

# WCF



Jan / Feb 2026 - Issue



# PRESSER

The Newsletter of the ARRL West Central Florida Section

## Section Cabinet

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**Section Emergency Coordinator**  
**Section Traffic Manager**  
Dave Rockwell W4PXE

**Assistant Section Manager Technology**  
**Technical Coordinator**  
Darrell Davis, KT4WX

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Randy Payne K4EZM

Paul Toth NB9X

Russ Delaney N4RTD

Doug Williams N2DW

Mike Lunsford KB4FHP

Chuck Johnston W4CWJ

Dee Turner, N4GD

Christine Duez K4KJN

William Miller N1CDO

Dan Noah WX4DAN

Doug Christ KN4YT

Stephen Park W4OEP



**Jimmy Russ, AB4KA**  
**Section Manager**  
**West Central Florida Section, ARRL**

## QST de AB4KA

### Welcome to 2026!

Many exciting things are coming in 2026. The ARRL has deemed 2026 as the year of the club with a number of fun things and activities surrounding amateur radio clubs, including a new "Year of the Club" landing page at arrl.org. There are lots of resources for clubs themselves as well as resources for hams who are looking for clubs. Clubs are the backbone of amateur radio, and in my opinion every ham should belong to one (as well as the ARRL but that's a different argument).

The ARRL has also started some new award programs, not the least of which is the WAS250, which is a special Worked All States award which can only be obtained this year and only by logging your contacts in Logbook of the World. In addition to WAS250, there will also be lots of stations using the callsign W1AW/# (1-0). All 50 states will

have at least one station using the callsign twice a year, so in addition to working all states, it will be possible to do it using the special event stations, too!

Some other things we have coming at us are:

Winter Field Day, Jan 24  
Hamcation, Feb 13-15  
Highlands County Hamfest, Feb 21  
TechCon, Feb 28  
MARCifest, Mar 14  
ZAARC Hamfest, Mar 21

Lot of events, and that's only in the first quarter! 2026 will be a fun year.

Until next time..."

Jimmy Russ AB4KA

## New Ham makes their First contact.



**Dade City, Florida-** After earning her Technician class license back in early October of 2025. Cathy Bentley had to wait weeks for her license to be

processed. This delay was due to the Federal government shutdown.

Cathy Bentley, XYL to Tom W1HFR, checked the FCC database and there it was Tuesday morning. So that morning she called out on the EPARS (East Pasco Amateur Radio Society) 146.880 VHF repeater. WA2MMY Bonnie Bloxsom, XYL of AA4CB Chris Bloxsom, picked up the microphone and replied to her call.

They made the usual exchanges that hams do on repeaters. After that more members came on the repeater and exchanged reports and congratulations on getting the new callsign.

Cathy will be studying for her General class license shortly after the holidays are over and things return to normal. In the meantime you can most likely hear her on one of the many East Pasco repeaters. Both Tom and Cathy have been long time supporters of EPARS and participate in all the clubs public service events.

Later that week Cathy and Tom were volunteering their time at the local community center for a fundraiser for Ridge Manor Area Crime Watch. Bonnie and Chris presented her with the Official ARRL First Contact Award. Where she received "bonus points" for it being a YL to YL contact. That is very rare nowadays.



Cathy Bentley receiving her First Contact Award

## 12th Annual TECHCON - How It Started and What Is It About?

By Darrell Davis KT4WX  
Technical Coordinator - ARRL  
West Central Florida Section



Some may be asking, what is TECHCON? TECHCON is the annual technical conference for the ARRL West Central Florida Section. When I became the 3rd Section Manager for the ARRL West Central Florida Section in January 2015, I felt there was a need for an annual technical conference for our ARRL

Section. So I started the ARRL West Central Florida Section Technical Conference and patterned the conference after the former ARRL/TAPR Digital Communications Conference (which sadly came to an end in 2022) because it was such a good structure. Originally it was called the ARRL West Central Florida Section Technical Conference, but I realized that the name was verbose. In 2017, I renamed it simply TECHCON, which is short for Technical Conference.

The 12th Annual TECHCON will be held at the Hillsborough County Public Safety Operations Complex, located at 9450 E. Columbus Dr., on the east side of Tampa, off of Falkenburg Road and not far from I-75.

If you plan to attend, please register online at the TECHCON Registration Page at the ARRL West Central Florida Section website. We plan again this year to have two program tracks, and once again will be video recording these presentations. Russ Delaney N4RTD, one of our Assistant Section Managers, will take these video recordings, add the presenter slides in post-production edition, and then post the finished product on the Section YouTube Channel for viewing which is located at <https://www.youtube.com/@arrlwcf>.

We used to try to do a dual in-person/virtual type



TECHCON, but the logistics simply proved to be too difficult to manage and starting last year, we now record only the presentations, and then put them on the Section YouTube channel.

The night before TECHCON, we have a Friday Evening Social at a local restaurant. This is open for anyone interested in attending. We are close to finalizing a venue for the Friday Evening Social and we will announce that via a WCF SECTION PRESS RELEASE very shortly.

Between the morning and the afternoon sessions, we will have a 1 1/2 hour break for lunch. This gives adequate time for discussion about products and ideas between the morning and afternoon session, and for anyone going off site to have lunch.

Again this year, we will order pizza in for those who wish to participate, so they can dine in and not have to go anywhere between the morning and afternoon sessions. We take up a small collection, to pay for the cost of the pizza. We have been doing this at TECHCON since 2020 and it has been very popular. Alternatively, you can bring your own lunch or dine out locally.

The topics presented at TECHCON are entirely up to the presenter. The presenters are very enthusiastic about their topics and that is why they make such good

presentations. We have openings for presenters. Each presentation slot is 50 minutes in length and we usually dedicate one time slot to what we call "Lightning Talks", which are presentations that are usually 5 to 15 minutes in length.

If you are interesting in becoming a presenter at TECHCON, please email me at [kt4wx@arrl.net](mailto:kt4wx@arrl.net) and I will be glad to discuss you becoming a presenter.

Each year we try to move TECHCON to a different venue in a different part of the Section. We have mostly used emergency operations centers as the venue, because they are available at no charge, and being the Section budget is not substantial enough to rent a venue. If a venue is available to us at no cost, we would be interested in holding TECHCON there. The venue needs to have a large room, several small rooms, and a dining area or kitchen is a plus. If a club or group can arrange for access to a venue for future editions of TECHCON, please contact me via email at [kt4wx@arrl.net](mailto:kt4wx@arrl.net) and I would be glad to discuss it with you.

Look forward to seeing you at the 12th Annual TECHCON



# Florida Parks on the Air



**Jim Miller,**  
**N7JIM**  
**Chairman, TARC FL POTA**  
**Committee**

As the new for 2026 sponsor of the Florida State Parks on the Air Contest (FLPOTA), the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club (TARC) in Venice would like to ask all addressees of this email to please help us promote this contest to their fellow club members and friends. The contest has had a troubled history the past few years and TARC is committed to making 2026 the year that Florida amateurs get back out into our great state parks again in large numbers to compete for Parks on the Air activation recognition.

Florida will join Alabama, Georgia, and Texas in holding 2026 state POTA contests during the weekend of April 18-19, 2026. Our Florida contest will run from Friday, April 17 through Monday, April 20 during normal park hours of 8 am to 7:59 pm (or actual park closing time). We encourage clubs to use this opportunity to bring together experienced park activators and the many other club members who would like to learn about POTA operations. Plan to compete as a "club station" category contestant.

We have tried to keep the rules, number of operating classes, and scoring system to an absolute minimum. We want this to be more of a fun event and an opportunity for participants to explore our great state parks. The rules have BONUS incentives for first time activators and for youth (under 18) operators. Visit the event website for more information and to read the rules and frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents posted there.

<https://fspota.org/>

We hope to fill the Florida parks with POTA activators on this weekend in April. The April QST magazine will have this listed as a published Special Event. Please address questions and comments to [admin@fspota.org](mailto:admin@fspota.org).

73, Jim N7JIM  
Chairman, TARC FL POTA  
Committee



## The WCF ARES Communicator for January 2026 is Published

The January 2026 issue of THE ARES COMMUNICATOR, is now available for download on

the new ARES COMMUNICATOR page located at <https://arrlwcf.org/home/wcf-ares-communicator>.

This issue features a guest column from Gary Bishop K4GHB, who is with Polk County ARES.

All issues will be archived on this page for current and historical reference.

## Chris Bloxsom AA4CB Appointed ARRL Affiliated Club Coordinator



On Monday December 15, 2025, Chris Bloxsom AA4CB was appointed to be the new ARRL Affiliated Club Coordinator for the ARRL West Central Florida Section, by Jimmy Russ AB4KA, Section Manager.

Originally from Long Island, New York, Bloxsom was first licensed in 1985, upgraded his license to General class in 2000, and then to Extra class in 2016. Bloxsom has served as an ARRL Public Information Officer in Pasco County for a number of years, and is currently active in the East Pasco Amateur Radio Club, along with several other amateur radio clubs.

Jimmy Russ AB4KA, had the

following comments to say about the appointment of Bloxsom as Affiliated Club Coordinator, "The West Central Florida section has a new Affiliated Club Coordinator, Chris Bloxsom, AA4CB. Chris has been an amateur radio operator since 1985 and has lived in Florida since 2000. He is active in several clubs and will be an even greater asset to the West Central Florida section during the upcoming "Year of the Club" in 2026. Welcome aboard, Chris! We're happy to have you."

## Mike Lunsford KB4FHP is the 2025 Ellen White W1YL Award Recipient



On Saturday December 14, 2025, at the Tampa Bay Hamfest, during the ARRL forum, Jimmy Russ AB4KA, Section Manager, announced



that the winner of the 2025 Ellen White W1YL Award was Mike Lunsford KB4FHP.

Lunsford is serving as an Assistant Section Manager – Public Service Liaison since December 13, 2022, and is serving as the President of the Lake Wales Radio Amateurs (<https://lwra.us>) since January 2022.

Lunsford was first licensed at KN4ITQ in 2018, but had a long time interest in Amateur Radio working with several organizations, including CERT and ARES, in his professional career before retirement. After retirement, Lunsford's wife encouraged him to get a hobby and amateur radio was the obvious choice.

After getting his Technician class ticket Lunsford became quickly involved in the amateur radio community and became a member of the Lake Wales Radio Amateurs, Lakeland Amateur Radio Club, Polk County ARES, and a member of the ARRL.

In 2019, Lunsford obtained the vanity call sign of KB4FHP, inspired by his time as a volunteer with the Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary, upon upgrading to General class. Lunsford currently serves as an ARRL Technical Specialist for digital voice modes.

Lunsford in his professional career was employed by Polk County Fire Rescue for 40

years and retired as a Battalion Chief over Special Operations, which included Office of Professional Standards, specialized response units, special events, and law enforcement liaison. Lunsford also dealt with the Public Information Office section from Polk County Fire Rescue and other agencies on a daily basis. Lunsford was the 451st person to hold a paramedic license in the State of Florida, and has maintained his license even in retirement.

Lunsford also volunteered for 35 years as a Florida Highway Patrol Auxiliary State Trooper and retired with the rank of Major. Lunsford also owns a part time business, since 1981, doing electronics and two-way radio installations in law enforcement, fire, and EMS vehicles.

Lunsford's other interests are participation as a coach for Special Olympics, as his son is an athlete, for Bocce, Golf, Bowling, and being active at his church, First Baptist Church in Lake Wales, as a ministry volunteer.

The ARRL West Central Florida Section congratulates Mike Lunsford KB4FHP on being named the 2025 Ellen White W1YL Award recipient. The 2025 Ellen White W1YL Award was presented to Lunsford, at the ARRL forum during the Tampa Bay Hamfest on Saturday December 14, 2025.

As in the past several years, The West Central Florida Group, the owners and operators of the NI4CE Repeater System, have sponsored a one year ARRL membership for Lunsford.

The Ellen White W1YL Award was established in 2016 in memory of Ellen White W1YL, who recently became a Silent Key in November of 2022. The Ellen White W1YL Award is to name the amateur radio operator who has made the greatest contribution to amateur radio in the ARRL West Central Florida Section.

For all the details and history of the Ellen White W1YL Award you may go to <http://arrlwcfl.org/wcf-special-events/white-award/>.

### 2025 Tampa Bay Hamfest Photos







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