



Hangar News

March 2026

Newsletter of the First Weedwacker Aero Squadron

AMA Charter #1651

First Weedwacker Aero Squadron

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*AMA Introductory Pilot Program Instructors:

Scott Graupmann, Glenn Merritt, Jeff Coskey, Butch

Weiser, Larry Bagalini and Keith Miller

HANGAR NEWS is printed for the members of the FIRST WEED WACKER AERO SQUADRON and its contents do not necessarily reflect the policies of the club. Editorial deadline is the 15th of each month.

Articles, news items and classified ads should be sent to news.weedwackers@gmail.com.

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CLUB FIELD: Cactus Park (East), Ashwood St. (1/4-mile N-E of El Capitan High School) in Lakeside, CA. Please be sure the last flyer to leave locks the pin box and the gate.

Upcoming Events

Swap Meet Saturday March 14th

Fire Drill and Extinguisher Training Saturday Apr 4th after regular meeting.

Fun Fly Saturday Apr 25th.

Next Meeting:

Saturday March 7th 2026 9:00 am at our Ron Smith Memorial Flying Field.

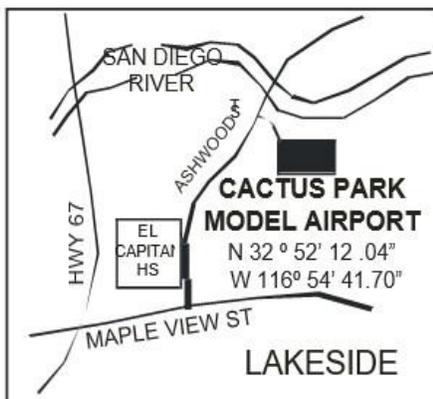
Headlines

Five-Day Rain Restriction Lifted

See details inside.

Daisy Chain Locks Members are reminded that the locks on all gates must be in a daisy chain in order to allow access to both county personnel and club members.

Pylon Race Results are in! Nine pilots participated, plus a heat of AeroScouts.



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Headline News

Five-day Rain restrictions lifted. While the February meeting minutes accurately reflect the discussion with respect to the East Gate Rules (as was the case at the time of the Feb meeting), the County's impromptu ruling restricting vehicular access to the field on and for five days follow rain was subsequently lifted on Friday Feb 13th thanks to Richard Brown elevating the issue to the County Supervisor.

Daisy Chain, defined. Lester Moore posted a very clear depiction of a daisy chained lock system at the front gate. All of our gate locks (east, north at the dirt road, main gate, and personnel access up near the plateau) must daisy-chain with the associated County lock.



Pylon Racing Results, Feb 21st

With nine pilots (including three guests from the SEFSD), it was a well-attended event. Thanks to Glen for hosting, and John Knowles and Richard Brown for calling the cuts.

Standings:

Bronze Jeff Coskey
Silver Jeremy Miller
Gold Alex Sutton (SEFSD)

A demonstration 20-lap heat was held with three AeroScouts. The AeroScout may work out to be an option for continued class racing if the T28's fall out of the market. The sound of three screaming AeroScouts is something to experience!

Gold Winner - Alex Sutton (SEFSD)
Silver Winner - Corey Nellis (SEFSD)
Bronze Winner - Jeff Coskey

A huge library of pictures was captured, edited and shared by SEFSD's Frank Sutton. He'd snapped over 700 photos during the morning and dedicated many hours of his time to filter them out for sharing. Our Webmaster will be posting them soon, if not already.

Meeting Minutes 07 Feb 2026

Mark Gray

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM at the field. Club officers present were the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and the Secretary. A total of 27 club members were present. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of minutes: Keith Miller moved the minutes of the January 2026 meeting (banquet) be approved as submitted. Seconded by Vernon Gilmore. The motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Starting Balance: \$11,739.80 November 30th, 2025
Income: \$8,316.35
Expenses: \$4,887.16
Ending Balance: **\$15,168.99** January 31st, 2026

- Balance January 31st, 2025: \$19,037.90
- 2026 Banquet
 - Attendance: 75
 - Banquet Revenue: Paid 73 @ 25.00 = 1,825.00
 - Banquet Costs: 1,976.34
 - Meal Net:, 26.89/person **151.34**
 - Women's Prizes: 255.00
 - Trophies Cost: 384.58
 - Actual Raffle Cost: 1,240.00
 - Raffle Sales: 855.00
 - Raffle Net: 385.00
 - Net Cost to Treasury **1,175.92**

Vernon Gilmore moved the treasurer's report be approved as submitted. Seconded by Frank Gagliardi. The motion was approved.

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General Notes:

- The 2026 Banquet was a lot of fun and a very enjoyable event. We started at 4:00 PM and had everything cleaned up by about 6:30 PM.
- No new members or guests are present today.
- Everyone is reminded to follow the rules and wear your badge whenever you are at the field. Badges are mandatory when you fly.
- Ron got 6 (1 year old) fire extinguishers that are available to anyone who would like one. They are in good shape, just need to be shaken once or twice.
- The gate must stay locked at all times, when we're present and when we're not. Be sure to daisy chain it according to the diagram on the gate. The brass lock is the County's lock. It must be daisy chained in so they can access the field at their discretion.
- Rain is possible next week. East gate rules will apply.
- Use extreme caution when flying over the vehicles that are parked near the East gate. AMA regulations strictly forbid flying over vehicles with people inside. Park on the North end of the pump house.
- Thank you to Butch for providing a wagon that can be used for field equipment when using the East gate to access the field on foot.

Field Maintenance:

- Richard and Dick continue mowing efforts to keep the field clean and well groomed.

Upcoming Events:

- Pylon Races are calendared for 2/21/2026.
 - The plan is to race 4 times this year, every 3 months if there is sufficient interest.
 - A straw poll indicated that the majority of club members present favor having pylon races continue as planned.
 - The [FMS 800mm] T-28 has limited stock and is out of production at this time. The Aero Scout would make a perfect stock class with no modifications. Buy a 2200 mAh battery and fly as is.
 - It was agreed to integrate the Aero Scout into the races this month and May to assess how it does.
- Ron will organize a fire drill for the club in April.

Old Business: None

Safety Officer Report: None this month.

Rule review: Wear your badge at the field.

New Business:

- Ron has been dealing with the County for months now over our access to the field.

- Ron asked that the gate be left open when we're present as it has been for the past 38 years. Erin from the County wanted it locked. Ron and Erin compromised and agreed it would just remain closed, not locked. Two weeks later Erin contacted Ron and said the gate had to be locked at all times (the decision came from above Erin). It seems the County was issued a warning after the gate was found unlocked at some point (apparently club members were at the field at the time of the EPA inspection which is why the gate was unlocked). Bottom line – The gate must remain locked at all times, even when club members are present.
- The County is still insisting that there can be no access to the field for 5 days after a rain event. Ron continues to dialogue with them on this topic. *[Editor's note: This restriction was lifted after the minutes were recorded.]*
- The sink hole topic was brought to the table with a variety of comments. Bottom line: Sink holes are not caused by club vehicles, rather they are caused by subterranean water; it is the County's issue to manage. The club should not be offering anything related to the sink holes that may or may not form on the property.
- Richard Brown shared his communication with the County and how he is working to find the right person to understand our situation and respond appropriately. He had a positive conversation with Jessica Kirtland *[Department of County Land Agreements]* this past week. She seems to understand and agree with our position. The focus is on getting the 5-day rain event rule rescinded. We will wait to hear back from her before taking a different course of action.
- Glenn Merritt spoke at length regarding the recent letter he sent to the club *[Editor's note: Published in the February Hangar News]*, elaborating his concerns that the County is "setting us up for failure" by imposing rules (gate lock, 5 day rain event) that they can easily use against us— his proposal is that "we prepare ourselves to fight back, to say No, or to at least find out if we have the legal right to say No". We have the right to be here under the conditions of our lease which has just been renewed for 5 years.
- A series of 3 motions were made by Glenn to take proactive measures relative to the County's actions against the club:
 - Motion #1 – Contact the AMA for guidance and as a possible resource; open a file with the AMA. Seconded by Frank Gagliardi. The motion was approved. Frank will contact up to 3 AMA members that he knows well to see where we go. Greg Stone, Jerry Neuberger, & Rich Hanson. The goal is to have a baseline of information by the March meeting.
 - Motion #2 – For the club to obtain and install at least 1 camera that is pointed down the runway, capable of taking a photo every 15 minutes. Seconded by Keith Miller. The motion was approved. The County may do

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it. We believe we should do it separately as well. Butch will buy it back from the club if it turns out not to be what we want/need.

- Motion #3 – To create a 3-member committee to proactively address the issues as they present themselves; to provide a resource asset for the board. Seconded by Keith Miller. The motion was approved. Butch Weiser, Glen Merritt & Frank Gagliardi were recommended and all three agreed to serve in this capacity.
- There was some further discussion about our responsibilities relative to the lease. Richard Brown noted the lease states that we are responsible for all weed control. Ron will take the action to clarify the boundaries we are required to maintain.
- Glen Merritt floated an idea to the club – make our club larger by making every club member in SD an associate member. Keith Miller’s input is that we need not really have all local AMA members join or do anything by the way of an application or dues. Rather, simply consider all San Diego AMA members as associate members, period, free to visit and fly at any time, which they already are.
- Keith Miller will solicit a request for qualified legal counsel or any support for the committee in the next newsletter.
- Keith Miller moved that the lease be added to the website. John Loerke seconded. The motion was approved. *[Editor’s note: The lease is now available on the club web site. Thanks Vernon.]*

Good of the Order:

- Butch noted he was a little late to the meeting because he encountered two people at the gate that wanted to come in and check the club out but decided not to since the gate would be locked and they would not be able to go right back out.

Keith Miller moved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Feb 2026 President’s Message

Greetings all!

At the February meeting a motion was made and seconded to form a committee to assist the Board to help resolve field issues. I left a message with the AMA Club Liaison and am waiting for a response so that we can discuss eliminating the requirement to lock the gate.

Rich Brown contacted the County Supervisor for help regarding the five-day no-fly restriction after rain.

In less than a week we were notified that Weedwackers is now exempt from this directive. Next time you see Rich, say thanks!

Butch Weiser bought a game camera to monitor the field and gate. It is state of the art! We plan to have it installed soon. In the meantime, close and lock the gate.

The next meeting will be on Saturday, 7 March 2026 at 0900.

Please take the time to read your emails. The emails provide updates regarding access to the field and any other pertinent information that you need.

As always, if you have any questions or anything to report, feel free to call me.

Ron
(619) 988-7667

Editor’s Corner

Keith Miller

Solicitation for Legal Expertise within the Club. I took action to make a call-out to you, the membership, for points of contact who are well suited to assist or guide the club in matters that might lead to legal representation of the Club regarding the County’s impromptu and unsubstantiated restrictions. If you are or know of someone who is willing to hear our cause, hopefully pro bono, let the Board and the Committee know. At the time of this writing, the five-day rain restriction is revoked and not currently an issue. However, the requirement to lock the gate while we’re present and policing the site is still an issue.

New wind sock, silhouette upkeep. Richard, with help from Ron and Keith, hung a new windsock and put a fresh coat of paint on the profile silhouette on the flag pole at our eastern flight boundary. The new paint being white doesn’t “pop” like Richard had planned. Ron is working on a bright orange plexiglass piece to hang there as well as a 3’ size reference.

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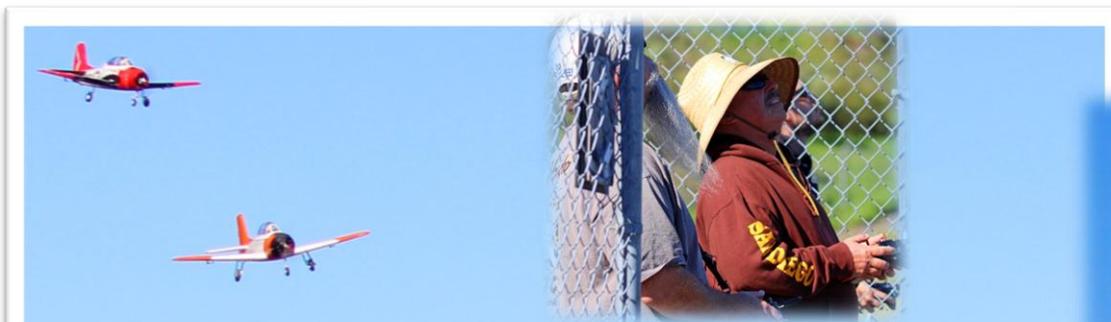
Kenny proudly shows off his first ARF build. Jeramy conducted the maiden prior to handing off the transmitter. Congrats, Kenny!



Racing at Weedwackers



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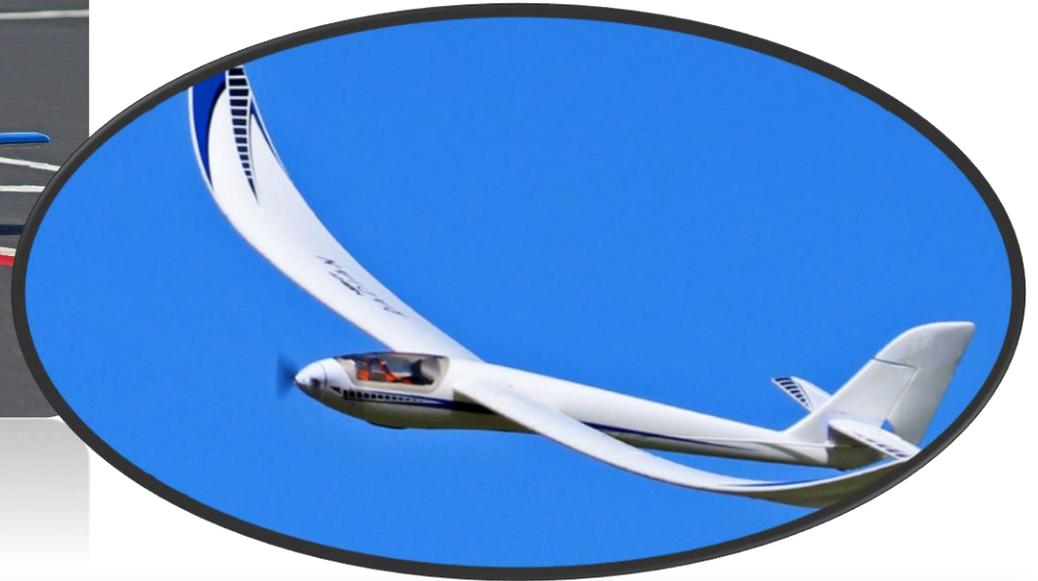
Racing at Weedwackers



Open Flying



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