



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 10 Issue 1

www.arrl-nfl.org

January 2023

From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR (kk4ecr@gmail.com)

I want to wish everyone in the Northern Florida Section a **very safe and Happy New Year**. This year the motto for the NFL Section is going to be, "Come Join the Fun!" Our Amateur Radio hobby should be fun! We do take it seriously but we need to have fun. And, to help rejuvenate the "fun" in our hobby, the ARRL is calling 2023, "The Year of the Volunteer."

As part of the Year of the Volunteer, ARRL is running a year-long contest called Volunteers on the Air (VOTA). Here is a link to the information on the ARRL website about [VOTA 2023](#), and here is the link to the article that was posted in the January 2023 QST - [Volunteers on the Air](#). Each state will have 2 weeks during the year to represent the ARRL and use the W1AW call sign as part of the contest. Florida has the week of February 22 and November 29 using **W1AW/4**. The NFL Section will coordinate the week in February. We will operate from multiple NFL locations to allow several counties to participate. If your county is interested in participating, please contact me. You can see the complete state activation schedule [here](#). You do not have to wait until our "weeks" to participate. Each contact you make counts for points. Each ARRL official that you contact counts for additional points. Check out the links above for a complete breakdown of points and how to get credit.

Challenge Coin

As a way for us to recognize those who go above and beyond on our section, we have designed a NFL Section Challenge coin. Each of our Assistant Section Managers as well as the Section Emergency Coordinator will have them to give out to honor members in our section.



Photos Needed

We are still in need of photos from each county to use for a section banner. We are looking for 2 photos from each county that picture our members working on radio equipment or making contacts. The banner will be used at events in our state to promote our section.

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR

kk4ecr@gmail.com

904-759-7812 — Cell

904-602-9576 — Direct to Shack

5481 — Hamshack Hotline



In the News

House Bill regrading HOA Antenna Restrictions for Ham Radio

Congressman Bill Johnson (OH-6) introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R.9670) on Thursday, December 22, 2022, to eliminate private land use restrictions that prohibit, restrict, or impair the ability of an Amateur Radio Operator from operating and installing amateur station antennas on property subject to the control of the Amateur Radio Operator.

Continued on next page...

What's Inside

[From the Section Emergency Coordinator](#)

[What's Happening? Santa Rosa County](#)

[Backup Comm Planning for Alachua County](#)

[What's Happening? Hog County](#)

[What's Happening? Big Bend Counties](#)

[What's Happening? Alachua County](#)

[New Alachua County VARA Digipeater](#)

[MERT Communications Update, 2023](#)

[What's Happening? Okaloosa & Walton Counties](#)

[Auxcomm Training Course—Feb 6-7](#)

If you have input for **QST NFL**, or would like to be added to (or removed from) the reminder list, contact Marty Brown, N4GL, Editor, n4gl.marty@gmail.com

All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.

NFL Officials

Section Manager

Scott Roberts KK4ECR

Assistant Section Managers

Kevin Bess KK4BFN

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

DJ Stewart KI4ZER

Joe Bassett, W1WCN

Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames W4CPD

Section Public Info Coordinator

Jim Bledsoe, KI4KEA

Section Technical Coordinator

Frank Haas KB4T

Section Affiliated Club Coordinator

Section Traffic Manager

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

Section Official Observer Coordinator

Robert Leasko WB8PAF

Section State Government Liaison

Darrell Brock N4GOA

NFL Committees

Webmaster, www.arrl-nfl.org

Kari McClure, NW4R

Newsletter, QST NFL

Marty Brown, N4GL

QST NFL is a monthly publication of the ARRL Northern Florida Section. *QST NFL* is intended for wide distribution within the NFL Section, including club Leaders and all licensed Amateurs in Florida. A current issue of this publication can be found at the ARRL Southeastern Division web site, Northern Florida Section.

www.ARRL-NFL.org Opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and may not express the positions of the ARRL.

Submissions may be made to the editor: Marty Brown N4GL.MARTY@gmail.com.

All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.

Looking for Something?

Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, has taken the time to index the articles from all the 2021 issues of *QST NFL*!

<https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/>

[up-](#)

[loads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf](#)

December 2022 in Review

In December I made a trip to Pensacola for work. While I was there, I “dropped in” on the EC for Escambia County, Gene Bannon, KB4HAH. We had a great chat over breakfast with some of his leadership team. Escambia county has some great things going on. Thanks for letting me pop in, unannounced, and making time to meet with me.

A look forward to 2023

I want to meet with as many clubs and ARES organizations as possible in 2023. I may even do some “drop in” meet and greets when I am in your area. If you would like me, one of our Assistant Section Managers, or our Section Emergency Coordinator to speak at one of your meetings, please let me know. We will do our best to put you on our calendar and attend your meeting. If we are not able to attend in person, we will do our best to attend virtually by using Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

2023 is going to be a GREAT year for the NFL Section. Don’t get left out — “Come Join the Fun,” and participate in “Volunteers on the Air.”

Thank you for allowing me to be YOUR Section Manager.

ORLANDO
HamCation®
2023

CENTRAL FLORIDA FAIRGROUNDS AND EXPO PARK
February 10th, 11th, & 12th

Host of the 2023 ARRL Southeastern Division Convention

Start the 2023 Hamfest season by visiting the 2nd largest Hamfest in the United States. Come check out the latest in amateur radio electronics, accessories, and gear. Stroll thru the largest tailgate in the Southeast. Find great deals in our swap building with more than 200 swap tables. You can even catch a great lecture or forum while you're here. Bring the family and spend some time before or after HamCation at one of our area attractions. Attending is so easy because we partnered with a select group of preferred hotels to provide you with great accommodations at special rates. So make HamCation your next vacation destination!

- Special Guest Speakers
- Over 150 Commercial Booths
- More than 200 Swap Tables
- Largest Tailgate in the Southeast
- Tasting on Friday and Saturday
- Forums on Great Topics
- Onsite Swagler & Wheelchair Rentals
- Guest Friendly Florida Atmosphere
- RV Camping on Premises
- Free & Convenient Parking
- Visit Nearby Theme Parks
- Casual or Fine Dining Nearby

WWW.HAMCATION.COM

Friday/Saturday 9AM - 5PM, Sunday 9AM - 1PM.
Tickets are \$25 at the gate.

Orlando HamCation®
PO Box 674923
Orlando, FL 32867
(407) 881-6674

From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

As we come to the end of another year, I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for the outstanding work you've done over the past 12 months. It has been an honor to work alongside such a dedicated and passionate group of individuals who are committed to serving their communities and the state of Florida.



Your dedication to the ARES and your communities has been evident in everything you do, and it has been especially evident during the recent hurricanes, Ian and Nicole. Your tireless efforts to provide emergency communication support during these difficult times have made a significant impact, and I am grateful for your selfless service. Your ability to stay calm under pressure and provide critical support to those in need is truly admirable, and it is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of our volunteers throughout the state.

As we look ahead to 2023, I am confident that great things are in store for our section and the state. Your skills and commitment to making a difference will undoubtedly continue to shine, and I am excited to see all that we will accomplish together. Whether it's responding to natural disasters, providing communication support for community events, or simply being there for our neighbors in times of need, I know that we will continue to make a positive impact in our communities.

I want to personally thank each one of you for your hard work and dedication. Your service is truly appreciated, and we are grateful to have you as a part of the team. Here's to a great year ahead!

Thanks to those of our ARES Emergency Coordinators that submitted their report for the month of November. These reports are critical to help Scott & me know what is going on throughout the section and provide that information up to headquarters. In November, our section reported 1,945 volunteer hours.

	Number	Person-Hrs
Exercises this month:	5	101.00
Training events this month:	23	373.00
Public service events this month:	13	44.00
Community service events this month:	4	128.00
Emergency events this month:	7	504.00
SKYWARN events this month:	1	5.00
Meetings this month:	19	425.00
Unclassified events this month:	114	364.00

Call signs of DEC/ECs reporting:

W4CPD KK4ECR N5CBP N4JTK K4SOP K4BJS AI4NF KB4HAH W4UFL K4DFG W4KKJ KN4PFZ WE4MJ W4KEF KM4BTW W4CJB WA4MN KO4KUS



What's Happening? Santa Rosa County Edition

Our ARES meeting for December included a special guest speaker, Tim Trowbridge, Logistics Chief for Santa Rosa County Florida Emergency Management. Trowbridge has been working for the county since May of 2022 and brings with him 19 years of experience in Law Enforcement.

As Logistics Chief, Trowbridge is responsible for interacting with several volunteer organizations, including ARES, CERT, Faith Based Partners, United Way/211, Red Cross, Medical Reserve Corps, and Shelter & POD Support.



During the meeting, Trowbridge spoke about his plans to expand the county's Citizen Corps organization by supporting a wider range of events. Citizen Corps is a national network of volunteers who are trained in emergency response and preparedness. The purpose of Citizen Corps is to engage individuals and communities in emergency preparedness and response efforts, helping to ensure that they are ready to respond to a wide range of disasters, from natural disasters to terrorism. By working together, Citizen Corps volunteers can help to protect their communities and ensure that they are prepared for any type of disaster.



To help achieve the goal of expanding Citizen Corps, Trowbridge has appointed Arc Thames-W4CPD as the Alternate Logistics Section Chief and Assistant Citizen Corps Coordinator for Santa Rosa County. Thames brings 9 years of experience in special event incident planning from his service as the Auxiliary Unit Lieutenant for the Crestview Police Department. Thames serves in several capacities within the State including the ARRL Northern Florida Section Emergency Coordinator and Amateur Radio Liaison to the State. Thames has been involved with ARES in Santa Rosa County for 5 years, with the last 2 and a half serving as their ARES Emergency Coordinator.

Thames & Trowbridge look to expand volunteer support of incidents and events including disaster support and response, races, parades, festivals, and traffic direction for incidents. They emphasized the importance of working these types of events, as it helps volunteers learn how to interoperate with other agencies and organizations, preparing them for real disasters.

One of the organizations that falls under the Logistics team's purview is CERT, or the Community Emergency Response Team. CERT is a national program that trains volunteers to be prepared for a variety of disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, and terrorism. CERT members are trained in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. They are also taught how to work with other agencies and organizations during a disaster, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and working together effectively.

A key goal of the Logistics Team in Santa Rosa County is to expand CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) to the rest of Santa Rosa County. Currently, CERT is only active in Navarre, but Trowbridge and Thames hope to see CERT and ARES team members cross-trained, so that all volunteers can assist with any type of event.

The attendees at the meeting were enthusiastic about the plans and developments discussed, and Thames mentioned that a training schedule for the spring would be available soon. Overall, it was a productive and exciting meeting, with much to look forward to in the coming months.

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management will host an open volunteer meeting on Saturday January 21, 9:00AM at their EOC. This meeting will be an opportunity for those interested in volunteering in the community to find out how they can help.



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](#).

General Class In Person Hands-On Class in Alachua County January 7/8

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Alachua County ARES(R)/NFARC club will hold another 2-day intensive, hands-on General Class course the weekend of January 7/8, beginning at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center,



- 1100 SE 27th St, Gainesville, FL 32641
- Secure Facility ; No Firearms Allowed
- Saturday Jan 7 0800 - 1800 (bring money for Pizza)
- Sunday Jan 8 1300-1800

For many amateurs, the General Class is the life-long entry way to the wonders of the ionosphere and long-range shortwave HF communications. Take the plunge -- get your General!

We always do as much "hands-on" as we can, and this year is no different: At-Cost creation of HF Dipole antenna with 50 feet of coax (the major cost). Expect \$25-\$35 total cost.

Registration can be completed here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc78maHip0LIRmFzzNyhNNOzLHjrZ8VP58H6dGCifuqvy1Uyw/viewform>

Got Lost? Can't find the Building? Questions? Call 352 246 6183



TVARC Holds General Class Course

Brad Castelli, KN9B

The Villages Amateur Radio Club (TVARC) is holding a free in person General license course. Class will meet once a week for seven weeks followed by an ARRL/VE License Exam on Monday February 27th. The course is free and open to the public. Amateur General Licensing Course on Monday evenings, Jan. 9 - Feb. 27, 2023 in The Villages, Florida. More class details and study resources are listed on the club website; www.K4VRC.com ("Interested in becoming a ham" tab). You are encouraged to get your friends to sign-up too, so you can study together.

Info: kn9b@arrl.net



Tallahassee ARS Elects Officers

Chris Pandolfi KO4DN, President-- TARS

President- Chris Pandolfi KO4DN

Vice-President- Phil Fusilier KA5USN

Secretary- Adrienne Hendrix AJ4D

Treasurer- Todd Clark KN4FCC

Member at Large- Alan Terrell N4KGT

Congratulations to the new officers.

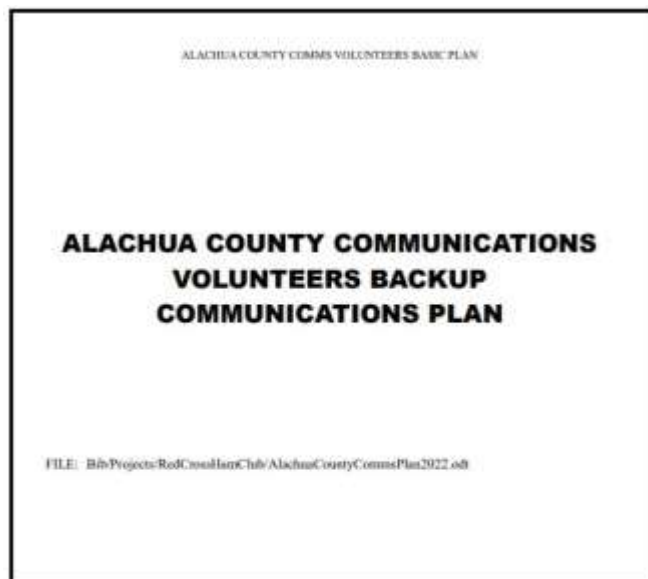


Backup Communications Planning for Alachua County

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Our local ham radio volunteers normally provide fairly simple volunteer service to our county during hurricanes, mainly staffing shelters. However, in this day and age, we're very aware that many additional dangers lurk out in the shadows¹ and as citizens we bear some of the responsibility for having plans for backup communications in case wildfire, or hackers or something else damages critical communications.

Until recently, Alachua County ARES(R) did not appear to have any written volunteer communication plan. One was attempted in 2017, but didn't reach consensus of agreement. The ARRL ARES(R) Plan 2.1 makes **hearty recommendation** for having some type(s) of local communications plan(s) suitable for the potential threats. (See: [http://www.arrl.org/files/file/ARES Plan 2 1-a \(002\).pdf](http://www.arrl.org/files/file/ARES%20Plan%201-a%20(002).pdf))



In the intervening years, our volunteer group has grown in its training, assets, and capabilities, and become even more closely allied with the local Emergency Management group, as they also have grown and developed. In 2021, our EOC mentor asked us to come up with **written plans** for growing our response to the major perceived communications threats. The result was an Integrated Preparedness Plan: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2021/DraftAlachuaCountyARESIntegratedPreparednessPlanning.pdf>. We had never before done that level of assessment of communications risks and our group's response strengths and weaknesses.

Although our capabilities (so far) have never been *desperately* needed, we've tried to exercise them repeatedly through simulation exercises, and at every storm event. We learned a lot about how to allow our tiny backup radio room at the EOC function smoothly in a broad-based volunteer communications effort. As a result, we proposed, discussed, improved, amended, and reached unanimous consensus such that now we have a written Plan for our volunteer communications, for the "usual" issues, as well as extensible to the more threatening. (<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/AlachuaCountyCommsPlan2022.pdf>) The recent intentional power systems destruction in North Carolina and attempts in the Pacific Northwest draw attention to how easily multiple systems (such as water, sewer, traffic lights, communications, temperature control, security alarms etc) can be brought down.²

NOTIFICATION is a key part of our planning because potential situations include the loss of normal internet/telephone as well as hurricanes. We don't *have* any sort of huge independent "radio beeper" system that can reach out with "push" notifications to volunteers independent of telephone/internet. We depend on our members sensing "something is odd" and then (a) checking a well-known VHF repeater for human response with instructions, or (b) connecting to one or more of our local fixed radio assets which can automatically (without human continued effort) display a "signon message" (Winlink RMS) or "status" or "info" scripts (JS8 relay cache). The VHF repeater requires *human staffing* to communicate; the radio assets can be programmed and will then automatically present information to searching volunteers. Much more detailed written information can be provided via WINLINK radio email (accessible via (a) distant, still-functioning RMS's or via (b) "local user" functions on local RMS assets).

¹Recent examples include both attempted and successful attacks on grid power systems in two states.

²See: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/north-carolina-power-outage-moore-county-state-of-emergency-alejandro-mayorkas-roy-cooper-duke-energy/> and <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/12/08/string-of-electrical-grid-attacks-in-pacific-northwest-are-unsolved/>



Setting the standard for next generation population alerting systems

The above plans are worst-case solutions. For slow-onset incidents with normal internet/telephone still working, notification is much easier, and email / county **Everbridge** automated phone notification / groups.io / web page can all reach out with terse or detailed information. (We just use what our county has; we aren't promoting them commercially.)

SECURITY/CONFIDENTIALITY. Some of our information/notifications require more confidentiality and therefore we have a breakdown of *which groups* receive *what information* based on need-to-know. For example, our emergency manager's tentative shelter openings cannot be made available on a public-facing asset prior to actual opening (such as a repeater

that can be monitored by news media or anyone in the public). Similarly we don't want a publicly-available list of *which volunteers' homes might be unoccupied* because of emergency deployment assignment! Recent Hurricanes Ian and Nicole were our first instance of using these principles to use tiered information distribution and were viewed very positively.

*Our Communications Plan provides guidance for **which information** should be sent to **which vetted groups**, to protect the security of our volunteers and protect civil authorities' privileged planning.*

COMMUNICATION HIGHWAYS. Although the EOC is a "hub" of information gathering and dissemination, we plan to have **local tactical net control** handled *elsewhere* to limit work load on EOC volunteers. Similarly, experience showed our EOC volunteers can't really serve regional net control functions, despite our desire to be helpful. And we can't "tie down" the small EOC volunteer crew to continuously monitor multiple radio frequencies will only be needed in critical situations. Instead, we have our EOC maintain capability to reach out, but only **monitor** certain specific systems such as the SLERS (Statewide Law Enforcement System), and the local tactical net. Humans just can't monitor multiple busy systems simultaneously. That allows them to respond quickly to calls for immediate response over systems that remain "radio quiet" most of the time.

INFORMATION CAPTURE. One of our volunteers is familiar (because of federal disaster-response employment) with the expression "Feed The Beast" - the need to assimilate and provide information to decision-makers from the periphery. To receive detailed inbound logistical data, a continuous radio data-based receptacle at the EOC has proved to be an excellent solution that doesn't tie down a volunteer. This can be a peer-to-peer or server-type WINLINK repository (or similar, such as YAPP) that any shelter or deployed volunteer can asynchronously send detailed information at any time. Modulation/Protocol: At present we have the option of multiple different modulations, including AX.25-Packet or VARA-FM, and our ICS-205 will serve to notify volunteers which is available in a given operational period. Tactical net requests can also accommodate special needs.

SIMULTANEOUS RADIOS. To our chagrin, we discovered that co-located VHF/UHF antennas on our tower mean using two or more radios simultaneously is a prescription for failure! We want our tactical voice comms and asynchronous data comms both *simultaneously* functional. One solution might have been separation by bands, but unfortunately we didn't set up radio network assets that way. So we came up with an alternative solution involving high-Q mechanical filter duplexer "cans" to separate our voice comms (usually transmitting on 146.220) from our data comms (144.990/145.010/.030/.070). Testing has recently shown that a single notch can inline with each radio provides 10-20dB notching of the unwanted transmissions, and gives us significant immunity. [Manual tuning may optimize for a specific need.] This was an direct outgrowth of an after-action report/improvement plan document. (https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/2022Hurricanes/2022_Combined_Hurricane_IAN_TS_Nicole_AAR_IP_221128.pdf)

WRITTEN DOCUMENTS. Our county is *extraordinarily interested* in getting documentation of our volunteer efforts, for each and every operational period of a declared emergency. (To the extent that our deployed volunteers aren't approved to demobilize until the paperwork is done!) This represents significant INCOME to the county from Federal coffers. We're told that our volunteer hours are highly valued, and that the match required for federal dollars can be as little as 12.5%, meaning our in-kind contributions can be multiplied 8-fold if properly documented. This

Continued on next page...

isn't so hard when cell phone cameras can still send in photos of signed ICS-214's, but how to do it when cell comms are down? Some investigation has come up with a solution of *digitized signatures* that appears to be very workable and completely acceptable -- even in a radio-dependent comms environment. We will be rolling this out starting in December and growing in the coming year, thanks to some of our recent high-speed data systems deployment.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION. Our efforts are driven directly by local authority notifications and directives. How would this even happen in the event of sudden and complete loss of normal public switched network systems, potentially even with loss of normal modern repeaters? Our newly-developed comms plan has a **specific solution for direct notification from our Emergency Management group, using EMP-hardened radio systems.** We test that pre-set system frequently.

SUMMARY. Our volunteer efforts are highly appreciated by our local authorities and ever more-tightly integrated into their response. We have finally managed to get a written set of plans into play that better guide our volunteers and can be further improved with more experience.



Coax & Coax Information from K1PEK

Bob Lightner, W2GJ

[Coax Facts](#)

<https://www.davisrf.com/buryflex.php>

Self-Spotting in ARRL Contests

Carl Berry, KC5CMX

Bob Naumann, W5OV, posted this message:

<https://groups.arrl.org/g/ARRL-Contesting/message/1499>



KC5CMX shares his best Christmas present ever!

Radio Merit Badge Class at HamCation

Ken Lyons, KN4MDJ

Trustee for wB4SA

I'm pleased to announce that our Radio Merit Badge class at HamCation Feb 11, 2023 is now full with 25 scouts and we have opened an overflow class on February 19th at the Winter Garden Masonic Lodge @9am. We have scouts coming from across the state, Crestview, Tampa, Jacksonville, Melbourne and Miami to earn their Radio merit badge. It's important we support local youth programs as they are the future hams, our replacements. In a survey of hams under age 26, 34% came from scouting programs and 39% came from school programs.

Assorted photos with me and scouts <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5oXuSLvmYLuCPnCu7>



HamCation Needs You!!

Michael Cauley, W4ORL, General Chairman



For more information, to include a description of each volunteer position needed and its duties, and to sign up, go to: www.hamcation.com/hamcation-volunteer

Be sure to read the directions as each volunteer needs to submit the form and we asked that only one area is selected each day. If you want to volunteer in more than one area in a day, please submit a form for each position. You will then be contacted by the Chairman of the area you volunteer for to create a schedule based on your availability and our needs.

Hog County Amateur Radio Association—K4HOG

Gene King, KI4LEH, President



Hog County Amateur Radio Association, Inc. – K4HOG

4655 NW 68th Blvd., Lake Panasoffkee, Florida 33538
www.K4HOGFL@gmail.com Phone: 352-748-3645
www.K4HOG.org or find us on Facebook
An IRS Registered Nonprofit Organization



Gene King – KI4LEH, President – Bobby Smalley – KX4RS, VP – Gil Chapin – WB2UTI, VP

2022 in review.

We had a few milestones here at the Hog County Amateur Radio Association, Inc., which all started on Monday, January 31, when we had to remove our association repeater from its current location in Summerfield, Florida. The repeater was offline then until its relocation to a tower in Sumterville, Florida, on Saturday, February 19th. The plus for us was going from an antenna height of 255 feet to an antenna height of 380 feet, giving us greater coverage area overall and allowing us to cover all of Sumter County, including our southernmost parts of the county. We followed up by submitting the new location information to FASMA to be re-coordinated, which was approved.



Getting ready for the move from Summerfield to Sumterville. Gene – KI4LEH & Gary – W2TR in discussion.



The equipment inside the old Traffic Signal Box.



Disassembly of the old..... Bobby – KX4RS & Gary – W2TR.



Re-installation begins at the new location in Sumterville with Bobby – KX4RS.

Continued on next page...



Testing it out to make sure it is working properly with Bobby – KX4RS & Gary – W2TR.



All buttoned up at the new location with Gary – W2TR standing guard.



Our repeater's new home is 380 feet up on this tower. Increasing our overall coverage.



The new Yaesu DR2X Fusion Repeater was installed on Labor Day – 09-05-2022.

And to digress just a little, via a letter dated February 4, 2022, from ARRL, the Hog County Amateur Radio Association, Inc. was approved as an ARRL Affiliate Club.



Our 2022 Ice Cream Social and Picnic – proudly displaying our new ARRL Affiliate Club Certificate.

Then on Saturday, March 19th, we held our annual association Picnic and Ice Cream Social. This was held at the home of one of our members; they make the ice cream with an old John Deer Hit-n-Miss motor attached to two five-gallon churns, and talk about some great ice cream.

On Saturday, April 16th, we held our annual association Luncheon. We chose Cody's Original Roadhouse Restaurant at Brownwood – The Villages this year. I think we had thirty-two in attendance, some old and some new associates, with everyone saying they had a good time.



One photo of many of our 2022 annual association luncheon – a great time by all.

In August we started the discussion of changing out our repeater with a Yaesu C4FM/Fusion System. Well, on “Labor Day,” our repeater crew “Labored” and replaced our old Kenwood FM repeater with a brand new Yaesu DR2X. With some immediate testing and over the course of the next few weeks, we had good reports, and therefore we are pleased with our decision. So now, we have the capability of operating in both FM Analog and C4FM with the repeater set to the AMS mode.

Fast forward to Saturday, December 3rd, we provided communications support for the annual Lake Panasoffkee Christmas Parade. This usually takes about fifteen operators in various positions, from shadowing Parade Officials to assisting with Float and Participant lineup.

And we have continued with our status as an ARRL-approved VE/Testing organization in which we offer testing on the first Saturday of each month.



What's Happening? The Big Bend Counties

Gordon Beattie, Jr., W2TTT

Get On The Air!

There's been much activity over the last few months in the **Big Bend counties of Madison and Suwannee** and their respective ARES teams.

During the run-up to IAN's arrival into northern Florida, some delayed station reconfiguration and antenna installation and testing was completed at the Suwannee County EOC. The 80m dipole issues were resolved and a separate 40m dipole was installed.

Suwannee County EOC KK4RQY 80m dipole on sidearm along with VHF-UHF Omni vertical and 2m yagi.



Suwannee County EOC KK4RQY new 40m dipole



Suwannee County EOC KK4RQY operating position



Continued on next page...

In addition, the VHF/UHF station was checked out. There was an issue with the assigned laptop, but since the KK4RQY HF radio is an ICOM IC-7300, other personal laptops configured for that radio were available with Winlink and other relevant software. In the next quarter, Suwannee County EC Mike Meador KM4BTW will coordinate the next steps toward making the station and the ARES team more effective within the EOC and across the county.

At this time members of the Suwannee ARES team take turns checking into the weekly statewide SARNET Net on Wednesday afternoons (1 pm ET). The Monday-Saturday 75m NFL ARES Net on 3.950 MHz at 8:30 am ET usually has Joe KI4TRR, Gordon W2TTT and others checking in for the Suwannee County ARES team. For Madison County, Pat K4NRD handles the SARNET check-in, and Jr KC4VPJ and sometimes others check in for Madison ARES on 3.950.

On Saturday, November 12th, the Madison ARC had a successful tailgate on the grounds of the Lee City Hall led by club President Ken KI4IMN and Madison County EC Jr KC4VPJ. The event was free and open to everyone with all kinds of "treasures" being bought, sold and traded. Hot dogs and cheeseburgers along with soft drinks sold well thanks to the grillwork of Aaron KQ4DCB and others. Area Hams and curious members of the public who took note of the community media outreach, enjoyed good conversation and fellowship. Thanks to Dan W1JXG for his efforts in getting signage out on the roads to promote the event. The live demonstrations of POTA (Parks On The Air) by Jim K4DBC, AREDN (Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network) Mesh by Gordon W2TTT and other Amateur Radio activities attracted a lot of interest and discussion because of the technology, the fun and their application to EMCOMM.

On Saturday, November 19th, Jerry AA5DK and his test team tested four candidates for the Technician Class license at a test session administered at St. Francis Xavier Church in Live Oak. All passed after having taken a study course run for several weeks by Gordon W2TTT. They brought the Technician course alumni count up to five newly licensed hams, including Holly KQ4EVH, Wayne KQ4EVB, Ernestine KQ4EUW, Kenny KQ4EUK and Aaron KQ4DCB. Ernestine and Kenny have a solid station on the air already and are making plans to improve it. Holly and Wayne have been setting up antennas and are going to borrow equipment as they figure out what will be best for them.

Aaron is already a General and on HF, VHF and UHF and should be an Extra soon! Here's a few photos of Aaron's station and antenna. His home station has two HF radios and one VHF FM radio. His shack already has Kenwood, Yaseu and Icom radios!



KQ4BCD Shack Fall, 2022



Here is a photo of Aaron's improvised 80 meter dipole mounted on his fence. He used for a contact in St. Augustine! Since then, he's raised it up, added another HF antenna and even joined the Long Island CW Club <https://longislandcwclub.org/> as a LIFE MEMBER to help him learn CW and other aspects of Amateur Radio via their ZOOM and over the air activities. He also bought himself a really nice, brand-new Vibroplex HK-STD key.

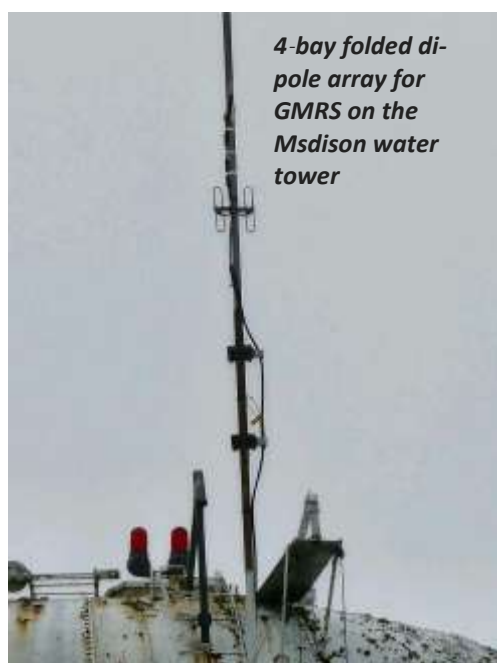
https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/vib-hk-std?seid=dxese1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAyracBhDoARIsACGFcS57sMSyUL2VkeCVU05bY9sdvmtnu5krBZpT7A5cdeJorQ4xGqd21DoaAhjDEALw_wcB

Continued on next page...

Aaron also installed an ICOM IC-2730A 2m/70cm radio in his truck and found a nifty spot for the control head up near the headliner.

Two additional students are in the current Technician Class Course and will finish up with their tests soon. The classes are currently being held on Friday evenings at 6:00 pm at St. Francis Xavier in Live Oak. There is no charge for the course which is being given under the auspices of the Knights of Columbus Council #9720 at St. Francis Xavier Church and the Madison Amateur Radio Club. Pizza is served and a free-will offering is welcome. If interested, please contact Gordon W2TTT at +1.201.314.6964 or email W2TTT@ARRL.NET.

Recently, the Madison Amateur Radio Club put up a GMRS repeater in Madison as a way to provide the community with a publicly available means of local communications both day to day and in emergencies. It also is providing a pathway to those inclined to earn an Amateur Radio license. They were helped by the Taylor County Amateur Radio Club and by Mark Joost who did the antenna work and who is currently enrolled in the license course.



Mark should be licensed and on the air soon! For more information on the growing number of GMRS repeaters in the area, go to <http://bbgmrs.mywebcommunity.org/>

The next meeting of the Madison Amateur Radio Club will be held at 6:30 pm on January 10th (the second Tuesday) at the EOC. Talk-in is on the 145.19 MHz (Offset -600 kHz, Tone 123.0 Hz) repeater in Lee. All are welcome to attend and to participate in the club's activities. The weekly training and discussion net is on the repeater each Sunday evening at 9:00 pm. Again, all are welcome to participate.

There will be a Winter Field Day operation at one or more locations in Madison and Suwannee Counties on the fourth weekend in January. Discussions will determine where they will be, and whether they will be Home, Indoor, Outdoor or Mobile stations. The primary focus is to get more hams on different bands and modes in order to improve our experience and flexibility. One common focus is likely to be emergency power, so batteries, solar, wind, vehicle and generator will be key to the learning. We'll concentrate on powering radios, computers lights and accessories. Power for heat may be a "bridge too far" at this juncture, but

this Florida in January so we'll be prepared for temperatures anywhere in the range from 20 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit! :-)
If you are interested in Winter Field Day please contact Gordon W2TTT at +1.201.314.6964 or email W2TTT@ARRL.NET.

Final note: As we close 2022, we should all reflect and express our thanks for the gift of the people and experiences found through Amateur Radio - especially here in the United States of America. They are truly extraordinary blessings!



What's Happening in Alachua County!

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Despite the holidays, the Alachua County crew is super-active.

TRAINING. We have finished 2 out of 3 of a series of VHF-data TechNites, covering older AX.25 and newer VARA-FM. With the third talk on January 5th (see our Calendar here: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/CALENDAR.html>) on "navigating VHF data resources," we will have completed a full overview of these valuable resources. (See our maps at: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/VHFPacketInterconnections.html>) Great!-- because we're developing and using them!! As detailed in a separate article, we just intalled our highest VARA-FM (narrow) digipeater at 550ft thanks to the generosity of TV-20 and Jim Carr KC4MHH -- and reports of connections using *as little as 5 watts FM* from the edges of the county are starting to appear. At our recent meeting we created [bitmap-signatures](#) (.jpg file type) to allow complete radio-delivery of signed ICS-214 forms suitable for submission, according to our EM mentor. **A problem:** the WINLINK "radio message viewer" *makes even P2P messages and attachments visible, leading to a signature security concern.* I'm working out possible fixes or alternatives, one of which is to utilize VAR-AC file transfer instead.



NETS. Our traditional "check-in" FM VHF net continues strong. But now the twice-monthly HF NVIS net (<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/NVIS-NET.html>) continues to gain steam and attract new participants as people gain HF assets and skills. Reid Tiller K9RFT heads this up. We are now adding two new trial nets -- a CW net for beginners at 7PM (<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/AlachuaCountyCWGrowthNet.pdf>) opposite Fridays to the HF NVIS net, and eventually a VAR-AC FM (<https://www.varac-hamradio.com/>) text-messaging net at 7:30PM those same nights. The latter net is waiting on an upcoming VAR-AC that is expected to allow "broadcasting" via digipeaters -- important for a county-wide net.. Very new stuff for us!

Integrated Preparedness Plan. Back in 2021 our EOC asked us to compile a 3-year plan for meeting perceived communications threats and we developed a complete IPP. No one ever accused us of setting goals too low! Reviewing actual progress versus "plan progress" shows we've gotten a lot done, *but not as much as listed in that document...* <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/DraftAlachuaCountyARESIntegratedPreparednessPlanning.pdf> This helps give us some direction to bring some of those projects up to speed. Meanwhile, discussion on the national RATPAC-associated forum has brought some spotlight to our planning, and a couple of leaders from sections far out west have expressed appreciation for getting copies of our first-crack document, which will speed them along the way.

Morse Code is being increasingly recognized as a surprising "draw" for middle-schoolers. Lorilyn Roberts KO4LBS teaches a class at Cornerstone Academy, and Gordon Gibby KX4Z helped the team there build simple pinewood-base tin-can-strip Morse Code keys with piezo buzzers. The students had fun with screwdrivers assembling the simple series circuit and then having their own practice Morse Code set to take home!

Volunteer Recognition. (See photo above) At Susan Tipton K9PDL's suggestion, we held an impromptu "Luncheon & Recognition Ceremony" on a nice-weather-day at a local eatery and despite the late notice, had 17 hungry participants. Just about EVERYONE in our group has contributed very significantly to our growth and training this year, so

Continued on next page...

there was a long list of people to recognize. After the ceremony, we held our traditional "Lab" part of the Saturday fellowship with volunteers putting finishing touches on their Go-Boxes at KX4Z's house. After considerable frustration, we finally *read the manual* for Rosemary KI4QBZ's ICOM 746pro and discovered how to get it into "data mode" on either HF or VHF and to our surprise, the 6-pin mini-DIN connector on the back came alive and we were easily making VARA-FM data connections out of this older but very capable transceiver. I gained a new respect for this "shack in a box" radio that goes from HF all the way to UHF.

2022 Hurricane AARIP -- [https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/2022Hurricanes/2022 Combined Hurricane IAN TS Nicole AAR IP 221128.pdf](https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/2022Hurricanes/2022%20Combined%20Hurricane%20IAN%20TS%20Nicole%20AARIP%20221128.pdf) Brett Wallace NH2KW did a phenomenal job assembling information about our response to two hurricanes this season and at our December meeting held his 3rd discussion time on our Improvement Plan, noting that many of the items have already been accomplished. He got overwhelming approval of the much-studied AARIP.



2023 FIELD DAY -- Our group is being challenged to hold our 2023 Field Day at a very popular park devoted to recognition of Veterans' service and sacrifice to the country. This site is an alternate location for a displaced EOC as part of the continuity of operations planning of our County, so it is a great idea for us to scope it out for radio comms. With much less "operational control" over the public park than our EOC site, we face much more significant safety issues in trying to move up to 3F+GOTA status. Coaxial lines and power lines pose a **safety tripping hazard**.

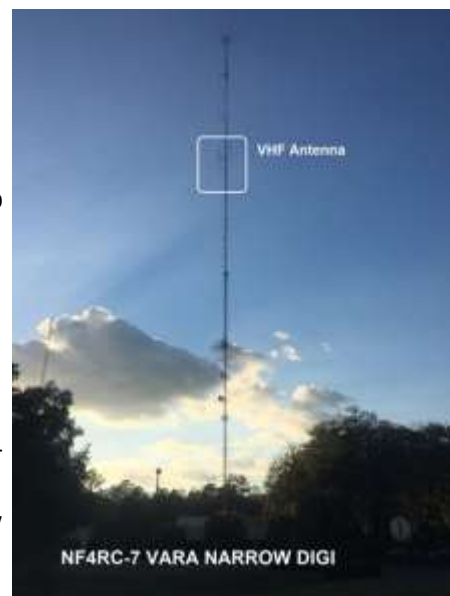
We held initial discussions on how to mitigate. (See preliminary plans in photo.) Included in that was a live demonstration of operating a remote station, literally making an FT8 contact right from the meeting using a station miles away. (TeamViewer.) First time we've ever done that! The idea might allow us to control remote "drone" stations within the 1000-foot circle via microwave mesh and avoid running long coax cables and providing higher power for human-friendly air conditioning at far flung stations at the Park. The group concluded further study and reconnaissance were in order.



New Alachua County VARA Digipeater

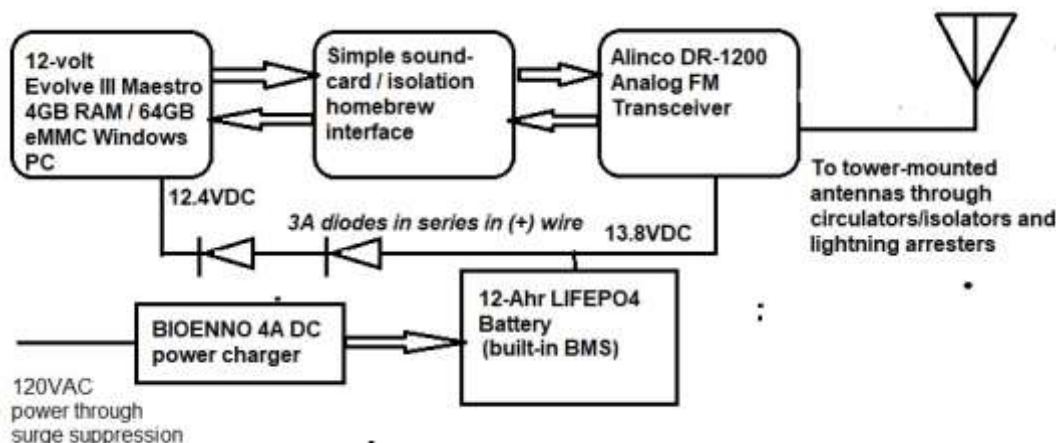
by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Thanks to the generosity of tower space on the TV-20 tower from Jim Carr KC4MHH and the TV station, Alachua County ARES(R)/NFARC have been provided a connection to a set of VHF antennas above 500 feet. We decided to put up a VARA digipeater, NF4RC-7 on 144.990, since we already have a 1200-baud packet AX.25 system in our county and beyond VARA-FM¹ is a recently-developed modulation, comprised of as many as 58 audio carriers spread throughout the audio bandpass. Each carrier of "narrow" VARA-FM is individually modulated with 256QAM, with a symbol rate of 42/second. As a result, data moves VERY rapidly, up to 12.75Kbps. This is similar to the way that most advanced ham radio data modulations have been going for some years and similar to cell-phone signals. We settled on "narrow" VARA, which still uses the entire 3kHz audio bandpass², but works with just about any Signalink or homebrew sound system and simple analog FM transceivers, even Baofengs.



Continued on next page...

Most of our county can now digipeat through just one station, NF4RC-7, and reach more than one local Winlink RMS Server³. Further, we can use this asset for test-messaging conversational VarAC, for "nets" and/or data transmission. (See: <https://www.varac-hamradio.com>). This "digipeating" capability was added in VARA-FM 4.01, Nov 28, 2020 and makes a huge difference for community groups such as ours, spread out over large distances. Already Reid Tillery K9RFT on the far eastern side of the county, has found he can now make VHF WINLINK connections.



Although the inexpensive Evolve III PC (currently more available and cheaper than a Raspberry pi!) likely includes a switching regulator between its 12.0VDC power adapter and internal circuitry, a diode pack of 2 series diode sets rated at 3A, was utilized to avoid over-voltage when the LIFEP04 charger reaches peak voltages. With a charged internal PC battery, the total current drain during receive was measured with a hall-effect sensor at approximately 0.52A, well within the capabilities of the 4A charger. During transmit, the 25W transmitter likely draws from the combination of the charger and the 12-Ahr LIFEP04 battery.

With lead-acid storage batteries, our team has used this sort of power supplies for VHF AX.25 digipeaters in remote locations quite successfully for several years.

The setup of the PC included:

- Installation of VARA-FM version 4.2.7 (compatible with current Var-AC)
- Using the included AUTO-TUNE to assist in setting RX and TX gains on homebrew sound-card interface⁴. (A Signalink or equivalent could just as easily be used).
- Setting digipeater checkbox and assigning callsign NF4RC-7 within the VARA-FM Soundcard setup
- Inserting the startup icon for VARA-FM into the STARTUP folder of Windows (ensuring it will be automatically started on each reboot)
- Inserting a Basic Task into the Windows Task Scheduler to perform a shutdown -r at 2359 each day (or suitable alternate time). (See any suitable web instructions on performing this task.)
- Adjusting the Windows power/sleep settings so that the PC stays "on" forever with power provided, and does not turn off or sleep with the lid closed

The PC-radio setup was test-connected to the tower antenna to measure the background noise in the environment and verify that it was not "desensed" by existing high power FM and TV transmitters. The professional antenna management at the site includes complicated circulators/isolators⁵ that are more capable than setups we have experienced before. Our transceiver perceived no interfering signals and easily made distant VARA "pings" to our existing KX4Z-12 VARA RMS, with full-scale received signals off the side of KX4Z-10's beam aimed at the EOC. No desensing was observed during our visit. Before final connection, the assembly was tested and monitored at home, for several days, including direct observation of the automatic shutdown/reboot sequence.

Although the digipeater itself does not have to possess VARA registration (it does, however); users wishing to utilize it do have to make a commercial payment to obtain the registration.

Continued on next page...

Frequency Selection

VARA-FM digipeaters are not "repeaters," because they do not simultaneously repeat, but rather store and forward data transmissions⁶. VARA-FM does not have the multi-user-channel listen-before-transmit capabilities of AX.25. As a result, users must observe proper etiquette and avoid transmissions when the frequency is busy. With the rapid packet re-transmission by a VARA digipeater, it is easy to detect usage of the frequency. However, some amateur data users don't build their stations so that they can hear the received signals, and thus might inappropriately transmit over existing communications. Due to the lack of listen-before-transmit, VARA-FM does not properly co-exist on an AX.25 packet frequency.⁷ Several discussions were held among north central Florida data leaders to pick a digipeater (and related Winlink RMS) frequency. 145.01 / .03 / .05 / .07 are frequently utilized for AX.25 packet operations according to the ARRL Band Plan documents⁸. There is a disadvantage to having too many VARA digipeaters too geographically "close." Examination of the WINLINK RMS list⁹ suggested that 144.990 was frequently chosen, and that we were sufficiently far from the nearest users. Time and monitoring will determine whether there is any significant interference (other than rare tropospheric ducting). Because of FM's characteristic take-over of a frequency by stronger signals, it may well work out fine.

Radio Assets

VARA-FM digipeaters are not cataloged or listed on the channel selection charts within WINLINK. As a result, local knowledge of useful digipeaters is important. We maintain maps and tables of existing VHF architecture pertinent to Alachua County at: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/VHFpacketInterconnections.html> and attempt to keep the rapidly-changing data current.

¹<https://rosmodem.wordpress.com/> This is a commercial proprietary product developed by an amateur operator.

²See TechNite Lecture Slides, <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/AX25Part1.pdf> and <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/AX25Part2.pdf> which provide information and contrasts / comparisons between AX.25 Bell 202 and VARA FM

³See maps of our VARA-FM and AX.25 resources here: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/VHFpacketInterconnections.html>

⁴See <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2019/SmallBoxSoundCardInterfaceManual2.2.pdf>

⁵See for example: <https://www.militaryaerospace.com/directory/blog/14059676/what-are-rf-isolators-and-rf-circulators>

⁶FCC Part 97.3(a)(40) See <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-97>

⁷Note the very candid warnings to that effect in this how-to document: https://www.winlink.org/sites/default/files/RMSE_FORMS/rms_packet_dual_mode_single_radio_setup_0.pdf

⁸See <http://www.arrl.org/band-plan>

⁹See <https://winlink.org/RMSChannels>



Upcoming Hamfests

Don't Freeze Your Ham Off	1/14/2023	https://wf4x.wordpress.com/
K4KDI Winter Tailgate 2023	1/14/2023	http://k4kdi.square.site
TarcFest	1/14/2023	www.hamclub.org
Southwest Florida Regional Hamfest, ARRL Southern Florida Section Convention	1/20/2023	https://swflhamfest.info
DeSoto County Hamfest	1/28/2023	http://desotoarc.org
Orlando HamCation, ARRL Southeastern Division Convention	2/10/2023	http://www.hamcation.com
Highlands County Amateur Radio Club Hamfest	2/18/2023	https://www.highlandsamateurradio.com/index.cfm/p/pages/v/13/t/2023-HCARC-Hamfest
The Hernando County Amateur Radio Association Hamfest	2/18/2023	http://www.hcara.org
9th Annual TECHCON - ARRL West Central Florida Section Technical Conference	2/24/2023	http://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/wcftechconference/

MERT Communications Update, 2023

Harlan Cook, KN4VRM, MERT Coordinator

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!"

Please check the calendar for changes to the meetings scheduled the rest of this year. <https://kq4nxx.com/mert-calendar/>



Harlan Cook, KN4VRM,
MERT Coordinator

MERT

Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Marion County Sheriff's Office
Div. of Emergency Management



Goodbye 2022... and Hello 2023!

As 2022 comes to an end, I'm thinking back to when it began and saying to myself... **"Boy, that went by fast!"** For me, it was also a year filled with many new experiences, new friendships and some new challenges.

As many often do this time of year, it's also a time to be thankful for the opportunity in giving support to favorite charities and organizations which are trying to make our community and our world a better place for all.

To me, the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) is one way I can personally "pay it forward" by volunteering my time to help the MCSO during times of major civil emergencies in helping the professional responders help residents, wherever they are.

I acknowledge the outstanding support provided by EM Director Preston Bowlin and his staff of Deputy Director Erin Miller, Emergency Coordinator Chris Kemp, Emergency Coordinator Rob Morris and Secretary Maryanne Davis. Without their constant support, MERT would not maintain its "Mission Ready" status every day of the year.

Most of all, I thank every past and current MERT member and the friends of MERT for their support during 2022. Our organization is very fortunate to be where it is today by all members efforts in volunteering their time and energy supporting two decades of service to the Marion County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management.

My sincerest thanks to you all for your service and support!

MCSO Recognizes MERT & ARES Amateur Radio Operators at 2022 Awards Ceremony

On Wednesday, December 14th, the Marion County Sheriff's Office recognized MERT Member Pat Davis (KQ4BRW) and ARES Marion County Coordinator Hayden Kaufman (N2HAY) (who was on duty supporting MERT) with special awards for their actions during Hurricane Ian in helping rescue a resident in Ft. Meyers, FL as flood waters forced her onto the roof. Her calls for help was relayed by a relative over amateur radio transmissions received by Hayden and passed on to the EOC while Pat was on duty.

We congratulate Pat and Hayden for following FEMA/NIMS procedures while teamworking to alert officials on the request for emergency SAR support.

Continued on next page...



(L Photo) Hayden Kaufman, Pat Davis and family along with MERT Members await the start of the Awards Ceremony.



(R Photo) Sheriff Billy Woods Welcomes almost 400 | Guest and Award Recipients to the MCSO 2022 Awards Ceremony presentation.



(Top Photos) Sheriff Billy Woods presents "Certificate of Appreciation" to Pat Davis and Hayden Kaufman. (Bottom Photos) It was a very special night of awards and recognition to MCSO Deputies, Employee's and Volunteers. The stories of valor, sacrifice and bravery were emotional and moving. It was a wonderful evening!

New CERT Liaison Announced

MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook and Assistant Coordinator Bill Gillespie announce the appointment of Stephen Wall (KE6YXF) as MERT's new "CERT Liaison".

Per our "Standard Operating Guidelines" pages 8 & 9, the "CERT Liaison" duties are:

- Assist with coordinating and facilitating positive interactions between MERT and CERT.
- Coordinate with MERT leaders the timing of and support staffing for CERT specific activities during drills, Rodeo's, Exercises Meetings and actual Activations.
 - The CERT Liaison will meet with the CERT Coordinator to learn when CERT Teams will deploy within their communities, be expecting MERT radio support and when they will deactivate.
- Assist the CERT Coordinator and MERT Training Manager with establishing trainings for CERT Ham Operators.
 - Provide an update to CERT Ham Operators on how to use the ICS-213 and the recommended method of making reports to MERT.
- Participate in CERT Leader meetings in providing MERT - CERT Information supporting the use of amateur radio communications by all CERT Communities.
- Attend the MERT Annual Meeting and report on the events and activities of MERT's support to Marion County CERT.



*Stephen Wall KE6YXF
Mert's new CERT Liaison*

Stephen is also a Certified Instructor with the Marion County CERT and will contribute to MERT's and CERT's future partnership. Please congratulate Stephen when you see him!

Walton & Okaloosa Counties!

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER, Assistant Section Manager, NFL
President of W4ZBB, WF4X, W4AAZ

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER
Assistant Section Manager, NWFL, ARRL
President, W4AAZ, Crestview
President, W4ZBB, FWB
President, WF4X, Defuniak Springs

This is it! This is the end of the year! what a great and wonderful journey! From meetings to, POTA, to Contesting, to Field Days, to tailgates and HAMFESTS, to Fairs and Parades, to Potlucks, to Antenna Raisings, Tower Climbs, Community Development, Supporting Elected Officials, Participating in City and County Politics, and so much, much more!

Without every one of YOU, none of this would be possible. YOU are a part of something. Not just Ham Radio. YOU are a part of a social influence that drives the cohesion of the communities we all call home. While we are all volunteers, we dedicate time to each other! Sitting back over the last week and just taking the year in there are many instances which come immediately to mind. But mostly what comes to mind, are the relationships which are built and are irreplaceable! Take the time to pat yourselves on the back, celebrate and rejoice in the fact that YOU are the ones who empower each person you encounter! Hams or not, the experimentation and joy of Radio Communications is vastly more enjoyable because YOU are here! So, what does 2023 have in store?!

More electrifying and interesting Technical Nights! More Classes sponsored by multiple Clubs and Orgs! More Civic engagement and Support! An increase of capabilities and moving the Clubs into the foreseeable future, advancing with the new technology releases while honoring and teaching the ways of days gone by! As if that is not enough, ...HAMFESTS! This is going to be a great year! New gear, more items, More events, More locations! & Where?! Check the ARRL Hamfest Page! You'll be surprised! Expand your day trip to within 300 miles of say, The NWFL Panhandle! Here's a slight hint, Defuniak Springs, Fort Walton Beach, Daleville, Possibly Milton (what?!), Crestview and more! These Social evens are more than about the deals you can get, they are about seeing the very friends we make Dx and local contacts with! Meeting face to face over a plate and a cup of joe is always great! Take the time to meet the folks YOU ragchew with!

But wait! December was not an empty month! We had breakfasts, meetings, potlucks parades, tower climbs, and Club growth in many organizations! And the best part, we had fun doing it! People traveled from all over to come to the NWFL Panhandle and participate in events, nets, meetings, and gatherings! We hope that when you travel, you participate in the areas you visit! One of the best kept secrets in Ham Radio is an open-door policy! Welcome your visitors and they will in turn welcome you!

Below are some photos and upcoming event flyers. Be sure to reach out to your club reps for more! Do you have an event to advertise? Did you plan it and check all the calendars for the dates? Want to get information out there? Send it to in-fo@NWFLHamRadio.Net email it to me KI4ZER@ARRL.Net share it into the NWFL Ham Radio Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/nwflhamradio>





PARC.FL



NOARC.FL

Playground Amateur Radio Club Presents

THE 53RD ANNUAL HAMFEST

March 17 - 18 2023
Friday 4pm - 7pm
Saturday 8am - 2pm, no early birds

Northwest Florida Fairgrounds
1958 Lewis Turner Blvd.
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Admission: \$7
Tables: \$15
Tailgating encouraged: \$10 per spot
RV Parking: \$30 per night, 30A, Water, Sewer included
Contact: Hamfest@W4ZBB.Org
(850)359-9186

www.W4ZBB.Org



ON THE AIR
PLAYGROUND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
PARC
FT. WALTON BEACH
FLORIDA
SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY



Continued on next page...

**Florida Division of Emergency Management
DHS Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM) Training Course
6-8 February 2023**

In cooperation with the 76th Orlando Hamcation™ - Orlando, Florida
(30 student maximum capacity)

This class is designed for auxiliary communicators (AUXCOMM) and other communications groups who volunteer to provide backup radio communications support to *public safety agencies* such as EOC's, Fire, Law Enforcement and Medical. This typically includes volunteer amateur radio communicators affiliated with many different governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO). (There is no cost to attend this course.)

AUXCOMM focuses on auxiliary communications interoperability, the relationship between the Communications Leader (COML) and AUXCOMM volunteers, emergency operations center (EOC) etiquette, on-the-air etiquette, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and regulations, auxiliary communications training and planning, and emergency communications deployment.

The program is intended to supplement and standardize a volunteer operator's experience and knowledge of emergency amateur radio communications in a public safety context, in an effort to train amateur radio volunteers to a professional, national standard.

Prerequisites for Attendance

Personal experience:

- A valid/signed FCC amateur radio license
- Past experience in auxiliary emergency communications
- An affiliation with a public safety agency (served agency)
- A desire to work with Communications Unit Personnel (COML/COMT) in a NIMS ICS environment

Must have completed the following online courses from the FEMA EMI Independent Study website:

- IS-100, Introduction to the ICS
- IS-200, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Incidents
- IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-800, National Response Framework (NRF)

How to Apply:

- In-State (Florida Students): via FDEM SERT TRAC: <https://trac.floridadisaster.org>
- Out of State (Outside Florida): E-mail: Florida AUXCOMM Coordinator David Byrum dbyrum@tampabay.rr.com
- Applicant's Name
- The name of the Public Safety Agency you are, or will be, supporting
- The Public Safety Agency Email Address
- The Public Safety's point of contact name and both their email/phone number

All applications, and other requested documents, must be received by close of business on **Monday January 28, 2023**. Selected individuals will be notified of approval to attend the course, final location, and additional pre-course information.

Questions regarding the course prerequisites should be directed to FDEM by contacting David Byrum via email at dbyrum@tampabay.rr.com

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

- Last Saturday of the month
- Suwannee Regional Library
- Contact Gerald Guy, geraldguy@gmail.com

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 and requirements.**

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!