

Athens County Amateur Radio Association (as amended)

Minutes of the meeting of September 20, 2011

In Attendance:

John Biddle	W8PG
Jim Crouse	KC8OVB
Bob Curtis	KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow	N8VZ
John McCutcheon	N8XWO
Eric McFadden	WD8RIF
Jeff Slattery	N8SUZ
John Thomas	KC8JWZ
Pete Wickman	KD8MZA
Bill Justice	
MariaPaz Hermosilla	

Following the social gathering at 7:00pm the meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

The minutes of the May 17, 2011 meeting were distributed by co-secretary Eric McFadden. The minutes were accepted as distributed

Treasurer Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, distributed the financial report which was accepted as distributed.

Special Visitors: Bill Justice and MariaPaz Hermosilla – Near-Space Balloon Project

Eric McFadden gave the floor to visitors Bill Justice and MariaPaz Hermosilla to discuss their near-space balloon project. Bill and Maria have done a successful launch of a balloon that flew to an estimated 90,000 feet but their GPS-enabled telephone can't measure altitude above 20,000 feet. They asked for help in incorporating amateur radio technology to allow accurate altitude measurement above 100,000 feet and showed as an example the website of the *Balloon Experiments with Amateur Radio* (BEAR) website (<http://bear.sbszoo.com/>). BEAR has successfully used APRS trackers in their balloon projects. Eric showed Bill and Maria the Byonics website and said he thought the Byonics Micro-Trak AIO unit might work in their application; he and said he would contact Byonics to see if the AIO will measure altitude above 100,000 feet. Eric also said he would send Bill's contact information to Ted Jacobson, W8KVK (callsign corrected), and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, to see if they might wish to help with this project through recommendations and Earth-bound receive equipment.

Old Business

Repeater

Eric McFadden reported that he and John McCutcheon, N8XWO, visited the repeater site to increase the height of the temporary antenna by 10' as directed by the club at the May, 2011 meeting. Eric and John successfully raised the height of the rear-mounted Cushcraft Ringo by one 10' mast section but were unable to adjusting the Ringo for a match using John's MFJ Antenna Analyzer. The pair left the repeater connected to the antenna mounted to the front of the building and connected the APRS digipeater to the Ringo.

Eric reported that he and Jim visited the repeater site and measured the SWR of original antenna the weekend before Pelotonia using an SWR bridge but found it to still be very high; the problem didn't appear to be water in the feedline. They also measured the SWR on the Ringo and got stable readings; they speculated that there's so much RF at the site that John's antenna analyzer was "fooled" during the previous visit.

Eric reported that he and Jim visited site with Bill Warthman, WD8LWC; Bill measured the feedline/antenna system with a commercial analyzer and found a short at 147'; this location is well below the hardline/flexible jumper junction and might be the result of a lightning strike.

Eric reported that he visited the site to determine how much feedline is needed. By measuring the height of the lowest tower section (20') and counting sections below the antenna (8 sections) he determined the antenna is mounted at about the 175' point of the tower.

Eric reported that he has found the Super Stationmaster 220-2N antenna at Wadsworth Sales for \$785 plus \$160 freight (\$945).

Jim reported that he received a quote of \$548.24 from Radio Frequency Systems for the Super Stationmaster 220-2N antenna; Jim also received a quote of \$1.92/ft for Cellwave-brand 7/8" hardline. The full order for antenna, 200' of Cellwave feedline, flexible jumper, and connectors would be \$1181.17 plus \$125 freight from Radio Frequency Systems.

Jim reported he found a source for Drake-brand hardline at \$2.59/ft with \$169 freight plus \$79 for a lift-gate if we have no loading dock or forklift available. Eric found that Universal Amateur Radio doesn't carry hardline; Jim found that Ham Radio Outlet sells genuine Andrews Heliac hardline for about \$6/ft.

Old Business (cont'd)

Repeater (cont'd)

Jim reported he has found a Columbus-based climber who can do our antenna/feedline job for \$1,800. This climber is very ham-friendly and has been hired by WOUB for climbing jobs. (Last sentence corrected: replaced "is a ham" with "very ham-friendly.")

Jim elaborated on the financial report. By his reckoning, the club can pay for the antenna, feedline, and sundries and can pay a climber but will be left with essentially a zero bank balance by the time dues start arriving in January. He suggested two possible ways to avoid a zero balance: 1. Ask for members to pay 2012 dues early, and 2. Ask for donations to help cover the cost of the repeater repairs. Discussion ensued. Carl Denbow made a motion that the club send a letter to the membership asking for 2012 dues to be paid early and asking for a tax-deductible donation to be applied to the cost of the repeater repairs. This motion was seconded by Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ. For clarification, Jim pointed out the club membership dues aren't tax-deductible but additional donations would be tax-deductible. The motion passed unanimously. Eric said he will compose the letter and give it to Jim who will send it, the membership form, and the club-officer ballots in the same envelope.

Field Day 2011 – Saturday/Sunday June 25-26

Eric McFadden reported on the ACARA's ARRL Field Day 2011 effort at the Athens County Fairgrounds. The club participated in class 1A using CW, SSB, and digital modes on HF and CW and SSB on VHF. Station power was provided by the Third Sun Solar solar-demonstration trailer provided by Geoff and Michelle Greenfield of Third Sun Solar. Doug Bentley, KC8PNE, provided the Athens County 9-1-1 System's 50' mobile crank-up tower.

The HF CW radio was Drew McDaniel's 100-watt Elecraft K2. The HF SSB radio was John McCutcheon's Icom IC-746. The HF digital-mode radio was Carl Denbow's Icom IC-703+ running 10-watts. The antennas for HF were an 80/40m fan-dipole and a 10/15/20/40m trap dipole. (Corrected: second sentence had said "Carl Denbow's Icom IC-706MK2G".)

The VHF radio for SSB and CW was John McCutcheon's IC-746. The 6m antenna was a home-brew two-element yagi on a 20' mast.

A total of 547 QSOs were made including seventy-three QSOs on 6m and 890 bonus points were earned.

Old Business (cont'd)

Field Day (cont'd)

A report on the operation and photos can be found here:

http://home.frognet.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/fd_2011.htm

Eric thanked those members who participated:

John Biddle, W8PG - set-up, tear-down

Gary Carter, KD8MSR - tear-down, logging

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB - location reservation

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ - set-up, tear-down, SSB

Carl Denbow, N8VZ - tear-down, digital captain, digital

John McCutcheon, N8XWO - VHF captain, HF SSB captain, set-up, tear-down, SSB

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV - set-up, tear-down, CW, HF CW rig

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF – set-up, tear-down, HF CW captain, CW

Kate McFadden, KD8KNB - SSB Youth Participation QSO

Miles McFadden, KD8KNC - set-up, SSB Youth Participation QSO

John Thomas, KC8JWZ - set-up, tear-down, logging, SSB

Pete Wickman, KD8MZA - set-up, tear-down, SSB, logging, Education &, Media Bonuses

June Picnic – Tuesday, June 21

Eric McFadden reported that the annual June Picnic was held at the Dairy Lane shelter-house. Attendance was lower than usual but a good food and good time was had by those who were able to attend.

UHF Repeater

Eric McFadden reported that he corresponded with Ray Webb, KB8GUN, trustee of the Hocking Valley ARC in Logan, in June. Mr. Webb told Eric that the HVARC has decided to transfer ownership of the Athens UHF repeater to the ACARA.

Eric reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, spoke with Dave Brimner, KB8OTU, president of HVARC and ARES Emergency Coordinator for Hocking County, in August. Mr. Brimner told Jeff that the HVARC would be finalizing the transfer of trusteeship at their August meeting. (Spelling of Mr. Brimner's name corrected and callsign added.)

Old Business (cont'd)

Pelotonia – August 20-21

Jeff Slattery reported on the ACARA support of the 3rd Annual Pelotonia. He reported that the Athens County/ACARA portion of the event went well but that since both the Fairfield County and Hocking County groups had declined to participate this year, all net-control activities had to occur in Columbus and in Athens which made for very busy nets.

Jeff will report to the club once the Pelotonia organizers contact him for the 2012 event in order to determine if the ACARA will again support the event. (If Jeff doesn't hear from the organizers until after the May ACARA meeting, he will contact the executive committee.)

Jeff thanked those who participated:

Jason Hager, KC8LFF
Jan Slattery, KD8PUJ
Dave Underwood, KC8RYL
Roy Plant, KD8PKV,
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Kirk Groenveld, KC8JRV
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Robin Kinney, KG6DI
Jim Crouse, KC8OVB
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Miles McFadden, KD8KNC
Pete Wickman, KD8MZA
Mike Cooper, KC8WMY
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Ted Jacobson, W8KVK
Rob Jacobson, KB9AFT

Old Business (cont'd)

Ohio State Parks on the Air – September 10 at Strouds Run State Park

John McCutcheon reported on the ACARA participation in Ohio State Parks on the Air (OSPotA) at Strouds Run State Park. Seventy QSOs were made on 40m and 80m, SSB and CW, and stations representing twenty-nine state parks were worked. John compared this to 2010, when the club earned only 900 points.

John thanked those who participated:

Jim Crouse, KC8OVB

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ

John McCutcheon

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF

Miles McFadden, KD8KNC

Pete Wickman, KD8MZA

Learn more about OSPotA: <http://parks.portcars.org/ospota/index.php>

Warren Ferguson, N8VOV, SK – August 29, 1965 - July 27, 2011

The club lost member Warren Ferguson, N8VOV, on July 27. Jim Crouse sent flowers on behalf of the ACARA.

Jim Crouse reported that he received thank-you cards from Warren's widow and family for the flowers.

New Business

“Copper Cactus” 2m Antenna group project – October

Eric McFadden reported that Jeff Slattery will be leading a group building-project in his Athens High School lab in October. The project will be a collapsible 2m copper J-Pole antenna which will be useful during support of events such as the Athens Marathon and Pelotonia as well as during emergency operations.

Jeff will purchase and cut the copper and will solder the screw-eyes in the caps prior to the construction get-together.

All those present at the meeting expressed interest in this project.

Jeff will email the membership with estimated cost and date/time announcement.

Club Purchase of EZ Hang Antenna Launcher

Eric McFadden reported that at Field Day, after watching the struggle to throw an antenna support rope over a tree, John Biddle had offered to pay half the purchase price of an EZ Hang Antenna Launcher (<http://ezhang.com/>) if donations were collected to pay the remainder of the purchase price. John confirmed that his offer still holds. The EZ Hang Square Kit is \$99.95 and John will pay \$50 toward the purchase of one. Those wishing to donate toward the purchase of an EZ Hang should contact Eric McFadden or Jim Crouse.

Bobcat Marathon – Sunday November 6, 2011

Jeff Slattery announced the upcoming Bobcat Marathon, a 26.2 mile run on the hiking trails around Burr Oak Lake. The runners start at 7:15am on November 26. There are seven aid stations requiring radio operators. The radio operation will be a simplex net and most of the stations will need to be mobile rigs and gain antennas. The assembled members expressed interest in supporting this event.

Eric asked Jeff to email full information to the membership as soon as possible so members can save the date and begin gathering their equipment.

Learn more about the Bobcat Marathon:

<http://www.oneworldtrailrunning.org/bobcat-trail-marathon/>

New Business (cont'd)

Nominations for 2012 Officers

After much discussion, the current slate of officers was nominated with one change; Pete Wickman, KD8MZA, agreed to run for the position of Secretary as well as maintain his current position as Newsletter Editor.

Nominations:

President	Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Vice President	Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Secretary	Pete Wickman, KD8MZA
Treasurer	Jim Crouse, KC8OVB
Newsletter Editor	Pete Wickman, KD8MZA
Webmaster	Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Packet Node Trustee	Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Repeater Trustee	Eric McFadden, WD8RIF

Jim Crouse will mail ballots to members; ballots will be counted at the October meeting and the elected officers will begin their duties immediately.

Athens County PIO Vehicle

Jeff Slattery reported that the county is building a Public Information Officer vehicle in a retired SEOEMs squad. The vehicle will include a HF/VHF/UHF multimode transceiver and a VHF/UHF FM transceiver. Jeff has already recommended the county purchase an Icom IC-7000 and an Alinco DR-635 and that the squad be fitted with antenna mounting rails.

Jeff asks members to send him ideas for suitable HF antennas.

Program

The meeting running late, Eric McFadden showed only the shorter of two presentations he had prepared, a web-tour of W9EVT's collection of vintage transmitters, receivers, and transceivers:

<http://www.qrz.com/db/w9evt>

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 by President Eric McFadden.

Respectfully submitted by Eric McFadden, co-secretary.