

RARC Meeting October 24, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 17 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The HF digital net continues to be held on Tuesday evenings at 8PM on 28.070 MHz with coordination frequency of 146.490 MHz simplex. It has most recently been attended by Glenn N4MJ, Todd W4TZX, Noel KJ4UNX, and Jamie WB4YDL. Anyone interested in HF (and by extension VHF) digital operations should join the group on Tuesday evenings. The presentation on Fldigi by Stan AA5XO was also reviewed. This is also the preferred program for the digital net.

Thanks go to Art WA4EQO and Tracy for providing the delicious refreshments for the night's meeting. The hot vegetable soup was certainly welcome on a very cool night ! After the break, Jamie WB4YDL gave a scintillating presentation on *An Introduction to Contesting*. Given that OI' Sol is now cooperating in a big way just in time for the huge CQ Worldwide DX phone contest this weekend, it was a timely presentation. The [handout](#) and [Powerpoint](#) files are available by clicking the links.

The meeting was adjourned at this time. Hope to see everyone at the annual Christmas Gathering at Sassafras Restaurant on December 6th at 6PM !

RARC Meeting September 26, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order by Vice President Bob K9IL in the President's absence with 15 members and 3 guests in attendance. We welcomed back Wayne Rowe KD4MSE who is wrapping up a 26 year career with the Army and plans to rejoin RARC next year. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. In particular, there appears to be a growing interest in digital communications with the membership. There is a rudimentary net being held on Tuesday evenings at 8PM initially starting on 28.080 MHz and also monitoring 2M simplex on 146.490 MHz. The principal operators of this net were not in attendance at this meeting. Also of interest, Marv Cummings, who recently upgraded to Extra Class, now has a new call sign, AB4MC. Congratulations, Marv !

In order to give plenty of time to our guest speaker, an early break was taken to partake in the great refreshments provided by Jamie WB4YDL and XYL June. Our guest speaker was Stan AA5XO who gave an excellent introduction to the very popular FLDigi digital software. This software utilizes digital signal processing available in a standard computer sound card and allows operations in a variety of digital modes. It is very popular not only in general communications, but also in emergency communications. As such, it can be used on any band and in FM or SSB modes. The most popular mode to communicate bulletins and the like over a 2M repeater is MT63 which incorporates 64 multiphase tones that resembles the sound of a buzz saw when transmitting. Other modes were discussed such as Olivia (which sounds like a flute), the most popular mode on the HF bands for net operations, and of course PSK31 for casual operating. EmComm operations with this software are made robust with the addition of modular plug-in programs such as FLmsg, which simplifies the formatting of standard messages, and FLwrap which ensures that a message passed is verifiable and accurate. For information on this exciting (and free) digital program, go to the authors web page at <http://www.w1hkj.com>. The meeting adjourned at the conclusion of this presentation.

RARC Meeting August 22, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 15 members and 4 guests in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. Jamie mentioned that the Recalibration Party in July was extremely well-attended and everybody enjoyed themselves. Stan AA5XO and Josh KK4FQQ made it up from Gibson County and Dean KK4PXJ's XYL Sandy attended. We also welcomed Mark Spalenka who attended the meeting. No significant old business was reviewed. Of note was that Marv KK4MAC has upgraded successfully to Extra Class. Congratulations Marv !

The Christmas gathering will be held this year at *Sassafras Restaurant* on Friday, December 6th beginning at 6PM. Copies of the menu were handed out at the last regular club meeting and it is anticipated that we will be ordering straight off this menu. Many thanks to Glenn N4MJ who provided the refreshments for the club meeting.

After the break, Todd W4TZX began a discussion about the possibility of beginning a digital mode training net. As digital modes are quite popular and useful in times of emergency operations, it would be important particularly for less experienced hams to learn techniques that would be applied to these modes of operation. Initially it is anticipated that the net will be on the low HF bands and that fLDigi will be the preferred (although not exclusive) operational software. It was suggested that the next meeting could be used to present this particular piece of software and generally how to interface a computer (sound card) to your HF radio. Further details and discussion will be found on the club web site forum.

RARC Meeting June 27, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 18 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. All Field Day receipts were accounted for and reimbursements were made. RARC membership shirts with logos and name/callsign are still being pursued. However, a satisfactory response has not been forthcoming with the approached vendor. Another vendor - perhaps Anita who did hamfest embroidery - will be approached. The anticipated date of the Christmas dinner and gathering will be December 6th, Friday at 6PM at *Sassafras Restaurant* in Union City. This will be firmed up at the August meeting. Glenn N4MJ handed out copies of their menu to the membership on hand.

The most recent Field Day event was discussed in detail. Given the limitations of our club, the result was felt to be good, but areas of improvement were highlighted. Special thanks were given to the XYL's and all those who help to provide ancillary assistance. The food was great and was very much appreciated. The results highlighted were those of our youth members who all landed in the log. Samantha KK4NNM, who passed her Extra Class examination, accomplished the feat of triple-double bonus points at the GOTA station. Todd W4TZX also managed bonus points. Also noted was that the VE test session yielded 3 new Technician Class licensees and 2 new Extra Class licensees. These and other highlights will be posted on the Recent Events web page of the RARC web site.

Many thanks to Jeff W5VNH who provided great barbeque and refreshments for the meeting. After the break, Jamie WB4YDL invited one and all to the annual Recalibration Party which will be held at his QTH on July 19th at 6PM until ... All particulars of this event will be discussed via the RARC email reflector. Hopefully the weather will cooperate and allow comfortable sitting outside on the patio. The kids are welcome and may swim in the pool. The meeting was adjourned at this time.

RARC Meeting May 23, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 14 members and 5 guests in attendance. We welcomed XYL's Sandy Rupp and Trina Carr, Stan AA5XO and Josh KK4FQQ from Gibson County, and Noel KK4UNX's son Daniel to the meeting. After Jamie WB4YDL gave the Treasurer's report, old news was reviewed. This encompassed the changes that will occur with the next Ides of March hamfest now scheduled for March 29th, 2014. Jamie also mentioned that there has been no information from the apparel company where the logo artwork was sent for consideration of personalized shirts. Hopefully there will be some information available for the next club meeting.

Stan AA5XO announced that there will be digital communications course given by Jimmy Floyd of Jackson-Madison County Emergency Management Office on June 1st at 9 AM at Dyer County Rescue, in Newbern, TN. This will focus primarily on digital communications as it relates to emergency operations. Many thanks to Bob K9IL and Rose W9DHD for providing the refreshments for the night's meeting. After the break, the subject turned to Field Day. This will be held on June 22-23, 2013. Jamie WB4YDL reviewed many aspects of the coming event. Importantly, we are now able to begin setup on that Thursday evening at 7 PM. Plans are to meet at 'the Shop' for station setup and to verify that computer interfaces, etc. are functioning correctly. On the following morning at 9 AM, antenna assembly will begin. This will include the two MINI-32 beam antennas for the CW and phone stations, the Spiderbeam for the digital station, and the folded dipole for the GOTA station. Also the digital and CW stations will have 80M doublet dipole antennas for the low bands. The VHF station will consist of Bob's Rohn 6 short tower with the homebrew 6M beam and 2m/440 vertical. The digital station will double as the phone station for low bands only, so there will be no dipole on the actual phone station. On Saturday morning at 10 AM there will be a VE test session and the educational bonus talk will also be done by Marv KK4MAC prior to kick off of the the Field Day event. The actual event runs from 1 PM Saturday to 1 PM Sunday. Todd W4TZX will copy the WIAW bulletin, Samantha KK4NNM will make up the Public Information display, and Noel KK4UNX will contact TV and newspapers for the public announcement bonus. Glenn N4MJ will also invite elected and appointed officials to attend. The last item emphasized was safety at the Field Day site and particularly walking at night around the antenna guy points and cable avoidance. We look forward to a successful, fun and safe Field Day event. The meeting ended after Phil N4PWG showed a particularly nice 6M folded dipole that he made from cheap items easily obtained at the local big box store.

RARC Meeting April 25, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 13 members and one guest in attendance. We welcome Dean KK4PXJ and his XYL Sandy into the fold. Dean recently passed both the Technician and General Class exams during the VE session at our most recent hamfest and is newly licensed. Welcome, Dean and Sandy ! Jamie WB4YDL gave the Treasurer's report and this was accepted. Old business was reviewed and this folded into further discussion of the most recent Ides of March Hamfest. Thank you notes were sent to our vendors and the nice emails received by our major vendors demonstrated that they were most willing to return next year. There were also helpful suggestions offered mostly as relates to the sound (PA) system and the need to enlarge the overall venue. As the TN National Guard Armory offers many conveniences, there was no serious talk of moving to a new facility. Rather most discussion centered on opening up the North room - a large spacious room with outdoor entrance - to flea market and used equipment vendors. The main armory venue that we now use would primarily be used for commercial vendors. Hub City Radio Sales made mention that they were unable to unload much of their wares as there was simply not enough room to do so. Also, there are a few vendors that have to travel a substantial distance, and discussion was made to accommodate them overnight on the Friday prior to the hamfest. In addition to these items, a change in the format of prize giveaway is being planned that would greatly

benefit our vendors. Purchase of individual prize tickets will not be necessary and one will be free with admission. Those in attendance would be enticed to patronize our vendors in order to be granted further tickets for the prize giveaway. Details of this are being hammered out and will be reported on in a future meeting.

Many thanks to Ray N4SLY and Dolly KN4SLY for providing refreshments for the night's meeting ! After the break, Jamie WB4YDL announced that our logo artwork is being sent to a vendor in Newbern, TN for potential use for personalized Polo-type and Tee shirts. It is anticipated that, if the price is right, the club would subsidize part of the cost of shirts for individual members. This will be reported on next meeting. The annual Field Day event is scheduled for June 22-23rd and this year there is more interest in expanding back to class 3A to include a digital station. Jamie WB4YDL discussed these plans in some detail and provided handouts on the proposed station setups. There will no doubt be some changes in the lineup but it was presented for discussion. The only change in this year's rules for Field Day are that we can begin setup as early as Thursday evening at 7PM. We will of course take full advantage of this in order to beat the usual oppressive heat. Jamie discussed some proposed strategy as relates to the use of the digital station as an additional phone station on the low bands when QSO's become hard to come by in digital modes. This will have the effect of potentially 3 phone stations operating simultaneously (including the GOTA station). Also additional digital modes will be used such as PSK31 in addition to just RTTY. The newest version of N3FJP Field Day Log (version 4) will be used on all stations except the digital station which will use N1MM Logger with the FLdigi engine. The VHF station will be moved back to Ray & Dolly's camper for 6 meter and 2 meter activities. Final preparation discussion will be made at next month's meeting.

Michael AK4VU presented his "Slim Jim" antennas for 2 meters and 6 meters for 'show and tell'. These are interesting antennas that are very easily made and are basically a folded over J-Pole antenna. These antennas are known to give improved gain on FM where this vertical polarization is used. After this presentation, the meeting was adjourned.

RARC Meeting March 28, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 12 members in attendance. Jamie WB4YDL gave the Treasurer's report which included the annual filing of Form 990-N with the IRS and the Tennessee non-profit corporate annual report with the Secretary of State. Also included in this report was an accounting of the most recent Ides of March Hamfest held the previous Saturday. The Treasurer's report was accepted and then discussion next centered on the hamfest. Everybody agreed that the crowds were bigger this year with an estimated gate count of 360 attendees. This is over 100 more than attended the previous year ! The discussion centered on what was good and bad and what could be improved for next year's event. Plans are already underway for next year's event and several suggestions from the vendors were noted. The PA sound system is at the top of the list for improvement. An amplifier will be obtained to "put more fire in the wire" as well as possibly larger capacity speakers. The LCD screen used to display prize winners was felt to be a good idea. Thoughts are on better placement as well as possibly more than one monitor for next year. As usual, the food was felt to be great ! Everybody had a good time and Glenn N4MJ mentioned that club members were well-mannered and represented the club well. Special mention was to Noel KJ4UNX who arranged the PR effort and had a TV reporter from WOBT Union City come and report on the event. Also the Crockett County VE team was thrilled to be presented VE Challenge Coins for recognition of their important contribution to the hamfest.

A brief overview of Field Day operations was made by Jamie WB4YDL for the benefit of newcomers to the hobby. Plans are to add a digital station this year, placing us in class 3A once again. There is always a lot of activity in the Spring to improve antenna plans and radio positions for this event. Jamie's Spiderbeam is the planned antenna for the digital station as well as a wire dipole for the lower bands. This will involve some preparatory 'dress rehearsal' as a different vertical support is planned. The event will again be held at "The Shop" and the dates are June 22 - 23rd. The only change in the rules this year is the ability to start setting up on Thursday evening at 7PM. This will be helpful to get ahead of the usually oppressive heat. A more formal preparatory talk on Field Day will be presented in the near future.

Many thanks to Marv KK4MAC and XYL Ruth for providing refreshments for the evening's meeting. After the break, we were treated to a showing of the vintage ham radio movie, "Ham's Wide World" which depicted ham radio as it existed in the 1960's. The meeting adjourned following this video.

RARC Meeting February 28, 2013

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 22 members and 5 guests in attendance. The Treasurer's report was read by the President, Glenn N4MJ, as Jamie WB4YDL was unable to attend. Old Business was reviewed. VEC Challenge Coins will not be ordered at this time. There is uncertainty as to who the VE team will consist of for the hamfest. Plans will be made to present these coins after the hamfest. As this was the last meeting prior to the hamfest, discussion centered on setup and preparation for this event. Setup for the event will begin at 1PM on Friday, March 22nd. Bob K9IL will open the doors at 6AM on Saturday morning. The downloadable hamfest flyer is available on the RARC website and all corrections have been made. VE sessions will be held at 8AM and 11AM. Dean Rupp and Sam Clayton are planning on taking their initial exam. Noel KJ4UNX will be trying to get a WOBT reporter to attend the hamfest for added public relations.

There will be an emergency preparedness test in Obion County on Thursday, March 21st from 10AM - 3PM. That evening at 6:30PM, there will be a NWS Storm Spotter class held at the Obion County Library. Initial discussions of this year's Field Day event were held and revolved around explaining to newcomers what the event is about. This year, Field Day 2013 will be held on June 22nd - 23rd. There is some consideration of re-instating the digital station as there appears to be more interest and more licensed operators for this. If this is the case, Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club would operate in class 3A. This will be explained at next month's regular meeting.

Many thanks for the refreshments provided by Ottis K5BSE and Rhelda N5BSE. Stan AA5XO presented a brief presentation on ARES/MARS and digital methodology. This Fall, he plans on doing a formal presentation on the FLDigi program as well as a possible Winlink presentation. Dean Rupp is involved in the Tennessee State Guard organization and briefly talked about how amateur radio may be useful for them. Yes, the RARC officers were re-elected. See you at the 2013 Ides of March Hamfest !

RARC Meeting January 24, 2013

The first monthly meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club in the year 2013 was called to order with 16 members, 5 new members, and 2 other guests in attendance. Wow ! What a start to the new year for RARC ! The new members we welcome are as follows : Stuart Clements AK4ZP, Eugene Hardin KB4EBV, Steve Clayton KK4NNH with "harmonics" Samantha KK4NNM and Samuel (no call as of yet). Also Dean Rupp from Lake County and our new District 2 DEC Stan Kozlowitz AA5XO were in attendance. Welcome to one and all ! Steve KK4NNH is a Med-Evac helicopter pilot based in Martin and soon ham radio will be a full family affair with all planning to become licensed operators. Stan AA5XO is the newly appointed District 2 Emergency Coordinator which covers 8 surrounding counties in Northwest Tennessee. He replaces Jamie WB4YDL who was appointed Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator for West Tennessee after Randy KI4OAS moved up to Section Emergency Coordinator.

Jamie WB4YDL gave the Treasurer's report and this was accepted. As there was no Old Business of any consequence, discussion began on the forthcoming Ides of March Hamfest. There was some confusion as to the actual date of the hamfest, but this was later confirmed to be March 23, 2013. Art WA4EQO brought up the idea of presenting ARRL VE "Challenge Coins" to the Crockett County based VE team that so graciously provides for the VE testing session each year at the hamfest. A count of how many we need to order will be obtained and then considered for ordering. First Prize for the hamfest will be the Yaesu FT-817nd QRP HF-VHF portable radio - a very popular radio. Assignments were made to contact vendors for consideration of donating hamfest prizes, brochures, etc. The matter of food and concessions will be finalized during the next meeting.

After discussion of the hamfest was concluded, our new DEC Stan AA5XO gave some comments on ARES in general and training and participation in particular. An effort will be made to increase membership in ARES and begin a more vigorous effort to incorporate training sessions.

We thank Noel KJ4UNX and Ms. Laura for providing the great chile and hot dogs. It sure was great on a cold night ! And we had enough for the crowd ! After the break, Glenn N4MJ, gave a very interesting presentation on Lithium ion battery technology. This technology has its limitations as has been reported in the news lately with the battery problems of laptop computers and even the newer airlines. But the batteries do have tremendous use particularly in the medical field where, it was brought up, that pacemakers and defibrillators make use of very long-lasting lithium iodide batteries. These batteries can last for the better part of a decade ! Lithium batteries in ham radio is being used in portable work since they are quite lightweight and hold a substantial charge well. The meeting adjourned after the presentation.