



SIERA BEACON



Carson Valley, NV

April 2021

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

Defying COVID!!!

Ed Terlau KG7ZOP reported that almost a dozen SIERA members showed up for an informal Fourth Saturday Breakfast at the Tail Dragger last week. Even Mike and Natalie Sherrick came down from Sparks. Ed said he had to reintroduce himself to Natalie after not having seen her for a year.

There are even rumblings about meeting in local parks. Ed Eggert K3VO suggested that in a recent Watering Hole session. With churches still under strident COVID restrictions and, as Ed KG7ZOP put it, "napalming" required after using the room, returning to our indoor meetings is quite a way off.

As the weather warms up and stabilizes, we could gather at any of the beautiful parks Carson Valley has to offer: Lampe, Heritage, Stoddick, Minden, even the park on Mitch Street in The Ranchos. Heritage is fairly central and is friendly to impromptu gatherings. Bring a chair, a picnic lunch, or spread out the blanket. All we need is the final blessing or the SIERA Board.

Or like KG7ZOP and the gang did: set the date, announce it on the Tuesday nets, and show up. Rebellion is in the air!

FCC Not Yet Collecting \$35 Application Fee

The FCC Part 97 rules establishing a new \$35 amateur radio application fee go on the books on April 19, but the FCC won't start collecting the fee "until the requisite notice has been provided to Congress. The FCC's information technology systems and internal procedures have been updated, and the Commission publishes notice(s) in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of such rules."

When effective, the fee will apply to new, modification (upgrade and sequential call sign change), renewal, and vanity call sign applications, as well as applications for a special temporary authority (STA) or a rule waiver. Fees will be collected per application. The FCC exempted from the fee applications for administrative updates, such as a change of mailing or email address. The FCC proposed a schedule of application and other fees for all services last year.

The General meeting is at 1 p.m. Saturday April 3rd on the NV7CV 147.330/240 repeater. Board meeting at noon. General meeting at 1 p.m. Topic for discussion TBA.

Ham License Exam in Reno

SNARS is offering a license exam session April 17 at 8:30 a.m. in the Reno Operations Center. For more information and to sign-up for this exam, go to www.SNARS.org/exams.



A Great Video for New Hams

The Facebook page, *Amateur (Ham) Radio*, has lots of great information and videos for all stages of ham radio. Here's an 18-minute YouTube that discusses some important issues for new hams about etiquette, education, and equipment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf5IE13ESqI>

Echolink for SIERA from Afar:

Danielle Smith K1DJS emailed the Beacon with some questions, including one about how she and husband Mike K7MGS could check in to SIERA nets and meetings while traveling out of the area. We suggested she check out Echolink. A few of our local hams have connected with nets and The Watering Hole using Echolink very effectively.

Granted, there's a 10-second delay between transmissions, which makes it a bit like talking to Mars, but that's a small inconvenience compared to the benefit of contacting friends around the world. If you're interested in learning more about Echolink, go onto this website and download their app. Echolink uses software that can interface your Microsoft computer to repeaters around the globe. www.echolink.org.

On the Air Magazine from ARRL

<http://www.arrl.org/on-the-air-magazine>

Those of you who have already joined ARRL and receive their magazine, *QST*, probably have also gotten a copy or two of *On the Air*, a magazine written especially for new hams or those still hemming and hawing about entering the hobby. It's well-organized, with articles in each issue that work off each other for good context and continuity. For example, the Jan/Feb 2021 issue includes a string of articles about tuners, SWR, dummy loads, etc. that help the new ham understand how these basics come together to build that first radio station. If you're a seasoned ham who receives this magazine, perhaps there's someone in your circle of friends who might be inspired to join the hobby. Kids especially might find *On the Air* interesting to read.



Facebook: Minefield or Gold Mine?

It seems that anything and everything can be found either on YouTube or Facebook, but a lot of people are freaked out about privacy and intrusion issues with these resources. Nonetheless, the Beacon has found a lot of good resource material to share for SIERA hams, but there's so much available, it's just too much to include in the Beacon. So, don't be afraid to venture into the jungle of Facebook

and explore. You just may find gold! And to help you get started, here are a few Facebook groups that work with different aspects of amateur radio, sharing information about problems, vendors, and discoveries. Some of these are USA specific. Others are more international. Have fun.

SOTA:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/37631909313/?multi_permalinks=10159538655309314

ARRL Field Day:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/arrlfd/?multi_permalinks=3633853060054378

Winter Field Day:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/winterfieldday>

Elecraft Radio Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Elecraft>

VHF/UHF Weak Signal Amateur Radio:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VHFUHFWeakSignal>

Amateur (HAM) Radio on a Budget:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1570967196484549>

Amateur Ham Radio:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2228282568>

Ham Radio:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/12699105116>

**The Watering Hole, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
on 147.330/240mh. Questions and Answers
pertaining to Amateur Radio.**

Among the regulars on *The Watering Hole* is Ed Eggert K3VO (veteran operator) who always has lots of information gleaned from his 65 years as a ham. During one discussion about "slinky" antennas, he told us about the stories on <https://www.eham.net/article>. There is even an article about slinky antennas. Check it out. And thank you, Ed, for being a mainstay of answers on *The Watering Hole*.

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A recent *Watering Hole* discussion centered on what hams could do to help during emergency situations. DCART (Douglas County Amateur Radio Team) has a ham station in the 911 Dispatch Center that is designed to aide dispatchers with emergency traffic. Because of their training and vetting, DCART members are authorized to help first responders during emergencies. All other hams not affiliated with such groups are discouraged from "showing up and broadcasting" any information or traffic in emergency field locations. Usually, there is a specific Public Information Officer charged with that duty on location. Untrained and unvetted hams become a nuisance to emergency crews and can have their equipment temporarily confiscated if they cause trouble, albeit unintentional. DCART coordinators Sheila Clement KA7AJQ and Ben Etchevarria N7BBE can advise anyone interested in joining DCART.



The DCART W7SR station in the 911 Dispatch Center is equipped with VHF, HF, and packet radio capabilities. Jim Marshall K6LR has worked extensively to configure all equipment in this station and maintain it. Thanks, Jim, for all your important work.

Net Controls? If you don't want to join DCART or other official organization, consider joining the roster of SIERA members serving as net controls for the Tuesday VHF/HF nets. This is an opportunity to learn proper protocols for handling emergency traffic and the unpredictable chaos that can happen during emergency situations. (Ben N7BBE could tell horror stories about this.) There are currently about six NCs on the list, which means you would only have to do a VHF and HF net once every six weeks.

SIMPLEX: *The Watering Hole* gang also talked about frequencies used during emergencies. As long as the repeaters are working, they can extend the range of communications. If they should happen to go off-line, SIMPLEX is the way to go. In fact, Ed Eggert K3VO told *Watering Hole* listeners that SIMPLEX used to be the way ham radio worked in the 50-70s before the network of repeaters existed. While repeaters extend the range on those frequencies, you'd be surprised just how far your signal can go on SIMPLEX.

The official national SIMPLEX frequency is 146.52mhz, but any repeater frequency, such as 147.330 and 147.240 can be used. For example, Bill K7DUY uses SIMPLEX on 147.330 during our weekly nets because his radio doesn't have PL capability. It limits his reach, but it works. Some of us can hear him during nets just fine. And when the repeater goes down, as it did years ago when somebody sat on their mic and timed out the machine, other hams got on and talked about it on SIMPLEX.

AHEM! SPEAKING OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TRAININGS:

Comm Academy: April 10-11, 2021 -- Disasters Here, There, and Everywhere!

Comm Academy is an emergency communications & amateur radio conference to be **held online** April 10-11, 2021. Two days of training, talks, and information on emergency communications. Theme: Disasters here, there, and everywhere – are we ready?

Headquartered in Seattle, **COMM ACADEMY** is two days of training and information on various aspects of emergency communications.

The annual event has continued to evolve by presenting keynotes and seminar tracks that engage beginners, intermediate and advanced users in technologies, served agency support, volunteer management, self-preparedness, and how volunteer and professional communications are used, adapted and improved.

All those interested in emergency and amateur radio communications are welcome. Learn, network, and share your experiences with others. More info and to register:

<https://www.commacademy.org/>

Here is the presentation lineup:

Saturday, April 10 (all times PDT)

- 9:00: Kickoff and welcome
- 9:15: Brian Daly, WB7OML, "Pandemics and Power Outages: What Next?"
- 10:30: Jason Biermann, KI7KVP, "When We're On an Island: Reframing How We Plan for the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake"
- 12:15: Ward Silver, NOAX, "Grounding and Bonding for Home and Mobile HF Stations"
- 13:45: William Chapman, "Out of the Pan(demic) and into the (Wild)fire: Communications Support During Large Emergencies"
- 15:15: Scott Currie, NS7C, "Winlink, Digital Voice, and Tech-Based Comms: When Infrastructure Fails"

Sunday, April 11

- 9:00 Day 2 Welcome
- 9:15: Ian Gallagher, KE7MAP, and Morgan Davis, KD7ZMC, "This Is Not a Drill: Safety and Communications at Burning Man"
- 10:45: Randy Neals, W3RWN, "Emergency Wireless Internet Following the Holiday Farm Fire"
- 12:30: Carl Leon, N7KUW, "Basic Orientation for New EmComm Volunteers"
- 14:00: Anthony Clifton, "Gulf Coast Storms: Impacts on Infrastructure, Comms, Alerting, and More"
- 15:30: Thomas Cox, VE6TOX, "The Importance of ICS in Addressing the Big Ones"

Check it out.

1940 Sears Ham Radio catalog:

Bill O'Brien, K7AQB sent this link to an online copy of a 1940s Sears Catalog of Amateur Radio equipment. It's VERY long, but you can enjoy reading it by copying this link to your browser:

https://winlinkwednesday.net/docs/Sears_1940_Amateur_Radio_Catalog.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3Egoq1MpROtwOptwjDnDBl723XSLmXTncL8s67nCs0oXP68PINZiGQawc

Sheila Clement: Remembering Silent Key Reid Ross, W7HOP:

Reid had a very distinguished, adventuresome life. He was the Elmer's Elmer. Many years ago (I was working for Carson City at the time), LeRoy and I met Reid and Barbara while out for dinner at the Ormsby and discovered LeRoy and Reid went back many years and that I, a new ham, (a couple years) had never been on the air. After dinner, Reid insisted we go back to his shack. He contacted Wally Adams, WB7NDJ, handed me his 2-meter and said, "talk." Thus my first contact.

Reid was Carson City Communications Supervisor, based next to the Airport Fire Station when I knew him. I was newly with the City, so he advised and helped with technical suggestions as we planned and coordinated ham radio with operations and exercises.

He was a regular participant on the 10-meter 6 p.m. nightly (except Sunday) net. We could always catch up with him there. 73, Sheila, KA7AJQ

(At right) He was stationed at Skaggs Island in the U.S. Naval Radio Station in 1945. City radio operations.



2021 DCART March ARES Report comment

News about our DCART members' participation with the ham stations at Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center (CTRMC) and the Carson Tahoe Specialty Medical Center (CTSMC) -

Dave, N7TNX, LeRoy, KA7UIS, and CTRMC volunteer Keith, KJ6JJN, work with the CTRMC representatives to maintain the ham equipment and antennas. They participate with the Friday Hospitals Net at 10 a.m., on the SNARS system repeaters, at the hospitals or from home. (Anyone can check in as a visitor.)

For the future, grant monies for upgrading the radio equipment are being pursued. Telenet Winlink operations are possible with other Winlink modes hoped for. Packet capability is there though operations are not smooth yet. The Hospital requires that hams be formal Hospital volunteers though others may visit as current restrictions are lifted.

Operating the radios and working with antennas can be complicated and needs to be coordinated with Hospital operations. Hopefully other hams will be interested in these Hospital operations so we don't lose the history of antennas and radio equipment. In the 80's two antennas (one 2-meter and one City frequencies) were installed on the Specialty Medical Center (old hospital) roof and the cables go into "a room" and are coiled up in the ceiling. There is, of course, a separate operating station.

In other news, the current 911 ham station policy still requires that only one ham be at our station at a time with mask. However hams who have been vaccinated may work together with masks. Our Fire Station 12 training/meeting room has not been opened yet. They will let us know. -- Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ, ARES Emergency Coordinator, Douglas and Alpine Counties

Don't forget to check out the SIERA website on www.cvhams.com for lots of information and reference material.



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 the following schedule: The first two Mondays on 147.330 linked with 147.240. The third Monday is Tahoe Basin ARES on 147.240 to be linked with 147.330. The fourth (and fifth) Monday(s) on 147.270 to be linked with 147.240

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.

W7DEM Net, Wednesdays at 9 a.m., various frequencies: Eagle Ridge 442.225 T156.7, Carson DEM 442.900 T156.7, Lake Tahoe 442.300 T156.7, and Smith Valley 440.050 T 94.8. (Refer to Nov. 2020 Beacon for details.)

Carson ARES Net: 9-10 a.m., check in anytime in that hour on 147.270mhz PL156.7. Includes VHF

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

Don McRoberts W3DRM, our SIERA webmaster for CVhams.com, has a more comprehensive chart with more nets than anyone has time for: <https://www.cvhams.com/nets.php>

SIERA General Meeting March 6, 2021

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 General meeting was held utilizing the NV7CV, SIERA 2-meter repeater.

Call to order : 1:00PM

Attendance: 13 check-ins

Last month's minutes

The February minutes were published in the March issue of The Beacon. Copies are available on the SIERA webpage. (<http://www.cvhams.com/>)

Treasurer's Report for March 2021

The detailed Treasurer's report was presented to the Board and approved by email.

Announcements

We now have 60 paid members and the membership list has been updated.

WA6EWV received an email from AA6MK(at)gmail.com who is looking to work Alpine County in California.

Thank You to Sue KI7CTT for all the work she does on the *Beacon*

Business:

K1SCN, Dave, gave a quick summary of the LiTZ (Long Term Zero) Emergency Protocol for use in emergencies on a simplex frequency. Details can be found in March 2021 QST on page 70 "Wilderness Emergency Communications Protocols." Chuck K7PGI related that it is not hard to become disoriented, even only a mile out in the BLM.

K7GUU shared that there are personal EPIRB's that can be used in the backcountry. Since the EPIRB's are satellite radios, they can work where other forms of communications fail.

Jim, AG6IF, related his personal experience with using APRS in an emergency that turned out in the end to not be an emergency. But, reporting it led to rectifying the problem.

Jim AG6IF summarized the ABC's of operating out in the backcountry.

Antennas:

- Have you noticed a degradation of Rx/Tx?
- When was the last time you checked your SWR? Test your coax...sensitivity?
- Has current or prolonged weather introduced moisture into your antenna system?
- VHF, UHF verses HF (antenna for frequency and mode of operation)(power for what you are trying to do)?
- Sealing the connections (as simple as electrical tape but if you can, use silicone tape/coax seal or better product).

Batteries:

- How do you power your system?
- Has your power supply kept up with the equipment you now run?
- Digital modes run at an increased duty cycle...is it new to your shack?
- Learn the power requirements for specific radios...do they run just as well with 13.8 as they do with 12.2 volts?
- Consider a "buck boost" that will provide the necessary 13.8 constant volts from a battery that is running 8-40 volts.
- If not, do your feed lines match the amp draw of the total draw to your system..."SYSTEM?"
- Properly fused as your system grows?
- Do you have primary and alternate means of staying on the air should the power fail?
- AC (linear/switching)?
- DC, spare battery(ies)?
- Generator (fuel or solar...back to batteries)?

Connections:

- If you answered yes to a degraded Rx/Tx, have you checked your coax and coax connections lately?
- When was the last time you re-seated your coax connections and refreshed sealing your connections? Don't forget to wire brush your center conductor as needed.
- Simply consider switching out cables, coax and hand mics (have some on hand to do one for one swap).
- Have you considered making several short runs, single runs, limiting the connections from your radio to your antenna.
- Reseat the power connectors and if you have had spurious emission interference think about the following:
 - Identify which frequency.
 - Get a handheld with the frequency, take off the antenna to attenuate the signal and "sniff out" those potential noisy wall warts, fluorescent light fixtures and other transformers that might be the cause of the problem.
 - Also, those nests of bundled wires might be the source of the noise and they might need to be run in parallel instead of being zip tied together and a source of RF signal to include which should not be done, crossing or bundling wires of any kind with the coax running in/out of the shack.
 - Digital modes, like FT8, APRS, might bleed into your other bands. Chuck K7PGI pointed out that he did not think that his HT had an external connector for power. Jim said that he connected his HT to a drop-in charger to power it.

N7BBE shared that he has a LiPO battery in a go-box to run his FT-891, and quad band radio along with an antenna tuner. He can also charge the system with solar power.

W3DRM suggested that Ben and Jim hold "show and tell" of their portable set-ups when we get back to having in-person meetings.

KG7ZOP reported that the Tail Dragger appears to be in operation and he and his wife intend to start visiting there on the fourth Saturday of the month.

Adjournment: 1:50PM

If you want a copy of the Treasurer's Report, email Debbie Williams N7XYL at n7xyl@arrl.net.

**Back in my day, we didn't have tuners to trick
our finals into thinking they saw fifty ohms!**



**We chewed the end of the wire off until
we had a perfect match and we liked it!**

**Remember to send your photos and news for the Beacon
and the SIERA Facebook page to scauhape2020@protonmail.com**