

# Twin City Amateur Radio Club

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

February 2011

Milt Forsberg K9QZI Editor



## Next Meeting is February 8

Our next meeting is at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 8, at the UI Fire Institute. The program is by Al Wolfe, K9SI, on connectors. He will show many types of connectors, explain their use, and demonstrate how to properly install them. This is an excellent learning opportunity for everyone.

## 2 Meter FM Challenge

January 9 found several club members scurrying up and down the 2 meter band looking for contacts. One of our popular 2 Meter FM Challenge contests warmed up the 2 meter band for an hour. From 7 to 8 p.m., we talked to as many stations as we could, each counting for a point and different towns also counted as multipliers. Providing more excitement, Mark, KC9DUU, and his son, Adam, KC9JVY drove from town to town making contacts from each location as rovers, giving those who talked with them a multiplier for each different town. (Contacting 6 towns means multiplying the total number of contacts by 6). They covered CU, Mayview, St Joseph, Sidney, Philo, Savoy, and possibly more. Several stations in the Danville area heard us and gave us more points as we contacted them. The scores are not tallied yet, but should be very soon. Due to early publishing of the newsletter, the scores were not available.

## Local Nets

D-Rats Net on W9YR	Tuesday 8 p.m.
◆Week of Second Tuesday - Meets Wednesday	
ARES 444.100	Tuesday 9 p.m.
Illinois D-Star 443.48125	Wednesday 9 p.m.
Champaign Co 146.760	Thursday 9 p.m.
Illini Net 14.320	11:30 a.m. Daily Except Thursday

## VE Exam Schedule

02/10/2011 Illiana Radio Club  
7:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC  
James P. Osburn (812) 238-0584  
Ryves Youth Center at Etling Hall  
1356 Locust St Terre Haute IN

02/16/2011 Iroquois County ARC  
7:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC  
Carl F. Schroeder (815) 473-4263  
Glen Raymond School 101 E Mulberry St  
Watseka IL

03/10/2011 Illiana Radio Club  
7:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC  
James P. Osburn (812) 238-0584  
Ryves Youth Center at Etling Hall  
1356 Locust St Terre Haute IN

03/12/2011 Central Illinois Radio Club  
1:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC  
Keith R. Hanson (309) 378-4416  
Fire Station 1300 E College Ave Normal IL

## Hamfest Calendar

Feb 11	Orlando, FL
Mar 6	Sterling-Rock Falls, IL
Mar 12	Terre Haute, IN
Apr 1-2	AES Superfest, Milwaukee, WI
Apr 2	Belton, TX
Apr 16	Madison, WI
Apr 30	Godfrey, IL
May 1	Arthur, IL
May 1	Sandwich, IL
May 20	Dayton, OH



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**TCARC**  
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To get to the Fire Institute, go south on First Street from the Assembly Hall to the UI Credit Union - That is Gerty. Go West on Gerty to the end of the street. You will be in the Fire Institute parking lot. We are in one of the classrooms inside.

The TCARC Board meets on the Thursday prior to our regular monthly meeting. It is at 7:00 p.m. at the UI Fire Institute. Club members are welcome to attend.

## Another FM Challenge

Now that we are warmed up for contesting, Jeremy, KC9KGJ, set the date for the next 2 Meter FM Challenge on February 20, Sunday afternoon from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Taking advantage of daylight, more rovers should participate. Details are forthcoming and will be announced on the nets and on the Internet. Please mark your calendar now!

## TCARC Officers and Board Members

<b>President</b>	Jeremy Lamb KC9KGJ	621-8036
<b>Vice President</b>	Wayne Hamilton AB9FJ	384-4310
<b>Secretary</b>	Chris Anderson W9CMA	403-1599
<b>Treasurer</b>	Milt Forsberg K9QZI	352-5075

## Board Members

Larry Mohr K9LMM	356-3794
Jim Crisman N9AJV	202-7402
Dr Mike Trautman K9MLT	356-4302

## VE Coordinator

Debbie Fligor N9DN 244-4446

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.w9seh.org">www.w9seh.org</a>
<b>Analog Repeater W9SEH</b>	146.760
<b>D-Star Repeater W9YR</b>	443.48125

## Auction

It's time to start digging in that junk box to see what you can bring to our annual auction. The date is Saturday, April 9, 2011, at the Windsor Road Christian Church. The event will run as it has in the past, with doors opening for equipment at 11:00 a.m. and the auction beginning at 1:00 p.m. Food will be prepared by some of the church members and available for purchase prior to the start of sales.

As in the past, the club will retain 10% of the sale price as a commission. However, if the seller is not happy with the bids, he may bid it up and if no one outbids him, he buys it back. No charges are associated with this transaction. Bidder number are \$2 each, spectators are free.

We encourage everyone to donate items to the club for sale, with the entire proceeds retained by the club. This is our main fund raising effort and we greatly appreciate the donations of past years.

Amateur Accessories, Steve Zahos, KR4S, will be in his usual location at the auction with many fine accessories for sale, including antennas, connectors, books, microphones, and many more items. His will be straight sales, nothing auctioned by him.

Please talk up the auction with as many people as you can. Word of mouth is great advertising, and who knows, your friend just might buy your items.

As always, we need help setting up prior to the event, and tearing down after the close. No huge effort is needed, but the more helping, the easier and faster it will be.

## Electronic Newsletter

Please contact Milt, K9QZ! if you would like to receive this newsletter over the Internet.

## VE Exams A Big Success

Sunday, January 23, was our most recent VE Exam Session at the UI Fire Institute. 8 candidates arrived to be tested, and 8 went away with big smiles on their faces. Everyone passed whatever they needed, resulting in 7 new Technician Licenses and 1 General upgrade. The interesting part of this is that 3 were 12 and under, They are the result of a recent class held by Debbie, N9DN, on Saturdays. One is Debbie's and Jay's son, Pierce. The other 2 are Brian and Elizabeth, son and daughter of Keith, KC9TMR. Keith was in the class as well, but was ready to take the test earlier, so he tested in Monticello. The licenses were issued Friday, January 29, by the FCC. Pierce is KC9TOF, Brian KC9TOK, and Elizabeth is KC9TOL. As soon as they learned of the call signs, they were on the air! All 3 made several contacts on Friday. Pierce was heard on the D-Star repeater as well as our analog repeaters. Brian and Elizabeth were on the analog repeaters - Brian learned how to use Echolink and made a few contacts in other places, including New Zealand. Later in the evening, he was heard helping another new licensee learn about Echolink. Wow! What a first day on the air for all of them! Congratulations to all. Our next VE session is Sunday, April 17.

## Orlando!

The Orlando Hamcation is a little over a week away. This is a great time to get away from Illinois weather and enjoy an outdoor and indoor hamfest. It is February 11-13 in Florida.

## Dues

We received dues from most of our members. Thank you. If you are not up to date on your dues, please send a check to our PO box listed in the return address on this newsletter. If you receive a paper mailing of the newsletter, the dues expiration date is on your label. If you receive electronically, the date is in your notice.

## Fractal Antennas: Hype or Hope?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

QRZ.Com currently has a very interesting item on fractal antennas (<http://forums.qrz.com/showthread.php?t=277623>). While the idea of applying fractals to the design and construction of antennas has been around for quite some time, very few hams have actually built them, and there are currently no companies building commercial fractal antennas for the ham radio market. The question, of course, is why?

Those that are hyping fractal antennas—most notably W1YW, CEO of Fractal Antenna Systems—claim several advantages. These advantages purportedly include wider bandwidth and smaller size when compared to traditional antennas, such as verticals and dipoles. Those that are trying to debunk these claims contend that this is all just hogwash, and that there's no real scientific basis for these claims.

One thing that's confounding this debate is that there have been very few articles published on the topic. For commercial reasons, W1YW has made his articles unavailable. He says that he will be publishing something real soon now, but there is nothing definite at this point.

There is at least one article on the Internet that describes the construction of a fractal antenna for amateur radio use. "FYI:FYQ: Another look at the Fractal Quad Yagi" (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/18788401/FYIFQY>) was published in the October 1999 issue of 73 magazine. It describes the construction of a two-element, 10m antenna. Like most 73 articles, it's not incredibly technical, though, and doesn't really contribute to the technical debate, except to demonstrate that physically small antennas can be made using fractal design.

The PDF contains several photos of the antenna. It's a crazy contraption that looks relatively difficult to build. So difficult, in fact, that it makes me wonder if it's even worth it to try building one. After all, 10m antennas are not really all that big or all that difficult to build to begin with.

Even more interesting than the antennas are the personalities on both sides of the debate. The QRZ.Com discussion quickly devolved into a flame war, with neither side scoring a knockout.

Personally, I think the brouhaha is much ado about nothing. It seems to me that it's been demonstrated that you can build antennas using fractal design techniques. They are physically smaller than traditional antenna designs, but you really don't get something for nothing. Overall, they don't have as much gain as yagis or quads, and they're more complex to build.

My opinion on this is that if W1YW can build antennas that radiate a signal and can sell those antennas to someone, then more power to him. In the end, his company will live and die by how well, his antennas work and how much they cost when compared to antennas from other companies.

As for me, I think I'll stick with the more traditional HF antennas. If I need to make my antennas smaller, I'll use loading coils or designs such as the Moxon. I may not be on the bleeding edge of technology, but I'll certainly avoid a lot of headache trying to figure out who's right.

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When not avoiding flame wars on QRZ.Com, Dan, KB6NU, operates CW on the HF bands, writes and publishes license exam study guides, and teaches ham radio classes. You can find his ham radio blog at [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com).