

The Greater Wichita Field Day (GWFD) - 2008

An Introduction by Randy Wing, N0LD

Over 60 people from the Boeing Employees Amateur Radio Society (BEARS), Wichita Amateur Radio Club (WARC), Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN), and SKYWARN joined forces for a very successful Field Day weekend! The rainy weather on Saturday morning and slow contacts all day Saturday were the challenges we faced. A special event callsign – N0W – November Zero Whiskey – was chosen to commemorate our combined field day and to have an easily remembered callsign. Thank you to everyone who contributed, attended, encouraged, and provided help during field day!

(I want to let everyone know that I am sorry in advance for omissions - the mistakes are all mine.) Please send me a note and I will correct it before I upload it to the ARRL Soapbox.)

Setup - Friday

Setup began at 1:00 PM on Friday, June 27th and went on until we had a barbeque supper prepared by Samantha Wing and Evan Fischer about 5:30 PM. We continued setup after that until about 8:00 PM and then took a break for ice cream at Braum's. We put up antennas, radios, and tents for 10m, 15m, 20m digital, and 40m digital. The extension cords were run to the tables and the planned positions of the generators. Our generators were turned on and tested. Charlie Rasico setup the network router and we setup the computers inside the air conditioned pavilion for testing. Roger Bailey setup his 20m digital station – and wow, is it complete! Roger's truck is well equipped – but he didn't use those antennas – he setup a very tall multi-band vertical – his own generator, and an air conditioned tent complete with TV – oh and a digital ham radio station.... ☺ The GOTA team – with some advice from their Elmer (Randy Wing) – setup the GOTA equipment. The people that assisted during the Friday setup included: Roger Bailey, Steve Canfield, Nick Farlow, Evan Fischer, Catherine French, Harvey Jones, Charlie Rasico, Dan Rasico, Dexter Schnebly, Ben Stranghoner, Sherry Weir, Ben Wing, Randy Wing, Samantha Wing, James Whitfield, and Mary Whitfield. The temperature was in the 90s as was the humidity – the tents were absolutely miserable during the night – so my GOTA members persuaded me to setup our sleeping bags on air mattresses in the air conditioned pavilion.

Setup – Saturday

Saturday morning began with the sound of thunder as Sherry Weir woke the GOTA team up. We hurriedly woke everyone up and got everyone in the tents to safety. The station captains secured their stations. As people slowly trickled and the slow drizzle and lightning continued throughout the morning the station captains began to worry that we might not be able to start field day on time. About 11 AM however, the lightning had stopped; the storm moved on. Everyone scurried to setup the 20m beam, the 40m dipole, and the 80m near-vertical-incidence antenna. The captains who had waited until Saturday morning to setup were pressed for time – but we got everything DRIED in the transmission tents before we turned the generators on! The 20m beam had a problem – the elements hadn't been tightened sufficiently and a high SWR forced a takedown and a re-tightening.

6-Meter Station

Captain: *Randy Wing*. Four contacts! Three local! A 4 element 6m beam at 10 feet with a 25 watt Ranger 6m mobile radio.

10-Meter Station

Captain: *Steve Canfield*. Loyd Williams, Randy Wing, Nick Farlow, Jim Enix, Charles Rasico. A 10m Ringo Ranger at 35 feet netted a handful of contacts on Sunday morning.

15-Meter Station

Captain: *Sherry Weir*. Andera Bohl, Dexter Schnebly, Jack ?, and Everett Hastie. A 15m vertical – made from a downspout (lovingly engineered by James Whitfield) served on 15m. Like 10m, 15m was slow – but it picked up a little on Sunday morning.

20-Meter Station

Captain: *George Pinick*. Charles Davis, Steve Heyroth, Charlie Hill, Jim Kernan, Jay Lies, James Macioniski, and Phil Tatsukawa. Ten Tec Omni D radio with a 3 element 20m beam with an Armstrong rotator. When we started to operate, the VSWR on 20M was 5:1. We had to take the beam down to find the problem - the hardware on the connections to the driven element were only "finger tight". After the aluminum tubing and connecting straps were polished with steel wool, the connections were put back together. Eureka! A VSWR of 1.5:1 !! We hoisted it back into the air with less than an hour lost performing the antenna maintenance.

20-Meter Digital Station

Captain: *Roger Bailey*. Ten Tec Omni D radio with a 3 element 20m beam with an Armstrong rotator. When we started to operate, the VSWR on 20M was 5:1. We had to take the beam down to find the problem - the hardware on the connections to the driven element were only "finger tight". After the aluminum tubing and connecting straps were polished with steel wool, the connections were put back together. Eureka! A VSWR of 1.5:1 !! We hoisted it back into the air with less than an hour lost performing the antenna maintenance.

40-Meter Voice and CW Station

Captain: *Steve Heyroth*. Andrea Bohl, Charles Davis, Nick Farlow, Catherine French, Terry Gattis, Jimmy Macioniski, Phil Tatsukawa, Thomas TBD, and Jimmy Williams. The 40-meter station was situated at the west end of the operating area. Setup was delayed by rain and thunder on Saturday morning, but progressed quickly once begun. The KC0IFQ 40-meter dipole was supported in the center by a 30-foot aluminum mast, and at the ends by 15-foot fiberglass masts. Participating in setup were James N5GUI, Steve K5MNZ and TBD.

Rig was the K5MNZ Icom 706 and LDG autotuner, running 100 watts powered by the quiet K5NN Honda generator. Primary mode was Voice. Operators included two out-of-town

visitors, Phil and Charles, who were in Wichita for a square dance convention that occurs annually on the same weekend as Field Day. Their tradition is to find a Field Day site and combine their dancing with some guest operating. Nice to have you, guys. The band was noisy and crowded Saturday afternoon but much quieter (but still 40 meters!) Sunday morning. Jimmy N8NCC operated at a 100+-QSO-per-hour rate for long stretches of Sunday morning and really pumped up our score and section count. Andrea KD0EKB made her first HF contacts ever. Nick KB0YHT kept the position on the air throughout the night, alternating voice ops with Jimmy K5NN operating CW. Most of the time we had one person operating and one logging, and I really came to appreciate our electronic logging program and wireless-linked server.

Sunday morning passed quickly with good band conditions and plentiful operators. Teardown was accomplished expeditiously by James Whitfield, Bill Benton, Jimmy Williams, and Steve K5MNZ.

40-Meter Digital Station

Captain: *Harvey Jones*. Andrea Boh, Jack TBD. The system was manned the entire event, with slightly over 100 contacts in the 24 hour period. Harvey used his FT-857 and auto-tuner with a Hy Gain vertical antenna that stood about 30 feet tall. Harvey recorded the ARRL message, too.

80-Meter Station

Captain: *Jim Enix*. Ron Cowan, Nick Farlow, Larry Macionski, Woody Thompson, Loyd Williams, and several walk-up field attendees. The radio was an ICOM 756 PRO II and a 102 ft long dipole in an inverted V configuration with the peak at 30 feet and the ends about 5 feet off the ground. Ben Stranhorn, Jim Kernan, Lloyd Williams, Charles Rasico, James Whitfield, and Randy Wing, were instrumental in getting this station operational and packing it away. A highlight of the event was Ron Cowan, KB0DTI, KS Section Manager, operating CW and voice for a good portion of the night and morning. Ron used our 80m station to run the Kansas Net on Sunday morning.

We had antenna-tuning problems with the ICOM, which was resolved by the use of an LDG tuner. In the end we made contacts across the US and Canada. The furthest contact was with a station in Hawaii in early Sunday morning – not bad for a “compromise” antenna!

Next time I believe that a sheet of plywood would be a benefit to those of us who are lucky enough to find gopher holes with chair legs. I also would like to have a sign in sheet for those who work the station. I apologies to those who I missed this time. Because of the 80m antenna problems several offers have been made to provide a better antennas for the station. If all works as claimed next FD will be great on 80m.

Based on lessons learned from 2007 we made sure that the station had a key this year. It did come in handy Sunday morning. My thanks to Ron Cowen for his CW skills and taking time from his family to visit various field day sites.

Antenna setup/take down

Roger Bailey, Jim Enix, Evan Fischer, Steve Heyroth, Harvey Jones, Joey Jones, Jim Kernan, Logan Nispel, Charles Rasico, Jack TBD, Ben Stranghoner, Sherry Weir, James Whitfield, Mary Whitfield, Jimmy Williams, Ben Wing, Randy Wing, and Samantha Wing walked the grounds, loaded vehicles, and ensured the building was swept and clean. Cleanup began about noon and completed about 3 PM. It was wonderful having so many stay to finish the event!

Food

Evan Fischer and Samantha Wing prepared a meal hosted by Randy Wing on Friday night. The Salvation Army donated a meal on Saturday morning. James Whitfield and Mary Whitfield organized a (BEARS hosted) 60 person supper event for Saturday evening and a smaller Sunday morning breakfast feed. Leftovers from these meals were enthusiastically raided from the refrigerator through Field Day. Asking for an (optional) \$0.25 donation for each bottled water or pop actually resulted in our beverages breaking even this year!

In Summary...

Every Field Day we learn a few new things as we progress up the learning curve and make higher scores. Sometimes we re-learn things that we should have learned last time... ☺ Here are just a few:

1. We need a dedicated CW station – we had several CW operators who would have operated had they not had to kick off some of the voice operators.
2. The GOTA antenna was too close to the 20m voice and the 20m digital – there was a lot of interference. This severely limited the number of GOTA contacts in comparison to years past.
3. Improve our antennas every year - we didn't have two dipoles for 40m and it would have helped! We knew our 80m antenna could be improved, but somehow we just didn't have the time.
4. Captains noted that signing up operators for band-time-slots would be a good best practice.
5. A dinner bell should be rung when food is served! A coffee pot should be operational at all times!
6. A sheet of plywood as a floor is a good recommendation for future station captains.
7. A signup sheet – so that each captain knows who operated and when – would be a good addition in the future.

In spite of some challenges, by combining our local clubs Field Day events into the Greater Wichita Field Day we had some true successes!

1. Sherry Weir provided a SKYWARN display that provided a good show and tell for visitors.
2. Taking field day pictures at planned times during the event was a super idea – I'm sure we'll get wide exposure. We had pictures of the Saturday morning attendees, SATERN attendees, and SKYWARN attendees. They will be available by the first week of August from a server – so that you can download any that you'd like.

3. By posting our Field Day location into the ARRL Field Day location finder, ham attendees at the National Square Dance competition drew in hams from California (K6PMT – Phil Tatsukawa) and Texas (KD5KOD - Charles Davis) to our field day event!
4. Similarly, a few new hams found our GWFD event and learned about field day!
5. No one went hungry! Food was plentiful and was well received by everyone – in fact, our attendance peaked during the Saturday evening barbeque!
6. Gwen Welshimer, Sedgwick (Kansas) County Commissioner attended around noon on Saturday. Gwen met with Chance Hayes (Wichita, KS National Weather Service) and learned how vital amateur radio is to the NWS and to the local community. Chance noted that the number of SKYWARN affiliated ham radio operators has grown to over 125 this year. Chance explained how SKYWARN operators are linked to the NWS by amateur radio and provide valuable on-the-spot observations that contribute to timely severe weather warnings to the public.
7. Gwen Welshimer also noted that the Salvation Army van had attended in the morning and fed the GWFD team lunch – a reverse “served agency”! (Field Day attendees passed the hat - a good sized donation was made to the Salvation Army).
8. Gwen Welshimer, on 3 July 2008, briefed the Sedgwick County Commissioners on her visit to our GWFD site and on the value that ham radio volunteers provide to the local community through their served government agencies. You can see video of this at about 1:14:50 into the session, almost at the end.

http://sedgwick.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1589

9. The local ABC Affiliate, KAKE, interviewed a few Field Day attendees – the spot was shown on the 6 pm news on Saturday, June 28, 2008!

Planned Attendance

Randy Wing	N0LD	FD Chair / 6m Captain / GOTA assistant
James Enix	KC0QIE	FD Co-Chair / 80m Captain
Charles Rasico	KC0WQY	FD Network chairman
Samantha Wing	KC0MTM	GOTA Captain Full time
Evan Fischer	n/a	GOTA Entire time
Logan Nispel	KC0VUG	GOTA Entire time
Dan Rasico	n/a	GOTA Setup only
Ben Stranghoner		GOTA Entire time
Ben Wing	KC0YJI	GOTA Entire time
Alan Bruster	KB0PKL	Saturday – boy scouts
Andrea Bohl	KD0EKB	40m voice
Bill Benton	WA0MIF	40m Prob. / Sat & Sun
Bill Briles	W0OQC	Saturday
Bill Turner	N0GGO	Saturday
Blake Barnard	KD0CSH	WARC Secretary
Blake Barnard's daughter		WARC member
Bob Egbert	KC0ZRX	WARC president

Brian Michael	W1OU	WARC
Catherine French	KE5CEJ	Saturday and Sunday
Chance Hayes	KC0QBY	Sat
Charles Davis,	KD5KOD	After Sq Dnc
Chris Melugin	KC0ZBP	WARC member
Dave Power	KA0KCI	Saturday evening
David Sirota,	KB0UKW	Entire time
David Stanislaw	N0JWY	Saturday; WARC VP
Deb Sirota,	KB0NOR	Entire time
Dexter Schnebly	KB0YWN	Sat and Sunday
Dory Hayes	KD0DNT	occasional
Everett Hastie III	KC0FUE	9 am Saturday thru evening
Everett Hastie	N5UQD	9 am Saturday thru evening
Gary Cowles	KC0RZI	in and out
George Pinick	WA0GNC	20m Captain
Gwen Welshimer		Visitor
Haley Canfield	n/a	Entire time
Harvey Jones	AC0EG	40m PSK-31 Captain
Henry Monton	W0IE	Visitor
James Macionski	N8NCC	40m voice
James Whitfield	N5GUI	Setup, Teardown, Food Captain
Jan Ingram	KC0VUE	WARC member
Jeff Waldschmidt		Friend of Gary Cowles'
Jeff Waldschmidt's son		Friend of Gary Cowles'
Jim Kernan	KC0WHI	Sat and Sunday
Jimmy Williams	K5NN	Entire time
Joe Johnson	N0KTA	Saturday
John Bandy	W0UT	Saturday and CW
John Harford	KB0OPH	Saturday and Sunday
Larry Macionski	W8LM	Late SAT and Sunday
Larry's friend #2	Visitor	
Lisa Wing	n/a	Visitor
Loyd Williams	KC0HZR	some 10m; some other
Mary Monton	n/a	Visitor
Mary Whitfield	n/a	Food Coordinator
Nancy Williams		Jimmy's wife
Nick Farlow	KB0YHT	Midnight Sat and Sunday
Phil Tatsukawa,	K6PMT	After Sq Dnc
Roger Bailey	N6ZOP	20m Digital Captain
Ron Hoffmann	KB0QVJ	Sat and Sunday
Ron Ligenzowski	N0YRP	Saturday
Samuel Patton	KC0SXY	Friday evening & Sat. day
Sherry Weir	KB0SQQ	15m Captain
Steve Canfield	KC0GAA	10m Captain Entire time
Steve Heyroth	K5MNZ	40m Voice Captain
Steve Schroeder	KA0YBN	Entire time

Terry Gattis	K9TAG	Saturday
Tim Force	AJ7F	Saturday
Woody Thompson	KC0TXD	Civil Air Patrol may visit