

Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm

February 2024

Newsletter

Greetings and Happy New Year everyone! I hope everyone had some time to spend with your families during the holidays. This newsletter had started out as the January edition and finally emerged as the February edition. Speaking of **February we have our 7:00 PM monthly meeting Monday February 5th in South Paris with a pre-meeting at Applebee's in Oxford at 5:00 PM EST. The Zoom option is still available if you are unable to attend in person.** Please either email Wayne n1yis for the link or follow the link from the email with the agenda.

We had our first 2024 successful meeting January 8th with John WQ1W, Brian W1BKW, Dan N1XYL, Norm KA1SG, our state ARES EC Keith KE4UCW, and Wayne N1YIS attending. The mixed in-person and ZOOM meeting style has been working. The in-person 5:00pm pre-meeting dinner at Applebee's gave some of us a chance to catchup on happenings in our lives.

Keith KE4UCW had some notes for us about the upcoming WinLink presentations and Region 1 FEMA goals of implementing WinLink as the radio version of email. There was a brief discussion about the implementing SHARES which I will have a brief article in the next newsletter explaining what it is.

This coming year I have set some goals to be finished by Field Day 2024. They are:

1. Finish the EMA radio room
2. Have the group proficient in using WinLink
3. Test six different bands to discover the viability of the use of each band for simplex communications in our county
4. Review the newer 2019 CERT manual focusing on the communications section.

5. Find, check and update each of the deployed VHF radios at fire/EMS departments and health services departments (Hospitals and clinics.).
6. Acquire and setup a Fusion and DMR radio at the EMA that will reach 'local' repeaters.
7. Have an amateur radio testing session in this county for the people who have either been studying or have the books to test and receive their licenses.
8. Complete an updated inventory of our equipment at the EMA and in the Communication Trailer.

These goals I have listed are not in any specific order.

At the BOAT Anchor Hamfest in Augusta on February 10th I hope to gather support and personnel to have a test session here in Oxford County this spring. Some books have been in the hands of potential hams for a year. It would be good to have these folks licensed and on the air.

Countywide Testing Six Different Bands

In the upcoming months, we will be testing six different bands after a regularly scheduled Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm net on Monday nights.

160 Meter Test

The first test will be February 12, 2024 for Phone (voice) on 160 meters at or around 1935 khz (Lower Side Band). This should be a good winter frequency for night communications. I will be contacting members of the group who are typically unable to meet with us on Mondays to schedule a second test in later in the month of February on a different week night. The tests will probably run ten to fifteen minutes at most, so if you have the equipment please join us. Also please note CQ 160 meter contest date for

SSB: 2200Z February 23 - 2200Z February 25, 2024

2 Meter FM Simplex Tests

The second test will be after the February 19, 2024 net for Phone (voice) on 2 meters on the 146.550 Mhz to be followed on our secondary frequency 147.435 Mhz. We may use a digital mode from the Fldigi

suite, so please dust that off and check connections before the net that night.

ALSO If you haven't used the brief messaging feature in APRS either in a long time or ever please review that feature. I would like to test that system at the conclusion of our meeting in February. Someone will be generating a message over the system from the EMA and a response back will give us as a group this messaging system capabilities.

10 & 6 Meter Test

The next test will be February 26, 2024 following the regularly scheduled net. Currently I am looking at 28.375 Mhz (+or – 5khz) USB and 51.20 Mhz (+or – 5khz)USB & 52.54 FM (Simplex Calling).

40 and 60 Meter Test

The final test will be for 40 meters at 7.262 (and the frequency is subject to change depending on time of day and foreign broadcasters on frequency.) The 60 meter test will be on voice channel 2 (5.3465 Mhz USB) with a backup of channel 3 (5.3570 Mhz USB)

Other Oxford County ARES & CERT Communication News:

February 5, 2024 meeting:

- We will be discussing projects and equipment planning and have grant deadlines coming up for CERT Comm funding. (March 15th?)
- Planning for Trek Across Maine and the Maine Radio Rodeo.
- Setting up a time to install the Fusion radio in the radiator room.
- Finishing the radio room (Console, Tiles on wall, white board hung, etc...)

Reminder that the Augusta Boat Anchor Hamfest is February 10
MAINE BULLETIN 24-002

Boat Anchor Hamfest

The Boat Anchor Hamfest will be a great place to buy, sell, swap used and new ham radio gear and other items. It is also a fantastic opportunity to meet your fellow hams in person and break the winter blues with some socializing and fun.

It will be held Saturday, February 10 from 8am until noon at the Club Calumet, 334 W River RD, Augusta, ME. Entrance fee is \$5.00.

VE exams will be held at 9:30am. VE Team Liaison is Joseph G. Devonshire, AB1YO email trainbee@aol.com.

Hamfest coordinator is George Szadis, K1GDI. Food and refreshments will be available.

Also mark your calendar:

Major Change At NearFest

-NEAR-Fest XXXV, will be held FOR TWO FULL DAYS, on Thursday April 25th and Friday April 26th 2024.

There has been a significant change for the spring version of NearFest in NH for April 2024. There will be no hamfest on that Saturday. Check out the details here: <https://near-fest.com/>.

The gates will open on Thursday morning, at 7:00 AM for PREPAID TICKET HOLDERS ONLY so you might want to buy your tickets online well in advance starting February 1st 2024 on our Web site, www.near-fest.com, or in March at the Ham Radio Outlet store in Salem NH and at Ross Hochstrasser's Clock Shop in Whitman MA and get your favorite spot. NEAR-Fest XXXV will end at 3:00 PM on Friday.

Prepaid ticket holders will line up and enter via Gate C as we did in the Fall. They **MUST** have **ALL of their needed tickets and inside parking passes** or they will be sent to Gate F. This includes all Campers, RVs, tenters, who **MUST** also have their overnight camping passes as there will be NO tickets or passes sold at Gate C.

Anyone needing to buy tickets or parking passes will go to Gate F and will be admitted starting at 8:00AM. Once the line has entered at Gate C it will close and all others entering the grounds will proceed to Gate F.

We are saddened by the passing of Martin Engstrom N1ARY. He was a mentor, a friend, a colleague to many in our group. Services were January 20, 2024.



For those of you not volunteering at the Trek Across Maine in June, you may want to attend the 2024 Maine ARRL State Convention & Hamfest

Plans continue for the Maine State Convention & Hamfest set for June 15, 2024. Be sure to get your room at one of two locations which are conveniently close to the Augusta Civic Center.

Attention Vendors: Please reserve your tables EARLY! We will have 100 tables available for vendors and want to get them filled. Contact Cory Golob by either calling 207-514-0202 or email convention@w1npp.org to discuss vendor arrangements. Take advantage of the savings reduction by getting your table before the deadline to reduce costs. People have already expressed interest in giving talks.

People who have already committed to giving talks:

- Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC, ARRL New England Director: ARRL Forum Update
- Bruce Blain, K1BG, CW Academy
- Bill Richardson, NG1P, Maine Mesh Network Status

Our Door Prize will be an Icom 7300 HF Radio.

Raffle Tickets for a Honda EU-2200i 2.2 kW Generator, value \$1400 must be purchased in-person for \$10 per ticket or 3 for \$20. These tickets will also enter you for a chance to win one of two Wavian 5.3 gallon gas cans and one of two Cordless DeWalt impact drivers. You can purchase them from an Androscoggin ARC club member or email convention@w1npp.org so we can meet up with you. You do not have to be present to win the raffles. These tickets help support the convention and activities of the Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club.

The Augusta Civic Center will be selling concessions on premise. Everyone is looking forward to this new venue and the Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club is excited to host it. Please visit the 2024 ARRL Maine State Convention & Hamfest webpage at the w1npp website to stay updated on the progress.

Oxford County ARES/CERT Comm Monthly Meeting

February 5, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

Pre-meeting Dinner

Applebee's in Oxford

February 5, 2024 @ 5:00 PM