



The Manatee Amateur Radio Club, Inc. • An ARRL Affiliated Club

MARCI Newsletter



The Manatee Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

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On the Road with Jonelle

This is the first (and maybe last!) of an occasional column of stories and editorial commentary by our editor on life and Ham radio. Enjoy!

A Florida senior citizen drove his brand new Corvette convertible out of the dealership.

Taking off down the road, he pushed it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left. "Amazing," he thought as he flew down I-75, pushing the pedal even more.

Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a Florida State Trooper, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120. Suddenly he thought, "What am I doing? I'm too old for this!" and pulled over to await the trooper's arrival.

Pulling in behind him, the trooper got out of his vehicle and walked up to the Corvette. He looked at his watch, then said, "Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Fri-

day. If you can give me a new reason for speeding--a reason I've never before heard--I'll let you go."

The old gentleman paused then said: "Three years ago, my wife ran off with a Florida State Trooper. I thought you were bringing her back."

"Have a good day, Sir," replied the trooper

Contributed by
Jonelle Nabergall, KI4WSN

Notices

Your MARCI membership expired on December 31st! Annual dues are \$25.00 for FULL member and \$5.00 for each family member at the same address, Student Membership is \$12.50. Please bring payment with you to the January meeting or send your payment to Frank Morton, AC4MK (checks only by mail, please).

Nets You Might Find Interesting

These Nets are all on the NI4CE "BIG STICK" 145.43 - 100 Hz Tone and 442.95 + 100 Hz Tone

DAILY: 8:30 PM - THE EAGLE NET:

The VHF/UHF NTS Message Traffic Net in West Central Florida. Check in and tune up your message handling skills.

SUNDAY: 7:30 PM - WCF INFO NET:

Check into the net and find out what's going on in the Section. Its all here.

THURSDAY: 9:00 PM - TECH NET:

Got a question? Just getting started in ham radio? Our Technical Specialists can help!

Contributed by
Geoff Haines, N1GY



MARCI Weekly Information Net

Every Thursday at 7pm
146.820 -100 CPS Tone

MARCI Monthly Meetings

1st Tuesday of the Month
Starting at 7pm
Red Cross Building
2905 59th St. W.
Bradenton, FL

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR



MARCI Repeater
146.820 -
100 CPS Tone

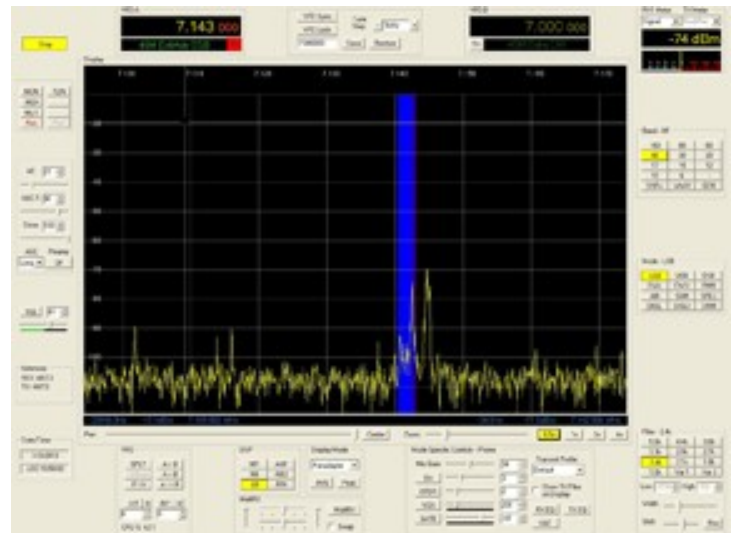
Product Review

The Flex-5000A Software Defined Radio

The Flex-5000A is the flagship ham radio from Flexradio systems, Austin TX (<http://www.flex-radio.com/>). By conventional standards, this is a very different radio. The first thing you notice is the lack of knobs or anything that resembles a control - beyond the illuminated power switch. There is an 8-pin mic jack, and the ubiquitous 1/4 inch headphone jack; otherwise the front panel is blank. This radio is completely computer-controlled by the "Power SDR" software that accompanies the radio. In fact, your computer literally becomes a significant portion of the radio.

The main features of the Flex 5000A are: The panoramic display, variable band pass filters with "brick wall" skirts, and first rate TX audio quality - even with a modest microphone. The receiver is superb, surpassed by few - the most notable exception being the K3. In my opinion, the panoramic display is what makes this the radio to own (see Photo).

The panoramic display provides a real time graphical representation of the radio spectrum - like a spectrum analyzer. The frequency you are tuned to is in the center, lower frequencies are to the left, higher frequencies to the right. A signal appears as a vertical "peak" - the taller the peak, the stronger the signal.



The panoramic display of the Flex-5000A. This display is generated by the Power SDR software running on the radio operator's computer.

The spectrum width displayed can be varied from a maximum of 192 KHZ, down to about 4 KHZ. This allows you to see the activity on a good bit of the band, or zoom in and closely examine one specific signal. In short order, you learn to visually identify RTTY, CW, AM, USB, and LSB transmissions at a glance. The wider display widths are highly useful if your searching for an open frequency or if you are looking for a QSO to join when the bands are quiet.

The Flex 5000A is an all mode radio. Modes and bands are selected by clicking on the appropriate button. 10 Preset filter widths are available for easy bandwidth selection, or you can

use a slider control to vary the width of the receiver band pass to suite your taste or situation.

The Power SDR software allows you to record what you hear and this can be handy in many situations, most notably when someone you are working wants to hear what his own TX audio sounds like. You can also record yourself calling CQ, and save your vocal cords some wear and tear during your next contest.

For the moment, this rig has no equal. Software Defined Radio technology is still in its infancy, and the Flex-5000A represents a big step in the evolution of that technology.

Steve Senft, KG4LJB