

OCRA Board Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2022

Board Meeting Attendees – Bruce (N1LN), Bill (N8BR), Dan (KR4UB), Karen (KD4YJZ), Dave (W4SAR), Aurora (KN4VXB), Wilson (W4BOH)

The minutes from the February 14 OCRA Membership Meeting were approved.

Updates from the team leads who gave presentations at the February 14 Membership Meeting were given:

Field Day Team (Dave, W4SAR)

- Dave indicated that he will request input from the OCRA/DFMA membership for initial Field Day plans by sending a message on the reflector. One of the areas that will be addressed is a request to find out who would like to be band captains. Dave will also reach out to those who have been captains before to see if they would be interested in leading that effort this year.
- The recommendation for this year's Field Day was to slim down the effort to a 5A operation. The stations might include 2 SSB stations, 2 CW stations, and 1 digital station. HF stations doing one high band in the day and low band in the evening.
- If the operations are focused on 5 stations, rather than 9 as in the past, we may have a higher probability of keeping them manned for the 24 hours of the Field Day event. Being more lean and mean may make up for the absence of some of the usual folks who won't be operating.
- Being a 5A, rather than 9A operation, will cost bonus points since each station earns 100 bonus points.
- Dave's email would also request volunteers for logistical support and bonus points.
- There was a lot of productive conversation which included the following topics –
 - If training on N1MM will be needed, Bruce will be happy to provide the training. He just needs a heads-up to pull it together.
 - An inventory will need to be completed for items that have been stored and maintained by specific people. These items include the tower trailer, band pass filters, the Windows 10 computers used for networking the stations, and other critical components.
 - Dan indicated that Steve (W3AHL) will be returning to North Carolina from New Mexico around May 20.
 - If the recommendation is to slim down the event to a 5A operation, do we need to get input from the membership to ensure the recommendation meshes with everyone's desires? If input is requested, we will need to get feedback from OCRA and DFMA members since the in-person activity is a joint operation.

Programs Team (Bill, N8BR)

- John (KX4P) was out of town at the time of the Board Meeting. After he returns, John and Bill will meet and discuss how to continue to request input for programs and to continue to

ensure the presentation materials are integrated with the multiple technologies that are being used (email, UHF, Zoom).

- For an upcoming meeting, Bruce has put together a presentation that gives an overview of the radical simplification of the N1LN antenna farm.
- Based on the request that was sent to members for program ideas, many of the requests are related to technologies where we don't have expertise. We need to find ways to fill the gaps if these are areas that should be addressed.
- We know there is a lot of local expertise. It could be valuable to find out what type of expertise we have and, then, develop a strategy to the membership about what we can and cannot focus on based on our knowledge base.
- Bill recommended that he and John work to get the programs viewed as an integral part of monthly meetings. If there were a few programs put on the calendar, and a few "in the can" in case scheduled presenters were not available, the process would be introduced to the club and become a usual part of the meetings.
- Dan directed the group to the club's website and one particular area that could prove very helpful to the Programs Team. Members are requested to add information to their profiles that indicate their areas of interest. Many of our newer members have added information. During the meeting, Dan extracted the information and compiled a summary report that was distributed to the meeting attendees. Members will be asked to review and update their profiles to ensure the information is current. They will also be informed about how we are using the information that is provided.
- A survey had been sent to the OCRA membership asking for input for meetings. There had been rather few responses at the time of the Board Meeting. It was agreed that, at the upcoming membership meeting, the members would be reminded of the survey and encouraged to respond.
- Aurora mentioned that AuxCOMM and remote activities could be of interest to many folks in terms of emergency preparedness, especially to newer members who truly want to ensure they are ready in emergency situations. Even without the results of the survey or data from member profiles, these areas would be good topics for presentations.
- Bill recommended that he and John get together, after John returns. They will put five to six programs and make sure the technology is running appropriately. They will review the information that Dan sourced from the club's website about member interests. This data will help focus on data driven decisions regarding program topics.
- Bill would also like to bring a few more members onto the team. Dan volunteered to be part of the team to ensure that updated and new member profile information was available and shared to help inform the topics of the programs to align with interests of the membership. One additional team member would be appreciated to round the team to five members.
- The planned presentations include John in March; Field Day from Dave in April, May, and June (final preparation); Bruce has a "canned" presentation about the simplification of his

antenna field that can be used when needed; and Aurora has volunteered to present in late summer. The first membership meeting that may have open time is currently the July meeting. This scheduling aligns with the plan that Bill voiced of having programs for a few months planned to allow focus on the named topics while developing future programs.

Technical Training – Wilson (W4BOH)

- There is an antenna work day coming up that is planned with Aurora and Nan. The subject is shortened antennas which is timely since there are many folks who are operating remotely. Wilson would like to broaden the audience for this training in the future, potential to an outdoor activity when the weather is warmer.
- Since Aurora's group is growing, Wilson hopes that she will join the team to help identify people who can talk on specific topics like pi giving updates on technical theory or reports on what they have done. These presentations would be more special interest focused.
- Wilson would like to have some radio history programs. For example, a program could start with Hertz and go on to Marconi and DeForrest and some of the early scientists. This would ensure that our membership is aware of the work of these folks. Other people who could be introduced and discussed would be Henry and Faraday. The history overview would get to radiation and then on to radio. The training would also get into digital modes. Many people don't have a good foundation to understand what radio is. It would be good to have a deeper appreciation of how we all use radio and truly what it is.
- Wilson's recommendation was fully supported by the team. There was discussion about how the training would be structured – hybrid (in-person and Zoom); recorded and posted on Zoom; given as part of membership meetings. The goal would be to have a library of information that would be available to our members. The library could include books and online videos.
- The OCRA YouTube channel has been set-up. We need to make sure our members know about the YouTube channel and the videos that have been posted so far.

Operations Training – Bruce, N1LN

- Net control training and backup net control training have been provided on the Saturday AuxCOMM nets.
- During an upcoming Saturday net, there will be additional training. The topic will not be divulged before the net.
- A potential N1MM training is also being put together for a future program.
- Bruce would like to have Doug talk about FT8 as a presentation for the group.
- The current focus of this team is to provide any training that would be needed to support Field Day. After Field Day is over, other topics will be addressed.

Repeater Team – Dan, KR4UB

- The immediate priority of the team is to preserve the knowledge base. Steve (W3AHL) will be leaving permanently soon, and we need to backfill his knowledge. Dan has spent

significant time with Steve recently to make sure he is able to produce the repeater topographic mapping information.

- There is tremendous insight that is provided by the topographic mapping. It will be very interesting to see what happens when the Saturday net training simulates the need for folks to go to an alternate repeater. The topographic maps show the dramatic change between getting into the repeaters on an HT versus a mobile radio. Previously, there hasn't been a good tool to be able to present the limitations to our membership.
- When the maps are completed, they will be on Google Earth. This will allow users to zoom in to see detail or zoom out to see the macro information. Everyone will be able to see their own location and the type of radio will be needed to contact and communicate with the repeater. This will be a huge education to make sure folks are able to be functional during an emergency.
- This is a topic that might be best given in an in-person meeting. There is a lot of information that would need to be shared to give our membership a good overview. This type of presentation could complement the interest (especially from newer members) related to AuxCOMM training. Many of our members have HTs as one of their primary pieces of radio equipment. We could focus on how to ensure that we can all work together in a true emergency situation. From the participation and discussion at the meeting, we could gauge interest and the likelihood of whether OCRA could truly partner with the EOC for emergency communication.
- Dave will work with the Baha'i assembly in Efland to find out when we might be able to reserve the building meeting area for a meeting. If we are able to meet face-to-face in July, the topic of the repeater topographic maps, the ability of members to communicate with the repeater, and ways to improve communication would be the primary focus of the meeting. There would also be a short report out from our Field Day efforts. Dave will confirm the internet capabilities at the Baha'I Center. A big screen television will be need to display the topographic mapping information.
- In terms of extending the members of the Repeater Team, Dan has spoken with several people. Mike Thorn, Ed Neely, Paul Robertson, and John Green are willing to join the team.

Moving Forward with Remaining Teams – Bruce, N1LN

- Membership, Event Planning, and the Admin Teams will be topics for a future board meeting to determine the next steps.
- The EOC Liaison and AuxComm training teams will be directly related to the focus of the July meeting as discussed.

New Business – Bruce, N1LN

- The program for the March 14 membership program will be John's (KX4P). He will be presenting from California via Zoom. The presentation will be recorded and posted on the OCRA YouTube channel.
- As we move toward having in-person membership meetings, we need to continue to figure out ways to be inclusive by providing Zoom access.

- Dan is exploring ways that we can conduct a hybrid (Zoom, UHF) meeting in his absence. It would be nice to have a good audio quality for Zoom recordings.
- The equipment loan program topic will be part of a future board meeting agenda.
- There has been discussion about raising the annual club membership dues. Some members will not have an issue with this change. Others will request a justification for the increase. We will need to have a business case put together to support the increase. The admin team will meet to put together a proposal for the increase in dues, and the proposal will be reviewed at a future board meeting.
- The information provided by the repeater topographic mapping work supports the potential increase in dues. Repeater site expenses are increasing. The ability to put up new repeaters is decreasing due to associated costs. Bruce will schedule an administrative team meeting to pull together a comprehensive repeater business plan.
- The cost of radio equipment varies considerably. It was noted that some members can face challenges in purchasing equipment due to budget limitations. We need to demonstrate cost effective ways to enhance communication capabilities of lower cost radios such as HTs.
- Creative ways to support our members having access to equipment were discussed. For example, if a person were not able to purchase a piece of equipment directly, perhaps the equipment loan program could provide a solution. Also, members could gain use of loaned equipment by volunteering time and effort related to emergency communications such as acting as net control operators. These types of solutions would help provide an inclusive emergency communications program for all members.
- The cost of emergency communications training is essentially free. We need to have more folks as net control operators and backup net control operators on our AuxCOMM nets. This will extend our training and help us understand how many members are interested in emergency communication.
- As we continue to develop and provide training, we will get a true picture of how many people are interested in emergency communication. Then, we can take a viable plan to the EOC for further discussion.
- We should also incorporate CERT training into our overall emergency communications planning which would help people see how personal the training can be.

Officer reports will be provided at the general Membership Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Meier, N1YXU
OCRA Secretary