

## TRO Field Day 2016 Report

Sometimes, the preparation for Field Day requires more effort than what you put in on the day itself. That was especially true for me this year.

We used VolunteerSpot.com to help with the organizing and planning. I signed up there to bring the ARRL Ham-Aid station that Ben Joplin, WB5VST, had handed off to me earlier at Camp Bandage, and to bring out some potato salad for the club picnic. I didn't have to do much with the station, but I spent a good part of Friday making the potato salad. I hard boiled and peeled 14 eggs; peeled, diced and boiled a bunch of potatoes; separated the yolks from the egg whites, whisked the yolks together with mustard and Miracle Whip to make the dressing; used a potato masher on the whites and added them to the dressing; and then grated a whole jar of sweet pickles for the final ingredient. I noticed that everyone who took some ate it all, and I received several compliments about it.

I arrived at the Okmulgee County EOC, 110 N. Alabama, around 0900, and found Mark Conklin, N7XYO, inside straightening up and preparing for the rest of the crew.

I set up a small PR display on the conference table that is just inside the front entrance, then gave my attention to setting up radio equipment.

Joe Gorkos, N5TEX, arrived soon after I did. He brought in his equipment, then set about setting up a wire dipole along the south side of the EOC. I asked if he needed help, and he did. The two halves of the antenna had been wound up together, and were intertwined. He could have unraveled them on his own, but he wouldn't have finished until almost time to start making contacts. This effort soon became a three man operation, as Steve Miller, AA5V, joined us. Joe held the center of the antenna while Steve and I each held one end of the wires, and Steve passed back and forth alternatively going under or over my half of the antenna. At one point, I quipped, "Didn't we play this game as kids?"

That was the extent of my antenna construction efforts for a while. I went back inside to the AC to set up radios, tuners and power supplies.

After I arranged the Ham-Aid equipment on a table in the classroom, I noticed the wire dipole in the kit was in the same situation as Joe N5TEX's antenna had been – both sides wound up together. I spent the better part of an hour untangling that mess, but I chose to do it inside.

Meanwhile, Paul Young, KE5EHM showed up and began to help with antenna set up. Brett Lackey, KF5YEY, an Emergency Management volunteer, also helped with antennas and whatever else we needed. Several other EM volunteers, and Okmulgee County Emergency Management Director Tim Creighton, helped out a bit and asked a few questions.

Joe N5TEX used his Comet Antenna Analyzer to adjust both dipoles and to see which bands they would work best on. He also checked the vertical antenna for the EOC's Icom IC-706. After a brief discussion, he recommended 40 M for the EOC radio, 20 M for the Ham-Aid station, and he would try his radio on 10 meters.

I'm not sure why, but the bands sure seemed to be stingy with the DX. I don't think we accumulated any more than a few dozen contacts.

Mark N7XYO started out operating the EOC radio, but Steve AA5V took over there after spending some time helping Joe N5TEX and Paul KE5EHM try to make contacts. I stuck with the Ham-Aid station, determined to make contacts despite the band conditions denying me that pleasure and privilege.

I abandoned 20 meters to try 15. It was worse. On 20, I could hear stations, but they couldn't hear me. On 15, I couldn't hear anything except some faint garbled sounds I could barely recognize as "CQ Field Day" calls.

Around 1700, Mark N7XYO, transitioned to the infrared station to cook burgers and hot dogs for the

picnic. About that time, I decided to try 40 meters. The EOC's antenna was a vertical, and the Ham-Aid's dipole was horizontal. For some reason, I couldn't hear Steve AA5V on the radio, but I knew when he transmitted because I was only about 10 feet away from him. Obviously, he couldn't hear me on the radio either, because he was surprised that a station he hadn't logged told him he was a duplicate! I had just contacted that station a few minutes earlier, at 1715!

By the time the picnic started, David Siebert, KF5YZW, and his wife, Margaret, and Joe's wife, Sue Gorkos, KG5GOE, and Merlin Griffin, WB5OSM had arrived. Glen Brewington, AA5FM had been there earlier, but didn't stay for the meal. Paul KE5EHM and Joe N5TEX encouraged Sue to try making contacts, because the female voice often draws a quicker response than male voices do. She made her first contact! Congratulations, KG5GOE!

After everybody had their fill of burgers, dogs, sides and desserts, Mark N7XYO conducted a drawing for prizes. I helped by distributing tickets. Almost everybody won something, but Paul KE5EHM won the big prize, a Baofeng HT.

We went back to operating radios until about 2030. We had thought about just bringing in the wire antennas and coming back in the morning to finish the tear down, but no one wanted to make that extra drive. I had just logged my third and last contact at 2024, but I was ready to get home. By the way, my second contact on 40 meters was one I had to get, and not let Steve have it, because the call sign's suffix were my initials!

Despite the poor band conditions, I think we could have done better if we could have gotten the antennas higher off the ground. Maybe next year we could have use of Ben WB5VST's 60 foot mast.

Many thanks to Okmulgee County Emergency Management for the use of your facility, and all your help in making TRO Field Day 2016 an enjoyable and memorable experience!

Sure we put in lots of effort to make just a few contacts. But did we do the best we could with what we had? Yes! Did we have fun? YES!

### TRO Field Day 2016 Participation Chart

NAME	CALL SIGN	COMMENTS
Mark Conkin	N7XYO	TRO President, OCEM Communications Officer, cook
Paul Young	KE5EHM	TRO Vice President
Doug Lee	KC5ZQM	TRO Secretary, Public Relations Chair
Steve Miller	AA5V	TRO Treasurer
Merlin Griffin	WB5OSM	TRO Trustee
Joe Gorkos	N5TEX	TRO Engineering Chair
Sue Gorkos	KG5GOE	N5TEX's YL and boss, and potential DX monster
David Siebert	KF5YZW	TRO member
Glen Brewington	AA5FM	TRO member
Brett Lackey	KF5YEY	Okmulgee County Emergency Management volunteer