

MERT



Marion County Emergency Radio Team

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

February 2022

MERT's primary role is focused on supporting all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during Emergency events. We also support EOC, Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management personnel along with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) with mobile voice, image and data communications resources.

MERT January Meeting

Our January 15th Monthly Meeting topics:

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ Pledge of Allegiance
- ✓ Attendee Introductions
- ✓ Silent Key Acknowledgements
- ✓ MERT Coordinator Update
 - Leon Jurcyszyn, MERT Coordinator
- ✓ MERT New Member Administrator
 - Clint Stockton
- ✓ New Member Intro – Jerry Landrum
- ✓ ARES Coordinator Update
 - Hayden Kaufman, ARES Coordinator
 - ARES Agenda Update – ARRL N. Florida Section
 - Net Control Operator training - Feb. 5th @ Green Clover Hall (9:00 am – 12:00 PM)
- ✓ School Shelter Update – Harlan Cook
- ✓ Training Update – D-RATS Refresher class – Leon Jurcyszyn
- ✓ Member, Participant and Attendee Survey Coming
- ✓ Attendee's Suggestions, Q & A..... for the Good of our Organization

Mark your calendars!

The next MERT Meeting will be on February 19th at 10:00 am at the MCSO EOC (692 NW 30th Ave, Ocala, FL 34475).

See you there!



Hayden Kaufman
(N2HAY)

"The broadest, and maybe the most meaningful definition of volunteering: Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good." ~Ivan Scheier

Leon Jurcyszyn Stepping Down as MERT Coordinator



**Leon Jurcyszyn
(K8ZAG)**

Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG) announced he was stepping down from the MERT Coordinator position at the January meeting. Leon has been a Member of MERT for 9 years and served as MERT Coordinator following Chuck Richards move out of Marion County in 2020.

Leon's experience and significant overall technical knowledge has contributed in many critically important ways to MERT's continued success.

Leon is recognized as taking it upon himself to learn the repeater and reflector systems, thereby becoming our resident technical expert. Additionally, he organized all our resource materials in our library; created SHREK Manuals for each mobile kit having key reference information; eliminated the excess paper clutter and equipment which was outdated or no longer used; secured Florida coordination approvals in renewing two repeater licenses; and, completed a rebuild and expansion of MERT's website (kg4nxo.com).

Another major contribution was his never-ending willingness to spend whatever time was needed on sharing his knowledge on multiple technologies and/or programs. All you needed to do.... *was ask!*

Perhaps his biggest and unseen contribution... was his desire and ability to keep MERT interesting and active during the past 2 years while the COVID pandemic ravaged regular activities, HAM events and normal training opportunities MERT Members were accustomed to.

Leon, a sincere and heartfelt Thank You for your many years of service and Leadership as MERT Coordinator!

Note: Leon has agreed to become Technical Advisor in continuing his service to MERT.

Bill Gillespie - MERT Assistant Coordinator

Bill Gillespie (KW5BGN) announced he will continue serving in his position as Assistant Coordinator supporting MERT.

Note: Bill also serves as President of the Silver Springs Radio Club (see <https://k4gso.us/> for more information).

Bill, Thank You for your continued Leadership and service!



**Bill Gillespie
(KW5BGN)**

Harlan Cook named new MERT Coordinator



**Harlan Cook
(KN4VRM)**

Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) has accepted the position of MERT Coordinator to lead the organization going forward.

Since joining in 2019, he increased his participation by taking on several projects which include: Analyzing the move of a 90 ft tower from South Ocala Elementary; becoming Trustee for KG4NXO (V&U); starting and editing the monthly “Communications Update” newsletter reporting on the many activities and events MERT conducts; and, reviewing & designing the new Marion School Districts Shelter additions (North Marion H.S. & South Ocala Elementary).

Background: After graduating from Oklahoma State in 1970, he worked in the telecommunications industry for several firms including AT&T, AT&T Broadband, Viacom and Time Warner Communications Business. His experience includes long-haul SONET microwave, circuit-switched voice systems, broadband RF & UHF services, broadcasting and point-to-point VHF/UHF services with the last 15 years of work overseeing the design, construction, installation and maintenance of Cell Tower and Fiber Optic services in major cities including Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Denver, Los Angeles and San Diego.

He retired in Dallas in 2013 and RV'd fulltime with his wife Char until they moved to Ocala in 2017. Harlan also volunteers in service to the Stone Creek CERT as Assistant Radio Operator, Neighborhood Captain and newsletter editor.

Harlan shares... **“I’m honored by this opportunity to serve as leader of this important service organization and commit myself to supporting every Member, the MERT organization and the MCSO Division of Emergency Management’s continued success.”**

Clint Stockton named New Member Administrator



Clint Stockton (AG0K)

Leon Jurcyszyn, MERT Coordinator (K8ZAG) announces that Clint Stockton (AG0K) has accepted becoming our New Member Administrator. Clint’s role is to promote new memberships and new member events, track applications for vetting/approval, keep new applicants updated on the review status and be point-of-contact for all questions which arise from new applicants.

The position was created resulting from the immense challenges the COVID pandemic forced on MERT volunteers and the Div. of

Emergency Management workloads affecting some communication processes. Clint is charged to track all new applications from vetting to approval and in keeping prospective members updated on the process by being POC.

Clint will be sharing more in future “Communications Updates” on applications, new member updates and ideas for all existing members to use in inviting new HAM’s to join.

Clint, Thank You for taking on this important responsibility!

New Shelter Updates - North Marion High School and South Ocala Elementary

As part of an initiative to increase the number of Emergency Shelters available to residents throughout Marion County, the Marion County School District and the MCSO Division of Emergency Management have instituted a joint effort addressing the challenge.



Over the past few months, MERT was requested to design and assist in setting up additional radio communications facilities at the Marion County School Districts North Marion High Schools new Cafeteria and at the South Ocala Elementary School Cafeteria (which is being hardened and retrofitted for Shelter Operations).

Installations likely in late-Jan. or February. If you would like to participate as a Technical Advisor or Observer to the installation, please contact Harlan Cook.

Shelter Audit Update – Belleview Elementary School

Leon Jurcyszyn, MERT Technical Advisor (K8ZAG), reports the follow up meeting with Brady Nettina, Marion Co. School District Emergency Coordinator scheduled for December 16th had to rescheduled for January (Note: School access was not available.)



Skywarn Storm Spotter Class

Clint Stockton (AGOK) shares several MERT Members attended the Skywarn Class held on January 5th at the Marion County Emergency Operations Center. He reports the class was well attended and very helpful in showing what everyone should know to stay safe and what to share when providing amateur radio reports to the National Weather Service in Jacksonville. Skywarn topics that were

covered: Tornadoes, Flash Flooding, Wall Clouds, Funnel Clouds, and Winter Weather. Clint shared he highly recommends attendance by all Members. The next class is scheduled for March 10th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the EOC.

MERT Members attending included: Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), Jerry Landrum (HO4TMS), Bill Gillespie (KW5BG), Sharon Malik (KM4SMM) and Clint Stockton (AGOK).

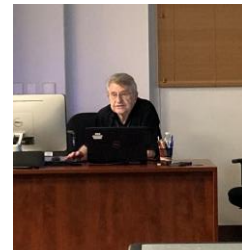
For more information, visit: https://www.weather.gov/jax/skywarn_schedule

D-RATS Training Refresher

Digital communication capability is a vitally important tool in our objective of providing reliable and accurate communications while supporting the Shelters. It allows us to complete standard FEMA Message forms as well, like the ICS-213.

Today, there are two reliable digital message resources, Winlink and D-Rats. Winlink is an excellent resource having significant capabilities designed for amateur radio users supporting a broad spectrum of emergency operations and activities. As a result, it is also complex and can be challenging to learn. However, since D-RATS is the only available resource today on the MCSD school computers, we must continue our training using it to remain competent should we be activated. [Note: We have requested that the MCSD add Winlink to the school computers in the past and again recently. A decision is pending.]

Toward that objective, Leon Jurcyszyn, MERT Technical Advisor (K8ZAG) presented a refresher class on getting started with D-RATS, from downloading the program to setting it up for operation. To learn more on D-RATS and download the program, visit: <http://www.dstarinfo.com/drats.aspx> Having trouble? Contact Leon at k8zagmert@gmail.com



**Leon Jurcyszyn
(K8ZAG)**

Invitation to Attend

MERT meetings are open to all interested Amateur radio enthusiast, CERT, ARES, Skywarn members and the General Public who are interested in learning more about participating in this important volunteer Amateur radio organization.

**[Interested in learning more..... or becoming a MERT member?
Visit https://kg4nxo.com/ and click the "Contact Us" tab!](https://kg4nxo.com/)**