

IRVING AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Serving Amateur Radio Since 1955

WA5CKF REPEATERS:

146.72 PL 110.9/TSQL 110.9

224.40 PL 110.9/TSQL110.9

442.675 PL 110.9/TSQL110.9



November 2021

November Club Meeting Is Online

The November club meeting will be online. It will also be a week early due to Thanksgiving. The Webex session will open at 6:45 PM on Thursday, November 18, 2021. The actual meeting will start at around 7:00 PM. You must register in advance at:

<http://iarc.sent.com>

President's Corner

Ken Hansen N2VIP

Remembering

I was thinking about Dennis Brady, W5FRS (SK), the other day, and about how he always preferred to operate on homemade equipment, rather than store-bought "appliance" radios (my word, not his). While there are many paths to enjoyment in this wonderful hobby of ours, sadly the designing, construction, and operation of homemade equipment is, I fear, on the decline. Many of us have felt that warm surge of pride when we have contacts with distant hams on an antenna we built, and I can only imagine how much greater the satisfaction is when you've built a radio out of a pile of components and a hot soldering iron.



The closest many of us will ever get is building a radio from a component-level kit, soldering thru-hole components into a printed circuit board according to someone else's design. That is a path I've started down recently, and while I still own and operate any number of "store-bought" radios, I'm looking around and snatching up kits as they appear – to be assembled when time permits.



Heathkit SB-101 Station – everything (except the microphone) was assembled from a kit, but Heathkit stopped offering kits in 1992.

Like most members of the IARC, I entered the hobby too late to "enjoy" building a station from Heathkit kits – while I was aware of Heathkit for decades, my interest in Amateur Radio peaked well after Heathkit stopped offering their electronic kits in 1992. (A high school friend's father chose to build not only his home stereo, but a color TV from Heathkit kits, and at the time it amazed me that while he could have afforded better "store bought" versions of either device, he chose to sit in his garage workshop for countless nights, painstakingly soldering these kits together, but looking back on it now, I'd welcome the opportunity to build a stereo receiver or TV from discrete components.)

President

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Vice-President

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Ron Tabb KC5HPO

Billy Geer KA5OZC

Venzula Mathews KF5PJH

Jerry Aberdeen KB3RWT

Newsletter Editor

John Cheyney KF5PFP

General/Business Meeting:
Nov 18 2021 @ 7:00 pm

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

Contact Us

Irvingarc.org

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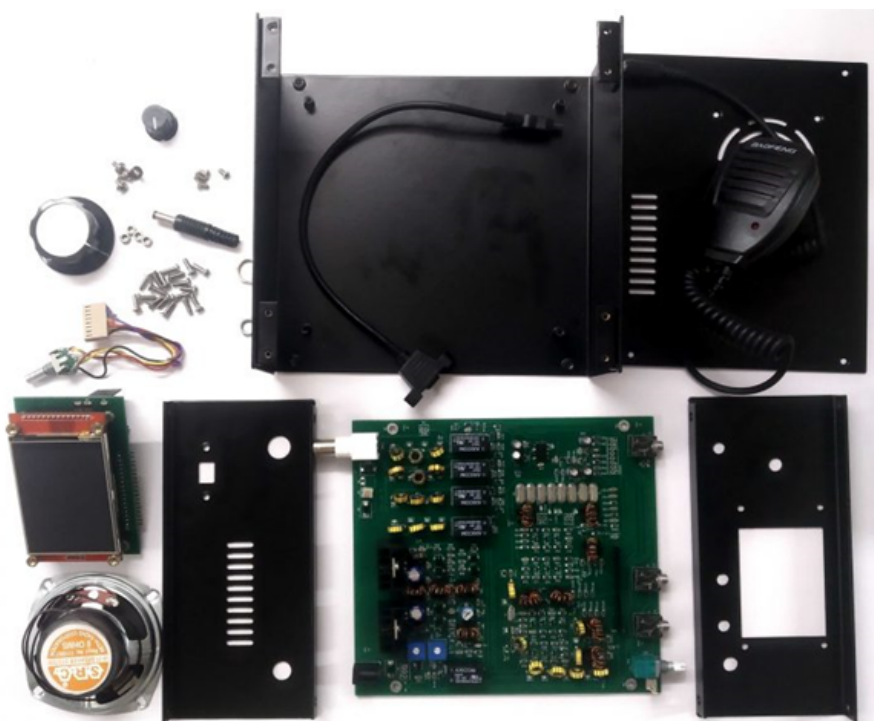
Jerry Aberdeen KB3RWT

Newsletter Editor

John Cheyney KF5PFP

These days, many hams suffer from “mic fright” – opting for digital operation (FT8, PSK, JT8, RTTY, etc.) rather than grabbing a microphone and squeezing the PTT switch to make a contact. While some older Hams may lament this trend among new hams, It’s really just a new path through the hobby – it takes nothing away from anyone travelling a different path, and brings more hobbyists to the airwaves.

Way back in the day, hams used to take discarded car parts and cobble together spark gap transmitters to communicate over the airwaves, and in the more recent “back in the day” hams used to cannibalize discarded TVs to build their stations, but as the hobby grew, a market was created that could support major corporations designing complete, ready-to-operate, radio transmitters and receivers (and eventually transceivers) allowing less technical hobbyists to get on the air quickly and easily. Well, Spark Gap Transmission has been illegal for nearly a hundred years, and today’s cars lack the components needed to construct such a transmitter (which is not to say that today’s cars are incapable of transmitting RF as they leave the factory, as anyone that has installed a mobile radio in a car will attest!), and TVs no longer contain the tubes needed to construct a transmitter or receiver, bit kit radios are starting to make a comeback, and that’s a great thing.



uBitx Full Kit, as shipped from hfsignals.com – the circuit board is assembled by young women in India and helps them support their families.

Currently, kit manufacturers are mainly focusing on QRP and near-QRP radios (QRP is a name applied to low power transmissions, and most QRP radios offer 10 watts or less RF output, as compared to the more common 100 watts a modern transceiver puts out), and their sophistication and specifications are improving at a great pace. One of the most accessible radio kits is the uBitx, offered by a company in India HF Signals. The uBitx operates on 80 thru 10 meters, offers up to 10 watts output on SSB and CW, and includes a touchscreen. The kit comes in two versions, a basic kit (\$160) that includes all the necessary components and accessories, and the full kit (\$209) that includes a nice custom-made aluminum case. (<http://hfsignals.com>) It is a “no solder kit” and I can confirm that the radio assembles nicely without the need of a soldering iron or any special tools in a couple hours. Once completed the owner has a basic radio, and there is a thriving community of people offering “hacks” and improvements to support expanding the radio to meet all kinds of use cases.



40-9'er 40 Meter Transceiver, as offered on eBay by Chinese retailers assembled for less than \$5 (I'm not certain why the 8 pin dip socket is empty in the picture?)

Beyond that, there are what I refer to as “novelty” radio kits, they typically sell for a few dollars and either provide fairly crude receivers (by today’s standards) or very low power (so-called QRPp) transmitters offering a watt or less of RF, typically supporting only CW operation. One example is the infamous “49'er” available on various websites for a few dollars, all based on an article from the Northern California QRP Society newsletter (<https://www.norcalqrp.org/files/49erOrigMnl.pdf>). The name refers to it's operating on the 40 meter band, and can be powered by a 9 volt battery. (There is a great body of work around the 49'er, available here: <http://www.norcalqrp.org/files/49er.pdf>) But CW is a rare skill among today's new hams (although interest in learning CW is growing and has been ever since the FCC dropped the morse code requirement back in the 1990's – who knew!)



The QRP Labs QDX Digital Transceiver, the very embodiment of a “black-box” with only three connections, BNC Antenna, barrel connector for power, and a USB cable to connect to you computer running WSJT-X or other digital mode software.

There is another kind of kit on the market, a little more feature-full, and little more geared towards today's microphone-adverse ham – I'll call these radios “one trick wonders”. These radios are purpose-designed for a very limited uses, like autonomous WSPR transmissions, or, as is the case with a kit I recently received, computer-controlled SSB transceiver that supports digital mode operation exclusively. I recently ordered the QRP Labs QDX (Quad-band Digital Transceiver) kit – it connects to a laptop running WSJT-X with one USB cable that carries not only the audio to/from the radio, but also provides CAT control of the operating settings and PTT signaling. With custom aluminum case, the kit was \$80, \$60 if you forgo the case. (<http://qrp-labs.com/qdx.html>) As you can easily imagine, the seller sold-out all 450 of these kits in 14 minutes when they were available for order. QRP Labs hopes to secure the needed components to offer them again in the future, ut with the current supply chain issues, who can say...

I'll report my success or failure with this kit in the near future – it involves winding a few toriods, something I have very little experience with, so fingers crossed!

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In a similar vein, last month the IARC and the Dallas Amateur Radio Club partnered on a Lecture and Lab event at a local park where there was an opportunity to build a coaxial dipole antenna for 2 meters and “play radio” outdoors. The event was a great success, from all accounts it went well, and everyone that attended (even a father and son that just happened to be wandering by in the park) and chose to buy a kit left that day with a great roll-up antenna, perfect for temporary/portable operation, offering better performance than a manufacturer’s rubber duck antenna on an HT. The partnership came about because DARC struggled to secure a location for an in-person event, and IARC was able to secure the park location for the joint event through the City of Irving. I hope to partner with DARC on future Lecture and Lab events like this, they are great social events and are a great way to meet area hams and have some fun.

Whether you choose to buy a “store-bought” radio or attempt a kit radio like any of the ones mentioned above, the bottom line is that I want to encourage everyone to get on the air and have some fun – chase DX, participate in repeater or HF nets, make new friends, “ragchew” on the lower bands (160, 80, and 40 meters), whatever, but put some RF out there and have some fun! Low-power Handheld radios are very affordable (\$25 and up), higher-power Mobile radios can be found at bargain prices (\$50 and up) and as I showed above, an HF radio needn’t cost \$1,000 or more. While an antenna can be a problem in some locations, the practice of “picnic table portable” (where you take your radios out in to the field and operate with temporary antennas and battery/solar powered radios) is a viable option, either in your back yard or in a public park.

The New Irving EOC project is progressing nicely, the new tower and “shed” are installed, and soon the power will be connected, as will our antennas. As a reminder, we are being given by the city of Irving not only rack space in the new facility to house our equipment, but also antennas for each of our four repeater pairs, as well as a tri-band backup antenna and a complete set of AREDN node sector antennas and backhaul dish antennas. The Club Repeater Committee is working the issue of securing any needed equipment to build-out this facility, and we are hopeful the site will be “on-the-air” in the first quarter of 2022. The tower can be seen at the intersection of Belt Line Road and PGBT/161 – the club officers are very optimistic that the site will expand and/or improve the footprints (service area) of our repeaters, and in addition to the current repeater site at the hospital, we will have a complete redundant set of repeaters, able to withstand a failure at either site.

We are working on hosting a Hamfest in March, 2022 (as always, the first Saturday in March), the initial work is being done, and monies have been authorized to allow us to purchase door prizes now, to ensure we can offer the prizes we want in March (with the current supply chain issues not expected to end anytime soon, I’d hate to miss out on our preferred prizes by waiting too long to buy them). Expect to see more information on the club website (<http://irvingarc.org>) going forward.

That’s it from me – go out, get on the air, have some fun, and if there’s something you think the club should be doing but isn’t, please let us know either at the upcoming club meeting this Thursday, or you can contact me directly via email at n2vip@arrl.net.

Irving Christmas Parade

John Cheyney KF5PFP

The Irving ARES/RACES team and the Irving ARC will be providing communications for the City of Irving Christmas Parade on Saturday 4 December 2021. The parade starts at 6:00 pm. Radio operators will be on the parade route reporting progress and any issues back to parade control. This opportunity is open to any Irving club member or ARES/RACES member with an HT capable of hitting the IARC 2 meter repeater from downtown Irving. Tom Schuessler N5HYP will be net control.

To sign up or for questions please contact John Cheyney KF5PFP (jjcheyn@gmail.com) or Billy Geer KA5OZC (wgeer@verizon.net).

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Treasurer's Report

Ken Hansen N2VIP



Transaction - Last month
10/1/2021 through 10/31/2021

Date	Account	Num	Description	Memo	Category	Tag	Clr	Amount
BALANCE 9/30/2021								48,923.02
10/4/2021	Irving Checking DEP		Sale Of Club ...	Ken Hansen,...	Sale		Club As...	163.00
10/4/2021	Irving Checking EFT		Home Depot	Door Prize - ...	Door Prize		Misc	-50.00
10/7/2021	Irving Checking DEP		2021 Dues	Joe Medrano	2021 Dues		2021 D...	15.00
10/23/2021	Irving Checking DEP		Sale Of Club ...	Tom Schues...	Sale		Club As...	15.00
10/28/2021	Irving Checking DEP		Sale Of Club ...	Tom Schues...	Sale		Club As...	24.01
10/29/2021	Irving Checking EFT		MicroCenter	New Treasur...	Club		Capital ...	-548.26
10/1/2021 - 10/31/2021								-381.25
BALANCE 10/31/2021								48,541.77
TOTAL INFLOWS								217.01
TOTAL OUTFLOWS								-598.26
NET TOTAL								-381.25

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Irving ARES/RACES Report October 2021

Billy Geer KA5OZC

Total number of ARES members: 13
 Change since last month: (-) _____ or (+) _____ or same: >__X____
 Local Net Name: Irving RACES/ARES
 Total sessions: 5
 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 City of Irving Siren Test
 1 SET
 Person hours: 48.8
 Number of ARES public service events this month: 0
 Person hours: 0
 Number of ARES emergency operations this month: 0
 Person hours: 0
 Total number of ARES operations/activations this month: 5
 Total Person hours: 48.8

The Irving RACES/ARES Team and Irving ARC members continue to assist the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) by monitoring the monthly warning siren tests. The next test will be Wednesday 1 December 2021 at 01:00 pm. Members go to the location of a siren for the test and report the results on the IARC 2 meter repeater. Results are collected and sent to the OEM for review.

For more information please contact Billy Geer KA5OZC at wgeer@verizon.net or John Cheyney KF5PFP at jjcheyn@gmail.com.



IARC Meeting Minutes October 2021 (Pending Approval)

Tom Schuessler N5HYP

1.Meeting Called to Order 28th at 7:05 By Ken Hansen

2.Pledge of Allegiance

3.Introduction

a.Tonight's presentation is "Show and Tell"

b.Passing of Dennis Brady, W5FRS. N5BB reviewed Dennis Brady and his wife's memorial service. He shared some history and memories of his life.

c.Belton Hamfest observations. Ken, N2VIP reported on his experience there.

d.Ken also reported on the combined IARC/DARC lecture and Lab at TW Richardson Groves Park in North Irving. May be site of combined Winter and Summer Field Days.

4.Old Business

a.Review and Approve

i.September Meeting Minutes (as published in club newsletter) Moved to approve by Calvin, W7KYG, seconded by Bill, N5BB. Approved by acclimation.

ii.September Treasurer Report (as shared prior to meeting). Moved to accept by Bill, N5NN, Seconded by Ron KC5HPO and approved by acclimation

b.RFI at Bingo Hall – Ken reports there is still a tiny amount of RFI in one PA system

c.Work party update

i.Still need to configure Remote station Ken says he will complete the project in next few days.

d.Hamfest (of sorts) Ken Hansen reports on outcome.

i.Many items in the club Shack were sold/found new homes.

ii.The items offered/claimed were a combination of club-owned and Dennis Riise estate-owned items.

iii.Club Officers discussed the funds raised and decided to pass all proceeds from both club-owned and Dennis Riise estate-owned sales on to Dennis's widow.

iv.\$173 was raised in total.

e.Repeater Committee

i.The new repeater location is being completed, and may be operational by the end of the year (2021). N5BB, KA5OZC, and N2VIP reported on their visit to the new EOC tower site on October 1.

ii.The Repeater Committee will meet (date/time TBD at tonight's meeting

iii.Committee Agenda - plan for new repeater site at Irving EOC:

1.Determine Functional Requirements

a.Do we want to operate FM, Fusion, DMR, or D-Star on 442.375?

2.Measure Performance of current repeaters

3.Poll area clubs about experiences with various repeater brands

4.Decide on needed equipment for new location, seek approval for purchase, and install equipment when the site is available

5.Measure performance of new repeaters against Functional Requirements

6.Issue final report

f.2022 Hamfest

i.With planning beginning, volunteers will be needed

1.Volunteers needed for chairman, marketing/promotion. Tom Schuessler, N5HYP agreed to co-chair. John KF5PFP will assist with marketing of the event.

ii.Door Prizes to be selected and purchased this month. Discussion on what to do about these prizes. Should we purchase now, but what happens if we cancel the Hamfest? John, KF5PFP agrees that we should go ahead and purchase the prizes to insure that we have them and we will look at opens if we cancel closer to Hamfest.

iii.N5BB moves to approve all expenses for the Hamfest of \$2000 which includes raffle prizes, seconded by Tom, N5HYP seconded, and approved by acclimation.

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5. New Business

a. New Members; No new member applications this month.

b. Micro-Grant. Bill, N5BB reports

i. Status of current (2021) program and upcoming 2022 program.

1. Bill will get information about the 2022 Microgrant program by November, with official invitation published in mid-December and deadline by February 15th.

2. Ron, KF5OMH, brought up a discussion on issue that smaller clubs who do not have infrastructure projects, but would like to do other tasks with the MicroGrant awards. Discussion by several on what types of projects are eligible for these grant awards.

c. Irving Foundation Scholarship. N5BB reports on status of last year's scholarship recipient and our desire to repeat again this year. N5BB moves that we repeat again this year to again endow \$1000 scholarship for 2022, Tom N5HYP seconded, Approved by acclamation. Ken will cut check tomorrow and get to Bill.

2. Presentation/Discussions

a. Show and Tell.

i. Ken N2VIP described Wago series connector blocks.

ii. John, KF5PFP talks on several End fed antennas he has used.

iii. Tom, N5HYP talks about the uses of his Nano VNA.

iv. Ron, KF5OMH, talked about a nifty solder removal aid he purchased on Amazon. SMT removal Alloy

v. Bill, N5BB talked on the slow speed CW contest sprint events. More of an operating event to aid slow speed CW operators with maximum at 20 words per minute.

3. Items from the floor? N5BB led some discussion on the periodic noise interference to all three of our hospital top repeaters.

4. Meeting Adjourned at 9:05 CDT.

Respectfully submitted.

Tom Schuessler, N5HYP, IARC Secretary.

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