



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 12 Issue 6

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June 2025



From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR (kk4ecr@gmail.com)



Make ARRL Field Day 2025 a Great Success for Your Radio Club!

I'm thrilled to reach out to you as we gear up for one of the most anticipated events on the amateur radio calendar—ARRL Field Day 2025! Whether you're a seasoned operator or a brand-new ham, Field Day is our chance to shine, connect, and showcase the very best of our radio community. This year, let's make it our mission to elevate Field Day to new heights and create an unforgettable experience for every member of your club.

Why Field Day Matters

Field Day is more than just a contest—it's a celebration of everything that makes amateur radio special. It's about camaraderie, learning, public service, and, yes, a little friendly competition. It's our opportunity to demonstrate our emergency preparedness, reach out to the public, and inspire the next generation of hams. Most importantly, it's a time to have fun and strengthen the bonds that make our clubs and our section so vibrant.

Start Planning Early

Success starts with preparation. Now is the perfect time to gather your club's leadership and start mapping out your Field Day strategy. Set clear goals: Do you want to increase your QSO count? Attract new members? Engage youth or local officials? Whatever your objectives, early planning ensures everyone is on the same page and ready to contribute.

Build a Dream Team

Field Day is a team effort. Encourage every member to get involved, regardless of experience level. Assign roles based on interests and skills—station captains, setup crews, food coordinators, publicity managers, and more. Don't forget to reach out to inactive members or those who haven't participated before. A personal invitation can make all the difference!

Promote, Promote, Promote!

Let's show Northern Florida—and the world—what we're made of! Use social media, club newsletters, and local news outlets to spread the word about your Field Day plans. Invite the public, local officials, and media to visit your site. Consider hosting demonstrations or "Get on the Air" (GOTA) stations for newcomers. The more visibility we create, the stronger our community becomes.

Emphasize Training and Safety

Field Day is the perfect time to practice emergency communications skills. Schedule training sessions on logging, message handling, and equipment setup. Review safety protocols for antennas, generators, and severe weather. A safe, well-organized event ensures everyone has a positive experience and is ready to respond when real emergencies arise.

Make It Fun and Inclusive

Remember, Field Day is about enjoyment as much as achievement. Plan activities that appeal to all ages—fox hunts, potluck meals, or even a friendly contest for the most creative portable antenna. Recognize everyone's contributions, from the top operator to the youngest participant. A welcoming atmosphere keeps members coming back year after year.

Leverage Technology

Take advantage of the latest tools to streamline your Field Day operations. Use online sign-up sheets, digital logging software, and group messaging apps to keep everyone informed and engaged. Share live updates and photos on your club's website or social media pages to build excitement and attract visitors.

Celebrate Your Successes

After the last QSO is logged and the antennas come down, take time to celebrate your achievements. Host a post-Field Day gathering to share stories, review what worked well, and brainstorm ideas for next year. Submit your results to the ARRL and share your successes with the wider

amateur radio community. Recognition fuels motivation and pride in our shared accomplishments.

Let's Make History—Together!

Northern Florida, we have a proud tradition of excellence and innovation. Field Day 2025 is our chance to build on that legacy and show what we can achieve when we work together. I encourage every club, every operator, and every friend of amateur radio to join in the excitement. Let's make this Field Day the best one yet—full of learning, laughter, and lasting memories.

If you need support, ideas, or just want to share your plans, don't hesitate to reach out to me or your section leadership team. We're here to help you succeed.

See you on the air—and at Field Day!

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.



Celebrating 90 Years of ARRL ARES®



The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is a vital component of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), dedicated to providing emer-

gency communication support during disasters and other critical situations. As we celebrate 90 years of ARES®, it is essential to reflect on its history, achievements, and the role it plays in emergency management.

A Brief History of ARES®

Founded in 1935, ARES® was established to organize amateur radio operators to provide communication support during emergencies. The initiative was born out of the need for reliable communication channels when traditional systems fail. Over the decades, ARES® has evolved, adapting to new technologies and the changing landscape

of emergency management.

The first local emergency coordinators were appointed by the ARRL in 1937. They were Charles H. Taylor, W4B in the Southeast; J. Robert St. Clair, W2B in the Northeast; and Harry L. Miller, W5A in the Southwest.

Key Achievements

1. Disaster Response

ARES® has played a crucial role in numerous disaster responses, including hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. Amateur radio operators have provided essential communication links when other systems were down, ensuring that emergency services can coordinate effectively.

2. Training and Preparedness

Over the years, ARES® has focused on training its members to be prepared for emergencies. This includes regular drills, participation in emergency preparedness exercises, and collaboration with local emergency management agencies. The training ensures that operators are ready to respond quickly and efficiently when called upon.

3. Community Engagement

ARES® has fostered strong relationships with local communities and emergency services. By participating in public service events and providing communication support for community activities, ARES® members have built trust and recognition as valuable resources in times of need.

The Role of Technology

As technology has advanced, so has ARES®. The integration of digital modes, satellite communications, and other modern technologies has enhanced the capabilities of amateur radio operators. This evolution allows ARES® to provide even more reliable and efficient communication during emergencies.

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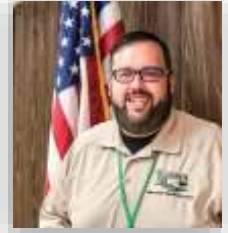
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From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD



First, I wanted to apologize to our wonderful newsletter Editor Earl McDow for getting my article in so late. Many people don't realize it, but, I am far away from retirement. I ended up receiving a promotion at work about 2 years ago which puts me on the road quite a bit. In addition to that, we have a very, very active CERT program here in Santa Rosa county which I also lead. People often ask me how I keep up and the answer is, I don't always but my volunteerism is extremely important to me as what we do matters to our communities. This weekend alone: on Friday I finished up at my day job, immediately went and volunteered with CERT until 10P then got up at 4AM and drove to Tallahassee to assist Leon county with an exercise, then drove back home and volunteered with CERT again until midnight.

Why did I say all that? If there was any question about my commitment to my role, you can see there isn't. Thankfully my job supports volunteerism so when we have an activation at the State EOC, I'm able to take off and be there the morning following the landfall to support our auxiliary communications team. I may not get to check in to our HF net all the time because of my day job and I may not be the quickest responder to emails, but I am committed and am there when it matters most.

Enough about me! It's hurricane season officially now. Thank you to all the teams that have participated in or hosted an exercise. I encourage you to keep doing that over the next few months. If you haven't yet coordinated with neighboring counties, now is the time. Make sure that you have plans in place to communicate with those counties around you in the event you lose a capability that they may be able to assist with.

I also strongly encourage you to learn how to use Winlink if you haven't already. Winlink is an extremely powerful tool for sending digital messages over the air, including ICS forms. That is one of our preferred methods to receive official communications at the State EOC. The YouTube channel "[WaveTalkers](#)" has a whole series on using it.

As a reminder, should we activate, all information will be on floridaemergency.net.

Monthly Radiogram Challenge

Want to practice using the national traffic system (NTS)? instructions on using the NTS on our website at arrl-nfl.org/nts/ For the month of June, please send me (W4CPD located in Pace, FL) a radiogram via the NTS with your answer to this question "What skill do you think is the most important in hurricane response for auxiliary communications??"

Website updates

If you find information that is out of date on the section website (arrl-nfl.org), please fill out the [online form](#) and one of the team will take care of it as soon as possible.

Monthly EC Reports

Out of the 34 appointed ARES Emergency Coordinators we have in the section, we only received monthly reports for 18 last month. If you're an EC and are having trouble submitting your reports, please reach out to me. This information is so critical to knowing who of our teams are still out there and also hearing about the incredible work that's being done. Last month ARES volunteers provided over 1,600 hours of service to our communities. Thanks to the following counties for providing their reports: Alachua, Bay, Citrus, Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Leon, Madison, Marion, Okaloosa, Seminole, St. Johns, Santa Rosa, Suwanee, Volusia, Walton, Washington.

	Number	Person-Hrs
8. Exercises this month:	13	357.00
9. Training events this month:	29	477.50
10. Public service events this month:	1	10.00
11. Community service events this month:	2	120.00
12. Emergency events this month:	1	8.00
13. SKYWARN events this month:	5	21.00
14. Meetings this month:	25	442.70
15. Unclassified events this month:	95	227.00

Remembering Steve Strom – N4GXX

Earlier this month I received news that a dear friend and elmer of mine, Steve N4GXX, had become a silent key. Steve had a huge impact in my ham radio journey, and I probably wouldn't have gotten nearly as far into it as I did without his support, guidance, and encouragement.

Steve was one of the first (and usually the first) ones to call me anytime we activated the State EOC for a hurricane. Always willing to help in any way he could. If there was anything that Steve had the knowledge to help with, he'd offer to help.

One of the first things that Steve helped me with was my DSTAR repeater in Santa Rosa County. DSTAR was the first mode I got interested in when I got my tech license. The DSTAR repeater here had been down for a long time and Steve volunteered to come over and help me get it back up. That act is what led me to get involved with ARES here and ultimately led to me becoming EC and the rest is history.

Steve was a great friend to many and a mentor to so very many people. Steve's absence will definitely leave a whole in the amateur radio community in the State of Florida. I encourage you to have the kind of commitment and dedication to amateur radio and your community as Steve did to his. Rest in peace my friend, we'll take it from here.



NFL Officials

Section Manager

Scott Roberts KK4ECR

Assistant Section Managers

Kevin Bess KK4BFN

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

DJ Stewart K14ZER

Joe Bassett, W1WCN

Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames W4CPD

Section Public Info Coordinator

Jim Bledsoe, K14KEA

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*

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>

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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.

Steve Strom N4GXX(SK)

Hi Team. I am sure you have heard by now of the passing of Steve (N4GXX). For those of us that knew him, we knew him well and we reveled in his prose. That is to say Steve always had a way with words, language that would rile you up, and motivate you to one side or the other. Steve never told his plans. He just showed up. Sometimes to see what was going on, other times to share his knowledge. Steve, like many of us, wanted the same thing. The continuation of the Amateur Radio hobby in a positive way forward while imploring others to learn. He accomplished this in his own distinct way. That way was often with a smirk, eyes open wide and pointing at you [or me] with a laser death stare until you asked the correct question or attempted to answer [correct or incorrect didn't matter] to the best of your abilities unless you [or I] admitted defeat. Then, with a smile, Steve would present the answer that was to him, overly simplistic.

Decades of radio experience were at play here. Steve's knowledge was paramount when it came to inspiring others. While he may have gotten annoyed with people [myself included] he never gave up, he never quit, and he continued to come around and offer exactly what you needed to hear, not what you wanted to hear. That motivation inspired many to become hams or to expand their horizons and learn something new. It also inspired many to take on roles and accept challenges. Often strengthening the bond between many that interacted with him, and each other. Some may disagree with that, some may not, but Steve himself would not want to hear the conjecture, he would simply smile, laugh to himself, interrupt, and say "let me tell you a story." That story would normally be of times past, but Steve always found a way

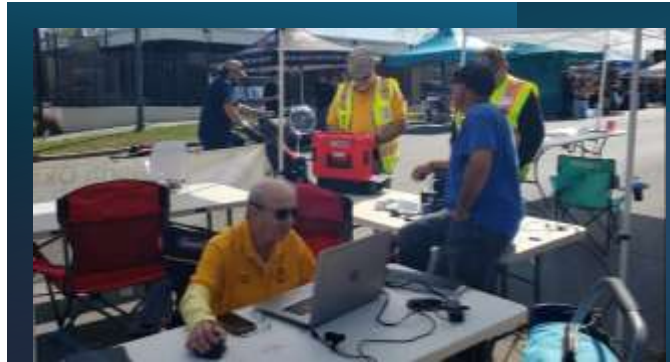
to relate it to the current situation. This, made people think. Moreover, that approach, that way of interacting with not just one, but all who were in his presence [listening or not] took note that Steve was going to get his turn to speak.

So, what do we need to take from all of this? Is there a lesson in remembering our Elmer, our Mentor, our Friend, our confidante in arms who dedicated his life to communications? Some will say the lesson would be to remain humble and soak in what knowledge you can get from others while pressing forward limiting interference from sources that are less than knowledgeable. Others, including myself, will suggest that the lesson is everyone has a voice, some of those voices just happen to be incorrect and you can choose which ones to listen to and which ones not to listen to. ~Paraphrased from Steve Strom `November 2018. That point stuck with me as a new member of NOARC back then. Steve was at the time (next to N4CU) the "welcoming" [hihi] committee.

N4GXX will be missed. His legacy and lessons will live on as he has inspired generations of amateur radio operators and taught them a very valuable message. That message, RTFM. If you know, you know. Steve certainly did. And he inspired many of us to pick up a book and have an educated discussion rather than speculate and assume in ignorance.

Thank you, Steve. For being in the driver's seat. We will take it from here. Sincerely yours,

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER



Thank you, Steve,
for your guidance
and inspiration. 73's
until the next CQ.

“Santa Rosa County ARES® uses monthly meeting to practice Winlink”

Jon Holladay KM4QQO

In April 2025, Santa Rosa County ARES® participated in the 2025 Florida Statewide AUXCOMM exercise. The scenario was coordinated cyberattack taking down internet and cellular communications as the State recovered from a devastating round of tornadoes. Much like the other counties that participated in the exercise, Santa Rosa County utilized Winlink quite extensively. On May 17, Santa Rosa County ARES® provided a Winlink lecture, demonstrations and training to all interested ARES® members in the area. As this training was also our monthly ARES® membership meeting, the Santa Rosa County EC provided a brief introduction for new ARES® members concerning the ARRL, the difference between ARES® and AUXCOMM, and an introduction to the ARES and AUXCOMM task books. Moving forward, the monthly ARES meetings will focus on providing training opportunities based on the task books.

The Winlink lecture was a tremendous success. Scattered throughout the lecture were live demonstrations of VHF and HF Winlink operations using packet, VARA FM and VARA HF. Participants were able to see how emails could be sent via radio and requiring no connection to the Internet for delivery. At the end of the lecture, participants who chose to bring their personal laptops were provided guidance and instruction as they each installed and configured Winlink on their devices.

Santa Rosa County ARES had several active Winlink stations setup throughout the training room for the participants to use as they worked through a series of Winlink. Participants were introduced to using ICS and Radiogram forms in Winlink, as well as using the catalog feature of Winlink to pull the activation status from the floridaemergency.net website.

The participants were encouraged to practice Winlink usage by submitting a Winlink check-in form for the Santa Rosa County Citizen Corps Tuesday night NET each week.



Huntsville Hamfest 2025

The World's Friendliest Hamfest®

In our 72nd year!



Saturday August 16 9 AM to 4:30 PM

Sunday August 17 9 AM to 3 PM

Von Braun Center South Hall

700 Monroe St. SW, Huntsville, AL 35801

- World Class Educational Forums
- License Exams both days
- Outstanding Youth Lounge
- Over 50 Commercial Vendors
- Huge Expanded Flea Market
- ARRL AL State Convention
- All indoors & air-conditioned
- DX Card Checking
- Grand Prizes both days + hourly prizes

Plus: scheduled gatherings before & during the event! YouTubers at Monte Sano State Park, DX Banquet, W4DXCC Convention, Hospitality Suite at on-site Hotel, Microwave group activities, YL Breakfast, after-hours Hospitality Suite, and more!

*Check the website for details & times
www.hamfest.org*

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: A READY DISPOSITION

Saturday, July 12th, 2025 9:00 am- 4:00 pm Forest Grove Baptist Church
22575 NW 94th Ave, Alachua

Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to face the uncertainties in your life? It goes beyond preparation for emergencies, as it includes having a ready disposition that anticipates and responds proactively to life's challenges.

This seminar delves into a variety of subjects that will help you to live a prepared life, and to develop mental fortitude and resilience. It will aid you in maintaining that resilience beyond the moments of hardship. Discussion topics will include:

- Getting Emergency Information During Disasters Without Internet or Cell Phones (**Keynote Speaker: Craig Fugate**)
- Generator Safety/ Downed Power Lines/ Storm Logistics
- Fermentation & Your Immunity
- The Essential Go-Bag
- Firearm Safety & Training
- Productive Gardening & Composting
- Compact Space Gardening
- Emergency Communications Using General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) & Family Radio Service (FRS)
- Wild Edibles & Foraging
- Water Collection & Disinfection
- Hurricane Helene: How Ham Radios Helped the Helpers in North Carolina
- Integrating Aquatics into Your Food Garden
- Satellite Phones & Starlink
- "Common Sense" Personal Disaster Preparedness
- Beekeeping
- Back to Basics: Traditional Poultry and Fish Processing
- Creative Bartering



Register online only at Eventbrite.com, or scan the QR Code. Early registration \$20 per person before July 1st. Seating is limited; registration begins @ 8:00am.



Getting Emergency Information During Disasters Without Internet or Cell Phones

William Craig Fugate KK4INZ

- ◆ Craig Fugate served as President Barack Obama's FEMA Administrator from May 2009 to January 2017.
- ◆ Previously, he served as Florida Governor Jeb Bush's Emergency Management Director from 2001-2007
- ◆ Governor Charlie Crist from 2007-09.
- ◆ Fugate led FEMA through multiple record-breaking disaster years and oversaw the Federal Government's response to major events such as the
 - ◆ Joplin and Moore Tornadoes,
 - ◆ Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Matthew, and
 - ◆ The 2016 Louisiana flooding.
- ◆ Fugate set a clear and compelling vision, mission, and priorities for FEMA and relentlessly drove the Agency to achieve better outcomes for survivors.
- ◆ FEMA's effectiveness in dealing with more than 500 Presidentially declared major disasters
- ◆ and emergencies under Fugate's leadership restored the faith of the American people in the Federal Government's ability to respond to disasters.
- ◆ Prior to his tenure at FEMA, Fugate was widely praised for his management, under Governor Jeb Bush, of the devastating effects of the 2004 and 2005 Florida hurricane seasons (Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma).
- ◆ Craig provides senior level advice and consultation in disaster management and resiliency policy through Craig Fugate Consulting LLC.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: A Ready Disposition

Saturday, July 12th, 2025, 9:00 am- 4:00 pm

Forest Grove Baptist Church 22575 NW 94th Ave, Alachua, FL

8:00- 9:00 REGISTRATION, EXHIBIT TABLES*

9:00- 9:10 - WELCOME

9:10-10:10 MORNING SESSION (1 hour) - Getting Emergency Information During Disasters Without Internet or Cell Phones - Craig Fugate

10:15 - 10:30 BREAK

10:30- 11:15 Morning Breakout Groups (45 min.)

Choose 1 of 7

1. Generator Safety/ Downed Lines/ Storm Logistics - Todd Martin (Clay Electric)
2. Integrating Aquatics into Your Food Garden - Garrett Schendowich
3. Fermentation & Your Immunity - Karyn Shander
4. The Essential Go-Bag - Tim Parker
5. Firearm Safety & Training - Bill Quirk
6. Productive Gardening and Composting - Paul Miller
7. Compact Gardening - James Dailey

11:20- 12:05 Morning Breakout Groups (45 min.)

Choose 1 of 7:

1. Generator Safety/ Downed Lines/ Storm Logistics - Todd Martin (Clay Electric)
2. Integrating Aquatics into Your Food Garden - Garrett Schendowich
3. General Mobile Radio Service and Family Radio Service for Emergency Communications - Karyn Shander
4. The Essential Go-Bag - Tim Parker
5. Firearm Safety & Training - Bill Quirk
6. Wild Edibles and Foraging - Brandon Carmel
7. Compact Gardening - James Dailey

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

12:10- 12:55 LUNCH SESSION (45 min.) VIDEO- Creative Bartering - Dr. Jeffrey Haglund

EXHIBIT TABLES* /

1:00- 2:00 AFTERNOON SESSION (1 hour) "Common Sense" Personal Disaster Preparedness- David Peaton

2:05-2:20 BREAK

2:25- 3:25 Afternoon Breakout Groups (1 hour)

Choose 1 of 5

1. Water Collection & Disinfection - Reid Tillery
2. Hurricane Helene: How Ham Radios Helped the Helpers in North Carolina - Brett Wallace
3. Satellite Phones and Starlink- Mark Weible
4. Beekeeping - Archie Matthews
5. Back to Basics: Traditional Poultry & Fish Processing - Emily Wallace (Caution: Discretionary viewing is advised)

3:30-4:00 EVALUATIONS / *EXHIBIT TABLES/

1. Freebies
 2. Shoot GTR/ Alachua County Crime Stoppers
 3. Water Pump/Shallow Wells (Burch Well & Pump)
 4. Raffle & Seminar Booklet Sale
 5. Raffle Prizes table.
 6. Gainesville Amateur Radio Society
 7. AmRRON (American Redoubt Radio Operators Network) Brett Wallace, Book Sale
 8. Clay Electric
 9. Alachua County Emergency Management
 10. Aquatics in Your Food Garden
- Gideons International



Sumter County ARES®
Amateur Radio Emergency Service
501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Non-Profit Organization



Sumter County ARES® – Hurricane Expo
May 2, 2025

On Friday, May 2nd, 2025, Sumter County ARES® had a presence at the 18th Annual Hurricane Expo at the Savannah Center located in The Villages, Florida. Each year at this time, private businesses, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations participate in this exposition to show how their products and services help prepare for hurricanes, mitigate losses caused by these storms, and recover following them.



Sumter County ARES® member Peter Stirpe, NV2P, and Emergency Coordinator Mark Newby, KX4LEO, presented the ARES program to a multitude of people who attended the event. Complete with a video presentation, ARES literature, and a display of radio equipment, our representatives explained or demonstrated how ARES can provide emergency communications through a variety of means wherever needed when normal public safety communications is interrupted because of severe storms.

For more information about Sumter County ARES and how to become a member, check us out at www.sumterares.org.

Technician License ZOOM Class

Reed Tillery K9RFT, Gordon Gibby KX4Z and others

The ARES(R) group, spurred on by Reid Tillery's fantastic results, is going to hold a ZOOM Technician License Course during JUNE, prior to Field Day, partly to serve the students of Lofton (magnet school) ham radio club and help out W4GJ. **But we can accept many more students!!!** We are using the excellent and easy-to-use materials from <https://www.hamradioschool.com/> which include pre-made instructor slides and pre-made Quizzes. To gain access to these isn't hard -- instructors merely need to sign Stu's "non-disclosure agreement" (which protects his materials from easy plagiarism).

You might want to zoom in on one or more of the presentations, even if you're already licensed for many years! Why? Well, after 20+ years of a very busy career in medicine, I had not been able to "keep up" with all the advances in radio, and actually found that I didn't know enough to teach a Technician License Course. That was 9 years ago, and I set to work to catch up and then some -- and it was great for me, and we've since taught every course including Extra Class, more than once. So I had to start with the TECH course to learn what experts in our hobby thought needed to be understood. I had NO idea was "ax.25" or "packet" were -- I had to start way back there.

Our course calendar can be found here, including the zoom links:

<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/CALENDAR.html>

so you can pick and choose which sessions you'd like to review -- but to honor our commitments to the creator of this material we need to monitor who comes on the Zoom link, so we ask you to fill out this simple form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMIGyBKcsbJOk9-VvdntzWERT4cfUTfalp3hW9HjVF3JY-GQ/viewform?usp=header>

Also, please let others know about this course! And if you would like to TEACH one or more of the sessions (we still have some openings) just contact me.

See Flyer below:

LEARN HOW TO HAVE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS THAT ALWAYS WORK -- DON'T QUIT WHEN CELL / INTERNET FAIL!

Join our evening zoom courses in the month of June to learn all about *fun* radios that provide reliable communications even when everything else has quit! Our radios can go any distance and meet the need -- and we will teach you how to get the full legal license!

Our entry-level course starts at 7 PM Wednesday June 4th over ZOOM and will be held most weekday nights to get you read to get that legal license and know how to use a real radio anytime for fun, or during a disaster -- and also how to connect to a thriving bunch of nationally-known local disaster volunteers. Our schedule & ZOOM link are found here: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/CALENDAR.html>



You can register for the course here: <https://forms.gle/gZYyGhLHS9WS4FiE9> or just show up at 7PM. You will need to purchase either the study book or the online course from this group: <https://www.hamradioschool.com/technician-prep> -- less than \$30 -- but our local experienced volunteer instructors are FREE. Our course is based on the study book/online course. We will throw in our solid experience to help you make progress faster!

Sponsored by Alachua County Amateur Radio Emergency Service / North Florida Amateur Radio Club (see: <https://www.nf4rc.club/>). You can also join us for our huge nationwide EMERGENCY EXERCISE Saturday/Sunday June 28/29 at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center -- we always place highly in this nationwide contest of tens of thousands of competitors and we can get you right on the air!

What Is The Best Way to KEEP Our Frequencies?

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Amateur Radio enjoys the use of some very prime "real estate" in the radio spectrum, from LF (30-300 kHz) all the way to microwave and beyond -- and at no cost! Everyone knows that commercial interests, military and others would love to take away some of these quite generous allocations. What is the best way for amateur radio operators to keep and maintain these wonderful frequency bands?

Many people think that "*using those frequencies*" is the key. That is certainly important, but oddly, it doesn't show up anywhere in Part 97.1. Why?

I would argue that the laws and regulations are generally made by *rational actors*, and therefore the deciding factor is the weighing by those persons of the **benefits to the nation** coming from Amateur Radio.

What are the prime benefits that Amateur Radio provides nations? Part 97.1 gives an important set of clues, among which are:

- Volunteers familiar with and owning radio assets can be an important force multiplication in time of emergency (for more-so if they are formally involved, organized and trained at this);
 - Amateurs continue to come up with improvements and innovations in radio -- such as fascinating new digital waveforms that push communications deeper into the noise that ever dreamed-- and in constantly simplifying expensive systems to make them more common;
- Our radio community and particularly our unique freedom to build, test, repair and experiment, foster wonderful opportunities for young and old alike for personal growth and learning more about physics, radio, electronics, and propagation -- opportunities that simply aren't available, say, in the business radio services.

So my argument would be that it is **not enough** to increase "club membership" or to hold lots of "technician classes" or "license test sessions" -- the benefits that the regulators and law-makers would weigh must go far beyond those important endeavors.

Every year, in our Alachua County service group, we pursue all of these goals, **imperfectly of course**, but we try!

We are formally aligned with ESF2/Emergency Management in our county -- and every Wednesday we are there, participating in exercises, making connections without Internet or cell phones to other counties, our State, and even far beyond. We continually train any of our members who are willing, in how to carry out these important communications techniques.

We don't have local experimenters and mathematician/physicists on the level of Joe Taylor, of course (developer of FT8 and other modulations) -- but we do come up with new printed circuit boards and simplified antenna systems that benefit many.

Perhaps our strongest national contributions are our continuous efforts to **advance the skills of our volunteers**, and to **develop more trained operators, technicians and electronics experts**.

FCC Part 97.1

§97.1 Basis and purpose.

The rules and regulations in this part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

(a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a **voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications**.

(b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to **contribute to the advancement of the radio art**.

(c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for **advancing skills in both the communication and technical phases of the art**.

(d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of **trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts**.

(e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.
[emphases added]

Not only do we train willing volunteers in intrastate and interstate communications, we try to train all of our participants in multiple kinds of communications. Semi-contests such as Winter Field Day and ARRL Field Day are two big opportunities, as well as frequent experiences of sending WINLINK radio emails. We support multiple internet gateways in our county. Many clubs settle just for voice contesting operations, others add CW, but in our group we push all three -- and we end up with strong diverse scores and strong skills among our various participants in multiple different techniques and frequency bands. We just held one of our training sessions for ARRL Field Day and you can see the wide range of skills taught here: <https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/2025-field-day-suggestions/>

Further, we hold frequent "LabNLunches" where we develop not only friendships, but also new radio and electronics skills galore! It may be soldering together a microcomputer-based CW electronic keyer using an Arduino Nano (<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/alachua-county-arduino-winkeyer/>); it may be winding toroids to build 9:1, 4:1 or 49:1 baluns (<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/antennas/balun-how-to/> <https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/antennas/guanella-41-balun/>); it may be using the spectrum analyzer or NanoVNA to build and tune band-pass filters or an antenna multiplexer; it may be building portable 6-meter antennas (<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/antennas/six-meter-inexpensive-versatile-antenna/>), or measuring the radio frequency interference of various inverters and charge controllers. We are always BUSY doing things, and learning things and growing the technical skills and understanding of our participants.

At the same time, we hold and have held formal licensing courses for the entire range of amateur radio licenses, year after year after year. Our hands-on approach to building and learning carries over to some of those courses, helping our participants gain new privileges.

It is fine for many clubs to excel in friendship and fellowship -- those are very important to many youngsters and adults to avoid isolation and loneliness. But I would argue that *this alone* will fail to safeguard our valuable frequency allocations. There are plenty of well-known "social clubs" out there in every community with nothing to do with radio, who certainly help in these areas! I think it is important for ham radio clubs, especially those affiliated with the American Radio Relay League, to work at fulfilling the national best interests in our area, which are neatly encapsulated in Part 97.1, including communications, emergency communications, technical skills and knowledge in radio and electronics. ARRL Sections and their leadership should put a very strong emphasis on promotion of these goals.

What are the Alachua County Crew Up To Now?

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

May has been a relatively calmer month for NFARC (North Florida Amateur Radio Club) and Alachua County ARES(R). The weather has been beautiful (despite very little rain for my garden, requiring intensive drip irrigation); we're already harvesting string beans, and club attention is now firmly on FIELD DAY PLANNING.

Licensing Class

We've adopted Reid Tillery's (K9RFT) <https://hamradioschool.com/> Technician materials, which he's used in three **very successful** classes so far, and I found were excellent even for an 8th grader at my school. Bob Lightner W4GJ at Loften (magnet school) appreciates help to get his thriving ham radio club more licenses -- so we put together a ZOOM CLASS for the month of June, finishing before Field Day. This is also open to anyone!



*2m/70cm elliptically polarized
2-axis rotation Yagi System for
Satellites--Homebrew*

ZOOM TECHNICIAN CLASS

Alachua County ARES® / NFARC

Evenings, JUNE -- **Calendar provides all details & link**

<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/CALENDAR.html>

Field Day Planning

With that squared away (and now fully staffed with instructors), our planning for Field Day surged. Maybe **Earl Sloan KI4OXD** didn't know what he got himself into when he agreed to head it up for us this year? Despite his work schedule, Earl did a masterful job corraling the troops and getting bases covered at our May meeting. Our Incident Action Plan (we are an ARES(R)) support group, right?) is at: <https://www.nf4rc.club/2025-field-day-iap/> and it is ambitious!! We don't know if we are going to be able to host the Loften students -- there are big issues with management of under-age students and safety -- but thanks to protective coursework I and **Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ** have taken, we have a great plan at least, with massive parental involvement required! Now we have to see if the students' parents will sign up....

Last year we had a new high for our team -- over 1600 contacts at a secluded day camp where we could set up a bunch of antennas as 4A -- but it was more WORK than our team desired. The Anthony crew is so impressive -- they surpassed us! This year we're back at our EOC for potentially "less work" but going to try to put up our ancient triband beam again....in the back parking lot... wish us luck! We have already almost filled in our entire 4F schedule thanks to aggressively encouraging new members and old alike to sign up! Now we're working on a possible small GOTA effort. A problem is that few of our crew have travel or RV-trailers, and we're OLD and it is HOT!



Safety Officer:	Manish Sahni KZ4KC
Incident Commander:	Earl Sloan KI4OXD
Solar Power Chief:	Leland Gallup AA3YB
Networking Chief:	Earl McDow K4ZSW, Susan Halbert KG4VWI, Mark McDow KN4POZ
Liaison Officer:	David Huckstep W4JIR
Logistics Chief:	Rosemary Jones KI4QBZ
Travel Trailer Chief:	Gordon Gibby KX4Z
Generator Towing Chief:	Hugh Minnich KN4IIM

County Ham Radio Proclamation

Our Ham Radio Proclamation got approved and should be announced and presented on June 10th. See: <https://groups.io/g/NF4RC/message/8362>

Satellite System Improvements/Plans

Thanks to suggestions from Rosemary Jones KI4QBZ, I worked to switch the homebrew satellite rotator/antenna system from "wood" to "PVC" -- and I think it was a good idea. Now I'm working adding the 90° polarization 2nd set of antennas and trying to get them connected with a reasonable SWR, for circular polarization. The controller, with a small correction to my software modifications is working great now. Next step is to move the hamlib *rotctld* little module over to a raspberry pi and then have **remote WIFI-based control**. [Late note: **I succeeded!**] If we can get that to work, we can set the antenna system outside our EOC and control it from air-conditioned space without having to buy a huge amount of dual-rotator-cables. We hope to use this as a crowd-pleaser for Field Day, and possibly get better media coverage, since there's a local meteorologist who is also a ham. Pull down weather maps from live satellites? I'm going to try to learn how, using tips from this article: <https://www.a-centauri.com/articoli/noaa-poes-satellites-reception>. [Late note #2: I am getting through on the ISS APRS digipeater and got an answer on the last try! Switching to this package: <https://pinpointaprs.com/download.html> which looks a lot easier than what I was doing with EASYTERM. See my transcript here: <https://groups.io/g/NF4RC/message/8358>]

Winkeyer Solution

Last year our crew built all ten printed circuit boards that I got for the Arduino-emulator Winkeyer version. With both the real commercially marketed excellent WINKEYER USB and with our emulator Arduino version, **we've had trouble at times getting logging software N3FJP to send canned text**.



This is incredibly helpful during Field Day. For example, it can send CQ transmissions every few seconds by itself, and stop automatically as soon as you type the first character of an answering station's callsign in the "callsign" box. Then, you can simply strike a function key to answer that station **with their call sign** and your group's exchange. Huge! Makes CW operation a breeze and was a huge factor for me in vastly increasing my productivity. Now I've converted Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO over to the "dark side" and we're going to power the CW effort of NF4AC Alachua County EOC club (the call sign our group uses in Field Day).

EOC Wednesday Practice Sessions

We all miss **Eric Pleace KO4ZSD**, who flew the coop to cold New England, but we have been delighted to have many more appearances of **Brett Wallace NK2KW!** We have managed to update our ALE software and now it appears to WORK again! For a while, it would just rattle the PTT relay rather than stay in "transmit." Brett did yeoman work up in North Carolina after Hurricane Helene, providing actual radio support for traveling teams of volunteers (for safety). He has written a BOOK detailing the lessons learned. A nice video introduction is already available <https://drive.proton.me/urls/1K3CJJ7KGW#3HBvfm0ZT3Tu> The book should become available soon on the website of the ministry for which he served -- <https://grindstoneministries.com/collections/all>

Draft Proclamation — “Amateur Radio Week” in Alachua County Florida
Feel Free to use this as a starting point Proclamation in Your County

Alachua County Florida
A Proclamation

***Declaring June 22nd through June 29th, 2025 as "Amateur Radio Week" in
Alachua County, Florida***

- Whereas, *Amateur Radio has historically played a significant role in developing worldwide radio communications and has continued to provide a bridge between peoples, societies, and countries by creating friendships and sharing of ideas; and*
- Whereas, *Amateur Radio operators have provided countless hours of community service to local organizations and during emergencies throughout these decades; and*
- Whereas, *Amateur Radio operators of Alachua County and neighboring communities offer free technical training to all interested citizens; and*
- Whereas, *Alachua County recognizes the uncompensated services Amateur Radio operators provide to essential emergency response organizations including the State of Florida and Alachua County; and*
- Whereas, *The Alachua County Emergency Management and Fire Rescue Departments value the partnerships Amateur Radio operators have provided during hurricane season to support emergency communications on behalf of impacted citizens and shelters; and*
- Whereas, *Amateur Radio Week in Florida is an opportunity to honor and recognize the valuable work radio operators provide in dispersing public safety information to the citizens of Alachua county and Florida.*

Now, therefore, *through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of the Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim June 22nd through June 29th, 2025, as "Amateur Radio Week" in Alachua County, Florida.*

Duly proclaimed this 10th day of June, A.D., 2025

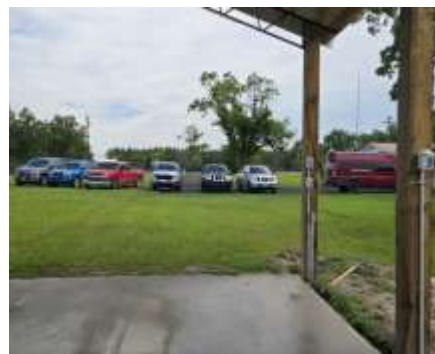
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA**

Suwannee & Madison County ARES® News

Gordon Beattie W2TTT

Well, the month of May was a very busy month of preparation for the upcoming hurricane season with ARES member home stations getting back in order, the Suwannee EOC station KK4RQY getting checked out, the Madison EOC radio room getting a facelift and many improvements for mobile and portable operations. Weekly ARES® nets were held each Sunday evening on the ARES® repeaters 145.27 W2TTT and 146.19 MHz W4FAO at 8:30 and 9:00 pm respectively. Both use a tone of 123.0 Hz and an offset of -0.600 Hz. Check-ins on the morning ARES® and evening NFL Section HF nets have been fairly consistent as has participation check-ins on the weekly County Net on SARNET on Wednesday afternoons. All Amateur Radio repeaters in Suwannee and Madison Counties are operating properly. After a brief outage, the GMRS repeater in the City of Madison is back up and the weekly GMRS net and routine activity remains high on that repeater as well.

Suwannee and Madison ARES® members gathered at the QTH of W2TTT and had the first of several morning building sessions to make four element two meter "measuring tape" Yagis. More sessions will take place after Field Day. We will have a longer article on this in the future, but we have fifteen members interested in building these compact antennas for backup, portable and signal hunting purposes. One of our members 3D printed element fittings, protective covers for the sharp measuring tape ends and handles for donated half-inch PVC boom material. Seven of us came together to work out the elements of the process of mass production of these handy antennas.



POTA also continues to be a major communications preparedness activity with activations and gear being assembled. Bryan K4BHP is our most active member and he has built a new lightweight HF antenna and also an APRS unit based on the KV4P package. He is getting great use of his 3D printer!



Our mobile installations have also seen some improvements with Aaron KQ4DCB, Bryan K4BHP and Nancy N2FWI each getting repaired or new mobile mounts for antennas. Aaron's antenna mount restoration after a catastrophic antenna strike was solid and performs well. Bryan's hitch mount and push up mast gets an antenna 22 feet up quickly for both POTA and EMCOMM activities. The Breedlove mounts on Nancy's F-150 will provide sturdy antenna platforms with a solid grounds.



There's more going on here in both Suwannee and Madison County ARES® and our collaboration continues to be fruitful as we head into Field Day. Other operating events in the next few weeks include the ARRL Digital Contest, the ARRL June VHF Contest and the 13 Colonies Event. Getting on the air improves our EMCOMM skills, tests our station equipment and is loads of fun!



Get On The Air!

New "Downtown" Repeater in Gainesville -- and Murphy's Law!

by Gordon KX4Z

"Murphy" is the mythical traditional character that causes PROBLEMS in otherwise wonderful ham radio plans and developments. Some people write it as Murphy's Law - "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong!" For more fun, see: <https://www.arrl.org/blowing-in-murphy-s-wind>

We were in strong wind gusts on the top of the Alachua County Admin Building with Dave Huckstep W4JIR atop a 12-foot extension ladder leaning against a not-impressive tower....trying to maneuver a 17-foot collinear antenna into VERTICAL with only a one hand-hold, in that powerful wind -- and he did it!

Maybe he bent the coax a "bit" in the process, but he got it done and we managed to get the homebrew tower mount, made out of Lowe's "Unistrut" into position. That WIND dramatically changed many minds on just how far outbound from the tower it would be safe to cantilever that huge antenna....



Likely Repeater Range to Modest Ham Antenna - Covers Lots of Population



But Murphy wasn't done with us. The VHF repeater just didn't seem to work well; the receiver seemed to be "desensing." Duplexer cans misadjusted? A second trip (again requiring county personnel to babysit us into the restricted area) suggested the cans were perfect....but it still wasn't working well. So a THIRD trip had to be arranged, and this time we had to find different personnel -- we did, and Jim Carr KC4MHH brought a completely different UHF repeater. The VHF system still just didn't perform as needed, so out it went, and in went the UHF repeater!

Range turned out to be just about what the "square root of antenna height" in miles, formula says. Maybe 8 miles? Farther if you put up YOUR END antenna higher because radio waves just don't go through DIRT at all, and endure **20dB per mile loss at UHF in suburban densely forested environments**. In that kind of loss, **height** dramatically overwhelms **coaxial cable losses**.... by a large margin. Hard to convince hams of that.

The huge advantage, and the reason we worked so hard for this repeater, is that the County Admin building has generator backup power. We hope we're on it -- will have to work further on that end, but getting the repeater in was the first part. This building unfortunately isn't planned to be long term for the County, but when it gets transitioned, we hope the new owners will leave the tower. We'll cross that bridge when it comes!

KC4MHH 433.025 (Receive) +5 MHz 438.025 (your transmit) PL 123.0

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 signup for classes
- Go to <http://k4gso.us/test-signup/> for testing. Testing is held on the 2nd Tuesday of odd months at 7 PM.
- Note <http://k4gso.us/ncvec605/> is requested to be filled out before you show for testing. It is best to download the form and open it as a PDF so you can fill in the blanks.

Suwannee ARC, Live Oak, FL

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

Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS)

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

West Volusia Amateur Radio Society

- Second Saturday of each odd numbered month
- 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>

Hernando County Amateur Radio Association (HCARA)

2nd Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM
For details and to register—<http://www.hamstudy.org> and go to **Find A Session**
Exam cost is free. FCC charges do apply

Statewide Digital Radio Resources

Designated ARES® DSAR Reflectors & a DMR Talk group? DSTAR Reflector 046

REF046A – Florida Statewide

REF046B – NFL ARES®

REF046C – NWS Mobile, AL SKYWARN

DMR Florida State ARES® TG 31127

Link your local repeaters to help create a digital repeater network throughout the state!

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