



Field-Day WA6MTN

| AUGUST 2020 | [Mountain Top Amateur Radio Association](http://www.mtana.org) |



President: Vic Marquez, KK6WKI

Secretary: Dave Esquer, K6WDE

Ed/Membership: Tracy Lenocker, WM6T

The Rim of the World ARES group is an ARRL affiliated organization and part of the Mountain Top Amateur Radio Association.

Vice President: Gary Johnson, AA6GJ

Treasurer: Patty Szychowski, KK6LWH

Past President: John Snedden, KT7P

President Vic's Message

Greetings from your President, Vic, KK6WKI.

This is our third issue and it seems forever that we've been locked down, but we had FIELD DAY this month.



The Zoom virtual club sessions are still held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The schedule is published on the [MTARA website](http://www.mtana.org).

We welcome four new members to the club: Alvie Grant, KG4SXQ from San Bernardino, Jeff Palmquest, N6SAM from Downey and Greg and Donna Berenato, AJ6FN and KK6TCR from Highland.

Remember, stay radio-active and as always, **if you see something, say something!**

73, Vic

Monthly Club Meetings

Our monthly meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month. **Put August 4th on your calendar. For the time being, they are virtual sessions held on**

Zoom. We have video and teleconference abilities. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and last until about 9:00 p.m. Our meetings are open to everyone, licensed amateur radio or just interested parties. Our purpose is to provide educational opportunities, mentoring, radio communication training and providing radio communications for community events.

For our virtual meetings, interested parties, NOT members of the club will need to email tracy@lenocker.com with their name and callsign. The credentials for the meeting will then be emailed to that person.

We hope to 'see' you all on the 4th of August!

Treasurer's Report - KK6LWH

We have four new members so our balance is now \$90 richer! Our income from membership dues is \$4,060.00 and no expenses for the month. The total funds on deposit in our account is now \$9,237.09!

73, Patty

Editor's Update - K6WDE

This issue is devoted to YOUR Field Day AND 13 Colonies Special Events operations. Sit back and enjoy these first person notes and photos from the 'field'!

Field Day, Jo - N6NTJ

Field Day 2020 was sure different this year. I missed sharing Field Day with other club members, but we were still involved in one of the biggest contests of the year.

I operated from my home on my ICOM 730, tuner and Bioenno 20 amp-hour battery. I was on 20 and 40 meters and made contacts as a 1E ORG station.

Propagation was up and down for me. There were so many hams calling CQ, I could always find someone somewhere. The [DXSummit](http://www.dxsummit.com) spotting network helped me spot the hams calling CQ for Field Day.

I made 10 contacts the first day and 5 on the second day. No all nighters for me. 73, Jo

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Field Day, Vic - KK6WKI

Field Day this year was definitely not the same. I was looking forward to this year's event at the Lodge with our members. For me, field day is more about the social gathering than the



radio, this year however, it was all about the radio.

In keeping with tradition, I had a pancake breakfast and then at 1100 hours I got on the air. I ran a 1-Delta station and played till about 2100, with several breaks in between. I used the N3FJP logging software. I did not play on Sunday.

I looked around on all the bands but only made contacts on 20 and 40 meters. I made a total of 49 contacts, with approximately 10 being made from me calling CQ for an hour. I was a little disappointed to say the least, from my location at 6,200 feet and my antenna 50 feet up, I thought I'd make a lot more contacts.

A few things I did learn, If I'm going to call CQ, I need to stake take out a place early and in the general class portion of the band.

Another thing, when I first started, I heard a lot of local stations and I

skipped over them looking for more distant contacts, not thinking it doesn't make any difference point wise.

Last but not least, creature comfort, I do need to buy an additional monitor for my laptop, my neck got very stiff and sore, looking down at it all day. I may even need an additional keyboard.

- Vic

Field Day, Dede - K6DDZ

For Field Day 2020, I hunted, chased and pounced on 67 QSOs across the western U.S., British Columbia and a few contacts on the east coast. In my best "YL voice", I was able to break



through some of the pile ups and for the first time I was given preference.

I worked 20 and 40 from my 1-Delta (home station on electricity) off and on for the 24 hours with support from Tom K6KTH who had just come home from the hospital.

- Dede

13 Colonies, Jo - N6NTJ

This was my second year to try to get 13 Colonies. My modest home station is an ICOM 730 (purchased in the early 80s), tuner and Carolina Windom Antenna. There are no waterfalls or fancy filters in my radio. I was on 20 and 40 meters.

This year required a lot of patience in making a contact. The propagation was terrible for me. At times I could hear only one sided pileups. I would listen to what areas he/she was answering. If I didn't hear them picking up the West Coast, I would turn the knob until I heard another K2. It is very addicting once you start making contacts.

At times, I would get a little help from my friends. I'd get a text stating a K2 station was booming in. Of course, they would expect me not to make the contact before they did.

I also have DXSummit on my iPad. It is a good tool for spotting assistance when looking for K2s. And, every ham in the world has DXSummit. It is fun to see all the hams from around the world on DXSummit's web page.

I made 7 contacts. It would have been 8, but I messed up my log info. I still do it by hand.

Hope propagation is better next year!

- Jo

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Field Day, Bruce - KJ6IJM

Using a balloon to launch an end-fed half wave vertical antenna sounded both challenging and fun; not that this approach was unique (see 1940 QSL article qsl.net/g4vgo/antenna1.htm). The hardware consisted of a Yaesu FT-991A radio, an LDG AT-100ProII antenna tuner, a MFJ-915 RF choke and a Myantennas.com MEF-330-1K antenna matching transformer. The radio and tuner were powered by a Bioenno 20Ah battery and all computer and an external monitor were powered through a dc/ac inverter using the DC power outlet on the 2m/440 Go-Box, that contains a 15 Ah Bioenno battery. To provide internet service to the computer, a Wifi Hotspot was established via cell phone.

The operational site was chosen based on being out of public view and away from power lines in La Quinta, CA. This activity was originally planned for a location in the San Bernardino Mountains but the complexity of the logistics, including recovery from a potential balloon failure, differential pressure between fill point and ops location and the possibility for substantial winds were just too great.

The antenna had to be light enough to be carried up by a reasonable sized Helium balloon. A seven strand, stainless steel, model airplane control cable with a diameter of 0.021" was selected. The antenna was launched using a



36" balloon under filled to 30". A second balloon, filled the same way, was used as a backup. Since the backup was not needed it was attached, along with the primary balloon, to provide additional lift of the antenna wire.



The antenna was adjusted in length to be half-wave at both 40m (64.8') and 80m (123.2'). The slight breeze converted the vertical to a sloper which was OK. The only major

problem encountered was an incorrectly set parameter, in the radio, in a mode that had never been used before. Finding the problem required 5 hours and was found after station tear-down had already occurred; unfortunately, no contacts were made. A very short dry-run the weekend before, with only a 25' long balloon launched antenna, resulted in a contact to Japan, JF2VGS.

Although Field Day was over, the

antenna was deployed again using the same balloons at the 40m length (64.8') this time at home in La Quinta, the morning of 30 June. There was absolutely no wind and the antenna stood vertical; the antenna tuner brought the SWR at 40m to 1.0 to 1.0 and at 20m (full wave) 1.1 to 1.0. Starting at 5:00AM, and for the next three hours, contacts were made, using FT8, with Argentina, Japan, Russia, Australia, the U.S., the Philippines and all over Indonesia.

The photo below shows the field station manned by Bruce (KJ6IJM) and his neighbor Gavin (Extra Class K6GAV).



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Upcoming Calendar of Events

Activities that MTARA will be participating in or supporting during the upcoming summer months:

- ▶ Mountain Top Days - The Parade has been canceled. In its place there may be another event but probably not requiring any ECS or ARES radio operators.
- ▶ ~~Tour de Big Bear—Rescheduled to September 19th.~~
- ▶ Kodiak 100
John, W6GC, will be sending out information to MTARA members and former radio operators. The event will be on September 11-12 starting at 6:00 pm. The event will be limited to just one 100 mile race and limited to 100 runners.
- ▶ Kids on Public Lands
KOPL has been canceled due to Corona virus safe social distancing concerns.
- ▶ Big Bear Gran Fondo – Still on schedule for September 26th.
The Gran Fondo mountain bike ride will be held once again in Big Bear. MTARA members will be located along the mountain area trails, aid stations and in SAG vehicles providing communications to support the event.

Upcoming VHF/UHF and HF Ham Radio calendar of events

A few fun events that club members can participate in and/or sharpen their communication skills with!

- ▶ [North American CW QSO Party](#), August 1-2
- ▶ [Maryland-DC QSO Party](#), August 8
- ▶ [North American SSB QSO Party](#), August 15-16
- ▶ [Hawaii QSO Party](#), August 22-24
- ▶ [Ohio QSO Party](#), August 22-23
- ▶ [International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend](#) - ILLW, August 22-23
- ▶ [Kansas QSO Party](#), August 29-30
- ▶ [Colorado QSO Party](#), August 21-September 1
- ▶ [Tennessee QSO Party](#), September 6-7
- ▶ [Texas QSO Party](#), September 12-13
- ▶ [ARRL September VHF Contest](#), September 12-14
- ▶ [California QSO Party](#), October 3-4
- ▶ [Pacificon](#), October 16-18, hopefully!

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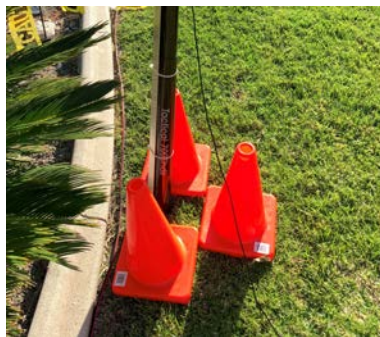
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Field Day, Gary 'n Debbie - AA6GJ and WB6LVC

This year, Field Day took on a new look because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally, field day meant just that, set up in the field with friends and club members to practice deployment of emergency communications equipment, and operate it for 24 hours; trying to contact as many stations with as many modes as possible considering your own circumstances. And invite the public, too!

Unfortunately, that didn't happen. We had to be "socially distant." So, Debbie and I set up our station in our backyard. Our operation was on phone and digital. We operated on 20 and 40 meters. The following photos tell the tale.

The photos below show part of our early set up. I put up a SOTABeams TAC 7000 HDS telescoping mast, and on top I mounted a SOTABeams Bandhopper 2 Inverted VEE.



These photos show the antenna fully extended and our Bioenno 60-Watt Solar Panel. We operated on 100% battery power.

Our exchange was 1 Echo Orange.

I first set up on 40-meter phone using my Elecraft KX3 at full 15 Watts of power. I found that I was not being heard well. I found that the higher power 1D stations were not necessarily listening for weak signals, so after 4 hours and 5 contacts, I went in for dinner.



Then, after dark, I decided to run FT8 digital mode on 40-meters. The propagation was better, and I landed 11 more

contacts before calling it a night at 0000 hrs. local.

The next day, I continued FT8 on 20-meters. I finished the day by collecting 13 more contacts.

I received 100 bonus points for operating 100% battery power and 50 points for submitting the entry via the web. That equaled 150 points.

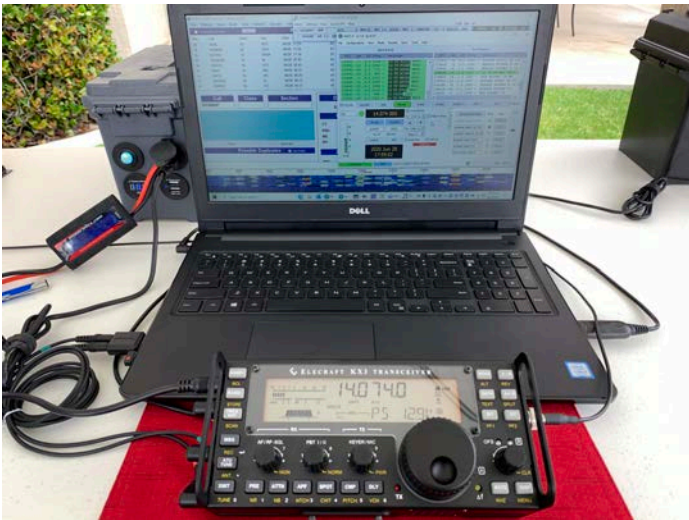
My claimed score was 53 (2 points for each digital contact and 1 point for each phone contact). So, 53 times the power multiplier of 2 (for operating all

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stations at 150 Watts or less) equaled 106 points.

My total points were 256 for me and MTARA! Not bad for 15 Watts!!



While I missed the camaraderie of club members, I really got a kick out of being outdoors and "On the Air" participating in the best hobby in the world! I hope your Field Day was just as fun and educational as ours was. Stay well everyone!

73, to all de AA6GJ, Gary, and WB6LVC, Debbie

Field Day, Sandy - W6SJE

A view from a newbie. I should start by saying I have attended a few Field Days, but never in a competitive contact basis. I try to hide in the kitchen at the Masonic Lodge and being on the radio can sometimes (most times) be a bit intimidating for me. I promised my husband, Dave, that I would be an active teammate for the 2020 Field Day. Due to Covid, MTARA decided it would be better not to gather as a group and instead each member could participate in their own way. Dave and I decided to go to our place in Arizona and transmit from there.

I had promised Dave I would participate most of Saturday. I think he was disappointed that I wasn't

excited by the idea of working throughout the night, but I do have my limits. The couple of times I've done a short bit of contesting, I make sure to write down everything I'm supposed to say, because I sometimes feel like my mouth is full of marbles and I trip over my own tongue as I'm trying to make contacts. Maybe the piece of paper is my security blanket, but it does seem to help.



So....with paper in hand and sweaty palms, I approached Field Day on Saturday. We started with my scrolling through the bands to find other testers who were looking for new contacts. Boy, you have to be aggressive as those ham radio folks can talk right over you! I did have a crutch in that Dave was logging in all of my

contacts. I would need a lot more practice to be able to do both! He is amazing at this stuff, and I don't just say that because I'm his wife! You have to understand as well that I'm not a fisherman. I don't have much patience and if there's not activity or the radio is too scratchy, I like to just scroll on and not wait for someone. I did manage to make 73 contacts in all, which was pretty exciting. When we seemed to hit a wall of new contacts, Dave showed me how to tape my CQ CQ call and then we found a place to sit on a radio band where other testers could come to me. We had success in that area as well, but again my lack of patience made me want to move on and find more action!

Between Saturday and early Sunday morning, Dave and I had a total of 186 contacts. The experience was at times very exciting, at times very boring and all things in between. All in all, I would love to do this again and

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feel much more comfortable using the radio. If you've been thinking about getting into some type of contesting, I would definitely recommend you work with someone else as a part of a team. Dave was very supportive and patient with me and has been a great mentor! Thanks dear! 😊



I'm looking forward to next Field Day! We've been talking about Route 66 as our next team event. Stay tuned.....

(Dave's turn now)

We had a dynamic team for Field Day in Arizona, two operators and one Icom IC-7300 radio. I missed the smell of Vic's sizzling bacon team at the Lodge, but we all had to adapt this year!



Determined to put forth a great effort, Sandy and I were deployed and ready as a 1-E, AZ (Arizona) station, running on solar and battery power, prior to the 11:00 a.m. start of Field Day. Due to our HOA/CCR restrictions,

we play stealthily to avoid detection and complaints. Two End Fed Half-Wave sloper antennas (one 80-10 meters [for evening use] and one 40-10 meters)

oriented East-West, were ready as well as our portable 6 meter Moxon.

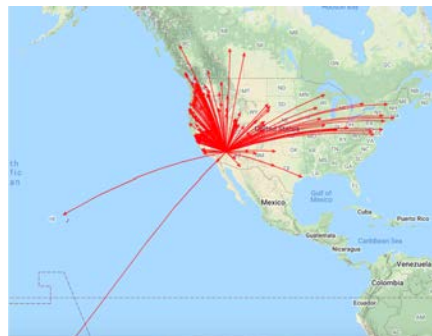
Propagation being what it is, we made a fantastic 6 meter contact with KOPTK, 868 miles to Nebraska prior to the start of the event! I was hoping the magic band would cooperate during FD, but that was the ONLY 6 meter contact during the weekend, and, it didn't even count, bummer!



We operated Saturday off and on from 11:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and from 4:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Sunday. We did a combination of search-and-pounce and running a frequency (calling CQ). The photo to the left shows our 'portable'

station with Sandy at the helm. Two monitors always helps.

As she mentioned, we made 186 QSOs for a total of 372 points. Adding in 100 points for emergency power and 50 points for our online submittal, we totaled 522 points. The breakout by band was 4 contacts on 80



meters, 130 contacts on 40, 48 contacts on 20 and 4 contacts on 15 meters.

It was great fun, but we look forward to the MTARA Masonic Lodge pancake and crispy bacon

breakfast in 2021.

Sandy and Dave

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Field Day, Tracy 'n Jodi - WM6T and WA6JL

Early Saturday morning Jodi, WA6JL, and I, WM6T, packed up the Jeep. We did not have time to prepare so we just brought everything we could think of. I grabbed the radio related items and Jodi prepared a nice picnic lunch. Well it didn't all fit in the Jeep. So I put some of the larger items in the Subaru where we would leave them unless needed.



We drove to the end of a road blocked by a USFS gate. From there Goat (Jodi), Mini Goat (Tess) and I hiked to our Field Day location nestled in the trees about a one-

tenth mile hike (34° 16.105' N, 117° 10.057' W). We noticed that the road to the site was in good condition, although steep in some places. I had thrown everything I could think of in the Subaru including a folding wagon. It took four trips to get the radio essentials and lunch to the Field Day location.

We arrived at the Field Day site with more gear than necessary around 09:45. We quickly began to set up a temporary radio station which consisted of the Elecraft KX3 and an Alex Loop antenna powered by a Bioenno battery.

We threw down a temporary ground cloth for Mini Goat (Tess) and a folding table and small stool. Tess was not wearing the cone for a "moon bounce bark" contact but because she and Jodi had been attacked by two German shepherds a week earlier.

So, before Field Day even started I turned on the KX3, tuned the loop to 20 meters around 14.250. There were a few light signals but all of a sudden around 10:15 I heard a very strong signal on 14.257.50. He

called "CQ W3FF portable tricycle". Well that was very interesting so I replied back at around 10 watts and made contact with Budd. He was 59 into me and he said I was 56 or so to his location out in Redding,



CA. We spoke for a while and I learned that he has a tricycle and tows a cart behind it. He was working using a portable hex beam antenna.

But the interesting part was after I got back home and looked up W3FF, I discovered that it was Budd



Drummond the founder of [BuddiPole](#). We have had several email conversations on antenna stuff since then.

As Goat (Jodi) noted I was so jazzed with the contact on low power to Redding with just a minimal setup that I said "Well I guess we can consider Field Day a real success already and we have not even started".

We then set up a ground cloth and an overhead awning tied to the multiple trees around us. So, we had good shade and a comfortable ground area to sit or lay on. Mini Goat loved the area and thought it was so nice of us to provide a nice place to lie down and wide open spaces for us to take her on a walk.

It was time to put up a better antenna in the trees and add the KXPA100 to the KX3 and PX3. So, we would be 100 watts and a wire.

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I decided to use one of my oldest methods to put the antenna rope in a tree. Yes that was a standard slingshot. Jodi put the camera on movie mode and I made my first shot, and my second and third. She asked me if I was supposed to hit the trunk and have the weight bounce back for movie effect. I explained it was practice in case I lost the weight. On the fourth attempt, everything went perfectly. Of course, I might have been aiming for a higher branch but I was not going to share that with Jodi.

We attached the endfed random wire antenna to that tree up high and to a lower tree branch near our campsite. It was in a north-south direction. We then ran about 25 feet of coax to the amp and radio. We both set up one of the folding solar panels for charging the battery. We were in so much shade that Jodi had to move the panels a number of times as the sun moved.



We had a relaxing afternoon and only made a few contacts which were mostly to the north in WWA region. We did have a visitor who was very interested in what we were doing. The deer got close but then ran off when I was thinking about a mobile mounted antenna on antlers.

Two hikers came by on the North shore hiking trail which was next to our campsite. They were geocaching. After they took a few steps in the wrong

direction I redirected them to the correct trail. When they came back about a half hour later they said they found the cache.

After a fun day with both of us taking turns spinning the dial we decided to pack it up around 15:00. One of our MTARA club members offered to help take the equipment back to the cars. The offer was greatly appreciated. And it was noticed that this time it would be downhill.

Not a lot of contacts but a memorable fun day in the forest. Jodi also said it was a good time to test more of the radio gear to see what worked and what did not. We did submit our results to ARRL to be accumulated for our club.

We are looking forward to more outings where we can be socially distanced during the rest of the summer and early fall.

