QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 10 Issue 11 | www.arrl-nfl.org | **November 2023**

Thoughts & Prayers

Please keep Section Manager, Scott Roberts, KK4ECR, in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from recent surgery and returns to...

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day. That's not how it's done. Relationships are built over time by being there to fill a need when called upon.

You'll read about it later in this edition of QST NFL about my team's relationship with our Emergency Management and dispatch team. Want to know how that relationship started? Cookies and cakes. Yes, you read that correctly. It started because when I first became ARES Emergency Coordinator in Santa Rosa County, I was told that I needed to let our dispatch personnel know when I was there after hours.

Continued on next page...

From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

As the end of hurricane season is within site, please remember to not let your guard down. We've certainly experienced late season storms in years past so be sure to keep those batteries charged and go-kits tested. As you and your teams are out working various events, be sure to utilize your go-kit radios, when possible, to ensure they are exercised so you can detect any issues before you need to use them for disaster response or other events.

One word keeps resounding through my mind and has over the course of this year, relationships. With the various "hats" that I wear within my county and the state, I see a wide variety of relationships among volunteers, such as ARES, and their served agencies. At times it can get discouraging and disheartening when things don't go as fast as you'd hoped. Remember that many of these served agencies have had bad experiences with volunteers in the past and may not be ready to embrace "letting people in" quite yet. It may not have even been amateur radio operators that they had a bad experience with but someone else could have done damage and left a bad taste in their mouth to utilize volunteers.

If you've ever seen me speak or attended one of my meetings, you'll know I almost always do the illustration about walking into a served agency with your "big boy important amateur radio operator pants on" and telling them that you're there to save the

What's Inside

NFL Officials

Section Manager
Scott Roberts KK4ECR

Assistant Section Managers
Kevin Bess KK4BFN
Helen Straughn WC4FSU
DJ Stewart KI4ZER
Joe Bassett, W1WCN

Section Emergency Coordinator
Arc Thames W4CPD

Section Public Info Coordinator
Jim Bledsoe, KI4KEA

Section Technical Coordinator
Frank Haas KB4T

Section Affiliated Club Coordinator

Section Traffic Manager
Helen Straughn WC4FSU

Section Official Observer Coordinator
Robert Leasko WB8PAF

Section State Government Liaison
Darrell Brock N4GOA

NFL Committees

Webmaster, www.arrl-nfl.org
Kari McClure, NW4R

Newsletter, *QST NFL*
Marty Brown, N4GL

QST NFL *is a monthly publication of the ARRL Northern Florida Section.* ***QST NFL*** is intended for wide distribution within the NFL Section, including club Leaders and all licensed Amateurs in Florida. A current issue of this publication can be found at the ARRL Southeastern Division web site, Northern Florida Section. www.***ARRL-NFL.org*** Opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and may not express the positions of the ARRL.

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

All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.

Looking for Something?

Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, has taken the time to index the articles from all the 2021 issues of ***QST NFL***! https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf

To do that, I had to knock on the door. Someone from dispatch had to get up and answer the door for me to tell them I was there. I felt bad about that so one day I asked my wife if she'd bake something for them so that I could give it to them when they had to answer their door. I didn't do it to get anything out of them or the agency, I did it with a servant's heart to thank them for all they do.

With that simple act, over the last 3 years, I've gotten to know our dispatch team and vice versa. Having that relationship has enabled our team to truly be a part of the overall Emergency Management department within our county.

Whether it's baking a cake or just showing up to say, is there anything I can help you with, you can make a difference with your served agency. Do things for the right reasons and watch the doors that will open all around you.

Monthly ARES Statistics

In September, ARES volunteers in our section reported 1,447 hours. Thanks to the Emergency Coordinators who submitted their monthly report and for all of you that have volunteered and contributed to those hours!

	Number	Person-Hrs
Exercises this month:	6	170.00
Training events this month:	20	252.00
Public service events this month:	16	52.00
Community service events this month:	4	90.00
Emergency events this month:	26	189.00
SKYWARN events this month:	6	52.00
Meetings this month:	45	333.00
Unclassified events this month:	73	309.00

Call signs of DECs/ECs reporting:
W4CPD KX4LEO W4KKJ W4KEF N2HAY W4UFL K4SOP K4BJS KB4HAH W4CJB KO4YOL KN4PFZ KA3OGG KO4KUS KM4BTW

Pass it On…

Marty Brown, N4GL, Editor

Thanks to YOU, ***QST NFL*** has become an excellent vehicle for promoting the NFL Section, and we want to spread the word. Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, has an easy and efficient approach to help accomplish this goal. Using email, Gordon sends the ***QST NFL*** link to the groups he participates with that are ham radio-related. Gordon also takes the extra step to note the articles and pictures that are of particular interest to the group he's addressing.

Please follow Gordon's lead and forward the link that came in this email to your ham radio groups and friends and invite them to read and participate. Getting greater exposure will also get us a broader range of subject matter.

Thanks to everyone, readers and contributors, for your time and talent.

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. 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.

NFL Section Member of the Month—Marty Brown, N4GL

Submitted by Wayne Brown, N4FP

First of all, my best wishes to Scott Roberts, our Section Manager, for a speedy recovery. I had submitted this information to him as a possibility for this month. I only learned this morning from Arc Thames, W4CFD, our Section Emergency Coordinator, that Scott is in the hospital and won't be in a position to submit his monthly report. Arc suggested I go ahead and submit it, so, here it is:

Marty Brown, N4GL

I have known Marty for over 70 years, since grade school in Greene, NY, where she was a grade behind me. We dated some in high school and she knew I was a ham radio operator. After her first year at Elmira College, in 1963, her parents agreed she could transfer to Denver University in Colorado to be near me while I was a cadet at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. We were married in the Academy Chapel on my graduation day, June 9, 1965. Marty likes to tell people I taught her Morse Code on our Honeymoon. Marty earned her Novice license as WN2VYK in 1966 and has been operating CW ever since.

Here is a picture of Wayne, then W2TPV, and Marty, after she received her ticket.

Marty has her own station, a Flex 6400, with a ZS6BKW multi band antenna at 50 feet. She has been an active member of CWOPS, #1644 since 2016, and works CWT sessions most Wednesdays. She also works SSB, RTTY, FT8, and Echo Link. She is active in the Silver Springs Radio Club in Ocala, as well as The Villages Amateur Radio Club in The Villages, of which she is a past president. She is also active in the Quarter Century Wireless Association Chapters 62 in Ocala and 217 in The Villages.

Marty earned her Extra Class license in January 2019 and, after 14 months and 68 times of applying for a 1X2 call, she received N4GL. She was thrilled.

Here is why I think Marty has most clearly earned the right to be selected as the Northern Florida Section Member of the month: For the last 10 years, she has edited ***QST NFL***, the ARRL Section Newsletter for Northern Florida, publishing over 100 issues. Additionally, she is the editor for the Florida Contest Group ***Contest Gazette*** and for the Silver Springs Radio Club newsletter, ***The Oracle***. I have followed her editorial activity every month and am so impressed with the articulate approach she takes. She really knows what she is doing, and she gets great support from the regular article contributors. She enjoys supporting ham radio in any way she can.

Here is a recent photo of Marty, N4GL at age 78:

73, Wayne N4FP

ARRL Article: The Grant Money in Action!

Barbara Matthews, KO4TWZ, GARS PIO

In the fall of 2022, the Gainesville Amateur Radio Society (GARS) initiated the process to apply for one of the generous ARRL Grants that exist to promote expansion of Amateur Radio. GARS has existed for sixty-eight years, serving the North Florida area through many community events, but it was a club without a home station. The ARRL Grant program has transformed a mediocre, cumbersome club "space" into a thriving communications center. It will also be used as an emergency communications center for the City of Waldo and backup / assist the Alachua County EOC, to increase the operating skills of the club members and local HAMS, and to allow community members access to radio equipment who may not be able to afford this equipment.

The City of Waldo, Florida (situated 15 minutes north of Gainesville) is small in size but is noteworthy for its Good Neighbor spirit. For a number of years, the Waldo City Government had been generous with allowing club activities in their City Square buildings and in return, the Club assisted in maintaining the space. In early 2023, a new shared vision became reality.

In a solid and proud former school building that was handcrafted by masons at the turn of the last century, GARS was allotted use of a room that has become the club's Radio Room. The Radio Room was manned by club volunteers operating as the communication center for any Emergency Operations in Waldo. It was equipped with old radios and no permanent antenna. Every time the club needed to get on the air, it was cumbersome at best.

GARS members agreed to apply for the **ARRL Foundation Club Grant Program**. Larry Rovak, WB2SVB was our point person for the committee, which consisted of members Terry Gordon, K4TMG and Pete Winters, W4GHP.

Based on the member's vast professional skills (military, telecommunications, and electricians) and Amateur Radio experience, they put vision to paper and in the Grant a blueprint was laid out and eventually approved. To establish four stations within the radio room, we would purchase three ICOM 7300s, and each would have a two-display computer for logging. To serve these stations, establishing permanent antennas was critical to provide a variety of ways to maintain contact during emergencies and training new operators. The two-story building's roof had a prime spot for a hex beam with a powered rotator, and a dipole was raised using the "ball field" light poles. Purchase of a triplexer would allow maximum flexibility to communicate during emergencies and regular club activities. The request included all the "infrastructure wiring" needed for radio and antenna connectivity. Heil headsets for each spot would support teaching people how to operate (utilizing the "listen in" jack feature) while minimizing room noise during operating times.

GARS members donated equipment and labor to the entire process. The City of Waldo donated unused classroom furniture that was used for the stations. Hours were spent on the roof in the boiling Florida humidity to install antennas (and the masons did not make it easy to attach to such tremendously solid exteriors!). There is some work to be completed yet, but we are open for operating. Cleaning, organizing and testing produced a fully functioning radio room that was just debuted.

After a couple of dress rehearsals, September 23, 2023, marked our first formal "Get on The Air" day at the GARS Radio Room. Promoted through social media, emails and word of mouth, the public was invited to come and immerse themselves in a few hours of Amateur Radio. The turnout was summarized in an email from the GARS club president Terry Gordon, K4TMG:

"We had a nice turn out at the Waldo EOC / GARS Club Radio Room today for the club "Get on The Air" event. Everyone had a good time. We had at least two people that are interested in ham radio that don't have their license yet that made a contact with supervision under the club call sign, and a couple of others that just wanted to watch. This included a young man who is a freshman in high school, working on his Technician License and a couple of others made their first HF contact. We had a couple of DX contacts to Canada. There were several contacts to POTA stations and to the Maine QSO Party. The CW bunch made a few Europe DX contacts also, including the Vatican.

The event was a great opportunity to check out new equipment and software. We have three new ICOM 7300s. Not only did we help folks make some contacts, but we also demonstrated how to use the IC 7300 and how to use

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Log4OM logging software. Almost all the contacts made with the club call sign were logged onto Log4OM and sent to QRZ.com. The operators that used their personal call signs used a paper log and will enter them manually later. We are already starting to get confirmations on QRZ. The IC 7300 radio is an SDR and can be connected directly to a computer. This makes logging and doing digital modes a breeze.

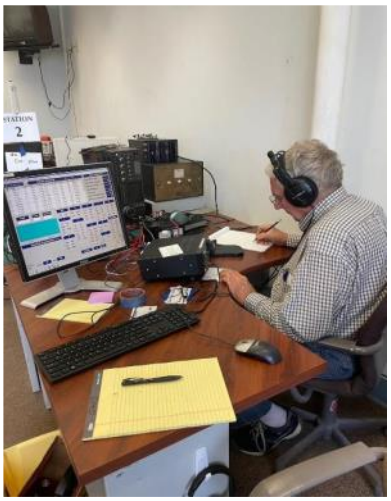
Thanks to everyone that came out to Waldo to participate! I hope we can do a lot more of this. We have two stations that are set up to do digital communications. If there is an interest, we can practice digital modes in the future. We are a radio club and "communicating using a radio is the ultimate goal". The only way to get better is to do it! Our other goal is to get more people interested in ham radio. Everyone is welcome, so let's get the word out!

A special thanks to all the volunteers that came out to help and mentor. Without you this would not have been possible. A lot of work has gone into making the Waldo EOC / Club Radio Room a top-notch ham radio room, with absolute appreciation for the ARRL Grant Program which made it possible. Please come out when we have events and see what your club is doing. Any participation is always welcome!

It was a lot of fun to see the new hams when they heard someone say their call sign back to them for the first time. I hope to see everyone again next time we do this. I hope next time we can get even more to come out and don't forget to bring the young people! They are our future!"

In summary, GARS encourages all clubs to consider applying for this ARRL Grant Program: the ARRL grant has transformed a mere vision of amazing upgrades to a reality, and GARS can now serve the community hosting us, as well as providing many opportunities to bring Amateur Radio to the forefront of public awareness. In other words, we are 'getting people involved, getting them active and getting them on the air!"

Grant Update Program Photos



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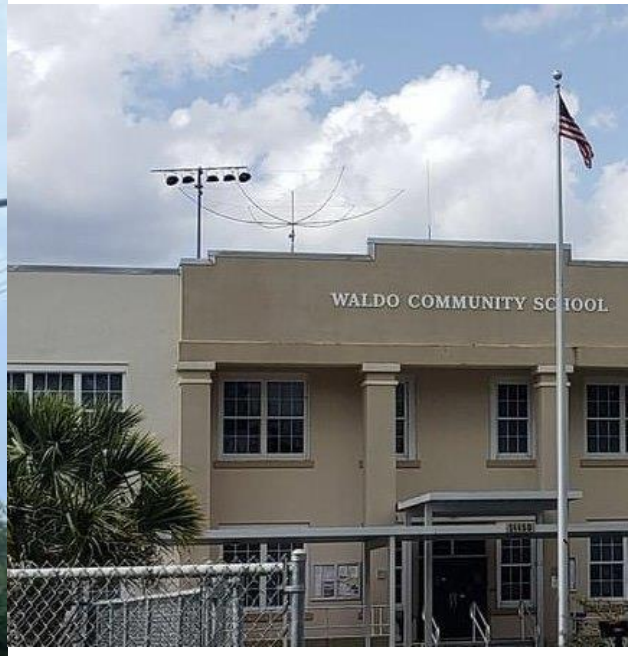
Working ARES Special Events Days

Technical Desk

New Equipment Training

New Equipment Station



New Hex Beam Being Installed on Waldo City Square Roof

VA6AM Kit Part 3 (Final): The Birth of QuadPlexor and then QuintPlexor!

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

In the first (https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/00-QST-NFL-September-2023.pdf p. 13) and second (https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/00-QST-NFL-October-2023.pdf p 6) articles of this 3-part series, I reviewed how our NFARC club in Alachua County, Florida, completed the VA6AM Low Power high-frequency Triplexer as an inexpensive triplexer to allow more than one transmitter/receiver on our single EOC HF coax. This would be of great value not only at our EOC, but also in contests. I've been very impressed how contests that involve new situations & skills are sharpening our volunteers' skills at setting up gear and understanding fast-paced comms.

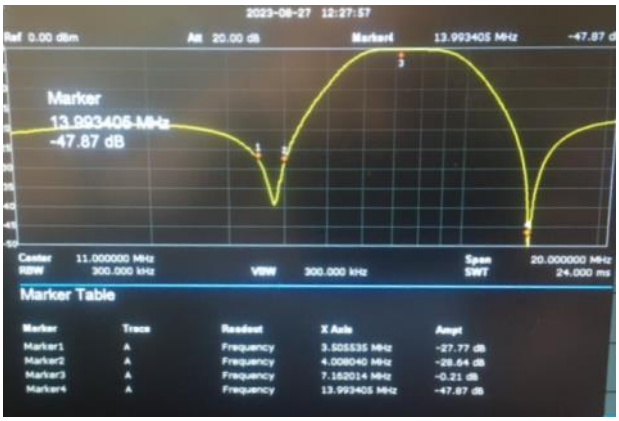
Once I learned Pavel's "trick" -- how he combines high- and low-frequency series resonant "traps" to ground to result in a parallel tuned resonant circuit at the passband to **greatly minimize losses** of the desired passband, while just *destroying* the nearest interfering bands, it was much, much easier to understand how to proceed to add additional bands.

Because each filter of the multiplexer starts (from the antenna side, where ALL the radio energy is present) with a series-resonant LC filter, there is roughly 10dB or more isolation of 100-watts RF from the "more delicate parts" from the common port. But this means, as Pavel points out, that each additional paralleled filter adds just a bit more undesired loss, because some of the energy (hopefully only low single digit %) *does* go into other bands' filters... He makes his coils and capacitors quite robust to reduce losses.

The Making of the QuadPlexor

The next filter on the list to create was the 40-meter, which must be a BANDPASS design. Pavel tends to put in 130-ish ohms of reactance at the passband frequency for each of his series reactances. Following his lead, the 40-meter series tuned filter should be about 172 pf and 3µH.[1] For 100watts, it should be on a T130-17 toroid, #16 wire, approximately 27turns (46"). Two series traps to ground are chosen to approximately quash the 20meter energy and the 3.75 MHz energy, but combined to a parallel resonance on 40 meters.

40 Meter MultiPLEXOR	Series Tuned Input	20 meter trap	3.75 MHz trap
Inductor	~ 3mH*	383 nH*	1443 nH
ACTUAL TURNS in our instance	23 turns T130-17	8 turns T130-17	15 turns T130-17
Capacitor	~160 pf >= 1kV	~337 pf >=1kV	~1250 pf, >= 1kV



40meter multiplexer filter response

[1] That is microhenries if the font system is correctly printing it.

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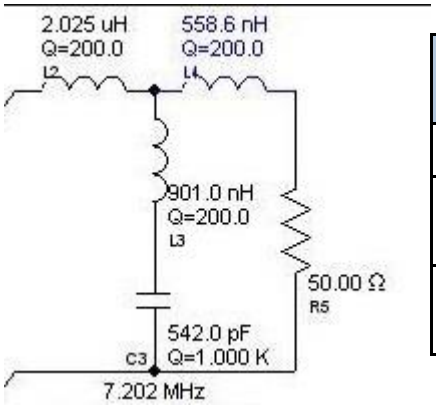
This worked out well, with a low insertion loss, and good notches for the 80m and 20m band. Above 20 meters, the isolation isn't so great -- but since those frequencies are also farther and farther away, a downstream bandpass filter will pick them off nicely. (It does increase the insertion loss slightly for the 15 and 10 meter responses, because 20dB isolation means 1% of 15-meter power gets absorbed in the 40 meter system..... This agrees with comments by Pavel.).

The Final Filter - Birth of the QUINTPLEXOR

The last filter is the 80m -- and here there is finally an advantage to build a Low Pass Filter to allow possible operation on either 80 or 160meters. Pavel provides a couple of different fairly simple examples of suitable low pass filters. I used something close to his Chebyshev model.

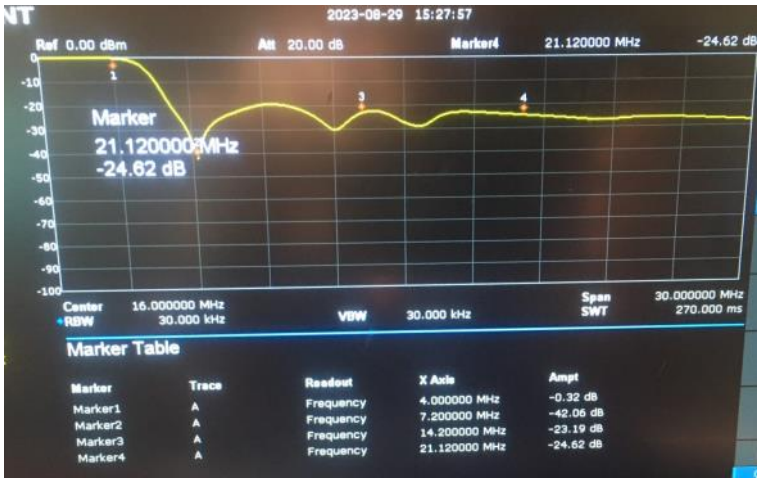


80m/160m LPF Chebyshev, from VA6AM

80 M LOW PASS Chebyshev	Antenna Input Inductor	Trap to ground	Radio-side inductor
Inductor	~2000 nH	~900 nH	~ 560 nH
ACTUAL Construction in our instance	T130-17 22 turns, #16	T130-17 12 turns, #16	T80-6 11 turns, #20
Capacitor	(none)	~540 pf	(none)

* Tune to desired resonance

A very simple filter and with mediocre results. The 80 meter response is "ok" but not great. The big advantage we have is that the 80 & 40 meter sections are in a separate box. The two boxes' antenna connectors are connected by a very short coax line. (For energy going to a correct filter, the line is terminated closely to 50 ohms due to low SWR''s.) If we don't' need operation on any frequency below 20 meters, we can disconnect the lower-frequency box and likely shave off a tenth of a db or so of energy escaping. Likewise, if all we need are the bands below 20 meters, we can ditch the high frequency end! And the entire additional expenditure to go from Tri- to QuadPlexor was easily < $100.



80/160m multiplexer LPF response. A very simple filter, somewhat limited isolation.

The Practical Problem of Finding All These Capacitors!

I haven't yet discussed finding the components. Finding high voltage capacitors can be difficult. Pavel recommends using multiple capacitors in parallel to potentially improve handling higher currents. He uses 6kV capacitors even in his "low power" systems. (Very well made!)

Using Amazon and DigiKey, I was able to find some usable capacitors. The TDK's available eon DigiKey at 6kV appear physically identical to the ones that Pavel supplies in his kit. The following table should help you finding parts:

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Possible Sources of RF / HV Capacitors		
Capacitance	Rated Voltage	Link to potential source
100 pf and higher values	1kv	https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08BFWG5T7
220 pf silver mica	500V	https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00L5YM4X6
Assorted	supposedly 500V	https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01INRL2WQ Be careful -- not all of these are 500v
TDK 47pf	6kV	https://www.digikey.com/en/products/detail/tdk-corporation/CC45SL3JD470JYVNA/7383672
TDK 22pf	6kV	https://www.digikey.com/en/products/detail/tdk-corporation/CC45SL3JD220JYGNA/7383661
TDK 10pf	6kV	https://www.digikey.com/en/products/detail/tdk-corporation/CC45SL3JD100JYNNA/4457596

FINAL PERFORMANCE

Our approximate performance at the final stage, of the QuintPlexor alone (no additional bandpass filters):

Signal at common Antenna connector Operating BAND PORT	80/160	40 meters	20 meters	15 meters	10 meters
80/160m	-0.35 dB	-42 dB	-22 dB	-24 dB	
40 meters	-27 dB	~ -0.35dB	-47	est -20 dB	
20 meters		-57 dB	-0.23 dB	-32 dB	-44 dB
15 meters		-24 dB	-34 dB	-0.49 dB	-31 dB
10 meters		-24 dB	-48 dB	-37 dB	-0.43 dB

Operating passband losses are shown with a blue background; the other losses are desirable ISOLATIONS. **Additional bandpass filtering in this and most other systems I've seen is required** to make the sum ALWAYS greater than 50 dB (safety) and preferably closer to 60+ dB for operation. With more care, we could get our passband losses lower....but with 300 feet of coaxial cable between our transmitter and the Antenna, these losses aren't the real problem...coaxial losses are the major issue.

Hand-in-Glove With Butterworth Bandpass Filters

Our additional bandpass filters are of the Butterworth design[2],[3] and their weaknesses and strengths perfectly complement the strengths and weaknesses of the QuintPlexor. The QuintPlexor has the most isolation at the "next" band (due to series traps to ground); the Butterworth band passes aren't so strong there, but their isolation grows and grows as the frequency gets farther away. As a result, it becomes fairly easy to go way past 50dB for every necessary combination.

Conclusion: A Great Club Project!

This is a great project for any club that is interested in making multi-station contesting easier, or any EOC that has similar coax/antenna limitations with which we've had to work. Getting your team members to work together on this will help teach them a LOT about measuring equipment, dB measurements, filters and signals!

[2]See the ARRL technical paper here: https://www.arrl.org/files/file/Technology/tis/info/pdf/8809017.pdf

[5]See our initial experience with the Butterworth filters: https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/equipment-design-manuals/field-day-bandpass-filters/ also available at: https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/NFL-QSTBandpassFilterArticle.pdf and the Gerbers are available at: http://qsl.net/nf4rc/Tech/BandpassFilterPCB.zip

What's Happening? Okaloosa & Walton Counties

Assistant Section Manager, NFL, ARRL
President, W4AAZ, W4ZBB, WF4X

Hello from Okaloosa and Walton Counties in Northwest Florida! We hope that your October has been as fabulous as ours! In this exciting write up, we recount not only the exciting #Hamtober that has taken place, but we also discuss the wonderous events that are going to take place!

In the front of the month, we had the great pleasure to attend the Walton County ARC meeting in Defuniak! This club is just doing wonderful things and when they get together, the word team comes to mind! The cooperation and open discussion lead to all things that bolster Amateur Radio! Keep an eye on them and mark your calendars for their upcoming events! You will not want to miss them! One keynote, they announced their Annual Free Tailgate in partnership with the Life Enrichment Senior Center and the ARRL "Don't Freeze your Ham Off" for January 13, 2024! More details to come so mark your calendars for its 3rd year!

Also, at the front of the month, the Playground ARC held a Tech Night! What a great time we had here as we dove deep into HF Mobile Installations with KC5RFU! What a great an informative night this was! Paul showcased a very meticulous installation of an HF radio, screwdriver antenna and great advice for those that are seeing to do the same!

The following week was of course, the North Okaloosa ARC's Annual Hamfest! Thank you to all the patrons, vendors, attendees, test takers and presenters to include the Mobile National Weather Service for supporting the call for training and certifying Storm Spotters! This turned into a SOLD-OUT show and wow what a time! The crow was the largest we have had yet, and all accounts call for over 500 walking through the door! Be looking for them to continue to host another spectacular event next year! In attendance were many other sponsored Clubs and Organizations bolstering their longevity within the Amateur radio Hobby! In attendance; Milton ARC, Twin Cities AREC, Playground ARC, Walton County ARC, ARRL, ARRL DX CC, Mobile ARC, Deep South ARC, Five Flags ARC, Live Oak Baptist Church, and many, many more!

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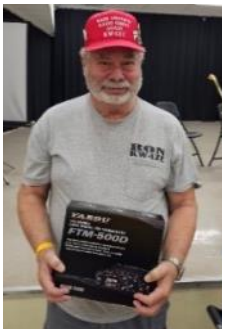


On Behalf of Craig, KK4WDQ and Mike, W4BZM, NOARC concluded its class for the General license on 10 October. We held eight class sessions, including a demonstration of the club station. Five students completed the course, four of whom had a technician license and one who already had a general license but desired a review. The four students upgrading from Technician to General took the exam at the NOARC Hamfest on 14 October and all passed on the first try!

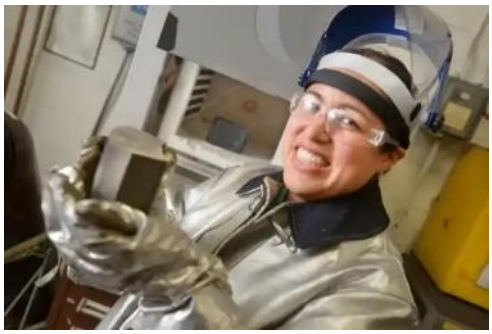
Congratulations to the new General hams from our class:

- Scott, WO4GDU
- Brian, KQ4DWU
- Tim, KN4WOO
- Tony, KQ4HLE

The following hams helped teach the General classes:

- Bob KN4UDT
- Robert KM4VKY
- Steve W4HA
- Ron KI5FR
- Craig KK4WDQ
- Don KN4CGX
- Mike W4BZM

We are now setting up scheduled visits from Elmers, following NOARC's "Guide to Being an Elmer for New General Licensees" developed in 2021. Overall, the license testing provided at NOARC's Hamfest on 14 October resulted in three Technician, five General, and one Amateur Extra certification.



At the testing event during the NOARC Hamfest We certified 1 Extra, 5 General, and 3 Techs! Congratulations to all!

Did you know one of them was the daughter of the "furthest traveled Ham" to the Show? WA6LNC, David, a lifelong Ham came to the show by special invite from Los Angelous California just for the show! His daughter decided to study and get her license! Rache is now KQ4FYL! She is a Metallurgist with a Doctorate working at nearby Eglin Air Force Base responsible for developing fields of study related to the ongoing advancement of Agile Weapons used to defend our nation! Congratulations Rachel!

Also in the spotlight, we would like to take the time to that the city of Crestview Debi Dodge from Parks and Recreation and Mayor JB Whitten. Without the Crestview City Team none of this would be possible! We also want to thank W5CL, Bob for graciously donating multiple prizes!

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Moving into the following week we head back to the Playground ARC not once, but twice! Why twice? The Pile-Up & the monthly meeting! If you have not made a Playground Pile-Up, wow do we encourage you to do so on Sunday's at 3pm CST! This crew really has a technical edge, loves to teach, train, educate, and show off the Dx Capabilities! The same week during their monthly meeting they announce the dates and plans for their **54th Annual Hamfest at the Northwest Florida Fairgrounds**! Mark your calendars for the 8th and 9th of 2024 in March! More details to be released soon!

Guess what else they did within the same 7-day period?! PARC stepped in to host the Boy Scouts with the Jamboree on The Air! They opened their clubhouse on Saturday and Sunday setting up and instructing antenna builds, radio frequency reception and transmission, and they even taught the BSA a trick or two about propagation! This yielded great contact results to include New Zealand on 10 Meters1 Yes that's right!!! New Zealand! With propagation peaking, the long path transmissions are as easy as pie! All the while still hosting their Pile-up and assisting hams with the installation of antennas, testing the radio system, and reaching new contacts!

That same weekend, members from the Walton County ARC and Walton County ARES gathered to activate a Park! So much fun to not only activate a park, but also to be a hunter and find parks around the globe in this exciting and ever-growing radio communication opportunity!

The Pensacola Interstate Fair! Hams from all over gathered to show off Amateur Radi to the public and make contacts while there! What a great time it was and a wonderful setting to catch up wit multiple hams from the area that we just don't get to see enough! Thanks for your time ad dedication to the event to all!

Marion County Emergency Radio Team

Harlan Cook, KN4VRM, Coordinator

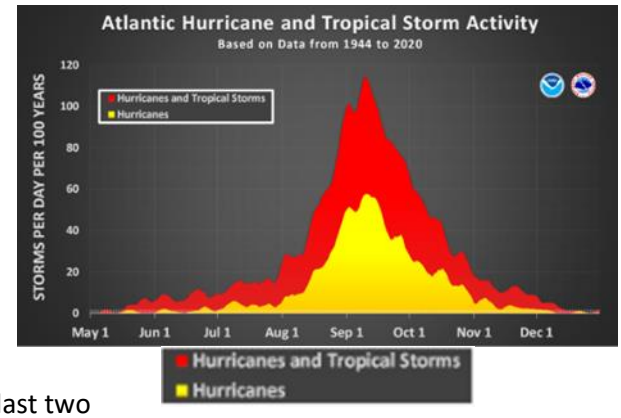
MERT

Good Weather Continues! I know everyone values our pleasant weather here in Marion County over the last month. It has cooled and some needed rains have returned. It has been very nice.

Most importantly for us, the Tropical Storms and Hurricanes that have developed followed paths far to the East and then moved North. I've read it has been a non-typical year… and I'm reminded that it's good to be lucky sometimes too!

While the Hurricane season is past the historical peak on Sept. 20th, we all know deadly hurricanes have occurred late into the year. As I've shared before, I receive daily weather updates and will forward them to MERT Members when appropriate. Please remain alert and prepared to act!

I also want to thank the Members for the Hot Wash feedback after Hurricane Idalia and then the follow through on the revised ICS-205 and Shelter Manager Update documents. Both have been updated and inserted into the Shelter Operators Manual along with being posted on our MERT website KG4NXO.com (see "MERT SHELTER Reference").



In addition, all the Shelter Radio Emergency Kit (SHREK) radios were re-programmed consistent with the revised ICS-205 in helping simplify radio operation for the Shelter Operators.

I'm so very proud of the teamwork and energy shown by all to keep our procedures and reference materials up to date and relevant. Thanks to the many Members who helped!

A final note sharing several new Members have joined over the last two months. Please take time to introduce yourself and help them feel welcomed. As we all know, MERT is a very unique organization requiring most Ham's to learn several new procedures, protocols, radio systems, etc., etc., etc. I know each of them will sincerely value your personal time in saying… ***Hello and Welcome***!

Leon Jurcyszyn – K8ZAG
MERT Technical Trainer

Command Center Manual We want to thank Leon Jurcyszyn (K8ZAG), MERT Technical Advisor for his work and expertise to create a first version MERT Mobile Command Center (MCC) manual.

It includes the specific instructions on setting up and adjusting the TuneMatic model TM1, Automatic Motorized Antenna Controller manufactured here in Ocala by the JT Communications company.

For more information on TuneMatic:
https://tunematic.jtcomms.com/wp/

This controller interfaces with the Little Tarheel II antenna on the MCC and supports operations from 3.5 to 54 MHz (80 to 6 Meter HF bands).

This allows MERT Members full national and international radio capabilities in addition to local operations over the 2 Meter and 70 cm bands (VHF & UHF) whenever deployed. MCC training classes are being planned**.** ***Thank you***, Leon for your talents in creating this important resource!

Sumter County ARES Participation in National Night Out

Mark Newby, KX4LEO, Emergency Coordinator, Sumter County

With arrangements made by its Planning Officer, Steve Walbrun, Sumter County ARES participated in the National Night Out event on October 13th, 2023. Organized locally by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

This was a free event, complete with entertainment, food, exhibits, vendors and prize giveaways. Sumter County ARES participated to promote amateur radio and explain the mission of the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Service. The Sumter County ARES Emergency Communications Trailer was on display. Sumter ARES member Louise Racine set up her Go-Kit as a GOTA station, (Get-On-The-Air), to provide citizens an opportunity to experience amateur radio first-hand. Members also used the opportunity to make local and DX contacts.

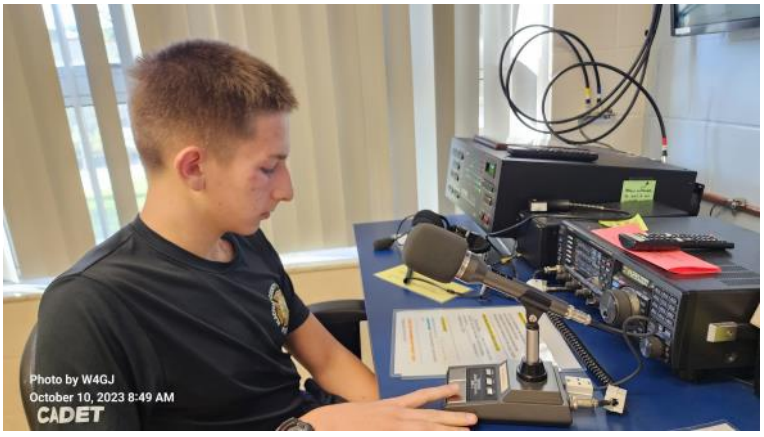
Sumter County ARES members and guests who participated in this year's event were Gil Chapin - WB2UTI, Louise Racine - KN4IOH, Verne Betlach - K4VEB, Paul Kock - KD2HQV, Greg Madore - K1MGR, Michael "Spike" McKenzie - N4EBF, Steve Walbrun - KD8WAA, Ken Simmons - K9TPT, and Emergency Coordinator Mark Newby - KX4LEO.

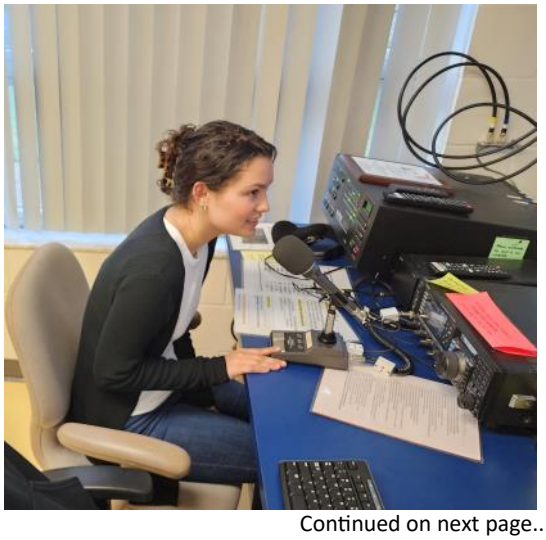
Loften HS Students Participate in National Fire Prevention Week

Bob/W4GJ, Trustee for K4WTL/N4F

Students at W.T. Loften High School made 924 contacts using the special event call: N4F this month for National Fire Prevention Week. The theme for this year's NFPW was ***Fires in the Kitchen***. They also participated in the ARRL School Club Roundup and the Boy Scouts Jamboree on the Air. It was a busy month at K4WTL, but the new freshmen shined about the previous classes. We had 48 students participate in the NFPW event and a few more for the other events. With more people doing POTA events and the usual plethora of Nets on 20 meter SSB, we tried 10 meters and 15 meters. Both alternate bands provided many contacts, but mostly with DX stations.

One of the websites for NFPW is hamfire.com if anyone is interested in participating next year. Some of our students made CW contacts for N0F, since the Zero-land stations were not very plentiful. We did this remotely via a station in St. Louis. It was different, but we enjoyed the challenge.





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Loften HS Students Participate in National Fire Prevention Week, continued...

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A New Shop Tool for Sheet Metal Boxes / New Simultaneous Data Capability at the Alachua County EOC

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

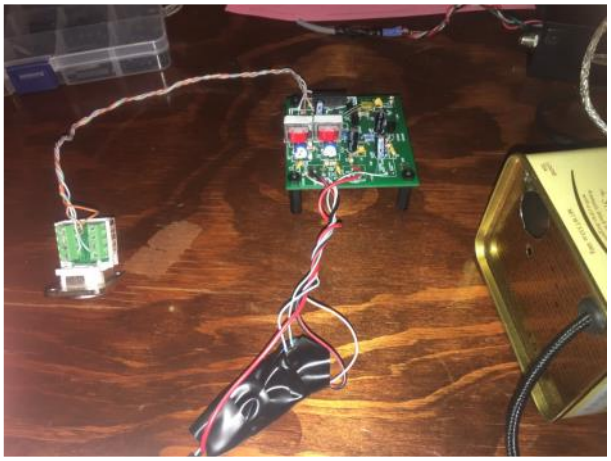
Perfectly-sized shielded project box for our small

Rosemary Jones KI4QBZ, provides an unending supply of Twinings tin boxes, from her enjoyment of their Earl Gray (loose tea leaves) traditional beverage. For years we have used these conveniently sized sturdy boxes to enclose some of our homebuilt radio projects. However, drilling holes in thin, lightly-supported sheet metal with a traditional twist drill can make for jagged cuts, snagged drills, and even injuries if one isn't using pliers to hold the work while drilling. I have finally learned about "step drills" and can report on how much better they made the last tin-box project!

Step drills are inexpensive (https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B09GX8QGQ3?th=1) and provide the ability to cut any of several sizes of circular holes in thin sheet metal. My goal was to provide access for a modular RJ-45 ("Ethernet") plug into a jack mounted on the metal box. (Jack: https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0BY8FQZQJ/?th=1) The step drill was a huge success! It is very clear ("ka-THUNK!") when it has "dropped another diameter" as one is drilling. It does leave a sprue on the inner side, but I happily discovered that could be removed by carefully applying the step drill from the other side! This was my first attempt at using a bulkhead mountable RJ-45 jack. Although one could mount it in a larger hole designed to fit the embossed jack, I found a smaller hole, just large enough for the RJ45 connector, was easier to construct. Thanks to Rosemary, I had no shortage of practice materials!

Step Drills (ref: https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B09GX8QGQ3?th=1

Older radios that don't include built-in sound card systems can still be used for modern data communications (which often require far less signal/noise ratio than voice SSB) if something like a Signalink or DigiRig is added. However, there are significant costs (Signalinks @ $140) and/or solder-settings, and jumpers that have to be set to use some of these commercial offerings. For several years, I've used a homebrew design (https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/soundcard/soundcard-kit-2/) with simple transformers, 2N3904 transistors and a bit of soldering to reproduce the function of a Signalink, for less cost than a few gallons of gasoline these days. This does require some time building and soldering, but as a retired person, my time is now my own to allocate, and staying within budget is well worth the effort/pleasure of building.



All the parts: bulkhead RJ-45 jack, printed circuit board (on mounts) and USB sound dongle (in insulating tape prior to double-stick mounting)

At our EOC we have an older Part 90 commercial radio that is somewhat the "Part 90" version of an Icom 718, built by Yaesu. It even provides 3.5mm jacks and a setting for "J2E USB" (data communications). Now that we have access to the QuintPlexor 5-band antenna multiplexer, we wanted to be able to handle data communications (e.g. MT-63 broadcasts on SHARES nets, or SHARES or ham WINLINK connections) on the older radio simultaneously with voice/data operations on a different band using our more modern primary radio

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(with built-in sound card). I had a finished printed circuit board "homebrew Signalink" available , so mounting it, and a small CM108-based sound card USB dongle (https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07CFWZGZB) was a much less expensive way to bring our older Yaesu radio up to speed. Using the step drill, I was able to mount a nice RJ-45 jack for connection to the radio cable.[1] Removing one end of a long USB extension cable and soldering the red (+5), black(ground), green (data+) and white(data-) internal wires to the tabs of the USB sound dongle gave me a nice way to mount the sound dongle inside the shielded Twinings box, and route the USB cable though a rubber grommeted hole, over to a computer. I was able to pick off the +5V from the USB cable easily, to power our homebrew Signalink. The Yaesu has fairly repeatable modulator sensitivity, so audio gain trimmer settings once chosen, work pretty well on any band.

Yaesu AND Heathkit now working!

The result was that now our EOC can run both voice, and now data comms on any two bands, simultaneously! And for only a very few $$ out of my ham budget! At the same time, I put together a receive-only cable for our EMP-proof SB-100, which allows us to receive data broadcasts even on the older SB-100. (It can even handle WINLINK if you use a frequency counter to get close enough to the correct frequency, but I haven't wired up the mic/ptt portion of the data cable yet).

Either of the backup radios can use the sound-interface system -- same pinouts.

[1]On ALL of our Signalinks and homebrew equivalents, we use the RJ-45 pinout that works with commercial Baofeng and mini-din 6 connectors: Pin 1= mic; Pin 2 = ground; Pin 4 = PTT; Pin 5 = receiver audio. We use this uniformly throughout our entire ARES® group, no matter what radio a volunteer has, and we make suitable cables for their radio. Because of this, we have total redundancy between soundcard devices throughout our EOC and throughout or entire organization.

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Youth & Scout Amateur Radio Club

Scouts Looking to Fund Radio STEM Building & Tower

Ken Lyons, KN4MDJ, ARRL Southeastern Assistant Division Director - Radio Scouting, *www.kn4mdj.com*

We're still working on funding our Radio STEM building & tower, it will be one of the few in the country actively licensing new hams. LINK https://www.gofundme.com/f/stem-center-conversion

Year-to-date, our chapters have presented our program to over 9k youth in 4 councils, completed hundreds of merit badges, and have licensed over 20 youth. All our youth get an intro to RF, learn how to do SOS and their name in CW, and many have had the chance to get on-the-air, though we are limited on stations.

As a charity inside the ham community we have to beg and borrow for equipment, resources and helpers, but it's our youth that become 18% of future hams. Our goal is to give the youth their first experience and ignite that spark, trying to capture just 1%, showing interest in RF technology.

It's hoped this stem center will showcase the latest in technology from a number of vendors (no exclusive agreements) and offer our scouts a wide STEM program covering a number of topics and utilize the towers height for many programs, including optical astronomy above the trees (remote telescope), radio astronomy, sat tracking and even area datalink projects. Could we make an ARDN network across half of Florida using dozens of ham towers?

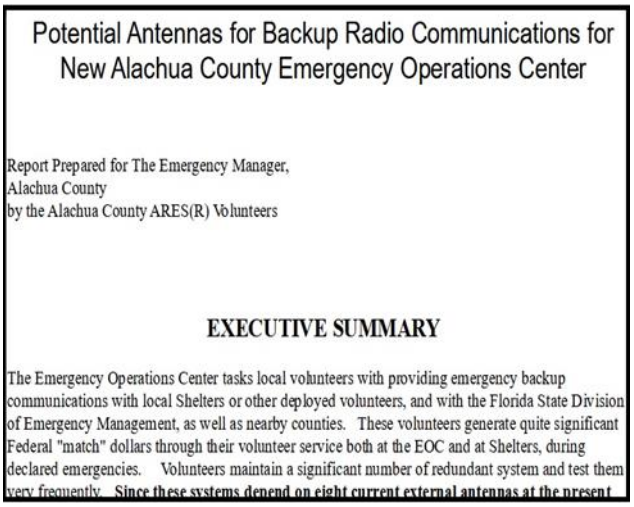
"Bringing Amateur Radio Scouting programs to a half million scouts in AL, GA, FL, PR, USVI"

What's up with ALACHUA COUNTY ARES®/NFARC!

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

EOC Move, Continued

Our Alachua County EOC is *moving*, and our group provided written documentation of both overall design suggestions, and also very specific suggestions for new antennas at the new facility:. (https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/DesignConsiderationsExpanded.pdf and https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/AntennaProposal4.pdf) The latter 24-page document is an extensive engineering overview plan for 2 simultaneously-usable HF antennas, 4 simultaneously-usable VHF/UHF antennas on two different mounts, and additional antennae to allow SLERS and other connections. It even includes a rough draft of a materials list, procurement and pricing information.

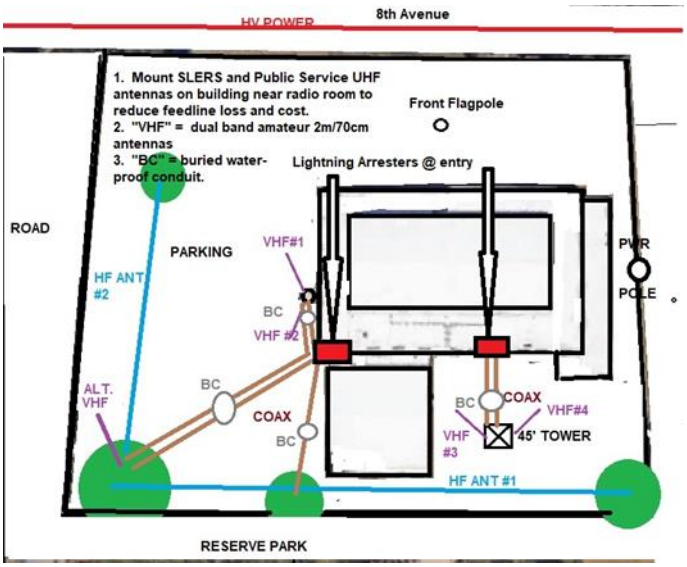


Potential Antennas for Backup Radio Communications for New Alachua County Emergency Operations Center

Report Prepared for The Emergency Manager,
Alachua County
by the Alachua County ARES(R) Volunteers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Emergency Operations Center tasks local volunteers with providing emergency backup communications with local Shelters or other deployed volunteers, and with the Florida State Division of Emergency Management, as well as nearby counties. These volunteers generate quite significant Federal "match" dollars through their volunteer service both at the EOC and at Shelters, during declared emergencies. Volunteers maintain a significant number of redundant system and test them very frequently. Since these systems depend on eight current external antennas at the present



Sketch of proposed antennas & supports at new Alachua County EOC

KEY to that proposal is have a tilt-over, telescoping mast to dramatically reduce maintenance tower climber costs All assets on towers eventually degrade, and tower climbing on "cheaper" straight towers.... is an expensive operation that requires exquisite planning.

Thanks to **DAVE HUCKSTEP W4JIR** for ***following up*** with EM personnel on the antenna proposals -- and working to dispel thoughts that "towers aren't allowed." As we documented in our proposal, there is no known proscription, particularly for public safety, of towers in their new location, which is NOT in any known historical district. Furthermore, dependence on "mother nature supports" (oak trees) in a "mother nature event" (HURRICANE) will look really sad when all the antennas are laying on the ground afterwards... One of the tenets of Emergency Management, as detailed in the FEMA Professional Development Training IS-244.b is **adequate support for volunteers!**

Improved Communications Plan & Assets!

At our October meeting, **Reid Tillery K9RFT** did a great job further detailing the position of "local helper station" in our backup disaster communications response plan. He is spearheading development of simplex capabilities into far eastern Alachua County, with new antennas and new volunteers sprouting from contract / volunteer fire departments. Reid came up with much better and more descriptive language for our important Paragraph 3.15 in our Communications Plan, which was enthusiastically adopted by a unanimous vote at the October 2023 meeting

(Later in the month Reid Tillery K9RFT & Gainesville Amateur Radio Society President **Terry Gordon K4TMG** visited the Cross Creek Fire Department in the southeastern region of Alachua County and used a slingshot to put up an end-fed N9TAXlabs (https://n9taxlabs.com/) type 2-meter antenna, 55 feet up into a pine tree. This will provide back-up communications possibilities even by simplex to this outlying fire station. Hooray!)

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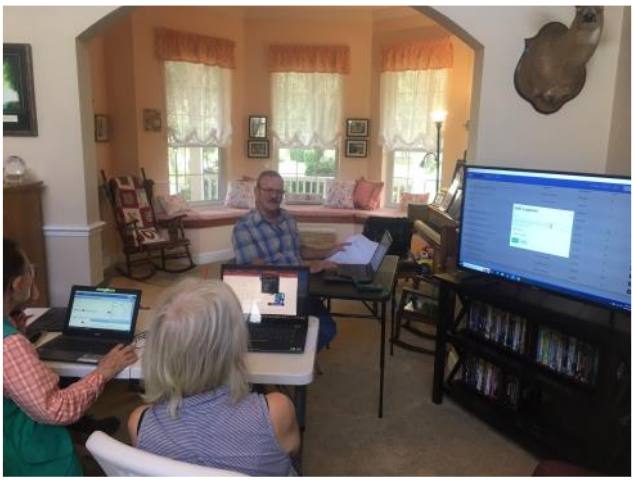
Florida ARES(R) Training

https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Florida-ARES-Training-Task-Book-2020-R1.pdf

Leadership Training Requirements Debate

We're still short of top-level operators who are qualified to operate every radio system in our EOC -- we only have 4; one is moving away from the area (**Leland Gallup AA3YB**, a key leader) and another is usually unavailable because he works for the county in an important position (**Jim Bledsoe KI4KEA**). That leaves us with only TWO qualified volunteers under our current protocols: Gordon Gibby KX4Z and Wendell Wright KN4TWS. Others are close....but not there (yet).

At our October meeting, long time leader **Susan Halbert KG4VWI** raised the key question of just how important was the completion of the ARRL-endorsed FEMA Professional Development Series. In Alachua County, we follow the ARES(R) doctrine and have additional requirements to ensure that volunteers assigned to the EOC are capable of operating every radio system and familiar with all our federal, state and local techniques. https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2022/AlachuaCountyEmergencyVolunteerTaskbook.pdf Susan felt that 40-hours of training required for the FEMA Professional Development Series were excessive, and furthermore not germane to the actual operations of the NF4AC/NCS181 EOC backup radio station. Since 2019, the ARRL Board of Directors has required completion of the Professional Development Series for all top level ARES leadership, but compliance by the Field Organization appears to be spotty, and reporting is unknown. How important is this training? Rather than decide such a change on the initial discussion, when few had any practical experience, Gordon Gibby requested all present to take at least ONE of the series and then report back next month for a final decision.



Is it Really 40 Hours?

So Gordon KX4Z literally *re-took* the Volunteer Management FEMA course, one of the series. And found that the 4-hour estimated time was *wildly inflated.* The actual course, including ordering and consuming a delicious bagel & refreshment, took only 31% of the stated time. This suggests that the issue to be decided is whether a day and a half of training is too much to expect of our top-level emergency response leaders and representatives at the EOC. **Earl McDow K4ZSW** then reported he'd finished a course also! No one else has reported taking a course so far. An update on this important decision next month! We go with the group consensus!

Hit It Outta Da Park: POTA Training in Alachua County

Following up on **Wendell Wright's** October 5th well-attended TechNite 7PM zoom presentation on the Parks On The Air program, **Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ** and **Wendell Wright KN4TWS** teamed up to present an entire afternoon's worth of LabNLunch POTA hands-on training.

Wendell got it going with hands-on computer training for about 10 of us, on just about every aspect of Activation Logging for POTA activators. "Hunters" who just contact POTA activators don't need to do any of this -- no logging required at all. Activators have to keep an accurate log and submit it to the POTA organization. Wendell has us all install the HAMRS log system (which is quite simple) and had us going through ALL the paces! (https://hamrs.app/)

Plain Old Ham Fun!

But that was just the beginning! Next those of us who were able headed off to a new entrance to San Felasco State Park where Ron was already set up with ham radios and making contacts! We added our Field Day multi-band end-fed 40&Up antenna, and then our QUINTPLEXOR and band cans for 20/40/15 meters and we had TWO POTA stations going simultaneously! Wendell and Ron led us in a startup set of contacts on 2-meter and 70cm simplex so that everyone got the sequence down.

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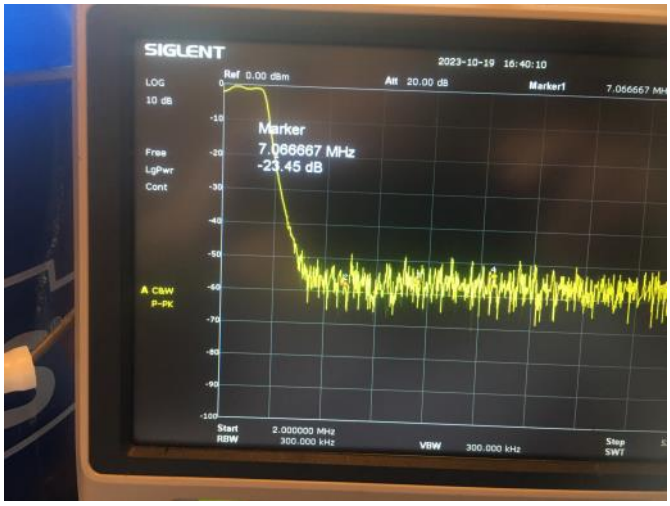
When everyone had the sequences understood, out came the HF radios and we were working POTA on two bands simultaneously on one antenna -- multi mode, also! CW and SSB on different bands and a heck of a lot of fun! Ron rustled up a Spain contact, and engineered it for everyone interested to make the contact with their own calls! For some, this was one of their first experiences with 20-meter SSB trans-Atlantic ham radio. Way to go, Ron!

Bright outside! Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ (L) mentors DX POTA 20-meter SSB with Eric Pleace KO4ZSD in the sunlight, and Susan Halbert KG4VWI, Wendell KN4TWS (R) listening

Trial by Fire for our Quintplexor that had us working our choice of 40 / 20 / 15 /10 meters simultaneously out at San

Tidbits

Earl McDow K4ZSW & **Reid Tillery K9RFT** took on the task of organizing the next TECHNICIAN CLASS, perhaps switching to a multi-evening class instead of our typical "weekend scramble." **Gordon Gibby KX4Z** continues his investigations of the transmitter purity of the recently released sBitx Version 2, and will be reporting on that next month.



BADGED VOLUNTEERS GROWING

By Florida Statute, there are specific requirements for serving in locations where vulnerable citizens are present. Thankfully, Alachua County continues to be helpful in checking and badging our newly-recruited volunteers, because all groups experience attrition due to aging out, loss of interest, health problems, moving away, etc... Alachua County ARES(R) is delighted to be badging four new volunteers:

- Bob Lightner W4GJ
- Steve Panaghi KC2ASY
- Craig White KO4ZRZ
- Eric Pleace KO4ZSD

With **John Troupe KM4JTE** retiring due to family responsibilities and **Leland Gallup AA3YB** soon moving from the area, this will leave us with about 19 non-county-employee active volunteers who are badged, out of our 40 or so ARES(R) participants locally. Jeff Capehart W4UFL EC manages our badging requirements https://qsl.net/nf4rc/WelcomeToAlachuaCountyARES.pdf and we're always looking for new volunteers with a sincere interest to serve!

What's happening Santa Rosa County

Arc Thames, W4CPD

October was quite a busy month for us with our ARES team providing communications services alongside our CERT volunteers providing first aid. The partnership of our two teams has opened many doors and opportunities for us to provide support throughout our county.

First, we setup a mutual aid repeater and managed a radio cache for the Munson Heritage Festival. This is an annual event that draws thousands of people to the Krul Lake Recreation Area. This is a unique campground in the very rural part of our county and consists of a working gristmill and sawmill area. The event organizers have struggled for years to communicate with each other due to the limited cellular coverage in this area.

While our main ARES repeater does work in this area, it's a bit too far to utilize HT's. Our original plan was to setup a crossband repeater using a dual band radio but the county Emergency Management staff has been encouraging us to leverage their P25 public safety radios for these events, so we did. This trunked repeater system has excellent coverage throughout the county and there is a tower directly across the road from where this event was so it worked out well for us. We're thankful for our relationship with Santa Rosa County to be able to utilize these resources.

ARES Member & Central CERT Captain Ralph N3RLC manning the first aid station

This past weekend we supported a 100 mile bike ride with over 300 riders starting in the central part of our county and stretching all the way north to the state line and over to our neighbors to the east in Okaloosa county. Again, we provided both communications & first aid support. We utilized amateur radio for communication among the aid stations since this event crossed county lines. There were a total of 5 aid stations with amateur radio operators & CERT volunteers along with a net control station, Larry W4LAT, at the start/finish line.

This event really highlighted our ability to provide up to the minute information about what's going on during the ride as well as events that might impact the ride. Thanks to our close relationship with Santa Rosa County Emergency Management and their Emergency Communications Center, we were notified about both a brush fire just to the east of the route as well as a major motor vehicle accident that had Munson Highway shutdown for several hours. Thankfully the brush fire had no impact to the event but the vehicle accident did impact the support vehicles ability to traverse portions of the route. The bike riders themselves were not impacted as, at this point in the ride, their route took them on the Blackwater Heritage trail which only crossed the impacted roadway.

A huge shoutout to our friends at both the North Okaloosa and Playground Amateur Radio Clubs for supporting the aid stations in Okaloosa county along with the Blackman Fire Department supporting first aid in Okaloosa county.

L—Ralph-N3RLC and son Phil

R—Phil Coffman and Ron-KI5FR from NOARC

Continued on next page...

Josie-WD4DCL, Larry-W4LAT, and Dane-WD4DSL at the starting line

Joe-KQ4IRJ and Randy-KF6CC

Jack-W4JPH & son Jon-KM4QQO

Volunteers from PARC & NOARC

Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications

Marty Brown, Editor

Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications is now archiving ***QST NFL*** issues. DLARC is a project of the Internet Archive (the not-for-profit online library best known for The Wayback Machine.) DLARC is growing to be a massive online library of the past and present of ham radio and related communications. It is funded by a grant from Amateur Radio Digital Communications. You can see what we have so far at https://archive.org/details/dlarc .

Three years of QST NFL are now online, and I am working with the curator, Kaye Savetz, K6KJN, to eventually get all the issues that I have edited since 2014. DLARC can also scan paper issues. So if you have any stashed in your attic, let me know.

Announcing our 4th Annual Youth "Dream Rig" Essay Contest

Dave WD5COV, Vice President The Intrepid DX Group — Submitted by Scott Roberts, KK4ECR, NFL Section Manager

Attention All Groups with a Youth Connection!

The Intrepid-DX Group is a US based 501 C (3) nonprofit organization that promotes Amateur Radio activities around the world. We recognize the importance of including Youth in our great hobby because they are our future! We are continuing with our annual "Dream Rig" Youth Essay Contest to gather the views and ideas of young people involved in Amateur Radio.

What are the Prizes?

* The First-Place prize is an ICOM IC-7300!
* The Second-place prize is an ICOM ID5100AD dual band mobile radio with D-Star.
- The Third-place prize is an ICOM ID52A dual band handy talkie with D-Star.

Contest Rules:

- Two-page Essay answering this question: What attracted you to amateur radio?
- Contestants must be USA or Canadian Amateur Radio License Holders Aged 19 or younger. All contestants must be in the US, including US territories or Canada.
- Promise to keep the radio for one year, not flip it, trade it or sell it, and to use it on the air.
- Send an essay in plain text, PDF or MS Word attachment to intrepiddxgroup@gmail.com by November 30th, 2023. You may alternatively mail it to: The Intrepid-DX Group, 3052 Wetmore Dr, San Jose, CA 95148, USA. Must be post-marked by November 30, 2022.
- Those that have previously submitted an essay may compete in this year's essay contest as long as all other criteria are met.
- The winner of the Essay Contest will be announced on our Website and Facebook page on December 15th, 2023. Winner must agree to provide a photo with their prize.
- All submissions become the property of the Intrepid-DX Group and the winners authorize the Intrepid-DX Group to use their photographs to promote the contest.

Questions: Send an email to intrepiddxgroup@gmail.com

You can follow our contest and receive updates via our Facebook page. Good luck to everyone!

What's Happening? Madison & Suwannee County ARES® News

October has been a busy month with great weather! This has allowed many of us to continue to fix more of the damage from Idalia and also to engage in some fun operating and building.

One small surprise was the discovery of this insulator in the middle of a local road. Subsequently, another similar insulator was spotted in the weeds along the side of the road and "recovered". They are "demanding" to become the base for HF vertical antennas, or possibly a phased antenna array. Suggestions to W2TTT would be welcome!

POTA Activation

On Sunday, October 8th, Bill AA4TM sent out a note to several of us asking if anyone wanted to do a POTA (Parks On The Air) activation. Gordon W2TTT responded, and Bill and Gordon went to the Suwannee River State Park for an activation that was a lot of fun! Bill provided the transportation, his laptop as a logging computer and his portable vertical antenna. Gordon provided his IC-7300, LiFePO4 battery and Evolve III computer to run FT8.

Since the park entrance was blocked to allow crews to remove hazardous trees from the park, Bill's 4WD **Pic**k-up was used to get onto park property, but outside the fence near the entrance. About thirty-five contacts were made using Bill's callsign. POTA is an excellent way to sharpen ones EMCOMM skills while getting some fresh air!

L—Comfortable tailgate operating position.

***Above**— Bill AA4TM enjoying another POTA day in the sunshine.*

***L**— Bill AA4TM's vertical went up in a few minutes.*

Continued on next page...

Digital Cell Modem "Go Boxes" Take Form

During the aftermath of Idalia's march through Madison and Suwannee Counties several of us were discussing the digital cellular modem go box that provided Nancy N2FWI and Gordon W2TTT with Internet in the absence of power. Ted W4KOD expressed interest in replicating some elements of Nancy and Gordon's go box. Ted had a large "lunch box" sized ruggedized and waterproof case and Gordon expressed interest in reworking his into a similar, but larger container.

L— *This is Gordon W2TTT 's existing go box. The battery is out to facilitate use of an external battery while the internal battery was being solar charged elsewhere.*

R—*This is a side by side comparison of the existing W2TTT go box and the new box that Red W4KOD will be using.*

L - *Gordon has four others of these as "battery boxes" each with one 30 AH LiFePO4 battery inside with room for cables and a charger. The front side has a dual Anderson PowerPole bulkhead connector.*

Ted and Gordon spent an evening laying out and drilling and placing components in Ted's box. Ted has an Mikrotik router flashed with AREDN Mesh code. We also identified some key components used in Gordon's box that Ted would acquire. In the meantime, both Ted and Gordon have been busy making progress on their respective go boxes and in a month or so, there will be one or more complete articles describing them. In the meantime, here is a "sneak peek" of some of our sizing, fitting and progress.

R—*Gordon W2TTT bought this Apache 2800 at Harbor Freight for his go box "remodeling".*

Below—*A 12 VDC to 24 VDC voltage booster for the Mikrotik AREDN Mesh router.*

R—*Test fitting the battery, Mikrotik AREDN Mesh router, cell modem and other components in Ted W4KOD's new go box.*

Continued on next page...

Below—*Test fitting two LiFePO4 12 VDC 9 AH batteries in the HF Apache 2800 case. Also, note the four "hard points" inside the cover lid. After some thought, we came up with a really cool use for them and that space.*

R— *A six-way Anderson PowerPole distribution lock. These can be bought or easily made.*

R—*Another great looking go-kit has been assembled and used this month by Bryan KQ4FMY. It is nicely done with a Yaseu rig, automatic antenna tuner, LiFePO4 battery and cables.*

L—*Here is a photo of Bryan's portable vertical antenna. He has a recording of 17m QSO s with 80m Loop and Feed Line Repairs*

You might recall that during Idalia's visit, that a garden shed was torn off its bolts into concrete and went flying through most of the two-hundred feet of 450 Ohm window line, breaking and scarring insulators and support poles. Well, repairs have been slowed by work tasks, but progress marches us forward.

R—*The 80m full-wave loop at W2TTT is now fixed and ready for a new feed line.*

Below— *Yellow insulators replaced on almost every 4x4 support for the 450 Ohm window line. The next step is to run the two hundred feet of window line and to splice it to the short piece alteady connected to the 80m full-wave loop.*

A final reminder about the force of a 120 mph wind. Take a look at the the face of the 4x4 post above. When debris struck the end of the smooth 4x4 post it left a gnarly gash on one face and ripped the electric fence insulator off. These insulators are inexpensive and the 450 Ohm are affixed to the top with UV-resistent zip ties.

If you are interested in joining either Madison or Suwannee ARES, or have questions about our activities, please contact Gordon Beattie W2TTT at w2ttt@att.net

Get On the Air

Madison Amateur Radio Club
Annual Tailgate
Saturday, November 11, 2023
9::00 am - 2:00 pm

Bring Treasures to Sell and Pick a Spot! Open Your Tailgate or Set Up a Table!

Meet Friends Old & New! Talk Ham Radio! Buy a Burger and a Soft Drink!

How-To Sessions!
Parks On The Air (POTA)
AREDN Mesh Networks for EMCOMM
WinLink

Bring Your Radios, Antennas and Computers
We will help you set them.up!

Location: Lee City Hall , 286 Co Rd 255, Lee, FL 32059
Conveniently off of I-10 x262, Just north of US Rt. 90 in Lee

Talk-In
145.19 (-.600 kHz, 123.0 Hz)
SARNET (briefly, to get you heading toward us!)

Admission: FREE— Donations Welcome!

Questions? Contact: Ken Odom KI4IMN
EMAIL: ki4imn@outlook.com
PHONE or TEXT: 850-464-3239

Hope To See You There!

QCWA Chapter 62, Ocala

Ken Simpson. W8EK, President

Ocala Chapter 62 of the Quarter Century Wireless Association met on October 26, 2023, at a different location. We usually meet at China Lee Buffet in Ocala, but this time we moved our meeting to Bushell to Pico de Gato Mexican restaurant. This was done primarily to help Marty, KR4VS, who lives in Bushnell, but can not travel to Ocala any longer.

Chapter 62 QCWA October 26, 2023.
L to R, Marty, KR4VS; Sue, XYL KR4VS; Dennis, N4KPI; Larry, W9SX; Sue, N8AJU; Ken, W8EK; and Doug, W3HH.

It is with deep sadness that we report two silent keys. Dick Shaurer, W8DYV, and Raymond Richards, W4RPR. W8DYV was one that you could always count on to do what he said he would do. That doesn't happen much any more! He was Treasurer of Chapter 62 and active in the Friendship Amateur Radio Club. W4RPR had served national QCWA as the Membership Supply person, collecting the money, and shipping out the various supplies members desired. Both will be missed!

Our attendance was a bit smaller than normal, due to the fact that some did want to travel the extra 35 to 40 miles to Bushnell.

Chapter 62 holds a net every Saturday at 9:00 AM local Eastern time, on 3940 MHz. All are invited and encouraged to check in.

SILVER SPRINGS RADIO CLUB
2023 HAMFEST
Saturday, December 2, 2023
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
1908 EAST FORT KING STREET, OCALA, FL 34471
DOORS OPEN AT 7:30 AM

Grand prize and door prizes
Grand prize tickets separate from door prize tickets. Admission ticket stub good for door prizes only. Both tickets available at the door only! Additional Grand Prize tickets $5 each.
No online sales.

Grand Prize

YAESU FTM-300DR

VE Testing
One session only at 10:00 AM
Bring two forms of ID & FRN +
FCC Reference copy, if upgrading
Test Fee $15 cash.
Test slots are limited.
Pre-register at K4GSO.US

Commercial Vendors
Tower Electronics
Signman Of Baton Rouge
J T Communications
Paradan Radio
Satellite Sam
And others

Active military and first responders in uniform and kids under 12 free.

Flea Market & Tailgate
Inside flea-market tables in Fellowship Hall

Separate Tailgate area on first-come first-parked basis.
No advance reservations.
(Bring your own tables and chairs)

Must buy tickets for Grand Prize.

REAL, NOT FAKE
Ham Food and drinks available for purchase from Scout Troop 439

TALK-IN ON K4GSO
VHF 146.610 PL-123

General Admission	$10
Tailgate – Car & Driver	$20
Each Extra Tailgate Space	$10
Additional Person	$10

MORE INFORMATION ON THE SSRC WEBSITE:
WWW.K4GSO.US/HAMFEST

SPECIAL NOTE:
By attending the SSRC Hamfest, you are acknowledging that an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. You assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agree not to hold the Silver Springs Radio Club, First Christian Church, or any of their directors, officers, employees, vendors or volunteers liable for any illness or injury.
The SSRC will follow all Federal, State and Local guidelines to keep our visitors safe.

More Information

The 48th annual Tampa Bay Hamfest will be held December 8th and 9th, 2023.

Be sure to mark your calendar and plan to visit your ARRL West Central Florida Section Convention and Hamfest at the Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City.

For information check *https://tampabayhamfest.org*

For all you vendors, now is the time to place your orders for tables, booths, tailgate spaces and covered tailgate in the Carriage House. We will again use the indoor space at the Expo Hall and tailgating in the adjacent grassy field. You can visit your elected officers and other officials at the ARRL booth in the Hall. Get your cards checked there also.

Both amateur and commercial license testing will be available. Don't forget to check out the Forum Schedule.
Indoor tables are available at $20, booths at $60 and tailgate at $10 per space. Camping is also available on-site. Much more information on all these can be found on the above website.

Tickets are $10 if ordered before December 6th, thereafter $13 at the gate. To keep ham radio alive and thriving we need all the support we can muster from the ham community. Hamfests do their part in gathering hams together to enjoy meeting of friends, young and older.

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, geraldlguy@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. ®//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**
  - REF046A – Florida Statewide
  - REF046B – NFL ARES
  - 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!