

Amateur radio ARRL Field Day 2016 set for June 25-26

By Martin de Vore | Posted: Saturday, June 18, 2016 11:36 am

Members of Texas Emergency Amateur Communicators (TEAC) will be participating in the national American Amateur Radio League (ARRL) Field Day exercise, June 25–26 at Lone Star College — Kingwood. Since 1933, amateur or “ham” radio operators across North America have established temporary ham radio stations in public locations during Field Day to showcase the science and skill of Amateur Radio. This event is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

Last year’s Field Day was also held at Lone Star College Kingwood. Although many of the weekend events will be similar, there will be differences.

“This year, we will be adding a satellite station to operate amateur radio satellites,” said John Nobile, call sign N6ZP, TEAC Field Day 2016 chairman. “We will also be opening up the class for Scouts to anyone who is interested in obtaining their license. The class will be held on Saturday at 10 a.m. and ends around 5 p.m. After that, participants will work a radio and put the skills learned into operation.”

This year’s event will be open to the public Saturday, June 25, from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. and Sunday, June 26, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. The start time of official Field Day events is on Saturday at 1 p.m. CDT. Field Day officially ends at 2:59 p.m. Sunday afternoon.

Field Day demonstrates ham radio’s ability to work reliably under any conditions from almost any location and create an independent communications network. Over 35,000 people from thousands of locations participated in Field Day in 2015.

“The highlight of Field Day for me — personally — is watching a person catch the radio bug,” Nobile said. “This especially happens when they operate a HF rig (High Frequency Radio) and speak with people hundreds or even thousands of miles away. You usually hear something like, ‘Whoa, I just spoke to someone in the South Pacific.’ On Field Day, it is especially easy to hear a return to a call because so many stations are on the air.”

Monthly TEAC Meetings are normally held on the first Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. in the Fellowship Center at Christ The King Lutheran Church located at 3803 W. Lake Houston Pkwy, in Kingwood. Nobile said there will be no meeting in July since Field Day is just one week prior and serves as a meeting. TEAC



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Boyd Bilger is using what is called a GO KIT. A GO KIT is setup with radios and designed to be easily deployed during an emergency and ready for connections to either a portable power supply or the mains. This is one of the radios Scouts use during Field Day.

also does not meet in December because the group hosts a Christmas party where donations are collected for HAMM and Mission Northeast.

“All are welcome to visit, join and come for any of the lectures we hold with local professors and scientists,” Nobile said. “It’s not always about radio but always about science. We encourage anyone interested to go to our website www.TEAC.net and look through it, especially our calendar of events and come out and meet with us. We also have informal breakfast meetings at Denny’s Restaurant in Kingwood on the U.S. Highway 59 southbound service road every Saturday when there is no meeting.”

In the United States, Field Day — always the fourth full weekend of June — is typically the largest single emergency preparedness exercise in the country, with over 30,000 operators participating each year. Since the first American Amateur Radio League (ARRL) Field Day in 1933, radio amateurs throughout North America have practiced the rapid deployment of radio communications equipment in environments ranging from operations under tents in remote areas to operations inside Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).

“It’s easy for anyone to pick up a computer or smartphone, connect to the internet and communicate, with no knowledge of how the devices function or connect to each other,” said Sean Kutzko of ARRL, the national association for amateur radio. “But if there’s an interruption of service or you’re out of range of a cell tower, you have no way to communicate. Ham radio functions completely independent of the internet or cell phone infrastructure, can interface with tablets or smartphones, and can be set up almost anywhere in minutes. That’s the beauty of amateur radio during a communications outage.”

“Hams can literally throw a wire in a tree for an antenna, connect it to a battery-powered transmitter and communicate halfway around the world,” Kutzko continued. “Hams do this by using a layer of Earth’s atmosphere as a sort of mirror for radio waves. In today’s electronic do-it-yourself (DIY) environment, ham radio remains one of the best ways for people to learn about electronics, physics, meteorology and numerous other scientific disciplines. Amateur radio is a huge asset to any community during disasters if the standard communication infrastructure goes down.”

Anyone may become a licensed amateur radio operator. There are over 725,000 licensed hams in the United States, as young as 5 years old and as old as 100. And with clubs such as TEAC, it’s easy for anybody to get involved.

“Currently, TEAC has 80 members but there are many hams in the community that may belong to other groups, either independently or concurrently with TEAC,” Nobile explained. “For instance, many members who live in the Roman Forest area also belong to the RF Repeater Society. This is a club that maintains their own repeater, a radio that receives and re-transmits signals. This is where cell phone technology borrows its ideas from. The RF Repeater Society call sign is KG5FKW.”

Current 2016 TEAC officers are Bill Hagebusch, KE5ZVF, president; John Psimas, KE5MSE, vice president; Bran Sasic, KF5NBA, secretary; Bruce Bayley, KC5ABR, treasurer; and Frank Hormann, KM5I, trustee.

For more information about Field Day, visit www.TEAC.net, <http://www.arrl.org/field-day> or www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio. For more information about TEAC (call sign W5SI) visit www.TEAC.net.