

"Ides of March" Hamfest 2017

March 25 , 2017

Location:

Tennessee National Guard Armory, Union City, TN

The 10th 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.

"Spring has sprung" as they say here in Northwest Tennessee ! And to be sure, it has sprung a leak ! Rain was in the forecast for the whole weekend and for a few days prior to the event. In fact, the day before saw tornadoes and otherwise severe weather in Arkansas, Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. This may have severely limited attendance from these areas. Rain would persist intermittently throughout the event and afterwards.

This year the event stayed well clear of the Easter weekend and other regional hamfests. Those that were able to attend, were treated to a fine event !

The Event:

At the appointed time on Friday afternoon prior to the event, members of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club gathered at the Tennessee National Guard Armory to set things up. Yep, it was raining ! Table and chairs were arranged and the sound system was put into place. Unfortunately, *Mid-South Amateur Radio Supply* could not be with us due to health issues sustained by Steve KI4YOP. We certainly hope that Steve recovers well and hope to see he and Rosalinda KI4ZKW return next year.



Ron of JMR Sales making deals



Rhelda N5BSE

JMR Sales with Ronald WT4RR and Loretta KJ4ULC made the long drive from Altoona, Alabama to be with us again. They set up a large display on the east wall of the armory. Loretta KJ4ULC is "the badge lady" and she excels in making fine quality name and call sign badges that look absolutely terrific ! She makes them for you on the spot. She will place any graphic that you want and even pull them off the internet right there and then ! Awesome ! *JMR Sales* also provided a major prize - a Baofeng dual band hand-talkie.

TN07 Engineering comes to us from Eagleville, Tennessee. Bob W4AZM and Laura KK4CGY run their company which specializes in portable and emergency antenna systems. They set up at the north wall with all the windows. They had a great display featuring their portable and field antennas. One antenna is also a backpack antenna and one was donated as a top prize. They revealed a brand new product - the KH6 InvisiTenna - as a presentation - an antenna embedded in an extendible shade or awning. Very interesting ! This will be important for those hams living under HOA's or other restricted areas where classic antennas are forbidden.

Master Chef Second Class and newly elected RARC Secretary-Treasurer Noel KJ4UNX fired up the grill once again and supplied the hamfest attendees with great thick hamburgers and awesome barbecue.

Harold KJ4FTM
along with other
members held

down the entrance and kept the line moving.

As in previous years, the prize ticket arrangement worked extremely well and the vendors were busy making sales to provide receipts for these prize tickets. The more you spent and bought from our

vendors, the more prize tickets you earned. Everyone received free prize tickets with the price of admission.

Gene KM4MUN and XYL Pam were supposed to be our emcees for the event. However, due to weather related damage sustained at their farm, and the fact that they had to round up cattle that had gotten loose from their pasture, they were unable to attend the event. Rhelda N5BSE and Ottis K5BSE were supposed to be taking off from this duty this year, however, in this pinch, Rhelda N5BSE filled in for quite some time. Samuel KK4SJE and Phillip N4PWG also pulled the load and kept things moving to give away all the prizes.



Future ham

to the ladies at the concession stand for serving up this great affair. They include Hannah KK4SJF and her daughter Samantha KK4NNM, Harrell WD4LAR's XYL Carrie, and Jamie WB4YDL's XYL June. We couldn't have done it without you !

Glenn N4MJ, President Emeritus of RARC, was able to make a brief appearance at the event. He has been caring for his XYL Linda who was recovering from recent surgery. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ms. Linda for a speedy recovery. In addition, Dennis Wieck N4ZKR, District Emergency Coordinator for District 2, was able to make the trip over from Paris, TN after receiving and recovering from cancer treatment. Good to see you, Dennis !

VIP's:



The DX'er Gang

Speaking of prizes,

a large number of quality prizes were given away at this year's Ides of March Hamfest. Prizes came from vendors such as Elecraft, Icom, Ten-Tec, Yaesu, the American Radio Relay League, 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 *TNO7 Engineering Backpack* Antenna as 4th prize, a Baofeng UV-82 2M/440MHz dual band HT donated by *JMR Sales* as 3rd prize, 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. In addition, anyone who obtained or upgraded their license in the past year received a free Yaesu cap !

The delicacies served at concessions was amazing ! Noel KJ4UNX did an outstanding job with thick Angus hamburgers and awesome barbecue off the grill. Many thanks



Chuck and Keith at ARRL desk

Once again, we had in attendance Tennessee Section Manager Keith Miller N9DGK and ARRL Vice-Director Ed Hudgens WB4RHQ. ARRL Delta Division Director David Norris K5UZ could not attend due to a division meeting in Denver. Ed and Keith gave a great forum and updated the group on happenings within the Delta Division and the Tennessee Section. Ed gave the news from across the division as well as current happenings at ARRL including "The Hill" watch for current legislation



Harrell introducing Bob and new antenna

VE Testing Session & DX Card Checking:

This year's VE testing session was again manned by the Crockett County VE team which does an excellent and professional job. We had several testers this year and a couple managed to pass for a new license class.

Successful Candidates Testing at the VE Session :

- **J. Douglas Sterrrett** : passed Technician Class
- **Lamont F. Myers** : passed Technician Class

Lamont Meyers is the first candidate that we know of in the 10 years of the Ides of March Hamfest that did not miss one question on the test. He Aced it !! Congratulations Lamont !

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	Tim Belton KK4DTT	Icom IC-718 HF Transceiver
2nd Grand Prize	Ed Brewer KJ4BJF	Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM Transceiver
3rd Grand Prize	Darrell Chelcun KD9HAH	Baofeng UV-82 dual band HT
4th Grand Prize	George Rob KK4SRR	TN07 Engineering Backpack Antenna

Epilogue :

This year, the early Springtime ran into Spring rain ... and lots of wind ! This combined to lower attendance at this year's Ides of March Hamfest. However, all those attendees that managed to make it, were treated to a fantastic event with great vendor support and wonderful prizes and food !

Plans are already being made for next year's Ides of March Hamfest 2018 and a great many exciting

making its way through Congress. There is an expectation that new ham bands will be approved soon in the VLF realm.

The new Tennessee ARRL and ARES web sites are now online and looking great. There is also a new ARES Task Book recently debuting and is gaining much interest across the section. This book is a standardized presentation of levels of training and expectations as an emergency communicator. This is now currently available on the TN ARES web site.

Thanks so much for attending !



Floor flea market

improvements and prizes.

Don't miss it !

Soapbox :

Harrell WD4LAR :

Hamfest 2017 has past and gone. My first as President of the club. The weather was sure a hindrance this year with steady rain and we were under a severe storm watch. The thunder and lightening did not show up during the event and for this we are thankful. It was about 10:00 a.m. before the rain slacked up enough for us to get the new banner set out by the road. It was so windy Friday that we thought that it was too windy to set it out. We closed about an hour early due to threats of bad weather coming in that was predicted to hit at about 2:00.

With these considerations we had a good hamfest. Attendance was down with 129 paying guests and we had two major vendors with TNo7 and JMR sales both of which were with us last year. Each of them told me that they think they did well and will get back with me with any details they wish to share. A few tables were bare that are usually occupied with used gear. Our staff was short this year and we had to fill in or "pinch hit" in several areas. Weather, Weather, weather!!!

A special thanks to our food committee, Carrie XYL of Harrell WD4LAR, June XYL of Jamie WB4YDL, Hannah KK4SJF who ran the cash register and distributed food to our guests, and Samantha KK4NNM who diligently ran the soft drink machine which was not conveniently located due to an electric awning in the kitchen that was broken and serving at best was difficult. Thanks to our club that helped set up and tear down and clean the Armory. Great job all.

73/WD4LAR/Harrell

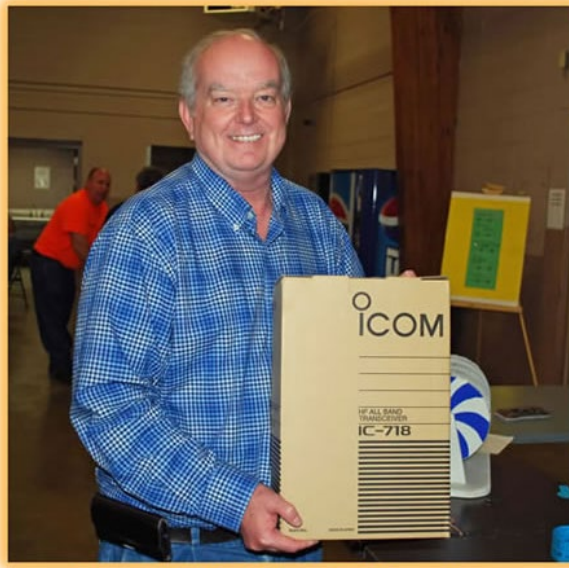
President RARC

Tim Belton KK4DTT :

I have been attending the Union City hamfest since I joined the amateur fraternity in 2011. It is usually the only time of the year I see several of my fellow amateur associates. I enjoy visiting with them, meeting new hams and sharing ideas and information. This year was special. I WON the grand door prize! Thanks!

73, Tim Belton KK4DTT

Photography Credits : Jamie WB4YDL, Samuel KK4SJE, Art WA4EQO, Michael AK4VU, Ray N4SLY.



Tim KK4DTT Grand Prize winner