RCA Amateur Radio Club
Indianapolis, IN

ARRL Affiliated Club

www.w9rca.org

FEBRUARY 2026 MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE RCA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB WILL BE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 6:30 PM AT NORTH SIDE EVENTS, FORMERLY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, 2100 EAST 71st, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

RCA ARC NEWS

JANUARY MEETING SUMMARY – Thanks to all those who attended the January meeting. At this meeting the problem of what to do with your "ham radio stuff" when you die was discussed Jim K9RU, shared recent experiences as he has been working with others in the Indianapolis Radio Club on taking care of equipment from three stations which belonged to now silent keys. There have been no announcements about Field Day 2026. We expect our Club can again do the 6m station Some of the past problems with the '88 repeater were discussed. K9RU and Dick W9ZB commented on the January VHF contest.

AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE TEST SESSION

Date:	February 14, 2026
Time:	Starting at Noon **by appointment only**.
Location:	Salvation Army EDS Training Facility, 4020 Georgetown Rd Indianapolis, IN 46254-2407
Contact:	**James Kajder (505) 228-3704**
Email:	testing@indyradioclub.org
Required:	FCC FRN and a completed NCVEC 605 license application form.

Laurel VEC test sessions: https://www.laurelvec.com/?pg=exams\

HAMFESTS, OPERATING EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Salvation Army Open Net, Thurs. 7PM, W9RCA repeater, 146.88 MHz, tone 88.5 Hz

Feb 7	Hendricks County Hamfest, Danville, IN http://n9hc.org/
Feb 28	LaPorte Cabin Fever Hamfest, LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 State Road 2, LaPorte, Public Contact: Richard Oberle KC9DJP, Phone: 219-448-0090, Email: cabinfeverhamfest@gmail.com
Feb 9-13	ARRL School Club Roundup
Feb 21-22	DX Contest CW
Mar 7-8	DX Contest SSB

WA7BNM expanded contest calendar, https://www.contestcalendar.com/
Visit the **ARRL Special Event Stations database** at www.arrl.org/special-event-station to find other on-the-air events and commemorations.
Hamfest or Convention: www.arrl.org/hamfests
Find a license exam in your area: www.arrl.org/exam
ARRL Home: www.arrl.org

NEW 60-METER FREQUENCIES AVAILABLE AS OF FEBRUARY 13

The new 60-meter frequencies approved by the FCC in December will become available to amateurs as of February 13, 2026, along with new power restrictions on those frequencies. It's a bit confusing, as different rules apply to different segments of the band. The changes result from the FCC's action to approve a worldwide 60-meter amateur allocation made by the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15). See https://tinyurl.com/mt8p8jpa.

As of February 13, FCC-licensed amateur operators holding General Class or higher licenses may operate on a secondary basis anywhere between 5351.5 and 5366.5 kHz, subject to a maximum bandwidth of 2.8 kHz and maximum transmit power of 9.15 watts ERP (effective radiated power). For the purpose of computing ERP, the transmitter PEP (peak envelope power) is multiplied by the antenna gain relative to a half-wave dipole antenna. A half-wave dipole is presumed to have a gain of 1 (0 dBd). Amateurs using other antennas must maintain in their station records either the antenna manufacturer's data on the antenna gain or calculations of the antenna gain.

Here's the confusing part: The existing 60-meter channels centered on 5332, 5348, 5373, and 5405 kHz remain as secondary amateur allocations with maximum power of 100 watts ERP. However, the old channel at 5358.5 kHz is eliminated as it is now part of the new 5351.5-5366.5 kHz subband and subject to the lower power limit.

For all 60-meter transmissions, emission bandwidth is limited to 2.8 kHz or less and amateurs must not cause harmful interference to, and must accept interference from, stations authorized by the United States (NTIA and FCC) and other nations in the fixed service; and all other nations in the mobile service (except aeronautical mobile). Data or RTTY emissions in particular must be limited in transmission length so as not to cause harmful interference. Digital mode operators must be familiar with offsets in order to stay within the authorized frequencies. --ARRL

W1AW/9 INDIANA ACTIVATION DURING ARRL AMERICA 250

During 2026, ARRL will celebrate the USA semiquincentennial by holding a year-long America250 Worked All States operating event. W1AW/portable will operate from each state on two different weeks. Indiana's weeks are Wednesday through Tuesday starting February 4 and July 15. We now have a scheduling tool in place so you can reserve a time to operate as W1AW/9. We have several operators signed up, but there's room for more. If you are interested in operating, please contact me. Bob Burns AK9R ARRL Indiana Section Manager email ak9r@arrl.org

STUDENT CODING COMPETITION IS UNDERWAY WITH $25,000 AWARD

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® is asking members to help encourage licensed youth in their communities to participate in the ARRL Student Coding Competition, an initiative focused on developing practical resources for the Amateur Radio Service. The competition, which began January 1, 2026, challenges young amateurs to create a mobile application that ARRL will use as a long-term learning resource. Rules and App Specifications (PDF) were released on January 1 and are available at coding.arrl.org.

The competition centers on building a useful, accessible FCC exam preparation app for iOS devices. The app must support Technician, General, and Extra Class license exams and use the official NCVEC question pools. Judging will focus on usability, clarity, stability, and code quality — qualities that ensure the finished product can serve as a dependable study resource for current and future radio amateurs.

Eligibility is limited to ARRL members aged 21 or younger who hold a US amateur radio

license, competing individually or in teams of up to three. ARRL membership is free for full-time students, making participation accessible to students already active in amateur radio and those newly licensed. Parents, educators, and ARRL members involved in radio clubs, VE teams, and youth outreach are encouraged to share this opportunity with students who have an interest in software development or STEM learning.

Project submissions will be accepted between February 1 and March 31, 2026, with source code and documentation submitted online. Winning entries will receive national recognition, with total awards of up to $25,000 authorized by the ARRL Board of Directors. While pre-registration is optional, it is recommended to receive competition updates and reminders. Complete information is available at coding.arrl.org. --ARRL

FCC POISED TO EXEMPT AMATEURS FROM FOREIGN ADVERSARY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At the urging of ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio®, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is expected to exempt radio amateurs from foreign adversary reporting requirements. These rules would have applied to citizens of the listed countries (see below), including those living in the United States, who hold or are applying for an FCC license.

On January 8, 2026, the FCC released a draft Report and Order (R&O) [GN Docket No. 25-166; PDF) expected to be adopted at its January 29 meeting that will, as requested by ARRL, exempt radio amateurs from requirements that would have applied reporting requirements to every FCC-authorized radio amateur "subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a foreign adversary." This included "(a)ny individual, wherever located, who is a citizen of a foreign adversary or a country controlled by a foreign adversary, and is not a United States citizen or permanent resident of the United States." Foreign adversaries as defined in the draft R&O are: (1) China, including Hong Kong and Macau; (2) Cuba; (3) Iran; (4) North Korea; (5) Russian Federation; and (6) "Venezuelan politician Nicolás Maduro."

The draft liberally cites ARRL's comments:

"35. We agree with the National Association for Amateur Radio (ARRL) that, while there is a need to protect national security where entities are 'engaged in commerce by providing networks, services or equipment to the American public, where there is the possibility of sensitive information being surreptitiously accessed.' [*sic*] … As ARRL notes, '[a]mateur radio licensees not only do not sell or provide any communications service, network, or equipment to the public, but in fact they are prohibited from doing so by both international and domestic law.' … The risk to national security of Foreign Adversary Control over these licenses is minimal due to the lack of connection to any of the nation's communications networks used by the public. We also agree with ARRL that this reasoning applies to similar services where licenses are held by individuals (e.g., GMRS, Commercial Radio Operators), as well as other licenses and authorizations that lack sufficient connection to commercial wireless communications networks in the United States. Furthermore, the Personal Radio Services—a category that encompasses over 1.6 million unique, mostly individual licensees—operate in shared spectrum bands for hobbyist and safety purposes, posing little threat to national security. Similarly, we include antenna structure owners that voluntarily register their towers in Schedule C because they are likely to be individuals or companies that lack sufficient connection to commercial communications networks. Given the sheer number of licensees and authorization holders in this group, the drain on Commission personnel and resources to process the collections and attestations for each individual licensee would far outweigh the little benefit to the public or the agency of doing so."

ARRL DIRECTOR THARP, KB7HDX, RECEIVES SEARCH-AND-RESCUE AWARD

Mark Tharp, KB7HDX, Director of the ARRL Northwestern Division, has received the Hall of Honor Award for 35 years of service to the Yakima Search and Rescue group.

Tharp called the award “unexpected and very much appreciated,” adding, “You don’t do volunteer work to get awards, you do it because it’s needed and makes a difference.”

Tharp was first licensed in 1989 and now holds an Extra Class license. He became a ham after spending time with a ham friend, while exploring the mountains in the northwestern United States. “The Yakima Search and Rescue group continues to grow and help volunteers train and keep over 100 sports-related locations safe,” said Tharp. He remembered one particular rescue that involved a young boy and his cat.

The boy had been missing for several hours and it was getting dark and cloudy. “We were tired but didn’t quit. I sat down on a hillside and using an infrared camera...we were able to find him and his cat...cold but OK,” lamented Tharp.

Tharp is retired now but as the ARRL Northwestern Division Director, he represents members in Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. He is an ARRL Life Member and a member of the ARRL Diamond Club and ARRL Maxim Society. --ARRL

DX

Desecheo DXpedition 2026 Update,A Remote, Solar-Powered DXpedition Is a Balancing Act – Operating a remote, solar-powered DXpedition is a constant balancing act.

Every operating decision requires us to carefully balance battery conservation, power consumption, and on-air effectiveness, while remaining focused on our primary objective: working as many All-Time New Ones (ATNOs) as possible, while still providing band and mode fills where conditions allow.

Unlike traditional DXpeditions, this operation is constrained by renewable power and strict environmental requirements. As a result, when propagation is favorable, we must often remain on the most productive bands and modes for extended periods of time. This approach maximizes total QSOs and gives stations with limited antennas or narrow propagation windows the best chance to complete a contact.

Current Status As **February 1, 2026 22:30,** the log exceeds 52,300 QSOs with more than 12,500+ unique callsigns, spanning 123 DXCC entities. ATNOs approx 3000. Activity continues across all major regions. Europe now accounts for nearly 28% of total QSOs, reflecting steady improvement following recent schedule and band adjustments. Recent CW and SSB activity into Europe has produced strong results, and we continue to receive encouraging feedback from operators who are now being worked successfully.

Digital modes remain an important tool for reaching weaker stations and difficult paths, while CW and SSB continue to play a key role in band coverage and regional focus when conditions permit.

Why This Balancing Act Matters Two realities shape our operating strategy:

1. Available energy is finite and weather-dependent

2. There is no certainty that a return to Desecheo will be possible in the future Because of this, our priority is to use favorable openings as efficiently as possible. Sustained operation on productive bands allows us to work first-time contacts, modest stations, and weak-signal DX, while higher power stations will naturally have opportunities to complete remaining band and mode needs as the operation progresses.

We understand that this requires patience, particularly for operators waiting on specific bands or modes. Experience has shown that disciplined operating early in a DXpedition ultimately benefits the greatest number of stations.

Operating Philosophy Going Forward

- Low power and efficiency remain essential
- Band and mode choices will continue to follow real-time propagation

• Adjustments will be made to reach under-served areas as conditions permit

• CW, SSB, and digital modes will all continue to be utilized

This DXpedition demonstrates that remote, renewable-energy operations can be effective, but they demand flexibility, understanding, and trust in the process. We sincerely appreciate the patience, constructive feedback, and continued support from the amateur radio community worldwide. The team remains fully committed to making the most of every opening, every hour, and every watt.

Operation continues until: February 12
We look forward to getting all of you in the log.

73,

Steve N2AJ

Media Officer & Pilot

Desecheo DXpedition 2026

SHORTS

SWR Magazine We're excited to announce that the February issue of SWR Magazine is now available. This month, we've gathered a special selection of articles that blend technical insight, exploration, real stories, and the passion that drives amateur radio around the world.

Download February Issue (English) https://online.fliphtml5.com/kqkyd/SWR-February-2026-English/

The ADTH Box Just Killed the Broadcasters' DRM Arguments - ATSC 3.0 Update!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdALJp5w_Ns

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SILENT KEY: ELWOOD DOWNEY, WBØOEW, CREATOR OF HAMCLOCK– The sudden death of Elwood Downey, WBØOEW, the developer and creator of the popular open-source HamClock software. The popular Linux-based digital information display has been a mainstay in amateur radio shacks, where hams have eagerly awaited updates and new versions.

The revelation that Elwood had become a Silent Key on Thursday, the 29th of January, was accompanied by a message on his clearskyinstitute.com website. It announced his death, adding that the final release of HamClock is version 4.22. All HamClocks are to stop functioning in June of this year. In a separate posting on Facebook, Bruce Kempf, KC3JS, announced that he was halting all sales of turnkey HamClocks until there is a functioning replacement. He asked for fellow HamClock enthusiasts to help find a means to get a functioning server and edit the code to allow this to work. – (CLEARSKYINSTITUTE, FACEBOOK)

HAMS MARK 96TH ANNIVERSARY OF PLUTO'S DISCOVERY --Amateur radio operators will be on the air as W7P from February 14th through the 22nd to celebrate the 96th anniversary of the discovery of Pluto and to continue the countdown to the 100th anniversary in 2030.

This year the event sponsors are hoping to have a number of visiting operators join the fun! Bob Wertz, NF7E, told AR Newsline "The Northern Arizona DX Association invites out-of-state ham radio clubs and operators to join us as guest operators for the W7P Pluto Discovery Anniversary Special Event — operating from the very place where Pluto was discovered in 1930, the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona."

Visiting hams will need to contact Bob ahead of time to be placed on the schedule.

In addition to operations at the observatory, Doug Tombaugh, N3PDT, nephew of astronomer Clyde Tombaugh, who discovered Pluto in 1930, will lead a team of operators at W7P/Ø. Doug said that he especially enjoys making contact with other amateurs who knew his uncle or were involved in other activities related to Pluto. For more information, look up W7P on QRZ. – (NORTHERN ARIZONA DX ASSOCIATION)

HAMVENTION CELEBRATES THE ADVENTURE OF RADIO – For ham radio operators, adventure comes in all forms - whether it means landing on a remote island for a two-week DXpedition or hiking to activate a summit in a national park. Others simply see adventure in the annual challenge to make that trip to Xenia, Ohio to attend Hamvention. Whatever your personal challenge is, it's in the spotlight this year as Hamvention organizers have just announced that "Radio Adventure!" is the theme for the three days from May 15th through to May 17th at the Greene County fairgrounds.

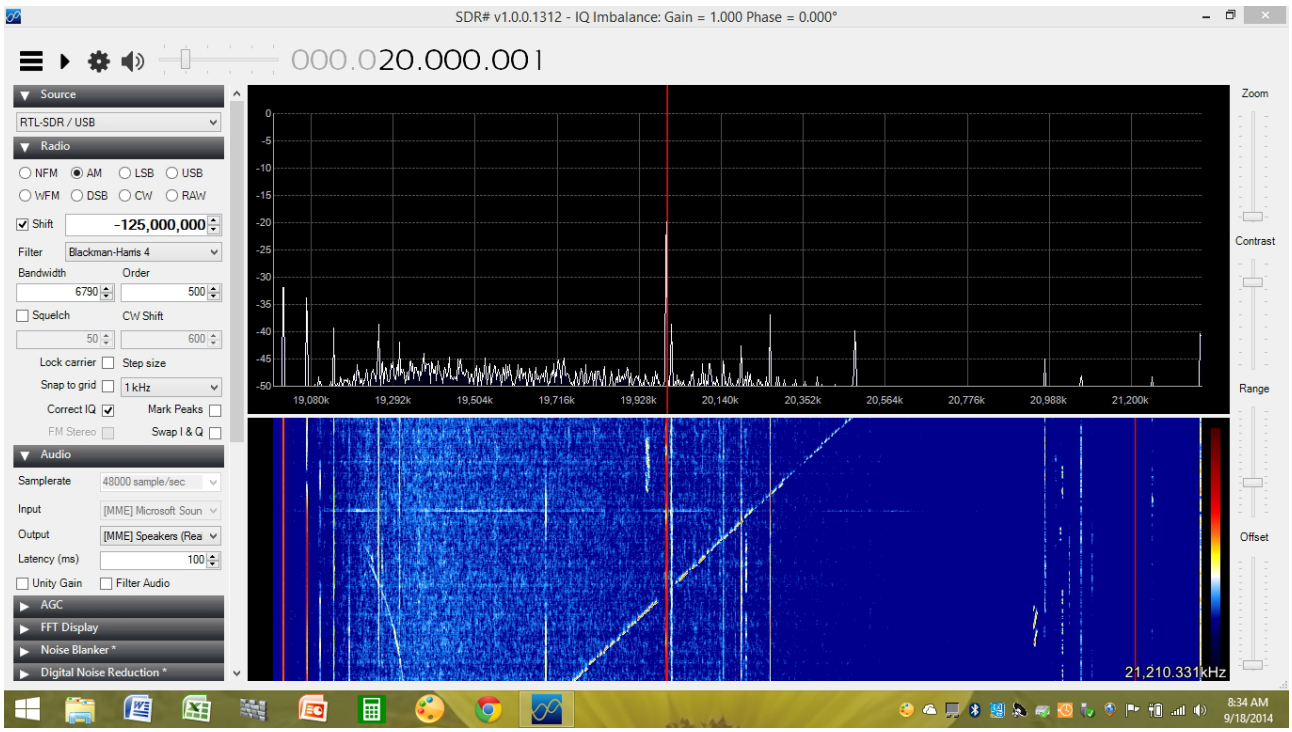
Even if your biggest adventure ends up being your decision on what new rig to take home with you this year, expect the gates to be open, as usual, for a reunion among friends and your ham radio family. – (Hamvention)

ANNUAL "AM RALLY" TURNS BACK THE CALENDAR -- Long before there was Single Sideband there was AM, or Amplitude Modulation, the only HF voice mode available to previous generations of amateur radio operators.

AM operators are still on the air - holding nets and having QSOs - although AM's rich, warm tones are heard less often on the bands these days. That's about to change. From 0000 UTC

on Saturday February 7th through to 0700 UTC on Monday, February 9th, everyone gets a chance to be part of this annual operating event. Any type of radio equipment will get you in the game as long as it is capable of full carrier amplitude modulation.

The action will take place on the 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 , and 6 metre amateur radio bands. For details about the different power categories, rig categories or operating procedure, visit the website amrally.com If you are a newcomer to operating on AM, there's plenty of information there to help you get started. – KB3TZD (AMRALLY.COM)



If you're ever listening on HF SSB and hear a quick "zwoop-like" sound in your headphones, it may be an ionospheric sounder a.k.a. "chirp sounder." Some call it a radiosonde. It's a transmitter that sweeps the HF bands to assess the state of the ionosphere in regards to radio propagation. The photo above shows one - it's the 45-degree line in the center of the "waterfall." I happened to be listening to WWV when the chirp sounder appeared. You'll find them on HF quite frequently. An SDR receiver is great in that a waterfall (the lower half of the screen) is a powerful option. Thanks for reading and have a nice day. – Mario Filippi, Facebook HF Underground

THANKS FOR READING

THE RCA ARC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER IS COMPILED AND EDITED BY JIM RINEHART, K9RU AND JIM KEETH, AF9A. ALL MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREIN IS OBTAINED FROM THE SOURCES CREDITED AND EDITED FOR THIS NEWSLETTER.