

The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by president Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program

Thomas Witherspoon, K4SWL, gave a very well received presentation via Zoom on "Field Antennas".

Presenter bio:

Thomas Witherspoon, K4SWL, also holds the callsigns VY2SW (Canada) and M0CYI (United Kingdom). Thomas is quite passionate about shortwave radio and field-portable amateur radio activities and is the owner and editor of the popular and respected websites *The SWLing Post* and *QRPer.com*. He is also the founder and curator of the significant online resources *The Shortwave Radio Audio Archive* and *The Radio Spectrum Archive*.

In addition to posting field reports about his field activities on *QRPer.com*, Thomas also publishes "real-time, real-life, no-ad videos" on his YouTube Channel.

Thomas publishes equipment reviews on *QRPer.com* and the *SWLing Post* and he also writes reviews for *Radcom*, the Radio Society of Great Britain's monthly member-magazine, and for *The Spectrum Monitor* magazine.

In his own words, Thomas is "terribly addicted to playing radio in the field".

<http://swling.com/>

<http://qrper.com/> and <https://www.youtube.com/@ThomasK4SWL>

<http://shortwavearchive.com/>

<http://spectrumarchive.org/>

Attendance

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
John Biddle, W8PG
John Bowes, K3JJB
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Constantine Faller, KC8JXA (via Zoom)
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV (via Zoom)
Mike Hansgen, K8RAT (via Zoom)
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ
Thomas Witherspoon, K4SWL (via Zoom)

Corrections/Additions to Minutes

Copies of the February minutes were distributed and were also made available online for those members participating remotely.

A motion to accept the February minutes as published was made by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion was seconded by John Biddle, W8PG. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, the Treasurer's Report was presented by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF. After a deposit of \$170 from incoming membership dues, the club treasury holds \$1,449.46 in unencumbered funds. The *Jim Crouse Memorial Fund* holds \$48.25.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion passed without dissent.

The Treasurer's Report is available online in PDF format at http://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

Old Business

VHF and UHF Repeaters

VHF Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 2m repeater is operating normally. He has not recently noticed any periods of desense, but added that because of the ACARA Technician license classes, he has been unable to regularly participate in the weekly 2m FM nets. Michael Baxla, KE8ICP, did report there had been sensitivity issues during a recent ACARA Weekly 2m Net.

Eric reported that Paul Jellison, K8IO, contacted Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, about testing and tuning our cavities. Eric will contact Mr. Jellison by telephone. Eric reminded the members that in January Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, had mentioned that he now has a spectrum analyzer and can verify the tuning of the cavities.

Eric reported that the 2m repeater is in dire need of a 70cm antenna to allow off-site control of the repeater. He explained that the Yaesu DR-2X repeater has a second receiver available for off-site control. Eric wants to configure this second receiver for 70cm and install an appropriate antenna so that he and other designated control operators can control the repeater remotely.

Eric reported that the UHF repeater is operating normally.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Nets

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

- 2m FM Net, Mondays, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm FM Net, Mondays, following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- 10m SSB Ragchew Net, Tuesdays, 5pm, 28.375 MHz, hosted by Carl Denbow, N8VZ
- 6m AM Net, Sundays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz, hosted by John McCutcheon, N8XWO
- 2m System Fusion Net, Thursdays, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursdays, following the 2m System Fusion net, 442.100 MHz
- 2m FM Simplex Net, first Thursday, 7pm, 146.400 MHz, hosted by Joe Weber, KE8LRZ; the next net will be on April 6, 2023

Eric extended thanks to all those serving as net-control and to all those participating in the club nets. A list of these nets and other regional nets can be found on the ACARA website at http://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=39.

Old Business (continued)

Club Building Projects

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the end-fed halfwave antenna (EFHW) build to be led by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, has been scheduled to take place at 2pm on Sunday, March 26 at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio. The EFHW, when cut for resonance on 40m, should allow for no-tuner operation on 40, 20, 10, and perhaps 15m. The cost for the EFHW matching unit kit is \$40; for an additional \$10, Paul will also provide 67' of antenna wire, a wire-winder, and an end-insulator. Paul reported that he has two EFHW kits still available. The club will provide all the tools necessary to build and adjust the EFHW at the build session on the 26th.

Eric reminded the membership of the other upcoming club building projects:

- Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, will lead a build-session for a collapsible copper 2m J-pole antenna
- Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, will lead a build-session for a copper 2m dipole called the "Mighty Woof"
- Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, will lead a build-session for a two-band HF trap-dipole antenna

Eric reminded the membership that the projects that require sweating of copper pipe (the J-pole, the "Mighty Woof") will need to wait until the arrival of Spring weather because we will need to do the copper-sweating outdoors.

Drew will not be able to lead his build of the two-band HF trap-dipole until sometime after early April.

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the members that the club's Elecraft K3 transceiver now has the optional KAT3 internal automatic antenna tuner and that, after the installation of the KAT3, the K3 showed signs of intermittent apparent antenna disconnection.

Eric reported that he currently has the K3 at his home station and has been testing it. He has heard the apparent antenna disconnection only once since its initial appearance in January. Eric will continue to test the K3 and will ask Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, to further test the transceiver upon his return.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Technician License Class 2023

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the ACARA's annual Technician License Class has ended. Eric thanked Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for leading the class and the associated VE test session, and he recognized the others who taught portions of the class: Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ; Carl Denbow, N8VZ; John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Drew McDaniel, W8MHV; Paul Schulz, WD8SCV; and himself.

Jeff reported that five students attended various sessions but only three students attended the all the sessions and tested. At the March 20th test-session, students Gerald Carter and Bob Weber earned their Technician Class licenses. In addition, Tony Peric, KE8VFA, successfully upgraded to General Class. (Post-meeting update: Gerald Carter is now KE8WWF; Bob Weber is now KE8WWG.)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners

Event Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023

Event Website: <https://www.ironfurnacetrailrun.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA will be supporting the Iron Furnace Trail Run in Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park on Saturday, April 1, 2023.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported he has identified operators for all locations except for one.

Watch for additional emails from Jeff as the date of the event approaches.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee / Lisa Simons

Event Date: Sunday, April 16, 2023

Event Website: <https://www.athensohiomarathon.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA will be supporting the Athens Marathon on Sunday, April 16, 2023.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported he still needs a few operators for some of the locations.

Watch for emails from Jeff as the date of the event approaches.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest

Event Date: Sunday, April 30, 2023

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the members that he has reserved the use of the Community Center half-gym and a smaller conference room.

Eric reported that he has tried unsuccessfully to contact Ron Chapman, Jr., via email to ask about the availability of the PA system from the estate of his father, Ron Chapman, Sr, N8HEK (SK). Eric will reach out to Ron Jr. via telephone.

Eric apologized for neglecting to take Athens Hamfest flyers with him to the MOVARC Hamfest in Bidwell, Ohio, on March 11.

Eric reported that doorprizes have arrived or will be arriving from ARRL, DX Engineering, Mastrant, Alpha Antennas, Elecraft, and EasyWayHamBooks.com. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, volunteered to reach out to MFJ and announced that he will donate a Baofeng handheld transceiver as a doorprize. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, reported he has reached out to GigaParts and Ham Radio Outlet; GigaParts offered a discount on any items ACARA would like to purchase and HRO has not responded to Paul's email.

Eric reported that he has updated the hamfest page of the ACARA website with logos of doorprize donors.

Carl reported he has already received a check for an indoor table reservation.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, asked if the email database has been updated following last year's hamfest. Eric will ask Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV. Once he has the up-to-date database, Jeff will send the hamfest announcement emails.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: ARRL Field Day 2023

Event Date: June 24-25, 2023

ARRL Field Day Website: <http://www.arrl.org/field-day>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that he will be unable to participate with the club in ARRL Field Day 2023 and that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, will serve as Field Day Chairman.

Eric reported as background that he has reserved the use of the brick building and associated greenspace on the Athens County Fairgrounds. He further reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had previously reported that Athens County 9-1-1 has begun the process of replacing the broken cable on the mobile crank-up tower and that he has reserved the use for the tower for Field Day. Jeff said he will contact Athens County 9-1-1 to check on the status of the tower.

Paul reminded the members that he is planning a Class 2A operation with one HF station for CW and SSB, one HF station for digital modes, and the free VHF/UHF station operating 6m CW/SSB/digital.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the Masons' car show has been rescheduled to take place on June 10. Eric contacted Ranson Callaway of the Fair Board and verified that ACARA still has the reservation for the brick building.

Jeff reported that he will contact the Mayor of Athens and the Athens County Board of Trustees to ask for proclamations.

New Business

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge

Event Date: Saturday, August 5, 2023

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling / Todd Acheson

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that this event has been rescheduled to take place on Saturday, August 5, 2023. The organizers are trying to include a portion of the Bailey's Trail system in the route, but it is unclear at this time if this can happen.

Members are asked to watch for emails from Jeff as the date of the event approaches.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Run Baileys

Event Dates: August 12-13, 2023

Event Sponsor: Southeast Ohio Trail Runners / Michael Owen

Event Website: <https://www.seotvents.com/runbaileysdetails>

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the 2023 running of the Run Baileys event will be held on the weekend of August 12 and 13.

Watch for emails from Jeff as the date of the event nears.

ARDC Grant

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, had sent him the link to a page describing the Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC) grants awarded in 2022:

<https://www.ardc.net/apply/grants/2022-grants/>.

As background, Eric read the ARDC website's description of the grant program:

ARDC makes grants to projects and organizations that are experimenting with new ways to advance both amateur radio and digital communication science. Experimentation by amateur radio operators has benefited society in many ways, including the development of the mobile phone and wireless internet technology.

Eric reported that the ACARA Executive Committee will study the ARDC grant program and the list of the grants awarded in 2022 to determine if ACARA can qualify for a grant to upgrade the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station or other projects.

MESH in Athens County

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, asked if there's interest in the ACARA to build out a Mesh network in Athens County, perhaps with ARDC grant-funding. Eric stated that in order to answer that question, ACARA members will need to learn what a Mesh network is and how a Mesh network might benefit Athens County. Eric asked if there are any volunteers who would like to learn about Mesh networks and report back to the club. It was suggested that as a start, ACARA might invite Ted to make a presentation on Mesh networks at a club meeting. Eric will reach out to Ted.

Following a motion to adjourn by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and a second by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted by President and Secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF