

The

Modulator

Newsletter of the Newport County Radio Club, October 2016

Lessons from a fox

Aside from the simple fun of searching for a hidden radio, fox hunting simulates real world RDF—radio direction finding. Just before our hunt, Bob Beatty, WB4SON, and others located and resolved an uncoordinated repeater at a mid-state location.

The first choice a hunter makes is the kind of antenna. Last year we found that Handi-Finders provided a sharp null, but not this year.



Paul, N1PSX, with his Handi-Finder

It appears that the shape of the bow tie antenna is critical. Note the rounded corners of Paul's antenna. A sharply defined antenna made of welding rod gives a much sharper null.

Handi-Finders provide a sharp line of bearing, but is the fox in front or in back? Although a traditional Yagi antenna is not as sharp, our hunters agree that its unambiguous single bearing would be helpful, especially with a variable attenuator in line. Perhaps we'll see teams armed with both types working them together.

Fall Fox Hunt at Beavertail

Perfect conditions

The southern end of Conanicut Island is simply beautiful even on a dull gray day, but with little wind, blue skies, and pleasant temperatures, it's hard to imagine a prettier location than Beavertail State Park for a Sunday morning fox hunt.



Bob and Pete at Hunt Control

By mid-morning our carnival tent was up and active on 2-meter simplex, the public relations materials were on display, and it was time to set the foxes. Among our members, we have six Fox-15 devices, allowing a challenging field of five continuously transmitting radios, enough to keep any hunter very busy.



Foxes loaded on the disbursement vehicle

Disbursing the foxes is always a complicated activity. As you can see in the bike photo, their cases are well camouflaged, so well camouflaged that they are virtually invisible once placed in the brush. The down side is the inevitable first comment: "Is that a pipe bomb?" We've learned to turn this to good use by taking the lead. We approach passers by and show them the fox, talk up ham radio, and invite them to monitor the action at Hunt Control. For extra assurance, we do the same outreach for the local police station.



Paul and Dave Fredette on the scent

Not as easy as you'd think

Originally scheduled with an hour time limit, hunt control extended the hunting time an additional half-hour. Even so, the hunters only found three of the five foxes. All teams were using Handi-Finders as shown above. These devices are capable of a sharp null, depending on their construction—see fox lessons at left.

An Interesting Idea

Bob Beatty, WB4SON, offers this observation and idea:

I am almost stunned by the three-week long on-air event to honor the 400th anniversary of Cervantes' death (author of Don Quixote). They have logged almost 600,000 QSOs at this point.

They have had dozens of stations running special "AN400x" call signs (all the unique letters of Cervantes' name -- like AN400A, AN400D, etc.).

Here is the URL for their excellent web site in multiple languages:

<http://cervantes.ure.es/>

Bob goes on to make the following suggestion:

Given the success of this operation, I can't help but think that a similar paper chase event could be setup for RI if we had enough home operators willing to get on the air for a few weeks.

This idea is intriguing. Our state's roots are often overlooked under the bustle of modern life, but they are impressive! Rhode Island is truly the home of independent thinking and action. Did you know that we were the first state to declare independence and the last state to sign the Constitution because it did not provide individual protections?

Let's give this some thought. Perhaps this is a multi-club opportunity to celebrate Rhody. From colonial times, through the industrial revolution and more, we have much to work with.

Important Business Coming

2017 Budget

The budget for next year will be presented at the October meeting. In addition to the standing expenses like insurance, internet service and so on, we have several extraordinary expenses to consider:

- Field Day - \$500
The amount is greater, but the raffle proceeds cover the extra.
- W1SYE Repeater \$1000
The 30+ year-old duplexer is in tough shape.
- Service Awards - \$500
Brick for one ham; service certificates.
- Education - \$300
Two TECH classes of 15 students at \$10 a book.
- W1AAD Repeater \$500
Move/replace antenna

The last two items, education and the W1AAD antenna, may not be spent or only partially spent.

Christmas Party

Mark your calendar for December 12th. Our annual Christmas party vies with Field Day for the biggest turnout of the membership. Year after year, this event has been a relaxing and pleasant evening for all. Ed Gosling, W1NQH, has again arranged for us to gather at the Main Stay in Middletown for another excellent buffet, and the price remains the same at \$33/person. Early sign-up are encouraged, call Jim Sammons at:

(401) 295-5506 -or-
editor@w1sye.org

Election of Officers

The election of NCRC officers takes place at the November meeting each year. The electees will be installed at the December meeting for the 2017 year.

The nominating committee has prepared the following slate of candidates to be placed before the membership at the November meeting.

President Paul Fredette
Vice President Pete Lawson
Secretary Bob Beatty
Treasurer Ted Wrobel
Director Willy MacLean
Director John King
Director Jim Sammons

After the slate has been nominated, the President will call for additional candidates. Any member may nominate additional candidates including him/herself.

DStar Repeater News

How many hams does it take to screw in a repeater? Bob Beatty, WB4SON, reports four—Ted, W1GRI, John, K1JSM, Pete, W1LAB, and himself. Our digital repeater, W1AAD, now fully upgraded, is now part of the ircDB Gateway. It includes DCS and XRF reflectors as well as CCS call sign Routing and touch-tone control. For more details see:

<http://w1sye.org/?p=2896>

Many thanks gentlemen for your many hours and hard work over the span of a month and a half to complete this project.