



# KEY KLIX

Amateur Radio Club of Savannah

April 2008

Volume 4

Issue 4

## **Amateur Radio Operators Respond to the Effingham County Tornadoes and Severe Weather**

Mac McCormick, KF4LMT

The Springfield and Rincon areas of Effingham County suffered the effects of two EF2 tornadoes on March 15, 2008. At 9:34 PM, the first tornado touched down northeast of Springfield and traveled southeast for approximately 7 miles, injuring five people, destroying three mobile homes, damaging between two dozen to three dozen homes, knocking down fifteen high voltage transmission towers, destroying or damaging approximately twenty vehicles, and destroying numerous outbuildings. This tornado was  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile wide at its widest point and was rated an EF2 with wind speeds between 110 to 120 mph. The second tornado touched down northeast of Rincon near Georgia Power's Plant McIntosh, traveled through the plant and lifted just southeast of the plant at 9:44 PM. It destroyed one of the plant's water cooling towers, damaged another water cooling tower, knocked down two high voltage transmission towers, uprooted several dozen trees, and damaged other plant equipment. Initial estimates indicate that Plant McIntosh suffered \$2-3 million in damage. The tornado was approximately 100 yards wide and was rated an EF2 with wind speeds between 120-130 mph.

Certainly those who were injured and those whose property was damaged may not agree, but providence shined upon the Savannah area on the night of March 15, 2008. Many thousands were out in the open in downtown Savannah while attending the St. Patrick's Day Festival. If the tornadoes were to have continued toward Savannah, there could have been a great disaster. As it was, the widespread power outage caused by the tornadoes caused enough confusion by throwing downtown Savannah into darkness and rendering traffic lights inoperative.

During the night of March 15 and the morning of March 16, Skywarn Nets were activated on the Effingham County 146.745- (CTCSS 97.4) repeater and the Amateur Radio Club of Savannah 146.970- repeater. These nets were used to collect information for the National Weather Service in Charleston, SC and to ascertain information for Memorial Health University Hospital in Savannah. These reports were beneficial because power was knocked out in a five county area and some areas also lost phone service. Approximately fifteen amateur radio stations checked into the nets, making reports on weather conditions, electrical power status, and other pertinent information. Additionally, the net passed weather bulletins being issued by the National Weather Service; the net was able to compare the actual reported weather situation with NWS bulletins. The net also was able to pass information on conditions and damage gleaned from monitoring public safety communications and commercial media, keeping those whose power was out informed as to what was happening around them.

Greg Tillman, N4VAD, acted as net control station and reports that all stations did an excellent job of maintaining frequency clearance and net discipline, allowing information to flow both to and from their stations and net control. Stations were responders as opposed to reactors; instead of screaming "the sky is falling," they maintained their calm, listened, provided the pertinent information, and handled the situation at hand. It is important to remember that the stations were not storm chasers. They took cover when necessary and returned to the net when it was safe to do so, reporting on damage and letting the net control station know that the operators and their families were safe and sound.

Greg also passes on some important lessons learned from the tornado related radio operations:

1. It is important to train and drill on a regular basis so that you can be ready to operate during emergencies rather than learning what to do on the fly. Training will make you a much more effective and capable operator.
2. Check your equipment regularly to make sure it is in proper working order. An emergency is not the time to find out that your equipment is inoperable or functioning improperly.
3. ALWAYS have if not one, two deep cycle marine batteries charged and ready for operation. You never know when commercial power may be lost or how widespread it might be.
4. Keep extra antennas, accessories, and supplies prepared so that you can deploy from your residence or replace storm-damaged antennas.
5. Maintain receivers for monitoring public safety, portable TVs and radios, flashlights, a generator if possible, and other supplies to keep you informed and sustained during an emergency.
6. Never take any county or area out of your emergency plans; you never know when you will need to get information into or out of that area or when that area will be doing the same for you.

**Sources:**

The ARRL Letter, Vol. 27, No. 11 (March 20, 2008)

Greg Tillman, N4VAD

National Weather Service Charleston, SC Public Information Statement (March 22, 2008)

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## **March 11, 2008 Meeting Minutes**

Submitted by Andy Blackburn, WD4AFY

Doug Rowland, President, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. on March 11, 2008. Mark Zeigler gave the invocation.

Andy Blackburn read the minutes of the February meeting taken by Irene McCormick. A slight correction to the February meeting to read that Kurt had nothing to report instead of Kurt had no report. Correction approved.

Kayton Smith, Treasurer reported the current balance of the treasury as \$405.31. Checks to be deposited after the meeting will raise balance to \$470.31.

Andy will renew incorporation and pay the \$30.00 fee. Andy's \$30.00 payment for the incorporation fee will be his dues to ARCS (for reimbursement.)

Kurt Hoffman, Trustee, reported that there are some surplus items that were at one time intended for various ARCS projects, etc. Available for sale include: Hustler G-6 antenna, 6 Micor mobiles, 1 converted Micor, Motorola PS, misc, coax, polyphaser, etc. Kurt also mentioned the repeater amp problems and that repairs were needed.

Mac McCormick III, Key Klix editor, asked for submissions for the newsletter and asked for them to be submitted by around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Beth Ann Blackburn, KI4ZDN, voted in as a new member in ARCS

Doug Rowland stated that the Field Day site at the Air National Guard pavilion is reserved for the last full weekend in June.

CARS announced that they were going to have a special event at the Tybee Lighthouse in October. Philip will probably organize another JOTA event.

Andy did a 5-minute program.

With no further business, Doug Rowland, President adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

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## Announcements

### ARCS April Meeting

Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Classroom 4 or 5 in the Hoskins Building at Memorial Hospital

The Hoskins Building is next to Parking Garage C at the Ranger St. entrance.

*Talk-In is on the 146.970- Repeater. If you need directions prior to the meeting, contact Mac McCormick, KF4LMT at [kf4lmt@comcast.net](mailto:kf4lmt@comcast.net)*

### ARCS Thursday Night Net

Thursday Nights at 9:00 PM, 146.970- repeater

### Effingham ARES/Skywarn Net

Tuesday Nights at 9:00 PM, 146.745- (CTCSS 97.4)

First/Third Tuesdays are Skywarn Nets

Second/Fourth Tuesdays are ARES Nets

When Fifth Tuesdays occur, they will be ARES Nets

*For further information on Effingham ARES or Skywarn contact NT6H at [nt6h@arrl.net](mailto:nt6h@arrl.net)*

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## Callsigns You Might Hear on April Fool's Day

Submitted by Andy Blackburn, WD4AFY

YU/FØ0L or UFØ0L

ST1NK

PHØNY

RG8AU

UR2/WE1RD

AL1EN

UBØZO

SL1ME

L1D

BRØOM

Note: I actually heard a couple of these (PHØNY) calls on April Fool's Day a number of years back.

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## FCC Requirements

The FCC requires you to maintain a valid current mailing address in their database at all times. This is so that they can contact you by mail if needed. If you move or even change PO boxes, be sure to update your information using the FCC ULS online system. If you do not maintain a current address and mail to you is returned to the FCC as undeliverable, your license can be revoked and removed from the database.

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## Submissions

Key Klix is *your* newsletter. Please submit radio related articles or announcements as well as swap/sale items. Radio and Radio Event related photos are also requested. Written submissions can be submitted in MS Word or in plain text format. Please send your submissions to [kf4lmt@comcast.net](mailto:kf4lmt@comcast.net)

## AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OF SAVANNAH

The Amateur Radio Club of Savannah, was founded in 1938, and is a non-profit 501(c)(3)(a) organization dedicated to:

- . (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
- . (b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
- . (c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communication and technical phases of the art.
- . (d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.
- . (e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.

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