



SIERA BEACON



Carson Valley, NV

October 2018

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

Nevada QSO party is Oct 12 - 14, 2018

We will be circling the wagons for a camp out and BBQ back at the junction of Nye, Lander, and Churchill counties near Burnt Cabin Summit. Come out for the day or camp with us for the weekend. Either way, it promises to be another fun event. We will need volunteers to set up the antennas and flip burgers. RSVP is required. Contact Greg at: KG7DMI@frontier.com



These three QSO parties will run concurrently with the Nevada. This means we can work all four parties at the same time. Check the websites for more information.

The Arizona <https://www.azqsoparty.org/>, South Dakota <https://sdqsoparty.com/>, and Pennsylvania <http://www.nittany-arc.net/pqppdf/paqsol7rules.pdf>

The California QSO party is the weekend of Oct. 6-7, <http://www.cqp.org/>. The CQP is the largest QSO party in the country and guaranteed to be lots of on-air action. We will be in a prime location! Close enough to work everyone with 100w and a wire. You will be surprised how many stations have never worked Nevada. That makes you the rare DX. <http://nvqso.com/>

The October General Meeting will be held Saturday, *October 6th*, at 1 p.m., at the United Methodist Church, 1375 Centerville Lane, Gardnerville. Jamie Dahl N6JFD will tell us about SOTA, Summits on the Air. In August, some of us had the pleasure of responding to Mark Sandler K7MAS who, while visiting Tahoe from Bellevue, WA, set up his SOTA station on Monument and Tamarack Peaks. He recently earned the title "Mountain Goat" because of his SOTA contacts, and we were part of that achievement. Congratulations, K7MAS!

Thank you Greg Moore KG7DMI and Subrina Vinton KI7OAL for providing the coffee for the meeting. Thank you, Ben, for facilitating the meeting and bringing the cookies. Jeff and I knew we could count on SIERA hams to get it done.

September Meeting Presentation: Ed Eggert and Morse Code

Ed Eggert discovered quite a bit of interest in Morse Code when he gave his presentation on the topic at the September General Meeting. Suggesting that those interested first learn the letters E, I, S, H, T, M, O, he added that a good phrase to practice to learn rhythm is "best bent wire." He defined an operator with poor code skills as a "*fist*," meaning the guy was heavy-fisted or amateur. That term was the precursor to the term "*ham*." Someone who used Q-signs while using phone modes was a *LID*. One operator Ed knew would open his net with "no kids and no LIDs." One of his various stories was about Sputnik 1. Hams could receive a Morse Code message from the satellite, send it and their contact information to Box 88, Moscow, Russia to receive a QSL card. He has worked hundreds of stations all over the world and met some interesting people in the process. He handed everyone a sheet listing all the letters, numbers, and punctuation used in CW and encouraged us to take advantage of the ARRL Practice sessions. Check <http://www.arrl.org/wlaw-operating-schedule>.

Meanwhile, Paul McAfee KI60CB, sent this list of his favorite resources to augment Ed's information.

Tutors:

<http://www.nzart.org.nz/exam/morse/> Keyboard based. You can cut-copy-paste text into the window and it sends in Morse. Program sends, but you have to use the keyboard to input the letters. My favorite basic tutor.

<http://www.rufzxp.net/> My second favorite tutor.. if you like code you MUST see these pages!

<http://www.morseresource.com/morse/makemorse.php> Converts text to Morse and vice-versa. Also converts to wav files. That allows you to copy to paper while you listen

<http://www.winmorse.com/> Converts text to Morse and vice versa, also converts to wav files. That allows you to copy to paper while you listen

<https://www.fistsna.org/> Good source for all sorts of CW stuff and a good pair of CD tutors for pretty cheap. One tutor is a General license exam that starts at 5wpm and works up speed.

<https://www.mtechnologies.com/> Cool keys and stuff.

Books:

<http://morse-rss-news.sourceforge.net/artskill.pdf>

THIS IS A MUST-HAVE! This is THE Book!

Pierpont's "The Art and Skill of Radio-Telegraphy" The book is available from www.lulu.com for a lot less (\$14) than some vendors. This is THE book for learning code. The URL below is for a PDF of this book.

https://www.amazon.com/gp/offer-listing/1300608706/ref=tmm_pap_new_olp_sr?ie=UTF8&condition=new&qid=&sr=

Army Signals FM Field Manual and TM Technical Manual

1. FM24-5 Basic Signal Field Manual
2. TM11-459 International Morse Code
3. TM11-454 The Radio Operator

COOL YouTubes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmg1MlStxWM> Army
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC5RQNSSZH0> Navy



FOR SALE

Brian Freitag, KE7JIO, still has an Icom 718 and a 80m ham stick dipole. He'd like to get \$350. Please contact him at KE7JIO@gmail.com

For Sale

Joe Smaltz N6URA <joesmaltz@charter.net>

Tri-Ex 70 ft Galvanized freestanding crank up tower steel foundation parts for base (needs 3 ft X 3ft X 5-6 ft deep hole filled with concrete)

Heavy duty Coax for tower

Lightning protector

Ham IV Rotor with accessory carrier bearing 40 meter two element beam

Four element Tri-Bander beam

Icom HF IC-751

Kenwood 2 meter mobile with regulator power supply

Two meter antenna

Palomar 300 A linear

Palomar 200 linear

MFJ Versatuner III

Comsat CB (new in box)

MFJ signal enhancer SSB/CW filter

Realistic Pro 2021 scanner

Ranger 3300 10-meter mobile

For Sale

Larry Minihan NS6P llmini@aol.com

Zero Five 29" broadband multiband 6-80 antenna

Palstar AT2KD 2000w antenna tuner. 6-80 meter capability

Glen Martin aluminum hazer-tilting crank-up 30' tower w/heavy-duty mast and Yaesu 2800DXA rotator. Manuals available.

Kenwood TS9905 HF plus 6-meters. 200 w, software up-to-date. Serial #B3700015. Manuals available.

Miscellaneous small items available.



Reflections on a Dead Band

By David DeAngelis K1SCN

While we continue to approach the solar minimum, hearing only static on the bands seems to be a common experience. I will bet if you were to poll the experienced members of the club, you would find that almost all have experienced surprising signals emerging unannounced from out of the static. One of my most memorable dead band experiences occurred on December 9, 2013. I was tuning around 28Mhz and all I was hearing was static. Now, you have to understand that the ten-meter band is a special animal when it comes to propagation. Usually it is either wide open where you can easily work out to 2000 miles or more running low power and a simple antenna, or totally dead and unable to get a signal into California while running a kilowatt. Imagine my surprise when I stumbled across a very strong signal - and I mean a very strong signal - strong enough to have been local. What is the call sign? I had to wait for the station to sign. Good thing I am patient. Oh my! The call was D2QR.



If you are new to HF, another way that operating on HF is different from VHF is that you will hopefully be hearing a variety of call signs. Even if you are not actively pursuing a DXCC award, it helps to become familiar with some of the more popular DX prefixes. This one was in no way ordinary. The prefix D2 is allocated to the country of Angola in Southern Africa. Now remember all I was hearing while tuning around was static. This was the only signal on the band. If I hadn't been curious, I could have easily dismissed it as being a local signal and I could have just kept on tuning around - or even worse I could have changed bands or just turned the radio off.

What made this experience memorable, however, was that I actually wrote in my log that the D2 was the only signal on the band. Not the only loud signal - the only signal period.

You may ask, "What do you mean that you wrote it in your log?"

The FCC eliminated the rule for keeping a log in 1983. Those of us licensed before that date were required to keep a detailed log. Every CQ and test transmission in addition to QSO's were required to be logged. Basically, every time the transmitter was turned, on a log entry was required. So for me, it just became a habit that I continue to this day. I do have an electronic log, but I continue to use a paper log because I find it easier to keep notes on things like solar conditions and strange occurrences like the D2 signal. So, another way that HF operating differs from VHF is that keeping a log can be really handy.

The ARRL website offers three reasons for keeping a log. The complete article can be found at: www.arrl.org/keeping-a-log:

Legal, operational, and personal.

Legal to support your innocence in an interference complaint.

Operational as a resource for confirming contacts.

Personal for keeping track of your personal experiences like the event discussed in this article.

What your detailed log needs to record is the date, the time of the QSO start and finish, the frequency, the mode used, the call sign of the station worked, signal reports sent and received, name and location. UTC is preferred. Have you ever tried to convert AZ or IN times to local time? Adding information like your QSO partner's rig and antenna, QSL route, and other notes are your decision to include or not. You do not need to purchase a fancy logbook for the purpose of keeping a log. The ARRL website has a sample log page at the address listed above that can be downloaded and printed.

It has been a long-standing tradition in amateur radio that the final courtesy of a QSO is a QSL confirmation. Why the "final courtesy"? The 73 you send is the first courtesy. So, operationally it helps to keep some sort of detailed log. Even if you personally are not actively pursuing an award, like *Worked All States*, there are many others who are looking to add a certificate of some sort to their collection. In case you were not aware, Nevada is considered somewhat of a rare catch on HF. So there is a very good possibility that confirmation of your contacts will be requested by the stations that you have worked.



While the traditional form of confirmation is a QSL postcard, you do not need to spend a fortune on an elaborate, glossy QSL card. I have in my QSL card collection short hand-written notes on stationery, index cards with crayon drawings, repurposed postcards, and letters with detailed newsletter-like biographies in addition to traditional professionally printed postcards. Personally, I print my own QSL cards on 110-lb index card stock using a desktop publishing program.

As a newcomer, you also might not be aware of the fact that your call sign, name and address are now a matter of public record on the FCC database. You may have wondered how all those catalogs appeared in your postal box shortly after you were first licensed. As a result of your information being in the public domain, several online services maintain free public access to your information. This makes it possible to send a QSL request through the USPS. What is really nifty about these services is that it is possible to link your electronic logging program to one of these services, and your log will display and enter the name and address of the station you are working. No need to manually enter the information. A good logging program will also spit out the address for mailing and print your QSL card. In addition, some of these online services provide the ham operator the opportunity to provide more detailed information to the public. This might include things like photos, a station description, or pertinent biographical information.

I am not going to endorse any one particular service here. If you do a search for "amateur radio database" or "ham call sign database," you will be treated to at least a half dozen choices. Probably the most popular call sign database service is *QRZ.com*. QRZ allows the user to provide biographical information as well as detailed location information (LOC Grid & map) and QSL preferences. So if you don't particularly want to participate in the exchange of a QSL for contacts, you have the opportunity to indicate that on your QRZ page. As an FT8 user, I find that using websites like QRZ adds to the total experience by filling in information that is not provided in the FT8 QSO. Only call signs, signal report, and grid square are exchanged.

At this point I need to interject a consideration that was only recently pointed out to me. As is my habit, while entering my recent QSO's into my paper log, I check the contact information for each station on QRZ. The biographical information for the D2QR station stated that the operator was visually impaired. He also said that the screen reader he

used often got confused on the QRZ page due to the prevalence of advertisements with flashing graphics. As a result, he asked operators to please update their QSL info on *HamQTH.com*. A quick look there revealed a website with plain but easy-to-read graphics. I can see how it could be an improvement over QRZ for someone who had to rely on a screen reader.

While I am at it, I would be lacking if I didn't plug *WM7D.net*. You have probably heard me mention that I made extensive use of this site when I lived Back East. Not only does Mark's site provide solar information, but he has a call sign database as well.

If dealing with paper cards is not your cup of tea, there are electronic alternatives for collecting and dispensing confirmations. Only confirmed contacts can be used for awards and some contesting purposes. The question then is, which service to use?

The ARRL touts a "secure" service known as "Log of the World" (LoTW). It is the only electronic QSL accepted for ARRL Awards. You do not have to be an ARRL member to use it. There is some "hoop-jumping" involved in getting set up. But once you are set up it is straight forward and easy to use.

One of the first to offer electronic QSL services is *eQSL*. The basic service there is free. If you want a paper card, you can print them on your computer printer. Otherwise, they can be archived electronically, and called up to view as you need them. They have their own awards program, and premium services are not expensive. On the downside, some people feel that it is too easy to fake the information.

The website QRZ.com discussed above also offers a free QSL service as part of their on-line logging system. Your logged information contributes to your progress in their awards system, and additional privileges are available for the price of membership.

ClubLog a free web-based tool for producing DXCC league tables, expedition tools, log search services and most-wanted lists for ham radio. Uploading your log to *ClubLog* adds to their database, which provides information of most wanted DXCC entities and propagation information. Many DXpeditions use *ClubLog*. Most importantly, *ClubLog* has a direct link to the *OQRS* service. If your log information is a match in *ClubLog*, *OQRS* will, for a price, provide you with a paper QSL for those rare DX entities you have worked.

Now after all this, you may be wondering if I got a confirmation for the D2QR contact? I actually got two: one confirmation on LoTW and one on eQSL.



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 Hwy 395. 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: November 17th.



Congratulations

Andrew Sickinger KJ7ATJ and Bryce Leinan KI7NIK. Andrew came down from Reno to earn his Technician's License and Bryce earned his General License.

Sheila Clement can always use new people to do Net Control for DCART and the SIERA HF and VHF Nets. If you want to stretch your radio voice and become more familiar with members' names and call signs, please sign up to do net control. The more we have on the rosters, the fewer times per month each of us will be up to do the nets. As it stands now, there are four people doing DCART Nets and as well as the HF and VHF nets. So, PLEASE, come join the fun and give the rest of us a break once in awhile.



**Help
Wanted**

SPEAKING OF NET CONTROL:

It's always an adventure when Sue KI7CTT and Jeff Cauhape K7BCV do the DCART nets from the W7SR station at the 911 Dispatch Center. Sue likes to do this to better acquaint herself with the idiosyncracies of that radio station. Things change from one month to the next ... for some reason. Also, it's an opportunity to update her badge.

On September 10, she and Jeff were befuddled when switching over to the new DCART frequency 147.270. The W7SR radio is already programmed with a long list of frequencies. Sue tuned to 147.270 and wondered why Ben could hear her but Sheila couldn't. Jeff, who is her very patient Elmer, pointed out that the tone and offset weren't on. Sue was on Simplex. Ever the trouble-shooter, Jeff searched the manual as the seconds before the net began ticked by. Sue started the net on the Simplex, and more befuddlement ensued with Sheila told Ben she couldn't hear Sue. Thanks to Ben's relays, Sue got Sheila's okay to switch to 147.330 until the problem could be resolved. She restarted the DCART Net and, with just a few more tiny glitches, and finished the net with appreciation to the NV7CV repeater for the use.

A few minutes later, Jeff found the channel with the correct frequency. (Sue has had this trouble before with tones and offsets.) Had Sue and Jeff checked the Frequency List pinned to the bulletin board next to their heads, they would've seen that 147.270 Simplex is on channel 8 and the KC7ARS repeater 147.270 is on channel 9. Duh!

The lesson here is that regular visits to the W7SR station is required to get used to its peculiarities. Kind of like getting accustomed to your own radios at home so you can use them with the stuff hits the fan.

"Repetition is the key to learning, and some of us need a lot of repetition." Anonymous

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 Tail Dragger Café at the Minden-Tahoe Airport.

DCART NEWS

The Minden linked repeater 443.750 + 123.0pl at the sheriff's department has been modified and can now be linked to the 147.270 or the 147.345 on Eagle ridge (frequencies may change as needs arise). 99% of the time it will continue to link directly to the 147.270/441.250 repeaters. The link can now be easily dropped from the Minden side only, allowing further linking capabilities from McClellan to other things at a later date. The repeater performs well now and has very impressive HT coverage around Minden/Gardnerville/Carson considering its setup and whopping 12w output.

Work in progress...on both systems.

Jeff Brown-K5BLS

Public Safety Communications Technician

Douglas County Technology Services

New Repeater:

The 146.655 Mono County repeater is off the air and removed for repair. It may be quite a while before it may be back up. We will change our DCART nets to the 147.270 and linked repeaters beginning Monday, September 10th.

Substitute Call Personnel:

Our DCART ARES AECs (Assistant Emergency Coordinators), Dale, KJ6IX and Ben, N7BBE will be the call people from September 15th to about October 15th. (My knee replacement is Sept. 18th). To formally activate DCART, a requestor must call the non-emergency Douglas Dispatch, 775-782-5126. Our 911 Director, Ron Sagen, or the Dispatch Duty Supervisor would OK the formal activation, including mutual aid requests. Probably informal contacts and information would be exchanged first.

Contact Ben, N7BBE, first for DCART business as Dale, KJ6IX, has a full business schedule. Ben works Monday through Friday 7:30 to 4 pm and is off weekends. Text him 24/7 at his mobile number 775-781-7522. Dale, KJ6IX, would be in touch with us with his availability and expertise.

When you respond to our 911 Station, take your DCART notebooks with all the paper and information we have discussed. Our project to have a complete binder there is not complete. There are many ICS forms there available.

Mini-Exercise:

Monday evening, Labor Day, I planned our DCART net on the 146.655 but found the repeater apparently not working. It turned into a mini exercise. Would members know to automatically check the 147.270? LeRoy set our extra radio to the 655 reverse

frequency where I announced the change. A couple of our members heard and switched.

With with Dale, KV7S, moved to Oregon, C.A.R.S (Churchill Amateur Radio Society) merged with Carson Valley Radio Club, W7SR. CARS will now be able to manage our repeater assets on McClellan Peak and downtown Minden and work with some legal issues.

Remember: On all our linked repeater systems, to key, pause after pushing the PTT, then talk. This helps capture your entire transmission.

73, Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ
ARES EC, Douglas and Alpine Counties



Nets Available in Carson Valley and Beyond:

The SNARS Noon Net daily on 147.15.

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

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 3982kHz.

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

"discussing questions and issues pertaining to amateur radio."

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

BARC (Bishop) Nightly Net, 8 p.m. on 146.940 pl 103.5

(website: <http://www.n6ov.com/newsletter.html>)

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 147.150 +123 PL

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

RARA Rural Amateur Radio Asso., Fridays at 8 p.m. on 147.180 (+) MHz pl 123

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

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.



Happy Birthday to:

Steven Rawson



SIERA General Meeting, September 8, 2018:

Called to order: 1:00 p.m.

Introductions: KI7VNG Fred Torres who paid his membership dues today, and visitor Mike N6GEN (who was visiting the area).

Treasurer's Report for September 2018:

Checking Account

Starting Balance	\$ 2248.95
Deposit:	
Donations for equipment	230.00
Membership	6.50
Withdrawal	
#1222 Jim Marshall antenna at repeater site	<716.55>
Ending Balance	\$ 1768.55

Saving Account

Starting Balance	\$ 4069.67
Dividends	.17
Ending Balance	\$ 4069.84

Grand Total

Tom Tabacco and Ben Echavarria moved to approve and seconded.

Donation Jar: As per a suggestion from the August meeting, a donation jar for the NV7CV repeater fund was placed on the table and total contributions of \$23.40 were made. Fred Torres paid \$30 in cash for his membership today and told Sue Cauhape to put the remainder, \$6, in the donation jar. His money was included, in a separate envelop, inside the donation jaw and given to Debbie after her return to Minden.

Membership: William Rose, Kirby May

Business:

Cathy Carney: Because she will be offering a presentation about her 50 years living in Alaska for the October meeting, she asked the members how many had lived or visited Alaska and if there was anything in particular they wanted her to cover in her talk. She used Ham radio for many years in Alaska. (Cathy later traded dates with Jamie Dahl, so he will present on SOTA in October and she will take the November meeting.)

Larry Minihan: Larry and his wife are down-sizing and he is liquidating his ham station. Everything must go. A list of his equipment and his contact information was read to the group. The information was also posted on the SIERA Facebook page, but for some reason, was not included in the September Beacon.

Brad Hollander Project: Brad's building of a remote radio station for high school kids and seniors living in assisted-living situations is moving forward. He has the information needed to apply for a tower permit with the County. He needs to get the money for an engineering study and a contractor.

BREAK

Ed Eggert gave a talk on learning Morse Code. He suggested that those interested first learn the letters E, I, S, H, T, M, O and that a good phrase to practice to learn rhythm is "best bent wire." He went on to tell various stories. An operator with poor code skills was called a "fist." That term was the precursor to the term "ham" as meaning someone who was heavy-fisted or amateur. Someone who used Q signs while on phone was an LID. One operator Ed knew would open his net with "no kids and no LIDs." When Sputnik 1 was launched, hams could receive a Morse Code message from the satellite, send it and their contact information to Box 88, Moscow, Russia to receive a QSL card. He has worked hundreds of stations from all over the world and met some interesting people in the process. There are also lots of good Morse practice websites, and there's a nightly practice net sponsored by the ARRL.

Following the meeting, Paul McAfee emailed a list of books and websites for people to use to teach themselves code. There seems to be a lot of interest to learn Morse.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:20 p.m.



SIERA members have been great sending in information about their events and news about other members. The Beacon appreciates any news items you have. It's easy to submit them, too.

If you have photos and/or can write a short description of whatever you're doing, send it to the Beacon at scauhape2002@yahoo.com. We'd all like to hear about your adventures and discoveries with amateur radio.