



QST NFL

Season's Greetings



Providing timely and interesting information to Radio Amateurs in North Florida

Volume 5, Issue 12

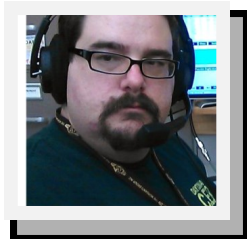
www.arrl-nfl.org

December 2018

Kevin's Take:

NFL Section Manager

Kevin Bess, KK4BFN



Greetings North Florida Hams!

Welcome to the GREATEST HOBBY IN THE WORLD!

First off, I want to apologize for not having a Section Manager's Message for last month. With trying to help manage the Amateur Radio side of Hurricane Michael, and then my college class I am taking... I got a little hectic!

Speaking of Michael, I want to extend a personal thanks to everyone who helped out with this event! From those who deployed to those who managed behind the scenes. This is what makes this hobby so unique; we can go from chasing DX to providing communications for our fellow citizens in need. Karl Martin, KG4HBN, did a marvelous job in his role as Section Emergency Coordinator, and an extra amount of thanks to Steve Szabo, WB4OMM, who helped us immensely with his prior experience and knowledge with emergency management. There are many others who helped out here, and they all deserve a round of applause.

In other news, Thanksgiving has just passed, Hanukkah starts in a few days (Dec 2 – 10) and Christmas is coming up, too. So, after you have let the turkey settle (and the leftovers and the leftovers of the leftovers!), it's time to break the Menorahs, trees, lights, Dreidels, and the heavy winter gear appropriate for Florida!

As for making my rounds, I attended the November Orlando Amateur Radio Club's meeting. They were doing a class on how to build 2M J-Pole antennas out of window/ladder line. I couldn't stay for that, as I had to be at work early the next day. Upcoming visits will be with OARC's Christmas dinner on the 1st of December, followed by my home club's dinner

on the 10th, and the NOFARS dinner on the 13th. I was also at the Melbourne Hamfest, and it was a nice show. They did have a couple of major vendors scheduled, but due to Michael closing down parts of I-10, they were not able to get through.

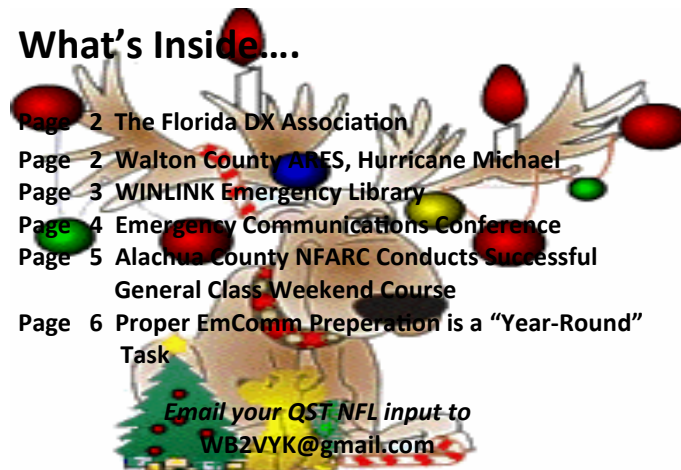
As always, I would like everyone to keep in mind the upcoming hamfests:

- Tampa Bay Hamfest – December 7th-8th, 2018 - <http://fgcarc.org/>
This is the West Central Florida section's convention, so be sure to head over and say hi to the guys from WCF!
- Southwest Florida Hamfest – January 18th – 19th, 2019 - <http://swflhamfest.info/>
- This is the Southern Florida section's convention. If you're heading down south to avoid the brutal North Florida winter, this would be a great place to go!
- Orlando Hamcation 2019 – February 8th-10th, 2019 – <https://www.hamcation.com/>
- This is the big one for us in Florida, and is also the Southern Division Convention! I will be attending Saturday and Sunday, but I am pushing for all three days!
- Brooksville Hamfest - February 16th, 2019 - <http://www.hcara.org/>
Looks like a nice little Hamfest if you want to get away for the day

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Email your QST NFL input to
WB2VYK@gmail.com



Section Manager, Continued

Well, that's all I have for this report. I want to bid everyone a good day, and close by saying "Get involved, get active, get happy! Stay safe, get on the air (no matter the mode), and have fun!" Amateur radio is the greatest hobby, and I am proud to be a ham!

EVERYONE COUNTS!

73, Kevin KK4BFN

NFL Section Manager

ARRL, The National Association for Amateur Radio™



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Are you interested in DX?

Bob Lightner, W4GJ.



The North Florida DX Association (NFDXA) is a special organization for HAMS who are interested in DX. We meet on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 5PM at the Keystone Heights American Legion Hall. If you are interested in visiting our club meeting, just show up. After we get to know you, and you us, you can request a club sponsor for membership. We have two levels: Associate Member and Full Member. If you have proof of the basic 100 (or more) DXCC, you qualify for Full membership. Less than 100, Associate Membership.

We publish a world-class monthly newsletter called the PileUp. Visit our Website at: nfdxa.com

If you would like a brochure from NFDXA, or if you want more information, Contact: Bob Lightner, W4GJ, President of NFDXA. bobw4gj@gmail.com



Walton County ARES—Hurricane Michael

Doug Ritchie, KF5BCX

PIO Walton County, Florida ARES

In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, on Sunday, 14Oct2018, under the direction of Walton County Emergency Management (WCEM), our Walton County ARES team worked with our Walton County CERT team for a field mission in rural eastern Walton County. Bordered on the east by Holmes, Washington and Bay Counties, this area of Florida had also been hit by high wind gusts and considerable rain from Hurricane Michael. WCEM determined the area needed both personal citizen assistance and field situation information. It was decided that a joint deployment of ARES and CERT would achieve the mission goals set by WCEM.

ARES AEC, Rory Martin, K4CCK and William Martin, KM4UFW operated from the ARES ESF2 station N4EMA at the Walton County EOC, while Doug Ritchie, KF5BCX (ARES PIO and CERT) was deployed with another CERT member to visit multiple wind-damaged homes and the people affected in the Ponce De Leon area and down to parts of the Bruce area. Due to poor or non-existent cellphone coverage, the joint ARES/CERT team stayed in voice contact via multiple VHF frequencies, passing information, making inquiries of WCEM regarding specific locations and sites and working

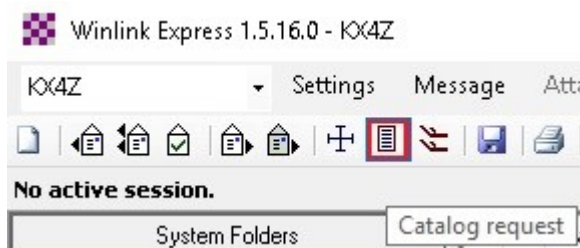
location assistance and updates of mission status throughout the day. The CERT team provided much-needed tarps, water and personal and property-assessment assistance at each visited home and neighborhood. Due to washouts and downed trees, some sites could not have been visited and meaningful communications not possible without KF5BCX's "Radio Jeep", K4CCK, KM4UFW and N4EMA equipment at the EOC and the personal skills and cooperation of the volunteers.

Our Walton County ARES EC, John Blaisdell W4CJB, has worked to achieve an excellent relationship and cooperation with Walton County Emergency Management. This deployment represents another example of that excellent working relationship. In addition, this was a great "real world" joint effort between the ARES and CERT trained volunteer organizations serving Walton County Emergency Management and the citizens of Walton County, Florida in their time of need.

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WINLINK Emergency Library of Information

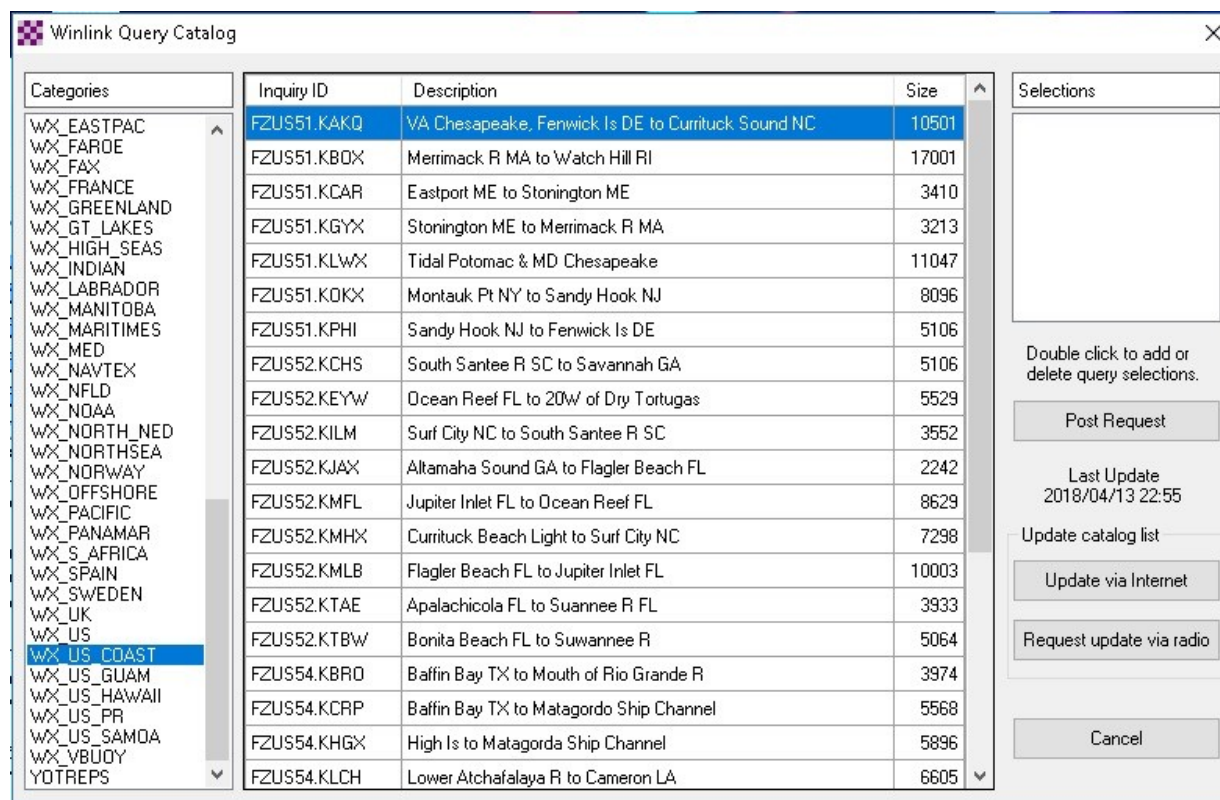
by Gordon Gibby, KX4Z



The virtually unknown WINLINK "Catalog" resource

Very few emergency communications amateur radio operators know about the wealth of information they can receive over their ham radio, even when inside a shelter or EOC that is otherwise completely cut off from the rest of the world --- exactly like thousands of mariners on the high seas. The WINLINK system includes a virtual online encyclopedia of current information known as the "Catalog." This feature is accessed by clicking the **page-like icon** shown with a red box in the above portion of the Winlink Express toolbar.

This will open up a dialog box where you can delve into a vast array of possible information resources, from *current BBC news*, to *lists of stations and frequencies*, *other stations hear near you*, *help files on a range of WINLINK topics*, *current propagation indices*, and the *NOAA weather for coastlines or regions near you*. It is built from automated data sources, of course, and volunteers work to keep it connected.



Dialog Box to drill down to the exact information you want. In this case, WX_US_COAST gives a selection of coastal marine weather.

You can make one or more selections by double clicking your requests. These become email messages in the WINLINK system, and you post them and then connect (via radio, if you are cut off!) and soon you'll find a reply email/attachment with your requested information. **What a great resource!**

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference— February 2-3

by Gordon Gibby KX4Z

The North Florida Amateur Radio Club (<https://www.qsl.net/nf4rc/>) is developing its 2nd conference on ham radio emergency communications, Saturday/Sunday Feb 2/3 in Gainesville Florida. Mike Ridlon K4MVR is getting permission to use space on the wonderful Santa Fe College campus that we used last year. By transitioning to a 2-day format, we plan to have a slower pace, and much more time to do **mentored construction and installation sessions**.

Many hams trying to get started in "digital" have problems getting the correct cables and interface set-ups. You can get pre-made cables specific for your radio -- but you can make them for very little cost and learn in the process. We plan several sessions that will address these areas with real soldering and installation, to **get you immediately on the air**. (These are the same connections you need to build your own voice repeater.) We may even have a session where you can get help building a wooden go-box to stabilize all your gear for travel. Preliminary Program Information can be viewed: <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/2019/EmergencyConference/2019ConferenceInformation.pdf>

Our "full scale exercise" will come much earlier in the program, and may roam around a much larger travel radius, and once again will be extremely challenging to many participants -- but allowing more time. Last year we discovered that groups were slow to organize and although many of the participants were quite skilled, optimal utilization wasn't achieved. During the Hurricane Michael response, observations pointed to improvement opportunities for information dispersal & management of a diverse group of ham volunteers --- so we'll add in a "ham logistics chief" whose team of deputies/assistants will gain valuable experience managing a host of problems!

If you're on ARES CONNECT, you can do a basic registration here: <https://arrl.volunteerhub.com/EventsV1/Event/Summary.aspx?EventID=7178703> We are working to make that work for additional Sections. Jeff Capehart W4UFL (Alachua County EC) is also working on a more specific registration site where we can track who wants which of the courses -- there will be as many

as three courses running simultaneously to cover all the possibilities. Look for announcements of its arrival on <https://www.qsl.net/nf4rc/>.

At this time, we are assembling the instructors. They will be asked to have their hard copy chapter finished by Dec. 25 so we can have our instructional text done in time for the Conference. There may be a charge of no more than \$5 at the door to cover the costs of texts for each participant this time, written by the instructors, and a "Blank Book" of all the forms one typically needs even in a very busy response. (Texts were donated last year, so that initial conference was free of charge.) Your suggestions and comments are welcome -- address to docvacuumtubes@gmail.com We hope to see you and your group in Gainesville next year!



Front Cover of the Conference Syllabus from 2018. Text is available on Amazon in hard copy and kindle at: <https://www.amazon.com/Amateur-Radio-Emergency-Communications-Symposium-ebook/dp/B079JRYHHV>

To Register: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe9OPwQoo2yKbVzcplRc_oBil0yBSvLJPmtIXBAImDHPm0HEw/viewform

Alachua County NFARC Conducts Successful General Class Weekend Course

by Gordon Gibby

A one-weekend boot-camp marathon -- and we succeeded! From 8AM until 7 PM on Saturday Nov 17th, including two meals Then 1 PM Sunday Nov 18th until about 6:30 PM (we actually ended very close to on-time) -- what a General Class Course!

Eight students, six instructors, an auditor or two for review, and over eleven hundred slides from the fabulous set provided free by the ARRL. You had to MOVE FAST in order to keep up, because not only were all the topics TAUGHT, but all the general class pool questions were reviewed!

And on top of that, we did real demonstrations of voice, digital and winlink modes. Then we **assembled seven 40-meter full size dipoles**, including a center feedpoint SO-239, and provided 50 feet of RG8X cable for each -- and hoisted every antenna up 25 feet up an oak tree and measured their resonance to allow for later adjusting. Every builder taught the next person as hand skills of stripping insulation, soldering wires, tying insulators, hoisting ropes, measuring SWRs using an MFJ antenna analyzer flowed throughout the group. Costs were only \$27 each, including the coax. Antennas are a frequent stumbling block for new HF operators, so we conquered that quickly.

Our cast of instructors included both old-hands and new victims: Leland Gallup AA3YB, Gordon Gibby KX4Z, Tom Gause W4YGT, John Troupe KM4JTE, Susan Halbert PhD KG4VWI and Shannon Boal K4GLM -- all our instructors are Extra Class licensees. Which is good, because we plan to put them to work next year teaching our 2nd Extra Class course. (We had 5 pass last time!)

For others who might want to hold a similar course, we have some organizational materials. Our ICS-201 for the course can be viewed here:

<https://www.qsl.net/nf4rc/2018/ICS201GeneralClassCourse.pdf>

We took the 40-odd module slide sets from the ARRL and made some additions/edits and arranged them to go along with the Chapters in the ARRL license manual text (which we also recommend): <https://qsl.net/nf4rc/Tech/GENERALCLASSCOURSE/ChapterSlides/>. These are in the ODP format which can be read by the free Libre Office software package:

<https://www.libreoffice.org/download/download/> but should also be readable by Word products.

Next year we'll do another Tech class and an Extra class. Everyone is welcome!



Students & Instructors at the Alachua County EOC for the first day. Many thanks to the EOC for allowing us the use of this magnificent facility



Leland Gallup AA3YB giving an excited discussion of FCC Regulations



Tom Gause W4YGT with two helpers measuring the resonance point of one of the 7 antennas our students built in one hour.

Proper EmComm Preparation is a “Year-Round” Task

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR, NFL Section PIC
kk4ecr@gmail.com

This month, I am going to stray from the “Public Information” side of things and share a personal “lesson learned” moment. So, please bear with me as I relate a personal story...

A few nights ago, my wife Joyce (KN4KSI) and I got home late after a fun night out with the grandkids. We were getting ready for bed when we heard a rather loud “explosion.” (Okay, maybe a really loud “bang”) We smelled a strong burning smell and began to check the house.

The smell ended up being from our home-office near my radios. In further checking, I found that my 12-volt deep-cycle marine battery, used as my backup power, had “exploded.” Fortunately, there was very limited damage – no radios or equipment was damaged – just a few wires had to be replaced.

This is the battery after I covered it in baking soda to defuse the acid.



I learned several lessons from this:

- ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS keep batteries in a properly secured battery box when stored inside your home (outside also). My battery was in a thick battery box, which kept the “damage” to a very limited location.
- Wear gloves when working with batteries – anytime you are working with them. (Yes, I had to learn that the hard way.)
- Keep a box of baking soda nearby – thankfully my wife had several boxes readily available.
- Use the proper type of battery. (There are batteries that are better suited for indoor use.)
- Check batteries monthly
- Check for corrosion
- Check for any leakage
- Check for any bulging or deformities in the battery itself
- Check for “heat” coming from the battery
- Test batteries monthly – verify that they hold a charge.
- Keep batteries in well ventilated areas.
- Check charging unit to make sure it is not over-charging the battery

I know there are many other things to consider when using batteries indoors, and most of these are things we all should already know. The entire goal of this article is to get us all to think and check our backup / emcomm batteries (and equipment) regularly, not just when we think we might need it.





FCC Testing Information

LMARS FCC Testing

- Third Saturday every month
- 9:15 AM
- Seminole County Sheriff's Office
Off SR 17-92, on 100 Eslinger Way in Sanford
- For more information and registration, contact Bob Cumming, W2BZY, 407-333-0690 or w2bzy@cfl.rr.com

North Florida ARS

- Weeknight testing for all grades of license in Feb., May, Aug. and Nov.
- Hogan Baptist Church at the corner of Hogan Rd. and Parental Home Rd. in Southside.
- Advance registration is required. See http://nofars.net/home/fcc_testing

Lake ARA

- Monthly on the 3rd Saturday, prior to monthly meeting. (Except December)
- 8:00 AM
- [LARA Clubhouse](#) (11146 Springdale Ave, Leesburg – off of CR 473)
- For more information and registration, contact David A. Pennell, NP2MR (352) 602-5164 np2mr@yahoo.com in advance of the meeting.

Suwannee ARC

- First Tuesday of the month prior to the meeting
- Saturdays available with advanced notice
- N4SVC, 9707 58th Street, Live Oak, FL 32060
- www.suwanneearc.org for more information

Silver Springs Radio Club

- Go to <http://k4gso.us/class/> to signup for classes
- Go to <http://k4gso.us/test-signup/> for testing. Testing is held on the 2nd Tuesday at 7 PM.
- Note <http://k4gso.us/ncvec605/> is requested to be filled out before you show for testing. It is best to download the form and open it as a PDF so you can fill in the blanks.

Hog County Amateur Radio Association

- First Saturday, 11:00 AM, starting September 1, 2018
- Cross Connection Church, 1451 West County Road 476, Bushnell, FL 33513
- Info: sumterVE@gmail.com



Upcoming QSO Parties — Get Ready for 2019

Alan Sewell, N5NA

Montana	1/26/2019	1/27/2019	Flathead Valley Amateur Radio Club
Vermont	2/2/2019	2/3/2019	Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont
Minnesota	2/2/2019	2/2/2019	Minnesota Wireless Association
British Columbia	2/2/2019	2/3/2019	Orca DX and Contest Club
South Carolina	2/23/2019	2/24/2019	Columbia Amateur Radio Club
North Carolina	2/24/2019	2/25/2019	Raleigh Amateur Radio Society
Oklahoma	3/9/2019	3/10/2019	Oklahoma DX Association
Idaho	3/9/2019	3/10/2019	Idaho QSO Party
Wisconsin	3/10/2019	3/11/2019	West Allis Radio Amateur Club
Louisiana	3/16/2019	3/17/2019	Louisiana Contest Club
Virginia	3/16/2019	3/17/2019	Virginia QSO Party

Links to the NFL Web Site

For net, hamfest and other events go to www.arrrl-nfl.org or select the option below. Web Master Bert Garcia, N8NN, maintains an up-to-date and detailed listing of all NFL nets and activities. If you need to make a change to an existing net or activity, or add a new one, contact Bert at: n8nn@arrrl.net.

[Section Nets](#)

[Northern Florida STM Report](#)

[Florida Hamfest/Convention Calendar](#)

[Operating Events](#)

[Emergency Communications Archive](#) **New * New * New**

Web Wise

NFL Officials

Section Manager – Kevin Bess, KK4BFN

Assistant Section Managers – Joseph D. Bushnel W2DWR, John C Reynolds W4IJJ, Dave Davis WA4WES, Jeff Capehart W4UFL, Neil Light KK4VHX, Ray Crepeau K1HG, Steve Szabo WB4OMM

Section Emergency Coordinator – Karl Martin KG4HBN

Section Public Information Coordinator – Scott Roberts KK4ECR

Assistant SE Coordinator – Robert A. Mitchell W4HKG

Section Technical Coordinator – Frank Haas KB4T

Affiliated Club Coordinator – *Appointment Pending*

Section Traffic Manager – Tom Housworth, KI0JO

Official Observer Coordinator – Robert Leasko, WB8PAF

State Government Liaison – Darrell Brock N4GOA



Newsletter of the Northern Florida Section of the ARRL

1. Spread the word about our website www.arrrl-nfl.org and **QST NFL** on your club web-site or at your next meeting.
2. Send a write-up and picture of your next activity.
3. Make sure you, or the appropriate member of your club is on the email reminder list.
4. Contact: Marty Brown WB2VYK, wb2vyk@gmail.com



QST NFL is a monthly publication of the ARRL Northern Florida Section. **QST NFL** is intended for wide distribution within the NFL Section, including club Leaders and all licensed Amateurs in Florida. A current issue of this publication can be found at the ARRL Southeastern Division web site, Northern Florida Section. www.ARRL-NFL.org Opinions expressed by writers are their own, and may not express the positions of the ARRL. Submissions may be made to the editor, Marty Brown, WB2VYK, wb2vyk@gmail.com.