



P.O. Box 6421, Auburn, CA 95604

APRIL 2026

<https://www.w6ek.org>

At The Key at SFARC:

PRESIDENT

Mark Koehler (W2MWK)

VICE PRESIDENTS

Jim Jupin (WA8MPA)
Greg Dolkas (KO6TH)

SECRETARY

Bob Patton (N6EMS)

TREASURER

Ron (KA6UAI) and Laurie Holland

DIRECTORS

Greydon Hicks (KC6SLE)
Frank Calvillo (KG9M)
Steven Foley (KO6EBQ)

GREETER / SUNSHINE

Pam Bautista (KN6GTK)

PUBLIC RELATIONS / SOCIAL MEDIA

Smitty (WB1G)

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Jeff Morgan (KW6U)
Dudley McFadden (KO6DRM)

VE TESTING COORDINATOR

Brian Gohl (AI6US)

WEBMASTER(S)

Smitty (WB1G)
Greg Dolkas (KO6TH)

STATION TRUSTEE

Clyde Campbell (AB4CC)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jim Zheng (W6JCZ)

GROUPS.IO ADMINISTRATOR

Aaron Bond (W1ATB)

DROPBOX ADMINISTRATOR

Smitty (WB1G)

ELMER LEAD

Greydon Hicks (KC6SLE)

ADVANCEMENT / CLASSES

Chair: Orion Endres (AI6JB)
Instructor(s): Orion Endres (AI6JB), Anders Rehnvall (NR6H), James Goldstene (AE6JG), Steven Foley (KO6EBQ)

WEEKLY CLUB NET

Thursdays @ 7:30 PM

W6EK 2m Repeater @ 145.430 MHz

Primary Net Control Operators:
Dave Jenkins (WB6RBE)
Orion Endres (AI6JB)
Chip Bautista (KM6MDF)
Smitty (WB1G)

COFFEE BREAK NET

365 Days A Year 7:30 AM – 10 AM

W6EK 2m Repeater @ 145.430 MHz

Primary Net Control Operators:

- Brian Gohl (AI6US)
- Gerry Brentnall (WA6E)
- Theta Brentnall (WA6EWF)
- Tom Newman (NN6H)
- Orion Endres (AI6JB)
- Jeff Morgan (KW6U)

Standby Net Control Operators:

- Smitty (WB1G)
- Don Hay (WB6LPJ)
- Aaron Bond (W1ATB)

CLUB MEETINGS

Second Friday of the month,
PCHHS Conference Center @ 7:30 PM
Cordova Room 500, 11434 B Ave, Auburn, CA

CLUB EVENTS

Amateur Radio License Exam Session

April 6 @ 7 PM
Confluence Church
1101 Auburn Ravine Rd, Auburn, CA

Board Meeting

April 9 @ 6 PM
[Online via Zoom](#)

General Meeting

April 10 @ 7:30 PM
PCHHS Conference Center or [Online via Zoom](#)
Cordova Room 500, 11434 B Ave, Auburn, CA

Breakfast Social & Radio Direction Finding

April 25 @ 7:30 AM
The Original Mel's Diner
1730 Grass Valley Hwy #2885, Auburn, CA
Visit our [website](#) for more information about RDF

REPEATERS

145.430 MHz (-0.6 MHz / CTCSS 162.2)

AllStarLink: 51018
EchoLink: 4128

Wires-X: W6EK-2M-ROOM (62545)

223.860 MHz (-1.6 MHz / CTCSS 110.9)

440.575 MHz (+5.0 MHz / CTCSS 162.2)

AMS – Fusion C4FM & Analog FM
Wires-X: NorCal Repeater GRP (43847)
YSF: US-NorCalRptGrp (06040)

In This Issue:

- President's Message
- Looking Forward
- Summer Field Day 2026
- 10th Annual Loomis Hamfest
- VE Testing Report
- Board & General Meeting Minutes



Sierra Signals is published monthly by the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club for the information of its members and friends and is distributed via e-mail. Opinions expressed are those of the authors. Newsletter exchanges with other clubs via e-mail are welcomed. The contents of Sierra Signals are copyrighted by the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club, and all rights are reserved. That said, we will gladly permit republications for non-profit uses of all text material. Photos require the consent of all people pictured in them, and some of our material is copyrighted by others and published with their permission.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SFARC President | Mark Koehler (W2MWK)



March continues the club's consistent pace of activity across all domains. Nets, monthly meetings, and of course, Hamfest, the club's biggest annual event, which will have concluded by the time this article is published. Held on March 28th at the Loomis Historic Train Depot, under the leadership of Frank Calvillo, KG9M, and his team, I am confident that it was a resounding success. Please let us know if you enjoyed the mystery box silent auction.

Field Day planning will start in April, with several key roles already assigned to facilitate the progress of the event. For more details, please refer to the Field Day update later in this newsletter.

We have now conducted two meetings in the Cordova room at the Health and Human Services building. The A/V team is diligently refining and enhancing the setup process. I hope you're finding the new facility to be an improvement over the church gymnasium.

Speaking of the Church, I and Jim Jupin, WA8MPA, had the privilege of presenting Pastor Jason with a \$300 donation to the Food Bank. This gesture of gratitude was in recognition of their generous permission to use their gymnasium for our monthly general membership meetings and other events over the past five years.

Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute their time and energy to the club. Your involvement keeps SFARC active and moving forward.

Mark, W2MWK
SFARC President

A promotional banner for a donut and coffee event. The background is a collage of various donuts and coffee cups. The text is centered and reads:

**Donuts and Coffee
In The Park**

**AUBURN RECREATION PARK PICNIC PAVILION
123 RECREATION DR, AUBURN, CA 95603**

MAY 9TH, 9AM

On the right side of the banner, there is a white paper coffee cup with a logo, a glass mug of coffee, and a white ceramic coffee cup on a saucer.

LOOKING FORWARD

SFARC Vice Presidents | Jim Jupin (WA8MPA) and Greg Dolkas (KO6TH)



For the April meeting, Jim WA8MPA will do a technical dive into Common Mode Currents, the skin effect in coax cable, and how to visualize it all with a Nano VNA. Got a kink in your garden hose, and wonder how that works with your cables? What kind and how many ferrite beads cause a given result? They're not all the same, and with apologies to Yogi Berra, if you don't know what you have, it's probably going to do something different! Come to the April meeting and find out how to make sense of all of this, and keep the currents (and garden hoses) flowing the way you want them to.

But wait! There's MORE!

Swap Meet – Attic giveaway

Our April SFARC Club meeting will have a SPECIAL "Help yourself" opportunity for those attending. We have a large quantity of items from our recent HamSwap that will be given away FREE!

This includes:

- Test gear
- Tools
- Project Boxes
- Build it yourself kits
- Meters
- RF connectors
- RF adapters
- Crimp-on, Stay/Con connectors

And much more!!!!

Come a little early – we will limit the per person haul to 4 - 5 items

SUMMER FIELD DAY 2026

SFARC President | Mark Koehler (W2MWK)

ARRL Field Day, June 27th & 28th at Georgetown Airport - Mark Koehler - Chair

The team is slowly coming together:

Smitty - WB1G, Co-Chair & PIO

Brian - AI6US & Matt - KO6IMP Co-Chairs Antenna setup

Garritt - KO6BMA Saturday Lunch and Dinner

Brian - AI6US and Lin - KN6KRD Saturday and Sunday Breakfast

Scott - KM6RFB Safety Officer

Jim - WA6MPA Welcome Table

Dennis - WU6X Networking and logging setup

We are looking for volunteers to pair up with both Jim and Dennis with an eye providing backup on future field days and to offset some of the work they do every year. Additionally we need 2 or 3 folks to setup to be the band masters.

If leading isn't your thing but you want to help out we will need volunteers to help setup and take down our antenna farm, pre-Field Day campground clean up and as always helping with Sunday clean up.

10TH ANNUAL LOOMIS HAMFEST

SFARC Hamfest Chair | Frank Calvillo (KG9M)

To the Hamfest Team Leads, Committee Chairs, and Volunteers,

The 10th Annual Loomis Hamfest is officially in the books! While we are still tallying the final results, the initial feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This year's event was a resounding success, and that is entirely due to this team.

To the Team Leads & Club Leadership

You shouldered the heaviest part of the workload and taught me so much throughout this planning cycle. I am incredibly grateful for your "all hands on deck" spirit, your patience, and your unwavering support. It was a true honor to work alongside you.

To Our Incredible Volunteers

Whether you were on-site at 04:00 (or earlier) or stayed late to pack the last vehicle, THANK YOU! Your energy is what makes this club special.

A huge shout-out to the crews who handled:

Logistics: Setup & Tear-Down and Equipment Loan.

Operations: Parking, Security, Vendor Relations, Club Sales, Cash Handling, Safety, Medical, and our first-ever Incident Action Plan.

Technical & Outreach: Test Table, Elmer Tours, Prize Drawings, Media/Photography, and the Coffee Break Net.

Hospitality: Concessions (those donuts were amazing!), Hydration, and our Emcee.

Seeking Your Feedback: "Two Up, One Down"

I am a firm believer in continuous improvement. While the event is fresh in your mind, I'd appreciate your perspective using the "Two Up and One Down" format:

What were two things that worked well?

What was one thing (or more) that could be improved for next year, or what is a new opportunity to consider?

We never rest on our laurels, and all constructive feedback is a gift. Please send your thoughts to me at kg9m@outlook.com. Thank you to those who have already sent me feedback!

73,

Frank – KG9M

Director, SFARC

Chair, Loomis Hamfest 2026....and maybe 2027 :)

VE TESTING REPORT

SFARC VE Testing Coordinator | Brian Gohl (AI6US)



The Sierra Foothills VE team is very thankful for all who have served in the military and our first responders. We are excited to introduce a 50% discount on the amateur radio exam session fee. Please present a supporting document during the session check-in to receive your exam at the discounted fee of \$7. Thank you!

The March 2, 2026 amateur radio exam evening started at 5 pm with a delicious dinner at Old Town Pizza in Auburn. After dinner we met at the Confluence Church campus to hold the exam session at 7 pm. Nine candidates tested with eight successfully passing the Technician exam. Two of the new technicians won a drawing for HT radios with pre-programmed local repeaters and simplex frequencies.

Congratulations to these new Technicians:

Drew Coighlin – KO6MSN
Sandy Graham – KO6MSU
Paul Hills – KO6MSQ
Josh Paul – KO6MSV
Michelle Paul – KO6MSO
Andrey Romanenko – KO6MSE
Matt Valentine – KM7EPN
Gary Waters - KO6MSP

Exam Team

VEC: Brian – AI6US
VE Lead: Smitty – WB1G
Signing VEs: Frank - KG9M, Gary - KQ6RT, Gerry – WA6E

Elmer Team:

Elmer Lead: Gerry – WA6E
Elmer Team: Don – WB6LPJ, Bob – N6EMS, Jeff – KW26U, Doug – W2VX, Jim – WA8MPA, Greg – KO6TH, Jeff - KO6KVZ

The next exam session will be 7pm on April 6 at the Confluence Church campus. Pre-register at www.hamstudy.org/sessions/sfarc . Come join us for the VE / Elmer dinner at 5pm. Delicious Chinese food and great conversations will be had at the Happy Wok Restaurant, 352 Elm Ave., Auburn, CA 95603

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

SFARC Membership Coordinator | Dudley McFadden (KO6DRM)

Congratulations to the newest members of SFARC who were voted in at March's general club meeting!



Jeff Jubera	KO6MGA
Rich Minear	KCØRKM
Samuel Speigel	KE6NTD
Stephen Reagen	KO6MEZ
Dmitri Chinguel	KO6MDG

We have 6 new members to vote on at the next club meeting on April 10.

Michael Miles	N7HLK
Jolayne Nash	KO6MSR
Kristopher Poulos	KI6HFP
Stephen Kramme	KD6KXT
Craig Dale	W9PAX
Donald Russel	W6DAR



SFARC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

X (TWITTER) <https://x.w6ek.com>
FACEBOOK <https://facebook.w6ek.com>
INSTAGRAM <https://instagram.w6ek.com>
YOUTUBE <https://youtube.w6ek.org>
LINKEDIN <https://linkedin.w6ek.org>
GROUPS.IO <https://w6ek.groups.io>



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

SFARC Secretary | Bob Patton (N6EMS)

03/12/2026 at 1800 Hrs

SFARC Zoom room

Club Officers and Directors present:

Mark (W2MWK) President
Greg (KO6TH) Vice-President
Jim (WA8MPA) Vice-President
Bob (N6EMS) Secretary
Ron (KA6UAI) & Laurie Treasurer
Greydon (KC6SLE) Director
Frank (KG9M) Director
Steven (KO6EBQ) Director

1. Scholarship Award Disbursement

There are three approved scholarships. Checks for these have not yet been cut due to missing recipient information. Mark is responsible for writing award letters to recipients but has not received names. It was verified that Smitty had previously sent a list of applications and recipients. An action item is created for Greydon to make sure Mark, Ron, and Laurie receive the scholarship winner names to facilitate the check writing and letter process.

2. Expansion of Scholarship Outreach

The board approved outreach for three additional scholarships, considering contacting local high schools in Placer and Nevada Counties. Confirmation has been received that Nevada County has no objections to the club reaching out to schools within their area, including Bear River High School. Further coordination is needed to proceed with outreach.

3. General Membership Meeting Procedures

All officer and board member topics requiring discussion during general meetings must be communicated to Mark ahead of time. All presentations for the general meeting must be submitted to Stephen by 12:00 PM on Thursday prior to the meeting for integration into a unified presentation.

4. Hamfest Planning Update

The final prize value for Hamfest is pending calculation, with prizes coming from multiple sources. Frank is coordinating this sum. Approximately 15 volunteer spots remain to be filled. The planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 19th, with the event occurring 15 days after. Volunteer tracking, finalization of maps (some dating back to 2003 may need updating), and signage inventory were discussed. There is confusion regarding

the location of recently purchased large fabric banners, specifically two red-and-white banners for Ham Swap purchased last year, along with banners for refreshment and prize areas.

5. Groups.io Integration for Membership Support

Smitty presented an upgrade to the club's support ticket tracking, integrating the club's webserver with Groups.io to create a new group titled "SFARC Membership Support." This tracks all inbound web requests and is visible to board and appointed members. The protocol remains: reply to all in email, with visual tags (e.g., open, answered, on hold) for ticket status. The system currently processes about a dozen support requests per week. Members are encouraged to regularly check and update ticket statuses for improved transparency and follow-up.

6. Club Public Address (PA) System Discussion

The club's current PA system is inadequate, relying heavily on Smitty's personal equipment. Smitty proposed investing in a new, higher-quality PA set, estimating costs at around \$800 (including cables and necessary gear). This expense is not currently budgeted and requires further board discussion before proceeding, with suggestions to consider this in future budget planning and potentially organize a standalone meeting for a detailed discussion.

7. PayPal Account and Payment Issues

Recently, only Square deposits have shown on bank statements. On PayPal, the account showed a balance around \$354 but could not transfer funds due to errors including "debit card denied." Attempts to view January and prior years' transactions failed, with PayPal only displaying February Square payments. Currently, PayPal payments are disabled; members may pay only via the website or Ham Club Online using Square. A formal complaint will be registered with PayPal. Resolution could take up to 6 months. Ownership issues persist with PayPal, as the account is under Richard Kepler (past president 2002-2003), possibly linked to the club's PO box. Square continues to operate reliably. A plan for future payment providers is needed, focusing on transferring account ownership to current club officers.

8. Membership Payments and Status

There was concern that payments made between January 1 and January 10 for memberships and donations are stuck in PayPal. All February transactions were processed through Square. Despite the inability to access PayPal funds, membership status is accurately reflected. Members who paid are valid and data is intact; donations require

further investigation.

9. Trailer Maintenance and Expenses

Trailer currently at Greydon's residence, full of club auction items. Repairs completed by Jim (cleaned trailer, some fixes). Remaining issues include roof leaks, clearance lights, and wheel bearings. 6 new LED clearance lights need ordering. Wheel seals likely cost \$10 each. Funds allotted for trailer maintenance total \$800; \$425 has been spent. Remaining funds sufficient for upcoming repairs. Repairs will commence after the Ham Fest.

10. Veterans Memorial Hall Equipment Status

The radio station at Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall lacks equipment except for coax cable and possibly an amp. Further follow-up will occur to determine potential restoration or use of this station. Equipment belongs to the post; a club member is custodian.

11. AV System Updates

Round two of the AV system update scheduled. Transition continues, with improvements being implemented.

12. Membership System and Group Communications

A new email handler now fully integrates with Ham Club Online for automated member notifications and roster management. Manual monthly processes are now largely automated. Groups IO remains under Dennis's primary supervision.

13. Membership Expiration

Club currently has approximately 65 members with expired dues, who have received multiple reminders. Example of PayPal-related renewal issues highlighted.

14. VE Exam Results

Recent exam session saw 9 candidates, 8 new technicians granted licenses. FCC and testing fees are covered by the club for successful candidates.

15. Antenna and Battery Installation

New lithium-ion battery installed with 36 hours backup at high power. Request for a low-gain antenna received; board authorized a \$630 expense for battery and antenna (replace minutes, not \$500). Equipment donations possible; follow-up required.

16. Contest and Upcoming Events

Reminder: Idaho "Spud Run" QSO contest this weekend. Ham Fest event details confirmed. Scholarship updates ongoing.

17. Nominations and Committees

Nomination committee seeking a chair. Board members asked to submit recommendations by email.

18. Event Scheduling: Donuts in the Park & Field Day

"Donuts in the Park" event date changed to May 9 (was May 16), due to Mother's Day and scheduling conflicts. Board agreed to proceed with the new date. Field Day preparations underway, to start after Ham Fest. Fox hunt event cancelled in March due to Loomis Ham Fest.

19. Board Meeting Schedule Proposal

Proposal has been raised to move board meetings earlier (e.g., Tuesday) to allow more preparation time between board and general meetings. A poll will be conducted via email to gauge interest.

NEXT STEPS

1. Greydon to provide the names of all three scholarship recipients to Mark, Ron, and Laurie so that checks and letters can be processed without further delay.
2. Jim/Greydon/Earl to confirm the third scholarship recipient and facilitate communication of all necessary details.
3. Proceed with expanded scholarship outreach to targeted high schools in both Placer and Nevada Counties.
4. Board and officer members to submit general meeting topics and all presentations to Mark/Stephen by 12:00 PM of Thursday preceding the meeting.
5. Frank to finalize the total prize value for Hamfest by reaching out to all prize contributors and update slide accordingly.
6. Fill approximately 15 remaining Hamfest volunteer positions and update volunteer tracking slides.
7. Finalize Hamfest maps (update replace previous years as needed) and schedule brief review with Brian for confirmation.
8. Inventory and locate all Hamfest banners and signage, especially the two large red-and-white fabric banners purchased last year; Frank to coordinate search and create inventory.
9. Encourage all board/appointed members to join and actively use the new Groups.io support group for improved member support tracking.
10. Organize a dedicated session to discuss PA system purchase, considering both budgeting and club needs.
11. Register a formal complaint with PayPal and begin claim process; expect up to 6

months resolution.

12. Laurie to email summary of actions taken regarding PayPal issues; Brian and Smitty to assist in brainstorming next steps.

13. Consider processes for managing account ownership in Square and future payment platforms.

14. Greydon to order parts and schedule trailer maintenance after Ham Fest.

15. Follow up regarding the Veterans Memorial Hall radio station equipment.

16. Implementation and monitoring of AV system upgrades.

17. Continue automated email and membership integration; Dennis to lead Groups IO.

18. Address expired memberships, ensuring accurate renewal processing (especially for PayPal payments).

19. Confirm antenna purchase status with Clyde and obtain donated equipment if available.

20. Update website and communications for new event dates (Donuts in the Park, Field Day).

21. Conduct board member poll about meeting schedule change.

22. Proceed with nomination committee formation.

Meeting was adjourned at 1930 Hrs.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

SFARC Secretary | Bob Patton (N6EMS)

March 13, 2026

Mark (W2MWK) opened the meeting on time at 1930 Hrs and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Meeting room procedures including evacuation procedures were reviewed.

Reminder was given to review your membership status on Ham club online and renew as needed.

Motion was made by Brian (AI6US) to accept new membership applications. The motion was seconded by Aaron (W1ATB). Voting will be online.

Motion was made by Scott (KM6RFB) to approve funds to purchase equipment for the repeater. Motion was seconded by Aaron (W1ATB). Voting will be online.

Frank (KG9M) the chair for this years Hamfest gave an update on planning. Section leads gave updates and requested additional volunteers. This is the last general meeting before Hamfest so this was our presentation. The presentation was recorded and will be available on the W6EK YouTube channel.

There was a break for social time.

The meeting concluded with the monthly drawing and the winners were Dan (KN6WQU), and Patrick (AK6JP)

The meeting was adjourned at 2100 Hrs.

ADVERTISEMENTS



Dennis H. Gregory
Instructor/Technician

Computer Repairs and Support
Reasonable rates, free consultation
Business License #114527

Phone: 530-305-0180
Auburn, CA

Email: yourmissioncontrol@att.net
Web: www.yourmissioncontrol.com



**DJ AND EMCEE
SERVICES
SINCE 1992**

SMITH DIGITAL SERVICES
(916) 773-1999 | DJSMITTY.COM

SFARC members in good standing can request to have a business-card sized advertisement displayed in the club newsletter. Contact the newsletter editor for more information about how you can have your card in this space.