

Christmas RARC Gathering 2014

December 12, 2014

Location:

Sassafras Restaurant, Union City, TN

The Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club's annual Christmas holiday gathering was once again held at *Sassafras Restaurant* located in Union City, TN. This year the weather cooperated without any of the ice and snow that plagued last year's event. The party room this year was filled to capacity and we all had a great time. The food and drink was very good although noticeably more expensive, particularly any beef entree.

Attendance:

We had an excellent turnout, in fact the best in recent memory- Glenn N4MJ, RARC President and XYL Linda; Bob K9IL, RARC Vice-President and XYL Rose W9DHD and her mother, Sylvia; Jamie WB4YDL, RARC Secretary-Treasurer and XYL June; Art WA4EQO and Tracy; Todd W4TZX and XYL Trina from Water Valley, KY; Noel KJ4UNX and XYL Laura; Phillip N4PWG; Steve KK4NNH, his mom and Hannah KK4SJF with 'harmonics' Samuel KK4SJE, Samantha KK4NNM, and Melodie KK4SJD; Jeff W5VNH and XYL Diana; Dean KK4PXJ and XYL Sandy; Harrell WD4LAR and XYL Carrie; Gene Hardin KB4EMV and XYL Jo; Marv AB4MC; and Michael AK4VU and his guest, Peggy.

Door Prizes:

Bob K9IL and Rose W9DHD provided their wonderful array of door prizes that they spent a great deal of time constructing. This has become a tradition at the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club



Jamie WB4YDL presented with Contester button.

Christmas gathering. There were lots of Santa's and elves, reindeer and snowmen (one in construction with a front loader!), and snow houses and even a Christmas pig. Some sported light effects. All were well received and added to the festive occasion. The Christmas oinker was picked up by Jamie WB4YDL ... to match his button! Bob K9IL had presented a button to Jamie WB4YDL in appreciation for aid and assistance for all things computer related. On the button was a sitting pig next to a radio tower pigging out on a sandwich - it read "Even a dedicated Contester has to eat."

The Meeting:

As is the tradition for this event, no formal business occurred at this 'meeting'. Everybody was too busy



Part of the RARC gang at Sassafras Restaurant

enjoying the great food selections provided by *Sassafras Restaurant*. Many selections included seafood, pasta, and steaks / burgers. Interestingly, no one decided to have dessert. Guess everyone was too full to go for it!

The year 2014 began with the first ever club participation in an ARRL contest other than the annual Field Day event. With Todd W4TZX organizing and help from experienced RTTY contester Jamie WB4YDL, the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club entered as a multi-single, low power entry in the ARRL RTTY Roundup in January. Other operators included Phil N4PWG, Noel KJ4UNX, and Dean KK4PXJ. This was a lot of fun for all participants and the results were

quite pleasing. With a "Field Day" style setup, over 500 QSO's were made and this was good enough for 7th nationwide ! An extensive write-up about this operation was published in the digital edition of the August QST. The plan is to participate again in this annual event in 2015.

There were lots of on air activities and plenty of horn tootin' for RARC members. Bob K9IL



Art WA4EQO & Glenn N4MJ applaud another successful event.

traded for rain, rain, and more rain ! Actually we had some nice breaks with sunshine and lots of activity. We had 17 operators this year and the GOTA station really performed well. This year, a strategic move was made to put this station on digital and the PSK31 mode. The younger operators had a blast and made a record 145 digital QSO's. There was also an experimental antenna used for this station designed and deployed by Todd W4TZX - a dual band vertical dipole array which performed well. Overall, our results were much improved over previous years and K4RFT finished 3rd in class 3A in Tennessee and in the top 50 nationwide.

Finally, after nice weather for the Recalibration Party (this year held in September), cool weather was had for a nice "Field Day" style operation at "the Shop" for the Jamboree on the Air Boy Scouts event. The weather couldn't have been better and it was nice to get out and play radio. Todd W4TZX brought his newly acquired IC-746 transceiver and Jamie WB4YDL set up outside under a tailgater awning with his battery-powered Elecraft KX3 and Buddipole antenna set up as

a

vertical. Everybody had a ball and our resident Boy Scout, Samuel KK4SJE, got to make several



Dean KK4PXJ and XYL Sandy

achieved Worked All States award for 6 meters as well as winning 1st place in the Tennessee QSO Party CW high power class. After plenty of study and practice, Noel KJ4UNX made his first CW QSO ! Jamie WB4YDL won a Clean Sweep mug for his effort in the ARRL November Sweepstakes - Phone. This year was also the Centennial year celebration for the ARRL and as part of that celebration, Jamie WB4YDL participated as WIAW/4 from his station, making several *thousand* RTTY QSO's !

The year 2014 will be remembered as the year of rain. Monsoons, to be exact ! The annual Ides of March Hamfest was held in a relocated area in the fairgrounds building in the rain. A good time was had by all but the attendance was significantly down because of this adversity. We will be back at the Tennessee National Guard Armory in 2015 as they have completed their re-modeling.

The annual Field Day event is normally the hottest !@#\$ day of the year ! This year, the heat was



Jamie WB4YDL scores the red contest pig



Todd W4TZX wins snowman in construction

contacts, some with international scouts.

Epilogue :

Next year is already shaping up with our usual events such as the Ides of March Hamfest, which will be back at its normal location, and the Annual ARRL Field Day event. Add to that new events such as the ARRL RTTY Roundup and the Boy Scout JOTA event and we have a pretty full year. We have new programs and presenters such as Samuel KK4SJE and Jamie WB4YDL is still giving his contesting program at other area clubs.

The next regular scheduled RARC meeting will be on January 22, 2015 at the Obion County Public Library in Union City, TN. The Net Control Station and Refreshment assignments will be posted soon. Until next time ...

Have a Very Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Good DX!

