

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

July 14, 2021

Meeting held at the Alachua County EOC in person, and via ZOOM

Attendance: 13

Gordon Gibby  
Susan Halbert  
Leland Gallup  
Craig Fugate  
Dean Covey  
David Huckstep  
Mike WB2FKO  
Susan Halbert  
Amy KIO4DO  
Arc Thames  
Wendell Wright  
Rosemary Jones  
Lorilyn Roberts

**Introductions.** From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced. This was the first ARES meeting in over a year that was actually in person; nevertheless, and despite many technical challenges, the meeting was also conducted by ZOOM.

1. **UPDATES ON BADGING NEW VOLUNTEERS.** KX4Z showed a list that has 20 people, including many County employees, who are already badged. Jeff Capehart spoke to the issue of getting more badged volunteers. Reid Tillery is working on getting his badge, and Brett has completed requirements but needs to follow through to final status. Amy working on it. Capehart showed the list of the requirements on the screen so everyone could see what the minimum requirements are. The CEMP Annex shows these as RACES requirements...fill out RACES application is necessary to further the badging process. If we can get four or five "to the finish line," we'll arrange for fingerprinting and pictures. Send W4UFL copies of certificates for course completion and upload those to SERTRAC for archiving. State of FL certifies...Level 2 Florida state deployment requirement requires this process as part of vetting for approved emergency deployment. Encouraged folks to get it done by mid August so that when peak season occurs in September we have badged volunteers.
2. **APPROVAL OF JUNE 2021 MINUTES.** June 2021 minutes approved.
3. **REVIEW OF LOCAL ARES EFFORTS FOR TS ELSA JULY 2021.** No shelter activation and we had one storm report to NWS. We did report a tree blockage via local means. Columbia County did activate shelters, and Karl Martin, our SEC, activated to support those counties. Limited partial ESF 2. Lessons learned? Good to be ready; we did have concerns

with how people can be notified. This continues to be a problem requiring our attention. Pre-staging personnel is a good thing because you don't have the getting there problem. Worse in Jacksonville, surprisingly. Arc Thomas introduced himself as the new NCS for the North Florida ARES net. This just happened as of today. Other lesson learns included concerns that with many tree falls our volunteers may be trapped at their houses or have extremely limited ability to get to places where they may be needed.

4. **LATEST ANTENNA PARTY.** Lorilyn has gotten her Tech, General, and as of yesterday her Extra Class. Got two antennas raised for her...one of the antennas is working fine, and she now has a working HF station on the air. KX4Z and W4JIR helped her put up two antennas, one of which is not working. This may be #'s 30 and 31 in number of antennae raised by our group's volunteers.
5. **TREASURER's REPORT.** Insurance paid...and the EOC attendants gave \$200 to Susan Halbert to defray her expenses in paying the insurance. Kudos to KX4Z for carrying half the cost; AA3YB for carrying 40%, and KK4INZ for the remainder. We are "good" for FD expenses.
5. **FIELD DAY 2021 AAR AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN.** We doubled the number of contacts from last year...500 contacts which was twice last year's 250. The group in Columbia County made 250; Arc said that Santa Rosa had something like 250. Huckstep said we had more people, we signed up and got things done, and this contributed greatly to the success of the operation. Folks got competitive....Set up 3 hrs and tear down was 1.25 hours. 15 folks signed in to the log. Many more people tried this year than last. KX4Z showed a slide with the leadership positions noted by name. Great job on PIO, satellites, etc. This year we are over three thousand in points. We tried an OCF for the Station 2 trailer. No difference between Station One at the EOC and Station Two at the trailer in terms of HF performance. The 6 meter vertical worked really well and got used; we don't think the 2d HF antenna, a sloper ever was used. We averaged one contact 23 per our. There were times when it was over 40/50 per hour. 62 contacts on 6 m. KX4Z showed a map colored by contacts. WB2FKO worked Hawaii on 15m! We made many improvements from last year. These included fixing antennas and connection boxes for the EOC; permanent ground connections; headsets and foot switches; adapter boxes for various phone plugs; polarity protections. We experienced a great difference among operating modes. FT8 clearly more productive than phone: the latter had only 3-6 per hour across several clubs. CW is a great mode and moderately skilled ops can be much more productive than FT8. Skilled CW ops in Gainesville (not our group) ran rings around Alachua ARES with a single transmitter...three times the FT8 rate. Three times the contacts with only one transmitter. Surprise: night better than day; fewer stations and clearer space for FT8...empty spots and less congestion. Improvement suggestions include training on CW and FT8. The draft AARIP is on the web page now, with 40 suggestions. Need more training on rules. Need command post with a monitoring computer and one person to be the PO/Person in Charge. Training session for section leaders. Do what Arc Thames and Santa Rosa did by meeting visitors and taking them around. Santa Rosa had considerable outreach and this yielded over 40 visitors to the FD site. Extra trailer is great but we need more protection from the elements which can be expected in June in FL. Some safety snafus...both lightning protectors were not connected. Move the Porta Potty so it isn't an oven. Training on the networking computers...more pre-event training. Broaden the on-site appeal as did Santa Rosa. Arc Thames spoke to this; they had the FD at their EOC. Partnered with a local food bank and did a food drive with a raffle including a TV; they did advertising for us. Local AF recruiting office

set up, and there was a food truck; meals free for dispatchers and first responders. Arc “knew a guy” and that was their food truck. Arc paid for the food for the first responders and dispatchers. Amy wanted to know why FT8 was of any use for emergency communications; KX4Z spoke to the use of the very similar JS8 Call. JS8 does in fact have EMCOMM utility. JS8 permits text messaging, store and forward, and other capabilities show that there are many advantages to it as a low signal strength message system. She wants training on JS8 and PSK31; WB2FKO had some comments. There was in fact some traffic on FT4...would recommend looking at that; no point in staying with FT8 when we can do FT4. He has a beam on 6 meters...recommends switching to a beam on 6m. He's made 60 contacts with Europe with 3 element beam and a horizontal beam...horizontal polarization. Rotated with only arm strength. Susan Halbert would like more training and practice on the MESH system, and work on the computer so that they won't shut down. K9PDL suggested that we get spouses involved; Rosemary, too, with suggesting pot luck. Rosemary suggested moving the second trailer away from the tents; GOTA station to be in more public place. Moving the generator from Brett's trailer might help with noise and smell. Arc had his camper at the EOC. No noise and no QRM which was good, Arc told people to be available from 1-6 for outreach. Very much recommended Facebook. Food truck good too because it reduces liability or food service license.

6. **REVIEW OF LAB/LUNCH POLARITY PROTECTION PROJECT.** This was another successful effort.
7. **REVIEW 2021 IPP & RECRUIT LEADERS FOR SECTIONS.** KX\$Z used a list of A to Z tasks that needed people to agree to take the task. Needs advocating addition shelter testing with go-boxes. Asked if DH could do....COL H will talk to KX4Z offline, but can discuss further. **AA3YB took the task of adding another person to be depolyable with HF.** Solar...Gibby is doing. “Typing” of volunteers. Brett has agreed to work this with the State. Alerting...this is getting the local EOC on the radio. Gordon is doing this. Repeater survey. Need someone to oversee the project of reviewing repeaters...where they are, what would work to get folks in the various areas of the county; to help police and fire if there were a way to use our ham repeaters if the 800 MHz systems are unavailable and perhaps with emergency declaration we might get the authority for them to use systems. **Susan offered to do the repeater** survey. Jeff has offered to do an inventory of loanable HTs; trying to get MARC course...KX4Z will do. Portable EOC comms...a go box that the EOC's station can be movable. (Sec'y note: did not record whether a “stuckee” had been identified for this tasker. Tall Places....the places where itinerant repeaters can go. Earl McDow has offered to work the tall place issue.Arc asked what MARC is....KX4Z explained that the state has six trailerable comms towers with ability to do HF and VHF. We are Region 3 MARC and we (LT Rulapaugh of Alachua County Fire and Rescue, who is also an amateur radio operator) got funding for HF on the MARC trailers. Encryption...KX4Z has agreed to work this. State data. SHARES winlink training...but SHARES requires PACTOR. This is an open requirement. Resilient Homes....this is open – help our people keep going for a couple of weeks max. Volunteer hardening...issues with volunteers and what their concerns might be if the volunteer has to leave; the person taking this task would have to be able to work the issues of working out solutions for what folks can do to ensure their families are ok if they deploy. Space weather awareness....done on our website in the Articles page. Sustainability...Lorilyn Roberts has agreed to work this (keeping folks going for a couple of weeks). Vol Family Safety (similar to T).Volunteer family safety. Broadcast (Z) Gordon has looked in to this and is offering some options. Getting information out to folks about road blockages, etc. SSTV is a way to get an image out...can be done as a

soundcard mode over FM. Time out a repeater is an issue, but it is a possibility for getting an image out. We need to ask the EM guys how to get us information on which roads are flooded. KK4INZ suggested opening the ARES nets just to update on the local traffic situation...information bulletins during the storm so we could develop a Common Operating Picture.

8. **TENTATIVE MONTHLY TECH NIGHTS.** Nashua NH does a tech night once a month; whatever people know they can talk about. Perhaps on a Thursday before our ARES meeting; once a month. Not a replacement for our LabNLunches. Complementary. Tentative date is August 5<sup>th</sup>. Zoom at 7:00pm. End is hard stopped by the ARES net for the evening which begins at 8:00pm.
9. **TENTATIVE EXTRA CLASS LICENSE COURSE AUGUST 2021.** Tentative now for Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of NOVEMBER. KX4Z asked about doing a General Class course. No response, so we'll hold off a General class for this year.
10. **ADJOURN** at 8:35 EDT. Many stayed on afterwards to chat in person at the EOC and on the live Zoom feed.

**(NOTE: We did a demo of the HF equipment in the EOC Radio Room)**