



VIRGINIA SECTION EAST OF I-95
AMATEUR RADIO NEWS

January, 2026

Fellow ARRL Southeastern Virginia, Richmond Area Hams, Eastern Shore, Northern Neck, Peninsula, and Middle Peninsula Operators,

Happy New Year! We are excited to be a part of ARRL's Club of the Year. There are several ARRL activities that clubs can be involved in. You will find that information within this newsletter. Please be sure to update your club's contact information on the ARRL website. Also, please be sure to distribute the newsletters by email to your club members. Have a great year!

73,

Ed Gibbs KW4GF

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Phone (757) 274-5793



Radio Amateur Society of Norfolk in the News

NEWSPOSITIVELY HAMPTON ROADS

Ham radio hobby can be life-saving when disaster strikes



By: Beverly Kidd
Posted 12:37 PM, Jan 16, 2026

NORFOLK, Va. — Many know ham radio as a hobby — and it is — but when disaster strikes, it quickly becomes essential.



“When I got the funnel cloud report, I called Wakefield directly because that’s immediate life danger,” said Rich Davis, an amateur radio operator.

In March 2017, a tornado swept through Chesapeake and crossed over into Virginia Beach’s Salem neighborhood.

“I called my counterpart in Virginia Beach and said, ‘Hey, there’s a tornado in your city. Get your guys ready,” Davis said.

Amateur radio operators — or “hams” — are often the eyes and ears on the ground during a storm, relaying real-time observations to the National Weather Service.

And you don’t need the internet or a cell phone to get the word out.

Corey McCook, one of about 30 members in the Norfolk ham operators club, remembers how important ham radio became when Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico.

“A lot of the infrastructure failed, and that happened coincidentally with a major solar flare that took out satellite communications,” he said.



While storm chasing is a big part of what ham operators do, it's also a hobby where enthusiasts can talk to each other all over the world.

"It doesn't matter whether you're 12 or 70 — you can be just as smart with radios at any age," said Jeff Swain, another member of the Norfolk ham operators club.

You do need a license to operate, and you don't get paid — but that's not why these Norfolk hams do it.

"When you have a purpose like that and you can fill a void where there's a need — when they couldn't have done it without you — that makes you feel special. It's very fulfilling," said McCook.

Your local ham operators can turn from hobbyists to heroes in the blink of an eye. And they are positively Hampton Roads.

Link to news report:

[Ham radio hobby can be life-saving when disaster strikes](#)

Exciting Events in Virginia and Nationally

From Mike Aimone WA8AHZ

- First, the W1AW/4 activation the week 11-17 March, 2026. Note this is 7-day event which spans Sunday, March 15th, which is the ARRL VA Section Convention, in Vienna Virginia. VA Hams can sign up to operate using the W1AW call sign from their QTH. There will be an on-line sign-up scheduling tool (TBD). Virginia is up again in July for a 2nd weeklong opportunity to use the W1AW/4 call
- Second, activating your club call sign to Work all States during the nation's semi quincennial anniversary (WAS250). The idea is work all states in 2026, and as a bonus work all the W1AW/xxx sections throughout the year. The WAS250 award requires you to upload your club QSOs to LoTW. All QSOs count – regardless of if they are W1AW/xxx or not. You can activate your club call anytime in 2026. More details attached.
- **YEAR OF THE CLUB:** Further, there are two other contests part of the YOTC celebration: the **Club Website Contest** -- <https://www.arrl.org/club-website-contest> and **Club Newsletter Contest** -- <https://www.arrl.org/club-newsletter-contest> To be considered, your submittal needs to be received to ARRL by 30 January, 2026 by 4pm. Be part of the fun, and submit your website/newsletter to ARRL.

More about the YOTC events at: <https://www.arrl.org/year-of-the-club>



Great Times at the Monthly Chesapeake Amateur Radio Service's
Shack Day-January 17,2026!





What's going on in Virginia?

Included are the two events VA has the opportunity to use the ARRL W1AW station call signSpecifically, Mar 11th and Nov 4th (these are 7 day long events spanning a weekend) BTW, the sign up sheet for the March event is open for signups at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uAGeVSKTefGVofy-gpho_QbEgLAC4IjdF2GBUN7wR0/edit?usp=sharing Guidelines for the event at: <https://w1sye.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2026-WAS-250-W1AW-Portable-Operator-Guidelines-002.pdf> Spread the word in your clubs, and looking forward to seeing the spreadsheet filled out!

WINTERFEST: The Vienna Wireless Hamfest – WINTERFEST is Sunday March 15, at Oakton HS starting at 8am. More info at: <https://viennawireless.net/wp/winterfest-key-info/> This is the 50th anniversary of WF, and hopefully we'll have a great turnout. Note, the ARRL VA Section Convention is hosted by WF, and the agenda is at: <https://viennawireless.net/wp/arrl-va-section-convention-2/> The Convention will introduce the new VA Section Manager, as Jack Smith, who has served for nearly four years as the SM is stepping down. Jack will use the Convention to turn over the SM leadership.

VA QSO Party: Thanks to the Sterling Park club for their efforts setting up the VQP the 3rd full week in March. We need all the Clubs in Virginia to participate – in fact activate your club call sign for the VQP and make it count as part of the WAS250 operating event. There is competition between State QSO Party teams ... let's work hard to beat out PA and NC this year.

The Year of the Club: ARRL has designated 2026 as the Year of the Club, and there are many activities planned. ARRL has created a webpage, tho this is a program in process so check back to the webpage from time to time. see: <https://www.arrl.org/year-of-the-club>

One initiative which will play out in the Virginia Section is the week-long activation of W1AW/4 during the ARRL VA Section Convention in March. (Before you ask, the Convention doesn't fall on top of the VA QSO Party). All the clubs will have the opportunity to sign up members as guest W1AW/4 operators from their home radio shacks. Our second week activating W1AW/4 will be in late July. We'll work it

much like we did a few years ago with the Volunteers on the Air operating event. More to follow.

- Another initiative will be a special WAS certificate for each Club who works all states using their Club call sign (s) in 2026.
- Field Day, and Clubs will be a big thing.

Williamsburg Area Amateur Radio Club

Boat Anchors Breakfast: December 2025

Attendees brought their keyer paddles to the Monthly Boat Anchors Breakfast!





Western Tidewater Radio Association is Alive and Well!



WTRA CLUB MEETING

Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:00

pm

Isle of Wight Volunteer Rescue Squad

13080 Great Spring Rd

Smithfield, VA 23430, USA



Special Service Clubs by Mike Aimone WA8AHZ

Why not become a Special Service Club: A club that exists to go above and beyond for their communities and for Amateur Radio is what defines a Special Service Club (SSC). They are the leaders in their Amateur Radio communities who provide active training classes, publicity programs and actively pursue technical projects and operating activities. To join the SSC Program please apply via: <https://www.arrl.org/ssc-application>

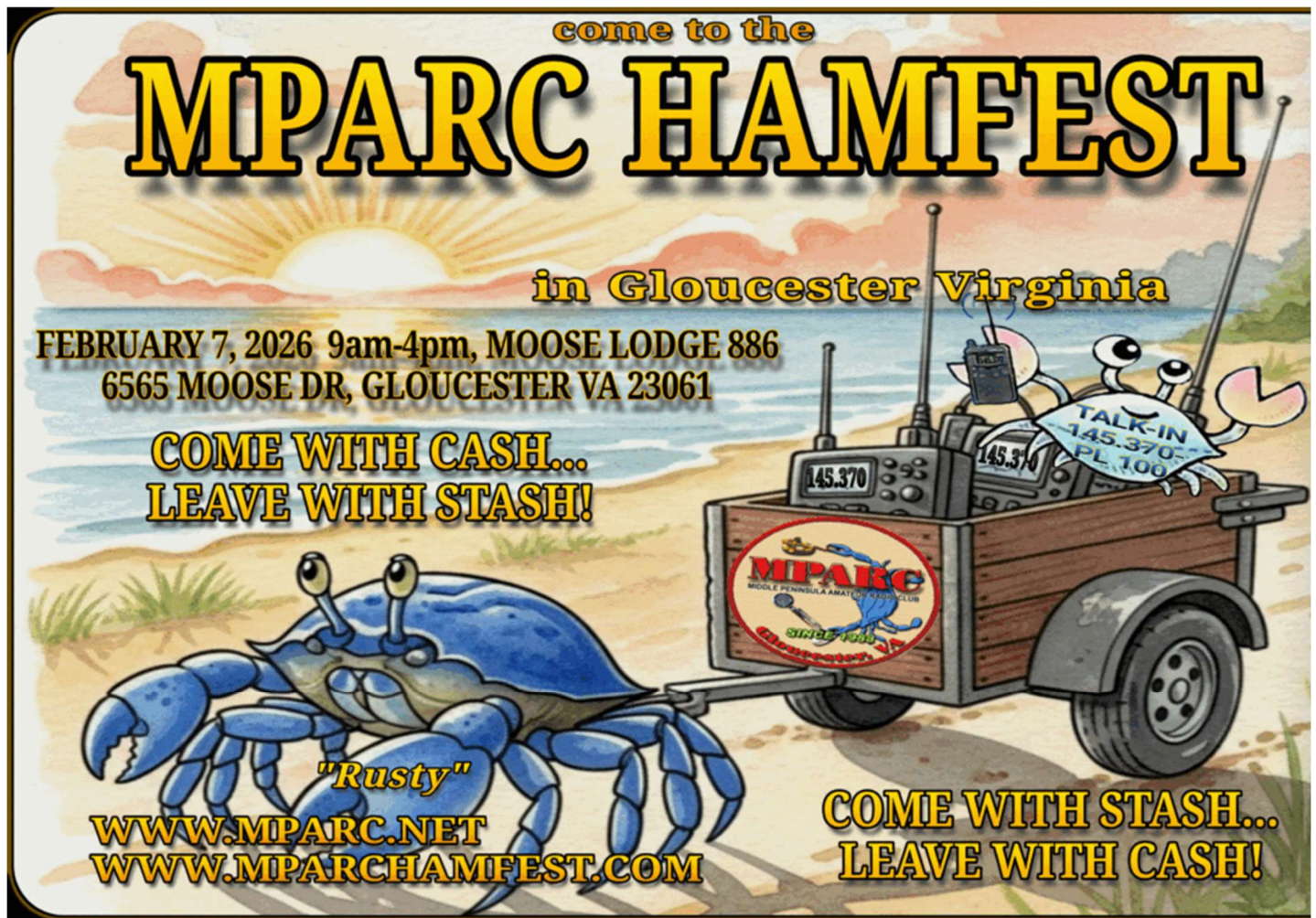
From the ARRL Letter, January 15, 2026

Get Students Involved

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program is seeking formal and informal educational institutions and organizations, individually or working together, to host an amateur radio contact with a crew member on board the International Space Station (ISS). **ARISS anticipates the contact would be held between July 1 and December 31, 2026. Crew scheduling and ISS orbits will determine the exact contact dates. To maximize these radio contact opportunities, ARISS is looking for organizations that will draw large numbers of participants and integrate the contact into a well-developed education plan. The deadline to submit a proposal is February 27, 2026. Proposal information and more details such as expectations, proposal guidelines, and the proposal form can be found at www.ariss.org.**

Middle Peninsula Amateur Club

Come One, Come All!



come to the

MPARC HAMFEST

in Gloucester Virginia

FEBRUARY 7, 2026 9am-4pm, MOOSE LODGE 886
6565 MOOSE DR, GLOUCESTER VA 23061

**COME WITH CASH...
LEAVE WITH STASH!**

"Rusty"

**WWW.MPARC.NET
WWW.MPARCHAMFEST.COM**

**COME WITH STASH...
LEAVE WITH CASH!**



Extra! Extra! Online Class!

If you or anyone you know is interested in attending an Amateur Extra Class licensing course, please pass along the following information, and feel free to publicize it with your radio club or any group you feel would benefit.

A free, weekly, live, Amateur Radio Extra Class Licensing course on Zoom will begin on Thursday, January 15, 2026, and will run through Thursday, March 26. There will be 11 sessions. The three-hour sessions will start at 6:30 PM Eastern Time. Sessions will be recorded. Those who attend should hold (or be studying for) the General Class Amateur Radio License. These are the classes that we have been holding for years sponsored by the National Electronics Museum. Please publicize this with anyone that you think would be interested. Those wishing to sign up should email roland.anders@comcast.net.

Thanks.

73,
Rol Anders, K3RA



Richmond Area Telecommunications Society

RATS is at it Again!

RATS usually operates from Pocahontas State Park for our Winter Field Day activation. For 2026, we've rented the [Powhatan Dining Hall](#) and will begin setup at 10AM on Saturday. There is plenty of space will be available for staying overnight indoors (you might want to bring a cot), and good news - we will have indoor bathrooms this year! Park entry fees are covered by the event! Mention you are coming for us and they'll let you on through.

We will have HF radios and antennas for the operating event. Feel free to bring VHF or UHF radios and antennas to make simplex contacts on those bands.

This year's event food is a potluck, so you're encouraged to bring a dish (store-bought is great too!) and non-alcoholic beverages. Also, if you feel like cooking, we will have access to the dining hall's full commercial kitchen - just bring your own pots, pans, and utensils! RATS will supply some basic cutlery, plates, and bowls. Also PLEASE bring a small card identifying your dish and list of ingredients to help out folks with food allergies.

Need help finding us? Talk-in assistance will be available by calling W4RAT on our [442.55 repeater](#).



A Posting from the Rappahannock Valley Amateur Radio Club FB page



**STAFFORD COUNTY
FIRE & RESCUE
DEPARTMENT**

Office of Emergency Management

Phone: (540) 658-7200

www.staffordfirerescue.com



TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT

COURSE: SKYWARN® - Basics
CLASS DATES: February 24, 2026
CLASS TIMES: 1900-2100
LOCATION: Stafford County Public Safety Center
1225 Courthouse Road, Stafford, VA 22554
COST: None
PREREQUISITES: None

REGISTER HERE:

<https://forms.gle/eyVyW6lYsK7RtYFm8>

Attendees will be trained by NWS personnel to recognize features associated with developing, mature, and dissipating thunderstorms which cause hazardous weather such as lightning, flooding, hail, tornadoes and downbursts. Attendees will also learn basics about winter weather and tropical hazards.

At the end of the course, attendees will be assigned a SKYWARN® spotter number and directed how to report this vital weather information.



Contact lwz-report@noaa.gov with questions
or concerns regarding the class.





Rappahannock Amateur Radio Club

From their QRZ page

W4NNK is the club call of the Rappahannock Amateur Radio Association.



RARA is an ARRL-affiliated club which serves northeastern Virginia's Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, a region that is bordered by the Potomac River to the north and The Chesapeake Bay on the east and the Rappahannock River to the south. The Club and its members participate in The Virginia QSO Party, The Museum Ships Weekend Event, and Field Day as well as other special



events during the year and operates two open repeaters covering the area. See below for our Meeting schedule.

Our Club participated in the 2025 Museum Ships Weekend Event from The Reedville Fishermen's Museum in Reedville, VA featuring the Museum's Chesapeake Bay Skipjack *Claud W. Somers*. If you are one of our several hundred QSO's and would like a photo QSL card, please send your card and an SASE to the address above. For County Hunters the QSO counts as Northumberland County Virginia.

We will also be active on ARRL Field Day on June 27th and 28th on 80 through 6 meters. We would sure appreciate your QSO then! Again, the QSO will count for Northumberland County Virginia. QSO's will be uploaded to LoTW but if you would like a paper card, please use the instructions above.

Our Meeting Schedule

Unless otherwise noted the meetings take place in one of the conference rooms of the Lancaster Community Library in Kilmarnock located just off North Main Street at 16 Town Centre Drive, across from the town park. Please check back here often for the latest update.

Club members also get together informally for lunch most Wednesdays (or Thursday, depending on the meeting day - see below) around 11:30am at Lee's Restaurant, 30 South Main Street in Kilmarnock.



Westmoreland Amateur Radio Club

**Our club meets the second Tuesday of
each month, 7:00 at the
George English Building, Montross.**

Our Christmas Party, December 8, 2015





Updating Information

Please update or apply for LOTW if certificate is expired. LOTW will be the ARRL's way to verify contacts during the year's ARRL 2026 "Year of the Club" activities. Please let members know.

If your club has not updated club information on the ARRL website, please do this as soon as possible

Please send me club news, questions concerning the Section, Division, or national ARRL, and any requests. I'll try to expedite this as soon as possible.



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