

The

Modulator

Newsletter of the Newport County Radio Club, February 2019

Your Help Needed

We have become aware that some unknown number of entries, including email addresses, in our membership list is out-of-date. Email is our primary means of communication so that leaves us with no means of reaching those members. This becomes a *Catch 22*—how do we update unknown members for whom we have no valid email address?

This is where your prompt attention can save the day. At your earliest convenience, would you please:

1. Go to the club web site, www.w1sye.org and click on Documents/Member Only/Membership Roster and review your information line.
2. Email me at Editor@w1sye.org and either indicate
 - 1) no changes are needed or,
 - 2) provide the new information.

Please do not attempt to modify the roster directly, that will cause bigger problems. Please note that at some point we will have to call anyone who has not replied by email, so your prompt attention will save those calls and be most appreciated. Also email me if you have forgotten the password needed to access Member Only.

Winter Field Day

A Contradiction?

Willy, W1LY: "Winter Field Day was fantastic...We had the lowest contact rate in a long time." So Willy described this year's Winter Field Day at our January business meeting. Say what? Willy went on to point out that we really won't have any idea about how well we scored until the results are released months from now.

The apparent contradiction lies in our goal. NCRC has demonstrated that we are as competitive as any radio club in the US, so in recent operating events we've concentrated on introducing new comers to operating at a fast pace and where accuracy counts. This operating style goes beyond competition; it hones the skills needed in an emergency.



Mary Nebiolo, KC1NEB, logging

Willy reported that there were more new loggers, more new operators, more new coaches, and more new hands for set up and tear down than before. That's the source of his proud evaluation.

Like a Well-Oiled Machine

The operators operated, the generators ran, and the contacts rolled in. Well, not quite like that.

This was the coldest Winter Field Day we've entered, but no one complained as the predicted snow did not materialize.



Our newest Ham, Ryan, KC1KUF

Then there was the RFI generating generator that had to be replaced. Finally it was very clear that we're at the bottom of Solar Cycle 24; QSO rates were low.

But again, our main purpose, training and experience, was well served!



The Green Island Mystery

A Wreck From the Past

A few years ago, Paul Silverzweig, N1PSX, and the other Upland Activators made preparations to qualify Green Island in upper Narragansett Bay under the US Islands Awards Program. Unfortunately, like Ester off Nantucket and Billingsgate off Cape Cod, wind and waves had reduced the island to a shoal exposed only at low tide. Where formerly a fine estate had stood, there is only deep mud and knee-deep water.

But while examining the hydrography via Google Earth, we spotted what appeared to be a wreck just to the east of the shoal.



Unknown wreck off Green Island

What ship might this have been and what caused its loss? Casual inquiries were fruitless and so the mystery remained unsolved, until...

New light befalls the mystery

A recent lecture about Rhode Island shipwrecks included a photo of the mystery ship at spring low tide, high and dry. Although

there was no information available, it was clear that the wreck was not unknown and the search for its identity began anew.



Bow of the mystery wreck.

As is often the case, one often finds help right around the corner. Around this corner was our own Mike Martin, AC1DV, who forwarded an article about the wreck from the *Johnston Sunrise*. The following account is drawn from that article.

The Hard Winters of WWI

World War I was a time of privation beyond the horrors of the war itself. The influenza Pandemic of 1917-1918 was the most severe pandemic in recent history! On top of that, the winter of 1917 was so cold that Narragansett Bay was frozen solid all the way to Newport.



Fishing vessel Ada Velma locked in the ice off Wickford

At that time, most homes and businesses were heated by coal delivered to our area by barges. Ship losses to German submarines and ice-blocked passages created a shortage of this essential fuel. This prompted the building of ocean-going wooden vessels known as *Victory Ships*. The first of these ships was fitted out at Fields Point in May of 1918.

Six months later the war ended, coal was no longer a distressed commodity, and the Victory Ships became surplus property. Stripped of their salable equipment, they lay at anchor in the Providence River until 1924. Then several of them were taken to Occupestatuxet Cove where they were run aground and abandoned. One of these was our mystery ship, left abandoned on Green Island.

An Ignoble End

But our tale does not end there. Soon opportunists moved into the abandoned ships much to the distress of shore side neighbors. A long wooden plank allowed paperboy Tom Campbell to deliver daily papers to our ship. The neighbors became increasingly hostile toward the inhabitants and on the evening of July 3, 1935, "toughs" burned the ship to the waterline. The next day, the Forth of July, smoke was still rising from the remains.

Purchased from Miantonomi in 1624, Green Island's original 14 acres have been lost to time along with the ship's name. That name remains a mystery.

General Class Seminar

More than one ham has observed that High Frequency, HF, operating is the heart and soul of Amateur Radio. But except for some TECH CW privileges, the key to the HF bands is the General Class license. What's a TECH to do?

Look—that cloud of dust—why it's **Seminar Man**, coming to the aid of oppressed upgraders. OK, so that's a bit much, but the good news is that Paul Fredette, W1YBE, is again convening a seminar to aid those looking to upgrade.

Paul's last seminar included both General and Amateur Extra material and resulted in advancement in both license classes. Mindful that the current General question pool will expire this June, Paul will concentrate on that material.

Paul will hold six 2.5 hour meetings starting on April 23rd. Meetings will run from 17:30^h to 20:00^h. Upgraders should note that this is not an all-inclusive class, but rather an assist and an opportunity to explore material that otherwise might be more difficult. Some hands-on component testing and other visual aides will be used, so bring your calculators. Paul adds that calculators will be used only for basic operations.

The timing of these sessions has been set so that the seminar will be completed in time for our quarterly VE session.

Future seminars will return to the Amateur Extra Class license exam and the new General Class question pool exam.

Public Service Communications Training

Many hams, especially new Technicians, are interested in using their knowledge and radios for the public good. Service communications often takes the form of monitoring a road race, bike race or other public event with your hand-held transceiver. The nature of messaging is similar to a controlled net such as our 19:00^h Monday-Friday repeater net.

Anyone who has checked into a net already has a sense of how that works. But there are details that increase the reliability and utility of this form of communication.

Service Comm Class

"How can I learn those techniques?" Ted Wrobel, W1GRI, will run a class at All Saints Steam Academy, AS2A, on Thursday, March 21st, at 18:30^h. This is a rare opportunity and Ted has deep experience both as a service communicator and also as a service communicator trainer.

Ted will introduce phonetics, prowords, rules & procedures, a few forms, and general types of activities.

Next Ted will simulate a message activity with two or three people at a table, all facing away from the center of the room. Using scripts for events and messages, each person will take a turn as sender and net control.

This message activity will use hand-held transceivers, so bring your along. There will be "some" other HTs available, so don't feel left out if you do not have one.

Soon there will be a form on our web site for you to sign up for this opportunity.

Emergency Communications

Service Communications is an excellent way to start on the path toward Emergency Communications, EmComm. EmComm involves lives and so is more formal with classes and qualifications at multiple levels.

Anyone who has an EmComm *Go Kit* assembled is asked to bring it to the class to show how communicators prepare for incidents on short notice.

Although AS2A is listed as 915 West Main Road in Middletown, it lies *behind* Saint Lucy's church at 909 West Main Road. The entry is immediately north of the church and is well marked with this sign.



Forrest Golden, SK

Forrest Golden, W1ZAR, passed away recently. Forrest had been a member of NCRC for twelve years and in addition to being a regular at Thursday breakfast, he was active in our Field Day activities. His service will be at Portsmouth Methodist Church at 10:00^h February 23rd.