

## **Athens County Amateur Radio Association**

### **Minutes of the meeting of October 18, 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 |

Following the social gathering at 7:00pm the meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

The minutes of the September 20, 2011 meeting were distributed by co-secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF. Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, and Carl Denbow, N8VZ, both offered corrections. The corrected minutes were accepted as distributed

Treasurer Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, distributed the financial report. Jim reported that following the written plea by president Eric McFadden early renewals have been arriving and about \$500 in donations have been received. Jim reported that after the repeater antenna repairs are paid for the club will enter 2012 with a positive bank-balance of about \$700. The treasurer's report was accepted as distributed.

#### **Old Business**

##### **ACARA 145.15 MHz Repeater**

Jim Crouse reported that he has spoken with the climber and is now confident about ordering all the pieces necessary for the repeater antenna and feedline replacement. He plans to order the antenna, feedline, and sundry smaller pieces from Radio Frequency Systems by the end of this week.

## Old Business (cont'd)

### Linked 440MHz Repeater at Athens 9-1-1 Site

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he has received a letter stating that the Hocking Valley ARC has approved the transfer of trusteeship of the UHF repeater to the ACARA.

Eric McFadden asked Jeff if keys have been received; none have. The club may need to contact Scott Warner of Athens County 9-1-1 for a set of keys.

Jim Crouse asked if HVARC intends that the club to maintain the system's linked configuration. Jeff didn't know what HVARC expects but said that as trustee he plans to maintain the linked configuration.

### Near-Space Balloon Launch

Eric McFadden reported that he has investigated high-altitude APRS trackers and learned that Byonics offers a high-altitude version of the Micro-Trak AIO—which will measure altitude well above 90,000ft—for about \$300; Eric has passed this information on to Bill Justice.

Eric reported that Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, has been corresponding with Bill Justice about APRS and equipment. (Those interested in Amateur Radio on high-altitude balloons might like to visit <http://arhab.org/>.)

### “Copper Cactus” 2-meter Antenna Group Project – October 24, 2011, 7pm, Athens High School

Jeff Slattery reminded the membership of the upcoming group antenna building project at 7pm on Monday, October 24, at the Athens High School. Jeff reported that six people have committed to building collapsible copper 2-meter J-pole antennas. One additional member committed at the meeting. Jeff has purchased enough material to build ten antennas. The cost of the antenna and a suction-cup mount will be \$40. Those interested individuals who haven't already done so should contact Jeff. (Jeff's email address can be found on the ACARA website: <http://ac-ara.org/>.)

### Club Purchase of EZ Hang Antenna Launcher Through Donations

John Biddle, W8PG, confirmed his gift of \$50 toward the purchase of an EZ-Hang Square Shot Kit (\$99.95, <http://ezhange.com/>). Donations should be sent to Treasurer Jim Crouse; he will order the device once a sufficient amount has been raised through donations for the purchase price and shipping. (Jim's email address can be found on the ACARA website: <http://ac-ara.org/>.)

## Old Business (cont'd)

### Bobcat Trail Marathon – Sunday November 6, 2011

Jeff Slattery confirmed the date and time of the Bobcat Trail Marathon and the club's commitment to provide communications support to this event. The communications net will be on 146.46 MHz simplex.

Jeff and Ted Jacobson have visited the lake and confirmed that 2m simplex communications can be easily made between each of the aid stations and the net control location. At most of the aid stations, a 5-watt HT and a 1/4λ whip were sufficient to provide a solid communications link.

The marathon starts at 7:15am. Those manning early aid stations should plan to be in-place by 6:45am.

Jeff still needs operators for aid stations and someone to operate mobile with a race official.

Jeff asked Eric to bring the club's counters so operators can count runners as they pass. Jeff will also bring GOBA counters.

Learn more about the Bobcat Marathon:

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

## New Business

### Pelotonia 2012

Jeff Slattery reported on his meeting with three members of the Hocking Valley ARC and Kal Dworkin, KA8RLC, of the Central Ohio ARES group (<http://www.coares.org/>) on October 18. The meeting was to discuss problems and issues regarding Pelotonia and the organization thereof. The representatives of the radio clubs agreed that Pelotonia organizers are not communicating well with either the radio amateurs or other Pelotonia volunteers. The Logan hams reported that they had sent a written letter to the Pelotonia organizers following last year's tragic accident that had resulted in the death of a bicyclist and the club received no reply. They also reported that their operators have been expected to act as traffic-controller, a duty inappropriate for communicators. Jeff reported that Pelotonia organizers had been notified that Parade of the Hills was happening the same weekend but didn't change either the date of the tour or the route in order to avoid the heavy congestion in Nelsonville.

## **New Business (cont'd)**

### **Pelotonia 2012 (cont'd)**

Jeff reported that the group will meet again in late December and thereafter will attempt to meet with Pelotonia officials at Ohio State University and with officials at Cadence Sports, the organization that has been providing logistical support of the event. The results of these meetings will determine how much support the area radio clubs will provide future runnings of Pelotonia. (A link to Jeff's notes about this meeting will be made available soon.—secretary)

### **Athens City Tower Ordinance**

(Background: The Athens Planning Commission has been working on “Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Siting Ordinance for the City of Athens” for over a year. As it is currently written, it contains an exclusion for Amateur Radio towers. A copy of the draft ordinance, as it was on September 21, 2011, can be found here: <http://home.frognet.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/text/acara/AthensWirelessOrdinanceDraft2011-08-21.pdf>.)

Eric McFadden showed a portion of the video of the September 21, 2011 Athens Planning Commission meeting in which Commission-member Sumney suggested that the Commission should remove the Amateur Radio exclusion from the ordinance. (The video can be viewed here: <http://athensoh.swagit.com/play/09212011-61/2/>; the discussion about Amateur Radio tower begins at about the 40-minute point.)

Eric reported that he, John McCutcheon, Jim Crouse, and Carl Denbow composed and delivered a letter to Planning Commission Chairman Nicholas Bittner and Mayor Paul Wiehl on October 4. (The letter can be viewed here: <http://home.frognet.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/text/acara/LetterToPlanningCommission2011-10-04.pdf>.) The letter stressed Amateur Radio's importance in Homeland Security and emergency communications and the existence of the FCC's PRB-1 which requires state and local governments to “reasonably accommodate” amateur radio communications.

Eric reported that Carl Denbow, N8VZ, contacted ARRL Volunteer Counsel Richard Bennett, K8MZ. Eric invited Mr. Bennett to attend the October 18 ACARA meeting; Mr. Bennett accepted but had to decline at the last minute due to a non-negotiable scheduling conflict. Eric spoke at length with Mr. Bennett on the telephone prior to the ACARA meeting about the issue and sent copies of his notes to John McCutcheon, Carl Denbow, and Jim Crouse.

(Information about PRB-1 can be found here: <http://www.arrl.org/prb-1>.)

## **New Business (cont'd)**

### **Athens City Tower Ordinance (cont'd)**

Jeff Slattery reported that the Ohio versions of PRB-1, House Bill 158 and Senate Bill 93, have each passed their respective houses and are now in Committee. The two bills are very similar and are expected to pass in early January.

Jim Crouse reported that he was visited by Mr. Sumney, who is campaigning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward City Council seat. Jim discussed the tower ordinance with Mr. Sumney who said he may wait to see if the state version of PRB-1 passes before further attempting to remove the Amateur Radio exclusion from the ordinance. Jim felt that Mr. Sumney's main issue with Amateur Radio towers relates to set-back issues.

Jim reported further that he was contacted a second time by Mr. Sumney who informed Jim that the next Planning Council meeting is Wednesday, October 19, at noon in the City Building. Eric reported that through Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, he had learned that the Commission is planning to vote on the ordinance at that meeting. Eric reported that he, Jim, and John McCutcheon were going to attend this meeting to ensure that the Amateur Radio exclusion isn't removed. Carl Denbow said he would also attend the meeting.

Jeff Slattery read the letter he wrote and which Eric will deliver to the Commission. Jeff's letter can be read here: <http://home.frognet.net/~mcfadden/wd8rif/text/acara/N8SUZ-PlanningCommissionWirelessOrdinanceLetter.pdf>.

### **Officer Elections**

Jim Crouse counted ballots in the presence of the assembled members and reported that sixteen ballots were received. Fifteen ballots voted for the entire slate of uncontested nominees. One ballot had write-ins for John McCutcheon for president and John Biddle, W8PG, for vice-president.

The slate of officers for 2012 as elected:

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 |

## **New Business (cont'd)**

### **ARRL 10-meter Contest – December 10-11, 2011 0000-2359Z**

Pete Wickman, KD8MZA, reported that the ARRL 10-meter contest is December 10-11, 2011, 0000-2359Z. Pete would like the club to attempt a multi-operator, single-transmitter entry this year and will coordinate such an effort at the Ohio University Amateur Radio Club's station in Stocker Hall. Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, will make sure the station is available for use that weekend. Those wishing to participate with Pete and other club members in this effort should contact Pete. (Pete's email address can be found on the ACARA website: <http://ac-ara.org/>.) Full rules for the ARRL 10-meter contest can be found here: <http://www.arrrl.org/10-meter>.

### **CQ World-Wide SSB – October 29-30 0000-2359Z**

John Biddle reminded the membership of the upcoming CQ Worldwide contest, the SSB portion of which is October 29-30, 0000-2359Z. John explained that operating this major DX contest is an excellent way to work many DX stations. (The CW portion of CQ Worldwide is November 26-27.) Full rules for CQ Worldwide can be found here: <http://www.cqww.com/>.

### **Expiring Licenses**

Jim Crouse reported that Ted Jacobson sent him a list of hams whose licenses are about to expire. Jim notified two members present they were on the list and passed the list around so other members could find friends/colleagues who should be notified. Any members who need help renewing their licenses may contact Jim for help. (Jim's email address can be found on the ACARA website: <http://ac-ara.org/>.)

### **License Class – beginning January 9, 2012**

After verifying interest, Jeff Slattery reported that the club will sponsor a licensing class in 2012. The class will meet Monday evenings at the Athens High School starting January 9 and continuing for nine weeks with the test session on the tenth Monday. The class will be free and new ARRL Technician Class study-guides will be available for purchase at a discount. (Jeff's email address can be found on the ACARA website: <http://ac-ara.org/>.)

### **Morning Kiwanis Club**

John Biddle reported that the Athens Morning Kiwanis Club is looking for someone to speak to them about Amateur Radio. The club meets Thursdays at 7:30am in the Willow Café at O'Bleness Memorial Hospital. Anyone interested in doing so should contact Cliff Houk. (Mr. Houk's telephone number can be found in the Athens telephone book.)

## **Program**

Eric McFadden displayed his very small radio-control airplane; the radio is a 2.4GHz digital spread-spectrum system and the receiver, electronic speed control, and two servos fit on a circuit board about 1.5"x1.5" in size. The airplane, a model of a 1930s Aeronca Champ, can be seen here: <http://www.hobbyzonesports.com/Products/Default.aspx?ProdID=HBZ4900>.

Eric explained that the spread-spectrum technology means any number of similar transmitters can be used at a flying site without interference issues. He also explained that the transmitter can be "bound" to any other model using the same digital spread-spectrum technology so an R/C pilot needs only one transmitter regardless of the number of aircraft in his collection.

The meeting was adjourned by President Eric McFadden.

Respectfully submitted by Eric McFadden, co-secretary.