



President's Notes for September 2013

As I start these notes for September, Maker Faire 2013 is still fresh in my mind. We had another successful event at Maker Faire, making 174 QSO's across all bands and modes. This includes VHF/UHF. It also includes a few ground wave QSO's with local hams on HF. The two Hustler 6BTV antennas mounted on the roof of the museum were operating very well; the CW operators made DX contacts with Japan, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Scotland, Slovenia, New Zealand and the Virgin Islands, while our final voice contact on Sunday was with Croatia. On a more personal note, I made two or three contacts in close proximity with hams located in the Houston area, where I grew up; one may have been operating mobile from a large park located in my hometown of League City.

Was the event perfect? No event ever is. We did have to contend with muddy ground from overnight rains, and we had a tremendous downpour on Saturday night shortly after closure for the day. No radios got wet, fortunately (they were with us for the night), but any pads or papers left out sure did, even with lowered canopies. There was a short supply of available operators, and there were times when the radios were not in operation. But still, it was a success, and we're thinking of ways to improve it for next year.

After our summer break (Maker Faire meeting in July, no meeting in August), we resume our monthly meetings in September. As is the custom, we'll have a debriefing of our performance at Field Day. This year's will differ from prior years because of the new location in Livonia. Did our performance improve or suffer as a result of the move? Come to the meeting and find out. In addition, I plan to report on the Field Day activities of AA5RO in Texas, the site I visited while on vacation (and which I described in the July BOLT). There may be some last minute information about the PEAC ride, as well; it takes place 2 days after our meeting. Hope to see you all there at the meeting!

73,
Roger, KD8CSE



www.arrl.org

2013 Field Day in Review

David Treharne, N8HKU

The Ford Amateur Radio League and the Livonia Amateur Radio Club took on a new Field Day adventure this year with the relocation of the Field Day site from our familiar ground at the Fire Station to the new location on Lyndon. While we really enjoyed using the Fire tower in the past, we were ready to expand our experience of Field Day by choosing a new location. If we were to ever deploy a site in an emergency, it could be anywhere. Overall, the two clubs ended up rising to the challenge, handling the new site and gaining some new capabilities in the process. We have plenty to review this year and have some items to improve upon for next year. With that, we start the review:

The Contacts: Total contact points this year were up nearly 200 points, provided by a sharp rise in the number of phone contacts, a rise in digital contacts, offset by a drop on CW contacts. CW and digital contacts are worth double versus phone contacts.

Category	2013 Field Day	2012 Field Day
CW	550	766
Phone	1,313	784
Digital	97	50
Total Points from Contacts	2,607	2,416

For this Field Day, we had one CW station, two Phone stations, one Digital station, and one VHF/UHF/Satellite station, for our 4A classification. This year, we almost worked every section in the US and Canadian list. We got all of the additional Ontario sections this year, as Ontario split into 4 sections. We only missed the Northwest Territories section. Last year, it was Newfoundland and Manitoba that went missing. Contacts over the 24 hour period were pretty

consistent with a couple of breaks. One break was during the thunderstorms in the area in late afternoon on Saturday. We did not get a direct hit, but the storms were just to our south. The second was when the Wi-Fi network got locked up. This happened several times during the weekend, and the digital station was removed from the network to try to clean this up. More on that later.

The Bands: For this Field Day, we had a lot of wire antennas employed. The CW station had a Carolina Windom, SSB #1 had a full size G5RV, SSB #2 had a Junior G5RV (40-10m) and a 6 BTV vertical. The Digital station had a wire dipole (?), and the VHF/UHF had various beams, including a 6 meter beam. Below is a chart showing all of the modes and bands.

Band	CW	Phone	Dig	Total	%
80	38	168	0	206	11
40	314	529	63	906	46
20	182	501	24	707	36
15	9	89	9	107	5
10	0	1	0	1	0
6	4	22	0	26	1
2	0	2	0	2	0
SAT	3	1	1	5	0
Total	550	1,313	97	1,960	100

For being near the peak of the sunspot cycle, the bands were not very friendly. The vast majority of contacts for all of our stations were in the 40m and 20m bands. As has happened during the past several years, 80m got noisy very early in the morning, and was unusable by 8am. However, where the peak sunspot cycle usually allows for 15m and 10m openings, there was nothing open on 10m, and it was pretty hard work on 15m as well. Going back to 2010 and 2011, we had more 10m and 15 meter contacts in these years than in 2013. The net effect of the band conditions was that 40m and 20m bands were absolutely wall to wall

stations. It was incredibly difficult to find an opening with which to operate, or to separate one calling station from another. Every station was forced to transmit with other stations on either side and underneath. SSB#1 generally has a great signal on Field Day, and this year was no exception. However, there were times when the noise from the other stations prevented us from being heard or from hearing the quieter ones. See the Contacts over time log to see what bands and modes were in play over the period.

The Field: This was our first year at the Lyndon Street location, the former home of an elementary school. This means we were out of our comfort zone, creating a new setup for all of the operating locations. That is kind of fun, and exciting. The field was in good condition, and we could carefully drive on it to help with the packing and unpacking of gear. It had a nice parking lot where we could store vehicles. It was certainly a public location, but not too many visitors saw it, as it also was tucked into a residential area. We did get a few neighbors wandering over, but Ivan Love, N8AMT, whose house we could see from the site, helped with community relations, and we all got along well.

Hanging antennas: This site has a lot of space, and a lot of trees on it. Bill Allen, KD8KTF, purchased an air-powered launcher this year to use with hanging antennas, and got plenty of quality practice with it. He and others got our antennas nice and high up in the trees, so we had no problems with antenna height. Now, the trees were not always where we wanted them to be. In order to sit under the antennas, the CW and SSB #1 stations were quite far from the other stations. This was great for keeping interference down, but tough for walking back and forth, and too far for the Wi-Fi set up to easily cover the site, The SSB#2 G5RV Junior antenna ended up getting strung up very near the food tent, where we ended up walking underneath it a lot. There is a field generated around the window line used for these antennas, so it would be better to keep some more distance between our walking paths and the antennas.

What worked and what can be improved: A larger list this year, as we had this new location to work with.

What worked well:

1. Nice open field; good operating positions, easy to get in and out.
2. High trees to hang antennas from.
3. No problems with RFI neither from the neighborhood nor really from other stations.
4. Livonia Fire Dept lending the pump up tent again.
5. Nice parking lot to locate the cars.

6. LARC members who stayed Friday night in a camper to make sure no vandalism occurred with the partial setup.
7. Our ability to complete the setup well before the 2pm starting time.
8. A lot of hands to help with set up and teardown: Particularly from LARC, there was great participation in set up and teardown.
9. Vegetarian fare: Thanks for accommodating some of the vegetarians in the group! We had some nice food choices that were greatly appreciated.
10. LARC planning and participation: Good initial scouting of the site, good contact with the neighbors. LARC participation was high versus the FARL participation. Thanks for the leadership and for making the FARL members welcome!

What can be improved:

1. Tent versus antenna locations: Find a new home for the G5RV junior, so our walking paths do not come so close to it.
2. Investigate moving CW and SSB #1 a bit closer to the rest of the site. Perhaps share a tree as one of the end points, similar to what we did with the tower setup. It makes for easier inter-tent communications and will improve the Wi-Fi. (A report was received that having the CW tent so far away from the food tent improved a certain amateur operator's tendency to overeat!)
3. Improved Wi-Fi: Moving the stations a bit closer will help. Also, if the VHF and Digital stations will not operate in the HF Voice or CW bands, they can run the logging program unattached to the network. Saving the contacts in an *.adi* file allows the logs to be merged later for submission. Finally, the router used may be able to take a different antenna, which could dramatically improve range. While keeping the VHF and digital station logs separate, it is nice to see where and when the other stations are operating, especially the digital station. It is essential that the SSB 1 and SSB 2 stations share the same log in order to avoid dupes.
4. Procedures to shut down in the event of bad weather: We had some bad storms very close to the operating site on Saturday afternoon. While they, thankfully, stayed south of us, we could hear the thunder at the site. Still, there was some disagreement as to whether to shut down or not. I recommend we make a rule on when to shut down so we can remain safe. Note that the Monroe club site experienced severe weather that was rumored to have blown down their tents.
5. SSB #1 Tent: FARL had no usable tents for Field Day, so one was purchased. It turned out to be extremely time consuming to set up and take down, and it is also quite

heavy. I do not recommend this tent be used again. A version that is easier to set up and tear down is required.

6. Sunday Morning breakfast. Eggs, pancakes and fruit were served around 7am on Sunday morning, which is the historical time. However, many people were not ready then, and would have preferred something later, such as 9am. Need recommendations on perhaps a different menu or serving method to keep food available longer in the morning.
7. W1AW message: Need to make sure the message gets properly received. The message was incomplete from the digital station in both the RTTY and PSK versions. It was very difficult to assemble the message combining the two. We need to make sure the message is received well on Saturday night, or assign it to be acquired again at noon on Sunday morning.
8. Message traffic: We did not receive credit for message traffic, as it was not sent out using the K8UNS station call. We just need reminder that the message traffic needs to use the Field Day call sign.
9. Operators: A lot of contacts were made by relatively few operators this year. 63% of the contacts were made by 3 operators. As always, we want to make sure those who wish to operate feel free to do so. Field Day is a fast paced operating event, but it is also an excellent training ground, as having a seasoned operator at the log can help pick out stations to work and give experience and training.

David Treharne, N8HKU
FARL Vice President



Volunteers Needed for Bike Ride Event - Patrick Quinn

Looking for volunteers for the event on **Saturday, Sep 14** in **Hines Drive** and other locations for this event. So far I only have a couple of people and I need at least 6 or 8 more to really make a go of it. Let me know if you are planning on attending/working the event and what you might want to do. Let me know ASAP or I have to tell them that I have to cancel if I can't get enough people to make a go of it.

Patrick Quinn, patquinn52@wowway.com



Here is a note that we received from Bill Brezina, WA8HEA, who moved out to Hartland a few years ago and consequently hasn't attended many (any) club meetings lately.

Aug 9, 2013
Hey Gang,

Sorry I haven't made it to any club meetings. Life is good & busy here in Hartland. I still don't have a station on the air but I'm hopeful I'll have the shack sorted out this year.

Still working on selling ham radio estates. The latest is Steve Zdon's [sp?] gear. It's a sad but necessary job. On the plus side, I am going to some new swaps and meeting new hams.

Hope all is well in Dearborn.

73, Bill Brezina, WA8HEA



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!



Classes and Exams

The following amateur radio clubs conduct license exams throughout the year. Many clubs allow walk-ins but pre-registration will insure an exam is available for you when you attend.

Club Name	Contact Person	Phone	Email
Ford Amateur Radio League	Bill Boyke	313-805-8877	wboyke@ford.com
South Lyon ARC	Christian Anderson	248-437-3088	K8VJ@arr.net
Motor City ARC	Don Novak	734-281-7030	K8THU@arri.net
Hazel Park ARC	Jerry Begel	248-543-2284	w9npi@comcast.net
USECA ARC	Joseph Kennedy	586-977-7222	N8OZ@arri.net
ARROW Assn	Roger Place	734-663-4625	merrogplace@aol.com

Some of the above clubs also conduct license classes. Please contact them for additional information.



2012-2013 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	Roger Reini	KD8CSE	734-728-1509
Vice President	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666
Treasurer	Pat Quinn	WD8JDZ	734-729-1993
Secretary	John Turowski	N8NWA	313-258-1996
Repeater Chair	Murray Scott	KE8UM	248-743-1704
K8UTT Trustee	Dave Treharne	N8HKU	734-476-1666
Activity Chair	Bill Boyke	N80ZV	313-805-8877
Bolt Editor	Rajiv Paul	KD8LHF	313-405-2573



Club Meetings

The Ford Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Thursday of each month, except for Christmas and the summer months July and August. The meetings are held at 6:30 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: September 12, 2013 at 6:30PM
Topic: Field Day in Review by Dave, N8HKU

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