WAS operating event stations during this event. All W1AW/portable contacts will be confirmed via LoTW.

Stations who contact W1AW at ARRL HQ can upload such contacts to LoTW and/or send QSL cards (with SASE) to W1AW, ARRL HQ, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111 – for contacts only made directly with the W1AW Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Station.

Applications for the America250 WAS Award must be made via LoTW once a minimum of 50 state QSO confirmations appear in LoTW for contacts made in 2026. To apply within LoTW, look at your usual LoTW WAS page summaries, which will show your progress toward the America250 Award, then when applying in LoTW, the usual WAS Award processing fees will be displayed for the America250 certificate (with endorsements where earned) and shipping.

After the initial America250 Award certificates are issued, endorsements can be sought. These will be supplied as America250 endorsement stickers (in a fashion similar to as shown in the certificate illustration above) that you can affix to your America250 Award certificate.

The Delaware Section gets to run W1AW/3 for two weeks during the year. The first week is scheduled for the week covering the ARRL Delaware State & Hamfest; Wednesday, April 15 through Tuesday, April 21. The second week in the latter half of the year has yet to be assigned. Anyone can work a station within the Section as W1AW/3 (think POTA, DE QSO Party, etc.) but you must be on the schedule so we don't have any duplicate stations on the same band and mode. Contact Steven Keller, KC3DSO, ARRL Delaware Section Manager for info on operating W1AW/3 during these events. An online scheduling tool will be used with a link being sent out sectionwide when it's ready for prime time. All W1AW/3 QSO's must be logged. Section Staff will collect your logs for uploading to LoTW. Email Steven at [kc3dso@gmail.com](mailto:kc3dso@gmail.com) with any questions.

Visit the America250 WAS website: <https://www.arrl.org/america250-was>

### **FCC Allocates 60 meter World Wide Amateur band Approved by WRC-15**

FCC Allocates 60-Meter World-Wide Amateur Band Approved at WRC-15; Continues Amateur Use of Four Additional 60-Meter Channels.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on December 9, 2025, released a long-awaited Report and Order adopting a new amateur radio spectrum allocation in the 60-meter band that was approved for world-wide use on a secondary basis in the WRC-15 (World Radiocommunication Conference 2015) Final Acts. The Commission also agreed with a petition from ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® to continue to allow amateur operations on four existing 60-meter channels outside the international allocation with a full 100 watts. The new rules will go into effect 30 days after publication in the Federal Register, when amateurs may then begin using the allocation.

Specifically, the Commission allocated 5351.5 - 5366.5 kHz (60 meters) to the amateur service on a secondary basis with a permitted power of **9.15 watts ERP**. The Commission also authorized amateurs to continue using four existing channels outside of the 5351.5 - 5366.5 kHz band centered on 5332, 5348, 5373, and 5405 kHz on a secondary basis with a permitted power of 100 watts ERP. There are no antenna restrictions but antenna gain must be used to calculate ERP.

The 60-meter allocation is available to amateurs holding a General Class or above license. The maximum permissible signal bandwidth is 2.8 kHz.

Amateurs are cautioned that this allocation is strictly on a secondary basis, and amateurs must avoid interfering with non-amateur stations using this spectrum. This obligation includes the responsibility to monitor for such stations using appropriate receiver bandwidths. The FCC emphasized that “allowing amateur operations in this band while fully protecting incumbent primary Federal operations is our priority, and even intermittent interference in this band could jeopardize important Federal operations.”

### **The ARRL Delaware Section Facebook Page**

The ARRL Delaware Section Facebook Page has changed ownership and is now back up in full info releasing operation. Social media continues to be a primary source for information for many. Having access to this page allows the over 500 followers to get up to the minute information about the Delaware Section and surrounding area regarding current events and other amateur radio related information. In coordination with the ARRL Delaware Section's [groups.io](#) page most active amateur radio licensees in the section will have up to the date information.

Visit the ARRL Delaware Section's Facebook page via [Facebook](#).

## **ARRL January Board of Directors Meeting – January 16-17, 2026**

The ARRL Board of Directors will meet on January 16, 2026 for their first BoD meeting of the year. This meeting will focus on various initiatives and decisions made by the board.

They include establishment of the 2026 Year of the Club, review of the ARRL Heritage Museum's online collection, Radio Alpha (a project aimed at creating a comprehensive repository of information about the history of amateur radio), and the adoption of updated by-laws. The meeting will also address the current status of the ARRL's Washington Advocacy and the development of a 3-year strategy for the league. The BoD is composed of the fifteen Directors as well as officers who manage the day-to-day operations of the ARRL including the CEO and CFO. Our Atlantic Division Director, Bob Famiglio, K3RF, and Vice Director, Martin "Marty" Newingham, will be representing the Atlantic Division at the meeting.

## **Delaware Section Parks On The Air (POTA) update**

Born from the success of the 2016 ARRL National Parks Event, POTA has grown into an international movement with over a half million amateurs as hunters and activators worldwide.

Whether you're setting up a portable station in a quiet forest or chasing park contacts from your home shack, POTA blends radiosport with nature, public outreach (have brochures handy to pass out), and emergency preparedness. With 89 parks within Delaware, we can stay busy for a while. Delaware has some changes to our park list. We lost one park, Ft. Miles, US-9884, but we just got two new parks in Sussex County. Barr Industrial Forest Land State Wildlife Area, US-12939 which has only one tract and Laurel Industrial Forest Land Wildlife Area, US-12938, which has three tracts which can be activated; Edwin Bell Tract, Whitesville Tract and Line Tract. Official POTA events are held each year.

New Year's Week is the first full week of the new year; January 1-7, 2026.

Support your Parks events occur four times a year:

Winter: 3<sup>rd</sup> Full Weekend in January, January 17-19, 2026

Spring: 3<sup>rd</sup> Full Weekend of April, April 18-19, 2026

Summer: 3<sup>rd</sup> Full Weekend of July, July 18-19, 2026

Fall: 3<sup>rd</sup> Full Weekend in October, October 17-18, 2026

Many clubs in the section run POTA and/or Fox Hunt events throughout the year. These are a great opportunity to get outside, meet fellow radio operators, and get some snacks. Visit the Delaware ARRL [groups.io](https://groups.io) page to view the statewide calendar which lists section events.

As a side note, the state has just increased fees to access state parks which is the first time in 10 years. Some have more than doubled. Considering the average age of an amateur radio

operator is in the mid 70's, having a lifetime pass to the parks (once you hit 65) can be a good savings. Another great way to get access to Delaware's State Parks is using your library card! Yes, your library card allows up to 1 pass per month/5 per year. There are many POTA "Mentors" around so grab one and get into a park or hunt parks from home.

### **Winter Field Day 2026 January 24-25, 2026**

Winter Field Day is an annual event for amateur radio operators, taking place in the last full weekend of January. For 2026 that will be January 24-25, 2026. WFD is organized by the Winter Field Day Association. You may choose to participate solo or get friends or an entire club or ARES group to participate. WFD aims to help participants to improve their preparedness for disasters and enhance their operational abilities in adverse conditions. Unlike Field Day which is held in June, WFD provides a very different environment to set up and operate in so doing both events gives you experience at different times of year. As of this newsletter, there are 328 locations registered on the WFD site (<https://winterfieldday.org>) but none in Delaware. Ensure you list your site on their page to allow visitors to find your site.

### **Grid Down, Mic Up – EmComm Topics**

#### **Digital Modes for Disaster Response – Strengthening Amateur Radio's Role when it Matters Most**

When disaster strikes and traditional communication systems fail, amateur radio continues to stand as one of the most resilient and adaptable tools available to emergency managers.

In recent years, digital modes have become a cornerstone of that capability, offering accuracy, efficiency, and reliability that voice alone cannot match. From hurricanes and wildfires to infrastructure failures and large-scale public events, digital communications give amateur operators the power to deliver clear, documented, and interoperable messages when they are needed most.

One of the most powerful tools in the EmComm arsenal is **Winlink**, a global radio email system that allows operators to send and receive messages—including ICS-213 forms—over HF, VHF, or UHF. Winlink uses a network of Radio Message Server (RMS) gateways that can forward traffic via the internet when available or via HF radio when infrastructure is compromised. This "store-and-forward" architecture makes Winlink uniquely suited for disaster response, enabling communication between shelters, hospitals, EOCs, and field teams even when commercial networks are down.

While Winlink handles structured email-style traffic, it's not the only tool in the toolbox. **FLDIGI** and similar software packages offer tactical messaging. Modes like MT63-2000 (preferred on VHF/UHF) and MFSK32 (common on HF) are widely adopted by some groups for their robustness and speed. These modes allow operators to send radiograms, ICS forms, and free-text messages with exceptional reliability. Because they require only modest

equipment—a laptop, a radio, and a simple audio interface—they can be useful for deployments.

VarAC has quickly become one of the most capable digital tools for EmComm, offering reliable, grid-independent messaging even under poor conditions. Built on the robust VARA protocol, VarAC maintains links at extremely low signal-to-noise levels and supports features tailored specifically for disaster response, including one-to-many broadcasts, real-time alerts, beacons for station availability, digipeating for extended reach, and standardized emergency message forms. Whether used on HF, VHF, or UHF, VarAC enables fast, dependable data exchange when traditional infrastructure is down, making it a powerful addition to any emergency communicator's toolkit.

Digital modes are powerful, but they require practice. Regular drills, public service events, and simulated emergency tests give operators the opportunity to refine their skills, test equipment, and build confidence.

Many clubs now incorporate digital EmComm nights, Winlink Wednesdays, and FLDIGI workshops to help members stay sharp. The more familiar operators become with their tools, the more effective they will be when the call comes.

As emergency communications evolve, amateur radio continues to adapt—embracing digital technologies that enhance our ability to serve communities in times of need. Whether you're sending a formal ICS-213 via Winlink, sending a Radiogram, or supporting a shelter with a portable digital station, your skills contribute to a resilient and reliable communications network. Digital modes aren't replacing voice—they're expanding what amateur radio can accomplish when every second counts.

### **Upcoming Events & Contests**

- **POTA New Years Week – January 1-7, 2026.** A full week of POTA contact to specifically include New Years Day activations.
- **ARRL Kids Day – January 3, 2026.** Kids Day is a special occasion designed to induce young people to the work of Amateur Radio.
- **ARRL RTTY Roundup – January 3-4, 2026.** Amateurs worldwide contact and exchange QSO information with other amateurs using only the Radioteletype (RTTY) mode on the 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meter bands.
- **January VHF Contest – January 17-19, 2026.** For amateurs in the US and Canada (and their possessions) to work as many amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees x 1 degree Maidenhead grid squares as possible using authorized frequencies above 50 MHz. Stations outside the US & Canada (and their possessions) may only work stations in the US (and its possessions) and Canada.

· **Winter Field Day – January 24-25, 2026** – Annual radio event run by the Winter Field Day Assn, this event aims to help participants improve their preparedness for disasters and enhance their operational abilities in adverse conditions. Visit <https://winterfieldday.org> for more info and be sure to register your site to get on the map.

Visit [contests.arrl.org](https://contests.arrl.org) or [www.contestcalendar.com](http://www.contestcalendar.com) for details on these and upcoming contests.

## **A Warm Welcome to Our Newest & Upgrading Members**

Join me in welcoming the latest additions to the Amateur Radio Service in our vibrant community.

KC3GAI John K. Norris  
KC3GCS Kevin L. Turner  
KD3CCB Galen Fabric  
KD3CCI Donald F. Melvin  
KD3CEE Peter L. Seely  
KD3CER Shyama Kesavan  
KB3LUF Andrew Shearer  
KC3GAI John K. Norris  
KC3GGT Richard S. Davis  
KC3GOT Robert D. Young  
KD3CGV Radford Skudrna  
KD3CHO Samir M. Ahmadi  
KD3CID Aidan Elm  
KD3CIL Daniel S. Eastburn

## **Winter ahead...**

As winter settles across the region, it brings both challenges and opportunities for amateur radio operators. Cold weather, shifting propagation, and the occasional nor'easter remind us why preparedness matters—but they also make this season one of the most rewarding times to get on the air. Whether you're checking into a local net during a storm, testing your portable gear in the crisp winter air, or simply enjoying the quiet of the bands on a snowy evening from the warmth of your shack through the heat 1.5K tube based amplifier provides, winter operating keeps our skills sharp and our community connected. Stay warm, stay safe, and keep those signals strong all season long.