

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Attendance

John Biddle, W8PG
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Constantine Faller, KC8JXA
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Marc Richards, KC8MCW
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

Corrections/Additions to Minutes

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

A motion to accept the January Minutes as published was made by Constantine Faller, KC8JXA. The motion was seconded by Marc Richards, KC8MCW. 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. A PDF of the Treasurer's Report had been distributed via email prior to the meeting. The Treasurer's Report in PDF format is available online:

http://www.ac-ara.org/minutes/2021/Treasurers_Report_February_2021.pdf.

In the absence of Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, the Treasurer's Report was presented by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF. The club treasury holds \$1,245.98 in unencumbered funds. The *Jim Crouse Memorial Fund* holds \$158.38.

Eric reminded the membership that it is time to pay dues for 2021. Members should have received reminders via US Mail. Dues can be sent to Athens County Amateur Radio Association, PO Box 72, Athens OH 45701.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Marc Richards, KC8MCW. The motion passed without dissent.

Old Business**VHF and UHF Repeaters**

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he has not noticed severe desense of the VHF repeater in a few weeks. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he has not been able to establish a correlation between the EMS Alert transmitter and the repeater's episodes of desense.

Jeff Slattery reported that the UHF repeater continues to work well.

Jeff Slattery reported that he has not been able to spend much time with the Arcom ARC-210 repeater controller project since last month's meeting, but he hopes to be able to get back to the project soon.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the ACARA's weekly and monthly nets continue to do well during this time of COVID-19. He reminded members of the current net schedule:

- 2m FM Net, Mondays, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm FM Net, Mondays, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- 10m SSB Ragchew Net, Tuesdays, 5pm, 28.350 MHz
- 6m AM Net, Sundays and Wednesdays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz
- 2m System Fusion Net, Thursdays, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursdays, immediately following the 2m System Fusion net, 442.100 MHz
- 2m FM Simplex Net, first Thursday, 7pm, 146.400 MHz

Eric extended thanks to all those serving as net-control and to all those participating in the club nets.

Foxhunts

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, reported that the Hocking Valley Amateur Radio Club (<https://www.qsl.net/k8lgn/>) will begin their foxhunt season on Saturday, March 20, with a rain-date of March 27. Participants will need to register on the HVARC 147.345 MHz repeater (PL Tone 114.8) by 9:45am and the foxhunt begin at 10am on an announced simplex frequency. Kirk emphasized that participants can remain in their cars during the whole event and they do not need to physically interact with others.

Kirk stated he is confident the ACARA will be able to hold its own foxhunt later in the spring or summer.

ACARA Constitution and Bylaws

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the rewrite of the club's Constitution and Bylaws remains on hold during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Old Business (continued)

Report: Winter Field Day – January 30-31, 2021

<http://www.ac-ara.org/?p=1338>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club participated in Winter Field in a group effort at the *Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station* at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio on the Saturday of the two-day event.

Eric reported that on the Wednesday prior to the event, several members (Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ; Lance Groeneveld, KD8KMZ; Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF) repaired and redeployed the roof-mounted Hustler 5-BTV HF vertical antenna with ten radials.

Eric reported that several members visited the operation (John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Nick Arnold, KD8FKB; Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV) and two members (Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF) made QSOs. The club succeeded in making 83 QSOs:

80m CW: 17 QSOs
40m CW: 31 QSOs
40m SSB: 28 QSOs
20m CW: 7 QSOs

ACARA February Potluck

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that at the January meeting the members had decided to postpone the potluck until September 2021.

ACARA Technician License Class

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that the Technician License Class was canceled this year due to the COVID-19 situation. The VE test session will still happen on Monday, March 15, 2021 at the Athens Masonic Lodge.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that new applicants for licenses will need to have their Federal Registration Number (FRN) prior to arriving to test. Jeff has built a web page (http://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=1346) with instructions on applying for an FRN as well as a calendar of test sessions and other information and links. Jeff gave credit to Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, for much input and research leading to the development of this web page.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest – ~~Sunday, April 25, 2021~~

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that at the January meeting Carl Denbow, N8VZ, had suggested that the club postpone the hamfest until summer and hold it in conjunction with the Sunday Creek Amateur Radio Federation (SCARF). He had further made a motion that the club take his suggestion under advisement and make a decision about the April 25 hamfest and a summer “All Athens County” hamfest at the February meeting. This motion had passed without dissent.

Eric reported that he had tried unsuccessfully to contact Vanessa Scott, our contact at the Athens Community Center, on February 15 and again on February 16, finding that the Community Center was closed on those days due to the inclement weather. He had hoped to learn if the Community Center would actually be available for a group event on April 25.

Eric further reported that Miles McFadden, KD8KNC, had suggested following the January meeting that instead of canceling or postponing the event, the club might instead use the entire gym, rather than the usual back half of the gym, to arrange the same number of inside tables farther apart from each other to ensure physical distancing. Miles had further suggested that if the club were to postpone the hamfest but find the Community Center to unavailable, the former Elder-Beerman space in the Market on State mall might be available; Miles had explained that this space is being used at the winter-time home of the weekly Athens Farmers’ Market.

Discussion ensued. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, suggested the April 25 date’s “first hamfest in the Ohio Section” status might bring a larger crowd than usual. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, mentioned that the state’s sanctions against large gatherings have not yet been lifted. Constantine Faller, KC8JXA, mentioned that the United States has not even seen the end of the first wave of COVID-19 yet. Marc Richards, KC8MCW, asked if the ACARA can survive without the income from the annual hamfest; Eric replied to Marc that the ACARA’s expenditures are low enough that the club can survive a second year without a hamfest.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, moved that the ACARA postpone the Athens hamfest to a date sometime in late July through mid- to late-August, with the date to be chosen by the Executive Committee; and that we invite SCARF to unite with the ACARA in an “All Athens County Hamfest”. The motion was seconded by Marc Richards, KC8MCW. The vote passed without dissent.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest (continued)

Following the vote, Carl suggested Eric contact SCARF as soon as possible. He further suggested that the hamfest might be held at Tri-County Career Center if SCARF chooses to participate in an All Athens County Hamfest.

Iron Furnace Trail Run – ~~Saturday, April 3, 2021~~

Event Sponsor: Southeastern Ohio Trail Runners / Michael Owen
<https://www.ironfurnacetrailrun.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, had mentioned in a recent ACARA 2m net that he had been told by the organizers that the event is now to be virtual.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he had received an email in late January from Michael Owen stating that permits to use the Lake Hope State Park facilities are suspended through May 31, but permits are available to use Zaleski State Forest. Running the event entirely within the State Forest would require the event to be small and no amateur radio support would be needed.

The event website does not yet reflect a change.

Lake Hope Bicycle Race

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has learned that the Lake Hope Bicycle Race is being rescheduled for later in the summer; it will probably be in late July or early August.

Athens Gravel Challenge – Saturday, October 2, 2021

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling / Todd Acheson

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has learned that the Athens Gravel Challenge has been postponed until Saturday, October 2, 2021. This date conflicts with the Buckeye Trail Marathon but Jeff is confident we can provide enough operators to support both events.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Marathon – ~~Sunday, April 18, 2021~~

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee / Lisa Simons
<https://www.athensohiomarathon.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Athens Marathon will be a virtual event this year. The event website does not yet reflect this change.

New Business

Buckeye Trail Marathon – Saturday, October 2, 2021

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has confirmed the date of this event.

ARRL Field Day – June 27-28, 2021

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the ARRL has extended the special COVID-19 rules for 2021:

- Class D stations may work all other Field Day stations, including other Class D stations, for points. This year, however, Class D and Class E stations will be limited to 150 W PEP output.
- An aggregate club score will be published — just as it was done last year. The aggregate score will be a sum of all individual entries that attributed their score to that of a specific club.

Eric added that by the late June date of Field Day, club members might feel comfortable with a group Field Day operation.

In March, Eric will try to reserve the Athens County Fairgrounds for Field Day, in case it is possible to do a group operation.

New Business (continued)

Thunderbase 2022 – April 29-May 5, 2022

<https://scoutingevent.com/441-thunderbase>

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the ARRL Emergency Coordinator in Union County had been contacted by the Boy Scouts of America Simon Kenton Council about “Thunderbase 2022”, a multi-day event which will take place at the Ross County Fairgrounds.

The event organizers would like a Field-Day-style station set up at the event so that Scouts can complete the requirements for the Radio Merit Badge. Some of the adult operators of this station would need to be Merit Badge Counselors, so Jeff is letting club members know early so they have time to complete or update their training. Information on becoming a Merit Badge Counselor can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/>. Jeff suggested that hams who have children who are Scouts might be particularly interested in volunteering.

Jeff also reported that there will be a VE testing session at the event.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Jeff.

New Business (continued)

Traveling Vietnam Wall Special Event Station – July 29-August 1, 2021

<https://www.vvmf.org/The-Wall-That-Heals/2021-Tour-Schedule/>

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) has included Athens in the *The Wall That Heals* national tour for 2021. (The *Wall That Heals* exhibit includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile education center.)

Jeff asked if the club would like to have a Field-Day-style station operating near the exhibit when it comes to the Athens County Fairgrounds?

Discussion ensued. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, asked if there remains enough time to apply for and receive a 1x1 special event call sign. Carl also asked if the operation would occur at the exhibit or in the operators' own stations. Jeff stated that he thinks it would be better to have the operation on-site, near the exhibit but far enough away to be respectful. Jeff thinks the Kiwanis shelter might work well. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, suggested the small bandstand might be appropriate. Eric also asked if Bedrock Rentals could be persuaded to donate the use of a tent for the station.

Jeff volunteered to contact the VVMF to ask if they would be willing to let the ACARA operate a special event station near the exhibit.

Carl volunteered to contact Martin Lowery and Wayne Lowery of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), from whom he and Jeff had first learned of the event. Carl also volunteered to contact USAA, sponsors of the national tour.

Following a motion by Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, and a second by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted by President and Secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.