

# The Bolt

The Official Publication of the Ford Amateur Radio League

## President's Note - April, 2007

Greetings and welcome to spring. As I enter my third season of my outside G5RV antenna swinging in the elements, I am starting to trade the concerns of ice storms for lightning strikes. I also still need some work to keep the guy stakes in place. It was getting too cold last fall to add any more cement, but more is called for. I have been holding several of the stakes in the ground by setting a big rock on top of them, and even then, some have come loose. A 25 ft mast with an antenna attached is a bit of a sail in 60 MPH winds. After years of condo living with my stealth antenna configuration located under the roof, this free space wire antenna is something I have not had to deal with for almost 20 years. In exchange for having an outdoor antenna, I have been able to enjoy many conversations in digital modes and voice modes over the past months. I look forward to more daylight propagation this spring. I also hope we have the beginning of the next sunspot cycle coming. I have been reading up on the latest research on the sunspot cycle, and it is fascinating. Regardless, there is still plenty of activity on the airwaves to enjoy and be a part of.

I have been reading the ARRL news, and the ARRL Great Lakes Division information, Weaver's Words, by Jim, K8JE. Jim publishes a lengthy email newsletter, and it has a lot of interesting information in it. The recent changes to our rules to eliminate Morse code testing, and the proposed regulation of emissions by bandwidth, have been the subjects of a lot of discussion. There exist many opinions on these matters, some I agree with, and others I don't. However, I also see many opinions become hardened into "Right" and "Wrong." All of a sudden, eliminating Morse code becomes Wrong, moving band plans is Wrong, and ridiculing a fellow operator on air because of their operating method is Right. For me, there is no absolute Right or Wrong in any of this. I see our rules set up for Amateur Radio on the basis of "what works", what works for us both collectively and individually. It works for us to have certain emission types in specific areas of our allocation. It works for us to share our frequencies. It works for us to identify our stations when transmitting. It works for us to prepare for emergencies through contests, and through new procedures and lessons learned. For we as individuals, what works is to operate when we choose to, on the allocated frequency of our choice, and to choose how to participate. If we choose to be prepared to help in an emergency, what works is training, be it Skywarn or EmComm. My wish for you is that we work together to choose wisely our path into the future, be accepting of those see the situation as only of Right and Wrong, and help improve our hobby any way you can.

This month in April is time for us to make choices for the Ford Amateur Radio League. First, there is the choice to belong to our 51 year old organization, partially supported from our club dues. Second, we are to choose our Club officers for the rest of the 2007 calendar year into 2008. Third, we need to choose if we are going to participate in Field Day this year. Fourth, we need to choose the if, when, and where for a club celebration of our 50+ anniversary through a Special Event station. And fifth, we need to choose the rest of our club calendar for the year. Overall, participation in our club meetings continues to steadily drop. This appears to be the nature of a lot of club-social events. Our club is mainly operating through the efforts of a few individuals. I give a special thanks to the following:

- Bill, WA8HEA, for presentations and for taking on the club history, the current club newsletter, and past organization of events and Field Day.
- Pat, WD8JDZ, for being our Club Treasurer for as long as I remember, for organizing equipment for Field Day, and for organizing the amateur radio participation in Field Day.
- Bill, N8OZV, for being our representative to FERA, for continued Herculean fund raising for our club, and for printing and preparing our newsletter.
- Rusty, N8RGI, for his compilation of our club newsletters through the years.

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- Murray, KE8UM, for the continued care and feeding of our club 2m and 220 MHz repeaters, diligently restoring them to health and operation.
- Thanks to all who have organized events, performed fund raising, written and provided presentations, and otherwise participated in our events.

This month, we will be co-choosing our future. We will need to choose our club officers from among us. We will need to create our club presentations and projects from among us. We will need to choose our events and activities. Our club exists to serve us as an amateur radio community. Our active participation is what makes us a club. Please help choose in April who and what we are as our FARL club.

2007 Field Day: I have been in communication with Sharon Keller from the LARC, regarding Field Day. I informed her that both Bill, WA8HEA, and myself will not be available to participate and co-chair Field Day this year. She needs to know how many FARL club members are still interested in participating this coming year. Our club has been in the leadership in setting up the event during the past few years. I am not sure if the LARC will be able to staff the event without us. Please let me know if you are planning to participate. We would love a Chairperson from our club to organize the event. WA8HEA and myself have checklists and lessons learned from past operating to share. I will be thinking of Field Day as I am off to Grand Rapids to attend my cousin's wedding.

Club Special Event Station: We can choose to hold a 50+ anniversary special event station this year if we wish to. We thought this was our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a club, but then Bill, WA8HEA, found documents taking us back another full year to 1956. So, we are 50+ years in operation! The current thought during past club meetings is to hold the event during a single day in a public place. We need to work out the if, when, and where to hold this event, and lots of participation to make it work out. My personal two cents is a day during the weekend of Labor Day. There are lots of people out for picnics, the weather is often nice, and I have some time with my spouse off to visit her sister! Please think about some dates prior to the club meeting.

Conference call: We continue to have our club meetings on a club conference call. Please join us if you cannot make it in person. See the phone number and code in this newsletter.

Club License: I have just renewed our club license, K8UTT, for another 10 years, through 2017. It was due to expire in May.

Sunday Evening 2m Net: We had a total of 4 participants in the Sunday evening net on March 25<sup>th</sup>. It was an enjoyable discussion. We meet at 8pm on the Tin Lizzy. Please join us for a club chat!

73,  
Dave  
N8HKU  
FARL Club President

## FARL Minutes from March 8th, 2007

- The meeting was called to order by President Dave Treharne (N8HKU) at 7:09pm.
- The minutes of the February meeting, read by President Dave Treharne (N8HKU), were read and accepted. The motion was made by Pat, WD8JDZ, and seconded by Roger, KD8CSE.

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- The Treasurers Report from Pat Quinn (WD8JDZ) was read and approved. Motion was made by Bill, WA8HEA, and seconded by Roger, KD8CSE.
- Repeater report:
  - The 2 meter repeater is up and running
  - Dave, N8HKU, to contact Murray, KE8UM, about the status of the 220 MHz repeater.
- The website is up and running
- Thanks to Bill, WA8HEA, on getting the club newsletter out for March.
- Club 50+ celebration: Need to set a date during the April club meeting for a Special Event station and get it into QST. Recommend a one day event on a weekend.
- The upcoming year's club calendar was discussed. The AMSAT/OSCAR presentation is changed from tonight to the April club meeting.
- A new chair is required for Field Day this year. Dave, N8HKU, to contact the LARC about Field Day and about the Club Special Event station.
- A short break was taken and then a program was presented, by Dave Treharne, on the History of Radio. See Club Meetings on the club website for a link to the presentation.
- 2 members attended, and 3 retirees attended.
- The meeting was closed at 7:56 PM.

David Treharne, N8HKU, took the minutes for this meeting.

## MiQP For First-Timers

The Michigan QSO Party (MiQP) is an operating event held annually with Michigan as the center of attention. This article is a quick overview for those new to MiQP, to explain what it is and to offer encouragement to jump in and participate.

First of all, what is a "QSO party"? Over the years, this term has come to define an on-the-air operating event focusing on a particular geographic area. Amateurs inside the target area (in this case Michigan) earn points towards their QSO party score for making contacts with other amateurs located anywhere, while amateurs outside of the target area get QSO party points only for contacting amateurs inside the target area.

Perhaps the next question is: "Is the MiQP a contest?" Yes it is – the entrants are participating against one other and plaques/certificates are awarded after it is over. But don't let that scare you off - the MiQP is a lot less intense than other contests you might be familiar with, such as Sweepstakes, DX contests, or even Field Day. The bands are not as crowded as during those other events, and the operating style is a lot more relaxed. It's a great venue for a first-timer to get their feet wet.

Why might you want to participate in the MiQP? First of all, it's a great opportunity to hone your HF operating skills or work the bugs out of your HF station. MiQP can provide a concentrated dose of operating that will crack the rust off your CW ability or brush up on your phone operating techniques, skills that you can use in other on-the-air activities.

The fun thing about MiQP for Michigan amateurs is that we are the center of attention. When a Michigan station calls "CQ MIQP" there will usually be several replies. Many MiQP participants make several hundred contacts during the event, even with modest stations such as barefoot transceivers and dipoles. For many, there is a tangible feeling of camaraderie as you work fellow Michiganders, some located in sparsely populated counties with exotic names like Chippewa, Missaukee, or Presque Isle.

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What does it take to participate in the MiQP? All it takes is to get on the air during the MiQP period and make contacts with other participants. When it's over, mail in your log if you like so that it can be checked and your score included in the results; you may even win a certificate or plaque. If you include your radio club's name in your entry, then your score will be tabulated along with other member's scores in a separate sub-competition to determine the top Michigan club in the MiQP that year.

When does MiQP happen? MiQP occurs the third Saturday of April every year. For 2007, the starting date for MiQP is Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. The contest period begins at noon local time here in Michigan (1200 EDST or 1600Z) and runs to local midnight (2400 EDST or 0400Z on April 22<sup>nd</sup>). The contest period was deliberately chosen to be easy to fit into your weekend schedule – you can get up Saturday morning, get some chores or family activities done, and sit down for an afternoon or evening of operating.

Making MiQP QSOs is easy. You can operate on any of the “traditional” HF bands (i.e., no WARC bands) from 80 thru 10 meters. The exchange is your QSO number for that contact – i.e., the first is 001, the second 002, etc., plus your Michigan county. On CW, everyone uses the official county abbreviations from the list on the MiQP web site. Stations outside of Michigan will send their QSO number and state or province abbreviation.

Barring some sort of major propagation disturbance, you will find MiQP activity on 40M CW & SSB for the entire twelve hour contest period. This is a good band to get a mix of in-state and out-state coverage, plus it's popular with the mobile MiQP entries that move from county to county during the event. (Mobiles can be worked again when they change counties.) During the day there is usually good activity on 20M, and lesser amounts on 15M and 10M, depending on the solar cycle. Once darkness falls, there is a lot of MiQP activity on 80M.

Here's how your MiQP score is calculated. Each CW QSO is worth two QSO points while a phone QSO is worth one point. Your final score is equal to the QSO points you've accumulated multiplied by the number of multipliers (Michigan counties, non-Michigan states and Canadian provinces) you work. Multipliers are counted separately on **both** CW and phone. For example, if you work Washtenaw County (WASH) on both CW and phone, that's two multipliers.

As you start out in MiQP you might just want to make QSOs and have fun, but here are some suggestions to keep in mind which should increase your score. A station may be worked once on both CW and phone on each band, so try all five bands (and both CW and phone) to look for MiQP QSOs. The lower bands (80M & 40M) are usually better for in-state QSOs, and out-state QSOs out to 500 miles or so, but try the high bands (particularly 20M) to bolster your score with US states and Canadian provinces from out west. Also, while most people probably have a preferred mode they like to operate, because state and province multipliers are counted separately on CW and phone, in MiQP it's worth the effort to spend some time on the “other” mode to build up the multiplier count for a good score.

When MiQP is over, you have thirty days to submit your entry in order for it to count in the final results. (Note: If you make MiQP QSOs but don't send in a log, no harm is done; the people you worked still get credit for your QSO(s) with them.) Paper logs can be sent to: **Mad River Radio Club, c/o Dave Pruet, 2727 Harris Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48198**. Electronic log files (ASCII text only) can be e-mailed to [LOGS@miqp.org](mailto:LOGS@miqp.org).

What can you win for participating in MiQP? The Michigan winner in each majority category receives a beautiful 10” x 13” plaque, a total of eleven in all. The top single-operator score in each Michigan county making at least 50 QSOs wins a handsome certificate.

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To learn more about MiQP, check out the Michigan QSO Party web site at <http://www.miqp.org>. There you will find a wealth of information including complete rules, contest forms (summary, log, and multiplier count sheets), a list of county abbreviations, past MiQP results, operating tips and links to free logging software.

**By Dave Pruett, K8CC**  
**k8cc@comcast.net**

## Club Meeting Information

The Ford Amateur Radio Club meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, except for Christmas and the summer months (July & August). The meetings are held at 7 PM at the Ford Engine Manufacturing & Development Offices (EMDO) building. EMDO is located at 17000 Southfield Rd, Allen Park, MI, on the east side of Southfield just north of the Allen Park Municipal offices. Park in the front of the building and come to the front door near the flagpole. Knock on the door if no one is standing there to let you in.

Members who cannot make it to EMDO due to illness or other travel limitations may use a dial-in number (313-323-6737; passcode 19153130#) to participate in a conference call.

Meeting agendas start with club business items followed by a short break. Presentations on selected ham radio topics of interest are given after the break. Anyone wishing to present a topic can contact Dave Treharne (N8HKU) or Bill Brezina (WA8HEA).

## Club Repeater Information

The Ford Amateur Radio League operates 3 repeaters under the K8UTT call. The repeaters are located in the Dearborn, MI, area and are open for members and guests to operate. Phone line access is permitted to club members with touch tone dial capability and the auto patch code. The club operates a net on the 2 Meter repeater every Sunday evening at 8 PM local time. Please contact the following people if there is any problem with a repeater listed below:

<u>Band</u>	<u>Output</u>	<u>Input</u>	<u>PL Freq</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
2 Meters	145.270 Mhz	144.670 Mhz	100 Hz	Dave Treharne	734-476-1666
1.25 Meters	224.520 Mhz	222.920 Mhz	100 Hz	Murray Scott	248-734-1704
70 CM	443.425 Mhz	448.450 Mhz	107.2 Hz	Bob Krause	248-437-6634

## 2006-2007 Club Officers

Please contact any of the officers for information regarding the Ford Amateur Radio League, or go to the club website at [www.geocities.com/capecanaverall/hall/2183/](http://www.geocities.com/capecanaverall/hall/2183/) for current events and activities.

President	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666
Vice President	Bill Brezina	WA8HEA	313-563-2905
Treasurer	Pat Quinn	WD8JDZ	734-729-1993
Recording Secretary	Rod Deyo	K8SGL	734-595-7427
Repeater Chair	Murray Scott	KE8UM	248-743-1704
K8UTT Trustee	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666

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Just a reminder that final nominations and elections for the 2007-2008 club officers will take place at the April club meeting.

**The Ford Amateur Radio League  
PO Box 2711  
Dearborn, MI 48123**