

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

September 9, 2021

Meeting held via ZOOM

Attendance: 21 (participant count on ZOOM)

Gordon Gibby
Jim Bledsoe
Leland Gallup
Jeff Capehart
Craig Fugate
Joe MacKenzie
Lorilyn Roberts
Mike WB2FKO
Mike KD4INK
Susan Halbert
Amy KO4IDO
Brad Swartz
Reid Tillery
Dean Covey
Wendell Wright
Mike Ridlon
Earl McDow
Dave Huckstep
Rosemary Jones
Brett NH2KW
Vann Chesney

Introductions. From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced. Although the July 2021 meeting was held in person at the Alachua County EOC (and via Zoom), the return of COVID made an in-person meeting inadvisable. Consequently, the September 2021 meeting was solely by ZOOM.

- 1. UPDATES ON BADGING NEW VOLUNTEERS.** Before we got to the subject on the agenda, we asked for some introductions from “new” folks. Joe MacKenzie KK4MAC. Mike Ridlon also was in the meeting. Mike says he works for a comms firm in Jacksonville with a Gainesville operation. Everything having to do with cable communications. Joe MacKenzie reported that he was on a two week deployment with the FL Forest Service....to work on left over damage from Hurricane Michael (!). Mike Schaefer reports that his local club is meeting again in person. Mike is the Secy, and Mike Sherril is the President of the club. Mike wb2fko said that he was indeed the FT8 “guru” that was with us during FD. Jeff Capehart met today with Dalton Herding at the EOC, and the EMD will report next week on progress on what we can do about badging a new group of volunteers. Storm developing in the Gulf (Mindy) has only a 9% chance of coming thru. No plans for shelter. Will be a blustery day tomorrow. Jeff reports three ready to be badged

2. **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 2021 MINUTES.** August 2021 minutes approved.
3. **NOVEMBER EXTRA CLASS COURSE.** Friday evening, Nov 19, Saturday Nov 20, Sunday afternoon Nov 21. Typically we teach at the EOC. Areas are numbered somewhat weirdly. Volunteers sought for instructing the various elements:
 - Element 0, Safety: Earl McDow/Bledsoe backup
 - Element 1, Rules: AA3YB
 - Element 2, Operating Procedures: AA3YB
 - Element 3, Propagation: Jim Bledsoe
 - Element 4, Practices/Test equipment: TBD
 - Element 5, Electrical Principles: Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO
 - Element 6, Circuit Components: Mike Hasselbeck
 - Element 7, Practical Circuits: KX4Z
 - Element 8, Signals & Emissions: KX4Z
 - Element 9, Antennas/Transmission lines: AA3YB
4. **ALACHUA COUNTY GO-BOX POLARITY PROTECTIONS PLANS.** KX4Z showed photos of the go boxes. First image was of the back of the box, illustrating the Paradan power strip. Second image showed the rear of the “Paradan panel.” Plan is to cut the red wire from the battery monitor and crimp. Crimp connector and soldering is selected method. Showed a prototype box and wiring scheme. Bare wire connections will be wrapped in heat shrink. Showed a prototype circuit board with connectors. KX4Z will build these things with pigtailed making for an easy install in the boxes at the EOC which are in the hallway. We can slowly work our way through the boxes. Will schedule a day to come to the EOC and help with the install.
5. **DIGITAL MODES/FLDIGI/WINLINK INSTRUCTION.** Bret NH2KW and Reid Tillery have conducted digital sessions using the above three modes. Five people have “signed up” with Reid and Bret for doing an intro to digital radio. Reid and Bret will do a “how to” simple session series for working through how the techniques work. Practice sending messages in county using NVIS and perhaps VHF Packet as well (audible coupling). Reid proposes meeting in person with folks interested in acoustic coupling. Besides the five Reid was talking about, Joe MacKenzie and Rosemary said they were interested in participating. This effort started with a voice NVIS net, but we're moving to digital in addition to voice because digital is an extremely efficient low power and weak signal technique for communications in county. Susan Halbert also said she would be interested in participating; Dean Covey, as well. Probably meet two or three at a time for individual attention...increase the number of teachers and have fun. Recommended NBEMS as a method, and both Reid and Brett have really been impressed by JS8 Call.
6. **TECH NITE.** Report by KX4Z on first (or second?) Tech Nite. Discussion of topics for future Tech Nites and recruitment of volunteers. Second Tech nite was on wiring for digital. KX4Z proposed some topics for additional tech nights. These will not take the place of lab n' lunches. Some of the proposed topics (see list on the agenda on the NFACRC web site) may work better as lab and lunches. Polled on how often to do. KX4Z suggested that folks interested in doing talks email gallupleland@gmail.com if they are interested in doing a talk. Lorilyn said that she could help us set up

the ability to do YouTube videos, and record the talks so they can be viewed by people who are work or otherwise constrained.

7. FLORIDA BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF NEW ORLEANS DEPLOYMENT REPORT.

KX4Z reported on his recent deployment in support of FBDR operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. He left here and went first to Pensacola, RON. Left 0700 to Metairie on the far side of NOLA. Used Part 90 radios to keep up with one another in the road convoy, which was useful. Gordon put out a request on a forum....got a list of LA section frequencies, including PACTOR P2P, etc. Impressive. When he got to the site, he discovered the traffic lights were out. Parking for the big FLBDR vehicles an issue. On way to NOLA passed vehicles with generators (at least 4). Showed images of where the FLBDR vehicles were sited, and where the 65kW generator was sited. Cables for power had to be run across a street with boards protecting. At least 32 vehicles reported on site. Security tent established, with people watching/surveillance. Showed the comms crew, Mike Springer in the image...he is the network specialist for them. Showed Cradlepoint router with antennas for 4 different cell phone bands, WiFi routers, etc. Had faster wifi at this site than KX4Z has at his house. Displayed images of rack mounted systems for cell routers, VSAT router, satellite modem, and battery backup system. Another rack with UHF repeater, power supply switches, and DC power supplies. The group ran extension cables in to the church which had no power; helped them set up for church and for things such as feeding. More images showing the HF backup system with a Chameleon HF MPAS-like antenna. Another image showing a NanoBeam 5GHz antenna to route network. More images showing large-scale AC power distribution. 53' trailer with massive feeding kitchen (not known whether it's being used). Thinks that didn't work...IC-7300 and auto tuner didn't "talk" with each other. Takeaways: being a part of a specialty service group increases chances of getting deployed (such as roofing, tree work, etc.). State of FL not fascinated by hams, but FLBDR is indeed interested in using hams – helps with AUXCOMM task book. Do whatever is needed! Wider range of skills – better you will know how to do what is needed. Relationships established in advance is key.

8. SIMULATED EMERGENCY TEST.

Plans for the early October SET on the table and discussed....Karl Martin, the NFL SEC, who had announced previously that he would efforts for a NFL Section SET, has been sick. So KX4Z is coming up with a draft plan...our group doesn't have a lot of experience with handling "off the wall" problems...such as no power and burned out generators/generators that won't start. Lots of power issues in NOLA...so we may work on what happens if we have a REAL lost of power over an extended period of time. SET with start out everyone connecting from home/folks at home. 30 minutes in and all power gone. Stations coordinate for simplex, power from vehicle batteries. Can't just use wiring in car. We have to come up with ways to comm/pass structured reports that have to make it all the way to EOC by relay or whatever. Also a simulated survivor message to EOC. If you have established solar it's dead...batteries in garage...dead. Point is wiring up to a "neighbor's" car battery. Battery clips with Anderson PowerPoles would work just fine. Polarity protectors a good idea. No repeaters, so VHF simplex or HF with NVIS or HF with NBEMS would work. Two hour SET. Structured reports. This will be Saturday October 2. Columbia County will also join. We start at 0900 and run to 1100.

9. ARDUINO/HIGH SCHOOL HAM CLUB.

Report by KX4Z on his current efforts in support of a local private high school's STEM teaching. This included his sponsoring the school's clubs, subjects as above. Meeting this week with one student who'd connected an Arduino and had kids writing software. Learned how to turn on serial ports. 7th and 8th grades. The ham club? KX4Z will propose they build a radio...a receiver.

10. ADJOURN at 8:38 EDT. Link stayed active for a couple of minutes for folks to chat.