

Field Day does not end at 2 P.M. on Sunday

Bruce Pigott KC1US

The antennas have been taken down, tents collapsed, and boxes filled with gear. The log sheets have to be submitted, but there are other tasks to be completed to make next year's activity smoother. Everyone is tired/sunburned/water logged/has insect bites/skin rashes and wants to leave the Field Day site. Problems get forgotten about until next year's preparation is under way. Hams want to be helpful by wrapping up equipment, but usually will not be the ones discovering the condition of the gear next year.

Is the club equipment going back to a storage locker or members' homes? Before items are put away in the storage bay, a bit of preparation to prevent rust, mold, ants, mice, corrosion, dead batteries, gum in carburetors, and frozen bolts will speed the next set up. Remember, A.C. plugs are not green, antenna elements are not covered with white powder, tents do not have yellow splotches and coolers do not have college biology experiments on the inside.

It is time to dry and sweep out the tents. Otherwise next year's fragrance will be memorable. Any holes to repair? Got pegs? Tables and chairs should be washed and gouges filled in and rough edges and splinters sanded.

The coolers need washing, water containers cleaned, sanitized and dried out.

Where is the generator going to? Will it be used before next Field Day? Is it time for the 100 hour generator maintenance? Where will the starting battery be stored and kept charged? Was the fuel run dry or did it have stabilizer added to prevent gum from forming?

Any antennas giving funny readings? Who will check them out to find water logged traps? What about THAT run of coax cable? Are the rotors and control boxes still working correctly?

Check that all the coax cable has been rolled up properly. There are many helpful people who think it is a simple task to do. Was it twisted or kinked, is it too tightly wound? Does it have electrical tape holding it in a coil? Next year the cable will be a sticky mess, especially if the storage area gets warm. Are the plastic ties holding the coil so tight that it will cut through the outer jacket?

Who lost items? What items were found? What has to be found that did not make it to the Field Day site?

Material needs sorting to find if tower parts are missing, serving utensils and dinnerware are put away properly and the grill cleaned. Are the information and direction signs protected and banners rolled up properly? Printed brochures, handouts and background information need to be collected and bundled together. Have supplies been placed in marked containers with a contents list?

Check fire extinguishers' capacity and expiration date, hard hats for integrity, extension cords and guy ropes for fraying.

What else was broken or not working?

What about left over food?

Where will the trash be taken and material for recycling? Sometimes the clean up crew is so enthusiastic to leave, bags of trash are included with the gear, and stored with tower parts.

Who will be contacting visitors that signed your log book?

The inventory of club equipment needs updating for new items, retired items, needed items. Are items marked with the club name?

A bit of time spent in the summer and fall will minimize the late spring rush of details to be done before the next operating event. Some equipment can only be checked away from the Field Day location. But it will be easier, under better conditions, then trying to do it when you are pressed for time. This will give next year's Field Day chair a head start.