

The Repeater

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WX4BCA 147.285 + (131.8)

Amateur Radio Club of Butts County

Jackson, GA



HURRICANES, HURDLES, AND HAMS

An Interview with David Benoist

by Nancy Phillips

Mother Nature has the ball. She's coming at you at 140 mph. What do you do? You tackle her! That's one responsibility of our Section Manager and the Section Emergency Coordinator. They provide deployable members for recovery communications. Georgia ARES Section Manager, David Benoist, kindly granted an interview about preparation activities for hurricanes. Although Georgia did not activate, we came very close. With Florence bearing down on South Carolina, folks in SC found themselves scrambling for additional help.

When Irma slammed Puerto Rico, David arranged transport of 21 go-kits provided by ARRL from the Atlanta airport to the staging point, in prep for Puerto Rico. It took 3 vehicles! As kit contents were being inventoried for shipment, 50 deployables showed up. From that 50, 22 were selected (3 from GA) to go to P.R. for 3 weeks. To be deployed, you must have the ability to not only send an E-mail with WinLink, but be able to send it by an HF radio transmission. In many cases, you may be going to a place with no internet, no lights, no water. Are you mentally ready for that as well as being packed? These will be emergency conditions, not the Hilton. Do you have everything?

Déjà Vu! As Florence neared the Carolinas, David was asked again to transfer 7 go-kits to a SC Section Emergency Coordinator, Billy Irwin K9OH. David, and Larry Whited AB4NX, a MAT team member, drove the go-kits

to Augusta, Georgia and transferred them to Billy Irwin.

During Irma, a ham operator in Texas became aware that transmissions from P.R. were using his HF Winlink E-mail gateway. He erected a 40m antenna and aimed it directly at P.R. to increase message traffic capabilities, thus being a great asset during that hurricane!

When the Governor declared a state of emergency, a 5-man MAT team was put on stand-by. ARES in Butts Co was alerted in case we needed to activate. David and SEC Frank Dean K4SJR were working to get every ARES/AuxComm equipped county in GA covered. Frank, David, and Don Coltrane KJ4UC from Cherokee Co ARES worked at the State Operations Center (SOC) to establish initial communications in case Florence actually moved into Georgia.

ARES/AuxComm serves a vital role in emergencies on many levels. Amateur radio operators are a precious commodity. Have you considered becoming part of ARES?



Go-Kit Exchange
Augusta, GA
12 Sept 2018

2 men from State of SC State Force, SEC Billy Irwin K9OH, and GA ARES Section Manager David Benoist, AG4ZR

Photo courtesy of David Benoist

Nancy Phillips

Editor

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SEPTEMBER 2018

Whit's Wisdom

Whit Smith - WA4VBX

How Hot Is Your Wire?

Have you ever wondered how to tell if you have house branch circuit wiring problems? Look at your receptacles. Are they discolored, or distorted? Are they hot to the touch? If one or more of these conditions are present, attention is required.

One possible problem is that the circuit is overloaded. Add up the power connected to a circuit. Maximum on 15 amp circuit is 1440 volt amperes. $15 \text{ amps} \times 80\% \times 120 \text{ volts} = 1440 \text{ volt amperes}$, and a 20 amp circuit is 1920 volt amperes. In the average residential setting, you can use wattage and volt amperes as roughly the same. However, volt amperes will generally be slightly higher than wattage.

Another possibility is that the screw terminals of the receptacle are not sufficiently tight.

A third possibility is that the tension on the contacts of the receptacle have become too weak to provide good connections.

A fourth possibility is that the receptacle failed in service for some reason.

A fifth possibility is that the plug is bad, possibly because some of the strands of the wire have broken. Whatever the cause it needs to be corrected.

It would be a good idea to feel all cords and the plugs that are plugged into each receptacle. If any of them are more than barely warm to the touch, then attention is required. Also, you need to feel each receptacle to see if it is warm to the touch even if nothing is plugged into the receptacle. If the receptacle is more than barely warm to the touch, attention is required.

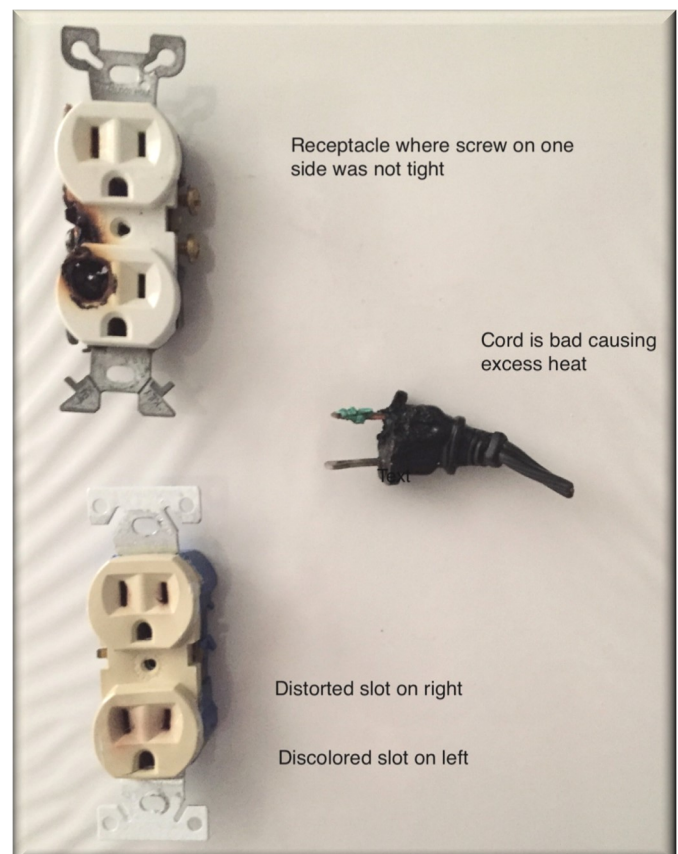
When you push a plug into a receptacle, there should be a fair amount of effort required. If it is very easy to insert the plug, then the receptacle should be replaced.

If you want to test to see if you have any loose screws on receptacles, get a 1200 to 1500 watt electric space heater and plug it into the receptacle. Turn the

heater on for several minutes. If the receptacle is faulty, it will be more than barely warm to the touch. It would be a good idea to check all receptacles on each circuit. Wall switches can also become faulty and over heat. When you operate a wall switch, it should not have any popping or sparking noise. If it does, it should be replaced. If a wall switch doesn't operate the same way every time it is operated, it probably is faulty.

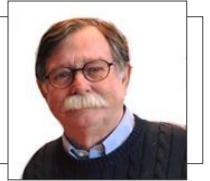
Look at the picture below. Fortunately each of these conditions did not result in a fire. In each case receptacle replacement and plug replacement was all required to correct the faulty conditions.

This is one of those projects that can be partly done by most anyone, however receptacle and switch replacement is not a first time project. ♦



NOTES FROM THE BACK ACRE

_ Buzz Kutcher, K3GWK



The heliacal rising of the star system Sirius has passed. That means, hopefully, that the hottest and stormiest part of the summer is over. Let's hope so anyway. According to the weather station here at *The Backacre*, the high for the last 31 days was 102° - Heat Index High was 120° - I sure am glad that Field Day isn't held in August.

Mike Crowe, AJ4GU, deserves the "2018 Patience Award" for the excellent Tech Saturday he facilitated on August 18th. I enjoyed the opportunity to see what's new in coax connector installation tools and techniques. My plans to build up some jumpers were foiled by not having the correct crimp-on connectors. I did get to watch and do a little Elmering. Thanks again to Mike and the members who attended the session. Unless the presenter's plans change, the October Tech Saturday will be about working the LEO satellites.

We are looking for additional operators for the weekly Public Health D-STAR net. If you are available in the day-time and want to get a little more active, contact Ken Wallis or me. The net is held every Thursday morning at 08:30 (arrive by 08:15) and usually lasts about 30 minutes. We currently have five operators to cover these four or five weekly nets. All of the needed radio equipment is installed at the Butts County Health Department office; this is a "plug-n-play" operation. It is a great learning opportunity; any ARES member who is working toward ACTIVE status is invited to join the DPH team.

The **Simulated Emergency Test** is scheduled for 06OCT2018. For us this will be primarily a message handling exercise. Several stations will be activated including portable, home, the 911 Center and the station at Wellstar Sylvan Grove Hospital. The exercise will use WL2K and NBEMS (Fldigi and Fmsg) to pass injected messages between local stations and also to the ham station at the GEMA SOC. WebEOC will also play a role. If you want to operate your home station or set up a port-

able station (HF or UHF/VHF) for the SET, please let me know. We will probably wrap up around lunch time and then proceed to Fresh Air BBQ for the hogwash.

Our July Technician class was cancelled due to a lack of student registrations. It was decided at the recently held Executive Committee meeting to suspend the formal two-day Technician classes and return to the one-day HAMCRAM format. A follow-up Newbie Night will be held later.

No update on the WX4BCA UHF D-Star repeater's connection to the Internet and the worldwide D-STAR network.

All of our ARES Team members have been invited to join ARES Connect. So far, fourteen of our members have registered. Thanks! Check the Events Calendar and be sure to sign up for Butts County activities.

ARES* MEMBERSHIP (09/01/2018):

Deployable: 12 (+2)

Active: 12

Pending: 7 (Need to complete Basic ARES, IS-100 and IS-700 to achieve ACTIVE status)

Total: 31 (If you are not an ARES member and want to get involved, contact me at k3gwk@arrl.net)

August ARES Activities:

Drills, Tests and Training: 9 (110.5 Ham Hours)
– Includes Tuesday's NBEMS Training

Public Service Events: 0

Emergency Operations: 0

Misc. Activities: 3 (66.5 Ham Hours)

Nets: 8 (24.5 Ham Hours) – Sunday WL2K
Test and Tuesday FM Net

Total Ham Hours 200 (Value \$5,000)

**ARES membership is NOT REQUIRED to participate fully in our radio club's activities.*

That's about it from Jenkinsburg Station. (Weather Underground ID: KGAJENKI2)

Thanks again for all you do for Amateur Radio.

73, Buzz (K3GWK)

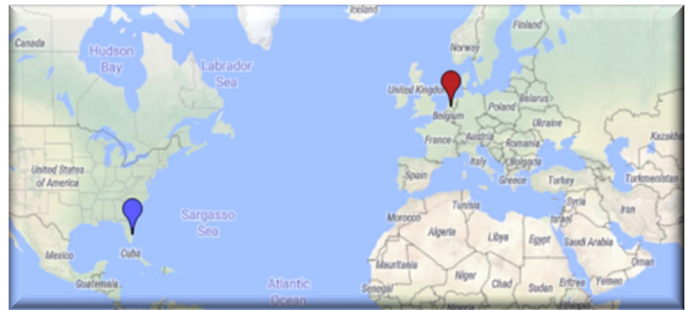
THE EXPLODING DIGITAL MODE

_ Jeff Phillips, KN4FRG

Many Ham operators beginning in a new hobby usually learning to operate on HF try many avenues across all bands, based upon licensing, to get the full experience. Many operators make contacts through phone (voice), digital modes (PSK, RTTY, Throb, etc.), and CW (definitely a learning curve here) or a combination. After a period, operators choose a favorite means to make contact – CW, digital, or voice. But, some feel, the waterfall remains void of signals or your speaker remains silent, except during contests. For the most part, this is true, except for the left side of the band, the digital side (i.e. 14.074, 7.074, 10.136, etc.), if you have not noticed, FT8 is taking the Ham radio community by storm.

The FT8 mode is named after its developers Steven Franke (K9AN) and Joe Taylor (K1JT). This amazing mode is four times faster than the previous like modes, JT65 and JT9, and one can make a contact in less than a minute. The FT8 mode is available in the free software call WSJT-X, physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/wsjsx.html, and the software encapsulates several different communication protocols or modes available for weak signal communications. About any time of the day, operators are using FT8 to make contacts across all bands, some more than others, either for contacts across the state or for DX. See PSKReporter, <https://pskreporter.info/pskmap.html>, the image below shows within a 15 minute timeframe the number

of operators making contacts using FT8 and the next image showing phone (SSB).



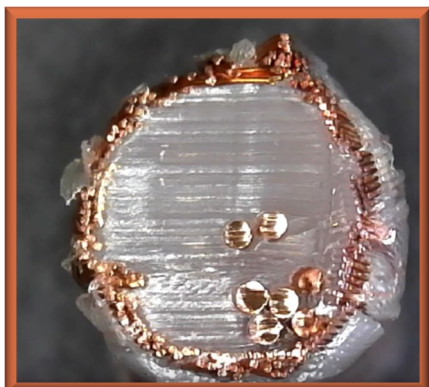
Wow, a huge difference between the two! So, if you have not tried it, or if you are looking to make several contacts, FT8 might be the mode for you.

FT8 is fairly easy to use, especially if you are already doing digital with your system. Most folks use a Signalink for sound card use connecting it between the computer and transceiver. After downloading the software and applying the appropriate settings to WSJT-X the operator is off to make several contacts using this extraordinary mode using low power to talk across continents. The significant letdown for several operators is the lack of real conversation when using FT8, no keyboard to keyboard conversation found in other digital modes like PSK, RTTY, and Olivia. FT8 uses, for the most cases, canned messages to ensure the messages align within the communications protocol. But not to fear FT8 users, there is an experimental mode, very similar to FT8, but called FT8CALL that allows some keyboard conversation.

FT8CALL is a derivative of the WSJT-X application, but restructured and redesigned for keyboard-to-keyboard message traffic. The inventor for this experimental mode is KN4CRD (Jordon Shere). FT8CALL is very similar to FT8 within WSJT-X, but it uses a separate platform, however, with generally the same layout,



Have You Checked Your Coax Lately?



David Burnham reminds us to *check everything*, if you are having a 'bad connection day.' Even the best coax can have a problem.

- ◇ This was a new coax, from a reputable dealer. The outside showed no signs of damage. This should make you aware of why you need to check your coax with a meter before you send it up a tower. The owner was able to locate an issue with his new coax that probably would have caused most of us to have confusion for awhile.

REPORT SYNOPSIS

MEMBERSHIP - Nancy Phillips

As of Sept 10, we have 39 regular members, 2 special members, and 1 Life Member, bringing us to 42.

TREASURY - John Lipscomb, IV, Treasurer

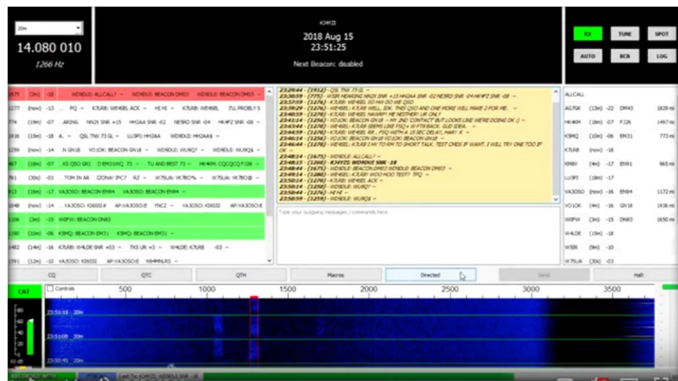
\$3091.83 between the 2 accounts.

FIELD DAY 2019 - Anyone wishing to serve on the FD committee, other than the Band Captains, etc., or having any suggestions they'd like to forward, please contact Nancy at 573-528-0697.

HOSPITAL NET - Hospital internet port is still not available to us, but D-Star and WinLink comms were successfully sent. The additional height to the antenna helped tremendously.

NET NCS for October -- open

The Exploding Digital Modes, continued from page 4



including icons. The FT8CALL has set frequencies (14.080, 7.080, etc.) and setup is like WSJT-X FT8. If the operator uses FT8 now, FT8CALL would be a breeze to setup and use. The conversation takes place one sided. One operator inputs their outgoing message, short to the point, and the software will splice the whole message in 15 sec splits until the conversation is complete. The other operator will see a '~' signaling to him or her it is their turn in the conversation. There are tutorials available to learn and operate in this experimental mode. If anyone wishes to try the mode, the operator must first join the FT8CALL Google group <https://groups.io/g/ft8call/>. After joining the group, the individual would go to <https://groups.io/g/ft8call/wiki/FT8Call-Latest-Release-Download-Links> and download the appropriate version for your computer's operating system ranging from Windows, Linux, and MAC.

If anyone is looking to get their all states award, making those last few DX contacts, and/or participating in the International Grid Contest WSJT-X FT8 might be the mode for you. If you are a seasoned FT8 operator and would like a little more real conversation similar to PSK, then try FT8CALL, the new experimental mode. It takes only a short period to get an account within the google group and access the download for the software. In about 15 minutes, you could be up and running in FT8CALL and making conversation. Try it!! ♦

Is your ARRL membership up-to-date?

This is important for our club affiliation with ARRL. Please update and inform the membership chairman of the new coverage dates.

MESSAGE HANDLING

_with Buzz

Ham operators fall under the Logistics Section of Emergency Operations, but can be assigned to any section for actual operations. There are numerous forms available on *fldigi*. When sending messages for emergency comms, one must use the correct form, and fill it out properly. The most common forms are the 213 and 214 forms; 205 is an incident plan form, and 309 is a comm log. The Correspondence section is used to send, and the Responder section to answer. All forms use analog, except D-Star. In Block 7, notate that the form is being sent in *flmsg*.

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PROGRAMS NEEDED FOR 2018/2019

Programs are needed for the 2018/2019 club year. The programs don't all need to be on technical subjects. I have a Sheriff's Deputy lined up to talk to us about Active Shooter Awareness and I'm working with the NWS on a CoCoRAHs presentation – it's been a while. I'm also planning to ask a local historian to talk to our group about the history of the county we serve. SKYPE presentations would be OK. They actually work very well.

If you have any suggestions, especially if they include a possible presenter, let me know.

Thanks...

Buzz Kutcher, K3GWK
Program Chairman

Ham Radio Support for

Spin For Kids

CQ CQ CQ Spin For Kids

October 21, 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's Spin For Kids Bike Ride is coming soon. You are receiving this email based on your past participation in this important event.

As you may know, Bill Ronay's health is not as good as it once was. He has asked me to assist in getting the rest stops, motorcycle and rovers lined up for this year's event. If you plan to support the event as you have in the past please respond to me (and copy Bill) with your desired station and function, name, email and cell phone number. Also, please let me know if anyone at your rest stop would be willing to be dispatched as a rover in the area of your assignment. I will send another reminder around the first of October.

Your past and future support is critical to the success of the SFK event and I thank you profusely for all you have done. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email or call me.

Best 73 to all and I hope to see and/or hear you on
Sunday, October 21.

Mike Wolcott, W4WYI
w4wyi@comcast.net

6 404-281-6581



NETS

SUNDAY:

Metro ARES FM Net - 1st Sunday ONLY at 1600L,
WA4ASI repeater, Covington, 146.925-, 88.5 PL
KK4GQ repeater, Fayetteville, 145.210 -, 131.8 PL
KC4AQS repeater, Paulding Co, 145.805 +, 100.0 PL

GA ARES/BCECA WL Express Net - Send an ICS-213 to
WX4GMA and WX4BCA by 2200Z. [1700L EST,
winter/1800L, EDT, summer.] Please use a Win
link RF gateway; Winmore packet, if capable;
otherwise, use Telnet.

GA ARES Digital Net - 210Z [1600 EST, winter/1700
EDT, summer.] 3.583 MHz USB.

GA ARES PSK 'Traffic' Net - send an ICS-213 to
WX4GMA NCS, centered on 1500 MHz.

GA ARES PSK 'check-in' Net - Even numbered months,
center on 1000Hz, 'text' check-ins only and will
run concurrently with the PSK 'Traffic' Net.

GA ARES D-RATS Net - 2130Z [1630 EST/1800 EDT].
Odd months, port: gaares.ratflector.com.

GA Section HF Net - 2200Z [1700 EST/1800 EDT], 3.975
MHz LSB, voice, by callsign prefix.

SE Weather Net - 2100L, D-Rats/D-Star, on
sewx.ratflector.com. D-Star Voice on REF004A.

TUESDAY:

Butts County Emergency Comm Training Net - 1930L,
WX4BCA repeater, 147.285 MHz, + offset,
131.8 PL, begins with voice check-ins, followed
by an NBEMS Digital Net. WL Express message
accepted if not sent the previous Sunday. Send
to WX4BCA with name, callsign, location, and
whether you are on mobile or aux power.

WEDNESDAY:

SE Metro Digital Net - 2100L, WX4ASI repeater,
146.925 - & 444.800 -, 88.5 PL. MT63L, center
on 1500 Hz. WL - ICS-213 to K4NCR, D-Rats on
gaares.ratflector.com.

THURSDAY:

NCRC/ARES/ACRES FM Net - 2000L, WA4ASI repeater,
146.925 - & 444.800 -, 88.5 PL. WL - K4NCR.



S.E.T. October 6, 2018

Southeastern Emergency Test

SET is coming up very soon. This is a simulation of emergency services abilities. Butts County ARES group would like to have several stations set up. An HF station is needed for Sylvan Grove Hospital (in the parking lot is fine), the 911 Station will be a main stay, a few scattered home stations are requested, several portable stations are needed. Fire Station 7 will have a station.

The schedule for now is:

0700 - Planning meeting at the Lunch Box

0900 - Begin SET

1300 - End SET

1330 - Hot Wash at Fresh Air BBQ

DATES of OTHER ACTIVITIES --

Newton Ham Club - Sep 29 - Newton Ham Fest - Berry's Christmas Farm. 9AM - 1PM.

Jackson Fall Festival - Oct 20 - 'On the Square'

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 1** - Monthly Meeting, 7 PM, Fairgrounds.
Grounding - Mike Crowe, AJ4GU
- 6** - Simulated Emergency Test (SET)
- 20** - Hungry Hams - Lunch Box - 0730
- 20** - Tech Saturday - FS #7 - 0900
Satellite Operations - John Kludt
- 21** - 'Spin for Kids' - Morgan Co, Need HTs & Mobiles

NOVEMBER

- 5** - Monthly Meeting, 7 PM, Fairgrounds.
Flu Shots, EMA Update - Glen Goens, KJ4TVO
- 17** - Hungry Hams - Lunch Box - 0730
- 17** - VE Session - FS #7 - 0900

DECEMBER

- 6** - 8th Anniv Family Christmas Dinner.
Buckner's Family Restaurant, 6:30 PM
- 15** - Hungry Hams - Lunch Box - 0730
- 15** - Tech Saturday - FS #7 - 0900

JANUARY 2019

- 7** - Monthly Meeting, SGH Volunteer Review
- 12** - GA ARES Meeting, GPSTC
- 19** - Hungry Hams - Lunch Box - 0730
- 26** - Tech Class

FEBRUARY 2019

- 2** - Tech Class & Special VE Session
- 4** - Monthly Meeting, 7 PM, Fairgrounds
- 16** - Tech Saturday

FIELD DAY 2019 - June 21-23

Tim Kersey Pavilion, Daughtry Park, Jackson

CONTACT INFO

PRESIDENT - Elaine Stachowiak
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