FARL President's Notes, January 2011

Well, I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's holiday period (not counting the Michigan State and Michigan bowl games, that is). Perhaps you participated in Straight Key Night on New Year's Eve and Day. Maybe you were in the CQ Worldwide CW contest in November (the CW segments of the bands were really hopping for that one – I could see and hear that for myself).

I mentioned being able to see the conditions on the bands. That's something that's easy to do with PowerSDR, the software that controls the FlexRadio software defined radios, and its visual panadapter display. At a glance, you can tell where the signals are – and where they're not, if you're trying to find an unused frequency. You can also – no, I think I'll leave that for my presentation on the FLEX-1500 radio, currently scheduled for this month's meeting.

Five of us made it to Mott Children's Hospital in December to put on Speaking With Santa. It's always been a well-received event, and this year was no exception. Even though our numbers were low, we still were able to put two Santas and two elf teams on the job. One of the patients asked me to pose for a picture with her, so she could show her niece that she'd actually met one of Santa's elves.

Now that the holidays have passed, it's time to get back into our meeting schedule. Our next meeting is January 13 at 6:30 PM at the EMDO Building. The presentation will be a demonstration of the FLEX-1500 software defined radio by yours truly. We'll also discuss possible revisions of the bylaws and/or constitution and hear about a recent repeater "adventure" (something we don't need). We'll also find out who's going to be going to the Hazel Park swap. In short, your typical meeting. Here's hoping for no snow that night (so no excuse to stay home, hi hi)!

73,
Roger, KD8CSE

Ford Amateur Radio League (AKA: The Tin Lizzy Club)
Club Meeting Minutes – November 11, 2010

Minutes, FARL Club Meeting - November 11th, 2010

Meeting was called to order at 18:35 (6:35p.m.)
9 members and 2 visitors were present.
Held a moment of silence for former member Joe Meyer - KA8KDO (silent key)

Minutes from prior meeting: October 2010 meeting minutes were approved without changes.

Treasurer Report: No report this month due to the change over of the treasurer position.

Board of Directors Meeting: None held.

Committee Reports:

Repeaters: All repeaters are still experiencing some trouble. If you notice any difficulties with any of them, please note the time and date; the kind of interference or trouble and send an email to either Roger, KD8CSE or Dave, N8HKU.
Don't forget to join the Sunday night net at 8p.m.

Education and Training: Starting in January, Bill Boyke, N8OZV will be resuming his Thursday training sessions at the Ford Building #2 at Oakwood & Rotunda approx. 11:30a.m. It is open to all. Contact Bill at wboyke@ford.com.

Communication - Newsletter/Website: Dave, N8HKU has added a lot of new links to the website along with the 2010 field day info.

Don't forget that the **Tin Lizzy Club** is now located on Facebook. You don't need an account to browse, but you do if you plan on leaving comments.

FEAR: No new news.

Unfinished/Current Business:

Unfinished Business:
Article IV Sec. @ of the By-Laws is still under review. The current suggestion reads as follows: **"A minimum of three (3) Board members must approve any 'emergency' expenditure not to exceed $300."** This will be revisited at the January club meeting.

New Business:
Discussion of a quorum: whether email voting or absentee voting is possible. A proposal to change the Constitution and discuss this will be held at the January meeting where suggestions will be taken.

Radio Santa is going on at Motts Children's Hospital. If you can help, please contact Bill Boyke, N8OZV. Needed are 220 and/or 440 handheld radios.

An application for membership was put forth at the meeting. Motion to except the new member was approved. The club would like to welcome the newest member **Joel Stanley, WU8Y.**

The Christmas dinner was voted on and approved for the same location as last year. **Mallie's Bar and Grille**; 19400 Northline Road, Southgate. Dinner to start at 6:30p.m. An email has been sent out to all members so we can get an approximate head count.

Break: 19:25 (7:25p.m.)

Presentation: Al, W8AMH did a short presentation on Bluetooth headsets for Amateur radio.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:10 (8:10p.m).

General Motors Turns to Ham Radio to Solve Antenna Problem - ARRL

When General Motors -- the world's second largest auto maker -- encountered a problem with the AM/FM antenna on its 2011 Chevrolet Camaro convertible, it was at a loss as to what to do. Spy photographs showed a pre-production version of the car with a long whip-style antenna on its rear fender. After what GM called "an outcry among Camaro enthusiasts," the company decided to rethink the antenna. But how?

On hardtop Camaros, the antenna is integrated into the rear windshield, but given the disappearing nature of this car's roof, that wasn't possible on the convertible. So GM turned to two antenna engineers -- Don Hibbard, W8DBH, and Gregg Kittinger -- who were tasked with doing what some thought was impossible: concealing the AM/FM antenna without sacrificing radio reception, while not putting it inside the Camaro's windows.

Hibbard and Kittinger managed to find a way to bury the AM/FM antenna inside the svelte spoiler perched on the car's rear deck lid. All that is visible is a shark fin antenna (used for satellite radio, OnStar and cellular signals), while the separate whip antenna -- built into the spoiler -- is used to receive AM and FM radio signals. He and Kittinger knew they had to find a way to preserve the vertical polarization of an AM/FM antenna, so they tried a few possibilities before coming up with the idea of placing the half-wavelength horizontal antenna in the spoiler. According to GM, this is a first.

A ham since 1977, Hibbard -- the holder of an Advanced class license -- is a self-described antenna nut, crediting his Amateur Radio background as a precursor for his love for antennas. He was first licensed when he attended Lansing Community College where he was studying electrical engineering. "One of my professors asked us in class if we would be interested in getting licensed," he told the ARRL. "We already knew the technical stuff from our college courses, but we settled in to learn Morse code, the FCC regulations and everything else you needed to know to become a ham."

After graduating, Hibbard went to work for General Motors in the electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) lab. A few years ago when a position in the antenna validation department opened, he jumped at the chance. "Through ham radio, I've always loved

playing with antennas," he said. "As hams, we are always building and experimenting. Sometimes at work, when I'm confronted with a problem, I say, 'I did such-and-such on an antenna for a ham band. I wonder if it will work here.' So my amateur experience with antennas has definitely come into play here at work."

The spoiler AM/FM antenna is an active antenna module that does all its impedance matching and amplification before sending back to the receiver. But when asked about the possibility of an amateur antenna in the spoiler, Hibbard just chuckled. "This antenna just receives, it doesn't transmit," he told the ARRL. "We can get away with a receive-only antenna in the spoiler. I'm not so sure about a ham antenna."

Hibbard said that the unorthodox placement of the antenna within the body of the vehicle created a number of technical challenges, such as balancing form by preserving the car's styling and maintaining unimpeded audio reception. "Where other automakers have tried and failed, Chevy succeeded," said Hibbard. "We hope to take what we've learned with the Camaro convertible, build on it and apply it to future vehicles."

Hibbard said that with work and kids in college, he has not found as much time as he would like to be active once again on the air; he counts 15 meters as his favorite band and SSB his mode of choice. "I really enjoy contesting, ARRL Field Day and the ARRL Sweepstakes," he said. "I also love experimenting and seeing what I can do. After all, I'm a ham."

For more information on the spoiler antenna, check out this video (http://reviews.cnet.com/8301-13746_7-20026067-48.html) of Hibbard and Kittinger. The 2011 Chevrolet Camaro goes on the market in February 2011.

FCC Cites Retailer for Marketing Amateur Radios as CB Radios - ARRL

In October 2010, an agent from the FCC's Enforcement Office visited Monroe, Michigan-based Doctor Radio's CB Shop (http://dr-radio.com/) to find that the store was selling, among other items, a radio that was described as "an Amateur Radio that could operate on CB frequencies" that was modified to operate above the approved power limits. As such, the FCC issued a Citation (http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-11-5A1.pdf) to the store on January 4 for marketing unauthorized radio frequency devices in the United States in violation of Section 302(b) of the Communications Act and Section 2.803(a)(1) of the Commission's rules.

The equipment in question includes a Cobra 150 GTL DX (http://www.cobra.com/downloads/manuals/150GTLDX.pdf). A store employee explained to an FCC agent that the transceiver had been modified to generate 170 W of power. The store employee further explained that the Cobra 150 GTL DX was an Amateur Radio transceiver that could operate on CB frequencies. If legally operated, the 150 GTL DX operates from 28-29.7 MHz; the CB frequencies are 26.965-27.405 MHz.
Section 95.655(a) (http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2002/octqtr/pdf/47cfr95.655.pdf) of the FCC rules prohibit radios that can transmit on both the amateur and CB bands. According to the Citation, the Cobra 150 GTL DX "offered for sale at Doctor Radio had both CB and Amateur Radio capability and therefore cannot be sold in the United States."

The FCC advised Doctor Radio's CB Shop that if after receipt of the Citation, it violates the Communications Act or the Rules by continuing these sorts of sales, the FCC may impose monetary forfeitures of up to $16,000 for each such violation or each day of a continuing violation, and up to $112,500 for any single act or failure to act. In addition, violations of the Communications Act or the Rules can result in seizure of equipment through in rem (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_rem) forfeiture actions as well as criminal sanctions, including imprisonment.

Doctor Radio's CB Shop has until February 4 to respond to the Citation, either through a personal interview at the FCC's Farmington Hills, Michigan office, or via a written statement.

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@arrl.net
Hazel Park ARC	Dee Flint	248-981-8145	N8UZE@arrl.net
USECA ARC	Joseph Kennedy	586-977-7222	N8OZ@arrl.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.

2010-2011 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	John Stucka	N3JM	313-576-9880
Bolt Editor	Rajiv Paul	KD8LHF	313-244-2515

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: January 13, 2011 at 6:30PM
Topic: FLEX 1500 Radio – Roger, KD8CSE

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