



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

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From the Shack of the Section Manager

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR (kk4ecr@gmail.com)



**What's Happening,
What's at Stake, and
What You Should Be
Doing Right Now**

Field Day Is Coming. Are You Ready?

ARRL Field Day 2026 runs June 27 and 28, beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday and ending at 2059 UTC Sunday. That gives you less than a month to get organized. ARRL This year's Field Day theme is "Amateur Radio: A National Resource." That's not just a slogan. It's the pitch you bring to every served agency official, every county emergency manager, every mayor's office, and every neighbor who wanders over to ask what all the antennas are about. Use it. ARRL

Field Day is the single best outreach event we have. It's not just a contest. It's a live demonstration that amateur radio operators show up, set up, and communicate when everything else fails. A premium is placed on developing skills to meet the challenges of emergency preparedness, as well as acquainting the general public with the capabilities of amateur radio. That means you need bodies at your site who are not just logging contacts. You need someone greeting the public. Someone explaining what they're watching. Someone willing to put a microphone in a visitor's hand and let them make a contact. ARRL

You earn a 100-point bonus if your Field Day site is visited by a representative of an agency served by ARES in your local community, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, local emergency management, or law enforcement, as a result of an invitation issued by your group. Don't leave that bonus on the table. Send the invitation now. A phone call works better than an email. Tell them

what you do and why it matters to their organization. They're busy. Make it easy for them to say yes. ARRL

Post your site on the ARRL Field Day Locator. Promote it on social media. Send a press release to your local paper. If you've never done a Field Day before, find a club in your section that's doing one and show up to help. Learn the operation. Then build your own next year.

Promoting Amateur Radio to Served Agencies and the Public

Field Day is one weekend. Your relationship with served agencies needs to be year-round.

Local emergency management offices, Red Cross chapters, Salvation Army units, and county sheriffs work with ARES operators because they trust them. That trust gets built over time, through training exercises, through showing up when there's weather, through being the team that answers when others can't.

Schedule a visit to your emergency management office before Field Day. Bring a one-page summary of what your club does, how many licensed operators are in the area, and what equipment you maintain. Keep it plain. No jargon. Those agency folks don't need to know what FT8 is. They need to know that when the cell towers go down, you're the people who keep information moving.

At public events, let people touch the gear. Let them hear a voice come back on HF. Let a kid send a message. The hobby sells itself when it's in someone's hands. Brochures sit in a stack. A real QSO sticks in someone's memory.

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The HOA Bill: Where Things Stand

This is the one that keeps coming up in every club meeting, every forum, every online conversation. And for good reason. Thousands of licensed operators in this section live in deed-restricted communities where they can't put up an antenna that actually works.

The bipartisan Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act was reintroduced in February 2025 as H.R.1094 in the House and S.459 in the Senate. The bills are designed to prevent restrictive HOA rules that currently prohibit or severely limit the installation of amateur radio antennas, even when such antennas are hidden in trees, placed in attics, mounted on vehicles, or look like flagpoles. [Keycityarc](#)

The bill limits the adoption and enforcement of private land use restrictions that prohibit, restrict, or impair the installation, maintenance, or operation of an amateur station antenna on property controlled by an amateur radio operator. Private land use restrictions would be deemed to prohibit or impair such installation if they unreasonably delay, prevent, or increase the cost or difficulty of the work, or if they prevent or degrade reception or transmission of a signal acceptable to the operator. [Congress.gov](#)

The bill has not passed. ARRL lobbyists and attorneys continue to pressure the FCC and Congress, but progress has been slow. What you can do right now is write your representatives. ARRL has template letters available, but personalized letters carry more weight. Tell them you're a licensed operator, tell them you serve your community, and tell them you can't do that effectively from inside an HOA that won't let you put up an antenna. [Amateur Radio Is On](#)

ARRL President Rick Roderick stated plainly that this legislation is about restoring equal rights to licensed amateur radio operators, noting that these restrictions hinder not only the enjoyment of amateur radio, but also its vital role in emergency communication during disasters. [Keycityarc](#)

If you live in an HOA yourself, document your situation. Talk to your board. Propose stealth options. And keep the pressure on your congressional representatives. This bill has bipartisan support. It needs constituent voices to move.

The Youth Problem Is Real. Here's What Actually Works.

The demographic data isn't pretty. Clubs keep losing members to silent keys faster than they recruit new ones. The average age of a licensed amateur in the U.S. keeps climbing. If clubs don't reverse that trend, the next ten years are going to be rough.

The good news is that young people are actually interested in what amateur radio offers. They just don't know it exists. They're building with Arduino. They're flying FPV drones. They're obsessed with cybersecurity, SDR, and satellite tracking. Every one of those interests connects directly to something in our hobby.

Here's what works:

Get into schools. Contact your local STEM teacher. Offer to bring equipment to class for an afternoon. A fox hunt. A satellite contact. A Winlink demonstration. You don't need a full club presentation. You need one compelling hour.

Run a Technician class aimed specifically at teenagers. Keep the cost low or free. Partner with a local school or library to host it. Make the exam feel achievable, not intimidating. Several clubs in this section have run license classes with a 90 percent pass rate by using focused study sessions over three to four weeks.

The ARRL Youth Rally at Hamvention featured activities including satellite communications, a short sprint contest, a fox hunt, and a chance to make contact with a parachute-mobile station. Attendees were encouraged to bring a 2-meter handheld radio. That's the right model. Make it active. Make it competitive. Make it something they'd brag about. [ARRL](#)

Globally, organizations like Youngsters on the Air run camps and contests specifically designed for licensed operators under the age of 26, drawing participants from Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The World Organization of the Scout Movement's annual Jamboree on the Air is the largest scouting activity on earth, with roughly half a million Scouts and Guides making radio contacts each October. Your club can plug into both of those programs right now. [Dayton 247 Now](#)

Connect with your local Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and Explorer Post leaders. The Radio Merit Badge is a real thing. Offer to be the counselor. You'll license some of those kids before you're done.

The other piece is mentorship. A young ham who gets licensed and then has nobody to operate with will let that license expire. Pair new young licensees with an Elmer. Check in with them. Invite them to your Field Day operation. Give them a reason to stay in the hobby.

Dayton Hamvention 2026: What Happened and Why It Matters

The 74th annual Dayton Hamvention was held at the Greene County Fair and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio, and closed with a strong sense of community. More than 30,000 people were expected to descend on Xenia, with attendees discovering the latest equipment and technology from more than 500 indoor exhibitors, learning at nearly 60 forums, and browsing a 2,500-space outdoor flea market. [Amateur Radio DailyARRL](#)

The ARRL's large exhibit area served as a hub for attendees, including free handheld radio testing for spurious emissions by the ARRL Lab, opportunities to meet organizational leaders, and author book-signings. [ARRL](#)

The youth programming stood out this year. The ARRL Youth Rally on Saturday drew about 30 young hams and future hams who took part in a hidden transmitter hunt, an introduction to Morse code by the Long Island CW Club, and the Youth Rally Sprint, in which seven HT-equipped teams spread out to different parts of the

Hamvention grounds to talk with each other, then move to a new location. [ARRL](#)

Students representing the ARRL Collegiate Amateur Radio Program were on hand to showcase amateur radio at their schools. ARRL booths highlighted major 2026 activities including the Year of the Club, the Worked All States America250 award, and Field Day. [ARRL](#)

ARRL Year of the Club: What Your Club Should Be Doing
ARRL has designated 2026 the Year of the Club, an initiative by the ARRL Board of Directors to honor the vital role clubs play in sustaining, growing, and energizing amateur radio. [ARRL](#)

The message for 2026 is clear: celebrate what your radio club already does well, try something new, and be radio active. Whether your club is small or large, new or nearing a century as an ARRL Affiliated Club, the Year of the Club is an invitation to connect, innovate, and share your story. [ARRL](#)

Icom America is the Official Sponsor of the ARRL Year of the Club, supporting initiatives that spotlight and strengthen ARRL Affiliated Clubs throughout 2026. [ARRL](#)

ARRL launched two contests to kick off the year: the ARRL Club Newsletter Contest and the ARRL Club Website Contest. Club websites play an increasingly important role in outreach, public service visibility, and attracting new members to amateur radio. [lcpodcast](#)

The Year of the Club isn't a marketing campaign. It's a call to do the things clubs are supposed to do. Run a license class. Show up at a public event. Partner with a served agency. Do a Field Day in a visible location. Post about it. Recruit one new member. Then do it again.

The clubs that will still be active in ten years are the ones doing those things right now. The ones running the same meeting format they've used since 1997 and wondering why attendance is down won't make it.

This is the year to try something different. Use Field Day as your launchpad. Invite the public. Invite a served agency. Invite a teenager. Show them what we do. That's how this hobby survives.

From the Section Emergency Coordinator

Arc Thames, W4CPD

Hurricane Season is Here. Are We Ready?

June 1 marks the beginning of another hurricane season, and for those of us involved in amateur radio and emergency communications, it serves as an important reminder that preparedness starts long before a storm appears on the radar.

Every year we see examples of how quickly conditions can change. Power outages, damaged infrastructure, overloaded cellular networks, and internet disruptions can occur with little warning. When those systems fail, amateur radio operators often become a critical link in the communications chain.

Being prepared means more than simply owning a radio. Now is the time to inspect antennas, test backup power systems, charge batteries, update frequency lists, and verify that equipment is functioning properly. If you use portable equipment, consider conducting a deployment exercise from a location away from home. Identifying problems today is far better than discovering them during an emergency.

It is also a good opportunity to review your local emergency communications plans and make sure you understand how your club, county, or served agencies would activate if needed. Familiarity with procedures and operating practices can make a significant difference when communications become critical.

For newer operators, hurricane season is an excellent time to get involved. Participate in nets, attend training opportunities, and learn from experienced operators. Emergency communications is a team effort, and every trained operator adds strength to the network.

While we all hope for a quiet season again this year, history reminds us that preparation is never wasted. The work we do before a storm arrives determines how effectively we can serve our communities when communications are

needed most.

Take some time this month to review your station, your emergency plans, and your readiness. When the call comes, the amateur radio community has a long tradition of stepping up to serve, and that tradition begins with preparation.

Stay safe, stay prepared, and keep those radios ready.

Monthly Radiogram Challenge

Want to practice using the national traffic system (NTS)? Instructions on using the NTS on our website at arrrl-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 "Do you feel prepared to support emergency communications should your area be impacted by a hurricane or other communications outage this year?"

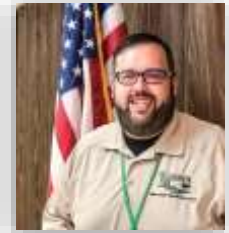
Thanks to the following hams for participating in last month's challenge:

Susan- KG4VWI

Emmett-WA5EWN

Monthly EC Reports

Out of the 33 appointed ARES Emergency Coordinators we have in the section, we only received monthly reports for 14 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 880 hours of service to our communities. Thanks to the following counties for providing their reports: Alachua, Bay, Citrus, Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Marion, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Walton, Washington



	Number	Person-Hrs
Exercises this month:	19	177.00
Training events this month:	13	109.10
Public service events this month:	0	0.00
Community service events this month:	3	178.00
Emergency events this month:	1	8.00
SKYWARN events this month:	0	0.00
Meetings this month:	28	349.30
Unclassified events this month:	18	58.30

Call signs of DECs reporting:

K4BJS, K4SOP, KB4HAH, KC3DWY, KD4EZW, KD4IMA, KF4ZZ, KM4BTW, KO4YGV, KO4YQL, KX4LEO, W4UFL, WA4MN, WE4MJ

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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.

Loften High School ARRL Club

Bob Lightner W4GJ

As we are wrapping up another academic year, the students are finishing their schoolwork and also concluding two on-the-air special events; National Police Week and National EMS Week. Our operators made lots of contacts in these two annual events activating **N4P** and **N4E**. More contacts were made on CW this year than on SSB, an achievement made by great operators using both modes.

Now the students can concentrate on their final exams and signing their yearbooks. We had a nice surprise operator, Antonette, (from the TV Production Academy) delight everyone with her pleasant British Accent. She made many contacts on EMS week passing along important safety tips created by our Fire/EMS Academy students.

We hope to get involved with a new event during the Summer, June 20-21 called the Club QSO Party, sponsored by the ARRL. Since the theme of the ARRL this year is The Year of the Club, we have decided to participate. QSX for **K4WTL** that weekend.



The 2026 Florida State Parks On The Air

What I learned and the Fun I had.

Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ

Somewhere in my internet travels and the rabbit holes that often await when searching for HAM radio-related gadgets, I stumbled onto the Parks On The Air event known as the Florida State Parks On The Air weekend (FSPOTA). The sponsors of the annual event, the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club, out of Venice, FL, do not like to call the extended weekend a contest. I personally believe making a POTA event into a contest takes away the beauty of being outdoors and enjoying what Mother Nature has to offer, while “playing radio” should be simple and enjoyable, which is not normally found when taking part in a HAM Radio contest. Maybe the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club feels the same way and wants HAMs to just have fun and get out of the shack.

Being a park “Hunter” before I was a Park Activator was very crucial for getting down the timing and verbiage of how the QSO happens when participating in events like this POTA event. Although I had over 55 activations leading up to the FSPOTA event, I had never done one park a day for 4 days straight, let alone as many parks I could wrangle from sun-up to sundown.

This year, the FSPOTA event ran four days from April 17th through April 21st, 2026. I placed the four-day event on my calendar and started sharing information with my local HAM Radio groups that I associate with here in the north central Florida area. Members from the NF4AC-ARES group decided to join in the fun on the Saturday portion of the four-day event. As for me, I had made up my mind that I would try to use the advantage of operating from multiple parks during the event. The point system was set up where an operator would get one point for a single QSO and 2 points for a CW QSO. For each park the operator activated, one hundred points were to be awarded in addition to the number of QSO’s. There were other points awarded for first-time operators and points for getting a youth on the air. Someone under the age of 18, with or without a HAM license. I gathered the 100 points for the youth on my first activation. I personally felt if I was going to have a chance in the state-wide event, I would have to get multiple parks per day. That was my goal.

Planning: Unlike many POTA activations I have done in the past, I needed to plan for an ALL-day adventure, not just a simple activation of one park and then go home. Although through my previous activations, I had learned to be flexible but prepared. I carried the equipment needed for a quick POTA activation, as well as what I call the “stay and play day”. Quick activations are when you roll into a park and throw out a quick deployable antenna, connect to your radio, and make contacts. The Stay and Play day is when you put up a better antenna, one with better gain, fully tuned, and a radio ready to do business across the globe. Having the right equipment is based on your individual skill level and what works for you. There is no perfect radio-antenna combination that guarantees a “perfect” day of

playing radio in the park. My radio of choice is the Xiegu G-90, although I had several QRP radios and my heavy hitter, the Yaesu 991a, that I used for my power or digital modes, such as FT8. I planned to make as many QSO’s with the G-90 on Side Band, but I did use the 911a for FT8 in my home park, San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park in the city of Alachua. I use this park because I know the park has A/C power and a covered pavilion. Although the G-90 power is limited to 20 watts with G-90, I was going to walk it back to 10 watts to be in the QRP classification for the FSPOTA event. I have operated great distances and have put many stations in the log with the Xiegu G-90 radio, which has become my favorite rig for portable or deployment operations.

I had several antennas to choose from in my antenna arsenal. I had the Wolf River Coil Silver Bullet Vertical with some minor modifications. Also along for the hunt was the very impressive Spooltenna, which is my new favorite End-Fed that requires minimal tuning. I usually deploy the Spooltenna in a slopper configuration. However, I was informed during recent outings that several of the State of Florida Parks forbid hanging items from the trees. To utilize a sloper configuration would require additional vertical poles and connections, so the Spooltenna stayed in my antenna go bag. Rounding out the mix was an assortment of HAMSticks cut for 10m, 12m, 20m, and 40m with the supported Mag mount for the roof of my truck.

I looked at the authorized park list provided for the FSPOTA event. Then I hashed out a plan as to where I was going to start each day and the order of the parks I would activate throughout the day.

This is the part that one must consider when doing all-day “POTA-ing”

Fuel: Did I have enough fuel in the Red Silverado POTA Rider for each day of driving from park to park? It was important to have a plan, so I would not be backtracking or retracing my POTA steps. Several of the parks I had plotted over the four-day event were in several surrounding counties close to my QTH. I plotted the parks as the crow flies and not driving mileage. A few of the parks on my weekend list to hit, I had never been to before. This will make this weekend doing POTA more adventurous.

I always tell people who start out doing POTA to bring some obvious items like first-aid, sunscreen, and bug spray. Snacks and beverages of your choice; however, an all day affair of POTA would require more snacks or meals. Bathroom breaks need to be factored in. Whether you take those breaks in the park or while en route to the next park. I did a series of different things. I ate meals and snacks in between activations while driving from one park to another. Having at least water by your side when activating is a must. I am never afraid to tell hunters “stand by” while I draw in a swig of some ice water to keep the voice going.

It should be noted that this POTA event and the mere concept of Parks On The Air are to get the HAM radio operator out of the HAM shack and into the outdoors. Parks are not always about the beauty of nature, bird watching, or just being out in the fresh air. There may be historical places, such as beautiful buildings, monuments, Naval vessels, and historical cemeteries or battlefields, where one may take their HAM radio gear and set up. Although my trek across the fourteen parks I managed to get into the long, only yielded a lot of set-up and break down, and the natural beauties of the parks I visited.

On my first outing on day one, after loading up the items I had prepared for the day, I grabbed a youth who is 17 years of age and is the cousin of my son's girlfriend. Slade lived close to River Rise Preserve State Park. The day started cooler, but I was prepared for the day to warm up as I moved from park to park. I learned a lot from this park as to how well I will perform over the next four days. I deployed the Wolf River Coil with the normal three radials. The 17 ft. telescopic whip and tuning coil performed well, and qso's came quickly and sounded great, but what I learned is that the setup and take down was going to take too much time. I had added help with my son Conner and my youth Slade. When I move to my next park, I will be alone doing the setup and break down. This would not allow me enough time to get all the parks in per day.

I said goodbye to Slade, and I knew his help in chatting with Dustin, KE9BBQ, would give me the 100 points I needed for the activation. First park done, 100 points, 14 qso's on 20 meters, sideband, and the youth points, I was on my way with 214 points on day one. The total parks for day one were six, which took a lot out of me. As I got close to home, I decided, since I had the Yaesu 991a loaded in the vehicle, I would go to my home park, which in the POTA community is a park near your QTH (home) that you frequent a lot. This San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park, US-3651. The north end of this park is made up of biking and hiking trails, as well as trails to take your horse for a ride. The park has a pavilion with A/C power and a bathroom close by. It is ideal for the "Stay and Play" POTA activation. I popped in before the park closed with my Wolf River Coil, FT-991a, and a laptop and banged out 28 FT8 contacts before the park closed. But, not to worry, I would be back with the Alachua County Amateur Radio Emergency Radio (ARES) club bright and early on day two.

As day two started, there were several members of the ARES group who were either setting up their own station or setting up the ARES equipment to have the club add to POTA fun as an FSPOTA participant. It was great to see many people out enjoying the park while playing radio. The group had several first-time HAMs on the air and first-time POTA activators, which assisted in gaining the extra points. Several operators learned valuable lessons and had the opportunity to use the POTA event as a teaching moment for ANY classic deployment. Things that were learned is no equipment is foolproof. We had issues with filters, generators, RF noise, and general noise from operating too close to each other. I even had issues with the wind

blowing over my recent military pole system I was using for the slopper Spooltena configuration. My points would not count towards my overall weekend, but I had more sneaky plans up my sleeve. The ARES group finished up around 1500 EST, and everyone packed up and went their separate ways. There was still daylight, and I had a calling to get more points for my personal log. I headed to a very interesting park on the north-west side of Gainesville. This park is a very unique park with a massive hole in the ground it is known as Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park. This natural landmark has been visited by many, dating back to the late 1800's, and became a state park in 1930 after a stairway was created by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The sinkhole that makes up this geological site is 120 ft. deep and is said to have been the location of the sacrifice of native American virgins to the devil to gain better hunting and crops. Although on this POTA outing, I would not have the time to venture down the stairs and play POTA radio. This would have to be a quick G-90 and a HAM Stick adventure, and a great way to round out the day.

Days three and four. Although I did not get out each morning as early as I would have liked, I decided that the parks for the remainder of the event would be quick and easy, get in, make my ten plus contacts, and get out. I deployed the Xiegu G-90, LiPho (LiFePO4) Battery, and a HAM stick. I had my trusty cell phone holder that I could use to search for other POTA activators or to do my own spotting.

I logged POTA activations in several parks, including Dudley Farm State Park and Nature Coast State Park. I did take a pause when I was at Fanning Springs State Park to, well, do what you are supposed to do when doing Parks on the Air. I had never been to the park, and after an extended time, trying to pay to get in using the application provided at the gate, I didn't just want to play radio and leave. I was parked close to the stairs that took me down to the spring, so I decided to give it a look. All I can say is, WOW!! I'm so glad I took the time to look. I know it wasn't a review of the entire park, but the spring itself was absolutely beautiful. Descending the stairs under the canopy of North Florida's favorite trees of magnolia, cypress, and cedar was perfect. The warm air in the parking lot changed to the coolness of the air coming up from the 72-degree water of the spring. I decided I must take a few pictures that would someday fill my memory of this POTA activation. This would be my last stop of the day, and I headed home, eating my leftover trail mix and my Arnold Palmer Iced Tea.



The final day took me south into Marion County and the edges of southwest Alachua County. Another new park and another spot I will revisit when the weather is cooler, and my hiking boots need a workout. This park, Price's Scrub State Park (US-10463) looked more like a grassy overflow parking for some tucked-away wedding venue. Just a big circle of flattened and lightly mowed grass with trails that shot off like spokes on a bicycle rim. I had no idea this park was here, and based on how it looked, I'm not sure how much use it gets. Made up of several trails that criss-cross each other according to the map on the weathered kiosk board. There was no fee for this park. Just pull in and go for a hike, not that hiking was on plan. I was here to play radio. I threw up my HAM Stick and put the G-90 to work. Band conditions seemed not to be as optimal as I would have liked for the final day. There were a couple of good signals coming in from other POTA operators as far away as Canada, but I still had not made a Florida contact of another FSPO-TA participant.

After completing Price's Park, I headed to the famous Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park (US-3647). A park I had activated before from several places within the park. I decided, since my track of driving, I would go through the main entrance. As I pulled up to pay, I explained what I would be doing with my HAM radio setup, and the ranger saw my veteran ball cap. She asked if I had my state park pass for free entrance, which I did not. I took the time to fill out the required paperwork and finally got my free Florida State Park pass. She refunded my \$6.00, and I set off to do what I came to do.

As the day progressed, I moved to yet another park. The park is named after the famous author, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, who wrote the book, *The Yearling*, back in 1938. The park that bears her name, US-3638, had a large parking area for boats and a boat ramp. Sadly, the water level was so low that only one airboat had come up and was quickly trailered off while I was operating. Of course, the sound of the airboat interfered with my radio operations, but it did allow me to take a pause and watch in amazement as an airboat was loaded onto the trailer. The wind was up, and ash was starting to fall on me from local wildfires that were flaring in several locations in South East Alachua County.

After a brief stop at a Tractor Supply in the town of Hawthorne, I headed back west to find a cozy spot on the Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail (US-3624). I did not want to set up at the trailhead in Hawthorne; I wanted to actually get on the trail. I nestled in on the trail just off County Road 325 and set up once again with the mag-mounted HAM Stick on 20 meters. The noise was horrible at this location. The bands I tried throughout the day consisted of 10 meters, 40 meters, and 20 meters, with the latter yielding the best results. But this time, even though I had been dealing with lots of noise and bad band conditions all day, it seemed to be even louder. It figures, since this was to be my last park, on the last day of the FSPO-TA event. I used up a lot of my water that had quickly been getting warmer as the day went on. I called CQ POTA-CQ POTA from

KN4ZUJ for several minutes at a time before getting any contacts. There was a cellular tower across the road and high voltage power lines close by, and I wondered, could these be causing an increase in noise? I just needed ten contacts, and I would be on my way. I normally try to get 15 or greater just in case, but this location and the wits of this operator were spent.

I finally got my ten contacts and packed up like I was running from a sudden late-afternoon thunderstorm, which is actually something Alachua County could benefit from due to the ongoing drought and wildfires. While heading home, I reached for my last Arnold Palmer in the cooler and a bag of trail mix. Who knew four days straight of activating parks in five different counties around my home (QTH) would be so exhausting? Now for the part that know ones likes. The logging. I still use a paper log, and I would have to spend several hours getting it put into my logging software.

With everything uploaded and waiting for the organizers to complete their tallies, I actually ended up coming in First Place for the Multi-Park /QRP (low power) operator. With Fourteen Parks logged, 251 QSO's, 100 points for a youth operator, my total score was 1751 points. As with many of the awards in HAM radio, self-satisfaction and bragging rights are what it comes down to. For me, getting out of the HAM shack, enjoying the outdoors, and exploring new parks are always an adventure and what Parks On The Air should be all about. Until Next Year-73.



GARS Ham Radio Tailgate

On Saturday, April 25th, the Gainesville Amateur Radio Society (GARS) held their annual Amateur Radio Tailgate in Gainesville, Florida. There was a great turnout. The day was filled with conversations, bartering and buying. It was a great opportunity to meet the public who may not be very familiar with Ham radio.



Activity abounds in the Florida Panhandle!

DJ Stewart, KI4ZER

Assistant Section Manager, NFL, ARRL

President, W4ZBB, W4AAZ

If you are not taking part in the AWESOME adventures, YOU are missing out! What a time to be involved in the organizations and enjoy each other's company, knowledge and expand Amateur Radio! The activity and engagement is just amazing as multiple organizations expand and delve into multiple technologies supporting RF transmissions!

The Florida Panhandle is an absolute hub for amateur radio. Organizations across the region—from Pensacola to Fort Walton Beach—are expanding the hobby through digital modes, VHF/UHF, satellite communications, and community events!

Playground Amateur Radio Club (PARC): Located in Fort Walton Beach holding call signs W4ZBB & K4FWB, this active club meets regularly with technical instruction and operations. They host recurring meetings on the first and third Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM. Get full details and repeater frequencies via the [Playground Amateur Radio Club](#) site.

The North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club (NOARC) holding call sign W4AAZ, is a community-driven organization based in Crestview, FL. It unites amateur radio enthusiasts from Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton counties. The club manages local repeaters, hosts licensing classes, and actively supports regional emergency communications and community events! Check them out at the [North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club](#) site.

For a broader directory of regional nets, ARES teams, and event calendars covering Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties, check out the centralized [Northwest Florida Ham Radio](#) network. It is a great way to stay connected to all the local RF transmission happenings!

What has been happening? From the streets to the skyways in Okaloosa County Hams have gathered to FOX HUNT, recommend radio and supporting equipment, expanded digital technologies, taught licensing classes, offered and completed testing events for initial licensing and achieved upgrades, advised on renewing licenses,

installed mobile radios, troubleshoot grounding issues with members equipment, taught members and non-members alike to program radios, instructed HF operating modes with demonstration, updating repeater book, updating radio reference, participating in online forums, and much, much more!

What can YOU do to compliment the Amateur Radio Service in your area?! You can start by following the organizations on their websites, social media platforms and channels, and volunteer to assist the teams with their visions of the future for the next generation of Amateur Radio Operators! And why shouldn't you! Apart from the Active Organizations you could directly support your community by getting involved with partners, bolstering engagement and opportunities to give back to the place you call home!

Amateur radio is critical to public safety in Northwest Florida. You can volunteer for the **Okaloosa County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)** to support emergency operations centers during severe weather [Okaloosa County ARES](#).

One of the best ways to ensure a future for amateur radio is to help new operators get licensed. You can officially guide candidates through exams with [Volunteer Opportunities - ARRL](#).

Stay connected with the broader Florida Panhandle ham community by following the Amateur Radio Organizations online! It seems with the amount of involvement that the stories are out there and waiting for you to be inspired or maybe even share your ideas with others to compliment the teams and be a part of the positivity that is Amateur Radio!

If you are looking for local Amateur Radio Events, check the organizations calendars or get on the nets! Even if you just want to listen! VHF/UHF/HF/Simplex, people are everywhere! All it takes is keying up, announcing your call sign and starting a conversation to get innovation and experimentation going!

Joining a local amateur radio club fast-tracks your technical learning, connects you with experienced mentors, and opens doors to community service and emergency response. It transforms a solitary hobby into a collaborative, hands-on social experience with shared resources.

Mentorship & "Elmers": Tap into a deep well of knowledge. Experienced hams (often called "Elmers") provide hands-on help with licensing, antenna building, and troubleshooting.

Shared Equipment & Resources: Access expensive test gear, club-owned repeaters, and tower trailers that would be too costly to purchase individually.

Community & Emergency Preparedness: Participate in public service events, join local RACES/ARES groups, and provide vital communications during disasters.

Exciting Group Events: Take part in events like ARRL Field Day, contesting, and hamfests, which require group cooperation and are a core part of the hobby.

Leading an amateur radio club is a rewarding way to shape the hobby, pass on skills, and build community. Successful clubs thrive by keeping meetings active, welcoming newcomers with hands-on ELMER (mentorship) programs, and organizing engaging events like on-the-air contests and Field Day.

If you are looking to revitalize a local group or start your own from scratch, you can utilize the [ARRL Clubs](#) directory to find existing organizations near you or tap into the [ARRL Joining a Club](#) guide for proven tips on recruiting new members and making meetings engaging!

Why the ARRL though? The **ARRL** (American Radio Relay League) is the national membership association for amateur radio operators in the US. It serves as the hobby's primary advocacy group, representing hams before the FCC and international bodies to protect radio spectrum and antenna rights.

Whether the ARRL is "worth it" depends on what you want out of amateur radio:

- **Spectrum Defense:** They lobby the government to protect ham frequencies from being auctioned off and push for favorable antenna zoning laws with HOAs and local municipalities.
-
- **Publications:** Membership grants access to magazines like *QST* (covering technical projects and ham news) and *On the Air* (geared toward beginners).
-
- **QSL Bureau:** If you participate in international con-

tacts, the ARRL provides a centralized, cost-effective service for sending and receiving QSL verification cards.

- **Local Club Networking:** They charter and support thousands of local amateur radio clubs, which host in-person training, license testing sessions, and events like Field Day.

Education & Support: They provide comprehensive licensing study guides and technical support services for building and troubleshooting stations.

The Catch: Some operators criticize the League over issues like membership costs, conversion of print magazines to digital, and internal leadership controversies. Feel free to make up your own mind but do not close the door. Get active and help with change. It costs nothing to care for your hobby and remain positive.

If you are just getting licensed or are highly active in contesting and emergency communications, the advocacy and resources make it highly valuable. You can explore their benefits or become a member directly on the [ARRL](#) website.

But wait, we opened with Amateur Radio activity in the Panhandle. Yes, yes we did and guess what! Field Day is next month! ARRL Field Day is the most popular annual amateur radio ("ham radio") exercise in the US and Canada, held on the fourth full weekend of June. It combines emergency communication preparedness with a social contest, where over 31,000 operators set up portable stations in public areas to make as many contacts as possible, often using emergency power! It is primarily an emergency communication training exercise. Summer Field Day tests the ability of amateur radio operators to set up stations in remote, non-optimal conditions and operate without relying on commercial power, simulating disaster scenarios. It takes place annually on the fourth full weekend of June, running for 24 hours (usually from Saturday 18:00 UTC to Sunday 20:59 UTC). It is described as part contest, part campout, and part public demonstration. Amateur radio clubs and individuals set up radios, antennas, and emergency power sources (generators, solar, batteries) to communicate with other stations across North America.

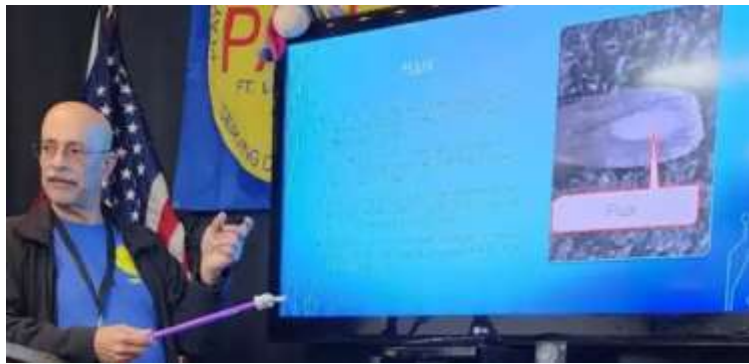
ARRL Field Day is highly encouraged to be a public event. Clubs often invite the public to see ham radio in action, with some even offering opportunities for unlicensed individuals to make contact. While training is key, it is also a “radio sport” contest. Groups submit their logs to the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) to be scored based on the number of contacts made and bonuses earned for things like using emergency power or involving youth. Most participants join a local amateur radio club to operate a large station! The event uses specific rules and categories, which can be found in the ARRL Field Day Rules. The event serves to demonstrate that “When All Else

Fails,” amateur radio can provide critical, reliable communication services during real-world disasters.

So go with your Clubs, Organizations, Local Groups, Operators, and Hams Alike. Get outside of your comfort zone, meet new people, see how they set up, operate, and perform! You will not be disappointed, and you may even come across that idea which benefits your next journey in Amateur Radio!

If you’re here, reading this, go forth and transmit, engage with positivity, and soak in the RF!





Reviving An 8-Year-Old Generator

Gordon Gibby KX4Z



Our 3400-watt Champion dual-fuel (propane / gasoline) quiet enclosed inverter generator was purchased in 2018, in order to operate a travel trailer rooftop air conditioner and other minor

loads during intermediate stops on trips. It has also operated a travel trailer for hours on end during Field Day operations. The inverter portion generates impressively strong wideband radio frequency noise, which requires a MIF23 filter to suppress, but the generator has a lower gasoline consumption than typical open-frame non-inverter generators, so it has proved useful many times. In 2019 we did extensive experimentation and published methods to totally quiet the RFI interference. <https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/radio-frequency-interference-rfi/quieting-the-rfi-hash-from-inverter-generators/> It probably has approximately 200 hours of usage by 2026. And gets routine oil changes and crank testing when I remember to do so...

A Problem Detected

Unfortunately, when I checked it prior to our April FL PO-TA outing, I found that it **would not stay running at idle, and in order to run at all, the choke had to be fully pulled (closed)**. This suggested that the engine was starved for fuel and had to have reduced air in order to run at all. Sounds like a carburetor problem!

Bad History

This isn't the first time the generator has had carburetor problems. On our 2025 6,000 mile trip to/from Yellowstone National Park, I had to tear into the generator and get the carburetor bowl removed (bolt underneath carb to release) on the tailgate of the truck in a Walmart parking lot (no fun!), to clean out degraded gas. But this time seemed even worse.

Learning How To Get At It, Again

I first tried to just get the carb bowl removed as I had done before, by removing the air filter box and two nuts holding the carb to the intake manifold and pulling outward on it enough to be able to reach the bolt under-

neath. Cleaned the bowl. Checked fuel flow through the needle valve -- good, but the fuel shutoff valve is incompetent and unable to completely stop fuel flow. Had to clamp the gas line to stop the continuous mess of flammable gasoline.

This cleaning didn't work, despite the hours it took to carry out. The generator still wouldn't run right and would stop eventually even with the choke lever pulled all the way out to enrichen the mixture.

At this point, I thought the generator was history. Next step appeared to be the landfill, as I despaired of repairing or replacing the carburetor which was so hard to reach. I ordered a replacement generator. (\$560 <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D6PM5XN1> -- future article on how to deal with the overly enthusiastic carbon monoxide detector on that model....)

Gain Better Access

Then I discovered a couple of youtube videos showing how to disassemble more of the casing of the tightly enclosed generator, to gain complete access to, and remove, the carburetor!

Champion 3400W Inverter Generator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrH8zkFGZL8>

Removing a *lot more Phillips screws and 10mm-headed bolts*, I was able to get the top cover off, and remove the 2-gallon steel fuel tank, and then I was able to get full access and completely free up the carburetor from its servo throttle motor and choke Bowden-cable control.

Cleaning Efforts

The carburetor now went to the kitchen table, got externally cleaned with sprays of carb cleaner fluid, and more carefully examined. I was able to remove the **main jet** from the protrusion into the bowl area, and the spray tube above it, and clean both with carb cleaner. I found the very crucial idle jet and after removing a top bracket from the carburetor, was able to carefully unscrew the **idle jet** with a straight blade screwdriver. I poked sewing needles through its tiny orifice, cleaned it as best as possible with sprays from the carb cleaner fluid, and also sprayed carb cleaner through its passageways and through any other passageways I could find in the carb.

I was very happy when it all went back together (plus some new M5 Phillips head screws to replace missing fasteners on the cover pieces. In the process, I plugged the never-used propane intake to the carb, and replaced all the fuel tubing with automotive grade reinforced 1/4" fuel tubing, and added a replacement fuel shutoff valve, which I was able to jerry-rig to be accessible via the battery compartment. When all put back together, hooray! The generator engine ran perfectly!

For a While...

Carried it to our FL POTA event and it successfully powered the travel trailer AC for about 30 minutes....and then it just quit again, and wouldn't restart. Dead. (I already had a replacement generator -- but it too had "issues" and that's yet another story!)

Getting at the REAL PROBLEM

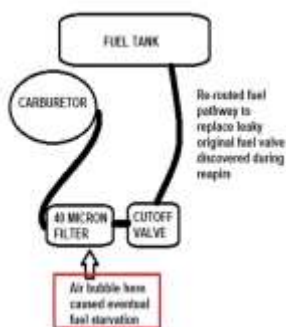


Single 0.007" stand of AWG18 wire passing thru idle jet ifice

By this time I was getting really good at tearing into this generator and gaining access to the carburetor. I learned how to disconnect the throttle wiring and choke cable, and fuel inlet. At the same time, I replaced the incompetent 8-year-old fuel valve with a small ON/OFF fuel valve, and added a real 40 micron paper-based fuel filter with a transparent case so I could see the situation. The breakthrough was a

Wikipedia article on idle jets that indicated the nearly microscopic indentation hole at the inside end was likely truly the inlet for idle jet gas! That set me off on a crusade to find a way to probe the tiny hole. No sewing needle in the house was small enough to pass. A carb too kit from Amazon had no probe small enough. (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DTH332NY>) I found a nearly identical carb on eBay and ordered it as a last ditch solution. (<https://www.ebay.com/itm/196766198305> A tip on some blog let me to try individual strands of wire from #18 speaker wire (0.007" each) -- and one of those easily passed the clean idle jet of the replacement carb. I used carb cleaner and sprayed and soaked the old carb's jet

and finally managed to pass two strands (0.014") through the tiny hole till they were visible in the thru-holes higher in the jet. They had to be straight -- even twisting them and they would not pass.)



HOORAY! Sort of...

That was as good as I could get it -- and it appeared to be enough! When reassembled, the engine cranked, and subsequently ran the AC on the travel trailer without a hitch for an hour or more. And then it died again.

Fuel Routing / Air Bubble

This time it turned out that the problem was my re-routing the fuel line down and then up to allow a new fuel -valve and 40 micron filter. An air bubble in the low-placed fuel filter resulted in engine fuel starvation. Flushing out the air bubble succeeded once again in a reliable generator.

CONCLUSIONS

- Apparently using ethanol-gasoline in a small engine based machine is really false economy. From now on at my house, all small engines get fed ethanol-free gas that doesn't absorb water so easily.
- Adding a 40 micron filter with the proper fuel tubing and clamps to avoid leaks, seems much cheaper than having to rebuild a carburetor periodically from dirt. (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CDC6XFW3> if 1/4" tubing) Be careful of filter placement and avoid AIR BUBBLES if it is placed a few inches below the carb inlet.
- A spare carburetor can be a cheap and very useful purchase that could extend the life of your gas-engine generator several years. Finding one is much easier when the generator is still in production!
- Cranking and testing generators even more religiously on a regular basis should be part of my routine.

Packaging A Cheap, Effective 23-Amp EMI Filter for Field Day & Deployment

Gordon Gibby KX4Z



Serious efforts at planning for emergency communications should always take into consideration the common-mode RF noise produced by ubiquitous inverter-based gasoline generators. **Field Day is a prime opportunity to solve this problem for your team and be far better prepared.** The modern fast-switching inverter generator is basically the modern equivalent of an old spark-transmitter. Those fast switching transitions generate thousands of harmonics all through the HF spectrum and possibly beyond.

End Fed RFI Antenna

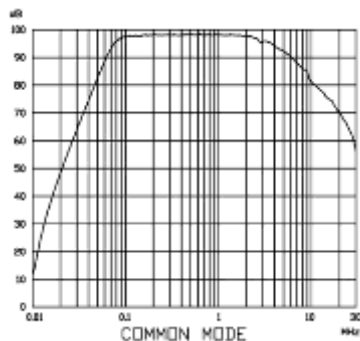
The generator sees your extension cord as a ready-made end-fed ANTENNA and not only conducts RF noise to connected gear, but radiates it as well from your "antenna extension cord." It is often enough to just deafen HF SSB receivers.

(Laptop power supplies are another huge offender, with one of our participants experiencing 20dB over S9 noise until he unplugged that charger! This can be solved by the same type filters as this article discusses, just smaller and cheaper for the typical 1-4 Amps a 19-20 VDC charger produces.)

Common mode filtering (with a bit of differential filtering as well) is the key and you need scores of dB and the shortest, best ground connection you can....the common mode filter will shunt the RF into your ground and a spectrum analyzer shows how a long ground wire can ruin an effective filter.

Years ago, we conducted objective experiments and found the MIF23 filter plus an additional simple FT-240-43 toroidal filter were wonderful solutions. Nelson Sollenberger KA2C heavily referenced our 2019 work in his more recent treatise on solving the problem.

Year	RFI Article
2019	https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2019/InverterGeneratorSolutions.pdf https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/radio-frequency-interference-rfi/quieting-the-rfi-hash-from-inverter
2020	https://www.ka2c.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RFI-Management-for-Field-Day.pdf
2023	https://www.ka2c.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Taming-a-Noisy-Generator.pdf
2025	https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/lab-n-lunch-projects/mitigating-dc-inverter-rfi-noise/



The MIF23 filter is an industrial AC line electromagnetic interference filter (EMI) designed to reduce noise created by stepper motor drives in factory/industrial equipment. It comes in single-phase (MIF23) and three-phase (MIF323) versions, and there are lower-current versions as well. The 23-Ampere MIF23 appears to be the most popular. New they run just under \$200 but can often be purchased used on eBay for \$60-\$80 -- an extremely good buy!

In a laboratory 50-ohm environment the common mode rejection is extraordinarily impressive. Don't expect anything close to this when sitting near to your generator and an ad-hoc ground connection right at it -- but the better your ground connection, the better your filtering.



The power connections on the filter are simple screw clamps that easily accept bare stranded wire. In my builds, I have used AWG10 and AWG12 wiring. Because the screw terminals are exposed, to prevent a shock hazard, some form of enclosure is useful. For that reason, I recently created a 3D-printed enclosure with a bottom box and a top lid. This replaces much more crude previous enclosures, that were actually more expensive and difficult to work with.

View of the wiring before lid top is added.

3D Printed Enclosure

The .stl files and even Bambu Studio files can be found here: <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/MIF23EMIFilterBox> These were created for a Bambu Labs P1S 3D printer with 0.4mm extruder (the default). ABS generic plastic was used for tolerating Florida heat -- but definitely do NOT operate this filter under significant load exposed to sunlight as there is no ventilation. Printing both bottom and top used about 0.34 kg of filament, about \$6 in current prices. Total printing time for top and bottom is about 7 hours.

Bill of Materials

No.	Item	Comment
1	ABS Filament	Used for heat toleration
2	3/8" Non Metallic Cable Clamp https://www.homedepot.com/p/Halex-3-8-in-Non-Metallic-NM-Twin-Screw-Cable-Clamp-Connectors-5-Pack-20511/100133208	The opening on the 3/8" cable clamp passed three #14 wires but not the cable insulation; I just enlarged it with a step bit. You could clamp the cable at the entry and just pass the individual wires and be fine An alternative is to use a 1/2" cable clamp and enlarge the 3D printed hole for the cable entry.
3	Nylon 10-24 screws to hold the MIF23 to the bottom; normal metal 10-24 nuts	I used nylon screws because they would protrude on the bottom and possibly scratch a supporting structure if metal. They connect to the outer body of the filter, which should be completely safe.
4	Standard house dual-outlet receptacle (NEMA 5-15)	While technically rated only for 15 Amps, with good plugs this will tolerate a bit more without problems.
5	6-32 machine screws/nuts	Use a 1/2" screw for the center mount on the outlet receptacle, and useful lengths for the two end mount holes for the receptacle.
6	M4 brass threaded inserts	Optional. You could use a #6 or possible #8 sheet metal screw to affix the top. I get 500 assorted brass threaded inserts here: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D5V3TZLB



M4 screw and threaded insert after successful heat-enabled placement. You can see the space on the threads where the iron and needle nosed pliers can be applied

Affixing Brass Threaded Inserts

While you can just use sheet metal screws to bite into the ABS plastic of the screw holes, I've had pretty good success using heat to insert **brass threaded inserts**. The technique that has worked the best for me requires heating the inserts pretty hot with a soldering iron, and simultaneously pressing them into place with needle nosed pliers. To

avoid getting plastic fouling the internal threads, use a **long** M4 screw through the insert with just a thread or so poking out. Apply the soldering iron right at the top of the insert, and the needle nosed pliers higher up, near the head of the screw and patiently insert to proper depth as the plastic melts. Use shorter M4 screw to secure the lid so it doesn't exit the insert.

Conclusion

This widely available industrial filter has been a mainstay of our team's power planning for any deployment where inverters of any kind are going to be used. It can also be used to filter the DC solar power input to MPPT chargers -- by mounting it right at the solar panel charge controller, it will reduce the radiated power in the wires to the panels significantly. It can also be used to reduce noise radiation from switching-mode LIFEPO4 battery chargers. Any kind of DC power regulation that uses switching mode can cause significant radio frequency interference on HF bands, and can be helped with filters like this, as well as simple common mode toroidal filters. (See commercial options here: <https://palomar-engineers.com/rfi-kits/acdc-power-line-chokes>)


Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society ARRL Field Day 2026!

Emmett Ward WA5EWN


Every June, amateur radio operators across the country pack up their radios, antennas, generators, and plenty of coffee to participate in one of the biggest on-the-air events of the year — Field Day! Hosted by the American Radio Relay League, Field Day is part emergency preparedness exercise, part educational showcase, and part old-fashioned radio fun.

This year, Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society is proud to partner with emergency communications groups and amateur radio organizations from across Central Florida for a large multi-group Field Day event at Central Winds Park in Winter Springs, Florida.

Event Information

 **Location:** Central Winds Park — Winter Springs, Florida

 **Operating Begins:** Saturday, June 27, 2026 at 2:00 PM

 **Operating Ends:** Sunday, June 28, 2026 at 2:00 PM

 **Weather Permitting**

One of the most popular attractions during Field Day is the **GOTA** — “**Get On The Air**” station.

Visitors of all ages will have an opportunity to sit down with a licensed amateur radio operator and make real radio contacts themselves. Whether you are young, old, technical, curious, or just adventurous, the GOTA station is designed to make amateur radio approachable and fun.

No experience is necessary — just bring your curiosity!

Scouts attending the event will also have the opportunity to participate in a **Radio Merit Badge session during the evening hours.**

Homebrew 50+ dB EMI RFI Filters

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

When are EMI (Electromagnetic Interference) filters important?



Moving into the fields to operate HF SSB/ Digital/CW -- such as

ARRL Field Day encourages (or disaster response might entail) -- often brings unexpected and unwelcome surprises in the form of **wideband hash RF NOISE**. Exclusively using battery-based power supplies often avoids this, but as soon as you add some sort of "inverter" or "converter" (even a laptop power supply)...their internal switching circuits' square waves and fast rise times make for dandy equivalents to a "spark transmitter." Every connected power supply cable, extension cord, or laptop charger cord becomes part of their "antenna" and "transmission line" system! The result can be deafening to your receivers.

Real Life Example: At a recent club practice deployment, one of our participants set up shop and concluded the bands were completely *dead* - bit actually it turned out actually his laptop power supply was creating **20dB over S9 wide band noise!** With that level of wide-band noise, you aren't likely to hear anything!

When you need power that lasts longer than your batteries, because your laptop won't operate hours on end, or you must have heating or air conditioning, etc., then you're forced to use various power generation systems (including electronically regulated generators, inverter generators, or solar power MPPT chargers) that often generate huge amounts of wide-band "hash" noise. How do you solve the noise problem they create?

=====
Great Field Day Hash Solution or Group Project!
=====

SOLUTION

The solution is effective filtering right at the noise producer, usually primarily common mode filtering, that denies the noise producer access to that crucial length of power cord or extension cord that acts as its radiating "end fed" antenna or conducting transmission line. (Parasitic capacitance or direct connection, to ground or other large metal, gives the power supply its return RF path.) Clamp-on ferrites around entire cables (widely available on Amazon and other sources) are a great first step, and you can put on several of these on a single cable. Sometimes you can get more than one turn of the cable through the gap, increasing their effectiveness.

Heavy Duty AC Line Noise Filtering

But often you'll need much more effective filtering. For really heavy duty filtering of up to 23A 120-240VAC, our group has turned to the industrial equipment MIF23 filter. (Generally available used for about \$80 on Ebay.) In another article, I've provided information on 3D enclosures.

Homebrew Filter Success

But for laptop chargers and lower current systems, including solar MPPT controllers, switching "battery generators" and similar applications, this might be overkill. I attempted to develop a smaller, less-expensive and more versatile homebrew filter that could be replicated many times over for the price of one MIF23. After some learning curve, the result has been a success! Testing? Commercial filter manufacturers tend to test their filters in a laboratory 50-ohm or similar environment. This doesn't really show what you will get out in the field with a wildly varying set of source and load impedances and with clearly inferior "grounding" of the filter. But it is a way to compare and contrast filters. (For best performance, try using RV frame ground, a screen counterpoise laying on the ground, a ground rod, laying the filter right on the ground, and running cables along the ground to provide capacitance to ground -- anything to get a better ground, to improve the real-life performance of your common mode filters.)

Schematic

These electromagnetic interference/radio frequency interference filters tend to all use a similar schematic, differing only in the number of "sections" employed. I settled on a 2-section filter.

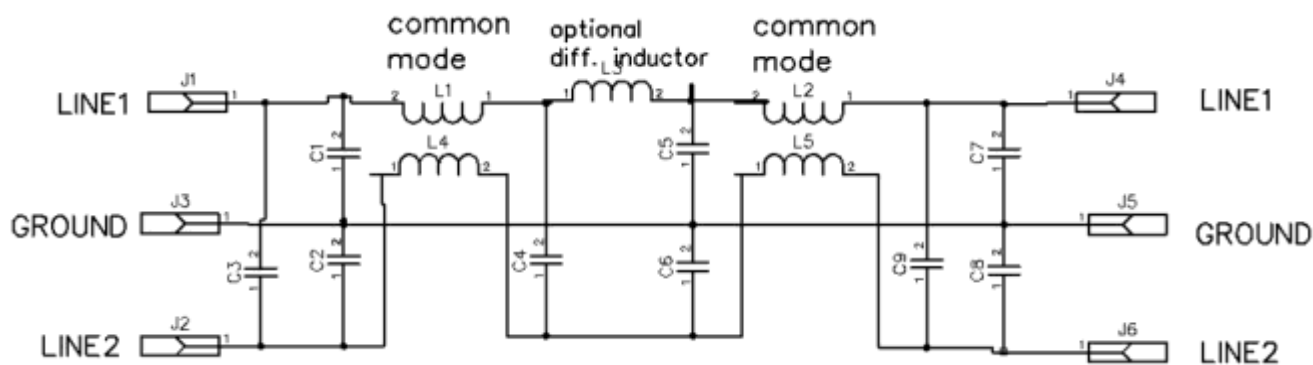


Figure above: Schematic of general filter.

RESULTS

Here is a 50-ohm environment, common-mode measurement of my prototype filter using FT-240-43 toroids, which was very impressive, from below 80 meters to beyond 6 meters:



Differential mode filtering comes as a byproduct:

FT-240-43 2-Section Filter Measurements		
Band/Frequency	Common Mode Rejection	Differential Mode Rejection
80m / 3.5 MHz	49db	53dB
40m / 7.0 MHz	55dB	53dB
20m / 14.0 MHz	52dB	48dB
30 MHz	44dB	41dB

Item	Value	Component	Notes
All Capacitors--	0.047-0.1 uf (47-100 nf)	For AC line use, use Y type special capacitors rated for 500V or more For DC line use, use capacitors rated several multiples of highest DC voltage expected	The Line1-to-Line2 capacitor is somewhat redundant and can be omitted with slight reduction in differential mode rejection.
common mode Inductors	Try 6 turns spaced widely	I used FT-240-43 toroids, but FT-240-31 are also successful I wound them in "split" mode, but if you are not certain how to do that, you can wind them as bifilar and they should work acceptably. The wiring direction must differential currents to cancel magnetic fields.	Trade-off between low frequency inductance and interwinding capacitance limits the number of turns useful. Wind carefully so that the fields cancel! If placed on opposite "sides" of ring, one should be CW and the other CCW in that position.
Differential Inductor	not yet tried	If you need more differential mode filtering, try a FT-140-43 core with 8 turns	
Strain Reliefs		Standard electrician's 3/8" non-metallic strain reliefs (intended for non metallic cable) will work nicely.	

Using FT-240-31

Because of its increased losses at HF frequencies, many people use the FT-240-31 type toroid for RFI EMI filters like this. So I built a second filter with two of those toroids, and 7 turns each on the wiring.

In a 50 ohm environment, it also had excellent common mode rejection!



Figure: Common mode rejection of FT-240-31-based filter, from 1-50 MHz, showing roughly 40 dB rejection on 80m and better rejection around 50 dB on higher HF bands. Not quite as good at 80 meters as the FT-240-43 filter, but otherwise fairly similar

PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD

Construction of the filter was made a lot easier by designing a printed circuit board to hold and wire the components. A zipped collection of all the Gerber files necessary to have them fabricated is inside the github repository: <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/2SectionEMIFilter> The design includes the option of adding a series differential-mode inductance beyond the differential component inherent in the common-mode inductors. The ground trace was made especially wide for AC line current potential application, and the trace connections for the input/output and component connections are made so they can be bolstered with solder or additional wiring. If you use hefty wire on your toroids, you could potentially create a filter up to or beyond 15 A capability.



Prototype FT-240-43 Filter, experimenting with two different types of wiring. The enameled solid wire stays shaped much better than the insulated stranded. I found that the spacing of the turns didn't make as much impact on the ultimate rejection as I had feared. The prototype used FT-240-43; a future prototype will try FT-240-31 ferrite, said to be even better for filters.

The cross capacitors can be simple ceramics rated at 100V or more if used in a 12V or 19V (e.g. laptop power supply) system - but if used for true AC line, you should use "Y" type capacitors rated for 500V+ which are designed to fail "open" rather than shorted. These aren't hard to find, either, even on Amazon.

3-D Printing Files For Homebrewers

Encapsulating the filter prevents unwanted shorts from other wiring. My boxes were printed in ABS plastic on a P1S Bambu Labs printer. The public repository for .STL files and other materials is: <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/2SectionEMIFilter>.

Applications of this kind of homebrew filter:

Field Day Station Captains

New Field Day chief **Earl Sloan KI4OXD** is using "station captains" to organize setup for multiple HF & VHF stations at our Field Day Exercise. So far the volunteers include: **Manish Sahni MD KZ4KC, Earl Sloan KI4OXD, Gordon Gibby KX4Z, and Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO**. We still have room for a VHF/WINLINK Station Captain. Volunteers?

LabNLunches!

We held a wide-ranging LabNLunch (our primary building/circuits training tool) in May to help participants build custom Signalink cables for their radios. We also rewired 1:1 RF chokes with RG316 coax for better performance. I towed our tower trailer out of storage and we were delighted to find the G-800 rotator still works fine from its rebuild a couple years ago. Further, the top thrust bearing still turns well, also! Less work for us on Field Day!

Jeff W4UFL and Manish KZ4KC work on projects at one of our May LabNLunches



In our Florida QSO Party deployment we noticed our voice guys were having a lot more trouble than our CW op, so we've scheduled a very special LabNLunch for the end of the month. Using a dummy load with a 30dB attenuator tap (and even more attenuation after that) we'll be able to let people actually listen to how they sound on an ICOM7300 (or their own radio) using their preferred mic and different compression and equalization settings. The goal is to find optimal setting for each person's voice for intelligibility and "punch." Further, we'll record CQ messages on individual micro-SD cards. Hoping to help our voice ops out!

Our first-Saturday monthly evening social dinners out are doing well!
For the June event, we'll try out the Mi Appa Latin Cafe in the city of Alachua.
All are welcome, 6 PM June 6th.

Filters, Filters!

As you can tell from other articles, a lot of our recent radio asset improvements have been creating better ways to filter out wide-band noise from modern switching based power systems. The MIF23 filter (\$80 used on eBay) is a workhorse product rated at 23 amps up to 240VAC and beyond, and now we have a 3D printed case for it with a built in spot for an outlet receptacle. For other needs, including for laptop power chargers, we now have our very own homebrew design for a 1- or 2-section common/differential mode filter that can be easily added to a variety of troublesome systems.

Teaching Technology to High School Students

The high schoolers taking my Introduction To Technology class just finished up (and won awards!). Their final project was to design and 3D print an insulating plastic enclosure for a FT-240-43-based filter. Despite limited time on the 3D printing part of this wide-ranging course, they still learned how to use Tinker CAD quite effectively, and print out first-draft enclosures on the Gainesville Christian Community School A1 Bambu Labs printer. Skills to help them in their future careers!

Great opportunities for hams to get involved and make a difference in others' lives!

For our Field Day IAP, see: <https://www.nf4rc.club/current-field-day-exercise-incident-action-plan/>

North Florida Amateur Radio Club NF4RC created to support Alachua County ARES(R)	https://www.nf4rc.club/ https://groups.io/g/NF4RC/topics
Alachua EOC Radio Club NF4AC created to support Alachua County ARES(R)	Our 2nd club - call sign for EOC
Zoom Link for meetings, Tech Nites	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89530741792



What's Happening In Alachua County ARES®

Gordon KX4Z

Despite May being a "quieter" month with no deployments for our Alachua County ARES(R) team, we were still very busy learning and doing (which is how you stay active and out of the hospital!).

Field Day Planning

Earl Sloan KI4OXD took up the challenge of planning and running our 2026 Field Day Exercise, which is probably our largest teaching/operating opportunity every year. Our EOC is in the process of moving -- delayed time and time again by contractor delays -- so we have **no antennas** at the new EOC site, and not much more than having seen the unfinished room. So Earl worked to find alternate possible Field Day locations....and most of them were already booked, and another wouldn't allow overnight operation... So we settled on "Casa Gibby" -- the 5 acre backyard and Guest House at my homestead. 2-3 stations in the guest house, two air conditioned trailers, a tower trailer and yagi, and several vertical or horizontal wire antennas. High speed Mesh networking per usual with **Mark McDow N4TEK**, **Earl McDow K4ZSW**, and **Susan Halbert KG4VWI**. Planning continues!

Some of the power planning for Field Day



We've had two stalwarts "retire" from active service -- **Leland Gallup AA3YB** and **David Huckstep W4JIR** -- so time to recruit new volunteers to fill our slots! We still have an amazing **twelve volunteers** who have signed our unique MOU with the County for vetted volunteers to have significant protections while serving. <https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/county-ares-docs/alachua-county-volunteer-mou-2025/>

General Class Course

We finished a complete General Class Course based on <https://hamradioschool.com/>, with five participants finishing. Many thanks to our team of volunteer teachers: **Earl Sloan KI4OXD**, **Gordon Gibby KX4Z**, **Brett Wallace NH2KW**, **Earl McDow K4ZSW**

SHARES

With the cutting of our HF antenna cable last year, we've had a real pickle of how to continue our HF SHARES practice, so we've gone to off-site checkins on Wednesdays. **Brett Wallace NH2KW** has been shouldering a good bit of this load (thanks!). Further, the SHARES Southeast Regional Net is in need of new net control stations, and Brett has volunteered to help out with that also. Hooray!

Amateur Radio Week Proclamation

Prior to Field Day, this year we got an Amateur Radio Week proclamation submitted via the Emergency Manager to the County and it is scheduled to be presented publicly on June 9th at the County Commission meeting. Several of our volunteers plan to attend to accept the award.

June TableTop Exercise

For our June meeting, Brett plans to do a "tabletop exercise" to explore staffing issues when asked to deploy by the Emergency Manager. I'm excited to participate and see how this turns out --we currently have over 30 ARES members, but only 12 volunteering to deploy to serve. <https://www.nf4rc.club/how-to-docs/county-ares-docs/badging-list/>

Is It Possible To Mitigate Modern Travel Trailer RFI Sources Adequately For Effective HF Communications?

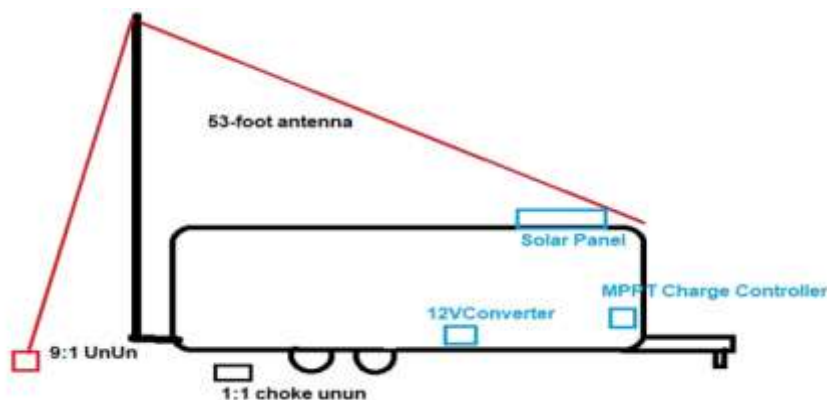
Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Introduction: Trailer Noise Sources

Any switching-based power system will generate hash noise (electromagnetic interference, EMI) related to every harmonic of the switching frequency, decreasing in amplitude as the harmonic number grows. The major sources in typical travel trailers of the 2025-2026 vintage are (1) the 12 volt battery charger/power supply (called a "converter") and (2) installed MPPT solar panel charger if present.

Test Setup

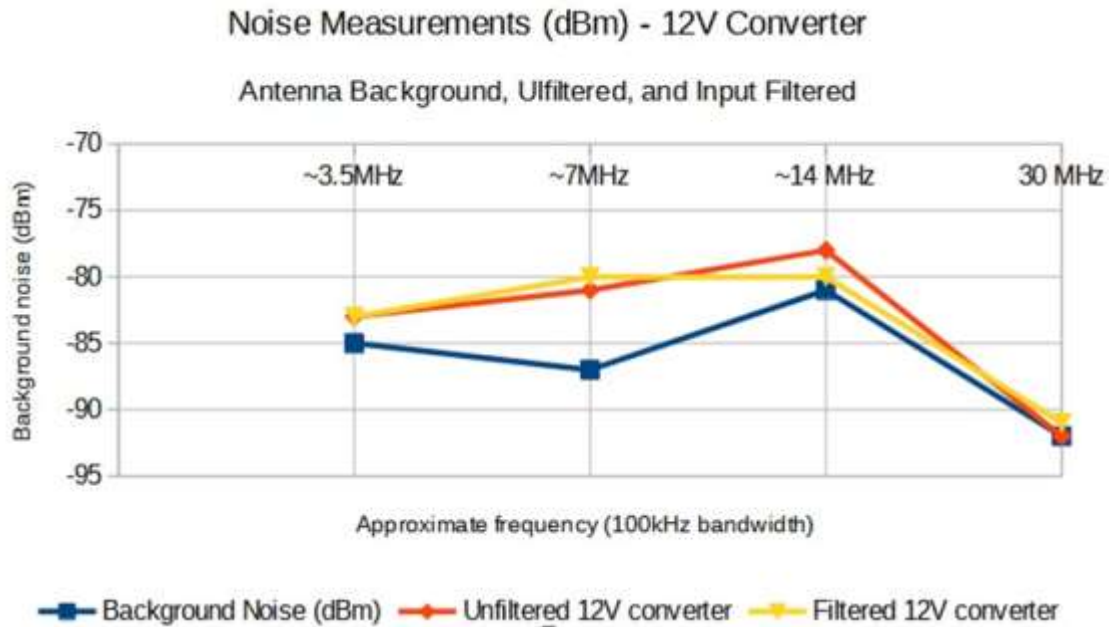
Our 25-foot 2025 Grand Designs 21BHE travel trailer is equipped with a WFCO WF9855 12-volt converter, 165W solar panel and a Furrion 40A MPPT charge controller FSCC40PW2. A 53-foot random end-fed wire antenna and a 30-foot carbon fiber mast at the rear of the travel trailer comprised an inverted vee. A 9:1 unun was connected to the end of the wire, at the rear of the trailer, with a counterpoise of about 10 feet. Coax with 1:1 choke Balun proceeds inside the trailer to the Siglent spectrum analyzer. The far end slopes down from the mast, right over the front of the trailer, only feet away from the solar panel. This makes a fairly "worst-case" test setup for common mode noise radiated by switching most power supplies. A Siglent spectrum analyzer connected to the coax of the antenna (without an antenna tuner) made the measurements.



Limitation: My random-wire 53 foot antenna with 9:1 step-down surely presents a terrible match on 80 meters and the data suggest that without any matching correction, it indeed conveys far less signal, so my 80-meter data are less robust. Further weather changes during measurements, an afternoon lightning storm, random clouds and changing sun position and ionospheric conditions made data gathering difficult.

Noise Source 1: 12VDC Converter

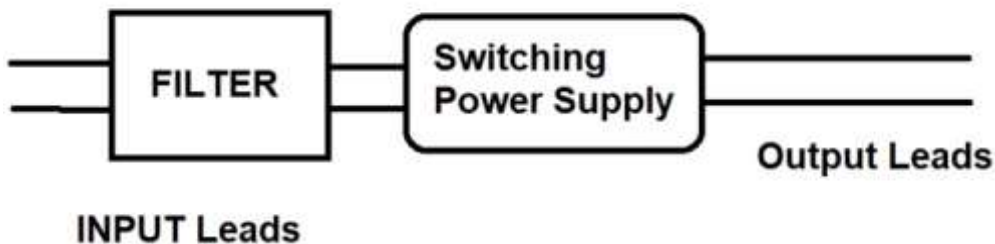
In my previous trailer (2007 vintage) the traditional open frame switching converter generated large amounts of RF hash over the low- to mid-HF bands. The current 2025 Grand Designs 21BHE uses a WF8955 deck-mounted (enclosed) converter, and appears to have only modest noise creation, at least when lightly loaded. The following graph shows it produces ≤ 7 dB noise over baseline and the two-stage filter on its input does not seem to make a great amount of improvement. The noise that it produces was received as approx -80dBm @ 100kHz bandwidth. At 3kHz bandwidth, this equates to -95 dBm or approx S5 noise. (Based on experience with Noise Source #2, adding an output filter on this supply might be advantageous.)



Major Noise Source: MPPT Solar Panel Charge Controller

The observed noise from the MPPT controller varies enormously with the amount of solar radiation. This posed a big problem for consistent measurements; I'm presenting the best aggregation of data I was able to capture. Background noise on 40/20 meters was approx -83 dBm @ 100kHz, equal to -98 dBm @ 3kHz or approx S4.5. The unfiltered MPPT controller with strong sunlight reached as much as -60 dBm @100kHz or about S9 on a perfect S-meter @ 3kHz.

Adding a 2-section filter to the solar panel feed wires, positioned inches from the MPPT controller made a huge improvement on 40meters, **but not on 20 meters**. Why?



Conventional wisdom is that the input leads to a switching system are the most crucial to filter, because the switcher chops the current in these leads violently, and the output signal ripple is intentionally minimized. However, that wasn't working so well here, and Palomar Engineers' web page recommends filtering also the output wiring of MPPT controllers. I created a simple single stage LC pi network filter and **obtained huge improvement also on 20 meters**.

With low solar irradiation (31 W generated) the noise is only a couple dB above background noise. With high solar irradiation, the noise received in my test setup does rise, but the combined two filters result in approximately 15 dB reduction, resulting in noise approximately 10-15 dB at worst above background, approximately S6-7 @ 3kHz instead of S9.

Approx. Noise Power MPPT Charger Filtering

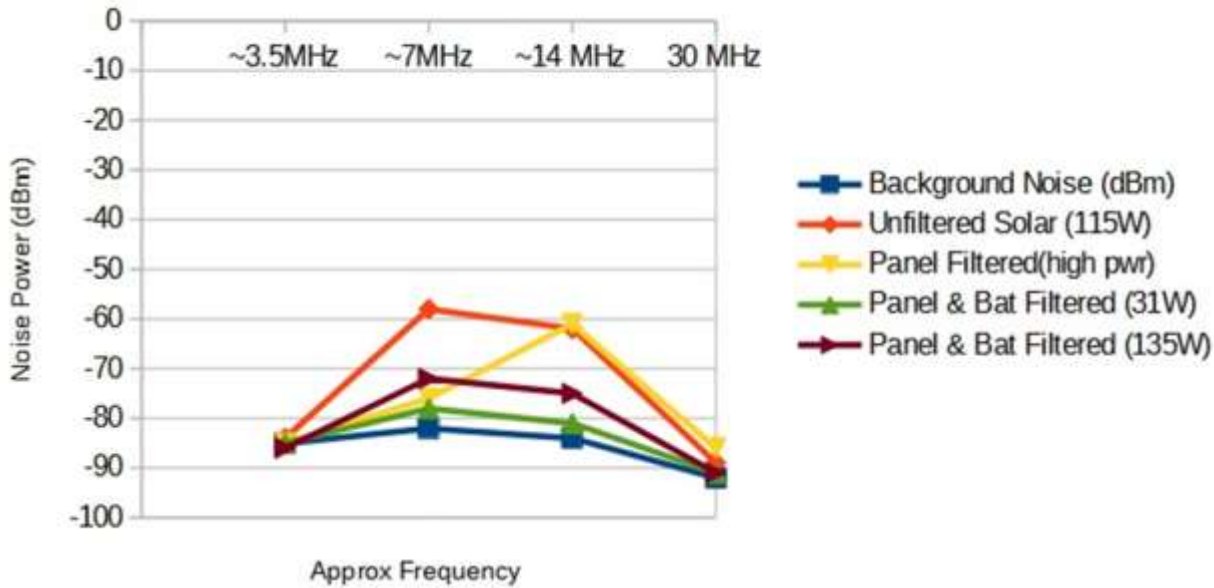


Figure: Measured noise (100kHz bandwidth) from MPPT Charge Controller with various filter situations

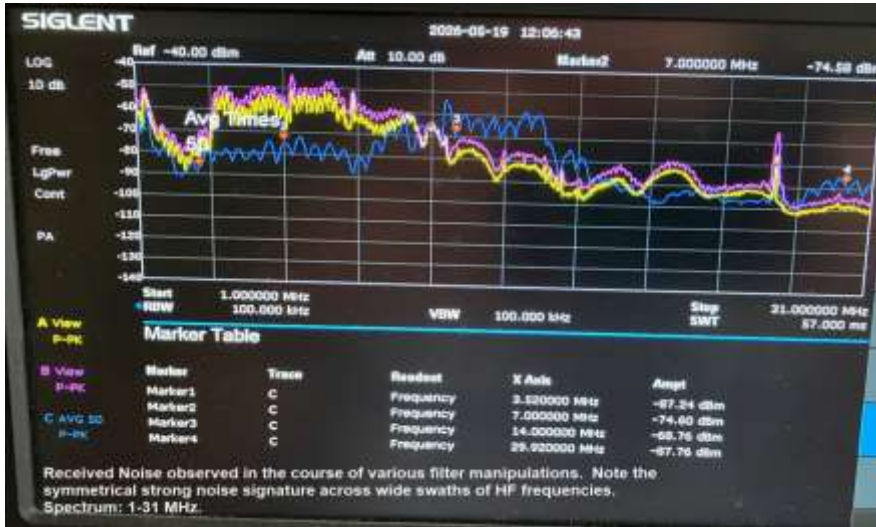


Figure: Horrible received noise signatures observed in the process of filtering the MPPT charge controller. Noise stronger than -60 dBm is observed.



Figure: Much lower noise signatures obtained with filtering of all lines in and out of the MPPT charge controller. Noise signatures are now down in the -70 dBm or below. Stronger peaks probably represent international broadcast stations.

Worst Case Data

It is important to recognize that these test were collected intentionally at worst case -- with the inverted V antenna right over the trailer and ending within single digit feet from the panels! It is likely that a proper 80 meter antenna would have demonstrated very significant 80-meter noise from these sources, and likely considerable improvement, just as was demonstrated on 40 and 20 meters.

Distance: Our experience is that these noise sources tend to have a "near-field" component that declines as the inversion of distance to the 4th power (r^4) and thus **moving the antenna 20-30 yards away could make the remaining filtered noise disappear as a problem.**

Practical Application

One motivation for these improvements was to allow the trailer as well as its solar power system to be useful in the ARRL Field Day -- perhaps the largest emergency communications exercise of all. I also use it for ham radio on trips all over America. The results show that with fairly simple 1- or 2-stage LC filters (design presented elsewhere) significant filtering of even quite noisy switching systems of a travel trailer is very possible.

Filtering of both input and output of particularly strong noise generators such as the MPPT charge controller, may be necessary. Palomar Engineers markets simple toroid and snap-on ferrites that are a good first effort.

My 2-stage homebrew filters may be overkill; even a simple FT-240-43 toroid with 6 bifilar turns of power wiring might make significant difference, and I did successfully add a single stage toroid filter with just one toroid and 4 capacitors to ground. Any filtering would be an improvement! If input filtering doesn't solve the problem, add output filtering!

Volunteer communicators seeing the advantages of in-built kitchen and restroom facilities in a travel trailer considered for an emergency comms base should utilize these type filtering systems to make HF SSB or digital communications more successful.

MERT



Marion County Sheriff's Office
Division of Emergency Management

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

June 2026



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, all cities in the county and other EMCOMM groups (CERT, HEC, ARES & MBA) with voice, image & data communications locally, statewide and across the United States.

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

Next Bimonthly Meeting

Saturday, July 15th, 10:00 am at the EOC

All are Welcomed!

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

Coordinator's Corner – The Power of YOU!



**Harlan Cook
(KN4VRM) MERT
Coordinator**

As we approach the second half of the year and the start of the 2026 hurricane season on June 1st, I find myself reflecting on what truly makes MERT strong. It isn't just the radios we operate or the new HF antennas and SHARES capabilities we're working to add this year. It isn't the equipment, the training sessions, or even the technical improvements we've achieved—impressive as they are. What makes MERT exceptional is the people behind all of it... **YOU.**

Every improvement we've made this year has been driven by volunteers who choose to give their time, energy, and expertise. That choice is powerful. It's what transforms equipment into capability, and capability into readiness. Working alongside each of you—learning together, solving problems together, making improvements (small and large), and supporting one another—has been one of the most rewarding parts of my role. Volunteering with MERT isn't just about service; it's about connection, purpose, and a shared commitment to all of the communities in Marion County.

As the 2026 hurricane season approaches, I want to say clearly how pleased I am of our collective work so far. As the MERT Coordinator, I could not be prouder of the dedication I see across this team. We train not because we expect disaster, but because we know Emergency Management depends on us if one comes. Should we be activated, we stand ready to support the emergency shelters and all the residents and guests inside them, young and old, who rely on us as the last line of communication when everything else fails. Our strength is measured by our members. In you. In us. In the network we support together. Thank you for showing up, for caring, and for being the heart of MERT. Thank you for everything you do to support our mission of serving our community when it needs us most.

Your presence matters. Your skills matter. Your voice matters. Please answer the call when it comes.

With sincere appreciation,
Harlan Cook, KN4VRM
MERT Coordinator

From the Deputy Coordinator - You May Want to Join This Mailing List

I reside in an HOA community which always means there will be certain constraints on amateur radio antennas. An HOA community is enjoyable in many respects, but not particularly so for Ham enthusiasts looking for a workable HF antenna solution that does not violate covenants.

I have been searching for HF antenna candidates that might work in my HOA setting. Searches invariably lead you to a number of websites and even social media pages devoted to the subject. One particular site that I keep an eye on is Greyline Performance Antennas, which is well known for their HOA-friendly flagpole HF vertical dipole antennas.



Ray Woody (WB6FKJ)
Deputy Coordinator

I have not made any purchases from Greyline yet, but I did subscribe to their email list. I usually receive one or two emails each month. While these predictably contain promotional content, I have found that they also include useful articles, tools, and links to helpful and interesting resources. I actually look forward to receiving them.

Here are some recent examples.

On the Monday after our Saturday, April 18th **MERT 22** Exercise, the Greyline e-mail contained an interesting account of why the HF bands went dead over that past weekend. It described the coronal hole on the sun that fired a high-speed solar wind stream at Earth. By Saturday morning (**MERT 22** day), NOAA registered a G2 moderate geomagnetic storm, with the **Kp** index climbing to six (6). They also included a simplified way to look at **Kp**, likening it to a weather forecast for your antenna:

- ⇒ a **Kp** between 0 – 2 is flat calm and usually means open bands;
- ⇒ a **Kp** between 3 - 4 is “partly cloudy”; and
- ⇒ a **Kp** anywhere between 5 – 9 represents moderate to strong storms causing widespread disruption

Although this Greyline analysis was not as comprehensive as Harlan’s “**MERT 22** HF Bands Outage” analysis, it was an excellent quick read right after our event.

The Greyline e-mail sent on May 12 featured a user-friendly Coax Loss Calculator. Here is the link (<http://greylineperformance.com/pages/feedline-loss-calculator>). It is free and does not involve any login. Simply choose the feedline type and operating band from the dropdown menu, and input your run length and transmit power, and it will display results for line loss (dB), watts at the antenna, and watts lost as heat. It also contains their rationale for not skimping on your choice of feedline. “Running 100W from the radio with only 50W reaching the antenna effectively cuts your station in half. Doubling power to compensate (100W to 200W) costs significantly more than upgrading to better coax.”

A worthy read is Greyline’s discussion on the importance of an antenna’s “aperture” and why it is a better metric of an antenna’s effectiveness than physical length. It is an interesting read. Visit: <https://greylineperformance.com/pages/antenna-aperture-and-gain?>

I am very tempted to purchase their 20-foot flagpole antenna (allowable by my HOA) but have not pulled the trigger yet. (Greyline Mailing List - <https://greylineperformance.com/>)

Best regards to all!

Ray Woody WB6FKJ
Deputy Coordinator

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something.” – Edward Everett Hale

Net Control Operator Class

MERT is planning a Net Control Operator (NCO) class and will announce the date soon. You may ask.... What is an NCO and what do they do?



The NCO is the person in charge of managing and coordinating radio traffic during a Net (also referred to as a “Communications” or “Training” Net) and defined as a scheduled or ad-hoc group of amateur radio operators communicating on a set frequency for a specific purpose. Think of the NCO as the “conductor” or “host” of the Net, ensuring smooth, orderly, and efficient Communications between all participants.

Members – NCO positions are available. Challenge yourself and learn something new! It is actually, fun to be the NCO and I look forward to the opportunity.

Nick Kiddey
W4NFK
Safety Manager &
New Member
Manager

MERT Coordinator Update on Supporting our new Safety Manager

Safety is a core pillar of every successful organization, and especially for the Marion County Emergency Radio Team. We can only fulfill our mission of providing dependable communications from the shelters during emergencies if we ourselves operate safely in our conduct and actions.

The appointment of **Nick Kiddey, W4NFK**, as MERT’s new Safety Manager strengthens our commitment to ensuring that every deployment, training event, and exercise is conducted with the highest level of awareness and preparedness.

In amateur radio, the Safety Manager serves as the team’s eyes and ears for risk prevention—monitoring operating conditions, identifying potential hazards, and ensuring that equipment, power sources, and operating spaces meet safe standards. Within MERT, this role carries added importance. Our operators work in shelters we do not control, and our training and field environments can present unique and sometimes unexpected conditions. Nick’s leadership will help ensure that every member returns home safely and without injury after every activity.

Supporting Nick is simple but vital. Members can help by following established safety procedures, reporting concerns promptly, maintaining their equipment responsibly, and staying aware of their surroundings during every activity—whether in the classroom, the EOC, MERT warehouse, or during training exercises. By strengthening our shared responsibility, we continue building a culture of safety awareness that benefits every operator. Thank you for your fullest support.

HC

New Member News



In May, new member **Gavin Karelitz (K2ETC)** receives his Level 1 ID badge from Deputy Coordinator Ray Woody (WB6FKJ). We congratulate Gavin on his eagerness to learn more about MERT’s mission and objectives. All members are invited to offer their support and Elmer skills at every opportunity.

Welcome to MERT Gavin!



(L-R) Ray Woody, Dave Smith and Harlan Cook.

New Member Dave Smith (KG5RF) receives his Levels 1 & 2 ID Badges from Deputy Coordinator Ray Woody (WB6FKJ). We congratulate Dave on his enthusiasm to complete and be approved for full access to all Shelter facilities as an emergency communications operator when called upon.

Dave has also enthusiastically embraced MERT’s mission and objectives and already is on the air with Winlink messages during our weekly training Nets!

The History of MERT



Ever since I attended my first MERT meeting, I found myself drawn to our mission and to the questions of how this remarkable organization came to be — and especially to the story behind our past leaders (both within MERT and the Division of Emergency Management), our incredibly impressive EOC, and the advanced emergency communications radio room and systems that so many of us rely on today. It was a major disappointment to discover that no written history existed, and even more heartbreaking to learn that nearly all of MERT’s earliest leaders and senior members had become “Silent Keys”.

When I eventually became a “senior member,” and later was asked to serve as Coordinator, I felt a responsibility to change that. Two priorities quickly rose to the top:

- Create and share a regular newsletter that highlights what MERT is doing and who is making it happen. Volunteers support what they understand and feel connected to — and a newsletter not only builds that connection; it also quietly builds our history for everyone who will lead and support MERT in the future.
- Research, collect, and publish a true “MERT History” so that our beginnings are never lost again.

In May, I published the **MERT History Introduction** along with **MERT’s Genesis – Part 1** and **The New EOC – Part 2** which chronicled (to the best information I have now) MERT’s creation and history. I’m hopeful everyone enjoys a look back to our foundations and future members will add more to it as unfolds. Please let me know if you’d like a copy. HC

Honoring Those Who Answer the Call

On March 26th, Deputy Coordinator Ray Woody received the “Spirit of the Volunteer Award” certificate from the Marion County Sheriff’s Office signed by Sheriff Woods. The award says in part... “In honor of your exceptional commitment, passion and selflessness in serving the community through the Marion County Sheriff’s Office.” Congratulations to Ray and the positive impacts he has made in supporting MERT’s mission.



May 20, 2026 – Deputy Coordinator Ray Woody (WB6FKJ) is shown MERT’s “Honoring Those Who Answer the Call” award by Coordinator Harlan Cook



“The quality of your life will be determined by the quality of your contribution. When you work to improve the

To honor the award and memorialize the service for all future members to acknowledge, a new recognition of those volunteers making a difference and supporting MERT has been created. "Honoring Those Who Answer the Call" will help in building a history into the future of all the volunteers making major contributions and leading MERT.

KG4NXO.com – Your resource for great MERT information. New resource ideas are always welcomed!

May 16th AUXCOMM-EMCOMM Combined Meeting Update

The combined meeting of MERT, CERT, HEC, ARES, MBA and guest hams was very well attended with these speakers and presentations:

- Harlan Cook – MERT Coordinator
MERT History - Introduction plus Parts 1 & 2
- MERT 22 HF Band Outage Update
Multiple solar events report
- Adding 4 HF Antennas @ EOC
- Dave Welker – HEC Coordinator
April Hospital Drill After Action report - What HEC did, how we did it and what is next?
- Ray Woody – MERT Deputy Coordinator
Update on Shelter Testing Action Items and Remaining Readiness Activities for upcoming Hurricane Season
- Mark Weible – MBA – Marion County Disaster Relief Coordinator
Rapid Disaster Assessment Program review and the Marion Mesh Initiative Update

Additional topics from ARES Coordinator Hayden Kaufman was information on the **Operation Southern Track** Training Exercise planned for June 20th and Kraig Pritts update on CERT's next Certification Class starting May 30th.



(Top Row) Attendee's visit before the meeting starts. Dave Welker (HEC Coordinator) presenting an excellent review on the hospital systems and HEC team exercises.

(Middle Row) Deputy Coordinator Ray Woody shares information on the Dunnellon shelter tests and the next steps for MERT repair visits at Lake Wier HS and Madison Street Elementary on June 9th.

(Bottom Row) Mark Weible (MBA Disaster Relief Coordinator) shares an overview on the Rapid Disaster Assessment app. and the current efforts of the Marion Mesh Initiative. MERT thanks every speaker for their interesting and informative presentations.

Introducing the Division of Emergency Management

During the Wednesday, May 20th “Check In” meeting, **Nathan Hime** – Div. of Emergency Management Planner, provided an excellent overview of who the Division of Emergency Management is, what it is responsible for and why it is needed in serving the citizens of Marion County.

His presentation was very informative and presented many aspects about the Division most citizens never learn about like “Continuity of Operations (COOP)”, the detailed planning and year-long preparations the Division works on, along with the future forecasting of hurricane season forecast that La Nino’s and El Nino’s (warming or cooling phases of the oceans temperatures) can impact the results.

It was a very interesting review and MERT thanks Nathan for his time to share it with all the members. Thank you Nathan!



Wednesday “Check In” Updates - May

In May, members focused on these activities:

- SHREK Kit Audits
 - ◊ A full audit of every kit was completed by members with only a few old headphones replaced.
- Upcoming school Shelter repair visits planned for June 9th.
- New EOC HF Antennas Update
- Meeting reviewing the Shelter Operator Binder.
 - ◊ What and Why is this binder important?
- Who is the Division of Emergency Management and What Does Do?

These topics and more made the May meetings very interesting with many diverse subjects shared!



(Top Row) Ray Woody shares a class on the Shelter Operator Manual. Nathan Hime presenting his overview of the Div. of Emergency Management.

(Bottom Row) Deputy Rob Ethridge visits MERT. Division Director Preston Bowling stopped by early and share a fun story about a trip to Alaska with early attendee's Phil Lewis, Gavin Karelitz, Ray Woody, Jim Lowe and Nick Kiddey.

MERT has a new email - Please note it for the future - MERT.AUXCOMM@gmail.com

All amateur radio operators and the general public are welcomed to attend all MERT meetings every Wednesday from 9:00 am till Noon at the
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
692 NW 30th Ave., Ocala, FL.

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.

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

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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.