

Blowin' in the Wind

I lived in Texas for 22 years and never came as close to a tornado as I did on August 20th.

I was upstairs in my radio shack monitoring Jim KC3BTV, the net control operator for Skywarn on the 91 repeater, when I heard him say that he needed a back-up operator for a while. I was about to key the mic when my wife grabbed my arm and said that we needed to go downstairs to our safe room. Damaging winds were imminent. I grabbed my HT and headed down.

I knew from experience that my HT would not reach the 91 repeater, so I could not offer assistance to Jim. Fortunately, Brendan AB2QB, one of our newest club and ARES members, picked-up control like a pro and did not lose a beat. (Thank you, Brendan!)

I could only monitor the repeater.

Lesson Learned: I need to be able to reliably operate VHF from my safe location at my home.

I have the tendency to beat myself over the head and scream, "Failure of the imagination!" I failed to paint a mental picture of the weak spots in my personal emergency communication system.

In the end, "Lessons Learned" must turn into personal projects. The failure would be to not address the issue and run into the same situation again.

So, to my Readers: What was your experience during the August 20th Tornadoes? What were your Lessons Learned?

Before I close, this would be a good time to invite you to join our ARES meeting, which meets on the last Monday of the month at 7pm at the EOC. Jim KC3BTV is our Kent County Emergency Coordinator. He works diligently behind the scenes to present practical information and training at these meetings. (Thank you, Jim!)