



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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Christmas RARC Gathering 2018

December 15 , 2018

Location:

Old West Steakhouse , Union City, TN

"Oh, the weather outside was frightful " was the theme for the Christmas gathering originally scheduled for December 8th. However, at the 11th hour, our club president, Harrell WD4LAR, made the correct call to reschedule the dinner for the following week. A wintry mix of sleet and ice made traveling conditions treacherous.

So following another wet weather week, the Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club's annual Christmas holiday gathering was again held at the *Old West Steakhouse* located in Union City, TN. The establishment was quite understanding for the weather delay. Our host and hostesses were very nice and provided superb service to all in attendance.

Attendance:

We had an excellent turnout - Harrell WD4LAR, RARC President and XYL Carrie; Bob K9IL, RARC Vice-President; Noel KJ4UNX , RARC Secretary-Treasurer and XYL Laura; 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, Randall Flowers KN4OPZ and XYL Judy and Steve KK4NNH with Hannah KK4SJF. The

surprise was that Samuel KJ4SJE

could not be in attendance as he was in the United States Air Force ! Congratulations to Sam and his parents !

Door Prizes:

Bob K9IL and Rose W9DHD provided their wonderful array of unique door prizes that were constructed expertly and provided much holiday spirit. There were several Santa's and sleighs, many laden with holly and mini-presents, and ham radio themed scenes. There was even a "blue screen" cutout globe with a Christmas home scene with train. All were beautifully constructed and added to the Christmas spirit and tradition of the event.

The Meeting:



Rose and her creations

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Beautiful Door Prizes

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.

The year 2018 was an interesting year for Reelfoot Amateur Radio Club. All of the RARC officers were reelected and continued their excellent guidance and leadership.

On air activities were dominated by the new digital mode FT8. Because the solar cycle is at its nadir, traditional modes such as CW, SSB, and even RTTY are finding it hard going. Enter this unique way to make contacts, albeit brief and non-conversational, several tens of decibels below the noise floor! This has opened up a whole new ballgame especially for those with limited stations. This was particularly felt during the VHF contests this year. This coming year will certainly be interesting because of this growth and excitement. The ARRL RTTY Contest in January will be open to this mode (as well as any digital mode), and the WSJT software will be ready for it. What will be truly interesting is how this mode will effect operation, particularly on the high bands, during this coming Field Day.



Randall KN4OPZ & Judy

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. Bobby Richardson W4NWT, who gave a great presentation on NTS traffic and the Radiogram, is now our District 2 Emergency Coordinator.

The annual Ides of March Hamfest was the 11th in the club's history and saw increased attendance thanks to some improved weather and the addition of two new vendors. We welcomed John Visage KN4EOV with *CT Morgan and Associates* out of Chattanooga, TN, dealers of amateur radio gear, and *Byrd Songs* from Jackson, TN specializing in multiple electronic items. *TNo7 Engineering* out of Eagleville, TN specializing in portable operations gear, continued to be a major vendor. *JMR Sales* from Altoona, AL was also present and we really appreciated Ron WT4RR and Loretta KJ4ULC making this big drive. We now have a Hamfest Operations Committee headed up by Glenn N4MJ that promises to make the



Christmas globes

12th annual event even better!

The annual Field Day event took place during the last full weekend in June. The usual miserably hot weather actually moderated this year, thanks to recent thunderstorms which cooled things a bit. This year there were no new bonus point opportunities, but Noel KJ4UNX continued as our safety officer during the event. We continued to run the simpler antenna setup as in the previous year, so the Spiderbeam was not deployed. Glenn N4MJ had installed an awning at the front of the shop which added new functionality. Band conditions

were typical for the bottom of the sunspot cycle and made operating difficult. We did not see great 6M openings as last year, but several contacts were logged. The ISS packet system was inoperable for the event. So Jamie WB4YDL cobbled together a lightweight satellite antenna array and managed to make a QSO through the AO-92 Fox-1D satellite - good for the 100 point satellite QSO bonus. We didn't do as well as in previous years as a result of poor band conditions scoring under 5500 points, as compared to over 7000 points last year.



Rose & Bob setting the tone

Interestingly, RARC placed 2nd in TN class 3A and 40th nationwide in class 3A. Not as bad as was thought considering we didn't even make 1000 QSO's ! Plans are already in progress for next year's event which promises to be a bit different. Stay tuned !

Epilogue :

The year 2018 is nearly in the books with several interesting challenges met and new promise for the coming year. The next Ides of March Hamfest will be upon us very soon and the new committee is working hard to put a quality product out in March. Field Day continues to be the biggest operating event nationwide and new ideas are being developed to make our experience even better. 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 gave a presentation on EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) or moon-bounce and this was well received. Digital modes continue their exciting progress and drawing new hams into the hobby. For 2019, we hope to see new members and excitement for club activities and continued participation and good health for all our members.

The next regular scheduled RARC meeting will be on January 24, 2019 at the Obion County Public Library in Union City, TN. The Net Control Station and Refreshment assignments will soon be posted. Until next time ...



June in the Christmas spirit

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

