

# W6SFM

Samuel F. Morse Amateur Radio Club  
(SFMARC) Sacramento, CA



*VEC & Member Tom W6JS presents Katy, KJ6YCP with her badge*

## W6SFM Becomes An Official VE testing Site

At this month's in-person meeting Guest speaker, VEC and SFM ARC member Tom, W6JS presented the club with its official documents in order to conduct FCC VE (volunteer Examiner) testing. During his presentation to the club Tom gave out badges to new VEs and presented the club with its credentials. A special PDF VE study manual written and provided by the ARRL was presented via email to all those who applied to our new VE program. After reading this manual those who received their badges at our February meeting are requested to return to the March meeting in order to sign **Continued Pg. 2**

## W6SFM February, 2018 Newsletter

### North American QSO Party Contest

This year the W6SFM participated in the National Contest Journal's NAQP (North American QSO Party) contest. Members of the club came together at David, K6CIM's home QTH to enjoy some club comradery, food, and some contesting too. As with each year, the club sets up a moderate single transmitter station. This year David offered his Elecraft KX3, 100-Watt Amplifier, and PX3 Pan Adapter for our use. The station was more than enough to get the job done. In the past a pan adapter wasn't always available as part of the equipment supplied for the contest. However, it was found to be a nice benefit at monitoring the bands for both activity, and frequency openings. Although 10 meters was found to be closed to all communications both local and distant, 15 meters seemed to be wide open. It's possible that the 15-meter band has been working fine lately, but there have been no operators out there to active it. This seems to be becoming a common problem among some of the upper CW bands. For this contest the club was able to make a large amount of contacts **Continued Page 3**

## On-Air/On-Line QNI Report

Secretary Chris, AI6U reports a Much higher number of **42** QNI on-air check-ins and **14** On-line "Live Feed" viewers. This month on-air & on-line check-in numbers increased a total of 50% up from last month! The last week of Jan., and first week of Feb., check-in numbers were slightly down with most of our check-ins coming from the local area. We are still getting regular check-ins from members in the Washington and Los Angeles areas, however copy has become increasingly difficult with winter band conditions. The club always welcomes new comers and guest stations whenever they would like to check in. When meeting someone on-air in a QSO please be sure to mention our on-air nets, and invite them to join us. Nets and QSOs have been one of SFM ARC's best advertisements for new members. The **Net Control Station** suggests that those attending the on-air nets please try to keep speeds to 13 -15 WPM to allow past CW class students and others new to CW to copy everything being sent. Please keep those on-air check-ins coming! We enjoy hearing about member's current happenings. On-air Net Meetings offer a way for club members to get together between in-person meetings and events. Especially out of towners.

## In-Person Meeting Attendance

The W6SFM Samuel F. Morse ARC club welcomed **17** members and **1** **guest** to our in-person monthly meeting. Attendance was up 15% from last months in-person meeting. We would like to extend a very big welcome to returning member Tony, W6VFW who came to the meeting. It was great to have Tony join us again so the other members could once again catch up with him. Bill and Katy, KJ6YCO/KJ6YCP provided the snacks including various pound cakes and Pete's coffee for everyone to enjoy. Thank you very much for that. Joining us as a guest of presentation speaker and Member, Tom, W6JS was Gene, WA6ZRT. Gene was the former head of the VEC in Northern California. Gene came to assist Tom with his introduction of the new VE program. Both Gene and Tom live in the Chico area of Nor. Cal and made the drive down just for our club meeting. We thank them both for making such a long trip and having to deal with all the extra traffic on the way. Tom indicated he will re-join us for the club's first VE testing session in an effort to aid us in the understanding of the process.

## W6SFM Live Feed Report



This month the YouTube Live feed has been working flawlessly on-line with our on-air meetings. The club completed the full 2 Hour 15 Minute broadcast of our In-person meeting. Our On-air meetings continue to be broadcast in their entirety and posted to our website for review. Those videos along with Club in-person meetings can be found under the Media Clips and Pics menu in the "Videos" tab on our website at ([www.w6sfm.com](http://www.w6sfm.com)). Also posted along with the meetings and nets are where the club's CW Class training videos will be posted beginning this upcoming April 4<sup>th</sup> when our new CW class begins. Videos will be added to each week according to the lesson plan. Feel free to use these recorded and archived videos for CW Practice, or review when you are unable to view broadcasts LIVE or attend meetings while we are on-air live. Please note that there may be a delay starting the live videos as it takes the YouTube server up to 2 minutes to begin the live transmission. This is done to accommodate. any lag in the transmission video.

## W6SFM VE Testing

(continued from front page)

important documents that certify the VE has read and understands the rules, regulations, and procedures of the VE program and its testing. Once the documents are signed the VE position is official. At that point SFM ARC VEs are then able to conduct tests with our group. Another privilege of being an SFM ARC certified VE is the ability to join any other VE testing group within the United States and conduct testing along with them. With the ARRL's VEC program, which is separate from Tom's VEC group, after the VE applicant receives his manual it is required that the applicant then take the 2-page open book test and return it to the ARRL for review. Although W6SFM is not requiring that test to be taken by our VE applicants, we do suggest that they use the test as a good study guide in order to identify details about which rules and regulations they should pay closer attention to. The ARRL has noted, through their open book test, many of the important rules, regulations, and procedures which insure that the newly licensed, or upgrading candidate will not have their license forfeited due to negligent applications, forms or submissions. As many of you already know the W6SFM is also a home club to many of the Past and

even present local Amateur Radio Club presidents such as, but not limited to Bob, N6PGQ, and Katy, KJ6YCP. By offering them the VE status they are also able to offer their services to their other clubs as well. This means that with Katy, KJ6YCP and Bill, KJ6YCO becoming VEs with our group, they need only have 1 other VE at their other local club to now begin doing testing for their other groups. So, the reach of the W6SFM's VE program could very well 'touch' and help other local clubs as well!

The FCC created the VEC system to provide initial licensing examination for prospective new hams and upgrade examination opportunities for those already licensed. FCC authorized VEC organizations oversee the work of their certified Volunteer Examiners (VEs) and serve as a liaison between the exam applicants and the FCC.

The VEC program has a long-standing tradition of serving the Amateur Radio community and the FCC with integrity and expertise. The VEC operate as a knowledgeable information source for a wide-range of licensing issues. VEs support HAMs around the country by offering exam opportunities in their local community's and helping exam candidates fulfill their Amateur Radio aspirations.

There is a total of only 14 VEC programs available in the United States of America. Included in that list are the ARRL and member Tom, W6JS's Golden Empire Amateur Radio Society (GEARS). Although most of the VEC groups are spread throughout the country 4 can be found in California alone. Only those 14 VEC programs can certify VEs to conduct Amateur Radio licenses exams and license upgrades. We would like to thank Tom and his group for honoring the SFM ARC by presenting us with the ability to become VEs under his groups authority.

Service and volunteerism are vital parts of our Amateur Radio culture. VEs give so generously of their time, energy and skill to our community. The SFM ARC, W6SFM hopes that you will embark on this rewarding journey and become a Volunteer Examiner with us! If for some reason you were not included in our first round of VEs presented with a badge, and you would like to become a VE with our group, please be sure to contact Mike, N6MQL at his club email address and let him know. EVERYONE in our group, so long as you are dedicated, can become a VE and help not only our group, but other groups with license examinations.

# 2018 Club Membership

With each year that passes the SFM ARC hopes that all of our members will continue their support with our club. In past years we have seen some slight drops, and even some increases in the new year's membership dues collections. Last year (2017) the club ended the calendar year with 68 total members (3 SK lifetime members).

**Members**

To visit an SFM ARC member's page, click on their Name & Call  
To e-mail a member, send your mail to <member's call@w6sfm.com

<a href="#">AA6DK Stan</a>	<a href="#">KG6ZI Dennis</a>	<a href="#">N8LA Lou</a>
<a href="#">AA6DT David</a>	<a href="#">KJ6CA Bob</a>	<a href="#">NA6D Ralph</a>
<a href="#">AI6U Doug</a>	<a href="#">KJ6VCO Bill</a>	<a href="#">NS3O Jennifer (SK)</a>
<a href="#">AI6U Chris</a>	<a href="#">KJ6VCP Katy</a>	<a href="#">W0UFC Tom</a>
<a href="#">K5EST Walter</a>	<a href="#">KK6GCR Josef</a>	<a href="#">W6HN Howard</a>
<a href="#">K5KV Benny</a>	<a href="#">KK6ESN Keith</a>	<a href="#">W6JS Tom</a>
<a href="#">K6CIM David</a>	<a href="#">KK6GMR Peter</a>	<a href="#">W6TJA John</a>
<a href="#">K6DQ Rob</a>	<a href="#">KM6BTD Dana</a>	<a href="#">W6KN Kevin</a>
<a href="#">K6KSG Richard</a>	<a href="#">KM6MLT Oleg</a>	<a href="#">W6PPP Walby</a>
<a href="#">K6LQ Mike</a>	<a href="#">KP4MD Carol</a>	<a href="#">W6VPW Tony</a>
<a href="#">K6SDW Eddy</a>	<a href="#">KR6AI Kevin</a>	<a href="#">WA6NEA Bob</a>
<a href="#">K7NDE Gene</a>	<a href="#">KZ6B Alan</a>	<a href="#">WB6RVR Norm (SK)</a>
<a href="#">K7SF Steve</a>	<a href="#">N6DLD Lou</a>	<a href="#">WB6UBK John</a>
<a href="#">K0JPI Jon</a>	<a href="#">N6IET Rick</a>	<a href="#">WG6CFS Charles</a>
<a href="#">KA9MDP Bob</a>	<a href="#">N6KIX Rob</a>	<a href="#">WR7RQ Bob</a>
<a href="#">KB6VSE Steve</a>	<a href="#">N6MQL Mike</a>	
<a href="#">KC6O Andrew</a>	<a href="#">N6PGQ Bob</a>	
<a href="#">KD6RM Phil</a>	<a href="#">N6UD Wes (SK)</a>	
<a href="#">KE8EVR Kal</a>	<a href="#">N6UG Bliton</a>	
<a href="#">KG6FJ Angie</a>	<a href="#">N6UOE Chuck</a>	

W6SFM Members Page

By February 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018 the club had a total of 57 members renewed. This is a 16% drop in membership renewal. This would be the largest in the club's 6-year history. It is speculated that with the overwhelming popularity of the Bug Roundup Event that many of those people who have not renewed their membership may have joined due to our Bug Roundup Event. With past years events we have noticed that participants operating in the November CQ BR have been quick to take advantage of our

prorated, new on-line membership application and payment system. Because the dues in November are prorated to only \$4.00 for the months covering November and December, participants may be using the club membership as a way to make a small donation to the club. Although we're happy to welcome anyone who chooses to join us, in these cases of donation, the club would prefer that operators use our donation button located on many of our on-line pages. This opposed to joining the group as a temporary member. Another reason that the club suspects we may have had some dropped members is due to the lack of checking email, or ignoring emails coming from the W6SFM club address with reminders. There are about 3 or 4 past years members that the club suspects will come back to the group once they realize they have been removed from our mailing list, lost their W6SFM email forwarding address, and been removed from the club Members Page on our website (as of Feb 1<sup>st</sup>). In an effort to maintain membership renewal the club officers will meet together in hopes of resolving this type of membership drop in the future. In the meantime, if you know someone who used to be a member of the SFM ARC and is no longer listed on our members page, we would ask that

you contact them by phone or email and remind them to rejoin our group. It is up to all of us to make sure we don't lose any of our valued members, and help to bring in new applicants who can also benefit from the many good things the SFM ARC has to offer. From our Bug Roundup event, On-air CW nets, In-person meetings, Club Contest events, Work with kids in the park, to our new VE program, the W6SFM has something to offer every Amateur Radio Operator.

## NAQP Contest (continued from front page)

on the 15-meter band from the beginning of the event starting at 10 AM local, until about 1:30 PM (apx. 3.5 hours)



Chris, AI6U with Mike N6MQL at the key

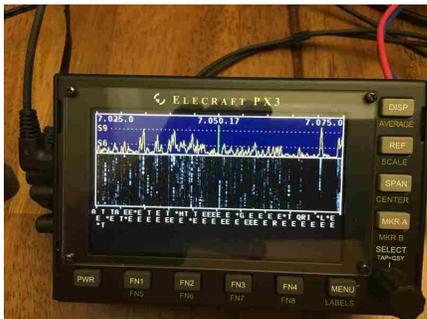
During that time period the club scored 66 contacts of our total 221 contacts in the contest. The club event offered a great way for members to get together and enjoy some fun and food. Coffee & Doughnuts were served in the morning followed by a Pizza lunch served around 1:30 PM. Snacks, soda and water were available all day until

## (NAQP Cont.)

the evening when the event ended at 10 PM local. For the most part the club kept on-the-air continuously with the exception of about 1 hour of which most was during the lunch time.

Antennas used for the event included an End Fed approximately 125' long wire good from 160 meters through 6 meters at 100 watts. Also available was David's newly set up Hex Beam directional antenna. The Hex Beam was used exclusively for the 20-meter band in the contest. For the first time ever, the club operated on the 160-meter band during an event. While doing so the club scored a very reasonable 7 contacts. All of which were within California, Utah and Nevada states.

The club was able to work 46 of the 50 United States including Hawaii, Alaska and many parts of Eastern and Western Canada. We also operated the country of Argentina on 20 meters as well.



Unlike in the weeks prior to the event, conditions seemed to be very good on the day of the contest. Of course, we also know that

the bands are always far more active when there are contests taking place on the air. The break down of the event results is as follows:

Band	CW	%
160	7	3
80	12	5
40	61	28
20	75	34
15	66	30
Total	221	100

Thank you to all the members who helped participate with us at David's QTH. For pictures of the event please be sure to visit the Photo Gallery under the Club's "Media, Clips & Pics" drop down menu on our website [www.w6sfm.com](http://www.w6sfm.com).

## CA QSO Party

The results of October 2017's California QSO party contest have finally been released. The W6SFM scored 17,640 points for the event with a confirmed 170 contacts made in total. W6SFM was placed 4<sup>th</sup> of all the Sacramento County stations that turned in their scores. In the past W6SFM has placed 2<sup>nd</sup> place in most years. However, keeping in mind that the 24-hour contest began at 9 AM and was ended by the club at approximately 6 PM, we did very well. In the past the club would activate the contest for the

full 24 hours. However, this was found to be difficult for members to offer during that time of the year. The club intends to continue its support and participation in the CAQP events in the future, offering up to 12 hours of on-air event work. Look for information & signup sheets for that event this coming October.

## Members Pages

A fun and useful benefit to being an SFM ARC member is your personal Members webpage. On this page, you can proudly display your bio and personal pictures to the public. We encourage our members to post news, photos and other information about themselves as well as their hobbies. Feel free to visit other member's pages found in the '[members'](#)' section of the W6SFM website for some examples. If you are interested in updating your own personal page, please contact [admin@w6sfm.com](mailto:admin@w6sfm.com) with your pictures and bio. Or, if you feel more comfortable with QRZ.com, you may have your QRZ.com page linked to your W6SFM members' page. This means that you can do all of your own editing and maintenance of your personal W6SFM web space. Those members who do not opt to have a webpage your name and call sign will be listed in the members section without a blue link button.

## Member Show and Tell



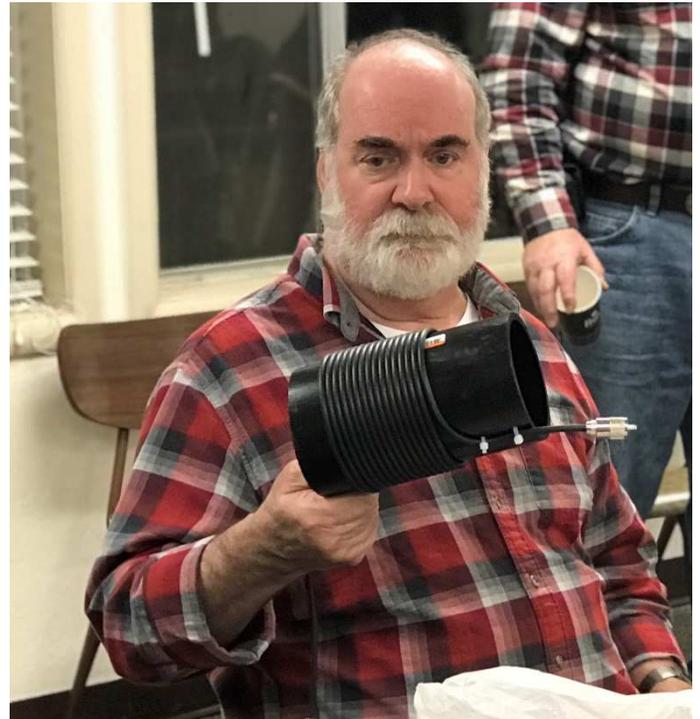
Member Angie, KG6FJF brought with her an old QSL card sent to her father Victor, K4NP circa 1973. This card from Venezuelan operator YV5TT has a very interesting cartoon drawing on the front of the card (seen to the left).

QSL. N° <u>1028.</u>	<i>Thank very much for this fine QSO. I hope we will repeat this contact very soon. Many 73 and good luck.</i> <i>Angie</i>	
Q R. A. ANGEL MELENDEZ SUAREZ YV5: TT 5YX. 312 - APARTADO POSTAL 80512 CARACAS 108 - VENEZUELA - TELF. 932014		
CONFIRMO QSO. CON <u>K4: NP</u>	SEÑOR: <u>Victor M. Woodward.</u>	
FECHA <u>14 Sep 73</u> HORA YV <u>1245</u>	DIRECCION: <u>R3-Box 180-B.</u>	
BANDA <u>15mils</u> AM-SSB- <u>CW</u>	<u>Riverview,</u>	
FREC <u>21.052</u> SEÑALES <u>579</u>	CIUDAD: <u>Florida</u>	
TRANSMISOR <u>32 SL: Collins</u>	PAIS: <u>U.S.A.</u>	
RECEPTOR <u>75 SA: Collins</u>		
ANTENA <u>TH6: DXX-</u>		
AGRADEZCO QSL AGRADECERE 73 s DX <i>Good Friday</i> 10f. OPERADOR <i>Salud - fuerza - union -</i>		

Member Rob, N6KIX displays his newly constructed Choke balun made from RG8 coax and a 4" piece of PVC pipe. This design is very closely constructed around the ARRL's suggestion in their antenna handbook for Amateurs. The importance of a choke balun of this size is to properly isolate the antenna from the feedline when operating on bands below 40 meters. Rob said that he estimates he has about 20' of coax wound



on this PVC pipe. Doing so is necessary in order to achieve an inductance of 50 to 100 uH. Doing so maintains a proper choking of extraneous RF energy that can



otherwise cause return currents on the feedline. Rob also reports that this choke balun has both lowered his noise level on his vertical antenna, while simultaneously increasing his radiation pattern of the antenna. Rob indicated that since he installed this on his Butternut HF6V vertical he has found it more useful than ever before, and he chooses to operate that antenna more often.



## W6SFM is an Affiliated club

The SFM ARC is an ARRL affiliated club. In order to continue this, we MUST have at least 51 percent of our members current with their ARRL membership. Without this W6SFM will no longer continue to receive the benefits we do from the ARRL. Benefits include the club's ARRL liability insurance policy. The club asks that you please **consider renewing, or joining the ARRL through our club.** To do this please use the [Join/Renew ARRL link](#) on the W6SFM.COM menu to fill out your application. As a benefit, the SFM ARC receives **\$2** for each membership renewal, and **\$15** for each NEW membership we submit! ARRL membership fees are \$49 per year. You can now pay your ARRL Dues on-line with our cart system. Or, be sure to bring your check made out to "**SFMARC**" to the next club meeting. Remember, early renewals are credited with an additional 12-month period, plus your remaining balance. So, feel free to get your renewal in early to avoid having it laps and losing out on your copy of QST Magazine.

## Update your Email

All members receive a W6SFM.COM email addresses. Each member has been assigned a club email address of "your call"@w6sfm.com. You do not need to sign up, or change any settings on your computer. E-mail sent to "your call"@w6sfm.com is forwarded to the address supplied to the club when you became a member. **It is very important If you plan to change your main email address PLEASE be sure to provide this new information to the club so we can update our Data Base.** Without this information, you will be unable to receive emails from the club, including this monthly newsletter.

## Club Merchandise

Club Merchandise was announced and distributed at the meeting to those who ordered within the last month. Mike N6MQL reminded the members the club still has stock on all new **T-Shirts** in most sizes. If you're interested in purchasing a new T-Shirt to replace your old, faded or stained shirt, please use the clubs NEW [Merchandise](#) order link on our website. Because T-Shirts are in-stock there is no delivery fee unless delivered to your home address. Mike also noted the club has very

nice **PERSONALIZED** hats and Coffee Mugs as well! Please keep in mind that ALL members receive a **20% discount** on our Club Shirts as we ask that members wear them to Club activities and events. The 20% discount is extended to both the member and their family. **The club asks that if you plan on attending an event that is held in public that you own and adorn your W6SFM club T-Shirt at those events. It is important that we look like an organized team to the general public. Events include ARRL Field Day, Kids Day in the Park and club or organized days out in the park as an example.**



*Pictured above: Some items for sale on the W6SFM Merchandise web page*

## Treasury Report

Currently our Wells Fargo account contains a total of **\$2,790.04**. The club's PayPal account is currently at **\$2,843.36** for a total of **\$5,633.40**. Our Last month's increase in funds are due to end of year Club Dues collected. Increases also reflect ARRL Renewal referrals and club merchandise sold through our online webstore. The club also received a \$20 donation from a member when paying their 2018 club dues.

## Next Month's Meeting

Our next SFM ARC in person meeting will be held at its normal time and location **March. 8<sup>th</sup>** (followed by our **April 5<sup>th</sup>** meeting). SFM ARC in-person Meetings are held in the Howard Crowley room upstairs at the Carmichael Presbyterian Church. Directions, including a Google Map are available at the bottom of the W6SFM.com homepage. At our **March** meeting, we will have a presentation by Phil, KD6RM on the Phased Vertical Array System. We will also discuss ARRL news and events. As always, we will have our Member show and tell portion. Members and visitors are asked to share their Ham Radio related items they find of interest. These are items that you've purchased or were given to you that you would like to share with others in the

group. Visitors are always welcome to join us at our meetings.

## On-Air Net Meeting

Each Tuesday of the week 8:00 PM on 3.545 MHz the SFM ARC enjoys getting on the air with CW for our weekly Nets. You do NOT need to be a member of the SFM ARC to check into our nets and we encourage you to invite a friend to join us as well. Although our nets usually run around 13 wpm code, we are all happy to accommodate those that are slower and need us to oblige. If you are unable to copy Morse Code or need some code practice, please feel free to visit our on-line LIVE streaming broadcast of both the Audio and a CW to Text decoding of the meeting. The "**LIVE FEED**" link can be found on our home page of our website. With our YouTube Live streaming system, you can watch the Live Feed on your Apple IOS or Android devices. You do not need to have a YouTube account to access the feed. However, you will to subscribe to our channel. Those visiting & viewing can chat with others watching on-line as well. This of course is not mandatory, but rather just a way of making everyone feel more involved in our on-air nets. If you like, you can "check-in" using the chat window and you will be included with our On-Air

Net log. Simply announce your call letters in the chat window.

## Tell A Friend

Do you know someone in need of a Ham Club to call home? Perhaps someone that wants to learn Morse Code, are interested in CW or already knows and uses it? The SFM ARC would love to be their new Club home. Our in-person meetings are held each **1st Thursday of the month at 7PM**. Please use the rear parking lot and entry for best access to the meeting. A map and directions can also be found on our website. We hope to see you at our next meeting!

## Thank You

If you enjoy this newsletter and would like to contribute to it, we ask that ALL members please send in interesting information, or stories they would like to share with the other members. If you would like to write a monthly (or periodic) news article we would welcome that as well. Please be sure to contact [admin@w6sfm.com](mailto:admin@w6sfm.com) with your ideas! Until our next newsletter, I thank you all very much for being a continued member of the SFM ARC, without you this club could not exist.

