

The Governor Gets on the Air

Sussex County ARA aims high and scores a Governor.

Walter Palmer, W4ALT

As with most hams, the cold, dark days of February spark thoughts of summer and ARRL Field Day. The Sussex Amateur Radio Association (SARA) is no exception. SARA's primary service area includes Sussex County, Delaware, also known as Lower Slower Delaware. But don't let the name fool you. Sussex County, encompassing over 979 square miles and 50 miles of coastal shoreline, is within 200 miles of the major East Coast population centers of Washington, DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York City. During the summer season coastal Sussex County swells from a sleepy but growing, year-round population, to millions of tourists, sun worshipers and weekend warriors. Sussex County also boasts the home of the largest population of broiler chickens in the United States. With such a diverse economic and population census, "turning *fun* into *functional*" has become the club's mantra.

Within 1 month of the beginning of his term, President Joe Stormer, W3TL, mustered the troops to participate in the Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio (SPAR) January Winter Field Day. Hard work garnered the club a national Second Place proving that the membership was hungry and willing to practice its skills. Therefore, during the February meeting the idea and planning stages for ARRL Field Day were formulated. These included inviting neighboring Nanticoke Amateur Radio Club (NARC) to join in the fun. Between the two clubs, ownership of suitable equipment and the pool of knowledgeable talent would allow for the Joint Field Day (JFD) venture to operate in the 4A class.

During the March meeting it was decided that it would be worthwhile to invite some notable local politicians to the JFD. SARA Vice President Bill Prettyman, W3DR, mentioned that it would be exciting if the Governor would attend. After all, Field Day is all about emergency communications and that starts at the top. Not being one to pass up a great public relations opportunity, I, as SARA Public Information Officer, accepted the challenge and began correspondence with Governor Ruth Ann Minner's scheduling secretary.

A Governor on Site

Following weeks of back and forth communications, her commitment to attend was received and announced to the joint membership, raising the morale of all. During the entire process I was also in contact with Allen Pitts, W1AGP, ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager. Allen was quick to develop thoughts of organizing a Governor's Net to kick off the 2007 national Field Day



PAUL ROSS W3FIS

Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner declares June 2007 as Delaware Amateur Radio Awareness month. Delaware Section Manager Frank Filipkowski, AD3M, also addressed the club.

event, by inviting Governors from other states to participate. The idea started off with great enthusiasm, but ultimately did not come to fruition due to scheduling issues. That made Delaware's Governor Minner the highest ranking elected official on the air from any US station during Field Day.

In honor of the Governor's appearance, we changed our club call, KB3BHL, to special event station W3D, courtesy of the ARRL. The ability to CQ *Whiskey Three Delaware* made us an attractive contact.

In her online blog the Governor wrote:

"Today I visited the Georgetown Airport for the 75th Annual Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Day where I declared the month of June as Amateur Radio Month in the State of Delaware. Amateur Radio, also known as ham radio, involves amateur operators who communicate with each other throughout the country and the world. It was my pleasure to use the different radios of 20 meter and

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Delaware Governor Minner made several contacts at W3D Field Day.



Roy Gould, K1RY, informs an unsuspecting QSO that they are about to speak to Governor Minner.

Field Day Planning Wisdom

Lessons learned during the planning and execution includes:

- ✓ **Plan early.** Look at last year's effort, what worked, what didn't. What needs to change?
- ✓ **Plan BIG.** Whether you are a one-person station or multi-club effort, don't forget to invite your neighbors, friends, local elected officials, local emergency agencies and first responders. Show them that Amateur Radio is alive and well in your area.
- ✓ **Plan to have fun!** Serious contesters or first timers, individuals or clubs and teams can all benefit from excitement and camaraderie of this annual rite of summer.

40 meter frequencies to contact other hams in Pennsylvania and Indiana.

"These ham operators are residents committed to emergency preparedness in our state. During unpredictable and tragic emergencies, such as the September 11th attacks, the Tsunami in Indonesia, and Hurricane Katrina, these amateur radio operators play an important role in our emergency communication network. They are off grid and sometimes the only way to communicate. I appreciate the active involvement and cooperation of our General Assembly, Sussex County Council, local officials, Delaware National

Guard, Delaware State Police, Delaware Emergency Management Agency, Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, Sussex Amateur Radio Association and the Nanticoke Amateur Radio Club. By working together we are better prepared to protect the residents of Delaware when disaster strikes."

A Real Attendance Booster

Following the Governor's acceptance of our invitation, other invitees and notables were quick to do likewise. Additionally, a commitment by the Delaware State Police Mobile Command Center to be on-site for tours; the Delaware National Guard, who supplied a tent and personnel with promotional goodies and the Sussex Technical High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Color Guard provided additional eye candy to our setup.

When all was said and done, the SARA/NARC W3D Joint Field Day was a grand success! Over 75 spectators attended our kickoff ceremony with more than 100 unique visitors to our field location over a 24 hour period. We received lots of beneficial newspaper and radio coverage and opened many doors toward improved interoperability with served agencies. As an added bonus, we gained three new club members that weekend and over 30 new hams later from state agencies.

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Some Tips for a Memorable Field Day

Look Up to the ISS

You might just hear the International Space Station crew operating NA1SS. A two-way packet or voice exchange through the ISS counts as a satellite contact. (On the other hand, a contact with the crew or simply hearing the ISS beacon doesn't earn FD points.) — *Rosalie While, K1STO*

For Serious FD Ops

If your group has several high-power HF stations, your biggest challenge could well be *interstation interference*. To minimize its effects, make sure the ends of antennas such as Yagis or dipoles are pointing at each other. There will be a null in the antenna pattern that way. This technique works best when you're fortunate to operate FD from either the East or West Coast, because you don't have to turn your Yagis — just point them in one direction and call CQ! — *Dean Straw, N6BV*

Impress Your Friends and Relatives and Earn Up To 500 Extra Points

If you or your group enjoys FD from the woods or a remote mountaintop, that's great. If on the other hand you decide to stay closer to home, you can earn up to 500 (count 'em) bonus points — before you even turn on your radio.

Be conspicuous! Odds are, there's a good sized parking lot or a town park nearby that will probably be happy to have you set up shop for Field Day.

Operating FD from a conspicuous public place = 100 points

Be media savvy! It's standard operating procedure to get the word out to everyone in the club about the big weekend. It should also be SOP to write up a news release and send it to local newspapers and radio and TV stations. You've never written a news release? Samples are available at www.arrl.org/pio.

Having a media release or link = 100 points



Last Field Day, the Massillon (OH) ARC FD site (W8NP) sported this attractive information table.



Jim Farriss, WA8GXM, shows Eleanor Carosello of the American Red Cross around the W8NP site.

Meet your neighbors! Once you're out in public, you'll want to arm yourselves with materials that explain just what exactly it is that the club is doing there. All it takes is a folding table, some handouts and a few nice looking signs. Or you can get more involved with a tent or trailer, streaming videos and free food. Either way, don't forget the smile!

Having a public information table/center = 100 points

Meet your local elected officials! Instead of gladhanding the mike, how about shaking hands with your area elected officials and politicians? A sample invitation is in your Field Day packet.

Inviting elected officials (and having them show up) = 100 points

Provide a served agency representative with a taste of Field Day! Instead of talking to a served agency, such as the Red Cross or Salvation Army, how about inviting one of their leaders "come on down" and visit you. Don't forget to invite them to get on the air!

Inviting a representative of a served agency (and having them show up) = 100 points.

For those keeping count, that's 500 extra points just waiting to be added to your FD score. — *Allen Pitts, W1AGP*

Looking for a Place to do Field Day?

If so, or if you're not sure if the local group is holding their event at the same place this year, or even if you just want to make the rounds and visit a few nearby sites, you'll want to check out the brand-new *Field Day Station Locator*. Just plug in the general (or specific) location, and a list of nearby sites, replete with a pin on a highway map, will pop up. The Locator can be found at www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/fd/locator.php or just enter LOCATOR in the SEARCH SITE box on the ARRLWeb home page.