

WELLS HARBORFEST

By Tony Baker - AA3HD

Photos By Tony-AA3HD, and Paul-KYIC



The 2022 Wells HarborFest took place on Saturday August 6th from 11 AM to 3 PM. For those of you unfamiliar with this old-fashioned, family-friendly event, HarborFest is an annual free, fun-filled few hours of enjoyment and great memories for everyone young and not so young! The Wells Rotary Club and the Wells Chamber of Commerce are responsible for making this community-oriented festival possible. Other sponsors included Poland Spring Natural Spring Water, Kennebunk Savings, Congdon's Doughnuts, and Webhannet River Bait & Tackle.

Activities for the day were numerous, and were not only entertaining and fun, but educational as well. They included a kids crabbing activity, the lobster trap toss world championships, a doughnut eating contest, and demonstrations by the Wells Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Service to name a few. Food, live music, and a variety of vendors rounded out the recreational pursuits. Free shuttle service from the junior high school parking lot was provided by Shoreline Explorer.

But what I want to focus on here that also took place at HarborFest was the emergency communications demonstrations put on by members of the York County Emergency Communications Team (YCECT), and the York County Amateur Radio Club. (I am a member of both organizations.) In conjunction with the York County Emergency Management's emergency communications van, the YCECT utilized amateur radio gear to show firsthand how radio communication works and can support the community in times of need.



Bill-KB1CAT, providing direction to get the emergency communications van parked next to the portable antenna setup.



Among the communication gear in the York EMA emergency communications van are banks of VHF, UHF, and HF radios that monitor police, fire, hospital, and school radio systems. All are tied into two redundant consoles allowing up to four dispatchers to work at once if necessary.

The YCECT started setting up at about 9 AM, with the erection of a 20 meter antenna made up of two 20 meter hamsticks in a dipole configuration atop an MFJ tri-pod/buddypole setup some 30 feet high.



Dave- AA1LO, Jimmie-KC1ETT, and Rick- KB1ASM start the process of erecting the antenna.



Jimmie-KCIETT holds the telescoping mast sections while the hamsticks are attached to the top section.



Antenna setup and ready for operations.



Paul-KY1C, Dave-AA1LO, and Bill-KB1CAT pose with the York EMA emergency communications van.

Throughout the event, HarborFest attendees were free to stop by the EMA vehicle to watch operators making real-time contacts, as well as tour the emergency communications van. We got off to a rocky start when the primary HF radio we had kept cutting out right after power was put to it. But like all ecomm-equipped hams, another member of the team had a go-box ready and we were in business. Unfortunately, the propagation was not great, and we only operated on 20 meters. However, we made some interesting and fun QSO's including one to John-K8VON, at a balloon festival in Ohio. QSO's also were made to Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia.



Paul-KY1C, makes the first contact of the day with his well fitted-out go-box. Rick-KB1ASM looks on.



Rick-KBIASM takes a turn making QSO's while Dave-AA1LO checks on the state of propagation.



Tony-AA3HD, calling "CQ, CQ, CQ Wells Maine HarborFest."

The YCECT is always looking for volunteers. If you live in York County and are interested in providing emergency communications, or have questions regarding this endeavor, please contact Neil-K1NBT at K1NBT@yahoo.com Also, thank you to Rick, the driver of the emergency communications van.