

# RDXA Field Day 2023

Doug Stewart N2BEG

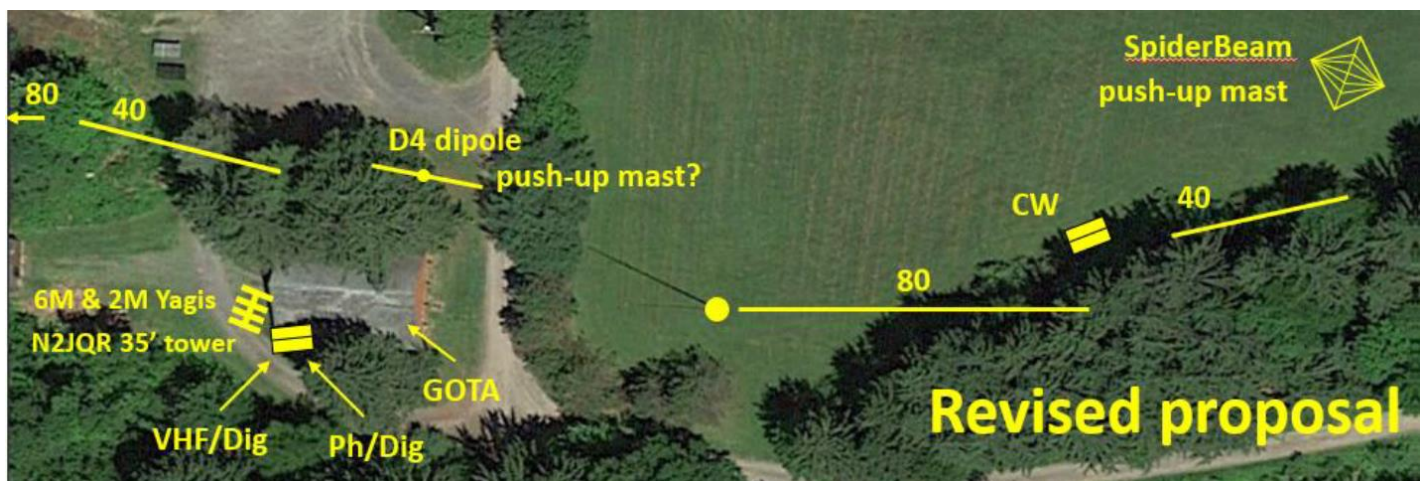
Our field day effort this year was modeled after last year's successful exercise, with a few tweaks. The things we needed to work on were making sure we had enough interest and ops to maintain a proposed move from 2A to 3A and to try to maximize the bonus points we missed last year while maximizing having some fun and not over taxing anyone (or getting anyone hurt!)

Recall that last year was a return from the covid era and our first real effort in 3 years. We had some issues to be sure, however we still finished with a respectable score and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2A, proving that we still remembered how to do things. We continued to try to minimize the heavy lifting of field day by spreading the jobs out, limiting the amount of big hardware and trying to do things smarter and not harder. The key was more folks to spread the responsibilities out and good planning.

The decision to go back to 3A was only decided after the club voted that with more of a turnout we could support the effort, do well AND have a good time doing it. By all of the early indications, we did just that.

Planning in earnest started once we got clear of NYQP last year. Planning early, the main things we wanted to build on was the use of the same basic hardware which included as many IC7610s as possible, the same awesome filtering combination we deployed last year thanks to Bill, Mark and Dave, and the simple antenna solutions utilizing push up masts rather than any milmast setup as we were so accustomed to doing along with a lot of ropes and dipoles.

The antenna layout stayed largely the same, with the notable addition of a dedicated satellite station provided by Dave, K2DH in the middle of the field. (not shown)



As the day crept closer, additional meetings were held to firm things up. We split the hardware set up and assigned each part to their captain and confirmed who was providing what and how it was getting there. Logistics, as you all know, is the key to any successful operation and assuming never gets you far. Getting people to commit and ensure tasks were understood and planned ensures fewer surprises. We each had our assignments and it looked like we would have all the hardware, food and coffee we would need to pull off a fun and successful outing. The only unknown, as always is the weather. Plan for the worst, hope for the best!

When the Friday of field day arrived, we met at the Nutcracker as per our standard routine, enjoying a nice breakfast before starting setup. The forecast was sunny and hot and the threat of thunderstorms loomed for the weekend. (sounds familiar?) Yours truly, as I have done previously, took a load of stuff up to the site early and stored it under the commissary awning with the blessings of the Webster Park staff. When we finished breakfast and the caravan arrived at the site, we were met with a locked gate. That was a first. A quick call to Brian at the park had him arrive in a few minutes and things got under way.



Load number 2 prior to leaving Friday

With the increase in volunteers and the simplified layout, the setup went very fast. The stations came together mostly before noon on Friday and by day's end, all but a few antennas in trees remained. Looking at the impressive amount of hardware K2TER, K2DH, K2MTH, K2UA and others provided, I would venture to say very few clubs (or ANY!) could compare to what was brought to the field that weekend.

Friday evening brought our usual campfire and 807 session with the stalwart campers who stayed at the site. Stories long and short were shared along with some casual sipping of some of Ireland's finest. It wasn't too late as we were all pretty beat and Saturday was go time.


The Saturday breakfast at the nutcracker was very well attended. Once back to the site, with the morning sun rising, the rest of the remaining setup items were tackled with many wires and ropes put in trees by the numerous volunteers on the antenna teams. Things were mostly finalized as lunch arrived and we were in good shape with only a dipole or 2 remaining.

As start time rolled around, all the stations had been debugged (mostly) and the starters took their seats. A last minute strategy session suggested that we switch the primary focus of the phone station to digital during slow times to maximize our points since digital and CW QSOs are double that of phone QSOs on the run stations. This strategy worked out very well in the end. Murphy only plagued the phone/VHF setup for a bit, but between Bill, Mike and Dave, the issues were quickly resolved.

We had a steady stream of visitors to the site over the weekend and many took turns giving tours and information to all who stopped by, including county legislator Mark Johns.

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## Rochester DX Association "Field Day" Emergency Preparedness Drill Webster Park, 23-25 June, 2023



The ARRL (American Radio Relay League, the governing body of Amateur Radio in the USA) holds an emergency preparedness drill each year called Field Day. Stations around the USA, Canada and its possessions deploy temporary stations to demonstrate the ability to provide emergency communications when necessary. Radio operators contact each other for a 24 hour period utilizing voice, data and even morse code. The Rochester based club has demonstrated unparalleled expertise in this operation and has "won" the event (most successful contacts) at least 6 times in the last 20 years. Approximately 35,000 amateur radio operators participate each year. Group picture - Left to right: Dave Hallidy - K2DH, John Hall - AC2RL, Don Dever - KD2CTZ, Gayle Shalvoy - N2TWI, Legislator Mark Johns, Bill Rogers - K2TER, Lynn Bisha - W2BSN, and Mark Hazel - K2MTH

Photo: Rochester DX Association

As the afternoon wore on, the contacts started to pile up. As the run and GOTA stations were churning out contacts, Dave used his 705 in the satellite station he set up to make a solid satellite QSO to satisfy another bonus. He later added 2 more just for fun. He sure made it look easy, but with an impressive hardware setup! Operators were rotated with many taking turns at phone/VHF and GOTA during the day.

Only one real antenna issue arose and that was with the push up mast. Turns out it was not raised with the correct fixturing to keep it from slipping back down, a quick repair and it was secured at its nominal height. (training opportunity!) As dinner time rolled around, Chris tried to confirm our order delivery time with our caterer, only to find out they had cancelled our entire order somehow! A quick decision to order pizza and wings for the masses ensured no one would go hungry. There were no casualties.

As night fell, rotations continued. The “phone” station continued to churn out FT8 contacts through most of the night, as did GOTA when the bands quieted down on SSB. I think this is the first field day where yours truly did not take a shift in the CW tent. (I offered!) I did however put some time on actual SSB to add some Qs in the log when it was busy, and we could manage a good rate. Kudos to Tom, KC2VHS for the awesome caffeine support as usual. It was much appreciated, especially during the wee hours.

As daylight approached, we were still kicking out QSOs on all of the stations. The phone/FT8 station was raking up Qs at the increased rate so we stuck with it for most of the contest. There was plenty of FT8 activity, so that seemed to be the right call. We still had GOTA for phone contacts that a few took turns at. There were far more GOTA FT8 Qs as well, so it seems to be the way things are now.

Breakfast was provided by Tom once again, with enough carbs to keep us going. As the morning progressed, we had a continued stream of visitors pass through and plenty of socializing and more Qs. By 11 am we started takedown of the 80m antennas and readied for a grilled lunch of Brats and burgers. Everyone was well fed I believe, and we continued the grind to the finish line. The weather had held out for us and hot and dry was the outcome of the weekend. Takedown was again very efficient with a lot of hands present to pitch in. We had the majority of everything done by 430PM. A customary round of 807s were consumed as we all gathered in front of the commissary to take a bow for a job well done and shake hands. The final tallies are elsewhere in the newsletter but suffice to say we did pretty well. A hearty thanks to all who came out to the site or contributed in any way. You all made RDXA proud!

&73and THANKS to ALL

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