



# THE LED

Published by the  
Livingston Amateur Radio Klub  
Howell Michigan

# MAY 2003

<http://www.qsl.net/milark>

Livingston Amateur Radio Klub  
PO Box 283  
Howell, Michigan 48844

Dated Material



NEXT KLUB MEETING  
MAY 8th 7:30 P.M.  
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER  
300 SOUTH HIGHLANDER WAY

NET  
146.680 SUNDAY 9:00 P.M.

## BOARD MEMBERS

President	Steve	N8GQ
Vice-President	Bill	K8BI
Secretary	Mary	KC8SER
Treasury	Dave	KE8Z
Program Director		
Tech Coordinator	Kenny	N4KCD
Board Member	Jerry	N8DY

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S

146.680 Repeater	Jack	KA8BOG
LED Editor	Roger	N8SGU
VE Coordinator	Greg	AA5GO

---

## PREZ SEZ

It's morning in America. Well sort of.

The terror alert is back to a warm yellow. The endless winter is over and so is the shooting war.

Life is good. Some people would state that the above is true, while others would say, "not quite so."

We have completed another year in the LARK and it is time for the election of new officers. If you haven't paid your dues there is no better time then now. If you haven't been to a meeting in the last year or more, now is the time to return. Let your voice be heard.

This past year I feel has been very good. We accomplished a lot and yet did not complete as much as we would have liked to. We dispelled the rumors and innuendo with regards to the club's books. We initiated the first E-LED and reduced our publishing and mail expenses by half. The KLUB again for the second year experienced no expenses for Field Day. We had some great presentations, and our business meetings have been cordial and friendly. Attendance was terrific, not quite standing room only but very well attended. We managed to get a number of our members' and friends' licenses upgraded, as well as bring some new people to the hobby. We established an Emergency Communication Fund that hopefully will continue to grow. In the event these funds are needed they will be available. This will allow those hams in the community that don't want to be members of

LARK to still help support this county. If you know someone that isn't a member have them send a check to the Livingston County Emergency Communication Fund.

It's been a good year and I thank you for the opportunity to have served. Nevertheless there is still more to do. We need to change to grow. We need new blood, fresh ideas, and people who are willing to contribute more than just opinions. Good luck to the new Board of Directors.

The pessimistic curmudgeonliness of classic conservatives is that change is bad; but their optimism comes from seeing opportunity in the present and in the traditions of the past.

Have a great year!

**Steve N8GQ**

---

## EDITORS COMMENTS

As preparing this document for publication I was wondering to my self, what is the future of the LARK. We dropped the Operation Care, as we couldn't get enough people to work the needed shifts. I don't know what will happen for Field Day, as nobody seems to want to handle that. We are short nominations for Officers for the Board. We will have to see what the next meeting brings.

**Roger N8SGU**

---

## TREASURER REPORT GENERAL OPERATING FUND

For period 1 March – to – March 31 2003

OPENING CASH:	\$2,756.66
Total Income	\$200.00
Total Expenditures	\$120.61
Net Cash Flow	\$79.39
ENDING CASH	\$2,836.05

### INCOME

50/50 Drawing	\$14.00
Donations	\$151.00*
Dues	\$35.00

### EXPENDITURES

Donations	\$112.00
Printing (LED)	\$2.88
Postage (LED)	\$5.55
Sales Tax	\$0.18

\* \$112.00 of the \$151.00 shown as Donations Income is from the White Elephant sale during the Awards Dinner.

Respectfully submitted,

**Dave KE8Z**  
**Treasurer**

---

**EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS  
FUND TREASURER REPORT**

For period 1 March – to – March 31 2003

OPENING CASH:	\$1045.75
Total Income	\$15.00
Total Expenditures	\$0.00
Net Cash Flow	\$15.00
ENDING CASH	\$1060.75

INCOME  
Donations \$15.00

EXPENDITURES:

NONE

Respectfully submitted,

**Dave KE8Z**  
**Treasurer**

---

**SECRETARIES REPORT  
GENERAL MEETING 04/10/03**

The guest speakers for April were from Complete Battery Source. These gentlemen gave a very interesting talk on the different types of batteries that amateurs may run across in their daily and emergency operations. They then answered questions from the audience. In addition they donated flashlights as door prizes. Mary KC8SMA led the reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, which opened our meeting. Bob K8PBA made a motion to accept the secretaries report as published in the April LED, with changes. These changes were mostly spelling errors. Mac N8RBA seconded. Motion carried. Mac N8RBA made

motion to accept treasurer report as published in the April LED. Ken N4KCD seconded. Motion carried.

**ARES/RACES:** Bruce N8WWX handed out RACES card, also went over last month ARES/RACES meeting. He informed all present that there would be a background check on those applying for their ARES/RACES cards.

**AWARDS:** Gerry N8DY was presented the “Teacher of the Year” award, Roger N8SGU was presented the “Editor of the Year” award, Messilia KC8UFT received the “Most Improved Amateur of the Year” award and Ken N4KCD received a “Board Member” award.

**OPERATION CARE:** There were not enough volunteers signed up to fill all shifts over the Memorial Day holiday weekend. One last call was given for volunteers. Since no one stepped forward, Dave KE8Z made a motion to cancel LARKS participation in Operation Care over the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Mac N8RBA seconded. Motion passed.

**Nomination for officers:** Melissa KC8UTS for Vice President, Mary KC8SER for Secretary and Paul KC8UKF for Board Member.

Melissa KC8UTF made a motion to adjourn. Dave KE8Z seconded. Motion passed.

50/50 Drawing: Bruce N8WWX won the 50/50 drawing for the second month in a row. He immediately donated the \$16.00 to the LARK Emergency Communication Fund. (Thanks Bruce)

Respectfully Submitted,

**Mary KC8SUR**

---

**YOUTH GROUP**

Hi, We had a lot of fun and some tired legs at the April meeting. The next meeting is on May 17 2:00 p.m., will be a cookout at 5704 Crandall Rd. Howell (Rick Jewett's house). Please bring a dish to pass. I will have hot dogs and hamburgers call (517) 546-6054 Thank You,  
**Paul (KC8UKF)**

---

## The PL259, A Tale of Woe

I'm one of those guys who buys premium silver plated PL259s and pays upwards of \$5 a piece for them. While some amateurs might believe that my connector phobia borders on Barnum's "A sucker is born every minute", I think not, and I'll tell you why.

It is my humble opinion the single most prevalent problem amateurs face is caused by the ubiquitous PL259. They typically are poorly or incorrectly soldered (if at all), the coax preparation is almost never done properly, and the material making up cheap PL259s easily corrodes or rusts adding insult to an already terse situation. These situations result in blaming all matter of station equipment and antennas rather than the real culprit; the PL259. So this treatise is an attempt to address the situation by making a few pertinent suggestions. First, there are a few do's and don'ts which need to be discussed aside from the quality issue of cheap PL259s.

Never, ever use a soldering gun! Soldering guns have very little thermal mass and as soon as you touch the tip to a cold connector what little latent heat there is, is drawn away. While you're waiting for the material to get hot enough to melt the solder, the core is slowly but surely being damaged beyond use. Proper soldering of PL259s requires two soldering irons (more on this later).

Never, ever cut coax with wire cutters! Doing so distorts the core and the center conductor making installation of the PL259 body rather difficult. If you don't have a proper cable cutter, a heavy-duty box cutter with a new blade is your best bet. Lay the coax on a scrap chunk of lumber and tap the box cutter through the coax with a small hammer. The cut needs to be clean and even.

Always use a coax cutting tool to prepare the coax for the PL259! The Cablematic® Division of Ripley Tools Corporation make the UT8000, a special coax cutter specifically for RG8U and RG213. (<http://www.ripley-tools.com>). The "First Cut" end cuts the coax outer jacket, shield, and core, but not the center conductor. The center conductor is cut to the exact length needed, 5/8".

Incidentally, the center conductor SHOULD NOT stick out of the end of the PL259 once it is installed, but just shy of the end (see picture below). This is the correct length! The "Second Cut" end of the tool removes just the outer jacket to the correct length, 5/8". Other companies make coax

prep tools, but this one is the best. I've had mine 25 years and it has saved me countless hours in the mean time.

Always use good quality solder! I prefer Kesters 60/40 multicore because I know of its quality. That cheap stuff you buy from Radio Shack or Wal-Mart is not the solder of champions. I prefer the small .081 size but the .105 is okay too. Larger sizes tend to have too much rosin so I don't use them.

Now let's talk about the soldering irons. Two, count them two, are required. I use a Weller pencil type to solder the center conductor which incidentally should be soldered first. If you use good PL259s as I suggest, this operation takes about 10 to 15 seconds. Enough solder should be used to close the connector tip entirely to aid in keeping out moisture.

I use a modified 80 watt Weller SP80 iron to solder the body of the PL259. Big, ugly, but lots of latent heat to get the job done quickly! Its round tip is slightly flattened so it just fits into the groove of the PL259. I clamp the iron in the vise and rotate the work, not the other way around.

So we've got our coax prepped, our irons hot, and it's time to screw on the PL259. Remember slide the outer threaded barrel on to the coax first. I digress.

All too often I have seen amateurs cut the jacket away to the point the shield shows after assembly. This IS NOT the proper way. If you follow the cutting table listed in the ARRL Handbook, the jacket stripping length is too short, and on some PL259s, the jacket bottoms out before the core is snug against the back of the tip. Further, the jacket could cause contamination of the solder thus impeding its flow. Both good reasons for purchasing a proper stripping tool.

Make sure you put the threaded barrel over the coax and in the correct direction! Then carefully slide the PL259 body over the end of the coax and screw it down over the jacket. A small pair of channel lock pliers works well for this purpose. Once resistance is felt stop threading. And speaking of resistance, once you get connectors screwed on both ends is a good time to use your DVM or VOM to check for shorts between the center and shield.

With the center conductor should be just below the notch in the tip of the PL259, solder the tips with the small pencil iron and let them cool before soldering the shield. Again, enough solder should be used to close the end of the tip. Avoid slopping solder on the outside of the center pins.

Next solder the shields. If the soldering iron tip is well tinned, about 6 to 10 seconds later the barrel will be hot enough to accept solder. The solder should be applied just at the edge of each hole so it flows into the shield. Enough solder should be applied to just close the hole. Use too much and it could flow to the tip and cause a short. This operation should take about 20 seconds and requires both hands; one to apply the solder and the other to rotate the coax. Now you know why I clamp the iron in a vice. Once soldering is complete, it's time to recheck for shorts and continuity.

There! You have my secret.

**Alan Applegate, KØBG**

---

## **Ten ) More Undeniable Ham Truths**

(In my humble opinion

1. A clean ham shack is an oxymoron.
  2. The rare DX will be on while you're on vacation.
  3. The higher the tower, the greater the TVI complaints.
  4. Your grandchildren are more likely to become hams than your children.
  5. Hamfest attendance is inversely related to the price of gasoline.
  6. Lightning will always hit the expensive gear first.
  7. Whistling "CQ" in the dark deters muggers.
  8. The older the ham club president, the fewer young members.
  9. Computer Nerds think that Hams are the real weirdos.
  10. Junk boxes will never, never contain the last part needed to complete a project.
- 

## **LIBERTY**

"When poor Winston Smith was keeping his secret journal in George Orwell's 1984, one of his first crimes against

the all-knowing state was to write down the subversive thought: Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. Note that Winston didn't define freedom as the freedom to say

that two plus two make five, or three, or anything but the truth. The freedom to speak a lie, or not much care whether it is a lie or not, may be the essence of self-delusion, or of deconstruction, or even the adversary system. But it is not true freedom, which is dependent on truth. The truth sets us free in more ways than one; it not only allows us to say what we think but allows the world to correct us. Because it furnishes us a standard outside ourselves by which we may be judged. Without it, we live on our own little imaginary planets, spinning out of control. It is the lies, the evasions, the falsehoods, the purely adversarial arguments which power is prone to use that undermine freedom -- and human discourse itself."

**Paul Greenberg**

---

## **Available ARES/RACES members**

For those that can make it, there will be a general ARES/RACES meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. Items to be discussed will be the summer Wednesday night HF Field Exercises, if there is enough interest to participate.

(Sorry, to those I previously advised the 7th, it was taken and was pretty close to the Klub meeting.)

**Bruce N8WWX**

---

## **DAYTON HAMFEST**

Anyone looking for a bus trip to Dayton you can pick one up in Ann Arbor. Please read the email below for more information...Debbie KA8YKK

Dear Fellow Hams:

This year Arrow is planning a one-day motor coach trip to the Dayton

Hamvention on May 17th.

<http://www.w8pgw.org/node.php?id=73>

Travel in style with your friends in a fully appointed motor

coach and avoid the expense and stress of driving and parking.

The bus will depart for Dayton will be from Ann Arbor at 5:00 am and arrive around 9:00am. Our tentative departure point is Pioneer high school. Departure from Dayton is 5:00 PM arriving back in Ann Arbor around 8:00 p.m.

You will have a full day to tour the exhibits, visit manufactures booths, take FCC exams, attend the seminars, and go bargain hunting at the swap meet!

Tickets for the trip are \$45.00 per person and are refundable up to May 1st.

For more information visit our website at <http://www.w8pgw.org/node.php?id=73> or contact Dan Romanchik KB6NU at 734-930-6564 or [kb6nu@w8pgw.org](mailto:kb6nu@w8pgw.org).

73's

---

## BROADBAND OVER POWER LINES

The FCC released its Notice of Inquiry (NOI) on the deployment of "Broadband over Power Line" (BPL) technology on April 28 and now is accepting comments. A form of carrier-current communication better known as power line carrier (PLC), the technology has raised concerns of substantial interference to the Amateur Radio HF bands.

BPL would couple high-frequency RF to parts of the power grid and use existing power lines as the transmission medium to deliver broadband and Internet access. In the NOI, the FCC acknowledges the interference risk from BPL.

ARRL Lab Manager and RFI guru Ed Hare, W1RFI, has cautioned that deployment of BPL could affect every amateur in communities where it's employed with a significant increase in noise levels. More information is on the Web at [www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/](http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/).

The complete NOI is available on the FCC Web site. The FCC now is

accepting electronically filed comments via its Electronic Comment Filing System ECFS Express page. To initiate a comment, click next to "Broadband over the traditional telephone network."

---

**I've gotta cut back on the caffeine**

