

## Signals Downeast

HOLIDAY EDITION!



**HAM RADIO 2018**  
WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE NEW YEAR?



**2018 VE SCHEDULE**  
HAM RADIO TESTS IN ELLSWORTH AND STEUBEN



**GOTA ANY DAY**  
INVITE NEWBIES TO GET ON THE AIR



# LONG PATH



## Bob Curtis W1GRG

**War in the South Pacific**, Maine's paper mills, Ham Radio, and a large and growing family have all shaped Bob Curtis's life. Many of us hams know Bob as W1GRG and hear him regularly checking into the Maine Seagull Net on 75 meters. In fact, he has been a ham since 1955 and was a Seagull net controller into the sixties.

Bob W1GRG at Ellsworth ham radio breakfast, and Joan N1NUA looking on.

What you probably don't know about Bob is that he fibbed about his age and joined the Marines when he was 16. He had three brothers that were already in the service and he was just anxious to join the military as well.

Bob celebrated his 17th birthday from the South Pacific war zone in World War II. As a Marine machine-gunner he saw action in the Solomon Islands, Tarawa, and other places. He just missed landing on Iwo Jima because he and his unit were sent back to Kauai for some medical tests, since they had been deployed for 22 months. They found a spot on his lungs so the Marine Corps decided to send him back stateside. "I got out of Iwo Jima. I lost a lot of guys over there," said Bob during a recent interview at his home in Ellsworth. He got to see the WWII memorial and the other war monuments in Washington, DC when he flew down there on one of the "Honor" flights.

**Paper Mill Industry.** After the war, Bob returned to work within Maine's paper mill industry. At one point in his career he traveled quite extensively when he worked for the Saint Regis Paper Company, including to Texas, Florida, and the west coast. He retired in 1984 from the Bucksport mill where he was production manager.

**Ham Radio Inspired.** Bob became interested in ham radio after his friend Cliff Boviar W1RBD, who was paralyzed and worked at the paper mill in Jay with him, showed Bob his station. He took the test in Wilton and remembers Phil Young-W1JTH and some of the other senior hams being there at the time. He was first licensed as WN1GRG as a Novice. "We had to stay on cw for a year before we could get the 'n' removed," he said. His first station consisted of a Globe Scout he built himself, and a Hallicrafter receiver, and an off-center fed dipole.

Bob recalls that he first started serving as Seagull Net Control around 1956 and continued through 1960ish, when it was still AM. Other net controllers at that time were John Phillips K1BXI and Harland Hitchings K1HHC. (K1HHC just passed away recently)

## *ARRL Kids Day January 7*



Invite a young person to operate your ham station on Kids Day. Inspire them now. You never know, that on-air experience may spark an interest in ham radio and one day they could earn their own 'ticket!'

“Sideband came in during the early 60s and they took 11 meters away from us,” said Bob.

Bob has always liked 80 meters and can usually be found nowadays on 3940 kilocycles. However, he used to get on 15 and 20 meters, especially when he was in Florida, so that he could keep in touch with his ham friends back in Maine.

**Bomber and Fighter Jet Down!** Bob enjoyed the public service aspect of the amateur radio service and actively participated in emergency communications. On two occasions he provided communications assistance when military aircraft crashed in Maine. In 1963 a B-52 bomber crashed on Elephant Mountain. Bob kept about a hundred kilocycles clear on 80 meters in case they were needed in support of the search and rescue operation. Bob had maintained a relationship with the commanders of the Bangor and Limestone bases. When a fighter jet was lost out of Bangor in 1961, he relayed information to the base that he received via cw from a mobile ham on location at the crash site. He had certificates from the military for his efforts, but lost all of his ham radio records, logs, and personal belongings in a house fire when he lived in Orland. He also lost about \$5,000 in ham radio equipment in the fire. That event kept him off the air for a few years.



**Section Emergency Coordinator** was a title Bob held for quite awhile in Maine and he had net controllers in each county and even started a net on Sundays. He used to travel to clubs to talk about emergency communications, including clubs in Ellsworth and the St Croix club in Washington County. He would also visit the FCC Monitoring Office in Searsport. “At that time they had a lot of problems with CBers using too much power,” said Bob. He recalls the FCC monitoring wayward CBers in Washington County.

**The Brady Bunch** family pales when compared to Bob’s & Rena’s family. They were both widowed when they met, and decided to get married. Between the two of them they have 14 children, about 29 grandchildren [ed. note: it’s easy to lose track when you have that many!], and about 22 great-grandchildren, and counting. “They all blend together like one big family,” he said. None of them are ham radio operators. Yet.

W1GRG was born and raised in Maine. He is now 91 and still enjoys playing golf, attending the Ellsworth ham radio breakfast meetings, and getting on-the-air.

## Ham Radio Outlook For 2018

The coming year is shaping up to be a banner year for ham radio activity in Eastern Maine. Efforts to get schools on the air, balloon launches, special events, and more are in the works. N1EP is creating a new web site that targets youth and hopes to entice them to learn about the various aspects of ham radio. Check out the still “under construction” <http://kidz.n1ep.com> web site. It includes videos and other information that might be of interest to the younger generations. Send your suggestions to [phil@n1ep.com](mailto:phil@n1ep.com).



**kidz-radioActive** aims to recruit new and younger hams to the hobby.

The former Narraguagus ARC has reactivated as the **Maine Ham Radio Society**. A website has been created for the club and a substantial web site revamp should be complete soon with a large assortment of photos from NBARC’s history.

### December Meetings

- EAWA Xmas Pot Luck will be Saturday, December 9 at noon at Meadow View Apts Phase IV Dining Hall, Ellsworth.
- MHRS Xmas Pot Luck Junior Supper will be Thursday, December 21 at 6 pm at the home of Brian Carlton KC1FXF, 1150 Mason Bay Rd in Jonesport, ME

N1EP has also created a Facebook page — N1EP@downeasthamradio — to post current ham radio news and test session reminders. If you haven’t “liked” the page yet, go to <https://www.facebook.com/downeasthamradio/> and press the LIKE button. Then you should see ham radio notices in your feed.

The Ellsworth Amateur Wireless Association will continue its **Sunday Projects** sessions through the winter months. All are welcome. Hams or others can come and work on projects such as building kits, programming radios, or just play radio. Sometimes you can see a demonstration of packet radio, APRS, Digital

comms, or some other aspect of ham radio at the sessions. Sessions start at noon at the Meadow View Apts Phase IV Dining Hall, 25 Tweedie Lane, Ellsworth.

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## Field Day 2018

The American Radio Relay League's annual Field Day is the fourth full weekend of June. Ham radio clubs and individuals go into the field and operate contest-style and make as many contacts as possible in a 24-hour period all while using non-commercial electrical power and often using home-brew antennas. Field Day will be June 23-24 in 2018. Now is the time for clubs to start planning for this much-loved ham radio event.



Doing it in a public venue not only earns more bonus points, it also gives the public a chance to see what ham radio is all about and can be a great recruitment opportunity. The photo here illustrates why Field Day is so popular, at least when EAWA and NBARC got together. It doesn't have to be Thanksgiving for turkey!

**Autumn Gold Special Event W1G** *The Poverty Hill Amateur Radio Group* has secured the special 1X1 call sign W1G for use during and around the Autumn Gold celebrations in Ellsworth. EAWA and MHRS are invited to join forces and coordinate public demonstrations of ham radio during Autumn Gold, and perhaps schedule a portable operating event during the 10-day period that the call has been issued starting on September 20. QRP, QRO, let's start planning now!

**Train-Mobile?** Dick, W1KRP, and others have mentioned the possibility of doing a special ham radio operations on the Downeast train out of Ellsworth. Let's make this happen. A little birdie told me that the folks running the train would love us to do something like that and that it would be great positive publicity.

## CW Training Net

The Morse Code training net will start up again sometime in January, So get that straight key or paddle out and get ready to send some dahs and dits! (date, time, freq coming soon.)



**2018****Ham Radio Test Sessions**

Down East

Wednesday Jan 10 at 6:00 pm in Steuben.Wednesday Mar 14 at 6:00 pm in Steuben.Saturday May 19 at 1:00 pm in Ellsworth.Wednesday July 18 at 6:00 pm in Steuben.Saturday Sep 22 at 1:00 pm in Ellsworth.Wednesday Nov 14 at 6:00 pm in Steuben.

Ellsworth exam session location: Meadow View  
Apartments Phase IV Dining Hall, 25 Tweedie  
Lane

Steuben exam session location: Henry D. Moore  
Parrish Hall & Library.

**Just Get-On-The-AIR!!**

For years the ARRL has advocated Field Day operations to set up a GOTA station for non-hams or inexperienced hams to operate field day. Why not use a Get-On-The-Air station any day of the year? It can be right in your own shack, or at a club meeting, or public demonstration. Portable and mobile work as well. Invite people to use your equipment to make ham radio contacts. Imagine the inspiration you can instill when you allow a person to talk with a ham in Europe, or even other stations just a few towns away. There is something magical, as you know, about ham radio, and you just might spark that interest and recruit a new ham radio operator. There are also plenty of hams who are limited from operating from within their homes or communities. You can give them a chance to GOTA! Anyone wishing to GOTA from the N1EP shack in Milbridge can email [phil@n1ep.com](mailto:phil@n1ep.com) and we will make it happen!

**Local Nets**

Mondays - DownEast Information & Emergency Net 146.595 at 1830 (6:30 pm).

Washington County ARES Net 147.330+ (PL 118.8) at 1900 (7:00 pm).

Tuesdays - Digital Net 146.910- (PL 151.4) repeater at 1830 (6:30 pm) (**No Net Nov 28**)

Hancock County EmComm Net 146.910 repeater at 1900 (7pm)

Wednesday - Ellsworth Amateur Wireless Assn on-air meeting 147.030+ (pl 100) at 1900