

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program: Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, made a short, impromptu, presentation on his recently-received BG2FX FX-4CR (<https://bg2fx.com/fx-4cr-transceiver-prod>), an all-mode, 80m-6m 20w transceiver with built-in soundcard for digital modes.

Attendance

Joe Barnhart, KB8JOE
John Bowes, K3JJB
Kate Bowes, KB3URV
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV (via Zoom)
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK
Robert Riordan, Sr., KM4CRF
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

Corrections/additions of Minutes

The October meeting minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the October minutes as published was made by Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion to accept the minutes as amended 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.

The Treasurer purchased postage stamps, paid ARRL Liability Insurance and ARRL Equipment Insurance, and paid \$50 to the Ohio Attorney General, leaving the club with \$2,534.62 in unencumbered funds. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund holds \$251.63.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, asked for more information about the \$50 paid to the Ohio Attorney General, stating that the not-for-profits he is involved with have not had to pay when refiling their paperwork with the state. Eric replied that he will ask the Treasurer and would include his response in the meeting minutes. Here is the Treasurer's reply to Eric's question: "I had to file an annual report as a charitable nonprofit with the AG. This year for the first time there is a charge for the filing. Something new."

A motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented was made by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented passed without dissent.

The Treasurer's Report can be viewed online at https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

Old Business

VHF & UHF Repeater Reports

VHF repeater trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 2m repeater is performing well. He added that during the prior week he had noticed several instances of someone using a Chinese HT (Baofeng or similar) to “kerchunk” the repeater. No audio was heard other than the HT’s “roger beep”. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, suggested that this person could be unaware they’re successfully bringing up the repeater because of the repeater’s lack of a reset-beep.

In the absence of UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, Eric reported that the UHF repeater continues to operate as well as it has been, noting that the smaller-than-desired repeater coverage area (“footprint”) remains a problem. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, stated that the footprint appears to have gotten smaller—he can no longer hear the repeater at his house although he used to be able to.

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, suggested that the club might wish to do work on the station’s two HF antennas prior to January’s Winter Field Day event, suggesting again that the club might wish to consider replacing the current 40m end-fed halfwave antenna with a Chameleon EMCOMM-III-B 130’ end-fed wire antenna ([link](#)) for 160m-10m coverage if the club can determine there is room to hang a wire that long. Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, added that the Chameleon’s 130’ wire can be replaced with a 65’ wire and still provide good performance on 80-10m.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's weekly and monthly nets continue to do well, although 2m and 70cm System Fusion net participation appears to be dropping.

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, 28.375 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)

Red Cross Building

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had reported via email prior to the September meeting that Athens Red Cross will be installing a Brivo photo ID card access system at the chapterhouse. All Red Cross volunteers will get new IDs which will give them access to the building via this system. He had further reported that once the new system is in place, the existing exterior key-safe will contain an entry-card to be used by ACARA and others needing building access but who lack their own ID card.

Eric reported that as of the November meeting date, the Brivo system is not yet active.

ACARA Website

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, recently updated the club's website's WordPress template and that this temporarily broke the website, placing the posts behind the main navigation buttons. Jeff was able to fix this issue, but he had to move the main navigation buttons to the right side of the page, leaving the posts on the left. (Previously, the main navigation buttons were on the left and the posts were on the right.)

Old Business (continued)

Results: ARRL Field Day 2024

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

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ARRL Field Day 2024 results have been published in the December 2024 issue of QST magazine and that they're also available in various formats at <https://field-day.arrl.org/>.

With 848 QSOs and 4,252 points, ACARA operating as K8V placed 11th out of 183 entries in Class 2F, placing ACARA at the 94th percentile within their class.

ACARA placed 1st in Ohio in class, 1st in the 8th callsign-district in class, and 2nd in the ARRL Great Lakes subdivision in class.

Eric congratulated Field Day Captain Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, for a job well done.

Results: Ohio State Parks on the Air 2024

Event Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Ohio State Parks on the Air 2024 results have been published at <https://ospota.org/>.

ACARA operating as W8UKE placed 10th out of 11 entries in "Multi Op, Single Radio, Low Power, in an Ohio State Park" class with 450 points.

Eric noted that participation was down this year from previous years. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, suggested that, perhaps, making a pot-luck part of the event would bring better participation.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon

Event Sponsor: Western Reserve Racing

Event Date: Saturday, November 9, 2024

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA supported Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon on Saturday, November 9.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, provided a report via email that Eric read to those present at the meeting:

We had a total of 13 operators who came out to support the Bobcat Trail Marathon on the hiking trails at Burr Oak State Park. We had a beautiful day for the run which was ideal for the runners, starting out a little cool with daytime high in the low 60's.

We had no incidents of lost runners this year although the lack of an organized numbering scheme with somewhat random bib numbers made tracking more difficult this year. Our operators did a good job of, at least, keeping a good running tally of runners through their stations and helping ensure runners took the right path through their location.

I've heard some comments, but if anyone has concerns or kudos they would like to share, please send them to me at n8suz@yahoo.com. I will share them with the organizers. I was given a stack of leftover shirts. I will be going through them over the next couple of days to see what sizes we have for the volunteer operators who came out that day.

Thanks to: Robin Kinney, KG6DI for an excellent job as liaison with the race officials at the lodge and to our other volunteer operators, Brian Taylor, K8ZU; Marcel Casavant, AD8CM; Paul Schulz, WD8SCV; Andy McDonald, K8FO; Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV; Michael Baxla, KE8ICP; Robert Peoples, N8UVM; Jeramy Duncan, KC8QDQ; Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ; Miles McFadden, KD8KNC; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF; and Net Control Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ.

New Business

GMRS Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, had informed him that Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group has offered a GMRS repeater and antenna to the club, asking that the repeater be deployed somewhere near Albany to improve GMRS coverage in that part of Meigs County.

Joe Barnhart, KB8JOE, from Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group, attended the meeting. He explained how he had become involved in GMRS and how the network of GMRS repeaters the Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group is building has been serving as a communications resource within Meigs County. Joe explained that Meigs County holds a weekly net on channel 21R (91.5Hz tone) repeater and that the net is also monitored by people using FRS radios who can participate by commenting and asking questions via the Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group Facebook page during the net. Joe added that he has seen GMRS serve as a real “gateway” into Amateur Radio and that several hams in Meigs County first got involved in GMRS and were then inspired to earn their Amateur licenses. Joe was able to install one repeater on the Meigs County EMA tower after explaining to the EMA director how GMRS could be used to send alerts directly to Meigs County residents. Joe has been working with New Era Broadband to locate additional repeaters on their towers. Joe has five UHF repeaters available that can be configured for GMRS; three of these are Kenwood TKR-850 repeaters with built-in duplexers. Joe stated he also has one eight-bay commercial UHF repeater antenna available. Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group is offering ACARA the long-term loan of up to two repeaters and one antenna. He prefers that the repeater(s) be located along the Athens/Meigs County border. Joe suggested that ACARA work with Athens County EMA to see if a repeater can be installed on the Athens EMA tower.

Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, suggested the Albany water tower and the Columbia Township Fire Department’s new tower as possible locations for a GMRS repeater.

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, suggested that Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, and Mark Summers, KD8SM, each have well-located properties with towers that might serve as locations for a GMRS repeater.

New Business (continued)

GMRS Repeater (continued)

John McCutcheon, N8XWO, suggested ACARA hold a “GMRS License sign-up session” to help people file for GMRS licenses.

Eric thanked Joe Barnhart for the presentation and the offer of the repeater hardware, adding that he, personally, feels ACARA should support a GMRS repeater in Athens County. He told Joe that the club will keep in touch with him on this.

ARRL Club Affiliation

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he has performed the required annual update to the ACARA’s ARRL Club Affiliation documentation.

Social Event: ACARA Annual Holiday Dinner

Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Location: TBD

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that ACARA’s annual Holiday Dinner will take place on Tuesday, December 17. ACARA will pay for hors d’oeuvres. Members and guests will order their meals from the menu.

Eric asked for suggestions on the venue, suggesting that Applebees in Athens worked well the previous two years. John McCutcheon, N8XWO, asked about the cost to rent a meeting room at the OU Inn, suggested there might be a special rate for not-for-profits. Eric will investigate and coordinate with the Executive Committee. If the OU Inn is too expensive, Eric will reserve at Applebees.

Eric will alert members of the Holiday Dinner venue via the ACARA’s weekly 2m net, email, and the ACARA website.

New Business (continued)

Operating Event: ARRL 10-Meter Contest

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, December 14-15, 2024

Event Website: <https://www.arrl.org/10-meter>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the ARRL 10-Meter Contest is to be held on the weekend of December 14-15, 2024 and that ACARA participates in this contest in two ways:

1. The club participates in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest as a club, in the Affiliated Club Competition in class "Local". Members who will be operating at a location within 35 miles of uptown Athens will be eligible to participate in the Affiliated Club Competition. When they submit their 10-Meter Contest submissions to ARRL, members will list "Athens County ARA" in the "Club Name" field and their scores will count toward the ACARA's Affiliated Club Competition score.
2. The ACARA member submitting the highest score to the ARRL will win the coveted NC8V Memorial Trophy which is presented annually in recognition of the life and accomplishments of past-member John Cornwell, NC8V (SK). The current holder of the NC8V Memorial Trophy is John Biddle, W8PG.

The winner of the NC8V Memorial Trophy will be announced at the ACARA's annual Holiday Dinner on December 17.

ACARA Technician Class License Course

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's annual Technician Class License course will begin on Monday, January 13, 2025 and will meet for nine consecutive Mondays, with the final session being the VE testing session on Monday, March 17, 2025. Classes will be at 7pm at the Athens Red Cross, 100 South May Avenue, Athens. (The start date of January 13 is a post-meeting correction.)

New Business (continued)

Operating Event: Winter Field Day

Date: January 25-26, 2025

Event website: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Winter Field Day, the wintertime operating event, is to be held on the weekend of January 25-26, 2025.

Eric asked Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, if he would again be willing to serve as Winter Field Day Chairman; Paul agreed to do so.

Paul will investigate the availability of the solar trailer the club used for ARRL Field Day in June and will look at various locations for the operation, although he suggested there's a good chance that ACARA will operate at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station at the Athens Red Cross.

Eric mentioned that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had informed him via email that the Red Cross chapter is talking about performing a sheltering/feeding simulation at the chapterhouse during the event if the club chooses to operate at the chapterhouse.

Paul stated he would like to improve access for emergency power and antenna feedlines at the Red Cross chapterhouse before Winter Field Day. Eric said the Executive Committee could meet or hold discussions via email on this.

Watch email and the club website for more information.

Following a motion to adjourn by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and a second by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF