



CENTRALIA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE TEAM

June 2020

Amateur Radio is a hobby ... Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a commitment!

Field - PANDEMIC - Day 2020



Raising the Field Day tower with a little help from Don's lawn tractor.

It is Field Day once again and our Centralia Amateur Radio Emergency Service team has come together for the 12th year in a row to participate. But some things are very different this year. Instead of our regular site at Fort Borst Park, we are located at the home of a team member because Borst Park is not open to the public this year due to regulations issued because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Several team members are wearing masks and we are all trying to “social distance” as much as possible.

In addition, we were missing two very important people. Founding team member Lyle Olmsted, KB7PI passed away in December. Lyle's brother, Merle, regularly flew out from Kentucky to spend field day with the team and enhance our numbers with his amazing CW skills. This year, however, he remained at home.

The presence of these two professionals was sorely missed.

The “Spirit” of field day, however, was still strong among our team. On Friday, we delivered and set up our two ARES communications vans in a beautiful open field. Then it was time to erect our regular 30 foot tower and beam antenna for 20 meters along with two other long wire antennas for 40 and 80 meters. Skip, K1HEK, also set up a digital station using the HF system in his pickup. All together, this gave us a four station field day operation.

While generators ran the 20 meter station, we decided to test the capability of our on board batteries in both Comm II and Comm III. The system powered HF and VHF radios, desk and overhead lighting as well as the logging computers and worked flawlessly throughout the weekend. We did use a generator for a short time, but only to run the coffee maker.

Saturday was cold and windy but we started the day with a wonderful breakfast prepared by Ken, KK7YUQ, and Don, KI7ZNG.



Don, KI7ZNG, working 20 meters



Chef Ken preparing breakfast eggs

As she has done each and every year, our most popular field day teammate Evelyn, KE7ACI, rose very early in the morning to prepare two large pans of the world's best cinnamon rolls to get our day started right.

With full stomachs, the team made final preparations to be on the air at 11am. Throughout Saturday, the 20 meter and 40 meter bands were our most active although not up to the standards from previous years. Still, as we gathered together for a meal, once again prepared by Ken and Don along with several great potluck dishes, we were willing to call it a successful field day Saturday.

We may have been the only field day group with a magic show! John, KI7YEF, is an experienced entertainer and had a ready audience in Don's, KI7ZNG, granddaughter who sat transfixed as John displayed his capability with the magic rings for her.



John, KI7YEF, performs some one on one magic with a fascinated audience

This is not the only time John has shown his abilities. At last year's National Night Out Against Crime party in Washington Park, he stood for hours blowing up and creating balloon animals for the kids they lined up across the park.

With a couple of intrepid overnight operators, we had a reasonably good score going into Sunday morning. By the time operations stopped at 11am, we had added a few more points and contacts to the log. While we could hear lots of stations on Sunday, they were harder to contact

With the contest over, it was time to bring down the tower and antennas and pack everything away. It always surprises me that we have any energy left on Sunday to take down equipment and put it all away but somehow it gets done.

Centralia ARES team members have exchanged outdoor training for Zoom training since April. We've done on-air nets instead of meeting for our normal coffee days. We have had to forego swap meets and radio conventions as well as our regular CVARS monthly meetings throughout the spring. We are, however, still resilient and continue to train to be ready if called upon. Thanks to all of our team members and hams everywhere who remain vigilant. Thanks for all you do!



Social Distance Training

On June 15th, while still under social distance requirements, the ARES team conducted a wildfire field exercise. Participants remained in their own vehicles during the entire training - from briefing to debriefing. Chief Kytta, also a ham, joined us from home over the simplex frequency to add some great realism and advice. We practiced windshield surveys, comm van placement, evacuation planning and house counts along the evacuation routes. Social distancing is a little different and makes planning harder but we made it happen. Good job everyone!