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## The ARRL Letter for May 7, 2026

1 message

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**ARRL Letter** <memberlist@arrl.org>  
Reply-To: memberlist@arrl.org  
To: cmcguire10@gmail.com

Thu, May 7, 2026 at 3:09 PM

[view this email in your browser](#)



John E. Ross, KD8IDJ, Editor | May 7, 2026

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### The Ham Radio World Heads to Ohio

Hamvention<sup>®</sup> 2026 is just over a week away, and the world’s largest in-person amateur radio gathering promises another three-day weekend of total immersion in all things ham radio. According to the

Dayton Amateur Radio Association, more than 30,000 people are expected to descend on the Greene County Fair and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio, on May 15-17. Attendees will discover the latest and greatest in ham radio equipment and technology from more than 500 indoor exhibitors, learn about virtually all aspects of our hobby at nearly 60 forums, and scour the 2,500-space outdoor flea market for bargains and hard-to-find accessories.



The theme of this year's Hamvention is "Radio Adventure," which is reflected in many of the forum topics, including Summits and Parks on the Air®, high-altitude ballooning, and DXpeditions to remote locations. There is also a youth focus, with the annual Radio Club of America youth forum, booths on radio scouting, Youth DX Adventure and Youth on the Air (YOTA), as well as the [ARRL Youth Rally](#) on Saturday afternoon — which includes a hidden transmitter hunt, handheld radio sprint, and the chance to contact a parachute-mobile station.

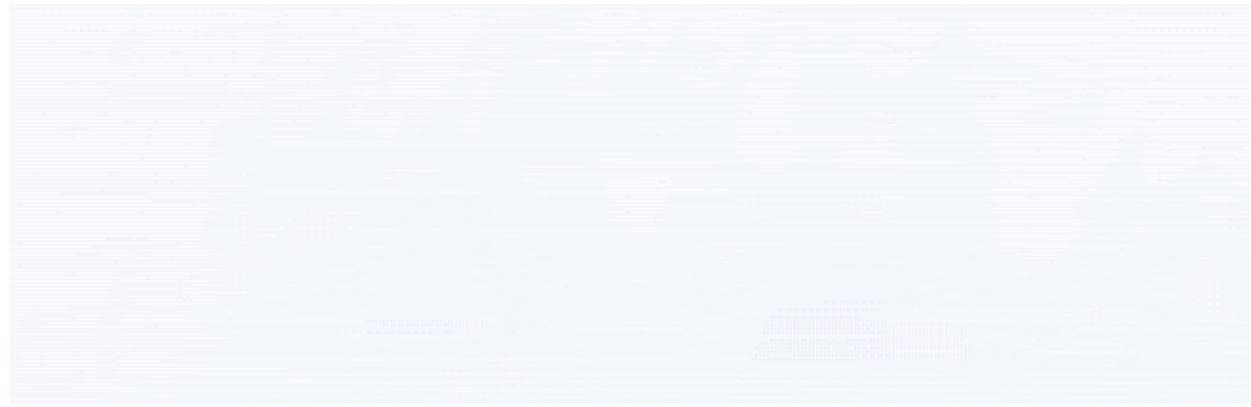
ARRL's large exhibit area will serve as a hub for attendees, including free handheld radio testing for spurious emissions by the ARRL Lab, opportunities to meet the organization's leaders and program representatives, and author book-signings. Students representing the [ARRL Collegiate Amateur Radio Program](#) (CARP) will be on hand to showcase amateur radio at their schools. Other ARRL booths will highlight major 2026 activities including the Year of the Club, the Worked All States America250 award, and Field Day. A comprehensive listing of ARRL activities at Hamvention is [available](#).

Beyond the fairgrounds, the Xenia-area ham radio adventure stretches into a nearly week-long series of events, including Four Days in May for low-power (QRP) enthusiasts, and Contest University, before Hamvention begins; dinners and evening gatherings for DXers, contesters, and various interest groups; and a 3-day AUXCOMM class for emergency communicators the following week. Plus, if you're in the area and not sure about attending Hamvention, admission on Sunday is free!

Hamvention spokesman Michael Kalter, W8CI, says the event — which dates back to 1952 — is "a living, breathing community — part festival, part classroom, part marketplace, and part reunion (where) visitors from across North America and around the world gather each year ... transforming a quiet Ohio city into the international capital of amateur radio for one unforgettable weekend."

More information and tickets are available on the [Hamvention website](#). The free ARRL Events app, produced in partnership with Hamvention, is available to

navigate the complete program, exhibits, and prize drawings. Download the app at [www.tripbuildermedia.com/apps/arrl](http://www.tripbuildermedia.com/apps/arrl) or use the [web version](#).



## Learn More About SDR

The Boston Software Defined Radio User Group, SDR-Boston, is hosting the New England Workshop for Software Defined Radio 2026 ([NEWSDR](#)), June 4 - 5, at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Worcester, Massachusetts.



The primary goal of this workshop is to provide a forum that enables software defined radio (SDR) enthusiasts to get together, collaborate, and introduce SDR concepts to those interested in furthering their knowledge of SDR capabilities and available resources. NEWSDR 2026 welcomes experienced SDR enthusiasts as well as individuals who are interested in getting started with SDR.

John Swoboda, Ph.D., Geospace Research Scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Haystack Observatory, said the two-day event is open to all amateur radio operators who want to learn more about SDR.

“This an opportunity...to explore more opportunities...using SDR, how it works, and the advantages of SDR technology,” said Swoboda. “You don’t have to quit using the tactile touch of tuning a transceiver or give up tubes. SDR still has all of those familiar functions.”

The keynote speaker this year is ARRL Member Gregory Charvat, N8ZRY. A radar expert in his professional life, he operates SSB equipment that he has designed/built from scratch and vintage gear that he has restored. His work has been featured in *QST* magazine, on Hackaday, and many other publications. Charvat is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). His YouTube channel is [Gregory Charvat - YouTube](#).

NEWSDR 2026 will be held at WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, Massachusetts. The main event is scheduled for Friday June 5, 2026, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Eastern). Tutorials are scheduled Thursday June 4, 5:00 – 9:00 PM (Eastern). Attendance is free, but advance registration is required. Visit [newsdr.org/workshops/newsdr-2026/](https://newsdr.org/workshops/newsdr-2026/).



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## STEM On and Off the Air

The Garden School Amateur Radio Club in Jackson Heights, New York, K2GSG, was started in September 2016 as a way to implement the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) standard at the school.

Currently the ARRL Affiliated Club has 13 members ranging from 4th graders to 12th graders.

Well, last week they got a big surprise...they were on television...in Chicago!! CBS News in Chicago aired a short feature that showed the students using amateur radio to make contacts and then transmitting weather reports on the air to a SKYWARN training net!

You can watch the video at [www.cbsnews.com/chicago/video/students-learn-how-use-ham-radio](https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/video/students-learn-how-use-ham-radio).

Their reaction to seeing the video, "They loved it!" said their teacher, John Hale, KD2LPM.

Hale said students are learning more than just how to push buttons...they are learning how to talk on and off the air! One student said he really did not know how to speak correctly but amateur radio was helping him improve his speaking, reading the station IDs and reading those weather reports. The group may participate in ARRL Field Day later this year.



Hale has been selected for the [ARRL Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology](#) (TI) for an upcoming session on Long Island this summer. TI is a donor-funded professional development program designed to help classroom teachers elevate their STEM programs through the use of wireless technology.

Garden School was founded in 1923 to meet the need for a high-quality, independent school in Queens.

<p><b>Say Goodbye to the Climb!</b></p> <p><i>Introducing...</i></p> <p><b>The Carlson Tower Lift</b></p> <p>A Safer, Faster Way to Service Equipment on Light-Duty Sectional Lattice Towers</p>		<p><i>See it working at Hamvention Booth 1205!</i></p> <p> <b>CARLSON Roof Towers</b> A SOLID BASE FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION</p>
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## **Salty Walt Goes “Next Level” with New Portable Antenna Sketchbook**

For many hams, portable operating starts simply: a wire in a tree, a folding chair, and the lure of making memorable contacts from a favorite spot. For Walt Hudson, K4OGO — better known to many as “Salty Walt” from YouTube’s [Coastal Waves & Wires](#) — that spirit of the outdoors has always been the point.

Now Walt is back with a second collection of antenna projects, [Salty Walt’s Next Level Portable Antenna Sketchbook](#), expanding on the easygoing, field-tested style that made his first book a favorite among radio amateurs.



Where [Salty Walt's Portable Antenna Sketchbook](#) focused on beachside builds and creative wire antennas, the new volume ventures into even more concepts while keeping the designs approachable. Readers will still find practical, deployable antennas designed for parks, beaches, and backyard operating, but this time Walt explores ideas like phased arrays, beam-forming, and higher-gain directional arrays — all presented in his familiar notebook-sketch style.

“Designing, building, improving, and learning about antennas never ends — it evolves,” says Walt. “This book is meant to take antenna building to the NEXT LEVEL.”

The 17 projects range from relatively simple builds, such as a three-element vertical Yagi-Uda and half-square antenna, to more sophisticated designs including portable rhombics, bobtail curtains, and co-phased vertical arrays.

Throughout the book, Walt keeps the emphasis on learning-by-doing, with the same entertaining teaching style and relaxed voice that fans have come to expect. “I referred to my first book as the Jimmy Buffett of antenna books,” Walt says. “Well, this is the second album, where the songs are only getting better.”



Alongside the antenna projects, Walt shares radios from his personal collection, and operating tips to help amateurs get the most from their stations, whether running QRP or operating at 100 watts. The book also explores military-inspired antenna systems and streamlined wire antenna designs that can be deployed with minimal equipment. The result feels less like a technical manual and more like riding along on another operating adventure.

*Salty Walt's Next Level Portable Antenna Sketchbook* is published by ARRL. Find it now through the ARRL [online store](#) and ARRL [publication dealers](#). ARRL Item No. 2370, ISBN: 978-1-62595-237-0, \$27.95 retail, \$24.95 ARRL member price.

For builders looking for a quick weekend project to start out, ARRL offers an [End-Fed Half-Wave Antenna Kit](#) as an accessible introduction to portable wire antennas. To order by phone call 1-888-277-5289 (toll-free in the US), Monday through Thursday, 8 AM to 7 PM, and Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM Eastern Time. Outside the US, call (860) 594-0200.

ARRL will host Salty Walt at the 2026 [Dayton Hamvention®](#), May 15 – 17. Walt will lead a portable antenna forum on Friday, and sign books throughout the weekend.

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## Amateur Radio in the News

“Their ability to communicate when no one else can” and [YouTube video](#) / The Brentwood Press (California) April 30, 2026 -- *Delta Amateur Radio Club and Heritage High School Amateur Radio Club are ARRL Affiliated Clubs.*

“Ham operators around the world will connect during Oswego event June 6” / Oswego County News Now (New York) May 2, 2026 -- *The Battleship New Jersey Amateur Radio Station is an ARRL Affiliated Club.*

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## ARRL Live Events and Podcasts



### On the Air LIVE

Join ARRL's Education Specialist Wayne Greene, KB4DSF, as he takes amateur radio to the final frontier! In this session of *On the Air Live*, we will explore how to make contacts through amateur radio satellites and the International Space Station (ISS) using portable equipment. We'll dive into the essential gear—including handheld radios and directional antennas—and discuss the techniques needed for successful space-based communication. Plus, Wayne will show you how to use computer and smartphone apps to accurately track satellite passes in your specific area. Whether you are a newcomer or a seasoned operator, tune in to learn how to work "the birds" right from your own backyard!

The session will air on the ARRL'S learning center, [learn.arrl.org](https://www.arrl.org), on May 26th at 8 PM Eastern. Preregistration is required and can be accomplished on the learning center.

 Date: May 26, 2026

 Time: 8 PM Eastern / 5 PM Pacific

 [Register Now](#) |  [Previously Recorded Sessions](#)



## 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. [More info](#) | [Listen on Blubrry](#) | Also available on iTunes and Apple Podcasts.



## On the Air

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### Get On the Ham Satellites!

ARRL Education Specialist Wayne Greene, KB4DSF, visits the podcast to discuss his May/June 2026 *On the Air* article "Equipment for Making Contacts Through an Amateur Radio Satellite" as well as the upcoming May 26 "On the Air Live" session he'll be hosting on the same topic. [More info](#) | [Listen on Blubrry](#) | Also available on iTunes and Apple Podcasts.

The advertisement for the PicoFox r3 transmitter features a purple header with the text 'PicoFox r3 Open Source Fox Transmitter'. Below this, there are two bullet points: 'Ready to Hunt in Minutes!' and 'Designed & Assembled by Hams in the USA!'. A QR code is provided for ordering, along with the website 'www.picofox.radio/arri-letter'. The ARRL logo is also present. On the right side, there is an image of the transmitter hardware, including a black box and a purple PCB with various components and a antenna.

## Announcements

All Aboard!!! The [Fort Myers Amateur Radio Club \(FMARC\)](#), an ARRL Affiliated Club, will be joining the [Railroad Museum of South Florida \(RRMSF\)](#) in celebrating this year's National Train Day on Saturday May 9, 2026, 1400 - 1900Z, with club call sign **W4LX**. The event commemorates the driving of the Golden Spike in Promontory, Utah, on May 10 1869, which marked

the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the United States. FMARC will be demonstrating Morse code (CW) by communicating with other amateur radio operators around the world. Other stations will be sharing this information via voice communications. A certificate will be available. For more information visit their website.



### In Brief...

The following America250 W1AW Portable Activations begin 0000z on Wednesdays, and end 2359z on Tuesdays (7 days total for each activation). See the complete schedule at [www.arrl.org/america250-was](http://www.arrl.org/america250-was).



- 05/06/2026 Maryland W1AW/3 (host K2EJ)
- 05/06/2026 Nevada W1AW/7 (host NØCSM)
- 05/06/2026 Ohio W1AW/8 (host K8ZT)
- 05/20/2026 Connecticut W1AW/1 (host W8ZY)
- 05/20/2026 Missouri W1AW/Ø (host NØAX)

**Emergency communications professional and ARRL Life Member Ross Merlin, WA2WDT, passed away on May 3, 2026.** He was 67 years old. Merlin held an Amateur Extra class license and had a career in emergency communications at the national level and in the federal government. He had also long been an advocate for amateur radio. Merlin is credited with creating the National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) for CISA, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. He also worked with ARRL in many ways over the years and led the national SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program from 2015 to 2021. Before he became a government



ARSLI Director Ross Merlin, WA2WDT on ARSLI Director Tom Lafleur, KA6IQA's, sailboat, San

employee, Merlin was involved in radio communications professionally with the National Disaster Medical Services (NDMS). Within the federal government, he held many positions, including FEMA National Emergency Radio System (FNARS) manager; FEMA Spectrum Manager and Department of Homeland Security Frequency Manager. Merlin was also on the board of the Amateur Radio Safety Foundation (ARSA), which funds and operates Winlink and helped to build a substantial Winlink network on government radio channels which is still active today.

Diego Bay, after a successful Board of Directors meeting regarding the Winlink Radio Email System.

A celebration of life for Ross Merlin will be announced at a later date.

**The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) held a teleconference meeting on April 24, 2026.** During the meeting, VEC representatives elected new officers for several leadership positions. The newly elected officers are Allan Batteiger, WB5QNG (W5YI VEC), Chairman; Maria Somma, AB1FM (ARRL), Vice Chairman; Michael Masterson, WT9V (W5YI), Treasurer; Ashley Wallis, WQ9K (GLAARG), Assistant Treasurer; Michele Cimbala, WK3X (Laurel), Secretary; Austin Smith, W4PBL (SANDARC), Custodian of the VEC/FCC Rules, and Roland Anders, K3RA (Anchorage), Question Pool Committee (QPC) Chairman.



### **Open Positions at ARRL**

Come join the headquarters staff of ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio®! We are currently seeking qualified applicants for the following positions:

**Awards Program Supervisor**

**Membership Manager**

**RFI Lab Engineer**

**Public Relations and Outreach Manager**

Full details may be found on the ARRL HR web page at [www.arrrl.org/careers](http://www.arrrl.org/careers).

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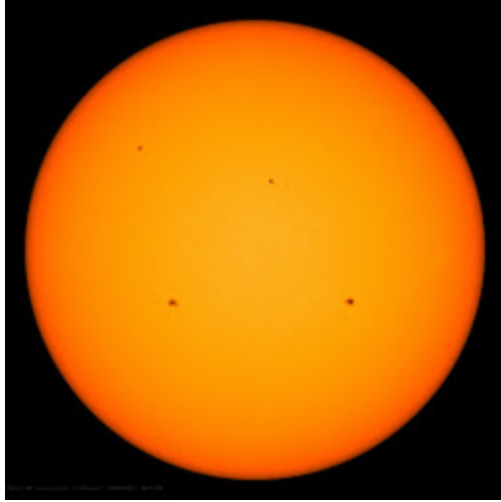
**STORM CYPHER**  
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## The ARRL Solar Report

### ARRL Solar Report for May 7, 2026

Solar activity was at low levels this past week with occasional B-class and isolated low-level C-class flares. The largest event of the period was a C1.4/Sf flare from Region 4429 on May 5.

There are currently six numbered regions on the visible disk as Region 4434 decayed to



Solar disk image courtesy of NASA/SDO, May 7, 2026

plage and Region 4428 rotated beyond the western limb as an E-type group. The remaining regions mostly showed signs of decay. Region 4425 appeared stable, though full characterization is difficult due to extreme limb proximity. Region 4429 showed continued submergence and decay, decreasing in both area and length along with a total loss of penumbra.

Region 4431 showed some minor new development, with a few small spots emerging in both polarities following recent decay.

Region 4432 had minor emergence in its intermediate spots, despite an overall gradual decrease in extent. The remaining regions were mostly stable.

No Earth-directed CMEs were observed in available coronagraph imagery.

Solar activity is expected to be at low levels on May 7 with a slight chance for isolated M-class (R1-R2/minor-moderate) flares. Flare probabilities increase beginning May 8 as up to two active regions near L=330 rotate into view from beyond the eastern limb. Considering the size of these regions and recent far-side eruptions seen in coronagraph imagery, solar activity is expected to increase May 8 – 9 with a chance for M-class (R1-R2/minor-moderate) flares and a slight chance for X-class (R3/strong or greater) flares.

Solar wind parameters returned to near background levels as transient coronal mass ejection (CME) influences waned. Solar wind speeds averaged around 375 km/s. The phi angle was predominantly in a positive (away) orientation for the majority of the period with a few short-lived oscillations into a negative (toward) orientation during the period.

Solar wind parameters are expected to reflect a slow wind regime into early May 7. By mid-to-late May 7, the onset of a coronal high speed stream (+CH HSS) is expected with CH HSS influences persisting through May 8 before beginning to subside on May 9.

The 10.7-centimeter flux: May 8, 135; May 9, 130; May 10, 130; May 11 - 12, 125; May 13, 120.

Predicted sunspots: May 7, 104; May 8, 98; May 9, 110; May 10, 93; May 11, 114; May 13, 88; May 14, 118.

For more information concerning radio propagation, [visit](#) the ARRL Technical Information Service, read [A Quick Guide to HF Propagation Using Solar Indices](#), and check out the [Propagation Page of Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA](#).

For customizable propagation charts, visit the [VOACAP Online for Ham Radio website](#).



## Just Ahead in Radiosport

- May 7 -- VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest-NA (digital)
- May 7 - 8 -- Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest (CW)
- May 7 -- NRAU 10m Activity Contest (CW, phone, digital)
- May 7 -- SKCC Sprint Europe (CW)
- May 9 - 10 -- CQ-M International DX Contest (CW, phone)
- May 9 - 10 -- VOLTA WW RTTY Contest (digital)
- May 9 - 10 -- SKCC Weekend Sprintathon (CW)
- May 9 - 10 -- Canadian Prairies QSO Party (CW, phone)
- May 9 - 10 -- 50 MHz Spring Sprint (CW, phone, digital)
- May 11 -- 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint (CW, phone)
- May 12 -- DARC FT4 Contest (digital)
- May 14 -- VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest-NA (digital)
- May 14 -- QRP Minimal Art Session (CW)
- May 16 -- UN DX Contest (CW, phone)
- May 16 -- NZART Sangster Shield Contest (CW)
- May 16 - 17 -- His Maj. King of Spain Contest (CW)
- May 16 - 17 -- EU PSK DX Contest (digital)
- May 16 - 17 -- Arkansas QSO Party (CW, phone, digital)
- May 16 -- Feld Hell Sprint (digital)
- May 17 - 18 -- Run for the Bacon QRP Contest (CW)
- May 18 -- RSGB FT4 Contest (digital)

Remember to visit the [ARRL Contest Calendar](#) for more events and information.



## Upcoming Section, State, and Division Conventions

- May 9 | [ARRL Nebraska State Convention](#), Lincoln, Nebraska
- June 5 -7 | [SEA-PAC](#), hosting the ARRL Northwestern Division Convention, Seaside, Oregon
- June 13 | [Knoxville Hamfest](#), hosting the ARRL Tennessee State Convention, Knoxville, Tennessee
- June 14 | [BreezeShooters Hamfest](#), hosting the ARRL Western Pennsylvania Section Convention, Butler, Pennsylvania
- June 19 - 20 | [Flagstaff HamFest](#), hosting the ARRL Arizona Section Convention, Flagstaff, Arizona.
- August 28 - 30 | [Wyoming HamCon](#), hosting the ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Convention, Casper, Wyoming
- October 9 - 10 | [SPARK-CON 2026](#), hosting the ARRL Midwest Division Convention, Sedalia, Missouri

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

## Save the Date

- May 15 - 17 | [Dayton Hamvention](#), Xenia, Ohio
- June 26 - 28 | [HAM RADIO](#), International Amateur Radio Exhibition, Friedrichshafen, Germany
- August 7 - 8 | [Shreveport-Bossier Hamfest](#), hosting the ARRL Delta Division Convention, Shreveport, Louisiana
- August 13 - 16 | [Northeast HamXposition](#), ARRL New England Division Convention, Marlborough, Massachusetts
- August 15 | [Cincinnati Hamfest<sup>SM</sup>](#), hosting the ARRL Great Lakes Division Convention
- August 22 - 23 | [Huntsville Hamfest](#), hosting the 2026 [ARRL National Convention](#), Huntsville, Alabama

- October 10 | [North Star Radio Convention](#), hosting the ARRL Dakota Division Convention, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota
- October 16 - 18 | [Pacificon](#), ARRL Pacific Division Convention, San Ramon, California

## Have News for ARRL?

Submissions for the ARRL Letter and ARRL News can be sent to [news@arrl.org](mailto: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 Sprints, 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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