

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

Program

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, gave a short show-and-tell presentation about the QRP Labs QMX transceiver that he had just received. The QMX is a high-performance, five-band, five-watt, CW/digital HF transceiver that can be purchased as a kit or as a factory-built radio. The QMX can be purchased as a “low band” version that covers 80, 60, 40, 30, and 20 meters or as a “high band” version that covers 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 meters. The basic kit costs \$95. The factory-assembled radio with the optional aluminum enclosure costs \$165.

Learn more about the QMX at <https://qrp-labs.com/qmx>.

Attendance

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
John McCutchen, N8XWO
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV (via Zoom)
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Robert Riordan, KA4VNK
Robert Riordan Sr., KM4CRF
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Josh Senefeld, N8VXR
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ (via Zoom)
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ
Judith Winner, KF8AQL

Silent Keys

Tyler Smathers, KE8GSO

After a long battle with brain cancer, strokes, and other health issues, Tyler Smathers, KE8GSO, became a Silent Key on March 31, 2024.

The family requests donations be made to the Athens Red Cross.

Corrections/additions of minutes

Copies of the March meeting minutes were distributed and were also made available online for those members participating via Zoom.

A motion to accept the March minutes was made by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion was seconded by Tony Peric, KE8VFA. The motion to accept the Minutes as published passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurers Report was presented by Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV / HS0ZQT, from Thailand via Zoom. Drew stated he will be back in Ohio on May 6, 2024.

The club checking account holds \$1840.60 in unencumbered funds. The Jim Crouse Memorial Fund holds \$132.47. The 5 month CD holds \$10,202.96. The 13 month CD holds \$10,000.00.

A motion to accept the Treasures Report as presented was made by John McCutchen, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion to accept the Treasures Report as presented passed without dissent.

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

Old Business

Repeater Reports

VHF Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that following reports of scratchy signals during the March 25 and April 8 runnings of the weekly 2m net, he visited the repeater site prior to the Athens Marathon and reseated the antenna connections. Nevertheless, the 2m repeater operated very poorly during the club support of the Athens Marathon, the symptom appearing to be intermittent reduced sensitivity. Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, suggested immediately after the marathon that the issue may be heat related, since the repeater was transmitting nearly continuously during the event. Eric added that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had visited the repeater site on April 15 to reconfigure the digipeater and found the interior of the building to be quite warm and the air conditioner was not running. Since the Athens Marathon is the only event we support that uses the repeater this aggressively, Eric suggested the club will need to find some way to determine what happened during the Athens Marathon and come up with a fix.

UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported via email that the 70cm repeater continues to work as well as it has been. Judith Winner KE8AQL, stated the 70cm repeater is not listed in the popular repeater directories.

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, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- 10m SSB Rag chew Net, Tuesdays, 5pm, 28.375 MHz
- 6m AM Net, Sundays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz – since 2003
- 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.

Old Business (continued)

Donation of book to the Ohio University Library

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that following a vote made at the March meeting, he had contacted Seth Sisler, Head of Acquisitions and Collections Services for the Ohio University Libraries, via email, asking if the library would accept a donation of the Marion Crawley book "CBI Radioman, a Memoir". As of the date of this meeting, no reply had been received.

Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, stated that his wife, Allison, works for Ohio University under Mr. Sisler. Joe will ask Allison to follow up with Mr. Sisler on this matter.

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Red Cross repaint and carpet-replacement project had not yet started but is expected to start later in April.

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, mentioned the need to improve lighting within the station after the paint and carpet work has been completed. Paul will investigate possibilities.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest

Event Date: Sunday, April 28, 2024

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that the Athens Hamfest will take place on Sunday, April 28, 2024, in the Athens Community Center's parking lot, half-gym, and smaller conference room. He added that ACARA has received ARRL sanction for the event.

Eric reported that he printed and mailed out approximately 426 postcards on Friday, April 12, and that he had delivered flyers to the MOVARC hamfest on April 13. He added that the postcard printing required two trips to the local FedEx office because the first attempt at printing produced cards that were too large to mailed at postcard-rate. (For 2023, FedEx initially produced cards that were too small to sent postcard-rate.) The fix appears to be to remove the crop-marks from the artwork before submitting the print job to FedEx.

Eric reported that door prizes from Elecraft, K4IA, MFJ, and DX Engineering have been received.

Eric reported that ACARA has received \$414.00 from the 2024 *Visit Athens County Tourism Development Grant* from the Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau. This grant is to be used to help cover the costs associated with publicizing the hamfest, such as printing of postcards and purchase of postage.

Eric reported that John McCutcheon, N8XWO, is donating a PA system with three speakers to the club. Eric will pick up this PA system from John and will test the system prior to the hamfest.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, reported that he has possession of the club's ticket drum and that he will will deliver it to the hamfest. Carl stated that the drum will need some repairs following this year's hamfest. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, agreed to look the drum over and to make any necessary repairs.

Carl reported that at the time of the meeting he had sold reservations for eight tables.

Paul reported that he has spoken with the City of Athens and will be picking up around twenty traffic cones on the Friday prior to the hamfest. He will return them on the Monday following the hamfest.

Eric reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has been speaking with his Masons lodge about providing food at the hamfest.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest (continued)

Eric reported that he has contacted last year's volunteers via email. He also asked for any additional volunteers. Tony Peric, KE8VFA, volunteered to work the club table and handle money along side the President. Andy McDonald, K8FO, offered to work any position needed until it's time for him to report to the 10am VE test session.

Eric reported he will schedule a venue walk-through sometime the week prior to the hamfest. Any interested member is welcome to attend. Watch for an email announcing the date and time.

Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners / Michael Owen

Event Date: Saturday, April 6, 2024

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the Iron Furnace Trail Run consists of 13.1 mile and 4.5 mile trail runs within Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park and that the club provided communications support to the event on April 6. The event went well and Michael Owen was satisfied with the club's support.

Participants:

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee / Condi Richardson

Event Date: Sunday, April 14, 2024

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the Athens Marathon is Ohio's longest running marathon, is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon, and runs mostly along the Hockhocking-Adena bikeway from Athens to Nelsonville Ohio.

Eric reported that the club provided communications support to the April 14 event, assigning radio operators to each aid station and APRS-equipped bicycle-mobile operators to ride with the full marathon male lead, female lead, and the last runner on the course. Through a relationship between Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, and the Athens Bicycle Club, the club was also able to provide riders with the half marathon male and female lead runners. Despite malfunctioning APRS trackers and an ailing repeater, the club provided complete communications support to the Athens Marathon.

Eric reported that although they both worked perfectly during pre-marathon testing by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, and Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, neither of the newly-purchased Byonics MicroTrak AIO v4 trackers functioned on the day of the event. Both devices transmitted proper power-on packets but neither got GPS lock and neither transmitted any position packets. Through on-air consultation, it was decided that Eric, who was riding with the full marathon male lead and Paul, who was riding with the full marathon female lead, would take the two older MicroTrak AIO trackers from the bicyclists riding with the half marathon male and female leads and would carry these trackers for the full marathon. As expected, these older trackers worked well.

Eric reported that as the marathon progressed, the club's 145.15 repeater began showing intermittent sensitivity issues, with nearly all operators having difficulty hitting the repeater at times. Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, had suggested at the time that this could have been a heat-related issue caused by the repeater being in near-constant use.

Eric asked for input to pass along to the marathon committee. Items mentioned were missing or poorly-located portable toilets, timing staff at the half- and full-marathon turn-arounds, and "Goo" packets left as litter on the bikepath.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Athens Marathon (continued)

Participants:

Joe Barnhart, KB8JOE
Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
Jon Bennett, KD8ZRQ
Gary Carter, KD8MSR
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Mike Dailey (Athens Bicycle Club)
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Blake Gall, KE8PAG
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
Malcom Idleman (Athens Bicycle Club)
Rob Jacobson, KB9AFT
Ted Jacobson, W8KVK
Robin Kinney, KG6DI
Charles McClain, KE8YHE
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Vickie McFadden, KC8MAJ
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Jan Slattery, KD8PUJ
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Mark Summers, KD8SM
Brian Taylor, KZ8U
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ
Bob West (Athens Bicycle Club)
Kat Wolf, KE8EAP
Matt Wolf, KD8GFX

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: OhioHealth Race for a Reason

Event Sponsor: OhioHealth

Event Date: Saturday, April 27

Event Websites: <https://www.ohioraceforareason.org/>,
<https://www.ohioraceforareason.org/chsp-triathlonduathlon.html>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club has been asked to provide communications support to the Ohio University College of Health Sciences and Professions Triathlon and Duathlon on Saturday of the two-day, six-event, OhioHealth Race for a Reason. The Triathlon consists of a 500m swim at the Aquatic Center, a 10.42 mile bicycle ride mostly on the Hockhocking-Adena Bikeway, and a 5k run alongside the Hocking River.

Eric reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, is confident that enough operators have volunteered to support this event. Jeff is waiting for more details about the event so he can make operator assignments.

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

Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge / Gravel Grinder

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling

Event Date: July 20, 2024

Event URL: <https://www.ohiogravelgrinders.com/event-listings/2024/7/20/the-athens-gravel-challenge>

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, reminded members of the upcoming event the club has been asked to support.

Watch for emails from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, as the date of the event nears.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Run Baileys

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners

Event Date: TBA

Event Website: <https://www.seotrevents.com/runbaileys>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members of this event that the club has supported in previous years. Run Baileys consists of a 13.1-mile half marathon and two 5k runs within the Baileys Trail System. It is expected that this event will be held sometime in August.

Watch for emails from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, once the the date of the event has been announced.

Public Service Event: Points Race

Event Date: September 15, 2024

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, mentioned this bicycling event the club might be asked to support. He has few details yet about this event.

Public Service Event: Baileys Dirt Fondo / Funduro

Event Sponsor: Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA)

Event Date: Saturday, October 12, 2024

Event URL: <https://baileystrailsystem.org/baileys-dirt-fondo/>

Organization Website: <https://www.orcaohio.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Bailey Dirt Fondo is a “singletrack adventure consisting of casual riding between optionally-timed segments.”

Watch for emails from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, as the date of the event nears.

Old Business (continued)

Club Antenna Building Projects

Event Date: Sunday, April 21, 2024

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, and Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, have chosen Sunday, April 21 as the date of their combined antenna build. Jeff will lead the build of the 2m copper J-Pole antenna. Kirk will lead the build of the tape-measure Yagi antenna. The build will take place at 1pm at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio, 100 South May Avenue, Athens.

Information about these builds can be found on the ACARA website at <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2255>

Athens County Foxhunt

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that since he was the winner of the final Athens County Foxhunt of 2023, he will serve as fox for the first Athens County Foxhunt of 2024. He will choose a date and will distribute an announcement via email.

Eric reported that following a suggestion made at the March meeting, he emailed Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, and Phil Stanley, W8NZB, about the possibility of a fox hunt teaching session in May.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: ARRL Field Day 2024

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, June 22-23, 2024

Event website: <https://field-day.arrl.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, read from the ARRL Field Day website that “Field Day is ham radio's open house. Every June, more than 40,000 hams throughout North America set up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate ham radio's science, skill and service to our communities and our nation. It combines public service, emergency preparedness, community outreach, and technical skills all in a single event. Field Day has been an annual event since 1933, and remains the most popular event in ham radio.”

Eric reminded members that he has reserved the use of the brick building and surrounding greenspace on the Athens County Fairgrounds for Field Day weekend and that Andy McDonald, K8FO, has reserved the special-event callsign “K8V” for the club’s use during Field Day.

Eric thanked Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, for agreeing to serve as Field Day Chairman. Paul reported that the club will participate in Class 2A with two HF stations and a 6m VHF station, with operations to take place using CW, SSB, and digital modes. Paul is investigating the possibility of including a “Get on the Air” (GOTA) station. Paul added that his brother Bob Schulz will be joining ACARA for Field Day.

Eric asked Paul if he will be inviting Jeremy Duncan, KC8QDQ, to bring his mobile satellite ground-station to the Field Day operation. Paul replied that he will reach out to Jeremy.

New Business

Social Event: ACARA Annual June Picnic

Event Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Event Time: 5:30 PM

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club's annual June Picnic will be held at 5:30pm on Tuesday, June 18. Eric will reserve the use of the Dairy Lane picnic shelter. For this event, the club will provide burgers, brats, and buns. Members and their guests are asked to bring a dish to share, their own beverages, and their own table service.

Operating Event: Ohio State Parks on the Air

Event date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Event URL: <https://ospota.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Ohio State Parks on the Air is to be held on Saturday, September 7, 2024, and asked if the club is interested in again activating Strouds Run State Park for this event. The consensus was that the club should again activate Strouds Run State Park.

Eric asked which of the three picnic shelters at Strouds Run State Park members prefer for this event: Bulldog Shelter, Bobcat Shelter, or Lakeview Shelter? Of the three, Bobcat Shelter is the only one with available commercial power; Bulldog shelter is closer to a toilet and has more room for antennas. The members indicated a preference for Bulldog Shelter. Eric will reserve Bulldog shelter for the club's activation.

New Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Buckeye Trail Blue Blaze Festival

Event Date: Saturday, October 12, 2024

Event Sponsor: Buckeye Trail Association (BTA)

Event URL:

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Buckeye Trail Blue Blaze Festival is a half marathon, a 10K run, a 5K run/walk, a 10-mile hike, and an overnight backpacking trek. All events are on the Buckeye Trail in the Wayne National Forest.

A member noticed that the date of this event conflicts with the date of the Baileys Dirt Fondo / Funduro and the question was raised, can the club provide enough operators to support both events?

Watch for emails from N8SUZ as the event nears.

Public Service Event: Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon

Event Sponsor: Western Reserve Racing / Joe Jurczyk

Event Date: Saturday, November 9, 2024

Event URL: <https://www.westernreserveracing.com/races/bobcat-trail-marathon-half-marathon/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon is an event the club has sponsored for many years. The marathon is a single loop on the hiking trails encircling Burr Oak. The half marathon is a point-to-point course on the same trails.

Watch for emails from N8SUZ as the date of the event nears.

Following a motion to adjourn by Tony Peric, KE8VFA, and a second by Carl Denbow, N8VZ, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Tony Peric, KE8VFA.