



SIERA BEACON

News for the SIERA Membership, Carson Valley, NV

March 2018



New Pony Express Coordinator

Tom Tabacco KE7NCJ is now organizing the Pony Express Re-Ride radio support. Most of the local base stations are filled, but we'll need HAMs to follow the riders or set up relay stations on mountain tops. So, if you want to be a part of one of the most fun and adventurous events SIERA covers, contact Tom by phone or email:

smokey@pyramid.net

775-246-729 or 775-443-5523

The next meeting will be held March 3rd at 1 p.m. in the United Methodist Church, 1375 Centerville Ln., Gardnerville, NV. See below for presentation details.

How Solar Weather Influences HF Communications

What is all this talk about the solar cycle? Why should HAMs care about things that would normally only interest astronomers and astrophysicists? If this sounds like a strange topic to be discussing, you are probably right. In our March meeting, Dave DeAngelis K1SCN will once again step up to show us how to use the data and tools that are available to enhance your enjoyment of amateur radio.



Coming Up Soon

QSO Parties and Contests in March and April:

March 4-5 **ARRL DX Phone:** <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

March 24-25 **CQ WW WPX:** <http://www.cqwpw.com/rules.htm>

April 14 New Hams On The Air (with Subrina KI7OAL) More on this in the April Beacon.

April 15 ARRL Rookie Round up: <http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup>

The Moving Wall, the miniature version of the Vietnam Memorial Wall, will be visiting Carson Valley in May at Bentley Heritage Park. Jim Marshall is coordinating a special event so that SIERA can participate. More information to come in the Beacon.

SNARS NevCon is coming to Boomtown July 20-22. J.D. Fowler AD7CD is organizing a booth to represent SIERA at this annual event. Stay tuned to the Beacon for further information. Or, you can contact J.D. at: jdad7cd@gmail.com or 775-410-1677.

Ten Aspiring HAMs Attend Technician's Class

Jeff Cauhape's opening class at Western Nevada College attracted ten students wanting to earn their Technician's license. Most of the students are either first responders or people who like to recreate in the backcountry. Mike Whitten, KI7NIP, brought his sixteen-year-old daughter so she could earn her ticket. As students entered the classroom, Jeff had a video about HAM response during the Loma Prieta Earthquake. A link to the video is listed on Jeff's website: www.k7bcv-radio.tech.

SIERA/BARC Videos about EMCOM

The Bishop Amateur Radio Club, BARC, Facebook page has been linking videos about HAMs helping during Hawaii's recent nuclear alert scare. Rather than being a debacle, the incident was a good test of how to prepare for such an event. You can find these videos shared on the SIERA Facebook page. Also check out Jeff's website: www.k7bcv-radio.tech for more videos, news reports, and articles about amateur radio.

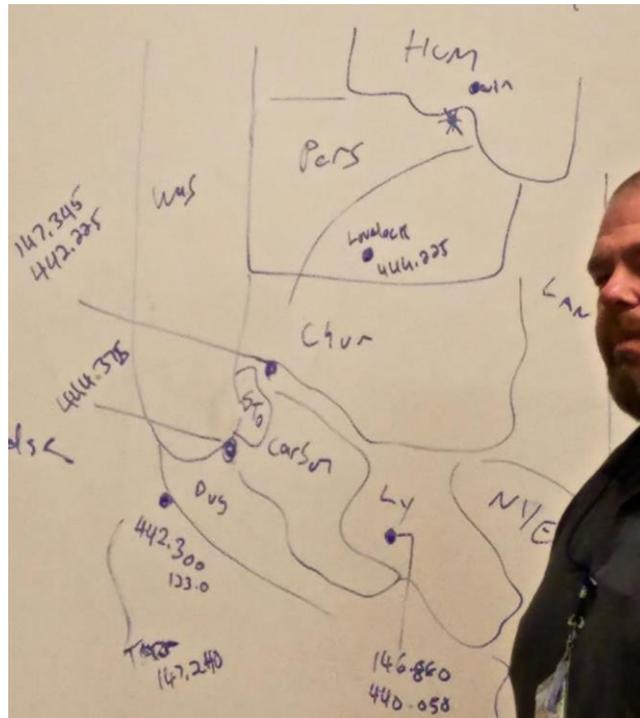


News from DCART

Activity Report for 2018 January Alpine/Douglas Comment

In addition to nets and regular meeting, members spent much time on packet operations and discovery, antennas, 911 Center radio repair, and personal equipment repair. Members are working on the SIERA emergency radio trailer, available to DCART. Sheila registered both Alpine and Douglas Counties for our organization numbers for ARRL ARES.

At our February meeting, John Abrodt, KD7NHC, reported a Search and Rescue exercise in the backcountry, using a linked system of repeaters owned by CARS President, Jeff Brown, K5BLS. Coverage reaches as far eastward as Winnemucca and westward to Lake Tahoe. It also accommodates digital and analog users. For clearer information about the frequencies, etc., (graphically



shown here) check out the CARS website, right-hand column: <http://nvcars.org/>. CARS is also raffling three YASEU radios that will work very well with this system for \$20 per ticket.

HELP WANTED: Our SIERA net needs more net control operators. Being a Net Control operator is a good opportunity to become familiar with our members and their calls and good practice for emergency operations. Contact Sheila, KA7AJQ, at smclfc@gmail.com

FROM ARES: Amateur Radio Emergency Service Transitioning to New Online Reporting System

<http://www.arrl.org/news/amateur-radio-emergency-service-transitioning-to-new-online-reporting-system>

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) will phase out the traditional ARES report forms later this year in favor of an online system called ARES Connect, a volunteer management, communications, and reporting system. The new system will allow information to be logged by ARES members and managed through the Field Organization. The advent of ARES Connect was among other highlights in “The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) 2017 Annual Report,” released this week.

“ARES Connect is a volunteer management system that covers event signup, reporting, and roster management,” ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U, said. “It does not change how ARES operates when serving a partner entity; it is simply a system that will make managing volunteers and events easier.” Beta testing of ARES Connect will begin in March. ARES made changes to its report forms last year to make it easier to process information at ARRL Headquarters and to standardize the format for all forms. ARES Monthly Reports have been posted to the ARRL website, providing regular information on Amateur Radio public service communication activity, the report noted.



TECH PROJECT by Greg Moore KG7DMI

Field computer with dual monitors



A while back I decided to hard wire my camper for a power source for my laptop. Converting 12v DC to 120v AC and then back to 18v DC is inefficient and just silly. So for \$2.50 on EBay, I found a pre-made circuit to step up the voltage. Input was 3v to 30v and output was adjustable from 5v to 35v as long as the output was larger than the input.

I wired it up with a switch and the proper plug for the computer and it worked great!! However when that computer finally died, the replacement computer had a third wire from the power source. With some research, I found this third wire

sensed a signal from the computer to turn on the power source. Even if the plug and the voltage were the same on several power sources, the signal was brand specific; therefore mixing brands between computers and power sources wouldn't work.

I never could find exactly what type of signal was needed. After searching for how to wire this third conductor, I found a company that sells 12v power sources for laptops. The cost was so low it wasn't worth any more effort to use existing parts. A quick Internet order solved the problem.

https://www.amazon.com/Laptop-Charger-Pavilion-Probook-Presario/dp/B003H9G0SW/ref=cm_cr_dp_asin_lnk

Second phase of this device

Wouldn't it be nice if I had a 12v monitor to use with a raspberry pi? Or even better, a 12v monitor to use as a second monitor with my laptop when in the field.

The logging software (N1MM Logger) I run takes up a fair amount of screen space and even more when running Digital modes. I had another laptop that I used for parts. A quick Internet search and again, cheap Chinese pre-made circuits are easier to find than a schematic of the needed circuit. So another \$20 and I now have a second monitor that runs off 12v. The board has input provisions for VGA, digital, and HDMI.



All that was needed to get the correct controller board was to take the screen from its case and find the brand and model on a sticker on the back. This ensured the correct cabling for a plug-n-play connection.



After searching high and low for a "Project box" and not finding one that I liked, I finally gave up. The project sat on the bench unfinished for a couple months. I used a small Tupperware box, not ideal, but it was handy and works for now.

The extra wires taped to the back are for the camera and the microphone. I'll make them useable at a later date by adding a USB plug. But for now, the monitor is up and working.

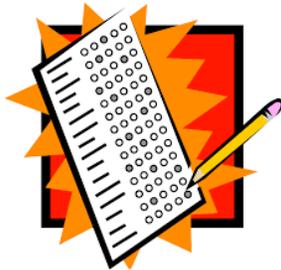




I drilled holes in the aluminum monitor cover and used motherboard stand-offs from my computer parts junk box. It seems solid and works for now. The standoffs threaded right into the aluminum case. All that was necessary was the correct size drill bit.



I even lucked out in that the monitor will stand up leaning on the Tupperware box. I may find a better project box, or perhaps I'll find another junk laptop monitor and start fresh, but for now it works fine and is ready for my next portable adventure.



ARRL Licensing Exam: SIERA offers these exams on the third Saturday every other month at 9 a.m. in the Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran Church behind the Best Buy on Topsisie Lane. Bring a photo ID, a copy of your license if you're upgrading, and \$15. Contact: Greg Moore at KG7DMI@frontier.com for more information.

The next Licensing exam: March 17th.

TARA HAM CRAM and License Exam Session

Saturday, April 28th at 9:30AM, Barton Hospital, 2170 South Ave., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. The "HAM CRAM" is free. The cost of the actual exam is \$15. If time permits, a re-test may be offered but will require an additional \$15. A valid photo ID is required to take the exam.

Happy Birthday to:

Natalie Sherrick N7JKM
Jay Masure WT8K



Breakfast and Lunch Gatherings

11:15 a.m., every Wednesday at Jethro's on Kimmerling in the Ranchos.

8 a.m., every fourth Saturday at the Taildragger Café at the Minden-Tahoe Airport.

Nets Available in Carson Valley and Beyond:

DCART Net, Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on 146.655 pl 131.8

TARA Net, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. on 147.240.

SIERA VHF Net, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. on 147.330.

SIERA HF Net, Tuesdays at 8 p.m. on 3982.

Brad Smith's (WT6B) Watering Hole, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on NV7CV 147.330,
"discussing questions and issues pertaining to amateur radio."

BARC (Bishop) Nightly Net, 8 p.m. on 146.940 pl 103.5
(website: <http://www.n6ov.com/newsletter.html>)

Plumas County Net, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m., on 145.470.

SKYWARN at 7 p.m. Wednesdays and the **NV ARES** is 7 p.m. Thursdays. Both operate on the EchoLink conference server NV-GATE: 152566 EchoLink and can go onto your smart phones, tablets and computers.

SNARS Hospital Net, Fridays at 10:00 a.m. on 147.030 or 147. (SNARS Linked Repeaters: <https://snars.org/repeaters/analog/>)

ARES HF Net, Saturdays at 7 a.m. on 3965.

National Traffic Service Net, Sundays at 6:15 p.m. on 3945.

The SNARS Noon Net daily 147.15.

General Meeting Minutes, February 3, 2018:

Called to order: 1:05 p.m.

Introductions: Bob Yandow K7GUU

Minutes: There was no report for January because of the post-holiday party.

Treasurer's Report: for January and February 2018

Checking Account Starting balance: **\$2183.59**

Withdrawals:

Secretary of State	(50.00)
Bob Williams, raffle prizes	(492.69)
Lutheran Church	(150.00)

Total Withdrawals: \$ 692.69

Deposits:

Exams	\$ 23.00
50/50 Raffle	37.00
Raffle Prizes	227.00
Membership dues	896.00

Total Deposits \$1183.00

Ending Balance for Checking Account: **\$2673.90**

Savings Account Starting Balance **\$4568.25**

Deposit	500.00
Dividend Earned	.21

Ending Balance: **\$5068.25**

Grand total of both accounts: **\$7742.15**

Tom Tabacco motioned to approve and Ben Echavarria seconded.

Announcements: Jeff Cauhape reminded everyone that there are still SIERA caps for \$15 and badges for \$5.

Thank you was given to Bob and Debbie Williams for all their work putting together the post-holiday party and buying such nice raffle prizes. Everyone was very happy with their prizes.

Business:

SNARS NevCon: J.D. said that this annual event was going to be at Boomtown July 20-22 and would SIERA be interested in sponsoring a booth. J.D. will get the information and tell Sue for the Beacon. He will also make arrangements for people in the booth.

The Moving Wall: Debbie Williams reported that a miniature version of the Vietnam Memorial Wall, The Moving Wall, will be here in May at the Bentley Heritage Park. Jim Marshall will coordinate a special event. A contact for this was MARS member Diego Garcia.

Field Day/Pony Express Re-Ride: Both events will be overlapping on the same weekend. Jeff also reminded the members that he's coordinated the Pony for six years (applause ensued) and would like to train someone else to take it on. He's become too busy with teaching classes and presidential duties. Tom Tabacco, who handed it off to Jeff, said he'd like to take it back and do it again. Jeff will send all of his lists, etc. for Tom to use.

BREAK

David DeAngelis gave a presentation about using digital modes, especially PSK-31, to get on the HF bands during low sunspot cycles, and Greg Moore demonstrated his digital setup.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Judging by Jim Marshall's K6LR conversations with Brad Smith WT6B, he's been enjoying many contacts with European stations recently.

Congratulations, Jim. Looks like all your efforts putting up your tower has paid off.



If you have photos and can write a short description, send them to the Beacon. We'd all like to hear about what's going on with SIERA members. scauhape2002@yahoo.com