Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES JANUARY MEETINGS

January 13, 2021

Meeting held via ZOOM, instead of in person at the American Red Cross, Gainesville Red Cross, 6th Ave NW and 16th St

Attendance: altogether 18

Members of North Florida Amateur Radio Club & Alachua County EOC Radio Club:
Gordon Gibby
Jeff Capehart
Leland Gallup
Mike K4INK
Brett NH2KW
David W4JIR
Earl McDow
Bob Guertin
Tommy Boyd
Brad N5CBP
Susan KG4VWI
Alvin John Osmena
Craig Fugate
Reid Tillery
Wendell Wright
Vann Chesney

Judy Gardner [logged on too late for membership rolls in the two clubs]
Amy Ko4IDO [logged on too late for membership rolls in the two clubs]

Introductions. From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced. December 2020 Minutes approved.

1. **UPDATES ON CREDENTIALED VOLUNTEERS AND PATHWAY FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS (RACES)**. Badging requirements associated with our RACES mission; associated with both NF4RC and our EOC's radio station club. Look for "RACES" on our NFARC website; everything you need to do, including ICS list and the State requirements. Jeff defined what "badging" is to an inquiry. A badged person is considered an "employee" of Alachua County. Background checks required for shelter deployments. ARES Connect is going to die, since ARES CONNECT contract with Volunteer Hub is not going to be renewed. Our database is on ARES CONNECT and we still want people to register there so we can migrate the data to whatever platform we might eventually use. SERTrac website was shown, and certificate storage was demonstrated. Store your certificates! You have to be cleared locally in your county before the State will permit your deployment. Question: volunteer firefighter badging? Could be the same. We really need more volunteers to get badged.

2. **APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2020 MINUTES**. December minutes approved

3. **EOC ANTENNA PARTY.** Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Wear long pants, put on bug spray. Gave directions to where to park. Put pant legs in to the socks. 270 foot antenna is sagging and we need to get that higher. We'll install a second 130' end fed that we can use as a second back up antenna.

4. **NFARC CLUB ADMIN: MEMBERS, ELECTION OF OFFICERS**. We have to have membership and elections every year. We need to have a "list" of all who want to be official members. All 15 participants are members. Jeff President; Bob Guertin VP, Leland Secretary, Susan Treasurer; All elected.

----------EOC RADIO CLUB CALLED TO ORDER----------

5. **ALACHUA EOC RADIO CLUB ADMIN: MEMBERS, ELECTION OF OFFICERS** Gordon President, Bob Guertin VP, Leland, Sec'y; Susan, Treasurer. All elected. All members of NFARC are enrolled as as members of Alachua EOC radio club. Administrative requirements for both clubs fully met for 2021.

6. **WINLINK RMS GATEWAY: NEW ONE.** K4ZSW-7, 145.070 Showed local map of connections, and they are on the NF4RC website. This is a Winlink message server. Should be able to use NEWB (NF4RC-7) or DARK (W4DAK-7) to hit Earl's new RMS. Has a backup generator.

7. **NEWCOMERS' CORNER: TRANSMISSION LINE HOUSEBREAK!** Wendell Wright talked through a presentation slide deck How to get a transmission line out of a house is an important consideration. Getting antenna cables outside is a big deal and is a major issue. Flat transmission lines move easily under older wooden walls. There are transmission lines that are tapes. These are probably not successful with metal sashes. MFJ makes pass through panels that can be installed in a window sill; mounts on wood to fit your window and is weather stripped. You can build these things; use pressure treated so it will last. Earl took an MFJ panel and adapted it to a horizontal sliding window, with adapters for angles. Showed bulkhead double female connectors. If you want to go through a soffit, MFJ makes a solution; multiple models are $20 and up. You pop the soffit out and replace with MFJ. Then put the wire through you roof to where you want to route it. Drilling holes through ceiling in to attic...will work but you have to worry about piping/wiring/insulation/fire blocking. When removed can be later patched easily with spackle. 48" long drill bits will do the trick. Turn off power before drilling! Find your power cables in advance. Seal holes with silicone sealers to prevent water drip through. Finding one stud will pretty much get you the rest until you get to corners. OSB is oriented stranded board. Used for exterior sheathing. Rigid foam panel is a new sheathing that is expensive but very good. Weatherstripping: lots of options at big box home improvement stores. Wendell just used foam pipe insulation, routed coax through it, and closed window on it. This worked well and prevented leak through. Showed cables and phone boxes as a method for installing coax, lightning arrestor, etc. Window stop pins are the ticket for security when you've put your pass through in the window. The pin is screwed in to the wall and prevents some one from opening your window. There is also a no-drill metal clip that can be used to prevent a window from being opened..

8. **LONG RANGE TRAINING PLAN UPDATE** The updated list is now up on the NFARC website. It's updated from time to time. Ideas for meetings,lab n'lunches, etc.

9. **ALACHUA COUNTY INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLAN SURVEY** First time we've been asked to participate. Five members contributed to the survey; consolidated input entered on their web form. Five most crucial threats, most important trainings, efforts. COML and COMT as well as AUXCOMM were requested. Discussions with the Acting Emergency Manager. The latter is wary of tech that isn't tested regularly isn't going to be reliable when it comes to an emergency. Showing up and doing is critical for credibility.

10. **EOC AMPLIFIER: SUGGESTED OPERATION** We have two HF amplifiers; the MOSFET amp shouldn't be sustaining antenna tuner auto-mode retunings. The tuner is set up in semi auto mode. LDG tuner makes this not so easy, but after tuning on the frequency you want, only THEN turn on the amplifier on that frequency. Note frequency before you transmit, since our 7300 is opened up to operate on non-amateur frequencies.

11. **EOC GENERATOR TESTING: FIELD DAY**. Rules for generators at EOC mean that you have to crank the generator during the FD period. If we do that we avoid running off batteries the whole time. COL Huckstep has talked with the folks at the center...will crank the generator on the Saturday of FD...this means that we can use mains at the EOC the whole time and get credit for "emergency backup" power. We are transitioning to higher tech batteries such as LiFePo4. We have flashlights at the EOC.

12. **TECH CLASS COURSE AT SANTA FE COLLEGE.** Gordon proposed course to Santa Fe. Karl Zawoy did the class a year ago, and he's happy with us doing it. So Gordon has put in the entire packet including resumes. Employment application, reference list, etc. That means we might have a class at Santa Fe. It would be great if eventually this morphed in to a real class at Santa Fe. He will be looking for volunteer instructors. If students at Santa Fe realize they can employ these tech skills It will be post-vaccine before we go in person. Spring semester picks up in March; five weeks. Two hours a night for two nights a week for five weeks. 20 hours of instruction altogether. Not that different from how we do the courses already. We build leaders by having people act as teachers.

13. **NEWCOMERS' CORNER (AGAIN) BASIC PACKET COMMANDS** KX4Z related the history of packet. It was invented in the '70s as AX.25. Guys who invented putting stuff over the wires migrated it to the air came up with AX.25. Used limited computers. Everyone was doing packet until cell phones killed. Winlink co-opted packet modulation, so packet had a bit of resurgent. Many know how to do Winlink but not packet. Packet is far more capable than Winlink alone, such as "scripts" that all of us know how to do. Most know how to connect to a gateway in Winlink, with a "10" as an SSID. Showed Easy Term as the method for getting direct packets, and commands typical of linbpq shown. Command such as "CONNECT' and the shorthand would be. For example, C7 NEWB then C 7 KX4Z-10 VIA NEWB Another command is MH 7 for "machines heard." INFO gets background information on the station. PORTS command allows you to switch between the 030 Port 6 and 070 is port 7. ROUTES will get a view of all the stations that the station will be able to reach. Practice with these commands to get them to work. NODES has the station show you every station that that station knows how to reach. These commands could allow wide ranging traffic to be moved on the SARNET system, for example. Gordon used his "share screen" to demonstrate the commands. Also showed how to access YAPP capability. Although this is "old" tech it's undergoing a

resurgence. Talked about VARA FM...we've not moved to that because we would not have had the coverage we have now. But if VARA FM can operate “alongside” AX25 as another modulation without issue, we may move to VARA FM. KX4Z showed how to see VHF Packet as mode on Winlink. Much discussion of commands, digipeating, moving traffic, and scripts. KX4Z demonstrated using scripts to go from station to station to station, querying commands that station can do, ports, what stations it can hear on which port, etc. The inventor of much of this software, John Wiseman, is a UK amateur, and his call sign is G8BPQ. He has provided an excellent library of BPQ stuff at this link BPQ32 Documentation (cantab.net) If the link doesn't work, just use a search engine with BPQ and Wiseman as search terms and you should get to John Wiseman's site.

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14. **ADJOURN** at 2044 EST