



NVARC

Signal



VOL. XXXIII... No.9

WWW.N1NC.ORG

September 2024

In This Issue

2-meter Net	1
Next Meeting	1
Treasurer's Report	2
NTS Training	2
QDX Digital Transceiver	3
Secretary's Report	4
President's Corner	5
Working POTA	6

Fox Hunt

The club will be holding a Fox Hunt on Saturday September 21 after breakfast at Tiny's in Ayer.

Next Meeting

The first scheduled meeting for the 2024-2025 year is September 19, 2024 at the Pepperell Community Center at 4 Hollis Street in Pepperell. Meeting starts at 7:30. Eliot Mayer W1MJ will discuss radio direction finding, also known as fox hunting. Fox hunt to follow on Saturday September 21.

Weekly 2-meter Net

The NVARC Information Net is held Monday nights at 7:30PM local time on the 2m N1MNX repeater – 147.345MHz+100pL.

Thanks to Jim N8VIM for keeping the repeater in good kit.

Treasurer's Report Ralph KD1SM

Income for August was \$15 in membership fees. Expenses were \$0.45 for PayPal fees leaving a net income of \$14.55 for the period.

If any member has approved Field Day expenses that you intend to submit for reimbursement, please get those to me.

Current balances:

General fund	\$2,901.20
Community fund	\$7,128.25

As of 5 September we have 37 members who are current with their dues and 51 renewals outstanding. Renewal months are in the member list on www.n1nc.org in the Member's area; check yours on <https://www.n1nc.org/Members/Roster> or you may also email me.

Special thank you to those of you who mail your renewals or use PayPal without a reminder.

To pay membership dues via PayPal see the instructions in the same Members area.

If you are joining ARRL or renewing your membership please note ARRL's instructions to enter your NVARC membership information. As a Special Service Club, the ARRL expects a majority of Club members to also be ARRL members and will send a portion of your new or renewal ARRL membership fee back to the Club. Contact Ralph for further information if you need it.

NTS Training on Zoom

Interested in NTS and Traffic Handling? Join us Monday, October 14 at 7PM on Zoom and receive training.

Hosted by Ray, AA1SE (WMA SM) and joined by Marcia, KW1U (EMA/WMA/RI STM), Bob KC1KVY, and Shawn N1CVO, we will provide the training on the basics of proper handling of NTS traffic as well as participating on a net. This will be a combination of videos and open discussion to get started in this aspect of the hobby that's been around for over 100 years. All ham operators are invited to join whether you are experienced or not. Below, please find the link for this training. This will be first come-first served and limited to 100 participants. We hope to see you on Zoom. Any questions email Ray AA1SE at aa1se@arrl.net

Topic: NTS Traffic Training

Time: Oct 14, 2024 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[<use this link>](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86391167095?pwd=EE7QXsDKRQPqzIUgZxc4HUfk27Ja9Z.1>

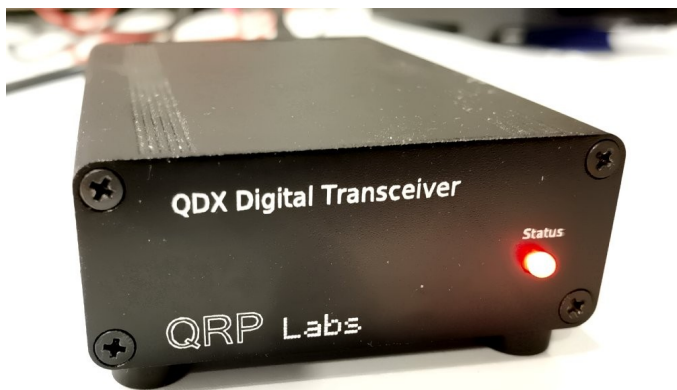
Meeting ID: 863 9116 7095

Passcode: 346199



First Impressions of the QRP Labs QDX Transceiver Les N1SV

The QRP Labs Model QDX transceiver is a 5w transceiver designed for single tone digital communications like FT4/8, WSPR, and RTTY. It is not designed for CW or SSB use. It includes an SDR receiver and an internal USB soundcard. Its \$69 price point is attractive given its functionality. Two versions are available, one that covers the 80/60/40/30/20 bands & the other that covers the 20/17/15/12/10 bands. I decided to order the 80-20m version.



The transceiver can be assembled to be powered from either a 12 VDC or 9 VDC power source, I opted for 12 VDC source. The transceiver is very small measuring only 1" x 2.48" x 3.49" (it can fit in your shirt pocket). On the rear panel are connections for your antenna, DC power, and a USB connection to your computer (A USB A-B cable is required). There is also a PTT connection for interfacing to a power amplifier (like the QRP Labs 50w).



Getting the QDX on the air is fairly straightforward. The user manual does a pretty good job of walking you through the different WSJT-X settings. My shack computer runs Windows 10 and there were no problems with driver installation. The status light on the transceiver's front panel serves several different purposes. When in the receive mode, it glows constantly but when transmitting, it pulses on and off at a 1 Hz rate.

I connected the QDX to my 30m dipole and immediately made several FT8 contacts with stateside stations. While the sensitivity is not nearly as good as my standard HF rig, it's more than sufficient to work a lot of stations and have a lot of fun. I was also able to work some DX stations with some effort. I also tried the QDX on 30m WSPR with good results with stations hearing my 5W signal in Europe and Africa.



While I opted to have the QDX assembled to save time, they also sell this as a kit. The kit cost \$69 with an additional \$20 for the enclosure. Kit assembly if desired is \$45. For those interested in building your own, there are nine toroids that need to be wound. The remainder of the assembly seems pretty straightforward.



Secretary's Report - Board Meeting
September 2024
John K1JEB

"New" member Bob Mignard N1DVC from Hopkinton, MA, is one of the founding members of NVARC. Welcome back, Bob!

Bruce K1BG is currently trying to recruit a Web Designer. Selected parties may be trained in WordPress by Phil Temple. Les N1SV suggested that members may also contribute content for the website.

For the September club meeting Eliot W1MJ will conduct a Fox Finding course. Then on the following Saturday after the club meeting he will be running a Fox Finding event for the Club.

Les N1SV will be presenting at the September Club meeting the results of the club survey.

Les N1SV has won a Satellite/Fox Hunting hand held antenna kit. He wants to raffle it off at a club meeting.

Les N1SV reminded the board that Phil Gladstone N1DQ will be the October guest speaker talking about PSK Reporter.

November club meeting is QSL Sorting.

December club meeting is Home Brew Night.

Bruce K1BG went over his experience attending the Marlborough HamExposition.

Ralph KD1SM will be delivering the coffee mugs to John KK1X who will deliver them to John K1JEB at the Tiny's Diner.

K1JEB will be bringing all undistributed Badges to the September Meeting.

Bruce K1BG is currently looking for a location to conduct the Licensing Classes.

Les is proposing to conduct a club project making a calibration tool to calibrate a NanoVNA. He will also be giving a class on how to use the NanoVNA.

Meeting Ended at 8:10 PM

Repeater Shack Repairs

John KK1X is working on setting up a working party, perhaps several, to perform maintenance on the Repeater Shack in Pepperell. I'm not sure there's a whole lot of work to be done.

Anybody interested?

Let John know, and we'll try to work out a schedule.

Raffle

Les N1SV is in a pickle. He won a portable handheld "satellite" antenna. He already had one.

Les has graciously offered to raffle this antenna away at the next club meeting, with the proceeds being donated to the club.

Come to the meeting for your chance at contacting space aliens!

President's Corner Bruce K1BG

Summer is all but over, but what a summer it was! I'm not going to re-hash the entire summer, but I will give you an update on HamXposition which was held the weekend of August 23 – 25. In my opinion, this year's HamXposition was superb. Thanks in large part to long time club member and past president Skip Youngberg, K1NKR (who was program chair), HamXposition has perhaps the best speaker program of any ham related gathering worldwide. No joke. Hard work by other committees resulted in a significant increase in attendees, vendors, dinner attendance, and flea market activity. I'll publish the official results when known in a future Signal, but it's safe to say that "a good time was had by all". Many NVARC members were in attendance, and if you were there and I missed you, my apologies. It was very busy and you can't be everywhere!

After the summer hiatus, we will be meeting again (on September 19th at the Pepperell Community Center). Our guest speaker will be Eliot Mayer, W1MJ, who will give us a practical discussion on Fox Hunting (AKA hidden transmitter hunting). We will follow this up with an actual fox hunt on Saturday, September 21st after breakfast.

Our Vice President, Les, N1SV has a brand new portable 2 meter/440 MHz satellite antenna that he would like to raffle off at the meeting. If I remember correctly, Les already owns one of these. He won another, so he is kindly donating this one for the raffle. I don't know the details regarding the antenna, but I do know that it can be used for satellite tracking or hidden transmitter hunting.

Come to the September meeting, mingle with our members, learn about fox hunting, and win a snazzy antenna!

I know that John, KK1X, and Nathan, N1ATE, have been participating in POTA (Parks on the Air) on a regular basis. It's a really popular activity and a great way to learn about setting up a station, propagation, antennas, operating, etc. I'm going to shoot for an activation on October (after breakfast at Tiny's, of course). If anyone is interested in joining me, let me know. I'm happy to make it a club activity, and this time, everyone else will get a chance to operate!

A week later, October 19th, is Scouting's Jamboree on the Air (JOTA). I've been approached by several scout troops to see if we can help them with a demonstration. The October meeting takes place on the Thursday before, so we have a little time to plan. If one of you is interested in helping coordinate this event, please let me know.

It looks like I have a window coming up where I can commit some time to coordinating a Technician license class. Les, N1SV, and Bob, N1DVC, have volunteered to help out with the class. License classes help promote and grow amateur radio and give us new club members. Time and place are still TBD, but I'll make sure the information is available to everyone well in advance of the class.

Finally, I'd like to welcome Bob, N1DVC, back to NVARC. Bob is one of the original founders of the club who met at Earl Russel, WR1Y's, QTH back in February of 1992 to inaugurate NVARC. Bob was active for many years, and like many of us got distracted by more important things. He's a member again and eager to get back in the fold. If you haven't already done so, introduce yourself to Bob at the September meeting.

That's all for this month. See you on the 19th at 7:30 PM.



Working POTA
John KK1X

My POTA operations in August were numerous - 26 outings in all, not counting the two-for-one parks where boundaries cross. To be fair, a lot of them were either at the Bill Ashe Visitor Center or what I refer to as "The Swamp", a section of the Oxbow intersecting the Nashua River. And in Spring 2024, as mentioned last month, a large number of Massachusetts Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) were added to the POTA program, and I've spent more than a few days going to parks that had not yet been activated.

I'm nearly amazed at the number of houses in Massachusetts that exist on dirt roads. And in large part, I'm not talking shacks and live-in barns, either. Fully on the grid with three-phase power and full fiber buildout. I've seen beautiful properties with small fortunes invested in stone walls and landscaping. Getting off of the beaten path is very enlightening. If nothing else, POTA has opened my eyes to a lot of interesting stuff. And horses! So many people have horses, it seems.

Four of the new WMAs were within a half hour or so of home, a couple more an hour or so, but six of them were out past Greenfield. Surprisingly, I knew a number of the roads I had to travel - I have family roots in the area. I did run into another ham working a park. I was hoping to be the first to activate this one (I was on a three-park trip), but arrived to find WB1ANA banging away on a straight key. We chatted for a bit, then I left for the other side of the park so as to not interfere. I'd spotted an alternate parking spot on my way over.

Early one Sunday morning I was sitting in my car at Maxwell Brook WMA in Rowe. I'd strung a highly visible yellow end-fed antenna between two trees using orange paracord, about eight or ten feet off the ground. I was getting out, too! A horsewoman approached me along the road and asked "did you put all of this here?". I explained - amateur radio, POTA, antenna... She asked if I was on my property (clearly owned by the Commonwealth). I pointed out that I was on public land intended for recreation and that I was not in violation of any regulations. She claimed it "wasn't about regulations", and that I was "broadcasting". She then wandered away. Sure enough, twenty minutes later the Charlemont police show up to check me out. It happens once in a while. I'm sorely tempted to show up there on a number of consecutive Sunday mornings...



Operating at Lake Wyola State
Park in Shutesbury Massachusetts

I might have stumbled upon one of the prettiest places in Massachusetts. This was in Rowe or Charlemont.

In the ordinary course of events, there's not a lot of action at the Wildlife Management Areas outside of hunting season. I drove out to the Leyden WMA a few weeks ago, and there was already a car there - not unusual. The other fellow and I both got out and exchanged greetings. He was John as well. I explained what I was doing. He was there as a volunteer to support a "prescribed burn". Soon enough, a dozen or more trucks rolled in, driving on to the staging area up hill. While I operated, John explained to his colleagues that I was a ham radio operator playing in the woods. I'd like to get back out there to see what the burned area looks like. Perhaps they should do this in California...

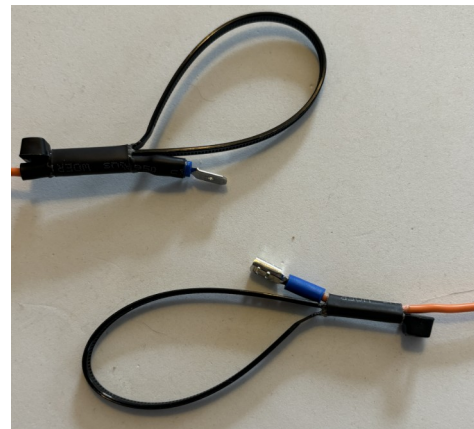
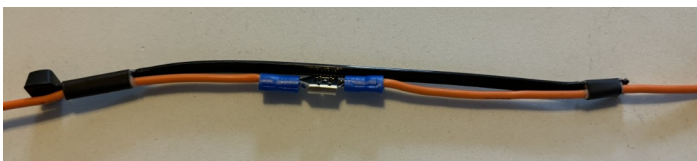


I was surprised to see an old Power Wagon – this one probably predates me!

The antenna selection for the month included the "Field Day End Fed" with a shorter (66") radiator for 40 meters, and a new end fed transformer (actually build on a cutting board!) with radiators for 40 meters and 20 meters. The other one is a camera tripod with a 17 foot vertical telescoping whip. Tuned elevated radials for 20 meters at opposite sides of the antenna result in a nearly omni pattern. This antenna has been working pretty well, even with just one radial. I tested this in three configurations. In one, I neglected to actually connect the radials. There was an incidental connection where one connector rested against the ground plate. Connecting the two tuned radials resulted in little if any improvement. Substituting three 33 foot radials resulted in little, if any, degradation in signal. "Testing" consisted of watching PSK Reporter and counting contacts during 30 minute test runs. For a couple of outings, I used the 40 meter EFHW about three feet off the ground (set on four plastic fence posts) and got reasonably good results.

The radial links are constructed of wire ties, crimp connectors, and glue-lined heat shrink, all readily available at Harbor Freight. I'd clip off the heads from the ties next time.

Tie loops at either end make it easy to support the radials.



Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 900
Pepperell MA 01463-0900
<https://n1nc.org>

President: Bruce Blain K1BG
Vice President: Les Peters N1SV
Secretary: John Bielefeld K1JEB
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM

Board Members:
Fred Darling KB1RGT(2024-2025)
John Griswold KK1X (2024-2026)
Jim Hein N8VIM (2024-2027)

N1NC Trustee: Bruce Blain K1BG

Join NVARC! Annual dues are
\$15 individual, \$20 family

Contact us on the N1MNX repeater:
442.900(+) PL100
147.345(+) PL100
53.890(-) PL100

This newsletter is published monthly. Submission,
corrections, and inquiries should be sent to

editor@n1nc.org

to reach the newsletter editor.

Editor: John Griswold KK1X
(C)2024 NVARC