

Introduction and Executive Summary

The Ventura County Amateur Radio Society (VCARS) has been privileged to hold its annual “Field Day” event on the grounds of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum for the past several years. In fact, the 2021 event marks their 20th year at this location. The Presidential Library provides an ideal location for this weekend event; partially because of its location, partially because of its resources, partially because of the status and prestige that the Presidential Library holds, and partially because of the way in which members of the public are drawn to both the facility and the event in a synergistic way. In all, it’s an event that allows local Amateur Radio Operators (“*Hams*”) an opportunity to sharpen their operating skills and promote their hobby, a hobby that is as old as radio communication itself. What better place to showcase communications skills, than at a facility dedicated to one of our country’s *greatest communicators*.

What is Field Day? “Field Day” is an annual “operating event” organized and promoted by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national organization promoting and supporting the Amateur Radio hobby. The purpose of the event is to provide an opportunity for licensed Hams to challenge themselves by operating under non-ideal conditions, such as might be encountered during an emergency or disaster. Our participants must transport equipment and supplies, erect temporary shelters and antenna structures, utilize portable power sources, and operate radio stations for twenty-four consecutive hours. During that period we attempt to contact as many similar stations as possible (i.e., across the United States and around the world), exchanging certain prescribed information. In past years, events at this location have netted many-thousands of two-way contacts; and for each of the past several years (with only a handful of stations), our contacts extended to all of the (50) United States and several other countries.

Field Day in the shadow of COVID-19? After over a year of isolation, cancelled events, and struggling infrastructure, California is finally crawling its way back to normalcy. But in spite of the availability of effective vaccines, the order of the day is still *caution*; and as such, both the staff of the Reagan Presidential Library and the participants of the N6R Field Day event are remaining vigilant against the temptation to drop their guard against the still-present pandemic. Even though the N6R Field Day event is conducted outside, ALL participants will be *fully-vaccinated* and symptom-free from COVID. What’s more, where practical, participants and visitors alike will wear masks, practice *Social Distancing*, and continue with the frequent hand-washing type practices that have allowed area residents to *slow the spread* of COVID enough to give vaccines a chance to develop *herd immunity* against this often fatal disease.

When is it held? Field Day is an annual event, held during the *fourth full-weekend in June*; in 2021, this falls on **June 25-27**. Following the guidelines of the national event, local setup will begin at noon on Friday; “*on the air*” operation follows, beginning at 11 AM on Saturday and

ending at 11 AM on Sunday. Prompt tear-down follows, oftentimes with all related equipment and personnel entirely gone from the site by 2:30 PM on Sunday. In all, participants demonstrate not only radio communications, but also efficient deployment, activation, and deactivation of a purely volunteer organization of radio amateurs *during a simulated disaster situation*.

Who participates? Participants in this year’s event at the Reagan Presidential Library include members and guests from a few local Amateur Radio clubs and organizations. This year, members from the Ventura County Amateur Radio Society (VCARS) have combined efforts with members from the Simi Settlers Amateur Radio Club (SSARC) to organize the event; and during the event’s operation, they will be joined by several other (non-affiliated) Hams from the local area. Often times, the event is visited by local officials, and members from the local Boy Scout troops who help to earn their *Radio Merit* badges by making actual contacts over the air; but this year (due to lingering COVID risk and restrictions), public visitations have been discouraged.

How is it organized? This year, Vern Potter (W6NCT) has been designated *2021 Field Day Chairman*, and may be considered the *primary point of contact* with the Presidential Library. Stu Sheldon (AG6AG) will serve as *Co-Chairman*, and will act as *second in command* of Event Operations. In addition, several others help make this event run smoothly, including members from local Ham Radio organizations and invited guests, making this a truly integrated event. Finally, each operating station has a designated “*Band Captain*” who is responsible for all aspects of the station during Field Day. See Appendix A, for related contact information.

What does Field Day mean to the participating radio clubs? While this year’s event is expected to have a slightly fewer participants, as compared to prior years, it is still considered to be the highlight of the year for many local Hams, in terms of their active participation in the hobby. It’s a chance to test equipment, hone skills, assess readiness to provide essential disaster communications, and test integration with members of other clubs. It’s also a wonderful opportunity to expose the hobby to the general public, which is one of the reasons why having it at the Presidential Library is such an advantage. And finally, it’s a special opportunity for fellowship and fun among the participants.

Why is holding the event at the Reagan Presidential Library so advantageous to its participants? In general, an *ideal* Field Day site resides at a relatively high elevation with an unobstructed view of the sky and horizon, and has convenient public access and exposure. The Reagan Presidential Library has *all* these qualities, and more.

Higher elevation sites provide a special advantage in the propagation of radio signals, especially for the higher frequency bands (e.g., VHF/UHF); since their propagation is primarily line-of-sight. In past years, we have been permitted to place several VHF and UHF stations on the adjoining hilltop (A.K.A., *helipad*), which greatly facilitated our ability to contact other stations throughout Southern California and other portions of the Southwest.

Radio propagation in other frequency bands (e.g., HF) is predominantly influenced by antenna position, typically with an unobstructed sky and horizon-view, and suitable separation (e.g., to limit station-to-station interference). The Presidential Library site allows many options for positioning stations and antennas to address these needs as well.

As for public exposure, *normally*, the natural flow of visitors to the Presidential Library complex on a summer weekend provides a great opportunity for participating Hams to show off what we do. As visitors pass our stations they naturally become curious, allowing us to provide them an “instant education” into the hobby that we find so fascinating. But due to lingering COVID risk and restrictions, we anticipate a temporary reduction in 2021 public visitation.

In addition, the Presidential Library complex has many additional amenities that help facilitate our event, including a terrific onsite Café, restrooms, a nicely shaded picnic area, and more.

What does the event do for the Presidential Library? Hosting *Amateur Radio Field Day* allows the Presidential Library to be a key resource to the community, helping spread the word about *Emergency Preparedness* and the role of Amateur Radio in addressing critical communication needs. Plus, our active public information efforts *normally* showcase the event and the Presidential Library through the local media, including newspapers, television, radio, and online forums. Throughout past decades, Field Day activities have been spotlighted in both the Ventura County Star and Acorn. It has also had coverage on KCLU radio, and Internet-based audio/video programs. Event notices are *normally* posted in two national publications dedicated to Amateur Radio; and excerpts from those publications air on *Amateur Radio Newslines*, an Internet news outlet dedicated to the hobby; but like so much else, the lingering COVID risk and restrictions have limited our normal PIO efforts, in preference to public safety.

During the event, we operate under “N6R”, a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued *special event* call sign, which was specifically selected in honor of former President and Mrs. Reagan. During the event, we are identified by this call sign, periodically announcing that we are *operating from the grounds of the Reagan Presidential Library*. As a result, the call and its affiliation with the Presidential Library have become quite well known throughout the nation and portions of the world; so much so, that it is now common for operators (elsewhere in the world) to seek us out to make contact. Many of these operators even make a point to visit the Presidential Library, either during a subsequent Field Day event, or whenever their schedules allow them to visit the Simi Valley area.

What does the event mean to the public? Operating at the Presidential Library *normally* allows us to interact with Presidential Library visitors, as they come and go, giving them a brief exposure to a hobby enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and around the world. In less restrictive times, we encourage visitors to participate with us; and some find it a great thrill to speak over the air to other radio stations, often hundreds or thousands of miles away.

Some visitors are truly surprised that communications like this can be possible without the aid of telephones or the Internet, which immediately becomes a natural segue into the fragility of *conventional communication methods* during a disaster. Oftentimes, even a small exposure to this event helps make the public more aware of *Emergency Preparedness*; both for themselves and organizations like the Amateur Radio community that supports it.

A few visitors become so interested in what they see and experience that they pursue obtaining their own license, and eventually join our ranks in a fun and rewarding hobby.

What does the event mean to other Hams that we contact? In addition to making an event-related contact (QSO), many operators (e.g., of stations we communicate with) are genuinely excited to talk with someone “*at the Reagan Presidential Library*”. Many look forward to exchanging “QSL cards” with us, which serve as confirmation of the two-way interchange of information. For this, we have created an attractive and unique (“QSL”) postcard to mail out. *QSL cards* like these are often displayed proudly, giving the operator well-earned bragging rights for contacts made throughout the world.

What do we ask of the Presidential Library and staff? (i.e., in reference to past years ...)

- We have located our stations (e.g., *normally* including an Information Booth) throughout the Presidential Library grounds: in small portions of the parking lots (when available), on a corner of the apron at the front entrance, on the hilltop helipad, and on some of the lawn areas throughout the grounds. All stations operate transmitters “off the grid”, using batteries, often re-charged from solar panels, or perhaps small and quiet generators.
- Canopies (e.g., EZ-UPS) are used to provide minimal environmental protection for the equipment and operators; and have historically been permitted at all operating and support areas (e.g., Information Table).
- In the past, the Presidential Library staff has been kind enough to reserve contiguous parking spaces for stations located in the parking lots; but for the past several years, we have revised our setup to use NO spaces from the primary parking lots (during the Presidential Library’s Operating Hours). Instead, we park in specially designated areas, not normally used by the public.
 - Exception(s) to the above policy may be made for the few (e.g., currently one) member(s) of our ranks who has/have legally recognized physical handicaps.
- The staff has also allowed us to temporarily park near the various stations to facilitate setup, tear down, and after hours operation.
- We have been given permission to have a Saturday evening group-meal.
- We have been permitted 24-hr ingress and egress of the Presidential Library grounds, and after-hours access to the restroom at the south-eastern corner of the main building.
- Grounds maintenance staff have turned off certain sprinkler zones for the weekend, and have identified safe locations for us to drive small stakes into the ground for shelter and/or antenna mast (guy) supports.

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- The Presidential Library has graciously provided tables and chairs for use at our operating stations, and when necessary, for our Saturday evening meal.
- We have been permitted to park extra vehicles in several out-of-the-way places, including the *auxiliary* parking lots (e.g., north-west of the Presidential Library).
- We have been permitted to park event-related RVs within the hilltop helipad and *auxiliary* parking lots, and bring our support vehicles closer to our stations during times when the Presidential Library is *closed*.
- Portable Emergency Operations are one focus of Field Day, and many of our temporary antenna structures require *guy* lines for their safe support. For this, we have been allowed to judiciously attach *guy* ropes to fence posts, light standards, sturdy trees, and on selective occasions, to ground-stakes.

How much space is required? Each station occupies the approximate equivalent of two to four parking spaces, even when not actually positioned in the parking lot. Stations usually consist of an antenna and its supporting structure, radio equipment, power supply components, and a shelter of some type (e.g., folding canopy, tent, or RV).

We try to separate certain stations from each other to reduce the possibility of one station creating radio and audible interference to the other. However, Event Rules require *all stations involved* in the group’s operation fall within a circle *no larger than one-thousand (1000) feet in diameter*. Fortunately, this radius allows stations to be spread throughout most of the Presidential Library grounds, but precludes us from having stations at the extreme ends of the property (e.g., simultaneously at helipad and northern-most parking areas).

How many of these stations will there be? For this year’s N6R Field Day event, we anticipate enough support from the amateur radio community to operate approximately 9 stations in 8 unique locations; but of course, if the Presidential Library requests fewer, we will happily abide by a lower limit. Appendix A shows the approximate placement of stations we anticipate at this time.

What about safety issues? The safety of the public and event participants, and the avoidance of damage to personal or Presidential Library property are of paramount importance to us. We appoint a Safety Officer, whose task it is to monitor all aspects of the event, insuring that all operations are accomplished with utmost care and discretion. The Safety Officer has authority to require any participant to modify their station configuration and/or personnel behavior, up to and including requiring them to leave the premises, should the situation require it. Because of this, there has never been a serious accident or injury in all the years that the N6R Field Day event has been held at the Presidential Library. In one case, however, a participant did require ambulance transport and hospitalization, due to a serious reaction caused by an unexpected food allergy.

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In addition, this year, the Safety Officer will also serve as a Health Officer, to monitor and advise participants and visitors about COVID related health practices.

In conclusion, the members of VCARS, and the others who join with us for the Field Day event, feel very privileged and appreciative to have been guests of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library for the past several years; and look forward to continuing this relationship this year, and for many years to come.

Thank-you for your support!

Appendix A – Site Plan and Reference Information

The Site Plan for the event is included in Figure 1 (below). This diagram indicates proposed locations for radio stations, antenna fixtures, support equipment, Public Information shelters, parking areas, and social gathering areas related to the event. This year's layout is similar to prior years (see Appendix B for examples).



Figure 1 - Proposed Site Plan for 2021 Field Day

The drawing included in Figure 2 (below) indicates where watering **MUST BE** suspended before and during key hours of the event. These areas include where event participants and sensitive electronic equipment will be located.

IMPORTANT: Excess moisture in these areas may pose **a significant safety hazard** for event participants, as well as Presidential Library Staff and visitors.

- Please **DO NOT** water in areas indicated in **YELLOW** circles on the diagram from **8 am** on Friday through **5 pm** on Sunday. These are areas where event staff will be working.
- Please **DO NOT** water in the Picnic area (indicated in **RED** circle) from **12 (noon)** through **9 pm** on Saturday. This is where event staff will meet for an evening meal; sensitive electronic equipment may also be present.

No Water Zones - N6R Field Day



Figure 2 - Requested "No Water" Zones for Event

2021 “N6R” Amateur Radio “Field Day” Event at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

The following table identifies key individuals responsible for certain aspects of the N6R Field Day Event, and includes corresponding CONTACT information.

Responsibility	Contact Information		
Field Day Chairman, Health and Safety Officer (primary point of contact)	Vern Potter (W6NCT)	805-390-2753 (private cell)	w6nct@arrl.net
Network support	Rick Slater (AG6AY)	805-501-5085 (private cell)	rlslater@gmail.com
Co-chairman, and part-time Public Information Officer (PIO)	Stu Sheldon (AG6AG)	805-462-7835 (private cell)	ag6ag@arrl.net

Table 1 -Key Organizers for Event

The following table identifies basic information about parking spaces, RVs, tents and sunshades, and tables and chairs used for the event.

RESOURCE	INFORMATION
Parking Spaces used	Support vehicles will be parked either along the north-side of the access road to the helipad, in the <i>auxiliary</i> lots west of the Air Force One Pavilion, or outside the main gate along Presidential Drive. Note: Special exceptions are allowed for event participants and visitors with official (CA) handicapped placards.
Tables and chairs (needed)	The Reagan Presidential Library Facility has graciously offered to provide tables and chairs for event participant use. The requested number of event-related tables and chairs is defined in Table 3. These tables and chairs will initially be staged at a convenient central location (to be indicated by Presidential Library personnel prior to the event). They will be distributed and returned (by event participants), back to the same staging location at the end of the event.
Tents	Tent usage and locations are TBD. If used, they will only be erected during times when the Presidential Library is <i>closed</i> (i.e., the Presidential Library expects any tents be packed away during hours when the Presidential Library is open to the public).

RESOURCE	INFORMATION
RVs	During the event, RVs may be actively used on top of the hill, as integral part of event stations. Any other (e.g., <i>support</i>) RVs will be located either along Presidential Drive or in the <i>auxiliary</i> lots west of the Air Force One Pavilion. These <i>support</i> RVs are allowed to be relocated elsewhere on the property (i.e., typically in the main parking lot areas near radio stations) after the Presidential Library <i>closes</i> , but will be returned to the designated parking areas during business hours.

Table 2 - Basic Resource Information

The following Table indicates organizational information about the individual stations; including the associated Band Captains, operational parameters, and the number of individual tables and chairs requested. Note that even though Band Captains are indicated (per station), the *primary contacts* for the event are still those individuals identified in Table 1.

Name (first-last)	Amateur Radio Call	Email	Band	Mode	Tables	Chairs
			Exchange: 9A (9 transmitters, med. pwr.)		14 total	25 total
Jim Aguirre	KM6GUE	Jim.Aguirre56@gmail.com	(6m/2m/70cm)	PH	1	3
Rick Tate	KQ6NO	kq6no@arrl.net	15	CW	1	2
Stu Sheldon	AG6AG	ag6ag@arrl.net	20	PH	2	4
John Percival	WI6O	johnspercival1@gmail.com	20	CW	2	4
Jim Parker	KJ6LXJ	James.Parker@SbcGlobal.net	40	PH	1	2
Bob Paull	KK6UE	kk6ue@arrl.net	40	CW/digital	2	4
Rick Slater	AG6AY	rlslater@gmail.com	80	PH	2	3
Mike Hasenfratz	WA6FXT	mikeh@tothe.net	80	Digital	2	3

Table 3 – Stations, Band Captains, and Table and Chair allocations

Appendix B – Previous Field Day Events

The two figures (below) show Site Plans from previous Field Day events at the Reagan Presidential Library. These are provided as a simple comparison, showing similarity of requirements and implementation from one year to the next.

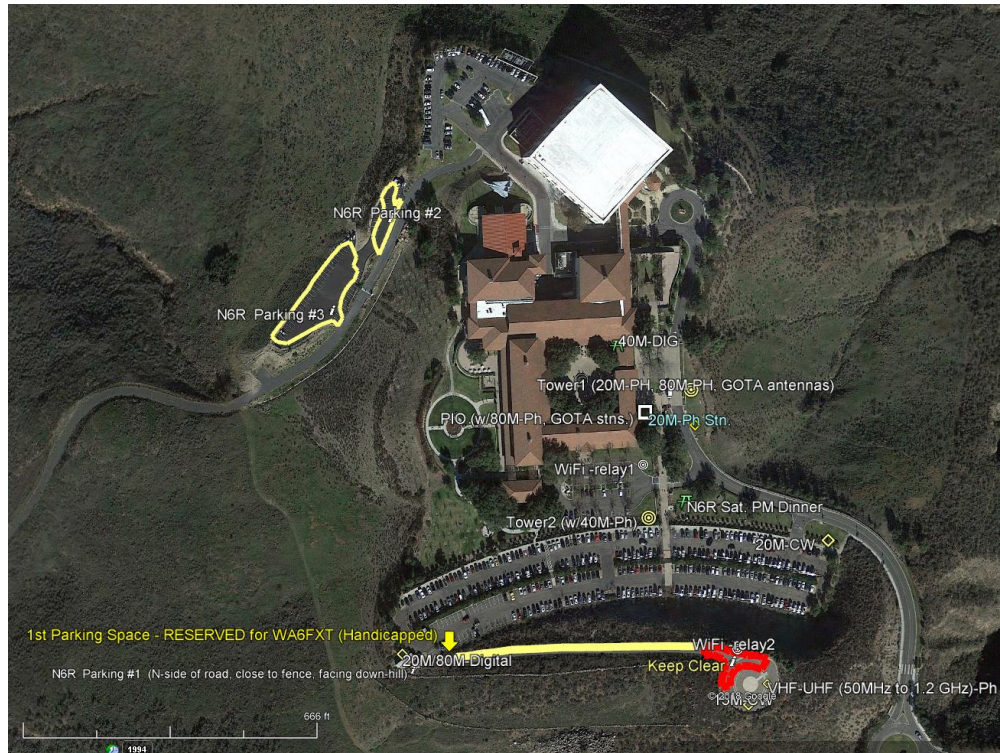


Figure 3- Site Plan for 2019 Field Day



Figure 4 - Site Plan for 2018 Field Day

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For historical reference, the Site Plan below is from the **largest** (“N6R”) Field Day event held at Reagan Presidential Library (2010). That year’s event operations made significant use of the Library grounds, including 17 stations operating on 19 separate bands and modes; and were staffed by over 75 Amateur Radio Operators from more than 6 local clubs and organizations. Unlike prior and more-recent years’ operations, the 2010 event made significant use of parking areas; and included several grass, dirt and paved areas.



Figure 5 - Site Plan for 2010 Field Day

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For historical reference, the photo (below) is from the **first** (VCARS) Field Day event held at the Reagan Presidential Library (2001). That year’s event operations were located at the present site of the Air-Force-One Pavilion, were comprised of only a small handful of operators and stations, and focused around the use of a large portable tower (provided by U.S. Towers).



Figure 6 – 2001 Field Day at the Reagan Presidential Library