

The Bolt

The Official Publication of the Ford Amateur Radio League

President's Note: October, 2008

A big Thank You to all who participated in the PEAC bike ride last month. The weather was excellent for the ride, possibly the best conditions I have seen it since I began volunteering in 2001. As Pat (WD8JDZ) was "vacationing" at the Civitan convention in Michigan City, Indiana, Roger (KD8CSE) took lead for the organization and net control. We had a few flat tires, a couple of tired riders, and some of the normal food issues, but everyone stayed healthy and we needed no trips to the hospital. This event is a good time to practice our community service skills and net operation skills. Here are some observations I had on what went well and some ideas for improvement:

Right:

- We had every rest stop covered, plus a couple of sag wagons
- We had good, strong communication back to the Warrendale base. The high mounted antenna and the higher power radio really kept the communication working well. We have had issues with this in the past.
- We had a second operator at the base at times, making it easier to reach the base. Base is the most important station during the activity, so it is important to be able to reach them.
- The host repeater had good coverage, and we could reach the repeater via vehicle mounted antennas.

Improvements:

- More use of tactical call signs would be good. Each rest or lunch stop had a name, and it was easier to relate to the stops by name instead of the call sign of who was operating. We had several instances of the base asking for a call sign repeat instead of a tactical name.
- A few more sag wagons might have worked. Passing supplies between stops via the wagons would be easier with more vehicles.
- Operation from the rest/lunch stops needs to be with mobile gear. Multiple rest/lunch stops were not reachable during times because the handtalkie did not receive well enough. Recommend that the amateur vehicles be parked right next to the rest tables, with external speakers, so the amateur can hear all the traffic all the time. We do not want to call someone on the cell phone to reach them via radio.
- Better training on the aspect of the repeater: The multiple receiver set up of the I-94 repeater seemed to take a vote for the first second a communication was started. The first syllable or word of the start of a communication was often cut off with this approach, particularly if the repeater was being keyed up from the off state. This caused the net control to not hear the call signs or introductions correctly. Perhaps a pause after keying up before speaking would make the communications more effective.

Thank you again to all who participated in the event. The PEAC people really appreciate our service, and the bike riders like knowing we are there to help them if needed.

October Club Meeting: We will have Bill (WA8HEA) running the October club meeting instead of myself. I may be able to show up late, but I need to take my wife to the airport that evening. We have a swap in presentations this month. We had Bill (WA8HEA) set up to discuss RadioComm software. However, Bill has talked Al (W8AMH) into giving his presentation on Ham Radio Deluxe this month instead, and Bill will give his presentation in November. Ham Radio Deluxe is free software, so it may be a good baseline to start from. RadioComm is purchased software. At the

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end of the November presentation, we may have a good comparison between the two, and find out if the money for the commercial software is worth it!

ARRL Vice Director Election: Please remember to vote for the ARRL Vice Director for the Great Lakes division if you are an ARRL member. It is nice to see a slate of 3 good, qualified candidates running for the position. I have already filled out my vote and sent it in. Those things have a tendency to get buried otherwise.

I am looking forward to operating some contests this fall and winter. My outdoor activities are starting to be limited, now that the weather is cooling off, and the days are getting shorter. The call of the various summer activities have been keeping me out of the shack for the most part. However, I have enjoyed making CW, digital, and voice contacts recently. My voice contact was with a ham in south east Minnesota. He was encouraging me to get my beam up on my roof, stating I will be amazed at the difference a beam makes. Perhaps a few more sunspots will encourage me as well, as the beam is a 10m-20m system. My digital contact was with Costa Rica, a retired Chemical engineer. I found out a lot about the imported auto market there when I mentioned that my day job is with Ford. He hopes to see more hybrid vehicles down there as well.

73,
Dave
N8HKU
FARL Club President

Field Day Summary from the 2008 FARL/LARC Field Day Chair John, K8AZT

2008 FARL/LARC Field Day Assessment (How did we do?/What can we do better?)

Thanks to all for efforts put forth. I want to especially thank those who did the grunt work to make our FD operation successful. Total score for the club was 4258 points. Great job by all.

As FD chair I want to express special thanks to:

1. The FARL for all their efforts – setting up SSB station and operation
 - a. Bill Brezina who helped with organization and site planning
 - b. Dave Treharne who worked with Bill to setup the networked logging computers and is analyzing the logs and preparing them for submission

2. LARC subcommittee chairmen/women who supported the effort
 - a. Food – Doris & Sharon
 - b. GOTA – Fred Deschenes
 - c. CW – Mike Rudzki
 - d. Tents – Tas Foley
 - e. Traffic to SM , Tables/chairs – Dave Randal
 - f. Publicity & postcards – Tom Melnick & Lynette Rudzki

3. All the operators – great job

Things gone right:

- Food

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- Insect control (freshest breath mosquitoes in Livonia)
- Great job getting word out to community – post cards
- Getting publicity in Detroit News and Observer
- Setting up stations & antennas (except for GOTA)
- Wire antennas for CW & Phone stations
- Minimal interference between CW, Phone, & GOTA stations – bandpass filters
- Infrastructure – tables, chairs, tents
- Experienced amateurs pitching in to help at GOTA station
- Setup & take down support & coordination
- Networked logging program – allowed CW station to work 10M phone w/o any issues
- Good initial contact with local Homeland Security Team (Livonia)
- Great cooperation between FARL & LARC members
- Great literature table
- Some great photos of the setup, operation, and tear down
- Band conditions were pretty good for low ebb of sunspot cycle

Things to improve on:

- Training sessions were prepared, but failed to implement
- Need to better coordinate photographic documentation of all special activities – need to make a list of what pictures should be taken for documentation (e.g. - QRP – Solar/Battery power station)
- Traffic handling
 - Organize and have traffic prepared and sent prior to FD proper so traffic could be delivered at FD site during contest
- Stress safety more during setup, operation, and tear down – safety officer appointed
- Need better shelter capability for wet/foul weather – tents were not waterproof. Needed sufficient tarps to protect against vertical & horizontal rain
- Before operation begins, operators should be trained on rigs being used at respective stations. When stations are handed off to new operators, there should be overlap time to make sure new ops feel comfortable with the stations. – rig and station operators manuals should be posted at each station.
- At least 2 people should man each station all the time. One person should not have to operate and log simultaneously
- Should be signs posted on each station's tent to show which bands are currently being operated
- Better training on operating techniques. – club meeting prior to FD there should be review of Mad River Radio Club Sweepstakes Handbook
- Convince Livonia Homeland Security organization that we should setup an alternative EOC at Firestation #2 giving us bonus points for operating from an EOC
- Better organized effort to support satellite comms
- No youth operators. (There has to be a few teen hams around that would love to get on the air for FD)
- Setup VHF station – possibly in fire tower with antenna on top. If beam is used, Armstrong rotator? to keep setup minimal
- Reportedly someone jumped the gun when starting the contest – better coordination & control
- Consider portable shelter for generator in case existing “box” is not available in future
- FD station books (sign-in sheets, rules, hints, operating frequencies, etc) not initially present at each station – pick up some of this stuff at Dayton
- Be ready to demonstrate capability to communicate with other local EOC sites during weekend – would have been great to demonstrate to Livonia Homeland Security Team on Sunday morning.
- Be better prepared for cooler wx overnight – can personally attest to this one
- GOTA station:
 - Larger tent to support the welcome of visitors (signs) and literature tables. Someone should be assigned at all times to welcome visitors. All visitors should be encouraged to

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enter the site by passing through the welcome tent and they should be given a personal welcome by one of the club members.

- Better training for operators of GOTA station. Prior to 2 PM, a training session of how to operate a contest should have been presented (what is the exchange and how to do it)
- Rig should be easy to operate and control ops should be familiar with the rig/tuner being used. (if necessary take time to train the control ops on how to operate the rig being used)
- Antennas for GOTA should have been proven out by experienced people prior to FD. Don't rely on "how it worked last year". Backup antenna system should have been worked out and been available.
- Some people wanted to operate GOTA station, but couldn't because too much focus was placed on individual operators getting 20 QSO's. Everyone wanting to should have opportunity to operate. My apologies to anyone wanting to operate but weren't given opportunity. As FD chairman, I will try not to let this happen again.

I am sure some things have been overlooked in this assessment. I will appreciate any additions and/or corrections if you care to add them to this list. As potential LARC Field Day Chairman for CY2009, the items under "Things to improve" will be focus for next year's efforts. I believe there should be an assistant FD chairman who works hand-in-hand with whoever is the appointed chairman. This should improve the efforts as two heads are always better than one.

Final Note from CY2008 FD Chairman

During the July LARC board meeting, some interesting thoughts were expressed immediately following the post FD assessment. The question was raised "What really is Field Day?" and what does it mean. Each of us has our own opinions and feelings of what is important to them. Yes. The food, the working together to setup and teardown the stations, the problem solving, the establishment of new friendships and a high score are the most important to some. Our efforts did result in a respectable score, but scoring was not the real gratification for me. The CY2008 FD, for me as FD chairman, was a success because of all the support provided by the individual committees, the people who came out, and the cooperation of the people in both clubs. We can, however, go further.

ARRL sponsors this activity for the purpose of preparing and practicing to setup a temporary station and provide emergency communication. The preparation for FD should be in place year around not just one time a year. And what, as hams, can we give back to the community? This belief was put forth by Bill Brezina of the FARL. To be effective in time of emergency, the club should be able and ready to provide emergency communications at a moments notice. This is not an easy goal to accomplish. Not only do the stations (equipment and antennas) have to be pulled together and setup at a moments notice, there must be a level of competence for communicating effectively. All this takes organization, preparation and training.

More club members are participating in the Livonia CERT classes. In this class you are taught how to respond during an emergency situation. You will not have the luxury to think about what to do and how to do it. The training will step in and you will function based on that training without having to think. Along with the search and rescue, fire suppression, and other community support training, we should not overlook training on how to conduct ourselves during a closed net and how to communicate accurately and effectively. As a radio club supporting our community we should work with the Wayne County ARPSC/RACES organization to provide training and materials that can be used to hone our communication skills as Hams.

Best Regards until FD2009.

CY2008 LARC Field Day Chairman
John Mathey/K8AZT

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Tin Lizzy Club Calendar

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

October 6 **Amateur Radio Classes start:** The Technician class will run on for 11 weeks, beginning October 6th. (10 weeks of instruction, license exam on the 11th week.) It will be followed by an 11 week General class, beginning February 2nd. (Same as above.)
<http://www.gardencityschools.com/schools/cambridge/home.htm>

9 FARL Club Meeting, EMDO, 7 PM Presentation: Ham Radio Deluxe (W8AMH)

12 Michigan State Convention, Kalamazoo, MI
<http://www.kalamazoohamfest.com>

20 Free Press Marathon is on October 19th from 6:30 AM until about 3PM with some being released earlier. The FPM is open to all operators. Contact Sharon Keller, at ka8spw@sbcglobal.net

26: USECA Swap: American Polish Century Club, Sterling Hts. 8am <http://useca.rfc791.org/swap.php>

November 13 ***FARL Club Meeting, EMDO, 7 PM Presentation:*** Radio Comm6 Software for radio WA8HEA

December 7 L'Anse Creuse Swap, Mt. Clemens, MI www.n8lc.org
11 ***FARL Club Meeting, EMDO, 7 PM*** (FARL Christmas Party)
TBD Speaking With Santa, Mott Children Hospital

Other 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, September 11, 2008

Minutes recorded by Roger Reini, KD8CSE, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 7:06 PM by president Dave, N8HKU. There were 9 attendees, including one guest. Not everyone signed the attendance roster.

MINUTES: The minutes from the June meeting were approved as published.

TREASURER: The treasurer's report from Bill, WA8HEA, was read by Dave, N8HKU. The main expenditures during the time from the last meeting involved phone bills, name tags, Field Day expenditures, and a contribution to the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund. The report was approved as read.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The board reviewed the calendar of upcoming events and slotted some presentations; copies were available at today's meeting. Presentations in the next two months will be on PC logging and operating software. Still looking for presenters to fill in holes in the calendar. Bill, N8OZV, suggested a presentation on microcontroller kits that he would do.

REPEATER: The repeaters are in good operating condition. Bill, N8OZV, has a 1 kW generator that can be used for the repeater during emergency conditions.

CLASSES: Bill, N8OZV, has a class planned for October; it will be done at lunchtime at one of the Ford buildings (Building 1 or 2). It will be publicized in the FERA mailings. He is still willing to do General classes, given enough students and a good location. Garden City ARC is also giving classes – Technician classes begin October 6, General classes February 2.

NEWSLETTER: Al, W8AMH, will be assembling the newsletter for next month; send submissions to him.

WEBSITE: Yahoo is increasing the fee for website hosting by \$2, taking it to \$6.95 a month. It may be time to consider moving to another host. Roger, KD8CSE, offered to host the site as part of his allocation at no charge to the club. Domain names: FARL.* names are unavailable, while K8UTT names are definitely available; combinations of the two are also likely available.

OPERATORS NEEDED: Operators will be needed for the PEAC ride (details were given later in the meeting) and the Free Press Marathon. The marathon is October 19, and volunteering is open to all operators (there had been reports that only amateurs involved with RACES or ARES would be permitted to serve, but this was not true). Contact [Need correct contact info].

CHRISTMAS DINNER: Dave, N8HKU, asked for suggestions for locations to hold the annual Christmas dinner. The locations used for the last several years were suggested (Mexican Fiesta, Amantea, Richter's Chalet) along with Dmitri's in Garden City.

WA2HOM: Roger, KD8CSE, reported that the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum was soliciting help from all amateurs in southeast Michigan to build an amateur radio exhibit at the museum. According to the card received by him and most of the other attendees, the exhibit will include a fully functional station, a visible rooftop antenna, hands-on exhibits, a QSL card display, real-time demonstrations and licensing classes. Visit www.aahom.org/WA2HOM for more information.

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PEAC RIDE: After the break, Pat, WD8JDZ, called for volunteers to support the PEAC bike ride, which takes place this year on September 20. Operators are desired for all 7 stops (6 along the route plus home base at Warrendale) and SAG wagons. The 146.92 repeater will be used due to its excellent coverage of the full route. Volunteers should contact either Pat or Roger, KD8CSE; Roger will be handling net control at Warrendale due to Pat having an unavoidable conflict out of town.

FIELD DAY WRAP-UP: Dave, N8HKU, reviewed the results of the LARC/FARL operation on Field Day 2008. The full results submission has been posted to the club website.

Operational highlights: total score of 4258 claimed; the lieutenant in charge of Livonia's CERT effort paid a visit; there were more contacts than in previous years (station was class 2A with a GOTA station), helped in large measure by short skip conditions on 15 and 10 meters. **What worked:** running the 2 wire antennas off of the fire tower; amount of food; availability of tables; bug repellent; the generator; plenty of chairs; the mounting pole for the G5RV antenna (mounted along the eastside fence); the network logging capability of the software being used, allowing real-time monitoring of each station's performance and operating; publicity from the Detroit News and Livonia Observer. **What didn't work:** lack of rain protection, as the tents were not waterproof; lighting (not enough at night); preparation for chilly overnight conditions; no bandpass filters for the GOTA station; problems getting a good antenna for the GOTA antenna; unfamiliarity of the GOTA mentors with the GOTA transceiver (it had been put into duplex mode inadvertently); no under-18 contacts, unlike recent years; few operators overall, or few opportunities for more operators to operate. **Plans for the future:** LARC and FARL need to determine the primary purpose for operating on Field Day: to permit as many operators as possible to operate; to treat it more as a contest, using hot-shot operators and aiming for a high score; or to operate it as a demonstration station. The logging software was not perfect; one feature missed from other software was the ability to show contacts by band. The station may operate as a 3A station next year, and there is a desire to get a satellite operation working again. The attendees supported the desire to get more operators.

ADJOURN: 8:27 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

Please suggest locations for our Christmas dinner this year! We have suggestions for Richter's Chalet and Dimitri's to date. Early reservations are beneficial, so plan on choosing at the October club meeting.

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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, October 9th @ 7pm
Presentation: Ham Radio Deluxe, AI (W8AMH)

The Ford Amateur Radio League
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