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John E. Ross, KD8IDJ, [Editor](#)

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ARRL Responds to FCC Proposals

ARRL [responded](#) (PDF) to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) request for comments on removing the symbol (baud) rate restrictions that apply to data

communications on the LF bands and the VHF and UHF bands below 450 MHz. The FCC also requested comments on the bandwidth limits applicable to those bands.

The FCC's action follows their 2023 decision to remove the symbol (baud) rate limits on the 160- to 10-meter amateur bands. Those limits were replaced with a 2.8 kHz bandwidth limit, a move ARRL had long advocated for.

The FCC's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking sought comments on updating the other amateur bands on which its symbol (baud) rate limits continue to throttle faster data rates. The subject bands are the LF bands (2200 and 630 meters) and the VHF and UHF bands below 450 MHz. In its comments, ARRL



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strongly agreed with the FCC's proposal to remove the symbol (baud) rate limits on the remaining bands.

[Read more about ARRL's comments on ARRL News.](#)

The public period for reply comments remains open until January 22, 2024. An ARRL guide to filing comments is at: <https://www.arrl.org/arrl-guide-to-filing-comments-with-fcc>

2024 Orlando HamCation Awards

The HamCation® Awards committee has announced the 2024 Orlando HamCation recipients of the Carole Perry Educator of the Year and the Gordon West Ambassador of the Year awards. Both awards will be presented at the [2024 Orlando HamCation](#), which is hosting this year's ARRL Florida State Convention, on February 9 - 11, 2024.

Lewis Malchick, N2RQ, is the recipient of this year's Carole Perry Educator of the Year Award. Malchick holds an Amateur Extra-class license and is co-founder of the [ARRL School Club Roundup](#), of which he's been active with for more than 25 years. He formerly taught chemistry at the Brooklyn Tech High School, where he's an advisor to the school's Amateur Radio and Wireless Tech Club, W2CXN. Malchick is the trustee for the Stuyvesant High School Amateur Radio Club, W2CLE, the chairperson of the Long Island Mobile Amateur Radio Club (LIMARC) Education Committee and has participated in five ARISS contacts. He's spent his lifetime educating children and adults about amateur radio.



Lewis Malchick, N2RQ. [Photo courtesy of Michael Cauley, W4ORL]

The Carole Perry Educator of the Year Award was first awarded at the 2019 HamCation to its namesake, Carole Perry, WB2MGP, in honor of her work as an educator and teaching students about ham radio. It is given annually to individuals who've made outstanding contributions to educating and advancing youth in amateur radio.

The 2024 Gordon West Ambassador of the Year Award winners are Fred, AB1OC, and Anita Kemmerer, AB1QB. The Kemmerer's hold Amateur Extra-class licenses and are active in the [Nashua Area Radio Society](#) promoting amateur radio instruction, youth outreach, and STEM education. Together, they've created and helped grow [Ham Bootcamp](#), a program encouraging more than 900 hams to learn new skills. They're active in the club's training and licensing events, along with Tech Night, which complements



Anita, AB1QB, and Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC. [Photo courtesy of Michael Cauley, W4ORL]

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club meetings. Their participation in STEM activities includes high-altitude balloon launches, foxhunts, and ARISS contacts for many schools. Fred Kemmerer is the ARRL New England Division Director, and he chairs and contributes to several subcommittees. Anita Kemmerer serves the Division as an Assistant Director for mentoring and new ham development.

The Gordon West Ambassador of the Award was first awarded the 2023 HamCation, in honor of West's contributions and inspiration to the amateur radio community. It's given to individuals who represent and inspire others and who embody the amateur radio spirit by making outstanding contributions to the amateur radio community.

HamCation has been sponsored by the Orlando Amateur Radio Club, W4PLB, since 1946, and is held annually on the second weekend of February.



ARRL Kids Day a Success in Nebraska

The [Bellevue Amateur Radio Club](#) and the Science Club at [Yates Illuminates](#) teamed up to offer the youth in Omaha, Nebraska, with an opportunity to get on the air for ARRL Kids Day.

The event occurred on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at Yates Illuminates, a former elementary school that is now a culture and community center. Amateur radio operators Dudley Allen, KD0NMD; Terry Gampper, N0BXQ; Frank Jozwiak, KB0EOR, and Mike Terneus, WB0BEE, served as



volunteer operators and were extremely patient coaches who nurtured the kids' curiosities of talking on the radio. Dozens of youths as young as 4, as well as young-at-heart Bob Hutton, 91, used the event call sign to talk to amateur radio operators across the country and around the world.

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Parents were impressed with Kids Day. One parent said, "The event organized by the Yates Illuminates Science Club was a perfect blend of education, technology, and community spirit. My kids were thrilled to delve into the world of amateur radio, thanks to the expert guidance of the Bellevue Amateur Radio Club. They learned about radio technology and how to contact other young radio enthusiasts across the country. This hands-on experience in

communication technology was not only fun but also incredibly educational."

The final highlight of the day came as each child received their certificate of completion. Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America were all represented as the country of birth or the original nationality of the youth participants, and they talked with amateurs as far away as England and Canada. ARRL Kids Day is already planned for next year, and the Yates Illuminates Science Club will continue to help youth learn the basics of electrical circuits, electronics, and radio propagation, as well as how to make homebrew antennas. Foxhunts, the integration of a course in radio, and other applied scientific learning opportunities (such as wildlife tracking and rescuing, aviation and space research, and communications) are also planned.



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All photos courtesy Bellevue Amateur Radio Club.

More stories and photos of ARRL Kids Day can be found on the [ARRL Contest Soapbox](#).

Winter Field Day 2024

[Winter Field Day \(WFD\)](#), sponsored by the Winter Field Day Association, is scheduled to run from 1900 UTC on Saturday, January 27, through 1859 UTC on Sunday, January 28.

WFD is held on the last full weekend in January and is a communications exercise that can be worked from the comfort of your home or in a remote location. You can participate by yourself, with your friends and family, or with a local club.

WFD is open to participants worldwide. Amateur radio operators may use frequencies on the HF, VHF, or UHF bands and are free to use any mode that can faithfully transmit the required exchange intact. Similar to ARRL's Field Day, bonus points are earned in several ways, including from using non-commercial power sources, operating from remote locations, making satellite contacts, and more.

WFD is designed to help increase your level of preparedness for disasters and for you to improve and practice your operating skills in winter environments, as the potential for freezing temperatures, snow, ice, and other hazards present unique operating conditions.

Also, remember to mark your calendar for 2024 ARRL Field Day on June 22 - 23. For additional information, visit [Field Day \(arrl.org\)](#).





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"Marty on the Mountain" Engstrom, N1ARY (SK)

Avid radio amateur, Marty Engstrom, N1ARY, of Fryeburg, Maine, has become a Silent Key. He died on January 4. [Generations of New England television viewers](#) may know him as Marty on the Mountain from his weather reports on camera for WMTW-TV from the station's transmitter site on Mount Washington in Gorham, New Hampshire.

Engstrom was known to quip that he was not intentionally in the weather business: "I'm a TV engineer, not a meteorologist!," he would say.

Engstrom served the viewers of New England for 38 years.

He began at the station in the mid-1960s, after a career in the United States Air Force, according to [a memorial on the WMTW website](#). He retired in 2002.

In 2003, Engstrom released his autobiography, [Marty on the Mountain: 38 Years on Mt. Washington](#), in which he discussed his passion for amateur radio.

As a well-known radio amateur in his area and beyond, Engstrom's voice was easily recognizable. According to Bill Mann, W1KX, "You could recognize his heavy Maine accent before he even identified."

According to those who knew him, Engstrom frequently served his community through amateur radio. After a major ice storm in 1998, hams in Oxford County, Maine, banded together to form an emergency communications group. "Marty's low-key approach to various situations, even the more stressful ones, helped the group stay focused. His wealth of knowledge of transmitters and antennas certainly was a tremendous benefit to the less experienced hams," said Wayne Strout, N1YIS. "Marty actively worked as a member of our group with drills and training for both CERT and ARES."

Engstrom served for some time as the treasurer of the Yankee Amateur Radio Club and had been a longtime ARRL member at the time of his passing. He was 86 years old.



Marty Engstrom, N1ARY, (SK), was well known to generations of television viewers in New England for his weather reports from Mount Washington as "Marty on the Mountain." [Marty Engstrom/Facebook, photo]

ARRL Public Information Officers, Coordinators, and many other member-volunteers help keep amateur radio and ARRL [in the news](#).

"[Local organizations host nationwide Kids Day on the air radio event](#)" / KETV (Nebraska) January 6, 2024 -- *The Bellevue Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL Affiliated Club.*

"[Radio club holds annual dinner meeting](#)" / The Times-Gazette (Ohio) January 2, 2024 -- *The Highland Amateur Radio Association is an ARRL Affiliated Club.*

[Share](#) any amateur radio media hits you spot with us.



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ARRL Podcasts

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Maintaining a "junk box" -- a collection of odds and ends that can be used in future projects and repairs -- is a time-honored practice among hams. Every ham radio junk box has to start somewhere, though, and the cover story of the January/February 2024 issue of *On the Air*, "A Fine Mess: Starting Your Junk Box," by Eric P. Nichols, KL7AJ, offers advice about how to do just that. The January 2024 episode of the On the Air podcast digs deeper by going on location to the workshop of W1AW, ARRL's Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Station. Station Manager Joe Garcia, NJ1Q, welcomes us into this working space to show us some real-life junk boxes and discuss how they come in handy.



ARRL Audio News

Listen to [ARRL Audio News](#), available every Friday. ARRL Audio News is a summary of the week's top news stories in the world of amateur radio and ARRL, along with interviews and other features.

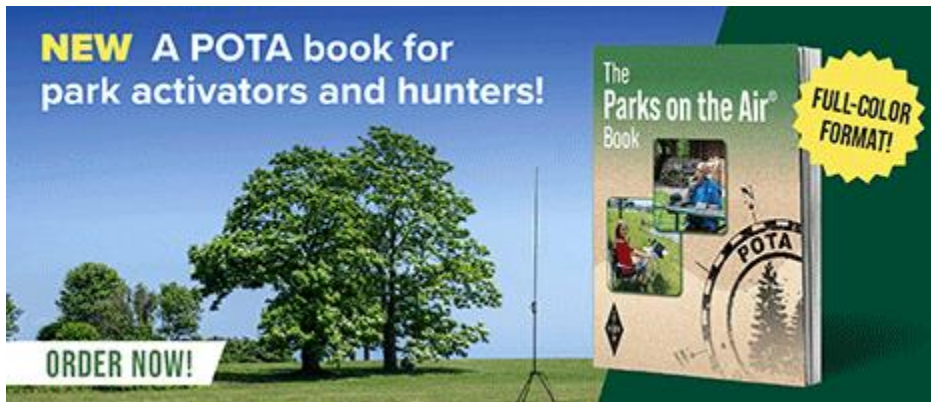
The On the Air podcast and ARRL Audio News are available on blubrry, iTunes, and Apple Podcasts -- [On the Air](#) | [ARRL Audio News](#).



Announcements

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 onboard the International Space Station (ISS). ARISS anticipates that the contacts will be held between July 1 and December 31, 2024. 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 29, 2024. Proposal information and more details, such as expectations, proposal guidelines, and the proposal form, can be found at www.ariss.org. An ARISS Proposal Informational Webinar will be held on January 17, 2024, at 7 PM ET. The Zoom link to sign up is https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrc-qsrD0pGNLBvhR_2p5O9uTeRzO0u4Sw.



In Brief...

The [River City Amateur Radio Communications Society \(RCARCS\)](#) and Sacramento, California, Girl Scout Troop 1089 have been working hard to plan a contact with the International Space Station (ISS). In March of 2023, the application submitted by Scout Leader Amanda Banks was approved by the [Amateur Radio on the International Space Station](#) (ARISS) program. RCARCS hams and Girl Scout troop leaders have jointly engaged in a variety of activities to prepare for the contact. The scouts have learned about space, communication modes, how radio waves work, frequency and amplitude, circuits, web-based software-defined radio (SDR), telemetry signals from terrestrial and orbiting sources, creating QSL cards, and designing t-shirts for contact day. Jennifer Garland, K1TTY, led practice sessions with local clubs on the N6NA repeater via voice and SSTV. The ARISS contact is expected to occur in mid-February, when the Space Station tracks over California, and will be live streamed from the Girl Scouts' Sacramento headquarters on YouTube and Facebook.

The K7RA Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, of Seattle, Washington, reports for this week's ARRL Propagation Bulletin, ARLP002:

Eight new sunspot groups emerged over this reporting week, January 4 - 10, 2024.

Four new sunspot groups appeared on January 5, another two on January 7, and two more on January 9.

The average daily sunspot numbers rose from 63.4 to 146.1, and the average daily solar flux increased from 141.9 to 163.3.

Geomagnetic indicators declined, with the planetary A index decreasing from 6.7 to 4.9 and the middle latitude numbers decreasing from 5.1 to 4.3.

The predicted solar flux is 185 on January 11 - 12; 175 on January 13 - 15; 170, 165, and 155 on January 16 - 18; 150 on January 19 - 21; 145 and 140 on January 22 - 23; 135 on January 24 - 26; 130 and 135 on January 27 - 28; 140 on January 29 - 31; 150, 160, 165, and 150 on February 1 - 4; 155 on February 5 - 6; 160 on February 7, and 155 on February 8 - 10.

The predicted planetary A index is 5 on January 11 - 12; 8 on January 13 - 14; 5 on January 15 - 27; 8 on January 28 - 30; 5 on January 31 through February 3; 10, 10, and 8 on February 4 - 6, and 5 on February 7 - 22.

Sunspot numbers for January 4 - 10 were 64, 121, 149, 171, 152, 183, and 183, with a mean of 146.1. The 10.7-centimeter flux was 125.8, 152.7, 159.4, 167.1, 176.2, 175.9, and 186, with a mean of 163.3.

Estimated planetary A indices were 6, 5, 3, 3, 4, 6, and 7, with a mean of 4.9. The middle latitude A index was 5, 4, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, with a mean of 4.3.

Send your tips, questions, or comments to k7ra@arrl.net.

A comprehensive K7RA Solar Update is posted Fridays on the ARRL website. For more information concerning radio propagation, [visit](#) the ARRL Technical Information Service, [read](#) "What the Numbers Mean...," and [check out](#) the Propagation Page of Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA.

A propagation bulletin [archive](#) is available. For customizable propagation charts, visit the [VOACAP Online for Ham Radio](#) website.

[Share](#) your reports and observations.

A weekly, full report is posted on [ARRL News](#).



This solar disk image was taken on January 11, 2024. [Photo courtesy of NASA SDO/HMI]

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The image shows two black hardcover books. The left book is 'THE ARRL HANDBOOK 100' and the right book is 'THE ARRL ANTENNA BOOK FOR BOND COMMUNICATIONS'. A 'NEW!' badge is placed over the bottom right corner of the antenna book.

Just Ahead in Radiosport

- January 13 -- YB DX Contest (phone)
- January 13 - 14 -- UBA PSK63 Prefix Contest (digital)
- January 13 - 14 -- SKCC Weekend Sprintathon (CW)
- January 13 - 14 -- North American QSO Party (CW)
- January 14 -- NRAU-Baltic Contest, SSB (phone)
- January 14 -- DARC 10-Meter Contest (CW, phone)
- January 14 -- NRAU-Baltic Contest (CW, phone)
- January 17 -- VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest (FT8)
- January 18 - 19 -- Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest (CW)
- January 18 -- NAQCC CW Sprint (CW)

Visit the [ARRL Contest Calendar](#) for more events and information.

Upcoming Section, State, and Division Conventions

- January 12 - 14 | [ARRL Puerto Rico State Convention](#), Hatillo, Puerto Rico
- January 19 - 20 | [Cowtown Hamfest](#), hosting the ARRL North Texas Section Convention, Forest Hill, Texas
- January 27 | [Winterfest](#), hosting the ARRL Midwest Division Convention, Collinsville, Illinois
- February 2 - 3 | [Capital City Hamfest 2024](#), hosting the ARRL Mississippi State Convention, Jackson, Mississippi
- February 9 - 11 | [Orlando HamCation](#), hosting the ARRL Florida State Convention, Orlando, Florida
- February 24 | [Central Dakota Amateur Radio Club](#), hosting the ARRL North Dakota State Convention, Bismarck, North Dakota
- February 24 | [HAM-CON](#), hosting the ARRL Vermont State Convention, Colchester, Vermont
- March 1 - 2 | [Greater Houston HamFest](#), sponsoring the ARRL West Gulf Division Convention, Rosenberg, Texas
- March 8 - 9 | [Acadiana DX Association Hamfest & Swapmeet](#), sponsoring the ARRL Louisiana State Convention, Rayne, Louisiana
- March 16 | [49th Annual Stuart Hamfest](#), sponsoring the ARRL Southern Florida Section Convention, Stuart, Florida
- March 16 | [St. Patrick's Day Hamfest](#), sponsoring the ARRL West Texas Section Convention, Midland, Texas

Search the [ARRL Hamfest and Convention Database](#) to find events in your area.

Have News for ARRL?

Submissions for the ARRL Letter and ARRL News can be sent to news@arrl.org. -- *John E. Ross, KD8IDJ, ARRL News Editor*

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- Listen to [ARRL Audio News](#), available every Friday.
- *The ARRL Letter* is available in an accessible format, posted weekly to the [Blind-hams Groups.io](#) email group. The group is dedicated to discussions about amateur radio as it concerns blind hams, plus related topics including ham radio use of adaptive technology.
- [NCJ -- National Contest Journal](#). Published bimonthly, features articles by top contesters, letters, hints, statistics, scores, NA Sprint, and QSO parties.
- [QEX -- A Forum for Communications Experimenters](#). Published bimonthly, features technical articles, construction projects, columns, and other items of interest to radio amateurs and communications professionals.

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