

The Bolt

The Official Publication of the Ford Amateur Radio League

President's Note April 2009

Elections are here: We have our annual club elections this month. Please help us run our club by volunteering some time as an officer. Training is included, and we do have a lot of our club calendar already set up for this coming year. We need to take nominations and have our elections as our first item of business in April. We need a good club turnout to make sure we have a quorum in order to conduct business.

Thank you to last month's presenters! The club enjoyed the double presentation of unusual mobile amateur radio installations: Bicycle mobile and Marine mobile. Many thanks go out to Roger, KD8CSE, and Bill, N8OZV, for giving us these presentations. For the bicycle mobile, it was clever to see how a twin lead J-pole antenna could be attached to a bike flag stick to make a working VHF antenna. The J-pole antenna is certainly a higher gain device than the standard HT rubber ducky, making it much easier and more practical to make contacts on the local repeaters. The marine mobile set up confirmed what I have heard about fresh water radio operations, but had not had confirmed: that fresh water does not make for a very conductive ground plane. Bill described how the bottom of the boat can be covered in a grounding grid to provide a counterpoise for the wire antenna above. The challenge of keeping the ground plane intact in a humid environment was also interesting. Galvanic corrosion can render a set up inoperable pretty quickly. Salt water operations need a different approach with a connection to the salt water. As Bill pointed out, running an amateur radio out in a lake, on a sailboat, does have the advantage of getting away from urban noise sources very effectively!

My apologies for not getting the Bolt out last month ahead of the ARRL DX contest. I intended to get the newsletter out before the first weekend to remind everyone of this great opportunity to make contacts with the rest of the world. However, I neglected to tell Bill, N8OZV, of this, and he took my early submission as plenty of time to print and send it. For those of us who did manage to work the contest, there was fun to be had with the given propagation conditions. I did manage to work Europe, a bit of Africa, South America, and the Caribbean. The 20m band was working east-west, and the 15m band was working mostly north-south. There were some pretty good pileups, particularly on Saturday. By Sunday, some of us "smaller fish" could get a word in edgewise and make some contacts. I did try to work some poor chap in Britain who was calling CQ and answering no calls. All around him contacts were flying about, but he heard none of us. He kept plugging away, changing his CQ message a bit, but to no avail. Based on what I have done in the past, I did wonder if he was accidentally operating split, and was listening on a different frequency than he was transmitting on. Either that or he had the world's worst receiver, as his signal was strong into Michigan.

Field Day: Yes, with the coming of spring comes the reminder that Field Day is coming to us this June. John, N8AZT, from the LARC, chimed in during the morning drive last week to say hi and make an initial comment about Field Day. We have the ability to participate again as a joint club in Field Day operations this June 25th and 26th. Please begin thinking of your plans for these dates, and we can discuss how to do Field Day, what stations to run, and work on some improvements from last year.

73,

Dave
N8HKU
President

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Congratulations (again) to our newest Amateur!

Congratulations to club member Bernie Mitchell for earning his Technician class radio license on February 20th, as KD8KEO, then upgrading a few weeks later to his General class license!

Bernie's FT-990 transceiver and roof mounted R7 vertical were all ready to go when he got his license, but he had trouble contacting stations. Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, helped Bernie do some troubleshooting and after removing some guys from the antenna and checking it with an antenna analyzer, everything was working fine.

Last word was that Bernie was making DX contacts and is thinking about adding some hidden wire antennas to his DX arsenal. Anyone care to share their "stealth" antenna experiences? Hmm, might make a good club presentation.

Michigan QSO Party

The Michigan QSO Party (MiQP) will be held on Saturday, April 18 from 1200 EDST to 2400 EDST (1600Z Saturday until 0400Z Sunday UTC). Stations may operate the full twelve hours.

The general objective of the MiQP is for amateurs outside of Michigan to work Michigan stations specifically and for Michiganders to work anyone. The other objective for everyone is just to get on the air and have fun.

Anyone want to activate the K8UTT call? It could be a perfect time to send out some K8UTT Tin Lizzy Club QSL cards and help others qualify for the Tin Lizzy Award.

Information about MiQP is available at <http://www.miqp.org/> and includes the rules, a description of operating categories, bands to use, multiplier factors and operating tips.

2 M/70 CM J-Pole Antenna Project Update

Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, has the material cut and some of the elements ready for the 2 M/70 CM dual band J-poles. Al Habbal, W8AMH, came over to Bill's garage and spent some time threading the elements for the J-poles (thanks Al). Bill will have some of the antennas ready at the next club meeting and hopes to have all of them done shortly afterwards.

Bill and Al did a little testing of the prototype with 2 antenna analyzers and found the SWR on 2 meters is about 1.4:1 around 146 MHz and about 1.7:1 on 443 MHz when mounted on a 8 foot metal pipe at ground level. They tried a PVC pipe as well, and the SWR and resonant frequencies on both bands increased slightly. The elements have been threaded to allow some height adjustment for best SWR.

Bill did a little more experimenting and found the anodized surface of the aluminum used on the prototype antenna is non-conductive. It provides better surface finish, corrosion resistance and hardness for threading, but doesn't conduct well. The material used for the club antennas is the same (6061-T1) but not anodized. It is also less than half the price of the anodized material.

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It has been a fun project. We learned a lot about antenna materials, fabricating techniques, mounting and tuning the antenna. Our analysis says the antenna should work well on both bands. We haven't been able to take gain measurements, or do on-the-air A to B comparisons with other antennas, but they seem to work as advertised by Arrow (a commercial manufacturer of this antenna) and the antenna is very sturdy.

Six of the ten antennas are already spoken for so there are four left up for grabs. They will cost about \$20 each. Contact Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, at wbrezina@att.net or call him at 313-563-2905 if you are interested in an antenna.

FARL Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2009

Minutes recorded by Roger Reini, KD8CSE, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: At 7:17 PM by President Dave, N8HKU. The start of the meeting was delayed some 15 minutes due to building access problems. There were 11 members present at the start, with 2 more arriving late for 13 total attendees.

CONGRATULATIONS: to Bernie Mitchell, who passed his Technician exam and is now KD8KEO. He is planning to take the General exam on March 14.

MINUTES: Minutes were read and approved.

TREASURER: Bill, WA8HEA, could not attend tonight, so he had given the report to Dave, N8HKU, who forgot it at home. But the club balance was sound, with the only expenses being a table for the LARC swap and for the phone.

UPCOMING SWAPS: Marshall on March 14 and Toledo on March 15. There was no interest in obtaining a club table for the Toledo swap.

CLUB ELECTIONS: Officers are up for election at the April meeting; be thinking about whom you would like to nominate.

DUES: Dues are due next month (April); they are \$15.

NEWSLETTER MAILING PROBLEM: Mike, K8ZLG, brought his copy of the newsletter; it consisted of only the cover page, the rest having disappeared somewhere in the mail. Bill, N8OZV, who takes the newsletters to the mailer, promised to check into it.

SKYWARN TRAINING: The agenda showed 5 more upcoming sessions in the Detroit and Ann Arbor areas through May.

REPEATER: No problems with its operation; Dave, N8HKU, still has phone patch instruction cards.

CLASSES: Bill, N8OZV, said classes will be starting at Ford in April; full details will be in the April Bolt. They'll be held once a week for 5 or 6 weeks.

NEWSLETTER EDITING: Bill, WA8HEA, will handle the April newsletter; volunteers for the May newsletter are welcomed.

WEBSITE: www.k8utt.org is the new URL. The website content appeared to have been corrupted in an attempt to get Front Page to do the uploading; Dave, N8HKU, planned to restore the website content [he did so on the 14th].

J-POLE PROJECT: Bill, WA8HEA, is still taking orders for the parts for the aluminum J-pole he described at last month's meeting.

CPR TRAINING: Pat, WD8JDZ, had not had a chance to contact his planned provider for CPR refresher training. May, September and October were better dates for scheduling in a meeting.

CALENDAR: the calendar for the year is filled through the summer break, but presentations are needed afterwards.

MEETING TIME CHANGE DURING WINTER: Mike, K8ZLG, suggested that the meeting time for the meetings during winter – November, January and February – be moved one hour earlier to 6 PM. That would allow the attendees to arrive during the last few minutes of daylight. Dave,

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N8HKU, noted that everyone would have to remember to arrive earlier. No action was taken on the suggestion.

MEETING LOCATION: the difficulty in gaining entrance to the EMDO building might become more regular if it turns out that after-hours access to the building is being limited. The attendees discussed possible locations if it should prove necessary to find one. Locations mentioned included the atrium between buildings 1 and 2 and a conference room at FMCC. For now, the meeting location will remain at EMDO.

BREAK: at 7:42 PM.

BICYCLE MOBILE: Roger, KD8CSE, gave a presentation about operating bicycle mobile. He brought his bike along; it had a twin-lead rollup J-pole antenna taped to the mast of a bicycle safety flag, which he connected to his HT and then succeeded in contacting the repeater while pedaling around the room, thus he was literally operating bike mobile during the meeting. The presentation included pictures taken at last year's Hamvention forum for the Bicycle Mobile Ham Association (BMHA). The presentation is available on the club website.

MARINE AND MARITIME MOBILE: Bill, N8OZV, gave a presentation about operating marine and maritime mobile (marine mobile is fresh water, while maritime mobile is salt water). He did not bring a boat with him, but he spoke in depth about the legalities of operating marine and amateur radios in a boat and especially in the Great Lakes. He also gave several pointers about installation of marine setups, noting some similarities with car mobile installations. One major complication of operating in fresh water: the lack of a suitable ground plane. 100 square feet of ground plane is needed to have acceptable HF performance; this can be achieved with phosphated bronze window screening that is laminated into the deck or the hull. But beware of the problems associated with dissimilar metal corrosion! To reduce this, use capacitors throughout the boat to isolate the ground plane from other metallic components. He also recommended the use of an isolation transformer to guard against strange electrical hookups at other docks and ports. Antennas on powerboats are similar to ones on car mobile use; for sailboats, a popular antenna makes use of the back stay.

ADJOURN: 8:38 PM.

Club Repeater Information

The Ford Amateur Radio League operates 3 club repeaters under the club K8UTT license. All the repeaters are located in the Dearborn, MI area near the Southfield Freeway. All repeaters are open for members and guests to operate.

Repeater	Output Freq	Input Freq	Tone
2 M Repeater	145.270	-600 KHz	100 Hz PL
1 1/4 M Repeater	224.520	-1.6 MHz	100 Hz PL
70 cm Repeater	443.425	+5 MHz	107.2 PL

Club Net: 8pm on Sunday, 2 and 1-1/4 meter repeaters!

Ham Radio Swaps and Conventions

The Milford Amateur Radio Club has graciously donated a club table to the Tin Lizzy Club for their Saturday, April 18th Swap at the Milford High School. Anyone who wants to sell some equipment can bring it to the swap and place it on the club table. Please be sure to bring some labels or tags to identify who it belongs to and how much you are asking for the equipment. Also include some minimum value if your asking price is negotiable. Don't forget the instruction books if you have them. Support your local Hamfests!

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The Dayton Hamvention is just around the corner (May 15-17th). Make your plans now if you want to attend since the tickets cost less if you buy them in advance. It can also be difficult to get rooms in the area, especially if another event is going on at the same time. Dayton is arguably the world's largest ham radio convention and always has interesting forums, lots of activities, all the major equipment vendors and a huge flea market. The flea market alone is worth the trip. Go to <http://www.hamvention.org/> for more information about the Dayton Hamvention.

If you don't want to drive down or spend the night, the ARROW (Ann Arbor Radio) club has a bus or two that will take you down and back in one (long) day. It is great way to travel with a bunch of fellow hams and relax during the trip. Contact ARROW through their website at <http://www.w8pgw.org/>. Tickets are limited and they expect to sell out.

Mark your calendars for the Great Lakes Division Ham Radio Convention on Saturday, Sept. 12th (the day before the Findlay Hamfest). The Findlay Radio Club is again sponsoring the event and the convention organizers are looking for people to present topics of interest for the forums. The latest "Weaver's Words" e-mail provides much greater detail than I can cover here. I will see if we can either forward the e-mail to club members or have some copies available at the club meeting. This has been a really good hamfest and the convention provides opportunities to get more information and ask questions about your favorite ham radio activities. For more information about the Findlay hamfest and Great Lakes convention, go to <http://www.findlayradioclub.org/>.

Ham Gear for Sale!

No, I don't have any ham gear for sale at the moment, but you might. Or you might know someone who does. There are many ways to sell ham gear. Local hamfests are great because you get to see the equipment, talk to the owner and get out of the house for a while. Radio club "cork boards" that may be posted in their newsletters or websites are also good ways to make contact with a potential local buyer or seller.

There are several classified sections in e-ham, QRZ, QTH and other amateur radio focused internet websites. Then there is always an e-bay or similar on-line auction site. Not everyone has access to these on-line, web based services or may be concerned about using them and boxing and shipping equipment to a prospective buyer.

I am offering my assistance to help sell Tin Lizzy Club member's ham radio equipment and I am hoping I can solicit other club members to aid me. First, I will put together a "cork board" for both the Bolt and the club website and will update it as equipment is added or sold. All I need is a list of equipment you wish to sell and contact information (e-mail address, phone number, etc.). Prices are optional.

Second, you can contact me, Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, if would like to sell some equipment at any local swap but cannot attend. I go to most of the local hamfests and I will coordinate pickup of the equipment and help sell it at the swap. All equipment not sold will be returned. Please include the asking price, a minimum price, operating condition when last used, and telephone contact information. I may not be able to take all equipment if I have a full vehicle.

I'm not sure what kind of response I will get with either assistance to help with this project or items people want to sell, but I will give it a try and offer my help as long as it remains manageable. There will be no charge for any of this.

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Club Officer Elections at the April Meeting

We are looking for your nominations for club officers. The election of new officers will take place at the April meeting and nominations will be accepted up to the time of elections. Please contact Dave Treharne, N8HKU, if you would like to nominate a person for any club office. A list of current officers is shown on the back cover of this newsletter and at the K8UTT club website. Remember: a person must accept a nomination to be voted into an office.

It is also important to attend the April meeting to vote on the officers. Our by-laws require a quorum to hold the elections, so we need both your vote and your input. The meeting provides a forum to talk to the nominees if you have any questions and discuss the future direction of the club. Please plan on attending.

Detroit Children's Museum Radio Station Update

We now have 2 radio operators, Laura (KD8KNY) and Bill (KD8KCQ) at the Detroit Children's Museum, and Bill just upgraded to his General class license! The Icom IC-7000 is fully operational on all bands with both the AH-4 antenna tuner connected to a 25 foot long wire and the dual band vertical for 2 M and 70 CM. The TS-2000 still needs the B&W folded dipole installed on the roof to be operational on HF.

A laptop was added to the station equipment and the TS-2000 is running Ham Radio Deluxe and Digital Master 780 software for controlling the transceiver and operating the digital modes (PSK, RTTY, Olivia, etc.). Laura and Bill were also introduced to the Orbitron software to locate and track ham radio satellites. They would like to schedule an ARISS contact in the future. Echolink was installed on the station laptop, however, the DPS firewall currently prevents making an Internet connection.

Ham Radio Class and License Study

Bill Boyke, N8OZV, is making an "Introduction to Amateur Radio" presentation at the Ford Engineer & Research Center on Thursday, April 23rd, from 11:30 to 12:30 in the Atrium Conference Room (1GG099). The Atrium is in-between Buildings 1 and 2, located at the northeast corner of Oakwood and Rotunda roads. You can enter the Atrium through the front lobby doors and parking (available in the corner lot) is accessible from either Oakwood or Rotunda. The conference room holds up to 20 people so seating is first come, first served.

If there is sufficient interest, a training class for the first level of amateur radio licensing will be held at the same time and location on following Thursdays with an in-house licensing exam proposed for May 21st. Please contact Bill Boyke at 313-805-8877 (cell) or wboyke@ford.com for additional information about this ham radio presentation and getting your Technician license.

Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, is currently studying with another ham for their Extra class licenses and would like to know if there are other hams interested in upgrading. He is using the Gordon West Study Guide as well as the ARRL Extra class (Element 4) pool questions. They are also taking the AA9PW and QRZ on-line tests to monitor their progress. Please contact Bill Brezina at 313-563-2905 (home) or wbrezina@att.net if you would like to join the study group.

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Tin Lizzy Club Calendar – 2009

April	9 th : Club meeting: EchoLink, W8AMH 18 th : Milford Amateur Radio Swap: we have a Club table
May	14 th : Emergency Communications 15 th -17 th : Dayton Hamvention
June	11 th : Club meeting: Preparation for Field Day 27-28 th : Field Day
July & August	No club meetings but activities may be scheduled
September	10 th : Micro controllers, N8OZV 19 th : Celebration of Cycling
October	8 th : Digital Communications: Kenwood Sky command: WA8HEA.

2009 Club Dues

Just a reminder: the annual club dues (\$15) are to be paid in April. The club dues are an important part of our club income and entitle you to the privileges of being a Tin Lizzy Club member. These include the club newsletter, special presentations on ham radio topics, updates on ham radio events and opportunities to participate in ham radio activities and social functions.

You can pay your dues by cash or check (made out to FARL) at a club meeting or send them to: FARL, PO Box 2711, Dearborn, MI 48123. Your newsletter mailing label indicates your dues status. Please contact Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, at wbrezina@att.net, or 313-563-2905, if you have any questions regarding club dues.

New member dues are \$20 the first year and include the cost of the Tin Lizzy Club name badge. Additional or replacement name badges can be ordered by contacting Bill.

Old Dog, New Tricks -- Young Dog, New Tricks

"Nobody is ever too old to stop learning. Exercising the mind as well as the body keeps us healthy. An operator who cut his teeth with Hartley oscillators and vacuum tubes can still master basic computer skills if they approach it with an open mind and the material is presented in comprehensible modules.

Finally a club can develop a pool of people who are knowledgeable about different topics. Some clubs publish an "Elmer List" in the club newsletter or on their website. People requiring help can contact the expert and ask their question. Experience is a good teacher and an experienced person is a good mentor." *Reprinted from the ARRL Club Newsletter, dated March 31, 2009.*

I've seen some of the Club websites that have a list of Elmers who volunteer to help coach, mentor, or otherwise assist other hams, or would-be hams, get licensed or solve some problem. I personally like the idea and would like to put together a list of Tin Lizzy Club Elmers. Please contact Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, if you would like to get on the list.

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2008-2009 Club Officers

Please contact any of the officers for information regarding the Ford Amateur Radio League, or go to the club website at www.k8utt.org for current events and activities.

President	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666
Vice President	Pat Quinn	WD8JDZ	734-729-1993
Treasurer	Bill Brezina	WA8HEA	313-563-2905
Secretary	Roger Reini	KD8CSE	734-728-1509
Repeater Chair	Murray Scott	KE8UM	248-743-1704
K8UTT Trustee	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666
Activity Chair	Bill Boyke	N8OZV	313-805-8877

Club Meetings

The Ford Amateur Radio Club meets the 2nd 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 (located at 17000 Southfield Rd, Allen Park, MI) is south of I-94 on the east side of Southfield just north of the Allen Park Municipal offices. Park in the front of the building and come into the main lobby at the side. Knock on the inside door on the right if no one is standing there to let you in.

Next Club Meeting: April 9th at 7:00 PM
Officer Elections and Echolink presentation by W8AMH

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