

## **ARRL Delaware Section Manager February 2026 Newsletter**

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#### **Greetings from Sussex County**

As I start this month's newsletter, I am still chipping away ice, up to 3" in my driveway, as I hear of another possible snow event is around the corner. This storm, Winter Storm Fern, hit on Winter Field Day weekend, sadly disrupting many club's WFD plans. Two clubs, Nanticoke Amateur Radio Club and First State Amateur Radio Club both continued with their plans just simply ending them Saturday evening before the storm started. I have always said if you are planning a radio event, always plan it as a social event first and radio event second. In the past this has proven to be a winner for attendance and participation.

Winter Storm Fern was a significant event for us in Delaware. Most everything closed, driving restrictions for all three counties, up to 10.5" of snow in northern areas and significant ice accumulation. Skywarn was in full swing with activations in all three counties handling weather reports forwarding them to the NWS and EOC's including DEMA.

More Winter Ahead? Well, Groundhog Day is on February 2, if you believe Punxsutawney Phil has the ability to be a prognosticator. The tradition is when Phil emerges from his burrow and sees his shadow, he will retreat back into his den and winter will go on for another six more weeks. So, I personally am OK if Phil goes back in. I enjoy the snow but not the ice.

#### **Atlantic Division loses Division Director Bob Famiglio, K3RF**

As you may know, Bob has been serving the division for about 10 years. First as Vice Director and then as Director when Tom, W3TOM, stepped down. Bob, who is an attorney, was very active with amateur radio for many years and fully supported not just ARRL members but all licensees in the division. His expertise helped many operators with legal issues, represented the division at all of the ARRL Board of Director meetings, and was the chairperson of several committees. Bob chose to not sign the new "Board Member Statement on Authority, Responsibility, and Expectations" required under the passing of the new By-Law 46(d). This put Bob's tenure as Division Director on a clock. Marty, AG3I, the Division Vice Director, is now the Atlantic Division Director. Marty will serve the balance of the existing term that expires December 31, 2026. A new Vice Director will be named at a later date. We hope to see Bob, AG3I, at our state convention/Hamfest in April. Bob's farewell email to the section is on the ARRL Delaware Section [ARRL Delaware Section groups.io](https://groups.io/g/ARRL-Delaware-Section) and the [Delaware Sections Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/ARRL-Delaware-Section/).

#### **ARRL America250 Worked All States (WAS) Award for 2026 W1AW/X UPDATE**

The ARRL Delaware Section will have use of the W1AW/3 callsign for two weeks of the year. The first week will cover the Delaware State Convention/Hamfest on April 18, 2026. The week will run from Wednesday, April 15 to Tuesday, April 21. The second week will cover December 7 which is Delaware Day. December 7, 1787 is when Delaware became the first state. This second week will run from Wednesday, December 2 to Tuesday, December 8. We are working with an online scheduling tool which appears to work well for us. The site info and a printed instruction sheet for signing up to operate will be released in the coming weeks. All operators must use the schedule and follow the rules the ARRL has released for operating. Logging must be done and submitted via an ADI file. The rules, country wide schedule of stations, etc. has been posted on the ARRL Delaware Section groups.io

page. This is a rare opportunity to run the ARRL Club W1AW callsign. Unless you go to ARRL HQ, you probably won't get another chance.

### **Gerald "Jerry" Simonowitz, KB2GCG, Steps down from DE QSO Party**

For many years the First State Amateur Radio Club has run the Delaware QSO Party, which has been run annually since 2007. FSARC has maintained scores, maintained and updated the rules, posted results and more. Jerry, KB2GCG, spearheaded the Delaware QSO Party for about 17 years spending hundreds of hours checking log files, maintaining scores, solving rule issues, helping folks with issues, etc. Jerry had decided to step down and allow a new crew at FSARC to assume the responsibilities of the QSO Party. At the February meeting of FSARC I had the privilege to present Jerry an ARRL Delaware Section Certificate of Appreciation for running the QSO Party for 17 years. The Delaware QSO party is held in the first week of May so this year, it's May 3 & 3, 2026. Mark this weekend in your calendars now. This is a great opportunity to get on the air and make a few Q's. Running a combo POTA/DE QSO Party station is a great way for you and your fellow operators on the air. Visit the First State Amateur Radio Club (FSARC) for more information on the event.

### **ARRL Delaware Section Youth Initiative gets new name**

The ARRL Delaware Section Youth Initiative's name has been changed to the "*Randall Carlson Delaware Youth Radio Memorial Initiative.*" Randall Carlson, WB0JJX became a silent key in June of 2024. Randall was the Delaware Section Manager from 1992 to 2005; a good run. Due to generous donations by Randall's family, the initiative has been renamed. The Randall Carlson Delaware Youth Radio Memorial Initiative will continue into the new year under a new name but the initiative's goals will remain the same. To assist in getting youth not only into the Amateur Radio Service via study guides and providing new radios upon successful completion of the technician exam, but keep them engaged in local events and activities.

### **Sussex County ARES**

Sussex County ARES has seen an active January. Sussex ARES had its normal 2m Training Net and Zoom meetings for advanced training.

January 10 was Sussex ARES 1Q Hospital Drill. ARES staffed 3 facilities with the Sussex EOC also being online. One station is still down due to being in the process of being moved. In all we had 14 radio operators participating in the drill. The drill saw a series of injects to all of the stations. These injects ran the gamut from simple single station voice requests to dual injects being delivered via WinLink. These dual injects had the receiving station accept/acknowledge the inject and forward the inject (most were resource requests) to another facility and await a completed response. All with all events, drills, exercises, activations, etc. Sussex County ARES always does an After Action Report and Improvement Plan. This document will be available in the next couple of weeks.

Sussex ARES Skywarn was activated on Saturday, January 24 for Winter Storm Fern. Sussex Skywarn has 3 Net Control Stations (NCS) monitor the radio continually for just over 31 hours. The NCS received many reports which were forwarded to the local EOC, NWS and DEMA as needed. The After Action Report for this activation has been sent out via email and is available via the Sussex County ARES groups.io page in the files section. DelMarVA Skywarn again used the DMR Skywarn 759 TG to coordinate NCS operations and take some reports.

## **Sussex ARES has the following events scheduled for February 2026**

- 2/4 – 2m Training Net – 147.090 Millsboro Repeater
- 2/11 – Hybrid Meeting – Arena’s in Georgetown- 6:30PM – Hurricane Watch Net
- 2/18 – 2m Training Net – 147.090 Millsboro Repeater

Sussex ARES runs a drill every 90 days and runs/participates in other events during the year. Want to be a part of an active ARES group? You don’t have to live in Sussex County to be a part of the team. Send an email to [kc3dso@gmail.com](mailto:kc3dso@gmail.com).

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

When Help Walks Through the Door: Spontaneous Volunteers in Amateur Radio Incidents  
In every major incident—whether it’s a winter storm, a communications outage, or a large-scale public event—amateur radio operators pride themselves on being ready, trained, and organized. We drill, we plan, and we build our teams around ICS principles so that when the call comes, we can step in without hesitation. But there’s one element that no amount of planning can fully predict: the spontaneous volunteer.

These are the hams who hear the activation on the repeater, see the weather turning ugly, or simply feel compelled to help when they sense something is happening. They show up at the EOC, the hospital, or the club’s staging area with good intentions, a radio in hand, and a desire to serve. And while their enthusiasm is welcome, spontaneous volunteers can be both an asset and a challenge if not managed properly.

## **Why Spontaneous Volunteers Appear**

Amateur radio is built on a culture of service. Many operators feel a deep responsibility to help their community, especially when they hear that their fellow hams are being deployed. Curiosity, civic duty, and a genuine desire to contribute all play a role. In Delaware—where the amateur community is tight knit and deeply connected—word travels fast, and people want to be part of the solution.

### ***The Benefits They Bring***

Handled correctly, spontaneous volunteers can strengthen an incident response:

- Additional manpower when the situation escalates
- Operators with specialized skills (digital modes, HF, antennas, logging)
- Local knowledge of repeaters, terrain, and community resources
- Backup equipment such as batteries, laptops, or portable antennas

In many cases, these volunteers become the extra set of hands that keeps a net running smoothly or allows a hospital station to maintain continuous coverage.

### ***The Challenges They Create***

But enthusiasm alone doesn’t guarantee readiness. Spontaneous volunteers may:

- Arrive without being assigned
- Lack situational awareness or briefing
- Not understand the current ICS structure
- Bring equipment that isn’t compatible with the operation
- Overcrowd a workspace or unintentionally disrupt workflow
- Create security concerns

In a hospital or EOC environment—where space, security, and documentation matter—uncoordinated arrivals can complicate operations. The key to preventing issues is to address these volunteers in a policy for use/placement.

### ***Integrating Them the Right Way.***

The key is not to turn them away, but to manage them effectively. ARES groups can adopt simple practices to make spontaneous volunteers an asset rather than a liability:

#### **1. Establish a Check In Point**

A designated operator or supervisor should greet new arrivals, record their presence, and determine their skill level.

#### **2. Provide a Quick Briefing**

A five minute overview of the incident, the communications plan, and the chain of command can prevent confusion later.

#### **3. Assign Them Appropriately if you can**

Not every volunteer needs to be on the radio. Unless someone has a Task Book, deciding how to put their skill set to work is a challenge. Perhaps assigning them to non-secure areas such as at a Check In or a Welcoming center. Some may be better suited for:

- Logging
- Message handling
- Equipment setup
- Monitoring Winlink
- Shadowing experienced operators

#### **4. Document Their Participation**

ICS 211 check in forms and ICS 214 activity logs ensure accountability and help with after action reporting.

#### **5. Use the Opportunity for Recruitment**

A spontaneous volunteer today may become a trained, dependable operator tomorrow—if we welcome them properly.

### ***A Culture of Preparedness and Inclusion***

Spontaneous volunteers are a reminder that Amateur Radio Service is more than equipment and procedures—it's a community. When people show up unannounced, it means they care. Our job is to channel that energy into something productive, safe, and aligned with the mission.

Handled well, these volunteers become part of the story of resilience. Handled poorly, they become a missed opportunity.

As Delaware ARES continues to grow and refine its capabilities, embracing spontaneous volunteers-while maintaining structure and professionalism-will strengthen our readiness for whatever comes next.

### **Upcoming Events & Contests**

- ***School Club Roundup – February 9-13, 2026.*** Amateur radio event designed for clubs and individuals, particularly those associated with elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools or colleges. Encourages young people to get on the air.
- ***ARRL International DX Contest – CW - February 21-21, 2026.*** To encourage W/VE stations to expand knowledge of DX propagation on the HF and MF bands, improve operating skills, and improve station capability by creating a competition in which DX stations may only contact W/VE stations.

Visit [contests.arrl.org](https://contests.arrl.org) or [www.contestcalendar.com](https://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.

KB3NEB Alfred Fallavollita Jr.  
KD3CIR Joseph E. Krisger  
KD3CJI Nicholas Dumicich  
KD3CJJ Ronald P. Ferraro  
KD3CJK Nathan Wiggins  
KD3CJP Jerdahn G. Campbell  
KB3CJQ George C. Groseclose  
KC3CJR Matthew T. Mossman  
KC3CKQ David Johnson  
KC3CMC Tyler S. Adams  
KD3CMP Thomas Rinaldi  
KD3CNA Eugene B. West Jr.

### **Our Strength Comes from All of Us..**

As we head into another month of on air activity, training, and service, I want to thank each of you for the dedication you bring to amateur radio across Delaware. Our strength as a Section comes from operators who stay curious, stay prepared, and stay connected to one another. Whether you're mentoring a new ham, checking in during a net, or supporting our served agencies, your efforts make a real difference. Let's continue building momentum, supporting our clubs, and keeping the spirit of amateur radio strong throughout the First State. Until next month, stay safe, stay active, and keep the bands alive with your signal.

As always, feel free to contact me anytime.

73,

Steven Keller

Delaware Section Manager

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Useful Links:

- ARRL Sections – Delaware (<https://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/Delaware>)
- ARRL Delaware Section Groups.io Reflector (<https://groups.io/g/ARRLDelawareSection>)