

MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

March 2022

MERT's primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during declared Emergency events. We also support EOC and emergency personnel along with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) with voice, image and data communications resources. "Call MERT.... When all else fails!"

Mark your calendars!

MERT ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting will be March 19th @ 10:00 am at the MCSO EOC (692 NW 30th Ave, Ocala, FL 34475).

See you there!

MERT February Meeting

Our February monthly meeting was Saturday, Feb. 19th included these topics:

- ✓ Pledge of Allegiance
- ✓ Silent Key Acknowledgements:
 - Pete Castella (N4CQN), Jan. 30th, Long term member of S.S. Radio Club
- ✓ Attendee Introductions
- ✓ MERT Coordinator Update
 - Harlan Cook, (KN4VRM), MERT Coordinator
 - Equipment Request approved
 - Battery replacement
 - Cable/antenna analyzer approved
 - Power Meters & Data cables
 - Florida EM Volunteer participation approved
 - Members interested in seeking certification will be supported by MCSO
 - Bill Gillespie, (KW5BG), Assistant MERT Coordinator
 - Florida SHARES membership approved
 - SHARES is a Homeland Security administered HF Radio communications network outside FCC Amateur Radio bands

- ✓ New Member Administrator, Clint Stockton Update
- ✓ New Member Introduction – Allen Abbott (KB1QCE)
- ✓ ARES Update
 - Hayden Kaufman, ARES Coordinator
(haydenkaufman@gmail.com)
 - ARES Net Control Training Update
 - Class being put online
 - Marion County EmCOMM Exercise proposed
 - Attendees supported joint exercise plan
- ✓ School Shelter Update
 - A minimum of 9 schools to be visited during Spring Break
 - We need HAM's to support school visits and to main EOC Radios – Please contact Harlan Cook for signing up
- ✓ Training Update – Insightful Winlink audio presented by Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), MERT Technical Advisor
- ✓ Last Call – MERT Surveys Thank you for submitting your input and thoughts!
- ✓ Florida EOC Region 3 & 5 Monthly Test Update
 - MERT used a NVIS antenna for the first time – with positive results!
 - Multiple FL Counties contacted including Tallahassee and even AR
- ✓ For the Good of the Organization
 - Cesar Lopez resigning MERT - moving back to Miami to care for Mom
Thank You for your wonderful service to MERT. We wish you well!



**Hayden Kaufman
(N2HAY)**

SPECIAL NOTICE

MERT's Annual Meeting will be held March 19th at 10:00 am.

Speakers include:

- **Brady Nettina, Emergency Management Coordinator, Marion County Public Schools**
- **Dave Welker, Hospital Emergency Team Coordinator**
- **Hayden Kaufman, Emergency Coordinator, North Florida ARES**

MERT Secretary Position Open

The position of MERT Secretary is open. Interested Members please contact Harlan Cook at harlancook6@gmail.com or 210.331.3240.

Training Administrator News



Bill Sobel (K1WLS), Training Administrator, will announce a new training plan for MERT in March.

Harlan Cook (KN4VRM), MERT Coordinator, is very pleased to announce that Bill Sobel (K1WLS) has agreed to continue as Training Administrator in support of MERT.

Additionally, Bill proposed a new training focus and long-term plan during his meeting with Harlan which was enthusiastically supported. To share more details, Bill is finalizing his update to the Members which will be presented at the Annual Meeting on March 19th.

Thank you, Bill, for your support of MERT and our mission to be ready for service!

New Member Administrator Update



**Clint Stockton (AG0K),
New Member
Administrator**

Clint Stockton (AG0K) shares wonderful news that we have received six new applications for membership over the last 3 months. Four have been vetted-approved so far.

Clint's message this month.... "As MERT members, I would like to ask these questions. As we each look at our communities, how many MERT members do you have? Do you have any HAM's....and have you invited them to a MERT meeting? Another idea is to attend your community CERT and tell them about MERT. Do they have radio comms or is it just cell phones? We are now getting more MERT members, but we need more to support all the Shelters if they were opened. We are not in

Hurricane Season but we need to remember there can be an activation at any time! If after reflecting on these questions, I welcome YOUR ideas on growing MERT! Please contact me anytime. ***73's Clint Stockton***

New Member Introduction Allen Abbott

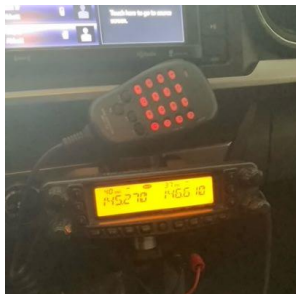
MERT welcomes Allen Abbott (KB1QCE) who recently moved from Alaska and shares this about himself....

“I’m a professional volunteer. For most of my life the auto body industry has been my M-F, 8-5 job. However, that left a lot of time to assist others. From Boy Scouts, EMT, hospital volunteer, first aid/CPR instructor, National Ski Patrol instructor, American Red Cross disaster responder, CERT instructor, limited commission volunteer police to ham radio operator.



Allen Abbott (KB1QCE)

For most of my volunteer career, I was blessed to have fantastic Ham radio supporters. It wasn't until 2005 when I became Asst. Director of Emergency Management for Gardner, MA that the Director, Paul Topolski (W1SEX) convinced me to get my Technician license so I could work the radios in our EOC. Public service was and is still the reason I'm into ham radio.



Whether it's a marathon, bicycle race, fundraising walk or emergency event, I will lend support to provide emergency comms and situational awareness to event leadership. This is my way to give back to my community.”

Allen, Welcome to MERT!

“Until our household goods arrive from Anchorage, AK, my Toyota Tacoma is my “ham shack”. A Yaesu FT 8900 gives me 4 bands with cross capability. 6 Yaesu multi-band handhelds and a second FT 8900 fill out the collection.”

Special Project Update

A long-term project for **MERT** is identifying radio equipment for the proposed new Mobile Command Center (MCC). The Sheriff's Office plans on replacing the current 52 ft trailer with a more mobile version built on a large chassis used for fire ladder trucks.



Proposed MCSO type of new Mobile Command Center.

Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA) volunteered to coordinate the effort and provides this update.... “I created an Excel sheet listing ham radio equipment, supporting devices and materials. Also developed is a diagram for installation help. I will solicit advice from our Technical Advisor Leon Jurczyn (K8ZAG) and all MERT, ARES, and HEC members on various ideas

with the ultimate objective of having an optimum ham radio station(s) detailed and ready to submit to the Division of Emergency Management when requested.

Thanks to Bruce for stepping up to tackle this project for MERT!

Successful NVIS Antenna Test

The results of the Feb. 23rd Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) test was very successful with Contacts made in many Florida cities (Gainesville, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Crestview), along with one in Arkansas (KB5OWV). ***Thanks to the MERT, HEC & ARES members who participated in this interesting and fun event!***



Photo courtesy of Dave Welker - HEC



Gerry Mucci, Bill Sobel and Clint Stockton, MERT



Bill Gillespie and Leon Jurcyszyn, MERT



Hayden Kaufman - ARES and Bill Gillespie - MERT



Harlan Cook and Bill Sobel - MERT



Hayden Kaufman - ARES



(L-R) Dave Welker - HEC Team Coordinator, Harlan Cook - MERT Coordinator, Bruce Twiss – MERT & HEC Member, Clint Stockton – MERT Member, Leon Jurcyszyn – MERT Technical Advisor, Al King – HEC Member and Kirk Brown – HEC Member

Not shown: Robert Dick – HEC Member

We sincerely thank Carl Berry, KC5CMX for the loan of his military model AS-2259 NVIS Antenna. For more information, see: https://radionerds.com/images/7/73/As2259-gr_erection_procedure.pdf

MERT Receives Bronze CW Morse Key



MERT's new CW Key

At our February 23rd meeting, we were all surprised to receive a donated polished brass straight key (CW) donated from new Member Jerry Landrum (KO4TMS). We are sincerely appreciative of his gift and look forward to adding it to MERT's key inventory

in supporting our mission..."Call MERT... When all else fails!"



Jerry Landrum
(KO4TMS)

Jerry, from all MERT Members...Thank You...for your very generous donation!

MERT Presentation at CERT

The Division of Emergency Management has restarted CERT classes again and MERT was invited to share more about our organization along with becoming a licensed amateur radio operator. At the Feb. 5th class, Harlan Cook (KN4VRM) and Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG) distributed a new CERT – MERT Informational flyer explaining the benefits of becoming a Ham, especially in communities with CERT certified members. (Of course, it also contained an "Invitation to Join MERT" too!) If you know any CERT Leaders or CERT communities, copies of the "CERT – MERT Ham Reference Sheet" are available free to them. Contact Harlan Cook or Clint Stockton (AG0K) for more information. We are also pleased sharing 5 CERT trainees were interested and received copies of the ARRL Technician Training guide to help with their path to becoming licensed.



CERT – MERT HAM Communications Reference Sheet

This reference provides important information and resources on communication processes between Marion County CERT's, the Marion County MERT and other key organizations. CERT personnel with Amateur Radio licenses from the FCC can use the following information to communicate, monitor and verify established procedures are followed receiving, reporting and documenting incident information during drills and emergency conditions.

Marion County Emergency Radio Communications Team (MERT)

General Information – MERT was established to provide communications support to the Marion County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with locations and groups such as Area Shelters, Hospitals, CERT communities and other key groups during times of disasters.

Copies of the new CERT-MERT HAM Reference are available to any CERT Leader or Member.

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.



Marion County Public Schools
"Helping Every Student Succeed"

MERT designed and the new radio communications systems for the North Marion High Schools new Cafeteria and the South Ocala Elementary School Cafeteria. Installations

are pending awaiting contractor schedules. If you would like to participate as a Technical Advisor or Observer to the installations, please contact Harlan Cook.

Shelter Audit Update – Belleview Elementary School

The Shelter Audits are scheduled for the week of Spring Break (March 14-18th). We need more Members to man the radios at the EOC for the upcoming tests. Please contact Harlan Cook if you can help this week in testing the Shelters communications systems.

MERT Helping CERT

From MERT Member Bruce Twiss: On Sunday Feb. 3 at 17:30 hours, OTOW residents and MERT Members Jerry Landrum (KO4TMS), Allen Abbott (KB1QCE), and Bruce Twiss (KI4NFA), participated in a CERT exercise to set up a Command Center, utilizing equipment and supplies owned by the community CERT program. While results varied, kudos to all three MERT Members for assisting CERT with these tests!

Thanks to these MERT Members for your excellent examples of taking action and helping your local CERT teams!

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://kg4nxx.com/> and click the**