

## **Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) Report**

This report of the ARRL Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) Coordinator to the ARRL Board of Directors covers the period January 12, 2005 to January 17, 2006.

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

As defined by the Terms of Reference document of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region 1 ARDF Working Group, "ARDF is a technical, sport activity within the framework of the amateur service. It deals with the taking of radio bearings and finding hidden transmitters, constructing relevant equipment, and the training of amateurs involved in and with the organizing of relevant sport and social events."

The purpose of the national ARDF Coordinator position is to promote the development of this sport within the country and to work with ARDF Coordinators of other IARU countries to organize ARDF events and activities. The focus is on international-rules on-foot foxhunting (also called foxtailing, fox-teering, and radio-orienteeing).

### USA ARDF CHAMPIONSHIPS 2005

In 2001, members of the Albuquerque Amateur Radio Club (AARC) made history by putting on USA's first national championships of Amateur Radio Direction Finding. In 2005 they outdid themselves as they staged the fifth annual USA ARDF Championships, August 1 through 6. This was combined with the Third ARDF Championships of IARU Region 2. Competitors arrived from eleven states and three foreign countries. They were housed in dormitories and family living quarters of the University of New Mexico and ate in the excellent food-service facility.

Event co-chairs were Jerry Boyd WB8WFK and Mike Pendley K5ATM. WB8WFK was a member of ARDF Team USA 2004 at the World Championships in the Czech Republic.

Other core members of the organizing committee were Scott Stevenson KC5VVB, Mike Eaton K5MJE and Jack Stump KD5OEO.

Although most ARDF participants are licensed hams, the championship courses were open to anyone of any age, with or without an Amateur Radio license. They were separated into five age categories for males and four for females in accordance with IARU rules. All would have to hunt independently on the courses

-- no

teaming is allowed.

The two-meter competition took place at Oak Flats in the Cibola National Forest, southeast of the city at over 7000' elevation. The course was six kilometers point-to-point from the start to each of the five transmitters and then the finish. The total distance traveled by competitors was greater of course, especially for those who stayed mainly on the trails or were less proficient at RDF.

Thursday was devoted to rest and recreation. Since many attendees didn't have their own vehicles, AARC arranged for two free shuttle buses from UNM to Old Town and other areas for the shopping, museums, the zoo, aquarium and botanical gardens.

Fully refreshed, the radio-orientees boarded buses on Friday morning to another unexpected destination for the 80-meter contest. This time, the trip ended at Doc Long Picnic Area in Sandia Park, northeast of town on the road to the Sandia Peak ski area. The course had approximately the same point-to-point length as Wednesday's two-meter course, but trails and terrain made for greater travel and longer times.

The awards ceremony featured a Mexican buffet dinner. In addition to the usual gold/silver/bronze awards for top three places in each of the nine age/gender categories for Overall and IARU Region 2 only divisions, everyone who completed the course within the time limit and found at least one fox transmitter received a participant medal. Awards were presented by Bill Weatherford KM5FT, ARRL's Section Manager for New Mexico.

#### OTHER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Two Americans triumphed in the 2005 IARU Region 3 ARDF Championships near Niigata, Japan. In the 80-meter competition on September 21, Harley Leach KI7XF won the gold medal in M60, the category for men over age 60. He finished ahead of competitors from Russia and Japan, and was the only M60 to find all three required transmitters within the time limit. In the September 23 two-meter competition, Bob Cooley KF6VSE captured the M60 gold, finishing four minutes ahead of silver medallist JE1XXK of Japan. KF6VSE and JE1XXK were the only two-meter M60 competitors to find all three foxes.

Bob Cooley ALSO participated in the 2005 IARU Region 1 ARDF Championships in Tara/Zlatibor, Serbia and Montenegro. On September 5 in the two-meter competition, he finished 16th out of 27 competitors in M60 Category. In the 80-meter competition on September 7, he moved up to 12th in his category.

#### USA ARDF CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006

Your ARDF Coordinator has selected Raleigh, North Carolina as host city of the Sixth USA ARDF Championships, April 7 - 9, 2006. Radio-orientees from all over the country plus visitors from abroad are expected to attend.

Competitions will take place within the 5300 acres of William B. Umstead State Park, located near Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

Events begin Friday at noon with an optional four-hour practice and equipment checking session, followed at 5 PM by an information and safety briefing.

The two-meter competition takes place Saturday and the 80-meter event will be on Sunday. In addition to the ARDF competitions, there will be a picnic get-together on Saturday night and an award ceremony following the 80-meter hunt. It will end in time for those who must depart Sunday afternoon.

Event organizers are Charles (NZ0I) and Nadia Scharlau of Chapel Hill, NC.

Both have been consistent medal winners at previous USA Championships. They attended the World ARDF Championships in 2002 and 2004, where Nadia was among the top six finishers in her category on one band each time. The Backwoods Orienteering Klub (BOK) is providing assistance with preparation of maps and organization of the start/finish areas of the competition.

As always, the USA ARDF Championships are open to anyone, at any ARDF skill level. Medals will be awarded in IARU's five age categories for males and four categories for females. Registration is now open. Attendance by ARRL leaders is welcome.

#### IARU ARDF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006

The Sixth USA Championships will take place just in time for final selection of this year's ARDF Team USA members, who will travel to Primorsko, Bulgaria for the 13th ARDF World Championships from September 12 through 17. USA's team positions will be filled based on individual performances in the 2005 USA Championships in New Mexico and the 2006 events in North Carolina.

IARU rules limit each society's team size to three persons per age/gender category. At this time, I estimate that there will be about a dozen members on the USA/ARRL team traveling to Bulgaria. I will be requesting ARRL Headquarters' assistance with wire transfer of team entry fees, as has been done since 1998.

#### CONCLUSION

Interest and participation in ARDF activities continues to grow. The encouragement and support of the ARRL Board of Directors for activities of ARDF Team USA, the North American ARDF Task Force and the ARRL ARDF Coordinator is greatly appreciated. Thanks also to ARRL Headquarters, especially QST and ARRL Web staff, for publicizing ARDF activities and events.

My "ARDF Update" is now a regular feature on the ARRL Web site. The most recent installment ("2005 in Review") has stories and photos of ARDF activities in many states at hamfests, ARRL conventions and Scouting events.

<<http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2006/01/15/1/>> I firmly believe that ARDF is a magnet to our hobby for youth and others, and I welcome efforts by Board members to encourage inclusion of ARDF at local and regional events within their jurisdictions.

More information about ARDF in the USA, including details and photos of the 2005 USA Championships, has been posted at my Web site. <[www.homingin.com](http://www.homingin.com)>

Respectfully submitted,

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