

President's Corner

October 2018

It's been a soggy month—flooding in Carrollton and Farmers Branch, hail, rain. But we were not activated. Wonder why?

The role of Amateur Radio in emergency communications is changing. True, recent events in Puerto Rico and Florida demonstrated the utility and flexibility of amateur radio HF and VHF data and voice communications, but Hurricane Harvey showed how much can be accomplished without amateur radio when the mobile infrastructure is sufficiently hardened.

Some people say this is the end of amateur radio—we're just not needed any longer. Other, wiser heads understand what amateur radio can bring to the disaster.

What's really happening? The various government and non-government organizations are making investments in communications infrastructure. They are making mobile “cell” towers waterproof and with sufficient reserve power to stay on the air longer. They have allocated an entire LTE data band to disaster responders and use Voice over IP (VoIP) on their dedicated bandwidth to get call calls and messages through specially-programmed mobile devices. They have created new interoperability channels and modes, and more and more agencies are adopting them.

We should applaud these efforts. They can greatly alleviate human suffering and loss of life. And as these technologies become more widely adopted and deployed, the need for amateur radio grows less acute.

But it doesn't go away. Because there are always those situations where the only thing left standing is amateur radio. What does that mean to you?

It means you should understand and be ready to use new digital modes to get ICS forms sent and received. It means you should take the ICS series of courses so that you understand how to fit right into an incident response – winging it doesn't cut it any more. It means you should keep your equipment maintained and ready to use, not jammed in a box full of wires that may or may not work.

Part of our hobby, and our spectrum allocation, is to serve the public interest through emergency response. Be sharp, be ready, be trained, and be informed.

We have some fun events coming up! Radio Play Day will be Play Day in the Park this month, coupled with Fall Field Day and an ARES/RACES demo. That's a positively mind-boggling amount of radio all in one place at one time – Mary Heads Carter Park in Carrollton on Saturday, October 13. Bring your field day gear, antennas, radios, stuff you want to try out, or just come on out and socialize. We'll start at 10 am or so after Hams & Eggs.

Steve Darrah, KD5YPB, will have a technology demonstration for the Emergency Managers from our served Cities that will include AREDN, a remotely-operated AREDN camera, and a selection of VHF/UHF transportable equipment that can be deployed to City locations in an emergency.

Christmas Party tickets will be on sale at Hams & Eggs and all club events. Dave Gilpin, K5GIL, (Immediate Past President) was able to get us a great deal at Victoria's in Farmers Branch and we were able to hold the price at \$20 per ticket. Long-time members will note that the ticket price hasn't changed in many years even as the price of food and venues has continued to grow. Thanks, Dave!

Come to the regular club meeting on Thursday, October 10th, to get your Christmas Party tickets, get more information about Play Day in the Park, hear some interesting presentation on “Network Radio” and EchoLink, and more.