

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

**June 12, 2024**

Attendance: 14. The meeting was held in person at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center and via ZOOM. Meeting attendees are not specifically noted as attending live and in person or via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby  
Leland Gallup  
Jeff Capehart  
Eric Pleace  
Dean Covey  
Rosemary Jones  
Mark McDow KN4POZ  
Earl McDow  
Susan Halbert  
Reid Tillery  
David Huckstep  
Mike Hasselbeck  
Brian Joy KQ4BWH  
Manish Sahn

**Introductions.** From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced. Hands on time with shelter radio with Jeff and Rosemary.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/APPROVAL OF MAY 2024 MINUTES/ARES HOURS.** Jeff Capehart led off with a recounting of the ARRL situation. Many of their online systems are down because they were hacked. Our group's total reported May hours: 138 hours; 68 admin and 60 training. May be missing 30 hours. KX4Z talked the Emergency Preparedness Seminar scheduled for July 13. KX4Z is keynoting the seminar. Many of our members are participating.
- 2. PREVIOUS MONTH HOURS REPORT.** See above.
- 3. 75 FOOT TOWER TAKE DOWN AND PROVISION FOR CROSS CREEK.** Reid Tillery, K4RFT, discussed how he, Shannon Boal, and Terry Gordon, were able to harvest a Rohn tower. Yesterday another tower was harvested. Pictures shown. Terry Gordon is really good at taking down these towers. Reid talked the method for how these towers can be taken down. The use of ropes to control tower "takedowns" sounds similar to the way lines are thrown into trees for wire antennas and is very similar to the control techniques for cutting and taking down large trees. Tag lines, cutting metal bars to form a hinge, etc. Crew will deliver the Rohn 25 to the Cross Creek fire department for their GMRS repeater with high gain antenna. The other has been already delivered to Windsor for use as an amateur tower. Hope is that boaters and hunters out in the remote areas will be able to use GMRS HT's for communications. The crew made sure that the site where the tower was has been cleaned up

with all metal reduced to below ground level (no threat). Homeowners happy that the site is clean and the tower is gone. Questions from meeting participants in how the tower will be installed and how it is deployed (sections, versus one piece, etc.). KX4Z and W4UFL offered to help take down and put up towers as needed.

4. **TECHNICIAN LICENSE CLASS IN EAST ALACHUA COUNTY.** Reid talked about the Tech Class that he is “honchoing” at Melrose. About 8 participants. Using the Hamradioschool.com text books. Ham Radio School will give slides and books to the instructors. Students use the books and online stuff, which contains video materials. The teachers will go over the materials to piece out whatever questions people have. Six weeks of instructions. Will go through mid-July and take their tests in August. KX4Z asked that promotional materials for ARES be put out at the Tech Class. Reid would like to teach several courses in Melrose, and is very interested in recruiting new licensees for emergency communications.
5. **ARRL: WHY HOLD FIELD DAY EDITORIAL BY KX4Z AND MORE.** 40k hams participate in FD every year. FD has been going on for 75 years. A lot of people get their first exposure to a variety of radios, antennas, lines, propagation, etc. by seeing and/or participating in FD. Gives people means to improve tech skill. Our group has greatly improved tech ability because of our participation in FD. Working as a team, with planning, etc., is important. Growing our friendships is a significant consequence of the event. Earl McDow demonstrated a Mesh network “go box” that he has built. He brought the client end box, which has a place for cable, the antenna with clamps; the goal is that it is a simple deployable solution – even has a GPS for power. Has a power box for ac, the wireless access point, and a PC. Place to plug everything is. Not wired for 12v DC yet, but that will be an improvement.
6. **FIELD DAY 2024 BRIEFING AND PLANNING FOR DRESS REHEARSAL.** Gordon showed a cheap 25\$ headset and recommended that people buy these. We can have two people operate as a team at one station by using splitters. Important that they use headsets in the noisy environment of an operations room with several stations. Dress rehearsal: that will be this coming Saturday, June 15, at Gordon’s house at 7:00am. Will brief at the beginning on setting up antennas, generators and power, solar power charging, and an overview of the rules (we will be 4A group. We will also get some points for ed efforts (as we did last year). We should have a public affairs/social media guru, which Gordon has agreed to do. This gets a hundred points, which is a lot. We will be on alternative power to get 100 points. Need someone to invite elected officials. Setup until 10:00am. KX4Z went through what people should bring. We have three antennas to put up: tower, camper vertical, and the EFHW. Have to get the microwave, filters, and bandpass stuff. The simulated cabin will do a vertical off center fed dipole. The yagi will allow isolation from the cabin to permit 20m simultaneous ops. We will have a MARC unit at FD, but will not be at the dress rehearsal. Showed images from the IAP on placement for FD itself. We will attempt to simulate placement of the “cabin,” the Yagi trailer, and the EFHW at the Dress Rehearsal. House will be the lodge. Tower in place; Far corner of the lot will be the camper which will simulate the cabin. Will be similar to the actual FD concept. KX4Z talked about generators and backup generators, as well as solar. At 10:00, once the antennas are up, we will test the SWR for the bottom CW and top phone ends of each band. Will then look at coupling between antennas. Will look at simultaneous ops on all bands; need 70 dB of isolation. Will use 5w of power on CW, with spectrum analyzer at the other end. Will first measure the Yagi, and then the EFHW. We had 100 dB of isolation in the past years when we did FD at the Sheriff’s campus. For our dress rehearsal we have 300’ of distance, and at FD we will have

600'. We will try logging systems, microwave, and all that is needed. For the dress rehearsal we will have pot luck at 1200. Chips, deserts, and side dishes from everyone else. At end will break down Yagi for transport.

- 7. BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION OF FIELD DAY AT CUSCOWILLA.** Last year there were 150 4A entries. KX4Z thinks if we do 1200 contacts as we did last year we could do well, and that number would put us in the top 13% of national 4As. Other clubs that did really well were CW operators big time. Vast majority of contacts were on 20m, with fewer on 40, and much fewer on the other bands. Rosemary asked for input on a variety of snack, coffee, lunch and dinner options. Asked that folks bring crock pots for food. Suggested that people bring their own crock pots. Same for deserts. Suggested sandwiches for lunches. Asked what people wanted for dinners. Last year we had barbeque, potato salad, and cole slaw. KX4Z suggested spaghetti in a crock pot. Eric will take care of himself (vegetarian). Talked bonus points. We need help with respect to an information table. Information badge for the IC – should have a bright radio information badge? The rules require a “picked out person” to do this. The IC should do this. GOTA station is not worth doing. Since we lost our PIO we lost the County Proclamation, but Gordon may do some news releases and Instagram. The Safety Office role gets us a hundred points. KX4Z showed a slide for the IC’s role; weather radar, check off tasks, observe how folks are doing. Make sure that NTS messages are sent at night. KX4Z asked for help: people to volunteer for IC/Safety. Signup document on the screen.
- 8. FIELD DAY OPERATING TIME SIGNUPS.** Many operation and IC positions filled,
- 9. TOM HORNE INFORMATION OF FOREIGN V. US CELL TOWER BACKUP.** KX4Z discussed information from the differing ways that cell towers are backup provided in the US versus foreign countries. Bottom line – US cell towers much more vulnerable in general to disruption from sabotage/stealing of fuels. Cell is not as reliable in terms of infrastructure in the US because of the scattered methods for resiliency.
- 10. LAST BITS OF STUFF.** Our main IAP for FD is now on the new web page.
- 11. ADJOURNMENT.** At 2048 hours EDT.