

OCRA Membership Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2023

Meeting Attendees (Total of 22 in-person and on Zoom) – Dee (KU4GC), Chip (KF4WBK), Bob (W4FK), Paul (N0US), Ken (KO4DHJ), Paul (N2XZF), Boyd (KO4GJO), Tim (KC1TWR), Laurie (N1YXU), Bruce (N1LN), Dan (KR4UB), Mark (KR3AM), Dave (W4SAR), Karen (KD4YJZ), Patrick (KO4QLU), Aurora (KN4VXB), Steve (W3AHL), John (KM4MDR), John (KX4P), Bill (N8BR), Randy (KF4O), and Wilson (W4BOH).

Opening Comments – Bruce (N1LN)

- Earlier in the year, we discussed adding air filters in our meeting room at the Baha'i Center as an extra layer of protection given the current situation related to COVID. The OCRA Board had a number of discussions, worked with the Baha'i Center leadership, and have concluded that additional air filters will not be added. This decision was reached since OCRA does not want to take ownership for any negative impact that the filters might have on air flow and potential resulting expenses to mitigate any impact. Another factor in the decision was the realization that air in the meeting room would not be refreshed after the system is turned onto cooling or heating just before the meeting. Please note that the OCRA policy regarding COVID remains unchanged; however, the Board will continue to monitor local, state, and federal health policies related to COVID. If health guidance suggests more stringent practices, the Board will consider changes to the current OCRA policy.

Field Day Update – Dave (W4SAR)

- Like all other clubs and individuals who participated in the 2023 Field Day Event, OCRA/DFMA is in a waiting mode to find how we have scored in the national rankings. The final results should be published in QST later in the fall.
- Individuals who participated from home had the opportunity to indicate their affiliation with OCRA/DFMA when they submitted their scores to the ARRL. To have a more complete preliminary score, Dave requested that these individuals send him an email with their scores. To date, he has received information from some individuals but is waiting for information from others. If you are one of these individuals and have not sent Dave your information, please do so as soon as possible. Dave will send a reminder email to jog everyone's memories to provide him the data.
- In terms of the results from the OCRA/DFMA Field Day site, there were a total of 1,645 QSOs and a total of 4,778 points, which includes bonus points.

Meteor Scatter Research on Six-Meter Band – John (KX4P)

- John recently attended an annual conference of the Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers (SARA) at the Green Bank Observatory in Green Bank, West Virginia. The facility has a focus of radio astronomy. Several researchers from around the world come to the observatory to operate many of the telescopes that are at the facility.
- John gave a preview of an upcoming presentation that he will give regarding his trip and work that is being done that links with amateur radio operations. The focus would be on meteor scatter on the six-meter amateur radio band.
- To see the slides and get more of a preview of John's upcoming presentation, be sure to go to YouTube and watch the video of the OCRA meeting.

Update on Emergency Communications Training Survey – Bruce (N1LN)

- Recently, a survey was distributed to the reflector requesting feedback from OCRA members regarding options for emergency communications training.
- Of the 109 current members, 50 members responded! Thank you to everyone who took time to complete the survey. The responses will be very useful to inform planning for future training.
- The frequency and duration of the training preferences varied, and many people indicated they would rather support emergency communications from home as opposed to being deployed.
- If you are interested in assisting in developing and/or delivering training, please let Bruce know. Emergency Communications will be a focus for OCRA in 2024.

Christmas Party Update – Laurie (N1YXU)

- The OCRA Christmas Party will be on Monday, December 12. It will be held at Union Grove United Methodist Church, the same location as last year's party.
- The dinner will be primarily a potluck meal with those attending bringing a dish to pass.
- More information, including the initial sign-up sheet, will be shared at October's OCRA Membership meeting.
- If you or your spouse/significant other would like to be part of the planning committee, please contact Laurie.

Upcoming OCRA Elections – Bruce (N1LN)

- In January, the elected officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) are on the ballot. The individuals who currently hold these positions will not be automatically re-elected.

- The Board-of-Director at-large members are elected for a two-year term. In January, there will be only one BOD at-large member who will be on the slate to renew his position. Chris (KY4OU) is currently serving his first of a two-year term.
- Please consider serving on the OCRA Board as an elected officer or a BOD at-large member. It is important that our membership is represented on the Board.
- To see the high-level bullet points of each Board member's responsibilities, please take time to view the YouTube video posted for the OCRA membership meeting.
- In addition to the traditional officers and Board-of-Director at-large members, should we consider having a webmaster, Field Day coordinator, and AUXComm (EOC) coordinator as listed members of the OCRA leadership team and included in the monthly Board meetings? If yes, what are the responsibilities of these additional members? Would these members be elected as Board-of-Director at-large members with specific focused responsibilities? OCRA has a required minimum of four at-large members; however, there is no limit on the number of at-large members that can serve. The only requirement is that the person be a paid member of the club.
- If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact Bruce.

Comments/Suggestions – OCRA Membership

- As we get close to the new year, it would be beneficial to have input from the membership regarding priorities for the club. This input will help guide the leadership that is elected in January to develop plans for 2024.
- There are not a lot of younger people involved in amateur radio. We need to find ways to reach out to the younger generations and foster their interest in our hobby. Suggestions of who/where to reach out were discussed –
 - School of Math and Science in Durham likely has a STEM program.
 - There are community colleges in our area that have a focus on technology.
 - Note: There was a solicitation from a community college to participate on a high altitude balloon team. The request was posted on the reflector. The focus will be mentoring the students to help them get their tech amateur radio licenses and prepare for the balloon launch. They will monitor the balloons on APRS. Some OCRA members have volunteered for the event.
 - John's (KX4P) upcoming presentation on radio astronomy could be a topic that would be very interesting to younger people. Kids love space stuff! After John gives his presentation at an upcoming OCRA meeting and makes any adjustments that are needed, he will present the information to the youth of his church. Perhaps a local school would also allow the program to be given to their students.
 - In addition to the roles discussed for the BOD (webmaster, Field Day coordinator, AUXComm coordinator), perhaps we need roles that focus on membership and community outreach.

- The club needs to think about how we get visibility in our community. We do have a website; however, people need to know that it exists to go and find it. We need to market our group effectively.
- The annual Hog Days event could be a venue for us to use to reach out by setting up a booth and have a simple radio demonstration.
- Many local churches have sections in their weekly bulletins that give information about specific organizations. We might be able to use that communication to reach several people in our area.
- We could reach out to the scouting programs in the area. There could be a group of scouts who are working on their badges and would have an interest in learning more about amateur radio. The scouts also have an annual Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) event.
- We could do outreach by setting up booths at a SciTech Expo or Maker Fests. Foxhunts could also be publicized to include younger groups. A scout group almost attended a past foxhunt!
- In past years, students have been able to complete their Chapel Hill High community service activity by participating in ham events. Phillips Middle School also had an instructor who worked with the students to help them get their amateur radio license. Perhaps, we could work with local high school teachers to get these types of programs restarted. Aurora indicated that she will check with her son's engineering teacher at Orange High School to see if there is any interest.
- In the past, there were many more kids involved in OCRA activities when their parents were members of the club. If we had younger parents, who have children, as club members, we might have more youth involved as well.
- We might be able to have an article published in the local "News of Orange County" newspaper. The article could highlight our club, give more information about meetings and activities, provide an introduction to amateur radio, and have an invitation for folks to participate. In that article, we could host an open house at a member's home and invite people to come and see a live radio demonstration.
- Helping staff the RARS truck at the upcoming NC State Fair would also be a way to let folks know about amateur radio.
- It is clear from the list above that there are many great suggestions for potential focus of the club. Now, we need to find people or groups of people who can turn these suggestions into action. If you have an interest in any item listed above, please contact Bruce.
- We need to ensure there are people who are trained in key areas for the club. This will provide redundancy and an easier transition as members take on key roles. For example, Dan has been the Treasurer for several years and currently doesn't have a backup. This is a key role in the club that needs to have a seamless transition to a new Treasurer when needed. It is important that the training is done while the person currently doing the work is able to share knowledge.

- Bob (W4FK) had a show and tell for the meeting. At the Scrap Exchange in Durham, he picked up a shield that is used in laser tag. After taking the shield apart, he noticed that it has a loop antenna for direction finding. The assumption is that the laser gun has a signal, and based on how the person is facing the gun, the antenna in the shield picks up the signal and lights up green LEDs.

Officers/BOD Updates – All

- Dan – Treasurer's report
 - Thank you to the membership for being diligent in paying your dues.
 - Bruce added that after a new member pays dues, Bruce receives an email indicating that the club has a new member. This is the trigger to have a badge made for the new member to wear at meetings.
- The next membership meeting will be on October 9. The program will feature, Ben (KO4BXH), and a presentation on a satellite tracker that he built.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Meier, N1YXU
OCRA Secretary