



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 2018

March 24 , 2018

Location:

Tennessee National Guard Armory, Union City, TN

The 11th 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, Tennessee. Rain was once again in the forecast for the event weekend but it managed to remain at bay for the most part. This allowed those wishing to attend the hamfest to do so unfettered by bad weather. Attendance was much improved as a result over last year.

This year the event featured the addition of new vendors which also attracted many attendees. And it just wouldn't be a hamfest without many selling used gear in the flea market area. You couldn't ask for a better atmosphere !

The Event:

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. Things went up very smoothly and we got some help from young newcomers. Table and chairs were arranged and the sound system was put into place. As we were finishing the setup, our newest vendor from Chattanooga, Tennessee pulled in. This is John Visage KN4EOV with *CT Morgan & Associates*, dealers of amateur radio communications gear. They took their position near the north entrance. John was kind to provide a prize of "ladder line" for wire antenna feed. Welcome John !

JMR Sales with Ronald WT4RR and Loretta KJ4ULC made the long drive from Altoona, Alabama to be with us once 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 fabulous ! *JMR Sales* also provided a very nice prize - a MFJ 4230 Power Supply. Welcome back, Ron and Loretta !

TNO7 Engineering from Eagleville, Tennessee with Bob W4AZM and Laura KK4CGY at the helm, once again set up on the north wall with the large windows. Their company specializes in portable and emergency antenna systems. Their display featured their portable vertical antenna inside an extendible fiberglass mast and a beefed up tilt over mount. Very nice ! One antenna is also a backpack antenna and



Dennis, Jamie, Lee & Mickey

[Field Day 2022](#)

[Field Day 2021](#)

[Field Day 2020](#)

[Christmas 2019](#)

[Field Day 2019](#)

[Hamfest 2019](#)

[Christmas 2018](#)

[Field Day 2018](#)

[Hamfest 2018](#)

[Event Archive](#)



Blast from the Past

Another vendor is one of Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club's own members - Nathan Spencer KM4ZYM and XYL Demetria (Demi) did a bang up business by making customized decals for RTIC insulated 30 ounce tumblers. These decals were usually configured for amateur call signs and names and they were applied on the spot and sold. This was a great idea !

Master Chef Second Class and RARC Secretary-Treasurer Noel KJ4UNX fired up the grill once again and supplied the hamfest attendees with great thick hamburgers and awesome pork 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. There was a bit of confusion initially as it needed reminding how the tickets worked - spend \$25, get a blue Grand Prize ticket, spend \$5, get a red general prize ticket. Everyone received free prize tickets - both blue and red - with the price of admission.

Gene K4MUN and XYL Pam were our emcees for the event along with Samuel KK4SJE. They held down the front desk and announced the prizes as the winners were chosen. The sound system performed quite well and the new 32 inch display looked great in displaying the prize winners. It was discovered at the time of setup that we had a faulty HDMI cable and this was quickly replaced that morning.

one was donated as a top prize. They also specialize in hide-away antennas which would be important to hams living under HOA's or other restrictive covenants. Their "KH6 InvisiTenna" is an antenna embedded in an extendible shade or awning. Very interesting !

Another new vendor graced our hamfest and hails from Jackson, Tennessee. This was *Byrd Sounds* run by Alan Byrd who specializes in all sorts of electronic gadgets from GPS sensors to solar chargers and to cell phone accessories. They also submitted a prize for the give away - a Plantronics Voyager Legend Bluetooth headset. Nice !! Welcome *Byrd Sounds* !



Ed AB4IQ checking Bob K9IL's QSLs

A staple of the Ides of March Hamfest is the great prizes that are given away. Prizes came from vendors such as Elecraft, the American Radio Relay League, MFJ Enterprises, RT Systems, N3FJP Software and several others. The top prizes were a *TNO7 Engineering* Backpack Antenna as 4th prize, a Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM transceiver as 3rd Grand Prize, another Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM transceiver as 2nd Grand Prize and a cash 1st Grand Prize of \$ 250. This was the first year that a cash prize was given for the 1st Grand Prize. There was also much literature available from many of the suppliers of amateur radio equipment.

The delicacies served at concessions was amazing ! Noel KJ4UNX did an outstanding job with thick Angus hamburgers and awesome pork barbecue off the grill. Many thanks to the ladies at the concession stand for serving up this great affair. They include Hannah KK4SJF, Harrell WD4LAR's XYL Carrie, Glenn N4MJ's XYL Linda, Michael N4EBA's XYL Christie and Jamie WB4YDL's XYL June. Also present was Harrell's grandson Kade Coursey, and Linda's granddaughter Alayna and her boyfriend Colton Mayo. Many thanks for all your help !!



Busy Hamfest Activities

VIP's:

We had in attendance Tennessee Section Manager Keith Miller N9DGK and ARRL Delta Division Director David Norris K5UZ and Vice-Director Ed Hudgens WB4RHQ. An excellent meeting was had with these gentlemen concentrating on ARES and happenings at the ARRL.

The new ARES Task Book, which debuted last year, is doing very well and gaining much interest across the section. This book is a standardized presentation of levels of training and expectations as an emergency communicator. The Basic Level is now required of all ARES members. The new online-fillable PDF is now currently available on the TN ARES web site.

Much interest was paid to the new proposal for upgrading Technician Class privileges and there was a lot of discussion. Expect to hear a lot more on this as time marches on. Also the ARRL is now in a search for a new ARRL CEO as Tom Gallagher NY2RF has stepped down.

Thanks so much for attending !

VE Testing Session & DX Card Checking & Weather Radar Interpretation Forum:

This year's VE testing session was again manned by the Crockett County VE team which does an excellent and professional job. This year, the Crockett County crew donated a very nice prize of a Baofeng UV-5R 2M/440MHz dual band HT for the first successful tester of the Technician Class license exam for age less than 18 years old. The winner of this radio was Benjamin Bennett, whose father is Jimmy W4MF from Dickson, TN. Congratulations Benjamin !!



Crockett County VE Crew

Successful Candidates Testing at the VE Session :

- **Benjamin Bennett** : passed Technician Class - **100% score !**
- **Richard Burress** : passed Technician Class
- **Dennis Shannon** : passed Technician Class
- **Alan Arnold KJ4TRA** : passed General Class
- **Seth Smith** : passed Technician Class - **100% score !**
- **Matthew Devanzo** : passed Technician Class
- **Allison Finney** : passed Technician Class

Seth Smith, age 8, and Benjamin Bennett, age 12, represent only the 2nd and 3rd testers to ever score a perfect 100% score during the Ides of March Hamfest VE testing !!

Congratulations One and All !

Ed Pflueger AB4IQ again came down from Paducah, KY as an official ARRL QSL card field checker for DXCC. Several, including Bob K9IL and Jamie WB4YDL, both avid DX'ers, had their QSL cards checked for DXCC credit.

A new forum was added this year in an effort to add quality attractions to the Ides of March Hamfest. Eddie Holmes WE4WYO spent nearly 40 years with WBBJ-TV in Jackson, Tennessee as a professional meteorologist. Eddie gave a well-attended forum on weather radar interpretation - a first for this event ! Thank you, Eddie !

Grand Prize Winners:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st Grand Prize | Robert Griggs KG4ZDN | \$ 250 cash prize |
| 2nd Grand Prize | Seth Smith | Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM Transceiver |
| 3rd Grand Prize | Ricky Lee KI4WPD | Kenwood TM-281A 2M FM Transceiver |
| 4th Prize | Randy Smith KI4OAS | TNØ7 Engineering Backpack Antenna |

Epilogue :

This year's Ides of March Hamfest featured new vendors in *Byrd Songs* from Jackson, Tennessee and *CT Morgan & Associates* from Chattanooga, Tennessee. New and interesting prizes were given away and the great food was a complete hit ! Also a new forum was presented and was very well received. And the weather cooperated !

Plans are already being made for next year's Ides of March Hamfest 2019 and a great many exciting improvements and prizes.

Don't miss it !

Soapbox :

Harrell WD4LAR :

Twenty four hours ago our hamfest ended as far as the public is concerned. With the announcement of the individual that won the grand prize, the door closed on this year's hamfest which is the showcase of the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club, though many other things distinguish us. Ides of March hamfest began for some of us at least thirteen months before the event. Our hamfest this year was a complete success.

We had more vendors this year than the last couple of years. I talked with the vendors and they were happy to have the invitation to come and display their wares. One promised

vendor did not show up to participate and we wish they had. Carrie, my XYL and I, had dinner with three of the vendors Friday evening. This was a good experience for sure though it made a long day for us.

Our hamfest this year had the tables full of used gear and we saw many taking used bought gear away. Of course not everyone sold all they had or wanted to sell. C T Morgan was pleased with new equipment that was sold by their representative – John Visage.

I send my personal thanks to the Crockett County Amateur Radio Society for their help in many different ways. I visited their club meeting several times asking for ways to improve our hamfest and they responded positively. One of their members sent me a list of suggestions and ideas at least a year ago. Additionally, they did the VE testing and we have two new young hams one is 12 from Dickson Tennessee and the other is 8 who lives in Martin Tennessee

The hamfest is not mine or yours. It does not belong to any one of us, but all of us – our Club! Thanks for every member that helped in set up and tear down. We give our thanks to every family member that helped and especially the ladies who helped with kitchen duties. There were no burgers or

barbecue left over – even the pickle slices were all gone!!

Sgt. Orr of the National Guard was kind and cooperative in every way. Some rules were changed by them which we learned and observed as the day progressed.

I personally thank my fellow Club officers. Bob – K9IL our vice-president, and Noel – KJ4UNX our secretary and treasurer. They accepted and carried out their assignments courageously and completely.

Last, I have appointed a committee to study the 2018 hamfest and make suggestions for the 2019 hamfest for ways to improve. I know they will do a fantastic job.

73/WD4LAR/Harrell

President Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club

Robert Griggs KG4ZDN :

I've regularly attended the hamfest since its inception, and I truly enjoyed this one! I found the main item I was searching – a VHF/UHF watt meter – at the first booth (CT Morgan & Associates) for \$10



Randy presents Benjamin Youth Prize



Loretta with Wayne's Badge

off retail. I got some odds & ends from JMR Sales, where I also got about a \$10 discount from retail, and the rest of my day was “toy” shopping and cheering on a friend who was taking his ham radio test.

I love old receivers, so seeing several older receivers, including the Zenith Trans-Oceanic radios, was a treat! I got a Realistic DX-100 and a couple Sony coat pocket radios. I kept avoiding one of those Zeniths...but it kept calling my name. So I made an offer late in the 'fest, and it was accepted! I've been enjoying the H500 Trans-Oceanic just about every day since the 'fest. Love that tube audio!

And to finish an already great 'fest...I won the top prize! This is the first time I've ever won a grand prize, and I think the last time I even won a door prize was 2015. I spent about the same amount of money, so it worked out great for me! I'm holding onto the money 'til the next ham radio “toy” catches my eye!

I thought overall it was an excellent 'fest. From my untrained eye, I think attendance was up a bit, and I heard at least one young person passed the Technician test along with a my buddy who is still young at heart! I hope the vendors selling new items return next year – I think the balance of new & used was the best yet. I'm already looking forward to next year, and I hope the hamfest and ham radio in general continues to grow throughout the coming year!

Jimmy Bennett W4MF - Benjamin's Dad

My son Benjamin Bennett and I attended the Ides of March Hamfest in Union City. Benjamin took his technician test at the 9am VE session and passed, earning his Tech ticket. Benjamin is 12 years old, and was the first under 18 on Saturday to pass the tech license and won a Baeofeng UV5R HT radio.

Benjamin and I had a great time at the Hamfest, and met several Hams and hopefully made new friends. Thanks for all that you do to put on this event.

73

Jimmy Bennett

W4MF

Photography Credits : Jamie WB4YDL, Art WA4EQO, Michael AK4VU, David K5UZ .



Robert KG4ZDN Grand Prize Winner



Harrell congratulating Seth

