

Susan Swiderski, AF4FO, Section Manager, wrote the following article for her newsletter.

U.S. ARDF Championships: April 20-21 WOW! Kudos to the members of the Georgia Orienteering Club for bringing this top-notch competition to Georgia, and for the fabulous job they did with the planning and execution of it. There were competitors from CA, OR, NM, TX, AR, OH, IL, KY, NY, VA, NC, FL, AL, and GA, as well as some competitors from Japan and Russia, who are currently living and working in the US.

As the finishers of the 2M portion of the competition on Saturday came through the "chute", gasping, sweating, some a little tattered and scratched up from the briars and brambles, I heard such words as....."sadistic"..... "satanic".....so we all knew that Sam Smith, N4MAP, had done an outstanding job of setting up a world-class, challenging course.

The way it worked was five transmitters were hidden throughout the woods. Competitors were started, a couple at a time, from nine until ten AM, and the object was to find as many of the transmitters as possible in the shortest amount of time. Each transmitter had a paper punch with it, with a unique shape, so it could be easily determined which transmitters had been found by each competitor. Let me tell ya, this was not a leisurely amble through the woods... they were doing some serious motivating!!

At the dinner on Saturday night, Joe Moell, K0OV, the ARRL's ARDF coordinator, talked about the history of DFing in the US. Other countries of the world have been active in this radio sport for much longer than we here in the US have, but Joe is certainly up to the task of getting the word out and promoting interest in this fascinating aspect of the hobby. He's written a book entitled Transmitter Hunting, and he has a website at <http://www.homingin.com>, where you can find a multitude of information on this subject.

Dale Hunt, WB6BYU, who is the IARU (International Amateur Radio Union) region 2 ARDF coordinator, also spoke at the dinner. His goal is to encourage an awakening of interest in ARDFing throughout the entire region. While activity is on the rise in the U.S., there is but a modicum of activity in Canada, and activity in South and Central America is virtually non-existent. Americans who have entered the international competitions in regions 1 and 3 have been welcomed enthusiastically, so hopefully, in the near future, the entire region 1 will have a presence in international competitions. Dale has developed a wonderful, simple, and fairly inexpensive DFing antenna for 80M competition, and he has submitted an article all about it to QST. Hopefully, we'll all be able to read that soon.

Sandy Donahue, W4RU, and I also spoke to the dinner group, and while I clearly admitted to the crowd that I'm somewhat "directionally challenged", Sandy elected to prove his inadequacies more demonstratively..... on Sunday morning, he managed to get himself LOST while attempting to find his way from the starting line to his car in the parking lot. Trust me, he got some serious ribbing over that one! (He said that none of the trees had street signs!!)

Sam Smith, N4MAP, (who is married to the lovely and delightful Laurie), and Sam Smith, KD4SHK, (who is NOT married to the lovely and delightful Laurie) came to Sandy's rescue, who though hot and thirsty, was none the worse for the experience. He will, of course, never live it down, though. Don't be surprised if he manages to "ham it up" a little, though, (who...Sandy???) when he tells you the story of his "ordeal"... I can just imagine it now.... how he was crawling, hot and sweaty, through the briars, bloody and torn, with a rabid armadillo on his tail...

Some highlights of the actual competition: Charlie Siler, KO4NO, member of the Bill Gremillion Memorial Amateur Radio Club, won gold medals in the M-50 class, for both the 2M and the 80M competition. He absolutely smoked the competition!! Charlie is now eligible to be on the U.S. team and travel to the world competition in Slovakia in the fall. In the HF competition on Sunday, Gyuri Nagy, KF6YKN, and Sergie Storkov, KD5RNL, finished less than a minute apart, with times of 75:14 and 75:51, respectively. Very exciting! Steve Reynolds, W4CNG, did a terrific job of heading us up at the finish line, as did my better half Mike, K4HBI, who watched out for the competitors and then guided them toward the finish line with some serious arm waving. (Especially on Saturday, when the finishers were liable to approach from just about any direction, this was a very necessary function!) Members of the Georgia Orienteering Club, the South Fulton ARES, and Bill Gremillion Memorial Amateur Radio Club all did an outstanding job of volunteering for this exciting event.

For more information, check out <http://www.gaorienteering.org>