



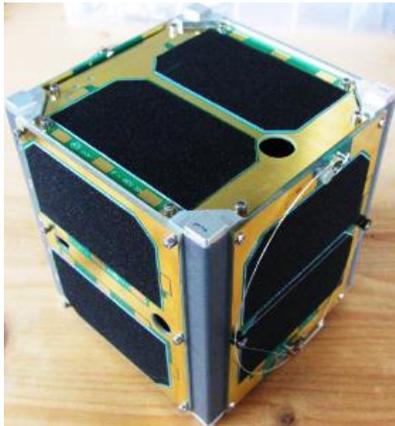
Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for September 2015



Fox Telemetry Software for Windows, Mac, & Linux



Rebuilt tri-band Yagi goes up in Bath

By Robert "Bob" Oxton. W1RSO



For those of you thinking of trying your hand at listening to or communicating through the FOX-1A and follow-on FOX cube satellites the following website from AMSAT and help you detect when the cube(s) are in range by listening for the telemetry download. The following website can tell you how to download the needed software so you can receive and demodulate the telemetry.

http://www.amsat.org/?page_id=4532

Amsat said, "The Fox Telemetry Decoder is being released to demodulate, store and analyze telemetry data from AMSAT's Fox series of Cube Sats. We hope that you will also upload the telemetry you receive to the AMSAT server so that it can be used by other Amateur Scientists and our research partners, whose experiments fly with the Fox satellites."



I finally got my 1970's Wilson System-33 Tri-Band beam back up in the air. Wilson parts are no longer available, so I had to totally rebuilt it with parts from Mosley/Hygain, DX Engineering with all stainless fasteners. In the late 70s it started out as a Wilson System-33 that I obtained from Bruce Randall, W1ZE.

In addition I rebuilt my 1970's BX tower and added a Rohn TB3 thrust bearing on top. I had to remove the house siding and rebuild the wall with plywood to make it structurally strong enough to mount the tower. I totally rebuilt an Alliances rotor I got from Dana McCurdie, KB1CV with parts from Norm's Rotors. I sandblasted it and then sprayed it with aluminum paint.

The antenna is up about 60'. Now I hope everything holds up.

I originally sent the above photo to Bruce, W1ZE because I thought he might like seeing his old antenna 32 years later.

73's. Bob



Start an amateur radio virtuous circle

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

On the ham_instructor Yahoo Group (https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ham_instructor/info) recently, we talked about the classes that we are going to be offering this fall. About his Tech class, Bob, K0NR, noted, "Currently have about 30 students signed up. We keep thinking we'll run out of interested people but they keep coming."

I've noticed the same thing here, too. I keep thinking that I am going to run out of people to teach, but I have no problem at all filling my classes. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that the more people that have taken my class, the more people there are that want to take it.

Of course, this makes perfect sense. If there are more people out there who have amateur radio licenses, there are more people out there talking about amateur radio, and actually doing amateur radio. And, the more people out there talking

about and doing amateur radio, the more likely it is that other people will become interested in amateur radio and get their licenses as well.

It's an amateur radio "virtuous circle."

What does this tell you? Well, if you're in a place where amateur radio seems to be dying out, or belong to a club that is slowly fading away, start a class! I think every club should hold classes at least once a year, even if that first class has only one or two students. Those first few students are the start of your virtuous circle.

Don't know how to start a class? I can help you there. Start by reading my blog post, "Teaching a one-day class" (<http://www.kb6nu.com/teaching-a-one-day-tech-class/>). It has a lot of practical information, including tips on how to select a venue, how to publicize the class, how to get people to sign up for the class, and finally, how to teach the class.

You might also want to join the ham_instructor mailing list I mentioned earlier. It's a relatively low-volume list, but the subscribers have a lot of experience that you can tap into.

Also, get a copy of my free Tech study guide (<http://www.kb6nu.com/study-guides/>). Not to brag (well, OK I am bragging), but I really think that it's the best study guide for a one-day class. The study guide presents the topics in exactly the same order as I cover them in class. Read through it and you'll see what I mean.

If you need more help, or even just some encouragement, e-mail me, and I'll do what I can to help you. Seriously.

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When not teaching ham classes or publishing amateur radio study guides, Dan, KB6NU, operates CW on the HF bands (mostly 40m and 30m). His #1-rated amateur radio blog can be found at KB6NU.Com, and you can e-mail questions, comments, or complaints to cwgeek@kb6nu.com.



Six Meter FM on the mid coast

By Bruce Randall W1ZE

On September the 29th I was checking out some of the other modes and bands I had in memory on my trusty old IC-746PRO and when I got to my previously programmed six-meter

repeaters that I can reach from down here along the Kennebec River in Phippsburg.

The first repeater I had programmed was the 53.050/52.050 K1AAM/R repeater in Litchfield. Just about the time I was to check out the next repeater I heard a station ID but I missed his call sign. Thinking it most likely was a local mid coast ham I gave a quick QRZed and Cory, N3FE/mobile in northeast Pennsylvania came back. It appears the K1MMA repeater is tied into a VoIP link that comes out in various places in the northeast. Cory and I chatted for several minutes before he had to stop for gas. Then a station in Concord, NH came in and asked for a report, which I gave him a 'clear and solid copy' report.

Many newer multi-mode/multi-band transceivers now include six meters. If you have one but have not programmed in the local southern and central Maine repeaters, you never know who may be listening

Here is a list of six meter FM repeaters in southern/central Maine that you may be able to access with a very simple antenna:

1. 53.050 – 52.050 (pl 136.5) K1AAM, Litchfield
2. 53.290 – 52.290 (pl 136.5) N1XBN, Scarborough
3. 53.370 – 52.370 (pl 136.5) K1AAM, Hiram
4. 53.550 – 52.550 (pl 91.5) KC1CG, Lenfest Mt., Washington
5. 53.570 – 52.570 (pl 151.4) W1EMJ, Harrison

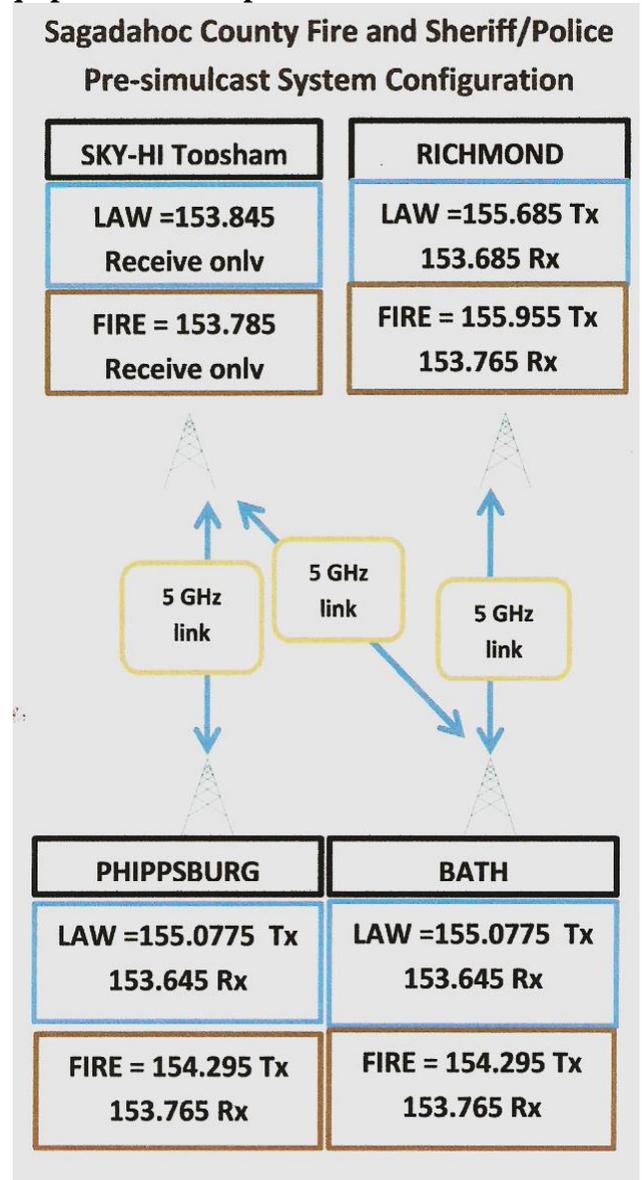
Most all six meter repeaters in New England have a minus 1 MHz offset, however other parts of the country may use a 500 kHz offset. If your fancy multi-band rice box transceiver includes six meters, give SIX FM a try. 73, W1ZE



The New Sagadahoc County Police & Fire Communications System

Several years ago Sagadahoc County with the cooperation of most of the municipalities within the County got together to develop a countywide Pre-simulcast communications system for the

Sheriff's Department and all the local Police and Fire Departments. This system eliminated the need for each town to have its own radio dispatch and 911 interface. The only odd man out was the Town of Topsham which decided to keep its own communications system with equipment and dispatchers.



To provide countywide two-way radio coverage using narrowband (+/- 2.5 kHz deviation) FM it was necessary to establish several receiver-transmitter sites around the county and link them all together. Not all the sites used the same VHF frequencies and are using some new frequencies in the VHF public service band. All the receiver and transmitter frequencies employ PL tones for encode and decode purposes. The

various sites are all linked together by a 4.9 GHz backbone link system.

The above illustration shows how the system is configured. The chart can be handy when you are adding Sagadahoc County first responder frequencies to your scanner receiver of Ham Radio FM transceiver to monitor county first responder radio activity.

This change in Sagadahoc County does not effect the frequencies of northern Cumberland County first responders in Brunswick, Harpswell and Freeport. Those frequencies are:

- Brunswick Police = 155.370
- Brunswick Fire = 154.340
- Harpswell Fire = 154.190
- Freeport Fire = 154.385
- Freeport PD = P25 digital

Note: Brunswick PD has the ability (equipment) to use P25 digital, but at this time they remain in FM analog



Email from Al Corderman, W3ZD relays bad news

In early October we received the following email from MARA member and our good friend Al Corderman, W3ZD.

I don't know if the word got out at our last MARA meeting, but I have pancreatic cancer and have been given a 3-9 month life expectancy, depending on whether I elect to get chemo and radiation or not. Please get this info out to the MARA and QCWA gangs. Many thanks. Al

Bruce Randall, W1ZE and Steve Kerchel, AA4AK have been keeping in close contact with Al. They indicate that he still wants to participate in Association and Ham social activities if he can. We will try and keep you all informed as to how he is doing.

Please keep our friend Al in your thoughts and prayers. If you get the chance, give him a call at 207-841-7670 for a cherry chat and maybe an eyeball QSO at his Highlands Senior community apartment located at:

30 Governors Way, apt 308, Topsham, 04086.



Yearend dinner party, where will it be?

The leaves have fallen from the trees and winter weather is just around the corner. It is also that time of year when we start making plans for the annual Yearend Dinner. At the next MARA meeting the event will be discussed and we would like recommendations on where and when to hold it. Try and make the meeting, but if you can't, let Dan (N5AGG), Harry (N1TTT), Steve (AA4AK) or Marjorie (KX1I) know of your recommendation .



MARA-Midcoast CERT/ARES show their stuff at the Brunswick, Cook's Corner Firehouse



Brunswick: On Saturday, October 10th several members of the Midcoast CERT-ARES and MARA team gathered at the Cook's Corner fire station to participate in the fire safety event there. As you can see in the previous photo the team set up the CERT-ARES awning and a portable station to show the public how Ham Radio can be used in the case of emergencies and other community communication needs.



The group had many members of the public stop by to see the operation and the team put the Midcoast CERT-ARES team and Amateur Radio in a very good light. Thanks goes out to John, K1JJS, Harry, N1TTT, Marjorie, KX1I, Scott, KC1AFU, Steve, AA4AK, and Daniel, N5AGG. **WELL DONE!**



NEXT MEETING PROGRAM

By George Szadis, K1GDI

Ever fall off your tower or looked into the rear view mirror to see your roof load flying off into the wind?

Peter Child, K1MPM and assistants will present a program on knots for the ham radio operator. Simple and basic knots for many occasions. Best part is they ability to easily untie them. Names such as bowline and sheepshank will be part of your vocabulary.

You will be able to try these and practice at your seat. Not just a demo. Did you know that mountain climbing is the most dangerous sport in the world? Some of those fatalities wish they had taken this knot tying demo.

Activity survey. We would like to survey the members for interests and thoughts on programs for the MARA meetings.

How about some ideas on areas of interest to include ham radio but not restricted. Maybe you have some hobbies that might be of interest to the club. Never know what might develop.

Theme meetings on antennas, digital modes or construction projects? Building a rocket and launching our own satellite for ham use? Building Christmas ornaments out of radio junkbox parts. Costume party dressing up as famous people in electronic history?



MARA Prez's Sez

My topic for this month is Association participation, or lack thereof:

We had a scaled back Field Day this year because of low participation. A recent event at the Brunswick Fire station for Fire Safety Week only had 6 people show up, and 2 of those were there for a brief time because of prior commitments. Those who did participate were: John, K1JJS, Harry, N1TTT, Marjorie, KX1I, Scott, KC1AFU, Steve, AA4AK, and Daniel, N5AGG.

This is bordering on the pathetic. Participation at public events is the means whereby we as hams practice for the eventuality of a real event, whether manmade or natural. Read that again, slowly.

If you think that you will wait until the real deal to offer your services, think again. You will be turned away because you will be considered a liability and not an asset. This is real life, and the few who do keep up have an undue burden placed upon them because of your intransigence. I would like to see our participation rate turn around. I am proud of being a ham and giving back to my community. Are you?

73, Daniel N5AGG



New 2-Meter repeater in Brunswick

That is correct. There is a new repeater on 147.330 MHz with a PL of 100.0 Hz. The listing says it belongs to Michael Lawler, K0LDO. It is operating on a trial basis from either the Exec. Airport or Woodward Cove in Brunswick. It appears to be a low-level installation because is only S-1 at W1ZE's QRH. If you have more info on it, pass it along to w1ze@arrl.net.

