

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

**February 12, 2025**

Attendance: **16**. The meeting was at Queen of Peace Catholic Community, and via ZOOM. Meeting attendees are not specifically noted as attending live and in person or via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby  
Leland Gallup  
Susan Halbert  
Dean Covey  
Jeff Capehart  
David Huckstep  
Earl Sloane  
Hugh Minnich  
Mark Miller  
Reid Tillery  
Mike Schaeffer  
Rosemary Jones  
Manish Sahni  
Mark McDow  
Mike Hasselbeck  
Brett Wallace

**Introductions.** From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced.

- 1. INTRODUCTION//MINUTES APPROVED FOR JANUARY 2024/DISCUSSION OF JANUARY ARES HOURS:** January minutes approved. 370 ARES hours for January, largely for WFD, but also the Tour de Felasco. W4UFL hasn't seen whether the section EC has been able to put up hours on the Section website. Hamcation report by W4UFL, Jeff Capehart. Normally about 25000 Hamcation attendees, and this was a large year, among others. Jeff and his RV were there all three days, as was David Huckstep. Jeff talked about the forums. He attended AUXCOMM, EMCOMM update, and the FL update. SARNET "sort of working." David Huckstep reported that the connection is faulty. We believe it is our side of the node. There may be a problem with something – not just the connector. Jeff reports that there is now a 501c3 to act as the custodial service group for SARNET support. SARNET got a 25\$k grant from the ARRL. The presentation slide for SARNET is on the Hamcation website. Arc, the SEC, was there, with Josh Johnston, the ARRL EM director. They report that there is a new ARES task book from the ARRL that will serve as the FL ARES Task Book. FL has now adopted the ARRL task book. If you have already done the FL specific task book, you don't have to do it again. Only one person in the past 12 months has had any signing of the FL taskbook in this area, reports KX4Z. The basic ARRL emcomm course is up on the homepage and is free to take. Word from AUXCOMM is that there will be a new AUXCOMM task book later this year or early next; so ARRL will hold off on an ARES leadership new course until the new AUXCOMM task book is released. New (2022) NIFOG has been published and is

available on your phone. Hardcopy can be ordered from CISA and/or the Government Printing Office. Discussion about ICS courses: 100, 200, 700, and 800 required for ARRL ARES even if you're going to be working from home. FL. SERTRAC is being updated to 2.0 Certificates will not be moved from the old system to the new. Arc is talking about a FL SET early – not in October. Tentatively scheduled for weekend of April 12, 2025. See separate section at the conclusion of these minutes. That will contain the entire text prepared by Jeff Caphehart (thanks!) reflecting his back brief from Hamcation and more.

2. **WINTER FIELD DAY AFTER ACTION REPORT.** KX4Z showed the stats for WFD, with a big increase in our digital contacts. Total onsite operators down to 11. We're trying to fix that. We have an improvement plan that is in four sections. Listed those things that are in each of the four sections (see the Club website for specifics). Document approved.
3. **PROGRAM TOPIC FOR THE MONTH: COAXIAL CABLE AND THE DECIBEL.** KX4Z discussed and showed slides for the attendees. Two major loss mechanisms in coax: skin effect for the conductor and dielectric loss in the insulator. Skin effect is frequency dependent, as well. Ohmic losses get worse at high frequency. Small cable means smaller circumference and consequently a smaller area for skin to begin with. Dielectric loss is loss caused by insulation. HF causes molecules of the insulation to vibrate – recall that electricity flows on the surface of a conductor. Put in simple term, more material vibration equals more ohmic loss. Too reduce, you can use better materials. Best dielectric is air, which is why foam is a lower loss insulating material. Bigger diameter cable means more distance for dielectric between the conductors and hence lower loss, all other things being equal. Loss goes up linearly with distance. Longer distance equals more loss. Higher SWR means higher voltage or current at certain points, which both cause more loss than is the case with lower SWR. X4Z showed a coax loss table (they are readily available off Google). Discussion of the use of solid or stranded center conductor. Stranded is better for movement issues, and may have greater surface area for reduced skin effect loss.
4. **SUMMER FIELD DAY PLANNING.** Earl Sloan picked up this item for discussion. He needs a PIO. Gordon agreed to be the PIO. Also looking for a logistics chief. Rosemary Jones agreed to act in that capacity. As to public information, KX4Z has already drafted a proclamation for publication.. Group said it looks good for release. Discussion of whether Porta Potties are necessary at the ACSO site for our 2025 FD; given low volume of visitors. David H thought it is unnecessary to rent Porta Potties. Resolved – we'll discuss this in a future meeting as we approach FD. It is the fourth weekend in June. Question: where? It will be at the EOC just as was WFD. Regarding food; Earl will provide lunch on Saturday – burgers dogs and chips. Big meal Saturday evening: baked beans, slaw and bbq chicken, as well as smoked butt. **NOTE: see the complete menu, which is appended at the bottom of these minutes.** People asked to bring sides. Sunday morning – sausage, eggs, biscuits, pancakes. Grill will probably be out on the grassy area where we've located the trailer. Sunday lunch: chicken salad and pita bread. There must be a signup sheet, where people will indicate what they want (which meals, etc.). There will be costs, with actual costs laid out and folks are asked to contribute. Can't do a budget until he has a sign off sheet – two weeks before FD they need to sign up. If they don't comply with that, they are on their own. Earl will bring the Blackstone fiddle and propane. Need an ops chief. Gordon asked Jeff...not sure if Jeff agreed. Earl will also provide charcoal. Now Earl will concentrate on the Incident Action Plan.

- 5. AMATEUR RADIO DIRECTION FINDING.** Reid Tillery talked about “fox hunting” (radio direction finding) as a method for outreach. RDF is a radiosport that has a world championship. Also known as radio orienteering. Instead of looking for points on a map, you’re looking for transmitters. Don’t have to be a ham, since you’re only receiving signals from a transmitter. Finding the transmitters in the least amount of time is the criterion for success. To start out use just one. TX distance a couple of miles – especially if located up high. Transmitters are small VHF devices. Reid thinks that a combination of fox hunting and licensing classes will get more hams. Just waiting for folks to show up won’t cut it. This is a proactive way of increasing our ham community. Reid showed the antenna he uses, made out of a tape measure, coax, and PVC pipes. It’s a Yagi. He described how to use triangulation principles to accomplish the finding, as another method besides just using the signal strength meter on a receiver. He’s getting a transmitter in the mail. Can use “fox controllers” to control a Baofeng, for example, and provided the name of a vendor (Sec’y note: not able to copy the name of the vendor). Gordon asked what kind of receiver would be needed – one with a decent S meter. Reid said that Baofengs are not good for fox hunting because they don’t have decent S meter. Good S meter is the key. Jeff asked Reid what the hunter does when finding the transmitter – Reid described a method for putting a code on the TX. Reid offered to do a lab n’ lunch to build these 2m yagis. Earl asked Reid about a “hairpin match” that he’d used on his handheld to hit the Gainesville repeater.
- 6. POSSIBLE SUMMER FIELD DAY COLLAB W/LOFTEN HS STUDENTS.** There is an option for our Summer Field Day operation. It involves the Lofton student group, which is as much as 50 kids, is good for phone operations, but has very few licensed ops. They’d worked with college kids during WFD, but scatter in the summer. KX4Z has talked with Bob Lightner .. they are high on skill but low of licenses. They have made their trailer available for our FD use. It has a 7300 and a beam antenna. K4WTL is the call sign on the trailer. It has a small a/c and a table inside, as well as a generator. The discussion then turned to whether our group wants to use the trailer, and if so for what purpose. Two ways to use this trailer – site it back of the EOC to run coax to the EOC, which would mean we have a directional antenna for the rigs inside the EOC. This means no increase in the number of operators at the EOC. Second option is to operate as a standalone in the parking lot. Possibly use multiplexers at each site. Could be 5F or even 6F. Kids assembled the trailer antenna at WFD. If we want the beam, it would be good to have kids involved, and they could be useful outreach. Discussion of the practical issues represented, including the threshold of whether we want to do this in the first place. Discussion of looking at the trailer to get some sense of what is materially involved. In depth analysis of these fundamental issues. Dean Covey says that this Lofton group doesn’t have much contact with GARS. Earl asked Gordon to contact Bob Lightner to see if we can have a viewing – the trailer is on school property. Bob has said that we can use the trailer if we want. Issue tabled for next meeting.
- 7. POSSIBLE HAM GROWTH THROUGH SUMMER HAM CAMP.** Bob Lightner has not had success in getting his students licensed. Gordon Gibby has thought about this, and is offering to work with Reid Tillery on a plan to run a youth camp. He has sketched out a plan. Five days with Reid doing a course, Gordon doing build sessions. The issue up for discussion is whether the ARES group will support this endeavor. There is a considerable up front planning effort, which includes cost of materials, etc. KX4Z suggests that this be an endeavor for more than the Lofton – teach anyone. There is chaperoning, liability, etc. We can’t do this at the EOC. Venue possibilities: Grace Baptist. Another possibility is Living Faith Fellowship, but KX4Z can’t speak to this. KX4Z has contacted the person who provides Reid’s instructional

materials and is being certified as an instructor. Reid offered his doubts that it's really possible to do a fullup course of instruction over a period of five days. This issue is tabled for discussion for the next meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT.** At 2045 EST.

**TEXT OF JEFF CAPEHART'S BRIEFING ON HAMCATION 2025**

**MENUS FOR FIELD DAY PROVIDED BY EARL SLOANE**

**SEE NEXT PAGE**

# Field Day Menu

## Saturday

### Lunch

Burgers and all beef hotdogs

Assorted Chips

Drinks

### Dinner

Bring your favorite side dish and/or dessert to share.

Pulled Pork Sandwiches

BBQ Chicken Quarters

Baked Beans

Coleslaw

Drinks

## Sunday

### Breakfast

Coffee

Eggs To Order (may become Scrambled Eggs)

Bacon or Turkey Sausage

Home Fries

Pancakes

(and maybe Biscuits and Sausage Gravy)

### Lunch

Chicken Salad in Pita Bread

Drinks