



SIERA BEACON



Carson Valley, NV

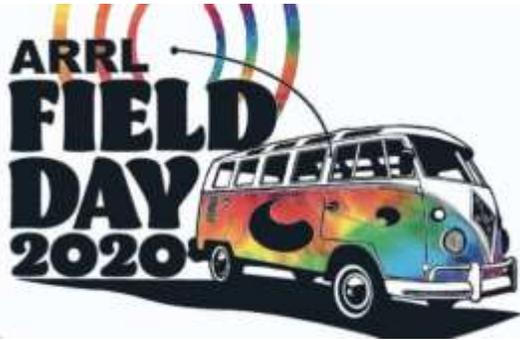
July 2020

"HAM radio is not a hobby. It's a way of life." - Carlos Beltran, XE1MW

Field Day 2020, SIERA Style

Despite the SIERA Board cancelling even our scaled-back version of Field Day, SIERA hams rose to the occasion anyway, holding scores of QSOs across the country and beyond. Here's a run-down:

David DeAngelis K1SCN Because of David's writing ability, the Beacon is going to let him tell his own story.



To borrow a phrase from Monty Python's Flying Circus "...And now for something completely different" my approach to this year's FD exercise was, in fact, to do "something completely different." If this were a real emergency, what would I be able to do? So, I did no pre-FD preparation. I didn't read the rules. I would not use any of my existing antennas. I would only use the radio I own that I would be able to set up in a portable operation.

At 1800Z, I started rummaging around for supplies that could be pulled into immediate service. By 18:22Z I had erected a four-element 2-meter beam that I had in storage, pointed it in the general direction of Reno, and started monitoring around 144.200Mhz for SSB signals. While the radio was in scanning mode, I took the time to prepare to erect a new 20M Double Bazooka to replace the malfunctioning old one. In the two hours that I spent listening on 2 Meters, I only heard and worked one station – N6HX in Tracy California. A distance of about 125 miles – and I believe there are a FEW hills in between here and there - not bad for 50 watts. Next order of business was to deploy the Bazooka since there did not seem to be any other activity on 2-Meter sideband.

Replacing the existing Bazooka required taking down my Fan Dipole so that the new Bazooka would not get tangled. Well, you know Murphy's Law. What I thought would be a simple operation turned into a major project. But, the operation eventually succeeded. For the uninitiated, a Double Bazooka is a simple dipole that utilizes the braid of lengths of coax for the elements. The advantage of this antenna is not to improve the radiation pattern (NO appreciable gain over a simple dipole), but to provide a wider range of operating frequencies. Once hauled up to the top of my mast, testing out the antenna with an antenna analyzer revealed a usable bandwidth (SWR 1.3:1 or less) of

548 Khz. So switching between the low end of the band to the phone portion would be painless.

Having used up most of the afternoon getting the antenna in the air, I was content to make only a few SSB contacts. Since one contact was with Alaska and another was with New Hampshire, I was satisfied that the antenna arrangement was working.

The next morning I was determined to reacquaint myself with WinWarbler to make a few PSK31 contacts. I found that I had to rewrite all my Field Day scripts and load them into the program. By that time, the 20 Meter signals were subject to very deep QSB that made getting a solid print out of any one station difficult. So I retreated to SSB end of the band and made contacts with West Texas and British Columbia. As my time was limited, I went back to the digital portion and made three contacts, one with West Central Florida.

In total, I only made sixteen contacts, but I was satisfied that in a real emergency, I could put a functioning station on the air on short notice. If that is what Field Day is all about, then I guess it was a success.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Jim Marshall K6LR



As many of you may know, Jim Marshall K6LR has a huge 60+-foot tower that easily reaches all over the world. He regularly talks to hams in Eastern Europe, Africa, etc etc etc. So, it's not surprise Jim made 312 contacts: 51 SSB on 40 meters, 247 SSB on 20 meters, 14 digital on 20 meters for a total of 326 points. He was in a Classification 1E Solar and Generator.

Here's what Jim has to say about it all:

"Tried 15 meters and 10 meters, heard nothing. Called CQ FD a few times. Worked 20 primarily except for this morning and made 51 contacts on 40 prior to band folding. Digital was via PSK-31, using fldigi, all on 20 meters. Power output was 150 watts or less, 50 watts on digital. Fun weekend!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Jim Sanders AG6IF

We've all have seen Jim's awe-inspiring station in the background of his ZOOM meetings. Here's Jim's report:

"OK, for me, FD2020 is in the book. Remember, the score could go down if one of my contacts doesn't confirm, or I mistyped something. I worked Digital, CW and SSB.

Power Multiplier: 2X Preliminary

Total Score: 282 Bonus Points Status 100% emergency power, 100

Entry submitted via web 50 Total bonus points 150 Score

Summary - Cabrillo log/dupe sheet file: ag6if-fd2020-cab-file CW Digital Phone Total

Total QSOs (Digital)16 =32 pts, (CW)10=20 pts, (SSB) 14=14 pts. Total Points 66"

And this is only three SIERA members who participated in Field Day 2020. Let's hope next June, COVID will be a memory rather than a reality. Stay safe and wash your hands. 73s to all.

General meeting at 1 p.m. July 4th on the NV7CV repeater 147.330MHz. We will hold an informal session and set up a mini-round table for anyone to share any special projects, or their experience and interesting contacts with Field Day this year.

Dan Deemer's Portable Antenna/Radio for Backpacking

Dan Deemer, KN6EFC, is a relatively new ham who manages the Kirkwood Ski Resort and is an avid backpacker. He designed this portable antenna and tried it in June on a hike around the Tahoe Rim Trail. During this hike, he was able to contact, Sue Cauhape KI7CTT and had a fairly good, readable signal. Here's how he put it all together:



This design relies almost entirely on the very common 1/4 Quarter Wave ground plane based on the SO-239 chassis connector. I made a few additions to this in order to make the antenna easily assembled/disassembled and able to be hoisted several feet above one's head if needed. A high priority was put on its ability to be stored easily while in transit via backpacking.

The telescoping "mast" functions as a storage sheath for the radial elements, which are prone to bending. The telescoping mast is made from a recycled "selfie stick" I pulled from a trashcan. The radial elements are all solid copper 12 AWG wire. I tapped threads into the 4 holes on the SO-239 to accept the four small screws used to secure the ground radials. Ground radials simply have ring terminals crimped, and heat shrink for extra protection and cleaner look.

The vertical radial element has a tapered end filed to allow it to simply be inserted snugly into the SO-239.

Velco cable staples aid with the storage of the coaxial cable and also attached the telescoping post to the end of a fishing pole when deployed. The antenna could also be deployed simply with just the telescoping mast if desired.



I used this resource: (<https://m0ukd.com/calculators/quarter-wave-ground-plane-antenna-calculator/>) for radial lengths and tuned this for 146.520 Mhz. After preliminary testing, I get near perfect 1:1 SWR across the 2m band and acceptable SWR on 70cm, although it is more variable in the later.

I built this antenna specifically for mountain-top 2m simplex activation while I thru-hike the Tahoe Rim Train (165 miles) starting next Wednesday. It requires no special tools for assembly and deployment and would be field

repairable/serviceable if needed. The ground radials being 12% longer than the vertical, allow them to serve as backup verticals if the primary is lost or broken. All small hardware will be painted yellow to be easily found if dropped on the ground/in the dirt during deployment. Deployment takes just a few moments.

I knick-name it the "Fishing Pole" both because I use it in conjunction with my fishing pole for additional antenna height, and also because it roughly resembles a fishing pole and reel when in the storage configuration.



Attention all CW Operators:

Effective July 1, 2020, Radio Relay International will be implementing a series of weekly training broadcasts designed to prepare CW operators for participation in traffic nets. Training broadcasts consisting of radiogram training messages will be transmitted on 20, 40 and 80 meters each Wednesday/Thursday. An outline of the program and the operating schedule may be found [here](http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RRI-Weekly-Broadcast-Schedule-FA-2020-7-1.pdf):

<http://radio-relay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RRI-Weekly-Broadcast-Schedule-FA-2020-7-1.pdf>

The Watering Hole

For many years, Brad Smith WT6B has held ***The Watering Hole*** every Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., on 147.33mH. Lots of hams check in, ask intriguing questions, and pool SIERA's vast amateur radio experience to help hams, both new and old, solve problems with their stations. It's a fun and informative half-hour even if you just want to listen to the chat.

Watering Hole Discussions

Among the many topics discussed on June 3rd's Watering Hole was 'is it worth it to get the Extra Class License. Other than bragging rights, there are many reasons why this challenging 50-question exam is worth all the blood, sweat, and tears. For one thing, Morse Code is not part of the test. The irony here is that Extra's have full access to all amateur radio bands, including the CW portions unavailable to Techs and Generals on 80m, 40m, 20m, and 15m where all the DXers hang out. This is according to Dan Romanchik's KB6NU article, *Why You Should Get Your Extra Class License*, on www.everythinghamradio.com.



You can also score a 2x1 or 1x2 vanity call sign, be the trustee for a club call sign (handy during Field Day), and grade all tests during the VEC exams. Another sweet perk is that when you travel overseas, say to Europe, you have an easier time getting permission to make contacts if you indeed need the permissions at all. It just opens up the world for your DXing enjoyment. Beyond that, the Extra license takes you deeper into electronics and radio design. That should excite all the inventors among us. After all, hams have been the ones to develop radio technology throughout the years.

Another article on this subject is *Why You Should Upgrade to the Extra Class Amateur Radio License*, by Michael Marten KB9VBR, on his website, www.jpole-antenna.com. And of course www.arrl.org is always the go-to for information about amateur radio. So, does this inspire anyone to belly-up to the textbook and take on this challenge?

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Beacon Opinion: By the way, as more hams join the discussions on *The Watering Hole*, radio etiquette becomes that much more important to keep it all from turning into a circus. Most operators say their call sign so that net control, Brad WT6B, can coordinate the show. Some don't observe this bit of courtesy and it becomes quite irritating when all we can hear is that grating sound of people doubling with each other. Useful information is lost to those who need it. And the short period of time Brad has to run *The Watering Hole* is wasted. When you have an answer to someone's question, please give your call sign and wait for Net Control to give you permission to speak. Thank you.



To Danelle and Michael Smith for passing their Technician's License at the Reno, NV EOC on June 20, 2020.

In these COVID days, you can study AND take your exams online at hamstudy.org.

ARRL Licensing Exams:

Greg Moore KG7D may be able to arrange a private exam for you. Just send him an email: Kg7d@arrl.net. You'll need your photo ID, \$15.00 cash or personal check, and a copy of your current license if you are upgrading (*a reference copy from the FCC web site is acceptable. It doesn't need to be the Official copy*). Greg also suggests you bring an extra \$15.00 if you want to take another test.



The Pony Express Re-Ride will enter Nevada at Woodfords on **August 27th**. For once, The Pony won't conflict with Field Day. Don McRoberts W3DRM has posted the handbook for participants on <http://www.cvhams.com>. If you have any questions, contact Tom Tabacco KE7NCJ at smokey@pyramid.net. True to the Postal Service motto, nothing keeps the PO from delivering the mail, not even a pandemic.

Repeater Update from Jim Marshall K6LR, SIERA trustee: I have recently been in communications with Pete Wilson, from CAL OES, (no, not the past Governor of Calif.), concerning our repeater on Leviathan. I have exchanged several phone conversations and emails providing information on who we are (SIERA & DCART), and what equipment we have on site. He is gathering information on who is on site, what our purpose is and what equipment is presently being used. In our phone conversation he pretty much summed things up by stating that due to the virus and the economy, it is going to be a long time before a new site is built, and said the existing structure is going to be the equipment site for the foreseeable future. If anything good is to come from the Corona virus, looks like we have a new lease on (Repeater) life!

KE7EAA Estate Sale

Silent Key KE7EAA Ed Goldberg has a great legacy that he leaves behind including working with the Douglas County Amateur Radio Team. He was regarded by many here as a good and loyal friend, always ready to help in whatever way he could. Jeff Brown K5BLS is acting as a buffer for the family to broker these items so as to not over tax the family with visits and calls. Please contact Jeff at 775-391-0320.

This sale will only be around for until about July 4th so as to not have this run on forever. (Sorry for the short Beacon notice on this. It was posted to the SIERA Facebook page and also emailed to everyone. So, let's hope many of you have had a chance to score some of these items.

- Yaesu desk Microphone \$179 new \$75
- MFJ Versa-tuner 949E \$219 new \$100
- Unknown dual band V/U \$50
- Alinco 1200 VHF digital radio-Packet \$199 new (1991) \$40 works
- Yaesu 8800 V/U dual-band mobile \$349 new \$200
- Icom w32a V/U HT batts charger? \$279 new (1998) \$75 works
- TYT DMR HT \$140new \$60
- Baofeng V/U HT \$45 new \$25
- NOAA wx Alert monitor \$10
- Icom 730 HF radio 1980's vintage radio \$1-200 works
- CB SWR meter \$20
- SEC 25A Power supply 12V \$20
- Astron RS20A 12v power supply RS20 \$25
- Frequency counter \$25
- Yaesu VX5R V/U HT \$259 New (1999) \$65 works? Accessories?
- Older Yaesu 208R HTs (1980's vintage) \$unknown- Offers
- GE CB \$10
- HF mobile antenna coil tap type \$35
- VHF/UHF long mobile antenna \$25
- Mics. Mounts for mobile antennas \$-10 each
- Military mast pipes \$40
- Uniden analog 16ch handheld scanner \$15
- 1-Signal link USB soundcard \$125 new \$40
- 2- Signal link USB soundcard \$125 new \$40
- Wuxon V/U ht \$99new \$40
- RTL SDR USB Receiver \$22 new \$10
- LMR Coax Cable aprox. 100ft \$20
- Grundig Satellit 700 HF & SSB receiver with manual New in 2000 \$450- \$!50
- FRS radio not a pair \$5
- Full range stereo speaker only one \$5
- D104 mic head \$5
- MISC dynamic mics (5) \$10
- Yaesu CT39 Packet cable \$5
- Dual radio soundcard interface RD Technologies make offer
- Through window SO239 \$5
- Kamtronics All Mode TNC \$15
- AEA Packet controller PK-88 \$15
- Base loaded BNC antenna \$5
- Diawa 140-525 Mhz Watt/SWR meter in box \$145 new \$50
- Icom mobile hand mic \$5
- Yaesu foot PTT and headset adaptor \$30
- Copper J-pole antenna \$10

Solar Panels for Sale:

During the May 24th VHF net, Bill Holmes K7DUY announced he has ARCO M-52 solar panels to sell for \$10 each. They're 6 amps, 30 watts, 1'X 4', 12 lbs., and though they are 20

years old, Bill claims they are still in spec. If you're interested, call him at 775-265-0732 or email at hinterland001@gmail.com. There was quite a pile-up of interested hams after the net, but he may still have a few left.

DCART NEWS: 2020 June DCART/Alpine ARES monthly comment

Douglas County Amateur Radio Team (DCART) members will not meet in July. Our weekly nets continue, coordinating with Tahoe Basin ARES. We did have tests of two of our simplex planning frequencies. Everyone took notes on who they could hear and speak to.

The Alta Alpina Challenge bike ride was postponed from June 27th to July 25th. This date depends on California conditions and permits secured. DCART members plan to staff our station at the 911 Communications Center during the ride to make sure emergency calls get into the system properly.

There are tremendous training opportunities online for Winlink, ICS and of course FEMA classes. Enough to keep us all in training.

Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ
ARES Emergency Coordinator
Alpine and Douglas Counties

Simplex test 147.420 June 1, 2020

DCART / Tahoe Basin ARES Net members met after the formal net to test coverage for our simplex planning frequency 147.420. Members noted those stations that could be heard directly. Our testing showed paths, with relays, that covered Mound House, Dayton, Carson Valley, Carson City, Smith Valley and the Tahoe Basin.

On simplex, participants gave their radio equipment capability reports that show we have some powerful resources to be able to cover our area without a repeater. Note the paths that will get us our contacts.

Tahoe Basin

KI6EWK, David (Chichester), good contact with KM6UWG, Mike (TB)
WA6EWV, Paul (TB) to Carson Valley through special 220 links.
K7VOC, Bob & N7XYL, Debbie (Johnson Lane) can reach WA6EWV, Paul, (TB)
WA6EWV contacted our 911 station simplex previously.
KE7NCJ, Tom (Mound House) notes opening squelch allows more reception.

Carson Valley, Carson City, Smith Valley

K7VOC/N7XYL can reach KD7NHC, John of Smith Valley
Carson City / Carson Valley - communications not heard by some stations. Relays work.

Topaz - no good path with the Valley. Need person on site using repeaters

Breakfast and Lunch with SIERA

(with restrictions of course.)

Tail Dragger Café at the Minden-Tahoe Airport.
775-782-9500 (four at a table several feet apart.)

Jethro's on Kimmerling in Gardenerville. 775-
265-2215 (no more than eight at a table.)



Nets Available in Carson Valley and Beyond:

The SNARS Noon Net daily on 147.150.

Daily Carson & Eagle Valley net, 6 p.m. on 28.435 MHz USB

BARC Nightly Net, 8 pm on 146.655 pl 131.8, ragchew and pre-check-in at 7:30 p.m.

DCART Net, Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on 147.330.

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 3982kHz.

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

CARS Fusion Net, Wednesdays at 7 p.m. The local FUSION repeater is at 442.300.

Brad Smith's (WT6B) Watering Hole, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on 147.330,

"questions and answers pertaining to amateur radio."

SKYWARN at 7 p.m. Wednesdays.

NV ARES Net Thursdays at 7 p.m. Echolink conf server NV-GATE 152566 IRLP Western Reflector Ch8:9258

SNARS Hospital Net, Fridays at 10:00 a.m. on 147.030 or 147.150

(SNARS Linked Repeaters: <https://snars.org>)

RARA Rural Amateur Radio Assn., Fridays at 8 p.m. on 147.180 pl 123

ARES HF Net, Saturdays at 7 a.m. on 3965kHz (+or - QRM).

RARA, Rural Amateur Radio Association, Saturdays 7:30 a.m. on 3965kHz

New Hams Net, Sundays at 1 p.m. 146.760 pl 123

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

SIERA General Meeting June 6, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 Virus outbreak, and exercising an abundance of caution, and following recommendations from the CDC and the State of Nevada the Board meeting was held utilizing the NV7CV, SIERA 2 meter repeater. A Zoom session was also available.

Call to order 1:00

Check-ins: WT6B, KI7CTT, KI6EWK, WB6EWV, K7VOC, N7XYL, W3DRM, WA6EYD, K7GUU, K1SCN, W7EJC, KE7NCJ, KG7ZOP, KE7YBA, KU8B, N7BBE, six reported on Zoom

Treasurer's Report

Not shared over the repeater. Sent to board members by email and approved by email consensus.

Checking Account

Starting Balance	2245.73
Deposit	.00
Withdrawal	.00
Ending Balance	2245.73

Saving Account

Starting Balance	4073.22
Dividends	.17
Ending Balance	4073.39

Grand Total 6319.12**NEW Business**

Mike KI6UGO reported that Alta Alpina Challenge has been restructured to accommodate COVID-19 safety measures. The event will have to be postponed to either July 11 or July 25. State of California will have to relax their travel restrictions before they can lock in to a date.

KI6EWK summarized the plans for this year's Field Day. Don W3DRM has updated the website to include a Field Day link. Sign-up rosters and up to date information is available there. Setup and break down volunteers will be needed. Social distancing has required us to change the way we conduct the event. David is available at KI6EWK @ arrl.net for questions and sign-ups. Don, W3DRM is available through the web page.

When submitting your logs, there will be a place to include the Club Call if you so desire, and ARRL will publish club scores. W3DRM said that the online forms are not interactive, so it will be necessary to contact David KI6EWK or Don W3DRM to update the forms.

N7BBE volunteered to be the Safety Officer for this year's event. K7VOC will deliver the trailer to the site and asked why there were three sign-up slots for each time slot. David replied that a rover would allow for giving operators a rest if needed.

Addendum

On June 16, 2020 the Board corresponded by email. The SIERA Board of Directors unanimously decided that due to the COVID-19 restrictions still being imposed on group activities, it would be in the best interest of all of our club members not to attempt to conduct the Field Day 2020 activities this year in the normal manner of a group activity. Instead, this year's Field Day will be in the style of OPERATE-FROM-YOUR-HOME as a class "1D" or "1E" using ARRL Rule 4.6 found here:
<http://www.arrl.org/temporary-rule-waivers-for-arrl-field-day-2020>

Presentation

AG6IF demonstrated PSK Reporter (found at <http://pskreporter.info/>). PSK Reporter is not only a tool that can be used to evaluate HF conditions, but it can also be used to help to evaluate your station's efficiency. Jim made several 5-Watt transmissions on several bands and showed that his signals were reported by many stations and the strength of his signals were also displayed on the map.

Several digital modes are available. FT8 is offered through WSJT-X. FT8 only provides the capability of exchanging a signal report and a Grid Locator. JS8call provides the ability to exchange text as well. Both modes are capable of digging signal out from deep in the noise level.

Updates

Next Month's meeting will be a virtual meeting and we will continue to monitor the situation

KI6EWK will stand by after the meeting for Field Day sign ups. Field Day will be in three weeks.

1:36 PM adjournment.

Remember, send your photos and news for the Beacon AND the SIERA Facebook page to: scauhape2002@yahoo.com

How's this for a Field Day set up?

