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# OFARC Monthly Meeting Minutes 2026\_0131

The meeting started on a cold day at 0915 by Mark WB5ANN

Hal made a motion w/o a 2<sup>nd</sup> for him to be president, but with the requirement that everyone be president for a month, everyone host a net, and we rotate people monitoring 17, so that our repeater is kept monitored as much time as possible.

Money in the bank problem is that the bank wants to start charging a \$15/month fee. Alternatives were discussed. Insurance for the club was mentioned.

Dues were collected for the year of 2026.

Winter field day was cancelled for this area, this year due to weather, therefore we were at the bottom of the list.

We talked weather a lot including the Sun weather and Northern Lights and how the solar winds and the electromagnetic field have been acting lately.

<https://cosmo.org/> was discussed, as it has Russian Space Agency displays as an associated museum to the U S Air and Space Museum and <https://underkansas.org/> as the salt mine storage area for all the old movie stuff.

KI5WWD Don talked about odd readings of 1500 volts without any electricity being connected to the volt meter.

## Tools, Tips & Techniques

**Barry** - Visited at Bletchley Park north of London, England last November. HAM operators can use their radio to make RF contacts from their mini museum on site. The UK honors our US licenses for HAM Radio. If you plan to go there you should join the Radio Society of Great Britain (for about \$100 yearly membership at <https://rsgb.org/>), but do so about 3 months ahead of your visit and request a voucher to get free admission to the park. The movie "Imitation Game" was mentioned as a great documentary about Alan Turing and his leadership in code breaking during WW2. RSGB is the UK version of the ARRL. Membership gets you access to the digital version of their most excellent "Radcom" magazine. Visit <https://rsgb.org/> for more information.

**Rick** - brought tools for electrical work. Shown before, his non-contact electrical tester and a GFCI plug tester is useful to make sure your electrical outlets are wired properly - many are not!! There have been GFI and Arc preventer updates to the NEC electrical code. Any garage or outside outlets, wet areas, pool lighting, and now arc prevention outlets are required in interior areas e.g. bedrooms because of pet hairs and lint that accumulates in outlets.

Amprobe made a non-digital meter device that can be used as an amp and voltmeter for electrical tests. It has a 300 amp scale but does AC amps only. Amprobe is now owned by Fluke according to Google. Rick's version is completely analog, no batteries required. If you search E-Bay for it, you'll find the prices vary wildly.



Another piece of equipment Rick showed was a continuity tester that uses a battery and an incandescent light bulb. DO NOT use one of them on a modern automobile because the test current may be too high for the circuit you are testing and cause a circuit failure.

The majority of house hold electrical fires are due to a receptacle or switch, caused by a loose screw on the connector. Outlet and switch screw connectors, where the wire is wound around the screw, are high-risk for fires. The new outlets use ECX screws, although they appear to be Phillips. These screws will accept a Phillips, flat blade, or most any type of screwdriver but likely will not be tight before the screwdriver slips. Look for an ECX #1 and/or #2 screwdriver (or bit) on your next hardware store visit; the torque you'll be able to apply with an ECX driver is a lot higher and will ensure that the outlet terminal connections remain tight.



*ECX screws shown on the side of a receptacle.*

Klein connector crimpers are used for connecting multi-conductor cables to insulation displacement connectors (RJ45, RJ11 etc.) and the one shown below available at Amazon at this website. <https://www.amazon.com/ratcheting-stripper-klein-tools-vdv226-011-sen/dp/b002d3b97u>





*This oddly shaped bit is the ECX bit.*

There is a screwdriver with the handle that has a wire nut tightener built into the handle of the screwdriver. Only use this with the “winged” version of wire nuts.



There are at least two sizes of wire nut handles.



Here is a small Battery tester is used that has a tester for button batteries and 9 volt along with connections for positive and negative. There is a tester for coin cells using the slot on the right side. Coin cells (typically 3.0V and low current [high ESR]) are useful for testing LED Bulbs.



Klein came up with a USB tester (model ET-900). If you plug in the tester, and then plug in a device to be charged (phone), it tells you how much power the charger delivering to the device and logs amp hours, watt hours etc.

Rick also has a telephone RJ-11 jack tester. It will let you know if you have A/C interference or if the line is hooked up properly (tip and ring).

Fire alarm testing for wired POTS devices... you need to know whether the line has proper dial tone voltage, which is 48 volt signal, with all phones on-hook. Ring voltage is 110 volts A/C.

RJ-11 connector can go up to 6 contacts. 26-gauge 6 wire cable is available. Rick has a set of cable strippers that use RJ-45 8 wire cable. You've probably heard the term POTS which means Plain Old Telephone Service. When working with these kinds of twisted pair wires you have to make sure you are butting the wires into the jack a certain way so they don't short out. Most of the wires since the late nineties are Cat 5 cables now. Stranded and solid wires cut differently and there are different cutters.

This electronic LCR tester can test resistors, capacitors, inductors and other electronics such as transistors to measure characteristics of the component. The tester costs \$10 with NO documentation. Rick ordered it from Walmart ([www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com)) but there are lots of them available at Amazon (search for Electronic Component Tester or LCR-T4). It runs on a nine volt battery. Rick recommends you pay a little more to get it with a case. The notation in the silkscreen "1231111" is telling you that there are three circuits on pins 1-7 of the socket, circuit "1" is connected to pins 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the socket. It is a great gadget for identifying 2 or 3 leaded devices for which don't have a clue what they are!



Rick showed a cool light-show gadget using a half dozen NA2 Neon light bulbs and a high voltage dry cell. The circuit is actually is a collection of relaxation oscillators that causes the bulb to light up when the charge on a capacitor reaches the excitation voltage of the bulb. The gas conducts and discharges the capacitor and cycle repeats until the battery runs down but don't hold your breath... Rick reads only 168 microamps for his circuit.



Another tool was shown that is used in connecting conduit fittings together, or especially in tight spaces, connecting conduit fittings (nuts) inside electrical boxes.

Meeting ended at 11:15.

*Minutes Recorded by Ken Wenzel, KW5KEN*