

Field Day 2010 — A Parrothead Ham Looks At 40

By: Dan Henderson, N1ND, Growing Older But Not Up

With a tip of the cap to Jimmy Buffett...

Parrothead (n) — *A commonly used nickname for fans of Jimmy Buffett.*

It is hard to believe that 40 years ago I took my Novice test and was first licensed. That factoid hit me recently as this proud Parrothead was listening to the streaming audio of the latest Jimmy Buffett concert. Jimmy had just started singing *A Pirate Looks At Forty* and it dawned on me that I had been licensed (and thus not a “pirate”) that many years. When I started researching this year’s ARRL Field Day results article and discovered that James William Buffett released his first album in 1970 (40 years ago) the die was cast: tell this year’s story with *Songs You Know By Heart*.

When the fourth full weekend in June comes around amateurs across the US, Canada and much of the world get the restless demeanor of *Gypsies in the Palace* as they participate in the largest 24-hour on-the-air operating event sponsored by the ARRL. (You know, when ‘*Order of the Sleepless Knights will now assume the throne.*’) Among the record 37,765 participants reported this year, you will find all kinds of operators, groups and characters. You might find a few *Fruitcakes* set up in the local park while others would be *In the Shelter* (maybe a picnic shelter or the county EOC). We will always find our share of ‘*half-baked cookies in the over; half-baked people on the bus*’ because ‘*there’s a little bit of Fruitcake left in every one of us!*’



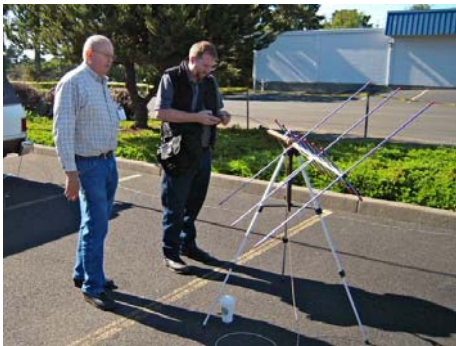
(left) At W4ML the Central Virginia Contest Club Trey, son of Milt, K4OSO (the photographer) just made a 15-meter SSB QSO at their GOTA station W4PM, who was the control operator.

Whether at home *A Mile High in Denver* or in downtown *Margaritaville*, (where we are not necessarily ‘*wasting away*’), it was easy to see *Everybody’s Talkin’* or perhaps using the *Coconut Telegraph* (finding out ‘*what everybody knows*’). The total number of contacts was down a bit (1,329,810 in 2010 down from 1,360,401 in 2009). This can best be attributed to our sunspot lament — *Miss You So Badly* (‘*feeling so sad since they been gone.*’) Of course, some would wish to *Take the Weather with You*, hoping for cooler or warmer conditions at their location. What may be a *Sunny Afternoon* for some may be a *License to Chill* for others (‘*and I believe I will.*’) No weekend is going to be perfect weather for everyone. That is one of the strengths of Field Day. If the weather does not suit what your group or club can handle, you always have the alternative of operating from different venues, locales or even from home stations. Those who want to take a longer time to set-up outside than is allowed for by a Class A station can still set-up at their own pace – they simply become a different class station. As we have learned over the years, all entry classes have importance – none is more “special” than any of the others.

Entries by General Class					
Class	# of Entries				
A	1203	AB	67	AC	95
B1	75	B1B	113	B1C	20
B2	50	B2B	30	B2C	7
C	60	D	417	E	239
EB	61	F	179		

All types of operations have a place in Field Day. Whether you are the *Twelve Volt Man* ('who'll make sparks fly around your head') as a Class B1B low power station on a mountain top, a Class F station at the town Emergency Management office, setting up in the *One Particular Harbor* where your club always goes (and 'where the children play on the shore each day and are safe within') or simply deciding that it is *Time To Go Home* and operate, there is a place and a way for you to enjoy the weekend.

A little over half of this year's Field Day entries (52.2%) were Class A stations where *Everybody's On the Run*. These in-the-field operations often resemble a *Carnival World*. Operating tents or RVs need to be placed, antennas erected safely, plans made for what to do *If It All Falls Down* and coordinating who is responsible for making sure that we have a *Cheeseburger in Paradise* (they know we like ours 'with lettuce and tomato, Heinz 57 and French fried potatoes'). If you haven't shown *An Attitude of Gratitude* to your Field Day chairman, do so. Their hard work and the efforts of the volunteers they organize allow hams to *Bring Back the Magic* at least once a year.



(left) N7HQR setting up for our one satellite contact with KU7G looking on at the Lincoln County Amateur Radio Club, N7OY, site.

(right) ARRL Atlantic Division Director Bill Edgar, N3LLR, watching Joe, N3XE, and Bill NY9H making digital contacts on 40 meters for The WACOM, WA3COM, Field Day.



When there are *Changes in Latitudes*, *Changes in Attitudes* are bound to happen. Besides, in Field Day 'nothing remains quite the same.' Being out in the field adds responsibilities to everyone attending. If you ask, "Who's the Blonde Stranger?" the answer may be one of the invited governmental officials or a representative of a served agency. They might be a visitor learning about Amateur Radio and looking for someone to make *The Perfect Partner* to Elmer them along their journey. It could be a reporter for the local paper who says they are there because *It's My Job* 'to be better than the rest and that makes the day for me.' Perhaps it is someone who wandered up to see what the hubbub was all about. Makes no difference, everyone at the site — from seasoned ham to *The Son of a Son Of a Sailor* (or "Elmer" as the case may be) — helps give these VIPs a positive *Public Relations* fix (or work 'the press for a mention or two').

General Field Day Statistics						
Year	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
CW QSOs	540,419	556,525	506,139	511,580	518,799	503,205
Digital QSOs	41,872	38,340	27,869	22,112	21,459	21,766
Phone QSOs	747,419	765,536	702,847	679,240	696,567	692,722
Total QSOs	1,329,710	1,360,401	1,236,855	1,212,932	1,236,825	1,217,693
Total Entries	2,648	2,642	2,409	2,331	2,199	2,212
Novice/GOTA	467	470	447	467	432	396
Participants	37,764	37,592	35,798	34,833	32,506	33,078

Class D using commercial power or Class E with emergency power, these stalwarts are not operating *Incommunicado*. They are a strong element of the total Field Day experience. That is another special feature of Field Day — there is no differentiation between those operating from home or remote locations. Circumstances may dictate the time has come to *Send the Old Man Home* or for the group to be *Trying to Reason with Hurricane Season* (or thunderstorms or tornados – some times we prep; sometimes it's the real event). From an emergency communications test vantage point, there is room for everyone.



(left) Coachella Valley Amateur Radio Club, the Valley's RACES group and QCWA Chapter 154 combined for Field day operating as NR6P. 14 year old Lanae Smit, KJ6ISE handled the TV news interview like a pro for the group.

All 80 ARRL sections were on the air for Field Day leading many to opine *I Heard I Was in Town*. Dupe sheets and logs show DX participation from Europe, Asia, *Back To The Islands* of the Pacific and Caribbean, places where you can see the *Southern Cross* and even a few contacts that might qualify as a *Cuban Crime of Passion* (for the hobby). Add this all together and one quickly sees that Field Day is a *Window on the World*.

Entries by ARRL Section									
Section	# of Entries								
AB	9	AK	9	AL	40	AR	33	AZ	56
BC	27	CO	56	CT	36	DE	9	DX	1
EB	23	EMA	32	ENY	27	EPA	72	EWA	26
GA	57	IA	26	ID	19	IL	89	IN	64
KS	32	KY	34	LA	24	LAX	38	MAR	11
MB	3	MDC	42	ME	18	MI	88	MN	39
MO	58	MS	20	MT	23	NC	69	ND	6
NE	12	NFL	53	NH	28	NL	2	NLI	29
NM	24	NNJ	45	NNY	7	NT	1	NTX	59
NV	15	NWT	5	OH	136	OK	28	ON	68
OR	47	ORG	50	PAC	8	PR	3	QC	33
RI	12	SB	14	SC	27	SCV	38	SD	7
SDG	24	SF	12	SFL	26	SJV	27	SNJ	19
STX	58	SV	31	TN	56	UT	25	VA	77
VI	1	VT	15	WCF	20	WI	48	WMA	13
WNY	46	WPA	45	WTX	12	WV	20	WWA	64
WY	10								

One area of interest observed this year is what seems to be an increase in the weak signal stations on both HF and VHF. You know these operators — the ones *Quietly Making Noise* ('not too soft, not too loud, just enough to draw a crowd'). They may be *Up on the Hill* ('above the confusion'), on a mountain with a portable beam and a solar panel or trying their hand making contacts from a cottage where you can see *Stars on the Water* (digging 'the good time sounds' we all play). Maybe they are between *Honey Do* (with little time to pronounce their r's and g's) projects and can only get on for short periods. They frequently tackle operating *Anything Anytime Anywhere*. When you ask why, their answer is simple: *That's What Living Is to Me*. They are an important part of the Field Day *Feeding Frenzy*.

The special memory of making your first contact is one of the reasons the GOTA — Get On The Air — station is a popular feature of Field Day. There were 467 GOTA stations reported for 2010. That translates to 34.9% of groups eligible to employ one did so. We suspect that many of those GOTA operators will look back at Field Day 2010 as *The Night I Painted the Sky* (using 'the modern invention that won't let me be.')



(left) W6CPD, the Corona PD CSV Team, tethered in for the long night ahead.



(right) Dusk meant antenna work at KØKKV, the Lincoln Amateur Radio Club.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. So on Sunday afternoon June 27 it became *Time to Go Home*. But *Come Monday* the next phase of Field Day started (and *‘it will be alright.’*) Summary sheets and supporting documentation from 2146 entries were submitted using the www.b4h.net/cabforms Web application (Many thanks to Bruce, Horn WA7BMN, for making this tool available to the amateur community – a true “unsung hero”!). Another 502 submissions were received by other methods, which meant a record 2648 entries were received for this year. When it came time to *Let Me Tell You Babe*, about 190 groups and individuals posted their individual stories on the ARRL online Soapbox at www.arrl.org/soapbox. Visit the site and see what *Stories We Could Tell*.



(left) Matt, WH7XM, running the pile on 20 meters for NH6P.

Top Ten Claimed Scores		
Call	Score	Class
W3AO	33,452	24A
W9CA	19,748	3A
K1R	19,638	5A
K4BFT	17,140	4A
W2RDX	16,510	3A
K4FC	15,902	7A
K6EI	15,450	7AB
K7UM	15,154	4A
W6YX	14,260	2F
W1NVT	14,230	2A

There are those whose Field Day focus is to post more points than anyone else. They sit around Sunday afternoon and *Can’t Remember When I Slept Last*. These operators live Field Day to the fullest, not only maximizing on-the-air points but working hard to do the same with the non-operating bonus points. To those who put up *The Good Fight* we say congratulations. It is all part of the Field Day game.



(left) Larry, KF6JOQ, helping the scouts with their Communication Badge, at the W6LIE Kern County Central Valley ARC set-up.

(right) Ninety year old Fritz Nitsch, W4NTO, the oldest member and one of the founders of the Spartanburg Amateur Radio Club, K4II, handling some of their PR responsibilities.



Field Day is many things to many people. *Some Wonder Why You Ever Go Home*. Others will anxiously seek to return home to their *Quiet Village*. A few of *The Natives Are Restless*, already planning strategies for Field Day 2011 — scheduled for June 25-26 when we will be singing *A Summer Song*. After all, this Field Day thing is *Bigger Than the Both of Us*. And this is one “Parrothead Pirate” who knows he will never wakeup one morning and find his “*occupational hazard is my occupation’s just not around.*” Because while the avocation has become the vocation, it is *an avocation for a lifetime... 73*.

Entries by Full Class

Class	# Of Entries								
1A	130	2A	424	3A	343	4A	155	5A	73
6A	38	7A	15	8A	12	9A	5	10A	4
11A	2	19A	1	24A	1	1AB	22	2AB	16
3AB	13	4AB	5	5AB	6	7AB	1	8AB	1
9AB	1	10AB	1	15AB	1	1AC	14	2AC	34
3AC	28	4AC	13	5AC	4	6AC	2		
1B1	75	1B1B	113	1B1C	20	1B2	35	2B2	15
1B2B	20	2B2B	10	1B2C	2	2B2C	5		
1C	56	2C	3	3C	1				
1D	396	2D	14	3D	4	4D	2	5D	1
1E	191	2E	19	3E	20	4E	4	6E	2
7E	2	8E	1	12E	1	1EB	55	2EB	5
3EB	1								
1F	39	2F	66	3F	41	4F	18	5F	10
6F	2	8F	1	9F	1	13F	1		

Class A - Club / non-club portable with 3 or more participants
 Class B - Club / non-club portable with 1 or 2 total participants
 Class C - Mobile
 Class D - Home / Permanent station running commercial power
 Class E - Home / permanent station running emergency power
 Class F - EOC station

A second letter of "B" means battery or alternate power, a second letter of C means commercial power.



(left) AI5M had a comfortable setting for their demonstrations for the visitors.



(right) Rusty, W6OAT, mentors is Ronda Presley KJ6GVQ at the Palo Alto ARA W6ARA Field Day operation.

