

Christmas RARC Gathering 2017

December 9 , 2017

Location:

Old West Steakhouse , Union City, TN

This year, the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club's annual Christmas holiday gathering was held at a new venue, the *Old West Steakhouse* located in Union City, TN. After several members at previous meetings mentioned that the food was very good and that there was a large party room for our use, it was decided to take advantage of it and locate our Christmas gathering there. As it turns out, this was an excellent decision ! The weather for the evening was excellent - cool but not terribly cold and clear skies.

Attendance:

We had a superb turnout - Harrell WD4LAR, RARC President and XYL Carrie; Bob K9IL, RARC Vice-President; Noel KJ4UNX , RARC Secretary-Treasurer and XYL Laura; Art WA4EQO and Tracey; Gene KM4MUN and XYL Pam from Bardwell, KY; Jamie WB4YDL and XYL June; Phillip N4PWG; Glenn N4MJ and XYL Linda; Michael AK4VU and his guest, Peggy, and Steve KK4NNH with Hannah KK4SJF, Hannah's parents from Washington state, and Samuel KK4SJE.

Door Prizes:

As is traditional, Bob K9IL and Rose W9DHD provided their wonderful array of unique door prizes



Christmas gathering smiles



Bob's door prize table

constructed with great care over a considerable amount of time. Unfortunately, Rose was unable to attend the event. There was a red-nosed reindeer, a nativity scene, several lit Christmas trees, sleds and baskets. There was even a more practical gift for that special someone ! All were beautifully constructed and added to the Christmas spirit and tradition of the event.

The Meeting:

As is normal for this event, no formal business occurred at this 'meeting' . The food was indeed excellent and almost everyone partook in the buffet. There was quite a selection of meat and fish and even someone to cook your steak to order. Very nice ! There was also several impressive desserts if you had room left for them.

Some New Year's resolutions were being made for next year such as dropping a few pounds - seems like those were the same resolutions from last year ! Jamie WB4YDL actually kept this resolution by losing greater than 50 pounds over the course of the year.

The year 2017 was special in that we welcomed new leadership in our club as well as the White House. After a long tenure as President of RARC, Glenn N4MJ stepped down and was immediately voted President-Emeritus of RARC for his excellent leadership for all these years. Stepping up after the officer elections is Harrell WD4LAR who is also the Emergency Coordinator for Obion County ARES. Bob K9IL remains as Vice President. After 13 years, Jamie WB4YDL decided to step aside as Secretary-Treasurer, although he will remain as web master for the club's web site. Noel KJ4UNX was voted in as the new Secretary-Treasurer for RARC. After nearly a full year, all agree that the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club is in very good hands.

On air activities were not as active this year as in past years. Jamie WB4YDL was not active in HF

contests until some tower work was done to replace a couple rotators. After that, he dipped his radio toes into the CQ WW RTTY contest for a single band 40M effort. It seems that the station is operating well as he ripped off over 500 QSO's - preliminarily good for 8th worldwide. Glenn N4MJ is still quite active in Summits on the Air (SOTA) activity and Micheal AK4VU is active with WWFF (Worldwide Flora and Fauna). Bob K9IL, primarily a CW operator, operated a few contests including the TN QSO Party, when he wasn't looking for 30M DX.



Jamie WB4YDL checking the door prizes

ARES activity with Harrell WD4LAR as Obion County EC has been steady with good participation with the ARES Minute during the Sunday evening nets. Jamie WB4YDL is the Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator (ASEC) for West TN and has been busy working with ARES leadership to provide easier access to reports and new training opportunities. Glenn N4MJ gave a great talk on ARES during a summer meeting.

The annual Ides of March Hamfest was the 10th in the club's history and turned out to be one of our best ! We had to dodge thunderstorms and we had one less major vendor due to health problems. However, *TNO7 Engineering* out of Eagleville, TN specializing in portable operations gear, really stepped up and became a major vendor. They even announced a new "invisible" antenna for use in HOA restricted areas. *JMR Sales* was also present and we really appreciated Ron WT4RR and Loretta KJ4ULC making the big drive from Altoona, Alabama. The staggered prize ticket arrangement was again successful, particularly for the vendors. Looking forward to the Ides of March Hamfest 2018, which will be our 11th annual event! Wow !

The annual Field Day event took place during the last full weekend in June. As usual, it was hot and humid with very high temperatures. This year there were no new bonus point opportunities, but Noel KJ4UNX continued as our safety officer during the event. We decided to run a simpler antenna setup which



Pam & Gene KM4MUN

eliminated the Spiderbeam which served us so well in the past, but was labor intensive. Glenn N4MJ and XYL Linda were again wonderful in allowing the club to use the "Shop" facilities and we all pitched in to help make it ready for the event. Linda was recovering from surgery and Glenn could only be at the event on a part-time basis. Band conditions were decent during the event and we were also rewarded with a major high band opening including a monster 6M opening. Surprisingly, even with the simpler vertical / inverted-L antenna, the digital station did very well. The phone station controlled by Michael AK4VU made a huge improvement and contributed well to the score. The GOTA station again turned in an excellent score as did the CW station. When the dust settled after the event and the score was counted, RARC had just under 7000 points - the 2nd highest in club history (behind 2015). Not only did we finish 1st in class 3A for the state of Tennessee, we finished 1st in the Delta Division, and 28th nationwide. This represents an improvement of 11 places from last year ! With simpler antennas, this can readily be explained as due to much better operation of



The Clayton's with Hannah's parents

the stations. Better and more experienced operators means better scores !



Glenn, June & Jamie saying goodbyes

Epilogue :

The year 2017 is nearly in the books with several interesting challenges met and new promise for the coming year. The next Ides of March Hamfest will hopefully offer more vendors and perhaps new forums to attract new attendees. After stumbling a bit on Field Day last year, the club and its intrepid crew made an outstanding effort in challenging conditions to come away with a winning score. New members were added to the rolls and new folks are interested in giving talks on all matter of ham radio items. The thing about amateur radio is that there is never a lack of interesting facets. Jamie WB4YDL is even taking on EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) or moonbounce and has already entered a contest for this ! For 2018, we hope to see new members and excitement for the club activities and continued participation and good health for all our members.

The next regular scheduled RARC meeting will be on January 25, 2018 at the Obion County Public Library in Union City, TN. The Net Control Station and Refreshment assignments will soon be posted. Until next time ...

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

