



## Second Century

# Getting Inspired for Field Day

*ARRL Field Day 2021 is upon us, and it's a great opportunity to experiment with facets of amateur radio you may have never tried before. And the great thing about Field Day, beyond the diversity of ways to operate, is the diversity of the skill levels of the participants! This is a fun event for everyone involved, so why not jump into something new and give it a try, whether it's VHF, satellite, FT8, or using the National Traffic System to send your Section Manager a message about your operation.*

One of my favorite Field Day outings was in 1989. A group of my friends — who are all well-known contesters today — and I set out for Skyline Drive in New Jersey for a mini-mountaintop experience. We had a couple of medium-sized tents, a generator, and a bucket truck with a triband Yagi pointed west, along with a dual-band dipole from atop a very tall fire tower. The two things that strike me about that Field Day are: if we were to do that outing today, we were certainly socially distanced enough to operate safely, and also that this was the first — and only — operation using FreddyPac. This was a 2-meter-based packet robot that I wrote, running on a Compaq “lunchbox” computer. Freddy sat and monitored 2 meters while making the occasional contact. Field Day had become my venue for experimentation!

As I look at Field Day this year, I would encourage you to take on an aspect of amateur radio you've never tried before. YouTube being what it is, there's a tremendous amount of material to research.

You can start with going into the field! Structured events like the various on-air programs that focus on everything from parks to summits to islands can give you very good ideas about making your first venture outdoors. These operators use one of many new-generation QRP radios and small, light antennas for their activations. The maker community has even created 3D-printed handles for antennas to be wound around for portability and convenience. This year, ARRL is offering a kit for Field Day: an end-fed half-wave antenna. This kit is intended to take the guesswork out of collecting the materials, but gives you the opportunity to build your own antenna for Field Day.

Perhaps you'd like to experiment by building a Moxon antenna. This simple antenna is a favorite amongst another community you can learn from: the VHF rovers. The 6-meter Moxon is a small but fantastic performing antenna for Field Day. You can also look at a 2-meter

Moxon along with a short 70-centimeter Yagi on the same boom for satellite operation. Although some of the recent rock stars of low earth orbiting (LEO) satellites are now silent, there will be plenty of passes during Field Day for you to try making a contact.

Field Day is also a great opportunity to reach out to newcomers or friends who have been off the air for a while. The event brings out a sense of community for clubs, groups, and friends to get together and operate. This issue includes a Field Day insert that we hope helps you navigate the myriad ways to add bonus points to your score. You'll find that a newcomer can operate a GOTA station for your effort, and perhaps your inactive friend may find the pace of a VHF bonus station more appealing.

Last year, Field Day was directly impacted by very strict restrictions that states imposed to keep people far enough apart to prevent increased potential of spreading COVID-19. This year, the restrictions in many places have been reduced or even eliminated. Many groups and clubs are revisiting their options for coming together for Field Day in a socially responsible way.

Whether you decide to operate from home again this year, take a trip to a local park, experiment with something completely new, or operate safely with your club or group, Field Day is the best opportunity of the year for all of us to come together and enjoy the hobby!

Stay radio active, be that connector getting more people on the air, and we'll see you for Field Day!

David A. Minster, NA2AA  
Chief Executive Officer