

Hammin' in the Park Cabot Area Simplex Group Hosts 5th event

By Danny Straessle (KE5WLR)

Scott, Ark. – Taking advantage of a textbook example of what a spring day should be, the Cabot Area Simplex Group hosted its latest [Hammin' in the Park](#) event on Sunday, March 29th at Willow Beach State Park.

Amateur Radio (Ham Radio) enthusiasts gathered near the banks of the Arkansas River for an afternoon of socializing, making long distance contacts, and a bit of show-n-tell as some participants displayed new equipment and others rolled out homebrew projects.

Hammin' in the Park is a tailgate exercise that takes place in a public park and offers Ham Radio operators (as well as non-Hams) an opportunity to work several modes of communication, regardless of license class, under the authority of a properly licensed operator.

The four transceivers set up on this day included a Yaesu FT-817 (demonstrating QRP), a Kenwood TS-430S (demonstrating HF), a Kenwood TM-V71A (demonstrating VHF/UHF) and a laptop (demonstrating CQ100).

HF operating conditions were much better than expected with a surprise performance on 10 meters as the band was open internationally, which netted the group some overseas air time.

“We made several contacts across the country and around the world, some of them QRP, with as little as 3.5 watts,” says event organizer Steve Tune (KC5FWE). “We did not immediately recognize the origin of some of the international call signs, which meant a little homework later that night.”

Band conditions weren't as favorable for weak signal VHF/UHF contacts. The group was using a dual band, three-element beam antenna constructed out of metal miniblinds to try and eek out the still elusive SSB signals. Other antennas in use included a recently homebrewed G5RV for HF and a thin wire dipole for QRP.

Of particular note was the demonstration of [CQ100](#) by Daryl Stout (N5VLZ). The software package emulates HF operation on a laptop by providing a virtual ionosphere through the Internet. Although no RF occurs, good amateur practice does apply when using the program. Stout used a Sierra Wireless AirCard 881 to access the Internet.

Not to be confused with Echolink, the CQ100 interface resembles the front of a generic HF transceiver and includes additional controls such as squelch, microphone gain, VOX sensitivity and more. The program covers 5 HF bands (80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters) on a network that consists of an array of Internet servers that provide streaming VoIP audio between stations.

Stout also designed a commemorative QSL card for the event, which was the 5th Hammin' in the Park to date. Organizers try to schedule one at least every quarter in a different park location and encourage all Ham Radio operators, regardless of club affiliation, to join the fun and enjoy the outdoors.

“We have a good group of people that will come out and participate on a regular basis,” adds Tune. “The real kick is when our activities catch the attention of nearby children playing in the park who will come over and ask what we are doing. It gives us an opportunity to open the door of possibilities for the next generation of Ham Radio.”

Organized in 2006, the Cabot Area Simplex Group is dedicated to the use of simplex frequencies and promotes single side band (SSB) operation on 2 meters and 6 meters. Members participate in a variety of Ham Radio related discussions and explore technologies such as Echolink, cross-band repeating, UHF, and the new technician privileges on 10 meters.

The group conducts a weekly net every Saturday night at 9:00 p.m. CST on 147.570 simplex in the Cabot, Arkansas area. Ham Radio operators out of range that would like to participate in the net can do so via the Echolink node KE5ELU-L (260617). More information can be found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CabotAreaSimplexGroup>.