

The Bolt

The Official Publication of the Ford Amateur Radio League

President's Note: February, 2009

A tough winter: Wow, this has so far been a rough winter for antennas. I hope that your outdoor antennas have stood up to the test of the weather. My support poles have shown a lot of stress from the high winds and cold temperatures we have had so far. I have had to do a bit of maintenance on them, but they are still holding up the antenna, so all is well. I had a very good time with the G5RV antenna for the ARRL RTTY contest that was held during the first weekend of January. I was starting to come down with a bad cold, but I did not need any voice to work the RTTY contest. There were a lot of signals on the bands that weekend, and I enjoyed improving my skills in the digital domain. This was probably the first serious digital contest I have worked with my new Compaq computer and reloaded MixW software, so I had a lot of set up and adjustments to make. I also found out that the program was automatically color coding the callsigns it was copying into those I had worked in the contest versus those I had not. That sped up my progress during the end of the contest as I roamed the band looking for new contacts. During the contest, 15m and 20m were open when the sun was up, but 80m proved to be the most productive for me in this contest. I look forward to more operating time on the bands, now that I have eliminated the RFI to the old TV. Winter winds, keep away from my antenna! The North American International Auto Show ran last month down at Cobo. Our club raises funds by selling Auto Show tickets. Many thanks to Bill, N8OZV, who serves his fellow employees every year with an amazing number of ticket sales. I certainly appreciate his work to obtain the tickets, hand them out to those of us who sell them as well, and keep track of our sales. In spite of the economy, Bill reported to me that the total club ticket sales were exceeding 700. The monies from the ticket sales directly support our club operations of the repeater, Field Day, and other club events. Thank you, Bill!

Last month, Bill, WA8HEA, reported on his progress in helping the Detroit Children's Museum on the air. The Museum staff are very enthusiastic in obtaining their licenses and using the station to introduce our next generation to the magic of science, technology and radio waves. The effort at the museum is especially challenging as they are only open from 8am to 4pm. Bill, re-entering retirement from Ford last August, has been able to get over and help during the daytime hours that many of the rest of us could not. Please see Bill's presentation on the club website and see their progress!
<http://www.k8utt.org/Presentations.htm>

Upcoming Club meetings: We have an interesting pair of antenna discussions for the February club meeting, as Bill, N8OZV, will discuss a longwave loop antenna he has built, and Bill, WA8HEA, will discuss an aluminum J pole antenna that may be a good club project. See you at the meeting! For the March meeting, we are still looking for a topic. Please let me or any club officer know if there is something you will share with us!

73,

Dave, N8HKU
FARL Club President

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HAMS HELP OUT WITH HISTORIC DAY

(Information used taken from the ARRL newsletter)

On Tuesday, January 20, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States. Numerous organizations -- federal, state and local agencies, the staff of Presidents Bush and Obama, as well as private agencies -- were involved in the months of planning required to make the event go smoothly. From the very beginning, Amateur Radio operators were involved, making sure that communications support was available by providing backup communications in the event that primary communications were disrupted.

According to ARRL Virginia Section Public Information Coordinator Joe Safranek, K4JJS, the Virginia and Maryland Offices of Emergency Management -- as well as various local jurisdictions in and around the Washington, DC metro area -- requested the assistance of Amateur Radio operators to provide local and short distance communications for the inauguration and the events leading up to it.

Safranek said that ARRL Virginia Section Manager Carl Clements, W4CAC, and ARES-RACES of Virginia Section Emergency Coordinator Ron Sokol, K4KHZ, selected Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator Bruce Freund, K7BC, to be the project officer for this event.

"Freund's area of responsibility covered two Virginia ARES districts that are comprised of 14 cities and counties along the western border of the District of Columbia," Safranek said. "These districts are managed by Howard Cunningham, WD5DBC, and Tom Lauzon, KI4AFE. They had to ensure that their jurisdictional Emergency Coordinators and members accomplished the mission objectives received from event officials.

Numerous Amateur Radio operators involved with the various organizations serving the jurisdictions in Virginia, DC and Maryland all worked together."

Across the Potomac River, ARRL Maryland/DC Section Manager James Cross, WI3N, and Section Emergency Coordinator Steve Beckman, N3SB, were actively involved from the beginning with planning and preparation efforts. If needed, Section leadership was prepared to assist within the District. In DC, members of Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams (REACT) <http://www.reactintl.org/> were also part of the planning; the organization had a representative at the very first regional planning meeting.

Planning for communications support during the inauguration drew upon the expertise and relationships developed through the years of planning the annual Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) in DC <http://www.marinemarathon.com>, Safranek said. "The marathon is our major regional Amateur Radio event in the Metropolitan DC area," he said. "When planning our communications support for the marathon, we use the Incident Command Structure (ICS). We decided to use ICS with the inauguration, too. By using a system we were all familiar with, we had a head start."

Safranek listed some of the many ways amateurs helped out with communications support: Nick Meacher, N3WWE, built on a template the group used for the marathon for the compilation of the Incident Communications Plan. Weeks in advance of the inauguration, Fairfax County Emergency Coordinator Jeff Wilson, AI4IO, led a field test of the repeaters planned for use for the primary Regional Coordination Net to ensure that participating

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Emergency Operations Centers would be able operate cleanly through the selected repeaters. Field tests are a key lesson learned from MCM and identified necessary changes to the Communication Plan. District Emergency Coordinator Howard Cunningham, WB5DBC, serves the marathon as Special Project Officer. He prepared a staffing approach for mutual assistance that, if needed, would rely on the on-call ARES/RACES organizations in Loudoun, Prince William and Fauquier counties to supplement the activated groups in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax.

Safranek said that the area's communications equipment was well suited to the task: "Using a combination of many systems, hams were able to move information quickly and efficiently. The Network Engineers Repeater Association (NERA) UHF linked repeater system <http://www.qsl.net/nera/> supported the primary Regional Coordination Net. Local group operations used other analog VHF and UHF systems for phone, Winlink, packet and other modes of operation, as well as the use of a D-STAR VHF/UHF voice and data system. Some operators monitored the Old Dominion Emergency Net/Alfa on 3947 kHz."

On the Maryland/DC side of the Potomac River, hams were active in other areas, including several stationed at RFK Stadium to assist with the visitors from the more than 1200 buses that were parked there. District EOCs in Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties also had hams providing communications support.

ASEC Bruce Freund singled out the achievements of the Fairfax ARES-RACES Unit, specifically the actions of Fairfax Assistant Emergency Coordinator Tom Azlin, N4ZPT. "Tom was deeply involved in the local and regional planning activities before the event; he serves a similar key role in the Marine Corps Marathon leadership. But in my opinion, it was his performance in the execution of the plan that is particularly noteworthy. During the field testing for the Regional Coordination Net, several jurisdictions could not reliably hit the planned repeaters, so we made the decision to shift to the NERA linked UHF system.

Unfortunately, the Fairfax EOC VHF/UHF antenna only provides marginal coverage into NERA. Due to the difficulties the EOC experienced when the Regional Coordination Net opened at 4 AM, Tom put a separate liaison channel in place to supplement the EOC's NERA link and manned it himself while developing a watch bill to ensure coverage on this unanticipated circuit. That liaison channel was covered solidly throughout the day and was the last ARES-RACES circuit secured at the end of operations on Tuesday evening. Tom made sure that the EOC was staffed beginning at 3 AM, until it was secured a little after 8 PM. While his leadership in the planning activities is noteworthy, Tom's stepping forward to provide leadership ensuring successful execution merits special recognition."

Fairfax Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Operations, Art Pond, KD4FBT, worked very long days during the planning phase. Due to his job on Capitol Hill, he was busy getting the new members' IT infrastructure set up. "He pulled one of the six hour rotations in the EOC during what might have been the highest activity time if there had been transport problems inbound," Freund said. "This shows the dedication of the volunteers in working very long days on their regular job, pulling activation duty for the event, and then going back to their regular jobs the very next day."

In Fairfax, one operator was on duty at the local Emergency Operations Center at the beginning and end of the activation, while two were on duty during the main portion of the

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event. EOCs in Alexandria, Arlington and Falls Church City also had ARES/RACES operators on duty. The Virginia State EOC was manned with a full Amateur Radio crew utilizing HF, VHF and UHF links via voice, packet and Winlink to the inauguration Nets. Besides providing support at EOCs, amateurs were also on duty at Alexandria Hospital, while others were on standby to support communications at two other hospitals in Prince William County, as well as EOCs in Loudoun, Fauquier and Prince William Counties.

Freund is also a member of Army MARS. He served as Net Control Station on the MARS frequencies during the event. According to Safranek, Army MARS HQ at Ft Huachuca, Arizona, put out a directive stating an Actual Incident Net would be established, directing the type of MARS coverage that would be required and how Region 3 (in the DC area) would have liaisons from other regions available to pass any necessary traffic.

ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, monitored both ham radio frequencies and the ARRL HQ MARS station, AAN1ARL. At the Virginia Commonwealth level, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management opened their EOC where Terry Hebert, KG4GLS, coordinated Amateur Radio activities. State EOCs in Maryland and Virginia had Army MARS operators on premises participating in their regional nets.

Sokol said he was pleased at the outcome of this historical event: "When I was appointed SEC in April 2008, I told the ASECs that they are the managers over their areas and they will be given the opportunity to do just that -- manage operations in their designated areas. Section Manager Carl Clements, W4CAC, totally agreed with this comment and has been extremely supportive of efforts to delegate authority to the intermediary managers, the ASECs and the District Emergency Coordinators, since they are the local area experts. I am really proud

of the way in which ARES-RACES of Virginia participated in this event." "As Virginia Section Manager, I am responsible for a myriad of items -- the emergency communications aspect of the hobby being one of prime importance," Clements said. "With a senior leader like Ron Sokol, a staff of ASECs like Bruce, our DEC's, and our local EC's performing their managerial and supervisory duties in an outstanding manner, there is no wonder why our numbers are constantly growing. The Section has accomplished a lot in less than a year, including a Memorandum of

Understanding with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. We have been instrumental in working with a group of dedicated hams in the western areas of the Commonwealth in building an RF link to the eastern areas of Virginia and now we are participating in the inauguration of the President of the United States of America. I could not be more proud of these fine men and women as I am now."

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Clubs are always looking for meeting program ideas. Some programs that can be the most fun and successful revolve around hands-on projects or interactive activities. Involving members in the program allows them to share knowledge and experiences.

Traditional club projects include kit building, antenna building or some other soldering project. These sorts of projects attract members to the meetings and teach useful skills to the radio amateur.

As a program director in a club today you want to be looking at current topics with subjects that club members can apply to today's operating requirements.

Some topics could include:

- Computer logging programs
- Operating digital modes
- Logbook of The World
- Wireless networking
- Software Defined Radio (SDR)
- Computer file management
- D-Star
- Contest software
- Radio to computer interfacing
- Sound card modes and interfacing
- Programming a VHF/UHF handheld transceiver

Make your presentations lively and exciting and involve your audience. Quiz the audience. People love to jump in with an answer. Visual aids, charts or slides are great tools to help make a point and drive home an idea.

When club meetings are exciting and informative people will be eager to attend.

New PowerPoint Program Added To the Multimedia Library Logbook of The World:

This presentation is an overview of ARRL's exciting on-line QSO confirmation award service. The LoTW is a repository of digitally-signed log data uploaded by individual participants. The system compares the log data to all other logs to find matches

(QSLs). These matches can be used as confirmation of a contact for award credit.

Users can also use LoTW to track awards, check DXCC records, and find QSLs and QSOs.

Many of today's popular computer logging software programs interact with LoTW providing users with an interface to LoTW from within the logging program. LoTW works with Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems. The software is free to download and there is no charge for uploading data or viewing records.

All PowerPoint programs are free to download at <www.arrl.org/multimedia>

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FARL MEETING MINUTES, January 8, 2009

Minutes recorded by Roger Reini, KD8CSE, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: At 7:07 PM by President Dave, N8HKU. There were 6 members in attendance this evening.

MINUTES: Minutes for the November meeting were approved as published. There were no minutes for the December meeting, as that was the annual Christmas dinner.

TREASURER: The balance is sound, reported treasurer Bill, WA8HEA. The only expenditure last month was for the phone bill. Dave gave Bill a check from FERA.

BOARD MEETING: The board of directors met last week to set the calendar for the year. Among the items discussed was a club fundraising project to construct J-pole antennas (either aluminum or twinlead roll-up) and sell them at swap meets. More information on this will be forthcoming at the February meeting.

UPCOMING SWAPS: Hazel Park on January 18; Livonia ARC on February 15; the Marshall swap on March 14, and the Toledo swap on March 15. Other swaps are listed in the club calendar.

CPR TRAINING: Our training and certification from two years ago is either about to expire or has already expired, so we may want a refresher. Pat, WD8JDZ, is willing to check with the instructors who trained us last time, but we need to determine the level of interest within the club, as this will affect their fee for the training.

WEBSITE: The website is now at www.k8utt.org and is working well. Club e-mails sent by Dave are being sent from Tom Musolf's Yahoo address to overcome limitations of Dave's comcast.net address. Roger, KD8CSE, offered to create an address in the k8utt.org domain for club e-mail; Dave suggested that the address be "president [at] k8utt.org"

EMERGENCY TRAINING: Dave mentioned the online training offered by ARRL for Emergency Services – the ECC-1 and ECC-2 courses.

REPEATER: Running well, no problems noted.

TRAINING: N8OZV's classes at Ford are to start soon.

NEWSLETTER: AI, W8AMH, will edit the February newsletter.

OLD BUSINESS: None

CALENDAR: The calendar of events for the year was reviewed and discussed.

TABLE FOR HAZEL PARK: Roger, KD8CSE, moved that the club obtain a table at the Hazel Park swap; Bill, WA8HEA, seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

HAMS HELPING HAMS: Bill, WA8HEA, asked the club to become more involved in helping our fellow hams, just as we've been helping the general community. This has been going on for as long as the hobby's been around, but we should step up our efforts. Examples: help hams unload gear that's sitting around gathering dust before it becomes part of an estate sale of a Silent Key; offer to drive someone to a club meeting or other activity; help with an antenna raising; and so on. He challenged us to keep a log of what we did each month to help out amateur radio.

DETROIT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Bill, WA8HEA, gave a presentation on the Detroit Children's Museum and the amateur radio station he's helping them set up (continuing the work started by the Hazel Park club). The museum has been in operation since 1917 in the New Center area. The station has two transceivers, an Icom IC-7000 and a

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Kenwood TS-2000 and an Astron 60 A power supply. He and the museum staff members erected a Diamond VHF/UHF vertical and a longwire antenna on the roof. The museum wants to obtain masts for satellite work, as there are plans for ARISS contacts in the future, as well as obtain a computer to facilitate Echolink contacts. More immediate needs include antenna switches, a 12 V power distribution panel with Anderson PowerPole support, and a good station ground. Anyone wishing to help Bill should contact him at 313-550-0928. Note that the museum hours are Monday-Friday, 9 to 3:30, so retirees are in a better position to offer assistance.

DIGITAL SYMPOSIUM IN OHIO: The Southwest Ohio Digital and Technical Symposium is on Saturday, January 10 in Middletown, between Cincinnati and Dayton.

NEW ONLINE MAGAZINE: There is a new online magazine devoted to amateur radio, based in France. It is reached at <http://www.ham-mag.com/> and is "published" by Vincent, F5SLD.

ADJOURNMENT: At 8:11 PM.

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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, February 12 @ 7:00PM

Presentation By Bill, N8OZV

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