

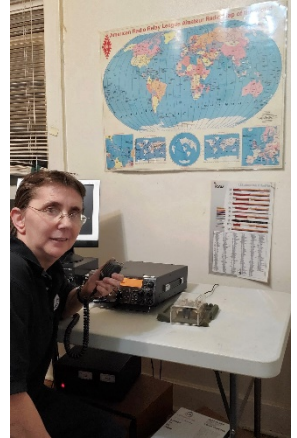
Amateur Radio operators Adapt to Social Distancing

Each year, on the last weekend of June, in an event known as Field Day, thousands of ham radio operators all over North America test their ability to communicate in challenging situations. The ARRL, a national association for amateur radio in the United States, founded in 1914, has sponsored this event every year since 1933. Field Day provides an opportunity for ham operators to simulate communication conditions after a loss of power or shelter. They gather in parks and fields away from commercial power, set up antennas and operate in teams for 24 hours to make as many contacts across town and across the country as possible.

However, not this year.

Normally they work in rather close proximity to one another which, in the time of COVID-19 social distancing, makes sharing microphones, setting up equipment and operating side by side difficult.

This year members of the Four Lakes Amateur Radio Club are using the opportunity to test their ability to adapt. In past years, they would set up in and around one of the shelters at Badger Prairie County Park in Verona. This year however, each activating member will be operating out of their home radio shacks and at the same time working as part of a team.



Carolyn, NQ9A, tests her home station.



Jeff, KC9UNZ, prepares his antenna for Field Day

Members of the club use this event as an opportunity to introduce amateur radio to people who are curious, and normally are able to open the space in the park to anyone who would like to observe, ask questions and, if brave, try their hand at the microphone. While that will not be possible this year, the club has created a 24 hour Zoom meeting that is open to the public so anyone in the greater Madison area can connect, observe and ask questions if they would like. In order to secure the meeting from Zoom bombing, the club requests that interested members of the public pre-register at <https://bit.ly/FLARC2020>. You will receive instructions telling you how to connect, and you can connect any time during the 24 hour period starting at 12:30 pm on June 27.

For any questions you might have, feel free to contact Jeff at kc9unz@arrl.net.