



## **NFARL eNEWS**

### **January 2014**

[www.nfarl.org](http://www.nfarl.org)

eNEWS is "what's happening" in North Fulton and surrounding area! Check out each item and mark your calendar. Go to [arrl.org](http://arrl.org) for national news, but here is this month's **North Fulton ARL eNEWS**.



### ***IN THIS ISSUE: Focus on Special Interest Groups (SIGS)***

Special Interest Groups offer NFARL members a way to go deeper into specific aspects of our hobby. This month you will find articles on SIGs that can help you learn more about CW, upgrade from Tech to General, or discover the exciting world of contesting.

### **Summary of Upcoming Events and Dates**

- **Every Sunday – NFARES net** - 8:30 PM - 147.06 MHz (+) PL 100
  - **Every Monday – Tech Net** - 8:30 PM - 145.47 MHz (-) PL 100 - Check NFARL Nets [website](#) for "how to"
  - **Every Wednesday – Hungry Hams Lunch Bunch** - 11:15 AM - Slopes BBQ, 34 East Crossville Road, Roswell. **Slope's will be closed on Wednesday, January 1.**
  - **Second Saturday – VE Testing Session** - January 11, 10:00 AM - Alpharetta Adult Activity Center, 13450 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta.
  - **Second Saturday – GARS TechFest and Chili Cook-off** - January 11, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Gwinnett Medical Resource Center, 665 Duluth Highway (Georgia 120), Lawrenceville. Details elsewhere in this edition.
  - **Second Tuesday – NFARES meeting** - January 14, 7:00 PM with dinner at 5:55 PM at the Brandon Hall School, 1701 Brandon Hall Drive, Sandy Springs. Talk-in station on the 147.06 Repeater
  - **Third Tuesday – NFARL Club Meeting** - January 21, 7:30 PM - Alpharetta Adult Activity Center, 13450 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta. NFARL Library opens at 7:00 PM.
  - **Fourth Tuesday – NFARL Executive Committee Board Meeting** - January 28, 7:00 PM – Nicky's Diner, 475 Sandy Plains Road, Roswell, at the intersection of Sandy Plains Road and Georgia 92. Meetings are open to NFARL club members.
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## ***Program Update / Walt Woron, KJ4HE***

Not many hams get to sign "maritime mobile" after their calls, and probably even fewer will ever go on a DXpedition. So if you want to learn more about the excitement involved with both of these activities, join us at our monthly club meeting at 7:30 PM on



Tuesday, January 21, at the Alpharetta Adult Activity Center, 13450 Cogburn Road, Alpharetta, for a double-header guaranteed to entertain and inform.



Club members who have taken part in these ham radio adventures will share their experiences.

**Wes Lamboley, W3WL**, (photo above) **Jim Paine, N4SEC**, (left in photo at right) and **Terry Joyner, W4YBV**, (right in photo at right) have recently returned from a Quarter Century Wireless Association cruise on the high seas.

Enjoy an encore presentation by Wes on the health concerns and preparations that are important when traveling great distances and operating for long periods of time. Jim and Terry will tell you all about the fun they had signing /mm!

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## ***Don't Miss TechFest January 11 / John Tramontanis, N4TOL***

The Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society TechFest will be held on January 11 at the Gwinnett Medical Resource Center, 665 Duluth Highway (Georgia 120), Lawrenceville, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Admission and lunch are free.



Interesting technical and ham radio-related exhibits will be featured, as well as prizes awarded, and there will be the famous GARS Chili Cook-Off for all to enjoy.

NFARL will conduct a beginner's kit build and will have a presentation on Logbook of the World (LoTW) and the art of QSLing.

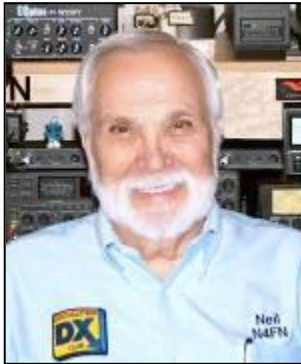
NFARL volunteers with soldering equipment are needed to guide youth in the electronic kit-building exercise. If you can help, please email [Chuck Catledge](mailto:Chuck.Catledge@nfarl.org).

[Click here](#) for more information and a full list of TechFest activities.

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## ***President's Corner*** / ***Neil Foster, N4FN***

Welcome to a new year! My wife Nancy and I hope all have a happy and healthy new year (emphasis on the healthy part). I appreciate the opportunity to serve the club in a new capacity this year. My thanks to **John Kludt, K4SQC**, and all the officers who served during 2013, for a great year. This year brings some new faces to the Executive Committee and some familiar ones who continue to serve.



Those of you who were not able to attend the holiday party missed a great event. Not only was the food outstanding, but the fellowship and camaraderie was first class. Thanks to all who made this a success. Distinguished service recognitions went to **Mike Roden, W5JR**, for his continued work on the repeater system; **Bill Cobb, K4YJJ**, as webmaster; special recognition to **Scott Straw, KB4KBS**, as Field Day chair: Ham of the Year honors to **Mike Cohen, AD4MC**; and, of course, recognition to John Kludt, our 2013 prez for an outstanding job.

This year brings new challenges and directions such as new and renewed SIGs. We will see some changes, particularly in the competitiveness of Field Day. Although FD is not a "contest," there is a competitive edge to it. The ice cream is coming back to NFARL!

Remember that this is your club, and you need to let us know what kind of programs you would like to see. Be sure to give **Walt Woron, KJ4HE**, ideas and feedback. Last month, I started a blurb on getting to know your officers. This month, there should be two more added. I think that it is important for members to get to know what each of us has done regarding our hobby and what we have done professionally.

NFARL is one of the most active and diverse clubs in its activities to support metro Atlanta: from ARES to "adopting" the students at Mill Springs Academy. I still remember the smiles on youngsters' faces when they made their first contact on amateur radio during the School Club Roundup.

This club is dedicated to working with youth as evidenced by our joint participation with the folks at SEDXC. We had another banner program at HamJam 2013. HamJam 2014 will be another winner, hopefully, at the same venue. NFARL has not only been active with youth programs, but in ARES and community involvement such as International Day at the library, participation in the Georgia QSO Party, VE testing and many other activities.

Our next big event is TechFest, sponsored by our friends at Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society, on Saturday, January 11, in Lawrenceville. We will be doing another kit-building program for the youngsters and a slide presentation on LOTW and the ARRL QSL Bureau.

2014 marks my 54th year in ham radio and what we now can do using new modes and software will never cease to amaze me. Over the years, I have observed from some

friends, intolerance and disdain from some spouses toward our hobby. I never have understood that. Although Nancy has no desire to get a license, she supports and encourages my interest (I guess she knows where to find me at home), and I guess I am just lucky. So, here's to another great year for NFARL. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on January 21.

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## ***Meet Our New Leadership / Second in a Series***

### **Vice President and Program Chairman for 2014: Walter Woron, KJ4HE**



I am a 35-year resident of Marietta and lived in Houston and San Antonio before moving to Georgia. A native of Connecticut, and a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University, I became licensed more than 30 years ago after being a student in a NFARL novice class. Inactive as my son went through high school and college, I became active again and served as the NFARL program chairman and as a vice president from 2007-2010. I retired nearly 18 months ago after a long tenure with Peerless Electronics.

My favorite pursuits are DXing, building wire antennas, and operating QRP from nearby parks.

I hold an Advanced Class amateur radio license.

### **Secretary for 2014: Mike Birmingham, K4LJG**

I am a retired airline pilot. I began flying in 1967 at age 17. From that first flight I knew that I wanted to fly for a living. It took 12 years of dedication to get the flight hours, college, and types of flight experience necessary to get hired with Delta Air Lines in January 1979.

September 11 and the eventual Delta bankruptcy left me little option but to retire early on December 31, 2004.

My wife and I started an airplane import business in 2005 and had great success and a lot of fun with that adventure until the market collapsed in 2008.

My first exposure to ham radio was when I was about 12 years old. I went to a friend's house and he led me to his attic where his older brother had his ham shack. I was amazed to see him sitting in front of these large glowing radios, sending code while talking with us. He showed me his QSL cards from contacts he made from around the world. It left an indelible impression.

I took my Technician's test in August 2012, and got my call, KK4LJG, on August 31. I recently changed my call to K4LJG.



I joined NFARL in September 2012. I found the people friendly and very willing to welcome a newcomer.

In October I passed my General license exam. That month, I also participated in the NFARES SET. It was great fun and I learned a lot.

In the past year I have enjoyed many aspects of the hobby. I have made many memories already but, more importantly, many friends.

I look forward to many more years and I feel privileged to serve as secretary in 2014.

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## ***New Life for CW SIG / Jim Stafford, W4QO***



The CW Special Interest Group (SIG) has not met in a couple years and I'm ready to resurrect it! The SIG is aimed at promoting CW – whether to assist folks to learn the code or to improve their code proficiency. The format being proposed is a little different this time. Rather than meeting once per week face to face, we plan to hold one initial meeting with weekly (minimum) “on the air” meetings. Then in about eight weeks, we will get together again for a couple of sessions to measure

progress and reward achievement. There will be a special emphasis on “getting on the air” as part of the SIG.

Because there are several early January activities of the club, we would plan to meet in my house the evening (exact time not yet determined) of Wednesday, January 22. If you would like to learn the code or improve your code and join this fun SIG for a couple of months, please send me [an email](#) to sign up. There is no charge but an honest effort to work on your CW for two months is requested.

In the meantime, you can actually work on CW yourself. There is a section on the club website on how to learn CW along with over [50 practice files](#). If you are looking at iPhone apps, please paste the files into the program – Text2Morse. We have found this to be some good-sounding CW. Lastly, here are [some tips](#) I've written.

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## ***Attention, Techs: Here's a SIG That Can Help!***

***/ Scott Straw, KB4KBS***

Do you have a desire to upgrade to the next level of ham radio? Would you like to make new friends within the club and around the globe via your HF radio? Then you are invited to be a part of the North Fulton Amateur Radio League's first “General Interest Group” Special Interest Group, or GIG-SIG, that will begin in mid-February. At this time, the format will be to meet once a week as a group for two-three hours over a six-week period, culminating on the second Saturday in April.

That end date is significant for two reasons:

1. It is the day when then the club has its regularly scheduled VE session. When you pass your General Class exam on that day, you will immediately be granted the privileges of that level and be able to operate HF phone (and CW, and digital), identifying with a "/AG" after your call sign. Why is that important? Because...



2. That is also the first day of the Georgia QSO Party, a special event on the HF bands when amateur radio operators all over the world try to work as many Georgia hams as possible in a

contest format. The North Fulton Amateur Radio League will be heavily involved in this event and you will be able to get on the HF bands and start making contacts using your own call sign with your new privileges the same afternoon you pass your test.

I will be the designated contact point for assembling the list of interested persons. Please [email me](#) and say, "Yes, Scott, I have a General interest in upgrading my Technician Class license and would like to learn more."

So that you don't forget, sign up for GIG-SIG now.

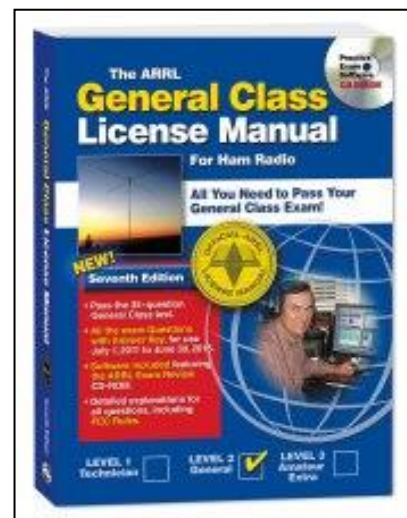
I will compile a list of respondents and send a message to all in January with further details. For now you need to know this:

1. There will be no charge for the class, but you will be expected to have your own textbook, which you can purchase on the [ARRL website](#). The book is also available on Amazon and at the local Ham Radio Outlet store.

2. The format of the class will be an "Elmer-Guided Study Group." We will read through the book chapter-by-chapter and then review the content using the test pool questions as a guide. This is not designed to "teach to the test," but rather teach the content and use the test pool questions to assess comprehension. A syllabus will be distributed, detailing which chapters will be covered each week.

3. We will meet at a public location in the north Fulton County area, generally along the Georgia 400 corridor between Holcomb Bridge Road and Windward Parkway. Times and exact location will be determined based on a consensus of the study group. It is possible that some (but not all) of the classes may be held on one of the club's 2-meter repeaters in a "virtual classroom" format.

4. If you commit to be a member of this GIG-SIG, you will be expected to be present at each class, be prepared by having read the assigned chapters for the week, and be willing to actively participate in the review and discussion. If you have questions or want to join, please [contact me](#).



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## ***Want to Contest? This SIG Could Be for You!***

***/ Scott Straw, KB4KBS***

One of the priority items for 2014 is providing opportunities for club members to be involved in Special Interest Groups or SIGs. You will read about CW and General SIGs elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter. A third SIG that is being proposed would be focused on contesting, offering a basic course, designed for hams not familiar with "radiosport." But first, we would like to know the level of interest for such an undertaking.

If you are interested in learning about the methods, software, strategies, and techniques that would allow you to become comfortable participating in an on-the-air contest, I want to hear from you. Here is a rough draft of the course syllabus. Please review it and [email me](#) if it is something you would want to commit your time toward:

### **NFARL Contesting Special Interest Group (SIG)**

If you are new to ham radio, and maybe don't even have HF voice privileges beyond 10M, this is the first course for you to take. The course will cover the fundamentals of HF operating. It will be assumed that students have operated 2M FM using club



repeaters, and understand the basics of half-duplex two-way RF communication.

This course will cover the common controls found on an HF radio. There will be a brief discussion of the signal path of SSB and CW signals at a basic level. We may also touch on the merits and purposes of antenna tuners, various feed line types, baluns, matching systems and antennas themselves.

It will be a basic assumption that students will primarily be using wire antennas: dipoles, OCF dipoles, loop antennas, etc., so that will be the main focus. As it is hoped that they will someday have the opportunity to sit at a radio connected to a Yagi antenna, a brief explanation of what they are, how they work, and why they are useful will be presented. This short discourse will also cover rotor operation as well as terms such as azimuth, short path, long path and grey line.

Next, this introductory class will cover DX spotting networks and methods of tapping into them. The course will discuss contesting software, with partiality to N1MM, but will also provide brief "drive-by tours" of other contesting software as well as general logging software programs.

Finally, there will be a discussion of the various types of contests, focusing on the different modes, exchanges, operating classifications, and operating periods, as well as limitations, and strategies. We will cover resources for finding details on each contest,

and also cover post-contest reporting procedures. During this segment contesting rules and ethics will be discussed.

Once all of this has been covered in a classroom setting, the "second semester," i.e. the operating phase, begins. Students will be expected to participate in three contests of their choosing, either solo or as part of a team effort before Field Day. Students will be asked to spend a minimum of four hours (but not necessarily consecutively) actively participating during the contests they choose and to log a minimum of 25 contacts in each one. They will then submit their score to the contest sponsor, and provide a copy of their submission receipt to the SIG leader.

But first, we need to know who would be interested in such a SIG. If you are interested or have questions, [email me](#), referencing the CONTEST SIG.

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## ***NFARL Holiday Party Was a Fun Time for All***

***/ Wes Lamboley, W3WL***

Our holiday party featured a lot of fun and camaraderie as usual, with 74 folks in attendance. The food, arranged by **Bob Citronberg, KI4GHT**, and catered by Bambinelli's, was first class. Oscar of Oscar's Villa Capri, was in attendance with his wife, and provided the piece de resistance for dessert.



Several NFARL members were recognized for their contributions to the club during the year. **Mike Cohen, AD4MC** (at left), was recognized as NFARL "Ham of the Year," acknowledging his significant contributions to NFARES and to youth programs in North Fulton.

Distinguished Service awards went to **Mike Roden, W5JR** (below center), for his managing of our four repeater systems, and to **Bill Cobb, K4YJJ** (below right), for his efforts as our webmaster. **Scott Straw, KB4KBS** (below left), was cited with a plaque thanking him for his leadership

as Field Day Chairman for the past two years.

President **John Kludt, K4SQC**, handed the reins over to new president, **Neil Foster, N4FN**. We are looking forward to Neil's leadership in 2014.





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## ***Koch Among ARES Ham of Year Nominees***

North Fulton ARES Emergency Coordinator **Tom Koch, W4UOC** (left in photo below), has been nominated to be [Georgia ARES Ham of the Year](#). Fellow NFARL member **Mike Cohen, AD4MC** (right), also was nominated but suggests NFARL members cast their votes for Tom.



Tom has held the North Fulton EC position for more than seven years, building strong working relationships with police and fire departments in Sandy Springs, Johns Creek, Dunwoody, Alpharetta, Milton, and Roswell as well as the hospitals in those cities.

Tom coordinated the support effort for a major Citizens Emergency Response Team drill that relied on his ARES organization for communications. Additionally, Tom has sought to expand ARES support capabilities to the North

American Mission Board, including installation of ham radio station NA4MB at the Alpharetta [Disaster Relief Center](#).

Tom has stressed the benefits of digital message handling training and FEMA Incident Command System Training and has led the establishment of a ham radio club at the Brandon Hall School, among many other community activities.

To vote for Tom (you don't have to be an ARES member), [email Mike Brown, KE4FGF](#), by January 10. Be sure to include your call sign in your email.

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## ***My Trip to the Islands / Jim Stafford, W4QO***

Several folks have asked about my participation in the Buddies in the Caribbean (BIC) DXpedition. Let me start with the summary – it was a hugely fun event! The BIC organizes three expeditions to the islands each year and this was the fifth year that St. Lucia was on the schedule. BIC invites about six hams to join Budd and Chris from Buddipole for a total of eight.

We all arrived in St. Lucia around mid-afternoon, Sunday, December 1. It took a while to clear Customs and get our luggage through. There really was not a problem, just three large flights arriving about the same time with perhaps 200 passengers each. We experienced no questions either in Atlanta or St. Lucia regarding all the equipment we



were taking. We put our batteries in our carry-ons and gladly showed them to the TSA screeners. I got a note in my checked bag was searched: Not unexpected since it was loaded with all kinds of gadgets, wire, connectors, etc.

It was almost two hours from the airport to our villa. The road is about 45 miles long but St. Lucia is a very mountainous, volcanic island with very curved roads. The villa sat on a cliff 300 feet above the ocean facing north so we had a great shot toward Europe, North America, and Japan. All our antennas were "Buddi." By that I mean, in reality the Buddipole system is a big erector set with all kinds of parts to make antennas. We put up 40M and 80M verticals in the dark Sunday night. By the end of the day Monday, a total of nine antennas were assembled – four Yagis (two-element), two dipoles, and three verticals. During the week, a 160M dipole was installed because Buddi antennas do not cover 160M.

The big news the first night was on 80M where J6/N9AW made about 175 contacts and worked 37 countries! The vertical was about 25 feet tall with an elevated radial. I made about a hundred Qs on 30M and others also made contacts the first night. It is important to note that these events are not hard-driving with every possible minute scheduled with operators. It is more laid back. When you wanted to operate, you looked for a band that was not in use, strung the coax to your station and worked as long as you wanted. I usually operated about five or six hours per day.



The "money" band was 17M with stations from all over the world calling. We were mostly phone on 17 and since I worked mostly CW, I was not too involved on 17M. My station consisted of the Elecraft KX3 at either 5 watts CW or occasionally 10 watts phone. My best operating stint was from about 8:00 PM Tuesday to 1:00 AM Wednesday when I worked almost 500 stations, taking me past the 1,000 mark for the week. The remainder of the week I was more casual in my operation but in the end, I went for 2,086 QRP QSOs in 75 countries and the entire team had 12,000 QSOs.

Some of the guys operated very little but went off to operate on the beach or from some of the mountain tops nearby. One thing was for sure ... the Buddipole antennas, while limited in their size on some of the lower bands, will perform well at a location with a DX call sign! On 20M and up, the antennas used no coils so the only compromise was the height. The 17M Yagi was placed on the roof of the villa and so was perhaps 25 feet above the ground. I was amazed at how well the 40M and 80M verticals performed. I worked probably 40 JAs on 40M and another 60 on 20M. Some were way over S9 or 599! The state I worked the most was, yes, Georgia!

The question many ask: How much? About \$1,000 plus airfare, but as only my second experience in operating from a DX location, this seemed well worth it to me. And this was a statement for QRP. Even some of the other ops at the villa could not believe my results at QRP power!

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## ***NF4GA Closes in on Triple Play / Dave Higdon Jr., KD4ICT***

As of December 20, the NFARL Triple Play activity has the club needing only 12 contacts to complete the award. We need six more states on CW and digital to wrap it up. Currently, there have been 960 Triple Play Awards given. It is possible we could complete this before the 1000th award is presented. There will be two ARRL contests in January which may help us achieve our goal. The weekend of January 4 will be the ARRL RTTY Roundup. On Saturday, January 11, the North American CW QSO Party will be a great opportunity to pick up the more rare states we need.

If you want to help by using the NF4GA call sign during a contest, just be sure no one else is using the call during that time. Any questions, [contact me](#).

State	CW	Phone	Digital
Alabama	NEED	OK	OK
Arkansas	NEED	OK	OK
Delaware	OK	OK	NEED
Hawaii	OK	OK	NEED
Idaho	OK	OK	NEED
Kentucky	NEED	OK	OK
Louisiana	NEED	OK	OK
Mississippi	NEED	OK	OK
North Dakota	OK	OK	NEED
South Dakota	OK	OK	NEED
Utah	NEED	OK	OK
Vermont	OK	OK	NEED

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## ***Taking a Sneak Peek at NFARL Field Day 2014***

***/ John Kludt, K4SQC, 2014 Field Day Chairman***

Field Day is one of the big events on the NFARL calendar every year. Each year we have stressed the participation aspect of the undertaking. For four out of the past five years we have been number one in the nation in this category. Two years ago, a California club beat us by a very, very small margin making us (oh, darn!) number two in the nation.

While our contest scores have been creditable, they have generally been 40 percent and 60 percent of the top score in our category (either 3A or 4A). This year we'd like to change things. Our goal for 2014 will be to go after a score that is at least 80 percent of the top score in the class, if not win the class outright.

Toward that end we are going to change the emphasis of NFARL Field Day to emphasize the contest nature of the event:

**“Field Day is a contest where you keep score and also exhibit ham radio ‘emergency preparedness’ to the general public.”**

Plans are still in the early stages and, at least of now, the thought is to run 3A. We will field one phone station, one CW station and one “floater” station that will be able to go to phone, CW, or digital as band conditions and scoring opportunities suggest. To facilitate this, **Joe Camilli, N7QPP**, has agreed to serve as our IT support person and network our logbooks, at least for HF. We also are planning to support a VHF station and a satellite station. As an added challenge, we would really like to win AMSAT Field Day in 2014. In AMSAT Field Day, CW QSOs are worth 3 points instead of the usual 2 points, placing a real premium on CW operations.



This approach to Field Day fits nicely with the SIG activities for 2014. The Contest SIG, the Antenna SIG and the Satellite SIG all fit nicely with the new approach. Each gives any NFARL member a way to participate in a related activity, culminating in Field Day setup and operations.

Participation is an established strength at NFARL, as is our GOTA (Get On The Air) operation. We are not walking away from those activities. Rather, we hope to add new strengths and competitiveness to an already strong Field Day tradition. Stay tuned as the story unfolds: There is a role for every NFARL member to play in this adventure.

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## ***NFARES Visits Disaster Center / Tom Koch, W4UOC***

The December NFARES meeting was held at the Baptist North American Mission Board's Disaster Relief Operations Center at 4200 North Point Parkway in Alpharetta. The event included a tour of the new Disaster Operations Center.

A demonstration of the amateur radio equipment at **NA4MB** was provided by **Tom Koch, W4UOC**. Emails were sent to ARES members in attendance via HF utilizing the Kenwood 2000, a Signalink USB and a WINMOR connection to a MARS RMS HF gateway internet station located in Virginia.



## **Contact Us**

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## Club Repeaters

<b>145.470 (-)</b> EchoLink Node 560686 NF4GA-R	<b>100 Hz</b>	Sweat Mountain
<b>147.060 (+)</b> Primary ARES repeater	<b>100 Hz</b>	Roswell Water Tower
<b>224.620 (-)</b> Joint Venture with the MATPARC club	<b>100 Hz</b>	Sweat Mountain
<b>443.150 (+)</b>	<b>No Tone</b>	Roswell Water Tower
<b>444.475 (+)</b>	<b>100 Hz</b>	Sweat Mountain
<b>927.0125 (-)</b>	<b>146.2 Hz</b>	Sweat Mountain

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