

# Relay

April 2009

Volume 39, Number 4

## April Club Meeting

**Date:** Friday, April 24, 2009

**Time:** Socializing at 7 pm, Meeting at 7:30

**Place:** Covington School, 205 Covington Road, Los Altos

**Topic:** To Be Announced



**Raffle Prizes:** The first prize is a Yaesu VX-150/83B 2-meter 5 watt handheld with fast charger stand and 1400 mah battery (shown left, yaesu.com). 2nd prize is MFJ-392B Headphones (at right, mfjenterprises.com). 3rd prize 2009 NARCC Northern California Repeater Directory.

The club offers refreshments (great coffee, great cookies) and technical advice at the meeting: Bring your questions for Dr. Know-It-All and get great answers. Be sure to attend for an enjoyable evening.



**Pre-Meeting Dinner:** There is a pre-meeting dinner at 6:00 pm for those who would like to attend. We meet at the Beausejour Restaurant, 170 State St., Los Altos. There are Great Early Bird specials.

## March Meeting Report

Steve Stearns, K6OIK, talked about Wilderness Emergency Communications. Steve considered several types of personal emergencies, from accidents to getting soaked. He also discussed various methods for getting the word out so help will come. It turns out that Ham Radio is a good option, providing several ways to contact help. Steve concluded by showing slides from some of the wilderness excursions he has done.



**Steve Stearns, K6OIK**  
March Speaker



**Doña, Ken, Jonathan, Peter**  
Raffle Winners

There were four prizes at the March meeting. A video prize, donated by Ben Koning, February speaker, was won by Peter Chow, AF6DS. A package of Bongo ties was won by Ken Ashe, KI6HLQ. The ARRL 2008 Handbook was taken home by Doña Kerns, KI6DAR. The first prize, a Yaesu FT1802, 2-Meter Radio, was won by Jonathon Knowles, K1DOD. The Wish You Were Here number for Dave Platt, AE6EO, was chosen. Unfortunately, Dave was not present to claim the prize.

## President's Corner



**Membership Meeting.** Our next regular membership meeting is Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm). More details and directions to the meeting are available at <http://www.fars.k6ya.org/meeting>.

**Flea Market & Volunteers.** The next Electronics Flea Market is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> and this time FARS is hosting it. This means we need volunteers to help run the flea market and that means you. So check your schedule for May 9<sup>th</sup> and see if you can spend a few hours working the flea market. There will be sign up sheets at the April 24<sup>th</sup> club meeting, so you can sign up then. Contact Gerry [K6TXD](mailto:K6TXD), for more information or to volunteer.

**Am-Tech Day.** The next Amateur Radio Technology Day is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are into our fifth year of Am-Tech Day at SLAC. There is always a lot of activity, interesting programs, so be sure to check it out.

The April 4<sup>th</sup> Am-Tech Day was **The Electric Utility Innovation Called "Smart Grid"** with Pradeep Gupta, Ph.D., [W6XH](mailto:W6XH) (<http://www.fars.k6ya.org/cgi-bin/e-link?evid=217>). Dr Gupta talked about the limitations of the current electric distribution system and how making the network "smarter" makes the system more efficient and reliable.

Check the web site ([www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday/](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday/)) or the email list ([www.fars.k6ya.org/mail/](mailto:www.fars.k6ya.org/mail/)) for the date and program information.

**Maker Faire** (<http://www.fars.k6ya.org/makerfaire>). FARS and other amateur radio clubs are scheduled to be at Maker Faire at the San Mateo County Expo Center on May 30 & 31. Maker Faire is for "makers", who are people make things from sublime to amazing. This is a great crowd to get interested in amateur radio. We have a booth there and are presenting different aspects of amateur radio. We have enough volunteers, but there may still be a need for a few more. Contact Michael Pechner, [KI6QNZ](mailto:KI6QNZ) ([ki6qnz@arrl.net](mailto:ki6qnz@arrl.net)) to volunteer. Even if you are not working the show, come on down to check it out.

**Amateur Radio Field Day** is just a couple months away in June

**Email Notices.** Subscribe to the FARS Announcement list ([www.fars.k6ya.org/mail/](mailto:www.fars.k6ya.org/mail/)) to receive reminders of FARS activities and other news.

- de Mikel, KN6QI

## Upcoming Events

Apr 24 7:00 PM, [Club meeting](#), Covington School  
 May 7 7:30 PM, Board Mtg at the Los Altos Town Crier  
 May 2 8 AM to 9 PM, [Am-Tech Day](#), SLAC NAL  
 May 9 [Electronics Flea Market](#) hosted by [FARS](#)  
 May 22 7:00 PM, [Club meeting](#), Covington School  
 May 30 Ham Radio [Maker Faire](#)  
 Jun 27-28 ARRL Field Day  
 Thursdays 8:00 PM, FARS net, 145.230(-), 100 Hz PL

See more events, [FARS Calendar](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/events/calendar) <<http://www.fars.k6ya.org/events/calendar>>

## CLUB INFORMATION

President:	Mikel Lechner, KN6QI
Vice President:	Steve Stearns, K6OIK
Treasurer:	David Cooper K6WA
Secretary:	
Radio Officer:	Phil Hawkins, KA6MZE
Training Officer:	Kevin Weiler, K6XXX
Relay Editor:	Mark Hardy, K6MDH
FARS Board: Dick Baldwinson N6ATD, Peter Chow AF6DS, Robert Flemate KE6TFU, Nimit Hongyim K6XOX, Gerry Horn K6TXD, Charlie Morrin KI6FXY, Barbara Neuhauser AE6RM.	
K6YA Trustee:	Phil Hawkins, KA6MZE
FARS Web Page:	<a href="http://www.fars.k6ya.org">http://www.fars.k6ya.org</a>
Download Relay:	<a href="http://www.fars.k6ya.org/relay">http://www.fars.k6ya.org/relay</a>
Club members and non-members are encouraged to subscribe to the FARS Announcement list by browsing <a href="http://www.fars.k6ya.org/mail">www.fars.k6ya.org/mail</a> , clicking on Subscribe/Unsubscribe and following the instructions under "Subscribing to fars-announce."	
You may submit announcements to the FARS Announcement at <a href="mailto:fars-announce@sypal.org">fars-announce@sypal.org</a> . The list is moderated and messages will be posted as approved by the list moderator.	
Contact the FARS board of directors at <a href="mailto:fars-board@sypal.org">fars-board@sypal.org</a>	
Club meetings are held at 7 PM on the fourth Friday of each month except January (Winter Banquet); and sometimes there are changes for June (for field day) and Nov. & Dec (for holidays).	
Annual club membership is \$20. Club badges are \$9. Visitors are always welcome! Directions in this newsletter. Talk-in: N6NFI (145.23-, 100 Hz) or W6ASH repeater (145.27-, 100 Hz).	
FARS <i>Relay</i> is the official monthly newsletter of the Foothills Amateur Radio Society. Contributions to the newsletter from members, family, and guests are earnestly solicited! Contributions are subject to editing and/or compression. All readable forms welcome.	
Here is how to reach the editor:	
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Santa Clara, CA 95055	
Voice: 408-243-0701 (Before 9 PM, preferred)	
Email: <a href="mailto:mark.af6do@gmail.com">mark.af6do@gmail.com</a> , At FARS meetings.	

### **Pacificon 2009 to be hosted by EMCOMMWEST May 1, 2, and 3, at the Circus Circus Hotel, Reno, NV**

[T]he Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club ... decided not to sponsor the Pacificon Convention this year. They have done an outstanding job of running Pacificon every year since 1992.... Realizing the difficulty of finding a replacement for the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club, ... I decided to contact EMCOMMWEST [and] they very kindly accepted.... I am truly grateful to the entire EMCOMMWEST team for their decision. The Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club has been very supportive of this effort, and is making all of their speaker, vendor, and organizational information available to the EMCOMMWEST team. The keynote speaker will be Steve Ewald, WV1X, Field Organization Supervisor from ARRL HQ; and the banquet speaker will be Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, who was in charge of Amateur Radio rules enforcement at the FCC when he retired. I hope many of you will be able to attend this year's Pacificon. More information is available at [pacificon.org](http://pacificon.org).

See you at EMCOMMWEST/Pacificon!

Thanks and 73,

Bob Vallio, W6RGG, Director, Pacific Division  
ARRL, The national association for AMATEUR RADIO

## 160 Meter Contest

This year FARS participated in the CQWW160 meter phone contest up at our usual field day site: the soccer field at Maryknoll residence. This contest was held from 2200Z 27 February to 2200Z 1 March. Since this contest is in the winter, it presents a different setting for an outside field set-up. On this weekend a storm passed over California and presented moderate winds, cold temperatures, and some rain. These conditions made the deployment of a 160 meter ¼ wavelength (135 feet) vertical antenna that is designed to be erected by a balloon questionable. In this event FARS operated only Saturday evening from sunset to sunrise due to propagation on the "top band". Antennas used in this contest were a vertical antenna for transmit and a 300 foot Beverage antenna for receive. Because of the sizes of these antennas, set-up took all day which started Saturday noon and ended a few hours before sunset, but this was okay due to very little activity during the day on that band. Because of the high wind velocity component at Maryknoll due to the storm, I decided not to use the balloon for the vertical antenna, but instead use the antenna as a sloper with the radiating element at 45° relative to the sixteen 50 foot radials the antenna has that are placed on the ground. The end of the radiating element was anchored to one of the tallest Eucalyptus trees with the use of the club's pneumatic tennis ball launcher. The Beverage antenna was deployed straight down the center of the soccer field and since this is a directional receive antenna, it was aimed in the direction 070 degrees magnetic, which is the great circle path to the northeastern states.

Contest operation started for us at 0100Z (an hour or so before sunset) and continued until 1500Z just after sunrise. Using 100 watts from the Yaesu FT-990, we were able to make contacts in 23 states and Canada, but the Beverage antenna was able to hear as far as the Canary Islands (EA8). On the vertical Tx antenna, the farthest contacts we made were Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ontario Canada. We could hear all kinds of stations out there but could not work them, which indicated that the Beverage antenna outperformed the vertical antenna's capability - needless to say this was a bit frustrating. Total contacts made were 78. With the multipliers, this yields a score of 3,816 in the contest. One observation was as soon as the sun came up, the signal to noise level drastically decreased, leading to loss of all contacts, with the exception of stations received by local ground-wave propagation - typical top-band propagation.

People I would like to thank are: the Operators: Byron (KG6UOB), Dave (K6WA); Set-up: Byron (KG6UOB), Nimit (K6XOX), George (AB8PQ), and Keith (KG6ZJI); Tear down: Byron (KG6UOB) and my wife Tina Hawkins. My thanks also to Dave Wolfe (AA6XV) who "coached" us in the art of 160 meter contest, Jim Peterson (K6EI) for the use of an MFJ tuner which made the vertical antenna work, Kevin (K6XXX) who let us use his tent which made the whole wet, cold and windy contest happen for us and of course the Maryknoll Residence for the gracious use of their soccer field.

Phil, KA6MZE

*FARS Radio Officer and K6YA station Trustee*

## Amateur Radio Participation in the 2009 San Francisco Bay Area Maker Faire

Save the date May 29, 30 & 31!

Participate in the 2009 Bay Area Makers Faire.

This year we look forward to the Foothills Amateur Radio Society's (FARS) sponsorship of an amateur radio booth at the 4th annual Bay Area Maker Faire held at the San Mateo Fair Grounds. The Maker Faire, sponsored by O'Reilly Publishers and Make Magazine, has defied the trend of shrinking festivals and fairs. Each year the Maker Faire grows larger and more diversified. Last year there were 500 "Makers" and 65,000 attendees.

Terms:

(1) Maker, n. DIYers that work on anything except house repair. Interests include: robotics, electronics, metal forging, detailed models, RC control, grand scale Lego, art cars, knitting, cloths, alternative transportation, model rockets of all scales.

(2) Hams, n. makers. We mod our radios, build our radios, tweak antennas, play with power settings, experiment with digital and analog communication protocols of the ham frequencies.

Following on President Obama's call to "begin again the work of remaking America", Maker Faire 2009 will be organized around the theme of Re-Make America (see <http://makerfaire.com/>). Amateur radio operators are already there. We play with all this technology. In the end we are able to apply it all to situations where the infrastructure has failed due to some form of an event or disaster.

FARS will have a HF special events station, demonstrations of SSTV, ATV, APRS, repeater use, model rockets and using APRS for telemetry data collection. We will have emergency communication vans. In demonstrating these aspects of amateur radio, we will talk to faire participants about becoming hams.

Amateur radio participation in this year's Faire is a collaborative effort that includes

- [Foothills Amateur Radio Society \(FARS\)](#) will be operating their club station as a special events station. Primary sponsor providing financial support.
- The [Kings Mountain Amateur Radio Club](#) is bringing their [emergency communication](#) van on Saturday.
- The [Burlingame Red Cross](#) is bringing their [emergency communications](#) van on Sunday.
- [K6BEN Silicon Valley Amateur Television Group](#) will be at the faire both days transmitting [ATV](#).
- [Mad Scientist Amateur Radio Club](#) will be demonstrating [Slow Scan TV\(SSTV\)](#).
- [Lunar](#) will talk about the use of [APRS](#) in model rocketry.
- Leigh Klotz, WA5ZNU, will be showing a custom [Automatic Packet Reporting System](#) device he is building.
- Kevin Weiler, K6XXX, will be giving a talk on Model Rocketry and APRS on one of the stages.

- ARRL will be providing financial support, QSL card service, Custom Polo shirts, and Custom printed materials.
- BAERS. After the show, [BAERS](#) will offer a ham cram after the faire so those who became interested in ham radio can get their license with one day of study.
- HRO. For those who attend the Maker Faire and earn their first license after May 31st, Ham Radio Outlet will offer a first radio at a discount.

We are looking for volunteers to help at the booth. You will get to spend time demonstrating your favorite aspect of the hobby, hanging out with hams, educating non-hams about the hobby, participating at a major national show about DIY. The participants at this Maker Faire come to see cool things and learn about activities and hobbies they have little or no exposure to before, but share common elements with amateur radio.

A special part of the Faire is on Friday. It is education day. Kids from bay area schools come in for special presentations and a preview of the faire. Anyone with a background in education is needed. To have some demonstrations that would interest school age children from elementary school on up would be great. Specifically radio related is best, but basic electronics demonstrations would also be great. This is a very good opportunity to interest children in amateur radio.

Volunteers will be asked to spend 4 hours at the booth. In exchange you will get free access to the Faire for the day, a \$25 value, a custom polo shirt, and hopefully a great feeling of accomplishment in educating folks about amateur radio.

For more information contact Michael Pechner, [ki6qnz@arrl.net](mailto:ki6qnz@arrl.net). Visit our website at <http://www.fars.k6ya.org/makerfaire/> or join our Yahoo group at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/maker\\_faire\\_hams/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/maker_faire_hams/)

### Unclaimed Badges

If you see your name/callsign below, it means that you have a FARS badge to pick up (in fact, one person has two badges to pick up!). They will be available for pick-up at the FARS meeting this Friday evening.



**FARS 2009 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE fill out the form for all new/renewal memberships.

Name(s) & Callsign(s) & Class (E-A-G-T-N-None): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax (H or W?) \_\_\_\_\_ Packet BBS Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Exp Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred modes: (e.g. HF-SSB/VHF/QRP/Other): \_\_\_\_\_

I'm willing to Elmer new hams with: \_\_\_\_\_

Special topics of interest / suggestions for club meeting speakers:

Dues: \$20 per year, new members add \$9 for badge fee. **Please note:** Membership runs from January 1 to December 31.

Send your check payable to FARS, to:

David A. Cooper  
PMB 41  
270 Redwood Shores Parkway  
Redwood City, CA 94065-1173



**How to get to FARS Club meetings (Visitors always welcome)**

Meetings are held at the Covington Elementary School (directions below) on the fourth Friday. Socializing at 7 PM with the regular meeting at 7:30 PM. There may be changes in the meeting dates for January, June, November, and December.

**DIRECTIONS:**

**From Interstate 280.** take the El Monte exit Northeast. Cross Foothill Expressway. (A) At the first traffic light turn right on Covington. (B) Immediately at the fork take the left street (Covington). Go about 1/10th of a mile. Turn left into the parking lot. The gym is the tall building to your right with red and white stripes.

**From Foothill Expwy.,** take the El Monte exit and go Northeast; then follow directions as above at point (A).

**From US101 or El Camino:** take San Antonio Road west (to Foothill Expressway). Then follow directions above at point (A).

**TALK-IN** via the [N6NEI](#) (145.230-; 100Hz PL) repeater or the [W6ASH](#) 145.27- (100Hz PL) repeater.