Field Day 2009 In Books
Poor band conditions, heat and rain were obstacles

HENLEYFIELD - Despite temperatures that hovered around 100 degrees, a Saturday afternoon thunderstorm, and band conditions that could best be described as atrocious, Pearl River County Amateur Radio Club held Field Day 2009 at the Henleyfield Community Center Pavilion, making 269 phone contacts, 106 digital contacts and 11 digital contacts. During the event, club members manned radios and computers, ate well and enjoyed fellowship with other hams.

The contact totals were lower than in previous years, but according to early reports, many other clubs had similar results. Most blamed the low contact counts on poor band conditions that made most bands a bit unstable. Others suggested that there simply seemed to be fewer hams participating this year - possibly due to the poor economy.

Using rigs including a Yaesu 897-D, an Icom 718 and a Kenwood 440 to make contacts, the local hams kept track of their contacts with laptop computers. The Yaesu 897-D was also equipped with a digital interface permitting digital communications.

During the day Saturday, the site was visited by local news reporter Ginger Schmidt of the Picayune (Miss.) Item. She was provided with a full tour of the site, and an explanation of how all the gear worked as well as the capabilities of amateur radio in helping to deal with emergencies such as Hurricane Katrina.

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The tour even included a brief lesson on how hams construct antennas out of spare parts. She got to see up-close how a simple dipole antenna was designed and built.

The group also got a visit from District Attorney Hal Kittrell - who came by to check out how hams from the area are helping to provide communications services.

While the group relied on the three-element tri-band yagi antenna it has used in previous years for much of the phone communication, a “secret weapon” was employed for the first time this year to help make contacts.

Barely visible unless it was pointed out, circling the Henleyfield baseball park was an 805-foot-long loop antenna strung up from the light poles surrounding the park. The loop was the brainchild of PRCARC Vice-President Larry Wagoner (N5WLW) who said, “I have heard for years about how great the loops work for low-noise communications - and this year we had a perfect place to set one up and try it out.”

The Scene Of The Loop: This innocuous-looking ballfield was the scene for the 805-foot loop antenna used by PRCARC during Field Day 2009 to make contacts.

The Clue: Barely visible up on one of the poles in the ballfield was this black box - actually a balun - that was the feedpoint for the 805-foot loop used by PRCARC at Field Day.
Solar Cell used to charge battery for demonstration of emergency power sources.

Moore, left, son of David Moore (N5ELI), helps out with the logging duties for CW operator Jack Beith (K5WNU), right. Beith - who used the “secret weapon” loop antenna for his contacts, said the loop worked well.

Educational / Public Information Table set up to share knowledge and information about our hobby.

Glenn Miller (KC5KMK) left, makes a point to a visitor while his daughter, Courtney (right) listens.

Pearl River County Amateur Radio Club