

The

Modulator

Newsletter of the Newport County Radio Club, May 2015

A Tale of Two J-Poles

In preparation for the May 11th J-Pole night, a building plan had to be chosen from various sources. We narrowed the field to two candidates, but how to choose the best? Why test them of course!



Here is KB4SON Bob's kitchen dining area with one candidate hanging up. We used Bob's calibrated wattmeter and KA1ZOU Jim's antenna analyzer to measure standing wave ratio of both candidates over the two-meter band.

To our surprise, the more sophisticated antenna, developed by our experts, KC1SD Jim Kyle and W1CG Charlie Greene, and the other simpler design were within a tenth of an SWR unit across the frequencies of measurement. Next we will build a prototype of the simpler design as a proof of product confirmation.

Amending Our By-Laws—Youth Hams

Youth Members

At the recommendation of the Executive Committee at last month's meeting, the membership voted to begin the process of amending our Constitution and By-Laws.

Recent months have seen a gratifying surge in interest in ham radio among middle and high school aged students. Our members who are working most closely with these students explored the idea of creating a Youth membership within NCRC with the Executive Committee.

Although the idea was well-received, our Constitution and By-Laws address membership specifically and do not provide

for a minor member. Thus the Executive Committee proposed to amend our Constitution and By-Laws to include this new membership.

The Amendment Process

Amending our Constitution and By-Laws begins with a vote of the membership to engage the amendment process. The membership started the timetable by accepting the process at the April meeting.

The proposed amendments will be read at both the May and June meetings. After the second reading in June, a two-thirds vote of the members present at that meeting is required to accept the proposed amendments.

Proposed amendments to the Constitution

1. Add new to Article 2—Membership:
(b) Youth Member – Those members who hold a current FCC Amateur License of any class and who will be less than 18 years of age on July 1st of that membership year.
2. Add new in Article 2—Membership:
The word "Adult" to existing references to members to differentiate between the two memberships.

Proposed amendments to the By-Laws

1. Add new to Article 4—Dues:
Section 2) Dues for youth members shall be not more than one half of the current adult full voting member dues.

NCRC Field Day 2015, Part II

The Biggest Weekend in Amateur radio

As we saw in last month's Part I, Field Day is a multi-faceted round-the-clock radio festival. Conceived as an emergency communications drill, the goal is to work as many stations as possible on the amateur radio bands. Our Field Day is not limited to experienced hams. New hams will be at ease at the GOTA, VHF, and Satellite stations—see the listings.

Although Field Day is almost two months away, preliminary schedules are beginning to be drawn up. If you're thinking of joining the fun, it's not too early to make John King's life easier by signing up for task and time.

Following are summaries of the who, what, and how of becoming a part of Field Day. More complete details are on the club web site under Club Activities/Current Year Activities/Field Day 2015.

Field Day Setup

Friday 0800 to sunset.

Many volunteers are needed throughout the day. Tasks include setting up operating tents, setting up and testing radio gear, and erecting the tall antenna towers. All persons on site are required to wear a hard hat. Bring your hard hat and whatever hand tools you can.

Contacts:

- Willy MacLean W1LY
w1ly@cox.net
- John King WA1ABI
wa1abi@cox.net

Field Day Teardown

Sunday 1400 to 1800.

Similar to Field Day Setup with the same contacts.

Get On The Air Station (GOTA)

Saturday 1400 - Sunday 1400
This HF voice station may be operated by:

- Anyone who has been licensed within the past year
- Anyone who has upgraded their license within the past year.
- Non-licensed visitors.

An experienced operator will serve as control operator and coach. Operating style is relaxed and ideal for new HF operators.

Contact:

- Bob Beatty WB4SON
wb4son@gmail.com

Main Phone/CW Station

Saturday 1400 - Sunday 1400
This HF station operates contest style, with rapid fire contacts on a fixed "run" frequency. Operators should have previous experience in major voice or CW HF contests.

Contact:

- Willy MacLean W1LY
w1ly@cox.net

Main CW Station

Saturday 1400 - Sunday 1400
Operation of this HF station is like the Main Phone Station above, but operates CW only. Operators should have previous experience in major CW HF contests.

Contact:

- John King WA1ABI
wa1abi@cox.net

VHF Station

Saturday 1400 - Sunday 1400
This 6 and 2 meter SSB voice and CW station may be operated by any licensed Amateur. Operation is generally relaxed, although contacts may be fast and furious during band openings on 6 meters.

Contact:

- Richard Russell KC1ARO
thethinkery@me.com

Satellite Station

Saturday 1400 - Sunday 1400
This station operates part time, long enough to make at least one contact using an Amateur satellite. Operation is timed to coincide with satellite availability. Bob Beatty will be operating this station. Everyone is encouraged to visit this station in operation to learn more about this fascinating mode of Amateur communications.

Contact:

- Bob Beatty WB4SON
wb4son@gmail.com

Picnic and Hospitality

Saturday picnic and Sunday breakfast
Helpers are needed for food prep, serving and clean-up. Ed runs a fun crew.

Contact:

- Ed Gosling W1NQH
edward.gosling@verizon.net

New Members

Four new candidates were elected to membership at the April meeting. That brings our roster up to 77 members.

- David Cain, W1DEC
Jamestown
- Lloyd Sherman, KC1NMS
Wakefield
- Corry Thibault, KE1AK
Portsmouth
- Randy Walters, K2OOI
Bristol

Welcome aboard the Newport County Radio Club all.

Fox Hunt Project

What is a fox hunt? Imagine small, low-power transmitters hidden in a large area like the Norman Bird Sanctuary. Teams of hams equipped with simple, hand-held directional antennas hooked to their 2-meter transceivers search for these “foxes” in good-natured competition.

A fox hunt like this needs help with the transmitters, antennas, people management and other tasks yet to be defined. If this turns on your pilot light, email your interest to:

editor@w1sye.org

J-Pole Build Night Reminder

Our next meeting will be J-Pole night. Although we have some tools, it will be helpful if you bring some of your own—soldering iron, side cutters, utility knife, and wire stripper for example. And don't forget your 2-meter radio so we can test your creations.

Remote High Frequency Stations

Why a Remote HF Station?

VHF handhelds are designed for short range communication and are small and easily carried—your handy brick.

In contrast, High Frequency radio waves are bend-able and can reach anywhere on earth, opening the door to grand radio adventures. But to do this, HF stations use much higher transmitter power than a VHF brick and the antennas are measured in many tens of feet. Clearly not something that you can tuck into your purse or pocket.

Enter the Remote HF Station

Imagine your station, with its transmitter and antenna secure and operating in your home as you well know it, but accessible from any location that has internet access. That's a remote HF station. It's an ideal solution for someone in an antenna restricted condo or neighborhood, travelers, and temporary operation such as in an instructional environment.

Depending on the degree of control that has been supported, remote control may be a simple as changing frequency and other simple transmitter adjustments to total station operation including turning a beam antenna.

Sounds Great—But...?

At the April meeting, W1LAB, Pete Lawson and WB4SON, Bob Beatty, demonstrated end members that define the range of Remote HF solutions. Pete has

been operating for a long time using essentially free resources to control his station. He had arranged a sked with several radio regulars and easily controlled his North Kingstown station from the KVH meeting receiving excellent signal reports. Then Bob demonstrated an equally seamless remote operation using a “Pay-to-Play” commercial service.

Before these demonstrations, W1LY, Willy MacLean described his efforts to duplicate a station similar to Pete's operation. He had spent considerable effort, and while making progress, had not succeeded at meeting time. Since then, Willy reports that he has tamed the last issues.

You can see from these accounts the choices that must be made: An inexpensive approach requires more skill and effort. At the other end, no skill and very little effort is needed if you open your wallet generously. Of course there are easier, but increasingly costlier, solutions in between.

Going Forward

Pete has generously offered to assist any club member who would like to remote their station using the nearly free options that he uses. Contact Pete at:

rlawson3@gmail.com

We continue to explore a club remote HF station for member use similar to our VHF repeaters. Our guideline is that it has to be easy for members to use, so it will likely cost more on the club side than the nearly free options.