

The

Modulator

Newsletter of the Newport County Radio Club, September 2016

How to Catch a Fox

Each fox is a tiny transmitter, small enough to fit in a toothbrush holder. But it is contained in a PVC pipe that is very well camouflaged. Your 2-meter HT will easily pick up its signal, but the trick is to get a directional bearing so that you can move closer to the signal.

The most effective way to do that is to build a directional antenna. There are several designs that are easy to build and you will find lots of information on the club web site at:

http://w1sye.org/?page_id=2788

You'll find the *Rules and Info* bullet an especially helpful starting point. Near the page bottom is *Information for Fox Hunters* that contains links to help and how-to sites.

The simplest way to hunt is with your unmodified 2-meter HT. Hold it against your chest and turn slowly as described in *Rules and Info*. When the signal fades, the fox is behind you. This will not get you right on top of the fox, but close enough to use your eyes to look for it.

We have found that in close, most HTs are not able to tell direction because the signal leaks into the HT case. But a simple wrap in aluminum foil blocks that leakage even though it makes your radio look like a taco.

Beavertail Fox Hunt

Family Fun by the Sea

Our club has seen steady growth over the past several years. Along with increased membership, our activities have broadened in imagination and scope. Fox hunting, the search for hidden low power transmitters, is one of those new activities.

As you know, we will host a fox hunt at Beavertail State Park on September 25th at 10:00 AM. Registration will begin at Hunt Control at 9:30 AM in Parking Lot 4 on the eastern flank of the park. Allow enough time to visit the test range set up nearby so you can check your gear, hear what the fox signal sounds like, and see the actual camouflaged fox in the clear.



Bob, WB4SOB, at Hunt Control

This will be a family friendly hunt. All foxes will be easily accessible on foot, no cars, no scrambling on rocks, nor any bush whacking into the brush. The foxes are very well camouflaged and more than one hunter has

stared at one without realizing it was there. Anyone of any age can participate, but you will need a ham with a 2-meter HT to report your finds to Hunt Control. We'll have some volunteer floating hams that can report for you and you could walk back to report. We'll have a tally board set up at Hunt Control so that non-hunters can keep track of the action.

The Extras

The hunt will end promptly at 11:00 with winners announced shortly after. Why not bring a picnic to enjoy in one of the prettiest locations on the East Coast? Did you know that Beavertail is internationally famous as a premier geological site? Why not stay for a guided tour.

Your Chance to Shine

Thanks to RI Section Manager, Bob Beaudet, W1YCR, you probably got an announcement of the hunt from the ARRL. Note that this invitation went out to all RI hams, so we might have an interesting turnout.

Clearly we will need members to assist with registration, helping on the test range, reporting finds for non-hams and just general presence. And that's not to mention you as a hunter too! Contact:

editor@w1sye.org

Jamboree on the Air

Jamboree-on-the-Air, or JOTA, is the largest Scouting event in the world. It is held annually on the third full weekend in October. JOTA uses amateur radio to link Scouts and hams around the world, around the nation, and in their own community. Scouts of any age participate, from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts and Venturers, which includes girls.

NCRC has participated in JOTA for many years, but under the leadership of Rob White, KB1ZZU, our JOTA activity has grown into a multi-troop camping weekend at the Glen.



“Control Op is Willy, W1LY”

Club members establish HF and VHF stations in the horse stables and serve as control ops for the scout guest operators. We also provide instruction and other support for scouts to earn their radio Merit Badge.

Enjoy a Fall Weekend

Why not enjoy part of a fall weekend at the Glen and lend a helping hand? Contact Rob White, KB1ZZU, at:

kb1zzu@verizon.net

US Islands and NCRC

More First Activations

By now it would be no surprise to learn that since the last issue of the modulator, the Bay Island Activators qualified two new islands in the US Islands awards program.

Gardner Island

We ran down the East Passage on the morning of August 20th and turned up Point Judith Pond by late morning.

Gardner is uninhabited and sometimes abused, so when we immediately met up with the Harbor Master, he began by wagging his head back and forth. Fortunately, as is our standard practice, we had permissions from the owner and her representative, so the back-and-forth changed to up and down and we made 42 contacts before the bottom fell out of the bands.

Spectacle Island

Spectacle is another well-protected island and made for a good landing on September 3rd, a heavy swell day at the mouth of the Bay.

For those of you who have visions of tribulations before the mast, the image below will correct that view.



Guest Chef, Pete Lawson, W1LAB

What better way to start an operation than Eggs Benedict? A short run from Tiverton brought us to Spectacle in Island Park Cove. The Island Park Cove is at the head of Aquidneck Island, so we operated as a triple island—an island (Spectacle) in an island (Aquidneck), in an island (Rhode Island). Yeah, we know, the last two are the same thing, but hey...

Handwriting in the Sky

Last year we would run QRZ for twenty minutes or more before calling CQ, making 150-200 contacts in an easy 4-5 hour watch. But the sun spot decline is working against us. We barely made our minimum required 25 contacts with a paltry 26 before 40 meters pooped out. We didn't even get off the ground on our usual go-to 20 meter band. Not surprisingly, this has been a consistent trend and suggests that we will have to modify our operating procedures.

Help for US Islands

The *United States Islands Awards Program* is the agency under which we have been running our island adventures. It has been a very good fit for us.

Now they are asking for financial assistance to overhaul their web site. Several of us have already made pledges, and if you too are so inclined, you would be helping a worthwhile cause.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/371115094/us-islands-award-program-web-site-redesign>