

Minutes -- ACARA October 18, 2005

Attendance:

John Cornwell	NC8V
Jim Crouse	KC8OVB
Carl Denbow	N8VZ
Evan Dickinson	K8ELD
Constantine Faller	KC8JXA
Ted C. Flood	N8JYK
Royce Holliday	KC8THI
John McCutcheon	N8XWO
Drew McDaniel	W8MHV
Eric McFadden	WD8RIF
Rich Post	KB8TAD
Jeff Slattery	N8SUZ
John Thomas	KC8JWZ

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 pm by President Drew McDaniel, W8MHV

Minutes: The minutes from the September meeting were accepted as distributed.

Treasurer's Report: Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, presented the treasurer's report. The report was accepted as presented.

Old Business:

Repeater Report: N8VZ had no report

5PM 6AM Net:

N8XWO reported on the weekly 5PM 6AM net which convenes every Sunday at 5pm. The net has been running on 50.7MHz but starting on October 23 the net will begin running on 50.4MHz, the national 6m AM calling frequency. This net was originally intended for those using tube-type vintage equipment but N8XWO stressed that all operators with 6m AM capability are welcome and are invited to participate. (N8XWO added that those running modern solid-state gear should remember to turn off the compression; compressed audio sounds terrible on AM.)

Sustainability Festival (October 8-9 Athens Fairgrounds):

N8XWO passed around photos taken at the event by W8PG.

WD8RIF displayed two of his photos of the event and explained that KC8OVB, W8MHV, N8XWO, and WD8RIF had participated on the Sunday of the event. He explained that he had set up a QRP CW station using solar power and his twinlead-fed fishing-pole supported all-band doublet antenna. He reported that N8XWO had set up a 100w SSB station using his van-mounted Hustler mobile antenna and a small, very quiet generator. He added that W8MHV had

set up a 2m station and brought ARRL literature to distribute. All the stations were set up in and EZ-Up tent provided by KC8MAJ. WD8RIF also mentioned that he had also displayed his Athens Marathon bicycle-mobile 2m station.

N8XWO reported that the entire operation was set up quickly and that both of the HF stations were successful in working numerous regional stations during the Pennsylvania QSO Party. He felt that this was a good demonstration of ham radio's ability to quickly provide communications support in time of need.

KC8JXA explained that he is a co-founder of the annual Sustainability Festival. At the event he provided food using his "Athens Own" portable kitchen. He explained that the "Athens Own" role in emergencies is primarily to provide mass care and feeding of victims in association with the Red Cross. He expressed great appreciation that the ACARA was able to participate in the Sustainability Festival.

(More information about the Sustainability Festival can be found at <http://www.susfest.org/>)

W8MHV reported that at the event the participants discussed operating ARRL Field Day at the Fairgrounds in order to gain more public exposure for ham radio and the ACARA. KC8JXA reminded the members that the Athens Fairgrounds is one of the regional evacuation sites and announced that he is willing to change the date of his June, 2006 "Athens Market Days" event to coincide with Field Day and that "Athens Market Days" would be willing to host the ACARA's Field Day effort at the Fairgrounds. He said that "Market Days" events typically bring over a hundred visitors to the fairgrounds. His "Athens Own" mobile kitchen could provide food to Field Day participants.

W8MHV asked if there was interest in using the Fairgrounds for Field Day. The consensus was that there is. KC8OV and N8XWO stressed that operating in a public venue would bring valuable publicity to ham radio and to the ACARA. N8XWO added that the public media did a very poor job of covering the role amateur radio performed in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita and that operations such as Field Day at public locations are important.

KC8JXA will approach the Fair Board to gain permission for the ACARA to do Field Day at the Fairgrounds. WD8RIF reminded him that the ACARA has a history of operating at the fairgrounds, having operated two previous Field Day and three "Freeze Your B___ Off" (winter field day) events there.

Election of 2006 Officers:

KC8OVB collected and counted the ballots. He reported that the ACARA has forty-six members and twenty-one ballots were returned. All nominated candidates received votes. Only Packet Node Trustee, a position with no nominee, received write-in votes.

President: Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Vice-President: John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Treasurer: Jim Crouse, KC8OVB
Secretary: William McFadden, WD8RIF
Web/Newsletter: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Repeater Trustee: William McFadden, WD8RIF
Packet Node Trustee: undecided (see below)

The position for Packet Node Trustee received five write-in votes, with each write-in getting one vote:

John Biddle, W8PG
Richard Post, KB8TAD
John Cornwell, NC8V
Warren Ferguson, N8VOV
Ted Jacobson, W8KVK

KB8TAB and NC8V immediately declined to serve. W8KVK is no longer a member. The Nominations Committee will talk to the remaining candidates, W8PG and N8VOV, about serving as Packet Node Trustee.

New Business:

Keys:

W8MHV reported that Ron Chapman, Jr. (KA8YMG) asked that the key to the previous meeting site on The Ridges be returned. W8MHV doesn't have it and asks that all members look to see if they have it. It is a JK-series State of Ohio key.

Linked Repeater System:

WD8RIF reported that W8KVK had sent him a letter and map describing a new linked-repeater system covering several counties of interest to the ACARA. The system works with UHF (440MHz band), VHF (144MHz band), and VoIP (Voice over IP). The Athens node operates on 442.1MHz and includes a VoIP component.

Transcription of the letter from W8KVK:

October 4, 2005

Athens Co. Red Cross Emergency Communications Group
and others who may be interested:

We are pleased to have been chosen as an operational partner in the new Central and Southeast Ohio Linked

Repeater Network. This state-of-the-art initiative provides continuous interconnected amateur radio coverage from Columbus southeast through Lancaster, Logan and Athens; west through Vinton and Jackson counties; then south into Gallia County. Coverage is accomplished through multiple repeater and remote base tower sites with access on UHF (440 MHz), 2-meters; 6-meters, and Voice over IP (VoIP) internet linking.

The immediate value to Athens County Red Cross is that this network covers all four counties in our 'extended family' (Athens, Vinton, Jackson, Gallia). A map of the network is attached [...]

The VoIP technology allows on-demand linking to additional neighboring counties including Washington, Fairfield and Meigs, as well as to external emergency services entities such as the National Weather Service and perhaps (eventually) Red Cross Area 5.

with Most 'ports' on the Network identify themselves

a single Morse character so you can tell how/where any given station is accessing the Network. These characters are further divided into 'higher pitched' (indicating UHF port) and 'lower pitched' (indicating a 2-meter simplex remote base). Examples include:

Columbus (C)
Logan (L) both Hi and Lo
Athens (A)
Gallipolis (G) both Hi and Lo
McArthur (M)
Ray (R) Hi, Lo, and Morse '6' for 6-meter remote base
Vega (V)
Jackson (no id at present)
Hamden (H)

Most of the Network is operational, however, testing and fine tuning continues, ... especially on the Athens Repeater which was just activated this past weekend.

There is a weekly Skywarn/Severe Weather net Wednesday evenings at 9:45 pm which we invite you to attend.

Additional information and updates as available.

Regards,.... Ted (W8KVK)

The map referred to in the letter is available here:

large (1698x2197 65k):

http://home.frognets.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/text/acara/linked_repeater_large.gif

small (791x1024 22k):

http://home.frognets.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/text/acara/linked_repeater_small.gif

Zanesville "Hamfest":

NC8V reported that he and other ACARA members attended an ARRL sanctioned hamfest in Zanesville. The event turned out to be at the house (and contest "big gun" station) of a Zanesville ham and that there were about eight vendors. There was no entry fee for vendors or browsers and the host provided food and drink free.

ACARA Hamfest:

W8MHV reported that the date for the 2006 ACARA Hamfest be selected so that the event date can be filed with the ARRL and so that a venue can be chosen. The date of April 30, 2006 was chosen. W8KHV will register the event on this date with the ARRL and he will investigate whether the Recreation Center gymnasium is available on this date and whether the basketball tournament falls on this date.

W8MHV reminded the members that last year N8SUZ had investigated using the Athens High School for the Hamfest. N8SUZ confirmed that he was told by the school that the fee to use the facility would be about \$400, that tables and chairs would be provided, and that the large cafeteria space and parking lot would be available. NC8V suggested that the club should seriously consider using the high school. N8VZ asked if the tourism grant money is contingent upon using city facilities. KC8OVB explained that the grant money is from the county, not from the city, and that any venue within the county is acceptable.

KC8OVB will order the new CD-ROM Callbook.

Contests:

NC8V announced the upcoming CQ Worldwide DX SSB Contest which falls on the last weekend in October. WD8RIF added that the CW portion of this contest falls on the last weekend in November.

N8XWO explained that CQ WW allows club entries. Anyone participating needs to provide him with callsign, number of QSOs, and number of points so that he can submit the club entry.

Silent Keys:

KC8JWZ reported that two local hams passed away in October: Harry Vollmer, W8LXC, and Gary Lemley, KC8SPQ.

Program:

W8MHV showed a video prepared by the W1AA club of a tour of W1AW.

N8SUZ played audio and video Public Service Announcements (PSAs) by the ARRL. These included a radio spots featuring the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina as well as a TV spot featuring ham radio's role in emergencies.

NC8V displayed his kit-built 40m CW one-watt transceiver. The kit is by Vectronics and is a crystal controlled direct-conversion design. He reported that he is having a lot of fun with the little rig.

N8XWO displayed his recently-purchased, recently-renovated Gonset Communicator IV 6m AM transceiver, a rig he bought at a New York thrift shop for \$35. He stressed that restoring rig was a community effort.

N8SUZ displayed the pvc-and-wire 75-40-20m NVIS antenna system he was inspired to make following last month's presentation by W8MHV on NVIS. N8SUZ built his system using guidance found at <http://www.eham.net/articles/5747>

KC8TAD displayed the Soviet-Union era, CCCP-made, RF Ammeter he bought at a hamfest in the Netherlands and told the story of getting the thing through airline security. Pictures, a description of the device, and the story of airline security can be viewed on his website:
<http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix/RusEqAnt.htm>

WD8RIF displayed his two home-brew LED flashlights made from one-dollar USB computer keyboard lights from Dollar Tree.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59pm by W8MHV.

Respectively submitted, William McFadden, Secretary