



FEEDBACK

May 2023

Do you have a story, humorous or otherwise, about amateur radio? If so, please contact the newsletter editor (w8kdb@arrl.net) and get it published in **FEEDBACK!**

If you would like to place a classified ad to sell, purchase or swap amateur radio related items, please contact the editor.

Board of Directors:

President
Paul Crisher, KE8MOI
paulcrisher@gmail.com

Vice President
Zach Mann, W8MAN
zmann648@gmail.com

Secretary
Stephanie Halbert, W8AEZ
w8aez@arrl.net

Treasurer
Michael Russell, KQ8N
kq8n@arrl.net

Member at Large
Melanie Lake, KE8TPQ
mel1853@hotmail.com

Inside this issue:

Lead article.....	1
Supplemental article.....	2
Upcoming Radio Contests.....	2
Upcoming Hamfests & Conventions.....	3
Meeting Minutes.....	4
Board Meeting Minutes.....	5
Club Repeaters.....	6
Nets & Upcoming Events.....	6

Club News

Parks on the Air (POTA)



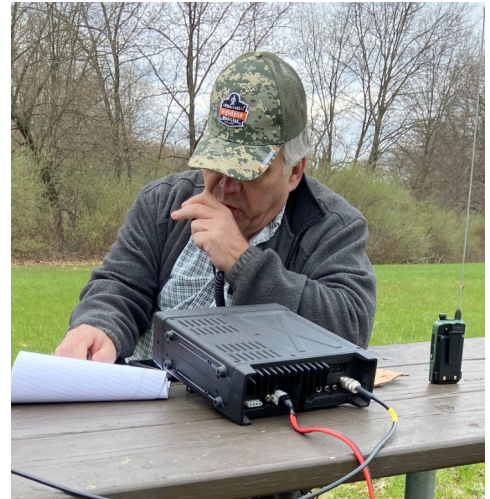
W8MAN at POTA

The W8DF call sign hits the air on Parks on the Air. On April 22nd N8EC, W8MAN, WB8KC, and W8JRD activated the Ft. Custer State Recreation Area (K-3310) using the W8DF club call sign. The 20 meter band was booming giving us the opportunity to make 84 QSOs. Of those SP9RXP a Polish station was our furthest contact. Being the Clubs first POTA outing I think things went exceptionally well. On May 6th KE8MWQ, WB8KC and W8MAN attempted to activate Ft. Custer State Recreation Area (K-3310) Using the W8DF club call sign. The bands where very up and down, with just 8 contacts the high light was the club made our first Canadian contact at the park with VE9GLF. If you would like to be notified when the W8DF attempts another POTA activation email W8DFPOTA@GMAIL.COM to be added to the notification distro. Thank you to all the club members that have joined us so far and I look forward to working the W8DF with more of you.



N8EC at POTA

Article by Zach Mann, W8MAN



WB8KC at POTA

Upcoming Radio Contests

Looking for a little action on the airwaves? You might want to check out these upcoming contests!

ARRL Digital Contest

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, and 6 Meters

Mode: Digital (excluding RTTY)

Date: 06/03 – 06/04

URL: www.arrl.org/arrl-digital-contest

June VHF

Bands: Authorized Frequencies above 50 Mhz

Mode: Phone, SSB, CW, Digital

Date: 06/10 – 06/12

URL: www.arrl.org/june-vhf

Kids Day

Bands: 80, 40, 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 Meters

Mode: Phone

Date: 06/17

URL: www.arrl.org/kids-day

Field Day

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 Meters, as well as 50 MHz and above

Mode: Phone, CW, Digital, SSB

Date: 06/24 – 06/25

URL: www.arrl.org/field-day

IARU HF World Championship

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 Meters

Mode: Phone, CW, Digital, SSB

Date: 07/08 – 07/09

URL: www.arrl.org/iaru-hf-world-championship

**A more thorough listing of upcoming Contests can be found on the ARRL's web page [ContestCalendar](http://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar), <http://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar>*

Other News

\$30 Lowe's Antenna

I'm a big fan of homebrewing antennas, especially commercially-available antennas. So, when I saw this posting on the qrptech mailing list, I asked the author, Will, KI4POV, if I could re-post it here. So, here it is, with his permission. Thanks, Will!....Dan

I recently decided that the antenna situation at the shack needed an upgrade. I've been using a fan dipole for a little over a year now. It worked great when I had it cut for 2 bands, 40 and 20. However as I started wanting more bands and adding more legs, the performance got progressively worse. I needed something else.

After a lot of reading and research, I kept coming back to a non-resonant doublet fed with ladder line. The low loss of ladder line seemed like that perfect solution to my issues. I looked into antennas like the St. Louis Doublet, but I didn't have a huge roll of computer cable lying around, plus I wanted something that could potentially handle at least 100 watts in the future if I ever build an amp and go QRO.

I went to Lowe's and after wandering around, here's what I came up with.

I bought a 100 foot roll of 18 gauge speaker wire. my goal was a 100 foot doublet, so after splitting the two wires, this gave me 100 feet of antenna and 50 feet of feed line.

Next, I needed spacers for the ladder line portion. What I found was these bags of cable staples. They're about \$6 dollars per bag. I bought two bags worth to do the whole antenna.



These are a UV-resistant plastic spreaders that are a bit under an inch long with finishing nails through each side. They are made secure cable and wire runs in place. After pulling the two nails out, you are left with a plastic spacer that the two wires of the ladder line can be run through after drilling it out just slightly. Admittedly, pulling out all the nails and drilling all the holes took a couple of hours, but it really wasn't too bad once I got a system going. After that, it was just a matter of sliding the spacers onto the wire, spacing them appropriately (I put one about every 4 inches), then securing them in place with some weather-resistant hot glue.

From there on out, the rest was pretty quick and easy. I made my center insulator out of a small scrap of plexiglass I had and zip-tied the wires to it through small holes I drilled. I've got it up around 25 or 30 feet in a tree behind our house.

Upcoming Hamfests & Conventions

06/03/2023

FCARC Summer Hamfest

Location: Wauseon, OH

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Fulton County Amateur Radio Club

URL: <https://k8bxq.org/hamfest>

06/03/2023

IRA Hudsonville Hamfest

Location: Hudsonville, MI

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Independent Repeater Association

URL: <http://www.w8ira.org>

06/04/2023

Annual Chelsea Amateur Radio Club Swap Meet Partnering w/Michigan Electronics Expo

Location: Chelsea, MI

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Chelsea Amateur Radio Club

URL: <http://wd8iel.com>

06/17/2023

Midland Amateur Radio Club Hamfest

Location: Midland, MI

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Midland Amateur Radio Club

URL: <http://www.w8kea.org>

06/18/2023

Monroe Hamfest Electronics Expo

Location: Monroe, MI

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Monroe Hamfest

URL: <http://mcrca.org>

07/29/2023

Auburn Hamfest

Location: Auburn, IN

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Northeastern Indiana Amateur Radio Association

URL: <http://w9ou.org>



I'm matching it with a t-match tuner and a tiny 1:1 current balun that I plan to show in a separate post. I was able to get a good match on 80-15 meters, and based on RBN data, I think it may be a better performer than my fan dipole. I need more time to determine how it stacks up. Band conditions have not been great the past few days.

Anyway, there's nothing new or earth-shattering here, but just wanted to share that even with today's prices, you can still put together a decent "all-band" antenna on a budget if you're willing to invest a little time and effort.

Article courtesy of <https://www.kb6nu.com/30-lowes-antenna>

Meeting Minutes 04/20/2023

Meeting called to order @ 7:00 PM

Officers Present: Paul KE8MOI, Zack W8MAN, Mike KQ8N, Stephanie W8AEZ, Melanie KE8TPQ

Members Present: Kelly , John W8JRD, Larry KE8TOV, Bob AC8QM Don W8RVT, Don KB9IAR, Jim KC2JJQ, Jay N8ARR, Dan N8EC, Dan WB9KC, Kyle W8KDB, Terry N8LN, Tyler KE8UTG, Kevin KE8UUJ, Bret KD8RHB, Harold KE8JZU, Rick Franz N8RCF, Jim Zoss W8JMZ, Matt AD8KA, Ben N5AMD.

Secretary's Report: Motion was made to accept the report as printed in the Feedback. Motion was passed.

Treasurer's Report: Per Mike KQ8N
Monthly bills for AT&T and Internet. Melanie asked if we could have a small donation box for SMARS for those who wish to make a small donation to the club. Motion made, motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Hamfest – Kalamazoo Hamfest is October 7th, 2023 from 9 AM to 4 PM. They have increased their table and ticket prices for this year. Per Paul, Wings Stadium has our 2024 Hamfest event scheduled.
- Skywarn – Bret KD8RHB reported there was a good turnout for the Skywarn meeting this past Tuesday. He did two exercises (205/PACE planning) at the meeting. The preamble for Skywarn has been updated. There were no failures at our last warning siren test. The prior month's siren failures were attributed to the ice storm. There has been one confirmed tornado (Dundee) so far in Michigan this season. There will be a simulated state emergency test on June 3rd and a fire station simplex relay challenge on Saturday, June 17th. Bret invited anyone interested in Auxcomm to contact him. Per Jim W8JMZ, the date for the Radio Amateur Poker Run will be finalized and publicized. The run is anticipated to have around five stations.
- HIAD – Don W8RVT suggested that the SMARS club be promoted at the HIAD.
- Field Day 2023 – Zach W8MAN reported that the Ft Custer site reservations are all set. He will discuss at the May club meeting other items, such as an operator schedule. Dan WB8KC recommended checking the SWR of the antennas. Kelly asked if the weatherproofing of the trailer roofs had been completed. Paul said we would have to check with Tom KE8GDN. John W8JRD suggested posting information on our Field Day on the SMARS Facebook page as it would reach a larger audience.
- VE Session: Kyle W8KDB reported that there were twelve new HAMS after last month's HIAD, including one examinee who went from Tech &

General and one General who passed his Extra (congratulations, KE8MOI!). The next VE session will be at Maple United Methodist Church on Thursday, April 29th. Per Kyle, no one has yet contacted him about coming to the session.

- Repeaters – Don W8RVT reported that Echolink is still working on 2m, but it is operational on 220 MHz and 440 MHz. Terry N8LN reported that the DStar 2m repeater was recently serviced.

OLD BUSINESS:

- POTA. Zach said recently met with Ft. Custer manager (Tony Trojanowski). Tony confirmed that operators can use wire antennas as long as they are placed away from public traffic areas and no damage is caused to the trees. Zach will take a small group of people out to Ft. Custer this Saturday at 11 AM for a test run at the Pavillion) to activate the club's call sign. We need 10 unique callsigns (QSO's) to activate POTA. Zach will log the QSO's for the club. A Google Calendar will be used to coordinate operators.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Zach W8MAN encouraged all members to come to the club meetings. He proposed having a DX competition for the members. Two separate competitions: one for technicians, the other for general & extra class. QSO's must be confirmed (e.g. QRZ confirmed logs, QSL cards, confirmed LOTW logs); they can be screen-shots of the logs and printed off copies can be brought to the SMARS Club Meeting to enter the competition. Whoever achieves the longest distance contact that month gets special recognition in the Feedback.
- Matt AD8KA reported that Albion will have a Festival of Forks (September 15th-16th) in the downtown area. He invited the club to set up at his booth there to demonstrate amateur radio.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Halbert W8AEZ
SMARS Secretary

Board Meeting Minutes 05/05/2023

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 AM

Attendees: Paul KE8MOI, Mike KQ8N, Melanie KE8TPQ, Stephanie W8AEZ.

Topics of Discussion:

- POTA – Per Paul, Zach W8MAN said that last month's POTA activation was successful. Another POTA activation is planned for tomorrow (May 6th).
- Field Day – Paul KE8MOI emphasized that our Field Day will be focused on training and public relations. One of the main goals will be teaching other hams to use the various pieces of equipment and how to set it up. Don W8RVT won't be able to be at field day as he'll be out of town. Paul left a message for Tom KE8GDN about pulling the kenwood radios from the trailers as Don said he'd tune them up beforehand. Zach W8MAN said he didn't get a copy of the insurance, so Paul resent it to him. Melanie KE8TPQ has kindly offered to take care of the food. Donations are welcome to help her with the costs. State Representative Haadsma or his representative Paul will also drop by our event. Paul sent a letter to Mayor Behnke about coming but he hasn't heard back from him yet.
- VE Sessions – Paul KE8MOI proposed that the VE fees collected at our testing sessions come back to our club to help offset the costs of hosting the sessions. All of the Board members present at this evening's concurred.
- Treasurer's report – Mike KQ8N just paid the AT&T bill. He won't be at the next SMARS membership meeting due to the Hamvention in Xenia, OH.

Meeting ended at 7:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Halbert W8AEZ
SMARS Secretary

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY FEEDBACK

S.M.A.R.S. W8DF Club Repeaters

2m Repeater 146.66MHz, -600KHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz

2m DStar 146.79 MHz, -600 KHz offset

*1.25m Repeater 224.240 MHz, -1.6 MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8 Hz

APRS Digipeater/Igate, 144.39 MHz

*70cm Repeater 443.950 MHz, +5 MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8 Hz

70cm DStar Repeater 442.7625 MHz, +5 MHz offset

***Note:** 70cm & 1.25 meter repeaters are linked.

All repeaters are available via EchoLink (70cm and 1.25m are W8DF-R; 2m is W8DF-L)

Other Repeaters

2m Repeater 147.120 MHz, +600 KHz offset, CTCSS 186.2 Hz

70cm Repeater 442.350 MHz, +5 MHz offset, CTCSS 186.2 Hz

<p>Club Meeting 3rd Thursday of every month Maple United Methodist Church 342 Capital Avenue NE Battle Creek, MI 49017</p>	<p>SKYWARN Coffee 1st Saturday of every month Immediately after Siren Test Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>BLB Luncheon 1st Thursday of every month Coney Island, 962 Capital Ave NE, Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>SMARS Breakfast 2nd Saturday of every month Coney Island, 962 Capital Ave NE, Battle Creek, MI</p>
---	---	---	--

<p>SMARS Nets: Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66 MHz Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66 MHz Monday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 MHz Wednesday 7:00 PM, 224.24 /443.95 MHz Wednesday 8:00 PM, 28.365 MHz Saturday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 MHz</p> <p>Other Nets: Skywarn Net: Tuesday 7:00 PM, 147.12 MHz</p> <p><i>Please see previous page for offsets and CTCSS tones</i></p>	<p>Upcoming Events:</p> <p>Club Meeting: May 18th @ 7:00pm BLB Luncheon: June 1st @ 11:30am Board Meeting: June 2nd @ 6:30pm Club Breakfast: June 10th @ 8:30am VE Session: June 22nd @ 7:00pm</p> <p>Field Day Setup: June 23th @ 3:00pm Field Day: June 24-25th starting at 2:00pm</p>
---	---