

A HISTORY OF THE ORANGE COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB - Part 10

by Bob - WB6IXN, Club Historian

*** The Modern ERA ***

In 1986, Frank Smith, WA6VKZ, received the president's gavel. The club published a monthly map of Halley's Comet locations in 'RF'. The Club finally (after years of building a "generator fund") purchased its first FD generator which remained under the care of Kei Yamachika W6NGO. Jim, N6JSV and Wyatt Berry, WB6BPX, paid off the remaining generator debt.

Before the internet and the QRZ web site, hams would buy a "paper copy" of the US call book or the International call book to find ham mailing addresses. But, callbooks were very expensive....and it seemed that each year they became more expensive. So, it was very expensive for an individual ham to "personally" own an updated copy every year. Therefore, back in the 1970's and early 1980's....the OCARC would buy a copy of the paper call books for the use of the OCARC membership. As Bob Eckweiler AF6C recalls: "...the membership chairman held the call books. I also further recall that while some years the call book got little use, on other years it got a lot of use. One of our membership chairmen, as I recall, asked people to limit their call book inquiries to certain hours and certain days of the week. More than once I was in charge of the call books; and on one of those years, I remember one of our avid hams calling me in the middle of the night for an address to QSL to. I was polite the first time, but not the second time (which was either the same night or shortly thereafter.) We finally agreed on a time and I probably looked up a hundred calls for him over the last half of the year". Finally, the paper copies got really expensive....maybe \$40 for the US copy and maybe another \$45 for the International copy. Probably around the mid-1980s, the club lost interest because of the expense and stopped providing this callbook service to members.

Field Day was held at MCAS(H) in Santa Ana. The Christmas Banquet was held at the China Gate Restaurant in Stanton.

1987 found the president's gavel transferred to Jim Talcott, N6JSV. Jim N6JSV, who had great artistic talents, was runner-up for the design of the ARRL Special Service Club logo, featured in July 1984 QST, page 51. OCCARO presented the Field Day Trophy for most contacts to OCARC...The club had won the trophy 9 times since 1970! El presidente had the vice president's office empty!

Finally in Feb., Lloyd Harwood, WB6ULU, was elected our new vice president. In March, the Club breakfast began using Le Grand Café in Santa Ana. Ron Toering, KB6EZP taught the theory portion of a Novice class, while Bob Evans WB6IXN taught the Morse code portion using the club's old paper tape code unit (called an "InstructoGraph") for code practice. Lloyd WB6ULU was a member of WCARC's first VE team. Lloyd also handled scheduling for the 1987 OCCARO Booth at the Orange County Fair.

Field Day was held June 27-28 at Centennial Park, at Edinger & Fairview streets in Santa Ana. Past president Alex, W6RE, had a mild stroke and missed his first Field Day ever! Jane Watts, NØNE (no call yet), fed hungry mouths at FD. The Club's novice class participated in FD. AF6C reported 926 contacts for FD. The July Club meeting was a wine & cheese party held at Ken W6HHC's QTH in Santa Ana.

On Sept. 9, an arsonist set a fire in Santiago Canyon in the Santa Ana Mts. With dry summer conditions, the fire quickly spread, which eventually brought 1,100 firefighters to the staging area in Irvine Park. Ralph Alexander, W6RE, coordinated the Red Cross communications effort on 145.40 MHz, simulcast on 224.18, using the Western Amateur Radio Assoc N6ME repeater. The communications operations began on the evening of Sept. 9, at 6:00pm and ran with continuous operation until Monday evening, Sept. 14, at 6:00pm. The N6ME repeater became inoperative on Sept 12 and Communications then shifted to the Anaheim repeater, K6SYU. The National Traffic System handled welfare traffic for the communications group. Frank WA6VKZ's portable packet station, with the able help of Ken W6HHC, originated messages for fire fighters at the Irvine Park staging area. During the emergency, more than 45 messages to friends & families of the firefighters were handled, through WF6O as a gateway station, by SCN1, SCN2, RN6, and Army MARS. Navy MARS was standing by in case of need. Numerous practical & supply needs and deployment of personnel messages were efficiently handled! A total of 39 amateurs were involved with fire communications, including six OCARC members.

Roy Maxson, W6DEY, the past-president who restarted the club after WW2 and an OCARC Honorary Life Member, passed away in his sleep on Nov. 9 at his home in Vista, CA. The Club Christmas Party was held at Temple Gardens in Garden Grove on Dec. 19, 1987.

(to be continued next month

...Bob Evans, WB6IXN, Club Historian)