



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 10 Issue 6

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June 2023

From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR (kk4ecr@gmail.com)

I hope that you and your family had a safe Memorial Day weekend, and that you were able to take time to reflect and honor those who gave their all so that we can enjoy the freedom we have today. If you have a family member who



served in the armed forces and gave their life for our county, my sincerest gratitude goes out to you for your personal sacrifice.

The mission of the ARRL is to **advance the art, science, and enjoyment of Amateur Radio**. This is accomplished through 5 pillars:

The ARRL Five Pillars consist of **public service, advocacy, education, technology, and membership**. These pillars have been used in our materials and information to support other guiding principles, as a rallying call, and to define the organization. Each pillar underscores ARRL's broad authority and association as Amateur Radio's witness, partner, and forum.

This month, our pillar is **Education**.

The ARRL stands as a pivotal organization in promoting and supporting the world of amateur radio. With a firm commitment to fostering education and involvement in this fascinating hobby, the ARRL offers a diverse range of educational resources and programs. These initiatives are designed to empower individuals to learn about amateur radio, obtain licenses, and actively engage in this vibrant community. One of the primary educational offerings provided by the ARRL is licensing classes. These classes are essential for aspiring amateur radio operators who wish to acquire their licenses. Through these structured courses, participants learn the fundamentals of radio theory, regulations, and operating practices. The classes are typically led by experi-

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enced instructors who possess a deep understanding of amateur radio and can guide learners effectively. By attending these courses, individuals gain the knowledge and skills necessary to confidently operate radio equipment and communicate with fellow enthusiasts around the world.

In addition to licensing classes, the ARRL supplies comprehensive study materials. These resources cater to different learning

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Arc Thames W4CPD

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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://arrrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf>

styles and levels of expertise, making them accessible to a wide range of individuals. Whether someone is a novice seeking their first license or an experienced operator aiming to upgrade their privileges, the ARRL's study materials provide the necessary guidance. From textbooks to online courses, practice exams to audio resources, the ARRL equips learners with the tools they need to succeed in their amateur radio pursuits.

To enhance the learning experience further, the ARRL organizes educational events throughout the year. These events serve as platforms for individuals to gather, exchange knowledge, and deepen their understanding of amateur radio. Conventions, conferences, and seminars offer opportunities to attend lectures, workshops, and hands-on demonstrations led by industry experts. These events foster a sense of camaraderie and provide an immersive learning environment where participants can ask questions, engage in discussions, and gain valuable insights from experienced radio enthusiasts.

Plus, the ARRL actively supports youth education initiatives, recognizing the importance of introducing amateur radio to the younger generation. Through programs like the Amateur Radio Education & Technology Program, the organization aims to inspire and educate students about the science and technology behind radio communications. These initiatives encourage students to explore the world of amateur radio, engage in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning, and develop essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. As you can see, the ARRL's educational resources and programs play a vital role in fostering knowledge and involvement in amateur radio. From licensing classes and study materials to educational events and youth initiatives, the ARRL empowers individuals to explore the realms of amateur radio, obtain licenses, and become active members of this vibrant community. By providing accessible and comprehensive resources, the ARRL ensures that aspiring and experienced operators alike have the necessary tools to embrace the wonders of amateur radio and contribute to its continued growth and innovation.

Section Updates

On May 15th, I had the honor of speaking at the **Daytona Beach Amateur Radio Association** meeting. The event was held at The DBARA's new meeting location, Embry Riddle University. This new location offers the club some amazing opportunities for growth and expansion.

This year's **Dayton Hamvention** was an awesome event. ARRL made several exciting announcements, including the signing of an MOU with FEMA (<https://www.arrrl.org/news/arrrl-and-fema-sign-agreement-ham-radio-is-as-relevant-as-ever>). Additionally, an application filed by ARRL to join SAFECOM has been approved. This partnership will be an important step in recognizing Amateur Radio operators as valuable assets in times of emergency.

Field Day is coming up very quickly. Make sure to contact your local served agencies, public officials, and media outlets to promote your event. It is not too late to get the word out and invite the community to see how we are prepared to serve if called upon. I am presently waiting on the proclamation from Governor DeSantis. As soon as it is received, I will get it out to everyone.

I would be happy to speak at your club meeting. Please contact me with dates and times. Thank you.

Thank you for the privilege of being YOUR Section Manager!

SM Comments and Considerations from KK4ECR

HERMAN®



"You never heard of a ham operator before?"



VOTA Activation Schedule for June

06/07/2023	Louisiana	W1AW/5
06/07/2023	Alabama	W1AW/4
06/14/2023	Arkansas	W1AW/5
06/14/2023	West Virginia	W1AW/8
06/21/2023	None	Field Day
06/28/2023	Maryland	W1AW/3
06/28/2023	Illinois	W1AW/9

Submit your candidate for NFL Section Member of the Month!

If you know someone who deserves recognition, please submit their information to Scott at, kk4ecr@gmail.com, or SEC Arc Thames, W4CPD, arc.thames@srcare.org. Please include name, call sign, the name of the club or group, the name of the person making the submission, a description of why they deserve to be the NFL Section Member of the Month, a photo of the person, and a bit of background.

From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD



As we enter hurricane season for this year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect upon what allows us to be able to support our communities, and that's teamwork.

It is crucial to recognize the significance of teamwork and the benefits it brings. Collaboration not only fosters an inclusive work environment but also propels collective success. By prioritizing cooperation and valuing the contributions of each team member, we can achieve incredible results that far exceed those of individuals. As the old saying goes, working together, we'll get it done. Each person in a communications team brings something valuable to the table, even if it's just by being there to lend a helping hand.

While there are various volunteer communications teams that support our various counties and the state at large such as ARES, RACES, AUXCOMM, and others, it's so critically important to remember, at the end of the day, we're all here to support our communities. It's not about "us vs. them" or hey look what "I" did, it's about working together for the better good and being ready to stand alongside whatever communicator we may work with, regardless of their affiliation.

Take time to build those relationships with your served agency. You may not see the results you want overnight, but being present and willing to serve can make all the difference in the world. Don't be in such a hurry to say "No, we can't do that" or "that's not what I'm here for" and have a servant's heart. You'll be surprised at what a difference that can make in your relationships with the agency you support. Remember, we are guests in those agencies. We're not there to be "in charge" or put on our "I'm Important Badge", we're there to be communicators and lend the helping hand wherever we can.

Section ARES Report

In April our section reported 1,610 hours of volunteer time to various ARES duties within our section. Thanks to the counties and EC/AEC's for reporting their time. The information provided by our team is consolidated and then forwarded to the ARRL.

	Number	Person-Hrs
Exercises this month:	14	300.00
Training events this month:	17	144.00
Public service events this month:	4	291.00
Community service events this month:	31	105.00
Emergency events this month:	25	119.00
SKYWARN events this month:	8	64.00
Meetings this month:	24	307.00
Unclassified events this month:	56	280.00

Call signs of DECs/ECs reporting:

W4CPD W4KKJ K4SOP KK4ECR K4BJS KA3OGG KN4PFZ WE4MJ KO4YOL WA4MN KO4KUS KX4LEO KM4VKY KO4KUS W4CJB KM4BTW



Managing RF

Carl Berry, KC5CMX, Silver Springs Radio Club

Sometimes we forget the basics and need a reminder. These are informative articles, especially for those having some RFI.

[Coax Feed Line Common Mode Chokes](#)

[Choosing a Feedline Choke](#)



Santa Rosa County Featured in Field Day Edition of QST

The recent Field Day edition of *QST* featured an article by NFL EC, **Arc Thames, W4CPD**, on Santa Rosa County's approach to networking with other volunteer organizations. Arc is our NFL Section Emergency Coordinator as well as the Emergency Coordinator for Santa Rosa County. Check out QST June 2023, pages 67-68. Look for more of Arc's articles in upcoming issues of the ARRL's *On the Air* magazine.

Suwannee ARC Participates in the FQP

Steve Kostro, N2CEI, President, Suwannee ARC

As stated on the Florida Contest Group webpage, "The Florida QSO Party is the one event where you can work each of the 67 Florida counties in one weekend! Every county from Alachua to Washington will be activated at least once during the 20-hour Florida QSO Party." The Suwannee ARC did their part and provided Suwannee County for the full 20 Hours.

Five years ago, the Suwannee ARC first participated in the Florida QSO Party (the FQP) and soon realized that Suwannee County was rare in the FQP and desired for the "Worked All Florida Award". During that first year's operation, we experienced the FQP like a mini "Field Day" except that we could be nestled in our air-conditioned Clubhouse with all of the conveniences of home and be very busy operating the HF bands of 10, 15, 20, and 40 Meters. Our comparison made to Field Day and not other ARRL or CQ WW contests is that multiple modes of operation are utilized, in this case, both SSB and CW. Dual modes of operation during an event such as the FQP is preferred by our club members with their specialized interests in certain modes and allows membership instruction and training to those that are interested in developing their operating skills while exercising the capabilities of the N4SVC Clubhouse station. PLUS- we always have a great time being together and operating.

This year like last year, we utilized a special event 1X1 call sign of N4S. This fit into the Florida Contest Group's "Special Event Spelling Bee" where 12 stations in various counties throughout the state utilized a 1X1 call sign of which when "collected" would spell the word "CITRUS". The Suwannee ARC was privileged to be one of two stations to hand out the "S" and thank you to the Florida contest Group for adding us to the Spelling Bee list thus providing us some additional operational mayhem! It is a thrill to hear comments from the other end of the QSO such as "Thank you for the "S" to complete the Spelling Bee" or "I have been looking for Suwannee County for years, thank you for helping me towards my Worked All Florida Award!"

Pictured is Jon, KD4AMP (foreground) operating the CW position and Sandra, K4SME (Background) operating the SSB position. Other operators present were Barney, KD4IPN, Del, K1UHF, Dave, K0DI, Steve, N2CEI and visitor, Mike, N9MC, along with other membership that had time to stop by.

For this year's operation, as in the past, we utilized two of the seven operating positions within the clubhouse consisting of computer controlled K3's networked with each other along with a third computer providing backup logging. Each transceiver was connected to a KT-34 Tri-bandier (10, 15 and 20M) on two 120 foot towers. For 40M, we would share our K1WA design directional vertical array when required. One position operated on SSB and the other on CW continuously for the two 10-hour periods. As the event rules state, operate 10 hours, take a 10-hour break (overnight) and finish with a final 10-hour period. It makes this event fun and as relaxed as can be as a multi-operator competition compared to those 48 hour knock-down-drag-out competitions that disenchant many amateur radio operators that desire to participate/compete but just can't give up that much time or energy.

Our results were that we made over 1000 QSO's on each mode for a total of 2134 QSO's even though we were interrupted by a nasty lightning storm on Sunday afternoon that kept us off the air for over an hour. But for a 20 hr operation period, we averaged 1.77 QSO's per minute leaving time for changing of both inexperienced and experienced operators, casual chit-chat among the membership waiting their turn, consumption of good food, (just like Field Day!) and of course some horse- play and fun! So, yes, maybe we could have done better if we hunkered down with our best operators but that was not our goal as a club event. We just sat and called "CQ" and answered anyone that replied and had a lot of fun!





The FQP is a great event to practice one's operating skills, to learn about propagation on the different bands, and to work DX along with local Mobiles back-to-back! Most would find that activating their county during this event is always welcomed by any station worked. And then there is the Worked All Florida Award, which because of propagation, is not an easy task for Florida residents or operators in nearby states but a great goal to have in mind! The Suwannee ARC only worked 47 counties in this event but will verify past logs to see if we have obtained the 20 additional counties to fulfill the 67-county requirement for the award!

So, not much else to report from the SARC other than its business as usual within the club and do expect greater activity as N4SVC operates through the month of June with the ARRL International Digital contest, the ARRL June VHF contest, Field Day as a 5E station operating with generator power and then the 13 Colonies event through the 4th of July time period. The 13 Colonies has become a Club membership favorite in that we can operate three different modes to work all 16 special event stations that will be active on all HF bands.

And as always, if you hear us on the bands 160M through 3cm this year give us a call and say HI! Then if you worked us in the FQP, thanks for stop'in by! Hope you had as much fun as we did and See you again soon! '73 from all at the Suwannee ARC!



Easy to get Ham Radio Banners for your Club or Field Day

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Our North Florida Amateur Radio Club Field Day will be at a popular county park with large soccer fields, pavilions and playgrounds -- a continuity of operations site for county government. We expect to see more potential visitors than ever before! (See:

<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/FieldDay2023/ICS201GLG2023.pdf>)

Considering our 4-station inside-building-setup as well as our outdoor RV-trailer G.O.T.A. station, we concluded we need more promotional banner signage to communicate the opportunities to the local public visiting the fields at the Park. Using free Libre Office, we

created a new tri-fold colorful brochure emphasizing the wide range of benefits our hobby affords families and youths: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/FieldDay2023/BROCHURE2023A.pdf> -- but how to get **banners** made?

Turns out this is relatively easy and well under \$100. There may be local vendors who can do this, but I found an online vendor (<https://www.bannersonthecheap.com/> Disclaimer: no financial interest!) that had a very easy-to-use what-you-see-is-what-you-get web interface to put wording and images on a banner design. ARRL members and affiliated clubs may use the ARRL logos (see: <https://www.arrl.org/logos-photos>) Since our club is affiliated, supports ARES(R), and is a Special Service Club it appears we can help our ARRL by promoting their logos and our hobby. I chose the high-resolution color logos, available on that page.

On the vendor's website, I chose 3 feet x 8 feet size, heavier vinyl, and six total grommets. This should allow it to be easily attached to the awning of our G.O.T.A. Field Day Trailer. Members of our club offered improvements to my original wording choices; the wording is sufficiently "generic" that we can re-use it for other promotional events as well. Delivery methods add an additional cost but it still was under \$75. We may get another one to help out our signage for the public, and we'll also use "Realtor signs" recovered with information to guide the public to our displays and exhibits and operating positions.



Mark Newby, KX4LEO, Named Sumter County ARES Emergency Coordinator

Hello, my name is Mark Newby – KX4LEO, the newly appointed ARES Emergency Coordinator for Sumter County, Florida. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with such a dedicated group of volunteers, carrying out the ARES mission to provide public service communications to our communities.

My QTH is in Webster, Florida, and I have been active in amateur radio since April 2019. I am a member of ARRL, the Sumter County RACES program, the Hog County Amateur Radio Association, the Villages Amateur Radio Club, several HF Net groups, and an associate member of the Red Oaks Amateur Radio Group. I retired from law enforcement after nearly 30 years, two of which were as Chief of Police.

Since I started my amateur radio journey, I developed a tremendous appreciation for the role amateur radio plays in providing public service communications, not only in times of disaster, but also for pre-planned public events. I wanted to be a part of providing a valuable service through my new-found interest.

The Sumter County ARES team and I have already set several goals to improve our ability to be an effective and reliable civil emergency service organization in our County. We will be stepping up our recruitment efforts, particularly with newly licensed amateurs. You will see Sumter County ARES participating in community events and represented in local amateur radio groups. You will hear us on our newly created Sumter County ARES monthly Net. We will be supporting Sumter County Emergency Management and working closely with the RACES program. We will seek to form an alliance with local CERT programs.

To successfully achieve our goals and move our organization forward, it will take way more than me. It will take a group of dedicated volunteer amateur radio operators willing to serve our communities. To that end, if you live in Sumter County or in an adjacent county, please consider becoming a part of our team. YOU can make a difference! For more information about Sumter County ARES and how to join, go to www.sumterares.org.

The Sumter County ARES Net is conducted on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM ET on the KS4EOC repeater on frequency 146.925 MHz, PL 123.0 Hz,

EchoLink: KD8WAA-R (648680) or AllStar: 53446. Come join us on our Net. We would love to hear from you.

73,

Mark Newby, KX4LEO

Emergency Coordinator

Sumter County ARES





TAILGATE

SILVER SPRINGS RADIO CLUB



DATE: June 3, 2023
TIME: 9:00am to Noon
(setup 8:00am)
LOCATION: Green Clover Hall Parking Lot
319 SE 26th Terrace, Ocala, FL
ADMISSION: FREE
VENDOR FEE: \$5 / TAILGATE SPACE
(Provide your own tables and chairs)



Coffee and Donuts
will be available

More Info: K4GSO.us

Constructing a Club RV Station

by Gordon: Gibby KX4Z

RV Travel Trailers make an ideal communications club mobile station, because they already include desk space, food preparation and storage space, climate control and a restroom. Much easier than tackling a utility trailer! Lacking an engine and drive train, there is less to maintain than a vehicle. It is relatively easy to equip them with a simple fiberglass mast. This makes setting up a mobile HF/VHF/UHF command center for Field Day or disasters or public service much easier.

This article will attempt to introduce potentially first-timers into this productive niche of ham radio club growth.

Purchase

First, evaluate your **tow vehicle** for its capabilities. RV travel trailers range from light 2,000 lb units to those in the 6,000+ lbs. Passenger vehicles are typically limited to 1500 lbs towing capacity. A typical V8-powered full-size truck may handle up to 7,000 and be comfortable towing 4-5,000 lbs. In Florida, you'll need brakes on each axle of a towed travel trailer above 3,000 gross weight. Normally these will be electrically operated brakes, so your tow vehicle is going to need electric braking control. If yours doesn't have that, it can be added by yourself or dealers such as U-Haul. It is best NOT to overload your tow vehicle! Mini-vans are limited in their towing capacity. Try not to push the limits!

Market Dynamics

Spend some time getting a feel for the used market for travel trailers. There is a marked decline in price with the age, due to the tendency of these travel trailers to degrade with time and poor maintenance. Visit some reasonably priced units and get used to sizing them up.

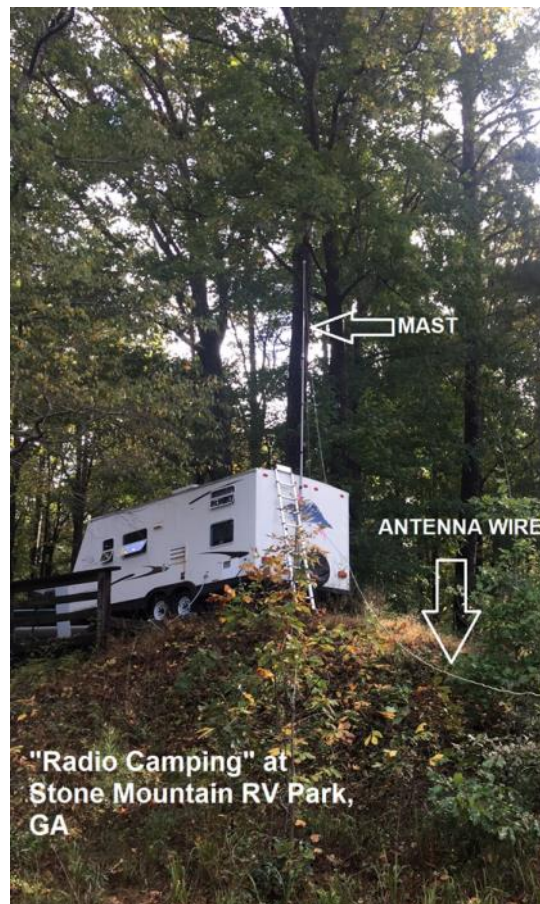
Roof Leaks. This is one of the most important factors in the degradation of travel trailers. Look for any discoloration on ANY wall or ceiling. It is likely caused by water, which can enter at any seam or fixture on the roof. Severe deterioration of the roof structure can easily result. This usually results from owners who didn't do maintenance on seams and perforations to the roof. If you're handy with a caulking gun and able to remove and re-install the special caulking, these can be an easy fix. I use this product: <https://www.amazon.com/Dicor-501LSW-1-Self-Leveling-Sealant-10-3-Fluid-Ounces/dp/B000BRF7QE>

Soft Floor. The floor is usually some form of wood covered with vinyl or carpet. Soft spots indicate deterioration of the floor. Crawl underneath and see what it looks like if you find a soft spot. While you're under there, evaluate how much RUST is on the supporting members. A significant spot can be shored up with some carpentry work from below if you are handy.

Tires. Learn how to read the date code. Look for "DOT" followed by 2 four-digit entries for type identification, then a four digit date stamp = MMY. More than 6 years old is a definite no-no and you'll want to replace them! Figure that into your costs. Read the max weight - tires have different load classifications -- you'd prefer that the tires are operated at no more than 60-70% of their weight limit! I prefer two tires on each side unless the trailer is very light. Trailer tires are special purpose tires. I've had three out of a lot of 4 tires literally self-destruct within one year of operation....defective. Before driving a trailer, pump the tires to right at their design pressure for their max load. You'll have much less flex of the sidewalls and less chance of overheating.

Lights. Are all the DOT-required lighting present and do they work?

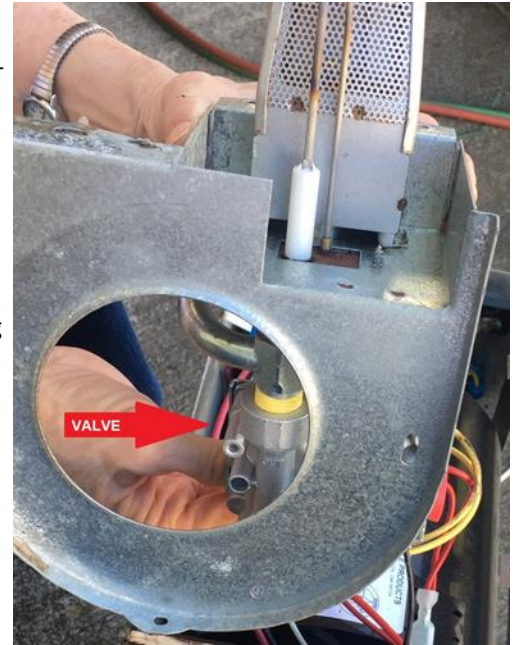
Propane. Required safety propane detectors have a limited lifespan of 5-7 years but are modestly priced and easy to replace. Do it!! Original detectors in an older trailer show a lack of understanding of maintenance. Check the smoke detector -- it probably doesn't work or is beyond 10-year lifetime also. IMPORTANT: carry a **propane pressure gauge** with you to check for leaks in the propane appliances. Also carry a propane tank (in the bed of your pick up truck, please!) -- simply pres-



Continued on next page...



surize the trailer propane lines, note the pressure and then *shut off* the valve. Any leak-down should have a "time constant" measured in MINUTES at worst, not SECONDS. The valves in both the furnace and the hot water heater system **degrade with age** and can't fully turn off the gas. The last trailer I purchased had leaks in BOTH. Tear down of the propane furnace takes experience, ingenuity and 2-3 hours but the replacement of the valve is inexpensive. (Ours: \$75 <https://www.amazon.com/Atwood-Hydro-Flame-38604/dp/B00A2TECE4>) For the hot water heater, if the tank is aluminum it will probably be in good shape but the burner system/valving may need replacing. The plumbing and fittings can be complex. I was lucky and able to use existing fittings although I unnecessarily replaced a good tank. If you're not really competent at mechanical work, any propane leak means you're going to pay a shop to do potentially very expensive repairs. If you are handy -- RV trailers are mass produced and often use stock appliances as easy to find replacements or replacement parts. We use the stove top frequently, have never used the oven, and replaced the non-working microwave with a cheap unit from Walmart. A bit of sheet-metal work and it was nicely secured in the same space as the old one.



going to pay a shop to do potentially very expensive repairs. If you are handy -- RV trailers are mass produced and often use stock appliances as easy to find replacements or replacement parts. We use the stove top frequently, have never used the oven, and replaced the non-working microwave with a cheap unit from Walmart. A bit of sheet-metal work and it was nicely secured in the same space as the old one.

Air Conditioner. In Florida, a well-working roof air conditioner is a must. Typically 12-15,000 BTU, using about 20-25 A @ 120VAC. These can be replaced but they are heavy and if the roof strength is questionable, the repair is going to be dicey. I've been lucky on this so far as travel trailers see relatively LITTLE usage and the A/C system may be in fine shape.

Refrigerator. A propane-based refrigerator is nice because they don't depend on electricity, but they are very expensive (\$1000+) and don't have as much cooling capacity as we are accustomed to in electric refrigerators. Comfortable with generators, and inverters, I've replaced non-working propane refrigerators in two travel trailers with **much cheaper electric units**. A suitable "dorm" sized refrigerator/freezer can be had for under \$200. Getting the system to be road-worthy (won't tip over!) and easy-opening doors can take some carpentry skill. Using ice and cooling packs in an electric fridge that is taped shut during travel has kept our freezer frozen and the refrigerator adequately cold for trips up to 8 hours. We always start the generator and power the fridge if we stop for an extended lunch.

Roof Surface. As discussed above, sealing perforations and joints will do a lot to dry-in your trailer. I've fixed leaks more than once by removing unnecessary TV antennas or propane fridge vents and using aluminum flashing and caulking compounds to seal up leaks.

When a membrane roof needs resealing, this is a major effort. Unwilling to walk on our questionable roof, we were able to build a "loft" in our pole barn to allow working on it without needing to walk on the roof. We used a commercially available re-coating system with appropriate preparatory cleaning with a very nice result--no leaks in two monsoon-level rains! This 5-gallon product (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01EV4EXG2>) was plenty for my 24-foot travel trailer. You'll want to watch a few YouTube before starting this project but it is a 2-day and done effort.



Figure 1: Amy WA4WMY and Dean KV4RL working solar power contacts in Field Day

ADDING A HAM RADIO MAST. On two different fiberglass-sided trailers we've had great success adding a 33-foot telescoping fiberglass mast. <https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/mfj-1906h> First I glued a 1x6 pressure treated board to the back of the trailer, and then secured with two massive U bolts through the back wall of the trailer to reinforced plates on the inside, strategically located inside a bit of storage space furniture. I glue a PVC 4-way fixture to the top piece and hang stainless steel loops to allow ropes to pull up antennas. UHF/VHF can be lashed to the mast. Bulkhead thru-SO239 double female connectors are easily installed through the fiberglass with a wood spade bit and some generous caulking to prevent water intrusion.

Favorite HF Antenna: Lately I've had very good success with a 52-foot end-fed random length antenna driven by a homebrew 9:1 FT-240-43 Balun, to coax and then using an external tuner on my 7300. Worked a nice south Pacific island DX expedition with that antenna! Easily make Winlink connections etc.

Balun construction Part 1: <https://arri-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/00-QST-NFL-April-2023.pdf> page 8

Balun construction Part 2: <https://arri-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/00-QST-NFL-May-2023-1.pdf> page 14



Gainesville ARS Lends a Hand with Lofton HS EMCOMM Trailer

Bob Lightner, W4GJ, Trustee for K4WTL/N4E and N4F

Members of the Gainesville Amateur Radio Society installed roof racks for the Lofton High School EMCOMM trailer today.

Our thanks to: Tom Gause W4YGT, Dave Dockus KO4GGZ, Ken Miller KF4ULO, Terry Gordon K4TMG. Dave Kaufman, K9OBW' donated material for the installation.

In addition, The Lofton High School participated in this week's National Emergency Medical Services Week on-air program. Our students made 517 contacts on SSB and CW. They passed along important safety tips to most of the people that made contact. We used the special event call: **N4E**.



Home of the Eagles

AUXC Personnel Attend State Mobilization

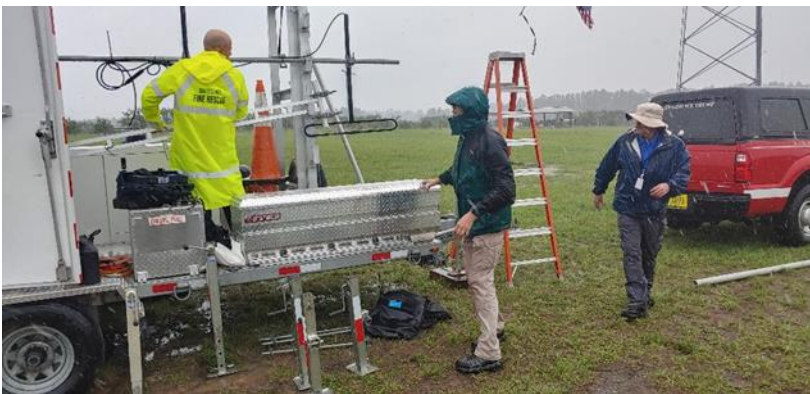
David Byrum, KA4EBX

From May 21 through May 24, 16 amateur radio operators who previously completed the AUXCOMM course and were looking to complete their AUXC position task book were selected to attend as part of the State's second annual communications training mobilization, known as **"MARCONI II"**. These 16 members, deployed to Lake County, along with Mutual Aid Radio Communications (MARC) unit resources, as well as staff from of the State of Florida's Communications Unit.



As was previously announced, Florida is moving towards being an "AUXCOMM State" meaning that the communications resources that could be asked to deploy outside of their local county (whether inside or outside of the state) must complete the AUXCOMM training course as well as the [AUXCOMM position task book](#). Volunteers in local counties that don't wish to deploy outside of their own county would continue

to use whatever program they're currently under, which could be ARRL ARES, RACES, or AUXCOMM. Florida has offered one AUXCOMM course so far in 2023, two in 2022 and 2021, and working to get more courses available in various parts of the state this and next year.



MARC units were drilled, along with other deployable local and regional assets as part of the training week. Each team was a mix of public safety and AUXC personnel, with several AUXC resources serving as team leaders. Each region of Florida hosts a MARC unit, as well as numerous other local and regional assets, that come together when needed such as most

recently Hurricane Ian. During Ian, for the first time, AUXC volunteers were deployed as part of the state deployment. Additionally, cache radios on VHF/UHF and the 700/800 MHz public safety bands, repeaters, gateways, portable trunked systems, and Satellite systems were utilized. Staff challenged the AUXC trainees in many ways during the week.

The AUXCOMM training equips volunteers with practical skills, such as radio operation and data network management, as well as fostering relationships within the emergency response community under common incident management concepts. Having the opportunity to practice and prove out your skills alongside professional career response personnel is a great way to learn as well as get to know the people you may be deployed along side of during an incident or even a planned event.

AUXCOMM volunteers that attended the exercise received training on topics ranging from operations of the MARC units to Winlink, and proper go-kit station setup. The volunteers



also had the opportunity to have various portions of their AUXC position task book signed off by COMT (communications technicians) and COML (communications leader) staff.

Some volunteers were ultimately able to complete their task books they'd already started and have them signed off on by the SWIC (Statewide Interoperability Coordinator) to be officially recognized as AUXCOMM resources by the State of Florida. Additionally FEMA has announced updates to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that officially recognizes the AUXC position as part of the new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) branch.

AUXCOMM is about more than just amateur radio as volunteers are trained to be used in any position in which a communications resource may be needed. Whether it be amateur radio, SHARES radio, public safety, answering a phone, or even satellite communications, AUXC's are there to assist wherever they can be utilized to make a difference.

For more information on how you can begin or continue your AUXCOMM journey, contact myself David Byrum - dbyrum@tampabay.rr.com or your Florida Disaster Region AUXC coordinator.



Region 1	Arc Thames	arc.thames@srcares.org
Region 2	Arc Thames	arc.thames@srcares.org
Region 3	Miller Norton	mnorton@nassauso.us
Region 4	Clayton Parrott	cparrott@co.pinellas.fl.us
Region 5	John Zimmerman	john.zimmerman@lcso.org
Region 6	Clayton Parrott	cparrott@co.pinellas.fl.us
Region 7	Julio Herrera	julio.herrera@miamidade.gov

Of Band Plans for Everyday Operations and EMCOMM

J. Gordon "Gordie" Beattie, Jr., W2TTT
W2TTT@ATT.NET

Since moving to the beautiful Big Bend area of northern Florida, my wife Nancy N2FWI and I have had the opportunity to get on the air from different locations and communicate on VHF-UHF bands over long distances. Propagation here in the Gulf area has been exciting with routine 100 to 300+ mile contacts on 2m FM due to tropospheric ducting. These create "pipelines" for very strong signals sometimes lasting for hours. For example, on several occasions former ARRL Southeastern Director Frank Butler W4RH in Okaloosa County and I in Suwannee County have chatted on 146.55 MHz for over an hour during these enhanced band conditions. The distance between us is just over 204 miles! We each have a 50W radio and a vertical omnidirectional antenna around 30-60 feet in the air. Our stations while solid, are not extraordinary in any way and are somewhat typical of what many other Amateur Radio stations have.

Now many of our radios are set up with banks of memories configured with standard simplex frequencies obtained from the 2m band plan. Band plans are designed to help operators locate certain types of activities on the air and to reduce conflicts between incompatible operations. For example, when listening on a voice simplex frequency, one would not expect, or want to hear APRS packets "burping" from one's speaker!

Sometimes we have been surprised and occasionally bewildered when we would scan frequencies to find stations "off frequency" and therefore unintelligible. Sometimes when scanning the channels used by the Space Station or other Amateur Radio satellites, we would hear stations chatting locally on those frequencies where one would expect a signal from space. Now to be clear, we as Amateur Radio operators are given operating privileges for bands of frequencies except for 60m where we do have channelized allocations. As such, we can operate pretty much as we please within the authorized grant of our operator privileges. However, we as an Amateur Radio community have developed band plans to help keep things more effective and pleasant. More importantly, standardized frequency use makes finding and maintaining communications with other stations in an emergency more effective.

So why do we have so much non-standard frequency operation here in this part of Florida? Coming from the densest part of the BOS-WASH (Boston-Washington) corridor, in metro New York/New Jersey, we rarely had such persistent and pervasive frequency outlier activities, so I started to investigate the reasons for their more frequent occurrence here in Florida. Here are some factors that I found:

1. Folks come from a variety of places each with their own band plans and are simply bringing those familiar plans to the airwaves of Florida. On 2m for example, most of the country uses 15 kHz channel spacing for FM and other non-weak signal modes in the 146-148 MHz portion of the band and 20 kHz spacing in the 144.39-146 MHz portion. However, the western states including states as far east as Texas have gone to a 20 kHz band plan for most everything on the 2m band.
2. Most are unaware of the ARRL Band Plans and how they fit into an international framework that incorporates both the Amateur Radio Service and the Amateur Radio Satellite Service. (Bet you didn't know that both exist, did you? :-) This causes grief to satellite users, weak signal users and the usual mix of FM voice, digital voice and data users when they "trip over" each other.
3. New hams and "reactivated" hams are plentiful here in Florida as many are retirees who finally have the time to devote to our wonderful hobby. They are simply unaware of band plans due to a lack of current operational training.
4. HF-oriented operators with little exposure to VHF-UHF, see these wide expanses of frequencies as unlimited playgrounds when compared to the HF bands. Somewhat like new or reactivated hams, they can mistakenly end up on a frequency used by an incompatible activity, or one that is misaligned.
5. Then there is the "I didn't hear any activity" operator who chats with 50W with his buddy across the county using 2m FM or one of the digital voice modes on 144.200 or thereabouts. Well, that happens to be a part of the band where weak signal stations operate SSB, CW, FT8, MSK144, etc. You won't hear those activities on your Yaseu FT-

2980R or your Baofeng UV-5R, but the weak signal stations will hear you! The same situation can exist in the satellite portions of the bands and often causes those satellites to become useless during a portion of an orbital pass.

Here in Florida, we do have band plans for 2m as well as other VHF-UHF bands. Further, the ARRL has issued a general band plan for the VHF-UHF bands as guidance for regions and states to follow. Finally, the ARRL and IARU have issued band plans for the HF bands to focus activities into "meeting spots" for various modes and activity types and deconflict incompatible activities.

Here are some handy references:

Florida Amateur Spectrum Management Association

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://fasma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021-Spectrum-Mgmt-FL.pdf&ved=2ahUKewiHqKHLolb_AhW4fjABHXn0CSkQFnoECCAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3-20I3V54FHVctHY5L8m5o

ARRL Band Plans HF- VHF - UHF—<http://www.arrl.org/band-plan>

Just a reminder that these are not hard and fast rules unless backed up by regulations, but they do make for a courteous and pleasant operating experience. Specifics such as where one operates your favorite mode or net are not generally specified in these documents but will be guided in their choices by both regulations and band plans. As new modes of operation emerge, there will be tension related to spr, but using these frameworks things get worked out. Since spark evolved to CW, and CW to AM phone, then from AM phone to SSB, and then the emergence of RTTY, ATV, FM, AX.25 Packet, WSJT-X modes, VARA modes, and the panoply of digital voice modes, the evolution of Amateur Radio continues. With that evolution comes change within the FCC's only largely self-policing service: Amateur Radio.

Our spectral freedom, accompanied by a wide discretionary use of power, transmission modes and operating conditions allow for unprecedented capabilities that work because we welcome growth and change as we manage it using band plans and "gentleman's agreements". So, take the time to think through where you are going to operate and how you might impact others. Further, be open to adjusting while also being thoughtful and patient when asking others to adjust. These are core principles of how the Amateur Radio Services have operated for generations and hopefully with an educated and cooperative community, will continue to be so for decades to come.



It started out being 6 feet apart

Chris Pandolfi, KO4DN, TARS President

The Tallahassee Hams Thursday lunch bunch always met at a local sports restaurant for lunch and fellowship. When COVID hit, that came to a screeching halt. After a period of time a few of us missed the camaraderie, telling stories, and talking about ham radio. Theo Titus K4MVL came up with a good idea. Past the Sports restaurant's parking lot was a grassy field with a few shade trees. The idea was we would get take-out food and meet under the shade tree in the grassy field keeping at least 6 feet distance. It started out with about 4-6 of us sitting in a circle either on the back of our vehicle or fold up chair. Soon that grew to between 10-15. Today, that number can easily surpass 20. We still sit in a circle, tell stories, talk ham radio, but now we also have show and tell of latest ham related purchases. The day before the lunch, Theo emails the group on if we are doing PLAN A (picnic) or PLAN B which is lunch in the meeting room at the Red Cross building.



Lake Monroe ARS Participates in PanCAN/PurpleStride Event

Rich Fischer, WA3SXX, President, LMARS

On March 29th PanCAN/PurpleStride charitable event took place in cities across America. In Florida the locations were Altamonte Springs and Jacksonville.

LMARS set up to operate our Special Event station N4P for a day.



K4A 911 Special Event

Bob Beaudoin, WA1FCN

Alabama Contest Group

The Third Annual Special Event to Honor the Victims of 911 in New York City, Shanksville PA, and Washington DC, sponsored by the Alabama Contest Group, will be September 8, 2023, from 00:01 GMT through September 12, 2023 at 23:59 GMT. The title for this year's event will be "9-11 Still in Our Hearts and Minds."

Many members of the Alabama Contest Group (ACG) will activate K4A, operating all modes, SSB, FT8, CW, and RTTY. We will try to be on all bands 160 through 10 meters.

A special QSL will be available. For those who contact K4A on 3 bands, using any combination of modes, we will offer a full color glossy certificate mailed postage paid in a full size manila envelope. This includes DX stations. Put each QSO information on your QSL card. We request a \$2.00 donation to help cover costs.



Send QSL requests to:

Robert Beaudoin
970 Mountainview Road
Cordova, AL 35550

<https://alabamacontestgroup.org/>

Walton & Okaloosa Counties!

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER, Assistant Section Manager, NFL , ARRL
President of W4ZBB, WF4X, W4AAZ, #HamOn!



Hey and howdy! The month of May draws to a close, but it is not without great Hamventures, activity, and all things Ham Radio! The pure and simple generosity of the Clubs and Organizations which make up the 'hobby' embody what it means to be a socially engaged technological interest!

The Walton County Amateur Radio Club in Defuniak Springs continues to put the Fun in Defuniak hosting their Fun in the Front style meetings! Stop in, introduce yourselves, talk about what your level of interest is in Ham radio, brief your current projects or seek technological assistance! They still talk shop and handle business, but the WF4X crowd knows how to engage and partner up to help others complete their experiments while being Elmer's and mentoring those in a friendly manner!

The WF4X (WCARC) Crowd also showcased Ham Radio to the public at Lakefest in their brand-new club shirts! While the shirts are great, the WF4X folks showed off a minimalist approach to VHF, UHF, HF, GMRS and more while only operating with battery power! This drew a lot of interest from neighbors and officials alike who know all too well the susceptibility of power outages in the Florida Panhandle as Hurricane Season approaches.



Moving elsewhere in the communities we stopped at the Playground Amateur Radio Club (PARC)! Their Tech Nights are simply world class! KM4DYA presented the W4ZBB Club and its guests on May the 4th Be With you (Star Wars Themed Night) with Critical Conditions Ad-Hoc Antenna Theory! A network of radios and computers that can be set up to communicate together over distances in environments that have a lack of infrastructure. This drew a large crowd in person and online as the skilled team broadcasts live on Zoom and/or Google Meet depending upon the instructor's preference. Coming June 1st, W4ZBB has another great tech night hosted by N7XDL covering the subject of "Creating a GOKIT That is Right for You"! If you are interested in attending, please feel free to come to the clubhouse at 17 First Street SE Fort Walton Beach Florida on Thursday June 1st, 2023, at 7:30pm! If you cannot make it and would like to view this online event, please email the club at PARCFWB@Gmail.com.



Following that event PARC meet up once again for another Sunday Funday with their weekly Pile-Up! QSO's and QSL's were exchanged, GOTA's got to PTT, experiments and equipment maintenance efforts were furthered, and Clubhouse projects were accomplished to make it a more technological friendly place to be! This is truly a great resource in the Ham Community and their doors are open to all who are seeking advice, mentoring, a chance to operate, be trained, or just join in socially! Be sure to stop in for a visit and enjoy time in Florida's Playground!

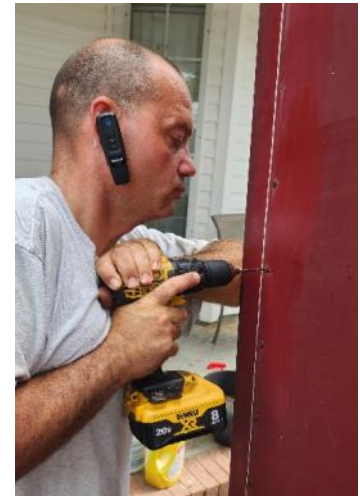
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The next week takes us to Crestview for the North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club unrivaled energy! At their meeting they furthered plans for their October Hamfest and focused on Field Day 2023 prep! Both are going to be great events! For their Field Day, they are inviting all Clubs, Organizations and the Public to Spanish Trail Park, Warriors Hall in Crestview Florida for joining up to show how in a disaster situation, multiple Clubs can be resourced to fully staff Emergency Coordination Communications and to evolve Club relations with the Communities and each other!



More Ham action takes us to #HamsHelpingHams and the retrieval, tear down and transposition of an unused antenna tower from one Ham home to another! Teams from NOARC, PARC and WCARC assisted AA0EU (formerly KJ4KRT) with this project! There were even a couple of guests without their Ham Tickets (yet) there to hands on (literally) and learn while they study up!

"Every, Single, Screw". This was done to upgrade to stainless screws and get the team closer to being ready for paint and design! Soon the outside work will be done, and they will be ready to focus on the inside! They sure have fun doing this and love all of the assistance they get! Surely the finished product will be enjoyed by club members present and future for a long time to come!



Back over to Walton County for the WF4X crowd and their newly established Tech Nights on the 4th Tuesday of each month! Be sure to join in with them as their newly elected Activities Director WD9GIU hosts a myriad of wonderful classes following the success of a 14 of 14 licensed Hams from the Club's recent Technician License Class! This Club really works hard to get folks on their air and to continue their education and advancement! This Tech Night was about how to Program your Radio! This is always a fun encounter (as we all know) with the sheer amounts of programming software available and the many methods in which we attempt to learn radios and the ever-changing interfaces we all encounter when buying new equipment.

Tech Night - May 23rd 7:00 pm
Getting on the Air
Life Enrichment Center, 312 College Avenue, DeFuniak Springs

- Programming your radios manually and with CHIRP and RT Systems Software
 - Software & Programming Cables Needed
 - Repeaters you will want in your radios
- Options if your HT won't reach your favorite repeater:
 - External Antenna, Coax & Adapters
 - Mobile Radios
 - Mobile Radios + Power Supply = Base Station
- Area Nets
 - Net Protocols
- New Conversational Net starting May 25th



But guess what????? Walton County is hosting a POTA/GOTA event! This will occur on June 10th, 2023, 0800 at Grayton Beach State Park. Go to the end of Main Park Road and you will see the Antenna's! All are welcome! If you think that WF4X does not have another hotkey programmed, you'd be wrong! INTRODUCING a new informal NET to the area!

The Chit-Chat Net! Thursdays, 7:30pm, 147.285 +, 100 Hz.

Continued on next page...

Walton County Amateur Radio Club

Announcing



The NEW "Chit Chat" NET



Weekly on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Starting tomorrow May 25th on the
DeFuniak Springs 147.285+ (100.0) Repeater

An Informal "Conversational" Net
With a weekly "Topic" or "Question of the Week"

Helping Hams Getting to Know Each Other!

Be sure to engage with your local area Clubs and Orgs and if you're interested in NOARC, PARC, WCARC, WCARES or OCARES be sure to hit the links to their websites for more information!

NOARC - <https://w4aaz.org/>

PARC - <http://w4zbb.org/>

WCARC - <https://wf4x.wordpress.com/>

WCARES - <https://n4ema.wordpress.com/>

OCARES - <https://oc-ares.org/>

NWFLHamRadio - <https://nwflhamradio.net/>

What's next? Where is the excitement you ask?! Seek no more than the NOARC Tech Night! Guess what?! Remember that invite for Field Day to showcase Ham Radio from the entire area?! Thus far, the Clubs call has been answered and is being supported by PARC! KO4NKL (PARC Activities Director) teamed up with KN4UDS (VP& Activities Director of NOARC) and has planned out a great lay out of the are at Warriors Hall in Crestview and even created a sign-up sheet for set-up, operating and tear down! The invite is still open for more to join in! Be it a Club or be it an Individual, all are welcome! See the sign p page here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0949a4ad2aa5f5ce9-field#/>

How do you close out another Great month?! End it at a Pile-Up with PARC? Yes! But wait, there is more!!!!

Speaking of Hams Helping Hams, KM4VKY made a request for help to get some work done on his tower. This tower, BTW, was also recently put up by volunteers from PARC and NOARC at the beginning of the month! What a way to start and end May with positive results! The call was answered and a new antenna and cables were run on a very peaceful, not wet, not hot day! While the job did not take long, it was a relaxing day overlooking a lake with a gentle breeze and great company! This just serves as another example of the social aspect in the Northwest Florida Panhandle!



What's happening? Santa Rosa County Edition

Arc Thames. W4CPD, SEC NFL

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management, in collaboration with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), organized a Technician Class to train individuals in amateur radio operations. The class was a resounding success, with a total of 22 people, including two teenagers, obtaining their amateur radio licenses.

The class was targeted towards the recent graduates of our basic CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) class but also included individuals from the community as well as dispatchers from both Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. The class was offered to the participants 100% free to include the books, instruction, lunches, license test, and a basic amateur radio HT upon successful completion of their exam. We wanted to remove as many barriers as possible for an individual to obtain their license. The only thing remaining that the participants had to pay out of pocket was their license fee to the FCC.

This was all made possible by the generous donations of various ARES volunteers who gave freely of their finances to ensure this class was such a success. Thanks so much to all those who gave and to our incredible instruction team that made this possible.

The technician class caused a noteworthy increase in the number of licensed amateur radio operators within the ARES and CERT rosters. Out of the 140+ individuals currently listed on our volunteer roster, 64 now have their amateur radio licenses. The increased number of licensed operators empowers Santa Rosa County's ARES and CERT teams with a larger pool of skilled communicators during emergencies. These operators possess the necessary expertise to handle radio equipment, assist in establishing communication networks, and provide critical support to emergency management personnel.



We're looking forward to offering a general operator license class and planning for another technician class in the fall. License testing is available at anytime for those wishing to test. Please visit our [exams page](#) for more information.

Our ARES volunteers also participated in Santa Rosa County's annual activation exercise at the Santa Rosa County Emergency Operations Center. Our volunteers got to hear the process that's gone through anytime the EOC is activated and interact with the various support functions that staff the EOC during an activation. Our very own ARES Emergency Coordinator, Arc-W4CPD, also volunteers in the capacity of Emergency Management Alternate/Assistant Logistics Section Chief so he was very busy assisting the various positions learn how to interact with the web based EOC management software, WebEOC.



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Our team now shifts its focus to field day in which, for the third year, we'll host an event we call "Volunteer Santa Rosa Day" in which the various volunteer organizations that support Emergency Management come together to showcase what they do for the community alongside the amateur radio field day event. If you're in the area, be sure to check it out but you can also read about our efforts in the field day edition of the ARRL magazine QST.

For more information about Santa Rosa County's ARES or CERT programs, visit santarosacc.com or email info@santarosacc.com



Suwannee County ARES Activities - May 2023

J. Gordon "Gordie" Beattie, Jr., W2TTT
W2TTT@ATT.NET

The month of May brought forth a mixture of routine and special activities as we ramp up for a very busy schedule of activities in the month of June. The county EOC station KK4RQY was operational each week on Wednesdays for the morning HF ARES Nets. We also held a weekly county ARES net each Sunday night at 8:30 pm EDT on the W2TTT repeater (145.27 MHz, offset -600 kHz, tone 127.0 Hz) with the exception of Mothers' Day. The 443.775 MHz repeater was also tested and used throughout the month and is operational.

Self-Alerting - Not Self-Activation Event

Parts of Suwannee County lost power for a little over an hour on Friday, May 19th around dinnertime. This did cause the repeaters to go down and immediately Joe K14TRR, James KO4LFB, Nancy N2FWI and Gordon W2TTT got on the air on 146.52 MHz to offer each other status, and to listen for other stations who might come on the air. Had there been a longer outage or one of broader impact, operations would have reverted to 146.55 MHz. Each of us had no telephone or Internet service from Windstream due to the loss of power. Cellular service was also limited because the signals do not easily penetrate into homes and buildings and the severe weather conditions forced us indoors.

This alerting protocol was adopted as part of the recent SET's Incident Action Plan (IAP), which calls for operators to put themselves on "Alert" status and take to the airwaves when there is a power, Internet, severe weather, or any other potentially hazardous condition. If conditions allow, they should use phone, text or email to let others know of the situation. This power outage also triggered the delayed purchase of the DC cable for the 145.27 MHz repeater and the wiring of the 443.775 MHz repeater for battery backup. As they say, "Better now, than later!"

Net Coverage from Suwannee County

Weekly Wednesday coverage from the EOC station KK4RQY was accomplished on the morning ARES Net by our EC Mike KM4BTW, Gordon W2TTT and Dave K4VLF each taking turns. While the KK4RQY station has effective dipoles on 80/75m and 40m, the move of the morning ARES net to 40m has not been kindly accommodated by the propagation at 0900 EDT. This has required our check-in to be relayed on some days. We compared the EOC station's characteristics to one home station in the area and they too had issues hearing net control. We will pursue further reports from other local stations and report our findings. Several check-ins were also accomplished on the Wednesday State and County SARNET nets during the month. We also had several check-ins to the evening net on 3.950 MHz.

KK4RQY EOC Station Upgrade Plans

The month of June will require KK4RQY to check-in from alternate locations on June 7th and June 21st due to official activities taking place at the EOC. These opportunities along with daily check-ins from other stations in Suwannee County will further help sort out the 40m propagation challenges. Other pending activities at KK4RQY include our plan to get operational once again with Winlink as this could be more effective than phone operation. A newer computer was secured and is being readied. Mike

KM4BTW has built and tested a new tri-band fan dipole for 80/75m, 60m and 40m that will replace the existing 80/75m dipole. At this point, the plan is to leave the separate 40m dipole in place with the intention of enabling operation on two HF bands at once for phone/phone, phone/data or perhaps data/data operation. We hope to schedule its installation after Field Day.

Alachua County Functional Exercise Support

Alachua County ARES held a functional messaging exercise called, "Get The Message Out" or "GTMO". It was organized and led by Reid Tillery K9RFT on Saturday, May 20th. It involved the movement of health and welfare traffic in a "grid down" scenario. To make their exercise effective, they sought out several "remote" stations to whom they could forward traffic. Gordon W2TTT supported them and moved 95 pieces of traffic via Winlink RMSs and using Winlink P2P modes. Having a VARA modem software license allowed for more efficient data transfer and is highly recommended. Gordon also provided net control assistance throughout the morning session on 75m. During the morning, the Earth was exposed to three solar disturbances that made propagation difficult and that continued into the afternoon session. Look for more details on this Alachua County activity elsewhere in the newsletter.

Food For Thought

One key point that once again emerged is that there is potentially a special role that some of the non-coastal Big Bend counties could play in moving traffic to and from Tallahassee/Gainesville/Jacksonville in the event of a natural or human-made disaster. The counties of Madison, Hamilton, Suwannee, Columbia, Baker and possibly others, have a statistically lower chance of severe weather (hurricane) impacts and as such would be more likely to be able to get on the air during, or in the aftermath of a severe storm to relay traffic. Further, their physical locations are relatively ideal when there is a need to move traffic on VHF or HF. Colombia and Alachua Counties already have digipeating capabilities linking their two counties and surrounding areas. This needs to be tested further and then extended as appropriate. Stations in Madison, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties routinely check into nets on several Tallahassee repeaters and some even have routine QSOs on 2m simplex! Getting some form of 2m, or perhaps 6m or 1-1/4m, linking going through the Big Bend area for data or voice is surely something to think about given our experiences on 2m and HF.

Field Day 2023

Once again, Madison and Suwannee County ARES operators will collaborate in having a wonderful Field Day activity in the church hall of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church located at 928 East Howard Street (US 90) in Live Oak, Florida 32064.

Through the graciousness of the St. Francis Xavier parish community and the support of the Knights of Columbus, our operating positions will be in the back of the church hall adjacent to a large area with trees and open space to erect antennas.

We'll gather around 9 am on Saturday, June 24th and demobilize after 2 pm on Sunday, June 25th. While our station equipment is going to be a solar-powered battery operation, we will be inside with indoor plumbing.

All are welcome to attend, visit and even operate! If you would like to join the team and bring some piece of equipment or an antenna, please let us know so that we can add it to our plans.

Our key objective is to just "OPERATE!" So many folks just don't get to do that, or they do it with compromised station conditions. Our other objectives include practicing "expeditionary" radio operations, trying new modes, equipment and antennas, and having FUN! Feel free to join us!

Contact Gordon Beattie W2TTT at +1.201.314.6964 or email W2TTT@ATT.NET.

Joining Suwannee County ARES

If you are interested in becoming part of an interesting and active team that is constantly evolving, learning and serving the community, contact our Emergency Coordinator Mike Meador KM4BTW at mmeador@hotmail.com. No matter your experience, you will be welcomed!

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://www.k4tlh.org/getting-started/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!