



ORANGE COUNTY RADIO AMATEURS
(an ARRL Special Services Club)
Orange County, North Carolina



Orange County Radio Amateurs (OCRA) Newsletter
March 2009

From the Editor

Well,

Here we are, two months into 2009 and less than four months away from field day 2009. To say that time flies is an understatement. Nonetheless it's fast approaching, so; **make your plans and participate.** You'll be glad you did.

My late Christmas

My 2008 Christmas came a bit late, as I most recently was blessed to purchase a Kenwood TS-450SAT from the son of a deceased Raleigh area HAM. The radio was not functional at time of purchase and my suspicion as well as input from more knowledgeable amateurs pointed to bad final RF stage transistors. Well it turned out to be a much better issue than that; A little know-how, couple pair of eye glasses ☺, good soldering iron and determination to succeed resulted in a fine working transceiver and an Indiana 40m contact on the first try. Oh yes, been busy since (TN, OH, FL, NY, WI, MS, IL and 3 foreign DX). With my dipole pointing to NNE/SSW I however, could not reach the Azores on March 2nd ☹.

CQ100

While testing my newly acquired rig and QSOing with a station in TN, I learn about the existence of CQ100. CQ100? some may say, what's that; well it is an Internet method via which licensed (verification required) ham operators with the use of a PC and Internet connection can communicate with amateurs all over the world (see <http://www.qsonet.com/programs.html> for additional info). At first I shook my head and said, what does this have to do with HAM radio? Why is it different than a "chat room"? Well as I was conversing with NA4JB, the answer is more inspiring, in that: 1) Any amateur traveling a lot for business or other activities need not take along equipment to stay in touch with friends. 2) As we get more mature (;) climbing 50,70,100' towers causes our XYL to worry. So in the age of computers and the Internet someone has come up with a way to keep us active and connected. I can think of several not so healthy hams I know who might consider this a way to stay in touch and not having to worry about equipment, weather, tuning, climbing, etc....

News letter Format (going forward)

News letter format will start with:

- 1) Secretary's opening remarks
- 2) Board meeting report
- 3) General meeting report
- 4) QSL Card(s) of the month
- 5) Editorial write ups
- 6) Community involvement by our club
- 7) Miscellaneous information

Until next month.....

Adriano – KI4OTN
KI4OTN@ncocra.org



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March board meeting report:

March board meeting was held, as customary at the Casa Ibarra restaurant in Hillsborough.. (OCRA's board meetings are open to everyone and begin at about 1830L (6:30PM) on the second Monday evening of each month.

Board members in attendance:

- Raymond (Woody) Woodward (K3VSA) OCRA President.
- Dan Eddleman (KR4UB) OCRA Treasurer
- Adriano Marcuz (KI4OTN) OCRA Secretary

Also attending were Dewey Thompson (W4AHR), Justin Hinecke (KD4CPM), Bruce (N1LN) and Laurie Meier (N1YXU), Chris Lawless (KG4HNC), Dee (KU4GC) and MK Ramm (W4MKR).

Woody reported that the OCRA members' list on our WEB site

(<http://www.ncocra.org/members.html>) had been updated to show all members' current status.

Woody reported that he had sent a letter to WUNC-TV in where we were inquired about offering support for WUNC spring telethon during a week night. Ms. Gloria Howell (WUNC-TV representative) responded with week-end dates of needed support.

Also discussed was amateur support for the upcoming digital conversion, in helping members of the community with the transition.

It was agreed by the board that we ask the membership to approve the acquisition of two tables for OCRA at the upcoming RARSFest and DurHAMFest. Dee offered to reserve the tables once the membership approved the Board's recommendation.

Laurie and Bruce proposed "some communications" training to better prepare ourselves for a real emergency (see detailed article below).

March meeting report:

Dave Snyder reported great news from his presentation to the Durham DFMA club for a joining of camps and forces at field day. He was WELL received by DFMA members and the Field Day team will probably benefit by the addition of several expert CW operators as well as other very qualified operators from DFMA. The California competition (the very wealthy 9A group we placed second to for a couple of years now) better be ready, this year WE'LL take home the trophy.

Dan Eddleman reported that between battery sales and other donation, our club coffer is now around \$6,000.

Woody presented WUNC telethon representative Ms. Gloria Howell's response to our week night support effort and asked for members input as to what the "group" would like to do. A vote was taken and the group overwhelmingly supported week nights as a mean for OCRA to provide telephone support. Woody



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will communicate the clubs wishes to WUNC-TV.

Woody proposed a “site clean up effort” for the WUNC-TV tower area (where our 442.150 MHz repeater is located) to the recently retired WUNC-TV chief engineer, who eagerly said he would talk to the new chief engineer to set up a meeting to discuss this effort.

Dan Eddleman volunteered to receive individual callsign OCRA cup orders and then place the order with the Sign Man.

Laurie Meier presented (see article below) to the body the desire to form a steering committee to look at “emergency communications” training and procedures for OCRA HAM, she asked that if anyone in the club had a calling/drawing to participate in this effort to contact her via E-Mail lauriemeier@bellsouth.net

Dave Snyder (W4SAR), Gerald Jones (KI4MXP) and Gary Pielak (AI4GT) oversaw a VE session which resulted in a new Technician and General class HAM operators. **Congratulation to both candidates**
Our thanks to the three VE’s who missed the meeting and presentation to perform this task for our club.

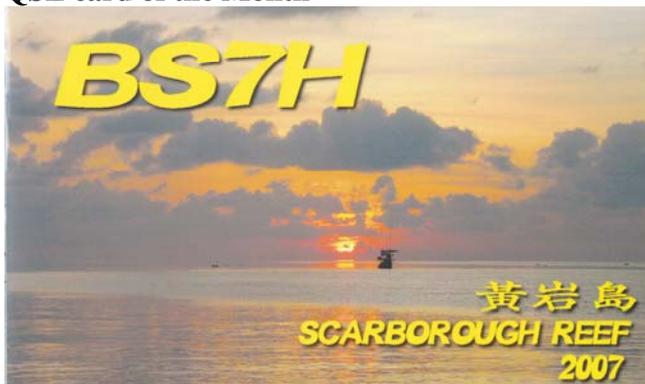
John (“MAC”) McCauley (WQ8U) proposed offering a free year’s membership in OCRA to anyone who successfully passes the Technician exam at an OCRA VE session. Dee (KU4GC) suggested adding the requirement that the person must attend at least one OCRA meeting to claim the free one year OCRA Membership. These suggestions were made into a motion, which was unanimously approved.

A wonderful presentation:

A most en”light”ening wonderful presentation on **light beam communication** was made by Ryerson (“Rye”) Gewalt (K9LCJ) and Gary O Niel (N3GO). The knightlites as they are known are experimenting on “line of sight light communication”. Using battery powered light emitting diodes, groups all over the world have been researching how to DX communicate using this medium. The equipment is totally home made and does not cost much to construct. The current long distance achievements are in the range of around 130mi. More information on the “Knightlites” can be found at <http://www.knightlites.org> as well as being discussed on the yahoo groups at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/knightlites_optical_comm/?yguid=342563615

QSL card of the Month





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NC QSO party From (Bruce Meier) N1LN

If you missed out on the Ham Radio event that occurred on Sunday, March 8 from noon - 10pm local time, you now have to wait one full year.

What am I talking about? Well, the North Carolina QSO Party of course. The NC QSO Party is an annual operating event sponsored by the Forsyth Amateur Radio Club from Winston-Salem. Their club call is W4NC. The operating modes are both SSB and CW and you can operate on any and all HF bands from 10 meters to 80 meters. For those of you trying to get your Worked All States award, this event is even better than the ARRL Sweepstakes in November. Why? Well, everyone in the US and Canada (and even DX stations) are trying to work North Carolina and ONLY North Carolina.

This year Laurie and I once again organized a club entry and decided to use our club call - NC4KW. You may remember last year we had two entries. One was W4UNC and the other was NC4KW. We did not want to try to do that again because this year we wanted to have full access to all bands / modes / antennas so we could maximize our score and try to win again. Our team was an ALL OCRA entry with fellow club members Dave Snyder - W4SAR, Steve Jackson - KZ1X, Laurie - N1YXU and me - N1LN.

At exactly Noon, Laurie started sending out a CQ NC QSO PARTY from NC4KW on 20 meter SSB. The stations immediately started to call her. Quickly her rate jumped up to 120 - 130 QSOs per hour and stayed there for most of the first hour. Then, in came the heavy rain. With the rain, came very heaving rain static. If you have never rain static - lucky you. Let me briefly describe it as VERY loud (for us around S7 - S9) QRN everywhere. As this contest has a 100 watt power rule, the super loud stations were few and far between so copy was difficult. The rate dropped below 50 Qs / hour and it was about to be my turn to operate CW. I bounced between 20 cw and 40 cw trying to maintain a decent rate, but it was impossible to get above 100 Qs / hr. Why was that important? Well, as I said earlier, last year we won. We assumed that the club competition would be greater this year with the Winston-Salem club trying to win back first place. Our target average rate for the entire 10 hours was 60 Qs / hour to try to get our total QSO count to 600. We knew that as we approached the end of the event the rates would be lower, we had to maximize the early hours. Dave followed my CW hour and went back to 20 SSB. By then we figured out that the noise was only on the top antennas, so Dave used the mid 20 meter yagi at 65'. Steve was up next and worked 40 SSB, using the 40 meter yagi at 65'. The antennas between 105' and 120' proved to be of no value. TOO much rain static. We continued to rotate operators for the rest of the event as well as moving from band to band and mode to mode with our eyes always focused on the QSO count and the rate meter. Oh yes - almost forgot. Another VERY key number is the quantity of multipliers we worked. For this event, a multiplier was defined as the first time we work a new state, new NC county or the first (only) DX country. Our Mult-count continued to increase also.

Move the clock ahead to 10:00pm. The contest is now over. How did we do?

There are a few ways to judge the success or failure of a contest entry.

- > Did we have a good time - - - YES
- > Were there any equipment malfunctions - - - NO
- > Did we reach the QSO count target - - - YES
- > Did we reach the MULTIPLIER count target - - - YES
- > Did we beat last years score? If so, buy how much? YES - by 50,000 points (or 50% more than last year)
- > Did we win?

Well, we were able to answer 5 of the 6 questions. The 6th answer won't be available until May or June 2009.

	2009	2008	Increase
QSO count:	618	444	174 (+ 39%)
Mult count:	100	90	10 (+11%)
Total score:	149,600	92,630	56,970 (+61.5%)

Again, if you missed it - you now get to wait for a full year.

73,
 Bruce - N1LN
 (aka: NC4KW)



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OCRA ARES communications preparedness training

By Laurie Meier (N1YXU)

One of the areas of amateur radio that I am most interested in is emergency communication. I have had the privilege of working with trained amateur radio operators in an extreme situation, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I was incredibly proud to be able to provide tangible assistance to people who were suffering and separated from their family members. Having formal emergency communications training allowed me to be effective when our Houston ARES group was asked to assist in the communications efforts for the Hurricane Katrina evacuees.

Why should you care about becoming trained in emergency communications? Well – It is not a question of whether OCRA members will be needed to help with communications in an emergency situation. It is a question of when OCRA members will be needed and, more importantly, whether OCRA members will be prepared to assist with communications.

I have volunteered to lead a group within OCRA to focus on ensuring that we are prepared. This effort cannot be done by one person. That is the reason for this note – I am asking you to consider becoming involved in the effort.

What will the group do?

- Contribute articles to the OCRA newsletter on specific emergency communications topics.
- Present brief training sessions at the monthly OCRA membership meetings.
- Design mock emergency situations to demonstrate emergency communication practices.
- Conduct on-the-air training sessions to ensure OCRA members have knowledge of various types of nets (resource, tactical) and message handling.
- ... [more work to be defined by the group members...]

Please let me know if you are interested in being part of this effort. The group will have its first meeting in April at our house. We will present our first training session at the May OCRA club meeting.

Even if you voiced interest at the OCRA meeting in being part of the group, I would appreciate if you would send me an email.

I look forward to working with you and will all OCRA members to ensure that we are known as invaluable communicators within our community.

Best regards,
Laurie Meier – N1YXU



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President QRM

Product Review: LaCrosse Atomic Wall Clock WS-8157OAK-IT

by Woody (K3VSA)

My existing atomic wall clock was perfectly suitable for keeping local time, but becoming active on HF meant keeping track of zulu time, too. I had been searching for a while for a dual clock system that would allow the display of European, or "military" time, in the 24-hour format, in addition to automatic time setting via WWVB. MFJ sells some dual time 24-hour format clocks, but they don't synch to WWVB.

While painting the walls of the ham shack/office, I managed to drop my wall clock and crack the LCD panel, rendering it useless. A trip to the Hillsborough Wal-Mart allowed me to part with \$29 and change and get a LaCrosse Atomic Wall Clock, model WS-8157OAK-IT. This unit has decorative imitation oak panels on the side and a remote temperature transmitter (on 915MHz) that you can position 330 feet away. While setting it up, I made an interesting discovery. Even though nothing on the package says anything about this clock displaying Greenwich time, there is a GMT setting in the setup menu. And it works, too! A second trip to Wally World and another \$29 and change, and I now have two matching wall clocks for the office shack, one displaying local and the other displaying zulu time.

I did have to give up the 24-hour format, since this clock has no provision for displaying such, but I got everything else I was looking for, along with the bonus of selecting inside/outside temperatures in Celsius on the zulu clock and Fahrenheit on the local clock.



Clock in original package



Clocks adjusted and installed on Woody's shack/office wall.



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The President's QRM part two
(March 2009)

Let's extend a warm welcome to Wayne Estabrooks (KJ4GDW), who just joined the club. Wayne has an extensive background in television broadcast engineering and has worked on transmitters that make even Bruce's and Laurie's rigs look like peanut whistles. (We're going to see if we can coax him to do a club presentation at some point on some of the highlights of his career.)

I was pleased to hear that Dave Snyder's Field Day presentation at the DFMA meeting went over well. It seems that our brothers and sisters in Durham are responding in a very positive way to the joint Field Day 2009 proposal, and a number of their great operators will hopefully show up and work some radio with us. Incidentally, Dave is scheduled to appear as the main event for our April OCRA meeting, dressed in his complete regalia of his alter ego, the Captain of Infantry in King George's army, continually attempting to put down the rebellion of us unruly colonials. Seriously, he will dispel some persistent erroneous beliefs about the War of Independence. The Redcoats were smarter than we give them credit for.

The big news for me is that I'm finally on HF. Yes, after literally years of procrastination and excuses, I helped Adriano (KI4OTN) put up my G5RV between two tall pine trees, and, lo and behold, the old, forlorn TS-520 still worked after sitting neglected in my office for too long to remember. And I can say that I'm having a ball working sideband and checking into the Tar Heel Emergency Net most nights as an Orange County AEC. Soon we'll have the OCRA Ten Meter Net up and running again, too.

And, yes, Mac, I'll learn Morse code, too! I bought a straight key at the Richmond FrostFest, so it's only a matter of time.

The US economy (for that matter, the world economy) continues to decline, perhaps Titanic like, and the experts are not sure if it's a recession or a depression. The difference is: A recession is when your neighbor is out of work. A depression is when you're out of work. As of this writing, it's not yet a depression for me, but I know some people for whom it is. We'd all be well served to keep prepared for anything. Make sure your batteries are charged and you have a month's supply of canned food on hand. (And a good, non-electric can opener!) Know how you'll cook and obtain water. You're useless for emergency service if you haven't first taken care of your own household.

Both the RARSFest and the DurHAMFest are coming up soon, and OCRA generates a good portion of its operating income from equipment sold at the club tables during these events. So it's not too soon to start rummaging through your stuff to see what you want to get rid of. Bring it to the hamfest and let us know 1) how much you want for it, and 2) what portion of that you wish to go to OCRA, and we'll see if we can't sell it for you. Consider spending some time behind the tables representing us, too, because that's also a fun activity. Everybody at the hamfest eventually passes by our tables, so you'll meet some great folks, perhaps some you've talked to over the air! Until next time,

vy 73 de Woody K3VSA



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Other items of interest

Steve's (KZ1X) 30m, 1/2 wave vertical antenna raising party



Completed antenna project. 45' tall guyed 1.75" aluminum tubing mast.



Perry North (KJ4IYJ)'s daughter pondering the whole thing.



KR4FM doing??



N1LN The official antenna inspector.



Going Up?



Steve, I'm not sure it's straight.



Hold on I'll fix it (KZ1X).



Steve's other toys.



W4PAH Dancing for joy??

KZ1X is one of the original founders of OCRA, a gifted CW operator and antenna designer has delighted most of us with his: Field day new (unusual) antennas, monthly club meeting show and tell as well as assisting many, many new ham achieve a better understanding of radio wave propagation as well as overcoming CW learning barriers. Have fun with the new toy Steve.



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AZ HAMs need help

It has been once said that “for evil to triumph all that good men (and women) must do is nothing”. “What do you mean?” one may say. Well so many wonderful things exist in our nation that are not available elsewhere, things which other people before us took time and energy to put in place.

Many of these things are taken for granted by us ALL. The following is a request for help from our ham comrades in Arizona. If you are so inclined participate, but most importantly don't take our NC (laws, rules, directives) blessings for granted.

73 Adriano.

(Cut and pasted from QRZ.COM)

Please take the time to read. This is of extreme importance.

Last Wednesday I (along with several others) testified in front of an Arizona House committee regarding (PRB-1) HB2514 which is better known as the "Amateur Radio Antenna Bill." This bill would force HOA's to provide "REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION" to Amateur Radio antennas. It is really that simple.

You must understand, in Arizona all new housing since the 70's are pretty much under HOA control. So, it is not all that simple to buy a home outside of one of these. Non-HOA homes are often really old, run down or have land attached to them out in the desert making them cost-prohibitive. Of course, there are exceptions but they are not common. Arizona law requires a neighborhood association and board on all new housing developments.

The reason I mention all of this is because a common response is "well then don't buy a home on an HOA."

There were a bunch of reporters covering this hearing and now it is in the paper. Currently it is in the Tucson paper (Daily Star) and the East Valley Tribune in Phoenix. The Arizona Daily Star is going to be running a big, in-depth article in the print edition of the paper in the morning (Sunday, March 15).

The article online now is not pretty. It takes things and twists them. The reporter writing this article was not friendly to the cause. But it is a public hearing... what can you do?

PLEASE, PLEASE go to: <http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/hourlyupdate/284351.php>

and type a comment to this article. We need support from hams to help us get this bill passed. This bill, if passes will help other states get similar laws.

I would greatly appreciate your help. Countless hours and frankly several years have gone into this.

Randy, KF0X
Tucson, Arizona

ARRL has been totally ineffective in its Congressional (AZ) lobbying.



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REMINDER: Location for the Monthly OCRA Meeting is: Orange Co EOC, 510 Meadowland Dr. in Hillsborough.

Direction to meeting site:

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 the 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