



Smoke Signals

Newsletter of Fullerton Radio Club

January 2026

President's Report

I hope everyone had a restful holiday season and we've all kicked off a brand-new year. We have quite a bit going on at the Fullerton Radio Club, and I wanted to remind you of some opportunities to join us.

As I write this, Verizon Wireless has just "recovered" from a wide ranging national cellular outage stranding people in countless day to day situations where a phone (with service) was needed. Three friends of mine contacted me a few days later asking if a ham radio handheld would have helped them out. What's the answer for someone who hasn't explored amateur radio yet? Probably start small and get with a group to grow.

The national association for amateur radio, the American Radio Relay League (aka ARRL), has proclaimed 2026 the "Year of the Club" and continues to focus on education, events and accomplishments of local radio clubs. With that in mind, Fullerton Radio wants to make a number of resources available to help you— and our local club — grow as radio enthusiasts.

Weekly Net and Zoom - Each week we meet on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm and run a couple of check-in exercises on our radios. Watch for an email the day before covering what the parameters are for the weekly net. The net is followed at 7 pm by a Zoom call where we catch up on what's new and often have a discussion or two.

Ham Basics - We started this weekly Zoom meeting in late December on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm to help provide some fundamental training and encourage our club members to get on the air. We've had a great response to these meetings.

Saturdays at Hillcrest - The second Saturday of each month we gather at Hillcrest Park in Fullerton at 8 am for a few hours with the goal of raising some antennas, firing up radios, and getting on the air

with some training. This is hands-on, and the response the last few months has been steadily growing. Lunch follows at Farmer Boys right down the hill on Harbor. All are invited.

TAG - on the second Wednesday of each month we replace our weekly net and Zoom call with an in-person meeting in Fullerton to discuss all things related to technology - note that this doesn't necessarily always include radio topics, but we also have topics like 3D printing, ESP-32/Arduino hardware and programming, and other projects members have been working on.

Also, watch for information on our annual **Antennas in the Park** day this May.

Any other ideas for the club? I hope you can take advantage of these get-togethers and be involved in Fullerton Radio Club this coming year. Let's all tune in and learn something new or help someone be proficient in a new skill as well. Members, please be sure you've also registered at our groups.io site for additional resources.

Not a member yet? Join us at <https://fullertonradioclub.org>. Want more information on any of these items? **Drop me a line at k6rax@arrl.net**

73

Ray Rounds, K6RAX



Fullerton Radio Club
P.O. Box 545, Fullerton, CA 92836

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FRC January 7, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

The monthly FRC Board Meeting was called to order by President Ray Rounds K6RAX at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 via Zoom.

Board Members present: Ray Rounds K6RAX, Bob Houghton AD6QF, Ted Schulman KO6FKX, Gene Thorpe KB6CMO, Walter Clark, Robert Gimbel KG6WTQ, Larry McDavid W6FUB, and Bart Pulverman WB6WUW

Board members absent: None

The December Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved without amendment.

Treasurer's Report:

- New deposits: \$430.00 plus \$0.02 interest
- New expenditures: \$506.41 (Raffle prizes \$318.41 + PO Box \$188.00)
- Bank balance: 5758.03 as of December 31, 2025

Membership:

- New members: 2 (Ted Kramer NB6N, Pat Piper KA6KAF)
- Renewals: 16
- Bob's records show 18 paid members plus 3 mid-year renewals plus 1 life member = 22 members as of 1/1/26.

Old Business:

Holiday Party – 24 in attendance, new Board installed at meeting

New Business:

- Board motion to grant 2026 membership to 2 members who renewed mid-year (Jesse James, Mike Klewer)
- Tuesday "Ham Basics" Learning Center
- Saturday in the Park 1/10/26 plans – TBD, likely an overview of HF radio controls.
- Robert Gimbal raised the question about in-person meetings. Follow up was assigned to Robert to investigate possible venues and times and then advise. The Board will reconsider within three months with consideration made for convenience, cost, impact on the weekly net, and the Board's general ability to attend.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:06 PM

Ham Basics Update

by Bob Houghton AD6QF

In the last issue of *Smoke Signals*, I mentioned that the club was forming a new group intended to support members and friends who want to spend some time better understanding basic principles of amateur radio operation.

Since then, the club has started a new weekly Zoom group called Ham Basics. While this group is intended to be helpful to new and intermediate level hams, all are welcome to participate. We meet on Zoom every Tuesday at 7 pm. The Zoom link is the same as for the regular Wednesday night meetings.

If you have a suggestion for a topic, we'd love to hear it.

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Reports from the Field

by Bob Houghton AD6QF

I think that by now, most FRC members are aware that on the second Saturday of every month, we take our radios to Hillcrest Park and operate "from the field." Besides being a fun social event, this is an excellent way to practice "doing radio" in austere conditions. The only "infrastructure" that the park supplies is a picnic table. We have to bring our own power, radios, microphones, feed lines, antennas and all the easy-to-forget-at-home bits and pieces that allow us to get on the air. After arriving without that critical adapter, one soon learns that careful planning and a checklist are necessary for success. We have been doing this for well over a year now, and it gets easier every time.

Second-Saturday activity

Saturday, January 10

This month, Dick Palmer lead a discussion of some of the HF radio controls that may not be fully used by newer operators: RIT, bandwidth, and notch filters, noise reduction, compression, band stacking memories and more. He did this while we were setting up to make a few contacts in the 10-10 net.

What's 10-10 you say? 1Established in 1962, 10-10 is an organization dedicated to maintaining high levels of ham radio activity on the 10 meter band. They have nets 6 days a week and issue 10-10 numbers to the net participants.

For more information about 10-10 International Net, go here:

→ <https://www.ten-ten.org/>

We had a great turnout; somebody counted 16 people total. There were many side conversations and lots of questions were asked and answered.

I had a chance to work with Jesse James in programming his Yaesu FT-60. We were happy to be joined by Greg Hastings KO6DOM and Ed Roth K0NW who are both new to the club activities.

Afterwards, many of us convened at Farmer Boys for chow and more conversation.



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Winter Field Day report

Saturday January 24

FRC member Dick Palmer is a regular seller at the Claremont as well as the TRW swap meets. This means he is busy the third and last Saturdays of most months. Every once in a while, a month has five Saturdays, giving Dick an extra free Saturday. This January is one such month.

Dick phoned me and mentioned that he was free on January 24, and did I know that Winter Field Day was this weekend. Within a few minutes, we had the beginnings of a plan to do some extra field operating at Hillcrest Park. After an email to the club, we had some folks who were interested in participating.

Saturday, January 24, from 8 to 11 am, Dick Palmer, Ray Rounds, John Mock, Tom Smith, Linda Souder, and myself set up radios and antennas for HF as well as 2 m and 70 cm bands. Dick launched a 40 m / 20 m trapped dipole that he had built from a kit sold by Pacific Antennas. Ray set up a ground-mounted vertical with a 20 m Shark Hamstick as the radiator. I set up a Comet GP-1 2m / 70cm vertical base station antenna. Dick operated using an Elecraft K2/100, Ray set up his new Yaesu FT-710 FIELD, and I used an Icom IC-9700. I only had two bands since the 2m / 70 cm / 23 cm vertical that I had planned to use proved to be too unwieldily to fit in my truck.

We operated for three hours, made a moderate number of contacts in a pretty low-key "operating event." I had a QSO with FRC friend Jenna Canillas WWOMAN, who was at the nearby Sizzler with her husband Robert and two friends. The friends were sitting for their Technician Class license. After the testing was finished, we all gathered briefly so the two brand new hams could see the field setup at Hillcrest and then convened at Farmer Boys for lunch.



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TAG Activity Report for January 2026

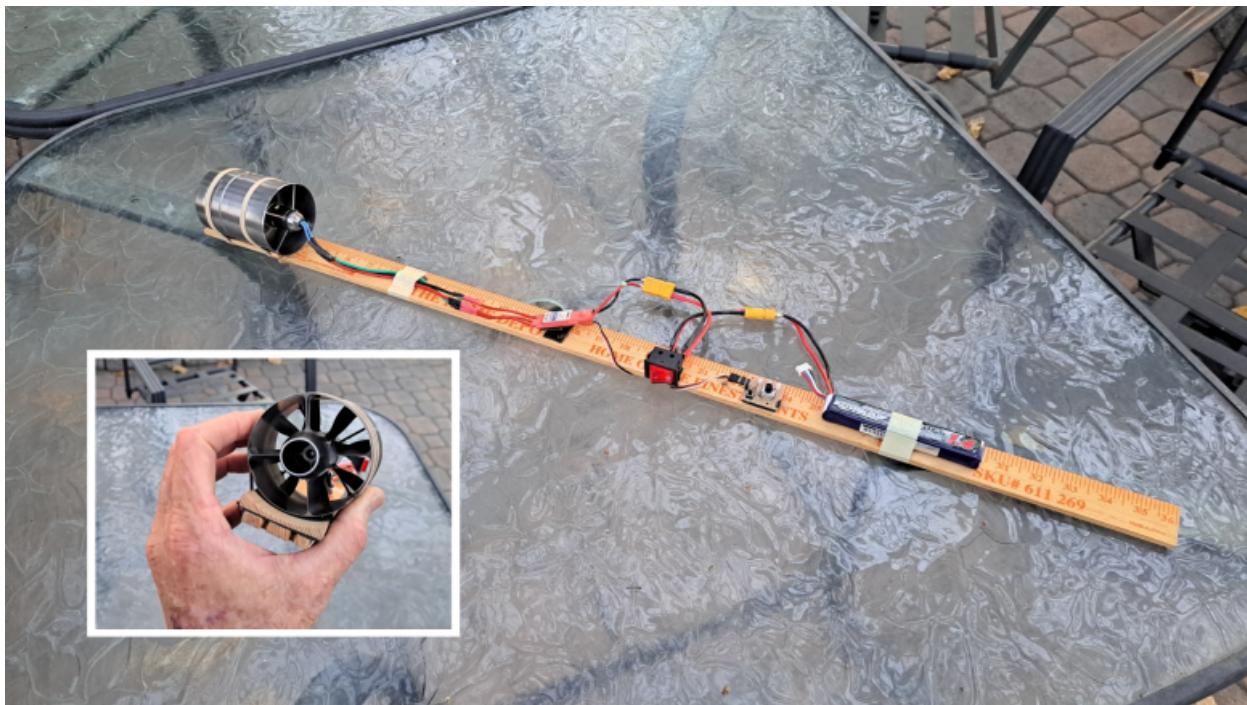
by Walter Clark

Still outdoors. Southern California may be expensive, but man its weather is nice.



Walter your host spends his free time making, flying and crashing R/C planes. The radio part of it is: telemetry, GPS flight path recording, and gyro augmented stability. I've been at R/C planes for 50 years with occasional interest in telescope making, amateur radar, and oh yea, work. Most of my planes are slow. I like slow. I was given a ducted fan, which like a real jet doesn't go slow. So it sat until recently I found a use for it.

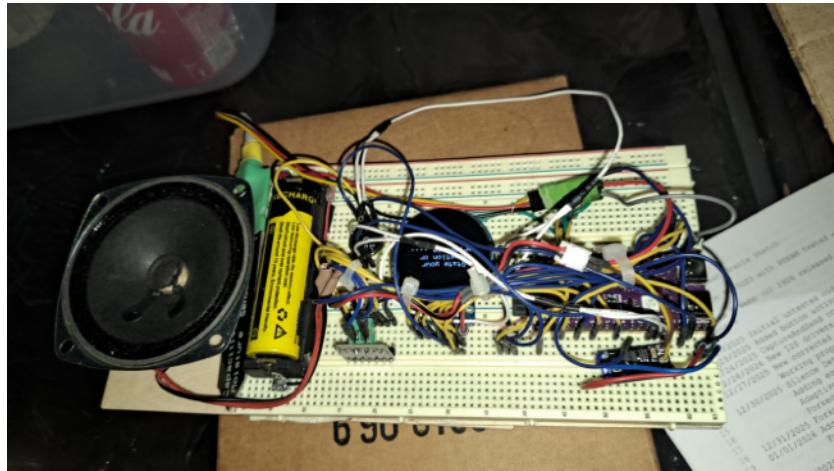
A leaf blower.



You probably recognize the main switch. Between that and the battery a circuit to test servos; a pulse width modulated 5V signal generator of 50 cycle per second. The fan draws 300 watts which is 0.4 horsepower. It's a brushless motor driven by a 3 phase power supply. I made the blow-stick as a joke, but it works well. I was surprised to find how handy having the blower down low. You can throttle back and use it as a whisk broom. I like it

so much I store it in the house next to the front door. You don't do that with yard blowers.

Bill Webb is famous for 3D printing: weather stations, microcontrollers, LoRa (long range low-power wireless) and artificial intelligence. Previous use of those four skills involved controlling his yard sprinklers and a fortune teller. The latter involving text to speech. His most recent project added speech-to-text so he can have the A-I respond to his own voice.



Both of these have the same software and communicate to the same A-I website. The difference is how much smaller and neater the bottom one is. The smaller speaker is the silver button. All those jumpers are replaced by the green circuit board underneath the ESP32 microcontroller. It is unbelievable how cheap and easy it is to replace the jumper board with a circuit board. There is some effort involved in learning how to design the

boards. The cost is low, about \$4 per board. The round display shows what was spoken. The red module between the display and the ESP32 is a Digital to Analog Converter.

In demonstrating this application he spoke a short sentence and after a delay involving acquiring the website, we heard the same sentence back after correcting for grammar and replacing cuss words with less accurate wording.

Larry McDavid's technical discussion was on "Slim" size HDMI and Ethernet cables, about 1/3 the diameter of standard cable, offering greater

flexibility while maintaining the performance of standard cables. This photo is of an HDMI 3-port, bidirectional switch connected to a HDMI-input video capture card with



USB output. Larry uses it to connect his new Icom IC-7300MK2 transceiver to a 15-inch video monitor or his computer.

But of more interest perhaps was his give-away of stuff that is too good to trash, but redundant to his use, including a band-scanning monitor receiver, small Alinco HT, several wall-outlet remote devices and lots of other electronics.



In the midst of Larry's presentation there was a general discussion about tariffs in the buying of radio and electronics on AliExpress vs Amazon vs eBay. Walter didn't understand how compliance was so perfect, and effortless. You might say dope has an infinite tariff but it keeps coming in. There were two tragic stories about gift cards.

Richard, Dick Palmer's son shared with us his experience restoring a 1970s Chevrolet Vega. We expected Richard to be knowledgeable, but Bob Houghton was very articulate on car engines as well. There was an impressive discussion on cylinder machining tolerance and oil viscosity.

Bob Houghton talked about he and Ray putting on their first Beginners Radio Class. They are calling it Ham Basics and they meet on Zoom Tuesday nights from 7 to 8 pm. Among other topics, was programming HTs (frequency modulations) and using ARRL's magazine for beginners titled *On the Air*.

Harish's lavish desserts were missed but Dick Palmer's wife made some really good cookies.