

IRVING AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Serving Amateur Radio Since 1955

WA5CKF REPEATERS:

- 146.72 PL 110.9
- 224.40 NO TONE
- 442.675 PL 110.9

June 2021



Important Club Updates

The June meeting will be our last virtual meeting. To register for the June meeting use the link below:

<https://webex-488.my.webex.com/webex-488.my/j.php?RGID=r2d0fbb121f0d5ad657e2c2d21ea059fe>

After clicking the link above, if you see a page requesting a meeting password, ignore this. Just click the Register button. You will then see the "Register for meeting" page and should fill it out and submit. After submitting your registration for the meeting you will receive an email with the login details. SAVE THE EMAIL WITH THE LOGIN DETAILS so you can use it on Thursday night. Bill will also send this out via HamClubOnline

Starting with the July meeting we will back at Senter Park East. At the July meeting we will vote on the updated Club By-Laws as proposed by the By-Laws Committee. Those have been sent out by Club Vice-President Bill Byrom N5BB. If you don't have a copy, please contact Bill at Bill@Byrom.Net

President's Corner

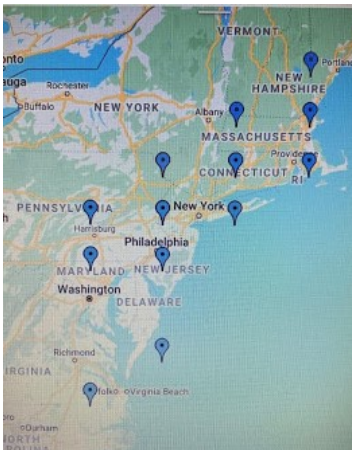
Ken Hansen N2VIP

ARRL VHF Contest Experience

I am not a Contester – sure I participate in Field Day, but rarely do I make a point of participating in other contests, I rarely find myself with sufficient time to participate in any meaningful way. But with encouragement from a few friends, I committed to participating in a recent contest.



With a very modest setup – an Icom IC-705 QRP radio, an external 9 amp Bioenno battery, and an Elk dual-band Log Periodic beam on a 6' tripod on a second floor balcony in NJ (Maidenhead Square FN20io), I went forth and worked the recent ARRL VHF Contest. [0] Briefly, the goal of the VHF Contest is to work as many Maidenhead Squares [1] as possible, on as many bands above 50 MHz as possible, in a 24 hour period



My temporary station in New Jersey, note the antenna and tripod on the outside deck

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Directors

Ron Tabb KC5HPO

Billy Geer KA5OZC

Venzula Mathews KF5PJH

Jerry Aberdeen KB3RWT

Newsletter Editor

John Cheyney KF5PFP

General/Business Meeting:
June 24 @ 7:00 pm

Weekly Meeting Nets:
7:00 pm each Thursday on
the WA5CKF repeaters.

Contact Us

Irvingarc.org
P.O. Box 153333
Irving, Texas 75015-3333



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I got a VERY late start, while the contest started at 18:00 UTC, I started setting up my station at about 10:30 PM local time, but quickly got on the air and bagged my first QSO, an SSB contact in the same square (FN20).

After setting up the laptop for WSJT-X I hit my stride, completing about 90% of my attempted contacts (the other 10% went unanswered), with only 10 watts.

My contacts range from near Portland, Maine down to the northern border of North Carolina, each about 300 miles from my QTH in central New Jersey, all on 2 meters.

Elk Log Periodic Antenna Tripod

While at Pacificon last fall (2019) I attended an antenna seminar that had many great presenters, and when it was over, I won a door prize! While I did not win the HF Vertical, I won a an Elk 2m/440L5 Log Periodic Antenna, suitable for entry-level satellite work on the VHF and UHF bands – something I always wanted to try.



Once I flew home, I put the antenna to the side, and focused on other things, but a few weeks ago I came across the antenna, and with the weather here in Texas getting nicer, I decided to look into working satellites so I pulled the antenna out of my closet and started searching for a suitable mount. While ideally, being lazy, I was hoping to find a pre-built, inexpensive, and simple computer-controlled AZ/EL solution for the Elk antenna, what I did find was an inexpensive solution for mounting the Elk antenna on KOPIR's website using an inexpensive Amazon Basics 60" tripod, a 3" bolt and a couple nuts and washers.

The parts list and instructions are here: <http://n2vip.com/elk-log-periodic-tripod-mount>. (I went to Home Depot for my hardware, but there's no reason to think you can't source similar parts elsewhere), and beyond the price of the Elk 2m/440L5 antenna (\$129.95) and the Amazon Basics 60" Lightweight Tripod (\$25.95), the hardware was under \$5 (Three bags of hardware at \$1.18/each):



Completed Tripod with Elk 2m/44L5 Antenna, horizontal polarization

Close-up view of antenna/tripod mount. Note tripod level indicator

Close-up of the mount in vertical orientation



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A Year With My Buddy (Pole)

Tom Schuessler N5HYP

Due to various reasons last year, I was unable to use my Gap Challenger HF antenna at all. (I have hopes now of resurrecting it this fall). I also had wanted to be able to do some more portable HF operations. I had in the past, used a portable antenna system known as a "Buddypole". Former Irving club member Jim Schultz, W5OMG, had brought a portable dipole system to a field day we had some years ago, out at Irving's Running Bear Park. I thought it was an interesting system. I was later able to borrow his system for a Scouting event at Texas Motor Speedway a few years ago and it worked very well for us there.

This type of antenna system was originally designed by Bob Drummand, W3FF, and his homebrew designs are still available at <https://sites.google.com/site/w3ffhomepage/>. He has subsequently turned the homebrew designs into a really robust line of parts and accessories that make a wide collection of antenna types. Go to <https://www.buddipole.com/> for more information. They have simple packages to get started, but like all things ham, you sure can sink a lot of bucks in the system if you so desire.

This antenna package is kind of like an erector set. (Remember those from our youth). With the right parts, you can build all sorts of designs. You can do dipoles, verticals, and other variant designs for any band from 160 to 2 Meters.

Last June, with the want to do ARRL Field Day, but having to do it from home due to the COVID thing, I got to looking for HF antennas that I could set up easily, take with me on trips, and would perform well. I saw an eBay listing from an individual in CA, for a complete package of parts from Buddypole that could get me started.

What I ended up with is what is known as a "Buddypole Deluxe package" which includes a tripod, 18 foot, 6 section mast, a "Versa Tee" which is a specialized center insulator, several "Accessory Arms" two different sizes of extendable whips, and two coils to resonate the antenna, especially at lower bands.



The one accessory I thought should have been in with the set from the start was some means to attach guy ropes to the mast. I immediately bought the guying kit that Buddypole offers. Without it, one could easily have such a tall structure tip over on you and break a lot of parts. They designed two snap-together triangles that fit around the top mast section, to which you can attach guy ropes. Besides the three guy lines to stabilize the top of the mast, I have also found that unless you add some low center of gravity counterweight, the tripod can shift around on you while extending the mast before the guy ropes get taught. Putting canopy weights on the cross arms that hold the tripod legs to the center, addresses this problem. Others have used those corkscrew dog leash stakes to hold the base down firm



With Field Day 2020 approaching I immediately set to build some different length dipoles and measure how they performed SWR-wise with the club antenna analyzer. I found that especially on the higher bands, where you could build full length dipoles, the SWR was exceptionally low, and the antennas were very broad banded. With any antenna design, some method of checking for SWR while designing is extremely helpful. I now have a “Nano VNA version F” that does the job nicely and is much less expensive than the commercial products.

Although Propagation was poor for Field Day last year, I was able to make some nice contacts on 20 through 10 meters. I operated class 1E Patio Portable and had a great time.

In October, I took the antenna and my FT847 to a weekend of camping with my wife and spent a fun Saturday afternoon talking at length to a nice collection of folks on 17 meters. I realized afterwards that I should have activated Lake Whitney State Park as a “POTA, Parks on the Air” location, and I bet I would have gotten even more attention on the air.

In December, I tried both dipole and vertical configurations for the ARRL 10 Meter contest. Propagation was poor, but I managed to work a few stateside and some South American stations via Trans-Equatorial Propagation mode. I used the Buddipole “Rotating Arm Kits” to add downward oriented counterpoise type radial arms for the vertical. Future verticals will use wire counterpoise as that is much easier to manage for anything longer than a 10-Meter vertical.



For Winter Field day, I stuck again with dipoles, mostly on 20 but I did work 40 on the 20 Meter dipole through a tuner. Not the best of setups for 40, but made a few contacts anyway.

Early March was the NA SSB Spring. I worked the first 2 hours and made 50 contacts on 20 meters on a day with low Sunspot numbers and marginal propagation.

For the May Irving Club QSO Party, I lashed my Elk 2m/70cm log periodic to the mast/tripod and had a great time working the event. Got it up to 20 feet which was very helpful.

Over time, I have been adding pieces and parts to the system. I have bought additional accessory arms to supplement the four 22” arms I started with. Now I have 33” and 11” arm pairs. The additional length will let me build a full length 20 Meter dipole without having to use the resonator coils to make up the missing length.

One of the door prizes for the club’s 2020 virtual Christmas party, was a 6 Meter antenna book. I won that one in the drawing but had never in my ham life, made a contact on that band. I had been looking at the documentation pages on the Buddipole web site, <https://www.buddipole.com/documentation.html> and saw that there was a design for a three element 6 Meter Yagi. I decided that I would have to accumulate the additional parts to create the beam. They make some adapters to screw two whips end to end for reflector and director elements, and the collars to secure the element assemblies to the boom. My target was the June VHF contest 2021 on the 12th and 13th. I tried the design out the weekend before the event, but with limited propagation, I only made a couple of local contacts, I did however, randomly end up working my good friend from Irving, John, KF5PFP, who just stumbled on me talking to a guy from Grand Prairie on 6 Sideband. I found that the beam did have a decent amount of front to back ratio. As a result, I decided it was worth it to try the 6 Meter band for the VHF contest the next weekend.

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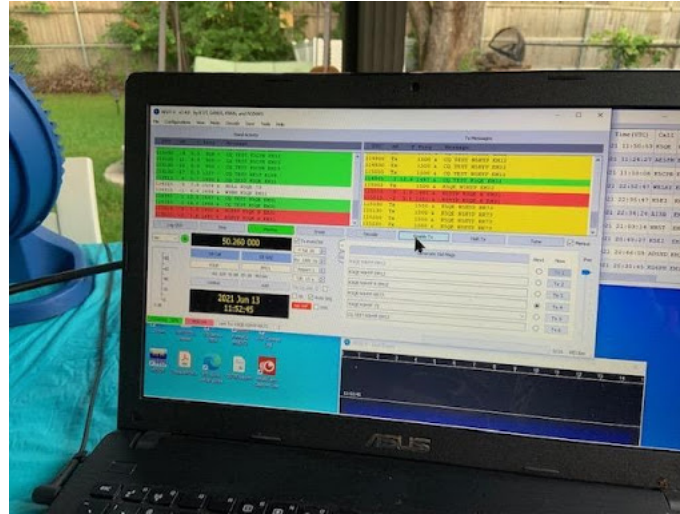
Venzula Mathews KF5PJH

Jerry Aberdeen KB3RWT

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John Cheyney KF5PFP

A presentation last year by avid VHF contester and trustee of the K2BSA call sign, Jim Wilson, K5ND, told me that I needed to be able to work FT8 for the VHF contest, as that mode had taken over from voice and CW. That in fact, was absolutely true. The only thing I heard in the few hours I worked Saturday afternoon was FT8 on 50.313. No phone, no CW. There were signals from all over the country for the couple hours I worked, and I made 18 FT8 QSOs.



I kept the antenna up overnight and got up before sunrise, brought the radio back out to the patio and decided to try again. As I expected, there was no long distance FT8 activity at that time of day, but I did hear a few short pings, so I decided to try the WSJT-X mode called MSK144, which is designed for Meteor scatter propagation. In this mode, you send the same 18 or so characters that you get in a 15 second FT8 transmission, but the mode repeats them rapidly at about 10 bursts per second for 15 seconds. The average meteor induced propagation ping is much less than a second so the program can pull the transmitted data in and display it just like the other "JT" modes. I made my first two ever Meteor scatter contacts for the contest in the hour I worked that morning. One was from Louisiana. Very exciting.

So now I have a lot of good experience with this antenna system and am looking forward to Field Day 2021, with the promise of better HF propagation as we have lately begun seeing more sunspots to increase the retractability of the ionosphere. I will be working 1E Patio Portable again this year, sweating away out there, hoping to work a lot of QSO's. Hope to hear you on the air.

73, Tom, N5HYP



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IARC QSO Party #2: May 2021

Congratulations to Jim Nordgren W8EP for winning the second IARC QSO Party with a massive 37 QSO's. Jim just squeaked past Billy Geer KA5OZC and John Cheyney KF5PFP who tied for second. Jim won at \$50 gift card. Be on the lookout for information on our next QSO Party.

Irving ARES/RACES Report April 2021

Billy Geer KA5OZC

Total number of ARES members: 13
Change since last month: (-) __1__ or (+) _____ or same: >__X____
Local Net Name: Irving RACES/ARES
Total sessions: 3
NTS liaison is maintained with the: DFW Net
Number of ARES drills, tests and training sessions this month: 4
2 Dallas Training
1 Irving Training
1 SET
Person hours: 54.5
Number of ARES public service events this month: 0
Person hours: 0
Number of ARES emergency operations this month: 1
1 Skywarn Activation
Person hours: 7.5
Total number of ARES operations/activations this month: 4
Total Person hours: 62

IARC Meeting Minutes May 2021 (Pending Approval)

Tom Schuessler N5HYP

Meeting called to order shortly after 7PM by Ken Hansen, N2VIP, Club president.

Members and guests present.:=

- Dick Melcher
- James Comer
- John Cheyney
- Ron Ford
- Bill Byrom
- Jerry Aberdeen
- Tom Schuessler (presenter)
- Ken Hansen
- Billy Geer
- Jim (I assume Nordgren)
- Calvin Gluck
- Dennis Brady

Club member concerns: Bill, N5BB's brother is still in hospital and recently his uncle passed away.

Pledge of allegiance.

Ken Hansen gave a brief summary of items to be talked about later:

- Microgrant is going well. Checks given out to the clubs who's proposals were accepted.
- Donation checks cut to local charities and delivered.
- Bylaws. Board will be asked to vote on changes. Then General membership has 30 days to vote. Will be voted on in July meeting.,

Presentation for the evening; Tom Schuessler, N5HYP talked on "HF Propagation Basics"

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Mission Statement

To provide radio communications with honor and integrity and

To honor the amateur radio code of ethics and

To provide technical support services to others so interested and

To support citizens of our community in times of need and disaster and

To provide radio communications as needed during local emergency situations.

Club Business;

- Minutes of April meeting were sent out by Tom, N5HYP and published in May newsletter. Motion to accept by Billy, KA5OZC, seconded by Bill, N5BB and approved by acclamation.
- Treasurer report for April discussed by Ken, N2VIP. Motion to approve by Jerry, KB3RWT, seconded by Billy, KA5OZC and approved by acclamation.
- Bill, N5BB, went over the final results of the Microgrant program. He reviewed the details of the five clubs whose submissions were approved for funding. Described a virtual meeting with all the clubs and ARRL NTX section manager. Talked about the expectation of getting follow-up status reports on the progress of the organizations completing the projects.
- Ken, N2VIP, talked in more detail on the donations given by the club to both Irving Cares and Main Place Irving. Ken was very impressed with Main Place (A new charitable organization for IARC to donate to). Thought the community programs they offer were excellent.
- Ken reviewed the recent club FM QSO party. Thought it went quite well. The winner of the event was Jim Nordgren, W8EP with 37 QSOs. He will receive the prize of a gift card.
- Bill, N5BB Club VP, reported that the Bylaws revisions were going to have been voted on prior to this meeting but quorum was not available. Will hold a special board meeting in June to do so and then will present to the club early enough to allow an approval vote by the club membership at the July general meeting.
- Ken, N2VIP says that he will be out of town the entire month of June and will not be present at the June regular meeting.
- Tom, N5HYP, club secretary talked about the city Parks department will be opening buildings to organizations to hold activities on June 25th. Will have a sign-up session on June 10th. WE will attempt to request Senter Park East for meeting dates beginning with our July meeting. Billy, KA5OZC agreed to proxy for Tom should he not be able to go.
- Bill, N5BB reports that due to issues with the 220 repeater, it is currently off due to erratic noise. M2 and 70CM are still on and linked. Talked about the need to add a PL on 220 machine. Dick Melcher WA6MDI will work with N5BB on getting together needed cables, software and test gear, to address the situations.
- Ken did bring an update on where the city is with the new EOC and our place in it/on it's new tower. He discussed the equipment we have on had to fill out this installation. There might also be a need to buy a new repeater controller at some point.

Meeting adjourned shortly after 9PM.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Schuessler, N5HYP
IARC Secretary