CAARA NEWS

Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association
Gloucester, Massachusetts
FEBRUARY- 2026 EDITION

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Brandon- NQ1W

Dear Members,

I hope you are all staying warm following the major New England snowstorm we just experienced.

I am writing to celebrate the fantastic success of two recent events, our Yearly holiday party and Winter Field Day.

Firstly we had an amazing time at the CAARA Holiday Party. The club was decorated and festive and much fun and camaraderie was shared by all in attendance. We also had a chance to celebrate the contributions of members who have been so very active in service to the club and greater community. In short it was a blast. I can only hope that those of you who couldn't make it this year can join us for the next big bash.

Then following right on the heels of the party we had Winter Field Day 2026 this past Saturday. It was wonderful to see such a great turnout and participation right before the weather turned. In many ways we got to simulate operating in a winter emergency just as a real one unfolded all around us that weekend. I want to extend a sincere thank you to all the members who helped make contacts, as well as those who participated from home by making contacts with the club station. Your involvement is what makes these events so successful for CAARA.

A special thank you goes out to Thomas Stephenson AA1TS for the excellent food provided to our operators and members up at the clubhouse for both of these events. As always, having great meals available made the experiences even more enjoyable for everyone involved.

We are looking forward to a fun and active February. We'll be having a special talk by Paul Kreuger N1JDH at our members meeting on Valentine's Day Feb 14th at noon. It will be about the electromagnetic properties of stealth aircraft and should be a fascinating talk.

I would also like to remind everyone that Brian Llyod KC1SOO and myself have volunteered to perform net control duties for Radio Active Cape Ann FB group's weekly Gloucester Fishnet, which occurs every Thursday at 7:30pm and alternates between 2m and 6m simplex every week. It is a great opportunity to test your capabilities with direct point to point communication between participants without the benefit of a repeater. It is great fun and will really help refine your 6m and 2m operational capabilities. I hope you can join us. More info can be found at https://fishnet.radioactivecapeann.com/

In order to keep the great work we do moving forward and the gem that is our clubhouse running, we are very much indebted to those that offer the extra generosity of their time, money or equipment. If you are able to make that kind of contribution please know we are all very grateful and that the club and officers do everything we can do to extend the value and to make your investment matter for ham radio and the broader community we serve. Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to the club!

Best regards and 73,
Brandon Hockle, NQ1W
President, Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA)

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CAARA Newsletter
Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association
6 Stanwood Street
Gloucester, MA 01930

CAARA Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA).

It is the policy of the editor to publish all material submitted by the membership provided such material is in good taste, relevant to amateur radio and of interest to CAARA members, and space is available. Material is accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Articles and other materials may be submitted by internet to Jon at jpcrockport@gmail.com . If possible, material should be in Word format. Material may also be submitted as hard copy to Jon-K1TP or any Club Officer.

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Jon Cunningham- K1TP Editor
Dean Burgess- KB1PGH Reporter

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Welcome to CAARA:

CAARA, an ARRL affiliated club, operates the 2 meter W1GLO repeater on 145.130 MHz with antennas located on the ATT cell tower in the Blackburn Industrial Complex in Gloucester Massachusetts. It has an average effective radius of 60 miles, and serves Eastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Rhode Island, Southern New Hampshire, and maritime mobile stations.

CAARA also operates the W1GLO repeater on 224.900 located at the CAARA clubhouse.

The 443.700 repeater is now on the ATT cell tower in the Blackburn Industrial Complex with greatly enhanced performance running in fusion mode and linked to 10 other repeaters in the New England area.

The Association is one of the few amateur radio clubs that has its own clubhouse. Located at 6 Stanwood Street in Gloucester, with a variety of HF stations with beam, vertical, or G5RV antennas.

Amateur radio exams are held on REQUEST at the CAARA clubhouse. Anyone who is considering a new license or an upgrade, is welcome to test with us. Currently pre-registration is necessary. Contact the head of our VE team Bill Poulin- WZ1L if you have any questions about monthly testing.

Monthly member meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at noon except for July and August.

Each Sunday evening at 9:00 PM, the club operates a 2 meter fm net on 145.130. This is an open and informal net which disseminates club news and prepares operators for emergency communications work. All are invited to check into the net as club membership is not a requirement.

The club is open every Wednesday from 10- Noon for CAARA members and interested parties to stop by and socialize, as well as use the extensive collection of ham radio gear.

This newsletter is published under the auspices of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA), However, all content is the work of individual contributors and may contain ideas, opinions or views not necessarily shared or supported by the CAARA Board of Directors or the membership.

THE EMCOMM MINUTE

By Dean- KB1PGH

So if you are involved with emergency communications or are a survivalist or a prepper here are are couple of product reviews of two items that I got for Christmas that you may be interested in. So of course in any emergency situation you will need a flashlight in either your car or home. The only thing is that you want a really strong built flashlight that will take a beating.

There is no use in buying a cheap plastic flashlight that will break the second you drop it. What I rely on now is the NEBO brand or flashlights. I have a few of them now in my ham radio got kits.

The one I just got is the NEBO Master Series FL 3000 flashlight. This flashlight is built to last and is made from aircraft grade aluminum and Is IP 67 waterproof which means that it is good for 30 minutes under 3 feet of water.

What I like about the NEBO brand of batteries is that they have a rechargeable Lithium Ion battery so you save money on buying batteries and there`s no chance of battery leakage inside like the store bought alkaline batteries. I had a expensive Mag light flashlight destroyed by two Duracell batteries that ended up leaking inside of it so I learned my lesson there.

The NEBO FL 3000 flashlight is recharged by a universal USB port and the magnetically charged as you can see in the photo. It also has a magnetic base as well. Unlike other cheap flashlights this flashlight has 4 different brightness settings to extend battery life as well a 3X zoom setting. You can do 3000 lumens setting for 30 seconds or up to a 400 lumens setting for 4 hours. It emits a clean and clear light unlike cheap flashlights. The NEBO FL 3000 would be great for on the job applications as well as it can be dropped from 3 or 4 feet and still work.

While this flashlight is built like a tank but it is a wee bit expensive at $129 on Amazon but it`s a battery that you will have for life, plus you`ll save the money in not having to buy batteries ever again. Like the old saying in life, you get what you pay for.

There are 3 other versions of the Master series FL flashlights as well that go all the way down to a penlight so check them out on Amazon. While we are on the subject of flashlights. If you haven`t done this in a while please take the time to go through what you have for flashlights in your house and make sure they all work and are fully charged so you won`t be left in the dark when the power goes out. It`s good to at least have a couple of them especially by your bedside if you ever need it.

So now lets move on to another basic item that we all should have in our ham radio or prepper`s go bag or at least one at home and in the car. It is a battery bank charger for your cellphone.

It`s also good to have a battery bank when you go camping or hiking or a day on the boat or at the beach or any outdoor activity. They are small enough to fit in your pocket or purse as well. There`s nothing worse to have a low battery on your cellphone when the power goes out or if you have been using your phone all day.

One good aspect about cellphone battery chargers is that you can pick the size and how much charge they have in case you want to charge a laptop too. I even have one that has a fold out solar panels on it to recharge it. I have at least 4 of them incase the power goes out for my families cellphones and laptops and ipads.

One thing to watch for is the charge rate on them because some charge slower than others. So the one I got for the Christmas is a Anker Powercore Slim 10,000 .

As you can see in the photo it has a USB c charging cable

and I say it is the same size and weight as a iphone. Anker is one of the top brands in the battery bank business. The Anker Powercore Slim 10,000 is a 5 V 3 Amp high speed charger with "Power IQ Charging".

That means it can sense what type of device you have and the correct type and speed of charging it needs. It has USB-C input and output and it can charge Apple, Android and Samsung devices. It is very durable up to a 3 foot drop and weighs only 8.6 oz . The cost on Amazon is $26.00 and that`s cheap for peace of mind.

So I would highly recommend these two items for any ham radio or prepper go kit. Since it is February if you find your self with not much to do you could always start to create your very own emergency go kit.

There are plenty to you can buy pre made as well online. So that`s it for now, See you next month,

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Dean

North Carolina Students Scheduled to Make Contact with the International Space Station

580 students at Conn Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, will participate in a conversation with an astronaut on board the International Space Station (ISS). Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) has confirmed the contact, scheduled for Friday, January 30, 2026, just after 10:00 AM EST.

Radio communications will be provided by the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society under the leadership of John Brier, K4EB. “This contact could not have been possible without a $14,000 grant from Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC), said Brier. “The new equipment, which is in cases and movable, will allow us to provide communications for other schools in the area.” Brier added that club members are being trained to operate the gear and it can be loaned to other clubs for use in future ARISS contacts.

Today's contact will be with NASA astronaut and medical physicist Christopher Williams, KJ5GE. Twelve students will be asking questions, two in each grade level, from kindergarten through fifth grade. All 12 students will be wearing special T-shirts designed by a second grader who won the school’s T-shirt logo contest. Students also had a chance to create a logo for a keychain and there was a winner for each grade. Every student will get their grade level keychain to mark the ARISS event.

ARISS is a cooperative venture of international amateur radio societies and the space agencies that support the ISS. In the US, participating organizations include NASA's Space Communications and Navigation (SCaN) program, the ISS National Laboratory -- Space Station Explorers, ARRL, and AMSAT.

Now Shipping: the 2026 edition of The ARRL Repeater Directory® powered by RepeaterBook

ARRL is excited to announce that the 2026 edition of The ARRL Repeater Directory® is once again powered by RepeaterBook, amateur radio’s worldwide repeater database. New for 2026, The Repeater Directory features a City Quick Find Index, making it faster and easier than ever to locate nearby repeaters.

“Each year The ARRL Repeater Directory continues to set the standard for trusted repeater information, and we’re proud to see RepeaterBook data play an ongoing role in that effort,” said Garrett Dow, KD6KPC, of RepeaterBook. “Our continued partnership helps ensure the directory reflects the most current, carefully curated repeater listings available. As new features and tools are added, the 2026 edition further strengthens its value for everyday operators, travelers, and emergency communications teams who depend on accurate information when it matters most.”

SpottedHam.com Launches Real-Time Custom Keyword Alerts for Portable Operators

A new web-based tool for the amateur radio community, SpottedHam.com, has launched to provide hams with a more granular way to monitor the bands. Unlike traditional clusters, SpottedHam allows users to create custom watchlists for specific callsigns, POTA references, or specific bands and modes.

The system monitors live spotting data and sends an immediate email notification to the user the moment a match is found. This is particularly useful for operators chasing specific park references or monitoring the activity of friends and local club members.

Developer Robert Campbell/KM6HBH designed the tool to be mobile-first, ensuring that activators in the field and operators in the shack have a clean, clutter-free interface. The service is currently free to use and supports global spotting data, including UK and European POTA references.

CAARA JANUARY HOLIDAY PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS

The CAARA January Members meeting was also the Annual Holiday Party. It was well attended with a mouth watering BBQ catered lunch provided by Tom- AA1TS. We cannot thank Tom enough for all he does to support this radio club.

Awards were given out by Kevin- K1KL who manages the YukanRun public service race group and does an excellent job!

All participating received praise for their donated public service time.

Two special awards were given to Tom- AA1TS and Paul- W1PAG.

The jackets below were given to these two deserving men in appreciation for participating every single race.

Thanks to all for their public service.

Winter Real Estate Adventures

by Curtis- AA3JE

A decade ago I started looking for a retirement home. My wife suggested Florida, but the idea of humid heat and cockroaches the size of rats did not sound so good. Besides, property values were getting insane.
We looked on Zillow and found lovely homes for sale in New Hampshire. If we worked it right, we could sell the house in Rockport, buy a house in New Hampshire, and have a chunk of cash left over.

The problem was that a LOT of people from Massachusetts have the same idea. We looked harder and found out that the further you got from the NH-MA state line, the prices went down. We found a lovely house in New Hampshire, in a quiet little town called, appropriately, Littleton (no antenna restrictions) , bought it, and moved in. It was handy to Canada (20 miles away) and very inexpensive.

All went well till the first winter. It snows, a LOT, and my daily routine in the 8 months of snow season (October to May) is get up, wash up, have a coffee looking over the pastoral view out the window, and put on arctic gear and plow snow. I have 3 snow blowers, a tractor-front end loader, and assorted shovels. The first thing is to dig out the 4-foot berm at the end of the driveway left by the county plow. Then I have a decision. The tractor has a ½ cubic yard bucket. If the snow is more than 6 inches, it is faster to blow it, as the tractor requires way too much backing and froing. Less than 6, plow, more than 6, blow and plow. One answer is a bigger tractor, but my wife killed that by asking where I could put it. We have two garages, but I can barely get the small tractor in along with the summer season yard equipment. (more on that later).

I quickly learned that one has to put the snow someplace. There is a gate in the fence out to the hill, and I can shove it there, but this requires the snow reading skill of an Eskimo. If the snow is too soft, the tractor bogs down, gets stuck over the hill and I then have to find the 1 1/2 inch tow rope, blow a bare patch, hook up the truck and pull the darn thing back from over the hill. In recent years I just pile it on the edges of the drive and quickly learned that if you pile it on the uphill side, you form a glacier that slowly slides down into the drive and is like concrete. It can be removed with an electric jackhammer.

Once the drive is plowed so you can get out, it's time to shovel the porches. This is easy early in the season, I just shove it over to the edge, but late in the season, the snow piles become as high as the porch, and it becomes more difficult. Soon the porches and the drive are surrounded by 8-foot-high snow drifts. The snow pack is up to your knees in good years, and going out to service the antennas is a trip! I am considering snowshoes to service the long wire.

In spring (June) it melts, and I have to pump out the garage which otherwise fills with snowmelt. We call this the mud season, for obvious reasons. The line at the carwash is 10 cars long.

I am considering putting a snow blower on the porch, but my wife says this would spoil the view. It is a nice view, when I have time to look at it.

If you are considering New Hampshire, I recommend electric gloves. Get a tractor with at least a cubic yard bucket. One can hire a plow service, but if you have a lot of driveway, it's pricy.

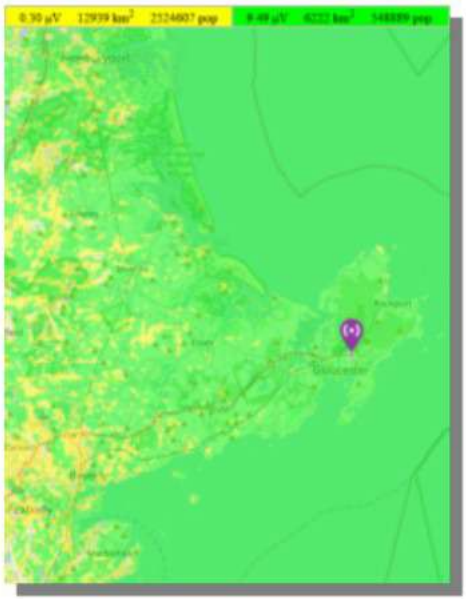
THE RULES OF HAM RADIO OPERATOR

RF Coverage Maps — See Where Your Signal Goes!

(Maurice N1UV)

Introduction

Ever wonder how far your RF signal really gets out from your home QTH, or that mountaintop? What about how those repeater coverage maps were made—or how well that 33cm repeater you're planning to put up is going to work? That's where RF propagation modeling and RF coverage maps come in! These maps give you a visual picture of your signal's reach, showing where your transmissions are strong, weak, or likely blocked by terrain.



With modern RF coverage software, you can model your station or location on a computer before ever putting up an antenna or committing to a site. Just enter some details—like operating frequency, power level, antenna gain, and location—and the software uses terrain data to show you where your signal is likely to reach. Hills, valleys, and even buildings can affect your range, and these maps make it easy to see how.

RF mapping takes the "what if?" out of radio planning and turns it into something you can visualize. It's another great way to learn about propagation, experiment with antennas, and make the most of your setup—whether you're chasing DX or keeping in touch with your local net.

One of the most popular tools among amateur radio operators is Radio Mobile, a free web application created by Roger, VE2DBE - https://www.ve2dbe.com/rmonline_s.asp

It uses detailed terrain data and propagation models to generate relatively good coverage maps for everything from home stations, SOTA locations, public service event locations, point to point links, to single or wide-area repeater networks. With Radio Mobile, you can experiment with antenna heights, locations, and power levels to see how each change affects your coverage—all without touching an antenna. Better yet, it's all web-based so you don't need to download or install anything. Just create a

free account.

For amateurs, this kind of tool is incredibly handy. Even for your home station, it's fun (and pretty eye-opening!) to see how changing your antenna height and power affects your signal.

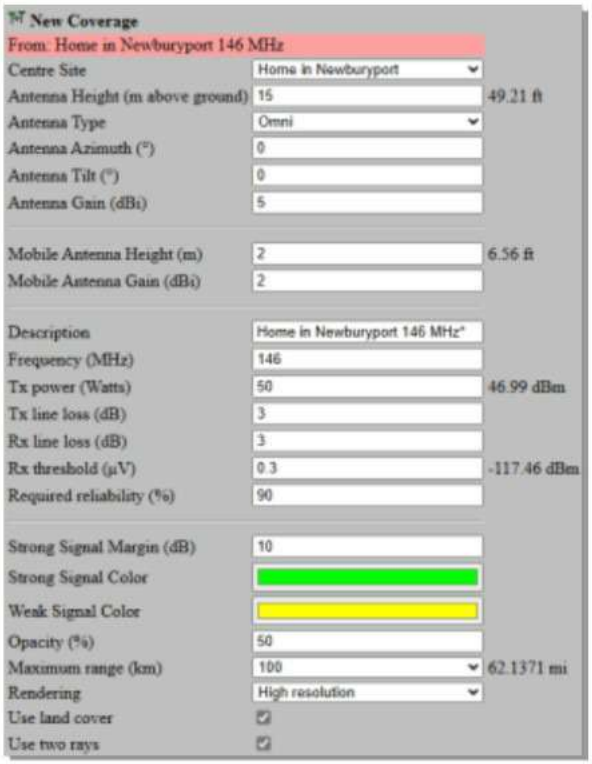
Additionally, even if a club has not published its official repeater coverage map(s), you can still generate a reasonable approximation. Using parameters such as 50 watts of transmitter power, approximately 4 dB of feedline and duplexer loss, and an assumed antenna height of about 50 feet above ground will usually yield a usable model—provided you know the approximate location of the repeater (e.g., on a particular hill or mountain). Running these simulations can be both highly instructive and quite engaging.

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1 – Start by going to https://www.ve2dbe.com/rmonline_s.asp and creating a new (free) account.

Step 2 – Click on "New Site" and either enter your Lat/Long coordinates, or navigate the cursor to the location you want on the map. Press "Submit" and enter a Name (eg, "My Home in NBPT") for this site on the next screen. Press "Add to My Sites"

Step 3 – Click on "New Coverage" and select the site you just created above. A screen similar to the one below will display. Where possible, enter the key values as accurately as you can – if you can't, no worries. You can play around with them later (that's the beauty of modeling!).



Key Fields to Complete:

Antenna Height: Above ground in meters

(will convert to feet)

Antenna Gain: A dipole is 2.15dBi

Frequency: Operating frequency

Mobile antenna height and gain: an approximation is good here

Description: A name for this coverage

Frequency: Rounded to MHz is fine

Tx Power: In watts

Tx/Rx line loss: Estimated coax loss

Rx Threshold: Start with 0.3µV. Not too noisy!

Reliability: Start with 90. Higher is more conservative

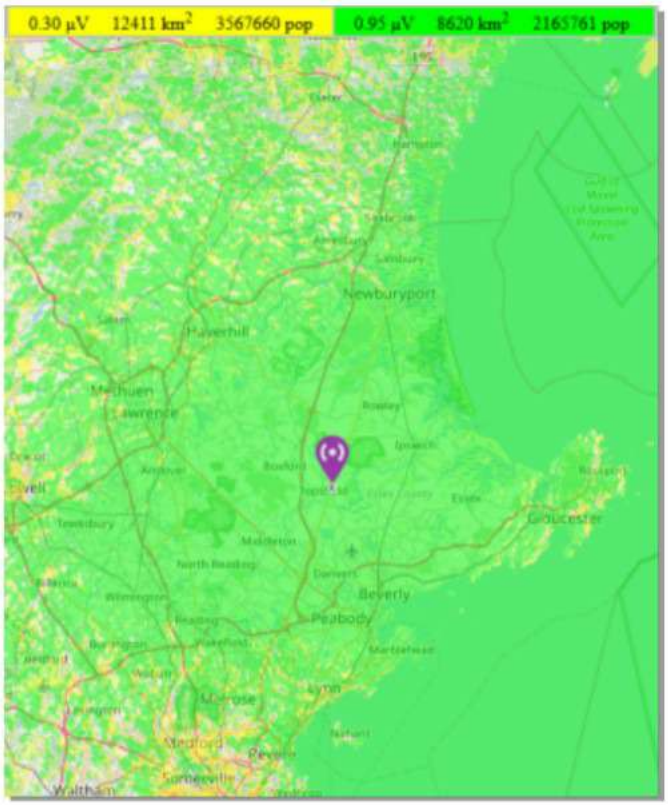
Rendering: High Resolution

Coverage Map of the Topsfield

Repeater (estimated parameters)

Yellow Area: Weaker coverage of 0.3µV or better (the Rx Threshold value entered)

Green Area: Stronger coverage of 0.95µV or better (ie, 10dB more than the threshold)



Caveats

Radio Mobile relies on basic terrain and vegetation data and uses several approximations. Coverage accuracy in dense urban areas will likely be limited. It is not on the same level as the commercial (and expensive!) software used by cellular providers, broadcast engineers, and others for designing and optimizing their networks (e.g., Atoll and ASSET). However, if conservative values are used in Radio Mobile, it is my experience that it can still provide a reasonably good approximation.

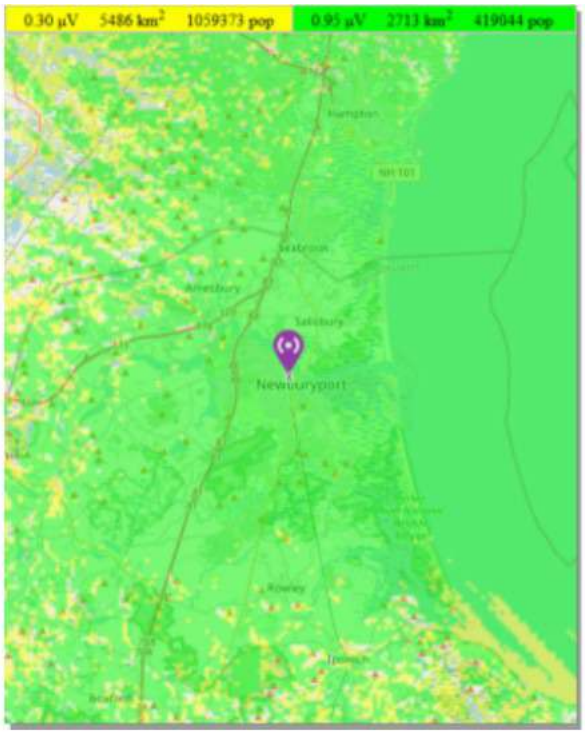
Experimentation

To make the model more conservative (and closer to real-world conditions), you can use a reliability factor of 90% or higher and a Strong Signal Margin of 30 (i.e., 30dB above the threshold, which would correspond to near-full quieting in most cases).

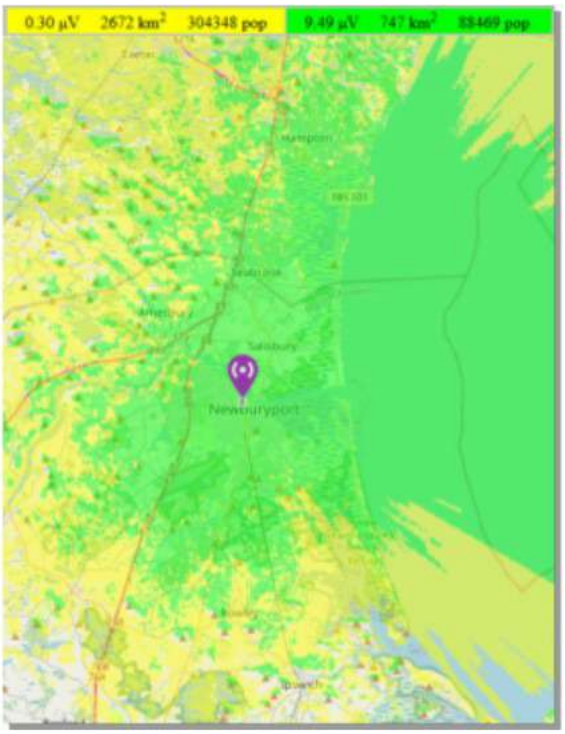
To illustrate the difference a change in the Strong Signal Margin parameter can make, the coverage areas below show my QTH using 146MHz (i.e., 2m): the left map green area is set to 10dB above the threshold (still a bit noisy), and the right map green area is set to 30dB above (essentially full quieting). The difference is quite noticeable!

As an aside, you can perform further analysis between two points (e.g., a repeater location and your

QTH) to determine likely signal strength, fade margin, path loss, Fresnel zone clearance, and more. Use the “Link” feature of Radio Mobile for this purpose.



My QTH where the green is 10dB above the threshold.



My QTH where the green is 30dB above the threshold (ie, full quieting).

Conclusion

RF propagation modeling gives amateur operators a powerful way to understand, predict, and optimize performance. Whether you’re planning a new repeater, organizing a field event, experimenting with antenna configurations, or simply curious about how your home station performs, tools like Radio Mobile make the process accessible and surprisingly insightful. By entering some station parameters, these models help remove some of the guesswork and highlight how real-world conditions shape your signal. For amateurs who enjoy learning, experimenting, and improving their stations, RF coverage mapping isn’t just useful—it’s an essential part of smarter, more informed operating.

Amateur Radio Newsline Report

SILENT KEY: ELWOOD DOWNEY, WBØOEW, CREATOR OF HAMCLOCK

PAUL/ANCHOR: As Newsline went to production, we learned of 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.

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HAM RADIO BUSINESS OWNER KILLED IN PLANE CRASH IN AUSTRALIA

PAUL/ANCHOR: The pilot of a private plane that crashed North of Australia's Gold Coast has been identified as an amateur radio operator and successful businessman. He was well-known for the ham-radio equipment business he built decades earlier from a garage-based operation. We hear about him from Graham Kemp VK4BB.

GRAHAM: The single-engine plane had just taken off from a private airstrip on Tuesday, January 27th, when it came down, killing the pilot and his passenger at the scene. The pilot was identified as Greg Ackman, VK4BBX, owner of Mobile One Australia. Various news reports described him as an experienced aviator. His passenger was said to be from Sydney. According to media reports, the two were on their way to New South Wales.

Greg designed much of the amateur equipment sold by the company he founded. A ham since 2021, he was a visible presence at amateur radio events throughout Australia. At the time Newsline went to production, investigators were still trying to determine the cause of the crash.

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HAMS MARK 96TH ANNIVERSARY OF PLUTO'S DISCOVERY

PAUL/ANCHOR: Do you want to come visit Pluto? It doesn't involve space travel - it just means you're committed to helping mark yet another anniversary of its discovery -- by the uncle of one of the special event operators! Randy Sly W4XJ tells us what we need to know.

RANDY: 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 <quote> “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

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HAMVENTION CELEBRATES THE ADVENTURE OF RADIO

PAUL/ANCHOR: 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.

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ANNUAL "AM RALLY" TURNS BACK THE CALENDAR

PAUL/ANCHOR: It's not time to turn the clocks just yet - here in the US, we take a one-hour leap forward in a few weeks. It is, however, time to turn back the calendar in just a few days and revisit amateur radio's first voice mode. Sel Embee KB3TZD has those details.

SEL: 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.

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STATEWIDE POTA ACTIVATORS' CLUB DEBUTS CALLSIGN

PAUL/ANCHOR: Even as parts of the US, including the New England states, were suffering through days of sub-freezing temperatures recently, a dedicated group of park activators in Connecticut had a good warm feeling - and they headed to the park to celebrate by getting on the air. Travis Lisk, N3ILS, tells us more.

TRAVIS: If you happened to work WB1CT on the first morning of the new year, you are part of the inaugural POTA log of the Connecticut Parks On The Air activators group. The club has been around - and growing - since its first informal activities in early 2021. Until recently, most of their hunters are more familiar with their previous callsign, K2D, the special event one-by-one callsign it shared with the Connecticut operators in the 13 Colonies Event each July. Group director Conrad Trautmann, N2YCH, told Newsline that as the group grew larger and added even more activities, it made sense to become an official nonprofit club, which is did in late 2025. The FCC granted the club callsign shortly afterward.

With a special park-to-park net that helps activators get more Connecticut parks in their logs, the club continues to evolve, both in activities and membership. The group has more than 100 POTA activators throughout the state. When they're not on the air, they keep in touch regularly via a groups.io list.

Be listening for WB1CT calling "CQ POTA" or, if you happen to live in Connecticut, join the action. You can find details on the club's page on QRZ.com

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SILENT KEY: NOTED DXPEDITIONER DAVID ASSAF III, W5XU

PAUL/ANCHOR: A noted DXpeditioner and active member of the Intrepid-DX Group has become a Silent Key. We hear more about him from Stephen Kinford N8WB.

STEPHEN: David Assaf III, W5XU, had a long amateur radio life which began when he was still in high school. It gathered momentum - and more of a spirit of adventure -,over time. The DXpeditioner was 71 years old when in 2016 he activated South Sandwich Island with the Intrepid-DX group as VP8SGI and Thule Island as VP8STI, in a place uninhabitable except by penguins.

He became a Silent Key on January 18th, according to his online obituary.

David, who discovered ham radio as a high school electronics enthusiast, would go on to a lifetime of other discoveries and many DXpeditions, including Russell Reef, as 9MØW, and Melish Reef, 9M6MA.

An active member of the Baton Rouge Amateur Radio Club, his commitment to helping his Louisiana community spurred him into service by assisting emergency communications during Hurricane Betsy in 1965 - an action for which the city of New Orleans honored him.

David was 80.

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ARDC GRANT FULFILLS SATELLITE, SPACE GOALS FOR N.C. CLUB

PAUL/ANCHOR: A grant from Amateur Radio Digital Communications has helped one club in North Carolina fulfill its dreams of space, satellites and the ISS. We have that story from Jim Damron N8TMW.

JIM: An important terrestrial contact made recently by the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society has brought the promise of so many more contacts that can now happen in space. For this club and the youngsters at the Conn Magnet Elementary School, Friday the 30th of January will be remembered as a big day for their scheduled QSO with the International Space Station - a direct contact made via amateur radio.

The North Carolina hams have a long history of answering school and youth-group requests to assist with ham radio satellite contacts and even ISS communications. But, as club member Carl Davis, W8WZ, told Newsline, it was always challenging to assemble the necessary equipment because to answer each request, members had to dismantle and transport the appropriate radio gear from individual members' own homes.

The club reached out successfully to Amateur Radio Digital Communications which gave them a $14,000 grant and the means to buy portable equipment dedicated for amateur satellite and ARISS contacts, such as the late-January QSO under the direction of John Brier K4EB.

Carl said that while the new equipment will help inspire the next generation to explore the power of amateur radio, it will also enable more club members to train to assist with the ARISS contacts. Within the club itself, more members will also learn to become skilled satellite operators.

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ARTEMIS 2 LAUNCHPAD IMAGE CAPTURED BY ASTRONAUT

PAUL/ANCHOR: All eyes, it seems, are on the Artemis 2 moon rocket since its recent rollout onto the launchpad at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. From high above the earth, another pair of eyes - and the lens of a camera - have been watching too, as we hear from Jack Parker W8ISH.

JACK: From his front-row seat aboard the International Space Station, NASA astronaut Chris Williams, KJ5GEW, got the best view of all of the Artemis 2 as it awaits its crew of four. Chris was able to capture the image on camera. He posted it on the social media site, X, on Monday the 19th of January.

Alongside the image he wrote: [quote] "If you zoom in on the rightmost launch pad, you can see a shadow just to the left of the center of the pad. That shadow is from the rocket and launch tower that will soon take four of my friends on a trip around the moon." [endquote]

They're not just his friends and fellow astronauts - just like Chris, three of them have their ham radio licenses: Commander Reid Wiseman, KF5LKT, pilot Victor Glover, KI5BKC and mission specialist, Jeremy Hansen, KF5LKU. The fourth crew member is mission specialist Christina Koch. The crew's launch toward the moon could come as early as February.

Though Chris is scheduled to stay aboard the ISS for a few more months, once Artemis is launched, the crew won't coming by for their closeup. The journey is expected to last 10 days before it splashes down in the Pacific Ocean.

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WORLD OF DX

In the World of DX, five operators will be active during the AU7RS DXpedition to Agatti, IOTA Number AS-011, in the Lakshadweep Islands. The activation is scheduled for the 8th through to the 14th of February. Be listening on 160 through 6 metres where they will be using CW, SSB and FT8. They will also operate via the QO-100 satellite.

Andre, PD1DRE, is using the callsign PJ2/PD1DRE from Curacao, IOTA Number SA-099, until the 4th of March. e is calling QRZ on SSB and FT8/FT4.

In Placencia, Belize, listen for Walt, WØCP using the callsign V31DJ, operating CW and SSB. His wife Mary, KØZV will be using the callsign V31DK, operating FT8 and FT4. They will be on the air from the 1st through to the 27th of February.

John, W5JON, is active with the callsign V47JA from St. Kitts, IOTA Number NA-104), through to the 3rd of February. He is operating SSB and FT8 on various bands.

We'll be having a special talk by Paul Kreuger N1JDH at our members meeting on Valentine's Day Feb 14th at noon.

It will be about the electromagnetic properties of stealth aircraft and should be a fascinating talk.

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