

# OCRA Membership Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2022

- **Check-ins (xx) – Bruce, N1LN**

Zoom -

Bruce N1LN, Laurie N1YXU, Dan KR4UB, Ken KO4DHJ, Bill N8BR, Dave NA4VY, Dave W4SAR, Karen KD4JYZ, Wilson W4BOH, Mike KN4ZHP, John KX4P, Steve W4AHL, Jason Wolonick, Adriano KV7D, Mark KR3AM, Pete N4KW, Dee KU4GC, Jeremy K2HJX, and Sherry WB4OSU

Repeater –

Bill KI4RAN, Jack KM4MBG, and Paul N2XZF

- **Opening Comments – Bruce, N1LN**

- Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and reminded that it would be the first time the meeting was being conducted in a new way. Since the group is not meeting in person, it is necessary to be able to have the meeting using different methods – UHF via the repeater, virtual Zoom meeting, and audio conferencing via Zoom. Each of these methods was used in the meeting. It's also important to be able to simultaneously present information to these different audiences. Those who are on Zoom will be able to see the presentation slides. Before the meeting, the presentation slides were distributed which will allow those on UHF and audio conference to follow the presentation since they have the slides.
- The meeting agenda was very full including the team presentations, officer reports, and general discussion.
- Wilson (W4BOH) announced that his son, Christopher, had brought home three displays and one raspberry pi which will be donated to the OCRA raspberry pi group for their use.

- **Team Focused Discussion**

- Introduction – Laurie, N1YXU
  - When the new OCRA board was introduced during the January membership meeting, there were three goals stated for this year. They included club administration, membership engagement, and training.
  - Tonight's meeting will focus on the last two goals – membership engagement and training.
  - In a recent meeting, board members decided the best way to deliver the goals is to develop teams. The teams will be able to work in parallel and have input from many members.
  - Five teams will be introduced tonight. The team leads will give an overview, talk about planned activities, and ask for your support.
  - Your questions and comments will be appreciated.
  - Most important – The teams need your support and involvement to be successful.
- Field Day – Dave, W4SAR
  - There is a lot to discuss when thinking about Field Day. First, is Field Day a contest or an emergency exercise? It is an emergency exercise which includes setting up stations and operating for 24 hours off the grid. The event also provides us all practice to operate whether it is on battery or generator

power. And, on the other hand, it has been cleverly disguised as a contest since operators try to contact as many stations as possible. After all, clubs and individuals want to have bragging rights after competing with others and also themselves.

- OCRA has a long history with Field Day. Since around 1990, OCRA has participated in Field Day. When OCRA and DFMA joined forces into a combined Field Day event, the results included increased rankings and true partnership between the clubs. In fact, the OCRA/DFMA Field Day results have been as high as #2 overall!
- Then, the pandemic hit. In 2020, Field Day was essentially called off. However, in 2021, the ARRL made an exception to the Field Day rules to allow amateurs to operate from their homes and add their results to club totals. What did that mean for OCRA/DFMA in 2021? Well, again we achieved the #2 ranking overall!!
- What will Field Day look like this year? Will it be a traditional, in-person operation? Will it be an at-home operation? Yes and yes. While the situation surrounding the pandemic is getting better and better, a hybrid operation (in-person and at-home) may be the best option. A hybrid operation would simulate a true emergency situation. In an emergency, many of us would operate at home and many would be deployed to support agencies.
- Since there will be a lot of key folks who cannot participate this year and many may want to operate from home, the size of the operation will be smaller than in past years. It may be a 5A operation, depending on the number of volunteers that we have.
- Regardless of the size of the operation, many volunteers will be needed. As in the past, band captains will be the heart of the operation.
- A successful Field Day operation is a result of having stations operated for the full 24 hours. In other words, we need to have butts in chairs!
- The planning for this year's Field Day will start soon. We will need support from many members to make this event successful.

○ Programs – Bill, N8BR, and John, KX4P

- OCRA has a history in terms of programs at meetings. When Patti and Bill Bischoff (N8BR) came to North Carolina, about six years ago, Bill wanted to get involved with local radio groups. He feels fortunate to have found OCRA and was impressed with the meetings. There were several activities including workshops, training, on-hand building, installing, operating, licensing classes, and more.
- Unfortunately, over the last few years (especially interrupted by COVID), meeting programs have not been as frequent. The new board has determined that club programs need to be revived and renewed. The best way to do this will be by forming a Programs Team.
- This team will need volunteers to work with Bill and John to bring fresh ideas and energy. In addition to monthly programs, there may also be spin-off programs.
- How can you get involved?
  - Contact Bill or John to volunteer to join the team.
  - Make suggestions about what you would like to have as program subjects.
  - Help prepare information for programs, set-up programs for the meetings, and/or give the presentations.
- There is an incredible amount of talent and areas of expertise in the club. Let's tap into it!
- Tonight's meeting is an example of the way in which programs will need to be delivered. As previously mentioned, programs will be shown on Zoom and provided in email before the meeting. This will allow everyone to participate.

- Currently, there is a program that is in the works for the March membership meeting. After March, the slate is currently open.
  - Sherry (WB4OSU) volunteered to be a member of the Programs Team.
- Technical Training – Wilson, W4BOH
    - When the topic of technical training came up, Wilson volunteered to lead the team.
    - It is important to think about what you mean when you say radio? The world has had something identifiable as “radio” for well over a century. Many of the people who took early observations of electromagnetic phenomena out of labs and into useful forms were independent hobbyists and experimenters recognizable as what we would call hams.
    - The incredible utility of radio spurred rapid development, bringing it to its “modern” form by about 1930. There have been many improvements to hardware and transmission modes, but the basics of generation, transmission, and reception were well established. Generations of hams have grown up, through no fault of their own, “using” radio, with ever decreasing awareness of how the miraculous technology, they so casually employ, came to be.
    - The focus of the Technical Training Team is the hope that having historical background will motivate some members to want to enhance their own knowledge of radio technology basics and how they work to make our great hobby what it is. The team will be a group of hams willing to organize and provide historical and technical material, making the information available to those who are interested.
    - The training will be provided in many ways – putting together a library of websites; organizing a program for loaning books to members; preparing and delivering technical training; having get-togethers and workshops with hands-on activities; and additional training opportunities.
    - A YouTube channel will be set-up for OCRA to house videos from meetings, activities, and trainings.
- Operator Training – Bruce, N1LN
    - For several years, OCRA has not focused on training. In the past, there were training sessions that were held at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). OCRA ARES had field events with on-the-air training. We need to get back to a focus on both technical and operations training.
    - In the future, we will have a separate team that will focus on Emergency Communication. If we truly want to partner with the Orange County EOC for emergency communication, we will need to reestablish our relationship. We will also need to ensure that we are trained to provide quality communication services. This will require training.
    - Operator training will help us expand our capabilities for on-the-air communications. As Dave mentioned, we need butts in chairs during Field Day to maintain our previous results. Operator training will help in that area.
    - Many members are active on the air. The updates on the Monday night 10 meter net is a great place to hear about their activities.
    - What are the next steps that we will take to focus on Operator Training?
      - We need input to put together a list of training areas that are members have interest in.
      - We need people to develop and deliver the training.
      - There is no need to be an expert in putting the slides or other training materials together. Fortunately, we have several members who can help in that area.

- The format and procedures that the Programs Team develops will be used to deliver training.
  - Some areas of potential training were shared –
    - Net control and backup net control training – Typically, there is a small group of three or four members who alternate as the Saturday AUXCOMM net control. Soon, training will be provided for both net control and backup net control. Jump in and give either of these positions a try!
    - Logging software
    - Remote beacon network and DX clusters
    - Contesting
    - FCC RF exposure testing and compliance – There is an upcoming deadline, and we all need a training session to ensure compliance.
    - Digital modes
  - How can you get involved and participate? Send Bruce an email or call him directly (phone or on-the-air). We really want to have members get involved and share their expertise and interests.
- Repeaters – Dan, KR4UB
  - Bruce introduced this team by acknowledging that Dan has been managing the repeaters for several years. The membership needs to have a good understanding of the work related to repeaters.
  - Dan indicated that he has been the principal repeater coordinator for about 23 years. He has been supported by a small team of dedicated individuals.
  - Over time, the turnover of the team members has resulted in the inability to ensure long-term knowledge transfer and the eventual turning over of the trustee responsibility to the next generation. It is very important to understand that repeater knowledge is a perishable skill if there is a gap in the team and their training.
  - Also, over time, there have been dramatic changes in the availability of host sites, the cost of installations, and the increase of maintenance expenses.
  - In the past, volunteer hams were allowed access to install and maintain repeaters at host sites. This included tower access. As a result, the overall cost was affordable.
  - Current challenges will be a topic for a future discussion.
  - What are the next steps?
    - The Repeater Team needs a special kind of volunteer since the commitment will be long-term. Please consider becoming a member of the team. Training will be provided to ensure long-term capabilities and knowledge transfer.
    - Keep in mind that the license for the repeater is held by the repeater trustee. If the license goes away with no-one becoming trustee, the repeater goes away. Also, coordination of the frequencies is done with the Southeastern Repeater Association (SERA) annually. Without the coordination, the frequencies are no longer guaranteed.
    - The work of this team is invaluable to all of us and our community. The recent passing of Nick Szydle (KA1HPM) who was a valued friend and trusted club member is an example of lost knowledge. Our club needs to ensure we are in a better position to pick up repeater skills and ensure the repeaters are compliant to remain on-the-air.
  - The overall repeater plan will be a topic for a future discussion.

- Bruce commented that the information that Dan shared about repeaters is a partial list of the work that Dan does to support OCRA. He encouraged members to become part of the Repeater Team. Be active, join teams, and support your club!

- **Officers Reports**

- Vice President – Bill, N8BR
  - A team will be put together to focus on organizing the club events. An example of events is the traditional December Holiday party.
  - A number of members have already indicated interest in working on this team.
  - Bill will present a proposed format at the next OCRA BOD meeting.
- Secretary – Laurie, N1YXU
  - Communications to members are being provided in many ways including email, posts to the OCRA website, and video posts to the OCRA YouTube channel.
  - Comments and feedback would be appreciated to ensure the communications are clear, concise, and informative. Please provide feedback if you have recommended changes.
- Treasurer – Dan, KR4UB
  - As of the meeting, we have a total of 103 members (92 are current, 7 need to renew, and 4 are expiring).
  - Please note that dues payments from 85 members are needed to cover our annual fixed expenses. These expenses include insurance, post office box rental, safety deposit box, website fees, Zoom license, and SERA costs. Recently, the cost of renting a post office box has increased.
  - We have gained 18 new members over the past 12 months. Five of these members were newly licensed.
  - It is important to note that we have had 24 memberships that have expired over the last 12 months. This is higher than in the past.
- Jack (KM4MBG) – DFMA
  - The DFMA board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15. It is planned to be conducted online. Information was emailed from Lenore (KF4PAB), DFMA President. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate.
  - In addition to the DFMA board meeting, everyone is invited to attend the upcoming March membership meeting and weekly nets (Wednesday and Thursday nights). You do not need to be a DFMA member to participate.
  - Jack is excited to have the continued collaboration between DFMA and OCRA. One area of collaboration is emergency communication and mutual backup. Getting on nets and participating is a great way to prepare for emergency communications.
- President – Bruce, N1LN
  - Comments and questions were solicited from everyone attending the meeting. To ensure that everyone had the opportunity to be heard, feedback was requested first from those on UHF. Then, feedback was requested from those on Zoom.

- UHF discussion –
  - Bill (KI4RAN) requested that those who are legally blind are considered when the meeting materials are sent to the membership. We need to work together to ensure that folks with handicaps have the ability to join. Bruce took the action item to work with HandiHams to understand how they send their communications.
  - Dan (KR4UB) commented that the ham who taught him how to build repeaters (Danny Hampton, K4ITL) had a screen reader software that allowed him to hear the information from a voice narration.
- Zoom discussion –
  - Adriano (KV7D) thanked everyone who worked to set-up the Zoom meeting.
  - Wilson (W4BOH) commented on the overlap among the many teams that gave presentations. Training is a great example. He is looking forward to the collaboration.
  - Bill (N8BR) requested clarification regarding the implied attendance of the OCRA Vice President at DFMA meetings and receipt of DFMA communications. The conclusion of the discussion was Bill is the OCRA liaison for the DFMA club, and Jack is the DFMA liaison for the OCRA club. Bill and Jack will be on the distribution list for communications from the boards for both DFMA and OCRA. Bill and Jack are welcomed and encouraged to attend board and membership meetings from both clubs, as possible. Laurie took the action item to add Jack to the distribution list for the OCRA board communications.
  - Based on a comment from Wilson (W4BOH), clarification about the meeting communication was provided. The video from tonight’s meeting will be uploaded to YouTube. When it is available, an email will be sent to the OCRA/DFMA groups.io. There will be a review and approval process before the video is posted.
- **Meeting Closed and Check-outs - Bruce, N1LN**
  - Bruce thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He is looking forward to a fun, interactive year. He is also looking forward to getting back in person; however, even when we meet in person, we will need to ensure there is a way to have the meeting in a multi-media way.
  - To join a team, please reach out to the team leads or any member of the board. You can send email, call directly, use carrier pigeons, send smoke signals, use tin cans, or any other method that you choose.
  - Check outs were done on UHF and on Zoom

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Meier, N1LN, Secretary