Hog County ARA Holds Annual Picnic

Gene King - KI4LEH

On Saturday, March 19, 2022, the Hog County Amateur Radio Association, Inc. held its annual (though it's been two years thanks to Covid) Picnic and Ice Cream Social out at Roger and Johanna Jones's residence. Of the many hats the Jones's wear, being amateur radio operators and members of our association can be added to the list.

Along with our association members were some members of the Red Oaks Amateur Radio Group - our seasonal friends who come down each year and reside at the Red Oaks RV Resort in Bushnell.

Part of this year's get-together was also to celebrate that the Association has reached our official status as an *American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Affiliated Club* - a Charter Party as they call it. This was part of growing our association over the past few years, obtaining a repeater, moving the repeater from Summerfield in Marion County to its new location in Sumterville in Sumter County.

And while those of us who were at the Picnic / Ice Cream Social had a good time, good food, good fellowship, a few stories, we missed those of you who were not able to attend for one reason or another.

We hope to keep growing our association, to keep getting new amateurs involved, and to get where our association can serve our county and communities even better. If you are reading this but are not yet a part of our association, we encourage you to contact us and join us if you will Email us at K4HOGFL@gmail.com . Website: K4HOG.org

Looking for Something?

Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, has taken the time to index the articles from all the 2021 issues of *QST NFL*! The link below takes you to a pdf of all the articles in alphabetical order. This link is also on the arrl-nfl.org website newsletter tab.

https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf

April 18th is World Amateur Radio Day!

From the Section Emergency Coordinator
Arc Thames, W4CPD

March has been a busy month of preparation as I've been working through organizing activities at the section level in preparation for hurricane season. While we often focus on hurricanes, as that's the type of activation we're most used to, cyber attacks are another area in which amateur radio operators should be prepared. In today's political climate, the threat of cyber warfare is real and has the potential to not only disrupt communications and utilities at a local level but potentially nationally or internationally.

It is so important to remain in a state of preparedness. An activation could come at a moment's notice for a reason you might not have considered. Practicing by participating in nets, attending training locally or online, using software tools such as Winlink to send messages/ICS forms or other digital modes on a regular basis is needed to help you stay prepared should we be called upon.

I often hear the comment from some hams that "digital isn't ham radio". While voice nets move traffic very well, imagine if an entire state, region, our country was unable to communicate via email, the internet, or cellular service. Voice nets could become clogged quickly with local, state, and federal agencies attempting to establish communications with each other. It never hurts to have additional tools in your toolbelt, whether it be CW or any one of the many digital communications modes (JS8, RTTY, Winlink, etc.)

If you aren't familiar with any of the above-mentioned tools, that's ok! In addition to the mounds of information that can be found using Google and YouTube, we have many active ARES groups within the section that would be glad to help you learn. You can find your local county's Emergency Coordinator on our section website, arrl-nfl.org. If your local ARRL affiliated club or ARES team is having a training session, be sure to submit it online so we can post it to the section website.

Emergency Coordinator Updates
After servicing as Emergency Coordinator of Lake County for many years, Al Richter-W4ALR, is stepping down due to work commitments but will remain on as an Assistant EC. Jamey McKinley-W4CGX has graciously agreed to step into the position. Lake County has a very active ARES/AUCXCOMM team and do a lot for their local area as well as the state. Thanks Jamey and I look forward to working with you!

New Monthly Radiogram Challenge
Continuing for April, I am issuing a challenge to all hams within our section to send a Radiogram using phone/voice over one of our local or section nets. April's challenge is to send me, W4CPD, a Radiogram to share with me the name of a road or highway that commonly becomes congested during high traffic times or an evacuation in your county. Please be sure to include your county name. The section website, arrl-nfl.org, has a net listing. Many of these nets have a traffic representative/liaison that can pass your traffic up to a section net to allow the traffic to reach me.

Some of the feedback I received during the month of March is that many operators know how to fill out a radiogram form, but some aren't aware of where to find a net to transmit it on or how to read them on the air. To help with this, our Section Traffic Manager Helen-WC4FSU and Matt-KD8TTE, who spoke in Orlando, will provide an **open training session** for those interested to learn about where and how formal traffic can make its way into the NTS. **Training will be held via Zoom on April 20 at 5:30P CDT/6:30P EDT**. No registration is required, simply click this link when it is time to join.
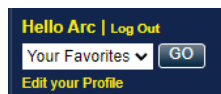
Your section needs you!
In preparation for the upcoming hurricane season, we are looking for volunteer net control stations that can assist during an activation of the ARES HF Emergency Net. While helpful, prior experience is not required as we will do training via Zoom later this month. To pre-register to be an NCS, please visit - https://arrl-nfl.org/emncs/

We **need additional net control stations for the Northern Florida HF ARES Net** that takes place Monday through Saturday at 9A Eastern/8A Central on 3950 KHz. If you transmit and receive well across the section, **please** email me at arc.thames@srcares.org. This is a great opportunity to practice for emergency activations and counts towards completion of your ARES Task Book.

Subscribe to the ARRL ARES Letter

If you don't already, be sure to update your email subscriptions with the ARRL to receive the monthly ARRL ARES Letter written by Rick Palm-K1CE. This newsletter contains useful information and news regarding ARES throughout the country. To subscribe, login to your ARRL account on arrl.org, select *Edit your Profile* under your name and then choose *Edit Email Subscriptions*.

Section ARES Report

I want to send out a sincere thanks to our ARES Emergency Coordinators across the Northern Florida Section for their monthly report submissions. For February, we received the most participation in the report that we've ever had with 62% of our EC's reporting in. ARES members in the NFL section reported over 2,000 person hours provided to their local counties between training, activations, public service events, meetings, and nets. Thank you to all of our ARES volunteers for all you do for your local communities!

What's happening? Santa Rosa County Edition
Arc Thames, W4CPD

Arc-W4CPD

We had another great turnout for our March training which focused on deployments and activations. ARES EC, Arc-W4CPD, kicked off the training focusing on activations in our county followed by ARES AEC's Ray-K1HG and Daisy-KT4KW discussing their experience with deploying for hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. During Arc's presentation on local activations, he emphasized the importance of the DNA of an ARES member. Arc starts each meeting by reminding the team "It's not about me, you, my club, your club, their club, ARES, RACES, or AUXCOMM. It's about supporting our served agencies and our communities." When we enter a served agency, none of our titles as amateur radio operators or ARES members matter, we are there to provide whatever communications services the agency might need.

Ray-K1HG

Ray and Daisy continued that theme with their presentation on their activation following Hurricane Katrina. While Ray operated mostly on ham radio, Daisy was tasked with everything from communicating with firefighters to interfacing with the National Guard to relay requests for service. At the end of the day, we are communicators. Whether it be answering phones or talking on numerous types and services of radios, we are there to be professional communicators.

The team was reminded that amateur radio operators should never "self-deploy." Deployment tasking is done typically at the state level but is sometimes done by a local county. When officially deployed, you are issued a task number that serves as your pass to travel to the area of your deployment. It identifies where you're going and who you are to report to when you arrive.

In April, we will have a combined ARES "bootcamp" with Santa Rosa and Escambia counties on Saturday April 9 at 9:00AM. The training will be at the Escambia County Emergency Operations Center 6575 North W Street, Pensacola, FL. This is a great training session for new ARES volunteers in addition to a good refresher for others. Topics covered range from ICS forms to Winlink. For information on joining or participating in the Santa Rosa County ARES team, please reach out via email info@srcares.org, visit our website srcares.org, or find us on Facebook.
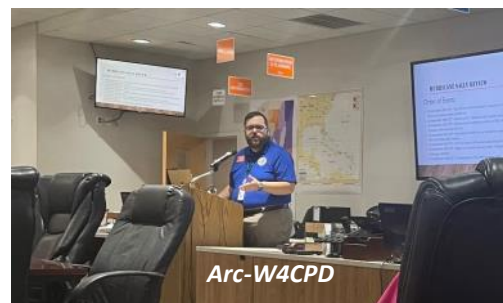
It's not too Late to Start

By Scott Roberts, KK4ECR
Assistant Section Manager / Public Information Coordinator

It is that time of the year again – It's Field Day Time!!! It is time to start planning and preparing. Here is a great schedule to use when making plans for Field Day.

DATE	OBJECTIVE -- THESE ARE RECOMMENDED TASKS FOR ALL ARRL PIOs
JAN.	*UPDATE ALL MEDIA AND POLITICAL CONTACT INFORMATION.*
Jan.	Intro letter to press contacts/re-intro as required. Basics about ham radio/ARRL/FD locally sourced. Phone call follow up for key media.
Feb. 15	Send out letters (snail mail) to POTUS (see additional comments below), both Senators and Representative in Congress inviting them to Field Day.
April	Draft sample FD press release / move to clubs that may not have position to adapt for their local area.
May 15-30	Book guest appearances on broadcast radio and TV shows. Include "B" roll photos for TV stations. Draft local FD letter. Invite local officials (elected, OEM, etc.) to FD with possible press coverage mention.
Memorial Day	"Button hole" key public officials for FD appearances / contact press aides at Memorial Day parades.
Late May-Early June	Assess press coverage status / value of sponsored content if necessary*
Week of June 1st	PIC follows up with club officers regarding any additional assistance that may be needed.
June 1-5	Send release and contributed photos to weekly newspapers for their late June editions. Remember any photos showing minors under the age of 18 MUST have a signed model release.
Week before Field Day	Guest appearances on radio and TV. Look to secure other press interviews (print).
Two Saturdays before Field Day	Send releases to broadcast TV news editors to place in weekend file. Send releases to weekly newspapers.
Saturday before Field Day	Send releases to daily papers.
Day before Field Day	Send email reminders to ALL media. BCC everyone.

Just because a date has past, does not mean that you are not out of the game – You can compress time frames and get accomplished the things you need to plan a great Field Day!

Here are a couple of additional notes to keep in mind when putting together any correspondence for Field Day:

- Include PIO's cell number and email in all releases.
- Use the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why). Include background information and hyperlinks for more information. If your Field Day location is outside, make sure all your operators how to get in contact with the PIO.
- POTUS-President of The United States. Mail to The Honorable (insert POTUS name), c/o Office of Appointments and Scheduling, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500

Phonetic Alphabet

A - alpha	N - november
B - bravo	O - oscar
C - charlie	P - papa
D - delta	Q - quebec
E - echo	R - romeo
F - foxtrot	S - sierra
G - golf	T - tango
H - hotel	U - uniform
I - india	V - victor
J - juliet	W - whiskey
K - kilo	X - x-ray
L - lima	Y - yankee
M - mike	Z - zulu

Use of the Phonetic Alphabet

The use of the ITU/ICAO Phonetic Alphabet is the standard phonetic alphabet for Amateur Radio operations. Although some Amateur Radio operators make up phonetics, there is no proof that these achieve better results in achieving clarity. Further, making a habit of using non-standard phonetics can create the habit of using non-standard phonetics, and may carry over to emergency communications and public service communications.

Get Your Computer Ready for ARRL Field Day
-- Step by Step Instructions for N3FJP Contest Logger

Bert Garcia N8NN

ARRL Field Day is always the fourth full weekend of June. This year that's June 25-26 beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday (2:00 PM EDT) and ending at 2059 UTC Sunday (4:59 PM EDT). ARRL recently updated the Field Day rules, so check them out [1]. Whether you operate alone or as part of a club, you will want to use a computer for logging and radio control. This article will walk you through installing and setting up a contest logging program.

There are several popular contest logging programs available. I will discuss using N3FJP's ARRL Field Day Contest Log because it is easy to use, generates the documents needed for log submission, checks for duplicates, interfaces to most popular radios, is a Windows program, and is affordable [2]. You can download the program for free to try it. Permanent use will cost you $8.99 to register and includes unlimited program updates. After the contest, the program will save your log file in .ADI format to combine with other logs if you are operating with a group or club.

Download and install N3FJP's ARRL Field Day Contest Log. The current version is 6.6.2, but the program will prompt you to upgrade if one is available. When installing, accept the defaults, check the box to create a desktop shortcut, and check the box to launch the program. The program will open and ask you to enter your Callsign and a Password (the registration code you received by email when you purchased the program is your password). Next, a popup window will ask you to fill in some *Common Fields*. Enter your callsign or the callsign used for Field Day, country USA, continent NA, latitude 29.2, longitude -82.1 (use your actual lat/long), CQ zone 5, ITU zone 8, grid square EL89 (use your actual zones and grid square), operator call, operator initials, check the box *Always display*, and click *Done*. A popup will ask you to download a new country file, click *Yes*. Click *OK* on the next popup that reports a successful download. Your contest log is open, and you are *Ready to begin*. To find your lat/long and grid square, you can use GridMapper [3].

There are many items to set up in the program, but I will only discuss those needed to get you operating as a single station. If you are operating as part of a club or group with interconnected computers, ask your LAN administrator to help you set up those features. In the following steps you will select a log filename and location, connect your computer to your radio CAT control to automatically log the band and mode information, set up CW keying and messages, and set up phone voice messages.

Get started by selecting ***File > New > Start a New Contest with a New Database File or New File Location***. In the popup navigate to the desired file location and type your new file name such as 2022 ARRL Field Day *Callsign*. Each time you open the program you will continue using the same log file; thus, you can close the program when needed and resume where you left off when you open it again.

To set up your radio CAT control, select **Settings > Rig Interface** and a popup window will open. In *Select Rig*, choose your radio brand and model from the list. If you can't find your model, try similar models to see if they work. For the Yaesu FTDX radios which are not listed by model, try Yaesu Newer or Newer2. In the *Description* box you will find specific instructions for Icom and Kenwood. If you click on *More rig interface help and settings!*, you will find video instructions for Icom radios. The *Baud Rate*, *Parity*, *Data Bits*, and *Stop Bits* will be automatically selected for your rig by default, but you should check them and set them to match your radio menu settings. In *Com Port* click on the COM port number for your radio. If you don't know the COM port number, you can use the Windows Device Manager to find the number. Accept the other default values unless you have a good reason to change them. Now click the *Test* button. If your settings are correct, you will be rewarded with a blue box saying *Polling Rig!* and your radio frequency and mode will be displayed. Turn your radio tuning dial and change the radio mode to observe that the correct values are displayed in the popup. Click the *Done* button and you are back to the main program with the current band, mode and frequency displayed.

Next, set up the CW keying and messages. The program allows you to send from the keyboard, send messages using the keyboard function keys F-keys, or interface a WinKeyer. Select *Settings > Transmit > CW Setup* and the *CW Setup Form* popup will open for you to enter your settings. Choose the *Com Port* number to key your radio via the USB cable. Select a *Keying Option* of either *RTS* or *DTR* depending on your radio menu settings, then click on the *Test* button. If your settings are correct, your radio will send the message in the F9 box by CW. If you are using a WinKeyer (recommended), select the WinKeyer *Com Port* number, choose *Winkeyer* in the *Keying Options*, and then click *Configure Winkeyer*. A popup for your WinKeyer settings opens. Click *Open* to start the WinKeyer and the *Winkeyer Status* popup will show your current *Winkeyer Status* and *Version* number. Set your *Keyer Settings*, *Keyer Setup*, and other settings to your preferences. Press the *Test* button and your radio will send the F9 message in CW. Click *Done* to close the popup.

The F-key messages are the next things to set up in the *CW Setup Form*. Notice in the *Description* box there is a list of wildcards that you can use in your messages, as well as instructions for sending messages stored in Icom radios. You will need messages for the CQ Mode and the Search and Pounce Mode during Field Day. In the CQ Mode the F1 message will loop and repeat your CQ message until you press the Esc key or enter a callsign into the main form in the program. I put "CQ FD N8NN" into F1. F2 is "$ 1D NFL" where $ is the wildcard for the callsign of the station that called me, 1D is my class, and NFL is my section. F3 is "R TU N8NN" as the acknowledgement of a successful contact and my callsign invites other stations to call me. F4 is "1D NFL 1D NFL" if the station needs my exchange repeated. Thus, F-keys 1, 2, 3, 4 are used for the CQ Mode. In the Search and Pounce Mode I am tuning around looking for stations. F5 is "N8NN" to send my callsign when I find a station. F6 is "R 1D NFL TU" as my exchange. F7 is "NFL NFL" to repeat my section, and F8 is "1D 1D" to repeat my class. You can *Save Settings* and *Load Settings* in the popup. Click *Done* to return to the main program. For the CW F-keys to work, the focus of the program must be on the main form entry boxes – *Call*, *Class*, *Section*. Use your mouse and click on one of those boxes to set the focus to the main form. The program and the radio must be in CW mode to transmit from the F-keys.

Setting up the phone voice messages is similar to the CW messages. Before you start, record your voice messages in Wave or MP3 format and put them on your local computer. Use the Windows Voice Recorder to create your messages or download the free program Audacity [4]. Select **Settings > Transmit > Phone Setup** and the *Phone Setup* popup will open for you to enter your settings. Select the *Com Port* number for PTT keying and select the *Keying Options* of *RTS* or *DTR* to match your radio menu setting. Select your *Sound Card* from the list. Enter the paths to your recordings into the F-key boxes or use the *Browse* button and locate the voice recordings. The voice recordings must be on a local drive, not in the cloud. Click *Done* to return to the main program. Remember to click on the main form entry boxes so the F-keys will work. The program and the radio must be in SSB mode to transmit from the F-keys.

Now you're all set for Field Day! After the contest the N3FJP program will prepare all the documents required for your submission to ARRL. Select **File > Write Cabrillo (Contest Submittal) File** and follow the instructions. If you need some help getting things ready to go for Field Day, give me a call and I'll help you. Enjoy!

References:
1. ARRL Field Day Rules, https://www.arrl.org/field-day-rules.
2. N3FJP Amateur Radio Software, https://n3fjp.com/.
3. GridMapper, https://www.qrz.com/gridmapper.
4. Audacity voice recorder, http://www.audacityteam.org/download.

What's Happening — Escambia County

Gene Bannon, KB4HAH

40 Meter Off Center Dipole

The Five Flags Amateur Radio Association (FFARA) and the Pensacola State College (PSC) sponsored "Introduction to Amateur Radio & Upgrade" class is winding down to the VEC testing Session (Apr 14th) that will mark another successful completion of our class. Mar 29th we had what we refer to as our Mini Field Day. The purpose of this class session is to demonstrate to the class that hams do not need to have 40 ft towers and complete commercial power to operate their amateur radio station. That we can and do go out in the field and operate our equipment. It also allows the student to see the various kinds of antennas, what are their advantages and limitations for each of the antennas. After we got all the antenna setup, we went back into the classroom and proceeded to get the Radios on the air. We demonstrated the various type of power source (Solar, Battery and commercial) and what it takes to use those different sources to get the radios on the air. After getting the station connected up, we analyzed the various antennas to ensure their SWR's were correct for the various operations we expected to conduct. Then we went on the air with the different types of operations, from voice (HF-VHF-UHF, SSB & FM) to Digital (HF-VHF-UHF). We demonstrated that we were making contact throughout the world via WSJT;FT-8,PSK-31, 40 Meter SSB, DMR Hotspot (The Zoomspot was located 2-3 miles away line of sight via the UHF 6 elem yagi pointed back toward the source), VHF FM. Once we completed the different demonstrations, we got the students on the air. Overall the students seemed to really enjoy this class session. Our next class session (Thurs Mar-31st) will be the construction of their VHF/UHF vertical antenna to take home. Another class session that students in the past really enjoy.

Bill's Digital Demo

Bill WY8O Demos Digital HF operations

Here are some photos of our Mini-Field Day on Mar 29, 2022.
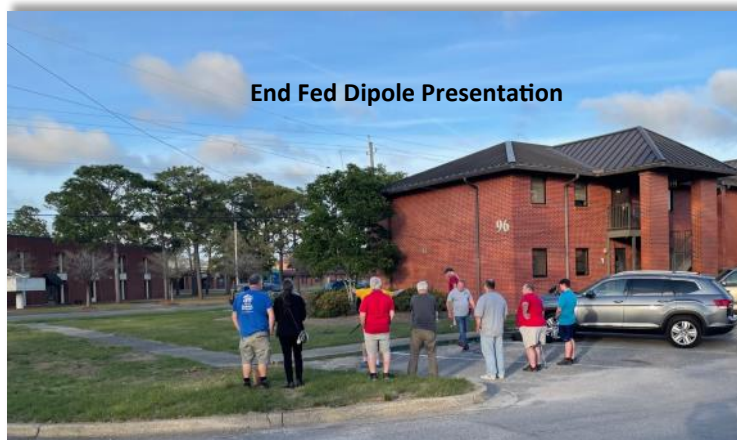
End Fed Dipole Presentation
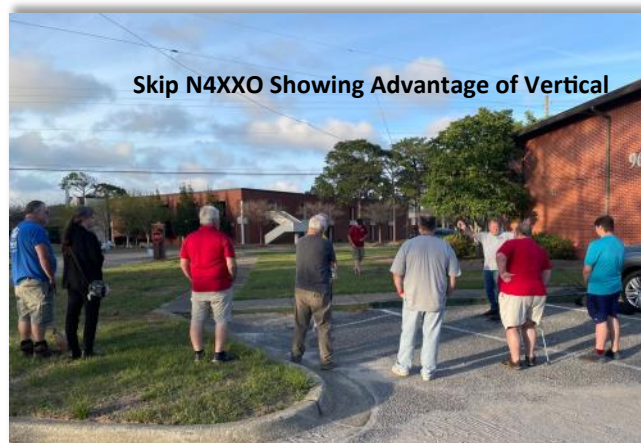
Skip N4XXO Showing Advantage of Vertical

Free Operating Classes!

Roland Anders, K3RA (Submitted by Jeff Taffuri, KO4NCC)

The **Amateur Radio Club of the National Electronics Museum** is offering free weekly 3-hour Zoom sessions providing info on a wide range of Amateur Radio Operating Activities. Sessions will start on Thursday, April 7, at 6:30 PM (EDST) and run through June 9. Sessions will be taught by experts, and the subjects include:

- All About Operating--A general Introduction
- Amateur Radio Organizations—Local to International
- Ham Radio Awards
- DXing-History and Tips from the Experts
- QSLing-How to get that needed card for DXCC or WAS
- VHF/UHF Weak Signal Work and "Roving"
- Image Operating—Slow Scan and Fast Scan TV
- Remote Station control over internet
- Learning CW in the no-code era
- Digital Modes—From RTTY to FT8 and beyond
- Contesting—How to get started, tips for the beginner and intermediated contester
- Logging Software—What's available, how to use
- Propagation—A general intro to HF Propagation
- Amateur Satellites—How to get started
- Portable (backpacking) operation—Tips from an expert
- Setting Up a Modern (or not so modern) HF Station Lightning Protection and Grounding
- Traffic Handling
- Public Service, Emergency Communications

K3NEM
Amateur Radio Club of the National Electronics Museum

A detailed syllabus will be published before the classes begin. Attend them all, or any that you like, but you must register for the classes. To receive registration information, contact Rol Anders, K3RA, at roland.anders@comcast.net.

LARA ARES Team Visit Repeater Site

Frank Anders, KK4MBX

The LARA ARES team took a field trip to our primary repeater site. Our repeaters are co-located with Lake County's public safety 800mhz system and we have enjoyed many years of partnership with our served agencies. Jason, K4AUS, and Jamey, W4CGX, led the tour explaining the equipment, security, and redundancy at the site that provides continuous operation.

Talking In from Walton and Okaloosa Counties!

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER

Hello Fellow Hams! We sure hope your Hamventures have been keeping you keyed up and motivated this March!

Coming from The Walton County arena first we have the great pleasure of attending a growing Club with the fine people in De-Funiak Springs at the Walton County amateur Radio Club! These folks are coming together and bringing about the joy of all there is to be associated with Ham Radio! Coming up in April they are planning for an open BBQ with a tower and antenna system inspection to boot! Come out and see them in action and maybe even consider joining in on the fun!

Here are the details:
Where: 312 College Ave, DeFuniak Springs, Florida
When: 16 April 2022 @ 8:00 AM! Goes until they are done or the dinner bell rings!
Contact: WF4X via the VP at KI4ZER@ARRL.Net

They also have their monthly business meeting next week! Don't miss this growing club as they continue to evolve in the Panhandle!

Here are the details:
Where: 312 College Ave, DeFuniak Springs, Florida
When: 5 April 2022 @ 7:30!
Contact: WF4X via the VP at KI4ZER@ARRL.Net

Next up we were able to move into the Tech Night at the Playground Amateur Radio Club in BEAUtiful downtown Fort Walton Beach, Florida! This groups just keeps bringing out the wonderful technical subjects and if you don't make these technical nights you surely are missing out! This time the wonderful KM4DYA discussed P25 trunking and understanding its application! This event was attended by multiple clubs and the room was packed with fresh faces! There is sure to be more like this as they have an upcoming Tech Night on the 7th of April themed for the Go Bags! That's right! Get you EMCOMM On! This will be presented by KJ4JRT!

Here are the details:
Where: 17 1st St SE, Fort Walton Beach, Florida
When: 7 April 2022 @ 7:30 PM!
Contact: W4ZBB@W4ZBB.Org

Going into the next area of attendance we find ourselves with the wonderful people of the North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club (NOARC)! Their Business meeting sure was a lively one and they continued to go over plans for upcoming events and tasks such as testing out Echolink on their Repeater and Field Day operations in the next few coming months at Spanish Trail Park in Crestview, Florida! New faces are coming around and with COVID on the decline there are more coming back! This club is high output so be sure to catch them at any of their events, meetings or tech nights!

Here are the Details:
Where: 4565 Live Oak Church Road, Crestview, Florida
When: 14 April 2022 @ 7:00 pm!
Contact: https://w4aaz.org/contact-forms/

The following week we find ourselves back in DeFuniak! That's right for the Walton County ARES Team! These great people are always honing their skillset and ready to show off what they have got! More work in the go boxes and the associated hardware/software continues as they test out the items and find out what does versus what does not work. Great efforts in this team are underway! Catch them at their next meeting or event! There are two to choose from!

Here are the details:
#1 POTA Activation!
Where: Eden State Gardens Park
When: 2 April 2022 @ 8:00 AM!
Contact: W4CJB.EC@Gmail.com

If you think the month has been busy enough for March time frame in the area let's just say we are only halfway there in this exciting recap! So grab a drink of water and hold on to your seats as we go back to the Playground for the folks in Fort Walton Beach! They had their Business meeting in two parts. Half at the Clubhouse and half at the Northwest Florida Fair Grounds! This was in direct support of their wonderful event, The 52nd Annual Hamfest! 52 years of consistency folks! That is a feat for

#2 The WCARES Monthly Meeting
Where: 75 S. Davis Ln, DeFuniak Springs, Florida
When: 19 April 2022 @ 7:00 PM!

sure! In attendance were no less than 425 people plus vendors and guests throughout the day1 There were many deals had and if you missed this one , don't worry, there are more coming soon to an area near you! These fine people sure know how to make sure all are welcome to the Panhandle and this show is truly a great gem here in the South! Congratulation to the team at PARC for putting this on!

How do you follow up the Hamfest you ask! With a tech night in Crestview with those great folks in the North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club! Guess who their presenter was?! Give up? It was the CEO of DX Engineering himself Tim Dufy K3LR on the topic of antenna building! People tuned in nationally to this one folks and let me tell you Tim did not disappoint! Hats off to the NOARC team for making this enjoyable event happen! If you have a chance to interact with them please consider to do so! See their upcoming events and information as listed above!

So what could be the last report but surely an item to keep your interest? BBQ! That's right BBQ! With an exclamation point! The Activities Director KN4UDS organized with the City of Crestview and the Main Street Association, Incorporated to set up and support the communications needs to ensure vendors found their spots for the 17th annual Triple B BBQ Cook off! Their coordination efforts in assisting to run the event were not all they did! No sir-e-bob! They also set up their own demonstration booth and had multiple clubs participate with them The End of March QSO Party. Contacts were made worldwide from portable, battery and solar applications and the public went nuts for volts over the fact that we could talk so far away on limited resources! These folks really showcased Ham Radio to the public! What a great draw they got as well as boosting the message of what Ham Radio is and how important it can be to the community. We are certain there will be some new faces at area meetings soon enough! As if that is not enough, the tenacity of the operators in NOARC even use their time to their advantage for certain!

Whew! That was a roller coaster of a month with all up and loops and no let downs! Stay tuned as we explore into April with Spring in our keys and a skip in our step!

And as always, Ham On!

One final note:
The great people in the Panama City Amateur Radio Club are having a Tailgator on the 9th of April 2022!

Here are the Details:
Website: https://www.w4ryz.org/2022/02/panama-city-arc-spring-tailgate-planned.html

Where: 130 N. Church Avenue, Panama City, Florida
When: April 9 2022 @ 9:00 AM!

Squirrel!

NFARC Sets Up JS8 Relay / Cache Station to Assist Emergency Communications

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

As newer and more noise-resilient and narrower modulations continue to be developed, Alachua County volunteers are seeking to use these advances to provide additional options for emergency / disaster communications.   Leland Gallup AA3YB and I have now set up a 24/7/365 JS8Call relay/cache station, call sign AA3YB.

JS8Call utilizes robust FT8 type modulation, but adds many of the features of a simple networking system, including abilities to

- detect which stations might function as relays to an important target station that cannot be reached directly
- discover signal strength readings from many stations
- send messages directly to a storage on a target station
- cache messages on an intermediary station for later pickup.
- simultaneously receive and process incoming messages or directives at four different speed levels, from as low as 8wpm to as high as 40wpm
- synchronize to received signal timings even without access to an accurate time base.
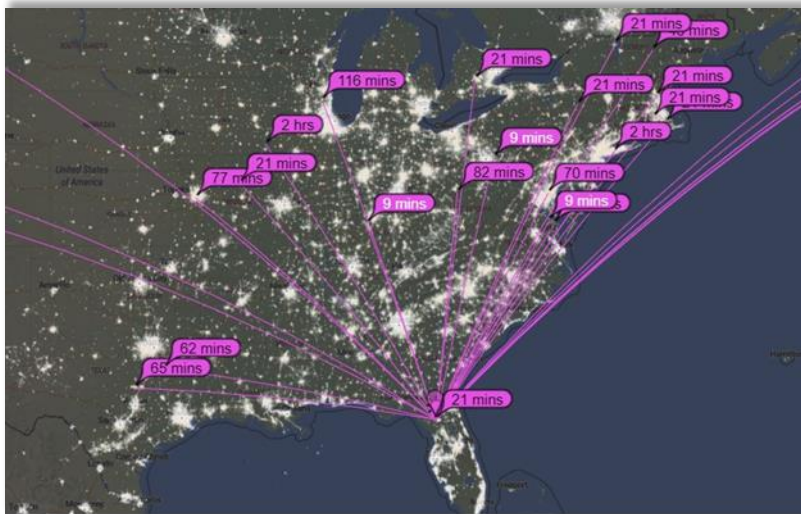
While normal single sideband voice modulation (developed in 1915) typically requires a signal to noise ratio (SNR) of as much as +10 dB across a 2.4 kHz bandwidth for traffic passage, some of the modulations available in the JS8Call package can handle SNR's of as much as 30db less than that (referenced to the same 2.4 kHz bandwidth).   Thus a 1-watt station using these recently-developed modulations, can be as effective as a kilowatt station using voice SSB.

During disaster response, deployed volunteers may be forced to use compromise, hastily constructed or inefficient antennas with excessive transmission line or ground loss, so finding modulations that allow for effective communication despite these handicaps appears to be a useful goal.

Leland and I assembled a hodgepodge of gear, including a spare Icom 718, Signalink, a computer purchased with proceeds from the sales of emergency comms texts, 130 feet of #14 stranded house wire, and a homebrew 49:1 Balun.   A bit of slingshot work provided an end-fed half-wave inverted vee with a peak at about 50 feet and ends at 10 feet.

Getting the JS8Call version 2.2.0 software (http://files.js8call.com/latest.html) software installed went smoothly but there were some hiccups and learning curve to the configuration!   The plan was to have the station provide services (per 97.221(c)) on 40 meters during 9AM-9PM local time, and then use 80 meters during the dark hours.   Unfortunately there is a known bug in 2.2.0 software so the internal scheduler is ineffective.   Plans are to remedy this using the Windows Scheduler and two separate copies of JS8Call.   Next, the system wasn't responding properly -- a setting requiring manual approval of responses had to be adjusted, and then a sunset provision of automated responses had to be moved out to > 1000 minutes.   After these corrections were made, the station was happily responding to interrogations from much of the eastern USA during dark hours (see photo from PSKReporter).   Plans are to add a LiFePO4 automated battery backup next.

Brad Swartz N5CBP and I tested caching messages to each other -- at the SAME TIME -- onto the AA3YB node.   It worked! We were each able to subsequently query the node for messages, getting a "YES" reply, and message ID.   Then we were each able to query the automated station for the contents of our individual message ID and receive

the messages we had left for each other. The system can process two incoming messages *simultaneously* (but didn't ACK one of them because it was still receiving the longer one). Of course, it can't transmit simultaneously to two clients, so we took turns retrieving cached messages. Amazing abilities!

From 500 miles away in North Carolina, on 80 meters, the impact of signal passage through the D-layer on signal strength as the sun rose and set was impressive: AA3YB heard me at +6 dB SNR at nighttime 4AM, but by sunrise that dropped to -9 dB and 2 hours after sunrise it dropped to -15 db. (Typically several dB>0 would be required for successful voice comms and my distant experience with the Florida Phone Traffic Net matches well.) Communications over the disadvantageous slant-angle trajectory through the D-layer were then impossible throughout the major part of daylight hours until about 2 hours prior to sunset, when AA3YB again heard me and reported my signal at -19 dB SNR.

It's probably important to point out that this is currently **experimental**. It is NOT yet an official part of any of our Emergency Operations Procedures, nor of anyone else of whom we have any knowledge. However, such weak signal capabilities combined with simple message caching and relaying capabilities may turn out to be quite useful to emergency procedures in the future as we gain more experience. Many thanks to AA3YB for providing this resource

If you wish to try out the station, simply direct an SNR? or other request to AA3YB on standard JS8 80-meter frequencies, upper-sideband. This should allow for lots of volunteers to practice some of the more advanced capabilities that JS8Call offers. We hope to have 40-meter daytime coverage soon.

Cornerstone Academy Ham Radio Club Open House Display

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

The small classical Christian school at which I have been teaching Honors Chemistry this year has a "flex" time at lunch every school day and they welcomed unusual activities – such as a Ham Radio Club. So I jumped at the chance. *Surprise, surprise,* mostly middle school kids were attracted and what they really enjoyed was learning how to **SOLDER**! So we built a direct-conversion digitally controlled double sideband/AM/CW receiver for 2-30 MHz – and they worked![1]

Like all small businesses, the school has to "advertise" its services, and schools often do this with an "open house" trying to put their best foot forward on their various courses and activities – so here was another chance to do a Ham Radio display! For the sake of confidentiality of the students, I'm not including any photos of all the kids and families who tried out the various activities at the display – but one 2nd grader was absolutely captivated by the ability to send digital messages on a FLIDGI system at the left side of the table, transmitting 5 watts on 80 meters into an auto-tail-light dummy load. Then the message would be received by one of our direct-conversion receivers (being horribly overdriven!) and show up on the computer at the right end of the table! He got his sister to watch for quite a while as he tested various messages and then his entire family.

Another crowd-pleaser was the Morse Code setup with a straight key, a real mechanical "bug", and a fully auto keyer all connected up so participants could try each keyer and hear what they sent. Since this is a school, they were fascinated with the swinging weight on the ancient "bug" – a 2nd order harmonic oscillator to the rising Physics students in the high school.

It took a bit of work to put the display together but it was well worth it to get to do some STEM education to students and families of all ages.

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[1]See: https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2021/RadioReceiverIntroduction.pdf

What's Happening? Alachua County Edition

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

After all the *busy-ness* of helping with the ARRL National Convention Emergency Communications Academy, March was a quieter month for Alachua County ARES® / NFARC.   The major issues included:

- Follow-up LunchNLab to help our participants work on finishing sound-card isolators and wire to radios
- Continued issues of where/how to hold Field Day this year
- Ideas of where/when/whether to begin in-person meetings
- Radiogram training
- Training efforts including simplex VHF tests, lectures, Region 3 monthly exercise, TechNite

Sound-Card Systems – although more recent radios are now increasingly including build-in sound card systems allowing easy access to the modulations of WINLINK, FT8, JS8, PSK31 and so many others, a lot of older radios need external help. And the process of understanding exactly what microphone and speaker signals look like, and how they get into, and out of, the radio, are great training items for volunteers who might have to repair damaged systems during a deployment.   Our follow-up LunchNLab had several of our crew doing even more soldering, and grappling with pin-outs of VHF / HF radios to make sense of it all.   One of the printed circuit board systems didn't put out any audio, so out came the oscilloscope and a bad TRACE on the board was detected! Great chance for our volunteers to see how you can use a scope probe to follow a signal along its path. Our members have SO MUCH FUN at these solder-sessions that they tend to spend half the day at my house!

Field Day – We really did better last year (over 500 contacts!), so we're looking forward to another chance this year, but now we're getting a bit more experience dealing with "served agencies."   Government sub-units have their own inter-relationships to work out, and right now there are some communication hiccups being worked out between various parts of our county's government.   So our normal place for our 2F Field Day operation may not work out this year, and our Emergency Manager group is busily thinking up alternatives– we may end up doing some sort of "continuity of operations" effort surrounding our Field Day!   Really interesting options are being discussed and we will likely grow in real capabilities as a result.   Associated with that is our need to make our EOC radio gear more "portable."   While we have go-boxes for shelters now, our HF gear (to reach State EOC etc) is pretty "shelf-bound."   Stewart Reissenier KK4DXF is our wood-working expert, who has built some gorgeous go-box enclosures, so we're gearing up for a possible go-box to hold some of our HF gear and still sit within our normal desk-setup at the EOC.   More news to come on this.

We have at least three possible locations for renewing in-person meetings – not sure how we'll resume yet.

Radiogram Practice – After a training request from Arc we encouraged our members to get formal message traffic over to Arc. Zoom meetings haven't helped our physical handitalkie radiogram practice! And like many ARES® groups, some of our members have weaknesses at HF comms.   So this was a bit of a struggle to coax people to learn how to relay and get more active on the 7AM and 9AM HF nets available to us.   ARES® groups are the perfect way to serve the public by taking health-and-welfare messages and moving them out through the NTS and/or WINLINK and I'm hoping those relationships and skills will blossom.

Florida Region 3 EOCs are doing monthly training now, headed up by Flagler County and our group has enjoyed having several members joining in on this down at the EOC – we're getting SLERS[1], SARNET, LEO sat-phones, SHARES, data, voice – all of it going!   Great practice!

TechNite: We have a monthly TechNite now that has gone pretty well, with slide sets now on our web site for several beginner-level talks. On April 7th we will tackle the issues of nuclear attack survival and subsequent radio communications issues, after all of the surprises in Europe this year.   Our calendar can be seen here: https://qsl.net/nf4rc/CALENDAR.html and anyone is welcome to join in on any of our training.   Our web site is: https://qsl.net/nf4rc/ and our groups.io site is: https://groups.io/g/NF4RC.   That's open to all hams and is proving to be a good discussion tool.

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[1]SLERS: digital 800/700 MHz law enforcement / emergency management radio system. See: https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/telecommunications/public_safety_communications/radio_communications_services/statewide_law_enforcement_radio_system_slers
Florida's Statewide Law Enforcement Radio, participating agencies throughout the state.

Antenna Wavelength Calculator
Submitted by Carl Berry, KC5CMX

Antenna Wavelength Calculator

The 2022 Florida QSO Party will be held the weekend of April 30th – May 1st

The 2021 Florida QSO Party Results are being processed.

Since the re-introduction of the Florida QSO Party to the contest scene in 1998, the Florida QSO Party has become one of the fastest growing and most popular State QSO Parties around today. This is due, in part, to the tremendous effort by the mobile teams to activate as many counties as they can in order to allow those participating from out-of-state, to achieve a county "Sweep" (working all 67 Florida Counties). Florida stations operating from home are also valuable, since that increases the chances that stations will work all counties! Regardless if you are a serious or casual participant from Florida, or from outside of Florida, the Florida QSO Party was designed to be a FUN operating event. Why not give it a try?

FCC Testing Information

Hog County Amateur Radio Association, Bushnell FL

- First Saturday, 11:00 AM
- Cross Connection Church, 1451 West County Road 476, Bushnell, FL 33513
- Info: sumterVE@gmail.com

Lake ARA, Leesburg FL

- Monthly on the 3rd Saturday, prior to monthly meeting. (Except December)
- 8:00 AM
- LARA Clubhouse (11146 Springdale Ave, Leesburg – off of CR 473)
- For more information and registration, contact: Dave Templeton N4NG, 386-804-2806 n4ng@icloud.com in advance of the meeting.

Lake Monroe ARS FCC Testing, Sanford FL (LMARS)

- Third Saturday of every month
- Seminole County Sheriff's Office, 100 Eslinger Way, 1st Floor, Sanford, FL
- Registration Required
- For more information and registration, contact Bob Cumming, W2BZY, 407-333-0690 or w2bzy@cfl.rr.com

Milton Amateur Radio Club, Milton FL

- Check date at miltonarc.org
- Walk-in
- Bagdad United Methodist Church
- Info: Chuck, N4QEP, merlinman3@yahoo.com

Orlando Amateur Radio Club

- First Wednesday
- 5:30 PM, Walk-ins allowed
- ARRL/VEC
- Central Florida Fairgrounds Craft Building, 4603 W Colonial Drive, East Gate off Fair Villa Road
- Info: testing@orac.org, Robert Cumming, 407-333-0690

Santa Rosa County FL ARES Testing (Walk-in)

- Information and dates can be found at srcares.org

Seminole County

- Every month on the third Saturday
- 9:15 AM
- Seminole County Sheriff's Office off SR 17-92, on 100 Eslinger Way in Sanford, FL
- Info: Bob Cumming, W2BZY, w2bzy@cfl.rr.com

Silver Springs Radio Club, Ocala FL (SSRC)

- Go to http://k4gso.us/class/ to signup for classes
- Go to http://k4gso.us/test-signup/ for testing. Testing is held on the 2nd Tuesday of odd months at 7 PM.
- Note http://k4gso.us/ncvec605/ is requested to be filled out before you show for testing. It is best to download the form and open it as a PDF so you can fill in the blanks.

Suwannee ARC, Live Oak, FL

- First Tuesday of the month prior to the meeting
- Saturdays available with advanced notice
- N4SVC, 9707 58th Street, Live Oak, FL 32060
- www.suwanneearc.org for more information

Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS)
The Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS) has begun limited License testing. Please refer to the following for the updated testing dates and requirements for individuals wishing to take exams. https://k4tlh.net/faq/license-testing/

West Volusia Amateur Radio Society

- Second Saturday of each odd numbered month
- 9:00 AM
- Elks Lodge, 614 S. Alabama Avenue, Deland, FL
- Info: https://westvars.org/testing

> **This information is subject to change. Check with the testing venue to confirm the testing session.**

Remember: Bring photo ID, CSESs, copy of current license, exam fee in cash, $15 exact change. Large print exams are available.

NFL Web Site

For net, hamfest and other events go to www.arrl-nfl.org. Webmaster Brian McClure, NW4R, maintains an up-to-date and detailed listing of all NFL nets and activities. If you need to make a change to an existing net or activity, or add a new one, you can contact Brian on the website.

NFL Officials

Section Manager – *Kevin Bess, KK4BFN*

Assistant Section Managers

> *Joseph D. Bushnel W2DWR*
>
> *John C Reynolds W4IJJ*
>
> *Jeff Capehart W4UFL*
>
> *Neil Light KK4VHX*
>
> *Ray Crepeau K1HG*
>
> *Steve Szabo WB4OMM*
>
> *Scott Roberts KK4ECR*

Section Emergency Coordinator – Arc Thames W4CPD

Section Public Information Coordinator— *Scott Roberts KK4ECR*

Section Technical Coordinator – *Frank Haas KB4T*

Affiliated Club Coordinator – *Appointment Pending*

Section Traffic Manager – *Helen Straughn WC4FSU*

Official Observer Coordinator – *Robert Leasko WB8PAF*

State Government Liaison – *Darrell Brock N4GOA*

Statewide Digital Radio Resources

Did you know we have designated ARES DSAR Reflectors & a DMR Talkgroup?

· **DSTAR Reflector 046**
o REF046A – Florida Statewide
o REF046B – NFL ARES
o REF046C – NWS Mobile, AL SKYWARN
· **DMR Florida State ARES TG 31127**

Feel free to link your local repeaters to help create a digital repeater network through the state!

Email your QST NFL input to n4gl.marty@gmail.com, **Marty Brown, N4GL, Editor. All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.**

Newsletter of the Northern Florida Section of the ARRL

1.Spread the word about our website www.arrl-nfl.org and *QST NFL* on your club web-site, in a newsletter or at a meeting.
2.Send a write-up and picture of your next activity.
3.Make sure you, or the appropriate member of your club is on the email reminder list.
4.Contact: Marty Brown N4GL, n4gl.marty@gmail.com

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