

Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

May 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 (Stub Year)



Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club (OARC) is building a thriving Ottawa Amateur Radio community of individuals that are trained, equipped, and actively involved in the hobby and in providing radio-communications support at community events organized by our served agencies and partners.

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Message from our leadership

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2025, the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club (OARC) decided to shift its fiscal year from May-April to January-December. To make this adjustment, the Club wrapped up a shorter “stub year”, running from April 1 to December 31, 2025. This report covers that stub year. The 2026 fiscal year will run from January 1 to December 31, 2026.

Despite being shorter, this year has been very productive. All the same Directors stood for re-election, and this group is working well together. The *OARC Strategic Plan 2025-2028* continues to guide our decisions with its mission statement and vision for the Club, a set of core values, as well as the four strategic goals:

Educate	Increase the number of OARC members who are educated and certified Amateur Radio operators.
Equip	Improve local Amateur Radio technology (e.g., repeater, beacon)
Actively involve	Actively involve OARC members in Amateur Radio activities including Club Activities and in providing radio-communications support to community events.
Partnerships	Strengthen strategic partnerships with external organizations to raise awareness about Amateur Radio and the OARC.

Unfortunately, the Club has not yet been successful in recruiting a volunteer Coordinator for each of the four strategic goals. These are critical roles that are part of the Club’s management team. All of the Club’s short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities are posted on the OARC volunteer page: <https://oarc.net/volunteer/>.

Club operations continued to improve this year with the adoption of new software, including:

- Zoho books, low-cost, comprehensive accounting software;
- Microsoft 365, including Outlook, Sharepoint, Teams (free for non-profits); and,
- Zeffy, the free, secure, Canadian online payment system.

The use of Zeffy, in particular, has increased security and greatly reduced the amount of administrative effort needed to manage member information and payments. Watch for your membership renewal email to arrive 30 days before your membership expires and follow the instructions. Send any membership questions to: <https://oarc.net/contact-us/>

With thanks and 73,

The 2024-25 OARC Board

Goal 1: Education

Goal 1: Education focused on strengthening the skills, confidence, and engagement of both new and experienced Amateur Radio operators. During the 2025 stub year, the OARC delivered a well-rounded education program that combined formal courses, practical workshops, and targeted supports designed to move members from certification to active participation in the hobby.

Courses

A cornerstone of the year was the delivery of several structured training courses. In May 2025, the Club hosted an **Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)** training weekend, bringing together 22 participants with a wide range of experience. The course blended classroom instruction with hands-on learning and emphasized real-world preparedness for emergency and disaster response. Participants included newer hams, experienced operators, and volunteers from partner organizations, reinforcing both skill development and cross-organizational collaboration.



ARES Training weekend, 24-25 May 2025

In September, OARC successfully negotiated access for 17 members to the Radio Amateurs of Canada **Auxiliary Communications (Aux-Comm) course**. This provincially funded program focused on interoperability between Amateur Radio operators, non-governmental organizations, and emergency management services. In addition to training, the program will deliver a fully equipped Aux-Comm radio go-kit, creating opportunities for future exercises and practical application of course material.

Formal instruction continued in the fall with the launch of the **OARC Basic Course** and **Morse Code (CW) Course**. The Basic Course was redesigned to reflect the updated ISED question bank released in July 2025, ensuring students were prepared for current exam standards. Running over approximately 12 weeks, the course continues to be a key pathway into Amateur Radio for new operators. In parallel, the CW course provided structured training in Morse Code reception and transmission, preparing students both for on-air operation and for the CW qualification exam.

Workshops

Complementing classroom learning, the Club expanded its hands-on workshops, with particular emphasis on lowering barriers to active participation. The **Get-on-the-Air (GOTA) workshop**, now integrated into the Basic Course, provides new hams with guided experience programming radios, setting up stations, and making on-air contacts in a supportive environment. This addition has measurably increased confidence and early engagement, including participation in weekly nets. The fall also saw the launch of a **Soldering-skills and kit-building workshop**, giving members practical electronics skills while reinforcing the technical foundations of the hobby.

The New Hams Program tied these elements together by addressing the critical gap between passing an exam and becoming an active operator. Through a combination of a free one-year membership, discounted starter equipment, and structured expectations for participation, the program aims to build lasting involvement. The coming year will be the first opportunity to assess retention outcomes, as early participants are invited to renew their memberships.

Exam Administration

Finally, the Club continued to support the community through Amateur Radio exam administration, delivering dozens of new certified operators during the stub year. While Morse Code exam results highlighted areas for improvement, they also provided clear direction for refining instructional approaches going forward.

Results of 2025 exams administered by Mike, VE3FFK, and Harrie, VE3HYS:

	Mike, VE3FFK				Harrie, VE3HYS			
	Total	Passed	Passed with honours (80%+)	Failed	Total	Passed	Passed with honours (80%+)	Failed
Basic	19	5	11	3	34	5	19	7
Advanced	5	4	1	1	2	2		

That's a total of **40 new hams** during this period. Mike also supervised 4 Morse Code (CW) exams: 3 passed (sending and receiving), 1 failed (sending, receiving or both).

Together, these efforts demonstrate a coherent education strategy that balances certification, practical skills, and sustained engagement—advancing the Club's objective to grow a capable, confident, and active Amateur Radio community.

Goal 2: Equipment

Goal 2: Equipment focused on maintaining and improving the Club's technical infrastructure while laying groundwork for greater operational flexibility in the future. During the 2025 stub year, progress was steady, pragmatic, and deliberately paced to match available volunteer capacity.

Modernizing and maintaining Amateur Radio equipment and infrastructure

The Club continued planning for a significant **upgrade of the VE2CRA repeater system**, with funds already set aside and preserved for that purpose. While a full implementation plan has not yet been finalized, the Board remains committed to moving forward once a small technical working group can be assembled. In the interim, reliability improvements were realized with the return to service of the **DMR repeater** in May 2025, restoring an important digital capability for members.

Other core infrastructure also remained operational. The **VE3TEN 10-metre beacon**, after a brief outage, was returned to service in April, restoring its role as both a propagation indicator and a technical asset for the region.

Making resources and tools accessible

A notable development this year was progress toward a new-hams equipment lending library. By bringing an existing grassroots effort – the **Youth Equipment Program** run by Craig, VE3OP - under the Club's umbrella, OARC reduced financial barriers for new operators while pairing loaned equipment with mentoring and technical support. This initiative directly supports education, retention, and early engagement.



Retivis RT-95, 25-Watt VHF/UHF mobile radio

In addition, 19 new hams who took the OARC Basic Course and passed the exam, then purchased a **discounted radio bundle** from the Club. The bundle includes a Retivis RT-95, 25-Watt VHF/UHF mobile radio, programming cable, and mag-mount antenna, as well as a DC cigarette lighter plug with power pole connection so you can operate in a vehicle or from battery virtually anywhere.

Operational Agility

Finally, the Club took modest but meaningful steps toward improving operational “agility.” The acquisition of a **portable gazebo** and the anticipated delivery of an Aux-Comm radio go-kit enhance OARC’s ability to deploy quickly for events, exercises, and emergencies. Together, these investments strengthen the Club’s technical readiness while remaining aligned with its volunteer-driven capacity.



OARC portable gazebo

Goal 3: Active Involvement

Goal 3: Active Involvement focused on translating education, training, and technical capability into meaningful participation. During the 2025 stub year, the OARC placed strong emphasis on giving members frequent, varied opportunities to operate, experiment, socialize, and serve the community. Despite the shortened reporting period, member engagement remained high across Club activities and community events, reinforcing Amateur Radio as both a technical hobby and a public good.

Active involvement also plays a critical role in member retention. By offering welcoming entry points for new hams alongside challenging and rewarding opportunities for experienced operators, the Club continues to foster a culture of participation, mentorship, and shared purpose.

Club Activities

Club-run activities formed the backbone of member engagement throughout the year. From regular meetings to large-scale operating events, these activities created space for learning, operating, and building social connections within the Club.

Between May and December 2025, OARC held five **Monthly Meetings**. While the number was reduced due to our July-August summer break and a scheduling problem in September, attendance and engagement remained strong. These meetings provided updates on Club operations, featured presentations, and offered a consistent touchpoint for members to stay connected.



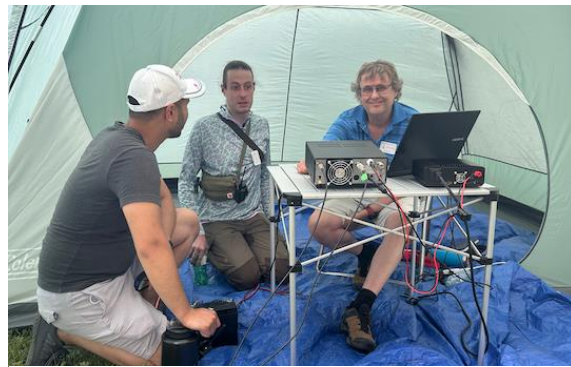
Field Day 2025 - Operators taking a break in the shade

Field Day 2025, on June 28–29, was once again held at Scouts Headquarters. The site proved well suited to operations, offering excellent facilities and strong support from Scouts Canada. On the air, OARC achieved its third-highest score since 2009, with Morse Code contacts continuing to be a key contributor to overall performance. CW activity on 40, 20, and 80 metres dominated results, while FT8 contacts were concentrated on

20 and 40 metres, reflecting propagation conditions. Although VHF and higher bands were less productive, a handful of FM simplex contacts added variety and interest.



Field Day 2025 - Craig, VE3KKU, and Ann, VA3PAO, operating Morse Code (CW)



Field Day 2025 – Dave, VA3OOC, satellite comms

Beyond the score, Field Day excelled as a participation and outreach event. Volunteers were involved in all aspects of the operation, from setup and teardown to operating and visitor engagement. The Get-on-the-Air stations attracted members of the public, many of whom learned about the event through a CBC Radio interview aired the same weekend. The visit by a City Councillor and the associated media coverage further reinforced the Club's public profile.

Coinciding with Field Day, the **“Come Meet the New Hams” BBQ 2025** brought together approximately 50 participants, blending social interaction with celebration of newly certified operators. This event underscored the Club's commitment to welcoming newcomers and strengthening informal connections between members at different stages of their Amateur Radio journey.

On September 6, 2025, OARC held its annual flagship event: **Carp Hamfest 2025**. This year's was the largest in event's 28-year history with over 500 attendees! It remains the region's largest Amateur Radio flea market and trade show, featuring most of the big ham radio retailers, fellow hams selling radio goodies at unbelievable prices, and major

door prizes. There were more great door prizes than ever, all donated by our 2025 commercial vendors.

Ed, VE3WGO, has been delivering Carp Hamfest since 2007 and we're all so grateful to Ed for his organizational skills and boundless energy. Janice, VA3PAX, and Greg, VE3Ytz, certainly deserve special mention for their advance financial and logistics preparations for the volunteer team. A big thank you to Shivang Jani, too, who played a key role organizing all the volunteers this year.



Carp Hamfest 2025 - Record-breaking crowds



Carp Hamfest 2025 - The hard-working set-up crew

This year's Hamfest also included two unique additions:

- RAC held its AGM in the sports-club diner upstairs at the Hamfest arena. The meeting was attended by the members of the RAC Board of Directors and Executive and was open to all RAC members.
- A demonstration of Winlink was presented by Ian Snow VA3QT (Team Lead) and Marcel Eschenmoser VE3UKW, both from the Emergency Management Simcoe County – Auxiliary Communications Team. The demo featured a functioning Winlink 2m/70cm Gateway, Typical 'shelter' station set-up with HF, 2m and 70 cm capabilities, APRS display, and local AREDN network

Other operating-focused activities rounded out the year. Participation in the **RAC Canada Day Contest 2025** saw local hams activating the VE3RHQ callsign from RAC Headquarters, combining contesting with national celebration. Later in the year, members were encouraged to take part in the **RAC Canada Winter Contest 2025**, reinforcing radio sport as an accessible and flexible way to stay active on the air.

Outreach and experimentation were also central themes. In July, **OARC hosted a booth** at the 2025 IEEE International Symposium on Antennas & Propagation and the North American Radio Science Meeting (AP-S/URSI) Over five days, approximately 100 visitors stopped by the booth, which featured live demonstrations using remote radios connected to stations at Scout and RAC headquarters.

The booth also displayed six large-format, full-colour Amateur Radio posters supplied by The American Radio Relay League (ARRL). Volunteers distributed bookmarks with the phonetic alphabet on one side and info about Amateur Radio on the other. This event highlighted Amateur Radio’s technical depth and its relevance to professional engineers and researchers.

September’s **Radio in the Park** event provided a more informal outreach opportunity. Operators set up a variety of antennas and modes in a public park, sparking conversations with passersby and giving new hams additional on-air experience in a relaxed setting. Events like this help demystify Amateur Radio and showcase its accessibility.



OARC Bookmark for IEEE AP-S/URSI 2025



Radio in the Park 2025 – Andrew, VA3IH; Dave, VA3OOC; and James, VA3OJL.

Looking ahead, the Club also laid groundwork for early 2026 activities such as **Winter Field Day** and **Homebrew Night**. While these fall outside the stub year, their inclusion reflects continuity in programming and sustained momentum in member engagement.

Community Events

Community events are a defining aspect of Goal 3, demonstrating Amateur Radio’s value as a public service and providing members with real-world operating experience. During the stub year, OARC members supported several large-scale events that required coordination, reliability, and professionalism.

In May, Amateur Radio operators provided communications support for **CN Cycle for CHEO**, an event involving thousands of cyclists and walkers across multiple routes. With over 40 operators participating in various roles—fixed stations, mobile units, cyclists, and command post—the event showcased the flexibility of Amateur Radio in complex, dynamic environments. The event also served as a valuable training ground for newer operators, who could observe and participate under the guidance of experienced Net Control.



June saw continued involvement in the **Rideau Lakes Cycle Tour**, where operators from Ottawa and surrounding regions worked together across multiple districts. This event emphasized interoperability, repeater coordination, and teamwork across clubs—skills directly aligned with emergency communications training.

Later in the summer, OARC members contributed to the **MS Bike Tour**, supporting both cyclists and medical teams. The deployment included mobile operators, APRS tracking, and repeater relocation to ensure coverage, highlighting the technical planning and adaptability required for successful event support. These events not only raise funds for important causes but also reinforce trust between Amateur Radio operators and event organizers.

In October, **OARC supported Jamboree on the Air—Jamboree on the Internet (JOTA-JOTI)**, the world’s largest Scouting communications event. Operators facilitated contacts between Scouts locally and around the world, combining radio and internet-based communications. This event aligns particularly well with the Club’s educational mission, introducing young people to Amateur Radio and demonstrating its global reach.



Looking forward, the inclusion of the **Canadian Ski Marathon** in early 2026 underscores the continuity of community service. While technically outside the reporting period, its mention reflects the Club’s ongoing commitment to supporting demanding outdoor events that require dependable communications under challenging conditions.

Outcomes and Impact

Collectively, Goal 3 activities delivered several important outcomes. Members had frequent opportunities to apply skills learned through courses and workshops, reinforcing confidence and competence. New hams were integrated into Club life through operating events and community service, helping bridge the gap between certification and sustained involvement. Experienced operators found meaningful avenues to contribute expertise, mentor others, and tackle technically and logistically complex challenges.

Equally important, these activities strengthened OARC’s visibility and reputation. Through community events, media coverage, and partnerships with event organizers, the Club demonstrated Amateur Radio’s ongoing relevance and value. Goal 3 thus serves as the practical expression of the Club’s broader strategy—turning education, equipment, and partnerships into active, engaged participation that benefits both members and the wider community.

Goal 4: Partnership

Goal 4: Partnership focused on strengthening relationships that expand the reach, relevance, and resilience of Amateur Radio in the Ottawa area. Progress during the stub year was selective but meaningful, prioritizing depth of collaboration over the number of formal agreements.



The most significant partnership remains with **West Carleton Disaster Relief (WCDR)**. Building on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2024, the relationship matured in 2025 through shared training, participation in courses, and the launch of regular joint field exercises. These exercises support emergency preparedness while helping volunteers from both organizations learn how to work together effectively under realistic conditions.

Beyond formal agreements, OARC continued to collaborate extensively with other Amateur Radio clubs and national organizations. Joint participation in training, contests, conferences, and public events reinforced professional connections and promoted consistent operating practices across the region.

While additional partnerships were not formalized this year, the groundwork remains in place. The Club's visibility at events such as Carp Hamfest, IEEE conferences, and community activities continues to generate interest from organizations with aligned missions. Goal 4 reflects a deliberate, relationship-driven approach that positions OARC for sustainable collaboration in the years ahead.

5. Club Operations

Like any non-profit organization, the OARC undertakes governance improvements, administrative tasks, financial planning and oversight, membership coordination, and communications. These ongoing functions support the smooth running of the Club itself, so the Club can focus on delivering its goals and objectives.

Governance

The **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** of the members of the OARC took place on June 11, 2025. The agenda began with a review of the OARC's 2024-25 accomplishments and finances. Copies of the 2024-25 Annual Report were made available. The meeting then moved to the election of 2025-26 OARC Directors. All the 2024-25 directors agreed to stand for re-election. The members present voted in favour of electing the slate. The final segment of the meeting was to look ahead at 2025-26 Operational Plan and

Budget, which covered plans for each of the OARC's four goals and Club operations.

The Board continues to function well, with monthly meetings focused on key deliberations and decisions. There are also quarterly meetings of the expanded management team, which include updates from Coordinators of the four goals and Club operations (membership, administration, and communications). The three-year Strategic Plan continues to provide the overall framework for the organization. The 2025-26 Operational Plan and Budget are continuing to guide the organization for the upcoming year.

Financial planning and oversight

Overview

OARC concluded the fiscal year with a solid cash balance of \$48,585. The Club continued to allocate resources strategically, supporting both essential infrastructure upgrades and member-focused initiatives.

Because OARC transitioned to a new fiscal-year end during the reporting cycle, the accompanying financial statements cover only an eight-month period rather than a full twelve months. The abbreviated timeframe accounts for the timing shift and explains why certain revenues—such as those from the early-year Amateur Radio course—are not reflected in the current totals. Detailed figures, along with explanatory notes on the change in reporting period, are provided in the financial statements and related notes in Appendix A.

Key Financial Highlights

- Repeater Upgrade Reserve: Approximately \$35,500 remains earmarked for the planned repeater upgrade, ensuring the project stays funded without impacting operating cash flow.
- Audio-Visual Enhancements: An investment of \$3,080 was made in audio-visual equipment to improve the quality of member meetings and events.
- Club Equipment & Scout Headquarters Station: Additional capital was directed toward maintaining and upgrading club-owned gear as well as the radio station located at the Scouts Canada headquarters.
- D-Star Repeater for Camp Fortune: OARC invested \$4432 in a D-Star repeater to support emergency services. Funding for this repeater was drawn from the Club's restricted reserve fund.
- RT-95 Radio Purchase Program: OARC contributed \$2,290 to subsidize the acquisition of RT-95 radios for new members, reinforcing the Club's commitment to onboarding fresh enthusiasts.

Bottom Line

The Club recorded a modest \$2,411 excess of expenses over income for the year. While this reflects a slight shortfall, the overall financial health remains robust thanks to the strong cash position and disciplined reserve allocations.

OARC's finances demonstrate prudent stewardship of funds, balancing necessary capital projects with member-service investments. The retained cash and reserved funds position the Club well for upcoming initiatives, particularly the repeater upgrade and continued support for new ham operators.

Membership coordination



Sample OARC e-Membership Card

Last year, the Club moved to processing payments for new and renewed memberships through Zeffy, a secure, zero-fee, Canadian online payment system for non-profit organizations. This has increased security and significantly reduced our administrative burden by automatically storing member information, managing payments and issuing renewal reminders. Zeffy also allowed the Club to move to a much fairer anniversary-date membership, which runs for one year

from the date of your payment, rather than having everyone's membership expire all at the same time regardless of payment date.

On behalf of the Board and all the members of the OARC, a heartfelt thank you to Claude Fournier, VE3VLW, our Membership Coordinator for the past year, who brought lots of energy and new ideas to the role. The Club is now seeking a new Membership Coordinator for the coming year.

Communications coordination

Joanne, the OARC's volunteer communications coordinator, continues to focus on writing and editing content for the website, reports, and the monthly OARC Newsletter. Eve, VA5EVE, continues as the Club's webmaster, publishing new web content and issuing the monthly OARC Newsletter. Neil, VE3PUE, continues to provide ongoing IT support behind the scenes.



Screenshot of OARC website home page

6. Conclusion

In 2025, the Board made excellent progress clarifying the Club's goals and objectives and moved the Club forward with better planning, more professional and transparent club management, and clear volunteer position descriptions.

By focusing on our four Goals, the Club is expanding its educational offerings, upgrading equipment, expanding activities, and building strategic partnerships. This strategy is helping the OARC grow in a sustainable way and helping ensure that Amateur Radio remains relevant in a rapidly changing world.

A number of critical long-term volunteer roles need to be filled in the coming months so that the Club can continue to thrive. We will need all hands on deck to deliver on our plans next year and beyond. Learn more by visiting <https://oarc.net/volunteer/>.