



Smoke Signals

Newsletter of Fullerton Radio Club

July 2026

President's Report

A few of us had the privilege of visiting the Rio Hondo Club at Michigan Park in Whittier for ARRL's Field Day on June 27. Dick Palmer worked the event, Harish Kumar KO6FJT, Ted Schulman KO6FKX, Ed Roth K0NW, and I visited with their group. There were several stations setup at the Park and we had a chance to learn about their setup and coordination for this important day. The purpose of field day is to exercise our ability to run remotely in case of a catastrophic event. Everyone sets up portable and temporary transmitting stations to practice emergency communications, hone technical skills, test equipment and procedures, and engage with the community. Kudos to Rio Hondo for a job well done!

How many recall these vital connectors from the 70's? (See image at bottom right). How many combinations of connections did these handle? I remember as a teen our family learning to share the communal TV with off air TV, VCR and Atari (this was, for our family, "BC" - before cable). Later, I hooked up my Commodore 64 and thought "wow, this is convenient and should be standard equipment for all future equipment!". Now, with amateur radio, I have a bag of adapters and connectors, jumper cables, and A/B switches to be prepared for expected (and unexpected) connections while going portable or fiddling with new things at home. Still, while visiting Santa Barbara over the 4th of July weekend, I was lacking a microphone for a second radio (accidentally left at home) and a USB-B cable (forgotten, but fortunately located during a downtown walk at an OfficeMax - \$9 and they had a half dozen of them).

So, be prepared. September is National Preparedness Month and between now and then we'll cover some ideas for being prepared at home, being remote with your radio and some ideas to be equipped. You never know when a 300Ω twin-lead antenna connection needs to connect to something new.

Included in this newsletter are summaries of some recent POTA activations - if you have some trips to share, please let me know for future newsletters, we'd love to share everyone's experiences. Want to

do something local with some group members? Let me know that as well.

Also everyone, welcome Greg Chang KD5HIZ, our newest member. Greg lives in Fullerton and carries an Extra license. Welcome, Greg!

Ray Rounds, K6RAX



Fullerton Radio Club
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FRC July 1, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

The monthly FRC Board Meeting was called to order by President Ray Rounds K6RAX at 5:35 pm on Wednesday, July 1, 2026 via Zoom.

Board Members Present: Ray Rounds K6RAX, Bob Houghton AD6QF, Ted Schulman KO6FKX, and Larry McDavid W6FUB

Board Members Absent: Gene Thorpe KB6CMO, Robert Gimbal KG6WTQ, Walter Clark, and Bart Pulverman WB6WUW

The June Board Meeting Minutes were approved by consensus without corrections.

Treasurer's Report:

- New deposits: \$0.02 interest
- New expenditures: None
- Bank balance: \$5,503.53 as of June 30 bank statement

Membership:

- New members: None
- Renewals: None
- Bob's records show 35 paid members plus 1 life member = 36 members as of 6/30/26.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Hillcrest Park/ARRL Field Day Recap
- Next meeting: August 5, 2026, 5:30 PM via Zoom

There were no further items brought forward and the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM.

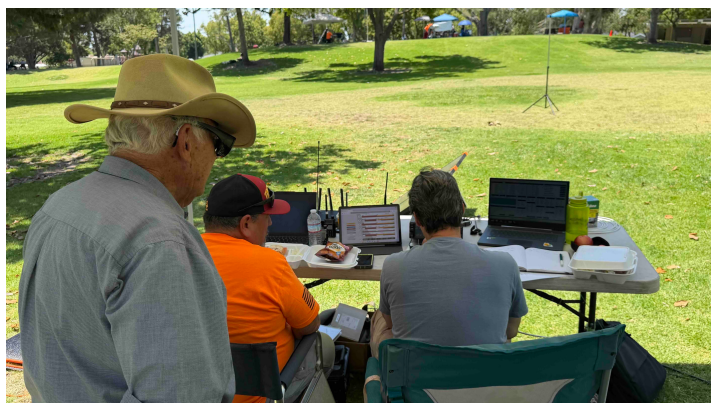
Submitted by Ted Schulman, KO6FKX

Want to join or renew?



OR:

Go to fullertonradioclub.org
and click on Join/Renew





As I understand It - Toroids

by Harish Kumar KO6FJT

Clarity of communications in ham radio is where toroids can play an important role.

What are toroids? They are donut shaped objects made of ferro-magnetic mixtures with other metal oxides like zinc which form a closed magnetic loop. This loop confines the magnetic field, within the core, to significantly reduce electromagnetic interference (EMI). Toroids are one of the components in making Baluns, Ununs and Chokes. They reduce EMI and is confined to within the core rather than leaking it forward. We build them by wrapping copper wire around the core. We place them between the antenna and the coax to remove interfering RF to clarify the signals. They are useful mostly for HF use (6 m to 160 m). (See Figure 1 right for images of a toroid core and one that has been wound with wire).

Chokes are placed along coaxial feedlines to suppress stray or "common-mode" RF interference and results in reduction of noise at the receiver. Here is an example of 1:1 Balun I made for my 20 m dipole antenna. (See Figure 2 right).

There are 2 sets of wires each with 11 turns of insulated copper wire around the Toroid. There are

many YouTube videos on how to wind toroids - please check them out for details. What you see in the picture is for QRP use (low power, up to about 10 W). As a rule of thumb, I use a 1:1 Balun for Dipole antennas and a 49:1 Unun for End Fed, Random wire antennas. The Baluns and Ununs help match the antenna's impedance to the 50 Ohm coax cable. Building stuff for HAM radio use is always fun. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I have been.

73
Harish
KO6FJT



Figure 1



Figure 2

Hillcrest Report

by Ray Rounds, K6RAX

Our monthly visit to Hillcrest Park was on Saturday July 11 with Dick Palmer WB6JDH, John Mock K6AHY, Ted Schulman KO6FKX, Rich Belansky KD6UDD, and Ray Rounds K6RAX up on the hill. The theme for the day was software and hardware. Bob Houghton AD6QF remotely tied into the FRC repeater from Jasper Canada and sent greetings to the group.

Ray and Dick set up a whip antenna and tuned it for 20 meters. Both brought a Xiegu G90 and Dick proceeded to hook up to the antenna and started listening for activity for the IARU HF World Championship Contest which was running over the weekend. Almost immediately he picked up an operator calling CQ from Japan and using only 10W and after a few tries, QSO'd with that operator. Shortly afterwards, he also QSO'd with an operator in Hawaii.

The group talked about experiences with the NanoVNA as an antenna analyzer, among other topics. Rich demo'd his impressive work on SDR dongles with Direwolf (a software soundcard, AX.25 packet modem/TNC and APRS encoder/decoder) and picked up APRS messages via RF, including a few beacons and a message sent by Ray. Both Rich and Ray showed SDR++ installations, a cross-platform and open source software defined radio (SDR) program that works with many different SDR receivers. Both used a small whip antenna. Later, Rich showed his YAAC (yet another APRS client) integration which plots beacon activity on maps, similar to the APRS.fi web site.

Ray showed off his "go box" which contains space for his G90 (with cooling fan/stand), Anderson PowerPole for power input and distribution, and a 15" monitor. He powers it with a 30Ah LiFePO4 and Powerwerx PWRBox2 box with a Victron Energy SmartShunt which helps monitor the charging status via Bluetooth. The box uses an Intel computer stick running Linux Mint for radio utilities. He briefly ran WSJT-X on 20m and showed propagation using PSKReporter's web site over most of North America at 20w power.

The group also discussed the Radioddity HF-010 vertical whip antenna and components. While it was configured and tuned for 20m, it covers 80m-6m and includes radials, coils, tripod, and stake.

The group adjourned for lunch about 11:30 at Farmer Boys in Fullerton.



POTA Summary K6RAX

On July 2, K6RAX visited US-3428 - El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park while visiting Santa Barbara. The site is an old adobe fortress covering a couple city blocks in downtown. After getting permission granted to do a park activation, Ray setup at a flat open space on a busy street corner with a whip antenna on 20m and Yaesu FT-710 radio. After ten contacts, including two park to parks, US-3428 was activated with QSO's in New Mexico, Utah, Texas, Montana, Indiana, Colorado, Idaho, and Washington states.



CQ SoCal

by Bob Houghton AD6QF/VE7

This past Sunday, I decided try a POTA activation while camping in Kicking Horse Pass in Yoho National Park. This is the location of the Spiral Tunnels that are famous with railroad buffs (Google it). Kicking Horse Pass is a deep valley surrounded by steep mountains that rise nearly vertically three thousand feet (think Yosemite Valley). This locale makes for beautiful scenery, but is a tough location for radio signals.

When I do a POTA activation, I have a loyal group of FRC members and Friends who try to contact me (you know who you are!). Although a park has been successfully activated once I get ten contacts, I don't feel like I have actually succeeded until I manage to contact some of my FRC friends who are listening for me.

While I typically get my first ten POTA contacts within 30 minutes, that was not to happen this time. After almost two hours with only 5 contacts, all in coastal Oregon, I turned the radio off and my wife KJ6QLY and I headed into the tiny hamlet of Field, BC for some ice cream cone therapy.

Refreshed, I headed back to camp to try some more. After another hour, I *finally* had my necessary 10 contacts and went QRT, but without talking to any familiar voices.

Joe Moell, K0OV, pointed out that the K index of 3 may have been a contributing factor to my communication troubles, so on Tuesday, I tried again. This time the band was eerily quiet. Even 14074 MHz was silent! I called CQ for about an hour, collecting only 4 contacts, two were (again) in coastal Oregon but the fourth was WH2X, Joel in Guam, so at least there's that!

Sometimes you go fishing and the fish aren't biting!