

RARC Meeting October 23, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 18 members and 2 guests in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The Recalibration Party was held on September 12th at the QTH of June and Jamie WB4YDL. All in attendance enjoyed the camaraderie and the food was great ! The Christmas Holiday dinner will once again be at *Sassafras Restaurant* on Friday, December 12th at 6:30 PM. Also Glenn N4MJ has secured a written affirmation that next year's Ides Of March hamfest will be at the Tennessee National Guard armory on Saturday, March 28, 2015.

Todd W4TZX reviewed last weekend's club event with the Jamboree on the Air Boy Scout event. We set up two stations at the Field Day site - Todd's Icom IC-746 running 100 watts to the mounted beam yagi antenna, and Jamie WB4YDL set up outside under an awning with his Elecraft KX3 running 10 watts into a Buddipole antenna configured as a vertical for the HF bands. A total of 15 QSO's were made and our one Boy Scout, Samuel KK4SJE talked to many other scouts around the country. This was a fun event we hope to repeat next year and the weather was gorgeous.

Many thanks to Art WA3EQO and Tracy for providing the refreshments for this month's meeting ! After the break, Sam KK4SJE gave a short presentation on the 2M "Slim Jim" antenna he and OM Stephen KK4NH constructed while at the JOTA event this past weekend. In fact, Steve "Skyped" in to watch the presentation and to check in with the meeting. The antenna itself was constructed of small copper tubing normally used for water lines to refrigerators. The proof was in the pudding as it works fantastic getting into several repeaters in the area.

RARC Meeting August 28, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 16 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The Field Day after-action report was briefly reviewed. A new solar panel charge controller has been procured for next year's event. The old one was found to be defective. Jamie WB4YDL brought in the new caps with embroidered RARC logo. Prices of the caps have gone up since the last batch was ordered and it was advised that the price of the summer mesh caps should increase to \$10 a piece. This was accepted without further discussion. The new winter cloth cap price would remain the same at \$13 a piece.

Significant dates for the club were brought up by Glenn N4MJ. The Recalibration Party will be held on Friday, September 12, 2014 at 6:30 PM at the QTH of Jamie WB4YDL. Further detail will be propagated through the email reflector. Also, the Christmas dinner will be Friday, December 12, 2014 at 6:30 PM at *Sassafras Restaurant*. And finally, the Ides of March Hamfest will be on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at the Tennessee National Guard Armory in Union City. Todd W4TZX brought up an item for discussion - The annual Boy Scouts of America Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA) will be on October 18-19, 2014. In the past, RARC was part of a JOTA activation when several troops got together at Reelfoot Lake, and stations were set up for the event. This time, it was suggested that the club station, K4RFT, be activated that weekend in order to make contact with the scouts on a casual basis. This was accepted with some discussion. Finally, Jamie WB4YDL mentioned that Tennessee will again be active as W1AW/4 during the first week of September. Many thanks to Glenn N4MJ for providing refreshments for the meeting.

RARC Meeting July 24, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 19 members and 3 guests in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. Field Day reimbursements were made. The last meeting was held at The Shop in preparation for the annual ARRL Field Day event. This was a working meeting and no regular business was discussed. We welcomed David KM4CJV and his young son William to the meeting as well as Roy N4ARA. Both David and Roy are settling back in the area and hope to be regular attendees. New business was then discussed. This included the need to make a new order for RARC caps as the supply particularly of the summer mesh caps was getting low. A date was chosen for the annual Recalibration Party held at the QTH of Jamie WB4YDL of Friday, September 12, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

Many thanks to June and Jamie WB4YDL for providing the refreshments for the night's meeting. After the break, Jamie WB4YDL gave a recap of the most recent Field Day event in the form of an [after action report](#). Lots of discussion ensued regarding all the challenges that were met and some that need work. Jamie gave a report that demonstrated how this year's score broke down. Despite multiple setbacks with weather and issues with hardware and software, the final score was actually an improvement over last year's effort when there were no such issues. This shows an actual improvement in operators ! There was also discussion in how things have improved with setup and breakdown of the antennas and equipment. Hopefully, the experience gained through adverse conditions will translate to better scores next year.

RARC Meeting May 22, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order by Vice-President Bob K9IL with 19 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. There was little to discuss in terms of old business; the most recent Ides of March hamfest was briefly reviewed. Phillip N4PWG gave an announcement on the forthcoming Medical Reserve Corps training to be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 6 PM at the Union City health department on Mt. Zion Road. Flyers were distributed regarding this training. It is Phil's understanding that there is high interest in ham operators being recruited for communications. The web site address is www.tnmrc.org and the emergency volunteer coordinator is Lori Barker.

The main focus of the meeting was the discussion of the upcoming ARRL Field Day event on the last weekend of June, on June 28-29, 2014. Jamie WB4YDL discussed the event in detail. The rules for this year's Field Day are exactly the same as last year. This means that setup may begin on Friday at 00Z, which is 7PM Thursday evening. As this is our normal meeting time, the next RARC meeting will be held at the Field Day site (N4MJ's shop) beginning at 6:30 PM. As daylight will be limited for this first evening, the time will be spent setting up the radios and computer interfaces and being sure all are functioning as they should. There will be four HF stations and one VHF station; therefore, the class of operation will be 3A. All stations were discussed in detail.

Antenna setup will begin the next day (Friday) at a yet to be determined time. There will be four dipole doublet antennas as well as the two MINI-32 beams and the Spiderbeam yagi deployed. The VHF antennas will be the same as in past years. This year, in addition to the dipole for the GOTA station, a new antenna will be setup as an experiment. It will be a SVDA - switched vertical dipole array. Actually, instead of 'switched', it will be 'swung' to change directions. The construction of this antenna will be by Todd W4TZX and be modeled after that of [F4BKV](#) and his cross construction. This will be for the 20M band with the 15M band added orthogonally as part of the guying. This should provide some interesting comparisons ... and a lot of fun !

Also this year, the GOTA station will incorporate digital modes such as RTTY and PSK31. Since the GOTA station will be the same as that used for the RTTY Roundup in January, the radio and computer are already interfaced and setup for N1MM Logger. The Yaesu FT-920 at this position does have a quirk - there is a slide switch on the back to choose to run FSK OR AFSK ! FSK is presently selected as RTTY was the only mode in use. However, for PSK31 to work, audio has to be used; therefore, AFSK needs to be selected for both digital modes. Always sumthin !

Bonus points were reviewed and duties were assigned. Many thanks to Rose and Bob for providing the refreshments for the meeting.

RARC Meeting April 24, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 15 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The most recent Ides of March Hamfest was reviewed. Jamie WB4YDL gave a financial report that, thanks to many donations, the hamfest essentially broke even. The gate attendance was about half of previous years and this was blamed on a sudden venue change at the last minute and crappy weather. Reports from our vendors were however positive in that they made a profit. The new ticket system went over very well. Basically, the money garnered at concessions took care of the kitchen cost and the gate money took care of the event cost including prizes. This did not include the money spent on upgrading the sound system. A brief discussion ensued comparing the armory facility to the fairgrounds facility. More discussion on this will occur at a future meeting.

Many thanks to Dolly KN4SLY for providing the great refreshments for the meeting. After the break, discussion began on the upcoming ARRL Field Day event scheduled for the last weekend in June, which this year falls on June 28 - 29th. Perennial Field Day chairman Jamie WB4YDL stated that the rules for the 2014 event are exactly the same as last year's event. This means that setup can begin on the Thursday evening prior to that weekend. What was done last year was to setup the radios during that evening and then setup the antennas the following day. As luck would have it, our regular meeting is also scheduled for that Thursday evening. It is anticipated that we will have the meeting at the shop. The radios will be the same except the phone station will be provided by Todd W4TZX. This will likely be his Icom IC-746. We will also have intercom capability between operator and logger at this station. It is possible that this capability will be added to the GOTA station. Additionally, digital capability will likely be added to the GOTA station for the first time. This may require a change in software to accommodate this and that will be discussed at next month's meeting. The idea of using the GOTA station as an experimental platform for antennas of various sorts is intriguing to many. Different antennas were discussed primarily by Todd W4TZX and Jamie WB4YDL as well as Michael AK4VU and Phillip N4PWG. A most recent QST article on a nested loop antenna (written by N3JFP) was discussed as well as various vertical antenna ideas. This will be finalized at next month's meeting.

RARC Meeting March 27, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 15 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The entire meeting was dedicated to hamfest preparation, which was made more urgent due to our need to quickly find a new location. It turns out the National Guard Armory has been in construction since late last year. No communications was received to that effect by the club membership. It was only when Glenn N4MJ was about to make arrangements to pick up the key, etc., that this information was passed. Needless to say, this was not welcome news, and the

scramble was on. Available accommodations were discovered at the Obion County Fairgrounds and found to be quite adequate. Plans were discussed to move the event there and to quickly notify all involved as to the change in venue.

Many thanks to Ottis K5BSE and Rhelda N5BSE for providing the refreshments for the meeting. The meeting was adjourned after completing discussion of the hamfest preparation.

RARC Meeting February 27, 2014

The regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club was called to order with 14 members in attendance. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The main subject for the evening was the upcoming hamfest. Many items were reviewed including the audio PA system upgrade which is expected to provide noticeable improvement from previous years. Approximately \$800 has been spent to effect this upgrade. A new vendor, JMR Sales from Altoona, Alabama, has been added to the vendor list. They provide a much desired need for badges and items with call signs emblazoned. They will also bring in many amateur radio accessories. Prize acquisition has mostly been achieved. Force 12 had to be dropped this year primarily due to the chaos from their recent merger with Innovantennas. Perhaps next year we'll be able to have them represented.

Due to the large price differential from the Grand Prize and all other prizes, and the fact that prize chances will be earned from guest's purchases, it was decided to have a two tier ticket system. This would make the chances more equitable and help prevent 'stuffing' of the ticket barrel. A few different ways to do this were discussed. General prize tickets will still be earned with a \$5 per ticket ratio. The Grand Prize tickets will be earned on a \$25 per ticket ratio. These tickets are earned simultaneously with the same vendor purchase, and one free ticket for both general prizes and Grand Prize is given free for the price of admission. This should soothe fears of an unfair prize giveaway.

Many thanks to Marv AB4MC who provided for the refreshments and to Glenn N4MJ who actually delivered them. Marv was unable to attend the meeting. After the break, RARC officer elections were held. All three officers were re-elected by acclamation. Congratulations ! Also of note, the ARRL has its Centennial celebration this year, and part of this is the running of stations in each state with the W1AW call sign. In the month of March, Tennessee will be active and Jamie WB4YDL will be W1AW/4 for RTTY operation. Look for him on the HF bands from March 19 - 25th. The next meeting will be just before the hamfest when final details for preparation will be discussed.

RARC Meeting January 23, 2014

The first regular scheduled meeting of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club for 2014 was called to order with 18 members and one guest in attendance. We welcomed Harrell Davidson WD4LAR who is from Obion, TN and who is reactivating his interest in ham radio after many years of inactivity. The Treasurer's report was given by Jamie WB4YDL and old business was reviewed. The Christmas holiday gathering held at *Sassafras Restaurant* was considered a big hit and plans are to return there again this next Christmas season. The previous formal meeting was dedicated to the presentation by Jamie WB4YDL on *Introduction to Contesting*. This presentation was well received and was given at the Paducah Amateur Radio Association and will again be given at the Murray State University Amateur Radio Club next month.

The club's first venture into digital contesting occurred earlier this month when five operators - WB4YDL, W4TZX, KK4PXJ, N4PWG, and KJ4UNX - gathered at 'the shop' at Glenn N4MJ's QTH for the ARRL RTTY Roundup. This was a multi-operator, single transmitter, low power effort that yielded 524 QSO's using Field Day antennas and the Yaesu FT-920 transceiver. The overall setup worked flawlessly and everybody enjoyed getting in the action and making contacts. It remains to be seen how we placed in the overall contest in that class, but this will be reported when the results are available.

The Ides of March Hamfest is quickly approaching and Glenn N4MJ began with a few details on some new changes for this year. We will be opening the hamfest area for vendor setup on Friday before the hamfest at 1 PM as we set up the tables. The new flyer is in the works and will adequately explain the door prize give-away process. Jamie WB4YDL will be exploring improvements to the sound system to be more clearly heard. Vendors are being contacted as well as those contributing prizes. Force 12 has been bought by Innovantennas and the factory moved to Colorado. Jamie will be contacting them as well as Elecraft regarding door prizes. Other details were discussed and will be the focus of email traffic and the next meeting.

Many thanks to Noel KJ4UNX and XYL Laura for providing the excellent refreshments on a very cold night !