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## Orange County Radio Amateurs (OCRA) Newsletter October 2008

### From the Editor

Can you believe that it is the month of October? We have all heard the adage that time seems to go by faster every year. I never believed that saying when I was younger, but I definitely do now. Perhaps the other adage ó something to do with wisdom coming with old age ó is true then also ☺

I do know that we have moved into the later part of the year since many of the weekends on our home calendar are marked with various ham radio contests. And, I find comfort in that fact. It means that for our house will be a focal point for many local amateur radio operators; people will come and go throughout the specific contest hours; the familiar sounds of searching and pouncing or running stations will be heard; and the famous contest chili will be simmering on the stove.

As you read through this month's newsletter, I am sure that you will find several articles that catch your attention. There is a wide variety of topics that are included. The monthly mantra still applies ó Get comfortable and take time to read through your club's newsletter.



Until next month! .

Best regards,  
Laurie - N1YXU  
[lbmeier@bellsouth.net](mailto:lbmeier@bellsouth.net)

## Membership Meeting

**Please take note that the location for the monthly OCRA membership meeting has changed effective for the Monday, October 13, 2008 meeting.** The new location is the Orange County EOC Building which is located at 510 Meadowland Drive in Hillsborough. [Directions are detailed below.] The monthly meeting starts at 7:30 pm. Prior to the meeting, there is an open board meeting at the Casa Ibarra restaurant on South Churton Street in Hillsborough. The open board meeting begins at 6:00 pm.

Directions to the new Orange County EOC Building

From Chapel Hill:

1. Take Martin Luther King ("Historic Airport Road") north toward Hillsborough.
2. MLK becomes Highway 86 (north towards Hillsborough)
3. Turn right onto Highway 70 Business at Hillsborough at the "T" intersection
4. Pass Meadowland Drive at the Triangle Sportsplex entrance to Meadowland office park
5. Turn right onto the second Meadowland Drive (Meadowland Drive is a loop), approximately six tenths of a mile from intersection of Highway 86 and Highway 70 Business
6. Turn left into second driveway at 510 Meadowland (see radio tower), which is the location of Orange EOC

From Durham:

1. Take Interstate 85 South toward Hillsborough.
2. Exit Interstate 85 at Highway 70.
3. Bear to the left and take Highway 70 Business at Wayside Baptist Church
4. Turn left onto Meadowland Drive
5. Turn left into second driveway at 510 Meadowland (see radio tower), which is the location of Orange EOC

by Woody Woodward, K3VSA

Lots of things to talk about this month! First off, greetings to Wilson Lamb (W4BOH), who joined OCRA at the September Membership Meeting. He's been a ham for a while now, and he likes tube gear and homebrew construction projects. Welcome to OCRA, Wilson!

While we're on the subject of membership, is the McLamb listing changing from "individual" to "family" sometime soon? We've heard that Brian's (KI4YSZ) XYL, Summer, is studying the book and may be looking at getting her own ticket in the near future. Brian says he already has an HT with her name on it. We are blessed with many exceptional ham ladies in our club, but we can always have one more. (And they say Amateur Radio is just a guy thing!)

The Saturday before our September Membership Meeting, Skip (N6LUZ) received an invitation for OCRA/OCARES to take a guided tour of the new Orange County EOC building and hold our September Membership Meeting there, so we did. The new Director of Emergency Services for Orange County NC, Frank Montes de Oca, was kind enough to personally escort us around the facility. "The Chief" is a former Floridian, and Florida people know all about weather emergencies. He also knows what hams can do, and so I think we can have a good working relationship.

I'm telling you, that place is a piece of work! We'll have our own glass enclosed area with enough space for multiple operating positions. That area will double as the viewing position for members of the press during actual operations, so Amateur Radio will be quite prominently displayed in times of trouble.

We were offered the use of the facility on a regular basis for holding exam sessions and our monthly meetings, and it seemed logical to meet right there where our equipment would be located, so we resolved then and there to make the move, effective with our October meeting. Both the OCRA website and the ARRL website have already been updated with the new location info.

Beginning in November, our "off month" VE sessions will begin, coinciding with the Membership Meetings at the new EOC. The remaining Saturday morning VE sessions will continue through the remainder of 2008 at Sunrise Church and then will move to the EOC in 2009.

There was quite a bit of "Amateur Radio outreach" during the month. We had another operating event at Suntrust Bank thanks to Chris (KG4HNC), who just happens to have the keys to the place and knows where the reservations roster is located. Thanks to Lisa (KG4PFB), we had some tasty goodies to sell, so we made a little bit of money and introduced Amateur Radio to a couple of folks.

The Sunday before the September meeting, I was at Sunrise Church manning a table at their neighborhood fair, an outreach to area residents that demonstrates some of the activities that Sunrise sponsors, including the Boy Scouts and, of course, us. It was somewhat disappointing in that most visitors seemed more interested in the free food and games, but several people did stop off to hear some over the air ham conversation. I had requested OCRA members to monitor the repeater and be prepared to reply if I threw out my callsign, and many did so. Thanks to Chris (KG4HNC), Gerry (KD4YJV), Ken (KR4FM) and Steve (KZ1X) for being so attentive on a Sunday afternoon. Apologies to anyone I've inadvertently left out.

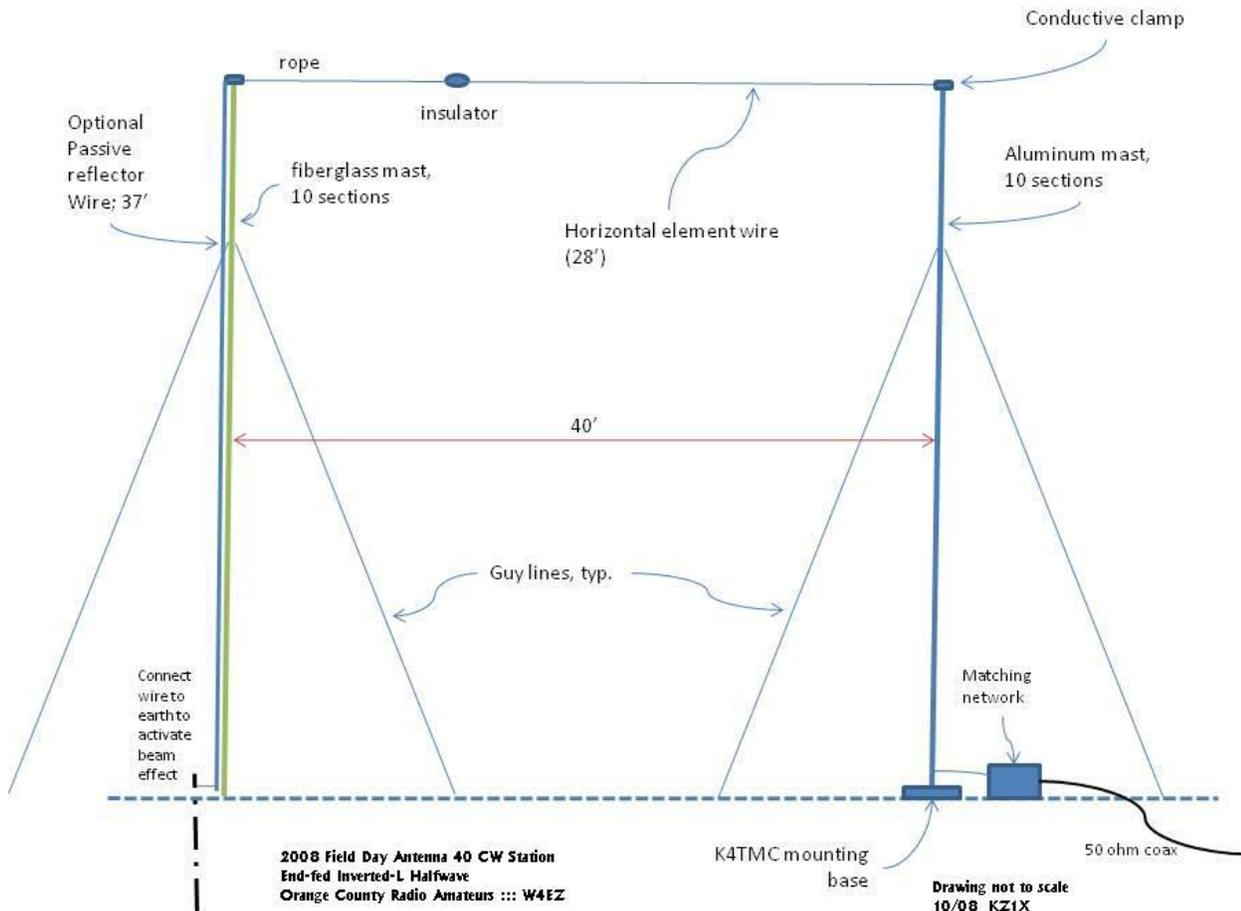
Much better received was the information table that OCRA staffed at the Emergency Preparedness event put on by the Orange County Health Department/Orange County CERT. Lisa (KG4PFB) and I were in Charlotte all that weekend giving away delicious, freshly baked cookies, but Adriano (KI4OTN), Bill (W1REP), Brian (KI4YSZ) and Chris (N2JFP), did yeoman service explaining Amateur Radio to the many interested passers-by. I'm told all our ARRL literature was gone within the first hour!

The group campsites at the Eno River State Park have been reserved for an OCRA club campout on Saturday night, October 25th. That's a little late in the season, but it's the soonest weekend we have open from our demo business. Just bring some warm stuff and you'll be alright. We can climb to the top of Cox Mountain within the park and see who we can reach on simplex or see what repeaters we can hit. Lisa promises us some good food for supper Saturday night and breakfast Sunday morning. Call me or send me an email if you plan on coming so I can keep track of the tent sites as they fill up.

...that OCRA is getting a good reputation as being a club where you can ... point and I were talking on our 442.150MHz machine, and he told me, ... body friendly to talk to on it." Well, we may not be allowed to transmit music over the air, but comments like this one are certainly music to my ears. In what other activity can you make so many friends in so many diverse places so quickly and easily? Are you taking the time to be a part of this? I hope so!

## 2008 Field Day Antenna – 40 CW Station

by Steve Jackson, KZ1X



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## t for Lead-Acid Batteries

The OCRA club project that I am working on is a float charger kit for lead-acid batteries, such as the gel cells that many club members have.

The goal is to have a simple kit that can help people learn a bit about electronics and building, to use up some free surplus parts to make an immediately useful item, and to save some money while having a little fun.

What IS this project ?

It *is* a very low cost kit that requires some customization by the user.

It *is* a circuit that can be safely left charging a typical gel cell, indefinitely.

It *is* a 100% zero-RF-noise circuit.

It *is* small and easy to build by anyone, in less than an hour, with just basic soldering skills and hand tools.

What ISN'T this project?

It is *not* a charger capable of restoring a deeply discharged battery.

It is *not* a charger designed to charge anything other than portable gel cells.

It is *not* a huge, complex undertaking.

It is *not* something that requires you to have a shop full of tools, or lots of electronics experience.

### FAQ

Q. Can the charger overcharge my gel cell?

A. A typical 12V gel cell is designed to 'float' indefinitely at 13.7V, and that is what this charger does.

Q. How many gel cells can I put on the charger?

A. It is designed to charge one battery at a time, typically between 1 and 7 amp-hour size.

Q. There is no fuse on the output of the charger. Why?

A. None is needed. If you short the charger output, it simply goes into current limiting. No damage is done.

Q. What happens if the battery is on, but the AC power fails. Won't the battery try to 'back power' the charger circuitry?

A. No. The charger 'chip' senses that condition, and opens the circuit.

Q. Can I operate my radio from the battery while it is being charged?

A. Yes. Just remember, the charger is a trickle-charge type, and only provides enough power to charge the battery, not run the radio.

Q. So, if I have one of these just float-charging the battery, and I suddenly need the battery, it will be ready to go at a moment's notice?

A. Yes, if you have the connectors set up for that use, it's the perfect solution to this common challenge.

Q. What parts do I need besides the kit?

A. You'll need to supply the fuse holder and fuse, an AC power cord, suitable connectors, and some kind of enclosure. You may already have these items.

Q. What tools will I need?

A. You need some kind of soldering iron, solder, a wire stripper/cutter, and needle-nose pliers. A multimeter would be handy, too. If you have a hot-melt glue gun, that is also nice.

Q. Is there a circuit board?

A. No. The kit is too low-cost and simple for that. A few wires installed by hand are all that are needed to hook the whole thing up.

and it. Will there be a tutorial?  
 this is to learn about, and how quickly you will pick up on the concept.

Q. What is the cost of this kit?

A. Right now it is looking like around \$4, plus the stuff you supply.

Q. Can I modify the kit to be more powerful?

A.. Yes. You can buy a larger transformer and simply substitute it, up to a point of diminishing returns.

Q. What if the charger fails in the future, how am I supposed to fix it?

A. The charger is made of easy-to-get, low-cost common parts. Most are sold at RadioShack! Because you build it, you can fix it, too.

Q. I have never built anything before. How can I be sure this will work?

A. Ideally, we'd have a building session at one or two club meetings.

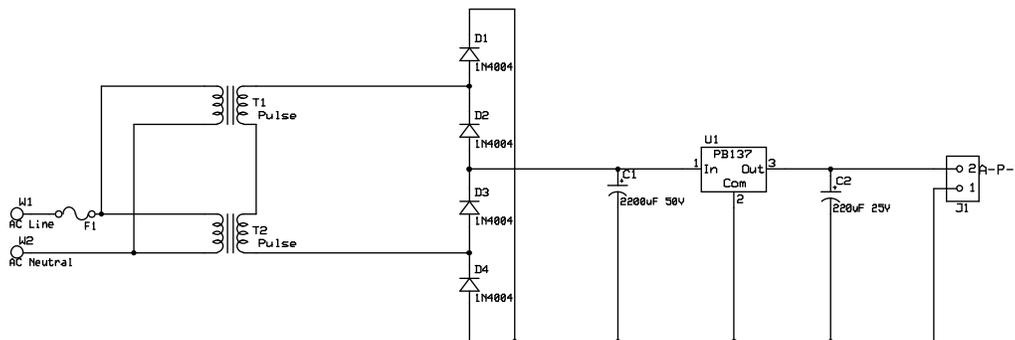
You will have ample chance to have 100% success.

Q. Can I buy kits for my friends?

A. Sure, as long as they are OCRA members! Realistically, we have to limit this somehow. Only a fixed number of kits will be available.

Q. When will the project start?

A. The goal is to have these available for a building session / demonstration at the November OCRA meeting. Let's see how this goes.



Orange County Radio Amateurs		
Stand-By Float Charger		
S. Jackson K21W-4	Rev 1.0 10/4/2008	Page # 1

I don't consider myself to be a particularly superstitious person, but neither do I go out of my way to chance fate. (I think I'm in good company in that regard. Even Jesus Christ, an infinitely better man than I, was quoted as saying, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.") For example, if I were to own a watercraft, I certainly wouldn't call it the "Titanic." SCI, a high-tech company based in Huntsville, once owned a paddle boat known as the Scitanic in a blithe, tongue-in-cheek reference to the ill-fated passenger liner. Well, the Scitanic sunk in a freak accident that claimed eleven lives.

I think I'm also capable of learning a little bit from other people's mistakes. Did you ever hear about the radio broadcast that Orson Welles' Mercury Theater group did in the nineteen thirties? It was a dramatization of H G Wells' classic, /War of the Worlds/. I can remember hearing firsthand from my father and mother about the panic this broadcast caused when it was aired. Now, you'd think that a rational person would learn a lesson from that, but here's a true account of what happened when /War of the Worlds/ was dramatized in Spanish and broadcast on Radio Quito, in Ecuador:

The Day the Martians Landed  
or stories they never tell on HCJB  
copyright 1992 by Don Moore

A slightly edited version of this article was originally published in the October, 1992 issue of Monitoring Times magazine.

Remember when the Martians invaded? Of course! - It was back in Grandpa's time. We hear about it every Halloween. On October 30, 1938, Orson Welles presented a dramatization of /War of the Worlds/ on the CBS network. Welles' Martians landed near Princeton, NJ and proceeded to wreck havoc on the surrounding countryside. Well, maybe there weren't really any Martians, but the broadcast certainly created havoc across the country. Millions of Americans tuned in after the opening credits and thought the invasion was for real. As police stations were swamped with phone calls, many city-dwelling Americans jumped in the family car and took off for the safety of the country. Others went off in search of a priest to give a final confession. At New York City's naval base, shore leaves were canceled and sailors were called back to their ships. In short, panic seized the entire nation.

How could Grandpa have been so dense as to actually believe that Martians really had landed? And now every year we wave it about for the world to see - Look, everyone, at how we got fooled in 1938! It's sort of a blemish on the national IQ. Well, fortunately we're not the only ones to get bowled over by imaginary Martians. Just eleven years later it happened again, south of the equator, in Quito, Ecuador. The Ecuadorians got taken in just as bad as Grandpa did, but their reaction was, well, a little bit stronger.

### The Martians Land

Nestled at the foot of Mount Pichincha, in a fertile Andean valley, Quito has always been as peaceful as a city could be. When the 1940s came along, Quito may have lagged behind the rest of the world in some things, but communications was not one of them. In downtown Quito, next door to the Ministry of Communication, was the three-story Comercio building. This was headquarters for Quito's premier newspaper, El Comercio, which was respected throughout Latin America. Also in the same building was Radio Quito, owned by the newspaper, and the most popular radio station in the city.

In February, 1949, Leonardo Paez, the art (program) director of Radio Quito and Eduardo Alcaraz, the station's dramatic director, were looking for something new and exciting to do on the air. Something that would really draw attention to Radio Quito. They had heard of Orson Welles' famous /War of the Worlds/ program, and that seemed to have just the level of excitement they needed. A script was drawn up and actors and sound effects were arranged for. Paez and Alcaraz saw no need to tell station management about their plans. It was just another drama production. Finally, on Saturday, February 12, 1949, everything was ready to go.

As usual, listeners in Quito and surrounding towns tuned in to Radio Quito's evening newscast, which was followed by the nightly music program. Suddenly, an announcer broke in mid-song, "Here is an urgent piece of late news!" He then gave a long and frightening description of how Martians had landed twenty miles south of the city, near Latacunga. Latacunga had already been destroyed and the aliens were approaching Quito in the shape of a cloud. A few minutes later came another announcement, "The air base of Mariscal Sucre has been taken by the enemy, and it is being destroyed. There are many dead and wounded. It's being wiped out!"

ent actors stepped up to the microphone, some chosen for their ability to 'minister of the Interior' arrived, and urged citizens to stay calm to help. Next, it was the 'mayor' of Quito's turn: "People of Quito, let us defend our city. Our women and children must go out into the surrounding heights to leave the men free for action and combat." Then a priest begged for mercy from God as a recording of Quito church bells ringing in alarm was played in the background. The prayer was interrupted for a telephoned report from an announcer at the top of Quito's tallest building. He described a monster surrounded by fire and smoke coming towards the city. More reports were telephoned in from residents of the nearby village of Cotocallao, which was now under attack.

### Panic in the Streets

By this point, the population of Quito was in panic. The city's streets filled as thousands fled their homes, many wearing their pajamas. The noise in the streets was the first inkling Radio Quito had of what they had done. An announcer came on and revealed that the broadcast was entirely fictional. Station staff members, many trusted voices, frantically pleaded for calm in the city.

Radio Quito's appeals did nothing to calm the mobs in the street. In fact, hearing that the whole thing was a hoax angered people even more. From all directions, thousands converged on the El Comercio building and began stoning it. About 100 people were in the building when the riot began. Most were able to escape the mob through a back door, but some were forced to flee to the third floor. The police and army were called to come put down the riot, but they were already busy. They were on their way to Cotocallao to battle the Martians.

More rioters arrived. Some brought gasoline, others had crumpled copies of the El Comercio newspaper. Gasoline was used to fuel the fire as dozens of burning El Comercios were thrown at the building. Soon, the building was engulfed in a mass of flames which began spreading to nearby buildings. Several dozen people were still trapped on the third floor. Some leapt from windows to escape the flames. Others tried forming a human chain to climb down, but the chain broke and most crashed to the pavement.

Finally, the police and army arrived, but it was only with tanks and massive doses of tear gas that the crowds cleared, making room for the fire trucks. The fire was put out before it caused extensive damage to nearby buildings, but it was too late for the El Comercio building. Only the front was left standing. The presses, radio equipment, and the newspaper and radio station files were destroyed, leaving \$350,000 in damage, an astronomical sum in 1949. More tragic was the human cost. Twenty people died in the fire or trying to escape it. Fifteen more were injured.

### Radio Quito Rebuilds

The next day, the staffs of El Comercio and Radio Quito began picking up the pieces, except for Paez and Alcaraz, who were indicted. Other Quito and Guayaquil newspapers offered their presses so that the newspaper could continue printing. Gradually, the paper and the radio station were rebuilt, and they regained their positions as the most respected media in Quito.

Apparently neither wants to remember the most memorable event in their past, however. In a 1980 article on the 40th anniversary of Radio Quito, El Comercio didn't include a single sentence about the Martian broadcast.

Today, Radio Quito is a not-to-difficult catch on 4920 kHz in the sixty meter band. It can be heard most evenings until 0400 sign-off, and mornings after 1000 sign-on. Programming is mainly news and sports, with occasional radio dramas. But, don't expect to hear any science fiction. Radio Quito stopped doing that sort of thing a long time ago.

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and permission to reprint <http://www.pateplumaradio.com> that has many other fascinating items that reading. Next month, I hope to bring you an harrowing account of a ship radio operator.

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## **IARU Endorsed Booklet Promoting Ethics**

Contributed by Bruce Meier, NILN, from the weekly ARRL newsletter

Bill Moore, NC1L, ARRL Awards Manager, reports on the DXCC Blog Web page: "A 67-page booklet, 'Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur' by John Devoldere, ON4UN, and Mark Demeuleneere, ON4WW, is available for free download from the ARRL Web site. The booklet is an "Americanized" version of the booklet that the authors wrote for an international audience. An international version is also available. At its June 2008 meeting, the IARU Administrative Council endorsed and recommended the principles set out in the booklet as a means of encouraging all radio amateurs to operate to the highest levels of proficiency, with proper consideration for others using the amateur radio bands and as a tool to teach newcomers and others correct operating behavior. The booklet mainly addresses HF operating issues, but the principles are also applicable to VHF and higher bands.

ARRL Chief Executive Officer and IARU Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ, expressed appreciation for Devoldere's and Demeuleneere's efforts: "The authors are well known, experienced HF operators who are concerned about on-the-air operating standards and who decided that 'It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.' Anyone who reads their booklet will learn something, no matter how experienced they may be."

The Web link for the booklet is: <http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/Eth-operating-ENarrl-SITE-1jul2008.pdf>

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## **2008 OCRA Officers and Board Members**

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Ken Kauffmann, KR4FM ó Vice President  
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