# The Repeater



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WX4BCA 147.285 + (131.8)

Amateur Radio Club of Butts County



Comradery and skills practice at HamCation 2020 Orlando, FL





Dan Darsey W4DED

L to R: Mike Crowe AJ4GU Win Barnes W8XC Rudy Williams KA4LAD Jesse Porter W4DNS Dan Darsey W4DED

Nancy Phillips Editor 573-528-0697 K4NEP@arrl.net

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**February** 2020

Vol 8, No 2

## **Amateur Radio Club of Butts County**

#### **February 3, 2020**

## Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Nancy Phillips on behalf of Darlene Ragon, Secretary ARCBC

#### Meeting Held at Butts County Fairgrounds - Jackson, Georgia

Meeting Called to Order by Elaine Stachoviak at 1858 Meeting Concluded at 2026

**Membership report:** Nancy said there are 34 members.

**ARES Connect:** Buzz & David B - There will be a Weather exercise Table Top meeting on 14 Feb at 0900 Fire Station 7 to play out the SkyWarn event coming up in March for Stark Elementary School. Bring your HT if you can attend. Please register for the event and then record your participation hours.

Tech Sat: Buzz - Bob Garza will be our speaker on the new ARESConnect software and how to use it.

NCS report: Ken - Anthony was NCS for January. We had an average of 8 Voice check-ins, 4 Digital check-ins, and 8 Win-Link check-ins. Buzz volunteered for February NCS and Melvin for March NCS. We are over booked for operators at the stations and will also soon need operators for 'Old Yeller'.

**Repeater:** Mike -- There is a new security captain at SGH and he will be calling a meeting soon to go over the status of the ham shack at the hospital. Mike will let us know when he hears more. Internet will need certain ports in order for us to use EchoLink.

**PIO:** Buzz - the JP-A paper and WJGA are both making announcements on our behalf, and if the paper doesn't show the announcement, it will at least appear in the website.

**BB&BGF:** Elaine - Blue Bird & & Blue Grass Festival will be held Sat, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Buzz gave her the official letter of invitation which he had received. Elaine hopes to plan a Fox Hunt during BBF.

**VE Session:** Dan - No one attended the Jan VE testing session. Next VE session will be at FS7 on Sat, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Hospital Report:** Dan: Feb net at SGH went very well. DStar connection was made without hassle, Voice check-in was made on clear signals, and the WinLink connection actually went through on the first attempt. Best net we've had in a long time.

Treasurer's report: John - Repeater fund: \$1949.11. General fund: \$1503.33. Total: \$3452.44. We took in \$85 dues in Jan.

**SkyWarn:** Elaine - Elaine has sent a letter requesting another class and another tour of the weather station. She read over the different degrees for a SkyWarn net: 1.) Relaxed Mode: Periodically read the WX statement and repeat that we are in a relaxed mode. 2.) Standby Mode: Net activated to Standby Mode, call in and follow instructions from the NCS. 3.) Full Alert Mode: This is a directed net, only those with traffic should report, once checked-in. NCS will handle the traffic and check-ins. Repeat WX statement and station info every 10 mins. You could receive notice via Butts County's website 'Code Red' alert system. March and April usually have some rough WX days. so stay alert. Henry Co is starting a **SkyWarn class** on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 PM. POC: Jeremy Head 770-288-7875.

**Old Business:** 29 Feb & 1 Mar - Volunteers are still needed for the marathons.

John's Club Survey had 20 responses and he has compiled all the answers into a spread sheet, but there are comments that he will gather and he will forward all that so it can be posted in the NL.

New Business: GA QSO Party Challenge - Buzz said scores can be turned in to 3830scores.com.

**Field Day 2020:** Elaine said she would take 40M Captain position again, and we need someone for FD Coordinator and 20M Captain. Nancy said she has applied for the use of the pavilion again, but has not heard back from the Rec Dept yet about it. Elaine has a friend who may cater the FD picnic this year. More next meeting about that option.

**PROGRAM:** Melvin - *Measuring Electrical Current with a Multimeter* -- We can use a multimeter to measure the current our radio is drawing in both receive and transmit modes, so we will know approximately how many hours of battery life we have during an event. We should never run our batteries down beyond half of their work life, and by figuring current used during low, medium, and high outputs, we can find the length of usable battery life.

Mark - *NanoVNA* - A compact little item that can show a Smith chart, has a 4-color screen, can be used as an antenna analyzer, operates at 50Hz to 900 MHz, has terminals, operates on 2 channels at once, the software is easy to use, and costs around \$70.

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# NOTES FROM THE BACK ACRE

Buzz Kutcher, K3GWK



# **Georgia ARES Monthly Report January 2020**

From the Backacre – 24JAN2020 (Already?)

Greetings from very soggy Jenkinsburg Station. Our BC group made an excellent showing at the state ARES meeting earlier this month; if not the largest group we were certainly in the top five. Some Butts County team members even came home with door prizes; I saw several of our folks make the trip to the stage. I attended the JS8Call forum. JS8Call is an FT8 like mode with limited messaging capabilities. Several of our members attended the ARES Connect forum. David Burnham (AK4EM) has taken on the ARES Connect Coordinator position for Butts County. Thanks David! ARES Connect is now the only way Georgia ARES reports volunteer hours. It is very important that we all remember to enter any time we spend supporting an event. If you have any issues, please contact David. The February Tech Saturday will be about ARES Connect.

Hopefully most of you receive the monthly Georgia ARRL newsletter called *Georgia on My Mind*. It is generally circulated monthly although "special editions" are sent out, as needed. Georgia's PIO, Renee Conaway (KK4LOJ) put out a first class issue this month. Check it out.

Santa was very good to me this year. She gave me a new radio. It is an ICOM IC-7610, an SDR radio with dual receivers. I'm slowly learning how to use all of its functions. I figured out the internal soundcard this morning. My IC-746PRO is still available..

The UHF DStar repeater continues to work quite well; it is normally connected to Reflector 30B (Georgia Linked Repeaters) and is pretty busy in the morning. Last week a station from the Canary Islands checked into the GA DPH Net.

Don't forget about the Tuesday evening FM Training Net at 19:30 Local on the WX4BCA VHF Repeater. We are always looking for participants. Nancy (K4NEP) and Anthony (N4TZY) have joined the NCS list. The digital portion of the net gives us a chance to practice with NBEMS via Fldigi. And please don't forget about the Winlink email test every Sunday afternoon. The "Send To:" addresses have changed. In addition to sending an ICS-213 message to WX4BCA, include KX4MAT in place of WX4GMA. Digital skills are very important to us as communicators – practice makes perfect. And don't forget to report the time you spend on each net.

Yearly Butts County ARES Events and Ham Hours:

(Value \$88,201.05)		
TOTALS	253	3,507 Hours
Miscellaneous	011	440 Hours
Activations	004	202 Hours
Public Service	016	295.5 Hours
Drills, Tests and Training	121	2022.5 Hrs
Nets	101	547 Hours

That's about it from Jenkinsburg Station. Thanks for all you do for Amateur Radio in and around Butts County. "When all else fails, ham radio

works."

73, K3GWK <AR>

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We forgot to take our group picture this year at the **ARES** training at GPSTC, but those from Butts County ARES who attended were:

Dan Darsey, Winford Barnes, Rudy Williams, Mike Crowe, David & Michelle Burnham, Buzz Kutcher, Ken Wallis, Brent Strite, Anthony Strite, Melvin Mosier, Nancy Phillips, Chris Southerland, Mark Austin, Robert Swanson, and Jeff LeMaster.

February 2020 The Repeater

## WHAT IS IN A SIGNAL REPORT?

JEFF PHILLIPS KN4FRG

In most all of my conversations or QSO's, I provide a signal report either when operating phone or in the various digital modes. Almost all Hams generally would like to know how well the other station received them. Everyone wants to know how their signal sounds on the air and often it is the best way to find out is a signal report from other ham radio operators. The standard signal reporting method for amateur radio is the RST (Readability-Signal Strength-Tone) system. This article will provide a little information about the RST system and define its use.

The RST system is a report from a receiving station on the quality and strength of the transmitted signal. Using shorthand in the form of numbers to represent the tone of a CW/digital signal or voice transmission of a transmitting station's signal at the receiving station's location (QTH). As a note, the RST System of Signal Reporting was established roughly in 1934 as a quick method of reporting Readability, Signal Strength and the Tone of CW by Arthur W. Braaten, W2BSR. Next is a quick explanation of each area. R - Readability - Understanding what is said and how well. On a scale of 1 to 5, the readability of your signal with a "5" being perfect with no difficulty. In other words the ability of the other operator to understand what you are saying. A "1" is unreadable....a "5" is perfectly readable.

## Readability

- 1 Unreadable
- 2 Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable.
- 3 Readable with considerable difficulty.
- 4 Readable with practically no difficulty.
- 5 Perfectly readable.

Next the S - Strength - On a scale of 1 to 9, indicates signal strength of the station. A "1" is a very faint signal. A "9" is an extremely strong signal.

## Signal Strength

- 1- Faint signals, barely perceptible.
- 2- Very weak signals.
- 3- Weak signals.
- 4- Fair signals.
- 5- Fairly good signals.
- 6- Good signals.
- 7- Moderately strong signals.
- 8- Strong signals.
- 9- Extremely strong signals.

Finally, the T - Used for Morse code/ digital signal reports. Indicates on a scale of 1 to 9 the quality of the tone of the morse code "dits and dahs" or a modulated signal for digital – PSK31. From a "60 cycle harsh tone" a (1).... To a "very pure tone", a (9). Many digital signals also have a tone and operators will provide the tone scale when exchanging signal reports.

#### Tone

- 1- Sixty cycle a.c or less, very rough and broad.
- 2- Very rough a.c., very harsh and broad.
- 3- Rough a.c. tone, rectified but not filtered.
- 4- Rough note, some trace of filtering.
- 5- Filtered rectified a.c. but strongly ripple-modulated.
- 6- Filtered tone, definite trace of ripple modulation.
- 7- Near pure tone, trace of ripple modulation.
- 8- Near perfect tone, slight trace of modulation.
- 9- Perfect tone, no trace of ripple or modulation of any kind.

The best signal report for CW/digital operation is RST 599. On phone, we drop the reading for Tone and just give RS reports, so a perfect signal on phone is RS 59 or just "five nine." On the HF bands, you will typically hear something like this: "your signal report is five nine in central Missouri." If you are good copy, you will usually get a "Five" for Readability. The Signal Strength usually reflects what the operator is seeing on the S-Meter of his receiver, but several factors can cause the signal to deviate including power levels, dB's, S meters, propagation, antenna theory, brand names, receiver sensitivity, etc.

SIGNAL continued on page 5

## SIGNAL continued from page 4

Of course, with both CW/digital and SSB, the S-Meter will be bouncing around a bit, so the operator must apply some interpretation. More importantly, there is considerable variation in S-Meter calibration, so signal reports can vary from radio to radio (S9 is commonly defined as 50  $\mu$ V at the receiver input, with each S unit representing a 6 dB change in signal strength) A 55 or 57 report indicates that the signal is very readable, but the signal strength is not as strong as a "9" signal. A few more examples. If you got a report of "599" on CW, it means the following:

The five means your signal is very easy to understand with absolutely no difficulty. The first nine means your signal registers a very strong reading on your S meter, usually 3/4 scale or more. The second nine means your CW tone has a nice pure clear tone or sound. A Voice Report: If you get a 5 5 (sometimes said 5 by 5)....Your signal is perfectly readable with a fairly good signal strength.



**Signal Strength Meter** 

Most S Meters show an extended scale above S9 that is listed in terms of decibels. The scale may be marked with +10 dB, +20 dB, etc. indicating that the signal strength is that much stronger than S9. You'll hear radio amateurs say something like "you are 5 9 plus 20 dB." Or they may just say "you are 20 dB over." During contests and many times from DX stations getting through a pile-up, the sending station will receive a "rubber stamp" signal report. Basically, they are trying to work as many stations as fast as possible and do not want to be bothered with accurate signal reports, so everyone gets a 59 or 599 report. The RST report system works well, it can be used for troubleshooting problems with your station and Hams used it worldwide for many

years. So, be honest the next time you provide one. Now, signal reports can be different for VHF FM signal reporting.

On VHF FM, signal reports are often given in terms of FM quieting. A strong FM signal is said to "quiet the receiver" since there is virtually no noise present in the received audio. As the signal strength is decreased, noise starts to appear on the received signal. At some signal level, the noise increases dramatically and the signal becomes unreadable. This dramatic increase is called the threshold effect, meaning that FM signals do not gradually fade out, they suddenly crash into the noise. The key idea here is that you want your signal to be strong enough to be above this noise threshold. In terms of a signal report, a strong signal may result in a "full quieting" report. If the signal is less than full quieting, you may hear a report like "90 percent quieting" or "you have about 10% noise", both can describe the amount of noise present in the signal. If the signal is really noisy, the report might be "50% quieting." You will also hear the classic Five Nine signal report on FM, saying "excellent signal." While S Meters are often inconsistent on CW/SSB transceivers, they are almost universally poor on FM rigs. Most FM radios just give you an unlabeled bar graph that is only a relative indicator of signal strength. Usually, these are not labeled in terms of S units, so don't try to interpret them as such. If all of the bars are lit up on your meter, then you might give a report of "your signal is full scale."

For FM repeater operation, keep in mind that the signal you are receiving is coming from the repeater and not from the other station. So if the other radio ham is fiddling around with his antenna and asking for signal reports, the repeater signal strength is going to remain the same. You may notice that the other station's signal into the repeater gets more or less noisy, so giving a report on how well he is hitting the repeater is helpful. "James, you are full quieting into

# 200106 Net Mgr Report

Anthony, N4TZY, held 4 ARCoBC Trng Nets in January, I'm gonna start callin' him 'Wolfman Jack' cuz EVERYBODY tunes in when he calls the net!! We averaged 8+ voice chk-in's, almost 4 on digital, and almost 8 on WL which is a SUBSTANTIAL improvement over the last couple months. We split the digi modes last month between MT63 & PSK125 to refamiliarize ourselves w/ some diff digi modes, so if anyone wants to try anything else, let us know when you chk-in on Tues nights.

February is gonna be a very BUSY month for Butts Co HAMs...

- 5th is a state-wide Tornado Net on 3.975 MHz, every-one's invited.
- 14th is the BC School Syst TTX for the Stark Elementary Tornado Ex on 13 March.
- 22nd is our Survey of the remaider of Zone 4 + Zone 3, which will leave us w/ only 1 to go.
- 24th is the Health Dept's PODx final plan'g mtg before the Full Scale Ex (FSE) on 5 March.
- + the regular nets, RT doings, and other stuff.
- ... and March is startin' to stack up as well, so if you are interested in BC Skywarn, ARES, or any of our 4 RT sites please let Elaine, KW4AQ, or one of our AEC's know.

We still need NCS volunteers for the weekly Trng net each month. We still need to cover Mar and on thru the year. If anybody wants to volunteer as a Net Controller, pls lemme know. The 'Preamble' (script) is posted on the groups.io 'files' pages and I'll be more than happy to send you my macros for FLDigi and show you how to use 'em. Lemme know if yer interested.

Again, fm yer local 'broken record' - as some (most) of our current ARES Response Team operators are overbooked (spell dat - 'assigned to more than 1 RT'), pls lemme know if you're interested in supporting either the Sylvan Grove Hosp, BC Health Dept, our 911 Ctr, or ol' Yeller as an ARES operator. FREE training is available and also the gratitude of our Butts Co ARES team and our served communities, and remember -

" we gotta be able to DO what we SAY we can do." and

## 200220 BC EC Survey Report

brought to you this month by 'Ex' Gamblers Anonymous, yup, I wasn't sure who'd show up for January's Survey, but I gambled anyway and hoped we'd have enuf people to get Zone 5 done, PLUS do the bottom half of Zone 4, and WE DID IT!! Thx to Buzz, K3GWK at the 911 Ctr; Mike, AJ4GU at the Darnell Rd 'relay' site; Glen, KK4GNO, in ol' Stumpjumper; and Melvin, KK4QJR for ridin' shotgun w/ me last month. Think I'm gonna gamble again on a good turnout for this month and get all the paperwork ready for the rest of Zone 4 and all of Zone 3 and see what happens. Reckon I done 'fell off the wagon' fer sure.

We've been at this for over a year now and if we get everything done this month we'll only have 1 more session to go - Zone 2 in March. Then I can get back w/ Corky, the Butts Co 'cartographer' up at the Taj Mahal, and start workin' on marking 'the map' again w/ all the sites. Once finished, we'll put copies on the walls at the 911 Ctr, Sylvan Grove's radio room, the BCHD, one in ol' Yeller, and have one for a 'portable' ICP as well. Really appreciate everyone's participation on this Project, it'll save alot of time for our county Emerg Mgm't folks and ourselves when we need to QUICKLY deploy HAM operators ANY-WHERE in the county and KNOW for sure where we'll have good comms.

Unless we have any objections, it looks like we'll do the Survey on Sat, 22 Feb this month. We'll talk about it more at the Feb mtg on the 3rd.

until our next Adventure into WILD Butts Co,

Ken, KM4H0S

ARCBC Recreational Adventure chairman

"ya cain't DO wut ya DON'T practice."

Appreciate all y'alls time & effort last month in support of Butts Co HAM radio,

73,

Ken, KM4HOS, Butts Co Net Mgr

# 200106 BCHD Report

We got chk'd into 5 outta 5 GA HD Nets last month, many thx to all our RT mbrs and the Butts Co Health Dept staff for makin' that happen.

For the BCHD and Sylvan Grove RT's, we have the final planning session for the Butts Co DPH POD Ex on Mon, 24 Feb '20 at the county Health Dept office, for the actual PODx on Thurs, 5 Mar '20 If we can't get thru to La-Grange on Pkt WL we may need to use the HF resources at K4SGH, so it'd be nice to have a Sylvan Grove RT mbr (who's available on 5 Mar) at this final planning mtg.

There will be another multi-district Health Dept Ex on Tues, 24 Mar so pls standby, we'll probably need the K4SGH for that too. I'll pass the word as I get it.

If you're D-Star equipped, ANY of you in the ARCBC can chk-in fm home or your mobile station. Just tell 'em you're 'off site' and representing the Butts Co Health Dept in Jackson, GA, District 4. If you need help finding the D-star repeaterz we use, gimme a holler and I'll give you a list or the RT syst. file we use in our K4SGH or KW4BHD radios.

ALL the BCHD RT operators should make sure they have 'up to date' FLDigi/FL Msg, and Win-Link Express (w/ UZ7HO's 'Sound Modem' program) on their laptops so we're able to tx/rx using 'digital' modes if the Health Dept staff needs us to. The weekly GA DPH Net chk-ins

DON'T need a laptop, it's just a D-Star voice chk-in.

Thanks fer yer help,

KM4HOS, yer friendly, neighborhood HD rep

# K4SGH - Sylvan Grove Hospital Net

Net was opened at at Sylvan Grove Hospital (K4SGH) at 1400 on Sunday, Feb 3rd, with Glenn KK4GNO, Ken KM4HOS, and Dan W4DED in attendance. A WinLink message was sent successfully at 1438 via HF on the first try; at 1445, a successful check-in was completed to the DStar Net; and at 1530, the HF Net check-in was completed. Operations closed and the station was secured at 1600.

\_ Dan W4DED

## Is your ARRL membership up-to-date?

This is important for our club affiliation with ARRL.

Please update and inform the membership chairman.

**DIGITAL** continued from page 11

the repeater." This is another reason why FM signal reports tend to be in terms of receiver quieting...in linked systems, the signal strength at the transceiver is less important.

One final note for HF and/or FM is that sometimes the operator on the other end is looking for a more critical evaluation of his signal quality. If the operator says something about "checking out this new microphone" or "have been working on solving an audio problem", that may be the clue to spend a little extra time really listening to the signal and providing more comments on how it sounds. For most of us, we do not actually get to hear our own signal on the air, so it's very helpful to get quality feedback from other radio amateurs.

\_JP

## **NETS**

**SUNDAY:** (rev. 190722)

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/ARCBC WL Express Net - Send an ICS-213 (or regular typed msg, if unable 213) to KX4MAT and WX4BCA by 2200Z. [1700L EST winter/1800L EDT summer.] Please use a Winlink RF gateway; Winmor packet, etc, if capable; otherwise, use Telnet.

**GA ARES Digital Nets** - 2100Z [1600 EST winter/1700 EDT summer] 3.583 MHz USB.

- GA ARES 'Traffic' Net EVERY mo, FLDigi, MT-63 1KS, centered 2K MHz. called by GA ARES districts, send an 'I have traffic' msg when your district is called, wait til CFD'd, then ICS-213 to KX4MAT NCS.
- GA ARES 'check-in' Net Even mos, FLDigi, MT-63, centered 1000Hz, justa 'text' check-ins only and runs concurrently with the 'Traffic' Net.
- GA ARES D-RATS Net 2130Z [1630 EST/1730 EDT].
   Odd months, port: gaares.ratflector.com, use 'chat' to ck-in; also under 'messages', send ICS-213, if able; runs concurrently with 'Traffic' net.
- **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 NBEMS Digital Net. WL Express msgs accepted if Not sent the previous Sunday, send to WX4BCA with name, callsign, location, whether on mobile or aux power.

### **THURSDAY:**

NCRC/ARES/RACES FM Net - 2000L, WA4ASI repeater, 146.925 - & 444.800 -, 88.5 PL. WL - K4NCR. May have a 'follow on' Digital Net - MT63-2KL, centered 1500 Hz, D-Rats on gaares.ratflector.com.

\*\*\* For other training opportunities, see the ARCBC Group.io website, and/or the GA ARES website for other Nets w/ days, times, freqs, protocols, etc, for your training convenience.\*\*\*

## ICOM IC-746 PRO

An excellent 100 Watt, 160-2M transceiver - all mode (FM, SSB, SSB-Data, RTTY, CW, AM.) (Auto tuner covers 160 - 6M.) One owner, non-smoking/non-pet environment. Has all documentation, HM-36 hand mic, all manuals, Anderson Power Pole cable, and original box. Factory 'Electro Static Discharge' protection modification and the over-size display heatsink installed. Matching ICOM PS-125 power supply. Data capable SignaLink connector on the back. Excellent Digital Signal Processing. Asking \$750.

Buzz Kutcher, K3GWK, 770-298-0451, k3gwk@arrl.net







## **CALENDAR**

#### **FEBRUARY 2020**

**19 - Survey -** Ken, 0730 Lunch Box, 0900 Pavilion

## **MARCH 2010**

**2 - Monthly Meeting -** 7 PM, Jackson FGs "Henry Co Library, part deux" - Michelle Burnham

**21 - Hungry Hams** - 0730 Huddle House, 16 & I-75

21 - VE Session - 0900, FS # 7, 144 Colwell Rd

#### **APRIL 2020**

**6 - Monthly Meeting -** 7 PM, Jackson FGs "DMR Programming" - Chris Southerland

**18 - Hungry Hams -** 0730 Huddle House, 16 & I-75

**18 - Tech Saturday -** 0830, FS #7, 144 Colwell Rd

#### **MAY 2020**

**4 -** Monthly Meeting - 7 PM, Jackson FGs "*Drones*" - Pete Acevedo

9 - Hungry Hams - 0730 - Huddle House, 16 & I-75

9 - VE Session - 0900, FS #7, 144 Colwell Rd

## **JUNE 2020**

**1 - Monthly Meeting** - 7PM, Jackson FGs "Field Day"

**20 - Tech Saturday -** 0830, FS7, 144 Colwell Rd **26-27-28** - FIELD DAY - Kersey Pavilion

#### **JULY 2020**

**6 - Monthly Meeting -** 7 PM, Jackson FGs

Tues Net NCS for February
Buzz K3GWK



Tues Net NCS for March Melvin KK4QJR



# CONTACT INFO

PRESIDENT - Elaine Stachowiak KW4AQ, ubudogems@hotmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP - Nancy Phillips & EDITOR K4NEP, k4nep@arrl.net

SECRETARY - Darlene Ragon KK4BKF, Iragon@aol.com

TREASURER - John Lipscomb, IV KA3SME, john.lipscomb@delta.com

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER - Buzz Kutcher K3GWK, k3gwk@arrl.net

AEC for REPORTING - Buzz Kutcher K3GWK - k3gwk@arrl.net

AEC & VE TEAM ADMINISTRATOR - Dan Darsey W4DED, w4ded@arrl.net

AEC & CERT LIAISON - David Ridgeway KK4SUO, dpridgeway@bellsouth.net

AEC & SHERIFF LIAISON - Mark Clark NI2Y, NI2Y@arrl.net

AEC & TECHNICAL ADVISOR - Mike Crowe AJ4GU, aj4gu@bellsouth.net

AEC & ARESConnect - David Burnham AK4EM, burnham1078@gmail.com

SKYWARN COORDINATOR - Elaine Stachowiak KW4AQ, ubudogems@hotmail.com

