

The First Field Day
Anoka County Radio Club
June 23-24 th 1956

This was also the 20 th Annual ARRL Field Day operation . Before we tell about it ,we need to explain what was going on during the "Cold War " days of the late 50 s and 60 s between the USA and the USSR ,

There was fear of a Russian Nuclear attack as the Russians were far ahead in the intercontinental Missile development .

Here in Minnesota,there was a Civil Defense organization set up by the State . Orders were dictated from St.Paul . Gar Anderson ,then WØDOP ,now KØGA was with Bell Telephone and had much to do with the organization .L.R. Bearness was Chief of Staff of the Minnesota Civil Defense organization .Art Lane was Chief Radio Officer .

State Civil Defense officials decided to set up a State Civil Defense Radio Station in Anoka . A second Floor room in the American Legion Building on the west side of Greenhaven Golf Course was donated by the Legion and some equipment was supplied by the State . Phil DeJarlais ,WØJHS was appointed State Civil Defense Radio Officer .Don Marcy ,WØHEN and Bob Waldhoff ,KØCKT were his assistants . We were supplied with three Viking II transmitters and three NC 183 D receivers along with a GE FM two meter transmitter . Bob Harshberger ,WØJIE and some of the St.Paul radio Club members helped set up the station and the antennas and supplied a crankup tower for the two meter rig . This took place during the summer of 1955 and we held regular Friday night operations .This was a cold place during the winter ...

We had heard about the Anoka County Radio Club and Don Marcy ,WØHEN and Phil DeJarlais ,WØJHS attended the May 1956 meeting with the hope of getting some additional operators for the CD Center .

The main topic of discussion was a possible Field Day operation .Phil DeJarlais offered the use of the CD equipment and the use of the nearby Legion grounds . The State CD organization sent out a 15 KW Onan generator for our use ,to be stored by the City of Anoka and used in emergencies .

When June 23 ,1956 arrived ,the Anoka County Radio Club members arrived with tents which were set up under some big oak trees on the edge of the Greenhaven Gold Course The 15 KW generator was setup 250 feet down the hill .

The 40 meter tent station was operated on CW by George Collier ,WØEG ,Vic Felix,WØQHT and Bob Waldhoff ,KØCKT . The 75 meter station was handled by Bill Bunce ,WØSGY and John Lonsky ,WØBSI . WØHUX had the 15 meter station and Wayne Mienke,Club President ,Bert Westerman ,WØSER and WØHEN were other operators . KØENS and WØJHS handled the two meter station . Wayne Mienke/WØDXZ as XYI served coffee and cake during the night long operation . About 200 stations were worked on 80-75-40-20-15 and 10 meters along with some two meter contacts .We had nice weather -no rain -a memorable occasion but it was a long time before the club sponsored another Field Day .

This was partly due to what happened to the Anoka CD Center . Late in the summer Civil Defense held an exercise We were on the air from the Anoka State CD Center when we heard the Colorado Defense Center announce that the Minneapolis Metro area had taken a direct atomic missile hit and the Anoka CD Center had been destroyed !!

~~XXX~~ We stood around for a few minutes until the full implications sank in -closed station and went home to ponder the future . Soon afterward CD State Officials decided Anoka was too close to target areas and moved the station to Mankato where CD Officials felt it would be a safer place to operate from .

I think the next Field Day sponsored by the Anoka County Radio Club was in June 1979 and George Collier was there and his WØEG call was used . This was the start of a series of Field Day operations each year up to the present.

Phil DeArleis WØJHS