

QSA-5

Founded, 1933

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

August 2004 Page 2

Field Day by Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ

If you asked ten hams, you would probably get ten different answers. Some would say that Field Day is a contest. Others would say that it is an emergency preparedness exercise and still others would say that it is a party and yet others would say that it is a public relations exercise. Who is right? Well I would say they all are and with that in mind I made the mistake—or was it—to volunteer to help with the club's 2004 Field Day.

It was a typical March Sunday "Bible/babble Class" and I started talking with Chet Rice who, as we all know has spearheaded the club's Field Day exercise for far more years than he wants to admit. Well, Chet knows when he has a sucker on the line and soon reeled me in and before I could say NO I was committed to be part of the planning for our club's participation in this Ham Holiday.

Chet spun a great tail of how all we needed to do was to get a number of the members to take on just a little bit of the work and there would be few or no problems. He said Norm Baetz would give us a hand which sounded good. Now there were three people to solicit support and it looked like we would be having a great time.

Now I was on the committee, which is what I called it. But Norm and Chet knew better, without me even getting a hint, that I had been promoted to take the lead for organizing the participation. Gullible wasn't I.

I felt that I should know what the Field Day rules were. So off to the computer and the ARRL website and within a few minutes I had them. The opening line of the cover letter by Dan Henderson, N1ND,

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Website at W6SG.NET
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Club Picnic, Saturday 17 July.

We went down to the clubhouse about 0945 to deliver an ice chest for transit of some of the perishables to the Sam Taylor Park location. Another of our members was scheduled to show up at 10:00 with his pickup to haul most of the food and supplies. Ten AM came and went and we started to panic, a little. No pickup. We started to pack the stuff into our Toyota's short, five foot bed and back seat and the back seat of Ben's orange VDUB. With the passengers, Connie AE6PA and Doug KD6SAU holding the final items in their laps, we headed for Fairfax to pick up ice at Albertson's. That accomplished, we set out for Sam Taylor Park, fearing any sudden stop which could propel the loaded coffin-sized ice chest in the rear seat, which obscured the rear window, into the front.

Luckily, we cheated death and arrived at the picnic site unflattened. A few members were already on site and the charcoal was soon smoking. Forty people were scheduled but we got around 28 so there was plenty of food. Enough for fifty, easily. We had overbought a few items. Example: three large cans of 'whistle berries'. (BUSH beans) We opened one. (Two?) A lot of leftovers had to be hauled back to the clubhouse later. One suggestion to reduce the number of no-shows was to charge five or ten bucks, pre-paid, and refund the money to those who show up. For some, it's too much of a temptation to RSVP to more than one event and then pick the most desirable one w/o canceling the other/s.

Pres. John brought the com. van, attached the coax and extended the mast. We had HF, VHF and UHF equipment set up on one of the tables.

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Mailing Address
P.O. Box 6423
San Rafael, CA 94903

Board Meeting 13 July.

President John Boyd KE6ORI called the meeting to order at 1935 hours. Other board members present were Norm Baetz WA6CLK, Doug Slusher KF6AKU, Al Weisman W5ALW, Herman Weiss WP4DCM, Kevin Foley KF6YUF, Raine Strom KG6GII and Phil Dunlap K6PHD.

The Treasurer's report was given by Connie Sawtelle AE6PA.

There was a discussion about sending out membership renewal forms. Phil Dunlap will get the material together and send it out with next month's QSA-5.

There are Public service events coming up in August: the Century 200 on the 7th and the Holstein on the 21st. Both could use more radio volunteers.

Connie Sawtelle discussed both the club's annual picnic and Christmas party. Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ has offered to be chief cook at the picnic.

John Boyd brought up the idea of having another social event during the late summer or fall. Another thought (for next year) was to push back the picnic to September so we can get better park accommodations? and, possibly better attendance with most vacations already taken.

Connie is looking at ideas for gifts for the Christmas party. It was brought up that there may be problems with the State in regard to holding a raffle. This will be looked into.

The club is reminded of the monthly breakfast, which is held at the Flatiron restaurant in San Rafael. This is always the third Sunday of the month. (We don't worry about carbs here. That fad diet is losing momentum. Ed.)

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Board Meeting, from page two.

There was nothing new to report from the tech committee other than some of the repeater antennas need replacing.

Doug Slusher gave a report on the club's Field Day scores and they were quite an improvement over the past two years. Final numbers will be forthcoming.

A donation of \$100.00 will be sent to the Marin Rod and Gun Club to show our appreciation over the use of their grounds.

There was a discussion about removing or retaining the planter in front of the clubhouse. (Containing the tree with branches at eye level. Ed) Also the elderly Volvo owned by the upstairs tenant, parked in the back, will be removed.

There was some discussion about future club repairs and remodeling. Al Weisman asked the club to consider helping the Apache Indians in a New Mexico reservation to get involved in ham radio. He was asked to get more details.

The meeting was adjourned at 2050 hours. Submitted by Norm Baetz, Secretary.

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PICNIC, from page two.

George KF6VSG rode in on a new Honda Shadow 600, a smart move as they get better than fifty mpg., even on Marin's back roads.

The afternoon was spent mainly on good eyeball, taking photos, eating, exploring, etc. Dave KG6TCJ was our chef and did a great job juggling the various foods. He also was pretty good at staying up-wind of the smoke, most of the time. We had slightly oversize burgers—cheese burgers if you preferred—that ended up perfectly bun size after cooking, hotdogs, salad, chips & dips, watermelon, dessert and various kinds of belly wash/soda pop. And, of course, the whistle berries. Most of us left before the effects of these made themselves known so we were not able to hold a farting contest.

There are enough dogs and burgers to supply the attendees at the next VE session, 25 September. Just have to remember to thaw them out.

Field Day from page two, column one.

ARRL Contest Branch Manager read, "It's as easy as ABC..." Boy, that sucks you right in doesn't it? I was thinking that if the ARRL promotes how easy it is to put on a Field Day event, then our club's event and member participation should be a piece of cake.

As I got into the nitty-gritty of scoring I saw that if we held the event in a public park and had a public official stop by we made automatic points. Wow, that sounds easy. Then further down: if we set up a GOTA (Get On The Air) station and make 100 contacts, even more easy points and the kids would be doing all the work and having fun at the same time. And if we make a satellite contact, even more. Now the ideas were piling up and I was thinking we could do all of this. We just needed a few members to help, so no problem.

Bible Class was in full attendance when I sat down with Chet and Norm for a meeting of the committee. I started talking about all the things we could do with this year's FD. Soon a few more babblers joined the conversation and we had a great round table going with all kinds of ideas. Club Pres John Boyd and others were in full support of having the Club out in the public's eye. With enthusiasm running high Tom Jordan got the bug. I don't think Tom realized it at the time but Chet had seized the opportunity and reeled him in. Guess what? Yep, we had a forth committee member. I left that Sunday morning thinking we were going to put on one of the best FD's in recent history and my first assignment was to find a public location for it.

As the weeks progressed and the planning continued we started refining our list of locations. Chet told me a story of how one year the club held their FD at a local city park and in the middle of the night the sprinklers came on and everyone was grabbing equipment and making a run for it. I made a mental note to make sure to contact the local rain gods to turn off the irrigation or bring buckets and sandbags to cover the sprinklers if we set up in local park.

One location that met all of our needs was the lagoon area at the Civic Center. As a RACES member I talked to the powers that be, along with offering to have the County OES join the fun with

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From column two.

their emergency comm bus, the Green Whale, and a display. This would be great press to bring in the public. They were all for it and started working inside our county government bureaucracy to arrange the use of the area. Well this came to a screeching halt when the director for the July 4th County Fair said we would be interfering with the setup of the fair, an absolute no-no as the July 4th holiday is the largest annual money maker for the County. This un-named director, not wanting to be unsupportive of our worthy event threw us a bone and said we could use a field adjacent to the parking lot on the far west side of the Civic Center.

Thinking that this might still work, I toured the site. What we were offered was a grassy knoll 100 feet from the most congested section of highway in the county. Restroom facilities were 6 porta-craps 300 yards away and fresh water would be from a hose run through the security fence around the corporation building, a good city block down the hill. Now, there were some great trees for stringing antennas and FD is supposed to be a test of setting up in the wild, but I knew this was not going to work for our group. Admit it, we're spoiled Marinites. (Historically speaking, County residents were known as Mariners, which sounds a whole lot better than 'Marinites'. Correct pronunciation of Marin is with the accent on the first syllable. Ed) So, to make the best excuse I could, I told our friends at the county that the radio propagation from the site would be very poor and not suitable for the event, so thanks but no thanks.

Scratch the Civic Center from the list. But we had others. John Boyd was pushing for the top of Mt. Tam which is DX heaven but a logistic nightmare. Then there was McInnis Park but that put us back with the County bureaucracy and don't forget the pesky sprinklers. Stafford Lake was high on the list and had support from a number of our members. I think they all lived in Novato. The facilities are great but expensive plus

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it was not a very public place and there is a toll charge for each car that drives in. Cronkrite Beach in the Marin Headlands hung in there but Federal Bureaucracy entered in and that was worse then the County's. We looked at the overflow parking lot for the Corte Madera Town Center but that made the west side of the Civic Center look like a high end camp ground. Through all this Norm had the insight, or was it past experience, to arrange for the tried and true Marin Rod and Gun Club site.

Well, three months of Sunday meetings were behind us and Field Day was now less than a month away. We had sent out letters asking for ideas and help, working the membership for support. We had visited possible sites and spent hours on the phone, most of it on hold. We had done very well. The radios and equipment were all lined up, a crew was ready for setup, the food was all arranged for. But what about the goals that were set in March? As you remember, we wanted to be in a public place, to have a local government official stop by, setup a GOTA station to introduce kids to amateur radio, have lots of press for public exposure and a list of committed club members lined up to work the radios for 24 hours straight. Well, the great event that we had envisioned and promoted didn't happen as we had hoped.

My first Field Day started Friday afternoon when I met Norm at the Club House and we loaded up all the assembled radios antennas, masts and even a ladder just in case. Off we went to spend the next 45 minutes driving from Mill Valley to San Quentin a normal 15 minute jaunt but remember it was Friday afternoon. When we arrived it was great to see a group had already assembled and were doing what all good hams do, rag-chewing and drinking beer. As I stepped out of the car the wind just about sent me into the Bay. It was blowing a good 20 miles/hour with gusts to hurricane force and we were going to put up antennas. Yeah. Right. Well we did three dipoles for 80, 40, and 20 meters. We even set up all the radios Go to column two.

From column one.

Plus a networked computer logging system and to top it off a very quiet two-cylinder diesel generator showed up, courtesy of our club Pres and Phil K6PHD's pickup and trailer.

Saturday start time was 11 AM due to our having set up Friday. Activity stayed brisk for the day with phone, CW and digital contacts a plenty. The only time it slowed down was for lunch and dinner and from what I was told it went on into the wee hours of Sunday morning. But I had headed home around 9 PM as I had to get up around 4 AM to start the sausage and potatoes for breakfast—another one of my weaker moments when I again said, "Oh, I can do that."—which I brought to the site at seven AM where I added scrambled eggs and OJ. This reenergized the group and off we went making more contacts till we had to stop at eleven. Wow, we made it 24 hours with only about 4 or so not on the air. Even as beat as everyone was, we had the site cleaned up by noon and off we went to return the generator and drop off all the other stuff at the club. Field Day 2004 was now history, except for the paper work.

Phil, our hard working editor asked me to pen a short piece on Field Day and I just could not pass up the chance of having a bit of fun with it. On the serious side, I want to thank Chet, Norm and Tom for the hours of work they put into this years event. We also could not have done it without the support of all of you who showed up on Friday afternoon to help set up and those of you who stayed up until the wee hours of the morning, two AM or so, racking up contacts and then stayed around to help with putting it all away on Sunday. I for one can not thank you all enough for an outstanding job. I wish there was room to list each of you. In the end we all had a great time with good friends and isn't that what its all about?

Ok Now For Next Year Let's
73 Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ

Edwin Karl, KØKL, has moved from San Rafael, CA to Warrenton, MO. Ed has transferred his OO appointment to the Missouri Section. Jim Harrell, MO Section OOC has approved his transfer and appointment as an OO in Missouri.

From the ARRL Missouri Section News.

Public Service Events.

We have the following public service events coming up for which we need volunteers:

Saturday, August 7, 2004 Marin Century 100/200M Bike Ride

Saturday, August 21, 2004 Holstein Hundred Bike Ride

Please contact me at

ka6bqf@aol.com or John at **kf6vyh@earthlink.net.**
73, Randy KA6BQF

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A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says, "I'll serve you, but don't start anything."
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A mouse trap, placed on top of your alarm clock, will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep when you hit the snooze button.
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This one sent in by Ed Karl KØKL

A research group captured an odd porpoise--it had feet. After it had been photographed and measured, the poor thing was prepared for release. Asked one of the researchers, "Wouldn't it be a kindness if our ship's doctor amputated the feet so it would be like other porpoises?"

"Not on your life," exclaimed the doctor. "That would be defeating the porpoise."

Stuff for Sale

#1. **ICOM 745** HF radio with desk mic \$300. Ham band and general coverage. Includes WARC bands. Has FM module. This is a great rig, by the way. A friend of mine has just returned from a 5 year sail around the world with his. There's nothing like a true love in ones life but I need room for another rig to take its place.

#2. **ALINCO Model DR605**
2 meter & 440 VHF/UHF \$200.

Contact Jere KQ6HB at 415 382 8724 or email

kq6hbjvl@yahoo.com

Use "radio" in subject line.