

ORANGE COUNTY RADIO AMATEURS
An ARRL Special Services Club
Orange County, North Carolina

The OCRA Newsletter for November, 2009

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November Board Meeting Summary

The OCRA Board Meeting for November was held at Casa Ibarra on Monday, November 9th at 6:30PM as announced on the OCRA website. In attendance were Officers and Board Members:

Woody Woodward (K3VSA), President
Ken Kauffmann (KR4FM), Vice President
Dan Eddleman (KR4UB), Treasurer
Laurie Meier (N1YXU), OC ARES
Dave Snyder (W4SAR), Board Member
Karen Snyder (KD4YJZ), Board Member

Others attending the Board Meeting were:

Mike Everette (WA4DLF)
Justin Heinecke (KD4CPM)
Bruce Meier (N1LN)
Dee Ramm (KU4GC)
Dewey Thompson (WA4AHR)
Lisa Woodward (KG4PFB)

Treasurer Dan Eddleman (KR4UB) reported a balance of \$6,662.54 in the club's account. It was determined that the monetary donation to Sunrise Church, which had been approved about a year ago had not actually been written. Dan wrote a check from the OCRA account in the agreed amount of \$100 for Woody (K3VSA) to deliver to Sunrise Church. It was agreed to reimburse Woody \$40 for the eight sections of five foot masts he bought for Orange County ARES at an exceptionally good closeout price.

Further funding for the temporary emergency antenna for the Orange EOC was postponed until future review can be done to determine what is needed.

Treasury balance did not reflect the funds allocated for the new 2 Meter repeater (about \$1,100) and the power amplifier (\$400). No further work on the new 2 Meter repeater had been done due to schedule conflicts, and it was not known precisely when the work would continue, however we all want K4ITL and KR4UB to give it their best, so we are all remaining patient.

The venue for the 2009 OCRA Holiday Dinner was not finalized, but the Bennett Pointe Grill in Durham remains a strong contender. Bruce Meier (N1LN) agreed to continue to search for the best location and the board would mention at the Membership Meeting that no location had been chosen yet and suggestions to Bruce would be considered. It was agreed that the date of the dinner should be the same second Monday that the normal monthly meeting would be held so as to minimize schedule disruptions for members.

OC ARES EOC Laurie Meier (N1YXU) gave an update on the upcoming Section Emergency Test ("SET") and phone tree activation. Woody mentioned a medical emergency that Lisa (KG4PFB) had been involved with earlier in the week in regard to her Girl Scout activities. It seems that all the adults who are engaged in field activities with the Girl Scouts are required to have up-to-date medical history forms on file, to be used in case of some medical emergency. Woody suggested that OC ARES consider encouraging its members to complete and maintain similar histories, and he volunteered to bring a sample blank form set to a future meeting for review and possible action.

A construction party to build portable J-Pole antennas for OC ARES members will be scheduled for some time in January. In the meantime, prototypes will be made and tested until the design and dimensions are finalized and a materials list is produced.

The Board Meeting was subsequently adjourned.

de K3VSA

October Membership Meeting Notes

The OCRA Membership Meeting for November was held at the Orange County EOC Building in Hillsborough. Dan Eddleman (KR4UB) gave the treasurer's report and an update on the new 2 Meter repeater. Laurie Meier (N1YXU) gave an update on the upcoming Section Emergency Test.

The Board asked the members to give any suggestions about the upcoming Holiday Dinner to Bruce (N1LN), who was tasked with making reservations at a suitable location. A show of hands indicated that between thirty and forty people will likely attend the dinner. The date is intended to be Monday, December 14th at 6:30PM.

Guest Speaker Mike Everette (WA4DLF) gave a presentation on the history and significance of the National HRO series of receivers, and he was followed by Steve Ahlbom (W3AHL), who gave an overview on digital communications [see "The President's QRM" for more about these].

Dave Snyder (W4SAR) awarded The OCRA Cup to Steve Ahlbom (W3AHL) in recognition of his tireless work on behalf of Amateur Radio emergency communications since moving here from Pennsylvania a short while ago. Dave also mentioned our excellent showing at Field Day 2009 and gave credit to the operators from DFMA, without whom we would not have been able to do so well.

The meeting was adjourned after enjoying an apple upside-down cake created by Lisa (KG4PFB).

de K3VSA

The President's QRM (October 2009)

This month, I'm exceptionally pleased to say that former OCRA Charter Member, Lad Carrington (W4ORD), has indeed officially rejoined the club. He'll be going in for knee replacement surgery in mid-December, unfortunately just in time to miss the Holiday Dinner. Also joining the club is Ben Liddy (KB4NQH), whom I've had the pleasure to talk with over the air. We hope Ben will be able to make the dinner and hopefully bring his XYL, whom I met at the last DFMA meeting. Good to have both of you! (We had one other new member joining us this month, as you'll read about below.)

Congratulations are in order for OCRA's own Steve Mills (KJ4NPD), who will soon have a new callsign on account of his passing the Amateur Extra exam at the VE session held at the meeting.

The program at the November meeting was L-O-N-G!! Traditionally, OCRA meetings have not included much in the way of a formal program, but this time we had not one but two programs at the same meeting. We were very lucky to snag Mike Everette (WA4DLF), who is both a historian and a ham, and a boatanchor collector at that. He did an absolutely first-rate presentation on the highly significant National HRO receiver, complete with a working model on hand. This radio may well have been the best of the early superheterodynes, and it can still give a good account of itself today. A good case can be made that the HRO significantly helped win World War II. It must have been one heck of a great radio if even two of our enemies produced copies of it for their own use.

Mike not only knows the names, dates and places involved, but he also has a passion for the old sets that he makes contagious in the way he does his talks. I talked to him on the air the following day, and he was effuse with his appreciation for the friendship and

hospitality he experienced at our meeting. He said he was filling out his application to join our club, and we received that application just a few days later. Mike, welcome to OCRA!

The other program was concerned with more modern hardware. Steve Ahlbom (W3AHL) gave us an equipment-rich overview of digital communications in both the conventional and the microwave regions. This was quite an eye opener for someone like me who thought that you had to be a metal worker to rig up something to get on the GHz bands. Steve showed us how to repurpose common and cheap Wi-Fi hardware and get on these frequencies. He also talked about Winlink and D-STAR systems and put them all into perspective based upon his extensive EMCOMM experience in Pennsylvania. I'm sure it was no surprise to anyone in attendance when Steve was presented with The OCRA Cup this month.

On Friday, November 13th, OC ARES tested its call tree activation process, whereby the Orange County AECs were each directed by EC Laurie Meier (N1YXU) to call specific ARES members and advise them of the test activation. Official results will not be finalized until the next OC ARES Leadership Team Meeting, but from my own perspective, the test went well with only a few refinements needed.

I was pleased to see so many of our members on Sunday, November 15th at the JARSFest in Benson, NC. This is not exactly the largest hamfest around, but it is one of the friendliest, and I enjoy attending it. Once again, the excellent South Wake ARS was giving away free bags of freshly popped popcorn out there in the tailgating area. There were the usual assortment of vendors inside, and the ones I spoke with said they were doing a good business this year, which is reassuring for the future of our avocation. Stand by to see if my XYL kills or disowns me because of the 440MHz linear amplifier that I just couldn't pass up!

Isn't it amazing how quickly 2009 has gone by? In just a few weeks, we'll be having our annual OCRA Holiday Dinner, and then before we know it, January will be upon us! We're going to be doing something practical then: building some portable antennas for emergency use. We bought some twinlead at JARSFest that we'll use to construct the prototypes. It should be a useful, fun and instructive club project.

January also brings us to the annual chore of determining the OCRA officers for the year. It's been my privilege to serve you all as OCRA President for these two years, and as Vice-President before that. Of course, it's always a privilege to serve in such a capacity, but because of who you all are and what you all do, it's been my joy, too. Now it's time for others to assume the leadership, and rest assured, well qualified people are out there who can do an excellent job in those two high offices. I believe the best post for me in this upcoming year is as OCRA Secretary, so that's where I think I'll volunteer.

Until next time,
vy 73 de Woody K3VSA

Reminders:

The Orange County ARES Simulated Emergency Test ("SET") for 2009 will take place on Saturday, November 21st. Details will be communicated on the OCRA website and the NCO CRA Yahoo Group.

The next OCRA Membership Meeting will be the annual Holiday Dinner at 6:30PM Monday, December 14th, location to be announced. No Board Meeting will precede the Holiday Dinner meeting.

Be sure to visit our club's website (<http://www.ncocra.org>) to learn about other upcoming events in the area.

Sign up to be one of our OCRA Club Facebook buddies.

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