

Orange County Radio Amateurs (OCRA) Newsletter

January, 2009

From the "Editor"

This will be a short, transitional newsletter. Our past Secretary, Laurie, N1YXU, has passed along the torch after two exceptional years of service to OCRA. She has been a ball of fire, bringing the club into a new era, and her work will be sorely missed. Hopefully, our new secretary, Adriano, KI4OTN, will be transitioned into the job in time for the February newsletter, but for now, here's the news that's fit to print:

The President's QRM (January 2009)

Well, putting aside a raft of "important matters," I'm finally forcing myself to get out the January newsletter. Is it just me, or does it seem to you, too, that there are too many things to do in too short a time? (And I thought retirement would be all about relaxation!) If you're thinking that the OCRA Newsletter was never late when Laurie (N1YXU) did it, you can take some solace in knowing that I am thinking the very same thing. She will be a tough act to follow! But hopefully, by February, our new secretary and I will have this worked out. Until then, "please stand by..."

First, let's welcome back to OCRA Andy Meyer (N4GMG) who, I'm told, belonged to OCRA in times past and has now joined with us once again. Welcome, Andy! Also, thanks to all of you who've "reenlisted" for 2009. I hope you won't be disappointed.

The January membership meeting had us conducting our annual elections for OCRA officers, and the unanimous results are:

President (once again): Woody K3VSA
Vice-President (once again): Ken KR4FM
Treasurer (once again): Dan KR4FM
Secretary (newly elected) Adriano KI4OTN

We also had two board members with expiring terms, and we had three volunteers to replace them. Since a check of our club constitution showed that we could have up to eight board members, the club voted unanimously to install all three:

Gerry KD4YJV
Karen KD4YJZ

Chris N2JFP

At that meeting, it was also decided to invite DFMA members to participate with OCRA in Field Day 2009, and I am composing a formal letter of invitation to be sent to them. DFMA's Main Event is, of course, the DurHAMfest, and the planning and administration of that precludes the Durham club from taking a more active role in Field Day, so perhaps they'd like to partner with us and enjoy our great Field Day setup.

Another item proposed, discussed and agreed to is a new page on our website which will remember our "Silent Keys," those hams we've known and been influenced by who are no longer among the living. Once a year, we'll hold a special Silent Key Net, and the Net Control Operator will call the roll of OCRA members and friends who have passed on, so that their names and callsigns will once again be transmitted over the air. So, send me the info on your parents or grandparents who were hams, and significant elmers or friends who've influenced your Amateur Radio avocation, and I'll build the page.

The CW portion of the Classic Exchange is taking place while I write these words, and I hope that you'll have a chance to participate. OCRA's own WQ8U, Mac, is the newsletter editor for the CX, and I know he'll be on the air with a selection of his extensive collection of classic radio gear. I would love to see every one of us acquire and use a piece of antique radio equipment just to conserve and appreciate this important part of our heritage.

And speaking of CW, I've run across a company, COMAX.COM, that sells a software package that allows you to control your Windows PC using a Morse Code key instead of a keyboard. They claim that a top flight Morse operator can input data to the computer faster with a key than with a keyboard, and maybe they're right. of course, there's now a link to their website on our "Resources" page.

You can now order OCRA name tags from the Sign Man of Baton Rouge, and we will be taking up a mass order for OCRA name tags and OCRA coffee mugs at the February meeting.

I see that the FCC is requesting assistance from members of the Amateur Radio Service concerning the upcoming changeover to Digital Television, which will take place on February 17th. It seems that, despite vast infusions of Your Tax Dollars, there's quite a bit of confusion out there on the part of the average TV viewer. It's probably not as confusing as Fathers' Day in Hollywood, yet, but it might be close. The FCC wants us to use our expertise to assist these viewers with answers to their questions. A message went out on the NCOCRA Yahoo Group asking for volunteers to work a telephone bank at WUNC-TV the day of the Big Switchover. If you want to help, by all means volunteer and do so!

The inaugurations have now come and gone. Hams helped with inaugurations at both the Federal and State levels, and I understand that here in North Carolina, hams working at

the gubernatorial inauguration did traffic direction duties at the parade. I must confess that I also have mixed emotions about the expanded roles we hams are being asked to perform. Used to be, hams concerned themselves with providing "health and welfare" messaging and such, and our "customers" were ordinary citizens who couldn't communicate by normal means. Now, governmental agencies are looking to us as a sort of adjunct corps of quasi-official communicators. I suppose it's good that we're being sought after, but I hope it doesn't get to the point where we're expected to take firearms training and are given powers of arrest.

I say this only partly in jest, because who knows how bad civilization might become before it gets better? Just this evening, my wife, daughter and I were at the Hillsborough Wal-Mart, and there we encountered some friends from church: a gentleman and his wife, who happens to require a walker. While she was inside Wal-Mart, he was outside fetching the van and while he was waiting at the store entrance for her to come out, some lowlife reached into the van and ran off with the lady's pocketbook, which of course contained driver's license, credit cards, a little cash, an irreplaceable prescription of pain medicine, etc.

Like many people at this time, they are far from well-to-do, and this incident will hurt them financially. Therefore, be forewarned: Insure that your vehicle is locked at all times. Tell your XYLs to remove their keys and lock their pocketbooks in their cars immediately upon leaving a store and then load the bags into the hatchback or trunk. Especially make sure that any mobile radio equipment is camouflaged or otherwise concealed from sight.

Seventy years ago, during the Great Depression, we could at least expect most people to have a modicum of morality and honesty. I'm not sure such expectations are reasonable any longer, so be careful! I don't want to have to go to any funerals for OCRA members who perished because of a lapse of situational awareness.

Until next time,

73 de Woody K3VSA

OCRA Officers:

President: Raymond ("Woody") Woodward K3VSA

Vice-President: Ken Kauffmann KR4FM

Treasurer: Dan Eddleman KR4UB

Secretary: Adriano Marcuz KI4OTN

Board Members:

Gerry Cassara KD4YJV (exp 2011)
Chris Ferrer N2JFP (exp 2011)
Robert Little N4ZAK (exp 2010)
Brian McLamb KI4YSZ (exp 2010)
Dave Snyder W4SAR (exp 2010)
Karen Snyder KD4YJZ (exp 2011)

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