



The OCRA Newsletter—For May 2014

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- 3) Prior Month's Meeting Highlights
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From the Secretary's desk

Last month was quite interesting and brought with it many interesting scenarios.

73,

Adriano (KV7D)

Board Meeting Minutes

1. Board meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Present: Woodward R. (Pres.), Karen, S. (VP), Adriano M (sec). Board: Tucker McGuire, Michael N., Mike C., Tadd T.,
3. Reported there were no April meeting minutes to record.
4. Treasurer report: Out of town on vacation.
5. ARES: Nothing was presented for ARES.
6. 145.230MHz repeater's antenna and possible coax are having issues (high SWR at 3.9:1 measured with Array solutions AIM4170 and confirmed by Daiwa CN801 in Dan's absence). Discussion over E-Mail with Dan, Adriano shut the repeater down. A discussion ensued as what to undertake for this repeater by OCRA. Adriano M. (Secretary) was tasked to get additional information and pricing on a commercial grade VHF antenna replacement and bring to board in June.
7. Motion was made by Mike Carwile and seconded by Tadd T. that following a prior month's suggestion to move OCRA board meeting to a different night, so that the board would not be rushed in discussing items and to lessen the distractions, be pursued. Motion carried. An E-Mail to board members to poll for majority preference will be sent.
6. R. Woodward: Introduced Billy K9OH now working for EOC. Orange County emergency management has turned the former OCRA comm room into Billy's office. A place for relocation of OCRA equipment has not yet been designated.

Board Meeting Minutes Continued

6. R.Woodward: Orange County EOC communications to switch from VIPR to P25 sometime in June. Requested OCRA emergency comm for 2 hrs (or more) during that period of time.
7. Tucker McG. Many members have other club affiliations, one of them is Alamance. He asked if OCRA would consider moving the meeting night to a different night so that Alamance located members could attend both functions. (This has been brought-up before for consideration; some comments arose by OCRA members present at meeting that DFMA should be the possible tie breaker?). Motion was made by Tadd and seconded by Karen to post on reflector and acquire consensus of 2/3 majority on third Monday of month for OCRA monthly meeting. Motion carried.
8. A motion to adjourn at 7:05pm, which was seconded and was approved by the board.

Notes/Announcements

The OCRA Membership Meeting for February 2014 will be held on Monday, April 14, starting at 1900L (7:00 pm) at the Orange County Emergency Services Building, 510 Meadowlands Drive in Hillsborough. The Officers and Board Members will meet starting at 1815L (6:15 pm) at the same location.

General Meeting Minutes

1. Board meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.
2. Count of Members present 36
3. Introductions
4. VE Session Intro and set-up
5. No Treasurer Report
6. No ARES Report
7. Dee Ramm (KU4GC) RARS revenue report \$168.50
8. Dee Ramm (KU4GC) Made available DFMA hamvention tickets (\$5 ea)
9. President R (Woody) Woodward (K3VSA) announced 145.230MHz repeater was down awaiting research on antenna replacement cost information from Adriano (KV7D in absence of Dan Eddleman repeater manager for OCRA). More detailed and final pricing to be presented at the June meeting.
10. Tucker McGuire (KK4UNZ) proposed for considerations that OCRA change the meeting night so that members who are also part of the Alamance county club could attend the OCRA meeting). The two clubs meet on the same night every month. Proposed date was the third Monday of the month.
11. Dave Snyder (W4SAR) Presented results of several sites surveyed for use for Field Day. Little River Community Center and Wilson Lamb (W4BOH) were the finalists. In David's opinion Wilson's property was the best spot for several reasons, (openness, tall trees, accessibility, no need for Piedmont bucket truck), the only drawback was the lack of visibility (from major thoroughfare) for anyone driving by and seeing our signs. A motion was made to use Wilson property which was seconded by Bruce Myer (N1LN) the motion carried. Field Day to be held at Wilson's and Chris Lamb.
6. A motion to adjourn at 8:25pm, which was seconded and was approved by all.

Notes/Announcements

The OCRA Membership Meeting for June 2014 will be held on Monday, June 9, starting at 1900L (7:00 pm) at the Orange County Emergency Services Building, 510 Meadowlands Drive in Hillsborough. The Officers and Board Members will meet starting at 1815L (6:15 pm) at the same location.

The Haj of the Infidel

By Wilson Lamb—W4BOH

Do you have a bucket list? They seem to be all the rage, but since they smack of organization they are not something in which I'm interested. I do have a few things I'd like to do in my few remaining years. I've been to Oshkosh a few times, so that's done and I'm way too old (and poor) to fly fighters, so that's off too. I'm capable of going to hamfests, however, as proven by many BOHmobile trips. So, after hearing about so many Dayton trips from local friends, I decided to give it a go. Starting late (Remember what I said about organization.) I found that rooms were fairly expensive and either far from the fest or in by-the-hour looking places. All would necessitate renting a car and/or taking shuttle rides each morning and afternoon. Then I remembered I had heard of a charter bus run for hams to go to Dayton. Googling "ham bus Dayton" instantly got me the ad for last year's trip and an email to the contact, Bill Lundy, who informed me there was indeed a bus this year and that there were just two seats left. After a few milliseconds of vacillation, I decided to throw in with the bus crowd and give it a try.

This was Bill's 37th year at Dayton, but I don't know how many were bus trips. Among other things, Bill used to be a driver for the small company that owns two buses, so he gets a good rate on the bus and knows how to use it. The more I thought about not driving, not dealing with the room search, not having to get a ride to the fest or home, etc., the better it sounded! I boarded in Burlington, the easternmost pickup, and off we went, with a hired driver because Bill is 82 and can't get commercial insurance. We made brief stops to pick up people (more hams) in Greensboro, Kernersville, Winston, Mayberry, and Wythville, Va. Every single passenger was on time and it only took a minute to put their bags in the cavernous belly of the beast and get going again. We made rest stops at reasonable intervals, had lunch at a Bob Evans (don't bother), and rolled to a stop at our Univ. of Dayton dorm right about 1700. That's about an hour longer than the drive in a car, but having no responsibility for navigation, buying fuel, or checking the oil made the time very enjoyable. One could chat with the 34 new friends on the bus, read, or nap. The big bus was quiet and smooth riding.

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Did I mention a dorm? Yes. UD is a smallish Catholic school smack in the city of Dayton. It's a 15 minute ride from the fest, but the bus dropped us at the gate every morning! On the way we had breakfast, one day at the UD cafeteria and one day at Golden Corral (not a bad breakfast at all). Then the bus sat in the lot near the gate and we could use it to rest our legs or have a quiet lunch. Those who wished could buy subs at the UD cafeteria and leave them on the bus or carry them around (not a good idea). At the end of the day, we boarded the beast again for dinner at a local pizza/Italian place or Golden Corral. The pizza place is a local institution and does an enormous business. It's not a chain and the food has character (good).

Then it was back to the dorm for bull sessions or reading. After a day at the fest, there was not a lot of BS energy available, however, and with no TV we tended to go to bed early to be ready for the 0700 boarding the next day. The dorm was spotless, the bed OK, and cost almost nothing. What's not to like?

So what about the Hamfest, or Hamvention as they call it? As Oshkosh has more planes than one can take in, Hamvention has more "stuff" than one can take in.

The flea market was much bigger (several times) than anything close, maybe four-five times Shelby. There was a lot of stuff, much of it good and some that should have been left at home. I clearly missed the glory days, because there were very few classic components like coils, caps, transformers or chokes. There was almost no HB gear, just a couple of amps. There were boatanchors and some more modern rigs, mostly at fairly fanciful prices but bargaining was possible in many cases. There were all sorts of nice tools and more old two way stuff than anyone could use. Tadd found some usable rigs. It could be seen in a day, but not thoroughly. Best way was to buy what you were sure you wanted, with some haggling if necessary, unless it was something expensive, and make note of what else you wanted. Then work on the else items and the haggling for the expensive items on day two. Some people realized that some markets are very thin and would be reasonable and some would not. It's a sad fact that lots of the stuff there is obsolete beyond reason and that very few are left who know how to use it, even if they wanted to! There were a few nice boatanchors, some at reasonable prices and some not. I'm old, have more than I can work on, and am getting more lazy every day, so all I bought was a couple of coils, a couple of meters, and a couple of relays, and one small transformer (30 cents, it had a broken wire.), maybe fifteen pounds in all.

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The ride home was pretty much a replay of the ride up, except for stopping at Tamarack Lodge, in WV. It has decent food and many displays of craft work by West Virginians. I'm told it was the pioneer setup of such stuff, now seen in many states. I bought a pair of earrings. No not for me, for Dee Anne! And we were back to Burlington around 1700. A guy from Raleigh gave me a ride home.

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a little more, but it might happen. He passed around a sheet and almost everyone on the bus signed up for next year, if it does! The bus and room cost \$175. Dirt cheap considering what one received. Meals were all modest, so the whole thing was very reasonable.

Was it fun? You bet; it was great! Would I go back? Probably, but not for a couple of years and for sure not next year. It's better than Shelby, but not overwhelmingly better and the time investment (I don't have much left, you know.) is considerable. I'd rather use the travel days fixing something or making one of my improbable creations generate some RF. I could even do some of the things Dee Anne wants done. I might even use some time to get my tower up, only a year, or ten, late! Isn't it amazing how much shorter years are as we age!

73,

Wilson

W4BOH

PS: One of our guys won the grand prize, a \$9000 radio! I got a free peppermint from a vendor.



Field Day 2014 Preparation

By: David Snyder —W4SAR

After a struggle to find a good site for Field Day this year, a majority of Band Captains and board members of both OCRA and the DFMA chose Wilson Lamb, W4BOH's property as our operating site this year. Wilson's place has adequate space, a good mix of trees and level ground so we can raise wire antennas or towers. Bonus is a number of shady spots to put up shelters and power drops available to run air conditioning, laptops and lights for a few of the stations. See the picture for an aerial view of the property and a draft of the site plan.

The site plan was worked out on a walk-through by most of the band captains. Siting is based on the types of antennas to be used by each, with an attempt to minimize inter-station interference. We currently plan to run once again as "9A Battery", meaning up to 9 HF signals can be run simultaneously, with all radio equipment running off batteries or natural power alone. Power from the electric grid or generators may only be used to run auxiliary equipment such as lights, cooling, or logging computers that are not used to control the radios. Also, only temporary radio stations may be used, Wilson's home station is off limits.

The nine HF stations, their band captains and antenna types are as follows:

80 CW – Danke Hirasawa, W4YAS- dipole or end-fed Zepp

40 CW – Andy Yates, W4KIL- wire beam /long wire combo

20 CW- Bruce Meier, N1LN & Wilson Lamb, W4BOH- Yagi

15/10CW- Michael North, KK4EIB- Yagi

Multiband Digital- Dave Snyder, W4SAR- 40M Vertical and a G5RV

80 Phone- Steve Ahlbom W3AHL- inverted "V" dipole

40/15 Phone- Joe Simpson, K4SAR & Adriano Marcuz, KV7D- wire beam and Yagis

20 Phone- Lad Carrington, W4ORD & Dave Snyder, W4SAR – Yagi

10 Phone- Bob Clarke, W4RWC – rotatable dipole

Additional stations which could give bonus points, without adding to the count, are a VHF/UHF station, a satellite station, and a GOTA station (a station intended to introduce unlicensed ops or new hams to operating).

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If you want to operate, see the band captains, relief CW operators in particular are in short supply. A lot of muscle is also needed for the setup of stations on Friday and on Saturday morning, and teardown on Sunday afternoon.

According to the Field Day rules, we may commence setup as of 0000 UTC on June 27, which translates to 8PM Thursday, June 26 in local time. However, from that time until the start of the field Day contest itself, only a total of 24 hours may be used for setup., which can be broken down however we need. Therefore, we will plan on the official set up times to be 8:00am to 8:00pm local time on Friday, June 27th, and 6:00am to 2:00pm on Saturday June 28th. That is a total of 18 hours, leaving a few hours of wiggle room for after dark arrivals on Friday to set up tents and trailers.

Day contest itself, only a total of 24 hours may be used for setup., which can be broken down however we need. Therefore, we will plan on the official set up times to be 8:00am to 8:00pm local time on Friday, June 27th, and 6:00am to 2:00pm on Saturday June 28th. That is a total of 18 hours, leaving a few hours of wiggle room for after dark arrivals on Friday to set up tents and trailers.

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After it was all over the realization came to me that I had an 80 galling water storage tank in my basement - yes, the water heater. It even has a spigot at the bottom from which gravity will produce a very welcome supply of fresh clean water! Just be certain that the circuit breaker that feeds it is off as well so that when the power comes back on the tank will be refilled before energizing the circuit.

Power Inverters (changes 12 volts DC to 120 volt AC) can be a simple answer for small 120 volt requirements and are quite inexpensive these days. Some are small wattage and can be plugged into the cigarette lighter socket in a vehicle and others which supply 400 to 800 watts or so, can be wired directly to a vehicle's battery. They will produced a small amount of 120 volt power for as long as the battery remains charged or while the vehicle is running. These can be found at places like Best a Buy or perhaps Wally World. A small price to pay for emergency preparedness don't you think?!

Field Day operation itself will run for 24 hours straight, from 2:00pm local time on Saturday, June 28, to 2:00pm Sunday June 29. All logging will be done electronically, either N1MM or the N3FJP programs may be used as long as all the proper exchange data can be saved and exported in ADIF format. If anyone needs N3FJP, I hold a license and can set you up and give a tutorial. For N1MM, Bruce N1LN may be the best to speak to. The exchange for Field day is our callsign – likely W4UNC, but that needs to be confirmed, our category “Niner Alpha”, and section – NC. We then need the corresponding info from the other station. The logging programs will automatically record the time and date, they will also prevent making duplicate contacts.

Dee Ramm, KU4GC and M.K. Ramm, W4MKR will be running the canteen , for \$10 per head they will supply a grilled dinner on that Saturday, and a breakfast on Sunday (\$5 if you only want one of these). Additionally, unlimited cold water and soft drinks will be available.

At our next club meeting, we will discuss the logistics for field day, and what additional bonus points we may be able to achieve. We made it to 5th place nationally out of 2500 participants last year. Evey year, we made more points than the previous year. Let us do it again this year, let’s see how close we get to #1! Field Day has been a wonderful synergy between OCRA and DFMA, come on out and be a part of it!

73,

Dave Snyder, W4SAR

Field Day Coordinator

Field Day 2014 Preparation Layout

