

ARRL Delaware Section Manager

Newsletter – September 2026

Hello from Sussex County

As another month of Amateur Radio activities begins, I'd like to welcome you to the latest edition of the ARRL Delaware Section Newsletter. This monthly publication is your source for Section news, upcoming events, training opportunities, legislative updates, operating activities, and the many accomplishments of amateur radio operators throughout the First State.

As we move into the fall season, there are plenty of opportunities to get on the air, sharpen your operating skills, support community events, participate in emergency communications training, and enjoy the fellowship that makes Amateur Radio such a rewarding service. Whether you're activating a park, checking into a local net, mentoring a new operator, experimenting with digital modes, or preparing for the next public service event, every contact you make helps strengthen our Amateur Radio community.

Thank you for your continued dedication to Amateur Radio and your support of the ARRL Delaware Section. Your volunteer spirit, willingness to learn, and commitment to serving others are what make our Section successful. I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and find something that inspires you to get involved, try something new, and spend more time on the air. I look forward to hearing you on the air soon!

Order your ARRL America250 Worked All States (WAS) Award Certificate

I received an email the other day from an ARRL Member in New Castle County, Chet, WA3I. Chet applied for and received his America250 WAS Award and is proudly being displayed in his shack next to his Bicentennial WAS Award he received in 1976.

The National Association for Amateur Radio® introduced the ARRL America250 Worked All States (WAS) operating event this year. If you've already confirmed contacts with all 50 states, you can now order your commemorative award certificate. The attractive, frame-worthy certificate celebrates your participation in this once-in-a-lifetime event honoring America's 250th anniversary. ARRL is a Supporting Partner of America250 and the ARRL America250 WAS operating event complements the 2026 ARRL Year of the Club. Icom America is the Official Sponsor of the ARRL Year of the Club. Together, ARRL and Icom are supporting activities that spotlight the vital role of amateur radio clubs in communities across the country.

The America250 WAS event runs through December 31, 2026, and is based entirely on Logbook of The World® (LoTW®) confirmations. Earning the basic award requires confirmed contacts with all 50 states made during 2026. [america250.arrl.org](https://www.america250.arrl.org)

Once your confirmations appear in your LoTW account, visit the America250 WAS web page [america250.arrl.org](https://www.america250.arrl.org), sign in using your existing LoTW account credentials, and view your WAS Account to see your award progress. If you don't already have an LoTW WAS Award Account, you'll need to create one first. When you've qualified for the award — and any endorsements — submit your order online!

America250 WAS Endorsements

Even after you've earned the basic award certificate, there's still plenty of time this year to qualify for endorsements. Participants can earn up to three:

WAS W1AW Portable — Contact the W1AW/portable activation in all 50 states.

WAS ARRL Affiliated Clubs — Contact ARRL Affiliated Club call signs in all 50 states.

WAS Triple Play — Confirm all 50 states on CW, phone, and digital modes.

Endorsements are available as commemorative gold stickers that can be added to your ARRL America250 WAS certificate.

Certificates are \$30 for ARRL members and \$35 for non-members, plus shipping and handling. Endorsement stickers are \$5 each plus shipping and handling.

Track your progress on the ARRL America250 Worked All States web page, and learn more about Celebrate America250 with ARRL.

America250 is the national, nonpartisan organization charged by Congress to lead the commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a milestone that marks America's semiquincentennial.

Delaware will again be running at W1AW/3 from December 2-9. It's planned to have a station running in Dover "On The Green" on Monday, December 7 to celebrate Delaware Day. If you are interested in running from Delaware as W1AW/3 from home, POTA, etc. or if you want details on the Delaware Day event contact me for information.

ARRL's New 10-band DXCC Award

The ARRL has introduced the 10-Band DXCC Award, a new milestone that recognizes amateur radio operators who have earned DXCC on all ten HF amateur bands from 160 through 6 meters (excluding 60 meters). While many operators work toward DXCC on individual bands, this new award celebrates the dedication, operating skill, and perseverance required to achieve confirmed contacts across the entire HF spectrum. Like other DXCC awards, higher endorsement levels are planned for operators who reach 200 entities, 300 entities, and Honor Roll on all ten bands. The award provides another exciting challenge for DX enthusiasts and encourages operators to explore the unique propagation characteristics of every HF band throughout the solar cycle. Whether you're just beginning your DXCC journey or are working toward your first band endorsement, the 10-Band DXCC

The award offers an outstanding long-term goal and another reason to get on the air.

Getting Started with Amateur Radio Logging Programs & ADIF/Cabrillo Files

Whether you're chasing DX, activating parks, participating in contests, or simply enjoying a casual ragchew, a good logging program can make operating easier and more rewarding. Modern logging software helps you keep accurate records of your contacts, track awards such as Worked All States (WAS) and DXCC, upload contacts to Logbook of The World (LoTW), QRZ, and eQSL, and even interface directly with your radio for automatic frequency and mode logging. Popular programs such as N3FJP ACLog, Log4OM, DXLab Suite, Ham Radio Deluxe, and GridTracker offer features for operators of every experience level. A well-maintained log not only preserves the memories of your time on the air but also makes confirming contacts, earning awards, and reviewing your operating history simple and efficient. If you're still using a paper logbook, now is a great time to explore the many benefits of electronic logging. Electronic logging is something I wish I had done

when I first got started working HF. Many of those original QSO's have sadly been lost. But we also want to discuss the ADIF; what is it and how it can be helpful for us and how it compares to the Cabrillo file standard.

Understanding ADIF Files

One of the most valuable features of modern amateur radio logging programs is their ability to create and read ADIF (Amateur Data Interchange Format) files. ADIF is the universal file format used to exchange contact logs between different logging programs and online services such as Logbook of The World (LoTW), QRZ, eQSL, Club Log, and many award programs. Think of an ADIF file as a common language that allows operators to switch logging software or share contacts without losing valuable operating data. By regularly exporting and backing up your log in ADIF format, you ensure that years of contacts, awards, and operating history remain portable, secure, and accessible regardless of which logging program you choose to use in the future.

Understanding Cabrillo Files

If you've ever participated in an amateur radio contest, you've likely encountered the Cabrillo file format. A Cabrillo file is the standard format used by contest sponsors to receive and score contest logs. Unlike an ADIF file, which stores detailed information for general logging and award tracking, a Cabrillo file contains only the information needed to verify contest contacts and calculate scores. Most modern logging programs can automatically generate a Cabrillo file at the end of a contest, making it easy to submit your log electronically. Whether you're participating in ARRL Field Day, Sweepstakes, CQ World Wide DX Contest, or another major event, learning how to export and submit a Cabrillo file is an essential skill for contest operators. Keeping your logging software's station information up to date will ensure your Cabrillo files are accurate and accepted by contest sponsors. There are many online resources that can be leveraged to move data between file formats to make our life easier.

Delaware's "Know your Zone" Evacuation Program

Delaware's "Know Your Zone" program is designed to help residents and visitors prepare for hurricanes, coastal flooding, and other emergencies by identifying whether they live, work, or travel in one of the state's four evacuation zones: A, B, C, or D. Instead of issuing countywide evacuation orders, emergency officials can direct warnings or mandatory evacuations only to the zones that are at risk. This zone-based approach reduces unnecessary travel, minimizes traffic congestion, and allows those in the greatest danger to evacuate more quickly and safely. Every Delaware resident is encouraged to determine their evacuation zone before an emergency, include it in their family emergency plan, and sign up for emergency notifications through the Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS). You can find your evacuation zone by entering your address into the Know Your Zone lookup tool at [PrepareDE.org](https://www.preparede.org).

Grid Down, Mic Up – EmComm Topics

Digital Modes: A Powerful Tool for Emergency Communications

When traditional voice communications become difficult or unreliable, amateur radio digital modes provide an effective way to pass accurate information. Unlike voice transmissions, digital modes can reliably transfer text and data under weak signal conditions where voice may be unreadable. This makes them an invaluable tool for emergency communications (EmComm), disaster response, and public service events.

One of the greatest advantages of digital communications is message accuracy. Rather than relying on spoken words that may be misunderstood or require multiple repeats, digital modes transmit written information

exactly as it was entered. This is especially important when sending addresses, patient information, resource requests, damage assessments, shelter reports, or other critical information where accuracy is essential.

Several digital modes are particularly valuable for emergency communications. Winlink allows operators to send email-like messages over radio without requiring an internet connection at either end, making it ideal for formal message traffic and ICS forms. JS8Call provides keyboard-to-keyboard messaging with excellent weak-signal performance and supports message storage and forwarding. Traditional modes such as RTTY and PSK31 continue to offer reliable text communications under a variety of conditions, while VARA HF significantly increases the speed and efficiency of Winlink message transfers.

Digital modes also allow operators to maintain communications over long distances using modest power levels and simple antennas. Many modes are capable of decoding signals well below the noise floor, allowing messages to be exchanged when voice communications are no longer practical. During widespread disasters where cellular networks, internet service, or commercial communications have failed, these capabilities can provide a vital link between emergency operations centers, hospitals, shelters, and field teams.

As emergency communications continue to evolve, today's ARES® members should strive to become proficient not only in voice operations but also in digital communications.

Learning to use programs such as Winlink, JS8Call, and other digital applications expands an operator's capabilities and provides served agencies with additional communication options when they are needed most. Digital skills complement—not replace—traditional voice operations, giving Amateur Radio operators another valuable tool to fulfill our mission of providing reliable emergency communications when all else fails.

VarAC: Expanding Emergency Communications Capabilities

As Amateur Radio emergency communications continue to evolve, VarAC has become a valuable addition to the EmComm toolbox. Built on the high-speed VARA HF modem, VarAC combines reliable keyboard-to-keyboard messaging with features such as station beacons, message storage and forwarding, acknowledgments, file transfer, and group messaging. These capabilities allow operators to exchange accurate written information over long distances, even when voice communications are difficult due to poor propagation or high noise levels.

Unlike traditional voice operations, VarAC creates a written record of every message, reducing the chance of errors when transmitting addresses, resource requests, damage assessments, medical supply needs, or other critical information. Messages can be stored and forwarded when stations are temporarily unavailable, increasing the likelihood that important traffic will eventually reach its destination.

VarAC also supports peer-to-peer (P2P) communications, allowing stations to exchange messages directly without relying on internet connectivity or centralized servers. This makes it particularly useful during disasters when commercial communications infrastructure has been disrupted. Operators can establish HF communication links between Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), shelters, hospitals, and field teams while maintaining a complete log of all transmitted and received traffic.

For ARES® groups and other emergency communications organizations, VarAC is not intended to replace voice operations or Winlink, but rather to complement them. Voice remains the fastest method for tactical communications, while Winlink excels at formal email-style messaging and ICS forms. VarAC fills the gap by providing reliable real-time keyboard messaging, efficient file transfers, and resilient station-to-station communications when immediate written exchanges are needed.

As more Amateur Radio operators become familiar with digital communications, adding VarAC to your emergency communications skill set provides another flexible and dependable option for serving your community. Like any EmComm tool, its effectiveness depends on regular practice. Participating in digital training nets, exercises, and simulated emergency tests will ensure you are ready to use VarAC confidently when your community needs reliable communications the most.

Contest & Events

September 5 & 6 – ARRL EME 2.3GHz & Up – Weekend 2.

September 12 – Delmarva Swapmeet, 34807 Old Hickory Road, Laurel, DE.

QTH of Al Waller, K3TKJ (SK). 0900-1400. Food/Drinks available. FCC

Testing. Buy, Sell, Trade. Questions call Jim, 443.366.5677

September 12-14 – ARRL VHF Contest

September 13 – POTA/Fox Hunt, Trap Pond State Park, Jason Beach.

0900-1400. Contact Eric, WG3J via wg3j61@yahoo.com for more information.

September 19 & 21 – ARRL 10 GHz & Up. Round 2.

For information on all ARRL Contests visit www.arrl.org/contest-calendar

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest & Upgrading Members

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

KB3MXY Matthew D. Holmes

KC3HPD Norman H. Malmberg

KD3DOU Joseph P. Rupert

KD3DOV Ingrid J. Wolfenden

KD3DPE John F. Lynch

KD3DPS Yunhan Shi

KD3DQM Peter M. Lindbergh

Commitment to our Community

As another month comes to a close, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the dedication and commitment demonstrated by Amateur Radio operators across Delaware. Whether you've participated in a public service event, checked into a training net, explored a new digital mode, activated a park, mentored a new operator, or simply made time to get on the air, your efforts continue to strengthen both our Amateur Radio community and the communities we proudly serve. As we move into a new month, I encourage you to keep learning, stay involved, and look for opportunities to share the excitement of Amateur Radio with others. Every contact you make, every skill you develop, and every volunteer hour you contribute helps ensure that amateur Radio remains a valuable public service and a vibrant technical hobby for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of the ARRL Delaware Section.

Until next month, stay safe, enjoy the bands, and I hope to hear you on the air!