

Palmetto Amateur Radio Club - February 2026 Member Meeting

Zoom meeting started at 19:05 on 2/24/26

Board Members in Attendance: David Pomerantz (President), Nemury Valladares (Vice President), Jim Schwantes (Treasurer) and Mike Sam (Repeater Trustee)

Quick recap

The Palmetto Amateur Radio Club held their monthly general meeting to discuss club activities and updates. The meeting began with a repeater report from Mike, who shared details about the VHF repeater's current status and upcoming maintenance plans. Jim presented the financial report, noting that the club has 33 dues-paying members and is working towards a goal of 50 active members. The club discussed upcoming park events, including plans to visit Quiet Waters Park on March 21st. David shared updates on the website and minutes documentation process. The group also discussed recent activities, including Jim's successful satellite tracking project and plans to expand the website's content with new presentations. The conversation ended with a brief discussion about various radio equipment and technology.

Battery Box Research Discussion

Members briefly discussed battery boxes, with Mike sharing that he was researching pre-wired options that could be more cost-effective, mentioning prices around \$70-90. The goal is to create a simple, cost-effective battery box model that can be offered for sale to our members.

Radio Equipment and Repeater Updates

Mike and Nemury planned to visit the repeater site on March 9th to secure a loose UHF monopole antenna bracket. They also discussed installing a Meshtastic device to test its performance at the high elevation site. Mike provided an update on the repeater's current status and recent improvements, including the installation of a copper ground bar and a battery backup system. The group agreed to continue experimenting with Meshtastic devices and potentially present the results to club members.

Membership and Financial Planning Updates

The meeting covered financial updates, membership status, and plans for improving both. Jim reported a current balance of \$703.89 and highlighted the need for 50 active members to sustain operations, with 33 members currently paying dues. He proposed implementing

an automated annual dues reminder system and suggested aligning the membership year with January to December for better financial planning. Mike mentioned plans to upgrade the repeater site equipment with a donated cabinet and mesh panels, which will require assistance for transport. David agreed to follow up on a \$24 expense discrepancy. The board discussed strategies to increase membership and improve communication, with Jim taking a proactive role in membership initiatives for the month.

Website Hosting and Communication Platforms

The group discussed website hosting and functionality, revealing that their site is hosted for free by Jeff Dale of Countrywifi CANADA, who also handles other clubs' websites. Palmetto inquired about storage space and was advised to check cPanel for details, while the discussion explored the pros and cons of Groups.I/O versus MailChimp for member communications, with the consensus being that both platforms have value - Groups.I/O for daily updates and MailChimp for important announcements. The website management team, consisting of David and Jim, was praised for their work, particularly their homepage updates, with David mentioning an upcoming photo feature.

Website Content

David discussed plans to refresh content on the website and streamline posting across different platforms, including Groups.I/O and MailChimp, to better engage members. He also mentioned exploring new content, such as information on FT2, and the need for a messaging platform to facilitate member discussions. David noted that testing sessions were postponed due to Hamcation attendance but planned to organize one in early March. Participants shared experiences from the Hamcation event, including meeting Mike K8MRD and Tony's RV setup. The group discussed the importance of building a battery box for various uses, and Mike mentioned plans to add more presentations to the website, including one on Meshtastic, an emerging technology in amateur radio. Nemury will post a groups.io article about receiving the Metric order this week and share information about MeshCore. David will upload the board minutes once they are finalized and will sign them, with Nemury offering to assist with the electronic signature process.

Park Hoppers Planning Discussion

The group discussed their experiences at Hamcation, noting high prices for food and water. They agreed to visit Quiet Waters Park on March 21st for the next PARC Hopper. The group decided to add Olita Park to their schedule after Markham Park, with Nemury and others expressing enthusiasm for the location. They also considered visiting Delray Park in the future. The group discussed various parks for future events, including Marshall

Loxahatchee Park, Holiday Park, and Heritage Park, with emphasis on finding locations with adequate shade and facilities.

Project Updates

Jim provided an update on his satellite project, which successfully tracked two satellites at the last park gathering, and he plans to create a document for others interested in satellite tracking.

Digital Hotspots and QSO Party

The group discussed various digital hotspots, with Ricky sharing his experience using an older model that still works well. Mike explained the basics of Raspberry Pi hotspots, which allow users to connect to digital modes like DMR, YSF, and P25 using a smartphone or HT. The conversation also covered the advantages of All-Star nodes for analog radio users.

Finally, an announcement was made by Grumme about an upcoming Florida QSO Party and picnic on April 26th at Tree Top Park, which will be free for children under 18.

Meeting ended at 21:08