



Hangar News

October 2026

Newsletter of the First Weedwacker Aero Squadron

AMA Charter #1651

First Weedwacker Aero Squadron

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Sec: Mark Gray 619-993-6548

Treas: Richard Brown 619-887-7273

15198 Picturesque Point

El Cajon, CA 92021

Field Marshals:

Vernon Gilmore, Ron Keith, Butch Weiser, Steve Shepersky, Dick Milhausen, Gary Rold, Richard Brown, Keith Miller

Fun Fly Chairman Keith Miller

Race Chairman David Roche

Safety Officer Ron Keith

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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 22nd of each month.

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

Articles originally published in this newsletter may be reprinted and published by modelers and club newsletters. We ask that credit to the author and this newsletter be acknowledged in the reprint. We will do the same.

CLUB FIELD: Cactus Park (East), 10295 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

Next Meeting:

Saturday Oct 3rd 2026 9:00 am at our Ron Smith Memorial Flying.

Toys for Tots Drive / Swap Meet, Sat Oct 17th

Veterans' Day Fly-In, Sat Nov 14th

Pylon Races, Sat Nov 21st

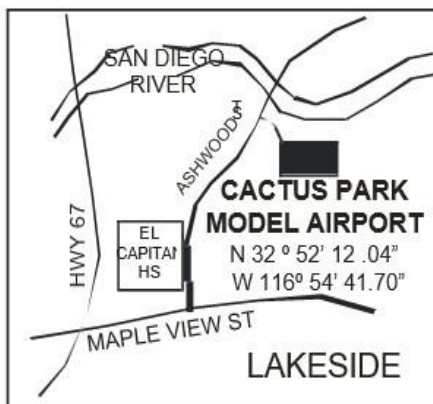


Headlines

Nominations for the November Club Officer Election are OPEN.

- Ron is stepping down as President, and will run for Vice President.
- Jeff is running for President.
- Lyle Black is nominated (accepted) for the Secretary seat. Mark will be dedicating his time in a leadership position at his church.
- Richard will run to continue as Treasurer.
- Ron will run to continue as Safety Officer.
- As is always the case, nominations will remain open through the November meeting at which time elections take place.

Read Ron's President's Message inside for important information about the absolute restriction of any type of firearms, air guns, etc. (anything launching a projectile).



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Meeting Minutes 05 Sep 2026

Mark Gray

Recorded Summary:

Safety, field rules, and operations

- Dry conditions: bring fire extinguisher; if smoke call 911; county will respond quickly.
- Snakes: 4 found during trimming; if bit, photograph the snake for ID; no tourniquet or wound-sucking.
- Rule 6: running/fuel models 9AM-sunset; electrics/gliders 7AM-sunset. Quiet helicopter flying permitted near runway 8AM to 9AM.
- Pit box must be open before flying.
- Airspace boundary reminders- Residents report aircraft over property; keep aircraft on correct side of windsock and avoid overflight of neighbor fields.
- Helicopter-specific areas: Hover testing at Station H between runway and cones; don't enter normal flight pattern. Normal/aerobatic flying from stations 1-5 as per all other aircraft.

Helipad, gates, and maintenance

- Helipad boards failing; plan rebuild using 2x10s on raised 4x4s; volunteers requested by Ron Keith. Look for an email with details and the schedule.
- Front and east gate locks failing; prior lock-lube worked; gate may be left open and monitored ONLY when Ron is present.
- East-field caretaker to be paid from estate sale income; payment scheduled today; club agreed to spend \$200 to pay Trent.

Action Items

- Ron Keith: Buy helipad materials (2x10s, 4x4s) - No date.
- Ron Keith: Email helipad work-party date - No date.
- Ron Keith: Collect \$5 seller fee at swap meet - 17 Oct (starts 7:00 AM).
- Butch Weiser: Lube front gate lock – Today.
- Keith Miller: Will provide club email coverage while Mark Gray is out of town, 9/8 to 9/21.
- Board: Start nominations for November elections – Need to publish nominees in the October newsletter.

Formal Minutes:

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM at the field. Club officers present were the President, Vice President, Secretary, & Newsletter Editor. A total of 15 club members were present. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of minutes: Keith Miller moved the minutes of the August 1st, 2026 meeting be approved as submitted. Seconded by Vernon Gilmore. The motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Starting Balance: \$14,085.66 August 1st, 2026
Income: \$1,111.50
Expenses: \$1,097.23
Ending Balance: **\$14,099.93** August 31st, 2026

- Balance August 31st, 2025: \$12,711.71
August 22nd Fly-in/AMA National Model Aviation Day
32 paid: \$160
Food cost: \$248.07
Net food cost: **\$88.07**
Raffle income: \$340.00
Raffle cost: \$452.75
Raffle net cost: **\$112.75**
Net cost to club **\$200.82**
 - Simpson estate sale income \$531.00 to date; five or six more donated planes (incl. apprentice); will be offered at swap meet or to club.

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

General Notes:

- John Campbell was introduced as a new member. Welcome John!
- Keith Miller moved to approve a \$200 expense to pay for weed abatement services to Trent (coordinated by Art Flores). Seconded by Butch Weiser. The motion was approved.

Field Maintenance:

- Upcoming work party to repair/restore the heli pad. Ron asked for volunteers. Look for an email notification.

Upcoming Events:

- Swap meet on 10/17/2026.

Old Business:

- None

Safety Officer Report:

- None

Rule review: Rule 6

- Running or flying engine-powered models is permitted from 9:00AM to sunset. Electrics and gliders are permitted from 7:00AM to sunset. Quiet helicopter flying is allowed in the vicinity of the runway from 8:00AM to 9:00AM. Turbine, pulse jet and rocket powered models are not permitted.

New Business:

- Nominations for 2027 officers are due and are to be published in the October newsletter.
- Keith Miller will sub for Mark Gray for club emails that need to be sent out between 9/8 and 9/21 while he is out of town.

Good of the Order:

- None

Jeff Coskey moved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 AM.

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September 2026 President's Message

Ron Keith

Hello everyone –

It's time for Board member nominations. Jeff Coskey is running for President, Mark Gray is stepping down from Secretary, so Lyle Black has been nominated for that position. I am running for Vice President. Rich Brown will remain as the club Treasurer. *[Editor's note: Ron will also run to hold his seat as Safety Officer.]*

I have been President for four years and feel I have helped the Club with problems we faced. Big changes with County have made it trying at times but I still think we are flying on the best field in San Diego. I do not agree with some of their changes. I tried to compromise and gave suggestions that would work for both Weedwackers and County.

County Park Ordinance 41.117 states that no guns, BB rifles, air guns, bow & arrow, cross bow, paint ball guns, slingshots, pea shooters, or rock throwing is allowed in the County parks. If law enforcement gets involved, the end result will not be good. If a \$100,000 horse has a pellet wound, we could be shut down. If we are seen walking around the field with a gun, we will be shut down.

I have no choice if you bring a weapon to the field, I will ask you to leave. If you have one in your vehicle, leave it there. This is another thing we had to deal with that just came up. This will be strictly enforced.

County would love to shut us down! Here are some of the valid reasons:

- Gate left unlocked - County can and will close us down if they find the gate unlocked
- Driving on cap
- Fire
- Guns - we would be toast
- Flying over the polo field could prompt someone to notify County

Please be careful. If you're in doubt about something – **DON'T DO IT!** Call me and ask!

I'm stepping down from President, but I would appreciate your vote for Vice President. I will still have my phone number listed – feel free to call me. Thank you!

The next meeting will be held on Saturday, 3 October 0900.

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

Ron

(619) 988-7667

Editor's Corner

Keith Miller

Thanks to our Club Officers and Art Flores for their coordinated effort to clear much of the tall dry growth on the property to our east. This was done with permission from the land owner and was an excellent strategy to mitigate potato fires should one of our electrics go down in that area.

Workshop Hacks

Taper Nylon Bolts: Use a standard handheld pencil sharpener to put a slight taper on the ends of stubborn nylon wing bolts, making it much easier to align and thread them into blind nuts.



Balance Plastic Propellers: Instead of shaving plastic off the heavy blade of a propeller, spray a light mist of clear spray paint onto the lighter blade to bring it into perfect balance. A small piece of Scotch tape works as well.



Magnetic Cleanup: Keep a refrigerator magnet on your workbench to quickly sweep up spilled pins, small screws, and tiny washers from the floor or table.



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A Facebook story worthy of sharing: This news comes out of Katy, TX (near Houston), Sept 16, 2026.

This story rings true when considering we've had at least two very recent and significant model searching efforts well up into the hills south of our flightline.

In one scenario just in the past week, while two members did go out together, several cell phone check-ins with members in the pits failed due to poor cell coverage between three different phones.

Here's the story, coming out of the [RC Roundtable Podcast](#), posted by "Lee".

"My friends, it has been a rough day and I'd like to share my grief and thoughts with you. I hope you take a moment to read this message and consider it the next time you enjoy this wonderful hobby of ours.

Today, our club lost a fine man, Ron Nowak. He was a past club president and a true modeler. He had a passion for this hobby and he loved flying at our club. He will be dearly missed.

Sadly, his death happened at our flying site. His model airplane crashed into dense woods north of our field. He, along with two other members, went out to search for it. They split up but kept in constant vocal communications. Eventually, the two other members located the crashed airplane. When they announced they were heading back to the pits, Ron responded he was on his way but did not exit the wooded area.

Other club members at the field QUICKLY went back into the woods to look for him. Police were immediately called and a search team was out until 2am looking for him last night. This morning, several more agencies came out to help in the search and eventually found his body (via drone) in an area much further north than anyone was looking. We are not sure if he got lost, suffered heat stroke, got disoriented, or had a heart attack. However, he clearly walked AWAY from the flying site instead of toward it.

What went wrong? Who is to blame? Why take a risk on a model airplane? Why did it take so long? What could we have done? All these questions run through your mind while you sit with the family, search teams, and your fellow club members hoping/praying Ron would be found alive.

I've been upset since I heard the news last night and throughout the day. I'd like to pass on a few thoughts I hope you consider during your next flying day:

- No model recovery is worth your life.
- Never go out alone looking for your missing aircraft.
- Have a proper recovery plan with the necessary tools.
- Carry a smartphone on you, especially if you are leaving the pits/runway to search for your plane.
- Tell people where you are going. Communicate.

- Stay hydrated. Wear sunscreen.
- If you are older than 50, don't pretend you're 20-30.
- If you are older than 70, don't take the risks - period.
- Heat stroke is a serious threat when temps are over 90°.

We all knew Ron had been in & out of that wooded area many times before - it wasn't new to him. However, his age (74), health, and the high temps (over 95) were major factors in this horrible incident. In the end, he probably should have stayed in the pits.

Today also brought up memories of another club member we lost at our field - Jay Maguire. Jay was an incredibly talented builder and loved WWI aircraft. Several years ago, he was out flying during high temps, suffered heat stroke, went home not feeling well, and passed away within an hour. I think about him often, especially during these extreme temps here in Texas. It is not worth the risk folks.

Cherish and enjoy this hobby and its members. Pray for Ron, his family, his close friends, and our club.

Let's be safe out there. -Lee"

Crash Kit and Member Response

The Safety Officer and Board have published guidance and training over many years to encourage the use of our Crash Kit.

The Crash Kit is a backpack in our pin box that contains a fire extinguisher, shovel, leather gloves, and a trash bag. Should an electric model go down in the brush, the pilot and at least ONE member need to go to the scene (with cell phones).

In the past eight months, at least on Saturdays, I've seen only ONE of our members grab the crash kit. Not to say that others haven't, but I've not seen it.

In the most recent significant event well up into the hillside, only one member, Jeramy Miller, followed this guidance. He is routinely responsive in this manner, and I commend him. He has shouldered the kit at least five times this year. I really wish we'd see more safety-conscious members follow his example. BZ, Jeramy!

Photos of the Month



R/C Model SWAP MEET Toys for Tots Drive

Sat. Oct 17th, 2026
(Rain date Sat Oct. 24th)



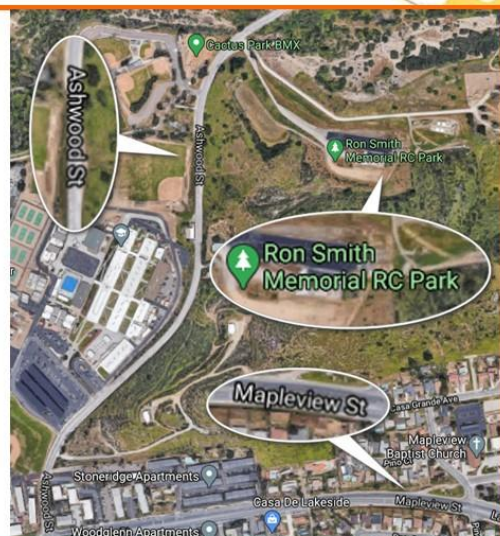
**Site: Ron Smith Memorial Field
(SD County Cactus Park, Lakeside)**

Hours: 7:00 am – 11:00 am
\$5 Seller's Fee
Buyers Free

Information:

Buyers and sellers are encouraged to bring an unwrapped gift appropriate for boys and/or girls from ages 6 to 16 valued at \$10 or more. Cash gifts will also be accepted. Seller fees are waived with a gift.

Event Coordinator: Ron Keith (619) 988-7667
10295 Ashwood Street
Lakeside CA
1/4 mile N-E of El Capitan High School in Lakeside
N 32° 52' 12.04", W 116° 54' 41.70"



Photos of the Month

Veteran's Day



Fly-In

BBQ and Pot Luck

Saturday, Nov 14th, 2026



Events include:
Open Scale Presentation and Flying
Awards for:
Best Sport/Civilian
Best Military
Judges' Choice
Best Flight

Schedule:
8:00-9:00 AM Check in
9:00 AM—1:00 PM Flying
11:00 (approx.) - LUNCH
NO Landing Fee
\$5 for Lunch—Pay when you pick up your plate.
Toys for Tots drive continues.



Event Coordinator
Ron Keith (619) 988-7667

www.weedwackers.org