



The

# Modulator

Newsletter of the Newport County Radio Club, June 2019

## Modulator—What Up?

It has been several months since you received your monthly *Modulator*, why is that? Short answer, change is in the wind.

In the four and a half years that the *Modulator* has been a monthly publication, readership has been mixed. Some members have sent in their comments (Thank you!), but by a large, response to requests and offers has been meager. Together with other indicators, it appears that a scheduled monthly publication does not fit well with today's members. Therefore we have been exploring more effective means of communicating with you.

- You have received several emails issued by Bob Beatty, WB4SON. These messages are short, single-topic messages of immediate interest such as meeting reminders.
- Mike Cullen, K1NPT, already has a social media presence and is exploring how that may be used for broader visual messaging.
- The *Modulator* is not going away, but will present unscheduled comprehensive messages, such as the theme of this issue, "Get Involved."

Comments? Send them to:

Editor@w1sye.org

## Change is in the Wind—Get Involved

### New Challenge

At this time, NCRC is doing very well especially for a radio club in New England. Unlike call zones 4 and 5 where whole families are licensed Amateurs, Rhode Island in particular is considered semi-rare by ops working on their Worked All States award. And yet we have over 130 members and continue to grow.

But there is a hard reality to keep in mind. Like all hobby clubs, our membership is cyclical with wide swings in numbers. Twenty years ago, we had fewer than twenty members! Another hard reality is that again, like all hobby clubs, we have a core leadership group that makes most of our activities happen.

Recently we lost some key members of that leadership core. It would be tempting to assume that with over 130 members, that won't be a problem, but experience shows that leaders are the glue that keeps groups moving. Losing even one of them is more significant than the loss of a single member.

Fortunately by recognizing this dynamic early on, we can take advantage of our wealth of membership to rebuild and add depth to our leader core. The first step of this process is to highlight and

promote our many activities. The goal is to encourage and support the participation of new and less active members to maintain the energy of Newport County Radio Club.

### It's a Broad Hobby

In the following pages you will see a wide variety of upcoming opportunities for you to become more involved with your club. Why not pick one and give it a try? Perhaps you know of something that you would like to try, but that we have not offered recently. Contact an Executive Committee member or present your idea at a meeting. No need to fear that you'll be stuck with the full responsibility for it. The important point is that we have the people to easily engage new ideas. Your suggestion might open a whole new direction for us.

This appeal is not a Dooms Day preview. NCRC is very much alive and well, but we are looking ahead with the idea that we want to keep it that way. After all, it's much harder to prime the pump of member interest when the number of helping hands has already fallen.

## Field Day 2019

### Biggest Ham Day of the Year June 22-23 at the Portsmouth Glen.

Field Day is a demonstration of the resourcefulness of Amateur Radio as a resilient communications alternative in times of crisis. North American stations make contact with other stations over a 24-hour period on the forth weekend in June. The event is organized as a contest with points awarded for contacts made.

#### Who? Where? Say what?

As measured by participation, this is the biggest event in Amateur Radio! But here's the surprise: NCRC, our little club in semi-rare Rhode Island usually finishes among the top five across the nation! Last year we came in second in the most contentious class, 2A.

How would I fit in, I'm a newbie? You can operate the Get On The Air (GOTA) station if you:

- Have no license.
- Are newly licensed.
- Upgraded within one year.
- Have been inactive.



Ava and Heather GOTA-ing.

We make a special effort to make anyone who would like to

try High Frequency operating at ease. You will have a coach, visual aid prompts, and lots of good will around you as you take the operator's chair.

The CW, SSB and VHF/Digital stations are staffed by seasoned operators. If you are experienced with contest-style operations, contact Willy, W1LY, at:

[w1ly@cox.net](mailto:w1ly@cox.net)

#### But Wait—There's more!

It takes a lot of hands to set up our antennas, tents, generators, cables, and so on.



Antenna Preparations

We welcome additional hands, but you will need a hard hat (Home Depot et. al.) and a pair of gloves. Willy is the contact for that too.

#### Fox Hunting Presentation

Saturday at 4:00 PM we will have a presentation about Amateur Radio Direction Finding, better known as Fox Hunting. Learn how you can take part in this fun activity with only a 2-meter handheld. Be sure to bring yours along.

We will have very small 2-meter transmitters hidden in the area so you can try your hand with your radio or one of our loaner radios and antennas.



Paul's on the scent of a fox

#### Saturday Picnic

At 6:00 PM at the end of the first operating day, Ed, W1NQH, and Fay Gosling will host their fabulous picnic for everyone and their families. This is not a hot dog and bun affair, Ed and Fay know how to do this in grand style!



Good eats for everyone.

Ed is short handed in the kitchen this year and would very much like to have some additional assistance. If you would like to be that person, contact Ed at:

[edward.gosling@cox.net](mailto:edward.gosling@cox.net)

One thing that everyone can do to help is to sign up for the picnic so that Ed and Fay will have a good sense of numbers. You're reading this on your computer, so scoot over to the club web site and register. Not attending? Register with zero guests. Don't wait, do it now. Please. Go on, git!

## Logging

It used to be that as part of their radio spectrum control mission, the FCC required that Amateurs keep careful written records of all transmissions. These records—Logs—were an essential station component. Although no longer required, most ops continue to keep them as a valuable record.

NCRC uses N3FJP's suite of dedicated logging programs. For Field Day, we will use his *Field Day Contest Log* running on our new ToughBook laptops. Using this dedicated program, Field Day logging is quick and efficient involving a minimum of keystrokes.

## Help Wanted

Here is another opportunity to participate in Field Day—as a logger. It often happens that a member, who had only intended to help by logging, ends up in the operator's chair. Listening and recording is an excellent way to absorb the rhythm of the exchanges.

Find out about logging and Field Day logging specifically at 11:00 AM on Saturday. We'll meet in the GOTA tent or the nearby Pavillion for a hands-on training session. You'll get a chance to see how the software works and try logging some dummy contacts. You'll be working on the new ToughBook laptops. These hardened computers are available for loan to members for radio events, so you'll get twice the bang for your time buck!

## Fox hunting

Fox hunting is ham talk for radio direction finding. Multiple very low power transmitters are hidden before the hunt and individuals or teams search for them using hand-held radios and home brew antennas.



Dave and Paul working a phase detecting antenna

Fox hunting is serious business in Europe where each fox transmits in succession for only a short time and hunters look like cross country runners.

Our foxes transmit continuously on separate frequencies. That makes finding them challenging, but straight-forward for the beginner.



Fox Hunter's Clubhouse

We also maintain a running tally of hunters at Hunt Central so that spectators can keep track of their favorite's progress.

## Service Communications

Service communications has two forms, emergency communications and public service communications.

Emergency communications involves life and property and so this form is much more formalized and requires specific training. NCRC member Paul Silverzweig, N1PSX, is the Rhode Island Section Emergency Coordinator and our contact for ARES, Amateur Radio Emergency Service. Paul has grown RI ARES to 70+ volunteers and welcomes more.

A good place to start service communications is Public Service Communications. This often takes the form of being a radio talker along a road, bicycle, or other race. You may be asked to relay racer counts, call for assistance, or some other form of information that assists racers for the event organizers.

## An Experimental Drill

Emergency communications is well organized at the community and state level, but does not reach down to the house-to-house level.

In Newport, on Saturday, June 29th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, there will be an experimental drill using Boy Scouts with Family Radio Service hand-helds calling in pre-arranged street level information. These calls will be taken by our members also using FRS hand-helds and relayed to a central base using their 2-meter hand-helds.

Contact Ted Wrobel, W1GRE, for more information.

[twrobel@tacticaltech.com](mailto:twrobel@tacticaltech.com)



## Activations

Activations are a form of portable operation. Radios, antennas, and associated equipment are taken to remote locations where contacts are made with stations wherever they may be. These stations are usually High Frequency radios, so contacts are made around the world. The club has an impressive collection of international QSL cards from activations.

NCRC has activated many kinds of locations, often, but not always in association with an umbrella organization:

- SOTA - Summits on the air.
- IOTA - Islands on the air.
- USi - US islands on the air.
- NPOTA - National Parks on the air.
- ARLHS - Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society.

The next activation will be Beavertail Light in late July/early august, specific date TBA. This event will be hosted by Paul Silversweig, N1PSX, and Rhode Island's Amateur Radio Emergency Service.



The Light at Beavertail

Beavertail light is an especially good time activation for easy access, drop-dead beauty, and a broad field for scampering and cavorting kids of all ages.

The HF radio operating is relaxed and affords a nice introduction to this style of operating.

Our contact is Scott Tillotson, WX1X. You can reach Scott at:

[wx1x@arrl.net](mailto:wx1x@arrl.net)

## Hands-On Build Nights

The smell of radio—melting solder! NCRC has a gourmet nose for all things electronic. Hosted by member Anita Brouse, KC1IPS, Principal of All Saints Steam Academy, Build Nights are held irregularly on Thursday evenings in their maker space. Past projects include a roll-up J-Pole antenna and the \$10 Super Pixie 40 meter QRP transceiver.



Build Night at KVH Industries

Want to try Fox Hunting? We'll put on a Build Night where you can make your own tape measure yagi antenna!

## Education and Outreach

NCRC is active in schools across Rhode Island. Mike Cullen, K1NPT, has a presence in multiple Rhode Island schools from elementary to high school. In addition to these

more formal activities, NCRC members volunteer on a will-call basis. Our members have taught soldering to classes just beginning to take up STEM/STEAM activities.



Paul, K1YBE, at Jamestown School

## But Wait—There's more!

Our education efforts are in-house too. Paul Fredette, K1YBE, runs classes for members upgrading to General and even Extra class licenses. And of course Bob Beatty, WB4SON, runs his Technician license classes at least once each year. And then there is our gracious open invitation to attend the Blackstone Valley Amateur Radio Club's Consortium on the first Monday of the month.

[www.w1ddd.org/Consortium.html](http://www.w1ddd.org/Consortium.html)

These are a sampling of the many NCRC events and activities coming in the near future. Jump in and find out about others—you'll have a good time.

Now before you forget, zip on over to the club web site and register for the Field Day picnic.

[www.w1sy.org](http://www.w1sy.org)