

# Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club

Western Tennessee • Western Kentucky • Southeastern Missouri

EmComm • Amateur Training • Public Service • License Testing • Special Events

501c4 Non-Profit Organization



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## "Ides of March" Hamfest 2008

March 15 , 2008

### Location:

Tennessee National Guard Armory, Union City, TN

After a great deal of planning and hard work, an event occurred in Union City that old(er) timers here said has never occurred - a Hamfest. The date was chosen to coincide with Caesar's "Ides of March" and we all hoped we would not meet his same fate ! After some searching, the Tennessee National Guard Armory on Reelfoot Avenue in Union City was deemed the ideal location for this event. The commanding Guardsmen were very agreeable to us using their facility. It had a loading garage-type door on one end and a well-equipped kitchen area on the other end that could be used for concessions.

### The Event:

Tables were set up on the main floor during the afternoon prior to the event. They were arranged with tables around the perimeter in a large U and with two large ovals set up in the middle of the floor. The opening of the U pointed towards the concessions counter and the entrance. Bob K9IL, who headed



Richard KI4EMJ from Jackson selling his wares

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up this whole operation, was on 'pins and needles' and



Visitors 'meeting and greeting' as Phil KU4AB sells his antennae

W4RB, was instrumental in setting up the VE session and Phil N4PWG was there to assist.

John Williams from MACO, a Memphis-based radio parts company, was the first vendor to arrive and begin setting up his tables. Richard Skelton KI4EMJ from Jackson was next to enter the fray and set up his tables. Almost all the tables were taken for those to 'flea market' their wares. These came from many places including Memphis, Jackson, Collierville, and locations in Kentucky and Missouri. While Chris KI4TRM was setting up the big grill and his awning in front of the open loading door, the crowd began to build. Those selling items were making sales and the talk-in frequency was very active with incoming visitors as far away as Michigan ! Folks were coming to purchase raffle tickets and a chance at a "50-50" cash prize. This latter item was provided courtesy of Larry KI4UNT. The ARRL provided a very nice prize package and several local companies contributed to this effort. This

included Radio Shack from both Union City and Martin, the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Coca-Cola, Ivy Depot of Fulton, Skagg's Market and Turner Dairies. Prize winners were announced every 20-30 minutes and the Grand Prize was \$50. This was won by Eric Geater from Trenton, TN who came to the hamfest unlicensed. At the end, he was a new Technician Class licensee with \$50 in his pocket ! You just can't beat that !

arrived at the crack of dawn on the big day. The weather had not been very promising with thunderstorms occurring the whole night prior to this morning. However, the weather finally moderated and a few rays of sunshine actually emerged - a good omen on this Ides of March! Many club members began arriving before 7AM including XYL's. These were Ottis K5BSE with Rhelda, Glenn N4MJ with Linda, and of course, Rose W9DHD, Bob's XYL who did a supreme job with posters and organizing the raffle. Rose and Bob made a very nice raffle ticket drum out of "chicken wire" and wooden caps ! Jamie WB4YDL and XYL June came in shortly later as did Tracy N4IL, Larry KI4UNT, Ray N4SLY and XYL Dolly KN4SLY, Ron W9RVR and XYL Gladys, and our Master Barbeque Chef, Chris KI4TRM and XYL Jamie. Also on hand to help out was some younger folks - Lexi, Glenn's granddaughter, and Brittany, Bob's granddaughter. Also Stan



Dave WT8R enjoying chat with Ron W9RVR

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**Don KC0WOO and Chris KI4TRM at the grill**

*Congratulations Eric !!*

### **Food, Glorious Food! :**

It was widely known before we started this venture that hamfest's were not particularly known for their cuisine. This was *not* going to happen on our watch ! In fine Southern tradition, the hamfest was an excuse to throw a barbeque - in fact, anytime is a good time for that ! Chris KI4TRM did a magnificent job cooking and preparing barbeque pork for sandwiches, hamburgers, and hot dogs. We also had coffee and donuts for the early

morning hours. Everybody raved about the great food and the overall organization. The XYL's behind the counter and young Lexi made sure there was no line backup and that everybody got their correct order.

### **VE Session & DX Card Checking:**

In a truly amazing occurrence, the VE session drew an impressive number of applicants. Stan W4RB again 'held court' and was 'the Man' for getting things done at this session. He had the help of Ottis K5BSE, Phil N4PWG, and several new VE's including Randall KI4OAS, Carl KI4PCW, David KE4NTL and Sam KG4IBV. There were 14 tests given ! After the dust settled, we now have 5 new Technician Class licensees, 4 new General Class licensees, and one new Extra Class licensee. One of the new General Class licensees was our Master Chef, Chris KI4TRM ! *Congratulations, Chris !!*

Also available was Ed Pflueger AB4IQ who made the trip down from Paducah, KY as an official ARRL QSL card field



**Ed AB4IQ checks Bob K9IL's DX QSL cards**

checker for DXCC. Many DX'ers took advantage of Ed's services including DXCC Honor Roll member Bob K9IL and Jamie WB4YDL, who recently completed RTTY DXCC and has 317 entities confirmed.

### **Epilogue :**

In nobody's wildest expectation did we expect the tremendous attendance we observed for this event. Even though the weather was very iffy, people came to our first ever Hamfest in big numbers. Estimated total attendance based on tickets,



**Bruce KA5ELC from Cordova and 'Go List' John K1XN from Paris**

tables, and concessions was 275 +/- 25. Not bad at all !

There were so many friendships renewed and "eyeball" QSO's made during this first ever Hamfest. The folks that came to "flea market" all came away with sales. There was something for everyone. Glenn KD5EZM's XYL Jean, KD5KXS set up a

couple of tables displaying her scrap booking wares for the ladies. Dave Colvet K4WVW from Bertrand, MO even joined the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club ! Even young Brittany, Bob's granddaughter, came away with a win at the 50-50 contest ! As tired as we all were after working the hamfest, we were all very satisfied that we put on a successful event and really put Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club on the map. Plans are already underway to make this an annual event.

**Et tu Brute? The Ides of this March were nothing to beware !**

### Soapbox:

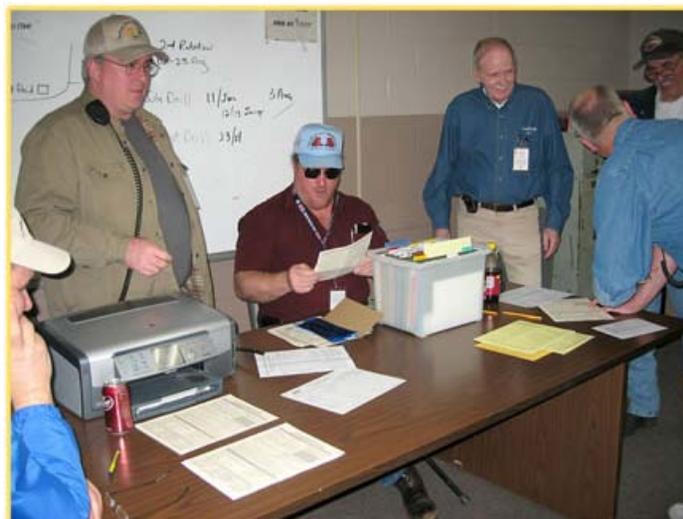
**Glenn N4MJ:**

*Hi All,*

*At this point I am whacked or bushed or whatever term you may choose. Anyway ya look at it I am tired. Isn't everyone who worked the hamfest? I thoroughly enjoyed the day and I CALL IT A TOTAL SUCCESS!!!! Already, I am looking forward to next year's IDES OF MARCH HAMFEST. Soon we'll begin planning and working on that one.*

*Thanks to Bob. You did a fantastic job of coordinating and setting up this hamfest. Bob, I really, really appreciate (you just can't imagine how much I appreciate) all your efforts.*

*Thanks to Jamie. Always there!!! Supporting and enjoying ham radio to the utmost, regardless of what mode, operation, or event you are involved in. Taking care of the club records and finances, and the*



**Stan W4RB checks license applications as Tracy N4IL looks on**

*website. That's a load, especially with your professional and familial commitments.*

*Ron thanks for all your support, printing, and suggestions, recommendations. You are a valuable source of information and assistance. Besides that you like chocolate milk and my XYL's biscuit/sausage/egg things. hi hi*

*Stan you are the VE man and I doubt I could have picked a better one. You've done a superb job of managing the VE program for the club. That speaks loudly and well for us throughout a huge area.*



**Group exchanging tall ham tales with Richard K14EMJ looking on**

*Chris. What a man!!! You really WOWed everyone with your abilities to coordinate the food concession and produce delicious food. I heard many folks commenting on "how good" the BBQ was today. For sure I never heard one negative word about anything you prepared. Thanks and that's just to small of a word for all the time and effort you gave to the club for this hamfest.*

*Larry, the man with more ideas of how to make money than anyone I know. Thanks Larry for your ideas and assistance in today's activities.*

*Ray, good man for suggesting Steve and Turner's. And thanks for helping Larry today.*

*Otis thanks for being there talking and visiting with other hams. Someday maybe you and I can sit down and discuss those baluns a bit more.*

*Howard, Assistant Delta Director, you've gone above and beyond in supporting our club. Thanks for all you've done and for the signs you made and contributed. You've spent a great amount of time helping us by telling other clubs about the hamfest. You've also spent a great amount of time and effort organizing your own club/association at home. Thanks again for your help and we wish you the best in your official position and in growing your organization.*

*Rose thanks for the great amount of time spent working with Bob on the hamfest. As always your ability to perform in the art field shines brightly. You and Gladys and Dolly did a magnificent job behind the table today.*

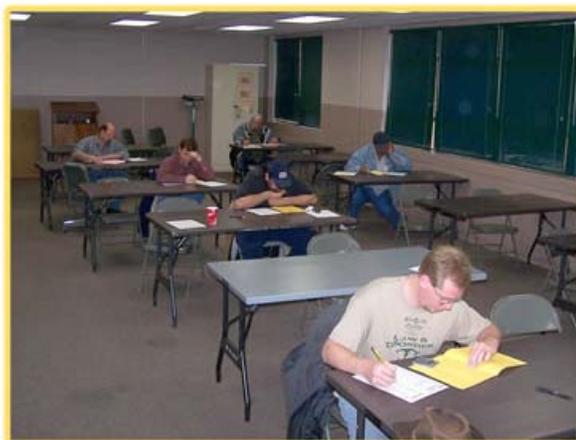
*June thank you for seemingly tireless dedication to OUR hobby. I don't know how we could pay you back but perhaps someday we can help you with a project.*

*Rhelda thanks for the early morning ham and biscuits and the coffee, too. That caffeine did a good job for me.*

*Jamie (Chris' XYL) - although you are new to the life of a 'ham' you showed us your abilities and desire to help today. Thanks so much, and take care of Chris. He's been a blessing to the club. I really appreciate*

*your coming and supporting him and us.*

*Lexi (my granddaughter) - I think you learned a lot today from what your GrandMom has told me. You were a great help at handling the money and food. Thanks girl, and I hope to see you there next year. Besides that "I love ya a bunch".*



**Ham license candidates taking exams**

*Linda (my XYL) - Even though you haven't been feeling well you gave, as always, more than I personally deserved but you did it with more than me in mind. For those who aren't all that familiar with Linda - that statement means that she always gives to others more than she gets recognition for or expects. She's a great person and without her to help and understand me I couldn't do many of the things I do -ham related or otherwise. Thanks for always being there.*

*Gladys, I have a feeling you are about the same as Linda. You've always supported and been there for Ron - that I know for a fact. Your assistance is always appreciated.*

*Dolly, or Miss Dolly as she is commonly referred to by the fraternity, I was surely glad to see you able to be there today. Unfortunately, things got busy in a hurry this morning and I didn't get my "hug" from you. I'll get two the next time though. You and Ray are a lovely couple and both being 'ham's' and sharing the hobby is every 'ham's' dream. We realize that's not always possible as radio is not everyone's 'thing'. Both of you have been dedicated RARC members all along. You've done anything you've been asked to support the club. That says a lot for you and for Ray. Thanks for being there.*

*Thanks to Tracy for all your help with setting up and taking down the tables and chairs and for helping in the VE session. A good learning experience, huh, Tracy?*

*Jeff, thanks for coming to visit the hamfest. Sorry I didn't get to talk longer and I never did spot Steve Pickle.*

*For those who don't know - today's hamfest is a dream come true for yours truly.*

*The synergy that has grown from within the club in the past few years has just amazed me, and I've learned a lot about people and how to accomplish goals. Of course I couldn't have done any of this without YOU.*

*I'll close with one final Thank You and that one is to my grandson, Brandon. He was a big help today, too. While I was walking the floor meeting and greeting people, he ran errands for me. He's beginning to develop an interest in amateur radio and I certainly hope his interest continues to grow.*

*For now the Best of 73 to each of you and I look forward to working with you and seeing you at future club meetings and events.*

**Ron W9RVR:**

*I'd like to thank Bob K9IL and Rose Miles W9DHD for their supreme effort being the lead organizers of our first "Ides of March Hamfest". I'm proud to know you two and be able to call you friends.*

*The effort put in today's event was beyond the call of duty. Special thanks go to Jamie WB4YDL and June Hall, Glenn N4MJ and Linda Snow, Chris Edmaiston KI4TRM ("The Master Cook") and all of the XYL's that came to make this one of the best hamfests ever! In fact, the whole club seemed to show up and take part in one way or the other. Thanks to all for making this a successful event!*

*The best news is what "the other" attendees thought about this event. I walked around (Gladys quickly corrected me and said "rode" around) the fest and tried to ask every vendor three questions. 1) Did they have a good time? 2) Were they happy with their sales/response at their booth 3) would they like to come back next year?*



**Glenn N4MJ and Bob K9IL with Michigan visitor Richard WA8ZFO**

*Of the 20-25 vendors I asked these questions of, I got a unanimous response of YES to all three questions. Most I talked to admitted they were taking home much less than what they came with. I was impressed and very happy with the general turn out which our officers peg at 275 to 300 attendees. I like to look at this as "company visiting the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club". We were good hosts, renewed many old and made many new acquaintances.*

*The door prizes, the food, the 50-50 Raffle and most importantly, Stan W4RB and his crew of VE's increased our ham population by 5 Technicians, 4 more Generals and another Extra Class licensee. Stan, thanks for you and your crews excellent effort to make this happen.*

*Even the weather wanted to cooperate as the fog started to burn off around 9:00 am and the rain dried up and the sun came out. Any day is a good day for a hamfest but it helps when the sun shines.*

*There are several keys to the success of this type of event. One is the hard work and cooperation from the officers and club members who put this together. Another is the customer draw. Attendees came from Kentucky, Indiana, Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Missouri, Arkansas and as far away as Michigan. Good job of advertising kudos go out to all involved in broadcasting this event to the world. I started to realize this was a winner event when people started to tell me about it from out lying areas! Thanks Howard for all of the advertising! Another key is the vendor satisfaction rate and who shows up to sell. Another A+ for everything from Amplifiers, batteries to Radios, mobiles and test equipment. We need to give a special thanks to the vendors that offered door prizes and patronize their establishments. Next year we will ask sooner, ask more strongly, and have evidence to supply the larger vendors and will hopefully draw Memphis Amateur Supply, The Ham Station, HRO, AES and others to increase the value of our small fest. Having some of these vendors and advertising them will increase the attendance and this will continue to grow.*

*One last KEY! The venue was great; the armory was a great place for this to happen. They offered us the use of this facility at very reasonable costs and RARC intends to repay that kindness by giving some kind of donation to the men of the Tennessee National Guard. These men were*

*deployed to Iraq for a while and did duty for our countries honor. They did lose a man to an IED. If this man has a family and a donation to them is possible I'd like to see that happen. If this is not possible I think we should try to show our gratitude and respect some other way that will benefit the men directly.*

*This is only an observer's view point and I am sure Jamie, Glenn and Bob will have a write up complete with tell all pictures. Our beautiful web site will be a good place to show off the success of this event.*

*To end this I must say this was Ham Radio at its best. Fellowship, Fun, Promoting the Hobby, Seeing strange equipment, good food, new acquaintances and hopes that this could happen again next year. Thank you for the opportunity!!!!!!*

*73's W9RVR & NØWAY, Ron and Gladys*

**Bob K9IL:**

*Thank you Reelfoot ARC members for a great day. We estimate 250 in attendance.*

*I wish to thank a lot of people:*

- *Stan for handling the VE session*
- *Tracy for being there when we needed him*
- *Chris for the excellent food*
- *Larry & Ray for the 50/50*
- *Otis & Relda for helping & feeding yours truly early*
- *Ron & Gladys for all their help*
- *Jeff & Phil for their help*

*I know I'm missing others but thank you, too. Everyone stepped in when the call went out. And also Linda, June & my wife Rose. And I didn't do this alone. Not by a long shot....We couldn't have pulled this off without Glenn & Jamie.*

*I think this club can be proud of itself !!!!!!!!!!!!!*