



# QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

**Come join the FUN!**

Volume 12 Issue 10

[www.arrl-nfl.org](http://www.arrl-nfl.org)

October 2025



## From the Shack of the Section Manager

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



## Division Election

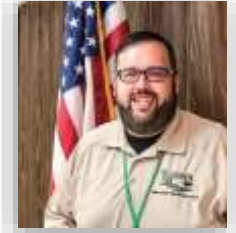
The online voting site for the 2025 ARRL Division Election is now open. Please click the link below to access candidate statements, the electronic ballot, and to vote online. Just a few minutes of your time will help decide the leadership of our organization.

You will need your Election Validation Number and call sign to log in. Once registered, follow the online voting instructions.

Go to <https://vote.esvote.com/ARRL/> to access the login page for the 2025 ARRL election.

Online voting ends at noon (ET), on Friday, November 21, 2025.

**PLEASE VOTE!**



## From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

Well, we keep having some storms look like they're heading our way but the fans on the east side of the state keep blowing them away. We're all keeping a watchful eye on the tropics as we are certainly in the height of hurricane season. Please make sure you have your 72-hour emergency supplies kit ready and keep those gas tanks at least half full.

I've mentioned this before but, if you're not already teaching ham radio classes to your community, you're missing out on an amazing outreach opportunity. Locally, here in Santa Rosa County, we started last year and have been wildly successful in attracting interest in amateur radio. We just recently completed our first time at teaching an upgrade to general class and had 6 students ace their upgrade exam! I'm so thankful to our amazing team that takes time out of their busy schedules to teach these classes.



### 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/](http://arrl-nfl.org/nts/) For the month of September, please send me (W4CPD located in Pace, FL) a radiogram via the NTS with your answer to this question "Which HF radio is your go to for your portable operations or go-kit?"

Thanks to the following individuals for their participation in August:

- W4BZM – Mike (Huge shoutout to Mike for consistently participating each month!)
- AJ4D – Adrian
- KG4VWI – Susan

If you weren't aware, the ARRL has been working in coordination with the Radio Relay International team on a project called NTS 2.0. There is a plethora of information on the [website](http://www.arrl.org/nts2) for it and they are also doing weekly Zoom meetings to practice sending & receiving radiograms. Be sure to visit <https://nts2.arrl.org/virtual-nts-training-net/> for more information.

### Website updates

If you find information that is out of date on the section website ([arrl-nfl.org](http://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 17 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 815 hours of service to our communities! Thanks to the following counties for providing their reports: Alachua, Bay, Citrus, Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Marion, Orange, Seminole, St. Johns, Santa Rosa, Sumter, Suwannee, Wakulla, Walton, Washington.

**Call signs of ECs reporting:**

K4BJS, K4SOP, KB4HAH, KD4EZW, KD4IMA, KF4ZZ, KM4BTW, KM4QQO, KO4YGV, KO4YOL, KX4LEO, N2HAY, N4JTK, W4KEF, W4UFL, WA4MN, WE4MJ

Highlights from some of the counties:

- Bay - Our team has been working to interact with citizens on GMRS and have added a weekly net to develop communications with CERT and other groups on these frequencies and local repeaters.
- Escambia - Taught Amateur Radio at Ransom Middle School class of 6-8 grade students.
- Suwannee - EOC site preparations are under way to prep for the active portion of the storm season.

## NFL Officials

### Section Manager

Scott Roberts KK4ECR

### Assistant Section Managers

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

### Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames W4CPD

### Section Public Info Coordinator

Jim Bledsoe, KI4KEA

### Section Technical Coordinator

Frank Haas KB4T

### Section Affiliated Club Coordinator

### Section Traffic Manager

Helen Straughn WC4FSU

### Section Official Observer Coordinator

Robert Leasko WB8PAF

### Section State Government Liaison

Darrell Brock N4GOA

## NFL Committees

### Webmaster, [www.arrl-nfl.org](http://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](http://www.ARRL-NFL.org) Opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and may not express the positions of the ARRL.

Submissions may be made to the editor:  
Earl McDow [earl.mcdow@gmail.com](mailto: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...

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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](mailto:kk4ecr@gmail.com). Include the nominee's name, call sign, county, reason for the nomination, and a photo of the nominee. Arc and I will review the nominations and 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.



Calling all Radio Enthusiasts, Amateur Radio Operators, GMRS, FRS, CBRS, Aviation Band, Shortwave, Communications Dealers, Wholesalers, Distributors, and anyone else who loves or is involved in all modes of radio communication! Gather your gear, set up your booth, and partake in one of the BEST Hamfests in Sunny Florida! Over the nearly last half of a decade, the North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club in Crestview Florida has been hosting a wonderful Hamfest! This Annual Autumn event is lauded by many and always brings out a surprise or two during its course! Stay tuned with the links below to follow along for more announcements!

Bolstering 40,000 useable square feet, this facility offers ample space inside with HVAC, restrooms, refreshments, meal hosting, ample parking and more! the house is packed with Vendors and Patrons alike filling the capacity of the facility!

**What:** North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club’s Annual Autumn Amateur Radio Hamfest!

**When (Day 1):** Friday October 10th, 2025, VENDORS SET UP ONLY 1030 - 500pm. NO SHOW.

**When (Day 2):** Saturday October 11th, 2025, 0600 Vendors, 0800 Show Start and goes until 100 pm!

**Where:** 1446 Commerce Drive, Crestview, Florida in the Crestview Community Center! Do not let them name fool you; this place is massive! Admittance for Visitors & Guests: \$8.00 each person. Boy Scouts in Uniform FREE! 12 and Under FREE! 90 and above FREE!

**Prices:** Vendor Tables/Table Spots: \$15.00 each spot/space/table (good for the entire show). First reserve first served. If you are a walk-in the day of the show, tables may be limited as this show typically sells out.

**Food:** Meal & bake sale services provided by Live Oak Baptist Church! Menu to be announced! If you recall them in the past, you know you’re going to be eating just as well if your grandmother was baking you a pie for that after dinner desert!

TALK IN: 147.360, +, 0.6, 100 Hz Tone

Want to have us advertise your business as attending? Just email us or drop us a line!

<b>Activities Offered:</b>	National Vendors!	Deals, Deals, Deals!
License Testing at 1000 10/11/25!	Area Club Booths and Tables!	
Refreshments!	Private Individual Tables!	
Local Vendors!	Raffles & Prizes!	

As if that Hamfest is not enough! The Panama City ARC has a Tailgate on Oct the 18<sup>th</sup>! This will be held at the Panama City Amateur Radio Clubhouse located at 130 North church Street, Panama City, Florida, 32401. This event will run from 9am to 1pm. Be sure to pay them a visit as they are wonderful hosts who welcome all! For more details or inquires, please go to <https://www.w4ryz.org/>

Ok we know about all of the bigger events going on in some areas of the Panhandle, what has been going on in some of the local Organizations?!

Glad you asked that question!

**The North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club** in Crestview Florida has been big time busy! Obviously with detailing their upcoming Hamfest. But what else is transpiring at this highly enjoyable club?! NOARC is coming up on its Volunteer Season with the weather cooling off. So planning is underway to not only aid the City of Crestview, Niceville, other Non-Profits be successful in safety and communications, but to also participate in a parade or two! It all starts with the Nov 11, 2025, Veterans Day Parade in Crestview Florida. Details to be released soon. Keep an eye on [W4AAZ.Org](http://W4AAZ.Org) for more!



**The Playground Amateur Radio Club** as you know has WIRES-X capabilities! Today, the team improved the antenna from a 3 Db gain antenna to a 9 Db gain antenna! It also was elevated from its standoff location to a new height! So, what does that mean for you and everyone else? A better coverage area and reliable WIRES-X coverage in NW Florida! Give it a shot, break out your WRES-X Capable Radios, and talk digitally, the world over! PARC WIRES-X: 146.400 MHz sponsored by AA0EU, Node 91172 Room 01172.

PARC always has something in store to suit your experimentation in Amateur Radio and many other forms of communication! Key on every 1st and 3rd Thursday at 730pm and every Sunday at 3pm for the PILE-UP or join the net each Sunday at 730pm on 146.790! The Playground Team reports that they had many, many visitors during their Open House / Fox Hunt and would like to remind you all those meetings and Pile-Ups are free to attend and see if the Playground is the right fit for your desires! [W4ZBB.ORG](http://W4ZBB.ORG)



## **Amateur Radio Society**

**The Twin Cities Amateur Radio** Club gets a tip of the hat and honorable mention! They continue to hold nets. They are currently using the 146.790, -, .6, 100Hz W4ZBB repeater on Sunday's at 830pm Central. Be sure to tune in and join! They surely have a lot of fun hearing from everyone and invite more to check in with them and participate.

Speaking of nets, the following data is pulled from [NWFLHAMRADIO.Net](http://NWFLHAMRADIO.Net). Be sure to make a note of the information and participate. The joy of communicating over the air, sharing ideas, and collaborating is just as possible over the air just as much as it is by watching YouTube (or whatever source you use). We need to get some of the action, back on the air (just my opinion) and share with our fellow operators, neighbors, and potential Amateur Radio Supporters.

Before you read the net list below here is a plug. We tuned into the Wire Rascals 146.760 W4UC (-offset, 100hz tone) on a Friday at 7pm (yes finally at home to do so) and wow, the conversation, training, education, and idea exchange set a high bar! A lot of great information and after the net, a few Hams even stuck around to assist a new licensee who had question about a home brew 10-meter-long wire antenna! Listen folks, tune that dial to any of these nets and take the time to check in. You can add to the wonderful communication going on, participate as you wish, and just have a great time. Remember before cell phones and social media? We used to use the radio as the main way to stay in touch in and around town. Let's bring back getting to know each other versus looking at a picture of what is often only a glimpse into a split second!

### **Daily**

- 8:00am NFL ARES Net 7.265 LSB (Traffic net) Alternate 7.242 LDB (Not on Sunday)
- 6:00pm QFN Net, all Florida CW Traffic Net 3547 kHz
- 6:30pm NFL Phone Net 3.950 LSB (Traffic net)
- 8:00pm Gulf Coast VHF Training Net 147.360 W4AAZ (-offset, 100hz tone)

### **Monday's**

- 7:00pm Escambia ARES Training Session 146.760 W4UC (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 7:00pm Okaloosa ARES Training Session 147.225 MHz (+offset, 123 hz tone)
- 7:30pm Escambia ARES Net 146.760 W4UC (offset, 100hz tone)
- 8:00pm Milton ARC Net 145.490 W4VIY (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 7:30pm Walton County Amateur Radio Club Net 147.285mhz (+offset, 100hz tone). Also, Echolink. The node is WF4X-R.

### **Tuesday's**

- 7:00pm Santa Rosa County ARES Net 146.700 K4SRC (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 7:30pm Elmers Net 146.760 W4UC (-offset, 100hz tone)

### **Wednesday's**

- 7:00pm Escarosa 10M Net 28.375 USB
- 7:30pm Walton County Amateur Radio Club Net 147.285mhz (+offset, 100hz tone). Also, Echolink. The node is WF4X-R.

### **Thursday's**

- (First Thursday only) 8:00P 220 Round Table 224.000 KO4SRC (-offset DCS023)
- 6:00pm – Mullet Net 3.885 AM

**Friday's**

- 7:00pm Wire Rascals 146.760 W4UC (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 7:30pm Walton County Amateur Radio Club Net 147.285mhz (+offset, 100hz tone). Also, Echolink. The node is WF4X-R.

**Sunday's**

- 6:00pm North Florida Digital Net, 3.590, USB, PSK31
- 7:00pm YL (Women's) Net 146.700 K4SRC (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 7:30pm PARC Sunday Night Net 146.79 W4ZBB (-offset, 100hz tone)
- 8:30pm Twin Cities Amateur Radio Club (TCARC) **Temp on 146.790 W4ZBB (-offset, 100hz tone)**

All this inclusion and empowerment in the Amateur Radio community! What does it all mean? Team building in the context of amateur radio can be approached in two primary ways: through activities that foster collaboration within a club or group, and through events that leverage the nature of the hobby itself to build a sense of community and shared purpose. So, get out that microphone, put your voice to the airwaves, and help each other out with a project! You never know what you will learn from the experience with nothing more than stating your call!



## “Our National Calamity”: The Great Easter 1913 Flood

Wireless to the Rescue! Birth of Emergency Radio

<https://nationalcalamityeaster1913flood.blogspot.com/2014/04/wireless-to-rescue-birth-of-emergency.html>

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## Alachua County EOC AUXCOMM: NF4AC

Brett Wallace NH2KW

A Brief Overview of Our Operation with a Vision for Future Interoperability <https://www.nf4rc.club/>

Ocala AUXCOMM Meeting Sept 20 2025 Presentation

<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/ocala-auxcomm-meeting-sept-20-2025/>

# ARRL Member Bulletin



## Please be Alert for Email and Text Scams

September 10, 2025

We have heard from several members that Amateur Radio Operators and radio clubs are being targeted by scammers requesting gift card purchases. In one case, the scam message appeared to come from one club officer to another.

Please remember: *No legitimate organization will ever ask for payment in the form of gift cards.*

We also want to reassure you that we do not share your email address with third parties. If you receive a suspicious message, delete it and report it.

Stay alert and stay safe!

73

ARRL Member Services

### Resources to help stay safe online:

Federal Trade Commission “Avoiding and Reporting Gift Card Scams”

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/avoiding-reporting-gift-card-scams>

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## Hams Needed to Track NASA Moon Mission

PHOTO: Artemis II NASA astronauts (left to right) Reid Wiseman, KF5LKT; Victor Glover, KI5BKC; and Christina Koch, along with Canadian Space Agency (CSA) astronaut Jeremy Hansen, KF5LKU. [NASA Photo by Frank Michaux]



The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is seeking volunteers to passively track the 2026 Artemis II Orion spacecraft as the crewed mission travels to the Moon and back to Earth.

The Artemis II test flight will send NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, KF5LKT; Victor Glover, KI5BKC; and Christina Koch, along with Canadian Space Agency (CSA) astronaut Jeremy Hansen, KF5LKU, on an approximately 10-day mission around the Moon.

Targeted for no later than April 2026, the mission will rely on NASA's Near Space Network and Deep Space Network for primary communications and tracking support throughout its launch, orbit, and reentry. However, with a growing focus on commercialization, NASA wants to further understand industry's tracking capabilities.

This collaboration opportunity builds upon a previous request released by NASA's Space Communication and Navigation Program (SCaN) during the Artemis I mission in 2022. Ten volunteers successfully tracked the uncrewed Orion spacecraft on its journey thousands of miles beyond the Moon and back.

One of those volunteers tracking in 2022 was Scott Chapman, K4KDR, of Montpelier, Virginia. "Sometimes it's what you don't know that makes this kind of activity interesting," said Chapman. "All I had was a small S-band dish and receiver and wasn't sure what I could or couldn't hear...but when I started hearing the signals...it made everything worth it."

Chapman said he felt good about the whole process and, while it was interesting, it was also a lot of fun!

There were also other participants during the Artemis I mission, including international space agencies, academic institutions, commercial companies, nonprofits, and private citizens who were also attempting to receive Orion's signals. Chapman added that NASA is also looking for commercial partnerships to share in the process.

If you're interested in volunteering for next year's event, all of the information can be found at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). The response deadline is October 27, 2025, at 5:00 PM EDT.

## Low-Cost Ham Radio RV Traveling Across America

### Part 2: The Journey Tests The Plan

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

***"Everyone has a plan -- until they get punched in the mouth!"***

After teaching AP STEM courses part-time for a few years after retiring from Anesthesiology, it was time for a change -- so Nancy plotted a course all the way from Newberry, FL to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Would our 2007 24-foot ancient travel trailer make it? How 'bout the truck? And what radio and antenna? Would I succeed at POTA?



The planning that we did included:

- Additional (2nd) spare tire fully assembled for both pickup truck and travel trailer.
- Two 100-Ahr LIFEPO4 Batteries, a 2kW inverter, to power the residential refrigerator/freezer, with a 20Amp AC charger and 40Amp MPPT solar charger, and 3 100-watt 18V solar panels
- 3.4 kW inverter generator in the bed of the pickup truck to provide power when boon-docking (2 different Yellowstone camps)

But that wasn't all! I've done a modest amount of mechanical repair before, including personally overhauling a small 4-cylinder engine, and I've also had not just one, but three explosive tire-blowouts related to trailers, and I've had ham radio equipment quit on me also -- so we carried a lot of additional gear and supplies:

- 3/8" Metric socket set
- Full set of metric wrenches
- Heavy-duty floor jack for jacking up either vehicle for tire changes
- Ryobi battery-powered 1/2" impact wrench and impact sockets for relevant lug nuts on both vehicles
- Soldering Iron, solder, needle nose pliers, diagonal cutters, spare wire, electrical insulation tape
- Assortment of coaxial cable lengths
- Crimp-on Coaxial connectors / Crimper
- Dual containers of Epoxy Glue Resin/Hardener
- Extra Paracord and rope
- Three laptop computers for me, and one for Nancy as well
- Relevant financial account information for the event of catastrophic investment changes
- Amazon "basic" simple keypad safe bolted inside of trailer cabinetry
- Significant amount of cash for repairs or other needs
- Handguns in safe and conceal-carried for safety, with ammunition
- Chlorine testing kit to test camp water
- Bleach to treat water if needed

We always traveled with partially full fresh water tank, which would be very much appreciated if we broke down on the road and were stuck for a significant amount of time in one place.

#### **BREAKDOWNS: TRAILER**

The TRAILER, 19-years old, proved to be almost perfect on this trip. We had zero tire failures. During a very heavy rain in Utah, I detected a few drops of water leaking past the bathroom vent/fan. The other vent and skylight, both of which I had removed and re-puttied, were perfect with zero drips. The bathroom vent/fan will eventually get pulled as a result. The plumbers putty under the other two had completely dried up and was providing zero water protection, and I suspect the same with the vent/fan.

In Ohio somewhere I found the bathroom mirror hanging on only one remaining screw in one hinge; the 19-year old plastic of the medicine cabinet had cracked from bad-roads vibration. This was repaired by laying a thin strip of paint-stirrer wood over the edge, and gluing with epoxy glue. This provided new purchase for the screws of both hinges, and the mirror remained intact the remainder the trip.

After the shaking that New Mexico highways gave us for hours, part of the ceiling air conditioner plastic covering cracked and two other screws came loose also. This was repaired with a small strip of paint-stirrer wood, some epoxy glue for securement and on the threads of the loosened screws. The AC cover remained intact the remainder of the trip. New Mexico got our vote for the worst roads.

#### **BREAKDOWNS: TRUCK**

The 2016 Silverado TRUCK had a bigger problem. Twice I had the impression while maneuvering in tight parking lots, that the power brakes were suddenly "manual brakes." The dash gave me the warning "SERVICE BRAKE ASSIST" and one of those times I thought I was going to slide into the next vehicle in line despite pushing with all my might on the brake..... We did get the vehicle into a Chevrolet dealer in Salt Lake City where it was diagnosed as a well-known brake vacuum pump failure -- for which there was a "special" warranty that would cover it, but the dealer didn't stock the part! With some "encouragement" they found a part within several hundred miles and were able to get the truck back on the road after about 36 hours. This required us to extend both a campsite and a rental car and also drive into the night in the midst of storms to catch up our schedule so we didn't have to re-schedule 10-odd more campsites -- but we did get it fixed!

#### **HAM RADIO:**

The sBitx semi-QRP SDR transceiver, built around a raspberry Pi by HFSIGNALS.COM turned out to function flawlessly, along with the Z-100 auto tuner! During the trip I learned how to get LOG4OM to connect perfectly and automatically to WSJT-X so I could log POTA activations easily and make perfect submissions to the POTA log upload. As a result I was able to successfully submit six POTA activation logs from the three national parks that we visited. At Zion, all of the RV parks inside were closed for remodeling, so we stayed outside and I had to move the truck and trailer to their visitor parking lot one afternoon to make the required contacts.

The 52-foot non-resonant antenna, 30-odd foot fiberglass mast, homebrew 9:1 Balun and 1:1 choke Balun functioned very well the entire trip! No one seemed to mind the antenna, and I got a few interested inquiries. On the High Plains, especially in Cody, Wyoming the winds were very impressive at times, even slightly rocking the trailer, so I gave up on flying a US Flag. A few times the potential for thunderstorms convinced me to put the antenna mast down and disconnected. I got very good at extending the collapsible ladder and putting up and down the antenna. On 20-meters I generally got signal reports from others that were similar to how strong I was hearing their signals, suggesting the antenna was quite effective on that band. On 40 meters I had a lot less favorable signal reports. I never tried joining any 75-meter morning ragchew nets except one, where a few of the participants could hear me and relayed. However, it was great fun listening to hams all across America voicing their opinions and thoughts on morning ragchew nets. I was able to get the antenna to successfully connect me to two SHARES WINLINK stations on frequencies a bit above the 75 meter band, a couple hundred miles away or more before daybreak. I considered that a big success.

RV travel parks can be very RF-noisy places. My own trailer's 12-volt "converter" produces huge hash, so often I flipped off its circuit breaker and 12-volt systems just ran from battery during ham operations. My wife's laptop power supply also made interference, but using a simple AC filter (e.g. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09NND96FQ>) on its power cord quieted that down significantly.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Our little travel trailer is an example of a "self-contained" living space, and it functioned fairly well as a ham radio communications point, also. The resilience of even an older trailer like this one, when roof work has been attended to, demonstrates that it could be a great communications vehicle for a ham radio club or ARES(R) group. Simple travel trailers provide many of the "comforts of home" and are great for fun or public service!

## Vulnerabilities of Internet and Cell Phone Systems

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Many disaster response groups remain firmly dependent on the Internet for much or all of their command and coordination. I remain amazed at the continuing vulnerability, but I understand why they see this as versatile tool for integration and communications. Recent events serve to again demonstrate how vulnerable the Internet and cell phone communications remain.

### New York City Cell Phone System TakeOver Possibility

When the President was scheduled to speak to the United Nations, Secret Service discovered an elaborate system of "SIM SERVERS" scattered throughout otherwise unoccupied apartments in the New York City area. Apparently these computerized systems are able to provide any cell phone communication with an apparently good SIM card -- and it appears they can change that number as needed. There were apparently three hundred of these systems deployed by a threat actor, and they had over 100,000 SIM cards/numbers available to them. The reporting indicated that these systems include the capabilities to:



- Completely take down the entire city's cell service (possibly by denial of service by overloading the system?)
- Make millions of phone calls in only minutes (reaching every phone number in America in 12 minutes)
- Mask any number of SWAting phone calls to tie up police resources and potentially result in fatalities

Obviously, by destroying the capability of the public switched network to function, the majority of Internet users would also lose access. Imagine what this would do to the response if there had been a real attack of the 9/11 type, or an attempted assassination? It wouldn't take nearly 300 servers to take down my county's systems, I suspect...

### GeoServer Attack

Separately, on one of the forums I peruse, I learned of a DHS/CSIS advisory (<https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/cybersecurity-advisories/aa25-266a>) that detailed the Incident Response to an attack on a federal agency's Internet Systems. Geoserver is a public-sourced software system that allows a wide variety of GIS inputs to provide mapping solutions. It is the kind of system Ref: <https://maps-nyc.com/img/1200/map-of-new-york-city.jpg> that ham radio operators using WINLINK reporting forms might be sending input to, as a data aggregation system for a disaster response system. Apparently there were a series of commands that could be used to "take over" Internet control of the server, and when this was discovered, a threat advisory was issued. (<https://www.cve.org/CVERecord?id=CVE-2024-36401>) But an un-named agency didn't get the message and didn't protect their system from attack. Only eleven days later, one of their systems was successfully attacked, and then that intrusion allowed a furtherance of the intruder control onto a 2nd server! I can only imagine the effort that was required to clean up that mess. Both of these incidents are good reminders why our trained amateur radio operators and their service for our county, and their abilities to leverage as many seven different communications systems to maintain a small amount of independent communications are such an important component of our county's preparedness. All of our Level III trained volunteers are able to use every single system



## HF BandPass Filter Repairs / Recommendation

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Like many other EOC's, even at the state level, our Alachua County EOC has had a limited number of coaxial cables, and in our case only ONE for an HF antenna. So trying to listen to a ham disaster net at the same time as participating in a SHARES net or other activity on another band was impossible. (Just as W1AW broadcasts CW training simultaneously on multiple bands, it might be good for statewide disaster nets to operate simultaneously on two bands to allow coverage for both near and far counties -- but impossible if you only have HF outlet.)

Our solution for Field Day became to put up additional antennas, and after a memorable summer where we put up SEVEN antennas at an alternate EOC location, my team cried "Uncle!" and asked for something easier, with less physical work... We had already learned something about bandpass filters and built some simple Butterworth filters (<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/equipment-design-manuals/field-day-bandpass-filters/>) from an ARRL resource article -- but those don't let you put multiple transceivers on ONE antenna and taking a cue from the GARS folks, we learned about the wonderful VA6AM antenna multiplexer systems. (<https://va6am.com/>) Not being wealthy, we bought the **kits** (email Pavel directly) and learned how to tune them and even more-- we learned how they work! Soon we had expanded and expanded and eventually could run five or even six simultaneous transceivers on a single, suitable multiband end-fed halfwave antenna.

A slide-show review of this technology and how it has grown from original efforts by Gordon Gary K6KV to the advanced solutions by VA6AM and our Alachua County derivations can be seen here: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/Quintplexor2023.pdf>

But some of our systems were not true VA6AM builds, they were our own adaptations and homebrewed in some cases using the best parts we could find. We learned from Pavel to use LARGE low-loss toroids and multi-kV capacitors. Field Day provides a fantastic chance to test out not only our skills but also our equipment -- and we've had some failures, principally the high voltage ceramic capacitors. **This article will explain what we found and how to avoid these failures.**

During the 2025 Field Day, one of our 15-meter bandpass filters and an 80-meter filter bit the dust. These were almost certainly our own modifications/creations (I don't think I can point to *any* actual VA6AM part that has failed.) Examination of these filters showed in both cases, a 3kV ceramic "blue" capacitor had failed -- the ones I purchased very inexpensively from Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09P7JRR1H>. When I did "power testing" (100 watts for two successive 60-second intervals into a dummy load) I was surprised to find that a lot of these inexpensive 22pf 3kV capacitors were getting HOT. So I ended up replacing a bunch of them with 22pf 6kV capacitors of TDK brand <https://www.mouser.com/ProductDetail/TKD/CC45SL3JD220JYGNA?qs=sGAEpiMZZMuMW9TJLBQkXppyB8d7Ldx77fd3d0hNcN4%3D> from Mouser or Digikey. These are a little more expensive at \$0.41 each, but it is well worth it -- they ran COOL in my tests. I discovered that their literature states they have a "low dissipation factor and decreased self-heating temperature in the high frequency and high voltage application."

I'm now a believer in the TDK capacitors! They might be the ones that Pavel has been using (can't be If your EOC or other group has limited HF antenna or coaxial cable access, you might profitably consider using antenna multiplexers as a way to get around the limitations!

Review of the basic technology:

<https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2023/Quintplexor2023.pdf>

Our 6th Band Addition:

<https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/antennas/adding-6th-band-alachua-county-sextuplemultiplexer/>

# MERT



Marion County Sheriff's Office  
Division of Emergency Management

## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

October 2025

**MERT's primary role is to support all open Evacuation Shelters throughout Marion County (FL) during declared Emergency events.** We also support the Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander, staff and other EMCOMM groups (CERT, HEC, ARES) with voice, image & data communications locally, statewide and across the United States.

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

### **Next Bimonthly Meeting**

**November 15th, 10:00  
am at the EOC**

**All Amateur Radio Operators  
are Welcomed!**

**Meetings conducted in Jan,  
March, May, July, Sept. and Nov.**

### **Working Together: MERT's Commitment to Be Ready**



Behind every clear transmission, emergency alert, and coordinated response is a team of volunteers who are ready to make it possible. At MERT, our current volunteers are leading an ambitious effort to update, renew, replace, and improve the communications infrastructure that serves the Division of Emergency Management. It's a quiet revolution with a powerful impact which is only possible with the strong leadership and support of Preston Bowlin, Director along with Erin Miller, Deputy Director; Logan Stamp, Emergency Management Coordinator; Nathan Hime, Emergency Management Planner; and, Darian Tucker, Administrative Assistant.

Across the county, from Ocala to the center of the national forest, volunteers have been hard at work replacing aging repeaters, rebuilding our systems on the towers, expanding battery backup resources and insuring shelters are in good working order. These aren't just hardware improvements—they're lifelines being strengthened by people who really care about our community safety and resilience when the majority are unable to do anything to help others.

The recent installation of a new repeater in the Ocala National Forest, the equipment moves and enhancement of the Sheriff's Complex tower last fall, and the rebuilt EOC tower and systems represent milestones driven by many hundreds of hours of collaboration, technical skill, and commitment.

Volunteers have replaced and upgraded EOC tower coaxial cable runs two years ago, tested and repaired systems equipment and ensured that every link in the emergency communications (EMCOMM) chain performs when needed. The team has also expanded MERT's capabilities by receiving a SHARES license and improving the capabilities of every Kit inventories. These upgrades mean improved capabilities, greater reliability, better response times, clearer communications and broader coverage in times of crisis.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."* – Margaret Mead

But what truly sets MERT apart is the team itself. Diverse in background but united in purpose, our volunteers bring together new members, seasoned radio operators, tech-savvy troubleshooters, and passionate community advocates. They don't just respond when disaster strikes—they train and prepare in advance, anticipate challenges, and innovate solutions. Their camaraderie and shared vision have transformed MERT into a vital arm of Marion County's emergency response network.

Together, we're building a system that won't just endure the next hurricane - it will help in guiding our community safely through it. And with each system adjusted, cable replaced, signal fine-tuned and repeater added, our volunteers are proving what's possible when dedication meets a commitment to help the residents of Marion County. We can all be proud of our work as we support our motto... **"When all else fails. Call MERT!"**

Thank you, members for your participation and enthusiastic support!

Ps: Thank you for reporting all your volunteer hours in **MERTrak**.

### **Ocala Forest Tower Repeater Update**

As testing continues across north Florida with MERT's new Ocala Forest repeater (147.210 MHz; +600 kHz; 123 PL), additional revisions are being made. The most recent is focused on improving the reliability and operational life of the repeater unit should extensive use be required during a major hurricane event.

Radio transmitter/receivers (repeaters) can be subject to failure if the unit is required to operate continuously while supporting major events. This long operational use is referred to as a heavy "duty-cycle" and can push the transmitter portion of the repeater to overheat to a point causing failure. To reduce this from happening, repeaters can be adjusted to lower transmitter power and a heavy-duty post-amplifier be added to maintain coverage.



Towards this objective, we are very thankful to Andy Allen (NA4DA) who recommended this revision and loaned his custom-built post-amplifier in support of MERT's mission and responsibilities. We appreciate his generous support and the equipment loan.

**Repeater with post-amp installed.**



Thanks Andy!

**(L) Andy Allen NA4DA upgrading the new Forest repeater with his loaned post-amplifier.**

### **MERT INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS-205)**

With the ongoing testing of the new Forest Tower repeater confirming its operational usefulness to MERT's radio coverage, our communications plan was modified to reflect its addition as a key resource during all future activations. Please secure a copy of the 9/25/2025 version of our ICS-205 showing its addition as Channel 5. Visit: [KG4NXO.com](http://KG4NXO.com) and the tab "Quick Links" for your copy.

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands — one for helping yourself, the other for helping oth-

**EOC Radio Room Update**



Another updated document includes the EOC Radio Room diagram. MERT is adding a radio at Station 2 to support the fulltime monitoring of our new Forest repeater which supports direct EOC to EOC communications. Visit: [KG4NXO.com](http://KG4NXO.com) for a copy.

**Member Updates!**

Kudos to the following members who are stepping up and challenging themselves to new levels while supporting MERT. Please join me in congratulating them all!



**New  
General License  
Santos Pagan  
KR4FEP**



**New  
Logistics Manager  
Royce Hagerman  
KD7SNN**



**Deputy Logistics Manager  
Cindy Sheffield  
K9LRX**



**CERT Liaison  
Craig Pritts  
A2LHO**

**Field Exercise @ the MCSO Northwest Office – Salt Springs**



(L) The latest Field Excise location was a re-test from the Salt Springs area originally conducted in 2020. The great news is the results went from 0 radio repeaters contacted then to 15 on the recent test!

MERT thanks all members who supported this important exercise!



Royce Hagerman KD7SNN and Ray Woody WB6FKJ loading radios, antennas and portable towers.



Phil Lewis W4EUV checks in with Jaime Gillan, Administrative Assistant with the MCSO Office.



The new MERT pop up tent was very welcomed in keeping the hot sun off all the operators during the tests.



(L) MERT's telescoping tower and Yagi 2 Meter/70 cm antenna were important components for the successful radio communications test results at the Salt Springs Field Exercise.



Santos Pagan KR4FEP notes radio test results as Royce Hagerman KD7SNN conducts them. Mark Weible in back.



Harlan Cook KN4VRM adjust a second Yagi antenna before conducting tests.



Phil Lewis W4EVV and Mark Weible await the results of a Winlink Digital test.

Members successfully conducted 15 specific frequency tests during the Exercise using the new Forest repeater and others around Marion County.

**September Meeting Update**

The September meeting had great speakers, excellent information to learn and timely updates on training and exercise results by MERT, Hospital HEC and ARES teams. We also welcomed special guests from the North Florida Amateur Radio Club in Alachua County who provided a Informative overview of their amateur radio activities. (Visit: <https://www.nf4rc.club/>)



(L) Harlan Cook, Coordinator welcomed 26 attendees to the monthly meeting. (R) Guest speaker Brett Wallace NH2KW, Alachua County, shares his update on Future Objectives; New EOC status; and future collaboration w/N FL AUXCOMM Work Group.



“We can benefit others through our actions by being warm and generous toward them, by being charitable, and by helping those in need.” -Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama



(Far Left) Brett Wallace provides a thorough update on Alachua County activities.  
(L) New MERT member Don Webb W9EBB is presented his Welcome letter sharing his approved application by the MCSO.

(R) Bill Gillespie, Deputy Coordinator and Harlan Cook, presents KK4AEG Trustee Certificate to Gary Nicholas HQ4HQD.  
(Far Right) Phil Lewis W4EVV is presented the KK4DFC Trustee Certificate.



(L) Bill Gillespie, Deputy Coordinator and Harlan Cook present Royce Hagerman KD7SNN his MCSO Uniform in completing Levels I & II of the New Member Orientation Taskbook. Additionally, Royce received his Logistics Manager Certificate

(R) Ray Woody WB6FKJ, Shelter Manager presents an update on his responsibilities and duties supporting MERT's shelter activities. Ray also provided an update on the next shelter to open at the new South Marion High School. He also explained



(Far Left) Dave Welker W2SRP HEC Coordinator share the results of the latest HEC Exercise results with attendees.

(L) Gray Moffett KC3DWY Marion County ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinator shares updates on the Iron Spill Exercise and the Net Control Op. class for amateur radio operators.

"The greatest waste in the world is the difference between what we are... and what we could become!" - Ben Herberster (American Clergyman)

**CERT Liaison Update – Kraig Pritts**



MERT member and CERT Liaison Kraig Pritts KA2LHO shares there is a new CERT class on the dates listed below at the EOC.

- October 04, 2025      Saturday
- October 11, 2025      “
- October 28, 2025      “
- October 25, 2025      “
- November 1, 2025      “



Participants can secure and complete an application at the first class.

**Kraig Pritts  
KA2LHO**

Classes generally run from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm. Participants are very encouraged to attend all classes to receive a certificate.

Limited class make up opportunities *may* be available... *depending on the class missed.*

**MBA Net Update**



MERT Member and Marion Baptist Association (MBA) Liaison Mark Weible N4GPA, shares their Net times have changed. The “Disaster Relief Net” now meets at 9:00 p.m. Tuesdays on the KA4WJA Repeater Receive: 146.970 MHz, -600 kHz; No Tone).

(Note: Locally, this repeater is often referred to as the “970 repeater” or the “Anthony repeater”. Access throughout Marion County is usually very good, even if participating with a Handi-Talkie (HT).)

This week, their NET will be talking about the National SOS Radio Network and how to develop a community network of FRS and GMRS operators. An informative reference is at:

Visit: [https://radiorelay.org/files/sos/National\\_SOS\\_hurricane\\_flood\\_flyer%202021-8-9.pdf](https://radiorelay.org/files/sos/National_SOS_hurricane_flood_flyer%202021-8-9.pdf)

For more information, contact Mark Weible at [mark@ams.mba](mailto:mark@ams.mba) or visit: [www.ams.mba](http://www.ams.mba)

**Robert Ethridge – New Emergency Management Coordinator**

We are very pleased sharing Robert Ethridge was selected to fill the open Emergency Management Coordinator position for the Division of Emergency Management. Mr. Ethridge transfers from his current duties as a Deputy Sheriff since receiving his Florida Law Enforcement Certificate. Prior to that responsibility, he served as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO).



We are looking forward to welcoming Mr. Ethridge and the opportunity of working with him to continue advancing MERT’s Mission into the future.

For more information on the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT), visit:

**[KG4NXO.com](http://KG4NXO.com)**

All hams are welcomed to attend all MERT meetings every Wednesday from 9:00 am till Noon at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC); 692 NW 30<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ocala, FL.

“Being good is commendable, but only when it is combined with doing good is it useful.” – Author Unknown

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:n4ng@icloud.com) in advance of the meeting.

### Lake Monroe ARS FCC Testing, Sanford FL (LMARS)

- Third Saturday of every month
- Seminole County Sheriff's Office, 100 Eslinger Way, 1st Floor, Sanford, FL
- Registration Required
- For more information and registration, contact Bob Cumming, W2BZY, 407-333-0690 or [w2bzy@cfl.rr.com](mailto:w2bzy@cfl.rr.com)

### Milton Amateur Radio Club, Milton FL

- Check date at [miltonarc.org](http://miltonarc.org)
- Walk-in
- Bagdad United Methodist Church
- Info: Chuck, N4QEP, [merlinman3@yahoo.com](mailto:merlinman3@yahoo.com)

### Orlando Amateur Radio Club

- First Wednesday
- 5:30 PM, Walk-ins allowed
- ARRL/VEC
- William Beardall Senior Center 800 S Delaney Ave Orlando FL 32801.
- Info: [testing@OARC.org](mailto: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](http://srcares.org)

### Seminole County

- Every month on the third Saturday
- 9:15 AM
- Seminole County Sheriff's Office off SR 17-92, on 100 Eslinger Way in Sanford, FL
- Info: Bob Cumming, W2BZY, [w2bzy@cfl.rr.com](mailto:w2bzy@cfl.rr.com)

### Silver Springs Radio Club, Ocala FL (SSRC)

- Go to <http://k4gso.us/class/> to 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](mailto:geraldguy@gmail.com)

### Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS)

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

### West Volusia Amateur Radio Society

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

### 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.**