

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

July 12, 2023

Attendance: 19. Meeting held in person at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center and also via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby
Leland Gallup
Wendell Wright
Susan Halbert
Eric Pleace
Bob Lightner
Jeff Capehart
Earl McDow
Dean Covey
David Huckstep
Rosemary Jones
Mike Hasselbeck
Amy WA4AMY
Brad Swartz
Reid Tillery
Craig White
Lorilyn Roberts
Stuart Reisner
Rob KQ4FWS (Clay County)

Introductions. From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced. The NFARC/NF4AC radio club met for this month in person at the Alachua County EOC and via ZOOM.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/APPROVAL OF JUNE 2023 MINUTES.** Minutes approved. Jeff Capehart, W4UFL led the meeting. Showed a slide detailing how we integrate people into our Service Organization. This included groups.io, Thursday VHF ARES Net; 1st week/month Tech Nite; Lunch N'Labs, Winlink training. These are just a few of the ways that participants in Alachua ARES can integrate themselves into service for our supported agency, the Alachua County Emergency Management Department. June meeting minutes approved.
- 2. PRESENTATION OF JUNE SECTION HOURS.** Jeff Capehart showed a slide with a link for the hours that were reported to the ARRL and the Section for June. All coordinated events such as Field Day are picked up and the individual doesn't have to report. For example, AA3YB as the Secretary reports the overall hours for the ARES meeting. 626 hours for this ARES group -- just for the month of June alone. The QST NFL Newsletter also contains hours from other groups in the section. The hours in QST NFL are a month behind.
- 3. FLORIDA STATE GUARD AND HAM RADIO.** Jim Bledsoe and Gordon Gibby's son were members of the first "graduating class" for the State Guard...which has been inactive

since 1947. This first “class” at the end of June marks the first FL State Guard “life” in almost 80 years. We discussed the purpose of the Florida State Guard, and that it cannot be Federalized. According to KX4Z’s son, the word went out at the organizing sessions that members of the State Guard are encouraged to get amateur radio licenses.

4. **RENEWING OUR INSURANCE.** Tabled the discussion for next month. Ditto for expenses from Field Day that were incurred by Rosemary Jones.
5. **TECHNICIAN COURSE FOR AUGUST 2023.** Volunteers sought for the 5 sections of the license questions that need instructors. Section T0, RF/AC Safety.
Section T0: Earl McDow will do RF/AC Safety.
Section T1, Commission’s Rule (Regulations). Rosemary Jones
Section T2, Operating Procedures. AA3YB will also do T2, .
Section T3, Radio Wave Propagation. Eric Pleace
Section T4, Amateur Radio Practices. Susan Halbert

This completes the fill of all needed instructors. Moreover, KX4Z mentioned that he will undertake the antenna instruction as the build of a simple ground plane 1/4 wave vertical 2 meters.

6. **ARES – HOW TO JOIN, BADGING, and ARES TASKBOOK.** We have a group of three volunteers who are ready to be badged. We will have to coordinate with the County to make sure we understand the process and can get them going in the right direction. We also need to ask the County what the process is for the folks whose badges are expiring. The County will also be rather more insistent in knowing whether people are REALLY going to be able/willing to come out in support of the County if needed. Lorilyn Roberts asked what the requirements were for the taskbooks; the link to the Taskbook PDF was called up on the screen and discussed.
7. **LAB N’LUNCH AUGUST 2023.** This will be on Saturday, August 5. Gordon showed a slide of the Lab N’Lunch project: the HF Triplexer. Also showed a circuit diagram. Described the concept of the triplexer, which uses series and traps to short out unwanted particular bands. Concept in brief is that a well tuned antenna with a good SWR on three bands can be used with the Triplexer so that three transceivers can operate simultaneously on three different bands – with one antenna. Must have good resonance on each of the operating bands.
8. **FIELD DAY 2023 AFTER ACTION REVIEW.** Gordon showed slides that broke out Alachua ARES Field Day operations by mode and band; comparison of contacts by reference to the last years – 80% more that last year! Much improved over the years before. A tribute to increasing skills, dress rehearsal the weekend before, and taking the Friday before FD proper to completely set up the antennas. KX4Z pronounced, based on our FD results, that “we are ALL pretty good now.” Any one of us made on average more points than total score for the entire group from 4 years ago. We used a variety of modes, filters, and techniques to enhance our ability to operate. This is a demonstration of our increased operational skills. W4UFL also touted this FD as an F4 event rather than the F2 events of the years before, which enhanced our ability to increase our point total because we could operate twice as many transceivers as before. Dean Covey described the GARS operation, which achieved approximately 400 contacts. A great improvement! And Bob Lightner....managed 60 contacts an hour for 11 hours!! David Huckstep and Wendell compared notes on how they were doing phone and that their tactics changed. They could have amassed more phone points, but elected to return to

digital since that afforded twice as many points per contact – points driving tactics, not operational skills. Gordon Gibby showed a slide depicting one single operator’s improvement from 2022 to 2023. Similarly, five or six people were significantly more engaged. A small number likely were helping others and that’s why they didn’t do what they did the previous year. Four operators made a very significant jump in performance. A “ton of improvement” in everybody. All mentored others on the team as needed. Mike Hasselbeck and Pat Benson did superb work teaching others how to perform at a higher level. Observation: signage brought more people to the event (GOTA and the main building) than did our feeds to the media outlets. More signs throughout the county would do better...since we didn’t get people from the media outlets (a great disappointment). Lorilyn Roberts offered to do more outreach/advertising for next year. Improvement plan list was on several slides. Each suggested need was marked with a separate item number on the slide. Item one, Winkeyer: Winkeyer issue since resolved. Computer configuration training needs some tweaking, as to CW versus WSJT-X. Confusion on CW paddles, with devices requiring differing plugs. Antenna #2 and the remote tuner seemed problematic...so the possible solution is to use an end fed half wave as compared with a ladder line fed/remote tuner setup. Chairs...need more comfortable. Dual monitors – make operating date modes much easier, as you can see the entire passband so it's obvious where signals are located. Larger PIO team – Lorilyn has addressed. Reducing paperwork. Idea: put out changes every two weeks, with a change list so you don’t have to read the entire document. Resource list can be separated out. End result is five or so pages that everyone can be expected to read. Bite sized tasks with assessments/quizzes will help with ensuring that preparations are effective. Outreach was a failure: no scouts, no schools, no politicians. Reduce these efforts and just increase signage, which did produce walkins, at least? Reduce Bluetooth usage. Suggestion: Winter FD? No FT4/8 so perhaps it’s a chance to get RTTY done. We can do the operation as 3I, operating indoors at the EOC, employing (if we can get it to work, the triplexer). Reducing Antenna setup efforts ... triplexers and quadplexers. Intermediate coax lengths are needed. Earl McDow has been asked to create some 25 foot jumpers. Freedom Center A/C during the night shut off...we can investigate. Suggestion for defibrillators. Defibs...they are actually close by, so renting one is probably out of reach financially. Logging database...needs practice. David Huckstep recommended we approach the County for a defib loaner – every deputy’s patrol car has one, for example. Time server – build a second one (Gordon is working). Gibby had a problem with outdoor screen readability at the GOTA station. If we are going to try anything outside, we need displays with great “nits” rating (more visible in the sunlight). David Huckstep also recommends that we approach the County for this, too. Printer...bring the one that is in the EOC. Operating schedule...we forgot to post; we simply need to do that. Training room...this would enable people to get used to doing things without reading the IAP. Bulletin... only two people actually did get the bulletin. All our mice failed and we need backups.

9. MEMBER INPUT ON THE FIELD DAY AAR/IMPROVEMENT PLAN. Rosemary suggested that folks bring mice as a backups. Another suggestion: do a Winter Field Day operation, 3I, from here at the EOC. Side note: the Alachua County EOC may be moving to the old Army Reserve building off Waldo Road in east Gainesville, in 18 months. Susan Halbert suggests that we do more frequent training so that our perishable skills can be practiced – during the year and not at events. David Huckstep thinks all the recommendations are valid (with tweaking). He moved they be accepted. Motion to accept all the recommendations as written. Accepted...the group adopted the recommendations as written.

10. ADJOURN at 2046, 12 July 2023.