



QST NFL

Newsletter for the Northern Florida Section

Come join the FUN!

Volume 13 Issue 11

www.arrl-nfl.org

November 2026

What is ARRL?

The National Association for Amateur Radio®

ARRL supports and advances amateur radio through advocacy, education, technical resources, public service, and emergency communications.

-  Protecting Amateur Radio Spectrum
-  Education and Licensing Support
-  Emergency and Public Service Communications
-  Community, Mentoring, and Operating Activities

Serving the Northern Florida Section



ARRL The national association for amateur radio®



What is ARES?

Amateur Radio Emergency Service®

ARES is a program of licensed amateur radio volunteers who provide emergency and public service communications when normal systems are overloaded, damaged, or unavailable. In Northern Florida, ARES helps connect local municipalities, county EOCs, public safety partners, and the State Emergency Operations Center when reliable communications matter most.

-  Support for local municipalities, counties, and partner agencies
-  Communication links between county EOCs, local operations, and the State EOC
-  Deployable HF, VHF, UHF, Winlink, APRS, and auxiliary radio capabilities
-  Training, exercises, public service events, and readiness activities

★ SERVING THE NORTHERN FLORIDA SECTION ★

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, COMMUNICATIONS MATTER MOST. ARES VOLUNTEERS ARE READY.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS. CRITICAL CONNECTIONS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.



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Newsletter, *QST NFL*

Earl McDow, K4ZSW

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

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

All submissions are subject to editing prior to publication.

Looking for Something?

Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, has taken the time to index the articles from all the 2021 issues of *QST NFL*!

<https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021QSTNFLIndex.pdf>

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NFL Section Member of the Month!

We are always accepting nominations for the NFL Section Member of the Month. To submit a nomination, please email Section Manager Scott Roberts at kk4ecr@gmail.com. Include the nominee's name, call sign, county, reason for the nomination, and a photo of the nominee. Arc and I will review the nominations and contact you with any questions

Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications

Marty Brown, N4GL

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

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

Loften High School Project

Bob Lightner W4GJ

We are working on a fun fund-raising project for our High School. We are enjoying building "Static Dissipaters."

Here's basically what they look like:



I have them on my tower at 75 feet. They work great!

Description of Our Student Product

Static Dissipaters lower the exposure to a direct lightning strike by controlling the conditions which trigger direct strike (i.e. they reduce the build-up of static ground charge and retard the formation of the ion "streamers" which complete the path for a lightning strike).

Our Dissipaters employ the point-discharge principle to continually leak off the lightning causing ground potential in low amperages over a long period of time instead of the short duration, high amperage discharge occurring with a lightning strike.

This is the same technology which is successfully employed to protect commercial broadcast and television towers from direct lightning strikes. This lightweight Dissipater mounts to the masthead and extends vertically above all other masthead equipment.

We do not claim that this product is 100% effective in preventing a lightning strike. At the present collective level of understanding of the lightning phenomenon, no one can make that claim. This product does control the causes of lightning strikes and thereby reduces the incidence of direct strikes.

Commercially sold ones cost hundreds of dollars. We make them at our High School and sell them for the cost of materials plus a small amount for labor. Our price is: \$50 per pair.

Mount them on your antenna masts with a U-Bolt or Stainless Steel hose clamp (not supplied).



Silver Springs Radio Club, Inc.

2026 HAMFEST



Saturday, December 5, 2026
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Location:

First Christian Church
1908 East Fort King Street
Ocala, FL 34471

Event Contact:

Email: hamfest@k4gso.us
Web: www.k4gso.us

Registration:

See: k4gso.us - click
"OCALA HAMFEST"
for info and to register

- **Admission:** \$10 entry to exhibit hall includes one Raffle ticket! Advance tickets available online.
- **Raffle Prize:** Yaesu FT-710 Field Transceiver — Additional tickets: only \$5 each!!
- Multiple raffle tickets sold only with at least one admission ticket.
- Raffle Tickets available online at k4gso.us
- Need not be present to win the raffle prize (Yaesu FT-710 Field)
- Other door prizes throughout the day
- Multiple commercial vendors in the indoor exhibit hall
- Outdoor Flea Market/Tailgating
- Plenty of **FREE PARKING** directly across the street
- **VE FCC License Testing:** - Fee \$15 - cash only - Bring ID and your FRN number
- **VE signup, contact:** TestingChair@k4gso.us
- VE testing begins at 10:00 AM - Walk-ins accepted
- Food available on site by the Boy Scouts

INSIDE COMMERCIAL EXHIBITORS (Indoor tables reserved for exhibitors only until October 31):

- Tables \$15 each - please indicate number of tables desired
- Advance registration highly recommended. Tables on first come basis for commercial vendors.
- Unsold inside tables will be open to individuals after October 31 if space is available.
- All indoor tables must be Amateur Radio related equipment, products or services.
- Doors open for exhibitor setup at 6:00 AM

• TAILGATE (Outside):

- Tailgate fee \$20
- Tailgate fee includes one admission ticket to exhibit hall and one tailgate spot. Additional tailgate spots can be purchased separately for \$10. Must purchase admission ticket and tailgate spot to purchase additional tailgate spots.
- Tailgate setup outside begins at 6:00 AM

Silver Springs Radio Club Repeater - K4GSO 146.610 — 123.0 PL

Interested in joining the Silver Springs Radio Club? See our website at k4gso.us or contact membership@k4gso.us
We can help you obtain your Amateur Radio license if you are not licensed or to upgrade your existing license
Visit our club meetings via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Link is on our website at k4gso.us

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DIXIE AMATEUR RADIO KLUB • W4DAK

2026 • FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Amateur Radio Festival & Tailgate



SAT • NOV 7, 2026

8 AM – 1 PM

TRENTON TRAIN DEPOT

N Main St (US-129) & NW 4th Ave
Trenton, Florida

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Learn how local hams keep Dixie, Levy & Gilchrist connected when disaster strikes

POTA ACTIVATION

Nature Coast State Trail, park US-3640

TAILGATE SWAP

Buy, sell & trade gear. Tailgaters set up from 8 AM

PRIZE RAFFLE

Drawing at 12 noon

LICENSE TESTING

VE exam session at 1 PM. **Must preregister by email to fredko4yol@gmail.com**

FOOD & DRINKS

Available on site all morning



TALK-IN

147.390 MHz • PL 123.0

Fred Lewis, K04YOL • 352-214-6557

fredko4yol@gmail.com • Serving Dixie, Levy & Gilchrist

Ham Radio Festival and Tailgate Returns to Trenton Train Depot Nov. 7

Fred Lewis, KO4YOL · 352-214-6557 · fredko4yol@gmail.com

TRENTON, Fla. — The Dixie Amateur Radio Klub (a non profit club) will hold its annual Amateur Radio Festival & Tailgate on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 8 a.m. 1 p.m. at the historic Trenton Train Depot, at North Main Street (U.S. 129) and Northwest Fourth Avenue. The event is free and open to the public.

The festival gives residents an opportunity to meet local amateur radio operators, known as “hams,” and learn how they support the community. Club members will explain how amateur radio can provide emergency communications when storms or other disasters disrupt phone and internet service.

All morning, the tailgate swap will offer radio equipment for sale and trade from vehicles parked at the depot. Food and drinks will be sold on site, and a prize raffle drawing will be held at noon.

Anyone who wants to earn or upgrade an amateur radio license can take the FCC exam at a session starting at 1 p.m., run by volunteer examiners. Test-takers must preregister by emailing fredko4yol@gmail.com before the event.

Operators driving in can use the club's talk-in frequency, 147.390 MHz (PL 123.0).

For more information, contact Fred Lewis, KO4YOL, at 352-214-6557 or fredko4yol@gmail.com

PARC Annual Swampfest

HAMFEST/CONVENTION

11/21/2026

Start Date: 11/21/2026

End Date: 11/21/2026

Location: Hangar 41

41 Windham Ave. SE

Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Website: <http://www.w4zdb.org>

Sponsor: Playground Amateur Radio Club

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Talk-In: 146.790

Public Contact: Queenie Barrientos, KQ4FRB

17A First St. SW Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

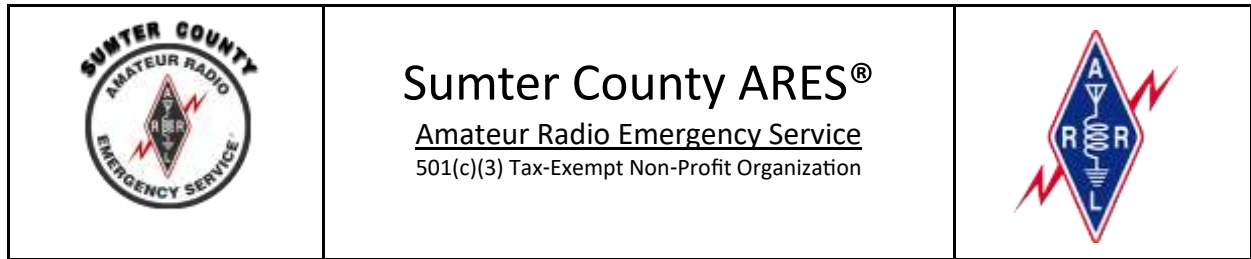
Phone: 850-359-9186

Email: kq4frb@gmail.com



COME ONE COME ALL! OPEN YOUR TRUNKS, DROP YOUR TAILGATES,
AND BRING YOUR GEAR FROM YOUR STORAGE AREAS!





NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2026

Mark Newby KX4LEO Emergency Coordinator Sumter County ARES



Sumter County ARES participated in the National Night Out event on Friday, October 2nd, 2026, at the Sumter County Fairgrounds. Despite the rain, the event was a huge success attended by many Sumter County residents, and visitors alike.

Organized locally by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

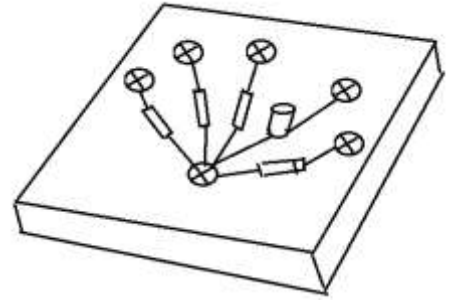
Sumter County ARES uses this opportunity each year to promote the advancement of amateur radio, and to acquaint the public and local officials with the capabilities of amateur radio for emergency communications.

Our own Planning Section Chief, Gene King, KI4LEH, is instrumental in coordinating our participation with the Sheriff's Office. I want to say a special thank you to Sumter ARES members Paul Koch, KD2HQV, and Logistics Section Chief

Youngsters Having FUN Learning Ham Radio

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

Youngsters at two local Alachua County private schools are having a bunch of crazy experiences and FUN while learning ham radio -- and potentially pursuing a goal that would impress even seasoned hams -- making satellite and International Space Station contacts!



Simple pine board, a few 1000 ohm resistors, an electrolytic capacitor and a silicon diode and some screws make for a wonderful learning experience!

At the 2026 AMSAT national conference, I was able to present a paper on my work with middle-schoolers at one school with a mathematics teacher leading a class on wide-ranging TECHNOLOGY, and with myself starting a high-school club at a 2nd private school. While many are concerned by the very significant "graying" of amateur radio and the recent decline in numbers and certainly in active numbers -- this is a success that can be replicated in your town, too! (My talk can be heard beginning about the 1:38 point of their Friday live stream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaTlb-RBVYU> .)

High School Students Learning Things, Moving Ahead!

At the high school (The Rock School) 4-10 students on a typical Wednesday assemble right after early dismissal (if they have finished their schoolwork) and join in a very fast-paced club meeting. A few minutes of Technician exam question review over material they were to study in the previous week are followed by active involvement in some facet of home-brewing a SATELLITE STATION. Three students so far have done some old-fashioned **soldering** on a custom printed circuit board to make a K3NG Arduino Nano computer-controlled robotic controller. This last week, students also spent the better part of an hour unpacking, calibrating and doing their first 3D print using a Bambu Labs P1S 3D filament printer. They printed the traditional little "Benchy" boat in green PLA filament. A younger student nearby was the lucky one to get to take it home! Interested in what we're doing, a new student wandered in, who already has 3D printing experience. Soon the group will be downloading the STL files for the gears and levers of a **homebrew elevation rotator** based on a design by Australian ham VK4GHZ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRMzorm-bA>).

My ambitious schedule for those students may be just a tad TOO ambitious -- they may not make their Technician Exam by December 5th when the GARS club next gives exams, but no worry -- we are still moving right along toward an ARISS application next spring!

Middle School Kids Excited by Multimeter

John Seppala, the not-yet-ham radio-licensed math teacher at Gainesville Christian Community School is now making in the low 90's on Technician practice tests and plans to take his exam with the Gilchrist County team in November. That will be a big step forward for his 16-student TECHNOLOGY elective class. Every week or so, I or other local hams have been dropping in to give the students hands-on demonstrations. Their Board Chairman, a retired airline pilot, is also a ham and has been helping out, too!

This last week, I was able to take some of my pine-board-component-blocks and visit their classroom. Armed with some multimeters, and various little dry-cell batteries, the students clambered over each other to get a chance to measure something with the METER. There was a lot of excitement when I plugged the test leads into a wall socket to measure AC line voltage! It was so much fun to see them crowding around desks as they tried to measure the resistance characteristics of little 1/2 watt resistors, an electrolytic capacitor, and semiconductor diode that I have affixed to a simple pine board. Those demo props were made years and years ago, but they never fail to help new Technician students begin to understand the Electricity Chapter in any Technician Course.

The middle-schoolers may have a slightly slower road toward building their own rotator controller printed circuit board and sawing and assembling the 2-axis rotation system, but it sure looks like they are learning and growing!

The crowd at the AMSAT meeting was very happy to hear my talk about ways to bring grade-school students into the world of satellite ham radio. I have made handouts and schedules and links to building projects widely available on our Alachua County website: <https://www.nf4rc.club/ariss-satellite-resources/>

Textbook for Technology	https://www.amazon.com/Introduction-Technology-High-School-Students/dp/B0H5X7FH5T
Ham Radio School resources	https://hamradioschool.com/
Compiled list of Alachua County Resources	https://www.nf4rc.club/ariss-satellite-resources/
Example of Invitational Handout	https://www.nf4rc.club/invitational-handout-for-amateur-radio-satellite-club-at-christian-private-school/

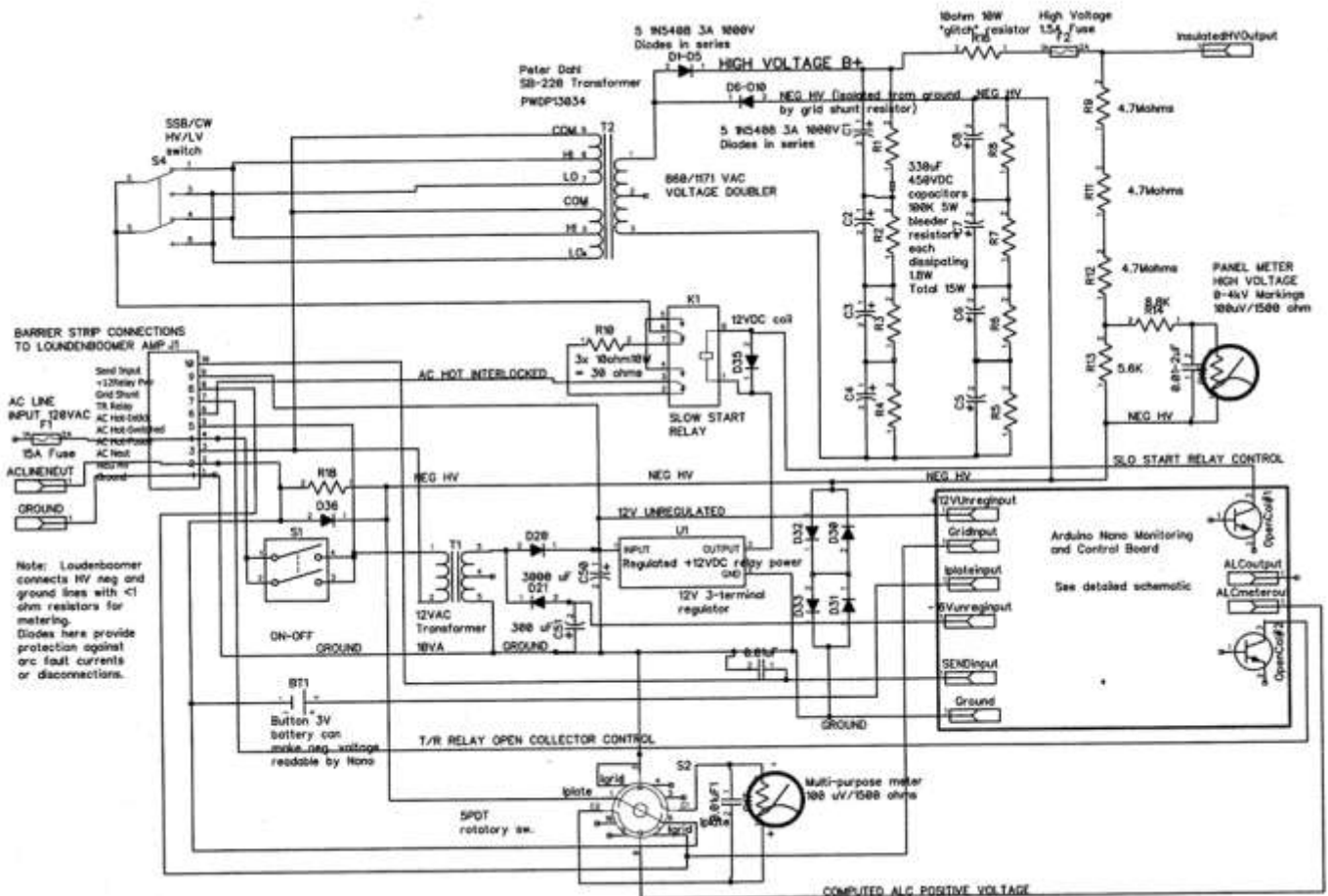
Building a HomeBrew 3-500Z Plate Power Supply—Part Two: Initial Wiring

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

This is the 2nd in a series detailing the construction of a high voltage power supply for a single- or double-3-500z amplifier. The design is based on 3D-printing the chassis and cabinet, allowing for easy replication and minimal construction skills. Normally difficult items such as oddly-shaped cutouts for meters are easy to accommodate in 3D printing and front panel labels can even be provided using different colors in layers of 3D printing.



Hallicrafters HT-45 Loudenboomer Single Tube Amplifier



CIRCUIT OPERATION

The high voltage portion of the power supply is simply a copy of the Heathkit SB-220 voltage doubler. The filter capacitor system can be thought of as two separate banks, each four capacitors fed by a diode. On the positive going half period, through the series diode string D1-D5 the left bank charges; on the negative going half period, the right bank charges through diode string D6-D10. Each such bank has $330/4 = 82 \text{ uF}$ capacitance. Each bank gets charged once each 16.7 millisecond cycle, and is expected to supply an average current of about 330 mA. Since $Q = CV$ for capacitors, the voltage droop can be calculated as $0.0055 \text{ amp-seconds} = 82 \times 10^{-6} \text{ F} * \Delta V \Rightarrow \text{droop} = 67 \text{ volts}$ for a single 3-500Z amplifier. At an average voltage of about 1600 volts per bank, this is on the order of 4% ripple, and the two banks are time-separated so the total effective ripple may be even less.

The bleeder resistors service to even out the voltages between capacitors and also safely discharge the capacitors when power is removed.

Power arrives to the high voltage supply through series of front panel toggle switch, cabinet interlock switch (in the amplifier) and through a slow-start resistor that gets bypassed by a relay after the initial surge current. (The timing controlled by the Arduino board later to be constructed.)

A simple low voltage supply provides unregulated positive voltage to intermittently operate T/R (bypass) relays in the Amplifier, and regulated +12 for the slow-start relay. The latter is the only load most of the time and the unregulated voltage was higher than comfortable so a simple regulator was added. The two T/R bypass relays in the Amplifier add enough load so that they see reasonably near to +12V and do not need regulation. The supply also provides a negative voltage for the op amp on the Arduino board to provide a negative ALC voltage to the exciter transmitter.

Voltage metering of the high voltage is continuous by one panel meter through dropping resistors, and this also will allow the Arduino to check for blown high voltage fuse and remove any excitation from the 3-500Z.

A second panel meter can be switched to measure plate current from a 0.33 ohm resistor in the negative HV line, or to access the grid shunt resistor voltage in the Arduino to measure grid current. The grid current voltage is also made available to the Arduino for ALC computation.

FILES REPOSITORY: <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/3-500ZPowerSupply>

CAUTION: Recommend all 3D printed be solid, 100% Inlay ABS Plastic.



Perspective view from the left side shows the tiered circuit boards, and how the wiring behind the front panel toggle switches takes up too much room. The 10-terminal barrier strip that interfaces to the amplifier is at the left rear. The new tray just above the transformer can almost be seen. The panel mount fuse will mount on the back panel of the final enclosure.

PROGRESS

For the last two weeks, I've been working on constructing and mounting the three printed circuit boards of the 3+ kV power supply and wiring up much of the system.

Circuit Boards:

- Low Voltage (+12 Unregulated, -16 Unregulated; 12V Regulated) (bottom board; build on simple electronic perfboard)

- Rectifier and plate current shunt resistor board (middle board; Harbach <https://harbachelectronics.com/shop/heathkit-sb220-sb221/rm-220-rectifiermetering-board/>; the cathode biasing portion is not used as those components will be inside the amplifier enclosure).

- High Voltage Filter Capacitor board (top board; Harbach <https://harbachelectronics.com/shop/heathkit-sb220-sb221/fb-220-replacement-filter-capacitor-block/>)

Three sets of nested pillar/posts allowed the bottom board to be mounted first, then the middle and the top on top of all of it.

For the moment I have not yet tackled the Arduino/Nano board. This will be a modified and re-purposed "KX4Z Sequencer" board. (Github repository for Gerber, etc: <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/Sequencer>) That should come next month. A new sketch will be needed, but that doesn't appear difficult. The tasks of the board will include:

- Monitoring Grid Current and generating negative voltage ALC (0- negative 4VDC) to go to exciter
- Create positive going ALC voltage to go to multi-purpose panel meter option
- Monitor fused high voltage to detect arc fault (and then bypass amplifier to prevent grid damage)
- Monitor SEND input (ground to go into "transmit") -- and operate T/R (bypass) relay in Loudenboomer

"Glitch Resistor" & Fuse Protection Against ARC Fault Currents

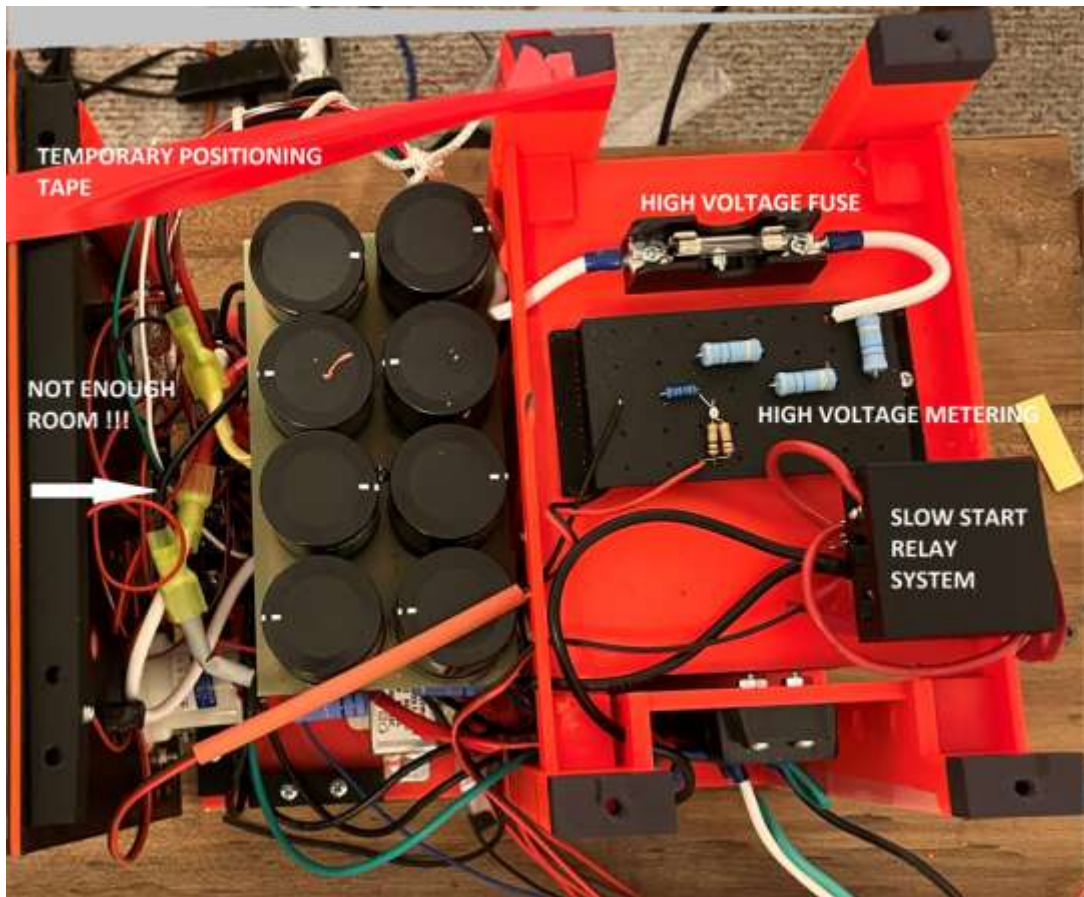
The high voltage output goes through a 10 ohm glitch resistor which protects the circuitry from otherwise devastating damage in the event that a slightly gassy 3-500z tube arcs from plate to grid or cathode. The Heathkit SB--220 didn't have this protection. I was able to place that resistor horizontally between two of the "fins" on the finned vertical baffle that was 3D printed just forward of the transformer, for such mounting. The fins of that baffle also allowed drilled holes to separate and fix the position of transformer wiring.

More Real Estate

I needed more "real estate" than just the three circuit boards for at least three additional items. Further, the vertical pillars on the sides of the power transformer needed more support. Therefore I designed and 3D printed a horizontal platform of 4mm thickness designed to go above the transformer. Threaded 10-24 holes in the platform accept screws passing through a drilled hole in each pillar. The result is a well-insulated platform and considerably improved rigidity of the pillars designed to support lifting handles on top of the case.

This above-transformer platform allowed placement of three items:

1. A 3-D printed assembly that holds an inexpensive 12-V coil relay to provide the "slow start" feature, and three 10-ohm 10-watt resistors in series, that the relay allows in series with the high voltage and filament transformers' primary, and then can bypass when the initial current surge is over. The original Heathkit SB-220 didn't have this, but Harbach and other mods allow many to add it to their amplifiers to reduce stress on the power supply components and potential mechanical damage to the filaments from the high current surge. (Other writers have found that the tube's elements are not at significant risk with the usual surge current.)¹
2. High voltage series fuse on the amplifier side of the 10-ohm "glitch resistor." In my experience with SB-200 amplifiers, a 3AG fuse works pretty well to interrupt the arc current if a tube arcs. Many original 3-500Z amplifiers didn't include this. It is said that an arc will do considerable damage to the rectifier/capacitor string, without the glitch resistor/fuse protection.
3. The high voltage string of resistors that allow direct analog metering of the high voltage, positioned by choice on the amplifier side of the fuse. (My available perf-boards are poor quality, so I just printed a small raised board with spaced holes to allow mounting components.)



TOP VIEW 10/16/2026 shows the contents of the added "tray" above the transformer as well as how the wiring behind the front panel switches has become a problem.

Placing the HV metering resistor string on the amplifier side of the fuse has a big additional benefit. In the event of a tube arc, when the high voltage is disconnected by the fuse, you do NOT want RF input power to be seen by the 3-500Z grid, as it may self-destruct from the resulting current with no plate high voltage. Having the voltage sensing on the amplifier side of the fuse allows the Arduino Nano circuitry to monitor the status of the High Voltage and immediately bypass the amplifier (using the T/R relay) in the even of a fuse blow.

The holes that were 3D printed in the supports to either side of the 10-terminal barrier strip and also in the baffles surrounding the printed circuit boards were a great help in stabilizing the position of power supply wiring.

Cardboard Insulation

To help isolate the low voltage supply on the bottom of the circuit board stack from high voltage wire going to the rectifier printed circuit board, I used a piece of cardboard with circular holes to fit over the posts for the rectifier board. That worked nicely to separate the two.

SELF-CREATED PROBLEM: I should have remembered the limited clearance behind the screw terminals of the large toggle switches and the baffle just behind them, visible in the photo in Part 1 of this series. I didn't. Instead I proceeded to crimp and solder very nice spade terminals on all the primary wires and use them to connect nicely to the screw terminals -- and created a massive obstruction to getting the front panel to recess enough to fit! The solution will be to remove the crimp ring/spade terminals and just solder the primary wires to the terminals on the switches. This will save a lot of space and allow the front panel to mate flush with the base-board. This is a very compact power supply!

CAREFUL HV WIRING: A lot of thought was given to the wire for the high voltage wiring. Dry air has the ability to withstand as much as 3kV per millimeter, but providing conservative insulation and space around high voltage wiring may protect against unexpectedly high field strengths caused by **sharp points** rather than perfectly rounded edges on high voltage carrying conductors. While the original Loudenboomer was wired with fairly common hookup wire for the high voltage wiring, I chose to order some wire rated to 30kV with much thicker insulation. Next, I need to work on LEAD DRESS so that all wires have good clearance and aren't touching something such as a hot resistor that would result in failure eventually. A careful initial test with a VARIAC showed no immediate problems up to a modest AC line voltage that generate more than 2000volts -- but more care will be applied before full voltage testing!

The wiring shown in the photographs is NOT FINISHED yet. Lead dress to avoid damage to important insulation hasn't been completed. Wiring of the toggle switches will be redone to allow the front panel to properly mount. Carefully check and test your wiring before applying power!!

In another portion of this series, I'll explain some of the work going on with the Amplifier cooling system; and in later issues, the T/R relays in the Loudenboomer and the design of the Arduino Nano power supply controller board.

Building a HomeBrew 3-500Z Plate Power Supply

Part Three: Loudenboomer 3-500Z Cooling

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

This is the 2nd in a series detailing the construction of a high voltage power supply for a single- or double-3-500z amplifier. However, this specific article deals more with the Loudenboomer amplifier updates.



Hallicrafters HT-45 Loudenboomer Single Tube Amplifier

3-500Z Cooling

The 3-500Z plate is cooled by RADIATION. However, the electrical connections out of the tube ("pins") pass through glass and require a seal at that passageway. Keeping that seal cool is of prime importance to keeping the high-vacuum intact in the tube. The base seals must be kept below 200°C and the plate seal below 225°C. The original method for cooling was to recess the tube socket below the chassis, enclose the tube above in a Pyrex glass "chimney" and pressurize the lower chassis with a blower. Tables of required air flow were provided to maintain the right temperature for various amounts of plate dissipation. <https://frank.pocnet.net/sheets/088/3/3-500Z.pdf>

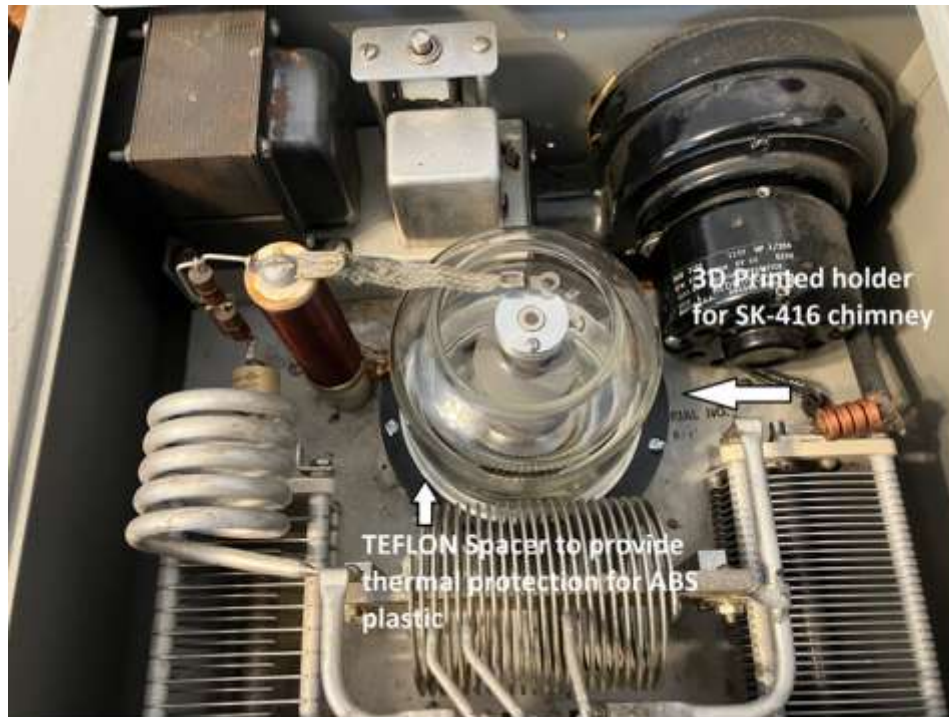
The Loudenboomer uses the traditional blower/chimney cooling system. The Heathkit engineers came up with a cheaper method using side-flow from a regular fan, obviating the need for the chimney and saving money.

The Loudenboomer was originally designed for the 3-400Z tube, which is no longer in active production. The 3-500Z however, is very readily available, easily substituted, but it is about 3/4" taller. The proper glass chimney for a 3-500Z (Eimac SK-406) is the same diameter as that for the 3-400Z (Eimac SK-416), but is 3/4" taller.

My problem is that my second-hand eBay Loudenboomer came with the shorter 3-400Z chimney, but a used 3-500Z tube. The chimney is too short for that tube. A proper 3-500Z chimney would run more than \$100 used....how to solve without incurring that cost?

To make matters worse, I didn't understand the diameter of both chimneys are the same, and I cut off the spring metal clips that could have been used to help hold a chimney. So I needed to provide a complete method for supporting the chimney -- and raising it at least 1/2" as well.

3D-printing could help a lot with this, but ABS plastic softens at temperatures above 105°C. ABS is one of the highest-temperature plastics easily printed with a consumer 3D printer, such as my Bambu Labs P1S. AI research suggested the chimney could be exposed to 150-200°C where the ABS plastic would soften.



Final Solution: ABS-printed annulus with Teflon temperature protection and "riser"

ATTEMPT AT A SOLUTION

Silicone can be used as a "shim" at these temperatures, but Teflon (PTFE) is even better, completely unaffected by these temps. Teflon's problem is that its coefficient of linear expansion is about ten times that of metals.

After some experimentation, I came up with a 3D-printed annulus that could be attached to the chassis with screws. A ring of 1/16" thickness Teflon (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0F6Y13JK5>) circumferential strip provides temperature protection for the ABS plastic of the annulus. A gap is provided in the Teflon circumferential strip to allow for expansion; the gap is covered by a smaller piece of Teflon strip outside it and inside the ABS annulus.

Then two shorter strips (approx 1/2" height) are placed to provide a "step-up" for the short 3-400Z chimney. The 3-400Z chimney rests solidly and tightly within all of this and provides adequate clearance from the 3-500Z tube.. The cost of the ABS plastic is minimal and the cost of the PTFE was only \$16 from Amazon. If later the proper 3-500Z chimney is acquired, this setup (minus the "riser") should still work well. A freely downloadable STL file to reproduce the ABS annulus is provided at <https://github.com/docvacuumtubes/3-500ZPowerSupply> Print it in ABS plastic with 100% inlay. Find safe locations to put in at least two screws through the chassis to secure it. Testing of this solution will begin when the power supply is finished

Report from the 44th Annual AMSAT Space Symposium / Jacksonville FL, Oct, 2026

Gordon Gibby KX4Z

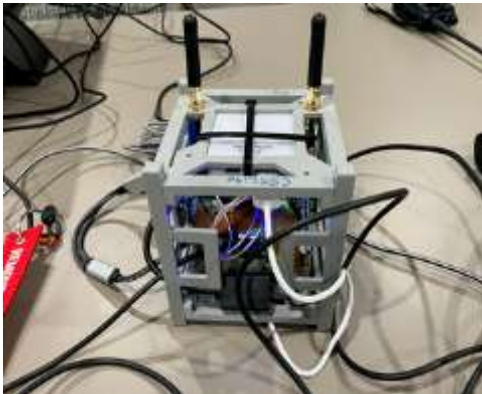
I was delighted to get to attend the AMSAT Space Symposium at a Wyndham hotel in Jacksonville. It was a lot of fun, and I can heartily recommend future meetings. Their current President, **Drew Glassbrenner KO4MA**, lives in Brooksville FL. His 14-year-old son, **Carsten Glassbrenner KQ4SJM** is the 2026 recipient of the Bill Pasternak WA6ITF Memorial Ama-

teur Radio Newline Young Ham of the Year -- and he is a very impressive young man who was helping out in many ways at the conference. **Other than their President, I was the only other speaker from Florida at this year's meeting.** Seeing that they had a session dedicated to "Education," I decided at the last minute to submit an abstract of the middle/high school efforts I've started, and they quickly accepted it for a 30-minute talk on Friday in their Education session.



You, Too, Could Give A Talk

They have a very simple, informal process for giving talks. I didn't see any "posters," just oral presentations with slides. I got an email notifying me that my talk was accepted and asking how many minutes did I need? A few days before the event, another email asking for a PowerPoint. On **Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO**'s recommendation, I sent them not only the PowerPoint but also a PDF. Both somehow got waylaid -- but I had the talk in three formats on a thumb-drive and that saved the day. Drew had a Windows computer at the podium for the talks, and just loaded it up fresh from my thumb-drive. And away I went!



Their meeting was amazing. When I got there a bit early, I wandered into a demonstration of satellite simulators being set up by several of their speakers. The simulators have live FM radios and can even simulate Doppler shift! A 1-U satellite is truly small. Their demonstration was very impressive. In the same room were some 5- and 10-GHz satellite 1-meter dishes. I never got to learn much more about those, but I could see the coaxial cables for signal and local oscillator. They call those bands, "five and dime." The Qatar-government financed QO-100 that serves the Asian hemisphere in a geostationary orbit uses those bands for high speed communications

Down To Earth Apps

There were not just one, but multiple new apps presented that could do everything you needed to track and make all the adjustments needed to communicate to/with a satellite. One ran on a tiny ESP32-based hand-held device, the "Cardputer." For the guys who like to operate in parking lots, it looked ideal -- and they passed one around through the audience.



AMSAT Focus

The AMSAT folks' major interest seems to be getting more satellites up. They are right on top of everything related to that. Their President, who lives in Brooksville FL, is actively reaching out to any company or agency that can possibly give them a "ride" to put more ham radio into space. One of their presenters, a very elderly Professor, has developed a coaster-sized "flat-sat" that does low-speed data comms. He can fit TWENTY of them into a 1U traditional deployment cube. He has 18 schools already signed up and if he can find a "ride" he will give 20 different schools their own satellite!

Satellite	Typical Pass Length	Orbital Height (approximate)
AO-7	20 minutes	1500 km
FO-29	16 minutes	800-900 km
ISS	11 minutes	400 km
RS-44	19 minutes	1100 km
AO-73	12 minutes	600 km
JO-97	10 minutes	460 km

AMSAT has a very interesting program through which they will donate a small linear satellite transponder module (free of charge) to anyone who will give it a ride into space! Hooray for developing the hardware and for providing it free!

My favorite Linear Satellites -- pass durations & orbital altitudes

AMSAT maintains an excellent relationship with NASA. I learned a lot more about their future: NASA has guaranteed ARISS access to the space station/satellites clear through its planned obsolescence about 4 years from now. The plan is to begin to put "stations" on the surface of the Moon -- and NASA is planning to continue student- and ham-access even there! So within a few years, we may routinely be using ham radio to reach a Moon-Station.

I was able to sit at Glen's table for lunch on my last day and I learned even more about the difficulties they face. There is a real issue with "space junk" that poses a fatal risk to humans in space; apparently more than 27,000 objects are constantly being tracked. As a result, the FCC initiated new rules that require satellites to "de-orbit" within 5 years of "end of mission" if they are in low earth orbit (where the ISS orbits). If the satellite is in higher orbit (which is more expensive to reach and not nearly as common for ham radio satellites) then the requirements change again.

Low earth orbit systems (below 500km) tend to meet the 5-year requirement passively if their weight-to-area ratio is such that ordinary drag eventually brings them to a fiery re-entry. That means most NEW ham-related satellites are going to have a limited lifespan. Not only is it more expensive to get to higher orbit, but active de-orbit systems may then be required -- and they require 3-dimensional attitude control so that propulsion to de-orbit faces the correct way. So much more complicated.

That makes me very grateful for the few somewhat-higher-orbit linear satellites that I'm used to using!

Simple Approaches

In our Alachua County group, **Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ** has had huge FM voice satellite success with very simple manual aiming of an arrow antenna, and chest-mounted handi-talkies. I'm trying to provide him with upgraded rotator control of antennas. At the AMSAT conference, I was surprised to find he is in good company! More than one of the attendees sitting around me work satellites the same way that Ron does, and one of the tracking systems was optimized for just that kind of activity.

On the other end of the spectrum, Glen has a very high-gain yagi system with dual-axis rotation control (a commercial version, much more capable than the homebrew I have designed). So the AMSAT folks run the gamut from simple to extremely advanced.

Education



Frank Karnauskas, N1UW has made it his mission to create an array of educational materials for students from elementary school on up. He spoke very effectively at the meeting, demonstrating their website <https://buzzsat.com/>.

- Downloadable cartoon coloring book for the elementary students in multiple languages that teaches satellites and their importance to our economy and nation <https://buzzsat.com/buzzsat-satellites-in-space-coloring-book-free-downloads>
- Much greater depth online courses <https://buzzsat.com/free-online-courses> that present an enormous amount of information on the impact of satellites on meteorology, pollution monitoring, natural resources, astronomy.
- Future online courses are planned for topics including navigation, satellite design and construction, space exploration, communications, and search/rescue. Amazing stuff!

Those materials are exactly the kinds of resources that I'll need for my target schools to develop school-wide modest emphases on satellites as part of our ARISS applications that I hope to make in the Spring. Go, Frank!

I was extremely impressed with the entire AMSAT team leading the conference. Their knowledge and connections are extremely far-reaching. They definitely think "out of the box" all the time! The 50-60 participants who traveled to Jacksonville, FL for the meeting are augmented by hundreds and hundreds more who were watching the live-streamed conference, or will review segments on their youtube channel: <https://www.amsat.org/2026-amsat-symposium/> My talk on working directly with students to get oodles of educational contact hours is at about 1:38 on their Friday youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaTlb-RBVYU&t=5970s>

What's Happening in Alachua County?

by Gordon KX4Z

September had been such a BUSY month for Alachua County ARES/North Florida Amateur Radio Club -- October continued a lot of action, but we finally got a breather.... Nancy and I drove up to our family retreat bungalow in Black Mountain, NC. The morning temperatures here are in the high 30's to mid-40's -- way different from Florida.

NEXT MEETING - NOVEMBER -- CRAIG FUGATE SPEAKING

We're blessed that **Craig Fugate KK4INZ**, famous former head of FEMA, lives in our area. Thanks to efforts by **Susan H. KG4VWI**, Craig will be giving an extended discussion of disasters at our November meeting, Wednesday Nov 11. Meeting starts at 6:30 and we zoom over: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89530741792>

All are welcome to join in for this informative discussion by a national leader in

I've been delighted to see all the public demonstrations the **GARS club** <https://gars.club/> is doing these days! I can't seem to get as many from ARES to be willing to do those kinds of useful things -- but reviewing our group additions over the years, we really never got any from demonstrations...so I quit pushing for them. The GARS crew is also doing another Great Thing -- **Vicky Miller** has now held not just one but TWO fantastic presentations at their monthly meetings. This is truly a good thing -- education and learning are key to ham radio. Meetings just cannot be all "business!" I applaud their efforts and hope they will have even more presentations on radio topics. Keep up the good work!

October NFARC/ARES Activities

1	LabNLunch Building
2	Fantastic Club Meeting chaired by Brett Wallace NH2KW -- Meshcore Effort
3	Development of Github "machinery" by Mark Mc:Dow N4TEK
4	Continued work at local schools -- Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ joining in!
5	SHARES and SARNET participation
6	Washington State/SHARES exercise
7	AMSAT Presentation



LABnLUNCH Project. We worked on two different projects at our early October LabnLunch. We finished the installation of the ICOM 718 and power supply / analog monitoring into our homebrew plywood go-box.

Having a radio inside a box like this, with all the wiring already in place, makes it much easier to deploy to a POTA or disaster service point, and actually have it "on the air" quickly and without problems



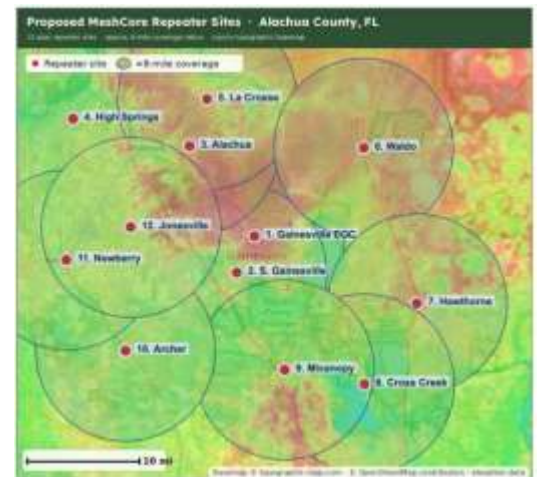
Computer-controlled satellite azimuthal tracking at LabNLunch

There is room intentionally left in the box to allow us to add in an automated antenna tuner in the future. **Manish Sahni KZ4KC** has one of those TINY new tuners and it works pretty well for him -- there are lots of options for automated modest-power (100W) auto tuners these days.

We also worked on putting together a simple AZIMUTH ROTATOR that is computer controllable, to help our **RON LEWIS KN4ZUJ** in his satellite efforts. Ron was away on a cruise (pity poor Ron!) so he missed the LabNLunch but next for him is to put on a mast and base and start working more satellites!

WIDE RANGING CLUB MEETING -- **Brett Wallace NH2KW** chaired our October meeting and it was a great one! We met for the 2nd time at the Gainesville Christian Community School, in their new "Science Lab" room. We're very grateful for the generosity of the School! They don't yet have CHAIRS in that room, only tall "lab tables" but an emergency text to their Headmaster got us the secret code to borrow chairs from the Music Room. (Schools these days have all these security locks on doors.) Brett headed up a GANGBUSTER meeting. He reviewed the BLACK SWAN radio exercise very briefly -- he and some of us have participated in various years in this government-connected well-documented exercise. We had a special presentation by Mark McDow on an amazing new web-connected "back-stage machinery" he has started to store all the vital information on our club knowledge and disaster support. (See later). Then there was a very informative and wide-ranging discussion on MESHCORE versus MESHTASTIC and how local groups might begin creating actual infrastructure.

Brett's research suggested that 12 MESHCORE repeaters might service a large local region, and perform better under higher usage load, than MESHTASTIC. **Tom Warren KC8DHX**, and **Jon Simonds KC4NWK** added a LOT of information, as we discussed these possibilities and whether the propagation estimations by Artificial Intelligence were optimistic or realistic. Brett has assembled a "working group" and may be able to create a "standard repeater package" so that repeaters may begin to be installed. I'm watching this development closely, concerned that the propagation estimates are optimistic and many more repeaters may be needed -- but hey, Give It A Try!! If they can begin to get systems in place, this may fly! Brett was able to elucidate some reasonable use-cases where such a system would be advantageous. Worth trying!



IMPROVED BACK-END ORGANIZATION . Mark McDow N4TEK
<https://markmcdow.com/> is an amazing computer resource. He knows more about how to wrangle stuff out of computers than I've ever dreamed of. He did a broad review of the "lore" of our ARES(R) group and put together an organizational system based on GitHub, that somehow manages a web page and keeps all kinds of information neatly squirreled away and accessible to the right people. He seems to know how to make it even protected and disseminated to the right people when needed. We were amazed. A motion was passed for him to definitely continue this amazing work.



I don't completely understand all the pure-magic that Mark has conjured up almost out of thin air. You should be able to see this page: <https://github.com/Alachua-ARES> but to go farther, a "sign-in" is required. I was amazed that he had all this working so easily! Mark has additional information if you are a "member" of our group (and he has a join-up system also!). He already has amassed a large amount of information! **Go, Mark!!**

SCHOOL OUTREACH -- Some details given in another article in this issue of the NFL Section Newsletter. Our middle-schoolers are making progress at Gainesville Christian Community School, and their Teacher, John Seppala, says he's going to take the Tech exam at Gilchrist county ham meetings this month. More power to him! At The Rock School we don't have the advantage of a full class with an hour of instruction every day -- just a one-hour club meeting every week. That means there we are much more dependent on INITIATIVE by the students themselves.... and these are high school students! So home studying isn't something they may be naturally gravitated toward.... But we are still trying! I got an email from their Principal, Erica Littauer, asking if an extremely-interested 8th Grader could be allowed to join -- and of course, YES!! With the arrival of their own 3D printer (Bambu Labs P1S enclosed filament printer) to build the 3D parts of their elevation rotator, yet another student (with considerable 3D printing expertise) got interested

Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ jumped in to teach the students this last week when Nancy and I are out of town. Ron has HUGE experience working FM satellites with little more than two Baofeng FM transceivers, a vest, and a handheld Arrow Antenna -- so he was able to give the students real-experience stories. (He has also been a Scoutmaster!) We worked through teaching "propagation" to the students this meeting. Next on their list is to study how receivers, transmitters, and AM/FM/SSB modulation work. Let's hope we can motivate them to STUDY!!



SHARES & SARNET PARTICIPATION. We're really hobbled here, with no antennas of any kind at the "new" EOC and not even yet a pass-thru for coaxial cables. Every Wednesday there is a SHARES exercise (net) and we are used to joining 1-2 of the nets with our callsign NNA4UK on federal frequencies. With EOC permission we have shifted to making connections from our home locations. Brett Wallace NH2KW has shouldered the majority of the effort. Check-ins include both voice and digital techniques. This last week, up here in Black Mtn NC, I was able to check in with only about 30 watts on digital to one of their nets (unpublished frequencies). For the SARNET, which is a primary (but fragile) linking tool all over the state, Jeff Capehart W4UFL EC has been helping out to make the net. **Thanks, guys!! As soon as the Contractor is released from the "new" EOC we hope that work will begin to give us a pass-through for coaxial cable.**

WASHINGTON STATE/SHARES EXERCISE There's a professionally written radio communications exercise scheduled on Oct 30/31 (after the submission of this column) -- and some of our ARES team plan to join in!



EDUCATIONAL AMSAT PRESENTATION -- I was delighted to be able to present information about our local school outreach efforts, as a 30-minute talk at the 44th Annual, 2026 AMSAT national meeting, in person in Jacksonville, FL. This is an amazing group, full of people who are FAR more expert than a beginner at satellite comms like me. I got to rub shoulders with true leaders, including their President, **Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA**, who lives in Brooksville, FL and has an amazing satellite station. His son, **Carsten KQ4SJM** is an award-winning amateur radio operator even in his 9th grade year! Way to go!! My little talk is happily preserved on their youtube live-stream of the

conference. You can see both the Friday and Saturday presentations: <https://www.amsat.org/2026-amsat-symposium/#psu-watch-friday> Other than President Glassbrenner, I was the only Floridan to present. This is a great meeting, which occasionally occurs in Florida and is well worth attending and/or presenting! (The WCF TechCon, Friday Feb 26 2027, is another example of a Florida Conference well worth attending. <https://arrlwcf.org/wcf-special-events/wcftechconference/>)

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

Ashhar Farhan's Latest Software Suite -- Amazing

Gordon KX4Z

The Continuing Story
of the amazing
HFSIGNALS sBITX

Ashhar Farhan VU2ESE this week released a new software suite that works on both the sBitx V3, and also his miniature zBitx. [Available at <https://www.sbitx.net/> at least right now.] For quite a while, the team JJ W9JES assembled has had the **top-ranked software** for the sBitx world -- but this new release from Ashhar may change that. (JJ formed a discord group and I just never went there, but I have downloaded some of his excellent software and use it often.)

Ashhar Turns a New Leaf

Ashhar typically releases a version of software and then a **series of issues** are one-by-one solved. However, in this case, he used Claude to work on the complete rewrite, which apparently took months to complete. I went to the update page, and followed the directions -- and **it worked on the first try!** Ashhar has a different emphasis in life than JJ it seems. JJ is brilliant at improving graphical user interface; Ashhar focuses more on adding more and more connections and utility. They complement each other.

The new software does some amazing things, including:

- CW operation is now almost perfect near-full-breakin CW with no clicks or thumps
- At my speeds of operation (up to 25 wpm or so) the first dit is ALWAYS transmitted (and apparent the same is true even faster) -- and the latency is minimal
- The transition back to receive is near-perfect; I can hear between each letter, and you can adjust the delay to be longer than that, if you wish.
- You can choose to make your transceiver be available on the Internet, somewhat like a "web-SDR". If you do, it shows on a publicly available map, and others can "listen in" -- this works very well!
- Further, you can, with appropriate password security, gain Internet access to CONTROL your radio! I had control of the radio from my iPhone while sitting in McDonalds several miles away.
- New modulation modes are built right in -- including RADEv1 and RADEv2 (experimental) -- and a new keyboard-texting mode JTTY

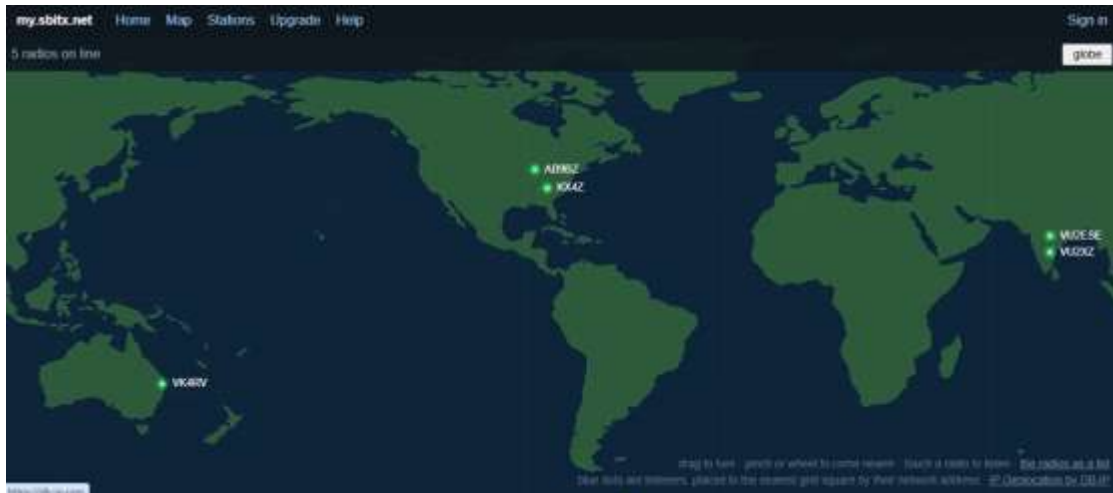


CW Actually Better Than ICOM7300

I can't stand "relay-based" attempts at break-in CW. Banging relay contacts back and forth with every dot and dash drives me batty, not to mention the alterations in those elements due to relay timing considerations. The sBitx has always had solid-state transmit/receive switching, but this software makes it seamless. It is far better than the experience of semi-breakin on an ICOM 7300. During Field Day (my biggest ham radio operation every year) I frequently miss the first elements of a fast-responding station because of the semi-breakin delay of my ICOM7300, even when optimized to as fast as I can stand the relays. **With the sBitx there is NONE of this.** You are immediately receiving after every character if you wish! Right after I send a "K" I could hear the other station. For a CW operator, this is incredible. I haven't had a CW transceiver that was this good since my high school HW-16 back in 1971-1973.

Viewing the radio remotely.

Ashhar has basically made this radio into a remotely viewed web-radio, or with the proper credentials, a remotely controlled radio. At his website, you can see a view of the sBitx radios around the world. Not many online just yet, but this is an amazing ability



Remote Control

Ashhar has some security provided. With the proper credentials, I could operate the radio remotely. The screen on my iPhone was the same one that I saw when at the radio itself. Even CW!! You type on the provided keyboard to send CW.



View of my sBitx V2 on my iPhone for operating remotely

I see the utility of that little feature allowing me to use radios when on trips away from my house -- or even making a club radio available to users!

There are a few items that I still don't understand or will need a bit of polishing. The new power level control now operates directly to control percentage of POWER (not voltage, as the previous). That's a big improvement! But the scaling seems way off between modes. If it set the rig's configurations for RADEV1, then for SSB I use a different power level, and for CW far, far less. A bit of polishing there. I don't yet know how to turn on Noise Reduction or DSP -- items which were available in other code. But this is an amazing set of software right as it is!! Way to go, Ashhar!!

Okaloosa County Florida

DJ Stewart KI4ZER

Hey there! Seems like a bit of breezy weather came through and we all had some extra work to do. I am not discounting that storm nor am I dismissive of it. I genuinely hope everyone is okay and that your path of recovery is a smooth one. If you need help, do not go it alone. Be safe, talk with your friends and family, and ask for assistance. The resilience of people is astounding. While we were all faced with different versions of turmoil, we all pressed forward with normal activities, outings, events, and gatherings as much as we could. Hams helped hams. But wait

Before the storm, which had stolen some of the attention, we opened October with Terrance KQ4MEB teaching his first Tech Night and discussing High Frequency Communications! If you missed that tech night at the Playground, you missed a very educational evening! It gets better, here's the slides! Well, a [link to them](#). Be sure to check them out!



The Playground ARC hosts Tech nights on the 1st Thursday of each month in person and online! Be sure to check the club calendar at W4ZBB.Org

Returning to the second week in October. On the anniversary 8 years later of Hurricane Michael (which impacted me at Panama City Florida, we had to prepare to deal with Hurricane Isaias (pronounced [don't bother, just call it the October Hurricane])). Two days prior to the storm a question was asked a question while talking about antenna capabilities during a storm. The conversation started with a statement, that statement was "I am not sure what I am going to do for an antenna since I am taking down my primary communications array" or something to that effect. My response was simple yet robust. As I am a collector of things [aren't we all], I have a spare mobile magnet mount antenna. I also happen to have a spare SO-239-barrel connector and maybe, just maybe, I

might have some extra coax. Many hams do. With all of the projects and experiments we undertake, things and such tend to show up. So, my answer, simple yet effective, was to recommend using a spare magnet mount antenna, barrel connector, a little bit of extra coax, and mounting the antenna on a vehicle under cover, in a garage, or outside.

With this set up I can reliably hit quite a few repeaters, monitor 146.52 simplex, hear the weather broadcasts and more. The SWR on 2m is 1.2 and on 70 cm the SWR is 1.3 to 1.6 (variable). I am using a Diamond NR770HB with a Midland [yes Midland] MXTA12 NMO mag mount [very strong magnet that will not blow off at 70 mph on I-10] attached to 100 feet of RG-8X Flex. What?! Why so much coax? Because that is what I have available to me that is coated in Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene (FEP). This is a specialized, waterproof material designed for harsh outdoor environments such as intense sunlight, direct burial, rain, high use etc. It is an alternative to LMR 400, less bulky, can handle HF, and take some "abuse". **Frequency Range:** RG-8X works effectively across HF bands (1.6 to 30 MHz), showing roughly 1.5 dB to 2.5 dB of signal loss per 100 feet at 30 MHz.

Many of us have multiple radios, I am wired and have the capabilities to connect to all of my 2m/70cm & HF capable transceivers. But know this, the antenna is an effective listening device. Think of any antenna [say what you will] as a broadband listening device. That means [while you should not necessarily transmit on it out of the designed bands] you can listen to HF in limited capacity. That is an important statement. The part about listening to HF. **An antenna functions fundamentally as a broadband listening device** because it is a piece of conductive metal designed to intercept electromagnetic radio waves traveling through space. While we often think of antennas as tuned to specific frequencies (like a car radio or Wi-Fi router), any physical antenna inherently interacts with a broad spectrum of ambient electromagnetic energy across various wavelengths. This is not the first time I have discussed this.

Moreover, this suggestion, while common place for many, was not so common to the other radio operator. The point of all of this is to share your experiences. Occasionally, what you, I, or others consider common place can teach and inspire others. That is the goal of this mostly volunteer radio service, right? To teach. To inspire. To intrigue.

Come celebrate it with the Playground Amateur radio Club as we welcome you to a [free tailgate](#) with our partners at The Hangar sponsored by the Panhandle United Roller Derby and the Fort Walton Beach Junior Bombers Market! Saturday 21 November 2026 from 8 am to 1200 pm! Drop your tailgates, open your trunks, come for the gear, stay for the food, and enjoy each other's company! We are bursting with Joy as we have Rise and Swine returning once again as the food truck! Great food, wonderful pricing, and an awesome supporter of Amateur Radio!



Are you interested in Amateur Radio Nets? Do you like to just check in or do you like to share? Here in the Panhandle of Florida and beyond, there are plenty of versions that YOU can take part in! Nets occur on more than just VHF and UHF. There are formal nets, informal nets, rag chew sessions, digital nets, SSB Nets, and more! The point being, nets are immersive and allow for interaction! Just as in person, you never know who you will meet on the airwaves that could benefit your passion for all things communication. Ideas exchange, processes improve, interests peak, and the best part, you get to make some new friends and contacts! Join in via our nets page!

We recently updated our [Nets Page](#) with an additional net for an APRS check in! Simple, quick, easy to do! Using your APRS enable equipment, the app on your phone, an HT, mobile, base, or computer, set it up and **send "Net" to KM4DYR-10 via APRS messages on Sundays** and check



into the APRS net! This fast and easy form of a Net requires only a fraction of time

and satisfaction is guaranteed!

Well, that's all well and fine but what else has been going on?! Glad you asked with Gusto! Horary! Let me tell yins

something, a lot has been going on! First up, EARS, The Eglin Amateur Radio Society, had an impact from the storm, they lost 2 of 3 antennas to support their communications. But their benefactors stepped right in and offered some loaner items to get back on the air until a more permanent solution can be put in place. You know the adage, "why would I throw that away"? Well, a large LOL goes out because normally, I am against that mentality since it allows for collections of useless items to build up. This time, proud to say, I am still correct. HA! You like that joke huh?! No? Oh well. Anyway, I saved the antennas, [yes me] that we previously replaced. I will be going through them to make them usable from the last bout of "these are worn out" and place them back in service. To be clear, 147.120, 444.800, and APRS for W4NN are operating. We aim to make them better. So, key in with your FCC granted license, identify what frequency you are on by saying the frequency or back-end number [36, 79, 12, Triple 0, 73, 45, 48 etc.] as is commonplace and enjoy your conversation on their airwaves!

So that's the South and the middle. What about the North end of Okaloosa? Glad you asked! The North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club had to cancel the Hamfest on Oct 10th due to the Hurricane. So that was what happened. Nothing more, nothing less. After fielding barrage of calls, emails, texts and in person visits, people wanted to know the reschedule date! So, thank you for that! We are happy



to know that there is that much support for the event to occur. Not to go into too deep of a hole, it will not occur until Oct 2027. Why? Because of the logistics for table rentals, table availability, facility availability, the proximity to the holidays and other events that occur.

Even in the spring. So, the North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club will help advertise and promote other events and continue to support the community as normal through its outreach and educational programs! The North Okaloosa Amateur Radio Club also has some work to do. Due to the hurricane its primary ham shack tower [not the repeater site or the clubhouse] was significantly impacted by wind. NOARC is n work and talks with area tower professionals to rectify the situation. Is it that bad? Bad enough to call in a team? Yes. It is. And it's on property that is occupied by a relief team, so workspace is limited. Don't worry, NOARC has a benefactor and a replacement tower and spare equipment for it. This seems to be a unique opportunity to improve what once was and make great what will be!

During the storm, Hams were checking on each other and after the storm via the local frequencies, relaying information, and ensuring that no one had the chance to stay silent ensuring community resiliency. We gathered for the restoration of services, performed multiple inspections on towers and antenna structures. We repaired repeater sites, cleaned up each other's yards, assisted with tree falling, fencing cleanup and patching holes in roofs. We also assisted others with generators, house sitting, pet care, and families' immediate needs. Upon completion or the start of those tasks, we took time to be grateful for the community in which we live and operate. We checked in on our partners, affiliated organizations, and offered our assistance. The list goes on. You can understand the impact that our versatile hobby has to offer. In one word, community.



What's more?! As time progressed, routines went somewhat back to normal, the area members of clubs and orgs in Okaloosa County united to participate at multiple Trunk or Treat events! Partnering with libraries, Cities, and other Educational Foundations, we represented Amateur Radio to give the kids a well-deserved treat or three!



For the better part of a year, we have been Fox, rather "Llama" Hunting! What? Why? This one time, at a holiday party, a llama key chain inspired a series of events that has driven the airwaves into a frenzy and flurry of activity! No, we're not talking about snow, we are talking about uniting over a simple pun that has turned into a motivator for all to enjoy and drive focus on "hoe to be an amateur radio operator". Communities have grown, people are taking action, contests and contacts are being made along with systems upgrades and communications modes and processes improved!

Speaking of NOARC, they held a tech night and had open discussion of "How did you prepare for the storm"? This was a great event and there was food! What?! Hey, hams, we like food. So, the crowd joined in and shared their success, pitfalls, lessons learned, and what would go better next time. There will be a next time. Don't bet it can't happen.



October is over. Seems like it just got here. This year has cruised on by like a jet powered car on the salt flats. That would be fun to do. Put a mobile HF rig in one of those and use it as a contest. Wouldn't last very long but the winner of the contest would have the heck of a story to tell! So would the driver! In closing out this month we want to say a huge thank you to our neighbors, friends, colleagues, fellow hams, community providers, fellow leaders, non-profit agencies, and service resources for their esteemed assistance during times of joy, sadness, grief, and challenge. Without this network, there would be a large void. Be thank full as we approach that aptly named holiday in Late November and invite those to share time with you that you are thankful for but take the time to get to know the ones better who may be watching from afar or monitoring instead of keying. The rewards could be immense; the gratitude will return. Stay safe, enjoy Halloween, build something, send in an article to Ear! Share your experiences! Thanks – DJ.

Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society (LMARS)

Emmett Ward WA5EWN

Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society (LMARS) supported the City of Winter Springs at the annual Winter Springs Home Town Harvest. The LMARS group assisted with the Hay Rides, served as roaming eyes in the crowds, and manned a booth advertising Amateur Radio. Our call sign was N4EH.



	Sumter County ARES® <u>Amateur Radio Emergency Service</u> 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Non-Profit Organization	
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Sumter County ARES - Halloween Event

Mark Newby, KX4LEO

Emergency Coordinator October 23-24, 2026



Sumter County ARES, in partnership with the Hog County Amateur Radio Association, again provided communications for the annual Halloween event at the Dade Battlefield State Historic Park in Bushnell, Florida on October 23rd and 24th, 2026.

Amateur radio operators were positioned along the “haunted trail” to monitor activities. Wearing the bright ARES vests, each volunteer was easily distinguishable as someone to go to for help, as well as a visible deterrent to unwanted behavior.



Our participation this year was again coordinated by Gene King, KI4LEH, the Sumter County ARES Planning Section Chief and President of the Hog County Amateur Radio Association.

A huge “thank you” to the following amateur radio crew who helped make this year’s event safe and enjoyable for the children and adults who attended this “spooky” event:

FCC Testing Information

Yellow there is an issue that needs fixing

Red—Unless these references are fixed they will be deleted

If your testing information is not shown, now is a good time to join the gang of testing clubs.

Contact earl.mcdow [at] gmail [dot] com

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

- 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)

Tallahassee Amateur Radio Society (TARS)

West Volusia Amateur Radio Society

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

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Designated ARES® DSAR Reflectors & a DMR Talk group?

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REF046A – Florida Statewide

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REF046C – NWS Mobile, AL SKYWARN

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