June 2025

Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Next OCRACES Meeting

Monday, June 2, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Orange County EOC

Members Only

Orange County Sheriff's Department
Emergency Management Division

CRO's Nest

by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer Emeritus

Clarifying Communications with the Phonetic Alphabet

Our RACES nets are intended to be streamlined and efficient, with no superfluous words or miscommunications. Especially during activations, precise and short transmissions can be critical. One of the methods of achieving that is the use of the phonetic alphabet where needed, and avoiding phonetics where it's unnecessary.

Phonetics is the science or study of speech sounds and their production, transmission, and reception, and their analysis, classification, and transcription.

A phonetic or spelling alphabet is a set of words used to represent the letters of an alphabet in oral communications, especially over two-way radio. The words chosen to represent the letters sound sufficiently different from each other to clearly differentiate them. RACES units, as well as law-enforcement and the military, use the standardized phonetic alphabet: NATO phonetic alphabet, which evolved from the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet.

During OCRACES Monday night nets, City RACES and EmComm stations should check in with their call signs phonetically and their unit name. OCRACES members should check in only with their call signs (no phonetics) during the roll call. OCRACES applicants should check in with their call signs phonetically, followed by "Applicant." Late check-ins and visitors should check in with their call signs phonetically and their unit name (or say "No affiliation").

Alfa	November
Bravo	Oscar
Charlie	Papa
Delta	Quebec
Echo	Romeo
Foxtrot	Sierra
Golf	Tango
Hotel	Uniform
India	Victor
Juliett	Whiskey
Kilo	Xray
Lima	Yankee
Mike	Zulu

NATO phonetic alphabet. Alfa and Juliett are spelled that way to avoid mispronunciation by people unfamiliar with English orthography. NATO changed X-ray to Xray from the original ICAO alphabet for the same reason. Many agencies (including OCSD) change Alfa to Alpha for common spelling.

When calling the roll, net control first calls the City RACES and EmComm units. Then, while calling OCRACES members, net control should simply state the call signs, without using the phonetic alphabet. (Members are aware of their own call signs and do not need to hear them stated phonetically by net control, which simply drags out the net.) ✸

City/County RACES & EmComm Drill: April 30

At the OC EOC RACES Room during the April 30th ACS drill were (front to rear on the left) Lance Rzepiejewski, KO6CXL, Joel Bishop, AJ6ZP, Dick Palm, KN6RVU, Bill Ehart, KM6ZHO, and Chuck Streitz, KK6HFS. To the right in this left photo (which was taken by Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS, in the right photo) is OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE.

A City/County RACES & EmComm ACS Drill was held on Thursday, April 30, 2025, concurrently with the "Off the Grid 2025" EOC Functional Exercise. The two drills had separate goals but focused on a common disaster scenario of a cyberattack against utilities. Winlink was the preferred method of communications, but voice traffic was also relatively heavy.

The scenario for this drill was a cyberattack intrusion incident that impacted various utility providers throughout the Orange County Area of Responsibility. Preliminary information showed portions of the County had large areas impacted by power outages.

OCRACES net control operated at the Orange County EOC RACES Room at Loma Ridge. OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE, was assisted by Joel Bishop, AJ6ZP, Bill Ehart, KM6ZHO, Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS, Dick Palm, KN6RVU, Lance Rzepiejewski, KO6CXL, and Chuck Streitz, KK6HFS.

Most other participants operated from their home location, but with some reporting from a field or mobile location on portable power, including OCRACES Assistant Chief Radio Officer Joe Selikov, KB6EID, Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Assistant Radio Officer Randy Benicky, N6PRL, Chief Radio Officer Emeritus Ken Bourne, W6HK, Heide Aguirre, K3TOG, Ted Lavino, KG6LZP, Steve Livingston, NJ6R, Ron Mosher, K0PGE, Robert Stoffel, KD6DAQ, and Ken Tucker, WF6F.

Well over 116 messages were sent and received during the drill. Over 75 operators participated, with 60 percent of them using Winlink. There were 29 check-ins on VHF and 7 check-ins on UHF, from 31 operators. A total of 80 Winlink messages were received and sent, including 32 field station reports and 27 reports from unique operators.

For the first time in an OCRACES drill, the "what3words" app was used for pinpointing field locations. About 95 percent of participants included their what3words locations. It is a geocode system designed to identify any location on the surface of Earth with a resolution of approximately 3 meters (9.8 feet). (See article on page 4.) ✸

OCRACES Participates in SDSO ACS Exercise

San Diego Sheriff's Office, Auxiliary Communications Service (SDSO ACS), invited OCRACES to participate in their communications exercise on Saturday, May 10, 2025, beginning at 1300 hours. They contacted OCRACES and exchanged a couple of short messages at the start of the exercise, via a repeater on Palomar Mountain. The goal of the exercise was to do something simple and brief and almost assuredly successful, with an eye toward more substantive training interactions at a later date. SDSO ACS also contacted Imperial County and Yuma County (Arizona) around that same time.

During this exercise, OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE, Assistant Radio Officer Randy Benicky, N6PRL, and Ted Lavino, KG6LZP, contacted SDSO ACS from the RACES Room at the Orange County EOC at Loma Ridge. ✸

Yaesu FTX-1 Series Transceiver Now Available

The Yaesu FTX-1 Field and Optima HF/VHF/UHF all-mode compact transceivers are now FCC approved and available for purchase, and appear to be Yaesu's answer to the Icom IC-705 transceiver.

The FTX-1 with C4FM provides wide-range receiver coverage from 30 kHz through 174 MHz and from 400 MHz through 470 MHz, including SWL, FM broadcast, and aviation band.

The FTX-1 Optima provides 100-watt base-station operation with an external DC power supply. The FTX-1 Field runs 6 watts (5 watts QRP) with the supplied Li-ion battery, and 10 watts with an external DC power supply.

Included items with the FTX-1 Field are field head, SBR-52LI 6400-mAh Li-ion battery, DC power cable with 2p-round plug for field head, and SSM-75E hand microphone.

The FTX-1 Optima adds the detachable SPA-1 100-watt RF power amplifier and a heavy-duty DC power cable for the SPA-1 (25 A).

The compact FTX-1 Field is 8.4 inches wide, 3.5 inches high, and 2.2 inches deep. Modes of operation on HF through VHF and UHF bands are SSB, CW, AM, FM, and C4FM digital.

Stand-alone operating time is 9 hours with 6 W on HF bands (SSB), and 8 hours with 6 W on V/UHF bands (FM) (6-6-48 duty cycle). The SBR-52LI is rechargeable separately with a third-party's USB Type-C PD cable (45 W or greater/ 15 V, 2 A).

When using an external 13.8 V DC power supply, up to 10 W of power output is available, and the Field Head charges the SBR-52LI automatically.

By connecting the SPA-1 to the rear of the Field Head, the FTX-1 operates as a 100-W base station. No tools are necessary for connection.

Useful features for HF through UHF include:

- **MAG (Memory Auto Grouping) for HF/VHF/UHF:** memory channels are automatically grouped and can be recalled by band groups. In M-GRP (My Group), any desirable memory channels can be set regardless of frequencies.
- **QMB (Quick Memory Bank) for HF/VHF/UHF:** QMB stores frequency, mode, transmit/receive settings, filters, and other parameters of the current receiving signal. Up to 10 channels can be recalled with one touch of the [QMB] key.
- **PMG (Primary Memory Group) for VHF/UHF:** Up to 5 PMG channels can be registered and then quickly monitored. In AUTO mode, all PMG channels are scanned and up to two PMG channels with signals are simultaneously received. In MANUAL mode, the PMG channel manually selected is always scanned and heard. The other PMG channels are also scanned and a channel with a signal can be received and heard at the same time. PMG function is useful for watching the channels RACES members use to communicate.
- **AMS (Automatic Mode Select) for VHF/UHF:** AMS automatically determines whether the received signal is C4FM digital or FM and sets the receiver to the appropriate mode. No need for users to manually switch between modes.
- **Memory Channel Scope for HF/VHF/UHF:** The reception status of up to 43 memory channels can be displayed with bar graph. Transmit/receive channels are selectable by touching the bar graph.

Yaesu FTX-1 Series HF/VHF/UHF all-mode compact transceiver.

Excellent proximity two-signal characteristics are achieved by the RF front-end design with 10-divided BPF (Band Pass Filter) in the amateur bands from HF through UHF and RF amplifier with a low NF (Noise Figure) for excellent intermodulation characteristics. In addition, a high-purity 110.592-MHz oscillator circuit configuration supplies a sampling clock signal with excellent C/N characteristics to the A/D converter.

The SDR circuit configuration adopts the same high-resolution A/D converter and FPGA used in the FT-DX10 transceiver.

Effective QRM rejection is achieved by a 32-bit high-speed DSP: SHIFT/ WIDTH/ NOTCH/ CONTOUR/ APF (audio peak filter)/ DNR (digital noise reduction) and NB (noise blanker).

True dual-band operation includes C4FM/C4FM simultaneous receive (HF/V, HF/U, V/U, U/V, V/V, U/U). HF/HF is not available.

The FTX-1's 3DSS (3-Dimentional Spectrum Scope) has a high-resolution 4.3-inch TFT color touch panel display.

The front panel is designed for intuitive operation, such as the dual LED indicators above the MAIN VFO to show the current receiver status of MAIN/SUB bands, VMI LED (VFO mode indicator) to present the current operation mode (MAIN, SUB and clarifier/split operation), and FUNC (Function) dial allowing quick selection of a desired menu and change of the setting value.

Ham Radio Outlet is currently offering the FTX-1 Field for $1,500, and the FTX-1 Optima for $1,900. ✸

Next OCRACES Meeting: June 2nd at 7:30

The next County of Orange RACES meeting will be in-person on Monday, June 2, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the Orange County EOC at Loma Ridge. RACES PSRs may sign up for the meeting on the InTime Calendar. This will be a closed training meeting for OCRACES members and registered applicants only.

OCRACES Winlink Gateways Back Online

The three OCRACES Winlink UHF Remote Message Servers are now back up and running! These high-speed (9600-baud) Winlink RMS gateways cover all of Orange County.

Station ID	Frequency [MHz]	Encoding / Baud	Location
W6ACS-10	431.475	Packet / 9600	Loma Ridge
W6ACS-11	431.125	Packet / 9600	Olinda (Brea)
W6ACS-12	431.075	Packet / 9600	San Clemente

OCRACES RMS gateways.

Spearheading the restoration of these systems was Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE. Exhibiting his computer and network knowledge, Ted Lavino, KG6LZP, worked diligently for several months to set up the equipment and then troubleshoot a plethora of issues. Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS, with his technical knowledge, also was of great help.

The details for the RMS gateway are shown in the above chart, produced by Scott, who says it's time to power up the county-provided Winlink radios, TNCs, and antennas, or your own Winlink equipment. Scott says, "Check out these new gateways and get ready for some Winlink messages."

New Location Tool for OCRACES: what3words

An app called "what3words" was used for the first time by OCRACES in the City/County RACES & EmComm ACS Drill on April 30, 2025, to identify precise locations. In this app, every 10-foot square on Earth has been given a unique combination of three simple words as a what3words address. The app is free and can be downloaded from the Google Play store or Apple App Store. Alternatively, you can go to the what3words website to obtain the three words for your street-address location.

Some April 30th net-control operators found some of the three words in a field location report to be hard to understand, and had to be retransmitted phonetically. The 10-foot-square detail was too precise for the drill's application.

As we were considering whether to continue using this app, we learned that OCSD and OCFA already have the ability to locate individuals using what3words. It was used recently by both agencies and provided a precise GPS location to locate a missing biker in the hills north of Yorba Linda. The app has a "Navigate" button that takes you to Google Maps and Apple Maps, which give you precise latitude and longitude coordinates that you can send to net control or an agency.

Besides for RACES applications, you can use what3words to:

- Find your way anywhere in the world using just three words
- Plan exact meet-up locations
- Help people find your apartment, business, or Airbnb
- Always find your way back to your parking space
- Save key locations, from incident reporting to delivery entrances
- Save your favorite memorable spots – a sunset, a waterfall, proposal location
- Guide people to accessible entrances
- Help emergency services find you

You can find what3words addresses in travel guides, website contact pages, invitations, travel booking confirmations and more—anywhere you would normally find location information. If you're invited to a friend's home, ask them to share their what3words address.

Popular features:

- Find your current what3words address offline
- Compatible with navigation apps, including Apple Maps and Google Maps
- Save your favorite locations, categorize and share them as lists
- AutoSuggest prompts you with intelligent suggestions
- Navigate offline with compass mode
- Add a what3words address to a photo

Perhaps another method of determining a precise location should be considered for RACES activations or drills, such as a mapping app like Google Maps or Apple Maps. Simply drop a pin and share it with net control. First locate the desired location on the map, either by searching for an address or using the "drop pin" feature (usually by long pressure on the map). Once you have placed the pin, tap on it and then select the "Share" or "Send" option. Choose how you want to share it (e.g., via text message, email, etc.) and send it to your recipient.

Winlink Online Classes to Start June 19 & 22

by OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE

Starting Thursday, June 19, and Sunday, June 22, 2025, I will be teaching weekly hour-long online Winlink classes over 5 weeks using Zoom. These classes will be offered on Thursday afternoons at noon and repeated the following Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. to allow scheduling flexibility. It doesn't matter which day you participate for a given session, since they are the same, and you can change days if you have a schedule conflict on a given week. There will be no sessions on Thursday, July 3rd, and Sunday, July 6th, due to the Fourth of July weekend. The weekly session dates and topics covered are shown in the chart.

Session	Dates	Topics Covered
#1	June 19 & 22	Introduction, overview, and uses for Winlink. Winlink software installation and setup. Compose and send a simple message.
#2	June 26 & 29	Additional setup and capabilities, overview of the built-in Forms and customization features.
#3	July10 & 13	Representative computer and radio hardware configurations. Setting up Winlink with a radio (simple).
#4	July 17 & 20	Additional hardware configurations. Setting up Winlink with a radio (continued, more advanced).
#5	July 24 & 27	Additional radio setup options, and other Winlink operating modes.

The level of instruction is focused on individuals who don't know much about Winlink, as well as those who may have played with Winlink, but want to learn more about its extensive capabilities. The classes are an introduction to Winlink Express software using the built-in packet encoding. As such, the classes do not cover more advanced topics like VARA encoding and using Winlink on HF or microwave (mesh) bands. If there is enough interest, classes that cover these more advanced topics will be offered.

If you're interested in signing up and/or have any questions about the classes, please send me an email (KM6RTE@gmail.com); include your name, email address, call sign, city you live in, and what (if any) local emergency organization(s) you are a member of.

In preparation for each week's session, I will be providing participants that have signed up with the Zoom meeting information and handout material. Recording of the class sessions is not currently planned. If you think you might miss a week's lesson, please go ahead and sign up, since the handout materials are my presentation charts, which provide a fairly complete overview of what is covered.

This is an informal class (organized by me) for the general benefit of amateur radio operators and is not associated with any organization. Your participation is solely for your own personal benefit, and the classes are not to conflict with any official city or county government activities. ✸

Reallocation Bill Threatens Amateur Spectrum

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® reports that early Thursday morning, May 22, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a massive reallocation bill with the below spectrum provisions relevant to amateur radio.

Within two years, not less than 600 megahertz must be identified from between 1.3 and 10 GHz for reallocation to commercial use for broadband services.

The identified spectrum must be auctioned by the FCC for such services on an exclusive, licensed basis as follows: not less than 200 megahertz within three years (mid-2028) and the remaining spectrum (at least 400 megahertz) within six years (mid-2031).

Excluded from spectrum that could be reallocated for these purposes is 3.1-3.45 GHz (which includes the temporary secondary Amateur band at 3.300-3.450 GHz) and 5.925-7.125 GHz.

With regard to Amateur spectrum, the bands that potentially could be subject to consideration for reallocation under this legislation are 13 cm (2300-2310 and 2390-2450 MHz) and 5 cm (5650-5925 MHz). At this time a number of bands have been mentioned informally for consideration, none of which include Amateur spectrum. But the bands under consideration could change and ARRL will closely monitor the evolving situation.

Additionally, some government operations may be required to consolidate in current Amateur secondary spectrum that is already shared with those government uses. In select instances this might constrain Amateur operations if such consolidation occurs.

It is to be emphasized that these provisions have been passed by the House, but key U.S. Senators have not agreed to some aspects and have stated their intention to modify these provisions as the bill moves through Senate consideration. The stated goal for final enactment is by July 4, 2025. ✸

Countywide RACES/EmComm News

"RACES/ EmComm News" provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County RACES/ACS units and EmComm organizations and supportive amateur radio clubs in and near Orange County, as well as from Cal OES and federal agencies.

Please send your news to *NetControl* Editor Ken Bourne, W6HK, at:

kbourne.ocsd@earthlink.net

Seal Beach RACES

John Breiding, KG6IMB, has replaced Dick Crowe, KG6XJ, as Chief Radio Officer of Seal Beach RACES. Bob Spence, KF6KVR, is now the Assistant Radio Officer.

Winlink Peer-to-Peer Exercise

by OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE

Based on the successful previous exercises, the next countywide Winlink Peer-to-Peer (P2P) practice exercise is planned for the morning of Saturday, June 14, 2025. This exercise provides an opportunity to gain experience using the Winlink P2P Operating Mode.

The exercise will again focus on sending a Winlink P2P message with an attached form to "Drill Ops" located at Loma Ridge in central Orange County. Details are fully described in the instructions currently being finalized and will be distributed prior to the exercise.

It is important to note that this is an informal practice exercise (organized by me) and not associated with any organization. Your participation is solely for your own personal benefit, and the exercise is not to conflict with any official city or county government activities.

Importance of Winlink P2P. For those not familiar with Winlink P2P, it is one of the four operating modes that Winlink supports and does not rely on intermediate Radio Message Server (RMS) or "gateway" for connection to the internet. It is valuable to understand how to operate this mode since it is expected to be a critical Winlink mode used after a major disaster when phone, text, and internet services are not available in our area. I highly recommend that you take advantage of this exercise to gain experience with P2P. However, make sure your Winlink equipment can operate using Conventional Mode (using a local "gateway") before participating in this drill. The main purpose of this drill is not to verify that your Winlink equipment works, but instead focuses on becoming familiar with how to operate P2P mode.

Other interested individuals and organizations may take advantage of this practice exercise. This includes any operators that can reach Loma Ridge directly or through a Winlink gateway operating as a relay.

For more information on Winlink Global Radio Email: https://www.winlink.org.

Southern California SKYWARN

Alex Tardy, who took over the Southern California SKYWARN weather spotters program in 2012, is now retiring from the National Weather Service after 32 years in the federal service. During that time, there have been a lot of changes with technology and social media sharing. However, NWS in San Diego has conducted numerous in-person training sessions to groups such as CERT, ARES, RACES, and emergency management. Technology allows NWS to do live webinar sessions and post online training such as the two videos on YouTube, https://www.weather.gov/sgx/skywarn (all current information).

NWS still has a national online form for submitting weather and impact reports, which will go directly to the operation floor (meteorologists). Weather may also be reported using the mPING app. Those reports are stored online and become part of national Storm Data, which verifies and documents weather impacts: https://forecast.weather.gov/product.php?site=sgx&issuedby=SGX&product=LSR. How to submit: https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report/.

NWS still has a 1-800-240-3022 number (restricted for reports) and is on social media Facebook and X.

Now technology allows you to stay in touch and keep your information current! This will ensure that the database of over 1000 volunteer weather spotters does not rapidly become out of date when your information changes. Confirm your contact information is correct at least twice per year at https://partnerservices.nws.noaa.gov/registration/ (you must update here). Enter your email address and click the "Check Email Address" button. It will ask you to send a one-time code to verify your email address. Click the "Send One Time Code" button. When the code arrives in a couple of minutes, enter it in the "One Time Code" box and click "Verify Code." Finally, make any changes needed to your information and click the "Submit" button.

June 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Weekly 2 m ACS Net & OCRACES Meeting	3	4	5 San Bernardino Microwave Society Mtg.	6	7 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
8	9 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	10	11	12	13	14 Weekly 60 m ACS Net & P2P Winlink Drill
15	16 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	17	18	19 Winlink Class, Session #1	20 Orange County Amateur Radio Club Meeting	21 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
22 Winlink Class, Session #1 (repeat)	23 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	24	25	26 Winlink Class, Session #2	27	28 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
29 Winlink Class, Session #2 (repeat)	30 Weekly 2 m ACS Net on 3 Bands					

Upcoming Events:

- **June 2, 1930-2130 hours:** OCRACES Meeting at Orange County EOC, Loma Ridge
- **June 5, 1900 hours:** San Bernardino Microwave Society Meeting, American Legion Post #216, 1024 S. Main Street, Suite B, in Corona
- **June 14:** Winlink Peer-to-Peer Exercise in the morning
- **June 19, 1500 hours:** Winlink class on Zoom; Session #1 (see article on page 5)
- **June 20, 1900 hours:** Orange County Amateur Radio Club meeting, American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana
- **June 22, 1500 hours:** repeat of June 19 class.
- **June 26, 1500 hours:** Winlink class on Zoom; Session #2 (see article on page 5)

https://ocraces.org

Mission Statement

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

60 m: 5371.5 kHz USB (dial) (Channel 4) (OC ACS Net—Saturdays, 1000 hours)
6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
2 m: 146.595 MHz simplex
1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (down for repair)
70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
70 cm: 448.320 MHz output, 443.320 MHz input, 141.3 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.680 MHz output, 444.680 MHz input, 131.8 Hz PL (private)
*Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

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It's Where It's @!

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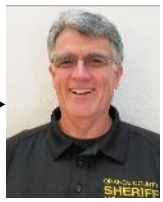
"W6ACS ... Serving Orange County"

Meet Your County of Orange RACES Members!

Officers →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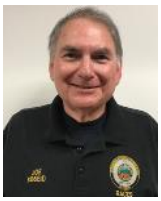
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Steve Livingston
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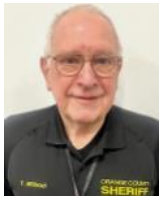
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