

THE MAINE TELEGRAPH

NEWSLETTER FOR MAINE
AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS



Major Winter Storms Prompt SKYWARN Activations

WRITTEN BY TIM WATSON, KB1HNZ



While last year left many New Englanders asking the question “where’s winter,” 2022 has started off with quite a punch. The month of January saw three SKYWARN Activations, and the trend continued into February, with the most recent activation on the 4th. The first storm of the new year came on January 7th, delivering 3-5” of wet snow to the region. The NWS Gray SKYWARN Amateur Radio Team gathered 40 reports via amateur radio, of mostly precipitation type and snowfall measurements throughout the event. Temperatures remained below freezing, winds were calm, and there were very few accounts of storm-related damage or power outages related to the storm.

The next storm, which required activation, occurred on the 17th and continued through the 18th. Higher temperatures along the coast resulted in reports of rain, freezing rain, and sleet, but further inland and in the higher elevations of Western Maine and New Hampshire, it was mostly all snow. The highest snowfall total in the NWS Gray Weather Forecast Area was 9.0 inches, reported by Frank W1WU, in Ossipee, NH, and the highest in the region was 11.0 inches, reported by Dan N1UKJ, in Randolph, VT. We also received reports of coastal flooding, as Rt. 1 near the Scarborough Marsh was closed because water (and floating ice), were covering the entire roadway, and areas of Wells and Hampton Beach were also affected. This weather system produced over 30 reports via amateur radio.

The next storm was the blockbuster of the winter so far, as a Nor'easter entered the region from the south on the morning of the 29th. The first reports were for very light snow, but this intensified over the next several hours, reaching near blizzard conditions in Waterboro, Saco, Camden, Gorham, and Ossipee. Wind gusts in excess of 40 mph were reported twice during the storm, and between the hours of 2200-2300 UTC, sustained winds of 20+mph with gusts of 30+mph accompanied nearly every report. Visibility during this period ranged from 0 to less than 500 feet.

Getting accurate snowfall measurements was complicated by the drifting snow, but most spotters knew to take averages and they were encouraged to do so. The highest snowfall total within the NWS Gray Weather Forecast Area was 10.8 inches in Saco, followed by 10.0 inches, reported by Bill NE1B, in Hudson, NH, and the highest in the region was 22.0 inches, reported by Colleen KC1NOS, in Norwood, MA.

The NWS Gray SKYWARN Amateur Radio Team welcomed two new Net Control operators for this event! We'd like to thank Jason Andrews WISFS for taking net duties on the DMR SKYWARN Talkgroup, and also Tom Mahon AB1NS, for operating a rolling SKYWARN net on the 147.090 repeater, in Falmouth. This Nor'easter produced the most weather reports for a single event since 2018! We logged 86 on the NWS Gray SKYWARN Net Reporting form, and relayed an additional 40 to nearby weather offices, including Albany, Burlington, and Norton. Thanks to everyone who contributed reports! The next SKYWARN Activation, occurred on February 4th. Sleet and freezing rain reports were prominent, mostly along the coast and southern New Hampshire, but there were some areas where snow was accumulating. Edwin KC1QCW reported 5.0 inches in Naples, ME at 1317Z, and Roger K1DFA reported 9.0" in Bartlett, NH. Roger also reported feeling an earthquake at 12:30am, and this was verified by USGS a short time later! This was only the second time we ever received an earthquake report!

Later in the morning, we began to receive reports of trees and wires down, mostly from the Connecticut River Valley of New Hampshire. We received damage reports from Chesterfield, Alstead, West Chesterfield, and Unity, NH, as well as one from Westminster, VT. This seemed to be very localized and was unexpected considering the highest wind gust reports that we received were 10-12 mph.

Sleet was the word of the day, though, as the forecasted snow totals were well down in most areas because of the precipitation type. Frank WIWU reported 4.0" of sleet, with 1.0" of snow on top of it, and this was a common trend. Bryan, WIBKW in Harrison, ME and Roger K1DFA, in Bartlett, NH reported the most snow at 10.0 inches.

Thanks again to everyone who contributed weather observations and volunteered as Net Control ops during these recent activations. It's only the first week of February and we've already gathered more than 200 reports! Keep up the good work!

Join the team!

Many of you are probably unaware of just how big the NWS Gray Weather Forecast Area is. It encompasses all of southern, central, and western Maine and the entire state of New Hampshire from the Massachusetts and Vermont borders to the seacoast.

From the greater Portland area, where most of our volunteers are located, its not easy to reach places like Southwestern New Hampshire, the Kennebec Valley, or the Lakes Region of Maine, via VHF, so we need the help of ARES groups and local ham clubs to take responsibility for their own backyards and activate when weather effects them directly. This is especially important during convective (thunderstorm) season, when localized pop-up storms are common.

Also, we have not been able to activate directly from the NWS Forecast Office since the COVID-19 pandemic began almost two years ago, so our coverage is limited to the capability of the individuals who volunteer as Net Controls.

They do a great job, and they also utilize resources such as the DMR SKYWARN Talkgroup, Echolink, and Winlink, but they can't reach everywhere. On an individual level, please consider representing your county or local community as a SKYWARN Net Control Operator. If you're interested, we'll provide the training and accesses you need, to be successful.



Submitting reports is easy.

Now, relaying reports to NWS is simpler than ever. In collaboration with the NWS, we've developed a SKYWARN Net Reporting Log that is a shared Google Sheet, that the weather forecasters see in real time. As you gather reports via radio, simply type in the information. The sheet is formatted in such a way that the forecasters can import it into their systems, so it's a time saver for them. And often you will see a forecaster mark your report as logged shortly after you enter the data, so you know when its imported.

Operating Net Control during a SKYWARN Activation is a great way to hone your communications skills, and the ground-truth information you gather for NWS is used to determine, update, and verify weather warnings, which can save lives.

Become an Official Supporter!

Last March we introduced the Official Supporter program to encourage ARES groups and ham radio clubs to become official members of the NWS Gray SKYWARN Amateur Radio Team.

Being part of the NWS Gray SKYWARN Amateur Radio Team is a meaningful way to experience the hobby while making a positive impact on our community. As an Official Supporter, we recognize that your organization will embrace SKYWARN as a way to enhance the amateur radio experience, use it as a real-time training and preparedness tool to sharpen Emergency Communications skills, and to provide a vital service. Click [here](#) to find out how to enroll in the program.

Please reach out to Tim Watson KB1HNZ at: kb1hnz@yahoo.com with any questions, or to become a member of the team.



Maine State Convention in Lewiston 4/1-4/2.

WRITTEN BY CORY GOLOB, KU1U

While I do my best to issue the Maine Telegraph on the first day of each month, April's issue will be delayed a day or so due to the Maine State Convention being held during that time. It will allow time to capture the events which took place over the two day event to be included in the newsletter.

The Maine State Convention will be held Friday, April 1st and Saturday April 2nd, 2022 at the Ramada Inn & Convention Center, 490 Pleasant St, Lewiston, ME, just off I-95, Exit 80. Talks are free, admission into the vendor area is \$10 at the door.

Friday Night Talk Schedule:

7:00 PM: ARDEN MESH Networking Talk & Demonstration
Bill Richardson (NG1P)

8:00 PM: Soldering Class, Build a Monitor for Keeping Track of Battery Voltage
Joel Curneal (N1JEO) - \$10 cost to cover kit

8:00 PM: 6-Meter Magic
Lefty Clement (K1TOL)

Saturday Morning Talk Schedule:

10:00 AM: ARDEN MESH Networking Talk & Demonstration
Bill Richardson (NG1P)

11:00 AM: ARRL Forum
Fred Kemmerer (AB1OC) New England Director
Phil Temples (K9HI) Vice Director

If you would like to reserve a room at the Ramada Inn for the special rate, please call 207-784-2331 at mention Maine Hamfest Convention.

The 2022 Maine State Convention is being held in memory of Joel Hallas, W1ZR (SK) who has given his well received "The Doctor Is In" improv talks at previous Maine State Conventions.

Rooms will be available for groups who wish to have meetings. The Quarter Century Wireless Association Pine Tree Chapter will be meeting at 10:00 AM. Anyone wishing to request a room for a meeting, please send Cory Golob (KU1U) an email: ku1u@nediv.arrl.org



Hamfest Admission: \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door
Vendor: \$7 per table in advance, \$8 at the door (\$8 admission)
Please contact Ivan Lazure (N1OXA) at 207-577-5152 for information.

Interested in taking an amateur radio exam or upgrading your license?
There will be a VE Exam session at 12:30. Cost for the exam is \$15.

CDC rules at the time of the event will be followed, these rules have been subject to change at any moment.



NIEP Presents 3 Certificates of Merit at Calumet Club Hamfest



From One Section Manager to Another. Phil Duggan (NIEP), current Maine Section Manager, presenting a Certificate of Merit to Bill Mann (W1KX), Bill was Maine Section Manager 1988-1989 and has been the Net Manager for the Pine Tree Net since 1989. He is a Net Control on several nets and participates in multiple nets such as the Pine Tree Net, Maine Slow Speed Net, Seagull Net, Maine Public Service Net and Maine Emergency Communications Net. Through his example, he has trained countless hams in proper net procedure.



Al Sirois (N1MHC) was presented a Certificate of Merit for his continued efforts to involve scouts in amateur radio and his participation in various public service nets throughout Maine. Al has been instrumental in helping scouts earn their radio merit badges by getting them on the air and introducing them to the hobby.



Jose Douglas (KBITCD) was presented a Certificate of Merit for his dedication to the Maine Emergency Communications Net which he continues to serve as Net Control for every Sunday at 1630 hours in the Winter and 1700 hours in the Spring/Summer. Jose is dedicated to Emergency Communications and promotes operators to check in using emergency power.

Winter field Day 2022 (How Mother nature steals your bonus points!)

WRITTEN BY JEFF HANSCOMB, KA1DBE

Some of you may or may not know that Matt, WIMRH, and I grew up together. We both got our ham licenses when we were 14 years old. Matt moved to Brewer so everyday after school we would get on 80 meter CW and try to best each other with our increasingly speedy CW! We kept in touch somewhat after High School. The Navy took me to Virginia and Matt to Augusta. We connected a couple times on the radio but as usual, life and family took center stage.

Fast forward 35 years to the present. After finishing up working for the shipyard, I moved back to Maine to take care of my parents. Matt and I reconnected and we picked up right where we left off. Matt has a very state of the art station and I hobble together whatever equipment I own at the time and make it work. My first mission was to drag Matt into the 21st century. He was still paper logging and collecting paper QSLs. The organization of his system was impressive and his DX count is over 200 confirmed. I set him up with a LOTW account and showed him how computerized logging worked. A little help with FT8 and he was off to the races.

Field Day 2017 was the first field day I attended with the Ellsworth Amateur Wireless Association. I invited Matt and he almost declined because he is not a contester. He showed up and reconnected with the old gang and told me the following year he would help me operate the Digital/Satellite/6 Meter station. A field day contester is born!

The Covid years presented many challenges but we managed workable solutions. Winter Field Day 2022 was no different. The plan was to operate SSB, CW, and Digital from Matt's camp on Georges Pond. It is a nice spot, RF quiet, and had plans of a multiband vertical in the ice for one of our antennas.

Planning was going well and the week before we kept seeing a possible snow storm on Saturday. The amounts were up and down and no one was really sure where it was going to hit. This could be a problem.

We got together the Wednesday before Winter Field Day and came to a final decision that we would not be able to operate from his camp. There went our bonus points for being away from our home station, emergency power, and a satellite contact (My Satellite station is portable). But in the essence of fun and friendship, we would press on and operate from Matt's QTH.



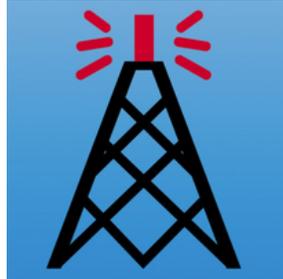
We were out of the gates and on the air. Matt was working Digital and I on CW. I am not a real phone contester (our logs prove that HHI) but I had to remember to make a few before switching bands. The Snow had really piled up (8 inches I believe) so we decided to take a break to we could do some snow removal at our QTHs. The plan was to return on Sunday and finish out the contest.

Sunday morning greeted us with openings on 10 and 15 meters. Matt was back on Digital with mostly PSK31 and RTTY. I was back in the CW seat and hammering away. Getting my phone contacts on 10 was proving a little difficult but I finally made some so I could move back to 15 where is was really opening. When the clock finely struck 1900Z and the log was tallied, We had 175 Digital, 121 CW, 49 phone, for a total of 15,384 points. Not our best but we did have a lot of fun in spite of all that Mother nature threw at us. Looking forward to WFD 2023....possibly from Georges Pond!



New Echolink Node on the Hancock Repeater

WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER STANLEY, K1WJY



The K1WJY-R EchoLink node (767433) is now active/linked to the N1ARO repeater. (146.835- pl.110.9)

For those new to EchoLink, you can visit www.echolink.org for information on how it works. There are also a ton of videos on YouTube that explain it nicely. If you are familiar on the workings of EchoLink, here are a few of the DTMF commands:

- Disconnect

- Disconnect ALL

* - Forces a station ID

08 - Gives station's current status

09 - Reconnect to last connected station

01 - Connects you to a random LINK

00 - Connects you to a random NODE

03 - Connects you to a random USER

(node number) - Connects you to that specific station

If you have any questions/comments, put them down below.

Enjoy!

Hamshack Hotline

WRITTEN BY CORY GOLOB, KU1U



HAMSHACK
HOTLINE

Have you ever heard of Hamshack Hotline? This idea started in New England thanks to the efforts of John Rogers (K1WIZ) which led to him develop his core team: David Neal (W2DAN), Ken Reynolds (KA1EZH), Bill Lewis (KG6BAJ), Lynn Schweers (KE0LRW), David Bodman (KD4CLJ), Jay Spaulding (W0JAY), Gescio Alpuro (WH6AV) and Jeff Lehman (N8ACL). The Hamshack Hotline, often abbreviated as HH, is a free, dedicated Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone network available to amateur radio operators. This by no means is meant to take over amateur radio operations done over the air, but offers a great opportunity when bands are congested or conditions are not optimal. Some of these phones are located in Emergency Operation Centers, for example, Acushnet Emergency Management Agency in Massachusetts has three of these phones, the Foster Center Volunteer Fire Company in Rhode Island has a Hamshack Hotline and American Red Cross, such as the one in Maryland, uses this service as a backup.

Just as amateur radio operators have different talk groups, there are various conference rooms that one can dial into. There are ten public rooms (Extension 301 through 310) in addition to public rooms with more significant purposes like extensions 312 & 313 for ARES and 314 & 315 for SKYWARN. Some groups have dedicated conference rooms for special interests like Winlink Users on extension 1336 or the American Legion Radio Club on extension 1460.

Not much of a talker and seem to be more in a listening mode? Not a problem. There are audio services that you can dial into as well. By dialing 7000, you will be able to listen to WBZ AM 1030 Boston, 7010 allows you to listen to Morse Code practice or 7013 to tune into the Amateur Radio Newslines.

Hamshack Hotline allows RF linking by dialing certain extensions. Bill Richardson, NG1P, in Topsham, has a HH RF Link connected to his 147.57 MHz (100.0 Hz PL) simplex node at his house which is also tied to his Allstar node of 49581. If you have a Hamshack Hotline phone and dial extension 94009, you will connect to this RF link. To start transmitting, first press *99 on your keypad and to stop transmitting press #.

If you are interested in getting started, you can obtain a supported device on ebay for around \$30-\$40 usually. I have a CISCO SPA303 in my shack. Cisco supported devices are: WIP-310, SPA 112, 122, 232D, 303, 504, 508, 509, 514, 525G(2), 941 and 942. This does work as a softphone, however, Hamshack Hotline will not issue extensions exclusively for softphones, you must have a provisioned hardware device before requesting softphone access.

Once you have your hardware, you must fill out a ticket to request your extension. <https://apps.hamshackhotline.com:9090/> You must create an account and have a valid email address. You will also be asked to provide the MAC address which is specifically on your hardware to get your extension created. You will be emailed instructions on how to provision your phone so that the script can be sent to program your device. If you have any questions, the team is extremely knowledgeable and helpful when it comes to answering any questions you may have.

Once set up, your extension has a voicemail, so if you are away, others can leave you a message. You can personalize your voicemail message just like any other phone service. There is also a dashboard that you can look at to see what type of activity is taking place on the conference rooms. Dashboard has become a popular term over the years that has made its way into amateur radio lingo. Just like the dashboard on your vehicle has useful information, dashboards in amateur radio provide supplemental information about stations and statuses of a network.

If you end up getting a Hamshack Hotline, give me a call at extension 4026.

To learn more about Hamshack Hotline, please visit <https://hamshackhotline.com/> or their facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1796731430542934>

The example pictured to the right is a live dashboard that can be viewed online.

CONFERENCE BRIDGE CALLS				
3 Active				
* To view Conference Bridge Properties, hover over Bridge Number				
Bridge	Bridge Name	Extension	Callsign	Name
367	ARES PUBLIC	5605	N9RBE	BILL
378	HAMSKN	4910	V44KBW	BASIL
1479	PORTUGUESE AMATEUR LEAGUE	4200000044	CT2GFP	JOAO
RF-LINK CALLS				
3 Active				
Please use *99 to transmit, # to unkey.				
User Count	Extension	Name		
2	94049	EAST COAST REFLECTOR LINK TO 27339		
1	94073	W0SKY ALLSTAR 1710		
1	94111	CT1ESJ ALLSTAR 56215		
AUDIO CALLS				
2 Active				
User Count	Extension	Name		
2	7000	WBZ FEED		

Lobstercon 2022 has been announced July 8, 9 & 10

INFO FROM QRPME WEBSITE: [HTTP://QRPME.COM/?P=PRODUCT&ID=L22](http://qrpme.com/?P=PRODUCT&ID=L22)



Lobstercon2022! campground reservations have now been confirmed! We will be gathering at Thomas Point Beach & Campground on the weekend of July 8, 9 & 10 2022..... The 2022 event will be the 23th year that WIREX has hosted the QRP event at TPB&C! I have already reserved the group campsite for the 2022 event and set the dates....so you have plenty of time to still plan your weekend getaway to Maine!! I plan on coming up with a few special activities to make our awakening event from this pandemic very special and an event that you will not want to miss! If you have often thought about coming to Lobstercon but never got a round tuit, you have better make this one.....

New Englands premiere QRP gathering ♦ a weekend of QRP camping, BBQ eating, operating, socializing, lobster eating, prize winning, all round great QRP time. A \$50.00 registration fee gets you wake-up coffee, juice, cereal, bagels and donuts (if you wake up early enough) and 2 GIANT meals on Saturday: a BBQ lunch and FRESH Maine lobster dinner. Lobstercon lobsters are fresh out of the ocean for less than an hour before they go into the pot. YOU CAN TASTE THE DIFFERENCE! Pictures of all the fun had by Lobsterconners at previous years events can be found at <http://www.newenglandqrp.org>

Where: Thomas Point Beach & Campground, Brunswick Maine
When: July 8, 9 & 10, 2022

Activities: (Friday afternoon through Sunday morning)
Campsite setup and meeting old friends
No-host dinner Friday night at Taste of Maine???
N1RX/W1REX Friday night Stargazing (weather permitting)
Partying into the night
Wake-up coffee & donuts Saturday morning
QRP hobnobbing BBQ lunch off grill
QRP fleamarket NT1R/W1REX Lobster feast/banquet
RAFFLE Prize drawings QRP music jam

POSSIBLE Sunday morning No-host breakfast at a local eatery...
Registration is \$50 per person for all meals & activities on Saturday. Camping is additional and reservations should be made through Thomas Point Beach & Campground. You DO NOT need to register for camping until Lobstercon time next year...Unless you want to reserve a dedicated campsite with hookups (\$35 per night). Do not forget to tell the Thomas Point Beach people that you are with the crazy radio gang...2022 Camping fees are \$10 per person/night in our group site.

The Group site does not have electricity or hookups. We do run extension cords to the closest power pole. Campers requiring electricity will be charged \$5 per night. Regular park camping fee camping fee is \$32 per camping unit /family of 2 adults & 2 children

It would be best if most camping reservations were made on-line through the TPB website.

The camping request is in the camping section....OR you can call 1-207-725-6009

Advise each camper to include "With Lobstercon" in the Special Needs section so the correct price will be charged to them.

Thomas Point Beach & Campground

(NOTE from Rex: if you plan on camping with the main QRP group in the group site, you already have a spot in the GROUP campsite when you register with me! The *formal* reservation and payment to TPB&C can be made at any time before you come to Lobstercon.. Check the TPB&C for the opening date. If you want a regular site close to the group site, send ME an email to let me know. I will be holding a couple of close sites, in reserve, for just that purpose.)

Registration Forms in Word and PDF:

<http://qrpme.com/docs/L2022!RegistrationWORD.doc>

<http://qrpme.com/docs/L2022!RegistrationPDF.pdf>