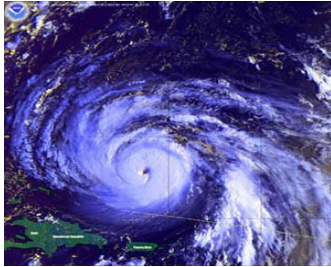


THE WCF PRESSER: ARRL WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA SECTION NEWS
Issue #30 – January 2018
By Darrell Davis KT4WX
ARRL West Central Florida Section Manager

HURRICANE SEASON IS OVER AND WINTER HAS NOMINALLY ARRIVED.



On Thursday November 30th, the 2017 Atlantic hurricane, the seventh most active season in the historical record dating to 1851 and the most active season since 2005, finally came to an end. Three major hurricanes made landfall on the United States within 60 days: Harvey, Irma, and Maria. For a very interesting article on hurricane predictions and season summary please read the following article on the NOAA website: <http://www.noaa.gov/media-release/extremely-active-2017-atlantic-hurricane-season-finally-ends>. Now that hurricane season is over, right after the holidays is a good time to check your equipment and even do some planned repairs, upgrades, or improvements that you may have planned. Also now is the time to begin planning on checking and replacing any hurricane supplies.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our ARES, ACS, and CERT groups that did shelter communications duty before during, and after Hurricane Irma in early September. From all the reports I received everyone did a fantastic job. All the time that all of you have put into attending meetings, doing training, and participating in drill paid off handsomely in this activation. It is a reminder to all of us involved in emergency communications, that meeting, training, and drills are never a waste of time and if you learn or re-learn something, you have accomplished your goal. Also many of our encomm groups have already done their “hotwash” to see what they did right they need to continue and what they can improve upon. Hurricane season will thankfully come to an end at the end of this month. However winter is coming. This is when the focus for ARES, ACS, and CERT can change. When you plan on how to respond to an emergency, try to think outside of the box and prepare for communications duty for more scenarios than just hurricane shelters. We can be called upon for more than just hurricane shelter duty.

I wish to apologize for the WCF PRESSER not being published since September, due to my college class load at South Florida State College (I was taking Freshman English I and Introduction to Microprocessors) and the impacts from Hurricane Irma. The good news that this time next year, I will graduate with my Associates degree. Now that I am on Christmas break (as of the date of this publication), I am producing the January issue a little early.



Finally, I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Be thankful to God for the blessings that you will enjoy as you celebrate Christmas and the New Year. I am also hoping that all of my Jewish friends had a wonderful Hanukkah celebration earlier this month. It is a wonderful story of revolt against tyranny that has been portrayed in a motion picture. There are people, even in our own country, that are very lonely during this holiday season, due to the loss of loved ones and or are financially under stress. Some are still doing

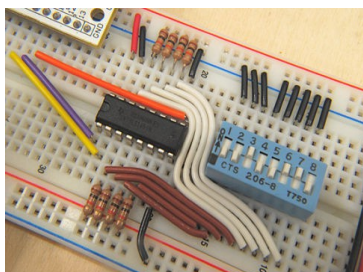
without the basics we can take for granted especially those victims still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, Irma or Maria or the forest fires out in California . Take time to encourage that friend or family member who may be lonely or depressed during this time and enjoy the time of fellowship with your family and friends during this special time.

NEXT WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA SECTION ARES LUNCHEON AND MEETING – 1/20/18:



The [West Central Florida Section ARES Meeting for Winter 2018](#) will be held on Saturday January 20, 2018 at 1300. The meeting location will be the Polk County Emergency Operations Center. The [West Central Florida Section ARES Luncheon for Winter 2018](#) will be held on Saturday January 20, 2018 at 1100. The luncheon location will take place at Sonny's BBQ at the corner of Spirit Lake Road and Recker Highway in Winter Haven, a few miles from the EOC. I look forward to seeing many of you there as can make it.

4th ANNUAL TECHCON COMING UP IN FEBRUARY – REGISTRATION NOW OPEN



Coming up on Saturday February 24th, 2018, will be the 4th Annual TECHCON, the annual Technical Conference for the ARRL West Central Florida Section and will be held at the Polk County Emergency Operations Center, located between Winter Haven and Lakeland in Polk County. Our special guest speaker from the ARRL Lab will be Bob Allison WB1GCM. Attendance is free of charge but please register to attend at the TECHCON Registration Page on the Section website.

Many of our speakers from previous years are planning on returning this year as well with new programs. However, we are still looking for new speakers that would like to do a presentation on any technical topic that is amateur radio related. For more information go to the TECHCON page at <http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/wcftechconference/>

KJ4KSG IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 WHITE AWARD



On Saturday December 9th during the ARRL forum at the Tampa Bay Hamfest, the 2017 *White Award* was presented to Lemuel “Woody” Furman KJ4KSG. Woody is the assistant net manager for the Eagle Net, the NTS traffic net for the ARRL West Central Florida Section. Woody does quite a bit of work supporting the Eagle Net behind the scenes and helped to keep the Eagle Net running during and right after the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in spite of damage to his home in Manatee County and ongoing health issues. Woody also assisted Manatee County ARES during Hurricane Irma when Ed Skalecki NI4MX, the Emergency Coordinator for Manatee County ARES was in hospital.

The *White Award* was established in 2016 and is named after Ellen White W1YL, who was a Section Communications Manager in the 1950's and worked for ARRL HQ. For more details on the *White Award* go to the [White Award page of the Section Website](http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/white-award-wcf-section-ham-of-the-year/) at <http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/white-award-wcf-section-ham-of-the-year/>

W4NHL IS A SILENT KEY



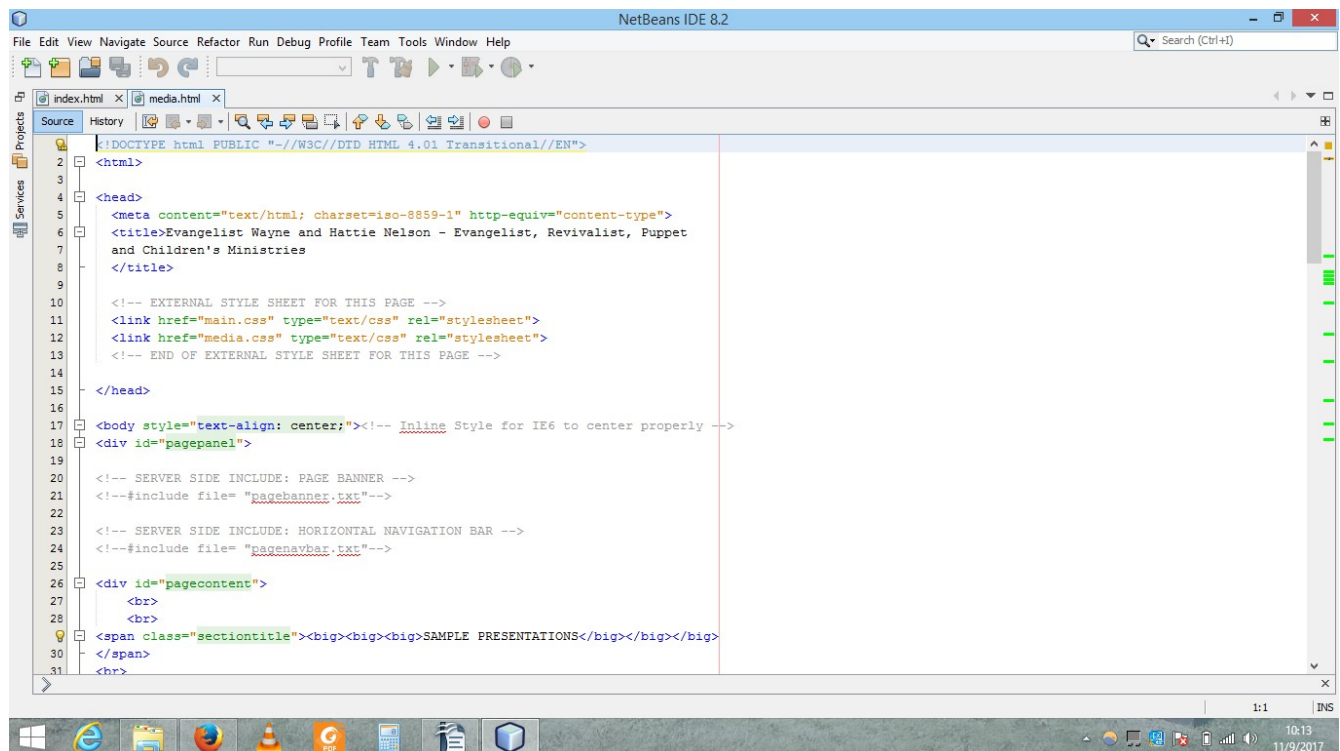
On Friday October 13th, Neil Lauritsen W4NHL, became a Silent Key. Neil was the Section Emergency Coordinator for the West Central Florida Section from 2005 through 2014 and was serving as an Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator. Neil had previously have been the ARES Emergency Coordinator for Pinellas County and was still involved with Pinellas County ACS at the time of his passing. Neil in his professional career had been in Fire Rescue in the state of Maryland. There was a memorial service held at Bay Pines Cemetery on Monday October 30, 2017. Please continue to remember Neil's family in your prayers and thoughts.

COMPUTER APPLICATION OF THE MONTH – NETBEANS

If you are looking for a great program to produce C++, HTML, PHP or other kinds of programming code, consider NetBeans. NetBeans is a fully integrated development environment. You have to have Java Virtual Machine installed on your computer. However, you can download Netbeans bundled with the appropriate Java Virtual Machine and it will install the Java VM along with Netbeans concurrently.

There are also plugins for Netbeans for various custom applications. Two examples are Python programming and a plugin for Arduino development. You can check out about all the various plugins for Netbeans and the various Netbeans downloads that are available for Windows, Linux, and Mac platforms at <http://www.netbeans.org>.

Below is a screenshot of the main Netbeans IDE screen with a HTML file open for editing:



DISASTER TRAFFIC

By Dave Rockwell, W4PXE

Net Manager – Eagle Net (West Central Florida Section Traffic Net)



Lots of hams on the Eagle Net wanted to help during Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. After all, many of us became radio amateurs to become public service operators in the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES). There were questions every night on Eagle Net about how to get health and welfare (H&W) traffic into first Texas, then the Caribbean, and, after Maria, into Puerto Rico. Folks with family in the impacted areas reached out to amateurs here in our coverage area to get messages to friends and loved ones. Many amateurs were frustrated when their H&W traffic requests were turned back. So, let me see if I can put this situation in perspective.

First, let's look at the situation where we, the local amateurs, are in the impact zone of the hurricane (works for earthquakes, volcanoes, blizzards, and manmade disasters). Depending on the severity of damage, we may only have a small number of radio stations that can operate. Since the power will be out, the stations will likely be on generator or battery power. These operators may have suffered damage and trauma from the storm. Bottom line: If these operators can operate at all, it is for a short period of time. Remember our rule in ARES is "family first". Make sure you and your family are safe before jumping on the radio.

If the impact area is large, there will be thousands of people displaced by the event. We need an efficient means for folks in the impact zone to pass messages to friends and loved ones. ARES usually works with non-government organizations (NGOs as we call them in Emergency Management) like the Red Cross or Salvation Army (and other faith-based groups) when dealing with health and welfare traffic. These organizations have proven techniques for collecting health and welfare information. In the impacted area, the NGOs set up reception tables and may have representatives in major shelters and medical facilities. These reps collect names and status of people and destination information for the H&W message. These are assembled into book traffic destined for regions. This makes very efficient use of the scarce radio time.

Now let's look at what should happen outside the impact area. The natural tendency for most people who know a ham operator, is to ask him or her to send a radiogram to the relative or friend. This isn't bad for a small local event, but the number of such requests soon overwhelms the National Traffic System and the Radio Relay International nets. So, once again, we rely on our partner NGOs, like the Red Cross and Salvation Army to collect requests, assemble them into book traffic, and pass them to affiliated amateur stations.

With our modern, network-based, communications such as the Internet and cellular phone service, amateur radio nets are becoming a last resort channel. If the network infrastructure is partially intact in the impacted areas, the local, state, or regional emergency management team may establish online resources for folks to post H&W queries and reports. Some of the social media services, like Facebook, have services where folks can report their status to friends and loved ones. If the networks are running, these should be the first way. Local governments or NGOs in the impacted areas may establish kiosks where those impacted can post their status. Don't forget cellphone text messaging. Many times, text messages can make it through the system when voice cannot. The messages take very little bandwidth.

DISASTER TRAFFIC (Continued)

In general, for amateur radio nets during disasters, we give priority to outbound traffic. Inbound H&W queries may be rejected or cached. We want to give precedence to actual H&W traffic, like ARRL ONE ("Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.") from a specific person going to a specific destination. Remember, we probably have limited time windows based on the fuel in the generator and propagation, to get that message delivered. Clogging the system with hundreds or thousands of queries doesn't help. Some of the NGOs set up bulletin boards for incoming queries. These might be online or actual physical signboards. It can be different for each location and disaster.

Now what do we need to do. First, we need to educate our fellow amateurs in how H&W information is passed. Consider making it a topic at your next ham club meeting. Reach out to your local NGOs and build a working relationship and develop processes to handle H&W traffic. Make sure your agreements and practice sessions with the NGO include the scenarios of being in the disaster zone and serving folks who are outside the zone. Also, tell your family, friends, social groups, and others how the process works. They should know to contact the Red Cross to find out about someone's status in the impact zone. Ensure everyone knows that it may take days or weeks to get an answer to the query. It's not unusual for the person in the impacted area to call the relative long before a reply from the amateur radio H&W messages makes it.

In times of emergency like the recent hurricanes, we need to remember that we are communications experts first and radio operators second. We need to advise folks on the most likely channels to get their message through or the query answered. When that channel is amateur radio, then we need to apply our best traffic handling skills and make sure the message gets through as quickly and accurately as possible. Remember, these skills come with practice. If you haven't sent and received messages in the last six months, you are probably rusty. Join one of the traffic nets and take traffic.

ARRL STATION APPOINTEE MONTHLY REPORTS ARE DUE:

Just a reminder to all in the WCF Section who hold an ARRL Station Appointment. Your monthly reports are due for the previous month of activity. You may file your reports on the Section website at <http://arrlwcf.org/section-forms/>. You may also send your report via email to the respective cabinet member that is the coordinator for your appointment as well. Many thanks to all of you who do file your reports. Filling a monthly report is a requirement to hold an ARRL Station Appointment. If you do not file a report at least once a year, your appointment may be canceled due to lack of activity.

CHECK OUT THE SECTION WEBSITE - <http://www.arrlwcf.org>:

If you have not done so lately, check out all the information that is posted on the Section website at <http://www.arrlwcf.org>. The latest WCF SECTION PRESS RELEASES, upcoming special events, monthly club meetings, are all posted there. We will be adding more content to the Section website here during the summer months including the VE test session calendar, local radio net schedule, and lists of the various ARRL Station Appointee that serve you here in the West Central Florida Section.

AMATEUR RADIO PARITY ACT REFILED AND PASSED BY THE U.S. HOUSE AND ON TO THE U.S. SENATE:



Update 7/12/17: The [Amateur Radio Parity Act](#) of 2017 was introduced in the US Senate on July 12, marking another step forward for this landmark legislation. Senators Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) are the Senate sponsors. The measure will, for the first time, guarantee all radio amateurs living in deed-restricted communities governed by a homeowner's association (HOA) or subject to any private land use regulations, the right to erect and maintain effective outdoor antennas at their homes. The Senate bill, S. 1534, is identical to H.R. 555, which passed the US House of Representatives in January. ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, is calling on League members to urge their US Senators to support the [Amateur Radio Parity Act](#) of 2017, S. 1534. ARRL has opened a [RallyCongress page](#) to simplify the task. For more information see the ARRL News article at <http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-president-issues-call-for-members-to-reach-out-to-their-senators-to-support-s-1534>.

The [Amateur Radio Parity Act](#) of 2017, refiled in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 13, 2017, was passed unusually quickly on January 23, 2017. The Amateur Radio Parity Act will require the FCC to amend its Part 97 Amateur Service rules to apply the three-part test of the [PRB-1](#) federal preemption policy to include homeowners association regulations and deed restrictions, often referred to as 'covenants, conditions, and restrictions' (CC&Rs). At present, PRB-1 only applies to state and local zoning laws and ordinances. The FCC has been reluctant to extend the same legal protections to include private land-use agreements without direction from Congress."

UPCOMING HAMFESTS IN THE SECTION

The 2017-2018 hamfest season will resume in early January and it will be very busy.

- Saturday January 6: [8th Annual SOUTCARS Tailgate and Luncheon](#)
Golder Corral – North Lakeland, FL.
- Saturday January 13: [TARCFEST XL](#)
TARC Clubhouse – Tampa, FL.
- Saturday January 27: [Desoto County Hamfest 2018](#)
Turner Agri-Civic Center – Arcadia, FL.
- Saturday February 9-11: [72nd Annual Orlando Hamcation and ARRL Florida State Convention](#)
Central Florida Fairgrounds – Orlando, FL.
- Saturday February 17: [25th Annual Sebring Hamfest](#)
Lake Josephine Baptist Church – Sebring, FL.

MS CITRUS BIKE TOUR: 5/05/18 AND 5/06/18



The MS Citrus Bike Tour will take place on May 5, 2018 and May 6, 2018. The routes and rest stops location will remain unchanged that we are aware of as of press time. We will need many volunteers to make this a success. The MS Citrus Bike Tour will start at Fantasy of Flight in northern Polk County and end at Champions Gate just inside of Osceola County and reverse the next day. Online registration will begin soon. For the latest information please go to the amateur radio communications website for the bike tour at <http://www.citrustour.org>.

CLUB HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH: Manatee Amateur Radio Club Inc. (MARCI)

Based in the city of Bradenton, in Manatee County. They have a website, a monthly club newsletter called the Radiowaves (edited by our Technical Coordinator Geoff Haines N1GY), and operate a repeater on 146.820 MHz with PL100.0 Hz..

Manatee Amateur Radio Club Inc. (MARCI): A screenshot of the home page.



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Section Information

- Section Website:
<http://www.arrlwcf.org>
- Section Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/arrlwcf>
- Section Twitter
<https://www.twitter.com/arrlwcf>

That is all for this issue of THE WCF PRESSER. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and see you all at a hamfest, meeting, or other special events in 2018. 73 de Darrell KT4WX.