

The Bolt

The Official Publication of the Ford Amateur Radio League

President's Note: November, 2008

It is time to check those antenna installations: I have heard of several hams who have been working on their antenna installations before the weather gets too cold. Now is a very good time to get everything up in the air and checked. It is no fun trying to work on antennas when a cold, driving rain is coming down. I have checked the guy wires on my G5RV ends and have tightened everything up for the inevitable heavy winds and freezing conditions that can only equate to a Michigan Winter.

This is also a good time to get the antennas ready for the ARRL Sweepstakes operating contests coming in November. These are some of my favorite contests, and I hope to work both the CW and phone contests this year. The CW contest is the first weekend of November, and the voice contest is the weekend of the 15th. I hope to hear you on the bands!

I hope that you enjoyed last month's presentation on Ham Radio Deluxe. Many thanks to Al (W8AMH) for presenting it to the club. While I was not at the October club meeting, I did look up the software and have loaded the Digital Master Software program to check out on my system, as opposed to the MixW that I currently use. While I love the concept of MixW, I keep having problems with it working properly, so I am open to a change if it is beneficial.

Welcome to Sunspot Cycle 24. We have been getting official Cycle 24 sunspots now. Not many, not long lasting, but they are present, after a summer of very quiet solar activity. As I had presented to the club back in April 2007, the sunspots for the new cycle appear north and south of the Sun's equator, and the sunspots move toward the equator as the cycle moves on. These new sunspots are certainly part of the new cycle. The other good news about sunspots is that they tend to rise to their peak early in the cycle, before the midpoint, and then gradually decrease. I remember working Australia from my trap dipole in my condo attic a number of years ago. It would be nice to hear such signals again in a few years. The Sun and Propagation presentation is available on the club website under Activity Reports, Presentations.

Finally, many thanks to Al (W8AMH) for putting together the November Bolt. Please volunteer to edit the Bolt for a month or two. Many hands make light work!

73,
Dave, N8HKU
FARL Club President

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THE "DOCTOR IS IN" THE ARRL LETTER

(Information used taken from the ARRL newsletter)

This week, ARRL Letter readers are in luck! The ARRL's very own Doctor, author of the popular QST column "The Doctor Is IN," answers a question from his mailbag:

Jim Kueck, KC9LMO, of Long Grove, Illinois, asks: I greatly enjoyed the article about feeding a dipole with low loss balanced line in July 2008 QST. I have put up a half wave 40 meter dipole fed with 300 Ohm twin lead, with an antenna tuner at the radio. This \$15 antenna has worked very well on 40 and 20 meters, with many European contacts logged using just 100 W.

Is there any concern about having RF in the shack with the twinlead as a feed line? I have read that a long wire antenna can pose this problem and want to be sure that I'm not slow cooking myself with this feed line going right in back of my operating position.

The Doctor Answers -- The short answer is no, but the long answer is longer! If the dipole is fed in the center, the two sides are at the same height and the transmission line is perpendicular to the antenna, the currents on the two sides of the balanced transmission line will be equal and opposite and there is virtually no radiation outside of an imaginary tube a few times the wire spacing around the wires.

If all of those conditions are not met, there may be some radiation from the line, but it will generally be a small portion of the total signal. Note that if you were to feed the dipole with coax, if you didn't have a balun at the antenna, the current on the outside of the shield would likely be higher than that from a not quite balanced dipole fed with balanced line. Note also that the pickup on a transmission line that is not perpendicular to the antenna would be about the same on coax as balanced line.

So my conclusion is that balanced line and coax are about the same in this regard, as long as you stay more than a few inches from the line -- it can have high RF voltage in places. If you notice effects of large common mode currents on you feed line -- typically a hot chassis or RF feedback -- you will want to address them for many reasons, but even then I have trouble imagining an RF safety issue especially at the 100 W level.

One caution worth mentioning is that twinlead may be more susceptible to picking up RFI as it works its way to the tuner. Make sure you keep it as far as possible from your PC or other potential RFI generators.

Do you have a question or a problem? Send your questions via e-mail doctor@arrl.org; or to "The Doctor," ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111 (no phone calls, please). Look for "The Doctor Is IN" every month in QST, the official journal of the ARRL.

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GET READY FOR THE ARRL NOVEMBER SWEEPSTAKES

(Information used taken from the ARRL newsletter)

This year marks the 75th running of the premier domestic contest, the ARRL CW Sweepstakes <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/novss.html>>. According to ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, the event started back in 1929 as a competition for handling formal traffic messages and is one of the oldest traditions in Amateur Radio. "The contest exchange contains more elements than usual, an homage to the traffic-handling days of yore," he said. "If you have never participated in Sweepstakes, you are really missing out on some serious fun! A complete primer by ARRL Contributing Editor H. Ward Silver, N0AX, on how to participate in Sweepstakes can be found in the Radiosport supplement in the October 2008 issue of QST."

Kutzko said that since 2008 is the 75th running of Sweepstakes, ARRL is anticipating record levels of participation and many prizes will be available for those who participate: "We'll have a special magnet that will be sent free to all stations that submit a log with 75 of the 80 ARRL and RAC Sections worked. As in previous years, those who submit logs with at least 100 contacts will be able to purchase Participation Pins."

The major challenge in Sweepstakes is to work all 80 ARRL/RAC Sections; this is known as a "Clean Sweep." "This year, we will be awarding a Clean Sweep whisk broom to all stations that make a Clean Sweep," Kutzko said. "Brooms were last available in 1983, the 50th running of Sweepstakes. In addition to the free brooms, Clean Sweep coffee mugs will also be available for purchase. This year's mug will be fine etched glass and will truly be a collector's item."

Thanks to ICOM America <<http://www.icomamerica.com/>>, the Principal Award Sponsor of the November Sweepstakes, certificates will be awarded for first place in each of the 80 ARRL/RAC Sections for all six entry categories; plaques will be available to the overall winners in each entry category, as well as the winners in each Division. "ICOM has provided plaques and certificates for Sweepstakes winners since 2005, and we are grateful for their support over the years," Kutzko said.

"Certain Sections are always rare for Sweepstakes, especially on CW," Kutzko pointed out. "VY0/VY1/VE8 (Northern Territories), VE1-VE9-VY2 (Maritimes), VE2 (Quebec), VE4 (Manitoba), VE5 (Saskatchewan), VO1-VO2 (Newfoundland-Labrador), Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming always seem to be highly sought after. If you live in one of these places (or want to travel there), this is a golden opportunity for you to be the 'rare DX.' Stations in these Sections get to hear 'Thanks for the Sweep!' more than once during the weekend. Even if your CW is rusty or your station is modest, your effort to put a rare Section on the air during CW Sweepstakes will be appreciated by every single station that works you."

Whether you want to go for a Top 10 finish, or simply get on the air to hand out a few QSOs or work on your Worked All States Award (WAS) <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/was/>>, Kutzko said the November CW Sweepstakes is guaranteed fun and excitement. Be sure to check out the complete rules and entry forms. Come be a part of one of Amateur Radio's finest traditions <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/novss.html>>.

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ARRL News Brief

(Information used taken from the ARRL newsletter)

* ARRL Continuing Education Course Registration: Registration remains open through Sunday, November 9, 2008, for these online course sessions beginning on Friday, November 21, 2008: Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 2 (EC-002); Antenna Modeling (EC-004); HF Digital Communications (EC-005); VHF/UHF -- Life Beyond the Repeater (EC-008), and Radio Frequency Propagation (EC-011). Each online course has been developed in segments -- learning units with objectives, informative text, student activities and quizzes. Courses are interactive, and some include direct communications with a Mentor/Instructor. Students

register for a particular session that may be 8, 12 or 16 weeks (depending on the course) and they may access the course at any time of day during the course period, completing lessons and activities at times convenient for their personal schedule. Mentors assist students by answering questions, reviewing assignments and activities, as well as providing helpful feedback. Interaction with mentors is conducted through email; there is no appointed time the student must be present -- allowing complete flexibility for the student to work when and where it is convenient. To learn more, visit the CCE Course Listing page <http://www.arrl.org/cep/student> or contact the Continuing Education Program Coordinator cep@arrl.org.

* Third Annual ARRL On-Line Auction Begins: The Third Annual ARRL On-Line Auction kicked off Thursday, October 23 <http://www.arrl.org/auction>. With almost 200 items up for bid, this event promises to have something for just about everyone. This year's auction will again include many transceivers and other items, including items that have appeared in the QST Product Review column, and have thus been thoroughly tested by the ARRL Lab. According to ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B, "Last year's online auction -- our second -- proved to be a successful and enjoyable event for both hams and ARRL staff members alike. When the bidding ended, we realized that we had sold 162 items and sold just over \$50,000 worth of merchandise." Proceeds from the auction benefit ARRL education programs including activities to license new hams, strengthen Amateur Radio's emergency service training, offer continuing technical and operating education, as well as create instructional materials. The auction runs through Friday, October 31 on the ARRL Web site.

For Sale

- Kenwood TS-570 - HF
- Kenwood TM-231A – 2M
- Kenwood SP-820 – Speaker
- Ameritron AL811 H – Amp

Contact Bill WD8IWQ @ 561-4199

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Tin Lizzy Club Calendar

Please contact Dave (N8HKU) with any additions or suggestions for the Calendar

November	08	<i>Livonia ARC Special events Station W8F</i> The Livonia ARC is operating special event station W8F on November 8 from 1500-2000 UTC to commemorate the loss of the Edmund Fitzgerald in 1975. Planned frequencies are (in kHz) 28400, 28200, 7250, 7125 CW SSB 10 15 20 40 and 80m as conditions permit. There will be a certificate. More info is at the LARC website, www.livoniaarc.com
	13	<i>FARL Club Meeting, EMDO, 7:00PM</i> <i>Presentation: "Radio Comm6" Software for radio Control WA8HEA</i>
December	07	L'Anse Creuse Swap, Mt. Clemens, MI www.n8lc.org
	11	<i>FARL Club Meeting, EMDO, 7 PM</i> (FARL Christmas Party)
	TBD	Speaking With Santa, Mott Children Hospital

Suggested presentation topics:

- FIRST Robotics (WA8HEA)
- Bicycle Mobile (KD8CSE): Spring, 2009
- Micro controllers, N8OZV
- Marine Amateur Radio N8OZV
- Digital Voice on HF: Need volunteer presenter.
- Sky Command and/or D-Link: Need volunteer presenter.
- Fox Hunting techniques: Need volunteer presenter.
- Mobile Installation
- Software defined radio

Please suggest more topics for our club meetings!

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FARL MEETING MINUTES, October 9, 2008

Minutes recorded by Roger Reini, KD8CSE, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 7:08 PM by Treasurer Bill, WA8HEA, in the absence of both the president and vice-president. There were 12 attendees, 11 members and one guest (John, N3JM).

MINUTES: The minutes from the September meeting were read and approved.

TREASURER: The treasurer's report was read and approved. The only expenditure in the last month was for the phone line for the repeater (used to remotely control the repeater and to support phone patch capability).

BOARD: No board meeting since the September meeting.

REPEATER: Instructions for using the phone patch are available from Dave, N8HKU; they are for members only. No formal report from Murray; no known problems with any of the repeaters.

EDUCATION/TRAINING: Classes at Ford – Bill, N8OZV, will be holding Technician classes near the Buildings 1-2 atrium; the exact date will be known after the FERA-wide announcement goes out. Other classes – Al, W8AMH, is working with a Scout troop to give them training for merit badges and asked for assistance from the membership; 4 members volunteered to assist as needed. Garden City's classes started this week; for more information, contact Shannon, KA8SPW (ka8spw at sbcglobal dot net). Testing and VE's – John, N3JM, mentioned that he's an accredited VE and is willing to assist with any future testing sessions we may have.

NEWSLETTER: Need a volunteer to compile the November newsletter; Al, W8AMH, volunteered.

WEBSITE: Roger, KD8CSE, mentioned difficulty in grabbing all of the content from the existing website for transfer to his website, which will become the new host. Bill, N8OZV, mentioned some Firefox plug-ins that can grab all of the content from a website. Subsequent to the meeting, Roger found a utility that would grab the content.

PEAC RIDE FOLLOW-UP: This month's newsletter had comments from president Dave, N8HKU, on his impressions of our support of the PEAC bike ride. Bill, WA8HEA, added his comments, saying it went well and thanking everyone who participated, including main net control operator Roger, KD8CSE, who filled in for vice-president Pat, WD8JDZ, who was out of town that day. Roger added his thanks to Bill, Rod, K8SGL, and to all others who participated.

FREE PRESS MARATHON: the race will be in 10 days, which is Sunday, October 19. Anyone wishing to volunteer for radio support should contact Shannon, KA8SPW (ka8spw at sbcglobal dot net). Time for support is 6:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

CLUB CALENDAR: Bill, WA8HEA, will present next month on RadioCom 6, a commercial transceiver control program, and is planning a future presentation on Kenwood's Sky Command system, which allows remote control of a Kenwood HF rig from a Kenwood HT. Other suggested topics were CW Skimmer and APRS.

CLUB DINNER: The four proposed locations for this year's Christmas dinner (scheduled for December 11 in lieu of a regular club meeting) were Richter's Chalet, Mexican Fiesta, Amantea, and Malley's at Allen Road and Northline. Bill, WA8HEA, will check if they would be able to handle our group on that date and will report back.

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PRESENTATION: Al, W8AMH, gave a presentation on Ham Radio Deluxe, a popular Windows freeware program for controlling transceivers. It can be downloaded at <http://www.ham-radio-deluxe.com/>. It has built-in support for several popular transceivers (Elecraft, FlexRadio, Icom, Kenwood, Ten-Tec, Yaesu), logbook capability, the ability to monitor DX clusters, customizable band layouts, satellite tracking interfaces, and more. The associated DM 870 program handles digital modes, and the associated Mapper program allows one to determine antenna bearings, show the terminator for gray line action, etc. And best of all, it is free (donations accepted).

ANNOUNCEMENTS: ISS – Roger, KD8CSE, mentioned that the ISS would soon (Oct. 12) be visited by private astronaut Richard Garriott, W5KWQ and the son of retired astronaut Owen Garriott, W5LFL. Richard plans to make several QSO's and transmit SSTV images during his time on the station. Gear for sale – Bill, N8OZV, has several pieces of equipment for sale: Kenwood TS570 HF transceiver, TM231 2m transceiver, SP80 speaker, and Ameritron AL811H 800 watt linear amplifier. Contact him at 561-4199.

ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

FARL 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.

FARL Christmas Dinner

We have suggestions for Richter's Chalet, Mexican Fiesta, Amantea, and Malley's to date. Bill, WA8HEA, will check if they would be able to handle our group on that date and will report back during the November meeting, stay tuned.

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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.geocities.com/capecanaveral/hall/2183/ 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

Next Club Meeting: Thursday, November 13th @ 7:00PM
Presentation: "Radio Comm6" Software for radio Control
Bill (WA8HEA)

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