



# SIERA BEACON



Carson Valley, NV

May 2021

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

## Don McRoberts Feted as Citizen of the Year

<https://www.recordcourier.com/news/2021/apr/08/don-mcroberts-named-elks-citizen-year/>

Don McRoberts W3DRM recently received the honor of Citizen of the Year from the Elks club in Gardnerville. The Record-Courier story is linked above. However, SIERA has been the beneficiary of Don's organizational skills and work ethic for years.

While he may have dropped out of sight while president of the Food Closet, directing the building of a huge new distribution center, he now wrangles the many details of SIERA's membership. That not only includes collecting dues checks and enrollment information to update SIERA's records. He also updates and re-updates the VHF/HF Net Control roll call lists, defining with color codes those who actively participate, those who are listed but don't participate, and those out there who are "Visitors." Keeping these records updated is a moving target throughout the year; however it helps shorten the time net controls use to call out to hams on our ever-growing membership list ... over 65-70 members at last count.



In the past, Don has organized hams to support the Pony Express Re-Rides until Tom Tabacco KE6NCJ and Jeff Cauhape K7BCV held that position for many years. Now, he's putting out the call for a new coordinator of this event. Besides the Pony Express, Don has also provided radio support for other events, such as, the Death Ride, Alta Alpina, and many others. Don has also been SIERA's webmaster for [www.cvhams.com](http://www.cvhams.com). He's always there to lend a hand whenever something needs to be done. Thank you, Don, for years of service to SIERA and to the communities of Carson Valley.

**We will have our first in-person SIERA meetings Saturday, May 1st at Lampe Park. Jim AG6IF will give a simple direction finding demonstration. Those who have tape measure yagis, bring them with you so we can play with them. If you wish to stay home, we will also transmit the meetings on the NV7CV 147.330/240mh repeater. Board meeting at 12:30 p.m. General meeting at 1 p.m. Bring your own chairs and refreshments.**

**From Bob Yandow K7GUU: Forest Service Lookout Tower - Leviathan Peak, structural engineer needed!**

"Some may remember I have worked as a wildfire lookout in past summers and I belong to the Forest Fire Lookout Association (FFLA). Our association has the purpose of saving and restoring fire lookout structures across the United States. We have assisted federal and state agencies in maintaining fire lookout towers when their funds were short. Some of these were grants of several hundreds of dollars and some were major rebuilding projects. A few have consisted of moving the structures piecemeal or intact via helicopters.

Currently the Forest Service is planning on destroying the Leviathan Peak lookout which is the site of the SIERA club 147.330 repeater. The FFLA leadership in the Western U.S. would like to save the lookout and has contacted the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest administration about alternatives in place of destroying the lookout. We understand building a new communications tower and destroying the lookout has been delayed. The FFLA wishes to evaluate if the lookout can be used where it is or moved to another location. To do this we would first need the structure of the lookout evaluated by a structural engineer to determine if it can be saved or moved. I would like to know if any of the SIERA members are structural engineers or know such an engineer who would be willing to do a gratis evaluation of the structure relative to it remaining in place or being moved. If someone does come forth I can put them in touch with the FFLA staff able to proceed with such a project. Thanks for your help. Please email me at [k7guu@arrl.net](mailto:k7guu@arrl.net) to discuss this further. Bob Yandow K7GUU. "



**N7RCA's 17th Annual Electronics Swap Meet**

**June 5, 2021**

**This is a free event for buyers and sellers**

**Rain or Shine**

**For a map and more information: [www.n7rca.com](http://www.n7rca.com).**

## **Upcoming Events:**

### **The Pony Express Re-Ride June 16-17, coordinator needed:**

The Pony starts in Sacramento, CA this year and runs eastward. Tom Tabacco KG7NCJ has coordinated this event for the past couple of years, but wants to retire. Luckily, he just found Gerry Miller KJ7GEZ in Smith Valley to take his place. If you're interested in supporting this event, contact him at [kj7gez@gmail.com](mailto:kj7gez@gmail.com) or 775-552-5496.

Gerry's got a tough job ahead of him as many of the old timers who have worked the Pony are getting "on in years". (That ought to ruffle some feathers.) So, SIERA needs volunteers to set up relay stations on a few mountain passes and at various spots along the trail where riders stop to transfer the mochila from horse to horse. Other hams



follow the riders through areas that are particularly dangerous. As most of the trail is accessible to the Pony's crew vehicles, these "follow" situations are getting fewer in number, but we still need hams with a sense of adventure and a good SUV.

One of our favorite hams is Ken Head KE6FTM from Placerville, who has become especially attached to the eastern side of Nevada. He's helped the Shellbourne Riders get out of some pretty gnarly situations, like pulling a large horse trailer

out of thick mud, and scaring away a pair of mustang stallions harassing a Pony rider on a mare. As you can see by all the mud on Ken's jeep, it can be a bit gooey sometimes. This photo was actually taken after he had cleaned off some of the muck. He had so much mud on his antenna, he couldn't transmit. About three pounds worth!

Such "Wild West" adventures happen along the Nevada segment of the Pony Express Trail. Any takers? C'mon ... it's fun! Let's make Gerry's inaugural year as Pony Coordinator a little easier so he'll continue to do it for a few years.

### **Visalia DX Convention May 15-16:**

This year's convention is all virtual Zoom presentations. Registration required but free. Pre-register and you get in on the door prize entries. For more information, registration, etc.: [www.dxconvention.com](http://www.dxconvention.com)

### **Bishop High Sierra Fun Run May 22:**

<https://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=78391>

Noam Shendar is looking for support for a set of road races including a 50-miler near Bishop, CA on May 22. Hams would be located with aid stations, one of which is out of

repeater range. Radio shifts start as early as 5 p.m. and end as late as 12:30 a.m. the following morning. Contact: Noam [w6rt@arrl.net](mailto:w6rt@arrl.net)

### **Alta Alpina Challenge - Riding the Wild Sierra June 26:**

This is an endurance cycling event for 200-300 riders, in which they ride many of the mountain passes in our area. *Course communications are handled by motorcycles patrolling the course that report to ham operators stationed at key locations.* Volunteer hams will be assigned a specific shift and a location, though they may be asked to move once or twice during their shift. Lunch is provided.

Time: 6am to 10pm, per assigned shifts of 6-10 hours.

Location: The ride's start/finish and headquarters is Turtle Rock Park outside of Markleeville. The northern-most part of the course is Kingsbury Grade. The full course goes from there south to Hope Valley/Carson Pass, Monitor, and Ebbetts Passes as well.

To volunteer, or for more information, please contact Jennie Hamiter, KE7YBA, at [jenniehamiter@mac.com](mailto:jenniehamiter@mac.com), or 530-307-1168.

### **Death Ride July 17:**

This ride may be "shorter" than the Alta Alpina, but it's more rigorous because the bicyclists must ride over all five passes within the 12-hour time span of the ride. They go over Monitor twice, Ebbetts twice, and Carson Pass before zooming down through Hope Valley to Turtle Rock for the finish. (Just think of poor Hans Burkhardt, the Chicken Man, who lugged heavy bags of rubber chickens along the route because he had already given out so many in previous years that nobody wanted one last year.) SIERA hams are usually located at the aid stations, which is fun because you get to meet and schmooze with the riders and sample the food available there. (At least that's how it was at Picketts Junction.)



You'll also meet all the crazy supporters clamoring along the sidelines, like the ladies at the Sheep Camp. And there're ALWAYS a lot of spills without the thrills of riders missing a turn and flying off the edge of the roads. This bicycle event NEEDS hams to help with communications. Contact Paul Gulbro WA6EWV at [wa6ewv@juno.com](mailto:wa6ewv@juno.com) or check out the TARA website for further information.

---

### **The SIERA Board Is Burning Out**

Bob and Debbie Williams (K7VOC/N7XYL) are retiring at the end of this year. David DeAngelis K1SCN has already worked as secretary a year beyond his desired term and would LOVE to retire. And as mentioned above, we need a Pony Express coordinator if we are to continue supporting this event.

Two more SIERA hams will be retiring from their positions in DCART. Sheila Clement KA7AJQ is stepping down as Emergency Coordinator for Douglas and Alpine Counties and hopes some other SIERA member will be willing to take her place.



Meanwhile, just as many of you were probably thinking maybe Ben Etchevarria N7BBE could easily fill Sheila's shoes, he's also retiring from his job at PCC Structural in Carson City on May 14th and will be joining his wife in Ft. Lauderdale where she has been employed for the past few years.

So, DCART and SIERA both need capable people to slip into these slots. Emergency radio experience is always a big plus, especially for DCART (Douglas County Emergency Radio Team) ECs. SIERA needs a new secretary and treasurer.

Thank you go out to all of these folks for their many years of service in both organizations. These are big shoes to fill, but SIERA has lots of talent and experience. All you have to do is listen to the Watering Hole every Wednesday to know how deep the radio expertise is out there. Get in touch with anyone on the Board, even during one of the nets, to let them know you're interested. SIERA and DCART need you in order to keep these organizations functioning at top levels.

## **DCART News**

I have appointed an additional (to Ben, N7BBE) Assistant Emergency Coordinator, David OHara, KB7DWO. David has been in law enforcement for 41 years and served as the emergency manager for Mono County for three years. He has been a ham since 1986 and holds a General class license. He started the Mono County RACES program that eventually merged with Mono County SAR. During the June 2002 Canon fire, and later the Slinkard fire, he was the Incident Commander. The Canon Fire involved the C-130 that crashed in Walker and left Walker-Coleville without electricity and telephones for over three weeks. He managed the Mono County radio system and wrote several Homeland Security grants that enabled the county to upgrade its communications system. At home, he and his wife, Sandy, KE7SJO, have HF, VHF/UHF and DMR capability. Welcome, David and thank you, Ben, N7BBE, for your support as AEC. Best Wishes, Ben, for your coming trip to Florida. -- Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ,

## **Net Controls Needed**

With Sue Cauhape KI7CTT and Ben Etchevarria N7BBE leaving the net control roster for the Tuesday VHF/HF nets, SIERA is in desperate need for people to step up and lead those nets. Currently, there are five NCs left, but that still makes this assignment a once-a-month contribution to the club's activity. It only takes an hour to do both nets. Don McRoberts W3DRM updates the roll call list after each net so that NCs know who participates and who doesn't. That cuts the time down quite a bit, especially on the VHF net. Being a net control is good practice for anyone wishing to hone such skills for emergency work too. And it's a fun way to learn the names and call signs of SIERA members and visitors to the nets. If you want to take a turn at this activity, contact Sheila Clement KA7AJQ at [smclfc@gmail.com](mailto:smclfc@gmail.com) or Don McRoberts at [drmcroberts@outlook.com](mailto:drmcroberts@outlook.com).

## **Informal Saturday Breakfasts**

We all miss meeting at the Tail Dragger on the fourth Saturday of each month at 8 a.m. for our Saturday Breakfasts. While the SIERA Board hasn't officially granted sanction to this favorite event, Ed Terlau KG7ZOP has been showing up there on the fourth Saturdays for the past couple of months, inviting any hams who want to get things back to normal. So, if you want to join Ed, he's still going to be there on the fourth Saturday. And the way things are going, those breakfasts may be opened officially in no time at all. Thanks Ed for being the rebel with a great cause.

## **News From ARRL**

### ***ARLB011 Updated Radio Frequency Exposure Rules Become Effective on May 3***

The FCC has announced that rule changes detailed in a lengthy 2019 Report and Order governing RF exposure standards go into effect on May 3, 2021. The new rules do not change existing RF exposure (RFE) limits but do require that stations in all services, including amateur radio, be evaluated against existing limits, unless they are exempted. For stations already in place, that evaluation must be completed by May 3, 2023. After May 3 of this year, any new station, or any existing station modified in a way that's likely to change its RFE profile - such as different antenna or placement or greater power - will need to conduct an evaluation by the date of activation or change. The Report and Order can be found online in PDF format at, <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-19-126A1.pdf> .

**This is a video link from the Zoom meeting covering the Exposure rules, and should be able to answer your questions, and clarify the requirements. Please take the time to review this video.**

**Topic: FCC Radio Frequency Exposure Rules**

**Speaker/Presenter: [Greg Lapin, N9GL](#)**

**View Video: <https://vimeo.com/540342124>**

**Download**

**Video: <https://vimeo.com/user107547861/download/540342124/36ae948e83>**

**Documents: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mq3djoyqppeucwg/AACjeZjnNjFcDINtEI B6xPpa?dl=0>**

### **ARLB014 FCC Auto-Registration Feature for Exam Applicants to be Discontinued**

Auto-registration in the FCC Commission Registration System (CORES) amateur radio exam for candidates using a Social Security number will be discontinued on May 20, 2021. Applicants must use an FCC Registration Number (FRN) for all license transactions with the FCC.

Examinees must register in CORES and receive an FRN before exam day. Starting on May 20, electronic batch filed applications that do not include a candidate's FRN will be rejected. The Social Security/Licensee ID Field will be disabled.

The CORES website can be accessed at:

<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do> .

An instructional video provides step-by-step instructions on how to establish a CORES account, which is necessary for licensees to make administrative updates and download electronic license authorizations.

The instructional video can be found at, <https://www.fcc.gov/rofrn> .

After June 29, all filers must provide an email address on all applications. When an email is provided, applicants will receive an official electronic copy of their licenses once granted (allow incoming email from [authorizations@fcc.gov](mailto:authorizations@fcc.gov)). If no email is provided when filing on or after June 29, applications will be rejected. ARRL VEC suggests that those without access to email to use the email address of a family member or friend.

Further information about providing an email address can be found at:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-to-require-email-address-on-applications-starting-on-june-29-2021>

Licensees need to log in to the Universal Licensing System (ULS) to download their authorizations. The FCC no longer issues paper copies.

## **ARLX005 Annual Armed Forces Day Cross-Band Test Set for May 7 - 8**

The US Department of Defense will host this year's Armed Forces Day (AFD) Cross-Band Test, Friday and Saturday, May 7-8, in recognition of Armed Forces Day on May 15. The event is open to all radio amateurs. For more than 50 years, military and amateur stations have taken part in this exercise, designed to include amateur radio and government radio operators alike.

The AFD Cross-Band Test is a unique opportunity to test two-way communications between military and amateur radio stations, as authorized under FCC Part 97 rules. These tests provide opportunities and challenges for radio operators to demonstrate individual technical skills in a tightly controlled exercise in which military stations will transmit on selected military frequencies and will announce the specific amateur radio frequencies being monitored.

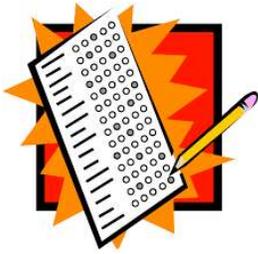
The schedule of military/government stations taking part in the Armed Forces Day Cross-Band Test and information on the AFD message is available on the MARS website at, <http://www.dodmars.org/home/armed-forces-day-2021> .

Complete the request form to obtain a QSL card at, <http://www.usarmymars.org/events>

## **Santa Cruz, CA holds Field Day 2020 - K6MMM Station**

If you have a 40-minute window of free time, this video of the Santa Cruz hams' 2020 Field Day interviews participants and how their organization continued working through the pandemic. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us95WkySQUs>

## Resources for Taking the Licensing Exams During the COVID Era



Despite the COVID lockdown on in-person meetings and testing opportunities, SNARS in Reno has a schedule of exam sessions at the REOC. Just click on this link for more information and registration: <https://snars.org/exams/>

### Good online resources for learning amateur radio:

**eHam.com** has study questions and quizzes

**hamstudy.org** is highly recommended by SIERA members because it helps you understand the whys and wherefores of amateur radio instead of encouraging you to just memorize answers.

There is also a wide selection of licensing books on Amazon. One of the more expensive as well as the best resource, is the *ARRL General License Manual*.

*Paul Gulbro shared this article written by one of TARA's members about his online testing for his General license on ZOOM:*

### REMOTE HAM TESTING

- First thing I did was to go to <https://hamstudy.org/>
- Once there, I went to find a session. Once there, I selected a session date that wasn't full and made sure it was listed as online.
- After selecting session, go ahead and register.
- Once you're registered, you will receive an email with a pin number you'll need for the test.
- Then got an email from a member of the club that listed a link to the club administrating the test with the pre test info. This will include procedure break down and payment and the link to the test site <https://ExamTools.org/>
- They wanted payment at least 24 hours before the test. Payment was by PayPal.
- After payment was made, an email with the Zoom meeting ID and password was given.
- The test time that I registered for was 2:30, but when I got my Zoom info, they said my test time was 3:55 as they test multiple people but only one at a time.
- At 3:55 logged into Zoom and entered the meeting. After about 10 minutes, I was greeted by three people. They had me move my computer around so they could see the environment I was in and make sure there wasn't anything on the desk.
- They had me show my driver's license by holding it up to the camera. They also had me hold up my Technician license.
- After a little more delay, the person that was taking the test finished and I was transferred to another meeting group. (I never saw anybody but the three club members.)
- The group I was transferred to was the test group of three VE's. They verified my information, changed my computer to share screen, then had me put in my pin number into the Exam Tools site that I had already logged into.
- I was then instructed to click the Begin Exam button and then click the Grade Exam when finished.
- They then turned off their video so I could no longer see them but they still monitored me.
- I completed the test, hit the Grade button, and they returned and graded my test, which was just like the practice tests and gave me the result immediately.
- With a passing score I was then asked to sign for conformation and asked if I wanted to retain my current call sign and that I would get my FCC license in about three days.
- That was it. Closed down and jumped for joy.

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

**Don't forget to check out the SIERA website on [www.cvhams.com](http://www.cvhams.com) for lots of information and reference material. This includes a comprehensive list of nets throughout the area.**



**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 147.270mh 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

---

**SIERA General Meeting April 3, 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:** 18 check-ins

**Last month's minutes:**

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

**Treasurer's Report for April 2021**

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

**Announcements**

- Still looking for someone to volunteer for the position of club Secretary.
- Pony Express Ride is in need of a co-ordinator.
- Alta Alpina Challenge will be held on June 26 and they need volunteers to provide communications – contact through [www.altaalpina.org](http://www.altaalpina.org) . Email to: Challenge AT [altaalpina.org](mailto:altaalpina.org)
- K7VOC and N7XYL will be retiring from their club board and officer positions.

**Business**

- Jim, AG6IF solicited comments about conditions on the low bands.
- The club is planning a construction project – specifically a 2-meter tape measure yagi - to be started when we get back to meeting in person. Meanwhile, we will conduct informational sessions during our meetings on the repeater.
- AG6IF explained the fact that some radios are more susceptible to overload in the presence of a strong signal, resulting in an apparent loss of signal. Switching to REVERSE will put your transmit signal on the repeater OUTPUT frequency, and your receive frequency to the repeater INPUT which should restore communications.
- For Direction Finding you should be listening on the frequency of the transmitted signal – not the repeater output frequency. Garth KC4M explained the technique of shielding your HT antenna with your body to determine the direction of the signal you are looking for.
- AG6IF reported on his experiments with MIADY LiPo batteries.

**Adjournment:** 1:34PM

**If you want a copy of the Treasurer's Report, email Debbie Williams N7XYL at [n7xyl@arrl.net](mailto:n7xyl@arrl.net) or any of the Board members.**

**Remember to send your photos and news for the Beacon and the SIERA Facebook page to [scauhape2020@protonmail.com](mailto:scauhape2020@protonmail.com)**