



P.O. Box 6421, Auburn, CA 95604

JULY 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

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

Board Meeting

July 9 @ 6 PM

[Online via Zoom](#)

General Meeting

July 10 @ 7:30 PM

PCHHS Conference Center or [Online via Zoom](#)
Cordova Room 500, 11434 B Ave, Auburn, CA

Breakfast Social & Radio Direction Finding

July 25 @ 7:30 AM

Wings Grill & Espresso Bar

13595 New Airport Rd, Auburn, CA

Visit our [website](#) for more information about RDF

Hams and Hops

July 29 @ 6:00 PM

Moonraker Brewing Co.

12970 Earhart Ave #100, Auburn, CA

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
- Vice Presidents' Message
- VE Report
- ARDC Grant for Sac-Foothills Mesh
- Membership Update
- 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.

MORE THAN A CONTEST: SFARC FIELD DAY 2026

SFARC President | Mark Koehler (W2MWK)

Field Day 2026 was another outstanding success for the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club. Throughout the weekend we welcomed well over 100 members, guests, family members, and visitors to the Georgetown Airport Campground. Some stopped by for a quick visit, others spent the day on Saturday, and many camped with us for the entire weekend. Regardless of how long they stayed, every visitor helped make this one of our most successful and enjoyable Field Days.

We were especially pleased to welcome Auburn City Councilmember Alice Dowdin Calvillo, who visited our site on Saturday afternoon to learn more about Field Day and the role Amateur Radio plays in emergency preparedness and community service. We appreciate her taking the time to spend part of her day with us.



As I shared during our planning meetings and presentations, this year's Field Day was built around three simple themes: **Fun, Food, and Fellowship**. While Field Day is technically an operating exercise and friendly competition, our greatest success isn't measured by the number of points we earn. It's measured by members getting on the air, practicing their operating skills, learning something new, mentoring others, and enjoying a weekend together. By every measure, this year's event was a tremendous success.

Field Day is about far more than making contacts. It is an opportunity to demonstrate emergency communications, introduce amateur radio to new people, learn from one another, and strengthen the friendships that make our club so special. Everywhere you looked there were conversations about an-

tennas, radios, digital modes, operating techniques, camping, and countless other topics that remind us why we enjoy this hobby.

The weekend also demonstrated the enthusiasm and dedication of our members. By Sunday morning, our operators had logged well over 1,600 contacts across multiple operating modes, while our Volunteer Examiner team successfully administered eight amateur radio license examinations, welcoming another group of new and upgraded operators into the hobby.

As with any successful Field Day, none of this would have been possible without an exceptional group of volunteers.

The antenna crew, led by Brian AI6US and Matt KO6IMP, installed five operating antennas that supported our HF stations throughout the event. The CW team, Derek W6DWR and Jon AI6W, added two additional antennas dedicated to Morse code operations.



Our operating stations were staffed by knowledgeable operators who kept the radios active throughout the weekend. David N6OJJ served as Band Master, Derek W6DWR and Jon AI6W operated the Morse code (CW) station, Aaron W1ATB coordinated the Digital Station, Tom NN6H led the GOTA (Get On The Air) station, Russell KI6LOP managed the SSB station, and Matt KO6IMP operated the 6-meter and VHF/UHF station.

One of the most memorable moments of this year's Field Day wasn't measured by the number of contacts made, but by the excitement of watching several young visitors make their very first amateur radio contacts. The smiles on their faces, the concentration as they listened for their callsigns, and the pride they felt after successfully completing each exchange reminded all of us why events like Field Day matter. Among those young operators was one participant who went on to make more than 40 SSB contacts—placing among the club's top operators for the weekend—and who also recorded the highest number of GOTA contacts. Watching these young people discover the excitement of amateur radio brought a smile to my face and renewed my confidence that the future of our hobby is in good hands.

No Field Day would be complete without great food, and our food and refreshment volunteers once again exceeded expectations. From breakfast to lunch and dinner—and plenty of coffee through the overnight hours—the team kept everyone well fed and energized. Special thanks go to Brian AI6US and Lin KN6KRD for preparing breakfast, and to Garritt KO6BMA for stepping in to lead an outstanding Saturday evening dinner.



To everyone who attended, operated, helped with setup or teardown, prepared meals, welcomed visitors, or simply stopped by to enjoy the weekend—thank you. Every contribution, whether it was making one contact or one hundred, helping erect an antenna, mentoring a new operator, preparing a meal, earning a new license, or simply sharing in the fellowship of the weekend, helped make Field Day 2026 a memorable success.

Field Day continues to showcase what makes the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club special—a willingness to share knowledge, mentor new operators, serve our community, and enjoy each other's company. We hope even more members will join us next year, get on the air, make a few contacts, learn something new, and experience the Fun, Food, and Fellowship that make SFARC Field Day such a special annual tradition.



JULY CLUB MEETING

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

For the July club meeting Jim W6JCZ will give a brief presentation and demonstration on OpenHamClock, a web app built in the spirit of the original HamClock project. OpenHamClock does not require special hardware or even software installation, and provides a wealth of information useful to ham radio operators. It uses a modern scalable interface and works on all devices from computers to smart-phones and even TVs. Jim will also compare OHC to HamClock as well as the GeoChron Atlas computer.

VE REPORT

SFARC VE Coordinator | Brian Gohl (AI6US)

Two VE sessions were held in June resulting in 7 new amateur radio operators and 3 license upgrades! We awarded one military, three 1st responder discounts and one student scholarship!

Session 1 on June 1, 2026 at the Auburn Confluence Church Campus:

VE Team

VEC: Brian - AI6US

VE Lead: Anders - NR6H

Signing VEs: Smitty - WB1G, Frank - KG9M, Bob - WB6MUZ

VE Observer: Dave - WB6RBE

New Licensees

Andrew Myers - KO6NYJ **Technician**

Brandon Bradbury - KO6NXT **General** (passed both Technician and General exams)

Duane Chorley - KO6NYI **General** (passed both Technician and General exams)

License Upgrade

Daniel Dillon - AK6UD **Extra** (previous call sign KO6EBW)

We gifted three pre-programmed HTs to the new amateur radio operators and awarded one military discount and one 1st responder discount. Thank you for your service!

Elmer Team

Lead: Steven KO6EBQ

Kerry - KI6PAL

Bob - N6EMS

Greg - KO6TH

Jim WA8MPA

Mark W2MWK

Jeff – AL1S

Session 2 on June 26, 2026 at Field Day, Georgetown CA Airport @ Scott – KK7AIR hangar:

VE Team

VEC: Anders NR6H

Signing VEs: Shannon - K6TNY, Chip - KM6MDF, Gary - KQ6RT, Smitty - WB1G and Frank - KG9M

New Licensees

Thomas LaCoste – **Technician**

Patrick McCabe – **Technician**

Kendrick Moore – **Technician**

Donald Roberts – KO6OFZ **General** (passed both Technician and General exams)

License Upgrades

John Barrett – KO6LYD - **General**

Viktor Komarchuk – KO6NOI - **Extra**

The Sierra Foothills VE team will be taking July off and will return for our next session on August 3rd at the Auburn Confluence Church Campus. A big thanks to all of the VEs and Elmers who support the Sierra Foothill VE sessions!



Field Day VE Session- Anders, NR6H welcomes new amateur radio operators!



Field Day VE Session Exam Candidates



Field Day VE Session Elmers and Observers

ARDC GRANT FOR SAC-FOOTHILLS MESH

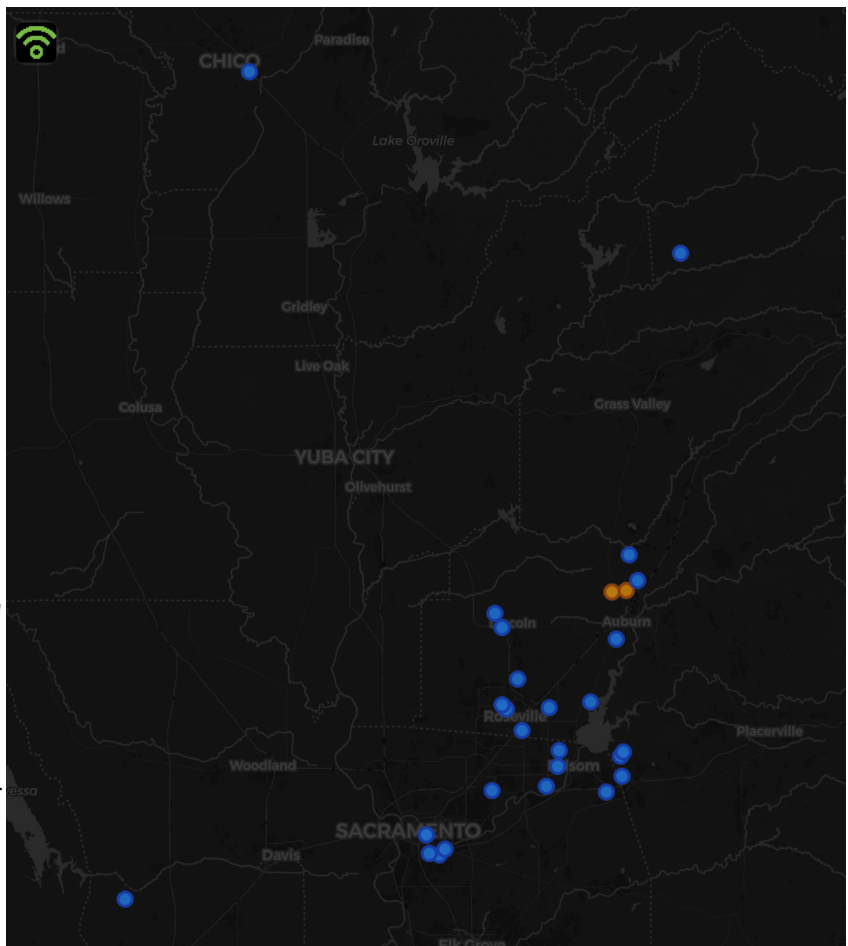
SFARC Member | Jef Allbright (N5JEF)



ARDC (Amateur Radio Digital Communications) on June 9 approved a grant of \$1,656 for enhancement of the growing Sacramento-Foothills LoRa Mesh.

This mesh project began in October of last year with two nodes running the MeshCore framework—one on Sugarpine Ridge with a view across Auburn and out over the valley, another at Dewitt Center with coverage of North Auburn. Since then, the Sacramento-Foothills mesh has grown to currently 48 active repeater nodes as far north as Chico, Paradise, and Nevada City, across Lincoln, Roseville and Citrus Heights, and westward to Pleasants Valley beyond Vacaville. A bridge node is in development to link traffic with the Bay Area.

The grant provides for adding a wide-coverage repeater node based in mid-town Sacramento, and small client nodes to be used in conjunction with training and engagement at local area Maker groups.



The decentralized mesh supports chat, off-grid and emergency communications, EDC (Every Day Carry) connectivity, IoT devices and sensors for remote control and telemetry and more. Many find it an easy and fun entry to learning and playing with radio technology, given the small, low-cost, low power 900 MHz devices and antennas.

This is a Part 15, unlicensed mesh project, but Part 97 Amateur licensed operation, with its greater benefits and restrictions, is also possible on the 30cm band.

For more information or to get started, check out the West Coast Mesh website at <https://www.wcmesh.com>.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

SFARC Membership Coordinator | Dudley McFadden (KO6DRM)

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



Steven Walter	KD3CSK
James Carlson	K06N0I
Cal McKitrick	AI6MC
Mark Walker	AI6XU
Michael Parnell	W6LPS
Margaret Tides	K06JTZ
Gene Trasti	W6JMP
John Hansen	KC6TEP

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)

Date and Time: 2026-06-11 18:00 Hrs

Location: W6EK Club Zoom room

1. Microsoft 365 Licenses Awarded to Club by Microsoft

Microsoft granted the club licenses for Microsoft 365 providing online access, email, OneDrive storage, and Microsoft Teams.

2. Licenses Assigned to Positions, Not Individuals

Licenses are issued to club officers and committee chair positions, ensuring continuity when positions change, as the licenses remain with the role rather than the person.

3. 300 Microsoft 365 Licenses Received

The club has been awarded 300 Microsoft 365 licenses, which will be distributed among officers, directors, and committee chairs as needed.

4. Microsoft Teams to Serve as an Alternate to Zoom

Microsoft Teams access will allow the club to use it as an alternative video conferencing platform, especially for collaborative projects.

5. Cost Constraints and Restrictions on Grant Licenses

Using Microsoft 365 licenses outside of the grant program will incur additional costs, so use is restricted and must adhere to grant guidelines.

6. Costco Donated a Gift Card for Field Day Expenses

Costco provided the club with a donation in the form of a gift card, which can be used for any Field Day needs.

7. Plan to Provide Laptops for Club Positions

The club is working to acquire Microsoft Surface laptops issued as club assets to officer positions. The laptops, with external hard drives, will transfer to new officers as roles change.

8. Administrative Control of Licenses and Laptops

The administrator (currently Scott, with Mark as co-admin) can assign, retrieve, reissue, and change passwords for licenses, ensuring proper management and security.

9. Training Resources Being Developed

A video is being produced to instruct members on accessing accounts, using the software, and understanding restrictions.

10. Enhancing Workflow and Collaboration with Cloud Solutions

The shift to Microsoft 365 aims to streamline club collaboration, especially for events like Field Day, by reducing reliance on emailing attachments and multiple platforms.

11. Club Officer and Committee Assignments Completed

All eligible positions (officers, directors, committee chairs) have been assigned the necessary Microsoft 365 accounts/licenses.

12. Non-recorded Discussion Segment Initiated

A request was made not to record a particular portion of the meeting, related to a complaint lodged by a past member. The issue was resolved without board involvement.

13. Implementation of Zelle as a Reimbursement Option

The board discussed and passed a motion to implement Zelle as an additional payment mechanism for reimbursements. This will provide members with a choice to receive reimbursements via Zelle or continue using paper checks, thereby reducing manual processes and postage. The motion was made by Steven KO6EBQ and seconded by Greg KO6TH. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

14. Paper Checks Remain an Option

It was clarified that paper checks by mail will remain available for those who prefer them, ensuring no payment options are removed and accommodating members with varying comfort levels with electronic payments.

15. Security and Data Privacy with Zelle

The proposal emphasized that using Zelle does not require members to provide additional information beyond existing data, such as email or phone numbers, which are already collected. There is no need to share bank account numbers, enhancing security.

16. Clarification: Zelle for Outgoing Payments Only

The use of Zelle is intended for treasurer-initiated reimbursements, not for accepting incoming payments like membership dues, to avoid additional complexity at this stage.

17. Venmo Considered for Future Implementation

There was discussion about possibly adding Venmo as another payment option, but the motion was restricted to Zelle at this time, with possible future expansion to additional board action.

18. Target Implementation Date for Zelle

The board agreed to aim for implementing Zelle as a reimbursement option by June 22, before the upcoming field day, to allow members to use it for field day-related expenses.

19. Integration with Money Minder Accounting System

Reimbursements processed with Zelle will be integrated into Money Minder, the club's accounting package, enabling streamlined financial tracking and reporting. This system is being gradually set up by the treasurer.

20. Challenges in Budget Planning and the Need for Accounting Software

The club has outgrown spreadsheet-based budgeting. The transition to Money Minder is seen as a necessary step to facilitate efficient reporting and budgeting for a growing membership (>350 members).

21. Proposal to Hire a Financial Professional for Money Minder Implementation

The board approved allocating up to \$1,000 to hire a financial professional (CPA/bookkeeper) to assist with mapping spreadsheet data and setting up categories in Money Minder, aiming for a clean and standardized accounting structure. The motion was made by Frank KG9M and seconded by Jim WA8MPA. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

22. Internal vs. External Assistance for Money Minder Setup

Discussion included whether to seek volunteer expertise from club members or hire externally. It was agreed to poll the membership for internal expertise first, with clear deadline, and proceed to spend funds if no volunteers stepped forward.

23. Transparency and Avoidance of Conflict of Interest

The board expressed the importance of transparency and avoidance of conflicts of interest if a club member is paid for the Money Minder setup. Optics and clarity were emphasized for any paid internal involvement.

24. Budgeting Process Timeline

The timeline for full Money Minder implementation includes recruiting a financial professional in August, transitioning the budget to the new system alongside spreadsheets, and presenting a finalized budget in October for membership approval.

25. General Fund Availability

The board confirmed sufficient funds are in the general fund to support the expenditure for Money Miner implementation and other approved activities.

26. Efficient Budgeting and Utilization of Club Funds

The club's budgeting approach is shifting replace bare minimum allocations to a more reasonable, operational budget that reflects actual needs, encouraging responsible use of accumulated funds for approved activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 1930 Hrs.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

SFARC Secretary | Bob Patton (N6EMS)

Date and Time: 2026-06-12 19:30 Hrs

Location: Placer County HHS Conference Center

Jim WA8MPA had a table of equipment from silent keys available to members at bargain prices.

The meeting was brought to order by Mark W2MWK and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. Significant Equipment and Monetary Donations to the Club

The club received several notable donations, including software, a \$100 donation from Costco for field day items, and a major \$1000 grant from The Ironman Foundation for the club's community support and use of the repeater during events. Additionally, a startup company in Iowa donated a high-quality cooler for free.

2. Ongoing Efforts to Secure Further Grants and Donations

The team, including members like Frank, Scott and Graydon, are actively pursuing additional grants and donations, with plans to ramp up efforts after Field Day. Past successes, such as securing valuable equipment and funds, were highlighted.

3. Field Day Drawing and Prize Details

There will be a drawing during Field Day with prizes donated by various companies, including camping lights by Infinity Lights, Digirig Light units, and complete camping gear kits such as sleeping bags and air mattresses.

4. Successful Scholarship Program

The scholarship program awarded six \$1,000 scholarships this year to students in the Sacramento, Placer, and Yolo County areas. Mark presented a handwritten thank you note from one of the recipients. It highlighted the impact and appreciation from the student. The VE team reported awarding a special EMS/first responder and military scholarship for test fees.

5. Volunteer and Net Controller Opportunities

Members are encouraged to volunteer as net controllers for the Western States Run, especially for activities scheduled on Saturday, either midday or evening. The group emphasized the importance of both club volunteering and supporting related organizations.

6. Membership Updates and Voting Process

The club welcomed several new members, with an official voting process facilitated through Hand Club Online.

7. Significance and Logistics of Field Day Event

Field Day is described as both an emergency preparedness exercise and a major social event. It runs from Friday setup through Sunday cleanup, featuring meals, contests, operating stations, and VE testing. Participation is highly encouraged, with specific tasks and timelines detailed for each day.

8. Field Day RSVP and Camping Arrangements

Members are reminded to RSVP online by June 18th, as accurate headcounts impact breakfast, dinner, and camping arrangements. A QR code and detailed instructions were provided to facilitate the RSVP process and is also available on the website.

9. Educational and Social Aspects of Field Day

The event offers learning opportunities in radio operation—emphasized as friendly and open to all experience levels. Members can observe or participate in radio activities, antenna setup, and other technical tasks in a supportive environment.

10. Health, Safety, and Accessibility at Field Day

Safety is a top priority, with a clearly marked safety station, hydration, medical supplies for minor issues, and dedicated handicap parking spots. Members shared personal experiences highlighting the importance of hydration and looking out for one another during the event.

11. Field Day Site Logistics and Amenities

The campground setup map and directions are provided on the website. Dry camping is in effect with no generators allowed in the main area to maintain a low noise floor; generators are allowed in designated areas. Facilities are available, but members needing power for medical devices must bring appropriate equipment.

12. Club Culture Emphasizes Camaraderie and Fun

Beyond technical preparedness, the club values socializing, shared meals, stories, and informal conversations, reinforcing the event as an inclusive, friendly, and enjoyable experience for all attendees.

Mark W2MWK and Smitty WB1G fielded some general questions about Field Day:

13. Trailer lacks antennas and lights, but modifications can be made

The trailer in question does not currently have antennas or lights. However, there is openness to adding these features if needed. The trailers are currently being used to transport the club equipment and are not set up as operating stations.

14. Club breakfast will be held at Mel's on Saturday

There is confirmation that the traditional club breakfast will occur at Mel's, despite overlapping with other club events. There will not be a fox hunt associated with this breakfast.

15. Most popular radio operating time at Field Day is 11 A.M. to dinner on Saturday

The busiest period for radio operations during the event is 11 A.M. Saturday until dinner, with high participation and less after dinner.

16. After dinner, radio activity diminishes significantly

Post-dinner, radios tend to go silent and activity decreases, with only a few bands remaining staffed for operation overnight.

17. Next breakfast event will be at Wings, at the Auburn Airport for July through September

The future club breakfasts will be hosted at Wings at the Auburn Airport for the months of July through September, offering an outdoor setting to enjoy aircraft activity.

18. Grant approved for Mesh Core project in Midtown

The club's grant for the Mesh Core project with Midtown Broadcasting has been approved, resulting in equipment to be placed atop a 10-story building, which will expand mesh network coverage for the valley.

19. Club events and activities will remain mostly unchanged

Besides the new Mesh Core project and breakfast location changes, the regular club events will continue as usual, with the Western States event utilizing the club repeater for communication on Field Day weekend.

20. No Coffee Break Net during the Western States Event

There will be no Coffee Break Net on Saturday or Sunday during these specific events.

21. Volunteer opportunities and equipment purchases available during the break

Members are invited to purchase equipment and patches, and trifold cards and stickers are free for the taking at the tables. RSVP options for Field Day are available via SFARC website on the provided computer.

22. Stickers are free; iron-on patches are \$3 each or two for \$5

Free stickers and business cards are available for members, while iron-on patches, useful for identifying equipment, are sold at \$3 each or two for \$5.

There was a 15 min break for social time and after resuming a drawing was held and Earl K6GPB and Evan AJ6OR received a HRO gift card. Carson WB6GON was awarded one of the new patches.

The meeting was adjourned at 2100 hrs.

ADVERTISEMENTS



WU6X



WB1G



KN6ZRX

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.