

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

June 14, 2023

Attendance: 11. Meeting held in person at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center and also via ZOOM. This was the first meeting at the EOC in a very long time!

Gordon Gibby  
Leland Gallup  
Jim Bledsoe  
Wendell Wright  
Susan Halbert  
Earl Pleace  
Reid Tillery  
Earl McDow  
Amy WA4AMY  
Jeff Capehart  
Lorilyn Roberts

**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 MAY 2023 MINUTES.** Minutes approved. Jim Bledsoe, KI4KEA, led the meeting.
- 2. GTMO AAR REVIEWSECTION SET RESULTS AND HOTWASH.** Reid Tillery gave a short review of the GTMO (or GANN..."Get the Message Out") exercise. The plan for the exercise called for for us to use NVIS on the high frequencies, which did not work on the day of the exercise; 40. and 80. died. We still managed to get out 512 messages. Only 26 of those (5%) were by voice. The great majority were by data...data is absolutely essential for emergency communications. The concept of sending out health and welfare was vindicated, but only by data by the most part. Improvements needed: we need to collectively improve our digital capabilities, because this is key. The "TWI" the Winlink academy, of which Reid and Wendell and Gordon Beattie are instructors, will really help folks to get completely up and running with Winlink, and how to use it for health and welfare messaging on both HF and VHF. Also FLDIGI...voice comms during this exercise failed...but what if we are able to get on PSK31 we could do "broadcast" live keyboard to keyboard that anyone who can receive the bandwidth can see? This means we could have had a live keyboard to keyboard HF net. Polled the folks in the room. Reid can help with that skillset among our community. JS8 is similar in terms of a keyboard to keyboard "room" in which to run a net. Reid recommended laying in an HF NVIS antenna. Next improvement point..."catchment areas." We are the communicators for our neighborhood. Think of a "catchment area" as a geographic area – neighborhood, for example – that has a communications node. We are the node through which neighbors can get H&W messages out. But there needs to be a catchment area focused on a person the neighbors know to whom they can get messages for delivery outside. Could be a place, and then the ham

can pick messages up for delivery. Make sure folks are familiar with the information.txt form in WinLink. Separate messages don't have to be sent; person outside the area can get your "book" of health and welfares, and then can individually move them on. If you take the Winlink Academy you will be instructed as to how to do this and serve your neighborhood. Picking the best out of area RMS can be also be an issue for improvement. That being said, take Winlink 103 for how to pick an RMS. 60Meters is another option. When NVIS doesn't work, what do we have locally? Well, we have VHF. Can we communicate if the principal repeaters are out? Cross county comms by simplex? Better VHF antennas are the way to go. Another item on the improvement list. Reid talked about how by putting an antenna up HIGHER. Higher antennas and various methods for getting a line, and hence an an antenna, higher were discussed. Jim Bledsoe recommended arborist throw bags to get a line up. Higher VHF antennas are key to extending simplex VHF capabilities when the main repeaters do not function. ! Select frequencies that don't have an established frequency during the nets! Sep VHF channels by 30 kHz. Ad hoc digipeaters....Reid can instruct on how to do this. This is all using Winlink and VARA FM. Additional improvement need: recruiting out of area team members. Out of area people would be good "auxiliary members" of our team. Lorilyn recommended people look at CW as another way to achieve comms – with programs that can even send and somewhat decode. Reid did not include CW in the Improvement Plan, but the point is well taken. Action item: CW operators could work on establishing and improving our group's skills with CW, and then taking the lead on working network nodes.

3. **REVIEW OF FIELD DAY OPERATIONS PLAN.** Bledsoe talked the meeting through the Dress Rehearsal IAP; antenna up on Friday the 16<sup>th</sup>, interference testing on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, then a setup of the operating stations on the 17<sup>th</sup>, followed by site visit to Kanapaha. GOTA trailer and generator will be set up at the Dress Rehearsal, as well as all transceivers, the network systems, and power. Bledsoe then turned to the IAP for FD itself. Jim talked about the signups. Go to the club website. Jim says the PIO activities are well underway. Worked through the IAP. All were enjoined to read the IAPs, which are fine and extensive labors by KX4Z. Also showed on the Club website how to see a running list of who has signed up for what positions and times, and well as the "how to volunteer" link. Extensive discussions brought us to the end of the evening.
4. **ADJOURN** at 2024, 14 June 2023.