

IRVING AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Serving Amateur Radio Since 1955

WA5CKF REPEATERS:

146.720 - PL 110.9 TSQL 110.9

224.400 - PL110.9

442.675 + PL 110.9

442.375 + PL110.9

January 2025



January Meeting Information

The next in person Meeting will be on January 23rd 2025 at the club Shack at Betcha Bingo hall on 2420 W Irving Blvd, Irving, TX 75061.

President's Corner

Ken Hansen N2VIP

President, Irving Amateur Radio Club, Inc.



Welcome to a new year! As always, there's a lot to go over, but first, as I write this (Sunday Night), it is 25 degrees outside – yikes! I bought a new car last month, and I'm finding it's too cold outside to install a permanent radio in the car, even working in the garage! I have a temporary radio sitting on the passenger seat (a Yaesu FTM-7250, a nice, very basic Fusion radio) but I'll likely install an FTM-400 – I've found that the local Fusion repeaters are fairly active, more so than either the DStar or the DMR repeaters in the area. If anyone in the club considers themselves knowledgeable in Fusion, I'd encourage them to consider giving a presentation to the club in the near future. As a reminder, we have two UHF Fusion repeaters on the air currently, but we have them set to act as analog FM repeaters, and both are rarely used...

Speaking of Repeaters, on the off-chance you noticed it, the 442.675 repeater was off the air recently. I'm not sure of the cause, but the issue was not serious. As a precaution I switched the 442.675 repeater pair back to a Yaesu FTDR-2X repeater, but the Icom UHF DStar repeater appears to have just needed to be power-cycled. I'll share an update once I get a chance to investigate

Winter Field Day is this weekend – the club plans to operate during daylight hours on Saturday, and not operating either Saturday night or Sunday morning. The plan is to do some casual operation from a city park location, and I hope you'll be able to join us. I don't have the details in front of me (sorry), but it will be discussed at this month's meeting on Thursday night at the Bingo Hall, and I'm certain there will be an "email blast" to all club members with details before Saturday Morning.

I attended the Cowtown Hamfest on both days, Friday night and Saturday morning/afternoon. The Cowtown Hamfest is approximately the same size as our Hamfest (about 75-80 tables), but Cowtown has fourms/presentations. Admission to the Cowtown Hamfest costs \$12/adult, \$10 if you purchase your admission ticket online before the event, and their tables rent for \$35/ea, with one admission ticket included in the table price. They do not offer additional tickets for the door prizes, so every attendee has an equal chance at the prizes, provided they are able to pick up their prize in-person. This year the hamfest was well-attended, and the sellers seemed to be moving a lot of "treasures" (I picked up a few myself). I hope to submit a small write-up on the event, but I just wanted to make sure to let all the members know how our hamfest compares to Cowtown.

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Shane Outlaw KI5GBU

Newsletter Editor

Jerry Aberdeen KB3RWT

General/Business Meeting:
23rd January 2025 @
7:00pm

Weekly Meeting Nets:
7:00 pm each Thursday on
the WA5CKF 2m repeater.

Monthly VE Testing:
2nd Saturday of the month,
Business Jet Center at Dallas
Love Field. Check the IARC
Calendar [here](#) for more
details.

Contact Us

Irvingarc.org

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Irving, Texas 75015-3333

Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/
irvingarc.org](https://www.facebook.com/irvingarc.org)

President's Corner Cont'd

Our own Irving Hamfest is progressing nicely – we have had the webpage up since the beginning of the year, and we've already sold nearly 30 tables and I haven't yet sent prior hamfest attendees a reminder email that the web page is up. The Houston Hamfest that some folks were concerned about conflicting with our hamfest, the Houston event has been pushed to the following weekend, so no conflict. In addition, I understand that the impression among a few of the vendors that attended Houston the past two years that the event seems to be declining, but that's just an impression – we'll see what happens in March. I'll be taking names for Hamfest volunteers at the coming meeting, please let me know if you are able to help – there are lots of positions available, and all are timed to only require club members to help for a couple hours, leaving plenty of time to “bargain hunt”.

January is “Nominating Committee Month” – Two club officers (President and Secretary, I think) and two Directors are up for re-election, and I'll need to create a nominating committee at the January Meeting. If any club member is interested in either helping with the Nominating Committee or running for one of the open positions in club leadership, please approach me at the January Meeting.

Now for a Club Shack Update – Back in May we purchased a Yaesu Desk Microphone for the club shack, and at the end of the summer it developed a problem and had to be sent back to Yaesu for a repair under warranty. Well, just this past week Yaesu sent us the replacement microphone – it seems like it took a really long time, I suspect the issue was Yaesu simply ran out of replacement Microphones. For now, the Club Shack is in great shape, and I encourage you to take advantage of the unique club member resource. If there's something you think the club shack needs, don't hesitate to let a club officer know, and we will consider the request.

Every month the club participates in the monthly City of Irving Siren Test at 1:00 PM on the first Wednesday of the month, weather permitting (the tests are called off if there is a chance of rain or storm activity). All you need to participate is a 2 meter HT or mobile radio and the ability to visit one of the Irving Storm Sirens at 1:00 PM on the first Wednesday of the month to be able to report on it's condition. If you can, please consider helping with this effort, the City does a lot for our club, and this is a great way to give back to the city.

If you are interested in joining the Irving ARES/RACES folks, reach out to Carrye Johnstone, KD5RFB, for more information – there are on-going training commitments that occur several times a month (certain Sunday and Thursday evenings). I encourage you to consider participating in this group.

The Thursday Night Nets are continuing, and participation is strong – if you aren't aware, this net meets every Thursday at 7:00 PM, except for the Thursday night the club meets (typically the 4th Thursday of the month, except for November and December to avoid holiday conflicts). The discussions are wide-ranging, and the on-air activity has introduced our club to several new area Hams that eventually decided to join our club. Consider joining this net on Thursday nights at 7:00 PM.

As a final reminder, aside from a collection of repeaters, the club has a fairly broad Social Media footprint – the club website, Facebook page, and Discord server. If you want to share something with your fellow club members, consider exploring those options – more information can be found on the club website.

I hope you can join us for the monthly meeting this coming Thursday at 7:00 PM, it should be interesting, and you can help shape the future of the club by participating the in the nominating process.



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Regarding Chinese Radios

by Ken Hansen, N2VIP



For the last several years, I have had an on-again/off-again love affair with low-cost Chinese radios, as a quick peek in my closet would reveal. At the Cowtown Hamfest this past weekend, I gave in and bought yet another (used) Chinese radio – *even though I already own one of the same model!*

I need help, an intervention perhaps – but I digress.

I wrote this article to help share the points I consider when deciding to buy a Chinese radio.

First off, let's define "Chinese Radio" – my definition broadly covers radios with unpronounceable names, and while they tend to come from China, it isn't really about their country of origin. The appeal of these radios, at least for me, is not just price, but also size and unique capabilities/feature sets. A great example is the popular HT from Quansheng, the UV-K5. It is extremely affordable (about \$20-30, depending on items bundled with the HT), easily available from Amazon, and has a very unique feature, user-updateable firmware, with third-party developers working hard to add new, exciting features to a simple dual-band HT. And, unbelievably, it is actually a fairly decent HT.

So how to approach an unknown Chinese radio?

The first thing is to whip out your smartphone and Google the radio model – it's great if you can find your prospective treasure listed on eHam, but that isn't always the case – don't let that omission concern you, you'll likely find numerous YouTube videos that cover the radio you're looking at. I'll tell you a little secret, often times (not always, but sometimes) the videos are the result of someone giving the YouTube host the radio on loan or as a gift, and that may influence their opinions. It's OK, just realize there may be some bias in the review. *(Oh, and while we're on the subject of YouTube videos, please don't watch "Un-boxing" videos – can we stop encouraging content creators from filling the web with these mindless videos? Please, stop clicking on them, and hopefully we'll see their numbers reduce. OK, I'll get off my soapbox now.)*



Next, check the CHIRP website specifically (<https://chirpmyradio.com>) for your radio. CHIRP Stands for Chinese Radio Programming, and make sure the radio you are considering is listed on the site – DO NOT assume that you can convince the Chirp programmers to add support for your obscure Chinese radio – the developers have a big backlog of new radio models to add to Chirp, it could take years for your radio to be added. If it isn't supported by Chirp, move on – there are plenty of discount Chinese radios to choose from, don't fall in love a radio that will force you to learn to program the radio through the front panel or with a vendors programming software (assuming you can find it).

To program a radio from a computer using Chirp, you'll need a radio-specific cable – make sure one is included with the radio. Just because the jack on the radio looks familiar/similar to a cable you may already have, doesn't mean the cable you have is wired the way your prospective radio needs it to be.

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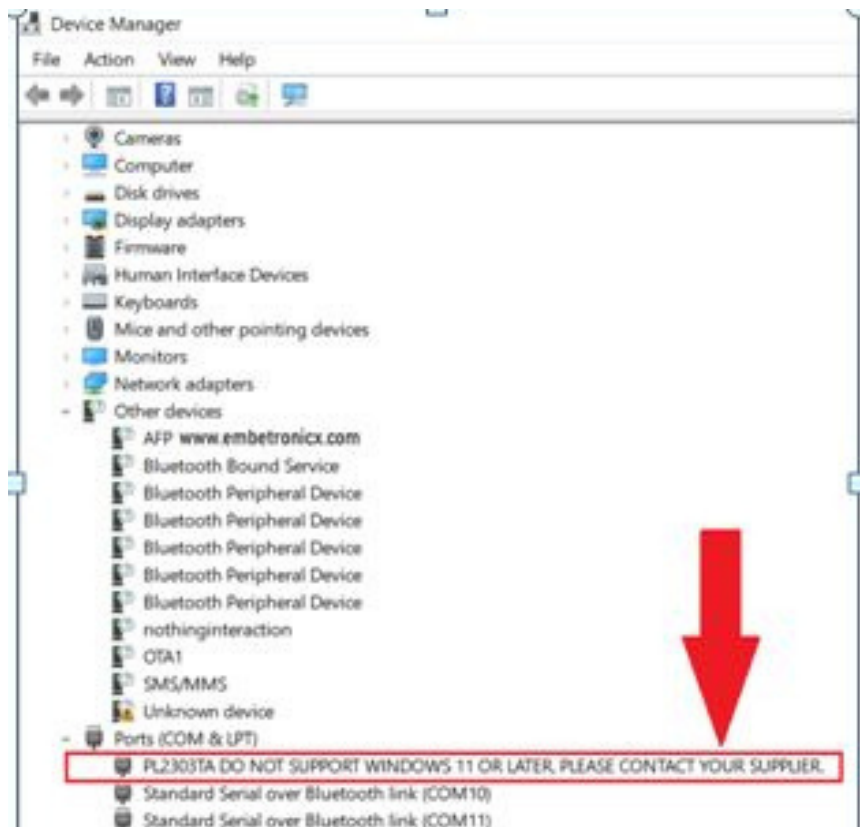
by Ken Hansen, N2VIP



If you can't get the needed cable with the radio, there is a vendor I'd encourage you to check before passing on the radio (and I do suggest that you take a pass on any radio you can't get a programming cable for). The site is bluemax49ers.com – there are other sites, but this site offers high-quality cables, and it is worth the added cost to buy a quality cable from a vendor with a good reputation. If the prices on the site seem high, remember the prices include all shipping costs – the listed price is the price you pay.



While we are considering programming cables, understand that the supplied cable with your soon-to-be-your radio may have a potentially unsupported/counterfeit “serial chip” in the cable. If this happens (the most common culprit is the Prolific PL2303TA Chip), a quick google will likely find a link to an older driver that will work with your operating system and supplied cable. The back story is the Prolific serial chips are very popular with counterfeiters, and Prolific has loaded a driver that detects these chips Prolific no longer supports and will not make the ports/cables work – by downloading and installing an older driver, you can typically make an unsupported cable work. Linux, which also supports Chirp, has no such issues about unsupported prolific ships, since the required driver for linux does not intentionally block the serial chip from working.



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Regarding Chinese Radios

by Ken Hansen, N2VIP



So, if your radio has generally good reviews/mentions on YouTube, if it is supported by Chirp, and if it either includes a proper programming cable OR one can be gotten at a price you are comfortable with, then go ahead and get that affordable Chinese radio with the unique features you found so appealing.

At Cowtown I found a radio from a company called Anysecu, the radio is a model WP-9900 dual-band, 25 watt VHF, 20 Watt UHF Analog/FM radio that I was able to buy for \$45. The radio was in it's original box, it included all the mounting hardware, the power cord and microphone – it seemed like a good bargain, so I bought it. (It turns out I already had one of these radios in my closet, so I was already familiar with the model) You may be asking yourself, “What made this radio so appealing to Ken?” And the answer is the form factor. The main radio unit is tiny (slightly bigger than a deck of playing cards) and ALL the controls and display are built-in to the microphone. You could hide this radio under a car seat and only need a microphone clip to hold the mic in a mobile install. You could also easily build this radio into a battery box and turn your battery pack into a go-box very easily.



Anyway, I only risked \$45, and I strongly encourage you to view such purchases as a risk, you need to be prepared to write-off a defective or poor-performing radio. If there is a problem with the radio it could cost anywhere between \$50-75 to ship it back to the manufacturer, and don't even think about a for-hire US repair – no radio repair technician I'm aware of will work on these radios.

So, in conclusion, if you want to buy a low-priced Chinese radio with some unique feature or capability, if you do the homework I've outlined above (it should only take you a few minutes at a hamfest table to gather the needed information), you can go forward and make your purchase. But please, remember, your \$50 treasure will not, in any way, beat anything from a major vendor (Icom, Kenwood, Yaesu, Alinco, etc). The radio may be susceptible to intermod, due to inadequate filtering, the scanning function will be slow due to the under-powered CPU inside the radio, and you will not have great sensitivity/selectivity. They tend to be about as good as their antennas, and really shine if used to operate through a repeater. These radios will struggle to operate simplex over any real distance. That said, go forth and try a new Chinese radio – you just may find yourself putting one near your workbench in the garage, connected to a mag mount antenna on a pie pan, or finally putting a radio in your car or making your first small go-box, just for working repeaters from picnic tables around town. Manage your expectations, do your home work, and maybe, some day, you could wind up with a closet full of great, inexpensive, Chinese radios!

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The ARRL makes new appointments in the North Texas Section

by Ron KF5OMH

Steve Lott Smith, Section Manager of the North Texas Section of the ARRL recently announced the following appointments.

Section Traffic Manager, JoAnn Keith KA5AZK. JoAnn and her husband John, W5BWC, reside in Gilmer TX. JoAnn is well known across the region in association with the 7290 Traffic Net where she is the Net Manager. The 7290 Traffic Net is in its 72nd year of operation as an independent HF traffic net. She also holds ARRL appointments as ARRL West Gulf Division Assistant Director for the National Traffic Section, North Texas Section Assistant Section Manager and ARES District 8 District Emergency Coordinator. JoAnn replaces Aaron Huelett, K8AMH who resigned in order to pursue other volunteer activities in the fire service having served in the position for the past eight years,

Section Emergency Coordinator, Mike Nelson K5YX of Little Elm, TX in Denton County where he is also the Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Denton County. Mike is also active in the Denton County Amateur Radio Club where he is the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator. He is also a director in the Lake Area Amateur Radio Klub. Lastly, he is active in the Little Elm and Denton County CERT organization as an instructor and a member of the Denton County Salvation Army SATERN group. Mike replaces Greg Evans, who has relocated to South Texas with his employer.



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Public Service Honor Roll

Reprinted from ARRL website
by Ron KF5OMH



Each month in QST's Field Organization Reports column, the Public Service Honor Roll (PSHR) recognizes the efforts of Amateur Radio operators who are active in many aspects of public service. This includes net operations, traffic handling, emergency operations and public service communication support. There are chances that you're already involved with some aspect of Amateur Radio that would apply to the Public Service Honor Roll (PSHR).

Take a look at these categories and descriptions to see where your Amateur Radio activities fit in. At the end of each calendar month, just add up your qualifying points. If it reaches the 70-point level (or more), you've qualified for the Public Service Honor Roll! Report the good news with your call sign and monthly PSHR point total to your ARRL Section Manager or Section Traffic Manager. The ARRL section leaders, in turn, would forward the report onto ARRL Headquarters so that Headquarters staff may prepare these for listing in the Field Organization Reports segment of QST'.

Public Service Honor Roll Categories-

1) Participation in a public service net -- 1 point, maximum 40.

One example of a public service net is one that is regularly scheduled and handles Amateur Radio formal messages. There are many such public-service nets: local and section nets that are affiliated with the National Traffic System (NTS); NTS region, NTS area, and independent nets that handle messages. ARES, RACES, SKYWARN nets that meet on a regular basis would also qualify.

Another example is when an NTS Digital Relay Station manually logs onto an automated digital system. This action, too, qualifies under the intent of PSHR Category 1.

Public service or emergency nets that are activated to support an actual emergency or potential emergency or public-service event would be part of this first category. How about the net that has been established for training radio amateurs in public service and emergency communications? Why sure! Are you looking for a public net to check into? Try the on-line ARRL Net Directory:

2) Handling formal messages (radiograms) via any mode -- 1 point for each message handled; maximum 40.

The ARRL's ARES Manual explains how to count your individual messages. (You may find the entire manual at <http://www.arrl.org/files/file/PublicService/ARES/ARESmanual2015.pdf>)

Originated--One point for each message from a third party for sending via your station. This "extra" credit is given for an off-the-air function because of the value of contact with the general public.

Sent--Every message sent over the air from your station to another amateur receives a point in this category. Thus, a message that is eligible for an Originated point as above receives another point when it is sent on the air.

Likewise, a message that is received on the air conveys a Sent point when it is relayed to another station. A message that you initiate yourself, while it gets no Originated point, gets a Sent point when cleared. All Sent points require on-the-air sending.

Received--A message received over the air gets a Received point, whether received for relaying (sending) or for delivery to the addressee. Any message received which is not eligible for a Delivery point (such as one addressed to yourself) is nevertheless eligible for a Received point.

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Delivered--The act of delivery of a message to a third party receives a point in this category, in addition to a Received point. This is strictly an off-the-air function and must be coupled with receipt of the message at your station. Thus you can't get a Delivered point unless you first get a Received point.

For additional details on traffic handling and net operations and the National Traffic System, the NTS Methods, Practices and Guidelines is a resource available to you via the ARRL Web page.

3) Serving in an ARRL-sponsored volunteer position: ARRL Field Organization appointee or Section Manager, NTS Net Manager, TCC Director, TCC member, NTS official or appointee above the Section level. -- 10 points for each position; maximum 30.

ARRL Field Organization appointees (in alphabetical order) include the following: Assistant District Emergency Coordinator, Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator, Assistant Section Manager, District Emergency Coordinator, Emergency Coordinator, Local Government Liaison, Net Manager, Official Emergency Station, Official Observer, Official Observer Coordinator, Official Relay Station, Public Information Coordinator, Public Information Officer, Section Emergency Coordinator, Section Manager, Section Traffic Manager, State Government Liaison, Technical Coordinator and Technical Specialist.

The Section Manager is the ARRL-member elected League official in the section. An NTS official or appointee above the Section level would include Region and Area Net Managers, and TCC (Transcontinental Corps) Directors who are in charge of organizing TCC membership rosters of operators that comprise the corps. TCC members are those operators that are assigned to relay traffic from one NTS area to another, conducting liaison with NTS nets to do so. NTS Members at Large, NTS Area Staff Chairs, NTS Area Digital Coordinators and Digital Relay Stations would also be included in this category.

To read more about the ARRL Field Organization and these appointments, read the article, "The ARRL Field Organization: Something for Everyone," by Dave Hassler, K7CCC, in March, 2003, QST, pp. 50-54.

4) Participation in scheduled, short-term public service events such as walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, simulated emergency tests and related practice events. This includes off-the-air meetings and coordination efforts with related emergency groups and served agencies.

-- 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent in either coordinating and/or operating in the public service event; no limit.

This category recognizes the value of public safety communication events that Amateur Radio is often called to participate in. Simulated emergency tests, exercises, and drills are covered by this category. Points are gained by the amount of time that an Amateur Radio operator spends directly involved in operating the event. This also recognizes the value of off-the-air time it takes to meet with the organization or public service agency to plan and coordinate Amateur Radio involvement.

PSHR Category 4 is set up to recognize Amateur Radio operators for what they do in performance of public service events. Therefore, time spent in group and one-on-one ARES/RACES meetings, phone calls, email, and group administrative duties (processing and maintaining ARES/RACES member records and planning/conducting member training, for example) all are part of the 'public service communication event support' definition and would count.

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Public Service Honor Roll Criteria

This listing is to recognize radio amateurs whose public service performance during the month indicated qualifies for 70 or more total points in the following 6 categories (as reported to their Section Managers). Please note the maximum points for each category:

- 1.) Participating in a public service net, using any mode. --1 point per net session; maximum 40.
- 2.) Handling formal messages (radiograms) via any mode. --1 point for each message handled; maximum 40.
- 3.) Serving in an ARRL-sponsored volunteer position: ARRL Field Organization appointee or Section Manager, NTS Net Manager, TCC Director, TCC member, NTS official or appointee above the Section level. -- 10 points for each position; maximum 30.
- 4.) Participation in scheduled, short-term public service events such as walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, simulated emergency tests and related practice events. This includes off-the-air meetings and coordination efforts with related emergency groups and served agencies. - 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent in either coordinating and/or operating in the public service event; no limit.
- 5.) Participation in an unplanned emergency response when the Amateur Radio operator is on the scene. This also includes unplanned incident requests by public or served agencies for Amateur Radio participation. - 5 points per hour (or any portion thereof) of time spent directly involved in the emergency operation; no limit.
- 6.) Providing and maintaining a) an automated digital system that handles ARRL radiogram-formatted messages; b) a Web page or e-mail list server oriented toward Amateur Radio public service -- 10 points per item.

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Shack Update

IARC Lending Library

The club has purchased a library of books from the ARRL. These books are in the shack and available for check out by club members only. We are working on a way for club members to get to them. For now you can check them out at any shack event, or by contacting Ken, John, or Kim and setting up a time to meet. Please only keep each book two weeks at a time.

- ARRL Technician, General, and Extra class manuals
- ARRL Handbook
- ARRL Antenna Book
- Basic Antennas
- RFI Book
- Understanding Basic Electronics
- Basic Digital Electronics
- And many others

Club Equipment for Loan to Members

The club has several pieces of equipment that members can borrow for testing their stations, or for use at events. If you'd like to use some of this you can pick it up at any shack event, or make arrangements with John or Ken.

- Rig Expert AA-600 antenna analyzer
- IFR Service Monitor
- Anderson Powerpole crimp kit (you have to supply your own connectors)
- Soldering equipment
- Several desktop power supplies
- MFJ-557 Morse Code practice oscillator (for practicing CW)
- Multiple sets of HT's and tape-measure Yagi antennas for fox hunting
- 25 watt Retevis 2M mobile radio in an ammo can (great for events like the parades)

In addition we can lend out the UHF/VHF go box (contains two radios), the IC-7300, the PowerWrx battery box, and a number of antennas and coax runs to support special events or for testing.



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RACES/ ARES Corner

The Irving RACES/ARES group is always looking for amateur radio operators willing to join them in community service to the city of Irving, all you have to do is be a licensed amateur radio operator, and either work or live within the city of Irving. If you are interested feel free to contact Carry Johnstone KD5RFB.

Siren Test

Reminder to all,

Both the IARC and Irving RACES ARES group have committed to support the monthly Irving siren (ENS -Emergency Notification System) test.

Irving has 26 sirens located through the City, on City property. All sirens rotate and make a LOUD siren type noise, with the exception of the one that is located on top of the Irving Convention Center that does not rotate.

There is always a monthly test that occurs on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM and lasts 3 minutes. There are two types of tests, a full function test, siren and rotation (if it is designed to rotate), and a silent test (rotate only if it is designed to rotate). The silent test is only done if there is any possibility of a weather threat, or any other reason the OEM (Office of Emergency Management) feels it may confuse the citizens.

We will only monitor the test for full functionality, NOT the silent test. I will notify all that has a siren assignment if the test is silent (usually before noon on the day of the test), and get confirmation you received that notification.

The individual effort will take only around 5 minutes at the location, but may take a total of 15-45 minutes, depending on travel time to and from. You MUST be close enough to your assigned location to see it rotate and sound for the full 3 minutes (ear muffs and/or ear plugs are recommended).

A list of all the sirens with the ones needing to be observed identified to choose from will be sent to all the IARC and Irving RACES ARES group members the weekend before the test. You will need to notify me of your choice, and I will conform it is yours to observe, or request you to pick another because somebody else has picked it.

We, as Amateur Radio Operators, enjoy this hobby, and this is one way we can give back to the community. This is one of the reasons the FCC has allowed us to have assigned frequencies/bands to operate on, as HAMS, to enjoy and have the skills needed to support any government entity if needed, or during times of a national emergency. It is a GREAT and fun hobby.

Regards,
Billy KA5OZC

Note: *Volunteers are needed to help test the Irving city siren system every first Wednesday of the month. If you are interested in helping, please contact Billy KA5OZC at 214 587 8729 or via email: wgeer@verizon.net*



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Cowtown Hamfest 2025

by Ken Hansen, N2VIP



As I have for the last ten years or so, I attended the Cowtown Hamfest, and spoiler alert – it was pretty good.

I won't go into too much detail about how the Cowtown Hamfest is similar to, and different from, our own hamfest, but they are both fairly similar, each hosting about 75 tables, and while I can't compare attendance numbers (I don't know their attendance numbers), their crowd seems about the same size as the one our hamfest attracts.

One difference that just confuses me is their encouragement that attendees pre-purchase their admission tickets at a discount. We used to offer pre-sale tickets at a discount, but the math doesn't work out (in my opinion). We sold \$4 admission tickets at the door, \$3 tickets pre-sale, and after deducting the PayPal fees, we netted about \$2.50 per pre-sale admission tickets. Before long I raised the admission price to \$5 and removed the online discount. Cowtown admission is \$12 at the door, \$10 pre-sale, and then they have a special pre-sales drawing for a \$300 radio to encourage people to pre-buy their tickets. Depending on how many pre-sale tickets they sell, they could be "losing" \$5-7 per pre-sale ticket... I don't get it, but if you plan to attend Cowtown Hamfest next year, I'd encourage you to pre-buy your ticket, not just for the \$2 savings, but it puts you in a fairly small drawing for a nice radio!

ANYWAY, like I said, the event was fairly well-attended,

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January POTA Activation of Cedar Hill State Park a Success

By Will Turk (N5TLH) and John Moss (KI5WRQ)

After several days of cold weather and a little snow and sleet, Will (N5TLH) and John (KI5WRQ) decided to go out to Cedar Hill State Park - US-2996 - on January 14 to do a “two operator” POTA Activation.

The weather on Tuesday, January 14 was cool but sunny at the park, and Will and John got started around 10:30 am. John started on 10 meters, with his Yaesu FT-991A radio and his RadioWavz dipole antenna - set up in an inverted V - with a 17 foot mast at the center. Although propagation on 10 meters was not as good on that day as it has been over the past few months, John still was able to make 21 contacts in 45 minutes, including DX contacts in Chile, Scotland, Spain and Belgium.

The guys then moved to 20 meters and Will took the operational lead. 20 meter propagation was strong on January 14, and Will started a huge “pile up” on the 20 meter band. He successfully worked the crowd of POTA Hunters and got over 50 contacts in a short period of time, including several “Park to Park” contacts.

It was a fun day at the Park. Come on out to Cedar Hill State Park and do some Parks on the Air work with our POTA Activators. All participants always have a great time. The park is only about 30 minutes from downtown Irving, with easy access and plenty of covered picnic tables.

After two hours of playing radio in the Park, Will and John finished the Park Activation with a trip to Whataburger! What could be better than that?



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Technical Topic

Echolink system updated

By Bill- N5BB



On Friday evening, December 20th 2024. I replaced our very slow old PC used for our WA5CKF-R Echolink with a much better PC. The new PC I believe has a solid state drive, but it is stuck on Windows 10 and can't be updated to 11. It is far superior to the older PC and it didn't take too long to update it with the December update of Windows 10. The new setup uses a RT Systems USB to serial port special cable adapter (thanks, Ken!), and after I installed their Windows driver it worked great. I moved the Echolink setup to a different room in my house, but it is still on the second floor - see the attached photo.

I have a small UPS keeping the Kenwood radio and the PC going through short power glitches. My whole house uses solar power with a large backup battery which keeps everything running (including the fiber internet router and switches) during a grid failure. The Echolink setup at my house is across the street from our 146.72 MHz repeater at Baylor Scott & White Irving Hospital, so the radio is set to transmit at low power using the mobile antenna you see in the photo. The hospital is visible at the left through the window behind the PC, but at night from that angle you only see the parking lot near Hwy 183.

Please try using our WA5CKF-R Echolink on your various devices and let me know how the new setup works. I copied the Echolink settings from the old PC, but it's always possible that some networking settings on the newer PC might cause trouble for some devices trying to use our Echolink node. You can reach me at n5bb@byrom.net or try to find me on this 2M repeater.



The WA5CKF-R Node located at N5BB shack

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From the Desk of the editor



Happy New Year

Some useful ham radio websites.

- 10-10 Organization- <https://ten-ten.org/>
- QSL - <https://qsl.net/>
- QRZ - <https://www.qrz.com>
- QTH - <https://qth.com/>
- Gigaparts store - <https://www.gigaparts.com/>
- Ham Radio Outlet- <https://www.hamradio.com/>
- OMISS - <https://omiss.net/>
- Icom America - <https://icomamerica.com>
- Yaesu - <https://yaesu.com>
- Kenwood USA - <https://kenwood.com>

Let me take the opportunity to thank all our contributors to the current and past editions of the IARC club newsletter. I am always looking for articles that are ham related for the newsletter.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please email your contribution to me at jerry.aberdeen@gmail.com, with the subject "IARC Newsletter and your callsign" e.g. IARC newsletter -KB3RWT

Going forward, I would like to have all articles for the newsletter sent to me on or before the Sunday of the week in which our in-person meetings are held., but I will accept articles as late as 8pm on the Tuesday before the meeting. This gives me time to organize, create and send out the newsletter in a timely manner. Thanks.

De KB3RWT

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