

**2017 Annual Meeting
ARRL Board of Directors
Windsor, Connecticut – January 20-21, 2017**

Report of the ARDF Coordinator

To the Board of Directors:

This report of the ARRL Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) Coordinator to the ARRL Board of Directors covers the period July 12, 2016 to January 5, 2017.

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 and radio-orienteeing), but not mobile hidden transmitter hunting.

ARDF included in Scouting's Radio Merit Badge

The 2017 update of Scouting's Radio Merit Badge (RMB) includes an option for Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) activities. Scouts and their leaders are being encouraged to experience the fun of on-foot hidden transmitter hunting as part of their introduction to the world of Amateur Radio.

The new RMB requirements are written at a level that is easy for Scouts to read and understand. There are nine things that Scouts must do or explain to earn the RMB. Item number nine lists four possible activities, of which the scout must do one. The newest activity choice is ARDF. It includes building a simple direction-finding antenna for either of the two bands that are used for competitive ARDF (2m and 80m) and then participating in a simple foxhunt with the antenna and a provided receiver.

Your ARDF Coordinator is pleased to have been one of USA's ARDF leaders who provided input regarding the new RMB requirements, collaborating with Jim Wilson K5ND. Jim is the

former Director of Communication Services at the BSA national office and president of the K2BSA Amateur Radio Association. He visited a training session at the 2016 USA ARDF Championships in Texas, where, he realized what an excellent activity that on-foot hidden transmitter hunting can be for Scouts. He then authored the new requirements, which were reviewed by members of the ARDF community.

At the 2017 National Scout Jamboree in West Virginia during July, an ARDF course and equipment will be available to Scouts of all ages. Leaders are expecting that 400 or more Scouts will qualify for the new RMB during the Jamboree.

IARU ARDF World Championships 2016

The 18th IARU ARDF World Championships took place in Albena, Bulgaria from September 3 through 9, 2016. For the tenth time, a delegation of radio-orientees represented USA and ARRL at the World Championships and for the sixth time, USA's team was on the medal stand. There were separate classic ARDF events on separate days for each competitor on eighty meters and two meters, each with up to five transmitters scattered in a large forested area. In addition, there were ARDF sprints and foxoring competitions. Each IARU society is invited send up to three competitors in each of the eleven IARU age/gender categories to the World Championships. In addition, the ARDF World Cup took place just before the championships, a competition for individuals with no participation limits. In all, over 400 competitors representing 39 nations took to the courses.

Invitations to join Team USA 2016 were based on performances and standings in the Fifteenth USA ARDF Championships (Colorado, August 2015) and the Sixteenth USA ARDF Championships (Texas, April 2016). Nine men and six women traveled on this year's team, representing eight states and ranging in age from 27 to 74.

2016 ARDF Team USA Members:

Name/Callsign	Cat	State
Vadim Afonkin KB1RLI	M40	MA
Alexandra Bondarenco	W21	PA
Natalia Bondarenco	W35	PA
Ruth Bromer WB4QZG	W60	NC
Robert Cooley KF6VSE	M70	CA
Kenneth Harker WM5R	M40	TX
Joseph Huberman K5JGH	M60	NC
Lori Huberman	W21	CA
Harley Leach KI7XF	M70	MT
Karla Leach KC7BLA	W60	MT
Nicolai Mejevoi	M50	IL
Alla Mezhevaya	W35	IL
Mike Schuh KF7QDZ	M60	WA
Bill Smathers KG6HXX	M60	CA
William Wright WB6CMD	M50	CA

On August 30 in the 80m classic competition of the ARDF World Cup, Vadim Afonkin, KB1RLI placed third in the M40 category. On August 31 in the 2m classic competition of the World Cup, Alla Mezhevaya was second in the W35 category. In the sprint event on September 1, KB1RLI took gold in M40 category. Also on that day, Ruth Bromer, WB4QZG took third place in the W60 category. On September 2, Ruth (who was USA's Team Captain) won another bronze in the foxoring event. Then on the 2m classic course of the World Championships on September 8, KB1RLI won an individual bronze medal. Also on that day, WB4QZG and Karla Leach, KC7BLA won a team bronze medal in W60 category on their 80m classic course.

Team members were responsible for their own registration/room/board fees and for transportation expenses to and from Bulgaria. As in years past, thanks are due to the ARRL CFO and Controller and his staff for executing the currency exchange and transfer of individual advance entry fees to the organizers.

USA ARDF Championships 2017

Your ARDF Coordinator has selected the Cincinnati area for the site of the Seventeenth USA ARDF Championships. Members and associates of the OH-KY-IN Amateur Radio Club are now selecting competition sites and making other plans. By agreement with the ARDF Coordinators of Canada and IARU Region 2, this event will also be designated as the Ninth ARDF Championships of IARU Region 2.

The tentative schedule is for three optional practice days on July 31, August 1 and 2. The Foxoring and sprint competitions will be August 3 and 4, followed by the 2m and 80m classic competitions on the weekend of August 5 and 6. Awards will be presented at a banquet on Saturday night and at a luncheon on Sunday after the final competition.

OH-KY-IN ARC members organized the very successful USA ARDF Championships in 2003 and 2010. There are many excellent sites for ARDF in the Cincinnati area and it is expected that new sites will be selected for the 2017 competitions.

As always, the USA ARDF Championships are open to anyone, at any ARDF skill level. Medals will be awarded in IARU's six age categories for males and five categories for females. Visiting competitors from outside Region 2 are expected to attend.

Latest updates about these championships can be found at <http://www.homingin.com>. Competitor and visitor registration will begin in a few weeks, at which time I will send a news item for QST and the ARRL Web site. Attendance at USA's ARDF Championships by ARRL section and division leaders is welcomed and encouraged.

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 and the ARRL ARDF Coordinator is greatly appreciated. Thanks also to ARRL Headquarters, especially ARRL Web and QST staff, for publicizing ARDF activities and events.

I firmly believe that radio-orienteeing is a magnet to our hobby for youth and for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. I welcome efforts by Board members to encourage inclusion of on-foot transmitter hunting activities at local and regional events within their jurisdictions. It is also an excellent activity for outdoor Scouting events, including Jamboree-On-The-Air.

More information about ARDF in the USA, including details and photos of local events in the reporting period, can be found at <http://www.homingin.com>.

Respectfully submitted,

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