

Where in the World is . . .
Duhacsek Park
KK5W 10A STX GOTA-K5DX
FD 2019

In the beginning, the site was without form and void, but we could see it had potential. It wasn't much really. Just a little 50-acre greenspace donated to the City of Sugar Land, Texas by Walter and Virginia Duhacsek. The property included the Duhacsek homestead; a midcentury single-story residence though empty of furniture, could be used for group activities.



After three years of negotiations with the city, we got permission to use the park for our field day activities in 2018. Last year was a trial run for 2019.

At 0000 UTC Friday the transformation began. Four Houston area clubs came together for Field Day 2019. Dubbed the Quad Club Mega-Field Day it included amateurs from the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC), Texas DX Society (TDXS), Katy Amateur Radio Society (KARS) and Houston Echo Society.

Planning began almost a year ago after our first use of the Duhacsek QTH. We learned a lot from that experience. This year we wanted to go big! After all, everything is bigger in Texas, so 10 Alpha it was. BVARC President, Mike Hardwick, N5VCX assembled a stellar planning team including Bill Cordell, W5VOM and Jimmy Vance, W5ZTX.



Antennas Going Up!

Outside temperatures soared into the 90's. Hydration was the key for the set-up crew to stay safe. Although, there was a lot of discussion about claiming a multiplier for temperature.

With 50 acres of open pasture, the antenna field was ideal. Antenna crew chief Bill Cordell, W5VOM donated the man lifts and supervised all the antennas installations. We planned for parallel CW and SSB operations. To make that happen we had two arrays, a Tri-bander for 10,15, and 20 meters stacked above a 40-meter beam for both modes. They were each mounted on Man-Lifts at 65 and 50 feet, so they could be raised and lowered easily. We had a 3 Element beam for 6 meters and additional Dipoles for 20, 40 and 80 meters. Two Beverage antennas were deployed as part of an experiment. Based on the comments received; they will be back next year.

Space Allocation

The house has three bedrooms, two full baths, a large living room, dining area and a fully equipped kitchen. The largest bedroom was dedicated as a dormitory for operators to take a quick nap between shifts. The other two bedrooms were allocated to CW/Digital and SSB operations. The CW room was slightly larger and included two



stations for RTTY and FT8. The living room was set up as a lounge area for operators coming in or going off shift, for visitor orientation and for dining.

Keeping the rooms cool was a challenge. As we learned in 2018, 10 transceivers, power supplies, computers and operators generate a lot of heat. Shack Chief, Vance provided two portable air conditioners to supplement the house AC. He added temporary panels of Styrofoam to cover the windows. That offered some additional insulation and prevented outside glare from washing out computer screens.

Standard Operating Strategy

Preparation, preparation, preparation! We wanted all transceivers to operate identically to simplify training and minimize surprises. All the operating positions were the same. For our standard rig we went with the Elecraft K3/K3s. They were all loaded with the same firmware version, The K3 also has different settings for electret or dynamic microphones, we chose Yamaha CM500 headsets for all positions. For operators that might be a little icky about sharing headsets, we provided disinfectant wipes and disposable headphone covers.



Network Chief, Glenn Anderson, WB5TUF provided all the computers and network technology that allowed us to run the logging software with real-time score accumulation. Glenn handled all the computer set up too. He also made sure that all the transceivers were running the same firmware to ensure that all radios would perform identically.

The computer workstations were all loaded with the same version of Windows 7 and the latest update of N1MM Logger Plus networked together. Most importantly, this made operator familiarization standard.

As a group, it was decided to operate as if it were a contest. Potential operators from all four clubs were invited to training sessions held at BVARC and Katy ARS. The focus was to familiarize potential operators with the Elecraft K3 and contest operating techniques.



To get the maximum score, we had a Bonus Chairman, WB5TKI, Doug. He did a stellar job rounding up as many bonus points as possible. For the GOTA station, we had the use of the Fort Bend County Regional Communications unit, it was the highlight of Saturday operations. There was a press release, educational information table and even me, your author as Safety Officer.

A total of 179 hams from the four clubs made up the team covering set up, tear down and the contest operating period.



Iron Chef Field Day.

Food is always a big part of Field Day. Keeping the team running at top efficiency, our own Iron Chefs, Kelli KG5QJE, Daphne K5VQY and Anita, prepared meals for the teams of set up people and operators beginning with supper on Friday. Operators on shift could choose to have their meal delivered to their operating

position or to the lounge area.



There were Breakfast Tacos in the morning. Plenty of coffee, water and lemonade during the day. Texas BBQ at night kept the team charged up.



Aaand, They're Off!

At 1800 UTC, the contest began. Yes, officially it is not a contest but just a demonstration of emergency communications capability. Why do they keep score then? If it looks like a duck, talks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck. Operators signed up for one-hour slots in advance of Field Day with an online spreadsheet. The sign-up sheet was developed and hosted by Allen Brer, N5XZ. The sheet was transferred to hard copy just before the start of Field Day. It

stayed at the Contest QTH. If a participant wanted an extra shift or did not get a chance to sign up online, they could do so right there.



The highlight of Saturday's operations was a visit from our elected official, Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls. The Sheriff literally dropped in on the front lawn of our Field Day HQ! In his nearly one-hour visit, the Sheriff toured the operating positions and asked many questions about Amateur Radio and what we could do with our equipment in an emergency.

Band conditions were as good as could be expected, considering where we are in the solar cycle. But there was plenty of activity. It is a good thing there are no multipliers for state or section in Field Day as there are in other contests. We just had to make QSO's.



Visitors

We had plenty. And they had plenty of questions. BVARC President, N5VCX, Mike took on the duty of guiding visitors through our site and answering the myriad of questions and pointed them to the GOTA station. We also conducted tours of our Field Day antenna farm, pointing out the purpose of each antennas and the safety markers.



The Final Score

The results of our efforts paid off. Preparations and planning resulted in our biggest score ever. Operating in class 10A turned some heads. I know I had stations asking for repeats on my class. In

10A we were literally in a class by ourselves. We made 4125 contacts. **Our final submitted score is 16,826 points.**

KE7NSB

Finally, I want to dedicate this year's Field Day effort to Jo Keener, KE7NSB (SK). Jo was a long-time member of BVARC and enjoyed Motorola VHF gear. Jo also was an expert on many types of firearms, He was net control of the local Gun Net and had an active reloading business. He passed away earlier this year.



Reporting from the Dark Side,
Ron Litt, K5HM