



# Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System

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## NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 2018-2019 - PUBLISHED BY REGULAR PEOPLE  
ON AN IRREGULAR BASIS

### ANNOUNCING: The SPECS 2019 Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 12, 2019  
Time: 8:00 A.M. coffee, doughnuts and conversation  
9:00 A.M. meeting starts  
Where: El Camino Hospital, 2500 Grant Road, Mountain View, Rooms E, F & G on the lower level.  
Speakers: Rob Fenn, KC6TYD and Rachel Kinoshita, KK6DAC  
Topics: "PARACHUTE MOBILE" and "Operating Off the Grid"

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### 2019 SPECS ANNUAL MEETING, ELECTION of OFFICERS, and Vote on the Board Amended SPECS-UG Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

#### Election of SPECS Officers

- The slate below is the selection of the nominating committee and will be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting.
- Additional nominees will be solicited from the floor before the vote.
- Robert's Rules of Order will be followed during the voting.
- **You must be a paid up member of SPECS in order to vote.**

#### SPECS Slate of Officers for 2019

President: Grant Elliot, KK6FMQ  
1st VP: Neil Katin, K2LL  
2nd VP: Dave Koberstein, N9DK  
Secretary: Jack Pines, W1VSL  
Treasurer: Patrick Muffler, KG6TMI  
Training: Paul Goldstein, KJ6AMM

#### SPECS Membership Renewal

Join as a member or renew for 2019 at [www.specsnet.org](http://www.specsnet.org) from your computer or mobile device. You can also join or renew by mailing payment with the form on the website, or at the annual meeting.

#### Board Amended SPECS-UG Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Copies of these were sent to all members in a separate mailing(email) and they may be found on the website at [www.specsnet.org](http://www.specsnet.org). The membership will be voting on these at the Annual meeting.

#### Featured Speakers

Rob Fenn, KC6TYD and Rachel Kinoshita, KK6DAC



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**Rob Fenn, KC6TYD**

**Topic: "PARACHUTE MOBILE"**

So why do they jump out of a perfectly good airplane? Come and join us for an exciting and informative presentation where Rob will take you through ten years of Parachute Mobile. Using skydiving as a platform, discover the many unique projects that the members of Parachute Mobile have incorporated into each mission.



Rob has been in the EMS field since the mid 90's. He is currently working as a paramedic with AMR in Santa Clara County. When Parachute Mobile began Rob was recruited as the Safety Officer. When the Team Coordinator position opened up Rob grabbed it and has been handling all the coordinating, scheduling, and promoting ever since. Rob was not a skydiver when he started with the team. Being around and involved in the sport got him interested and in 2011 Rob took the course and soon thereafter was making his own QSO jumps.

**Rachel Kinoshita, KK6DAC**

**Topic: "Operating Off the Grid"**

This presentation will explore the variety of components that make up a small off-grid solar setup, including batteries, solar panels, charge controllers and inverters. This will help you determine your requirements by examining the actual power used by various ham radios, household appliances and other electronic devices and what is needed to run those during short-term, mid-term and long-term power outages.



Rachel Kinoshita moved from Oregon to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989 to work for a start-up email software company and has spent most of her career working in the messaging industry. She now spends her time fighting spam, malware and phishing attacks. Rachel (KK6DAC) is still a newbie to ham radio, having only gotten her license in early 2013. Although, like many things, Rachel jumped in with both feet and soon got her general license, an HF rig and starting exploring the world in the low bands. At the same time, she found herself working with her local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to help develop and shape their communications plans and policies. She also found her way to the South County ARES (SCARES) organization where she developed an interest in emergency communications. As part of becoming proficient in emergency communications, Rachel began researching alternative emergency power methods, including solar, generators, different types of batteries and what works best for a particular application. In this presentation, Rachel will be talking about batteries, the real world testing she has performed with them and how it applies to ham radio.



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## SPECS Users Group Treasurer's Report

01 January 2018 through 17 November 2018

### SPECS Users Group assets:

	<u>01 Jan 2018</u>	<u>17 Nov 2018</u>	<u>Change</u>
Regular checking account:	\$13,997.68	\$15,373.57	\$ 1,375.89
Business Fundamentals checking account:	\$ 3,365.73	\$ 4,458.63	\$ 1,092.90
Certificate of Deposit 6424:	\$10,351.80	\$10,355.60	\$ 3.80
Certificate of Deposit 6425:	\$ 5,171.28	\$ 5,173.18	\$ 1.90
PayPal account:	\$ <u>733.45</u>	\$ <u>9.10</u>	\$ <u>-724.35</u>
<b>Total assets:</b>	<b>\$33,619.94</b>	<b>\$35,370.08</b>	<b>\$ 1,750.14</b>

The decrease in the PayPal account reflects transfer of money to the Business Fundamentals checking account.

There is one current liability, a payment of \$69.00 to the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration for sales tax on the 2018 Flea Market concessions. This cannot be paid until January 2019.

### Flea Market

<u>Year</u>	<u>ASVARO fee</u>	<u>Gate</u>	<u>Profit/Loss</u>
2015	\$2,200	\$2,681	\$481
2016	\$2,300	\$1,795	\$505
2017	\$2,400	\$1,035	\$1,365
2018	\$1,000	\$2,680	\$1,901

Income from the SPECS Flea Markets in March 2016 and April 2017 at De Anza College was seriously impacted by inclement weather, resulting in fewer sellers than the number required to break even from gate receipts. In rainy 2017, SPECS Users Group collected \$1,035 from only 34 sellers. This amount was \$1,365 less than the \$2,400 fee paid by SPECS Users Group to the Association of Silicon Valley Amateur Radio Organizations (ASVARO). Fortunately, ASVARO had a Rainout Protection Fund that covered this 2017 shortfall. Note that the two rainy flea markets (March 2016 and April 2017) nearly exhausted ASVARO's Rainout Protection Fund. The excellent flea-market performance in 2018 was due primarily to transfer of the site from De Anza College to Fry's parking lot in Sunnyvale, resulting in a 58% decrease in the occupancy fee paid to ASVARO. In addition, good weather obviously helped.

Payment to the SPECS Repeater Association in 2018 was \$1,960.60, the usual transfer of 1/2 of Flea Market profit.

SPECS Users Group had 134 dues-paying members in 2018. 70% indicated that they were ARRL members.

Patrick Muffler, KG6TMI  
Treasurer, SPECS Users Group



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## SPECS Board Member Candidate For Secretary

Jack Pines, W1VSL, Palo Alto ARES EC



## Biography

Jack went to school in the dark ages, BA with honors in Physics from Bowdoin and SM from MIT in Geophysics, specifically in Lunar Seismology. He then went to work for a succession of startups and ended up with his longest gig working for the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. He worked on software to interface academic sensors to the free electron laser. He is now retired and spending more time with family, flying, kayaking and ham radio. He also enjoys trips to solar eclipses to photograph them.

## Message from SPECS President

*Marc Roddin, KI6HLH*

Well, this is my last time to write the President's Note. This is because I've served as your president for the past four years, and our Bylaws limit board members to four consecutive one-year terms. However I'll remain on the Board as Past President, and plan to stay fully involved in that role.

I've really enjoyed getting to know all of the other Board members over this period of time. I admire their knowledge and experience, and especially their willingness to enthusiastically help others and our association. Although our annual meeting and the Flea Market are some of the few times when one can see and talk with many of the amateur radio operators in our community, especially those from cities other than your own, the experience of those activities makes it more exciting to hear their

voices and call signs during our weekly nets. I'm also energized by knowing that this cadre of communicators are all willing to serve the community in a time of need.

Please take this as your personal invitation to get more involved if you have not been doing so already. It would be great if every one of our members, and all of the local ARES members, periodically got to be the net control for at least one and ideally both of our weekly nets, in addition to the net for their own city.

I hope that Santa brings you some new amateur radio equipment to work with, if that's on your list. Otherwise, use holiday sales to buy a present for yourself!

73

Marc Roddin KI6HLH

President

Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System

Users Group

## Secretary's Comments

*Grant Elliot KK6FMQ*

The SPECS Users Group Board of Directors held three meetings in 2018: February 4, April 22, and October 14. The February 4 Board meeting saw a review of the Annual Meeting and then looked forward to the 2019 Annual Meeting. We then reviewed and modified the Monday night Net Script. This was followed by review and revision of the SPECS-UG electronic document storage. All documents were subsequently migrated to the SPECSNET domain. Marc then initiated the financial audit as required by our Bylaws. Following this there was discussion of a potential change for the Flea Market venue. \$2400 was set aside for payment to ASVARO in anticipation of holding our Flea Market at the usual location, DeAnza College. Finally, there was a discussion about "what should the SPECS-UG really be doing?" No conclusions were reached and further discussion was postponed to a later meeting.

The April 22 Board meeting started with a review of the minutes of the last meeting. This was followed by a discussion of the security hole in the program script used to record the weekly net check-in totals which caused an error message to be sent to the user reporting his results. This was patched by Jim Clark, the author of the program script, and the warning message removed. The discussion then moved to a review of the audit committee report submitted by Rick van Mell and Phil Henderson. They did a detailed audit of the finances and examined how the SPECS-UG (and the Board) functioned relative to the group's Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. The Board voted to accept the audit committee's report



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and their suggested changes to the Articles and Bylaws with a couple of exceptions. Resolution of the exceptions was postponed to a later meeting to be held no later than November. Finally, the Board reviewed Flea Market plans. The April Flea Market that was held at Fry's in Sunnyvale was a great success. Not only was the Flea Market a success, but Fry's was quite pleased as their foot traffic increased substantially that day. The Board agreed to try and have the SPECS Flea Market there, and the usual necessary plans to make the Flea Market happen were set in motion.

After reviewing the minutes of the previous meeting, the October 14 Board meeting had a wide-ranging discussion looking at the implications and effects that ARRL's ARES Strategic Plan might have on SPECS-UG and the local emergency communications community in general. No conclusions were reached and no actions specified. The Board then undertook resolving the exceptions to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. This was done successfully, and plans for putting the Board Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws before the membership for a vote were established. This was followed by a review with the SPECS-RA of the expected costs for the new repeaters and antennas at El Camino Hospital. No definite cost could be established but it was projected to be potentially more than three times the initial \$11,500 estimate. The possibility for El Camino Hospital support with the expense was considered and proposed. The 2 meter antenna still experiences interference and work with Verizon to mitigate that is ongoing. Finally, Nominees for Board positions were solicited and plans for the Annual Meeting were initiated.

### **Flea Market Report from 1<sup>st</sup> V.P.**

*Neil Katin K2LL*

The major flea market news this year was the change of venue from DeAnza College to Fry's Electronics in Sunnyvale. Since we don't pay Fry's directly for the use of their parking lot this lowered the fixed costs from \$2300 (in 2017) to \$1100 per flea market in 2018. (The \$1100 figure includes one flea market at DeAnza and the rest at Fry's, and a \$100 contribution to the rain-out fund).

We have not yet signed a contract with Fry's for the 2019 flea markets, but we expect this to not be an issue. With this change most clubs moved from close-to-breakeven to solidly in the black.

Finally, I want to give credit to Ed Fong who did the initial negotiations with Fry's to allow us to use their parking lot for the flea market.

The "SPECS" turn for the 2019 flea market is Sat., Jun 8th. I hope to see you there, and please volunteer to help with some of the tasks if you can.

### **SPECS Repeater Association**

*Peter Griffith, WA6VAQ*

*Scott Overstreet, N6NXI Dave Platt, AE6EO*

*Keith Amidon, KJ6PUO*

The W6ASH repeater system is operating in its usual location at El Camino Hospital on the 224.140 and 440.800 MHz repeaters.

Operations on the 2-meter frequency of 145.270 continue to suffer from a persistent RF interference issue at the hospital "old tower" location, which significantly degrades the system's sensitivity. For this reason, the 145.270 repeater is operating from an alternate location using a "stand-alone" backup repeater system. As this backup system doesn't have access to the hospital-based "linking" equipment, we have changed the county's linked "Resource Net" configuration to use the 440.800 MHz repeater.

We have been working together with hospital staff, and with the staff of the cellphone company with whom we share space, to try to pin down the cause of the interference. After numerous tests and experiments, we've been able to rule out many possible causes of interference but have not found the true cause, although we're confident that it's local to the "old tower" installation. It's been an interesting, but very frustrating "chase"!

The hospital's work to build the new Integrated Medical Services building is proceeding. It appears that the new building will be ready for occupancy sometime late in 2019, and that the "big move" of equipment from the "old tower" to the new building will probably take place late next year. We expect to start detailed planning of our new repeater installation in the spring of 2019, and will be working together with the hospital staff and with the cellphone technicians to ensure full compatibility of the installations. We plan to install a new set of commercial-quality antennas, and have new feedline installed by the hospital's contractors.

## **Reminder - Membership Renewal**

Whether or not you plan to attend the January 20th annual meeting, please take a moment **now** to go to [specsnet.org](http://specsnet.org) to renew your membership for 2019. It's a real deal!



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