

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via Zoom teleconference.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, gave a well-received introduction to the intriguing and inexpensive *nanoVNA* device and spoke in detail on how to use the nanoVNA as a wide-range, graphical antenna analyzer. The slide-deck in PDF format from Drew's presentation can be downloaded here: http://www.acara.org/pdfs/W8MHV_nanoVNA_2020.pdf.

Attendance

Nick Arnold, KD8FKB
Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
Mike Hansgen, K8RAT
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Rich Post, KB8TAD
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ

Corrections/Additions to Minutes

Due to this being a teleconference-only meeting, no hard-copies of the July Minutes were distributed. Members had been instructed via email to read the July Minutes on-line prior to the meeting.

A motion to accept the July Minutes as published was made by Rich Post, KB8TAD. The motion was seconded by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Due to this being a teleconference-only meeting, no hard-copies of the Treasurer's Report were distributed. Prior to the meeting, a PDF of the Treasurer's Report had been distributed via email. (The Treasurer's Report is available in PDF format is available here: http://www.ac-ara.org/minutes/2020/Treasurers_Report_August_2020.pdf)

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, presented the Treasurer's Report. The club treasury holds \$1,494.36 in unencumbered funds. The *Jim Crouse Memorial Fund* holds \$95.34.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. Rich Post, KB8TAD, seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Drew asked the membership what should be done with the \$42 collected at the August 17 VE session, explaining that in the past the club has donated proceeds from VE sessions to the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio. Drew said he and Jeff Slattery had discussed the idea that the proceeds from VE sessions might instead be applied to the Jim Crouse Memorial Fund, with the idea that the money spent on the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station would ultimately benefit the Red Cross.

Drew made a motion that ACARA VE session earnings be applied to the Jim Crouse Memorial Fund in order to upgrade and maintain the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station. The motion was seconded by Jeff Slattery. The motion passed without dissent.

Jeff Slattery further suggested that our annual dues-reminder emails and postal mailings include the suggestion of a donation to be applied to the Jim Crouse Memorial Fund.

Old Business

Repeaters

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported John McCutcheon, N8XWO, had been corresponding with him via email about the idea of adding an external repeater controller to the DR-2X System Fusion repeaters. In an email dated July 29, 2020, John offered to pay for repeater controller hardware and suggested the S-COM 7330 controller is worth looking at.

Eric reminded the membership that the club's first System Fusion repeater, a DR-1X, had been configured with a CAT300-DXL controller and the results had not been good. There had been significant issues with reset-beep and with repeater ID.

Eric reported that initial research indicates the Arcom RC-210 repeater controller might provide better functionality with the DR-2X than the S-COM 7330. Arcom (<https://www.arcomcontrollers.com/>) claims the RC-210 provides full functionality when the DR-2X repeater is in analog FM mode and that the DR-2X's internal controller takes complete control when the repeater is in System Fusion digital mode.

Eric reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has an RC-210 controller and the associated ADR Interface that he had purchased for the as-yet undeployed Red Cross DR-2X repeater. He and Eric will use this hardware to investigate functionality of the RC-210 with the DR-2X. Jeff mentioned that the RC-210 can control up to three separate repeaters and can also provide linking between the repeaters.

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the ACARA's weekly nets are doing well during this time of COVID-19. He reminded members of the dates and times of the nets:

1. 2m FM Net, Mondays, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
2. 70cm FM Net, Mondays, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
3. 6m AM Net, Sundays and Wednesdays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz
4. 2m System Fusion Net, Thursday, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
5. 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursday, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
6. 2m FM Simplex Net, 7pm, occasional Thursdays as announced

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, will serve as net-control for the 2m and 70cm FM nets on September 24; that Marc Richards, KC8MCW, will serve as net control on August 31; and that Michael Baxla will serve as net control on September 7.

VE Session – August 18, 2020

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported on the club's August 18 VE test session. From Jeff's email to the membership following the test session:

ACARA held a very successful in-car VE session this evening. Due to the pandemic, the Red Cross building is closed to outside groups, so we held the session in the parking lot.

We had six candidates with everyone earning a new license or upgrade. Thanks to VEs Scott Green, KD8KZG; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF; John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Drew McDaniel, W8MHV; and session coordinator Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ. The pop-up showers held off and in spite of a little breeze, the session was handled efficiently.

Congratulations to the following:

New Technicians

Mark A Cooper of Jackson, OH
David B. Partridge of Centerville, OH
Douglas S Fedder of Athens, OH

General Upgrade

Michael S Baxla, KE8ICP, of Athens

Extra upgrades

Michael P Devaughn, K8MPD, of Marietta
Justin R Hellyer, KE8OLG, of Corning, OH

Jeff announced that the club's next VE test session will be on Monday, October 19, 2020 at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio.

Communications Drill/Event:

Athens County Functional Drill for the EOC

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that this event will not take place in October as previously planned but will be combined with the full-scale drill in the Spring. Operators will be needed for the full-scale drill.

ACARA Club Building Project – Copper J-Pole Antenna

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that following the success of the outdoors VE test session, the club might consider doing the copper j-pole build outside the Red Cross building. Jeff will consult his calendar, select a date, and notify the membership via email.

Update 2020-08-19: Jeff announced via email that the copper j-pole build will take place on Saturday, September 26, 2020, between 1pm and 4pm, at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio.

ACARA Constitution and Bylaws

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Committee has not yet met to re-write the club's Constitution & Bylaws and might not be able to present the re-written documents at the September or October meetings.

New Business

Ohio State Parks on the Air – Saturday, September 12, 2020

<http://ospota.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced the upcoming field event sponsored by the Portage County Amateur Radio Service (PCARS), "Ohio State Parks on the Air" (OSPOTA), the objective of which is to have competing stations operating from as many Ohio state parks as possible. The ACARA traditionally competes by activating Strouds Run State Park. Eric suggested that, unlike the larger ARRL Field Day event in which the ACARA did not do a group operation this year due to COVID-19, OSPOTA is a small enough event that the club should be able to participate as a group while still maintaining safe social distancing.

OSPOTA is always held on the first Saturday after Labor Day and runs for eight hours from 1400 UTC to 2200 UTC (10am to 6pm ET).

Eric asked if there's interest in doing a group operation this year and asked if he should he reserve the use of the Bulldog Shelter at Strouds Run State Park. The answer to both was "yes". Eric announced he will reserve the use of the Bulldog Shelter and that he would provide an 80m/40m fan dipole, a mast, a generator, and a power supply to use with the club's Elecraft K3 transceiver.

Komen More than Pink Walk– September 19, 2020

http://www.info-komen.org/site/TR?fr_id=8570&pg=entry

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the Komen More than Pink Walk Athens is now virtual and that no communications support will be needed for the event.

Buckeye Trail Marathon / Run for the Blue Blazes – ~~Saturday, October 3, 2020~~

Organizer: Buckeye Trail Association / Herb Hullis

<http://www.buckeyetrail.org/run4blue.php>

<https://runsignup.com/Race/OH/Shawnee/RunForBlueBlazes>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the event website now shows that this event has been canceled.

Bobcat Trail Marathon – Saturday, November 7, 2020

Organizer: Western Reserve Racing / Joe Jurczyk

<https://www.westernreserveracing.com/events/bobcat-trail-marathon/>

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that this event is still on. Jeff will start recruiting operators in September and asks those who have worked the event in prior years to send him an email if they can work the event this year at the same location.

Following a motion by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, and a second by Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Following the adjournment, several members remained on the Zoom call for informal discussion.

Respectfully submitted by President and Secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.