

Athens County Amateur Radio Association

Minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2011

In Attendance:

Jim Crouse	KC8OVB
Mike Cunningham	KD8PUI
Bob Curtis	KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow	N8VZ
John McCutcheon	N8XWO
Drew McDaniel	W8MHV
Eric McFadden	WD8RIF
John Thomas	KC8JWZ
Pete Wickman	KD8MZA

Following the social gathering at 7:00pm the meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF. (During the social gathering, Eric distributed Yaesu and Icom hats.)

The minutes of the April 19 meeting were distributed by co-secretary Eric McFadden. The minutes were accepted as distributed

Treasurer Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, reported that the ARRL equipment insurance has changed from Marsh; Jim will stay with Marsh until renewal time and then change to the new company. He distributed the financial report which was accepted as distributed.

Old Business

Hamfest – Sunday, May 1, 2011

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, thanked all ACARA members who worked the event.

Eric reported that Dovetail Solar provided their solar-demonstration trailer and this was used to power the hamfest check-in station. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, reported that several attendees expressed interest in the solar trailer; John was able to hand out Dovetail literature.

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, presented a preliminary financial report. There were 245 attendees. Attendance was down from previous years, probably as a result of the rain and the high cost of gasoline. The net profit of \$520 was up from 2010 but down from prior years.

Eric McFadden thanked Carl Denbow, N8VZ, for his gift to the club of the Kenwood two-meter HT door prize. Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, reported that this door prize generated significant interest.

Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that because of the wet weather he has been unable to perform additional tests on the repeater antenna system.

Eric reported that he has spoken with Ralph Anderson of Chillicothe-based B&C Communications, the company that handles much of the commercial work at the Peach Ridge tower site. Mr. Anderson thinks there's water in the top foot or two of the hardline ; Mr. Anderson explained to Eric that the standard procedure is to remove this top portion of the hardline and replace the flexible feedline at the antenna with a longer piece. B&C currently has no climbers scheduled to work at the Peach Ridge site.

Eric stated that he is hesitant to pay a climber to check the antenna/feedline without having a replacement antenna and feedline on-hand in case they're needed. However, he feels the cost of having these pieces on-hand just in case they're needed is prohibitive. (Eric estimates the cost of the antenna and feedline to be \$1000 and \$1200, respectively.)

Drew McDaniel suggested the club consider replacing the antenna and feedline since the current parts have been in service and exposed to weather for over 17 years. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, further suggested that the club should consider buying the hardline from the company hired to perform the climb. Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, agreed that the feedline should be replaced.

Drew made a motion that the club purchase a new antenna and feedline and hire a climber to install them. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. Due to a piece of New Business yet to be discussed, Eric tabled the motion until later in the meeting.

Drew made a motion that the club increase the height of the current temporary antenna to improve its performance until the permanent antenna is replaced. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Drew was authorized to purchase feedline and connectors for this project at the upcoming Dayton Hamvention.

UHF Repeater

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, reported that he was approached at the ACARA hamfest by a ham from Logan who had heard the ACARA might be interested in taking over the UHF repeater. This ham told Drew he is willing to discuss the possibility. WD8RIF will follow up with Bill Hopstetter, W8LGX.

Field Day – Saturday/Sunday, June 25-26, 2011

Eric McFadden reminded the membership of the upcoming ARRL Field Day event. He has not yet scheduled a meeting of the Field Day Committee but it has already been determined that the club will participate in class 1A as it has in the past.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, reported that he will not be able to provide the digital-mode station he had earlier volunteered to provide and operate.

Drew McDaniel reported he will be returning from his overseas trip the Friday immediately before Field Day and plans to be available to operate CW.

June Picnic – Tuesday, June 21, 5pm

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, reminded the membership of the upcoming June Picnic. He reported that the shelterhouse at Dairy Lane has been reserved.

As before, the club will provide burgers, buns, and condiments. Members are asked to bring a dish to share and their own table service and beverages. Members will meet at the shelterhouse at 5 o'clock.

New Business

Jim Mayer, W5XF, SK

The club noted the passing of Jim Mayer, W5XF. A card and donation to the USO was made in memory of Jim in behalf of ACARA by Jim Crouse, KC8OVB .

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, was contacted by Jim's son, Bob Mayer, KD8DKN, about Jim's estate. Bob explained that, per Jim's instructions, all the gear will be given to the ACARA for the members' use. Discussion followed and it was tentatively decided that members will get the opportunity to look through the equipment, after which time the remaining equipment will be donated to the Museum of Radio & Technology to be auctioned with half the proceeds to be returned to the ACARA. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, asked Drew to work with Bob and other members to remove the estate items from Jim's house. Eric volunteered the use of his garage for temporary storage.

Marathon Committee Gift

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, reported that the club received an unsolicited check from the Marathon Committee in the amount of \$2000. Jim added further that the Athens Running Club will be taking over responsibility for the marathon beginning next year.

Discussion about the gift ensued and the sentiment was that the contribution was timely and should be accepted. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, made a motion that the club accept the gift and communicate to the Marathon Committee the club's heartfelt appreciation for the timely gift. The motion was seconded by Pete Wickman, KD8MZA. The motion passed unanimously by voice acclamation.

The tabled motion to replace repeater antenna system was brought back to the floor. The members discussed using the Marathon Committee gift to pay for replacement of the repeater antenna and feedline. The vote on the previous motion (see "Repeater" in Old Business) passed unanimously by voice acclamation.

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, reminded the members that the ACARA is a 501-C organization and discounted pricing on the antenna or feedline might give the seller some tax benefit.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, will contact B&C Communications to get real numbers on the cost of the climber and the purchase of new hardline.

Near-Space Balloon Flight

Several members of the ACARA were contacted via email by Bill Justice to ask for the club's help in using radio foxhunting techniques to aid in the recovery of high-altitude balloon payloads:

... my friend and I have been experimenting with near space balloon flights. Our results have been very good, and we have had success in retrieving our capsule using GPS cell phones and simple "call us if you find it" technology

We would love a chance to conduct a "Foxhunt" with you and any other operators. Our past results would indicate that the flight would be around 2 hours, and we can semi-control the area of landing to drop it in the county anyway.

With your help we could verify altitude and potentially achieve a worlds record for amateur balloon flights! I have attached a few pictures of past results as well as a link on you tube. We would be happy share the glory, and the great pictures for our next launch. Please contact us via email or phone to talk more about this.

Bill 740-710-1692

MariaPaz 740-395-2310

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dv2XJUnkkXSU>

The members agreed to invite Mr. Justice to the June picnic for further discussion. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, agreed to contact Mr. Justice with the invitation.

Program

President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, conducted a door-prize drawing for two prizes left over from the hamfest. The first door prize was the book, A Family Affair – the R.L. Drake Story by John Loughmiller, KB9AT. This book had been won at the hamfest by the ARRL Affiliated Clubs Director for Ohio, Mike McCardel, KC8YLD, but it had been inadvertently been left behind; Eric had been directed by Mr. McCardel use the book as a door-prize at a club meeting. (Mr. McCardel also won one of the \$50 bills at the hamfest.) The second door-prize was a blue Universal Radio mug.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, displayed and demonstrated his Vibroplex Original Deluxe bug and showed videos demonstrating cleverly designed bugs crafted by Richard Meiss, WB9LPU. Mr. Meiss's bugs use a statically-balanced beam and magnets to generate the dits and can be operated in any orientation; a traditional bug operates only on a level surface.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, showed his class project—a high power quality stereo audio amplifier.

The meeting was adjourned by President Eric McFadden.

Respectfully submitted by Eric McFadden, co-secretary.