



Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System

NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 2015-2016 - PUBLISHED BY REGULAR PEOPLE ON AN IRREGULAR BASIS

ANNOUNCING: The SPECS 2016 Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 30, 2016
 Time: 8:00 A.M. coffee, doughnuts and conversation
 9:00 A.M. meeting starts
 Where: El Camino Hospital - Rooms D, E & F on the lower level in the new building
 Speaker: Tony Bowden, KF6CNT, Deputy Chief Training Division, Santa Clara County Fire
 Topic: Amateur radio operators to assist SCC Fire with emergency communications

THIS NEWSLETTER IS THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2016 SPECS ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION of OFFICERS

Election of SPECS Officers

- This slate 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 2016

President Marc Roddin KI6HLH
 1st VP: Neil Katin AI6FI
 2nd VP: Jack Pines W1VSL
 Secretary: Bruce Riter KE6EEX
 Treasurer: Patrick Muffler* KG6TMI
 Training: Paul Goldstein* KJ6AMM

* See biography later in this Newsletter

SPECS Membership Renewal

New! You can join as a member or renew your membership for 2016 at www.specsnet.org from your computer or mobile device. Membership is only \$5.00 per year - new or renewal. Paypal is now accepted. Membership can also be renewed as before by

mailing the form on the website with your payment or at the annual meeting.

Featured Speaker



Tony Bowden, KF6CNT
Deputy Chief Training Division
Santa Clara County Fire Department

Chief Bowden serves as the Department's Health and Safety Officer, and manages overall training and career development for line personnel, volunteers, and explorers. His past assignments have included: Firefighter/Engineer, Paramedic, Fire Captain, Safety Officer, Training Captain, Battalion Chief and

Communication Officer. He holds a BS degree in Fire Administration, and is a state certified Fire Officer, Chief Officer, and Fire Instructor.

Chief Bowden will speak on the planned use of amateur radio operators to assist Santa Clara County Fire with emergency communications.

Message from SPECS President

Marc Roddin, KI6HLH

Most people who live in Silicon Valley assume that the more and more advanced personal devices that they carry around with them will always enable them to communicate with whomever they want, whenever they want, even if there is a disaster. That's because with three simple key strokes, a nine followed by a one, and then followed by another one, people can always reach an emergency operator who can dispatch whatever type of fire, medical, or public safety assistance is critically needed. If the person is





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summoning help because of a big, major emergency, the dispatcher could send a fleet of trucks and as much as a battalion of experienced and brave professionals out to help. The person summoning help will quickly realize that it is a real disaster if instead of a cheery operator, the emergency phone call results in a busy signal or no answer, assuming that they can even operate their phone. That's the point at which we all come in to help, with our trusty radios and communications skills. We can serve as the bridge between the people who need help and those who can provide it. The weekly nets help to keep us at the top of our game. Those who have served as net control on one or more of the nets can develop additional skills to help them know what to do when the "big one" comes. Although we often think that an earthquake could be the next major disaster to strike, we might find instead that it could be a toxic cloud, total power failure, very extreme weather, terrorism, or something else.

This is my first year to serve on the SPECS board, and I quickly became impressed with how skilled, helpful, and caring our officers are. Three of our board members are preparing to move away next year. Hence, elsewhere in this issue you will see the names of those whom we are nominating to replace them.

Our annual fundraiser is the flea market that we co-sponsor with ASVARO, the Association of Silicon Valley Amateur Radio Organizations, once each year. This was also my first time to help with that staffing. I signed up for the shift that begins at 4 a.m. This was a good way to meet new

people. I enjoyed it. You can read about the flea market elsewhere in this issue.

SPECS has two types of resources — human and electronic. The human resources are our members. SPECS' training officer works to recruit new hams and to make sure that they receive training. You will see his article elsewhere in this issue. Our other resource is the repeaters, which are on top of El Camino Hospital. We have an article about that here in this newsletter, too.

I look forward to making new friends at our upcoming annual meeting January 30th at El Camino Hospital. You can read about the plans for that meeting elsewhere in this issue.

Treasurer's Comments

Wes Freeman, KG6POV

It's magic, but we have magicians! Bruce Riter, Leslie Grimm and Jim Clark have upgraded the SPECS web site and added...PAYPAL! That's right, you can now pay your dues and update your contact info from our web site! Of course I love the feel of real cash so you're certainly welcome to bring your \$5 to the annual meeting.

SPECS had a good year last year. Our membership is 121 and 69% of us are ARRL members.

Attendance was down a bit at the annual Flea Market, but we did OK. We raised \$2,461.95 from the gate, concessions and donation table. As we do every year, we split the Flea Market income with the SPECS Repeater Association (RA).

We still don't know when or if the repeater move will occur so we are maintaining our cash in CDs which do not have a prepayment penalty.

Hope to see all of you at the Annual Meeting.

Secretary's Comments

Bruce Riter, KE6EEX

The SPECS Users Group board held three meetings in 2015: March 15, July 19 and October 16.

Major topics were flea market planning and post-market review, usage of the 220 repeater, completing UHF checks before the VHF net, the prospective move of the repeater site, handing off the webmaster baton, and updating the specsnet.org website with mobile-friendly features, online payment capability, and more.

Please join me and all the SPECS Board in thanking Tom Smith KD6SOJ for his long and faithful service as webmaster; Leslie Grimm KK6EKN for taking on the webmaster role; and Jim Clark N6JRC for his invaluable technical assistance and sage advice.

Flea Market Report from 1st V.P.

Andy Rose, KI6SEP

SPECS sponsored the Electronics Flea Market at De Anza College on September 12. It was another successful Flea Market! All of the flea markets in 2015 had lower proceeds than previous years, including ours, which was the final one of the season. Nevertheless it was successful! Most of our funds are still being held in reserve





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for the future move of the repeaters to another building of El Camino Hospital.

My thanks to all of you for your patience with me on my first flea market, especially to Jerry Haag whose help was essential to the success! There were a lot of people who helped, especially Doug who provided his truck and trailer to haul the canteen canopy, equipment, & supplies, Svend who obtained the ice, the early gate staff of Marc, Duncan, Seth, Ed and others (I apologize to those I've missed - I was not there that early, so extra thanks!!), Wes a.k.a. Mr. Donuts and Mr. Cash Box, Mikel of ASVARO who coordinates all the flea markets with De Anza, and all of you who helped behind the refreshment counter, and those who helped with the tear down, packing, and repacking of the storage unit. Thanks also to Scott, Dave, Peter, Barbara, Jim and Keith for the hard work put into sorting, transporting arranging and selling at the surplus equipment sales booth.

We will be sponsoring the first flea market of 2016 on March 12 because we were "tail end Charlie" in 2015. It would be great to get the same excellent support!

SPECS Repeater Association

Peter Griffith, WA6VAQ

Scott Overstreet, N6NXI

Dave Platt, AE6EO

Keith Amidon, KJ6PUO

The W6ASH repeater system continues to operate normally. There have been no major changes in the last year; just some maintenance work. The 224.140 repeater continues to use its "new" PL tone of 88.5 Hz, however, this may be

returned to 100 Hz for compliance with our present NARCC and ARRL listings. You may remember that we had some system stability trouble last year. We introduced 88.5 Hz as a diagnostic and never got around to doing and testing a change back to 100Hz after giving both the 224.140 and 440.800 repeaters some Tender Loving Care.

We finally have some news about "The Big Move" - it's likely to take place in 2018. We have learned that El Camino Hospital is planning to add another tall building (taking the place of the current one-story Willow Pavilion), after which the existing "old building" (where we now are) will be demolished. There is a chance that we will be moving to this new building.

The W6ASH repeater system has been located on the roof of the original El Camino Hospital since early in 1980. We were the first radio system installed there and have shared space with local cities' police and fire radio systems, with commercial paging transmitters and with Verizon's cellphone equipment, all until recently.

When El Camino Hospital decided to construct the recent new hospital complex a few years ago and demolish "our" old building, plans were put underway to provide space in and on the new building for the radio systems which would have to vacate the old building.

Unfortunately, for some reason, the SPECS repeater was overlooked in the "first round" of planning. By the time we were contacted about arranging a move, all of the public safety radio systems, and the amateur "Hospital

Net" antennas had already been installed on the new building. After surveying the situation, we (N6NXI and AE6EO) concluded that moving to either of the two locations offered to us would most likely cause serious interference difficulties for the amateur Hospital Net, and possibly for other radio systems in the immediate area.

As it was not planned to tear down the old building before completing another new building, we asked the hospital for permission to leave W6ASH where it was until plans for this new building became clear. They agreed, and that's where matters have remained for several years.

Verizon also asked to keep their cellphone facility in the old building, and it remains in operation there today, with us.

We had heard rumors that the hospital was considering adding another new building, as tall as the "new" hospital or perhaps taller, and held out hope that we might be eventually able to move the repeater there. In the last couple of months, we've learned that the hospital is now moving ahead with planned construction of the "Willow Pavilion" replacement during the next couple of years and that it is planned that Verizon will move their system to this new facility at that time and that it is indeed the tall building that we had heard was a possibility.

As our system has co-existed with Verizon's for more than a decade with no interference issues either way, we know that we can be "good neighbors" together. We've had an initial talk with





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the hospital staff about this, have asked whether we could move the repeater to the new tower alongside Verizon, and have a "handshake agreement" acceptance of this moving plan.

There will be some considerable expenses involved in this move. The biggest expense will be new feedlines for all three repeaters and the remote base antennas (it's not practical to salvage the old hardline) and the cost of having the feedlines professionally installed. Some new antennas and mast materials will also be required. We aren't going to be asking the hospital to cover the costs of this move - it's our repeater, the costs are our responsibility.

We'll make more details available to the SPECS board and membership once they're pinned down.

Training Officer Candidate Bio

Paul Goldstein, KJ6AMM



Paul is a former elementary educator who received his first amateur radio license in 2007, he has been volunteering with a variety of organizations for the past eleven years since moving back to Mountain View. Paul loves volunteering because it has helped him find meaning and give back to the community he loves in his post-employment years.

Paul serves the City of Mountain View as an amateur radio operator with Mountain View ARES and the Bay Area Hospital Network (Kaiser-MV). He is a member of OMVNA-CERT, a founding member of the Association of Mountain View Neighborhood CERTS and an active member of Blackberry REACT.

Additionally Paul has served as a Docent and Volunteer Ranger at Shoreline for nearly 8 years. Paul uses his love of teaching young children, birding, and the outdoors to lead interpretive walks, instruct students on field trips, and greet visitors out at Shoreline.

Personal interests include the Kiwanis Club of Mountain View, where he also serves on the Grant and Scholarship committees. Paul also enjoys singing Barbershop.

Paul looks forward to serving SPECS as its new Training Officer.

Treasurer Candidate Bio

Patrick Muffler, KG6TMI



Patrick's entire career after getting his Ph.D. in geology at Princeton University was with the U.S. Geological Survey, where for 39 years he focused on the volcanic geology and geothermal phenomena in the Lassen region of northeastern California, the Cascade Range of the western United

States, the Imperial Valley of southern California, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, the Larderello region of Italy, and the Taupo volcanic belt of New Zealand. Interspersed with this research were four tours in management, most recently as Western Regional Geologist. He formally retired from the USGS in 2001, but is still is an active Emeritus Scientist.

Since 2001, Patrick has contributed to emergency preparedness in Palo Alto, primarily to ARES/RACES, where he currently serves as an Assistant Emergency Coordinator.



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