



# QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 10 Issue 8

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August 2023

## From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR ([kk4ecr@gmail.com](mailto:kk4ecr@gmail.com))

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.



To close out this series of articles, let's look at the last pillar this month: **Membership**.

The timing of this topic is very appropriate for this month. As many of you are already aware, ARRL has recently made a significant decision regarding the annual membership dues. I'd like to share the message conveyed by ARRL President Rick Roderick in the latest edition of the ARRL News:

## A Message from ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR

Dear ARRL members,

Yesterday, the ARRL Board of Directors completed their second annual meeting. I'm writing to let you know that they made the tough, but necessary, decision to increase the regular membership dues rate to \$59 a year starting January 1, 2024 (see [2024 Dues Rates](#)). Additionally, we have chosen to separate the printed, mailed magazine from regular membership. Members will be able to choose whether they want to add-on a print subscription to any of our magazines including *QST*, *On the Air*, *QEX*, and *NCJ*. All members will continue to have online, digital access to each of these four magazines and the digital archive as part of their regular membership benefits.

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR

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This is only the second time in 22 years that ARRL has raised our dues. It is a necessary part of ensuring ARRL is supported so we can continue to promote and fight hard for our Amateur Radio Service, while providing benefits and services for our members that increase your knowledge and enjoyment of ham radio.

To help us make this decision, we invited every ARRL member to participate in a survey in May. Over 20,000 members responded (you can view the survey results [here](#)). We know from the survey results that most of you will find the new rate reasonable, or even ask why we didn't set it higher. We also know that some may find the rate is too high.

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## NFL Officials

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DJ Stewart K14ZER

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### Section Public Info Coordinator

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### Section Technical Coordinator

Frank Haas KB4T

### Section Affiliated Club Coordinator

### Section Traffic Manager

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

### Section Official Observer Coordinator

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### Section State Government Liaison

Darrell Brock N4GOA

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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](http://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](mailto: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/uploads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf>

As I've shared with many of you during my visits at hamfests and conventions, each of us has a responsibility to be active participants, and to support ARRL if we want to increase our ranks and ensure a lasting legacy for amateur radio's future.

You told us that you value ARRL's advocacy efforts, including spectrum defense, standing up to regulators and policymakers, and our work in other areas that defend, promote, and grow amateur radio - including STEM outreach to schools, teachers, and youth. **There is no other organization that is working harder to advance a vision that allows any citizen to explore, develop, and practice radio communications and radio technology.**

Your feedback showed us the many benefits, services, and programs you use - from Logbook of The World, to the work done by the ARRL Lab to test equipment for product reviews. While our magazines topped the list of benefits, many of you also shared that your reading preferences have changed. Some of you prefer print, and increasingly members prefer digital. As a result, for those who prefer print, you will be able to subscribe to *QST* and/or *On the Air* magazine. Again, all members will continue to have access to the digital editions of all four ARRL magazines.

Have you ever heard a Life Member say, "I got a good deal when I signed up for Life Membership 25 (or 30, or 40...) years ago." They're right! They got a good deal, but continuing to serve Life members is not sustainable without making some changes. So, we're going to freeze new applications for the program, not adding any new Life Memberships until we can price the offering to be revenue neutral over its term. And, again, as more members prefer digital, we'll be asking current Life Members to opt-in if they want to continue to receive *QST* by mail.

The cost of doing business goes up every year. During the last couple of years, the costs associated with printing and postage have increased significantly. We've cut and delayed hiring for some positions on our professional staff - one of the smallest teams we've had staffing our headquarters in Newington, Connecticut, in years. We are also continuing to examine other cost-saving measures, but we cannot go further without reducing or eliminating benefits and programs which our members have told us are important to them.

I can assure you that the ARRL Board exercises due diligence and oversight in making sure your association is a good steward of your membership dollars. The reality is that ARRL does a lot - in fact much more than dues cover.

ARRL shares your passion for amateur radio. We are committed to strengthening and growing our community, and protecting our rights to use and experiment on our amateur radio spectrum. We have a 109-year track record that includes YOU as part of that ongoing legacy of support for amateur radio and ARRL.

73

Rick Roderick, K5UR

While there may be those who are not in favor of the increase in membership dues, and the increased cost to receive the printed copy of the magazines, we must keep a few things in mind.

The ARRL goes far beyond being just a magazine subscription; it offers a diverse range of valuable services and programs to its members. New England Division Director Fred Kemmerer, AB1OC, reminds us that the ARRL serves as a crucial support system for amateur radio enthusiasts and offering the following:

- Spectrum Defense: Protecting the rights and frequencies that are essential to amateur radio operators.
- Advocacy: Representing the interests of amateur radio operators at the local, national, and international levels in regulatory and policymaking processes.
- Antenna Regulation & Zoning Support: Assisting members in dealing with restrictive antenna regulations and zoning issues.

Continued on next page...

- Volunteer Monitor Program: A program that helps maintain adherence to the rules and regulations of amateur radio by promoting proper behavior within the community.
- Public Promotion of Amateur Radio: Working to raise awareness and popularity of amateur radio among the general public.
- ARRL Teacher's Institute: Offering programs aimed at promoting STEM learning through amateur radio among educators and students.

The ARRL provides an array of services and programs that cater to its members' diverse needs, such as:

- ARRL VEC Program: Facilitating the testing and licensing process for new amateur radio operators.
- Logbook Of The World: A platform that enables amateur radio operators to electronically record and manage their contacts.
- ARRL Learning Center: A valuable resource for members to expand their knowledge and skills in various aspects of amateur radio.
- Training and Webinars: Offering opportunities for members to enhance their expertise through educational sessions and online seminars.
- National Traffic System: A network that facilitates the efficient exchange of messages among amateur radio operators during emergencies and non-emergency situations.
- EmComm and ARES®: Providing emergency communication support through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service.
- ARRL Lab and Technical Support/RFI: Assisting members with technical matters, testing equipment, and resolving radio frequency interference issues.

The ARRL's commitment to improvement is evident in its efforts to establish an ARRL Ham Bootcamp, aimed at enhancing members' knowledge and skills. Additionally, the League actively promotes six and ten meter operation for Technician class amateurs, enabling them to explore new opportunities in amateur radio.

The list of services, programs, and initiatives offered by the ARRL is extensive and constantly evolving, reflecting the organization's dedication to supporting and enriching the amateur radio community.

And to put it in more perspective, if you pay \$59.00 per year for membership and \$25.00 per year for printed magazines, then you are spending \$84.00 per year. This comes out to:

- **\$ 7.00** per month, or
- **\$ 1.62** per week, or
- **\$ .23** per day.

There are very few, if any, other hobbies where you can invest only **\$ .23 per day** to get the results that we get from ARRL.

While you do not need to be an ARRL member to participate in this great hobby, it's essential to recognize that being a nonpaying "member" of the hobby, places an additional burden on those who are due-paying ARRL members. I understand that some individuals genuinely cannot afford membership fees, and it's essential to be sensitive to their situations. This is where local clubs and individuals can play a crucial role in providing support.

As technology advances rapidly, it's crucial for us to keep pace and ensure that those safeguarding the hobby have adequate funding. We mustn't lose sight of the bigger picture and consider the future implications of our actions. If we fail to act, future generations may question why we didn't take decisive steps. We must strive to secure the necessary resources, or else we risk ending up with outdated equipment that can no longer operate effectively on the bands we cherish today. Let's unite and invest in the future of amateur radio to ensure its continuity and vibrancy for generations to come.

### Section Updates

**EC's and AEC's:** Please be reminded that we have a very important EC/AEC meeting on August 5 in Tavares. Arc and I will cover some important topics and we would appreciate your input on the state of your county. This will be an in-person meeting, but it will also be available via Zoom (details for Zoom will be sent to you by email).

**Lake County EOC [425 W Alfred St, Tavares, FL 32778](#)  
Saturday August 5 - 10AM Eastern Time**

**PHOTOS:** We are still looking for photos from the counties in our section. ARRL is supplementing the cost of a promotional banner for our section to help us promote our hobby. We need your pictures to make this banner best represent what we enjoy most about our hobby. Please email your photos to me at [kk4ecr@gmail.com](mailto:kk4ecr@gmail.com).

If you would like me to visit your club meeting and/or speak, please email me and let me know. I'd be honored to be part of your meeting.

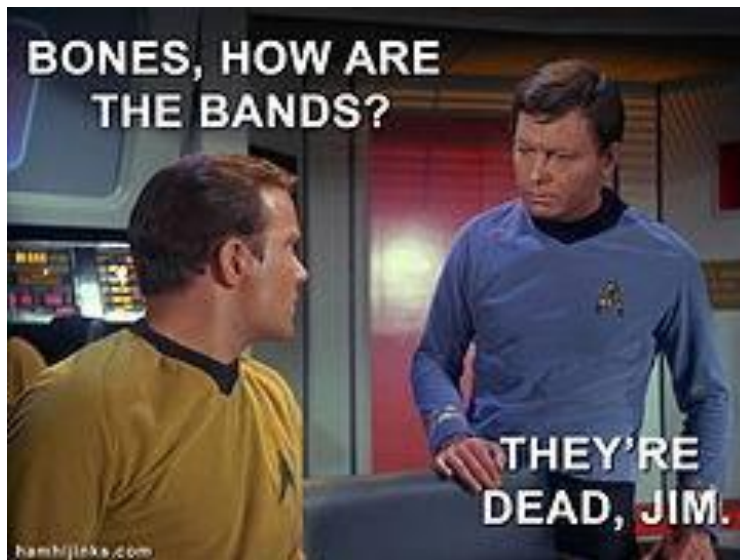
Thank you for allowing me to be YOUR Section Manager.

**A Little Ham Radio Humor – From KK4ECR**

**BE KIND TO  
EVERYONE YOU MEET.**



**THEY MAY BE  
STUDYING TO BECOME  
A HAM.**



**NFL Section Member of the Month!**

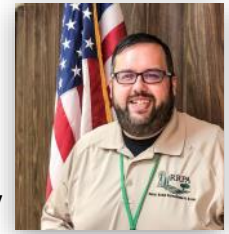
We are accepting nominations for the NFL Section Member of the Month. To submit a nomination, please send an email to Section Manager Scott Roberts at [kk4ecr@gmail.com](mailto:kk4ecr@gmail.com). Include the nominee's name, call sign, county, reason for the nomination, and a photo of the nominee. Arc and I will review the nominations and reach out to you if we have any questions.



## From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

In times of disaster, the ability to communicate effectively becomes an important lifeline that can mean the difference, in some cases, between life and death. Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) operators have long been recognized for their dedication and vital role in providing reliable communications during emergencies. However, as the scope and complexity of a disaster grows, the significance of fostering relationships with neighboring counties becomes paramount.



No single county can be fully prepared for every possible scenario. Inter-county relationships allow for the sharing of resources, enabling our teams to access a broader array of specialized equipment, communication infrastructure, and skilled personnel. By working together, neighboring counties can create a network of support that significantly amplifies their collective capabilities.

Many of our counties in Florida are within a short driving distance of each other. That proximity with neighboring counties provides a unique opportunity for ARES operators to participate in joint training exercises and drills. Collaborative training enhances the skill sets of individuals involved and fosters a shared understanding of standard operating procedures. Moreover, practicing communication protocols between counties helps identify potential challenges and iron out communication gaps, ensuring more effective responses in real emergencies.

Take time during “blue skies” to foster those relationships with your surrounding counties. For our leadership, if you’ve not taken the time to at least have a call with your neighboring counties, please take the time to establish those critical relationships.

In June our section reported a whopping 3,837 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:	39	1,343.00
Training events this month:	19	362.00
Public service events this month:	7	310.00
Community service events this month:	5	579.00
Emergency events this month:	0	0.00
SKYWARN events this month:	9	37.00
Meetings this month:	22	908.00
Unclassified events this month:	89	298.00

### Call signs of DEC’s/ECs reporting:

W4CPD KC4NVU KB4HAH KN4PFZ N2HAY W4UFL K4SOP N4JTK WE4MJ W4KKJ K4BJS W4CPN N9EE W2TTT KO4YOL KO4KUS KX4LEO KK4ECR

## NFL ARES Net Updates

For those that weren’t aware, the NFL ARES net has moved to 7265 on 40m due to increasingly worsening band conditions on 80m. The net meets daily, except Sunday, at 9A ET/8A CT (remember, Florida has 2 time zones.) Additionally, effective August 1 we will return to requiring new members that wish to be added to the net roster to send a radiogram to myself, W4CPD, to encourage the use and understanding of the national traffic system. This message must be sent as a message via the NTS and not directly to me via email or Winlink. You can find the details of how to send a message via the NTS via this link - <https://arri-nfl.org/nts/> Knowing how the NTS works and being familiar with it is critically important to volunteering as an ARES member.

## Field Day at Gilchrist EOC

FRED Lewis, KO4YOL, DARKlub VP, Gilchrist ARES EC

Gilchrist County ARES and Dixie Amateur Radio Klub came together for 2023 Field Day event. We set up just south of the EOC. The county Emergency Management furnished a generator large enough for all our needs. Field Day exercise provided Gilchrist County Emergency Management with a 24-hour test of its generator and our equipment. Many thanks to our Emergency Manager Ralph Smith and Ryan Clemons.

This year Gilchrist County ARES participated in the SET exercise. Added a bar and pulleys to tower south of EOC to raise dipole antennas and a VHF/UHF antenna at the top. This allowed us to communicate simplex with our furthest shelter. During SET we set up a POT in front of the shelter and the dipole gave us a second antenna on tower for Winlink comms.

The community response to field day has been great! We had a reporter Jeff Hardison join us on Sunday morning. His article is online at [www.hardisonlnk.com](http://www.hardisonlnk.com). Hopefully we can build our clubs memberships and ARES volunteers. This was the first Field Day in at least 5 years the local club has been on the decline, but this year is a new beginning. Of course, we learned a little more about antenna placement and with better planning we can make next year's field day even better.



Left to right Amy Woods WA4AMY, Jim Russell KN4KWN, and Steve Carman W4IT



Maria Rivero KF4UEE a GOTA operator (Maria passed her General test on June 29<sup>th</sup>)



Left to Right Jim Russell KN4KWN, Fred Lewis KO4YOL, Mike Shaffer KD4INH and Steve Carman W4IT

## What's the Frequency?

Here are the worldwide frequencies for  
Amateur Radio on the International Space Station

Crossband voice repeater  
437.800 down / 145.990 up (PL 67.0 Hz)

Packet Radio - Currently APRS  
145.825 up and down

Educational Contacts  
145.800 down



TNX, Carl Berry, KC5CMX, from the [ARISS](https://www.facebook.com/ARISS) Facebook page



## Tennessee Contest Group (TCG) Celebrates 30 Years with “30 for 30” Event

Kirk Pickering, K4RO

Greetings fellow contest operators and QSO Party enthusiasts. This year’s running of the August North American QSO Parties marks the 30th anniversary of the Tennessee Contest Group. In the August 1993 CW contest, a group of TN hams banded together, named themselves “Tennessee Contest Group,” and walked off with the top team score. Shortly after that, TCG became the official name of an ARRL-affiliated club and has grown ever since, keeping Tennessee “radioactive.”



Help us celebrate the occasion and earn yourself a certificate acknowledging your effort. How? Make “30 for 30” for TCG. The rules are simple.

Make 30 QSOs with TCG members during the August CW and SSB NAQP contests, then send your log to “[k0ej@arrrl.net](mailto:k0ej@arrrl.net)” for verification. Thirty TCG QSOs will earn you a custom certificate. In addition, the non-TN station with the most TCG QSOs will win something special from Tennessee. Hint — it isn’t an “RC Cola©” or a “Moon Pie©,” and you must be 21 years of age or older to receive it. It is likely Tennessee’s most famous export.

A list of current TCG members can be found here: <http://k4tcg.org/roster/>

Come celebrate with us in August! Send your NAQP CW and SSB logs to [k0ej@arrrl.net](mailto:k0ej@arrrl.net).

Complete rules and information on the North American QSO Parties can be found at: <https://ncjweb.com/naqp/> See you in August!



## Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society 2023 Field Day

Chris Pandolfi KO4DN

The Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society had a very successful Field Day. Antennas were put up quickly before it got too hot. There were plenty of food and cold drinks. This year we were pretty well fed.



We operated 2A and had a GOTA station. All rigs performed flawlessly. We made more contacts this year compared to last year.

We did have two VIP visitors. One was Tallahassee City Commissioner Porter. She checked out how the CW station operated. We also had the ARRL Southeastern Division Director Mickey

Baker, N4MB come by on Saturday morning to visit with us.

Fun was had by all who attended. We are already talking about plans for next year.

## Design Considerations for Florida County EOC

Backup Radio Rooms  
Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Note: an expanded version of this document, more suited to non-amateur radio officials, can be found at: <https://gsl.net/nf4rc/2023/DesignConsiderationsExpanded.pdf>

Our Alachua County volunteer group learned the hard way that an Emergency Operations Center can be a difficult place to have optimal backup radio communications. This article is an attempt to provide opinions and options to help new designs or remodeling efforts.

### **PRIORITIES**

County Emergency Managers likely prioritize the abilities to (a) reach the State of Florida FDEM with traffic if normal communications fail; (b) reach deployed locations such as shelters or points of distribution; and (c) reach near-by county or city EOC groups where mutual aid or other communications might be needed.

### **SYSTEMS**

The typical radio systems available to meet these needs include:

1. Florida Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System<sup>1</sup>, a 700/800 MHz repeater-based system connecting key assets for law enforcement as well as emergency manager (and potentially other) use.
2. Federal DHS/CISA SHARES<sup>2</sup> Automatic Link Establishment system, which allows for automatic choice of HF frequencies and alerting for voice or small message delivery. FDEM is actively encouraging this system and participating in exercises of this system.
3. SHARES Winlink radio email. FDEM not only maintains a continuous Radio Message Server, but there are multiple others within the state which makes logistical communications easy in our area.
4. Satellite telephone -- noting that portable systems require a view of the sky, which may be difficult during a weather event sufficient to activate an EOC..
5. Amateur SARNET<sup>3</sup> UHF communications. A very easy-to-use system that is tested weekly, but has some unique fragilities as a "serial" connected system.
6. Amateur voice and WINLINK<sup>4</sup> HF radio communications, particularly since at the Winlink CMS, the Florida FDEM can be addressed easily from a message originated on a ham radio callsign.

Note that these system span the frequency range from low megahertz all the way to gigahertz, and from point-to-point direct line of sight communications through variable ionospheric refraction techniques.

### **PROBLEMS**

The key hindrances to good performance include:

- A. Excessive coaxial cable runs causing crushing losses of signal. At UHF frequencies, one can expect 4dB or more per 100 feet even with expensive LMR-400 cable. A 300-foot run can reduce the signal to less than 10% of the original power.
- B. Damaging wide bandwidth RF interference noise from unfiltered backup power systems and computers, particularly high-power uninterruptible power supplies. These may add as much as 20dB to the noise floor and effectively wipe out most HF communications systems.
- C. Lack of adequate number of cable penetrations of the facility to allow for simultaneous antenna use on multiple bands. Having only one or two antennas for VHF/UHF, or HF communications can mean that you cannot monitor more than a couple of systems
- D. Lack of sufficient height for any of these antenna systems -- Florida foliage losses and ground losses from our low-conductivity soil can be very significant. At UHF the losses through Florida tree growth can be 20dB per mile, effectively turning even a powerful station into a 3-mile radius performer.

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1. See: [https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business\\_operations/telecommunications/public\\_safety\\_communications/radio\\_communications\\_services/statewide\\_law\\_enforcement\\_radio\\_system\\_slrs](https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/telecommunications/public_safety_communications/radio_communications_services/statewide_law_enforcement_radio_system_slrs)

2. See: <https://www.cisa.gov/shares-program-information> Information about this program is intentionally limited.

3. See: <http://www.sarnetfl.com/>

4. See: <https://winlink.org/>

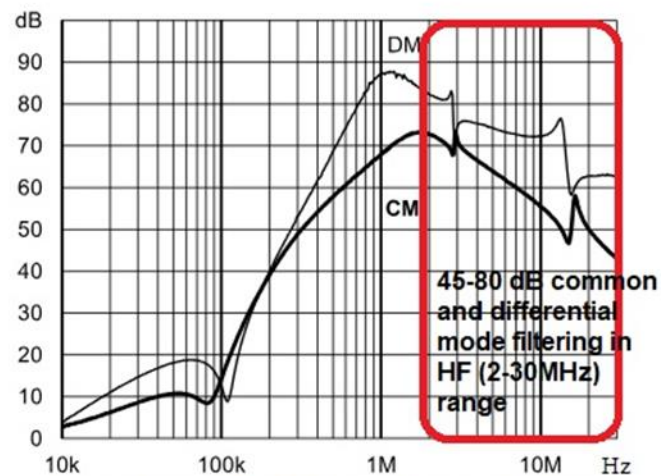


- E. Lack of adequate physical space to allow 3 or 4 volunteers to operate simultaneously without serious compromise. (Remember the COVID limitations?)
- F. LIGHTNING Protection - EOC antennas may end up connected to 24/7 radios that must continue to work even in bad weather, including thunderstorms. Grounding and lightning arrester choices are important. Gas discharge tubes (the active component in a modern lightning arrester) do degrade over time and recent commercial products make replacement with a new "button" easy and cheap. The correct power and frequency range must be selected for these components.<sup>5</sup> Providing a good "ground" for the radio room is also important.

### CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions to obtain optimum backup performance based on these systems, communications goals and typical problems include:

- Encourage volunteer communicators--or even a suitably qualified RF engineer-- to be involved throughout the design, remodeling or construction process, as they can help make measurements and tests that will more likely result in an on-time success, rather than problematic "fixes."
- Provide industrial quality line filtering against radio frequency interference if there will be significant switched-mode power systems as part of the facility. It is much cheaper to provide this from the start than to have to re-build high power AC systems afterwards. The usual FCC limits are **not adequate** to protect the capabilities of high performance HF receivers. Industrial filters installed by electricians near the noise-producing power systems can significantly reduce the damaging RF power that flows into the building wiring system, acting as a huge, enclosing antenna system if these interfering currents aren't blocked. Factories using pulse-width-controlled motors and data centers are familiar with these solutions. The Shaffner FN2520-32 (32 Amp) AC line filter is just one example, which provides 45-80 dB isolation in crucial HF frequency ranges.<sup>6</sup> Correcting noise problems potentially involving both conducted and radiated noise is a significant RF engineering skill; be sure to enlist professionals or volunteers with expertise in this area.
- **Measure and then correct high ambient RF noise** (e.g. from data center or power line arcing) in the areas where antennas will be placed. Our local group has authored an example of a Protocol for easy measurement with a simple spectrum analyzer, and provided baseline comparison benchmarks.<sup>7</sup>
- Position the radio room within the building such that it will be near to exit points/walls closest to towers and substantial trees that provide mounting points for HF/VHF/UHF antennas. This will reduce cable runs and losses.<sup>8</sup>



**Example Industrial EMC Line Filter - Shaffner FN2520-32 (32Amp)**

5. Attempting to push 400W of HF through a 50W VHF/UHF lightning arrester has an interesting outcome, based on sad experience.

6. This particular filter is only one example of industrial common- and differential-mode AC line filters. See: <https://www.schaffner.com/article/fn2520-32-07-c1111>

7. Ambient HF Radiated Noise Measurement Protocol, 2019. Accessed at: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2019/AmbientNoiseMeasurementProtocol.pdf>

8. An example of a cable run loss calculator: <https://timesmicrowave.com/calculator/>

- Provide a **very low resistance ground system** at the entry point of antenna cables, suitable for lightning protection (where currents may reach tens of thousands of amperes). Suitable systems often bond more than one ground rod together.<sup>9</sup> Run a short, heavy wire from this ground into the radio room without sharp turns or coils to avoid inductance.
- **Lightning Protection.** Either right outside, or right inside the building penetration, provide adequate gas-discharge-tube lightning arrestors for every coaxial cable. Each device must be properly chosen for the frequency range and power level to be utilized. VHF/UHF systems typically will be up to 100 watts. HF (3-30 MHz) cables should be protected for up to 1 kilowatt if possible, to allow for the use of amplifiers in the 400-1000 watt range. Some systems are rated for both HF and VHF/UHF. Choose commercial devices that allow for easy replacement of the internal gas discharge tube.<sup>10</sup>
- Provide high quality coaxial cable, particularly if any runs will be in physical situations that might become water-logged. Direct Burial rated cable should be used for any of those, and in general, cable of RG-213 or LMR-400 size should be the minimum where possible
- Provide a suitable antenna to reach preferably two potential SLERS repeaters. Cable length and antenna height will be important for that UHF system.
- Provide multiple VHF/UHF antennas (3 is a good number) to allow reaching multiple repeaters, including SARNET. Since one SARNET connection point may be turned off or disabled, attempt to have adequate antenna height to reach a secondary system as well. Omnidirectional vertical antennas are generally the easiest to mount on towers, and the goal should be to at least reach local foliage height to reduce immediate losses during leafy seasons.<sup>11</sup>
- For HF, our needs for reaching State and other assets generally are better served by Near Vertical Incidence Sky-waves, rather than low-angle of radiation antennas favored for "chasing DX stations" (distant stations in other nations). As a result, in general, aesthetically pleasing vertical HF antennas are a distinctly inferior choice to low-loss multi-band horizontal HF antennas that work well on a wide range of frequencies. Our group favors Off Center Fed Dipoles driven with low-loss Guanella-type 4:1 baluns and of sufficient length so that their fundamental working frequency is the 160 meter band (e.g. 270 feet). A backup antenna is a very important item, and having a separate coaxial cable for that is very important. We avoid "voltage-baluns" because of the risk of radio frequency interference within the building from common mode currents on the coaxial cable.

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9. Paper explaining some of the options: <https://topbandhams.com/tech-page/83-proper-grounding-for-safety-and-lightning-protection>

10. For example, an HF/VHF/UHF 2kW-rated arrestor with replaceable cartridge and SO-239 connectors: <https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/alf-att3g50uhp>; with N-connectors: <https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/alf-att3g50hp>; replacement cartridge: <https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/alf-3g50hp>. This type device can be used for virtually all our frequencies.

11. One antenna for connection to SARNET, one antenna for local communications to deployed volunteers or personnel, and one as a backup.



## Suwannee ARC Has a Busy Summer

Steve Kostro, N2CEI, President, Suwannee ARC

June and July were very busy months at the Suwannee ARC. It started the first weekend of June with various club members operating the ARRL International Digital Contest. The club has operated as Multi-Op in the past but since we offer the Club station to any club member that desires to pursue individual DXCC or Contest awards, the club station was relinquished to the interested individuals while the VHF, and above "Aficionado's" readied the station for the next weeks ARRL VHF contest. This included some upgrades to our 2 Meter tower as pictured to the right. It looks rather complicated but it is simply fixed directional phased arrays in 4 different directions side mounted on the tower with a rotational, both Azimuth and Elevation, mounted on top. This allows the operator to switch between different directions to work stations while still tracking the Moon during an operation event. The additional work and hardware proved to be beneficial during the June VHF Contest. N4SVC did rather well in the Multi-Op class with 6 club members operating.



The third full weekend in June became a work party weekend to check out all Antennas and Emergency power operation for the ARRL Field day event. For field Day, the Suwannee ARC has been operating in the 5E class (5 transmitters) since 2010. This class stipulates that we utilize emergency power for our radio equipment only. In our case, we also power our 5 operating positions with emergency power. This includes our logging computers,



bench lighting and antenna directional and switching equipment. Operating Field Day has two fundamental purposes for the Suwannee ARC. First is to verify that we can maintain at least 24 hours of operating time via emergency power. The second is to provide training or practice in operation of the three modes of operation that are allowed. In an event of a real emergency/disaster, we would most likely only utilize two operating positions in order to save power for the buildings air conditioning and refrigeration units and utilize an available higher power generator on propane during a prolonged outage. For this weekend our gasoline powered 5 KW unit was utilized. Sandra, K4SME is pictured to the left giving the unit we chose to use for the weekend a final check out. We consider both of these portable generators

temporary until we complete the installation of a 25 KW diesel unit that has been donated to the club.

Because of our varied interests of operation, Field Day generates the highest membership participation and having good food available all weekend stimulates a party like atmosphere for the 24 hr operation. Pictured to the Right is our Communications Director Phil Royce, KE4PWE (in the foreground) and Vice President Jon Beaver, KD4AMP (background) enjoying a meal and conversation while operating digital modes in two of the 5 active positions. Having all modes and all



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bands on the menu, everyone gets a turn at what they like to do. Granted, we did not operate the Satellite Station this year, we did offer training on all modes of operation, experienced the different propagation modes, and mentored our “Newbie’s” while they QSO’ed. Then during the period when the moon was in view (during the day that weekend) two club members utilized our 2M EME station on commercial power. Those QSOs do not count as valid Field Day QSOs because that station was in excess of 100 watts and was operated on commercial power, but demonstrated the versatility of our club station and that it is always available to a member who just wants a QSL card from a distant station on any band! All in all, Field Day was a success in that all equipment and antennas worked flawlessly and the membership had a great time operating.

July brought individual membership operations of the 13 Colonies event. It has caught on with membership in that, with a little effort with the clubhouse equipment, a nice piece of wall paper can be obtained. Just work the special event stations in the original 13 colonies along with the single stations in Philadelphia, Great Britain, and France. All modes can be utilized in any combination and is a good lesson in propagation. The next weekend I personally operated the IARU HF World Championship not as a competitor but to brush up on my average at best CW skills. Did my Skill level improve? I guess my LCR will be the answer!

To finish out the operation in July, the members interested in VHF operation played in the CQWW VHF contest. It was lack luster at best! Very low activity here in Florida due to poor conditions on 6M and bad EME conditions on 2M. BUT, the small group of us had fun in the event that we have done quite well in the past as a Multi-Op station. And it’s always a treat to have Mike, WB2FKO, guest operate with us. Maybe next year the propagation will be in our favor!

Not much else to report from the SARC other than its business as usual within the club and do expect more activity as N4SVC operates through the month of Aug with the ARRL 222 MHz and up contest, the Sept ARRL VHF contest and the 10 GHz and up event that spans both months. We will have our normal monthly business meeting on the first Tuesday night in Sept as this summer’s events wind down and we expect to have a Blow out Club-house birthday party on the first Tuesday in October.

So, if you are passing through the Live Oak area, take time to say hello on our 145.410 repeater (-600, 100 PL) and as always, if you hear us on the bands 160M through 3cm, give us a call and say HI! Then if you worked us in any of the events mentioned above, you will find your QSO information on LOTW. Hope you had as much fun as we did in the hobby the past two months or so and See you again soon! ’73 from all at the Suwannee ARC!



**TARCFest—Saturday, August 19th**  
**8 AM to 1 PM**

## Alachua County ARES® NFARC Update

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Websites: NEW: <https://www.nf4rc.club/> and LEGACY: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/>

In July most of our crew were *recovering* from our most-successful-ever Field Day. Columbia County smacked us last year, but we hit 1269 contacts this year!! All of us are growing. Somehow, we managed to put up 5 HF antennas, 3 VHF/UHF, and 2 microwave systems. Plus our own GPS-disciplined NTP server, GOTA effort and 4F Field Day. We scored 80% more QSO's than last year.

At our July meeting, chaired by Jeff Capehart W4UFL, we went over a draft AARIP (which got minor improvements and was approved). <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/FieldDay2023/2023FieldDayAARIP.pdf>

LEGEND FOR MODES			
FT4	FT8	CW	PHONE

Color Coding For Field Day Technique

We reviewed some in-depth analysis, hour by hour, of our performance. The figure shows our color code for the "technique" (FT8/4 CW / Phone) used by each participant, each hour.

6								
10								
15								
20	OJV		OJV	OJV	OJV			
20	NVI	ASY	ASY	ASY	ASY(FT4)/ TWS(FT8)	TWS	TWS	TWS
40	LBS	LBS	OO	OO\\		JIR	JIR	JIR//
40				///JIR	JIR			\\JIR
80	JIR	JIR	JIR	JIR//	OO	OO	OO	OO
100 Q/HR								
80				90				
60	66	83	82		70			
40						39	42	
20								27
TIME LOC	9PM	10PM	11PM	MN	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM
SAME BAND	SAME BAND(3)		SAME BAND(4)	SAME BAND(5)	SAME BAND(6)			

We made 3 tables, each for 8 hours, showing the *band*, *technique* (by color coding) and *call-sign suffix* of each operator. The Figure shows our 9PM - 4 AM table. The red bar chart at the bottom shows our total QSOs/hour for each hour -- we hit a maximum of 90 QSOs/hour at 11PM, which was surprising. It seems to go with when more people are AWAKE than anything else. Our tables clearly showed we started on the higher bands and then worked our way all the way down to 80 meters during nighttime hours.

### TOP THREE NF4AC GUNS:

- David Huckstep W4JIR 376 QSOs
- Wendell Wright KN4TWS 169 QSOs
- Kevin Rulapaugh KE4NVI 146 QSOs -- **while watching sports games!**

Further, we analyzed how many hours we had people on the "same band" -- the closest being doing digital AND CW on the same band. Of course this is allowed but it makes for a big potential for interference between radios. Very few bandpass filters are sharp enough to help this. Our defenses were separated stations, separated antennas, turning on the IP+ feature of the Icom 7300, and reducing RF GAIN or turning on the RF Attenuator (20dB). We had more than 8 hours of these instances where operators were very close to each other and still being successful.

We also analyzed our "QSOs/hour" anonymously *by operator*. Our volunteers don't really pay much attention to "who gets the glory" -- they don't always get the operator log entry correct because they care more for the team. So the data are approximate -- but they still tell a very interesting story! Most of our group aren't real "contesters" or real "DX'ers" -- we are just ordinary hams interested in public / emergency service to help our community, and Field Day is a chance for us to improve our portable skills and operating skills and try out our improved radio assets. Our

Continued on next page...

data show that we are all "pretty good" -- there isn't that much difference between the "fastest" and the "slowest" of all of us -- it could be more explained by differences in bands, times, or antennas.

That can be very encouraging to newer members! With a bit of coaching **anyone in our group rapidly gets to 10 QSO's/hour or faster**. Most of our people find FT8 or FT4 the easiest to start on (>1000 contacts), but we also had much better success this year on both voice (101 contacts) and CW (153 contacts)

### TRIPLEXERS & QUADPLEXERS

The hardest part of Field Day for older volunteers (like me) was putting up all those antennas!! The Gainesville Amateur Radio Society (GARS, <https://gars.club/>) obtained a great grant and one of their solutions was a lumped-constant **HF triplexer filter** to allow multiple transceivers to use a single antenna. The idea had instant appeal in our group also, not only for Field Day (to reduce the number of antennas we would need) but also for our EOC station where we are limited in the number of HF antennas. Our measurements and others' indicate a minimum of 50dB isolation is needed, and 60dB is better. We hit that with our separated antennas, bandpass filters, and attenuators, but there are triplexer designs on the market that have been successful at this. I liked the VA6AM design.

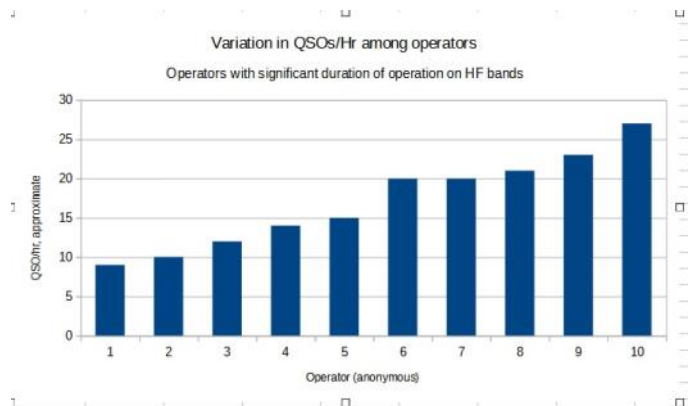
At our August 5th LabNLunch August, we will work to tune the VA6AM high-bands triplexer kit product and then we'll try to switch the 20-meter portion from being a low-pass filter design to a bandpass design, like his 15-meter circuit. This may allow us to more easily add a 40-meter filter in parallel, perhaps with a few added series traps. Our group is now interested in the Winter Field Day with this new asset, and maybe trying RTTY/PSK etc in addition to voice/cw.

### TECH LICENSE CLASS

We had 8 people sign up for our August 19/20 Technician License Class at our Field Day. 4 more have signed up on our Google Form! Anyone is welcome and information and registration can be found at: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSNTfEMFmOXiqVz2VHTjS9pvZvYchUiPZfsnkUZaCFwWzgtg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&usp=mail\\_form\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSNTfEMFmOXiqVz2VHTjS9pvZvYchUiPZfsnkUZaCFwWzgtg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&usp=mail_form_link) The "antenna project" this time will be a 2meter vertical 1/4 wave, with ground plane, built on SO-239's.

### NEW VOLUNTEERS

There are several Florida Statutes designed to protect vulnerable people, that seem to indicate radio volunteers in shelters need background checks ( <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/StateVolunteerRequirements.pdf> ). Jeff Capehart W4UFL has assembled a new crew of **4 new volunteers** to be submitted to the Emergency Manager. We're delighted to have more new volunteers!





**VOLUNTEERS**  
**ON THE AIR 2023**

## ARRL Volunteers On the Air

[ARRL.org](#)
[VOTA Home](#)
[Leaderboard](#)
[Certificates](#)
[Call Sign Points](#)
[W1AW Portable Operations](#)
[Help](#)

**A Year-Long Operating Event Recognizing Volunteers** [Click here for more information](#)





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Alejandro Malave at [pr@hamcation.com](mailto:pr@hamcation.com)

July 25, 2023

## HamCation Accepting Award Nominations

The HamCation committee is currently accepting nominations for the HamCation 2024 Carole Perry Educator of the Year Award and Gordon West Ambassador of the Year Award.

These individuals are not necessarily ones to seek recognition for what they do. That is what the Ham Radio community is all about. We want to recognize a few of these outstanding individuals each year who make this community the greatest in the world.

The **Carole Perry Educator of the Year** award is bestowed to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to educating and advancing youth in amateur radio. For more information and the nomination form click here: <https://www.hamcation.com/award-carol-perry>

The **Gordon West Ambassador of the Year** Award is presented to an outstanding Amateur who represents and inspires others, embodies the amateur radio spirit, and has made outstanding contributions to the Amateur Radio community. For more information and the nomination form click here: <https://www.hamcation.com/award-gordon-west>

Nominations close November 1, 2023

Join us at HamCation 2024, February 9-11, 2024

More information available at [www.hamcation.com](http://www.hamcation.com)

*Orlando HamCation has been sponsored by the Orlando Amateur Radio Club since 1946 which is held annually on the second weekend of February. HamCation has grown to become the second largest hamfest in the world.*

###

## How Do You Bolster Ham Radio?

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

That question, is what many clubs, organizations and individuals in the Northwest Florida Panhandle consider with each transmission of RF, meeting, civic engagement or political involvement.

Being a part of a social impact, an ambassador of a society, a positive benchmark above reproach,...That, is what is important in our beloved Amateur radio Hobby. Supporting all who have an interest in expanding communications, technology development, embracing the passing on of a skill, and instructing future generations of not only the ways of the past, but encouraging an fostering development to remain relative into the future.

This is more than a calling of DX, a contact made over SSB, a flyer or add on a website. Amateur Radio is a way of life, for all. Many walks of life enter this hobby. From multiple avenues of life, and all experiences. Bring forth your efforts! The positivity, recruit for your organizations, and bring in those that would benefit not only from membership, but also those who would add to the inherent social well-being of a community.

Recruiting for an organization does not have to be a large project. It can start small. Hosting classes, offering testing, holding dedicated sessions to introduce the hobby to beginners (or those who chose to return), and assisting those that are interested in the journey with information tailored to their desired experience.

Many levels of engagement offer rewards that are untold. From assisting at a charity food drive, helping out in a parking event, interacting with students, scouts and seniors, hosting at a parade, teaching technical nights, or performing one on one learning sessions to hone your skills, or enhance others. These chances, these moments in time, expand the capacity to benefit others. Is that not the overarching goal? That goal being interaction. This is why we are all here. To interact, communicate, develop, and to pass on the knowledge we have all gathered to aid in the development of the future!

We in the Northwestern Florida Panhandle challenge you all. Find that person, peak their interest, bring them out to activities, aide them in their pursuit, of communications!

For your chance to be a part of something great, please visit any of the mentioned clubs and organizations along with other area associations which promote the exceptional positivity and acceptance of all those who choose that amateur radio is a social endeavor. A social endeavor which serves the community and each other.

I am KI4ZER. My go by is DJ. And I am here to put forth the greatness that amateur radio can bring you, and promote the best of what you can be! Bring a guest, a family member, your neighbors or a co-worker. Expand this hobby into the art form we all know it is! Recruit now, so that we may thrive!

NOARC: [W4AAZ.Org](http://W4AAZ.Org)

PARC: [W4ZBB.Org](http://W4ZBB.Org)

WF4X: [WF4X.Com](http://WF4X.Com)

WCARES: [N4EMA.Wordpress.Com](http://N4EMA.Wordpress.Com)

OCARES: [OC-ARES.Org](http://OC-ARES.Org)

[NWFLHamRadio.Net](http://NWFLHamRadio.Net)



## **Suwannee and Madison County ARES® News**

J. Gordon "Gordie" Beattie, Jr., W2TTT

[W2TTT@ATT.NET](mailto:W2TTT@ATT.NET)

Well July has been a somewhat quieter month than June here in Madison and Suwannee Counties, but it's not without some interesting activities and news!

### **MADISON COUNTY COVERAGE SURVEY**

Madison County ARES is planning a radio coverage survey of its repeaters with primary focus on the Lee 145.19 MHz (-.600 kHz, 123.0 Hz) repeater. Additional measurements may be done on the 145.11 MHz (-.600 kHz, 123.0 Hz) repeater, 2m simplex and the Madison GMRS repeater if time and personnel are available.

### **MADISON TAILGATE PLANNING**

An Amateur Radio Tailgate gathering is tentatively being planned for November in Lee. This gathering of area hams will be an opportunity to socialize, eat and sell or swap "treasures" from our sheds and barns. Tutorials and demonstrations will again be featured for both prospective and experienced "hams"! If there is a particular topic that would interest you, please let us know, and we will consider adding it to the Tailgate program.

### **TECHNICAL TALKS & SEMINARS**

Having technical training seminars at the Madison ARES meetings or at other times was discussed at the July meeting. Bryan KQ4FMY was asked to provide a seminar on Echolink operation using a phone, tablet or PC. Other potential topics mentioned were: how to set up a remote Echolink node on a repeater, and How to program your radio using programming software.

### **LICENSING & UPGRADING**

Bryan KQ4FMY is almost ready for his General exam. Aaron KQ4BDC and Bryan are planning to then study together for the Extra, and to take that exam later in the Fall.

Gordon W2TTT has been distributing study materials to James KO4LFB so that he can upgrade to General and so that his wife, daughter and son-in-law can earn their Technician licenses. Further, Joe KI4TRR has a local friend who also received Gordon's study resources. A class is also in the works for these prospective hams once schedules are worked out.

If anyone, anywhere needs some study materials and references, then please reach out to Gordon W2TTT at 201.314.6964 or [W2TTT@ATT.NET](mailto:W2TTT@ATT.NET).

### **POTA AS EMCOMM TRAINING**

POTA and EMCOMM draw upon many of the same skills in that folks often need to go somewhere, set up antennas, feedlines, radios, computers, power and sometimes even shelter and food to sustain their operations. This was noted in conversations during our joint Field Day at St. Francis Xavier Church in Live Oak. Two of our most active operators, Bill AA4TM and Jim K4DBC both like to be POTA Activators and are involved in EMCOMM. It was obvious that they had practiced setting up their stations for POTA because of the ease with which they set up their Field Day stations at an unfamiliar site.

Then after Field Day, Gordon KX4Z and the Alachua County EMCOMM team had an online discussion regarding the use of POTA Activations as ARES "TRAINING" activities. The consensus among all of those involved in these discussions was "AFFIRMATIVE". So going forward POTA, SOTA (not a lot of that here in Florida!), IOTA, etc. activations should be logged in your monthly ARES activity reports as, "Training". Kudos to the Alachua EMCOMM team for having such a lively and productive online discussion on this topic!

### **HELPFUL & DILIGENT ARRL STAFF**

Another Alachua project is the construction of a 20/15/10m triplexer to enable three HF radios to share an HF triband antenna. They'll tell that story as they see fit, but along the way Gordon KX4Z requested an article from the ARRL's QST Archives. The League staff found and forwarded the article, but there was a problem in that the five page article excerpt started two pages early and missed the last two pages. Unless you read the third page of the article carefully, you might miss the need for the two missing pages. It was easy to miss. Further investigation for other sources for the particular issue of QST with the needed article went dry.

Gordon W2TTT then called the ARRL headquarters at +1.860.594.0200 and spoke with a member services representative about the problem. It seemed logical and apparent that the archive browsing tool was starting two pages early because it was including the front cover and front inside cover as pages in its count. Through some query magic, the very helpful League staff member was able to obtain the last two pages which were then provided to Gordon W2TTT who forwarded them to Gordon KX4Z and the Alachua EMCOMM team.

Continued on next page...



Now we all have all five pages of the article on the HF Triplexer. The League staff has an awareness of the problem, a temporary workaround, and an issue to address with their archive browser tool provider.

### **SUWANNEE ARES POT LUCK SOCIAL**

The Suwannee ARES team is in the early stages of hosting a pot luck and barbecue open to Suwannee and Madison County Amateur Radio operators and their friends. Look for more on that next month.

### **VISIT TO TAYLOR COUNTY CLUB**

At the Madison meeting, Junior KC4VPJ mentioned the importance of visiting and engaging area radio clubs not only through their nets, but also by attending their meetings and activities. This helps inject new, ideas, skills, and people into each group's activities.

Nancy N2FWI and Gordon W2TTT attended the Taylor County Radio Club's dinner meeting at the Fusion Buffet in Perry in July. The group was so welcoming and fun that Nancy and Gordon joined the Taylor County Radio Club! Steve W4XCO, the President of the Taylor County Amateur Radio Club asked Gordon W2TTT to prepare a hands-on setup workshop for HF and VHF-UHF data messaging modes such as Winlink with VARA or VARA FM modem software.

The idea would be that several operators would bring their computers and possibly radios and other components including cables, batteries or power supplies and set up each computer or station. By setting radios to low power with a small dummy load, the stations could practice various messaging modes including Telnet and radio-based RMS access, Peer to Peer, etc. This is likely to be done in several sessions starting with the computers and then to build up to including radios.

At the meeting, Donald KN4UHG mentioned that there is an availability of free decommissioned DSL modems, routers and TV set top boxes for parts. He also mentioned the availability of outdoor weatherproof equipment cabinets.

Recently, Gordon W2TTT procured a large AT&T SLC96 and DSLAM pedestal cabinet for use with his solar array and smaller pole-mounted cabinet for remote equipment mounting at a tower base.



*AT&T manufactured equipment pedestal cabinet*



*James KO4LFB with his Kubota L series tractor*



*Pedestal cabinet offloaded and ready for cleaning. It will eventually be relocated near the solar array.*

Continued on next page...

## HURRICANE SEASON PREPARATIONS

Well we're a few months into the hurricane season and while we've had some wild weather, experience has shown that the most serious storms tend to come in the late Summer or Fall. It is important to have your personal needs and communications equipment hardened, ready to relocate, or set up for rapid repair or restoration before or after the storm. Medications, documents, electronics and other essentials need to be readied.

### Countywide Alerting

It is also useful to have a countywide plan for pre and post storm coordination of communications. Setting specific times and frequencies, and then testing them over the air are key parts of a resilient communications plan. Every few months, the operators from both Madison and Suwannee ARES operators test their simplex capabilities as part of our weekly nets.

In Madison stations gather on the 145.19 MHz (-.600 kHz, 123.0 Hz) repeater and in Suwannee we gather on the 145.27 MHz (-.600 kHz, 123.0 Hz) repeater.

Both counties use 146.55 MHz FM simplex, so in the event of a repeater outage or a coverage issue with a repeater, we all should listen on 146.55 MHz FM simplex at 15 and 45 minutes past each hour for at least five minutes to allow those who are isolated or unable to reach a repeater to give a call.

### JOINING MADISON OR SUWANNEE COUNTY ARES

All Amateur Radio operators are welcome to join. Don't worry about experience, as we will train you in a fun and very social team environment. As you can see, there are a lot of underlying activities to our respective ARES/EMCOMM teams and we welcome each other to participate and to join in the fun!

In Madison County contact Junior Odom KC4VPJ at [kc4vpj@gmail.com](mailto:kc4vpj@gmail.com).

In Suwannee County contact Mike Meador KM4BTW at [mmeador@hotmail.com](mailto:mmeador@hotmail.com).

If you have questions about anything in this article, feel free to reach out to either of them or to:  
Gordon Beattie W2TTT at [w2ttt@att.net](mailto:w2ttt@att.net) or +1.201.314.6964



## Why join the ARRL?

J. Gordon "Gordie" Beattie, Jr., W2TTT  
Madison County ARES  
[W2TTT@ATT.NET](mailto:W2TTT@ATT.NET)

At the risk of "preaching to the choir", this note is really a "discussion helper" to assist us all in engaging the non-ARRL members of the Amateur Radio community.

One of the most confounding discussions that I have with fellow active Amateur Radio operators are the ones where a ham is adamantly opposed to joining the ARRL. With the news of a long overdue dues hike from \$49 to \$59 that came out of the July ARRL Board meeting, and the accompanying optionality of having a printed copy of *QST* or *On The Air* rankling some members, let me suggest that this is not a disaster for the League. The ARRL Board needed to adjust the League's business model for it to be a sustainable organization.

You might ask, "Why do we need an ARRL?" and "Why do we need to support it by joining?". As Amateur Radio operators, we are entrusted or licensed to use valuable segments of radio spectrum that many others wish to occupy and we need to justify our use of that spectrum as an ITU and FCC defined communications service. The League helps us in that process through three core and overlapping functions that are intended to ensure that Amateur Radio exists.

1. **Advocate and defend our service and spectrum** with representations to, and the education of, government officials ranging from the ITU, FCC, NTIA, DOD, et al to local zoning and school boards.
2. **Educate operators** in the many interesting ways Amateur Radio can be fun, educational, safe and of service to the nation, the community and to the operators themselves.
3. **Provide direct services to members**, and in many cases, non-members that enhance the operating and technical experiences for Amateur Radio operators.

The League is doing these things and is actively improving how each area is addressed.

**Item #1 is #1 for a reason. Without spectrum and the right to operate safely in one's home or in public, we don't have Amateur Radio.**

Forget the petty matters that alienated you from League membership. We need to circle the wagons of our relatively small community and present as united front when it comes to these key matters. By joining the League, you help demonstrate to officials that Amateur Radio operators are a diverse, yet unified resource. Further, through ARRL membership and donations you provide the League with many of the resources required to present our position.

**#2 is focused on a broad range of means and methods to expose Amateur Radio operators to the seemingly endless ways by which our avocation and interest in radio can be pursued.**

Every ARRL member has electronic access to all four of the main periodicals of the ARRL including: *QST*, *On the Air*, *QEX* and *NCJ*. As an Amateur Radio operator of 48 years, I look forward to articles in each of these great journals every time they come out. I also enjoy the various free newsletters that any member may request through their member account page. Podcasts, videos and ARRL Bulletins and Code Practice broadcasts round out this rich set of general offerings.

*Seeing how new activities and interests of other, often new hams helps me to not be stuck in the the Amateur Radio of my youth.*

**#3 includes a wide variety of direct services to Amateur Radio operators that are either "free" or provided for a very nominal fee. At the risk of missing someone's favorite function or service, here are some of the great services that the ARRL provides:**

1. The ARRL VEC for license training materials, support of local VE teams, exam processing and renewal processing
2. The ARRL Lab staff for technical guidance in station building or operations
3. Assistance in locating and obtaining articles in archived ARRL journals
4. Guidance for handling permitting and zoning agencies that regulate Amateur Radio operations
5. The Teacher's Institute/Amateur Radio in the Classroom/The Collegiate Amateur Radio Program
6. Logbook of the World
7. Operating Awards
8. RadioSport Competitions
9. EMCOMM and technology skill courses
10. The Outgoing QSL Bureau
11. Support of the Section Level field organizations and affiliated clubs and their diverse activities
12. 12. Referrals to volunteer legal and engineering experts
13. Referrals to Technical Coordinators and Specialists
14. Publication of outstanding reference books, field resources and special interest books designed to educate, coordinate and entertain the reader
15. A web site that has a treasure trove of online resources whose organization and ease of access is improving by leaps and bounds month by month

*If you have a question about any topic related to Amateur Radio, you can call the ARRL at +.1.860.594.0200 and they will gladly assist you.*

**Everyone wants "free stuff". Membership benefits can be "free stuff", but they have costs nonetheless.**

The list of ARRL functions and services is impressive and likely grossly incomplete. They are driven by the objective priorities of advocating, defending, promoting and enhancing Amateur Radio, but they could be endangered by the "What's in it for me?" sentiment. *I came to the realization a long time ago that for Amateur Radio to survive, that it couldn't be about me, but "us".*

**Our role as members is to inform and enlighten those non-members to consider joining or re-joining the League.**

It is not to badger, castigate or impugn those who are not members. It is also not our place to demean aspects of the hobby or equipment that are alien or unappealing to us. Every generation, and everyone's journey, is going to have similarities and differences to that of those who preceded them. We are too small a community to create a circular firing squad.

The, "What's in it for me?" viewpoint has a calm but poignant response: if the regulators and the societal body politic no longer see a value in having the Amateur Radio Service, then it will go away, and along with it the existential pleasures of being a "ham" including the friendships, the skills, the services, and the mental stimulation that it brings.



In short, every Amateur Radio operator who values the service and the hobbies (yes, plural) and sometimes careers that it affords them, should be focused on growing and securing that which they enjoy for themselves, for those who follow in our footsteps, and for those who will pursue new paths through Amateur Radio.

**Membership in an organization that will attract, educate and advocate seems inherently more important than a printed copy of a journal.**

Even as Life Members, Nancy N2FWI and I have donated modestly to the ARRL and plan to do so at a rate that will well exceed the cost of providing us with a printed copy of QST. Others may not be able to do so, but at minimum, it is incumbent on all active Amateur Radio operators who can afford a monthly trip to Starbucks, or four meals a year at a fast food restaurant, to allocate the \$59 dollars per year for basic membership without griping.

Life has twists and turns, and frankly reading online has its advantages - LARGER FONTS ARE GOOD AS YOU AGE! Voluntarily paying the incremental cost for a printed copy in order to be able to share it with others is also worth the cost. It's part of how Amateur Radio gets shared with others - so why not do it if you have the means?

*If I stop buying a banana split one week out of every month, then there will be an additional surplus of cashflow for Amateur Radio and a deficit for the waistline! Perhaps we should all consider such a plan and be all the better for it?*

Finally, there are additional ways to support the ARRL through an ad hoc directed donation, the Diamond Club (there are many levels to suit different budgets) or through one's estate.

Amateur Radio has given us much pleasure in terms of personal relationships, technology growth, service opportunities and maybe even a career, and so it is incumbent on all of us to do what we can to become ARRL members to secure Amateur Radio for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Vy 73 & Thanks for taking the time to read this.



## **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/>

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:w2bzy@cfl.rr.com)

### Milton Amateur Radio Club, Milton FL

- Check date at [miltonarc.org](http://miltonarc.org)
- Walk-in
- Bagdad United Methodist Church
- Info: Chuck, N4QEP, [merlinman3@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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
- 6:00 AM
- St. Johns Lodge #37, 2557 N. Spring Garden Ave, 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!