

2026 Huntsville Hamfest Forum List

As of 6/5/2026 **PRELIMINARY**

ARRL

ARRL AL Section and ARES Meeting – Denis Littleton, K4DL

This forum will discuss ARRL issues as they relate to the Section and the upcoming Simulated Emergency Test (SET).

Vendors

Elecraft Update with Q&A - Including the K4 and its Latest Features and Updates

Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ, is Elecraft's Chief Operating Officer, a co-designer of Elecraft's K4, K3S, K2, and other Elecraft products. He co-founded Elecraft in 1998 with Wayne Burdick, N6KR. Licensed for over 51 years, his early interest in Amateur Radio led him to a career in electronic design and management. In his forum Eric will provide an update on the K4, including the K4/0 and the remote system. There will be a Q&A at the end!

What's New at Chameleon Antenna – Steve Krumm, KV4AN

This year, Chameleon Antenna has introduced many new products - from a 3.4 oz EFHW for SOTA/POTA to a 34-foot heavy duty carbon fiber mast to Guide Books for HOA and portable operating. This forum will focus on these new products and provide an overview of the best kinds of antennas for portable applications. A prize drawing will be held for forum participants.

Organizations

Alabama Repeater Council - Grady Evans, W4GLE

Joint MARS Meeting

Quarter Century Wireless Associations (QCWA) – Daryl Stout, NK5LA (ex N5VLZ)

Were you licensed before 2021? Then this forum is for you. Come to this forum to find out the benefits of joining the QCWA and meet other experienced hams that share your passion.

How Huntsville's YL Club Started Thriving Again – Dr. Lisa Shier, N3WQL

A few years ago, HAYLARC (Huntsville Area Young Ladies Amateur Radio Club) had an aging membership and few activities. Now, the average age had dropped, membership has increased, and we are a very active club. This talk will discuss why the club was struggling and specific actions taken to fix the problems. Ideas and techniques discussed in this talk are relevant to a wide variety of radio clubs and other types of clubs.

National Amateur Radio Alliance – Mikel Turner, W4OPS

There is a new national association bringing fresh energy and innovative ideas to amateur radio. The National Amateur Radio Alliance (NARA) is a growing nonprofit focused on engaging operators, strengthening clubs, and advancing amateur radio across the country. Learn about our key focus areas, upcoming initiatives, and how we're helping shape the future of the amateur radio community. Come learn, connect, and see what's next. We're not just here — we're here to lead.

Technical Forums

Lightning Research in Huntsville – Monte Bateman, PhD, WB5RZX

NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) are home to one of the top lightning research groups in the world. We study basic physics of the lightning process, its relationship to storm severity, and help with lightning protection for our nation's space program. In addition to basic and applied science, we also design and build cutting-edge instrumentation that allows us to make unique measurements to study thunderstorms. We now have multiple Geostationary Lightning Mappers (GLMs) in orbit, on the GOES satellites, including the newest GOES-19. This gives us lightning mapper coverage over nearly half the Earth. The GLMs were developed here in Huntsville; they add lightning information to the GOES satellite photo loop images and are becoming important in weather forecasting and warning. We also have the Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS) aboard the ISS, and it has been working well now for over 3 years. Come see the state-of-the-art in lightning measurements and how much of it comes from Huntsville!

Lightning Protection for Hams – Monte Bateman, PhD, WB5RZX

Protect your shack and your tower! With a lot of anecdotal grounding discussions generating more heat than light, here's a solid approach to the best protection practices and the theory behind how and why they work. Learn how a lightning flash occurs and how to convince it to go elsewhere!

Kit Building Techniques for Success – Joe Eisenberg, K0NEB

A look at the best tools and techniques to help beginners through experienced builders have the best chance at success when building a kit. Joe will go over low-cost tools and the correct type of solder to use, how to sort and identify your parts, and will touch on things he has found available at the hamfest.

Creating Fun Projects with the Arduino and Other Microcontrollers– Glen Popiel, KW5GP

Join ARRL Author and Microcontroller enthusiast Glen Popiel, KW5GP, in an all-new presentation, and discover how you can use the Arduino and other microcontrollers to inexpensively create fun and exciting projects. We'll explore the features and capabilities of today's microcontrollers, including the Arduino Uno and Nano, the

Espressif ESP32, the Raspberry Pi Pico, and others. Learn how you can easily integrate Bluetooth, WiFi, and other wireless communication modes into your projects, and build those projects you've always thought were too complex or expensive.

BalloonSats, Taking Amateur Radio to New Heights with High Altitude Balloons – Bill Brown, WB8ELK

Bill Brown is one of the most knowledgeable experts in balloon launched ham radio. This forum will discuss how he accomplishes taking amateur radio to new heights on high altitude balloons. Weather permitting there will be a live balloon launch following this forum.

Adult Soldering 101 – Matthew Sager, KI4AJZ, Gary Dion, N4TXI, Joe Eisenbreg, K0NEB, and Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI

Want to get into kit building but don't know where to start? Then this class is for you. This hands-on class will cover more than which end of the soldering iron to hold and give you tips on how to be successful assembling kits. During the class the students will build a kit to take home with them. Three sessions of the class will be offered, one with an SMD kit, and two with a through hole kit. It is recommended, but not required, to take the Kit Building Techniques for Success forum offered by Joe Eisenberg, K0NEB. If interested please sign up at the information booth. This is a first come, first serve event with limited space.

Meteor Scatter Communications: The Science Behind the Pings– Dr. Rob Suggs, NN4NT

The HamSCI Meteor Scatter QSO Party was very successful last year and is continuing in 2026. Dr. Rob Suggs, retired NASA scientist, will describe basic meteor characteristics, how signals scatter from the meteor ionization trails, and how hams communicate on those trails using the MSK144 mode of WSJT-X. He'll also show some preliminary results from the 2025 event and describe how you can contribute to meteor science and engineering by participating in the MSQP even with a modest station.

How NOT to Learn Morse Code – Keith Ford, K4KEF & Jerry Poplin, KF4BOE

We discuss all things Morse code, with a focus on the fun of using Morse code and the mistakes to avoid when learning it. Here are some of the terms you will hear: Koch, Farnsworth, paddles, CW, Morserino, QRP, POTA, SOTA, and more.

ASCTE WX Balloon - Third Try's a Charm– Chris Brown, PH.D., W9SBS

This is a follow-up to last year's cautionary tale, this talk will cover ASCTE and our many trials and tribulations leading up to a successful high school club weather balloon launch and recovery.

Did Heaviside Delete Maxwell? Scalar Waves and Longitudinal Fields in Radio Science, Hans G. Schantz, Ph.D., KC5VLD

Did Oliver Heaviside remove part of Maxwell's theory? Do scalar waves exist? Are there electromagnetic waves that travel without transverse electric and magnetic fields? This talk examines the origins of these claims, from Maxwell's original equations and Heaviside's vector reformulation to modern electromagnetics. This talk explores where longitudinal fields appear in real radio systems, how they differ from the "scalar waves" of popular literature, and why understanding them can improve our intuition about antennas, propagation, and energy flow.

Georgia State Parks on the Air 2025 – Claude Ray, AC4SH

This forum will discuss results of the 2025 Georgia State Parks on the Air event, plans to add another event in the fall of 2025, and changes for the 4th annual event. This forum will also cover basic Parks on the Air (POTA) operations and how we have had great participation in our state POTA celebration.

POTA Forum – James Mon, KE8PZN, Ham Radio Adventure Guy

There is more to DXing than DXCC – Jay Slough, K4ZLE

Jay has been actively playing the DX game for 58 of the 68 years he has been licensed and have operated from 50 or so DXCC entities. In 1994 he made several trips to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast. This is the humanitarian story behind the on-the-air activity. At that time, in all three countries, they were in Civil War, at a lull in Civil War or pre-Civil War. This is the story behind the story.