

"Ides of March" Hamfest 2016

March 26 , 2016

Location:

Tennessee National Guard Armory, Union City, TN

The 9th Annual "Ides of March" Hamfest sponsored by the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club in Union City, Tennessee was held at the Tennessee National Guard Armory in Union City, TN. An early Spring was on tap for the northwest Tennessee area and temperatures were mild for the event. The only question was if we would see rain and thunderstorm activity which had been so prevalent in recent weeks. Luckily, the wet weather occurred prior to the event and we had bluebird-blue skies.

When the hamfest was originally scheduled late last year, we had no idea that Easter was so early this year ! And as it turns out, the Ides of March Hamfest landed on Saturday of Easter weekend. We didn't know how this would effect our overall turnout or how our vendors would do, but it was too late to change !

The Event:

As in prior years, setup for the event kicked off at 1PM on Friday where available RARC members convened and set up the tables and chairs as well as the sound system. Those vendors that had to drive long distance showed up that afternoon and set up their displays. *Mid-South Amateur Radio Supply* with Steve KI4YOP and Rosalinda KI4ZKW arrived from Memphis and set up a large display at their usual north side window location. Also *JMR Sales* with Ronald WT4RR and Loretta KJ4ULC arrived from Altoona, Alabama and set up a large display on the east wall of the armory. Loretta KJ4ULC is a crowd favorite as she is "the badge lady" who can make great looking ham radio call sign badges for you on the spot.

This year for the Ides of March Hamfest, we welcomed two new vendors. *TNØ7 Engineering* comes to us from Eagleville, Tennessee. Bob W4AZM and Laura KK4CGY run their company



Master Chef Noel KJ4UNX

which specializes in portable and emergency antenna systems. Also this year, Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club's own Stan AA5XO has started a commercial venture called buyhamradioantennas.com specializing in small antennas and miscellaneous antenna components. Welcome to the hamfest !

Master Chef Second Class Noel KJ4UNX fired up the grill once again and supplied the hamfest attendees with great thick hamburgers and awesome barbecue. Harold KJ4FTM along with Samuel KK4SJE held down the entrance and kept the line moving.

In addition to Rhelda N5BSE and Ottis K5BSE manning the front and dispensing the prize tickets as per usual, they got some help this year with Gene KM4MUN and Pam Hoffmeyer. Gene did take a break to go pass his General Class exam ! The prize ticket arrangement worked very well and the vendors were quite busy making sales. The receipts from these sales translated to earned prize tickets and the more you spent, the more tickets you earned. Everybody received free prize tickets with the price of admission.

This year's Ides of March Hamfest provided a large number of prizes to give away. Prizes came from vendors such as Elecraft, Icom, Ten-Tec, the Amateur Radio Relay League, Radio



TNØ7 Engineers Laura & Bob

Shack of Union City, MFJ Enterprises, RT Systems, and many others. Over 30 prizes were

given away which meant a name was drawn from the "chicken coop" about every 10 minutes ! The top prizes were a MFJ-4230 30 amp power supply for 4th prize donated by *JMR Sales*, a LDG Z100 Autotuner for 3rd prize donated by *Mid-South Amateur Radio Supply*, a Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM transceiver as 2nd prize and Grand Prize was an Icom IC-718 HF transceiver. There was also much literature available from many of the suppliers of amateur radio equipment. *RT Systems Software*, makers of programming cables and software for various programmable radios, donated programming cables and software for the top two grand prize radios.

The food was as usual outstanding!! Noel outdid himself with mouth watering barbecue and hamburgers off his grill. The ladies serving up these delicacies included Glenn N4MJ's XYL Linda, Harrell WD4LAR's XYL Carrie, Jamie WB4YDL's XYL June, Michael KJ4KHX's XYL Christie with daughters Alayna and Elizabeth, Gene KM4MUN's XYL Pam, and Hannah KK4SJE with her daughter Samantha KK4NNM. After all was said and done, there was very little food left. Lots of complements were heard about the food all throughout the event.

VIP's:



Browsing JMR Sales

does an excellent and professional job. We had many testers this year and several managed to pass for a new license class.

Successful Candidates Testing at the VE Session :

- **Kenneth B. Rohm KK4TES** : passed Extra Class
- **Gerald W. Carlisle W5GWC** : passed Extra Class
- **Michael S. Snow KJ4KHX** : passed General Class
- **Carl E. Minor** : passed Technician Class
- **Eugene L. Hoffmeyer, Jr. KM4MUN** : passed General Class
- **James L. Wofford KG4LTU** : passed General and Extra Class
- **Mike Owen K14ZLH** : passed Extra Class
- **Roger C. Gough KB4MLW** : passed Extra Class



Loretta "the badge lady" at work

We were honored once again to have in attendance Tennessee Section Manager Keith Miller N9DGK and ARRL Director of Delta Division David Norris K5UZ and Vice-Director Ed Hudgens WB4RHQ. Together they gave a fine forum and updated a great crowd on happenings within the Delta Division and the Tennessee Section. There were many topics including this year's ARRL activity, the National Parks on the Air, which has taken off in the same way that the Centennial Celebration event did last year. News from "The Hill" on pending legislation was also offered. Also discussed was remote ham radio (RHR) and the coming rules that will be applied to contests and awards.

The new Tennessee ARRL and ARES web sites are now online and looking great. There is continued development ongoing towards a more streamlined ARES monthly reporting system both section wide and nationally. There will be further updates as information is gathered throughout the year.

Thanks so much for attending !

VE Testing Session & DX Card Checking:

This year's VE testing session was again manned by the Crockett County VE team which



Ottis, Rhelda & Pam at the ticket area

James KG4LTU was a special case in that, due to disability, he required assistance in taking the tests. After successfully passing the General Class exam, he was asked if he would like to attempt taking the Extra Class exam for no extra charge. He promptly passed it as well !

Congratulations One and All !

Ed Pflueger AB4IQ again came down from Paducah, KY as an official ARRL QSL card field checker for DXCC. With the advent of OQRS and LOTW, Ed has much less to do in terms of checking cards. He's not the "Maytag repairman" yet, but there may come a day ...

Grand Prize Winners:

1st Grand Prize	Bob Vawter KW4RJ	Icom IC-718 HF Transceiver
2nd Grand Prize	James Garner N4OSV	Kenwood TM-281A @M FM Transceiver
3rd Grand Prize	Daniel Dunn KG4JXH	LDG Z100 Autotuner
4th Grand Prize	Scott Rob KK4SLM	MFJ-4230 30 amp power supply

Epilogue :

This year, with perfect Easter weather, it appears this Easter event was well-attended and that the vendors did well. The Easter bunny didn't lay a big egg on us and everybody had a great time.

Plans are already being made for next year's Ides of March Hamfest 2017 and a great many exciting improvements and prizes.

Don't miss it !

Soapbox :

Harrell WD4LAR :

(Grand Prize winner Bob Vawter KW4RJ) is my second cousin. His late father was my first cousin. I had not seen Bob since he was a child in Milan, TN. He did not recognize me at all to begin with. He is a retired band teacher at Lakeland, TN and school teacher. He got his ticket last fall and has upgraded to Extra Class and did not have a HF radio. What a story

!!!

Randy KI4OAS :

I was very pleased with everyone that tested. They all were very courteous to us all. I was



Choosing a Winner

Glenn N4MJ :

The weather was great, gas prices were very reasonable compared to past hamfests, the crowd was as expected and very orderly.

The VE Team did an excellent job of testing candidates for upgrades and new licenses. Thanks to Randy's team. Their help is really appreciated and helps make the hamfest a success.

Ed, AB4IQ, did his card checking with efficiency. We appreciate his assistance as well.

The ARRL representatives, Section Manager, Keith Miller (N9DGK), Delta Division Director, David Norris, K5UZ, and Vice Director Ed Hudgens, WB4RHQ, were present



Morse bugs and sounder

very proud of Mr. Wofford (the gentleman in the wheelchair) for passing both, his General and his Extra in one sitting.

I want to thank you all for letting us have the privilege and honor of getting to test with a very well coordinated Hamfest. The work you guys put in to making sure everything is in place goes without saying. It has become our favorite place to go. We all get excited a couple of weeks before the fest just knowing how much fun we all have plus getting to see everyone is as exciting as getting that first radio. Well, second most exciting come to think of it. That first radio was fun!

It would be nice if three or four of the local clubs could get together and have a picnic at the park later in the year around September. I know our club would help with the financial part and the cooking. Just a thought for all to consider.

Thanks again guys for all you do for us and we all appreciate y'all more than you will ever know!

73.

Randy Smith (KI4OAS)

Gadsden, TN

providing guidance, answering questions, conducting forums, and mixing with the crowd
We're always glad to host them Cathy Goodrich, KK4IWN, Section Public Information
Officer was present and did some training/guidance for our club PIO, Noel, KJ4UNX. We
look forward to working with Cathy.

Our club members and families worked hard to support the hamfest. The refreshment area
consisted of Linda Snow, XYL of Glenn, N4MJ; Carrie Davidson, XYL of Harrell,
WB4LAR; June Hall, XYL of Jamie, WB4YDL; Christy Snow, XYL of Mike, KJ4KHx;
Alayna Snow & Elizabeth Collett daughters of Mike and Christy; Hanna, KK4SJF; Pam,
XYL of Gene, KM4MUN. Noel, KJ4UNX, cooked up the burgers.

Ottis & Rhelda, K5BSE & N5BSE worked the club table, issued tickets and performed the
drawings for prizes. Pam and Gene trained with Ottis & Rhelda on Saturday.

Thanks to Harold, KJ4FTM, for manning the door and issuing entry tickets.

This year we had two vendors - TNo7 Communications and
Stan/www.buyhamradioantennas.com Returning vendors were Mid South Amateur
Radio Service of Bartlett, TN and JMR Sales from Altoona, AL. These folks brought a variety of new equipment and helped many attendees find that special need/want.

For yours truly it was the most enjoyable hamfest we've had.

If I've left anyone out, my apologies, it wasn't intentional.

The clock has been reset and we're looking forward to the 2017 Ides of March hamfest.

Thanks to everyone who made our hamfest a success.

73 de n4mj

Pres RARC



Bob KW4RJ Grand Prize Winner