



## Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System

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### NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 2020-2021 - PUBLISHED BY REGULAR PEOPLE  
ON AN IRREGULAR BASIS

## ANNOUNCING: The SPECS 2020 Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 9, 2021  
Time: 8:30 A.M. virtual link opens (zoom)  
9:00 A.M. meeting starts  
Zoom: <http://bit.ly/specs-ug-annual>  
Talk in: Zoom help on 145.27+, 440.8+ and 650 229 8584  
Speaker: Michelle Thompson, AmSat  
Topic: Amateur Radio Satellite

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### **THIS NEWSLETTER IS THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2020 SPECS ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION of OFFICERS**

#### **Election of SPECS Officers**

- The slate of officers 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.
- Rosenberg'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 2021**

President: Grant Elliot KK6FMQ  
1st VP: Open  
2nd VP: Dave Koberstein N9DK  
Secretary: Leslie Grimm, KK6EKN  
Treasurer: Neil Katin, K2LL  
Training: Rick Van Mell, KI6PUR

View pictures and brief biographies of all the candidates on the SPECS website Officers Page (available as drop-down choice from the "About" tab at the top of the page.)

#### **SPECS Membership Renewal**

Join SPECSUG or renew your membership for 2021 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



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### Featured Speaker

Michelle Thompson, W5NYV, CEO, Open Research Institute.

Topic: Amateur Radio Satellite

Bio: Michelle has a Master's Degree in Information Theory from USC, is the co-founder and current CEO of Open Research Institute, is a senior member of IEEE and the Vice Chair of the San Diego Chapter of IEEE Information Theory Society, is a life member of ARRL, AMSAT, and 10-10 International, won the 2018 Don Hilliard Award, is currently serving as an AMSAT board member, chaired the GNU Radio Conference for 2019 and 2020, and is active in is the repeater trustee San Diego Microwave Group, San Bernardino Microwave Society, and of Palomar Amateur Radio Club. She enjoys Halo, Pokemon Go, Animal Crossing New Leaf, and Formula 1. Find her as @abraxas3d on most social media.

Abstract of her Talk: The open source movement has dramatically altered the economy. Amazon, Facebook, Google, and many other extremely successful companies have made billions of dollars using open source software. The open source movement has dramatically altered technology culture as well, providing useful and resilient designs that are freely recreated. These designs form a solid foundation of work that allows businesses and organizations to focus on their core differentiating products and roles.

In amateur radio, especially in the Amateur Radio Satellite Service, embracing open source hardware and software is by far the best way forward. Rapid and positive developments in microwave hardware, plummeting prices for computer processors and FPGAs, dramatic and welcome improvements in the

regulatory environment, and a new generation of volunteers with experience in modern digital communications design have created the strongest and most vibrant future for amateur radio that most of us have ever seen.

And we are going to need that strength, because we have significant challenges. New rules from the FCC that directly affect amateur radio, massive deployments of spacecraft across multiple constellations, and rapidly changing launch patterns are all things that amateurs must deal with directly in order to remain in space for another 50 years.

What are the highest priorities? What is the open source amateur radio satellite community doing about it? This talk will describe open source propulsion efforts, microwave digital communication transponder progress, and successful regulatory work.

### Message from SPECS President

*Grant Elliot, KK6FMQ*

I'm quite sure the year 2020 will be known as the "Year of Covid." What with sheltering-in-place, social distancing and masks becoming the new normal, our lives have become quite disrupted.

The biggest fallout from the disruption this year, as far as SPECS is concerned, was the loss of the annual Electronic Flea Market. As you well know this has been our biggest source of funding. If there is no Flea Market next year we will have to start searching for alternate sources of revenue and we may be forced to increase membership dues. Fortunately, we have sufficient reserves to the cover the projected costs associated with the move of the W6ASH repeaters to the top of the new El Camino Hospital building, but after that we'll just have to wait and see.



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On the upside, SPECSUG has seen an increase in membership, which now stands at 121 (up from 109 this time last year). Also, we've seen an increase in the number of those choosing to check-in on the Monday night 440/220 SPECSNET. There has been an uptick in the number of check-ins to the city nets as well. I'm sure this reflects a decrease in the demands of our daily life as a result of sheltering-in-place, but I welcome the increased participation in emergency communications preparedness.

As a result of our new normal SPECS has changed the way it does things. SPECS board meetings are now held on the internet. Our upcoming Annual Meeting next January also will be virtual. Licensing examinations ceased for a while, but are now available online. Most County training activities were limited to those that could be done online. However, the county did stage a Halloween parade to accommodate those seeking performance certification.

Moving forward will depend upon how things go with the virus. We'll just take it day-by-day and see what develops.

As we move into the Holiday period, I want to wish you all a safe and happy time with family and friends.

### **Treasurer's Comments**

*Neil Katin K2LL*

2020 was a very quiet year for SPECS from a financial perspective. Our one major expense was the 2020 annual meeting (around \$400), and our only income was from membership dues (we have 121 paid members for 2020). Our financial position is basically the same as 2019, with approximately \$37,900 in assets.

It is very possible we will have no flea market income for 2021. Our anticipated major expense for 2021 is

helping to fund the repeater move to the new hospital building.

### **Flea Market Report**

*Neil Katin K2LL*

The Flea Market for 2020 was canceled and it is also expected that there will be no Flea Market in 2021.

### **Secretary's Comments**

*Leslie Grimm KK6EKN*

The SPECS Users Group board held four meetings in 2020: January 11, March 1, July 30 and October 30.

January Meeting: Neil Katin was appointed to the vacant Treasurer position. That left the position of First Vice President vacant.

March meeting: A committee was formed to discuss Flea Market plans for 5/9/20. We discussed future plans and member recruitment. An audit committee was appointed. Scott Overstreet reported that new antennas had been purchased in anticipation of the future move to the new location.

July meeting: The meeting was held online, via Microsoft Team, due to Covid restrictions. Flea Markets for 2020 were canceled, and the status for 2021 was unknown. A nominating committee was formed and current officers voiced their willingness to continue in 2021 except for the current secretary. Leslie Grimm agreed to serve as secretary for the remainder of the year and in 2021. We discussed the annual meeting, with plans to probably hold it virtually.



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October meeting: The slate of 2021 officers was presented. We reviewed the plans for the Annual Newsletter and Annual Meeting. Dave Koberstein found a speaker and will host the meeting on zoom. Scott reported on the repeater status. Measurements have been made and antenna locations have been identified.

### **SPECS Repeater Association**

*Peter Griffith, WA6VAQ Scott Overstreet, N6NXI Dave Platt, AE6EO, Keith Amidon, KJ6PUO, Jim Abraham, W6EB, Phil Hawkins, KA6MZE*

As with most things this year, work on the hospital's new Sobrato Pavilion has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this has pushed back our move to the new facility. We had a second walk-through of the new

tower's roof and facilities space in September to review the installation site, meet the cable-installation team, and inspect the "roof jack" penetration for our radio cables. We're now reviewing the antenna-mounting arrangements with the hospital staff. New antennas have been purchased. We expect to move forward with the installation work through the remainder of this year and the spring of 2021.

In the meantime, W6ASH has operated through 2020 as it did in 2019, with 220 and 440 radios operating from the primary site in the hospital's "old main tower" and the 2-meter system operating primarily from an off-site location (to avoid some local interference at the hospital). There was a brief PG&E power outage during one weekly SPECS net, but thanks to a backup-battery system on the repeater there was no interruption in the net.

### **Reminder - Membership Renewal**

Whether or not you plan to attend the January 9th annual meeting, please take a moment **now** to go to [specsnet.org](https://specsnet.org) to renew your membership for 2021, right now while you're thinking about it. It's a real deal!



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