

THE MAINE TELEGRAPH

NEWSLETTER FOR MAINE
AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS



Remote Technician Study Group

COURTESY OF THE MAINE HAM RADIO SOCIETY FACEBOOK PAGE

FYI, we will be conducting ham radio Technician classes starting Jan 11, via on-line Zoom app, 7PM Wednesdays.

Anyone interested email phil.nlep@gmail.com

To follow the Maine Ham Radio Society on Facebook please visit:

Maine Ham Radio Society | Facebook



Ellsworth Ham Radio Symposium

WRITTEN BY PHIL DUGGAN, N1EP



Trouble and mischief are not the only things to be hatched within Ellsworth hams many "Clandestine Coffee" meetings. Recently the group decided to convince the Ellsworth Amateur Wireless Association to bring back the popular ham radio symposium. And club members agreed during their November 10th meeting and confirmed a date for April 22 at Meadow View Phase IV Dining Hall, 25 Tweedie Lane in Ellsworth. So mark your calendar now.

Likely there will be a VE exam session in the morning hours and the Symposium will be in the afternoon. Although still in the planning phase, topics and presentations include:

- Portable Satellite Communications - KA1DEB
- Node Red programming with amateur radio application - K3PW
- Repurposing old computers for your ham shack - N1EP

More topics and table demos are likely. More details will be announced as plans progress.

WIA – Wreaths Across America Special Event

WRITTEN BY PHIL DUGGAN, N1EP



Every December Wreaths Across America, based out of Washington County Maine, embarks on a massive convoy that includes countless first responder escorts and tractor-trailer rigs, bound for Arlington National Cemetery where they conduct somber wreath-laying ceremonies on our veteran's graves. They do the same at veterans cemeteries across the nation and world.

December 17 is designated National Wreaths Across America Day. The Maine Ham Radio Society is also based in Washington County, Maine, and is honoring this tradition and our veterans with a special event DEC 16 - 19, 2022.

MHRS thanks all the Wreaths Across America staff and volunteers for continuing this worthy event. Wreaths Across America Slogan is REMEMBER - HONOR - TEACH.

Stations making contact with WIA during the above period can send a SASE for a special QSL card. Address info is on qrz.com under WIA.

The WIA special event will be on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6M and also on 2m for local contacts. Modes phone – cw – digital.

MHRS members and Maine ARRL cabinet members may operate as WIA. However, they must coordinate with Phil Duggan, N1EP. There will be a live on-line schedule for operators to sign up for 2-hour slots.

WIA operators will attempt to use the following frequencies or nearby as these were listed in QST for 40 - 10M: 7.240 14.240 21.340 28.440. — However, if the frequencies are busy with stations/nets, they will find a clear one as with standard operating practices.

Email phil.n1ep@gmail.com.

KY1C, SK

WRITTEN BY BILL MANN, W1SK

My good friend Paul Gooch, KY1C, recently became a Silent Key. Paul spent most of his hamming days (which started in 1979) in Wilton, ME, until he retired as Principal (and a well-respected one!) in Wilton and moved to Wells, ME.

Most recently Paul was manager of the Maine Public Service Net (Sundays, 9 AM, 3940), which he enjoyed very much and was also active on the Sea Gull Net, Bull Net and other nets. He was a founding member of the Bass Hill Repeater Group, along with KY1E, K1PV, W1KX and others. BHRG sponsors several repeaters and he enjoyed working on the repeaters and DMR. Paul always enjoyed Field Day and has been the BHRG Field Day Chairman for many years, usually leading us to #1 in Maine in 1A.

Paul participated in many Volunteer-Examiner sessions in the Farmington area with AA1SM and many others. He was active with the Franklin Co. ARES and later York Co. ARES. He held various ARRL leadership positions dating back to when W1RWG was Section Manager. He always enjoyed going to Hamfests, especially Hoss Traders/NEARFest. We spent many pleasant Thursday nights to Saturday afternoons in Deerfield, spring and fall.

Boy Scouts. Paul was the penultimate Boy Scout volunteer/leader most of his life. He introduced lots of scouts to the fun of ham radio over many years. Hundreds of Boy Scouts are better off because of his scouting activities.

On nets following KY1C becoming a Silent Key, the phrase which came up most often was "he was a real gentleman." That says it all.

Vy 73, OM, R.I.P.

Bill, W1KX



Sealing the Cracks to a Fractured Hobby

WRITTEN BY CORY GOLOB, KU1U

A constant theme that I hear from time to time is "the hobby is dead". This common theme is actually a misunderstanding, I do not consider the hobby to be dead, instead I find it is fractured. There is a difference. We find ourselves in the midst of a format war far worse than that of the VHS versus Betamax days. Digital Voice modes are bountiful. There is DMR (Digital Mobile Radio), D-Star (Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio), C4FM (System Fusion), P25 (Association of Public Safety Communications Officials' Project 25), NXDN (Next Generation Digital Narrowband), FreeDV and M17. The available options beg you to grab an ibuprofen for that now forming headache!

With each mode comes its own method of operation, its own way to program the radio, its own lingo, its own etiquette and its own realm of politics. Each mode remains in a silo; One digital mode cannot decode another digital mode and vice-versa. There is one saving grace however, many of these modes offer auto detect on the good ole' standby, Analog FM. No matter how into the weeds of digital voice operation we get, the case continues to be proven on how FM is reliable and easy to operate comparatively speaking.

Everyone wants change, until they are asked to change themselves. Also, why is it that somebody has to get hurt or killed before major changes are made? We TALK about it all of the time, but we DO NOTHING about it. Periodically, events happen on a massive scale that highlight everything we talk about and we try to do better, but that vigilance does not remain. It fades away and complacency becomes the norm. People go back to their old ways. 'This is how we have always done it' is a mantra that should never be uttered... ever. Whisper those words into a jar and bury it until the end of time. Twenty-two years ago when our country was attacked, as first responders traveled to the scene of the Twin Towers, a known problem on lack of interoperability reached its tipping point. One agency could not effectively communicate with another agency. Their use of codes and language combined with their difference in technology (different frequencies and/ or modes) was a recipe for disaster. There had to be better way to communicate with others. Feelings were stirred up, we remained on edge for a period of time, were more aware of our surrounding, even had a sense of national pride, but there did not appear to be much advancement on interoperability. Two decades later, I have not seen much progress, at least on the public safety side of the spectrum.

Enter the concept of XLX reflectors. To better understand this ingenious concept, we must first acknowledge other reflectors or rooms that are already in place. DMR connects to a "room" known as a Talkgroup. Maine Statewide is TG3123. Each type of room is identified by a unique number. TG3181 is New England Wide, TG3 is for North America, TG9 is for local communication. All of these talkgroups are contained within a server. Servers for DMR include, but are not limited to, DMR-MARC, Brandmeister, TGIF, DMR+ and DCI. If I am on the Litchfield DMR repeater using MaineStatewide (TG3123) and Joe WISK is on MaineStatewide (TG3123) using his hotspot that happens to be connected to Brandmeister, we cannot talk to each other even though we both have the same talkgroup programmed in. That is because the Litchfield DMR repeater uses DMR-MARC, which is a different server than Brandmeister. Think about a generation or two ago with video game consoles, if I was playing Call of Duty on a Playstation 3 and Joe was playing Call of Duty on an Xbox 360, we couldn't play against (or with) each other because they are two different systems.

The same applies to other modes, I just used DMR as the initial example since it has the largest infrastructure in place in Maine. D-Star has several servers to contend with as well. D-Star uses the word "reflector" for its system in lieu of rooms. The servers themselves are Dplus, which start as REF, Dplus-Extra, which start as XRF and DCS which to no surprise start DCS. The same rule applies, if I am talking on REF001C (D-Star has reflector numbers with three digits and module numbers A-D on the REF system, up to 26 modules with XRF/DCS systems A-Z) and Joe is on XRF001C then we are not talking to each other because they are different systems.

Fusion is no different. There is a little less confusion in the chaos, but it does not have one sole system. There are Wires-X, FCS and YSF and they refer to their gather points as "rooms". UFB New England can be accessed through Wires-X room 62148 or using the FCS system on FCS03339.

Now that the landscape has been laid out, let's return to XLX reflectors. XLX is the magic glue that is needed make sense out of the nonsensical. It brings to fruition that concept of interoperability that we have been longing for. I have to give major kudos to the Central New Hampshire Amateur Radio Club (CNHARC) because, in my opinion, they are doing it right. They have several repeaters staggered throughout New Hampshire, some are set up as single mode repeaters (4 as D-Star and 1 as C4FM) but they also have 3 repeaters set up for multi-mode (DMR, D-Star and C4FM). External users can partake in the action as well. If they are on a hotspot, they can connect up using DMR, D-Star or C4FM. The reflector is known as XLX026 and can be connected in various ways depending on the mode you are using for access:

DMR = TG86381
D-Star = DCS026B
C4FM = YSF86381

There are other forms of linking that various groups are using. Echolink, IRLP, Allstar, Hamshack Hotline, etc., but I wanted to highlight how XLX is bridging the gap between the multiple digital modes. It is like I upgraded my Playstation 3 to a Playstation 4 (or 5 if you can get one) and Joe upgraded his Xbox360 to an Xbox One and we can now play Call of Duty with disparate systems; The technology has been put into effect that allows CrossPlay so even the PC users are joining in on the fun. This analogy seems to mimic how our many digital modes are unfolding.

Something had to give, especially with the current state of the economy. While we all love to go out and buy a new radio, how much leeway will our significant others give us to buy a radio for each mode? That story will not pass the test of time and you may as well get a remote head extension cable because they will wring our necks with it!

At the end of the day, the best mode to use is the one you have available. Use what you have, continue to learn and don't be afraid to challenge yourself to trying something new. That is what the hobby is all about.

73 DE KU1U
Cory

Monthly Androscoggin Club Supper

WRITTEN BY CORY GOLOB, KU1U

The Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club has started meeting monthly for supper on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM. Restaurants rotate so stay in touch with the club through meetings, newsletter or the club website.

In October, the club met at the IHOP in Auburn with ten attendees and November's get-together at Lotus Restaurant in Auburn with sixteen people in attendance. Good food and good conversation was had by all.

December's monthly supper will be held at Angelo's Pizzeria, located at 195 Lisbon St, Lisbon.

Bring your appetite and conversation!



Oxford County EMA Move

COURTESY OF THE OXFORD COUNTY ARES/CERT COMM NEWSLETTER/
WAYNE STROUT, N1YIS

We are moving the Oxford County Emergency Management Agency from the Oxford County Courthouse basement to 9 Western Prom in South Paris. The “new” facility is a house the county owns. Norm Clanton KA1SG has been organizing and leading the work teams for the new site. Plans for the radio room have been drawn up by Mark Jackson N1SNP. The move of equipment and antennas, exterior work has been done by Norm Clanton KA1SG, Brad Saunders N1GZB, George, W2GPJ, Gary Gilman N1ZNJ, Robert Gould N1WJO, Mark Beede KE1M, Dan Wheeler N1XYL, Leo Dyer N1BBK



The tower base was dug and installed in concrete. Mark KE1M and the rest of the tower raising group tested the performance of their raingear during that day of the event.

On the November 19th work session Bob N1WJO and Norm KA1SG moved the last of the antennas and hardware in the courthouse attic over to the Green House at 9 Western Prom , along with the County EMA and MEMA radios. We now have the feedline entrance box installed, but need to run grounds, etc. Allyson and her staff could be moving over as early as the end of the month, and we need to have established an initial operational capability.

On November 22 Brad N1GZB climbed up the tower to mount the crossarms and antennas for the EMA and our VHF UHF communications. He was assisted by Norm KA1SG and Bob N1WJO as the ground crew. His three and a half hours working up on the tower in the cold weather is certainly appreciated.

On November 23, Bob also put the county and state radios back on the air. We (Bob and Wayne N1YIS) moved the EMA radios into the kitchen bookcase to free up space in the kitchen area.

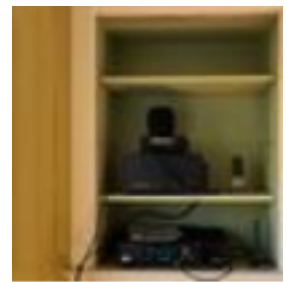
So as of November 29 the completion of the project is as follows: 1) Tower is up and secured. 2) The County, state, and our vhf and uhf antennas are on the tower with feed lines to the radio entrance box. 3) EMA County and state radios are fully operational.

To finish the move, we have before us:

- 1) Build the radio console.
- 2) Complete the grounding and install the lighting suppression.
- 3) Install the radios and computers.
- 4) modify the IC756 and the IC718 for 5 Mhz (60 meter band)
- 5) install the wifi/mesh link

We are looking to complete the radio console during the first two weeks of December. The stated goal is to have a fully functioning radio room before the end of December 2022. If you have time to assist in the completion of this project, please contact either Norm KA1SG, Wayne N1YIS, Gary N1ZNJ or Bob N1WJO. We have made very significant progress in a very short time.

If you visit or work in the radio room at the Green House, please log in on the sheet which currently is on the table in the middle of the radio room. We are trying to keep a record of work and visitors to the room and the house. This record allows the group to see who has been in to work or visit as well as help Wayne with recordkeeping for his monthly ARES report.



To learn more about Oxford County ARES/CERT please visit their
Facebook page at:
Oxford County CERT Communication Unit | Facebook
or email Wayne Strout wstrout2008@gmail.com

PINE CONE NET IS IN SEASON

Have you checked into the Pine Cone Net recently?

Tune in on Sundays at 2:00 PM at 3942 kHz

Listen for W1MFJ, the club call for the Quarter Century Wireless Association,
Home of Maine's Pine Tree Chapter 134

While joining the QCWA is always encouraged, you do not need to be a member to check into the QCWA net. Stop by and say hi. Welcome to All.



What are *you* or *your* club doing with amateur radio??

Consider sending an article our way to highlight all the good work that is being done in amateur radio.

Have a VE test coming up? Let us know the details so it can be published here and on the Maine ARRL Section Website

To submit articles for the Newsletter please use the following links:

LINK TO TYPE OUT AN ARTICLE THAT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER (WITH ABILITY TO UPLOAD IMAGES)

LINK TO SUBMIT ITEM(S) TO BUY/SWAP/SELL (WITH ABILITY TO UPLOAD AN IMAGE)

Link to be added or removed from the email distribution list