

"Ides of March" Hamfest 2015

March 28 , 2015

Location:

Tennessee National Guard Armory, Union City, TN

The 8th 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. The armory had finally finished their remodeling and was available for the event this year. In addition, aside from some cool temperatures as is typical for this time of year, the weather actually was quite nice and occasionally sunny. This last weekend of March was actually chosen in the hope of seeing warmer, more Spring-like weather !

The Event:

Setup for the event began the previous day and went very smoothly. We didn't forget how to set up the tables and the new sound system about blew everybody away ! Most of the vendors showed up at the dawn's early light. *Mid-South Amateur Radio Supply* with Steve KI4YOP, and Rosalinda KI4ZKW from Memphis set up a large display on several tables. *JMR Sales* from Altoona, Alabama set up several tables on the east side of the armory that featured the ever popular Loretta KJ4ULC. She is "the badge lady" that sits and makes name and call sign badges, a very popular item at the hamfest.

Master Chef Second Class Noel KJ4UNX fired up the grill for some great thick and juicy Angus hamburgers. Todd W4TZX provided the excellent pork barbeque from *Southern Reds BBQ* in



Bob K9IL and Jim N9DIX

Water Valley, Kentucky. Rhelda N5BSE and Ottis K5BSE manned the front and dispensed the prize tickets. As with last year's hamfest, the new prize ticket arrangement, with tickets awarded to those who buy from our vendors, was in effect. The more you spent at the vendor tables, the more prize tickets you earned. Plus everybody received free prize tickets with the price of admission. Philip N4PWG was our emcee and handled prize and event announcements.

This year as in past hamfests, we had a great line up of prizes to give away. These prizes came from vendors such as Elecraft, Ten-Tec, the Amateur Radio Relay League, Radio Shack of Union City, MFJ Enterprises, Volunteer Computer, and many others. Nearly 60 prizes were given away which meant a name was drawn from the "chicken coop" about every 5 minutes ! The top prizes were a MFJ 30 amp power supply for 3rd prize donated by *JMR Sales*, a Pyramid heavy duty 20 amp



Phil N4PWG handles Emcee duties

power supply for 2nd prize donated by *Mid-South Amateur Radio Supply*, 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. A new donator vendor for this year was *RT Systems Software*, makers of programming cables and software for various programmable radios.

The food was as usual outstanding!! Hamburgers from Noel's grill and barbecue sandwiches were very tasty. Hannah KK4SJF made awesome breakfast muffins that just melted in your

mouth. The ladies serving up the great chow included Glenn N4MJ's XYL Linda, Todd W4TZX's XYL Trina, Harrell WD4LAR's XYL Carrie, Jamie WB4YDL's XYL June, Michael KJ4KHX's XYL Christie and Rose W9DHD. After all was said and done, there was very little food left. Lots of compliments were heard about the food all throughout the event.

VIP's:

We were honored to have in attendance Tennessee Section Manager Keith Miller N9DGK and



Dave N4QS and Jamie WB4YDL

This year's VE testing session was again manned by the Crockett County VE team. We had many testers this year and several managed to pass for a new license .

Successful Candidates Testing at the VE Session :

- **James M. Daniel** : passed Technician Class
- **Larry I. Smith** : passed Technician Class
- **Preston Trent** : passed Technician Class

Preston represents one of our youngest successful testers at just 12 years old ! *Congratulations One and All !*

Ed Pflueger AB4IQ again came down from Paducah, KY as an official ARRL QSL card field checker for DXCC. Speaking of DX and DX'ing, one of our visitors was none other than James Jones N9DIX who was formerly VQ9JJ at Diego Garcia located in the Indian Ocean. Bob K9IL knows Jim personally and they shared many tales. Art WA4EQO was serving in the US Navy at the time and recalls resupplying at Diego Garcia many times. He recalls the huge hammerhead shark that frequented the docks affectionately named "Hector the Hammerhead" ! Jim knew of this right away. He now lives in the Nashville area.



Dilovan AA3DP behind radio wall

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 with the Delta Division and the Tennessee Section. Many updates dealt with changes coming to the web site of both the Delta Division and the ARES component. Also there was much discussion about the ham radio accommodation bill in Congress (HR 1301), and the ARRL's proposed HF band plan mostly as it relates to wideband digital communications.

Tennessee Section Manager Keith Miller N9DGK discussed the ongoing development (and trials and tribulations) of the TN ARES web site and reporting system. There is a possibility that this will become a national reporting system and will be revamped and made more user friendly. The Spring AUXCOM training in association with TEMA will be held at Bell Buckle, TN in April, with plans for a Fall session as well.

Thanks so much for attending !

VE Testing Session & DX Card Checking:

Also in attendance was Dave N4QS from Paducah who recently visited Kuwait to join the CW contest group in the most recent CQ WPX CW Contest. He had an amazing time and the team managed to beat the Asian MM record ! Dave is now speaking about his adventure at club meetings. Congratulations Dave !

Grand Prize Winners:

1st Grand Prize	John Jacobsen KB4MZW	Icom IC-718 HF Transceiver
2nd Grand Prize	Denis Barton WB8SKP	Pyramid Heavy Duty 20 amp power supply
3rd Grand Prize	James Jones N9DIX	MFJ 30 amp power supply

Epilogue :

This year's Ides of March Hamfest saw us return to our usual "digs", the Union City TN National Guard Armory. The weather was beautiful and the event was well-attended. John Jacobsen KB4MZW, who hails from Madeira Beach, Florida, while not passing his Extra Class licensing exam, nevertheless didn't leave empty handed. He won the 1st Grand Prize, a new Icom IC-718 HF transceiver, that will certainly provide motivation to retake and pass that exam !

Plans are already being made for next year's Ides of March Hamfest 2016 and a great many exciting improvements and prizes.

Don't miss it !

Soapbox :

Glenn N4MJ :

This year's hamfest was by far the easiest to coordinate and manage, thanks to all the members and ladies.



New ham Preston Trent picks a winner



John KB4MZW wins Grand Prize

It looks

like for the foreseeable future we'll be at the Armory. This works well for us and the vendors. Since the event I've been giving thought to moving the date forward into late April. Thinking was much better weather and perhaps a better attendance. I've spoken with a couple of people about this and so far the encouragement is to remain in the existing time frame. Reasons given are: 1) we have the first hamfest of the year in this end of the state and 2) the weather doesn't seem to make much, if any, difference in attendance. So for now it appears we will stay in our usual date slot.



Loretta and Ronald of JMR Sales

A BIG THANKS to ALL for your efforts. We may not be Dayton but we're the biggest hamfest in March in West Tennessee. HI HI LOL again.
On to hamfest 2016, right after Field Day and the RTTY Contest.

73 de n4mj//grs

Bob K9IL :

Actually, I thought this was the smoothest one yet. I had my usual fires to put out in the 1st hour or two but it got a lot easier for me. I hope all who helped didn't feel too stressed. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. I'd like to see more attendance but there's only so many of us in driving distance. I've only heard positive feedback so far. Thanks to all who helped.

Bob K9IL

We got good reports from the vendors; they like the way we do the drawing.

On the personal side I enjoyed seeing and visiting with many folks. Maybe some day I will know most, and hopefully, all attendees. Hi or LOL

The refreshments were super good this year thanks to Williams Sausage and Southern Red's BBQ. I heard many compliments on both. Our Grillman did a great job on the burgers.

Thanks Noel, KJ4UNX.

All in all, everyone pitched in and did their part to make the event happy and successful .



The Radio Wall