MARA Squelch Tales

Newsletter for the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for February 2011

FCC Sends License Renewal for K1MAN to Administrative Law Judge

Provided by ARRL HQ, Newington, CT.

The FCC has issued a *Hearing Designation Order* to determine, among other things, if the Amateur Radio license of Glenn A. Baxter, K1MAN, of Belgrade Lakes, Maine, should be renewed. According to the *Order*, "Baxter has apparently willfully and repeatedly engaged in unlawful Commission-related activities, including causing interference to ongoing communications of other amateur stations, transmitting communications in which he had a pecuniary interest, failing to file requested information pursuant to an Enforcement Bureau (Bureau) directive, engaging in broadcasting without communicating with any particular station and failing to exercise control of his station."

Baxter, whose amateur license expired in 2005, filed a timely renewal on July 22, 2005; his license expired on October 17. Because of the timely renewal, Baxter's license remained in effect past the expiration date. The FCC said it "believe[s] that Baxter's apparent continuing course of misconduct raises a substantial and material question of fact as to whether he possesses the requisite character qualifications to be and remain a Commission licensee."

Amateur Radio - Technician Level License Class

A Technician Level 9-week course will prepare you for the exam. The class is sponsored by the Piscataquis Amateur Radio Club (PARC). The course fee includes the 2010 ARRL Technician Class manual, and the ARRL VEC Exam fee. Instructors: George Dean, WA1JMM and Ken Worster, KB1UJS. Ken is the Physics/Chemistry teacher at PVHS and is enjoying his Amateur Extra class radio license. George is a retired US Navy cryptologist. He has been an Amatteur Radio Operator fo more than 42 years.

Beginning March 3 through May 5; 9 Weeks, Thursdays, 6 - 9 PM

FMI & on-line registration: http://pvaec.maineadulted.org/courses/course/amateur_radio__technician_level_license

Exam Session in Maine for 2011

01/20/2011 | South Portland ME 04106-2909

Sponsor: Portland Amateur WA
Location: Stewart Morrill American Legion #35
Time: 6:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

02/05/2011 | Bangor ME 04401-2929

Sponsor: Pine State ARC
Location: Bangor Daily News Offices
Time: 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

04/02/2011 | Bangor ME 04401-2929

Sponsor: Pine State ARC
Location: Bangor Daily News Offices
Time: 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

04/16/2011 | South Portland ME 04106-2909

Sponsor: Portland Amateur WA
Location: Stewart Morrill American Legion #35
Time: 10:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

(Cont.)

06/04/2011 | Hermon ME 04401-9999

Sponsor: Pine State ARC
Location: Hermon Hamfest, Hermon HS
Time: 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

07/21/2011 | South Portland ME 04106-2909

Sponsor: Portland Amateur WA
Location: Stewart Morrill American Legion #35
Time: 6:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

10/20/2011 | South Portland ME 04106-2909

Sponsor: Portland Amateur WA
Location: Stewart Morrill American Legion #35
Time: 6:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

NOTE: The MARA is attempting to coordinate with th4e PAWA to see is a few sessions could be done at the Topsham Red Cross…stay tuned.

What is the Incident Command System?

A ARES/CERT training reminder

The *Incident Command System* (ICS) is a standardized approach to incident management that:

- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and agencies.
- Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources.
- Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

The *National Incident Management System* (NIMS) provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment.

The *National Response Framework* (NRF) is a guide to how the Nation conducts all-hazards response - from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe. This key document establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response. The Framework identifies the key response principles, roles, and structures that organize national response. It describes how communities, States, the Federal Government, and private-sector and nongovernmental partners apply these principles for a coordinated, effective national response. -- FEMA

The KS1R 1.284 GHz repeater to become K1MNW/R

Oak Hill, Brunswick, ME: On January 23rd Bill Messier, repeater site manager & facilitator on the MARA technical committee approached KS1R Trustee Bruce Randall, W1ZE with the following suggestion. With very little use of the 1.248.GHz repeater, nearly 100% of the equipment involved in the repeater was provided by Bill; and the repeater is housed at a different tower site on Oak Hill than the other MARA's repeaters, why not transfer the responsibility of ownership and maintaining the repeater to K1MNW? Bruce said he agrees with Bill's recommendation and in consultation with the other tech committee members they also had no problem with the change. Bruce advised that the KS1R call sign was used for ease of record keeping and coordinating at the time. It would be a simple process to transfer and coordinate the microwave repeater from KS1R trustee to K1MNW and make the appropriate changes with the New England Spectrum Management Council.

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?

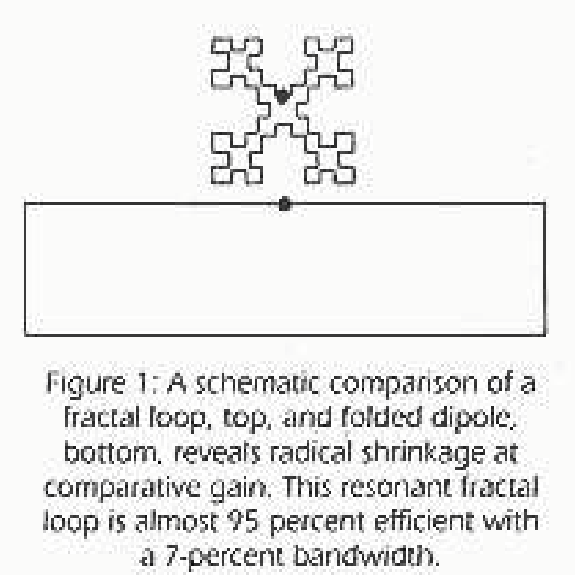

Figure 1: A schematic comparison of a fractal loop, top, and folded dipole, bottom, reveals radical shrinkage at comparative gain. This resonant fractal loop is almost 95 percent efficient with a 7-percent bandwidth.

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.

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.