



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 11 Issue 12

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December 2024



From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR (kk4ecr@gmail.com)



The Biggest Challenge Facing Ham Radio Operators Today

Amateur radio operators are known for their dedication, resourcefulness, and passion for communication. We've been the go-to community when disasters strike, infrastructure fails, or when experimentation drives innovation. But as we look around in 2024, it's clear that ham radio is at a crossroads. We're facing some tough challenges that will shape the future of our hobby—and our role as critical communicators. Let's dive deeper into what's at stake and how we can tackle these issues head-on.

Protecting Our Spectrum: A Fight We Can't Lose

The radio spectrum is one of our most valuable resources, but it's under constant threat. Commercial interests, fueled by the demand for more bandwidth for services like 5G and satellite internet, have their eyes on the frequencies we use every day. These frequencies aren't just for casual QSOs; they're lifelines during emergencies and playgrounds for innovation.

For example, amateur radio operators were critical during Hurricane Ian and other recent disasters, providing communication when traditional systems went down. Losing access to key bands could severely limit our ability to serve the public in times of crisis.

To protect our spectrum, we need to stay vigilant. Advocacy groups like the ARRL are fighting for us, but we can't sit back and hope they'll do it all. Write letters to your representatives, educate your community about the importance of amateur radio, and stay informed about legislative changes. This isn't just about keeping a hobby alive—it's about preserving a resource that saves lives.

Adapting to New Technology Without Losing Our Roots

Technology has always been a part of amateur radio's DNA. From the early days of spark-gap transmitters to modern digital modes like FT8 and SDRs, hams have been at the forefront of innovation. Today, the integration of internet-based technolo-

gies with traditional radio systems is opening up exciting possibilities. Tools like Echolink, D-STAR, and digital voice modes allow us to communicate globally in ways our predecessors never imagined.

But here's the flip side: these new tools can make ham radio feel intimidating or overly complicated to some operators. Others worry that we're losing touch with the analog skills that make our hobby resilient. After all, when the power goes out and cell towers fail, it's the operators who know how to work a dipole and a simple HF rig who make the difference.

The key is balance. Let's embrace the new while holding on to the old. Modern tools can enhance what we do, but they shouldn't replace the foundational skills that define amateur radio. Whether you're a seasoned CW operator or a digital mode enthusiast, there's room for everyone at the table.

Reaching the Next Generation: It's Now or Never

One of the most pressing challenges we face is the need to grow our community. The average age of amateur radio operators is increasing, and fewer young people are joining the ranks. It's not because ham radio isn't relevant—in fact, it's more relevant than ever. But to the uninitiated, it can seem outdated in a world dominated by smartphones, Wi-Fi, and instant connectivity.

The truth is, ham radio offers something these modern technologies can't: the thrill of building your own equipment, the satisfaction of making a DX contact on a homemade antenna, and the ability to communicate when everything else fails. We just need to show the next generation what they're missing.

Start by meeting them where they are. Host workshops on how ham radio integrates with STEM subjects like robotics and coding. Partner with schools to set up ham stations or sponsor youth contests. And most importantly, make the hobby feel welcoming and inclusive. It's up to us to ensure that anyone with an interest in amateur radio feels like they belong.

Start by meeting them where they are. Host workshops on how ham radio integrates with STEM subjects like robotics and coding. Partner with schools to set up ham stations or sponsor youth contests. And most importantly, make the hobby feel welcoming and inclusive. It's up to us to ensure that anyone with an interest in amateur radio feels like they belong.

Challenges in a Changing World

Beyond these core issues, the world itself is changing in ways that impact amateur radio. Climate change is leading to more frequent and severe weather events, making our role in emergency communications more important than ever. At the same time, urbanization and HOA restrictions are making it harder for operators to set up antennas, cutting off many from the airwaves.

On a brighter note, remote operations and advancements in portable gear mean that even those with limited space can stay active. We just need to share these solutions and support each other in overcoming obstacles.

Standing Together to Build the Future

The challenges we face might seem daunting, but they're not insurmountable. Ham radio has survived for over a century because of the passion and dedication of its operators. Now, it's our turn to ensure that amateur radio not only survives but thrives.

Whether it's protecting our spectrum, mastering new technologies, mentoring a new ham, or advocating for our rights, each of us has a role to play. By working together, we can keep amateur radio relevant, resilient, and ready for whatever the future holds.

After all, when the grid goes down and the cell towers fail, the world turns to us. Let's make sure we're ready.

Thank you for allowing me to be YOUR Section Manager!

NFL SECTION TOWN HALL MEETING

Our first NFL Section Town Hall meeting will be Thursday, December 5 at 7pm via zoom. Come join us as we give section updates and answer your questions.

Topic: NFL Section Town Hall Meeting

Time: Dec 5, 2024 19:00 Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82677401078?pwd=eB4YXpSRaepfu6qViqj8MwpelAlKGF.1>

Meeting ID: 826 7740 1078

Passcode: 703626

One tap mobile

+13052241968,,82677401078#,,,,*703626# US

+13126266799,,82677401078#,,,,*703626# US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 826 7740 1078

Passcode: 703626

VISIT YOUR CLUB

I'd love to be able to visit every club in our section. As hard as that may be to do in person, virtual visits can be much easier to schedule for some. If you would like me to visit your club in person or virtually, and speak, please email me so we can schedule it – kk4ecr@arrl.org

From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

Hurricane season has officially come to a close. I want to again send out a sincere “thank you” to all the volunteers in the various counties that had to activate this year as well as our team in Leon county and others who travelled to support the radio room at the State EOC. Your dedication and support both locally and throughout the state did not go un-noticed.



The communications issues that arose from Hurricane Helene as it moved north and up into North Carolina caused a huge uptick in the interest in amateur radio licensing, especially from first responders. This month, we provided a technician class to just over 20 first responders, dispatchers, and CERT volunteers in Santa Rosa County. Out of those, we gained 17 new ham radio operators in Santa Rosa County.

For the classes we offer, especially when it's to first responders, we do our best to remove all barriers to entry for the students. Through the generous donations of our volunteers, we are able to provide the class, the book, lunches and the test 100% free. In addition, all students who pass their technician test receive a free Baofeng UV-5 basic radio, already programmed up with area repeaters as well as SARNET. This model has worked well for us several times and we will continue to do it as long as we have the support to. Following the class we then offer a follow-on session called “So you've got your license, now what?” to go over basic operations of the radios and other fun things they can do in the hobby.



I've been meeting with officials from the State and we are on-track to do our statewide exercise either in late March or early April. As soon as I have the dates, I will get them out to our leadership team. We generally do not participate in the official date for the ARRL SET (Simulated Emergency Test) as its during hurricane season and, twice in the last few years, we've had a hurricane on that date.

Don't forget, the new emergency communications courses are now available from the ARRL and align with the new ARES task-book. The courses can be found online - <https://www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog> and the task book can be found via [this link](#).

Monthly ARES Statistics

The ARRL has now reported that the online form to report monthly reports is now back online. Emergency Coordinators, please submit your back reports from the months since it has gone offline no later than Friday December 13 so I can get them reported up to the ARRL.

NFL Officials

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Kevin Bess KK4BFN
Helen Straughn WC4FSU
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Arc Thames W4CPD

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Section Technical Coordinator

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Section Affiliated Club Coordinator

Section Traffic Manager

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

Section Official Observer Coordinator

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Darrell Brock N4GOA

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Kari McClure, NW4R

Newsletter, *QST NFL*

Earl McDow, K4ZSW

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 South-eastern 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:
Earl McDow earl.mcdow@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>

What's Inside...

[Section Manager](#)

[Section Emergency Coordinator](#)

[Index](#)

[Xiegu90](#)

[Loften High School](#)

[Pensacola State College](#)

[Getting High on RF](#)

[Suwannee County ARES®](#)

[Tis the Season](#)

[6-Meter Dipole](#)

[Alachua Count ARES®](#)

[Suwannee County ARES®](#)

[Geminids Meteor Scatter](#)

[MERT](#)

[FCC Testing](#)



NFL Section Member of the Month!

We are always accepting nominations for the NFL Section Member of the Month. To submit a nomination, please email 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 contact you with any questions

Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications

Marty Brown, N4GL

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.

The Xiegu G90: The Little Radio That Could

Bryan Phillips, K4BHP

In the life of the amateur radio operator, there is always newer tech that one wants to add to their radio and equipment inventory. After getting more involved in HF, I have come to love my FT-891. Sure its menu is obscure and clunky and I gently pack and deploy it, yet the FT-891 has been my go to HF radio since punching my General ticket last year. However the daunting process of disassembling my base setup for a trip, POTA activation, or just the ability to operate remotely on the farm, had become somewhat of a personal annoyance. That and coupled with the idea of packing the tuner, analyzer, worrying about my radio getting damaged, and taking a larger battery, just added to my disliking of wanting to break down my home station. In some cases the idea of remote operation had felt like a chore rather than something fun I was looking forward to. I began to look into alternatives, and in my reading of POTA posts on Facebook, online articles, and YouTube videos about portable operations, I began seeing more and more advocates of a little 20 watt radio. It wasn't as flashy as its Yeasu or Icom counterparts, but it was affordable and well liked. Enter the Xiegu G90, or as I have deemed it, the "Little Radio That Could,"

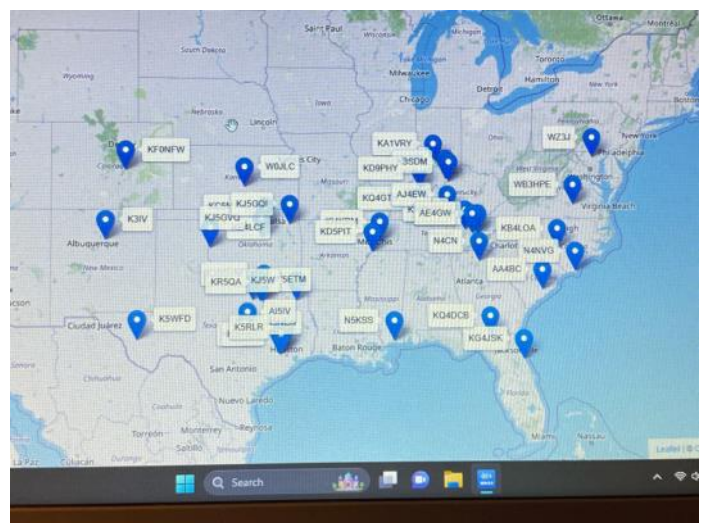
I settled on wanting to get another HF rig, but did not want to pay the price I had paid for my FT-891. As it would occur, Radioddity was running a special on the Xiegu G90. After talking with some of my fellow operators in our club about it, and a survey or two on Facebook POTA and Ham pages, I came to the conclusion of wanting to add the G90 to my radio inventory. At the time there was an online special for the radio, including a backpacking stand, a stand with a temp controlled fan, and a digital interface to run F8, etc. Initial impressions were that it was small, and reasonably light, but would it live up to what I had seen and heard about it.

When preparing for a family trip to Mississippi post Hurricane Helene, I figured that while there I would try to knock out a POTA activation, and was torn between packing everything needed to run my trusty FT-891 or pack the solemn G90. I went out on a test of faith and opted for the G90. I had already tested the waters with it, doing some hunting at my home by hooking up to my endfed antenna, as well as checking into the 80 meter HF net. During these times the G90 worked amazing, leaving me surprised what a small 20 watt radio would do. However I was still unsure about taking it and relying on it as my sole rig for the trip. During my POTA activation at the Gulf Islands National Seashore (park US- 0661, MS portion) I yielded a total of 40 QSO's in about a 2 hour time. Paired with the Wolf River Coils TIA and a piece of faraday cloth underneath acting as my ground plane, the G90 quickly went from being a questionable new piece of gear, to a favorite if not preferable "go-box" companion. I received several compliments from POTA hunters that my audio was good and several who were surprised I was only operating on 20 watts. Since then I have

made contacts anywhere from South America with my endfed suspended from a basketball court light at the church, to Spain from my classroom window and the same wire connected to a bush outside.

The Xiegu G90 checks off a number of points whenever it comes to being adaptable for a compact set up or when constructing a go-box for POTA or on the go situations. Of course it doesn't pack as big of a punch as a 100 watt rig, but at 20 watts, it's enough to be heard. The lower wattage is a plus for emergencies as it draws less power while running at full power. Coupling this with a built in waterfall display, built in antenna analyzer, CW decoder, and a tuner capable of tuning random items into usable antennas (a search of YouTube brings up videos of this) the Xiegu G90 presents a deal of valuable features into a compact and concise package. The G90 on some retailers sites come equipped with a mini tamiya connector for the power supply connection, however the one ordered from Radioddity came equipped with anderson powerpole connectors as stock. Radioddity also sells a replacement parts kit for any parts that may wear out.

As I move forward this fall and into this winter, I look forward to camping out, POTA, and any other opportunity to deploy the G90. Having recently restarted my journey of learning CW, I feel that combined with the built in decoder, I foresee many opportunities with the G90 by my side to make contacts. Maybe soon we will be able to have some fireside chats on a cold winter's night. The G90 has proven to be an invaluable addition to my radio set up, and I look forward to seeing all that this little radio is capable of doing. See You On The Air!



Map from HAMRS of stations reached during POTA at Gulf Islands National Seashore



Xiegu G90 during POTA activation.



Xiegu G90 Go-Box (Kit includes: Xiegu G90, 8ah LiFePo4 battery, 40-10 EFHW antenna, 49:1 Balun, power meter, 25' coax, cooling stand, and misc. forms and logs in lid. Box is an Apache 3800 from Harbor Freight



Loften High School

Bob Lightner K4WTL

K4WTL (Loften High School) students have been burning up ten meters this month making lots of contacts all around the DX world. New freshmen operators are really getting good at not only making contacts but rag chewing and using foreign phrases to begin and end QSOs.

One of our contacts in Ireland helped assist our kids with recording a narration for "The Legend of Eagle 35" a soundtrack for a special video. Here are some of our Freshmen ops.



Ham Radio fall term class at Pensacola State College

Gene Bannon, KB4HAH

The Five Flags amateur Radio Assoc in joint sponsorship with the Pensacola State College completed the fall class of the "Introduction to Amateur Radio & Upgrade" class. We had a very active class this term. With 26 students initially registering for the class. It made it a challenge to ensure we had enough materials for each of the students, since our maximum class size was supposed to be only 25. But we finally did find all the materials needed to get the job done.

The class had a wide range of students in ages as well as genders. There was a good mix of YLs and OM's in the class that was pretty much an even split between the genders. Their interest was also a good mix of students with 8 -10 wanting to get their technician class, as well as the others wanting to upgrade their current license. There were a lot of good questions about amateur radio that made instructing the class both a challenge and enjoyable. This made it a challenging class to instruct for the instructors, trying to keep the class interesting, without over whelming the others.

We had our Mini Field-day lesson where we brought in our equipment and explain the working of everything from the antenna all away to the transceiver. We also had our antenna construction lesson where the students built their own 2-meter dipole to take home, out of the material provided. This lesson has always seemed to be the most favorite and enjoyable to most of the students over the years, and again this year it didn't fail. We also touched on what general safety precautions that a ham should pay attention to, related to amateur radio as

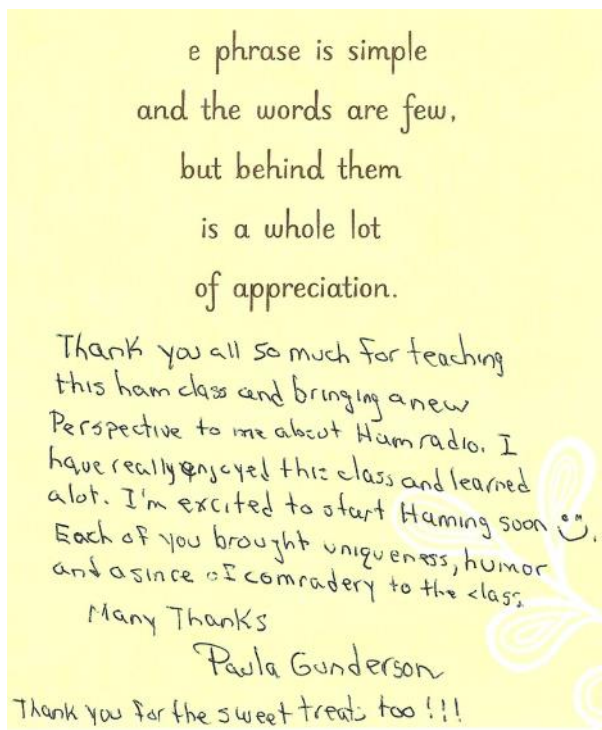
well. We ended up with 12 students taking our final class VEC session. Furthermore, we also had one student successfully upgrading to general class license at a VEC session the Milton ARC club held prior to their meeting during the middle of the term. So, we finally end up with a total of 13 students attempting to either get their initial license or upgrade their license, with 9 successfully doing so.

I believe we met the challenge well, as it showed in the results of the overall success of our students. We also had one student that went from no license to General class, and one student going from technician to extra class, with all the other in between.

Of course one of our instructor is a VERY proud father (Bill-WY8O), as his adult daughter (who got her novice, then technician license at the age of 13 and had been inactive, until recently), who now had successfully upgraded her license to General. Thus, she has indicated to dad she will be needing some technical advice getting her antenna up at her house, but wanting to do most of it on her own.

So with that, this was a great class. And we are now turning our sights toward the next challenge, the Spring term. It will be starting on Feb 11th and going through Apr 24 of 2025 where we already have 2-3 students registered for that class.

Here are some of the antenna construction pictures:



Ron KW4ZC Instructing Antenna Construction



Student Soldering her Antenna



Antenna Assembly Line



Working in Pairs on Antennas



Mike N4DIA helping a student

Getting High (in Frequency) December 2024 Update

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

It is Thanksgiving time as this is being written. We all have many things and more importantly PEOPLE, for which we are thankful. Thank you for the nice comments about the article that I wrote for last month's North Florida Section Newsletter on the topic of getting on the higher bands of VHF, UHF and microwave bands. Thank you!

FUTURE VHF-UHF & MICROWAVE ARTICLES

I will continue to write on this topic each month as I hope to spur interest in activities on these bands. We can cover any type of VHF-UHF and microwave activity from DXing, AREDN, LoRa/Meshtastic or other mesh networks, repeaters, APRS, antennas, PO-TA, or anything else you find interesting. If you want to discuss ideas or simply want a sked on the air, please drop me a note or give me a call. My email is W2TTT@ATT.NET and cell phone is 201.314.6964.

In fact, if you are so inclined, send our NFL Newsletter editor Earl McDow K4ZSW your own article describing your activities and interests. Earl can receive articles at earl.mcdow@gmail.com with QST NFL in the Subject line.

So here is an update from here on the progress we've made in the VHF-UHF and microwave area.

BEACON ANTENNA PROJECT

You might recall that I have several Ubiquiti 2.4 and 5 GHz antennas on hand from AREDN mesh activities. These AMO-2G13 and AMO-5G13 antennas offer 13 dBi of gain in both the horizontal and vertical planes depending on which antenna port you use. The issue for us flatlanders is that they provide a 2 degree "downtilt" and so I got to thinking that with all the rain scatter and tropo ducting here in Florida, that we might want to convert that to 2 degrees of "uptilt" and get a modest amount of propagation improvement. These are solid outdoor rated antennas, but their drainage scheme for humidity requires upright deployment. So the question of how to address that comes up.

I went out and bought some four and six inch Schedule 40 PVC pipe, tees and caps. If I don't use the parts, I can return them, but the PVC pipe is a "keeper".

Well, the 5 GHz antenna fits nicely into a four inch piece of PVC. Below is shown a Ubiquiti AMO-5G13 on the right with a Ubiquiti M5 Rocket transceiver loaded with AREDN mesh software. In use as a beacon or station antenna, the mesh node would be removed, and then inserted upside down into the four inch PVC tube. It will also have caps on the top and bottom and will be strapped to a mast below or possibly above where the antenna is placed in the tube. I may use a PVC T to keep the antenna toward the top of the tube and to get the feed line away from the antenna body. We will show that setup next month once it is finalized.

Just a few cautionary notes about PVC:

1. Plan on painting it with acrylic paint to protect it from UV damage.
2. Four and six inch Schedule 40 PVC pipe and connectors are CRAZY EXPENSIVE!
3. De-tuning of the antenna inside the PVC may be an issue.

Less expensive PVC drainage pipe, possibly in conjunction with a plastic NEMA electrical box and flange connector may be a sensible alternative. We will see!



For reference, the antenna on left is an Altelix dual band 2.4/5 GHz antenna that has the same diameter and base bracket as the Ubiquiti AMO-2G13 antenna, but with less gain on 2.4 GHz and was shown for size. The Altelix seems to not be available anymore, but may get used for field use for either mesh networks or for weak signal activities. You might also note that the Altelix antenna has normal Type N Female connectors as it was targeted to a broader market than Wi-Fi.

Either way, once these antennas are inserted into the PVC, their resonant frequencies and therefore their impedance matches may shift downwards in frequency. We will sweep them before and after insertion to see what happens. In the case of the 2.4 GHz antennas, we will hope that they will perform reasonably well at 2.304 GHz where weak signal activities are operational.

SMA VS. RP-SMA CONNECTORS

Normal higher frequency RF connectors include Type N, BNC, TNC and SMA. In the wisdom of government, it was decided that for Wi-Fi, that antenna connections had to be reversed in gender to ensure proper connections for outputs from transceivers and amplifiers to antennas. So the normal RF connector families have new "cousins" called "RP" connectors where the center pins are reversed or "Reverse Polarization". The outer part determines the gender for both. An inward facing thread on the shield implies "Male", while an outward facing thread implies "Female".

The Ubiquiti antennas are targeted for the Wi-Fi market and as such have SMA "RP" connectors which reverse the genders of the connector center pins and sockets in the bodies. The antennas have a collar but with a female "socket" and that needs to be converted to a standard SMA connector for use with most radios and transverter gear.



On the left you see a standard SMA Female on the left and an RP-SMA Male on the right.

Here are the two ends of the adapter that is used to render an SMA Female at the antenna.

Here are the two ends of the adapter that is used to render an SMA Female at the antenna.



SMA Female



RP-SMA Male

An adapter with these two ends allows one to use SMA Male cables between the antennas and the IC-905 radio or a transverter.

PROTECTING YOUR GEAR

I was reading the latest Summer-Fall issue of the Rochester (NY) VHF Group VHF Journal and noted a great article written by Rus Healy K2UA about enhancing his two ICOM IC-705s that he uses on 10, 24, 47 and 78 GHz. His article entitled, "IC705 Hints and Kinks" applies to both the IC-705 and IC-905.

After reading Rus' article I went to the Peovi web site to investigate their products for front cage, back rail and front panel protection. It is pricey stuff, but does an exceptional job in giving protection and adding functionality to your ICOM IC-705 or IC-905.



<https://peovi.com/pages/ham-radio>

The front rail and cage adds lots of convenience with its side, top and bottom handles.



The bottom handle can double as a stand.



The top handle can be provided with your engraved call sign at no extra charge.



The entire front rail and cage is a "NATO" rail with 1/4-20 tapped holes everywhere. This allows for accessories such as microphones, keys, paddles, cameras, and lights to be added securely. Further, cable harnesses and go kit placement can be done neatly and easily.

Here is the link to the Rochester VHF Group's Google drive with many years of past issues and other resources for VHF-UHF and microwave operators. The latest issue will be either at the top or bottom depending on the sorting.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12No45A-KhZpLiyo0KDb6YyzlzdqjgVo>

CLOSING THOUGHTS

During this holiday period, if time allows, get on the air, demonstrate something, build something or organize some aspect of your shack or someone else's with a friend or loved one. In short, share yourself with someone else. That's one way to give thanks and gratitude for our good fortune. If the Amateur Radio aspect of it doesn't work, then use your skills rooted in radio and electronics to do something that will enhance the lives of others.

Get On The Air!

Suwannee County ARES News

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

As we progressed through November, efforts to recover from Debby and Helene continued with stations getting back on the air - some with improvements. We held weekly nets on Sundays at 8:30 pm ET on the 145.27 MHz (-600 kHz, 123.0 Hz) W2TTT repeater that were well attended. Battery backup was maintained and will soon be upgraded to include 100% solar power. We are also looking for ways to improve countywide coverage.

NYC MARATHON SUPPORT

This year, due to a family medical issues, Nancy and Gordon Beattie, N2FWI and W2TTT were unable to travel to New York to support the Marathon, but we're still asked to provide support remotely. By working through the Internet, remote access allowed them to configure, adjust and monitor cameras that were strategically placed in key areas along the route on RF-based 5 GHz networks on the course and in the post-Finish areas. These camera imagery were made available in the Race Control Center in Central Park, the NYPD Operations Center at One Police Plaza and on the course. This AREDN Mesh network is the product of the collaborative handiwork of Amateur Radio operators from Connecticut, New Jersey, Florida and New York and was a great success!

WINTER FIELD DAY PLANS

The 2025 Winter Field Day will be held on the fourth weekend in January and promises to be exciting! The Suwannee County ARES team has arranged for the use of the St. Francis Xavier Church Parish Hall on Rt. 90 in Live Oak under the sponsorship of the Knights of Columbus. Additionally, the Columbia Amateur Radio Society and the Madison Amateur Radio Club are considering making this a joint operation where we can all learn together and operate for the entire period.

Amateur Radio operators and unlicensed people from throughout the area are welcome to come and participate. Our objective is to build up community resilience through communications. Talks about community communications resilience options, licensing classes and cram sessions are all being planned as part of our overall outreach through the radio clubs, churches and community organizations.

Winter Field Day has an underlying EMCOMM orientation and does not allow for FT8 or FT4 digital operations, but does allow for JS8CALL, PSK31 and RTTY. While the rules and multipliers are different from the ARRL's Field Day in June, each pair of stations can work each other three times per band using PHONE, CW and DIGITAL modes.

Complete rules and notes can be found at the Winter Field Day web site. <https://winterfieldday.org/>

CONCLUSION

As we close in on the end of the year, let's be thankful and start to plan a foundation for what we could do in the New Year. Last January 9th brought us tornadoes and strong straightline winds, so communications preparedness is a "NOW" thing and a year-round process. We have three to four months before the heat returns and growing grass and trees start to slow us down and demand our attention. Let's use this time wisely even if only with small but meaningful plans that get done and make our stations, families and communities more resilient.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Tis the season for all things RF! Tune 3Khz above and eliminate your QRM!

Okaloosa County Florida Amateur Radio—DJ Stewart KI4ZER

Coming to you from the Florida Panhandle, we want to wish you all a Happy Holiday Season and invite you to join us for all events, meeting, social hours, and gatherings! This absolutely is an attempt to get you more active in the area clubs!

Let us tell you why:

Social clubs are important because they provide a space to build community, foster a sense of belonging, meet new people, explore interests, develop leadership skills, and enhance social skills, all contributing positively to mental and emotional well-being by creating a supportive network and opportunities for meaningful interactions.

Key benefits of social clubs:

1. Expand social circles: Joining a club allows you to connect with people who share similar interests, potentially creating new friendships and expanding your network.
2. Discover new passions: Exploring different clubs can expose you to new hobbies and interests you might not have known you had.
3. Develop leadership skills: Taking on leadership roles within a club can help you practice and hone leadership abilities.
4. Improve communication skills: Regular interactions within a club can enhance your communication and interpersonal skills.
5. Sense of belonging: Being part of a group with shared interests can combat feelings of isolation and provide a sense of community.
6. Mental well-being: The social interaction and sense of belonging fostered by clubs can positively impact mental health.
7. Free Use of associated equipment? Maybe you don't want to set up a physical footprint at your home. Maybe the club has a project that is underway, and they could use your expertise!

[Seek out](#) your nearby organization and expand your personal growth!

Our Clubs welcome you, your family, your friends, you dogs, cats, and bearded dragons too!

Coming soon just for you! The Ham Radio Holiday Party! Dec=ember 15, 2024, 4 – 7 pm, Anglers 2nd Floor, Okaloosa Island, Fort Walton Beach Florida, Overlooking the Gulf of Mexico!

1030 [Miracle Strip Pkwy SE](#), [Fort Walton Beach](#), FL 32548

CLICK ON THE PICTURE TO GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!



We are going to recognize Hams of the Year! Be sure to come help the lucky winners celebrate! There is also a surprise presentation for all of those in attendance! You will have to just be there to witness it, so you do not want to miss out!



Onto a recap for November....

The month started off wet for some. For others, propagation was abundant! That is no more true than for many in the Playground and North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Clubs as they yet again work in cohesion to assist the city of Valparaiso Florida (you read that right) to put on their FIRST Fall Festival! Amateur Operators showed up in force with HF, VHF, Satellite, Shortwave, GMRS and more! Showcasing to the public and City Officials alike, they bounced signals around the globe and into low Earth Orbit! As the crowd observed, contacts were verified and all on remote power!

Guess what else happened?! The Annual Playground Swampfest Tailgate! People came from all over our Nation to attend and vend! Checking in had people log from such places as Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, and of course, Florida! There were prize winners, deals made that you could not pass up, and friendships made and rekindled! It's all about community and participating for a common goal! They even had a few Art Tables and a food truck! BOOM! What?! Aptly names "Rise and Swine", the team at Playground pulled off a knockout punch with selecting a great food provider with some of the best breakfast food in the Panhandle of Florida! Pay attention to this shake up to the norm as they are sure to spread their high pace energy near and far!



Did you hear about the Crestview Florida Christmas Parade? No? Well, that was because last year it was rained out not once, but twice. True story. On both the original date and the rescheduled date. Well, that was a bummer of a note, wasn't it? **HANG ON!**

THEY'RE BAACK!!! Yup. Dec 7, 2024, Main Street Crestview 5pm! NOARC will be leading the charge with the events communications and launching the start in the name of Public Safety! Want to get involved, contact [NOARC](#)! We bet that instead of hunting the FOX, they'll be keeping out the Grinch!



Want to know what else is going on?! Showing up and participating is 90% of the effort! The other 10%, is YOU! We value each and every person that comes in the Hamshack! Whatever form you want to be, how ever much you want to put into it, and what you expect to get out of being a part of something great is up to you! Come make some friends, meet some new pals, exchange ideas, share a common interest, educate each other, and just simply, have, FUN!

We will see you soon!

Enjoy your Thanksgiving, be safe in your travels, and enjoy riding the RF waves!

Okaloosa County Florida Amateur Radio has the following organizations:

- [Playground Amateur Radio Club](#)
- [North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club](#)
- Eglin Amateur Radio Society
- [Okaloosa County ARES Group](#)
- Twin Cities Amateur Radio Club – net only

Multi-Purpose 6 Meter Dipole Antenna

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

November 2024

Introduction

Our Alachua County emergency communications group has been working toward better and better communications across our 969-square mile county, with less dependence on 2 meter FM repeaters. A couple of factors have arisen suggesting we more strongly consider 6 meter SSB. First, more and more of us have easy access to this band and mode because of commercially available transceivers such as the Yaesu FT-991A and the Icom 7300, which include 6 meter SSB. Secondly, local VHF weak-signal experts (including Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO) pointed out to us the multi-dB advantage of 2.8kHz SSB over wideband FM for voice communications.

Recent actual simplex communications tests have confirmed that 6 meter SSB may be a great fit for providing county-wide communications that aren't so dependent on the state of the D-layer absorption, or of the F-layer ionization. And newer amateurs with the Technician license can easily participate in 6 meter communications. Finally, we support hams in all life situations and locations, some of whom live in limited apartment situations, and both indoor and outdoor antennas are easily possible with 6 meters.

All of those reasons prompted me to come up with inexpensive and versatile 6 meter antenna solutions. This is the first such solution, a "semi-inverted-V" 6 meter di-



Figure: 6 meter PVC-supported semi-inverted vee antenna, only slightly wider than a traditional living room couch.



When constructed with one side merely *slip-connected* with a securing screw, this antenna can be **easily broken down** for easy transport, as shown in the figure to the side. For indoors, it can be easily hung from attic rafters, or on a wall like a painting. For outdoors, multiple mounting techniques are possible. The total cost of the components should be below \$15. This is a very low-cost, versatile antenna!

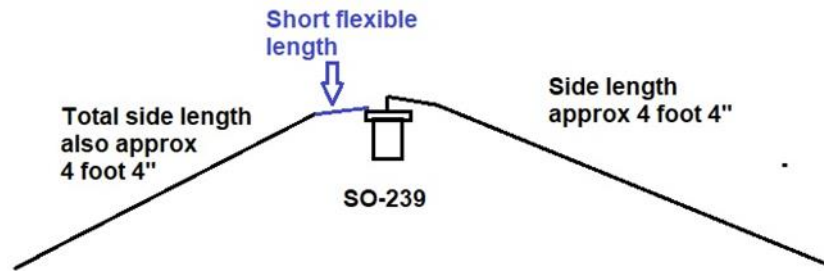
Construction

The "semi-inverted-V" was chosen to allow hanging the antenna from a single center support if necessary. This allows it to be easily hoisted up a line over a tree limb. It also decreases the horizontal footprint for those using the antenna inside. Because the included angle is 135° , the antenna loses little for horizontally polarized signals (the customary VHF weak signal polarization) but has some responsiveness to vertically polarized signals. It may have slightly less "notch" to end-on signals than a horizontal dipole, but elsewhere there will be compensating lower performances compared to a dipole (there is no "free lunch"; see: <https://www.md0mdi.im/the-underrated-inverted-v-antenna/>). To emphasize local simplex low-angle signals, you prefer to get this antenna well above $1/2$ wavelength above ground, but that isn't hard when $1/2$ wavelength is only 9 feet! Using an attic, a 2nd floor wall or high on a first-floor exterior wall suffices. The coaxial cable can be RG8X or any suitable cable, brought down symmetrically for 6 feet or so to minimize unbalanced induced currents. If desired, a suitable common mode choke can be used, even as simple as several 6" turns of coax.

The combination of semi-inverted V construction, insulated wire, and further PVC pipe encircling results in the actual wire being approximately 7% shorter than expected from the usual $468/F_{\text{MHz}}$ equation for bare wire dipoles.

To avoid issues of RF radiation, at 100-watts of SSB, one should stay more than 3 feet from the antenna.

(See: <http://arrl.org/rf-exposure-calculator>)



The parts list includes:

Figure: Drawing of dimensions

Item	Description	Possible Source
1	SO-239 coaxial connector	If you can solder the body connection quickly without overheating the insulation, the phenolic-insulated SO239's from this assortment can be used, which are inexpensive: https://www.amazon.com/Inovat-UHF-Female-Mount-Connector/dp/B06XB9CV3P The Teflon insulated versions withstand overheating much better: https://www.amazon.com/wlaniot-SO-239-Chassis-Connector-Bulkhead/dp/B089ZZZDS
2	6" length of stranded wire to allow bending when disassembled, #16 suggested	
3	#14 solid house wire (THHN) to a total length on each side of approximately 4 ft 4 inches (adjust as needed for best SWR at desired frequency)	The size of the wire is not critical. The insulation causes a slightly shorter length to be resonant. The color of the wire is immaterial. One possible source: https://www.homedepot.com/pep/Cerrowire-25-ft-14-Gauge-Black-Stranded-Copper-THHN-Wire-112-3401A/202564770
4	1/2" schedule 40 PVC pipe Each side cut to 3 ft 10 inches	Cut from a 10-foot length, typically available for less than \$5. Use hacksaw, wood saw, or circular saw to cut. https://www.homedepot.com/p/IPEX-1-2-in-x-10-ft-White-PVC-SCH-40-Potable-Pressure-Water-Pipe-30-05010HD/319692959
5	Center 45 degree elbow PVC fitting	https://www.homedepot.com/p/Charlotte-Pipe-1-2-in-PVC-Schedule-40-45-Degree-S-x-S-Elbow-Fitting-PVC023090600HD
6	1/2" PVC slip-cap end fitting x 2, with small hole drilled to allow wire to protrude	https://www.homedepot.com/p/NIBCO-1-2-in-CPVC-CTS-Slip-Cap-Fitting-C471712/100015035
7	Small length of paracord to provide support loop; thread through drilled holes a few inches from center on both sides, through center elbow; tie with square knot	
8	PVC cement to secure (a) end caps to PVC pipe after wires are passed, and (b) ONE PVC pipe to center elbow (leave other side free to be removed, secured only with small screw)	
9	#6 x 1/2" sheet metal screws	Use 2-4 screws as desired to secure the SO-239 connector; use one screw to secure the removable side pipe of the inverted vee

Assembly

- Drill a pilot hole for the SO-239 in the side of the elbow connector, approximately 3/16". You can not drill the required 5/8" hole using a normal drill bit because it will grab and fracture the PVC. I used two different types of abrasive drill bits as shown in the illustration below:
- Cut the PVC pipes to the 3 foot 10 inch lengths, deburring as necessary. At the ends that will be toward the center, drill suitable holes for a support loop, suggested 1/4" holes about 4" from each center end; bevel so that they won't cut through cordage.
- Solder one 4 foot 4 inch solid wire to the center conductor of the SO-239, insulate the connection with electrical tape.
- Carefully solder one end of 6 inch stranded wire to one of the mounting holes of the SO-239, avoiding over heating to damage the phenolic insulation. A 25-50watt iron can accomplish this job with low-temperature 60/40 traditional lead-based solder. If this will be difficult, connect with a stainless steel 6-32 machine screw/nut/lockwasher and use some dielectric grease against corrosion.
- Solder solid wire to the free end of the stranded wire, such that the total length of that side is also approximately 4 feet 4 inches.
- Pass the wires through the PVC pipes (solid wire does this easily) and out the end-caps.
- Pass the paracord loop rope through the drilled holes in the PVC pipes, internally across the 45° elbow and tie them on the outside with a square knot.
- Mount the SO-239 connector to the elbow using small pilot holes and #6 sheet metal screws as desired. You may optionally fill the gaps between the SO-239 and the rounded surface of the elbow connector with some form of glue or caulk if the assembly is to be maintained outdoors. This will limit rainwater ingress and access by flying insects.
- If the antenna is planned to allow disassembly, glue the elbow to the PVC pipe that has the center (solid) wire, and after passing wires through drilled holes in the end-caps, glue the end caps. Drill pilot hole to allow the remaining PVC pipe to be pinned to the remaining side of the 45° elbow, small enough to allow good purchase by #6 sheet metal screw.



Figure: Tools to create 5/8" hole for SO-239

Figure:
Mounting SO-239 connector



Figure: Detail showing screw to pin removable section.



- If the antenna is to be maintained outdoors, be certain the drilled holes in the end caps will allow entrained rainwater to exit, but not allow flying insects to enter.
- Tune as necessary with an antenna analyzer. You can expect a 2:1 SWR bandwidth of 3MHz or greater. ☒

NFARC / ALACHUA ARES(R) November 2024 Update

Gordon Gibby KX4Z NCS521

We have been BUSY here in Alachua County!

Hurricanes Our team has now deployed for three hurricanes in 2024, the last being Hurricane Milton, Oct 9-10. During Hurricane Milton, we had over 50 different hams check into our volunteer command net, and our 138 hours of volunteer service likely netted another \$22,080 for Alachua County, bringing our 2024 total to over \$60,000. Our After Action Report can be reviewed here: <https://www.nf4rc.club/incidents/2024-hurricane-milton/>

#	Incident	Deployed Hours	Estimated Reimbursement
1	2022 Hurricane Nicole ⁸	72 deployed hours	\$ 8,640
2	2023 Hurricane Idalia	41 deployed hours	\$ 6,500
3	2024 Hurricane Debby	165 deployed hours	\$24,000
4	2024 Hurricane Helene ⁹	178 deployed hours	\$28,480
5	2024 Hurricane Milton	138 deployed hours	\$22,080
	TOTAL ESTIMATE	456 deployed hours	\$89,700



Veterans' Day Ceremonies This was our first-ever display at the annual Alachua County Veterans' Day celebration, held on the grounds of Veterans' Park, with helicopter and sky-diver arrivals and public speeches and talks in honor of veterans. The Gainesville Amateur Radio Society has been holding successful displays there for years, but we decided we needed to gain more volunteers and showing up for these kinds of public events would be a "good thing." We did a fine job for our first-ever event, with



- two 10x10 canopies,
- lots of volunteers,
- our 30-foot telescoping mast,
- HF and VHF radios and WINLINK capabilities, and
- Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ even brought his 1946 Jeep and lots of vintage and current ham radios as display items!

What fun! But we forgot a FLAG for the top of our mast! We showed adults and kids alike how we can move disaster messaging either to cellular texting or email without needing any Internet or originating cell phone.

At our November meeting, we discussed the successes and "oops" portions of our display and will be doing it all over again (hopefully easier!) at the December 7th Life South Santa Delivery event.

Field Day Outcomes The ARRL has released Field Day Scores. This year we entered in the far more competitive 4A category. It was a lot of work to set up at a totally new location, but volunteer after volunteer made impressive improvements in their skills and scores.

We placed 12th in the nation out of about 186 entrants in Field Day 4A, netting us a top-6.5% standing!

We were VERY pleased. What was even more interesting was studying the NFL team who squeaked above us -- **Sun County Amateur Radio Society**. Surprisingly, there are a lot of similarities between the two active clubs -- both are raising their skills and scores year after year. The SCARS club has an impressive website at: <http://www.146970.com/> and they operate an impressive 2 meter voice repeater also.

Lessons From Tennessee Brett Wallace, NH2KW, volunteered with an organized group in the disaster zone of Hurricane Helene in Tennessee. He is just that kind of a guy! We had him give us a slide show at our November meeting and he described how effectively volunteer groups both from inside and outside the region worked to help those impacted by the floods. He went over communications systems and techniques that moved supplies and kept teams safe. They dealt with great people and not-so-great people in their efforts and he had keen insights to share with us about what works in such disaster service.

Way to go, Brett! We will have him back to bring us more information, soon!

6-meter Amplifier

The heavy-duty SB-220 King Modified 6-meter amplifier has now generated 950 watts of output thanks to **months of work by Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO**. Mike put in a whole new power supply (we're talking 3,000 volts!) and completely replaced a destroyed meter and switch and made many other repairs. Next is working on the T/R relay and tidying things up. We hope to have this on the air soon!



6-meter Meteor Scatter

Mike is also our mentor for this unusual mode of propagation. We have a POTA/Meteor Scatter event planned for Saturday December 14th- near the peak of the GEMINID meteor shows. Enter at the North entrance to San Felasco State Park, meeting there at 0800 at the Pavilion. We will be bringing our 35 foot alumina tower with a 6 meter beam and 600W Icom amplifier to do Meteor Scatter during the meteor shower that weekend. And we will also support multi-band HF POTA operations using our tower, HF antenna and Sextuple Antenna Multiplexer. Come join us! For further information get on our groups.io site <https://groups.io/g/NF4RC> or email Gordon @ docvacuumtubes at gmail.com We will have a "dress rehearsal" for the Meteor Scatter event at the Gibby household at 2PM on Sunday December 1.

New EOC Go Box --

Dave Huckstep is ALMOST finished with his creation of two County-owned HFGoBoxes with newly provided (by the county) HF & VHF/UHF gear, including an ICOM 7300 and 600 watt amplifier (in two separate professional go-boxes). This is a labor of love for Dave W4JIR and we'll be using the amplifier for our Meteor Scatter efforts. Go Dave!

License Classes & HinterLand Emergency Comms

Reid Tillery K9RFT continues to just be a bundle of energy, conducting Thursday evening Technician License classes, and equipping local contract fire stations with new antenna masts (also thanks to GARS crew Terry Gordon and Shannon Boal!) and conducting Wednesday East Alachua County comms tests and bi-weekly NVIS nets. Great going!

Upcoming Events

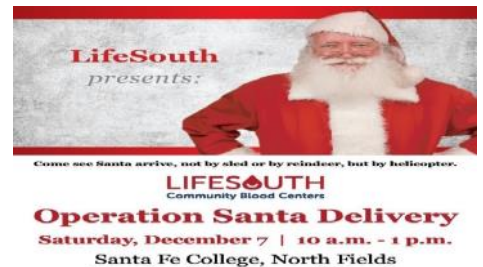
Our team will provide a display at the December 7th LifeSouth Santa Delivery massive children-focused event at Santa Fe College. For more details, see our Incident Action Plan at:

<https://www.nf4rc.club/dec-7-lifesouth-santa-delivery-incident-action-plan/>

We are likely to be holding LabNLunches in the coming months to support:

- Finishing up any remaining details on the TEN Arduino-based electronic Winkeyer-type keyers
- Building VHF/UHF portable voice/data go-boxes
- Building simply 6-meter antennas
- Building RFI-filtered portable inverter stations

And we plan to participate as 3I category in the 2025 Winter Field Day. Come join in on the fun



Suwannee ARC

Steve Kostro President N2CEL

It's been a rough Hurricane season for us here in Suwannee County. Helene left our club members a mess to deal with regarding our homes, businesses, and our clubhouse causing us to miss celebrating our 12th year in our Clubhouse on OCT 1st. After the storm, membership chipped in helping each other where needed for immediate repairs after noting that there were no emergency repairs required at our club's antenna farm. We are now addressing one issue there at a time.

We conducted an assessment and work party organization meeting on Nov. 12th and so far, we have developed a good working plan. We feel lucky that all of our towers were left standing and even luckier in that we only suffered un-repairable damage to one of our Tri-Band Yagis (a refurbished KT-34 @ 110'). It's not falling down so it's removal was moved to the bottom of the repair list along with all of the other directional Yagis on the remaining towers that require re-alignment. They will just need a couple of Saturdays on the tower tops with a good set of wrenches and a good pair of eyes on the ground and all will be back in order.



Our main concern was our Lean-to work area we have attached to the main building. It seems that a gust of wind got under it and broke a main support rafter after it kicked out a vertical support. (Pictured above) Safety was the main concern and the Clubhouse was closed to membership until the repair was made. Materials were purchased and a crew of 6 members with floor jacks made the repair on a Saturday morning. Pictured at this work party (left to right), is K4YNT, AB4IX, N4UTX, N2CEI, and KD4AMP. Photo by KE4PWE.



Next on the repair list is our 80M four square antenna system. Three of the four verticals had their supports broken first by a fallen tree. It appears flying limbs caused a domino effect in the rest of the array by knocking down two additional verticals. Each vertical is 28 foot of Rohn 20 tower with a 10 foot mast connected to a large gauge wire to make up for the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ wave length. The verticals are insulated from the massive ground plane (Sixty $\frac{1}{4}$ wave radials for each vertical). The wire ends are supported by a set of cross booms at the center of the array supported on our 160M Vertical antenna (a 72 foot Titian Trylon Tower). The 80M addition was a very economical array utilizing pressure treated 2 x 4's for the supports. We had 7 successful years of use out of it as it stood. So, no big money loss and we had some fun hanging with club members doing the repair work. The picture shown above is of N9MC and K4YNT removing a set of broken supports.



After the tree removal by Ben the Lumberjack, N4UTX pictured to the left, we replaced all of the 2 x 4 assemblies and reinstalled the bottom sections of each vertical. (Seen in the background) We will finish the array at a later date by individually completing the assembly of each vertical to its original height of 38 feet and then testing them separately for resonance and a 50 ohm match at 3.58 MHz. This is done by trimming the length of the end wire, raising and lowering it from the cross boom assembly. This has been a fun antenna to use on 80M and hope to get it back to normal soon. So plenty of work to do yet at the clubhouse and will continue though the holiday season with whatever available time the membership can offer for work parties.

Next on our schedule is our Holiday party on DEC 10th. Membership will bring family and /or significant others for a good meal and celebration of another year at the Suwannee ARC, N4SVC. Oh! Almost forgot! We will also take an opportunity to celebrate our Multi-operator, Two Transmitter Class win and record setting operation in the World Wide Digital DX contest. See the results here: https://ww-digi.com/results/2024-ww-digi_results-article.pdf

If you made a QSO with us, thank you very much in helping us with this achievement!



Now, always remember, 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, (after our repairs are finalized) if you hear us on the bands 160M through 3cm, give us a call and say HI! Then if you worked us in any past operation event, or even just in a casual QSO, you will find your QSO information on LOTW. We hope you are enjoying your favorite aspect of the hobby and maybe catch you on the bands some day!

See you soon and all the best from all of us at the Suwannee ARC!

Be safe and Happy Holidays!



Geminids Meteor Scatter and POTA Alachua County

INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201) (FOR ARES (R))

1. Incident Name: METEOR / POTA	2. Incident Number: 2024-7	3. Date/Time Initiated: Date: DEC 14 Time: 0800 LOC
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4. Map/Sketch (include sketch, showing the total area of operations, the incident site/area, impacted and threatened areas, overflight results, trajectories, impacted shorelines, or other graphics depicting situational status and resource assignment):

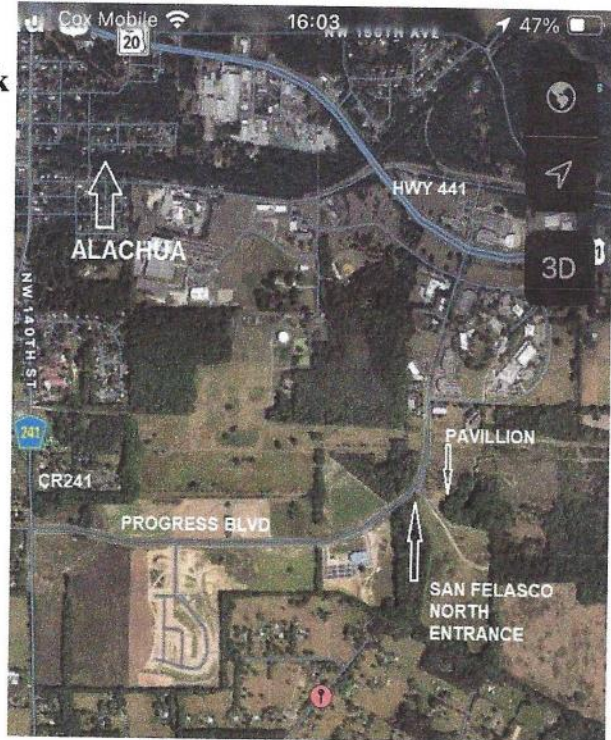
North (Alachua) entrance to San Felasco State Park (admission required)

Easiest way is to go north on either CR241 or HWY441 toward Alachua, then turn on the new wide Progress Blvd and find the entrance about half-way between 241 and 441. Pay the honor entrance and look for the pavillion immediately on the left.

Try to arrive at 0800. There is electricity at the pavillion. The Geminids Meteor Shower should be near its peak

We will set up all the following, which doesn't take long at all!

- a) Tower Trailer with rotator and 6 meter beam
- b) 6 meter Meteor Scatter station, with 600 watt amplifier.
- c) End-Fed Resonant Half-Wave antenna with high quality balun allowing multiple band operation
- d) Sextuple Antenna Multiplexer -- allowing stations to operate simultaneously on multiple HF Bands 80/40/20/15/10
- e) If you wish to operate 17m or 12m -- bring a suitable antenna for those bands and try to set up a bit away from the tower to minimize receiver overloading.



5. Situation Summary and Health and Safety Briefing (for briefings or transfer of command):

Recognize potential incident Health and Safety Hazards and develop necessary measures (remove hazard, provide personal protective equipment, warn people of the hazard) to protect responders from those hazards.

- Fun time operating Meteor Scatter and/or HF POTA - US 3651
- Park Restrooms available on site
- RESTRICTIONS: Not allowed to put lines in trees, damage vegetation (hence, we bring tower)
- Bring water, hat, sunscreen etc. Possibly a chair

6. Prepared by: Name: G. Gibby _____ Position/Title: Vol _____ Signature: _____

INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201)

1. Incident Name: SANTA DELIVERY 2024	2. Incident Number: 2024-6	3. Date/Time Initiated: Date: _____ Time: _____
7. Current and Planned Objectives:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety of volunteers and community 2. Property safety 3. Learn how to do METEOR SCATTER with mentorship from Mike Hasselbeck 4. Operate any other type POTA that you wish! 5. Join us for a LUNCHEON, beginning sometime around 12Noon or 1 PM depending on how much fun we are having -- listen for announcement on the 146.820 repeater LUNCHEON possibly either Alachua Sonny's or Zaxby's. 		
8. Current and Planned Actions, Strategies, and Tactics:		
Time:	Actions:	
Dec 1	2PM Dress Rehearsal at Gibby household to practice this in low key situation	
	Educational Resource: https://www.arrl.org/files/file/QST Binaries/nt0z.pdf	
Dec 14		
0730	Gordon will head out with the tower toward San Felasco Park	
0800	Setup time -- Assemble 6 meter yagi and put up tower, assemble meteor scatter and other stations	
	Operate as desired -- we can use NF4RC call sign for the "club pota" but you can use your own callsign as well to get a meteor scatter under your own callsign	
	Practice aspects of POTA operation, learn from others about their radios, antennas	
some time around 12-1PM	When we are done with operations, we'll pack up and move toward the end of the year Luncheon at an Alachua eatery, possibly either Sonny's or Zaxby. Alachua Sonny's: 15935 NW US Highway 441 (East of I-75, north side of 441) Alachua Zaxby's: 16088 NW US Highway 441 (west of I-75, south side of 441)) Expect announcement on 146.820 repeater	
6. Prepared by: Name: G. Gibby _____ Position/Title: _____ Signature: _____		
ICS 201, Page 2	Date/Time: DRAFT 11/17/2024 G GIBBY _____	

INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201)

1. Incident Name: SANTA DELIVERY 2024	2. Incident Number: 2024-6	3. Date/Time Initiated: Date: _____ Time: _____
9. Current Organization (fill in additional organization as appropriate)		
Distributed organization		
Location / Effort	Personnel	Comment
Meteor Scatter Mentor	Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO	
Tower Truck	Gordon Gibby	Emplace tower
?? additional tow?		we could bring a generator trailer if we think we will need more electricity??
POTA Mentor	Probably Ron Lewis or Wendell Wright	
6. Prepared by: Name: _____ Position/Title: _____ Signature: _____		
ICS 201, Page 3	Date/Time: _____	

INCIDENT BRIEFING (ICS 201)

1. Incident Name: SANTA DELIVERY 2024	2. Incident Number: 2024-6	3. Date/Time Initiated: Date: _____ Time: _____
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10. Resource Summary:					
Resource	Resource Identifier	Date/Time Ordered	ETA	Arrived	Notes (location/assignment/status)
Tower Trailer w/ 6 meter beam			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gordon KX4Z
EFHW antenna w/ balun / coax			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gordon KX4Z
Sextuple antenna multiplexer			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gordon or one of the EOC crew
Extension cord			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gordon
New EOC HF go box			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Huckstep
New EOC HF amplifier			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Huckstep
Computer - EOC volunteer			0800	<input type="checkbox"/>	One of the available loaners - Gordon
Any other radio or antenna that you desire			whenever		Bring whatever you like!

6. Prepared by: Name: _____	Position/Title: _____	Signature: _____
ICS 201, Page 4	Date/Time: _____	

INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ICS-205

INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS-205)

1. Incident Name: BASIC TEMPLATE	2. Date/Time Prepared: Date: 11/14/2024 Time:	3. Operational Period Date From: NONE Date To: Time From: Time To:
--	--	---

4. Basic Radio Channel Use:

Zone Grp.	Ch #	Function	Channel Name / Trunked Radio System Talkgroup	Assignment	RX Freq. N or W	RX TONE /NAC	TX FREQ N or W	TX TONE /NAC	MODE (A, D, or M)	Remarks
		Announcements	Local Net	Ham	146.820	123	146.220	123	A	Updates for those who wish to attend luncheon

5. Special Instructions

BASIC CONNECTIONS

6. Prepared By (Communications Unit Leader) Name G. Gibby	Signature
ICS 205	IAP PAGE
Date / Time 11/14/2024	

MERT



Marion County Sheriff's Office
Division of Emergency Management

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

October 2024

MERT's primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County during declared Emergency events. We also support EOC and emergency personnel along with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) with voice, image and data communications resources.

"Call MERT... When all else fails!"

MERT Monthly Meeting

The next meeting Check Schedule @ 10:00 am.

The Emergency Operations Center and *MERT's Role*



**Harlan Cook (KN4VRM)
MERT Coordinator**

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) serves a critical role in every phase of emergency management, from being the hub for all coordination during an incident to facilitating and directing recovery/clean-up. However, a common misconception is... the EOC does not manage an incident — it coordinates.

Various situations will trigger the EOC's activation, but as we know most commonly in Florida when a local or state emergency is declared, we have a hurricane coming! When that happens, the key objective is maximizing the **successful oversight** of that event.

The EOC is the centralized location of emergency response and recovery support operations during incidents. That's why senior emergency management designed MERT's communications resources to be co-located with the EOC. **Why?** Because MERT provides unique and difficult to replicate information (incident knowledge outside the EOC) assisting the EOC Incident Command personnel with information needed to better coordinate an emergency. This specifically includes the **resident Shelters when opened**.

As members have learned, ICS procedures are used as the command-and-control structure. Within this structure, the EOC is organized into five sections to manage overall operations in Marion County. The Division of Emergency Management created this chart showing the overall organizational groups and sections.

These EOC sections include:

1. **Emergency Management**: Under the guidance of the EOC Director or Deputy Director, this section has overall responsibility for the management and direction of all EOC activities including development, implementation and review of strategic decisions. Management directly coordinates with each section ensuring its strategic direction is implemented in EOC operations.
2. **Citizen Information Line**: Responding to and answering citizen questions before, during and after emergencies reduces uncontrolled rumors leading to panic situations. An informed public is better prepared by knowing what government officials are saying, planning and doing. It is then that an intelligent public can make the best decisions for their personal safety and security.
3. **Logistics**: Logistics is responsible for procuring supplies, personnel and material support necessary to conduct emergency responses (e.g. personnel call-out, equipment acquisition, lodging, transportation, food, etc.). This section supports Shelter activities (organization, security, etc.)

4. Planning and Intelligence: This section is responsible for receiving, evaluating and analyzing all disaster information and providing updated status reports to EOC management and field operations. The planning and intelligence section is also responsible for damage assessment and developing specialized technical assessments of events which may include maps and physical inspections.
5. Public Information Unit: Keeping the public informed during emergencies falls upon the Public Information personnel who collect, prepare and disseminate factual details and information via multiple formats from videos with key public officials to timely updates on popular Internet websites.
6. Operations: This section supports these units;
 - a. Law Enforcement
 - b. Fire Fighting
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Public Works
 - e. Utilities
 - f. Human Service - Mass Care
 - g. Sheltering
 - h. Communications
 - i. **MERT**
 - j. CERT

I trust this bigger picture of how the Division of Emergency Management is organized and operates during emergency events helps in understanding how the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) provides one important support element to a "successful oversight" of emergency events.

TO YOU... members of MERT... know that you are making a difference by your membership, active participation, training and support to accept a shelter assignment when we receive an Activation Order! I know it isn't "easy" but our actions and the results we provide and document are *significant and truly meaningful*.

It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize the follow individuals who honored their membership commitment during Hurricane Milton:

Bill Gillespie	KW5BG	MERT IC	EOC
Bill Sobel	K1WLS	MERT IC	EOC
Pat Davis	KQ4BRW	Leader	North Marion Middle
Cindy Sheffield	K9LRX	Trainee	North Marion Middle
Ray Woody	KB6FKN	Leader	West Port HS
Tim Trombly	K8TAT	Trainee	West Port HS
Gary Neron	KS4TSX	Leader	Ft. McCoy
Phil Lewis	W4EVV	Leader	Liberty Middle
Nick Kiddey	W4NFK	Leader	Horizon Academy
Mike Condon	W9MNC	Radio Operator	EOC
Gray Moffett	KC3DWY	MERT IC	EOC
Ryan Salom	N8GLX	Radio Operator	EOC
Carl Berry	KC5PMX	Radio Operator	Dunnellon PD

To all MERT Members... thank you for your enthusiasm and support of our mission...
"When all else fails. Call MERT!"

Hurricane Milton Facts

Some facts we learned about this hurricane:

- * In Marion County, the maximum sustained winds reached 33 mph with the highest recorded gust of 44 mph.
- * The maximum rainfall recorded was 9.42 inches.
- * About 75,000 customers lost electricity out of a total of 220,000.
- * 37,000 people from other parts of Florida sought refuge in Marion County.

FCC Testing Information

Daytona Beach Amateur Radio Assn (DBARA)

- Monthly, third Monday, 5:30 PM, prior to meeting
- Lehman Building, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Registration Required
- Info: <https://dbara.org/testing/>

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 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
- William Beardall Senior Center 800 S Delaney Ave Orlando FL 32801.
- Info: testing@OARC.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 sign up for classes
- Go to <http://k4gso.us/test-signup/> for testing. Testing is held on the 2nd Tuesday of odd months at 7 PM.
- Note <http://k4gso.us/ncvec605/> is requested to be filled out before you show for testing. It is best to download the form and open it as a PDF so you can fill in the blanks.

Suwannee ARC, Live Oak, FL

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

Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS)

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

West Volusia Amateur Radio Society

- Second Saturday of each odd numbered month
- 6:00 AM
- St. Johns Lodge #37, 2557 N. Spring Garden Ave, Deland FL
- Info: <https://westvars.org/testing>

Gainesville Amateur Radio Society

- 1st Saturday of even numbered months
- Tech day two weeks after testing
- <https://gars.club/Testing.html>

Statewide Digital Radio Resources

Did you know we have designated ARES® DSAR Reflectors & a DMR Talk group?

- **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!

Testing information is subject to change. Check with the testing venue to confirm the testing session and requirements.